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MOKSHA DHARMA PARVA

Moksha means liberation, as opposed to the pursuit of dharma, artba and kama

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SSECTION EIGHTY-SEVEN
DANA DHARMA PARVA
The dharma to be followed in dana—gifts, donations, giving things away in charity

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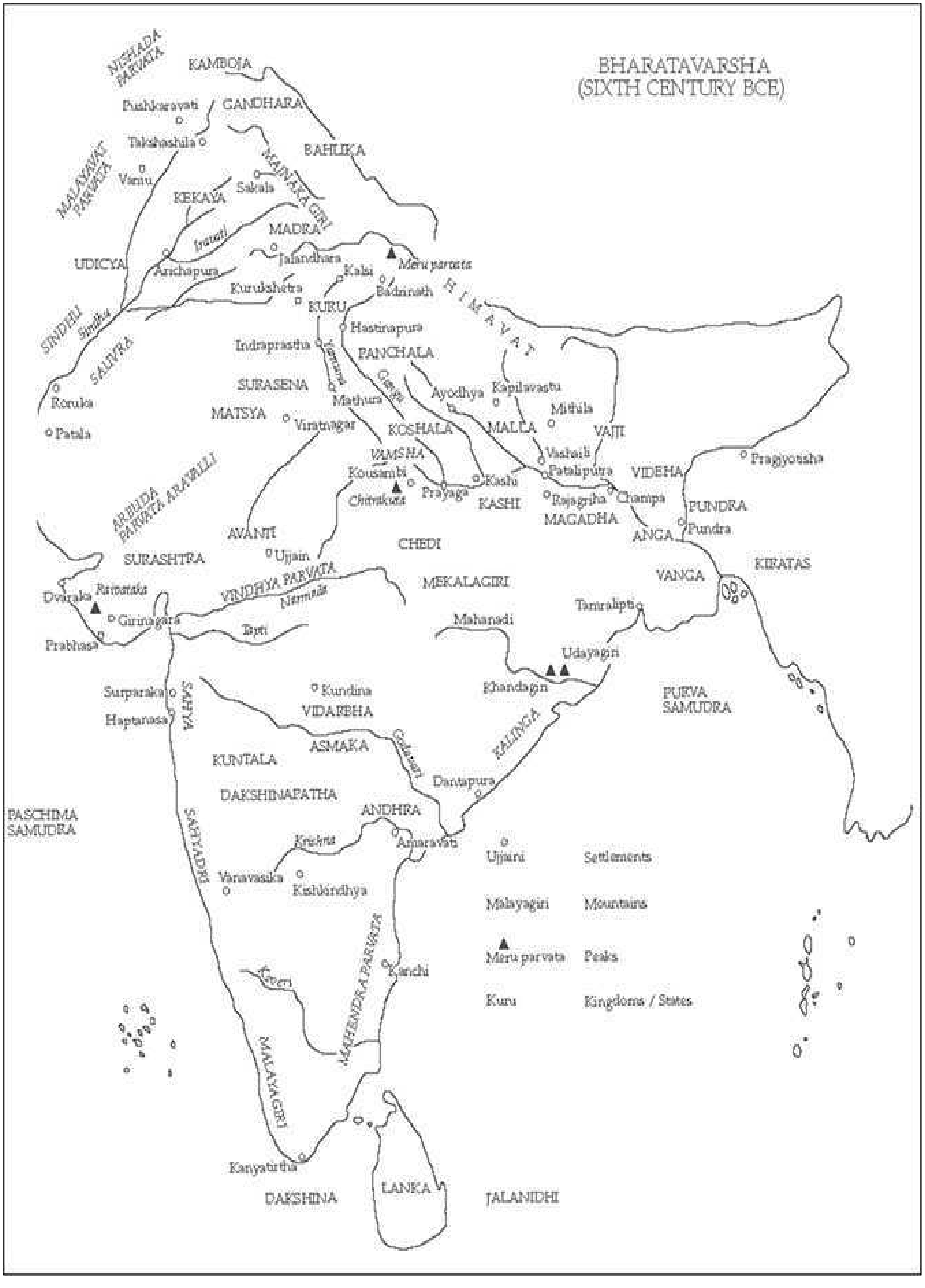
BHARATAVARSHA
(SIXTH CENTURY BCE)
NISHADA PARVATA
KAMBOJA
Pushkaravati
GANDHARA
Takshashila
BAHLIKA
MALAYAVAT PARVATA
Varnu
MAINAKA GIRI
Sakala
KEKAYA
Iravati
MADRA
Jalandhara
Meru parvata
UDICYA
Arichapura
Kalsi
Kurukshetra
Badrinath
HIMAVAT
KURU
Hastinapura
SINDHU
Sindhu
Indraprastha
Yamuna
PANCHALA
SAUVIRA
SURASENA
Ganga
Ayodhya
Kapilavastu
Roruka
Mathura
MATSYA
Viratnagar
Mithila
Patala
KOSHALA
MALLA
VAJJI
VAMSHA
Vaishali
Pragjyotisha
ARBUDA PARVATA ARAVALLI
Kousambi
Kashi
Pataliputra
VIDEHA
Chitrakuta
Prayaga
Rajagriha
Champa
KASHI
PUNDRA
MAGADHA
AVANTI
Pundra
ANGA
CHEDI
SURASHTRA
Ujjain
KIRATAS
VANGA
MEKALAGIRI
Raivataka
VINDHYA PARVATA
Dvaraka
Narmada
Tamralipti
Girinagara
Mahanadi
Tapti
Prabhasa
Udayagiri
Surparaka
SAHYA
Kundina
Khandagiri
PURVA SAMUDRA
Haptanasa
VIDARBHA
KALINGA
Godavari
ASMAKA
KUNTALA
Dantapura
DAKSHINAPATHA
PASCHIMA SAMUDRA
SAHYADRI
ANDHRA
Krishna
Amaravati
Ujjaini
Settlements
Vanavasika
Kishkindhya
Malayagiri
Mountains
MAHENDRA PARVATA
Meru parvata
Peaks
Kaveri
Kanchi
Kuru
Kingdoms / States
MALAYAGIRI
Kanyatirtha
LANKA
DAKSHINA
JALANIDHI

HARIVAMSHA

Chapter 1

Shounaka[1] said, 'O Souti! You have recounted the extremely great account of those born from the Bharata lineage, all the kings, the gods, the *danava*s, the serpents, the *rakshasa*s, the *daitya*s, the *siddha*s, the *guhyaka*s, their extraordinary acts of valour, the supreme and wonderful accounts of their births and the determinations of dharma.[2] In gentle words, you have spoken about these sacred and ancient accounts. Our minds and ears have become happy and delighted and are full of *amrita*.[3] O Lomaharshana's son! You have also spoken to us about the birth of those from the Kuru lineage. However, you have not spoken about the Vrishnis and the Andhakas.[4] Tell us about them.'

Suta replied, 'Janamejaya asked Vyasa's intelligent disciple about this.[5] Following this, I will tell you the truth about the lineage of the Vrishnis, from the beginning. After having heard the entire history about the Bharata lineage, the immensely wise Bharata Janamejaya[6] spoke to Vaishampayana. "The account of the Mahabharata has many meanings and is extensive in its compass. O *brahmana*![7] You have told me about it in detail and I have heard it. You have spoken about many brave ones, bulls among men, and the names and deeds of the *maharatha* Vrishnis and Andhakas.[8] O supreme among brahmanas! You have also spoken about their deeds. O lord! However, you have only spoken about this briefly and not in detail. I am not satisfied with what you have already recounted. It is my view that the Vrishnis and the Pandavas were related. You know about their lineages and were a direct witness. O store of austerities! Speak about their lineage in detail. I wish to know about who was born in whose lineage. What is the wonderful story of their being created earlier, by Prajapati?"[9] The great-souled and great ascetic was honoured well and asked in this fashion. He thus recounted the story in detail, following the due order.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Listen to the sacred and divine account, one that is destructive of all sins. I will tell you about these wonderful and diverse accounts, honoured in the sacred texts. O son![10] If a person sustains this and ceaselessly listens to it, he manages to uphold his own lineage and obtains greatness in the world of heaven. The eternal and unmanifest cause has existence and non-existence in his soul. He is Pradhana or Purusha. Though he is without a sense of ownership, he is the lord of the universe and everything flows from him. O great king! Know him to be the infinitely energetic Brahma. He is the creator of all beings and he seeks refuge with Narayana. Mahat[11] resulted from him and Ahamkara from Mahat. From this, all beings were created. The diverse gross elements were created from the subtle elements and this is the eternal nature of creation. Depending on my wisdom and based on what I have heard, I will now describe this in detail. This recounting will enhance the deeds of the ancestors. Listen. All of them were firm in their tasks and sacred in their deeds. This recounting leads to the enhancement of riches, fame and lifespans, slays enemies and leads to heaven. You are purest among those who are pure. I am capable of telling and you can comprehend. Therefore, I will tell you about the supreme story of the creation of beings, including the lineage of the Vrishnis. The illustrious Vishnu Svayambhu[12] wished to create different kinds of beings. He first created water and then released his energy into it. We have earlier heard that water is known by the name of Nara. Since he lay down on it earlier, he is known by the name of Narayana.[13] While he lay down on the water, a golden egg was generated and Svayambhu Brahma was himself born from this. This is what we have heard. The illustrious Hiranyagarbha[14] resided inside it for an entire year and thereafter divided the egg into two, thus creating heaven and earth. Between the two halves that were in the water, the lord created the sky. The earth was flooded with water and he created the ten directions.[15] Desiring to create, Prajapati created the forms of time, thoughts, words, desire, anger and attachment. From his mind, he created the seven greatly energetic ones—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha.[16] It has been determined that these are the seven ancient brahmanas. These seven were born from Brahma and have Narayana in their soul. Having created them, Brahma again created Rudra from his wrath. He also created Sanatkumara and the other rishis, who were the ancestors of the ancestors.[17] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rudra, and those seven, began to create offspring. However, Skanda and Sanatkumara restrained their seed.[18] Those seven[19] created divine and great lineages and large numbers of gods are also included in them, as are many *maharshi*s.[20] They performed rites and had offspring. He also created lightning, thunder, clouds, the rainbow,[21] aquatic creatures and rain. For the success of sacrifices, he fashioned hymns of the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda. We have heard that the gods known as Sadhyas are always engaged in performing sacrifices. He created the superior and the inferior creatures from his own body. Prajapati thus created large numbers of beings that dwelt in the water. He then divided his body into two, and one half of the body became Purusha.[22] The other half became female and gave birth to many kinds of creatures. In this way, they[23] pervade heaven and earth in their greatness. Vishnu created a great and radiant being. Know that being as Manu and manvantara is named after this.[24] There is a second creation that is said to have occurred after the mental one. This is known as Vairaja creation and was done by the lord.[25] The first cycle of creation was not born from wombs and was a creation that resulted from Narayana. If a man knows about this original creation, he obtains a long life and has fame, riches and offspring. He obtains the destination that he desires.’

Chapter 2

Vaishampayana said, ‘After having completed the mental creation, Prajapati became Purusha. As his wife, he obtained Shatarupa, who was not born from a womb.[26] O great king. Shatarupa was created in accordance with dharma and in her greatness, she pervaded heaven. For ten thousand years, she tormented herself through extremely difficult austerities. Because of those blazing austerities, she obtained Purusha as her husband. O son! This Purusha is spoken of as Svayambhuva Manu. Seventy-one yugas are said to constitute one manvantara.[27] Through Vairaja Purusha, Shatarupa had a son named Vira. Through Vira, Kamya[28] had sons named Priyavrata and Uttanapada. O mighty-armed one! Kamya was the daughter of Kardama Prajapati.[29] Kamya had four sons named Samrat, Kukshi, Virat and Prabhu. Atri Prajapati accepted Uttanapada as his son. Through Sunrita,[30] Uttanapada had four sons. Sunrita possessed excellent hips and was famous. She was Dharma’s daughter. Following dharma, the auspicious one became Dhruva’s mother. Through Sunrita, Uttanapada Prajapati had sons named Dhruva, Kirtimat, Apyayasmat and Ayaspati. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! Dhruva desired extremely great fame and tormented himself through austerities for three thousand divine years. Delighted, the lord Brahma granted him a spot that is like his own. The Prajapati does not move and is stationed in front of the saptarshis.[31] On seeing his pride, prosperity and greatness, Ushanas, the preceptor of the gods and the *asura*s,[32] composed a shloka. “Wonderful are his austerities and valour. Wonderful is his learning. Wonderful are his vows.” That is why Dhruva is stationed ahead of the saptarshis. Dhruva’s wife, Shambhu, gave birth to sons named Shlishti and Manya. Shlishti’s wife, Succhaya, gave birth to five unblemished sons—Ripu, Ripunjaya, Vipra, Vrikala and Vrikatejasa. Ripu’s wife, Brihati, gave birth to Chakshusha and he possessed every kind of energy. Through Pushkarini, Virana’s daughter, Chakshusha had a son named Chakshusha Manu. This great-souled Prajapati was thus descended from Virana's lineage. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Through Nangala, who was the daughter of Vairaja Prajapati, this Manu had ten immensely energetic sons—Uru, Puru, Shatadyumna, Tapasvi, Satyavit, Kavi, Agnishtut, Atiratra, Sudyumna as the ninth and Abhimanyu as the tenth. These were Nangala's immensely energetic sons. Through Agni's daughter, Uru had six extremely radiant sons—Anga, Sumanasa, Khyati, Kratu, Angiras and Shiva. Through Sunitha, Anga had a single son named Vena. Vena enraged all the great beings because of his oppressions. For the sake of offspring, the rishis kneaded his right arm.[33] When the rishis kneaded his right arm, a great son was born. On seeing him, the sages exclaimed, "This immensely energetic one will delight the subjects. He will obtain great fame." When he was born, he wielded a bow and was clad in armour. He was full of energy and seemed to burn everything down. Vena's son, Prithu,[34] protected everything and was the first of the *kshatriya*s. This lord of the earth consecrated himself for a royal sacrifice.[35] Accomplished bards and minstrels were generated from this sacrifice. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Desiring to ensure subsistence for the subjects, with the gods and the large numbers of rishis, he milked the earth to obtain crops.[36] Using their own respective vessels, the ancestors, the danavas, the gandharvas, large numbers of *apsara*s, the snakes, other sacred creatures, the herbs and the mountains also milked the earth. Having obtained their desired milk, they were able to sustain their lives. Prithu had two sons named Antardhi and Palina and they were knowledgeable about dharma. Through Antardhi, his wife, Shikhandini, had a son named Havirdhana. Agni's daughter was Dhishna. Through Havirdhana, she had six sons—Prachinabarhi, Shukra, Gaya, Krishna, Vraja and Ajina. The illustrious Prachinabarhi was a great Prajapati. O great king! He made the subjects prosper, just as Havirdhana had. O Janamejaya! As long as Prachinabarhi remained on earth, *prachinagra kusha* covered the surface of the earth.[37] After performing great austerities, the lord and king obtained the ocean's daughter, Savarna, as a wife. Through Savarna, the ocean's daughter, Prachinabarhi obtained ten sons. All of them were known as Prachetas and they were accomplished in *dhanurveda*.[38] All of them tormented themselves through great austerities and observed the same kind of dharma, immersed in the water of the ocean for ten thousand years. When the Prachetas were engaged in these austerities, the earth was no longer protected and became covered with trees. Consequently, the subjects were destroyed. The trees rose up into the sky and the wind was incapable of blowing. For ten thousand years, the subjects found it impossible to move. Realizing this, all the Prachetas resorted to their austerities and released wind and fire from their mouths. That wind uprooted and dried the trees. The terrible fire burnt them down. In this way, the trees were destroyed. On discerning that the trees were destroyed, but some branches were still left, the powerful king Soma[39] approached and said, "O kings! O all of you who are descended from Prachinabarhi! Restrain your anger. You have made the earth bereft of trees. Pacify the fire and the wind now. This beautiful maiden is the daughter of the trees and is a source of riches. O sons![40] Knowing what the future holds, I have borne her in my womb. This maiden is named Marisha and she has been fashioned from the trees. O immensely fortunate ones! She will be your wife and will extend Soma's lineage. Using half of your energy and half of my energy, she will give birth to a learned son named Daksha Prajapati. Through your energy and my energy, he will be like a fire generated from a fire and will again populate what has been burnt down with subjects." The Prachetas agreed to Soma's words. They withdrew their rage from the trees and following dharma, accepted Marisha as a wife. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through part of Soma and the ten Prachetas, Marisha gave birth to the greatly energetic Prajapati Daksha. To extend Soma's lineage, he had sons and created mobile and immobile objects, bipeds and quadrupeds. After this, through his mental powers, Daksha created women. He bestowed ten of these daughters on Soma and thirteen on Kashyapa. The lord bestowed the remainder, known as *nakshatra*s, on King Soma. The gods, birds, cattle, serpents, daityas, danavas, gandharvas, apsaras and all the other species were born from these.[41] O Indra among kings! Since then, offspring have resulted from sexual intercourse. The earlier creation is said to be one that resulted from resolution, sight and touch.'[42]

Janamejaya asked, 'You have earlier spoken about the creation of the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the serpents, the rakshasas and the great-souled Daksha. O unblemished one! You have said that Daksha was born from Brahma's toe.[43] How could the great ascetic again have been born as a son of the Prachetas? O brahmana! I have a doubt about this and you should explain it to me. He was Soma's grandson.[44] How did he become his father-in-law?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For all creatures, birth and destruction are perennial. Rishis and learned people are not confused on this account. O king! Daksha and all the others are born in every yuga and again die in every yuga. The learned are not confused on this account. O lord of men! Who was elder and who was younger was not determined by who was born first. Austerities were supreme and power was the determining factor. A person who knows about Daksha's creation of mobile and immobile objects obtains offspring, traverses everything and attains greatness in the world of heaven.'

Chapter 3

Janamejaya said, ‘O Vaishampayana! Tell me in detail about the creation of gods, danavas, gandharvas, serpents and rakshasas.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O lord of the earth! Svayambhu first instructed Daksha that he should create subjects and he then created beings. Listen. The lord initially created rishis, gods, gandharvas, asuras and rakshasas through his mental powers. However, despite his efforts, the subjects did not proliferate. Prajapati again thought about the creation of subjects. He decided to create diverse kinds of subjects by resorting to the dharma of sexual intercourse. He thus accepted Prajapati Virana’s daughter, Asikni, as his wife. She was full of extremely great austerities and was capable of sustaining the worlds. Thus, five thousand valiant sons were born through Daksha Prajapati and Virana’s daughter, Asikni. On seeing those extremely fortunate offspring prosper, *devarshi* Narada, agreeable in speech, spoke to them. This was like a curse on their own selves and they were destroyed.[45] Through Daksha’s daughter, the supreme lord[46] had earlier been born as one of Kashyapa’s foremost sons. But the sage was now scared that Daksha would curse him. The great lord, Narada, had already been born earlier. However, the supreme devarshi was again born through Asikni, Virana’s daughter. The bull among sages was born again and he was just like his father.[47] Daksha had sons who were famous as Haryashva.[48] There is no doubt that they became detached in every kind of way and were destroyed. The infinitely valorous Daksha prepared to destroy him.[49] With the maharshis leading the way, the great lord[50] restrained him. The great lord brought about a pact with Daksha and said, “Through my daughter, Narada will become your son.” The supreme lord bestowed his beloved daughter on Daksha and because of the fear of a curse, the rishi Narada was born through her.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘How were Prajapati’s sons destroyed by maharshi Narada? O foremost among brahmanas! I wish to hear the truth about this.’

Vaishampayana replied, 'Daksha's sons, the Haryashvas, were immensely valorous and were about to create offspring. Narada appeared before them and said, "You are foolish. You do not know the inside of the earth and what is above it and below it. How can you create subjects?" On hearing these words, they left in all the directions. They have still not returned, like rivers that head to the ocean. When the Haryashvas were destroyed, the lord Daksha, the son of Prachetas, again had one thousand sons through Virana's daughter. They were the Shabalashvas and they too wished to have offspring. O son! However, Narada urged them with the words that he had spoken earlier. All of them spoke to each other. "The great rishi has spoken appropriately. There is no doubt that we must follow in the footsteps of our brothers. Once we know the measurements of the earth, we can happily create subjects." They also departed along those paths, in all the directions. They have still not returned, like rivers that head to the ocean. O king! O lord! Since then, whenever a brother sets out to search for a brother, he is destroyed. There is no need to reflect on this. Daksha Prajapati got to know that his sons had been destroyed. Through Virana's daughter, Daksha again had sixty daughters. This is what we have heard. He gave ten to Dharma, thirteen to Kashyapa, twenty-seven to Soma, four to Arishtanemi, two to Bahuputra, two to Angiras and two to the learned Bhrishashva.[51] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arundhati, Vasu, Jami, Lamba, Bhanu, Marutvati, Samkalpa, Muhurta, Sadhya and Vishva—these are the ten who were the wives of Dharma. Listen to the names of their offspring. It is said that the Vishvadevas were born from Vishva, the Sadhyas from Sadhya, the Marutvans from Marutvati and the Vasus from Vasu. O son! The Bhanus were born from Bhanu and Muhurta and others from Muhurta. The Ghoshas were born from Lamba and Nagavithi from Jami. Every object on earth was born from Arundhati. All of these beings were born through mental resolution alone.

'O king! The wives of Soma were also bestowed on him by Daksha, the son of Prachetas. All these stellar bodies are known by the names of nakshatras.[52] Within the category of divinities, there are other gods who are foremost among radiant ones. I will tell you in detail about the eight who are famous as Vasus. Apa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa—these are said to be the names of the Vasus. Apa's sons were Vaitandya, Shrama, Shanta and Muni. Dhruva's son was the illustrious Kala, who controls the worlds. Soma's son was the illustrious Varcha and all rays originate with him. Dhara's sons were Dravina and Hutahavyavaha. Through Manohara,[53] he had sons named Shishira, Prana and Ramana. Anila's wife was Shiva and through her, Anila had two sons named Purojava and Avijnatagati. Agni's[54] son was Kumara, who prospered through rearing in a clump of reeds.[55] Shakha, Vishakha and Naigamesha followed him.[56] Since he was the offspring of the Krittikas, he is known as Kartikeya. Pratyusha's son is known to be the rishi named Devala. Devala had two learned and forgiving sons. Brihaspati's sister was a beautiful lady who practised *brahmacharya*. She became successful through *yoga* and roamed around the entire universe, bereft of attachment. She became the wife of the eighth Vasu, Prabhasa. The immensely fortunate Prajapati Vishvakarma was born from her. He was the creator of thousands of works of artisanship and was the architect of the gods. He was supreme among artisans and created all their ornaments. He also constructed all the *vimana*s[57] for the gods. Men who earn a living through artisanship follow that great-souled one. There were Ajaikapada, Ahibudhnya, Tvashta and the valiant Rudra.[58] Tvashta had an immensely illustrious and handsome son named Vishvarupa. Hara, Bahurupa, Tryambaka, Aparajita, Vrishakapi, Shambhu, Kapardi and Raivata—these are said to be the eleven Rudras and they are the lords of the three worlds.[59] Hundreds of infinitely energetic Rudras have been named.

'O lord of the worlds! Hear the names of the offspring of Aditi, Diti, Danu, Arishta, Surasa, Surabhi, Vinata, Tamra, Krodhavasha, Ira, Kadru and Muni.[60] In an earlier manvantara, there were twelve excellent and supreme gods and they were named the Tushitas. When that immensely illustrious and former *chakshusha manvantara* was over and they realized that *vaivasvata manvantara* was about to present itself, for the welfare of all the worlds, they met and spoke to each other. "Come. Let us swiftly enter the goddess Aditi. It will be best if we are born in the next manvantara." At the end of chakshusha manvantara, all of them mentally spoke to each other in this way. They were born through Marichi's son, Kashyapa, and Daksha's daughter, Aditi. In this way, Vishnu, Shakra, Aryama, Dhata, Tvashta, Pusha, Vivasvat, Savita, Mitra, Varuna, Amsha and the infinitely energetic Bhaga were born again. These are known as the twelve Adityas. In the former chakshusha manvantara, the gods were the Tushitas. In vaivasvata manvantara, they are known as the twelve Adityas. Soma’s twenty-seven wives have been spoken about and they were good in their vows. They had blazing and infinitely energetic offspring. Through his wives, Arishtanemi had six sons. The learned Bahuputra had four sons known as Vidyut. The best hymns of the Rig Veda, honoured by *brahmarshi*s, were generated from Angiras. The sons of devarshi Bhrishashva were the weapons of the gods. O son! In this way, because of their wishes, after thousands of yugas, the thirty-three gods are born again.[61] O Indra among kings! This is said to be the nature of their creation and destruction. O Kouravya! Just as the sun rises and sets, from one yuga to another yuga, the gods are also destroyed and created. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In addition to Aditi, we have heard that through Diti, Kashyapa had two sons, Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha. There was also a daughter named Simhika and she married Viprachitti. Hiranyakashipu had four renowned and energetic sons—Anuhlada, Hlada, the valiant Prahlada and Samhlada as the fourth. Hlada’s son was Hlada.[62] Hlada had Ayu, Shiva and Kala as sons. Prahlada had a son named Virochana and Bali was born through Virochana. O lord of men! Bali had one hundred sons. Of these, Bana was the eldest. The others were Dhritarashtra, Surya, Chandrama, Chandratapana, Kumbhanama, Gardabhaksha, Kukshi and others. The eldest Bana, was extremely strong and was devoted to Pashupati.[63] In an earlier era, Bana gratified the lord who is Uma’s consort. He desired the boon that he might always find pleasure by his[64] side. Hiranyaksha had five learned and extremely strong sons—Jharjhara, Shakuni, Bhutasamtapana, the valiant Mahanabha and Kalanabha. Danu had one hundred brave and fierce sons. They were devoted to austerities and extremely valorous. Hear the names of the foremost—Dvimurdha, Shakuni, Shankushira, Vibhu, Ayomukha, Shambara, Kapila, Vamana, Marichi, Maghavan, Ida, Gargashira, Vikshobhana, Ketu, Ketuvirya, Shatahrada, Indrajit, Sarvajit, Vajranabha, the mighty-armed Ekachakra, the immensely strong Taraka, Vaishvanara, Puloma, Vidravana, Mahashira, Svarbhanu, Vrishaparva and the valiant Viprachitti. All of these were Danu’s sons and they were born through Kashyapa. The immensely strong Viprachitti was the foremost among the danavas.[65] Svarbhanu had a daughter named Prabha and Puloma a daughter named Shachi. Upadanavi, Hayashira and Sharmishtha were the daughters of Vrishaparva. Both Puloma[66] and Kalaka were the daughters of Vaishvanara. Those great-spirited ones[67] were married to Marichi's son[68] and they had many offspring. Through them, Marichi's son, the great ascetic, had sixty thousand supreme danavas as sons. The danavas known as the Poulamas and Kalakeyas were immensely strong. They resided in Hiranyapura and because of the favours of the grandfather, could not be slain by the gods. They were killed by Savyasachi.[69] Other than this, through Simhika, Viprachitti had immensely brave and extremely fierce danavas as his sons. They were fierce in their valour and were born through a union between a daitya and a danava.[70] Thirteen greatly strong ones are known as Saimhikeyas[71]—Vyanga, the powerful Shalya, Bala, Mahabala, Vatapi, Namuchi, Ilvala, Khasrima, Anjika, Naraka, Kalanabha, Saramana and the valiant Sharakalpa. These best among danavas extended Danu's lineage. They had hundreds and thousands of sons and grandsons. The daityas known as the Nivatakavachas were born in Samhlada's lineage. They cleansed their souls and were extremely great in their austerities.

'The extremely great-spirited Tamra is said to have had six daughters—Kaki, Shyeni, Bhasi, Sugrivi, Shuchi and Gridhrika. Kaki gave birth to owls and crows, Shyeni to hawks, Bhasi to predatory birds and Gridhrika to vultures. O scorcher of enemies! Shuchi gave birth to large numbers of birds that dwell in water. Through Sugrivi, horses, camels and donkeys are said to have been born in Tamra's lineage. Vinata had two sons, Aruna and Garuda. Of these, because of his own deeds, Suparna[72] was fierce and the best among birds. Surasa had one thousand infinitely energetic snakes as sons. O son! Those great-souled ones possessed many heads and roamed around in the sky. Kadru also had one thousand strong and infinitely energetic sons.[73] They also possessed many heads and were known as those who were under Suparna's control. The foremost among them have always been Shesha, Vasuki, Takshaka, Airavata, Mahapadma, Kambala, Ashvatara, Elapatra, Shankha, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya, Mahanila, Mahakarna, Dhritarashtra, Balahaka, Kuhara, Pushpadamshtra, Durmukha, Sumukha, Shankha,[74] Shankhapala, Kapila, Vamana, Nahusha, Shankharoma, Mani and others. Know that all the categories that are descended from Krodhavasha are fanged. The birds on land and in the water are said to be the offspring of Dhara. Surabhi gave birth to cows and buffaloes. Ira gave birth to all kinds of trees, plants, creepers and grass. Khasa gave birth to *yaksha*s[75] and rakshasas and Muni to the apsaras. The great-spirited Arishta gave birth to the infinitely energetic gandharvas.

'These mobile and immobile objects are mentioned as the descendants of Kashyapa. They had hundreds and thousands of sons and grandsons. O son! In this manvantara, heaven is known as Svarochisha. In vaivasvata manvantara, a great sacrifice was performed for Varuna. It is said that for the sake of generating offspring, Brahma himself offered oblations. Earlier, he had created seven brahmarshis through his mental powers. The grandfather himself generated them as his sons now. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After this, there was a conflict between the gods and the danavas.[76] When Diti's sons were destroyed, she went and pleased Kashyapa. Worshipped properly by her, Kashyapa was gratified. He offered to grant her a boon and requested her to ask for a boon. She said, "I desire an infinitely energetic son who is capable of killing Indra." The immensely ascetic one granted her the boon that she desired. However, after having granted the boon, Marichi's son said, "If you desire a son who will kill Indra, you must carefully nurture the embryo for one hundred autumns. You must be pure and resort to supreme vows. If you sustain the embryo in that fashion, you will have that kind of son." O lord of the earth! The goddess told her husband, the great ascetic, that she would act in that way. Accordingly, Kashyapa found pleasure in impregnating Diti, so that an infinitely energetic offspring would result, who would be superior to all the categories of the gods. He permeated her with his energy, something that was impossible for even the immortals to withstand. Having done this, the one who was devoted to his vows retired to the mountains to practise austerities. The undecaying chastiser of Paka[77] continued to search for a deviation in her and discerned one before the one hundred years were over. Without washing her feet, Diti lay down to sleep. While she was sleeping, the wielder of the *vajra* penetrated through her side and shattered the embryo into seven fragments. When the embryo was thus split by the vajra, it began to weep and Shakra repeatedly told it, "Do not cry." Indra, the afflicter of enemies, was enraged. Using the vajra, he sliced each of those seven fragments into seven fragments. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The gods known as the Maruts were created in this way.[78] They came to be known as Maruts because of what Maghavan[79] had said. Those forty-nine gods are the aides of the wielder of the vajra. O Janamejaya! Different kinds of beings began to prosper in this way. For each such class, Hari appointed a Prajapati. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He gave the first kingdom to Prithu to rule and other kingdoms followed in due course. Hari is Purusha, Vira, Krishna, Jishnu, Prajapati, Parjanya and Tapana.[80] He is everything that is manifest in the universe. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a person knows this account about the creation of beings properly, he suffers no fear about being unable to find a means of subsistence. How can he entertain any fear about the world hereafter?’

Chapter 4

Vaishampayana said, 'The grandfather made Prithu, Vena's son, sovereign over the kingdom. In due course, he divided up the dominions further. Birds, herbs, nakshatras, planets, sacrifices and austerities were earmarked as Soma's kingdom. Varuna's kingdom was the water and Vaishravana[81] became the lord of kings. Vishnu became lord of the Adityas and Pavaka[82] of the Vasus. Daksha became lord of the Prajapatis, Vasava[83] of the Maruts and the infinitely energetic Prahlada of the daityas and the danavas. Vaivasvata Yama[84] was instated in the kingdom of the ancestors and also over the yakshas, rakshasas and kings.[85] Girisha, the wielder of the trident, became the lord of all the *bhuta*s and *pishacha*s.[86] The Himalayas became the lord of the mountains and the ocean of the rivers. The lord Chitraratha[87] became the lord of the gandharvas. Vasuki became lord over nagas and Takshaka over *sarpa*s.[88] Airavata was instructed to be the king of the elephants.[89] Uchchaishrava became lord of the horses and Garuda of the birds. The tiger became the king of animals and the bull of cows. Plaksha[90] was indicated as the king of trees. In this way, in due order, the grandfather divided the dominions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He also established the guardians of the directions. He consecrated King Sudhanva, the son of Vairaja Prajapati, as the guardian of the eastern direction. He consecrated King Shankhapada, the son of the great-souled Kardama Prajapati, as the guardian of the southern direction. He consecrated the great-souled King Ketumanta, the son of the undecaying Rajasa, as the guardian of the western direction. He consecrated the invincible King Hiranyaloma, the son of Parjanya Prajapati, as the guardian of the northern direction. They ruled the entire earth, with its seven *dvipa*s, habitations and the subregions, in accordance with dharma.[91] These lords of men followed the rites prescribed in the Vedas. They observed a royal sacrifice and made Prithu the emperor over all the kings in the various dominions. This is what happened when the manvantara associated with the infinitely energetic Chakshusha was over. When the manvantara associated with Vaivasvata commenced, the earth was divided into dominions in this fashion. O Indra among kings! O unblemished one! If you are favourably inclined towards hearing it, I will describe vaivasvata manvantara in detail.'

Janamejaya replied, 'O Vaishampayana! Tell me about Prithu's birth in detail. How did the great-souled one milk the earth? How did the ancestors, the gods, the rishis, the daityas, the nagas, the yakshas and the trees perform the milking? O Vaishampayana! In particular, tell me about the vessels that they used. In due order, especially tell me everything about the calves and the milk. What was the reason why Vena's arm was kneaded in those ancient times? O father![92] Tell me the reason why the maharshis were enraged.'

Vaishampayana said, 'I will tell you about how Prithu was born from Vena. O Janamejaya! Listen devotedly and with single-minded attention. O king! I do not recount this to those who are impure, inferior in mind, ungrateful and injurious, or to those who are without disciples and vows. This is blessed and is honoured in the Vedas. It leads to heaven, fame and a long life. O king! Listen properly to the mystery spoken about by the rishis. If a person bows down before brahmanas and always recites the account of how Prithu originated from Vena, he does not sorrow, on account of what he has done and what he has not done.'

Chapter 5

Vaishampayana said, 'Earlier, there was a lord who was Atri's equal and he was the protector of dharma. He was born in Atri's lineage and this Prajapati's name was Anga. His son was Vena, who did not know about the purport of dharma. This Prajapati was born through Sunitha, Mrityu's daughter.[93] Since he was the son of Kala's daughter, Vena suffered from the taints of his maternal grandfather.[94] He turned his back on his own dharma and frequented the world of desire. This king established ordinances that were contrary to dharma. He transgressed the dharma of the Vedas and was always devoted to *adharma*. At the time of that Prajapati, there were no sounds of *svadha* and *vashatkara* at sacrifices performed by the subjects.[95] Therefore, the gods no longer drank the soma offered at these. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Since the time for that Prajapati's destruction had arrived, the cruel one promulgated a rule that there should be no sacrifices and no oblations. "I am the one who should be worshipped through sacrifices. I am the sacrifice and the one who sacrifices. The oblations offered at sacrifices are meant for me." He transgressed all the ordinances and appropriated everything for himself. All the maharshis, with Marichi at the forefront, said, "We will consecrate ourselves in a sacrifice that will last for many years. O Vena! Do not observe adharma. It is not the view of the virtuous that this constitutes dharma. Though there is no doubt that you have been born as a Prajapati, it is for your destruction. At that time, you took a vow that you would protect the subjects." All the assembled maharshis spoke to him in this way. However, Vena was evil in his intelligence and thought what was inferior to be superior. He laughed at them. "Who other than me is the creator of dharma? Who other than me should be listened to? There is no doubt that you do not know of my superiority because of your folly. If I desire, I can burn the earth down, or flood it with water. Without even thinking about it, I can slow down the progress of the firmament and this earth." The maharshis sought to persuade King Vena, who was overcome with insolence and strength. When they didn't succeed, they became angry. In their rage, those great-souled ones seized the one who was swollen because of his strength. They kneaded his left thigh. When they kneaded the king's left thigh, a man manifested himself. He was extremely short and dark. O Janamejaya! Frightened, that man joined his hands in salutation and stood there. On seeing that he was supremely anxious, they asked him to sit. O supreme among eloquent ones! He was the progenitor of the lineage of *nishada*s.[96] The fishermen were also created from the sin in Vena. O son! There were others, the Tumuras and the Tumburas, who reside in the Vindhya mountains and are addicted to adharma. Know that they were also created from the sin in Vena. In their anger, the great-souled maharshis then again kneaded Vena's right hand, as if it was a piece of wood used to kindle a fire. Prithu arose from this. His form blazed like the flames of a fire, and he was like a dazzling fire. From the time of his birth, he held the bow known as Ajagava,[97] which makes a loud roar, and divine arrows. For his protection, he was clad in immensely radiant armour. When he was born, all the beings were delighted. O great king! They assembled before him and Vena went to heaven. O Kouravya! Having given birth to a virtuous son, the great-souled tiger among men was thus saved from the hell named *put*.[98]

'To consecrate him, all the oceans and the rivers presented themselves and brought their water and all kinds of jewels. With the gods and the descendants of Angiras, and with all the mobile and immobile objects, the illustrious grandfather himself arrived to consecrate Vena's son and the immensely radiant protector of the subjects as the king in that great kingdom. Following the prescribed rites, those who knew about dharma consecrated the greatly energetic and powerful Prithu, Vena's son, as king and sovereign. The subjects were not delighted with his father, but were delighted with him. Because of this, he came to be known as king.[99] When he proceeded,[100] the water in the oceans was stupefied and the mountains offered him a path. That is the reason his standard never got attached to either. At that time, through the mere thought, the earth yielded grain, even when it had not been tilled. The milk of the cows yielded every object of desire and there was honey in every hand.[101] At this time, on a day, when an auspicious sacrifice was performed in honour of the grandfather, an immensely intelligent suta, who gave rise to the suta class, was generated as offspring.[102] It was at this great sacrifice that the wise magadhas were also born. To praise Prithu, the maharshis summoned them there. All the rishis said, “Praise the king. This lord of men is a right recipient of praise and your task is to do that. At this, the sutas and the magadhas told all the rishis, “We will please the gods and the rishis through our own deeds. O brahmanas! However, we know nothing about this energetic king’s deeds or manifestations of fame. How can we compose hymns of praise?” Engaged by the rishis, they began to praise the deeds that the immensely strong Prithu would perform later. O Janamejaya! In the three worlds, since that time, the practice of using sutas, magadhas and bandis for praise and benedictions has been adopted. Prithu, the lord of subjects, was extremely delighted at the praise and gave sutas the land of Anupa and magadhas the land of Magadha.[103] On seeing this, the maharshis were extremely happy and told the subjects, “This lord of men will grant you means of subsistence.” At this, all the subjects approached the great king who was Vena’s son and said, “Following the words of the maharshis, identify means of subsistence for us.” When all the subjects approached in this way, wishing to do what would ensure welfare for the subjects, the powerful one grasped his bow and arrow and rushed towards the earth. Terrified of Vena’s son, the earth assumed the form of a cow and fled. Prithu seized his bow and rushed after the fleeing one. Out of fear for Vena’s son, she went to Brahma’s world and all the other worlds. However, wherever she went, she saw Vena’s fierce son, with the bow and arrow. Resorting to great yoga, the great-souled one was invincible, even before the immortals. She could thus find no escape from Vena’s son. Finally, the one who is always worshipped in the three worlds joined her hands in salutation and told Vena’s son, “You should not see any dharma in killing a woman. O king! Without me, how will you be able to sustain the subjects? O king! I am the one in whom all these worlds are established. I am the one who holds up the universe. O king! You should know that for my sake, you should not destroy the subjects. You should not kill me. There is no benefit in it and you should not desire it. O lord of the earth! For the sake of the subjects, listen to my words. All tasks become successful if they are started in the appropriate way. O king! Search for a means so that the subjects can be sustained. O king! If you kill me, you will not be able to sustain the subjects. O immensely radiant one! If your anger is pacified, I will become full of grain. It is said that women must not be killed, especially those who are of inferior species.[104] O lord of the earth! Be established in that spirit and do not abandon dharma.” The great-minded king heard many words of this kind. The one with dharma in his soul controlled his rage and spoke these words to the earth.’

Chapter 6

‘Prithu said, “In this world, if a person kills many beings for the sake of a single entity, whether that single entity is he himself or someone else, he commits a sin. O auspicious one! O fortunate one! However, for the happiness of many, if a single entity is killed, then one does not commit a major sin or a minor one. O earth! Therefore, unless you act in accordance with my words and ensure benefit to the universe, for the sake of the subjects, I am going to kill you. You are reluctant to come under my subjugation. I will now slay you with my arrow. I will establish myself in your place and myself sustain the subjects. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! You are capable of imparting life to all the subjects and sustaining them. Therefore, accept my rule. If you become my daughter, I will withdraw this arrow, terrible to see, that I have raised to kill you.”

‘Vasundhara[105] replied, “O brave one! There is no doubt that I will arrange all this. Search out a calf for me, so that, driven by maternal affection, I can yield milk. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Make my surface smooth and flat everywhere, so that the milk I yield does not flow away to uneven terrain.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Using the ends of his bow, Vena’s son removed hundreds and thousands of mountains and made other mountains rise. The surface of the earth was no longer as uneven as it had been during the earlier creation. At that time, cities and villages could not be constructed. The growing of crops, tending to cattle and agriculture couldn’t happen. Nor were there routes for traders. O Indra among kings! Because of what Vena’s son had done, all these became possible. O unblemished one! In all the places that had become plain, all the subjects found pleasure in residing. We have heard that food for the subjects consisted of fruits and roots and that this led to great hardship. O tiger among men! Therefore, he[106] thought of the lord Svayambhu Manu as a calf and used his own hands to milk the earth. That is how Prithu, Vena’s powerful son, created all the crops. O son! It is on the basis of that food that the subjects always survived. It has been heard that the rishis milked the earth again. Soma was the calf and the immensely energetic Brihaspati, the son of Angiras, did the milking. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, the hymns were the vessels. The eternal and unmatched *brahman*,[107] the essence of austerities, was manifested in the form of milk. It has been heard that using golden vessels, the large number of gods, with Purandara[108] at the forefront, again milked the earth. Maghavan was the calf and the lord Savita did the milking. The gods sustain themselves on that energetic milk.[109] It has been heard that the ancestors, who are infinitely valorous in their abodes, used silver vessels to milk the earth again. The powerful Vaivasvata Yama was the calf then. Kala, the one who brings an end and who destroys all beings, was the one who did the milking. It has been heard that the nagas also did a milking, using Takshaka as a calf. O supreme among men! They used a gourd as a vessel and the milk was poison. O best among the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! Airavata did the milking for the nagas and the powerful Dhritarashtra did it for the sarpas.[110] Those fierce ones are giant in form and immense in strength, sustaining themselves on that[111] for obtaining food, their conduct, their valour and their austerities. It has been heard that the asuras milked the earth again. They used an iron vessel and obtained the *maya*[112] that destroys all enemies. Virochana's son, Prahlada, was the calf. The immensely powerful Madhu, who possessed two heads, was the officiating priest and the one who did the milking for the daityas. Since then, all the asuras know about maya and base themselves on maya. Their immense wisdom and infinite strength is also based on that. O king! It has been heard that the yakshas milked the earth again. O great king! They used a vessel that had not been baked and obtained the undecaying *antardhana*.[113] The auspicious yakshas made Vaishravana[114] the calf. The supreme rishi has said that they sustain themselves on that.[115] O bull among men! The rakshasas and pishachas milked the earth again. They used the skulls of corpses as vessels and their offspring sustained themselves on that. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Rajatanabha was the one who did the milking. O Kouravya! Sumali was the calf and the milk was blood. The rakshasas, the yakshas, who are the equals of the immortals, the pishachas and the large number of bhutas subsist on that. The large number of gandharvas and apsaras milked again, using a lotus leaf as a vessel. O supreme among men! They made Chitraratha the calf and obtained pure fragrances. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! At that time, the extremely strong and great-souled king of the gandharvas, Suruchi, whose complexion was like that of the sun, was the one who did the milking. It has been heard that the mountains milked the goddess earth again and the personified forms of herbs and many kinds of jewels manifested themselves. The Himalayas were the calf and the giant mountain of Meru did the milking. The mountains were the vessels and the mountains sustain themselves on what was obtained. It has been heard that the trees and plants also milked the earth. They used *palasha*[116] as a vessel and obtained the power of regenerating, even when severed or burnt down. A blossoming *sala* tree did the milking and Plaksha was the calf.

'The sacred earth is the one who generates and sustains. She is the origin and the foundation for everything, mobile and immobile. She is like a cow that can be milked to yield every object of desire. She is the one who germinates every kind of crop. This earth, which extends up to the frontiers of the ocean, is also famous as Medini. Every part of her was flooded by the fat from Madhu and Kaitabha.[117] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Since she followed the instructions of King Prithu, Vena's son, and became his daughter, the goddess is also spoken of as Prithvi.[118] Prithu divided the earth and cleansed her. He made her prosperous and the yielder of crops, with cities and habitations. O supreme among kings! This was the power of the king who was Vena's son. There is no doubt that the large number of creatures should bow down before him and worship him. The immensely fortunate brahmanas, accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas,[119] should also worship Prithu, because he gave them their eternal means of subsistence. So should immensely fortunate kings who desire to remain kings. The powerful Prithu, Vena's son, was the first king and deserves to be worshipped. Brave warriors who desire to obtain victory in a battle should also worship that first king. That king was the first warrior. If a warrior chants the name of King Prithu and advances into battle, even if that encounter is extremely terrible in form, he surpasses it with ease and obtains fame. There may be prosperous *vaishya*s who are engaged in the livelihood of vaishyas. If they bow down before Prithu, who provided a means of subsistence, they will obtain great fame. There may be pure *shudra*s who are engaged in serving the other three varnas. If they desire supreme benefit, they should also worship Prithu. I have specifically spoken to you about the calves, the ones who did the milking, the milk and the vessels. What will I describe to you next?’

Chapter 7

Janamejaya said, 'O Vaishampayana! O one who is rich in austerities! Please describe in detail all the manvantaras, how they were created and how they were destroyed. O brahmana! I wish to hear about the Manus and their durations. I wish to hear the true account of the manvantaras.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O son! I am incapable of describing it in detail, even if I were to speak for one hundred years. O Kouravya! I will tell you about the manvantaras in brief. Listen. O son! Earlier, there were Svayambhu Manu, Svarochisha Manu, Outtama, Tamasa, Raivata and Chakshusha. O Kouravya! The present Manu is said to be Vaivasvata. O son! It is said that the four Manus who will come are Savarni Manu, Bhoutya, Rouchya and Merusavarni. O son! These are the past, present and future Manus. I have recounted them to you, as I have heard them. I will now tell you about the rishis, their sons and the large number of gods. Marichi, Atri, the illustrious Angiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya and Vasishtha—these are Brahma's seven sons. O king! They are established as the saptarshis[120] in the northern direction. At the time of Svayambhu Manu, the gods were the Yamas. Agnidhra, Agnibahu, Medha, Medhatithi, Vasu, Jyotishmat, Dyutimat, Havya, Savana and Putra—these were the ten immensely energetic sons of Svayambhu Manu. O king! I have thus spoken to you about the first manvantara. At the time of Svarochisha Manu, Vasishtha's son, Ourva, Stamba, Kashyapa, Prana, Brihaspati, Datta and Atrishchyavana—these were the maharshis, great in their vows. Vayu[121] has spoken about them. At that time, it has been said that the gods were known as the Tushitas. O son! The great-souled Svarochisha Manu's sons were Havirdhra, Sukriti, Jyoti, Apa, Murti, Ayasmaya, Prathita, Nabhashya, Nabha and Surya. O protector of the earth! They were extremely energetic and valorous and I have spoken about them. I have thus spoken to you about the second manvantara. O lord of men! I will now tell you about the third. Listen. Hiranyagarbha gave birth to extremely energetic sons known as the Urjas.

These seven became famous as Vasishtha's sons and were known as the sons of Vasishtha.[122] I have spoken about the rishis. O great king! I will now recount the ten handsome sons of Outtama Manu. Listen. They were Isha, Urja, Tanupa, Madhu, Madhava, Shuchi, Shukra, Saha, Nabhasya and Nabha. The gods of that manvantara are said to be the Bhanus. I will now tell you about the fourth manvantara. Listen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Kavya, Prithu, Agni, Jahnu, Dhata, Kapivat and Akapivat were the saptarshis. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their sons and grandsons have been mentioned in the Puranas. During the manvantara of Tamasa Manu, the gods were the Satyas. Dyuti, Tapasya, Sutapa, Tapomula, Tapodhana, Taporati, Kalmasha, Tanvi, Dhanvi and Parantapa—these were the ten extremely strong sons of Tamasa Manu. O great king! Vayu has spoken about what happened after the fourth manvantara. Vedabahu, Yadudhra, the sage Vedashira, Hiranyaloma, Parjanya, Urdhvabahu, the son of Soma, and Satyanetra, the son of Atri, were the saptarshis thereafter.[123] During this manvantara, the gods are said to have been the Abhutarajas, Prakritis, Pariplavas and Raibhyas. Listen to me. I will tell you about his sons. Dhritimat, Avyaya, Yukta, Tatvadarshi, Nirutsaka, Aranya, Prakasha, Nirmoha, Satyavak and Kriti—these were the sons of Raivata Manu. O lord of men! After the fifth manvantara, I will tell you about the sixth. Listen. Bhrigu, Nabha, Vivasvat, Sudhama, Viraja, Atinama and Sahishnu—these were the seven saptarshis. O son! Hear the names of the gods during the manvantara of Chakshusha Manu. O Indra among kings! The names of the five categories of gods is said to be Adya, Prabhuta, Ribhu, Prithuka and Lekha. These were the residents of heaven. All these great-souled and immensely energetic ones were the sons of the rishi Angiras. O great king! O king! Through Nangla, it is said that there were ten famous sons, Uru and others.[124] During the current period of Vaivasvata Manu, the saptarshis are Atri, the illustrious Vasishtha, the great rishi Kashyapa, Goutama, Bharadvaja, Vishvamitra and Jamadagni, the son of the illustrious and great-souled Richika, as the seventh. They are now in heaven. During vaivasvata manvantara, the gods are said to be Sadhyas, Rudras, Vishvadevas, Vasus, Maruts, Adityas and Ashvins. During the current manvantara, Vaivasvata Manu had ten great-souled sons. Of these, Ikshvaku was the foremost. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The deeds, sons and grandsons of these extremely energetic maharshis exist in all the directions. In every manvantara, the forty-nine[125] are established in the sub-directions, to ensure the observance of dharma and the protection of the worlds. When each manvantara is over, twenty-eight of these winds go to heaven, having completed their tasks. They go to Brahma's world, where there is no disease. Others, who are full of austerities, take their places. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Kouravya! Including the current one, I have thus spoken to you about seven manvantaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Now listen to all the manvantaras that will come. O son! Listen to me. There are actually five Savarni Manus. Of these, one is the son of Vivasvat and four are the sons of Prajapati Parameshthi. O king! They are the maternal grandsons of Daksha and the sons of Priya. These extremely energetic ones performed great austerities on the slopes of Mount Meru and became Merusavarnis. The son of Ruchi Prajapati is said to be Rouchya Manu. Ruchi had sons through the goddess Bhuti[126] and they are known as Bhoutyas. In this world, these are said to be the seven manvantaras that are yet to come. Savarni manvantara will arrive soon and the seven maharshis for this future one are said to be in heaven. Listen. Rama, Vyasa, the extremely learned Diptimanta, Atri's son, the extremely radiant Ashvatthama, descended from Bharadvaja and Drona's son, Sharadvat Goutama,[127] descended from Goutama, Galava, descended from Koushika, and Ruru, descended from Kashyapa—in future, these seven great-souled ones will become the supreme sages. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Savarni Manu will have ten sons—Varivat, Avarivat, Sammata, Dhritimat, Vasu, Charishnu, Adhya, Dhrishnu, Vaji and Sumati. Arising at the right time, if a man always recites the names of the past and future maharshis, he obtains happiness. O son! For a full one thousand yugas, the earth, with its oceans and habitations, are ruled by kings. Thereafter, the subjects and their austerities are always destroyed.

'I will now tell you that a little more than seventy yugas, divided into krita, treta and the others, is said to be a manvantara. The recital of the names of the fourteen Manus leads to an extension of fame. O king! The Vedas and all the Puranas speak of the powers of these Vishnus and their subjects and offspring. This recital is blessed. There is destruction at the end of a manvantara. There is creation at the end of a period of destruction. Even if I speak for one hundred years, I am incapable of describing this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O bull among the Bharata lineage! In every manvantara, we have heard about the creation of subjects and their destruction. However, some gods and brahmana rishis are not destroyed, but remain. They are full of austerities, brahmacharya and learning. It is said that when one thousand yugas have been completed, a kalpa is over. All the creatures are then burnt down by the rays of the sun. O lord! Placing Brahma at the forefront, the large number of Adityas merge into the lord Hari Narayana, the best of the gods. At the end of a kalpa, he is the one who repeatedly creates all beings. He is the eternal and unmanifest god. This entire universe belongs to him. O best among the Bharata lineage! O immensely radiant one! It is the time of Vaivasvata Manu now and the time for creation has presented itself. I will speak to you about the ancient Vrishni lineage. The lord and great-souled Hari was born there, in the Vrishni lineage.’

Chapter 8

Vaishampayana said, ‘O scorcher of enemies! Vivasvat[128] was born through Kashyapa and Daksha’s daughter. Vivasvat’s wife was the goddess Samja, the daughter of Tvashtri. The beautiful one is famous in the three worlds by the name of Surenu. The illustrious one was the wife of the great-souled Martanda. Though she was named Samja[129] and possessed youth, beauty and the radiance of her own austerities, she was not content with her husband’s form. The sun god Martanda blazed in his own energy. This burnt her body and she didn’t wish to approach near. Because she had done it innocently, Kashyapa had pronounced, “This egg will certainly not be dead.”[130] That is the reason he is spoken of as Martanda. O son! Vivasvat always possessed a surfeit of energy. Because of this, Kashyapa’s son scorched the three worlds excessively. O Kouravya! Aditya, supreme among those who scorch, had three children through Samja. One was a daughter and two were Prajapatis. The first was Vaivasvata Manu and Prajapati Shraddhadeva[131] came next. Yama had a twin sister named Yamuna. Samja was unable to countenance Vivasvat’s dark complexion. She constructed a form that was just like her, with the same complexion, and this was known as Chhaya.[132] O lord of men! Using her powers of maya, Samja created Chhaya, who arose. Chhaya joined her hands in salutation and bowed down before Samja. “O one with the beautiful smiles. Tell me. What is my task? Instruct me. I am standing here, awaiting your instructions. O one with the beautiful complexion! Command me.” Samja replied, “O fortunate one! I am leaving for my father’s abode. Without any fear, you dwell in my residence. I possess two sons and this daughter, slender at the waist. Take care of them and do not reveal to the illustrious one what has happened.” Savarna said, “O goddess! Depart cheerfully. O queen! Unless my hair is seized, or unless I am cursed, I will not divulge what has transpired.” Having instructed Savarna and hearing her reply, the spirited one bashfully went to Tvashtri.

‘When she reached her father, her father reprimanded the auspicious one. He repeatedly directed her to return to her husband. However, the one with the unblemished form did not return. She assumed the form of a mare, went to the Uttara Kuru region, and began to roam around amidst the grass there. Taking the second Samja to be the real Samja, Aditya had a son through her and he was just like him in form. O son! The lord was just like the preceding Manu and because of this, he came to be known as Savarni Manu.[133] O son! Samja[134] was ordinary. Therefore, she was more affectionate towards her own son and not towards the elder children. Manu pardoned this. But Yama was incapable of tolerating it. In childish anger and with force, Vaivasvata Yama showed the beautiful one his foot and censured her. His mother was extremely miserable. In rage, Savarna cursed him. “Your foot will fall down.” Yama went to his father, joined his hands in salutation, and told him everything. He was anxious because of the severe curse and agitated because of Samja’s words. He asked his father to withdraw the curse and said, “A mother should be affectionate towards all her sons. However, she neglects us and displays more affection towards the youngest. I raised my foot towards her, but it did not touch her body. Even if I have done that in childish folly, you should pardon me. O lord of the worlds! O supreme among those who scorch! I have been cursed by my mother. O lord of the earth! Through your favours, let my foot not fall down.” Vivasvat replied, “O son! You know about dharma and you are truthful in speech. There is no doubt that there must have been a grave reason for anger to have entered you. I am incapable of rendering your mother’s words false. Worms will seize flesh from your foot and roam around on the surface of the earth. In that way, your mother’s words will come true and you will also be freed from your curse.” Aditya asked Samja, “All the sons are equal. Nevertheless, why do you display greater affection towards one?” Despite being repeatedly asked by Vivasvat, she did not reply. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! At this, the illustrious one desired to curse and destroy her. She then told Vivasvat everything truthfully.[135]

‘Hearing this, Vivasvat was enraged and went to Tvashtri. Following the proper rites, Tvashtri worshipped Vibhavasu.[136] He comforted the one who wished to burn everything down in his wrath. Tvashtri said, “You do not deserve this excessive energy in your form. Unable to tolerate it, Samja is wandering around, amidst the grass in the forest. O lord of the earth! You will now see your praiseworthy wife, the performer of auspicious deeds. She possesses the strength of yoga and has resorted to that yoga.[137] O god! O scorcher of enemies! If this appeals to you, it is my view that I should now reduce your form and make it handsome." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Tvashtri approached Martanda Vivasvat, raised him on a wheel and began to slice off his energy. When the energy was sliced away, his form became resplendent. He became more and more handsome and seemed to be even more beautiful. By resorting to yoga, he saw his own wife in the form of a mare. Thanks to her energy and her vows, she was incapable of being assaulted by any creature. Adopting the form of a horse, the illustrious one arrived in front of her. However, taking him to be someone else's husband, she refused to have intercourse with him and ejected Vivasvat's semen through her nose. The gods who are supreme physicians, the Ashvins, were generated from this.[138] The two Ashvins are known by the names of Nasatya and Dasra. They were the sons of Martanda, the eighth Prajapati. O Janamejaya! The sun god then showed himself to her in his beautiful form and on seeing her husband, she was satisfied.

'Meanwhile, because of what he had done, Yama suffered from great mental affliction. Therefore, in the form of Dharmaraja, he followed dharma and delighted the subjects. Because of his auspicious deeds, the greatly resplendent one obtained lordship over the ancestors and became a guardian of the worlds. Savarni Manu, rich in austerities, became a Prajapati. He will be the Manu in the future *savarni manvantara*. Since then, he has incessantly been observing austerities on the slopes of Meru. His brother obtained the status of the planet Saturn.[139] Desiring to bring an end to the danavas, through the excess energy that was shaved off, Tvashtri fashioned Vishnu's *chakra* and it was impossible to withstand in battle. The illustrious daughter Yami was the youngest.[140] Yamuna became the best among rivers, the sustainer of the worlds. In the worlds, Manu is also referred to as Savarna. The second son is known as Shanaishchara. This is the birth of the gods. A person who hears it and nurtures it is freed from all difficulties and obtains great fame.'

Chapter 9

Vaishampayana said, ‘O bull among men! Vaivasvata Manu had nine sons who were his equals—Ikshvaku, Nabhaga, Dhrishnu, Sharyati, Narishyanta, Pramshu, Nabhanedishtha as the seventh, Karusha, and Prishadhna as the ninth. O son! O lord of the earth! Before that, in a desire to obtain sons, Prajapati Manu had offered a sacrifice to Mitra and Varuna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These nine sons were generated because of that. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! While that sacrifice was going on, Manu summoned Mitra and Varuna and offered oblations to them. It has been heard that Ida[141] was born from this. She was divine in form. She was clad in celestial garments and adorned in divine ornaments. Manu, the wielder of the staff, told Ida, “O fortunate one! Come to me.” However, Ida replied, “O supreme among eloquent ones! I have been born from a part of Mitra and Varuna. I will go to them. I cannot destroy dharma, nor be destroyed by it.” Having said this to the god Manu, Ida, the one with the beautiful hips, went near Mitra and Varuna. She joined her hands in salutation and spoke these words to them. “O gods! I have been born from your parts. What can I do for you?” The virtuous Ida, devoted to dharma, spoke in this way. Listen to what Mitra and Varuna told her. “O one with the beautiful thighs! O one who is beautiful in form! We are delighted at your truth, your dharma, your faith and your self-control. O immensely fortunate one! You will obtain fame as our daughter. You will also become a son who will extend Manu’s lineage. O beautiful one! You will be famous in the three worlds by the name of Sudyumna. You will be devoted to dharma and will be loved in the universe. You will extend Manu’s lineage.” Having heard this, she withdrew and returned to her father.[142] Budha[143] desired to have intercourse with her. O king! Through Soma’s son, Budha, she gave birth to Pururava. As soon as he was born, Ida became Sudyumna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sudyumna had three sons who were extremely devoted to dharma. They were Utkala, Gaya and Vinata. O king! O best among the Bharata lineage! Utkala obtained the north, Vinata the west and Gaya the eastern region known by the name of Gaya.

'O son! O scorcher of enemies! When Manu entered into the sun, his sons divided the earth into ten regions. Ikshvaku, the eldest son, obtained the country in the middle. Because Sudyumna had been a woman, he did not possess the qualities required. O extender of the Kuru lineage! However, because of the words of Vasishtha, the great-souled Dharmaraja[144] gave him the status. O great king! The illustrious one, who possessed the signs of being both a man and a woman, handed over the kingdom he had obtained to Pururava, Manu's son. O bull among kings and supreme king! Narishyanta had one hundred sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nabhaga had a son named Ambarisha. Dhrishnu had a kshatriya son named Dharshnika, who was firm in battle. Sharyati had twin children. The son was famous as Anarta and the daughter was Sukanya, Chyavana's wife. Anarta's son was the immensely radiant Reva. In the kingdom of Anarta, there was a city named Kushasthali.[145] Reva's son was Raivata. He was devoted to dharma and Kakudmi was also his name. He was the eldest among one hundred sons and obtained the kingdom of Kushasthali. With his daughter, he had once gone to Brahma's world to listen to the gandharvas. O lord! Though this was a short duration for the gods, it happened to be many yugas on earth. He returned as a young man to his city, which was surrounded by Yadavas. The beautiful city of Dvaravati had been created,[146] with many gates. It was protected by the Bhojas, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, with Vasudeva at the forefront. O scorcher of enemies! On learning the truth about what had happened, Raivata bestowed his daughter Revati, excellent in her vows, on Baladeva. Having done this, he retired to Mount Meru and resorted to austerities there. Rama,[147] with dharma in his soul, sported happily with Revati.'

Janamejaya asked, 'O bull among brahmanas! The duration that had passed was of many yugas. How was it that Raivata Kakudmi and Revati did not have to face old age? Sharyati's descendant[148] went to Meru. How are his children still on earth then? I wish to hear the truth about this.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! O unblemished one! In Brahma's world, there never is any old age, hunger, thirst, death, or the cycle of the seasons. Kakudmi Raivata went to that world. O son! At that time, the rakshasas slew the good people in Kushasthali. He had one hundred great-souled brothers who were devoted to dharma. They were not killed by the rakshasas, but fled in different directions. O lord of the earth! O great king! Their extremely great lineage came to be known as the Sharyatis. O best among the Bharata lineage! O extender of the Kuru lineage! In all the directions, these kshatriyas, with dharma in their souls, hid themselves in many kinds of secret places. Nabhaga had two vaishya sons, who later became brahmanas. Karusha's sons were the kshatriyas known as Karushas and they were indomitable in battle. O Janamejaya! Because they killed their preceptor's cow, the Prishadnas were cursed that they would become shudras. I have thus spoken about all nine sons. O son! When Manu sneezed, Ikshvaku was born as a son.[149] Ikshvaku had one hundred sons and they gave away copious quantities of donations. Of these, Vikukshi was the eldest. Since he possessed a broad chest,[150] he couldn't be worsted in battle. He was extremely devoted to dharma and the lord became the king of Ayodhya. It is said that he[151] had fifty sons, of which, Shakuni was the foremost. O lord of the earth! They protected the country of Uttarapatha.[152] O lord of the earth! Another forty-eight of his sons, with Vasati as the foremost, protected the southern direction. Shashada[153] went on a hunt and there was a hare that had been earmarked for a funeral ceremony. Without offering it at the funeral ceremony, he ate it. On Vasishtha's words, the lord Ikshvaku abandoned him. O son! However, when Ikshvaku died, Shashada returned and began to dwell there again. The one who did not fight[154] had a valiant son named Kakutstha. Kakutstha's son was Anena and Anena's son was said to be Prithu. Prithu had a son named Vishtara and Vishtara had a son named Ardra. Ardra's son was Yuvanashva and Yuvanashva's son was Shrava. The king who was known as Shrava built Shravasti.[155] Shravasta's[156] son was King Brihadashva. His son was King Kuvalashva, extremely devoted to dharma. Having killed Dhundu, this king came to be known as Dhundumara.'

Janamejaya said, 'O brahmana! I wish to hear the truth about the slaying of Dhundu, because of which Kuvalashva came to be known as Dhundumara.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Brihadashva had one hundred sons who were archers. But the father instated Kuvalashva in the kingdom. Having instated his son in the kingdom, the king departed for the forest. However, the brahmana rishi, Utanka, restrained him from leaving.

‘Utanka said, “Your task is to protect and you should act accordingly. O king! I am incapable of performing my austerities without any anxiety. The plain of the desert is near my hermitage. This is an ocean that is full of sand and is known by the name of Ujjanaka. There is an extremely terrible rakshasa by the name of Dhundu and he is the son of Madhu. He is gigantic in size and immensely strong. He cannot be slain by the gods. He hides himself inside the earth, in the vast territory that is covered with sand. To destroy the worlds, he lies down there and practices terrible austerities. O son! He exhales his breath after an entire year and at those times, the earth and all its groves tremble. A great dust arises from the wind created by his breath. The path of the sun is obstructed and the earth trembles for an entire week. There are sparks from the coal and there is an extremely terrible smoke. O son! Because of this, I am incapable of remaining in that hermitage. For the welfare of the worlds, restrain the one who is gigantic in form. When he is killed by you now, the worlds will be comforted. O lord of the earth! You alone are capable of slaying him. O unblemished one! Vishnu had granted me a boon earlier. Thanks to that, Vishnu’s energy will permeate your energy. O lord of the earth! A little bit of energy is incapable of withstanding Dhundu’s great energy, even if he tries for a long period of one hundred yugas. He will only be burnt down. His valour is so great that even the gods are incapable of withstanding him.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The great-souled Utanka spoke in this way to the *rajarshi*.[157] For Dhundu’s destruction, he offered him his son, Kuvalashva. Brihadashva said, “O illustrious one! O best among brahmanas! I have laid down my weapons. But there is no doubt that this son of mine will become Dhundumara.” Having instructed his son that he should attack Dhundu, the rajarshi left for the mountains and, firm in his vows, resorted to austerities. To kill Dhundu, with his one hundred sons, King Kuvalashva left with Utanka. On Utanka’s invocation and for the welfare of the worlds, the illustrious lord Vishnu’s energy pervaded him. As the invincible one advanced, a loud voice was heard from the firmament. “This handsome prince will become Dhundumara.” The gods covered all the directions with celestial garlands. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Divine drums were sounded. The valiant one, best among victorious ones, advanced with his sons. Having reached, he began to dig the extensive ocean of sand. O Kouravya! He was pervaded by

Narayana’s energy. Therefore, the immensely energetic one had his strength reinforced. O king! His sons dug and discovered Dhundu hidden inside the sand, enveloping the western direction. Flames issued from his mouth and he seemed to whirl the worlds around in his rage. A torrential flow of water issued, as if from the great ocean. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was as if large waves of water had been stirred by the moon. Leaving aside three, the rakshasa burnt down the one hundred sons. O Kouravya! At this, wishing to destroy Dhundu, the immensely strong and greatly energetic king approached the rakshasa Dhundu. The king, who was a *yogi*, resorted to yoga. He stemmed the force of the water and used fire to pacify the water. He slew the gigantic rakshasa, whose strength was in the water. The king then showed Utanka what he had done. Utanka granted a boon to the great-souled king. “You will possess inexhaustible riches and be unvanquished by enemies. You will always be addicted to dharma and have eternal residence in heaven. Your sons, who have been killed by the rakshasa, will obtain undecaying worlds in heaven.” Of the three sons who survived, Dridhashva is said to have been the eldest. Dandashva and Kapilashva were the two younger princes.

‘Dhundumara’s son, Dridhashva, had a son named Haryashva. Haryashva’s son was Nikumbha, always devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. O king! Nikumbha’s son, Samhatashva, was accomplished in battle and Akrishashva and Krishashva were Samhatashva’s sons. Their mother was Dhrishadvati.[158] She was the daughter of the Himalayas and she also had a son named Prasenjit. Prasenjit obtained a wife named Gouri, devoted to her husband. Cursed by her husband, she became the river Bahuda. Her son was the great king, Yuvanashva. Yuvanashva’s son was King Mandhata, who conquered the three worlds. His wife was Bindumati, Chitraratha’s daughter, and her son was Shashabindu. She was virtuous and her beauty was unsurpassed on earth. She was devoted to her husband and she had ten thousand younger brothers. O king! Through her, Mandhata had two sons—Purukutsa, who knew about dharma, and King Muchukunda. Purukutsa had a son named Trasadasyu. Through Narmada, he[159] had a son named Sambhuta. Sambhuta had a son named Sudhanva, who was the afflicter of enemies. Sudhanva’s son was King Tridhanva. The lord, King Tridhanva, had a learned son named Trayyaruna and he had an extremely strong son named Satyavrata. However, he was evil-minded and abducted and married a lady who had already been married to someone else, thus violating the mantras of marriage. He was driven by childishness, desire, delusion, delight and fickleness. In his desire, he abducted a maiden who belonged to someone else in the city. Scared of adharma, Trayyaruna abandoned him and full of rage, spoke many words of censure. Thus addressed and abandoned by his father, he repeatedly asked, "Where will I go?" His father told him, "Dwell with *shvapaka*s.[160] O worst of the lineage! I no longer desire descendants through a son like you." Thus addressed, he followed his father's words and left the city and the illustrious rishi Vasishtha did not restrain him. O son! Abandoned by his father, the brave Satyavrata began to dwell near shvapakas. His father left for the forest. O Indra among kings! Because of that adharma,[161] for twelve years, the chastiser of Paka did not rain down in that kingdom. At that time, the great ascetic, Vishvamitra, had left his wife in that kingdom and had gone to the shores of the ocean to perform great austerities. To sustain her youngest son, his wife tied a noose around the neck of the son in the middle, offering to sell him in exchange for one hundred cows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The prince,[162] with dharma in his soul, saw that the maharshi's son was being offered for sale, with a noose round his neck, and freed him. To satisfy Vishvamitra and out of compassion, the mighty armed Satyavrata sustained them. O son! Because he had been bound at the neck, maharshi Koushika's son became the great ascetic Galava and he was freed by that brave one.'[163]

Chapter 10

Vaishampayana said, ‘Because of his devotion, compassion and pledge, Satyavrata humbly sustained Vishvamitra’s wife. He slew deer, boar and buffaloes that roamed around in the forest and tied their flesh near Vishvamitra’s hermitage. Because of his father’s instructions, the king had left for the forest and for twelve years, consecrated himself in a vow that he should not be detected by anyone. Since he was the officiating priest and the preceptor, the sage Vasishtha protected the kingdom of Ayodhya and the inner quarters. However, Satyavrata was driven by his childish sentiments and his strength. Therefore, he always bore a great deal of rage towards Vasishtha. When his father had cast away his beloved son from the kingdom, the sage Vasishtha had not restrained him. This was the reason. The mantras of marriage are completed when seven steps have been taken together. But Satyavrata did not believe in these seven steps. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! “Vasishtha knows dharma. However, he did not save me.” These were the thoughts and rage Satyavrata harboured towards Vasishtha. To determine his action, the illustrious Vashishtha had used his intelligence to evaluate the qualities. But Satyavrata did not understand this secret reason. Because he was dissatisfied with what his great-souled father had done,[164] the chastiser of Paka did not shower down for twelve years. O son! “This earth finds it difficult to sustain anything. If he is able to follow this great vow, he will save his lineage. I will thereafter instate his son in the kingdom.”[165] This was the view of the sage and that was the reason why the illustrious Vasishtha did not restrain his father from abandoning him. The powerful one observed that great vow for twelve years.

‘There was a time when flesh could not be obtained and the prince saw the great-souled Vasishtha’s cow, which was capable of yielding milk to satisfy every object of desire. O Janamejaya! Overcome by anger, delusion, exhaustion, hunger and adharma, the king slew it. He ate the flesh himself and fed it to Vishvamitra's son. On hearing this, Vasishtha was enraged. Vasishtha said, "Had you not committed two more sins again, I would have brought you down because of this cruel sin. Failing to satisfy your father, slaying a cow that belongs to your preceptor and eating meat that is not permitted—these are the three sins you have committed." Because of the three sins he had witnessed, the great ascetic addressed him as Trishanku and he came to be known as Trishanku.[166] When Vishvamitra returned, he saw that his wife had been sustained. Delighted with Trishanku, the sage granted him a boon. The prince told his preceptor about the boon he desired.[167] The fear resulting from twelve years of drought was over. While the gods and Vasishtha looked on, the sage Koushika[168] performed a sacrifice and instated him in the kingdom. His wife was named Satyaratha and she was born in the Kekaya lineage. She gave birth to an unsullied son, Harishchandra. King Harishchandra was known as Traishanka.[169] He performed a royal sacrifice and was renowned as an emperor. Harishchandra's son was the famous Rohita. Rohita's son was Vrika and Vrika gave birth to Bahu. O son! Though he[170] was born in a yuga of dharma, he was not excessively devoted to dharma. Therefore, this king was driven away by the Haihayas and the Talajanghas. Bahu had a son named Sagara and he was born with poison. He resorted to Ourva's hermitage and was protected by Bhargava.[171] King Sagara obtained the *agneya* weapon[172] from Bhargava and having slain the Talajanghas and the Haihayas, conquered the earth. O best among the Kuru lineage! The undecaying one knew about dharma and restrained the dharma followed by Shakas, Pahlavas, Paradas and other kshatriyas.'[173]

Janamejaya asked, 'Why was the undecaying Sagara born with poison? How did the immensely energetic one, the angry and undecaying king, destroy the dharma followed in the lineage of the Shakas and other kshatriyas? O store of austerities! Tell me everything about this in detail.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O son! O lord of the earth! Bahu confronted a hardship and his kingdom was seized by the Haihayas and the Talajanghas, accompanied by the Shakas. Yavanas, Paradas, Kambojas, Pahlavas and Khashas—these five categories contributed their valour for the sake of the Haihayas. With his kingdom having been seized, King Bahu left for the forest. He gave up his life in the forest. His miserable wives followed him there. One of these was born in the Yadava lineage. Though she was expecting, she followed him. Her co-wife had given her some poison earlier. Having prepared her husband's funeral pyre in the forest, she[174] got ready to ascend it. O son! However, overcome by compassion, Bhargava Ourva restrained her. With the undecaying one, she went to his hermitage, with the embryo and the poison. Thus, mighty-armed King Sagara was born. The great-souled Ourva performed his birth and other rites. He taught him the Vedas and the science of weapons and gave him weapons. The immensely fortunate one gave him the agneya weapon, difficult for even the immortals to withstand. Because of the strength of these weapons, he became powerful. He swiftly slew the Haihayas, like an enraged Rudra among the animals. The supreme among renowned ones spread his fame throughout the world. The king decided that he would annihilate the Shakas, the Yavanas, the Kambojas, the Paradas and the Pahlavas. Slaughtered by the great-souled and brave Sagara, they sought refuge with the learned Vasishtha and bowed down before him. On seeing them, the immensely radiant Vasishtha subjected them to a pledge. He granted them freedom from fear and restrained Sagara. Sagara followed his preceptor's words and the pledge he himself made. Having destroyed their dharma, he altered their attire. He shaved half of the heads of the Shakas and released them. He shaved the entire heads of the Yavanas and did the same for the Kambojas. He made the Paradas wear their hair loose and made the Pahlavas sport beards. The great-souled one robbed them of studies and vashatkara. O lord of the earth! O son! The Shakas, the Yavanas, the Kambojas, the Paradas, the Kolisarpas, the Mahishakas, the Darvas, the Cholas and the Keralas—all these were kshatriyas. But because of the great-souled Vasishtha's words, Sagara took their dharma away from them. The king conquered the earth through dharma. Consecrating himself in a horse sacrifice, he made the horse wander around. While the horse was wandering around along the south-eastern shores of the ocean, it was stolen and penetrated the earth. The king's sons began to dig in that region. As they dug in that spot, along the great ocean, they approached the original being, the god Hari Krishna Prajapati Vishnu, sleeping in the human form of Kapila. O great king! As he awoke, the energy from his eyes burnt down all the sons, barring four. O king! These were Barhaketu, Suketu, King Barhadratha and the brave Panchajana, the extender of the lineage. The illustrious Hari

Narayana granted them the boon that the fame of the lineage of Ikshvaku would be without decay and would never fade, that the ocean would be known as the lord's[175] son and that he would dwell in heaven for eternity. The ocean accepted the offering and worshipped the king, thus obtaining the name of Sagara[176] because of his deeds. From the ocean, he also obtained the horse meant for the horse sacrifice. We have heard that the extremely illustrious one performed one hundred horse sacrifices and had sixty thousand sons.'

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! Through what destiny did Sagara have sixty thousand brave, extremely powerful and valorous sons?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O lord of men! Listen to this. Sagara had two wives and they destroyed their sins through austerities. Ourva granted them boons. One of those spirited ones accepted the boon of sixty thousand sons, the other said that the boon of a single son who would extend the lineage would be sufficient. One of them desired the boon of many brave sons, the other of a single one who would extend the lineage. The sage agreed. One gave birth to the extremely strong King Panchajana. It is in the sacred texts that the other gave birth to a bottle gourd that was full of seeds. Like sesamum, there were sixty thousand in that fetus and these cheerfully began to grow, waiting for the right time. O king! Each of these[177] was immersed in a pot that was full of *ghee* and a maid was earmarked to take care of each of these. In the course of time, ten months passed and at the right time, sons who extended Sagara's delight were born. O king! In this way, the lord of the earth had sixty thousand sons who were born from the seeds of the gourd. Through Narayana's energy having penetrated, there was also a great-souled son, King Panchajana. Panchajana's son was the valiant Amshuman. His son was Dilipa, famous as Khatvanga. O unblemished one! He went to heaven. But in a short while, he came back to life again.[178] Through his intelligence, he comprehended the truth of the three worlds. Dilipa's son was the great king Bhagiratha. He is the lord who made Ganga, the best among rivers, descend and advance towards the ocean, which is why she is thought of as his daughter.[179] Bhagiratha's son is famous as King Shruta. Shruta had a son named Nabhaga, who was extremely devoted to dharma. Nabhaga's son was Ambarisha, the father of Sindhudvipa. Sindhudvipa's son was the valiant Ayutajit. Ayutajit's son was the extremely illustrious Rituparna. He was powerful and knew the divine art of playing with dice. He was also King Nala’s friend. Rituparna’s son was Artaparni, the lord of the earth. He also became known by the names of Kalmashapada and Mitrasaha. Kalmashapada’s son was the famous Sarvakarma. Sarvakarma’s son was known by the name of Anaranya. Anaranya’s son was Nighna. Nighna had two sons, Anamitra and Raghu. They were supreme and bulls among kings. Anamitra had a learned son named Duliduha, who had dharma in his soul. Dilipa, Rama’s great grandfather, was his son. The long-armed Dilipa had a son named Raghu. Raghu’s son was Aja and Aja’s son was Dasharatha. Dasharatha’s son was Rama. He was immensely illustrious and found solace in dharma. Rama had a famous son named Kusha. Kusha’s son was Atithi and Atithi’s son was Nishadha. Nishadha’s son was Nala and Nala’s son was Nabha. Nabha’s son was Pundarika and Pundarika’s son was known as Kshemadhanva. Kshemadhanva’s son was the powerful Devanika. Devanika’s son was the lord known as Ahinagu. Ahinagu’s son was the king named Sahasva. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the ancient accounts, there are two famous Nalas. The first was the son of Virasena and the other was an extender of the Ikshvaku lineage.[180] There were extremely energetic kings in Vivasvat’s lineage, the lineage of Ikshvaku, and the foremost ones have been recounted.[181] Vivasvat is the god who ensures the sustenance of subjects. He is the god who presides over funeral ceremonies.[182] A person who properly reads about the sun god’s creation obtains offspring and proximity with the sun god.

Chapter 11

Janamejaya said, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! How did Aditya Vivasvat become Shraddhadeva? I wish to hear about the supreme rites of funeral ceremonies and about the original creation of the ancestors. Who are known as the ancestors? We have heard the brahmanas say that the ancestors who are in heaven are gods among the gods. The ones who know about the Vedas also say this. I wish to know about this. What is said to constitute their categories and their supreme strength? Which of our deeds at funeral ceremonies please the ancestors? When the ancestors are pleased, what are the supreme benefits we are united with? I wish to hear about this and about the supreme categories of the ancestors.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘I will tell you about the supreme categories of the ancestors. When asked by Bhishma, Markandeya recounted them. In earlier times, when he was lying down on the bed of arrows, Dharmaraja had asked him the questions that you have asked me.[183] I will progressively tell you what Bhishma had said. Asked by Markandeya, this is what Sanatkumara had chanted.

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O one who knows about dharma! If one desires nourishment, how can one obtain nourishment? I wish to hear this recounted. What should one do to avoid sorrow?”

‘Bhishma replied, “If one desires all the fruits, one should please the ancestors through funeral ceremonies. One obtains this through a funeral ceremony and thereafter, after death, one obtains delight. O Yudhishthira! Through the ancestors, one advances towards the desire for dharma, the desire for offspring and the desire for nourishment.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “Whose ancestors remain in heaven and whose descend into hell? It is said that subjects must always reap the fruits of their deeds. There is no doubt that funeral ceremonies are performed with a desire for the fruits. Three funeral cakes are always offered. How do they reach the father, the grandfather and the great-grandfather? How do the offerings at funeral ceremonies reach the ancestors? How are we capable of rendering offerings to the ancestors who are in hell? We have heard that offerings are rendered to the gods and ancestors who are in heaven. O immensely radiant one! I wish to hear about this in detail. O infinitely intelligent one! Tell me about this in detail. How are offerings given to ancestors thought to lead to salvation?"

'Bhishma replied, "O destroyer of enemies! I will tell you the truth about what happens. My father, who has gone to another world, had spoken about this earlier. At the time of a funeral ceremony, I was about to offer a funeral cake to my father. However, my father's hand arose out of the ground and seized it. That hand was adorned with ornaments and bracelets. The fingers and palm were red. This is what I witnessed in earlier times. I decided that these were not the rites laid down in the rituals. Therefore, without reflection, I laid down the funeral cake on kusha grass. At this, my father was extremely delighted and spoke to me in a sweet voice. He said, 'O best among the Bharata lineage! O unblemished one! I am pleased with you. Since you are my son, I have obtained success in this world and in the next. O one who knows about dharma! You are a virtuous and learned son. O one who is firm in vows! O unblemished one! To establish dharma in the worlds, I wished to test you. Whatever a king establishes as the yardstick of dharma is what is always held up by subjects as a measure of conduct and is followed. O best among the Bharata lineage! You have acted in accordance with the eternal dharma of the Vedas. You have my eternal and unabated affection. Therefore, I am extremely pleased with you. Out of my affection, I will bestow a boon on you, one that is extremely rare in the three worlds. Accept it. As long as you wish to remain alive, death will not be able to influence you. In truth, death will only be able to exert its power after obtaining your permission.[184] What other supreme boon do you desire? What will I grant you? O best among the Bharata lineage! Tell me what is in your mind.' Having been thus addressed, I joined my hands in salutation and honoured him. I said, 'O excellent one! If you are pleased with me, I have obtained success. O immensely radiant one! If you wish to show me your favours, you should yourself give me the answer to a question I will ask you.' The one with dharma in his soul responded, 'O Bhishma! Tell me what you wish. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will dispel the doubt that is there in your question.’ My father was invisible and had gone to the worlds earmarked for the virtuous. I asked him about the curiosity that had been generated in me. ‘O father! It has been heard that the ancestors are gods among the gods. Are the ancestors the same as the gods or are they different? Whom should we offer sacrifices to? What offerings should be rendered at funeral ceremonies so that the ancestors are gratified? O father! For those who have gone to another world, what fruits are obtained from funeral ceremonies? I have a grave doubt and great curiosity about this. O one who knows about dharma! Tell me about this. It is my view that you know everything.’

‘“Shantanu replied, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will briefly tell you what you have asked. O unblemished one! Listen to everything with an attentive mind, about the reason offerings are given to ancestors at funeral ceremonies and the resultant fruits and about the origins of the ancestors. O son! Together with the gods, the ancestors are the original gods in heaven. In this world, that is the reason gods, humans, danavas, yakshas, rakshasas, gandharvas, kinnaras and giant serpents perform sacrifices for them. When they are satisfied at funeral ceremonies, the universe, with the gods and the gandharvas, is satisfied. That is Brahma’s injunction. O immensely fortunate one! Without any distraction, perform sacrificial ceremonies for them. That will bring you benefit and all the fruits that you desire. When you worship them, recite your name and your *gotra*.[185] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if they are in heaven, they will be content and will satisfy us. Markandeya will tell you everything else that remains to be said. That descendant of the Bhargava lineage is devoted to his father and knows everything. To show his favours to me, he has come here now, to this funeral ceremony. O immensely fortunate one! Ask him.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having said this, he vanished.”’

Chapter 12

‘Bhishma said, “At this, I followed his words, controlled myself and approached Markandeya. I asked him the question that I had earlier asked my father. The greatly ascetic Markandeya, with dharma in his soul, spoke to me. ‘O Bhishma! O unblemished one! I will tell you the truth. Listen attentively. O lord! It is through the favours of my father that I have obtained this long life. It is because of devotion to my father than I have obtained supreme fame in this world. I ascended Mount Meru and tormented myself through extremely difficult austerities for many thousand years, until an entire yuga had come to an end. On one occasion during that time, I saw the firmament blazing in energy, as a gigantic vimana advanced from the northern mountain. On a couch on that vimana, I saw a being who was the size of a thumb. He blazed like the sun and looked like a fire inside another fire. I lowered my head in obeisance and bowed down before the lord who was in that vimana. I worshipped him with *padya* and *arghya*.[186] I asked the invincible one, ‘O lord! It is my view that you are a god among the gods. Whom do I know you as?’ O unblemished one! The one with dharma in his soul smiled and replied, ‘A person who does not comprehend me has not undertaken excellent austerities.’ In a short instant, he assumed another supreme form. Earlier, I have not seen such a form in any man.”

‘“Sanatkumara said, ‘O lord! Know me as Brahma’s eldest son, born through his mental powers. I have been generated with austerities and energy and have Narayana’s qualities within myself. O Bhargava! You may have heard of Sanatkumara in the ancient accounts of the Vedas. I am he. May you be fortunate. What can I do for you? Brahma’s other sons are younger than me. The lineages of those seven invincible brothers have been established—Kratu, Vasishtha, Pulaha, Pulastya, Atri and Angiras.[187] They hold up the three worlds and are worshipped by the gods and the danavas. We[188] resorted to the dharma of mendicants and immersed ourselves in our atmans. O great sage! We did not engage in desire and the dharma of generating offspring. Know me to be the child that I was born as. That is the reason I have come to be established by the name of Sanatkumara.[189] With a desire to see me, you have devotedly shrivelled yourself through austerities. Now that you have seen me, what can I do for you?'"

'Markandeya continued,[190] "Thus addressed, I replied to the eternal one. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the illustrious one was pleased and gave me permission, I asked him. O unblemished one! I asked the eternal one the truth about the creation of the ancestors and the fruits of funeral ceremonies. O Bhishma! The lord of the gods dispelled my doubts. Pleased in his soul, he spoke to me for many years. He said, 'O brahmana rishi! I am delighted with you. Listen to everything in detail. O Bhargava! Brahma created the gods and wanted them to be active towards him.[191] However, having been created, desiring the fruits, they started to worship themselves. The foolish ones were cursed by Brahma. They became senseless and lost their consciousness. The worlds comprehended nothing and were also confounded. Everyone went to the grandfather and bowed down before him. To show his favour to the worlds, the lord said, "Since you have committed a transgression, you will have to perform atonement. For the sake of obtaining knowledge, go and ask your sons." Afflicted, and for the sake of performing atonement, they asked their sons. Controlling themselves, they were thus instructed by their sons, who knew about dharma, were always accomplished and possessed the insight of the truth. They were instructed about atonement for transgressions in words, thoughts and deeds. Having ascertained the truth about atonement, the residents of heaven regained their senses. Their sons told them, "O sons! You may go now."[192] Because of the words of their sons, it was as if the gods had been cursed once more. For dispelling their doubts, they went to the grandfather.[193] The god told them, "You know about the brahman. The way you have been addressed is correct and there has been no violation in this. O gods! You are the ones who generated their bodies. However, since they have granted you knowledge, there is no doubt that they are your fathers. Understand that you are like fathers to each other, the gods and the ancestors. O residents of heaven! Comprehend this." The residents of heaven returned to their sons and said, "Let us be affectionate towards each other. Brahma has dispelled our doubts. Since you have brought understanding to us, you are like our fathers. O ones who know about dharma! What is your desire? What boon can we grant you? What you have spoken is correct and there is nothing wrong in it. Therefore, because of what you have said, we have become like your sons. That is the reason you have become ancestors and there is no doubt about this. If a person observes rites, without faithfully performing funeral ceremonies for the ancestors, the fruits are obtained by rakshasas, danavas and serpents. O ancestors! When you are worshipped through funeral ceremonies, the undecaying Soma is always worshipped and prospers. When Soma is satisfied through funeral ceremonies, he satisfies the world, covered with oceans, mountains and forests and enveloped with mobile and immobile objects. If men desire nourishment and perform funeral ceremonies, the ancestors always grant them nourishment and offspring. The fathers and grandfathers are always present. If a person renders offerings and the three funeral cakes to them at funeral ceremonies and worships them, reciting his name and his gotra, they always think of him. O sons of the residents of heaven! Let these words be true. Let us be fathers and sons towards each other.”’” In this way, the gods are the ancestors and the ancestors are the gods. The gods and the ancestors are each other’s fathers.’

Chapter 13

'Markandeya said, "The resplendent and illustrious god of the gods spoke to me in this way. I again asked Sanatkumara, the god without decay, the illustrious one who is the foremost among the immortals, about my doubts. O scorcher of enemies! O Gangeya![194] Listen to everything, right from the beginning. 'What are the categories of ancestors and what are the types of worlds they are established in?[195] Where are those gods, the extenders of Soma, the foremost among the gods?'

'"Sanatkumara replied, 'In heaven, there are said to be seven categories of ancestors and they are supreme among those who meditate. Of these, four are embodied and three are without form.[196] O one rich in austerities! I will tell you about their worlds, their creation, their powers and their greatness. Listen. There are three supreme categories that are the embodied forms of dharma. I will recount their names and their worlds. Listen. There are resplendent worlds known as Sanatana.[197] These disembodied sons of Prajapati dwell there. O best among brahmanas! As sons of Viraja, they are known as Vairaja. The diverse gods follow the indicated rites and worship them. They are knowledgeable about the brahman and obtain the eternal worlds. However, because they deviate from yoga, they are reborn after one thousand yugas. But when they regain their memory, they obtain supreme *sankhya* and yoga.[198] They are successful and obtain the destination of yoga, from which, return[199] is extremely rare. O son![200] These ancestors are yogis and the extenders of yoga. Earlier, through the strength of their yoga, they invoked Soma. O supreme among brahmanas! Therefore, at funeral ceremonies, offerings must be rendered to these yogis. They represent the supreme and first creation and are named Somapas. Their daughter, born through mental powers, is the great mountain named Mena. She is the supreme wife of the Himalayas and her son is said to be Mainaka. Mainaka's son is the handsome and giant mountain named Krouncha. It is sparkling and the best among mountains, encrusted with many gems. The king of the mountains[201] had three daughters through Mena: Aparna, Ekaparna and Ekapatala as the third. These three performed austerities that were extremely difficult even for the gods and the danavas. They thus tormented the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. Ekaparna had only a single leaf for food. Ekapatala only ate a single *patala* flower.[202] One of them ate nothing at all. Miserable and driven by maternal affection, her mother said, "Uma" and tried to restrain her.[203] The goddess, the performer of extremely difficult austerities, was thus addressed by her mother. In the three worlds, the beautiful one came to be known as Uma. All three possessed the powers of yoga and their bodies were full of austerities. All of them knew about the brahman and all of them held up their seed.[204] The beautiful Uma was the eldest and best among them. She possessed great powers of yoga and was devoted to Mahadeva.[205] The great-souled and intelligent Asita-Devala was a great brahmana and a preceptor of yoga.[206] Ekaparna was given to him as a wife. Know that, in a similar way, Ekapatala was bestowed on Jaigishavya. These two immensely fortunate ones were presented to two preceptors of yoga. The sons of Marichi are in the world known as Somapada. These are the ancestors in heaven and the gods worship them. They are renowned as the Agnishvats and all of them are infinitely energetic. Their daughter, born through mental powers, was Achchhoda, who proceeded downwards and became a river. The celestial lake, known as Achchhoda, arose from her. She saw Ayu's illustrious son, famous as Vasu, in the firmament and addressed Vasu as her father.[207] Acting wilfully, she committed this transgression in her mind. Since she desired someone else as her father, she deviated from yoga and fell down. As she was dislodged from heaven and fell down, she saw three vimanas. In these, she saw minute ancestors.[208] They were extremely subtle and indistinct and were like fires inside a fire. Distressed as she was falling down, she shrieked at them, "Save me." Addressed by her, they replied, "Do not be frightened" and stationed her in the sky. Through their favours, the ancestors comforted her in tones of assurance. The ancestors saw that the maiden had been dislodged from her prosperity because of a transgression. They said, "O one with the beautiful smiles! Through your own fault, you have been dislodged from prosperity and are falling down. Whatever be the deeds performed by the gods in heaven, the gods receive the fruits of those deeds in exactly the same bodies. For gods, the fruits of deeds are instantaneous. For humans, they occur after death. O daughter! Therefore, you will obtain the fruits of your austerities after death." Having been addressed by the ancestors in this way, she gratified the ancestors. Driven by compassion, all of them thought of ways to show her favours. Having ascertained the truth about what was certain to occur, they told her, "O maiden! When Vasu is born as a king, you will be born as his child. Having been born as a daughter in this way, you will again obtain the worlds that are extremely difficult to get. Through the brahmana Parashara, you will give birth to a son.[209] That brahmana rishi will classify the single Vedas into four parts. Mahabhisha's sons will extend Shantanu's lineage. They will be Vichitravirya, who will know about dharma, and the lord Chitrangada. Having given birth to sons in this way, you will regain this world. Because you have committed a transgression towards your ancestors, you will have to go through this inferior birth. In the twenty-eight dvapara yuga, you will be born as the son of the king and Adrika, as the daughter of a fish."[210] Thus addressed, Satyavati was born as the daughter of a fisherman. The beautiful one was born from a fish, as the daughter of King Vasu. There is a beautiful world named Vaibhraja in heaven. The famous ancestors known as the Barhishads reside in heaven there. Those infinitely energetic ones are worshipped by all the diverse categories of danavas, yakshas, gandharvas, rakshasas, nagas, sarpas and suparnas. They are the sons of the great-souled Pulastya Prajapati. Those great-souled and immensely fortunate ones are ascetics and are full of energy. Through their mental powers, they had a famous daughter named Pivari. She herself practised yoga. She was the wife of a yogi. She was the mother of a yogi. That supreme among the upholders of dharma will be born when dvapara yuga nears. There will be a great ascetic named Shuka, born in Parashara's lineage. That great yogi, a bull among brahmanas, will be born in that yuga. Like a blazing fire without smoke, he will be generated through the two kindling sticks that are Vyasa.[211] Through Pivari, daughter of the ancestors, he[212] will have a daughter. He will also have four extremely strong sons who will be the preceptors of yoga: Krishna, Goura, Prabhu and Shambhu. The daughter will be Kritvi. She will be Anuha's queen and Brahmadatta's mother. Having had these offspring, the one with dharma in his soul,[213] the preceptor of yoga, will resort to great vows. The great yogi will go to the destination from which there is no return.[214] O sage! The ancestors without bodies have the forms of dharma. The account about the lineages of the Vrishnis, the Andhakas and the others begins from here.

'"'I have spoken about the three.[215] O foremost among brahmanas! Listen. I will now tell you about the other four, the ones who are said to be embodied. Kavi's daughter was Svadha and through her, Kavi's daughter, Agni had sons. The ancestors named Sukala are Vasishtha Prajapati's sons. O Bhargava! They are always radiant in the world of the gods. Brahmanas worship them to obtain all the objects of desire. Through their mental powers, they have a daughter. She is famous in heaven by the name of Gou. O brahmana! In your lineage, she was bestowed on Shuka[216] as his queen. She is also known as Ekashringa and has extended the deeds of the Sadhyas. She pervades the worlds that owe their origin to the sun god. O son! In ancient times, the Sadhyas reared the sons of Angiras. To accomplish the desired fruits, the categories of kshatriyas revere them.[217] Through their mental powers, they had a famous daughter named Yashoda. She was Vishvamahat's wife and the daughter-in-law of Vriddhasharma. O son! She was the mother of the great-souled rajarshi, Dilipa. O son! In that yuga of the gods, in ancient times, the maharshis were delighted at his great horse sacrifice and sung a chant. "In performing this sacrifice, the great-souled Dilipa has been extremely controlled. Not only will he go to heaven. But he will also be a truthful and great-souled man who has witnessed it and has heard about the birth of Agni, Shandilya's descendant."[218] The ancestors known as the Susvadhas are the forefathers of Kardama Prajapati. Those bulls among brahmanas are the sons of the great-souled Pulaha. They are in the celestial world and can roam around as they will, like birds. O son! For the sake of obtaining the intended fruits, the categories of vaishyas revere them. Through their mental powers, they had a daughter, famous as Viraja. O brahmana! She was Yayati's mother and Nahusha's queen. I have spoken about three categories so far.[219] Hear from me about the fourth. Through Svadha, the Somapas were born as Kavi's sons. They are revered by the shudras, who are the sons of Hiranyagarbha. They exist in the celestial world known by the name of Manasa. Through their mental powers, they had a daughter named Narmada, supreme among rivers. She nourishes the subjects, flowing in a southward direction. She is Purukutsa's wife and Trasadasyu's mother. O son! From one yuga to another yuga, when the dharma of performing funeral ceremonies goes into a decline, Prajapati Manu revives it again. O supreme among brahmanas! This was the original creation of all the ancestors, who follow their own respective dharmas. They are also collectively known as Shraddhadeva. Having first uttered “svadha”,[220] when offerings are rendered to all the ancestors at funeral ceremonies, using vessels made of silver or embellished with silver, they are pleased. Soma, Agni and Vaivasvata[221] must be worshipped through oblations into a fire. If there is no fire, the water can be used.[222] If a man is devoted in pleasing the ancestors, the ancestors are delighted with him. The ancestors grant him nourishment, large numbers of offspring, heaven, freedom from disease and everything else that is desired. O sage! Rites performed to ancestors are superior to rites performed to gods. It has been said that the ancestors must be worshipped before the gods. They are swiftly pleased and are devoid of rage. They confer supreme prosperity on the worlds. Their favours are never fickle. O Bhargava! Therefore, bow down before them. O brahmana rishi! You are devoted to your father and there is no doubt that your devotion is true. I have instructed you about what is best. However, experience it directly yourself. O unblemished one! I am granting you divine eyesight and the knowledge. O Markandeya! Without any anxiety and without any distraction, see their movements. You have been successful in observing the rites. But with eyes that are made of flesh, even a person like you is incapable of seeing the yoga-based movements of the gods or the supreme movements of the ancestors.’”

‘Markandeya continued, “The lord of the gods was stationed before me and spoke to me in this way. He gave me the eyesight and knowledge, extremely difficult for even the gods to obtain. Blazing like a second fire, he then went away to wherever he desired. O best among the Kurus! Without any anxiety, listen to what occurred and what I saw through the favours of that god. For men on earth, this is extremely difficult to comprehend.”’

Chapter 14

'Markandeya said, "O son! In an earlier yuga, there were some brahmanas who were the sons of Bharadvaja.[223] They followed the dharma of yoga, but deviated because of the wickedness of their conduct. Having acted against the dharma of yoga, they were dislodged. Bereft of consciousness and submerged in great darkness, they fell down on the shores of Manasa.[224] They were confounded. Meditating on the meaning of yoga, they never attained it and all of them were destroyed, following the dharma of time. O bull among men! Having been with the gods for a long period of time, they deviated from yoga. They were born in Kurukshetra as the sons of Koushika. In the name of performing the dharma of funeral rites for the ancestors, they will commit violence. Thus deviating again, they will be reborn in an inferior lineage. However, because of their father's favours and because of the good deeds they had committed in their earlier lives, they will remember what had occurred in their earlier lives. Controlled, they will eventually always follow dharma. Because of their own deeds, they obtained the status of being brahmanas again. Because of what they had done in their earlier lives, they regained yoga. They obtained success again and the eternal abodes. In this way, if your intelligence repeatedly turns towards dharma and you are devoted to the dharma of yoga, you will obtain supreme success. O one who knows about dharma! There is no dharma that is superior to the dharma of yoga. O Bhargava! It is the best among all kinds of dharma. Therefore, follow it. Eat in limited quantities and control your senses. If you are controlled and devoted, in the course of time, you will attain the dharma of yoga. The illustrious god said this and vanished instantly. It seemed to me that eighteen years was like a single day.[225] I worshipped that lord of the gods for eighteen years. Through the favours of that god, I did not suffer from any exhaustion. O unblemished one! I did not suffer from hunger or thirst. I did not realize the passage of time. It is only later that my disciples told me how much time had passed."'

Chapter 15

‘Markandeya said, “After speaking these words, the lord disappeared. O unblemished one! Because of his favours, divine sight and knowledge manifested themselves before me. Thus, I saw the brahmanas who were the sons of Koushika. As the lord had told me, these were the ones who had been born in Kurukshetra. The seventh of those brahmanas was famous by the name of Pitrivarti. He possessed goodness of conduct and was reborn as King Brahmadatta. This king was the son of Kritvi, Shuka’s daughter. He was born in Kampilya, supreme among cities, and his father was Anuha, best among kings.”

‘Yudhishthira asked,[226] “Whose son was Anuha and what was the period during which he existed? His son[227] was the immensely illustrious king who was foremost among the upholders of dharma. What was the nature of King Brahmadatta’s valour? How did the seventh one become a lord of men?[228] The illustrious Shuka is revered in the worlds. He is the soul of yoga. The lord cannot have bestowed his daughter Kritvi, the performer of famous deeds, on someone with little valour. O immensely radiant one! I wish to hear about this in detail. You should speak to me about Brahmadatta’s character. How did those brahmanas conduct themselves in this world? You should tell me everything that Markandeya said.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! I have heard that this lord of men was a contemporary of the royal sage, Pratipa, my grandfather. Brahmadatta was a great king and yogi, a supreme among royal sages. He was devoted to all beings and engaged in the welfare of all beings. His friend was the immensely illustrious Galava, the preceptor of yoga, who used the power of his austerities to progressively elaborate the principles of shiksha.[229] Kandarika, with yoga in his soul, was his[230] adviser. Those infinitely energetic seven continued to be born in seven kinds of species for seven times in each, but remained each other’s aides.[231] That is what the immensely energetic and great ascetic

Markandeya recounted. O king! I will recount the lineage of the great-souled and ancient Pourava Brahmadatta to you. Listen. O king! Purumitra’s son was King Brihadishu. Brihadishu’s son was the immensely illustrious Brihatdhanu and his son was the famous king Brihaddharma, who was extremely devoted to dharma. His son was Satyajit, whose son was Vishvajit. Vishvajit’s son was Senajit, lord of the earth. Senajit had four sons who were revered in the worlds —Ruchira, Shvetakashya, Mahimnara and Vatsa. This Vatsa or Vatsaka was the king of Avanti. Ruchira’s son was the immensely illustrious Prithushena. Prithushena’s son was Para and Para’s son was Nipa. O son! Nipa had one hundred infinitely energetic sons. O Indra among kings! They were brave maharathas with possessed strength in their arms. All these kings were known as the descendants of Nipa. In that lineage descended from Nipa, there was a king who extended his fame through his deeds. He ruled in Kampilya. His name was Samara and he endeavoured to fight.[232] Samara had three sons who were extremely knowledgeable about dharma—Para, Paara[233] and Sadashva. Para’s son was Prithu. Prithu had a son named Sukrita, who was the performer of good deeds.[234] He had a son named Vibhraja,[235] who possessed all the qualities. Vibhraja’s son was the king named Anuha. He was immensely illustrious. He was Shuka’s son-in-law and Kritvi’s husband. Anuha’s son was the lord and royal sage Brahmadatta, with yoga in his soul. His son was Vishvaksena, the scorcher of enemies. It has been heard that because of his good deeds, Vibhraja was born again as Vishvaksena, Brahmadatta’s son. Vishvaksena’s son was King Dandasena and his son was Bhallata, whom Radheya[236] slew in earlier times. Dandasena’s son[237] was brave and great in soul, the extender of his lineage. O Janamejaya![238] However, Bhallata’s son was extremely evil in his intelligence. He became king and was the king who brought an end to the Nipas. It was because of him that Ugrayudha destroyed all the Nipas. Ugrayudha was insolent and was addicted to pride. He was always devoted to what was unlawful. When he engaged against me in battle, I slew him.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Whose son was Ugrayudha and which lineage was he born in? Why was he killed by you? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Ajamidha’s son was the learned King Yavinara. His son was Dhritiman and Dhritiman’s son was Satyadhriti. The powerful Dridhanemi was Satyadhriti’s son. Dridhanemi’s son was King Sudharma. Sudharma’s son was Sarvabhouma, the lord of men. He was known as Sarvabhouma because he brought the entire earth under a single king.[239] In this lineage of Pourava, there was a great king named Mahati. He gave birth to the valiant King Sannati, who obtained his name because of his righteousness.[240] Sannati’s son was the extremely powerful Karta. The great king Nipa was the lord of Panchala and was Prishata’s grandfather.[241] He was slain by his valour.[242] O son! Ugrayudha was evil in his intelligence and was always engaged in enmity.[243] He obtained a blazing chakra and became powerful, thus causing the end of the Nipas. Having killed the Nipas and other kings, he became intoxicated with pride. At that time, my father had died and was lying down on the ground, surrounded by me and my advisers.[244] O Indra among kings! Ugrayudha sent a messenger to me and through him, made me hear impure words. ‘O Bhishma! O bull among the Kuru lineage! Your illustrious mother, Gandhakali,[245] is a jewel among women. As a wife, bestow her on me now. There is no doubt that this kingdom is prosperous with armies and all the jewels that the earth possesses. I will give you whatever you wish for. If you desire the kingdom, your life or your lineage, obey my instructions. Otherwise, you will not find any peace.’ At that time, I was lying down, on a bed of grass.[246] While I was thus lying down, he struck me with the messenger’s words and they were like the flames of a fire. O unblemished one! I thus discerned the evil-minded one’s intentions. I instructed all the commanders of my soldiers to get ready for battle. ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! My blazing chakra cannot be pacified and is invincible. As soon as my enemies see it, they run away.’[247] Vichitravirya was a child and was dependent on me. On seeing that his[248] soul was full of rage, I made up my mind to fight. O bull among men! However, my advisers, those who were skilled in counsels, officiating priests, those who knew about the rites of the gods, and well-wishers restrained me. Knowing about the sacred texts, with gentle words, they asked me to refrain from battle. O unblemished one! At that time, they made me listen to words that were full of reason.

‘“The ministers said, ‘O lord! The wicked one’s chakra may be whirling, but you are observing a period of purification. This should never be regarded as the prime time for waging war. We should first resort to conciliation, donations and dissension.[249] By then, you will be purified and can engage, after having worshipped the gods. You will make brahmanas offer beneficial offerings into the fire. You will make brahmanas recite words of benediction. Having then obtained the permission of the brahmanas, you can depart for victory. At this time, one should not use weapons and one should not enter into a battle. Since this is a time of purification, that is what the instructions of the elders are. One should first attempt conciliation, donations and dissension. After that, you can slay him through your valour, just as Maghavan killed Shambara.'"[250]

'Bhishma continued, "O lord of men! At that time, hearing the words of the wise ones, especially the elders, I restrained myself. O best among the Kuru lineage! At that time, I progressively followed[251] the supreme course of action indicated by those who knew about the sacred texts. I entreated the evil-minded one with sama and the other techniques that the sacred texts had thought about, but was incapable of persuading him. O son! Since he was addicted to the adharma of desiring another person's wife, he would not be restrained. However, because of his own deeds, censured by the virtuous, his supreme chakra had already been controlled, though I did not know this. Having completed the rites of purification, I left the city on a chariot, with a bow and arrows. The brahmanas pronounced words of benediction and I proceeded to fight with the enemy. Approaching him, I began to fight with my strength and the strength of my weapons. It was like an encounter between the gods and the asuras and lasted for three days. Because of the power of my weapons, he was burnt down in the forefront of the battle. O scorcher of enemies! In front of me, the brave one gave up his life and fell down. O son! During this time, when King Ugrayudha, the lord of Nipa was slain, Prishata advanced against Kampilya. O king! With my permission, the greatly radiant one obtained his own ancestral kingdom of Ahichhatra back.[252] Arjuna swiftly defeated Drupada is battle and offered Ahichhatra and Kampilya to Drona.[253] Drona, supreme among victorious ones, accepted them both. But as is known to you, he returned Kampilya to Drupada. This entire story about the lineages of Drupada, Brahmadatta and the brave Ugrayudha has thus been narrated. This is the ancient history of what transpired. When asked by Markandeya, Sanatkumara also chanted to him the fruits of funeral ceremonies, performed in a self-controlled way and that of good deeds. O great king! O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! You will hear about the conduct and the seven lives of Galava, Kandarika and Brahmadatta as the third. They were yogis who followed the brahman.”’

Chapter 16

'Markandeya said, "I will tell you about the supreme fruits of funeral ceremonies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is what Brahmadatta obtained for seven lives.[254] O unblemished one! On performing funeral ceremonies, their minds quickly turned towards dharma, even though they had oppressed dharma earlier. I will tell you about those seven brahmanas, who performed an act of adharma when they observed rites for their ancestors in Kurukshetra. Sanatkumara saw them and instructed them. Their names were like their deeds and they were Vagdushta, Krodhana, Himsra, Pishuna, Kavi, Khasrima and Pitrivarti.[255] O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were the sons of Koushika.[256] But having been cursed by their father, all of them became Gargya's disciples and started to observe vows. On the instructions of their preceptor, all of them acted properly and took his milk-yielding *kapila* cow[257] and her calf to graze. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, along the route, they were hungry and overcome by childish delusion. With their minds overcome by cruelty, they wanted to kill the cow. Kavi and Khasrima tried to restrain them from doing this. But they were incapable of restraining the other brahmanas. There was a brahmana named Pitrivarti among them. He always performed funeral ceremonies and ablutions. He adhered to dharma and angrily spoke to all his brothers. 'If we must do this, let all of us control ourselves and do it properly together. If we do this, there is no doubt that this cow will also achieve dharma. If we follow dharma in worshipping our ancestors, we will also not be tainted by adharma.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed, all of them consecrated the cow, worshipped the ancestors by using it as an offering and thus used the cow.[258] They seized the calf, went to the brahmana[259] and uttered a lie. 'A tiger has killed the cow. Accept the calf.' He accepted it. Those brahmanas acted wrongly against their preceptor and resorted to falsehood. In due course of time, their lifespans were exhausted and they died. They were cruel and acted violently towards their preceptor, like those who were not *arya*s. The seven brothers were reborn as those who were fierce, conducting themselves violently.[260] O son! They were spirited and powerful and became the sons of a hunter. However, they had consecrated the cow and following dharma, had worshipped the ancestors with it. Therefore, though they were reborn as a different category of being, they retained memories of what had occurred. Those seven were born in the land of Dasharna as hunters who were accomplished in dharma.[261] All of them were devoted to their own dharma and were devoid of avarice and falsehood. They only did that much as was necessary for sustaining life.[262] For the rest of the time, they devoted themselves to dharma and reflected on their own deeds.[263] O lord of men! The names of those revered hunters, who were supremely devoted to dharma, were —Nirvaira, Nirvrita, Kshanta, Nirmanyu, Kriti, Vaidhasa and Matrivarti. O son! In the forest, though they were immersed in a dharma that required violence, they dwelt in this way, satisfying and worshipping their aged mother and father. Following the dharma of time, their mother and father eventually died. They then discarded their bows and gave up their lives in the forest. Because of their auspicious deeds, they were reborn as animals[264] that remembered their past lives. As a result of the fright and the force, they were anxious and dwelt on beautiful Mount Kalanjara.[265] The names of those animals were Unmukha, Nitya-vitrasta, Stabdha-karna, Vilochana, Pandita, Ghasmara and Nadi. Since they remembered their earlier lives, they reflected on the purpose of everything. They were controlled and roamed around in that forest. They were without attachments.[266] They were devoid of opposite pairs of sentiments.[267] All of them roamed around in that forest. They followed the dharma of behaving equally towards everyone and were auspicious in their deeds. They followed asceticism. They sustained their lives on a little bit of food and avoided drinking water. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O unblemished one! The footprints of those virtuous ones, who avoided drinking water, can still be seen on Mount Kalanjara. O son! Thus, their deeds were beyond what is good and bad. They were therefore reborn as *chakravaka* birds, moving from an inauspicious birth to a superior one.[268] As aquatic birds, those seven dwelt in an auspicious spot, on an island in a river. They were like sages who followed dharma and abandoned the dharma of looking for a mate. The names of those birds are said to be Sumana, Muni, Suvaka, Shuddha, Chhidradarshana as the fifth, Sunetra and Svatantra. Among the seven who were born, the fifth one was also known as Panchika. The sixth was reborn as Kandarika and the seventh as Brahmadatta. They performed asceticism in their seven lives. They followed the yoga of detachment and retained the wonderful knowledge of their earlier lives, what they had learnt in the household of their preceptor, about the knowledge of the brahman. Therefore, though they roamed around in this cycle of life, they were established in the brahman. All those birds followed brahmacharya and could roam around as they willed. They wandered around there, reflecting on the dharma of yoga.

'"While the birds were wandering around there, King Vibhraja, the lord of Nipa and descended from the Pourava lineage, arrived there, accompanied by his wives. His body was radiant and he was powerful. The handsome one was surrounded by the women from the inner quarters and entered that forest. On witnessing this kind of royal prosperity, the chakravaka bird known as Svatantra desired that he too might attain this state. 'I have performed good deeds, observed austerities and controlled myself. I have emaciated myself through fasting and asceticism. But all those have been rendered fruitless.'"'[269]

Chapter 17

'Markandeya said, "Two companions of that chakravaka bird said, 'We have always sought to bring you pleasure. We will become your advisers.'[270] Thus addressed, he[271] turned his atman and intelligence towards yoga. At this time, Suvaka addressed him. 'You are abandoning the dharma of yoga and think that the satisfaction of desire is more important. You desire an objective that is inferior. Therefore, listen to me. O son![272] You will become the king in the supreme city of Kampilya and these two friends of yours will become your advisers.' The other four birds cursed and abandoned the three who had strayed by desiring a kingdom. Those three[273] had lost their senses and had deviated from yoga. But cursed in this way, they sought refuge with their four companions. Those four were merciful and showed them their favours, Sumana speaking on their behalf. 'There is no doubt that this curse will come to an end. When that happens, you will become humans and will resort to yoga. Because of our father's favours and because of good deeds, this Svatantra will understand the language of all creatures. Earlier, while observing dharma for the ancestors, it was he who had protected the cow, thereby imparting knowledge to all of us and facilitating recourse to yoga. There is a shloka whose words will be full of meaning. In that human life, when a person makes you hear it, you will resort to yoga again.'"'[274]

Chapter 18

'Markandeya said, "Those seven dwelt in Manasa. They were devoted to the dharma of yoga. They always subsisted only on air and water and dried up their bodies. King Vibhraja, with the handsome body, went to that forest. He was surrounded by the women of his inner quarters, like Maghavan in Nandana. On seeing that the birds were resorting to the dharma of yoga, while he himself behaved like an ignorant person, the king was distressed. He went to his city and reflected about this. He had a son named Anuha, who was supremely devoted to dharma. Since he always minutely scrutinized the dharma of everything, he obtained such a name.[275] Shuka bestowed his daughter Kriti, who possessed all the revered and auspicious marks, on him. She possessed the good qualities of virtue and conduct and was always devoted to the dharma of yoga. O Bhishma! I have already told you what Sanatkumara instructed me, about that spirited and beautiful one being a daughter of the ancestors. She is supreme among those who uphold the true dharma, one that is impossible for those with uncleansed souls to comprehend. She is the embodiment of yoga. She is the wife of yoga. She is the mother of yoga. When I spoke to you about the creation of the ancestors, I told you about her earlier. Vibhraja, the lord of men, summoned the citizens and the brahmanas who pronounced benedictions. Pleased in his mind, he instated Anuha in the kingdom. With his wives, he left for the lake, so as to perform austerities. On the shores of that lake, he abandoned desire and tormented himself through austerities. The great ascetic gave up food and survived on air. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His resolution was that he would unite himself with yoga and be born as a son of one of those.[276] With this resolution, he engaged himself in great austerities. Vibhraja, the great ascetic, was as radiant as the one with the rays.[277] O best among the Kuru lineage! Because of his radiance, that forest is known as Vaibhraja. The lake is also known as Vaibhraja. O king! The four birds who followed the dharma of yoga and the three who had deviated from yoga gave up their lives.

'"With Brahmadatta at the forefront, all those great-souled ones, cleansed of sin, were born in the city of Kampilya. Those four remembered their earlier births, but the other three were confused. Svatantra was born as Anuha's son, known as the immensely illustrious Brahmadatta. As a bird, he is the one who had earlier desired that he should attain this state. Chhidradarshi[278] and Sunetra were born as Vabhravya and Vatsa, as the sons of learned brahmanas, and were accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. They were companions from that earlier life and became Brahmadatta's friends. The fifth was also known as Panchala[279] and the sixth as Kandarika. Panchala was accomplished in the Rig Veda and became the preceptor. Kandarika was accomplished in the chants of the Sama Veda and became the *adhvaryu*. Thus, they were skilled in two Vedas.[280] King Anuha's son could understand the languages of all creatures and he became acquainted with Panchala and Kandarika. They were under the subjugation of desire and addicted to sexual pleasures. However, because of what they had done in their earlier lives, they knew the truth about dharma, kama and artha. Anuha, supreme among kings, consecrated the unblemished Brahmadatta in the kingdom and attained the supreme destination. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Asita-Devala's daughter was unassailable in her yoga. Her name was Sannati and she was Brahmadatta's wife. Sannati was virtuous in her intelligence and conduct, devoted to the dharma of yoga. He[281] obtained the supreme maiden from Brahmadatta.

'"The four remaining chakravakas were born as companions and brothers in Kampilya, as the sons of a learned brahmana who was extremely poor. Their names were Dhriti, Mahamana, Vidvan and Tattvadarshi. Those four studied the Vedas and there were no gaps in their knowledge. They remembered what had transpired in their earlier lives. Devoted to yoga, all those accomplished ones wished to leave[282] and sought their father's permission. The father replied, 'O sons! If you abandon me in this way, that will be adharma. You have not taken care of my poverty. Nor have you obtained the merit of generating sons. How can it be proper for you to depart without tending to me?' All those brahmanas then spoke to their father again. 'We will devise a means so that you can sustain yourself. Go and approach the unblemished Brahmadatta and his ministers. Make him hear this shloka, which is deep in meaning. With a happy mind, he will give you all the villages and other objects of desire that you seek. O father! You will be able to depart cheerfully.’ Having said this, all of them worshipped their senior. Resorting to the dharma of yoga, they advanced towards supreme withdrawal.”’

Chapter 19

'Markandeya said, "Vibhraja[283] possessed yoga in his atman. He was united with austerities and was known as Vishvaksena. On one occasion, with his wife, Brahmadatta was cheerfully roaming in the forest, like Shatakratu with Shachi.[284] The lord of men heard the voice of a male ant. Overcome by desire, it was shrieking piteously and seeking the favours of a female ant. The small female ant was angry and the male one was trying to pacify it. On hearing this, Brahmadatta suddenly burst out in great laughter. O afflicter of enemies! At this, Sannati was miserable, distressed and ashamed.[285] She spent many days without any food. When her husband tried to restrain her, the one with the beautiful smiles replied, 'O king! Since you have laughed at me, I am not interested in remaining alive.' At this, he told her the reason, but she did not believe him. O king! She angrily told him, 'This cannot be true. How can a man understand the language of an ant? That is only possible through the favours or the gods, or as a result of good deeds performed in an earlier life, or through the fruits of austerities. O king! O lord of men! It cannot be known otherwise. If you really do know it, then prove it to me. O king! Otherwise, I take a pledge that I will give up my life.' O lord! The king heard the queen's harsh words and, extremely distressed, devotedly sought refuge with the supreme among gods, the lord Narayana, the lord of all beings. The god Narayana Hari, the illustrious one who is compassionate towards all creatures, showed himself before the king and said, 'O Brahmadatta! Your welfare will be ensured in the morning.' Having said this, the illustrious god disappeared.[286]

'"The four brahmanas had given a shloka to their father. Having studied the shloka obtained from his sons, he thought that he had become successful. He wished to approach the unblemished king when he was with his ministers and on seeing him, he desired to make him hear the shloka. Having obtained the boon from Narayana, the king happily bathed his head and proceeded to enter the city on a golden chariot. Kandarika, bull among brahmanas, grasped the reins. Vabhravya was engaged in fanning with a whisk. The brahmana decided that this was the best time to make the king and his advisers listen to the shloka. ‘There were seven hunters in Dasharna and they became animals on Mount Kalanjara. There were chakravaka birds in an island in a river and we are headed there.’ O unblemished one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this, Brahmadatta and his advisers, Panchala and Kandarika, were confounded. While the citizens saw them in this dishevelled state, the reins, the goad and the whisk fell down. O scorcher of enemies! For an instant, the two of them and the king remained stationed on the chariot in this way. They then regained their senses and returned.[287] They remembered the lake and the yoga. He[288] gave the brahmana a large quantity of riches and objects of pleasure. He instated Vishvaksena, the scorcher of enemies, in his own kingdom. With his wife, Brahmadatta left for the forest. The patient Sannati, Devala’s daughter, was extremely delighted and spoke to the king, who had gone to the forest to pursue yoga. ‘O great king! I knew that you knew about the speech of ants. However, since you were addicted to desire, I feigned to be angry, so as to goad you. From here, we will now head towards the supreme and beneficial destination. Yoga had vanished from you, but I have made you remember it again.’ On hearing his wife’s words, the king was extremely delighted. He regained yoga in the forest and obtained the destination that is so very difficult to get. With yoga in his soul, Kandarika became successful and through his deeds, obtained the pure destination of yoga, the supreme samkhya yoga. In due course, he composed the absolute text that is known as Panchala.[289] The great ascetic obtained the best of fame and the status of being a preceptor of yoga. O one without decay! This is an ancient account that I myself witnessed. O Gangeya! If you sustain this, you will also be united with what is beneficial. If others sustain such supreme conduct, they will never be born as inferior species. If one hears about this account, which is deep in its meaning, one obtains the great destination. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The dharma of yoga always circles around in his heart. Amidst all these bonds, such a person always finds peace. Such people become successful and their minds turn towards the objective that is extremely difficult to obtain on earth.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘In ancient times, this was chanted by the intelligent Markandeya. This is the instruction about the fruits of funeral ceremonies and the invocation of Soma. Soma is the illustrious god whose invocation brings supreme benefit to this world. In connection with the lineage of the Vrishnis, listen to the story of his lineage.’[290]

Chapter 20

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The illustrious rishi Atri was Soma’s father and was born. In deeds, thoughts and words, and through the control he engaged in, Atri ensured the welfare of all the worlds. He had dharma in his soul, was rigid in his vows and showed non-violence towards all creatures. The immensely radiant one stood with his hands raised upwards and was like a piece of wood that had become petrified. In ancient times, he tormented himself through such austerities and this asceticism is known as Anuttoma.[291] We have heard that he did this for three thousand divine years. He did not blink and stood there, holding his seed up. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great intelligence manifested itself in his body and that was the essence of Soma. With his soul cleansed, Soma’s essence rose upwards in his body and exuded from his eyes in the form of water that issued in the ten directions and radiated them. On seeing the ten embryos, ten goddesses[292] rushed forward to nurture them, but were incapable of doing so. The powerful embryos violently fell down from these ten goddesses and gave rise to the one with the cool rays, the one who nourishes everything and illuminates the worlds. The directions were incapable of holding onto the embryos. Suddenly, the embryos fell down on the earth. Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, saw that Soma had fallen down. Desiring to ensure the welfare of the worlds, he established him on a chariot. O son! He[293] was full of the Vedas, immersed in truth and possessed dharma in his soul. We have heard that the chariot was yoked to one thousand white horses. The god who was the great-souled Atri’s son fell down. At this, Brahma’s seven mental sons began to praise him, invoking the sacred texts. Angiras was there and Bhrigu’s sons. They chanted from the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda, associated with Angiras. Soma’s radiant energy was praised in this fashion and illuminated the three worlds, in every direction. In that foremost of chariots, he circumambulated the earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean, twenty-one times. Some of his energy fell down on earth and from that blazing energy, the herbs were created. It is through this that the illustrious Soma, the lord of the universe, nourishes the four kinds of subjects that are there in the worlds and the universe.[294] O immensely fortunate one! Through the praise and through his own deeds, the illustrious one obtained more energy. For one thousand *padma*[295] years, he tormented himself through austerities. There are golden-complexioned goddesses who sustain the universe. The god Soma became their treasure and became famous because of his own deeds. O Janamejaya! Brahma, supreme among those who know about the brahman, granted him dominion over seeds, herbs, brahmanas and water.

'The immensely energetic one, king of kings, was thus instated as king over dominions. Through his own radiance, the supreme among radiant ones began to illuminate the three worlds. Daksha, the son of Prachetas, bestowed his twenty-seven daughters, who were great in vows and known as Dakshayanis, on Indu.[296] These are known as the nakshatras. Soma, supreme among the Somas,[297] obtained that great kingdom. He prepared for a royal sacrifice at which one hundred thousand different kinds of *dakshina* would be paid. The illustrious Atri was the hotri and the illustrious Bhrigu was the adhvaryu. Hiranyagarbha was the udgatri and Brahma functioned as the brahmana.[298] The illustrious lord, Hari Narayana, was the assistant priest. They were surrounded by the brahmana rishis, with Sanatkumara at the forefront. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have heard that, as dakshina, he gave away the three worlds to the foremost among brahmana rishis who were assistant priests. Sinivali, Kuhu, Dyuti, Pushti, Prabha, Vasu, Kirti, Dhriti and Lakshmi—these nine goddesses were in attendance. O Indra among kings! He was thus worshipped by all the gods and the rishis. He performed the bath after the sacrifice and was radiant, illuminating the ten directions.

'He obtained prosperity that was extremely difficult to obtain and was revered by the sages. O son! His intelligence was confounded and his humility was destroyed. Brihaspati had an illustrious wife named Tara. Ignoring all of Angiras's sons,[299] he swiftly abducted her. The gods, accompanied by the celestial rishis, entreated him. However, he would not release Tara to Angiras's son. The immensely energetic Ushanas had earlier been a disciple of Angiras, Brihaspati's father, and he took his side.[300] Because of his affection, the illustrious god, Rudra, took Brihaspati's side and seized his *ajagava* bow.[301] The great-souled one affixed the supreme weapon known as *brahmashira* and released it at the daityas,[302] thereby destroying their fame. The famous battle known as Tarakamaya then waged between the gods and the danavas and it led to great destruction in the worlds.[303] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods who survived, the Tushitas, went to Brahma, the grandfather and original god, and sought refuge with him. Brahma himself restrained both Ushanas and Rudra Shankara and handed over Tara to the son of Angiras. The brahmana Brihaspati saw that Tara was expecting and said, "This womb belongs to me and someone else's seed shoud never be nurtured there." The foetus blazed like the fire and she aborted it on a bed of grass. This child became the slayer of bandits. As soon as he was born, the illustrious one's beauty surpassed that of the gods. In their suspicion, the gods asked Tara, "Tell us truthfully. Is this Soma's son or Brihaspati's son?" Despite being asked by the gods, she did not say anything in reply, good or bad. At this, the child who would be the slayer of bandits, started to curse her. However, Brahma restrained him and asked Tara to clarify the doubt. "Tell me the truth. O Tara! Whose son is this?" She joined her hands in salutation and spoke to the lord Brahma, the granter of boons. "This great-souled child, the slayer of enemies, is Soma's son." Prajapati Soma, the one who nurtures, inhaled the fragrance of the child's head. This intelligent son is known by the name of Budha. In the firmament, when Budha ascends, it causes disturbances.[304] O great king! Through him, the princess obtained a son, Pururava, Ila's son.[305] Through Urvashi, he had seven great-souled sons. Meanwhile, Soma was afflicted by tuberculosis.[306] Afflicted by tuberculosis, he was helpless and his disc started to fade. He sought refuge with his father, Atri. The immensely illustrious Atri arranged for the sin to be cleansed. Once he was freed from tuberculosis, in every direction, his prosperity began to dazzle. O great king! I have recounted Soma's birth and the deeds that extended his fame. I will now recount the names in his lineage. Listen. This account is sacred and blessed, it ensures a long life and freedom from illness. It ensures the success of all resolutions. If one listens to the account of Soma's birth, one is freed from all sins.'

Chapter 21

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! Budha’s son was the learned Pururava. He was energetic and generous and performed sacrifices with copious quantities of dakshina. He was valorous and knew about the brahman. In a battle, the enemies found it difficult to defeat him. On earth, he performed the celestial *agnihotra* sacrifice. He was truthful and his intelligence was auspicious. He was restrained in the indulgence of sexual desire. In the three worlds, his fame was always unmatched. He was knowledgeable about the brahman, forgiving, learned about dharma and truthful in speech. Abandoning her pride, the illustrious Urvashi accepted him.[307] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For ten years, the king dwelt with her in the beautiful Chaitraratha forest, for five years along the banks of the Mandakini, for five years in Alaka,[308] for six years in Vishala,[309] for seven years in Nandana, supreme among forests, for eight years in Uttarakuru, which possesses trees that yield all the fruits one desires, for ten years at the feet of Gandhamadana and thereafter, for eight years on the summit of Meru. Extremely happy, the king found delight with Urvashi, in these best of groves, treasured even by the gods. The lord of the earth ruled over his kingdom from Prayaga, in the most sacred of countries, that was revered even by the maharshis. He had six sons who were like Indra in their energy. Those great-souled ones were born in heaven and their names were Ayu, Dhiman, Amavasu, Dridhayu, Vanayu and Shatayu. They were Urvashi’s sons. Ayu had five sons and all of them were brave maharathas. Nahusha was the first to be born and Vriddhasharma, Dambha, Raji and Anena were born after that. They were famous in the three worlds. Raji had five hundred sons who were famous as the Rajeyas. They were famous kshatriyas and they caused fear in Indra himself. There was an extremely terrible battle between the gods and the asuras. At that time, both the gods and the asuras went to Brahma and asked, “O illustrious one! Who amongst us will be victorious in the battle? O lord of all creatures! Tell us. We wish to listen to your words.”

‘Brahma replied, “On whichever side the lord Raji fights, wielding his weapons, there is no doubt in the three worlds about that side being victorious in the battle. Perseverance exists wherever Raji is. Prosperity exists wherever perseverance is. Wherever there is perseverance, prosperity and dharma, victory exists there.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘When the gods and the danavas heard the god speak about Raji’s role in the victory, they were delighted. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Desiring their own victories, they approached him. The extremely energetic king was an extender of Soma’s lineage. He was Svarbhanu’s grandson and Prabha’s son.[310] Cheerful in their minds, all the daityas and the danavas went to Raji and desiring victory, sought the boon that he should take up his bow on their behalf.

‘Raji said, “When I am victorious, if all the large number of gods, with Shakra at the forefront, follow dharma and make me the Indra, only then will I fight in the battle.”[311]

‘The danavas replied, “Our Indra is Prahlada and it is for his sake that we are trying for victory. O king! That being the case, adhere to the agreement that you contract with the gods.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The gods told the king that if they were victorious, he would be the Indra. Thus addressed, he slew all the danavas, who deserved to be killed by the one who holds the vajra in his hand. The lord Raji destroyed the supreme prosperity of the danavas and brought their prosperity under his subjugation. He destroyed and killed all the danavas. With the gods, Shatakratu declared himself to be the son of the immensely valiant Raji. He spoke these words to Raji. “O father! There is no doubt that you are the Indra of all subjects. This is because of your deeds and because I, Indra, will be famous as your son.” He heard Shakra’s words and was deceived by the maya. The king was delighted with Shatakratu and signified his assent. The lord of the earth obtained a heaven that rivalled that of the gods. He had one hundred sons and they attacked Shatakratu’s place in the world of heaven, known as Trivishtapa, several times. After several days had passed, the immensely strong Shakra was deprived of his kingdom. He was deprived of his fortune and told Brihaspati, “O brahmana rishi! All the cakes that were offered to me at sacrifices have been destroyed. Can you at least arrange for a jujube,[312] so that I am always capable of sustaining my energy? O brahmana! I am emaciated. I am distracted. I have lost my kingdom. I have lost my seat. I have lost my energy. I am weak. I am senseless. O lord! Raji's sons have done this to me." Brihaspati replied, "O Shakra! If this is truly what has happened, you should have told me about it earlier. O unblemished one! There is nothing that I will not do to ensure your pleasure. O Indra of the gods! There is no doubt that I will try to ensure your delight. You will soon obtain your share and your kingdom back. O son! I will act to ensure this. Let there be no lassitude in your mind." He then acted so that Indra's energy might be enhanced. The supreme among rishis acted so that their[313] minds might be overcome with confusion. They became deluded and intoxicated with anger. They turned against dharma. They acted against brahmanas and lost their energy and valour. Indra regained the prosperity of the gods and the supreme state. All Raji's sons, addicted to desire and anger, were killed. A person who listens to this account of Shatakratu losing and regaining his state, and sustains it, never suffers from any calamities.'

Chapter 22

Vaishampayana said, ‘Nahusha had six sons who were like Indra in their energy—Yati, Yayati, Samyati, Ayati and Aryati. Yati was the eldest and Yayati was born after him. As a wife, Yati obtained Kakutstha’s daughter, named Gam. He resorted to the path of salvation and became a sage who was immersed in the brahman. Among the other five, Yayati conquered the earth and had two wives, Devayani, the daughter of Ushanas,[314] and Sharmishtha, the daughter of the asura Vrishaparva. Devayani gave birth to Yadu and Turvasu. Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva’s daughter, gave birth to Druhyu, Anu and Puru. Pleased, Shukra gave him[315] an extremely radiant chariot. It was divine and made out of celestial gold, drawn by divine and supreme horses that were as swift as thought. He conveyed his wife on that resplendent chariot. Yayati was invincible in battle, even against the gods, with Vasava.[316] On that best of chariots, he conquered the earth in six days. O Janamejaya! Right down to you, all the Pouravas,[317] those named Pouravas, have enjoyed that chariot. It remained in the kingdom of the descendants of Kuru till the time of Parikshit’s son.[318] After that, because of the intelligent Garga’s curse, the chariot departed. Garga had a young son. By causing violence to him through cruel words, King Janamejaya became guilty of the sin of killing a brahmana. The royal sage’s body began to smell of iron[319] and he roamed around, here and there. Though he avoided cities and the countryside, he could not obtain peace anywhere. He was tormented by grief and bereft of his senses. The king sought refuge with Indrota, Shounaka’s son. O Janamejaya![320] For the sake of cleansing the king, Indrota, Shounaka’s son and supreme among brahmanas, performed a horse sacrifice for him. When he bathed after the sacrifice, the smell of iron left him. O king! Delighted, Shukra gave that divine chariot to Vasu, the lord of Chedi, and Brihadratha[321] obtained it from him. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! Having slain Jarasandha, Bhima cheerfully handed over that supreme chariot to Vasudeva.

‘Yayati conquered the earth and its seven continents, right up to the frontiers of the ocean. The king who was Nahusha’s son divided it among his five sons. The intelligent king gave Turvasu the south-eastern direction. Nahusha’s son gave Druhyu the west and Anu the north. He instated Yadu, the eldest, in the north-east. The king who was Nahusha’s son instated Puru in the middle. The entire earth and its habitations are divided into seven continents. All those regions are protected in accordance with dharma. O supreme among kings! I will next tell you about the offspring who resulted. The king cast aside his bow and arrows and gave the burden to his five sons. The unvanquished King Yayati, the lord of the earth, having cast aside his weapons, looked at the way the earth was ruled and was delighted. Having thus divided the earth, Yayati told Yadu, “O son! There is something else to be done.[322] Accept my old age. In the form of a youth, I wish to roam around the earth. When that is done, I will take back the old age from you.” Yadu replied, “O king! I have promised a brahmana alms and he has not yet told me what he wants. Until that task is done, I cannot accept your old age. There are many taints associated with old age. One cannot eat and drink as one wills. O king! Therefore, I am not interested in accepting your old age. O king! You have other sons and you love them more than me. O one who knows about dharma! Ask this boon of acceptance from one of the other sons.” Having been thus addressed by Yadu, the king became full of anger. Yayati, supreme among eloquent ones, censured his son and said, “Under dharma, has any refuge other than you been indicated for me? O extremely stupid one! I am your preceptor and you have slighted me.” O son! Saying this, he angrily cursed Yadu. “O foolish one! O lord of men! From now on, your offspring will never enjoy a kingdom.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been rebuffed by Turvasu, Druhyu and Anu, the king also cursed them in a similar way. O supreme among royal sages! As I had told you earlier, the unvanquished Yayati wrathfully cursed them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having cursed the four elder sons, the king repeated his words to Puru. “In the form of a youth, I wish to roam around this earth. O Puru! If you think it proper, please accept my old age.” The powerful Puru accepted his father’s old age. In Puru’s form, Yayati roamed around the earth. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! With Vishvachi,[323] the lord roamed around in the grove of Chaitraratha, treading the path of desire and searching for its end. When the lord of the earth saw that his desire was no longer increasing, he went to Puru and took back his old age. O great king! In this connection, listen to a chant that was recited by Yayati. Through this, all desire is withdrawn, like the limbs of a tortoise. “Through enjoying pleasure, the birth of desire is never pacified. Instead, it increases, like ghee offered into a blazing fire. It is my view that one cannot tread the path of contentment with all the paddy, barley, gold, animals and women that are available on earth. If one does not harbour injurious sentiments towards all creatures, in deeds, thoughts and words, one obtains the brahman. Such a person does not frighten others, nor is he frightened by them. If one does not desire or hate, one obtains the brahman.” Having said this, with his wife, the royal sage entered the forest. For a long period of time, he performed great austerities. He performed austerities on Bhrigutunga. At the end of those austerities, the immensely famous one gave up his body and, with his wife, obtained heaven. O great king! There were five supreme and royal sages in his lineage. They pervaded the entire earth, like the sun with its rays. O royal sage! Yadu’s lineage is revered by the royal sages. Listen to it. Hari Narayana, the extender of the Vrishni lineage, was born in it. O lord of men! A man who always listens to Yayati’s character obtains good health, offspring, a long life and fame.’

Chapter 23

Janamejaya said, 'O brahmana! I wish to hear the truth about Puru's lineage and also about Druhyu, Anu, Yadu and Turvasu. O supreme among brahmanas! You should progressively tell me everything.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'In connection with the lineage of the Vrishnis, first listen to your own lineage. O great king! First hear about the great-souled Puru's lineage, where you have been born. O king! I will first tell you about that in detail. O scorcher of enemies! I will certainly tell you about Puru's supreme lineage and about Druhyu, Anu, Yadu and Turvasu. Puru's son was Pravira and his son was Manasyu. Manasyu's son was the king named Abhayada. Abhayada's son was the king named Sudhanva. Sudhanva's son was Subahu and his son was Roudra. Roudra had sons named Dasharneyu, Krikaneyu, Kaksheyu, Sthandileyu, Sannateyu, Richeyu, Jaleyu, the immensely strong Sthaleyu, Vananitya and Vaneyu. O Indra among kings! He also had ten daughters, who were *putrika*s[324]—Rudra, Shudra, Bhadra, Malada, Malaha, Khala, Bala, Talada, Suratha and Gopabala. These ten were gems among women. A rishi named Prabhakara was born in Atri's lineage and became their husband. Through Rudra, he had a son named Soma. Svarbhanu struck Surya and made him fall down from the firmament to earth. When the world was enveloped in darkness, he[325] displayed his powers. As the sun was falling down, the brahmana rishi spoke words of assurance and Surya did not fall down from the firmament to earth. The famous and great ascetic thus established the superiority of Atri's gotra. In sacrifices, the gods accordingly decreed that riches should be earmarked for Atri's lineage. The great-souled one was always addicted to fierce austerities. Through the putrikas, he had ten sons whose names were based on those of their mothers. O king! Those rishis were accomplished in the Vedas and established their own gotras. Though they were deprived of Atri's riches,[326] they came to be known as Svastyatreyas.

‘Kaksheyu had three sons who were maharathas—Sabhanara, Chakshusha and Paramekshu. Sabhanara’s son was the learned King Kalanala. Kalanala had a son named Srinjaya who was learned about dharma. Srinjaya’s son was the brave King Puranjaya. O great king! Puranjaya’s son was Janamejaya.[327] The royal sage, Janamejaya, had a son named Mahasala. His fame was so well established that even the gods knew about him. Mahasala had a son named Mahamana who was devoted to dharma. When the brave Mahamana was born, large numbers of gods worshipped him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Mahamana had two sons, Ushinara, who was knowledgable about dharma, and the immensely strong Titikshu. Ushinara had five wives who were born in the families of royal sages—Nriga, Krimi, Nava, Darva and Dhrishadvati as the fifth. Ushinara had five sons who were the extenders of the lineage. He obtained these sons when he was old, after he had performed great austerities. Nriga had a son named Nriga.[328] Krimi had one named Krimi. Nava had a son named Nava.[329] Darva had one named Suvrata. O king! Through Dhrishadvati, Ushinara had a son named Shibi. O son! Shibi’s descendants are known as Shivayas and Nriga’s as Youdheyas. Nava’s city is Navarashtra and Krimi’s is Krimila. Suvrata’s is known as Ambashtha. Hear about Titikshu’s offspring. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Titikshu became the king in the eastern direction. His son was the mighty-armed Ushadratha, whose son was Phena. Phena’s son was Sutapa and Sutapa’s son was Bali. Though this king was born in a human womb, he used golden arrows. In ancient times, this king used to be the great yogi, Bali.[330] He had five sons who extended the lineage on earth. Anga was born first and Vanga and Suhma came after that. Next there were Pundra and Kalinga. These are said to be the Baleya[331] kshatriyas. Baleya brahmanas also extended their lineages on earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Delighted, Brahma granted boons to Bali. These ensured that he would be a great yogi and would have a lifespan that would endure for one kalpa. He would also control and establish four varnas on earth. Having been thus addressed by the lord, Bali obtained supreme peace. O king! After a long period of time, he obtained that state. Hear about the five regions of Vanga, Anga, Suhma, Kalinga and Pundra and the offspring of Anga. Anga’s son was the great Dadhivahana, Indra among kings. Dadhivahana’s son was King Diviratha. Diviratha’s son was like Shakra in his valour. He was learned and his name was Dharmaratha. His son was Chitraratha. The great-souled Dharmaratha performed a sacrifice on Mount Vishnupada and drank soma with Shakra there. Chitraratha's son was Dasharatha. He was famous as Lomapada and his daughter was Shanta. Dasharatha's son was the brave and immensely famous Chaturanga. This extender of the lineage was born through Rishyashringa's powers.[332] Chaturanga's son is famous as Prithulaksha. Prithulaksha's son was the immensely famous king, Champa. Champa's city was Champa,[333] which was earlier known as Malini. Through the favours of Purnabhadra,[334] Champa had a son named Haryanga. For him, Vibhandaka used mantras and brought down the supreme mount, the elephant that could repulse enemies, down to earth.[335] Haryanga's son was Karna and his son was Vikarna. Vikarna had one hundred sons who extended Anga's lineage. All the kings in Anga's lineage have thus been recounted by me. They were great-souled and devoted to the truth. They were maharathas who had offspring.

'O great king! Now hear about the lineage of Richeyu, Roudrashva's son. O king! This is the lineage in which you have been born. O king! Richeyu's son was King Matinara. Matinara had three sons who were extremely devoted to dharma. They were Tamsurodha, Pratiratha and Subahu. All of them were devoted to dharma. They bathed themselves in the vows of the Vedas, were truthful in speech and were devoted to the brahman. O Janamejaya! There was a maiden named Ila who studied and knew about the brahman. She was bestowed on Tamsu. The royal sage Tamsu Surodha had an immensely illustrious son named Dharmanetra.[336] He was brave and devoted to the brahman. His wife was Upadanavi. Upadanavi had four sons who extended Surodha's lineage—Duhshanta, Suhshanta, Pravira and Anagha. Duhshanta's heir was the valiant Bharata. He was also known as the great Sarvadamana and he possessed the strength of one thousand elephants. Through Shakuntala, the immensely famous Duhshanta had this son, who would become an emperor. It is after Bharata that all the Bharatas have been named. O lord of the earth! O son! Bharata's sons were destroyed because of their mothers' rage. I have told you about it then.[337] O king! The great sage Brihaspati was the son of Angiras. This lord[338] had a son named Bharadvaja, who performed a great sacrifice. Earlier, all the sacrifices[339] performed for the sake of a son had been unsuccessful. Therefore, when a son was born through the sacrifice performed by Bharadvaja, he was named Vitatha.[340] Vitatha had five sons—Suhotra, Sutahotara, Gaya, Garga and the great-souled Kapila. Sutahotara had two sons—the great-spirited Kashika and the lord Gritsamati. Gritsamati's sons were brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. O king! Kashika's son was Dirghatama and his descendants are known as the Kasheyas. Dirghatama had a learned son named Dhanvantari. Dhanvantari's son is famous as Ketuman. Ketuman's son is said to be the brave Bhimaratha. He is also famous as Divodasa, the destroyer of all the rakshasas. O king! At that time, the city of Varanasi had been depopulated by a rakshasa named Kshemaka. O bull among men! It had thus been cursed by the intelligent and great-souled Nikumbha.[341] The city was uninhabited for one thousand years. When this curse was pronounced, Divodasa, the lord of men, built a new and beautiful city beyond the boundaries of his kingdom, on the banks of the Gomati. Bhadrashrenya had one hundred sons who were supreme archers. Having slain them, Divodasa, the lord of men, made the city inhabited. Divodasa's son was the brave King Pratardana. Pratardana had two sons, Vatsa and Bhargava. The prince Alarka[342] was known in this world as King Sannati. The lord of the earth destroyed the descendants of the Haihayas.[343] The great-souled Durdama was one of Bhadrashrenya's sons. However, because he was a child, Divodasa had shunned and spared him. He[344] forcefully seized his ancestral kingdom back from Divodasa. King Bhimaratha's[345] son was Ashtaratha.[346] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! Following the norms followed by kshatriyas, his young sons were killed and this brought an end to the enmity. Alarka[347] became the king of Kashi. He was devoted to the truth and to brahmanas. He ruled for six thousand and six hundred years. He was youthful in form and extended the lineage of the Kashis. Through the favours of Lopamudra,[348] he obtained an extremely long life. When the period of the curse was over, the mighty-armed one slew the rakshasa Kshemaka. The king built the beautiful city of Varanasi and reinhabited it. Alarka's son was the immensely illustrious Kshema. Kshema's son was Ketuman and his son was Varshaketu. Varshaketu's son was named Vibhu, the lord of men. Anarta was Vibhu's son and his son was Sukumara. Sukumara's son was maharatha Satyaketu. He had an immensely energetic son who became a king who was extremely devoted to dharma. His name was Vatsa and the region is therefore called Vatsabhumi. This is a region that the

Bhargavas travel on. These are the sons of Angiras who were born in the Bhargava lineage. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras among them.

‘Suhotra had a son named Brihat. Brihat had three sons—Ajamidha, Dvimidha and the valiant Purumidha. Ajamidha had three illustrious women as wives—Nili, Keshini and the beautiful Dhumini. Through Keshini, Ajamidha has a powerful son named Jahnu, who performed the great sacrifice that is known as the immense *sarvamedha* sacrifice. While this was going on, Ganga desired to have him as her husband and advanced towards him. When he did not desire this, Ganga started to flood the sacrificial ground. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the sacrificial ground was being flooded in all directions, Suhotra’s descendant angrily told Ganga, “I will drink up the water that you are flooding the three worlds with. O Ganga! You will instantly reap the consequences of your pride.” The maharshis saw that the great-souled one began to drink up the Ganga. They entreated the immensely fortunate one and she came be known as Jahnavi, his daughter. Jahnu married Kaveri, the daughter of Yuvanashva. Because of Ganga’s curse, half of her body later became a river.[349] Jahnu had a beloved and valiant son named Ajaka. Ajaka’s son was Balakashva, lord of the earth. Kushika, who was extremely attached to hunting, was his son. This king was reared with Pahlavas and other forest dwellers. The lord Kushika tormented himself through austerities, so that he might have a son who was Indra’s equal. Frightened that this might happen, Shakra took birth as his son. Maghavan himself was born as Kushika’s son, King Gadhi. Gadhi’s sons were Vishvamitra, King Vishvaratha, Vishvajit and Vishvakrit. O king! His daughter was Satyavati. Through Satyavati, Richika had Jamadagni as a son. Vishvamitra’s sons are famous as Devarata and the others. They are renowned in the three worlds. Listen to their names. There were Devashrava and Kati—the Katyayanas are said to be descended from them. Hiranyaksha was descended from Shalapati and the Renuyas from Renuka. O king! The Samkritya, Galava and Moudgalya gotras are famous. They are reknowned as the great-souled Koushikas. Among them are said to be Panini, Vabhrava, Dhananjaya, King Devarata, Salankayana, Soushrava, Lohitya, Yamaduta and Karishaya. O king! There are other Koushikas who are famous as Saindhavayanas. It has been said that many Koushika rishis intermarried among themselves. O great king! Because of these alliances between the brahmana rishis, the Koushikas, and the Pouravas, many famous lineages of brahmanas and kshatriyas emerged. Among Vishvamitra's sons, Shunahshepa is said to be the eldest. This Bhargava, supreme among sages, obtained the status of becoming a Koushika.[350] Vishvamitra had seven other sons, Shabara and the others. Through Dhrishadvati, Vishvamitra had a son named Ashtaka. Ashtaka's son was Louhi.

'I have so far recounted those who were descended from Jahnu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Now hear about Ajamidha's other line. Through Nili, Ajamidha had a son named Sushanti. Purujati was Sushanti's son and Purujati's son was Bahyashva. Bahyashva had five sons who were the equals of the immortals. They were Mudgala, Srinjaya, King Brihadisha, the brave Yavinara and Krimilashva as the fifth. These five protected a famous region. Know that the prosperous region protected by these five, populated by virtuous people, is Panchala.[351] "This is enough to protect this spot." Mudgala's sons were the extremely illustrious Moudgalyas. Through Indrasena, Vadyasvha was born.[352] The great-souled Srinjaya had a son named Panchavana and Panchavana's son was King Somadatta. Somadatta's son was the immensely illustrious Sahadeva. Sahadeva's son was King Somaka. Somaka's son was Jantu, who had one hundred sons. The youngest of these was Prishata, the lord who was Drupada's father.

'Dhumini, Ajamidha's third queen, desired sons. O lord of the earth! Your forefathers are descended from her. Desiring sons, the queen immersed herself in observing vows. Desiring sons, the queen resorted to the vow of brahmacharya. She tormented herself through austerities for one hundred years, a feat that is extremely difficult for women to observe. She ate auspicious food in limited quantities. Following the ordinances, she poured oblations into the fire. O Janamejaya! She observed agnihotra and slept on a mat of kusha grass. When the queen was thus engaged, Ajamidha united with her. She gave birth to Riksha, who was handsome, with a complexion like that of smoke. Samvarana was Riksha's son and Samvarana's son was Kuru, who abandoned Prayaga and set up Kurukshetra. This was a beautiful and sacred spot, frequented by auspicious ones. His lineage is extremely vast and you Kouravas are named after him. Kuru had four sons—Sudhanva, Sudhanu, the mighty-armed Parikshit and Pravara—whom the enemies could not vanquish. Parikshit's son is Janamejaya, who is extremely devoted to dharma.[353] The names of the other sons were Shrutasena, Ugrasena and Bhimasena. Janamejaya had two sons named Suratha and Mahimat. Suratha had a valiant son named Viduratha. Viduratha's son was the maharatha Riksha. This is the second king who possessed that name. O king! In your lineage, there have been two Rikshas, two Parikshits, three Bhimasenas and two Janamejayas. The second Riksha's son was Bhimasena. Pratipa was Bhimasena's son and Pratipa's sons were the three maharathas Shantanu, Devapi and Bahlika. O king! You have been born in a lineage that comes from Shantanu's offspring. O lord of the earth! Bahlika's kingdom was known as Saptabahvya. Bahlika's son was the extremely illustrious Somadatta. Somadatta had sons named Bhuri, Bhurishrava and Shala. Devapi became a sage who was a teacher for the gods. The great-souled Chyavana happily accepted him as an adopted son. Shantanu accepted the burden and became the king of the Kouravas.[354] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through Kali,[355] he had a son named Vichitravirya. This was Shantanu's beloved and unblemished son, with dharma in his soul. In Vichitravirya's field, Krishna Dvaipayana had sons named Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura.[356] Pandu's son was Dhananjaya and Dhananjaya's son was Soubhadra.[357] O lord of men! Abhimanyu's son, Parikshit, was your father. O king! This is the Pourava lineage, into which, you have been born.

'I will tell you about the lineages of Turvasu, Druhya, Anu and Yadu. Turvasu's sons were Vahni, Vahne and Gobhanu. Gobhanu's son was the undefeated king, Trishanu. Trishanu's son was Karandhama and his son was Marutta. I have earlier told you about another King Marutta, who was Avikshit's son. Since this king was without a son, he undertook sacrifices and gave away copious quantities of dakshina. The lord of the earth had a daughter named Sammata. As dakshina, he gave her away to the great-souled Samvarta and obtained an unblemished son in the form of Pourava Duhshanta.[358] O supreme among kings! In this way, like the onset of old age, Yayati's curse penetrated the lineage of Pourava Turvasu.[359] Duhshanta's son was Sharutthama, the lord of men. Sharutthama's son was Akrida and Akrida had four sons—Pandya, Kerala, Kola and King Chola. The prosperous countries of Pandya, Chola and Kerala were named after them. O king! Druhya's son was

King Babhrusena. His son was Angarasetu, who was also known as the lord of the wind gods. In a battle, after an extremely great encounter that lasted for fourteen months, Yuvanashva's son killed the powerful one.[360] Angara's son was King Gandhara. It is after him that the great kingdom of Gandhara has been named. The horses from the land of Gandhara are supreme among horses. Anu's son was Dharma and his son was Dhrita. Dhrita had a son named Duduha and Pracheta was his son. Pracheta's son was Sucheta. I have recounted Anu's lineage.

'Yadu had five sons who were like the sons of the gods—Sahasrada, Payoda, Kroshtu, Nila and Anjika. O king! Sahasrada had three sons who were extremely devoted to dharma—Haihaya, Haya and Venuhaya. It has been said that Haihaya had a son named Dharmanetra. Dharmanetra's son was Kanta and Kanta had four sons—Kritavirya, Kritouja, Kritadhanva and Kritagni. It was from the fourth son, Kritavirya, that Arjuna was born.[361] He possessed one thousand arms and became the lord of the seven continents. On a chariot that was as resplendent as the sun, he single-handedly conquered the entire earth. For one hundred years, he performed extremely difficult austerities and tormented himself. Kartavirya worshipped Datta, who had been born from Atri's lineage.[362] The greatly energetic Datta granted him four boons. As his first supreme boon, he desired that he might possess one thousand arms. As the second, he desired that if he turned towards adharma, a virtuous person should restrain him. As the third, he desired that he should be able to conquer the earth through his ferocity, while being devoted to dharma. As the fourth, he desired that he would defeat many in battle and kill thousands of enemies, but while being engaged in an encounter, would be slain by someone who was superior in fighting. He was a lord of yoga. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through his yoga and his maya, when he fought in a battle, the one thousand arms indeed manifested themselves.[363] Following the proper norms and using his ferocity, he conquered the entire earth, with its continents and habitations, with its cities and its oceans. Following the decreed ordinances, he performed seven hundred sacrifices in those seven continents. O Janamejaya! This is what we have heard. In all the sacrifices, the mighty-armed one gave away copious quantities of dakshina. All the sacrificial stakes and all the sacrificial altars were made out of gold. O great king! All the gods, stationed on their ornamented celestial vehicles, and the gandharvas and the apsaras, always attended these sacrifices.

'There was a learned gandharva named Narada,[364] the son of Varidasa. He was astounded at the grandeur of all this and recited a chant. "Indeed, no other king can follow the path Kartavirya has taken and match him in sacrifices, donations, austerities, valour and learning. Even when he used his chariot to advance into the seven continents with a sword, a shield and bow and arrows, men saw that a yogi was traversing those seven continents."[365] As alms, the valiant one offered the seven continents to the fire god.[366] At this, the lord Apava angrily cursed Arjuna. "O Haihaya! You have not spared that part of the forest which belongs to me. Therefore, though you have been successful in accomplishing extremely difficult deeds, those will be surpassed by Pandava Kouravya Arjuna, dear to Kunti. The powerful and ascetic brahmana, Bhargava,[367] will swiftly crush you, sever your one thousand arms and kill you." O afflicter of enemies! That lord of men followed dharma and used his power to protect his subjects, so that their possessions were not destroyed. Because of the great sage's curse, Rama delivered death to him. O Kouravya! This is a boon that he had himself asked for earlier. The great-souled one had one hundred sons. All of them were accomplished in the use of weapons, powerful, brave, illustrious and had dharma in their souls. But out of these, only five were left—Shurasena, Shura, Dhrishtokta, Krishna and Jayadhvaja. Of these, Jayadhvaja was Avanti's great king. Kartavirya's sons were brave maharathas. Jayadhvaja's son was the immensely strong Talajangha. It has been heard that his one hundred sons are known as the Talajanghas. O great king! Vitihotra, Sujata, Bhoja, Avanti and Toundikera—these are famous as Talajanghas and are from the lineage of the great-souled Haihayas. The names of many noble ones born in the lineage of the Bharatas are recounted. O king! Among the Yadavas, there are many performers of auspicious deeds, Vrisha and others. Vrisha's son was Madhu and Madhu had one hundred sons. These descendants of Vrisha were known as Vrishanas or Vrishnis. Since they are all descended from Madhu, they are also said to be the Madhavas. Those descended from Yadu are known as the Yadavas, though they formerly used to be called the Haihayas. If a person always recounts the story of Kartavirya's birth, his riches are never destroyed. Instead, what has been lost is regained. O lord of the earth! These are the five lineages of the sons of Yayati. O great king! Just as the five elements nurture all mobile and immobile objects, these brave ones are praised in the worlds and hold up the worlds. A king who knows about dharma and *artha* listens to the creation of these five lineages and such a lord also has his own five offspring[368] under subjugation. He obtains five boons that are extremely difficult to obtain in this world. These are a long life, fame, riches, sons and prosperity. O descendant of the Bharata lineage. The account of the creation of these five lineages must be heard and retained. O Indra among kings. Now hear about the lineage of that excellent man, Kroshtu. He was descended from Yadu, organized sacrifices and performed auspicious deeds. If a person hears about Kroshtu's lineage, he is freed from all sins. It is in his lineage that Vishnu Hari, the lord who extended the Vrishni lineage, was born.'

Chapter 24

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kroshtu had two wives, Gandhari and Madri. Gandhari gave birth to the extremely strong Anamitra. Madri’s two sons were Yudhajit and Devamidusha. From these three sources, their descendants extended the Vrishni lineage. Madri’s sons had two sons, Vrishni and Andhaka.[369] Vrishni had two sons, Shvaphalka and Chitraka. O great king! Shvaphalka had dharma in his soul. Therefore, wherever he happened to be, there was no disease. Nor was there fear or drought. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On one occasion, the lord who is the chastiser of Paka[370] did not rain down in the kingdom of the king of Kashi for three years. He[371] made the extremely revered Shvaphalka reside in his kingdom and Harivahana[372] showered down. In return, the king of Kashi bestowed his daughter on Shvaphalka as a wife. Every day, she used to give a cow to a brahmana. So she was known as Gamdini.[373] Shvaphalka’s son was Akrura. He was generous and persevering and performed sacrifices. He was learned and devoted to guests. He gave away large quantities of dakshina. There were also Upamadgu, Madgu, Mridura, Arimejaya, Arikshepa, Upeksha, Shatrughna, Arimardana, Charmavrit, Yudhivarma, Gridhra, Bhoja, Antaka, Avaha and Prativaha.[374] There was a beautiful daughter named Sundari. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Through the beautiful-limbed Ugrasena,[375] Akrura had two sons named Prasena and Upadeva, who were as radiant as the gods. Chitraka had sons named Prithu, Viprithu, Ashvagriva, Ashvabahu, Suparshvaka, Gaveshana, Arishtanemi, Ashva, Sudharma, Dharmabhrit, Subahu and Bahubahu. He had two daughters named Shravishtha and Shravana.

‘Through Ashmaki, Devamidhusha had a son named Shura. Shura had ten sons through his queen, Bhojya. The eldest was Vasudeva, also known as Anakadundubhi.[376] When he was born, drums were sounded in the firmament. A great sound of drums arose in heaven and a large shower of flowers rained down on Shura’s house. In the entire world of men on earth, there was no one equal to Vasudeva in beauty. He was best among men and his beauty was like that of the full moon. After this were born Devabhaga, Devashrava, Anadhrishti, Kanavaka, Vatsavan, Grinjima, Shyama, Shamika and Gandusha. There were also five beautiful daughters—Prithukirti, Pritha, Shrutadevi, Shrutashrava and Rajadhidevi. Each of these was a mother of brave sons. Kunta married Shrutadevi. The king of Chedi married Shrutashrava and their son was the immensely strong Shishupala. In an earlier life, he was Hiranyakashipu, the king of the daityas. Vriddhasharma married Prithukirti. Their son was the immensely strong Dantavaktra, the lord of Karusha. Pritha was adoped as a daughter[377] and the Kounteyas were born, carrying forward Pandu's line. King Yudhishthira, who knew about dharma, was born from her and Dharma. Bhimasena was born from the wind god. Dhananjaya was born from Indra and became a brave *atiratha*,[378] Shakra's equal in valour.

'Anamitra's son was Shini, the youngest of those in the Vrishni lineage. Shini's son was Satyaka and Satyaka's son was Yuyudhana Satyaki. Devabhaga had an immensely fortunate son named Uddhava. He was said to be supremely learned, like Devashrava. Through Ashmaki, the illustrious Anadhrishti had a son named Nikritashatru. Shrutadeva[379] had a son named Shatrughna. It has been heard that Shrutadeva had another son who was brought up by the ignoble Nishadas. O great king! He was reared by the Nishadas and his name was Ekalavya. Vatsavan had no sons. Therefore, the powerful Vasudeva, Shura's son, gave him his own son Koushika. Gandusha was also without sons, until Vishvaksena[380] gave him four sons—Charudeshna, Sucharu, Panchala and Kritalakshana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Rukmini's mighty-armed and brave son is the youngest of them all and never retreats from battle.[381] Whenever Charudeshna advanced, thousands of crows followed him at the rear, wishing to feed on the ones that Charudeshna would slay. Tantrija and Tantripala were Kanavaka's sons. Grinjima had two brave sons named Vira and Ashvahanu. Shyama's son was Sumitra. Shamika obtained a kingdom. His son was Ajatashatru, the destroyer of enemies. I will now recount the names of Vasudeva's sons. Listen. Originating from three sources, the Vrishnis had many extremely energetic branches. A person who nurtures this account never suffers from a calamity.'

Chapter 25

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Bahlika’s daughter was Rohini, descended from the Puru lineage. O great king! She was Anakadundubhi’s favourite and eldest wife. Through her, he obtained his eldest son, Rama.[382] The other sons were Sarana, Shatha, Durdama, Damana, Shvabhra, Pindaraka and Kushinara. O descendant of the Kuru lineage. Rohini also had a daughter named Chitra, who was given the new name of Subhadra and was known by it. Through Devaki, Vasudeva had the immensely illustrious Shouri[383] as a son. Through Revati, Rama had a beloved son named Nishatha. Through Subhadra, Partha had the charioteer Abhimanyu as a son. Through the princess of Kashi, Akrura had Satyaketu as a son.[384] Vasudeva had seven immensely fortunate wives. Listen to the names of the brave sons that he had. Bhoja and Vijaya were sons through Shantidevi. Vrikadeva and Gada were sons through Sunama. The great-souled Agavaha was a son through Vrikadevi, who was the daughter of the king of Trigarta, whose priest was Shishirayana. He had a question about virility and to test the manliness, placed his hand on the testicles.[385] Having been falsely accused, Gargya was overcome by rage and for twelve years, his complexion assumed the hue of black iron. To prove the accusation wrong, he proceeded to have intercourse with a cowherd girl. However, the cowherd girl was actually an apsara who had assumed the attire of a cowherd girl. Though the unblemished Gargya’s seed was extremely difficult to hold, she nurtured the embryo. It was on the instructions of the wielder of the trident[386] that she had assumed human form and became Gargya’s wife. She thus gave birth to the immensely strong king known as Kalayavana. In a battle, the front half of his body looked like that of a bull, while the rear half looked like that of a horse. The king of the *yavana*s was without a son and reared the child in the interior quarters of his palace.[387] O great king! That is the reason he came to be known as Kalayavana. When he became a king, desiring to fight, he asked the best among the brahmanas about whom he should fight with. The lord Narada told him about the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages. He attacked Mathura with an *akshouhini* of soldiers.[388] Once there, he sent a messenger to the houses of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. With the immensely intelligent Krishna at the forefront, scared as they were of Jarasandha, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas consulted among themselves.[389] Though this is not what they desired, all of them resolved to flee. Showing their respect for the wielder of the *pinaka*,[390] they abandoned the beautiful city of Mathura. They desired to set up their homes in Kushasthali Dvaravati. If a person is pure and is controlled in his senses, and if he listens to the account of Krishna's birth on auspicious occasions, he becomes happy and learned and does not suffer from any debts.'

Chapter 26

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kroshtu had an immensely illustrious son named Vrinjivan. Vrinjivan’s son was Svahi, supreme among those who offered oblations to the gods. Svahi’s son was King Rushadgu, supreme among eloquent ones. Rushadgu performed a great sacrifice at which many kinds of dakshina were offered, so that he might have one hundred sons. The foremost among them was the colourful Chitraratha, with many kinds of deeds. Chitraratha’s son was the brave Shashabindu. He was a supreme royal sage who undertook sacrifices at which large quantities of dakshina were offered. King Prithushrava, extensive in fame, was Shashabindu’s son. He was praised as someone who knew about the Puranas. Prithushrava’s son was Antara. Antara’s son was Suyajna. Suyajna’s son was Ushata, who performed all the sacrifices. Ushata was supreme among those who uphold their own dharma. Shineyu, the tormentor of enemies, was Ushata’s son. Marutta, the king who was a royal sage, was his son. Marutta’s eldest son was Kambalabarhisha. Thinking about the world hereafter, he performed supreme dharma. Kambalabarhisha desired one hundred sons. After those one hundred sons, he obtained Rukmakavacha as a son. In a battle, Rukmakavacha killed one hundred armoured archers, shooting sharp arrows from his bow. He then attained the supreme end.[391] Rukmakavacha’s son was Parajita, the slayer of enemy heroes. Parajita had five immensely valiant sons named Rukmeshu, Prithurukma, Jyamagha, Palita and Hari. Their father gave away Palita and Hari to the king of Videha. Rukmeshu became the king and Prithurukma supported him. The two of them banished Jyamagha from the kingdom and he started to dwell in a hermitage. He found peace in the forest, until he was goaded by some brahmanas. He then mounted a chariot and hoisting a standard, headed for another country. He dwelt alone on the banks of the Narmada, in a city named Mrittikavati, which was on the Narmada. Having conquered Mount Rikshavanta, he next began to dwell in Shuktimati. Jyamagha’s wife was

Chaitra and she was aged and virtuous. Though the king was without a son, he did not take another wife. Having been victorious in a battle, he obtained a maiden. Scared, the lord of men went to his wife and said, “This is a daughter-in-law.” On hearing this, she asked, “Whose daughter-in-law is she?” He replied, “She will be the wife of the son you give birth to.” The maiden then resorted to fierce austerities. Because of that immensely fortunate maiden, the virtuous and aged Chaitra had a son named Vidarbha. Through the learned princess who became a daughter-in-law, Vidarbha later had two brave sons, Kratha and Koushika. They were accomplished in fighting. Vidarbha had another son named Bhima and Bhima’s son was Kunti. Kunti had a son named Dhrishta, who was powerful and irresistible in battle. Dhrishta had three brave sons who were extremely devoted to dharma. Their names were Avanta, Dasharha and the powerful Vishnuhara. Dasharha’s son was Vyoma and his son was Jimuta. Jimuta’s son was Vrikati and Bhimaratha was his son. Bhimaratha had a son named Navaratha. Navaratha had a son named Dasharatha and Shakuni was his son. Shakuni’s son was Karambha and Karambha’s son was King Devarata. Devakshatra was his son. Devakshatra’s son was the great-souled Daivakshatri. Devakshatra’s beloved son seemed to have been born in the womb of the gods. Since his speech was sweet, he was known as Madhu[392] and his lineage is known as that of King Madhu. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Through a princess of Vidarbha, Madhu had a son named Purutvan, who was supreme among men. His mother was a princess of Vidarbha named Bhadravati. His[393] wife belonged to the Ikshvaku lineage. With her as a mother, he had a son named Sattvata. He possessed spirit and all the qualities and extended his fame. A person who knows about the offspring of the great-souled Jyamagha obtains supreme delight and is blessed with offspring.’

Chapter 27

Vaishampayana said, ‘Sattvata was spirited. Through Koushalya, he had sons—Bhajina, Bhajamana, Divya, King Devavridha, the mighty-armed Andhaka and Vrishni, the delight of the Yadu lineage. Hear in detail about the offspring of four of these. Bhajamana’s two wives were the daughters of Srinjaya—Bahyaka and Upabahyaka. Through them, he had many sons. Through Bahyaka, Srinjaya’s daughter, Bhajamana’s sons were Nimi, Kramana, Vishnu, Shura and Puranjaya. Through Upabahyaka, Srinjaya’s daughter, Bhajamana’s sons were Ayutajit, Sahasrajit, Shatajit and Dashaka. King Devavridha performed great austerities, having made up his mind that he desired a son who would possess all the qualities. He controlled his soul and touched the waters of the river Parnasha. Because he constantly touched the water, the river was kindly disposed towards him. The supreme of rivers thought in this way. “This lord of men has turned his mind towards the beneficial. However, he has not yet approached a woman who can bear him such a son. Therefore, I should myself approach him and take part in his vow.” The river assumed the form of a supremely beautiful maiden. The lord, the king, accepted her. After ten months, the supreme among rivers delivered King Devavridha’s son, Babhru, the possessor of all the qualities. Those who know about the Puranas chant the qualities of the great-souled Devavridha and about how he made his pledged lineage come true. “Babhru is best among men and Devavridha is the equal of the gods. We have not heard about a person like him[394] earlier. Nor have we seen such a person, at close quarters, or from a distance.” Babhru, Devavridha’s son, despatched seven thousand and sixty-six men to heaven. He was generous and performed sacrifices. He was intelligent and devoted to brahmanas. He was firm in wielding weapons. He had an extremely great lineage, those known as Martikavata Bhojas. Through the daughter of Kashi, Andhaka had four sons—Kukura, Bhajamana, Shami and Kambalabarhisha. Kukura’s son was Dhrishnu and Dhrishnu’s son was Kapotaroma.

Kapotaroma’s son was Taittiri and his son was Punarvasu. Punarvasu’s son was Abhijit. Abhijit had twins, Ahuka and Ahuki. They are famous and supreme among those who are renowned. This chant about Ahuka is cited. “He was surrounded by white horses. He was great and young in form. With eighty shields, Ahuka advanced in front of the army.” Among those who followed this infinitely energetic Bhoja, there was no one who did not have one hundred sons, did not possess one thousand and one hundred weapons, was not the performer of auspicious deeds and was not the observer of sacrifices. With the Bhoja’s permission, there would be ten thousand elephants in the eastern direction, with silver and gold harnesses. There would be another one thousand in the northern direction. The Bhoja Ahuka brought the lords of the earth under his subjugation, on a chariot that tinkled with bells. The Andhakas bestowed Ahuka’s sister on the lord of Avanti. Through the daughter of Kashi, Ahuka had two sons—Devaka and Ugrasena. They were like those born from the wombs of the gods. Devaka had four sons who were like the residents of heaven—Devavan, Upadeva, Sudeva and Devarakshita. He had seven daughters that he bestowed on Vasudeva—Devaki, Shantideva, Sudeva, Devarakshita, Vrikadevi, Upadevi and Sunamni as the seventh.[395] Ugrasena had nine sons and Kamsa was the eldest. The others were Nyagrodha, Sunamna, Kankashanku, Subhumaya, Rashtrapala, Sutanu, Anadhrishti and Pushtiman. They had five sisters—Kamsa,[396] Kamsavati, Sutanu,[397] Rashtrapali and the beautiful Kamka. Ugrasena and his offspring are those who were generated in the Kukura lineage. A man who sustains the account of the infinitely energetic Kukura lineage in his soul, obtains a lineage with a large number of sons.’

Chapter 28

Vaishampayana said, ‘Bhajamana’s son was Viduratha, foremost among charioteers.[398] Viduratha’s son was the brave Rajadhideva. Rajadhideva then had brave sons—Datta, Atidatta, the powerful Shonashva, Shvetavahana, Shami, Dandasharma, Dattashatru and Shatrujit. Their sisters were Shravana and Shravishtha. Shami’s son was Pratikshatra and Pratikshatra’s son was Svayambhoja. Svayambhoja’s son was Hridika. All of Hridika’s sons were terrible in valour. Kritavarma was the eldest and Shatadhanva was in the middle. There were also Devanta, Naranta, Bhishaka, Vaitarana, Sudanta, Adhidanta, Kinasha, Dama and Dambhaka. Devanta had a learned son, Kambalabarhisha. His other sons were the brave Asamouja and Nasamouja. Since Asamouja possessed no sons, it is said that Andhaka bestowed his sons, Sudamshtra, Sucharu and Krishna, on him.

‘Kroshtu had two wives, Gandhari and Madri. Gandhari gave birth to Sumitra, who brought delight to his friends.[399] Madri’s sons were Yudhajit and Devamidusha. Anamitra was victorious and extremely strong. There was no one who was not his friend. Anamitra had a son named Nighna[400] and Nighna’s two sons were Prasena and Satrajit, who were the conquerors of enemy soldiers. While he dwelt in Dvaravati, from the ocean, Prasena obtained a divine and extremely large gem named Syamantaka. Placed in the abode of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, this gem produced gold. The rain-god showered down at the right time and there was no fear of disease. From Prasena, Govinda desired this gem, Syamantaka.[401] However, though he was capable of doing so, he did not seize it. On one occasion, wearing the gem, Prasena went out on a hunt. While he was roaming around in the forest, for the sake of the gem, a lion killed him. The immensely strong king of the bears chased after the lion and killed it. Seizing the gem, it entered its cave. Knowing that Krishna had desired the gem, all the Vrishnis and the Andhakas were scared that Krishna had killed Prasena for the gem. Knowing of their suspicions, the one with dharma in his soul didn’t tell them that he had not done the deed. Instead, he resolved to go to the forest and bring the gem back. Krishna and the men who wished him well[402] followed Prasena’s footsteps and searched the supreme Mount Rikshavanta and the excellent Mount Vindhya. After he was tired out from searching, the great-minded one saw the dead bodies of Prasena and his horse. However, he did not find the gem. Not very far from Prasena’s body, he then saw the lion’s dead body. Because of the footprints of the bear, he deduced that it had been killed by a bear. Following those footprints, Madhava entered the cave. In the huge den of the bear, he heard a female voice. O king! This was the nurse speaking to Jambavat’s[403] young son, using the Syamantaka gem to play with him. The nurse said, “Do not cry. The lion killed Prasena and Jambavat killed the lion. O excellent child! Do not weep. Here is Syamantaka.” These words swiftly emerged from inside the den. The wielder of the Sharnga bow[404] entered the hole and saw Jambavat. Inside the den, Vasudeva[405] fought with Jambavat. Govinda used his fists and fought for twenty-one days. When Krishna entered the hole and did not emerge, the others, with Vasudeva[406] at the forefront, returned to Dvaravati and reported that Krishna had been killed. Meanwhile, Krishna defeated the immensely strong Jambavat. The king of the bears honoured him and bestowed his daughter, Jambavati, on him. Because of the entreaties of the king of the bears, which were pure, he also accepted the gem Syamantaka and emerged from the hole. Having accepted the gem, Achyuta,[407] the one with a cleansed soul, gave it to Satrajit, in an assembly of all the Satvatas. Thus, Krishna, the slayer of enemies, freed himself of the false accusation. By obtaining the Syamantaka back, he cleansed himself of the presumed sin that had tainted him.

‘Satrajit had ten wives and one hundred sons through them. Three of them are famous and Bhangakara was the eldest. The brave Vatapati and Upasvavan were the others. O lord of men! He also had three daughters who were famous in all the directions—Satyabhama, supreme among women, Vratini, firm in her vows and Padmavati. As wives, he gave them to Krishna. Bhangakara had two sons, Samaksha and Nareyu, both supreme among men. They possessed all the qualities and were famous because of these qualities. Madhu[408] had two sons, Prishni and Yudhajit. Prishni had two sons named Shvaphalka and Chitraka. Shvaphalka obtained the princess of Kashi as a wife. Her name was Gamdini, because she used to donate a cow every day. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She gave birth to the brave and learned Akrura. He was immensely fortunate and performed sacrifices at which copious quantities of dakshina were distributed. The other sons were Upasanga, Madgu, Mridu, Arimardana, Girikshipa, Upeksha, Shatruha, Arimejaya, Charmabhrit, Arivarma, Gridhrabhoja, Nara, Avaha and Prativaha. There was a beautiful daughter named Varangana. She was Samba's famous queen and her daughter was Vasundhara, who possessed beauty and youth and charmed all creatures. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Through Ugrasena's beautiful-bodied daughter, Akrura had two sons named Sudeva and Upadeva. They were as radiant as the gods. Chitraka had sons named Prithu, Viprithu, Ashvasena, Ashvabahu, Suparshvaka, Gaveshana, Arishtanemi, Sutadharma, Dharmabhrit, Subahu and Bahubahu. The daughters were Shravishtha and Shravana. Thus is recited the great account of the false accusation against Krishna. If a person knows about it, a false accusation never touches him.'

Chapter 29

Vaishampayana said, ‘In his heart, for a long time, Akrura had desired the gem Syamantaka and he had also desired the unblemished Satyabhama. A similar desire had been harboured by Shatadhanva, descended from Babhru Bhoja. Krishna handed over the gem Syamantaka to Satrajit. In the middle of the night, the immensely strong Shatadhanva killed Satrajit. Seizing the gem, he gave it to Akrura. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having formed a pact, Akrura accepted the gem. “Let us have a pact and do not tell Achyuta that the gem is with me. We are both going to be attacked by Krishna. There is no doubt that all of Dvaraka will be under my subjugation now.” When her father was slain, the illustrious Satyabhama was afflicted with grief. She ascended a chariot and left for the city of Varanavata.[409] She reached her husband’s side and shedding tears, miserably told him about what Bhoja Shatadhanva had done. With the Pandavas having been burnt, Hari was offering oblations of water to them. For the sake of the lineage of his cousins,[410] he handed over this task to Satyaki.

‘Madhusudana swiftly arrived in Dvaraka. The handsome one spoke these words to his elder brother, the wielder of the plough.[411] “O lord! The lion killed Prasena and Satrajit has been slain by Shatadhanva. It seems to me that Syamantaka is headed towards me and that I will be its owner. Let us quickly ascend a chariot and go and kill that immensely strong Bhoja. O mighty-armed one! Syamantaka will belong to us.” There was a tumultuous encounter between the Bhojas and Krishna. Attacked from all directions, Shatadhanva looked for help towards Akrura. Deciding that Bhoja deserved to be killed by Janardana, Akrura did not help Hridika’s son,[412] though he was capable. He resorted to deceit. Afflicted and afraid, Bhoja’s thoughts turned towards running away. Using a foremost horse, he fled for one hundred *yojana*s.[413] O king! Bhoja possessed a famous horse named Hridaya and it could dash for one hundred yojanas. However, wishing to fight with him, Krishna pursued him. After one hundred yojanas, Hridaya tired and slowed down. On seeing the chariot pursuing him, Shatadhanva's mind was afflicted with grief. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He abandoned the dead horse, which had fallen down on the ground, because of fatigue and exertion. As he fled on foot, on the chariot, Krishna told Rama, "O mighty-armed one! You remain here. My horses are also tired. I will pursue him on foot and seize the gem Syamantaka." Achyuta pursued Shatadhanva on foot. O king! The one who knew about supreme weapons slew him near the boundaries of Mithila. But though he killed the immensely strong Bhoja, he did not see Syamantaka. When Krishna returned, the wielder of the plough told him, "Give me the gem." Krishna replied, "I don't have it." Rama became full of anger and told Janardana. "Shame on you. You have dishonoured me earlier too. I have tolerated it because you are my brother. May you be fortunate. I am departing. I have nothing more to do with you, or with Dvaraka, or with the Vrishnis." Rama, the destroyer of enemies, entered Mithila. The lord of Mithila honoured him and gave him all the objects of desire.

'During this time, the supremely intelligent one of the Babhru lineage collected all the diverse kinds of materials required and incessantly performed sacrifices.[414] The gem was like a talisman and he consecrated himself for the sacrifices to protect it. Gadhi's wise and immensely illustrious descendant did this for the sake of Syamantaka. There were many kinds of objects and the best of riches and jewels. The one with dharma in his soul performed sacrifices for sixty years. The great-souled one's sacrifice has come to be known as Akrura *yajna*. All the many kinds of dakshina and all the diverse objects of pleasure were offered. King Duryodhana went to the lord who was in Mithila.[415] From the powerful Balabhadra,[416] he learnt the divine art of fighting with the mace. Later, with the Vrishni and Andhaka maharathas, the great-souled Krishna sought Rama's favours and brought him back to Dvaraka. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With Satrajit and his relatives having been killed in an encounter, Akrura and the Andhakas became extremely strong. There was a fearful clash within the kin and Krishna remained an indifferent spectator. Akrura and his side was defeated and the chastiser of Paka ceased to shower down.[417] When it did not rain down, the kingdom faced many kinds of difficulties. The Kukuras and Andhakas pacified Akrura. When the lord of generosity returned to Dvaravati again, the one with the thousand eyes[418] showered down and there were waterbodies in Kachchha.[419] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! To please Vasudeva,[420] the intelligent Akrura showed him proper honour and bestowed his sister on him. Through his yoga, Krishna deciphered that the jewel was with the descendant of the Babhru lineage. In the midst of an assembly, Janardana told Akrura, “O lord! You have the gem, supreme among jewels, in your possession. O one who deserves respect! Give it to me. Otherwise, do not show me false honours. For sixty years, you have committed many injuries against me. After this great period of time has elapsed, you must show me proper respect.” Thus addressed by Krishna in the assembly of all the Satvatas, with difficulty, the immensely intelligent one from the Babhru lineage yielded the gem. The scorcher of enemies received it from Babhru’s hands. However, cheerfully, the noble Krishna again returned the gem to Babhru. Having obtained the gem Syamantaka from Krishna’s hands, Gamdini’s son no longer concealed it. He was as radiant as the one with the rays.’[421]

Chapter 30

Janamejaya asked, ‘I wish to hear in detail about the deeds of this slayer of enemies. I wish to hear about the intelligent Hari Krishna, without anything being left out. Tell me progressively about the lord’s incarnations and deeds. You should explain to me his nature in the brahman. The lord Vishnu is the lord of the gods and is the destroyer of enemies. How did the intelligent one become Vasudeva, born in Vasudeva’s lineage?[422] He is auspicious and is surrounded by the immortals, adorned by the performers of virtuous deeds. Having abandoned the world of the gods, how did he arrive in the world of mortals? The lord’s powers pervade heaven and earth and he is the origin of gods and men. He is one with a celestial soul. How did he come to be associated with men? He is the one who whirls the cycle, yet he was born amongst inferior men. He is the supreme one who wields the chakra. How did his intelligence turn towards becoming human? He is the one who protects the cycle of the universe and all the worlds. How did the lord Vishnu, the protector, descend on earth? He is the creator and the soul of the great elements. He is the one who sustains and nurtures them. He is the womb of prosperity. How could he have been born in the womb of a woman on earth? He is the one who conquered the worlds and divided them into three, with a part earmarked for the thirty gods. His powers divided the universe into three worlds and the three classes of paths.[423] When the time for destruction arrives, he drinks up the entire universe and creates a form that is full of water. In ancient times, the one with an ancient soul assumed the form of a boar. The destroyer of enemies brought up the earth on the points of his tusks.[424] In ancient times, for Puruhuta’s[425] sake, the supreme among gods conquered the undecaying three worlds and gave them and the earth to the gods. In ancient times, having assumed the form of a lion, he tore the immensely valorous daitya Hiranyakashipu’s body into two parts and killed him.[426] In ancient times, the lord assumed the form of the subterranean fire known as Samvartaka.[427] In the nether regions beneath the ocean, he drinks oblations offered in the form of water. He is the brahman, with one thousand feet, one thousand rays and one thousand forms. From one yuga to another yuga, he has been invoked as the god with one thousand heads. The grandfather's[428] abode arose from his navel when the entire universe was like a single ocean. A lotus rubbed against another lotus was like the kindling. He killed the daityas in the *tarakamaya* battle.[429] He assumed a form that was of all the gods, wielding all the various weapons. With Garuda holding him aloft, he brought down Kalanemi.[430] He obtained amrita from the northern shores of the ocean. When there is great darkness, he lies down in eternal yoga. In ancient times, resorting to divine austerities, he gave birth to the gods through Aditi.[431] After they were born, he saved Shakra from difficulties, when he was assailed by large numbers of daityas. He covered the worlds through his steps and banished the daityas to a residence in the oceans.[432] He ensured heaven for the gods and made Puruhuta the lord of the gods in heaven. He devised the rites for *garhapatya* and the *anvaharya* ordinances.[433] He devised techniques for the *ahavaniya* fire,[434] the sacrificial altar, the kusha grass and the sacrificial ladle. He also did this for pots and other sacrificial vessels and the bath at the end of the sacrifice. He created the three spokes of a sacrifice and the offering of *havya* and *kavya*.[435] Havya is earmarked for the gods and kavya for the ancestors. He decreed the rites for determining shares at sacrifices and the rituals of a sacrifice. He is the one who knows yoga. He is the one who determined sacrificial altars, kindling, soma, strainers for the soma, the wooden frame around the fire, the objects required at a sacrifice and the choice of the place for the fire. For the best of sacrifices, he framed the rules for assisting priests, performers of sacrifices and sacrificial animals. Through his own deeds, the supreme lord classified this in ancient times. Depending on the yuga, he assumes a corresponding form and roams around the worlds. He created *kshana*, *nimesha*, *kashtha*, *kala*, past, present, future, *muhurta*, lunar day, month, solar day, year, season and the different kinds of measurements of time prevalent among men.[436] He laid down the principles for the development of lifespans and the signs associated with bodily beauty. He is responsible for the three varnas,[437] the three worlds, the three kinds of knowledge,[438] the three kinds of fire,[439] the three kinds of time,[440] the three kinds of deeds,[441] the three kinds of techniques[442] and the three kinds of qualities.[443] Through his infinite deeds, the eternal one created the three worlds. He is the creator of all creatures and qualities. His soul pervades all creatures and qualities. He is the one who finds delight in yoga. He is the lord of what is past and what is in the future. Therefore, he is the lord of destiny. But men only seek to comprehend him through their senses. He is the refuge for those who observe dharma. He takes away the refuge of those who perform evil deeds. He created the four varnas and he is the one who protects these four varnas. He is the one who knows about the four kinds of knowledge.[444] He is the one who resorts to the four ashramas.[445] He is the one who is in the firmament, beyond the directions. He is the one who separates the wind from that which is not the wind. He is the light of both the sun and the moon. He is the lord of yoga. He is the one who dispels the form of darkness. He is said to be supreme radiance. He is said to be supreme austerities. He is said to be supreme among the supreme. He is the supreme paramatman. He is the origin of the celestial Adityas. He is the lord who is the destruction of the daityas. He is the destruction that comes at the end of a yuga. He is the destruction that brings an end to the worlds. He is the bridge that acts like a bridge to the worlds. He is the sacrifice and the rituals of the sacrifice. He is what is known by those who know about the Vedas. He is the lord with power in his soul. His form is in Soma. His form is in the fire that is in all creatures. He is as radiant as the fire. His form is in the minds of all humans. He is in all ascetics in the form of austerities. He is humility in those who follow good policy. He is energy in those who are energetic. For the sake of the supreme welfare of the worlds, he is the creator of everything that is created. He is the image for those who want to revere the image. He is mobility amidst those who are mobile. The wind was created from space. The fire, the breath of life, was created from the wind. Fire is the breath of life for the gods. Madhusudana is the breath of life for the fire.

'Blood results from succulent juices.[446] It is said that flesh results from blood. Fat is born from blood and bones are said to result from fat. Marrow results from bones and semen is born from marrow. Semen penetrates the womb. Thus, succulent juices are the foundation of all action. Therefore, water possesses a primary role in the first creation that results from Soma. Know that what happens in the womb is the second creation. Semen is the essence of

Soma. The menstrual blood has fire as its essence. Creation results from these juices and semen, that is, a combination of the moon and fire. Semen results from phlegm and blood results from bile.[447] The heart is the place for phlegm and the navel is the place for bile. In the middle of the body, the heart is said to be the place for the mind. The fire god resides between the navel and the throat. Know that the mind is Prajapati. Soma should be thought of as phlegm. Bile is said to be the fire. Therefore, the entire universe is a combination of fire and Soma. Just as clouds are created, the wind and the paramatman enter through a process of intercourse. Inside the body, it grows and is again divided into five types—*prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana* and *vyana*.[448] Prana occupies the first position. It circles around and ensures growth. Apana is towards the bottom of the body and udana is towards the top of the body. Vyana distributes it and samana withdraws it. The creature is pervaded by these and the senses come into being. Earth, wind, space, water and energy as the fifth—using their own respective combinations, these lead to the manifestation of the senses. The body is a manifestation of earth. Prana is a manifestation of wind. The gaps inside the body are a manifestation of space. The juices flowing out of the body are a manifestation of water. The light in the eyes is a manifestation of energy. The mind is said to be that which controls everything. This includes carnal pleasures. Semen originates because of this. This is how the supreme being created all the eternal worlds. How did the imperishable Vishnu come to arrive in the human world? O brahmana! I have a doubt about this and I am struck with great wonder. How did the one who is the supreme among destinations come to assume a human form? I have heard about the origin of my lineage and about my ancestors. I now wish to progressively hear about Vishnu and the Vrishnis. The gods and the daityas have said that Vishnu is a great wonder. O great sage! Tell me about the extraordinary incident of Vishnu's origin.[449] Tell me about this marvelous account, one that will bring happiness. The infinitely energetic Vishnu is famous for his strength and his valour. Vishnu's deeds on earth have made the creatures marvel. Tell me the truth about these.'

Chapter 31

Vaishampayana said, ‘The questions you have asked about the wielder of the Sharnga bow are great in import. I will tell you to the best of my capacity. Hear about the Vaishnava fame. It is good fortune that your mind has turned towards hearing about Vishnu’s powers. I will tell you everything about Vishnu. Hear about his divine conduct. He is described as one with one thousand faces, one thousand eyes, one thousand feet and one thousand heads. He is the undecaying god who acts in one thousand ways. He is radiant and possesses one thousand tongues. He is the lord with one thousand eyebrows. He has one thousand forms and one thousand beginnings. He is the undecaying one with one thousand arms. He is the time for offering an oblation. He is the act of offering oblations. He represents the oblations. He is the one who offers the oblations. He represents the sacred vessels, the sacrificial altar, the consecration, the plate and the pestle. He is the ladle, soma, the sacrificial basket, the sacrificial rod and the sacrificial strainer. He is the dakshina and the offerings. He is the adhvaryu, the chanter of Sama, the brahmana, the assistant priest, the sacrificial seat and the act of pressing out the soma juice. He is the sacrificial post, the kindling, the sacrificial spoon, the sacrificial vessel, the sacrificial ladle and the sacrificial mortar.[450] He is the front of the sacrificial arena. He is the hotri and represents the bricks used in the altar. He represents rites of atonement and arghya. He is the grain and the kusha grass. He is the mantra that conveys the sacrifice. He is the fire, the different shares at the sacrifice and the one who conveys these shares.[451] He is the first receiver of the offerings. He is the one who accepts the soma. He is the oblations offered into the flames. He is the water used in the sacrifice. Brahmanas who know about the Vedas speak about sacrifices and the eternal lord in this way. Vishnu is the lord of the gods. He is the intelligent one who wears the *srivatsa* mark on his chest.[452] He has manifested himself in one thousand ways on diverse occasions. The grandfather has said that he will again manifest himself in many ways in the future. O great king! You have asked me about that sacred, pure and divine account. Why did the illustrious Vishnu take birth in Vasudeva's family? I will tell you about it. Listen to the complete account. Hear about the greatness of Vasudeva[453] and the immensely radiant one's conduct. For the welfare of the gods and the mortals and for the prosperity of the worlds, the one who is in the souls of all creatures manifests himself through his deeds. I will tell you about those manifestations, ones that are sacred and are characterized by divine qualities. The lord of the universe sleeps for one thousand yugas. When one thousand yugas are over, the god of the gods manifests himself through his deeds. Brahma, Kapila, Parameshthi,[454] the gods, the saptarshis, the immensely illustrious Tryambaka,[455] the immensely great Sanatkumara and the great-souled Manu, the illustrious creator of subjects—all these ancient ones exist in that ancient god, who is like a blazing fire in his energy. When all mobile and immobile objects are destroyed, he exists in the midst of that ocean. At that time, the gods, the asuras and men are destroyed and so are the serpents and the rakshasas.

'At such a time, the danavas Madhu and Kaitabha were extremely difficult to assail and desired to fight. He killed them through his powers and granted them an infinite boon.[456] The one with the lotus in his navel slept on that ocean of waters and in ancient times, the gods, with the large numbers of rishis, were born from that lotus. That is the reason this cycle of creation is known as Poushkara.[457] The sacred texts of the Vedas speak about this ancient account.

'The great-souled one manifested himself in the form of a boar and this is pleasant to hear. This is when Vishnu, best among the gods, assumed the form of a boar. The Vedas were his feet. His tusks constituted the sacrificial altar. His teeth constituted the rites. His face was the place for the sacrificial fire. His tongues were the fire. His body hair was the *darbha* grass. Brahma was the immensely ascetic one's head. Day and night were his eyes. The sacred texts of the Vedangas were his divine ornaments. His nose was the ghee. His snout constituted the sacrificial vessels. His great roar was the Sama hymns. He was full of dharma and the truth. He was handsome and his steps were revered because of their valour. His nails were the rites of atonement. The sacrificial animals were that patient and gigantic animal's thighs. His entrails were the udgatris. The oblations were his penis. The giant herbs were his testicles. The air was his inner atman. His curved trunk constituted the mantras. His blood was soma. The sacrificial altar was his shoulder. His smell constituted the oblations. His swift pace constituted havya and kavya. His body constituted the primary rituals. His radiance constituted the recital of vows of consecration. His heart constituted the dakshina. He was that great sacrifice. His lips constituted the attendant rituals. His ornaments were the procedures. His own shadow was the wife,[458] as he uplifted his bejewelled horn. Right up to the frontiers of the ocean, with its mountains, forests and groves, the earth was submerged in that single ocean of water.[459] The lord provided succour to the one who was dislodged into that single ocean of water. For the welfare of the worlds, he raised the earth up on his tusks. The one with the thousand heads, the origin of the gods, raised the earth again. Desiring the welfare of all creatures, in ancient times, having assumed the form of a sacrifice in the form of a boar, he raised up the goddess earth from the waters of the ocean. This cycle of creation is known as Varaha.[460]

'Now hear from me about Narasimha. He assumed the form of the king of animals[461] and killed Hiranyakashipu. O king! In an ancient krita yuga, an enemy of the gods was insolent because of his strength. This ancestor of the daityas performed supreme austerities for eleven thousand and five hundred years. He fasted and subsisted only on water. He was immobile, observed a vow of silence and was firm in his vows. O unblemished one! Brahma was delighted at his austerities, self-control, observances, discipline and brahmacharya. O lord of the earth! The illustrious Svayambhu himself appeared before him, on a radiant and celestial vehicle that had the complexion of the sun and was drawn by swans. The Adityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Maruts, the other gods, the Rudras who aid the universe, the rivers, the oceans, the nakshatras, the muhurtas, those who travel in the air, the giant planets, the devarshis, aged in their asceticism, the Siddhas, the saptarshis, the sacred rajarshis, the gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras were with him. The handsome one, the preceptor of everything mobile and immobile, was surrounded by all the gods. Brahma, supreme among those who know about the brahman, spoke these words to the daitya. "I am pleased with your devotion, austerities and excellent vows. O fortunate one! Ask for the boon you wish for, so that you may obtain what you desire." Hiranyakashipu replied, "O supreme among gods! May gods, asuras, gandharvas, humans and pishachas be unable to kill me. O grandfather of the worlds! May rishis not be able to curse me in rage, even when their austerities enable them to curse me in this fashion. This is the boon that I wish for. Let my death not come from any weapon, anything used to strike,[462] a mountain, a tree, anything dry, anything wet, or any other object. Let me be the lord of the sun, the moon, wind, fire, the water, the firmament, the nakshatras, the ten directions, ego, anger, desire, Varuna, Vasava, Yama, the granter of riches, the supervisor of riches,[463] yakshas and *kimpurusha*s."[464] Brahma said, "O son![465] This is a divine and extraordinary boon and I am conferring it on you. O son! There is no doubt that you will obtain everything that you desire." Having said this, the illustrious one departed through the sky. Worshipped by large numbers of brahmana rishis, he went to Vairaja, Brahma's abode. On hearing about the boon that had been granted by the grandfather, the gods, the serpents, the gandharvas and the sages presented themselves before him. The gods said, "O illustrious one! Because that boon has been granted and because he has pleased you, the asura cannot be killed. O illustrious one! We should certainly think of a means to bring about his death. O illustrious one! O Svayambhu! O lord who has created all the creatures! O creator of havya, kavya and the unmanifest *prakriti*!"[466] The god Prajapati heard these words, which were for the benefit of the worlds. At that time, the illustrious one spoke these words to all the large numbers of gods. "O residents of heaven! He will certainly obtain the fruits of his austerities. However, when the fruits of these austerities are over, the illustrious Vishnu will bring about his death." Hearing these words, spoken by the one who had been born from a lotus, all the gods were delighted and returned to their respective celestial regions. As soon as he had obtained the boon, he began to oppress all the subjects. The daitya Hiranyakashipu was insolent because he had obtained the boon. The immensely fortunate and virtuous sages were in their hermitages, self-controlled and engaged in the dharma of the truth. He oppressed them. The great asura defeated the gods in the three worlds. The danava brought the three worlds under his subjugation and started to reside in heaven. The danava was intoxicated because he had obtained the boon. When he resided on earth, he made sure that the shares in sacrifices were given to daityas and that the gods obtained no shares in sacrifices. The Adityas, the

Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas and the Vasus approached and sought refuge with the immensely strong Vishnu, the ultimate refuge. Narayana is the god who is full of the brahman. He is the sacrifice and its brahmana. He is the eternal god. He is the lord of the past, the present and the future. He is worshipped by the worlds. The gods sought refuge with the lord and god who is the ultimate refuge. "O lord of the gods! Save us now, so that Hiranyakashipu does not kill us. You are the supreme god. You are the supreme preceptor. O supreme god! You are the supreme protector and Brahma's origin. O one with eyes like a blooming lotus! O one who is a terror to the side of the enemy! We have sought refuge with you, for the sake of the destruction of Diti's lineage." Vishnu replied, "O immortal ones! Abandon fear. I am granting you freedom from fear. O gods! I will soon return heaven to you. I will slay the daitya who is insolent because of the grant of the boon, together with his companions. The Indra among the danavas cannot be slayed by the immortals, Indra and the others. But I will kill him." Having said this, the illustrious one took his leave of the residents of heaven. O king! Hari went to Hiranyakashipu's assembly. He adopted a form that was half that of a man and half that of a lion. In this form of Narasimha, he rubbed his palms against each other. He looked like a dense cloud. He roared like a dense cloud. His blazing energy was like that of a dense cloud. He was as forceful as a cloud. The daitya was extremely strong and proud. He was like an insolent tiger in his valour. He was protected by a large number of proud daityas. However, with one slap of his palm, he[467] killed them all. I have told you about Narasimha.

'I will next tell you about vamana.[468] For the destruction of the daityas, Vishnu adopted the form of a vamana. In ancient times, Bali, powerful and strong, undertook a sacrifice.[469] Vishnu caused great agitation through the valour of his three steps and disturbed the great asuras—Viprachitti, Shibi, Shankuraya, Shanku, Ayahshira, Ashvashira, the valiant Hayagriva, the swift Ketumat, Ugra, the giant asura Ugravyagra, Pushkara, Pushkala, Ashvapati on his horse, Prahlada, Ashvashira,[470] Kumbha, Samhlada, Gaganapriya, Anuhlada, Harihara, Varaha, Samhara, Ruja, Sharabha, Shalabha, Kupana, Kopana, Kratha, Brihatkirti, Mahajihva, Shankukarna, Mahasvana, Dirghajihva, Arkanayana, Mridupada, Mridupriya, Vayu, Gavishtha, Namuchi, Shambara, the great Vikshara, Chandrahanta, Krodhahanta, Krodhavardhana, Kalaka, Kalakeya, Vritra, Krodha, Virochana, Garishtha, Varishtha, Pralamba, Naraka, Indrapatana, Vatapi, Ketumat,[471] Baladarpita, Asiloma, Puloma, Bashkala, Pramada, Mada, Khasrima, Kalavadana, Karala, Keshi, Ekaksha, Chandraha, Rahu, Samhlada,[472] Srimara and Svana. They fought with *shataghni*s[473] and chakras in their hands, clubs in their hands, machines that hurled stones and javelins as weapons. They had mortars and pestles in their hands. They wielded battleaxes. Some held nooses and hammers in their hands, others held cudgels. Some danavas had tridents in their hands. Others used giant mountains as weapons. With diverse weapons and with varied attires, they were speedy and extremely terrible. Some had faces like tortoises or cocks, others had faces like rabbits or owls. Some had faces like mules or camels, others had faces like boars. There were fierce ones, with faces like *makara*s.[474] Other danavas had faces like jackals. Some had faces like mice or turtles. Others were terrible, with faces like wolves. Some had faces like cats or foxes. Others had gigantic faces. Some had faces like rams and ewes. Other fierce ones had faces like cows, goats and buffaloes. There were those with faces like lizards and porcupines, others with faces like herons. Some had faces like eagles, others with faces like rhinos and still others with faces like peacocks. Some were attired in elephant hides, others wore garments of black antelope skin. There were others who were attired in tattered rags and the barks of trees. Some asuras had headdresses, crowns and earrings. Some had diadems and long tufts of hairs. Others were extremely radiant, with necks like conch shells. The daityas were attired in many kinds of garments, wearing diverse garlands and unguents. Blazing in energy, they seized different kinds of weapons. Progressively, from every side, they surrounded Hrishikesha. He crushed all the daityas with his feet and the palms of his hands. Assuming a gigantic and terrible form, he swiftly placed his first stride on earth. The earth was overwhelmed by his valour and the moon and the sun seemed to be strung between his breasts. As he encompassed the firmament with his second stride, the moon and the sun slid to his navel. When the valour of his third stride overwhelmed everything, they slid to his knees. The brahmanas have therefore spoken about Vishnu's infinite valour. Vishnu, supreme among strong ones, crushed the earth and slew all the bulls among the asuras. He then handed over the earth to Shakra. This is the way the great-souled one manifested himself in the form of a vamana. Brahmanas who know about the Vedas speak about this Vaishnava fame.

‘The great-souled Vishnu, who is in the souls of all creatures, manifested himself yet again. He was born as Dattatreya, famous for his great compassion. The Vedas and the rites of the sacrifices had been destroyed. The dharma of the four varnas had become confused and decadent. Adharma started to flourish. Truth was destroyed and everything was based on falsehood. With dharma lacking a foundation, the subjects were afflicted. The great-souled one again established the dharma of the four varnas. He brought back the Vedas, with their sacrifices and rites. The intelligent Dattatreya also conferred a boon on the intelligent Kartavirya, the king of Haihaya. “O king! Because of what you have done for me with these two arms, there is no doubt that you will have one thousand arms. O lord of the earth! You will rule the entire earth. When you are present in a battle, large numbers of the enemy will find it impossible to look at you.” This is the extraordinary and auspicious account of his prosperous Vaishnava manifestation. After this, Jamadagni’s great-souled son[475] manifested himself. With his one thousand arms, Arjuna[476] was extremely difficult to defeat in a battle. Everyone was amazed to see the lord Rama slay such a king and his army. Rama brought down King Arjuna from his chariot on to the ground. Roaring like a cloud, he struck him as he willed. With a blazing battleaxe, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage severed all the one thousand arms and all his kin. There were crores of kshatriyas who inhabited the mountains Meru and Mandara. He destroyed them twenty-one times and removed all kshatriyas from earth. Bhargava, the extremely great ascetic, destroyed all the kshatriyas. He then sought to perform a horse sacrifice, so that all his sins might be extinguished. At that sacrifice, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage was extremely generous with dakshina. Delighted, he gave the entire sun to Marichi’s son, Kashyapa. At that great horse sacrifice, the immensely illustrious one, supreme among charioteers and greatly intelligent, gave away Varuna’s horses, a sparkling chariot, an infinite quantity of gold, cattle and gigantic kings of elephants. Even now, for the welfare of the worlds, Jamadagni’s resplendent son, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, repeatedly performs supreme austerities. The handsome one still resides on Mount Mahendra, supreme among mountains. The eternal

Vishnu, lord of the gods, is without decay. This manifestation of the great-souled one is known as Jamadagnya.

‘In the twenty-fourth yuga, when Vishvamitra was at the forefront, Dasharatha had a son and his eyes were like the petals of a lotus. The mighty-armed lord and god divided himself into four parts.[477] Rama was like the sun and his energy was famous in the worlds. To please the worlds, destroy rakshasas and make dharma prosper, the immensely illustrious one was born there. The lord of all creatures is established in all bodies. However, he came to be known as an Indra among men. The intelligent Vishvamitra gave him weapons, so that he might slay the enemies of the gods, who were unslayable, even by the gods. They created obstacles when sages, cleansed in their souls, performed sacrifices. Maricha and Subahu were supreme among strong ones. However, using his own strength, the great-souled one[478] baffled and killed them. In ancient times, as if sporting and playing, at the great-souled Janaka’s sacrifice, he broke Maheshvara’s[479] bow. He knew about all forms of dharma and resided in the forest for fourteen years, with Lakshmana as a follower. Rama was engaged in the welfare of all creatures. The beautiful Sita, famous among men, was by his side. She always followed him, like Lakshmi follows her husband. For fourteen years in the forest, Raghava tormented himself through austerities. While he dwelt in Janasthana, he accomplished the task of the residents of heaven. Following the footsteps of Sita,[480] the great-minded one killed two terrible and valiant rakshasas named Viradha and Kabandha. Those tigers among men were actually gandharvas, who had been dislodged because of a curse. They were killed, their bodies mangled by arrows released with great strength. These arrows were like the rays of the fire and blazed like lightning. They had colourful tufts and the shafts were made out of molten gold. In their essence, they were like the vajra wielded by Indra of the gods. For Sugriva’s sake, in an encounter, he killed Vali, the immensely strong Indra of the apes, and instated Sugriva in the kingdom. Ravana, Indra among the rakshasas, was difficult to beat and impossible to kill in a battle, even by large numbers of gods, asuras, yakshas, rakshasas and birds. He was protected by a crore of rakshasas and was like a thick and dark cloud. Ravana, lord of the rakshasas, was a cruel rakshasa who had conquered the three worlds. He was without decay and was impossible to withstand. He was like a tiger in his valour. He was insolent because of his boon and the large number of gods could not even look at him. In the battle, he[481] killed Ravana, with his advisers and his soldiers. Poulastya Ravana was cruel and immensely strong. He was gigantic in form and his complexion was like that of a great cloud. In ancient times, Rama, lord of creatures and tiger among men, swiftly killed him. Madhu's son was a proud danava named Lavana. The terrible and great asura had also obtained a boon. But he killed him and other rakshasas, who were indomitable in any battle, in an encounter in Madhuvana. These were the deeds of Rama, supreme among those who uphold dharma. He performed ten praiseworthy horse sacrifices. No inauspicious words were heard during his reign. No contrary winds blew. There was no theft of riches. Rama's reign was praised. Widows did not suffer difficulties because of lack of riches. The entire universe was peaceful. Rama's reign was praised. No creature suffered from fear. There were no natural catastrophes on account of water or fire. The aged did not have to perform funeral rites for the young.[482] Kshatriyas tended to brahmanas and vaishyas were devoted to kshatriyas. Without any sense of pride, shudras served the other three varnas. Wives did not oppress their husbands and husbands did not oppress their wives. The entire universe was peaceful and the earth was devoid of bandits. Rama alone was the lord. Rama was the protector. People lived for one thousand years and had one thousand sons. No creature suffered from disease. Rama's reign was praised. The gods, the rishis and all men lived together on earth. Rama's reign was praised. In this connection, those who know about the ancient accounts recite a chant. "The intelligent Rama imbibed the true purport of greatness. He was dark and young, with red eyes. His face was radiant and he was mild in speech. His arms extended to his thighs. His face was excellent and his shoulders were like that of a lion. He was mighty-armed."[483] Rama ruled for eleven thousand years and was the lord of Ayodhya. As long as the great-souled one reigned, there was the sound of hymns from the Rig, Sama and Yajur Vedas. Throughout the kingdom, there were the sounds of "Donate. Enjoy." He possessed the qualities of sattva. He blazed in his own energy. Rama, Dasharatha's son, surpassed even the sun and the moon. He completed hundreds of great sacrifices and gave away lots of dakshina. After this, the immensely strong Raghava left Ayodhya and went to heaven. Such was the mighty-armed descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage. After slaying Ravana and his companions, the lord went to heaven.

'After this, the great-souled Keshava manifested himself. This was for the welfare of all the worlds and was in the kalpa famous as Mathura.[484] The valiant one killed Salva,[485] Kamsa, Mainda, Dvividha, Arishta, Vrishabha, Keshi, Putana, the servant maid of the daityas, the elephant Kuvalayapida, Chanura, Mushtika and other daityas who had assumed human bodies. The performer of extraordinary deeds severed Bana's[486] one thousand arms. In a battle, he slew Naraka and the immensely strong Yavana.[487] Displaying his energy on earth, the one who was evil in conduct[488] had seized all the riches of the kings and had slain many kings. In this way, for the welfare of the worlds, the great-souled one manifested himself.

'The lord will again appear as Kalki, in the house of Vishnuyasha. There are these and many other divine manifestations, with celestial qualities. The ones who know about the brahman have chanted about these in the ancient accounts. On hearing recitals of these manifestations, even the gods are confounded. They are described in the Puranas and are immersed in the sacred texts of the Vedas. I have only recited some of the indications. The lord is the preceptor of all the worlds and his deeds should be recited. When they are recited, the ancestors are pleased. The infinitely energetic Vishnu is the lord of yoga and his yoga is full of maya. If a man listens to this with hands joined in salutation, he is freed from all sins. Through the favours of the illustrious one, he swiftly obtains great prosperity and riches and all the objects of pleasure.'

Chapter 32

Vaishampayana said, 'Hear about Vishnu Hari, who pervaded the universe in krita yuga. His Vaikuntha nature is for the gods and his Krishna nature is for humans. His characteristics as a lord are evident in the depth of his mysterious deeds. O king! Listen accurately to the characteristics he has recently exhibited. The illustrious lord is unmanifest, but his signs are manifest. Narayana's soul is infinite and his powers are without decay. It is this eternal Narayana Hari who manifested himself through Brahma, Shakra, Soma, Dharma, Shukra and Brihaspati. This descendant of the Yadava lineage became Aditi's son and was famous as Vishnu, who was younger to Indra.[489] For the sake of slaying the enemies of the gods, the daityas, danavas and rakshasas, it was through his own favours that he was born as Aditi's son. In ancient times, the great soul of this lord created Brahma. In an ancient kalpa, it is he who created the grand ancestors, the Prajapatis. Their bodies were created from his body and led to Brahma's supreme lineage. It is this eternal and great-souled one who flowed in many forms through Brahma. Vishnu's extraordinary deeds have therefore been recited. Those deeds should be recited and are recited. Listen to me. O son![490] In the current krita yuga, after Vritra had been killed, there was a battle that was famous in the three worlds and this is known as tarakamaya. All the terrible danavas were insolent in that battle and killed the gods, with the gandharvas, the yakshas, the serpents and the charanas. They were slain and retreated. They lost their weapons in that battle. Searching for a saviour in their minds, they went to the god and lord Narayana.

'At this time, the radiant clouds started to shower down burning coal. In the firmament, this shrouded the sun, the moon and all the planets. Creatures were struck by terrible lightning and were distressed. The seven winds[491] started to blow with great force. Blazing rain showered down. There was thunder mixed with fire and wind, with the force of the vajra. There were terrible portents and the sky seemed to blaze. Thousands of meteors showered down. Anything that travelled in the sky fell down. The vimanas could no longer be controlled and were hurled up and flung down. It was like the fear that creatures confront at the end of the four yugas. When these evil portents manifested themselves, everything with form turned deformed. Everything was dimmed by the darkness and nothing could be seen. The ten directions were agitated by waves of darkness and could not be discerned. It was as if the naked darkness was only shrouded by dark clouds. The sky and the sun were enveloped in that terrible darkness. With his hands, the lord flung away those waves of darkness. Hari displayed his own divine form and that form was also dark. His complexion was as dark as the clouds and his hair was also as dark as the clouds. Krishna's energetic form was as dark as a mountain. He was attired in radiant yellow garments and his ornaments were made out of molten gold. His form was as dark as the smoke that is created by the fire that arrives at the time of the destruction of a yuga. There was a crown on his head and he had eight thick arms. Each of these hands held a glistening weapon. He looked like the rising summit of a mountain, flooded by the rays of the sun and the moon. He held the Nandaka sword in one hand, a sword that he loves to hold. In another hand, he held arrows that were like venomous serpents. Yet another hand held a fierce plough, marked with the signs of javelins. Three other hands held a conch shell, the chakra and a mace.[492] Another hand held the Sharnga bow, made out of horn. Vishnu was like a mountain, with forgiveness as its foundation. He was like a tree that brings prosperity. He was on a chariot yoked to tawny horses. The standard was adorned with Garuda. The sun and the moon were the wheels and Mount Mandara was the axle. The serpent Ananta was the reins and Mount Meru was the seat. It[493] was decorated with stars as flowers and the yoke was decorated with planets and nakshatras. The terrified gods, defeated by the daityas, saw him in the firmament, indicating freedom from fear. They saw the god stationed on that divine chariot and all the worlds seemed to be inside it. All the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, joined their hands in salutation. They honoured him with sounds of "victory" and sought refuge with the one whom one turns to for succour. Vishnu heard the words of the beloved gods. He made up his mind that he would destroy the danavas in a great battle. Vishnu was stationed in the sky, assuming that supreme form. He spoke to all the gods, in words that amounted to a pledge. "O fortunate ones!

Depart in peace. O large numbers of Maruts! Do not be afraid. As soon as I have defeated all the danavas, I will take back the three worlds.” Since he always spoke the truth, they were content with Vishnu’s words. The gods departed in great delight, as if they had obtained the supreme amrita. The clouds withdrew and were dispelled. Auspicious winds started to blow and the directions turned peaceful. The stellar bodies regained their radiance and started to circle the moon. There was no longer any dissension among the planets. The oceans became calm. The three roads that lead to heaven became free of dust.[494] The rivers assumed their natural state and the oceans were no longer agitated. With the impure senses under control, the inner souls of men became calm. The maharshis became devoid of sorrow and uttered hymns from the Vedas. The oblations offered at sacrifices became pure and succulent and the fire accepted them. Cheerful in their minds, all the worlds engaged in pursuits of dharma. Everyone had heard the pledge that Vishnu had uttered in his words.’

Chapter 33

Vaishampayana said, ‘The daityas and danavas heard about the fear that would arise for them on Vishnu’s account. Hearing about this terror, indomitable in battle, they started to make extensive arrangements for the battle. Maya was on an undecaying and golden chariot that was extremely handsome and had four wheels. It was three *nalva*s long.[495] It was stocked with gigantic weapons that had been prepared well. It was decorated with the skins of leopards and jingled with nets of bells. It was adorned with nets of gems and festooned with nets of gold. It was populated by wolves and birds were seated on it. It roared like a cloud and there were divine weapons in the quivers. This best of chariots moved on its wheels, like a mountain. Stocked with maces and clubs, it looked like an ocean. The ends of the wheels were encrusted with gold and the yoke was also golden. With the best of flags and penants hoisted, it looked like Mandara, with the sun shining down on it. While its body was like that of a huge elephant or a cloud, in its radiance, it sometimes looked like a lion. It was yoked to one thousand bears, which roared like one thousand clouds. This blazing and divine chariot, which could crush the chariots of the enemy, moved along the sky. It was like Mount Meru, made radiant by the rays of the sun. The one who wished to be victorious in battle was seated atop it. Tara was borne along on an iron chariot that was one *krosha* long.[496] This looked like a reddish mountain, tinged with a mass of collyrium. The wheels were made of black iron and the yoke was also made out of iron. It roared like a cloud and emitted flashes from inside the darkness. There were giant nets of iron, with windows carved out in them. It was stocked full with iron clubs and bludgeons that could be flung. There were spears, and maces and mallets were strewn around. With the javelins and battleaxes, it was beautiful, but also generated fear. It was as if a second Mandara had arisen, to strike at the enemy. That supreme chariot was yoked to one thousand donkeys and borne along by them. The angry Virochana was stationed in front of his soldiers, with a club in his hand. He looked like a mountain with a resplendent peak. A chariot yoked to one thousand horses bore the danava Hayagriva, ready to crush the enemy. Varaha was in front of his army, like a mountain with slopes. He stretched a giant bow that was many thousands[497] long. The insolent Kshara shed tears of anger from his eyes. Desiring to fight, he gnashed his teeth and his lips and face quivered. The danava Tvashta was on a vehicle drawn by eighteen horses. The valiant one designed the battle formations for the danavas. Shveta, Viprachitti's son, was adorned with white earrings. He was stationed ready for battle, like a white mountain. Arishta, Bali's son, fought with excellent boulders. He looked like a mountain and stationed himself for battle. Kishora was delighted and looked like a young[498] horse that had been goaded. In the midst of the daitya soldiers, he looked like the rising sun. Lamba looked like a long cloud.[499] His garments and ornaments were long. In the battle formation of the daityas, he looked like the solar disc. Svarbhanu[500] fought with his teeth, lips and eyes as weapons. This planet, with a pleasant face, stood in front of the daityas and laughed. Some were resplendent on horses. Others were on the shoulders of elephants. There were some who rode on lions and tigers. There were others who rode on boars and bears. Some were borne by asses and camels. Others rode on clouds. Some rode on birds and others rode on the wind. Some fierce daityas, with malformed visages, were on foot. Some had a single foot, others were bipeds. Desiring to fight, they danced. Many danavas roared and shouted, roaring like proud tigers. All those bulls among the danavas roared. Those danavas wielded maces, clubs and fierce bows. They were used to physical exercise and their arms were like bludgeons. The best among the daityas sported and inspired their army with lances, nooses, swords, darts, goads, battleaxes, sharp shataghnis, boulders, mountains, bludgeons and other supreme weapons and chakras. Thus, all those danava soldiers were excited at the prospect of battle. They advanced towards the gods, as if the army was made out of clouds. With a depth of thousands, the daityas were extraordinary. That army was like a wave of wind, fire, water and mountains, advancing towards the battle. Intoxicated and desiring to fight, as they advanced, they seemed to shatter the firmament.'

Chapter 34

Vaishampayana said, 'O son! You have heard in detail about how the daitya soldiers readied for battle. Now hear in detail about all the Vaishnava soldiers of the gods. In due order, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras and the immensely strong Ashvins arrayed themselves, with their soldiers and their followers. Puruhuta, the one with the one thousand eyes and the guardian of the worlds, was at the forefront of all the other gods, astride the divine elephant.[501] The chariot was along his left flank[502] and so was the forceful and supreme bird.[503] The chariot's wheels were beautiful and were decorated with gold and diamonds. Thousands of gods, gandharvas and yakshas followed. The radiant brahmana rishis and the assistant priests pronounced benedictions. Lightning flashed from the vajra, Indra's weapon. He was protected by large numbers of clouds, which looked like mountains and could move at will. As the illustrious Maghavan advanced on his elephant, stationed in the forefront of the battle, brahmanas offered oblations and chanted his praise. In heaven, Shakra's followers sounded celestial trumpets. Thousands of apsaras danced in front of Indra. His standard was made out of excellent bamboo and was as radiant as the sun. His supreme chariot was yoked to one thousand horses and could move as swiftly as thoughts or the wind. The dazzling chariot was driven by Matali and because of its energy, looked like Meru, surrounded on every side by the rays of the sun. Yama held aloft his mace, which signified destiny. It assured the arrays of the gods and terrified those of the daityas. On four sides, Varuna was protected by the oceans and serpents with flickering tongues. His handsome form was decorated with conch shells, pearls and bracelets and was made out of water. He held the noose of destiny. His horses had the hue of moonbeams and they sported with the thousands of waves that had been raised by the wind. His garments were white and his bracelets were beautifully decorated with coral. His excellent form was decorated with necklaces of dark jewels that were so heavy that they hung down up to his stomach. Wielding the noose, Varuna was stationed amidst the army of the gods, which, as it sought battle, was like an ocean that was ready to breach the shoreline. The lord and guardian of riches[504] was accompanied by yaksha and *raksha* soldiers and large numbers of guhyakas. He was decorated with conch shells and lotuses. The handsome king of the yakshas could be seen holding a club in his hand. The lord of riches fought from a vimana and he was stationed on that Pushpaka vimana. Naravahana,[505] king of the yakshas, looked beautiful and desired to do battle. Shiva's friend[506] looked as if Shiva himself was stationed there. Proud in their valour, the four guardians of the four quarters were stationed there—the one with the thousand eyes in the eastern direction, the lord of the ancestors in the southern direction, Varuna in the western direction and Naravahana in the northern direction. They protected their own respective directions and the army of the gods. Surya was on a chariot that travelled through the sky, yoked to seven horses. He blazed in his prosperity and dazzled with his rays. From sunrise to sunset, the circle of his travels takes him all the way up to Meru. The undecaying one scorches the worlds and travels up to the colourful gates of heaven. Blazing in his energy, he radiated one thousand rays. Stationed amidst the gods, the lord of days has twelve parts to his soul.[507] Soma was radiant on a chariot with white horses and white reins. He is the one who is full of cold and water and he is the one who floods the world. The lord of brahmanas possesses cool rays and his followers glanced towards him. His body is marked with the shadow of a hare and he is the one who destroys the darkness of the night. He is the lord of all stellar bodies in the sky and of all the succulent juices. He is the one who saves the herbs and he is the store of amrita. The amiable one is the primary source of food for the universe, cool and succulent juices. The danavas saw that Soma was stationed, with chill as a weapon. Vayu is the breath of life in all creatures and divides himself into five in humans. On the seven shoulders,[508] he roams around the three worlds. He is the lord with universal powers and is said to be the controller of fire. The seven musical notes are said to originate with him. He is said to be the supreme element. He is said to be in embodied beings. He is said to travel in the sky. He is swift and is the origin of sound. Because of his energy, Vayu is said to be in all elements. He began to flow in perverse directions, so that the daityas might be troubled. The Maruts, the gods, the gandharvas and large numbers of *vidyadhara*s[509] began to sport with their swords, which were like snakes that had cast off their skins. From their arrows, the best among the gods created armies of fierce serpents that were full of rage and venom. With gaping mouths, these enveloped the firmament. To aid the large numbers of gods, the mountains presented themselves with mountain peaks and hundreds of trees, using these to strike the danava army.

‘The god Hrishikesha has a lotus in his navel. He conquered the earth in three strides. He is the lord of the world and the universe. He arose like the fire at the end of a yuga, with black trails. He is the slayer of Madhu. He is the one who arose from the waters. He is the one who enjoys the havya and is revered in sacrifices. He is the earth, water and the firmament. He is the dark. He is the one who establishes peace and is the destroyer of the enemy. Like the sun and the fire, he arose, infinite in his energy. The wielder of the chakra and the mace was ready to slay the enemy, the army of the asuras. He arose, like the sun blazing amidst his solar disc. In his left hand, he wielded the giant club, the destroyer of all the asuras. It was dark in form and ensured death to the enemy. In his other hands, the immensely illustrious lord wielded other blazing weapons, including the Sharnga bow. The enemy of the serpents[510] was on the standard. That bird was Kashyapa’s offspring and survived on serpents. The bird’s speed was greater than that of the wind and he agitated the sky. An Indra among the serpents could be seen, trapped in his beak. He looked like Mandara, freed after the amrita had been churned.[511] He had exhibited his valour in hundreds of conflicts between the gods and the asuras. There were the signs of the vajra on his body, inflicted by the great Indra, when he had tried to seize the amrita.[512] With his crested peak, he looked like a mountain that exuded minerals. His garment was made out of colourful feathers and his ornaments were fashioned out of molten gold. He was like the moon in his energy. Because he had eaten serpents, the radiant gems and jewels from those serpents stuck to the feathers on his broad chest. In sport, he spread his beautiful wings and shrouded the sky. These looked like clouds full of rain at the end of a yuga, tinged with Indra’s bows.[513] He was adorned with blue, red and yellow penants. With these penants, he assumed the form of a gigantic standard. In the battle, Hari climbed on to this beautiful bird, Aruna’s brother, as a mount. His own form was radiant, like that of Suparna, the supreme bird. The large number of gods and the self-controlled sages followed him. In praise of Gadadhara,[514] they chanted supreme mantras. Vaivasvata[515] was in the front, accompanied by Vaishravana.[516] They were urged by the unvanquished king of the gods, the lord of rains. When the battle presented itself, there were sparkling moonbeams everywhere. The wind began to roar and the fire started to blaze. Vishnu was surrounded by his traits of Jishnu, Sahishnu and Bhrajishnu.[517] The strong army advanced to do battle. The son of Angiras[518] proclaimed, "Let the gods have good fortune." Ushanas[519] proclaimed, "Let the daityas have good fortune."'

Chapter 35

Vaishampayana said, 'Then, there was a tumultuous battle between the two armies. The gods and the asuras sought to defeat each other. Brandishing many kinds of weapons, the danavas and the gods rushed towards each other. They fought with each other, like mountains against other mountains. As the gods and the asuras engaged, there was a marvellous battle. Dharma clashed against adharma and insolence against humility. As the mounts were goaded, blazing chariots advanced. In every direction, as they dashed forward with swords, the sky was agitated. Clubs were flung, arrows were shot. Bows were twanged and cudgels descended. As the gods and the danavas clashed, it was wonderful and terrible. The universe was terrified, as if the fire of destruction at the end of a yuga had been unleashed. In that battle, the danavas swiftly released clubs and flung mountains from their hands, striking the gods, with Indra at the forefront. They were slaughtered by the powerful danavas, who hoped for victory. In that great battle, the gods were distressed and overcome by grief. They were crushed by those nets of weapons. Their heads were shattered with clubs. When their chests were mangled by Diti's sons, copious quantities of blood began to flow from their wounds. Some were bound in nets of nooses. Others were afflicted by the arrows. The maya of the danavas penetrated them and they were incapable of regaining their senses. Their radiance vanished and they seemed to have lost their lives. Struck by the asuras, the army of the gods was soon incapable of raising weapons.

'The many-eyed Shakra penetrated the fierce army of the daityas. He shattered the nooses of maya and repulsed their arrows with his vajra. He killed the foremost among the daityas and rendered their great army weak. Through his net of weapons, he plunged their army into darkness. They could no longer discern each other, nor the gods or the mounts. Because of Puruhuta's energy, they were immersed in a terrible darkness. The best among the gods sought to free themselves from the noose of maya. While the bodies of that army of daityas were immersed in darkness, they brought them down. They fell down, bereft of their senses. Because of the darkness, they turned blue in complexion. Large numbers of danavas fell down, like mountains with their wings severed.[520] The Indras among the daityas seemed to be amidst a dense ocean of darkness. Overwhelmed by the darkness, the danavas were despatched to their death.

‘At this, to burn down the darkness, Maya created a grand maya. He created a fire known as Ourva, the fire that is the origin of the fire that arrives at the end of a yuga. This maya created by Maya destroyed all the darkness. The daityas instantly regained their original forms and were ready to battle again. Resorting to the Ourvi maya, they burnt down the residents of heaven. They[521] thought about the moon, whose heart is made out of water and whose rays are cool. Burnt by the Ourva energy, their own energy was destroyed. The wielder of the vajra asked the gods what had happened.[522] They told him how they had been scorched by the arrows and burnt down by the maya of the danava soldiers.

‘Thus urged, the king of the gods asked Varuna and he replied in these words. “O Shakra! In earlier times, a brahmana rishi had tormented himself through extremely terrible austerities. With qualities like those of Brahma, that energetic one’s name was Urva. The undecaying universe, the sun included, was scorched by the fierceness of his austerities. With the gods and the devarshis, large numbers of sages presented themselves before him. In those ancient times, knowing of the rishi’s supreme energy, the danava Hiranyakashipu, the lord of the danavas, also went there. The brahmana rishis spoke these words, which were full of dharma. ‘O illustrious one! The foundation of this lineage and family of rishis has been severed. You are alone and without offspring. Without offspring, the gotra cannot continue. You have resorted to a vow of celibacy and are undergoing these hardships. O brahmana! There are many gotras of sages with cleansed souls. Since they were detached and without offspring, those remained in their bodies alone. There is no reason for you not to have offspring and have descendants. You are supreme in austerities and are like Prajapati in your radiance. By perpetuating your lineage, you will only extend yourself through them. Use the energy that you have accumulated and create a second body.’ On being thus addressed by the sages, that sage's mind was disturbed. However, he did not accept the words of that large number of rishis and said this in reply. 'This is the eternal dharma of sages, laid down from ancient times. They should follow the noble path of surviving on wild roots and fruits alone.[523] If one has been born as a brahmana, one must follow the state of being a brahmana. If one conducts oneself well and resorts to the path of brahmacharya, one is following the path of the brahman. Three kinds of means of subsistence are indicated for brahmanas who dwell in the state of garhasthya.[524] However, we reside in forest hermitages and the life of the forest is decreed for us. We should not eat, or should only subsist on air. Or we can be *dantaulukhalinas*[525] or *ashmakuttas*.[526] We should practise ten austerities, five austerities, or seven austerities.[527] These are the extremely difficult austerities and vows we must be engaged in. We must honour brahmacharya and hope for the ultimate objective. A brahmana's attribute of being a brahmana is gauged from his practice of brahmacharya. Those who reside in the supreme regions and know about brahmacharya have said this. Patience is based on brahmacharya. Austerities are based on brahmacharya. Brahmanas who base themselves on brahmacharya find a state in heaven. There is no success without yoga. There is no fame without success. There are no worlds without fame. Brahmacharya is the foundation and is the supreme austerity. If one controls the senses and this collection of the five elements[528] and if one practises brahmacharya, what other supreme austerity does that person need? Without yoga, what is the point of tending to the hair? Without resolution, what is the point of observing rites and vows? Without observing brahmacharya, these three are merely signs of vanity.[529] Who is a wife? What is intercourse? What does this distraction of the sentiment mean? Brahma created subjects through his mind, with mental resolution alone. Following Prajapati's deeds, if you possess austerities and energy in your infinite souls, create mental sons. An ascetic worships a vagina that has been created through the mind. There is no need for intercourse with a wife to sow the seed. That is not said to be an ascetic's vow. Without any fear, you have spoken to me about destroying dharma and artha. It is my view that is not virtuous and is against what is right. I can create a blazing and beautiful body from my own. Without intercourse with a wife, I can create a son who is just like myself. I will thus give birth to a second one from my own self. This is the decreed way for those who reside in the forest and he will burn down the subjects.’ Urva resorted to austerities. He used some darbha grass and kneaded it against his thigh. Using his powers, he used these two as kindling and generated a fire. Even without any kindling, suddenly, a garland of flames emerged, breaking through his thigh. Desiring to burn down the universe, a son was generated from the fire. Since he emerged by penetrating Urva’s thigh, this was known as the Ourva fire. This was an extremely angry fire that was capable of burning down the three worlds. As soon as he emerged, he addressed his father in blazing words. ‘O father! This hunger is constricting me and it will only abandon me if I burn up the universe.’ The flames rose up to heaven and he belched in the ten directions. He burnt down all the creatures and the flames spread, like the fire of destruction.”

‘Varuna continued, “At this time, Brahma appeared before the sage Urva. ‘Show compassion for the worlds. Control the son you have created through your energy. O brahmana! If you act in this way towards your son, you will do what is beneficial. I will give him a place to dwell in and food that is like amrita. O supreme among eloquent ones! There is truth in my words and you should listen to them.’ Urva replied, ‘I am blessed that you have shown me your favours. O illustrious one! You have now given me this benediction. It is my view that you have shown me a great favour by granting me this. It is now morning and my desires have been met by your arrival. O illustrious one! What oblations will my son be satisfied by? How will he find happiness? Where will he reside? What kind of food will he survive on? He is extremely energetic and these will have to be commensurate with his valour. Please lay these down.’ Brahma responded, ‘There is a region known as Vadavamukha[530] in the ocean and he will reside there. O brahmana! I have been born from water and water also constitutes my mouth. Let him always dwell there and drink oblations of water. Let that be your son’s resting place and residence. O one who is excellent in his vows! When the end of the yuga arrives, with me, he will roam around, destroying all creatures and rendering them lifeless. I have made this fire of destruction reside in the waters. At the time of destruction, he will burn down all creatures, including the gods, the asuras and the rakshasas.’ Having been flung there by the power of the grandfather, the fire agreed to this and, surrounded by an orb of flames, entered Vadavamukha. Realizing the power of the fire known as Ourva, Brahma and all the other maharshis followed their respective paths and returned to their destinations. On seeing this, Hiranyakashipu prostrated himself flat before Urva,[531] worshipped him and spoke these words. 'O illustrious one! The worlds have witnessed this. Retreat now. O best among the sages! The grandfather has been satisfied with your austerities. O one who is great in vows! I am your son and that of your son[532] too. If I can pride myself on my deeds and if I am engaged in worshipping you, know me as your servant. When you see that I have sought refuge with you, please arrive here. O best among sages! My defeat will be nothing but your defeat.' Urva replied, 'I am honoured that you have shown me your favours and that you consider me to be your preceptor. O one who is excellent in vows! You no longer have anything to fear on account of my austerities. Accept this maya, fashioned by my son. This has no weaknesses and is incapable of being touched even by the real fire. Whenever your lineage faces a hardship, this will remain under your control. Use it to protect your own side and burn down that of the enemy.' He bowed down before the bull among sages and assented to this. Successful, the lord of the danavas cheerfully went to heaven. This is a maya that is impossible to withstand and is difficult for even the gods to repulse. This is a fire that was earlier created by Ourva and is a fire that is due to Urva's son. There is no doubt that even with that daitya[533] gone, the fire has not been rendered powerless. Through his own energy, in ancient times, the creator has created this curse for us. O Shakra! O illustrious one! If you wish to be happy and to counter this, then give me your friend, the moon, who originates from the water. Through your favours, there is no doubt that I will then be able to destroy this maya."'

Chapter 36

Vaishampayana said, ‘Shakra, who extended the prosperity of the residents of heaven, was delighted at this and agreed. Using dew as a weapon, he instructed Soma to fight. “O Soma! Go and help the wielder of the noose[534] destroy the asuras, for the sake of the victory of the residents of heaven. Your energy is unmatched. You are the lord of all the lords among the stellar bodies. Those who know about juices say that all the juices in the worlds are based on you. Your waxing and waning is evident in the ocean and in your circling in the sky. You circle through night and day and this is used as a standard to measure time in the universe. There is the mark of a hare on your lap and this is nothing but a shadow of the worlds. A person who doesn’t know about the god Soma cannot be a person who knows about the nakshatras. Your path is above that of the sun and you are stationed above the stellar bodies. You dispel darkness with your body and illuminate the entire universe. You are like a white sun that is cool in body. O moon! You are the lord of the stellar bodies. You are the soul behind the measurement of time and you are the creator of the year. You are the one who is worshipped. You are the undecaying essence of the sacrifice.[535] You are the lord of herbs. You are the source of all sacrifices. You are the source of water. You are the one who quenches heat. You are cool in your rays. You are the store of amrita. You are fickle. You are the one who is drawn by white horses.” Soma replied, “O king of the gods! O granter of boons! For the sake of the battle, you have spoken to me. I will shower down dew and dispel the maya of the daityas. I will quench the heat with my coldness. Behold them, encircled by ice. In this great battle, the large number of daityas will be left without maya and without insolence.” The creator of ice then showered down ice, mixed with rain. The daityas were encircled by this terror, as if by a large number of clouds. In that great battle, Varuna and Soma struck them with the noose and with white beams. The danavas were slain by that shower of ice and by being struck with the noose. In the encounter, those two lords of the water fought with the noose and with ice. It was as if two mighty oceans, stores of water, were agitating the battleground. The danava soldiers were seen to be flooded by this. The entire world was enveloped and whirled around by this storm. The moon and Varuna used their beams and the noose to pacify the divine maya that had been fashioned by the daityas. In the battle, they were scorched by the cool beams and the water and slain by the noose. The daityas were like mountains without summits and were no longer capable of moving. The daityas were afflicted by the ice and fell down, slain by the cool beams. All their limbs were covered in the ice, like a fire that no longer possesses any heat. Fortune turned perverse for the daityas. Their colourful vimanas tottered and lurched. Their hands were bound down by the noose. They were enveloped by the cool beams.

'On seeing this, the danava Maya unleashed another divine and danava maya. He created a net of mountains and these boulders and mountains seemed to laugh out aloud. These were covered with ugly trees fierce at the tips and had forests that were thick with caves. They were populated by lions, tigers and elephants and gigantic elephants trumpeted. There were large numbers of wolves and there were trees that were whirled around by the wind. He created and unleashed this famous maya of mountains in every direction. Meanwhile his son, Krouncha, travelled in the sky, as he willed, showering down and slaying large numbers of gods with falling trees, torrents of boulders and thunderous rocks. This injected a new life into the danavas. That traveller in the night made Varuna's maya vanish. In the battle, large numbers of gods were struck with rocks and clouds of iron. There was a terrible shower of boulders, interspersed with trees and mountains. Strewn with mountains, the earth was so terrible that it was impossible to cross. In the encounter, several of the gods were seen to be struck by rocks, some others were afflicted by the boulders. Others were obstructed by the large number of trees. They were distracted and their weapons were shattered. The bows slipped from their hands. With the exception of Gadadhara,[536] the army of gods abandoned the battle.

'Advancing in the battle, the prosperous lord did not tremble. Gadadhara, the lord of the universe, is patient and he was not enraged. The one who knows about destiny was like a dark cloud. He wished to see the progress of destiny in the battle. Janardana wished to see the gods and the asuras crush each other.[537]

Instructed by the illustrious one, the fire god and the wind god joined the battle. Goaded by Vishnu’s words, they dispelled the maya. When they joined that great battle, all the clouds were flung aside. The mountains of maya were burnt, reduced to ashes and destroyed. The wind united with the fire and the fire was fanned by the wind. It was like the end of a yuga. The daitya soldiers were incinerated and lost their senses. The wind chased them and the fire followed behind the wind. The fire and the wind roamed around amidst the army of the danavas, as if they were playing. The limbs of some of the danavas were burnt. Others tried to rise, but fell down. Vimanas dashed against other vimanas. With the wind bearing him on his shoulders, the fire was successful in accomplishing his task. When they returned after destroying that maya, everyone praised Gadadhara. The daityas lost all enterprise and the three worlds were freed from their bonds. All the gods were delighted and exclaimed, “Wonderful. Wonderful.” When the one with the one thousand eyes was victorious and Maya was defeated, all the directions became auspicious and the rites of dharma started. The path of the moon was cleaned and the sun was reinstated along his path. The worlds regained their natural states. Good conduct was seen amidst men. Death was restricted to his limits.[538] Oblations were offered to the fire. For the sake of heaven, it was seen that sacrifices started to be performed for the gods. All the guardians of the world were in control of their respective directions. Since there were no longer any evil deeds, ascetics could adhere to virtuous characteristics. The side of the gods was delighted and the side of the daityas was distressed. In that battle, dharma possessed three feet and adharma possessed only one.[539] The great gate of remaining established on a virtuous path was opened up. People adhered to their own dharma, as befitted their varnas and their ashramas. The kings were radiant in protecting their subjects. The world was peaceful and without any taints. The terrible darkness was pacified. Having accomplished their task, the fire and the wind retreated from the battle. The world sparkled and rites were performed, praising their victory.

‘On hearing about the great fear caused to the elder brothers of the gods,[540] a famous danava named Kalanemi showed himself. His crown was like the sun and his ornaments and bracelets jingled. He seemed to surpass Mandara and his gigantic body was encrusted in silver. He possessed one hundred arms, with one hundred fierce weapons held in them. He possessed one hundred faces and one hundred heads. The handsome one was stationed there, like a mountain with one hundred peaks. His gigantic frame seemed to stretch forward, like a fire during the summer. His hair had a smoky complexion. His beard was tawny. His teeth, lips and face jutted out. His gigantic frame was so large that it seemed to encompass the three worlds. His arms were as expansive as the sky and the stride of his steps was like that of mountains. When he exhaled from his mouth, that breath was like clouds raining down. His eyes were red and he was cross-eyed. His broad chest was like Mandara. He was ready to confront all the large number of gods in the battle, from whichever direction they might advance. He enveloped the ten directions and roared at the large number of gods. He was thirsty and insolent, like Death that arises at the time of final destruction. He stretched out his gigantic palm in assurance, with large finger joints. Those fingers were long and adorned with ornaments and the finger guards moved when he did this. The handsome one raised his right hand in a sign of assurance. He addressed the danavas and uttered these words, “Arise and strike the gods.” In the battle, all the gods glanced towards their enemy Kalanemi, who was like destiny, and their eyes became full of fright and terror. All the creatures looked at Kalanemi’s stride. They thought this was another Narayana, with his valiant three strides.[541] As he stepped forward with his first stride, whirling winds were generated in the sky. The asura advanced into the battle and terrified all the gods. With Maya, that Indra among the asuras gradually advanced into the battle and it seemed as if Kalanemi and that daitya[542] were like Vishnu with Mandara. With Shakra at the forefront, all the gods were distressed. They looked towards the terrible Kalanemi, who was advancing like destiny.’

Chapter 37

Vaishampayana said, ‘The danava Kalanemi delighted the danavas. His great energy increased, like a cloud at the end of the summer. The lords of the danavas saw him increase his size, until it covered the three worlds. They forgot their exhaustion and arose, as if they had obtained supreme amrita. With Maya and Tara at the forefront, they abandoned their fear and terror. Desiring to fight, the danavas picked up their weapons again. They consulted amongst themselves, arranged themselves in battle formations and prepared to attack. Delighted, the danavas looked towards Kalanemi. With Maya at the forefront, they advanced towards the encounter. All of them abandoned their fear and happily presented themselves for the battle. The great asuras were Maya, Tara, Varaha, the valiant Hayagriva, Viprachitti’s son Shveta, Khara, Lamba, Arishta, Bali’s son Kishora, Ushtra and Svarbhanu, foremost among immortals and one who fought in a crooked way. All of them were accomplished in the use of weapons. All of them had resorted to austerities. All these accomplished danavas advanced behind the supreme Kalanemi. They used heavy clubs, chakras, battleaxes, maces that were like death, bludgeons that could be flung, boulders, summits of mountains, rocks that were plated, spears, catapults, supreme cudgels made of iron, heavy weapons that could kill, shataghnis, machines that were released from yokes to batter down gates, nooses, pointed and sharp darts, spikes, bonds, clubs that were like snakes with flickering tongues, arrows that were like serpents, vajras, other blazing weapons, javelins, unsheathed and sharp swords and white and sparkling tridents. Inspired in their minds, they seized these weapons. With Kalanemi at the forefront, they stood in the field of battle. With the best of these radiant weapons, the army of the daityas was resplendent. It looked like the sky, when a thick and blue cloud has arrived and has shut out the nakshatras.

‘Protected by Shakra, the army of the gods was also resplendent. It blazed with the hot energy of the sun and with the cool energy of the moon. Though it possessed the force of the wind, it was peaceful. The flags were bedecked with a large number of stars. The clouds were like garments and planets and stellar bodies seemed to smile in it. It was protected by Yama, Indra, Varuna and the intelligent lord of riches.[543] Devoted to Narayana, the fire god and the wind god also blazed. That divine and large army of the gods was like a turbulent ocean. With yakshas and gandharvas, it was shining and fierce, giving rise to fear.

'The two armies clashed, like the friction between heaven and earth when the end of a yuga arrives. There was a terrible encounter between the gods and the danavas, with forgiveness versus valour and insolence versus humility. The gods and the asuras fiercely penetrated each other's armies. The vanguards and the rearguards wrathfully engaged, like two oceans full of water. The armies of the gods and the danavas cheerfully advanced against each other, like two elephants emerging from blossoming forests in mountains. Many drums, kettledrums and conch shells were sounded and this roar enveloped the directions, shrouding heaven, the firmament and earth. There was the twang of bowstrings, the slapping of palms and the swishing of bows. The roar of the daityas was dampened by the roar of the drums. They attacked each other and brought each other down. Desiring to fight, they attacked each other with their hands and wrestled with their arms. The gods attacked with terrible vajras and iron clubs. The danavas attacked with sharp swords and heavy bludgeons. They were brought down, their limbs battered with clubs and mangled with arrows. Some fell down. Others were dreadfully hurt. Still others lay down. Wrathfully and angrily, they attacked each other in that battle, using chariots, horses and swift vimanas. Some whirled around in that battle, others retreated. Chariots obstructed chariots and foot soldiers obstructed foot soldiers. The tumultuous clatter of chariots was borne along on the sounds that were already there, like the thunder of clouds carried in the sky by the rumblings of existing clouds. Some chariots were used to fight. Other chariots were used to obstruct. Because of the melee that was created, there were other chariots that were not in a position to move. They attacked each other in that battle. Some proud ones flung down the enemy. As they attacked each other with sword and shield, the ornaments jangled. In the battle, they attacked and mangled each other with weapons and vomited blood. It was like a sharp downpour when clouds assemble. Astra clashed against shastra. The agitated attacked the agitated with clubs. As that tumultuous battle raged, both the gods and the danavas were agitated. The danavas were like a giant cloud and the gods attacked them with radiant weapons. As they showered arrows on each other, the day of the battle turned catastrophic.

‘While this was going on, the danava Kalanemi became angry. He was like a turbulent ocean that overflowed because of rain from a cloud. Showers of blazing vajras sought to afflict his head and body, which was like a mountain. But like a cloud that has discharged its lightning, these were fruitless. He sighed in rage. He frowned and perspired profusely. His breath seemed to be tinged with fire and flames seemed to issue from his mouth. His arms seemed to diagonally extend up into the sky and were like dark-hued serpents with five hoods and flickering tongues.[544] The arms held many kinds of weapons, like bows and clubs. The sky and the firmament seemed to be enveloped by them, as if by mountains. In the forefront of the battle, his garments fluttered in the wind. He was like Mount Meru itself, with its summit touched by the evening sun. The force of his thighs flung aside mountains, large summits, trees and brought down large numbers of gods, like a giant mountain shattered by the vajra. In that battle, the gods were incapable of standing before Kalanemi. He used many weapons and swords to mangle their heads and chests. Some were slain by the blows of his fists. Others were dismembered. The yakshas, gandharvas and birds were brought down, together with the large serpents. In the battle, the gods were terrorized by Kalanemi. Though they tried, they were bereft of their senses and were incapable of making efforts. In the battle, he used arrows to bind down Shakra, the thousand-eyed one, while he was astride Airavata[545] and he was incapable of moving. In the encounter, he deprived Varuna of his noose and repulsed him in every way, so that he looked like a cloud without any water or an ocean without any water. Vaishravana[546] could assume any form at will and fought with clubs. However, the lord of riches was defeated, prevented from acting and lost his guardianship of the worlds. Yama is the one who takes everything away and uses death as a weapon. However, that immortal was deprived of all of Yama’s powers and fled to his own direction. He appropriated the tasks of the guardians of the worlds and dividing his body into four parts, took over the four directions.[547] With Svarbhanu[548] indicating the way, he went to the the divine path followed by the nakshatras. He seized Lakshmi[549] from Soma and deprived him of his great kingdom. The sun, the one with the blazing rays, moves along the gate of heaven. However, he[550] seized his kingdom, the solar paths and the task of determining times of the day. Agni is the mouth of the gods.[551] On seeing him, he replaced Agni's mouth with his own. He swiftly defeated Vayu and brought him under his own subjugation. He forcibly brought the ocean and all the rivers under his control. Through his energy, he controlled all the bodies of water and made them part of his own body. He conquered all the waters, whether they were on heaven or on earth, including those that were protected well by the mountains. It was as if he established his own universe. Controlling all the great elements, he was as resplendent as Svayambhu himself. The daitya pervaded all the worlds and terrified all the worlds. He appropriated the sun, the moon and the planets and made the guardians of the worlds become parts of his own body. In the battle, having vanquished fire and the wind, the danava blazed. Because of his powers, in the worlds, he assumed the status of Parameshthi.[552] The large number of daityas praised him, as gods praised the grandfather.'

Chapter 38

Vaishampayana said, ‘There are five traits that are vested with Narayana—the Vedas, dharma, forgiveness, truth and prosperity. However, because of his perverse deeds, he did not obtain any of these. The lord of the danavas desired this Vaishnava status. Having not obtained it, he angrily rushed to Narayana. He saw him there, astride Suparna,[553] holding the conch shell, chakra and mace. For the destruction of the danavas, that sparkling mace was being whirled around. He was astride that crested bird with golden feathers, Kashyapa’s offspring. He looked like a cloud that was full of water and lightning seemed to issue from his garments. In the battle, for the destruction of the daityas, he serenely waited in his place. On seeing that Vishnu was not agitated, distressed in his mind, the danava spoke these words. “From ancient times, right from our noble danava ancestors, this one has been our enemy, from the time of Madhu and Kaitabha, who resided in the waters. It has indeed been said that our clashes with him have never brought us peace. In encounters, this is the one who has slain many danavas. In encounters, this is the one who has brought misery to women and children.[554] He is the one who accomplished the task of ensuring that danava women were no longer *simantini*s.[555] This is Vishnu of the gods, who resides in Vaikuntha in heaven. He sleeps on the serpent Ananta and on the waters. He is the self-creating one who created Svayambhu.[556] He is the one who protects the gods and he is the one who causes us injury. Hiranyakashipu was slain because he confronted his rage. The gods hide in his shadow and station themselves in the forefront of sacrifices. They thus enjoy the oblations that are offered by maharshis at the three kinds of rites.[557] He is the cause of the destruction of all those who hate the gods. In a battle, it is his chakra that penetrates our lineage. For the sake of the gods, it is indeed he who is prepared to give up his life in battles. He hurls the chakra towards the enemy and it is like the sun in its energy. He represents death for the daityas and he is stationed as if he is my death too. However, this evil-minded one has exceeded his earmarked timespan and will reap the consequences. It is through good fortune that this Vishnu has appeared before me now. Unless he bows down before me, he will be crushed by my arrows now. It is through good fortune that I have confronted the one who has earlier caused us injury in battles. It is this Narayana who slew danavas and inspired fear in them. In this encounter, I will use my arrows to swiftly kill Narayana. Though he is part of our kin,[558] he obstructs danavas in battles. In ancient times, this is the one who was known as Padmanabha.[559] In a terrible battle fought in the waters, he killed Madhu and Kaitabha. In earlier times, he divided his body into two, half man and half lion, and killed my father, Hiranyakashipu. As if she was celestial arani,[560] this is the one whom Aditi had borne in her womb earlier. In three strides, he conquered the three worlds.[561] Such is the one who has again appeared before me in the tarakamaya battle. Having faced me, he will be destroyed, with all the gods." In the encounter, he attacked Narayana with these and many other words. He was eloquent and used other similar disagreeable words in the battle. However, though he was thus attacked by that Indra among the asuras, Gadadhara was not enraged. With the strength of forgiveness in his mind, he smiled and spoke these words. "O daitya! Enough of this strength of insolence. Be steady against my strength of lack of anger. You will now be slain because of your sins of insolence. Your words have transgressed my threshold of forgiveness. It is my view that you are wicked. Shame on the strength of your words. Those who shout like women are not men. O daitya! I can see that you will venture along the path trodden by your ancestors earlier. Having crossed the boundaries that Prajapati decreed, how can one walk in comfort? You are one who causes hardships to the gods and I will slay you. I will then re-establish the gods in their respective places." The one who sports the srivatsa mark spoke such words in the battle.

'But the danava laughed. He angrily seized chakras and other weapons. In the battle, he seized all kinds of weapons in his one hundred arms. His eyes red with anger, he struck Vishnu in the chest with these. In the battle, with Maya and Tara at the forefront, all the danavas rushed towards Vishnu, holding swords and other weapons in their upraised arms. The extremely strong daityas struck him with all kinds of upraised weapons. However, Hari did not tremble in the battle, like an immobile mountain. The great asura, Kalanemi, engaged with

Suparna. He used all his strength, raised a mighty club in his arms and angrily released this terrible and flaming weapon at Garuda. Vishnu was astounded at the daitya's deed. The club descended on Suparna's head. On seeing that Suparna was wounded and hurt, he[562] felt as if his own body had been hurt. His eyes red with rage, he seized the Vaikuntha chakra. The lord's force increased and became like that of Suparna's. His arms increased in size and enveloped the ten directions. The directions, the sub-directions, the sky and the earth were permeated by these. With this energy, he increased his size and again wished to overcome the worlds. For the victory of the foremost gods, he increased his size in the firmament. The rishis and the gandharvas praised Madhusudana. His crown seemed to write in the sky and his garments touched the clouds. His feet were on earth and his arms covered the directions. Sudarshana was terrible and a sight to be seen. It blazed like the fire. Its complexion was like that of the sun's rays. It had one thousand blades and was the destroyer of enemies. It was terrible, with a handle made out of diamonds. Its inner parts were also made out of gold. It was smeared with the fat, bones, marrow and blood of danavas who had been destroyed. It was a weapon without a second. It was circular, right up to the razor-sharp edges. It assumed whatever form it willed and could go wherever it wished. It was like an unthreaded garland. It had been created by Svayambhu himself and was a cause of fear to all those who were enemies. Since it was full of the rage of maharshis, it was always proud in a battle. When it was hurled in a great battle, all the mobile and immobile objects in the worlds were confounded. It was only predatory and similar beasts who were satisfied.[563] It was unmatched in its deeds and was like the rays of the sun. Blazing with rage, Gadadhara raised this chakra in the battle. With his own energy, Shridhara[564] dried up the danava's energy in the battle. With the chakra, he severed Kalanemi's arms. The daitya possessed one hundred curved and terrible heads that seemed to spit fire and laugh out aloud. Using his force and strength, Hari severed these with his chakra. Though his arms and heads were severed, the danava did not waver. The headless torso remained in the battle, like a tree bereft of its branches. Garuda stretched out his giant wings and his speed was like that of a storm. He struck Kalanemi with his chest and brought him down. Deprived of a head, the body whirled around in the sky and fell down. Dislodged from the firmament, it fell down and agitated the surface of the ground. When the daitya fell down, the gods and large numbers of rishis pronounced words of praise and collectively worshipped Vaikuntha.[565] There were other daityas who wished to exhibit their valour in the battle. In the encounter, he[566] grasped all of them with his arms and they were incapable of moving. He seized some of them by the hair. He afflicted the throats of others. When their heads were severed, some were brought down. Others were seized by the waist. Consumed by the mace and the chakra, they lost their spirits and lost their lives. All their limbs were dislodged from the sky and fell down on the ground. Purushottama slew all the daityas. Gadadhara thus accomplished a task that was dear to Shakra.

‘When they were crushed, the tarakamaya battle came to an end. Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, quickly arrived at the spot, accompanied by all the brahmana rishis, gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras. He worshipped the god Hari, the god of the gods, and spoke these words. “O god! You have performed a great deed and have uprooted the thorn of the gods. We are delighted that the daityas have been slain. O Vishnu! You have slain the great asura, Kalanemi, who was full of insolence. There is no one other than you who could have killed him in a battle. He is the one who defeated the gods and all the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. He created hardships for the sages and roared back at me too. His fierce oppressions have been terminated by you and I am pleased at your deeds. You have brought down Kalanemi, who was like death himself. O fortunate one! Come with me. Let us go to the supreme celestial regions. The brahmana rishis have assembled there and are waiting for you. You are supreme among those who grant boons. What boon can I possibly grant you? For the gods and the daityas, you are the supreme granter of boons. O Vishnu! In this great battle, the three worlds have now emerged and are bereft of thorns. Let them be returned to the extremely great-souled Shakra.” The illustrious Brahma spoke in this way to Lord Hari. Addressing all the gods through Shakra, he[567] spoke these auspicious words. “O residents of heaven who have assembled here! Listen. With Purandara at the forefront, hear with bodies that are now hale. In this battle, all the danavas, whose valour was greater than that of Shakra and who followed Kalanemi, have been slain. He has also been killed. However, there are two who have emerged unscathed from this clash—Virochana’s son,[568] Indra among the daityas, and Svarbhanu, the great planet. Let Shakra and Varuna head for whatever direction they desire. Let Yama protect the southern quarters and let the lord of riches protect the north. Let the moon roam around and at the right time, have conjunctions with the nakshatras. With the seasons at the forefront, let the years worship and follow the course of the sun. Let the brahmanas perform the decreed rites and offer oblations into the fire. With assistant priests, let them worship and offer the prescribed shares at sacrifices. Let maharshis study and offer sacrifices and oblations to the gods. Let the ancestors be cheerful and satisfied through funeral ceremonies. Let the wind move along its paths. Let the three fires blaze.[569] Let the three varnas[570] and the three worlds be satisfied through their own natural qualities. Let sacrifices continue and let brahmanas initiate themselves into these. As has been ordained for sacrifices, let appropriate dakshina be distributed. Let the sun satisfy the earth. Let Soma provide juices. Let Vayu provide the breath of life in all living beings. Let everyone be content through auspicious and peaceful deeds. O great Indra! As used to be the case earlier, let all the waters in the rivers, the mothers of the worlds, arise and flow down to the ocean. Let the gods abandon their fear of daityas and depart in peace. Let everyone be fortunate. I will go to Brahma's eternal world. In your own houses, in the world of heaven and especially in battles, you should not remain content. The danavas are always inferior. It is certain that they will strike, whenever they find a weakness. Therefore, your sentiments must be upright and peaceful and your intelligence must be virtuous." Vishnu, whose valour is the truth, spoke in this way to the large number of gods. With Brahma, the immensely illustrious one then went to Brahma's world. This is how the wonderful battle of tarakamaya was conducted between the danavas and Vishnu. This is what you had asked me about.'

Chapter 39

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! The god of the gods, the one who was created from the water, went with Brahma to Brahma’s world. What did he do there and what did he do in Vaikuntha? After Vishnu had been honoured by the gods because of his deed of slaying the daityas, why did the original god[571] take the one who was created from the waters with him? What was his status in Brahma’s world and what kind of yoga did he practise? What were the rituals that were followed by the lord who is the origin of all creatures there? While he was there, what happened to this great world and universe? How did it obtain the great prosperity that is desired by the gods and the asuras? At the end of the summer, how did he sleep on that undecaying ocean and how did he wake up? While he was in Brahma’s world, how did he hold up the burden of the worlds? O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear about the celestial conduct of the illustrious one in heaven. Tell me the truth in detail. I wish to know about everything.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Hear in detail about Narayana’s conduct, about how he found delight with Brahma in Brahma’s world. His wishes and his movements are subtle and even the gods find it difficult to follow them. I will tell you what I am capable of. Listen to me with single-minded attention. That god is nothing but the worlds and the three worlds are nothing but him. All this is full of that god and heaven is nothing but that god’s consciousness. Know that everything that makes the gods prosper flows from Janardana. Know that everything that the gods undertake flows from Madhusudana. Learned and knowledgeable people know that the world is full of Agni and Soma. The learned know that the world, full of Soma and Agni, is nothing but Vishnu and the grandfather. Curds are made from milk and butter is created from curd. In that fashion, Janardana churns creatures out of this world. The paramatman is known to exist in senses and in creatures. In a similar way, Hari is known through the Vedas, the gods and the worlds. The embodied bodies of creatures on earth are pervaded by the senses. Similarly, the gods in heaven are pervaded by the lord’s Vaishnava powers. The sacred paramatman distributes the fruits of sacrifices to the performers of sacrifices. He is the one who holds the strands of the worlds and mantras are used to honour him through those mantras. There are many who possess ultimate knowledge about these strands. But even they cannot see his limits. Know that Madhava is supreme in the worlds and that he is the ultimate destination. When the gods are immersed in darkness, he is the one who displays the divine path. Listen to the ancient account of what transpired in Brahma’s world. He went to Brahma’s world and saw the grandfather’s abode. All the rishis worshipped Vishnu, whose deeds are noble. He saw that the maharshis had kindled a fire and were offering oblations into this. Following the ordinances that are laid down for such auspicious occasions, the immensely energetic one honoured them. He accepted his share at the sacrifice, which was established on his body alone. The rishis honoured the immensely radiant one and were honoured back in turn. The one who cannot be thought of roamed around Brahma’s eternal world. He saw the auspicious sacrificial altars, which were bedecked with the best of sacrifices. He saw signs of the brahmana rishis performing hundreds of sacrifices. He inhaled the smoke that arose from these and heard the brahmanas chanting from the Vedas. He saw the sacrifices, which were nothing but manifestations of his own self. All the rishis, gods, priests and assistant priests raised their hands to revere him. They lowered their faces and told the auspicious one, “O best among the gods! O Padmanabha! O immensely radiant one! Welcome. Accept the hospitality of this sacrifice, performed with mantras. You are the auspicious sacrifice, the vessel and sacred padya in the vessel. You are the guest that the mantras have spoken about and it is evident that the guest has now manifested himself. O Vishnu! Ever since you left for the battle, our rites had ceased. It is not recommended that any rites should be performed in Vishnu’s absence. This sacrifice, performed with dakshina, will lead to fruits. However, may we immediately obtain these, since we have been able to see you.” The illustrious one agreed to this and honoured them back in return. With Brahma, the grandfather, he rejoiced in Brahma’s world.’

Chapter 40

Vaishampayana said, ‘Worshipped by the rishis, the lord Hari entered Brahma’s ancient and divine abode, which was nothing but Narayana’s hermitage. Cheerful in his mind, he took his leave from those who had come for the sacrifice.[572] He bowed down before the original god, Brahma, who had been born out of the lotus. He entered Narayana’s hermitage, which was named after his own name. However, before entering, the illustrious one laid aside his weapons. He saw his own abode there, which was like the ocean. The large number of elements and the eternal maharshis resided there. The lords of the *samvartaka* clouds[573] were there and it was also a place inhabited by the nakshatras. It was enveloped in shrouds of darkness and even the gods and the asuras could not penetrate it. This wasn’t the dominion of Vayu, the moon or the sun. That region was pervaded by Padmanabha’s energy and form. The one with the thousand heads entered there, bearing an extremely great burden of matted hair, and prepared to lie down and sleep. Kali[574] knows about the time for the end of the worlds. She bears the form of destiny and her abode is in the eyes. That sleep presented herself before the great-souled one. He lay down on that divine bed, made cool by the waters of the ocean. Hari is supreme among those who follow vows and he followed the vow that is known as that of the single ocean.[575] For the creation of the universe, the great-souled lord lay down there. The gods and the large number of rishis continued to worship Vishnu. While he was asleep, a beautiful lotus manifested itself from his navel. This possessed the complexion of the sun and it was Brahma’s original abode. While the great sage[576] slept, Brahma was like an original strand created from his upraised hand. This is how he whirls around all the worlds in the cycle of time. The breath is exhaled from his open mouth and the different categories of beings are created from his breath and merge into it again. Following this inviolate principle, the four categories of beings[577] are created by Brahma himself and depending on their respective deeds, head towards their own destruction. Brahma himself, nor the undecaying brahmana rishis, know the nature of Vishnu's sleep and yoga, enveloped as he is in austerities. All the brahmana rishis, with Brahma at the forefront, do not know when he sleeps and when he awakes and is seated on his seat. Who is awake? Who sleeps? Who breathes? Who does not move? Who is the one who enjoys? Who is radiant and fair? Who is dark?[578] They are incapable of comprehending the god's divine origin. They are incapable of understanding his deeds and his birth. The rishis who know about what has been instructed in the ancient texts speak about his ancient character. The gods hear about his ancient conduct, described in the great Puranas and other texts. However, no one knows about his end. They know that the Vedas are themselves a manifestation of his own power and character. The Vedas and the popular texts are pervaded by these and one hears about them. When it is time for the creation of the worlds and for the destruction of the danavas, Madhusudana, the creator of beings, awakes. When Achyuta sleeps, the gods are incapable of looking at him. When it is the end of the summer and the end of the monsoon, he awakes from his sleep. When he sleeps, sacrifices and rites, accompanied by auspicious mantras, are not performed. Sacrifices are performed when Madhusudana wakes in the autumn. While Vishnu sleeps, Purandara, the lord of rain, peforms the Vaishnava tasks that must be performed as part of the yearly cycle. It is this deep maya that is present in the world in the form of sleep. Sometimes it suddenly assumes a hateful and terrible form and appears before kings as the night of destruction. Night is the destroyer of the day. On earth, it assumes this form, envelopes the bodies of all embodied creatures in terrible darkness and takes away half of their lives.[579] Sometimes, it penetrates them and makes them yawn repeatedly. They are incapable of withstanding its force, as if they have been immersed in the great ocean. Sleep pervades every creature in the world—because of eating, exertion, or when it is night. Sometimes, creatures on earth are destroyed while they are asleep. When it is time for creatures to die, it confronts them with terrible destruction. Even among the gods, with the exception of Narayana, no one is capable of withstanding it. The maya which emerges from Vishnu's body is a friend to the one who destroys everything. It can be seen in Narayana's face and in his lotus eyes. In a short while, all creatures in the world serve it and are confounded. Like a wife who is devoted to her husband, for a short while, for the sake of their own welfare, creatures should serve and bear the one with the black trails.[580] For the sake of confounding the worlds, the undecaying Vishnu slept and was immersed in sleep in Narayana's hermitage. The great-souled one slept for one thousand years. Krita yuga passed and so did treta yuga, supreme among yugas. At the end of dvapara yuga, the maharshis saw that the worlds were extremely miserable and praised the immensely energetic one, seeking to wake him.

'The rishis said, "Abandon this natural sleep, like garlands that have been enjoyed and have become old. With Brahma, all the gods are here, desiring to see you. They know about the brahman and chant hymns towards the brahman.[581] O Hrishikesha! The rishis, rigid in their vows, are praising you. O one who thinks of the creation of subjects! These elements, earth, space, fire, wind and water, and creatures are part of your own soul. O Vishnu! Listen to these auspicious words. The seven sages and other circles of sages are with them. O god! They are chanting your praise in divine and sweet words. O lotus-eyed one! Arise. O Padmanabha! O immensely radiant one! A task that will bring glory to the gods has presented itself."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Hrishikesha arose in his supreme and blazing form, dispelling the waves of darkness that the entire universe had been immersed in. He saw all the assembled gods, together with the grandfather. They had assembled and wished to say something, because they were agitated because of the universe. With his eyes rested from the sleep, Hari spoke to the gods in words that were full of dharma, meaning and artha and wishing to ascertain the truth. "O gods! Whom is your conflict with? From where has fear arisen? What is the task and for whom? What has devolved on me? What has been caused by the danavas so that all is not well with the worlds? What has caused difficulties for men? I wish to quickly ascertain this. All of you know about the brahman. In your midst, I have abandoned my supreme bed and am stationed here, to do what is good for you. What can I do for you?"'

Chapter 41

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Vishnu’s words, for the sake of the welfare of all the residents of heaven, Brahma, grandfather of the worlds, spoke these supreme words. “O Vishnu! From one battle to another battle, it is you who does the steering. O destroyer of asuras! As long as you are there, the gods have no fear. O lord of the gods! O slayer of enemies! Shakra’s victory is based on you. How can men who endeavour to follow dharma suffer from fear? Men who are always devoted to truth and dharma are free from anxiety. Before their appointed times, Death is incapable of glancing towards them. Men, and their lords, the kings, do not falsely bear dissension towards each other and enjoy the one-sixth share.[582] They behave well towards their subjects and do not impose unwarranted taxes. They accumulate their treasures without these unwarranted taxes. They are forgiving and protect their respective dominions and prosperous habitations. They impose mild forms of punishment and sustain the four varnas. The advisers are virtuous and worshipped, without causing resentment among creatures. One-sixth the share is enjoyed and the army has the four kinds of forces.[583] Everyone is accomplished in dhanurveda.[584] Everyone is devoted to the Vedas. At the right time, they perform sacrifices and give copious quantities of dakshina at these sacrifices. They study the Vedas and maharshis initiate themselves into brahmacharya. Through funeral rites and offerings, they satisfy hundreds of ancestors. Of the three kinds of injunctions on earth, in the Vedas, in customary practice and as stated in the *Dharmashastras*,[585] there is nothing that is unknown to them. In terms of searching out what is best for others, those kings are equal to the maharshis. They are interested in tasks that will bring krita yuga back. Because of their powers, Vasava showers down auspicious rain at the right time and winds devoid of dust blow in the ten directions. There are no calamities on earth and the planets pursue their paths properly. The moon has amiable conjunctions with the nakshatras. In the right way, the sun moves along its two paths.[586] The fire is satisfied with many kinds of oblations that have auspicious fragrances. When everything is conducted properly in this way, the entire earth is satisfied and there is no fear of death among men. However, there are some kings who are more powerful than the others and they are afflicting the earth. In their blazing prosperity, they have followed each other. Because of the burden of oppression of these kings, the earth is exhausted and has appeared before us, like a boat that is about to sink. Freed of their bonds, the mountains seem to move, as if the end of the yuga has arrived. The waters are repeatedly agitated, as if releasing her sweat. The bodies and extensive dominions of these kshatriya men are full of energy and strength and are agitating the earth. In city after city, there are kings who are surrounded by crores of soldiers. This is also happening in many kingdoms and in hundreds and thousands of villages. Thousands of landlords have become powerful and strong. Tens of thousands are sprouting in villages and in kingdoms, as if rendering the earth full of holes. She has been rendered powerless. With Time leading the way, she has come to my abode. O Vishnu! You are her supreme refuge. This earth is the arena of action and this earth is now pained. You should act so that the eternal universe does not suffer from further affliction. O Madhusudana! Her oppression is a great sin. If rites disappear from the worlds, the universe will be tainted. Oppressed by this wave of kings, it is evident that she is tired. She has abandoned her natural forgiveness. Though capable of moving, she has been rendered immobile. We have heard what she has said and you have also heard her. We wish to have a consultation with you, so that her burden can be reduced. When all kings are established on the virtuous path and kingdoms prosper, the three varnas of men[587] follow the brahmanas. All the varnas then speak truthful words and the varnas are devoted to dharma. All brahmanas are devoted to the Vedas and all men are devoted to brahmanas. When men pursue dharma, this is how the universe progresses. Therefore, we must consult so that dharma is not destroyed. There is no other virtuous path and dharma is the excellent cure. For relieving the burden of the earth, it is appropriate that the kings be slain. O immensely fortunate one! Come. Let us therefore have a consultation. With the earth at the forefront, let us go to the summit of Meru."'

Chapter 42

Vaishampayana said, 'In a voice that was like the thundering of the clouds, he[588] agreed to this. The one who dispels bad days and brings good days left, like a mountain tinged with lightning. He was adorned in pearls and jewels. His radiance was like that of the moon and clouds. With dark and matted hair, Hari was radiant in his dark complexion. There was dazzling hair on his broad chest. The beautiful srivatsa mark was stretched between his two nipples. The undecaying preceptor of the worlds was clad in yellow garments. Hari was seen to be like a mountain, tinged by the evening light. Following the words of the one born from the lotus,[589] he departed on Suparna. Not taking their eyes off him, all the gods followed him. In a short while, they reached the bejewelled mountain. In the sky there, the gods saw the assembly hall, which could assume any form at will. It was stretched out and attached to the peak of Meru and was like the sun in its radiance. The foundations were made out of golden pillars and the doors were encrusted with diamonds. It was garlanded with a large number of vimanas and was colourful, fashioned through the powers of the mind. There were nets made out of gems. It was decorated with jewels and could go wherever it wished. There were many adornments fashioned out of gems. Everywhere, flowers blossomed. It was divine and had been constructed by Vishvakarma.[590] It was full of celestial maya. In cheerful frames of mind, following the prescribed order, the gods entered the auspicious assembly hall and sat down on their respective seats. As instructed, some of them sat on seats, others seated themselves on vimanas. Some sat on thrones, others on cushions and spreads.

'Urged by Brahma, the wind god Vayu asked everyone to be quiet and this sound echoed throughout the auspicious assembly hall. At this, there was silence throughout that conclave of the residents of heaven. The earth spoke these words, which were full of regret and self-pity. "In ancient times, when I was protected by the one born from the lotus, two great asuras made out of earth bound me down. When the great-souled Vishnu was sleeping on the great ocean, like a log of wood, they emerged from the wax in his ears. Goaded by Brahma's words, Vayu himself penetrated them.[591] Those two great asuras grew and covered the sky. Having been touched by Brahma, they obtained their breaths of life from Vayu. One was soft and the other one was known to be hard. The soft one was named Madhu and the hard one was named Kaitabha.[592] Having obtained these names, those two daityas became powerful and insolent. There was nothing to fear and the entire universe was a single ocean of water. However, they desired to fight. On seeing them in front of him, Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, sought refuge in that ocean of water and vanished. He had arisen from the lotus on Padmanabha's navel. Brahma, the one with the four faces, thought it desirable that he should hide inside the lotus. Narayana and the grandfather were both inside the water. Without any movement, they slept there for many years. After a long period of time, Madhu and Kaitabha came to the spot where Brahma was. The immensely radiant Padmanabha saw that the two terrible and great asuras, indomitable in battle, were swiftly advancing. There was a fierce encounter between them,[593] while the universe and the three worlds were immersed in that single ocean of water. That tumultuous encounter lasted for thousands of years. However, in that battle, the asuras were not exhausted at all. After a long period of time, the daityas, indomitable in battle, cheerfully spoke to the god, Narayana Hari. 'O supreme among gods! We are happy at this encounter with you and we are proud that in this battle, our death will be at your hands. However, slay us in a place that is not flooded with water. Once we have been slain, let us be reborn as your sons. If a person defeats us in battle, let it be such that we become his sons.' In the encounter, he seized the daityas with his arms and crushed them there.[594] Thus, Madhu and Kaitabha were slain. He flung the bodies into the water. Once flung into the waves in the water, the bodies of the daityas were fused into one and churned, releasing fat. That fat covered the water and the bodies disappeared. The illustrious Narayana again started to create subjects. It was because I was created with the fat of the daityas that I have come to be known as Medini.[595] For the sake of men, Padmanabha accomplished this through his eternal powers. While Markandeya looked on, he again assumed the form of a boar and raised me from the waters on a single tusk.[596] Later, in front of you, I was again struck by the daitya Bali and saved by Vishnu, through Vishnu's powers.[597] I am afflicted again and have come before Gadadhara. I am without a protector and he is the protector of the universe. I have sought refuge with the one who is the refuge. Agni is the preceptor of gold. The sun is said to be the preceptor of cows. Soma is the preceptor of nakshatras and Narayana is my preceptor. I alone hold up the world and its mobile and immobile objects. Though I hold them up, everything is actually held up by Gadadhara. When I was oppressed, Rama,[598] Jamadagni's son, became angry. To reduce my burden, he eliminated kshatriyas twenty-one times. Bhargava used me as a sacrificial altar and seemed to perform a funeral rite for his ancestors, the descendants of Kashyapa, offering the blood of kings. I was drenched with evil-smelling flesh, fat, bones and the blood of kshatriyas. It was as if a young maiden in her season stood before Kashyapa. The brahmana rishi told me, 'Why is your face downcast? You have taken the vow of being a wife to brave ones. Follow that vow of being the wife of a hero.' I told Kashyapa, the creator of the worlds, 'O brahmana! My husbands have been slain by the great-souled Bhargava. I am without brave kshatriyas, who earn a living through weapons. I am a widow and am not interested in sustaining cities that are empty. O illustrious one! Therefore, grant me a husband, who is a king and is like you. He should he able to protect the villages and the cities and me, extending up to the frontiers of the ocean.' On hearing this, the illustrious lord replied in words of assent and gave me Manu, an Indra among men. It is through Manu's auspicious powers, that the great lineage of Ikshvaku was generated. Over a long period of time, kings have come and kings have gone. This is what Manu, the intelligent Indra among men, gave me. I have been enjoyed by royal lineages that were revered by the dynasties of maharshis. Many brave kshatriyas have conquered me and subsequently departed for heaven. Despite having obtained me, they came under the subjugation of time and met their destruction. It is for my sake that there have been conflicts in this world. Powerful kshatriyas, who did not withdraw from the field of battle, have fought. Their conduct has been determined by destiny. For the welfare of the universe, act so that these kings are destroyed in the field of battle. I am suffering from a heavy burden. Do this out of compassion for me. Let the handsome one who wields the chakra grant me freedom from fear. I am tormented and afflicted by the burden. I have come before you, seeking refuge. I am suffering from this great burden. Let Vishnu speak to me.”’

Chapter 43

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing the earth's words, all the residents of heaven thought about what might be done for her and spoke to the grandfather. "O illustrious one! Act so that the earth's burden may be reduced. You are the one who created the bodies in this world. You are the lord of the worlds. O lord of the gods! There are tasks that have to be performed by the great Indra, Yama, Varuna, the lord of riches, Narayana himself, the moon, the sun, the wind god, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras who are the creators of the worlds, the Ashvins who are foremost among the gods, the Sadhyas who reside in heaven, Brihaspati, Ushanas, Time, Kali, Maheshvara, Brahma, Vishakha Guha,[599] the yakshas, the rakshasas, the gandharvas, the charanas, the giant serpents, the mountains that are best among mountains, the oceans, the giant waves, the divine rivers like Ganga and the others and other celestial rivers. O lord! Quickly instruct them about the portions they should resort to.[600] This is to accomplish the earth's task and to accomplish conflict among the kings. O grandfather! Among all of us, who are the ones who should act so as to be born in different portions? Who are the ones who will remain in heaven? Who are the ones who will be born on earth as kings? Who will be assistant priests among the brahmanas? Who will be born in lineages of kings? On earth, who are the ones who will create bodies that are not born from wombs?" The grandfather of the worlds was surrounded by the gods and heard about the great resolution the gods had adopted in accomplishing their tasks.

'He spoke these words. "O best among the gods! Your resolution is agreeable to me. Use your energy to create your own respective portions, which are equal to you, on earth. Let all the best among gods use their energy to be thus incarnated. Think of the goddess earth and obtain the prosperity of the three worlds. Know that on earth, I have already done something in the Bharata lineage. Knowing about what might happen to the earth, I have already done this. O gods! In earlier times, I was seated on the western shores of the ocean, with the great-souled Kashyapa, born from me. We were conversing about what had transpired in the worlds earlier and about what is in conformity with the Vedas. There were many such earlier accounts, full of the qualities of power. While we were conversing, Ganga and the ocean quickly came to me, with winds stirring their waters. The beach was turbulent because of the force of the wind and there were swift currents in the river. The ocean was clad in colourful garments of water. His body was bedecked with sparkling conch shells and pearls. There were ornaments made out of coral and gems. Full because of the waxing of the moon, the voice of the ocean rumbled. He transgressed his shoreline and sought to overcome me. He drenched me with moving and saline waters that drenched my seat. Because of the waves that arose, the ocean disturbed that spot. I angrily spoke to him, asking him to be peaceful. When I asked him to do this, the ocean became peaceful. He withdrew the torrent of waves and stood there, blazing in his regal prosperity. I then cursed the ocean and Ganga. There was a reason behind this decision. It was done for the sake of your welfare. 'O ocean! You have presented myself before me in a form that is like that of a king. Go. You will become a king and a lord of the earth. Despite this, you will be able to sport in your natural form and will be energetic. You will become a lord of men and an extender of the lineage of the Bharatas. Since I asked you to be peaceful and you adopted such a form, you will bear an excellent form in the world and obtain fame. You will be Shantanu.[601] Ganga's limbs are curved. This best of rivers will assume a form that is beautiful in all her limbs and unite with you there.' When I spoke in this way, the ocean was angry and replied. 'O lord! O lord of the gods! Why are you cursing me? I have been created by you and have always been devoted to doing what you have asked me to. I am like your son. I should not be cursed. Why have you addressed me in such words? O illustrious one! It is because of your favours that my force increases, in accordance with the waxing of the moon. O Brahma! If I am stirred because of that, how is it my fault? O illustrious one! I am stirred by the wind. I am touched by the waxing of the moon. How am I responsible for that and how can that be a reason to curse me? I become turbulent because of strong winds, am strengthened by the clouds and there is the waxing of the moons. These are the three reasons behind my agitation. If I am guilty because of this, those reasons have been created by you.

O Brahma! You should pardon me and take back your curse. Now that I have been disturbed by this curse, I am without any support. O lord of the gods! Even if you perceive some reason for guilt, you should exhibit compassion. O god! Following your orders, this Ganga will now have to go to earth. Even if I am guilty, she is guiltless and you should show her your favours.' I then spoke to the great ocean in these gentle words. He did not know about the cause of the gods and he was stirred by the wind and terrified by the curse. 'O immensely intelligent one! Depart in peace. Do not be frightened. I am pleased with you. O lord of the rivers! Listen to the reason behind this curse. Go. Using your own energy, adopt a body in the lineage of the Bharatas. O lord of the rivers! Abandon and give up this form as an ocean. O great ocean! Become a lord of the earth who is surrounded by royal prosperity. O lord of the waters! In that portion, generated from you, protect the four varnas. This best among rivers will adopt a beautiful female form. At that time, in that beautiful form, Ganga will serve you. Following my instructions, this Jahnavi will find pleasure with you. O ocean! You will forget about the hardships this watery form brought you. On the instructions of the gods, you should swiftly act in this way. O ocean! Following the *prajapatya* rites, Ganga will marry you.[602] The eight Vasus have been dislodged from heaven and have gone to *rasatala*.[603] I am engaging you so that they may be born. I am giving those eight to you, to be born as your sons through Jahnavi's womb. They are like the sun in their qualities and bring pleasure to the gods. Quickly have these Vasus as your sons and make the lineage of the Kurus great. O ocean! You will then give up the human body and regain the form of an ocean.' O supreme among the gods! To ensure your welfare, this is what I have done in earlier times. I had foreseen the burden the earth would have to bear because of those kings. That is the reason I sowed the seeds of Shantanu's lineage on earth. O residents of heaven! The Vasus have been born as Ganga's sons. The eighth Vasu, Gangeya,[604] is still on earth. Seven Vasus have returned.[605] One still remains. Through a second wife, a second son will be born from Shantanu's body. This is the radiant and powerful King Vichitravirya. Vichitravirya will have two kings as sons. These will be the famous bulls among men, Pandu and Dhritarashtra. Pandu will have two young and beautiful wives. They will be the auspicious Kunti and Madri and they will be like goddesses on earth. King Dhritarashtra will have a single wife and she will be like him in conduct. She will be famous as Gandhari on earth and she will always be engaged in vows similar to those of her husband. That lineage will be divided into two parts, one on this side and one on the other. There will be a great conflict between the sons of the two kings. Because of that conflict between the sons, there will be a destruction of kings. There will be great fear, like the one that comes at the end of a yuga. The kings and their armies will bring down each other. The cities and the kingdoms will become devoid of inhabitants and the earth will be without enterprise. In ancient times, I had foreseen the end of dvapara yuga. At that time, using weapons, the kings and their mounts will be destroyed. When men are asleep and unconscious in the night, the one who will be born as Shankara's portion[606] will use the energetic agneya weapon and destroy the ones who remain. He will be like Death. When this performer of cruel deeds withdraws, the third dvapara yuga, which I have spoken about, will come to an end. When the portion of the great lord returns,[607] the fourth yuga, known as Maheshvara, will manifest itself[608] and this will be a yuga that is terrible and subhuman. Men will generally follow adharma and observe only a little bit of dharma. The propensity towards truth will be destroyed and the store of falsehood will increase. Men will only worship two gods, Maheshvara and Kumara. All men will have diminished lifespans. For the sake of the earth, this is the best decision—to bring about the destruction of kings. O gods! Without any delay, you should incarnate yourselves in your own portions. Kunti will bear the portions of Dharma and the others and so will Madri. As the foundation for conflict, Kali's portion will be born in Gandhari's womb. Goaded by destiny, kings will adopt either of the two sides. For the sake of the earth, all of them will be wrathful and will desire to fight. Let the earth, the sustainer of the world, go and bear them in her womb. This is the proper method for eliminating those kings, who will be famous in the worlds.'" On hearing the grandfather's words, the earth went away to wherever she had come from, biding her time for the destruction of the kings.

'To destroy the ones who hated the gods, Brahma urged the gods—the ancient rishi Nara, the serpent Shesha who holds up the earth, Sanatkumara, the Sadhyas, Agni, foremost among the gods, Varuna, Yama, the sun god, the moon god, the gandharvas, the apsaras, the Rudras, the Adityas and the

Ashvins. The portions of all these gods should be incarnated on earth. This is what I have spoken to you earlier about,[609] the incarnations of these portions. On earth, some gods were born through wombs, others without wombs. To slay daityas and danavas, these lords among men were born. Some were as dense as *kshirika* trees.[610] Some could withstand vajras. Some possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants. Some were inferior in strength. They wielded clubs, maces and spears. Their arms were like bludgeons. Some struck with summits of mountains, others fought with clubs. There were hundreds and thousands who were born in the Vrishni lineage. Gods were born as kings in the Kuru and Panchala lineages. Some were prosperous officiating priests, born in the families of brahmanas. There were great archers who were skilled in the use of all weapons. There were those who were devoted to the vows of the Vedas. When angry, they were capable of shattering the earth, making mountains move, rising up into the sky and agitating the great ocean. Brahma, the lord of the past, the present and the future, instructed them in this way, when they assembled before Narayana to ensure peace in the world. Listen again to the account of Vishnu's descent on earth. The lord, the lord of the richness of life, did this for the welfare of the subjects. The intelligent Vasudeva was born in Yayati's lineage. Born in that lineage, the lord Narayana performed deeds that were revered and brought fame.'

Chapter 44

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been reassured about her well-being, the earth left. In the Bharata lineage, the gods then started to be incarnated in different portions. They were born in the portions of Dharma, Shakra, Pavana, the Ashvins, the physicians of the gods, and in Surya's portion.[611] The eighth of the Vasus, foremost among the gods, had already been born in his portion and had descended on earth. Death's portion descended on earth and so did Kali's portion. Soma's portion, Agni's portion and Varuna's portion descended on earth. Shankara's portion was incarnated and so were the portions of the Vishvadevas, residents of heaven. The portions of the gandharvas, serpents and yakshas also descended there. Narada was stationed in the sky and was coming down, towards the earth. Stationed there, he saw them descend and also saw that Narayana's portion was missing. He[612] was like a blazing fire, with eyes that were like the rising sun. A very large spread of matted hair hung down his left side. He was attired in garments that were as white as the moon. His ornaments were made out of gold. He held a giant veena, which clung to him like a beloved friend. His upper garment was made out of black antelope skin. His sacred thread was golden. He held a staff and a water pot and looked like Shakra himself. He secretly causes dissension in the world and is like a planet that engenders conflict. The maharshi is learned and knows about the knowledge of the gandharvas.[613] However, he is also attached to causing dissension. The brahmana finds pleasure in causing enmity. Indeed, he is like Kali in this. He is the one who chants the four Vedas. He is the foremost udgatri and officiating priest. Narada, the undecaying maharshi, roams around in Brahma's world.

'He stood in the assembly of the gods and angrily addressed Vishnu. "O Vishnu! The residents of heaven have incarnated themselves in their own portions. All of them have done this for the sake of the destruction of the kings. However, the destiny of the kshatriya kings is vested in you. It seems to me that, to accomplish this task, Nara and Narayana should also be engaged. O god! The sight of the truth is determined by you and you know that they have not been engaged. O god of the gods! For the sake of the gods, they should also be employed in such a task. You are sight for the ones who possess sight. O lord! It is your power that is praised. You are foremost among the yogis who are engaged in yoga. You are the supreme objective among all kinds of objectives. O lord! You are supreme among all. You have seen that the portions of the gods have left. To aid the earth, why has your own portion not been engaged? With you, those divine portions will have a protector. That is the reason I am urging you. To rescue the earth, they have left on different kinds of tasks. O Vishnu! I have swiftly come here, to this assembly of the gods. I desired to urge you. Listen to the reason why I wished to do this. There are daityas who were killed by you in the tarakamaya battle. O Vishnu! Hear about the ones who have left for earth because of that. There is a city named Mathura on earth. It is on the banks of the Yamuna. It is prosperous, with many habitations. There was a great danava named Madhu and he was indomitable in battle.[614] He had a terrible forest named Madhuvana and he used to reside there. That extremely large spot is covered by gigantic trees. He had a great son and that danava's name was Lavana. He resided there and terrified everyone because of his strength. That danava sported there for many years. He was insolent and dislodged large numbers of gods from the worlds. Rama, Dasharatha's son, resided in Ayodhya, a place that was impossible to assail.[615] The one who knew about dharma ruled his kingdom and caused fright to the rakshasas. The terrible danava was proud of his strength and dwelt in the forest. He despatched a messenger who spoke harsh words to Rama. 'O Rama! I dwell inside your kingdom and I am your enemy. No king who is proud of his strength ever wishes to be a vassal. A king who desires the welfare of his subjects should devote himself to the vows of kings. He should desire to vanquish all his enemies and make the kingdom prosper. A king who desires to cause delight should not be content with wetting his hair at a consecration.[616] When one conquers the various senses, this is when one obtains a firm victory. In particular, a king must always desire that everything is proceeding properly. To convey instructions, in this world, there is no one who is equal to a preceptor. If an intelligent person is immersed in unwarranted pleasures, he cannot be said to be in the midst of dharma. A king who is superior in strength does not entertain fear of a king who is near his frontiers. All the senses are naturally prone to flourish. If a king acts agreeably towards his enemies, he robs himself of his prosperity. Confused because of a woman, you killed Ravana and his soldiers. I do not think this was desirable. This wasn't a great deed. It was a wicked one. Because of your vow, you resorted to residing in the forest. You killed inferior rakshasas there. This is not seen to be something recommended for the virtuous.[617] Dharma results from lack of rage. This auspicious trait conveys one to a virtuous end. Because of your confusion, you tainted the forest and killed many of its residents. Though you seemingly followed vows, that Ravana is blessed. He was slain in a battle over a woman, like one who follows the dharma of carnal pleasures. That evil-minded one could not control his senses and was slain in a battle. However, if you are truly valorous in battle, fight with me now.' Hearing the messenger's words, the one who spoke the truth said the following. Raghava did not lose his patience. Nor was he frightened. He smiled and said, 'O messenger! What you have said about a praiseworthy act is false. You have flung abuse at him. But I know the truth and am not disturbed. O stupid one! As long as I am established on the virtuous path, why should I now lament over Ravana being slain or about my wife being abducted? Righteous ones, based on the path of virtue, do not abuse through words. Destiny is always awake and distinguishes between the virtuous and the wicked. O messenger! You have accomplished your task of being an emissary. Now leave quickly. A person like me does not strike at inferior ones who indulge in self-praise. This is my younger brother, Shatrughna, the scorcher of enemies. He will counter the evil-minded daitya in a battle.' Thus addressed, the messenger left with Sumitra's son,[618] after taking the permission of the great-souled Raghava, Indra among men. On a swift chariot, Sumitra's son reached the great Madhuvana. Desiring to fight, he set up his camp on the outskirts of the forest. Hearing the messenger's words, the daitya became senseless with rage. He entered the forest and stationed himself, ready to fight. A terrible encounter ensued between Sumitra's son and the danava. Both of them were brave and persevering in the field of battle. They struck each other with sharp and excellent arrows. Neither of them was exhausted from the battle. Nor did they retreat. Eventually, in the encounter, the danava was afflicted by the arrows of Sumitra’s son. The danava did not possess his trident and suffered on that account. Shatrughna, the scorcher of enemies, picked up a sword that had a golden handle and used that to sever Lavana’s head in the great battle. In the encounter, the danava was thus killed by Sumitra’s son, the one who delighted his friends. Using his weapon, the intelligent one also cut down the daitya’s forest. Having cut down the forest, Sumitra’s son created a habitation there. The one who knew about supreme dharma constructed a city at that spot. That city of Mathura is in the region that was known as Madhuvana. In earlier times, after having killed the danava in the battle, Shatrughna constructed it. The city is extremely large and has mansions, walls and gates. It is full of rich houses and is surrounded by prosperous kingdoms. Boundaries have been laid down for well-planned gardens and groves. There are high walls and moats encircle it. The tall mansions are like headdresses, the palaces are like armlets. There are excellent gates on all sides and the crossroads seem to be smiling. There are healthy and brave men and it is populated by elephants, horses and chariots. The city adorns the banks of the Yamuna and is like a crescent in shape. It is sacred and protected. There are shops and the city is proud because of its store of jewels. Since the god[619] showers down at the right time, the fields yield succulent produce. In that city, the men and women are seen to be cheerful. This city is nested in the dominion of the immensely valiant king, Shurasena, the extender of the Bhoja lineage. He was brave, with a large army, and is famous by the name of Ugrasena.[620] O Vishnu! In the tarakamaya battle, you killed the great daitya Kalanemi. He has been born as Ugrasena’s son. His name is Kamsa and the large-eyed one is the extender of the Bhoja lineage. This king is brave and famous on earth. His tread is like that of a lion. He is terrible and causes fear to kings. So all the kings are scared of him. Since he has veered off the virtuous path, all creatures are frightened of him. Since his inner soul is terrible, he has immersed himself in terror. That has got united with insolence and the body hairs of the subjects stand up. He does not follow the dharma of kings, nor does he cause delight to his own side. He does not do what is agreeable for himself or his kingdom. He is fierce and always prone to excessive taxation. Having been defeated by you in the battle, he has been reborn there as Kamsa. With an asura in his inner soul, he behaves like a predatory beast and constrains people. In the water, there resided the brave Haya, famous by the name of Hayagriva.[621] That wicked Haya has been reborn as Keshi. That wicked one is skilled in neighing, but also sports a mane. He resides in Vrindavana, devouring the flesh of men. Bali's son was Arishta. That great asura can assume any form at will. He sports a hump and has assumed the form of a bull, bearing enmity towards cows. Diti's son, Rishta, was a superior danava. That daitya has assumed the form of an elephant and has become Kamsa's mount. There was an insolent daitya, famous by the name of Lamba. He has been reborn as Pralamba and dwells in a banyan tree in the Bhandira forest. The daitya known as Khara, supreme among asuras, has been reborn as Dhenuka. That terrible one dwells in a forest of palm trees and exterminates all the people who come there. There were two supreme danavas known as Varaha and Kishora. They have been reborn as the wrestlers Chanura and Mushtika and they are found in the arena. There were the danavas Maya and Tara, who were like Death among danavas. They are in the city of Pragyotisha, with Bhoumya Naraka.[622] O Vishnu! These are daityas you killed and destroyed. However, on earth, they have assumed the form of humans and are constricting men. It is through your favours that the destruction of these danavas took place. They are frightened of you in heaven. They are frightened of you in the ocean. They are frightened of you on earth. However, there is no one else they are scared of. O Shridhara![623] There is no one other than you who can slay these wicked ones. Having been dislodged from heaven, these daityas have left for the earth. O Keshava! As long as you are awake, even if they are slain and uprooted on earth in their human bodies, it will be extremely difficult for them to reach heaven. O Vishnu! Therefore, you should yourself go to earth. For the sake of the destruction of the danavas, you should create yourself from your own self. When your unmanifest form becomes manifest, it is sometimes seen and can sometimes not be seen, by the best of the gods. You created the gods and they are being reborn on earth. O Vishnu! Kamsa will be destroyed through your incarnation. It is only then that the task the earth arrived for will be accomplished. Your eyes are devoted to the land of Bharata and you undertake important tasks there. O Hrishikesha! Therefore, go to earth and slay the danavas."'

Chapter 45

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Narada’s words, Madhusudana smiled. The lord and the god, the one who is worshipped, replied in these auspicious words. “O Narada! You have said this for the welfare of the worlds. They are for well-being. Hear my words of reply. It is known to me that the danavas have assumed bodies and have been born on earth. I know which daitya has assumed which body and I know about their forms. I know that Kamsa has been born as Ugrasena’s son on earth. I know about the daitya Keshi having adopted the form of a horse. I know about the elephant Utapalapida[624] and I know about the wrestlers Chanura and Mushtika. I know about the daitya Arishta, who has adopted the form of a bull. I know about the great asuras, Khara and Pralamba. O brahmana! I know about Bali’s daughter, Putana. I know about Kaliya, who can be seen inside a pool in Yamuna. O brahmana! Frightened of Vinata’s son,[625] he resides there in the form of a serpent. I know that Jarasandha is stationed at the head of all the kings. I know about Naraka oppressing the virtuous in Pragjyotishapura. I know that the earth, who loves me, is afflicted by a great burden. I know everything about where these kings are. I can see that when they are destroyed on earth in their human bodies, they will not be able to enter Shakra’s world and prevent virtuous conduct there. I will now enter and immerse my atman in supreme yoga. I will then be born on earth in a mortal and human form. I will slay Kamsa and all the other great asuras. I will do whatever is necessary to ensure peace. To proceed to that destination, I will now enter yoga. I will slay the enemy, those who hate the excellent immortals, in battle. It is for the sake of the world that the great-souled ones have been born in their own portions. The gods, the divine rishis, the gandharvas and the others have done this with my consent. All this has been determined by me earlier.” Having spoken to Narada, he turned to Brahma, the grandfather, and said, “O Brahma! Remain with me. O grandfather! Tell me whom I have to slay in battle. Where will I be born? Where will I reside and what will I wear?”

Brahma replied, “O Narayana! O lord! Listen to me about the means and about how you will obtain success. Hear about the mother who will give birth to you on earth. O mighty-armed one! You will be born in an excellent lineage on earth. The great lineage of the Yadavas will sustain you. You will create yourself in that great lineage and uproot the asuras. You will then establish wholesome agreements among men. O Vishnu! In earlier times, the great-souled Varuna performed a sacrifice. However, Kashyapa seized the cows that were to yield milk for that great sacrifice. Aditi and Surabhi were two of Kashyapa’s wives. Despite Varuna entreating them, they did not return the cows. At this, Varuna approached me and bowed his head down before me. He said, ‘O illustrious one! My senior[626] has appropriated my cows. Though my senior has accomplished the objective of seizing the cows, he doesn’t listen to my entreaties of returning them, having been influenced by his wives, Aditi and Surabhi. O lord! Those cows are divine and yield an eternal supply of milk, as desired. Protected by their own energy, they graze right up to the frontiers of the ocean. With the exception of Kashyapa, who is capable of oppressing my cows? Their milk is like divine amrita and there is an unlimited supply of this. You are the supreme refuge and you must control anyone who had deviated, whether it is a lord, a brahmana, a preceptor, or someone else who is superior. If the powerful are not chastised, whether they perform an act knowingly or unknowingly, there will be no preceptors in this world. Nor will there be agreements among men. O illustrious one! You are capable of taking action, as the case warrants. Return my cows to me and I will return to the ocean. These cows are undecaying and they are like goddesses to me. It is said that there is one conduct that must be followed by the worlds, that of protecting cows and brahmanas. Cows are the ones who must be protected first, because they are the ones who save brahmanas.[627] If cows and brahmanas are saved, the entire universe is saved.’ O Achyuta! This is what Varuna, the lord of the waters, told me. O one who knows about the truth! For the sake of the cows, I cursed Kashyapa. ‘The great-souled Kashyapa has seized cattle. Therefore, following that trend, he will be born as a cowherd on earth. His wives are the ones named Surabhi and Aditi, who like an arani, gave birth to the gods. They will follow him and become his wives there.’ The one known as Vasudeva has been born from Kashyapa’s portion. He is like Kashyapa in his energy and he dwells amidst cattle on earth. There is a mountain known as Govardhana, not far from Mathura. He dwells amidst cattle there and pays taxes to Kamsa. The intelligent Vasudeva has two wives—Devaki and Rohini, who are actually Aditi and Surabhi. O Madhusudana! For the sake of the worlds, you will incarnate yourself there. While you grow up, the residents of heaven will pronounce benedictions of victory over you. Creating yourself from your own self, descend there. Satisfy the wombs of Devaki and Rohini.[628] O mighty-armed one! With all the characteristics of a cowherd, you will be reared as a child there and become as strong as you once were, with your three strides. There are thousands of *gopa* daughters on earth.[629] You will overwhelm them and delight them with your own maya and forms of yoga. O Vishnu! Roam around in the woods and protect the cows, who will be blessed on seeing your form, adorned with garlands of wild flowers. O Vishnu! O lotus-eyed one! While you dwell as a child amidst those cowherds, everyone else will also behave like children. O Pundarikaksha! They will be devoted to you. Their minds will follow you. Whether you roam around in the woods, grazing cattle, and tend to them in their pens, or immerse yourself in the Yamuna, they will love you. Vasudeva will also dwell happily there, delighted that he can address you as 'son'. Who else but Kashyapa can address you as a son and is there anyone else whose son you can be? O Vishnu! With the exception of Aditi, who else is capable of delivering you? You will then use yoga to arise and advance towards victory. O Madhusudana! Let all of us now return to your respective abodes." Vishnu gave the gods permission to return to heaven. He went to his own region, the one to the north of the Kshiroda ocean.[630] There, on Mount Meru, there is a cave named Parvati that is extremely difficult to penetrate. The footprints of the one with three strides are there and are always worshipped on auspicious occasions. In that ancient place, Hari laid his body to rest. The lord harnessed his atman in yoga, so that he might be born in Vasudeva's house.'

This ends Harivamsha Parva.

Vishnu Parva

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Chapter 46

Vaishampayana said, 'Knowing that Vishnu and parts of the gods would be born on earth, Narada went to Mathura to inform Kamsa that his destruction was imminent. He descended from heaven and stationing himself in a grove in Mathura, sent a message to Kamsa, Ugrasena's son. The lotus-eyed asura, Kamsa, was swift and valorous. On hearing about Narada's arrival, he emerged from his own city. He saw the praiseworthy guest, the divine rishi who was devoid of all sins. With a form that was like the sun's rays, he blazed in his energy. Following the prescribed rites, he honoured the rishi and worshipped him. He offered him a seat that was like the fire in its complexion. The sage who was Shakra's friend seated himself on that seat and addressed Ugrasena's son, who was extremely prone to anger. "O brave one! Following the prescribed rites, I have been worshipped by you. Once that is over, listen to my words and act in accordance with them. O son![631] I traversed the divine worlds, with Brahma's city as the foremost. I went to the gigantic Mount Meru, which is the sun's friend. I saw the grove of Nandana and the grove of Chaitraratha. With the gods, I bathed in all the excellent *tirtha*s. I saw the sacred river, with its three divine flows and the three courses that it follows.[632] In due order, I bathed in the celestial tirthas. I saw Brahma's abode, frequented by the brahmana rishis. It resounded with the sounds of gods and gandharvas and the sounds of the apsaras. On one occasion, I went to an assembly of the gods on Mount Meru. Grasping the veena, which I love, I went to Brahma's assembly there. With Brahma, I saw many gods seated there, on celestial seats, wearing white headdresses and adorned with diverse gems. I heard an extremely terrible consultation among the gods there and it was about the means to kill you and your followers. O Kamsa! Your father's sister, Devaki, is in Mathura. Your death will result through her eighth child. He will be everything to the gods. He will be the refuge of heaven. It is a supreme secret of the gods that he will be the reason for your death. He is supreme among the supreme. He is the self-creating one, from whom Svayambhu was created. This great and divine one will be born and I am incapable of even speaking about it. He prides himself that he has already been the cause of your death in the past.[633] O Kamsa! Remember that. If you can, endeavour to act, so that you can prevent the birth from taking place. I am pleased with you and that is the reason I have come here. Enjoy all the objects of pleasure. May you be fortunate. Let me leave now.” Having said this, Narada departed.

‘Having thought about this for a short while, Kamsa laughed loudly, showing his teeth. He smiled and spoke to the servants who stood in front of him. “It is indeed true that Narada has no spirit. Nor is he skilled. Whether I am fighting, lying down, distracted or intoxicated, the gods, along with Vasava, are incapable of frightening me. I am capable of agitating the earth with my two large arms. Who in this world of men is interested in trying to disturb me? From today, I will create great carnage among all creatures who follow the gods, whether they are men, birds, or large numbers of animals. Instruct the horse Keshi, Pralamba, Dhenuka, the bull Arishta, Putana and Kaliya that they can roam around the entire earth, assuming whichever form they wish to adopt. Let them strike all those who abuse our side. Find out about the progress of all those who are expecting on earth. Narada has said that we will suffer a great fear on account of conception. Be devoid of anxiety and enjoy yourself, in whatever form you desire. As long as you resort to me as a protector, there is nothing to fear from anything the gods might do. The brahmana Narada is addicted to creating dissensions and finds sport in doing this. He derives pleasure from causing conflict between people who reside in harmony. He is mobile and always travels around, trying to make people dance to his tune. He creates conflicts among kings, as if they are puppets on his string.” Using words alone, he spoke in this way. After this, Kamsa entered his own residence, with his senses burning.’

Chapter 47

Vaishampayana said, 'Angrily, he[634] instructed all the advisers who were interested in his welfare. "All of you must make efforts to ensure that Devaki's embryo is destroyed. Let us destroy all the conceptions, starting with the first. When there is suspicion that injury may be caused, one must destroy the foundation. Let Devaki be protected in her house and guarded surreptitiously. Though she is protected by my soldiers, let her roam around freely, so that she is not scared. My women will keep count of the months, from when her menstrual flow starts. We will do the rest when we come to know that there has been a conception. Let Vasudeva be guarded, day and night, whether he lies down on the ground, or whether he is with women. Let those who are engaged in my welfare, women and eunuchs, do this, without being distracted. However, the reason for this should not be divulged. Men can only make those efforts that are humanly possible. However, hear how a person like me can counter destiny. By using a large number of appropriate mantras and by employing herbs well, it is possible to make efforts so that destiny turns favourable." These are the efforts Kamsa made to destroy Devaki's conception. Having heard about it from Narada, scared, he engaged in consultations.

'Having got to know about the possibility of injury, Kamsa made these efforts. Having heard about these, the valiant Vishnu, who had disappeared, started to think. "The son of Bhoja will slay seven of Devaki's conceptions. I think my task should be to manifest myself in the eighth conception." Thinking in this way, he went to patala in his mind. The danavas known as Shadgarbhas were lying down there, waiting to be born. They were bright and valiant in form, like those who survive on amrita. They were the sons of Kalanemi and were like the immortals in battle. In ancient times, these daityas had worshipped the grandfather of the worlds. They had tormented themselves through fierce austerities and had sported matted hair. Pleased with them, Brahma had granted the Shadgarbhas a boon. "Tell me what you desire. What boon shall I bestow on you?” All those daityas had wanted the same thing and had told Brahma, “O illustrious one! If you are pleased with us, grant us this best of boons. O illustrious one! Let us not be killed by gods or serpents, or through the weapons of curses used by the self-controlled and supreme rishis. May we not be killed by lords among the yakshas, gandharvas, siddhas, charanas and humans. O illustrious one! If you wish to grant us a boon, let it be this.” Having been thus addressed by them, Brahma had been extremely pleased in his mind. He had told them that it would be exactly as they had desired. Granting the Shadgarbhas the boon, Svayambhu had returned to heaven. At this, Hiranyakashipu[635] had been enraged and had spoken these words. “You abandoned me and sought a boon from the one who was born from a lotus. I am discarding my affection for you. You have become my enemies and I am casting you aside. Your father reared you and called you by the name of Shadgarbha. When all of you are conceived, it is this father who will kill you. You great asuras, the Shadgarbhas, will be conceived in Devaki’s womb six times.[636] When you are conceived in this way, Kamsa will kill you.” Vishnu went to patala, where those asuras were. Self-controlled, the Shadgarbhas were lying down in the water there, waiting to be conceived. He saw the Shadgarbhas lying down in the water there, treating the water like a womb. They were under the subjugation of sleep, the one who has the form of the destroyer and makes everything disappear. In the form of a dream, Vishnu entered their bodies. He took away their breath of life and handed it over to Nidra.[637] Vishnu, with truth as his valour, spoke to Nidra. “O Nidra! You have been created by me. Go to Devaki’s residence. Take the breaths of life of these creatures known as the Shadgarbhas. In progressive order, implant them in Devaki’s womb. When these conceptions are born and are conveyed to Yama’s abode, Kamsa’s efforts will be fruitless and Devaki’s efforts will be successful. I will show you my favours. Because of my favours, you will be like me on earth. That is the reason you will become a goddess who is worshipped by all the worlds. Devaki’s seventh conception will be my elder brother, born from Soma’s portion. In the seventh month, you will transfer him to Rohini’s womb. Since the conception will be transferred by you, he will be known as Samkarshana.[638] He will become my elder brother and will be as handsome as the moon. Kamsa will think that out of fear from him, Devaki’s seventh conception resulted in a miscarriage and will try to kill me, the eighth conception. Nandagopa is Kamsa’s cowherd and his beloved and fortunate wife is Yashoda, the extender of the Gopa lineage.[639] In our lineage, you will be born through her, as the ninth conception. You will be born on the ninth *tithi* of *krishnapaksha*.[640] When it is just past midnight, I will use yoga as I please to free you from that conception. Both of us will be born at the same time, in the eighth month of pregnancy and so that Kamsa’s reign is over, the births will be interchanged. O goddess! I will go to Yashoda and you will go to Devaki. This interchange, through the use of yoga, will confuse Kamsa. He will grab you by the legs and fling you against a stone. However, you will rise up into the sky and obtain an eternal position. Like me, you will possess a dark complexion, but your face will be like Samkarshana’s. On earth, your extensive arms will spread everywhere, just as my arms do.[641] You will wield a trident and a sword with a golden handle. You will hold a vessel full of honey and a sparkling lotus. You will wear a garment made of blue silk and your upper garment will be yellow. A necklace as radiant as moonbeams will grace your breasts. Divine and long earrings will adorn your ears. The radiance of the moon will manifest itself on your face. A diadem with three peaks will adorn your braided hair. Your arms will be as thick as clubs and like hissing serpents. Your standard will be adorned with the feathers of peacocks. Your radiant armlets will also be adorned with the feathers of peacocks. You will always be surrounded by large numbers of terrible bhutas[642] and they will follow your instructions. You will follow a vow of celibacy and go to heaven. There, the thousand-eyed one will perform the task I have entrusted him with. He will perform a celestial consecration for you and confer you with divinity. There, Vasava will accept you as his sister. Because you have the gotra of Kushika, you will become Koushiki.[643] He will grant you an eternal spot on Vindhya, best among mountains. From that spot, you will beautify the earth in one thousand different ways. In your mind, you will follow me and destroy the danavas Sumbha and Nisumbha, who dwell in the mountains.[644] You will roam around in the three worlds and be desired by the virtuous on earth. You will be immensely fortunate. You will be the granter of boons. You will assume whatever form you desire. You will be followed by ghosts and spirits. You will always love flesh and sacrifices. You will be worshipped on the ninth lunar day, with rites that involve sacrifices of animals. If a man knows about my power and bows down before you, there is nothing that he will find difficult to obtain, be it sons or riches. For men who are trapped in desolate regions, for those whose boats have been shattered in the great ocean and for those who have been waylaid by bandits, you will be the supreme salvation. You will be success. You will be prosperity. You will be fortitude. You will be fame. You will be modesty. You will be learning. You will be good intentions. You will be intelligence. You will be the evening. You will be the night. You will be radiance. You will be sleep. You will be the night of destruction. When you are worshipped, you will pacify difficulties faced by men from bondage, slaying, terror, destruction of sons, destruction of riches, disease, death and fear. By confounding Kamsa, you will alone save the universe. When I come of age, I will myself kill Kamsa.” After instructing her in this way, the lord vanished. She assented. Bowing down before him, she too departed.’

Chapter 48

Vaishampayana said, ‘As had been told, Devaki, who was like a goddess, conceived seven times. As soon as they were born, Kamsa killed six of them by smashing them against stone. She[645] transferred the seventh conception to Rohini. She[646] was then in her season and was sleeping. When Nidra suddenly entered her in the middle of the night, she fell down on the ground. In her sleep, she saw that the conception had left her. When, in an instant, she could no longer see the conception, she was distressed. In the darkness of the night, Nidra spoke to the anxious Rohini, the Rohini who was Vasudeva’s wife, appearing as if she was Soma’s Rohini.[647] “O fortunate one! For your welfare, a conception has been transferred from another womb to your womb. Thus, you will have a son named Samkarshana.” On realizing that she was going to have a son, Rohini was somewhat ashamed. She entered her own house, like the extremely resplendent Rohini.[648] However, Devaki followed the path of conceiving and was pregnant again, with the birth for which Kamsa had destroyed seven conceptions. Through his own wishes, Hari was in her womb and the guards carefully protected that conception. On the same day, Yashoda conceived and this was nothing but Nidra, who had emerged from Vishnu’s body and was following Vishnu’s instructions. In the eighth month, before the full period of pregnancy was over, both women, Devaki and Yashoda, delivered at the same time. In the night, the lord Krishna was born in the Vrishni lineage and at the same time of the same night, Yashoda, who was the wife of Nandagopa, Kamsa’s respected cowherd, gave birth to a girl. Yashoda and Devaki became pregnant at the same time. Devaki gave birth to Vishnu and Yashoda to a daughter at the same time. This was exactly at midnight when Abhijit nakshatra was in the ascendant. When Janardana was born, the oceans trembled, mountains moved and flames of the fire turned peaceful. Auspicious winds blew and the dust settled down. When Janardana was born, the stellar bodies were shining. Without being struck, the drums of the gods sounded in heaven. The lord of the gods[649] showered down flowers from the sky. Maharshis, gandharvas and apsaras presented themselves and praised Madhusudana with auspicious chants. Though Vasudeva loved his son, he was terrified. He swiftly grabbed the infant and entered Yashoda's house. Without Yashoda realizing, he left the infant son there. He picked up the infant daughter and laid her down next to Devaki, while she was asleep. Stupefied because of his fear, he interchanged the two infants. Successful in his intentions, Vasudeva entered his own house.

'Anakadundubhi[650] informed Kamsa, Ugrasena's son, about a beautiful daughter being born to him. On hearing this, with a force of guards, Kamsa swiftly came to the door of the valiant Vasudeva's house. The eloquent one censured the guard and quickly asked, "What has been born? Give it to me fast." With Devaki leading the way, all the women lamented. Devaki said, "O Kamsa! A daughter has been born. O lord! Seven of my handsome and infant sons have been slain by you. This daughter is almost dead. If you want, take a look." On seeing that it was a daughter, Kamsa was happy. However, the one with the foolish intelligence said, "Since she has been born, the daughter must be killed." She was still lying down in a dishevelled state in the bed for delivery. Her hair was still wet with fluids from the womb. Like the earth in patience, she was laid down on the ground, in front of Kamsa. The man seized her by her feet and raised her. He violently raised her, whirled her around and flung her against stone. However, she wasn't crushed against the flat surface of the stone. Instead, she rose up into the sky. She suddenly gave up the body of the infant. With freely flowing hair, she rose upwards into the sky, adorned with divine garlands and unguents. The divine one always remained a maiden and was worshipped by the gods. She was attired in blue and yellow garments. Her breasts were like an elephant's hump. Her thighs were as extensive as a chariot. Her face was like the moon and she possessed four arms. Her complexion was like radiant lightning. Her eyes were like the rising sun. She had excellent breasts and her voice was like that of the evening clouds. She was like the night shrouded in greater darkness, surrounded by a large number of bhutas. She was radiant and she alternately danced and laughed. The terrible one rose up into the sky and drank the best of drinks. She laughed out loudly and angrily addressed Kamsa. "O Kamsa! You tried to kill me. O Kamsa! You raised me and violently flung me against a rock. Therefore, when it is time for your death and you are afflicted by your enemy, I will tear apart your body with my hands and drink your warm blood." Having spoken these terrible words, just as she wished, the goddess roamed around in the abode of the gods, together with her followers.

'When she had left, Kamsa thought that she was his death. Ashamed, he met Devaki in private and addressed her. "O aunt! To avoid my death, I destroyed your babies. O queen! But it seems that my death will come from some other source. I made such efforts because of my despair. I killed my relatives. Through my manliness, I have not been able to overcome destiny. Give up all thoughts about your children, though that is a reason for grief. They have been destroyed because of destiny and I am only an instrument. Destiny is the enemy of men and measures out time. Time conveys everything and those like me are only instruments. Do not worry about your sons. Abandon sorrow and lamentations. This is generally the way of human birth. There is nothing that can bypass destiny. O Devaki! Like a son, I am prostrating myself and touching your feet with my head. Give up all anger that you have for me. I myself know the injury that I have caused." She was distressed and eyes overflowing with tears, she looked towards her husband. She replied like a mother. "O Kamsa! O son! Arise. In front of me, you killed my infant children. O son! However, you were not the reason. The Destroyer, in the form of time, was the reason. I have got over what you did by killing my infant sons. You prostrated yourself and touched my feet with your head and condemned your own deeds as abhorrent. At the time of delivery, or in childhood, death cannot be avoided. The young also come under the control of death. The old are almost dead. When he is not born, an infant cannot be seen. He is like one who does not exist. Those who are born, and those who are not born, go wherever the ordainer conveys them. O son! Leave. There is no reason for anger on my part. The death has been predetermined, a cause only implements it. In truth, the creation of beings occurs because of what destiny has determined earlier. Through the deeds of the mother and the father, that deed is only implemented." Hearing Devaki's words, Kamsa went to his own house. He was miserable because his attempt had been countered. He was severely distressed.'

Chapter 49

Vaishampayana said, ‘Earlier, Vasudeva had heard that in Vraja, Rohini had given birth to a son with a face that was lovelier than the moon. He quickly went to Nandagopa and spoke these auspicious words. “Go to Vraja with Yashoda. Perform the birth rites and other rituals for the two infant boys there. O son![651] Once you are in Vraja, rear them cheerfully. Protect Rohini’s son and my son in Vraja.[652] Everyone is prone to playing around in childhood. Men are foolish in childhood. Everyone tends to be fierce in childhood. Therefore, take care. During *pitripaksha*,[653] I will become an object of discussion among those who have sons.[654] Though I have a son, I won’t be able to see the child’s face. Truly, though I possess wisdom, it is as if my wisdom has forcibly been taken away from me. Our fear is that the hateful Kamsa may kill the children. O Nandagopa! O son! Therefore, search for a means whereby you can hide Rohini’s son and mine. In this world, there are many kinds of things that frighten children and hurt them. My son is older and your son is younger.[655] Cheerfully, look towards both with equal affection. They are equal in age and will grow up together. O Nandagopa! Therefore, act so that everything is well in Vraja. Do not ever arrange for the cows to be herded in Vrindavana. Because Keshi, evil in sight, is there, there is reason to fear a residence there. Protect the two infants from reptiles, insects, birds and cows and calves in herds. O Nandagopa! The night is over. Use a swift vehicle to quickly go to Vraja. Both to the left and to the right, the birds here are urging you to make haste.” Having taken the permission of the great-souled Vasudeva in private, he[656] cheerfully ascended the vehicle with Yashoda. The intelligent one carefully carried the infant on his shoulders and laid him down on a bed inside the palanquin. They left in secret along the beautiful banks of the Yamuna, fanned by cool winds that were sprinkled with water.

‘On the banks of the Yamuna, in a place where cool winds blew, he saw an auspicious region near Mount Govardhana. It was a beautiful place, not frequented by any predatory beasts. There were creepers, climbing plants and giant trees. There were carts near the river and cows grazed on the grass. The cows grazed on the flat ground and the level terrain was full of waterbodies. It was a spot where the trees were marked by scars from the horns and shoulders of bulls. However, it was a place frequented by wild crows, hawks and flesh-eating vultures. There were foxes, lions and other wild animals that lived off fat, marrow and flesh. There were the roars of tigers and the place was populated by many kinds of birds. It was a lovely place, with flowers and succulent fruit. There was sufficient grass to graze on. Cows roamed around there. There were the auspicious sounds made by cows. Gopa women lived there. In every direction, one could hear the sounds of calves calling. There were a large number of circles of carts. There were also plenty of trees with thorns. Though wild, it was adequately covered by a large number of trees that had fallen down.[657] It was decorated with pegs and ropes for tying up the calves. The huts were covered with mats and the ground was covered with heaps of dry cow dung. There were many flat spots where healthy and well-fed people were walking around. There were plenty of ropes and sounds of the churning of milk could be heard. Copious quantities of buttermilk flowed. The ground was wet with heaps of curds. As the gopa women churned the milk, sounds arose from their bangles. Young gopa boys played there, sporting feathers from crows. In the midst of the cattle pounds, there were cattle pens with gates. The breeze was fragrant with the smell of butter being made. Maidens attired in blue and yellow garments were everywhere. These maidens were adorned with wild flowers. On their heads, they bore pots of ghee, covered with fine cloth. There were those who carried water along paths that led from the banks of the Yamuna. He happily entered the place where cattle wandered around, to the sound of cows mooing. Aged gopa men and women greeted him. The place appealed to him and he decided that this was a happy place to reside in. The goddess Rohini, who brought happiness to Vasudeva, was there. He entered and hid Krishna, who was like the rising sun.’

Chapter 50

Vaishampayana said, 'In Govraja,[658] Nandagopa lived and worked as a cowherd and a long period of time elapsed. The two infant boys grew up in happiness. The elder was named Samkarshana and the younger was named Krishna. Hari had entered inside Krishna's body and he was as dark as a cloud. He grew up amidst the cattle, like a cloud in the ocean. On one occasion, he was asleep under a cart. Yashoda, who loved her son, left him there and left for the river Yamuna. Playing around in his infancy, he flung his arms and legs around. Krishna cried in a sweet voice and stretched his legs up into the air. He cried because he wanted some milk. Bending over, he overturned the cart with one leg. Meanwhile, Yashoda bathed and returned quickly. Here breast was overflowing with milk, like Surabhi[659] when her calf has been tethered. She saw that despite there being no wind, the cart had been overturned. She lamented and swiftly picked up the infant. She did not understand the truth about how the cart had been overturned. She was frightened, but was also delighted that the infant was safe. She said, "O son! Your father[660] will be extremely angry. Who knows what he will tell me? You were sleeping under the cart and suddenly the cart was overturned. My bath would have been a miserable bath.[661] What was the need for me to go to the river? O son! With the cart overturned, I find you lying down in the open." Meanwhile, after grazing the cows in the forest and clad in a brown garment, Nandagopa returned to Vraja. He saw the shattered vessels, pots and pitchers strewn around. The cart had been overturned. Its axle was broken and its wheels faced upwards. He was frightened. With tears in his eyes, he advanced quickly. He spoke words in anguish. "Is my son safe?" He then saw that his son was well and was drinking milk at the breast. He again asked, "Without a fight taking place between bulls, how did the cart overturn?" Yashoda was scared. She spoke in a voice that choked, "I do not know how the cart was overturned on the ground. O noble one! I had gone to the river, desiring to wash the clothes. On returning, I saw this calamity, of the cart being overturned on the ground.” While they were conversing in this way, some other children said, “This child overturned the cart with his foot. We were wandering around, as we wished. We turned up here and saw this happen.” On hearing this, all of them were astounded and their eyes widened in wonder. They placed the cart in its proper place and fastened the wheels again.

‘Bhoja Kamsa’s nursemaid was known by the name of Putana. She was seen in the middle of the night, in the form of a bird. She roared repeatedly, in a voice that was like that of a tiger. Her breasts flowing with milk, she stood on the axle of the cart. While people slept in the night, she offered her breasts to Krishna. Krishna sucked on her breast and sucked out her life too. With her breast torn out, she screamed. The bird suddenly fell down on the ground. At that sound, people were scared and awoke. Nandagopa, the gopas and Yashoda were worried. They saw the slain bird lying down on the ground, as if she had been shattered by the vajra. She had fallen down senseless, her breast severed. With Nandagopa at the forefront, they surrounded her and asked in terror, “What is this? Who has performed this act?” Astounded, the gopas returned to their own respective houses. In fear, Nandagopa asked Yashoda, “What kind of destiny is this? I do not know. I am greatly surprised. O timid one! I fear for my son. I am overcome by fear.” Yashoda replied, “O noble one! I do not know what this is. I was asleep with the child and woke up because of the sound.” When Yashoda said that she did not know, Nandagopa and his relatives were surprised. On account of Kamsa, they suffered from great fear.’

Chapter 51

Vaishampayana said, ‘As time passed, those two amiable infants, named Samkarshana and Krishna, started to crawl. From infancy, the two of them seemed to be one. The infants were attached to each other. They seemed to be strung on the same thread. They were handsome and were as radiant as the young moon and the sun. They seemed to have been created from the same mould. They slept on the same bed. They shared the same food and seat. They wore the same kind of clothing. They followed the same childish tendencies. They undertook the same task. It was as if a single body had been divided into two parts. They behaved in the same way. Though they were still children, they exhibited the same kind of great valour. Among people, they seemed to be of the same size. They were born as humans to undertake the tasks of the gods. The protectors of the entire universe were surrounded by gopas, in the form of gopa infants. They were affectionate towards each other and dazzled when they played. They were like the sun and the moon in the eye, casting their powerful rays on each other. With arms that were like snakes, they moved around everywhere. With dust smearing all their limbs, they looked like proud baby elephants. Their limbs were sometimes covered with ashes and sometimes, they were smeared with cowdung. They ran around, like Kumara, the son of Pavaka.[662] Sometimes, as they crawled around on their knees, they were radiant. They played in the pens meant for calves and their limbs and heads became covered with cowdung. They blazed in their beauty and brought joy to their mother and father. There were occasions when they acted mischievously and laughed. They played like children and the curly hair descended over their eyes. The delicate infants possessed faces that were as bright as the moon. They were seen to be extremely addicted to roaming around all over Vraja. They were so indomitable that Nandagopa was incapable of controlling them.

‘Once, Yashoda was angry with the lotus-eyed Krishna. She tied a rope around his stomach and tied him to a mortar. “If you can, free yourself and move around.” Saying this, she concentrated on her tasks. While Yashoda was thus engaged, he left the courtyard. Krishna continued to engage in infantile pursuits and amazed Vraja. When Krishna emerged, he continued to drag the mortar behind him. There were a pair of *arjuna* trees in the forest. The child went there and dragging the mortar behind him, passed between the trees. As he tugged, the mortar was stuck horizontally between the trees. He tugged. The two arjuna trees were uprooted, got stuck to the mortar and were dragged along behind him. In sport, the child dragged along the two Arjuna trees. The trees were uprooted and shattered. He stood between them and laughed. He wished to show the gopas his own divine strength. Because of the child’s powers, the rope also held firm. Gopa women were headed along a path that led to the banks of the Yamuna river. They saw the child and cried out in wonder. They rushed to Yashoda. With fear written on their faces, the women told Yashoda, “O Yashoda! Come. Are you delaying because of fear? The two arjuna trees in Vraja used to cater to our needs. Those two large trees have fallen down on your son. Your child is there, with the rope firmly tied to his stomach. Your son, a mere child, is standing between the trees and laughing. O one with evil intelligence! O stupid one! O one who is proud of her learning! Arise and go there. Your son is alive, as if freed from the jaws of death.” Frightened, she arose violently, lamenting. She rushed to the spot where the two large trees had fallen down. She saw her infant child there, in between the two trees. With the rope tied to his stomach, he was dragging the mortar. The gopa women went to the aged and young gopas in Vraja and they assembled to see this great wonder in the land of the gopas. The gopas who wandered around in the forest conversed among themselves, as they willed. “How did these trees fall down? They were the best of trees in the land of the cowherds. There was no wind. There was no rain. There was no lightning. There was no harm caused by elephants. How did the trees fall down? Alas! Without their roots, the arjuna trees are no longer beautiful. They have fallen down on the ground and are like clouds without water. O Nandagopa! The trees that have come to such a pass are pleased with you. Though they were uprooted, your infant son has escaped and is without injury. This is the third evil portent that has been seen in the land of the gopas. Putana was killed and the cart overturned. The trees are next. It is not proper that the gopas should continue to reside here. Evil portents are seen here and this is not desirable.” Quickly, Nandagopa freed Krishna from the mortar and swiftly placed him on his lap, as if he had returned from the dead. Nandagopa scolded Yashoda severely and returned to his home. All the other gopa people also returned to their houses in the land of the gopas. Since Krishna had been tied with a rope around his stomach, all the gopa women in the land of the gopas chanted his name of Damodara.[663] O foremost among the Bharata lineage! While Krishna resided in the land of the gopas, as a child, these were his extraordinary exploits.’

Chapter 52

Vaishampayana said, 'Krishna and Samkarshana thus passed through the period of childhood. They spent seven years in the land of Vraja. They were dressed in blue and yellow[664] and respectively anointed with white and yellow sandalwood paste. They tended to calves and sported sidelocks.[665] They had handsome faces. They played on whistles made out of leaves[666] and these were extremely pleasant to hear. When they went to the forest, they were as beautiful as three-headed serpents. Their armlets were made out of peacock feathers and their crowns were made out leaves. Their breasts were adorned with garlands of wild flowers and they thus looked like blossoming trees. Their headdresses were made out of lotuses and their sacred threads were made out of ropes. They carried poles with pots slung at both ends. They played flutes among the gopas. They sometimes laughed at each other. Sometimes, they played. They lay down on beds made of leaves and sometimes, they slept. In this way, they protected the calves and were radiant in the great forest. They found delight in roaming around. They were young and restless.

'Then, the handsome Damodara spoke to Samkarshana. "O noble one! We cannot play with these cowherds any more. We know everything about this place and have enjoyed everything that is to be enjoyed. Since the gopas have destroyed the trees, the grass and wood have also been exhausted. These groves and forests used to be dense. But since those have been destroyed, as one wills, one can see the sky. The doors to the cow pens used to be surrounded by trees. However, all those radiant trees have been consumed as firewood by the gopas. What used to be inexhaustible is now exhausted. Firewood and grass used to be available nearby. However, we now have to look for these in places that are far away. This forest only has a little bit of water and kindling left. Its foundation has been destroyed. Since trees are rare, we have to search for a place to rest. This is terrible. Now that the birds which rested on them have left, the trees have no more work to do. No happiness can be found here. There is nothing left that is succulent. The wind no longer serves any purpose. Like food without condiments, without birds, the forest is deserted. The wood and vegetables produced by the forest have been sold. Without the treasure of grass, this land of the gopas is like a city. The ornament for hills is pasture. The ornament for pasture is forests. Therefore, we should go to another forest where the best of kindling can be found. As they wish, the cows will then be able to graze on grass. Let us therefore go to a more prosperous land of Vraja, where the forest is full of new grass. That will not be a place where doors will have to be closed and houses and fields fenced. In this world, Vraja is famous as a place where one can roam around at will. Because of urine and excrement, caustic flows have been generated. The cows do not enjoy the grass and this is not good for the milk. The beautiful and new forests have generally become flat terrain. Let us quickly leave with the cows and create a Vraja somewhere else. It has been heard that there is a beautiful forest strewn with abundant pasture. It is named Vrindavana and there are succulent trees, fruits and water there. The forest there possesses all the qualities and the forest has no crickets and thorns. This is on the banks of the Yamuna and there are many *kadamba* trees there. A pleasant and cool breeze blows through the forest and the wind is auspicious in every direction. The gopa women will wander around happily. The interiors of the forest are colourful and wonderful. Not very far, there is a giant mountain named Govardhana. Its summit is tall and it is as radiant as Mandara in Nandana. In the midst of the forest, there is a *nyagrodha* tree[667] with giant branches and it is one yojana tall. It is named Bhandira and it is as beautiful as a blue cloud in the sky. The river Kalindi runs through the middle,[668] like the parting of hair on the head of a married woman. It flows like the supreme river Nalini in Nandana. We will roam around cheerfully there and see Govardhana, the tree Bhandira and the beautiful river Kalindi. Let us abandon this forest, which is devoid of qualities, and dwell in the pastureland there. All will be well if we go there. Let us think of an appropriate reason.” While the intelligent Vasudeva was speaking, hundreds of wolves appeared. They fed on flesh, blood and marrow. When he thought of them, those terrible ones appeared from his own body. Having thus manifested themselves, hundreds of them spread in every direction. On seeing the wolves appear and spread as they willed, there was great fright in Vraja, among the cows, the calves, the men and the gopa women. Some wolves were in packs of five, others in packs of ten. Some were in packs of twenty, others in packs of thirty. Still others were in packs of one hundred. They appeared from Krishna’s body, with the srivatsa mark on their bodies. They were black in visage. They increased the terror of the gopas. They devoured the calves and frightened the cows in Vraja. In the night, they seized young children. The wolves destroyed Vraja. They were unable to go to the forest, or protect the cows. They were unable to collect anything from the forest, or cross the river. The wolves were like tigers in their valour. In this fashion, they rendered Vraja immobile and everyone was forced to gather together in one place.’

Chapter 53

Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing the invincible wolves spread thus, all the gopa men and women consulted each other and said, “We should no longer dwell here. We should leave for another great forest that is auspicious and pleasant, so that we can reside happily there, with our cows. Why should we tarry? Let us leave, with our treasure of cattle. Otherwise, the terrible wolves will kill all of us. We should leave for another Vraja. These wolves are fanged and have limbs that are smokey red. They drag us away with their mouths. Their faces are black. They cause terror by howling in the night. Because of the calamity brought about by the wolves, in every house, there are lamentations of, ‘My son. My brother. My calf. My cow.’” Concerned by the sounds of weeping and the mooing of the cows, the gopa elders gathered together and decided to move Vraja. Nandagopa was like Brihaspati.[669] He ascertained that they had decided to leave for Vrindavana and establish another Vraja there, for the happiness of the cattle. He found out that they had decided to reside in Vrindavana. Therefore, he spoke these great words. “Since we have made up our minds, let us leave now. Without any delay, let everyone in gopa be instructed to make the arrangements.” The ordinary men in gopa were accordingly informed. “Swiftly prepare the cows and yoke the wagons. Tether the calves and pack the vessels. Make arrangements to leave and reside in Vrindavana.” They heard Nandagopa’s words, which were spoken well. Everyone in Vraja arose, desiring to leave quickly. When everyone in Vraja arose, there was a great uproar among the gopas. People awoke and the carts were readied. The noise heard among the gopas was like the great roar of tigers, or like the sound of the ocean roaring. There were arrays of gopa women, with pots of milk and buttermilk carried on their heads and it seemed as if a row of stars had fallen down on Vraja. They were attired in garments that were blue, yellow and red. As the gopa women advanced in rows, they resembled Indra’s bow.[670] The gopa men advanced along the road, with ropes and bundles of ropes tied to their bodies and they were as beautiful as trees with roots.[671] As that caravan of carts advanced, Vraja was radiant. These[672] looked like turbulent waves on the ocean, tossed around by the wind. In a short while, Vraja became empty. Throngs of crows circled around, amidst the discarded objects that were strewn everywhere.

‘In due course, the group of gopas reached the forest of Vrindavana. For the benefit of the cows, they spread out their habitations over a large area. The carts were stretched along the boundary, in the shape of a half-moon. The area was one yojana in the middle and two yojanas in length. In every direction, it was protected by tall branches of trees and bushes and trees covered with thorns. The churning rods[673] were erected and tied down with ropes. The vessels for storing milk were cleaned with water. Pegs were driven into the ground and ropes and nooses were fastened to these. In every direction, poles were erected and the carts were tied to these. The vessels for storing milk were tied to the tops of these poles with ropes. Grass was gathered and mats of grass were used to cover these up. Branches were gathered from the trees. Spots were cleaned and the mortars set up. The eastern direction was sprinkled with water and fires were ignited. Beds covered with the hides of calves were unloaded. Some gopa women gathered the excellent water, others gazed at the forest. Others pulled down branches. The young and aged gopa employed their hands skilfully. Some used axes to collect firewood from the trees. Consequently, surrounded by groves, this new Vraja seemed even more beautiful. This new residence in the forest was blessed with rain that was like amrita. The forest had pasture in every season and the cows yielded milk, as one desired. They reached Vrindavana, which was like the pleasure garden of Nandana. Krishna, who roamed around in the forest, always sought to ensure what was good for the cattle. In his mind, he had earlier thought of this auspicious forest. This was the second fortnight in a hot summer month. Even then, because the god[674] showered down rain that was like amrita, grass grew there. The calves did not suffer there, nor did the cows, or the other men. Where Madhusudana is present, people prosper there. Having reached a place that was approved of by Krishna, the cows, the gopas and the young Samkarshana happily resided there.’

Chapter 54

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus, both of Vasudeva's sons reached Vrindavana. They wandered around, tending to the herds of calves. They spent their time happily in the forest, until summer was over. They played with the cowherds and bathed in the Yamuna. The monsoon season, which ignites desire in the mind, arrived. There was the great roar of clouds, adorned with Shakra's bow on their stomachs. They showered down. The sun could no longer be seen, nor the earth and the grass. Torrents of new water showered down from stormy clouds. This force made it seem as if the earth had obtained a new youth. Large numbers of *shakragopa*s[675] were drenched with these new showers. Forest conflagarations and the resultant smoke were extinguished. The forest looked radiant. It was the time for peacocks with feathers to dance. The sounds of their engaging in intercourse could be heard. With the new rain, the trunks of young kadamba trees, which provided food for bees,[676] looked beautiful and it was as if these had assumed new bodies. Blossoming *kutaja*[677] flowers laughed. The fragrances of kadambas wafted through the forest. The earth was satisfied with the water and the heat was frightened by the clouds. The mountains had been scorched by the rays of the sun and forest conflagarations. The rain released from the clouds made them breathe again. Giant storms were created. There were masses of gigantic clouds. The earth, covered by the sky, looked like a great royal city.[678] In some places, kadamba flowers blossomed. In others, mushrooms sprouted. With the blossoming *nipa* flowers,[679] the forest seemed to be on fire. Sprinkled by Indra's water and spread by the wind, there was a new scent on earth. On inhaling this, the minds of people were agitated. Deer called proudly, frogs croaked. The earth seemed to be coloured with the new feathers on peacocks. Since copious quantities of water resulted from the rain, there were powerful whirlpools. The rivers broadened, uprooted trees from their banks and flowed downwards. The feathers of the birds got wet in the rain and they couldn't move them. Exhausted, they didn't wish to leave the tops of the trees. The clouds were dense with water. They showered and roared. The sun seemed to be submerged in the bellies of these new clouds. The earth's body was covered with green grass and it was beautiful, garlanded with moss and lichen. However, because of that torrent of water, it was difficult to discern paths. The mountains were adorned with trees. But because of the flood, those trees seemed to be severed by the vajra and fell down, as did the summits. The rain from the clouds flowed along the low ground and there were floods there, spreading through the forests. Following the roar of the clouds and drenched by the rain, wild elephants raised their faces and their trunks and it seemed as if the clouds had themselves descended on earth.

'On seeing that the monsoon had arrived and that there were dense clouds in the sky, Rohini's son[680] addressed Krishna in words that were appropriate for the occasion. "O Krishna! Behold these dark clouds, which seem to be adorned with cranes. They are the stealers of complexions. They have stolen your complexion and are in the sky. It is the time for you to sleep.[681] The sky has assumed your hue. Just as you cannot be discerned during the monsoon season, neither can the moon. The blue lotus is dark and the sky has assumed the shining complexion of a blue lotus, as if it is a bad day in a bad season. O Krishna! Behold. Mount Govardhana, which makes cows prosper, is beautiful. It is covered densely with clouds. In every direction, because water has descended from the rains, the dark antelopes are intoxicated and are happily roaming around in the forests. O one with eyes like a lotus! Delighted by the water, soft grass is covering the earth with new blades. Water is flowing through the mountains. There is water in the forests. The fields are covered with crops. Prosperity can be seen everywhere. O Damodara! The clouds are eloquent with their loud rumbling and swift winds have arisen, making those who are absent from home anxious.[682] O Hari! O Trivikrama![683] Your middle foot was placed in the sky. Though it possessed no arrows and no bowstring, it seemed to be decorated by the three colours of Indra's bow. The sun, the eye of the sky, roams in the sky, but does not shine.[684] The clouds have robbed it of its heat. The one with rays is bereft of rays. The clouds are pouring down incessantly and the roar of the clouds is like the roar of the oceans. The line that joins the sky with the earth seems to have been severed by these clouds. Thanks to the rain, the fragrance of nipa, arjuna and kadamba trees is spreading through the earth. As this wind roars, it ignites desire. It has been raining heavily and the large clouds are hanging over the ground. Because of these clouds, it seems as if the oceans have merged into the sky. The sky seems to have prepared for a battle. The sparkling lightning is like armour. The shining rain is like arrows and the rainbows are like bows. O one with the beautiful face! The mountains, the forests, the trees and the summits are covered by dense clouds and are beautiful. They have the colour of the ocean. As the clouds shower down rain, they look like a herd of elephants scattering water from their trunks. The cool wind has arisen from the ocean and is mixed with drops of water. As this harsh wind blows, it makes the creepers tremble. Because of the water released by the clouds, the moon has disappeared in the night. The sun is submerged in the sky and the ten directions cannot be seen. Everything is adorned by water from the clouds and the ill effects of the summer have been abandoned. O Krishna! Look at Vrindavana. It looks like the Chaitraratha forest.” In this way, Krishna’s prosperous elder brother praised all the qualities of the monsoon. Having spoken in this way, the powerful one returned to Vraja.[685] At that time, with all the kin, Krishna and Samkarshana sported in that great forest, enjoying themselves.’

Chapter 55

Vaishampayana said, ‘Krishna, the one with the beautiful face, could assume any form at will. On one occasion, he was wandering around in that supreme forest, without his senior, Samkarshana. He had sidelocks of hair. He was handsome and dark. His eyes were like the petals of lotuses. He had the srivatsa mark on his chest and looked like the moon with its mark.[686] There were anklets on his feet[687] and he was as radiant as a lotus. His delicate form was coppery in complexion and his tread was valorous. His yellow garments were like the filaments of lotuses and caused pleasure to men. In these thin garments, he looked like a cloud in the evening sky. His arms, worshipped by the residents of heaven, were anxiously engaged in virtuous tasks associated with forest pursuits and thus carried poles and ropes. In his childhood, Pundarikaksha’s beautiful lips and face were like a lotus in their fragrance. His beautiful face, with its flowing tresses and crest, was like a lotus. It looked as if a lotus flower had been circled by a throng of bees. There was a garland made out of arjuna, kadamba and nipa flowers on his beautiful head and these looked like stars in the sky. The brave one was radiant with another such garland[688] made out of all possible flowers. He looked like the sky personified, dark with clouds during the monsoon. The sacred thread around his beautiful throat was adorned with a single sparkling peacock feather and this was gently tossed around by the wind. Sometimes, he sang. Sometimes, he played. Sometimes, he roamed around. Sometimes, in that forest, he whistled on a whistle that was made out of leaves and this was pleasant to hear. Sometimes, when he so wished, he played on a flute used by gopas and this was extremely pleasant to hear. Sometimes, to bring delight to the cows, the handsome one went to the forest. The radiant lord, dark as a cloud, roamed around in Gokula.[689] He roamed around there, finding delight in the colourful forests. The sounds of the large number of peacocks ignited desire. In every direction, clouds rumbled and echoed. The paths were covered with green grass and the mushrooms were like ornaments. Water dripped from the new shoots, as if from the tusks of elephants. On every side, the forest inhaled the fragrance of the new blossoms, which was like the breath of a young woman at the time of desire. Krishna derived pleasure from that peaceful forest. He inhaled the new scents that were created by trees rubbing against each other.

‘On one occasion, while roaming around with the cows, he saw a tree that was tall and huge and was supreme among trees. Though it stood on the ground, its thick store of leaves was like a cloud dense with water. It was populated by a large number of birds that had blue and colourful feathers. Covered with red fruit, the tree looked like a cloud tinged with the rainbow. The branches looked like houses and there were creepers and flowers. The large roots spread out and it rose up, holding up the wind and the clouds. It was like a lord of all the trees that were in that region. It performed the auspicious task of offering eternal protection against the rain. This nyagrodha tree, which was like a mountain, had the name of Bhandira. On seeing its beautiful form, the divine lord decided to reside there. For several days, with his friends, the cowherds, the unblemished Krishna sported himself there, as he used to do in heaven in earlier times. Krishna, residing in Bhandira, played with the cowherds. Some of them caused him pleasure by fashioning forest toys. Cheerful in their minds, other gopas sang. Taking pleasure in sporting, Krishna and the other cowherds sang to each other. While they sang, the brave one played on a whistle made of leaves, or on a flute or a lute.

‘His eyes were like that of a cow or a bull. On one occasion, while tending to the cows, he went to the banks of the Yamuna, adorned with creepers and trees. A pleasant breeze was blowing, touching the water. Because of the waves, the river seemed curved. He saw the river Yamuna, covered with lotuses and lilies. There were excellent steps that led down to the water. The water was tasty. There were ponds and the water had a great force. Because of the force of the water and the wind, the trees in that forest bent down. There were the sounds of swans, ducks and cranes. Those addicted to intercourse were engaged in unions with each other. The water possessed all the qualities and all kinds of aquatic creatures lived there. There were colourful aquatic plants and because of these, the water assumed a greenish tinge. The flowing water was her feet.[690] The banks were her hips. The whirlpools were her deep navel. She was decorated with body hair made out of lotuses. The pools were like ripples on her stomach, with the waves marking three lines along it. The chakravaka birds were her breasts. The banks were like her lowered face. The foam was like her smiling teeth. When she was pleased, the swans were like her laughter. The beautiful red lotuses were like her eyelashes, when the one with the watery eyes lowered her eyebrows. The lakes constituted her extensive forehead. The beautiful one possessed moss for her hair. The currents were like her long arms. The bends were like her long ears. Ducks were her earrings. Beautiful lotuses were her eyes. Her garments were made out of the clear water, with swans as the auspicious signs on those garments. The banks were like ornaments and the shoals of fish were like sparkling girdles. The boats were like linen garments. The sound of cranes was like the tinkling of anklets. Crocodiles and alligators were like marks on her limbs. She was adorned with the auspicious mark of turtles. Predatory beasts and men drank her water, as if they were feeding at her breasts. Since many predatory beasts had drunk, the water was tainted. However, there were many hermitages. Krishna wandered around in every direction, looking at the beauty of the Yamuna, the queen of the ocean.

‘As he wandered along that excellent river, he saw a supreme pond. It was one yojana long and was difficult for even the gods to cross. The water was deep and without any agitation, as quiet as the ocean. The predatory beasts avoided this water. The shores were empty of any aquatic birds. Full of fathomless water, it looked like a sky that was full of clouds. The banks were difficult to climb and along these, there were the large holes of serpents. The place was full of poisonous smoke and fire that emanated from these serpents. The water was shunned by animals. Those who desired water, could not drink it. Virtuous ones, who bathed thrice a day, avoided the water. Birds who flew in the sky were incapable of flying above it. Even if a blade of grass fell into the water, it was consumed by the energy of the fire. From a distance of one yojana all around, the terrible banks were impossible to approach. The terrible bank blazed and flamed because of that poisonous fire. It was only one krosha, to the north of Vraja, which was unaffected. On seeing that gigantic lake, Krishna began to think. “Whom does this great and radiant lake belong to? This belongs to the one named Kaliya, who is like a mass of collyrium. That lord of serpents himself resides in this terrible lake. In ancient times, deprived by me of his residence in the ocean, he has started to live here. He is afraid of Suparna, the king of the birds who feeds on serpents. It is he who has poisoned everything in the Yamuna, the one who unites with the ocean. Because of their fear of the lord of the serpents, no one resides in this region. That is the reason the forest has assumed such a terrible shape here and is only covered by tall grass. This terrible spot is covered with the best of trees and has many other creepers and trees. All these are protected by the king of the serpents and by his advisers, who reside in the forest. That is the reason the forest has nothing in it. Like poison, it is impossible to touch. It has always been protected by them in every way. That is the reason the place is covered with moss, bushes, creepers and trees. It is my task to construct paths along both banks of the lake. It is therefore my duty to destroy the king of the serpents. The water of this river will then become clean and become an auspicious store of water. If I crush the serpent, the auspicious water will be enjoyed by Vraja. Everyone will then be able to roam around happily. This will become a tirtha and offer happiness in every way. That is the reason I was born as a gopa and started to dwell in Vraja, so as to uproot the deceitful and punish the evil-souled. Playing like a child, I will climb this kadamba tree. I will plunge into the terrible lake and chastise Kaliya.”’

Chapter 56

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having reached the banks of the river, Krishna firmly tied up his waistband. The young and quick one climbed the top of the kadamba. His form was like that of a cloud and his eyes were like lotuses. Krishna hung from a branch of the kadamba and then jumped into the middle of the lake, creating a noise. When Krishna jumped, the giant lake was agitated and overflowed. It was as if the ocean had been shattered with the force. The large residence of the serpent was agitated by that sound. Eyes dilated with rage, the serpent arose from the water. The lord of the serpents was angry and his complexion was like that of a mass of clouds. The ends of his eyes were as red as blood. Kaliya showed himself. He possessed five faces and flames issued with his breath. His tongues flickered and there were flames in his faces. There were five terrible hoods on all sides and these were large. The serpent was like the fire in his radiance and he covered the entire lake. He trembled in rage and blazed in energy. Because of his anger, all the water seemed to be boiling. Terrified, the river Yamuna seemed to flow backwards. The breath that issued from his faces was full of rage and fire. He saw Krishna playing like a child in the lake. At this, flames of fire and smoke issued from the mouths of the Indra among serpents. His anger created such a fire that the trees that were near the banks were instantly reduced to ashes, as if they had been conveyed at the end of a yuga. The Indra among serpents was infinitely energetic. His sons, wives, servants and other great serpents spouted terrible flames and poison emerged from their mouths, mixed with smoke. Those serpents coiled their bodies around Krishna and sought to crush him. His legs and arms could not move and he was like an immobile mountain. They bit him with their sharp fangs and water mixed with poison flowed. However, though the serpents descended on him, the valiant Krishna did not die.

‘At this time, all the cowherds were terrified. Weeping, they rushed to Vraja. In voices choking with tears, they said, “Krishna has been submerged in the

Kaliya lake and is unconscious. The king of serpents will devour him. Let us quickly go there." Hurrying, they told the cowherd Nandagopa, "The serpent is dragging your son into the great lake." Nandagopa heard these words. These words were as if the vajra had descended on him. He was distressed and distraught. Scared, he rushed towards the supreme lake. The young and the aged, maidens, the young Samkarshana and other people also went to the spot where the Indra among serpents was playing. With Nandagopa at the forefront, all the gopas had tears in their eyes. They lamented on the banks of that lake. They were ashamed and astounded. Stricken by grief, they repeatedly said, "Alas! Where is Krishna? Shame on us." Others wept in great sorrow and said, "We have been destroyed." The women looked towards Yashoda and shrieked, "You have been destroyed. Behold your beloved son. He is under the subjugation of the king of the serpents. He is being dragged in the coils of the snake, as if he is a deer. It is evident that your heart has an essence that is made out of stone. O Yashoda! On seeing your son in this state, how is it that it has not been shattered? We can see the miserable Nandagopa near the lake. His sight is fixed on his son's face and he seems to be unconscious. O Yashoda! We will follow you to the serpent's residence in this lake. All of us will submerge ourselves and not return without Damodara. What is day without the sun? What is night without the moon? What is a cow without a bull? What is Vraja without Krishna? Like cows without calves, we will not return without Krishna." Samkarshana was nothing but one body divided into two and knew that they[691] were two parts of the same body. On hearing the lamentations of the women and the residents of Vraja, he was enraged and addressed the undecaying Krishna. "O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! O Krishna! O extender of delight of the gopas! Swiftly destroy the king of the serpents, who has poison as his weapon. O son![692] O lord! These relatives are of the view that you are an ordinary human. Human in their intelligence, all of them are grieving piteously." On hearing the words of Rohini's son, his consciousness was aroused. He moved and stretched his hands and destroyed the coils of the serpents. He used his feet to crush the serpents that had arisen from the water. Krishna caught the hood with his own hand and lowered it. He then violently ascended the hood that was in the middle. Wearing beautiful armlets, Krishna stationed himself on that hood and started to dance. Crushed by Krishna, the serpent was exhausted. Blood emerged from its mouths. It lowered its heads and uttered these piteous words. “O Krishna! O one with the beautiful face! I was ignorant and exhibited my rage. I have been crushed. My poison has been destroyed. I have been subjugated. With my wives, sons and relatives, command me about what I should do. Whose subjugation should I accept? Please grant me my life.” On seeing that the serpent had lowered his five hoods, the illustrious one, with the enemy of snakes on his banner,[693] lost his anger and replied to the lord of the serpents. “I will not grant you a place in these waters of the Yamuna. O snake! With your wives and relatives, go to the waters of the ocean. If I again see a snake on this ground or in these waters, I will slay him, even if he is your servant or son. Let these waters be auspicious. Leave for the great ocean. There is a sin in your residing here and it will bring about your great destruction. O snake! In the ocean, my footmark will be seen on your hood. Garuda, the enemy of serpents, will not strike you.” The bull among the serpents accepted the mark of Krishna’s footprints on his hood. While the gopas looked on, he vanished from the lake. When the snake had been vanquished and departed, Krishna arose and stood there. The astounded gopas praised him and circumambulated him. All of them, those who roamed around in the woods, were extremely delighted and told Nandagopa, “You are blessed. Since you possess such a son, you have been favoured. O unblemished one! From today, the gopas, the cows, the pasture and the water will be protected by Krishna, the lord with the long eyes. All the waters of the Yamuna, frequented by the sages, have become auspicious. Every place has become as agreeable as a tirtha and our cows will cheerfully roam here. It is evident that we gopas in the forest did not recognize what a great being Krishna is. In Vraja, he was like a hidden fire.” Astounded, all of them praised the undecaying Krishna in this way. The large number of gopas then returned to Vraja, like the gods from Chaitraratha.’

Chapter 57

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the king of the serpents was subdued in the lake in Yamuna, Rama[694] and Keshava roamed around in that region. One day, with cows that they were attached to, the two sons of Vasudeva went to the beautiful Mount Govardhana. To the north of Govardhana and on the banks of the Yamuna, the two brave ones saw a large and beautiful forest of palm trees. The beautiful forest of palm trees was covered by palm leaves. Extremely delighted, they wandered around there, like two young bulls. That region was plain and pleasant, without stones and rocks. Most of the extremely large ground was covered with darbha grass and dark earth. The palm trees possessed large trunks and their dark joints rose up. Because of the shining fruit that was at the top, they looked like elephants with their trunks raised up. There, Damodara, supreme among eloquent ones, spoke these words. “Wonderful. This forest region is full of ripe palm fruit. O noble one! They are tasty, fragrant, dark and juicy. With a little bit of effort, we should be able to bring down some ripe palm fruit. Since there is such a pleasant fragrance and such a sweet scent, it is my view that the juice will be like amrita.” On hearing Damodara’s words, Rohini’s son laughed. Resolving to bring down the ripe palm fruit, they began to shake the trees.

‘That forest of palm trees was not frequented by men and it was impossible to enter. The desolate plain was as if it had been constructed by ghosts. It was like an abode of maneaters. There was a terrible daitya named Dhenuka, assuming the form of an ass. Surrounded by a large herd of asses, it resided there. That terrible forest of palm trees was protected by the ass. That evil-minded one was a source of terror to men, birds and large numbers of predatory beasts. It heard the sound of the palm trees being shaken and the palm fruit falling. It was like an enraged elephant and could not tolerate this sound of the palm fruit. It angrily followed the sound and its face was suffused with insolence. Its eyes did not blink. It was skilled in neighing and it tore the earth with its hooves. It raised its tail and neighed. Its gaping mouth was like that of Death. On descending there, it saw that Rohini's son was stationed there. The evil ass saw Rohini's undecaying son amidst the palm fruit, erect like a standard. Using its teeth as a weapon, it bit him. Rohini's son was unarmed. The daitya turned its back. Facing the west, it struck him on the chest with its hind feet. Thereupon, he[695] caught the hindlegs of the ass who was a daitya. He whirled it and struck its face and shoulders on the top of the palm trees. Its waist and neck was broken. Its back was shattered. With its body deformed, the ass fell down on the ground, with the palm fruit. The ass was bereft of life and lost all its enterprise. He then flung its relatives also among the palm trees. The bodies of those asses fell down on the ground, with the palm fruit. It was as if the clouds had been dispersed from the autumn sky. The daitya who was an ass and its relatives were killed. The beautiful forest of palm trees seemed to become even more beautiful. Freed from all danger, it became auspicious and the desolate regions could now be seen. Cattle cheerfully started to graze in that supreme forest of palm trees. All the gopas who resided in the forest also went there. They were without sorrow and all of them began to happily roam around in the forest. The cows grazed happily. Those two,[696] who were like kings of elephants in their valour, seated themselves on comfortable seats made out of the leaves of trees.'

Chapter 58

Vaishampayana said, ‘The two sons of Vasudeva were delighted. They left that forest of palm trees and went to Bhandira again. The ones with handsome faces tended to the herds of cattle and made them prosper. They looked at the forest, which was full of crops and trees. They challenged each other and sang. They gathered trees. Those scorchers of enemies addressed the calves and the cows by name. The ones with the auspicious marks bore the tethering ropes on their shoulders. They wore garlands made of wild flowers on their chests. They looked like two young and horned bulls. One had the complexion of gold, the other of black pigment. They wore clothes that resembled each other.[697] They looked like white and black clouds, decorated with the great Indra’s weapon. Their ears were beautifully adorned with the tips of kusha grass and flowers. Wearing forest garb, they wandered along forest paths. With their followers, they roamed around in the forest that was near Govardhana. Accomplished in many ordinary games, they remained undefeated in these games. Though they were worshipped by the gods, they had consecrated themselves to be born as men. Following that vow, they indulged in pastimes that were appropriate to those qualities.[698] On one occasion, while playing, they approached Bhandira. They approached that supreme nyagrodha tree, which was the best among trees. Accomplished in fighting, they stood together and swung from the branches. They flung stones and indulged in other forms of exercise. With the cowherds, they exhibited diverse techniques of fighting. Delighted, and as valiant as lions, they roamed around as they wished.

‘Pralamba was supreme among asuras. While they were amusing themselves there, he arrived there, desiring to find a weakness in them. He donned the attire of a cowherd and adorned himself with wild flowers. He laughed and played and challenged the two brave ones. Pralamba, supreme among danavas, adopted the form of a human. Therefore, without any hesitation, he immersed himself in the midst of these men. All of them played with this enemy of the immortals. Since he was in the form of a cowherd, the gopas took him to be one of their relatives. Searching for a weakness, Pralamba had assumed the form of a gopa. He cast his terrible eye towards Krishna and Rohini's son. He was of the view that Krishna was extraordinary in valour and impossible to withstand. Therefore, the supreme among danavas made efforts to kill Rohini's son. There is a children's game known as *harinakridana*.[699] In pairs, all of them indulged in this game. Krishna jumped with Shridama, the son of a cowherd. The unblemished Samkarshana jumped with Pralamba. Some cowherds challenged other cowherds to a duel. With the least bit of effort, they jumped over each other. Krishna defeated Shridama and Rohini's son defeated Pralamba. The cowherds who were on Krishna's side defeated the ones who were on the other side. Cheerfully and quickly, they bore each other. Following the agreement, they ran up to the trunk of Bhandira and returned. The danava swiftly raised Samkarshana on his shoulder. However, he quickly advanced in the reverse direction, like the moon being borne by a cloud. But he was unable to bear the weight of Rohini's intelligent son. Therefore, he expanded his body into a gigantic size, like the moon being invaded by clouds. Pralamba, supreme among danavas, exhibited his own form, which was like the banyan tree Bhandira, or like a black mountain that had been burnt down by fire. He wore a crown that was as fiery as the sun, with five tassels. The daitya's face was as radiant as a cloud when it has been lit up by the sun. He possessed a gigantic face and a large beak. He was as large as Death personified. He was terrible and his eyes were like the wheels of a wagon. The earth suffered from his footsteps. Pralamba was naked.[700] As adornment, he sported a long garland of flowers. Pralamba advanced gradually, like a cloud that is long and heavy with rain. The great asura seized Rohini's son with great force. He was like Death, when all the worlds are submerged in the great flood of the ocean. The young Samkarshana was abducted by Pralamba and looked like the moon, being carried away by a single cloud of destruction.

'Samkarshana realized that he was in danger. Perched on the shoulders of the daitya, the handsome one spoke to Krishna. "O Krishna! I am being carried away by this daitya, who is like a mountain peak in his radiance. He has exhibited great maya and assumed the form of a human. What should I do to chastise the one who is evil in his intelligence? In his insolence, the radiant

Pralamba has doubled his size." Krishna knew about the conduct and strength of Rohini's son. Therefore, he smiled. Amused, he replied in words of assurance. "I see. It is evident that you have adopted the traits of a man and have kept it a secret that you pervade the universe. You are the supreme mystery among all mysteries. Remember the self that you adopt at the time of the destruction of the worlds, when they immerse themselves in the ocean. Submerge yourself in your own self. Remember your own conduct and behaviour as the ancient god in the water. Remember the form from which Brahma resulted. The sky is your head. The water is your body. The earth is your forgiveness. The fire is your mouth. Your breath is the life force in all the worlds. It is you who created Manu through your mind. You have a thousand faces. You have a thousand limbs. You have a thousand feet and eyes. You have a navel with a lotus in it. You are the one with a thousand rays. You are the slayer of enemies. The residents of heaven see what you display to the worlds. Who deserves to know what has not been uttered by you earlier? In the worlds, everything that deserves to be known has been instructed by you earlier. Even the gods do not know what is known to you alone. The residents of heaven do not see that space has been generated from your body and that they have also been created by you. They only worship your artificial form. The gods have not seen your limits. Therefore, it has been said that you are infinite. You are subtle. You are great. You are one. You are subtle and difficult to comprehend. You are the eternal pillar and support on which the universe is established. You are the one who holds up the entire universe, with its immobile and mobile objects. The four seas are your extension. The four varnas are your division. You are the lord of the four yugas in the worlds. You are the one who enjoys the fruits of the four kinds of sacrifice. It is my view that what I am to the worlds, you are also that. Both of us belong to the same body. For the welfare of the universe, we have divided ourselves into two. I am the eternal god of the worlds. You are the eternal Shesha. Our body, divided into two, holds up the universe. I am what you are. You are the eternal one and so am I. We come from a single body. We are immensely strong and have decided to divide ourselves into two. Why are you behaving in this foolish way? Strike the danava on his head. O god! Using your fists, which are like the blow of the vajra, strike the enemy of the gods on his head." Thus, Krishna reminded

Rohini’s son about his ancient nature. The one who pervades the inside of the three worlds became full of strength. Using his fists, which were like the blow of the vajra, the mighty-armed and brave one struck the evil Pralamba on the head with great force. His skull was crushed and penetrated his body. Without a head and without life, he sunk down on his knees and fell down on the ground. Pralamba’s body was scattered through the universe, dispelled, like clouds in the sky. The shattered head and body began to exude blood, like the red-complexioned current that flows down from the summit of a mountain. Having slain Pralamba, Rohini’s powerful son controlled his own strength and embraced Krishna. Krishna, the gopas and the gods in heaven were satisfied at the daitya having been slain and pronounced benedictions of victory over the immensely strong one. The gods situated in heaven pronounced, “The daitya has been killed through strength. The child is undecaying in his deeds. He will be known as Baladeva.”[701] Because of his strength, people on earth came to know him as Baladeva. A daitya who was unassailable even to the gods was slain through his deeds.’

Chapter 59

Vaishampayana said, ‘In this way, Krishna and Bala[702] roamed around in the forest and spent the monsoon months. When they returned to Vraja, the brave ones heard that the gopas in Vraja desired to observe Shakra’s festival. Curious, Krishna spoke these words. “What is this festival of Shakra that everyone is happy about?” An aged gopa replied in these words. “O son! Listen to the reason why we perform a festival in Shakra’s honour. O destroyer of enemies! Shakra is the lord of the gods and of the clouds. O Krishna! He is the eternal guardian of the worlds and this festival is for him. The clouds are urged by him and are adorned with his weapon. The crops follow his command and are generated from the new clouds. He is Puruhuta Purandara,[703] the one who ensures water in the clouds. When the illustrious one is pleased, he satisfies the entire universe. When that god is worshipped, he ensures the crops and we and other men enjoy them and obtain subsistence from them. When that god showers in the worlds, crops result. The earth is satisfied and the universe is seen to be like amrita. Even when the calves have fed, the cows yield an abundant supply of milk. Grass grows and the cows and the bulls are nourished. There is no lack of crops. There is no lack of grass. Cattle and people do not suffer from hunger. This is seen to be the case when the clouds yield forth rain. Shakra milks the sun and provides the divine water. This new supply of milk is held by the clouds and flows from the clouds. Stirred by the wind, the clouds create a loud noise. Because of the force they have accumulated, people think that they are roaring. In this way, the clouds are united with the wind. The thunder has a sound like that of the vajra and seems to shatter the inside of everything. The vajra crushes the clouds and releases water from the sky. The many kinds of clouds wander at will, but Shakra is the lord and they are his servants. Sometimes, the clouds are scattered, signifying a bad day. Sometimes, there is a pearly white drizzle. Sometimes, the sky is thick with clouds. In this way, rain is formed by the sun and milk is generated from cows. For the sake of all the worlds, Parjanya showers down rain on earth. Since he showers down, all the kings are delighted with Shakra. We and other men worship the great lord of the gods.” Krishna heard the aged gopa’s words about Shakra’s dominion.

‘Damodara knew about Shakra’s powers. But he spoke these words. “O gopa! We are gopas who wander around in the forest. We earn our subsistence from the richness of cattle. Therefore, know that cows, mountains and forests are our gods. Agriculture is subsistence for farmers. Trading is subsistence for merchants. Cattle are supreme for us and these are said to be the three means of subsistence.[704] Supreme divinity is constituted by whatever form of knowledge one is united with. If a man obtains fruits from someone, but performs good deeds in the name of someone else, such a person obtains a double misfortune—in this world and in the world hereafter. There is a boundary at the end of the field. It has been heard that there is a forest at the end of the boundary. There is a mountain at the end of the forest. Therefore, our refuge is determined.[705] It has been heard that, in the forest, mountains can assume whatever forms they wish. Assuming their own forms, they find delight in their own respective summits. They[706] assume the form of lions with manes and tigers, supreme among taloned ones. They protect their own respective forests and scare those who want to cut down trees. There are those who are evil in conduct and are performers of harsh deeds. Despite earning a living from the forest, when they act in a perverse way, they kill them.[707] Brahmanas perform sacrifices through mantras. Farmers perform sacrifices through ploughing. We gopas should perform a sacrifice to the mountain. We should worship the mountain and the forest. It seems desirable to me that gopas should perform a *giriyajna*[708] in the forest. We should perform this rite at a fortunate place, under a tree, or at the foothill of the mountain. There, let us measure out the ground and slay animals at the sacrifice. Let us milk all the cows in the herd. What is the need to reflect further? Let all the cows be decorated with autumn flowers and let us circumambulate this supreme mountain. Having done this, let us again go to the forest. It is the agreeable and beautiful season of autumn. Clouds, the stores of water, have departed. The cows have obtained plenty of tasty grass that is full of energetic qualities. The *priyaka*s[709] have blossomed. The clumps of reeds are sometimes fair and sometimes dark. There is tough grass everywhere. The sound of peacocks cannot be heard in the forest.[710] The sky sparkles and no water can be seen there. There are no cranes and there is no lightning. The clouds that still exist are like elephants that are not in musth. The remaining clouds are not troubled by the wind of the monsoon. Having begun to shed their heavy covering of leaves, the trees seem content. The sky seems to be ready for a coronation.[711] The white-complexioned clouds are like a headdress. The swans are like whisks. The full moon is like a sparkling umbrella. The water has diminished in all the waterbodies. The swans seem to be laughing at them and the cranes have abandoned them. The river is advancing towards her lord.[712] The two chakravaka birds are like her breasts. The banks are like her hips. The swans are like her smile. When it is night, night lotuses bloom in the water. There are stars in the sky, competing with each other. There are flocks of intoxicated curlews. The paddy fields are ripe and pale. Having enjoyed this beauty, the mind finds pleasure in the forest. With blooming lotuses, ponds, lakes, wells, paddy fields,[713] rivers and pools are blazing in their beauty. *Pankaja*s, *padma*s[714] and other white flowers and blue utpalas are increasing the beauty of the waterbodies. Peacocks have got over their desire. The wind is blowing gently. There are no clouds in the sky. The ocean is quiet. As the seasons have progressed, the peacocks are relaxed in conduct and have ceased their dancing. Because of the scattered peacock feathers, the earth seems to possess many eyes. Yamuna’s banks used to be dirty with mud. But the banks are now covered with *kasha* flowers.[715] Swans and herons have made their nests there. Paddy has ripened in the fields and the forests. Birds are shrieking, eating crops and aquatic plants. At the time of the monsoon, with the onset of the rains, the grass was tender. It has turned hard now. The moon has discarded its garment made of clouds. Ignited by the qualities of autumn, it seems to dwell happily in the clear sky. The cows yield double the quantity of milk and the bulls possess double the stamina. The forests are doubly prosperous and the earth is covered with crops with qualities. The stellar bodies are free from clouds. There are lotuses in the water. The minds of people are content. In the autumn, since the sky is free of fierce clouds, the sun blazes with its sharp energy and its rays dry up the earth. Kings desire to obtain victory and conquer the earth. They advance towards other kingdoms, infusing vigour in their soldiers. The mind is attracted towards the colourful beauty of the forests, with the coppery-hue of *bandhujiva* flowers and many regions covered with mud. Trees, adornments of the forest, are found in the forest. There are blossoming asanas, *saptaparna*s, *kovidara*s, *ishusahva*s, *nikumbha*s, priyakas, *svarnaka*s, *srimara*s, *pichuka*s and *ketaki*s in every direction.[716] In Vraja in particular, autumn has manifested itself in the form of the beautiful women of Vraja, with the sound in the vessels as its laughter. There is no doubt that in the world of the gods, the residents of heaven are waking up the god who has the bird on his standard,[717] having happily slept during the monsoon. After the monsoon has withdrawn, excellent crops are obtained during the autumn. We should worship the god who is the mountain and especially the cows. Let us decorate their horns with peacock feathers. Let there be bells on their necks and autumn flowers. Let us start giriyajna and worship the cows for our good fortune. Let the gods worship Shakra and let us worship the mountain. There is no doubt that we should use our strength to perform a sacrifice for the cows. Do this if you agree with me and if you are my well-wisher. There is no doubt that cows must always be worshipped in every way. If you have been assured by me, if you are pleased with me and if you desire prosperity, then act in accordance with my words. Do not think about it."'

Chapter 60

Vaishampayana said, 'Those who earned their living from tending to cows heard Damodara's words, which were like amrita. Without any uncertainty, they replied, "O child! Your great words increase the delight of the gopas. All of us are pleased with your intelligence, which leads to the prosperity of men. You are our refuge. You are our delight. You are the one who knows. You are the succour. You are the one who grants freedom from fear. There is no well-wisher like you. You are the one who has created this peaceful Vraja. We are happy in this Gokula. We dwell here in peace, with all our enemies pacified. It is as if we have come to heaven. Since your birth, you have performed valorous tasks on earth, those that are extremely difficult for even the gods to accomplish. Knowing this, and your pride, there is wonder in our minds. In strength, excellence, fame and valour, you are supreme among mortals, like Purandara among the gods. In beauty, prosperity, favours, face and smiles, you are supreme among mortals, like the moon among the gods. There is no other man who is your equal in attire, form, childhood behaviour and strength. O lord! You have spoken words about giriyajna. Like the ocean against the shoreline, who is capable of transgressing them? O son! From today, we stop Shakra's sacrifice and start a prosperous sacrifice to the mountain, which you have ordained for the welfare of the gopas and the cows. Let us arrange for food, altars and delicious milk. Let beautiful vessels be arranged near the wells. Let large pots be prepared for *payasam* and food that is licked.[718] Let all the kinds of food, eatables and *peya* be brought. Let there be vessels for meat and amusement. Let us spend three nights in collecting milk and every kind of milk product. Let buffaloes and other animals that will be eaten be given grain. Let all the gopas be involved in arranging for this sacrifice." There was happiness in Vraja and great delight throughout Gokula. There was the blaring of trumpets and bulls bellowed. Calves mooed, increasing the joy of the gopas. There were lakes of curds and whirlpools of ghee. There were rivers of milk.

Heaps of meat were readied and mountains of rice were prepared. When the sacrifice commenced, the mountain overflowed with cattle. There were satisfied gopa men and beautiful gopa women. The sacrifice commenced by placing kindling on the fire. With brahmanas, the gopas performed the sacrifice near the mountain. When the sacrifice was over, Krishna used his maya to assume the form of the mountain and consumed the rice, the milk, the excellent curds and the meat. The best among brahmanas were satisfied by being fed well. When they stood up, they were delighted in their minds and cheerfully uttered words of benediction. After the bath at the end of the sacrifice, as he desired, Krishna drank the milk. Assuming his divine form, he laughed and said, "I am content." The gopas saw Krishna stationed at the forefront, astride the summit of the mountain and in the form of the mountain, wearing divine garlands and smeared with celestial unguents. The lord enveloped everything with his celestial form. He bowed down with the gopas and worshipped his own self.[719] The gopas were astounded at the sight of the divinity astride the supreme mountain. They said, "O illustrious one! We are your servants. What work should we servants undertake?" From the mountain, he addressed the gopas in a powerful voice. "From today, if you are compassionate, you should worship me in the form of cows. I am your foremost god. I am auspicious and will satisfy all your desires. Through my powers, you will possess ten thousand cows and will enjoy them. In every forest, I will be auspicious towards all those who are devoted to me. Just as I am stationed in heaven, I will remain present with you. These are famous gopas, Nandagopa and the others, who are stationed here. Pleased with them, I will grant these gopas great prosperity. Be satisfied. These cows will quickly have calves. There is no doubt that I am supremely delighted with them." As a token of worship, the innumerable herds of cows and thousands of bulls circumambulated the supreme mountain. Milk-yielding cows and calves were adorned with garlands and anklets. There were hundreds and thousands of cattle with garlands on their horns. They were followed by a thick crowd of cowherds, smeared with unguents on their limbs and attired in red, yellow and white garments. Their armlets were made out of peacock feathers and they carried staffs in their hands. Their hair was arranged and bound, with peacock feathers fixed at the ends. In the assembly, the gopas looked even more radiant.

Some rode on bulls, while others danced happily. Other cowherds quickly ran after the cows. When the circumambulation and worship by the cows was over, the form of the mountain instantly vanished.[720] With the gopas, Krishna entered Vraja. They were astounded at giriyajna having been undertaken.’

Chapter 61

Vaishampayana said, ‘When his sacrifice was stopped, Shakra, lord of the gods, was extremely enraged. He ordered the clouds known as Samvartaka to shower down rain.[721] “O clouds! O elephants![722] Listen to my words. If you wish to do what brings me pleasure, place devotion to your king at the forefront. Devoted to Damodara, Nandagopa and the other gopas who have arrived in Vrindavana, have shown disrespect towards my sacrifice. It is said that the livelihood of gopas is based on cows. Therefore, use wind and rain to oppress the cows for seven days. With the terrible rain, I will myself go there, astride Airavata. I will release rain and storm that are like the vajra. With that torrential rain, you will ride on the wind. Vraja and the cows will be destroyed and their lives on earth will be over.” In this way, the lord instructed all the clouds. The chastiser of Paka wished to counter Krishna’s instruction. In every direction, dark and terrible clouds enveloped the sky. They were like mountains and their rumbling was fearsome. They were adorned with Shakra’s bow and gave rise to lightning. The clouds ensured that the sky was covered in darkness. Some clouds were like an array of elephants. Others were as radiant as crocodiles.[723] Other large clouds looked like mountains in the sky. Like a herd of supreme elephants, their bodies seemed to be bound to each other. They covered the entire sky, signifying the beginning of extremely bad times. The clouds began to shower down rain that was in the form of human hands, the trunks of elephants and bamboo poles. In the eyes of men, it was as if the fathomless and infinite ocean had taken over the sky. Extremely terrible times commenced. The birds stopped flying and diverse types of animals started to flee. In every direction, mountainous clouds rumbled in the sky. Those terrible clouds were in the sky and it was as if the sun and the moon were asleep. Because of that excessive rain, the earth became deformed. Because of the thickness of the clouds, the radiance of the planets and stars disappeared. Without the rays of the sun and the moon, everything was dark. Water was repeatedly released from the clouds. Everywhere, the earth overflowed with water. The peacocks called, but the other birds were silent. The rivers swelled and flowed downwards. The frogs were swept away in the flood. The clouds thundered and the rain roared. Because of that sound, the grass and trees trembled. The large number of gopas was afflicted by fear. They exclaimed, "The end of the worlds has arrived and the earth has become an ocean." The cows were immobile and petrified, weeping in their moos. Their ears did not move. They could not move their hooves and faces. The hair on their bodies was wet and stood erect. Their flanks and breasts were emaciated. Some were exhausted and gave up their lives. Some were afflicted and fell down. Other cows suffered from the cold and the rain and fell down with their calves. Some mother cows tried to give shelter to their calves under their bodies. Others were exhausted and gave up. Deprived of food, their stomachs were thin. Vanquished by the rain, some cows quivered and shrieked in their misery. Young calves raised their faces towards Damodara. In agony, with afflicted faces, they seemed to tell Krishna, "Save us." There was carnage among the cows. These were terrible times and there was fear for the gopas. On seeing this, Krishna was filled with anger.

'In wrath, he looked towards the cows and thought. The one who was pleasant in speech spoke these words to himself. "I will now uproot the mountain, with its groves and forests. The rain is impossible to withstand and I will find a shelter for the cattle. I will hold up the mountain and it will be like a shelter made out of earth for them. This is under my control and I will save Vraja and the cows." Vishnu, for whom truth is valour, thought in this way. He exhibited the strength of his arms. He approached the mountain and held it up. When he uprooted the mountain with his arms, Krishna looked like another mountain. The mountain, surrounded by clouds, was held up in his left hand. It was like a radiant house and would perform the role of a shelter. The earth was dislodged from the summit of the mountain. As he raised it up, rocks and boulders were dislodged and trees uprooted. The summit was whirled around and staggered in every way. The summit was raised up into the sky, like a bird. The streams that flowed down its flanks became one. The mountain moved, as if it had been struck by the vajra. Under it, people could no longer feel the roar of the wind. Rain from the clouds did not penetrate. There was no shower of rocks and boulders. There were clouds around the summit, mixed with flows of water. Therefore, the mountain looked as resplendent as a peacock spreading its feathers. The vidyadharas,[724] serpents, gandharvas and rishis spoke in melodious words and said that the mountain, flooded with water, looked like a bird. It was severed from its foundation and separated from the ground. It rested on Krishna's hand. The base revealed iron, gold, antimony and silver. Some of these minerals were separated, others cracked. The mountain penetrated the clouds and looked like their summit. Because the mountain trembled, so did the branches of trees. Flowers were loosened and scattered on the ground everywhere. The offspring of birds became angry. They emerged, thick in the middle and with *svastika* marks on their upper bodies.[725] These travellers in the sky took to the sky. Numerous birds were terrified and afflicted by the rain. They rose up into the sky, but fell down again, distressed. Lions roared in rage, like clouds thundering. The best of tigers roared, like the noise of rods inside churning pots. When the mountain was raised, its form became beautiful. Uneven spots, even those that were difficult of access, became flat. Showered by rain, the mountain seemed immobile. It looked like Tripura, stupefied by Rudra.[726] Using his hand like a staff, Krishna held up the giant mountain. Covered by blue and pink clouds, it looked like an umbrella. Covered by clouds, the caverns in the mountain seemed to be asleep. Indeed, the mountain seemed to be asleep, using Krishna's arm as a pillow. The sounds of birds in the trees ceased. Peacocks did not call in the forests. Without its summit, the mountain seemed to be without a support. As they were whirled around and moved, the mountain's peaks and forests seemed to be suffering from fever. Goaded by the great Indra and borne along by the wind, the clouds continued to incessantly shower down on the summit. Resting on the tip of Krishna's hand and encircled by clouds, the mountain seemed to be riding astride a chakra. It looked like a country invaded by a king. The large number of clouds continued to surround the mountain. It was like a large and prosperous kingdom, surrounding the capital city.

'With the mountain nestling on his hand, Krishna smiled. Stationed like Prajapati, the protector of the gopas spoke. "This is incapable of being performed by the gods. I have ordained this, using my divinity. O gopas! I have created a house out of this mountain. The cattle will find a refuge here, beyond the scope of the storm. Quickly bring the herds here, so that the cattle can find some peace. Let them happily reside in a spot where there is no wind. Vraja is where the herds are, where happiness can be found. I have repulsed the rain. Divide up this region among yourselves. Raising up the mountain, I have created a great expanse. I am capable of devouring the three worlds. Why leave this spot?” There was a great uproar. The cows mooed. The gopas entered, while the tumultuous roar of the clouds went on outside. The gopas divided the cows into herds and they entered. The recess under the stomach of the mountain was extensive. Krishna stood under the mountain, like a pillar, and raising up the mountain. He carried the mountain on his hand, as if it were a beloved guest. All Vraja’s vessels, yokes and carts entered and found shelter there. In that house, carved out of the mountain, there was no fear from the rain. The wielder of the vajra saw that Krishna had performed a feat that was beyond the gods. His attempt having failed, the lord stopped the showers. Seven nights passed. Yet, his festival was not performed on earth. With the clouds, Vritra’s slayer returned to supreme heaven. Seven nights passed and Shatakratu was dislodged from his attempt. The clouds departed. The sky was clear. The blazing sun shone during the day. Freed from exhaustion, the cows returned to their respective places, following the appointed paths. Vraja returned to its earlier spot. Krishna restored the best among mountains to its rightful place. The lord who is certainly the granter of boons was pleased.’

Chapter 62

Vaishampayana said, ‘Govardhana was raised and Gokula was saved. On seeing this, Shakra was astounded and wished to meet Krishna. He ascended the elephant named Airavata, which was like a cloud without water, but intoxicated and wet with musth, and arrived on earth. Puruhuta Purandara saw that Krishna, unsullied in his deeds, was seated on a rock near Govardhana. He saw the child, blazing in great energy and undecaying in his radiance. Purandara recognized Vishnu, attired in the garb of a gopa. He was as dark as a palm tree and was marked with the srivatsa sign. Shakra, with eyes everywhere,[727] looked him up and down. He saw that he was united with prosperity and was like an immortal in the world of the mortals. On seeing him seated on the rock, Shakra was ashamed. He was cheerfully seated there. The excellent bird, who feeds on serpents,[728] was invisible, but used his wings to cast a shadow over him. Krishna, who knew about the progress of the worlds, was seated alone, near the mountain. The slayer of Bala[729] abandoned his elephant and approached. With the vajra in his hand, the lord who was the king of the gods was radiant. He was decorated with divine garlands and unguents. His crown had the complexion of the sun and sparkled like lightning. He approached and spoke in a delicate and celestial voice. “O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! O one who enhances the delight of kin! O Krishna! The task you accomplished to please the cows is one that is beyond the gods. I created clouds that were like the clouds that arrive at the end of a yuga. Nevertheless, you protected the cows. I am satisfied at this. With yoga you created yourself, you raised this supreme mountain up into the sky, like a house. Who will not be astounded at this? I was angry when my sacrifice was stopped. O Krishna! For seven nights, I showered down excessively on the cattle. The rain generated from the clouds is based on me. It is certain and is difficult for even the gods and the danavas to withstand. But you countered it. O Krishna! When you are enraged, the Vaishnava energy emerges. But I am extremely happy that you are able to conceal all of it in your human body. I think that the undecaying task of the gods has been accomplished. Though you have become a man, you are united with your own energy. O brave one! You are the leader of the gods. In all the tasks, you are at the forefront. Therefore, all the objectives will be accomplished and no one will be able to laugh at them. In the world of the gods, you alone are eternal. I do not see a second one who can hold up this burden. When there is a heavy burden, the best bulls are yoked. O one who has a bird as a mount! In that way, the gods seek refuge with you. O Krishna! The universe is in your body and you are its weapon. When he said that you are like gold among minerals, Brahma spoke well. The illustrious Svayambhu[730] himself, despite his intelligence and his age, is unable to follow you. He is like a lame person, running after someone who is fleet of foot. Himalaya is the best among mountains and Varuna's abode[731] the best among waterbodies. Garuda is the best among birds and you are supreme among gods. In the world, water is at the bottom and the mountains are above it. The earth is above mountains and men are above the earth. It is said that the path of the birds is above the world of men. The sun is above the sky and the sun is the gate to heaven. The world of the gods is beyond this and this great and secret region can be accessed through celestial vehicles. O Krishna! I am instated there, as Indra among the gods. Brahma's world, served by large numbers of brahmana rishis, is above heaven. The moon and the great-souled stellar bodies travel there. Goloka, protected by the Sadhyas, is above that. O Krishna! This great region is beyond everything and beyond the great sky. Your world of austerities is progressively above that too. Though all of us asked the grandfather, we are unable to comprehend that. The terrible world of the nagas, meant for the performers of evil deeds, is below all the worlds. The earth is a field for action. It is a field for all action. The sky is a restless region. Its conduct is like that of the wind. Heaven is the destination for the performers of virtuous deeds, those who are upright and self-controlled. The world of Brahma is the supreme destination for those who follow Brahma in austerities. Cows go to Goloka and it is extremely difficult to reach that destination. O Krishna! When that world was afflicted,[732] you acted on your own. O patient one! O brave one! You resorted to your perseverance and destroyed the calamity the cows confronted. Urged by the cows and by the immensely fortunate Brahma, I have come here, to honour you. O Krishna! I am the lord of all creatures. I am Purandara, the king of the gods. In earlier times, I was born in Aditi's womb, as your elder brother. In the form of the clouds, I tried to show that my energy was superior to your energy. O lord! You should pardon me. O Krishna! Because of your own amiable energy, you should pardon me. O one who is like an elephant in valour! Listen to the words of Brahma and the cows. The illustrious Brahma and the cows who are in the firmament and heaven have addressed you. They are pleased at your divine act of protecting the cows. "You have protected the cows. You have protected Goloka. Therefore, with the bulls, we will also prosper and grow. Farmers are pleased when there are bulls in the fields. The gods are pleased through oblations at sacrifices. Shri, who goes where she wants, becomes content through sacred cow dung. O immensely strong one! Therefore, since you have granted us our lives, you are our preceptor. Henceforth, you will be the king. You will be Indra."[733] Therefore, in my hands, I have brought his golden and celestial pot that is full of milk. Consecrate yourself with this. I will be Indra for the gods. You become Indra for the cows. In the worlds, and on earth, you will eternally be praised as Govinda.[734] The cows have established you as Indra and have placed you above me. O Krishna! In heaven, the gods will sing of you as Upendra.[735] In the year, four months have been earmarked for my worship.[736] I grant you the second half of these, to be known as autumn. From now on, men will know that two of these months are mine. My standard will always be worshipped in mid-year. At that time, because of the power of my water, peacocks will cast aside their pride. At other times, clouds will not roar and will possess little energy and pride. Depending on the rains and the season, all will be calm. In the months when Trishanku and Agastya wander, the one with the thousand rays will not scorch with his energy.[737] When it is autumn, the peacocks will become silent. They will only be happy as long as the water floods everything. Curlews will be excited and will sing and bulls will also be excited.[738] The cows will be happy and will yield a lot of milk. When the clouds retreat, the water will leave the earth. Resembling weapons, swans will fly around in the sky. Lotuses will grow in the water in ponds and rivers. Paddy will ripen in the fields and their tips will bend down. When rivers get swollen only in the middle, crops grow within the boundaries of their fields and the minds of sages are enchanted. When monsoon is over, it will be beautiful and there will be prosperous kingdoms on earth. The roads will be radiant and there will be fruit on the trees. The land will be full of sugar cane and sacrifices will be initiated. When auspicious autumn manifests itself, you will awake. O Krishna! Everything on this earth will be exactly as it is in heaven. On earth, men will worship you and me, Mahendra and Upendra, in the form of standards and poles. Men who know Mahendra and Upendra, base their conduct on us and bow down before us, will never face hardships." Shakra then grasped the pot, filled with divine milk, and consecrated Govinda, the one who knew yoga.

'On seeing that he was thus consecrated, with their herds, the cows sprinkled the undecaying Krishna with milk from their breasts. In every direction, from the sky, clouds showered down pearls and amrita, sprinkling the undecaying one with showers of water and consecrating him. All the trees exuded sap that was as white as milk. From the sky, flowers were showered down and trumpets were sounded. All the sages, eloquent and skilled in mantras, praised him. Freed from the form of a single ocean, the earth assumed its own form. The oceans were pacified. The winds blew such that the welfare of the universe could be ensured. The sun was on its path and the moon followed the conjunctions. Speckled shoots, flowers and fruit appeared on the trees. The elephants exuded musth. Animals in the forest were satisfied. The mountains were resplendent, decorated with minerals flowing from their bodies. The entire world was satisfied, as if satisfied with amrita, and became like the world of the gods. When Krishna was consecrated, it was as if divine juices flowed from heaven. The undecaying Govinda, clad in celestial and white garments, was consecrated by the cows.

'Shakra, the king of the gods, spoke to him. "O Krishna! This was my first task, having been appointed by the cows. Now hear the second reason behind my arrival. Act so as to establish your dominion. Let Kamsa, Keshi, worst among horses, and the intoxicated Arishta be killed quickly. Through your father's sister, my portion has been born.[739] He is like me. Protect him, respect him and make him your friend. Favoured by you, he will follow your instructions. Remaining under your control, he will obtain great fame. He will be the best archer in the Bharata lineage. He will be like you and will not find delight in anyone other than you. O Purushottama! Bharata[740] will be attached to you and you will be attached to him. When both of you unite together, the kings will confront their destruction. O Krishna! In the midst of the rishis and the gods, I pledged this. My son will be born to Kunti and he will be named Arjuna. He will be an extender of the Kuru lineage. He will be accomplished in the use of weapons and will be the best among archers. All the kings who fight with weapons will be vanquished by him. He will follow the dharma of kings and in the battle, fight the armies of brave kings who love fighting. He will send them to their death. O lord! With your exception, in the techniques he follows in wielding weapons and in dexterity with the bow, no kings and gods will be able to advance against him. He will be your friend and aide in battles. O Govinda! For my sake, instruct him about yoga. Regard him as my own self and always show him respect. You always know everything about the worlds and about Arjuna. In great battles, he will always be protected by you. Protected by you, death will not be able to exert its influence over him. O Krishna! Know me to be Arjuna and me to be your own self. Just as I am to you, let Arjuna eternally be like that to you. Earlier, for the sake of the gods, in three strides, you conquered and wrested the worlds out of Bali's hands. However, because I was elder, you made me the king. You are known to be full of truth. You are worshipped as truth. Truth is your valour. Resorting to truth, the gods invoke you for the destruction of their enemies. My son is named Arjuna. He is the son of your father's sister. In earlier times, he was your companion. Let there be friendship between you. O Krishna! Whether he is fighting, in his own place, in his own home, or in the field of battle, like a bull, always bear his burden. O Krishna! You can see into the future. When Kamsa is killed, there will be a great battle among the kings. There, brave men will perform superhuman deeds. Arjuna will enjoy victory and you will also obtain fame. O Krishna! You should act exactly in accordance with what I have said. O Achyuta! You should do this if you love me, the gods and truth." Krishna, who had become Govinda, heard Shakra's words. Pleased in his mind, he spoke these affectionate words. "O god! O Shakra! O Shachi's lord! I am pleased at having met you. In everything that you have said, there is nothing to be slighted. I know your sentiments. I know about Arjuna's birth. I know that my father's sister has been bestowed on Pandu, the lord of the earth. I know about Yudhishthira, the son obtained through Dharma. I know about Bhimasena, the son born from Vayu's body. I know that the virtuous Ashvins have had two righteous sons named Nakula and Sahadeva, born through Madri's womb. I know that my father's sister had a son named Karna, born through Surya while she was still a virgin, and that he has been sent to a suta household. I know about all the sons of Dhritarashtra, who desire to fight. I know that Pandu died because of a curse, as if he had been struck by thunder. O Shakra! Therefore, for the pleasure of the residents of heaven, return to heaven. In front of me, not a single one of Arjuna's enemies will be able to show his prowess. For Arjuna's sake, all the Pandavas will remain unharmed in battle. When the Bharata battle is over, I will return them to Kunti. O Shakra! Like a servant, I will do whatever your son, Arjuna, asks me to do. I am tied to you by affection." Krishna was always fixed to the truth. On hearing these agreeable words, spoken in a pleasant voice, and after meeting him, the lord of the gods returned to heaven.'

Chapter 63

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Shakra left, the residents of Vraja honoured Krishna, who had held up Govardhana. The handsome one then entered Vraja. The aged and the kin were delighted and honoured him. They said, “We are blessed that you held up the mountain. The cows overcame their fear of the rain. We have been able to tide over a great fear. O Govinda! O immensely radiant one! You are like a god. O lord of the cows! We have witnessed your superhuman deed. O Krishna! O undecaying one! We have seen how you held up the mountain. O immensely strong one! Who are you, a Rudra, a Marut, or a Vasu? Why did Vasudeva become your father? You have censured us through your childhood actions in the forest and your birth.[741] O Krishna! Your deeds are divine. There is a doubt in our minds. Why are you censuring us by finding delight in the attire of a gopa? You are like a guardian of the world. Why are you protecting cows? Whether you are a god, a danava, a yaksha or a gandharva, you have been born as our relative. You are who you are. We bow down before you. For some reason, depending on your wishes, you have decided to reside with us. All of us are devoted to you. We seek refuge in you.” On hearing the words of the gopas, the lotus-eyed Krishna smiled and replied to all the kin who had assembled. “All of you think that I am terrible in valour. That is not how you should think of me. I am your kin and relative. However, if you really wish to hear the truth, wait for an appropriate time. It is then that you will be able to hear about, and see, my true nature. If you now take pride in your relative being like a god in his radiance, you have shown me your favours. What is the need to know anything more?” When they were addressed by Vasudeva’s son in this fashion, the gopas were silent. They covered their faces and went away, in different directions.

‘In the night, Krishna saw the new and young moon. It was an autumn night and his mind turned towards enjoying himself. The roads of Vraja were tinged with dust from dried cow dung. The valiant one desired to organize a duel among the bulls. The valiant one also organized a contest among the cowherds to see who was the strongest. The brave lord proposed that cows should be seized from the forest.[742] The one who knew about time was in his youth. In the night, having regard to the time and showing proper respect, he invited the young gopa maidens and enjoyed himself with them. His face was beautiful, as if the moon had descended on earth. In the night, the gopa women drank in the beauty of his face with their eyes. Krishna was attired in excellent yellow silk garments and this made him even more beautiful. He looked like a wet *haritala* bird.[743] He was adorned in armlets and a colourful garland made of wild flowers. Govinda was handsome and enhanced Vraja's beauty. The gopa maidens said, "We bow down before Damodara." They had witnessed his wonderful deeds in Vraja and knew about his glorious truth. They crushed him against their thick breasts. The beautiful women rolled their eyes and looked at his face. Though they were restrained by their fathers, brothers and mothers, the gopa women were driven by desire and searched Krishna out in the night. All of them stood in lines and sported. The gopa maidens organized contests, in which they sang about Krishna's character. With their eyes fixed on Krishna, they mimicked Krishna. The young maidens imitated Krishna's gait. With palm leaves in their hands, some playfully struck each other. The women of Vraja talked about Krishna's character. They danced, sang, sported and looked at him. Delighted, the women of Vraja played in this way. Overcome by their sentiments, the beautiful women sang in sweet voices. Devoted to Damodara, they were delighted at having come to Vraja. With dried cow dung smeared on their limbs, they surrounded Krishna. They gave him pleasure, like she-elephants do to a male elephant. They were completely immersed in him, their eyes showing their attachment and their faces smiling. With eyes like black antelopes, the women drank in Krishna with their eyes, but were not satisfied. Thirsting with desire, the gopa maidens glanced at his face. In the night, even when intercourse was over, driven by desire, they continued to drink him in. The women laughed in delight. They were content when Damodara spoke some words. While thinking about intercourse, the partings in their hair were disturbed. The hair came loose and hung over the breasts of the gopa women. In this way, Krishna was like an ornament for the multitude of gopa women. In the moonlit night of autumn, he sported happily.'

Chapter 64

Vaishampayana said, ‘One morning, when Krishna was engaged in pleasure, there was terror in Vraja, because Arishta showed himself. He was as dark as coal that has been burnt, or a cloud. His horns were sharp and his eyes were like the sun. He was black and his hooves were sharp at the tips. He was like the personified form of Death. He repeatedly licked his lips and gnashed his teeth. He insolently raised his tail. His hump was large and hard. His hump was extremely large. He was impossible to measure. His limbs were covered with urine and excrement and he severely terrified the cows. His waist was thick and his face was large. His knees were firm and his stomach was huge. As he walked, he shook his horns. The skin hung down from his neck. He was eager to mount the cows. There were marks on his face.[744] The tips of his horns were ready, poised for fighting. He was the slayer of enemy bulls. His name was Arishta. To the cows, Arishta seemed to be terrible in form. This was a daitya in the form of a bull and he dashed around Vraja. He caused miscarriages from the wombs of cows. He had intercourse with sick cows. He was so eager to mate that he attacked young cows. He was fearsome and used his horns as weapons. His weapons were impossible for the cattle to withstand. That bull found no pleasure unless he could fight with the cows in Vraja. On this occasion, this cow arrived before Krishna. The evil-souled one sought to terrify everyone, but he was on the path to Vaivasvata’s[745] abode. The great bull roared, like Indra’s vajra, or like a cloud. He wished to destroy all the bulls in Vraja, including young calves that would become bulls. Krishna clapped his hands and confused him by roaring like a lion. In the form of a bull, the daitya then rushed towards Govinda. Raising his tail, the bull looked at Krishna with his eyes. He was enraged at the clapping of the hands. Desiring to fight, he bellowed. Krishna saw that the danava, in the form of a bull, was rushing towards him. But he remained immobile, like an immoveable mountain. The bull fixed his glance on his flanks and raised his head. It attacked quickly, desiring to slay Krishna. Krishna’s complexion was like that of collyrium. He was like a bull against another bull. When the invincible bull advanced, he seized him. Krishna, who was himself like a bull, engaged with the great bull. As he[746] made a great noise, froth issued from his curved mouth. In the encounter, Krishna and the bull sought to counter each other. It was as if two quivering clouds had clashed against each other. He[747] destroyed the insolence of his strength. He kicked him between the horns with his feet. He squeezed Arishta’s throat, as if it was a wet cloth. He uprooted the left horn, which was like Yama’s staff. He then struck him on the face. Severely struck, he died. His horns were shattered and his bones were broken. The danava’s shoulder buckled. Vomiting blood, he fell down, like a cloud releasing water. Govinda killed the insolent danava, who was in the form of a bull. On seeing this, everyone was extremely satisfied and uttered words of praise. Upendra, the one with a beautiful face, killed the bull at the end of the night. With eyes like a lotus, he again glittered in his radiance. All the gopas cheerfully worshipped the lotus-eyed Krishna, like the immortals worshipping Shakra in heaven.’

Chapter 65

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing that Krishna was in Vraja and that he was growing like a fire, Kamsa became anxious. He was worried and afraid. Putana had been killed and Kaliya had been defeated. Dhenuka had been destroyed and Pralamba had been brought down. Govardhana had been raised and Shakra's instructions had been countered. Through praiseworthy deeds, the cows had been protected. Arishta, the humped bull, had been killed and the gopas were delighted. He could foresee his destruction and suffered from great fear. The child had performed an unchildlike deed and had dragged the trees down. He heard about these unthinkable deeds and the prosperity of his enemy. The lord of Mathura thought that his own harm was close. He lost his consciousness, senses and mind and became like a lifeless image. In the night, when all was quiet and still in Mathura, the lord of men summoned his kin and his father, Ugrasena. He called Vasudeva,[748] who was like a god, the Yadava Kamhvya, Satyaka, Daruka, Kamhvya's younger brother, Bhoja, Vaitarana, the immensely strong Vikadru, Bhayesakha, King Viprithu, Prithushriya, Babhru, Danapati,[749] Kritavarma, Bhuriteja, who was never agitated, and Bhurishrava. The lord of Mathura, the king who was Ugrasena's son, summoned all these Yadavas and said, "Listen. All of you know about every course of action. You are accomplished in all the sacred texts. You are skilled in matters connected with policy. You know about pursuing the three objectives.[750] In this world, in determining action and in acting, you are like the gods. In observing great conduct, you are as immobile as mountains. You show no insolence in conduct. You are always ready to perform the tasks of your seniors. All of you are skilled in counselling the king. All of you are accomplished archers. Your fame is a light to the worlds. You are conversant with the meanings of the Vedas. You know about the creation of the ashramas and the due order of the varnas. You are the ones who enunciate good policy. You are the leaders who show the paths towards good policy. You are the ones who shatter other kingdoms. You are the ones who save those who seek refuge. In this way, your characters are faultless. You are prosperous and at the forefront. Your favours can take care of heaven, not to speak of this mere earth. Your conduct is like that of the rishis. Your power is like that of the Maruts. Your anger is like that of the Rudras. You blaze like Angiras. Extremely great ones like you, famous in deeds, have upheld the Yadu lineage. On earth, your bravery is like that of mountains. You possess such qualities and have followed my inclination. Despite you being here, my misfortune is increasing. How can you ignore that? This son of Nandagopa, is famous as Krishna in Vraja. He is prospering like a cloud and is destroying my foundations. I have been deserted by advisers. In the absence of spies, I am blind. Because of this, Nandagopa's son is protected in his house. He is like a disease that has been neglected. He is like a full cloud. He is like a thundering cloud at the end of summer. That evil-souled one is prospering. A performer of extraordinary deeds has been born in Nandagopa's house. I do not know what will come of him, nor about his yoga and his intentions. I do not know how he has been generated. Is he the son of a god? His deeds surpass those of gods and men. The bird, Putana, fed the infant child milk at her breasts. In the course of drinking the invincible one's milk, he sucked out her life. In the lake in Yamuna, he crushed the serpent Kaliya. In an instant, he vanished from the lake and was conveyed to rasatala. Nandagopa's son performed this yoga and arose again.[751] Dhenuka was flung on the tops of palm trees and killed. In an encounter, even the gods were incapable of looking at Pralamba. However, the child struck him with a blow of his fists and killed him, like an ordinary person. He destroyed Vasava's festival. When Vasava showered down in anger, he held up Mount Govardhana and removed the water from Gokula. In Vraja, he uprooted the powerful Arishta's horns and killed him. He sports like a child. But though he assumes the form of a child, these are not the feats of a child. These are the deeds of the one who lives in Vraja with the cows. It is certain that misfortune confronts me and Keshi. I am certain that in earlier lives and bodies, he was the cause of my death. It is as if he is standing in front of me, desiring to fight. Who is this inauspicious one, in the form of a gopa, in the form of a man who is weakened by death? Who is the one with the powers of a god, playing in my Vraja? He is hiding his own form in an inferior body. Like a fire in a cremation ground, this is a god who is sporting. I have heard that in ancient times, to accomplish the tasks of the gods, Vishnu had conquered the entire earth in the form of a vamana. Vishnu displayed Vishnu's powers in a maned form.[752] He killed Hiranyakashipu, the grandfather of the danavas. In ancient times, he assumed the unthinkable form of Bhava[753] atop the white mountain and destroyed Tripura of the daityas. Bhargava Angiras gave refuge to his preceptor's son, using the maya of asuras to create a drought.[754] That god is infinite and eternal. He is undecaying and possesses one thousand faces. He assumed the form of a boar and raised the earth from the ocean. Earlier, for the sake of amrita, Vishnu assumed the form of a woman and ensured an extremely terrible battle between the gods and the asuras.[755] In ancient times, the gods and the daityas had gathered together for the sake of amrita. It has been heard that Vishnu adopted the form of a tortoise and bore Mandara. In Dasharatha's house, he divided his energy into four parts. Rama was born in this way and destroyed Ravana. Thus, he assumed different forms and deceived. He accomplished his own tasks and was successful in accomplishing the tasks of the gods. Therefore, it is certain that Vishnu, Shakra or a supreme Marut has arrived to destroy me. This is what Narada had told me earlier. O lords! Therefore, my mind is suspicious about Vasudeva[756] now. In particular, it is because of his intelligence that we face this difficulty. Narada met me in the forest of Khatvanga. For the second time, the brahmana again told me these words. "O Kamsa! You made great efforts to destroy the embryo. However, in the night, Vasudeva rendered all your efforts unsuccessful. O Kamsa! In the night, you flung a daughter against the rocks. Know that she was Yashoda's daughter. Krishna is Vasudeva's son. Vasudeva is an enemy in the form of a friend. For the sake of your death, in the night, he exchanged the two infants. Yashoda's daughter is in the Vindhyas, supreme among mountains. She roams around in the mountains and will kill the two danavas, Shumbha and Nishumbha. Her consecration has been done and her attendants are large numbers of spirits.[757] She loves great sacrifices of animals and she is worshipped by the bandits. She is adorned with two pots, one full of liquor and the other full of meat. She has colourful armlets made out of peacock feathers and she is decorated with the feathers of peacocks. That forest resounds with the noise of proud cocks and crows. It is full of herds of goats and the birds do not fight amongst themselves. The roars of lions, tigers and boars echo. On every side, the forests are covered by thick trees. Celestial bees are her whisks and there are divine mirrors there. There is the noise of hundreds of divine trumpets. Using her own energy, she has created that spot in Mount Vindhya. Causing terror to her enemies, the beautiful mother always resides there. She lives there in great delight, worshipped by the gods. This leaves Nandagopa's son, the one who is spoken of as Krishna. In this connection, Narada told me about an extremely important reason. 'Vasudeva's second son will be known as Vaasudeva.[758] He will be your relative, but will be the natural reason for your death. This Vaasudeva will be Vasudeva's powerful son.' Under dharma, he is my relative. However, inside his heart, he is my enemy. He is like a crow that plants its feet on your head and desiring flesh, pecks out your eyes with its beak. Vasudeva, with his sons and relatives, is like that. He enjoys being at my side, but severs my foundations. One may be freed from the sins of killing a foetus, a cow or a woman. But in this world, there is no salvation for someone who is ungrateful, especially if he is a relative. Such a person follows a path that leads downwards. An ungrateful person is attached to a path that leads to a terrible end. He treads the terrible path that leads to hell. Such a person has evil in his heart and acts in a wicked way towards those who have caused no injury. Should my relatives praise me more, or should they praise his son more? I have sought the welfare of my relatives and have followed the rules laid down by the seniors. When elephants desire to fight a terrible duel, they ensure the destruction of the herbs. After the duel is over, they eat together, in the great forest. In the same way, when there is conflict among kin, injury is caused to relatives. Those who are caught in the middle are killed. O Vasudeva! Ignorantly, I nurtured you, ensuring this evil destruction. You have caused this terrible harm to the lineage. You are intolerant and like enmity. You are always evil in intelligence and deceitful. O foolish one! You have made the lineage of the Yadus miserable. O Vasudeva! Because of your age, I have fruitlessly revered you. One does not become aged because one has grey hair on the head, or because one lives for one hundred years. When the intelligence matures, that is when one becomes the most aged among men. Your intelligence is addicted to harshness. You are not extremely learned. You are only aged in age, like a cloud during autumn.[759] O Vasudeva! The virtuous know that your intelligence is futile. You think that once Kamsa has been killed, your son will rule over

Mathura. Your hopes will be belied. Your age is futile. Your intentions will be rendered false. No one who stands before me will live. You use your intelligence to remain as a trusted person and strike me. While you look on, I will act against both your sons. I have never killed an aged person, a brahmana or a woman. In particular, I have never killed a relative. You have been born and reared here, nurtured by my father.[760] You are the husband of my father's sister. You are the most senior among the Yadus. You belong to this great and famous lineage of emperors. The virtuous revere you as a senior. So do the Yadus, because your intelligence is presumed to be based on dharma. What can we virtuous people do, except to point out that this conduct is not appropriate for someone who is foremost among the Yadu clan. Because of Vasudeva's evil action, I may be killed or defeated. The virtuous men among the Yadus now go around with their faces covered. In discussions, you are thinking of a means to kill me in an encounter. The Yadavas speak about the untrustworthy acts that you have committed. Conflict and enmity has arisen between me and Krishna. The Yadavas desire peace and an end to this conflict. Let Danapati quickly go to Vraja. Let him bring Nandagopa and the other gopas who will offer me tribute here. Let him tell Nandagopa that the annual taxes should be paid to me. Let him quickly go and bring all the gopas to this city. Let him say that Kamsa wishes to see Krishna and Samkarshana, Vasudeva's two sons, together with their servants and priests. They are accomplished in fighting in the arena and can fight according to the needs of the occasion. I have heard that they are firm in disposition and are great in their enterprise. We have two wrestlers who are ready, spirited and victorious. Let those two, who are accomplished in fighting, engage with them. I must see those two children, who are like the immortals. They are the foremost sons of my father's sister, though they roam around in the forest and dwell in Vraja. Go to Vraja and tell the residents of Vraja, "The cheerful king wishes to organize a sacrifice with a bow." Let them come here from Vraja and reside nearby, wherever they wish. Everything will be properly organized for all those who are invited. Let payasam, ghee, curds and other milk products be given. As is desired, let all kinds of food be offered. O Akrura! Follow my instructions. Go swiftly and bring them here. I am curious to see Samkarshana and Krishna. If they come, I will be supremely delighted. After I see those extremely valorous ones, I will do whatever is best. If they do not come, after hearing the words that I have spoken, I will crush them at the appropriate time. With children, it is good policy to use conciliation first. Quickly bring them here, after speaking sweet and gentle words. O Akrura! Do this and ensure my pleasure, which is extremely difficult to obtain. O one excellent in vows! Unless Vasudeva has instigated them to the contrary, ensure this.” Vasudeva was like the earth in his patience. His soul was like the ocean. Despite being abused in this way, he did not lose his patience. Kamsa, lacking in foresight, struck him with words that were like stakes. However, fixing his mind on forgiveness, he did not reply. There were several there, who saw him abused in this fashion. They softly uttered words of “shame” and lowered their faces. Akrura was immensely energetic and possessed the knowledge of divine sight. Like a thirsty person who sees water, he was delighted at having been sent in this way. He instantly left Mathura. Danapati was happy that he would himself get to see Pundarikaksha.’

Chapter 66

Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing that the foremost among the Yadus[761] was thus abused, all the bulls among the Yadus covered their ears with their hands and thought that his[762] days were numbered. Andhaka, the foremost among eloquent ones, was not perturbed at these words. Full of energy, he replied in words that were driven by patience. “O son![763] It is my view that you have tired yourself out with words that should not be praised. These are inappropriate and reprehensible, especially when applied to relatives. A person who is not a Yadava should never hear the kind of words you have spoken. O brave one! Unlike you, Yadavas do not use force on other Yadavas. O son! Those of the Vrishni lineage will not find your words praiseworthy. A king of the Ikshvaku lineage disinherited his own sons.[764] You may be a Bhoja, a Yadava, or Kamsa himself. O son! But your head happens to be yours, irrespective of whether it is matted or shaven. One should grieve over Ugrasena. He is the destroyer of our lineage, since he has given birth to an evil-minded son like you. O son! The learned do not speak about their own qualities. Qualities become important when others speak of them. This is in conformity with the sayings of the Vedas. On earth, the lineage of the Yadus is censured by kings. After all, it is ruled by a foolish person who brings an end to his own lineage by killing children. You have spoken these apparently righteous words, as if they are full of virtue. However, those words only reveal the intentions in your mind and you will not be successful. A senior, especially a great one, should be respected and not reviled. Who will regard abusing such a person as desirable? That is like killing a brahmana. O son! Like the fire, those who are aged should always be respected. Their anger can consume the worlds, even those that are hidden. O son! Like a fish that finds its own way, those who are learned and self-controlled, and always desire what is good for themselves, must seek out the path of dharma. Because of your insolence alone, you are striking those who are aged and like the fire. Through your wicked words, you are striking at their inner spots, like offering oblations without mantras. You have censured Vasudeva because of his sons. This is false talk. I condemn your inferior words. Even if a father is cruel, a son must not act cruelly towards him. For the sake of a son, a father is always ready to undertake hardships. If Vasudeva hid his own infant son, I think he did what he should have done. Ask your own father about this. By censuring Vasudeva and criticizing the lineage of the Yadus, you have only injected poison and created enmity between the sons of the Yadavas. Had Vasudeva performed an undesirable act vis-à-vis his son, why did Ugrasena not destroy you when you were an infant? A son always saves his father from the hell known as put. Hence, people who know about dharma call a son putra.[765] The young Krishna and Samkarshana have been born as Yadavas. You have hated them since birth. Enmity has arisen in your mind. By censuring Vasudeva, you have agitated the hearts of all the Yadus and enraged Vaasudeva. By censuring Vasudeva, you have ensured enmity in Krishna. It is because of this censure that these fearsome portents have manifested themselves. At the end of the night, a nightmare where one sees the fierce sting of serpents is evil. We imagine that this means that the city will be without a protector.[766] The terrible planet[767] is engulfing the rays of the nakshatra Svati. The planet Mars seems to be devouring the birds in the sky. A jackal has left the cremation ground and burning coals are emerging from its mouth. It is circling the city in the morning and in the evening, uttering terrible howls. There is the roar of meteors showering down on the earth. There is an earthquake and the summits of mountains are moving. At dawn and dusk, the mark of a club is seen on the solar disc. Birds and animals are moving in contrary directions. Svarbhanu[768] has devoured the sun and it is dark during the day. Smoke has descended and enveloped the directions. Though the sky is dry, there is lightning. Mixed with thunder and lightning, blood is showering down from the clouds. The gods have been dislodged from their temples. The birds have abandoned the trees. Those who know about portents say that this signifies the destruction of a king. We have witnessed all these inauspicious portents. You hate your relatives and have turned away from royal dharma. You are enraged without reason. You confront the fear of misfortune. Vasudeva is aged and firm in his vows. He is like a god. O evil-minded one! Because of your confusion, you have reviled him. How will you find peace in your heart?

Henceforth, we will discard the affection we feel towards you. You ensure misfortune for your own lineage. We will not serve you any more. Danapati, who has left for the forest, is blessed. He will see Krishna, the one with eyes like lotus petals, the one who is the performer of unsullied deeds. Because of what you have done, this lineage of the Yadus has been severed at the foundations. Krishna will bring the kin together and assemble the clan. The intelligent Vasudeva has forgiven you. You have been cooked by time and are ignorant. Therefore, you speak as you will. O Kamsa! I think it is desirable that you should become Vasudeva's aide. If it so pleases you, go to Krishna's abode and be friendly with him." On hearing Andhaka's words, Kamsa's eyes became red with anger. Without saying anything, he went to his own residence. All the Yadavas, extensive in their learning, went to their own houses. Condemned unfairly by Kamsa, they departed, unsuccessful in their intentions.'

Chapter 67

Vaishampayana said, ‘Akrura was keen to see Krishna. As instructed, he left on the best of chariots, which could travel at the speed of thought. Krishna saw some auspicious omens, suggesting that a relative who was his father’s equal was due to arrive. Earlier, the king of Mathura, Ugrasena’s son,[769] had sent a messenger to Keshi, so as to bring about Upendra’s[770] death. Keshi was one who caused difficulties among men. Hearing the words of the messenger, that invincible one went to Vrindavana and started to trouble the gopas. He was angry and wicked in his valour. He ate human flesh. In the form of a horse, the daitya caused great carnage. He killed the cows and cowherds and ate their flesh. He was impossible to control. With nothing to restrain him, the maned one wandered around at will. Wherever the evil-souled Keshi, the danava in the form of a horse, resided, that part of the forest became like a cremation ground. It was covered with the bones of men. He dug up the earth with his hooves. With great power, he brought down the trees. He neighed and challenged the wind. He leapt up into the sky. Intoxicated with extreme insolence, the wicked one roamed around in the forest. The terrible one who was Kamsa’s follower was not troubled. The flesh-eater destroyed all the deer in the forest. In the form of a horse, the daitya sought to destroy all the gopas. The forest was greatly tainted because of his wicked conduct and men and cattle no longer tried to obtain subsistence from the forest. All shelters were removed from that region and all those paths became deserted. His conduct was insolent and he was terrible, eating human flesh. He angrily followed the sounds of humans. Having arrived at that forest, urged by destiny, on one occasion, he went to the place where the gopas dwelt.

‘On seeing him, with the women and the children, the gopas ran away. Screaming, they sought refuge with Krishna, the protector of the universe. Hearing the sounds of crying and lamentation among the gopas, Krishna granted them freedom from fear and advanced against Keshi. Keshi raised his neck, baring his teeth and dilating his eyes. Neighing, he swiftly rushed against Govinda. Seeing that Keshi, the danava in the form of a horse, was charging, Govinda advanced, like a cloud against the moon. Krishna was right next to Keshi. Desiring Krishna's welfare and taking him to be human, the gopas said, "O Krishna! O son! Do not rashly advance against this evil horse. He is formidable and wicked and you are only a child. Let him be. O son! Though he is externally Kamsa's companion, internally, he is like Kamsa himself. This supreme and excellent horse is a danava and is unmatched in battle. This immensely strong horse frightens the soldiers of the enemy. He is foremost among all the performers of wicked deeds. There is no creature that can kill him." Hearing the words of the gopas and listening to them, Madhusudana, the destroyer of enemies, made up his mind to fight with Keshi. The horse moved in a circle, to the left and to the right. Angrily, he kicked the trees with his hind legs and brought them down. The hair on his face was long, while the hair that covered his shoulders was thick. Perspiration, signifying rage, started to exude from the curved parts of his forehead. Froth emerged from his mouth, laced with a shower of dust and he looked like the moon in the sky, covered with dew during the winter. As he neighed, froth emerged from his mouth and covered the lotus-eyed Govinda with saliva all over. When the horse struck the ground with his hooves, dust that was like pale *madhuraksha*[771] was raised and Krishna's hair was covered with red dust. Striking the ground with his hooves, Keshi leapt up. He bared his teeth and attacked Krishna. Keshi, supreme among horses, engaged with Krishna. Using his front legs, he struck Krishna on the chest. Using his hooves, the powerful one repeatedly struck him on the sides. Using the terrible and sharp teeth in his mouth as a weapon, the angry horse bit Krishna's arm and left a mark there. The one with the long mane engaged with Krishna. Keshi was as radiant as a cloud that had engaged with the sun. The powerful horse struck Vasudeva on the chest with his chest. As his rage increased, his force and valour were doubled. As they engaged, the powerful and infinitely valorous Krishna also became angry. Using his hand, he struck him in the mouth. He was incapable of biting the hand, or withstanding the blow. His teeth were broken and torn from their foundations and he started to vomit frothy blood. His teeth were uprooted, his lips mangled and his throat choked. The eyeballs were deformed and came out of their sockets. His jaws were broken and blood flowed from his eyes. Though he raised his ears and made efforts, Keshi losts his consciousness. He used his legs to try and leap up again. He released urine and excrement. His body hair was wet. Eventually exhausted, his legs stopped moving. Krishna's hand dazzled inside Keshi's mouth. It looked like a cloud at the end of the summer, surrounded by the beams of a half-moon. Keshi's tired and immobile body still rested against Krishna. He looked like the moon in the morning, exhausted and resting against Mount Meru. Having been struck by Krishna's hand, Keshi's teeth fell down from his mouth. They looked like the white clouds of autumn, powerless without water. Having used his hand to destroy Keshi's body, Krishna's form looked extremely terrible, like that of the wielder of the pinaka[772] when an animal has been slain. Keshi's body was divided into two parts and lay down in the dust on the ground, each half possessing two legs, half a back and tail, one ear, one eye and one nose. Because of the injury suffered from Keshi's teeth, Krishna's hand looked radiant, like an aged *tala* tree in the forest, gored by the tusk marks of a king of elephants. Having brought about the destruction of Keshi and divided his body into two in the encounter, the lotus-eyed Krishna stood there, smiling.

'On seeing that Keshi had been killed, all the gopas and the gopa women were delighted, since their obstruction and impediment had been removed. According to their station and their age, they congratulated the handsome Damodara in affectionate words and repeatedly honoured him. "O son![773] You have accomplished the task of slaying a thorn of the worlds. O Krishna! This was a daitya who was wandering around on earth in will the form of a horse. You have brought peace to Vrindavana and it will be enjoyed by all the men and birds. O son! In the encounter, you have slain the wicked horse, Keshi. The evil-minded one killed many cowherds, cows, calves that were loved, and others, and destroyed this habitation. This performer of wicked deeds was about to become the ultimate destroyer. The deceitful one desired to make this world of men empty of men, so that he could reside here happily. Among those who desired to live, there was no one who was capable of standing before him, even among large numbers of gods, not to speak of those on earth." The brahmana sage, Narada, was travelling through the sky at that moment. Though he remained invisible, he honoured Krishna. "O Vishnu! O lord of the gods! O

Krishna! I am pleased. By killing Keshi, you have accomplished a difficult task. Among the gods, with the possible exception of Tryambaka,[774] no one other than you could have done this. O son! I am always anxious to witness fights. Tormented by curiousity inside me, I have arrived here from heaven, wishing to see this encounter between a man and a horse. I have witnessed your other deeds, like killing Putana. O Govinda! I am satisfied with your deeds. The great Indra, the slayer of Bala, was also scared of Keshi, the evil-minded one who assumed the terrible form of a horse. You used your long arms to tear him into two. This is the kind of death that has been ordained by the creator of the universe.[775] Now that you have killed Keshi, listen to my instructions. You will become famous in the world by the name of Keshava. May you be fortunate in this world and may you swiftly accomplish whatever tasks are left. I have to quickly leave. In the midst of these tasks, while you sport as a man, the residents of heaven will enjoy them, since they have sought refuge in your strength. The time for the Bharata battle[776] is approaching. Heading for heaven, the kings are readying weapons for fighting. In the firmament, the paths are being cleansed for them to ascend to heaven on celestial vehicles. For these kings, places are being earmarked in Shakra's world. O Keshava! After Ugrasena's son has been pacified by you, there will be a great battle among the kings. Depending on the past deeds of those kings, at the time of the conflict, those kings will take sides. O lord! Yours is the royal seat and royal prosperity flows from you. There is no doubt that kings who ignore your power will lose their prosperity. O Krishna! O lord of the universe! This is my message to you, the one whose fame is spoken about in the sacred texts and the one on whom this universe and the divinity of the gods are established. O lord! I have witnessed your deeds and I have seen you. I will return again after you have chastised Kamsa. Let me leave now." Narada was accomplished in celestial songs and having heard his words, with the gopas, Krishna entered Vraja again.'

Chapter 68

Vaishampayana said, ‘At that time, the rays of the sun had become mild and it was setting. The sky was tinged with the red of evening and the lunar disc was pale. The birds were in their nests and virtuous people were offering oblations into the fire. Everywhere, all the directions were enveloped in darkness. Everyone slept in the residences of the gopas. Jackals howled. Delighted at the prospect of eating flesh, night travellers wandered around. Once it was evening and the sun entered the cavern of evening, the shakragopa insects were delighted. For those who performed sacrifices in their houses,[777] it was the time to offer oblations. For those who had retired to the forest and for hermits,[778] it was the time to recite mantras and offer oblations into the fire. The cows returned to Vraja and were milked. When the calves were tied up, the cows regarded this as inappropriate treatment and mooed. The cows were summoned, with heaps of ropes lying around. They cows were summoned through sounds, tied up and herded into their pens. In every diection, dried cow dung was piled up and ignited. The gopas returned, carrying firewood on their shoulders. The moon rose a bit, spreading its gentle beams. With the day gone, night had just started to arrive. The day was over and night was about to arrive, the radiance of the sun had departed and the energy of the moon had presented itself, it was the time to offer oblations into the fire and the cool moonbeams had arrived, it was evening and the entire universe was offering oblations into the fire, the west blazed, as if it was on fire, and the east and the north were dark, with only a few stars, the sky looked like a mountain that had been reduced to ashes, the birds returned, indicating a time for relatives to meet—this was the time when Danapati swiftly reached Vraja on his chariot.

‘Having entered, Akrura respectively asked about the residence of Keshava, Rohini’s son and Nandagopa. The immensely strong one was the equal of the Vasus. He descended from his chariot and entered Nandagopa’s house, wishing to dwell there. As he entered through the gate, he saw Krishna stationed amidst the calves, milking the cows. He looked like a bull among the calves. The one who knew about dharma called out in a voice that choked with emotion. “O Keshava! O son! Come here.” He had seen him lying down on his back, when youth had not manifested itself.[779] He now saw him again, surrounded by prosperity. Akrura praised Krishna. “This is Pundarikaksha. He is like a lion or a tiger in valour. His complexion is like a cloud that is full of water. His form is like that of an excellent mountain. He cannot be assailed in a battle. His chest bears the srivatsa mark. His virtuous and excellent arms are capable of slaying enemies. Though his soul is mysterious, he has manifested himself. In the universe, he is the foremost one to be worshipped. He is Vishnu in the attire of a gopa, his body hair erect.[780] He seems to wear a diadem and his head seems to be covered by a blazing umbrella. His ears are adorned and deserve to be decorated with earrings. His extremely broad chest deserves to be decorated with garlands. He possesses two long, thick and round arms. Stirred by Manmatha’s[781] flames, thousands of women worship his body. He is the eternal Vishnu, attired in yellow garments. For the sake of creatures, the destroyer of enemies has graced the earth with his feet. These feet traversed the three worlds. For the sake of creatures, they have now resorted to earth. The beautiful hand in front[782] is appropriate for wielding the chakra. The second, which is uplifted,[783] wishes to be united with the mace. He is the foremost bearer of burdens. He is the best among the gods. He has incarnated himself on earth and is resplendent now. Those who are accomplished and learned in their foresight about the future have foreseen this incarnation. This cowherd will extend the Yadava lineage, which has weakened. Because of his energy, hundreds and thousands will extend the Yadava lineage, like rivers filling up the great ocean. Everything in the universe is based on his eternal rule. He will slay the enemy kings and bring about a prosperity which is like that in krita yuga. He will be based on earth and will place the entire universe under his subjugation. He will be above all the kings, but will not be a king himself. In earlier times, it is indeed true that he conquered the worlds in three strides and made Purandara the king of the gods in heaven. Just as he conquered earlier in three strides, he will vanquish the earth. There is no doubt that he will instate Ugrasena as the king. He has wiped away a lot of enmity. The sacred texts have asked questions about him in many ways. In ancient accounts, brahmanas who know about the brahman have sung about him. He is the Keshava whom the worlds desire. He has now arisen and has used his intelligence to manifest himself in human form. Following the prescribed rites, I will now worship his residence here. As if I am using mantras, I will worship Vishnu in my mind. Though I know that he has been born as a man, I know that he is superhuman and others who possess divine sight also know this. In the night, I will consult with Krishna, who himself knows everything. If he so agrees, I will go with him.”[784] On seeing Krishna, he cited these and many other reasons. With Krishna and the others, he entered Nandagopa’s house.’

Chapter 69

Vaishampayana said, 'The infinitely generous one[785] entered Nandagopa's house with Keshava and summoning all the gopa elders, spoke to them. Delighted to have met Krishna and Rohini's son, he spoke to them too. "O son! For the sake of welfare, let us go to the city of Mathura tomorrow. Let all those in Vraja and all the cowherds also go. Kamsa has instructed that the appropriate yearly taxes must be paid. There is a great and grand bow sacrifice that Kamsa is organizing. You can see that grand sacrifice and meet your relatives. You will meet your father Vasudeva, who has always suffered and is incessantly miserable because his sons were killed. He has always been oppressed by the wicked-minded Kamsa. This oppression has tired him out. He is miserable and is suffering from old age too. Separated from you, he is terrified and scared of Kamsa. Day and night, he is consumed by anxiety in his heart. O Govinda! You will also see Devaki, who has not held sons at her breasts. She is like a goddess, but is suffering, bereft of all her radiance. Because of grief on account of hers sons, she has dried up. She wishes to see you. Because of the separation, she is tormented by grief. She is like Surabhi,[786] without her calf. Her eyes are always overflowing with tears. She is always dressed in old garments. She is like the moon's radiance, when it has been eclipsed by Svarbhanu.[787] Desiring your arrival, she always wishes to see you. Because of grief on account of you, that ascetic lady is suffering. Since she has been separated from you, she has not heard your childhood conversation. O lord! She is unaware of your beauty and the radiance of your moon-like face. O Krishna! Though Devaki gave birth to you, she suffers. What is the point of having given birth? It would have been better for her to be childless. It is said that women who have no children only suffer from one kind of grief. But one who has a son, and does not obtain fruits through that son, is tormented by the birth. In qualities and granting others freedom from fear, you are a son who is Shakra's equal. Such a mother should not suffer. Your aged mother and father are the servants of others. Because of you, Kamsa, who doesn't possess foresight, abuses them. Having delivered you, Devaki should be revered, like the earth. However, she is immersed in an ocean of grief and should be saved. O Krishna! Vasudeva is immensely strong. He is aged and loves his son. If you unite him with his son, you will act in accordance with dharma. In the lake in Yamuna, you crushed the extremely evil-minded serpent. You raised up a large mountain[788] from the ground. You brought down the powerful and insolent Arishta. You killed the evil-souled Keshi, who robbed the lives of others. You must make efforts to save those aged and miserable ones. O Krishna! You should think about the means of following dharma. O Krishna! Your father was abused in the assembly and all those who witnessed it were extremely miserable and shed tears from their eyes. O Krishna! Your mother, Devaki, is incapacitated. She has suffered from many miseries on account of Kamsa destroying her conceptions. As has been indicated, it is said that everyone who is born must quietly repay the debt to the mother and the father. O Krishna! If you do this, you will show favours to your mother and your father. Unmatched dharma will be done and they will abandon their grief." Krishna knew what the infinitely generous one was saying. The energetic Keshava was not enraged, but restrained him. With Nandagopa at the forefront, the assembled gopas heard Akrura's words and prepared to follow Kamsa's instructions. All the residents of Vraja made arrangements for departure. The aged gopas readied everything. As could be afforded, taxes were arranged—bulls, ghee, buffaloes, other gifts, milk and curds. All these components of tribute to Kamsa were arranged. All the leaders among the gopas made these arrangements for departure. Akrura remained awake, conversing with Krishna. Rohini's son was the third one present and the night passed in this way.'

Chapter 70

Vaishampayana said, 'The morning sparkled and the birds began to make a noise. When night was over, the moon withdrew its beams. The sky turned red and all the stellar bodies vanished. It was dawn and the surface of the earth became wet with dew. The stars dimmed, as if they were about to go to sleep. As the night disappeared, the form of the sun made its appearance. The beams of the moon lost their lustre and melted away. There were many cows in the grounds that had been readied for departure. There were the sounds of milk being churned in the pots. The young calves were tied up with ropes. All the roads in Vraja were filled with gopas. There were many heavy vessels that were loaded on the carts. The chariots and mounts left quickly, leaving everything else behind. Krishna, Rohini's son and the infinitely generous one—these three departed on a chariot, like lords of the three worlds. When they reached the banks of the Yamuna, Akrura told Krishna, "O son! Let us stop the chariot here. Tend to the horses. Give fodder to the horses. The vessel for the horses is on the chariot. O son! Make these efforts and wait for me for a short while. I will worship the lord of the serpents and the lord of all the worlds[789] in this pool in the Yamuna, using the divine Bhagavat mantra. I will bow down before the handsome serpent who bears the svastika mark on his hood. He is the divine and thousand-headed Ananta, attired in blue garments. I will consume all the poison that flows out from that god of dharma, like the immortals partaking of amrita. He bears the svastika mark and his tongue is forked. He is the one who is adorned with prosperity. For the sake of peace, he is surrounded by all the snakes. Until I return from the pool and from that Indra among serpents, both of you be seated here and wait for me." Happily, Krishna replied, "O one who follows dharma! Go, without any delay. Without you, we are incapable of being well." The infinitely generous one immersed himself in the pool in the Yamuna.

‘He saw rasatala, the world of the snakes, as it indeed was. He saw him[790] with his one thousand faces, a standard with a golden palm tree held aloft his head. A plough was held in one hand and there was a club near his stomach. He was attired in dark garments. He was fair, with a pale face. He was adorned in a single earring. He was intoxicated and his eyes were like the petals of a lotus that was asleep. The serpent was seated on a white seat, made out of the coils of his own body. He was seated with the svastika mark and looked like the best of mountains. His head, decorated in gold, was inclined towards the left. His chest was adorned with a garland of lotus flowers that were made out of gold. The scorcher of enemies was mighty-armed and his limbs were smeared with red sandalwood paste. He was fair in complexion and there was a lotus on his navel. The powerful one blazed in energy. He saw the lord of the serpents, the lord who was there when everything was a single ocean. The lord, the Indra among those who forked tongues, was being worshipped by Vasuki and other serpents. The serpents Kambala and Ashvatara fanned him with whisks. The divine lord, who has no origin, was seated on a throne of dharma. Vasuki, the lord of serpents, was stationed near him. He was surrounded by snakes who were advisers, Karkotaka being the foremost. They bathed him and consecrated him as the king, with waters from the single ocean, poured from divine and golden pots that were strewn with lotus flowers. He saw Vishnu seated on his[791] lap, attired in yellow garments and with an extremely dark complexion, with the srivatsa mark on his chest.[792] He saw another lord, Samkarshana, who was seated, with a complexion that was like that of the moon. However, he wasn’t seated on a divine seat. At this, he suddenly tried to speak to Krishna.[793] But Krishna used his own energy to stop him from speaking. He saw the undecaying and illustrious lord amidst all those serpents. Astounded, the infinitely generous one surfaced again. He saw Bala and Keshava, extraordinary in forms, seated on the chariot and glancing at each other. Filled with curiosity, Akrura immersed himself again and saw the eternal god, attired in blue garments, being worshipped. He saw him seated on the lap of the one with the one thousand hoods. Akrura saw Krishna being worshipped according to the proper rites. Having surfaced again, the infinitely generous one chanted the mantra in his mind and returned to the chariot along the same route. When Akrura returned, Keshava cheerfully asked him, “What happened in the

Bhagavat pool? How was the world of the serpents? You took a long time. Is your delay because of some distraction? I think you must have seen something extraordinary and did not wish to leave.” He replied to Krishna, “There are no marvels without you. There is nothing in the mobile or immobile worlds that occurs otherwise. O Krishna! There, I saw a marvel that is extremely rare on earth. Here, it is exactly as it was there, and I am delighted. O Krishna! I saw a form that is extraordinary in the worlds. After this, there is no other wonder that I wish to see. O lord! Therefore, let us proceed to Kamsa’s royal city. We should leave so as to reach before the sun signals the end of the day.”’

Chapter 71

Vaishampayana said, 'All those infinitely energetic ones yoked that supreme chariot and entered that foremost city when the sun was turning red. The intelligent Akrura, who was like the sun in his energy, took the brave Krishna and Samkarshana to his own house. Danapati was scared. He told the two, who were excellent in complexion, "O sons! You should abandon all desire of going to Vasudeva's house. Because of you, Kamsa abuses the aged one. Day and night, he censures him, asking him to leave the place." Krishna replied, "O one who follows dharma! We will not debate this with you. O brave one! We will go and see the royal roads of Mathura." Having obtained permission, those two brave ones left, desiring to see. They were like two elephants that had been tied up, but were now released, desiring to fight. Along the road, they saw a washerman who had dyed some clothes. They asked him to give them bright clothes. The washerman said, "Who are you? You are foolish residents of the forest who are asking for royal garments. You don't seem to have any fear. I ensure that Kamsa obtains clothes from many different countries. I dye hundreds of garments with many colours that one wants. Who are you? Which forest were you born in? You have been reared with animals. On seeing these many red garments, you seem to be attracted to them. Alas! You have abandoned your lives. You are foolish, ordinary and ignorant people. Having come here, you are asking for inappropriate clothes." Krishna became angry with the washerman who was limited in intelligence. He was stupid and desired his own harm. That is the reason he spoke words that were like poison. He[794] struck the washerman on the head with a palm that was like the vajra and he fell down, having lost his life. His head was shattered. On seeing that he was dead, his wives started to lament and shriek. With dishevelled hair, they swiftly went to Kamsa's house. Those two chose some excellent garments. Seeking garlands, they went to the road along which there were shops that sold garlands. They were attracted to the fragrances, like elephants. There was a man named Gunaka. He earned his living from selling garlands and he was pleasant in speech. Though he earned his living from selling garlands, he was wealthy. There were many garlands in the shop. Gently, Krishna spoke these words to him. “Give us some garlands.” At that time, without any hesitation, the garland maker told them that he would give them some. The person who earned his living from selling garlands was happy and gave them many garlands. The handsome one replied, “Everything that I have is yours.” Delighted in his mind, Krishna granted Gunaka a boon. “O amiable one! Because you have sought refuge with me, you will obtain riches and prosperity.” The garland maker was happy at having received this boon. He lowered his face. He prostrated his head before Krishna and received the boon. The one who earned his living from selling garlands thought that they might be yakshas. Therefore, he was also scared and anxious and did not reply. Vasudeva’s two sons continued to proceed along the royal road. They saw Kubja,[795] who was carrying a plate laden with pastes. Krishna told Kubja, “O one with eyes like lotus petals! Who are these pastes for? You should quickly tell us.” She used to walk in a crooked way, like lightning. She stood and looked at him. She then replied to the lotus-eyed Krishna, whose voice was like the rumbling of a cloud. “I am carrying these pastes to the king’s bathing chamber. O fortunate ones! Come and spend some time with me. There is love in my heart for you. O amiable ones! Since you do not know me, where have you come from? I am loved by the great king and an employed for the purpose of pastes.” As Kubja stood there, smiling, Krishna told her, “Give us pastes that are appropriate for our bodies. O one with the beautiful face! We are wrestlers and have come to this country as guests. We have come to see this great and prosperous kingdom and this divine and grand bow sacrifice.” She replied to Krishna, “Now that I have seen you, you have become my beloved. Accept this excellent paste, which is fit to be given to the king.” They smeared the pastes on their limbs and started to dazzle. They looked like two bulls in a tirtha in the Yamuna, limbs covered with mud. As if playing, Krishna gently pressed the hump with two fingers of his hand. When Krishna pressed, the crooked body straightened and the one with the beautiful smiles stood upright. The one with the large breasts was as straight as a creeper around a pole and laughed out aloud. Intoxicated and in love with Krishna, she said, “O beloved one! Where are you going? I will detain you. Remain here and accept me.” They clapped their hands and smiled at each other. On seeing this and hearing about it, the onlookers laughed a great deal at Kubja. Krishna smiled and took his leave of Kubja, who was overcome by desire.

‘Having taken their leave of Kubja, they entered the king’s assembly. They had been reared in Vraja and were adorned and attired like cowherds. They entered the king’s abode, their faces hiding their intentions. Without being suspected, those two children entered the chamber where the bows were kept. Proud of their strength, they were like two lions who had been born in the forests in the Himalayas. They wished to see the giant bow, which had been appropriately decorated. Those two brave ones asked the person who was in charge of the weapons. “O one who guards Kamsa’s bow! Hear our words. O amiable one! Where is Kamsa’s great and decorated bow kept? If you so desire, show it to us.” He showed them the bow, which was like a pillar. No man was capable of wielding it, not to speak of the gods, along with Vasava. The valiant Krishna seized it and raised it. Cheerful in his mind, the lotus-eyed one grasped it in his hands. He raised the bow, worshipped by the daityas, as he wished. The strong one tried to bend the bow, but he was unsuccessful in bending it. It was like a serpent and though Krishna tried to bend it, he couldn’t. Instead, that decorated bow snapped in the middle. Krishna, who was swift in his valour, broke that excellent bow. With Samkarshana, the youth then departed at great speed. The sound of the bow shattering resounded in the air. This filled all the directions and made the inner quarters tremble. The man who was in charge of the weapons was terrified by this speed and valour. Trembling like a crow, he went to the king and said, “Listen to what I have to say. An extraordinary event has occurred in the chamber where the bow was kept. It has just happened and it deserves the respect of the universe. There were two men who came together, wearing locks of hair. They were dressed in blue and yellow garments. They were smeared with yellow and white paste. They were as brave as sons of the gods. Those children were like fires. Those two amiable ones stood in the chamber meant for the bow, as if they had suddenly arrived from the firmament. I saw that they were attired in beautiful garments and garlands. One among them possessed eyes like a lotus. He was dark and was attired in yellow garments and garlands. He seized that jewel among bows, which is impossible for even the gods to grasp. With great strength, the child picked up the giant bow, as if it was the entrails of a crow. As if he was playing, he applied force to the bow, but could not bend it. Using the strength of his hands, he tried to bend it, though there was no arrow attached. As he grasped it in his hand, it made a great sound and broke into two parts. That jewel among bows shattered, as if it had been struck by an elephant. Having broken it, the infinitely valorous one departed with the speed of the wind. O king! Having broken it, he has left. I do not know who he is." Hearing about how the bow had been broken, Kamsa was anxious in his mind. He allowed the guard of the weapons to leave and entered his excellent house.'

Chapter 72

Vaishampayana said, ‘The extender of the Bhoja lineage thought about the bow being shattered. He quickly went to the arena to see the viewing gallery. The supreme among kings saw that everything had been arranged in the arena. Arrays of firm platforms had been fixed, without any gaps. There were excellent walls, decorated with galleries. There were extensive shades, all supported on a single pillar. Everything had been arranged properly and the arena was superb. There were fountains of water and excellent steps for climbing on to the galleries. Seats had been spread around for the king and there were paths to walk along. The galleries were so spread out that they could accommodate large numbers of people. On seeing that the arena had been decorated, the intelligent one said, “Let colourful garlands and flags be used tomorrow. Let there be beautiful covers and fragrances. Let the canopy and the arena be strewn with flowers. Let the arena be wiped clean with cow dung. Let the gallery be decorated with beautiful curtains. In due order, let there be pots filled with drinking water. Everywhere, let there be excellent and golden pots filled with water. Let us think of offerings and pots filled with drinks. Let wrestlers be invited and let them be seated ahead of all the arrays. Accordingly, instruct the wrestlers and the spectators. Let the arena and the gallery be decorated properly.” The king thus instructed that excellent arrangements should be made. Having left the arena, he entered his own house.

‘There, he summoned the two invincible wrestlers, Chanura and Mushtika. Those two wrestlers were extremely brave and strong, skilful in fighting. Heeding Kamsa’s instructions, they cheerfully entered. He saw that those two wrestlers, famous in the world, had arrived. Kamsa addressed them in words that explained what he meant. “You are my famous wrestlers. You hold aloft the standard of valour. As is proper, you are therefore worshipped and, in particular, shown respect. Remember the good deeds I have done and the honour I have shown you. Using your own energy, you must now perform a great task for me. There are two cowherds who have been reared in Vraja—Samkarshana and Krishna. Though they are children, they have conquered all exhaustion. Those two roam around in the forest. They have come here, to this arena for fighting, desiring to fight. There is no doubt that you should bring them down quickly and kill them. You should not act towards them as if they are fickle children. You should not ignore them. You must make efforts. In the encounter that follows when they come to the arena, if you restrain those two gopas, you will ensure what is best for me, now and in the future.” Chanura and Mushtika heard the affectionate words of the king and became cheerful in their minds. The wrestlers were revered for their fighting and said, “When those two, the worst among gopas, stand in front of us, they will head towards their death. Those two ascetics have already gone to the land of the dead. If they fight against us, they will face a great calamity. We will be full of anger at those two foremost ones, who dwell in the forest.” In this way, those two bulls among wrestlers uttered words that were full of poison. Having taken the permission of the Indra among men, they returned to their own houses.’

Chapter 73

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kamsa spoke to Mahamatra, who earned a living through elephants.[796] “Summon the elephant Kuvalayapida and station him at the gate. He is strong. His eyes are crazy with intoxication. He is fickle and angry with men. He becomes fierce and terrible when he sees a rival elephant. Urge him towards those two residents of the forest. Arrange it so that those two inferior sons of Vasudeva lose their lives. In the arena, I wish to see that you and that king among elephants are fierce and kill those two, who earn subsistence through cows. On seeing that those two have been brought down, the foundations of Vasudeva and his relatives will be severed. He will be without a support. With his wife, he will be destroyed. All the foolish Yadavas have sought refuge with Krishna. On seeing that Krishna has been brought down, all their hopes will be destroyed. They will be killed by that king of elephants, by the wrestlers, or by me. With the city bereft of Yadavas, I will roam around happily. My father is an extender of the Yadava lineage and I have abandoned him. I have abandoned the remaining Yadavas who have taken Krishna’s side. Ugrasena desired to have a son. But Narada has told me that I have not been born through a man who is limited in valour. There is a mountain named Suyamuna. When my mother was in her season, because she was curious, she went to the forest with other women. There were beautiful and lovely trees on that summit. She roamed around on the summit of the mountain and in caverns and rivers. She heard the sweet songs of the kinnaras resounding. She heard words that were pleasant to hear and excited desire. Having heard the calls of the peacocks and the chirping of the birds and seen all this, she desired to follow the dharma of women. At this time, a breeze wafted through the forest. It carried the scent of flowers and ignited desire. Adorned with bees, the kadamba trees were stirred by the breeze. This increased their fragrances and it was enough to drive one senseless. *Kesara* trees[797] showered down flowers that ignited desire. Decorated with flowers and thorns, the nipa trees were like shining lamps. The earth was covered by new grass and seemed to be adorned with shakragopas. It assumed a form that looked like that of a young woman. The handsome lord of Soubha, the danava named Drumila, arrived there. Assuming Ugrasena's form, he raped my mother. Taking him to be her husband, she submitted to him. However, she subsequently suspected and thought that she had been dishonoured. When she arose, she was frightened and said, 'It is certain that you are not my husband. Who are you? Why did you violate me in this disguised form? I follow the vow of a single husband and have been tainted by you. O wicked one! You have assumed the form of my husband and perpetrated an inferior deed. O worst of your lineage! What will my relatives angrily tell me? I will have to live, derided by my husband's family. Since you have acted in this way, shame on you. You come from a wicked lineage. Your senses have made you deviate. You cannot be trusted. Driven by desire, you have violated another person's wife.' When she censured him in this way, the danava became angry. He wrathfully retorted, 'My name is Drumila and I am the energetic lord of Soubha. O foolish one! Taking yourself to be learned, why are you reprimanding me? You have taken a man as your husband and he is inferior in energy and valour. O one who prides herself on being a woman! Women are not tainted by adultery. The learned ones do not restrain women, especially those who are human, in this way. I have heard of many women who have transgressed by committing adultery. They have given birth to infinitely valourous sons who are like the gods. In this world, you take yourself to be the only one who follows the dharma of being excessively devoted to her husband. You take yourself to be pure, brandish your hair,[798] and speak whatever you wish. O one who wished to have intercourse! You asked me, who am I? I will tell you. You will have a son named Kamsa and he will destroy his enemies.' At this, she was again enraged and cursed this boon. Distressed, the queen spoke to the danava, who had spoken in this evil way. 'O extremely wicked one! Shame on your conduct. You have criticized all women. There are women who are wicked in conduct and there are women who follow the vow of being devoted to their husbands. O worst of your lineage! Those are the women who hold up all the worlds. You have granted me a son who will be the destroyer of good conduct. I do not approve of this. Listen to what I have to say. A man will be born in my husband’s lineage. He will cause the death of the son you have bestowed on me.’ Thus addressed, Drumila departed through the sky. Grieving, my mother returned to the city on the same day. O one who looks after the elephant! I am Ugrasena’s *kshetraja* son.[799] Having been abandoned by my mother and my father, I have established myself through my own energy. Both of them hate me and my relatives especially do so. I will slay those two cowherds. Go. Ascend the elephant and equip it with a goad, a spear and a spike. O Mahamatra! Be steady and quickly station yourself at the gate.”’

Chapter 74

Vaishampayana said, 'That day was over. When the second day presented itself, the great arena was filled with citizens who wished to see the encounter. The stage was supported on eight colourful pillars. There were walls and altars at the gates. There were windows in the shape of the half-moon and the excellent platform was decorated. The beautiful eastern gate was thrown open and adorned with garlands and ropes. It was ornamented and radiant, like a cloud in the autumn sky. The wrestling arena was prepared well and was equipped with everything required for fighting. The beautiful wrestling arena looked like a mass of clouds, or like the ocean. There were rows of people in the gallery, which was as resplendent as a mountain. Those from the inner quarters were not very far from the spectators' gallery. Their gallery blazed in gold and was adorned with nets of jewels. Decorated by those jewels, they looked like the summits of mountains. With blazing curtains as covers, they looked like mountains with wings. There were whisks and the sounds of laughter and the tinkling of ornaments. There were many kinds of gems, colourful in their rays. There was a separate gallery for the courtesans, draped with clean covers. With the best of courtesans seated there, they were as resplendent as celestial vehicles. There were the best of seats and golden couches. Colourful cushions were strewn around and there were bouquets and trees. The place was decorated with golden pots filled with water for drinking. There were baskets filled with fruit and arrangements were made for drinks. There were many other galleries, bound down with piles of wood. There were many such sparkling galleries, strewn with covers. There were other excellent galleries, shrouded in fine nets through which one could see. These viewing galleries for women sparkled like swans in the sky. The beautiful eastern gate was as radiant as the summit of Meru. The colourful pillars were inlaid with gold leaves. Kamsa's viewing gallery blazed even more. It was decorated with garlands of flowers and bore all the signs of his residence. The entire arena was full of people and resounded with the noise of crowds of people. The wrestling arena bore the complexion of a turbulent ocean.

‘It quietened down when the king arrived in his viewing gallery and instructed that the elephant Kuvalayapida should be stationed at the arena’s gate. He was attired in white garments and was fanned with sparkling fans and whisks. With a white crown, he dazzled, like the moon surrounded by white clouds. The intelligent one happily seated himself on his throne. On seeing his unmatched beauty, the citizens pronounced benedictions for his victory. Brandishing their garments in the air, the wrestlers entered the arena. Having entered the arena, those powerful ones seated themselves in three rows. Trumpets were sounded. Slapping their chests, Vasudeva’s two sons happily presented themselves at the gate of the arena. As those handsome ones quickly entered, they were halted by the crazy elephant, which had been severely goaded for this purpose. The evil-souled and maddened elephant curled its trunk. Carefully goaded, it sought to kill Bala and Keshava. When the elephant tried to scare him, Krishna laughed. He censured the evil-souled Kamsa’s intolerance. “Indeed, Kamsa will quickly go to Vaivasvata’s abode, since he desires to use this elephant to attack me.” Having approached, the elephant roared like a cloud. The lord Govinda suddenly leapt up and clapped his hands. With the elephant in front of him, he slapped his chest and created a noise. Shridhara[800] seized the trunk and pressed it against his chest. He passed between the elephant’s tusks and between its legs. Krishna teased the elephant, like the wind teasing the clouds. Krishna avoided the trunk and passed through the tusker’s tusks. Emerging from between the legs, he seized it by the tail. Though it wished to kill Krishna, that gigantic animal was incapable and stupefied. As its body was crushed, the elephant began to trumpet. It sank down on to the ground on its knees and its tusks struck the ground. It exuded musth in its rage, like a cloud at the end of the summer. Like a child, Krishna played with the elephant. Because of the hatred towards Kamsa, he then made up his mind to kill it. Placing his right foot against its temple, he uprooted both its tusks and struck it with those. The elephant was struck by its own tusks, which were like the vajra. Thus struck, it released urine and excrement and screamed in pain. Its limbs mangled by Krishna, the elephant’s senses were afflicted. Copious streams of blood began to flow from its temples. Halayudha[801] powerfully tugged at its tail, like Vinata’s son[802] pulling at a serpent that is hidden in the slope of a mountain. Krishna slew the elephant with a tusk. With another stroke of that same tusk, he slew the one who was astride the elephant.[803] Deprived of its tusks, the supreme elephant emitted a mighty shriek. With Mahamatra, it fell down, like a mountain shattered by the vajra. Having killed the supreme elephant that roared, Pundarikaksha entered the arena, which was like an ocean, with his elder brother.’

Chapter 75

Vaishampayana said, ‘Placing his elder brother ahead of him, the lotus-eyed Krishna powerfully entered the arena, his garments waving around in the wind. Devaki’s son carried the elephant’s tusks in his excellent hands. The fat and the blood seemed to have created playful armlets on his arms. He leapt like a lion and was like a thundering cloud. He seemed to move the earth with the slapping of his hands. Ugrasena’s son saw him, holding up the elephant’s tusk as a weapon. Extremely pale in fear, he angrily looked towards Krishna. Keshava was resplendent, with the elephant’s tusk in his hand. He looked like a mountain with a single peak, with the half-moon just above it. When Govinda leapt around, that entire arena, which was like an ocean, was filled with sounds made by that mass of people. As had been decided earlier, Kamsa commanded Chanura. “You should make efforts to fight with Krishna.” Chanura’s eyes became coppery red with rage. He advanced to fight, like a cloud that was full of water. The assembled people were instructed to be quiet. The assembled Yadavas collectively spoke these words. “There will be a wrestling match in this arena. Let no questions be raised. Let there be no cowardice. It was decided earlier that the strength of arms will be shown, without the use of weapons. Those who know about the progress of time have laid down the rules. What must be done has also been instructed. For exhaustion, there must always be water. Dried cow dung must always be kept ready for the wrestlers.[804] The judges have instructed that the duel must be one by one, stationed on the ground, or stationed in any other mode.[805] If a person is stationed in the arena, depending on whether he is a child, middle-aged, old, thin or strong, a rival must be found for him from within that same category. It has been decreed that a wrestling bout must be fought on the basis of strength or techniques. The learned know that once a rival has been brought down, nothing further must be done to him. In the arena, the wrestling match between Krishna and the one from Andhra[806] is about to commence. Krishna is a child and the one from

Andhra is massive. We should reflect about this.” At this, an uproar arose among the assembled people.

‘Govinda leapt around and spoke these words. “I am a child. The one from Andhra is massive, with a body that is like a mountain. I take delight at the prospect of wrestling with someone who has strength in his arms. So far as I am concerned, there will be no deviation from the rules set for wrestling. It is my view that one should not sully those who wrestle with bare arms. There is the dharma of dried cow dung and there is the dharma of water. One must attire oneself in ochre garments. These rules have been thought of for the arena. When one follows the vow of fighting in an arena, success comes from self-control, firmness, valour, exercise, good conduct and strength. However, if anyone brings a trace of enmity to this wrestling match here, it will be my task to suppress him and satisfy the universe. He has been born in Karusha and has the name of Chanura. Though he fights with the strength in his arms, one needs to think about the deeds he has done. Invincible in the duel, he has slain many wrestlers. By exhibiting that power in the arena, he has tainted the path followed by wrestlers. Warriors who are accomplished in the use of weapons must fight with weapons in the field of battle. However, for a wrestler who is accomplished in the arena, bringing down his rival represents success. A person who is victorious in a battle obtains eternal fame. Even if a person is slain by weapons in the field of battle, the vault of heaven has been earmarked for him. The slayer and the slain, both obtain success in a battle. That is a great journey that leads to the loss of one’s life and it is one that is worshipped by the virtuous. But along this path, success comes from strength and techniques. If a person dies in an arena, where is the heaven for him? What love can the victor have for such a victory? Because of the sins of a king who prides himself on being learned, if a wrestler exhibits his power and kills another wrestler, he is nothing but a murderer.” Having conversed in this way, an extremely terrible duel took place between them. It was as terrible as two elephants fighting in the forest. They used their arms to engage with each other and countered each other in wonderful ways. They raised the opponent and brought him down. They pushed and tugged. They struck each other with fists and made sounds like boars. They rained blows, which were like the vajra, on each other. They used their nails as spikes. They used terrible kicks. They struck with their thighs and butted with their hands, making sounds like stones striking against stones. There was a fierce duel, using the strength of arms and without resorting to weapons. In the midst of the assembly, those brave ones used their strength alone. Everyone present was delighted and roars of approval arose. Other people in the galleries uttered words of praise.

'Kamsa's face was full of sweat and he glanced towards Krishna. Using his left hand, he indicated that the trumpets should cease. He instructed that the trumpets and the drums should stop. The innumerable divine trumpets that were blaring in the sky also stopped. However, as Hrishikesha, the lotus-eyed one, continued to fight, all the trumpets began to sound of their own accord. The gods were in celestial vehicles that could travel as they wished, together with beautiful vidyadharas. Though remaining invisible, they assembled, desiring Krishna's victory. All the saptarshis who were in the sky exclaimed, "May Krishna defeat the danava Chanura who has assumed the form of a wrestler." Devaki's son played with Chanura for a long time. But on discerning Kamsa's sentiments, he summoned up all his strength. The earth trembled. The arena started to move around. The best of gems fell down from Kamsa's crown. Chanura had already lived his life. With his arms, Krishna bent him. He struck him on the head with his fist and on the chest with his knee. Tears and blood flowed from his eyes and his eyeballs emerged from their sockets, hanging like bells from a seat on an elephant. With his eyes gouged out, he fell down in the middle of the arena. Bereft of life and with his lifespan over, Chanura lay down on the ground. Bereft of life Chanura's body lay down in the arena. The large road was seen to be obstructed, as if by a mountain.'

Chapter 76

Vaishampayana said, 'Chanura was proud of his strength. On seeing that he had been killed, in that arena, Rohini's son seized Mushtika. Krishna seized Tosalaka.[807] At first, those two wrestlers[808] were senseless with rage. Having come under the subjugation of time, they engaged with Rama and Krishna. The powerful Krishna raised up Tosalaka, who was like the summit of a mountain. He whirled him around one hundred times and dashed him down on the ground. That powerful one was afflicted and oppressed by Krishna. Copious quantities of blood emerged from his mouth and he was about to die. The immensely strong Samkarshana fought for a long time. The wrestler from Andhra[809] was a great wrestler and exhibited various techniques. The energetic and brave one[810] struck him on the head with a blow of his fist and it was like the vajra. It was as if the vajra had shattered a huge mountain. His head was shattered. On his face, the eyes emerged from their sockets. Uttering a loud roar, he fell down there. After killing the wrestler from Andhra and Tosalaka, Krishna and Samkarshana leapt around in the middle of the arena, their eyes red with anger. They were terrible to behold. When the wrestler from Andhra[811] and the great wrestler, Mushtika, had been killed, no other wrestlers were left in the arena. On seeing this, all the gopas, with Nandagopa at the forefront, stood rooted at the spot. Their limbs trembled because of fear. Full of questions, Devaki also trembled and glanced towards Krishna. Tears of joy flowed from her eyes. On having seen Krishna, her eyes were filled with tears. Because of his affection, Vasudeva discarded his old age and became young. With their eyes, the best among courtesans drank in Krishna's face, like bees doing this to lotuses in the twinkling of an eye.

'There were beads of sweat on Kamsa's face and between his brows. Having seen Krishna, his inner hatred led to these manifestations. The fire in his inner heart and mind blazed and it was as if his breath was fanned by the wind of rage, emitting smoke towards Keshava. His lips trembled and he furrowed his eyebrows. Because of his rage, Kamsa's face assumed the form of the red sun. There were beads of sweat on a face that was red with rage. This looked like dew created by the rising sun. Angrily, he instructed many men, "These gopas roam around in the forest. Expel them from the assembly. They are wicked and deformed. I do not wish to see them. The gopas do not deserve to remain in my kingdom. Nandagopa is wicked in intelligence and regards me as someone who is evil in conduct. Bind him in iron chains and iron shackles. Vasudeva is wicked in conduct and has always acted deceitfully towards me. He deserves a punishment that is not meant for the aged. I will quickly kill him. These ordinary gopas are devoted to Damodara. Seize their cattle and any other riches that they possess." In harsh words, Kamsa issued these commands. Krishna, with truth as his valour, glanced towards his face. Keshava was angry at what had been said about his father and Nandagopa. He saw the distress of his relatives and that Devaki was senseless. The mighty-armed Achyuta climbed up, for Kamsa's destruction. He was as forceful as a maned lion, born with valour. From the middle of the arena, Krishna jumped up, to near Kamsa's throne. He was like a cloud tinged with lightning, fanned by the wind. All those who were in the middle of the arena didn't actually see him leap up.[812] The residents of the city only saw him standing next to Kamsa. Kamsa was under the subjugation of the dharma of time. He saw Govinda near him and thought that the lord had descended there from the sky. In the midst of that assembly in the arena, Krishna used his arms, which were like clubs, and seized Kamsa by the hair on his head. The crown, decorated with gold and diamonds, fell down. His head was seized by Krishna's hands. With the hair grasped by the hands, Kamsa was unable to make any efforts. He was senseless and didn't know what to do. Seized by the hair, he sighed gently. Kamsa was incapable of looking towards Krishna's face. The earrings were dislodged from his ears. The necklace was torn away from his chest. With his arms hanging down, the ornaments were dislodged from his body. His upper garment was dislodged. The throne moved violently. Thus grabbed by Krishna's energy, Kamsa trembled. Keshava dragged him down from the gallery on to the middle of that great arena. With his hair seized with great force, Kamsa confronted a great hardship. The immensely radiant king of Bhoja was thus dragged by Krishna along that arena. As his body was dragged along, potholes were created there.

In that arena, Krishna played around and dragged him along. When he had lost his life, Krishna flung Kamsa’s body a long distance away. A body that was used to happiness lay down on the ground. It was pale and covered with dust, the opposite of what used to happen earlier. He was without a crown and his face was dark. The eyes were closed. The radiance was destroyed. It was as if a lotus no longer had its petals. Kamsa wasn’t slain in a battle, wounded by arrows. He died from being grasped by the neck. He thus deviated from the path meant for the brave. He had been violently dragged along. Marks could be seen on the body, wounds made in the flesh by Keshava’s nails, while he was still alive. Having slain him, Pundarikaksha’s joy doubled. With the thorn dead, he worshipped at Vasudeva’s feet. The delight of the Yadu lineage lowered his head and kneaded his mother’s feet. Krishna was sprinkled with the milk that flowed from this happiness. Krishna, blazing in his own energy, asked about the welfare of all the Yadavas, in due order and according to age. Kamsa’s brother was named Sunama. Using his arms, Baladeva, with dharma in his soul, brought him down and defeated him. Those two brave and victorious ones had conquered their anger. They had been reared in Vraja for a long period of time. Cheerful in their minds, they went to the residence of their own father.’

Chapter 77

Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing that their husband had been killed, like a planet that had lost its splendour, all of Kamsa's wives surrounded the dead Kamsa from all sides. Having lost his life, the lord of the earth was sleeping on a bed on the ground. The wives saw this and grieved, like female deer when the male deer has been slain. "O mighty-armed one! Alas! We have been killed. Our hopes have been destroyed. Our relatives have been killed. We are the brave wives of a brave person. We have been devoted to the vows of the brave. O tiger among kings! Those who have seen how you came about your end are grieving. With your relatives, we are lamenting. O immensely strong one! We are without a foundation. Abandoned by you, we beautiful ones are without subsistence. Now that you have died, you have left us without a protector. When we are pale in our limbs, desiring to have intercourse and like creepers that cannot move, who will convey us to our beds? O amiable one! Your breath has now merged with the air and your beautiful face is being scorched by the sun, like a lotus that is deprived of water. These ears are empty and are no longer adorned by earrings. Your head has always loved earrings and is now lying down on the ground. O brave one! Your crown was decorated with all the jewels. Where is it now? It possessed the complexion of the sun and brought prosperity to your head. We are the wives and women who adorned your inner quarters. Now that you have gone to another world, what will these miserable ones do? Wives who are virtuous are never deprived from objects of pleasure and are never abandoned by their husbands. If that is indeed the case, where are you going? Time, which circles in its tasks, is immensely powerful. Time is like an enemy who is swiftly taking you away from us. We do not deserve unhappiness and have always enjoyed happiness. O lord! We are overcome by distress. How will we live as widows? For women of good character, the husband alone is the supreme refuge. You have been our objective. Death has proved to be stronger and has taken you away. We are now in the state of widows. Our minds are full of sorrow and grief. It is certain that we will be immersed in weeping. Where will we go without you? Time has left with you and so has the time for playing on your lap. We have been deprived in an instant. The fortune of men is transient. O one who grants honours! Alas! We are distressed. We are miserable. All of us must have committed the same crime. That is why we have become widows at the same time. We found delight in intercourse and you nurtured us. You have left for heaven. All of us desire you. Abandoning us, where are you going? O lord! We are lamenting like female ospreys. O protector of the universe! O one who grants honours! You should reply to us. O great king! Your wives are lamenting in this way and your relatives are sorrowing. To us, your departure seems to be terrible. O handsome one! There is no doubt that the beautiful women in the other world must be more beautiful than us. O brave one! That is the reason you have abandoned the people in your own household and have left. O brave one! O lord of the earth! Your wives are piteously shrieking and weeping. Then, why are you not waking up now? Alas! This last journey of men is pitiable. They must neglect the wives and leave. It is better for women to have no husband than for women to have a husband who is brave. That is because the women in heaven love brave ones more and are also loved by those brave ones. You loved to fight and you have swiftly been rendered invisible. Death has struck all of us in our inner organs. In battles, you have killed Jarasandha's soldiers and have defeated the yakshas. O lord of the universe! How could you have been slain by an ordinary human? In a battle, you have fought with Indra, using arrows in that encounter. You have vanquished the immortals in a battle? How could you have been slain by a mortal? The ocean cannot be agitated and you agitated it with your shower of arrows. You defeated the wielder of the noose[813] and seized all his jewels. Vasava was deficient in showering down. For the sake of the citizens, you penetrated the clouds with your arrows and used your strength to cause rain. All the kings were forced to submit to your powers. They sent excellent and expensive gems and garments to you. Witnessing your valour, the enemies thought that you were like a god. How could this terrible fear, which caused loss of life, arrive? With our lord having been brought down, we confront the prospect of being addressed as widows. We were not distracted. But we have been deprived by death and have become distracted. O lord! Even if you wanted to leave and forget us, it was your duty to tell us that you were going and take our leave. O lord! Show us your favours. We are scared. Our heads are lowered at your feet. O lord of Mathura! There has been enough of residence at a distant spot. Return. O brave one! Alas! How can you lie down on a bed of grass and dust? Does your mind not suffer because of lying down on the ground? Who struck us while we were asleep? Who struck us suddenly? Who has struck all these women in this extremely terrible way? As long as women are alive, they have to weep and lament. We are weeping. Why should we not depart with our husband?"

'At this time, Kamsa's mother also arrived there. She was miserable and trembling. "Where is my child? Where is my son?" She wept piteously. She saw her dead son, who was like a pale moon. Her heart was shattered and she lamented repeatedly. She glanced towards her son and exclaimed, "I have been killed. Alas!" Afflicted and miserable, she lamented and wept with her daughters-in-law. She loved her son. Miserably, she raised his head on her lap. Having done this, she thought of her son and wept in piteous words. "O son! You followed the vow of heroes. You brought delight to your relatives. O son! Why do you want to leave so quickly? O son! Without a bed, why are you sleeping in this way? O son! Those with your kind of signs should not sleep in this way on the ground. In ancient times, Ravana, who was superior in strength in all the worlds, chanted a shloka in an assembly of rakshasas and this is revered by virtuous men. 'Because of the energy I have obtained, I am capable of slaying the gods. However, it is certain that I will confront a terrible fear that will come through my relatives.' In that way, though my intelligent son loves his relatives, a great fear will arise on account of the relatives and lead to loss of life." Weeping and senseless, she spoke these words to her husband and king, the aged Ugrasena, who was also senseless. She was like Surabhi, deprived of her calf. "O king! O one with dharma in his soul! Come and see your son, the lord of men. He is lying down on a bed meant for heroes, like a mountain that has been shattered by the vajra. O great king! He has now died and gone to Yama's abode. We should perform the funeral rites that befit his departure. Brave ones enjoy kingdoms. We have been defeated. Go and instruct Krishna about performing Kamsa's funeral rites. All enmity is pacified after death. There is peace. The funeral rites must be performed. The dead do not commit any crimes.” She spoke these words to the lord of the Bhojas. Then, miserable, she started to tear out her hair. She glanced towards her son’s face and lamented piteously. “O king! Your wives deserved happiness. What will they do now? You were their husband. Though they had an excellent husband, their hopes have been belied. Can’t you see your aged father? He is dried up, like a pond without water and is under Krishna’s subjugation. O son! I am your mother. Why are you not speaking to me? You have abandoned your beloved relatives and have left for a long journey. O brave one! Alas! I am unfortunate and have been deprived by death. O one who were accomplished in policy! You enveloped me. But unfortunate as I am, you have been taken away from me. O leader of the herd! Your herd of servants has received gifts from you and has been satisfied by your qualities. They are weeping. O tiger among men! O long-armed one! O immensely strong one! Arise. Save all the people who are miserable, in the city and in the inner quarters.” Extremely stricken by grief, Kamsa’s women wept a lot. The sun was tinged by the hue of dusk and prepared to set.’

Chapter 78

Vaishampayana said, ‘Miserable, Ugrasena approached Krishna. Because he was tormented on account of his son, his sighs were like that of a person who has drunk poison. He saw Krishna in the house, surrounded by Yadavas, overcome by the prospect of Kamsa having been killed and lamenting. Having heard many extremely piteous lamentations by Kamsa’s women, he was censuring himself in that assembly of Yadavas. “Alas! Because of childishness, I have succumbed to the human trait of rage. Because of my act, thousands of Kamsa’s wives have become widows. Indeed, even an ordinary person will take pity on women. Because I have brought down their husband, they are weeping piteously. It is indeed the case that lamentations increase sorrow. Knowing this, compassion for women will be generated even in the lord of death. Earlier, it was my view that the slaying of Kamsa was the best. He created enmity towards the virtuous and was full of wickedness. In this world, an easy death is preferable for men who have deviated in conduct and are limited in intelligence. That is better than being alive and hated. Kamsa was addicted to evil and was not respected by the virtuous. As long as he was alive, that deviant was cursed by everyone. Why should there be compassion towards him? Those who perform pure deeds and observe austerities obtain the fruits of being able to reside in heaven. In that fashion, they also obtain fame in this world. If people are engaged in the good, if the subjects are devoted to dharma and if men conduct themselves according to dharma, there is no reason for the king to be a deviant. Death reduces the qualities of those who are evil in conduct by one-fourth. In this world, the best dharma is one that ensures the world hereafter. The gods excessively protect a man who is devoted to dharma. In this world, it is extremely easy to find the performers of evil deeds. From here, Kamsa wouldn’t have obtained an end meant for the virtuous. However, I have countered his evil deeds by severing them at the roots. Therefore, comfort all the women who are overcome by grief. Comfort the citizens and all the other ranks in the city." Govinda was speaking in this way.

'Anxious because of his son's wicked acts and lowering his face, Ugrasena entered the house of the Yadus. In that assembly of the Yadus, he spoke to Pundarikaksha Krishna. He was distressed and spoke in a faltering voice that choked with tears. "In your rage, you have killed my son. You have despatched your enemy towards Yama's direction. These deeds are in accordance with your own dharma and your name will be remembered on earth. For the sake of your well-wishers, you have established the proud Yadava lineage. To all the vassal kings, your power has become evident. Your friends will worship you. Those who seek riches will search you out as a refuge. Ordinary people will follow you and brahmanas will praise you. Advisers, who are foremost in deciding on war and peace, will bow down before you. O Krishna! Accept Kamsa's inexhaustible army, consisting of elephants, horses, chariots and large numbers of foot soldiers, riches, grain, all the other gems and spreads, women, gold, garments and everything else that is in the nature of wealth. O Krishna! When an encounter is over, this has been recommended. O slayer of enemies! You have established the Yadus on earth. O brave one! Hear these words, being spoken by a miserable person. He has been consumed by your rage. Kamsa was the performer of inauspicious deeds. O Govinda! Through your favours, let his funeral rites be performed. Distressed as I am, after performing funeral rites for the king, I, with my daughters-in-law and my wives, will roam around with animals.[814] O Krishna! I only desire to perform the funeral rites for a relative. Once I have done this, all my worldly debts will have been extinguished. Without following any other rites, I will only light his funeral pyre and offer him water. After that, I will be free from all debts to Kamsa. O Krishna! Show affection towards me and command only this much. Once this deed has been performed, that miserable person will obtain a desirable end." Hearing these words, Krishna was extremely delighted. He replied to Ugrasena in these assuring words. "O tiger among kings! Your words befit your conduct and your lineage. O king! What you have spoken about is history and couldn't have been avoided. After death, Kamsa will obtain a good destination. O father! Act in accordance with the words I speak. I have nothing to do with the kingdom. There is no desire for the kingdom in me. I did not bring down Kamsa because I desired the kingdom. Your son was a deformity in his lineage and I brought him, and his brother, down for the welfare of the worlds and for the sake of fame. I will roam around in the forest with the gopas, amidst cattle. I will happily roam around as I wish, like an elephant. I am saying this truthfully, one hundred times. Let it be known that I am not interested in the kingship. Act accordingly. You are respected and are the foremost lord among the Yadus. You be the king. O supreme among kings! For the sake of victory, be consecrated in your own kingdom. If you wish to do something that brings me pleasure and if you are not distressed, accept from me your own kingdom, one that you have been deprived of for a long time." At this, he[815] was ashamed. He lowered his face. In that assembly of the Yadus, Govinda, the one who knew about yoga, instated him as the king. The prosperous King Ugrasena wore a crown. With Krishna, he performed Kamsa's funeral rites. On Krishna's instructions, the foremost among the Yadavas followed the king along the path that led to the city, like the gods following Shatakratu.

'When night was over, the sun arose. The bulls among the Yadus performed the final funeral rites for Kamsa. They placed Kamsa's body on a palanquin. In due order, they performed the virtuous and ordained rites. The king's son[816] was taken to the northern banks of the Yamuna. As is proper, the funeral rites were performed by applying fire to the pyre. His brother was the mighty-armed Sunama. With the Yadavas, Krishna performed his final rites too. The Vrishni and Andhaka maharathas offered them water and said, "After death, may they obtain the eternal." Distressed in their minds, the Yadavas offered them water. With Ugrasena at the forefront, they then entered the city of Mathura.'

Chapter 79

Vaishampayana said, ‘With Rohini’s powerful son, Krishna happily resided in the city of Mathura, inhabited by the Yadavas. As he attained youth, his body blazed in royal prosperity. Adorned with jewels, the brave one dwelt in Mathura. After some time, Rama and Keshava went to the preceptor from Kashi, Sandipani, who now resided in the city of Avanti.[817] They went there to learn about dhanurveda. Rama and Janardana informed him about their gotra. They studied, served him with humility and followed good conduct. The one from Kashi imparted pure knowledge to them. Those two brave ones could remember everything that they had heard. In sixty-four days and nights, they studied and learnt all the Vedas and the Vedangas. In a short period of time, the preceptor instructed them about the weapons used in battle and the four elements of dhanurveda.[818] On noticing their superhuman intelligence, the preceptor thought the moon and sun gods had arrived there. On auspicious occasions, he saw that the great-souled ones worshipped the three-eyed Mahadeva himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they had become successful,[819] Krishna, together with Rama, asked Sandipani, “What will we give our preceptor?”[820] Knowing of their powers, the preceptor happily replied, “I desire that you should give me my son. He is dead and submerged in the salty ocean. Only one son was born to me and he was killed by a whale, while we were visiting places of pilgrimage in Prabhasa. Bring him back to me.” Taking Rama’s permission, Krishna agreed. The energetic Hari went to the ocean and entered the water. There, he saw the ocean standing before him, hands joined in salutation. He asked him, “Where does Sandipani’s son live now?” The ocean replied, “O Madhava! There is a great daitya named Panchajana. He adopted the form of a whale and has devoured the child.” Purushottama approached Panchajana and killed him. But Achyuta could not find his preceptor’s infant son. Having slain Panchajana, Janardana obtained the conch shell that is famous among gods and men as Panchajanya.

Purushottama then defeated the god Vaivasvata.[821] From Yama's eternal abode, he brought back his preceptor's son, who had been dead for a long time. Sandipani's son had been dead for a long time. However, through the infinitely energetic one's favours, he was again reunited with his body. All the creatures were astounded at witnessing this great wonder, something that was unthinkable. Having obtained his preceptor's son, Panchajanya and many expensive jewels, Madhava, the lord of the universe, returned. Those many kinds of expensive jewels had belonged to the rakshasas. Vasava's younger brother brought them back and offered them to his preceptor. In a short period of time, those two became best in the worlds in the use of the mace and the club, all kinds of weapons and in wielding the bow.[822] Krishna gave all those jewels. He also gave Sandipani's son the form and the age that he had possessed.[823] O king! Sandipani from Kashi was delighted at being united with his son, who had been dead for a long time. He worshipped Rama and Keshava.

'Having become accomplished in the use of weapons, Vasudeva's two brave sons, excellent in their vows, took their leave of their preceptor and returned to Mathura. With Ugrasena at the forefront, all the Yadavas, along with the children, were delighted that the two descendants of the Yadu lineage had returned. The arrays of ordinary people, the advisers, the priests and the young and the aged of the city welcomed them back. They played on trumpets and musical instruments and praised Janardana. In every direction, the roads dazzled with flags and garlands. Everyone in the inner quarters of the palace was happy. With Govinda's arrival, it was as if a sacrifice to Indra was being observed. Along the royal roads, singers sang happy songs. In agreeable tones, the Yadavas chanted praises and benedictions. Govinda and Rama, the two brothers famous in the worlds, arrived. Everyone in the city was without fear and amused themselves with their relatives. There was no distress there. No one was miserable or senseless. O king! This is what happened when Govinda turned up in Mathura. The birds sang sweet songs. The cows, horses and elephants were happy. All the large numbers of men and women were happy in their minds. Auspicious winds started to blow. The ten directions were emptied of dust. The gods were happy in all the temples. All the signs in the world were like those in an earlier krita yuga. When Janardana reached the city, this is what was witnessed. At an auspicious and sacred time, Govinda, the destroyer of enemies, entered the city of Mathura on a chariot that was yoked to tawny horses. Upendra, the scorcher of enemies, entered beautiful Mathura. He was followed by large numbers of Yadus, like Shakra by large numbers of gods. With happy faces, those two descendants of the Yadu lineage entered Vasudeva's house, like the moon and the sun atop a mountain. They left their weapons in the house. Then, Vasudeva's two sons, supreme among the Yadus, roamed around as they willed and amused themselves. The two with the handsome faces were formed out of a single entity. For some time, they followed Ugrasena and amused themselves in Mathura.'

Chapter 80

Vaishampayana said, 'After some time, the lord of Rajagriha, the powerful King Jarasandha, heard about Kamsa's death.[824] He arrived, surrounding himself with a large army with six sections.[825] Having heard about Kamsa's death through spies, he was angry and wished to slay the Yadus. The king of Magadha had two daughters named Asti and Prapti. These two fortunate ones were Jarasandha's daughters. They were large-breasted and thin at the waist. King Barhadratha[826] had bestowed them on Kamsa, as wives. Having imprisoned his father, Ahuka,[827] the king[828] sported himself with them. Finding support in Jarasandha, he slighted the Yadavas. You have heard a lot about King Shurasena.[829] To accomplish the objectives of his relatives, Vasudeva was always on Ugrasena's side. Therefore, Kamsa could not tolerate him. Once the evil-souled Kamsa had been killed, with the support of Rama and Krishna and surrounded by the Bhojas, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, Ugrasena became the king. For the sake of his beloved daughters, who were the wives of a hero, the powerful King Jarasandha arrived in Mathura. Overcome with rage at the Yadus, he made every kind of effort. He was joined by the kings who were under his power and by his friends, relatives and well-wishers. Surrounded by their soldiers, all of them followed him. They were great archers and immensely valorous. They wished to do what was agreeable to Jarasandha. Dantavaktra of Karusha, the powerful king of Chedi, the lord of Kalinga, the supremely strong Poundra, the deceitful Kaishika, King Bhishmaka, Bhishmaka's son Rukmi, foremost among wielders of the bow and one who always wished to rival Vasudeva[830] and Arjuna in strength, Venudari, Shrutarva, Kratha, Amshuman, the powerful king of Anga, the lord of Vanga, Koushalya, the king of Kashi, the lord of Dasharna, the brave Suhveshvara, the lord of Videha, the powerful king of Madra, the lord of Trigarta, the king of Salva,[831] the brave and immensely strong Darada, the lord of the Yavanas, the valiant Bhagadatta, the king of Souvira, Shaibya, Pandya, supreme among the strong, Subala, the king of Gandhara, the immensely strong Nagnajit, these and other powerful maharatha kings followed Jarasandha, driven by their hatred for Janardana. Equipped with a lot of grain and firewood, they entered the kingdom of Shurasena. With their armies, they laid siege to Mathura.’

Chapter 81

Vaishampayana said, ‘The kings were entrenched in the forests around Mathura. With Janardana at the forefront, all the Vrishnis saw this. Cheerfully, Krishna spoke these words to Rama. “There is no doubt that the task of the gods will be accomplished swiftly. King Jarasandha has been attracted to this place. The tips of the penants can be seen on his chariots, stirring in the wind. O noble one! The men desire victory and their white umbrellas are stretched out before us, blazing like the moon. The kings and the chariots are in front of us, with sparkling white arrays of umbrellas. They are advancing towards us, like an array of swans in the sky. There is no doubt that King Jarasandha will confront his destiny. In this battle with us, he is the first guest we will welcome in this encounter. O noble one! When the kings advance, let us remain together. When the battle commences, we can test how strong they are.” Krishna, who was assured and eager to fight, spoke in this way. He glanced at all the kings and the supreme and undecaying ones on the side of the Yadus. In his heart, the one who knew about all kinds of advice spoke these words to himself. “Because of what has been decreed in the sacred texts, kings who remain in the paths of other kings will face destruction. I think that all these bulls among kings have already been slain by Death. Their bodies can already be seen to be headed towards heaven. These foremost among kings oppressed the earth with their floods of soldiers and exhausted by that burden here, she went to heaven. Because of these armies and kingdoms, there is no space on earth. Indeed, in a short while, the surface of the ground will be emptied. Hundreds and large numbers of kings will be brought down.” Jarasandha, the lord of all the kings, was enraged. The immensely radiant one was followed by thousands of kings. There were tall and excellent horses, well controlled through reins. In some places, chariots that could freely advance were ready for battle. There were supreme elephants that were like clouds, with golden harnesses and giant bells. Mahamatras accomplished in fighting were astride them. Others astride horses looked around, ready to leap. The cavalry was like a cloud. The foot soldiers were ready to strike. Wielding fierce swords and shields, that infantry seemed to stretch up to the sky. Those thousands of foot soldiers were like descending serpents. In this way, the four divisions of the army were as vibrant as clouds. The powerful King Jarasandha advanced, firm in his resolution. There was the clatter of chariots. There was the trumpeting of crazy elephants. The horses neighed and the foot soldiers roared. All the directions, the city and the forests were filled with this noise. The king was seen, with an army that was like the ocean. That army of the lord of the earth had many proud warriors. The roar the army made was like the thundering of a cloud. The chariots advanced like the wind. The elephants were like clouds. The horses were swift. The foot soldiers were like birds.[832] That army was a mixture of all these, crazy elephants and chariots. It looked like a cloud extending up to the ocean, at the end of the summer. With Jarasandha at the forefront, that army of all the kings surrounded the city and set up camp there. The tents in that encampment were beautiful. It looked like the great ocean on a full moon night in *shuklapaksha*.

‘When night was over, the kings arose. They were eager to fight and break into the city. All the kings assembled near the Yamuna to hold consultations and decide on a time to commence battle. The tumultuous sound made by the kings could be heard. It was as if the oceans were being splintered at the end of a yuga. There were aged attendants with cloaks[833] and headdresses, with staffs made of cane in their hands. On the instructions of the king, they asked everyone to be quiet. The army was then seen to quieten down. It was as silent as the great ocean, when fish and crocodiles were quiet. Though ready, that large ocean was silent. Like Brihaspati, Jarasandha spoke these extensive words. “This army of kings will swiftly advance. Groups of men will surround the city from every side. Arrange catapults for hurling boulders and iron clubs. Hold up bows, spikes and javelins. Quickly break down the city with large numbers of spades and shovels. Kings who are well versed in techniques of fighting will be stationed a short distance away. From today, the soldiers will lay siege to the city. Let storms of arrows be showered down from the sky. Following my command, let the kings be stationed on the ground around the city. Without any delay, let them quickly climb up into the city. Madra, the lord of Kalinga, Chekitana, Bahlika, Gonarda, the king of Kashmira, the lord of

Karusha, Druma, kimpurushas from the mountains and Damana will swiftly attack the city's western gate. Pourava Venudari, the king of Vidarbha, Somaka, Rukmi, the lord of Bhoja, Suryaksha from Malava, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, the valiant Dantavaktra, Chhagali, Purumitra, King Virata, the king of Koshambi, the king of Malava, Shatadhanva, Viduratha, Bhurishrava, Trigarta and Bana from the land of the five rivers are kings who are as powerful as the lord of the vajra.[834] They will attack the city's northern gate and its fortifications. Uluka, Kaitaveya, the brave son of Amshuman, Ekalavya, Brihatkshatra, Kshatradharma, Jayadratha, Uttamouja, Shalya, Kourava, the king of Kekaya, the king of Vidisha, Vamadeva and Saketa, the lord of Sini, will take their battle formations to the city's eastern gate. They will swiftly attack, like clouds aided by the wind. I, Darada and the king of Chedi will armour ourselves and take care of the city's southern gate. In this way, the city will quickly be attacked from all directions. It will be struck by great fear, as if it has been struck by a bolt of lightning. Those who hold clubs will use clubs. Those who use maces as weapons will use maces. The others will use many kinds of weapons and break down the city. Today, this city is uneven.[835] The task before all you kings is to level it down to the ground." Jarasandha arranged the four divisions of his army in battle formations. With all the kings, he angrily attacked. The Dasharhas also armed themselves. Arranging themselves in battle formations, they counter-attacked. A terrible battle commenced and it was like an encounter between the gods and the asuras. With chariots and elephants, the few engaged with the many.[836]

'Vasudeva's two sons were seen to emerge from the city. At this, the army of the best of men was agitated.[837] The mounts were terrified and stupefied. Armed on their chariots, the Yadavas[838] roamed around. It was as if two wrathful makaras were agitating the ocean. On seeing all the signs that a battle was about to commence, those two intelligent Yadavas thought of their ancient weapons. In that encounter, those blazing weapons fell down from the sky. Those divine weapons were gigantic and extremely firm. They seemed to lick their lips. As those gigantic weapons manifested themselves, they were followed by predatory creatures. Thirsty, those terrible ones wished to devour the flesh of the kings in the battle. Those divine weapons were garlanded and could terrify those who travelled in the sky. Blazing in their radiance, they illuminated the ten directions. They were the plough named Samvartaka, the club Soubhadra,[839] the supreme bow Sharnga and the mace Koumadaki. These are Vishnu's four energetic weapons. In that great battle, they arrived for the Yadavas. With his right hand, Rama picked up the plough, which was like a flagpole. It was adorned with celestial garlands. In the battle, it creeped along like a serpent. With his left hand, the best among the Satvatas[840] picked up the beautiful and supreme club Sounanda. It was one that caused misery to enemies. The valiant Vishnu picked up the famous bow, named Sharnga. It deserved to be seen by all the worlds and thundered like a cloud. To accomplish what the gods has asked him to, the lotus-eyed one picked up the mace in his other hand. It was named Koumadaki. Thus armed, those two brave ones assumed forms like that of Vishnu. In the battle, Rama and Govinda prepared to counter-attack the enemy. Seizing the weapons, those two brave ones were like each other. Rama and Govinda bore the signs of being the elder and the younger brother.

'Like two gods, those brave ones counter-attacked the enemy. Rama was enraged, like an Indra of serpents. The brave one raised the plough and roamed around in the battle, like Death amidst the enemy. He dragged down large numbers of chariots that belonged to the great-souled kshatriyas. He exhibited the fruits of his rage among the elephants and the horses. Rama roamed around and crushed in that battle. He flung elephants away with his plough. He struck them with the club. He was like a mountain. In the encounter, the bulls among kshatriyas were struck by Rama. Afflicted in the battle, those brave ones approached Jarasandha. Jarasandha, established in the dharma of kshatriyas, told them, "How can you suffer in a field of battle? Shame on your conduct as kshatriyas. The learned say that those who are deprived of their chariots and run away from the field of battle commit a sin equal to the killers of foetuses. How can you be terrified and retreat? Shame on your conduct as kshatriyas. Goaded by my words, swiftly return to the field of battle. In this encounter, I will dispatch the gopas to Yama's eternal abode." Thus, all the kshatriyas were urged by Jarasandha. Cheerfully, they stationed themselves in the battle and released nets of arrows. The horses possessed golden harnesses. The chariots roared like clouds. Urged by the mahamatras, the elephants were like clouds. Their bodies were covered in armour and they sported swords. They raised weapons, flags and penants aloft. The bows were strung and the quivers were full of arrows. They wielded javelins. On their chariots, the kings were radiant as they advanced in the battle. All of them had umbrellas above their heads and they were fanned with beautiful whisks. The charioteers who advanced into the battle were the best among warriors. They held heavy clubs and maces that could be flung.

'Krishna advanced on a supreme chariot, with Suparna on a standard above his head. He pierced Jarasandha with eight arrows and pierced his charioteer with five sharp arrows. Making efforts, the brave one killed his[841] horses. On seeing that he was in difficulties, maharatha Chitrasena, the commander of the army of Kaishika, pierced Krishna with arrows. Kaishika[842] also pierced Baladeva with three arrows. Using broad-headed arrows, Baladeva shattered his bow into two fragments. He swiftly showered down arrows and oppressed him. Chitrasena was angry and pierced him with nine arrows. Kaishika pierced him with five arrows and Jarasandha with seven. Janardana pierced each of them with three arrows. Baladeva pierced each of them with five sharp arrows. The valiant Baladeva used broad-headed arrows to shatter Chitrasena's chariot and shattered his bow into two fragments. He[843] was deprived of his chariot and his bow was shattered. The brave one seized a club and angrily attacked the one with a club,[844] desiring to slay him. Wishing to kill Chitrasena, Rama was shooting sharp arrows at him. However, the immensely strong Jarasandha severed his bow. The lord of Magadha then angrily attacked him with a club. To fight with the advancing Jarasandha, Rama seized a mace. They wished to kill each other and a duel commenced between them. Jarasandha was surrounded by a mighty army and the immensely strong one fought against Rama and Krishna and the Bhojas. There was a tumultuous battle between the soldiers on the two sides and there was a great roar, like that of a turbulent ocean. O king! A great uproar arose in both the armies, as flutes, kettledrums, drums and conch shells were sounded in their thousands. The soldiers slapped their arms and chests and there was pandemonium everywhere. Because of the hooves and axles of chariots, dust rose up. They seized great weapons and bows and arrows. The brave ones who were present roared at each other. There were charioteers, horse riders and thousands of foot soldiers. Extremely strong elephants attacked fearlessly. There was a fierce fight between the

Vrishni warriors and those on Jarasandha's side. Ready to give up their lives, they did not retreat. They struck each other in terrible ways.

'Armoured, Shini, Anadhrishti, Babhru, Viprithu and Ahuka attacked half the army, placing Baladeva at the forefront. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This was directed towards the southern flank of the enemy soldiers, the part that was protected by the king of Chedi and Jarasandha. The immensely valourous Shalya, Salva and other kings were to the north. Ready to give up their lives, they released showers of arrows. Armoured, Agavaha, Prithu, Kahva and Viduratha attacked the other half of the army, placing Hrishikesha at the forefront. This was the part that was protected by Bhishmaka and the great-souled Rukmi. The east and the south were protected by brave soldiers. A tumultuous and great battle raged and they were ready to give up their lives in this. Javelins, swords, spikes and a large number of arrows were released. Satyaki, Chitraka, Shyama, the valiant Yuyudhana,[845] Rajadhideva, Mridura, the immensely strong Shvaphalka, Satraji and Prasena surrounded themselves with a large army. In the encounter, they counter-attacked the battle formations that were on the left flank. Mridura protected half of the battle arrays and fought with many kings, Venudari being the foremost.'

Chapter 82

Vaishampayana said, 'There was an extremely great battle between the Vrishnis and the great advisers, kings and other followers of the Magadha side. Rukmi fought with Vasudeva,[846] Bhishmaka with Ahuka, Kratha with Vasudeva, Kaishika with Babhru, Gada with the king of Chedi and Dantavaktra with Shambhu. Other brave Vrishnis fought with great-souled kings. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There was a battle and soldiers fought with soldiers. O king! Elephants fought with elephants, horses with horses, foot soldiers with foot soldiers, chariots with chariots and warriors with warriors, without getting mixed up.[847] King Jarasandha attacked Rama and there was an encounter that made the body hair stand up, like that between the great Indra and Vritra. O king! They caused a great carnage in each other's army. In both the armies, mud was created from the flesh and blood. A large number of headless torsos were seen to rise up. There was a great carnage of soldiers and it is impossible to count this.

'From a chariot, Rama struck Jarasandha with arrows that were like venomous serpents. Though he was enveloped, the king of Magadha counter-attacked. Their weapons were exhausted. They were without their chariots. Their horses were slain. Their charioteers were killed. Those brave ones seized clubs and dashed towards each other. As those two brave ones raised their giant clubs the earth trembled. Those two great-souled ones looked like mountains with summits. Other encounters ceased, so that one could see the duel between these two bulls among men. They were famous for fighting with clubs and angrily attacked each other. Both of them had had excellent teachers and these two immensely strong ones were famous in the world. In the encounter, they attacked each other like crazy elephants. In every direction, thousands of gods, gandharvas, siddhas, supreme rishis and apsaras assembled.[848] O king! Ornamented, the firmament glittered even more with these yakshas, gandharvas and maharshis, as if by a large number of stellar bodies. The immensely strong Jarasandha attacked Rama. He circled around from the left, while Baladeva circled around from the right. They were accomplished in fighting with clubs and struck each other. They were like tusked elephants and the sound filled the ten directions. As Rama brought down his club, the sound of thunder was heard. The sound of Jarasandha's tread was like the shattering of mountains. Rama was supreme among those who fought with the club and the blows from the club in Jarasandha's hand could not make him tremble. He was as unmoved as Mount Vindhya. The brave lord of Magadha was also able to withstand the force of Rama's club. He possessed great fortitude and resorted to his training. At this time, an excellent voice was heard from the firmament, spoken by one who was a witness to everything in the world. "O Madhava! Do not be distressed. He will not be killed by you. His death has been ordained by me. Therefore, it is best to restrain yourself. In a short while, the lord of Magadha will give up his life." On hearing this, Jarasandha was distracted. Thus, the wielder of the plough did not strike him again. The Vrishnis and the kings also stopped fighting. O great king! Those great-souled ones had fought for a long time, killing each other.

'Jarasandha and the kings were defeated and retreated. The sun had set and no one followed them in the night. The immensely strong ones[849] were successful in accomplishing their objective. Worshipping Keshava and summoning their own soldiers, they happily entered the city. Though they had defeated Jarasandha, the Vrishnis thought that they hadn't quite vanquished him. O tiger among Kurus! That king was extremely strong. The Yadavas fought with Jarasandha on eighteen occasions. However, those maharathas weren't able to slay him in those battles. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He possessed twenty akshouhinis and these assembled for the sake of King Jarasandha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among the kings! That of the Vrishnis was limited and was overwhelmed when attacked by Barhadratha and the kings. However, having defeated King Jarasandha of Magadha in the battle, the maharathas, the lions among the Vrishnis, roamed around happily.'

Chapter 83

Vaishampayana said, 'At this time, remembering the good deeds that the gopas had done, Rama took Krishna's permission and went to Vraja alone. He saw the extensive and beautiful forests and the fragrant ponds that they had enjoyed earlier. Swiftly entering Vraja, the lord who was Krishna's elder brother attired himself in beautiful forest garb. Following the ordained rites, as they used to do earlier, he asked about the welfare of all the gopas, in due order and proceeding according to age. He happily spoke to all of them. He told the gopa women delightful and sweet accounts. Rama was supreme among those who granted pleasure and had returned after residing elsewhere. Affectionately, the aged gopas addressed him in pleasant words. "O mighty-armed one! O one who gives delight to the lineage of the Yadus! Welcome. O son! Now that you have returned, we are happy to see that you have come back. O brave one! We are delighted that you have returned. Rama, who creates fear among the enemy, is famous in the three worlds. O descendant of the Yadava lineage! There is no doubt that we have been nurtured by you. O son! All the creatures who reside in the land of your birth are happy. O one with the unblemished face! O son! We wished that you should return, so that we could see you and it is certain that your decision will also be honoured by the thirty gods. It is through good fortune that you brought down and killed Kamsa's wrestlers. It is your younger brother's greatness that Ugrasena has been instated. We have heard about your encounter with the whale in the ocean[850] and how weapons descended for you in a battle.[851] Even the gods talk about your entry into Mathura. You have established the earth, which was terrified because of all the kings. As was the case earlier, we are fortunate to witness your arrival. We, and our relatives, are satisfied and delighted at this." Rama replied to all those who were stationed there. "Among all the Yadavas, you are indeed my relatives. Our childhood was spent with you. It is with you that we found pleasure in the forest. It is you who have reared us. How can we act in a contrary way? We ate in your homes. We protected your cattle. All of you are our relatives. You are our well-wishers and we are bound to you.” In the midst of the gopas, the one whose weapon was the plough spoke the truth in this way. The faces of the gopa women were seen to be delighted.

‘The immensely strong Rama went to the inside of the forest, to find pleasure there. Knowing what was appropriate to the time and the place, the cowherds offered Rama, the one who knew about his soul, the liquor known as Varuni. At that time, surrounded by his kin, the fair-complexioned Rama went to the interior of the forest and drank this intoxicating drink. They presented to him diverse kinds of forest produce—beautiful flowers and fruit, many kinds of food that were fragrant and pleasing to the heart and many blooming lotuses and water lilies that were freshly plucked. Some of the beautiful hair on his head was tied in a braid. A dazzling earring hung from one ear. He was smeared with sandalwood paste and *agaru*.[852] A garland of wild flowers hung down. Rama’s form was resplendent, like Mandara in Kailasa. His blue garment bore the complexion of a cloud. With his dazzling and sparkling form, he looked like the moon amidst a garland of dense clouds. He held the plough, which was like a serpent, in one hand. The radiant mace adhered to his other hand. The best among strong ones was intoxicated. With beads of sweat, his head swayed, like the moon on a winter’s night. Intoxicated, he told Yamuna, “O great river! I desire to have a bath. O one who heads towards the ocean! Reveal your sparkling form and come here.” She thought his speech was affected by intoxication. In addition, she was confounded by her own womanly nature. Therefore, ignoring him, she did not come to the spot. Overcome with intoxication, the powerful Rama became enraged. The powerful one raised the plough in his hand, with the tip lowered for tilling. As he dragged her,[853] the garland fell down and the pollen from the flowers reddened the water. With the tip of the plough, Rama dragged the great river Yamuna to the bank, as if he was chastising a wayward woman. The flow of water and the pools full of water were disturbed and the terrified river followed the path indicated by the plough. Attracted to the path indicated by the plough and terrified by the fear of Samkarshana, the force meandered from its course and followed him, like a distressed woman. As the flow of water reached, the banks were like lips and the gentle waters were agitated. Wearing strands of foam that were like a girdle, the water reached the banks and seemed to smile. There were turbulent waves. The chakravaka birds were like upturned breasts. The deep force followed that curved path and terrified fish and aquatic birds went with the flow. Her limbs were decorated with flocks of swans and her linen garments were made out of kasha.[854] The water deviated in this way, with the trees along the bank like her flowing tresses. The one who heads towards the ocean was agitated at her limbs thus being dragged by the plough. She was like a drunk and wanton woman advancing along a royal road. The speedy flow of water was dragged with great force and meandered. She was forced to follow a course that was different from her former course and made to flow through the forest of Vrindavana. The river Yamuna was brought right into the middle of Vrindavana and the birds that dwelt along the banks seemed to cry. The river was thus brought into the forest of Vrindavana. Assuming the form of a woman, Yamuna told Rama, "O Rama! Be pacified. Because of the perverse deed I performed, I am terrified. My watery form has turned contrary. O Rohini's son! Because of what you have done, among rivers, I have turned false. O mighty-armed one! Thus attracted by you, I have deviated from my normal course. My co-wives,[855] proud of their force, will certainly reach the ocean earlier. Since my water has followed a contrary course, their foam will laugh at me. O brave one! O Krishna's elder brother! I am beseeching you. Show me your favours. I have been dragged by your weapon. Restrain your rage. O one with the plough as a weapon! I am lowering my head at your feet. O mighty-armed one! Instruct me about the course I should follow. Where will I go?" The one with the plough as his weapon saw that Yamuna was speaking in this way. Having got over his exhaustion, the powerful one spoke these words to the ocean's wife. "O beautiful one! Your course is the one that has been indicated by the plough. Provide water at all the spots that have been thus indicated. O one with the beautiful brows! O one who heads towards the ocean! These are my instructions. O immensely fortunate one! Go in peace and cheerfully, wherever you wish. As long as the worlds remain, my fame will be established." On seeing that Yamuna had been attracted all the residents of Vraja praised Rama and bowed down before him.

'He then took his leave of the immensely speedy one and all the residents of Vraja. Rohini's son thought about this in his mind and made a resolution. He quickly returned to Mathura again. Having gone to Mathura, Rama went to Madhusudana’s house and saw the undecaying essence of the revolving earth[856] there. Dressed in forest attire and with a garland of wild flowers on his chest, he went and saw Janardana, who was lying down. Govinda saw that Rama, the wielder of the plough, had quickly returned. He arose and gave him the best of garments. When Rama was seated, Janardana asked him about Vraja’s welfare, about all the relatives and about the cattle. Rama spoke to his brother, who had uttered those pleasant words. “O Krishna! All is well. Everyone that you have asked about is fine.” In front of Vasudeva,[857] Rama and Keshava then recounted all the wonderful things that had happened in the past.’

Chapter 84

Vaishampayana said, ‘After some time, in the assembly of the Yadus, Pundarikaksha spoke excellent words that were full of import. “This land of the Yadavas, around Mathura, has made our kingdom prosper. We have been born here and have been reared in Vraja. Our miseries are over and the enemies have been defeated. On account of the conflict with Jarasandha, there was an enmity among the kings. We possess mounts and an infinite number of foot soldiers. We have wonderful jewels and many friends. But this region around Mathura is small and our enemies can penetrate easily. Our prosperity over our enemies is due to our forces and our friends. We have crores of young ones and large numbers of infantry. Because of this, our residence here is seen to be difficult. O bulls among the Yadavas! Therefore, the idea of living here doesn’t appeal to me. Pardon me, but I will set up another city. There is an intention behind my words and I have spoken with reason. At the right time, for your sake, I always speak agreeable words in the assembly of the Yadus.” Cheerful in their minds, all of them told him, “For the welfare of the people, accomplish whatever it is that you wish.” The Vrishnis held excellent consultations and discussed this. “He[858] cannot be killed by us. The enemy’s army is extremely large. Because of those kings, there has been a great destruction of soldiers. Even in one hundred years, we will not be able to slay all of their soldiers who remain. Therefore, we agree with the decision.” At this, the king[859] and Kalayavana attacked Mathura with a large army. Jarasandha’s army was huge and impossible to withstand. They also heard about Kalayavana’s arrival.

‘Keshava, who always speaks the truth, again told the Yadavas, “Today is an auspicious day to leave, along with all those who follow us.” On Keshava’s instructions, all the Yadavas emerged. Because of the large number of soldiers and elephants, this looked like the waves in an ocean. With Vasudeva at the forefront, all the wives were assembled. There were armed crazy elephants, chariots and horses. All the drums were sounded. With their riches, kin and relatives, all the Yadavas abandoned Mathura and left. There were chariots decorated with gold, and crazy and supreme elephants. There were speedy horses, lashed with whips by the riders. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Cheerfully, the Vrishnis headed in a western direction, resplendent as they drove along their respective forces. The best among the Yadavas were ornaments in the field of battle. With Vasudeva[860] leading the way, they were at the forefront of the army. They arrived at a spot that was colourful with creepers, with forests of coconut trees. There were groves of beautiful *nagakeshara* and ketaki flowers. There were *pumnaga*s[861] and many palm trees. There were some vines of grapes too. The bulls among the Yadus reached a marshy region that belonged to the king of Sindhu.[862] They loved pleasure and this was an enchanting spot. All the Yadavas were delighted, like the gods when they reach heaven. Krishna, the slayer of enemy heroes, thought about constructing a city. He saw that extensive region, adorned by marshes along the ocean. It was good for the mounts and the ground was wet and red. It possessed all the signs required for setting up a prosperous city. Breezes blew from the ocean. There was water from the ocean. This beautiful dominion of the king of Sindhu bore all the auspicious signs required for a city. Not very far away, there was a mountain by the name of Raivataka. It dazzled in every direction and was like Mount Mandara. This was where Ekalavya resided and also the place where Drona lived for a long time. There were many men and all kinds of jewels. An excellent spot was created for the king's pleasure. This extensive place was named Dvaravati.[863] It was like a board for an *ashtapada* game.[864] Keshava made up his mind to construct a city there. The Yadavas found the prospect of the soldiers residing there agreeable. While it was still day and the night was red, the bulls among the Yadavas and the commanders of the army made arrangements for camps to be set up. Keshava and the Yadavas were firm in their decision to live there. The lord, the foremost among the Yadus, resolved to build a city at the spot. Gada's elder brother,[865] best among men and supreme among the Yadavas, made up his mind to follow the instructions for construction and set up buildings that were named. O king! Having obtained the city of Dvaravati, with his relatives, he was delighted, like the large number of gods on reaching heaven, and decided to reside there. Knowing about

Kalayavana and the fear that was caused by Jarasandha, Krishna, the slayer of Keshi, went to the city of Dvaravati.’

Chapter 85

Janamejaya said, ‘O illustrious one! I wish to hear in detail about the conduct of the great-souled and intelligent Vasudeva, best among the Yadus. Why did Madusudana abandon Mathura? It was an important place in the middle of the country and the residence of Lakshmi. It was seen to be like a summit of the earth, with a lot of riches and grain. It was the best of places for noble people to reside in. O supreme among brahmanas! Why did Dasharha abandon it without fighting? How did Kalayavana react to Krishna? Having reached Dvaraka, fortified with water, what did the mighty-armed, great-minded and great yogi, Janardana, do? What bravery did Kalayavana possess? Whom was the valiant one born to? Why did Janardana consider him to be irresistible?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘The great ascetic, Gargya, was the preceptor of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. He had earlier been a brahmachari and did not take a wife. Therefore, that undecaying one held up his seed. O lord of the earth! His brother-in-law accused Gargya of not being a man. O king! The one who had conquered everything was thus accused in that city. Desiring a son, he departed and performed extremely difficult austerities. For twelve years, he only survived on powdered iron. He thought of Mahadeva and worshipped the wielder of the trident. Rudra granted him the boon that he would obtain a son who would possess every kind of energy and would be able to vanquish the Vrishnis and the Andhakas in battle. The supreme lord of the Yavanas heard about this boon of the birth of a son. Through ill fortune, he didn’t have a son, but desired a son. The king had the best among brahmanas[866] brought to him and reassured him. The king of the Yavanas kept him among the gopas and amidst gopa women. There was an apsara named Gopali there, disguised in the attire of a gopa woman. The undecaying Gargya’s seed was difficult to sustain, but she bore it in her womb. Through the desire of the wielder of the trident, a brave and extremely strong son was born to Gargya, through a wife who was in human form. His name was Kalayavana. This child was reared in the inner quarters of the king who didn’t have a son. When that king died, Kalayavana became the king. Desiring to fight, this king asked Narada, supreme among brahmanas, and was informed about the lineage of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Through Narada, Madhusudana got to know about the boon that had been granted. Therefore, he ignored the Yavana’s increasing energy. The *mlechchha*[867] kings sought refuge with him and started to follow him. There were Shakas, Tusharas, Daradas, Paradas, Tanganas, Khashas, Pahlavas and other hundreds of mlecchas who were from the Himalayas. The king was surrounded by these bandits, as if by locusts. Attired in diverse garments and wielding fierce weapons, they attacked Mathura. There were thousands and tens of thousands of elephants, horses, mules and camels. Because of this large army, the earth trembled. That king enveloped the sun’s path with dust. Because of the urine and excrement released by the soldiers, a river was created. O lord of men! Since this river was created through the urine and excrement released by horses and camels, it came to have the name of Ashvashakrit.[868] On hearing that a large army was advancing, Vasudeva, foremost among the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, summoned his relatives and said, “A terrible and great fear has arisen before the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Because of the boon that has been granted by the wielder of the trident, this enemy cannot be killed by us. We have used all the recommended means of conciliation with him. However, he is intoxicated by the insolence of his strength and desires to fight. Narada has told me that our residence here is over. King Jarasandha is always intolerant towards us. There are other kings who cannot bear the power of the Vrishnis. Some kings are dissatisfied with us on account of Kamsa’s death. Having sought refuge with Jarasandha, they desire to restrain us too. Those kings have killed many relatives of the Yadus.” Keshava decided that they could no longer prosper in that city.

‘Having decided to leave, he sent a messenger.[869] He placed a large serpent in a pot and it had the hue of lampblack. It was dark and fierce, with venomous poison. Krishna sent this. Govinda covered up the pot and sent this through a messenger, intending it as a sign that would frighten the king. The messenger showed Kalayavana the pot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He said, “Krishna is like this black serpent.” Understanding that the Yadavas were trying to scare him, Kalayavana filled up the pot with fierce ants. That serpent was bitten all over by these fierce ants. With all its limbs bitten, it was reduced to nothing. Covering up the pot, the lord of the Yavanas sent it back to Krishna, as a sign of his superiority. Vasudeva saw the signs and understood. He decided to swiftly leave Mathura and go to Dvaraka. O king! Thinking of a means to bring an end to the enmity, the immensely illustrious Vasudeva made the Vrishnis reside in Dvaraka. Madhusudana, the great yogi and tiger among men, then went to Mathura on foot, taking only his arms as weapons. On seeing him, Kalayavana was delighted. The immensely strong one emerged and began to angrily follow Krishna, who was in front. Wherever Govinda went, the lord of the Yavanas followed, desiring to kill him. However, the king wasn't able to seize the one whose dharma was yoga. The immensely illustrious Muchukunda was Mandhata's son. In ancient times, the immensely strong one was successful in the battle between the gods and the asuras. Since he had been completely exhausted, he accepted a boon from the gods that he would be able to sleep and said, "O gods! If anyone wakes me up while I am asleep, let me be able to burn him down through the flames of rage in my eyes." He repeatedly said this. Shakra and the thirty gods agreed. With the permission of the gods, he went to a place that was inaccessible to men. Exhausted and tired, he entered a mountainous cave. He slept for a long time, until he was seen by Krishna. All of this had been narrated to Vasudeva by Narada, including the energetic boon that the gods had granted the king. Followed by the mlechchha enemy, Krishna humbly entered Muchukunda's cave. Keshava, supreme among intelligent ones, stood near the royal sage's head, avoiding his path of vision. The evil-minded Yavana entered and saw the sleeping king, who was like Death. Like an insect that is destroyed by a flame, taking him to be Vasudeva,[870] he kicked the king with his feet. Rajarshi Muchukunda awoke at the touch of the feet. He was enraged at his sleep having been disturbed by the kick with the feet. Remembering the boon granted by Shakra, he looked at whoever was in front of him. Through the rage in the sight, everything was instantly consumed. In an instant, the fire generated from the energy in the eyes burnt up Kalayavana, like a fire consumes a dry tree. Having been successful, the intelligent and handsome Vasudeva spoke these excellent words to the king who had been sleeping for a long time. "O king! Narada told me that you have been sleeping for a long time. You have performed an extremely great task for me. May you be fortunate. I am leaving.” The king saw the sign that Vasudeva was short.[871] He realized that a long period of time had elapsed.

‘The king asked Govinda, “Who are you and why have you come here? How long have I been asleep? If you know, tell me.” Vasudeva replied, “In the solar dynasty, there was a king named Yayati and he was the son of Nahusha. His eldest son was Yadu. He had four other brothers who were younger.[872] O lord! I am Vasudeva’s son and have been born in Yadu’s lineage. O king! I am known as Vasudeva and I am the one who has come here. I got to know from Narada that you were born in treta yuga. Know that it is kali yuga now.[873] What else can I do for you? O king! My enemy was granted a boon by the gods. Consequently, he could not be slain by me in battle, even if I tried for one hundred years. He has been burnt down by you.” Having said this, Krishna emerged through the mouth of the cave and he was followed by the king. The intelligent Krishna was satisfied at his success. The king saw that the earth was full of short men. They were limited in enterprise, limited in strength and limited in bravery and valour. He saw that someone else was ruling in his kingdom. Taking his leave of Govinda, he entered a great forest. Having made up his mind to perform austerities, the king went to the Himalayas. Resorting to austerities, he freed himself from his body. Because of the auspicious deeds that he himself had done, the king ascended to heaven. The great-minded Vasudeva, with dharma in his soul, had thought of a means to destroy his enemy and returned to the soldiers.[874] Now that the lord of the soldiers had been killed, the intelligent one seized large numbers of chariots, elephants, horses, armour, weapons, armaments and standards. With a contented mind, Janardana went to the city of Dvaravati, filled it with these copious riches and told King Ugrasena everything.’

Chapter 86

Vaishampayana said, ‘The sun arose and the morning sparkled. Hrishikesha seated himself near the boundary of the forest and performed the morning meditation. He roamed around in that region, searching for a place for the fort. The foremost among the Yadava lineage were also present with the descendant of the Yadu lineage. It was the best day, with the nakshatra Rohini in the ascendant. Supreme brahmanas pronounced benedictions. With a great deal of auspicious words, work commenced for building the fort. The lotus-eyed slayer of Keshi, supreme among eloquent ones, spoke these best of words to the Yadavas, like Vritra’s enemy speaking to the gods. “Look at the spot that I have chosen. It is like a residence of the gods. I have also thought of a name that will make the city famous. This city constructed by me on earth will be known by the name of Dvaravati. This will be a beautiful city, like Shakra’s Amaravati. I will have buildings constructed here, with signs and measurements.[875] There will be four royal roads and level grounds for the inner quarters. Devoid of anxiety and like the gods, all of you will enjoy yourselves. With Ugrasena at the forefront, you will be able to restrain the large numbers of enemies. Take the equipment used for construction and mark out three crossroads. Mark out the measurements for the royal roads and the walls. Let the best of artisans be summoned and employed in the construction of the houses. Let men be sent to different countries to fetch artisans.” They were eager to begin the construction of the houses and Krishna instructed them in this way. Cheerfully, they started on their tasks. The best among Yadavas had measuring tapes in their hands. O great king! On this auspicious day, they worshipped the brahmanas. For the gods, Vasudeva had the ordained rites performed. The immensely intelligent Govinda spoke these words to the architects. “This is the spot where you must construct an excellent temple for us, where our gods can be worshipped. Mark out the crossroads and the roads.” The architects agreed to what the mighty-armed one had said. They followed the prescribed instructions and brought the material required for building the fort. The gates and the buildings were measured out properly. In due order, places were laid out for Brahma and the other gods. Four altars were laid out for four divinities—water, fire, the lord of the gods[876] and millstone and mortar. There were four gates for the four gods—Grihakshetra, Aindra, Bhallata and Pushpadanta.[877] The great-souled Yadavas engaged themselves in constructing the houses.

‘Madhava thought about how the city could be swiftly constructed. His intelligence was divine and he thought of a means for firm and swift construction. “This city will be agreeable and will enhance the prosperity of the Yadavas. The lord Vishvakarma is Prajapati’s son and is foremost among the artisans of the gods. He will use his intelligence to construct this city.” Krishna stood there alone, facing the gods. He thought of him[878] in his mind, so that he might arrive. At that instant, the immensely intelligent Vishvakarma, preceptor of artisans and best among the gods, stood in front of Krishna. Vishvakarma said, “O Vishnu! O one who is firm in his vows! I have been summoned here by your divine mind. I have come here as a servant. Instruct me about what I should do. O god! You are the lord of the gods. You are as undecaying as Tryambaka.[879] O god! O lord! I revere you and there is no difference between him and you. O one who knows about the three worlds! O mighty-armed one! All knowledge comes from your words. I can see the truth about this. Instruct me about what must be done.” Keshava heard Vishvakarma’s humble words. The best among the Yadus, Kamsa’s enemy, spoke these unmatched words in reply. “You know about the meanings of the sacred texts, mysterious even to the gods. O best among the gods! We are going to reside here and it is certainly your task to build a residence for us. O one who is excellent in vows! You must construct a residence on earth. In every way, the houses must reflect my powers. It must be the best on earth, just as Amaravati is in heaven. O immensely intelligent one! You alone are capable of performing this task. It is your task to build me a place that is like heaven. Let mortal people see my prosperity in this city of the Yadu lineage.” Vishvakarma heard these words, spoken by the lord of intelligence, Krishna, whose deeds were unsullied and who was the destroyer of the enemies of the gods. He said, “O lord! I will do everything that you have asked me to. But this city will not be sufficient to house all your people. This beautiful city will extend in the future and become prosperous. However, the four oceans will also freely roam around here. O Purushottama! If the ocean, the lord of the waters, withdraws and leaves some space, this city will bear all the signs of being extensive.” Krishna, the intelligent one, was addressed in this way and he had already thought about this. The supreme among eloquent ones spoke these words to the ocean, the lord of the rivers. “O ocean! O store of the waters! If you have any respect for me, withdraw on your own and leave a space of twelve yojanas. If you grant me this space, the city and the area will be sufficient to support and sustain all my soldiers.” Hearing Krishna’s words, the great ocean, the lord of the male and female rivers united with the wind and withdrew. Vishvakarma was delighted that a space sufficient for the city had been created. The ocean thus showed its respect towards Govinda. Vishvakarma spoke these words to Krishna, the descendant of the Yadu lineage. “O Govinda! Let everyone occupy the residences today. O lord! Without any delay, I have used the powers of my mind to construct this city. It is garlanded with houses and walls. It is a beautiful city, with excellent gates and the best of walls. There are multi-storeyed buildings that are like armlets, standing out like humps on the earth.” There were extensive inner quarters that could cater to Krishna’s needs. That city was constructed at a spot that was worshipped by the gods. This is how the beautiful city of Dvaravati was constructed at that time. Vishvakarma used his Vaishnavi mental powers.

‘There were beautiful men and women there. Merchants were like adornments, with many kinds of wares. It was as if something travelling around in the sky[880] had come down to earth. There was clean water in the ponds. There were handsome gardens. It was beautiful in all its limbs, like a woman with large eyes. There were prosperous squares and the best of houses looked like clouds. The beautiful palaces rose indistinctly up into the sky. The place resounded with the noise of large numbers of people who came from all the extensive kingdoms on earth. Cool breezes wafted in from the waves of the lord of the waters. There were beautiful groves and agreeable and pleasant people. Dvaraka was as radiant as the sky with its stars. The walls had the complexion of the sun and were decorated with molten gold. The grand houses were full of gold and their chambers echoed. The gates were like white clouds.

Along the extensive roads, there were beautiful and excellent palaces in some places. Krishna, and all the descendants of the Yadava lineage, resided in that city. With people desiring to live there, it sparkled like the moon in the sky. Vishvakarma created the city and made it like Shakra's city. Having done this and worshipped by Govinda, that god left for heaven.

'Krishna, who knew his soul, again had a thought about how he could satisfy the large numbers of people with wealth. In the night, in his own house, the lord Upendra summoned Shankha, Vaishravana's possession and the supreme jewel among all treasures.[881] Knowing of Keshava's summons, Shankha, the king of the guhyakas,[882] himself approached the lord of Dvaravati. Shankha humbly joined his hands in salutation. He addressed Krishna, as if he was addressing Vaishravana himself. "O illustrious one! My task is to protect the riches of the gods. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Yadu lineage! Instruct me about what must be done." Hrishikesha instructed Shankha, supreme among the guhyakas. "The people here are suffering on account of limited riches. Fill them up with wealth. I do not wish to see people who are hungry, weak and distressed, or poor people in the city who keep saying, 'Give.'" The *nidhi* bowed his head down before Keshava and followed his instructions. He commanded all the other nidhis that all the houses in Dvaravati should be showered with riches. All of them followed this command. There was no poor man there, nor one who suffered from misfortune. In every house in Dvaravati, there was no one who was emaciated or miserable.

'Purushottama again summoned Vayu. To do what was agreeable to the Yadavas, the illustrious one arrived there. The source of the breath of life in creatures presented himself before Gada's elder brother, when that lord and god, who holds up all the secrets, was seated alone. "O god! O one who swiftly goes everywhere! What is my task? O unblemished one! I am yours, just as I am a messenger of the gods." Purushottama Krishna told Maruta, the life breath of the universe who had presented himself before him, the secret. "O Maruta! Go to the lord of the gods and the immortals and persuade them. Bring the assembly hall Sudharma[883] from the gods. The Yadavas are valiant and devoted to dharma. There are thousands of them. They should be in that assembly and not in an artificial one. O Vayu! O one who can go wherever you want! O one who can assume any form you want! That eternal assembly hall is capable of holding up the Yadus, just as it holds up the gods.” He accepted the words spoken by Krishna of the unsullied deeds. Adopting a speed that was appropriate to his own nature, Vayu went to heaven. He reported Krishna’s words and entreated all the gods. Having obtained the assembly hall Sudharma, he again returned to earth. He gave Sudharma to Krishna of the unsullied deeds, the one who was excellent in the pursuit of dharma.[884] Having handed over the assembly hall of the gods to the divinity, Vayu vanished. For the foremost among the Yadavas, Keshava placed Sudharma in the centre of Dvaravati, just as it was used for the gods in heaven. Thus, the undecaying Hari adorned his own city with objects and ornaments from heaven, from earth and from the water, as if a woman was being beautified. He established rules for merchants and ordinary people to follow. He appointed supervisors to look after the soldiers and after the environment. Ugrasena was the king and Kashya[885] was the priest. Anadhrishti was the commander in chief and Vikradu was chief among the ministers. Ten aged Yadavas, ornaments of their families, were appointed by the intelligent one to ascertain that there were no gaps in any of the performed tasks. Daruka, the excellent charioteer, became Keshava’s charioteer. Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, became the foremost warrior among all the warriors. The unblemished Krishna thus established rules for the city to follow. With the Yadus, the creator of the worlds, found pleasure on earth. Revata’s daughter, Revati, possessed good conduct. With Krishna’s permission, Baladeva married her.’

Chapter 87

Vaishampayana said, 'At this time, the powerful Jarasandha wished to do what would be agreeable to the king of Chedi and urged all the kings that Rukmini, the daughter of Bhishmaka, should be bedecked in golden ornaments and be married to King Shishupala. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Suvaktra, the infinitely energetic son of Dantavaktra, who was an equal of the thousand-eyed one in battle and accomplished in the use of maya; the immensely strong son of Vasudeva from Poundra;[886] the brave Sudeva, who alone was the lord of an entire akshouhini; the brave and powerful son of Ekalavya; the son of the king of Pandya; the lord of Kalinga; King Venudari, against whom Krishna had done disagreeable things; Amshumanta; Kratha; Shrutarvana; Kalinga, who destroyed his enemies; the lord of Gandhara; the mighty-armed Patusha; and the lord of Kashi.'[887]

Janamejaya asked, 'O supreme among brahmanas! In which country was King Rukmi, supreme among those who knew about the Vedas, born? Where did that radiant one take birth?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'There was a rajarshi named Yadava and a son named Vidarbha was born to him. He lived in Vidarbha, on the southern flank of the Vindhya mountains. He had immensely strong sons and Kratha and Kaishika were foremost among them. They were full of valour and were kings who established separate lineages. O king! The Vrishnis were born in the lineage of Bhima.[888] Amshuman was born in Kratha's lineage and Bhishmaka in Kaishika's. People refer to him[889] as Hiranyaloma and the lord of the southern regions. Protected by Agastya, this king resided in Kundina.[890] O lord of the earth! He had a son named Rukmi and a daughter named Rukmini. The immensely strong Rukmi obtained divine weapons from Druma. He also obtained the *brahmastra*[891] from Rama, Jamadagni's son. He always sought to rival Krishna, the performer of extraordinary deeds. O king! There was no one on earth who could rival Rukmini in beauty. On hearing about her, the immensely radiant Vasudeva desired her. In a similar way, on hearing about him, she desired Janardana. Because of his energy, valour and strength, she thought that he should be her husband. Krishna asked for her. However, because of his hatred and because of Kamsa's death, the immensely strong Rukmi did not bestow her on Krishna. King Jarasandha asked King Bhishmaka, who was terrible in his valour, that she should be given to the son of the king of Chedi, Sunitha.[892] Vasu, the king of Chedi,[893] had a son named Brihadratha. In earlier times, he was the one who built the city of Girivraja[894] in Magadha. The immensely strong Jarasandha was born as his son. The king of Chedi, Damaghosha, was also born in Vasu's lineage. Through his wife Shrutashrava, Vasudeva's[895] sister, Damaghosha had five sons who were terrible in their valour—Shishupala, Dashagriva, Raibhya, Upadisha and Bali. All of them were powerful, brave and immensely strong, accomplished in the use of all weapons. Knowing that Jarasandha belonged to a similar lineage, Sunitha gave him his own son and he[896] protected him and brought him up as his own son. Placing Jarasandha at the forefront, the immensely strong enemy of the Vrishnis, Chedi,[897] sought to do many things that were disagreeable to the Vrishnis. When his son-in-law, Kamsa, was killed in the encounter, thanks to Krishna, Jarasandha bore enmity towards the Vrishnis. For the sake of Sunitha, he asked Bhishmaka for Rukmini. Bhishmaka bestowed Rukmini on the valiant Shishupala.[898] With the king of Chedi and Dantavaktra, King Jarasandha left for Vidarbha. The intelligent Vasudeva from Poundra followed him and so did the immensely strong kings of Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. Rukmi received and welcomed all the kings who had arrived. After having been supremely honoured, they were taken towards the city. To cause pleasure to their father's sister, Rama and Krishna, together with the other Vrishnis, also arrived, with chariots and forces. Following the prescribed rites, the lords of Kratha and Kaishika worshipped and honoured them, but made them reside outside.[899]

'The marriage was to take place the next day. When Jyeshtha nakshatra[900] was in the ascendance, the beautiful Rukmini went out to worship at a temple outside, on a chariot yoked to four horses. Her form blazed, decorated with the auspicious marks. She was surrounded by a large army and wished to worship Indrani. On seeing her there, Krishna thought that Lakshmi had manifested herself. She was near the temple, in that supremely beautiful form. She blazed like the flame of a fire and was like an illusion that had come down to earth. It was as if the grave earth goddess had herself arisen from the ground. It was as if the pleasant beams of the moon had adopted the personified form of a woman on earth. She was like Shri on a lotus, or like one of Shri's future aides. Even the gods found it impossible to look at her and Krishna saw her in his mind. She was almost dark.[901] She wasn't plump and her eyes were large. Her lips were coppery red and her eyes were beautiful. Her thighs were thick and her hips and breasts were heavy. She was a grown-up but young maiden, beautiful in all her limbs. Her face was like the moon. The tips of her nails were coppery red. She possessed excellent eyebrows. Her blue-black hair was curled. Her teeth were even, white and sharp. Her radiance illuminated her. In beauty, fame and prosperity, this was a woman who was unmatched on earth. Attired in a white linen garment, Rukmini seemed to have the form of a goddess. On seeing the one who was beautiful to behold, Krishna's desire increased, like the flames of a fire increase when oblations are poured into it. Having consulted with Rama and the Vrishnis, the extremely strong Keshava made up his mind to abduct her. When she had completed the worship of the gods and was emerging from the temple of the gods, Krishna suddenly picked her up and placed her on his supreme chariot.

'Balarama uprooted a tree, so that he might repel enemies who would advance. He also instructed the Dasharhas to be ready in every possible way. Many kinds of chariots, raising giant standards, horses and elephants surrounded the one who used the plough as a weapon. Having abducted Rukmini, Krishna swiftly headed towards his own city. The valiant one left the burden for Rama and Yuyudhana to bear. There were also Akrura, Viprithu, Gada, Kritavarma, Chakradeva, Sunakshatra, the immensely strong Sarana, Nivrittashatru, Vikranta, Bhangakara, Viduratha, Ugrasena, Kanka, Shatadyumna, Rajadhideva, Mridura,[902] Prasena, Chitraka, Atidanta, Brihaddurga, Shvaphalka, Chitraka[903] and Prithu. Keshava Madhusudana left the task to other foremost Vrishnis and Andhakas. Having imposed this heavy burden on them, he left for Dvaravati. Dantavaktra, Jarasandha and the valiant Shishupala became enraged. They armoured themselves and advanced, wishing to kill Janardana. The lords of Anga, Vanga and Kalinga, along with the valiant Poundra, also advanced. So did the king of Chedi[904] and his brothers, who were excellent maharathas. Wrathfully, the brave Vrishni maharathas countered them, placing Samkarshana at the forefront, just as the Maruts do with Vasava. In that great battle, the immensely strong Jarasandha descended. However, Yuyudhana pierced him with six iron arrows. Akrura pierced Dantavaktra with nine arrows and Karusha struck him back with ten swift arrows. Viprithu pierced Shishupala with seven arrows. However, the powerful Shishupala struck him back with eight arrows. Gaveshana pierced the king of Chedi with six arrows. Anirdanta shot eight arrows and Brihaddurga five. The king of Chedi pierced each of them with five arrows and using four arrows, slew four of Viprithu's horses. Using a broad-headed arrow, he severed the head of his enemy, Brihaddurga. He despatched Gaveshana's charioteer to Yama's abode. With his horses slain, the immensely strong Viprithu abandoned his own chariot and swiftly clambered on to the chariot of the valiant Brihaddurga. Since the horses were running wild, Viprithu's charioteer quickly climbed onto Gaveshana's chariot and controlled them. With a bow and arrows in his hand, Sunitha was prancing around along the path of the chariots. They angrily surrounded him and showered him with arrows. With a barbed arrow, Chakradeva shattered Dantavaktra's chest. In the encounter, he next pierced Patusha with twenty-five arrows. When he had been pierced with ten sharp arrows that struck at his inner organs, Bali shattered Chakradeva with ten arrows. Standing some distance away, he pierced Viduratha with five arrows and Viduratha pierced him back with six sharp arrows. He[905] pierced the immensely strong Bali back with thirty arrows. Kritavarma shattered the prince with three arrows.[906] He slew his charioteer and shattered the upraised standard. Enraged, Poundra pierced him back with six arrows that had stone arrowheads. With broad-headed arrows with drooping tufts, he severed his bow. Nivrittashatru struck Kalinga wih sharp arrows and the king of Kalinga struck him on the neck with a javelin. Using an elephant, Kanka fought against the valiant Anga's elephant. He struck Anga with a javelin and Anga pierced him with arrows. Chitraka, Shvaphalka and maharatha Satyaka drove Kalinga's army away with iron arrows. Rama became angry in his duel with the king of Vanga. He uprooted a tree and used it to kill the elephant of the king of Vanga. After killing it, the valiant Samkarshana ascended a chariot and picked up a bow. Using iron arrows, he killed many Kaishika soldiers. Using six arrows, he killed the brave and great archer, Karusha. Angrily, the maharatha slew one hundred soldiers from Magadha. Having killed them, the mighty-armed one advanced against Jarasandha. As he attacked, he was pierced by three iron arrows. The one who used his club as his weapon angrily struck him back with eight iron arrows. Using a broad-headed arrow, he severed his[907] standard, which was studded with jewels. A fierce encounter ensued between them, like that between the gods and the asuras. Trying to kill each other, they showered down arrows. Thousands of elephants angrily engaged with rival elephants. Chariots clashed against chariots and horse riders against horse riders. Foot soldiers attacked rival foot soldiers with spears and shields in their hands. They roamed around separately, severing the heads from the torsos. With a great sound, swords descended on armour. The sound made by descending arrows was like the noise made by birds. Kettledrums, conch shells, drums and flutes emitted sounds in the battle. However, the noise made by the weapons and by the great-souled ones twanging their bows was louder.’

Chapter 88

Vaishampayana said, 'Rukmi heard that Rukmini had been abducted by Krishna. In Bhishmaka's presence, he angrily took a vow. "If I do not kill Govinda in a battle and do not bring Rukmini back, I will not enter Kundina. I say this truthfully." The brave one ascended a chariot with a standard, stocked with all the best weapons. Surrounded by a large army, the angry one quickly left. He was followed by all the kings who resided along *dakshinapatha*[908]—Kratha, Amshuman, Shrutarva, the brave Venudari, Bhishmaka's sons on their chariots, supreme among charioteers, and the best from the land of Kratha and Kaishika. All of them were maharathas. Those angry ones travelled some distance and on the banks of the Narmada, saw Govinda with his beloved. Asking the soldiers to wait, Rukmi, who was insolent of his prowess, desired to have a duel on chariots and challenged Madhusudana. He pierced Govinda with sixty-four sharp arrows. In the encounter, Govinda pierced him back with seventy arrows. Making efforts, the immensely strong one severed his[909] standard and severed the head of the valiant one's charioteer from his body. On seeing that he[910] was in trouble, all the kings from the southern region surrounded Janardana, wishing to kill him. The mighty-armed Amshuman pierced him with ten arrows. Angrily, Shrutarva shot five arrows at him and Venudari shot seven. Govinda shattered the brave Amshuman's chest. The king was hurt and sank down on the seat of his chariot. With four arrows, he slew Shrutarva's four horses. He severed Venudari's standard and pierced him in his right hand. In that way, he pierced Shrutarva with five arrows and he was so pained that he sat down and leaned against his standard, exhausted. The foremost among the Krathas and the Kaishikas attacked Vasudeva from every direction with an array of chariots and showered down arrows on him. Janardana fought against them in that battle, severing their arrows with his arrows. He used arrows to kill the angry ones who were making efforts. There were some brave ones who angrily attacked. The immensely strong one used sixty-four sharp arrows to kill some of them. On seeing that his own army was being driven away, Rukmi was filled with anger. He pierced Keshava in the chest with five sharp arrows. He pierced the charioteer with three sharp arrows and severed the standard with an arrow with a drooping tuft. Keshava angrily pierced him back with six arrows. As Rukmi was making efforts, he severed his bow. Desiring to kill Krishna, Rukmi picked up another bow. He released divine and blazing weapons towards the brave one. The immensely strong Krishna repelled all these weapons with his weapons. He again used three arrows to splinter his bow and shatter his chariot. With his bow severed and deprived of his chariot, the brave and valiant one seized a sword and a shield and, like Garuda, leapt down from his chariot. In that encounter, as he descended with the sword, Keshava cut down the sword and angrily shattered his chest with three iron arrows. The mighty-armed one made a loud noise and fell down on the ground. The king was senseless and unconscious, like a mountain shattered by the vajra. Keshava again pierced all the kings with arrows. On seeing that Rukmi had fallen down, those kings ran away.

'Rukmini saw that her brother was trembling on the ground. Desiring her brother's life, she fell down at her husband's feet. Keshava raised her, embraced her and comforted her. Granting Rukmi freedom from fear, he left for his own city. The Vrishnis defeated Jarasandha and the kings. Placing the one with the plough as his weapon at the front, they happily left for Dvaraka. Once Pundarikaksha had left the field of battle, Shrutarva came to the field of battle. He picked up Rukmi on his chariot and left for his own city. Rukmi was proud of his strength. Since he was unable to bring his sister back, he had failed in his pledge. Therefore, he did not wish to enter the city of Kundina. So as to reside in Vidarbha, be constructed another great city and that became famous on earth as Bhojakatam. Dwelling there, the powerful and immensely strong one protected the southern direction. The great-minded King Bhishmaka lived in Kundina.

'Having reached Dvaraka with the Vrishni army, the lord Rama followed the prescribed rites and had Keshava and Rukmini married. With his beloved wife, he obtained supreme delight, like in earlier times, Rama with Sita and Poulami with Purandara.[911] This beautiful one was Krishna's eldest wife. She had the trait of being devoted to her husband and possessed the qualities of beauty and good conduct. Through her, he had ten maharatha sons—Charudeshna, Sudeshna, the immensely strong Pradyumna, Sushena, Charugupta, the brave Charubahu, Charuvinda, Sucharu, Bhadracharu and Charu, supreme among strong ones. There was also a daughter named Charumati. They were accomplished in dharma and artha. They were skilled in the use of weapons and were indomitable in battle. Madhusudana had seven other fortunate wives. The mighty-armed one married those who were born in noble lineages and possessed qualities—Kalindi, Mitravinda, Satya, the daughter of Nagnajit, the daughter of Jambavat, Rohini, who was beautiful in form, the daughter of the king of Madra, who possessed good conduct and auspicious eyes, the daughter of Satrajit, Satyabhama, Lakshmana, whose smiles were beautiful, and Sudatta, the daughter of Shaibya, who was like an apsara in her beauty.[912] The infinitely valorous one also had another sixteen thousand wives. Hrishikesha married all of these at the same time. All of them possessed supreme garments and ornaments and deserved to enjoy pleasure. Through them, thousands of brave sons were born. All of them were powerful maharathas, accomplished in the use of all weapons. These immensely fortunate and immensely strong ones performed sacrifices and other sacred tasks.’

Chapter 89

Vaishampayana said, 'After some time had passed, the valiant Rukmi, the scorcher of enemies, arranged for his daughter's svayamvara. The kings and the princes were summoned there by Rukmi. From many directions, those prosperous and immensely valorous ones assembled there. Surrounded by princes, Pradyumna went there. The maiden desired him and he desired the one with the auspicious eyes. This lady from Vidarbha possessed beauty and radiance and her name was Shubhangi. At that time, Rukmi's daughter was famous on earth. All the great-souled kings seated themselves. The maiden from Vidarbha chose Pradyumna, the slayer of enemies. That youth was accomplished in the use of all weapons and was capable of withstanding a lion. Keshava's son was unmatched in the world in his beauty. The princess also possessed the qualities of age and beauty and desired him, just as Narayani Chandrasena desired her husband.[913] When the svayamvara was over, the kings left for their own cities. With the maiden from Vidarbha, Pradyumna left for Dvaraka. There, he had a son who was like an offspring of the gods. He was famous as Aniruddha and his deeds were unmatched on earth. He was accomplished in dhanurveda, the Vedas and the sacred texts of policy. O king! When Aniruddha came of age, he chose Rukmi's granddaughter, named Rukmavati, as his wife. She was like Rukmini and possessed the complexion of gold.[914] The king was of the view that Aniruddha possessed the qualities. Hence, Rukmi was affectionately disposed towards the alliance with Rukmini's descendant.[915] He forgot about his rivalry and enmity with Krishna. O Janamejaya! He happily said that he would bestow her.

'With their forces, Keshava, Rukmini's son and his son,[916] Samkarshana and the other Vrishnis went to Vidarbha. All Rukmi's relatives and well-wishers were also invited by Rukmi and those kings also went there. O great king! When an auspicious nakshatra was in ascendance in the sky, that grand festival of Aniruddha's marriage was concluded honourably. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! Aniruddha accepted the hand of the maiden from Vidarbha. The Vrishnis were honoured like the immortals and enjoyed themselves there.

‘The intelligent king of Ashmaka, Venudari, Aksha, Shrutarva, Chanura, Kratha, Amshuman, Jayatsena, the immensely strong king of Kalinga, the king of Pandya and the prosperous king of Rishika—all these great kings from the southern region assembled. All of them secretly approached the lord Rukmi and told him, “You are skilled in playing with the dice and we also wish to play. Despite not being that skilled, Rama loves to play with the dice. With you at the forefront, we wish to defeat him.” Thus addressed, the idea of playing with the dice appealed to maharatha Rukmi. There was an auspicious assembly hall with golden pillars. It was decorated with flowers and had been sprinkled with sandalwood water. All of them happily entered that place, smearing themselves with fragrant pastes. Desiring victory, all of them seated themselves on golden seats. The deceitful ones, who were accomplished in playing with the dice, challenged Baladeva, who cheerfully said, “Let us play. What is your stake?” The kings from the southern regions wished to win through deceit and brought thousands of pearls, jewels and gold. The game of dice, which would destroy all their delight, commenced. It always leads to terrible conflict and brings destruction to those who are evil-minded. In the match with Rukmi, Baladeva offered ten thousand golden coins as stake. Though the maharatha tried, Rukmi defeated him. With a similar stake, he again defeated Baladeva. Rukmi defeated Keshava’s great-souled elder brother several times and won the stakes of one crore of gold coins. Cheerfully, the deceitful one said, “I have won.” He prided himself and laughed at the one who has the plough as a weapon. “Today, in the game with the dice, I have defeated the prosperous Baladeva and have won an unlimited quantity of gold. He is invincible, but is weak and ignorant.” On hearing this, the king of Kalinga laughed a lot, exhibiting his teeth. The one with the plough as his weapon was enraged. He heard the words spoken by Rukmi about his defeat, the sharp words of insult uttered by Bhishmaka’s son. However, though he was angry, the one who knew about dharma conquered his rage. That censure made him wrathful. But Rohini’s immensely strong son mentally resorted to patience. Controlling himself, he spoke these words. “My next stake is of ten thousand crores.[917] O lord of men! Accept this stake and throw the black dice and the red dice in this place that is full of dust.”[918]

Speaking these words, Rohini’s son challenged Rukmi, who didn’t say anything, but offered a stake again. King Rukmi cheerfully threw the dice and when the four-sided dice had stopped rolling, the king had been defeated.[919] However, he told Bala, “Baladeva has not followed dharma in defeating me.” Baladeva resorted to the patience in his mind and controlling himself, did not say anything. Rukmi smiled and told Baladeva, “I have really won.” Baladeva heard the words spoken by the king, about him having resorted to deceit. Though he was again overwhelmed by rage, he did not say anything in reply. At this time, a deep and invisible voice that spoke the truth was heard from the sky and this increased the great-souled Baladeva’s rage. “The prosperous Bala has won through the use of dharma. Even though he has not said anything, he has obtained success through his deeds.[920] It should indeed be considered that he mentally accepted it.” On hearing the words thus spoken from the sky, the powerful Samkarshana arose and grabbed the gold-red board. Using this, he beat Rukmini’s elder brother[921] down on the earth. Rama, bull among the Yadu lineage, was enraged at the cruel words spoken by the one who abused him and laughed at him. He slew him with the ashtapada board. Withdrawing a bit, he angrily uprooted the teeth of the king of Kalinga and in his rage, roared like a lion. Raising his sword, he terrified the kings. The supreme among strong ones uprooted a golden pillar. Dragging it like a giant elephant, he went out through the gates of the assembly hall, frightening the Krathas and the Kaishikas. The bull among the Yadava lineage killed Rukmi, who was skilled in deceit. Like a lion amidst small animals, he frightened all the enemies. Surrounded by his own relatives, Rama went to his camp and told Krishna everything that had happened. The immensely radiant Krishna did not tell Rama anything at the time. He controlled himself and shed tears of rage.[922] Vasudeva, the slayer of enemy heroes, had not killed him earlier. However, that powerful king, who was like the wielder of the vajra, was slain by the ashtapada in Rama’s hands, in that gathering over gambling with the dice. That great king, Bhishmaka’s son, had studied under Druma and Bhargava[923] and was equal to Druma and Bhargava. He was accomplished in battle and always performed sacrifices. When he was brought down, all the Vrishnis and Andhakas were distressed in their minds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have thus told you everything about Rukmi’s death and about how his enmity with the Vrishnis arose. O great king! The Vrishnis gathered together all the different kinds of riches. Seeking refuge with Rama and Krishna, they left for the city of Dvaravati.’

Chapter 90

Janamejaya said, ‘O brahmana rishi! I wish to again hear about the greatness of the intelligent Baladeva, who is Shesha who holds up the earth. He was extremely strong and a mass of energy. He couldn’t be vanquished. People who know about the ancient accounts speak about the great-souled one. O brahmana! I wish to hear the truth about his deeds. He is known as the immensely energetic and original god, the serpent Ananta.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘In the Puranas, one reads about him as the king of the serpents, the one who holds up the earth. He is the handsome Shesha, the store of energy. He is the Purushottama who does not tremble. He is the preceptor of yoga. He is great in valour. He is immensely strong. He is supremely strong among the strong. He defeated Jarasandha in a duel with the clubs, but did not kill him. O lord of the earth! There were many kings and lords of the earth who followed Magadha in the battle, but all of them were defeated in the encounter. Bhima was terrible in his valour and possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants. However, he was defeated by Baladeva in a wrestling bout. When Samba, Jambavati’s son, abducted Duryodhana’s daughter, he was imprisoned in the city of Nagasahvya.[924] Hearing this, the one with the plough as his weapon angrily went there. Rama went there to free him, but did not get him.[925] The powerful one was overcome by great rage. The powerful one raised his plough, which was invincible, impenetrable, divine, unmatched and like Brahma’s staff. He invoked it with mantras. The immensely strong one fixed the plough against the wall of the Kourava city and pushed it towards the Ganga river. On seeing that the city was being whirled around, the intelligent King Duryodhana released Samba and his wife. The extremely great-souled Rama offered himself to the king of the Kurus and accepting him as a disciple in fighting with the clubs. O Indra among kings! O king! Since that time, when the city had been whirled around, it became tilted towards the Ganga. This extraordinary deed of Rama’s is famous on earth. O king! In earlier times, what Shouri[926] did in Bhandira has already been recounted. With a single blow of his fist, the one with the plough as his weapon killed Pralamba. He flung the gigantic Dhenuka on the top of a tree. The great river Yamuna is Yama's sister, with a forceful flow of water and a garland of waves. She is the one who flows towards the store of saline water. Dragged by the plough, she was brought towards the city. I have spoken about all these aspects of Baladeva's greatness. He is the immeasurable Ananta. He is the extremely great-souled Shesha. This is the supreme among men, the wielder of the plough, who performed many other such supreme deeds. I have spoken about these deeds and they can be gleaned in detail from the Puranas.'

Chapter 91

Janamejaya said, ‘O great sage! When Rukmi was killed, the mighty-armed and valiant Vishnu returned to Dvaraka. Tell me what he did thereafter.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Surrounded by all of them, the illustrious and valiant Vishnu, the descendant of the Yadava lineage, returned to the city of Dvaraka. Pundarikaksha returned with jewels and many kinds of riches and in the proper way, made arrangements for the Nairittas[927] to be repulsed. The daityas and danavas caused many hurdles. The mighty-armed one slew these great asuras, who were the recipients of boons. The danava named Naraka created an obstacle at the time. He was a great enemy of the king of the gods and terrified large numbers of gods. He dwelt in Murtilinga and obstructed all the gods, acting against sages and men.[928] Tvashta’s daughter, Kasheru, was beautiful in her limbs. When she was fourteen years old, Bhouma assumed the form of an elephant and had intercourse with her. Having violated that beautiful one, Naraka, the lord of Pragjyotisha, confounded and lacking any fear about his own destruction, spoke these words. “There are many kinds of riches amidst gods and men and there is the radiant wealth on earth and in the oceans. From today, all the Nairittas, accompanied by the daityas and the danavas, will seize those for me.” In this way, Bhouma accumulated supreme jewels and many kinds of garments. But he did not use them. The powerful Naraka also abducted gandharva maidens, those from gods and men, and seven categories of apsaras. There were fourteen thousand and twenty-one hundred of these. All of them wore a single braid and followed the vows of the virtuous. Not distressed in his soul, on the mountain known as Mani, Bhouma built a supreme city for them.[929] This was in Alaka, in the kingdom of Mura. Ten of Mura’s sons and the best among the Nairittas worshipped the lord of Pragjyotisha and protected this city. Having obtained a boon, the great asura lived beyond the city.[930] For the sake of her earrings, the great asura oppressed Aditi.[931] With all those large numbers of asuras, the great asura perpetrated terrible deeds, the likes of which had not been done earlier. He was born from the goddess earth and owned the city of Pragjyotisha. He had four guards who were invincible in battle—Hayagriva, Nisunda, Vira and Panchajana. The great asura, Mura, and his one thousand sons, had obtained boons. With malformed rakshasas, they thus obstructed the path of the gods and terrified the performers of good deeds. It was to kill them that the mighty-armed Janardana, the wielder of the conch shell, chakra, mace and sword, was born in the lineage of the Vrishnis through Devaki and Vasudeva. To think of a means to accomplish the objective of the gods, the Indra among men, famous in the world for his energy, resided in Dvaraka.

‘The city of Dvaraka was more beautiful than Vasava’s eternal abode. It was protected by the giant ocean and adorned by five mountains. There was an assembly hall with golden gates there and it possessed the complexion of a city of the gods. It was known by the name of Sudasharha. It was extensive and one yojana wide. With Rama and Krishna at the forefront, all the Vrishnis and Andhakas resided there, protecting the entire progress of the worlds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On one occasion, all of them were seated there. A breeze with divine fragrances began to blow and flowers showered down. In the midst of a net of radiance, a joyous sound arose in the firmament. In an instant, this settled down on the ground. Vasava was seen in the centre of this energy, astride a white elephant and surrounded by a large number of gods. Rama, Krishna, the king[932] and the Vrishnis and Andhakas arose and worshipped the great-souled lord of the gods. He swiftly descended from the elephant and embraced Janardana, then embracing Baladeva and King Ahuka. Paying regard to their ages, he embraced the other Vrishnis, seated in their respective places. Worshipped by Rama and Krishna, he entered the auspicious assembly hall. The lord of the gods seated himself there, akin to an ornament in that assembly hall. As is proper, he accepted the rituals of arghya. Touching his auspicious face with a hand of assurance, the immensely energetic Vasava then spoke to Vasava’s younger brother. “O Devaki’s son! O Madhusudana! Listen to the words I speak. O afflicter of enemies! Listen to the reason why I have come here now. There is a Nairitta named Naraka. Having obtained a boon from Brahma, he has become insolent. In his confusion, that son of Diti has seized Aditi’s earrings. He always engages in tasks that are disagreeable to the gods and the rishis. Finding an opportunity, slay that wicked and harsh person. This Garuda can go wherever he wants and will take you there. Vinata's son is extremely energetic and travels in the sky. He possesses the valour of being able to go wherever he wants. Bhouma, the asura Naraka, cannot be killed by any creature.[933] Having slain that wicked one, you should swiftly return." Pundarikaksha Keshava was addressed by the king of the gods in this way. The mighty-armed one took a pledge that he would destroy Naraka. Assisted by Satyabhama and with Shakra, the wielder of the conch shell, chakra, mace and sword, the lord of Garuda, made arrangements for departure. As the lions among the Yadus looked on, with Vasava, the powerful one rose up, on the shoulders of the seven winds. Indra was astride the supreme of elephants, Janardana was astride Garuda. From a distance, they were as radiant as the sun and the moon. Praised by the gandharvas and the apsaras, Madhava and Shakra gradually disappeared in the sky. Having decided on what needed to be done, Vasava, the lord of the gods, returned to his own residence and Krishna left for Pragjyotisha.

'He slew the large numbers of rakshasas who were at the forefront of Naraka's large army. He then saw six thousand of Mura's followers, armed with nooses. Destroying all those nooses, he killed Mura and his aides with razor-sharp arrows. He crossed the mass of rocks and uprooted Nisunda. He uprooted the one who had single-handedly fought against the gods for one thousand years. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A terrible encounter, using many kinds of weapons, ensued, like that between the gods and the asuras. Basing himself on Garuda, the mighty-armed one shot multicoloured and large arrows and killed the great asuras. Clashing against Janardana, the shrieking danavas were brought down by arrows and the sword and mangled by the plough. Burnt down by the fire, some danavas fell down from the sky. Some were dragged close and, malformed in face, gave up their lives. He killed the extremely terrible and great asura, Hayagriva. The descendant of the Yadava lineage was infinite in his energy and invincible before everyone. In the middle of Lohitaganga,[934] in Alaka, the illustrious Purushottama, Devaki's son, killed the evil-souled Virupaksha. The tiger among men, the scorcher of enemies, killed eight hundred thousand danavas and attacked Pragjyotisha. He killed Naraka's terrible and great asura, Panchajana. He next approached the city of

Pragjyotisha, blazing in its prosperity, and a battle resulted. There was an extremely terrible encounter with Naraka. I will briefly tell you about it. Listen attentively. Naraka, who terrified large numbers of gods, fought with Purushottama, as if he was the energetic Madhu[935] fighting with Madhusudana. Madhusudana fought with Naraka for some time. After this, using his blazing and fierce chakara, he severed him into two. Divided into two parts by the chakra, his body fell down on the ground. Like the summit of a mountain, it was severed into two parts by the chakra. On seeing that her son had fallen down, the earth picked up the earrings. She gave them to Govinda and said, "O Govinda! He was given by you and he has been taken away by you. O god! These are the earrings. Please protect his subjects."'

Chapter 92

Vaishampayana said, 'After Bhouma Naraka, who was like Vasava in his valour, was killed, Vishnu, Vasava's younger brother, saw Naraka's residence. Entering Naraka's treasure house, Janardana saw an infinite quantity of riches and many kinds of jewels. There were gems, pearls, corals and a store of lapis lazuli. There were large heaps of silver and a store of diamonds. There was molten gold and pots full of refined gold. These blazed like the fire and were also as cool as the moon's beams. There were extremely expensive couches and thrones. He saw the large and beautiful royal umbrella, golden in complexion. It was as cool as the moon's beams and looked like a cloud that was about to shower down. There were hundreds and thousands of streams of pure and sparkling gold. We have heard that all this was seized by Naraka from Varuna earlier. The many kinds of riches that he saw in Naraka's residence are not matched by what exists with King Kubera, Shakra or Yama. That kind of store of riches has not been seen before, nor heard of. When Bhouma, Nisunda and danava Hayagriva were killed, the danavas who were left and those who were entrusted with the task of guarding the treasure troves, brought all these riches and everything in the inner quarters to Keshava. It was Janardana who deserved these extremely expensive objects. The danavas said, "There are many kinds of gems, jewels and riches. There are fierce elephants, their goads decorated with coral. Bows and spears are tied to their giant flanks with golden ropes. They are decorated with beautiful flags and many kinds of cushions and seats. There are twenty thousand male elephants and forty thousand female elephants. There are eight hundred thousand horses that have come from the best of regions. O Janardana! There are as many cattle as you wish for. All of these will be taken to the residences of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. There are beds and seats, covered with the fine hide of goats. There are birds who are pleasant to look at and they can chirp agreeably. There is sandalwood and agaru. There is also turmeric.[936] By following dharma, there are riches that you can obtain in the three worlds. All of these will be available in the residences of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas.” All the jewels of the gods and the gandharvas and all the riches of the serpents were available in Naraka’s residence. Examining them, Hrishikesha accepted all these. He made the danavas deliver all these to the city of Dvaraka. Madhava himself held aloft Varuna’s umbrella, which seemed to shower down gold, and mounted the bird Garuda, supreme among birds.

‘Looking like an embodied cloud, he went to Maniparvata, best among mountains. An auspicious breeze started to blow there and a golden-hued and pure radiance sparkled, emanating from the gems and surpassing that of the sun. Madhusudana saw lapis lazuli there and walls, flags, gates and couches. Maniparvata possessed the radiance of a cloud tinged with lightning. There were colourful and decorated celestial vehicles and beautiful palaces. There, Madhusudana saw the best of women and their complexion was like that of gold. They were the wives and daughters of the best of gandharvas and gods. He saw the wide-hipped ones. They had been imprisoned in a cave in the mountain. They had been brought there by Naraka and guarded in every possible way. Those unvanquished ones resided in a region that was like that of the gods. They happily lived there like goddesses, abandoning desire. The mighty-armed one was surrounded by women who possessed a single braid of hair. All of their garments were ochre and all of them had controlled their senses. Because of vows and fasting, their limbs were emaciated. They were waiting, desiring to seek Krishna. All those women joined their hands in salutation and assembled around the lion of the Yadu lineage. Knowing that Naraka, the great asura Mura, Hayagriva and Nisunda had been killed, they surrounded Krishna. All the aged danava guards also joined their hands in salutation before the descendant of the Yadu lineage and he honoured those who were senior in age. Those supreme women looked at the one with the eyes of a bull. All of them resolved that he would be their husband. His face was like the moon. The ones who had controlled their senses glanced at him. They happily spoke these words to the mighty-armed one. “In earlier times, the wind that speaks the truth has spoken to us in these words. So has devarshi Narada, who knows about the nature of all creatures. ‘The god, Vishnu Narayana, holds the conch shell, the chakra, a mace and a sword. Having slain Bhouma Naraka, he will become your husband.’ O scorcher of enemies! We have heard about you for a long time and we are able to see our beloved now. Today, we are satisfied at having been able to see the great soul.” Vasava’s younger brother comforted all those women. All of them possessed eyes like lotus petals. Madhava looked towards them and spoke to them. As is proper, Keshava comforted them and addressed them. Madhusudana instructed the servants that they[937] should be seated on vehicles. There were thousands of rakshasa servants, with the speed of the wind. As they raised the palanquins, a great sound arose. The foremost summit of the mountain was extremely revered. It had gates adorned with jewels and gold and it sparkled like the sun and the moon. There were large numbers of birds and elephants there and predatory beasts, deer and serpents. There were extensive stony slopes, inhabited by large numbers of monkeys. Ranku and ruru deer and boar inhabited the place. The giant summit was adorned by the tops of many kinds of trees. It was extremely wonderful and unthinkable and full of many kinds of animals. It echoed with the noise made by herons, pheasants and peacocks. With his two hands, the extremely strong Vishnu uprooted the shining peak and placed it on Garuda, supreme among birds. The bird Garuda, supreme among birds, carried Maniparvata, Janardana and his wife,[938] as if it was mere sport. The king of birds was like the summit of a huge mountain and used the strength of his wings and a great noise erupted in all the directions. He broke down the peaks of mountains and flung away trees, scattering and dispelling some of the clouds. He passed the regions of the two gods, the sun and the moon. Obeying Janardana’s instructions, the bird’s speed was like that of the wind.

‘Madhusudana reached Mount Meru, inhabited by the gods and the gandharvas. O lord of men! He saw all the residences of the gods, of the Vishvadevas, the Maruts and the Sadhyas. The scorcher of enemies passed over these and the radiant residences of the Ashvins. The scorcher of enemies reached the world of the gods, attained by the performers of auspicious deeds. Janardana reached Shakra’s abode and entered. On seeing the lord of the gods, he got down from Tarkshya.[939] Shatakratu, the king of the gods, was delighted to see him and welcomed him. Achyuta Janardana, best among men, gave him the divine earrings and, with his wife, worshipped the best among the gods. Thus worshipped, the king of the gods worshipped him back with jewels.

Satyabhama was appropriately greeted by Puloma’s daughter.[940] Together, Vasava and Vasudeva went to the sacred and prosperous abode of Aditi, the mother of the gods. There, Aditi was being worshipped in every direction by the apsaras. The two great-souled and immensely fortunate ones saw the ascetic one. Placing Janardana ahead of him, Shachi’s consort worshipped her and gave her the earrings, telling her what had happened. Delighted, Aditi embraced and greeted her two sons. She uttered identical words of benediction over both of them. Puloma’s daughter and Satyabhama were filled with great joy. They touched the sacred feet of the goddess who deserves to be revered. Affectionately, the illustrious mother of the gods addressed them and spoke these words to Janardana. “No creature will be able to assail you. No one will be able to slay you. Like the king of the gods, you will be worshipped in the worlds. Satyabhama, supreme among women, is extremely fortunate. O Krishna! As long as you remain in human form, this wife of yours will always be young and old age will not touch her.” The immensely strong Krishna was thus honoured by the mother of the gods.

‘Honoured with jewels, he then took his leave of the king of the gods. With Satyabhama, he climbed onto Vinata’s son. Praised by the divine rishis, he circled around the pleasure garden of the gods. The mighty-armed one saw Vasava’s pleasure garden. Worshipped by the gods, the great Parijata tree was there. This celestial tree blossoms with flowers all the time, with sacred and supreme fragrances. Men who approach it remember the incidents of their earlier lives. It was protected by the gods. However, the infinitely valourous Vishnu uprooted the giant tree.[941] As they left for Dvaravati with the speed of the wind, Satyabhama and Hari saw divine apsaras. The king of the gods heard about what Krishna had done, but said, “What the mighty-armed one has done meets with my approval.” Worshipped by the gods and praised by large numbers of maharshis, Krishna, the scorcher of enemies, left the world of the gods for Dvaraka. In a short while, the mighty-armed one covered that great distance. Worshipped by the king of the gods, he saw the city of the Yadavas. Thus, Vasava’s illustrious younger brother performed a great task. Astride Garuda, the prosperous Vishnu reached Dvaraka.’

Chapter 93

Vaishampayana said, 'Astride Garuda, Krishna saw the city of Dvaraka. It was like a residence of the gods and echoed in all directions.[942] After the visit to Maniparvata was over, Devaki's son proceeded there. The king of the gods summoned Vishvakarma and told him, "O supreme among artisans! If you wish to do what brings me pleasure and also for Krishna's pleasure, make the city of Dvaraka beautiful, like heaven, with gardens and groves. O best among the gods! Make it like my city. Whatever stores of riches you can see in the three worlds, swiftly assemble those in the city of Dvaravati. Krishna is always ready to undertake the tasks of the gods. The immensely strong one immerses himself in terrible battles." Accepting Indra's words, Vishvakarma went to the city and in every direction, sought to make it like Indra's Amaravati. Following divine instructions, Vishvarkarma ornamented it and, astride the bird, the lord of Dasharha saw this. The lord Narayana Hari saw the city of Dvaraka and was about to enter. He was delighted to see that it had become full of riches. As he headed towards Dvarka, Dasharha saw the trunks of trees that were beautiful to behold, colourfully created by Vishvakarma. There were blossoming lotuses along the banks and swans on the water, which dazzled like the water of the Ganga. The city was surrounded by moats. The walls had the complexion of the sun. Embellished with gold and silver, the tops looked like a garland of clouds against the sky. The groves were like Nandana and Chaitraratha. Beautiful Dvaraka was as resplendent as the clouds against the sky. The beautiful peaks and caverns of Mount Raivataka shone. In the eastern direction, there was a handsome gate, constructed out of jewels and gold. The southern gate was entwined with creepers of five colours. The undecaying western gate looked like Indra's standard. O bull among kings! The gate towards the northern direction was adorned by Mount Venuman, as resplendent and white as Mount Mandara. Towards Raivataka, there was the large forest of Panchajanya, with a hue that was speckled and grey. In every direction, there were other colourful forests too. There was the great forest of Meruprabha, covered throughout with creepers. The forest of Bharga dazzled, while that of Pushpaka was large. The forests known as Shatavarta and Karavirakarambhi were adorned with trees like *akshaka, bijaka* and *mandara*.[943] In every direction, Mount Venuman was rendered beautiful by large forests that were as shining as Chaitraratha and Nandana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the eastern direction, there was a beautiful and sparkling lake that was filled with aquatic plants with petals like lapis lazuli, and so was the river Mandakini. Urged by Vishvakarma and to ensure Keshava's pleasure, many gods and gandharvas were seated on the summits. The river Mandakini in Dvaravati had fifty different outlets. With auspicious waters, it entered the city and dazzled every direction. The city was large and immeasurable and was surrounded by a fathomless moat. There were the best of palaces and these were painted as white as milk. The city of Dvaraka was protected by fierce shataghnis and adorned with machines of war. There were large and iron chakras. The city possessed eight thousand chariots that were decorated with bells. Standards arose aloft them, as in the city of the gods. The city was like a mountain, eight yojanas wide and twelve yojanas long. The habitations in the city of Dvaraka could be seen to occupy double that area. There were eight main roads and sixteen large squares. There was a single highway and it seemed to have been constructed by Ushanas[944] himself. The women could also fight, not to speak of the Vrishni maharathas. Along seven major roads, there were paths that led to the battle formations. These had been laid out by the divine Vishvakarma himself. This was the best and supreme city of the illustrious Dasharhas.

'Delighted, Devaki's son saw the houses. The steps were decorated with gold and jewels, causing pleasure to men. There were palaces and squares that echoed loudly. There were fluttering flags and swimming pools. The white tops of the white buildings were decorated with refined gold. The beautiful tops of the buildings looked like the colourful summits of mountains. Decorated with five colours, it seemed as if flowers had showered down on them. They looked like many different kinds of mountains and resounded like thunder. They blazed like a forest conflagaration and had been created by Vishvakarma. Because of the paint, they rose up into the sky like mountains and were like the sun and the moon. Vasudeva[945] was the immensely fortunate

Dasharha and his house, surrounded by clouds, was like the house of Indra Parjanya. The illustrious one's beautiful house had been constructed by Vishvakarma himself and could be seen in Dvaraka, surrounded by the clouds. Vasudeva's residence could be seen and it extended for four yojanas. It was large and immeasurable and was filled with great quantities of wealth. Instructed by Vasava, the immensely fortunate Tvashtri had constructed this city on earth and it was full of the best of palaces and mountains. The palaces had the complexion of gold and all creatures found them to be delightful. Rukmini's supreme house had been constructed by Vishvakarma. It was large and golden and it rose up, like the summit of Mount Meru. Yet again, Satyabhama's house was white and was filled with all the objects of pleasure. It had colourful steps decorated with jewels and sparkled, with the complexion of the sun. It was adorned with flags. The best of adorned palaces was for Jambavati. There were flags on four sides and the residence was located on even terrain. Like the sun, this residence surpassed all the other residences in its brilliance. Like the rising sun in complexion, this was located between the other two.[946] This divine building had been created by Vishvakarma and was like the peak of Mount Kailasa. There was a house that blazed like molten gold and was like the flames of a fire. It was as large as the ocean and was famous by the name of Meru. O best among the Bharata lineage! Gandhari, born in a noble lineage as the daughter of the king of Gandhara, resided there and served Keshava.[947] There was a house known as Padmakuta. It was immensely radiant and possessed the complexion of a lotus. This large residence was supremely revered and was Bhima's abode.[948] There was a palace that possessed the complexion of the sun and had all the objects and qualities to satisfy desire. O best among the Kuru lineage! The wielder of the Sharnga bow earmarked this for Lakshmana.[949] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a palace that was green in colour, with the complexion of lapis lazuli. All creatures knew this as a supreme building. This abode, worshipped by the gods and the rishis, was where Mitravinda[950] resided. She was Vasudeva's queen and her residence was like an ornament. Vishvakarma constructed a foremost palace. This was extremely peaceful and was like an immobile mountain. This was praised by all the gods and was famous as Ketuman. This was where Vasudeva's queen Sudatta resided.[951] Tvashtri had himself constructed this best of palaces. It was auspicious and full of all the jewels, extending for one yojana. There was also an extremely handsome and resplendent resting house for the great-souled Keshava. Flags with golden poles indicated the way towards this. Flags fluttered along the way towards Vasudeva’s house. Here and there, nets of jewels were laid out.

‘The lion of the Yadu lineage had brought the giant mountain of Vaijayanta. Its peak was known as Hamsakuta and this was placed in the lake known as Indradyumna. It[952] was as tall as sixty palm trees taken together and its expanse was half a yojana. There were kinnaras and infinitely energetic giant serpents as its inhabitants. It was famous in the worlds and while all the beings looked on, he had brought it there. The supreme summit of Mount Meru obstructs the path of the sun. It is encrusted with celestial gold and is famous in the three worlds. For Krishna’s sake, Vishvakarma had uprooted it and brought it there. The summit was extremely radiant and was decorated with all the herbs. To accomplish the intention behind Indra’s words, Tvashtri had brought it there. Keshava had himself brought Parijata there. This was a supreme tree, protected by the gods. Krishna, the performer of extraordinary deeds, had brought it there, along with hundreds of lotus flowers and golden and celestial vehicles. For Vasudeva’s sake, a place known as Brahmasthala had been laid out, with giant trees. There were gems, water lilies and fragrant lotuses there. There were ponds and lakes, with jewels, gold and boats. The excellent banks were decorated with the best of trees, with hundreds of branches—sala, palm trees, kadambas and sandalwood. There were trees that could be found in the Himalayas and Meru. For the sake of the lion among the Yadus, Vishvakarma had them brought and laid out there. The groves had trees with red, yellow, pink and white flowers and these yielded every kind of seasonal fruit. In that supreme of cities, there were rivers and pools with sparkling water. Yellow sand and gravel lined the banks. There were other rivers with golden gravel and sand along the banks, with blossoming aquatic plants and many kinds of trees and creepers. The supreme trees were filled with happy and excited groups of peacocks and cuckoos. In the city, abodes were created for herds of elephants, cattle, buffaloes, boars, animals and birds. With golden walls, the city was beautiful. Hundreds of buildings could be seen there and these were one hundred cubits tall. All these were created by Vishvakarma. Bhouma[953] laid out these large mountains, rivers, pools, forests and groves there.’

Chapter 94

Vaishampayana said, 'The one with eyes like a bull looked at such a Dvaraka. Krishna saw his own residence, adorned with one hundred palaces. There were thousands and tens of thousands of white pillars, encrusted with gems. There were blazing and excellent gates and resplendent trees decorated with jewels. Here and there, dazzling and colourful sacrificial altars could be seen, made out of gold. There were extensive and large pillars made out of crystal, decorated with gold everywhere. The pools had water lilies and red and fragrant lotuses. The steps were adorned with jewels and were colourful because of the gems and the gold. There were happy and excited groups of peacocks and cuckoos. There were excellent ponds with blooming lotuses. Vishvakarma arranged for the mountains, ramparts and buildings. These were one hundred cubits tall and the city was surrounded by a moat. That house for the lion among the Vrishnis was also constructed by Vishvakarma. In every direction, it extended for half a yojana and it was like the great Indra's house. Astride Garuda's shoulder, Shouri[954] reached it and happily blew on his white conch shell, one that made the body hair of the enemies stand up. On hearing the sound of the conch shell, the ocean was greatly agitated. The entire sky was stupefied and was immobile, like a painting. The Kukuras and Andhakas heard Panchajanya's[955] roar. On seeing Garuda, all their sorrows were dispelled. The one with the conch shell, chakra and mace in his hand was seated astride Garuda. On seeing the one who was like the sun in his energy, the entire earth rejoiced. All the residents of the city sounded trumpets. The drums made a loud noise. All of them roared like lions. All the Dasharhas and all the Kukuras and Andhakas were delighted. They assembled to see Madhusudana. Placing Vasudeva[956] at the forefront and with the sound of drums and conch shells, King Ugrasena went to Vasudeva's[957] house. Devaki happily welcomed them and tended to them, as did Rohini and all of Ahuka's women who were present there. Astride Suparna, Krishna went to his own residence. As if he was followed by the gods, Hari roamed around in that spot. Krishna, the descendant of the Yadu lineage, got down at the gate of his house. As is proper, the bull among the Yadavas worshipped the Yadavas. Honoured by Rama, Ahuka, Gada, Akrura, Pradyumna and the others, Shouri accepted Maniparvata and entered. Pradyumna, Rukmini's son brought the large tree, Parijata, loved by Shakra, and entered the house. Because of Parijata's powers, all the people could see the superhuman properties of each other's bodies and were delighted. The lords among the Yadavas cheerfully praised Govinda. The prosperous one entered the house that had been prepared by Vishvakarma. With the Vrishnis, Achyuta, the one whose soul is immeasurable placed the peak of Maniparvata in the inner quarters. The one who triumphs over enemies worshipped the divine Parijata, supreme among trees, in an excellent place that he liked. Keshava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, then took leave of his kin. He honoured the women with what had been taken away by Naraka—garments, ornaments, objects of pleasure, female servants, stores of wealth, necklaces that had the splendour of the moon's beams and extremely radiant jewels that were like the sun. Vasudeva honoured the women with these. So did Devaki, Rohini, Revati and Ahuka. Satyabhama, supreme among women, brought good fortune. Rukmini, Bhishmaka's daughter, became the mistress of the household. Depending on what they deserved, Krishna instructed that they should be given mansions, tall buildings, houses and everything else that was needed.'

Chapter 95

Vaishampayana said, 'Then, Vasudeva honoured Garuda and treating him like a friend, gave him permission to return home. Having obtained permission, Garuda honoured and bowed down before Janardana. The bird who roams around in the sky rose up and then went wherever he desired. Because of the wind raised by his wings, the ocean, the abode of the makaras, was agitated. With great speed, he reached the eastern ocean. Before departing, Garuda said that he would return whenever he was needed for some task. Then, Krishna met his father, the aged Anakadundubhi. Madhava also met King Ugrasena, Baladeva, Sandipani from Kashi and the brahmana, Gargya. In a similar way, he met the other aged Vrishnis, Bhojas and Andhakas and honoured each of those Dasharhas by giving them jewels obtained through his own valour. "The Andhakas and Vrishnis have become victorious and all those who hate brahmanas have been killed. Madhusudana has returned unscathed from the battle. A man who was adorned with earrings and who was extremely respected all over Dvaravati made this announcement at all the crossroads.[958] Janardana approached Sandipani first. Then he humbly worshipped Ahuka, the king of the Vrishnis. After this, with Rama, Vasava's younger brother worshipped his father, whose eyes were overflowing with tears and who was senseless with joy. He then approached all those who remained and honoured them, depending on what they deserved. Adhokshaja[959] addressed all the Dasharhas by name. With Upendra at the forefront, all of them sat down on the best of divine seats, adorned with all kinds of jewels. On Krishna's instruction, men brought the infinite store of riches that had been accumulated by the servants to the assembly hall.[960] To the sound of drums being beaten, Janardana honoured and worshipped all the best of Dasharhas and Yadus. On Krishna's instructions, the best of Dasharhas entered the beautiful assembly hall, decorated with jewels, trees and gates, and seated themselves on excellent seats. Surrounded in all directions by lions among men and by the Yadus, he dazzled and sparkled even more, like a lion in a mountain cavern. With Rama, and placing the Vrishnis ahead of him, Govinda worshipped Ugrasena, who was seated on a large and golden seat. All those brave ones were happily seated there, according to age. Madhusudana addressed the best among Yadus who were in that assembly hall.’

Chapter 96

'Vasudeva said, "The evil-souled Bhouma Naraka has been slain because of your good deeds, the strength of your austerities and meditation and because of the intentions you bore against him. The maidens who were imprisoned and protected in that great city have been freed. The summit of Maniparvata has been uprooted and brought here. The servants collected an extremely great store of riches and I have brought it here. That belongs to you."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, he stopped. On hearing Vasudeva's words, the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas were filled with joy and their body hair stood up. They worshipped Janardana. The best among men joined their hands in salutation and said, "O mighty-armed one! O Devaki's son! It is not extraordinary that you should accomplish this extremely difficult task, which even the gods would have found most difficult. You have yourself obtained objects of pleasure and jewels and are nurturing your relatives with these." All the women among the Dasharhas and all of Ahuka's wives joyously came to the assembly hall, desiring to see Vasudeva. With Devaki as the seventh, the seven daughters of Devaka were there,[961] and so was Rohini, beautiful in face. They saw Krishna and the mighty-armed Rama, seated. Ignoring the precedence of age, Rama and Keshava first greeted Rohini and then, Devaki, Devaka's daughter. Because of these two sons, she[962] looked even more radiant, like Aditi, the mother of the gods, with Mitra and Varuna. At that time, her[963] daughter approached those two best among men. Men knew her as Ekamsha, the one who could assume any form at will. She was born at the same instant as the lord[964] and it was because of her acts that Purushottama was able to slay Kamsa and his soldiers. This maiden was brought up among the Vrishnis, worshipped by them. Because of Vasudeva's[965] instructions, she had been reared as a son. She was born at the same instant and men knew her as Ekamsha. This maiden, Yogamaya, was invincible and was born for Keshava's protection. Cheerful in their minds, all the Yadavas worshipped her. Divine in form, she was born so that she could protect the god, Krishna. Madhava saw that his beloved friend had come, and like a friend, held her with his right hand. In that way, the extremely strong Rama also embraced the beautiful one. He inhaled the fragrance of her head and held her with his left hand. Between Rama and Krishna, everyone saw their beloved sister. Her hands held a golden lotus and she was like Shri, whose abode is the lotus. All the women who had assembled showered down a great shower of parched grain and many kinds of auspicious flowers. They then departed to wherever they had come from. All the Yadavas worshipped Janardana. They happily sat down and praised his extraordinary deeds. The mighty-armed one, who enhanced the affection of the citizens, was worshipped. Because of his great deeds, he amused himself among them, like a god.

'When all of the Yadavas were seated around Janardana, on the instructions of Indra of the gods, Narada came to that assembly hall. He deserved worship and was worshipped by all the descendants of Shura, the bulls among the Yadus. Govinda was seated on a grand seat and he touched him with his hand. After he was happily seated, he spoke to the Vrishnis, who were also seated. "O bulls among men! Know that I have come here because of Shakra's words. O tigers among kings! Hear about Krishna's valour. Since his childhood, Keshava has performed these deeds. Kamsa, Ugrasena's son, crushed all his relatives. The evil-minded one seized the kingdom and bound his father, Ahuka. The worst of the lineage sought refuge with Jarasandha, his father-in-law. The evil-minded one showed disrespect to all the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas. The powerful Vasudeva[966] wished to accomplish the task of his kin. To protect Ugrasena, he protected his own son. Madhusudana, the one with dharma in his soul, resided in the groves of Mathura, with the gopas and performed extremely extraordinary deeds. All the Shurasenas saw these extremely wonderful deeds. Hear about them. When he was lying down, he flung up his legs and destroyed a cart. There was a fierce demoness who had assumed the form of a bird. She was terrible and her name was Putana. She was extremely large and extremely strong. She was killed. Her breast was tinged with poison and she offered it to the great-souled one. Those who roam around in the forest saw that this demoness was killed. Since he was born again, he came to be known as Adhokshaja.[967] As a child, Purushottama was extremely extraordinary. While playing, he overturned the cart with his toe. He was tied to a mortar with rope and did something that was quite unlike a child. Therefore, Vasudeva came to be known as Damodara.[968] The great serpent, Kaliya, was impossible to withstand and extremely strong. In the pool in the Yamuna, Vasudeva playfully vanquished him. Akrura saw the lord go to the abode of the nagas. He assumed a divine form and was worshipped by the serpents there. The intelligent Krishna saw the cattle were afflicted by the cold and the wind. For seven nights, the great-souled one held up Mount Govardhana. That is because Vasudeva wanted to save the cows and the calves. Arishtaka[969] was extremely wicked and extremely strong. He was giant in form and killed men. Vasudeva, the lord of cattle, killed him and flung him down on the ground. The danava Dhenuka was giant in form and extremely strong. To save cattle, Vasudeva killed the evil-minded one. Sunama had come, at the head of an army of soldiers, to sieze him. But the slayer of enemies used wolves to drive him away. He then again roamed around in the forest, in the company of Rohini's son, causing fear to Kamsa. The king of Bhoja sent a horse, which was capable of fighting, to the forest. However, Shouri Purushottama killed it. Kamsa's aide was the danava Pralamba, giant in form. Rohini's intelligent son brought him down with a blow of the fist. Vasudeva's two sons are like sons of the gods. Those two great-souled ones grew up and were taught good conduct by the brahmana Gargya. Since their birth, the supreme rishi Gargya, who knew about the truth, performed their *samskara*s at the appropriate time.[970] When these best among men attained youth, they were like crazy lion cubs on the slope of the Himalayas. These two immensely strong ones stole the hearts of the gopa women. Those two brave ones were as radiant as the gods and roamed around in Vraja. Nandagopa's cowherds were incapable of looking at them.[971] Their chests were broad and their arms were large. They were like the trunks of sala trees. On hearing about them, Kamsa and his advisers were distressed. When Kamsa was unable to seize Bala and Keshava, he became angry and imprisoned Vasudeva[972] and his relatives. Like a thief, along with Ugrasena, Anakadundubhi suffered that severe imprisonment and hardship for a long period of time. With the support of Jarasandha, Ahvriti and Bhishmaka, Kamsa imprisoned his father and ruled over the kingdom of Shurasena. After some time, King Kamsa decided to hold a great festival in Mathura in honour of Pinaki[973] and issued instructions. O lord of the earth! Wrestlers, dancers, singers and those accomplished in singing and dancing assembled there from many countries. Following proper rites, the greatly energetic Kamsa made skilled artisans construct an extremely expensive arena. There were thousands of galleries there, for the residents of the city and the countryside. These were filled with spectators, like stellar bodies in the sky. Kamsa, the prosperous king of Bhoja, ascended the extremely expensive royal gallery, like a person of virtuous deeds climbing on to a celestial vehicle. Kamsa stationed a brave and crazy elephant at the gate to the arena, stocked with a large supply of weapons and attended by valiant and brave guards. The great Bhoja had heard that Rama and Krishna, tigers among men, had arrived, like the sun and the moon. To ensure his protection, the king made every kind of effort. Thinking of Rama and Krishna, he could not sleep happily at night. Having heard about that supreme assembly, the brave Rama and Krishna entered there, like tigers entering a pen of cows. The guards prevented the bulls among men from entering. However, those slayers of enemies killed Kuvalayapida and its rider. Those invisible ones then entered the arena. Keshava and Bala crushed Chanura and Andhra. They brought down Ugrasena's evil-souled son[974] and his younger brother. The tasks accomplished by the lion among the Yadus are extremely difficult, even for the gods. Where is the other man who is capable of undertaking the other tasks that Keshava has done? Shouri has brought a wealth of riches here for you and, earlier, even the likes of Prahlada, Bali and Shambara could not accumulate anything like this. He is the one who attacked the daityas Mura and Panchajana. He crossed over a range of mountains and slew Nisunda and his followers. He killed Bhouma Naraka, who had seized the auspicious earrings. Amidst the gods in heaven, Keshava earned great fame. Resorting to the strength of Krishna's arms, you are devoid of sorrow, fear and obstructions. O Yadavas! Without any anger, perform many kinds of sacrifices. The intelligent Krishna has performed a great task for the gods. I have told you what is beneficial and do this quickly. May you be fortunate. O best among the Yadus! I will attentively do whatever you desire. I am established in you and you are established in me. These are the words conveyed by the chastiser of Paka to Krishna. Pleased, the best among the gods has sent me and I am also content. Wherever there is humility, prosperity exists there. Wherever there is prosperity, good behaviour exists there. Wherever the great-souled Krishna exists, good behaviour, humility and prosperity are always present.”’

Chapter 97

'Narada said, "He destroyed Mura's noose and killed Nisunda and Naraka. He again made the route towards the city of Pragjyotisha peaceful. Through the twang of his bow and the roar of Panchajanya, Shouri terrified kings who challenged him in battle. Keshava, bull among the Vrishnis, swiftly abducted Rukmini, who was protected by those from the southern regions, with battle formations that were as large as the clouds. The wielder of the conch shell, chakra and mace, who was on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun and roared like clouds, obtained the daughter of Bhoja[975] as his queen. He vanquished Ahvriti[976] in Jaruthi, Kratha and Shishupala. In his rage, he killed Indradyumna and the yavana Kasheruman. The one who wields a firm bow destroyed Salva, the lord of Soubha, and Soubha. With his chakra, Purushottama shattered thousands of mountains. Pundarikaksha brought down Dyumatsena. In the twinkling of an eye, the tiger among men went to the summit of Mount Mahendra and slew Ravana's followers, who roamed around fearlessly there. On the banks of the Iravati, the great Bhoja, the wielder of the Sharnga bow, killed Gopati and Talaketu, who were like the fire and the sun in battle. In Akshaprapatana, Krishna brought down the danavas Nimi[977] and Hamsa and destroyed their kingdoms. The great-souled Keshava burnt down Varanasi. He slew the king of Kashi and his relatives and destroyed his kingdom. Krishna, the performer of extraordinary deeds, used arrows with drooping tufts to defeat Yama in a battle and brought back Indrasena's son. Having reached the summit of Lohita, Krishna defeated Varuna, the immensely strong lord of the ocean, along with all the aquatic creatures. He went to the great Indra's abode and performed an unthinkable task. He seized the Parijata tree, protected by the great-souled gods, from Indra of the gods. Janardana killed all the kings from Pandya, Poundra, Matsya, Kalinga and Vanga. Having slain one hundred and one great-souled kings in battle, the intelligent one obtained the beautiful Gandhari[978] as his queen. In that way, in Kunti's presence, the lord Madhusudana played with the wielder of the Gandiva[979] and defeated him. Purushottama defeated Drona, Drona’s son, Kripa, Karna, Bhimasena,[980] Suyodhana and all their assembled followers. Desiring to accomplish what was agreeable to Babhru,[981] the lord, the wielder of the conch shell, chakra and sword abducted the daughter of the king of Souvira. For the sake of Venudari, Purushottama conquered the entire earth, with all its horses, chariots and elephants. In an earlier body, Bhoja Hari Madhava obtained energy and strength through austerities and won the three worlds from Bali. Along the road towards the city of Pragjyotisha, the danavas attacked him with thunder, lightning, clubs and summits of mountains and tried to terrify him with the threat of death. The immensely strong Krishna defeated Bana, the immensely brave and supremely prosperous son of Bali, along with his followers. The mighty-armed and immensely strong Janardana killed Kamsa’s advisers—Pitha, Paithika and Asiloma. The tiger among men, the slayer of enemies, killed the immensely illustrious Jambha, Airavata and Virupa. In the water, Pundarikaksha vanquished the greatly energetic Kaliya, lord of the serpents, and despatched him to the ocean. Hari, tiger among men, defeated Vaivasvata Yama and brought Sandipani’s dead son back to life. In this way, the mighty-armed one chastised all the evil-souled ones. He slew Bhouma Naraka and seized the bejewelled earrings. To bring pleasure to the one with the vajra in his hand, he gave these to the mother of the gods. In this fashion, the lord Krishna, the immensely illustrious lord of all the worlds, caused terror among the daityas, who tried to create fear among the gods. After establishing dharma in the mortal world, performing an infinite number of tasks for the gods and observing sacrifices and rites with copious quantities of dakshina, he will return to his own abode. The immensely illustrious Krishna will bring about the end of the beautiful and prosperous Dvaraka through some reeds, make it merge into his own self and submerge in the ocean. Dvaraka is full of many jewels and is marked with hundreds of sanctuaries[982] and sacrificial altars. With all its groves, it will be sent to Varuna’s abode. Those who know take it to be like the sun god’s abode. However, abandoned by Vasudeva, the wielder of the Sharnga bow, it will be flooded by the ocean. Among gods, asuras and men, there has not been, nor will there ever be, a resident of the city who is Madhusudana’s equal. Vishnu Narayana is himself the moon and the sun. In this way, he will bring about what has been ordained for the Dasharhas. He is immeasurable. He is uncontrollable. He is under his own control and goes wherever he wishes. Like a child playing with toys, he always amuses himself with creatures. We are incapable of gauging the mighty-armed Madhusudana. He is supreme among the supreme and there is nothing other than his universal form. He should be praised in hundreds of ways and in hundreds and thousands of ways. No one has ever been able to see an end to his deeds. With Samkarshana as an aide, in childhood and middle age, Pundarikaksha has performed such deeds. The great yogi, Vyasa, is immensely intelligent and can see everything directly. Because of his foresight, he possesses foresight and he spoke about all this long ago."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Using the great Indra's words, the rishi praised Govinda in this way. Worshipped by all the Yadus, Narada then returned to heaven. As they deserved and following the proper rites, Pundarikaksha Govinda Madhusudana then gave away his riches to the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Having obtained these riches, the great-souled Yadavas resided in the city of Dvaraka. Following the rituals, they performed rites and sacrifices and gave away copious amounts of dakshina.'

Chapter 98

Janamejaya said, ‘O illustrious one! Among the thousands of his wives, eight are spoken about. Tell me about the offspring that he had through these eight.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘It is generally said that all the eight queens had children. All these offspring were brave. I will tell you about his sons. Listen. Rukmini, Satyabhama, the queen who was Nagnajit’s daughter, Sudatta Shaibya, Lakshmana of the beautiful smiles, Mitravinda, Kalindi, Pouravi Jambavati and Subhima Madri.[983] Hear about Rukmini’s children. Pradyumna was born first and he was the son who killed Shambara. The second was Charudeshna, who was a maharatha and a lion among the Vrishnis. There were also Charubhadra, Bhadracharu, Sudamshtra, Druma, Sushena, Charugupta, Charuvinda and Charuman. The youngest was Charubahu and there was a daughter named Charumati. Satyabhama gave birth to sons named Bhanu, Bhimaratha, Kshupa, Rohita, Diptiman, Tamrajaksha and Jalantaka. Through the one who has Garuda on his standard, four sisters were born to these. Jambavati gave birth to a son named Samba and he was an ornament in the field of battle. She also had sons named Mitravan and Mitravinda[984] and a daughter named Mitravati. Know that Mitravaha and Sunitha were the sons of Nagnajit’s daughter. There were also sons named Bhadrakara and Bhadravinda and a daughter named Bhadravati. Samgramjit was born to Sudatta Shaibya and so were Satyajit, Senajit and the brave Sapatnajit. The sons of Subhima Madri were Vrikashva, Vrikanivritti and the prince Vrikadipti. Now hear about Lakshmana’s offspring. She gave birth to Gatravan, Gatragupta and the valiant Gatravinda, along with a younger sister named Gatravati. Kalindi had sons named Ashruta and Shrutasattama. Madhusudana gave Ashruta to Shrutasena.[985] Hrishikesha gave his wife this son and happily said, “For an eternity, he will be the heir to both of you.”[986] The son born through Brihati was known as Gada.[987] The son through Shaibya was known as Angada and she also gave birth to Kumuda and Shveta and a daughter named Shveta.[988] Chitrasena’s sons were

Agavaha, Sumitra, Shuchi, Chitraratha and Chitrasena[989] and her daughters were Chitra and Chitravati. Vanastamba gave birth to Stamba and Stambavana. Upasanga had sons named Vajra and Sukshipra. Koushiki's son was Sutasoma.[990] Youdhishthiri had sons named Yudhishthira,[991] Kapali and Garuda and they were colourful in fighting.

'O supreme among kings![992] Through the princess of Vidarbha, Pradyumna had a son named Aniruddha. In battles, this warrior had a deer on his standard. Through Revati, Baladeva had the sons Nishatha and Ulmuka. These brothers were supreme among men and were like the gods. Shouri[993] had two other wives—Sutanu and Narachi. Poundra and Kapila were Vasudeva's sons. Narachi gave birth to Kapila and Sutanu's son was Poundra. Between the two, Poundra became a king and Kapila left for the forest. The immensely strong Vasudeva[994] had a brave son through Turya. His name was Jara and he was best among archers, becoming the lord of the nishadas. Through Samba, Kashya obtained a spirited son named Suparshva. Aniruddha had a son named Sanu and Sanu's son was Vajra. Vajra's son was Prativaha and Sucharu was Prativaha's son. The youngest of the descendants of Vrishni, Anamitra, had a son named Shini. Shini's son was Satyavak and Satyavak's son was the maharatha Satyaka. Satyaka had the brave son known as Yuyudhana.[995] Yuyudhana's son was Asanga and Asanga's son was Bhumi. Bhumi's son was Yugandhara. Thus ends the description of the lineage.'

Chapter 99

Janamejaya said, ‘You have earlier spoken about Pradyumna, the slayer of Shambara. How was he born and how did he kill Shambara? Please tell me.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Through Rukmini, Vasudeva had a son named Pradyumna. He was firm in his vows and prosperous and desirable. He was as handsome as the god of love.[996] Before seven nights were over, in the night, Kalashambara stole Krishna’s infant child from the chamber where he had been delivered. Krishna knew about this. However, he followed the maya practised by the gods and did not restrain the danava, who was invincible in battle. The great asura was under the subjugation of death and following his own maya, seized him in both his hands and went away to his own city. He had a wife named Mayavati. Because of her own maya, she was pretty and possessed beauty and the qualities. However, she was without a child. Goaded by destiny, the danava gave Vasudeva’s son to his beloved queen, as if he was her own son. The danava lady was overcome with affection for him. The lotus-eyed one reared Krishna’s son and imparted all her knowledge of maya to him. When he became a youth, Pradyumna looked like the god of love. He became accomplished in the use of all weapons and also in what brought pleasure to women. The beautiful Mayavati desired the handsome one. She glanced at him and smiled at him. She sought to tempt him through signs. When the queen desired him, he addressed the one with the beautiful smiles. “Why are you abandoning your maternal instincts and acting in a perverse way? Alas! You possess the fickleness of women and are wicked in conduct. You have abandoned your feelings towards a son and have taken to a path of desire. O amiable one! Why have you deviated from good conduct? I am certainly not your son. O queen! Why are you behaving in this way? I wish to know the truth. It is indeed the case that the nature of women is as fickle as lightning. They desire men, just as clouds desire the summits of mountains. O amiable one! O beautiful one! Tell me whether I am your son or not. I wish to know the truth.

Why are you attracted to me?” The timid one was addressed in this way and her senses were afflicted by passion. In private, she spoke these words to her beloved, Keshava’s son. “O amiable one! You are not my son, nor is Shambara your father. You are handsome and brave and have been born as a descendant of the Vrishni lineage. You are Vasudeva’s son. You are the one who enhances Rukmini’s delight. While you were an infant, as soon as you were born, you were abducted on the seventh day, while you lay down on your back as an infant, in the chamber where you were delivered. O brave one! My husband, who possesses strength and valour, abducted you. He trespassed into the great house of Vasudeva, your father, who is like the chastiser of Paka. Shambara abducted you. Your mother is miserable and has been grieving about you since your childhood. O brave one! She is greatly distressed, like Surabhi over her calf. Your father, the one with Garuda on his banner, is greater than Shakra. He does not know that you have been abducted as an infant and are here. O handsome one! You are a Vrishni youth. You are not Shambara’s son. O brave one! The danavas do not give birth to sons like this. Since I have not given birth to you, I desire you. O amiable one! On beholding your beauty, my heart suffers and is weak. O handsome one! O Varshneya! You are in my mind and you should satisfy the desire that is there in my heart. O amiable one! I have told you about my sentiments. You are not my son. Nor are you Shambara’s son.” He heard everything that Mayavati had spoken.

‘The son of the wielder of the chakra became angry and called out to Shambara. Kalashambara was brave and knew about all kinds of maya. The maya he knew was undecaying in any battle. However, though he used all this maya, he was slain on the eighth day of the encounter. The supreme among asuras was killed in the city of Rikshavanta. Taking the queen Mayavati, he[997] then went to his father’s city. He was swift in his valour and resorted to maya, travelling through the sky. He reached the beautiful city, protected by his father’s energy. From the sky, the child descended into Keshava’s inner quarters. He was with Mayavati and looked as handsome as the god of love. When he descended like that, Keshava’s queens were astounded. Some were happy, but others were scared. He was like Kama and had arrived with his beloved. With happy faces, they drank him in with their eyes. They saw him walk one step at a time, face lowered in modesty. All of Krishna’s wives were delighted and overcome with affection. Rukmini loved her son and had been afflicted by grief. Surrounded by a hundred co-wives, she saw him and spoke these words, her voice choking with tears. “This is indeed the son of a blessed woman. He is handsome to behold and has a long life. In the first bloom of youth, he is like the god of love. O son! Who is the lady who has been blessed by fortune, with a living son like you? You are as dark as a cloud. Why have you come here with your wife? It is evident that my son Pradyumna would also have been of your age, had he not forcefully been taken away by Death. Or is it the case that my speculation is not in vain and you are a son of the Vrishni lineage? I have recognized you through the signs. You are like Janardana without his chakra. Your face, your hair and the ends of your hair are like Narayana’s. Your head, chest and arms are like those of the wielder of the plough, my elder brother-in-law. Who are you, standing here? Your body is as radiant as all those of the Vrishni lineage. Behold. Your body is as supreme as that of the divine Narayana.” At this time, Krishna suddenly entered. He had heard Narada’s words about Shambara’s killing. He saw his eldest son, who had been successful and had all the signs of the god of love. Happily, Janardana also saw his daughter-in-law, Mayavati. He swiftly spoke to the queen Rukmini, who was like a goddess. “O queen! This lord who has come here, holding a bow, is your son. He is accomplished in fighting with maya and has killed Shambara. He has destroyed the maya of all those who obstruct the gods. This auspicious and virtuous lady is your son’s wife. She has been reared in Shambara’s house and is famous by the name of Mayavati. Taking her to be Shambara’s wife, you should not be distressed. In ancient times, Manmatha was destroyed and became Ananga.[998] This maiden is Kama’s wife. She is the auspicious Rati, desired by Kama. Assuming a form through maya, this auspicious one confounded the daitya. In her youth, this beautiful lady was never under his subjugation. Using her own maya, she assumed a form and engaged with Shambara. This beautiful one is my son’s wife and your daughter-in-law. This pretty one will help the one who is loved by the worlds.[999] Let my daughter-in-law enter the house and let her be worshipped. For a long time, your son had remained perished. Now that he has returned, love him.”’

Chapter 100

Vaishampayana said, 'In the same month when Shambara, who wished to destroy himself, abducted Pradyumna, Jambavati gave birth to Samba. Since childhood, Rama taught him to show respect and all the Vrishnis respected him, just after Rama. All the enemies who lived in the border regions had been killed. As soon as he was born, Krishna entered that auspicious city, like an immortal entering Shakra's garden. On witnessing the prosperity of the Yadavas, Vasava disliked the prosperity he himself had obtained. Because of their fear of Janardana, the kings[1000] did not find any peace either. After some time, all the kings assembled for Duryodhana's sacrifice in the city of Varanasahvya.[1001] They heard about the prosperity of Madhava Janardana and his sons and about the city of Dvaravati, nestled along the shores of the ocean. All the kings on earth sent messengers and made peace with him. Wishing to see Hrishikesha's prosperity, they went to Krishna's house. There were all those who followed Dhritrarashtra, with Duryodhana at the forefront. There were Dhrishtadyumna and the other kings, with the Pandavas at the forefront. There were Pandyas, Cholas, lords from Kalinga, Bahlikas, Dravidas, Shakas and kings who were protected by eighteen akshouhinis. They arrived at the city of the Yadavas, protected by Govinda's arms. Those lords entered their own camps, which surrounded Mount Raivataka on all sides for a stretch of one yojana. With the bulls among the Yadavas, the prosperous and lotus-eyed Hrishikesha emerged and approached those lords among men. Amidst all those lords among men, the slayer of Madhu, best among the Yadus, stood out, like the moon in the autumn sky. Krishna welcomed them according to status and according to age and seated himself on a golden throne. The kings also sat down in diverse places. Those lords among men seated themselves on colourful thrones and seats. That assemblage of the Yadavas and the lords among men dazzled, like an assembly of the gods and the asuras in Brahma's abode. While Krishna looked on, in that meeting of the Yadus and the kings, wonderful stories were recounted.

'At this time, with a roar like that of the clouds, the wind began to blow. Lightning flashed and it was as if a tumultuous and terrible day had arrived. Shattering the clouds that were like a bad day, Narada appeared. There was a veena in his hand and his hair was matted. As resplendent as a fire, he descended in the middle of the kings. Narada was like the flames of a fire. The handsome sage was Shakra's friend. When Narada, bull among sages, descended on the ground, the giant clouds that were like the signs of a bad day disappeared. It is as if he submerged himself into the midst of an ocean that was made out of the kings. The undecaying sage spoke to the best of the Yadus,[1002] who was seated. "O Purushottama! Among all the gods, you alone are extraordinary. O mighty-armed one! You are blessed. There is no one like you in the worlds." Hearing this, the lord smiled and replied to the sage. "I am extraordinary and blessed because of the dakshina I receive." Thus addressed in the middle of the kings, the best among sages said, "O Krishna! You have said enough. I am going wherever I came from." The kings saw him start to leave. They had not understood the secret mantra spoken by the lord of the world or Narada's words. They said, "O Madhava! Narada said that you were extraordinary and blessed and you told him that this was because of the dakshina. We have not understood the great and divine words of the mantra. O Krishna! If we deserve to hear this, we desire to know the truth about this." At this, Krishna told all those bulls among kings, "This can be heard and the brahmana Narada will tell you about it. O Narada! Tell the kings about what they desire to hear. Tell them the truth about your question and the meaning in my words of reply." He[1003] sat down on a sparkling seat decortated with gold and spoke about his powers. "O best among men who have assembled here! Listen. This question is about the greatness of someone who has enabled me to cross over to the other side. On one occasion, I was on the banks of the Ganga, the guest of a person who bathes thrice a day. The night was over and the sun could be seen. I was roaming around, alone. I saw a tortoise whose body was made out of two shells. It possessed the complexion of a mountain peak. In every direction, the radius of its circumstance was one yojana. It possessed four legs. It was wet and smeared with mud. The tortoise was shaped like my veena and its shell was as tough as an elephant's hide. I touched the one who roams around in the water with my hand and said, 'O tortoise! It is my view that you possess a wonderful body and are blessed. Throughout, your body is covered with a shell that cannot be penetrated. Without any fear and without any kinds of thoughts, you roam around in the water.' The tortoise that roams around in the water spoke to me, as if it was a man. 'O sage! What is extraordinary about me? O lord! Why should I be blessed? The river Ganga is blessed. What can be more amazing than that? There are ten thousand creatures like me roaming around in the water.' Curious, I presented myself before the river Ganga and said, 'O best among rivers! You are blessed. You are always wonderful to behold. Inside you, there are many predatory aquatic creatures with gigantic bodies. You possess pools and head towards the ocean. You protect the abodes of ascetics.'"'

Vaishampayana continued, 'The brahmana Narada was loved by the gods, the gandharvas and Shakra. On hearing this, Ganga assumed a bodily form and replied to him. "O best among brahmanas! I am not blessed. Nor is my form extraordinary in any way. You are established in the truth. You have vexed me with your words. In this world, the most extraordinary object is the ocean. O brahmana! It is blessed. Like me, hundreds of wide rivers go there."

'Narada continued, "Hearing the words of the one with the three courses,[1004] I presented myself before the ocean and said, 'O great ocean! You are indeed extraordinary in the worlds. You are blessed. O lord of the waters! You are the origin of all aquatic creatures. The rivers that nurture the worlds convey their water to you. These wives,[1005] revered by the worlds, come here.' Stirred by the wind, the waves rose up from the surface of the water. Thus addressed, the ocean replied to me in these words. 'O supreme among brahmanas! The gods and the gandharvas do not regard me as wonderful. O sage! The earth provides me a foundation and it is blessed. With the exception of the earth, what is supremely wonderful in this world?' The ocean indeed possessed the earth as a foundation. On hearing the ocean's words, I was overcome with curiousity. I spoke to the earth, the refuge of the universe. 'O earth! O beautiful one! You are the origin of all creatures. You are blessed. With your immense forgiveness, you are extraordinary among creatures. You truly sustain the worlds and are the origin of humans. Forgiveness was born from you. Those who head to heaven commit their acts on you.’ At these words of praise spoken by me, she was ashamed. Discarding her natural patience, she replied to me. ‘O one who likes fights and dissension! The gods and the gandharvas do not regard me in this way. I am not blessed. Nor am I wonderful. My fortitude is like that of others. O best among brahmanas! These mountains, which hold me up, are blessed. Since they act like bridges for the worlds, they are seen to be blessed.’ Because of the earth’s words, I presented myself before the mountains and said, ‘O those who hold up the earth! You are seen to be blessed and extremely wonderful. All of you are the stores of jewels—gold, the best among gems and minerals. You will remain eternally on earth.’ Hearing my words, the best among mountains, decorated with forests, spoke these words of assurance. ‘O brahmana rishi! We are not blessed. Nor are we wonderful. Brahma Prajapati is blessed. He is wonderful, even among the gods.’ Therefore, I presented myself before the four-faced Svayambhu, the god who is the creator of the worlds. I lowered my face and progressively bowed down before him.[1006] When I finished speaking to the preceptor of the world and the one who had created himself, I said, ‘O illustrious one! You are extraordinary and blessed. I do not see any other creature who is your equal. Everything, mobile and immobile, has been generated from you. O lord of the gods! The gods, the danavas, the mortals in the worlds, every other kind of creature with senses and a body, and everything else has originated from you. The gods have indeed resulted from you. You are the eternal god of the gods. That is the reason you are the creator and the origin of the worlds.’ The illustrious Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, replied, ‘O Narada! Why are you speaking to me in these words, addressing me as blessed and extraordinary? The Vedas are supremely wonderful. The Vedas are blessed. The truth and vision of the Vedas sustain the worlds. My view is that the truth exists in the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda. O brahmana! Know that I am pervaded by them and that I am sustained by them.’ Hearing Parameshthi’s words and urged by Svayambhu, my mind turned towards a detailed exposition of the Vedas. Because of Svayambhu’s words, I presented myself before the four Vedas. Honouring them with mantras and words, I said, ‘You are blessed. You are auspicious. You are always wonderful and famous. Prajapati said that you are the foundation for all the brahmanas. Svayambhu has settled the question about who is supreme in this world. In learning or in austerities, there is nothing that is superior to you.’ The Vedas stood before me and replied in these words. ‘The sacrifices performed by those who are devoted to the atman are extraordinary and blessed. O Narada! We have been created by the creator for sacrifices. Therefore, sacrifices are superior to us and we are not under our own control. The Vedas are superior to Svayambhu, but that supreme objective is superior to them too.’ At this, I spoke to the sacrifices, with the fire that burn in households as the foremost. ‘O sacrifices! Your energy is indeed seen to be supreme. Those are the words of Brahma, repeated to me by the Vedas. In this world, I cannot think of anything more extraordinary than you. You are blessed, because you keep the brahmanas under your control. You are the ones who satisfy the fire and it is through you that all the gods obtain their shares and are satisified, just as the maharshis are with mantras.’ After I had spoken these words, *agnishtoma* and the other sacrifices, with all the sacrificial altars and stakes, spoke these excellent words to me. ‘O sage! The expressions extraordinary and blessed are not appropriate for us. The supreme wonder is Vishnu and he is our supreme destination. Everything that is offered as oblations into the sacred fire and is consumed by us is given to Pundarikaksha, who is an embodiment of the worlds.’ My destination is also Vishnu and I descended on earth to see him. I have seen Vishnu, surrounded by all of you. O kings! In the midst of all of you, I told him, ‘O Janardana! You are extraordinary. You are blessed.’ With dakshina, he gave an appropriate response to my words and thus my words were rendered complete. All the sacrifices, with dakshina, have Vishnu as a destination. With the dakshina, my question was answered. What was initially stated by the tortoise thus progressively came to this. With the dakshina, all the words terminated in that being. This is the decisive answer to what you asked me. I have told you everything. I will now return to wherever I have come from.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘When Narada had departed for heaven, all the lords of the earth were astounded. With their soldiers and their mounts, they returned to their own kingdoms. With the Yadus, who were like the fire, the brave Janardana, bull among the Yadus, entered his own residence.’

Chapter 101

Janamejaya said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to again hear about the supreme greatness of the mighty-armed Krishna, the lord of the universe. I am not yet satisfied with hearing about the great-souled and intelligent one’s deeds, as can be ascertained from the Puranas.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Even if I speak for one hundred years, I am incapable of describing all his powers. O great king! However, hear about the supreme Govinda. When Bhishma was lying down on his bed of arrows, he urged Bibhatsu,[1007] the wielder of Gandiva, to describe Keshava’s greatness. O great king! O Kourava! In the midst of the kings, he spoke to his elder brother Yudhishthira, who had vanquished his enemies. Listen to this.

‘Arjuna said, “On an earlier occasion, with my soldiers, I had gone to Dvaraka to visit my allies.[1008] Worshipped by the best of Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas, I lived there. During that time, on one occasion, the mighty-armed Madhusudana, with dharma in his soul, followed the rites mentioned in the sacred texts and initiated himself in a vow that lasted for a day. While he was thus initiated in that vow and seated, a supreme brahmana came to Krishna and exclaimed, ‘Save me.’ The brahmana said, ‘O lord! You have the right to protect me. Protect me. One-fourth of the fruits that come from following the dharma of protection go to the protector.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘O best among brahmanas! Do not be frightened. O unblemished one! What will I save you from? O fortunate one! Tell me the truth and I will act, even if it is extremely difficult to do so.’ The brahmana said, ‘O mighty-armed one! O lord! My sons die the instant they are born. O Krishna! Three have already died and you must save the fourth. My brahmana wife is in the delivery chamber now and protection must be ensured there. O Janardana! Act so that my offspring does not die.’ At this, Govinda told me, ‘I have initiated myself in a vow. However, it is one’s task to protect a brahmana in every possible situation.’ O supreme among men! On hearing Krishna’s words, I replied, ‘O Govinda! Engage me. I will protect the brahmana from fear.’ O lord of men! Hearing this, Janardana smiled and replied, ‘Who will protect you?’ I was ashamed. Knowing that I was ashamed, Janardana again said, ‘O best among Kouravas! If you are capable of protecting, go. The maharatha Vrishnis and Andhakas will advance in front of you, with the exception of the mighty-armed Rama and the immensely strong Pradyumna.’ I was surrounded by a great army of Vrishni soldiers. Placing the brahmana in front, I left with these soldiers.”’

Chapter 102

'Arjuna said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At an auspicious moment, we reached that village. All the mounts were exhausted and arrangements were made for staying. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![1009] I dwelt in the middle of the village, with the Vrishni soldiers spread out on every side of the habitation. The directions were ablaze and flaming birds and animals that shrieked in harsh tones scared and distressed me by the noise they made. The sun had turned pale and the twilight assumed the complexion of a red hibiscus. Large meteors showered down and made the earth tremble. I saw that large and terrible meteors were showering down, making the body hair stand up. The people were anxious and I commanded that all the arrangements should be made. Yuyudhana was at the forefront of the Vrishni and Andhaka maharathas. All of them yoked and readied their chariots and so did I. When midnight had passed, the brahmana was weak with fear. Scared, he came to me and spoke these words. 'The time has come for my brahmana wife to deliver. Remain steady and attentive, so that we are not deceived.' In a short while, I heard a piteous and distressed lamentation from the brahmana's house. 'Being taken away. Being taken away.' Then, I heard the child's cry from the sky, 'Alas!' Though he was being taken away, I did not see the rakshasa. O father![1010] We showered arrows in all the directions and blocked all the directions. Nevertheless, that child was taken away. When the infant child was abducted, the brahmana cried piteously. He spoke to me in harsh and terrible words. The Vrishnis were bereft of their senses and did not know what to do. The brahmana specially addressed me. 'You told me that you would protect. Nevertheless, you did not protect my son. O evil-minded one! Hear the other words that I have to say and you deserve them. Krishna is infinite in his intelligence and you always seek to rival him. Had Govinda been here, this unfortunate incident wouldn't have happened. O foolish one! A protector obtains one-fourth of the fruits of dharma that result from the act of protection.

But a person who fails to protect obtains a share of the sin. You pledged that you would protect. However, you were incapable of protecting. This Gandiva of yours is not invincible. Your prowess and fame are also not inviolate.' I departed without saying anything to the brahmana. With the sons of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, I went to the immensely radiant Krishna. Having gone to Dvaravati, I saw the slayer of Madhu. Govinda noticed that I was ashamed and tormented by grief. On seeing that I was ashamed, Madhava comforted me. He reassured the brahmana and spoke these words. He told Daruka, 'Yoke the horses, Sugriva, Shaibya, Meghapushpa and Balahaka.'[1011] Krishna Shouri made Daruka descend and asked me to be the charioteer, asking the brahmana to climb on to the chariot. O bull among the Kourava lineage! Krishna, the brahmana and I left for the northern direction, the one that belongs to Soma."'

Chapter 103

'Arjuna said, "We crossed over clusters of mountains, rivers and lakes and I saw the ocean, the abode of makaras. The ocean himself arose and welcomed Janardana, hands joined in salutation. Offering arghya, he asked, 'What can I do for you?' Accepting the worship, Janardana replied, 'O lord of the male and female rivers! I desire a path for my chariot.' The ocean joined his hands in salutation and spoke to the one who has Garuda on his standard. 'O illustrious one! Be pacified. If I give you a path, others will also proceed along that same route. O Janardana! Earlier, I have been established by you as someone who is fathomless. If you make me shallow, it will be a path that can be travelled on. Others will also proceed, including kings who are intoxicated because of their insolence. O Govinda! Bearing this in mind, do whatever is beneficial.' Vasudeva replied, 'O ocean! For the sake of the brahmana and for my sake, act in accordance with my words. With my exception, no other man will ever be able to transgress you.' Should he continue to be an obstruction, the ocean was scared of being cursed. Therefore, the ocean again spoke to Janardana and agreed. 'O father![1012] O Keshava! I am drying up and providing a path for you to traverse on. Proceed along that, with your chariot, your charioteer and your standard.' Vasudeva replied, 'Earlier, I have given you the boon that you will never dry up. Men will never know about the many kinds of riches that are stored inside you. O virtuous one! Stupefy the waters, so that I can pass on my chariot. A man will never be able to discern any sign of your jewels.' The ocean agreed and the stupefied waters retreated. We proceeded along a ground that was radiant with the hue of jewels.

'"Having crossed over the ocean, we crossed over Uttara Kuru. In a short while, we passed over Gandhamadana too. Seven mountains presented themselves before Keshava—they were named Jayanta, Vaijayanta, Nila, Mount Rajata, the giant Meru, Kailasa and Indrakuta. They were many-complexioned and radiant and were wonderful in many other ways. They presented themselves before Govinda and asked, ‘What shall we do?’ Madhusudana welcomed them back in the prescribed way. They prostrated themselves before Hrishikesha, who spoke to them. ‘Grant me a passage now, so that my chariot can proceed along that.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing Krishna’s words, the mountains agreed. They gave him the desired path. They then vanished and this seemed even more extraordinary to me. Without any obstructions, the chariot proceeded, like the sun through a net of clouds. O unblemished one! However, the horses dragged the chariot along with difficulty. There was a darkness that was like mud and one could only feel one’s way through touch. The darkness that arose was like a mountain. O king! On confronting this, the horses stood stationary, unable to move. At this, Govinda shattered the darkness with his chakra. The sky could again be seen and so could the supreme path for the chariot. Having emerged from that darkness, I could see the sky again. I regained my consciousness and my fear was dispelled. O supreme among eloquent ones! I next saw a blazing energy. It pervaded all the worlds and stationed itself, in the form of an embodied being. Hrishikesha entered that blazing mass of energy. I, and the excellent brahmana, remained on the chariot. In an instant, the supreme lord, Krishna, emerged, carrying with him the four sons of the brahmana. Janardana gave all these sons to the brahmana, the three who had been abducted earlier and the newborn son. O father! O lord! O king! On seeing the sons again, the brahmana was delighted. I was also supremely delighted and astounded. O bull among the Bharata lineage! After this, all of us, including the brahmana’s sons, returned the way we had gone. O supreme among kings! In a short while, we reached Dvaraka again. It was surprising that we returned before half a day was over. The immensely illustrious Krishna fed the brahmana and his sons. He satisfied them with riches and sent them home.”’

Chapter 104

‘Arjuna said, “Having been successful, Krishna fed many hundreds of brahmanas who were like rishis. With them, I, and all the Vrishnis and Bhojas, also ate. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We conversed about divine and wonderful accounts. When these tales were over, I approached Janardana. I asked Krishna about what had happened and about what I had seen. ‘O lotus-eyed one! How did you manage to stupefy the ocean? O Achyuta! How could you create a path through the mountains? How could you shatter the terrible darkness of the clouds with your chakra? You then entered a supreme energy. Where did that come from? O lord! Why were the children taken away? After that, how did you make the long journey brief? How did we manage to go and return in such a short while? O Keshava! Please tell me everything about what happened.’

‘“Vasudeva replied, ‘That great-souled one[1013] stole the children so that he could see me. He knew that Krishna would do this for the sake of a brahmana and not otherwise. O best among the Bharata lineage! You saw a mass of extraordinary brahman energy. That was I and that was my eternal energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That is my supreme nature, manifest and unmanifest. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! In this world, those who enter that are emancipated. O Partha! That is the supreme destination of those who practise sankhya, of yogis and ascetics. That is the state of the supreme brahman and that divides up everything in the universe. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should know that the mass of energy is me. I am the stupefied water of the ocean. I am the one who stupefied the water. I am the seven mountains that were progressively seen by you. I am the dense mass of darkness and I am the one who shattered them. I am the destiny for all creatures. I am spoken of as dharma. The four varnas have originated from me and so have the four ashramas. All the four directions are nothing but four different aspects of my soul. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that I am the one who created the four Vedas.'"

'Arjuna said, "O illustrious one! O lord of all the creatures. O lord! I wish to comprehend you. O Purushottama! I am seeking refuge with you and am asking you. I bow down before you."

'"Vasudeva replied, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Pandava! Know that Brahma, brahmanas, austerities, truth, *ukthya*s and *brihadratha*s[1014] have originated in me. O mighty-armed one! O Dhananjaya! I love you and you love me. O unblemished one! You should know the truth about me and that is the reason I am telling you this. I am the Yajur, Sama, Rig and Atharva Vedas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The rishis, the gods and sacrifices come from my energy. So do the earth, the wind, space, water, energy as the fifth, the moon, the sun, days, nights, fortnights, months, *kshapa*s,[1015] muhurtas, kalas and years. O Partha! The different kinds of mantras, all the sacred texts and the different kinds of knowledge that are to be known—all these have originated in me. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that creation and destruction are immersed in me. Existence, non-existence, and the state that is neither existence nor non-existence—all these are aspects of my soul.'"

'Arjuna said,[1016] "Pleased with me, Krishna told me all this. Since then, my mind has always been submerged in Janardana. This is how I heard about, and witnessed, Keshava's greatness. O Indra among kings! Everything else that you have asked me about is also immersed in Janardana."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'The best among the Kurus, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, heard this. In his mind, he worshipped Purushottama Govinda. The king, and all his brothers, were astounded. So were the kings who had assembled there.'

Chapter 105

Janamejaya said, ‘O best among brahmanas! I wish to again hear the truth about the immeasurable deeds of the intelligent lion among the Yadus. I have heard that the immensely radiant one performed many deeds, innumerable that were divine and several that were also ordinary. O great sage! I am delighted at hearing about these diverse deeds. O father![1017] You should tell me everything about them.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘I have told you about many wonderful deeds of the great-souled Keshava. O king! Hear about them again. O virtuous one! There is no end to his deeds and I am incapable of recounting them. O tiger among the Bharata lineage! I cannot describe the great-souled one’s deeds in detail. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! My words will certainly touch only a bit of them. Vishnu is infinite in his valour and is famous for his generous deeds. O king! I will describe them progressively. Listen with single-minded attention. The intelligent lion among the Yadus resided in Dvaravati. He agitated kings, the foremost among the kings and their kingdoms.[1018] He killed the danava Vichakra, who sought to create dissension among the Yadus. The great-souled one then went to the city of Pragjyotisha. In the midst of the ocean, he slew the evil-souled danava, Naraka. He vanquished Vasava in an encounter and forcefully seized Parijata. In a pool in Lohita, the illustrious one defeated Varuna. Along the southern path, he killed Karusha Dantavaktra. When Shishupala completed one hundred sins, he killed him.[1019] He went to the city of Shonita, protected by Shankara. Bali’s son, Bana, was immensely valorous and possessed one thousand arms. O great king! He defeated him in a great battle, but allowed him to remain alive. In the midst of the mountains, the great-souled one vanquished the fire god. He defeated Salva in an encounter and brought down Soubha.[1020] He agitated all the oceans and obtained Panchajanya. He killed Hayagriva and other immensely strong kings. After Jarasandha was killed, he freed all the kings. On a chariot, he defeated the king of Gandhara and abducted his daughter. Deprived of their kingdom, the Pandavas were afficted by grief and he protected them. He burnt down Puruhuta's terrible forest, known as Khandava.[1021] He arranged for Agni to give Gandiva to Arjuna. O Janamejaya! At the time of the terrible conflict,[1022] he acted as a messenger. This foremost among the Yadus made the lineage of the Yadus prosper. In front of Kunti, he took a pledge about the Pandavas. "When the Bharata war is over, I will return your sons to you." He freed the immensely energetic Nriga from a terrible curse.[1023] In a battle, he killed the one who was famous as Kalayavana. There were two immensely valourous apes, Mainda and Dvivida. He defeated them in a battle and also vanquished Jambavat, who was unassailable. O king! Sandipani's son and your father[1024] had come under Vaivasvata's subjugation, but he used his energy to bring them back to life. He fought many terrible battles, leading to the destruction of the best of men. He slew all those kings and performed extraordinary deeds in battles. O Janamejaya! I have told you about this earlier.'[1025]

Chapter 106

Janamejaya said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! I have heard the truth about the excellent accounts of the immeasurable deeds performed by the intelligent Vasudeva. You have earlier mentioned the great asura, Bana. O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear about this in detail. How did Vasudeva defeat Bana in a battle? The angry one wished to challenge him[1026] in a duel. How did he escape with his life?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! Hear attentively to the account of the great battle that took place in this world of men between the infinitely energetic Krishna and Bana. Bali’s son was insolent in battles and was aided by Rudra and Skanda. However, he was vanquished and allowed to escape with his life. The great-souled Shankara granted him[1027] a boon that he would always be near him and bestowed on him eternal lordship over the *gana*s.[1028] He went to Rudra, bowed down before him and greeted him. Bali’s son asked the following question to the one who has the bull on his standard. “With your support and with my insolent pride and soldiers, I have defeated the gods, the Sadhyas and large numbers of Maruts. They are terrified at their defeat and have lost all hope of vanquishing me. They now dwell happily in the vault of heaven. Therefore, I despair of being able to fight again and do not desire to remain alive any more. If I cannot fight, my possession of these arms[1029] is pointless. Hence, tell me if there is going to a battle again. O god! Without an encounter, I can find no delight. Show me your favours.” At this, the illustrious one, with the bull on his standard, laughed. He said, “O Bana! O danava! There will be a battle. Hear about it. O son![1030] Your standard is fixed in its appropriate place. When it is broken, there will be a battle.” Having been thus addressed, Bana laughed and was extremely delighted. With a happy face, he fell down at his feet and said, “It is good fortune that my possession of one thousand arms will not be in vain. It is through good fortune that, in a battle, I will again defeat the one with one thousand eyes.” The eyes of the scorcher of enemies filled with tears of joy. He joined five hundred pairs of hands in salutation and prostrating himself on the ground, worshipped the god.

‘Maheshvara said, “Arise! Arise! O brave one! You will obtain an unmatched encounter in a battle, one that befits your arms, your own self and your lineage.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Bana was thus addressed by the great-souled Tryambaka. He arose with great delight and quickly bowed down before the one with the bull on his banner. Bana, the destroyer of enemy cities, took Shitikantha’s[1031] leave and went to his own residence and to the chamber where his giant standard was kept. Seated there, he laughed and spoke to Kumbhanda. “I will tell you what has brought this delight to my mind.” He[1032] laughed and spoke to Bana, who was unmatched in battle. “O king! What will you tell me? What will I find agreeable? O excellent one! Your eyes are dilated with wonder and you seem to be overjoyed. What have you got through Shitikantha’s favours and Skanda’s protection? Has the wielder of the trident instructed that you will obtain the kingdom of the three worlds? Scared of you, will Indra find refuge in the nether regions? Will Diti’s sons overcome their fear of Vishnu? Scared of the chakra, they have to reside in abodes in the water. When the one with the Sharnga bow, chakra and mace in his hands is stationed in a supreme battle, will the asuras no longer be scared and terrified of Vishnu? Resorting to your strength, will they be able to give up the nether regions and go somewhere else? Will the great asuras reside where the gods now dwell? O king! Your father, Bali, has been bound down because of Vishnu’s strength. Abandoning that bondage in the water, will he get his kingdom back again? O father![1033] Will we see your father, Virochana’s son, adorned in divine garlands and garments and smeared with celestial paste? O lord! Earlier, the three worlds were taken away in three strides. Having defeated all the residents of heaven, will we again get them back? The god Narayana possesses a gentle and deep voice and the blare of the conch shell precedes him. He is the conqueror of armies. Will we vanquish him? O father! Is the one with the excellent face, the one with the bull on his banner, pleased with you? Your heart is beating and I notice tears of joy. By satisfying the lord[1034] and through Kartikeya’s favours, have you got back all our status on earth?” The bull among men was thus urged by Kumbhanda’s words. Bana, supreme among eloquent ones, loved to speak and said the following. “O Kumbhanda! For a long time, I have not had the opportunity to fight. That is what I cheerfully asked the powerful Shitikantha for. ‘O extremely great god! I desire a fight. How can I obtain an encounter that will please my mind?’ At this, Hara, the god of the gods and the slayer of enemies, laughed for an extremely long time. He then spoke these agreeable words. ‘O Bana! You will obtain an extremely great and unmatched encounter. O asura! When your standard, with the peacock on it, breaks, there will be a great battle.’ I was extremely delighted with what the illustrious one, the one with the bull on his standard, had said. I bowed my head down before the god and came to you.” Having been thus addressed, Kumbhanda spoke to the king. “Alas! O king! I do not find what the god has said to be auspicious.” While they were conversing with each other in this way, the upraised standard fell down with great force, struck by Shakra’s vajra. The asura saw that the supreme standard had fallen down. Thinking that the battle was at hand, he was greatly delighted.

‘Struck by Shakra’s vajra, the earth trembled. From the interiors of the earth, rats began to howl. Vasava, the god of the gods, started to shower down. The city of Shonita was filled with blood everywhere.[1035] Shattering the sun, giant meteors fell down on the surface of the ground. Since its own path was obstructed, the sun oppressed the earth. Hundreds and thousands of terrible streams of blood descended on sanctuaries and trees and the stars fell down. O lord of the earth! Though it wasn’t the right time, the sun was eclipsed by Rahu. Signifying a time for the destruction of the worlds, huge storms manifested themselves. A comet remained stationary in the southern direction. Extremely terrible winds began to blow incessantly. In the evening sky, the sun was covered by clubs with three colours—white and red at the ends and black-necked and tinged with lightning in the centre. Bana’s nakshatra at birth was Krittika. A retrograde Angaraka[1036] entered it and seemed to censure it in every possible way. There was a chaitya tree with many branches, worshipped by all the daughters of the great-souled danavas. This fell down on the ground. In this fashion, there were many portents and ill omens. However, Bana, intoxicated with pride and insolence, did not understand the nature of these. Bana’s adviser, Kumbhanda, possessed foresight and was conscious of what was likely to happen. He described these many portents.

‘Happy, Bana had an excellent drink. Intoxicated with valour, he amused himself with the daitya and danava women. Overcome by thoughts, Kumbhanda went to the king’s residence. Having seen these unthinkable omens, he reflected on what they might mean. “The king is evil in his intelligence and intoxicated. The great asura hopes to be victorious. He desires a battle and because of his intoxication, does not see any of these omens. These great portents cannot be false. Will all these portents that have been seen be rendered false? The one with the three eyes[1037] and the valiant Kartikeya are here. Will they help to overcome these taints and will we be able to avoid defeat? Because of the power of these portents, there can be a great destruction. It is my view that these portents will not be rendered false. There is no doubt that these omens will come to pass. Because of the oppression caused by the king, the danavas have been tainted. Bhava, the lord and creator of the universe and of large numbers of gods and danavas, and Kartikeya reside in our city. Bhava always loves Guha[1038] more than his own life. That apart, Bana has always been specially loved by Bhava. Bana is aided by both Bhava and Kumara. That being the case, who is capable of approaching Bana in an encounter?” Kumbhanda, who knew about the truth, thought in this way. The great asura’s intelligence was always devoted to what would ensure benefit. Even if they perform auspicious deeds, those who obstruct the gods will confront destruction in a battle, just as Bali was bound up.’

Chapter 107

Vaishampayana said, 'With the goddess,[1039] once Bhava went to the beautiful banks of a river. The lord sported there with the beautiful one. In every direction, hundreds of apsaras played. The lords of the gandharvas were there, in a forest that had flowers from all the seasons. There were blossoming Parijata and *santanaka* flowers. In every direction, this fragrance wafted along the banks of the river. Thousands of flutes, veenas, drums and trumpets were played and the songs of the apsaras could be heard. Bards, minstrels and large numbers of apsaras praised the god of the gods, the one with an excellent garlanded body, attired in red garments. Adopting the form of the goddess,[1040] Chitralekha, supreme among apsaras, pleased Bhava and the goddess laughed at this. With beautiful faces and adopting the form of the goddess, all the apsaras sported with him and the goddess laughed out loudly at this. In every direction, there were sounds of amusement and great joy and Bhava was delighted.

'Bana's beautiful daughter, named Usha, was present there and on the banks of the river, she saw the god sporting with the goddess. In Parvati's presence, Usha articulated her desire. "A woman who sports with her husband is fortunate." Discerning Usha's wish, the goddess, the daughter of the mountain, gently spoke these words to Usha, causing her joy. "O Usha! Soon, you will also amuse yourself with your husband, just as Shankara, the slayer of enemies, is finding pleasure with me, the goddess." When she was addressed by the goddess in these words, Usha's heart was filled with thoughts. "When will I amuse myself with my husband?" At this, the daughter of the Himalayas smiled and spoke these words. "O Usha! O fortunate one! Listen. This is how the union will come about. In the palace, in the month of Vaishakha, in the evening of the twelfth lunar day, the person who will have intercourse with you in your dreams will become your husband." Surrounded by maidens, the daughter of the daitya was addressed in this way. She joyfully retreated and roamed around happily. When day was over, having played and sported with Uma, all those women went away. Some left on horses, others on elephants and chariots. Some of them travelled through the sky. All of them happily returned to their own cities.

‘It became the month of Vaishakha. On the twelfth day of shuklapaksha, surrounded by large numbers of her friends, the beautiful one was lying down in the palace. A man arrived in Usha’s dreams and had intercourse with her. Though she wept, because of the words of the goddess, she was violated. She was violated in her sleep and became a woman. Covered with blood, she suddenly woke up in the night and started to weep. On seeing her crying in this way, Chitralekha,[1041] her friend, was scared. However, in gentle words, she comforted her about this wonderful incident. “O Usha! Do not be frightened. Why are you weeping and lamenting? You are Bali’s son’s daughter and are also famous. O one with the beautiful brows! Why should you be frightened? For someone like you, there is no fear in the worlds. O one with the beautiful thighs! Since your father destroys the gods in battle, you are the one who should generate fear. Arise! O fortunate one! Arise! O beautiful one! Your sorrow is pointless. O one with the beautiful face! In this residence, there is nothing for you to fear. With all the gods, the lord of the gods, Shachi’s consort, was unsuccessful in invading this city and and was driven away by your father in an encounter. All these large numbers of gods are scared of your father in a battle.” Usha replied, “I am a virtuous lady and have been violated in this way. How can I be interested in remaining alive? What will I tell my father, the enemy of the gods and the slayer of enemies! My lineage is extremely energetic and I have polluted it in this way. I think it is better for me to die. It is not desirable that I should remain alive. I am known as a maiden. Having done this, how can I be interested in remaining alive? I have been known as a woman who was the best among the virtuous. However, I have polluted my lineage and brought disgrace to my family. I have no refuge now. How can I be interested in remaining alive?” Surrounded by large numbers of her friends, Usha, the lotus-eyed one, lamented for a long period of time in this way, her eyes full of tears. With all her friends, bereft of her senses, she wept like someone who was without a protector. All of them surrounded Usha, their eyes also full of tears, and said, “O queen! O one with the beautiful brows! If something is done with a wicked mind, there may be an auspicious or inauspicious consequence. However, in your mind, you did not do anything evil. O fortunate one! Since this intercourse occurred in your dream, there has been no deviation from your vows. O queen! There has been no transgression because of this act of intercourse. It is said on earth that a woman is tainted through a sin that occurs in one of three ways: the mind, words, and specially through deeds. O timid one! Your mind is always upright and has not been tainted. You have always followed brahmacharya. How can you be tainted by this sin? You were asleep. You are virtuous, pure in sentiments and spirited. If you have been brought about to this state, there is no destruction of dharma in that. When a wicked mind first instigates a person to evil action, it is only then that a person is wicked. O beautiful one! You are virtuous. You have been born in a noble lineage. You are beautiful. You are controlled and follow brahmacharya. Yet, you have been brought about to this state. Destiny cannot be overcome." Eyes filled with tears, Kumbhanda's daughter[1042] spoke the following supreme words to the one who was weeping. "O Usha! While you were thinking about your husband, the goddess spoke to you, in the presence of the god of the gods. O beautiful one! Remember those words. In the month of Vaishakha, in the night, on the twelfth day of shuklapaksha, while you are lying down in the palace and weeping, you will be made a woman. That brave person, the slayer of enemies, will become your husband. Recognizing your wish, the goddess had cheerfully told you this. The words spoken by Parvati cannot be false. O one with a face like the moon! That being the case, why are you weeping?" Bana's daughter, the one with the auspicious eyes, was addressed in this way and remembered the words spoken by the goddess. She overcame her sorrow. Usha replied, "O beautiful one! When the goddess was sporting with Bhava, I now remember the words that she spoke. Everything that she said has come true in the grounds of this palace. The wife of the protector of the worlds told me about my husband. The task is to now decide how we find out who he is." Kumbhanda's daughter was skilled in discerning the truth and determining good policy. Having been addressed in this way, she again spoke these words. "O queen! With the exception of you, no one knows the truth about his lineage, his deeds or his manliness. O unblemished one! With the exception of what you saw in your sleep, no one has seen him or heard of him. O timid one! How will we know about the one who gave you that blazing pleasure? O friend! O dark-eyed one! O one who desired intercourse! While you wept, he used his valour to enter the inner quarters and enjoyed you. He cannot be an ordinary person. Otherwise, he would not have been able to single-handedly enter our city. He must be a slayer of enemies. The Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras and the Ashvins, greatly energetic and terrible in valour, are incapable of entering the city of Shonita. This slayer of enemies has stepped over Bana's head and entered the city of Shonita. He is a hundred times better than they are. O one with the auspicious eyes! Why should a woman who has a husband like that, who is accomplished in fighting, not be interested in remaining alive or enjoying herself? A woman with a husband like this is favoured and blessed. O one who wishes to satisfy her desires! You have obtained this through the favours of Parvati, the goddess. Without any fear, listen to what must be done. One must find out whose son he is, his name and his lineage." Usha, consumed by desire, was addressed in these words. She affectionately replied to Kumbhanda's daughter, Chitralekha, the apsara, "O friend! O friend! How will we find out?" Immersed in her thoughts, she spoke words that are extremely difficult to utter. "O friend! O beautiful one! Listen to my final words. O lotus-eyed one! If you do not bring my beloved husband here today, I will give up my beloved life. He is beautiful, with eyes like lotus petals. His valour is like that of a crazy elephant." Chitralekha smiled and gently spoke these words to Usha. "O Usha! O beautiful one! O one who is excellent in her vows! I do not understand. How will we know? O friend! However, using my intelligence, this is what we are capable of doing. Listen to my words. That is the way you will obtain what you desire. O friend! O timid one! In the next seven days, I will draw pictures of all the gods, danavas, yakshas, the distinguished ones in powers, beauty and birth, the foremost beings among all those who exist everywhere and the best and famous people in the world of men. I will show them to you through my drawings and you will be able to identify your husband." Having said this, in the next seven days, she drew all their pictures. The beautiful one drew pictures of these best of people.

'Chitralekha spread out the pictures that she had herself drawn and showed them to her friends, especially to Usha. "These are the gods. These are the best among those of the danava lineage. These are the kinnaras, serpents and yakshas. These are all the rakshasas. These are special men among all those who are men. Glance at all of them, in the pictures that I have drawn of them. O friend! I have drawn them. Which is the form of your husband? Recognize the one you saw in your dream." Progressively, the one who was overcome by desire looked at all of them. Having passed over all the Yadus, she saw the descendant of the Yadu lineage. On seeing Aniruddha, her eyes dilated with wonder. She told Chitralekha, "O friend! This is the one who has perpetrated that theft on me. Earlier, when I was lying down in the palace and dreaming, he is the one who violated me. O auspicious one! I know him by his form. Where has this thief come from? O Chitralekha! O beautiful one! Tell me the truth about him. What are his qualities and conduct? O beautiful one! What is his lineage and what is his name?" Chitralekha replied, "This is the grandson of the intelligent Krishna, the protector of the three worlds. O large-eyed one! He is terrible in his valour. He is your husband and he is Pradyumna's son. In valour, there is no one in the three worlds who is his equal. He uproots mountains and uses them to shatter other mountains. Since he is a bull among the Yadus, you are blessed and favoured. The wife of the one with the three eyes has decided well. You have obtained a virtuous husband who is your equal." Usha said, "O large-eyed one! O beautiful one! If this is my husband, an equal of the immortals, swiftly bring him here and save my life." Hearing Usha's words, Chitralekha spoke these words. "O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful smiles! You should listen to my words. O queen! Bana's city is protected in every direction. O timid one! In that way, Dvaraka is especially difficult to penetrate. It is impossible to enter the city of Dvaraka undetected. Protect me and your own self, especially from your father." Usha said, "O friend! Aniruddha's face is like the full moon. If I do not see it today, I will go to Yama's abode. If you know me and if you are affectionate towards me as a friend, listen to what I say. Swiftly go and bring my beloved. Grant me my beloved and grant me my life." Chitralekha replied, "O timid one! I will leave now and enter the city of Dvaraka. I will bring your husband, the extender of the Vrishni lineage, here today." Her words were inauspicious and would signify fear for the danavas. However, having said this, Chitralekha, who possessed the speed of thought, vanished. In a short instant, in three muhurtas, he left the city of Bana and reached Dvaraka, protected by Krishna. It was like the summit of Kailasa, adorned with beautiful palaces. She saw Dvaraka, which was like a star in the firmament.’

Chapter 108

Vaishampayana said, ‘In the middle of Dvaraka, adorned with palaces, she saw the house where Pradyumna’s son dwelt happily. She swiftly entered that large residence. She saw him amidst the women, like a moon that has just arisen. He was playing and amusing himself with the women, served by them. He was supremely handsome and was drinking the liquor madhvika. He was seated on an excellent seat, like Ailavila.[1043] The spirited Chitralekha began to think. “How will I accomplish my task? How will I remain safe and perform my duty?” Hidden, the illustrious Chitralekha thought in this way. The one with the auspicious eyes was invisible because she shrouded herself, using the knowledge of darkness.[1044] Despite remaining amidst the women in the palace, she rendered herself invisible. She seized Pradyumna’s son, who was invincible in battle, and leapt up into the sky. She made him vanish from there. Using the path frequented by the siddhas and the *charana*s, with the speed of thought, she suddenly entered the city of Shonita. Surrounded by her friends in the palace, Usha was astounded to see him. Now that he had reached, she made him enter her own house. On seeing her beloved and on her intention having been accomplished, her eyes dilated with joy. However, the accomplished and beautiful one was also overcome by fear. She quickly told Chitralekha, “O friend! O one who is accomplished in all tasks! How will we manage to keep this act a secret? As long as it is a secret, we are safe. If it comes out, there will be a threat to our lives.” The ornamented one was in a secret place and quickly spoke these words. She was with her beloved, but was also frightened and scared. Undetected by anyone, they united with each other and she found pleasure with Aniruddha.

‘The bull among the Yadus was adorned in divine garlands and garments and smeared with celestial unguents and paste. He united with Usha. However, at one particular time, he was detected by Bana’s guards. Those spies and men told Bana everything, without leaving anything out, about how his daughter had been violated. Bali's son, Bana, the slayer of brave enemies and the performer of terrible deeds, commanded an army of servants. "All of you go together and slay the evil-minded one. He has polluted our lineage and character. He is tainted and wicked in his soul. By raping Usha, it is as if he has molested our great lineage. She was not bestowed on him by us. He seized her himself and violated her. What kind of valour is this? What kind of fortitude is this? What kind of impertinence is this? He is evil-minded. Like an extremely foolish child, he has entered the city and the residence." Those angry danavas raised many kinds of weapons and assumed many kinds of forms. They attacked, wishing to kill Pradyumna's son. He heard their voices and all their roars. The brave one suddenly arose, like an elephant that has been struck. The mighty-armed one bit his lips. On seeing him climb on to the palace, all of them were afflicted by fear and fled. The one who was accomplished in fighting in many kinds of ways picked up a gigantic club that was kept at the gate of the inner quarters. To kill them, he flung this at them. All of them showered down arrows, clubs, javelins, swords, spears and tridents, trying to kill him in that field of battle. The one who was in the soul of all beings[1045] was not agitated. He roared like a cloud at the end of summer. In every direction, he slew them with iron arrows and clubs. He was like the sun in the sky, surrounded in every direction by clouds. Standing amidst them, he struck them with a terrible club. The infinitely energetic one slew them with that fierce club. Terrified, all of them ran away, like clouds driven away by the wind. Aniruddha cheerfully roared. He roared like a lion and roamed around. He was like a cloud in the sky at the end of summer, thundering loudly. He roared at the danavas who were indomitable in battle, "Stay." Pradyumna's son, the slayer of enemies, slaughtered all of them.

'In the battle, all of them were killed by the great-souled one. They retreated from the encounter. They were scared and went to Bana. Blood flowing from their limbs, they reached Bana and sighed. The daityas could not find any peace. They were immobile and their eyes were terrified. The king urged them, "Do not be frightened. Do not be scared. Abandon your fear. O bulls among the danavas! Remain together and fight. Why have you run away, abandoning the fame that is known in the worlds. You have been overcome by lassitude. You are unconscious, like eunuchs. Whom are you frightened of, that you are running away collectively? You are accomplished in fighting in many kinds of ways. Yet, all of you are the worst of your lineages. I will fight without you. There is no need for you to aid me. May you cease to exist. Go away from me and be destroyed." This is what he told them. The powerful one, fierce and eloquent, spoke in different ways to urge and goad the terrified ones. He again despatched ten thousand brave ones to fight. Large numbers of demons were instructed to seize him.[1046] There was an extremely large army there, raising many kinds of weapons. Bana's army covered everything, their eyes blazing. It was as if the firmament was covered with many kinds of clouds tinged with lightning. In every direction, some of them were stationed on the ground, like trumpeting elephants. Others were in the sky, like clouds at the end of the summer. An extremely terrible encounter raged again. Everywhere, the words "stay", "wait" were heard. In that encounter, it was a great wonder, since a single person fought against many extremely brave danavas who attacked him. The immensely strong one seized their clubs and spears and used these to kill them in the great battle. In the forefront of the battle, he again seized a terrible club. In the encounter, he used this to slay large numbers of immensely strong daityas. The slayer of enemies grasped a sword and a shield in the encounter. In the forefront of the battle, he roamed around in many modes of fighting—circling around, leaping up, descending, leaping up and jumping down, traversing diagonally. He exhibited such thirty-two modes of fighting.[1047] In the forefront of the battle, a single person seemed to appear in thousands of forms. In the encounter, he sported in many ways, like Death with a gaping jaw. They sought to torment him. However, their bodies covered with blood, they were again routed and fled to where Bana was stationed in the battle. On their elephants, horses and chariots, they fled in the different directions. Those fierce ones uttered terrible shrieks of desperation. They were afflicted by fear and climbed over each other. They vomited blood. Overcome by depression, they retreated from the fight. Earlier, when they had fought in a battle, the danavas had never suffered from the kind of terror they faced in their encounter with Aniruddha. Some of them vomited blood. Others fell down on the surface of the ground. With clubs, spears and swords in their hands, the danavas looked like the summits of mountains. Overcome by fear in the battle, they abandoned Bana and fled. The danavas were defeated and fled into the extensive sky.

‘On seeing that the large army had been routed and that he was alone, Bana blazed in rage, like a fire that has been fed with kindling. The valiant one ascended a chariot that was driven by Kumbhanda. He raised a fierce sword and went to where Aniruddha was. In his one thousand arms, he also held aloft javelins, swords, clubs, spears and battleaxes and they looked like hundreds of standards raised for Shakra. The mighty-armed one’s hands were protected with finger guards made out of lizard skin. With diverse weapons, the supreme among danavas was radiant. He angrily roared like a lion and twanged his giant bow. Eyes red with rage, he shouted, “Stay. Wait.” Pradyumna’s unvanquished son heard the words Bana had spoken in the battle. He glanced at him and laughed. The giant chariot[1048] was adorned with hundreds of bells and roared. It possessed red flags and penants. It was covered with bear-skin and was ten nalvas in size.[1049] The great-souled one’s chariot was yoked to one thousand horses. Wielding the sword and the shield, he[1050] saw it descend on him. Bana saw him standing on the ground, wielding the sword and the shield. He was extremely delighted at the prospect of being able to kill Pradyumna’s son. Yadava held a sword in his hand and was bereft of armour. Though he was stationed in the battle, he was of the view that his adversary could not be defeated. Desiring to slay Aniruddha in the battle, from every direction, Bana shot a net of small arrows towards his head. He repulsed these thousands of arrows with his shield and remained stationed there, like a rising sun. The descendant of the Yadu lineage countered Bana in the encounter and was seen to be like a solitary elephant in the forest, standing in front of a lion. Bana used thousands of sharp and swift arrows that could pierce the inner organs to strike Pradyumna’s unvanquished son. The mighty-armed one was severely struck by Bana’s arrows with drooping tufts. He blazed in anger and desired to perform an extremely difficult feat. Having been struck by the showers of Bana’s arrows, blood flowed from his limbs. However, extremely enraged, he dashed towards Bana’s chariot. Pradyumna’s son was severely struck with swords, clubs, spears, battleaxes, javelins and torrents of arrows. But he did not waver. In the forefront of the battle, he violently leapt up and using his sword, killed Bana’s horses and sliced through his chariot. But Bana was accomplished in different modes of fighting. He again enveloped him with showers of arrows, spears and javelins and rendered him invisible. The large numbers of *nairitta*s thought that he had been killed and roared. However, he suddenly leapt up and stationed himself on the flank of the chariot. Enraged, Bana seized a javelin in the battle. It was fierce in form and terrible. It was adorned with bells and blazed and flamed. It sparkled like Yama's staff and was as radiant as the sun. It blazed like a giant meteor and he hurled it towards his enemy's head. The supreme among men saw that the javelin was descending, about to rob him of his life. He leapt up and seized it. The immensely strong one used Bana's own javelin to strike him. Thus pierced in the body, he fell down on the surface of the ground.

'While he was unconscious, Kumbhanda spoke these words to him. "O Indra among danavas! How can you ignore the enemy who has presented himself before you? O brave one! You seem to be indifferent. Regain your purpose. Resort to maya and fight. Otherwise, he cannot be killed. Abandon this distraction and protect yourself and me. If you do not kill him now, all of us will be destroyed." The Indra among danavas was goaded by Kumbhanda's words. The supreme among eloquent ones was angered and spoke these harsh words. "In this battle, I will rob him of his life and dispatch him to death. I will seize him, like Garuda does the serpents." As soon as he said this, he, his chariot, his horses, his standard and his charioteer vanished,[1051] like a city of the gandharvas. Pradyumna's unvanquished son realized that Bana had disappeared. Full of manliness, he searched in the ten directions. Bali's angry son thus resorted to the knowledge of tamasa. He was powerful because of his knowledge of maya. While remaining hidden, he released sharp arrows. From every side, these arrows became snakes and bound up Pradyumna's son. In many ways, his body was bound up in the coils of these serpents. Bound up in all of his limbs, Pradyumna's son was captured in the battle. Though he was unharmed, he was rendered as immobile as Mount Mainaka. He was rendered immobile in the coils of these snakes and serpents, flames spitting from their mouths. However, like a mountain, Pradyumna's son was not scared in the battle. He was rendered stationary by the arrows that had become snakes and serpents. But though they coiled all around him, the one who is the soul of all creatures was not distressed. Bana, who was fierce with words, clung to his flagpole and angrily censured him with these harsh words. “O Kumbhanda! Quickly kill this defiler of the lineage. He is tainted in his soul and his conduct has tainted me in this world.” Addressed in these words, Kumbhanda spoke these words. “O king! I will say something. If you so desire, listen to my words. We should find out whose son he is and where he has come from. He is like Shakra in his valour. Who has brought him here? O king! In this great battle, I have seen him fight in many kinds of ways. He was seen to sport in the battle, like a son of the gods. He is full of strength and spirit. He is accomplished in all the sacred texts.[1052] O supreme among daityas! He has not committed any sin that warrants his being killed. Having ascertained, slay him, or show him honours. There is a great sin from killing him and there are great qualities in protecting him. He is best among men and should be respected in every way. O king! Behold this best among men. He is full of valour and is suffering because the serpents have bound him up in every part of his body. However, even though this powerful one has come to this state, he doesn’t pay the slightest bit of attention to it. Coiled by the serpents, blood is flowing from his body. There are three furrows on his forehead and he is stationed there, not thinking of us at all. O king! This is despite his having been reduced to this state. He has resorted to the strength of his own arms and does not think of you at all. He is brave and youthful. Who is he? In the battle, you have one thousand arms, while he possesses only two. He has strength and valour. O king! If it pleases you, find out who he is.” On hearing Kumbhanda’s words, Bana relaxed the severe coils of the serpents.[1053] Having fought with Aniruddha, he entered his own house.’

Chapter 109

Vaishampayana said, ‘Unable to see their beloved husband, all the women in Aniruddha’s household, who were like kinnara ladies, wept. “Alas! Though Krishna is still here as our protector, shame on this world. We are overcome by fear and terrified. We are weeping like those without protectors. The foremost among the gods, the Adityas, the large numbers of Maruts and all the gods who reside in heaven depend on the shelter provided by his arms and have originated from him. However, a great fear has arisen in this world. His grandson, the brave Aniruddha, has been taken away from us by someone. Alas! It is certain that evil-minded person doesn’t face any fear in this world. He has ignited Vasudeva’s anger, which is extremely difficult to withstand. He is being whirled around inside the jaws of Death and is poised on the tips of Death’s teeth. Because of his confusion, in a battle, he will face Vasudeva as an enemy. That person, even if he happens to be Shatakratu himself, has acted in this way and has caused displeasure to the bull among the Yadus. How will he escape with his life? We are grieving because of what he has done. We have been deprived by him. Deprived of our beloved, we face death ourselves.” They spoke repeatedly in this way and wept. Those supreme women shed inauspicious tears from their eyes. Their eyes were full of tears and looked like lotuses immersed in water at the advent of the rainy season. Their radiant and auspicious eyes were like the feathers of swans, tinged with blood. As they lamented like thousands of female curlews in the sky, a great noise arose from their palaces. This terrible uproar signified the arrival of some fear. On hearing this, all the bulls among men quickly rushed there, leaving their own houses. “What is this evil? Why is this loud uproar being heard from Aniruddha’s house? While we are protected by Krishna, what is this fear that has arisen?” They were confused and affectionately spoke to each other in this way. They emerged like suffering lions from their caves.

‘With the use of maya, Krishna’s drum was sounded. At this sound, all of them assembled and stood there. The Yadavas asked each other, “What is this?” All of them spoke to each other and conversed with each other. The Yadavas, unassailable in battle, stood there, sighing. Their eyes were full of tears and their eyes were red with anger. When all of them were silent, Viprithu spoke these words to Krishna, supreme among strikers, who was sighing repeatedly. “O Indra among men! Why are you standing here, overcome by thoughts? All the Yadavas find life by resorting to the strength of your arms. O Krishna! Depending on you, we have been divided into various groups. Shakra’s victory and defeat depends on your strength and that is the reason he sleeps happily. Why are you overcome by thoughts? All of your kin are agitated in this ocean of grief. O mighty-armed one! You are the only one who can save them from this submergence. Why are you immersed in thoughts and why are you not saying anything? O god! O Madhava! You do not deserve to be immersed in futile thoughts.” Thus addressed, Krishna again sighed for a long time. The one who had a way with words then spoke these words, like Brihaspati himself. “O Viprithu! I am immersed in thoughts because I have been thinking about what needs to be done. I have thought about what you said, but am unable to find a clear answer. Standing in the midst of this large number of Dasharhas, I am now speaking these words, which are full of reason. O Yadavas! All of you listen to me, about why I am overcome by thoughts. Since the brave Aniruddha has been abducted, all the kings on earth think that we and all our relatives are incapable. In earlier times, our king, Ahuka, was abducted by Salva. We fought an extremely terrible battle and brought him back. When he was a child, Pradyumna was abducted by Shambara. Having slain him in a battle, Rukmini’s son returned. This is indeed a great hardship. Where has Pradyumna’s son gone? O bulls among men! I cannot think of a sin like this. Who is the one whose ash-smeared feet have descended on my head? In a battle, I will rob him and his relatives of their lives.” Thus addressed by Krishna, Satyaki spoke these words. “O Krishna! Let spies be employed to seek out Aniruddha’s path.” Krishna smiled and spoke these words to Ahuka. “O king! Please instruct spies to be employed inside the kingdom and outside it.” The illustrious king instructed that spies should be employed in every direction and along every path, inside the kingdom and outside it. “Search the mountains Venumanta and

Raivataka, covered with creepers. Use swift horses to search the paths on Mount Rikshavanta. Search each and every garden and the paths in every direction. In every direction, go to all the gardens, even if they are deserted. Mount thousands of horses and large numbers of chariots. Swiftly search for the descendant of the Yadu lineage along all the paths." The commander, Anadhrishti, seemed to be scared and terrified and spoke these words to Krishna Achyuta, the perfomer of unsullied deeds. "O Krishna! O lord! If it pleases you, listen to my words. For a long time, my mind has turned towards telling you something. Asiloma, Puloma, Nisunda and Naraka have been slain. Soubha, Salva, Mainda and Dvivida have also been killed. You have killed the extremely great Hayagriva and his followers. For the sake of the gods, you have engaged in such extremely terrible encounters. Through your deeds, in battle after battle, you have destroyed them. O Govinda! You have done all this and you have no one to act as your *parshni*.[1054] O Krishna! With your followers, you have accomplished these deeds in battles. You performed the extremely difficult task of seizing the Parijata tree. O Krishna! At that time, Shakra, accomplished in fighting, was himself astride Airavata's head. However, using the valour of your arms, you vanquished him. There is no doubt that he has taken it upon himself to bear enmity towards you. Because of that, he has thought his task is to be hostile towards you. Therefore, Maghavan has himself abducted Aniruddha. There is no one else who is capable of bearing this great enmity towards you." Addressed in these words, Krishna sighed like a serpent. The intelligent one spoke these words to the immensely strong Anadhrishti. "O commander! O son![1055] It cannot be like that. The gods are not the perpetrators of inferior deeds. They are not ungrateful. Nor are they impotent. They are not insolent or foolish. My efforts are for the gods and for the great destruction of the danavas. It is to bring them pleasure that I have killed the insolent and extremely great asuras in battle. I am devoted to them and my mind is immersed in them. I am engaged in doing what they find agreeable. Knowing this, how can they commit this crime against me? They are truthful and are never inferior. They are devoted to those who follow them. Know that this transgression isn't theirs. You have spoken foolishly." Having heard Krishna's words, Akrura, who was skilled in speaking words that were full of reason, spoke these words. His speech was sweet and gentle. "O lord! It is certain that our tasks are for Shakra. The tasks that we perform are the same as the tasks required by Shachi's consort. We are protected by the gods and we also protect the gods. We have assumed human forms to accomplish the tasks of the gods." Purushottama was thus urged by Akrura's words. Krishna again spoke in a tone that was gentle and deep. "This abduction of Pradyumna's son hasn't been done by the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas or the rakshasas. This abduction has been done by a lady who is a courtesan. The daitya and danava women are courtesans and accomplished in the use of maya. There is no doubt that such a person has abducted him. There cannot be fear from anyone else." When these words were spoken, sweet sounds of praise were heard in Madhava's house, uttered by the bards and the minstrels.

'All the spies also returned and assembled at the gate. In soft tones, they spoke these words. "O king! We searched each one of hundreds of gardens, mountains, caverns, rivers and ponds, but could not trace his footprints. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! You should think of some other means and instruct us. Command us so that we can quickly seek out Aniruddha's tracks." All of them were distressed in their minds and their eyes were full of tears. They asked each other, "What shall we do next?" There were some who bit their lips. There were others whose eyes were full of tears. There were some brave men whose foreheads were furrowed in thought.

'A sparkling morning dawned and the sun arose. To the great sound of trumpets and conch shells, the mighty-armed Krishna was awoken in his house. Narada entered the assembly hall alone. He seemed to be smiling. The lord Krishna, impossible for even armies to defeat, was distracted. However, he arose and offered Narada *madhuparka*[1056] and a cow. He[1057] seated himself on a sparkling spread that was covered with cushions. Seated upright, he spoke these words that were full of import. "Why are you overcome by thoughts, as if you are enveloped in darkness and alone? All your enterprise seems to have been destroyed and you are as insensible as eunuchs." The great-souled Narada addressed them in these words. Vasudeva replied, "O illustrious one! You should hear what I am about to say. O brahmana! O one who is excellent in his vows! Someone has abducted Aniruddha in the night. It is because of this that all of us seem to be insensible and are immersed in thoughts." Narada was thus addressed by the great-souled Keshava. He laughed and retorted, "O

Madhusudana! You should listen to me. There was an extremely great battle between two great men and it is now over. In that great battle, Aniruddha single-handedly fought against Bana. Bana, unmatched in his energy, has a daughter named Usha. For her sake, the apsara Chitralekha swiftly abducted him. There was an extremely fierce and great battle between Pradyumna's son and Bana, like the encounter between Bali and Vasava. Aniruddha did not retreat from that battle. Out of fear for him, the immensely strong Bana resorted to maya and bound him up in the coils of serpents. For the sake of fame and victory, arise quickly. O son![1058] For the sake of victory, this is not the time to protect one's life." Addressed in these words, the powerful and valorous Vasudeva gave instructions that arrangements should be made for his departure. Sandalwood powder and parched rice were sprinkled in every direction. The mighty-armed Janardana made arrangements for departure. Narada said, "O Krishna! You should remember Vinata's son.[1059] O mighty-armed one! There is no one else who is capable of going there. O Janardana! Pradyumna's son has been taken to the city of Shonita and it is eleven thousand yojanas away. Vinata's powerful son is immensely brave and possesses the speed of thought. In an instant, he alone can show you Bana." Having heard his words, Hari thought of Garuda and he arrived at Krishna's side and stood there cheerfully.

'Jishnu wore bracelets and was dark in complexion. His hair was dark. He possessed four teeth and four arms. He knew the four Vedas and six Vedangas. He bore the srivatsa mark and his eyes were like lotuses. His body hair stood up and his speech was gentle. His fingers were even. His nails were even. His fingers and the tips of his nails were red. His voice was gentle and deep. He was mighty-armed and his arms were round. His arms stretched down to his knees. His face was like that of a lion. He was young and was capable of standing up before a lion. He blazed like a thousand suns shining together. This resplendent lord is in the souls of all creatures. He is the lord who thought of the creation of beings. Delighted, Prajapati had granted him the eight qualities and powers.[1060] Among all the lords of creatures, sadhyas and gods, he is eternal. He is praised in the chants of bards, minstrels and raconteurs and is honoured by the immensely fortunate rishis who are accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. Having made up his mind to leave, the mighty-armed and powerful Vasudeva conveyed instructions for Dvaraka. The god ascended Garuda, with the wielder of the plough behind him. Pradyumna, the afflicter of enemies, was behind Bala.[1061] “O mighty-armed one! Defeat Bana and his followers in the battle. In a great encounter, no one is capable of standing before you. There is no doubt that Lakshmi will show you her favours and that there is victory in your valour. Vanquish the enemy, the Indra among the daityas, and his soldiders, in the battle.” From the sky, the siddhas, charanas and large numbers of maharshis pronounced these words in every direction. Keshava departed for the battle.’

Chapter 110

Vaishampayana said, ‘There was the sound of trumpets and the loud blare of conch shells. Thousands of bards, minstrels and panegyrics chanted his praise. Men who were anxious for victory praised him with words of benediction. Hari assumed a blazing form that was like that of the moon, the sun and Venus.[1062] The form of Vinata’s son rising up was extremely dazzled and that radiance was enchanced by Hari’s energy. With eight hands, Krishna assumed a form that was like that of a mountain. Desiring Bana’s destruction, Pundarikaksha dazzled. The hands on the right held a sword, the chakra, a mace and an arrow. The hands on the left held a shield, the Sharnga bow and a conch shell. The wielder of the Sharnga bow assumed one thousand heads. Samkarshana also assumed one thousand forms. Astride Garuda, Rama was like the rising moon. The unassailable one wielded white weapons and looked like the summited Kailasa. Wishing to display his valour in the battle, the great-souled and mighty-armed Pradyumna manifested Sanatkumara’s form. With the force of his wings, the powerful one[1063] flung away and shattered many mountains, obstructing the path of the wind. Garuda adopted a speed that was greater than that of the wind. He followed the auspicious path adopted by large numbers of siddhas and charanas. Rama spoke these words to Krishna, who was unmatched in battle. “O Krishna! We have been robbed of our own splendour. This is something that has never happened before. How did it occur? It is clear that all of us have assumed a golden complexion. Tell me the truth about what has happened. Is this because we have reached the slopes of Meru?” The illustrious one replied, “O wielder of the plough! We have been struck by the radiance of the ahavaniya fire.[1064] Our reddish hue is the result of that.” Rama said, “If we are near and if our resplendence has been lost because of that, use your intelligence to determine what is beneficial and what must be done next.” The illustrious one replied, “O Vinata’s son! Do what must be done next. After you have decided what must be done, I will determine our next course of action.” Hearing these words of the great-souled Keshava, Vinata’s powerful son quickly went to the Ganga. He picked up water from there and sprinkled the fire with it. The ahavaniya fire was thus pacified. “It is my view that the three, Krishna, Samkarshana and the immensely strong Pradyumna, are capable of taking on the three worlds.”[1065] When the fire was pacified, the king of birds continued to advance. He created a terrible and loud noise from the strength with which he was flapping his wings.

‘On seeing this, the fires, followers of Rudra, began to think. “Who are these, astride Garuda? They have many forms and signify fear. Who are these three men and why have they come here?” The fires that travel in the mountains could not arrive at any conclusion. A battle commenced between them and the three Yadavas. An uproar arose. Anxious to know what was going on, Bana sent a man, who possessed the speed of thought, to go and witness everything. He agreed and went to see the battle that was going on, the great encounter as the fires clashed against Vasudeva. All the fires were there. There were the five fires which are famous as being associated with the utterance of “svadha”—Kalmasha, Khasrima, Dahana, Shoshana and the immensely strong Tapana. There were other immensely fortunate ones, accompanied by their own soldiers. The five fires associated with the utterance of “svaha” also fought—Patara, Pataga, Svarna, Agadha and Bhraja. The two great-souled and immensely radiant conflagrations associated with the divisions of *jyotishtoma* and vashatkara also fought.[1066] In between these two was the lord, the maharshi Angiras.[1067] On seeing Angiras stationed on his chariot, Purushottama Krishna smiled repeatedly and spoke these words. “O fires! Remain here. I will generate a fear among you. You will be consumed by my energy and devastated, will flee in different directions.” At this, Angiras attacked him with a blazing spear. In that great battle, he was enraged and wished to take away Krishna’s life. However, he[1068] fought with supreme arrows that were supreme and sharp, with tips in the form of the crescent moon and like the Destroyer, Yama. Using these, he severed that blazing trident. The extremely illustrious one used a blazing arrow with a broad shaft. It was like Yama. Using this, he struck him[1069] in the chest and roared. With blood flowing all over his body, the fire became senseless. With his body numb, he violently fell down on the ground. At this, the remaining four fires, the sons of Brahma,[1070] quickly fled towards Bana’s city.

‘The lotus-eyed one held the conch shell up to his mouth and it looked as if the moon was poised amidst clouds. With the force of the wind, he blew into it. The valiant one blew on the conch shell and generated fear. Krishna, the performer of extraordinary deeds, entered Bana’s city. Bana’s soldiers suddenly emerged from all sides, blowing on conch shells and creating a loud noise through drums. That army of servants was sent into the great battle. There were many crore of these and they wielded blazing weapons. In that encounter, they united together, looking like a giant mass of clouds adhering to each other. It seemed to be immeasurable and indestructible and was like a mass of collyrium. Those daityas, danavas and rakshasas wielded blazing weapons. There were the best of demons and they assembled and fought with Krishna. All of them had blazing mouths, like flames of fires into which oblations are fed. In that battle, they drank the blood of those four.[1071] The mighty-armed Rama spoke these words to Keshava. “O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! O Krishna! Create a great fear in them.” Krishna was thus urged by the intelligent Balabhadra.[1072] Purushottama was the best among those accomplished in astras and shastras. To slay them, he picked up the agneya weapon, as resplendent as the Destroyer, Yama. The large number of carnivorous asuras was driven away by this weapon’s energy. However, he swiftly went to the spot where that army could be seen. He glanced at that army of demons, wielding spikes, spears, javelins, swords, tridents, clubs and other weapons. Adopting many kinds of fearful forms, they looked like mountains or clouds. All the warriors were stationed there, with large numbers of mounts. They looked like clouds scattered away by the wind and clinging to mountains. Astride Vinata’s son, Rama saw this army and told Krishna, “O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! O Krishna! This army can be seen. O Purushottama! I wish to fight against them in this battle.” Krishna replied, “The same kind of intention has also been generated in me. I also wish to advance against these ones, who are indomitable in battle. I will fight on the east and let Suparna[1073] be ahead of me. Let Pradyumna be to my left and you can be to my right. In this fierce and great battle, we will protect each other.” Astride that supreme bird, they thus spoke to each other. Rohini’s son assumed a terrible form and fought, using the summits of mountains, clubs, bludgeons and ploughs. He was like Time, which burns down all creatures at the end of a yuga. He dragged them with the tip of his plough and uprooted them with his club. Extremely strong and accomplished in all the modes of fighting, he roamed around in that encounter. Pradyumna, tiger among men, fought in every direction and repulsed thousands of danavas with showers of arrows. Janardana blew on his conch shell several times. He was like a gentle mass of collyrium and wielded the conch shell, the chakra and the mace. In that battle, Vinata's powerful son attacked the enemy and struck them with the force of his wings, mangling them with the tip of his beak and his talons. The army of daityas was terrible in valour, but was slaughtered. In that encounter, it was routed with a shower of arrows. When the army was routed, Jvara[1074] desired to save it and attacked. He possessed three feet and three heads and was indomitable in encounters. He was like Yama. He was fierce and used ashes as his weapon. He roared like a storm, or like thousands of clouds. He angrily faced the wielder of the plough and said, "What kind of strength do you possess? In this battle, why are you not looking at me? Wait. In the forefront of this encounter, you will not be able to escape with your life." Saying this, he laughed and attacked the wielder of the plough. He generated great fear with his terrible fists, which looked like the fire that comes at the time of the destruction of a yuga. Adopting thousands of different forms, he whirled around in that battle and in a short instant, Rohini's son was no longer able to see where he was stationed. Unmatched in his energy, Jvara flung ashes and these descended on the target, the body that was like a mountain.[1075] From his chest, those blazing ashes fell on the summit of Meru and shattered the peak of the mountain. Krishna's elder brother was struck by the blazing ashes, hurled with anger. He sighed and yawned repeatedly and fell asleep. His eyes were filled with weakness and he was incessantly distracted. His body hair stood up and his sight faded. He sighed as if he was crazy. Maddened and unconscious, the wielder of the plough spoke to Krishna, "O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! O Krishna! This is a terrifying blaze. O son![1076] I am burning all over my body. How can I obtain peace?" Addressed in this way, he embraced the wielder of the plough. When Krishna embraced him with great affection, he was freed from the burning. Extremely wrathful, Vasudeva spoke to Jvara. "Come. O Jvara! In this great battle, fight against me with all your strength. O one who is accomplished in fighting! In this encounter, show me what you possess.” Using two of his right hands, Jvara then flung ashes at him. These blazed and were greatly powerful. In an instant, Krishna, supreme among strikers, assumed a blazing form and that fire was pacified. With three of his hands, which were like snakes, Jvara struck Krishna on the neck and beat him on the chest with his fists. There was a tumultuous battle between those two lions among men, the great Jvara and the great-souled Krishna. There was a roar like that of thunder descending on mountains. There was an extremely terrible battle, with Krishna and Jvara striking each other with their hands. There were loud noises, “You should not strike like this.” For a short instant, those two extremely great-souled ones fought with each other. Jvara was adorned in golden and colourful ornaments and roamed around in the sky. In that battle, he was crushed by the strength of arms[1077] and the lord of the universe seemed to be like Yama, the destroyer.’

Chapter 111

Vaishampayana said, ‘Krishna, the afflicter of enemies, thought that Jvara was dead. With the strength of his arms, he flung him down on the ground. However, as soon as he was released from the arms, he entered Krishna’s body. Krishna, infinite in his energy, could not free his body from his grasp. The infinitely energetic one was pervaded by Jvara. Krishna seemed to totter and repeatedly circled around on the ground. Krishna yawned. Yet again, he suffered severely. The body hair stood up on his body and he was overcome by sleep. Purushottama realized that Jvara had overcome him. He created another Jvara, so as to destroy the older Jvara. The infinitely energetic one struck Jvara in this way. At that time, an invisible voice was heard from the sky. “O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! O Krishna! O extender of the delight of the Yadu lineage! O unblemished one! You should not kill this Jvara. Instead, you should protect him.” Addressed in these words, Hari himself released him. Jvara said, “Let me be the only Jvara on this earth. O ornament of assemblies! Through your favours, let there be no other Jvara.” The illustrious one replied, “May you be happy. May you be the single Jvara in this world. The Jvara that was created by me will merge into me.” Jvara said, “I am blessed that you have shown me your favours. You have done something that is agreeable to me. O one who wields the chakra as a weapon! Command me. What will I do to ensure your pleasure?” The illustrious one replied, “In this great battle, both you and I only used the strength and valour of our arms as weapons. O Jvara! If a man bows down single-mindedly before me and reads this, he will be cured of all fever.” The great-souled Krishna himself addressed Jvara in this way. He bowed his head down before Krishna and left the field of battle.’

Chapter 112

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then those three, who were like fires, united and started to fight again.[1078] They fought, stationed in that battle astride Vinata’s son. Those extremely strong ones showered down arrows and mangled all the armies. Extremely strong, Vinata’s son roared in that battle. The large army of the great-souled danavas was afflicted by the chakra, the plough and the shower of arrows and was enraged. Krishna’s arrows emitted fire and the blaze increased, like dead wood on fire is fanned by the wind and the feeding of kindling.[1079] In the forefront of that battle, there were thousands of danavas. They were illuminated as they were burnt down by the rays, like the fire of destruction that comes at the end of a yuga. That large army of soldiers wielded many kinds of weapons and was routed. Bana restrained them and spoke these words. “Why have you become faint-hearted and overcome by fear? You have been born in the lineage of the daityas, yet you are running away from this great battle. You are capable of roaming around in the sky. Why are you fleeing, abandoning your armour, swords, clubs, spears, blades,[1080] shields and battleaxes? You should show respect to your own kin and your residence in Hara’s company. You should not be distressed and flee. I am stationed here.” However, despite being addressed in these words, all the danavas were afflicted by fear. They did not listen, or even think about it. They ran away. However, there was some numbers of demons who were still left at the forefront of the army. These remnants again made up their mind to fight.

‘The valiant Kumbhanda was Bana’s friend and aide. On seeing that the army was shattered, he spoke these words. “Bana is stationed in the battle and so are Shankara and Guha.[1081] Why are you overcome by fear and abandoning this battle?” The valiant Nandishvara[1082] was stationed on his chariot. Rudra bit his lips and advanced towards where Hari was. His chariot was yoked to lions. It made a loud clatter and seemed to swallow up the sky. It looked like the moon on a full moon light, freed from the clouds. Hari was in the front, astride

Vinata's son. Angrily, Hara[1083] pierced him with one hundred iron arrows. Hara, the slayer of enemies, afflicted him with these arrows. Angrily, Hari grasped the supreme *parjanya* weapon. Hundreds of thousands of arrows with drooping tufts were released and from all directions, they descended on Hara's body. Rudra, supreme among those who are skilled in all weapons, became angry. He released the extremely terrible agneya weapon. It was extraordinary. From all directions, those four[1084] were enveloped by these arrows and couldn't be seen. Their bodies were mangled and they were burnt by the fire. The supreme among asuras roared like lions. Since Hari had been rendered invisible by the agneya weapon, they thought that he had been killed. However, the powerful Vasudeva, supreme among those who were accomplished in the use of all weapons, wished to destroy the enemy and picked up the *varuna* weapon. When the intelligent Vasudeva raised the varuna weapon, the agneya weapon was pacified by varuna's energy. However, Bhava released four weapons that were like the fire that arrives at the time of the destruction of a yuga—*paishacha,* rakshasa, *roudra* and *angiras*. To counter these weapons, Vasudeva released *vayavya, savitra, vasava* and *mohana*. Keshava countered the four weapons with four of his. He then picked up the *vaishnava* weapon, which was like Death with a gaping mouth. When the vaishnava weapon was released, all the supreme ones among the asuras fled in different directions, their eyes confounded with terror. The world was immersed in darkness and Tryambaka seemed to blaze. Nandi and Rudra, on his chariot, could no longer be seen. The one with four faces[1085] seized the arrow that had brought an end to Tripura. Because of his rage and strength, his form doubled in radiance. Desiring to unleash it, the three-eyed one affixed it to his bow. However, the great-souled Vasudeva, who knew the intention behind everything, discerned this. Therefore, Purushottama picked up the weapon known as *jrimbhana*. The immensely strong one acted swiftly and made Hara yawn.[1086] He blew on his conch shell and extended the Sharnga bow. All the creatures who were present saw the god[1087] yawn.

'Guha was on a chariot and Kumbhanda steered the horses that were yoked to it.[1088] He attacked Krishna, Bala and Pradyumna. With arrows marking their bodies, those three looked like fires. Though blood flowed from their limbs, they fought back against Guha. Those three were conversant with modes of fighting. They shot three supreme arrows that blazed in their energy—vayavya, agneya and parjanya. The great-souled one[1089] wielded a radiant bow and his torrent of arrows blazed. He devoured that storm of arrows with the maya of his weapons. In the battle, Guha bit his lips. He picked up the weapon known as brahmashiras. It was like Death and was impossible to withstand. The brahmashiras was invoked and it was as resplendent as the one with one thousand rays.[1090] It was fierce and supremely unassailable. It would ensure the destruction of the worlds. All the great beings fled in different directions. The valiant Keshava picked up the chakra that destroyed Keshi. It was capable of countering and destroying the energy of all weapons. The great-souled one's chakra is famous in the worlds and cannot be countered. Through its energy, it made the brahmashiras weapon lose its lustre. It was like the giant solar disc losing its radiance because of clouds during the rainy season. The immensely energetic brahmashiras lost its valour and its radiance. At this, Guha was enraged. He seized a golden javelin that was like a giant meteor. It was as radiant as the fire that comes at the time of the destruction of a yuga. It was decorated with bells and garlands and he hurled this javelin. With a blazing mouth, that giant javelin seemed to yawn in the sky and descended, desiring to slay Krishna. All the immortals, with Indra at the forefront, were greatly distressed. They saw that blazing javelin and said that Krishna would be consumed. In the great battle, as the giant javelin approached, Krishna censured it with words of *humkara* and it fell down on the ground.[1091] When the great javelin fell down on the ground, all the gods, with Vasava, uttered words of praise and roared like lions. When the gods roared, the powerful Vasudeva, the destroyer of all creatures, again picked up the chakra. As the infinitely energetic Krishna whirled the chakra around, the goddess Koutavi saw this.[1092] She exclaimed, "Shame! Shame! Retreat! Retreat!" She stood in front of him.

'At that time, there was the blaring of trumpets and the great beating of drums. As the daityas roared like lions, Bana attacked Krishna. In the battle, the bull among the Yadus saw that he was advancing. Accordingly, the infinitely energetic Krishna mounted Vinata's son. Bana said, "Wait. Hold on. Before me, you will not escape with your life today. You will not be able to see Dvaraka and your well-wishers who reside in Dvaraka. O Madhava! You will not be able to see the trees with golden complexions at the tips. Urged by destiny, you will face me in this encounter. You will be overcome by me and die. In this battle, what will an eight-handed person do againt one with one thousand arms? O one with Garuda on his banner! Approach me and fight. In this battle today, I will vanquish you and your relatives. Slain in the city of Shonita, you will remember Dvaraka. Today, you will think my one thousand arms actually number one crore. They wield many kinds of weapons and are adorned in diverse kinds of armlets." The torrent of his words roared, like the waters of the ocean. He roamed around, like the terrible waters when they are agitated by the wind. His eyes were full of anger. He was like a giant sun that had arisen for the destruction of the universe. The illustrious one replied, "O Bana! Why are you roaring? When brave ones are stationed in battle, they do not roar. Come and fight in this battle. Why are you roaring in this pointless way? O Diti's descendant! Had encounters been won through words, you would have always triumphed. You have ranted a lot. O Bana! Come. Defeat me, or be vanquished and lie down on the ground, covering your face. O asura! Be miserable and lie down for a last time."

'Having spoken these words, in that battle, Krishna pierced him with a torrent of swift arrows that struck at his inner organs. They were invincible and blazed in their energy. However, Bana smiled and countered Krishna with a blazing shower of arrows. The extremely terrible encounter commenced. As the battle continued, the energetic one shrouded the revered Keshava with arrows, swords, maces, clubs, spears, javelins and spikes. The eight-armed one fought with the thousand-armed one. The wielder of the conch shell, chakra and mace fought with Bana. There was a supreme and divine weapon that had been created through great austerities. In any battle, it was impossible to withstand and could destroy all enemies. This had been created earlier by Brahma, and Bali's son released this. All the directions were enveloped and the discs of all the luminous bodies lost their radiance. A terrible dust arose and nothing could be seen. The danavas honoured Bana and uttered words of praise. As the gods roamed around, they exclaimed, "Alas! Shame!" From the strength and force of that weapon, an extremely terrible shower of arrows rained down, resplendent and fierce in form and extremely swift. The wind stopped blowing. The clouds ceased to move. When that arrow was released, Keshava was consumed. However, Madhusudana picked up an extremely swift weapon, which was named parjanya. In the encounter, the illustrious one was like the Destroyer, Yama. Having invoked the parjanya weapon with a mantra, he pacified the danava's weapon. All the large number of gods were delighted and cheered. O great king! When that weapon was destroyed, Diti's son became senseless with rage. Keshava was on Garuda and he again enveloped him with clubs, javelins and spears. Keshava, the slayer of enemies, again swiftly repulsed all these showers of arrows. The mounts of the two, the god and the daitya, also fought with each other. In the encounter, Garuda fought with the peacock.[1093] The peacock and Garuda angrily struck at each other with blows from wings and beaks, feet, nails and talons. The peacock blazed in energy. But Vinata's son angrily seized him by the head and struck him with his beak. The immensely strong one struck him on his right wing. He repeatedly dealt fierce blows on his flanks with his feet. The immensely strong one quickly seized him and dragged him along. He became unconscious and fell down from the sky, like a mountain. When the peacock was brought down by the bird Garuda, Bana was without a protector. He became extremely anxious and began to think about what he should do.

'Rudra got to know that Bana was distressed in his mind and extremely miserable in the battle. Anxious and miserable, the illustrious one thought about what he could do to offer protection. In a rumbling voice, Mahadeva spoke to Nandi. "O Nandikeshvara! Take this chariot and go where Bana is stationed in the battle. Take these large number of demons with you. My mind is awhirl. O son![1094] Go and use your powers to save Bana." Nandi, supreme among charioteers, agreed and left on that chariot. He went to where Bana was and spoke these soft words to Bana. "O daitya! O immensely strong one! Swiftly ascend this chariot." Thus addressed, he climbed onto Mahadeva's chariot. The infinitely energetic one was astride Bhava's chariot. He was supreme among those who were accomplished in the use of weapons and invoked the terrible and blazing weapon, brahmashiras. The extremely valiant Bana was angry and used this weapon. Brahmashiras blazed and the worlds were agitated. It had actually been created by the one who was born from a lotus[1095] for the protection of the worlds. However, the powerful Krishna destroyed this weapon with his chakra and told Bana, who was unmatched in battle and famous and illustrious in the worlds, "O Bana! What did you boast about? Wasn’t that in vain? I am stationed before you in this battle. Be a man and fight with me. Earlier, there used to be an extremely strong person by the name of Kartavirya Arjuna. He possessed one thousand arms. However, in an encounter, he was defeated by the two-armed Rama.[1096] Your arms were created because of your valour and you were insolent about them. In this field of battle, I will pacify your insolence with my chakra. Remain until I have destroyed the insolence that has been generated by your arms. In this field of battle, you will not escape from me today.” The tiger among men roared like a cloud at the end of the summer and seized the thousand-sided chakra, so as to pacify Bana’s arms, who was like an insect drawn to the flames. The chakra had been created by Prajapati and its energy blazed, like the moon. It was full of energy and extremely radiant, like the sun. His own body enveloped in energy, he stood in front of Bana. On seeing that the illustrious one was stationed in the field of battle, raising the chakra, Koutavi stationed herself in front of Vasudeva. Invisible to others, she shed her garments and stood before him again, naked. To save Bana, Vijaya[1097] stationed herself there. The noble one, eyes coppery red and naked, again stationed herself in the battle. Intent on saving Bana, she spoke these words. “O god! Bana is unmatched in battle and you should not kill him.” The mighty-armed Krishna, supreme among strikers, became enraged. In the battle, he whirled around the supreme chakra and spoke to Bana. “On each occasion when you fight in this encounter, Koutavi is stationed in front of you. You seem to be incapable of fighting. Shame on your manliness.” Krishna was immensely strong and knew about supreme weapons. Saying this, he closed his eyes and hurled the chakra towards Bana. Vishnu’s weapon possessed an excellent nave. In the field of battle, it whirled around like a circle of fire and was so swift that it could not be seen. One by one, in the field of battle, the chakra sliced off Bana’s one thousand arms.[1098] Torrents of blood started to flow from his body. With his arms severed, the giant asura looked like a mountain.

‘To slay Bana, Achyuta again wished to hurl the chakra. However, with Kumara, Mahadeva arrived before him and said, “O Krishna! O great god! O Purushottama! O Krishna! I know you. You are the one who killed Madhu and Kaitabha. You are the eternal god of the gods. O god! You are the destination of the worlds. The universe has been generated from you. The three worlds, with the gods, the asuras and humans, cannot vanquish you. Therefore, withdraw the divine chakra that you have raised. It is terrible towards enemies and will certainly destroy everything in this battle. O slayer of Keshi! I have granted Bana freedom from fear. You should pardon me. Otherwise, my words will be rendered false.” The illustrious one replied, “O god! Let Bana remain alive. I will withdraw the chakra. O god! You are always revered by the gods and the asuras. O Maheshvara! I bow down before you. I will depart, not having accomplished the task I set out to do.[1099] Grant me permission.” Speaking to Mahadeva in this way, Krishna quickly mounted Garuda and went to where Pradyumna’s son was, bound down by the arrows.

‘When Krishna had left, Nandi addressed Bana in these auspicious words. “O Bana! For your welfare, you should go and dance before him.” Blood flowed from his body and he was urged by Nandi’s words. For the sake of his life, Bana arrived before Shankara. The danava was senseless and because of his fear, started to dance. He was in a distressed state and his eyes were numb with fear. Maheshvara said, “O Bana! Ask for whatever boon there is in your mind. O one with the excellent face! I am pleased with you and the time has come to grant you a boon.” Bana replied, “O lord! May I never suffer from old age and may I always be immortal. O god! If it so pleases you, this is the first boon I ask for.” Maheshvara said, “O Bana! You will be like the gods and you will never face death. Now ask for another boon. I am always kindly disposed towards you.” Bana replied, “O Bhava! Blood is flowing from my body and I am suffering from wounds. In such a state, if devotees dance before you, may they have sons.” Maheshvara said, “If devotees fast, are full of forgiveness, truthfulness and uprightness and dance before me in this way, that shall indeed happen.” Bana replied, “I am suffering from severe pain because of the terrible strike of the chakra. O Bhava! As the third boon, may I find peace.” Maheshvara said, “It shall be that way and you will be fortunate. Pain will not be able to affect you. The wounds will be removed from your body and you will be rendered hale. O asura! Ask for a desired fourth boon and I will grant it to you. O son![1100] I will not refuse you. O one with the excellent face! I always show you my favours.” Bana replied, “O lord! May I be the first among the large number of *pramatha*s.[1101] O lord! May I be famous and renowned by the name of Mahakala.” Maheshavara said, “O one who is famous for his strength and manliness! Ask for another boon and I will grant it to you. O great asura! Ask what you wish for. What will make you happy?” Bana replied, “O supreme among gods! May my body never suffer from any deformities. O Bhava! Though I only have two arms now, may I never be deformed.” Bana was stationed near him and Mahadeva told him, “O Bana! It shall be exactly as you have said.” The illustrious one with the three eyes said this. As all the creatures looked on, surrounded by his followers, he vanished from there.’

Chapter 113

Vaishampayana said, 'The arrows, in the form of giant serpents, had coiled themselves around Aniruddha's body. On seeing Garuda, all these serpents quickly let go of his body. Assuming their natural form, all those arrows embedded themselves in the ground. On seeing Krishna and touched by him, the great-souled Aniruddha was delighted. He joined his hands in salutation and said, "O god of the gods! You are always triumphant in battle. Who is capable of standing before you? Not even Shatakratu himself." The illustrious one replied, "Let us swiftly mount Garuda and leave for the city of Dvaraka." Having vanquished the great asura, Bana, all those bulls among men climbed astride Garuda and left on their long journey.

'They travelled through the sky in Varuna's direction.[1102] They saw thousands of multi-hued ones roaming around in the forests along the ocean.[1103] The undecaying god, the origin of all the worlds, was astride Garuda. On seeing Bana's cows, he decided to seize them. "Satyabhama told me to bring Bana's cows. The great asuras drink their milk and do not suffer from any decay. As long as it does not interfere with any other task, she asked me to bring them. However, if it interferes with any other task, she told me not to bother about it. Having seen Varuna's abode, I can now see the cows. Let all of us enter there and do what needs to be done." Thus addressed, Garuda agreed. He agitated the ocean by the force of his wings and suddenly submerged, reaching Varuna's abode. Varuna's extremely terrible army saw that Vasudeva was in front of them and attacked, wielding many kinds of weapons. In that encounter, thousands of Varuna's soldiers violently attacked. However, they were routed and he entered Varuna's abode. Varuna's soldiers used blazing weapons in the encounter, with sixty-six thousand chariots. But in every direction, that army was scorched by the storm of Krishna's arrows. They were routed and distressed. Unable to remain there, they sought refuge with Varuna.

‘Varuna was there, praised in many ways by large numbers of rishis, gods, gandharvas and apsaras. A white umbrella was held aloft the radiant one’s body. Water flowed from his body and he held aloft his supreme bow. The lord of the waters was enraged. With his sons, grandsons and forces, he stretched his giant bow and challenged Krishna in the battle. Varuna blew on his conch shell. Like Hara in his anger, he enveloped Hari with his net of arrows. At this, the immensely strong one blew on Panchajanya, which had emerged out of the waters. In every direction, Janardana caused anxiety through his shower of arrows. In that encounter, Varuna was afflicted by many storms of arrows. However, he smiled and continued to fight back against Krishna. Stationed in the battle, Vasudeva invoked the terrible vaishnava weapon with a mantra and spoke to the one who was stationed in front of him. “This vaishnava weapon is extremely terrible and crushes enemies. Be steady, because I have raised it to kill you now.” The god raised the vaishnava weapon. However, the immensely strong Varuna invoked the varuna weapon and roared. O one who is victorious in assemblies! From the mouth of the varuna weapon, jets of water streamed out and the vaishnava weapon pacified them. All the water was scorched and seemed to be set on fire by the great valour of the vaishnava weapon. Terrified, everyone fled in different directions.

‘On seeing the blaze, Varuna spoke these words. “Remember your former unmanifest nature. You are overwhelmed by your manifest[1104] attributes. O immensely fortunate one! Vanquish the tamas quality. Why are you confounded by the rajas quality? O lord of yoga! O immensely intelligent one! You are always based on the quality of sattva. Abandon ego and the taints that come by resorting to the five elements.[1105] In your Vaishnava form, I am your elder.[1106] Because of the attributes of being an elder, I should be revered. Why do you desire to burn me down? O supreme among fighters! Fire cannot be overcome with fire. Discard your rage. You are the origin of the universe and I cannot exert my powers over you. You created nature earlier and all its transformations originate in your soul. Dharma has been thought of as the first seed. One must first resort to dharma. The qualities of hot and cold are known to be the original attributes of nature. You are the original creator of this universe. That being the case, what do you expect me to think? You cannot be vanquished. You are always eternal. You are the self-creating one and are the one who thought of creating all beings. O immensely radiant one! You are without destruction and without decay. O unblemished one! Protect me. I am one who should be protected. I am bowing down before you. You are the original doer in the worlds. You are the one who has extended them in many ways. O great god! Why are you playing like a child with a puppet? I am not one who has injured nature. Nor am I one who abuses nature. O Purushottama! When there are transformations in nature, you are the one who acts in the proper way so as to correct these transformations. You are the one who always acts against the ones who are wicked and know about adharma. These taints of nature are always associated with the quality of tamas. They are also tainted by the quality of rajas and confusion results from that. You know about what is supreme and best. You know about everything. The proper kinds of prosperity are based on you. You are yourself Prajapati. Why are you confusing all of us?” Addressed in this way, Krishna laughed and spoke these words. “O god! O one who is terrible in valour! To pacify me, give me the cows.” Varuna replied, “O god! In earlier times, I had an agreement with Bana. Having concluded such an agreement, how can I act so as to render it false? O one with eyes like a bull! As long as I am alive, I cannot give the cows away. That was the agreement. Kill me and take the cows away.” Having said this, Varuna released those extremely illustrious cows. Madhava laughed and honoured the god Varuna’s words.[1107] Like Shakra surrounded by the immortals, he left for Dvaraka.

‘O ornament of assemblies! The gods, the Maruts, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Vasus and the immensely strong Ashvins followed the undecaying lord of the universe, the origin of all beings. They arrived and followed his trail of fame and victory. The wielder of the chakra and the mace saw Dvaraka, garlanded with gates, from a long distance away and blew on Panchajanya. All those in Dvaravati heard the roar of the gods arriving and the blare of Panchajanya. They were supremely delighted. The Yadavas worshipped Krishna, seated astride Vinata’s son in his great prosperity. He looked like a mass of blue collyrium. In every direction, rishis, gods, gandharvas and charanas stationed themselves above Dvaraka and chanted Govinda’s praise. The supreme among the Dasharhas witnessed this extraordinary sight of Purushottama returning after vanquishing Bana and Mahadeva. With the immensely fortunate Krishna, the maharatha among the Satvatas, having returned, the residents of Dvaraka spoke about this in many ways. “We are blessed. We have been favoured by the lord of the universe. He is the protector and the preserver. He is the long-armed Janardana. Mounted on Vinata’s son, he defeated Bana, who was extremely difficult to vanquish. Pundarikaksha has returned and our minds are delighted.” The residents of Dvaraka conversed in this way. The maharatha gods entered Vasudeva’s house. Their celestial vehicles roamed around in the sky above. In every direction, they could be seen stationed there, in many different kinds of forms. Thousands of radiant and celestial vehicles were seen, with lions, bulls, deer, serpents, horses, cranes and peacocks inside them. “These are the Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Sadhyas and the other gods. Worship them in the proper order.”[1108] “This is an extraordinary wonder. We have obtained this good fortune because we have sought refuge with Vasudeva.” Such words were heard everywhere. From every direction, the citizens showered down sandalwood powder and showers of flowers and worshipped the residents of heaven. All the residents of Dvaraka bowed down before the gods and worshipped them with parched grain and incense, using controlled words and intelligence.

‘Ahuka, Vasudeva,[1109] Samba, the descendant of the Yadu lineage, Satyaki, Ulmuka and the immensely strong Viprithu were embraced by the valiant one.[1110] He inhaled the fragrances of their heads. Vasava spoke these words to Andhaka, Shubhaksha and all the Satvatas. “This descendant of the Yadu lineage[1111] displayed his fame and manliness in the battle. While Mahadeva and Guha looked on, he defeated Bana in an encounter and returned to Dvaraka. Hari caused supreme destruction to the arms of the thousand-handed one. He left him with two arms and returned to his own city. There is a reason why the great-souled Krishna was born among men. He has accomplished all that was required and has dispelled our sorrows. We are full of delight and will drink the tasty madhu and *madhvika*.[1112] For a long period of time, we will now enjoy our dominions. All of us depend on the arms of this great-souled one. All our grief has been destroyed. All of us rejoice and will enjoy the happiness meant for immortals.” Having said this, Purandara embraced the lotus-eyed Krishna and left for heaven, surrounded by large numbers of immortals.

‘Surrounded by large numbers of Yadus, Krishna reached Dvaraka and rejoiced. O lord of the earth! This is the reason Vishnu, best among the lineage of the Yadus, took an incarnation on earth. He was famous by the name of Vasudeva. This is the reason why the prosperous lord was born in the lineage of Vasudeva.[1113] That is the reason he was born among the Vrishnis, as Devaki’s son. This is what you had asked me about. O Janamejaya! Earlier, in connection with Narada’s question, I had told you about this briefly. I have now recounted everything in detail. You had a grave doubt about Vishnu’s residence in Mathura and about why he became Vasudeva. I have explained this to you. There is nothing else that is wonderful. Krishna is the store of everything extraordinary. Among everything wonderful that has been created, there is nothing more wonderful than Vishnu.[1114] He is most blessed among those who are blessed. He ensures blessings. He creates blessings. Among gods and daityas, there is nothing more blessed than Achyuta. He is the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ashvins, the Maruts, the sky, the earth, the directions, water, light, the creator, the preserver, the destroyer, destiny, truth, dharma, austerities, the eternal brahman and the entire universe. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bow down before the lord of the gods. I have thus spoken about the battle with Bana and Keshava’s greatness. If one hears about this, one can ensure the establishment of an unmatched lineage. If a person nurtures this account of the supreme battle with Bana and Keshava’s greatness, one never serves the cause of adharma. I have thus recounted everything about Vishnu’s conduct. O son![1115] O Janamejaya! When the sacrifice was over, this is what you had asked me about. O king! If a person nurtures all of this extraordinary account in his heart, he never obtains anything inauspicious and enjoys a long life.’

Suta[1116] said, ‘The king who was Parikshit’s son was told this by Vaishampayana. With the bulls among the brahmanas, he heard all about *Harivamsha*. O Shounaka! I have told you everything, in brief and in detail. What do you want me to talk about next?’

This ends Vishnu Parva.

Bhavishya Parva

Chapter 114: 18 shlokas
Chapter 115: 45 shlokas
Chapter 116: 40 shlokas
Chapter 117: 51 shlokas
Chapter 118: 51 shlokas

Chapter 114

Shounaka asked, ‘O Lomaharshana! Which of Janamejaya’s sons does one read about? Who established the lineage of the great-souled Pandavas?’

Suta replied, ‘Parikshit’s son had two sons through the princess of Kashi. They were king Chandrapida and Suryapida, who knew about *moksha*. Chandrapida had one hundred sons who were excellent archers. As descendants of Janamejaya, these kshatriyas were famous on earth. The eldest of these was Satyakarna, who was a king in Varanasahvya.[1117] The mighty-armed one performed sacrifices, with copious quantities of dakshina. Satyakarna’s heir was the powerful Shvetakarna. The one with dharma in his soul didn’t have any sons and retreated to a hermitage in the forest. While he was in the forest, he had a son through a Yadava lady, who was Sucharu’s daughter. Her name was Malini and she possessed excellent eyebrows. She was like a garland to her brothers. Once she had given birth, Shvetakarna, the lord of subjects, left for the undecaying and great journey that his ancestors had earlier followed.[1118] On seeing that he was leaving, Malini followed him at the rear. It was on this path that the one with the excellent brows gave birth to a lotus-eyed son. In earlier times, the immensely fortunate Droupadi, had followed her husbands. In that way, having given birth, she followed the king. The delicate infant wept on that mountainous path. Out of compassion for the great-souled one, the clouds offered him cover. Shravishtha’s sons were two brahmanas named Pippaladas. Out of compassion for him, they brought him home and bathed him in water. While he was playing in the mountains, his flanks became covered with blood. Those flanks became as dark as the complexion of a goat. When he grew up, that is the reason he came to be known as Ajaparshva.[1119] The name that was given to him thus came to be Ajaparshva. Those two[1120] reared him in the household of Vemaka. To obtain a son, Vemaka’s son got him married off. He, and the two brahmanas who were his advisers, were known as Vemaki’s sons.[1121] Their sons and grandsons lived for a time that was appropriate for the yuga.[1122] In this way, the Pourava lineage was established by the Pandavas. In this connect, Yayati, Nahusha's son chanted a shloka. This was at the time when the intelligent one was delighted at having been able to transfer his former old age.[1123] "There is no doubt that there may be a time when the earth doesn't have a moon, a sun, or the planets. But it shall never be the case that the earth is without the Pourava lineage."'

Chapter 115

Shounaka said, ‘Vyasa’s intelligent disciple[1124] had earlier recounted all of *Harivamsha*, with all of its parvas. I have told you about this. This immortal tales are full of *itihasa*.[1125] It pleases and is like amrita to all of us. It frees us from all sins. King Janamejaya heard about this supreme account. O Souti! After the snake sacrifice was over, what did he do?’

Suta[1126] replied, ‘King Janamejaya heard this supreme account. I will tell you about what happened after the snake sacrifice was over. When the snake sacrifice was over, the king who was Parikshit’s son began to collect the material required for a horse sacrifice. He summoned the officiating priests, priests and preceptors and said, “I wish to perform a horse sacrifice. Release the horse.” Hearing what he desired to do, the great-souled Krishna Dvaipayana, undistressed in his spirit and one who knew everything about the past, the present and the future, quickly came to see Parikshit’s son. The king who was Parikshit’s son saw that the rishi had arrived. Following the sacred texts, he gave him arghya, padya and a seat and worshipped him. O Shounaka! When he was seated, and so were the assistant priests, many kinds of stories that were in conformity with the Vedas were told.

‘When those accounts were over, the king urged the sage who was the grandfather and great-grandfather of the Pandavas and of himself. “There are many kinds of stories in the Mahabharata and they cover a huge expanse. When I hear about them, in an instant, I am transported to delight. These detailed accounts lead to prosperity and fame for everyone. O brahmana! You composed it, like milk stored in a conch shell. Comparable satisfaction cannot be found in amrita, or in the happiness in heaven. The satisfaction obtained from listening to the Mahabharata account is superior. O one who knows everything! O illustrious one! I imagine that the reason for the destruction of the Kurus was the royal sacrifice. That is my view. Like a flood, there was a great destruction of kings and it was impossible to withstand. I think that the royal sacrifice was engineered so as to bring about the battle. I have heard that Soma thought of the royal sacrifice earlier. After that, there was an extremely great battle known as the tarakamaya encounter. When that was over, Varuna performed an extremely great sacrifice and this led to a battle between the gods and the asuras which led to the destruction of all creatures. The royal sage, Harishchandra, performed a sacrifice. There was a battle known as Adibaka there and it led to the destruction of kshatriyas. Later, the noble Pandava[1127] performed an extremely difficult sacrifice that was like the fire and this sowed the seeds of the Mahabharata destruction. That was the foundation of the battle that led to the destruction of the worlds. Why was that great royal sacrifice not stopped? The different limbs of a royal sacrifice are extremely difficult to satisfactorily complete. If those limbs are not performed properly, a destruction of the subjects is certain. You are the grandfather of all the ancestors who have come earlier. You know about the past and the future. You are the protector and the origin of our lineage. O illustrious one! You are the leader and you are intelligent. Why did you make us deviate from good policy? Why were those men like those with a bad leader? Why were they without a protector? Why did they commit crimes?” Vyasa replied, “O child! Your grandfathers were driven by destiny. They did not ask me about the future. When I am not asked, I do not speak. I do not see any means of countering the future that has been determined. I do not see any means of saving oneself from the destiny that has been ordained. However, since you have asked me, I will tell you about what is going to transpire. But destiny is extremely powerful. Even if you hear about it, you will not act accordingly. Your manliness will make you exert yourself and try. But what has been written by destiny is extremely difficult to transgress, like the shoreline. It has been said that the horse sacrifice is the best sacrifice for kshatriyas. However, because of its superiority, Vasava will obstruct your sacrifice. O king! If you are capable, never perform this sacrifice. If manliness can be made subservient to destiny, do not perform this sacrifice. Then no crime will be committed against Shakra by you, by your preceptors, or by your officiating priests. However, destiny is the supreme lord. Listen to me. Its arrangement and its function, indeed every mobile and immobile object in the three worlds, is under the subjugation of destiny. When there is a destruction of the yuga, all kings who perform sacrifices go to heaven. So do brahmanas who sell the fruits of sacrifices.”[1128] Janamejaya asked, “What will be the consequences if I refrain from the horse sacrifice? O illustrious one! On hearing this, if I am capable, I will refrain from it.” Vyasa replied, “O lord! The consequence will be that the brahmanas will be enraged. Make efforts to refrain from it. You will then be fortunate. O scorcher of enemies! If you perform this horse sacrifice, as long as the earth sustains itself, there will not be any kshatriyas there.” Janamejaya said, “If I refrain from the horse sacrifice, there will be energy and blazing curse of the brahmanas. I will become the instrument for that. That is the reason why a terrible fear is generated in me. How will a person like me, who is the performer of good deeds, be associated with this ill fame? A bird that was once bound no longer wants to take to the skies when it is released. Like that, I will not be interested in facing people. You have foreseen the future destruction that will come from undertaking this sacrifice. Like that, assure me if there is any way to prevent its recurrence.” Vyasa replied, “If one refrains from this sacrifice, the gods will reside in brahmanas. That is because, when energy is withdrawn, energy resides only in energy. When the land is tilled, there will be a brahmana of the Kashyapa lineage, by the name of Senani. In kali yuga, he will again perform a horse sacrifice. O Indra among kings! After that, in that lineage, there will be a person who will perform a royal sacrifice. He will be like a white planet[1129] that is the harbinger of destruction. The fruits that men obtain from sacrifices depend on their strength. That is the reason, at the end of a yuga, the rishis roam around at the gates.[1130] That is when the lives of men depend on their earlier deeds. When one life is over, they roam around in the worlds, depending on the deeds they have performed. At that time, the dharma that is based on the four ashramas becomes weak. At that time, great fruits are obtained from the subtle dharma that is based on giving donations, though it is difficult to observe. At that time, men obtain success through limited austerities. O Janamejaya! When the end of a yuga arrives, men who immerse themselves in dharma are blessed.”’

Chapter 116

'Janamejaya said, "O brahmana! I do not know about what is imminent, nor about what the future will bring.[1131] Therefore, I wish to know about what will happen after the end of dvapara yuga. Driven by our thirst for dharma, we desire an era when, through a little bit of deeds, one can obtain happiness and achieve dharma. The end of the yuga[1132] has arrived, causing anxiety among subjects. O one who knows about dharma! You should tell me about the signs of dharma being destroyed."'

Suta replied, 'The illustrious one[1133] thinks about the true nature of future destinations and was thus asked about the signs that come at the end of the yuga. Earlier, he had replied.

'Vyasa said, "At the end of the yuga, there will be kings who will use their powers to only protect their own shares. The shares of sacrifices will no longer be protected, because they will seize these for themselves. Those who aren't kshatriyas will become kings. Brahmanas will obtain a livelihood through modes meant for shudras. When the yuga is destroyed, shudras will follow the conduct meant for brahmanas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Janamejaya! When it is the end of a yuga, *kandaprishtha*s and learned brahmanas will be seated in the same row and eat the sacrificial food together.[1134] O Janamejaya! When it is the end of a yuga, there will be men who are artisans, those who are devoted to falsehood, those who are addicted to liquor and flesh and those who regard their wives as enemies. Thieves will follow the conduct of kings and kings will follow the conduct of thieves. When it is the end of a yuga, servants will enjoy what they have not been instructed to enjoy. Riches will be praised and the conduct of the virtuous will not be revered. When it is the end of a yuga, those who are outcasts will not be condemned. Mortals will be devoid of their senses. They will sport dishevelled hair, or shave their heads. Without attaining the age of sixteen years, men will have children. When it is the end of a yuga, inhabitants will sell food, auspicious objects will be sold at the crossroads and women will sell their hair. Everyone will speak about the brahman.[1135] Everyone will be accomplished in the Vedas.[1136] When it is the end of a yuga, shudras will say *bho*.[1137] The brahmanas will sell austerities, sacrifices and the truth of the Vedas. When it is the end of a yuga, the seasons will behave in contrary fashion. Shudras will observe dharma, following the livelihood indicated by Shakya Buddha. They will display their white teeth and not lower their eyes. They will shave their heads and dress themselves in ochre garments. There will be a large number of predatory beasts and the number of cattle will decline. When it is the end of a yuga, tasty food will be difficult to come by and learning will decline. Outcasts will reside in the centre and those who should be in the centre will reside where outcasts should be. When it is the end of a yuga, inferior subjects will be allowed to go everywhere. When the yuga is destroyed, two-year-old bulls will be used to plough and till and the rain will shower down in extraordinary ways. When the yuga withdraws itself, men will no longer follow dharma. The land will become a desert and highways will traverse through the interiors of cities. When it is kali yuga, everyone will become a trader. Sons will no longer render offerings to their ancestors. Driven by avarice and falsehood, they will act against each other and steal each other's shares. When it is the end of a yuga, women who have lost their beauty, form and riches, will still decorate their hair. When it is the end of a yuga, householders will no longer possess a refuge and will be terrified. They will believe that no one should be loved as much as a wife. There will be many who are wicked in conduct and ignoble. Nevertheless, they will be handsome. When it is the end of a yuga, one of the signs is that there will be few men and many women. There will be many beggars in this world and they will give to each other.[1138] The kings will punish and afflict those who are not thieves and people will face destruction. Seeds sown will not lead to crops. The young will follow the conduct of the old. When the yuga is over, people will be happy with whatever they obtain in this world. Harsh winds will blow during the rainy season, inferior and laced with showers of stones. When it is the end of a yuga, there will be suspicion about the world hereafter. Kings will follow the conduct of vaishyas and earn a living from riches and grain. When the yuga is over, brahmanas will also follow this kind of conduct. There will be violations of agreements and contracts. As the yuga starts to decay, debts will not be repaid. When the yuga is destroyed, pursuit of future fruits will be unsuccessful.[1139] Instead, joy and anger will be successful among men. For the sake of milk, even goats will be milked. Those who do not know the sacred texts will behave as if they are wise. When it is the end of a yuga, they will nevertheless become expounders of the sacred texts. Without consulting the elders, everyone will be presumed to know everything. When the end of the yuga presents itself, there will be no one who deserves the appellation of being wise. When kshatriyas engage in contrary deeds, brahmanas will not restrain them. When the end of the yuga presents itself, kings will generally be thieves. O Janamejaya! When there is an end of the yuga, *kunda*s,[1140] shudras,[1141] deceitful people and drunkards become expounders of the brahman and perform horse sacrifices. When the end of the yuga presents itself, brahmanas become greedy for riches and perform sacrifices for those for whom sacrifices should not be performed and eat that which should not be eaten. They desire objects of pleasure and do not study anything. Women adorn themselves with a single conch shell and bind themselves up with *gavedhuka*.[1142] There are no nakshatras and the directions reverse themselves. When that next yuga[1143]appears, the red hue of evening burns in all the directions. Sons engage fathers in tasks and daughters-in-law employ mothers-in-law. Men will intercourse with women who are not from their own varnas. Men who observe agnihotra sacrifices will eat without having performed the required rites earlier. With offering shares of sacrifices as alms, men will themselves eat them first. While husbands are asleep, wives will cheat and go to someone else. While wives are asleep, men will go to the wives of others. Everyone will have some disease and some kind of mental suffering. Everyone will envy others. When the era ends, people will harm others, without having been injured earlier."'

Chapter 117

'Janamejaya asked, "When the world is agitated like this, who will protect men? Where will they reside? What will be their conduct? What will they eat? Where will they roam around? What will be their deeds? How will they die? What will be their size? What will be their lifespan? After how many measures of time, will krita yuga arrive again?"'

'Vyasa replied, "Dharma falls down from its elevated status and people are devoid of qualities. They give up good conduct for evil conduct and their lifespans diminish. As the lifespans diminish, their strength also suffers. As the strength suffers, they become pale. As they become pale, they suffer from diseases and ill health. Because of diseases and ill health, they lose their learning. From this state of lack of knowledge, awareness about the atman will arise. Once this awakening occurs, they will become attached to the conduct of dharma. In this fashion, after several measures of time are over, krita yuga will be obtained again. Some will be instructed about the conduct of dharma.[1144] Some will follow the middle path.[1145] Some will be prone to debating. Others will be curious about the cause behind everything. Some will be determined to follow what can be witnessed and proved. Others will pride themselves on their learning and not believe in proofs, arguing that nothing exists. Other people will see that what has been spoken about in the Vedas has not been proved. Some will be non-believers. Some will bring about the destruction of dharma. Men will be foolish and wicked, priding themselves on their learning. Unconscious about the knowledge of the sacred texts, they will be disrespectful and only believe in the present. They will be insolent and addicted to arguing. Dharma will be dislodged in this way. But there will be a few remaining ones who will follow what is auspicious, full of generosity and the truth. However, most will follow the senses and eat everything. They will be devoid of qualities and without any shame. These will be the filthy signs of the decline of the worlds then. People from the inferior varnas will adopt the eternal conduct prescribed for brahmanas. When the world is flooded by these astringent signs, knowledge and learning will be destroyed. But then, those who are detached obtain success in a short period of time. When there are those astringent signs, the yuga decays. There are great wars, loud roars, giant showers and immense fear. Rakshasas appear in the form of brahmanas. Kings listen to hearsay. When the end of the yuga presents itself, the earth will be agitated. Proud sages will not utter svadha and vashatkara. Predatory beasts appear in the form of brahmanas who eat everything and fail in their vows. They become stupid, selfish, greedy, inferior and evil in attire. They follow deviant conduct and are dislodged from eternal dharma. They steal the jewels of others and rape the wives of others. They follow desire and are evil-souled. They are untruthful and love to be rash. Men who are similar in power and conduct are seen to be everywhere. There are sages who appear in many different forms and claim that it does not exist.[1146] However, depending on the best of men, krita yuga will arise again. All of them will recite the accounts[1147] and be worshipped by men. But people will steal crops and steal garments. They will steal food and drinks and even the vessels in which these are kept. Thieves will steal from thieves. Those who kill others will in turn be killed by others. Because thieves ensure the destruction of other thieves, there will be peace. Without any essence, the earth will be agitated and no rites will take place in it. Oppressed by the burden of taxes, men will resort to the forest. When the rites of sacrifices are no longer observed, rakshasas, carnivorous beasts, insects, rats and snakes will make men suffer. O best among men! When the yuga is destroyed, peace, alms, health, objects, relatives and instructions are destroyed. They will protect themselves and steal from themselves, accumulating whatever is appropriate for the yuga. In groups, they will roam around in different countries. With their relatives, they will be dispossessed and dislodged from their own countries. They will flee in fear, carrying their young ones on their shoulders. Afflicted by fear and hunger, men will find refuge along the river Koushiki. Men will find refuge in Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Kashmira, Mekala, Rishikanta and the valleys of mountains. With bands of mlechchhas, men will reside everywhere in the Himalayas, the shores of the salty ocean and forests. The earth will not be empty, but it will not be full either. Those who should protect will not be able to act as protectors and rule, because they won’t possess the power. Men will survive on deer, fish, birds, carnivorous beasts, all kinds of insects, honey, vegetables, fruits and roots. Like hermits, they will attire themselves in many kinds of rags, leaves, bark and hides that they make themselves. Those who live in the upper regions will desire the seeds, wood and grain that grow in the plains and make efforts to rear goats, sheep, donkeys and camels. For the sake of water, those who live along banks will dam and obstruct the flows of rivers. They will buy and sell cooked food among themselves.[1148] Sons will be born to them without the interval of a year between the two births. They will have many wives, but no sons. They will be cruel and devoid of qualities. Driven by time, men will be like this. The subjects will follow the worst among all inferior kinds of dharma. The maximum lifespan of mortals will be thirty years. They will be weak, without possessions and overcome by the rajas quality. Disease will lead to the destruction of their senses. The lifespan will be reduced further because of the violence that they cause to each other. Though they will love the sight of virtuous people, they will themselves need to be tended to. However, because of uncertainty about the nature of conduct, they will praise the truth. When no gains are obtained from the sins of desire, they will follow dharma. Afflicted by the decay of their own side, they will restrain their wicked behaviour. Dharma possesses the four feet of serving, donations, truthfulness and the protection of life, and in this, men will come to follow it. But because they are insolent about dharma, those qualities will also be transformed. Having savoured the good taste of dharma, they will assume they know it and speak about it. Just as there is decay in progression, there is also expansion in progression. Hence, when dharma is duly accepted, there will be krita yuga again. The good deeds of krita yuga are said to subsequently decay. This is just like the moon becoming pale in complexion, as a result of the progression of time. In kali yuga, the moon is shrouded in darkness. But it is also in kali yuga that the full moon destroys the darkness. The learned know that the supreme meaning of dharma is in the essence of the Vedas. Something that is indeterminate and unknown is regarded as something to be given away.[1149] Rites, donations, austerities and brahmacharya are known to be extremely revered. Qualities are obtained by refraining from deeds, but qualities are also obtained by resorting to true deeds. From one yuga to another yuga, on seeing men who follow the dictates of the time and the place, rishis have pronounced benedictions over them. From one yuga to another yuga, sacred and auspicious benedictions are obtained in this world by those who follow dharma, artha and kama and the rites of the Vedas. The yugas circle around for a long time, depending on their nature and conduct, as determined by the creator. In this world of mortals, creation and destruction also circle around, neither remaining for more than an instant."'

Chapter 118

Suta said, 'King Janamejaya was assured in this way and the advisers also heard the words spoken by the rishi about the past and the future. Like the taste of amrita provided by the moon, the ears were satisfied by the sweet words spoken by the maharshi. They were full of dharma, artha, kama and compassion and delighted the brave ones. The entire assembly heard this beautiful account. Some listened and shed tears. Others heard and meditated. The itihasa was composed by the rishi who was Parashara's son.[1150] The illustrious rishi took his leave of the assistant priests and circumambulated. He said that he would see them again and departed. In the world, he is spoken of as the best of speakers. All the virtuous ones, stores of austerities, followed the supreme among rishis as he departed. When the illustrious Vyasa had left, the brahmanas, the maharshis, the officiating priests and the kings also returned to wherever they had come from. Having extinguished his enmity towards the extremely terrible serpents, the king[1151] also relinquished his anger, like a serpent that has released its poison. Astika, the great sage who was the hotri, saved the serpent Takshaka, whose head blazed from the fire, and returned to his own hermitage. Surrounded by men, the king also returned to Hastinapura. He ruled happily and the subjects were delighted.

'After some time had elapsed, King Janamejaya consecrated himself for a horse sacrifice, at which, copious quantities of dakshina would be offered, as is proper. Following the prescribed rites, when the horse had been slain, Queen Vapushtama, the princess of Kashi, went and slept with the horse.[1152] On seeing her beautiful limbs, Vasava entered the body of the dead horse and had intercourse with her. When this transgression occurred, realizing the truth, the king told the adhvaryu, "The horse isn't dead." The adhvaryu replied, "This revival has happened because of Indra." Thus addressed, the royal sage cursed Purandara. Janamejaya said, "If I have obtained the fruits of sacrifices, if I have performed austerities and protected the subjects, then, through the fruits of all these, let everyone hear what I have to say. O Shounaka![1153] Indra of the gods is fickle and has not been able to conquer his senses. Therefore, from today, no kshatriya will perform a horse sacrifice.” Angrily, King Janamejaya told the officiating priests, “Because of your weakness, this sacrifice has been tainted. You will not dwell in my dominion. With your relatives, you will be banished.” Thus addressed, the officiating brahmanas became angry and abandoned the king. Because of his rage, the king also instructed the women who were in his wife’s quarters. “Vapushtama has been unfaithful. Expel her from my house. She has placed her feet, covered with ashes, on my head.[1154] She has destroyed my greatness. She has polluted my fame and respect. She is like a faded garland and I do not wish to see her. If a man’s beloved wife has been crushed by someone else, he will not be able to eat any tasty food, or sleep happily at night.” Enraged, the king who was Parikshit’s son spoke in this way. However, Vishvavasu, the king of the gandharvas, spoke to him. “You may have performed three hundred sacrifices, but Vasava does not tolerate you. He made Vapushtama your wife and she is not to be blamed. O king! This queen is the apsara Rambha, born as the daughter of the king of Kashi. She is the best among women. She should be recognized as a jewel. To create an obstruction to the sacrifice, Indra was looking for a weakness. O best among the Kuru lineage! Had you accomplished the sacrifice, you would have rivalled Vasava in prosperity. O king! Shakra was scared of the fruits you would reap from the sacrifice. O lord! That is the reason Indra destroyed the sacrifice. Desiring to obstruct the sacrifice, Vasava resorted to the use of maya. He found a weakness in the sacrifice and the dead horse seemed to come alive. Indra desired to have intercourse with Rambha, who is the same as Vapushtama. You have cursed your preceptors, though they performed three hundred sacrifices for you. Indra has managed to make you and the brahmanas waver from receiving the fruits. One who has performed three hundred sacrifices should face this unpalatable truth. In truth, Vasava was always frightened of the brahmanas. With a single act of maya, Shakra managed to overcome both his fears.[1155] Purandara is extremely energetic and always desires victory. Will he ever commit the wicked conduct of violating his grandson’s wife?[1156] His intelligence is supreme. His dharma is supreme. His self-control is supreme. His prosperity is supreme. Such are the deeds of the one with the tawny horses.[1157] O performer of three hundred sacrifices! You are as invincible as him. You should not find fault with Vasava, your preceptors, Vapushtama, or with your own self. Destiny is always impossible to cross. Because of your prosperity, Indra of the gods became angry and entered the horse. Those who desire happiness should seek the favours of the gods. When there is a strong flow of water, it is impossible to fight against it. She is a jewel among women and has not been tainted. Free yourself from your anxiety and enjoy her. O king! If a woman who has not sinned is discarded, you will be cursed. Women cannot be tainted, especially those who are divine. Even if the radiance of the sun, the flames of the fire and the oblations offered into the fire attempt to pollute women, they remain untainted. The learned always accept, nurture and worship them. Women of good conduct must be revered and worshipped. They are like Shri."[1158] Thus entreated by Vishvavasu, he was pleased with Vapushtama. Discarding his false suspicions and following the rites of dharma, he obtained supreme peace.

'He gave up all the exhaustion that was in his mind. Janamejaya sought to obtain fame for himself. He ruled over the kingdom with dharma and intelligence. Delighted in his mind, he found pleasure with Vapushtama. He did not cease worshipping brahmanas, nor did he retreat from conducting sacrifices. He did not deviate from protecting his kingdom, nor did he censure Vapushtama. It is impossible to act against what destiny has ordained. This is what the ascetic[1159] had instructed him about earlier. As the king reflected on that conversation, he overcame all his anger.

'A man who reads this great poem[1160] composed by the great-souled rishi is worshipped. He obtains an excellent lifespan, which is extremely difficult to obtain. He attains emancipation and the fruits of knowing everything. Just as Shatakratu was released from his sins, a man who reads this is freed from his sins. In that way, he also obtains all the diverse objects of desire. Once all desire has been satisfied, he enjoys bliss for a long period of time. A tree yields auspicious fruit and from that fruit, trees are again generated. In that way, these words were composed by the rishi and also enhance the maharshi's power. Those who are without sons obtain extremely radiant sons. Those who have dislodged regain their own status again. There is no disease and there is freedom from bondage. One obtains the fruits of auspicious rites and all the qualities. If a maiden listens to the auspicious words of the sage, she obtains a virtuous husband. She gives birth to handsome sons who possess all the qualities, are full of valour and delight people. Those who follow the conduct of kshatriyas conquer the earth. They obtain unmatched riches and victory over enemies. Vaishyas obtain large quantities of wealth. Shudras who listen to this obtain a desirable end. This is the ancient account of the conduct of great-souled ones. A person who studies it obtains auspicious intelligence. He abandons misery and becomes free from attachment. Detached, he roams around the earth. You must remember that this account was recited in an assembly of brahmanas. If you remember this, patience will again be generated in you and will roam around the world, happy. The great-souled rishi composed this account about the conduct of those who were brave in their deeds. I have recounted it, briefly and in detail. What else do you desire that I should speak about?’

This ends Bhavishya Parva.
This also ends Harivamsha.

THE MAHABHARATA

ADI PARVA

Section One

Anukramanika Parva

This parva has 210 shlokas and only one chapter. It was clearly a later addition and sets out the background for the recital of the story and summarizes the main incidents, not once, but twice.

1

'Jaya'[1] must be recited after having bowed in obeisance before Narayana and also Nara,[2] the supreme human being, and also the goddess Sarasvati.

The great sages, performers of difficult austerities, were present at the twelve-year sacrifice of Kulapati[3] Shounaka and were comfortably seated in Naimisharanya.[4] Ugrashrava, the son of Lomaharshana and the son of a suta,[5] learned in the Puranas,[6] and also known as Souti, once approached them, bowing in humility.

When he reached the hermitage of Naimisharanya, the hermits who were the inhabitants, surrounded him, wishing to hear his wonderful stories.

Having been respectfully welcomed by those sages, he folded his palms before all those sages and asked them how their ascetic pursuits were progressing.

When all the sages had taken their seats again, Lomaharshana's son respectfully took the seat earmarked for him.

On seeing that he was comfortably seated and noticing that he was rested from his fatigue, one of the sages began the conversation and said: 'O lotus-eyed! O Souti! I am asking you. Tell me the details of where you have come from. Also, where have you spent the time?'

Souti said: 'The great-souled royal sage and lord of earth, Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit,[7] organized a snake-sacrifice. There, in his presence, Vaishampayana recited properly the wonderful and sacred stories composed by Krishna Dvaipayana.[8] After listening to those diverse stories of the Mahabharata, I wandered among several places of pilgrimage and sacred waters. I finally came to the sacred place known as Samantapanchaka, venerated by the twice-born. This is the land where, a long time ago, a war was fought between the Kurus and the Pandavas, and also all the kings of the earth. After that, anxious to see you, I have come before you. O revered sages! You shine like the fire of the sun in this sacred place of sacrifice. In my view, you are like Brahma to me, you who are pure through having performed sacred rites and meditation and you who maintain the fire of sacrifice. O you who are twice-born! [9] You are beyond all cares. What shall I say? Shall I state the sacred stories of the Puranas, the source of dharma and artha? Shall I speak of the history of kings among men and sages and great souls?'

The sages replied: 'Tell us that ancient story that was told by the supreme sage Dvaipayana, that which was worshipped by the gods and the *brahmarshis*[10] when they heard it—and that which is full of wonderful words and divisions and is the supreme of narratives, with subtle meanings and logic, adorned with the essence of the Vedas.[11] That sacred history of the Bharatas is beautiful in language and meaning, and includes all other works. All the shastras[12] add to it and that sacred composition of great Vyasa has been added to the four Vedas. We wish to hear that holy collection, that drives away fear of sin, just as it was recited at King Janamejaya's sacrifice by Vaishampayana.'

Souti said: 'I bow to the original being Ishana,[13] adored by all and to whom all offerings are made. He is truth and without decay, the manifested and un-manifested *brahman*, eternal. He is both existing and non-existing. He is the existing universe, but is distinct from the existing and the non-existing. I bow before Hari, the lord of all that moves and does not move, the lord of the senses. I bow before the pure and sinless Vishnu, worthy of worship, and he who is good and goodness.

'I will describe to you the holy thoughts of that great sage who is venerated in the entire world, Vyasa, the performer of wonderful deeds. Some poets have already sung this story before. Other poets are teaching this history now. In the future, still others will certainly do this on earth. Throughout the three worlds, this is a great storehouse of knowledge. Those who are twice-born, possess it in its details and compound forms. It is embellished with elegant words and usage human and divine. It is adorned with myriad metres and loved by the learned.

'When this universe was without brightness and without light and everything was enveloped in darkness on all sides, the great egg came into being. This was the inexhaustible seed of all creatures and was created at the beginning of all the eras. It is said that in this divine cause existed the eternal brahman,[14] true and resplendent—wonderful and beyond imagination and perfectly balanced everywhere. This was the subtle un-manifested cause. It was that which exists and that which does not. From this was born the one and only Lord Prajapati, known as Brahma, the preceptor of the gods. He is also known as Sthanu, Manu, Ka and Parameshthin. From him was born Daksha, the son of Prachetas, and Daksha's seven sons, and the twenty-one prajapatis. Him whom all the sages know as the being who cannot be fathomed was also born, as were the vishvadevas, the adityas, the vasus and the ashvins. Yakshas, saddhyas,[15] pishachas, guhyakas and the pitris were born and after that were born the learned, holy and superior brahmarshis. Then were born many *rajarshis*,[16] endowed with every noble quality. The water, heaven, earth, wind, sky and the directions, the years, seasons, months, fortnight, day and night, followed in succession. The world witnessed everything else that came forth. When the world is immersed in the decay of the era, everything that can be seen, movable and immovable, is again brought together. As the season changes, signs of the season can be seen.

Like that, at the beginning of another era, everything is produced again. Without beginning and without end, the wheel of existence rolls on eternally in this world, causing creation and destruction, without beginning and without end.

‘To give a brief example of creation, there are 33,333 gods. The sons of the divine Vivasvat were Brihadbhanu, Chakshus, Atma, Vibhavasu, Savita, Richika, Arka, Bhanu, Ashavaha and Ravi. Of these sons, Mahya was the youngest and his son was Devabhrata, also known as Subhraja. Subhraja had three famous sons, named Dashajyoti, Shatajyoti and Sahasrajyoti, and each of them gave birth to many offspring. The great Dashajyoti had ten thousand sons. The self-possessed Shatajyoti had ten times that number and Sahasrajyoti had ten times the number of offspring Shatajyoti had. From them were descended the line of the Kurus, the Yadus and the Bharatas, the lines of Yayati, Ikshvaku and all the rajarshis. Many other lineages and diverse living beings were created and their various places of residence.

‘The three mysteries of knowledge—the Vedas, yoga[17] and *vijnana*[18]—were created, as were dharma, artha and kama. The sage saw the various shastras, interspersed with dharma, artha and kama, and the rules of conduct for the world. He saw the ancient histories and all their commentaries and the *shruti*[19] texts too. This book has the signs of all those, everything is here. Having distilled this great knowledge, the sage made a summary of all that, in both abridged and detailed forms, as a storehouse of knowledge for the retention of the wise of this world. Some read Bharata from the story of Manu, others from the story of Astika, still others from the story of Uparichara. Some Brahmanas read the entire text. Learned men display their knowledge of the *samhitas*[20] by commenting on this collection. Some are skilled in explaining it, others in remembering it.

‘After penance and austerities, after having classified the eternal Vedas, Satyavati’s son composed this holy history. This learned brahmarshi, the son of Parashara, followed pure vows. Requested by his mother and at the request of the wise son of Ganga,[21] Krishna

Dvaipayana lawfully became the father of three sons in Vichitravirya's field.[22] These three Kouravas were like three fires. After thus giving birth to Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura, he returned to his hermitage to pursue the wise path of austerities. Until these sons were born, grew up and passed on to the supreme journey,[23] the great sage did not reveal Bharata to the world of men. When he was requested by Janamejaya and thousands of Brahmanas, he taught it to his disciple Vaishampayana, seated in his presence. Seated with his compatriots, it was he (Vaishampayana) who recited Bharata at intervals during the sacrifice, being repeatedly asked to continue when he stopped. Vyasa has described in detail the great lineage of the Kurus, the virtues of Gandhari, the wisdom of Vidura and the constancy of Kunti. The blessed sage has also described the greatness of Vasudeva,[24] the truthfulness of the Pandavas and the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Without minor narratives, Vyasa originally composed Bharata in 24,000 twenty verses. The learned know this as the real Bharata. Later, he composed a summary in 150 verses, with an index of the chapters, contents and events. Dvaipayana first taught this index to his son Shuka and then to other disciples who had the same qualities. Narada recited it to the gods, Asita-Devala[25] to the ancestors and Shuka to the gandharvas,[26] yakshas and rakshasas.

'Duryodhana is a great tree created out of passion, Karna is its trunk, Shakuni is its branches, Duhshashana is the plentiful fruit and flowers and the mindless Dhritarashtra is its root. Yudhishthira is a great tree created out of righteousness, Arjuna is its trunk, Bhima is its branches, the two sons of Madri[27] are its plentiful fruit and flowers, and Krishna, Brahma and the Brahmanas are the root.

'After having conquered many countries with war and valour, Pandu retired to the forest with the sages, because he was fond of hunting. When out hunting, he brought great misfortune on himself by killing a stag when it was with its mate. Since their birth, Pritha's[28] sons spent their lives there, according to the prescribed norms. In accordance with what is laid down in law, their two mothers[29] conceived sons from Dharma, Vayu, Shakra[30] and the two gods, the Ashvins. They grew up under the care of their two mothers and in the society of holy sages, in sacred groves and forests. Then, on their own, the sages took them to the presence of Dhritarashtra and his sons. They were dressed as *brahmacharis*[31] and students, with sacred tufts in their hair. The sages said, “These students of ours are the sons of Pandu, your sons, brothers and friends.” Saying this, the sages left. On seeing the sons of Pandu who had thus been left with them, the Kouravas, the learned among the castes and the townspeople exclaimed loudly with joy. However, some said they were not the sons of Pandu. Others said they were. Others wondered how they could be the sons of Pandu when Pandu had died long ago. However, voices were heard from all directions saying that they were welcome nonetheless. Through great fortune, Pandu’s offspring could now be seen. They must be welcomed. Such voices were heard everywhere. When the tumult of the people had died down, an enormous outcry was heard from invisible beings and all the directions echoed with the sound. As Partha[32] and the others entered, there was a shower of fragrant flowers and the sound of conch shells and kettledrums. It was a great wonder. Delighted because of their love for them, the townspeople’s loud cries rose up to heaven and increased the Pandavas’ fame.

‘Without threats from anywhere, the Pandavas lived there, studying the Vedas and various other shastras. They were respected by all the people. The townspeople were delighted with the purity of Yudhishthira, the strength of Bhima, the valour of Arjuna, the humility of the twins and the submissiveness of Kunti to her elders. The entire world was content with their quality of valour.

‘After a few years, in an assembly of kings where the maiden Krishna[33] was to choose her own bridegroom, Arjuna performed a difficult task and won her hand. From that day, he was respected by everyone in the world as a great archer. He became like a sun in the battlefield, difficult to behold. He defeated all the kings and all the main tribes. Thus, the king[34] could now perform the *rajasuya*[35] sacrifice. Through the wise counsel of Krishna and the prowess of Bhima and Arjuna, Yudhishthira killed Jarasandha and the swollen-head king of Chedi[36] and thus obtained the right to perform the rajasuya, rich in provisions and sacrificial offerings and full of merit. Duryodhana came to this sacrifice and saw on all sides the great wealth of the Pandavas—the offerings, precious stones, gold, jewels, cattle, horses, elephants and treasure. On seeing this, his envy made him angry. He fumed when he saw the hall of assembly, like a celestial chariot, built by Maya. Before Vasudeva, he was mocked by Bhima, who said he was of common birth, when he got confused at the architectural deceptions.

'It was reported to Dhritarashtra that while he was enjoying himself with various objects and valuable things, his son had turned pale, yellow and thin. Out of affection for his son, the blind king gave him permission to play the game of dice. When Vasudeva heard this, he became very angry. Though he wasn't pleased, he did nothing to stop the dispute and overlooked the fatal game and other unjust acts, as they increased in importance. In spite of Vidura, Bhishma, Drona and Kripa, the son of Sharadvata, he made the Kshatriyas kill each other in the great war that followed.

'On hearing the news of the Pandava victory and knowing the vows taken by Duryodhana, Karna and Shakuni, Dhritarashtra thought for a while and then told Sanjaya: "O Sanjaya! Listen to all that I am about to say. You will then find that I am not worthy of contempt. You are learned in the sacred texts, intelligent, wise and respected for being wise. My inclinations were not for war, nor do I find pleasure in the destruction of my lineage. I have no special affinity towards my sons compared to the sons of Pandu. My own sons, following the wrong path, were upset with me because I was old and blind. I bore all that, because of my weak state and because of my love for my sons. I was deluded and silly and Duryodhana's folly thrived on that. He saw the wealth and power of the sons of Pandu at the rajasuya sacrifice and was mocked at his awkwardness when he ascended the hall. He couldn't bear this, but was incapable of defeating the Pandavas in the field of battle. Unlike a Kshatriya and incapable of energetically pursuing wealth, with the help of the king of Gandhara, he planned an unjust game of dice. O Souti! Listen to my words and learn all that happened later and all that I came to know. When you hear what I say and learn, you will know that my wise eyes have the gift of foresight.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that, in the presence of all the kings, Krishna[37] was taken, when the wonderful bow was drawn and pierced, the target fell to the ground.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Subhadra of the Madhu lineage was forcibly carried away by Arjuna and married in Dvaraka and when the two heroes[38] of the Vrishni lineage set out for Indraprastha.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna had satisfied Agni by giving him the Khandava forest and when he used his divine arrows to check the downpour brought down by the king of the gods.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Yudhishthira had been defeated in the game of dice by Soubala[39] and deprived of his kingdom, though his powerful brothers were still in attendance.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Droupadi, with protectors but as if no protectors existed, was dragged to court at the time of her period, with a single garment on and with tears in her throat.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the grieving and righteous Pandava brothers left for the forest, suffering out of love for the eldest.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that thousands of *snatakas*[40] and great Brahmanas who lived on alms followed Dharmaraja[41] to the forest.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna had pacified in combat the god of the gods, Shiva, who appeared before him in the disguise of a hunter, and obtained from him the great weapon Pashupata.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna, bound by his promise, had gone to heaven and learnt properly from Indra the use of celestial weapons.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Bhima and the other sons of Kunti, accompanied by Vaishravana,[42] had gone to the land that is inaccessible to humans.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that my sons, spurred by Karna's advice, had gone on a cattle-related expedition and been captured by the gandharvas, and then freed by Arjuna.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Dharma had appeared before Dharmaraja[43] in the disguise of a yaksha and posed him questions that were correctly answered.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that when the great-spirited Arjuna lived in the kingdom of Virata, my best had been destroyed by Arjuna on a single chariot.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the king of Matsya[44] had with great honour bestowed his daughter Uttara on Arjuna and he had accepted her for his son.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Yudhishthira, defeated, wealth-less, exiled, separated from friends and relatives, had been able to raise seven *akshouhini*s.[45]

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard Narada declare that Krishna and Arjuna were Nara and Narayana and that he had truly seen them thus in the world of Brahma.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Krishna of the Madhu lineage, who had covered the world with one foot,[46] had been engaged on the side of the Pandavas.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Karna and Duryodhana had plotted to revile Keshava,[47] but he had shown himself in many forms.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Pritha[48] had been consoled by Keshava, when she had stood in front of his chariot, weeping in sorrow at his departure.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Vasudeva had become their advisor and Shantanu's son Bhishma and Bharadvaja[49] had pronounced blessings on them.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Karna had told Bhishma that he wouldn't fight if Bhishma fought, and saying this, had gone away.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Vasudeva, Arjuna and the immeasurable Gandiva bow had come together, a threesome of fearful energy.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna, overcome by lassitude, had sunk down on his chariot, and Krishna had shown him all the worlds within his own body.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Bhishma, the great destroyer of enemies, was killing tens of thousands[50] of charioteers every day, but had not killed a single warrior of note.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna, having placed Shikhandi in front of him, had vanquished the infinitely courageous Bhishma, unconquered in many battles.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the old warrior Bhishma, after killing the *somaka*[51] warriors until only a few remained, was lying on a bed of arrows, wounded by an arrow with a multicoloured feathered tip.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Shantanu's son Bhishma was lying there and was thirsty and Arjuna pierced the ground to slake his thirst.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Shukra[52] and Surya[53] united to bring victory to the sons of Kunti and fierce beasts of prey were always around us.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Drona displayed the paths of many weapons in the course of battle, but failed to kill a single one of the chief Pandavas.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the great warriors,[54] the *sanshaptakas*,[55] who had been placed so as to kill Arjuna, were all killed by him.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Subhadra's brave son[56] had single-handedly penetrated our secret battle formation, impenetrable to others and guarded by the well-armed son of Bharadvaja[57] himself.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that all our great warriors, unable to defeat Arjuna, combined to surround and kill the boy Abhimanyu and then rejoiced.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the mindless warriors of Dhritarashtra cheered with delight at killing Abhimanyu and the furious Arjuna took his vow about the king of Sindhu.[58]

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna had taken a vow to kill the king of Sindhu and kept his vow in the midst of all his enemies.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that on finding the horses of Dhananjaya[59] exhausted, Vasudeva unyoked them in the field of battle, gave them water to drink and then re-yoking them, drove on.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Arjuna, on his chariot, fended off all warriors with his Gandiva bow, when the horses that drew his chariot were indisposed.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Yuyudhana[60] of the Vrishni race threw Drona's army into disorder with the strength of his unassailable elephant and returned to where Krishna and Partha[61] were.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Karna, with Bhima in his power, spared his life with some abusive words and dragged the warrior with the tip of his bow.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Drona, Kritavarma, Kripacharya, Karna, Drona's son[62] and the brave king of Madra[63] allowed the king of Sindhu[64] to be killed in their presence.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the celestial spear, given by the king of the gods,[65] was diverted by Madhava,[66] to the demon Ghatotkacha, of terrible form.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that in the fight between Karna and Ghatotkacha, the spear that would have killed Savyasachi[67] in battle, was unleashed by the son of the charioteer.[68]

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Dhrishtadyumna, violating all norms of what was right, killed Drona, while he was alone on his chariot, insensate and bent on dying.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Nakula, the son of Madri, engaged the son of Drona[69] in a chariot duel before all the people and proved himself to be equal in war.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that after Drona's death, Drona's son misused the celestial weapon *narayana*, but failed to kill the Pandavas.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the exceedingly brave Karna, unconquerable in war, was killed by Arjuna in a fraternal war that was beyond comprehension even to the gods.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the son of Drona,[70] the brave warrior Duhshasana and the fearsome Kritavarma failed to defeat Dharmaraja Yudhishthira.

'"O Sanjaya! O Bard! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Yudhishthira killed the king of Madra,[71] who always taunted Krishna in battle.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that evil Soubala,[72] the cause of the game of dice and the quarrel, though armed by magic, was killed in battle by the Pandava Sahadeva.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that Duryodhana, weakened in strength, without a chariot, fatigued, and with his pride broken, went to a pond and lay down in its waters.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the Pandavas, accompanied by Vasudeva, stood at that pond of the Ganga and addressed my quarrelsome son with contempt.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that, in the battle of the clubs, despite displaying various marvellous circuits,[73] he was unjustly killed through the advice of Vasudeva.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the son of Drona[74] and others committed a horrible and infamous act by killing the Panchalas[75] and the sons of Droupadi while they slept.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that, pursued by Bhimasena and angered, Ashvatthama discharged the greatest of weapons named *aishika*, which killed the unborn in the womb.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the weapon *brahmashira*, was discharged by Ashvatthama and repelled with another weapon by Arjuna, which he then pacified, but Ashvatthama had to surrender the jewel on his head.

'"O Sanjaya! I had no hope of victory when I heard that the son of Drona[76] killed the unborn in the womb of the daughter of Virata[77] through a great weapon, and that the son of Drona was cursed jointly by Dvaipayana and Keshava.

'"Alas! Woe to Gandhari who has lost her sons, grandsons, friends, fathers, brothers and relatives. The Pandavas have accomplished a difficult feat. They have again gained a kingdom without a rival.

'"Alas! I have heard that only ten people have survived this difficult war, three on our side and seven on the side of the Pandavas. In that fearful war of Kshatriyas, eighteen armies[78] have been slain. I see extended and extreme darkness all around me. Delusion overcomes me. O Suta! Consciousness is leaving me, my mind is delirious."'

Souti said, 'Having uttered these words in greatest sorrow and lamented his fate, Dhritarashtra became unconscious. On recovering, he addressed Sanjaya in these words.

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Since this has happened, I wish to give up my life immediately. I see not consolation nor profit in being alive any longer.”’

Souti said, ‘Then the wise son of Gavalgana[79] addressed these words full of meaning to that wretched and lamenting king of the earth.

‘Sanjaya said, “From wise Narada and Dvaipayana you have heard of many kings, those who had great enterprise and great strength. They were born in great royal dynasties and possessed great virtues. They knew the use of celestial weapons and were equal to Shakra[80] in energy. Having conquered the earth with righteous conduct and performed sacrifices with appropriate offerings, they obtained fame in this world and then succumbed to the forces of time. Such men were the great warrior Vainya, the brave Srinjaya who won through blessings, Suhotra, Rantideva, Kakshivanta, Oushija, Balhika, Damana, Shaivya, Sharyati, Ajita, Jita, Vishvamitra, the slayer of enemies and Ambarisha, of great strength, Marutta, Manu, Ikshvaku, Gaya, Bharata, Rama, the son of Dasharatha, Shashabindu, Bhagiratha and Yayati of good deeds, to whom the gods themselves sacrificed and who has left the habitable and inhabitable regions of the earth adorned with sacrificial sheds and stakes. In ancient times, when Shaivya was afflicted with the loss of his son, these were the twenty-four kings whose acts were cited by the royal sage Narada. But there were other kings who came and went before, with more power, great warriors, great souls and blessed with all the good qualities. They were Puru, Kuru, Yadu, Shura, Vishvagashva of great endurance, Anena, Yuvanashva, Kakutstha, the brave Raghu, the invincible Vitihotra, Bhava, Shveta, Brihadguru, Ushinara, Shataratha, Kanka, Duliduha, Druma, Dambhodbhava, Para, Vena, Sagara, Sankriti, Nimi, Ajeya, Parashu, Pundra, Shambhu, the pure Devavridha, Devahavya, Supratima, Supratika, Brihadratha, Mahotsaha, Vinitatma, Nala of the *nishadas*,[81] Satyavrata, Shantabhaya, Sumitra, the lord Subala, Janujangha, Anaranya, Arka, Priyabhritya, Shubhavrata, Balabandu, Niramarda, Ketushringa, Brihadbala, Dhrishtaketu, Brihatketu, Diptaketu, Niramaya, Avikshita, Prabala, Dhurta, Kritabandhu, Dridheshudhi, Mahapurana, Sambhavya, Pratyanga, Parahan and Shruti. These kings and hundreds of others, as many as lotuses, have been heard of. Giving up immense wealth and pleasure, these great, powerful and wise kings attained death, as did your sons. Even those, performers of celestial deeds, great souls who had valour, generosity, truth, purity, pity, magnanimity, faith and simplicity and whose abundance of good qualities and riches have been described for the world in the Puranas by superior poets of great learning, they too went to their death. Your sons were wicked, envious, greedy, driven by passion and evil. Do not mourn for them. O Dhritarashtra! You are knowledgeable in the shastras and characterized by intelligence and wisdom. Those whose understanding follows the norms of the shastras do not succumb to delusion. O king of men! You know the good fortune and misfortune of fate. You know the extreme sentiments you succumbed to in protecting your sons. You should not sorrow for that which was bound to happen. Those who are wise do not feel sorry over fate. Even with the greatest wisdom, that which is ordained will happen. No one can transgress the path that has been laid down. Time brings existence and non-existence, pleasure and pain. Time creates all elements and time destroys all beings. Time burns all subjects and it is time that extinguishes the fire. Time alone is awake when everything is asleep. Time cannot be conquered. Time walks in all elements, pervasive and impartial. Knowing that everything, past, present and future, is created by time, it is not appropriate that you should be consumed by grief.”’

Souti said, ‘Krishna Dvaipayana has composed a holy Upanishad. The study of Bharata is such a holy act that even if one reads only one line of a shloka, all the reader’s sins are destroyed. Here are lauded the performers of pure deeds, the gods, the devarshis, the immaculate brahmarshis, the yakshas and the great *naga*s. The eternal Lord Vasudeva has been lauded here. It is he who is truth, immortality, purity and holy. In it is described the eternal supreme brahman, who is the constant everlasting light and whose divine action is described by the learned. He is the source of the existing and the non-existing, the principle of extension and withdrawal. In it has been described the supreme spirit who assumes the attributes of the five elements[82] and three qualities[83] and to whom words like un-manifest cannot be applied. And also those who are free, through the powers of meditation and yoga, perceive established in themselves like reflections in a mirror. He who is always faithful and always follows the path of righteousness, such a man is freed from all sin on reading this chapter. The believer who always hears this introductory chapter of Bharata from the beginning never suffers from difficulties. He who repeatedly utters any part of the introductory chapter in the morning or evening is freed from all sins accumulated during the day or night. In the body of Bharata, this chapter is like truth and ambrosia—like butter among curds and Brahmanas among bipeds, like the ocean is the best of the lakes and the cow is the best of the quadrupeds. Just as these are the best, so it is said is Bharata. He who makes a Brahmana listen to one verse of a shloka at a funeral ceremony, his offerings of food and drink to his ancestors become inexhaustible. The Vedas should be supported with itihasa[84] and the Puranas. But the Vedas are afraid of those with little learning,[85] lest that knowledge be hurt. However, if a learned man recites this Veda of Krishna's,[86] he will gain. Without a doubt, the sin of killing an embryo is also destroyed. I think that a pure man who has read this chapter reverently at every change of the moon has read the entire Bharata. The man who reverently listens every day to these sacred verses, it is said he attains a long life, fame and goes to heaven. In ancient times, the gods and the sages came together and on one side of a scale, they placed the four Vedas, with Bharata on the other side. In greatness and in weight, Bharata was heavier. Because of its superiority in substance and content, it came to be known as Mahabharata and he who knows this true meaning is freed from all sins. Asceticism is not a sin, studying is not a sin, the natural rules of the Vedas are not sins and exertion to acquire wealth is not a sin. These become sins when they are abused.'

Section Two

Parvasamgraha Parva

This parva has 243 shlokas and one chapter. It too was clearly a later addition. It gives two listings of the Mahabharata in the eighteen-parva and the 100-parva classifications. There is also a very brief summary of the highlights of the story.

2

The sages said, 'O son of a suta! We wish to hear from you all about the place Samantapanchaka,[1] described as it really is.'

Souti said, 'O Brahmanas! As per your wishes, listen to the blessed words about Samantapanchaka as I tell them. For listening to these accounts, you are the best of men. At the juncture of *treta* and *dvapara*,[2] angered at sins committed, the greatest of those who ever bore arms, Rama,[3] repeatedly decimated the world of all Kshatriyas. Having destroyed all Kshatriyas through his own prowess, lustrous like fire, he created five lakes of blood in Samantapanchaka. We have heard that, beyond his senses with anger, he stood in the bloody waters of those lakes and rendered bloody offerings to his ancestors. Then Richika[4] and his other ancestors appeared before this bull among Brahmanas and said, "Calm down, refrain, be pacified." From that day, the region in the neighbourhood of those five bloody lakes has become famous as the holy land of Samantapanchaka. The wise men have said that every place should have a name that signifies something that made the place famous. At the end of dvapara and the beginning of kali, a great battle was fought between the armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas at this holy Samantapanchaka. In that holy land, free from any bad qualities of the earth, eighteen akshouhinis of soldiers eagerly assembled for battle. O Brahmanas! Thus it was that the name of the region came about. I have described to you that beautiful and holy place. O best of Brahmanas! I have told you everything about this place, a region famous in the three worlds.'

The sages said, 'O son of a suta! We wish to hear everything about the akshouhini that you mentioned to us. You know everything. Tell us exactly the size of an akshouhini, with foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants.'

Souti said, 'One chariot, one elephant, five foot soldiers and three horses make up a *patti*. Three pattis are known as a *senamukha* and three senamukhas make up a *gulma*. Three gulmas are named a *gana* and three ganas a *vahini*. The wise know that three vahinis collectively form a *pritana*. Three pritanas make a *chamu*, three chamus an *anikini* and the wise say that ten times an anikini is known as an akshouhini. O best of Brahmanas! Those who know arithmetic have calculated that there are 21,870 chariots in an akshouhini and the number of elephants is the same. Know that the number of foot soldiers is 109,350 and the number of horses is 65,610. O best of Brahmanas! I have described to you in detail that which those who are familiar with numbers call an akshouhini. O best of Brahmanas! The eighteen akshouhinis of the Kurus and the Pandavas were made up according to these numbers and the cause destroyed them all. Time brought them together in this region and making the Kouravas the cause, destroyed them all. Bhishma, skilled in the best weapons, fought for ten days. Drona defended the Kuru army for five days. Karna, the decimator of enemy soldiers, fought for two days, Shalya for half a day and the duel of the clubs for also that duration. At the end of that day, the son of Drona,[5] Hardikya[6] and Goutama[7] killed Yudhishthira's soldiers when they were sleeping unsuspectingly. I will tell you in detail the story that was narrated at the sacrifice of Shounaka, the Bharata story, beginning with the story of

Poulama, which contains wonderful meanings, verses and accounts and is adorned in many ways. It is accepted by the wise the way men who desire final release accept renunciation, as the *atman*[8] is among objects to be known and life among things that are dear. It is the chief among all histories and the best among all sacred texts. This supreme of histories incorporates the supreme of intelligence and vowels, consonants and words, vulgate and learned. Hear the outline of different parvas of Bharata history, with subtle meanings and wondrous lines.

'The first is called Anukramanika (1);[9] the second Parvasangraha (2); then come Poushya (3), Poulama (4), Astika (5) and the descent of the first generation (6); then come the parvas composed by the gods—Sambhava (7), Jatugriha Daha (8),[10] Hidimba (9); then Baka Vadha[11] (10) and then Chaitraratha (11); then the parva known as svayamvara of the divine Panchali (12);[12] then, after defeating rivals in accordance with the dharma of Kshatriyas (13), Vaivahika (14),[13] Viduragamana[14] and Rajya-labha (15);[15] then Arjuna Vanavasa (16),[16] Subhadra Harana (17)[17] and Harana Harika (18); then Khandava Daha (19),[18] where Maya is met; after that, it is known as Sabha Parva (20)[19] and after that, Mantra Parva (21);[20] then Jarasandha Vadha (22)[21] and Digvijaya (23)[22] and after that comes the parva known as Rajasuya (24);[23] then Arghabhirana (25),[24] Shishupala Vadha (26)[25] and then Dyuta (27);[26] and then known as the Anudyuta (28);[27] then the parva known as Aranyaka (29)[28] and Kirmira Vadha (30);[29] then the parva known as Kairata (31), which features the bout between Ishvara[30] and Arjuna; then the parva known as Indraloka Abhigamana (32);[31] then the wise king of Kuru's pilgrimage in Tirthayatra (33); then Jatasura Vadha (34)[32] and Yaksha Yuddha (35);[33] and the one after that is known as Ajagara (36);[34] then the parva known as Markandeya Samasya (37);[35] and then the parva that has the dialogue between Droupadi and Satyabhama (38); then the parvas known as Ghoshayatra (39),[36] Mrigasvapna (40)[37]and after that the story known as the measurement of rice (41); then Droupadi Harana (42)[38] by Saindhava[39] from the forest; then comes the parva known as Kundala Harana (43),[40] then Araneya (44)[41] and after that the parva known as Virata (45);[42] then the parva known as Kichaka Vadha (46);[43] then the parva known as Gograhana (47);[44] then the parva that tells of the wedding between Abhimanyu and the daughter of the king of Virata (48); the next parva is known as Udyoga (49)[45] and after that the parva is known as Sanjaya Yana (50);[46] the next parva, concerning the worries of Dhritarashtra, is known as Prajagara (51);[47] then Sanatsujata Parva (52) with secret spiritual philosophy; then Yanasandhi (53)[48] and the arrival of Bhagavana (54);[49] then it is known comes the quarrel of the great Karna (55) and Niryanan Parva (56),[50] where the Kuru and Pandava armies march to battle; then comes the parva that describes the numbers of warriors and chariots (57), and the arrival of the intolerance-inspiring messenger Uluka (58); then the parva that tells the story of Amba (59); then the wonder-inspiring parva that tells of the anointment of Bhishma (60); then comes the parva that describes the creation of Jambu (61)[51]and Bhumi Parva (62), which gives an account of the expanse of the continents; then Bhagavad-gita Parva (63); then the parva describing the killing of Bhishma (64); then the anointment of Drona (65) and then the parva with the death of the sanshaptakas (66); then Abhimanyu Vadha (67)[52] Parva; then Pratijna Parva (68);[53] then Jayadratha Vadha Parva (69);[54] then Ghatotkacha Vadha Parva (70);[55] then the account of the slaying of Drona (71) that makes one’s hair stand up; after that the parva that is named after the release of the narayana weapon (72); then it is known as Karna Parva (73);[56] after that it is known as Shalya Parva (74);[57] then the parva that has the entering of the lake (75) and after that Gada Yuddha Parva (76);[58] then the parva that describes the river Sarasvati and places of pilgrimage and dynasties (77) and then

Souptika (78);[59] then the dreadful Aishika Parva (79) [60] and then Jalapradana (80);[61] then Stri Parva (81);[62] then it is known as Shraddha Parva (82) [63] with funeral rites for the dead Kuru warriors; then the coronation of the wise Dharmaraja (83); then the subjugation of Charvaka (84) who was a demon who appeared in the garb of a Brahmana; then the parva that describes the dividing up of the houses (85); then Shanti Parva (86)[64] where the duties of kings are described; then the parva where duties during contingencies are described (87); then that which describes the way to salvation (88); then Anushasana Parva (89) that describes disciplines and the parva that describes the wise Bhishma's ascent to heaven (90); next is Ashvamedha Parva (91) that destroys all sins and Anugita Parva (92) that concerns spiritual attainment; next come dwelling in the hermitage (93), meeting the sons (94) and the arrival of Narada (95); then the terrible Moushala Parva (96),[65] then Mahaprasthanika Parva (97),[66] and then Svargarohanika Parva (98);[67] then follows the Purana known as Harivamsha (99)[68] that is an appendix; and finally comes the great Bhavishya Parva (100), [69] which is also an appendix.

'These one hundred parvas were recited in full by the great Vyasa. Later, in the Naimisha forest, Lomaharshana, the son of a suta, recited them exactly again, having classified them into eighteen parvas. The gist of Bharata is given there as a summary of this collection of parvas.

'In Pousha Parva, the greatness of Utanka is described. In Poulama Parva, the extent of the lineage of Bhrigu is described; in Astika, the birth of all the snakes and Garuda, the churning of the ocean and the birth of Uchchaihshrava.[70] Then is recounted the story of the great-souled Bharatas, as described at the snake-sacrifice of King Parikshit.[71] In Sambhava Parva is described the birth of various kings, Brahmanas and the sage Dvaipayana, the partial incarnations of the gods are recounted, the births of the *daityas*, *danavas*[72] and powerful yakshas, and of nagas,[73] snakes, gandharvas and birds and all the other diverse living creatures; the births of the great Vasus from the Bhagirathi and in the house of Shantanu and their subsequent ascent to heaven and the birth of Bhishma from their energy is described, his renunciation of the kingdom, his adoption of brahmacharya, his adherence to the vow, his protection of Chitrangada and after Chitrangada's death, his protection of his younger brother,[74] and his subsequent placing of Vichitravirya on the throne. The birth of Dharma among men, as a result of Animandavya's curse, and the births of Dhritarashtra and Pandu, thanks to Krishna Dvaipayana's boon, and also that of the Pandavas, is described. The conspiracy of Duryodhana on the journey to Varanavata, the digging of a tunnel on Vidura's advice and the meeting between the Pandavas and the terrible-looking Hidimba in the forest and the birth of Ghatotkacha are next described. Then follow the disguised existence of the Pandavas in the house of the Brahmana, the killing of Vaka and the amazement of the townspeople. Then, after defeating Angaraparna on the banks of the Ganga, Arjuna, together with his brothers, went to Panchala. Then follow the supreme accounts of Tapati, Vasishtha and Ourva, the wondrous story of the five Indras, Drupada's sorrow that his daughter should have five husbands and the account of Droupadi's divinely arranged marriage. Vidura's arrival and meeting with Keshava, the life in Khandavaprastha and the rule over half the kingdom and Narada's command to Droupadi to follow separate hours, where the story of Sunda and Upasunda is told and Partha's[75] departure to the forest and his meeting with Ulupi on the way are then described. Next there is the description of the birth of Babhruvahana, the visit to many sacred places of pilgrimage, Arjuna's abduction of Subhadra with Vasudeva's permission in the chariot that goes everywhere at the will of the rider and on the arrival of Krishna, the son of Devaki, the burning of Khandava forest and their receiving of the *chakra* and the bow. The birth in Subhadra's womb of the supreme Abhimanyu, the saving of Maya's life from the fire and the saving of the life of the serpent and the sage Mandapala's giving birth to a son in the womb of a *sharanga* bird[76]—all this and other matters are found in the long Adi Parva, which is the first.

Vyasa, of great energy, divided this into 218 chapters.[77] The great one had 7984 shlokas in the text.

'The second is known as Sabha Parva,[78] with extensive accounts. It describes the building of the assembly hall by the Pandavas and their meeting with their servants, the description of the assembly halls of the guardians of the world by Narada who knows the celestial worlds, the beginning of the royal sacrifice, the killing of Jarasandha, the freeing by Krishna of the kings kept imprisoned in Girivraja,[79] the killing of Shishupala at the royal sacrifice when there was a dispute about offerings, Duryodhana's misery and jealousy at the magnificence of the sacrifice, Bhima's taunting of Duryodhana in the assembly hall, as a consequence of which he plotted a game of dice in which the crafty Shakuni defeated the son of Dharma,[80] Droupadi's immersion and deliverance like a boat in the ocean of gambling, after which, witnessing the deliverance, King Duryodhana challenged the Pandavas to another game of dice. The sage named all this Sabha Parva, with seventy-two chapters and 2511 shlokas.

'The great Aranyaka Parva,[81] the third parva, follows. The wise son of Dharma is followed by the townspeople. All the Vrishnis and Panchalas arrive, the slaying of Soubha and Kirmira is described and Arjuna's, whose energy was boundless, wanderings in search of weapons, his duel with Mahadeva who was in the form of a hunter, his ascent to heaven and his sighting of the guardians of the world. Also described is the grieving Yudhishthira, who was tormented over his vices, meeting with the great sage Brihadashva who had knowledge of the atman, the righteous but pitiful tale of Nala is there, the equanimity of Damayanti and Nala's succumbing to vice, the bringing of the news of Arjuna being in heaven by Lomasha to the great-souled Pandavas who were then forest-dwellers. Then follows the pilgrimages of the great-souled Pandavas, the slaying of Jatasura, Bhimasena's journey to Gandhamadana at Droupadi's request, where he transgressed a lotus pond in search of a *mandara* flower[82] and had a great fight with the rakshasas and yakshas led by Manimana. There is the story of Agastya and his swallowing of Vatapi and his sleeping with Lopamudra to beget a son, then the account of the hawk and the pigeon, where Indra, Agni and Dharma test King Shibi, the description of Rishyashringa who was celibate from boyhood and the description of Rama, son of Jamadagni, of unbounded energy, where the slaying of Kartyavirya and the Haihayas is told.[83] There is the story of Sukanya, where sage Chyavana of the Bhargava clan allowed the Ashvins to drink *soma*[84] at Sharyati's sacrifice and obtained everlasting youth as a result. There is the account of Jantu, where King Somaka sacrificed his son to obtain more sons and obtained one hundred sons, the story of Ashtavakra, where the sage defeated Bandin in a debate and won back his father who had been immersed in the ocean. Having obtained divine weapons for his elder brother, Savyasachi[85] battled the Nivatakavachas of Hiranyapura. Partha[86] then returned to his brothers in Gandhamadana. In the cattle expedition, Kiriti[87] fought a battle with the gandharvas. The Pandavas then returned to the lake named Dvaityavana, Droupadi was abducted from the hermitage by Jayadratha and Bhima, whose speed equalled that of the wind, pursued him. Then there is the meeting with Markandeya and several stories, Krishna's meeting and conversation with Satya, the story of the measure of rice and that of Indradyumna and the accounts of Savitri, Ouddalaka and Vainya, the story of the Ramayana recounted at great length, the theft of Karna's earrings by Purandara,[88] the account of the wood kindlings where Dharma teaches his son and where the Pandavas, after obtaining a boon, leave for the west. This is known as Aranyaka Parva, the third parva, where the great sage had 269 chapters[89] and 11,664 shlokas.

'Then occurs the extensive Virata Parva. It describes how the Pandavas arrived at the city of Virata, saw a large *shami* tree[90] in a cremation ground and hid their weapons in it. Then is described their entry into the city and their living there in disguise and the slaying of the evil Kichaka by Vrikodara.[91] The Kouravas were defeated by Arjuna when the cattle were stolen and Virata's bovine wealth was freed by the Pandavas. Virata gave his daughter Uttara to Kiriti[92] for Abhimanyu, the son of Subhadra and the slayer of enemies. I have described the contents of the fourth large Virata Parva. The great sage composed this parva in sixty-seven chapters and 2050 shlokas.

'After that, listen to the contents of the fifth Udyoga Parva. When the Pandavas were dwelling in Upaplavya, both Duryodhana and Arjuna, desirous of battle, went to Vasudeva and sought his help. Then the extremely wise Krishna said, "O bulls among men! On one side, there is an akshouhini of my soldiers and, on the other, I as a non-combatant counsellor. Which shall I give you?" Not realizing his interests, the foolish Duryodhana asked for the soldiers and Arjuna asked for Krishna as a non-combatant counsellor. Then the mighty king Dhritarashtra sent Sanjaya as a messenger to the Pandavas to ask for peace. Hearing that the Pandavas had Vasudeva in front of them, Dhritarashtra suffered from insomnia and worry and Vidura's many and diverse words of advice to the wise king Dhritarashtra are described and the supreme spiritual doctrine of Sanatsujata told to the sorrowing and anguished king. Next morning, in front of the king, in court, Sanjaya spoke of the union between Vasudeva and Arjuna. It was then that the great Krishna, moved by pity and desirous of bringing peace, himself went to Hastinapura to find peace and Krishna's proposal for peace was rebuffed by King Duryodhana, though this was in the interest of both parties. Then, hearing the evil counsel of Karna, Duryodhana and others, Krishna displayed to the kings his powers of yoga. Then, Krishna took Karna on his chariot and gave him good advice about options, but intoxicated with arrogance, Karna refused. Then follows the marching out of Hastinapura of chariots, horses, infantry and elephants and the recounting of their numbers. On the day before the great battle, the prince[93] sent the cruel-tongued Uluka as a messenger to the Pandavas. Then is related the numbers of charioteers and great charioteers and the story of Amba. These are the many accounts in the fifth parva of Bharata, titled Udyoga Parva and with incidents of war and peace. The great sage Vyasa, of vast wisdom, composed this in 186 chapters[94] and 6696 shlokas.

‘Then is told the wonderful Bhishma Parva, where Sanjaya recounted the creation of the region known as Jambu. Thereafter is narrated the fierce and terrible battle that raged for ten days and the depression of Yudhishthira’s army. The supremely wise Vasudeva dispelled there[95] Partha’s[96] lassitude born out of delusion, by invoking the teachings of salvation. Also is narrated how the great archer Partha placed Shikhandi in front of him in the war and wounded Bhishma with his sharp arrows and felled him from the chariot. This sixth great parva of the Bharata is Bhishma Parva and was composed by Vyasa, learned in the Vedas, in 117 chapters and 5884 shlokas.

‘Then follows the wonderful Drona Parva with many accounts, where Partha had to retreat before the sanshaptakas in battle and Kiriti[97] vanquished King Bhagadatta, equal to Shakra in war, and his elephant Supratika. There is described the slaying, by many great warriors led by Jayadratha, of the brave Abhimanyu, still a boy and not yet a major. Angered at Abhimanyu’s death, Partha killed King Jayadratha and seven akshouhinis of soldiers in battle and killed in war the remaining sanshaptakas. In Drona Parva is recounted the deaths of brave Alambusha, Shrutayus, Jalasandha, Soumadatti,[98] Virata, the great warrior Drupada and Ghatotkacha and others. When Drona was downed in battle, unforgiving, Ashvatthama unleashed the awful narayana weapon. This is the detailed seventh parva of Bharata, Drona Parva, where many rulers of the world met their death, warriors and bulls among men mentioned earlier. The sage, the son of Parashara[99] and master of great knowledge, composed this in 170 chapters[100] and 8909 shlokas.

‘Thereafter follows the most wonderful Karna Parva, where the appointment of the wise king of Madra[101] as charioteer is described. The old story of the destruction of Tripura is recounted. Then is narrated, at the time of marching out, the strong words exchanged between Karna and Shalya and the account of the swan and the crow, with an insulting moral. There is described the anger of Yudhishthira and Kiriti towards each other and Partha's slaying of the great warrior Karna in a duel of chariots. Those who know the Bharata call this parva the eighth parva. Karna Parva has sixty-nine chapters and 4900 shlokas.

'The next parva is the wonderful Shalya Parva. After the deaths of the chief warriors, the king of Madra became the commander of the army. In different parts of Shalya Parva is described the deaths of the chief warriors of the Kuru army in circular chariot duels, Shalya's death at the hands of the great-souled Dharmaraja, the furious battle of the clubs is described here and the holy pilgrimage of the Sarasvati River. This wonderful parva with diverse meanings is known by those good at numbers as one with fifty-nine chapters[102] and 3220 shlokas, composed by the great sage who wished to spread the fame of the Kuru lineage.

'I shall now describe to you the terrible Souptika Parva. Once the sons of Pritha[103] had withdrawn, the warriors Kritavarma, Kripa and the son of Drona[104] came to the field of battle in the evening and saw the intolerant King Duryodhana lying on the ground, his thighs broken and his body covered with blood. Firm in his anger, the great warrior, the son of Drona, vowed that he would not take off his armour without killing all the Panchalas led by Dhrishtadyumna and the Pandavas and their allies. Protected by Krishna's strength, the five sons of Pritha and Satyaki,[105] the great wielder of the bow, escaped. Everyone else died. Those bulls among men, led by the son of Drona, killed the Panchalas and their families as they slept peacefully in the night. Grief-stricken because of her sons, and mourning the deaths of her father and brother, Droupadi sat before her husbands, resolving to die of fasting. Moved by Droupadi's words, Bhima, the performer of great deeds, was angered and ran after the son of his preceptor, the son of Bharadvaja.[106] Driven by destiny and out of fear of Bhimasena, the son of Drona unleashed the celestial weapon, urging it to destroy the Pandavas. Krishna neutralized the words and said that would not be, and Phalguna[107] neutralized the weapon with one of his own. Dvaipayana cursed the son of Drona, and he too cursed Dvaipayana. After the funerals of all the kings were performed with offerings of water, there follows the acknowledgement by Pritha[108] of the secret story of how Karna was born from her. The raconteurs know this as the tenth parva, Souptika Parva, composed by the great soul, the sage of unlimited intelligence in eighteen chapters and 870 shlokas.

'After that is told the pitiful Stri Parva. There is recounted the pitiful lamentations of the wives of the heroes and Gandhari and Dhritarashtra's wrath and fainting. They saw the Kshatriya warriors lying on the field of battle, unable to escape destiny—dead sons, brothers and fathers. There the extremely wise king, chief among those who show righteous conduct, burnt the dead bodies of the kings according to prescribed rites. This is known as the great and pitiful eleventh parva. There are twenty-seven chapters in it and seventy-five shlokas are counted. The great-souled author composed the story of Bharata so as to move the hearts and bring tears to the eyes of good people.

'After that follows the twelfth Shanti Parva, which increases the understanding. There is related Dharmaraja Yudhishthira's despondency at having killed his fathers, brothers, sons, maternal uncles and relations by marriage. On the bed of arrows[109] is related duties and laws that kings who desire to have knowledge should study. Also recounted are norms during emergencies and rules of time and cause. The wonderful path to salvation is described in great detail and a person who understands these attains supreme knowledge. This is known as the twelfth parva, loved by the wise and this parva has 339 chapters[110] and 14,525 shlokas, filled with the fruit of meditation.

'Then follows the excellent Anushasana Parva. There, Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, was composed after learning about righteous conduct from Bhishma, son of Bhagirathi. It describes the rules of dharma and artha in great detail, the different rules of donation and their fruits, the different merits of charity depending on persons to whom charity is given, the rules of living, the rites of individual conduct and the unmatched supremacy of truth. All these diverse and supreme accounts are recounted in Anushasana Parva and it also describes Bhishma's ascent to heaven. This is the thirteenth parva, describing the certainty of righteous conduct. It has 146 chapters[111] and 6700 shlokas.

'After that is the fourteenth, Ashvamedhika Parva. There is related the excellent story of Samvarta and Marutta, the discovery of the golden treasures,[112] then the birth of Parikshit, who was burnt almost dead by the weapon and revived by Krishna again, the Pandava's[113] journey with the sacrificial horse that had been set loose, his combats with angry princes, Dhananjaya's encounter with Chitrangada's son,[114] his great danger in the battle with Babhruvahana and the story of the mongoose in the great horse-sacrifice. This extremely wonderful parva is known as Ashvamedhika Parva and he who knew the truth composed it in 133 chapters[115] and 3320 shlokas.

'Then follows the fifteenth Ashramavasika Parva. In this, abdicating the kingdom, King Dhritarashtra, accompanied by Gandhari and Vidura, retire to the forest. On seeing this, the virtuous Pritha,[116] who always served her superiors, left the kingdom of her sons and followed the old couple. As a result of the blessings of the sage Krishna,[117] the king saw an incomparable sight. He saw his dead sons, grandsons and other kings, who had gone to the other world, return. On seeing this, the old king discarded his sorrow and obtained with his wife the greatest fruits of his righteous deeds. Having resorted to righteous conduct all his life, Vidura also attained the supreme state. So did the learned and wise adviser Sanjaya, son of Gavalgana. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira met Narada and learnt from Narada about the destruction of the Vrishni lineage. This is the wonderful Ashramavasika Parva. He who knew the truth composed it in forty-two chapters[118] and 1506 shlokas.

'Then is told the terrible Mousala Parva.[119] This tells the story of how those tigers among men,[120] scars of weapons on their bodies, on account of the Brahmana's staff, were drunk and deprived of their senses. On the shores of the salty ocean, with *eraka* grass[121] that became like thunder in their hands, they killed one another, driven by destiny. There is told that Rama[122] and Keshava,[123] after destroying their race, themselves succumbed to the great all-consuming time. Then is described how Arjuna, bull among men, journeyed to Dvaravati, and seeing it bereft of the Vrishnis, succumbs to great sorrow and affliction. Having performed the funeral rites for his brave maternal uncle Vasudeva,[124] he saw the warriors of the Yadu race lying dead where they had been drinking. He then performed the funeral ceremonies over the bodies of the great Vasudeva[125] and Rama[126] and the chief among those of the Vrishni lineage. Then is described the journey from Dvaravati with the aged and the children and the sufferings, with the defeat of the gandiva bow. He witnessed the inefficacy of his celestial weapons and the failure to prevent the destruction of the Yadava women. He was despondent on seeing this, and on Vyasa's advice, went to Dharmaraja and asked for permission to become an ascetic. All this is described in the sixteenth Mousala Parva in eight chapters and 300 shlokas.

'Then follows the seventeenth Mahaprasthanika Parva. There, the Pandavas, bulls among men, accompanied by the divine Droupadi, gave up their kingdom and left for their great journey. He who knew the truth composed it in three chapters and 120 shlokas.

'That which comes next is called Svargarohana Parva, full of celestial matters. Replete with the fruits of meditation, it has five chapters and 200 shlokas.

'These are the contents of the eighteen parvas. The appendices are known as Hari Vamsha[127] and Bhavishya.[128] Thus the entire contents of Bharata are described in the chapter known as Parva Sangraha. Eighteen akshouhinis of soldiers came together to fight and the battle raged for eighteen days.

'A twice-born who is learned in the Vedas, the *angas*[129] and the Upanishads, but does not know this account, cannot be said to have any learning at all. Having heard this account, so worthy of being heard, no other account will seem pleasing, like the harsh cawing of crows sounds to one who has heard the cuckoo sing. Like the three worlds have evolved from the five elements,[130] the inspirations of all poets flow from this supreme history. O Brahmanas! Just as the four kinds of beings[131] are derived from the sky, all the Puranas[132] draw upon this account. Like the senses are dependent on all the varied workings of the mind, all action and all qualities are dependent on this account. There is no tale on earth that is not based on this account, just as it is impossible for the body to be alive without food. Like servants who wish to advance always live off high-born masters, all great poets make a living off this account. The Bharata flowed from the lips of Dvaipayana[133] and is immeasurable, sacred, purifying, salvation and the dispeller of sin. He who hears it as it is being recited has no need to bathe in the waters of Pushkara.[134] Just as the wide ocean can easily be crossed by men who possess boats, this section known as Parvasamgraha, helps understand the supreme and great account that is full of deep meaning.’

Section Three

Poushya Parva

This parva has 195 shlokas and one chapter. It is the story of Poushya. After the first two sections, which are really summaries and no more, Section 3 is where the main story of the Mahabharata should begin. But not only is this section mostly in prose, unlike the rest of the Mahabharata, it has little to do with the main story, since it has all kinds of incidents that don't quite belong. All this section does is set up the snake-sacrifice.

3

Suta said, 'Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit, attended a long sacrifice in Kurukshetra with his brothers. His three brothers were Shrutasena, Ugrasena and Bhimasena. As they sat at the sacrifice, a dog[1] came there. Being beaten by Janamejaya's brothers, the weeping dog went to his mother. On seeing him cry, the mother asked, "Why are you yelping? Who has beaten you?" On hearing this, he told his mother, "I have been beaten by Janamejaya's brothers." Then the mother said, "You must have committed some wrong that you were beaten." He replied, "I did not commit any wrong. I did not lick the sacrificial ghee. I did not even look at it." On hearing this, his mother Sarama felt sorry for the misery of her son and went to the place where Janamejaya and his brothers were attending the long sacrifice.

'She angrily addressed Janamejaya. "My son committed no wrong. He did not lick your sacrificial ghee. He did not even look at it. Why did you then beat him? Since you beat my son who committed no wrong, evil will befall you when you least expect it." On hearing these words of Sarama, dog of the gods, Janamejaya was saddened and miserable.

'Once the sacrifice was over, he returned to Hastinapura and took great effort to find a priest who could counteract the effect of the curse and pacify the effects of his sin. One day, Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit, went out on a hunt and saw a hermitage in a lonely part of his kingdom. A rishi named Shrutashrava lived there and he had a beloved son named Somashrava. Desiring to make the son his priest, Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit, saluted the rishi and said, "O Bhagavan![2] Please allow your son to be my priest." Thus addressed by Janamejaya, the sage replied, "O Janamejaya! My son is a great ascetic and is endowed with learning. But he was born to me in the womb of a snake that had swallowed my semen. He can absolve you from all sins except those committed against Mahadeva. However, he has a secret vow. If a Brahmana asks for anything from him, he always gives it away. If you can accept that, take him with you." Thus addressed, Janamejaya replied, "O Bhagavan! It shall be as you say." He then accepted him[3] as his priest and returned.

'Janamejaya then told his brothers, "I have accepted this person as my teacher. Without questioning, you must always do what he asks you." The brothers did what they were asked. Giving these instructions to his brothers, he marched against the kingdom of Takshashila and brought it under his control.

'At that time, there was a rishi named Ayoda-Dhoumya. He had three disciples named Upamanyu, Aruni and Veda. One day, the sage asked the disciple Aruni, from the land of Panchala, to go and stop a breach in the dike. On his preceptor's instruction, Aruni of Panchala went there, but could not stop the breach. He was sorry at this, but then found a way and said, "This is what I will do." He entered the breach and lay himself down there and the flow of water stopped. After some time, the preceptor Ayoda-Dhoumya asked his other disciples where Aruni of Panchala was. They replied, "O Bhagavan! He has been sent by you to stop the breach in the dike." Thus told, he said to his disciples, "Let us all go to where he is.” Having gone there, he cried out in these words, “O Aruni of Panchala! Where are you? Come here, my son.” Hearing his preceptor’s voice, Aruni rose from the breach in the dike, stood before his preceptor and said, “I was in the breach in the dike to stop the flow of water that could not be stopped in any other way. It is only when I heard your revered words that I suddenly came to you and allowed the breach again. O Bhagavan! I salute you. Please tell me what your instructions are now.” Thus addressed, the preceptor replied, “Since you have opened the flow of waters by standing up from the breach in the dike, you will henceforth be known as Uddalaka.” The preceptor also blessed him. “Since you have obeyed my instructions, you will obtain good fortune. All the Vedas will shine in you and also all the *dharmashastras*.” Hearing these words of his preceptor, Aruni went to the land where he wished to go.

‘Ayoda-Dhoumya had another disciple named Upamanyu. To him the preceptor said, “Go my son and look after my cows.” As instructed by his preceptor, he went and looked after the cows. After looking after the cows during the day, he returned to his preceptor’s house in the evening, stood before him and respectfully saluted him. On seeing him in the best of health, his preceptor asked, “Upamanyu, my son! How do you support yourself? You are very fat.” He replied to his preceptor, “I support myself by begging.” The preceptor replied, “You should not use alms you receive from begging without first offering them to me.” As instructed, he looked after the cows again. After looking after them, he returned before his preceptor and saluted him again. The preceptor, on seeing him as fat as before, said, “Upamanyu, my child! I take all your alms away from you. How do you support yourself now?” Being thus asked, he told his preceptor, “O Bhagavan! After giving you all my alms, I go out and beg again to support myself.” The preceptor replied, “That is not the way to obey your preceptor. When you behave thus, you deprive others of their sustenance. You have shown that you are covetous.” Having agreed to his preceptor’s words, he went away to look after the cows. Having done that, he returned to his preceptor’s house, stood before him and respectfully saluted him. On seeing that he was still fat, the preceptor said again, “I take all your alms and you do not go out to beg for a second time. How do you support yourself now?” He replied to his preceptor, “I live on the milk of these cows.” The preceptor replied, “It is not right for you to drink the milk without first asking for my permission.” He agreed to his preceptor’s words and went to look after the cows. Having done that, he returned to his preceptor’s house, stood before him and respectfully saluted him. On seeing that he was still fat, the preceptor said, “You do not support yourself through alms. You do not go begging for a second time. You do not drink milk. But you are still fat. How do you support yourself now?” Thus questioned, he replied to his preceptor, “I drink the froth the calves throw out when they drink at their mother’s udders.” The preceptor replied, “The good calves throw out generous quantities of froth out of kindness towards you. But if you act like this, you deprive the calves of their sustenance. It is not proper for you to drink the froth.” Upamanyu agreed to his preceptor’s words and went to look after the cattle, without food.

‘Having been prevented, he did not seek alms. He did not go begging a second time. He did not drink the milk. He did not drink the froth. One day in the forest, suffering from hunger, he ate the leaves of the *arka* tree.[4] His eyes were affected by the acrid, pungent, bitter and unripe arka leaves and he went blind. Wandering blindly around, he fell into a well. When he did not return, the preceptor told his students, “I have forbidden Upamanyu everything and perhaps he is angry. That is the reason he has not returned and has stayed out so long.” Having said this, he went to the forest and cried out in a loud voice to Upamanyu. “O Upamanyu! Where are you? Come here my son.” On hearing his preceptor’s voice, he replied, “O preceptor! I am here. I have fallen into a well.” The preceptor asked, “How did you fall into this well?” He said, “I ate the leaves of the arka tree and went blind. That is how I fell into the well.” The preceptor replied, “Sing praises of the two Ashvins.[5] Those divine physicians will restore your eyesight.” On hearing this, he[6] began to worship the Ashvins with verses from the Rig Veda. “O fiery first-born beings, born before creation. I worship you two, infinite and radiant. You are birds with beautiful feathers, beyond measure, but all-pervading in the world and the universe; you vest in all beings. You are golden eagles into which everything disappears. You are free from falsehood and you do not decay. You are always triumphant. Having created the sun, you weave night and day with black and white threads. For our good fortune, you freed the bird of life that was seized by time. Those who suffer from the delusion of the senses think that you, who are beyond matter, have forms. Three hundred and sixty milking cows[7] give birth to a single calf,[8] the creator and destroyer of time. The calves are in different sheds, but they suckle the same truth. The Ashvins milk them of true knowledge. There are 720 spokes on the nave.[9] To the rims of the wheel are stuck another twenty.[10] Without a rim, this wheel revolves, without decay and with delusion. O Ashvins! Set this wheel in motion. One wheel of time revolves with twelve rims.[11] Six spokes[12] and one axle bear the immortal nectar to which the gods of the universe are addicted. O Ashvins! Free me from this wheel of time. After killing Vritra, Indra once won back the nectar. Like that, the Ashvins have won it back. The Ashvins cleft the mountain in all forms and freed the pleasures obtained from the senses. At the beginning of creation, you created the ten directions of the universe.[13] You placed the sun and the moon above. The rishis perform yajnas according to their courses and so do gods and men who inhabit the earth. Mixing many colours, you have created objects of sight and the world and the universe were created from these. Gods and men who inhabit the earth follow these. O Ashvins! I worship only you and I worship the sky you have created. You are free and without decay, and create order from which even the gods are not free. You are the seed of everything. As male and female, you swallow food that becomes vital fluid and blood. The newborn baby sucks the mother's breast and you are the baby. O Ashvins! Restore my sight and grant me life." Thus praised, the Ashvins appeared and said, "We are pleased. Here is a cake. Take it and eat it." Thus addressed, he replied, "O Ashvins! Your words can never be false. But I cannot eat this cake without offering it to my preceptor.” Then the Ashvins replied, “Many years ago, your preceptor once worshipped us. We were pleased and gave him a cake. He ate it without offering it to his preceptor. You should do what he had then done.” Thus addressed, he replied, “O Ashvins! I crave your pardon. I cannot eat this cake without offering it to my preceptor.” The Ashvins said, “We are pleased with your devotion to your preceptor. Your preceptor has teeth made of black iron. Yours will be golden. Your sight will be restored and you will have good fortune.” Thus addressed by the Ashvins, he[14] regained his sight. He returned to his preceptor, saluted him and told him everything. He[15] was very pleased with him and told him he would obtain good fortune as the Ashvins had promised. All the Vedas would be manifest to him. This was his trial.[16]

‘The other disciple of Ayoda-Dhoumya’s was named Veda. One day, his preceptor told him, “Veda, my son! Stay here in my house and serve your preceptor. Fortune will be yours.” He gave his promise and remained for a long time in his preceptor’s house, always obeying his preceptor. Like a bull always yoked to pull a heavy load, he endured the difficulties of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and never complained. After a long time had passed, his preceptor was satisfied with him. Because of his preceptor’s satisfaction, he obtained complete knowledge and good fortune. This was his trial. Having received his preceptor’s permission, he returned home from his preceptor’s house and embarked on the householder stage of life. Three disciples came to live with him. But he never asked them to undertake any work or serve him in any way. Since he had himself suffered from the miseries of living in his preceptor’s house, he did not wish to be severe on his disciples. After some time had passed, two Kshatriyas, Janamejaya and Poushya, came to the Brahmana Veda and chose him as their preceptor.

‘One day, he had to leave to officiate at a sacrifice. He told one of his disciples named Utanka to look after his house. “Utanka,” he said, “whatever needs to be done in my house, perform it without negligence.” Leaving these instructions, Veda went away on his journey.

Utanka lived in his preceptor’s house, always following his preceptor’s instructions. While he lived there, the women of his preceptor’s household assembled near him and told him, “Your preceptor’s wife is at the right period for conception and your preceptor is away from home. You must stand in his place and ensure that her period does not go barren.” Thus addressed by the women, he replied, “It is not proper for me to do this at the request of women. My preceptor has not asked me to do anything that is not proper.” After some time, his preceptor returned home from his journey. He heard everything that had happened and was very pleased. He told him, “Utanka, my son, what favour can I bestow on you? You have faithfully served me in accordance with what is proper. Consequently, the fondness we have for each other has increased. I grant you permission to leave. Go, and all your desires will be fulfilled.” Thus addressed, he replied, “Let me do what you wish. For it is said, he who asks without rightfully giving in return and he who gives without rightfully receiving in return, one of those will die and enmity created between them.[17] Now that you have given me permission to leave, I wish to give my preceptor what he desires.” On hearing this, the preceptor replied, “Utanka, my son, wait for some time.” After some time, Utanka again told his preceptor, “Command me as to what I should give my preceptor.” His preceptor then replied, “Utanka, my son, you have asked me many times about what to give to your preceptor. Go to my wife and ask her what you should bring as a gift. Bring what she wants.” Thus instructed by his preceptor, Utanka went to his preceptor’s wife and said, “O madam! My preceptor has given me permission to go home. But I wish to bring a gift that brings pleasure and then go home, free from my debt. Command me as to what I should bring as a preceptor’s gift.” Thus addressed, his preceptor’s wife replied, “Go to King Poushya and get from him the earrings that his queen wears. Bring those here. Four days from now, the day is holy. On that day, I wish to appear radiant before the Brahmanas and serve them wearing those earrings. If you can do this, good fortune will be yours.” Thus instructed by his preceptor’s wife, Utanka took his leave.

‘When he was passing along the route, he met an extraordinarily large bull and an extraordinarily large man riding on it. The man addressed Utanka. “O Utanka! Eat the dung of this bull.” Though thus addressed, Utanka refused. The man said again, “Utanka, eat it. Do not hesitate. Your preceptor has himself eaten it before.” Thus addressed, Utanka agreed and ate the bull’s dung and drank the bull’s urine and then left for where the Kshatriya Poushya was. As he came near, Utanka found him seated. Utanka saluted him and said, “I have come to you as someone who asks.” The other answered, “O Bhagavan! I am Poushya. What can I do?” Utanka told him, “I have come to ask for a pair of earrings your wife wears, to give them as a gift to my preceptor. Please give me those earrings.” He told him, “Go to the inner apartments of the palace and ask the queen.” He did as he had been asked, went to the inner apartments, but could not see the queen. He again told Poushya, “You should not treat me with a lie. Your queen is truly not in the inner apartment. I could not see her.” Thus addressed, Poushya thought for a while and said, “You must be defiled with leftover food. Try and remember. The queen cannot be seen by anyone who is defiled with leftover food. Since she is faithful to her husband, she doesn’t appear before anyone thus defiled.” Thus addressed, Utanka thought for a while. Remembering, he said, “Yes, that is true. Since I was in a hurry, I performed my ablutions while I was walking.” Poushya retorted, “This is a breaking of the rules. Ablutions cannot be performed while standing or walking.” Utanka agreed and sat down facing the east. He first washed his hands, face and feet properly. Then, silently, he thrice sipped just enough water, free from scum and froth, to reach his heart. He then washed twice and cleaned his orifices with water. Having done this, he entered the inner apartment and saw the queen.

‘On seeing him, the queen stood up, saluted him with respect and said, “O Bhagavan! Welcome. Command me as to what I should do for you.” He told her, “You should give me your earrings. I ask for them because I wish to give them as a gift to my preceptor.” She was pleased at his direct words and thought that such a worthy recipient could not be refused. Therefore, she took off her earrings and gave them to him. And told him, “Takshaka, king of the nagas, wants these earrings. Please be careful when carrying them.” Thus addressed, he told the queen, “Madam! Be reassured. Takshaka, king of the nagas, cannot overpower me.” Having said this, he took leave of the queen and went to Poushya.

‘He told him, “O, Poushya! I am very pleased.” Poushya replied, “O Bhagavan! You are a guest of many qualities. After a long time, we have found a worthy recipient in you. Therefore, I wish to perform a shraddha.[18] Stay for some time.” Then Utanka said, “Yes, I will wait. But I wish to leave quickly. Please bring whatever food is ready.” As asked, he[19] offered food that was readily available. Utanka saw that the food that was brought to him was cold and had a hair in it. He considered the food unclean and told Poushya, “Because you have offered me unclean food, you will go blind.” In turn, Poushya replied, “Since you have rendered unclean what was clean food,[20] you will be without offspring.” Then Poushya inspected the cleanliness of the food closely. Because the food had been prepared by a woman who had not braided her hair, Poushya found that the food was cold and had a hair in it and was unclean. He pacified Utanka, “O Bhagavan! The food placed before you was cold, had a hair in it and was unclean. This was an error and I seek your pardon. Please don’t make me go blind.” Utanka replied, “What I say must happen. You will go blind, but you will recover your eyesight soon. Grant me that your curse on me should also not have effect.” Poushya said, “I cannot take back my curse even if I want to. Even now, my anger has not been pacified. Don’t you know that a Brahmana’s heart is soft as butter, even though his words are like sharp razors? The Kshatriya is not like that. His words are soft like butter, but his heart is like a sharp instrument. Since that is the case, I cannot take back my curse, because my heart is still sharp. Please go.” Then Utanka said, “I showed you the unclean food that was placed before me and allowed you to pacify me. Before that, you said I would be without offspring because I had rendered clean food unclean. But the food was unclean. Therefore, your curse will have no effect. Enough.” Saying this, Utanka left, taking the earrings with him.

‘On his way, Utanka saw a naked mendicant[21] come towards him. He was sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. Placing the earrings on the ground, Utanka then went for some water. The mendicant quickly came to the place, picked up the earrings and ran away. Then Utanka dashed after him and seized him. Then Takshaka suddenly gave up his disguise, assumed his real form and disappeared into a large hole in the ground. Entering the world of the nagas, he went to his own home. Utanka followed him through the same hole and on entering the place, praised the nagas with the following words. “O snakes![22] Subjects of King Airavata,[23] you adorn battles, you shower like clouds, driven by wind and charged with lightning. O offspring of Airavata! Handsome and many-formed, bedecked with earrings of many colours, you shine like the sun in the sky. Many are the habitations of the nagas on the northern banks of the Ganga. Who wishes to march in an army against the blazing sun without Airavata? When Dhritarashtra[24] goes out, 20,000 nagas march as companions. I salute all of you who have Airavata as their elder brother, whether they live near him or far away. For the sake of the earrings, I salute Takshaka, son of Kadru, who has always lived in Kurukshetra and the Khandava region. Takshaka and Ashvasena[25] were constant companions when they lived on the banks of the river Ikshumati in Kurukshetra. I must also salute Takshaka’s youngest brother, the great-souled Shrutasena,[26] who lived in Mahadyumna in a desire to become a chief of the nagas.” When he saw that in spite of the salutations, he did not get back the earrings, he saw two women weaving a cloth on a loom. There were black and white threads in the loom. He also saw a wheel being turned by six boys and a man who was handsome.

‘He praised them with the following *mantras*. “Six boys keep turning this wheel with 360 spokes, perpetually moving in a cycle of twenty-four divisions. Two young women, representing the universe, are continually weaving with black and white threads, creating worlds and beings of the past and the present. O master of the thunderbolt![27] O protector of the worlds, the killer of Vritra[28] and the destroyer of Namuchi![29] O great-souled one who is dressed in black, who brings out truth and untruth in the worlds! O he who in ancient times obtained as his mount the horse,[30] which was another form of the fire-god, from the depths of the water. I always salute you, the lord of the universe. O lord of the three worlds! O Purandara![31]" Then that man said to him, "I am pleased with your salutations. What can I do to please you?" He[32] then told him, "Let the serpents be in my power." Then that man again said, "Blow into this horse's anus." He then blew into the horse's anus and from all the horse's orifices that were blown into there billowed out flames and smoke. This burnt down the world of the nagas. Then the alarmed Takshaka, scared of being burnt by the fire, took the earrings, fled from his palace and told Utanka, "Please take back these earrings." Utanka took the earrings back.

'But having taken them back, he began to think. "Today is the sacred day mentioned by my preceptor's wife. I have come very far away. How can I then give these to her?" As he was thus thinking, the man said, "Utanka, get on this horse. It will instantly take you to your preceptor's house." He agreed, mounted the horse and reached his preceptor's house. After bathing, the preceptor's wife was dressing her hair, thinking that if Utanka did not come, she would curse him. At that time, Utanka entered, saluted her and gave her the earrings. She said, "Utanka, you have come at the right time and the right place. Welcome, my son. You have been fortunate that I have not cursed you. May good fortune be with you." Then Utanka saluted his preceptor and his preceptor said, "Welcome, Utanka, my son. What took you so long?" Utanka replied, "Takshaka, king of the nagas, cast impediments in my path and I had to go the world of the nagas. There I saw two women weaving a cloth with black and white threads on a loom. What did that mean? I saw a wheel with twelve spokes being turned by six boys. What did that mean? I also saw a man. Who was he? I saw an extraordinarily large horse. What was that? And as I was on my way along the road, I saw a man mounted on a bull. He respectfully addressed me as Utanka, and asked me to eat the bull's dung, as my preceptor had done. On being requested by the man, I ate the bull's dung. Who was this man? Please instruct me, what did all this mean?" Thus addressed, the preceptor told him, "The two women you saw are Dhata and Vidhata. The black and white threads represent night and day. The wheel with twelve spokes is the year with twelve months and the six boys turning it are the six seasons. The man is Parjanya.[33] The horse is Agni.[34] And the bull you saw on the way is Airavata, the king of elephants. The man who rode it is Indra. The bull's dung that you ate is the nectar of immortality. It is certainly because you ate this that you were not killed in the world of the nagas. Indra is my friend and it is because of his kindness that you have returned with the earrings. Now, amiable Utanka, I give you permission to go. You will obtain good fortune." Having received his preceptor's permission, Utanka went towards Hastinapura, angry with Takshaka, and wishing to seek revenge.

'In a short while, the good Brahmana Utanka reached Hastinapura and went to seek King Janamejaya, who had only recently returned victorious from Takshashila. He saw him seated, surrounded by his advisers. He uttered blessings of victory as was proper and then addressed him in words that had the right tone and metre. "O best of kings! You are spending your time in juvenile pursuits, when an important duty urgently demands your attention." Thus addressed by the Brahmana, King Janamejaya saluted him, as was proper, and said in a gracious tone, "I perform the duties of my Kshatriya birth by looking after my subjects. Tell me, O king of Brahmanas, what should I do? I am obediently waiting for your words." Having been thus addressed by that best of kings, the best of Brahmanas, superior because of his good deeds, replied thus, "O king of kings! It was Takshaka who performed violence on your father.[35] Therefore, you should take vengeance on that evil-souled serpent. I think the time has come for you to take revenge, as destiny has ordained. Go, O king! And take revenge for the death of your great-souled father, who caused no offence, but succumbed to the five elements, like a tree struck by thunder, having been bitten by this evil-souled serpent. Drunk with power, Takshaka, worst of the serpent race, committed a crime when he bit your godlike father, the protector of the lineage of royal sages among kings. The evil one even repulsed Kashyapa.[36] It is right for you, O king, to burn the evil one in the blazing fire of a snake-sacrifice. Do what is necessary and you will avenge your father. Thus, O king, you will also do me a great favour. O king of the world! O king who are pure! It was that evil one who obstructed me when I went on my preceptor's work." On hearing these words, the king was angry with Takshaka. As ghee stokes the sacrificial fire, the offerings of Utanka's words inflamed him. In Utanka's presence, the sorrowful king asked his advisers the details about his father's ascent to heaven. When he heard from Utanka the circumstances of his father's death, the king of kings was overcome with sorrow and grief.'

Section Four

Pouloma Parva

This parva has 153 shlokas and nine chapters.

Chapter 4: 11 shlokas
Chapter 5: 26 shlokas
Chapter 6: 16 shlokas
Chapter 7: 26 shlokas
Chapter 8: 22 shlokas
Chapter 9: 22 shlokas
Chapter 10: 8 shlokas
Chapter 11: 17 shlokas
Chapter 12: 5 shlokas

The meat of the Mahabharata doesn't start in this parva, since one is still on the snake-sacrifice. Indeed, this parva is mostly about the Bhargava lineage, descended from the great sage Bhrigu. Bhrigu's son was the famous Shukra or Shukracharya and so was the sage Chyavana. Bhrigu married Puloma and anyone descended from Puloma is called Pouloma. That is how this parva obtains its name. The chapters in this parva take us down Bhrigu's lineage, through Chyavana, Pramati, Ruru and Shunaka.

4[1]

Lomaharshana's son, the suta Ugrashrava, learned in ancient tales, was present at the twelve-year sacrifice of Kulapati Shounaka, held in Naimisharanya. Having spent a great deal of labour in learning the Puranas, he knew them well. He stood before the sages at the sacrifice, and with folded hands, addressed them, 'What do you wish to hear? What shall I tell?'

The sages replied, 'O son of Lomaharshana! We wish to hear, and you will tell us, those who are eager to listen, some excellent tales. But at the moment, the revered Kulapati Shounaka is busy in the room with the holy fire. He knows the divine tales about the gods and the demons. He also knows the stories of the men, the nagas and the gandharvas. O Souti! At this sacrifice, that learned Brahmana is the chief priest, capable, faithful to his vows and learned in all the sacred texts and the aranyakas. He is always truthful, a hermit strict in his austerities and vows, and calm. He is respected by all of us and we must wait for him. When he has taken the honoured seat meant for the preceptor, you will reply to what the best of the Brahmanas asks you.'

Souti replied, 'So it shall be. When that great-souled preceptor has sat down, I shall narrate, as asked by him, all the sacred stories on a wide variety of subjects.'

After that, when that bull among Brahmanas had finished all actions in accordance with the proper rites and had prayed to the gods and offered water to the ancestors, he came to the place of sacrifice where Souti was seated, in front of that assembly of brahmarshis, inflexible and successful in their austerities. Then, when Shounaka was seated among the officiating priests and assistants, who were seated, Shounaka said the following.

5

Shounaka said, 'My son, in days long past, your father learnt all the Puranas. O son of Lomaharshana! Is it the case that you have learnt them too? In the Puranas are described divine stories and accounts of the wise of the original lineage. In the past, long ago, we have heard these from your father. From those tales, I wish to hear that of the Bhrigu lineage. Tell us that story. We are all eager to hear.'

Souti said, 'That which was correctly learnt in ancient times by great-souled Brahmanas who were the best, that which was learnt and recited by the Brahmana Vaishampayana, that which was correctly studied by my father and from him learnt by me, O descendant of the Bhrigu race,[2] hear that story of the Bhrigu lineage, revered by the gods, Indra, Agni and the Maruts.[3] O chief and great sage, I shall recite to you the history of this lineage, and related stories, as it is recounted in the Puranas. Bhrigu gave birth to a beloved son, named Chyavana Bhargava. Chyavana had a righteous son named Pramati and Pramati, in turn, had a son named Ruru, from Ghritachi. From his wife Pramadvara, Ruru had a son named Shunaka. He was righteous and learned in the Vedas, he was your great-grandfather. He was devoted to asceticism, famous, learned in the shrutis, truthful, righteous, wise in knowledge of the brahman and always had control over his senses.'

Shounaka said, 'O son of Suta, why was the great-souled son of Bhrigu known as Chyavana? I am asking you, tell me.'

Souti replied, 'Bhrigu had a beloved wife, widely known as Puloma. She conceived from Bhrigu's semen and a child formed in her womb. In time, when the equable and chaste wife Puloma was in that condition, one day, the famous and righteous Bhrigu went out for his ablutions. It was then that a rakshasa named Puloman came to his hermitage. Having entered the hermitage, he saw Bhrigu's unblemished wife, and seeing her, he was filled with lust and lost his senses. On seeing that a guest had come, the beautiful Puloma served him with roots and fruits from the forest. O Brahmana, having seen her, the rakshasa burned with lust and wished to carry away the unblemished woman. He went to the room where the holy fire was blazing brightly and the rakshasa then asked the flaming fire, "O Agni! Tell me truthfully, under oath, whose wife is she? O Pavaka![4] Tell me the truth, I am asking you. This beautiful lady was earlier engaged to be my wife. But later, her father gave her to Bhrigu, who thus committed a falsehood. Tell me truly if this beautiful lady can be called Bhrigu's wife. Since I have found her in the hermitage, I wish to carry her away. My hurt burns with rage that Bhrigu should have obtained this slim-waisted woman who was my wife first." Thus did the rakshasa repeatedly ask the flaming fire this uncertain question of whether the lady was Bhrigu's wife. "O Agni! You are always there in every being as witness of their righteous deeds and evil ones. O wise one! Answer my question truthfully. The wrong-doer Bhrigu abducted her, though she was my wife first. I wish to hear the truth from you. When I hear the truth from you about whether she is Bhrigu's wife or not, I shall carry her away from the hermitage in your presence. Therefore, O fire, tell me the truth.” Having heard these words, the seven-tongued fire was extremely distressed. He was afraid to lie because of the fear of a curse. At the same time, he was scared of Bhrigu’s curse.’

6

Souti said, ‘O Brahmana, having heard Agni’s words, the rakshasa assumed the form of a boar and carried her away with the speed of the mind and of thought. Bhrigu’s child, who was in her womb, was angry at this violence and fell down from his mother’s womb. For this reason, he got the name Chyavana.[5] On seeing the child fall from his mother’s womb, blazing like the sun, that rakshasa let go of her, but fell down, burnt to ashes. O Brahmana, O descendant of Bhrigu! Puloma, the lady with the beautiful hips, almost fainted with grief, but picked up Chyavana and walked away. Brahma himself, the grandfather of all the worlds, saw Bhrigu’s unblemished wife weeping, eyes filled with tears. The venerable Brahma, grandfather of all beings, consoled his daughter-in-law and a great river was formed from the tears that fell from her eyes. The river followed the footsteps of the famous Bhrigu’s wife. On seeing it follow the path of his son’s wife, the venerable grandfather of the world named it himself. He called it Vadhusara and it passed near Chyavana’s hermitage. Thus was Chyavana born, the mighty son of Bhrigu.

‘On seeing Chyavana and also the beautiful young lady there, the angry Bhrigu asked his wife Puloma, “Who told the rakshasa who was here about you, so that he wanted to carry you away? O lady of beautiful smiles! That rakshasa could not have himself known that you were my wife. Tell me who told him, because I wish to curse him in my anger. Who does not fear my curse? Who dared to transgress?” Puloma replied, “O Bhagavan! I was made known to the rakshasa by Agni. Then that rakshasa carried me away, crying like a female osprey. I was freed only through the extraordinary energy of your son. That rakshasa let go of me, fell down on the ground and was burnt to ashes.” Having heard this from Puloma, Bhrigu became very angry. Out of his anger, he cursed Agni that he would be an omnivore.'[6]

7

Souti said, 'Being thus cursed by Bhrigu, the angry Agni said, "O Brahmana! What do you mean by displaying this rashness today? I always try to stick to the righteous path and tell the truth impartially. On being asked, I told the truth. Where is my transgression? A witness who is asked and knows the facts, but testifies to that which is false, dooms both his ancestors and his descendants for seven generations. And he who knows the truth about an action, but knowingly does not speak, is certainly tainted by the same sin. I am also capable of cursing you, but I hold Brahmanas in esteem. O Brahmana! Although these are known to you, I shall nevertheless recount them to you. Listen. Having multiplied myself through my powers of yoga, I am present in many forms, in *agnihotras,*[7]*sattras*[8] and other sacrifices and rituals. When ghee is offered to me in accordance with the rituals prescribed in the Vedas, the gods and also the ancestors appear in it and are satisfied. The gods are the waters and the ancestors are also the waters. The gods and the ancestors have equal rights to perform *darshas*[9] and *pournamasas*.[10] Therefore, the gods are the ancestors and the ancestors are the gods. Depending on the stage of the moon, they are worshipped as one and also separately. The gods and the ancestors eat what is poured on me. I am therefore known as the mouth of the thirty-three gods[11] and the ancestors. On the day of the new moon the ancestors, and on the day of the full moon the gods, are fed through my mouth the ghee that is offered to me. If I am their mouth, how can I become an omnivore?" After contemplating this problem for some time, Agni withdrew himself from everywhere, from the agnihotras of the Brahmanas, from sattras and other sacrifices. Being deprived of *omkaras*, *vashatkaras,*[12]*svadhas*[13] and *svahas,*[14] all the creatures became miserable.

'Then, in great anxiety, the sages went to the gods and said the following words. "O faultless beings! Because of the loss of fire, the three worlds are confounded at having lost their sacrifices. Without losing any more time, please decree what is to be done." The gods and the sages then went before Brahma. They told him about the curse on Agni and his withdrawal from all sacrifices. They said, "O illustrious one! Agni has been cursed by Bhrigu for some unknown reason. How can he who is the mouth of the gods and receives the first part of all sacrificial offerings and is also the acceptor of all offerings in all the worlds ever become an omnivore?" Having heard all this, the creator of the world summoned Agni to his presence. He addressed Agni, who is the creator of all the worlds, like him, and is also eternal, in gentle words. "You are the creator of all the worlds and you are their destroyer. You preserve the three worlds and ensure that all sacrifices and ceremonies are preserved. Therefore, O lord of the worlds! Act in a way that the rites thrive. O eater of the sacrificial ghee! How have you become thus deluded? You are always pure in this universe. You are the refuge of all living creatures. With your entire body, you cannot become an omnivore. O Fire, with a crest of flames! Only flames that are meant for accepting oblations will devour everything. Just as everything touched by the sun's rays are rendered pure, anything that has been burnt in your flames will become pure. O Agni! You are the supreme energy. You have issued forth from your own energy. Through your own lustrous power, make the sage's curse come true. Accept the gods' share, and your own, when they are offered into your mouth." Agni replied to the grandfather, "Let it be that way." He went away to obey the instructions of the god Parameshthin.[15] In great delight, the gods and the sages returned the way they had come. And the sages continued to perform all their sacrifices and ceremonies, as they had done before. The gods rejoiced in heaven, as did the many living beings on earth. Freed from the taint of the curse, Agni was also extremely happy. Such is the ancient history of the curse that was imposed on Agni, with the destruction of Puloman and the birth of Chyavana.'

Souti said, ‘O Brahmana! Chyavana, the son of Bhrigu, then had a son from his wife, named Sukanya. Sukanya’s son was the great-souled Pramati, of resplendent energy. In turn, Pramati had a son named Ruru, from Ghritachi. Ruru had a son named Shunaka from his wife Pramadvara. O Brahmana! I will tell you all the accounts of Ruru, whose energy was resplendent. Listen to it in detail. In days long gone by, there was a sage named Sthulakesha. He possessed the power of austerities and learning and was known for devoting himself to the welfare of all creatures. O Brahmana! O sage! At this time, Menaka[16] conceived a child through the king of the gandharvas, named Vishvavasu. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! When the time came, the apsara Menaka delivered her child near Sthulakesha’s hermitage. After leaving her child on the banks of the river, she went away. The great sage and great Brahmana, Sthulakesha, found the daughter abandoned on the banks of the river. He saw her to be blazing in beauty, like the child of an immortal. On finding her, the best of the sages was driven by compassion and adopted her. The beautiful and radiant girl grew up in that hermitage. Since she was superior to all the others in beauty and in every quality, the great sage gave her the name of Pramadvara.[17]

‘When Ruru saw Pramadvara in that hermitage of his,[18] the righteous man, in control over himself, fell in love with her. Through his friends, he made his father Pramati, descended from Bhrigu, acquainted with his love. Thereupon, Pramati asked the famous Sthulakesha. Then the sage engaged Pramadvara with Ruru, fixing the date for marriage as one when the *nakshatra*[19] Bhagadaiva[20] would be in the ascendant. A few days before the date fixed for the wedding, when the beautiful girl was playing with her friends, her time having come and driven by destiny, she didn’t see a coiled snake and stepped on it with her foot. Driven by the requirements of destiny, the snake sunk its venomous fangs into the body of the careless girl. As soon as she was bitten by the snake, she suddenly fell down senseless on the ground. She, who was so beautiful when alive, became painful to look at when dead. Thanks to the snake’s venom, the slender-waisted girl looked more beautiful than when alive, as if asleep on the ground. Her father and other hermits who were there, saw her lying motionless on the ground, as beautiful as a lotus. Overcome with compassion, all the best of Brahmanas assembled there—Svastyatreya, Mahajanu, Kushika, Shankhamekhala, Bharadvaja, Kounakutsa, Arshtisena and Goutama, and also Pramati and his son and other inhabitants of the forest. They were overcome with compassion when they saw the maiden dead with the snake's venom and wept. But in great pain, Ruru left.'

9

Souti said, 'When the Brahmanas were seated there in a circle, Ruru went into the deep forest and wept loudly. Overcome with grief, his lamentations were piteous. Thinking and remembering his beloved Pramadvara, he mourned. "She is lying on the ground, that slender-bodied beauty, increasing my grief and that of her relatives. What can be more painful than this? If I have ever given alms, performed austerities, if I have shown respect to my superiors, let those merits instil life into my beloved. If I have controlled myself from the day I was born, if I have stuck to the prescribed rites, let the beautiful Pramadvara rise up right now." The messenger of the gods said, "O Ruru! The words that you utter in your grief can have no effect. O righteous one! Someone whose mortal time on this earth has run out, cannot come back to life again. The miserly life has run out for this daughter of the gandharva and the apsara. Therefore, do not yield even a little to grief. However, in advance, the great gods have devised an antidote. If you wish to implement this, you will get back your Pramadvara." Ruru replied, "O traveller in the sky! Tell me the details of the means the gods have provided for in advance. I will implement what I hear. Your honour, grant me deliverance." The messenger of the gods said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Give up half of your life to the girl. O Ruru! Your wife Pramadvara will rise up again." Ruru replied, "O best of the travellers in the sky! I give up half of my life to the girl. Let my beloved arise, in the form and adornment of love." Then the supreme king of the gandharvas and the supreme messenger of the gods together went to Dharmaraja.[21]

‘They addressed him in these words. “O Dharmaraja! If you so think, let Ruru’s beautiful bride Pramadvara, who is now dead, arise with half of Ruru’s life.” Dharmaraja replied, “O messenger of the gods! If you so wish, let Ruru’s wife Pramadvara arise with half of Ruru’s life.” When he thus spoke, the beautiful lady Pramadvara, engaged to Ruru, arose as if from a slumber, endowed with half of Ruru’s life. It was later seen in the future that the illustrious Ruru gave up half of his long life for the sake of his wife and this shortened his own. Thereafter, on the designated day, their respective fathers gladly married them in accordance with the rites and the couple passed their days, devoted to each other. Having obtained a wife who was so difficult to get, beautiful and radiant as the filaments of a lotus, the sage of firm austerities took a vow to destroy the snakes. Whenever he saw a snake, he was possessed with terrible anger. If it was near, he always killed it with a weapon.

‘O Brahmana! One day, Ruru entered a very large forest. He saw an old *dundubha*[22] lying there. With the intention of killing it, he then raised staff, like the staff of death and struck it. The dundubha then addressed the Brahmana. “O ascetic! I have not done you an iota of harm today. For what reason and in what violent rage do you wish to do violence to me?”’

10

‘Ruru said, “My wife, whom I love as much as I love my own life, was bitten by a snake. O snake! At that time, I took a terrible vow that thereafter I would kill every snake that I saw. It is for that reason that I do violence to you and I shall deprive you of your life.” The dundubha replied, “O Brahmana! There are other snakes that bite mankind. The dundubhas are snakes only by smell; you should not kill them. We may share the same misfortune, but we do not share the same good fortune. We may share the same sorrows, but we do not share the same joys. Since you cannot differentiate between right and wrong, you should not kill the dundubhas.” On hearing the words of the snake, Ruru did not kill the dundubha, because he was scared and thought it might be a rishi.

‘The revered Ruru now sought to pacify the snake. “O snake!” he said. “If you desire, tell me how you came to be so metamorphosed.” The dundubha replied, “O Ruru! I was earlier a rishi named Sahasrapata. I became a snake through a Brahmana’s curse.” Ruru asked, “O best of the snakes! Why were you cursed by an angry Brahmana and how long will you have to continue in this present form?”’

11

‘The dundubha said, “In times long past, I had a Brahmana friend named Khagama. He was truthful in his words and possessed powers through his austerities. When he was engaged in the agnihotra sacrifice, out of juvenile playfulness, I made a snake out of blades of grass and tried to frighten him. He fainted. When he regained consciousness, that truthful ascetic, rigid in his vows, told me in great anger, ‘Since you created a powerless mock snake to frighten me, you will yourself turn into a powerless[23] snake through my curse.’ O ascetic! I knew the power of his austerities. Therefore, very agitated in my heart, I told him, ‘I stand here, bowing before you and saluting you with folded hands. Since I am your friend, I did this only to make you laugh. O Brahmana! You should forgive me and take back your curse.’ Seeing that my mind was thus agitated, the ascetic was moved and breathing hot and hard, he said, ‘What I have said must come to pass. But, O ascetic! Since you are always rigid in your austerities and unwavering from your rites, hear what I have to say and hold it close to your heart. When Pramati’s son, the pure Ruru appears, you will be immediately freed from the curse on seeing him.’ You are that Ruru, the son of Pramati. Regaining my form, I will tell you something for your benefit.

‘“O best of beings! The righteous path is non-violence and that of not destroying life. Therefore, a Brahmana should never take the life of any living creature. The sacred texts say that a Brahmana should always be peaceful, learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, should make all creatures fearless and should be non-violent, truthful and forgiving. The supreme duty of Brahmanas is to retain the knowledge of the Vedas. The duty of the Kshatriyas is not meant for you. O Ruru! Listen to me. To hold up the rod of punishment, to rule over and protect subjects, these are the natural duties of Kshatriyas. In days gone by, the snakes were destroyed in Janamejaya's sacrifice. But the frightened snakes were saved by a Brahmana at the snake-sacrifice. O supreme among the Brahmanas! This was Astika, chief among the Brahmanas, powerful in his austerities, brave, strong and learned in the Vedas."'

12

'Ruru said, "O supreme among the Brahmanas! Why did King Janamejaya cause violence to the snakes and how did he destroy them? O best of the Brahmanas! Why were the snakes saved by the wise Astika? I wish to hear all this."

'The sage said, "O Ruru! You will hear the great history of Astika from a Brahmana who will recount it." Saying this, he vanished.'

Souti said, 'Ruru rushed to look for the rishi, but could not find him anywhere in the forest. Not finding him, he was tired and fell down on the ground. Regaining his senses, he returned home and asked his father. On his asking, his father told him the entire story.'

Section Five

Astika Parva

This parva has 1025 shlokas and forty-one chapters.

Chapter 13: 45 shlokas
Chapter 14: 23 shlokas
Chapter 15: 13 shlokas
Chapter 16: 40 shlokas
Chapter 17: 30 shlokas
Chapter 18: 11 shlokas
Chapter 19: 17 shlokas
Chapter 20: 15 shlokas
Chapter 21: 17 shlokas
Chapter 22: 5 shlokas
Chapter 23: 12 shlokas
Chapter 24: 14 shlokas
Chapter 25: 33 shlokas
Chapter 26: 47 shlokas
Chapter 27: 35 shlokas
Chapter 28: 25 shlokas
Chapter 29: 23 shlokas
Chapter 30: 22 shlokas
Chapter 31: 18 shlokas
Chapter 32: 25 shlokas
Chapter 33: 31 shlokas
Chapter 34: 18 shlokas
Chapter 35: 13 shlokas
Chapter 36: 26 shlokas
Chapter 37: 27 shlokas
Chapter 38: 39 shlokas
Chapter 39: 33 shlokas
Chapter 40: 11 shlokas
Chapter 41: 30 shlokas

Chapter 42: 20 shlokas
Chapter 43: 39 shlokas
Chapter 44: 22 shlokas
Chapter 45: 28 shlokas
Chapter 46: 41 shlokas
Chapter 47: 25 shlokas
Chapter 48: 26 shlokas
Chapter 49: 28 shlokas
Chapter 50: 17 shlokas
Chapter 51: 23 shlokas
Chapter 52: 22 shlokas
Chapter 53: 36 shlokas

It is one of the longer parvas and is about the snake-sacrifice, which provides the setting where the Mahabharata story was told. The parva is named after a sage named Astika, who saved the snakes (the major ones) from the snake-sacrifice.

13

Shounaka asked, ‘Why did that tiger among kings, King Janamejaya, decide to have a snake-sacrifice until all the snakes were destroyed? Why did Astika, supreme among the Brahmanas, save the snakes from the blazing fire? Whose son was the king who performed the snake-sacrifice? Whose son was that best of the Brahmanas? Tell us.’

Souti said, ‘O best of the Brahmanas! O best of the speakers! I shall recount in all its details the great story of Astika, as it was told. Listen.’

Shounaka said, ‘I wish to hear in detail the beautiful story of the ancient and famous Brahmana sage Astika.’

Souti said, ‘The wise know this ancient story as history. It was recounted by Krishna Dvaipayana to the inhabitants of the Naimisharanya. At the request of the Brahmanas, my learned father Lomaharshana, Vyasa’s disciple and a suta, once narrated it. O Shounaka! I was present at the time. Since you have asked me, I shall recount the story of Astika exactly as I heard it.

‘Astika’s father was as powerful and mighty as Prajapati.[1] He was celibate and was always engaged in great austerities. He was controlled in his food and never spilt his semen. He was known by the name of Jaratkaru. He was the chief among mendicants,[2] righteous and rigid in his vows. Once, when he was travelling, he saw his ancestors hanging upside down in a great cave, their feet pointing upwards and their heads down. On seeing them Jaratkaru asked, “Who are you, hanging upside down in this cave, tethered with a rope made of grass that has been eaten away by rats who secretly live in this cave?” The ancestors replied, “We are rishis rigid in our vows, known as the *yayavara*s. O Brahmana! We are descending into the earth because we have no descendants. We only have one descendant known as Jaratkaru. But unfortunate as we are, that unfortunate one has adopted the path of austerities. Therefore, that fool does not think of having a wife so as to get a son. It is for that reason that we are hanging upside down in this cave, because we are decaying. Like sinners, despite having a protector, we are unprotected. O excellent one! Who are you that you are sorrowing for us like a relative? O Brahmana! We wish to know who you are that you are standing before us mourning, though we deserve to be mourned?” Jaratkaru replied, “I am Jaratkaru himself and you are my fathers and grandfathers who have come before me. Tell me what I should do.”

‘The ancestors said, “For your sake and for us, endeavour your best to have a son so that our lineage can continue. O exalted one! Such is the law. From the fruits of virtuous action and from the stored-up merits of austerities one does not obtain the gains accrued by having a son. Therefore, as we are instructing you, try your best to marry a wife and have a son. O son! You are our recourse and this will bring us the greatest good.”

‘Jaratkaru replied, “I have always resolved never to have a wife. But I will take a wife for the sake of your welfare. O ancestors! If I get a girl under my conditions, I will marry her according to the prescribed rites. Her name has to be the same as mine and her relatives have to willingly bestow her on me as a gift. But who will give a wife to a poor man like me? However, I will accept a girl who is given to me as alms. O ancestors! I shall go as far as to marry a wife under these conditions. I shall not act otherwise. O my ancestors! For the sake of relieving you, I shall have offspring from her so that you may attain the eternal state and be happy there.”’

Souti said, 'The Brahmana who was rigid in his vows thereafter roamed the earth in search of a wife. But he did not get a wife. One day, the Brahmana went into a forest and, remembering the words of his ancestors, thrice begged for a woman in a faint voice. Thereupon, Vasuki[3] appeared and offered his sister to the Brahmana for acceptance. But he did not accept her, because he thought she did not have the same name as his. The great-souled Jaratkaru had intently thought to himself that he would not accept for a wife someone who did not bear the same name as his. Then Jaratkaru, of great austerities and of great wisdom, asked, "O snake! Tell me truthfully, what is your sister's name?" Vasuki replied, "O Jaratkaru! My younger sister's name is also Jaratkaru. Given by me, accept this slender-waisted one as your wife. O best of the Brahmanas! Till now, I have protected her for you. Therefore, take her." O foremost among those who have knowledge of the brahman! In times gone by, the snakes were cursed by their mother[4] that they would be destroyed in Janamejaya's sacrifice by the one whose charioteer was the wind.[5] It was to pacify this curse that the best of the snakes[6] married his sister to the great-souled rishi of good vows.

'Accepting her in accordance with the prescribed rites, he[7] had from her a great-souled son named Astika, great-souled and an ascetic and learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas. He looked on all the worlds impartially and removed the fear from his father and mother. Then, after a long time, we have heard that a ruler of men[8] from the Pandava lineage conducted a great sacrifice known as the snake-sacrifice. When the sacrifice for the destruction of the snakes went on, Astika, of great fame, delivered them from the curse. Saving his maternal uncles, relatives and other snakes, he then delivered his ancestors by having a son through his ascetic practices. O Brahmana! He freed himself from their debt through his diverse vows and study of the Vedas. He pleased the gods through sacrifices in which many offerings were made. He pleased the sages through his celibacy and his ancestors through his progeny. Jaratkaru and his grandfathers went to heaven.

‘After a long time, the noble Jaratkaru, best of the sages, had a son named Astika and after following the righteous path, went to heaven. I have narrated the account of Astika as I heard it. O tiger of the Bhrigu lineage! Now tell me, what else should I narrate?’

14

Shounaka said, ‘O Souti! Tell us once again, in detail, the account of the holy and wise Astika. You listen most obediently to what we say. O son! You speak in gentle tones, with the right words and metres. We are very pleased. You speak like your father. Your father was always ready to please us. Therefore, tell us this account, as your father narrated it.’

Souti said, ‘O long-lived ones! I shall tell you the story of Astika exactly as I heard it from my father. O Brahmana without sin! Many years ago, in the era of the gods, Prajapati[9] had two fair daughters and these sisters had great beauty. Their names were Kadru and Vinata and they were the wives of Kashyapa. Their husband was like Prajapati and obtaining great happiness from his wives, gave each of them a boon. Hearing that their husband Kashyapa was willing to grant boons, these two beautiful women were transformed from happiness to great joy. Kadru wished to have one thousand nagas as her sons, equal to one another in splendour. Vinata asked for two sons, greater than Kadru’s sons in strength, form, energy and valour. Then, her husband granted her the boon of sons she wanted and Kashyapa told Vinata that it would be as she wished. Having got the boon she desired of two greatly powerful sons, Vinata was satisfied and happy. So was Kadru at having obtained the boon of one thousand sons, equal in splendour. “Nurture the embryos with care.” Saying this, the great ascetic Kashyapa went away to the forest, leaving his two wives satisfied with their boons.’

Souti said, ‘O lord of the Brahmanas! After a long time, Kadru gave birth to one thousand eggs. Vinata gave birth to two eggs. Their happy maidservants kept these separately in steaming vessels and 500 years passed. After 500 years, Kadru’s sons emerged from the eggs. But nothing was seen to emerge from Vinata’s two eggs. Thereupon, that ascetic lady Vinata, impatient to have a son but ashamed and sorry, broke open one of the eggs and saw her son, with the upper part of the body formed, but the lower part yet unformed. It was then heard that the enraged son cursed his mother. “O mother! Since out of avarice, you broke open this egg and didn’t allow my body to be completely developed, you will be enslaved for 500 years by the woman you sought to equal. O mother! Your other illustrious son will set you free from slavery, if you wait patiently and do not break open the egg prematurely and deform his body like you have done mine. If you wish to have a son of unrivalled strength, you must patiently wait for his time of birth, for 500 years.” Thus cursing his mother Vinata, the son arose into the sky. O Brahmana! Aruna[10] can be seen in the morning. At the right time, Garuda, the enemy of the nagas, was born. As soon as he was born, he deserted his mother. O tiger of the Bhrigu lineage! Being hungry, the king of the birds rose into the sky to search for the food earmarked for him by the creator.’

15

Souti said, ‘O great ascetic! At around this time, the two sisters once saw Ucchaihshrava approach towards them. This gem, the best of horses, was worshipped by all the gods when he arose when the ocean was churned for nectar. This horse was supreme, of unsurpassed strength, divine, forever young, wonderful and decorated with all the auspicious marks.’

Shounaka asked, ‘Where and how did the gods churn the ocean for nectar, from which you say this powerful and resplendent king of horses arose? Tell me this.’

Souti said, ‘There is a supreme mountain named Meru that is blazing with energy. The sun’s rays are scattered when they fall on its golden and glowing peaks. Adorned with ornaments of gold and frequented by gods and gandharvas, this is unfathomable and unattainable to those who have committed many sins. Fearful beasts of prey roam its heights and divine herbs illuminate it. That great mountain arises high to cover the vaults of heaven. It cannot be approached through the imagination. It is bedecked with many trees and rivers and it echoes with the beautiful melodies of many birds. It has stood aloft for many eras. It was on this peak's bejewelled and beautiful summit that all the revered gods ascended. Those who had practised austerities and observed vows gathered and held consultations about how they might obtain the ambrosia. When all the gods thought and consulted each other, the god Narayana[11] spoke to Brahma. "The pot of curdled milk[12] must be churned by the gods and the demons together. When that is done, ambrosia and all the herbs and all the jewels will emerge. O gods! Therefore, churn the ocean and you will get the ambrosia."'

16

Souti said, 'There is a mountain named Mandara, with soaring peaks that tower like clouds. Adorned with nets of innumerable creepers, echoing with the melodies of many birds and with many fierce-toothed beasts of prey roaming on it, it is frequented by *kinnaras*,[13] apsaras and gods. It rises up 11,000 *yojanas*[14] above and its base extends 11,000 yojanas downwards. Having failed to uproot it, all the gods came to Vishnu and Brahma, who were seated together, and told them, "For the sake of our welfare and intelligence, endeavour to find a means to uproot Mandara." O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Both Vishnu and Brahma said, "Let it be that way", and summoned by Brahma and directed by Narayana to perform the task, the powerful Ananta[15] uprooted the king of mountains with all his might, with all the forests and all the beings that lived in the forests. With the mountain,[16] the gods then went to the shores of the ocean and told him, "O ocean! We have come to churn your waters for the sake of the ambrosia." The lord of the rivers replied, "Let it be that way, but give me my share. I shall then be able to bear the great crushing when my waters are churned by Mandara." The gods and the demons then went to Akupara, the king of the tortoises and said, "You will have to bear the mountain on your back." Thus addressed, the tortoise offered his back, and using instruments, Indra fixed the mountain on his back.

‘O Brahmana! In days long past, having made Mandara the churning rod and Vasuki the rope, the gods and the demons began to churn the ocean, the treasure house of waters. For the sake of the ambrosia, the *asuras* and the danavas[17] grasped one end of the king of the snakes and the great gods grasped the tail. And Ananta stayed with the revered Narayana and repeatedly raised and lowered the head of the naga. As the naga Vasuki was raised up and down by the gods, black smoke and flaming winds issued from his mouth. From this smoke was created clouds with lightning in them and showers rained down on all the gods, refreshing them when they were tired and fatigued. From the sides of the mountain, flowers showered down and refreshed all the gods and the demons. Tugged by the gods and the demons as they churned the ocean, there arose from Mandara a terrible roar, like deep thunder in the clouds. All kinds of marine creatures were crushed by the great mountain and in hundreds gave up their lives in the salty ocean. Many living beings who dwelt in the underground depths, in the land of Varuna, met their destruction. From the whirling Mandara, great trees crashed against each other, were torn from their roots, and tumbled down, with all the nestling birds. Great fires frequently blazed forth from the friction of trees brushing against each other. The mountain Mandara looked like dark clouds filled with streaks of lightning. It drove out and burnt lions, elephants and many other creatures and killed them all. Then Indra, foremost among the gods, began to pacify the blazing fires that were everywhere by pouring down rain from the clouds. The juices of many herbs and the resins of many large trees flowed into the waters of the ocean and the gods became immortal through the juices of the milk, mixed with extracts of liquid gold, which had the powers of ambrosia. Through those juices and resins, the waters of the ocean now turned into milk and the milk turned into clarified butter, mixed with the best of essences.

‘Then the gods came to where Brahma, the granter of boons, was seated and said, “O Brahma! We are tired out, but the ambrosia has not yet emerged. Unless Narayana helps, *devas*, daityas and nagas have no strength to churn the ocean any more, which has been going on for a long time.” Then Brahma spoke to the god Narayana thus: “O Vishnu! You are the last recourse. Give them divine strength.” Vishnu said, “I grant strength to all those who have devoted themselves to the task. All of you insert Mandara into the pot and turn it around.” Their strength increased on hearing Narayana’s words and together they once more mightily churned the ocean’s milk.

‘Then from the ocean arose the calm, cool and radiant moon, whose light rivalled 100,000 of the sun’s rays. Then from the ghee arose Lakshmi, dressed in pale white; then arose the goddess of wine and the white horse.[18] Then from the ghee arose the celestial jewel *koustubha*, which adorns Narayana’s breast. Directed by Aditya,[19] swift as the mind, Lakshmi, wine, the moon and the horse followed a path to where the gods were. Then arose the beautiful god Dhanvantari[20] with a white pot in his hand, in which the ambrosia was. Seeing this wonderful sight, the danavas raised a great uproar for the ambrosia, saying, “It is ours.” At that, Narayana used illusion to assume the form of a beautiful woman and mixed with the danavas. Then, having lost their senses, their hearts bewitched by the woman, the danavas and the daityas gave the ambrosia to her.’

17

Souti said, ‘Then the daityas and the danavas assembled, grasped their best shields and many weapons and rushed at the gods. But the powerful god Lord Vishnu, accompanied by Nara, seized the ambrosia from the chief danavas. Thereupon, in the tumultuous confusion, all the gods received the ambrosia from Vishnu and drank it. When the gods were drinking the much desired ambrosia, a danava named Rahu assumed the form of the god Budha[21] and began to drink it also. For the welfare of the gods, the sun and the moon informed the gods of what had happened when the ambrosia had only reached the danava’s throat. Then the great god[22] sliced off his[23] well-adorned head with his weapon, *chakra*,[24] as he was drinking the ambrosia. Then, sliced off by the chakra, the gigantic head of the danava fell down on the ground with thunderous roars. Ever since that day, a great enmity was created between Rahu's head and the sun and the moon and even today, he swallows them both.[25]

'Then the great lord Hari[26] abandoned his unparalleled feminine form and made them tremble by hurling many weapons at them. On the shores of the salty ocean thus began the greatest of terrible battles between the gods and the demons. Thousands of large and sharp spears, sharp-tipped javelins and many other weapons were hurled. Then, wounded by fearful swords, lances and clubs, sliced by discuses, the demons vomited a lot of blood and fell down on the ground. Cut off by sharp-tipped spears, in that terrible battle the heads fell down continuously, like nets of molten gold.[27] Covered with blood on their bodies, the great demons lay dead everywhere, like mountain peaks red with metals. When the sun was tinged with red, thousands of wails rose from everywhere, from those killed by weapons. The roars of those killed in battle, with iron-tipped clubs when at a distance and with blows of fists when close, rose up as if to touch the sky. "Slice down", "pierce them", "chase them", "throw them down", "advance": these terrible words were heard in all directions.

'When this fearful battle was raging, the gods Nara and Narayana entered the battlefield. On seeing the divine bow in the hands of Nara, the great Lord Vishnu thought of his danava-destroying chakra.[28] As soon as it was thought of, *sudarshana chakra*,[29] the scorcher of enemies, as radiant as the sun, terrible to look at and unwavering in its path, descended from the sky. When it arrived, Achyuta,[30] as bright as the blazing fire and with fearful arms like an elephant's trunk, unleashed with great force that weapon of blazing energy, capable of destroying enemy towns. Then, when the supreme man[31] unleashed with his hand that weapon in battle, like the blazing fire at the time of the destruction of the universe, it swiftly and repeatedly descended everywhere, destroying Diti and Danu's progeny in their thousands. Sometimes it burnt, blazing like fire. Sometimes it struck down demons like the god of death. Sometimes it was in the sky and sometimes it was on the ground, drinking blood in that battle like a malevolent spirit. Then, undeterred in spirit, the mighty demons rose into the sky like dishevelled clouds and troubled the gods by showering mountains on them. Those terror-inspiring mountains, with many trees and flat peaks on them, descended from the sky like masses of clouds, crashing against each other and producing tremendous roars. When warriors shouted and the battle raged everywhere and mountains, with forests on them, began to fall, the earth and all her forests began to tremble.

'Then the great Nara appeared in the terrible battle of the asura masses and using his gold-tipped arrows with feathered shafts darkened the sky and reduced to dust the mountain peaks. Then the mighty demons, harried by the gods and witnessing the fearful sudarshana raging like a flaming fire, entered the earth, while others plunged into the salty waters of the ocean. Having become victorious, the gods respectfully returned Mandara to its place. The clouds, making heaven resound everywhere, returned whence they had come. The gods rejoiced a great deal and returned, keeping the ambrosia in safe custody. For safe-keeping, the killer of Bala[32] and the other gods handed over the vessel containing the ambrosia to Kiriti.'[33]

18

Souti said, 'I have told you the story of how the ambrosia was churned out from the ocean. From that, the handsome horse[34] emerged, unparalleled in strength. When Kadru saw this horse, she asked Vinata, "My dear, what is the colour of Ucchaihshrava? Tell me right away." Vinata replied, "Blessed one, the king of horses is white. What colour do you think it is? Tell me what you think and we will have a wager." Kadru said, "O lady of the sweet smiles! I think the horse has a black tail. O beautiful one! Let us have a wager that she whose words are false will become the other one's slave." Thus, having laid a wager that one would be the slave of the other, they returned to their home, resolving to examine the horse the next day.

‘Wishing to deceive, Kadru asked her 1000 sons to become like hair as black as collyrium and speedily cover the horse’s tail, so that she did not become a slave. When they refused to do what they had been asked, she cursed the snakes and said, “In the snake-sacrifice of the royal and wise sage Janamejaya, of the Pandava lineage,[35] the fire will consume all of you.” The grandfather[36] himself heard this extremely cruel curse uttered by Kadru, and driven by destiny, bearing in mind the welfare of all creatures, since the snakes had greatly multiplied, he[37] and the other gods approved the curse. The snakes had virulent poison, excessive strength and were mighty in prowess. They had a tendency to bite. For the welfare of all creatures, to counter their virulent poison, he bestowed on the great-souled Kashyapa the knowledge of neutralizing poison.’

19

Souti said, ‘O you who are rich in austerities! When the night was gone, it was morning and the sun arose. The sisters Kadru and Vinata, having laid a wager on slavery, were impatient and driven by jealousy. They started out to see the horse Ucchaihshrava, who was nearby. On their way, they saw the deep and great ocean, the treasury of the waters, full of fish that swallow whales,[38] crowded with sharks[39] and populated by thousands of other creatures of many forms. No other creatures could approach it, because of the perennial and terrible presence of crocodiles and turtles. It was the source of all jewels. It was the abode of Varuna. It was the beautiful and supreme home of the nagas. It was the lord of all the rivers. It was the home of the subterranean fire, friend to the demons and a terror to all creatures. It was the great reservoir of the waters and never decayed. It was blessed and brought welfare to the gods. It was the source of the ambrosia. It was beyond measure, beyond imagination, sacred and supreme. It was also fearful, with the terrible roars of aquatic creatures making a thunderous noise and full of deep whirlpools. It was a source of fear to all creatures. Buffeted by the winds, with the shoreline changing, heaving up with the agitation and the turbulence, it seemed to dance everywhere, its waves like raised hands. Its waves heaved with changes in the moon. It was the source of the panchajanya.[40] It was the source of the best of jewels.

'In days gone by, it was agitated by Lord Govinda[41] of infinite energy, when he assumed the form of a boar and found the earth at the bottom of the waters. Though he tried for 100 years, the brahmarshi Atri could not find its bottom, lower than the nether regions. At the beginning of every yuga, when Vishnu of infinite energy falls asleep in spiritual meditation, it is the bed of the lotus-navelled.[42] Its waters were the sacrificial offerings in the subterranean fire's blazing flames. It was holy, without limits, vast, beyond measure and the lord of the rivers. They saw the great ocean, with thousands of great rivers rushing towards it with pride, like rivals towards lovers' rendezvous. They saw that it was deep, populated by whales and sharks, thundering with the sounds of other aquatic creatures. They saw it was vast, as extended as the sky, unfathomable and the infinite and great treasury of the waters. When they thus saw the deep ocean, populated with whales, sharks and waves, serene and extended like the sky, shining with the flames of the subterranean fire, they swiftly passed over it.'

20

Souti said, 'Having crossed the ocean, Kadru of swift speed, accompanied by Vinata, quickly arrived before the horse. Seeing many black hairs stuck to the tail, Kadru made the dejected Vinata her slave. Then, having lost the wager, Vinata became a slave who was stricken by grief.

'Meanwhile, when the time came, Garuda of great energy broke open the egg without his mother's help and emerged. He looked like a mass of blazing fire and was fearful in appearance. As soon as he was born, the bird increased to a gigantic size and rose into the sky. On seeing him, all the beings[43] sought the refuge of Vibhavasu.[44] They bowed down before the god who has a universal form and who was seated on his seat, and addressed him thus. "O Agni! Do not extend your body. Have you decided to burn us? Look, the huge mass of flames is spreading." Agni replied, "O persecutors of the demons! It is not what you think. It is the mighty Garuda, equal to me in energy.” Thus addressed, the gods and all the sages approached Garuda and from a distance praised him in these words. “O lord of the birds! You are a rishi. You obtain the greatest share in a sacrifice. You are a god. You are our supreme protector. You are the ocean of strength, you are purity. You are beyond qualities and darkness. You are the possessor of all anger. You cannot be conquered. We have heard that you are the performer of all great acts. You are all that has not been and all that has been. You are the supreme knowledge. Surpassing the rays of the sun, you produce all that is permanent and all that is transient. Darkening the splendour of the sun, you are the destroyer of everything. You are all that perishes and all that does not perish. O god! With the splendour of fire, you consume everything, just as the sun burns all beings in his anger. You are like the terrible fire which destroys everything at the end of a yuga, when all is consumed in the cycle of destruction. O king of the birds! Having come to you, we seek refuge in you. You move in the sky, you have unbounded energy, you are as powerful as the fire. You are the mighty bird Garuda, you reach the clouds. We have approached you. You are the granter of boons and unparalleled in strength.” Having been thus praised by the gods and all the sages, Suparna[45] then decreased his energy and his splendour.’

21

Souti said, ‘Then that bird, capable of travelling everywhere at will and capable of summoning energy at will, went to his mother’s house, on the other side of the ocean. Vinata lived there, tormented by grief, having lost the wager and having become a slave. Some days later, when her son was present, Vinata was summoned by Kadru and when Vinata bowed before her, Kadru said, “Dear Vinata, take me to the beautiful and lovely abode of the nagas situated in the heart of the ocean.” Then Suparna’s mother took up the mother of the snakes. On his mother’s request, Garuda took the snakes on his back. Vinata’s son, the bird, began to rise up towards the sun and scorched by the rays of the sun, the snakes became unconscious.

‘Seeing the state of her sons, Kadru began to praise Shakra[46] in these words. “O lord of the gods! I bow before you. O slayer of Bala! I bow before you. O slayer of Namuchi! I bow before you. O thousand-eyed husband of Shachi![47] The snakes are being burnt by the rays of the sun. Save them with your showers. You are our supreme protector. O best of the gods! O Purandara![48] You can pour forth water in torrents. You are Vayu,[49] you are the clouds. You are Agni. You are the lightning in the sky. You drive the masses of clouds and therefore you are known as the dense cloud. You are the unparalleled thunder, you are the roaring clouds. You are the creator and the destroyer of all the worlds. You are invincible. You are the light of all beings. You are the sun and the fire. You are supreme knowledge, you are wonderful. You are the king. You are the best of the gods. You are Vishnu, you have one thousand eyes. You are the God and the last refuge. You are the *soma*[50] that is the most worshipped. You are the instants.[51] You are the *tithis*.[52] You are *lava* and you are again *kshana*.[53] You are *shuklapaksha,*[54] you are *krishnapaksha,*[55] you are *kala,*[56] you are *kashtha*[57] and you are also *truti*.[58] You are the year, the seasons, the months, the nights and the days. You are the beautiful earth with its mountains and forests. You are the bright sky with the sun. You are the great ocean and its waves, with whales,[59] creatures that swallow whales,[60] crocodiles[61] and diverse other fish. You are immensely famous. You are always worshipped by the wise, whose intelligence has been awakened, and the maharshis. You are the drinker of the soma juice that is offered at sacrifices with sacred incantations and other offerings. You are always worshipped in sacrifices by Brahmanas who desire the fruits. Your incomparable strength is praised in the Vedas. It is for this reason that the best of the Brahmanas, who are engaged in sacrifices, study the Vedangas with great diligence.”’

Souti said, ‘Having been thus addressed by Kadru, the illustrious god who rides tawny horses,[62] covered the entire sky with layers of blue clouds. Those clouds, sparkling with lightning, poured down copious quantities of water. As the clouds continued to thunder in the sky, as if at each other, and continuously poured down torrents of water that were welcome, they roared. The sky seemed to madly dance with the wind’s violence, the clap of thunder and the waves of showers. As Vasava[63] poured down this rain, the nagas were overwhelmed with delight. The entire earth was covered everywhere with water.’

23

Souti said, ‘Carried by Suparna, they soon came to an island. It was surrounded by the waters of the ocean and echoed with the songs of birds. There were myriad fruits and flowers in the woods that were there. There were beautiful houses and lakes with lotuses. It was adorned with charming lakes that were full of clear water. It was refreshed with pure winds that carried with them divine fragrances. It was radiant with trees that grow on the Malaya mountains.[64] They rose high up in the sky and stirred by the breeze, showered down flowers. It was as if the trees bathed the nagas who lived there with rain in the form of flowers. It was a charming, pleasant and divine place, dear to the gandharvas and the apsaras. Echoing with the sweet melodies of many birds, it delighted Kadru’s sons.

‘Having arrived in those woods, the *pannagas*[65] enjoyed themselves there. Then they told the immensely valorous Suparna, supreme among birds, “Take us to another beautiful island that has large quantities of water. O bird! You must have seen many enchanting countries when travelling through the sky.” Having thought about this, the bird asked his mother Vinata, “O mother! Why must I do what the serpents ask me to?” Vinata replied, “O supreme among birds! I have become the slave of my ignoble sister. The serpents deceived me and made me lose a wager.” When his mother told him the reason, the one who travels in the sky[66] grieved.

‘He told the serpents, “O serpents! What can I get you? What can I find out for you? What feat of power can I perform? Tell me truly how one can be freed from this state of slavery.” Having heard the bird, the serpents asked him to use his energy to bring the *amrita*.[67] That was the way to be freed from slavery.’

24

Souti said, ‘When he had heard the words of the snakes, Garuda told his mother, “I am going to get the amrita. But I wish to eat something. Tell me what.” Vinata replied, “The *nishadas*[68] have their excellent home in a remote part of the ocean. Eat thousands of nishadas and bring back the amrita. But never set your mind on killing a Brahmana. Among all living beings, a Brahmana is like fire and is never to be killed. When he is angered, a Brahmana is like fire, the sun, poison or a sharp weapon. Among all beings, he is the one who obtains the first share at a sacrifice, is supreme among the varnas and is a father and preceptor.”

‘Garuda said, “O mother! I am asking you. What are the auspicious signs through which I will recognize a Brahmana? You should tell me.” Vinata replied, “O son! If a man goes down your throat torturing you like a swallowed fish hook or burning it like hot coal, know him to be a bull among Brahmanas.” Out of the great love she bore for her son, Vinata again repeated the words. Vinata knew her son’s valour to be unparalleled. But she nevertheless pronounced a blessing on him. “Let the Maruts protect your wings. O son! Let the moon protect your back. Let the fire protect your head. Let the sun protect all your body. O son! I shall always be engaged in ceremonies that bring you peace and welfare. O son! Go in safety and accomplish your objective.” Having heard his mother’s words, the bird then stretched his wings and flew up into the sky.

‘The powerful one soon descended hungrily on the nishadas, like Yama himself. Determined to destroy the nishadas, he raised a great storm of dust that covered up the sky. This dried up the water in the ocean and shook the mountains that grew around. The king of birds opened his gigantic mouth and stopped the route of the nishadas. In great alarm, the nishadas also entered the mouth of the eater of snakes. Like frightened birds in a forest that rise in thousands into the sky when there is a great storm, the nishadas were blinded by the dust and in thousands entered the wide open mouth of the giant eater of snakes. Then the hungry bird, with great strength and swift speed, the scorcher of his enemies, closed his mouth. The traveller in the sky killed many nishadas, who depend on diverse fish for a living.'

25

Souti said, 'A Brahmana and his wife had entered his throat and began to burn the bird's throat like a piece of coal. The giant bird said, "O best among the twice-born! Come out of my open mouth quickly. A Brahmana will never be killed by me, even if he is always associated with those who commit sin." When Garuda said this, the Brahmana replied, "My wife is a nishada. Let her come out with me." Garuda said, "Take the nishada with you and come out immediately. Save yourself, before you are digested by the energy in my stomach." Thereupon, the Brahmana emerged with the nishada woman. Praising Garuda, he went to the country where he wished to go. When the Brahmana and his wife emerged, the king of birds, swift as the mind, stretched his wings and rose up into the sky.

'He then saw his father,[69] who asked him about his welfare and he replied, "I have been sent by the snakes to steal the supreme soma. I shall bring it today, to free my mother from her slavery. My mother instructed me to eat the nishadas. But even after eating them in their thousands, my hunger is not yet satisfied. O illustrious one! O lord! Show me some other food that I can eat, so that I am strong enough to steal the amrita."

'Kashyapa said, "In ancient times, there was a maharshi named Vibhavasu. He became angry very easily. He had a younger brother named Supratika,[70] who was a great ascetic. That great sage was unwilling to maintain their wealth jointly with his brother and Supratika always spoke of dividing it. After some time, Vibhavasu told his brother Supratika, ‘It is from delusion that many wish to divide common property. Once it has been divided, they are deluded from love of wealth. Ignorant from selfishness, enmity is created, though there is a disguise of friendship. Others, knowing them estranged in property matters, increase the enmity on other matters and divided relatives meet their downfall. Absolute ruin soon comes to those who are separated. That is the reason why learned ones never approve partition among brothers. When divided, they do not have any respect for the sacred texts or preceptors. O Supratika! You are beyond my control. Disregarding my advice and out of love for riches, you wish for a partition. I curse you that you will become an elephant.’ Thus cursed, Supratika told Vibhavasu, ‘You will become a tortoise that lives in the water.’ Cursed by each other and their minds deluded by desire, they became an elephant and a tortoise, animals of low birth. Boastful of their strengths and sizes, as earlier, they have continued in their vice of enmity towards each other, living in this huge lake. Look at one of them, the large and handsome elephant, come towards this lake now. Hearing his trumpeting, the giant tortoise that lives under water rises out of the lake, agitating its waters. On seeing him, the valorous elephant curls his trunk and rushes into the water, violently moving his tusks, trunk, tail and feet. The water that is full of fishes is agitated. The valorous tortoise also raises its head and comes up to fight. The elephant is six yojanas[71] in height and double that in length. The tortoise is three yojanas in height and ten yojanas in circumference. These two are maddened at the prospect of fighting each other and wish to kill each other. Eat them up and swiftly accomplish the task you wish to perform.” Hearing his father’s words, the bird swooped down from the sky and swiftly grasped the elephant and the tortoise, one in each claw.

‘The bird then flew high up into the sky. It went to the *tirtha*[72] named Alamba and saw many celestial trees there. Struck by the wind raised by his wings, the trees trembled in fear. Those celestial trees had golden branches and were scared that these would be broken. Seeing that the trees bore fruit and shoots capable of granting all desires and that they were quivering in fright, the bird went to other trees, incomparable in colour and shape. Those giant trees had fruit of gold and silver, with branches of lapis lazuli. They were washed by the waters of the ocean.

‘A giant sandalwood[73] tree stood there and spoke to the best of the birds, as he was swiftly swooping down with the speed of the mind. “Descend on my giant branch, which extends for one hundred yojanas, and eat the elephant and the tortoise.” Then the supreme among the birds, as giant as a mountain, descended swiftly on the tree, shaking the branches that housed a thousand birds, and broke the branch that was full of leaves.’

26

Souti said, ‘As soon as the tree’s branch was touched by the immensely powerful Garuda with his feet, it snapped. He[74] held onto it as it was about to fall. As he wonderingly gazed at that large branch that had been broken, he saw the *valakhilyas*[75] hanging from it, their heads facing downwards. The lord of birds was scared of killing them and carefully held the branch in his beak and ascended again. Shaking the mountains, the bird slowly circled the sky and while doing this, passed many countries, with the elephant and the tortoise. In his compassion for the valakhilyas, he could find no place to alight on. At last he went to the best of mountains, the indestructible Gandhamadana.

‘There he saw his father Kashyapa engaged in austerities. His father also saw the bird of divine form, with energy, valour and strength, swift as the wind and the mind, large as a mountain, like the raised staff of a Brahmana, inconceivable, incapable of description, terrible to all beings, the possessor of the valour of delusion,[76] as radiant as Agni himself, incapable of being vanquished by devas, danavas and rakshasas, capable of splintering mountain peaks, drying up the water of rivers and whirling the worlds, as terrible as Yama himself.

‘On seeing him approach and knowing his wishes, the illustrious Kashyapa told him, “O son! Do not commit a rash act, because that can bring sudden pain. The valakhilyas sustain themselves on the sun's rays. If angry, they can scorch you." Therefore, for his son's sake, Kashyapa propitiated the valakhilyas, accomplished performers of austerities. He explained the reason and said, "O performers of austerities! Garuda's endeavour is for the welfare of all creatures. He is trying to perform a great act. Therefore, please give him permission." Having been thus addressed by the illustrious Kashyapa, the valakhilyas gave up the branch and went off to the sacred Himalayas, in search of more austerities.

'When they went away, Vinata's son,[77] the branch still extending his beak, asked his father Kashyapa, "O lord! Where will I discard this branch of the tree? O lord! Tell me of a land where there are no Brahmanas." Kashyapa told him of a mountain that was uninhabited by men, inaccessible and incapable of being penetrated by others even in their thoughts, covered with snow and full of caves. The great bird, Tarkshya,[78] carried the branch, the elephant and the tortoise and swiftly, with the power of his mind, entered the mountain's wide base. A thin leather strap cut out of a hundred skins wouldn't have been long enough to encircle that giant branch the giant bird carried in his flight. Garuda, the lord of all the birds, flew over 100,000 yojanas in the briefest possible time. As if in a moment, he reached the mountain his father had described and released the branch, which fell down with a great roar. On being struck by the wind unleashed by the bird's wings, the king of mountains trembled. As the trees collapsed, they showered down flowers. The peaks of that great mountain, adorned with gold and gems, were shattered on all sides. The falling branch struck many trees with golden flowers and they looked like clouds charged with lightning. Bright as gold, those falling trees mixed with the mountain's minerals and glowed, as if reflecting the red rays of the sun. The best of birds sat down on the peak of the mountain and ate both the elephant and the tortoise.

'With the speed of the mind, he[79] then arose from the mountain peak. Ominous and fearful portents appeared before the gods. Indra's *vajra* blazed forth in great pain. Meteors that trailed flames and smoke were loosened from the sky and descended. The weapons of vasus, rudras, adityas, saddhyas, maruts and other classes of gods began to fight among themselves. Such things had never occurred earlier, not even during the war between devas and asuras. Meteors showered down in all directions, tumultuous winds thundered and the cloudless sky made a tremendous roar. Even the God of the gods rained showers of blood. Garlands on the necks of the gods faded and the sky's energy withered. Fearful masses of clouds rained down thick showers of blood. The swirling dust darkened the splendour of crowns worn by the gods. Then Shatakratu,[80] with the other gods, was greatly alarmed and frightened. Bewildered at these terrible portents, he asked Brihaspati,[81] "O illustrious one! Why have these terrible portents suddenly arisen? I do not see any enemy who can withstand us in battle." Brihaspati replied, "O Shatakratu! O king of the gods! It is because of your own fault and negligence. Through the power of their austerities, the valakhilyas have created a wonderful being—the bird who is the son of the sage Kashyapa and Vinata. He is powerful and capable of assuming any form at will and is coming to take away the soma. The bird is supreme among the strong and is capable of taking away the soma. He is capable of achieving the impossible." Hearing this, Shakra[82] spoke to the guardians of the amrita, "An immensely valorous and strong bird has decided to take the soma away. I am warning you in advance, so that he doesn't succeed in taking it away by force. Brihaspati has told me that his strength is unparalleled." When they heard these words, the gods were amazed.

'Carefully, they took up positions around the amrita. Shatakratu Indra also stood there, vajra in hand. They wisely clad themselves in wonderful golden armour, expensively adorned with lapis lazuli. They brandished diverse terrible weapons in their thousands, emitting flames, sparks and smoke, the edges and points sharpened—chakras, iron clubs, tridents, battle axes, many sharp spears, spotless swords, maces of terrible forms, weapons most appropriate for their respective bodies. Armed with these radiant weapons and decorated with divine ornaments, the army of gods stood there, their fears pacified. With unparalleled strength, energy and radiance, capable of razing the cities of the asuras and displaying themselves in forms as radiant as the blazing fire, the gods stood there, their minds set upon protecting the amrita. Thus, that supreme battlefield, with the gods and with hundreds and thousands of clubs, looked like another firmament, lit up by the radiant rays of the sun.'

27

Shounaka asked, 'O suta! What was Indra's fault and how was he negligent? How was Garuda born through the austerities of the valakhilyas? How did Kashyapa, a Brahmana, have the king of the birds as a son? How did he[83] become invincible and indestructible to all creatures? How did the bird have the power to travel anywhere at will and summon up every power at will? If they are recounted in the ancient tales, I would like to know the answers to these questions.'

Souti said, 'O Brahmana! What you wish to know is indeed narrated in the ancient tales. Listen to me, as I briefly recount it to you. Prajapati Kashyapa undertook a sacrifice in order to have a son and it is said that he was helped by the rishis, the gods and the gandharvas. Kashyapa appointed Shakra,[84] the other gods and the valakhilya sages to bring firewood for the sacrifice. Because of his great strength, the lord Shakra picked up firewood that was as large as a mountain and carried it, without any effort at all. On the way, he saw some rishis who were no larger than the joint of a thumb. Together, they carried a single leaf of a *palasha* tree.[85] The ascetics were extremely weak from lack of food and their bodies were lean. A cow's hoof had left a print[86] and this had filled up with water, causing them grief. Vain about his valour, Purandara[87] was amazed at this sight and contemptuously laughing at them swiftly passed over them, stepping over their heads. At this they were angered and began a great act[88] that would bring danger to Shakra. According to the rites, these great sages, rigid in their austerities, poured libations into the sacrificial fire and chanted mantras saying, “The gods will have another Indra, capable of going anywhere at will and capable of summoning up any power at will. He will bring great fear to the present king of the gods. Through the fruits of our austerities, there will be born one, swift as the mind, who will be a hundred times better than Indra in strength and valour.” On learning of this, Shatakratu,[89] the king of the gods, was greatly alarmed and sought refuge with Kashyapa, rigid in his vows.

‘Hearing everything from the king of the gods, Prajapati Kashyapa went to the valakhilyas and asked them if their act had been successful. The truthful ones replied that it had been. Then Prajapati Kashyapa pacified them and said, “O ones blessed with the power of austerities! The present Indra has been appointed by Brahma as the lord of the three worlds. You are trying to create another Indra. O supreme ones! You should not make Brahma’s words false. Nor should I make your intentions false. Let there be another Indra for winged beings, endowed with great strength and valour. Show mercy to the king of the gods who is a supplicant before you.” Having been thus addressed by Kashyapa, the valakhilya ascetics saluted Kashyapa, supreme among sages, and said, “O Prajapati! Our act was for the purpose of creating an Indra. It is also something that you wish, because it was meant to bring you a son. Please accept this act and its fruits. Do whatever seems to you to be the best course of action.” At that time, the beautiful and illustrious goddess Dakshayani[90] Vinata desired to have a son.

‘Having performed austerities and rites for the birth of a son and bathed, the pure one served her husband. Kashyapa told her, “O goddess! This act of yours will bear fruit and you will obtain what you desire. You will give birth to two valorous sons, lords of the three worlds. Owing to the austerities of the valakhilyas and through my own desire, these sons will be extremely fortunate and will be worshipped in the worlds.” Marichi’s illustrious son[91] again told her, “Take good care when you bear these auspicious seeds in your womb. One of these will be a valorous bird, the Indra of all winged beings, capable of summoning every power at will and esteemed by the worlds.” Pleased, Prajapati[92] then spoke to Shatakratu,[93] “O Purandara! You will have two powerful birds as brothers. They will cause no injury to you. O Shakra! Stop worrying. You will continue to be Indra. But in your arrogance, never insult those who have knowledge of the brahman. Their words are like poison, their anger is fearsome.” At these words, Indra’s fears were dispelled and he went to his world. Vinata was delighted, because her wishes had been fulfilled. She gave birth to two sons, Aruna and Garuda. Aruna, with the malformed body, became the one who comes before the sun.[94] Garuda was instated as the Indra of the birds. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Now listen to his great deeds.’

28

Souti said, ‘O best of the twice born! When this turmoil was going on, Garuda, the king of the birds, swiftly came to where the gods were. Having seen his great strength, the gods began to tremble in fear. They even began to attack each other with their weapons. Among those guarding the soma, was Bhouvana,[95] as radiant as the lightning and fire and unparalleled in his great valour. But after an instant’s great fight, he lay dead, ripped apart by the beaks, talons and wings of the Indra among birds. Darkening the worlds with a great storm of dust created by his wings, the giant bird overwhelmed the gods, and overcome with that dust, the gods were deluded. Those who were guarding the amrita could not see it because of that dust. Thus, Garuda brought complete turmoil to the world of the gods. He ripped the gods apart with his wings and beak. Then, the god with the thousand eyes[96] commanded Vayu,[97] “O Marut! It is your duty to drive the dust away.” Then the mighty Vayu drove the dust away.

‘When the darkness had disappeared, the gods attacked the bird. He roared in the sky, like a giant cloud, terrifying all beings. Attacked by the army of the gods, the immensely valorous king of the birds, the destroyer of enemies, rose into the sky, above the heads of the gods. Led by Indra and armoured, they attacked him with many weapons like lances, iron clubs, spears, maces, many sharp swords and chakras as radiant as the sun. Attacked from every side, the king of birds didn't even tremble. Vinata's powerful son fought a tremendous battle, showing no signs of tiring out. Like the roar of thunder in the sky, Vinata's powerful son attacked the gods from all sides with his wings and breast and scattered them in all directions. Oppressed and mangled by Garuda's beak and talons, a lot of blood flowed from the bodies of the gods and they fled. The saddhyas and gandharvas fled to the east, the vasus and rudras to the south, the adityas to the west and the Nasatyas[98] to the north. They retreated while fighting and looked back repeatedly at the immensely energetic enemy. He fought with the brave Ashvakranda, the bird Renuka, the brave Krathana, the bird Tapana, Uluka, Shvasana, the bird Nimesha, Praruja and Pulina. Vinata's son tore them into pieces with his wings, talons and sharp beak, like the wrathful and enemy-destroying Pinaki[99] at the end of a yuga. Those immensely powerful and energetic warriors, draining showers of blood from their many wounds, looked like dark clouds.

'Thus rendering the gods almost dead, the best of the birds went to where the amrita was and found it surrounded from all sides by fire. The flames of that great raging fire covered up by the entire sky and moved by violent winds seemed to burn up the hot and sharp rays of the sun. The great-souled Garuda thereupon assumed ninety times ninety mouths and drank up with these mouths water from rivers. Returning with great speed and using his wings as a chariot, he quenched the blazing fires with the rivers. Putting out the fires, he adopted a very small form, wishing to enter.'[100]

29

Souti said, 'Assuming the form of a golden body as bright as the rays of the sun, Garuda entered with great force, like a river entering the ocean. He saw a wheel near the amrita, with keen edges and sharp blades, revolving continuously and murderously around it, blazing like the fire and the sun, a fearful instrument skilfully created by the gods to slice down those who wished to steal the soma. The bird saw an entry through this. He made his body very small and in an instant passed through the spokes in the wheel.

'Behind the wheel, he saw two large snakes, standing guard over the amrita. They blazed like flaming fire and their tongues were like lightning. Their power was immense and their faces and their eyes were fiery. They were terrible, angry and always mobile and their eyes had venom in them. Their eyes did not blink and displayed rage. Anyone who was even seen by those two was instantly burnt to ashes. The one with the beautiful feathers[101] instantly flung dust into their eyes and thus making them sightless he attacked them from all directions. Vinata's son, the traveller in the skies, attacked their bodies and at will tore them into shreds. Without any delay, he then went to where the soma was.

'Vinata's powerful son picked up the amrita from where it was. The valorous one flew up into the sky, in the process shattering the instrument into pieces. The bird soon emerged, grasping the amrita, but without drinking it. He proceeded on his way, not tired at all, making the sun's radiance seem dark.

'Then Vinata's son encountered Vishnu in the sky. Narayana was pleased with him at his act of self-denial and told the bird, "I am the god who grants boons that don't decay." The bird said, "I always wish to remain above you." He again told Narayana, "I wish to be immortal, free from the decay of age, without the amrita." Having received these boons, Vinata's son told Vishnu, "O illustrious one! I wish to grant you a boon too." Krishna[102] asked for the boon that the powerful one should always be his vehicle.[103] The illustrious god Narayana placed the bird on his flagstaff and said, "Thus you will always be above me." The bird agreed.

'As the bird, the enemy of the gods, flew on with the amrita, Indra powerfully struck him with his vajra. Struck by the vajra, Garuda, supreme among those who fly, tauntingly told Indra in a pleasant voice, "I shall respect the rishi from whose bones the vajra has been constructed. O Shatakratu! I shall respect the vajra and you too. I will cast off one of my feathers and you will never be able to find its ends. I have not felt the slightest pain at being struck by your vajra." On seeing that beautiful feather, all the beings were amazed and exclaimed, "Let this bird be called Suparna."[104] On seeing this marvellous act, the thousand-eyed Purandara was surprised and concluded that the bird must be a great being. He said, "O supreme among birds! I wish to know the extreme limits of your incomparable strength. I wish to be your eternal friend."'

30

'Garuda said, "O Purandara! As you wish, let there be friendship between us. But know that my strength is great and hard to bear. O Shatakratu! There is no doubt that the learned do not approve of speaking highly of one's own strength or of praising one's own qualities. O friend! Since we are now friends and since you ask me, I will tell you, though there should never be self-praise without reason. O Shakra! On a single one of my feathers, without any fatigue, I can bear the wide world with its mountains, forests, oceans and even you suspended there, even all the worlds together, with all their mobile and immobile objects. Know this to be my great strength."

'O Shounaka! When the hero said this, the illustrious and prosperous lord, the crowned king of the gods, the bringer of welfare to all beings, said, "Now accept my eternal and supreme friendship. If you do not require the soma, please return the soma to me. Those to whom you give it will always overcome us." Garuda replied, "There is a reason why I am taking the soma away. I will not give the soma to anyone to drink. O god with the thousand eyes! O ruler of the three worlds! When I have put it down, you can immediately pick it up and bring it back." Shakra said, "O you who are born of an egg! Your words please me. O best of the birds! Ask from me any boon that you desire." Being thus addressed, he remembered Kadru's son and his mother's slavery through deception and said, “O Shakra! I have the power to do what I desire. Yet, I will be a supplicant before you. Let the mighty snakes be my food.” The enemy of the danavas agreed and said, “I shall take the soma away when you have put it down.” Thereafter, with great speed, Suparna went to his mother.

‘In great delight, he told all the snakes, “I have brought you the amrita. I will place it for you on this *kusha* grass. O snakes! Drink it after bathing and purifying yourselves through rites. I have done what you asked me to do. Therefore, as you had promised, let my mother be freed from her slavery at this very instant.” The snakes agreed and went off to have their baths. Shakra picked up the amrita and went off to heaven. After bathing and purifying themselves through prayers and rites, the snakes joyfully returned to the place where the soma had been kept, to drink it. But the snakes found that they had been deceived. They began to lick the *darbha* grass on which the soma had been placed. Because of this act, the tongues of the snakes were split in two and became forked. From that day, because of contact with the amrita, the darbha grass became sacred.

‘Thereafter, Suparna happily lived in that forest with his mother. He delighted Vinata by eating snakes, being honoured by all birds and always earning fame. Without a doubt, he who hears this story or recites it in an assembly of Brahmanas, will attain heaven, obtaining his share of merit from the glorification of the great-souled lord of the birds.’

31

Shounaka said, ‘O, son of a suta! You have told us why the snakes were cursed by their mother. You have told us why Vinata was cursed by her son. You have told us about the boons granted to Kadru and Vinata by their husband. You have given us the names of the two birds who were born from Vinata. O son of a suta! But you have not told us the names of the snakes. We wish to hear their names, at least those who are chief among them.’

Souti said, ‘O one who is blessed with the power of austerities! The names of the snakes are many. I will not mention all their names, but only the main ones. Listen. The first one to be born was Shesha and

Vasuki came after him. Then Airavata, Takshaka, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya, Kaliya, Maninaga, the snake Apurana, Pinjaraka, Elapatra, Vamana, Nila, Anila, Kalmasha, Shabala, Aryaka, Adika, Shalapotaka, Sumanomukha, Dadhimukha, Vimalapindaka, Apta, Kotanaka, Shankha, Valishikha, Nishthayunaka, Hemaguha, Nahusha, Pingala, Bahyakarna, Hastipada, Mudgarapindaka, Kambala, Ashvatara, Kaliyaka, Vritta, Samvartaka, the two snakes known as Padma, Shankhanaka, Sphandaka, Kshemaka, Pindaraka, Karavira, Pushpadamshtra, Haridraka, Aparajita, Jyotika, Shrivaha, Kauravya, Dhritarashtra,[105] Pushkara, Shalyaka, Virajas, Subahu, the mighty Shalipinda, Hastibhadra, Pitharaka, Kumuda, Kumudaksha, Tittiri, Halika, Karkara, Akarakara, Mukhara, Konavasana, Kunjara, Kurara, Prabhakara, Kundodara and Mahodara.

'O best of the twice-born! I have told you the names of the chief snakes. Since there are too many names, I have not told you the names of the others. O one blessed with austerities! I believe the progeny and the offspring of the progeny to be innumerable. Therefore, I will not mention them. O one blessed with austerities! There are many thousands, millions[106] and hundreds of millions[107] of snakes in the world. One cannot recount all their numbers.'

32

Shounaka said, 'O son! You have told us about the many valorous and invincible serpents. Now that you have told me about their curse, what did they do after that?'

Souti said, 'The illustrious and greatly famous lord Shesha left Kadru and practised severe austerities. He lived on air and observed rigid vows. He went to Mount Gandhamadana and practised his austerities in Badari, Gokarna, Pushkararanya[108] and the slopes of the Himalayas. He spent his time in these sacred tirthas, always rigid in observing his vows and controlling his senses.

'The grandfather[109] saw him engaged in terrible austerities, a lord with matted hair and dressed in bark, his skin, flesh and muscles dried up. Addressing the ascetic engaged in his austerities and truthful vows, the grandfather said, “O Shesha! What are you doing? Let the welfare of all beings also be in your thoughts. O unblemished one! You are causing pain to all beings through your severe austerities. O Shesha! Tell me what the wish in your heart is.” Shesha replied, “My brothers who shared the same womb are wicked of mind. I do not wish to live with them. Please allow me this. Like great enemies, they are always jealous of each other. I am therefore engaged in austerities. I do not wish to see them. O grandfather! They show no kindness for Vinata or her son, though Vinata’s son is also our brother. They always show him hatred. So does he. Because of the boon granted by the great-souled Kashyapa, our father, he is much stronger. Therefore, I shall carry on with these austerities until I have shed this body of mine. I will not associate with my brothers, in this life or another.”

‘When Shesha uttered these words, Brahma said, “O Shesha! I know what all your brothers do. There is a great danger that looms before them because of their mother’s offence. O snake! But earlier, I have already provided for an exception. O Shesha! Do not grieve for any of your brothers. Choose whatever boon you wish for from me. I am extremely pleased with you and I wish to grant you a boon. O best of the snakes! It is good that your mind is fixed on dharma. Let your mind be established even more firmly on dharma.” Shesha replied, “O divine grandfather! O lord! I ask for the boon that my mind always delight in dharma, in tranquillity and in austerities.”

‘Brahma said, “O Shesha! I am extremely pleased with your self-denial and desire for tranquillity. For the welfare of all creatures, let the words that you have expressed be fulfilled at my command. O Shesha! This wide earth is very unstable with its mountains and forests, towns, habitations and oceans. Bear it up properly and well, so that it is stable.” Shesha replied, “O divine Prajapati! O granter of boons! O lord of the earth! O lord of every being! O lord of the universe! As you command, I will hold the earth steady. Please place it on my head.” Brahma said, “O best of the snakes! O Shesha! Go under the earth and she herself will open up a passage for you. By holding up the earth, you will perform an act greatly valued by me.” Shesha agreed. The first among the snakes, the first one to be born, entered the passage in the earth and remained there. He carries the goddess earth, encircled by a girdle of oceans, on his head.

‘Brahma said, “O Shesha! You are the best of the snakes. You are the god of dharma, because you singly hold up the earth, encircling her with your endless coils. This is no less than what I myself, or the cleaver of Bala,[110] can do.” Thus does the powerful snake Ananta[111] always live under the ground, holding up the earth on Lord Brahma’s command. Then the grandfather, the illustrious lord who is the foremost among the gods, provided Vinata’s son Garuda to Ananta as a helper.’

33

Souti said, ‘Vasuki, best among snakes, heard about the curse from his mother and wondered about how it might be aborted. He held a consultation with Airavata and all his other brothers, those who were devoted to dharma. Vasuki said, “O unblemished ones! As you know, a curse has been pronounced on all of us. We should have consultations to free ourselves from this curse. There is no curse that does not have a remedy. O snakes! But he who has been cursed by his mother has no remedy. My heart trembles on hearing that this curse was uttered before the immutable, immeasurable and truthful one.[112] Without a doubt, our annihilation is imminent. Otherwise, the immutable lord would have prevented our mother from imposing the curse. Therefore, let us consult now to see how the health of the snakes can be preserved. Let us not waste time. Through our consultations, we may be able to find a means of escape, like in ancient times the gods regained the lost Agni who had hidden himself inside a cave, so that Janamejaya’s sacrifice for the destruction of the snakes does not take place or is overcome.” Thus addressed, all of Kadru’s offspring assembled. They were wise in counsels and put forward their views.

‘Some snakes present said, “Let us assume the form of bulls among Brahmanas and beg Janamejaya to call off the sacrifice.” Other snakes who believed themselves to be wise said, “All of us will become his best advisers. Without a doubt, he will then ask for our considered opinion on all the rituals and we will render him advice that the sacrifice should be stopped. Thinking us to be extremely wise, the wise king will certainly ask us about the sacrifice and we will give reasons why it should not be held. We will point out many serious evils, in this world and the next, that will result and show causes and reasons why the sacrifice should not be held. Or if a preceptor, who is known to be devoted to the king's welfare and is well-versed in the rites of a snake-sacrifice, is appointed as the priest, one of us can bite and kill him so that he is dispatched to the land of Yama. If the sacrificial priest is killed, there will be no sacrifice. If other experts in snake-sacrifices are appointed as officiating priests, we will bite them too and our objective will be attained." Some other snakes who were devoted to dharma said, "This advice is not good. It is not proper to kill Brahmanas. Confronted with any danger, ultimate pacification is only possible when the remedy is based on dharma. As we know, *adharma* only destroys the entire world." Other snakes said, "Let us become clouds luminescent with lightning and rain down showers so as to extinguish the sacrificial fire." Other superior snakes said, "Let us go in the night, unobserved by anyone, and steal the ladles for the sacrifice. That will bring an obstruction. Or let the snakes go in their hundreds and thousands to the sacrifice and bite everyone and create a terror. Or let the snakes defile the pure food with their dung and urine, so that all the food is destroyed." Others said, "Let us become officiating priests at the sacrifice and obstruct it by demanding our dakshina[113] at the beginning. Let us overpower the king, so that he does that which we ask him to." Others said, "When the king is sporting in the water, let us carry him home and tie him up, so that the sacrifice is not held." Others, thinking themselves to be virtuous, said, "Let us go to the king and bite him at once, so that our objective is attained. Through his death, the root of all our afflictions will be severed. This is the final result of our wisdom and consultations. O king! If you approve of this, let us proceed immediately."

‘Having said all this, they looked at Vasuki, the lord of the snakes. After thinking for a while, Vasuki told the snakes, “O snakes! This final advice of yours is not fit to be carried out. Not a single one of the plans given by the snakes seems right to me. What can I suggest that will be for our welfare? That is the reason I am worried. The credit and the blame for the act will rest on me alone.’

34

Souti said, ‘Having heard what all the snakes and Vasuki had to say, Elapatra said, “This sacrifice is certain. The Pandava, King Janamejaya, from whom great terror for us results, is also certain. O king![114] One who is afflicted by destiny can find a remedy in destiny alone. There can be no other recourse. O best of the snakes! The source of our danger is destiny. Therefore, it is only destiny that can be our refuge. Listen to my words. O best of the snakes! When that curse was imposed, I was frightened and climbed up into my mother’s lap. O best of the snakes! O immensely radiant lord! From there, I heard the sorrowful gods speak to the grandfather.

‘“The gods said, ‘O grandfather! O god of the gods! Who but the harsh Kadru, having borne such beloved children, can curse them in this way and in front of you too? O grandfather! And you also approved of her curse. We wish to know why she was not stopped.’

‘“Brahma said, ‘The snakes have become numerous. They are cruel, terrible in valour and full of poison. Because of the welfare of all other creatures, I did not prevent Kadru. The snakes which are destined to be destroyed are poisonous ones that have a propensity to bite, those that bite for little reason, the mean and evil ones, not snakes that follow dharma. Hear how those snakes can escape from that terrible danger when the time comes. In the line of the Yayavaras, there will be born a great rishi, intelligent, austere and self-controlled, who will be known by the name of Jaratkaru. That Jaratkaru will have a son named Astika, who will also be blessed by the power of austerities. He will bring an end to the sacrifice and snakes who are virtuous will escape.’

‘“The gods asked, ‘O god! On whom will Jaratkaru, foremost among sages and gifted with great powers of asceticism, beget that great-souled and powerful son?’

‘“Brahma said, ‘O gods! The powerful one, the best of the Brahmanas, will beget a powerful son on a woman who will have the same name as his own.”’

‘Elapatra said, “The gods agreed with the grandfather that it would happen that way. The gods went away and so did the grandfather God. O Vasuki! I see before me your sister, who bears the name of Jaratkaru. Give her as alms to the rishi of rigid vows when he comes looking for alms, so that this great danger to the snakes may be pacified. I have heard that this is the means of escape.”’

35

Souti said, ‘O best of the twice-born! When the snakes heard Elapatra’s words, they were delighted, and applauded. From that day, Vasuki took great care of that maiden Jaratkaru, his sister, and was relieved. Not long after this, all the gods and the asuras churned Varuna’s abode.[115] The serpent Vasuki, strongest of the strong, became the rope used for churning. After this work was over, he appeared before the grandfather. The gods and Vasuki told the grandfather, “O illustrious lord! Vasuki is suffering because of the fear of the curse. O God! He desires the welfare of his relatives, but the spike from his mother’s curse pierces his heart. Please draw it out. The king of the snakes always does that which is pleasing to us and is our benefactor. O lord of the gods! Please grant him a favour and pacify the fever in his mind.”

‘Brahma said, “O immortal ones! I have myself mentally thought about what you have said and had earlier inspired the snake Elapatra to utter those words. The time has come. Let the king of the snakes carry out those words. Only the wicked ones will be destroyed, not those who follow the path of dharma. The Brahmana Jaratkaru has been born and is engaged in austerities. At the appropriate time, let him[116] give away his sister Jaratkaru. O gods! What the snake Elapatra proposed for the welfare of the snakes is true. It cannot be otherwise.”’

Souti said, ‘On hearing the grandfather’s words, the king of the snakes appointed a large number of snakes to keep a continuous watch on Jaratkaru. He said, “When Lord Jaratkaru exhibits the desire for a wife, come immediately and inform me. Our future welfare depends on this.”’

36

Shounaka said, ‘O son of a suta! I wish to know why the great-souled rishi, whom you have referred to as Jaratkaru, came to be famous by that name on earth. What is the origin of the name Jaratkaru?’

Souti said, ‘*Jara* means decay and *karu* means gigantic. The sage had a gigantic body, but he decayed it slowly through severe austerities. O Brahmana! It was because of this that he was known as Jaratkaru and Vasuki’s sister had the name for similar reasons.’

When he heard this, the virtuous Shounaka smiled and told Ugrashrava[117] that the names were appropriate.

Souti said, ‘A great deal of time passed. But the sage of rigid vows, deeply engaged in devout austerities, exhibited no desire for a wife. The great-souled sage roamed the entire earth, engaged in deep studies and controlling his senses, holding back his seed without any signs of fear. Even in his thoughts, he showed no desire for a wife.

‘O Brahmana! Once upon a time, there was a king named Parikshit. He was born in the Kuru lineage. Like Pandu, he was mighty-armed and the supreme of archers in battle. He was devoted to hunting, like his great-grandfather[118] in ancient times. That lord of the earth roamed around, hunting deer, wild boar, hyenas, buffaloes and various other wild animals. One day, he pierced a deer with an arrow that had stooping tufts, and slinging his bow over his back, entered the dense forest. Like Lord Rudra searching in heaven for the sacrificial deer that had been pierced, he searched everywhere in the forest, bow in hand. Never had a deer pierced by Pariskhit escaped in the forest alive. However, though wounded by the lord of the earth and the king of men, this deer was soon lost, demonstrating Parikshit’s own proximity to heaven. He went far in pursuit. Tired and thirsty, he came upon a hermit in the forest. He was seated in a cowshed and drank the froth that issued from the mouths of calves when they sucked milk.[119] Swiftly hurrying to that sage of rigid vows, the king said, his bow raised, “O Brahmana! I am King Parikshit, the son of Abhimanyu. Have you seen where the deer pierced by me has gone?” Since the sage was under a vow of silence then, he did not reply. At this, the king became angry. He picked up a dead snake with the end of his bow and placed it around his[120] neck. The hermit looked at him, but did not utter a word, good or bad. On seeing him in that state, the king’s anger cooled and he was sorry. Thereupon, he returned to his city and the rishi remained the way he was.

‘He[121] had a young son who was blessed with the power of austerities and was extremely powerful. His name was Shringi and he was great in his vows, but given to great anger and difficult to appease. He sometimes worshipped, with great devotion, the supreme god Lord Brahma, engaged in ensuring the welfare of all beings. Once commanded by Brahma, he was returning home. A friend of his jestingly told him about his father. On hearing what had happened, the rishi’s son, easily prone to anger and like poison itself, was enraged. O best of the Brahmanas! The friend, Krisha, was also a rishi’s son and the two often spent time together. Krisha said, “O Shringi! Do not be too proud. You are an ascetic of great powers. But your father has got a carcass around his shoulders. Sons of rishis like us are successful, have knowledge of the brahman and are immersed in asceticism. But you should keep quiet. Where are your powers, your proud words and your arrogance when you see your father carrying a carcass?”’

37

Souti said, ‘When the powerful Shringi, who was easily prone to anger, heard the news that his father was carrying a corpse, he was extremely angry. He looked at Krisha and, abandoning all pleasantness of speech, asked, “Why should my father carry a corpse?” Krisha replied, “O friend! When King Parikshit was roaming around on his hunt today, he placed a dead snake on your father's shoulders." Shringi asked, "What harm had my father done to that evil-souled king? O Krisha! Tell me this and you will witness my ascetic powers."

'Krisha said, "Abhimanyu's son, King Parikshit, was out hunting and wounded a swift deer with a feathered arrow. He chased it alone and the king could not see the deer when he roamed in the wilderness of the great forest. He saw your father and asked him about it. The king was suffering from hunger, thirst and fatigue and repeatedly asked your father about the missing deer. But your father was under a vow of silence. He was immobile and did not reply. Thereupon, the king picked up a dead snake with the end of his bow and placed it on his shoulders. O Shringi! Rigid in his vows, your father is still seated there. However, the king has returned to his city, named after the elephant.[122]"'

Souti said, 'Hearing this, the rishi's son stiffened like a celestial pillar. His eyes reddened with anger and he looked like a blazing fire. Afflicted with rage and powered by the strength of his anger, the powerful one touched the water and cursed the king, "The evil-hearted and vile king, the defiler of Brahmanas and disgrace of the Kuru lineage, who has placed a dead snake on my old and feeble father's shoulders, will, triggered by my words, be taken to the abode of Yama within seven nights from today, bitten by angry Takshaka, the lord of the serpents, and smitten with the swift virulence of his poison." Having thus angrily cursed the king, Shringi went to his father and found him seated in the cowshed, the dead snake on his shoulders. On seeing the dead snake on his father's shoulders, Shringi was again possessed by anger. Shedding tears of grief, he told his father, "O father! When I heard how the evil-hearted King Parikshit insulted you, I cursed him in anger. That worst of the Kuru lineage deserves such a terrible curse. Within seven days from today, Takshaka, the king of the snakes, will send the evil one to Vaivasvata's[123] abode."

'At that, the father Shamika told his enraged son, "O son! Your act does not bring me pleasure. This is not the dharma for ascetics. We live in the domain of that king and we are righteously protected by him. We should not take note of his evil acts. Ruling kings must always be pardoned by men like us. O son! There is no doubt that if you destroy dharma, it will destroy you. If the king does not protect us, we will suffer from many afflictions. O son! We will then not be able to pursue dharma according to our desires. O son! It is because we are protected by kings, who too know dharma, that we are able to pursue dharma and obtain great merits to which such kings also have a share. Like his great-grandfather, Parikshit protects us, the way a king should protect his subjects. Today, he came here tired, hungry and thirsty and he did not know that I was under a vow of silence and he himself practices austerities. Therefore, you have committed an evil act through childishness. O son! In no way does that king deserve a curse from us."'

38

'Shringi said, "O father! Whether my act was rash and improper, whether it brings you pleasure or displeasure, the words that I have spoken will not be in vain. O father! It can never be otherwise. I tell that I never lie, even in jest, and certainly not in a curse."

'Shamika said, "O son! I know that you are greatly powerful and always truthful. You have not uttered a lie in your life. Therefore, this curse of yours will not be false. But even if he is grown up, a son must be advised by his father, so that he attains all the good qualities and becomes immensely famous. You are yet a child. Therefore, you need advice much more. You are always engaged in austerities and the anger of powerful and great-souled ones increases with their powers. O supreme among those who follow the path of dharma! Seeing that you are my son and witnessing your rashness, I see that I must advise you. Live on whatever food can be obtained from the forest and lead a life of tranquillity. Give up your anger. Otherwise, you will not be able to follow the path of dharma. Anger destroys merits that ascetics obtain after a great deal of pain. There is no hope for those who are deprived of merits. Tranquillity alone gives success to ascetics who are forgiving. Good accrues to the forgiving, in this world and the next. Therefore, you must always control your senses and lead a life that is forgiving. By being forgiving, you will attain worlds that cannot even be reached by Brahma. O son! Having achieved tranquillity, I shall do whatever is in my power. I shall send word to the king that he has been cursed by my son, who is yet immature and whose intelligence isn't fully developed and who did this in anger, when he couldn't condone the disrespect shown to me."'

Souti said, 'After these instructions, driven by compassion, the great ascetic and rigid observer of vows sent a disciple to King Parikshit. His name was Gouramukha and he was austere in his penances and well behaved. The disciple was instructed to first ask about the king's welfare and then come to the real business. Going there, he swiftly went to the king, the extender of the Kuru lineage. He entered the king's palace, after first having sent notice through servants. The king received the Brahmana Gouramukha with due honour. After resting for a while, he told the king, in the presence of his advisers, Shamika's terrible words,[124] exactly as he had been instructed.

'Gouramukha said, "O lord of kings! A rishi named Shamika lives in your kingdom. He is extremely virtuous, extremely tranquil, a great ascetic and in control of his senses. O tiger among men! He was observing a vow of silence when you used the end of your bow to place a dead snake around his shoulders. He himself forgave the act. But his son did not. O lord of kings! Without his father's knowledge, you have been cursed by him today. In seven nights, Takshaka will be the reason for your death. He[125] repeatedly asked his son to save you, but no one can falsify the curse. O king! Since he has not been able to pacify his angry son, he has therefore sent me to you for your own welfare." Having heard these terrible words, the king, the descendant of the Kuru lineage and a great ascetic himself, remembered his evil act and the king was struck with remorse. Having heard that the great hermit in the forest had been under a vow of silence, the king's remorse increased even more. On learning about the great compassion Shamika had shown for him and recollecting his sinful act towards the hermit, the king was even more miserable. The king did not grieve about his impending death. But like a god, he grieved over the act he had perpetrated. The king then sent Gouramukha away, with the message that the illustrious one[126] should show him mercy.

‘When Gouramukha had departed, the anxious king immediately sought the advice of his ministers. Having consulted his advisers, the king, who was wise in counsel himself, instructed that a palace be erected on pillars and guarded day and night. For protection, he placed all around the palace physicians, medicines and Brahmanas who were skilled in the use of mantras. Thus protected on all sides and surrounded by his virtuous ministers, the king continued with his royal duties.

‘When the seventh day came, Kashyapa, supreme among Brahmanas, was going with the intention of treating the king, since he possessed that knowledge. He had heard what had happened and that Takshaka, supreme among the snakes, would send the king to Yama’s abode. He thought, “I will cure the king of his fever when he has been bitten by the best of snakes. Through this, I will gain wealth and virtue.” Takshaka, the king of snakes, saw Kashyapa on the way, single-minded in his desire. He appeared before him in the disguise of an old Brahmana. Then the king of snakes spoke to Kashyapa, a bull among sages. “Where are you going so swiftly? What is the act you wish to accomplish?” Kashyapa replied, “Today, Takshaka, the best of the snakes, will use his energy to set on fire the invincible King Parkishit of the Kuru lineage. O amiable one! The king of snakes is as powerful as Agni in his energy. I am rushing there today to cure the fever of the king of unlimited energy, who was born in Pandu’s illustrious lineage.”

‘Takshaka said, “O Brahmana! I am that Takshaka, who will set the ruler of the earth on fire. Turn back. You cannot cure someone who has been bitten by me.” Kashyapa replied, “O snake! I will go to the king and cure him of his fever when you have bitten him. That I know. I have the power of intelligence and knowledge.”’

‘Takshaka said, “O Kashyapa! If you can cure any creature that has been bitten by me, revive this tree once I have bitten it. O best of the Brahmanas! I will set on fire this fig tree before your very eyes. Try your best and show me the power of the mantras that you have spoken of.”

‘Kashyapa said, “O king of snakes! If that is what you wish, bite the tree. O snake! I shall revive it, once it has been bitten by you.”’

Souti said, ‘Thus addressed by the great-souled Kashyapa, the king of snakes, supreme among snakes, went and bit the fig tree. Bitten by the great-souled snake, the tree imbibed the poison and flared up all around. When he had burnt the tree down, the snake again spoke to Kashyapa. “O best of the Brahmanas! Try your best and give life to this lord of the forest.” The tree had been reduced to ashes from the energy of the king of the snakes. But picking up the ashes, Kashyapa uttered these words. “O king of snakes! Today you will witness the power of my knowledge. O snake! I will revive this lord of the forest in your very presence.” Then the illustrious and learned Kashyapa, supreme among Brahmanas, revived through his learning the tree that had been reduced to a heap of ashes. First, he created a sapling. Then he created two leaves in it. Then he created twigs and branches. Then he regenerated the entire tree.

‘On seeing that the tree had really been revived by the great-souled Kashyapa, Takshaka said, “O Brahmana! It is wonderful that you can destroy my poison or that of others like me. O king of the Brahmanas! O you who are blessed with the power of austerities! Driven by what desire are you going there? I will give you whatever fruits you hope to gain from that best of kings, however difficult they may prove to get. O Brahmana! Your success is uncertain, because that king has been afflicted with a Brahmana’s curse. His life has been shortened. Your blazing fame, that is famous throughout the three worlds, will disappear, like the sun robbed of his splendour.” Kashyapa replied, “O snake! I am going there for riches. O best of the snakes! Give it to me and I will return home.” Takshaka said, “O best of the Brahmanas! I will today give you more riches than you hope to get from the king. Therefore, return.” Having heard what Takshaka had said, Kashyapa, supreme among Brahmanas, intelligent and with great energy, meditated on the king.

‘The powerful Kashyapa then learnt through his divine knowledge that the life of the Pandava king had indeed been shortened. He returned, receiving from Takshaka all the riches that he wanted to possess. At the great-souled Kashyapa’s departure, Takshaka hastened towards Hastinapura.[127] On his way, Takshaka heard that the lord of the earth was leading a careful life, protected by mantras and herbs that cured poison. At that, the snake thought to himself, “The king must be deceived through my powers of maya. But what is the best way?” In the disguise of ascetics, Takshaka sent some snakes to the king, with fruits, leaves and water as presents. Takshaka said, “Go swiftly to the king, as if you have a rite to perform. Make the king a present of the fruits, leaves and water.” Thus commanded by Takshaka, the snakes did this and took darbha grass, water and fruits to the king. The valorous king of kings accepted their presents. When their rites were performed, he gave them leave to depart.

‘When those snakes disguised as ascetics had left, the king addressed his advisers and well-wishers. “All of you eat with me the succulent fruits presented by those ascetics.” O Shounaka! As the king was about to eat the fruit with his ministers, a small worm appeared in the fruit that he had picked up. It was tiny, with black eyes, and had the colour of copper. Picking it up, the best of kings told his advisers, “The sun is setting. Today, I no longer have any fear from poison. Therefore, let this worm become Takshaka and bite me. Let the words of the hermit become true and let a falsehood not be committed.” Driven by destiny, the advisers applauded him. Having said this, the king of kings smilingly placed the small worm on his throat, about to die and robbed of his senses. He was still laughing when Takshaka, who had come out of the fruit that had been given to the king, coiled around him.’

40

Souti said, ‘When the ministers saw their king in Takshaka’s coils, their faces paled and they wept in great grief. Hearing his roars, the ministers began to flee. As they were running away in their grief, they saw the wonderful serpent Takshaka, the king of snakes, flying through the sky, like a streak with the colour of a lotus parting heaven's hair. The palace that the king had inhabited was set on fire from the snake's poison and blazed away. In panic, they[128] abandoned it and fled in all directions. The king fell down, as if struck by lightning. When the king was struck down with Takshaka's energy, the royal priest, pure Brahmanas and all the king's advisers performed the funeral rites.

'All the citizens assembled and placed on the throne the king's young son. The people called him Janamejaya, the slayer of enemies and a hero of the Kuru lineage. Though only a child, that best of kings, the eldest of the bulls among the Kurus, was wise. Together with his ministers and priest, he ruled over the kingdom, like his brave great-grandfather[129] once had.

'Seeing that the king was now able to burn down his enemies, the king's ministers went to Suvarnavarman, the king of Kashi, and asked him to give his daughter Vapushtama in marriage. After enquiries, the king of Kashi married Vapushtama to that hero among the Kurus, in accordance with the precepts of dharma. After obtaining her, he[130] was very happy and never gave his heart to any other woman. In pursuit of pleasure, the valorous one, supreme among kings, roamed happily in lakes, blossoming woods and forests, like Pururava[131] did in ancient times, on obtaining Urvashi. Vapushtama, the most beautiful among women, obtained a king of the earth as her handsome husband and at times of pleasure, pleased him with great love.'

41

Souti said, 'At about this time, the great ascetic Jaratkaru roamed the entire earth, having adopted the vow of sleeping at night wherever he happened to find himself in the evening. The immensely energetic hermit roamed around, bathing in the waters of many tirthas, practising vows that those who lack in resolution find impossible to accomplish, abstaining from food and living on air, thus drying up his body from one day to another.

‘He saw his ancestors suspended head downwards in a cave, hanging on to a single strand of grass. Even that single strand was being eaten away by a rat that lived in the cave. Without food, they were lean and in a wretched state, eagerly awaiting their deliverance. Himself in a wretched state, he went to these wretched ones and asked, “Who are you, hanging from this single strand of grass, which becomes weaker as the rat that lives in the cave gnaws at the roots? The rat is slowly biting away the root of the strand still left with its sharp teeth and soon the little that is left of the strand will break. There is no doubt that you will then fall, head downwards, into the cave. Seeing you hang upside down and in this miserable state, I am extremely distressed. How can I help? Quickly tell me if I can prevent this calamity by giving you a quarter, a third or even half of my austerities.[132] Or if you can save yourselves with all my austerities, I am willing to do that. What is best?”

‘The ancestors replied, “O Brahmana! You are old and celibate[133] and you wish to deliver us. O best of Brahmanas! You cannot save us with your austerities. O son! O supreme among eloquent speakers! Our state is the outcome of austerities. We are descending into this hell because of lack of offspring. O son! Hanging in this cave, our knowledge has become dim. Therefore, though you are famous in the worlds because of your manliness, we do not know you. You are old, you have great good fortune and you sorrowfully grieve for us. O Brahmana! Learn who we are and the reason behind the grief. We are rishis named yayavaras, rigid in their vows. We have been cast off from the holy regions because of lack of offspring. Our sacred austerities have not all been destroyed yet and we have a single strand left. We have a single strand left, but it matters little whether it exists or not. We have bad fortune, or little fortune. We have a single strand in our lineage. He is known as Jaratkaru and he is learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas. He is great-souled, rigid in his vows, a great ascetic and is in control of his senses. But in his greed for austerities, he has reduced us to this state. He has no wife, no son and no relatives. Having lost our senses, that is the reason we are hanging in this cave, like those without protectors. If you meet him, out of kindness for us, tell him that his wretched ancestors are hanging head downwards from a cave. Tell that holy one that he should have a wife and offspring. O Brahmana! O one blessed with the power of austerities! This single strand of grass that you see, the one from which we are hanging, is the strand of our family lineage. O Brahmana! The strands that you see being eaten up, are being eaten up by time. O Brahmana! The half-eaten root from which we are all hanging is the last of our lineage, practising austerities. O Brahmana! The rat that you see is time, immensely powerful. He[134] is slowly killing the misguided Jaratkaru, engaged in austerities, who is greedy for austerities, but has lost his mind and senses. O supreme one! His austerities cannot deliver us. Our roots have been destroyed, we have fallen and our senses have been confounded by time. Look at us descend downwards into hell like sinners. We are descending, with all our earlier ancestors. Severed by time, he too will descend into hell. O son! Austerities, sacrifices and other sacred and great acts are inferior to obtaining offspring. That is the view of the learned. When you see him, tell all this to the ascetic Jaratkaru. O Brahmana! If you wish to be our protector, describe in detail what you have witnessed to him and deliver our message that he should have a wife and offspring."'

42

Souti said, 'Having heard all this, Jaratkaru became extremely miserable with grief. He told his ancestors in a voice that was choked with tears, "I am Jaratkaru, your evil son. I have committed a foolish wrong. Please punish me." The ancestors replied, "O son! O Brahmana! It is fortunate that you have happened to come here. Why have you not taken a wife?" Jaratakaru said, "O ancestors! It has always been my objective to carry my seed inside my body and to take this entire body to the next world. O grandfathers! But having seen you hanging here like birds, my mind has been diverted from a life of celibacy. There is no doubt that I will do that which brings pleasure to you. If I get a lady who bears my own name, who comes to me of her own volition, who comes to me as alms and whom I will not have to maintain, I will accept her as my wife. O ancestors! Otherwise, I will not marry. That is my truthful promise." Having said this to the ancestors, the sage continued to roam the earth. O Shounaka! Though he grew old, he could not find a wife.

'He was sorry that he was not successful in keeping his promise to his ancestors. He went to the forest and cried out aloud in his grief. "Whatever creatures there are, mobile or immobile, visible or invisible, hear my words. I am a man engaged in severe austerities. But my grief-stricken ancestors told me to have a wife. Instructed by my ancestors and wishing to marry and do what they want, I am now roaming the world, poor and miserable, looking for a maiden as alms. If any of the beings I have addressed has a daughter, please bestow that daughter on me, since I am wandering in all directions. The maiden has to have the same name as mine. She has to be given to me as alms and I should not need to maintain her. I ask for such a maiden." Thereupon, the snakes who had been appointed to watch over Jaratkaru took this news about his intentions to Vasuki.

'Hearing this, the king of snakes immediately went to the forest where the hermit was, taking his maiden sister with him, adorned in various ornaments. O Brahmana! Having gone there, Vasuki, the king of snakes, offered the maiden as alms to that great-souled sage. But he did not immediately accept her, thinking that she might not have the same name as his and that the issue of maintaining her remained unsettled. He hesitated and was in two minds about accepting her. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! He then asked Vasuki for the maiden's name and said that he would not support her.'

43

Souti said, 'Then Vasuki told the rishi Jaratkaru, "This maiden has the same name as yours. She is my sister and is an ascetic. O best of the Brahmanas! I shall support her. O one blessed with the power of austerities! I shall protect her with all my might." When the snake made the promise that he would maintain his sister, Jaratkaru went to the snake's house.

‘Thereupon, the aged sage of great vows, best among ascetics, devoted to dharma and learned in mantras, accepted her hand in accordance with the prescribed rites. Worshipped by maharshis, he went with his wife to a beautiful house built by the king of snakes. In that house, there was a beautiful bed covered with unmatched spreads and Jaratkaru slept there with his wife. At that time, the supreme one made an agreement with his wife. “Never do anything or say anything that causes me displeasure. If you ever cause me displeasure, I shall leave you and no longer live in this house. Please remember these words I have spoken.” In great anxiety and great sorrow, the sister of the king of snakes agreed. Wishing to bring pleasure to her husband, the fortunate one served her melancholy husband with the dedication of a white crow.[135]

‘One day, at the time of her season, Vasuki’s sister bathed and following the norms, slept with her husband, the great hermit. She then conceived a child who was like the fire, blessed with the power of austerities and radiant like the god of fire himself. Like the moon in the bright lunar fortnight, the child grew in her womb.

‘A few days later, the immensely famous Jaratkaru fell asleep with his head in his wife’s lap, like a tired person. When the best of Brahmanas was thus sleeping, the setting sun entered the peaks of the mountains. O Brahmana! Vasuki’s excellent sister was frightened at the possible loss of dharma, because the day was coming to an end. “What shall I do now? Should I wake my husband or should I not? He leads a hard life and is devoted to dharma. How can I act so as not to cause him offence? On one side is his anger. On the other, since he lives by dharma, there is the loss of dharma. It seems to me that the loss of dharma is the greater evil. If I wake him, he will certainly be angry. But if the time for evening prayers passes, he will certainly lose dharma.” Having thought this over in her mind, the snake Jaratkaru[136] spoke in a sweet voice to the rishi, asleep like a fire, blazing in his austerities. “O greatly illustrious one! Wake up, the sun is setting. O illustrious one! O one who is rigid in his vows! Touch the water and perform the evening prayers. The fearful and beautiful moment for *agnihotra*[137] has arrived. O lord! Dusk is gradually spreading over the western direction.” Having been thus addressed, the illustrious and great ascetic Jaratkaru told his wife, his lips quivering in anger, “O snake! You have insulted me. I shall no longer live with you. I will go away to the place from where I had come. O lady with the beautiful thighs! If I am asleep, I know for certain that the sun does not have the power to set. No one likes to stay in a place where he has been insulted, let alone those who are like me and are devoted to dharma like me.” Thus addressed by her husband, Jaratkaru’s heart began to tremble.

‘Vasuki’s sister told him, “O Brahmana! I did not wake you with a desire to insult you. I did it so that you should not face a loss in dharma.” But the powerful ascetic Jaratkaru had made up his mind to abandon his wife. Addressed by his wife, the rishi angrily told the snake, “O snake! I have never uttered a lie. Therefore, I have to go. O beautiful one! That was the agreement I had earlier made with you and your brother. O fortunate one! I have passed my time happily with you. O timid one! When I am gone, tell your brother that the illustrious one has left. And when I have departed, please do not grieve for me.” Having been thus addressed, the beautiful Jaratkaru was filled with anxiety and sorrow. Her mouth was dry. Her eyes were full of tears. Her voice choked with sobs. Her heart trembled. But steadying herself, the beautiful one then told her husband Jaratkaru with joined palms, “O you who follow the path of dharma! It is not proper for you to forsake me in this fashion. I am innocent. You are established in dharma. But I am also always established in dharma, doing that which brings you pleasure. O best of Brahmanas! I have not yet accomplished the purpose for which I was given to you. I am unfortunate. What will Vasuki tell me? O supreme one! To save themselves from their mother’s curse, my relatives wanted a son born from me through you. But he is not yet visible. The welfare of my relatives depends on a son obtained through you. O Brahmana! I plead with you that you should not go away until I am fertile through our union and can bring about the welfare of my lineage. O supreme one! Why should a great-souled one like you abandon an innocent one when the conception is still not apparent?” Thus addressed, the hermit Jaratkaru, blessed with the power of austerities, told his wife words that were fit and appropriate for the occasion. “O fortunate one! The one who is in your womb now will be a rishi who will be like the god of fire himself. He will be the best of those who follow dharma and will be learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas.” Having said this, the virtuous and great rishi Jaratkaru went away. His heart was once again firmly fixed on the practice of great austerities.’

44

Souti said, ‘O one blessed with the power of austerities! As soon as her husband left, Jaratkaru went to her brother and told him what had happened. The best of the snakes heard this unpleasant news and told his sister, who was more miserable than he was, “O fortunate one! You know what had to be done and why you were given. A son was supposed to be born for the welfare of the snakes. That valorous one was supposed to have saved us from the snake-sacrifice. In ancient times, this is what the grandfather and the gods told me. O fortunate one! Have you conceived through that best of sages? It is my wish that the wise man’s marriage should not be fruitless. Without a doubt, it is not appropriate that I should ask you a question on such a subject. But the subject is too serious for me not to ask you. I know that your husband is always engaged in austerities and is prone to anger. I shall not follow him, because he might curse me. O fortunate one! Tell me what your husband has done and thereby pull out the terrible stake that has been implanted for a long time in my heart.” Being thus asked, Jaratkaru consoled the tormented Vasuki, king of snakes, and said, “I asked the great-souled and great ascetic about our offspring. He said it is there and left. I do not recollect his ever having spoken a lie, even in jest. O king! Why should he then utter a lie on such a serious subject? He said, ‘O snake woman! Do not sorrow over the fruit of your action. A son, resplendent as the fire and the sun, will be born to you.’ O brother! Having said this, my husband went away to his hermitage. Let the great distress that preys on your mind be removed.” On hearing this, Vasuki, the king of snakes, was delighted and accepted his sister’s words.

‘The best of the snakes worshipped his sister with kindness, appropriate praise, gifts and homage. O best of the Brahmanas! The immensely radiant embryo grew in her womb like the luminescent sun, like the moon waxing in the sky during shuklapaksha. O Brahmana! At the appropriate time, the snake’s sister gave birth to a son who was like a divine child, the destroyer of the fears of his father and mother. He grew up in the house of the king of snakes and studied the Vedas and the Vedangas from the sage Chyavana, the son of Bhrigu. Even as a child, he was strict in adherence to his vows and gifted with intelligence, spirituality and qualities. He became famous in the worlds by the name of Astika. He was known as Astika, because while he was still in his mother’s womb, his father went away to the forest, saying “*asti*”.[138] Even as a child, he was extremely intelligent. He was carefully watched over in the house of the king of snakes. He was like the golden and illustrious Lord Shulapani,[139] the lord of the gods. To the great delight of all the snakes, he grew up.’

45

Shounaka asked, ‘At that time, what did King Janamejaya ask his ministers about his father’s ascent to heaven? Tell me that again in detail.’

Souti replied, ‘O Brahmana! Hear what the king asked his ministers and all that they told him about Parikshit’s death. Janamejaya said, “You know all that happened to my father and how my greatly illustrious father came about his death. When I have heard all about my father in complete detail from you, I shall learn all that is good and not that which is evil.”

‘Being asked by the great-souled King Janamejaya, the virtuous and wise ministers replied, “Your father was devoted to dharma, great-souled and a protector of his subjects. Hear how that great-souled one led his life. The four varnas were respectively established in their own dharmas and the king, who was himself well versed with dharma protected them there, in accordance with the dictates of dharma. Illustrious and with infinite might, he protected the goddess earth. He hated no one. Nor did anyone hate him. Like Prajapati himself, he treated all beings impartially. O king! Established in their respective duties, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras were protected impartially by the king. He maintained widows, orphans, the disabled and the poor. He was handsome and like another moon to all creatures. Through that truthful and greatly powerful king, everyone was content and blessed with good fortune. The king became Sharadvata's student in the science of weapons.[140] O Janamejaya! Govinda[141] loved your father. He was immensely famous and loved by all the worlds. He was born in Uttara's womb when the Kuru lineage was almost destroyed. Therefore, Soubhadra's[142] powerful son came to be known as Parikshit. The king was learned in royal norms of dharma and artha and had all the qualities. He was in control of his senses and of himself. He was intelligent and was served by those who were wise. He had great wisdom and was completely familiar with the norms of righteous conduct. He had conquered the six vices.[143] Your father protected his subjects for sixty years. His end was preordained, through a snake, and it couldn't be avoided. O best of men! After him, you have lawfully ascended this ancestral kingdom of the Kurus and will rule for 1000 years. O protector of every being! You were instated when you were a child."

'Janamejaya said, "In our lineage, no king has ever been born who did not look after the welfare of his subjects and please them. Consider especially the conduct of my grandfathers,[144] who were always devoted to a great life. How did my father, who was like them, come to his end? Describe it accurately to me. I wish to hear it."'

Souti said, 'Thus asked by the king, the ministers, who were always engaged in that which brought pleasure to the king, told him everything that had happened. The ministers said, "O king! Your father was always addicted to hunting, like the greatly fortunate warrior and great archer, Pandu. He handed over all matters concerning the running of the kingdom to us. On one occasion, he was roaming in the forest and pierced a deer with an arrow. Having thus shot the deer, he pursued it deep into the forest, alone and on foot, with his sword, quiver and bow ready. But your father could not find that lost deer deep inside the forest. He was sixty years old and aged and felt tired and hungry. He then saw a great sage in that great forest. The lord of kings asked the sage, who at that time was observing a vow of silence and thus the sage did not reply to any of the questions. In his vow of silence, the sage sat motionless and peaceful like a piece of wood, and hungry and thirsty and not knowing that the sage was observing a vow of silence, the king became angry with the sage. Being angry, your father insulted the sage. O best of the Bharata lineage! With the end of his bow, he picked up a dead snake from the ground and placed it around the shoulders of that pure-souled sage. But that wise one did not utter a word, good or bad, and did not become angry. He remained as he was, with the snake around his shoulders."'

46

'The ministers said, "O lord of kings! Having placed the snake around the shoulders of the sage, the king, who was weak with hunger, returned to his own city. The rishi had an immensely famous son named Shringi, who had been born from a cow. He was extremely powerful, with great energy and prone to extreme anger. This sage had gone to Brahma to worship him. O tiger of the Kuru lineage! When he was given leave to depart, he was returning and learnt from a friend how your father had insulted his father, how your father had hung a dead snake around his father's shoulders and that he still bore it, though he had done no injury. O king! His father was a great ascetic and supreme among sages. He was pure and had control over his senses and the performer of wonderful deeds. His soul was radiant with the power of his austerities and he had control over all his limbs. His practices were pure and his words were also pure. He was perfectly balanced, without avarice, without pettiness and without jealousy. He was old and he was under a vow of silence. He was the refuge of all beings. Such was the person your father insulted.

'"However, the rishi's son cursed your father in anger. Though he was still a child, he had great energy and the radiance that comes with age. He instantly touched water and, blazing with energy, angrily spoke about your father. 'Look at the power of my austerities. An evil one has left a dead snake around my innocent father's shoulders. Within seven nights from now, the angry and radiant snake Takshaka will burn him down with the energy of his poison.' Having said this, he went to where his father was. On seeing his father, he told him about the curse he had uttered. That tiger among sages sent a message to your father. 'O lord of the earth! You have been cursed by my son that Takshaka will burn you down with his poison. O king! Be prepared.' O Janamejaya! On hearing this terrible news, your father was alarmed and took every possible precaution against Takshaka, supreme among snakes.

'"When the seventh day arrived, a brahmarshi named Kashyapa was on his way to visit the king. Takshaka, chief among the snakes, saw Kashaypa as he was hurrying, and asked him, 'Where are you going so swiftly? What is it that you want to do?' Kashyapa replied, 'O Brahmana![145] I am going to where King Parikshit, the best of the Kurus, is. Today, he will be killed by the snake Takshaka. I am hurrying there so that I can cure him from his fever. If I protect him, no snake can oppress him.' Takshaka said, 'O Brahmana! Why do you wish to revive the king after I have bitten him? Don't hesitate to tell me what your desire is and I will give it to you. Return home.' When he said he was going there with the desire of acquiring riches, the snake told the great-souled one in pleasant words, 'O, unblemished one! Take from me more riches than you hope to obtain from the king and return.' Thus addressed by the snake, Kashyapa, best among men, obtained as much of riches as he obtained from Takshaka and returned.

'"After the Brahmana returned, Takshaka disguised himself and went to your virtuous father, king and best of kings. He was fully prepared in his palace, but he burnt him with the fire of his poison. O tiger among men! It was after this that you victoriously ascended the throne. O best among kings! Though the account is extremely terrible, we have told you everything in entirety, the way it was seen and heard. O supreme among kings! You have now heard how that great king was destroyed and how the rishi Shamika was insulted. Now do what needs to be done."

'Janamejaya said, "I first wish to hear what was said between Kashyapa and the chief among snakes in that deserted forest. Who witnessed what transpired and how did you hear this? After I have heard this, I will think of a means to destroy the snakes."

'The ministers said, "O king! Listen to how we came to know about the encounter between the chief among the Brahmanas and the chief among the snakes. O lord of the earth! A man had climbed a tall tree, looking for dry twigs that could be used as kindling for a sacrificial fire. Perched on the tree, he was not seen by the Brahmana or the snake. O king! He was also reduced to ashes along with the tree. O lord of kings! The Brahmana's powers revived him, along with the tree. O chief among kings! He later returned to the city and told us the story. What we recounted to you about the encounter between Takshaka and the Brahmana was exactly as it happened and exactly as it was witnessed. O king! O tiger among kings! Now that you have heard it, decide what must be done."'

Souti said, 'On hearing the words of his ministers, King Janamejaya burnt in grief and wrung his hands. The lotus-eyed king heaved long and deep sighs and wept, tears streaming from his eyes. Struck with deep grief, the lord of the earth said, "I have heard from you the account of my father's ascent to heaven. Now hear from me what my firm decision is. I think no time should be lost in taking action against the evil Takshaka, since he is the one who killed my father. That evil one alone burnt the king and made Shringi's curse come true. If the evil one[146] had gone, my father would surely have been alive. What harm could have come to him[147] had the king been revived through Kashyapa's blessings and the precautions taken by his ministers? It was his delusion that made him prevent Kashyapa, supreme among Brahmanas, from reviving the invincible king. The transgression of the evil Takshaka is a great one. He gave riches to the Brahmana so that he might not revive the king. My father must be avenged, to bring great pleasure to me, Utanka and all of you.”’

47

Souti said, ‘When the illustrious king uttered these words, the ministers approved and the king took an oath that he would undertake a snake-sacrifice. The lord of the earth, Parikshit’s son and the king who was a tiger of the Bharata lineage, then summoned his priest and officiating priests who knew about the sacrifice. He who was eloquent in the uttered words that would make the deed successful said, “I must act against the evil Takshaka who brought violence to my father. Please tell me what I must do. Do you know of an act whereby the snake Takshaka and his relatives can be hurled into the blazing fire? Just as my father was earlier burnt with the poison, I wish to burn that evil snake.” The officiating priests replied, “O king! There is a sacrifice that the gods have recommended for those like you. It is known as the snake-sacrifice and it is described in the ancient tales. O lord of men! No one but you can offer this sacrifice. Those who know the ancient tales have told us there is such a sacrifice and we know it.” O supreme one! Thus addressed, the rajarshi thought that Takshaka had already been hurled into the mouth of a blazing fire and burnt.

‘The king then told the Brahmanas who were learned in the mantras, “I will perform the sacrifice. Collect the required ingredients.” O supreme among the Brahmanas! Thereupon the officiating priests, who were hard in their resolve and learned in the shastras, measured out a piece of land as the sacrificial platform, in accordance with the prescribed rites. It was graced by the presence of many learned Brahmanas and adorned with every valuable object, abundant quantities of riches and foodgrains. Before the snake-sacrifice could begin, they then instated the king on this sacrificial platform.

‘Earlier, when the sacrificial platform was being built and the sacrifice had not started, a great incident occurred that suggested the sacrifice might be disrupted. There was a man who was a suta. He was an extremely wise builder and one who was skilled in the knowledge of architecture. He was also a raconteur of ancient tales. This bard said, “The land on which the platform was constructed and the time at which it was measured indicate that this sacrifice will not be completed. A Brahmana will be the cause.” On hearing this, before being instated, the king instructed the door-keeper that no one should be allowed entry without his knowledge.

‘The snake-sacrifice then started according to the prescribed norms. The officiating priests, who were learned in their respective duties, went about prescribed tasks. They dressed themselves in black garments and their eyes became red from the smoke. Chanting mantras, they offered oblations into the sacrificial fire. As they poured oblations into the mouth of the fire and uttered the names of the snakes, the hearts of the snakes trembled in fear. Thereafter, the snakes dropped into the blazing flames, wretched and screaming piteously at each other. They swelled, breathed hard and intertwined their heads and tails. In large numbers, they fell into the blazing fire—white, black, blue, old and young. Crying out terrible screams, they fell into the lofty and blazing flames, in hundreds, thousands, millions and tens of millions. O supreme among Brahmanas! Many snakes perished powerless. Among those which perished, some were small as rats, others large as trunks of elephants, or gigantic and immensely strong like mad elephants. Snakes of many colours, poisonous, terrible, like clubs and with immense strength, fell into the fire in large numbers, as a consequence of their mother’s curse.’

48

Shounaka said, ‘At the snake-sacrifice of the wise king Janamejaya of the Pandava lineage, who were the supreme rishis who acted as sacrificial priests? Who were the *sadasyas*[148] at that terrible snake-sacrifice that brought great fear and misery to the snakes? O son! You should describe this in detail. O son of a suta! We should know about those who knew the secrets of the snake-sacrifice.’

Souti said, ‘I shall certainly tell you the names of those wise ones who became *ritvijas*[149] and sadasyas for the king. The hotar was the

Brahmana Chandabhargava, who was born in Chyavana's lineage and was famous as one who was learned in the Vedas. The wise and old Brahmana Koutsarya Jaimini was the udgatar. Sharngarava was the brahman and Bodhapingala was the adhvaryu. Vyasa was a sadasya, together with his sons and disciples—Uddalaka, Shamathaka, Shvetaketu, Panchama, Asita, Devala, Narada, Parvata, Atreya, Kundajathara, the Brahmana Kutighata, Vatysa, the old Shrutashrava who was always engaged in austerities and studying, Kahoda, Devasharma, Moudgalya and Samasourabha. These and many other Brahmanas who were rigid in their vows became sadasyas in Parikshit's son's sacrifice.

'When the officiating priests began to offer oblations into the flames of that great snake-sacrifice, terrible snakes that struck fear into living creatures began to fall into the fire. The fat and the marrow of the snakes thus burnt in the sacrificial fire and flowed like rivers, creating an intolerable stench as snakes continuously burnt. The screams of snakes that fell into the fire and those which were in the sky and were about to fall in and those that burnt were piteous.

'Meanwhile, as soon as Takshaka, king of snakes, heard that King Janamejaya had been instated in the snake-sacrifice, he went to Purandara's[150] palace. The supreme snake told Purandara everything and confessing the evil that he had done, fearfully sought refuge. Indra was very pleased and told him, "O Takshaka! O king of snakes! You have nothing to fear here from the snake-sacrifice. For your sake, I have already pacified the grandfather.[151] Therefore, you need not be afraid. Drive this fever away from your mind." Thus being reassured, the supreme among the snakes happily lived in Shakra's[152] palace.

'But Vasuki became extremely distressed on seeing that many snakes were continuously falling into the fire and only a few remained in his lineage. Vasuki, supreme among the snakes, was miserable with grief and told his sister with a grieving heart, "O fortunate one! My limbs are burning. I can no longer see the directions. I am about to fall because I have lost consciousness. My mind is whirling. My sight is failing. My heart is about to burst. Completely numbed, I may fall into the blazing fire without resisting. Parikshit's son's sacrifice will go on until he has exterminated our race. It is clear that I must also go to the land of the ancestors. O sister! The time for which I gave you to Jaratkaru has come. O sister! Save us and our race. O supreme among snakes! Astika will send the sacrifice[153] that is being performed. In earlier times, the grandfather himself told me this. O sister! Therefore tell your beloved son, who is learned in the Vedas and respected even by those who are aged, to save me and those who are dependant on me."'

49

Souti said, 'At that, the snake woman Jaratkaru called her son and told him what Vasuki, king of the nagas, had told her. "O son! The time has come for attaining the objective for which my brother had given me to your father. Therefore, do what is necessary." Astika said, "Why were you given by my uncle to my father? Tell me in detail, so that I can do what is necessary." Jaratkaru, the sister of the king of snakes, wished to bring about the welfare of her relatives.

'She resolutely told him, "It is said that the mother of all snakes is Kadru. Hear how she came to curse her sons in anger. She said, 'O sons! You have refused to change the colour of Ucchaihshrava, the king of horses, despite my asking and because of the wager, have made me a slave to Vinata. Therefore, the god of fire will burn you in Janamejaya's sacrifice. Thus being reduced to the five elements,[154] you will go to the land of the dead.' The great god, grandfather of all the worlds, himself heard this curse being uttered and approved. O son! On hearing this curse and the words of the grandfather, Vasuki sought refuge with the gods after the churning of the ocean was over. Once they had obtained their objective and got the supreme amrita, the gods went to Prajapati[155] with their brother[156] leading the way. All the gods and King Vasuki sought to placate the grandfather so that the curse might have no effect. The gods said, 'O lord! Vasuki, the king of snakes, feels sorry for his relatives. How can his mother's curse be rendered ineffective?' Brahma replied, 'Jaratkaru will marry a wife named Jaratkaru. The Brahmana who will be born will save the snakes from the curse.' O god-like son! When Vasuki, the lord of the snakes, heard this, he gave me to your great-souled father, long before this incident.[157] You were born from me and your father. That time has now come and you should save us from the fear. You should save me and my brother from the fire, so that the reason for which I was given to your wise father is not rendered futile. O son! What do you think?" On hearing his mother's words, Astika then agreed.

'He addressed the suffering Vasuki and brought fresh life into him. "O Vasuki! O supreme among snakes! I will save you. I truly tell you that I shall free you from this curse. O snake! Be reassured and banish all fear. O tranquil one! I shall endeavour to bring about your welfare. No one can say that my tongue has ever uttered a lie, even in jest, not to speak of serious occasions. O uncle! I will go to Janamejaya, supreme among kings, now instated in the sacrifice. I shall please him with words that bring him good fortune.[158] O supreme one! The king will then restrain himself from the sacrifice. O king of snakes! O one with great intelligence! Believe all that I say. Believe that what I have resolved is always fulfilled." Vasuki replied, "O Astika! My head is whirling and my heart is splintering. I cannot see the directions and I am oppressed because of the curse[159] of a Brahmana." Astika said, "O supreme among snakes! You should not suffer any more. I shall destroy the fear that comes to you from the blazing fire and the curse of the Brahmana, which has energy like the terrible fire at the time of destruction. You need not fear any more." Then, after having removed the terrible fever from Vasuki's mind and taking it on his own limbs, Astika, supreme among Brahmanas, swiftly went to where Janamejaya's sacrifice, adorned with all the qualities, was being held.

'Having gone there, Astika saw the splendid grounds that had been laid out for the sacrifice, populated with numerous sadasyas, as radiant as the sun and the fire. But the gatekeepers refused to allow entry to that best of Brahmanas. To gain entry, the best of Brahmanas praised the sacrifice.’

50

‘Astika said, “O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! Soma’s sacrifice, Varuna’s sacrifice and Prajapati’s sacrifice were held in Prayaga in ancient times. But your sacrifice is in no way inferior to theirs. Blessed be those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! Shakra[160] performed one hundred sacrifices. But your sacrifice is equal to one hundred of his. Blessed are those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! This sacrifice of yours is like the sacrifices of Yama, Harimedha and King Rantideva. Blessed are those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! This sacrifice of yours is like the sacrifices of Gaya, King Shashabindu and King Vaishravana. Blessed are those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! This sacrifice of yours is like the sacrifices of Nriga, Ajamida and Dasharatha’s son.[161] Blessed are those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! This sacrifice of yours is like the sacrifice of King Yudhishthira, who was the son of a god and a descendant of Ajamida and was famous even in heaven. Blessed are those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit! O best of the Bharata lineage! This sacrifice of yours is like the sacrifice of Satyavati’s son, Krishna Dvaipayana,[162] in which he himself was the priest. Blessed are those who are dear to us. Those who are seated here are as radiant as the sun and the fire and make it equal to the sacrifice of Vritra’s slayer.[163] There is nothing that they do not know. The gifts given to them are inexhaustible. I am certain that there is no ritvija in all the worlds who is the equal of your ritvija Dvaipayana. His disciples travel the earth, having become ritvijas skilled in their duties. The great-souled god Vibhavasu[164] Chitrabhanu,[165] whose seed is golden, who trails black smoke, who consumes everything and whose head faces the south, is eager for your offerings. In the world of the living, there is no king equal to you in protecting his subjects. My mind is pleased at your perseverance. You are Varuna or Dharmaraja Yama. Like the wielder of the vajra, Shakra[166] himself, you are the protector of all subjects in this world. In my view, in this world, you are the lord of all men. There is no king equal to you in sacrifices. You are like Khatvanga, Nabhaga and Dilipa. You are like Yayati and Mandhata in your power. You are like the sun in your splendour. In the rigidity of your vows, you shine like Bhishma. You are like Valmiki, whose firmness is subtle. You are like Vasishtha in controlling your anger. In my view, your sovereignty is like that of Indra and your radiance is like that of Narayana. You are like Yama in administering dharma. Like Krishna, you have all the qualities. Like the vasus, you are the abode of the goddess of wealth. You are the source of all sacrifices. You are like Dambhodbhava in strength. Learned in the use of arms, you are like Rama.[167] In your energy, you are like Ourva and Trita. Like Bhagiratha, your sight inspires terror.”’

Souti said, ‘Thus addressed, they were all pleased—the king, the sadasyas, the ritvijas and the fire into which offerings are given. On seeing the expressions they manifested, King Janamejaya spoke.’

51

‘Janamejaya said, “Though he is but a child, he speaks like a wise old man. He is not a child. I think he is wise and old. I wish to grant him a boon. O assembled Brahmanas! Give me the required permission.”

‘The sadasyas said, “Even though a child, a Brahmana deserves the respect of kings, even more so if he is learned. This child deserves that you grant him his wishes, but not before Takshaka has swiftly come here.”’

Souti said, ‘The king was willing to grant the Brahmana boy a boon and was about to say, “Ask a boon from me.” But the hotar was not pleased at this and said, “Takshaka has not yet come to the sacrifice.” Janamejaya said, “Try your best to complete this sacrifice successfully. Use all your powers, so that Takshaka comes here without any more delay. He is the one I hate the most.” The ritvijas said, “O king!

Takshaka now lives in fear in Indra's palace. The *shastras* reveal this to us and the fire also confirms it." The great-souled suta Lohitaksha was well versed in ancient tales and had known this before. Asked again by the king on this occasion, he said, "O god among men! O king! What the Brahmanas have said is true. I know the ancient accounts and I say that Indra has granted him a boon saying that he should live secretly near him and the fire will not be able to burn him." On hearing this, the king, who had been instated in the sacrifice, was angry and asked the hotar to perform his duties. He chanted mantras and poured oblations into the fire.

'Thereupon, Indra himself arrived there. The great god came in his celestial chariot, worshipped by all the gods surrounding him and followed by masses of clouds and large numbers of *vidyadharas*[168] and apsaras. But the snake[169] hid himself inside Indra's garments. At that, the king, who was determined to destroy Takshaka, angrily spoke to his priests who knew the mantras. "O Brahmanas! If Takshaka is in Indra's palace, hurl him into the fire with Indra himself." The ritvijas said, "O king! Look. Takshaka is coming now and will soon be under your power. His terrible roars and fearful cries can be heard. The snake has been given up by the wielder of the vajra. He has fallen and his body has been disabled through our mantras. Deprived of his consciousness, the king of snakes is falling from the sky. His sharp sighs and deep breaths can be heard. O lord of kings! Your deed is being properly performed. It is now proper for you to grant a boon to this best of Brahmanas." Janamejaya said, "O one who is beyond measure! You are so handsome and so childlike that I wish to grant you a worthy boon. Therefore, ask for the desire that is in your heart. I promise you that I will grant it to you, if it can be granted." Takshaka, the king of snakes, was about to fall into the sacrificial fire in a moment.

'At that very instant, Astika spoke. "O Janamejaya! If you wish to grant me a boon, I wish that this sacrifice should be stopped. Let no more snakes fall down." O Brahmana! At these words, Parikshit's son wasn't happy and told Astika, "O illustrious one! I will give you gold, silver, cows or whatever else you wish to possess. O Brahmana! I shall give you your boon. But let this sacrifice not be stopped.” Astika replied, “O king! I do not ask you for gold, silver or cattle. Let this sacrifice be stopped, so that my mother’s relatives are safe.” Thus addressed by Astika, Parikshit’s son repeatedly told Astika, greatest among eloquent ones, “O supreme among supreme Brahmanas! O fortunate one! O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Choose another boon.” But he[170] refused. Thereupon, all the sadasyas, who were learned in all the Vedas, unanimously told the king, “Let the Brahmana have his boon.”’

52

Shounaka said, ‘O son of a suta! I wish to hear the names of all the snakes that fell into the fire at the time of the snake-sacrifice.’

Souti said, ‘O you who are learned in the Vedas! There were many thousands, millions and tens of millions. There were so many that I am unable to count them all. As far as I can remember, hear the names of the chief snakes that fell into the sacrificial fire. First, hear the names of the chief ones in Vasuki’s family. They had the colours blue, red and white and were of terrible form, with gigantic bodies and virulent poison—Kotika, Manasa, Purna, Saha, Paila, Halisaka, Picchila, Konapa, Chakra, Konavega, Prakalana, Hiranyavaha, Sharana, Kakshaka and Kaladantaka. These are the snakes from Vasuki’s lineage that entered the sacrificial fire.

‘Now hear the names of those of Takshaka’s lineage as I mention them—Pucchandaka, Mandalaka, Pindabhetta, Rabhenaka, Ucchikha, Surasa, Dranga, Balaheda, Virohana, Shili, Shalakara, Muka, Sukumara, Pravepana, Mudgara, Shasharoma, Sumana and Vegavahana. These were the snakes from Takshaka’s lineage that entered the sacrificial fire.

‘Paravata, Pariyatra, Pandara, Harina, Krisha, Vihanga, Sharabha, Moda, Pramoda and Samhatangada—these are the ones from Airavata’s lineage that entered the sacrificial fire.

‘O best of Brahmanas! Now hear the names of the snakes born into the Kouravya lineage as I recount them—Aindila, Kundala, Mundo, Veni, Skandha, Kumaraka, Bahuka, Shringavega, Dhurtaka, Pata and Patara.

'O Brahmana! Now hear the names of the snakes born into the Dhritarashtra lineage as I mention them. They were all extremely powerful and swift as the wind, with virulent poison—Shankukarna, Pingalaka, Kutharamukha, Mechaka, Purnangada, Purnamukha, Prahasa, Shakuni, Hari, Amahatha, Komathaka, Shvasana, Manava, Vata, Bhairava, Mundavedanga, Pishanga, Udraparaga, Rishabha, Vegavana, Pindaraka, Mahahanu, Raktanga, Sarvasaranga, Samriddha, Pata, Rakshasa, Varahaka, Varanaka, Sumitra, Chitravedika, Parashara, Tarunaka, Maniskandha and Aruni.

'O Brahmana! I have thus recited the names of only the chief snakes, all famous for their great deeds. I have not been able to mention all, because there are too many to enumerate. Countless are the numbers of their sons, grandsons and other progeny who fell into the blazing fire. I am unable to mention them. Some had seven heads, some two and some five. They were terrible of form and their poison was like the fire at the time of destruction. They were sacrificed in hundreds and thousands. They had gigantic bodies, great might and were as large as peaks of mountains. Some of them were as extensive as a yojana, others two yojanas long. They were capable of assuming any form at will and of going anywhere at will. Their poison was as virulent as the blazing fire. They were all burnt there at the great sacrifice, oppressed by the Brahmana's curse.'

53

Souti said, 'I have heard that at that time Astika brought about another great miracle. The king who was Parikshit's son was about to grant a boon. The snake,[171] though thrown off from Indra's hand, remained suspended in the air. At that, King Janamejaya became pensive. Although offerings were being poured into the sacrificial fire according to the rituals, the frightened Takshaka did not fall into the flames.'

Shounaka asked, 'O suta! Did those wise Brahmanas not remember the mantras? Why did Takshaka not fall into the fire?'

Souti said, 'When that supreme snake had been cast off from Indra's hand and had lost consciousness, Astika told him thrice, "Stay! Stay! Stay!" Though his heart trembled, he remained suspended in the air, like a man inside a circle. At that, being repeatedly urged by his sadasyas, the king said, "Let it be done as Astika wishes. Let the sacrifice be stopped. Let the snakes be saved. Let Astika be satisfied. Also, let the words of the suta[172] come true." When Astika was granted his boon, a tumultuous roar of joy was heard in the sky. The sacrifice of Parikshit's son, the king of the Pandava dynasty, came to an end. King Janamejaya of the Bharata lineage was pleased and gifted riches in hundreds and thousands to the ritvijas and sadasyas who were assembled there. The lord also gave lots of riches to the suta Lohitaksha, the builder who had predicted at the beginning that the snake-sacrifice would be brought to an end through the action of a Brahmana. Thereafter, in accordance with the prescribed rites, he concluded the sacrifice. Exceedingly pleased, the king honoured Astika and sent him back to his home. The sage was also pleased, because his object had been attained. The king told him, "You must come again and be a sadasya in my great horse-sacrifice." Astika agreed. After performing his unrivalled deed and having pleased the king, Astika was delighted and swiftly returned to his uncle and mother. Touching their feet, he told them in detail all that had transpired.

'Having heard his words, the assembled snakes were extremely delighted with Astika. They were now freed from their worries. They wished to bestow a boon on Astika. All of them repeatedly asked him, "O learned one! O child! What is it that you desire? What can we do to please you? We are happy that we have now been freed by you. What boon can we grant you?" Astika replied, "Let Brahmanas and other men, who read about this virtuous act of mine with a tranquil mind in the morning and evening, have no reason to fear you." With cheerful hearts, they told their nephew, "It shall be exactly as you wish. We will happily do what you have asked us to do. He who invokes the immensely famous and truthful Astika, born to Jaratkaru from Jaratkaru, will be protected from snakes. Those who remember Asita, Artimana and Sunitha,[173] during the day or the night, will never face any danger from snakes."

Having thus saved the snakes at the snake-sacrifice, that supreme among Brahmanas, with dharma in his soul, met his destiny at the appointed time. He left behind many sons and grandsons.

'Thus have I narrated to you Astika's story, exactly as it occurred. When recounted, this story dispels all fear of snakes. O Brahmana! On hearing this virtuous and blessed account of Astika's exploits from the beginning, an account that increases one's store of merit, one has no fear of snakes.'

Shounaka said, 'O son of a suta! O son! You have narrated to me the great and extensive story of the Bhrigu lineage. I am extremely pleased with you. O son of a suta! I now ask you to recite for me again the wonderful accounts composed by Vyasa, exactly as they were recited by the great-souled sadasyas at the long-extending sacrifice,[174] during intervals at the ceremonies. O son of a suta! O great poet! O learned one! I wish to hear exactly the reasons behind those narrations.'

Souti replied, 'During intervals at the ceremonies, the Brahmanas spoke about many accounts based on the Vedas. But Vyasa recounted the wonderful and great history known as Bharata.'

Shounaka said, 'I wish to hear that sacred account known as the Mahabharata, which spread the fame of the Pandavas. Asked by Janamejaya, Krishna Dvaipayana had it properly recited during intervals in the sacrifice. It had its origins in the ocean-like mind of the maharshi of pure deeds. O best of men! O son of a suta! Recite it again to me. I am not satisfied.'

Souti replied, 'I shall recite from the beginning the great and supreme account of the Mahabharata, as Krishna Dvaipayana conceived it in his mind. O Brahmana! Listen to it. I too derive great pleasure in recounting it.'

Section Six

Adi-vamshavatarana Parva

This parva has 257 shlokas and five chapters.

Chapter 54: 24 shlokas
Chapter 55: 43 shlokas
Chapter 56: 33 shlokas
Chapter 57: 106 shlokas
Chapter 58: 51 shlokas

Ansha *means partial or secondary incarnation, while* avatarana *means descent. The parva is thus the descent of partial incarnations. It relates the story of Uparichara Vasu and Vyasadeva's birth from Parashara and Satyavati. It ends with the partial or secondary incarnations of the gods and the demons.*

54

Souti said, 'Hearing that Janamejaya had been instated at the snake-sacrifice, the learned rishi Krishna Dvaipayana went there. The grandfather of the Pandavas was born on an island in the river Yamuna, in the womb of the virgin Kali[1] and from Shakti's son Parashara. As soon as he was born, the sage of great fame developed his body through the power of his will, and mastered the Vedas, the Vedangas and the histories.[2] He achieved that which cannot be surpassed through austerities, study of the Vedas, rites, fasting, having progeny or through sacrifices. The best among those who know the Vedas, first divided the one Veda into four parts. He was a brahmarshi, knower of everything, a wise poet, truthful and pure. That sage of great fame and holy deeds begot Pandu, Dhritarashtra and Vidura in order to continue Shantanu's[3] lineage.

'Accompanied by his disciples, learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, this great soul entered the sacrificial assembly of rajarshi Janamejaya. There he saw King Janamejaya seated, surrounded by his many sacrificial assistants,[4] like Purandara[5] surrounded by the gods. There were the lords of many countries who had undergone sacrificial baths and skilled officiating priests, the equals of Brahma, seated on the kusha grass laid out at the sacrifice. On seeing the rishi approach, rajarshi Janamejaya, the best of the Bharata lineage, advanced in great delight, with all his companions. With the approval of the sacrificial assistants, the lord offered a golden seat, as did Shakra[6] to Brihaspati.[7] When the granter of boons was seated, worshipped by the *devarshis*,[8] the lord of kings worshipped him according to norms laid down in the sacred texts. Then the king offered his grandfather Krishna[9] water to wash his feet and mouth, oblations and a cow, as laid down in the rituals. Vyasa was delighted and accepted the offerings made by the Pandava Janamejaya, including the cow.

'Thus having worshipped his great grandfather, bowed before him, and having joyfully seated himself below him, the king asked him about his health. The great lord looked at him and asked him about his welfare. He then worshipped all the sacrificial assistants, who had already worshipped him. Thereupon, with folded hands, Janamejaya and all the sacrificial assistants addressed the best of the Brahmanas. Janamejaya said, "O Brahmana! You witnessed with your own eyes the great deeds of the Kurus and the Pandavas. I wish to hear them narrated by you. What was the reason for the great quarrel between these men of great and virtuous deeds? Why did the great battle, which caused the destruction of beings, take place among my grandfathers,[10] their minds clouded by destiny? O best of the Brahmanas! Tell me the details as they exactly happened." On hearing these words, Krishna Dvaipayana spoke to his disciple Vaishampayana, seated by his side, and said, "Relate in full, exactly as you had heard it from me, the account of the ancient quarrel between the Kurus and the Pandavas.” Thereupon, that bull among Brahmanas, instructed by his preceptor, recited in its entirety that old history to the king, the sacrificial assistants and all the assembled kings about the quarrel between the Kurus and the Pandavas and the destruction of the kingdom.’

55

‘Vaishampayana said, “Bowing down first before my preceptor, with my mind and intellect concentrated and worshipping with devotion, reverence and single-mindedness all the Brahmanas and learned men, I shall now recite in its entirety the account I heard from the great-souled Vyasa, a wise maharshi famous in the three worlds, infinite in his accomplishments. O king! You are a worthy person to hear the history of Bharata. Having received the account from my preceptor, I am delighted to be able to recite it. O king! Hear how the quarrel between the Kurus and the Pandavas occurred. In a desire for the kingdom, hear about the exile[11] as a result of the game of dice. O bull of the Bharata lineage! At your bidding, I shall recount to you how a battle ensued that destroyed the earth. On their father’s death, these warriors[12] returned to their home from the forest. In a short while, they became skilled in the art of archery and knowledge of the Vedas. However, the Kurus became envious of the Pandavas, who were all gifted with immense physical strength, beauty and energy, fame and fortune. They were also loved by the citizens.

‘“Thereupon, the evil-minded Duryodhana, with Karna and the son of Subala,[13] tried to banish them and oppressed them in various ways. That evil son of Dhritarashtra gave poison to Bhima with his food, but the warrior Vrikodara[14] digested it. One day, the evil one tied the sleeping Vrikodara on the banks of the Ganga and throwing Bhima into the water went away to the city. But when the son of Kunti woke up, he tore the ropes with which he was tied with his strong arms and Bhima’s pains disappeared. While he was asleep, he was bitten everywhere in his body by black snakes with virulent poison, but that destroyer of enemies did not die. However, in all this oppression, the great-souled Vidura was always on guard, to neutralize the evil plans and save them from oppression. As Shakra[15] ensures happiness in heaven and the world of living beings, thus did Vidura always ensure happiness for the Pandavas. When the Pandavas were not killed through all these means, open and hidden, since they were protected by fate and destiny, he[16] consulted his advisers: Vrisha,[17] Duhshasana and the others. With Dhritarashtra's consent, he had a house of lac built. The Pandavas, of unlimited energy, were forced to live there and it was burnt down by fire when they[18] least suspected it. Because of Vidura's warning, a trench was dug and that gave them a wonderful means of escape and they were freed from danger.

'"Later, in a large and terrible forest, Bhima, who had fearsome strength when angered, killed a rakshasa named Hidimba. Then, in complete agreement, those powerful warriors went to the town of Ekachakra and lived there, with their mother, disguised as Brahmanas. Having won Droupadi, they lived there for one year. And having been recognized, those destroyers of foes returned to Hastinapura. King Dhritarashtra and the son[19] of Shantanu then told them, 'Sons, so that conflict doesn't ensue between you and your brothers, we have thought and decided that Khandavaprastha will be your abode. Therefore, give up your resentment and go and live in Khandavaprastha, which has many towns and wide roads.' On hearing these words, they and their friends went to Khandavaprastha, taking many jewels with them. And the sons of Pritha[20] lived there for many years. Through the force of their weapons, they brought many kings under their vassalage. Thus they gradually increased in power, setting store to virtue and the way of truth, not roused by anger, calm and subjugating those who wished to do them harm. The immensely powerful Bhimasena subjugated the east, the brave Arjuna the north, Nakula the west and Sahadeva, the conqueror of brave enemies, the south. Having conquered everything, their kingdom extended over the whole world. With five such sun-like ones and the sun himself extended, the earth seemed to have six suns with the truthful and valorous Pandavas.

'"Then, for some reason, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira sent his brother Dhananjaya[21] to the forest. He lived in the forest for one year and one month. He once went to Hrishikesha[22] in Dvaravati and there obtained as his wife Subhadra, with eyes like the blue lotus, sweet of speech and Vasudeva's younger sister. As Shachi[23]with the great Indra and Shri[24] with Krishna, Subhadra was delighted to be united with Pandu's son, Arjuna. O supreme among kings! Kunti's son and Vasudeva then satisfied Agni by giving him Khandava[25] to burn. Aided by Keshava, this task wasn't difficult for Bibhatsu Partha, [26] just as when Vishnu sets his mind to destroying enemies, no task is too difficult. Agni gave Partha the supreme of bows, Gandiva, an inexhaustible quiver of arrows and a chariot with a monkey on the standard. It was on that occasion that Bibhatsu freed the great demon Maya. He[27] built the divine assembly hall, adorned with all kinds of jewels and precious stones. Seeing this, the evil-minded and deluded Duryodhana was driven by avarice.

'"Thereupon he deceived Yudhishthira in a game of dice, played by Soubala,[28] and banished him to the forest for twelve years, with an additional year to be spent in disguise, adding up to thirteen years. When in the fourteenth year they[29] returned and claimed their property, they didn't get it. O king! Then war was declared and after destroying all the Kshatriya lineages and killing King Duryodhana, the Pandavas obtained their kingdom back, mostly unpopulated. O great king! This is the ancient history of those whose deeds were everlasting, the account of the conflict, the destruction of the kingdom and the victory."'

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'Janamejaya said, "O supreme among Brahmanas! You have told me in brief the account known as Mahabharata, containing stories about the great Kurus. O blameless performer of austerities! But I now feel a great desire to hear this wonderful history in detail, with all descriptions. You should therefore recite it in its entirety. I am not satisfied with hearing a brief account of this great story. It cannot be for a trifling reason that the virtuous Pandavas killed those who should not be killed, and yet continue to be praised by men. Why did those tigers among men, despite being innocent and capable of wreaking vengeance on their enemies, suffer the oppressions of those evil ones quietly? O supreme among Brahmanas! Why did Vrikodara, who in his mighty arms had the strength of 10,000[30] elephants, keep his anger under control, despite being oppressed? Why did not the pure Krishna Droupadi, oppressed by the evil sons of Dhritarashtra, burn them with her angry eyes, capable though she was of doing it? Why did those tigers among men, the two sons[31] of Pritha and the two sons of Madri,[32] though oppressed by the evil ones, follow Yudhishthira, addicted to the evil vice of gambling? Why did Yudhishthira, the best among righteous men and the son of Dharma himself, suffer extreme misfortune, though he knew the path of virtuous conduct? Why did Pandu's son Dhananjaya, with Krishna as his charioteer, and capable of dispatching many warriors to the land of the dead with his arrows, suffer so much oppression? O blessed with the power of austerities! Tell me everything that those great warriors did in every situation."

'Vaishampayana said, "I shall recount the entire history, that which was composed by the great-souled maharshi Vyasa, whose powers are infinite and who is worshipped in all the worlds. This contains 100,000 sacred shlokas, composed by Satyavati's son, Vyasa, of infinite powers. The learned man who recites it to others and also those who hear its recital attain the world of Brahma and become the equals of the gods. This is equal to the Vedas. It is sacred and supreme. It is the best of all that can be heard. It is a purana worshipped by the rishis. It contains all the useful instructions on artha and kama. This immensely sacred history makes the mind desire to attain salvation. The learned man who recites Krishna's[33] Veda to those who are noble, generous, truthful and faithful, will attain great fortune. Even sins like the killing of embryos in wombs are destroyed. On hearing it, the most evil is freed from the most evil of sins. This history, called jaya, should be heard by those who wish to attain victory. On hearing it, a king can bring the entire world under his subjugation and defeat all his enemies. This is the best way to obtain a son and the great path to ensure welfare. It should be heard several times by heirs apparent and their wives.

'"Vyasa, of infinite intelligence, has said that it is the sacred arthashastra and the supreme dharmashastra. It has been said that it is also the great mokshashastra. It is recited in the present time and it will be recited in the future. He who hears it obtains sons, descendants and servants who perform desired acts. He who hears it is immediately freed from all sins committed in body, mind and speech. He who hears the history of Bharata, without finding fault, is freed from all fear of disease, not to speak of fear in the next world. Krishna Dvaipayana, in a desire to bring welfare to the world, composed this to bring wealth, fame, long life, pure deeds and attainment of heaven, spreading in the world the fame of the great-souled Pandavas and other Kshatriyas of immense energy. It is said that this Bharata is the treasury of jewels, like the ocean who is the lord and the great snow-clad mountain.[34] The learned man who recites it to Brahmanas during sacred parvas[35] is cleansed of his sins and becoming victorious over heaven[36] attains union with the eternal brahman. He who causes even a single line from it to be read to Brahmanas at his shraddha makes his shraddha becomes inexhaustible and his ancestors are satisfied with the offerings that are made to them. The sins committed ignorantly by men every day are destroyed on hearing the account of the Mahabharata. It is said that the Mahabharata is the history of the births of the Bharata lineage. He who knows the etymology of this name is freed from all sin. The sage Krishna Dvaipayana arose regularly[37] for three years and composed this wonderful history known as the Mahabharata. O bull among the Bharatas! Whatever is found here on dharma, artha, kama and moksha, may be found elsewhere. But whatever is not in it, cannot be found anywhere else."'

‘Vaishampayana said, “There was a king, a ruler of the earth, always devoted to righteous conduct. His name was Uparichara and he loved hunting. That descendant of the Puru lineage was also named Vasu and, on Indra’s instructions, conquered the beautiful and handsome kingdom of Chedi. After some time, the king gave up the use of weapons and lived in a hermitage, practising austerities. One day, the thunder-wielding god[38] came to him.

‘“Believing that he was trying to become the king of the gods through the practice of austerities, he tried to wean the king away from his austerities. Indra said, ‘O ruler of the world! You should ensure that the path of righteous conduct is not confused. Protect the path of righteous conduct, because that holds up the world. Protect meticulously and rigidly the practice of virtue in the world. If you protect virtue, you will see many other eternal and sacred worlds.[39] Though I am in heaven and you are on earth, you have become a dear friend to me. O ruler of men! Live in that place that is the udder of the earth, stable with animals, flowers, wealth and foodgrains. It has a pleasant climate meant for enjoyment and has all the qualities of the earth and is well protected like heaven. O king of Chedi! Beyond compare on earth, this land is full of wealth, precious stones, other objects and minerals. The citizens in the cities in this land are contented, pious and follow righteous ways. They never indulge in falsehood, not even in jest. The sons there never divide their wealth with their fathers and are engaged in the welfare of their superiors. Thin cows are never yoked to ploughs or carts for carrying goods. O king who gives reason for pride! In Chedi, all the castes are always engaged in their respective duties. Nothing that exists in the three worlds is unknown to you. I shall give you a great and excellent flying chariot,[40] made of crystal and possessed by the gods alone, that is capable of carrying you through the sky. Among all the mortals on earth, you alone, though you possess a physical body, will ride in that best of flying chariots, as if in the form of a god. I shall also give you this garland known as *vaijayanti*,[41] made of lotuses that never fade. If you wear this, you will never be hurt by weapons in battle. O ruler of men! This unparalleled, supreme and great garland, known as Indra's, will be your distinctive mark.' The slayer of Vritra also gave a staff made of bamboo to protect the good and the peaceful. After one year was over, the lord of the earth[42] planted this in the earth for the sake of worshipping Shakra. O ruler of the earth! From that day till now, all kings, following the example that was started, plant a bamboo pole in the ground. After that, the kings make it stand upright and decorate it with garlands, perfumes, ornaments and baskets. The worshipping is done in accordance with the rites, with garlands and ornaments, and the god who brings fortune is worshipped in his smiling form, a form he himself adopted out of his love for the great-souled Vasu. On seeing this welfare-granting and god-directed worship done, the great Indra was pleased with Vasu, chief among kings, and said, 'The men and kings who worship me and observe my festival like the king of Chedi will gain prosperity and victory, with their kingdoms. Their cities will also expand and will always be full of joy.' O lord of men! Thus did the great-souled and great Maghavan[43] Indra bless the great king Vasu, out of his love for him. Men who observe this festival of Shakra's, with gifts of land and jewels, become pure and are blessed with boons, like Vasu, lord of Chedi and the performer of great sacrifices, was blessed by Maghavan. Ruling Chedi in a righteous way, Vasu, the lord of Chedi, was loved by Indra, and continued with Indra's festival and protected the earth.

'"He had five sons, who had great valour and infinite might. He[44] was a universal emperor and instated his sons in many kingdoms. His famous *maharatha*[45] son Brihadratha was instated in the kingdom of Magadha. Others[46] were Pratyagraha and Kushamba, also known as Manivahana and Macchilla, and Yadu, powerful kings invincible in battle. O king! These were the sons of that rajarshi with unbounded powers. They established kingdoms and cities named after them. Thus, the five kings, sons of Vasu, established separate dynasties that were eternal. When he seated himself or travelled through the sky in the crystal chariot obtained through Indra’s grace, the apsaras and the gandharvas worshipped the great king. And he became famous as Uparichara.[47]

‘“The river that flowed near his city, Shuktimati, was once attacked by the mountain Kolahola, maddened by lust.[48] The mountain Kolahola was kicked by Vasu with his foot and the river flowed out freely through the gully caused by the kick. From the embrace of the mountain, the river gave birth to twins and, grateful, the river gave them to the king. Vasu, supreme among rajarshis and the provider of prosperity and vanquisher of enemies, made the son the general of his army.

‘“The daughter of the river was named Girika and the king[49] made her his wife. Once, the time for intercourse arrived and Vasu’s wife, Girika, having purified herself by bathing at the fertile time, informed her husband about her state. But on that very day, his ancestors came to him and asked the best of kings and wisest of men to kill some deer. Thinking that the command of his ancestors should be followed, he went out to hunt, thinking of Girika, who was exceedingly beautiful and like Shri[50] herself. He was so excited that the semen was discharged in the beautiful forest and wishing to save it, the king of the earth collected it in the leaf of a tree. The lord thought that his semen should not be wasted in vain and that his wife’s fertile period should not pass barren. Then the king thought about this many times and the best of kings firmly decided that his semen would be productive, since the semen was issued when his queen’s time was right. Learned in the subtleties of dharma and artha, the king consecrated the semen, which was productive for producing progeny, and addressed a hawk that was seated nearby. ‘O amiable one! Please take this seed to my wife Girika. She is in her season now.’ The swift hawk took it from him and flew speedily through the sky.

‘“When the bird was thus swiftly flying through the sky, another hawk saw him and thought that the hawk was carrying some meat and flew at him. The two birds fought with their beaks in the sky. When they were thus fighting, the semen fell into the waters of the river Yamuna. An apsara known by the name of Adrika lived in the water of the Yamuna as a fish, because she had been cursed by Brahma. In the form of a fish, Adrika speedily came to where Vasu's semen fell from the hawk's claw and swallowed it up immediately. O best of the Bharata lineage! Some time after this, the fish was caught by fishermen and she was in her tenth month.[51] From the stomach of the fish there emerged twins in human form, a boy and a girl. They[52] marvelled at this and went and told the king, 'O king! These two have been born in human form inside a fish.' Then King Uparichara accepted the male child and he later became the righteous and truthful king named Matsya. As soon as the children were born, the apsara was also immediately freed from her curse. The beautiful one had earlier been told by the illustrious god[53] that she would be freed from her non-human form when she gave birth to two human children. Following these words, after giving birth to two children and after being killed by the fishermen, she left the form of a fish and assumed her own divine form. The beautiful apsara then went up to the sky, following the path of the *siddhas*,[54] rishis and *charanas*.[55] The girl, the daughter of the fish, smelt of fish. She was given by the king to the fishermen, saying that she would be their daughter.

'"This girl was called Satyavati. She was possessed of great beauty and had every quality and character. But because she lived among fishermen, that sweet-smiling girl carried the smell of fish for a long time. Wishing to serve her father, she plied a boat on the water. One day, when going on a pilgrimage, Parashara saw her. She was extremely beautiful and an object of desire even to siddhas. As soon as the wise one saw the beautiful one, the best of the sages wanted to make love to Vasu's daughter. She told him, 'O holy hermit! The rishis are standing on both banks of the river. How can we have intercourse when they are looking at us?' Thus addressed by her, the great lord[56] created a fog so that the entire place seemed to be covered in darkness. On witnessing this sudden creation of fog by the great rishi, the girl was surprised and overcome with modesty. Satyavati spiritedly said, 'O great lord! Know me to be a virgin and under my father's protection. O unblemished one! My virginity will be sullied if I unite with you. O best of the Brahmanas!

If my virginity is lost, how will I be able to return home? O wise one! I will not be able to stay at home. O great lord! Bear this in mind and then do what is proper.' The best of the rishis was very pleased at her words and replied, 'Even after you do that which pleases me, you will remain a virgin. O beautiful, but timid one! Ask me for any boon that you desire. O one with beautiful smiles! My boon has never proven to be fruitless.' Having been thus addressed, she asked for the boon that her body might always have sweet scents. The great lord granted her what her heart desired. Then, having obtained the boon, she was extremely happy. The one adorned with all the charms of a woman had intercourse with that rishi of wonderful deeds. Thereafter, she became known on earth as Gandhavati.[57] Men on earth could smell her fragrance from the distance of one yojana and after that, she was also known as Yojanagandha.

'"The great lord Parashara went on to his own home. And Satyavati was extremely happy to have obtained this matchless boon. On that very day, she conceived as a result of the intercourse with Parashara and gave birth to Parashara's immensely powerful son on an island in the Yamuna. With his mother's permission, he decided to adopt a life of asceticism and went away, saying that he would instantly appear before her whenever she remembered him for any specific act. Thus was Dvaipayana born in Satyavati's womb through Parashara. Because he was born on an island, he came to be known as Dvaipayana. Knowing that dharma loses one leg at the end of every yuga[58] and that human life expectancy on earth and strength follow the pattern of the yugas, and moved by his desire to please Brahma and the Brahmanas, the learned one divided the Vedas. Thus, he came to be known as Vyasa.[59] The greatest lord and granter of boons then taught the Vedas and the fifth Veda Mahabharata to Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, his own son Shuka and his disciple Vaishampayana. Separately through them the Bharata Samhita became manifest. Then, Bhishma, of great valour and great fame, successor to Shantanu, was born in Ganga's womb through the semen of the Vasus.

'"There was a great and famous ancient rishi known as Animandavya. Though not a thief, he was suspected of being a thief and was impaled on a stake. Thereupon, the ancient maharshi summoned Dharma[60] and addressed him in these words. 'In my childhood, I pierced a locust[61] with a blade of grass. O Dharma! I remember that sin of mine. But I cannot remember any other. Since then, I have practised austerities a thousand times. Have not these great austerities neutralized a single sin? The killing of a Brahmana is more heinous than the killing of all other beings. O Dharma! Because of your sin,[62] you will be born in the womb of a Shudra.' Being thus cursed, Dharma was born in the womb of a Shudra in the form of Vidura, learned, righteous and pure of body. From Gavalgana, Sanjaya,[63] who was like a sage, was born as a suta.

'"Karna, of great strength, was born from Surya when Kunti was still a virgin. He emerged from his mother's womb with natural armour[64] and a face adorned with earrings.[65]

'"Vishnu himself, worshipped by all the worlds, appeared in Devaki through Vasudeva, for the welfare of the world. He is of great fame, the god without beginning and without end, the lord and creator of the universe, unmanifest, without decay, the brahman, the chief, without any attributes, the great soul, eternal, nature, the lord who controls, the prime being, the creator of the universe, the source of the sattva quality, perennial, without deterioration, infinite, incapable of being moved, the god who is the supreme soul, Lord Narayana, the upholder, perpetual, the supreme one without decay. This prime being, with infinite wealth and the lord and grandfather of all beings, took his birth in the lineage of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis in order to increase righteousness in the world.

'"The great warriors Satyaki and Kritavarma, skilled in the use of weapons and well versed in the use of all arms, always obedient to Narayana, were born from Satyaka and Hridika, as experts in use of weapons. The spilt semen of maharshi Bharadvaja, great in the practice of austerities, was kept in a vessel. There it grew and from that was born Drona. Goutama's semen fell on a clump of reeds and from that were born twins, Kripa[66] of immense strength and Ashvatthama’s mother.[67] Ashvatthama was born from Drona, blessed with the boon of knowing all weapons. From the sacrificial fire was then born Dhrishtadyumna, as radiant as the fire itself. The mighty hero was born with a bow in his hand, for Drona’s destruction. From the sacrificial altar was born Krishna,[68] beautiful and radiant. She had a fascinating body and shone with supreme beauty. Then were born Prahlada’s disciples, Nagnajit and Subala. Subala had a son named Shakuni. Through the curse of the gods, the son of the king of Gandhara[69] became the enemy of virtue and a destroyer of beings. The other[70] became Duryodhana’s mother. Both[71] were skilled in material pursuits.

‘“In Vichitravirya’s field, from Krishna Dvaipayana, were born Dhritarashtra, lord of men, and also Pandu, of immense strength. Through his two wives, from Pandu, were born five separate sons, the equals of the gods. Yudhishthira was the first-born, the eldest, born from Dharma. Vrikodara was born from Maruta.[72] The best of all, blessed with the boon of knowing all weapons, was Dhananjaya, born from Indra. From the Ashvins were born the handsome twins Nakula and Sahadeva, always devoted to serving their superiors. One hundred sons were born to the wise Dhritarashtra—Duryodhana and the others and the inter-caste Yuyutsu.[73]

‘“From Arjuna, Abhimanyu, the great-souled Pandu’s grandson, was born to Subhadra, Vasudeva’s sister. From the five Pandavas, five sons were born to Krishna,[74] handsome and skilled in the usage of all weapons—Prativindhya from Yudhishthira, Sutasoma from Vrikodara, Shrutakirti from Arjuna, Shatanika from Nakula and the mighty Shrutasena[75] from Sahadeva. From Bhima, Hidimba gave birth to Ghatotkacha in the forest. Drupada[76] had a daughter named Shikhandi, but later, she was transformed into a son. For the sake of her welfare, she was transformed into a man by the *yaksha* Sthuna. At that great battle of the Kurus, hundreds of thousands of kings assembled, eager to fight with each other. Their names are so many that I cannot recount them, for it would take many years. I have only mentioned the principal ones who figure in this account."'

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'Janamejaya said, "O Brahmana! You have mentioned some and others you have not. I wish to hear in detail the accounts of all the radiant kings. O man of good fortune! Why were these great warriors, the equals of the gods, born on earth? Tell me in detail."

'Vaishampayana said, "O king! We have heard that what you ask is unknown even to the gods. However, after paying my respects to Brahma, I shall tell you that. In ancient times, after destroying the Kshatriyas on earth twenty-one times, Jamadagni's son[77] went to Mahendra, supreme among mountains, and began to practise austerities. O king! When the world was thus bereft of Kshatriyas by the one of the Bhrigu lineage, Kshatriya women used to come to Brahmanas to fill their wombs. O tiger among men! Brahmanas who were rigid in observance of their vows had intercourse with them during their productive periods, not out of lust, nor when they were not in season. O king! Thus, thousands of Kshatriya women conceived and gave birth to many Kshatriyas of great power, boys as well as girls, so that the Kshatriya race might thrive. Thus the Kshatriya race originated from Kshatriya women through the ascetic Brahmanas.

'"This new generation had long lives and prospered through righteous conduct. The four castes were again established, with Brahmanas at the head. At that time, every man went to his wife only when she was in season, nor for lust, nor when she was not in season. O bull of the Bharata lineage! All other beings, even those that were not human, also went to their wives at the right season. Thus they prospered in a righteous way and lived for hundreds and thousands of years. O ruler of the earth! All subjects faithfully followed dharma and the right rituals. All men were free from sorrow and disease. O king, you who have the gait of an elephant! Kshatriyas once again governed the wide earth, with the mountains, forests and groves, with the ocean as the boundary.

When the earth was again governed righteously by the Kshatriyas, the other castes, with Brahmanas at their head, were filled with immense joy. All the rulers of men were freed from the sins of lust and anger and, punishing righteously those who deserved to be punished, they protected their subjects. On seeing that the Kshatriyas followed dharma, the one with thousand eyes and performer of a hundred sacrifices[78] poured down sweet rain at the right time and the right place, so that subjects prospered. O ruler of men! No child died then. No one knew a woman before attaining the right age. O best of the Bharata lineage! Right up to the shores of the ocean, the earth was full of people who lived for a long time. Kshatriyas performed great sacrifices in which a lot of alms were given. The Brahmanas studied the Vedas, the Vedangas and the Upanishads. O king! At that time, no Brahmana sold the knowledge of the brahman. Nor were the Vedas recited in the hearing of Shudras. The Vaishyas were engaged in farming and tilled the earth well with cattle, never yoking cows to ploughs and taking care of the lean ones. Men did not milk cows whose calves were still drinking the froth. No seller sold goods with false scales. O tiger among men! Men thus performed all acts with their eyes on dharma and followed the righteous path in every way. O ruler of men! Men of all castes followed the respective duties of their own castes. O tiger among men! At that time, there was no decline from the path of dharma. O bull of the Bharata lineage! Both women and cows gave birth at the right time. Trees bore flowers and fruit in the right seasons. O king! With Krita Yuga having thus arrived successfully at that time, the entire earth was filled with many beings.

'"O bull of the Bharata lineage and lord of men! When the world was in such a flourishing state, the asuras began to take birth in royal dynasties. Having been often defeated in battle by the gods, the sons of Diti were dislodged from heaven and their prosperity, and began to take birth on earth. O lord of kings! Wishing to attain divinity in the world of men, the powerful demons took birth as different beings—cows, horses, asses, camels, buffaloes, predatory beasts, elephants and deer. O ruler of the earth! On account of those that were already born and those that were being born, the earth was no longer capable of supporting herself.

Some of Diti and Danu’s offspring, dislodged from heaven, took birth as kings on earth, powerful and insolent. With great valour and strength, they covered the earth in many forms. Crushing their enemies, they oppressed the earth, right up to the shores of the ocean. They began to oppress the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. They persecuted all other creatures with their power. O king! Terrorizing and killing all the myriad beings, they roamed over the earth in their hundreds and thousands. Devoid of righteousness and drunk with the power of their valour and strength, they even regularly persecuted the maharshis in their hermitages.

‘“O ruler of the earth! Oppressed by the great asuras, who were swollen because of valour, power and strength, the earth approached Brahma. O king! At that time, invaded by the strength of the danavas, the wind, the mountain or the serpent[79] could no longer support the earth. O ruler of the earth! Therefore, the earth, frightened and overburdened, sought refuge with the god who is the grandfather of all beings. She saw the great and eternal god Brahma, the creator of the worlds, seated, surrounded by gods, Brahmanas and maharshis. Gandharvas and apsaras were engaged in divine tasks, worshipping him through hymns and chants. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the presence of all the rulers of the worlds, the earth saluted him and sought refuge, narrating all that had happened. But the reason for the earth’s arrival was already known to the omniscient self-creator who dwells high above and is the source of matter. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is the creator of the world. How could he not know what was in the minds of all beings, including the gods and the demons?

‘“O great king! The source of all beings, Prajapati, Isha, Shambhu, the lord of the earth, spoke to earth. ‘O Vasundhara![80] So as to accomplish the task for which you have come to me, I will appoint all those who live in heaven.’ O king! Having thus addressed the earth, the god Brahma bid her farewell, and then the creator of all beings commanded the gods. ‘So as to free earth from this burden, all of you go and ensure parts of you are born on earth and seek the conflicts[81] you want.’ Then the great lord summoned the hosts of gandharvas and apsaras and spoke to them these supreme words: ‘Go and ensure that parts of you are born on earth in the forms that please you.’ On hearing these words of the foremost among the gods, words that were appropriate and full of meaning, all the gods, with Shakra[82] at their head, accepted them. Impatient to go to earth and be born there in their respective parts, they went to Vaikuntha, to Narayana, the wielder of the chakra and the *gada*,[83] he who is dressed in yellow, he who is radiant white, he who destroys the enemies of the gods, he who has the lotus on his navel and he whose eyes are soft, wide and sloped downwards. For the purification of the earth, Indra told the supreme of beings, ‘Please incarnate yourself.’ Hari[84] replied that thus it would be.”’

Section Seven

Sambhava Parva

This parva comprises 2394 shlokas and sixty-five chapters.

Chapter 59: 54 shlokas
Chapter 60: 69 shlokas
Chapter 61: 102 shlokas
Chapter 62: 14 shlokas
Chapter 63: 26 shlokas
Chapter 64: 42 shlokas
Chapter 65: 42 shlokas
Chapter 66: 17 shlokas
Chapter 67: 33 shlokas
Chapter 68: 80 shlokas
Chapter 69: 51 shlokas
Chapter 70: 46 shlokas
Chapter 71: 58 shlokas
Chapter 72: 23 shlokas
Chapter 73: 36 shlokas
Chapter 74: 12 shlokas
Chapter 75: 25 shlokas
Chapter 76: 35 shlokas
Chapter 77: 27 shlokas
Chapter 78: 41 shlokas
Chapter 79: 30 shlokas
Chapter 80: 27 shlokas
Chapter 81: 16 shlokas
Chapter 82: 13 shlokas
Chapter 83: 13 shlokas
Chapter 84: 21 shlokas
Chapter 85: 27 shlokas
Chapter 86: 17 shlokas
Chapter 87: 18 shlokas

Chapter 88: 26 shlokas
Chapter 89: 55 shlokas
Chapter 90: 96 shlokas
Chapter 91: 22 shlokas
Chapter 92: 55 shlokas
Chapter 93: 46 shlokas
Chapter 94: 94 shlokas
Chapter 95: 14 shlokas
Chapter 96: 59 shlokas
Chapter 97: 26 shlokas
Chapter 98: 33 shlokas
Chapter 99: 49 shlokas
Chapter 100: 30 shlokas
Chapter 101: 28 shlokas
Chapter 102: 23 shlokas
Chapter 103: 17 shlokas
Chapter 104: 21 shlokas
Chapter 105: 27 shlokas
Chapter 106: 14 shlokas
Chapter 107: 37 shlokas
Chapter 108: 18 shlokas
Chapter 109: 31 shlokas
Chapter 110: 45 shlokas
Chapter 111: 36 shlokas
Chapter 112: 34 shlokas
Chapter 113: 43 shlokas
Chapter 114: 66 shlokas
Chapter 115: 28 shlokas
Chapter 116: 31 shlokas
Chapter 117: 33 shlokas
Chapter 118: 30 shlokas
Chapter 119: 43 shlokas
Chapter 120: 21 shlokas
Chapter 121: 23 shlokas
Chapter 122: 47 shlokas
Chapter 123: 78 shlokas

The word sambhava *means what can originate or be in existence. Hence, this parva is about the origins of the core story. It is one of the longest parvas.*

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Thereupon, Narayana and Indra agreed that, together with the gods, they would descend from heaven and be born on earth in their respective parts. Having instructed the gods, Shakra[1] returned from Narayana's abode. One after another, for the destruction of the enemies of the gods and for the welfare of all the worlds, the dwellers of heaven took birth on earth. O tiger among kings! Thereupon, as it pleased them, the gods took birth in the dynasties of the rajarshis and the *maharshis*. They killed the danavas, the rakshasas, the gandharvas, the nagas and other creatures that killed men, in great numbers. O best of the Bharata lineage! The danavas, the rakshasas, the gandharvas and the nagas could not kill the gods. Because, even when they were infants, they were strong.'

Janamejaya said, 'I wish to hear accounts of the births of gods, danavas, gandharvas, apsaras, men, yakshas, rakshasas and other beings, from the beginning and in detail. You know everything. Please tell me.' Vaishampayana replied, 'Bowing down to the god who creates himself,[2] I shall narrate to you the origins and end of the worlds of the gods and other beings.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Through the powers of his mind, Brahma had six sons[3]—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu. Marichi's son was Kashyapa and all beings were born from Kashyapa. Daksha had thirteen daughters who were illustrious. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Daksha's daughters[4] were Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kala, Anayu, Simhika, Muni, Krodha, Prava, Arishta, Vinata, Kapila and Kadru. The sons and grandsons of these daughters were immensely powerful and infinite in number.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! From Aditi were born the twelve *aditya*s, the rulers of the worlds. I shall now mention their names to you—Dhata, Mitra, Aryamana, Shakra, Varuna, Amsha, Bhaga, Vivasvana and Pusha. In the tenth place was Savita, the eleventh was Tvashta and the twelfth was Vishnu. However, the youngest surpassed all the other adityas in qualities.

'It is heard that Diti had only one son, named Hiranyakashipu. But he had five great-souled sons and their names were famous. Prahlada was the eldest, followed by Samhrada. After that was Anuhrada. And after him, Shibi and Bashkala. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Three sons of Prahlada are known everywhere—Virochana, Kumbha and Nikumbha. Virochana had one son, the immensely powerful Bali. Bali in turn had a son, the great asura named Bana.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Danu’s forty sons are known everywhere. The first one was the famous king Viprachitti. In addition, one knows of Shambara, Namuchi, Puloman, Asiloman, Keshi, the danava Durjaya, Ayahshira, Ashvashira, the valorous Ashvashanku, Gaganamurdhana, Vegavan, Ketuman, Svarbhanu, Ashva, Ashvapati, Vrishaparva, Ajaka, Ashvagriva, Sukshma, the great asura Tuhundu, Isripa, Ekachakra, Virupaksha, Hara, Ahara, Nichandra, Nikumbha, Kupatha, Kapatha, Sharabha, Shalabha, Surya and Chandrama. Thus is recited the names of the famous danavas in Danu’s lineage. The gods Surya[5] and Chandrama[6] are different. O great king! Besides these, ten other immensely powerful and great danavas are known as Danu’s sons—Ekaksha, the valorous Mritapa, Pralamba, Naraka, Vatapi, Shatrutapana, the great asura Shatha, Gavishtha, Danayu and the danava Dirghajihva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their sons and grandsons were innumerable.

‘Simhika gave birth to a son named Rahu, the persecutor of the sun and the moon, and to three others—Suchandra, Chandraharta and Chandravimardana. The numerous sons and grandsons of Krodha were as cruel as she herself was. That line was the performer of evil and cruel deeds, oppressing their enemies. Anayu had four sons, the best among the asuras—Vikshara, Bala, Vira and the great asura Vritra. Kala’s sons were like Yama himself, immensely famous on earth, great danavas who were powerful oppressors of their enemies and of great valour—Vinashana, Krodha, Krodhahanta and Krodhashatru. It is heard that Kala also had other sons, including those known as the *kaleyas*.

‘Shukra, the son of a rishi, was the great preceptor of the asuras. The famous Shukra Ushanas[7] had four sons, who were also officiating priests for the asuras. Their names were Tvashtavara and Atri and two others who knew about the incantations of mantras. In energy, they were like the sun and they always tried to influence Brahma’s world. Thus I have narrated to you, as I heard it in the ancient tales, the origins of the dynasties of the gods and the powerful and strong demons. O ruler of the earth! Their progeny were so many and multiplied so much that I cannot count them.

‘Tarkshya,[8] Arishtanemi, Garuda, Aruna, Aruni and Varuni are known as the sons of Vinata. Shesha, Ananta, Vasuki, the serpent Takshaka, Kurma and Kulika are known as the sons of Kadru.

‘O king! Bhimasena, Ugrasena, Suparna, Varuna, Gopati, Dhritarashtra, Suryavarcha the seventh, Pattravan, Arkaparna, the famous Prayuta, Bhima, Chitraratha, all famous and learned in all matters, Shalishira, Pradyumna the fourteenth, Kali the fifteenth and Narada the sixteenth, these divine gandharvas are known as the sons of Muni.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I shall now recount to you many other beings—Anavadya, Anuvasha, Anuranuna, Priya, Anupa, Subhaga and Bhasi were born to Prava, while Siddha, Purna, Barhi, the famous Purnayu, Brahmachari, Ratiguna, the seventh Suparna, Vishvavasu, Bhanu and the tenth Suchandra, these divine gandharvas are also known as the sons of Prava. It is also known that in times long past, the lady of good fortune known as Prava, through a devarshi,[9] gave birth to the race of apsaras with holy qualities—Alambusha, Mishrakeshi, Vidyutparna, Tulanagha, Aruna, Rakshita, the lovely Rambha, Asita, Subahu, Suvrata, Subhuja and Supriya. Atibahu, and the famous Haha and Huhu and Tumbura—these four are known as the supreme among gandharvas.[10]

‘The ancient accounts tell us that the ambrosia, the Brahmanas, cattle, gandharvas and apsaras were the progeny of Kapila.[11] Thus, I have recounted to you the origins and exact numbers of all beings, including the gandharvas, the apsaras, the serpents, Suparna, the rudras, the maruts, cattle and the fortunate Brahmanas who perform holy deeds. This history brings long life, is sacred, and is worthy of being heard and is also worthy of praise. It should always be heard and recited to others in the right frame of mind. He who reads this account of the origins of great souls with proper rites and in the presence of gods and Brahmanas, obtains progeny, good fortune, prosperity, fame and a beautiful outcome after death.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘It is known that Brahma gave birth to six maharshis through the powers of his mind. Sthanu[12] had eleven great sons through the powers of his mind—Mrigavyadha, Sarva, the famous Nirriti, Aja, Ekapada, Pinaki the destroyer of enemies, Dahana, Ishvara, the greatly radiant Kapali, Sthanu and the great lord Bhaga. These are known as the eleven rudras. The powerful maharshis Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu are Brahma’s six sons. It is well known in all the worlds that Angiras had three sons, Brihaspati, Utathya and Samvarta, all of whom were rigid in their vows. O ruler of men! It has been heard that the sons of Atri were many. They were all maharshis, learned in the Vedas, tranquil in their souls and attained salvation. From Pulastya were born the rakshasas, the monkeys and the kinnaras.[13] From Pulaha were born the deer, the lions, the tigers and the *kimpurushas*.[14] The sons of Kratu were the equals of Kratu and were companions of the sun.[15] They were famous in the three worlds because of truthfulness and rigidity of their vows.

‘O protector of the earth! The revered rishi Daksha, great son and great father, was born from Brahma’s right toe. From the left toe was born the great-soul’s[16] wife. Through her, the sage had fifty daughters. These daughters were lotus-eyed and were all unblemished in features. Since Prajapati[17] had no sons, he made these daughters his *putrikas*.[18] O king! In accordance with the divine rites, he gave ten to Dharma, twenty-seven to Indu[19] and thirteen to Kashyapa. Listen to me as I recite the names of Dharma’s wives—Kirti, Lakshmi, Dhriti, Medha, Pushti, Shraddha, Kriya, Buddhi, Lajja and Mati. As decreed by the one who created himself,[20] these ten wives of Dharma are the doors to Dharma. The twenty-seven wives of Soma[21] are known throughout the worlds.

These wives of Soma are pure in their vows and have been appointed to measure the progression of time. They are the magical nakshatras,[22] used to regulate the movement of the worlds.

'The grandfather[23] had another son named Manu. He was a prajapati[24] and his sons were the eight vasus. I shall name them in detail—Dhara, Dhruva, Soma, Aha, Anila, Anala, Pratyusha and Prabhasa. These are known as the eight vasus. Dhara was the son[25] of Dhumra, and so was Dhruva, who had knowledge of the brahman. Chandra was the son of Manasvini and Shvasa's son was Shvasana.[26] Aha was Rata's son and the fire[27] was Shandilya's son. It is known that Pratyusha and Prabhasa were the sons of Prabhata. Dhara again had two sons, named Dravina and Hutahavyavaha. Dhruva's son was the illustrious Kala, the regulator of the worlds. Soma's son was the lustrous Varcha and the beautiful Varcha had sons named Shishira, Prana and Ramana. The sons of Aha were Jyoti, Shama, Shanta and Muni. Agni's son[28] was the illustrious Kumara, born in a bed of reeds. Since he was reared by the krittikas,[29] he is also known as Kartikeya. Other sons[30] were Shakha, Vishakha and Naigamesha, as the youngest. Anila's wife was Shiva and her sons were Purojava and Avijnatagati. These were the two sons of Anila. It is known that Pratyusha's son was the rishi Devala. Devala himself had two sons who were learned and forgiving. Brihaspati's[31] sister was celibate and the first among women. Unattached to the world and attached to yoga, she roamed the world and became the wife of the eighth vasu, Prabhasa. Thus was born the illustrious Vishvakarma, founder of all crafts, creator of a thousand arts, artisan to the thirty gods, maker of all ornaments, best of craftsmen and maker of celestial chariots for the gods. Men thrive on the arts created by this great soul and it is for this reason that the everlasting Vishvakarma is eternally worshipped.

'The illustrious Dharma emerged by cleaving Brahma's right breast, assuming human form and bringing happiness to all the worlds. Dharma had three supreme sons, beautiful to all beings—Shama, Kama and

Harsha. They support the worlds through their energy. Kama's wife was Rati, Shama's was Prapti and Harsha's was Nanda. The worlds depend on them for sustenance. Kashyapa was Marichi's son and Kashyapa's sons were the gods and the demons. O tiger among kings! He is therefore the origin of the worlds. Tvashtri,[32] in the form of a mare, became the wife of Savita[33] and this fortunate one gave birth to the two Ashvins in the sky. O ruler of men! Aditi had twelve sons, headed by Shakra.[34] The youngest of them was Vishnu, on whom the worlds depend. These are the thirty-three gods. I shall now recount to you their progeny, according to their groups,[35] families[36] and classes.[37] One must know that the rudras, saddhyas, maruts, vasus, bhargavas and vishvadevas are each a group. Vinata's son Garuda, the powerful Aruna and the illustrious Brihaspati are counted among the adityas. The two Ashvins and all herbs and animals are counted among the *guhyakas*.[38] O king! These are the classes of the gods, recited in sequence. When a man recites this narration, he is cleansed from all sins.

'The illustrious Bhrigu emerged by cleaving open Brahma's heart. Bhrigu's son was the learned Shukra, wise and the son of one who was wise, and a planet. On being appointed by the one who created himself,[39] he travels the sky to sustain life in the three worlds, presiding over rain and drought, fear and freedom from fear. He is celibate, faithful in his vows, wise, learned in yoga and has great intelligence. He is the preceptor of the gods and the demons. Bhrigu's son was thus appointed by the mighty one[40] to look after that which should be obtained and preserve that which has been obtained. Bhrigu had another son named Chyavana, learned, righteous and radiant in his austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In his anger, he emerged from his mother's womb and set her free.[41] Manu's daughter Arushi became that wise one's[42] wife and Ourva,[43] of great fame, was born from her, ripping open her thighs. Even when young, he had great energy and all the qualities and practised great austerities. His son was Richika and Richika's son was Jamadagni. Jamadagni had four great-souled sons—

the youngest of them was Rama,[44] superior to the others in all qualities, skilled in the use of all weapons and the destroyer of Kshatriyas. Ourva had one hundred sons, Jamadagni[45] being the foremost. He[46] had thousands of sons and thus Bhrigu's offspring proliferated.

'Brahma had two other sons, whose signs can be seen in the worlds. They are Dhata and Vidhata and they lived with Manu. Their sister is the beautiful goddess Lakshmi, whose abode is the lotus and her sons, born of the mind, are the horses that travel in the sky. The goddess Jyeshtha was born from Shukra and became Varuna's wife. She gave birth to a son known as Bala and a daughter named Shura,[47] who brings joy to the gods.

'When hungry creatures began to devour each other for food, Adharma, the destroyer of all beings, was born. His wife was Nirriti and so rakshasas[48] are known as nairritas. She also had three other terrible sons, always engaged in evil deeds—Bhaya,[49] Mahabhaya[50] and Mrityu,[51] the destroyers of beings. The divine Tamra gave birth to five daughters known in the worlds as Kaki, Shyeni, Bhasi, Dhritarashtri and Shuki. O, ruler of men! Kaki gave birth to the owls, Shyeni gave birth to the hawks, Bhasi gave birth to the cocks and vultures, Dhritarashtri gave birth to all the ducks, swans and geese and the learned and righteous Shuki, blessed with the best qualities and adorned with the best marks, gave birth to the parrots.

'Krodha gave birth to nine daughters who were prone to anger—Mrigi, Mrigamanda, Hari, Bhadramana, Matangi, Sharduli, Shveta, Surabhi and the famous Surasa, blessed with every fortunate mark. O best of men! Mrigi's offspring are all the deer. O scorcher of enemies! Mrigamanda's offspring are bears, other forms of deer and yaks. Bhadramana had the elephant Airavata as her son. Her son Airavata is a great elephant and the divine elephant. Hari's progeny were tawny monkeys and nimble monkeys. It is said that the *golangula*[52] monkeys are also Hari's sons. O fortunate one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sharduli gave birth to lions and tigers and certainly also to big panthers and leopards. O ruler of men! The offspring of Matangi are the elephants. Shveta gave birth to a swift cardinal[53] elephant named Shveta. O king! Surabhi gave birth to two daughters, the beautiful Rohini and the famous Gandharvi. In addition, cattle were born from Rohini and horses from Gandharvi. Surasa gave birth to the nagas and Kadru to the pannagas.[54] Anala gave birth to the seven kinds of trees that produce round fruit.

'Anala had another daughter named Shuki. Surasa[55] was Kadru's daughter. Shyeni was Aruna[56]'s wife. She gave birth to two mighty and powerful sons, named Sampati and the valorous Jatayu. Vinata had two famous sons, Garuda and Aruna. O lord over men and chief among those who are wise! Thus have I completely described to you the origins of all principal creatures. The man who hears this is cleansed from all his sins, gets to know everything and finally attains the highest state after death.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O great-souled and revered one! I wish to hear in detail accounts of the origins and deeds among men of all creatures who assumed human form—gods, demons, yakshas, rakshasas and other beings.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O Indra among men! I shall tell you everything about those gods who took birth among men, and about the demons. The bull among the danavas was known as Viprachitti, and as a bull among men, he was known as Jarasandha. O king! The son of Diti, known as Hiranyakashipu, was known in the world of men as the mighty Shishupala. Prahlada's younger brother, known as Samhrada, became known as Shalya, chief among the Bahlikas. O lord over men! Known as Anuhrada, the mighty youngest brother became famous in this world as Dhrishtaketu. O king! The son of Diti, known as Shibi, became the famous king Druma on earth. O ruler of men! The best of the asuras, known as Bashkala, was born as the famous Bhagadatta. O king! The five valorous and swift asuras—Ayahshira, Asvhashira, Ayahshanku, Gaganamurdha and Vegavan—were born on earth in the illustrious lineage of Kekaya and became great kings. The mighty asura who was known as Ketumana, was born on earth as King Amitouja. The great, fortunate and famous asura, Svarbhanu, became King Ugrasena of terrible deeds. The great and fortunate asura, known as Ashva, became the valorous and invincible King Ashoka. O king! O bull among men! His younger brother Ashvapati, son of Diti, was born as King Hardikya. The great and fortunate asura, famous as Vrishaparva, became King Dirghaprajna on earth. Vrishaparva's younger brother, known as Ajaka, became King Malla on earth. The strong and great asura known as Ashvagriva became King Rochamana on earth. The wise and illustrious asura known as Sukshma became the famous King Brihanta on earth. Tuhunda, supreme among asuras, became King Senabindu on earth. The extremely strong asura, known as Isripa, became King Papajit on earth, and his valour was well known. The great asura known as Ekachakra became known on earth as Prativindhya. The great asura known as Virupaksha, capable of displaying different modes of fighting, was known on earth as King Chitravarmana. The supreme danava Hara, the abductor of his enemies, was born as Suvastu, a bull among men. The mightily powerful asura, destroyer of enemy armies and known as Ahara, became famous on earth as King Bahlika. The supreme among asuras, Nichandra, whose face was like the moon, became famous on earth as the fortunate King Munjakesha. The wise and invincible asura known as Nikumbha became Devadhipa on earth, the best of kings. Sharabha, the great asura who was a son of Diti, became rajarshi Pourava among men. The asura who was known as the second Shalabha, became King Prahrada in the land of the Bahlikas on earth. Chandra, the best of Diti's sons and as handsome as the lord of the stars[57] in the world, became rajarshi Rishika on earth, supreme among kings. O best of kings! The best of asuras, known as Mritapa, became King Paschimanupaka on earth. The great and powerful asura known as Gavishtha became King Drumasena on earth. The fortunate and great asura, famous as Mayura, became Vishva, ruler of the earth. The asura who was his[58] younger brother and was known as Suparna, became King Kalakriti on earth. The supremely powerful among asuras, known as Chandrahanta, became rajarashi Shunaka on earth, supreme among kings. The great asura known as Chandravinashana became rajarashi Janaki on earth, supreme among kings. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The supreme danava known as Dirghajihva became famous on earth as the ruler of the kingdom of Kashi. The planet who was born from Simhi and who oppressed the sun and the moon,[59] became famous as Kratha, ruler of men. It is said that the eldest of the four sons of Anayu, the asura Vikshara, became the powerful King Vasumitra. The great asura who was Vikshara's second brother, became king of the land of Pamsu. The best of the asuras known as Balavira became Poundramatsyaka, ruler of men. O king! The great asura known as Vritra became rajarshi Manimana on earth, ruler of men. The asura who was his[60] younger brother and was known as Krodhahanta, became the famous King Danda on earth. The asura known as Krodhavardhana became Dandadhara on earth, ruler of men.

'O ruler of men! The eight sons of the asura Kalaka were all born on earth and became kings who were as powerful as tigers. Out of the eight great kaleya asuras, the eldest became the illustrious King Jayatsena of Magadha. The illustrious second, equal to Harihaya,[61] became King Aparajita on earth. O great king! The third great asura, immensely powerful and with immense valour, became the king of the nishadas on earth. The fourth is known on earth as Shrenimana, supreme among rajarshis. The fifth great asura, greatest among them, became King Mahouja on earth, the tormentor of his foes. The great and wise asura who was the sixth, became Abhiru on earth, best of rajarshis. From that group[62] came Samundrasena, renowned all over the earth, right up to the shores of the ocean, for his learning in dharma and artha. O ruler of men! The eighth of the kaleyas and a tormentor of enemies, known as Brihata, became a righteous king, devoted to the welfare of all beings.

'O ruler of men! From the race of asuras known as *krodhavasha*,[63] many famous kings were born on earth. I have mentioned them to you—Nandika, Karnaveshta, Siddhartha, Kitaka, Suvira, Subahu, Mahavira, Bahlika, Krodha, Vichitya, Surasa, the handsome king Nila, Viradhama, Dantavakra, Durjaya, Rukmi, King Janamejaya, a tiger among kings, Ashada, Vayuvega, Bhuriteja, Ekalavya, Sumitra, Vatadhana, Gomukha, the kings known as Karushaka, Kshemadhurti, Shrutayu, Uddhava, Brihatsena, Kshema, Ugratirtha, Kuhara, the king of Kalinga and Matimana, an Indra among men and known as Ishvara. O descendant of the Kuru lineage and O ruler of the earth! O great king! In ancient times, these kings were born on earth from the race known as krodhavasha and they had great strength and performed great deeds. O ruler of men! Devaka, who was as resplendent as the king of the gods, was born on earth as the chief of the gandharvas.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona, the son of Bharadvaja, was not born from a womb. He was a part of the illustrious *devarshi* Brihaspati. O tiger among kings! He had great energy and great fame and performed great deeds. He was the best among those who were skilled in the knowledge of all weapons. Those who had knowledge of the Vedas knew him to be learned in the Vedas, as well as in knowledge of weapons.[64] Drona brought fame to his lineage and was like Indra in his deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage and O ruler of men! The brave and lotus-eyed Ashvatthama, of great valour, tormentor of enemies and fearful to enemy armies, was born from three parts of Mahadeva that merged into one—*yama*,[65] kama[66] and krodha.[67] Through the curse of Vashishtha and the design of Vasava,[68] the eight vasus were born as the sons of Shantanu,[69] through Ganga. The youngest was Bhishma, intelligent, learned in the Vedas, the best of speakers, fearful to enemy armies and the dispeller of fear among the Kurus. He was supreme among those who had all knowledge, had great energy and fought with the great-souled Bhargava Rama, son of Jamadagni. O king! The brahmarshi who was known on earth as Kripa and who was the embodiment of virility, was born from the group of rudras. O king! Know the king and great warrior,[70] known in the world as Shakuni, the tormentor of foes, to be Dvapara himself. He, who was known as Satyaki, truthful to his promises, upholder of the pride of the Vrishni lineage and the tormentor of enemies, was born from parts of the divine maruts. Rajarshi Drupada, best among those skilled in the usage of all weapons, was also born in the world of men from the same gods.[71] O king! Know that Kritavarma, the best of bulls among Kshatriyas, performer of unparalleled deeds and chief among lords of men and rajarshi Virata, the conqueror of other kingdoms and scorcher of foes, were also born from the class of maruts.

'Arishta's son, renowned as Hamsa and king of the gandharvas, was born to propagate the Kuru lineage. He was known as Dhritarashtra, Krishna Dvaipayana's son. He had great energy, long arms and he was a ruler of men with wisdom in his eyes. Through his mother's fault and the anger of a rishi, he was born blind. Know that he who was known in the world as Vidura, best among all wise men, was the greatly fortunate son of Atri himself and the best among all sons. The evil-minded and evil-spirited King Duryodhana, who brought disgrace to the lineage of the Kurus, was born on earth from Kali's part. O ruler of the earth! He was responsible for destroying everything on earth, he created discord and was hated by everyone in the world. He fanned enmity and the great fire of destruction that ended all beings. Among men, Pulastya's sons[72] were born as his brothers. Duhshasana onwards, there were 100 in number, all performer of cruel deeds. Durmukha, Duhsaha and the others, whose names will not be mentioned. All of them assisted Duryodhana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were all sons of Pulastya.

'O king! Know that King Yudhishthira was a part of Dharma, Bhimasena of the god of wind and Arjuna of the king of the gods. Nakula and Sahadeva, most handsome and enchanting to all beings, were parts of the Ashvins. He who was known as Suvarcha, the mighty son of Soma, became Arjuna's son Abhimanyu, the performer of great deeds. Know that maharatha Dhrishtadyumna was born from Agni's part. O king! Know that the male-female Shikhandi was born from a rakshasa. O bull of the Bharata lineage! Know that Droupadi's five sons were born from the class of the vishvadevas.[73] Know that the greatly famous maharatha Karna, who parted with his natural armour, was born from the celestial sun. From the eternal god of the gods, whose name is Narayana, was born, in the world of men, the mighty Vasudeva. The immensely powerful Baladeva was a part of the naga Shesha. O king! Know that Pradyumna, of great energy, was a part of Sanatkumara. O Indra among men! In this way, the parts of many of other gods were born in Vasudeva's lineage and increased its glory.

'O king! I have already told you about the class of apsaras. As instructed by Vasava, their parts were also born on earth. O lord of men! Sixteen thousand parts of these goddesses were born in this world as the wives of Narayana. A part of Shri[74] herself was born on earth out of love. She was born as a faultless daughter in the house of Drupada, from the middle of a sacrificial altar. She was neither tall nor short, and had the fragrance of a blue lotus. Her eyes were long, like lotus leaves. Her hips were well formed. Her hair was long and black. She had all the auspicious marks on her body and she had the shine of lapis lazuli.[75] She charmed the minds of five men who were like Indras. The goddesses Siddhi and Dhriti became the mothers of the five and were known as Kunti and Madri. Mati[76] became the daughter of Subala.

'O king! Thus have I described to you the birth and incarnations of the parts of the gods, asuras, gandharvas and also rakshasas, those who were born as kings on earth, drunk with the desire to fight and the great souls who were born in the extensive lineage of the Yadus. Hearing this account of *anshavatarana* brings wealth, fame, progeny, long life and victory and should be heard without questioning. On hearing the anshavatarana of devas, gandharvas and rakshasas, learned men know of creation, preservation and destruction and are unmoved in adversities.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O Brahmana! I have heard completely from you the account of the incarnations of devas, danavas, rakshasas, gandharvas and apsaras. O Brahmana! I now wish to hear from the beginning the account of the origin of the Kuru lineage. Please narrate it in front of these Brahmana sages.'

Vaishampayana said, ‘O best of the Bharata lineage! The founder of the Pourava dynasty was the valorous Duhshanta.[77] The victorious one protected the entire earth up to its four limits and was the lord of the four quarters of the earth and also regions that are in the middle of the ocean. That chastiser of enemies was also lord of the entire country of the *mlecchas*,[78] which was populated by the four varnas and beyond the ocean full of gems. During this king’s rule, there was no mixture of castes and no performer of evil deeds. No one needed to plough the land. No one needed to mine the earth. O tiger among men! Everyone was devoted to dharma and everyone acted in accordance with the norms of righteous conduct. O son! While he was the ruler of the land, there was no fear from thieves and no fear from famines. While he was the ruler of the land, there was no fear from disease. All the four varnas took pleasure in undertaking their own duties, without an eye to the fruits of the action. Depending upon him as a protector of the earth, they confronted no fear from anywhere. Parjanya[79] showered down rain at the appropriate time and the crops were succulent. The earth abounded with great stores of riches then.

‘He was young and his great prowess was extraordinary. His body was capable of withstanding the vajra. He could have raised up and carried in his arms Mandara,[80] with all its woods and forests. He was skilled in fighting with the bow and arrow, the club and all weapons, on the back of an elephant and on the back of a horse. He was like Vishnu in his strength and like the sun in his radiance. He was like the ocean in his equanimity and like the earth in his tolerance. The great king was loved by all his subjects, in cities and in the country. Everyone abided by dharma.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Once upon a time, the mighty-armed king went to the dense forest, with hundreds of horses and elephants and accompanied by many men and mounts. As he progressed, he was surrounded by hundreds of warriors armed with swords, spears, clubs, maces, javelins and lances in their hands. As the king marched on, the warriors roared like lions. Conches and drums sounded. The wheels of the chariots thundered. The huge elephants trumpeted. The horses neighed. And there was the sound of arms, all resulting in a deafening roar. Beautiful women came out on the balconies of terraced palaces to gaze upon the royal and famous warrior. The women knew their king to be the equal of Shakra[81] in destroying his enemies. In fending off enemy elephants, it was as if the women gazed upon the wielder of the vajra himself. They saw a tiger among men, extremely powerful in battle. The strength of his arms allowed no enemy to be alive. Having uttered these words of praise, the women, out of love for the king, showered down flowers on his head. Wherever he went, the best of Brahmanas paid homage to him along the way.

'Extremely pleased, he went to the forest for a hunt. For a long distance, the citizens and residents of the country followed the king. They were restrained from going further only on the king's instructions. The lord of the earth's chariot filled the earth, even heaven, with its roar. It was like Suparna.[82] After progressing, the wise one saw a beautiful forest like Nandana.[83] It was full of *bilva*, *arka*, *khadira*, *kapittha* and *dhava* trees. It was uneven and full of mountains and valleys and was strewn with boulders. There was no water and no human habitations. It stretched on for many yojanas. This terrible forest abounded with herds of deer and other forest animals. With the help of his servants, force and mounts, Duhshanta, tiger among men, killed deer of many kinds. Many families of tigers were killed as they came within the reach of his arrows. Many were pierced with Duhshanta's arrows. That bull among men killed those that were near with his sword. Supreme among those who wield spears, he killed many in that way. His valour was boundless and he was skilled in the circular motions of the club. He roamed around the forest, killing wild animals with his spear, sword, mace, club and javelin. The great forest was perturbed by the extraordinarily powerful king and his soldiers, who loved the fight, and the larger animals fled. Having lost their leaders, their herds dispersed, the deer screamed out in fright and fled in all directions. The river beds were dry. Emaciated in their thirst for water and their hearts tired with exhaustion, they dropped down unconscious, hungry, thirsty and tired.

'Some of them were eaten raw by those hungry tigers among men. Others built a fire and, having ignited it, cut up the pieces of meat and ate them in the proper way. Many mighty elephants were wounded by weapons and went mad. Raising their trunks, they stamped violently, flowing blood and emitting urine and dung in fear. These wild elephants trampled to death many men. With the cloud of strength and the rain of arrows, the king eliminated the once teeming forest of its large animals, as if a buffalo had run amuck.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having killed thousands of animals, the king and his many mounts entered another forest to hunt deer. Though supremely strong, he was hungry and thirsty. Travelling alone, he penetrated the deep forest until he came to a vast wilderness. Passing beyond this, he came to a wood that was full of holy pilgrimages, beautiful to the eyes and a joy to the heart. Beyond this, he came to another great wood where a cool breeze blew. The trees were full of flowers and soft grass extended on all sides. The great wood echoed with the sweet songs of birds. There were trees all around, with branches that offered pleasant shade. Bees[84] swarmed over the creepers and there was a supreme beauty there. There was no tree without flowers and fruit and none with thorns. Nor did that wood have one[85] not made dark with swarming bees. Resounding with the sweet songs of birds, adorned with beautiful flowers that blossomed in all seasons, with the pleasant shade of blossoming trees everywhere, and with pleasant expanses of grass, that supreme wood was beautiful. And the great archer[86] entered it. Bedecked with flowers, the trees were shaken by the breeze and repeatedly showered wonderful flowers. They rose up into the sky, full of the sweet songs of birds. The trees there were attired in many-coloured garments of wonderful flowers. They were heavy with the weight of new shoots and flowers and full of the sweet songs of birds and bees.

‘On seeing that expanse, adorned with many flowers and surrounded by pleasant creepers that seemed to form canopies, the greatly energetic one was delighted. With branches laden with flowers intertwined with one another, the wood then seemed to shine like Indra’s pennant. A pleasant, cool and fragrant breeze, carrying the pollen of flowers, wafted around the wood and sported with the trees. Such were the qualities of the wood the king gazed upon. It was located in the delta of a river and had the beauty of flagpoles. In that forest, the abode of extremely happy birds, the king saw a charming hermitage. It was full of many trees and blazing fires.[87] Many *yatis*,[88] valakhilyas and other groups of sages were there. Many places for sacrificial fires were around and the flowers formed carpets on the ground. O king! The sacred river Malini, which gladdens the heart, flowed by and created beautiful and large pools[89] of water. It was full of many waterfowl and made the hermitage even more beautiful. The king was delighted to see predatory beasts and deer peacefully together.

‘The king, whose chariot no one could obstruct, entered that enchanting hermitage, which was like the world of the gods and beautiful everywhere. He saw the river with sacred waters embracing the hermitage, as if the mother of all beings was established there. *Chakravaka*[90] birds swarmed along its banks. The water carried flowers and foam. Groups of kinnaras and monkeys and bears lived there. The sound of holy chants and studying resounded along the sand banks. Rutting elephants, tigers and gigantic snakes frequented the place. Having seen the sacred hermitage ornamented by the river Malini with beautiful banks and islands, the king then desired to enter it. It was like the abode of Nara and Narayana, beloved by the waters of the Ganga and echoing with the sound of madly dancing peacocks.

‘The bull among men entered the great wood, which resembled Chitraratha’s[91] garden. He wished to see the radiant maharshi Kanva, descendant of Kashyapa, blessed with all the qualities and the power of austerities. He stopped his retinue of chariots, cavalry and infantry at the entry to the wood and told his soldiers, “I will go to see the descendant of Kashyapa, blessed with the power of austerities and free of passion. Remain here until I return.” As soon as he entered the wood, which was like Nandana, the lord of men derived great pleasure and forgot his hunger and thirst. The ruler of men put aside his signs of kingship. He entered the supreme hermitage with only his priest and his adviser. He wished to see the sage whose store of ascetic powers was everlasting. He saw that the hermitage was like Brahma’s world, with buzzing bees and singing birds.

‘In one place, that tiger among men heard chanting of the Rig Veda, recited in proper word and metre by the best of Brahmanas, as they went about their work. Another place was adorned by those who were learned in various branches of sacrificial rituals.[92] That hermitage was adorned by ascetics who were controlled and rigid in their vows. In another place, those who were learned in the Atharva Veda, respected by the assembled, recited the samhitas in the proper tone and metre. In other places, Brahmanas learned in the science of tones recited other mantras, so that all these holy sounds made the hermitage seem like the illustrious world of Brahma. There were those who were skilled in the art of sacrifices and rules of recital. Others were learned in the Vedas and knew the principles of logic, self-realization and salvation. There were those who knew the meaning of words and were accomplished in combining them. Others were skilled in special rituals and the rites for salvation. Some were skilled in arguments, refuting redundant arguments and knew the secrets of words, philosophy and time. The sound of chanting and hymns was everywhere. The destroyer of enemy armies saw around him many learned Brahmanas of rigid vows, all engaged in meditation and offerings.

‘The lord of the earth was astonished to see the beautiful and coloured seats that had been carefully laid out. On observing the rituals with which the Brahmanas worshipped the gods, that supreme among kings thought that he was in the world of Brahma. The more the king saw of the beautiful, holy and solitary hermitage of Kashyapa's descendant,[93] protected by his austerities and qualities, the more he wished to see. Kashyapa's descendant's hermitage was full of great rishis, powerful in their austerities and rigid in their vows. Thus, the slayer of enemies entered there, with his adviser and his priest.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Thereupon, the mighty-armed one left his advisers behind and went on inside the hermitage alone. But he did not find the rishi of rigid vows.[94] On seeing that the rishi was not there and the hermitage was deserted, he called out in a loud voice that echoed in the wood, "Who is here?" On hearing his words, a maiden emerged from the hermitage. She was dressed in the attire of an ascetic and was as beautiful as Shri.[95] As soon as the black-eyed maiden saw King Duhshanta, she welcomed him and paid him homage. She offered him a seat, gave him water to wash his feet and the gift due to a guest. O king! She then asked that lord of men about his welfare. Having honoured him in the appropriate way and asked about his welfare, the maiden then smilingly asked the king what she could do. Having been thus honoured in the appropriate way, the king spoke to the maiden who was unblemished in form and sweet in speech. "I have come to pay my respects to the illustrious rishi Kanva. O beautiful and fortunate one! Where has the revered one gone?" Shakuntala replied, "My revered father has gone out of the hermitage to collect fruit. Please wait for a while. You will see him when he returns."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The king did not see the rishi there. But having been thus addressed by the maiden, he saw that she was dazzling, with a charming smile and beautiful hips. She was dazzling in her beauty, austerities and humility and endowed with beauty and youth. The ruler of the earth told her, "O one with the beautiful hips! Who are you? Who do you belong to? Why have you come to this forest? O beautiful one! You are blessed with beauty and qualities. From where have you come? O beautiful one! You have robbed me of my heart from the first glance.

O beautiful one! I wish to learn all about you. Please tell me.” Having been thus addressed by the king in the hermitage, the maiden smiled and told him in sweet words, “O Duhshanta! I am regarded as the daughter of the illustrious, righteous, great-souled ascetic Kanva, wise in the path of dharma.” Duhshanta said, “That illustrious and extremely fortunate one is worshipped by all the worlds and is known to have never spilled his seed. The god of dharma may stray from the right path, but not this ascetic of rigid vows. O beautiful and charming one! How can you be his daughter? Dispel this great doubt from my mind.”

‘Shakuntala said, “O king! Then listen to how I have learnt what occurred in earlier times and how I came to be the sage’s daughter. Once upon a time, a rishi came here and asked questions about my birth. O king! Hear what the illustrious one[96] told him about me. Kanva said, ‘In ancient times, Vishvamitra alarmed and oppressed Shakra,[97] the king of the gods, with his great austerities. He feared that with the blazing energy of his austerities, he would dislodge him from his seat. Purandara[98] therefore told Menaka, “O, Menaka!

You are the best of the celestial apsaras in your qualities. O amiable one! Please listen to what I have to say and do that which will bring about my welfare. The great ascetic Vishvamitra possesses the sun’s radiance. He has been engaged in such austerities that my mind is trembling. O Menaka! O you with the slender waist! Vishamitra is your burden now. His soul is fixed on meditation and he is engaged in the performance of awesome austerities. He is unassailable and may dislodge me from my seat. Go to him and seduce him. Bring obstructions to his austerities. Do that which is good for me. O one with the beautiful hips! Turn him away from his austerities with your beauty, youth, sweetness, efforts, smiles and words.”

‘“Menaka said, “O, illustrious one! That illustrious one has great energy and the power of great austerities. You yourself know that he is prone to anger. The energy, asceticism and wrath of that great-souled one have made even you afraid of him. Why should I not be scared? He made even the illustrious Vashishtha suffer grief through the premature death of his sons. He was born a Kshatriya, but became a Brahmana through his powers. For the sake of performing ablutions, he created a river with such a lot of water that it is difficult to cross. That sacred river is still known in the worlds by the name of Koushiki.[99] In ancient times, the great-souled one's wife was maintained there by the righteous rajarshi Matanga, who had become a hunter. O lord! After the famine was over, the powerful sage returned to his hermitage and gave the river the name of Para. O king of the gods! Extremely pleased with Matanga, he himself was the officiating priest at his sacrifice and out of fear, you yourself went there to drink the soma. In his anger, he who was descended from the stars[100] created a wealth of other stars, beginning with Shravana[101] and beyond the existing stars. I am afraid to go to a person whose deeds are like this. O lord! Tell me how I can escape being burnt from his anger. He can burn down the worlds with his energy. He can make the earth quake with a kick. He can uproot the great Meru and whirl it around. How can a woman like me touch someone with such austerities, such energy that is like a blazing fire and who is in complete control of his senses? His mouth is radiant as the blazing fire. The pupils of his eyes are like the sun and the moon. His tongue is like Yama. O best of the gods! How can someone like me touch him? Yama, Soma, the maharshis, the saddhyas, the vishvadevas and the valakhilyas are all alarmed of him. Why should someone like me not be afraid? O lord of the gods! Nevertheless, commanded by you, I must go to that sage. O king of the gods! Find a means so that I can accomplish your wishes under your protection. O god! When I sport before him, let Marut[102] strip me of my garments. On your instructions, let Manmatha[103] be there to help me in my work. Let the breeze carry soft fragrances from the wood when I tempt the rishi."' Having said this and once her wishes had been catered to, she went to Koushika's hermitage."'

‘Shakuntala said,[104] “Having been thus addressed, Shakra[105] commanded the wind, who was always mobile, to be present with Menaka. The beautiful-hipped Menaka then timidly entered the hermitage and saw Vishvamitra, who had burnt all his sins through austerities, but was still engaged in austerities. Having paid her homage to the rishi, she began to play around before him. At that instant, the wind robbed her of her garments, which were as white as the moon. Bashful at Marut’s conduct, the beautiful one dropped to the ground, in an attempt to catch the garment. The supreme among sages saw Menaka grasp at her garment. He saw her nude and that she was beautiful, with no marks of age on her body. On seeing her beauty and qualities, the bull among Brahmanas was struck with desire and wished to unite with her. He invited her and the unblemished one accepted his invitation.

‘“The two of them then passed a long time in the wood, making love as they wished. It seemed to be but a single day. Through the sage, Shakuntala was born to Menaka. Menaka went to the banks of the Malini, which passed through a lovely plain in the Himalayas. Having given birth, Menaka left the child on the banks of the Malini and left. Her objective accomplished, she quickly returned to Shakra’s assembly.

‘“The daughter lay in a deserted forest frequented by carnivorous lions and tigers. On seeing this, vultures[106] surrounded her from all sides, so as to protect her. The birds protected Menaka’s child. Having gone there to perform ablutions, I[107] saw her in the deep and lonely wood, surrounded by birds. I took her home and brought her up as my own daughter. According to the sacred texts, there are three kinds of fathers. In proper order, they are the one who gives a body, the one who protects and the one who provides food. Because she was found in the solitude of the forest, surrounded by birds, I have given her the name of Shakuntala. O amiable one! Know that it is thus that Shakuntala became my daughter. The unblemished Shakuntala also thinks of me as her father.”’

‘“When asked, this is how the maharshi described the account of my birth. O ruler of men! I do not know my own. But this is how I think of Kanva as my father. O king! I have told you exactly as I heard it.”’

‘Duhshanta said, “O princess! O fortunate one! You have spoken well. O one with the beautiful hips! Be my wife. Tell me what I can do for you. O beautiful one! Today, I will present you with golden necklaces, garments, golden earrings, sparkling gems and jewels from many countries, golden coins and skins. Let my entire kingdom be yours today. O beautiful one! Be my wife. O lovely one! O timid one! O one with the beautiful thighs! Marry me according to *gandharva*[108] rites, because it is said that a gandharva marriage is the best.”

‘Shakuntala replied, “O king! My father has left the hermitage to collect fruits for food. Please wait for a while. He will return and give me to you.”

‘Duhshanta said, “O unblemished one! O one with the beautiful hips! I wish that you accept me yourself. Know that I am standing here because of you. Know that my heart is completely in you. One is one’s own best friend. One can certainly resort to one’s own self. Therefore, in accordance with what is dharma, you can give your own self to others. Eight kinds of marriage are known to have the sanction of dharma —*brahma*, *daiva*, *arsha*, *prajapatya*, *asura*, *gandharva*, *rakshasa* and *paishacha*. Manu, descended from the one who is self-created,[109] has respectively described which of these is in accordance with dharma. O unblemished one! Know that according to dharma, the first four are sanctioned for Brahmanas and the first six for Kshatriyas. For kings, even the rakshasa form is permissible. The asura form is sanctioned for Vaishyas and Shudras. Of the five,[110] three are in accordance with dharma and two are not sanctioned. The paishacha and asura forms should never be used. These are the principles laid down by dharma and one should follow them. The gandharva and rakshasa forms are sanctioned for Kshatriyas. Therefore, you need not be scared. There is no doubt that either one, or a mix of the two, is appropriate for us. O beautiful one! I am full of desire for you and so are you. You should become my wife according to the gandharva form of marriage.”

‘Shakuntala said, “O best of the Puru race! O lord! If this is the path indicated by dharma and I am really my own mistress, know my terms before I give myself. Give me your word to this secret agreement between us. O king! O Duhshanta! Give me your truthful promise that the son who is born to me will succeed you. If that is accepted, you may unite with me.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Without any hesitation, the king said, “O one with a sweet smile! It shall be that way. I will even take you to my capital. O one with the beautiful hips! It is what you deserve and I promise you truthfully.” Saying this, the rajarshi accepted the hand of she whose gait was without blemish according to the proper rites and she accepted him. He returned to his capital after reiterating his promise and repeatedly assuring her, “I will send a fourfold army[111] to escort you. O one with a sweet smile! I will take you to my palace with that.” O Janamejaya! Having thus promised her, the king went away. As he went away, the king began to worry about Kashyapa’s son.[112] “What will the illustrious one, with all his ascetic powers, do when he hears?” Thinking in this way, he entered his capital.

‘A little after the king had left, Kanva returned to his hermitage. But Shakuntala was too ashamed to go and meet her father. However, the great ascetic Kanva had divine sight and knew everything. Having seen everything with his divine sight, the illustrious one was pleased and said, “O fortunate one! What you have done secretly today, this act of union with a man without my sanction, is not against dharma. A secret gandharva marriage between a desiring man and a desiring woman, without mantras, is said to be the best for Kshatriyas. O Shakuntala! Duhshanta, the one you have accepted as a husband, is the best among men, great-souled and devoted to dharma. You will give birth to a son who will be known in this world as great-souled and immensely mighty. He will extend his sway over this entire earth that is bounded by the oceans. When that great-souled king of kings marches out against his enemies, he will always be irresistible.”

‘Shakuntala then came to the tired sage and washed his feet. She took down his heavy load and properly laid out the fruits. She said, “I have chosen King Duhshanta, best among men, as my husband. Please give me and his advisers your blessings.” Kanva replied, “O beautiful one! I am prepared to bless him for your sake. O fortunate one! Ask for a boon that you wish.” Wishing to bring welfare to Duhshanta, Shakuntala then asked for the boon that kings of the Puru lineage should always be virtuous and would never be dislodged from their kingdoms.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When Duhshanta left, after making his promise to Shakuntala, the one with the beautiful thighs gave birth to a son who had immense energy. She bore him for three years. He had the splendour of a blazing fire. O Janamejaya! Duhshanta’s son had great beauty, generosity and all the qualities. Kanva, supreme among holy ones, performed all the stipulated rites, including those of birth, and the wise one began to grow. The boy had sharp and white teeth and the young one was strong enough to kill lions. He was handsome and immensely strong, with a broad head. On his palm, he had the sign of a chakra.[113] He quickly grew up, like a son of the gods. When he was only six years old, he was so strong that he tied up lions, tigers, boars, buffaloes and elephants to trees near Kanva’s hermitage. He rode them, tamed them, played with them and chased them. The inhabitants of Kanva’s hermitage gave him a name. “Since he has subjugated everything, let him be called Sarvadamana”.[114] Thus the boy came to be known as Sarvadamana. He had great strength, valour and energy.

‘On seeing the boy’s superhuman exploits, the sage told Shakuntala that the time had come for him to be instated as the heir apparent.[115] On seeing his great strength, Kanva told his disciples, “Quickly take Shakuntala and her son away from this hermitage and to her husband. She is blessed with all the auspicious marks. It is not fit that women should live forever with their relatives.[116] Such acts destroy fame, character and virtue. Take her away without delay.” The greatly energetic disciples all agreed and left for Gajasahrya[117] with Shakuntala and her son. Taking her lotus-eyed son, who was like a divine child, the one with the beautiful brows left the forest where she had first got to know Duhshanta.

‘She went to the king, with her son with the brilliance of the morning sun, and entered. Having paid homage, Shakuntala said, “O king! This is your son. Let him be instated as the heir apparent. O king! This god-like son was begotten by you on me. O best of men! Now fulfil the promise you made to me. O immensely fortunate one! Remember the promise you made to me in Kanva’s hermitage, when we united long ago.” Having heard her words, the king remembered everything. But he said, “O evil ascetic! I remember nothing. Who do you belong to? I do not remember having had any relation with you for dharma, artha or kama. Go or stay, as you wish. Do what you want.” Being thus addressed, the ascetic with the beautiful hips was ashamed. In her grief, she lost her senses and stood immobile like a pillar.

‘Soon, her eyes turned as red as copper in anger. Her lips began to quiver. Through the sides of her eyes, she cast glances at the king that seemed to burn him. Though driven by wrath, she calmed her demeanour and the energy accumulated through her austerities. In grief and anger, she stood for a moment, collecting her thoughts. Then she looked straight at her husband and said, “O great king! Knowing everything very well, how can you unconcernedly say that you know nothing, lying like a common person? Your heart knows the truth or falsity of my words. You yourself are the witness. Do what is good and do not degrade yourself. He who knows one thing in his mind, but represents it in another way, is a thief and robs his own self. What sin is he not capable of committing? You think that you are alone with your own self. But don’t you know the ancient and omniscient one who dwells in your heart? He knows all your acts and all your evil deeds. It is in his presence that you lie. When sinning, a man thinks that no one sees him. But he is seen by the gods and by the being who dwells in every heart. The sun, moon, wind, fire, sky, earth, water, his heart, Yama, day, night, the two twilights and Dharma know man’s every act. If the god in the heart, who is a witness to all acts, is pleased, Vaivasvata Yama ignores the evil a man has done. But when the great being is not pleased, Yama punishes the sinner for his evil deeds. He who degrades his own self and represents falsely cannot find refuge with the gods. He is not blessed by his own soul. I am a faithful wife to my husband. Do not disrespect me because I have come on my own. I am your wife and deserve to be treated with honour. In this assembly, why do you treat me as if I am a commoner? I am certainly not crying in the wilderness. Why do you not hear me? O Duhshanta! If you do not do what I am asking you to do, your head will today be splintered into a hundred pieces. The wise ones of ancient times knew that the husband himself entered the womb of his wife and emerged as a son. That is the reason a wife is known as *jaya*.[118] A son born to a learned man saves with his lineage the deceased ancestors. Since the son saves his ancestors from the hell known as *put*, the self-created one[119] has said that a son is known as *putra*. She is a true wife who looks after the house. She is a true wife who bears children. She is a true wife whose life is devoted to her husband. She is a true wife who is faithful to her husband. A wife is half the man. A wife is the best of friends. A wife is the source of the three objectives.[120] A wife is a friend at the very end. Those who have wives can perform rites. Those who have wives can be householders. Those who have wives are happy. Those who have wives have good fortune. Sweet-spoken wives are friends in solitude, fathers in religious acts and mothers in suffering. Even in the wilderness, a wife refreshes the wandering husband. A man who has a wife is trusted. Therefore, a wife is the best means of salvation. When a husband goes to the land of the dead and is transiting, it is the faithful wife alone who accompanies him there, for he is always her husband, in all adversities. If the wife goes before, she stays and waits for the spirit of her husband. If the husband dies before, the devoted wife soon follows. O king! It is for these reasons that man seeks marriage. The husband obtains a wife, in this life and the next. The wise have said that a man is himself born as his son. Therefore, a man should regard the mother of his son as his own mother. Looking at the face of a son born from a wife, a man sees his own face, as in a mirror, and is as delighted as a virtuous man on attaining heaven.

Burnt through mental grief or afflicted with disease, men rejoice in their wives, like perspiring ones do in water. Even in anger, a man should not utter unpleasant words to his beloved wife, because love, joy, virtue and everything are in her. The wife is the sacred ground in which the husband is born again. Even sages are unable to have offspring without wives. A son embraces his father, his limbs covered with dirt. Is there greater happiness to a father than that? Why do you frown and reject your son, who has come to you on his own and is glancing fondly at you? Even ants carry their eggs and do not break them. You are learned in the ways of dharma. Will you not support your own son? The touch of fragrances, women and water is not as pleasing as the embrace of one's own infant son. The Brahmana is the best among bipeds. The cow is the best among quadrupeds. The preceptor is the best among all superiors. The son is the best among all objects one touches. Let this handsome son touch you in embrace. There is no feeling more pleasant in the worlds than the touch of a son. O chastiser of enemies! O lord of kings! I bore this son, the dispeller of your grief, for three years. O descendant of the Puru lineage! When I was giving birth, a voice was heard from the sky, 'He will perform one hundred horse sacrifices.' Men who have gone to another village lovingly take up the sons of other men on their laps and feel great happiness on smelling their heads. At the time of the birth ceremony of a son, you know that Brahmanas utter the following mantra from the Vedas: 'You are born from my limbs. You are born from my heart. You are me in the form of a son. May you live for a hundred autumns. My life depends on you and my eternal lineage. Therefore, my son, live in happiness for a hundred autumns.' He has been born from your limbs, one man from another. Look on your son as your second self, like a reflection in a clear pond. Like the *ahavaniya* fire is kindled from the *garhapatya* fire,[121] this one has been born from you. Though you are one, you have been divided into two. O king! In earlier times, you were on a hunting expedition and had been led away by a deer. I was a virgin in my father's hermitage and was approached by you. The six supreme apsaras are Urvashi, Purvachitti, Sahajanya, Menaka, Vishvachi and Ghritachi. Among them again, Menaka, the apsara born from Brahma, is the foremost. Descending from heaven to earth, she gave birth to me through her union with Vishvamitra. The apsara Menaka gave birth to me in a plain in the Himalayas. Without any feelings, she abandoned me there, as if I was someone else's child. Earlier, what sins did I commit in another life that I was abandoned by my relatives in my childhood and by you now? Forsaken by you, I am ready to go back to my hermitage. But do not forsake this child who is your own son."

'Duhshanta said, "O Shakuntala! I do not know that this son born from you is mine. Women are liars. Who will believe your words? Your mother Menaka was a courtesan. She was merciless and abandoned you on the plains of the Himalayas, like a faded garland. Your father Vishvamitra was also merciless and was born in the Kshatriya lineage. But driven by desire, and lustful, he became a Brahmana. If Menaka is the best of the apsaras and your father is the best of the maharshis, how can you speak like a harlot and be their daughter? Are you not ashamed to utter these disrespectful words, especially in my presence? O wicked ascetic! Go away. Where is that best of maharshis? Where is Menaka, the best of apsaras? And where are you, who are wretched, clad in an ascetic's garb? Your son is gigantic. And he is strong, even though a child. How has he, in such a short span, grown up like the trunk of a *shala* tree? You were born in a lowly lineage and you speak like a harlot. It seems that Menaka gave birth to you from lust alone. O ascetic! Everything that you say is unknown to me. I do not know you. Go away, as you please."'

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'Shakuntala said, "O king! You see the faults of others, even though they are as small as a mustard seed. But you do not see your own, even though they can be seen as large as a bilva fruit. Menaka is one of the thirty gods.[122] She is foremost among the thirty. O Duhshanta! My birth is nobler than your own. O lord of kings! You are established on earth. But I roam the sky. Know that the difference between you and me is that between a mustard seed and Mount Meru. O king! Behold and understand my powers. I can go to the abodes of the great Indra, Kubera, Yama and Varuna. O unblemished one! Not out of hatred towards you, but as an illustration, I am going to tell you a popular saying. Therefore, pardon me and listen. Until he sees his face in a mirror, the ugly man thinks himself to be more handsome than others. But when he sees his malformed face in a mirror, it is then that he realizes the difference between him and others. He who is extremely handsome never demeans others. He who slanders others a lot is only considered to be evil-mouthed. Like a pig searches out filth, the fool seeks out evil words when he hears good and evil in men's speech. But the swan always searches out milk from the water. Like that, the wise one seeks out words of quality when he hears good and evil in men's speech. Honest ones are always pained to speak ill of others. But wicked ones are satisfied at this. Good ones always find pleasure in paying respect to the aged.[123] However, fools always derive pleasure from berating good men. Those who seek no evil live happily. But fools are happy when they find evil. Even when they are injured by the words of evil ones, the good never do them injury. In this world, there is nothing more ridiculous than the evil representing the good as evil. Even those who do not believe in god fear those who have been dislodged from truth, like snakes with virulent poison, not to speak of those who believe in god. A man who has begotten a son like himself, but does not accept him, doesn't attain the superior worlds. The gods destroy his prosperity. The ancestors have said that the son establishes the family and the lineage and, thus, giving birth to a son is the best of all dharmas. Therefore, a son should never be abandoned. Manu has said there are sons begotten on one's wife and five others—obtained, bought, reared, adopted and those begotten on other women. Sons support the dharma and fame of men and bring happiness to their hearts. Sons are like the boats of dharma in transporting the ancestors from hell. O tiger among kings! Therefore, it is not proper for you to forsake your son. O lord of the earth! Protect him like you protect yourself, truth and dharma. O lion among kings! It is not proper for you to be deceitful on this. A pond[124] is better than that of a hundred wells. A sacrifice is better than a hundred ponds. But a son is better than a hundred sacrifices. Truth is better than a hundred sons. If 1000 horse sacrifices and truth are weighed on a pair of scales, truth will weigh more than 1000 horse sacrifices. O king! I tell you that truth is equal to studying all the Vedas and bathing in all the tirthas. There is no dharma higher than the truth and nothing is superior to truth. And no evil is known to be fiercer than a lie. O king! Truth is the supreme brahman. Truth is the great vow. O king! Therefore, do not violate your oath. Let truth and yourself be united. However, if you are united with falsehood and if you yourself have no belief in my words, I shall go away from here on my own. A relationship with one like you should not be sought after. O Duhshanta! But when you are dead, my son will rule over the entire earth, crowned by the king of the mountains and surrounded by oceans in four directions.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having uttered these words to the king, Shakuntala prepared to leave. Thereupon, a disembodied voice spoke to Duhshanta from the sky, as he sat surrounded by his officiating priests, his priest, his preceptors and his ministers. “O Duhshanta! The mother is only a vessel for holding water. Born from the father, the son is the father himself. O Duhshanta! Support your son and do not reject Shakuntala. O god among men! A son who has semen is the saver from Yama’s abode. You are the creator of this embryo. Shakuntala has spoken the truth. The wife gives birth to a son by dividing her body into two. O king! O Duhshanta! Therefore, protect this son of yours, born from Shakuntala. To abandon one’s own son and continue to live is a great misfortune. O descendant of the Puru lineage! Therefore, cherish this great-souled son of Shakuntala and Duhshanta. Since you will maintain this son because of these words, this son will be known as Bharata.”[125] Having heard these words of those who dwell in the sky, the king of the Puru lineage was delighted. He addressed his priests and advisers, “All of you have heard what the messenger of the gods has to say. I myself know very well that this is my son. But if I had accepted him today as my son on her words alone, there would have been suspicion among all the people and he would never have been considered to be pure.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king was then cleared of all suspicion because of the words of the messenger of the gods. He was extremely pleased and accepted his son.

‘He smelt his son’s head and embraced him with affection. The Brahmanas pronounced their blessings on him and he was praised by the bards. The king then enjoyed the great happiness one feels at the touch of one’s own son. Duhshanta also paid homage and accepted his wife according to the rites of dharma. The king pacified her and told her, “O lady! My union with you was not known to the people. That is the reason I argued with you. It was natural for people to think that the union I had with you was because you were a woman and had my son been instated by me in the kingdom, he would have been considered to be impure. Therefore, I thought about how best to clear you. O beloved one! O large-eyed one! I have forgiven you all the harsh words you spoke in anger. I love you.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having thus spoken to his beloved queen, rajarshi Duhshanta honoured her with garments, food and drink. Thereupon, King Duhshanta instated Shakuntala’s son as the heir apparent and the name of Bharata was conferred on him.

‘From that day, the glorious wheel of the great-souled Bharata traversed the worlds with a great thunder, radiant, divine and invincible. He conquered all the kings of the earth and brought them under his sway. He always trod the path of dharma and attained supreme fame. That powerful king was known as Chakravarti[126] and Sarvabhouma. Like Indra, lord of the maruts, he performed many sacrifices. Like Daksha, he made Kanva the officiating priest at a sacrifice and offered a lot of alms. The fortunate one performed a horse sacrifice that was named after the large number of cows offered. At this, Bharata gave Kanva one thousand *padmas*[127] as the sacrificial fee. From Bharata springs the fame of the Bharata lineage and others of the Bharata lineage. All other kings who followed him were known as those of the Bharata lineage. In this Bharata lineage were born many greatly energetic and divine kings. They were supreme kings, like Brahma himself, and their many names are beyond recounting. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I shall only mention the names of the chief ones, those who were immensely fortunate and devoted to truth and honesty. They were like the gods themselves.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O unblemished one! O king! I will now recount to you in entirety the lineages of Prajapati Daksha, Vaivasvata Manu, Bharata, Kuru, Puru, Ajamidha and Yadava. These are great and holy accounts that lead to bliss. The histories of these illustrious ones bring wealth, fame and long life.

'Prachetas[128] had ten righteous sons, who were like maharshis in their energy and possessed a radiance that was ascending. They were known as the first ancestors. In earlier times, these greatly energetic ones were burnt with the lightning from clouds. O tiger among men! Daksha was born from Prachetas and from Daksha were born all subjects. Hence he is the grandfather of the worlds. He united with Virini and gave birth to 1000 sons, all rigid in their vows like he himself. In an assembly of these 1000 of Daksha's sons, Narada taught them the supreme philosophy of sankhya,[129] the means to salvation. O Janamejaya! In a desire to create more beings, Prajapati Daksha created fifty women and accepted them as his daughters. He gave ten to Dharma, thirteen to Kashyapa and twenty-seven to Chandra, with the last given the task of reckoning time.

'Kashyapa was Marichi's son. Dakshayani was supreme among his thirteen wives. Through her, he gave birth to the valorous adityas, Indra and the others and also to Vivasvat. From Vivasvat was born a son, the lord Yama. O king! Martanda was born as Yama's son and Martanda had the wise lord Manu as his son. Manu's lineage became famous as that of men.[130] All men, including Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and others, were descended from Manu. O king! At that time, the Brahmanas were united with the Kshatriyas. The Brahmanas among men were devoted to the study of the Vedas and their branches. It is said that Manu[131] had ten mighty sons who were devoted to the pursuit of the Kshatriya dharma—Vena, Dhrishnu, Narishyanta, Nabhaga, Ikshvaku, Karusha, Saryati, Ila as the eighth and Prishadhra as the ninth. Nabhagarishtha was the tenth. In addition, Manu had fifty other sons on earth. But it is heard that they all quarrelled with each other and perished.

'The learned Pururava was born from Ila and it is said that she was both his father and mother. Pururava ruled over thirteen islands in the ocean. He was immensely famous and though human, was always surrounded by superhuman beings. Pururava was intoxicated with his valour and waged war against the Brahmanas. Paying no heed to their protests, he robbed them of their riches. O king! On seeing this, Sanatkumara came from Brahma's world and showed him the right way. But he did not accept this. At this, the maharshis were angry and cursed him. That king of men perished because of avarice, power and arrogance. He lived in the world of the gandharvas with Urvashi. He brought to the earth the three types of sacrificial fire. Through Urvashi, six sons were born to this son of Ila's—Ayus, Dhiman, Amavasu, Dridhayus, Vanayus and Shatayus. It is said that Ayus had five sons through Svarbhanu's daughter—Nahusha, Vriddhasharma, Raji, Rambha and Anenas. Nahusha was Ayus's son. He was wise and devoted to the truth. O lord of the earth! Following the dictates of dharma, he ruled over a large kingdom. Nahusha protected the ancestors, gods, rishis, Brahmanas, gandharvas, *uragas*[132] and rakshasas. He treated Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas equally. He killed hordes of *dasyus*[133] and made them pay tribute to the rishis. Like animals, that valorous one forced them to carry him on their backs. He overwhelmed the gods with his energy, austerities, valour and power and became like Indra himself. Through Priyavasa, Nahusha had six sons—Yati, Yayati, Samyati, Ayati, Pancha and Uddhava.

'Nahusha's son Yayati was devoted to the truth and became an emperor. He ruled over the entire earth and performed many sacrifices. With great power, he worshipped the ancestors and the gods, who were always present. Yayati was always invincible and showed great kindness towards his subjects. His sons were great archers who possessed all the qualities. O great king! They were born from his wives, Devayani and Sharmishtha. From Devayani were born Yadu and Turvasu. From Sharmishtha were born Druhyu, Anu and Puru. O king! In accordance with dharma, he ruled over his subjects for a long time. Then he was attacked by the dreadful old age and he lost his beauty. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been overcome by old age, the king told his sons Yadu, Puru, Turvasu, Druhyu and Anu, "O sons! I desire to savour the pleasures of youth. As a young man, I wish to spend my time with young women. Help me." Yadu, the eldest son and born from Devayani, replied, "For what purpose do you want our youth? What act do you wish to perform?" Yayati told him, "Accept my old age from me. With your youth, I will satisfy my senses. During a long sacrifice, I was cursed by the sage Ushanas. Therefore, I have lost all my powers of enjoying desire. O sons! I am suffering because of this. Any one of you can rule over the kingdom with my body. And I will satisfy my desire by taking up a new and young body." Yadu and the other brothers did not agree to take up his old age.

'At this, the youngest son, Puru, always devoted to the truth and powerful, said, "O king! Enjoy yourself with a new and young body. As you command, I will take up your old age and rule over the kingdom." At these words, the rajarshi[134] used the power of his austerities to transfer his old age to his great-souled son. The king again became a young man with Puru's age. Puru ruled over the kingdom with Yayati's age. After a thousand years, the invincible Yayati had still not satisfied his desires and told his son Puru, "You are my heir. You are the son through whom my lineage will continue. From now on, my lineage will be known in this world as Puru's lineage." O tiger among kings! Then he instated Puru as the king. After a long time, he succumbed to the laws of time.'

Janamejaya asked, ‘Our ancestor Yayati was tenth in the line from Prajapati. How did he obtain Shukra’s daughter,[135] who was difficult to obtain? O supreme among Brahmanas! I wish to hear this in detail. Also tell me separately and in detail the accounts of the chiefs of the Puru lineage.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Yayati was a rajarshi who was as radiant as the king of the gods himself. I will answer your question and tell you how, in ancient times, Shukra and Vrishaparva gave him their daughters and how the union between Devayani and Nahusha’s son Yayati took place. Many years ago, a great fight occurred between the gods and the demons over who would rule over the three worlds, with all their movable and immovable riches. In a desire to obtain victory, the gods appointed the son of Angirasa,[136] who was a sage, as the priest for their sacrifices. The others[137] appointed the wise Ushanas.[138] These two Brahmanas were bitter rivals. The gods killed all the demons who had assembled for battle. But they were revived by Kavya with his knowledge. Having thus been brought to life, they fought with the gods again. In turn, the demons killed many gods in battle. However, though immensely learned, Brihaspati could not revive them. He did not possess the knowledge known as *sanjivani*[139] that the valorous Kavya possessed. Thus, the gods were immersed in supreme misery.

‘In great anxiety and afraid of Kavya Ushanas, the gods went to Brihaspati’s eldest son Kacha and said, “Worship us as we worship you. Please help us in this supreme task. That Brahmana with unlimited energy possesses knowledge. Quickly bring us that knowledge from Shukra and you will have a share in all sacrificial offerings made to us. You will find the Brahmana with Vrishaparva.[140] He always protects the demons, but does not protect those who are not demons. You are younger than him. Therefore, you can worship that wise one. You can also pay homage to Devayani, the beloved daughter of that great-souled one. You alone are capable. There is no one else. You are certain to obtain the knowledge by propitiating Devayani with your conduct, magnanimity, sweetness, action and self-control.” Having been thus honoured and addressed by the gods, Kacha, Brihaspati's son, agreed. He then went to Vrishaparva.

'O king! Having been thus sent by the gods, he soon arrived at the capital of the king of the demons. On seeing Shukra there, he said, "O illustrious one! Please accept me as your disciple. I am the grandson of Angirasa and the son of Brihaspati. I am known by the name of Kacha. Accepting you as my supreme preceptor, I will practise brahmacharya for a thousand years. Therefore, allow me." Shukra replied, "O Kacha! You are extremely welcome and I will accept your words. You deserve respect and I will treat you with respect. Because, by doing that, Brihaspati will also be honoured." Shukra Ushanas, the son of Kavi, commanded Kacha to take the vow and he did so. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Accepting the vow and the duration of the vow, as he had promised, he began to worship his preceptor and Devayani. The young man was at the peak of his youth and pleased Devayani with his constant worship, singing, dancing and the playing of musical instruments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Devayani was a maiden who had just attained the bloom of her youth and he pleased her through his conduct and offerings of flowers and fruit. The Brahmana rigidly stuck to his vows and when they were alone, Devayani also sang with him and sported with him. Five hundred years passed in this fashion and Kacha stuck to his vows. Then the danavas came to know that he was Kacha.

'One day, they saw him alone in the forest when he was tending to the cattle. Without hesitation, out of hatred for Brihaspati and in a desire to protect the knowledge, they killed him. After killing him, they chopped him up into pieces as small as sesamum seeds and fed it to jackals and wolves. The cows returned home without the cowherd. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Devayani saw that the cows had returned home from the forest without Kacha, she immediately said, "O lord! The sun has set and the agnihotra fire[141] has not yet been lit. The cows have returned without the cowherd and Kacha is not to be seen. O father! It is certain that Kacha must have died or been killed. I tell you truthfully that I cannot live without him." Shukra replied, "If he is dead, I will revive him by uttering the words: ‘Come back to life’.” With the aid of the knowledge of sanjivani, he summoned Kacha. Having been thus summoned, Kacha joyfully reappeared. When the Brahmana’s daughter asked him, he said that he had been killed. On another occasion, at Devayani’s request, the Brahmana Kacha again went to the forest to collect flowers. The danavas saw him and killed him a second time. The asuras burnt him, ground the ashes and mixed them with wine, feeding this to the Brahmana.[142]Devayani again spoke to her father, “O father! Kacha was sent to gather flowers. But he cannot be seen.” Shukra replied, “O daughter! Kacha is Brihaspati’s son and he has gone to the land of the dead. Though revived by my knowledge, he has again been killed. What shall I do? O Devayani! Do not grieve and do not weep. Someone like you should not grieve over a mortal man. The gods and the entire world must accept that which comes.” Devayani said, “The oldest Angirasa is his grandfather. Brihaspati, blessed with the power of austerities, is his father. He is the son and the grandson of a rishi. Why should I not grieve and weep? He himself is a brahmachari blessed with the power of austerities. He is always attentive and skilled in every work. I will happily follow the path that Kacha has trod on. O father! I love the handsome Kacha.” Shukra replied, “It is certain that the asuras hate me. They have killed my innocent disciple. These terrible danavas want to make me a non-Brahmana. The killing of a Brahmana oppresses Indra himself. Let this evil come to an end now.” Having been spurred by Devayani, maharshi Kavya again summoned Kacha, Brihaspati’s son.

‘Summoned by the knowledge, but scared about his preceptor’s safety, Kacha softly replied from inside the stomach. Shukra then asked him, “O Brahmana! How did you come to be inside my stomach? Tell me truly.” Kacha replied, “Through your grace, my memory has remained with me. I remember exactly what happened and how and can therefore bear this unending misery and insufferable pain. O Kavya! The asuras killed me. They burnt me and ground and mixed the ashes with wine, which they then gave you. But when you are there, how can the asuras’ powers of delusion overcome the powers of a Brahmana?” Shukra said, “O daughter! How can I now do what is dear to you? Kacha can only be brought to life through my death. O Devayani! Kacha is inside me. He can only reappear by ripping my stomach apart.” Devayani said, “Both the sorrows will burn me like fire—your destruction and Kacha’s. I will have no protection after Kacha’s death. And if you die, I will not be able to bear life.” Shukra replied, “O Brihaspati’s son! You have attained success, since Devayani worships you so much. Unless you are Indra in Kacha’s disguise, accept today the knowledge of bringing the dead back to life. No one can emerge alive from my stomach, but a Brahmana cannot be killed. Therefore, accept the knowledge I give you. Return to life as my son. O son! Possessed of the knowledge that I give you, bring me back to life after I leave my body. When you emerge from my stomach with the knowledge your preceptor gives you, act in accordance with dharma.” Receiving the knowledge from his preceptor, the Brahmana emerged from the stomach. The handsome Kacha emerged from the Brahmana’s right side, like the full moon in shuklapaksha.[143] He saw his preceptor’s remains, lying in a heap of Brahmana powers. Kacha revived him with the secret knowledge he had received.

‘Then Kacha paid homage to his preceptor and said, “The preceptor is an object of worship. The giver of knowledge is supreme. He is the most precious of all precious objects in the four directions. He who doesn’t revere him is never established and goes to the worlds of the evil.” Having been deceived through drinking wine and remembering the terrible consequences of losing consciousness, and also seeing the reappearance of the handsome Kacha whom he had drunk when intoxicated with wine, the mighty Kavya arose in anger. He wished to bring about the welfare of Brahmanas. The illustrious one himself spoke this injunction against the drinking of wine. “From this day, if a stupid Brahmana commits the crime of drinking wine, he will be considered to have committed the crime of killing a Brahmana. He will be hated in this world and the next. I am laying down this dharma for Brahmanas in all the worlds. Let this be heard by good Brahmanas who worship their preceptors, by the gods and by all the worlds.” Having said this, the illustrious repository of immeasurable ascetic powers summoned the danavas, who had been deprived of their senses by destiny. Having summoned them, he said, “O danavas! You are strong. But know that Kacha has obtained his wish and will live with me. Having obtained the great knowledge of sanjivani, the Brahmana is now as powerful as Brahma himself.” Kacha lived for a thousand years in his preceptor’s house. With his preceptor’s permission, he then prepared to return to the land of the thirty gods.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the period of his vow was over and he had obtained his preceptor’s permission, Kacha prepared to leave for the land of the thirty gods.

‘Devayani told him, “O grandson of rishi Angirasa! You are dazzling in your conduct, birth, learning, austerities and self-control. Just as the immensely famous rishi Angirasa is honoured by my father, so must I worship and honour Brihaspati. O one blessed with the power of austerities! Know this and hear what I have to say. You are aware of my behaviour while the rigid observance of your vow was going on. You have now achieved your learning. I love you and you should love me in return. Accept my hand in accordance with the proper rites and mantras.” Kacha replied, “O unblemished lady! You are an object of my honour and worship, as your illustrious father is. You are an object of greater reverence to me. You are dearer to the great-souled Bhargava[144] than his own life. O fortunate one! You are my preceptor’s daughter and, in accordance with dharma, I must always worship you. Just as your father Shukra, my preceptor, is always honoured by me, so must I always honour you. O Devayani! You should therefore not speak to me in this way.” Devayani replied, “O supreme among Brahmanas! You are not my father’s son. You are only the son of his preceptor’s son.[145] Therefore, you are an object of my honour and worship. O Kacha! You must remember the love I showed you when the asuras killed you again and again, and even now. O you who know dharma! Remembering my friendship, love and devotion towards you, you should not forsake me when I love you and have not shown any guilt.” Kacha replied, “You are pure in our vows. But you are now asking me to be engaged in a task that is not recommended. O lovely one with the beautiful brows! You are greater to me than my preceptor. Be gracious. O lady with the large eyes! O lady with a face like the moon! O fortunate one! You have dwelt in Kavya's loins and I have dwelt in the same place. O one with the fair face! According to dharma, you are my sister. O fortunate one! Do not say that. I have lived here happily and I hold no bad feelings. I ask your permission to leave. Bless me on my way. Remember me in your conversations as someone who has never transgressed dharma. Always serve my preceptor with single-minded alertness." Devayani said, "O Kacha! If you spurn me for the sake of dharma, artha or kama, despite my asking, your knowledge will never achieve success." Kacha replied, "You are my preceptor's daughter and there is no sin in refusing you. Nor has my preceptor given me instructions about this. Curse me if you so wish. O Devayani! I have told you the dharma the sages have decreed. I deserve no curse. Nevertheless, you have cursed me, not out of dharma, but out of desire. Therefore, your desire will never be satisfied. No rishi's son will ever accept your hand. You have said that my knowledge will never bear fruit. So be it. But it will bear fruit for the one I teach it to."

'Having said this to Devayani, Kacha, the best among Brahmanas, supreme among Brahmanas, quickly left for the abode of the thirty gods. On seeing him arrive, the gods, with Indra at their head, were delighted. They paid homage to Brihaspati and told Kacha, "You have performed a supreme and extraordinary act for our welfare and your fame will never diminish. You will have a share in our sacrificial offerings."'

73

Vaishampayana said, 'O bull of the Bharata lineage! The gods were delighted that Kacha had attained the knowledge. They learnt the knowledge that Kacha had learnt and were content. They assembled together and told Shatakratu,[146] "O Purandara![147] The time has come to display your valour and kill your enemies." Having been thus addressed, Maghavan[148] agreed and set out with the assemblage of thirty gods. He saw many women in the forest. The ladies were sporting in a forest that was like Chitraratha's.[149] Changing himself into the wind, he mixed up all their garments. After emerging from the water, the women then each picked up a garment that was nearest her. Devayani's garment was then picked up by Sharmishtha, the daughter of Vrishaparva, who did not know about the mixing up. O lord of kings! At that, a quarrel arose between Devayani and Sharmishtha. Devayani said, "O asuri! Despite being inferior to me,[150] how did you dare to take up my garment? You are devoid of good conduct. No good will come to you." Sharmishtha replied, "Whether my father is seated or lying down, your father is always humbly below him and always praises him. You are the daughter of a man who begs, praises and holds up his hand for alms. I am the daughter of a man who is praised and stretches out his hand to give alms, not to receive. You are defenceless and deserted. You are a beggar who trembles before me, who is armed. Find an equal. I do not regard you as one." On hearing this, Devayani stood up erect and clung to the garment. But Sharmishtha threw her into a well and went off to her city. The evil Sharmishtha took her to be dead. In extreme anger, she did not even bother to look down.

'Nahusha's son, Yayati, came to that place, looking for deer to hunt. He was thirsty and his two horses were tired. Nahusha's son saw a well in which there was no water. But the king saw a maiden who was as radiant as the flames of a fire. Seeing her there, he addressed the maiden who was celestial in beauty. The best of kings pacified her with extremely soft words and asked, "O one with nails the shade of copper! O one with the dusky complexion! O one adorned in beautiful gems and earrings! Who are you? Why are you in such deep grief? Why are you sighing in distress? How did you come to fall into this well that is full of creepers and grass? O one with the slender waist! Whose daughter are you? Tell me truly." Devayani replied, "I am Shukra's daughter, who uses his knowledge to revive the daityas when they are killed by the gods. He does not know what has become of me. O king! Here is my right hand, with nails that are the shade of copper. You seem to have been born into a good family. I know you to be gentle, brave and famous. Grasp me by the hand and pull me out of the well into which I have fallen." Having learnt that she was the daughter of a Brahmana, the king, who was Nahusha's son, grasped her by the right hand and pulled her out of the well. After pulling the one with beautiful hips out of the well, Yayati gently bid farewell and returned to his capital.

'Devayani said, "O Ghurnika![151] Quickly go to my father and tell him what has happened. From now on, I refuse to enter Vrishaparva's city." Ghurnika swiftly went to the asura's palace. On seeing Kavya, she spoke to him, her senses flustered. "O immensely wise one! O immensely fortunate one! I tell you that Devayani has been struck in the forest by Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva's daughter." Having heard that his daughter had been struck by Sharmishtha, Kavya quickly set out for the forest with a heavy heart. When he found his daughter Devayani in the forest, he engulfed her in his arms and sorrowfully said, "It is through their own faults that people reap happiness and sorrow. I am sure that you must have done something wrong, which has now been purged." Devayani replied, "Whether it is the purging of my fault or not, listen attentively to what Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva's daughter, told me. I am telling you truthfully. She said that you chanted praises to the daityas. With eyes red in anger and a harsh and sharp voice, this is what Vrishaparva's daughter, Sharmishtha, said. She said that I was the daughter of someone who always begged, chanted the praises of others and stretched out his hand for alms. And she was the daughter of one who was always praised, always granted and stretched out his hand to give alms. Eyes red with anger and full of pride, this is what Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva's daughter, repeatedly said. O father! If I am really the daughter of one who chants praises of others and stretches out his hand for alms, I must pay homage to Sharmishtha to obtain her favour. I have already told my friend[152] that." Shukra replied, "O Devayani! You are not the daughter of someone who always praises, asks for alms and receives. You are the daughter of someone who is always praised, but never praises. Vrishaparva knows this and so do Shakra and the king who is Nahusha’s son. Know my strength to be as inconceivable and incomparable as the supreme brahman.”’

74

‘Shukra said, “O Devayani! Know that a man who pays no heed to the evil words of others conquers everything. The learned regard as a true charioteer he who reins in his anger like horses, not he who hangs onto the reins tightly. O Devayani! Know that he who restrains his rising anger through feelings of non-anger conquers everything. A man who restrains his anger through forgiveness is compared to a snake that casts off its old skin. He who is not hurt through the evil words of others and does not retaliate attains all the objects of life. Between two men, one who performs sacrifices continuously every month for a hundred years and one who does not feel anger, the one without anger is the superior one. Young boys and girls are not always sensible and quarrel with each other. They do not know true strength or weakness. The wise never imitate them.”

‘Devayani replied, “O father! Even though I am a girl, I know what is virtue and what is duty. I also know the difference between anger and forgiveness and the strength and weakness of each. But when a disciple behaves disrespectfully towards a preceptor, it should not be condoned. I do not wish to live among people whose conduct is unbecoming. A wise man who desires welfare should not live among people with evil intent, who speak ill of high birth and good conduct. It is said that the best place to live is among honest ones, where high birth and good conduct are known and respected. I can think of nothing more intolerable in the three worlds than the terrible and evil words of Vrishaparva’s daughter. It is the inferior one who thrives on the success of a rival.”’

75

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kavya, the best of the Bhrigu lineage, was very angry. He went to the place where Vrishaparva was seated and unhesitatingly told him, “O king! Unlike a cow, the fruits of evil actions are not immediate. Such fruits are certainly manifested, if not in one’s own self, in one's son or in one's grandson. They are like a heavy meal in the stomach. You killed the Brahmana Kacha, descended from Angirasa, when he lived with me, even though he was devoted to dharma, committed no sin and served me. You killed one who did not deserve to die. You caused injury to my daughter. O Vrishaparva! For this reason, I have to forsake you and your relatives. O king! I can no longer live with you in your territory. O daitya! Do not take me to be one who utters a falsehood. Why do you overlook the faults of your own and do not check them?"

'Vrishaparva said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Never have I known falsehood or non-adherence to dharma in you. Dharma and truth are established in you. O illustrious one! Please show me your grace. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! If you forsake us and depart, we will have no refuge and will drown in the ocean." Shukra replied, "O asura! I do not care whether you sink to the bottom of the ocean or disappear in the various directions. I cannot tolerate any unpleasant act directed at my daughter, whom I love. Pacify Devayani, because my life is based on her. Just as Brihaspati ensures Indra's welfare, my ascetic powers are for your protection." Vrishaparva replied, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! You are the master of everything that belongs to the lord of the asuras—riches, elephants, cattle, horses. You are their lord, even of me." Shukra said, "O great asura! If it is true that I am the lord of everything that is possessed by the lord of the daityas, go and try to pacify Devayani." Devayani said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! O father! If you are really the lord of all the wealth of the king and he himself, ask the king to come to me and state it himself. Otherwise, I won't accept it."[153] Vrishaparva said, "O Devayani! O one with the beautiful smile! I will give you whatever you desire to possess, regardless of how difficult it is to obtain." Devayani replied, "I desire that Sharmishtha, together with 1000 other ladies, should be my maid servants. She must also follow me when my father gives my hand in marriage." Vrishaparva said, "O nurse! Quickly go and fetch Sharmishtha here. She must do whatever Devayani wishes." The nurse then went and told Sharmishtha, "O fortunate one! Arise and do what is good for your relatives. Urged by Devayani, the Brahmana is about to forsake his disciples. O unblemished one! You must now do exactly what Devayani wishes.” Sharmishtha replied, “I will today do exactly what she desires. Because of me, Shukra and Devayani must not leave.” Commanded by her father, she then quickly emerged from the supreme palace on a palanquin, accompanied by 1000 maidens.

‘Sharmishtha said, “I am your maid servant and will serve you, with 1000 other slaves. I will follow you wherever your father bestows you.” Devayani retorted, “I am the daughter of one who chants praises, begs and stretches out his hand for alms. You are the daughter of one who is praised. How can you be my slave?” Sharmishtha replied, “Whatever be the way, one must be prepared to bring about the welfare of one’s afflicted relatives. I will follow you wherever your father bestows you.” O best of kings! When Vrishaparva’s daughter promised to be her slave, Devayani told her father, “O supreme among Brahmanas! I will now enter the capital. I know that your knowledge and the strength of your learning are invincible.” Having been thus addressed by his daughter, the immensely famous one, the best of Brahmanas, was pleased and entered the city. All the danavas paid him homage.’

76

Vaishampayana said, ‘O best of kings! After a long time, the beautiful Devayani went to the same forest to play. With Sharmishtha and the 1000 maid servants, she reached the same spot and began to roam around as she pleased. Being attended by all those friends, she felt very happy. All of them sported in abandon, drinking the nectar from *madhavi* creepers, eating diverse food and biting into fruit. In search of deer to hunt, the king who was Nahusha’s son again came to the same place, exhausted and thirsty. He saw Devayani and Sharmishtha, with all those ladies. They were drinking and languid, adorned in celestial ornaments. He saw the sweet-smiling Devayani seated there. Among all those beautiful women, she was unparalleled in her loveliness. She was waited upon by Sharmishtha, who was massaging her feet.

'Yayati said, "It seems that these 1000 women are surrounding the two of you. O beautiful ones! Tell me your names and your clans." Devayani replied, "O ruler of men! Hear my words and know that I am the daughter of Shukra, the preceptor of the asuras. This friend is my slave. She goes wherever I go. She is Sharmishtha, the daughter of Vrishaparva, the king of the danavas." Yayati asked, "This maiden is beautiful. She has lovely eyebrows. I am curious to know how this daughter of the asura king, your friend, has come to be your slave." Devayani replied, "O tiger among men! Everything follows what has been destined. Do not be surprised at what seems to be out of the ordinary and know that everything is determined by destiny. Your form and attire is like that of a king. Your speech is like that of one who knows the Vedas. What is your name? Where have you come from? Whose son are you? Tell me." Yayati replied, "During my years of brahmacharya, the entire knowledge of the Vedas penetrated my ears. I am a king and the son of a king. I am known as Yayati." Devayani asked, "O king! Why have you come to this region? Is it to gather lotuses or hunt for deer?" Yayati replied, "O fortunate one! I came to hunt for deer and came here to search for water. You speak a lot. Please allow me to leave now." Devayani said, "With the slave Sharmishtha, the two of us and 1000 maid servants are at your command to serve you. O fortunate one! Please be my friend and husband." Yayati replied, "O beautiful one! I am not worthy of you. You are the daughter of Ushanas. O Devayani! Your father cannot marry you to a king." Devayani replied, "Brahmanas have already been united with Kshatriyas and Kshatriyas have been united with Brahmanas. You are a rishi and the son of a rishi. O son of Nahusha! Therefore, marry me." Yayati replied, "O beautiful one! There is no doubt that the four varnas have sprung from a single body. But their purity varies and so does their dharma. The Brahmana is superior to the others." Devayani said, "O son of Nahusha! Earlier, no man except you has ever touched my hand. Therefore, in accordance with the dharma of accepting the hand, I accept you as my husband. My hand has been touched by you, who are a rishi and the son of a rishi. How can a proud one like me allow any other man to touch my hand?" Yayati replied, “The learned men know that a Brahmana is more to be avoided than a virulently poisonous and angry snake or a blazing fire that spreads in all directions.” Devayani asked, “O bull among men! Why do you say that a Brahmana is more to be avoided than a virulently poisonous and angry snake or a blazing fire that spreads in all directions?” Yayati replied, “The snake kills only one. The sharpest weapon kills only one. But if angry, a Brahmana can destroy many cities and kingdoms. O timid one! Therefore, I think that it is harder to fend off a Brahmana. O fortunate one! I cannot marry you unless your father bestows you on me.”

‘Devayani said, “O king! I have chosen you. It is agreed that my father will bestow me on you and you will marry me. You need have no fear you have not asked for me. You will receive what is given to you.” Devayani quickly sent a message to her father. On hearing this, Bhrigu’s descendant went to meet the king. On seeing Shukra come, Yayati, the lord of the earth, paid homage to the Brahmana Kavya with joined palms, worshipped him and waited. Devayani said, “O father! This is the king who is Nahusha’s son. He grasped my hand when I was in trouble. Bestow me to him. I will accept no one else in the world as my husband.” Shukra said, “O son of Nahusha! You are brave. You have been chosen by my beloved daughter as her husband. I give her to you. Accept her as your queen.” Yayati replied, “O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! I seek a boon from you. Let no great sin descend on me as a consequence of my begetting offspring of mixed caste.” Shukra said, “I free you from this non-adherence to dharma. You will receive your desired boon. No sin will befall you as a result of this marriage. Maintain the slender-waisted Devayani as your wife in accordance with dharma. With her, may you find incomparable happiness. O king! Always respect this maiden Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva’s daughter, and you must never call her to your bed.” Having been thus addressed, Yayati circumambulated Shukra. With the great-souled one’s permission, he returned happily to his own city.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Yayati’s capital resembled Indra’s capital. He entered his capital and instated Devayani in the women’s quarters. There was a grove of *ashoka* trees nearby. With Devayani’s permission, he instated Vrishaparva’s daughter in a house that he built there. He honoured asuri Sharmishtha with 1000 maid servants and made good arrangements for her food and clothing. Like the gods, the king who was Nahusha’s son, passed many happy years in Devayani’s company. When her season arrived, the beautiful Devayani conceived and gave birth to a boy as her first child.

‘When a thousand years had passed, Vrishaparva’s daughter Sharmishtha saw that having attained youth, her season had arrived. She began to think, “My season has arrived, but I do not yet have a husband. What will happen? What shall I do? What is proper for me to do? Devayani has given birth, but my youth is in vain. I shall choose as my husband the same person and in the same way as her. I am certain in my mind that the king will give me a son. Will the one who is devoted to righteous conduct come and meet me in private?” On one occasion, the king emerged and came to the ashoka grove. On seeing Sharmishtha there, he came and stood before her. The sweet-smiling Sharmishtha found the king alone before her. She greeted the king with joined palms and said, “O son of Nahusha! No one can touch the women who dwell in the inner quarters of Soma, Indra, Vishnu, Yama, Varuna and you. O king! Know that I am beautiful, have been born in a good lineage and show good conduct. O ruler of men! I seek your favour for my season.” Yayati replied, “I know about your conduct, since you are an unblemished maiden born among the daityas. I can also see your beauty. I do not even see a blemish that is as small as the point of a needle. However, when I married Devayani, Kavya Ushanas told me that Vrishaparva’s daughter should never be in my bed.” Sharmishtha said, “O king! It is no sin to commit a falsehood in five cases—in jest, to women, at the time of marriage, when confronting death and when all one’s riches are liable to be lost. O lord of men! It is true that he who bears false witness is demeaned. When a general purpose is sought to be attained, only then does a falsehood harm the speaker.” Yayati replied, “A king must be a role model to his subjects and if it is proven that he lied, destruction follows. I cannot afford to lie, even when I am confronted with the greatest loss.” Sharmishtha said, “O king! It is held that one’s husband and one’s friend’s husband are closely related. A friend’s marriage is equal to one’s own. I have chosen my friend’s husband as mine.” Yayati replied, “The vow I have taken is that the gift should match the one who asks. You are asking my favour. Tell me what I should do?” Sharmishtha said, “O king! Save me from sin and protect my dharma.[154] If I conceive a child through you, I will perform the most righteous act in the world. O king! It is decreed that three people can never own—a wife, a slave and a son. Whatever they obtain belongs to the one who owns them. O king! I am Devayani’s slave and that descendant of the Bhrigu lineage is yours. She and I are equally yours. Love me as I love you.” Having been thus addressed, the king was persuaded.

‘He paid honour to Sharmishtha and protected her dharma. He united with Sharmishtha and satisfied their desires. Then they lovingly bade farewell and returned to where they had come from. As a consequence of the union with that best of kings, Sharmishtha, with the sweet smile and beautiful eyebrows, conceived her first child. O king! In due time, the one with eyes like blue lotuses gave birth to a son. He was like the son of a god, with eyes that had the complexion of blue lotuses.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the sweet-smiling Devayani heard of this birth of a son, she unhappily began to think about Sharmishtha. Devayani went to Sharmishtha and said, “O one with the beautiful eyebrows! What sin have you committed out of desire?” Sharmishtha replied, “A rishi arrived. He was devoted to dharma and learned in the Vedas. In accordance with dharma, I asked for a boon and he gave it to me. O one with the sweet smile! I did not fall prey to sin so as to satiate my desire. I tell you truthfully that I obtained this son through the rishi.” Devayani said, “O timid one! If that is the case, it is all right. I wish to know the name, lineage and birth of that Brahmana.” Sharmishtha replied, “O one with the beautiful smile! He was as radiant in energy as the sun. On seeing him, I was powerless to ask these questions.” Devayani said, “O Sharmishtha! If all this is true and you have indeed obtained this son from such a superior and great Brahmana, I have no reason to be angry.” They conversed and laughed happily with each other. Believing literally what she had been told, Bhrigu’s descendant[155] went home.

‘O king! Yayati had two sons through Devayani—Yadu and Turvasu. Those two were like Shakra[156] and Vishnu. Through that rajarshi, Vrishaparva’s daughter Sharmishtha gave birth to three sons—Druhyu, Anu and Puru.

‘O king! One day, the sweet-smiling Devayani went with Yayati to a great forest. She saw three divine looking children playing there, without any care in the world. Devayani was surprised and asked, “O king! Whose children are these handsome ones? They look like sons of the gods. They look exactly like you in form and radiance.” Having asked the king, she asked the boys, “O sons! What is the name of your lineage? Which Brahmana is your father? Tell me truthfully. I wish to hear it all.” The children pointed at the supreme king with their fingers and said that Sharmishtha was their mother. Having said this, they came up to the king. But with Devayani there, the king dared not greet them.

The boys then wept in sorrow and went to their mother, Sharmishtha. On witnessing the love the boys displayed towards the king, the queen understood and asked Sharmishtha, “You are owned by me. How have you dared to do that which brings displeasure to me? You have reverted to the dharma of the asuras. Do you have no fear?” Sharmishtha replied, “O one with the beautiful smile! What I told you about the rishi is true. My acts were in accordance with dharma and propriety. Therefore, why should I be afraid of you? O beautiful one! You chose the king as your husband. So did I. According to dharma, a friend’s husband is one’s own husband. You are the daughter of a Brahmana. Therefore, as my superior, you deserve my honour and respect. But don’t you know that this rajarshi is deserving of greater honour?” On hearing these words, Devayani said, “O king! You have caused me displeasure. I will not live here any longer.” Having said this, the dusky one quickly arose, with tears in her eyes. In a miserable state, she went to her father Kavya.

‘Extremely alarmed, the king followed her, trying to pacify her wrath. But she did not return. Her eyes were red with anger. She did not speak a word to the king. With eyes full of tears, she soon reached Kavya Ushanas. On seeing her father, she paid him homage and stood before him. Yayati followed soon after and also paid homage to Bhrigu’s descendant. Devayani said, “Evil has won over dharma. The inferior have ascended and the superior brought down. I have been overtaken by Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva’s daughter. This king, Yayati, has fathered three sons through that wretched woman. But I have got only two sons. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! This king is famous for his knowledge of dharma. O Kavya! Nevertheless, I tell you that he has crossed the threshold.” Shukra said, “O great king! You know dharma well. Yet, you have committed sin for the sake of pleasure. Therefore, invincible old age will soon oppress you.” Yayati replied, “O illustrious one! The daughter of the lord of the danavas begged me to make her season bear fruit. It was with that thought, and no other, that I did what I thought was right. Those who know the brahman say that a man who is asked by a woman for the fruition of her season must grant her wish. Otherwise, he commits the sin of killing an embryo. A man who refuses when a desiring woman privately solicits him, is called a killer of an embryo by the learned. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! It is for these reasons, concerned about committing a sin, that I went to Sharmishtha." Shukra said, "O king! You are dependent on me. You should have awaited my instructions. O son of Nahusha! By committing a falsehood, you have become a thief in the eyes of dharma." Being thus cursed by the angry Ushanas, Yayati, son of Nahusha, was instantly deprived of his earlier youth and old age overcame him.

'Yayati said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! I am not yet satiated with Devayani's youth. O Brahmana! Therefore, show me mercy and let old age not overcome me now." Shukra replied, "I never utter a falsehood. O ruler of the earth! You have been instantly attacked by old age. But if you wish, you can transfer this old age to another." Yayati said, "O Brahmana! Then agree to this. A son of mine who will grant me his youth will enjoy my kingdom, my merit and my fame." Shukra replied, "O son of Nahusha! If you think of me, you will be able to transfer your old age to whomsoever you wish. No evil will befall you from that. The son who will give you his youth will become the king. He will have a long life and numerous offspring and will attain fame."'

79

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been attacked by old age, Yayati returned to his capital. He summoned his eldest and best son Yadu and said, "O son! Old age, wrinkles and grey hair have overcome me, because of a curse imposed by Kavya Ushanas. But I am not yet satiated with youth. O Yadu! Take upon yourself this guilt and the consequent old age. I can then enjoy pleasures with your youth. When 1000 years have passed, I shall return your youth to you and take over the guilt and the consequent old age." Yadu replied, "O king! White hair and beard, cheerlessness, flabbiness, wrinkles on the body, ugliness, weakness, thinness, incapacity to work, defeat by the young and forsaking by those who depend on you—I do not wish for this old age." Yayati said, "O son! You were born from my heart, but you will not give your youth to me. Therefore, your offspring will have no share in the kingdom. O Turvasu!

O son! Take upon yourself this guilt and the consequent old age. I wish to enjoy pleasures with your youth. When 1000 years have passed, I shall return your youth to you and take over the guilt and the consequent old age." Turvasu replied, "O father! I do not desire old age. It destroys all desire, pleasure, strength, beauty, intelligence and even life." Yayati said, "You were born from my heart, but will not give your youth to me. O Turvasu! Therefore, your lineage will become extinct. O foolish one! You will be a king over subjects whose conduct and practices will be impure. Women of superior birth will marry men of inferior birth. They will live on meat and lust after and cohabit with their preceptors' wives and animals. The evil ones will follow the conduct of animals and behave like mlecchas." Thus did Yayati curse Turvasu, his son.

'Yayati then spoke to Sharmishtha's son Druhyu. "O Druhyu! For 1000 years, take over the old age that destroys beauty and complexion. Give me your youth. When 1000 years have passed, I will return your youth to you and take back the guilt and the consequent old age." Druhyu replied, "One who is old cannot enjoy elephants, chariots, horses or women. Speech fails him. Therefore, I do not desire this old age." Yayati said, "You were born from my heart, but will not give your youth to me. O Druhyu! Therefore, the most cherished of your desires will not come true. You and your lineage will not be kings, but will have the title of 'Bhoja'[157] in a land where the only means of transportation will be rafts, boats and swimming. O Anu! Accept my guilt and the consequent old age. I will have your youth for 1000 years." Anu replied, "Those who are old eat like children, drooling and unclean at all times of the day. They cannot pour offerings into the sacrificial fire at the right time. I do not wish for such an old age." Yayati said, "You were born from my heart, but will not give your youth to me. Since you have described so many faults associated with old age, old age will overcome you. Your offspring will be destroyed as soon as they attain youth. You yourself will not be able to perform any sacrifices before the fire."

'Yayati said, "O Puru! You are my youngest and most beloved son. You will be the best among them. O son! Old age, wrinkles and grey hair have overcome me, because of a curse imposed by Kavya Ushanas. But I am not yet satiated with youth. O Puru! Accept my guilt and the consequent old age. I will enjoy pleasures for some time with your youth. After 1000 years have passed, I will return your youth to you and accept back the guilt and the consequent old age." Having been thus addressed by his father, Puru replied, "O great king! I will do what you command me to do. O king! I will take upon myself the guilt and the consequent old age. Accept my youth and enjoy pleasures as you wish. I will live as you say, attacked by old age and deprived of youth and beauty. I will give you my youth." Yayati said, "O Puru! O son! I am extremely pleased with you. Since I am pleased, I will grant you this. Your offspring will rule the kingdom, be prosperous and accomplish all their desires."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having received Puru's youth, Yayati, Nahusha's son and the best of kings, was delighted and indulged in pleasures—as he desired, as he could sustain, at whichever time he wished, and as it gave him happiness. O lord of kings! But he did nothing that was against dharma. He pleased the gods with sacrifices, the ancestors with shraddha ceremonies, the poor through charity, the Brahmanas by fulfilling their desires, the guests through food and drink, the Vaishyas with protection, the Shudras with kindness and the dasyus with suppression. Yayati pleased all his subjects by ruling according to dharma, like Indra himself. The king was as valorous as a lion. He was young and enjoyed all the pleasures and unlimited happiness, but without transgressing dharma. The king was extremely happy at these grand pleasures. However, the ruler of men was also despondent when he remembered that 1000 years would soon end. Knowing the measurement of time, the valorous one counted kalas and kashthas.

'When the entire duration was complete, he called his son Puru and said, "O son! O vanquisher of foes! With your youth, I have enjoyed pleasures—as I desired, as I could sustain and at whichever time I wished. O Puru! O fortunate one! I am extremely pleased with you. Take back your youth now. Also take the kingdom, because you are the son who has brought pleasure to me." Nahusha's son, King Yayati, then took back his old age and his son Puru received back his youth.

'The king wished to instate his youngest son, Puru, as the king. But the four varnas, led by the Brahmanas, said, "O lord! How can you instate Puru in the kingdom, overlooking your eldest son Yadu, who is Sharmishtha's son and Shukra's grandson? Yadu is your eldest son. Turvasu comes after him. After him, there is Sharmishtha's son Druhyu and then Anu and then Puru. How is it proper to pass over the elders and instate the youngest as the king? In accordance with dharma, which you uphold, we wish to bring this to your attention." Yayati replied, "Listen to my words, everyone from the four varnas, led by the Brahmanas, as to why the kingdom cannot be given to my eldest son. My commands were disobeyed by my eldest son Yadu. It is the opinion of the learned that a son who acts counter to the father's wishes is no son at all. He is a son who follows the words of his mother and father for their welfare. He is a son who acts like a son with his father and mother. Yadu has slighted me and so has Turvasu. I have been extremely slighted by Druhyu and Anu. Puru is the only one who has specially followed my commands and respected me. Though he is the youngest, he accepted my old age. Puru is like my true son; he did what I desired. Kavya Ushanas Shukra himself granted me the boon that a son who followed my instructions would become the king and would rule over the earth. Therefore, I ask all of you to allow Puru to be instated as the king." The people said, "It is true that a son who has all the qualities and always seeks the welfare of his mother and father and respects them deserves to be the lord, even if he is the youngest. Since Shukra has granted this boon, there is nothing that we can say." At these words from the citizens of the town and the country, Nahusha's son then instated his son Puru as the king.

'Giving the kingdom to Puru, he accepted the vows for departing to the forest and left his capital with the Brahmanas and the ascetics. Yadu's sons are known as the Yadavas, Turvasu's sons are known as the Yavanas, Druhyu's sons are known as the Bhojas and Anu's sons as the mlecchas. Puru’s sons are known as the Pourava lineage. O king! You yourself have been born to rule this kingdom for 1000 years.’

81

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having instated his beloved son as the king, Nahusha’s son King Yayati was happy and became a sage in the forest. He lived in the forest with Brahmanas, rigid in his vows and living on roots and fruit. After a life of self-control, he ascended to heaven. Having attained heaven, he lived there in bliss and happiness. But after a long time, he was again thrown out by Shakra. I have heard that when he was hurled down from heaven, he remained suspended in the sky and did not reach the surface of the earth. It has been said that he later again went to heaven, together with the kings Vasumana, Ashtaka, the valorous Pratardana and Shibi.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘Through what deeds did the lord of the earth again attain heaven? O Brahmana! Before all these Brahmanas who are rishis, I wish to hear all the details. Yayati was like the king of the gods and lord of the earth. He extended the Puru lineage. He was as resplendent as the sun. The great-souled one’s fame was extensive and his deeds based on truth. I wish to hear his complete story, in heaven and here.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘I will recount for you the excellent account of Yayati’s exploits, in heaven and here. This is sacred and destroys sins for all those who hear it. Having instated his youngest son Puru on the throne, Nahusha’s son, King Yayati, happily retired to the forest. He cast aside to the farthest corners his other sons, with Yadu at their head. The king lived in the forest for a long time, surviving on roots and fruit. He paid homage to the gods and the ancestors, conquered his rage and controlled his senses. He poured offerings into the fire, as prescribed for those who retire to the forest. The lord worshipped his guests by offering forest food and ghee. He sustained himself through gleanings of corn and remnants of food from others. In this way, the king passed a full thousand years. For thirty autumns he lived on water alone, controlling his mind and speech. For one year he lived on air, without sleeping. For another year, he performed austerities amid the five sacred fires.[158] For six months, he stood immobile on one leg. The performer of sacred deeds then ascended heaven.'

82

Vaishampayana said, 'When that lord of kings lived in heaven among the gods, the thirty gods, the saddhyas, the maruts and the vasus paid him homage. The performer of sacred deeds often went from the world of the gods to Brahma's world. It has been said that the lord of the earth lived there for a very long time.

'One day, Yayati, supreme among kings, went to Shakra and in the course of the conversation Shakra asked the lord of the earth, "O king! What did you tell Puru when he accepted your old age and roamed the earth and when you gave him the kingdom? Tell me truly." Yayati replied, "I told him that he would be the king of the earth in the central region, between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. His brothers would rule over the other regions. I told him that men who possess no anger are superior to those who have anger, men with forgiveness are superior to those who do not forgive, that men are superior to animals and the learned to the ignorant. If abused, one should not abuse back in turn. If not suppressed, anger burns one's good deeds. One should not cause pain to others through cruel words. One should not cause fear to those who are worse off. One should not utter words that hurt and cause pain to others, taking one to hell. One who wounds another through the thorn of harsh, sharp and abrasive speech is deserted by Lakshmi and bears evil in his mouth. A righteous man should always be worshipped in the front. A righteous man should protect one's back. One should always disregard the cruel words of wicked ones. Cruel words issue from the mouth like arrows and cause hurt, night and day. When they descend, they strike the innermost parts and learned ones never release them on others. In the three worlds, there is nothing that pacifies as much as compassion, friendship towards beings, charity and sweet words. Therefore, one should always use words that pacify and never those that are harsh. One should honour those deserving of respect, always give, and never ask.'

83

'Indra said, "O king! O son of Nahusha! O Yayati! After accomplishing all your deeds, you left your home and departed for the forest. Tell me, who are you equal to in your austerities? I am asking you."

'Yayati replied, "O Vasava![159] I do not see anyone equal to me in austerities among gods, men, gandharvas and maharshis."

'Indra said, "O king! Since you are disrespecting those who are your superiors, equals and inferiors, without knowing their powers, these worlds will end for you now. Your merits will diminish and you will fall."

'Yayati replied, "O Shakra! O king of the gods! Since my disrespect for gods, rishis, gandharvas and men have diminished me and made me lose these worlds, I wish that when I am deprived of the world of the gods, I should fall among righteous men."

'Indra said, "O king! You will fall among those who are righteous. There you will again obtain great standing. O Yayati! After knowing this, you will never again show disrespect for your superiors and your equals."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At that, Yayati fell from the sacred worlds, frequented by the king of the gods. While he was falling, rajarshi Ashtaka, the protector of true dharma, saw him. Ashtaka asked, "O youth! Who are you? You are like Vasava in your form and blaze like the fire with your own radiance. Why are you falling like the sun, the chief among those in the sky and the dispeller of masses of dark clouds? On seeing you fall from the sun's path, as immeasurably radiant as the sun or the fire, everyone is wondering at what is falling among us and is being deprived of consciousness. On seeing you traverse the path of the gods, equal in radiance to Surya, Indra and Vishnu, we have all arisen and come together, to ask you the reason for your downfall. O one whose beauty causes envy! Had you asked us first who we were, we would not have committed the impudence of asking you first. But we now ask you, who are you and why have you come here? O one with Indra's powers! Let your fear be dispelled. Let your misery and delusion end. You are now in the presence of those who are righteous. Even Shakra, the killer of Bala, will not dare to harm you here. O one who is equal to the king of the gods! Righteous ones always provide standing to those who have been deprived of their happiness. Righteous ones are lords of the movable and the immovable. Righteous ones are assembled here and you are among them, those who are like you. Fire is the lord of burning. Earth is the lord of sowing. The sun is the lord of light. Like that, a guest is the lord of the righteous."'

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'Yayati said, "I am Yayati, Nahusha's son and Puru's father. Disrespect for all beings has dislodged me from the world of the gods, the siddhas and the rishis. My merit diminished, I am falling. Since I am older than you in age, I was not the first to greet you. He who is senior in learning, austerities or birth is older and is worshipped by the Brahmanas."

'Ashtaka replied, "O king! You say that he who is older in age deserves the respect of others and that is the reason you did not greet first. But it is also said that the worship of Brahmanas is for him who is senior in learning and austerities."

'Yayati said, "It is said that evil deeds destroy the merit of good deeds and vanity leads to the evil worlds. The righteous never follow evil and act so as to increase their virtue. I myself had great riches.[160] But all that is gone now and I will not get it back, despite my best efforts. One who learns from this fate will be wise and righteous. In the world of the living, men have different dispositions, but depending on destiny, their power and efforts may amount to nothing. Knowing that destiny is supreme, the learned say that the wise are content with what they obtain. Happiness and misery are determined by destiny and are beyond one's control and powers. Knowing that destiny is supreme, one should not be miserable or happy. The wise are always equable, without misery in grief and exultation in happiness. Knowing that destiny is supreme, grief and exultation are pointless. O Ashtaka! I never tremble in fear. Nor is my mind ever affected by anxiety. For I know that it will certainly be the way the creator has determined for me. Insects,[161] those born from eggs, vegetables, reptiles, worms, fish, stones, wood and everything, when freed from action, are reunited with nature. I know that happiness and unhappiness are not eternal. O Ashtaka! Knowing this, why should I grieve? We never know what should be done to avoid misery. Therefore, I am not concerned and give up grief.”

‘Ashtaka replied, “O lord of kings! Tell me in detail the accurate accounts of the worlds that you enjoyed and where you spent time. You speak of dharma like one who knows the subject.”

‘Yayati said, “I was a king, ruling over the entire earth as my kingdom. I acquired many great worlds and those beyond them. I lived there for 1000 years and then ascended to a superior world. That beautiful world was the capital of Puruhuta.[162] It had 1000 gates and extended for 1000 yojanas. I lived there for 1000 years and then ascended to a superior world. I attained that world, which was divine and without decay. It was the world of Prajapati, one that is difficult to attain. I lived there for 1000 years and then ascended to a superior world. That was the abode of the god of the gods.[163] I lived in that world, as I wished. The thirty gods have paid me homage. I have rivalled the gods in power and glory. In Nandana, I could assume any form at will. For a million years I sported with apsaras, in mountains with flowering trees and fragrant scents. I lived there in divine happiness for a large number of years, beyond counting. Then a messenger of the gods, terrible in visage, shouted to me thrice in a deep voice, ‘Ruined, ruined, ruined’. O king![164] I remember that I fell from Nandana with my merits diminished. O lord of men! I heard the voices of the gods in the sky, lamenting and mourning. ‘Yayati of sacred fame and sacred deeds has had his merit diminished and is falling. What misfortune!’ When I was falling, I asked them, ‘Where are the righteous ones among whom I shall fall?’ They pointed me to this sacrificial ground that belongs to you. On seeing it, I came here quickly. I smelt the fragrance of ghee wafting up from the sacrificial ground. I saw the smoke rising up and was reassured.”’

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‘Ashtaka asked, “O one who is foremost among those of Krita Yuga![165] You could assume any form at will. You spent a million years in the garden of Nandana. Why did you have to give it up and come to earth?”

‘Yayati replied, “Here, friends and relatives forsake a man who has lost his wealth. There, the gods and their lord forsake one whose merit has been diminished.”

‘Ashtaka said, “I am curious to know how one’s merit is diminished there. My mind is confused on this. Please also tell me which worlds are attained through which means. Please tell me. I know that you know the subject.”

‘Yayati replied, “O god among men! With great lamentations, those who speak of their own merits are hurled down to the hell known as bhouma. Though actually lean, they grow and become food for vultures, dogs and jackals. Therefore, in this world, a man should avoid evil acts that are condemned. O king! I have now told you everything. Please tell me, what else should I say.”

‘Ashtaka said, “When life is destroyed through age and they are torn apart by vultures, peacocks[166] and insects, where do they live and how do they come to life again? I have not heard of a hell named bhouma.”

‘Yayati replied, “When they have ascended from their bodies, depending on their deeds, they are born again on earth. They descend into the hell known as bhouma, and it is impossible to count the many number of years spent there. Some fall in the sky for 60,000 years. Some others fall for 80,000 years. They then fall to bhouma and are attacked by terrible rakshasas with sharp teeth.”

‘Ashtaka said, “When they fall thus to bhouma, why are they attacked by terrible rakshasas with sharp teeth? How do they continue to exist? How do the dead enter the womb again?”

‘Yayati replied, “Just as raindrops cling to flowers and fruit, they cling to the semen created by man. They then enter a woman at the time of her season and become an embryo in the womb. In visible form, life enters trees, herbs, water, air, the earth and the sky. Thus do the dead become embryos again, in the form of bipeds and quadrupeds.”

‘Ashtaka said, “Does a seed enter the womb with the old form? Or does it get a new form? How is a human womb entered? Tell me, because I still have doubts. How is the visible form of limbs, eyes, ears and senses acquired? Since I am asking you, tell me all this. O father! You know everything on the subject.”

‘Yayati replied, “When it is the season, the invisible form enters the womb through the sperm, like into a flower with its juices. Depending on the rights that have been acquired,[167] the embryo develops with the passage of time. When the limbs are developed and the six[168] senses established, man is formed. With his ears, he gets to know sound. With his eyes, he gets to see form. With his nose, he knows smell and with his tongue, taste. With touch, he gets to feel and with his mind, he gets to know feelings. O Ashtaka! Know that this is how the great atman develops life in the body.”

‘Ashtaka said, “A man who is dead is burnt, buried in the ground or becomes dust. He is reduced to nothing after death. Later, how does he get to know himself again?”

‘Yayati replied, “O lion among kings! A man who dies is like one asleep. However, his good and evil acts are in front of him. When the body is dead, he assumes some other form with a speed that is swifter than that of the wind. Those who have performed good deeds go to a pure birth. Those who did evil go to an evil birth. O one with great feelings! The evil become worms and insects. I will not speak about them. I have told you how the dead become embryos again—bipeds, quadrupeds and those with six legs. I have told you everything in detail. What more do you wish to ask?”

‘Ashtaka said, “O father! Is there anything that can be done to attain the superior worlds, through austerities and the pursuit of learning, instead of returning to earth? How does one attain the world of supreme bliss? I am asking you. Please tell me everything accurately."

'Yayati replied, "Austerities, gifts, tranquillity, self-control, humility and compassion towards all beings. The learned say a man is deluded and loses everything through pride. A man of knowledge, who thinks himself to be learned and uses his learning to debase the fame of others, never attains the eternal worlds. Nor does the brahman yield any fruits to him. There are four acts that dispel all fear of danger, but cause fear if performed in the wrong way, with pride—offerings before the fire, vow of silence, studying and sacrifices. The learned should find no pride in homage. The learned should not grieve if insulted. The good always honour the good in this world. The evil never possess the intelligence of the good. I have paid homage, I have performed sacrifices, I have studied and I have observed vows. But I have done all this while discarding fear. The learned ones know the ancient one who is the refuge and is worshipped from the mind. He is the one with a supreme and radiant form, for finding supreme peace here and in the world hereafter."'

86

'Ashtaka asked, "How should a householder act so as to attain the gods? What about mendicants and those who practise brahmacharya? What about the one who is devoted to the right path after retiring to the forest? Those who know have many differing views on this."

'Yayati replied, "A successful brahmachari should not be asked to do his preceptor's work and will study when asked to do so. He will awake first and go to bed after everyone else. He will be soft in speech, not stirred by pride, devoted to studying and self-controlled. The ancient sacred texts say that when a householder obtains riches according to dharma, he must spend it on sacrifices and give alms and provide food to guests. He should not take from others what has not been given him. A chief sage who has attained success must live on his own strength in the forest. He must give to others and never cause them pain. He must be controlled in his food and deeds. The true mendicant is one who does not depend on any craft for his living. He is always without a home, has control over his senses and is always free from attachment. He does not live under a roof and travels with little and light belongings. He roams through many regions alone. When there is a night in this world when one has conquered desire and happiness, that is the night when a learned one should become an ascetic. A person who performs good deeds in the forest frees ten generations that have come before and ten that come after him—counting himself, that is twenty-one generations.”

‘Ashtaka asked, “How many kinds of sages are there and how many who observe vows of silence? Tell us. We wish to hear all this from you.”

‘Yayati replied, “He is a true sage who lives in the forest and turns his back on the village. He is also one who lives in the village and turns his back on the forest.”

‘Ashtaka asked, “How can one turn one’s back on the village while living in the forest, or turn one’s back on the forest while living in the village?”

‘Yayati replied, “The sage who lives in the forest uses nothing from the village. Thus he turns his back on the village while living in the forest. But a true sage who maintains no fire and has no house or clan and keeps roaming, who wants nothing more than a loincloth as a garment and who is content with food that is enough to sustain life, he lives in the village and turns his back to the forest. He has given up all desire and deeds[169] and has his senses under complete control. He is the one who attains success in this world as a sage. Who will not worship one whose teeth are washed, nails are clipped, who is always bathed and without dirt and whose deeds are white, though he may be dark in complexion?[170] Lean from austerities and emaciated in blood, flesh and bones, such a sage not only conquers this world, but also the supreme one. The sage who observes a vow of silence and sits in meditation, with indifference between opposites,[171] he conquers this world and the supreme world. A sage who eats like cattle and other animals,[172] all his earlier worlds merge with the eternal at the time of universal destruction.”’

‘Ashtaka asked, “O king! Who among these two,[173] though both exert like the sun and the moon, first attains union with the gods?”

‘Yayati replied, “He who has no home despite being a householder and has controlled his desires, and the mendicant who lives in the village but has no home, will reach first. Both those who don’t attain old age and those who do can deteriorate. Because even if austerities are performed, there will be more austerities. It is said that cruelty finds no truth. O king! Even if one has no riches, but devotedly observes dharma without thinking of gains, one attains union with the eternal.”

‘Ashtaka said, “O king! You are young, handsome, garlanded and resplendent. Where have you come from and where are you going? Whose messenger are you? O lord of the earth! Where is your place?”

‘Yayati replied, “Since I have lost my merits, I am falling into the hell known as bhouma. I have been cast out from the sky and am entering the earth. I will go there after telling you that I must fall more. The Brahmanas and the rulers of the worlds are asking me to hasten. O lord of men! I obtained a boon from Shakra that I would fall among righteous men when I fell on the surface of the earth, at a place where the ones with all the good qualities were assembled.”

‘Ashtaka said, “O king! Do not keep falling. I ask you if there is any world for me here, in the sky or in heaven. I think you know the subject of dharma.”

‘Yayati replied, “O lion among kings! There are many worlds for you to enjoy in heaven, as many as the cattle and horses on earth and animals in the forests and in the mountains. This you must know.”

‘Ashtaka said, “O lord of kings! I give you all the worlds that are mine in heaven, be they in the sky or in heaven. O one who beats back enemies! Take them and go there quickly. Do not keep falling.”

‘Yayati replied, “O chief among kings! The likes of me, who are not Brahmanas or those who know the brahman, do not accept gifts. O lord of men! Earlier, I have always given to Brahmanas myself, as one must. Let no one who is not a Brahmana earn a living through begging, nor should the Brahmana wife of a valorous husband. If I act the way I have never done before, what righteousness will come of that?”

‘Pratardana[174] said, “O one with beauty that leads to envy! My name is Pratardana. I ask if there are any worlds for me, in heaven or in the sky, for I think that you know the subject of dharma.”

‘Yayati replied, “O lord of men! There are many worlds for you, dripping with nectar mixed with ghee and full of bliss. Even if you live in each for seven days, they will last you eternally.”

‘Pratardana said, “I give them all to you. Do not keep falling. Whatever worlds are for me, in the sky or in heaven, take them quickly and go there, shedding all your delusions.”

‘Yayati replied, “O king! No king who is equal in energy will crave for and accept the possessions obtained by another king through yoga. Even if affected with the adversity of destiny, no wise king should act in a cruel way. An intelligent king will tread the path of dharma and fame and bear dharma in mind. A person like me, learned and knowledgeable about dharma, will not act in the mean way you have advised. If I do[175] what others refuse to accept, how can that bring my welfare?” When King Yayati spoke these words, Vasumana, supreme among kings, addressed him.’

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‘Vasumana said, “O lord of men! I am Vasumana, the son of Roushadashvi, who is asking you. Is there any world for me in heaven? O great-souled one! I think you know the subject of dharma.”

‘Yayati replied, “In the sky, on earth and in the directions and wherever the sun radiates its heat, eternal worlds are waiting for you in heaven.”

‘Vasumana said, “I give them all to you. Do not keep falling. Let all my worlds be yours. O king! O wise one! If it is improper for you to accept them as a gift, buy them with a piece of straw.”

‘Yayati replied, “From childhood, I have not taken anything in a wrong way. I do not remember any false sale. If I do what others refuse to accept, how can that bring my welfare?”

‘Vasumana said, “O king! If it is improper to purchase them, take these worlds from me as a gift. O lord of men! I will certainly never go there. Therefore, let these worlds be yours.”

‘Shibi said, “O father! I am Shibi, the son of Ushinara. I ask you if there are any worlds, in the sky or in heaven, that are for me. I think you know the subject of dharma.”

‘Yayati replied, “O lord of men! In speech and in your heart, you have never refused anyone who asked you. Therefore, eternal worlds await you in heaven, great, prosperous and radiant as lightning.”

‘Shibi said, “O king! Accept these worlds as yours. If you don’t wish to accept them as a gift, purchase them. I will not accept them, now that I have given them to you. Go to those worlds.”

‘Yayati replied, “O Shibi! You are indeed the equal of Indra in influence. O lord of men! Your worlds are infinite. But I derive no pleasure from worlds that are given to me. Therefore, I cannot accept what you have given to me.”

‘Ashtaka said, “O king! You have not welcomed any of our worlds. But we have given them all to you. You will now go to hell.”

‘Yayati replied, “You have given to one who is deserving of gifts. All of you are strict in your righteousness and devoted to the truth. But I do not have the courage to do what I have not done earlier.”

‘Ashtaka said, “We see these five golden chariots before us. Who do they belong to? They are high and shining, blazing like the flames of fire.”

‘Yayati replied, “These five golden chariots, high and shining and blazing like the flames of fire, will bear you.”

‘Ashtaka said, “O king! Climb into your chariot and ride valorously in the sky. We will follow you when our time comes.”

‘Yayati replied, “All of us must go together. All of us have conquered heaven. Look, our path to the world of the gods has become visible.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Lighting up the sky and earth with the glory of their righteousness, those supreme kings then ascended their chariots and departed for heaven.

‘Ashtaka said, “I thought that I would be the first one to leave. The great-souled Indra has always been my friend. How is it that the vehicle of Shibi, son of Ushinara, has speedily outpaced us?”

‘Yayati replied, “Shibi, Ushinara’s son, has given up all his riches for the path of the gods. Therefore, he is the best among us. Gifts, austerities, truthfulness, dharma, humility, riches, forgiveness, equanimity and forbearance—King Shibi has always had them all, in incomparable measure. He is a learned king who has never been cruel. He is also restrained by his modesty. It is for these reasons that his chariot now outpaces ours.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Driven by curiosity, Ashtaka again asked his maternal grandfather, who was equal to Indra, “O king! I am asking you. Please tell me truthfully. Where have you come from? Who do you belong to? Whose son are you? In this world, what is it that you have performed that no one else, Brahmana or Kshatriya, can perform?” Yayati replied, “I am Yayati, the son of Nahusha and Puru’s father. I was a universal emperor on earth. You are my relatives. So I am revealing the secret to you. I am your maternal grandfather. Having conquered the entire earth, I gave it to Brahmanas. I gave them also handsome horses with single hooves and the gods then obtained their rightful shares. I gave this entire earth away to Brahmanas, with all its means of transport—cattle, gold, the best of riches and cows that numbered one hundred *arbudas*.[176] The sky and the earth still exist because of my righteousness and the fire burns among mankind. Never have I uttered a word that is not true. The learned always worship the truth. In all the worlds, I know that gods and sages are revered because they are devoted to the truth. He who recounts the tale of our ascent to heaven to the chief among Brahmanas, who do not question it, will himself attain the same worlds as us.” Thus, the great-souled king, who was the scourage of his enemies, was saved by his grandsons. The performer of the most noble of deeds left the earth and went to heaven, filling the earth with his exploits.’

Janamejaya said, 'O illustrious one! I wish to hear about the kings who established dynasties in the lineage of Puru. Tell me who they were, about their valour, their power and their courage. I have heard that in this lineage there wasn't a single king who lacked in valour or in good conduct. Nor was there one who lacked in offspring. O one blessed with the power of austerities! I wish to hear detailed accounts of these kings who were learned and famous, and about their character.'

Vaishampayana said, 'I will tell you what you have asked. The valorous ones of Puru's lineage were like Shakra in their energy. Through his wife Poushti, Puru had three maharathas as his sons—Pravira, Ishvara and Roudrashva. Pravira was the one who extended the lineage. Through Shuraseni, Pravira had the valorous Manasyu as his son. This one, with eyes like blue lotuses, became the lord of the earth, right up to the extremities of the four directions. Through Souviri, Manasyu had three sons—Subhru, Samhanana and Vagmi. They were all brave maharathas. Through an apsara, Roudrashva had ten great archers as his sons. They were brave warriors, performed many sacrifices and were famous and had many offspring. They were all learned in the science of weapons and were all devoted to dharma. They were Richepu, Kakshepu, the valorous Krikanepu, Sthandilyepu, Vanepu, the great warrior Sthalepu, the mighty Tejepu, the wise Satyepu, whose valour was like Indra's, Dharmepu and the tenth was Samtanepu, whose might was like that of a god. O son! These sons were born through Anadhrishti.[177] They performed royal sacrifices and horse sacrifices. O king! Richepu had a wise son named King Matinara. Matinara himself had four sons whose valour was unbounded—Tamsu, Mahana, Atiratha and Druhyu, whose radiance was unequalled. Among them, it was the greatly valorous Tamsu who extended the Puru lineage. He conquered the entire earth and obtained great fame and splendour. Tamsu gave birth to a valorous son named Ilina, who was supreme among conquerors and subjugated the entire earth. O king! Through Rathantari, Ilina gave birth to five sons who were like the five elements[178]—Duhshanta, Shura, Bhima, Pravasu and Vasu.

‘O Janamejaya! The eldest Duhshanta became the king. From him, and through Shakuntala, was born a learned son named Bharata who became the king. It was through him that the greatly famous Bharata dynasty started. Through his three wives, Bharata had nine sons. But none of them was like him and the king was not satisfied with any of them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bharata then performed a great sacrifice and obtained a son named Bhumanyu through Bharadvaja. O best of the Bharata lineage! Puru’s descendant looked upon this son as his own.[179] Bhumanyu was instated as the heir apparent. The king himself had a son named Vitatha and Vitatha became known as Bhumanyu’s son. Through Pushkarini, Bhumanyu had sons named Suhotra, Suhota, Suhavi, Sujayu and Richika. Suhotra, the eldest among them, became the king of the earth. He performed many royal and horse sacrifices. Suhotra conquered the entire earth, right up to the boundaries of the ocean, with all its elephants, cattle, horses and many gems. The earth seemed to be oppressed at the many burdens he placed on her, with masses of elephants, horses, chariots and human beings. Suhotra was a king who ruled over his subjects in accordance with dharma. The earth was covered with hundreds and thousands of altars and sacrificial stakes. People and crops were plentiful and the earth was adorned with the presence of the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Suhotra, the lord of the earth, gave birth to three sons through Aikshvaki—Ajamidha, Sumidha and Purumidha. Ajamidha was the chief among them and he perpetuated the dynasty. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through his three wives, he had six sons. Riksha was born from Dhumini, Duhshanta and Parameshthi were born from Nili, and Jahnu, Jana and Rupina were born from Keshini. All the Panchalas were descended from Duhshanta and Parameshthi. The Kushikas were descended from the infinitely energetic Jahnu. It is said that Riksha was older than Jana and Rupina and became the king.

‘O king! Riksha had a son named Samvarana and he extended your lineage. It has been heard that when Riksha’s son Samvarana ruled the earth as king, there was a great disaster that led to the destruction of subjects. The kingdom was broken up through famine, plague, drought and disease. The armies of their enemies defeated the Bharatas and sought to conquer the earth with fourfold armies.[180] The Panchalas soon conquered the entire earth and defeated them in battle with ten akshouhinis of soldiers. In great fear, King Samvarana fled with his wife, sons, advisers and friends. He then found shelter in the forests on the banks of the river Sindhu,[181] where the river extends up to the mountains. Facing a difficult situation, the Bharatas lived there for many years. They lived there for 1000 years.

'One day, the illustrious rishi Vashishtha went there to the Bharatas and at his approach, they respectfully and dutifully paid him homage. All the Bharatas then offered the radiant rishi welcoming gifts and honoured him. He lived there for eight years and the king himself then requested him to be their priest, so that they might regain their kingdom. Vashishtha agreed to this by saying "Om" to the Bharatas. We have heard that he instated the Pourava[182] as the emperor of all the Kshatriyas, like the tusk[183] of the entire expansive earth. The descendant of Bharata was established in his former supreme capital. With his great strength, he conquered the earth once more. Samvarana, the descendant of Ajamidha, performed many great sacrifices in which a lot of alms were given. Through Tapati, the daughter of Surya, Samvarana had a son named Kuru. Since Kuru was learned in the way of dharma, all the subjects instated him as their king. It is after his name that Kurujangala[184] has become so famous in the world. The great ascetic made Kurukshetra a sacred place through his austerities there. We have heard that Ashvavana, Abhishyanta, Chitraratha, Muni and the famous Janamejaya[185] were his five sons, through the intelligent Vahini. Abhishyanta begot Parikshit,[186] the powerful Shabalashva, Abhiraja, Viraja, the immensely strong Shalmali, Uchchaishrava,[187] Bhadrakara and Jitari as the eighth. Seven more immensely strong sons were born in this lineage—Janamejaya and the others. They were learned and famous for the qualities of their deeds. Parikshit had sons who were learned in dharma and artha—Kakshasena, Ugrasena, the immensely valorous Chitrasena, Indrasena, Sushena and Bhimasena. Janamejaya's sons were famous on earth because they were very strong—Dhritarashtra who was born first, Pandu, Bahlika, the immensely energetic Nishada, the powerful Jambunada, Kundodara, Padati and Vasati as the eighth. All of them were skilled in dharma and artha and were always engaged in the welfare of all beings. Dhritarashtra became the king and his sons were Kundika, Hasti, Vitarka, Kratha, Kundala as the fifth, Havishrava, Indrabha and the invincible Sumanyu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Pratipa had three sons—Devapi, Shantanu and the maharatha Bahlika. Urged by a desire for dharma and welfare, Devapi became a hermit. Shantanu and the maharatha Bahlika obtained the earth. Many other maharathas and supreme and righteous kings were born in the Bharata lineage, equal to gods and rishis. In this way, many maharathas were born in Manu's lineage. They were the equals of the gods themselves. Their numbers extended Ila's lineage.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O Brahmana! I have now heard from you the great origins of my ancestors. I have also heard about the noble kings who were born in my lineage. But I am still not satisfied with this account that I love, because it is too brief. Therefore, narrate it to me in greater detail—the divine account from Prajapati Manu onwards. Who will not find pleasure in hearing of such a sacred lineage? There is abundant and established fame in the three worlds about the qualities, righteousness, greatness, strength, influence, valour, energy and perseverance of these men. I am not satisfied with what I have heard of this history, which is like the taste of amrita.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Then listen to the complete and pure history of your lineage as I recite it, exactly as I had heard it from Dvaipayana. From Daksha, Aditi. From Aditi, Vivasvat. From Vivasvat, Manu. From Manu, Ila. From Ila, Pururava. From Pururava, Ayus. From Ayus, Nahusha. From Nahusha, Yayati. Yayati had two wives—Vrishaparva's daughter was Sharmishtha and Ushanasha's daughter was Devayani. There is the account that Devayani gave birth to Yadu and

Turvasu and Sharmishtha, Vrishaparva's daughter, gave birth to Druhyu, Anu and Puru. From Yadu, the Yadavas. From Puru, the Pouravas. Puru's wife was Koushalya. Through her, he had a son named Janamejaya. He performed three horse sacrifices and after performing the sacrifice known as *vishvajita*,[188] retired to the forest. Yayati married Ananta, the daughter of Madhava. From this was born Prachinvata. He conquered the regions of the east, right up to where the sun rises and thus his name.[189] Prachinvata married Ashmaki and she gave birth to Samyati. Samyati married Drishadvat's daughter Varangi and she gave birth to Ahampati. Ahampati married Kritavirya's daughter Bhanumati and she gave birth to Sarvabhouma. Sarvabhouma conquered and carried off Sunanda, daughter of Kekaya, and she gave birth to Jayatsena. Jayatsena married Sushrava from the Vidarbha region and she gave birth to Arachina. Arachina married Maryada, also from the Vidarbha region, and she gave birth to Mahabhouma. Mahabhouma married Prasenjit's daughter Suyajna and she gave birth to Ayutanayi. He was so named because he performed a sacrifice where one ayuta[190] of human sacrifices were made. Ayutanayi married Prithushrava's daughter Bhasa and she gave birth to Akrodhana. Akrodhana married Karandu from the Kalinga region and she gave birth to Devatithi. Devatithi married Maryada from the Videha region and she gave birth to Richa. Richa married Sudeva from the Anga region and she gave birth to Riksha. Riksha married Takshaka's daughter Jvala and through her had a son named Matinara. Matinara performed a sacrifice on the banks of the Sarasvati for twelve years. When the sacrifice was over, Sarasvati herself came to him and chose him as her husband. Through her, he had a son named Tamsu. On this, there is a saying that Sarasvati gave birth to a son named Tamsu from Matinara and through Kalindi, Tamsu gave birth to a son named Ilina.

'Ilina had five sons through Rathantari; Duhshanta was the eldest. Duhshanta married Visvamitra's daughter Shakuntala and she gave birth to Bharata. On this, there are two shlokas.

The mother is only a leather bag.[191] The son who is born from the father is the father himself. O Duhshanta! Maintain your son and do not forsake Shakuntala.

O king of men! A son who has sperm rescues one from Yama's abode.[192] You are the father who has planted this embryo. Shakuntala has spoken the truth.

Hence his name was Bharata. Bharata married Sarvasena's daughter Sunanda, from the Kashi region. She gave birth to Bhumanyu. Bhumanyu married Dasarha's daughter Vijaya and she gave birth to Suhotra. Suhotra married Suvarna of the Ikshvaku lineage and she gave birth to Hasti. He established this city of Hastinapura, which is why it was named Hastinapura. Hasti married Yashodhara from the Trigarta region and she gave birth to Vikunthana. Vikunthana married Sudeva from the Dasarha region and she gave birth to Ajamidha. Ajamidha had 2400 sons through Kaikeyi, Nagi, Gandhari, Vimala and Riksha. Each became a king and established a dynasty. Among them, Samvarana was the one who carried the lineage forward. Samvarana married Tapati, Vivasvat's daughter, and she gave birth to Kuru. Kuru married Subhagi from the Dasarha region and she gave birth to Viduratha. Viduratha married Sanpriya, daughter of Madhava and she gave birth to Arugvata. Arugvata married Amrita from the Magadha region and she gave birth to Parikshit. Parikshit married Bahuda's daughter Suyasa and she gave birth to Bhimasena. Bhimasena married Sukumari of the Kekaya region and she gave birth to Paryashrava, also known as Pratipa. Pratipa married Shibi's daughter Sunanda and through her had sons named Devapi, Shantanu and Bahlika.

'Devapi retired to the forest when he was still a child. Shantanu then became the king. There is a saying about this. "Those who were touched with his hands felt extreme pleasure and became young again. Therefore, he was known as Shantanu."[193] Thus, he was known as Shantanu. Shantanu married Bhagirathi Ganga and she gave birth to Devavrata, who later came to be known as Bhishma. To do that which would bring pleasure to his father, Devavrata got him married to Satyavati. She became his mother and she was also known as Gandhakali. Before that, while she was still a virgin, she had a son named Dvaipayana through Parashara. She bore two more sons to Shantanu, Vichitravirya and Chitrangada. But before reaching manhood, Chitrangada was killed by a gandharva and Vichitravirya then became the king. Vichitravirya married two daughers born to the king of Kashi through his wife Kousalya—Ambika and Ambalika. However, Vichitravirya died childless. Then Satyavati began to worry that Duhshanta's lineage would become extinct. She thought of the rishi Dvaipayana and he appeared before her and asked, "What is your command?" She told him, "Your brother Vichitravirya has gone to heaven childless. For his sake, be the father of righteous children." Dvaipayana agreed and was the father to three sons—Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Vidura. Of these, because of a boon granted by Dvaipayana, Dhritarashtra had 100 sons through his wife Gandhari. Four of Dhritarashtra's sons were chief—Duryodhana, Duhshasana, Vikarna and Chitrasena.

'Pandu had two gems among women as his wives—Kunti and Madri. One day, Pandu went out for a hunt and saw a rishi, in the form of a stag, uniting with a doe. He shot him with an arrow while he was still mounted on the doe, in a state of lust, but without his desire having been satiated. Wounded by the arrow, he told Pandu, "You follow dharma and you know the pleasure that comes from satisfaction of desire. But you have killed me before my desire was satiated. Therefore, you will also be united with the five elements[194] in a similar state, before your desire is satiated." Pandu paled on hearing this curse and from that time, stayed away from uniting with his wives. He told them, "This is the result of my own folly. But I have heard that in the hereafter there are no worlds for those who are childless." Therefore, he asked Kunti to bear children for him and accordingly Kunti bore children. Through Dharma, Yudhishthira. Through Marut, Bhima. Through Shakra, Arjuna. Pandu was pleased and said, "Your co-wife doesn't have children either. Let the right offspring also be fathered on her." Kunti agreed and Nakula and Sahadeva were then fathered on Madri through the Ashvins. One day, Pandu saw Madri dressed in her ornaments and his desire was stirred. But he died as soon as he touched her. Then Madri ascended the funeral pyre with him, requesting Kunti to affectionately rear the twins.

'Later, ascetics took the five Pandavas and Kunti to Hastinapura and introduced them to Bhishma and Vidura. An attempt was made to burn them in the house of lac, but this failed, because of Vidura's counsel. After this, Hidimba was killed and they went to a place named Ekachakra. In Ekachakra, they killed a rakshasa named Baka and then went to the capital of Panchala. Thereafter, they obtained Droupadi as their wife and returned to their own country, in good health. They had skilled sons—Yudhishthira had Prativindhya, Vrikodara[195] had Sutasoma, Arjuna had Shrutakirti, Nakula had Shatanika and Sahadeva had Shrutakarmana. In a *svayamvara,*[196] Yudhishthira obtained Devika as his wife. She was the daughter of Govasana of the Shibi lineage and through her he had a son named Youdheya. Through a *viryashulka*[197] marriage, Bhima obtained as his wife Baladhara, the daughter of the king of Kashi. Through her, he had a son named Sarvaga. Arjuna went to Dvaravati and obtained Vasudeva's sister Subhadra as his wife. Through her, he had a son named Abhimanyu. Nakula had Karenumati from the Chedi region as his wife and through her had a son named Niramitra. In a svayamvara, Sahadeva obtained Vijaya, daughter of the king of Madra, as his wife and had a son named Suhotra. Before this, Bhima had a son named Ghatotkacha through the rakshasa Hidimba. These are the eleven sons of the Pandavas.

'Abhimanyu married Virata's daughter Uttara. She gave birth to a stillborn child. On the command of Vasudeva, supreme among men, Pritha[198] accepted him in her arms. He said, "I will instill life into this embryo that is six months old." Having revived him, he said, "He was born in a lineage that was diminished.[199] Therefore, he will be known as Parikshit." Parikshit married Madravati and she gave birth to

Janamejaya.[200] Through Vapushtama, Janamejaya had two sons named Shatanika and Shanku. Shatanika had a son named Ashvamedhadatta, through a wife from the Videha region. Thus the lineage of Puru and Pandu has been recounted. He who hears about Puru's lineage is freed from all sin.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'There was once a king named Mahabhisha. He was born in the Ikshvaku lineage and was a lord of the earth. He was always truthful and truly valorous. He pleased the lord of the gods through 1000 horse sacrifices and 100 *vajapeya*[201] sacrifices and thus attained heaven.

'One day, the gods went to pay homage to Brahma. Many rajarshis and King Mahabhisha were also present. Ganga, the best of the rivers, also came to pay homage to the grandfather. Her garments, as white as moonlight, were blown away by the wind and immediately the masses of gods lowered their faces. However, rajarshi Mahabhisha continued to stare unabashedly at the river. Because of this, Mahabhisha was cursed by the illustrious Brahma. "You will be born on earth and then you will again regain these worlds." The king then thought about all the kings and ascetics on earth and chose the immensely radiant Pratipa as his father. On seeing King Mahabhisha lose his composure, the best of the rivers went away, thinking about him in her mind. Along her path, she saw the divine vasus. They were crestfallen and dark with despair at having been dislodged from heaven.

'On seeing them in that state, the great river asked, "O residents of heaven! Why are your forms destroyed? Why are you in despair?" The divine vasus replied, "O great river! We have been severely cursed by the great-souled Vashishtha for a minor transgression. Not seen by us, that supreme of rishis was engaged in his twilight rites and in our folly we crossed him. In his anger, he cursed us that we would be born in a womb. It is not possible to negate what the brahman-knowing one has said. Therefore, become a woman on earth and bear the vasus as your sons. We cannot enter the womb of an impure woman.” Having been thus addressed, Ganga agreed and asked, “Which supreme man will be your father?” The vasus replied, “In the world of men, a son will be born to Pratipa. He will be King Shantanu, devoted to dharma, and he will be our father.” Ganga said, “O unblemished gods! I was thinking exactly the same. I will do that which brings pleasure to him and also satisfy your wishes.” The vasus replied, “O revered one who dwells in the three worlds![202] You must hurl your sons into the water as soon as they are born, so that we are quickly freed and don’t suffer for a long time.” Ganga said, “I will do what you wish. But so that my union with him is not completely fruitless, let one son remain with him.” The vasus replied, “Each one of us will offer one-eighth of our respective energies. From that, a son will be born to you and will live according to your desires. But he will have no children on earth. Therefore, this valorous son of yours will remain without a son.” Making this agreement with Ganga, the vasus happily went away to the place where they dwelt.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘King Pratipa was always devoted to the welfare of all beings. He spent many years in meditation, on the banks of the Ganga. Then Ganga assumed the form of a woman who was beautiful and had all the qualities. She arose from the waters in this desirable form. The rajarshi was studying.

‘This divine and intelligent one with a beautiful face came and sat on his right thigh, which was like a *shala* tree. Pratipa, lord of the earth, asked the intelligent one, “O fortunate one! What can I do to bring you pleasure? What is your desire?” The lady said, “O king! O best of the Kurus! I desire you. I offer myself. Accept me and love me in return. Those who are wise always consider evil the act of refusing a woman who is full of desire.” Pratipa replied, “O beautiful one! Out of desire, I can never go to another man’s wife or to one who is not equal to me in varna. O fortunate one! Know that this is the vow I have taken for the sake of dharma.” The lady said, “I am never undesirable. I am never one with whom union is forbidden. I am never malignant. I am a divine lady and supreme in beauty. O king! Love me, as I wish to love you.” Pratipa replied, “I must refrain from doing what brings you pleasure. I have taken a vow and if I break it, dharma will bring about my destruction. O beautiful lady! You have seated yourself on my right thigh. O timid one! That is the seat earmarked for daughters and daughters-in-law. The left is the seat for the woman one finds pleasure with. But you have rejected it. O beautiful one! Therefore, I cannot satisfy desire with you. O fortunate one! I accept you for my son. Be my daughter-in-law. The left thigh is for the wife, but you have not accepted that.” The lady said, “O one who is learned in dharma! Let it be as you say. Let me be united with your son. Out of my love for you, I will love the famous Bharata lineage. Your dynasty is the refuge of all the kings on earth. Even if I take 100 years, I will not be able to recount the qualities of this dynasty, whose fame and righteousness is supreme. But he must not know my high birth. Nor must he ever question what I do. Living with your son in this way, I will make him happy and bring about his welfare. Because of his sons, his righteous conduct and his merits, your son will attain heaven.” O king! Having said this, she disappeared.

‘The king waited for his son to be born and for the promise to be fulfilled. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Meanwhile, Pratipa, bull among the Kshatriyas, performed austerities with his wife, so as to obtain a son. Though they were old, a son was born to them and this son was Mahabhisha. He was known as Shantanu, because he was born when his father had controlled his senses.[203] Remebering that the eternal worlds can only be conquered through one’s own deeds, Shantanu, supreme of the Kuru lineage, devoted himself to sacred conduct. When his son Shantanu became a youth, Pratipa told him, “O Shantanu! Earlier, a lady had approached me for your welfare. O son! If that divine and beautiful lady comes to you in secret and desires you so as to obtain offspring, you must not question her about who she is and who she belongs to. O unblemished one! You must not question any of her acts. I tell you that you must love her as she loves you.” Having thus commanded his son and instated him on the throne, King Pratipa departed for the forest.

'King Shantanu was intelligent and became a famous archer on earth. He loved hunting and spent a lot of time in the forest. Once, that best of kings killed many deer and buffaloes. Wandering alone along the banks of the Ganga, he came to a place frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. One day, the king saw there a supreme woman, dazzling in her beauty like the lotus-seated Shri[204] herself. Her body was faultless and her teeth were beautiful. She was adorned with divine ornaments. She was alone and she wore sheer garments that were as beautiful as the filaments of a lotus. The king was astounded at the beauty of her form and the hair on his body stood up in rapture. The lord of men gazed at her with his eyes, but was not satisfied. On seeing the radiant king move around, she also felt love and affection for him and the wanton one wasn't satisfied. The king then addressed her in a gentle voice. "O beautiful one! O one with the slender waist! Are you from the race of gods, demons, gandharvas, apsaras, yakshas or pannagas, or are you human? You seem to be born of the gods. Whoever you are, please be my wife." Hearing these soft words from the smiling king, that unblemished one remembered the promise she had made to the vasus. She spoke to the king, gladdening his heart with her words. "O lord of the earth! I will be your queen and will obey your words. O king! But you must not interfere in my acts, regardless of whether they please or displease you. You must never try to stop me or speak to me harshly. O king! As long as you act in the way I have asked you to, I will be with you. But I will certainly leave you whenever you try to stop me or speak to me harshly." The best of the Bharata lineage agreed. At that, the lady was delighted to have obtained that supreme of kings as her husband."

'Having obtained her, Shantanu was also delighted. He pleasured with her as he desired and remembering the promise, refrained from asking her anything. The lord of the earth was extremely pleased with her conduct, beauty, generosity, qualities and secret art of love. The divine Ganga, who courses the three worlds, assumed a beautiful and radiant human form and lived happily as an obedient wife to Shantanu, that lion among kings. He was as radiant as the king of the gods himself and his love waxed, as his fortune did. She pleased the king with her skilled love making, intelligence, coquetry and demeanour and the king loved her as much as she did. The king was so addicted to desire and the qualities of his supreme wife that many years, seasons and months passed by without him being aware. When the lord of men thus united with her when desire seized them, eight sons were borne by her, each resembling a god. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as each son was born, one after another, she flung them into the waters of the Ganga, saying, “This is for your own good.” This did not please King Shantanu. But the lord of the earth did not dare to utter a word, for fear of losing her.

‘When the eighth son was born and she seemed to be smiling, the king, who desired a son, miserably told her, “Do not kill him. Who are you? Who do you belong to? Why do you kill your sons? As a murderer of your sons, you are committing a great sin. O evil one! Do not commit sin. Desist.” Ganga replied, “Since you desire a son, I will not kill this son. You will become the supreme father of a son. But following our agreement, my stay here has come to an end. I am Ganga, the daughter of Jahnu and worshipped by large numbers of maharshis. I have lived with you so far to accomplish the wishes of the gods. These were the eight vasus, immensely fortunate and immensely energetic gods. As a result of a curse imposed by Vashishtha, they had to be born in human form. There was no better father than you on earth and no human mother in this world who could equal me. Therefore, I assumed human form to become their mother. By becoming the father of the eight vasus, you have conquered the eternal worlds. My agreement with the divine vasus was that I should free them from their human birth as soon as each was born. I have thus freed them from the curse imposed by the great-souled Apava.[205] Be fortunate. I must leave now. Rear this son. He will be rigid in his vows. My promise to the vasus that I would live with you is over. Let this son, born from me, be known as Gangadatta.’[206]

‘Shantanu said, “Who was Apava? What evil act was committed by the vasus that they were all cursed to be born in human wombs? What has this son Gangadatta done that he must now live among men? The vasus are lords of all the worlds. O Jahnavi![207] Why were they born among men? Tell me everything.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed, the divine goddess Jahnavi Ganga addressed her husband King Shantanu, bull among men.

‘Ganga said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varuna once had a son—the sage Vashishtha, later famous as Apava. His holy hermitage was along the side of Meru, the king of the mountains. It was populated with deer and birds and was always covered with flowers. O best of the Bharata lineage! Varuna’s son, supreme among those who perform sacred deeds, performed austerities in that forest, which had a plentiful supply of tasty roots, fruit and water. Daksha had a proud daughter named Surabhi. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Through Kashyapa, that goddess gave birth to a cow for the welfare of that entire world. This supreme cow was capable of fulfilling every desire. Varuna’s righteous son obtained this cow for the sake of performing sacrifices and the cow lived in that forest, populated by sages. Fearlessly, she grazed in those sacred and lovely woods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Once, all the divine vasus, with Prithu at their head, came to visit that forest, frequented by the gods and the devarshis. With their wives, they roamed in the forest and made love in its lovely mountains and woods. O you who are as valorous as Vasava[208] himself! A slender-waisted wife of one of the vasus saw the supreme cow, which belonged to the sage Vashishtha and was capable of fulfilling every desire, roaming in the forest. She was amazed at its conduct, power and riches and showed it to Dyou,[209] who had eyes like those of a bull.

‘“The cow was well fed and yielded plenty of milk. It had a beautiful tail and handsome face. It had all the qualities and was supreme in its conduct. O lord of kings! O descendant of the Puru lineage! So great were its qualities that the vasu’s wife showed it to the vasu. O you who are like the king of elephants! O you who are like Indra in valour! Dyou saw that cow, with its beauty and qualities. O king! He then told the goddess, ‘O goddess with the dark eyes! O one with the beautiful hips! O one with slender waist! This supreme cow belongs to the rishi who is Varuna’s son. He is the owner of this supreme forest. A person who drinks this cow’s tasty milk will live for 10,000 years with undiminished youth.’ O supreme among kings! When that slender-waisted goddess of unblemished form heard these words, she told her husband, whose energy was radiant. ‘I have a friend in this world of men and she is the daughter of a king. Her name is Jinavati and she is young and beautiful. She is the daughter of rajarshi Ushinara, who is truthful and intelligent. This daughter is famous in the world of men because of the wealth of her beauty. O immensely fortunate one! I wish to obtain this cow and its calf for her. O best of the gods! O one who increases good deeds! Please bring them quickly. O one who grants pride! On drinking the milk, my friend will be the only one in the world of men to be freed from age and disease. O immensely fortunate one! O unblemished one! Please do this for me. There is no other pleasure that would please me more.’ Hearing the words of the goddess, Dyou wished to please her and stole the cow with the help of Prithu and his other brothers. O king! Instructed by his lotus-eyed wife, Dyou did not think about the great ascetic powers of the rishi who owned her. He failed to consider that the stealing of the cow would lead to his downfall.

‘“In the evening, Varuna’s son returned to the hermitage with the fruit he had collected. He did not see the cow and her calf in that supreme wood. Then the one blessed with the power of austerities looked for her in the forest. But though he searched, the sage could not find her. Through his divine sight, he then found that she had been stolen by the vasus. His anger arose and he cursed the vasus. ‘Because the vasus have stolen my cow which yields sweet milk and has a handsome tail, there is no doubt that they will all be born as men.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus did the illustrious Apava, supreme among sages, curse the vasus in his anger. Having cursed them, the illustrious one returned to his austerities. O king! Thus, in his wrath, did the one blessed with the power of austerities curse the eight vasus. The rishi was immensely powerful and knew the nature of the brahman. As soon as they knew that they had been cursed by the rishi, the gods went to the hermitage of the great-souled one. O bull among kings! The vasus tried to pacify the rishi. O tiger among men! But they failed to obtain the grace of Apava, who was learned in all dharma and was supreme among rishis. The righteous sage said, ‘O Dhara! You and the other vasus have been cursed. But you will all be freed from your curse within a year. But Dyou is the one whose act has led to your being cursed by me. Because of his own deeds, he will have to live in the world of men for a long time. Though uttered in anger, my words cannot amount to a falsehood. However, the great-souled one[210] will not have offspring in the world of men. He will be devoted to dharma and will be skilled in the usage of all weapons. He will be engaged in doing that which brings his father pleasure and he will forsake pleasure with women.’ Having addressed all the vasus in this way, the great rishi went away. And all the vasus then came to me together.

‘“O king! They craved a boon from me. ‘O Ganga! As soon as each one of us is born, you should yourself throw us into the water.’ O supreme among kings! I agreed and acted accordingly, in order to free them from a life in the world of men, a consequence of the curse. O best of kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Dyou alone will have to live in the world of men for a long time, because of the rishi’s curse.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having completed the account, the goddess immediately vanished. Taking her son with her, she went away to wherever she wished to go. That son of Shantanu came to be known under two names—Devavrata and Gangeya. He surpassed Shantanu in all his qualities. With sorrow in his heart, Shantanu then returned to his own capital. I will now recount for you Shantanu’s many qualities and the great fortune of this famous king, who was from the Bharata lineage and whose illustrious history is known as the Mahabharata.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘King Shantanu was intelligent and was honoured by the gods and the rajarshis. He was devoted to dharma and was famous in all the worlds for being righteous and truthful. Shantanu, bull among men, always displayed self-control, generosity, forgiveness, forbearance, resoluteness, supreme energy and great nobility. The king had all these qualities and was also skilled in dharma and artha. He was the protector of the Bharata lineage and all righteous people. His neck was like a conch shell, his shoulders were broad and his strength was like that of a mad elephant. For him, dharma was superior to kama and artha. O bull among men! On seeing that he was devoted to dharma and supreme in the practice of all forms of dharma, all the kings instated him as the king of kings. With that lord of the Bharata lineage as their protector, all the kings on earth were freed from sorrow, fear and anxiety and awoke every morning from sweet dreams. When the world was ruled by kings led by Shantanu, all the varnas followed rules that served the cause of the brahman. Brahmanas were served by Kshatriyas, Kshatriyas were served by Vaishyas. Devoted to Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, Shudras served the Vaishyas. Shantanu lived in Hastinapura, the beautiful capital of the Kurus. He ruled over the entire earth, right up to the boundaries of the oceans. He was devoted to truth and learned in dharma, an equal of the king of the gods. He attained great fortune through the dharma of generosity and austerities. He was free of anger and hatred. He was as pleasant as Soma.[211] He was as energetic as the sun and his speed was like that of Vayu. He was like Yama in anger and like the earth in his patience. O king! When Shantanu ruled the earth, no animals, boars and birds suffered pointless death. Brahmana dharma was always followed in Shantanu’s kingdom. He treated all beings equally, without desire and anger. Sacrifices were performed for the worship of gods, rishis and the ancestors. But no being was deprived of its life, other than in accordance with dharma. The king was like a father to those who were miserable, to those who were without a protector and to animals. During the reign of that best of the Kuru lineage, the king of kings, words were embedded in truth and the mind was embedded in generosity and dharma.

‘Having pleasured with women for thirty-six years, the king retired to the forest. Shantanu’s son, the vasu who was born as Ganga’s son and was now named Devavrata, was like him in beauty, conduct, behaviour and learning. He was skilled in the usage of all weapons. Compared to other kings, he was mighty in strength, mighty in power, mighty in valour and mighty as a charioteer.

‘Once, when he had shot a deer, King Shantanu followed it along the banks of the river Ganga. He saw that the waters of the Bhagirathi had become shallow. On seeing this, Shantanu, bull among men, was concerned and wondered, “Why does this best of rivers not flow the way it used to do earlier?” While trying to determine the reason, the great-souled one saw a large youth who was beautiful and handsome of face. He was like the god Purandara[212] himself. He had divine weapons and a bow. Using his sharp arrows, he had stemmed the flow of the river Ganga. On witnessing this wonderful and superhuman feat of checking the Ganga’s course with arrows, the king was astounded. Shantanu had seen his son only once, at the time of birth. Therefore, despite being wise, he did not have sufficient recollection to recognize his own son. As soon as he saw his father, the youth created delusion through his powers and instantly disappeared.

‘When King Shantanu witnessed this, he suspected the youth to be his own son and addressed Ganga, “Show him to me.” Ganga appeared in a supremely beautiful form and showed him the ornamented youth, holding him by the right hand. Though he had known her before, Shantanu failed to recognize her, since she was adorned with ornaments and wore a garment that gathered no dust.

‘Ganga said, “O king! O tiger among men! This is the eighth son who you fathered on me. Take him home. He has studied the Vedas and the Vedangas from Vashishtha himself. This valorous one is skilled in the usage of all weapons and a supreme archer. In battle, he is like the king of the gods himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods always revere him and so do the asuras. He has all the knowledge of the Vedas that Ushanas[213] possesses. This great-souled and strong-armed son of yours is also well versed in all the knowledge of the sacred texts and their branches possessed by Angirasa's son,[214]who is worshipped by the gods and the asuras. He also has the knowledge about weapons possessed by the powerful and invincible rishi who is the son of Jamadagni.[215] O king! Your son is a great archer and also has knowledge about dharma and artha, as practised by kings. O brave one! I am myself giving you my brave son. Take him home."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by Ganga, Shantanu accepted his son, who was as radiant as the sun, and returned to his capital. When he reached his city, which was like Purandara's[216] city, the descendant of the Puru lineage was happy and thought that all his desires had been fulfilled. He instated his great-souled son, who had all the qualities, as the heir apparent. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The immensely famous son won, through his conduct, the affection of everyone in the Puru lineage, his father and the kingdom. Thus the lord of the earth, who was unlimited in valour, enjoyed himself with his son for four years.

'One day, the lord of the earth went to a forest that was along the Yamuna River. While he was wandering around, he inhaled an extremely sweet fragrance that came from an unknown direction. Searching for the cause, he saw a lady from the fisherman tribe who was as beautiful as a goddess. On seeing that dark-eyed lady, he asked, "O timid one! Who are you and whose are you? What are you doing here?" She replied, "O great-souled one! I belong to the fishermen tribe. Following the dharma prescribed for us, I ply a boat on the instructions of my father, who is the king of the fishermen." Having seen her beauty and sweetness, equal to that of a goddess, and inhaled her fragrance, King Shantanu desired the lady from the fishermen tribe. He went to her father and asked him to give her to him. The king of the fishermen told the king, "From the day she was born, I have known that I will have to give my beautiful daughter to someone. O lord of men! However, there was a desire in my heart and let me tell you that now. O unblemished one! If you desire to take her as your wife in accordance with dharma, you must truthfully make a pledge to me, because I know that you are true to your word. O king! If you make that pledge, I will give my daughter to you, because I will never be able to find a husband for her who is like you.” Shantanu replied, “O fisherman! It is only after hearing what you ask for, that I can say whether I can or cannot. If it is something that can be granted, I will do so, but not otherwise.” The fisherman replied, “O lord of the earth! The son who will be born from her will be instated king of the earth after you and no one else.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though his body burnt with the sharp pains of desire, Shantanu was unwilling to grant this boon to the fisherman. The lord of the earth returned to Hastinapura, thinking about the daughter of the fisherman and with his heart burdened by sorrow.

‘One day, his son Devavrata came to Shantanu when he was thus meditating and thinking sorrowfully, and told his father, “Everything is peaceful. All the kings obey you. Why are you then always sorrowful, as if in pain? O king! Immersed in your own thoughts, you do not utter a word.” Having been thus addressed by his son, Shantanu replied, “Wihout a doubt, I am always meditating, just as you say. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are the only son in this great lineage of ours. O son! I sorrow because of the impermanence of this mortal life. O son of Ganga! If anything happens to you, this lineage of ours will cease to exist. There is no doubt that you are superior to 100 great sons. Therefore, without reason, I do not wish to have another wife. I only wish that you are fortunate, fulfil your desires and have sons so that our lineage survives. However, those who are learned in dharma say that having one son is like having no son at all. Agnihotra,[217] the three Vedas[218] and sacrifices that involve a lot of alms are together not worth one-sixteenth part of having a son. This is true of man and all beings. O immensely wise one! On this, I have no doubts. That is what the eternal and supreme three[219] and Puranas say. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are brave, never forgive and are always armed. O unblemished one! There is every possibility of your being killed through weapons. If that happens, I worry about how I can possibly find peace. O son! Now I have completely told you the reason for my sorrow." Having heard this complete reason, the immensely intelligent Devavrata began to think about this. He then went and asked an old adviser, who was always concerned about his father's welfare. He asked him the reason for his father's misery. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On being asked by the foremost among the Kurus, he told him truthfully about the boon that had been asked for the lady.

'Then Devavrata took many old Kshatriyas with him and went to see the king of the fishermen. On his father's behalf, he himself asked for the daughter. The fisherman received him and paid him homage, in accordance with what was prescribed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he was seated in the king's assembly, he said, "O bull among men! You are an adequate protector for Shantanu. You are his son and he is the best of fathers. How can I say anything against your words? Even if the bride's father is Shatakratu[220] himself, he cannot but be pained at having to reject such a honourable and desirable union of wombs. The famous Satyavati was born from the seed of an arya who is equal in qualities to you. He has often told me about your father's achievements. He has told me that among all the kings, he is most suited to marry Satyavati. In earlier times, I have refused the famous devarshi Asita, when that supreme of rishis came and asked for Satyavati. O bull among the Bharatas! However, as the girl's father, there is sometime I must say. There is one strong objection that I can see. O scourge of your enemies! Whoever is your rival, gandharva or asura, will not live happily if you are angry. O king! This is the only fault with the marriage and no other. O scourge of your enemies! O fortunate one! Know that this is all I have to say in the matter of giving and taking." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard this, for the sake of his father and in the hearing of the kings, Ganga's son uttered the following words in reply. "O supreme among truthful ones! Listen to the truthful vow I take today. The man has not been born, nor will ever be born, who will dare to utter words like these. I will do what you have asked for. The son who will be born from her will be the king." O bull among the Bharata lineage! At these words, the fisherman spoke again, desiring to accomplish the difficult task of obtaining the kingdom. “O lord! You are an adequate protector for the radiant Shantanu and also for the lady. Your heart is in dharma and you are also lord of the act of granting.[221] O equable one! However, there is something else that needs to be said and done. Listen to me. O conqueror of enemies! This must be said for the welfare of daughters. O you who are devoted to truth and all dharma! The vow that you have taken, in the midst of all these kings, for Satyavati’s sake is worthy of you. O mighty-armed one! I have no doubt that it will never be violated by you. But I do have great doubts about the sons who will be born to you.” O king! Knowing what was on his mind, the one who was devoted to truth and all dharma wished to do that which would bring pleasure to his father and made a promise. “O king of fishermen! O supreme among kings! Listen to these words of mine. In front of these lords of the earth, hear what I have to say for my father’s sake. O lord of men! I have already relinquished my right to the kingdom. I will not destroy the doubt that has arisen about my sons. O fisherman! From today, I take the vow of *brahmacharya*. Even if I die without a son, I will attain the eternal world of heaven.” When he heard these words, the fisherman’s body hair rose up in delight.

‘He told the one who had dharma in his heart[222] that he was prepared to give. From the sky, apsaras, gods and rishis rained down flowers and said, “He is Bhishma.”[223] For his father’s sake, he then told the famous one, “O mother! Please ascend this chariot and let us go to our own home.” Having uttered these words, Bhishma made the beautiful lady ascend the chariot and, arriving in Hastinapura, he told Shantanu all that had happened. Then all the kings praised him for his difficult feat and jointly and individually said, “He is Bhishma.” Witnessing the difficult feat accomplished by Bhishma, his father Shantanu was pleased and granted him the boon that he would only die when he himself so willed.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! After the marriage was over, King Shantanu instated the beautiful lady in his own house. Then Satyavati bore Shantanu a wise and brave son named Chitrangada. He was superior to all men in valour. Then Satyavati again bore the powerful king another son. He was named Vichitravirya and he became a great archer. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Before he could become an adult, the wise King Shantanu succumbed to the law of destiny. Bhishma was always obedient to Satyavati. When Shantanu went to heaven, he instated Chitrangada, chastiser of enemies, on the throne. Through his valour, Chitrangada defeated all the kings. He could not find anyone equal to himself among men.

‘When he had defeated all gods, men and asuras, the powerful king of the gandharvas, who bore the same name as him,[224] came to him. On the fields of Kurukshetra, a great battle took place between these two powerful warriors, the king of the gandharvas and the king of the Kurus. On the banks of the river Hiranyavati, the battle went on for three years. In that great duel, characterized by a shower of weapons, the gandharva used superior powers of delusion[225] to kill the supreme among the Kurus. Having killed Chitrangada, the best of the Kurus and one who yielded wonderful bows and arrows, the gandharva went to heaven.

‘O king! When that tiger among men, the one with a lot of energy, was killed, Shantanu’s son Bhishma performed the funeral rites. Then the mighty-armed one instated Vichitravirya as the king of the Kuru kingdom, though he was still a child and hadn’t attained youth. Vichitravirya always listened to Bhishma’s words and as a king, ruled the kingdom of his father and grandfather. In accordance with dharma, the king paid homage to Shantanu’s son Bhishma, who was skilled in dharma and the sacred texts. In return, Bhishma also protected him.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O, unblemished one! With Chitrangada killed when his brother was still a child, Bhishma ruled over the kingdom. He was always obedient to Satyavati. When he saw that his brother had become an adult, Bhishma, that supreme among intelligent ones, thought about marrying Vichitravirya off. O king! Bhishma heard that the three daughters of the king of Kashi, all equal to apsaras, would be married through a svayamvara. With his mother's permission, the best of charioteers wore his armour and with a single chariot, set out for the city of Varanasi.

'There Shantanu's son Bhishma saw the three ladies and the prosperous kings who had come from all directions. O king! When the names of all the thousands of kings were being recounted, the lord Bhishma himself arrived there. O king! Raising the ladies onto his chariot, Bhishma, supreme among warriors, addressed the kings in a voice that was like thunder. "The learned have said that daughters may be given to virtuous men who have been invited, with ornaments, depending on one's power. Others can give after accepting riches,[226] others after accepting a couple of cows. Some give their daughters after accepting a price. Others take them away by force. Some women are taken involuntarily. Others are married with their consent. This is the eighth form of marriage, svayamvara, which learned ones remember and kings praise.[227] However, those who know dharma have said that the bride who is taken away by force is the best. O rulers of the earth! I am therefore taking these maidens away by force. Use all your strength to try and defeat me, or be defeated instead. O lords of the earth! I am standing here, resolved to do battle." Challenging the kings and the king of Kashi in this way, the valorous Kourava raised the maidens onto his chariot and inviting them to fight, swiftly drove off with the maidens.

'All the kings arose in great anger, slapping their arms and grinding their teeth. They quickly cast off their ornmaments and donned their armour, creating a great uproar. O Janamejaya! The radiant ornaments and armour resembled shooting stars. Their brows were contracted and their faces red with anger. The ornaments and armour dangled, as the brave ones dashed towards the chariots the charioteers had brought, yoked with excellent horses. Armed with all kinds of weapons, they ascended the chariots and went in pursuit of the Kourava, who was in a solitary chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the hair-raising battle between the one and the many occurred. The kings hurled 10,000 arrows at him at the same time. However, before they could reach, Bhishma sliced all of them off. Then all the kings surrounded him from all directions and rained arrows down on him, like a mountain being showered with clouds of rain. But he stopped all the showers of arrows with his own and pierced each of the kings with three arrows. Such was the charioteer's skill in defending himself in battle, as compared to that of other men, that his enemies applauded him. Having defeated all of them in battle, the one who was supreme among those who were skilled in arms, the descendant of the Bharata lineage, left with maidens for the land of the Bharatas.

'Then, in the battle, the maharatha King Shalva, whose spirit was indomitable, struck Shantanu's son Bhishma from the back. He was like a bull elephant that was the leader of its herd, using its tusks to attack a rival from the rear, when it was mounting a cow elephant in heat. The king told Bhishma, "Stay, stay." The mighty-armed King Shalva was driven by his anger. Bhishma, tiger among men and destroyer of enemy armies, was angered at these words. Blazing like a fire that was without smoke, he followed the dharma of Kshatriyas and without any signs of fear, the maharatha turned his chariot towards Shalva. On seeing him turn, all the other kings wished to witness the duel between Bhishma and Shalva. Like two powerful and raging bulls fighting over a cow in heat, the two turned on each other with great strength. King Shalva, best among men, covered Shantanu's son Bhishma with hundreds and thousands of swift arrows. On seeing that Shalva had first covered Bhishma, the assembled kings were astounded and exclaimed, "Blessed, blessed." All the kings saw his dexterity in battle and delightedly applauded King Shalva. Hearing the shouts of the Kshatriyas, Shantanu's son Bhishma, the conqueror of hostile cities, was incensed and cried, "Stay, stay." He angrily commanded his charioteer, "Drive up to that king. I will instantly kill him, the way the king of birds[228] kills a snake." O lord of men! The Kourava then attached the varuna weapon to his bow and used it to wound King Shalva's four horses. O tiger among men!

The Kourava used his weapons to fend off all of King Shalva’s weapons and used a single arrow to kill his charioteer and with another weapon, he killed the excellent horses. For the sake of the maidens, Shantanu’s son Bhishma defeated that supreme among kings, but let him off with his life. O bull among the Bharatas! Thereupon, Shalva left for his own city. O conqueror of enemy cities! The kings who had come to witness the svayamvara also departed for their own kingdoms.

‘Bhishma, supreme among those who wielded arms, thus won the maidens and left for Hastinapura, where the king of the Kouravas[229] was. O king! Within a short time, the valorous one who killed innumerable men in battle but was himself never hurt, passed many forests, rivers and mountains with trees in them. The great-souled son of the one who goes into the ocean[230] took care of the daughters of the king of Kashi like daughters-in-law, younger sisters or daughters and brought them to the land of Kuru. Bhishma had brought the ones who had all the qualities by force and gave them to his younger brother Vichitravirya. The one who was learned in dharma accomplished this superhuman deed in accordance with dharma and began to make arrangements for his brother Vichitravirya’s marriage, following the consultation with Satyavati.

‘When Bhishma was preparing for the wedding, the eldest daughter of the king of Kashi, one who was devoted to the truth, came and told him, “I have earlier chosen the king of Soubha[231] as my husband. Earlier, he has also accepted me and this is my father’s desire too. At the svayamvara, I would have chosen Shalva as my husband. You know dharma well. Now knowing this, decide what the course of dharma entails.” At these words of the maiden, spoken in an assembly of Brahmanas, the brave Bhishma began to think about what should be done. After consulting the Brahmanas, who were learned in the Vedas, the one who had knowledge about dharma, gave permission to Amba, the eldest daughter of the king of Kashi, to leave. In accordance with the prescribed rites, he then gave the two others, Ambika and Ambalika, in marriage to his younger brother Vichitravirya.

‘Vichitravirya had dharma in his soul. But when he had accepted their hands, since he was proud of his beauty and youth, desire took over his soul. They were tall. Their heads were covered with blue-black hair that was curled. Their nails were red and pointed. Their breasts and hips were heavy. They felt they had obtained a husband who was their equal in beauty and the fortunate ones worshipped Vichitravirya. He matched the Ashvins in beauty and was the equal of the gods in his prowess. He was capable of stirring the hearts of all women. The lord of the earth pleasured with his wives for seven years. Though young, he was then attacked by consumption. His friends consulted physicians to try and find a cure. But like the setting sun, the Kourava went to Yama’s abode. In accordance with Satyavati’s wishes, Bhishma, together with the priests and the chiefs among the Kurus, performed the funeral rites for King Vichitravirya.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Satyavati was miserable and unfortunate and grieved over her son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With her daughters-in-law, she performed the funeral rites for her son. Then the illustrious one turned her mind to dharma and the preservation of the paternal and maternal lineages. The immensely fortunate one told Ganga’s son, “The perpetuation of Shantanu’s dharma, the lineage and fame of the Kuru dynasty, the deeds of progeny and the offering of oblations to ancestors is now vested in you. Just as the attainment of heaven is certain when one performs good deeds, just as a long life is certain when it is based on truth, it is certain that dharma cannot be separated from you. You know dharma and its parts. Dharma is established in you. You are learned in all the sacred texts, the Vedas and the Vedangas. In preserving the customs and virtue of the family and in deciding what should be done in times of distress, you are like Shukra or Angirasa’s son.[232] O supreme among those who hold up dharma! Therefore, I am depending on you. I will ask you to perform an act. When you have heard it, please do it. O bull among men! My valorous son was your brother and you loved him a lot. He has ascended to heaven, though but a child. Your brother's queens are the fortunate daughters of the king of Kashi and they possess youth and beauty. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They yearn for sons. O immensely fortunate one! Therefore, so that the lineage continues, beget offspring on them. At my request, perform this act of dharma. Instate yourself on the throne and rule over the kingdom of the Bharatas. In accordance with dharma, take a wife and do not immerse your ancestors in hell." The conqueror of enemies was thus addressed by his mother and his friends.

'But the one who followed dharma replied in accordance with dharma. "O mother! What you have said is certainly sanctioned by supreme dharma. But for the sake of the kingdom, you know about the vow I have taken about not having offspring. O Satyavati! You also know about the price that had to be paid for you and about the occurrence thereafter. I will again repeat the truthful pledge that I then took. I can give up the three worlds. I can also renounce the kingdom of the gods, or anything that is greater than both of these. But I can never go back on the truth. The earth can give up its fragrances, the water can give up its juices, light can give up its diverse forms, wind can give up its sense of touch, the sun can give up its radiance, the smoke-crested flame can give up its heat, the sky can give up its sounds, the moon can give up its cool rays, the slayer of Vritra[233] can give up his valour, the god of dharma can give up dharma, but I can never give up the truth." Having been thus addressed by her son, who was endowed with great energy, the mother Satyavati then told Bhishma, "I know that you are always established in the truth and that truth is your strength. If you wish, you can create another three worlds with your own energy. I know that the vow of truth you took was for my sake. But you know the calamity that has now arisen and you know about dharma at such times. Also remember the duty to your ancestors. O one who is never defeated! Act in a way that dharma is not destroyed and our lineage is not broken. Do what doesn't make our friends grieve." Having been thus repeatedly addressed by his miserable mother, who was grieving for her son, in words that represented a deviation from dharma, Bhishma again said, "O queen! Look at dharma. Otherwise, you will bring all of us to ruin. The norms of dharma never praise a deviation from the truth by Kshatriyas. O queen! In order to prevent Shantanu's lineage from becoming extinct, I will tell you the eternal dharma of Kshatriyas. Hearing this, after consulting priests and those wise ones who know about the dharma that should be followed in time of calamities, determine what is best for the welfare of the world."'

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'Bhishma said, "Jamadagni's son Rama[234] was angry when his father was killed and in his anger, the immensely illustrious one killed the king of the Haihayas.[235] He sliced off Arjuna's 1000 arms. Then he again took up his bow to conquer the world. Using his wonderful weapons, the great-souled descendant of Bhargava used his arrows to exterminate Kshatriyas from the world twenty-one times. Then Kshatriya women everywhere had offspring through Brahmanas who were self-controlled. The Vedas clearly say that a son so born belongs to the one who accepted the hand.[236] With dharma in their minds, they united with the Brahmanas. The world has thus seen the resurgence of the Kshatriyas.

'"In earlier times, there was a famous and wise rishi named Utathya. His wife was named Mamata and he loved her dearly. Utathya's younger brother was the immensely energetic Brihaspati, the priest of the gods. He desired Mamata and sought to unite with her. Mamata told her brother-in-law, who was most eloquent in speech, 'I am pregnant through your older brother. Therefore, desist. O illustrious Brihaspati! Utathya's son is in my womb and has studied the Vedas and the Vedangas there. Your semen is infallible and, therefore, this is not possible. Do not desire me today.' At these words, the immensely energetic Brihaspati could not suppress his desire, though he had achieved self-control. The desiring one united with her, though she did not desire him in return. When he spilt his semen, the embryo inside the womb said, 'O father! There is no room inside for two of us. I was here first and you have unnecessarily wasted your semen.’ At this, the illustrious rishi Brihaspati was angry and cursed Utathya’s son, who was in the womb. ‘You have spoken at a time that all beings crave for. Therefore, you will enter a long period of darkness.’ From this curse was born the rishi Dirghatama.[237] He was Brihaspati’s equal in great deeds and great energy. To extend Utathya’s lineage, the famous rishi had sons like Goutama and others, all immensely famous.

‘“But Goutama and the other sons were overcome by greed and delusion. They tied him to wood and threw him into the waters of the Ganga. ‘This man[238] is blind and old. Why should we support him?’ Thinking in this way, the cruel ones returned home. O king! The rishi then floated along the river, blindly passing many kingdoms on the raft. One day, a king named Bali, who was learned in all aspects of dharma, had come to the water and saw him floating along in the current. O bull among men![239] The righteous Bali found his strength in truth. He knew who he was and grasped him, so that he could obtain sons. He said, ‘O illustrious one! Honour me. I have to obtain sons through my wife. Therefore, father sons who are knowledgeable in dharma and artha.’ Thus addressed, the energetic rishi agreed. The king then sent his wife Sudeshna to him. But knowing that he was old and blind, the queen did not go to him. Instead, she demeaned him and sent her ignorant Shudra nurse. The righteous rishi then fathered eleven sons on the Shudra woman, the first of whom was named Kakshivat. When he saw Kakshivat and all the other sons studying, the valorous king was delighted and told the rishi, ‘These are mine.’ ‘No,’ said the maharshi and continued, ‘I have fathered Kakshivat and the others on a Shudra woman. Your queen Sudeshna discovered that I was blind and old. In her folly, she insulted me and sent her Shudra nurse to me.’ Bali then pacified that supreme of rishis and again sent his wife Sudeshna to him. Dirghatama felt the queen’s limbs and told her, ‘You will have a powerful son who will be devoted to the truth.’ Thus the rajarshi Anga was born from Sudeshna. In this way, many Kshatriyas who were great archers were born from Brahmanas. They were supremely learned in dharma, valorous and had great strength. O mother! Having heard this, you should do as you desire.”’

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‘Bhishma said, “O mother! Listen to me as I again tell you how the Bharata dynasty can be certainly extended through sons. Let a Brahmana with all the qualities be invited. Let him father sons on Vichitravirya’s field.”’[240]

Vaishampayana said, ‘Satyavati then spoke to Bhishma, in a smiling and bashful voice. “O mighty-armed descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have spoken the truth. Because I have confidence in you, I will now say what needs to be done to continue the lineage. Learned as you are about what dharma permits in times of distress, you will not be able to reject it. You are the dharma of our dynasty, you are truth, and you are its supreme recourse. Therefore, hear what I have to say and then act accordingly. My father was a righteous man and for the sake of dharma, he maintained a boat. In the prime of my youth, I once plied that boat. The supreme rishi Parashara, greatest among those who know dharma, came to the boat because he wanted to cross the river Yamuna. When I was taking him across the river, the best of sages felt desire for me. He approached me and pacified me in gentle words. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I was scared of his curse and I was also frightened of my father. I could not refuse him. Therefore, I obtained a boon from him, one that is difficult to get. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I was a young girl and he overcame me with his energy in the boat. But he enveloped the world with a dense fog. Earlier, a foul smell of fish used to come from my body. But the sage removed that and gave me this divine fragrance. Then the sage told me that once I had delivered my son on an island in the river, I would once again become a virgin. Thus was born the great rishi famous as Dvaipayana, Parashara’s son. He is a great yogi and was born to me while I was still a virgin. That illustrious rishi has used the power of his austerities to divide the Vedas into four parts. He is known in all the worlds as Vyasa.[241] Because he is dark, he is also known as Krishna. He is always devoted to the truth, has destroyed his sins and is an ascetic who is free from all passion. Asked by me and also asked by you, that immeasurably radiant one will surely agree to father excellent sons on your brother's field. He has told me to think of him whenever a task has to be accomplished. O mighty-armed Bhishma! If you so desire, I will think of him now. O Bhishma! If you are willing, I am sure the great ascetic will father sons in Vichitravirya's field." When the maharshi's name was mentioned, Bhishma joined his hands and said, "He who knows the three objectives of dharma, artha and kama and takes a decision after weighing how artha leads to more artha, dharma leads to more dharma and kama leads to more kama, singly and jointly, he is truly wise. What you have said is in line with dharma and is also for the welfare of our lineage. It is the best course and I approve." O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When Bhishma approved, Kali[242] thought of the sage Krishna Dvaipayana.

'The wise one was then busy interpreting the Vedas. When he learnt that his mother was thinking about him, he appeared at once. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! She welcomed her son in accordance with the proper rites. Then she embraced him with her arms and bathed him with her tears, since the daughter of the fishermen tribe had seen her son after a long time. On seeing her weep, maharshi Vyasa, who was her eldest son, washed her face with water and paid homage. He said, "I have come to accomplish the task you desire. You know the ways of dharma. Therefore, tell me what you wish me to do and I will do what pleases you." The priest then worshipped that supreme among rishis and welcomed him with the prescribed mantras.

'When he was seated, his mother asked him about his welfare. After making the usual inquiries, Satyavati looked at his face and said, "O wise one! There is no doubt that sons are born from both the father and the mother. There is no doubt that they are their father's property as much as they are their mother's. According to destiny, you are my oldest son. O brahmarshi! In that way, Vichitravirya is my youngest. Therefore, just as Bhishma is Vichitravirya's brother on the father's side, you are his brother on the mother's side. This is my view and I do not know what yours is. Truth provides valour to Shantanu's son and he is devoted to the truth. For the sake of that, he is mentally unwilling to beget offspring or rule over the kingdom. O unblemished one! Out of respect for your brother, for the sake of preserving Shantanu's lineage, to keep Bhishma's request and mine, out of compassion for all beings and to protect everyone, without any cruelty in your heart, do what I am asking you to do. Your younger brother has left two wives who are as beautiful as goddesses. They are in the full bloom of youth and beauty and desire to have sons, in accordance with dharma. O son! Therefore, beget sons who are worthy of carrying forward our lineage on them. You alone are worthy." Vyasa replied, "O Satyavati! You know dharma, in this world and the next. Your mind is always fixed on dharma and in furthering the cause of dharma. With dharma as the objective, I will do what you are commanding me to do. This is an eternal practice. For my brother, I will produce sons who are the likes of Mitra and Varuna. Let the queens observe the vow I indicate for one year. They will then be purified. No woman can unite with me without having observed a rigid vow." Satyavati said, "Take steps so that the queens can conceive immediately. The gods do not shower rain in a country that is without a king. O lord! How can a country that has no king be protected? Therefore, let the conception take place and Bhishma will protect the wombs." Vyasa replied, "If I have to produce a son for my brother quickly and before the appointed time, they must observe the supreme vow that they will have to tolerate my ugliness. If Kousalya[243] can bear my smell, my form, my attire and my body, she wil conceive an excellent son today." Having uttered these words and pending the time of union, the hermit disappeared.

'The queen then went and met her daughters-in-law in private and told them what was in accordance with dharma and artha and for the sake of welfare. "O Kousalya! Listen to what I have to say. This is in accordance with dharma. On account of my misfortune, the Bharata lineage is about to become extinct. On seeing my misery at the extinction of his paternal lineage, the wise Bhishma has advised me about what should be done to preserve the dynasty and protect dharma.

O daughter! But whether it can be done, depends on you. Accomplish it and revive the lost lineage of the Bharatas. O one with the beautiful hips! Bear a son who is equal in radiance to the king of the gods. He will bear the heavy burden of our lineage and this ancestral kingdom.” She somehow managed to obtain the concurrence of that virtuous one to the proposal, since this was in accordance with dharma. Then she feasted Brahmanas, devarshis and guests.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At the time of her season, when her daughter-in-law had purified herself through a bath, Satyavati led her to the bed and softly told her, “O Kousalya! Your brother-in-law will come to you in the middle of the night and enter you. Wait for him and do not fall asleep.” Having heard her mother-in-law’s words, the beautiful one lay on the bed in her bedroom and began to think that it would be Bhishma or one of the other chiefs of the Kuru lineage. The rishi who was devoted to the truth had first been appointed for Ambika. He entered her bed while the light from the lamps was still burning. On seeing Krishna’s dark visage, matted hair that was the colour of copper, fiery eyes and tawny-brown beard, the queen closed her eyes. But in order to do what his mother desired, he united with her. However, because of fear, the daughter of the king of Kashi was unable to open her eyes. When he emerged, the mother asked the son, “Will she give birth to a son with all the qualities?” Hearing his mother’s words, the supremely intelligent and self-controlled Vyasa replied, following what was destined, “The son will have the strength of 10,000 elephants. He will be learned and supreme among rajarshis. He will be immensely fortunate, immensely brave and immensely wise. He will have 100 powerful sons. But because of lack of quality on the part of his mother, he will be blind.” Hearing these words, the mother told the son, “O one blessed with the power of austerities! How can a blind one be worthy to be king of the Kuru dynasty? How can he protect the lineage of your relatives and extend the lineage of his ancestors? Therefore, grant a second son to the Kuru lineage.” Having promised this, the powerful ascetic departed. In due course, Kousalya gave birth to a son who was blind.

‘Once again, the queen spoke to the other daughter-in-law. As before, the unblemished Satya[244] summoned the rishi. In accordance with what he had promised, the maharshi went to Ambalika in the same way. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him, she was distressed and turned pale. O king! On seeing her frightened, and pale of complexion, Satyavati’s son Vyasa told her, “Since you turned pale on seeing my ugliness, you will have a son who will be pale in complexion. O one with the beautiful face. His name will also be Pandu."[245] Having uttered these words, the illustrious and supreme rishi emerged. On seeing him emerge, Satya spoke to her son and he again told her that the son would be pale. On hearing this, the mother asked for another son and the maharshi agreed to his mother's request. When the time came, the queen gave birth to a son who was pale in complexion. But he was handsome and radiant and bore all the auspicious marks. Later, this son gave birth to the five Pandavas, who were great archers.

'When the eldest daughter-in-law was again in season, she[246] again asked her to go. But the one who was as beautiful as a goddess, remembered the form and odour of the maharshi and out of fear did not do what the queen asked her to do. With her ornaments, the daughter of the king of Kashi bedecked a maid servant, making her look like a beautiful apsara and sent her to Krishna. When the rishi arrived, she arose and paid him her respects. Having respectfully served him, she united with him with his permission. His desire satisfied, the rishi was greatly pleased with her. Having spent all night with her and found pleasure, the maharshi arose to leave and told her, "O fortunate one! You will no longer be a servant. The child in your womb will be devoted to dharma and in all the worlds, he will be supreme among those who are intelligent." This son of Krishna Dvaipayana was known by the name of Vidura, the extremely wise brother of Dhritarashtra and Pandu. As a consequence of the curse imposed by the great-souled Mandavya, Dharma himself was born as Vidura and he was learned in all principles and free from anger and desire. Freed from the debt he had contracted because of dharma, when he met his mother, he again told her that the woman had conceived. He then vanished. Thus sons were born in Vichitravirya's field through Dvaipayana. They were as radiant as children of the gods and extended the Kuru lineage.'

Janamejaya asked, ‘What did Dharma do to warrant a curse? Who was the brahmarshi because of whose curse he was born in the womb of a Shudra woman?’

Vaishampayana said, ‘There was a Brahmana who was known by the name of Mandavya. He had perseverance and was learned in dharma. He was devoted to the truth and established in austerities. This great ascetic used to seat himself at the foot of a tree near the entrance to his hermitage. While observing a vow of silence, the great yogi raised his hands up high and meditated. He passed a long time in these austerities.

‘One day, some robbers came to his hermitage with stolen property. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They were pursued by many guards. O supreme of the Kuru lineage! The robbers hid their stolen property there. Before the guards came, they also hid themselves in fear. No sooner had they done this, than the army of guards chasing the robbers arrived and saw the rishi. O king! They asked the one blessed with the power of austerities, but he did not move from his posture. “O supreme among Brahmanas! In what direction did the robbers go? O Brahmana! Tell us, so that we can quickly pursue them.” O king! Having been thus addressed by the guards, the one blessed with the power of austerities did not utter a single word in reply, good or bad. At that, the king’s officers began to search the hermitage and found the robbers and the stolen property hidden there. The guards then began to suspect the hermit himself. Together with the robbers, they seized him and brought him before the king. Along with the robbers, the king sentenced him to death. In their ignorance, the guards impaled the great ascetic on a stake. Having impaled the sage on the stake, the guards then returned to the king with the stolen property they had recovered.

‘The righteous Brahmana and rishi remained on the stake for a long time. But though he had no food, the rishi did not die. O scorcher of enemies! The great-souled one continued to perform austerities on the tip of the stake and summoned the supreme sages there. They were extremely aggrieved on finding him there and in the night returned in the form of vultures from every direction. Having shown themselves in their own forms, they then asked that supreme of Brahmanas, “O

Brahmana! We wish to know about the sin you have committed.” At that, the tiger among sages told the ones who were blessed with the power of austerities, “Whom shall I blame? There is no one but me who has committed a sin.” The king heard that he was a rishi and went there with all his advisers. He pacified the supreme rishi who was impaled on the tip of the stake. “O supreme among rishis! I have caused you harm through delusion and ignorance. I seek your blessings. Please do not be angry with me.” On hearing the king’s words, the sage was pacified. Having thus pacified him, the king then had him lowered from the stake. When he had lowered him, he tried to draw out the tip of the stake, but was unsuccessful. So he cut it off at the end. In that stage, with the stake still inside him, the sage continued to practise austerities and attained worlds that were difficult to obtain. Therefore, he was known as Animandavya[247] in the world.

‘One day, the Brahmana, who was well-versed in dharma and knew the supreme truth, went to the abode of Dharma. On seeing the illustrious Dharma seated, he asked him, “In my ignorance, what sin have I committed? Why have I suffered from such punishment? Tell me the truth immediately and then witness the power of my austerities.” Dharma replied, “O one blessed with the power of austerities! You had once pierced an insect in its tail with a blade of grass and you received the fruits of your action.” Animandavya said, “You have imposed a grave punishment because of a small fault. O Dharma! Because of this, you will be born as a man in the womb of a Shudra woman. Today, I will lay down a law in this world for the fruits of one’s deeds. No sin will be committed by anyone who is below the age of fourteen years.[248] It will be sin only when committed above that age.” Because he was cursed by that great-souled ascetic for that sin, Dharma was born as Vidura in the womb of a Shudra woman. He was free from avarice and anger. He was skilled in the knowledge of dharma and artha. He was devoted to the welfare of the Kurus, was far-sighted and equable.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘After the births of these three sons, Kurujangala, Kurukshetra and the Kurus grew in prosperity. The land produced abundant crops and the harvests were plenty. The clouds showered down rain at the right time. The trees yielded many flowers and fruit. The beasts of burden were happy and so were the animals and the birds. The garlands were fragrant and the fruit was juicy. The cities were full of traders and artisans. The people were brave, learned, honest and happy. There were no robbers and no one did anything that was against dharma. It was as if in all the parts of the country, Krita Yuga[249] had arrived. The people were devoted to rites of dharma, charity and performance of sacrifices. With love and affection for each other, the subjects grew in prosperity. They were devoid of pride, anger and avarice. They helped each other in becoming prosperous and dharma reigned supreme. The great city[250] was like the ocean. It was full of hundreds of palaces, with gates, arches and turrets that looked like masses of clouds. It looked like Indra’s great capital. The people happily enjoyed themselves in rivers, wooded groves, lakes, ponds, hills and beautiful woods. Rivalling the northern Kurus, the southern Kurus walked with siddhas, rishis and charanas. No one was wretched.[251] There was no woman who was a widow. The Kurus increased the loveliness of the country manifold. They built wells, resting places, assemblies, tanks and residences for the Brahmanas. O king! Bhishma protected everything according to righteous conduct. The beautiful country was dotted everywhere with sanctuaries and sacrificial stakes. The country expanded by bringing in other kingdoms into its fold. Upheld by Bhishma, the wheel of dharma rolled on in the kingdom.

‘All the inhabitants of the city and the country were always delighted on witnessing the accomplishments of the great-souled princes and feasted. O king! In the houses of the chiefs of the Kurus and in those of the citizens, the expressions “Let us give” and “Let us eat” were constantly heard.

‘Right from their birth, Bhishma reared Dhritarashtra, Pandu and the immensely intelligent Vidura as if they were his own sons. They went through rites, they studied and observed vows. When they attained youth, they became skilled in labour, exercise, archery, horsemanship, fighting with clubs, shields and swords, the science of elephants and the sacred texts of ethics. O lord! They studied history, the Puranas and many other branches of learning. They knew all the details of the Vedas, the Vedangas and their theory. The valorous Pandu excelled over all other men in archery. O lord of the earth! Dhritarashtra was stronger than anyone else. O king! In the three worlds, there was no one who was Vidura's equal in his eternal devotion to dharma. For him, dharma was the supreme goal. On seeing that Shantanu's lineage had again been revived, a saying became common in the world and in all the kingdoms. "Among mothers of heroes, the daughters of the king of Kashi; among all countries, Kurujangala; among those who know everything about dharma, Bhishma; and among all cities, Gajasahrya."[252] However, because he was blind, Dhritarashtra did not obtain the kingdom. Nor by law, could Vidura.[253] Therefore, Pandu became the lord of the earth.'

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'Bhishma said, "Our famous dynasty has all the qualities and virtue. Over all the other kings, it has now become the supreme overlord on earth. Earlier, this dynasty was protected by many great-souled kings who knew dharma. Never has our dynasty come close to destruction. Satyavati, the great-souled Krishna[254] and I have ensured that the likes of you are established, so that the threads of our lineage continue. O son![255] It is my duty, and especially yours, to take measures so that this dynasty expands like the ocean. I have heard of the princess of the Yadavas, a lineage that is equal to ours. There is also Subala's daughter and the daughter of the king of Madra. They are all from good lineages, beautiful and protected by their kin. Those bulls among the Kshatriyas are suitable for an alliance with us. O Vidura! O foremost among those who are wise! I think we should choose them for offspring and the continuation of our lineage. What do you think?"

‘Vidura replied, “You are our father. You are our mother. You are our supreme preceptor. Therefore, you yourself decide and do what is good for our lineage.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘He[256] heard from the Brahmanas that Subala’s daughter, the fortunate Gandhari, had obtained a boon by pleasing Hara, the god who robbed Bhaga of his eyes.[257] She would have 100 sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he heard this, Bhishma, grandfather of the Kurus, sent a message to the king of Gandhara. Because of the blindness, Subala hesitated. But taking into account the famous lineage and the conduct and intelligence of the Kurus, he agreed to give his daughter Gandhari, who was devoted to dharma, to Dhritarashtra.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When Gandhari heard that Dhritarashtra was blind and that both her father and mother had agreed to give her to him, the beautiful one who possessed many qualities picked up a piece of cloth. As devotion to her husband, she tied up her eyes with this, deciding resolutely that she would never experience more than what her husband could. Thereupon, Shakuni, the son of the king of Gandhara, brought his sister to the Kouravas, with a lot of riches. The brave one gave his sister, accompanied by her possessions, and after being honoured by Bhishma, returned to his own city. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gandhari of the beautiful hips satisfied all the Kurus with her acts, behaviour, attentiveness and conduct. She was devoted to her husband. She did not even mention other men in her speech.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The chief of the Yadus was named Shura and he was Vasudeva’s father. His daughter was named Pritha and her beauty was matchless on earth. Earlier, that valorous one had promised his first-born child to his father’s sister’s son, because this valorous one had no children. The first-born happened to be a daughter. To do a favour and an act of friendship to his friend, he gave her to the great-souled

Kuntibhoja. In her father's[258] house, she was appointed to honour the gods and guests. One day, she happened to tend to the Brahmana who was rigid in his vows and who was known as Durvasa. He was fearsome and was learned in the secret mysteries of dharma. Attending to his needs in every way, she pleased the self-controlled one. Through his foresight, he knew that she would face the dharma that is indicated for times of distress[259] and need magic. The sage gave her a mantra and said, "Whichever gods you summon through the use of this mantra, will grant you sons through their grace." Having been told this by the Brahmana, she was curious.

'Though still a virgin, the illustrious one summoned the god Arka.[260] She immediately saw the sun, who makes the worlds come alive. On seeing that wonderful sight, the one with the unblemished form was astounded. Tapana,[261] who spreads light, placed an embryo in her womb. Through him, she gave birth to a warrior who was supreme among those who knew the use of all weapons. He was born with natural armour, blessed with good fortune and handsome like a son of the gods. His natural armour and earrings lit up his face. This son was known in all the worlds as Karna. After giving her, the supremely radiant one and the best among those who give, Tapana, restored her virginity and returned to heaven.

'So as to hide her misconduct and frightened of her relatives, Kunti[262] hurled the son, who bore all the auspicious marks, into the water. Radha's illustrious husband,[263] who was the son of a suta, saved the child, and he and his wife brought him up as their son. They gave the child a name. Since he was born with riches, he was given the name of Vasushena. [264] He grew up to be powerful, skilled in the use of all weapons. The valorous one worshipped the sun until his back was burnt. During that time of worship and meditation, there was nothing that the brave, truthful and great-souled one would not give to Brahmanas. Indra, who looks after the welfare of all creatures, came in the form of a Brahmana begging for alms and asked for the radiant natural armour and earrings. Without a thought, and with blood streaming, Karna cut off the natural armour and the earrings and offered them with joined hands. The amazed Shakra[265] gave him a *shakti*[266] and said, "Whoever you wish to kill among the gods, the asuras, humans, gandharvas, uragas and rakshasas with this weapon, will certainly be killed." Earlier, he was known by the name of Vasushena. But after this deed, he became known by the name of Vaikartana Karna.'[267]

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Vaishampayana said, 'Kuntibhoja's daughter was beautiful and possessed all the qualities. She was always devoted to dharma and great vows. Her father arranged for a svayamvara. She found the handsome Pandu among thousands of powerful kings who had teeth like lions, shoulders like elephants and eyes like bulls. Blessed with unlimited good fortune, Kuru's descendant and Kuntibhoja's daughter were married, like Maghavan with Poulomi.[268]

'Thereafter, with Devavrata Bhishma, he[269] went to the capital city of the Madra kingdom. Madri, the daughter of the king of Madra, lived there. She was famous in the three worlds and among all the kings for her beauty, which was unmatched on earth. For Pandu's sake, he bought her with a great deal of riches. Bhishma got the great-souled Pandu married off. O, tiger among men! The people of the world were astonished to see the intelligent Pandu, with a chest like a lion, shoulders like an elephant and eyes like a bull. Pandu had strength, courage and enterprise. After marrying, he decided to conquer the earth and vanquish many enemies.

'Pandu, lion among men, went to the east and defeated the Dasharnas in battle, thereby spreading the fame of the Kouravas. Then with his army, which had many flags flying and many elephants, horses, chariots and infantry, he attacked Darva, the king of the Magadha kingdom, who was proud of his valour and had made enemies out of all the kings. He was killed in Rajagriha and his treasury, transport and armies seized. Then Pandu went to Mithila and conquered Videha in battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then the fame of the Kurus spread to Kashi, Suhma and Pundra. Through the strength of his own arms. Pandu, the scorcher of foes, burnt kings with the great net of his flaming arrows and his dazzling weapons. He was like a great fire and defeated with his army the kings and their armies. After conquering them, Pandu engaged them in the work of the Kurus. Having been thus vanquished by him, all the kings of the earth recognized him to be the only warrior on earth, like Purandara among the gods. All the lords of the earth came and worshipped him with joined hands. They brought him gems and riches of various kinds—precious stones, pearls, coral, a lot of gold and silver, the best cows, the best horses, the best chariots, elephants, donkeys, camels, buffaloes and some goats and sheep. The king of Nagapura[270] accepted them all.

'Then, to the delight of his own kingdom and city, Pandu returned to Gajasahrya[271] with his vehicles. "The fame of Shantanu, lion among kings, and of the intelligent Bharata had been destroyed. But those cries and deeds have now been revived by Pandu. Those who had earlier robbed the land of the Kurus and the riches of the Kurus have now been forced to pay tribute by Pandu, the lion of Nagapura." With happiness and confidence in their hearts, these were the words of the kings, the advisers to the kings and the citizens of the town and the country. With Bhishma at their head, they went out to receive him when he returned. Before they had gone very far, the residents of Nagapura delightedly saw the world full of many captives, myriad gems piled on many vehicles, elephants, horses, chariots, cows, camels and sheep. Following Bhishma, the Kouravas saw all this and could find no end to it. The one who had increased Kousalya's[272] joy paid homage at his father's[273] feet. He showed his respects to the citizens of the town and countryside. Bhishma shed tears of joy, now that he was reunited with his son, who had successfully returned after subjugating other kingdoms. There was the great roar of hundreds of trumpets and drums. As he entered Gajasahrya, he made the citizens everywhere very happy.'

Vaishampayana said, ‘On Dhritarashtra’s command, Pandu offered the riches he had won to Bhishma, Satyavati and their mothers.[274] Pandu also sent a part of the riches to Vidura. The one with dharma in his soul also pleased his relatives by giving them riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then Satyavati, Bhishma and the illustrious Kousalya were given sparkling gems Pandu had won. His mother Kousalya[275] embraced that bull among men, unequalled in his energy, the way Poulomi embraces Jayanta.[276] With the wealth won by that brave warrior, Dhritarashtra performed great sacrifices equivalent to 100 horse sacrifices, in terms of the hundreds and thousands of alms that were given.

‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! After some time, having won control over his senses, Pandu retired to the forest with Kunti and Madri. He left his excellent palace and its beautiful beds. He permanently lived in the forest, always hunting. He roamed on the southern slopes of the beautiful Himalaya Mountains and lived on mountain plains, and in forests with gigantic shala trees. With Kunti and Madri, Pandu lived in the forest, like Purandara’s handsome elephant[277] between two cow elephants. As the descendant of the Bharata lineage roamed around with his wives, with swords, arrows and bows and clad in wonderful armour, the king who was brave and skilled in the use of all weapons seemed like a god to the forest-dwellers. On Dhritarashtra’s command, these men always gave him every object of desire and pleasure in the forest.

‘The river’s son[278] heard that King Devaka had a daughter born from a Shudra woman[279] and that she was young and beautiful. O bull among men! He asked for her hand, brought her and married her off to the immensely wise Vidura. Through her, Vidura had many sons. They were humble, of good conduct and were equal to him in all the qualities.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O, Janamejaya! Thereupon, 100 sons were born to Dhritarashtra through Gandhari. Then beyond these 100, he had one more through a Vaishya. Pandu had five maharatha sons through Kunti and Madri. They were born from the gods so that the lineage could continue.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘O best of the Brahmanas! How did Gandhari give birth to 100 sons and how long did it take? How long did they live? How did Dhritarashtra have a son through a Vaishya, despite possessing a wife who was equal to him and who was devoted to dharma and loved him? How were the five maharatha sons born from the gods, after the great-souled Pandu was cursed? O one blessed with the power of austerities! Tell me all this as it happened and in detail, because I can never be satisfied on hearing the accounts of my relatives.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘One day, Dvaipayana arrived, hungry and tired. Gandhari satisfied him and Vyasa gave her a boon that she would have 100 sons who would be the equals of her husband. After some time, she conceived through Dhritarashtra. Gandhari bore the embryo for two years without giving birth and was overcome with grief. Then she heard that a son had been born to Kunti, as radiant as the morning sun. She felt the hardness of her stomach and began to worry, losing her patience. Unknown to Dhritarashtra, Gandhari violently struck her belly and aborted herself, fainting with the pain. A hard mass of flesh, like an iron ball, came out. This was what she had borne in her womb for two years and prepared to throw it away. But learning of this, Dvaipayana quickly came to her. That supreme among those who meditate saw that mass of flesh and asked Subala’s daughter, “What have you done?” She truthfully expressed her thoughts to the supreme rishi. “When I heard that Kunti had given birth to her first son, as radiant as the sun, I struck my belly in grief. Earlier, you granted me the boon that I would have a hundred sons. But instead of those 100 sons, this mass of flesh has been born to me.” Vyasa replied, “O Subala’s daughter! It will be as I have said and not otherwise. I have never uttered a falsehood in jest. Why should I do it when I am in earnest? Quickly bring a hundred pots and fill them up with ghee. Let cool water be sprinkled on this mass of flesh.” Being sprinkled with water, that mass of flesh divided itself into a hundred parts. Each part of the embryo was only the size of a thumb. O ruler of the earth! O king! As time passed, that mass of flesh gradually became 101 separate parts.[280] These parts of the embryo were then placed into the pots and these were concealed in a secret spot and carefully guarded. The illustrious one then again told Subala's daughter about how much time should pass before the pots were broken open. After saying this and making the necessary arrangements, the illustrious and wise lord Vyasa went away to the mountainous Himalayas to perform his austerities.

'In due course, King Duryodhana was born first. But King Yudhishthira was the eldest, because he had been born first. As soon as his son was born, Dhritarashtra summoned Brahmanas, Bhishma and Vidura and said, "Prince Yudhishthira is the eldest prince for the extension of our lineage. He will obtain the kingdom through his own qualities and I have nothing to say on this. But will this one become the king after him? Tell me truthfully what must certainly happen." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he stopped speaking, carrion eaters, terrible carnivores and howling jackals began to scream from all the directions. O king! On witnessing these terrible and ominous signs, all the Brahmanas and the immensely intelligent Vidura said, "It is clear that this son of yours will bring about the destruction of this lineage. There is peace in abandoning him and great disaster in nurturing him. O lord of the earth! Let ninety-nine sons remain with you and with the one you can bring about the welfare of the world and the lineage. It is said that abandon one for the sake of the lineage. Abandon a lineage for the sake of a village. Abandon a village for the sake of a country. Abandon the earth for the sake of the soul." Thus spoke Vidura and all the supreme Brahmanas. But because of affection towards his son, the king did not do this.

'O king! Within a month, 100 sons were born to Dhritarashtra and a daughter, over and above the 100. When Gandhari was afflicted with her expanding belly, the mighty-armed Dhritarashtra used to have a Vaishya maid in attendance. O king! Within a year, a son was born to Dhritarashtra. O king! He was immensely famous and wise and he was named Yuyutsu, of mixed lineage. Thus, 100 wise, brave and maharatha sons were born to Dhritarashtra and one daughter named Duhshala.’

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Janamejaya said, ‘O, lord! Recount to me the names of Dhritarashtra’s sons, beginning with the eldest, in the order of their birth.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Duryodhana, Yuyutsu, Duhshasana, Duhsaha, Duhshala, Jalasandha, Sama, Saha, Vinda, Anuvinda, Durdharsha, Subahu, Dushpradharshana, Durmarshana, Durmukha, Dushkarma, Karna, Vivimshati, Vikarna, Sulochana, Chitra, Upachitra, Chitraksha, Charuchitra, Sharasana, Durmada, Dushpragaha, Vivitsu, Vikata, Urnanabha, Sunabha, Nanda, Upanandaka, Senapati, Sushena, Kundodara, Mahodara, Chitrabana, Chitravarma, Suvarma, Durvimochana, Ayobahu, Mahabahu, Chitranga, Chitrakundala, Bhimavega, Bhimabala, Balaki, Balavardhana, Ugrayudha, Bhimakarma, Kanakayu, Dridhayudha, Dridhavarma, Dridhakshatra, Somakirti, Anudara, Dridhasandha, Jarasandha, Satyasandha, Sadahsuvak, Ugrashrava, Ashvasena, Senani, Dushparajaya, Aparajita, Panditaka, Vishalaksha, Duravara, Dridhahasta, Suhasta, Vatavega, Suvarcha, Adityaketu, Bahvashi, Nagadanta, Ugrayayi, Kavachi, Nishangi, Pashi, Dandadhara, Dhanurgraha, Ugra, Bhimaratha, Vira, Virabahu, Alolupa, Abhaya, Roudrakarma, Dridharatha, Anadhrishya, Kundabhedi, Viravi, Dirghalochana, Dirghabahu, Mahabahu, Vyudhoru, Kanakadhvaja, Kundashi and Viraja. O king! Over and above the hundred, Duhshala was the daughter. I have recounted the names of the one hundred, in accordance with the order of their birth.

‘O king! Know that they were all brave and unrivalled charioteers. They were all skilled in battle, all knowledgeable in the Vedas and wise in the ways of ruling. They were skilled in the science of relationships and were radiant in knowledge. O lord of the earth! When the time was right, Dhritarashtra considered the matter carefully and married them to wives who were their equals. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With the permission of Subala’s daughter, the king married Duhshala to Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu.’

Janamejaya said, ‘O you who are knowledgeable about the nature of the brahman! You have recounted to me the excellent and superhuman story of the human origins of the sons of Dhritarashtra. O Brahmana! In accordance with birth, you have also told me their names. Now I wish to hear about the Pandavas. They were great-souled and the equal of the king of the gods in valour. You have earlier told me that they were the partial incarnations of the gods themselves.[281] O Vaishampayana! I now wish to hear about their origins and their superhuman deeds. Please tell me all.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘One day, in the great forest frequented by deer and predatory beasts, King Pandu saw a stag that was the leader of its herd mating with a doe. With five swift and sharp arrows that were decorated with golden feathers in their shafts, Pandu shot both the stag and the doe. O king! The stag was actually the immensely energetic son of a rishi, blessed with the power of austerities. The energetic one was uniting with his wife in the form of a deer. While still united with the doe, he fell down on the ground instantly and as he began to lose his senses, lamented in a human voice.

‘The deer said, “Even evil men who are enslaved by lust and anger, are therefore deprived of reason and are always sinful, stay away from such cruel deeds. A man’s judgement does not swallow destiny. Destiny swallows judgement. The wise never sanction anything that is forbidden by destiny. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You were born in a dynasty that was always devoted to dharma. Overcome by lust and avarice, how have you lost all your reason?” Pandu replied, “O deer! In dealing with deer, kings behave no differently from enemies; they kill them. Therefore, you should not blame me in your delusion. Deer can be killed openly and through trickery. That is the dharma of kings. Since you know that, why are you blaming me? When seated at a sacrifice, the rishi Agastya went on a hunt. He offered each deer in that great forest to all the gods. This is the sanction of dharma. Then why are you reproving me? According to Agastya’s actions, the likes of you are offerings at sacrifices.” The deer said, “Earlier, they never unleashed arrows without considering preparedness.[282] There is a time for this and killing at such times is praised." Pandu replied, "It is known that killing occurs, whether prepared or unprepared, through different means—strength and sharp arrows. O deer! Why are you blaming me?"

'The deer said, "O king! I do not blame you because you have killed a deer or because you have caused me injury. But instead of performing such a cruel act, you should have waited until my act of intercourse was complete. This is a time that is for the welfare of all beings and desired by all beings. Which learned one will kill a deer engaged in intercourse in the forest? You have rendered futile my attempt to obtain offspring. O Kourava! O Pourava! This lineage has had rishis and is famous for its righteous acts. This act was unworthy of you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This greatly cruel act is condemned in all the worlds. It destroys attainment of heaven and fame and is against dharma. You are acquainted about pleasures from uniting with women. You also know the sacred texts and norms of dharma. You are the equal of a god. You should not have committed such an act, which is unworthy of reaching heaven. O best of kings! Your duty is to punish men who act cruelly, are engaged in evil acts and have abandoned the three[283] goals. O best of men! O king! What have I done that you killed me? I am a sage in the form of a deer and live on roots and fruit. I always live peacefully in the forest. Since you have caused injury to me, you will certainly be injured. Since you have been cruel to a helpless couple, when you are overcome through the pangs of desire, death will overtake you. I am a sage named Kimdama, unparalleled in austerities. Ashamed of men, I was engaged in intercourse with this deer. Assuming the form of a deer, I roamed with other deer in this dense forest. The sin of killing a Brahmana will not vest on you, since you did that unknowingly. O foolish one! But since you killed me in the form of a deer when I was overcome by desire, you will meet with the same fate that has befallen me. Overcome by desire, when you unite with your loved one, at that very instant, you will depart for the land of the dead. The woman with whom you unite in your last moments will also go to the land of the king of the dead, inescapable for all beings. Out of devotion towards you, that best of intelligent ones will follow you. You have now brought me into grief when I was in the midst of pleasure. Like that, you will be afflicted with misery when you have just found happiness.” Having said this, in great pain, the deer gave up its life. In an instant, Pandu was also immersed in grief.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After the deer’s death, the king and his wives lamented grievously, as if they had lost a relative.

‘Pandu said, “Even if born in righteous families, deluded by the net of desire, men confront calamity because of their deeds and when their intelligence is destroyed. I have heard that my own father was born from a man always devoted to dharma. But he died when he was still young, because he lived a life addicted to desire. Through the illustrious rishi Krishna Dvaipayana, self-controlled in speech, I was born in the field of that lustful king. Despite that, I have become evil-hearted and my lowly mind is spent on the evil chase of deer, deserted by the gods. I am tied down by a great vice and I will now seek salvation. Following the undecaying example set by my father, I will now follow a meritorious way of life. I will certainly tie myself to a life of extreme austerities. I will live alone, spending each day under a single tree.[284] I will shave off my head and become a hermit who begs for his food as he roams the earth. I will cover myself with dust and be without a home and without refuge. The foot of a tree will be my home. I will renounce everything that is loved or hated. I will neither grieve nor rejoice, and praise and blame will be the same to me. I will not seek homage or greetings. I will be at peace and without possessions. I will not mock anyone, nor will I furrow my brow at anyone. With a smiling face, I will always devote myself to the welfare of all creatures. I will never transgress the four orders, movable and immovable, and will treat them all equally, like my own children. Once every day, I will beg my food from two or five families and sustain myself. If it is impossible to obtain food in this way, I will fast. I will eat only a little and will never be greedy. I will never beg for more and never include more than seven.[285] I will think of the cutting off of one arm with an axe and the covering of the other with sandalwood the same way. I will not think of one as good and the other as evil, since both are equal. I will not act so as to live, nor act so as to die. Life and death are the same and I will not welcome one and hate the other. I will give up all the rituals for prosperity that those who are alive indulge in and times for their observance. I will always give up everything that makes the senses work. I will cleanse myself of all sin and even give up that done in the name of dharma. I will be free from all sin and all traps. I will not be under anyone's powers, but will follow the dharma of being as free as the wind. I will always sustain myself in this way and no other. I will make my body walk the path of fearlessness and not deviate. I will not follow the miserable path of dogs, followed by those without virility. I will follow my own righteous dharma and tread the lovely path of not using one's virility. He who is honoured and dishonoured and lusts for another life with hungry eyes, becomes full of desire and treads the path of dogs." When he had uttered these words, the king sorrowfully sighed.

'He looked at Kunti and Madri and said, "Tell Kousalya, *kshatta*[286] Vidura, the king and all his relatives, the lady Satyavati, Bhishma, the royal priests, great-souled soma-drinking and rigid-vowed Brahmanas and old citizens who live here under my protection that Pandu will leave for the forest." Hearing these words of their husband, who had made up his mind on leaving for the forest, both Kunti and Madri addressed him in these words. "O bull of the Bharata lineage! We are your wives under dharma. There are other stages of life[287] that you can observe with us and still perform great austerities. There is no doubt that even then, you will attain heaven. We will also control our senses, devote ourselves to our husband's world, give up all happiness and desire and perform great austerities. O lord of the earth! O immensely wise one! If you forsake us, there is no doubt that we will give up our lives today." Pandu replied, "If this decision of yours is in conformity with dharma, I will follow the undecaying path shown by my father with both of you. I will give up the pleasant life of villages and perform great austerities. I will eat roots and fruit, wear the bark of trees and roam in the great forest. I will bathe in the morning and evening and make offerings to the fire. I will make my body thin by eating less. I will wear skins and my hair will be matted. I will expose myself to hot and cold winds, hunger, thirst and exhaustion. Through difficult austerities, I will reduce my body. I will seek solitude and live on fruits, be they ripe or unripe. I will worship the ancestors and the gods with food found in the forest, water and words. The sight of a man living for vanaprastha has never affected superior residents. How can it affect those who are inferior?[288] Until my body perishes, I will perform the severest penances laid down in the sacred texts for those who live in forests.” Having said this to his wives, the king, a descendant of the Kuru lineage, gave the jewel from his crown, necklace, earrings, bracelets and valuable garments and ornaments belonging to his wives to the Brahmanas.

‘Pandu then again said, “Go to Nagapura[289] and say that Pandu has left for the forest. He has given up riches, desire, happiness and the supreme joy of sex. The descendant of the Kuru lineage has left with his wives.” Hearing these words of the lion of the Bharata lineage, the servants and attendants sorrowed and lamented. They bewailed in loud and pitiable voices. They shed hot tears and took their leave of the lord of the earth. Then they left for Hastinapura with his message. On hearing the details of all that had happened in the great forest, Dhritarashtra, best among kings, mourned for Pandu.

‘Living on roots and fruit, the Kourava prince Pandu went with his wives to the mountain named Nagasabha. He went to Chaitraratha and crossed the Varishena. Then he crossed the Himalayas and went to Gandhamadana. Protected by the great beings,[290] the siddhas and the supreme rishis, the king lived for some time on the mountains and for some time on the plains. He then went to the lake Indradyumna and crossed Hansakuta. Then the ascetic king arrived at Shatashringa.’[291]

Vaishampayana said, ‘There the valorous one engaged in the best of austerities and soon became a favourite of the siddhas and the charanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was devoted to service, had no ego, was disciplined and was in control of his senses. Through his own power, he went to heaven. To some, he was a brother. To some others, he was a friend. Other rishis protected him like a son. O bull among the Bharata lineage! After a long time, Pandu attained such great heights of pure austerity that he became a brahmarshi. With his wives, he wished to cross the Shatashringa and reach heaven. With his wives, he was about to start on a northward direction.

‘The ascetics told him, “As we went northwards, climbing the king of the mountains, we have seen inaccessible regions on the mountain, the playgrounds of the gods, gandharvas and apsaras, Kubera’s garden, laid out on plain and uneven ground, the sloping banks of great rivers and impenetrable caverns in mountains. There are regions that are always covered with snow and without trees, animals and birds. Some large tracts are inaccessible. No bird can cross them, not to speak of animals. The only thing that can go there is air, siddhas and supreme rishis. O bull among the Bharata lineage! How can these princesses cross that king of the mountains? Do not make them sink in that misery and do not go there.” Pandu replied, “O illustrious ones! It is said that one without a son has no door to heaven. I have no son and I tell you that I am in great sorrow. According to dharma, men are born on this earth with four debts—to ancestors, gods, rishis and men. The man who does not discharge them at the right time has no worlds. This has been established by those who know dharma. The gods are pleased through sacrifices, the sages through studying and austerities, the ancestors through sons and shraddhas and men through kindness. According to dharma, I have discharged my debts towards rishis, gods and other men. O ones blessed with the power of austerities! I have not yet been freed from the debt towards my ancestors and I am troubled. It is certain that when my body perishes, so will the ancestors. The best of men are born so as to give birth to offspring. I was begotten by the great-souled one[292] in my father’s field. Like that, should I have offspring in my father’s field?” The ascetics replied, “O king! O one who is devoted to dharma! We know that there are offspring for you, learned, beautiful, unblemished, and like the gods themselves. We have seen this through our divine sight. O tiger among men! Through your acts, accomplish what the gods have destined for you. The thinking and intelligent man always obtains fruit that are not spoilt. O son! The fruit can be seen. Exert yourself. When you have obtained offspring with all the qualities, you will find happiness.” Having heard these words of the ascetics, Pandu was worried. He remembered that his own procreative powers had been lost thanks to the deer’s curse.

‘He told the famous Kunti, his lawful wife, “A union to obtain offspring is supported. O Kunti! The sacred texts say that the worlds are established by offspring. The learned ones who know eternal dharma say this. Offerings, gifts, austerities, self-control—it is said that none of these free a childless man from his sins. O one with the sweet smiles! Knowing this, since I am without offspring, I think and can see that I will never attain the bright worlds. O timid one! Since I was addicted to cruelty and viciousness, through the deer’s curse, I lost my powers of procreation before my desire was satisfied. O Pritha! The religious texts speak of six kinds of sons who are both heirs and relatives and six kinds of sons who are neither heirs, nor relatives. Listen—the son born from one’s own self, the son presented, the son purchased, the son born from one’s widow, the son born through one’s wife before marriage and the son born through a loose wife.[293] The others are the son gifted, the son bought, the son who is obtained artificially, the son who comes on his own, the son who comes with marriage, the son who is born of unknown semen and the son who is born from an inferior womb.[294] One should try to obtain sons from the first downwards and so on. One always desires to obtain a son from a better man. O Pritha! The self-created Manu has said that the righteous who have no offspring can ensure the fruits of dharma outside their own semen. O famous one! Since I am myself incapable of procreation, I will ask you to obtain sons through my equals or betters. O Kunti! Listen to the story of Sharadandayani, the wife of a warrior. She was instructed by her superiors to obtain a son. O Kunti! When her season came, she bathed. In the night, she went to a place where four roads met and welcomed an accomplished Brahmana. For the sake of obtaining a son, she poured oblations into the fire. After performing this rite, she lived with him and three maharatha sons were thus born, Durjaya being the eldest. O fortunate one! On my instructions, you should also quickly obtain a son through a Brahmana who is superior to me in austerities.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Having been thus addressed, Kunti told Pandu, bull among the Kurus, lord of the earth and her husband, “O one who is learned in the law! O one with eyes like those of a blue lotus! You should not speak in this way to me. I am your wife under the law and am always devoted to you. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! According to dharma, you should yourself father valourous sons on me. O tiger among men! I will go to heaven with you. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You should unite with me to obtain offspring. Not even in my thoughts will I go to any other man but you. Which man on earth is superior to you? O one with large eyes! O one with dharma in your heart! Listen to this story from the Puranas. I heard this and I am now recounting it for you.”

‘Kunti said, “In ancient times, it is said that there was a king by the name of Vyushitashva. He extended the Puru lineage and was extremely righteous. The gods with Indra and the devarshis came to a sacrifice that this mighty-armed and righteous one performed. At the sacrifice of the great-souled rajarshi Vyushitashva, Indra was intoxicated with soma juice and the Brahmanas with their fees. O king! Thereafter, Vyushitashva was radiant beyond everything on earth, beyond all living beings and even beyond the sun, after dew has fallen. O supreme among kings! The king conquered all the kings of the east, the north, the middle and the south. At this great horse sacrifice, the powerful Vyushitashva, with the strength of ten elephants, became the king of all other kings. Those who know the Puranas sing a verse. ‘Vyushitashva has conquered the entire earth till the boundaries of the ocean. He protects all the varnas, just as a father protects his own sons.’ He performed many great sacrifices and gave riches to the Brahmanas. Collecting jewels, he later performed great sacrifices. Extracting a lot of soma juice, he performed the sacrifice known as *somasanstha*.

‘“O lord of men! His beloved wife was named Bhadra, the daughter of Kakshivat. Because of her beauty, she was unparalleled on earth. It has been heard that they desired each other a lot and addicted by desire for her, he became a victim of consumption. After some time, he went away like the setting sun. When that king of men died, his wife was afflicted with grief. O tiger among men! O lord of men! It has been heard that she lamented. ‘O, supreme among those who know dharma! A woman without sons lives a life of misery, if she lives without her husband. O bull among the Kshatriyas! Without her husband, it is better for a woman to be dead. Please take me with you. I wish to go where you are going. Without you, I will not be able to bear life for an instant. O king! Show your grace to me and take me quickly away. O king! I will always follow you like a faithful shadow and will always be obedient towards you. O tiger among men! I will always do that which is pleasurable for you. O king! O one with the eyes of a lotus! From now, a disease that dries up the heart will overcome me, since I will be separated from you. O king! I am unfortunate. In earlier bodies, I must have separated companions or separated a couple that was united. O king! That evil act from an earlier body has now come upon me and I am suffering this pain as a result. O king! From today, I will lie on a bed of kusha grass. I will give up all happiness and think only of seeing you. O tiger among men! Show yourself to me and make me happy. O lord of men! I am overcome with grief, miserable, unprotected and lamenting.’ Embracing the corpse, she lamented again and again. Then an invisible voice addressed her. ‘O Bhadra! O sweet-smiling one! Arise and leave. I will give you a boon. I will father offspring on you. O one with the beautiful hips! After you have bathed after your season, on the eighth or fourteenth lunar day, I will lie with you on your own bed.’ At these words, Queen Bhadra, who was devoted to her husband and wished to obtain sons, did as she had been asked to do. O lord of men! O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! The queen gave birth to sons through the corpse—the three Shalvas and the four Madras. O bull of the Bharata lineage! You too will be able to have sons on me, through the powers of yoga your mind possesses.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed, the king who knew dharma and was always devoted to dharma, addressed the queen again in these supreme words. “O Kunti! O fortunate one! What you have said is true. In ancient times, Vyushitashva did act this way. But he was like a god. Let me tell you what the ancient and great-souled rishis, learned in dharma, have laid down as dharma. O one with the beautiful eyes! In ancient times, women went around uncovered. They roamed around where they wished and were independent. O one with the beautiful hips! O fortunate one! From the time when they became maidens, they were not faithful to their husbands. This was not regarded as against dharma, because that was the dharma of those ancient times. Without desire and anger, this ancient dharma is still followed by those of inferior birth.[295] The practice of this ancient dharma is sanctioned by the maharshis. O one with thighs like that of a plantain tree! This is still practised in the northern Kuru region. This eternal dharma is favourable to women. O one with the beautiful smiles! The present practice of the world was only laid down later. Listen when I tell you completely when it was established and by whom.”

‘Pandu said, “We have heard that there was a maharshi named Uddalaka. He had a hermit son named Shvetaketu. We have heard that he laid down this rule for humans, in a fit of anger. O one with eyes like lotus petals! I will tell you why. In ancient times, in the presence of Shvetaketu’s father, a Brahmana came and grasped his mother’s hand and said, ‘Let us go.’ At this, the rishi’s son was angry and indignant when he saw his mother being taken away, as if forcibly. On seeing him angry, Shvetaketu’s father said, ‘O son! Do not be angry. This is the eternal practice. Women of all varnas are uncovered on earth. All beings are established in their own varnas, like cattle.' Shvetaketu, the rishi's son, did not accept this dharma. He established the present rule for men and women on earth. O immensely fortunate one! This is for humans, not for animals. We have heard that since then this rule has been established. 'From that day onwards, a woman who is not faithful to her husband will commit a sin that is equal to that of foeticide and be miserable. He who seduces a virgin, one who follows brahmacharya, or a wife who is devoted to her husband will also commit a sin on earth. A wife who is appointed by her husband to conceive a son, but refuses to do so, will also commit the same sin. O, timid one! In ancient times, thus did Uddalaka's son Shvetaketu forcibly establish the present practice of dharma. O one with thighs like that of a plantain tree! We have also heard that Sudasa's son appointed his wife Madayanti to obtain a son and she went to the rishi Vashishtha. O beautiful one! Through him, she obtained a son named Ashmaka. Kalmashapada's[296] wife did this act so as to please her husband. O lotus-eyed one! You are acquainted with the story of our birth. O timid one! We were begotten through Krishna Dvaipayana, so that the lineage of the Kurus might be extended. O unblemished one! On seeing all these reasons, you must do what I am asking you to do and this is dharma. O princess! Those who are learned in dharma say that at the time of her season, a wife who is strict in her vows must seek her husband. This is dharma. However, at other times, the woman is free to choose. Righteous ones who know dharma say that this was the ancient practice. O princess! But those who know dharma have also said that it is the duty of a wife to do what her husband instructs, be it in favour of dharma or against dharma. O one with an unblemished form! This is especially the case if one is hungry for sons, but is unable to procreate on one's own. I am like that, longing to set my eyes on a son. O beautiful one! I am joining my hands, like lotus leaves with red fingers, and raising them above my head. Be propitiated. O one with the beautiful hair! Because of my instructions, give birth to sons who have all the qualities, through Brahmanas who are ascetics. O one with broad hips! Through your act, I will tread the path of those who have sons."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Pandu, the conqueror of enemy cities, thus addressed Kunti, the one with the beautiful hips. She loved to please her husband and said, "When I was a child in my father's house, I was appointed to look after the guests. There I satisfied, with all attentiveness, a fearsome Brahmana rigid in his vows. He had his senses under control and was learned about the secret nuances of dharma. He is known as Durvasa. Pleased with my service, the illustrious one gave me a boon and taught me a mantra. Any god that I summon through this mantra will come to me and be subservient to me, whether he desires it or not. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is what he told me in my father's house. O king! The words uttered by a Brahmana are never false and the time has come. If you permit, I can summon a god. O rajarshi! O lord! Through that mantra, we can have offspring. O supreme among those who know the truth! Which god shall I summon? Know that I am waiting for your command, so as to act." Pandu replied, "O beautiful one! O one with the beautiful hips! You must act today itself, in the proper way. Summon Dharma, because he is the one who partakes of what is sacred. That which is not dharma is never united with that which is dharma. O one with the beautiful hips! The worlds will now think that what we have done is dharma. There is no doubt that one who is devoted to dharma will be born into the Kuru lineage. Since he will be given by Dharma, there will never be anything that is not dharma in his mind. O sweet-smiling one! Therefore, always set dharma before you and summon him. Worship Dharma through your offerings and rituals." At these words of her husband, the most beautiful of woman agreed. With his permission, she circumambulated him.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! Kunti summoned the undecaying Dharma for conception, after Gandhari had been with child for a year. The queen swiftly made offerings to Dharma and followed the rites that had earlier been given to her by Durvasa. Through his powers of yoga, Dharma assumed form and she united with him. Consequently, the one with the beautiful hips obtained a son who was the best of all living beings. This was a sacred tithi,[297] widely worshipped. It was the eighth hour of the day and the sun was in the middle of the sky. It was the auspicious moment known as *aindra*, when the moon was in conjunction with Abhijit.[298] When it was time, Kunti gave birth to a famous son. As soon as he was born, an invisible voice was heard. "There is no doubt that he will be supreme among those who uphold dharma. Pandu's first-born son will be famous by the name of Yudhishthira. He will also be a famous king, renowned in the three worlds—endowed with fame, radiance and adherence to vows." Having obtained this virtuous son, Pandu again said, "It is said that the best thing for Kshatriyas is strength. Therefore, ask for a son who has great strength." Having been thus addressed by her husband, she invoked Vayu[299] for a son. Through him, she obtained the mighty-armed Bhima, whose strength was terrifying. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as this immensely strong one was born, an invisible voice was heard. "This son will be the strongest among all those who are strong." An extraordinary event occurred as soon as Vrikodara[300] was born. Falling down from his mother's lap, he shattered a mountain into fragments with his body. Kunti was asleep and suddenly awoke, frightened by a tiger and forgetting that Vrikodara was asleep in her lap. The son, whose body was as hard as vajra, fell on the mountain. As he fell, he shattered the mountain into a hundred pieces with his body. On witnessing the mountain break in this way, Pandu was astounded. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! Duryodhana was born on the very same day that Bhima was born.

'When Vrikodara was born, Pandu again began to think. "How can I obtain a supreme son who will be the best in all the worlds? This world depends on destiny and on human action. But as decreed, destiny is only obtained over a period of time. We have heard that Indra is the king and the best of the gods. He has immeasurable strength and endeavour and he is valorous and unlimited in radiance. By pleasing him with austerities, I can obtain a son who is immensely strong. The son that he will give me will be the best. I shall therefore perform the greatest of austerities in mind, deeds and speech.” Thereupon, after consulting with maharshis, the immensely energetic Pandu of the Kuru lineage instructed Kunti to observe a sacred vow for one year. The mighty-armed himself stood on one leg for a year, performing severe austerities and immersed in supreme meditation. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wishing to propitiate the god who is the lord of the thirty gods, the one with dharma in his heart worshipped the sun. Indra responded after a long time. “I will give you a son who will be famous in the three worlds. He will ensure the welfare of gods, Brahmanas and relatives. I will give you a son who will destroy all his enemies.” After the great-souled Vasava[301] had spoken to the king of the Kuru lineage, the one with dharma in his heart spoke to Kunti, remembering the words of the king of the gods. “O one with the beautiful hips! O sweet-smiling one! Devoted to morality, great-souled, radiant as the sun, invincible, action-oriented, extremely wonderful to look at and endowed with Kshatriya energy—this is the son we will receive through the grace of the king of the gods. Summon him.” At these words, the famous one summoned Shakra.[302]

‘The lord of the gods arrived and Arjuna was born from him. As soon as the son was born, an invisible voice was heard in the sky, with a thundering and deep roar. “O Kunti! He will be like Kartavirya and Shibi in prowess, invincible like Indra. He will spread your fame everywhere. As Vishnu increased Aditi’s happiness, like Vishnu, Arjuna will increase your happiness. He will bring under his sway the countries of Madra, Kuru, Kekaya, Chedi, Kashi and Karusha and establish the prosperity of the Kurus. Through the valour of his arms, Havyavahana[303] will be supremely satisfied with the fat of all beings in Khandava. With his brothers, this immensely strong warrior will vanquish all small chiefs and perform three sacrifices. O Kunti! In valour, he will be the equal of Vishnu and Jamadagni’s son Rama.[304] He will be the greatest among those endowed with valour and he will be invincible. He will acquire all kinds of divine weapons. He will be a bull among men and he will regain the lost fortune.” When Kunti was in her delivery room, these were the wonderful words that were heard from the sky and Kunti heard them. The ascetics who lived on Shatashringa also heard these loud words and were supremely delighted. The devarshis, Indra and the other gods and the sound of drums being played raised an enormous clamour in the sky. Amidst this thunderous roar, the entire place was covered with a shower of flowers.

‘All the classes of gods assembled to pay their respects to Partha[305]—the offspring of Kadru and Vinata, the gandharvas, the apsaras, the lords of all beings and all the seven maharshis, Bharadvaja, Kashyapa, Goutama, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni, Vashishtha and the illustrious Atri, who arose when the sun was destroyed. Marichi, Angira, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prajapati and all the gandharvas and apsaras also came. Wearing divine garlands and garments, adorned in every ornament, the apsaras danced and sang Bibhatsu’s[306] praise. With the handsome Tumburu, the other gandharvas began to sing—Bhimasena, Ugrasena, Urnayu, Anagha, Gopati, Dhritarashtra, Suryavarcha, Yugapa, Trinapa, Karshni, Nandi, Chitraratha, Shalishira, Parjanya, Kali and Narada, the sixteenth one; and Sat, Brihat, Brihaka, the immensely famous Karala, Brahmachari, Bahuguna, the famous Suparna, Vishvavasu, Bhumanyu, Suchandra the tenth and the famous Haha and Huhu, whose songs are sweet. O bull among men! These were the divine gandharvas who sang. The apsaras were delighted and were adorned in every ornament. Those illustrious long-eyed ones danced—Anuna, Anavadya, Priyamukhya, Gunavara, Adrika, Shachi, Mishrakeshi, Alambusha, Marichi, Shuchika, Lakshana, Kshema, Devi, Rambha, Manorama, Asita, Subahu, Supriya, Suvapu, Pundarika, Sugandha, Suratha, Pramathini, Kamya and Sharadvati. All of them danced in groups. Menaka, Sahajanya, Parnika, Punjikasthala, Kratusthala, Ghritachi, Vishvachi, Purvachitti, the one who is famous as Umlocha and Pramlocha—these ten and Urvashi as the eleventh were long-eyed apsaras who sang. The adityas, radiant like the flames of fire, were assembled in the sky to increase the glory of the great Pandava—Dhata, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Amsha, Bhaga, Indra, Vivasvat, Pusha, Tvashta, Parjanya and Vishnu. O lord of the earth. The illustrious rudras were there—Mrigavyadha, Sharva, the immensely famous Nirriti, Aja Ekapada, Ahirbudhnya, Pinaki the destroyer of enemies, Dahana, Ishvara, Kapali, Sthanu and the illustrious Bhaga. The Ashvins, the eight vasus, the immensely powerful maruts, the vishvadevas and the saddhyas were also assembled there. The serpents Karkotaka, Shesha and Vasuki, Kacchapa, Apakunda and the mighty serpent Takshaka were there, with great energy, great anger and great strength. Many other serpents also assembled there. There were also Vinata's sons—Tarkshya, Arishtanemi, Garuda, Asitadhvaja, Aruna and Aruni. When they saw this great wonder, the supreme hermits were astounded. Their affection towards Pandu's sons increased even more.

'But the immensely famous Pandu was again greedy for more sons. He summoned the beautiful Kunti yet again. However, she said, "A fourth son has not been heard of, even in times of calamity. After that, a woman is called promiscuous. After the fifth, she is called a courtesan. You are learned in the ways of dharma. You are wise. Because of the desire for offspring, why are you transgressing the law and speaking as if you have lost your reason?"'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After Kunti's sons were born and Dhritarashtra's sons, the daughter of the king of Madra privately spoke to Pandu. "O scorcher of enemies! I am not distressed, even though you find no qualities in me. O unblemished one! Though I am superior,[307] I have always been regarded as inferior. O king! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I have not grieved on learning that Gandhari has given birth to 100 sons. But I do have a great unhappiness. We are not equal in that neither of us has sons. However, it is my destiny that my husband has obtained sons through Kunti alone. If the princess Kunti can arrange it so that I too have sons, she will do me a favour and this will be for your welfare too. Since she is my co-wife, I find it awkward to speak to Kuntibhoja's daughter. But if you are pleased with me, please ask her yourself.” Pandu replied, “O Madri! I have always thought about this matter in my own mind. But I hesitated to speak to you, because I didn’t know whether you would like it or not. Now that I know what you desire, I will act on it. I am certain that she will not refuse when I speak to her.” Thereupon, Pandu spoke to Kunti in private.

‘Pandu said, “O fortunate one! Please give me offspring for the lineage and the worlds. Do that which pleases me. Ensure that I, my ancestors and my successors always have funeral cakes. For the sake of giving me pleasure, you will have to perform a supreme act that brings welfare. Do this extremely difficult act for the sake of your fame. Even though Indra has obtained sovereignty, he still performs sacrifices, so that he can obtain fame. O beautiful one! There are Brahmanas who know the mantras and have obtained ascetic powers that are difficult to obtain. For the sake of fame, they too go to preceptors. All rajarshis and all Brahmanas who are blessed with the power of austerities perform the most difficult of deeds for the sake of fame. O unblemished one! Obtain supreme fame and save Madri with a boat. Bestow children on her.” Having been thus addressed, she spoke to Madri. “Think of some god once and through him you will certainly obtain a son who will be like him.” After thinking about this for some time, Madri thought about the two Ashvins in her mind. They came and she obtained twin sons—Nakula and Sahadeva. Their beauty was unmatched on earth.

‘When the twins were born, the invisible voice spoke again. “These beautiful, brave and righteous sons will have qualities that will surpass all men. They will be radiant in energy, handsome and prosperous.” O lord of the earth! The inhabitants of the Shatashringa mountains performed the rites of birth and affectionately named them. The eldest of Kunti’s sons was named Yudhishthira. The one in the middle was named Bhimasena. And the third one was named Arjuna. Affectionately, the Brahmanas named the first of Madri’s sons Nakula. And the one born later was named Sahadeva. These supreme ones of the Kuru lineage were born one year apart.

‘For Madri’s sake, Pandu once again spoke to Kunti in private. But Pritha replied, “O king! I gave her the secret to be used once. But she obtained two and I was deceived. I am worried that she will get the better of me.[308] This is the evil way of women. Fool that I was, I did not know that by summoning two gods at one time, the fruits could also be doubled. Therefore, do not command me again. This is a boon that I ask from you.” Thus, five sons were born to Pandu through the gods. They were immensely powerful, performed great deeds and extended the Kuru lineage. They bore all the auspicious marks and were as handsome as the moon. They were as proud as lions, their gait was as powerful as lions and they were great archers. Their necks were like those of lions, they were the lords of men and they grew up with the valour of the gods. They grew up in the sacred Himalaya Mountains. On seeing them grow, the maharshis who were assembled there were astounded. These five, and the other hundred, extended the Kuru lineage. They grew up in a short while, like lotuses in a pond.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Pandu saw his five handsome sons grow up in that great forest on the mountain, protected by the strength of his arms. One day, it was the season of spring, when the forests are in full bloom and all beings are drunk and maddened. The king was roaming through the forest with his wives. Pandu saw the forest, with trees like *palasha, tilaka, chuta,*[309]*champaka, paribhadraka* and many other trees that were laden with flowers and fruit. The ponds were beautiful with many different kinds of lotuses.

‘On seeing this, his heart turned to thoughts of love. Like a god, he was wandering around happily. Madri followed him, clad in a beautiful and semi-transparent garment. On seeing her youth through that garment, desire stirred in him, like a dense forest fire. The king stared at the one with eyes like that of a blue lotus, like his own. He could not control his desire and desire overpowered him. In that private place, the king forcibly seized her. The queen struggled and resisted, to the best of her strength. But his heart was taken over by desire. He did not remember the curse. Following the dharma of intercourse, he forcibly entered Madri. Under the control of love, the descendant of the Kuru lineage acted so as to end his own life. He had no fear of the curse and penetrated his beloved forcibly. With desire in his heart, his intelligence was deluded by destiny itself. Since he was prey to his senses, his consciousness was destroyed. Pandu, the descendant of the Kuru lineage and supremely devoted to dharma, succumbed to the law of time when united with his wife.

'Embracing the senseless king in her arms, the miserable Madri began to repeatedly and loudly lament. Kunti and the Pandavas, who were her sons and Madri's sons, all came to the place where the king was lying. O king! Madri called out to Kunti. "Come here alone and leave the children there." Hearing these words, she asked the children to stay away. Coming closer, she screamed, "I am dead." On seeing both Pandu and Madri lying on the ground, Kunti's body was overcome with grief and she lamented miserably. "This hero always protected me by controlling himself.[310] You knew about the hermit's curse. Why did you transgress it? O Madri! You should have protected this king. Instead, why did you tempt him in this lonely place? Knowing and thinking about the curse, he was always miserable. How did he find pleasure when he was alone with you? O daughter of Bahlika! You are more fortunate than I. You have seen the lord of the earth's face when he was happy." Madri replied, "It was I who got tempted. I tried to resist him repeatedly, but could not stay away. It was as if he was intent on making his destiny true." Kunti said, "By law, I am the eldest of the two wives. The fruits of dharma accrue to me. O Madri! O beautiful one! Therefore, do not try to restrain me from what must be done. I will accompany my husband who has gone to the land of the dead. Arise and let him go. Take care of the children." Madri replied, "I am still embracing my husband and have not let him escape. Nor has my desire yet been satisfied. O elder one! Please give me permission. The best of the Bharata lineage came to me for the sake of desire. With his desire unsatisfied, how can I let him go to Yama's abode? O revered one! If I live, it is certain that I will not be able to treat your children and mine in the same way and that sin will touch me. O Kunti! But you will be able to bring up my children as your own.

The king has gone to the land of the dead because of his desire for me. Therefore, my body should be burnt with the king's body. O revered one! Do what is pleasurable to me and burn them together. Watch over the children and think kindly of me. I cannot think of anything else I need to say." Having said this, the illustrious daughter of the king of Madra, wife by law to that bull among men, climbed onto the fire of that funeral pyre.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The maharshis who were the equals of the gods performed Pandu's last rites. Then the ascetics assembled and consulted each other. "For the welfare of the kingdom and the country, the great-souled great ascetic came here, to live among ascetics and practise austerities. King Pandu has gone to heaven and has left his sons, who have just been born, and his wife as a treasure we must look after." Having consulted with each other, those who are engaged in the welfare of all beings decided to go to the city of Nagasahrya,[311] with Pandu's sons in front of them. Those generous and accomplished ones decided on the journey, so as to give the Pandavas to Bhishma and Dhritarashtra. As soon as they decided, the ascetics set out at that very moment, with Pandu's sons and wife and the two bodies.[312]

'Earlier, she had always been used to a life of comfort. Now, out of affection for her sons, she thought that the long road was actually short. Within a short time, she reached Kurujangala and the illustrious one came to the chief[313] gate of the city. The citizens of Nagapura[314] were astounded on learning that thousands of charanas and sages had come to their city. It was the moment of sunrise. After paying their respects to dharma, the inhabitants of the city and their wives came out to see the ascetics. Masses of women, Kshatriyas, vehicles and Brahmanas with their wives emerged, and large masses of Vaishyas and Shudras too. Their minds were all on dharma and there was no cause for disturbance. Shantanu's son Bhishma, Somadatta's son Bahlika, the rajarshi with the sight of wisdom,[315] the kshatta Vidura himself, and surrounded by maids, the queen Satyavati, the illustrious Kousalya and Gandhari, emerged through the royal gate. Dhritarashtra’s 100 sons, with Duryodhana at the forefront, also came out, adorned in myriad ornaments. On seeing the masses of maharshis, the Kouravas and their priests bowed their heads in homage and sat down below them. The citizens of the town and the country also bowed their heads down to the ground and sat down below them. On seeing that the crowd was completely quiet, Bhishma offered the kingdom and the country to the maharshis.

‘At this, with the concurrence of the other maharshis, the eldest maharshi, with matted hair and a deerskin as his garment, spoke: “King Pandu of the Kuru lineage gave up a life of desire and pleasure and left for Shatashringa. He lived the life of a brahmachari there. But to accomplish the purposes of the gods, this son Yudhishthira was born there from Dharma himself. Then that great-souled king was given another son named Bhima by Matarishva[316] and he is immensely powerful, best among those who are strong. Puruhuta[317] gave Kunti this son. Truth is his strength and his exploits will shadow those of all other great archers. These two sons of Madri are great archers and supreme among those of the Kuru lineage. They were born from the Ashvins and are tigers among men. The illustrious Pandu always lived a life of dharma in the forest and in this way he revived his ancestral lineage. As he witnessed the birth, growth and study of the Vedas of his sons, Pandu always derived great pleasure. He never deviated from the righteous path. Having left these sons, Pandu has departed for the land of the ancestors seventeen days ago. On seeing him on the funeral pyre and about to be consumed by the face of the fire, Madri entered the fire and gave up her own life. She has followed to the world of her husband. Now perform those rites that should be performed for them. These are the two bodies and here are the supreme sons. Let these scorchers of enemies and their mother be respectfully received with rites of welcome. After the performance of the funeral rites, let Pandu, the upholder of the Kuru lineage, extremely famous and knowledgeable in all aspects of dharma, gain the right to ancestral offerings.” Having thus addressed the Kurus, all the charanas, guhyakas, rishis and siddhas vanished in an instant before the eyes of the Kurus, like a city of the gandharvas, leading to great amazement.’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Vidura! Perform all the royal funeral rites for Pandu, that lion among kings, and also specially for Madri. For the sake of Pandu and Madri, give away animals, garments, jewels and all kinds of riches to any that ask for them and as much as they want. Perform her rites the way Kunti would. Let her body be covered well, so that the sun and the wind cannot see it. Let there be no lamentations for the unblemished Pandu. He was a king to be praised. And five brave sons have been born to him, like the sons of the gods.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vidura, with Bhishma, did as he had been asked. He performed Pandu’s funeral rites in an extremely pure spot. Without any waste of time, the royal priests left the city, carrying with them a fragrant and flaming fire for Pandu. He was laid on a bier and covered with the best of scents and garlands and covered from all sides with cloth. This bier was also adorned with garlands, garments and great riches. Advisers, relatives and friends arrived. The lion among men was placed on a supremely decorated hearse, to be drawn by men. With the well-covered Madri, the hearse was then pulled by men. A white umbrella was held above the hearse and whisks made of yak tails were waved. With every musical instrument being played, it was a majestic scene. At the time of Pandu’s funeral ceremony, hundreds of men distributed jewels among the crowd. Large white and pale umbrellas and beautiful garments were brought for the Kourava. The sacrificial priests wore white and poured offerings into the blazing and strong fire that went ahead. Thousands of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras followed the king, lamenting in grief: “O king! O protector! Where are you going, leaving us unprotected and immersing us in eternal grief?” Bhishma, Vidura and Pandu’s sons wept.

‘At last they came to a beautiful, sacred and wooded region on the banks of the Ganga. On the plain, Pandu’s hearse, truthful lion among men whose deeds were untainted, and that of his wife were laid down. The bodies were then scented with all kinds of perfumes, sanctified with pure fragrances, consecrated with the best of oils and bathed. Water was sprinkled from a hundred golden pots. White sandalwood paste was smeared, mixed with black aloe and the juice of coconuts. They were then draped in white cotton garments. Dressed in these garments, that bull among men, tiger among men, seemed to be alive, as if sleeping on an expensive bed. When the other funeral rites were over, the sacrifical priests gave their consent. The ornamented bodies of the king and Madri were covered in ghee. Fragrances like sandalwood, *tunga*, *padmaka* and many other scents were applied and a fire was lit. On seeing the two bodies in flames, Kousalya lamented in her son’s name and fell down on the ground, unconscious. Seeing her fall down in this way, the citizens of the town and the country also wept in grief, out of the affection they bore for the king. Along with men, all the other beings also cried out, even those of inferior births. Shantanu’s son Bhishma wept in great sorrow, as did the immensely wise Vidura. All the other Kurus were also extremely miserable and unhappy. Then Bhishma, Vidura, the king, the relatives and the women of the Kuru lineage offered the water. O king! When the water ceremony was over, all the ordinary people sorrowed and consoled the Pandavas, who were overcome with grief.

‘O king! With their relatives, the Pandavas slept on the ground. The Brahmanas and the citizens also slept on the ground. The Pandavas and the city, young and old, grieved for twelve nights, unhappy and miserable.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Later, the kshatta, the king, Bhishma and the relatives performed Pandu’s shraddha, offering the immortal cake. The Kurus and the chief Brahmanas were offered a feast in their thousands. A large number of gems and the best of villages were given to the chief Brahmanas. When the period of uncleanliness was over, the Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, were taken by the citizens to the city of Varanasahrya.[318] All the citizens of the town and the country still lamented for that bull of the Bharata lineage, as if they had lost a relative. When the shraddha ceremony was over, Vyasa saw that the people were still immersed in grief. He spoke to his mother, who was also immersed in grief. "Happy times are over. Terrible times lie ahead. The earth has lost her youth and every day is more sinful than the preceding one. A terrible time is coming—full of many delusions, thick with many vices and with the rituals of dharma destroyed. Give everything up and go and live in a hermitage. You will not be able to witness the destruction of your sons and lineage." She agreed to this. She entered her daughter-in-law's quarters and said, "O Ambika! O fortunate one! I hear that as a result of the evil acts committed by your son, this Bharata lineage, along with all its relatives and grandsons, will be destroyed. I will take Kousalya,[319] who is still grieving from the death of her son, and leave for the forest. Come if you want." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Ambika consented. Taking Bhishma's permission, Satyavati, the one who was rigid in her vows, went off to the forest with both her daughters-in-law. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! There the queens performed terrible austerities. O king! They gave up their bodies and went on their journey.

'After observing all the rites prescribed in the Vedas, the Pandavas then began to grow up in their father's house, enjoying a life of pleasure. When they played childish games in their father's house with Dhritarashtra's sons, they excelled over them—in running fast, in hitting targets, in eating and in raising dust. Bhimasena defeated all of Dhritarashtra's sons. Playfully, he grabbed them by the hair above their ears. He caught them by the heads when they fought with the Pandavas. Alone and with the least effort, Vrikodara oppressed those 101 sons, who possessed great energy. The strongest of the strong would kick them with his feet. He would throw them down on the ground and break their thighs, heads and shoulders. When playing in the water, he would sometimes catch ten of them in his arms and hold them down in the water, letting them go only when they were about to drown. When they climbed a tree to gather fruit, Bhima would kick the tree with his feet and make it shake. Shaken by the force, the tree would whirl around and swiftly fall down on the ground with its fruit, frightening the princes. In fights, speed and martial exercises, the princes were never able to get the better of Vrikodara in any competition. Thus, in any competition, Dhritarashtra's sons began to hate Vrikodara, even though he bore no ill will towards them, since he was only a child.

'Bhimasena's great strength became well known. On learning this, Dhritarashtra's powerful son[320] revealed the evil side of his nature. He was wicked and inclined towards evil. Out of delusion and greed for riches, an evil thought occurred to him. "Kunti's son Vrikodara, the second of the Pandavas, is the best in strength. I must find some trick so as to kill him. Then I will overpower his younger brother and his elder brother Yudhishthira. I will tie them up and reign as the sovereign of the earth." Having made his mind up about this evil act, Duryodhana was always on the lookout for a chance to get at the great-souled Bhima.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For the sake of water sports, he had a wonderful and large sports house constructed, with cotton and wool. It was full of every object of desire. It was at a place known as Pramanakoti and slightly above the waterline. When the games were over, they would dress themselves in fresh garments, wear ornaments and quickly eat. When day was over, the valorous Kuru princes would be exhausted from their games and would rest in that sports house. The powerful Bhima always prevailed over the other princes in water sports. But on one occasion, he was tired at there having been an excess of exercise. He wished to sleep in Pramanakoti and climbed up the bank and found a spot. He was clad in a white garment. He was tired and he was under the influence of drink. O king! The Pandava was tired and slept like one who was dead. Then Duryodhana quietly tied him up with thongs made of creepers. He rolled him down from the land into the swift and deep waters. Regaining his consciousness, Kounteya[321] tore apart all the bonds. Bhima, supreme among those who wield arms, arose from the water. On another occasion when Bhima was again sleeping, he[322] brought many snakes—sharp in teeth, immensely poisonous, angry and virulent. He made them bite him[323] in all the soft spots of his body. But even when they bit him in the soft spots, they could not bring him down. They could not penetrate his skin, because the broad-chested one was too tough. When Bhima woke up, he killed all the snakes. He and his companions[324] became very careful from that time onwards. He also had poison mixed in Bhimasena's food. This was freshly made *kalakuta* poison, so virulent that it made the hair on the body stand up. On this occasion, the Vaishya's son[325] alerted Pritha's sons, so as to ensure their welfare. But though Vrikodara ate this, it had no effect on him. Though the poison was extremely virulent and was meant to kill Bhima, Bhima digested and tolerated it.

'Then Duryodhana, Karna and Subala's son Shakuni tried many other means to kill the Pandavas. However, the Pandavas, scorchers of their enemies, got to know about all of these. As advised by Vidura, they never revealed all this.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O, great Brahmana! Please tell me about Kripa. How was he born from a clump of reeds? How did he get his weapons?'[326]

Vaishampayana said, "Maharshi Goutama had a son named Sharadvat. O king! This son was so named because he was born armed with arrows.[327] O destroyer of enemies! His intelligence was not attracted to the study of the Vedas. Instead, his intelligence was more attracted to the study of Dhanur Veda.[328] Just as those who know the brahman acquire all their knowledge of the Vedas through austerities, he acquired all his weapons through austerities. Goutama's son worried the king of the gods because of his austerities and because of his expertise in Dhanur Veda. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The lord of the gods summoned a daughter of the gods named Janapadi and told her, "Create impediments in his austerities." She went to Sharadvat's beautiful hermitage. The young woman began to tempt Goutama's son, who had a bow and arrows in his hand. The apsara was only clad in a single piece of cloth. On seeing her wandering around in the forest alone, with a form that was unparalleled in the worlds, Goutama's son's eyes became wide open. The bow and arrows slipped down from his hands onto the ground. On seeing her, his body went numb. But he still possessed his knowledge and the power of his austerities. The immensely wise one used his patience to resist temptation. O king! However, a sudden fever overcame him and though he did not notice it, his semen issued forth. The sage left the hermitage and the apsara. His semen fell on a clump of reeds and having fallen there, divided itself into two. From this, a pair of twins was born to Goutama's son Sharadvat.

'King Shantanu had gone on a hunt and one of his soldiers happened to notice the twins. He saw a bow and arrows around them and also a black deerskin. He therefore deduced that they were the sons of a Brahmana who was learned in DhanurVeda. He showed the twins and the arrows to the king. Out of compassion, the king adopted the twins. He took them home, saying that they were like his children. He performed the usual rites and began to rear them. Goutama's son, who had left, became an expert in Dhanur Veda. Because the children had been reared out of compassion, the lord of the earth decided to name them accordingly.[329] Through the power of his austerities, Goutama's son got to know where they were, though no one knew the secret. He went there and told everything, including his lineage. He taught him[330] the four parts of Dhanur Veda[331] and the usage of many different kinds of weapons, including all the secrets associated with them. He soon became a great teacher. All the maharathas learnt Dhanur Veda from him. This included Dhritarashtra's sons, the immensely powerful Pandavas, the Vrishnis and other kings who assembled from many countries.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Bhishma wanted his grandsons to do especially well and wished to instil discipline. He therefore asked around for a preceptor who would be learned in archery and would be valorous. A man of little intelligence, who wasn't illustrious, wasn't an expert in all weapons and didn't have divine prowess, would never have been able to discipline the immensely powerful Kurus.

'In ancient times, maharshi Bharadvaja was once getting ready to pour oblations into the fire. The rishi saw the apsara Ghritachi herself, bathing.[332] The wind blew her garment away. At that, his semen issued out and the wise one placed it in a vessel.[333] The wise Drona was then born from that pot. He studied all the Vedas and the Vedangas. The powerful Bharadvaja, supreme among those who know dharma, taught the knowledge of the agneya weapon to the illustrious Agniveshya. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! The sage who was born from the fire[334] gave knowledge of the great weapon agneya to Bharadvaja's son.

'Bharadvaja had a friend and he was a king named Prishata. A son named Drupada was born to him. Prishata's son, that bull among Kshatriyas, always used to go to Drona's hermitage to play and study with him. When Prishata died, Drupada became the king, a mighty-armed lord of men over northern Panchala. The illustrious Bharadvaja also ascended to heaven. Obeying the instructions of his father and driven by the desire to obtain a son, the immensely famous Drona took Sharadvat's daughter Kripi for a wife. This descendant of Goutama was always engaged in agnihotra, the pursuit of dharma and self-control. She obtained a son named Ashvatthama. As soon as he was born, he neighed like the horse Ucchaihshrava. On hearing this, an invisible voice said from the sky, "Since this boy neighed like a horse and his voice carried over a long distance, he will be known as Ashvatthama."[335] Bharadvaja's son was extremely pleased with his son. He continued to live there and became extremely skilled in Dhanur Veda.

'The great-souled son[336] of Jamadagni was a conqueror of enemies. O king! He[337] heard that he was giving away all his wealth to Brahmanas.

Bharadvaja's son spoke to him when Rama[338] was already leaving for the forest. He said, "I have come in search of riches. Know that I am Drona, a bull among Brahmanas." Rama replied, "O one blessed with the power of austerities! Nothing is left of the gold or other riches that I possessed. I have given it all away to Brahmanas. I have given to Kashyapa, the goddess earth, right up to the boundaries of the ocean, with all her settlements and garlands of cities. Now I only have this body with me, weapons and many precious weapons. O Drona! Tell me quickly what you want. I will give it to you." Drona said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Give me all your arms and weapons of destruction, especially the knowledge of releasing them and withdrawing them." Agreeing to this, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage gave him all his weapons, especially all the mysteries of Dhanur Veda. Having received this, that supreme among Brahmanas became accomplished in the use of weapons and happily went to see his beloved friend Drupada.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Bharadvaja's powerful son went to Prishata's son and said, "Recognize me." Drupada replied, "O Brahmana! Your wisdom is lacking and inferior, if you suddenly begin to address me as your friend. O one with a dull mind! No great king can ever be a friend with men like you. You have no prosperity, nor do you have riches. Time decays everything, including friendship. It is true that we were friends once, but that was based on a relationship of equality. No friendship can be found in the world that does not age; desire and anger both destroy it. Do not therefore talk about a friendship that has died out. O best of Brahmanas! Find a fresh friendship. I was friends with you because it served my purpose. The poor cannot be a friend to the rich. The fool cannot be a friend to the learned. The weak cannot a friend of the strong. Who wants an old friendship? Those of similar wealth and similar lineage can have marriages and friendship together, not one who is rich with one who is poor. One who is learned in the Vedas[339] cannot be a friend to one who is not learned. One with chariots cannot be a friend to one who has no chariots. A king cannot be a friend to one who is not a king. Who wants this old friendship?” Thus addressed by Drupada, Bharadvaja’s powerful son was full of wrath and reflected for a while. The wise one thought about a course of action for Panchala[340] and made his way to Gajasahrya[341], the chief city of the Kurus.

‘One day, all the Kuru princes came out of Gajasahrya together. The brave ones wandered around, playing with a wooden ball.[342] While they were playing, the ball fell into a well. With all their efforts, they couldn’t find a way to recover the ball. The valorous Drona saw that the princes were unsuccessful in their attempts. He laughed at them a little and then softly told them, “Shame on your Kshatriya prowess! Shame on your knowledge of weapons! You have been born in the Bharata lineage and yet you cannot recover a ball. Here is a handful of reeds[343] that I have invested with the mantra of my weapons. Look at their power, unmatched by that of anything else. I will pierce the ball with one of these reeds and that reed with another one and that one with another. With the chain of reeds, I will bring the ball up into my hands.” On seeing this, the eyes of the princes widened with wonder. They saw him pull up the ball and spoke to the one who had pulled the ball up. “O Brahmana! We pay homage to you. No one else has the knowledge to do that. Who are you? We wish to know your lineage. What can we do for you?” Drona replied, “Go to Bhishma and tell him of my appearance and qualities. He has great intelligence and will know what should be done.” The princes agreed. They went to Bhishma, the grandfather, and told him exactly what the Brahmana had said and done. On hearing this from the princes, Bhishma immediately recognized Drona. He thought that this would be the right preceptor. He went to him in person and paid him the highest of respects. Bhishma, the greatest of those who wielded arms, then skilfully asked Drona about the reason why he had come there and he told him the entire reason.

‘Drona said, “Desiring to learn the science of Dhanur Veda, I earlier went to maharshi Agniveshya. I lived there for a long time, as a humble brahmachari with matted hair, desiring to learn Dhanur Veda. The powerful Yajnasena, son of the king of Panchala, hardworking and dedicated, also studied with me under that teacher. There he became my friend and was always willing to do what brought me happiness. I also loved his company. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! We studied together from the time we were boys. He would come to me and do things that were pleasurable for me. O Bhishma! He used to say things that brought me pleasure: ‘I am the favourite son of my great-souled father. O friend! When I am instated by the king of Panchala in the kingdom, it will be yours to enjoy. I swear truthfully on this. My pleasures, riches and happiness will all be yours.’ This is the way he spoke to me then. Having become skilled in use of weapons, I set out in search of riches. When I heard that he had been instated, I remembered those words. Happily, I went to see my old friend in his kingdom. O lord! Remembering those words, I went to my old friend Drupada and told him, ‘O tiger among men! Recognize me as your friend.’ But he laughed at me, as if I was a person who was unimportant. He said, ‘O Brahmana! Your wisdom is lacking and inferior. O Brahmana! Why have you suddenly come to me, claiming to be my friend? O one with a dull mind! No great king can ever be a friend with men like you. You have no prosperity, nor do you have riches. The poor cannot be a friend to the rich. The fool cannot be a friend to the learned. The weak cannot a friend of the strong. The king cannot be a friend to one who is not a king. Who wants an old friendship?’ O Bhishma! I was flooded with anger at Drupada’s words and I made my way to the land of the Kurus, in search of disciples who might have the right qualities.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Bhishma and Pandu’s sons accepted him as a preceptor. O king! With all kinds of riches, he handed over his grandsons as disciples to Drona, in accordance with the prescribed manner. Delighted, that great archer accepted the Kouravas as his disciples. Having accepted them, Drona called all of them together and told them privately, when they were seated at his feet, “O unblemished ones! There is a special task in my heart. You must promise me that you will give it to me when you have become skilled in the use of arms.” O lord! When they heard him, the Kouravas remained silent. But Arjuna, the scorcher of enemies, gave him a complete promise and he then inhaled the scent of Arjuna's forehead repeatedly, embracing him delightedly and shedding tears of joy.

'Then the valorous Drona taught Pandu's sons the use of many weapons, human and divine. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Other princes also came to Drona, supreme among Brahmanas, to learn the use of arms—the Vrishnis, the Andhakas, kings from many countries and Radheya,[344] the son of the suta. They made Drona their preceptor. The suta's son was envious of Partha and always competed with him. With Duryodhana's support, he showed his contempt for the Pandavas.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Arjuna took a great deal of care in worshipping his preceptor and showed the greatest devotion in learning the art of weapons. He became a great favourite of Drona's. Drona summoned the cook and told him secretly, "Never give Arjuna any food when it is dark." One day, when Arjuna was eating, a wind arose and blew out the lamp and its light. Arjuna continued to eat in the dark, his hand moving to his mouth from force of habit. The Pandava then began to practise in the night. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona heard the twang of his bowstring and came to him and embraced him. He said, "I promise you that I will do my utmost to ensure that you are the best archer in this world and there is no one equal to you." Then Drona taught Arjuna the art of fighting from horses, elephants, chariots and on the ground. Drona taught the Pandava how to fight in narrow confines[345] with clubs, swords, spears, javelins and lances. On witnessing his skills, thousands of kings and princes assembled to learn the science of Dhanur Veda.

'O king! Ekalavya was the son of Hiranyadhanu, the king of the nishadas. He came to Drona. However, since he was the son of a nishada,[346] Drona, who was learned in dharma, thought about it and refused to accept him as a student of archery, out of consideration for the others. That conqueror of enemies touched Drona's feet with his head. He went to the forest and used clay to make Drona’s image. He began to worship and treat this as his preceptor, devoting his mind to learning archery in accordance with the proper disciplines. As a consequence of his exceptional faith and supreme devotion, he acquired great dexterity in fixing an arrow to the string of the bow, aiming and then releasing it. One day, with Drona’s permission, all the Kurus and the Pandavas, conquerors of their enemies, went out on their chariots for a hunt. O king! A servant followed the Pandavas, carrying the required objects with him and he had a dog with him. They wandered around in the forest, their hearts set on what they wished to do. The dog also wandered off in the forest, got lost and came upon the nishada. On seeing the dark nishada in the forest, his body covered with dirt and clad in a dark deerskin, the dog began to bark. When it kept on barking, he displayed great dexterity. In one instant, he shot seven arrows into its mouth. The dog dashed back to the Pandavas, its mouth full of arrows. On seeing this, the brave Pandavas were extremely surprised. At this supreme and dextrous feat of shooting blind,[347]they praised the person who had done this, but were also ashamed of their own skills. O king! The Pandavas went out to search for the forest-dweller who had done this and found him, tirelessly shooting arrows. They did not know him and his appearance wasn’t handsome. They asked him, “Who are you and whose son are you?” Ekalavya replied, “Know me to be the son of Hiranyadhanu, the king of the nishadas. I am Drona’s student and I am trying to become skilled in Dhanur Veda.” The Pandavas ascertained the details of everything that had happened.

‘On return, they told Drona the entire story. O king! Kounteya Arjuna kept thinking about Ekalavya. He went to Drona and affectionately told him, “In your affection, you embraced me and told me that no pupil of yours would ever be my equal. How is it that you have another valorous pupil in this world, the son of the nishada king, who is better than everyone else?” Thereupon, Drona thought for a moment and arrived at a decision. He took Savyasachi[348] with him and went to the nishada. He found Ekalavya, his body covered with filth. His hair was matted and he was attired in rags. However, with a bow in his hand, he was ceaselessly shooting arrows. On seeing Drona approach, Ekalavya went up to him. He prostrated himself on the ground and touched his feet with his head. After worshipping Drona in the prescribed way, the nishada's son told him that he was his student and stood before him with joined hands. At this, Drona told Ekalavya, "If you are my student, give me my fee." On hearing this, Ekalavya happily asked, "O illustrious one! What can I give you? Command me. O you who know the brahman! There is nothing that cannot be given to the preceptor." Drona said, "Give me your right thumb as a fee." On hearing Drona's terrible words, Ekalavya kept his promise. Always devoted to the truth, he cheerfully cut off his own right thumb, with happiness on his face and peace in his heart, and gave it to Drona. O lord of men! After that, when he pulled the bowstring with his other fingers, the nishada found that he was no longer as swift as earlier. Arjuna was pleased and his fever went away. Drona's words, that no one would be able to surpass Arjuna, came true.

'Among all the Kurus who were Drona's students, two became particularly skilled in fighting with clubs—Duryodhana and Bhima. Ashvatthama excelled in the use of all secret weapons. The twins were better than all other men in the use of the sword. Yudhishthira was supreme in fighting with chariots. However, Dhananjaya[349] was the best in fighting with every weapon. The Pandava was famous on earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean, for his intelligence, perseverance, strength and enterprise in all weapons. He was thus the foremost among all warriors. Arjuna was special, not just in his knowledge of weapons, but also in his devotion to his preceptor, though the instructions were the same for everyone. Alone among all the princes, Arjuna became an *atiratha*.[350] O lord of men! Dhritarashtra's evil-souled sons could not stand Bhimasena's great strength and Arjuna's great skill and hated them.

'O bull among men! When they became skilled in all knowledge, in a desire to examine their skill with weapons, Drona assembled them together. He got an artisan to construct an artificial bird and placed it on top of a tree. The princes could hardly see it and it was to be used as a target. Drona said, “Quickly pick up your bows, all of you. Fix arrows to the string of the bow, stand here and aim at that bird in the tree. O sons! When I give you permission, one after another, slice off the bird’s head.” The greatest of Angirasa’s descendants first addressed Yudhishthira. “O invincible one! Aim with your arrow and let it go, as soon as I have asked you to.” Yudhishthira first picked up a bow that made a loud noise. Then, as instructed by his preceptor, he stood, aiming at the bird. The descendant of the Kuru lineage stood there, with his bow stretched. O, bull among the Kuru lineage! After a short time, Drona asked, “O prince! Can you see that bird on the top of the tree?” “I can see it,” Yudhishthira replied to his preceptor. After some time, Drona again asked, “Can you see the tree? Can you see me? Can you see your brothers?” In reply to each question, Kounteya[351] answered, one after the other: “I can see the large tree. I can see you. I can see the bird.” Drona was displeased at these words and reproachfully told him, “This is not for you. You will not be able to hit the target.” Then the immensely illustrious one placed Duryodhana in the same position and Dhritarashtra’s other sons, one after another, so as to test them. Bhima and the other students and the kings who had come from other countries were also asked. All of them said that they could see everything and were scolded.

‘Smilingly, Drona then summoned Dhananjaya. “This target is for you to shoot down. Listen. As soon as I ask you to, you must shoot. O son! Stand here for a moment, with your bow taut.” Thus addressed, Savyasachi drew his bow into a semicircle, aimed at the target and stood there, as his preceptor had instructed. After a while, Drona asked him in the same way. “O Arjuna! Do you see the bird seated there? Do you see the tree? Do you see me?” Arjuna replied, “I can only see the bird. I cannot see the tree. Nor can I see you.” Pleased, the invincible Drona waited again for a moment. Then he again addressed the Pandava, bull among warriors. “If you can see the bird, describe it to me.” Arjuna replied, “I can only see the bird’s head. I cannot see its body.” At Arjuna’s words, Drona was delighted and his hair stood up. He told

Partha, “Shoot,” and he let the arrow go. The Pandava sliced off the head of the bird on the tree with his sharp arrow and brought it down on the ground. When Phalguna[352] succeeded in this task, Drona embraced him and deduced that Drupada and his relatives had already been vanquished in battle.

‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! A few days later, the best of those of the Angirasa lineage went with his students to the Ganga to bathe. When Drona entered the water, a powerful crocodile grabbed him by the thigh, as if sent by destiny itself. Though quite capable of saving himself, Drona told his students, “Kill the crocodile and quickly save me.” Even before he had finished speaking, Bibhatsu[353] let loose five sharp arrows that killed the crocodile under the water. The others were still standing around, looking confused. On seeing the Pandava’s swiftness in action, Drona was extremely pleased and decided that he was the best of his students. The crocodile was chopped into many pieces through Partha’s arrows. It let go of the great-souled one’s thigh and returned to the five elements. Bharadvaja’s son told the great-souled maharatha, “O mighty-armed one! Receive this invincible and supreme weapon, named brahmashira, with the knowledge of releasing it and withdrawing it. You must never use it against human beings. If it is used against an enemy whose energy is inferior, it will burn up the entire universe. O son! It is said that there is nothing superior to this weapon in the three worlds. Therefore, preserve it carefully and listen to my words. O brave one! If a superhuman enemy ever fights with you, use this weapon to kill him in battle.” With joined hands, Bibhatsu promised that he would do as he had been asked and received the supreme weapon. His preceptor again told him, “No man in the world will be a greater archer than you.”’

Section Eight

Jatugriha-daha Parva

This parva has 373 shlokas and fifteen chapters.

Chapter 124: 33 shlokas
Chapter 125: 32 shlokas
Chapter 126: 39 shlokas
Chapter 127: 24 shlokas
Chapter 128: 18 shlokas
Chapter 129: 18 shlokas
Chapter 130: 20 shlokas
Chapter 131: 18 shlokas
Chapter 132: 19 shlokas
Chapter 133: 30 shlokas
Chapter 134: 28 shlokas
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Jatu *is lac and* griha *is house. This parva is about the burning down of the house of lac.*

124

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the sons of Dhritarashtra and Pandu had become masters in the use of arms, Drona spoke to King Dhritarashtra, lord of men, in the presence of Kripa, Somadatta, Bahlika, the wise son of Ganga,[1] Vyasa and Vidura, "O king! O supreme among the Kurus! The princes have now completed their learning. O king! With your permission, let them now display what they have learned." The great king replied with gladness in his heart, "O best of the Brahmanas! O Bharadvaja![2] You have accomplished a great task. You should yourself order me about how to arrange the display, the time and the place and about the rules to be followed. Today, I grieve for my blindness and envy men who possess eyesight. They will now be able to witness the prowess of my sons with weapons. O kshatta![3] O one who is devoted to dharma! Follow the instructions of this teacher and preceptor. I can't think of anything that will be more agreeable to me." Thereupon, Vidura excused himself from the king's presence and went out.

'The immensely wise son of Bharadvaja measured out a flat stretch of land that was devoid of trees and bushes, but had wells and springs. O king! On that plot of ground, on a day when the nakshatras were auspicious, that supreme of eloquent warriors made offerings and the reasons for that were announced in the city. A large arena was constructed in accordance with the principles of the shastras, and equipped with diverse weapons. O bull among men! Artisans constructed a giant viewing stand for the king and another for the women. The citizens built many platforms. The wealthy ones constructed large and high palanquins.

'When the day arrived, the king, accompanied by his advisers, came with Bhishma and the foremost of preceptors, Kripa, leading the way. They arrived at the divine royal viewing stand, constructed out of gold leaf, decorated with lattices of pearl-work and adorned with lapis lazuli.[4] O king who conquers all! Gandhari, the immensely fortunate Kunti and other ladies of the royal household arrived, dressed in beautiful garments and with their attendants. They joyfully ascended the viewing stand, like goddesses ascending Mount Meru. Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and others of the four varnas hurriedly left the city and arrived there, wishing to witness the skills of the princes in the use of arms. With the sound of the music that was being played and the curiosity of the assembly, the crowd was like a giant ocean rippling with waves. Then the preceptor entered the arena with his son. He was dressed in white garments and wore a white sacred thread. His hair and beard were white. He wore a white garland and was anointed with white paste. It was as if the moon and Mars had entered a sky that was bereft of rain clouds. At the appropriate time, that supreme of warriors[5] rendered offerings and instructed Brahmanas who knew the rites to recite mantras. Once the auspicious and pleasant musical instruments were quiet, men entered the arena, carrying diverse weapons and equipment.

‘Then the mighty bulls of the Bharata lineage[6] tightened their lower garments and entered, equipped with bows, quivers and finger protectors. With Yudhishthira leading the way, those princes, in order of their age, began to display great valour and wonderful skills in the use of weapons. Some[7] lowered their heads, concerned that arrows might fall on them. Other men who were not concerned looked on, in wonder and amazement. They pierced targets with arrows that had their names engraved on them. They rode fleet-footed horses skilfully. On witnessing the strength of the princes in the use of bows and arrows, they were amazed and thought they were in a city of the gandharvas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hundreds and thousands of men, their eyes dilated with wonder, cheered them on. After repeatedly demonstrating their skill in the use of bows and arrows, chariots, fighting on elephants, fighting on horses and duels, those strong ones then picked up swords and shields and began to circle one another on the ground, exhibiting the various modes of attacking with a sword. They saw the agility, beauty, symmetry, balance, firmness of grasp and mastery in use of sword and shield.

‘Then, in great spirits, Suyodhana[8] and Vrikodara entered, with clubs in their hands, like two single-peaked mountains. Those mighty-armed warriors tightened their lower garments and roared, like two mad elephants trumpeting and contending.[9] Those immensely strong ones circled each other with unblemished clubs, like mad elephants. Vidura described the feats of the princes to Dhritarashtra and the mother of the Pandavas[10] described them to Gandhari.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the Kuru prince[11] and Bhima, supreme among strong ones, descended into the arena, the spectators divided into two factions, each partial towards its own favourite. Some cried, “Look at the valorous Kuru prince.” Others cried, “Look at the valorous Bhima.” A great roar arose from the cheers of the spectators. On seeing that the place had become like a turbulent ocean, the wise son of Bharadvaja spoke to his beloved son Ashvatthama. Drona said, “Stop those two great warriors, both skilled. Let this crowd not become angered over Bhima and Duryodhana.” Restrained by their preceptor’s son, those two raised their clubs, like violent oceans lashed by tempests at the time of the world’s destruction.

‘Then Drona entered the arena and stopped the musical instruments in a voice that was as deep as the thunder of the clouds. “Now behold Partha, who is dearer to me than my own son. He is skilled in the use of all weapons. He is Indra’s son himself and is like Indra’s younger brother.” With his entrance blessed by his preceptor, the youthful Phalguni[12] appeared. He wore a finger protector and arm guard,[13]his quiver was full of arrows and he had a bow in his hand. He wore golden armour and he looked like an evening cloud reflecting the rays of the setting sun, radiant as a rainbow with lightning flashes. At this, a loud roar of joy arose everywhere in the arena. Musical instruments and conch shells sounded. “This is the middle Pandava, Kunti’s illustrious son.” “This is the great Indra’s son, the protector of the Kurus.” “This is the supreme one among those who are skilled in the use of weapons.” “This is the supreme one among those who tread the path of dharma.” “This is the foremost one in good conduct.” “This is the treasury in knowledge of good conduct.” Hearing these loud and incomparable words from the spectators, Kunti’s tears mingled with milk from her breasts and made them damp.

‘Dhritarashtra’s ears were filled with the great roar and that best of men happily asked Vidura, “O kshatta! What is this great uproar like the sound of a stormy sea, which suddenly arises in this arena and resonates in the sky?” Vidura replied, “O great king! Pandu and Pritha’s son, Phalguni, clad in his armour, has entered. Hence, this uproar.” Dhritarashtra said, “O one with great intelligence! I am indeed fortunate and favoured that I am protected by the flames of these three Pandavas, obtained from Pritha’s kindling.” When the arena had become somewhat quiet, Bibhatsu[14] began to exhibit the lightness in use of weapons he had learned from his preceptor.

‘He created fire with an agneya weapon. He created water with a varuna weapon. He created winds with a vayavya weapon. He created rain with a parjanya weapon. He entered the ground with a bhoumya weapon. He created mountains with a parvata weapon. He made everything disappear with an antardhana weapon. In an instant, he appeared tall, then short. In an instant, he was yoked to his chariot. In another, he was in the middle of his chariot. And in another instant, he was on the ground again. Trained well, the preceptor’s favourite used various types of arrows to shoot various targets, some fragile, some fine and still others thick. When an iron boar was moved, he shot five continuous arrows into its mouth, as if they were but one arrow. A cow’s hollow horn was swayed on a rope and the immensely valorous hero shot twenty-one arrows into it. In this way, he exhibited his great dexterity in the use of the sword, the bow, the club and other weapons.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The tournament was almost over. The musical instruments were quiet. The spectators had thinned. At that time, there was heard at the gate the sound of arms being slapped, signalling power and strength, like the crash of thunder. “Are the mountains being splintered?” “Is the earth breaking up?” “Is the sky echoing with the roar of clouds filled with rain?” O ruler of the earth! The spectators in the arena thought in this way and turned their eyes towards the gate. Surrounded by the five brothers, Pritha’s sons, Drona looked like the moon surrounded by five stars. With Ashvatthama, Duryodhana, the slayer of enemies, stood up quickly, surrounded by his 100 haughty brothers. He had a club in his hand and his 100 brothers circled him, with weapons raised, looking like Purandara[15] of ancient times, surrounded by the gods at the time of doing battle and destroying the danavas.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The spectators, eyes wide with wonder, made way and Karna, the conqueror of enemy cities, entered the large arena. He was clad in his natural coat of armour. His face was radiant with his earrings. His bow was in his hand and his sword was tied.[16] He entered like a walking mountain. That destroyer of enemy armies was great in fame and wide of eyes. Karna was born from Pritha when she was a virgin, from a portion of the sun whose rays are sharp. His strength, valour and prowess were like that of a lion, a bull, or a king of elephants. In radiance, beauty and splendour, he was like the sun, the moon and the fire. He was tall, like a golden palm tree. He was a youth who could slay lions. Born from the sun, he was handsome and possessed countless qualities. The mighty-armed one looked all around the arena. Perfunctorily, he bowed to Drona and Kripa. Everyone in that assembly remained stationary and gazed at him steadfastly. They were filled with great curiosity and asked each other who he was.

‘Supreme among those who are eloquent, the sun’s son addressed his unrecognized brother, the son of Paka’s punisher,[17] in a voice that was as deep as the roar of the clouds. “O Partha! Before the eyes of these people, I will perform feats that will surpass everything that you have done. Don’t be too amazed at what you have done.” O supreme among those who are eloquent! No sooner had he uttered these words, than the spectators quickly stood up all at once, as if raised up by a single machine. O tiger among men! Duryodhana was greatly delighted. Bibhatsu was suddenly filled with anger and a sense of disgrace.

‘With Drona’s permission, Karna, always eager to do battle and immensely strong, exhibited all that Partha had displayed before. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Duryodhana and his brothers delightedly embraced Karna and said, “O mighty-armed hero! Welcome. Good fortune has brought you here. You know how to humble pride. I and the Kuru kingdom await your pleasure.” Karna replied, “You have said it and that alone is enough. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I only desire your friendship. And I desire to have a duel with Partha.” Duryodhana replied, “O scourge of enemies! Enjoy all the pleasures with me. Do that which pleases your friends. Place your feet on the heads of all your enemies.” At that, Partha considered that he had been insulted. He told Karna, who stood in the midst of the brothers like a mountain, “O Karna! When I have finished killing you, you will attain the worlds set aside for unwelcome intruders and uninvited speakers.” Karna replied, “O Phalguni! This arena is meant for everyone and not for you alone. Dharma is that of strength and they are kings who are superior in valour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Altercations are nothing but the resort of the weak. Why use it? Speak with arrows, until my arrow carries off your head in your preceptor’s presence.” Partha, the conqueror of enemy cities, was embraced by his brothers. With Drona’s permission, he advanced to fight. Thereupon, Karna was embraced by Duryodhana and his brothers. He picked up his bow and arrows and stood ready for battle.

‘The sky was covered with thundering clouds, with lightning flashes in them. Indra’s radiant and coloured bow appeared.[18] The clouds seemed to laugh because of white cranes flying. Seeing that Harihaya[19] was fondly looking down on the arena, the sun dispersed clouds that were above his son. Phalguni was invisible under the shadow of the clouds. But Karna was clearly visible, because the sun had dispersed the clouds. Dhritarashtra’s sons stood next to Karna. Bharadvaja’s son,[20] Kripa and Bhishma stood next to Partha. The assembly was divided into two parties, including the women. Since she knew the truth, Kuntibhoja’s daughter[21] fainted. Vidura, learned in all aspects of dharma, revived the unconscious Kunti by sprinkling water scented with sandalwood over her. When she revived, she was struck with grief at the sight of her two sons clad in armour. But there was nothing she could do.

‘When the two were ready and had raised their bows, Sharadvata Kripa, well versed in all aspects of dharma and skilled in the rules of duels, said, “This son of Pandu is Kunti’s youngest son. He is a Kuru and will fight a duel with you. O mighty-armed hero! You should also tell us your mother, father and lineage and the royal dynasty of which you are the ornament. On knowing this, Partha will fight with you. Or he may not fight.”[22] At these words, Karna’s face was flushed with shame. It looked as if a lotus had been faded and torn by showers of rain. Duryodhana said, “O preceptor! It is stated in the sacred texts that there are three ways to become a king—through noble birth, through valour and through leading an army. If Phalguni is unwilling to fight with someone who is not a king, I install him[23] as king in the land of Anga.” At that instant, the immensely powerful and fortunate maharatha Karna was instated in the kingdom of Anga, with roasted grains of rice, flowers, golden water pots and ritual chanting by those who knew the mantras. He was seated on a golden seat, an umbrella was held above him and whisks[24] were waved at his side.

‘When the cries of “Victory” had died down, the bull among kings told the Kourava,[25] “What can I give you that is comparable to your gift of this kingdom? O king! O tiger among kings! Tell me and I will do your bidding.” Suyodhana[26] replied, “I wish for your eternal friendship.” Having been thus addressed, Karna said, “So shall it be.” Thereupon, they embraced each other in joy and were immensely happy.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘At that moment, Adhiratha entered the arena, swaying on his feet and supporting himself on a staff. He was trembling and perspiring and his upper garments were in disarray. On seeing him, Karna discarded his bow. Out of regard for his father, he bowed down his head, still wet with water from the coronation. The charioteer quickly covered his feet with the end of his garment and addressed Karna, who had been crowned with success, as his son. Trembling with affection, he kissed him on the head and wet with his tears the head that was already damp with water from the instatement as the king of Anga.

When Pandava Bhimasena saw him, he deduced that he[27] was a charioteer's son and jeeringly said, "O son of a charioteer! You don't have the right to be killed by Partha in battle. You had better take up a whip, more befitting of your lineage. O worst of men! You have no right to enjoy the kingdom of Anga, just as a dog has no right to eat the cake that is offered at a sacrificial fire." At these words, Karna's lips quivered a little. He looked up at the sun in the sky and sighed.

'The immensely strong Duryodhana arose angrily from among his brothers, like a mad elephant arises from a pond of lotuses. He told Bhimasena, of the terrible deeds, who stood there, "O Vrikodara! You should not speak these words. Strength is the most important virtue of Kshatriyas and even the most inferior of Kshatriyas deserves to be fought with. The sources of warriors and rivers are both the same; they are always unknown. The fire that covers the entire world arises from water. The vajra that destroyed danavas was made from Dadhichi's bones. It is said that the birth of the illustrious god Guha[28] is a complete mystery. Some say he is the son of Agni, or of the Krittikas,[29] or Rudra's son, or Ganga's. It is said that those who have been born Brahmanas have become Kshatriyas. Our preceptor was born in a water pot, Kripa in a clump of reeds. And we also know how all of you were born. Can a deer give birth to this tiger, equal to the sun, with natural armour and earrings and possessing all the auspicious marks? This lord of men deserves to be king, not only of Anga but of the entire world, through the valour of his arms and my obedience to him. If there is any man to whom my action seems condemnable, let him ascend his chariot, or on foot bend his bow." At this, a loud uproar arose in the arena, intermingled with cheers of applause. At that time, the sun went down.

'King Duryodhana grasped Karna's hand and led him out of the arena, lit with the flames of myriad torches. O lord of the earth! With Drona, Kripa and Bhishma, the Pandavas also returned to their own homes. Everyone went to their respective houses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As they went away, some hailed Arjuna, some Karna and some Duryodhana. Kunti was also delighted out of affection for her son, because she recognized him from the various auspicious marks on his body, and he had become the king of Anga. O king! Having obtained Karna, Duryodhana quickly banished his fears arising out of Arjuna's skills. Skilled in use of arms, that warrior[30] also gratified Suyodhana with sweet words. At that time, Yudhishthira also thought that there was no archer equal to Karna on earth.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O ruler of the earth! One day, Drona the preceptor assembled his pupils together and asked all of them for his fee.[31] "Capture Drupada, the king of Panchala, in a raid and bring him here to me. O fortunate ones! That will be my greatest dakshina." Agreeing, all of them armed themselves with weapons and quickly climbed into their chariots and set out, accompanied by Drona, in order to pay the preceptor's fee. Those bulls among men destroyed Panchala and went to the capital of the immensely powerful Drupada and attacked it. O bull of the Bharata lineage! Thus capturing Yajnasena Drupada and his advisers in battle, they brought him to Drona.

'Seeing him[32] humiliated and robbed of his riches and under his complete control, Drona remembered his earlier enmity with Drupada and said, "I have laid waste your kingdom and your capital. Now that you have received your life at an enemy's hand, do you wish to revive our old friendship?" Having said this, he smiled a little, arrived at a decision and continued, "O king! Do not fear for your life. We Brahmanas always forgive. O bull among the Kshatriyas! From the days when we were boys and played in the hermitage, my love and affection for you have increased. O bull among men! I ask for your friendship once again. O king! As a boon, I am granting you half of your kingdom. O Yajnasena! How can one who is not a king be a friend to one who is a king? Therefore, I am retaining half of your kingdom. You will be the king of the region that is to the south of the Bhagirathi and I will be the king on the northern side. O Panchala! If you so desire, from now on, know me as your friend." Drupada replied, "O Brahmana! O great-souled and brave one! This is not surprising. I am pleased to be your friend and I wish to give you pleasure eternally.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At these words, Drona set him free. He honoured him with a happy heart and returned half his kingdom.

‘Heartbroken, Drupada lived in a capital named Kampilya, in the region known as Makandi, on the banks of the Ganga, with its towns and countryside. He ruled over the southern part of Panchala, up to the banks of the river Charmanvati. Thinking about his enmity with Drona, he could find no peace. He did not see any way of vanquishing Drona with Kshatriya power and he knew himself to be inferior to the strength of Brahmana power. Therefore, he bore his grievance, waiting for the birth of a son. O king! Drona lived in Ahichhatra, which had towns and a countryside, and was won in battle by Partha and handed over to him.’

129

Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing that Bhimasena had become extremely strong and Dhananjaya extremely skilled, the evil Duryodhana was tormented. Then, Vaikartana Karna and Subala’s son, Shakuni, tried to kill the Pandavas through various means. However, the Pandavas, slayers of enemies, discovered all of them. But because of Vidura’s advice, they refrained from revealing these plots.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the sons of Pandu were blessed with all the qualities, the citizens began to speak about their qualities in squares and assemblies. “Lord of men, Dhritarashtra, though possessing the sight of wisdom, could not inherit the kingdom then because he was blind. How can he be king now? Shantanu’s son, Bhishma, is rigid in his vows and is devoted to the truth. Having given up the kingdom earlier, he will never accept it now. The eldest Pandava is young, but has the conduct of the old, is truthful and compassionate and has knowledge of the Vedas. With due ceremonies, it is up to us to crown him. Since he follows the path of dharma, he will certainly worship Shantanu’s son Bhishma and Dhritarashtra and his sons and give them objects for sustenance.” The evil Duryodhana heard these words of affection for Yudhisthira and burnt in grief. Burning thus, the evil-souled one could not condone such talk.

'Inflamed with jealousy, he went to Dhritarashtra. Finding his father alone, he paid homage to him, and burnt by the partiality of the citizens, said, "O father! I have heard words of ill omen uttered by the citizens. Ignoring you and Bhishma, they desire that the Pandava should be their king. Bhishma will agree to this, because he does not wish to rule the kingdom. It seems that the citizens wish to impose a great injury on us. Earlier, Pandu obtained this kingdom from his father because of his own qualities. Though you possessed every quality required to inherit the kingdom, you did not get it because of your defect. If Pandu's son now receives it after Pandu, his son will certainly receive it thereafter and his son and so on. We and our sons will be excluded from the royal succession. O lord of the earth! In future, we will be ignored by the worlds. We will always be dependent on others for our rice cakes and will always live in hell. O king! Therefore, quickly find a way so that this does not happen. O king! If you had obtained the kingdom earlier, you would have become established and we would have certainly succeeded to it, regardless of how unwilling the people are."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words from his son, Dhritarashta thought for a while and then spoke to his son. Dhritarashtra said, "Pandu was always devoted to dharma. He always behaved respectfully towards his relatives, and especially towards me. I never knew him to care for food and other objects of pleasure. He was rigid in his vows and gave me everything, including the kingdom. Pandu's son is as devoted to dharma as he was. He has all the qualities, is famous in the worlds and is extremely respected by the citizens. How can we forcibly exile him, especially since he has allies, from the kingdom of his father and grandfather? Pandu always took care of his advisers and his soldiers, especially their sons and grandsons. O son! Earlier, Pandu always took good care of the citizens of the city. For Yudhisthira's sake, why should they not kill us and our relatives?" Duryodhana replied, "O father! I have thought about that danger also and have weighed it against the evil that will befall us. We must placate the people by offering them wealth and honour. They will then certainly side with us. O lord of the earth! The advisers and the treasury are now under our control. Therefore, use some gentle means to remove the Pandavas to the city of Varanavata. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When I am firmly installed as king, Kunti and her sons can always return."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Duryodhana! The same thought has arisen in my mind too. But I could not reveal it because it was evil. Bhishma or Drona or kshatta[33] or Goutama[34] will never approve the banishment of Kunti's sons. O son! In their eyes, we and the Pandavas are equals. Those wise and virtuous men will not tolerate any differentiation. O son! Why should we not deserve death[35] from the descendants of the Kuru lineage, those great-souled ones and even inhabitants of the entire world?"

'Duryodhana said, "Bhishma will always be neutral. Drona's son[36] is on my side. There is no doubt that Drona will be on the side that his son is on. There is no doubt that Sharadvat's son, Kripa, will be on the side where those three[37] can be. He will never forsake Drona and his sister's son.[38] Though he secretly sides with others,[39] kshatta's survival is linked to us. Even if he opposes us for the sake of the Pandavas, he will be able to do no harm. Without any fear, banish Pandu's sons and their mother to Varanavata. Do it today and evil will not result. Through this act, take away the terrible spike that is in my heart and the fire that burns me with grief and robs me of my sleep."'

131

Vaishampayana said, 'Then King Duryodhana and his brothers slowly began to win people over to their side by bestowing honour and riches on them. One day, on Dhritarashtra's instructions, some skilled ministers began to describe the beautiful city of Varanavata. "Pashupati's[40] festival will be held in the beautiful city of Varanavata. A large number of people have assembled there. That marvellous place will be adorned with all the gems." On Dhritarashtra's bidding, these were the words they uttered. O king! When they heard these stories about the beautiful city of Varanavata, Pandu's sons wished to go there.

'When the king realized that the Pandavas were curious, Ambika's son[41] told the Pandavas, "My men always and repeatedly describe to me the city of Varanavata, the most charming in the world. O sons! If you wish to witness the festival in the city of Varanavata, go there with your attendants and soldiers and enjoy yourselves like the gods. Give jewels to all the Brahmanas and the singers. Enjoy yourselves like radiant gods who possess all they desire. Spend as much time as you want there and when you have enjoyed yourselves completely, happily return to Hastinapura." Realizing that this was Dhritarashtra's own wish and he himself had no allies, Yudhisthira agreed.

'Addressing Shantanu's son, Bhishma, the immensely wise Vidura, Drona, the Bahlika Somadatta, the Kouravas, Kripa, the preceptor's son[42] and the illustrious Gandhari, Yudhisthira said, softly and meekly, "On Dhritarashtra's command, we are going with our friends to the lovely and populated city of Varanavata. Bless us with happy hearts, so that those sacred blessings ensure our prosperity and protect us from sin." Having heard these words of Pandu's son, all the Kouravas blessed the Pandavas with happy hearts. "O sons of Pandu! Let all the beings along your journey bring you fortune. Let not the slightest touch of evil touch you." Then, after having received blessings and after having performed all the rites for obtaining the kingdom, the Pandavas left for Varanavata.'

132

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the king[43] addressed Pandu's great-souled sons, the evil-hearted Duryodhana was extremely happy.

'O bull among the Bharatas! He privately summoned Purochana, grasped the adviser by the right hand and told him these words. "O

Purochana! This world, with all its riches, is mine. But with me, it is also yours. You should protect it. I have no other ally who is as trustworthy. I have to consult with you. O father![44] Keep these consultations[45] and destroy my enemies cleverly. Skilfully accomplish what I ask you to do. Dhritarashtra has sent the Pandavas to Varanavata. On Dhritarashtra's command, they will sport themselves in the festival there. Ensure that you reach Varanavata today on a cart drawn by swift asses. On reaching there, build an excellent house with four halls on the outskirts of the city—large and full of riches and near the store where weapons are kept. Use hemp, resin and other inflammable materials that can be obtained in the construction. Mix the clay with ghee, oil from seeds and a large quantity of lac and plaster the walls with this. Also place carefully in the house hemp, cane, ghee, lac, wood and wooden tools, but in such a way that the Pandavas or other men are not suspicious on scrutiny and do not deduce that the house has been constructed with inflammable materials. After constructing the house in this way, reverently pay homage to the Pandavas and get them to live there, with Kunti and her attendants. For the sons of Pandu, place beautiful conveyances, seats and beds there, so as to satisfy my father. Do it in such a way that no one in the city of Varanavata gets to know, until our time arrives. Knowing that they are asleep in their beds, completely assured and without suspecting danger from anywhere, set fire to it, beginning at the gate. When they have burnt to death in that house, people will not blame us for the death of the Pandavas." Purochana promised the Kourava[46] that he would do this and left for Varanavata in a cart drawn by asses.

'O king! He was always obedient to Duryodhana and left quickly. Purochana did as the prince had asked him to.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The Pandavas yoked excellent horses, swift as the wind, to their chariots. When ascending, they sorrowfully touched the feet of Bhishma, King Dhritarashtra, the great-souled Drona, Kripa, Vidura and others who were old. Since they were rigid in their vows, they paid homage to all the elders of the Kuru lineage and embraced their equals. Even the children said farewell. Taking leave of all the mothers[47] and circling them with respect, they said farewell to the citizens and set out for Varanavata.

'The immensely wise Vidura, other bulls among the Kurus and the citizens sorrowfully followed those tigers among men. O bull among the Bharatas! There were some fearless Brahmanas there. Aggrieved over what had happened to Pandu's sons, they said, "The evil King Dhritarashtra isn't impartial and is immersed in darkness. Dhritarashtra doesn't follow the path of dharma. The Pandava who has no sin in his heart,[48] Bhima, supreme among those who are strong, and Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, cannot commit a sin. Nor can the immensely wise sons of Madri. Dhritarashtra cannot bear that they have inherited the kingdom from their father. How could Bhishma have allowed such a great act of adharma, so that Kunti's sons, bulls of the Bharata lineage, have been banished to another city without reason? Vichitravirya, Shantanu's son and Kuru's descendant, and rajarshi Pandu were like our fathers. Since that tiger among men[49] has now met his destiny, Dhritarashtra cannot bear his sons, these princes, though they are young. We cannot sanction this. Therefore, let us leave this supreme city and our houses and go to the place where Yudhishthira is going." Dharmaraja Yudhishthira thought about this for a while and then sorrowfully addressed the sorrowing citizens. "The lord of the earth[50] is like our father, he is our greatest preceptor. It is our duty to unhesitatingly obey whatever he commands. O illustrious ones! You are our well-wishers. Circle around us and make us happy with your blessings. Then return home. When the time comes for you to do something for us, do that which is pleasing and is good for us." Having been thus addressed, the citizens circled the Pandavas and gave them their blessings. Then they returned to the city.

'When the citizens had returned, Vidura, who knew all the principles of dharma, spoke to the eldest Pandava so as to warn him. The learned one[51] spoke to the learned one[52] in nonsensical words,[53] "One who knows will act so as to avoid danger. There is a sharp weapon that can pierce the body, but is not made of iron. He who knows this is not killed and can turn it against the enemy. The burner of grass and the drier of dew do not kill animals in holes. He who protects himself through knowledge lives. The blind man doesn't see the way, because the blind man has no sense of direction. He who doesn't have perseverance is never prosperous. Know this and be alert. He who accepts an ironless weapon from the untrustworthy, can escape from the fire like a porcupine. Through travelling, a man gets to know the way and from the stars can deduce the directions. He who keeps the five[54] under self-control is never oppressed by the enemy." Having thus addressed the Pandavas, Vidura circled them, and having said farewell, returned to his house.

'After Vidura, Bhishma and the citizens had returned, Kunti went to Ajatashatru[55] and said, "What did kshatta[56] tell you among so many people? He spoke as if he said nothing and you replied similarly. We have not understood. If it is not inappropriate that we should know, I wish to know what you spoke to each other." Yudhishthira replied, "Vidura said that there is danger from poison and fire and that there should be no path that I do not know. He told me that the man who is self-controlled wins the entire world. I told Vidura that I had understood." On the eighth day of the month of Phalguna, when Rohini[57] was in the ascendant, they left for Varanavata and saw the city and its people.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing that the Pandavas were coming, the citizens of Varanavata were delighted and swiftly came out in thousands, in various conveyances. In order to receive those best of men, they carried with them auspicious gifts, as laid down in the shastras. Coming to Kunti's sons, the citizens of Varanavata reverently surrounded them in a circle and uttered the blessed word "Jaya".[58] Thus surrounded by them, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, tiger among men, looked like the one with the vajra in his hand,[59] surrounded by gods.

‘Welcomed by the citizens and paying homage to them in return, those unblemished ones entered Varanavata, populated and decorated for the festival. O protector of the earth! Entering the city, the warriors first went to the houses of the Brahmanas engaged in their duties. They then went to the houses of the city officials and next to the houses of those with chariots.[60] Next they went to the houses of the Vaishyas and even to the houses of the Shudras. The citizens paid homage to the Pandavas, bulls among men. Next, with Purochana leading the way, they went to their house.[61] Purochana gave them beautiful food, drinks, beds and seats. Served by Purochana and worshipped by the town’s citizens, they lived there, attired in expensive garments. When they had lived there for ten nights, Purochana told them about a house that was blessed, though it was actually unblessed. Attired in expensive garments, those tigers among men then entered the house at Purochana’s request, like the guhyakas enter Kailasha. Inspecting the house, Yudhishthira, supreme among those who know all the dharma, told Bhimasena, “O scorcher of enemies! From the smell of fat and ghee mixed with lac, it is clear that this house is made of inflammable materials. The evil Purochana has used trusted and well-skilled artisans to build a house with straw, bark and cane, sprinkled all over with ghee. After winning my confidence, he wishes to burn me to death. O Partha![62] This is the danger that the immensely intelligent Vidura foresaw and warned me about earlier. But now that he has told us, we know this house to be full of danger, constructed by skilled artisans under Duryodhana’s control.” Bhimasena said, “If you think this house is inflammable, then let us go back to our earlier house.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I think we should live here as if we are keen and suspect nothing and thus doomed to be destroyed. But we must find a certain way of escaping. If Purochana deduces from our appearance that we suspect, he may act quickly and suddenly burn us to death. Purochana does not shrink from outrage and sin. The evil one is based here on Suyodhana’s[63] orders. The question remains whether grandfather Bhishma will be angry if we are burnt alive. Will he anger the Kouravas by displaying his anger to them? It may be that if we are burnt, grandfather Bhishma and other bulls of the Kuru lineage may be angry for the sake of dharma. But if we flee from this place, scared of being burnt, Suyodhana, avaricious for the kingdom, may kill us through assassins. The evil Suyodhana has position, we have none. He has allies, we have none. He has a large treasury, we have no riches. There is no doubt that he can kill us through diverse means. Deceiving this evil one[64] and that evil one, Suyodhana, let us live here for some time, hiding where we go. Let us roam the earth the way hunters do, so that we become aware of all the routes that exist for escape. We will now secretly dig a hidden tunnel in the ground. If we can keep that a secret, the fire will not be able to destroy us. Let us live here in a way that neither Purochana nor the inhabitants of the city know what we are doing."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O king! There was a skilled digger[65] who was Vidura's friend. This man came and spoke to the Pandava[66] secretly. "I have been sent by Vidura to do that which is pleasing to the Pandavas. I am well skilled in digging. Please tell me what I can do for you. Vidura told me to go to the Pandavas and do that which is for their welfare. He trusts me. What can I do for you? On the fourteenth night of this *krishnapaksha,*[67] Purochana will set fire to the door of your house. O Partha! I have heard that Dhritarashtra's son has decided to burn the Pandavas, bulls among men, together with their mother. O Pandava! Vidura told you something in the mleccha[68] language and you replied in that language. I am telling you this to establish my credentials."

'Yudhishthira, Kunti's truthful son, replied, "O agreeable one! I now know you to be a trusted and true friend of Vidura's, always devoted to him. There is nothing that learned one does not know. Just as you are his, you are ours. Do not distinguish between him and us. We are yours as much as his. Protect us the way that wise man does. I know Purochana built this inflammable house for me on the command of

Dhritarashtra's son. That evil-hearted and malicious one, with control over riches and allies, has always oppressed us. Use all your efforts to save us from the fire. If we are burnt to death, Suyodhana's wishes will be fulfilled. That evil-hearted one's store of arms is there. This large house has been built along those walls. Vidura certainly knew in advance the evil crime that was being plotted and warned me about it. The danger that kshatta foresaw earlier is upon us now. Help us escape from that without Purochana knowing." The digger promised to help.

'Carefully, he began the work of excavation and made a deep tunnel under the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He built that tunnel in the centre of the house, with a narrow mouth and level with the ground, and covered it with wooden planks. Because of the fear of Purochana, the opening was thus covered. He[69] constantly kept a watch on the gate of the house. O king! They lived in the hole in the night, with their weapons ready. During the day, the Pandavas went out hunting, from forest to forest. O king! Deceiving Purochana with a display of trustfulness and contentment, they were actually distrusting and discontented and lived very unhappily. The inhabitants of the city knew nothing about all this, except for Vidura's friend, the excellent digger.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having seen them live there for an entire year, happy and unsuspecting, Purochana was extremely delighted. Witnessing Purochana's delight, Yudhishthira, Kunti's virtuous son, spoke to Bhimasena, Arjuna and the twins. "The cruel-hearted and evil Purochana thinks us to be trusting and has been deceived well. I think the time has come for our escape. Let us escape, unobserved by anyone, after setting fire to the armoury, burning Purochana to death and leaving six bodies here."

'O king! On the occasion of giving alms, Kunti fed a large number of Brahmanas in the night. A number of women also came. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They enjoyed themselves and ate and drank as much as they wished. When it was night, with Madhavi's[70] permission, they returned home. Driven by destiny and in search of food, a hunter woman also happened to come to the feast, accompanied by her five sons. All of them drank wine, until, with her sons, she was completely drunk. O ruler of men! She and her sons lost their senses and slept in that house, as if dead. When everyone was asleep and a violent storm started in the night, Bhima started a fire at the spot where Purochana was sleeping. The intense heat and great roar of the fire soon became manifest and awoke a large number of the citizens. The citizens said, "Under Duryodhana's instructions, the evil-minded one[71] built this house for his own destruction. Curse on Dhritarashtra, whose intelligence isn't impartial. He has burnt to death Pandu's pure sons, as if they are his enemies. As fate would have it, that evil-hearted and evil-minded one[72] has burnt those innocent and unsuspecting ones, supreme among men, and has himself been burnt." Thus did the citizens of Varanavata mourn, as they stood around the house throughout that entire night.

'However, with their mother, the grieving Pandavas emerged through the tunnel and fled quickly, unobserved. The scorchers of enemies, the Pandavas, could not move swiftly with their mother, because of fear and lack of sleep. O lord of kings! Bhimasena, with great speed and power, then took up all his brothers and his mother. With his great strength, the valorous one carried his mother on his shoulder, the twins on his hips and his brothers, the two Parthas,[73]on his arms. He shattered the trees with force and pounded the earth with his feet. The energetic Vrikodara rushed on, with the violence of a storm.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the night passed, all the city's inhabitants went there quickly to look for Pandu's sons. They put out the fire and saw that the house which had been burnt down had been constructed with lac and that the adviser Purochana had been burnt. The citizens said, "There is no doubt that the evil Duryodhana committed this act to destroy the Pandavas. Without a doubt, this was done with Dhritarashtra's knowledge. Otherwise, he would have prevented Dhritarashtra's son from burning Pandu's heirs. Indeed, Shantanu's son,[74] Drona, Vidura, Kripa and the other Kouravas haven't followed the dictates of dharma either. Let us send the news to the evil-hearted Dhritarashtra that his supreme desire has been fulfilled and that he has burnt to death the Pandavas." When they stirred the ashes to look for the Pandavas, they found the burnt hunter woman and her five sons. While cleaning up, the digger covered up the opening with debris, so that none of the men present noticed it.

'The citizens then sent the news to Dhritarashtra, that the Pandavas, together with the adviser Purochana, had been burnt in a fire. Hearing the terrible news of the death of Pandu's sons, King Dhritarashtra lamented in great sorrow. Dhritarashtra said, "When those warriors and their mother have been burnt to death, today my unparalleled brother, Pandu, is truly dead. Let men quickly go to Varanavata and perform the funeral ceremonies for those warriors and for the princess Kunti. Let the bones of the dead be sanctified in large and white receptacles. Let the well-wishers of the dead pay homage to them. Now that this has happened, let us spare no riches to perform acts that bring welfare to Kunti and the Pandavas." Having said this, surrounded by his relatives, Ambika's son[75] tendered offerings of water to Pandu's sons. Afflicted with grief, all the Kouravas lamented. But Vidura did not sorrow much, because he knew more.

'O lord of kings! After escaping from the city of Varanavata, the Pandavas swiftly moved on, heading towards the south. In the night, they found their way towards the south by the stars. O king! After a lot of suffering, they reached a deep forest. Pandu's sons were tired, thirsty and blind from lack of sleep. Yudhishthira again spoke to the immensely valorous Bhimasena. "What can be more painful than our being in this dense forest? We do not know the directions and we are incapable of proceeding further. We do not know if that evil Purochana has actually been burnt to death. Unobserved, how will we escape from these dangers? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Carry us once again, as earlier, and let us proceed. Among us, you alone are strong and swift as the wind." Thus addressed by Dharmaraja, the immensely strong Bhimasena once more picked up Kunti and his brothers and walked with great strength.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O king! The force and speed of his thighs raised a storm, like strong winds when *shukra* and *shuchi* draw near.[76] He strode on, tearing down large trees[77] with flowers and fruit on them and demolishing creepers that obstructed the way. He uprooted, with his immeasurable power, trees and bushes and his speed dazed Pandu's sons.[78] Using his arms as boats, he swam across many streams whose banks were distant. Fearing Dhritarashtra's son,[79] they assumed disguises. He carried his delicate and illustrious mother on his back, when the going was difficult, over riverbanks and uneven terrain.

'When it was evening, those bulls of the Bharata lineage reached an impenetrable forest where roots, fruits and water were scarce and the place was full of cruel birds of prey and beasts. The twilight became terrible and fearful with birds and beasts and the directions disappeared, as a storm was imminent. Those descendants of the Kuru lineage were tired and thirsty and overcome with sleep. They could proceed no further. Then Bhima entered a large, desolate and terrible forest. He saw a beautiful fig tree[80] that offered extensive shade.

'O bull among the Bharata lineage! Placing them there, he said, "O lord![81] Rest here. I am going to bring water. I hear the sweet voices of water-dwelling cranes. I am certain there must be a large lake here." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His elder brother permitted him to go and he went where the water-dwelling cranes were. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There, he drank the water and bathed. O king! He brought water back by soaking his upper garment. Swiftly retracing his steps, he went to his mother, who was two measures of distance away.

‘On seeing his mother and brothers asleep on the ground, Vrikodara was afflicted with great grief and lamented. “Earlier, they could not sleep in Varanavata on expensive beds. Now they are asleep on the ground. Kunti is the daughter of Kuntibhoja and is blessed with all the auspicious marks. She is the sister of Vasudeva, who grinds his enemies down. She is the daughter-in-law of Vichitravirya and the wife of the great-souled Pandu. She is as radiant as the filament of a lotus. The most delicate of all women, she should always sleep in palaces, on the most expensive of beds. Look at how she now sleeps on the ground. She has given birth to sons through Dharma, Indra and the wind-god. She is now tired and asleep on the ground like a common person. What more painful sight will I see than what I am seeing now? I see those tigers among men sleeping on the ground. The king, who is always devoted to dharma and who deserves all the three worlds as his kingdom, is tired and asleep on the ground like an ordinary person. He whose complexion is like the blue ocean[82] and who is unequalled among men is asleep on the ground like an ordinary person. What can be more painful than this? The twins, who are as handsome as the divine Ashvins, are asleep on the ground like ordinary men. He who has no evil relatives who defile his lineage lives happily, like a single tree in a village. When there is only one tree with leaves and fruits in a village, it is without kin, becomes sacred and venerated and is worshipped. They who have many relatives who are virtuous and brave live happily in this world, without disease. They make the sons of their friends and relatives powerful and prosperous, living on each other’s support like trees in a garden. We have been banished by the evil-souled Dhritarashtra and his sons. We escaped the conflagration he had instructed. Having escaped from that fire, we have now found refuge under this tree. Having suffered unequalled misfortunes, where will we go now? I think I see a city not far away from this forest. But someone should be awake while they are sleeping. Therefore, I will stay awake. When they awake and have rested, they can drink the water.” Having decided this, Bhima himself stayed awake.’

Section Nine

Hidimba-vadha Parva

This parva has 169 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 139: 32 shlokas
Chapter 140: 21 shlokas
Chapter 141: 24 shlokas
Chapter 142: 34 shlokas
Chapter 143: 38 shlokas
Chapter 144: 20 shlokas

Vadha *means to slay or kill and this parva is about the killing of the rakshasa Hidimba.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'Not very far from where they[1] slept in the forest, a rakshasa named Hidimba lived on a shala[2] tree. He was cruel, addicted to human flesh, very brave and very powerful, malformed, with yellow eyes, and terrible and fearful to look at. He was thirsty and hungry and was looking around, when he happened to see them. With his fingers extended upwards, he scratched the dry and unkempt hair on his head and yawning with his large mouth repeatedly, looked at them. The evil eater of human flesh, with a huge form and great strength, smelt humans and told his sister, "After a long time, I will today devour my favourite food. Anticipating the pleasure, my tongue is moist with saliva. My eight sharp-pointed teeth are impatient because they have had nothing to bite. I will dip them into these bodies and the delicious flesh. I will attack the human throats and arteries. I will drink copious quantities of the warm, fresh and foaming blood. Go and find out who are sleeping in the forest. The strong smell of humans alone pleases me. Kill those men and bring them to me. They are asleep in our territory and you need not fear. We will both eat a lot of flesh from these humans the way we like it. Quickly do what I tell you." O bull of the Bharata lineage! On hearing her brother's words, the *rakshasi* quickly went to where the Pandavas were. On going there, she saw that the Pandavas and Pritha[3] were asleep, while the invincible Bhimasena was awake.

'On seeing Bhimasena, whose shoulders were like a shala tree and who was unrivalled on earth in his beauty, the rakshasi was filled with desire. She thought, "This dark, mighty-armed, lion-shouldered, greatly radiant, conch-necked and lotus-eyed man is the right husband for me. I will not obey my brother's cruel orders. A wife's love is stronger than affection for a brother. If he is killed, my brother's pleasure and mine will be satisfied for a short while. But if I do not kill him, my gratification will be eternal." She could assume any form at will. She adopted a beautiful human form and slowly came to where the mighty-armed Bhimasena was, like a shy creeper adorned in divine ornaments. With a smile, she then addressed him in these words. "O bull among men! Where have you come from and who are you? Who are these god-like men who are asleep here? O unblemished one! Who is this tall, dark and delicate lady, who is asleep trustfully in this forest as if it was her own home? Do you not know that this deep forest is inhabited by rakshasas? Here dwells the evil-minded rakshasa named Hidimba. O god-like man! I have been sent here by my brother, that evil rakshasa, with the intention of eating your flesh. But, on seeing you, like one who has emerged from the wombs of the gods, I honestly tell you that I desire no one but you as my husband. O learned one who knows the dharma! Please do that which is proper for me. My mind and body are overcome by desire. I wish to make you mine. Make me yours. O mighty-armed one! I will save you from the rakshasa who eats human flesh. O unblemished one! Become my husband and we will live in the safety of the mountains. I can travel in the sky and can go where I want. With me, you will find incomparable pleasure in those places."

‘Bhimasena replied, “O rakshasi! For the sake of what power can a man leave his mother, elder brother and those who are younger than him? What man like me would gratify his desire while leaving his sleeping mother and brothers as food for a rakshasa?” The rakshasi replied, “I will do that which pleases you. Wake them all up. I will save all of you from the desire of that man-eating rakshasa.” Bhimasena said, “O rakshasi! I will not awaken my mother and brothers, who are sleeping blissfully in this forest, out of fear for your evil-minded brother. O fearful one! There is no rakshasa who can withstand my valour. O one with beautiful eyes! Nor can any man, gandharva or yaksha. O slender lady! Go or stay, as you please. Or send your man-eating brother to me.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing her delay, Hidimba, the lord of the rakshasas, got down from his tree and came to where the Pandavas were. His eyes were red, his arms were gigantic, his hair stood up and he had great strength. His complexion was like that of clouds, his teeth were sharp and his face was aflame. On seeing this malformed one descend,[4] Hidimba[5] was frightened and told Bhimsena, “The evil-minded maneater is coming and he is angry. You and your brothers do what I ask you to. O brave one! Since I have the power of the rakshasas, I can go wherever I want, at will. Climb onto my hips and I will carry you through the sky. O scorcher of enemies! Awake your mother and brothers who are sleeping. Taking all of them, I will travel through the sky.” Bhima replied, “O lady with the broad hips! Do not be afraid. I am certain that as long as I am here, no one can harm us. O slender-waisted one! I will kill him before your eyes. O frightened one! The worst of rakshasas is no match for my strength. All the rakshasas together cannot stand up to me in a fight. Look at my arms, as round as the trunks of an elephant. Look at my thighs, like iron clubs. Look at my broad and hard chest. O beautiful one! Today, you will be witness to my valour, like that of Indra. O broad-hipped one! Do not think that I am only a man and consider me to be weak.” Hidimba replied, “O tiger among men! You are like a god. I do not consider you to be weak. But I have witnessed the power this rakshasa has unleashed on men.”

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While Bhimasena was engaged in this conversation with her, the man-eating rakshasa heard these words and was furious. He also saw Hidimba in human form, the crown of her head bedecked with flowers and her face like the full moon. Her eyebrows, nose, eyes and the tips of her hair were beautiful and her nails and skin were delicate. She was adorned with all kinds of ornaments and attired in a fine and transparent dress. On seeing her in that beautiful and deluding human form, the maneater thought she was lusting for a man and became furious. O best of the Kurus! Becoming very angry with his sister, the rakshasa dilated his gigantic eyes and told her, “Who is the deluded one who comes in my way when I am hungry? O Hidimba! Have you become so senseless that you are not frightened of my anger? Shame on you, you who lust after men! You do that which causes me displeasure. You bring disrepute to all the chief rakshasas, your ancestors. Today, I will kill you, together with all those for whose sake you have done this great injury to me.” Having addressed Hidimba in these words, the red-eyed Hidimba gnashed his teeth against each other and rushed at her, with the intention of killing her. On seeing him rush at her, Bhima, the supreme wielder of all weapons, reproached him strongly, asking him to stop.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Seeing that the rakshasa was furious with his sister, Bhimasena laughed in scorn and said, “O Hidimba! Why are you waking those who are sleeping peacefully? O evil one! Attack me quickly, you eater of men! Use your blows on me. You should not kill a woman who has done no wrong, especially since she has been wronged against. Afflicted by desire for me, this woman has no control over herself. She has been goaded by the bodiless one[6] who has pervaded her body. O evil one! You bring disrepute to your lineage. Your sister came here on your instructions and, on seeing my beauty, the timid one was afflicted by desire. O evil-souled rakshasa! The wrong was committed by Ananga,[7] she has not erred. While I am here, you will not kill a woman. O eater of men! Come to me and fight it out, one against another. Today, I will singly send you to the land of Yama. O rakshasa! Your head will be squashed on the ground till it breaks, as if squashed by the foot of a powerful elephant. When I have killed you in the fight today, your body will be happily torn apart by carnivorous animals, hawks and jackals. In an instant, I will free this forest of its thorn. It has been polluted for too long a time by those who eat men. Today, your sister will see how I drag the evil one, like a lion drags a large elephant that is the size of a mountain. O worst of the rakshasas! When you have been killed by me, the men who live in this forest will roam safely in the forest, without hindrance."

'Hidimba said, "Human! What is the need for this pointless roaring and bragging? Perform the actions first, then comes the bragging. Don't take long. You think yourself to be powerful and valorous. In your fight with me today, you will find out that I am stronger. Till that time, I will not harm those who are sleeping and dreaming. I shall first kill you, the stupid one who speaks such wicked words. After drinking your blood from your body, I will kill them and then this one,[8] who has done that which brought displeasure to me." Having uttered these words, the maneater stretched out his arms and angrily dashed towards Bhimasena, the conqueror of enemies.

'But the immensely powerful Bhima quickly seized his arms and laughingly flung him down. Seizing the struggling demon with great force, Bhima dragged him eight bow-lengths away, like a lion drags a small deer. At that, the furious rakshasa clasped the Pandava Bhimasena with great force and let out a terrible roar. Yet again, the immensely strong Bhima dragged him away, so that the sound would not wake his brothers who were happily sleeping. Clasping and dragging each other with great force, both Bhimasena and the rakshasa exhibited supreme strength. Fighting like two enraged sixty-year-old elephants, they tore down large trees and ripped off the creepers that grew around. At that great noise, those bulls among men[9] and their mother woke up and saw Hidimba standing before them.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Waking up, those tigers among men,[10] together with Pritha, were astonished on seeing the divine beauty of Hidimba. Then, astonished at the richness of her beauty, Kunti looked at her and addressed her in soft, gentle and assuring words. “O beautiful one, equal to the offspring of the gods! Who are you? Where have you come from? What business has brought you here? Are you the goddess of this forest or are you an apsara? Tell me everything and also tell me why you are standing here.”

‘Hidimba replied, “The great forest that you see, blue like monsoon clouds, is the habitation of the rakshasa Hidimba and me. O noble lady! Know me to be the sister of the lord of the rakshasas. O honoured lady! My brother sent me here to kill you and your sons. I came here on the instructions of that cruel one and saw your immensely powerful son, with a complexion like that of pure gold. O fortunate lady! Then, under the influence of Manmatha,[11] who pervades the essence of everything, I fell under your son’s spell. Therefore, I chose your immensely powerful son to be my husband. Though I tried to control my passion, I could not. Since I was delayed, the maneater himself came here to kill all these sons of yours. But he has been flung on the ground and dragged away by your great-souled and wise son, my husband. Look at the man and the rakshasa, both with great strength and valour, grasping each other with great force and fighting and roaring.” On hearing these words, Yudhishthira, Arjuna, Nakula and the valorous Sahadeva quickly got up. They saw those two fighting, grasping and dragging each other, desirous of victory like two immensely powerful lions. They grasped and dragged each other again and again. Dust rose from the earth like billowing smoke from a forest fire. Covered with the dust of earth, they were enveloped like two mountains in whirling mists.

‘On seeing Bhima oppressed at the hands of the rakshasa, Partha[12] slowly said, as if in jest, “O Bhima! O one with mighty arms! Do not be afraid. We did not know that you were tired from fighting this terrible rakshasa. O Partha![13] I am here to help you. I shall kill the rakshasa, while Nakula and Sahadeva will guard our mother.” Bhima replied, “Watch this fight as a neutral. You don’t have to take part. When I have got him in my clutches, he will not live for long.” Arjuna said, “O Bhima! What is the need to keep this evil rakshasa alive for so long? O conqueror of enemies! We have to leave this place as quickly as we can. We cannot stay here longer. Before long, the east will redden. The morning dawn is about to set in. At the *roudra*[14] moment, the rakshasas become stronger. O Bhima! Be quick. Kill the terrible rakshasa before he begins to use his powers of delusion.[15] Therefore, show the strength of your arms.” Having been thus addressed by Arjuna, Bhima threw up the body of the terrible rakshasa and whirled it around a hundred times.

‘Bhima said, “Your body has thrived in vain on impure flesh. Your intelligence is in vain and you have aged in vain. Therefore, you deserve a useless death. Today, I will end your useless existence.” Arjuna said, “If you think that killing this rakshasa in battle is too onerous a task, let me help you. O Vrikodara![16] Kill him quickly. Otherwise, let me kill him. You are tired and have almost finished the work. You deserve to rest now.” On hearing these words, Bhimasena was enraged. Crushing him on the ground with all his strength, he killed him the way one kills an animal. As he was thus being killed by Bhima, he let out a mighty roar that filled the entire forest, like the sound of a kettledrum drenched in water. Then the strong son[17] of Pandu held the body in his hands and tore it into two, pleasing the Pandavas with the strength of his arms. On seeing Hidimba killed, they were delighted and swiftly congratulated Bhimasena, a tiger among men and conqueror of enemies. Worshipping the great-souled Bhima of terrible strength, Arjuna again told Vrikodara, “O lord! I think there is a city not far from this forest. O fortunate one! Let us go there quickly, before Suyodhana[18] discovers us.” The scorchers of enemies and tigers among men[19] agreed, as did their mother, and left, with the rakshasi Hidimba following.’

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‘Bhimasena said, “The rakshasas remember their enmity and use delusions.[20] O Hidimba! Therefore, you also follow the path that your brother has taken.” Yudhishthira said, “O tiger among men! O Bhima! Do not kill a woman even in anger. O Pandava! Following the righteous path is more important than preservation of the physical body. You have killed the immensely powerful rakshasa who came here with the intention of killing us. What can his sister do to us, even if she is angry?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thereupon, Hidimba respectfully saluted Kunti and Yudhishthira with joined hands and told Kunti, “O honoured lady! You are familiar with the pangs women suffer through Ananga.[21] O fortunate lady! I am now suffering those pangs for Bhimasena. I have suffered that great misery, waiting for the right time. But now that time has come and I expect my happiness. O fortunate lady! I have left my friends, relatives and my designated path. I have chosen your son, this tiger among men, as my husband. O illustrious lady! Will the choice of a woman be rejected because of the way I speak? O greatly fortunate lady! Whether you think me stupid or whether you think that I am devoted to you, please unite me with your son, my husband. O fortunate lady! Let me go as I wish, taking this god-like one. Trust me that I shall bring him back here. Whenever you think of me, I shall immediately come to you and swiftly carry these bulls among men on my shoulders, over pastures and difficult terrain, wherever you wish to go. Please take pity on me and let Bhimasena make love to me. It is in accordance with what is right that one should preserve oneself from disaster and act accordingly, by whatever means. One who follows this righteous path in calamities is supreme among those who know what is right. Calamities are the greatest danger to what is right and to righteous ones. What preserves life is holy and, therefore, what grants life is what is holy. The means through which this righteousness is ensured can never deserve condemnation."[22] Yudhishthira replied, "O Hidimba! There is no doubt that what you have said is true. O lady with the slender waist! Act in accordance with the righteous path, as you have described it to be. O fortunate lady! When he has bathed, performed his ablutions and finished all rites, he will make love to you until the sun sets. O you who are swift as the mind! Have your pleasure with him, as you wish, during the day. But you must bring Bhimasena back every night." Having taken an oath to do this, the rakshasi Hidimba then took Bhimasena up and rose into the sky.

'Assuming the most beautiful of forms, adorned in every kind of ornament and sometimes breaking out in sweet music, she pleasured with the Pandava on beautiful mountain peaks cared for by the gods and always frequented by animals and birds; and also in forests and mountain passes with flowering trees and creepers; in beautiful ponds adorned with lotuses and water lilies; in islands on rivers where the gravel was like lapis lazuli and in mountain streams where the woods and the water were pure; on the shores of the ocean with jewels and gold; in beautiful cities and in forests with large shala trees; in forests sacred to the gods and the peaks of mountains; in the dwelling places of the guhyakas and the hermitages of ascetics; and along the waters of Lake Manasa,[23] abounding in flowers and fruit in all seasons. Assuming a beautiful form, she pleasured with the Pandava. In every such place, the one who was as swift as the mind, pleasured with Bhima.

'From Bhimasena, the rakshasi then gave birth to an immensely powerful son. He had a fearful appearance, with terrible eyes, a large mouth and ears like spikes. His form was distorted. His lips were brown as copper and his teeth were sharp, with great strength in them. He had mighty arms, possessed great energy and was born extremely valorous, a great archer. He had great speed, with gigantic size and was a conqueror of enemies, greatly skilled in the powers of delusion. Though born from a man, with great speed and great strength, he had nothing human in him. He surpassed all pishachas and other such creatures, not to speak of humans. O lord of men! Although a child, by human standards he seemed to be a fully grown youth. He became a powerful and supreme hero, skilled in the use of all the weapons that are known.

‘Rakshasa women give birth on the day they conceive. They are capable of assuming any form they want and they can adopt many different forms. The child who had grown and become a supreme archer, then saluted his father and mother by touching their feet. They gave him a name. His mother said, “He is shiny like a pot,”[24] and his name became Ghatotkacha. Ghatotkacha was devoted to the Pandavas and they always loved him. He became one of them. Knowing that the prescribed time of her stay with them was over, Hidimba made another agreement with them[25] and went where she wanted. Ghatotkacha, the best of rakshasas, told his father that he would come whenever he was required and left for the north. He had been created by the great-souled Maghavan[26] as a powerful antagonist against the great-souled maharatha Karna.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The maharathas[27] then went from one forest to another, killing many animals and travelling fast, through the lands of Matysa, Trigarta, Panchala and Kichaka, where they saw many beautiful woods and lakes. All of them had their hair in matted locks and they wore barks of trees and deerskin. Those great-souled ones and Kunti assumed the form of ascetics. Sometimes, the maharathas had to hasten, and carried their mother. Sometimes, they proceeded slowly and in the open.[28] They studied about the brahman in the Vedas and all the Vedangas and nitishastra.[29]

‘At that time, those wise ones met their grandfather.[30] Having respectfully saluted Krishna Dvaipayana, those scorchers of enemies[31] and their mother stood before him with joined palms. Vyasa said, “O bulls of the Bharata lineage! I had known in advance how Dhritarashtra’s sons would not follow the righteous path and would unjustly banish you.

Having known this, I have now come for your welfare. It is not right to sorrow. Know that this will bring future happiness. There is no doubt that you and they are equal in my eyes. But men love more those who suffer from ill fortune or are young. Therefore, my love for you is now greater. As a result of that love, I wish to do something good for you. Listen to me. Not far from here, there is a beautiful town that is a safe place for you. Go and live there in disguise and wait for my return." After he had thus comforted the Parthas,[32] the conquerors of enemies Vyasa led them to Ekachakra.

'The lord[33] also comforted Kunti. "O daughter! Live. Your son Yudhishthira, the son of dharma, will rule righteously over all the kings on earth. Well versed in righteousness, he will conquer the earth through his virtue, aided by the might of Bhima and Arjuna. There is no doubt that he will rule. Your sons and those of Madri, all maharathas, will enjoy themselves happily in their own kingdom. Conquering the entire earth, those tigers among men will perform rajasuya,[34]*ashvamedha*[35] and other sacrifices, in which the alms given will be very large. They will rule over the kingdom of their father and grandfathers and ensure their friends and relatives enjoy pleasures and prosperity." Having said this, rishi Dvaipayana took them to the house of a Brahmana and told the best[36] of the Parthas, "Wait for me. I will return for you. You will find great happiness if you learn to adjust to time and place." O ruler of men! With joined hands, they said, "So it shall be." Lord Vyasa, the fortunate rishi, then went away where he wanted to.'

Section Ten

Baka-vadha Parva

This parva has 206 shlokas and eight chapters.

Chapter 145: 40 shlokas
Chapter 146: 36 shlokas
Chapter 147: 24 shlokas
Chapter 148: 16 shlokas
Chapter 149: 20 shlokas
Chapter 150: 27 shlokas
Chapter 151: 24 shlokas
Chapter 152: 19 shlokas

This parva is about the killing of a demon named Baka.

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Janamejaya said, ‘O best of those who are born twice! What did the maharatha Pandavas, the sons of Kunti, do after going to Ekachakra?’

Vaishampayana said, ‘After going to Ekachakra, the maharatha Pandavas, the sons of Kunti, lived in a Brahmana’s house for a short while. O king of the world! They then begged for alms. They saw many beautiful woods, distant parts of the earth, countries, rivers and lakes. Because of their many qualities, they became the favourites of the citizens. Every night, they handed over their alms to Kunti. She divided it into parts and each separately ate his share. The valorous ones, the scorchers of foes, and their mother ate half. The immensely powerful Bhima ate the other half entirely. O best of the Bharata lineage! O king!

Those great-souled ones lived there like that and a great deal of time passed.

'One day, when the bulls of the Bharata lineage had gone out begging, Bhimasena was at home with Pritha[1] for company. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then Kunti heard a great uproar in the Brahmana's house, terrible sounds of lamentations. O king! Because of her compassion and goodness, the lady[2] could not bear the sight of that weeping and lamenting. Feeling sorry, the virtuous Pritha then spoke to Bhima in compassionate words. "O son! Unknown to the sons of Dhritarashtra, we have lived happily in this Brahmana's house, respected and treated well by him. O son! I have always thought about what can be good for the Brahmana and what I can do to please him, as those who happily live in others' houses should. He is truly a man who returns what is received and such an act is never destroyed. One should do more good than others do to one. Without a doubt, this Brahmana has fallen into some grief. If we can be of any help to him, that will be a good deed." Bhima said, "Let us find out what the distress is and how it has arisen. Having learnt it, I shall try to remove it,[3] no matter how difficult it will be." O ruler of the world! When those two were thus conversing, they heard a pitiful wail from the Brahmana and his wife.

'Like Surabhi[4] dashes at her tethered calf, Kunti hurried towards the inner quarters of the great-souled Brahmana. She saw there the Brahmana, his wife, his son and his daughter, their faces distorted with grief.

'The Brahmana said, "Cursed be this worldly life, without meaning, and like the substance of fire. Its root is unhappiness, slavery to others and it is based on great sorrow. To live means to suffer great misery, to live means to suffer a great fever. Without a doubt, those who live have to choose between evils. The atman may be one, but one has to serve dharma, artha and kama. The simultaneous pursuit of these leads to great misery. Some say that salvation is the greatest object, but it can never be reached. The acquisition of artha is hell, its desire creates misery. Great is unhappiness for those who desire wealth, greater for those who have acquired it. There is attachment to the acquired wealth and when it is lost, unhappiness is greater. I do not see any way of escaping from this danger unless I run away with my wife and son to a healthier place. O *brahmani*![5] I have told you before that we should go to a place that is safe, but you didn't listen to my words then. O foolish woman! When I repeatedly asked, you said, 'I was born here. I grew old here. This is my father's house.' Your father is now dead and your old mother died a long time ago. Your relatives are also dead. Why was there the desire to live here? You didn't listen to my words as a result of affection towards your relatives. We are now faced with the terrible misery that comes from losing a relative. How can I bear it? Perhaps the time has come for my own death. I cannot live like a cruel one after abandoning one of my own relatives.

'"Always giving, you have been my companion in all virtuous acts. You are like a mother to me. The gods gave you to me as a friend. You have been my chief support. My father and mother gave you to me as a partner in my duties as a householder. I chose you in accordance with the law. I married you in accordance with the mantras. You were born into a good family. You have a good nature. You are the mother of my children. You have always been faithful to me. You are chaste and have never harmed anyone. You have always been constant in your vows. I cannot give up my wife in order to save my own life.

'"How can I sacrifice my daughter? She is still a child, not yet an adult, and without any signs of coming of age. The great-souled creator gave her to me in trust so that I could find her a husband. Through her, together with my ancestors, I will be able to attain worlds reached by those who have sons through their daughters. How can I give up a daughter I have fathered myself? Some men think that a father loves a son more than a daughter. Not I. I love them equally. How can I give up this innocent girl? On her are based my continuity and the worlds that bring eternal bliss.

'"If I sacrifice myself and go to the other world, I will still have to repent. Abandoned by me, they will not be able to live. To give up any one of these[6] will be a cruel act, condemned by those who are learned. But if I sacrifice myself, they will also die without me. Great distress has befallen me. I do not know how to escape. I am cursed. What path will I and my relatives follow? It is better that I should die with all of them. I cannot live."'

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'The brahmani said, "You must not grieve like a common person. For someone who is as learned as you, this is not the time to grieve. All men must certainly come to an end. If something is certain, one should not grieve over it. A man desires a wife, a son and a daughter for his own sake. Therefore, since you have great learning, abandon this grief. I shall go there myself. It is the supreme and eternal duty of women in this world that they should give up their lives for the welfare of their husbands. Done by me, such an act will bring you happiness. It will also bring me eternal fame in this world and the hereafter. What I have told you is the highest dharma. Through this, it will perceptibly bring you artha and dharma. You have already obtained from me the purpose for which a man acquires a wife—a daughter and a son. Through this, I have been freed from the debt I owe you.

'"You are capable of supporting and protecting your children. I cannot protect and support the children as you can. You have given me all that I desire and protected me from all danger. If I am abandoned by you, how can these young children and I survive? How can an unprotected widow with two young children support them both, while treading a path of virtue? How can I protect our daughter when she is wooed by arrogant and selfish suitors who are unworthy of an alliance with you? Like birds grabbing a lump of meat thrown on the ground, all men crave women without their husbands. O best of the twice-born! Solicited by evil-hearted ones, I might waver and might not be able to stick to the path of virtue. How can I ensure that this only daughter of the lineage, young and innocent, walks along the path trodden by her forefathers? How can I teach this young boy, fatherless and without a protector, every desirable quality so as to make him as learned in virtue as you? When I am in this state, those who are unworthy will overcome me and demand this unprotected girl, like Shudras craving to hear the Vedas. If I refuse to give her, endowed with all qualities and with your blood, they may forcibly carry her away, like crows after sacrificial offerings. When they see a son who is unlike you and your daughter under the control of those who are unworthy, I will be despised in the worlds. O Brahmana! I do not know what will happen to me, under the control of the arrogant. But there is no doubt that I shall die. There is no doubt that these young children, deprived of you and of me, will perish like fish when the water dries up. There is no doubt that without you, all three of us will perish in this way. Therefore, you should sacrifice me.

'"O Brahmana! Those who are learned in dharma have said that the supreme salvation of women is to go on the last journey before their husbands and not remain under the protection of their sons. For you, I am ready to give up this son and this daughter, my relatives and my life. To be always engaged in what pleases her husband is a greater duty for a woman than sacrifices, austerities, vows and donation of alms. Thus, the act I wish to perform is in conformity with the supreme dharma. It is for the welfare of you and of the lineage. The virtuous say that objects of desire, children, possessions and friends, even the wife, are cherished to rescue oneself in a time of distress. O you who have extended your lineage! The wise ones have said that if all one's relations are placed on one side of the scale, they do not equal oneself on the other side. My lord! Thus, do through me what has to be done. Save yourself by sacrificing me. Give me permission and protect my children. In deciding the path of virtue for men, those who are learned in dharma have said that women should never be killed and that rakshasas also know dharma. Therefore, he may not kill me. It is certain that he will kill a man. But it is doubtful that he will kill a woman. O you who are learned in dharma! Therefore, you should let me go. I have enjoyed my life. I have enjoyed great happiness. I have trodden the path of dharma. Through you, I have borne beloved children. I will not grieve if I have to die. I have borne a son and I have grown old. I have always desired to do that which pleases you. Counting all my blessings, I have arrived at my decision. O revered one! You can take another wife after you have sacrificed me. You will then again be able to tread the path of dharma. O virtuous man! To have more than one wife is not a sin among men. But it is a grave sin for a woman to have another husband after the first. Having considered all this and realizing that your self-sacrifice must be condemned, today, without any delay, save yourself, your lineage and these two children through me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing her words, her husband embraced her. Stricken with grief, he shed copious tears, along with his wife.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the daughter heard these words of her parents, who were extremely sorrowful, she was overcome with grief and spoke to them. "Why are you lamenting so grievously? Why are you weeping as if you have no one to protect you? Now listen to what I have to say. On hearing my words, do what is proper. There is no doubt that dharma dictates that I have to be sacrificed at some time. Since I have to be abandoned in any case, abandon me now and save everyone through me alone. That is the reason men desire children, so that they can be saved. That time has come. Use me as a boat and save yourselves. A child saves everywhere, in this world and in the next. It is because a child saves everywhere that the learned know a child by the name of putra.[7] My grandfathers have always desired to have daughter's sons through me. Now I shall myself save them by saving my father's life. My brother is very young. There is no doubt that he will soon perish after you have left this world. When my father has gone to heaven and my younger brother has perished, the funeral cakes offered to the ancestors will come to an end and that act will displease them. Having been abandoned by my father, my mother and my brother, I shall descend from misery to misery and will finally perish in great distress. There is no doubt that if you are healthy and can save yourself, my mother and my child brother, and our lineage, the practice of offering funeral cakes will continue. The son is one’s own self. The wife is one’s friend. The daughter is the cause of suffering. Save yourself from that cause of suffering. Set me on the path of dharma. O father! Without you, I will be an unprotected and wretched girl, going everywhere and whenever, always miserable. Therefore, I shall save my lineage and I shall acquire the merit that this difficult act brings. O best of the twice-born! If you abandon me and go there,[8] I will be greatly oppressed. Therefore, be kind to me. O good father! Abandon me, who am to be abandoned eventually. Save yourself for my sake, for the sake of dharma and for the sake of your lineage. There should not be any delay in performing the inevitable. By offering them[9] water, you will do that which is good. What can be more painful to us than you ascending to heaven and our roaming like dogs, begging food from others? But if you are saved from this calamity with your relatives[10] and are healthy, I shall be very happy in the immortal world.” When they heard her piteous lamentations, all three, the father, the mother and the daughter, began to weep.

‘Then, on seeing all of them cry, their young son uttered these mumbling words, his eyes wide open. “O father! O mother! And you too, O sister! Do not cry.” Saying this, he smilingly came to each of them. Picking up a blade of grass, he again said happily, “I will kill the man-eating rakshasa with this.” Though they were overcome with grief, hearing the mumbling words of the child, they were cheered up. Knowing that this was the right time, Kunti went to them and thus spoke, like ambrosia reviving the dead.’

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‘Kunti said, “I wish to learn exactly from you the reason for this grief. On learning it, I will remove the cause from you, if it can be removed.”

‘The Brahmana said, “O lady blessed with austerities! What you have said is worthy of righteous ones. But removal of this grief is beyond humans. Not far from this town lives a rakshasa named Baka. That immensely powerful one is the lord of this town and this country. That evil-minded maneater, chief among asuras, and with the power of rakshasas, rules over and protects this town, this country and this region, sustained through human flesh. Thus protected by him, we have no fear from any encirclement by enemies or any living beings. But his stipend has been fixed to a supply of food—a cartload of rice, two buffaloes and the human who takes these to him. One after another, all the people provide him with food. After intervals of many years, this difficult task comes to a particular man and it is impossible to escape. If men ever try to escape their turn, the rakshasa eats them up, with their wives and children.

‘“The king lives in a place known as Vetrakiyagriha. But he makes no efforts to free his subjects from this danger for good. We deserve all of this, because we live in continued harassment in the kingdom of a weak and incompetent king. Brahmanas are free to live, as they wish, on anyone’s land.[11] They base themselves on their qualities and like birds freely go where they will. It is said that first one should find a king, then a wife, and then riches. By acquiring all three, one can maintain one’s relatives and one’s sons. But in acquiring these three, I have chosen the wrong order. Therefore, having fallen into this danger, I am suffering great grief. It is now my turn and it will destroy my family. I shall have to provide food and a man as stipend. I don’t have the riches to purchase a man. Nor am I able to give up someone who is dear to me. I do not see any means of saving myself from that rakshasa. I am immersed in this great ocean of grief from which no escape seems possible. Today, I will go to that rakshasa with my entire family, so that the evil one can eat all of us together.”’

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‘Kunti said, “Do not grieve because of this fear. I see a means through which you can escape from that rakshasa. You have an only son who is a child and an only daughter who is engaged in austerities. It does not seem right to me that they, you or your wife should go there. O

Brahmana! I have five sons. One of them will go, taking on your behalf the offerings to that evil rakshasa.”

‘The Brahmana said, “In order to live, I can never do this. For the sake of saving my own life, I cannot cause the death of a Brahmana and a guest. Even those who are of low birth and sinful refuse to do this. One should sacrifice oneself and one’s children for the sake of a Brahmana. I consider this principle to be the best for me and I would like to follow it. Between the death of a Brahmana and my own, it seems to me that the latter is better. There is no salvation from the great sin of killing a Brahmana. Even if I do it without the right frame of mind, it is better for me to sacrifice myself. O fortunate lady! In sacrificing myself, I will not commit the crime of self-destruction, because there is no sin if someone else does the killing. But if I deliberately kill a Brahmana, I will commit a cruel and vile act, from which there is no means of atonement. The learned have said that the sacrifice of someone who has come to your house or has sought your protection or the killing of a supplicant are cruel and sinful deeds. Great-souled ones, learned in principles that should be followed at times of distress, have earlier said that one should never commit cruel deeds capable of censure. It is best for me that I should perish today with my wife, than that I should ever cause the killing of a Brahmana.”

‘Kunti said, “O Brahmana! It is also my firm view that Brahmanas must always be protected. If I had 100 sons, I would not love any one of them less. But this rakshasa will not be able to kill my son. My son is full of energy, valorous and has knowledge of the mantras. He will deliver all that food to the rakshasa, but it is my firm conviction that he will be able to save himself. Earlier, I have myself seen that powerful and gigantic rakshasas have fought with that brave one and have been killed, one after another. O Brahmana! But do not reveal this to anyone through any means. For people, curious and wishing to learn,[12] will trouble my sons. The learned have said that if my son parts with this knowledge without the permission of his preceptor, the receiver will not gain from it.”’

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing these words of Pritha,[13] the Brahmana and his wife were very happy and agreed to her words, which were like ambrosia.[14] Then, Kunti and the Brahmana went to Anila's son[15] and said, "Do this." "So shall it be," was his reply.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhima said that he would do it before all the Pandavas returned there after collecting their alms.[16] Looking at his[17] appearance, Pandu's son Yudhishthira guessed and sitting down with his mother, alone and privately, asked her, "What is the exploit that the immensely powerful Bhima wishes to undertake? Is it something he wishes to do on his own or is it something you have commanded?" Kunti replied, "On my instructions, the scorcher of enemies[18] will perform this great task, for the sake of the Brahmana and in order to save this town."

'Yudhishthira said, "What have you done in your extreme rashness? This is a difficult task. The learned have certainly never praised the sacrifice of one's own son. Why do you wish to sacrifice your own son for the sake of someone else's? You have performed an act of abandoning your son. This is not approved by the worlds and by the Vedas. Through the strength of his arms all of us sleep in peace and hope to recover the kingdom that the evil ones have deprived us of. It is because of his infinite powers that Duryodhana, Shakuni and all the others spend sleepless nights of worry. Through his valour we escaped from the burning of the house of lac and other dangers when Purochana was killed. It is through dependence on his valour that we believe that we have already acquired this earth and its riches and have killed Dhritarashtra's sons. What came to your mind that you deliberately decided to sacrifice him? Have you lost your senses and your intelligence because of the miseries?"

'Kunti said, "O Yudhishthira! You need not lament over Vrikodara.[19] I did not take my decision because of the weakness of my intelligence. O son! We have lived happily in the house of this Brahmana. O son! I wish to regard this as our compensation. A man is true to the extent he recognizes a good deed. Having witnessed Bhima’s valour in the house of lac and in the killing of Hidimba, I have great confidence in Vrikodara. The strength in Bhima’s arms is as much as that in 10,000[20] elephants. It is because of this that he was able to carry us, as heavy as elephants, from Varanavata. There has been no one, nor will there be any one, as strong as Vrikodara. In battle, he is the equal of the best, the wielder of the vajra[21] himself. Earlier, as soon as he was born, he fell from my lap on a mountain. Through the hardness of his body, he shattered the rock into pieces. O Pandava! From that day, I have known Bhima’s strength and, remembering it, I wished to repay the Brahmana. I have not done this from folly, delusion or desire for gain. I have consciously desired to perform this act because it is what dharma requires. O Yudhishthira! Two objectives will be attained in this way. We will repay the Brahmana for his lodging us and we will obtain great religious merit. I have heard that a Kshatriya who helps a Brahmana in any way obtains the fortunate worlds after death. A Kshatriya who saves the life of another Kshatriya obtains great fame in this world and the next. A Kshatriya who helps a Vaishya on this earth is certainly loved by the subjects in all the worlds. A king who frees a Shudra who comes to him for protection is reborn in a wealthy family in his next life and is revered by other kings. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Earlier, the illustrious and extremely wise Lord Vyasa told me this. That is why I want to act in this way.”

‘Yudhisthira said, “O mother! What you have intelligently decided to do, driven by compassion for the poor Brahmana, is indeed right. It is certain that Bhima will kill that maneater and return alive. But the Brahmana must carefully be told that he must restrain himself, so that the inhabitants of this town do not find out.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Thereafter, when night had passed, Pandava Bhimasena took the food with him and left for the place where the maneater lived. Reaching the forest where the rakshasa lived, the immensely strong Pandava began to eat the food himself and called out to the rakshasa by name. Then, on hearing Bhimasena's words, the rakshasa was greatly enraged and came to where Bhima was. His body was huge and his speed was swift, as if he was breaking up the ground. His forehead was furrowed into three lines and he bit his lips. On seeing Bhimasena eating the food, the rakshasa dilated his eyes and angrily said, "Who are you, stupid one, who dares to eat these offerings meant for me, that too in front of my own eyes? Do you wish to go to the land of the dead?" O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this, Bhimasena began to laugh. Ignoring the rakshasa, he turned his head away and continued to eat.

'Uttering a terrible roar and raising both arms high, the maneater rushed at Bhimasena, with the intention of killing him. Even then, Pandava Vrikodara, the killer of enemy warriors, ignored the rakshasa. Casting only a glance, he went on eating. Greatly enraged, the rakshasa struck a mighty blow with both his hands on the back of Kunti's son. Though Bhima was powerfully struck by those arms, he did not even look up, and continued to eat. Thereupon, the rakshasa became even more enraged. He uprooted a tree and powerfully dashed at Bhima, so as to strike him again. Bhima, bull among men and immensely strong, slowly finished eating all the food. He washed himself and then cheerfully stood up to fight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The valorous Bhima laughingly caught the tree that had been angrily hurled in his left hand. Then that powerful one hurled many other trees at Bhimasena and the Pandava Bhima also hurled many at him. O great king! The terrible and great fight between Baka and the Pandava with trees went on, denuding the forest of its trees. Announcing his name, Baka dashed at the Pandava and grasped the immensely powerful Bhimasena in both his arms. Bhimasena also grasped the rakshasa in his great arms and began to violently drag the swift and strong one.[22]

'Dragged by Bhima and also dragging the Pandava, the maneater was gradually overcome by great fatigue. The earth shook because of their violent movements. Giant trees that stood there were shattered into pieces. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing the rakshasa fading away, Vrikodara pressed him down on the ground and began to strike him with his arms. Powerfully pushing the middle of his[23] back down with one knee, the Pandava grabbed his neck with his right hand and his loincloth with the left, and then ripped the rakshasa into two with great force. O ruler of the earth! Uttering a terrible roar, the fearsome rakshasa was torn into two by Bhima and vomited blood.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Frightened by that noise, the rakshasa's relatives and their attendants came out of their houses. On seeing them terrified and bereft of reason, the powerful Bhima, supreme among those who wield arms, pacified them and made them promise. "You shall never do violence to humans here. Those who perform violence will quickly die the same way." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing his words, the rakshasas gave the desired promise and accepted the terms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! From that day, the rakshasas there were friendly and behaved peacefully when they were sighted in town by the inhabitants of that town. Then, unobserved by anyone, Bhima took the dead maneater and placed him at one of the gates. He then went away.

'After killing him,[24] Bhima returned to the Brahmana's house and described in detail to the king[25] all that had happened. The next morning, the inhabitants of the town came out and saw the rakshasa lying dead on the ground, his body wet with blood, horrible and spread out, as huge as the peak of a mountain. They went to Ekachakra and spread the news throughout the city. O king! In their thousands, the citizens went with their wives, old people and the young to see Baka. They were astonished at the sight of this superhuman feat. O ruler of the earth! They gave offerings of gratitude to the gods. Then they began to calculate whose turn it had been the previous day to supply food. Learning that it was the Brahmana's turn, they went to him and questioned him.

‘Thus repeatedly asked, the bull among Brahmanas then protected the Pandavas, but told the citizens everything else. “When I was ordered to supply the food, I was weeping with my family, when a great-souled Brahmana, learned in the mantras, saw me. He asked me about the cause and learnt about the calamity that had befallen this city. That best among Brahmanas then reassured us and smilingly comforted us. He said that he would himself carry the food to the evil-hearted one and that we should not be frightened for his sake. After taking the food, he set out for the forest where Baka lived. For the welfare of the worlds, he must have been the one who performed this deed.” Thereupon, all the astonished and delighted Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras had a feast in honour of the Brahmana. All the inhabitants of the country came to the city to witness this extraordinary miracle. Pritha’s sons went on living there.’

Section Eleven

Chaitraratha Parva

This parva has 557 shlokas and twenty-one chapters.

Chapter 153: 12 shlokas
Chapter 154: 25 shlokas
Chapter 155: 52 shlokas
Chapter 156: 11 shlokas
Chapter 157: 16 shlokas
Chapter 158: 55 shlokas
Chapter 159: 22 shlokas
Chapter 160: 41 shlokas
Chapter 161: 20 shlokas
Chapter 162: 18 shlokas
Chapter 163: 23 shlokas
Chapter 164: 14 shlokas
Chapter 165: 44 shlokas
Chapter 166: 45 shlokas
Chapter 167: 21 shlokas
Chapter 168: 25 shlokas
Chapter 169: 25 shlokas
Chapter 170: 21 shlokas
Chapter 171: 26 shlokas
Chapter 172: 17 shlokas
Chapter 173: 24 shlokas

The parva is named after Chitraratha, a gandharva, whose stories figure in this section.

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Janamejaya said, 'O Brahmana! After killing the demon named Baka, what did the Pandavas, those tigers among men, do?'

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! After killing the demon named Baka, they lived in the house of that Brahmana, engaging themselves in studies about the supreme brahman. A few days later, a Brahmana who was rigid in the practice of his vows came to live in that Brahmana’s house. That learned bull among Brahmanas, always hospitable towards guests, duly worshipped him and gave him a place to live in his house. Then those bulls among men, the Pandavas, and Kunti, requested the Brahmana to tell them about his wonderful experiences. He told them about many countries, places of pilgrimage, rivers, many kings and many wonderful cities.

‘O Janamejaya! When these accounts were over, the Brahmana told them about the wonderful svayamvara[1] of Yajnasena’s[2] daughter in the land of Panchala and the births of Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi and also that of Krishna,[3] who was born from Drupada’s great sacrifice and not from any woman’s womb. Hearing of these wonderful events that had happened in this world, those bulls among men[4] asked the great-souled one[5] to narrate these accounts in greater detail. “How did Drupada’s son, Dhrishtadyumna’s birth take place from the fire? How did Krishna’s wonderful birth take place from the middle of the altar? How did he[6] learn the usage of all weapons from the great archer Drona? How did the great friendship between those two[7] break up?” O king! Having been thus asked by those bulls among men, the Brahmana recounted in detail the story of Droupadi’s birth.’

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‘The Brahmana said, “At the source of the Ganga, there lived a rishi of great austerities. He was always rigid in his vows and he was extremely wise. His name was Bharadvaja. One day, the rishi went to the Ganga to have his bath and saw there the apsara Ghritachi, who had arrived before him and now stood there, having finished her bath. Then a wind arose from the riverbank and removed the clothing from her body. Seeing her nude, the rishi was afflicted with desire. He had been celibate[8] since boyhood. As soon as his mind felt desire, his semen dropped and the rishi collected it in a wooden cup.[9] From that was born a son, who became the learned Drona and who studied all the Vedas and the Vedangas.

'"Bharadvaja had a king as his friend. His name was Prishata and he had a son named Drupada. Parshata,[10] that bull among Kshatriyas, always used to go to the hermitage and play and study with Drona. After Prishata died, Drupada became the king. Drona heard that Rama[11] wanted to give away all his riches. When Rama was leaving for the forest,[12] Bharadvaja's son went to him and said, 'O bull among Brahmanas! I am Drona and I have come to you for some riches.' Rama said, 'O Brahmana! Now I have only my body left. Ask for either my body or my weapons.' Drona said, 'O illustrious one! Give me all your weapons, together with the knowledge of releasing them and recalling them.' The descendant of Bhrigu[13] agreed and gave those to him. On receiving them, Drona concluded that he had become successful. On obtaining from Rama that supreme weapon known as brahmastra, Drona became extremely happy and became supreme among men. Thereupon, Bharadvaja's powerful son went to Drupada, a tiger among men, and said, 'Know me to be your friend.' Drupada said, 'A man without learning cannot be a friend to one who is learned, nor one without chariots to one who has chariots, nor one who is not a king to one who is a king. Why do you desire our old friendship?' Turning his mind against the king of Panchala, the intelligent one[14] went to Nagasahrya,[15] the capital of the Kurus.

'"Thereupon, Bhishma took a lot of riches with him and offered his grandsons to the wise Drona as students. With the intention of humiliating Drupada, Drona assembled all his students and told them, 'O unblemished ones! When you have become skilled in the use of all weapons, as a preceptor's fee, you must promise that you will give me what I wish for.' When the Pandavas became skilled in the use of all weapons and became successful in their labour, Drona spoke to them and reminded them about the preceptor's fee, 'Parshata Drupada is the king in Chhatravati.[16] Take his kingdom away from him and give it to me quickly.' Then Pandu's five sons defeated Drupada in battle. Taking him and his advisers prisoners, they showed them to Drona. Drona said, 'O king of men! I again seek your friendship. One who is not a king cannot be a friend to one who is a king. O Yajnasena! Therefore, I will divide the kingdom with you. You will be the king on the southern banks of the Bhagirathi and I on the north.' The thought of that great insult never left the king's[17] mind for a single instant. Being miserable, the king became thin."'

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'The Brahmana said, "Being miserable, King Drupada wandered in many places where Brahmanas lived, searching for bulls among Brahmanas who were perfect in all the rites.[18] He wished for the birth of a son. Afflicted with grief and out of his mind, he always thought, 'I don't have excellent offspring.' When his sons were born, he said, 'Cursed are my relatives[19] who are without learning.' He kept on sighing, thinking about taking revenge on Drona."

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But however much that best among kings tried, he could think of no means to overcome Drona's influence, humility, learning and accomplishments through his Kshatriya powers. Wandering around, the king came to a holy hermitage of Brahmanas located on the banks of the Ganga. There was no Brahmana there who was not rigid in his vows, nor one who was not a *snataka*.[20] Prishata's son found two brahmarshis named Yaja and Upayaja there. They were greatly illustrious, rigid in their vows, self-controlled and given to the study of the samhitas. They were descended from Kashyapa's lineage and both of those supreme Brahmanas were capable of rescuing him.[21] Having controlled his mind, he served them in every possible way. Knowing the strength of the younger one to be greater, he worshipped Upayaja of rigid vows, giving him every object of desire, serving at his feet and addressing him in pleasant words.

‘Worshipping him in accordance with the prescribed rites, he told Upayaja, “O Brahmana! O Upayaja! If you perform the sacrifice that will give me a son who can kill Drona, I will give you ten crore[22]cows. O best of the Brahmanas! I will give you whatever else is in your mind and whatever pleases you. There is no doubt about this.” Having been thus addressed, the rishi refused. Thereupon, Drupada again began to worship him and serve him. O king! After one year had passed and at the right time, Upayaja, best of the Brahmanas, spoke to the king in gentle words, “When roaming in a forest and at a waterfall, my elder brother picked up a fruit that had fallen on the ground, not knowing that it was impure and should be discarded. I was following him and witnessed my brother’s impure act. He never has scruples about taking that which is unclean. He did not see the impurities that were on the fruit. One who does not see impurities in one’s acts, is not expected to see it in another. When he was in his preceptor’s house and was studying the samhitas, without any scruples he used to eat the leftover food of others and repeatedly praise its qualities. Judging from this, my brother desires material fruit. O king! Go to him and he will perform your sacrifices.” Hearing Upayaja’s words and thinking about them, the king, who was well versed in the ways of dharma, went to Yaja, though he had a low opinion of him.

‘Worshipping the rishi who was deserving of worship, he told Yaja, “O lord! I will give you 80,000 cows. Please perform the sacrifice. I am inflamed with enmity for Drona. Pacify my heart. That best of men is learned in the Vedas and is skilled in the use of brahmastra. Therefore, Drona defeated me in a quarrel that arose over our friendship. There is no Kshatriya on this earth, however great, who is superior to him and that wise son of Bharadvaja has become the chief preceptor of the Kurus. Drona’s net of arrows can kill every living creature. His bow is 6 cubits long and looks great and matchless. That great-minded and great archer, Bharadvaja’s son, is undoubtedly capable of destroying the might of Kshatriyas with the might of a Brahmana. He has been created like another son of Jamadagni[23] to destroy the Kshatriyas. There is no man on earth who can withstand the terrible power of his weapons. Like a blazing fire that has been fed with sacrificial offerings, Drona's Brahmana powers consume every Kshatriya power in battle. Though his Brahmana powers are combined with Kshatriya powers, your Brahmana powers are superior to his. I am inferior because I only possess Kshatriya powers. Give me your Brahmana powers. I have now found you, whose Brahmana powers are superior to Drona's. O Yaja! Perform the sacrifice so that I obtain a son who will be invincible and can kill Drona. I will give you ten crore[24] cows." Yaja agreed and began to think of what was required for the sacrifice.

'Upayaja wished for no rewards, but was called to assist his elder. Then Yaja promised Drona's destruction. The great ascetic Upayaja instructed the king of men[25] on the sacrificial rites that would produce a son. "O king! According to your desires, a son will be born to you, who will possess great valour, great energy and great strength." King Drupada, wishing to obtain a son who would kill Bharadvaja's son, began to make the required preparations for bringing success to his effort. Yaja poured offerings into the sacrificial fire and instructed the queen, "O queen Prishati! Come here. The time for uniting has arrived."[26] The queen said, "O Brahmana! My face is anointed with divine scents. O Yaja! Wait a little. My body is not yet ready for the happy consummation that will give a son." Yaja said, "Offerings made sacred by Upayaja's incantations have already been prepared by Yaja. Why should the object of this sacrifice not be attained, whether you come or wait?" Saying this, Yaja poured the sanctified sacrificial offerings into the fire.

'Then a youth who resembled a god arose from the flames. His complexion was like the fire and his form was terrible. He wore a crown on his head and his body was encased in excellent armour. He had a sword in his hand and a bow and arrows and he let out many loud roars. As soon as he was born, he ascended a supreme chariot and went forth. All the Panchalas were delighted and exclaimed, "Blessed!" From the sky issued the voice of an invisible and great being. “This terrible prince has been born for Drona’s destruction. He will increase the fame of the Panchalas and remove the king’s grief.” Then a young maiden arose from the centre of the altar. She was blessed with good fortune and was known as Panchali. She was beautiful and her waist was shaped like an altar. She was dark. Her eyes were like the petals of lotuses. Her hair was dark blue and curled. She was truly a goddess born in human form. The sweet fragrance of blue lotuses emanated from her body, a full 2 miles[27] away. Her form and supreme beauty were such that she had no equal on earth. When the one with beautiful hips was born, the invisible voice said, “Supreme among women, this beauty of the dark complexion will bring about the destruction of the Kshatriyas. In time, this one with the beautiful waist will perform the objective of the gods. From her will arise terrible fear among the Kshatriyas.” Hearing this, all the Panchalas roared like a pride of lions. The earth was unable to bear their great joy.

‘On seeing these two, Prishati wished to get them and came to Yaja and said, “Let these two know no one but me as their mother.” Desiring to please the king, Yaja agreed. The Brahmanas, whose desires were entirely satisfied, gave the two names. “Because of his great courage and because he has been born from lustre, let this son of Drupada be called Dhrishtadyumna.[28] Because she is dark in complexion, let her be called Krishna.” Thus Drupada’s twin children were born from the great sacrifice. Bharadvaja’s powerful son[29] took the Panchala prince Dhrishtadyumna to his own house and taught him the use of all weapons. Thus did the illustrious Drona ensure that his own deeds would become famous, because the immensely wise one knew that what was destined would come to be.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing this, Kunti’s sons seemed to be pierced with spears. All those maharathas lost their mental peace. On seeing that her sons were confused and not in control of their senses, the truthful Kunti spoke to Yudhishthira.

‘Kunti said, “We have lived in this Brahmana’s house for many nights. O Yudhishthira! We have lived in this beautiful city and have received alms. O chastiser of enemies! We have seen again and again all the beautiful forests and woods. Seeing them again will not give us any pleasure. O brave descendant of Kuru! Alms will not be as easily available. O fortunate one! If you wish, let us go to Panchala. O son! We have not seen it before and it must be beautiful. O destroyer of enemies! It has been heard that alms are easily obtained in Panchala and that King Yajnasena himself is devoted to Brahmanas. It is my view that one should not live in the same place for a long time. O son! Therefore, if you also think the same, let us go there.” Yudhishthira said, “Your views are for our welfare and we should act in that way. But I don’t know if my younger brothers will wish to go.” Then Kunti spoke to Bhimasena, Arjuna and the twins about going there, and all of them agreed.

‘O king! Kunti and her sons saluted the Brahmana and left for the beautiful city of the great-hearted Drupada.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the great-hearted Pandavas lived in disguise, Vyasa, Satyavati’s son, once came to see them. On seeing him come, those scorchers of enemies advanced to meet him. They prostrated themselves to welcome him and stood before him with folded hands. Returning their greetings, and worshipped and pleased by Pritha’s sons, the sage spoke to them in affectionate words, after they were all seated, “O scorchers of enemies! Do you follow the path of dharma and that laid down in the sacred texts? Do you worship the Brahmanas and those who deserve worship?” The illustrious rishi uttered many words about dharma and artha.

‘Speaking about many subjects, he again said, “A great-souled rishi lived in a hermitage. He had a daughter who was slender of waist and wide of hips. Her eyebrows were beautiful and she had all the qualities. Because of her earlier deeds,[30] she was unfortunate. Despite being beautiful and pure, that girl did not get a husband. With sorrow in her heart, she then began to perform austerities so as to obtain a husband. She satisfied Shankara with her severe austerities. Gratified, the illustrious lord spoke to the ascetic lady. “O fortunate one! O beautiful one! Ask for a boon and I shall give it to you.” Desirous of ensuring her own welfare, she repeatedly told the supreme god, “I want a husband with all the qualities.” Then the eloquent Ishana[31] Shankara told her, “O fortunate one! You will have five husbands.” Thus addressed, she told Shankara, “Give me only one husband.” The god addressed her again in these excellent words, “You have repeatedly asked me for a husband five times. Therefore, when you are reborn in another body, it shall be as I have just said.” That daughter of divine form was born in Drupada’s family, as the unblemished Krishna Parshati and is destined to be your wife. O mighty ones! Go to the city of Panchala. There is no doubt that you will be happy in obtaining her as your wife.” Having told the Pandavas this, the greatly fortunate grandfather,[32] the great ascetic, bid his farewell to Kunti and Pritha’s sons and left.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Placing their mother ahead of them, those bulls among men, the scorchers of enemies, set out over smooth roads towards the north, as they had been directed. They walked day and night and reached the pilgrimage of Somashravayana. Pandu’s sons, those tigers among men, reached the Ganga. The immensely famous Dhananjaya[33] walked in front, with a torch in his hand to show the way and protect them.

‘In the beautiful waters of the Ganga, the jealous king of the gandharvas was sporting with his wives. He heard the sound[34] as they approached the river. That strong one was inflamed with rage at the sound. Seeing the Pandavas, the scorchers of enemies, and their mother, he drew his terrible bow and uttered these words. “It is known that except for the first eighty instants,[35] when terrible dusk colours and night is about to descend, the rest[36] is set aside for yakshas, gandharvas, rakshasas and others who can travel wherever at will. For the rest of the time, it is said that humans can travel at will. Therefore, if at those times, men wander around out of greed, we and the rakshasas attack and kill those stupid ones. Those who are learned in the Vedas disapprove of those men, even if they are kings with their armies, who come near the water in the night. Stay at a distance and do not come near me. Do you not know that I am bathing in the waters of the Bhagirathi? Know me to be the gandharva named Angaraparna. I rely on my own strength. I am proud and jealous and I am Kubera's beloved friend. This is my beautiful forest on the banks of the Ganga, known as Angaraparna. I dwell here. No corpses,[37] horned animals, gods or humans dare to set foot here. How dare you come?"

'Arjuna said, "O evil-minded one! Whether it is night or day or twilight, how can the ocean, the Himalayas or this river be barred to anyone? We are endowed with strength. We do not care even if we disturb you at the wrong time. It is only weak men who worship you in this cruel hour. Issuing from the golden peaks of the Himalayas, this Ganga descends into the ocean in seven streams. O gandharva! This holy Ganga, flowing through the celestial regions, is known there as Alakananda. In the region of the ancestors, it is known as Vaitarani and cannot be crossed by those who commit sins. Krishna Dvaipayana has said that this divine and pure river, which can take one to heaven, is accessible to everyone. How can you bar us access? That is not in accordance with eternal dharma. Because of your words, why should we not touch, as we will, the sacred waters of the Bhagirathi, accessible to everyone?"'

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing these words, Angaraparna became very angry. He drew his bow and shot flaming arrows that were like extremely venomous snakes. With the torch in his hand, Pandava Dhananjaya warded off the arrows with his excellent shield. Arjuna said, "O gandharva! Don't try to frighten those who are skilled in the use of weapons, because weapons unleashed at them disappear like froth. O gandharva! I know that gandharvas are superior to men. Therefore, I will fight you with divine weapons, not with the use of maya. In ancient times, this agneya missile was given by Brihaspati, Shatakratu's[38] preceptor, to Bharadvaja. From Bharadvaja it went to Agniveshya and from Agniveshya to my preceptor. Drona, supreme among Brahmanas, gave it to me." Having said this, the angry Pandava unleashed the blazing agneya weapon at the gandharva and it instantly burnt down his chariot. Knocked unconscious from the energy of the missile, the immensely powerful gandharva fell face down, dislodged from his chariot. Dhananjaya seized him by the hair on his head, which was adorned with garlands, and dragged the one knocked unconscious from the missile towards his brothers. On seeing this, his wife, who was named Kumbhinasi, sought refuge with Yudhishthira so that her husband might be saved.

'The gandharva woman said, "O great king! Save me and set my husband free. O lord! The gandharvi Kumbhinasi seeks your protection." Yudhishthira said, "O destroyer of enemies! Which hero will kill an enemy who has been defeated in battle, has lost his fame and is now protected by a woman? Set him free." Arjuna said, "O gandharva! Have your life. Go from here and do not grieve. Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus,[39] has ordered safety for you today."

'The gandharva said, "I have been defeated by you. Therefore, I will give up my earlier name of Angaraparna. Among men, I can no longer show my pride in strength or in name. I wanted to fight, with the powers of maya of the gandharvas, with someone who was at the peak of his youth. It is my good fortune that I encountered one with celestial weapons. My supreme and adorned chariot has been burnt by the agneya weapon. I was earlier called Chitraratha[40] and have now become Dagdharatha.[41] I spoke to you about the knowledge that I earlier attained through austerities. Today, I will give it to the great-souled one who has granted me life. He who saves the life of a vanquished enemy who seeks sanctuary deserves good fortune. This knowledge is called *chakshushi*.[42] It was given by Manu to Soma and Soma gave it to Vishvavasu. Vishvavasu gave it to me.

'"When the preceptor gives the knowledge to a coward, it is destroyed. I have spoken to you about its origin and transmission. Now learn from me its power. Whatever you wish to see through your eyes in all the three worlds will be seen by you, exactly as you wish. One can acquire this knowledge by standing on one leg for six months. I have given word that I will myself bestow this knowledge on you. O king! It is because of this knowledge that we are superior to men. Because we have the power of seeing everything, we are the equals of the gods. O best of men! I wish to give each of you five brothers, separately, 100 horses from the land of the gandharvas. They are divinely scented and possess the speed of the mind. They are used to transport the gods and the gandharvas. However tired they are, they never lose their speed. In ancient times, the great Indra created the vajra to kill Vritra. But it shattered into a thousand pieces when flung on Vritra's head. Since then, the gods divided the vajra pieces among themselves and worshipped them. Whatever is known as wealth in this world is but a piece of that vajra. The hands of Brahmanas are the vajra. The chariots of Kshatriyas are the vajra. The alms of the Vaishyas are the vajra. The servitude of the Shudras[43] is the vajra. The horses of the Kshatriyas are the vajra and it is said that they should never be killed. The horses that draw chariots are the offspring of vadava.[44] One who drives horses is called a suta. These[45] can assume any colour at will, can assume any speed at will and can go anywhere at will. These horses from the gandharva region will always fulfil any desire."

'Arjuna said, "O gandharva! I have no desire to accept the knowledge or the riches if you are giving them to me out of satisfaction at my having saved your life."

'The gandharva said, "An encounter with a great person is always a matter of satisfaction. In addition to that, you have given me my life. Being pleased with you, I am giving you the knowledge. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Bibhatsu![46] In return, to make it equal, I shall take from you the supreme agneya weapon,[47] so that our friendship is eternal."

Arjuna said, “O gandharva! I shall accept your horses in return for my weapon. Let our friendship be eternal. O friend! Tell me how we can be free from the danger from your race.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “O gandharva! We are the chastisers of enemies. We are learned in the Vedas. We are all virtuous. Yet, why did you abuse us when we were travelling in the night?”

‘The gandharva said, “O son of Pandu! You do not keep the fire.[48] You do not make sacrificial offerings. You do not have Brahmanas walking ahead of you. That is the reason you were abused by me. The yakshas, the rakshasas, the gandharvas, the pishachas, the uragas and men speak in detail about the prosperity of the Kuru dynasty. O brave one! I have heard Narada and other devarshis speak of the qualities and wisdom of your ancestors. When I myself roamed this rich earth that has this ocean as a garment, I saw the influence of your dynasty. O Arjuna! I personally know your preceptor in knowledge of the Vedas and the science of weapons, Bharadvaja’s famous son. He is revered in the three worlds. O Partha! O tiger among the Kurus! I also know Dharma, Vayu, Shakra,[49] the Ashvins and Pandu, the six who extended this lineage. These best of gods and men are your ancestors. I know that all you brothers are divine-minded, great-souled, supreme among those who wield arms, excellent in observance of vows, supreme in mind and intelligence and perfect in character. O Partha! Nevertheless, I abused you. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! No man who has the strength of his arms can patiently tolerate abuse before his wife’s eyes. O son of Kunti! Especially at night, our strength increases. Since I was with my wife, I was filled with anger.

‘“O extender of Tapati’s lineage! I was defeated by you in battle. Hear from me the reason why I suffered. O Partha! Brahmacharya is the supreme dharma and you are established in that. That is the reason you defeated me in the battle. O chastiser of enemies! If any Kshatriya, driven by desire, wishes to fight with us in the night, he can never escape alive. O descendant of Tapati’s lineage! However, a king, driven by desire, can vanquish all the wanderers of the night in battle if he is led by a priest. O descendant of Tapati’s lineage! Therefore, men should always employ priests who are learned and self-controlled in all acts that are desired. He who is learned in the six Vedangas, and is always pure, truthful, devoted to dharma and self-controlled, is fit to be a priest for kings. A king who has a priest who is learned in the precepts of dharma, eloquent, well behaved and pure ahead of him is always victorious and is assured of heaven afterwards. A king must always choose a priest who has all the qualities, who can protect what he possesses and acquire that which he does not. A king should always be guided by his priest to acquire the entire earth, from Mount Meru to where the ocean is the garment. O descendant of Tapati’s lineage! A king who is without a Brahmana can never acquire any land through his bravery or high birth alone. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, know that kingdoms with Brahmanas at their head can be sustained eternally.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “You have addressed me as the descendant of Tapati. Therefore, I wish to know what that precisely means. O blessed one! We are the sons of Kunti and are known as Kounteya. Who is Tapati and why are we called Tapatya?[50] I wish to know.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed by Kunti’s son Dhananjaya, the gandharva recounted the story that is famous in the three worlds.

‘The gandharva said, “O Partha! O chief among those who follow dharma! I will tell you this virtuous and wonderful story exactly as it happened. Listen attentively to what I have to say and you will understand the reason why I have called you Tapatya. He who pervades the entire firmament[51] with his energy had a daughter named Tapati who was equal to him. Tapati was born to Vivasvat[52] after Savitri and was famous in the three worlds because of her austerities. There was no one equal to her in beauty among the gods, the asuras, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the apsaras and the gandharvas. She was symmetrical in form and unblemished in features. She had large and black eyes. She was dressed in beautiful garments. She was pure in conduct. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing her, Vivasvat thought that no one in the three worlds possessed beauty, conduct, learning and qualities equal to her so as to be her husband. On seeing that his daughter had grown and attained the age of marriage, he had no peace of mind, thinking about whom to give her to.

'"O Kounteya! The mighty King Samvarana, the son of Riksha and a bull among the Kurus, always used to worship the sun, with offerings and garlands, observing fasts and rituals and practising various austerities. Puru's descendant worshipped Anshuman[53] when he arose, with devotion, obedience, selflessness and purity. On seeing that Samvarana was learned in the path of dharma and was unparalleled on earth for his handsomeness, Surya decided that he was the best husband for Tapati. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Surya desired to give his daughter to that supreme king, whose lineage was famous. Just as the blazing rays of the sun suffuse the sky with radiance, King Samvarana filled the earth with his splendour. O Partha! Just as those who know the brahman worship the rising sun, all subjects other than Brahmanas worshipped Samvarana. The fortunate king surpassed the moon in benevolence towards those who wished him well and the sun in scorching those who wished him ill. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Tapan[54] himself decided that Tapati should be given to a king who had such great virtue and qualities.

'"O Partha! It is told that once the king, blessed with such great good fortune and immensely famous on earth, went out to hunt in the woods on the slopes of a mountain. O son of Kunti! When he was hunting, his unequalled horse, overcome with hunger and thirst, died on that mountain. O Partha! Abandoning the dead horse, the king walked on that mountain on foot and saw a lady who had large eyes and was unrivalled in the worlds in beauty. That scorcher of enemies, a tiger among kings, was alone. That lady was also alone. He stood motionless and stared at her with an unwavering gaze. From her beauty, the king thought that she might be the goddess Shri.[55] He again thought that her beauty was the manifestation of the sun's rays on earth. The black-eyed lady stood on the mountain slope, with its trees and creepers, like a statue of gold. Having seen her, the king became contemptuous of all other beings and considered that his eyes had now accomplished their purpose. The king thought that nothing that he had seen from the date of his birth could rival her beauty. He thought that the creator had created the beauty of this large-eyed lady after churning the worlds of gods, asuras and men. The king's heart and mind were tied up in the noose of her perfection. Deprived of his senses, he was rooted to the spot. Thus, King Samvarana then decided that the lady's richness of beauty was unmatched in the three worlds.

'"As soon as he had seen that fortunate one, the king of noble lineage was pierced by the arrows of the god of love and began to worry. Burning with the fierce fire of desire, he spoke to the illustrious lady, who was an adult, but was still innocent, 'O lady with thighs like that of a plantain tree![56] Who are you? Who do you belong to? Why have you come here? O lady with the beautiful smile! Why are you wandering alone in this lonely forest? You are unblemished in every limb and adorned in every ornament. You are like a coveted ornament to those ornaments themselves. You don't seem to be a goddess or an asuri, or a yakshi or a rakshasi, or a nagini or a gandharvi, or a human. O supreme among beautiful ones! None of the beautiful women I have seen, or heard of, can match you.' Thus, struck by desire, did the ruler of the earth then speak to her in the lonely forest.

'"But she did not utter a word in reply. When the king kept asking, the large-eyed lady vanished like a flash of lightning. Like one who had lost his senses, the king wandered around in the forest, looking for the lady with eyes like a lotus. Having failed to find her, that best of the Kuru lineage lamented a lot and for a long time remained motionless in grief."'

‘The gandharva said, “When she disappeared, the king, the one who caused the downfall of enemy armies, was struck by desire and fell down on the ground. On his falling down on the ground, the one with the beautiful smile and swelling and rounded hips appeared once again before the king. In a gentle voice, the fortunate beauty then spoke to the king, the extender of the Kuru lineage who had lost his senses because of desire, ‘O tiger among kings! O fortunate one! O scorcher of enemies! You are known in the world. You should not be seen in loss of your senses. Arise! Arise!’ Having heard these sweet words, the king looked up and saw standing before him the lady with the wide hips.

‘“The ruler of men then addressed the black-eyed one in these words, his heart burning with the fire of desire and his words weak with emotion, ‘O black-eyed lady! O fortunate one! I am burning with desire. O lady with the large eyes! I am seeking you. Accept me in return, because my life is ebbing away because of you. O you whose complexion is like the inside of a lotus! Love’s sharp arrows never stop piercing me. O fortunate one! The god of love has bitten me like a large snake. O one with the unblemished face! O one with the tapering thighs! O one with a voice like the song of the kinnaras! My life is in your hands. O one with unblemished and beautiful limbs! O one with a face like a lotus or the moon! O bashful one! I shall certainly not be able to live without you. O lady with the large eyes! O black-eyed one! You should not forsake me. O beautiful one! You must save me with your affection. O beautiful and timid one! O one with thighs like a plantain tree! Marry me according to the gandharva rites, because among all forms of marriage, the gandharva is said to be the best.’

‘“Tapati said, ‘O king! I am not in control of myself. I am a daughter under a father’s superintendence. If you really seek pleasure from me, go and ask my father for me. O ruler of men! You say that I have robbed you of your life. But know that at the first sight, you have also robbed me of my life. O best of kings! I am not the mistress of my own body. Therefore, I cannot come to you. Women are always dependent. But is there any woman in the three worlds who will not desire a husband like you, who has a noble lineage and is always benevolent to his dependants? Therefore, since the time is right, ask for me from my father Aditya, with reverence, austerities and rituals. O destroyer of enemies! O king! If he desires to give me to you, I shall always be under your superintendence. O bull among the Kshatriyas! I am Tapati, Savitri's youngest sister. I am the daughter of Savitar,[57] who is a torch to the worlds.""'

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'The gandharva said, "Having said this, the unblemished one swiftly rose up into the sky. The king once more fell down on the ground. Searching for that supreme among kings, his minister and attendants found him in that state in the great forest, prone on the ground like Shakra's flag when the season is right.[58] On seeing the great archer prone on the ground and without a horse, the minister was burnt, as if by a fire. Drawing quickly near, the minister raised the king, who was lying senseless on the ground in the affliction of desire, affectionately and reverently, just as a father raises a fallen son. This minister was old in age, wisdom, fame and deeds. When he had raised him and senses were recovered, the minister addressed him in sweet and benevolent words, 'O tiger among men! Do not be frightened. O unblemished one! You will be blessed.' The minister thought that the king, the destroyer of hostile armies in battle, had been lying down on the ground because he had been overcome with hunger, thirst and exhaustion. He sprinkled cold water, fragrant with the scent of lotuses, on the king's head, but without touching the crown. Thereupon, the powerful king regained his consciousness. He then sent away all his attendants, except the minister.

'"When that large retinue had gone away on the king's instructions, the king again sat down on that mountain plain. Then, on that great mountain, the king purified himself and joined his palms. He raised his arms up and worshipped the sun. King Samvarana, destroyer of enemies, also mentally thought of his priest Vashishtha, supreme among rishis. Without a break, the ruler of men remained there for days and nights. Then, on the twelfth day, the brahmarshi[59] came to him. Through his power of austerities, the great rishi who was self-controlled knew that, as decreed by destiny, the king’s heart had been stolen by Tapati. Then the best of sages, who was rigid in his vows, wished to bring good fortune to the virtuous king and assured him. As the ruler of men watched, the illustrious rishi ascended the sky to meet the sun, as radiant himself as that blazing one. With his palms joined, the Brahmana joyfully introduced himself to the one with a thousand rays and said, ‘I am Vashishtha.’ Then the immensely radiant Vivasvat[60] said to the best of sages, ‘O maharshi! You are welcome. Tell me what you desire.’”’

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‘“‘Vashishtha said, ‘O Vibhavasu![61] On Samvarana’s behalf, I have come to ask you for your daughter Tapati, Savitri’s younger sister. He is a mighty king with great deeds. He is great-souled and is well versed in dharma and artha. O traveller in the sky! Samvarana is a fit husband for your daughter.’”

‘The gandharva said, “Hearing these words, Savita[62] decided on giving her. Divakara[63] saluted the Brahmana and said, ‘O sage! Samvarana is the best among kings and you are the best among rishis. Tapati is the best of women. Why give her somewhere else?’ Thereupon, Tapana[64] himself gave the unblemished and perfect Tapati to the great-souled Vashishtha, for Samvarana’s sake. The maharshi accepted the lady Tapati and taking his leave, Vashishtha returned to where the bull among the Kurus and the one with famous deeds was seated. The king was possessed by love and his heart was fixed on her. He became extremely glad when he saw that Vashishtha was leading the divine maiden Tapati, the one with a beautiful smile, towards him. The illustrious rishi Vashishtha, pure of spirit, came to the king when he had completed the twelfth night of his vows. Thus Samvarana obtained his wife through austerities and worship of the Lord Gopati[65] and Vashishtha’s energy. That bull among men accepted Tapati’s hand on that best of mountains, frequented by gods and gandharvas, in accordance with the prescribed rituals.

'"With Vashishtha's permission, the rajarshi[66] desired to sport with his wife on that mountain. He then instructed his minister to rule over his city, kingdom, mounts and armies. Bidding farewell to the king, Vashishtha left. The king sported on that mountain like a god. The king pleasured with his wife in the groves and streams of that mountain for twelve years. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For those twelve years, the one with a thousand eyes[67] did not pour any rain in the king's city and kingdom. Because of hunger and starvation, the men became like dead bodies. The city looked like a city of the king of the dead, populated by dead people. Then, seeing that condition, the illustrious rishi Vashishtha, learned in dharma, went to the supreme among kings.[68] O king! He brought back the tiger-like king, who had been away from his city for twelve years, together with Tapati. When that tiger among kings entered the city again, the slayer of demons[69] poured down rain, as before. Thus, enervated by that foremost among kings, who had himself enervated his soul, the city and the kingdom became extremely happy. With his wife Tapati, the king performed sacrifices for twelve years, like Shakra,[70] lord of the maruts.

'"O Partha! This is the story of the greatly fortunate Tapati of ancient times. She was the daughter of Vivasvat and it is after her that you are named Tapatya. O Arjuna! O greatest among those who scorch! On Tapati, King Samvarana had a son named Kuru. Born in that lineage of Tapati, you are known as Tapatya."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing the gandharva's words, the bull of the Bharata lineage, Arjuna, shone with joy, like the full moon. His curiosity was excited by what he had heard about Vashishtha's ascetic powers. The best of the Kurus, the great archer, spoke to the gandharva, "I wish to hear the story of the rishi whom you have referred to as Vashishtha.

Tell me in detail. O lord of the gandharvas! Tell me who this illustrious rishi, the priest of our ancestors, was.”

‘The gandharva said, “Desire and anger, which even the gods find difficult to conquer, were overcome through his[71] austerities and washed his feet. Though the supreme sage’s wrath was stirred at Vishvamitra’s evil deed, he was noble enough not to annihilate the Kushikas.[72] Though he mourned the death of his sons, and had the power to do so, he did not perform any terrible deed to destroy Vishvamitra. Like the great ocean does not cross its shoreline, he did not transgress Yama’s law by bringing his sons back from the land of the dead. Obtaining this great-souled and self-controlled supreme rishi Vashishtha as their priest, Ikshvaku and other kings conquered the entire earth. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! These kings performed many sacrifices. O best of the Pandavas! This brahmarshi was the priest for those excellent kings, like Brihaspati was for the gods.

‘“Therefore, look for a Brahmana in whose heart dharma is supreme, who is learned in the Vedas and in dharma and who has all the qualities, and appoint him as your priest. O Partha! A Kshatriya of noble birth who wishes to conquer the earth must first appoint a priest to be in front, so that the kingdom flourishes. A king who wishes to conquer the earth must have a Brahmana before him. Therefore, let a Brahmana who has all the qualities be your priest.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “How did the hostility between Vashishtha and Vishvamitra, both of whom lived in divine hermitages, arise? Tell us in detail.”

‘The gandharva said, “O Partha! Vashishtha’s account is known as a purana in all the worlds. Listen to me as I recount it in its entirety. O bull of the Bharata lineage! There was a great king in Kanyakubja. He was known in the world as Gadhi and he was devoted to true dharma. His virtuous son, a conqueror of enemies, was known by the name of Vishvamitra and he had many armies and mounts. With his ministers, he used to wander in deep forests and beautiful wildernesses, to hunt deer and boar. Once, tired and exhausted from pursuit of a deer, that best of men came to Vashishtha's hermitage. On seeing him come, the fortunate and illustrious rishi, Vashishtha, offered homage to Vishvamitra, the best of men. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He welcomed him and offered him water to wash his feet and face and gave him offerings of forest fare.

'"The great-souled Vashishtha possessed a kamadhenu. When she was asked to give, she produced whatever was desired. O Arjuna! She yielded products of villages and forests, herbs, milk, juices with six different flavours[73] that tasted like ambrosia itself, and different types of food that could be chewed, drunk, eaten, licked and sucked, all tasting like ambrosia. The king was honoured with everything that he desired, in abundant measure. He, his ministers and his entourage were greatly satisfied. With great surprise, he[74] saw Vashishtha's beautiful and unblemished cow, named Nandini[75]—six measures long, three measures wide and five measures around, with beautiful flanks and thighs, with eyes prominent like those of frogs, with a beautiful carriage, large udders, beautiful tail, uplifted and straight ears, handsome horns and a well-developed head and neck. O king! Gadhi's son was gratified with what he saw and saluted the cow. The king[76] then spoke to the rishi,[77] 'O Brahmana! O great sage! Give me Nandini in exchange for my kingdom or for 10,000 cows. Enjoy the kingdom.' Vashishtha said, 'O unblemished king! I keep this milk-yielding cow for the sake of the gods, ancestors, guests and sacrificial offerings. Nandini cannot be given away, even in exchange for your kingdom.' Vishvamitra said, 'I am a Kshatriya and you are only a Brahmana devoted to studies and austerities. How can there be strength in Brahmanas who are peaceful and control themselves? If you don't give me what I want in exchange for 10,000 cows, I will not give up my own dharma. I will take the cow away by force.' Vashishtha said, 'You are a powerful king with an army with you. You are a Kshatriya with valour in your arms. Do what you wish quickly, and without thinking over it.’ O Partha! Thus, addressed, Vishamitra seized the cow Nandini, as translucent as a swan or the moon.

‘“He dragged her here and there and beat her with a stick. The blessed Nandini bellowed piteously and came to Vashishtha. O Partha! She stood near the illustrious sage and raised her head up at him. Though she had been beaten a lot, she did not leave the hermitage. Vashishtha said, ‘O fortunate Nandini! I hear your repeated cries. But you are being taken away by force. What can a forgiving Brahmana do?’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Frightened by the force of Vishvamitra’s army and frightened by Vishvamitra himself, she came closer to Vashishtha. Nandini said, ‘O illustrious one! Why do you overlook it when I am beaten by the sticks and lashes of Vishamitra’s fearful army? Why do you orphan me when I am crying?’ O Partha! The great sage did not lose his patience. Nor did he deviate from his rigid vows[78] on hearing her cries of suffering. Vashishtha said, ‘A Kshatriya’s strength is his energy. A Brahmana’s strength is his forbearance. I cannot give up forbearance. If you wish, go.’ Nandini said, ‘O illustrious one! O Brahmana! Are you forsaking me in this way? If you do not forsake me, I cannot be taken away by force.’ Vashishtha said, ‘O blessed one! I am not forsaking you. Stay, if you can. Tethered with a strong rope, your calf is now being taken away by force.’ Hearing him say ‘stay’, Vashishtha’s cow raised up her head and neck and became fearful to look at.

‘“Eyes red with anger and with thunderous bellows, she attacked Vishvamitra’s army from all sides. Stung with their sticks and lashes and being dragged here and there, her anger increased and her eyes became red with rage. A shower of burning embers was unleashed from her tail. She blazed with anger like the midday sun. She created an army of pahlavas[79] from her tail, an army of shabaras[80] and shakas[81] from her dung and an army of yavanas[82] from her urine. She swooned with anger. From her froth, she produced pundras, kiratas,[83] dramidas,[84] Simhalas,[85] barbaras,[86] daradas[87] and mlecchas.[88] When she had produced these many armies of mlecchas, clad in different types of armour and armed with different types of weapons, before Vishvamitra’s own eyes, she scattered with her ferocious troops his large army. Every single one of his soldiers was surrounded by five or seven of hers and with a shower of weapons was dispersed and fled in all directions in panic. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Though greatly enraged, not a single one of Vishvamitra’s soldiers was separated from his life by a single one of Vashishtha’s. Vishvamitra’s army was driven 3 yojanas away and though it cried out in panic, there was no saviour to be found.

‘“On seeing this amazing sight born out of a Brahmana’s powers, Vishvamitra was disgusted with his Kshatriya powers and said, ‘A curse on my Kshatriya powers! The true power is that of a Brahmana. In judging weakness and strength, I see that true strength arises from the power of austerities.’ He gave up his prosperous kingdom and his radiant regal fortune. Turning his back on all pleasures, he decided to devote himself to austerities. Through his power of austerities, he became successful and filled the worlds with his radiance. Through all his radiant energy, he became a Brahmana and Kushika’s son[89] eventually drank the soma[90] juice with Indra himself.”’

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‘The gandharva said, “O Partha! In the world, there was a king named Kalmashapada. He was born in the lineage of Ikshvaku and he was unrivalled on earth in his prowess. One day, the king left his capital to go on a hunt in the forest. That chastiser of enemies shot many deer and boars. Hungry and thirsty, the king followed a narrow path and met Vashishtha’s great-souled son on the way. The son was an illustrious sage and his name was Shakti. He was the illustrious extender of Vashishtha’s lineage and was the eldest of the great-souled Vashishtha’s 100 sons. As they came face to face in opposite directions on the narrow path, the king said, ‘Move off from our path.’ The rishi then spoke to him in a soothing and kind voice, but did not yield the path, because he was following the path of dharma.[91] Out of pride and anger at the sage, the king did not yield the path either. When the sage refused to give way, the best of kings, deluded like a rakshasa, struck the sage with his whip.

Thus struck by the whip, Vashishtha's son, the best of sages, was angered and cursed the best of kings. 'O worst of kings! Since you have struck an ascetic like a rakshasa, from today you will become a maneater. O corrupt king! Go from here and wander around the earth, eating human flesh.' Thus, Shakti cursed him through the strength of his powers.

'"Vashishtha and Vishvamitra had had a quarrel over who should be the officiating priest.[92] At that time, Vishvamitra, came to that place. O Partha! The immensely powerful Vishvamitra, the rishi with great austerities, neared the place where the two were quarrelling. After the curse on the great king, the rishi[93] recognized that the rishi[94] was none other than Vashishtha's son, as powerful as Vashishtha himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Desiring to bring some benefit to himself, Vishamitra remained there, but concealed himself by making himself invisible from them. Having been cursed by Shakti, that best of kings[95] sought Shakti's mercy and worshipped him, so as to pacify him. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Knowing the king's nature, Vishvamitra ordered a rakshasa to enter the king's body. Because of the Brahmana rishi's curse and because of Vishvamitra's instruction, a rakshasa named Kimkara then entered the king's body. O chastiser of enemies! Knowing that the rakshasa had entered the king's body, Vishvamitra, the best of sages, went away.

'"Thereafter, the wise king was possessed and tormented by the rakshasa within him and found it difficult to save himself. A certain Brahmana saw the king roaming in the forest. Being hungry, he begged for some food with meat. Rajarshi Kalmashapada Mitrasaha[96] said, 'O Brahmana! Stay here for a while. When I return, I will give you the food you desire to have.' Having said this, the king went away and that best of Brahmanas remained there. But when he entered the inner quarters of his palace, the king forgot about his promise to the Brahmana and remembered it only at midnight. He told his cook, 'Go to the forest. A Brahmana is waiting for me there, hoping to get some food. Take some meat to him.' Having been thus addressed, the cook could not find any meat anywhere and came and sorrowfully informed the king about this.

Possessed by the rakshasa, the king unhesitatingly told the cook, ‘Feed him human flesh,’ and repeated his instructions. Agreeing, the cook quickly went to where executioners lived and took some human flesh from them. Washing it and cooking it properly, he mixed it with rice and quickly took it to the hungry and ascetic Brahmana.

‘“Through his ascetic sight, the best of Brahmanas immediately recognized the food to be forbidden. His eyes red with anger, he said, ‘That worst of kings has offered me food that is forbidden. Therefore, that deluded one will himself become fond of such food. Becoming fond of human flesh, as Shakti had cursed him earlier, he will roam the earth and persecute all beings.’ Repeated for the second time, the curse on the king became very strong. Being possessed by the rakshasa, the king soon lost all his senses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Shakti, that best of kings, having been deprived of his senses by the rakshasa within him, said, ‘Because you have imposed this unparalleled curse on me, I shall begin my man-eating predicament by eating you first.’ Having said this, the king immediately separated Shakti from his life and ate him up, the way a tiger devours its favoured prey. Having seen Shakti killed thus, Vishvamitra urged the rakshasa to kill Vashishtha’s other sons. Like an angry lion devours small animals, he ate up all the younger sons of the great-souled Vashishtha.

‘“When Vashishtha learnt that Vishvamitra had conspired to get his sons killed, he bore his grief patiently, like a great mountain bears the earth. That best of sages, chief among those who are intelligent, resolved to sacrifice himself rather than set his mind on extinguishing the Kushika lineage. The illustrious rishi threw himself down from the peak of Mount Meru and his head struck the stones like a bale of cotton. O Pandava! When the illustrious one found that the fall did not kill him, he lit a fire in that great forest and entered it. But though the flames blazed up high, they did not kill him. O chastiser of enemies! Instead, the blazing flames cooled him. Seeing the ocean, the grief-stricken and great sage tied a heavy stone around his neck and flung himself into the water. But the strong waves brought the great sage back to the shore. With a sorrowful heart, he then returned to his hermitage.”’

‘The gandharva said, “On seeing that his hermitage was bereft of his sons, the grief-stricken sage left it again. O Partha! He saw a river swollen with the new water of the rainy season. It was sweeping away many trees that grew along the banks. O descendant of Puru! On seeing this, the miserable one again began to think that he would certainly be killed in this water. Thereupon, the great sage bound himself with strong ropes and, struck with great grief, flung himself into the waters of that great river. O chastiser of enemy armies! But the river tore those ropes away and, unfettered, washed the rishi up onto the bank. Freed from the bindings, the great rishi arose and gave the river the name of Vipasha.[97]

‘“However, his mind was obsessed with grief and he did not stay in any one place. He went to mountains, rivers and lakes. Seeing once more the terrible river Himavati,[98] terrible of appearance and full of fierce animals, he once more flung himself into its waters. That best of rivers, thinking that the Brahmana was fire, immediately fled in a hundred directions and thereafter came to be known as Shatadru.[99] Finding that he was once again on dry land, he exclaimed that he was unable to die at his own hands and returned to his hermitage.

‘“When he was returning to his hermitage, his daughter-in-law Adrishyanti followed him. As she came near, he heard the sound of Vedic incantations, embellished with the fullness of meaning of the six branches.[100] ‘Who is following me?’ he asked. ‘I am Adrishyanti, Shakti’s wife,’ his daughter-in-law answered. ‘O illustrious one! I am austere, engaged in austerities.’ Vashishtha said, ‘O daughter! Who is reciting the Vedas and their angas that I hear? It is just as I have heard it from Shakti earlier.’ Adrishyanti said, ‘In my womb, there is a son begotten by Shakti. He has been there for twelve years. O sage! You have heard his recitations.’ Having been thus addressed by her, Vashishtha, the best of rishis, was greatly delighted. O Partha! Exclaiming that there was a son, he refrained from death.

‘“The unblemished one returned,[101] accompanied by his daughter-in-law. He found Kalmashapada seated in the deserted forest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him,[102] possessed by the rakshasa, the king arose in anger and sought to devour him. But seeing the king of evil deeds, Adrishyanti spoke to Vashishtha in fear and alarm, ‘O illustrious one! This terrible rakshasa looks like death himself, as he advances towards us with a fearful wooden club in his hand. O best among those who are learned in all the Vedas! Except you, no one on earth has the power to ward him off. O illustrious one! Save me from this evil one, whose form is terrible. Without a doubt, the rakshasa is advancing towards us to devour us.’”’

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‘“Vashishtha said, ‘O daughter! Do not be frightened. There is nothing to be frightened of from a rakshasa. There is no danger from the one you see advancing. He is not a rakshasa. He is King Kalmashapada, powerful and famous on earth. That terrible one lives in this part of the forest.’”

‘The gandharva said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As he[103] advanced towards them, the illustrious and energetic rishi Vashishtha stopped him with a roar. He sprinkled water sanctified with mantras over him and freed the good king from the terrible rakshasa. For twelve years, the king had been swallowed through the energy of Vashishtha’s son, like the sun is swallowed by the one who swallows[104] at the time of an eclipse. Thus freed from the rakshasa, the king reddened the great forest with his energy, like the sun illuminates the evening[105] clouds. Regaining his senses, the king worshipped Vashishtha, the best of rishis, with joined palms and said, ‘O illustrious one! O best of Brahmanas! I am the son of Sudasa. You are my preceptor. Tell me what your wish is now and what I should do.’ Vashishtha said, ‘O lord of men! My desire was fulfilled when the right time arrived. Return to your kingdom and rule and never again disregard Brahmanas.’ The king said, ‘O illustrious one! I shall never again disregard the bulls among Brahmanas. In accordance with your instructions, I shall always worship the twice-born. O best among the twice-born! O best among those who are learned in the Vedas! I wish to obtain a boon from you, so that I can be freed from the debt I owe to the Ikshvaku lineage. I wish to have a son. Please go to my beloved queen,[106] who is virtuous, beautiful and has all the qualities, so that the Ikshvaku lineage can be extended.'

'"Vashishtha, the best of Brahmanas and always devoted to the truth, agreed to the desires of the great archer, the king. O king of men! After some time, Vashishtha, accompanied by the one without blame,[107] went to his capital, famous in this world as Ayodhya. In great joy, all the people came out to welcome the great-souled and sinless one,[108] like gods welcome their chief. Accompanied by the great-souled Vashishtha, the king of men soon entered his auspicious city. O king! The citizens of Ayodhya saw him, like the sun rising in Pushya.[109] The king, the most fortunate among those who are blessed with fortune, filled Ayodhya, like the cool moon which fills the skies when it rises in the autumn. His mind was gladdened when he saw that supreme of cities, with its streets clean and washed, adorned with flags and pennants. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! That city was full of people who were happy and well fed. It looked as radiant as Amaravati[110] in Indra's presence.

'"After the rajarshi had entered the best of cities, the queen came to Vashishtha at the king's command. When the season was right, maharshi Vashishtha, the rishi who always obtained the best share, united with her, in accordance with the divine rites laid down by the gods. Thereafter, when the queen conceived through him, the best of sages received salutations from the king and returned to his hermitage. When she had carried the embryo for a long time, the famous lady split her womb open with a stone. O bull among men! After twelve years, rajarshi Ashmaka was born, the one who founded the city of Potana."'

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'The gandharva said, "O king! Living in the hermitage, Adrishyanti gave birth to a son who was the extender of Shakti's lineage and was like a second Shakti. O best of the Bharata lineage! The best of the sages, the illustrious one, himself performed the prescribed birth ceremonies of his grandson. Because the sage Vashishtha had resolved to kill himself, but refrained from doing so when he heard of the son in the womb, he was known in the world by the name of Parashara.[111] From the date of his birth, that virtuous one knew Vashishtha to be his father and behaved towards him like a father. O Kaunteya! O scorcher of enemies! When the child addressed the Brahmana rishi Vashishtha as 'father' in front of his mother Adrishyanti, she heard the sweet word, so full of meaning, uttered by him. Adrishyanti spoke to him with tears in her eyes. 'O son! Do not use the word father. The great sage is not your father. O son! Your father was devoured by a rakshasa in the deep forest. O innocent son! The one you think of as your father is not your father. The illustrious one is the father of your famous father.' Having been thus addressed, the best of rishis[112] was grief-stricken, because he always spoke the truth. The great-souled one resolved to destroy all the worlds. On seeing him thus resolved, the great-souled Vashishtha, great in austerities, gave reasons for refraining. Hear them.

'"Vashishtha said, 'There was a great king known by the name of Kritavirya. In this world, that bull among kings had as his priest the Bhrigus, learned in the Vedas. At the end of his soma sacrifice, the king gratified those who are the first receivers of offerings[113] with many presents of grain and riches. When that tiger among men had ascended to heaven, there came a time when his descendants were in need of riches. O son! Knowing that the Bhrigus were affluent, those kings went to the best of the Bhrigus, in the disguise of beggars, to ask for riches. To save their indestructible riches, some of the Bhrigus buried them in the ground. Fearing danger from the Kshatriyas, others gave away their riches to Brahmanas. O son! Some of the Bhrigus gave them as much of riches as they wanted, thinking that some other use might be found for the Kshatriyas.

'"'O son! Then one day, some of the Kshatriyas, according to their wishes, dug up the ground in the dwelling place of the Bhrigus and discovered a treasure. All the bulls among the Kshatriyas, who were assembled there, saw the treasure. Thereafter, angry and contemptuous, those supreme archers shot down the Bhrigus with their sharp arrows, though they craved for mercy. They travelled all over the earth, killing even children in wombs. O son! When they were killed in this way, many Bhrigu wives fled in fear and sought refuge in the mountains of the Himalayas.

‘“‘Among them was a lady with beautiful thighs. She resolved to perpetuate her husband’s race and kept her immensely energetic embryo hidden in her thigh, so that it might not be discovered. But the Kshatriyas discovered the Brahmana lady, who blazed in her radiance. Then the child appeared, tearing her thigh open and blinding the eyes of the Kshatriyas like the midday sun. Thereupon, deprived of their eyesight, the Kshatriyas began to wander around in the difficult passes of the mountain. Frustrated in their desire and frightened, those bulls among the Kshatriyas sought refuge with that unblemished Brahmana lady, so that their eyesight might be restored. They were out of their minds with pain. They had lost their eyesight and were like a fire that has been put out. Those Kshatriyas spoke to the lady. “O illustrious lady! Through your grace, may the Kshatriyas regain their eyesight. All of us will depart from here with our evil deeds. You and your son should show us mercy. You should save these kings by restoring their eyesight to them.”’”’

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‘“‘The Brahmana woman said, “O sons! I have not robbed you of your eyesight. Nor am I angry with you. It is the Bhargava who has been born from my thigh who is angry with you. O sons! There is no doubt that your eyesight has been taken away by this great-souled one, whose anger has been aroused on remembering that you had killed his relatives. O sons! When you destroyed even the Bhrigu sons in the wombs, I carried this child in my thigh for 100 years so that he might do that which is good for the Bhrigu lineage. All the Vedas, including their six angas, came to him when he was in the womb. Angry at the killing of his fathers, he certainly wishes to kill you. It is through his divine radiance that your eyesight has been destroyed. O sons! Pray to Ourva, this supreme son of mine. If he is placated through your homage, he may restore your eyesight.”’

‘“Vashishtha said, ‘Having been thus addressed, all the kings addressed the son who had been born from her thigh and begged him for mercy. He was merciful. Since that supreme Brahmana rishi was born after splitting open the thigh, he came to be known in the worlds by the name of Ourva. Regaining their eyesight, the kings returned. But the Bhargava sage decided to bring about the destruction of the entire world. O son! That great-souled one decided to bring about the destruction of all the worlds. In order to bring honour to the Bhrigus, that descendant of the Bhrigu lineage engaged in great austerities, so as to bring about the destruction of all the worlds. Through his great and severe austerities, he burnt the worlds with the gods, the asuras and men, and gratified his ancestors. On learning what the descendant of the lineage was planning to do, the ancestors descended from their world and told him, “O Ourva! O son! We have witnessed the power of your severe austerities. Have mercy for the worlds and control your anger. O son! The self-controlled Bhrigus weren’t powerless. Nor were they indifferent to slaughter at the hands of the violent Kshatriyas. O son! When we got tired of our long lives, we ourselves wished for our deaths at the hands of the Kshatriyas. The riches that were buried in the ground in the dwelling place of the Bhrigus were placed there with the intention of angering the Kshatriyas and creating enmity with them. O bull among the twice-born! What use are riches to us when we wish to attain heaven? O son! When we found that death was completely unable to overcome all of us, we thought this would be the most pleasant way. O son! Those who kill themselves never attain the best worlds. Remembering that, we did not kill ourselves with our own hands. O son! That which you desire does not please us at all. Therefore, control your mind and refrain from this evil destruction of all the worlds. O son! None of the Kshatriyas in the seven worlds[114] has offended or harmed our austerities. Win over the anger that has arisen in you.”’”’

““‘Ourva said, “O ancestors! In anger, I took a vow that all the worlds would be destroyed and that cannot go in vain. Because I cannot be one whose anger and vows come to nothing. Without a doubt, my anger will consume me, the way fire consumes dry kindling.[115] When anger arises from a reason that is just, a man who suppresses it cannot properly safeguard the three goals.[116] Anger has the purpose of restraining the evil and protecting the good. Kings who wish to conquer heaven use their anger for a just cause. I was lying unborn inside my mother’s thigh; I heard cries when my mothers of the Bhrigu lineage were slaughtered by the Kshatriyas. O ancestors! When those worst of the Kshatriyas slaughtered the Bhrigus, including those in wombs and the worlds ignored this, anger entered my heart. My mothers, heavy in their wombs, and my fathers were frightened, but did not find a protector in all the worlds. When the women of the Bhrigu lineage did not find a single protector, my fortunate mother hid me in one of her thighs. If there is one who punishes crimes in the worlds, no one in the worlds will dare to commit a crime. But if a crime doesn’t find a punisher, many in the worlds will commit crimes. A man who has the power to punish a crime and doesn’t do so, despite knowing that a crime has been committed, is himself tainted by the deed, even if he is the lord. The kings and others were capable of protecting my fathers, but failed to do so. Giving themselves up to the pleasures of life, they neglected their duties. Therefore, I have justifiable reason to be angry with the worlds and am now their lord. Yet, I am not capable of disobeying your instructions, even though I am capable of punishing a crime. By refraining from doing so, I will once again encourage the spread of evil in the worlds. The anger of my rage wishes to consume the worlds. If I suppress it with my own powers, it will consume me with its energy. O lords! I know that you always strive for the welfare of the worlds. Therefore, instruct me on what is best for the worlds and for me.”

““‘The ancestors said, “This fire that is born from your anger wishes to consume the worlds. Cast it into the waters and be fortunate, because the worlds are established on water. Every juice consists of water.

Indeed, the entire universe is made out of water. O best of the twice-born! Therefore, release your anger into the water. O Brahmana! If you so desire, let the anger of your fire be in the great ocean. Let it consume the water, because we have heard that the worlds are made out of water. O unblemished one! In this way, your vow will remain true and the worlds, with their gods, will not be destroyed.”’

‘“Vashishtha said, ‘Thereupon, Ourva hurled the fire of his anger into Varuna’s territory and the fire consumes the waters of the great ocean. Those who are learned in the Vedas know that it has assumed the form of a large horse’s head,[117] which spouts fire from the mouth and consumes the waters of the great ocean. O Parashara! You are the foremost among those who are wise. You are familiar with the higher dharma. Be blessed and refrain from destroying the worlds.’”’

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‘The gandharva said, “Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Vashishtha, the Brahmana rishi[118] controlled his anger, which would have destroyed all the worlds. But the immensely energetic Parashara, Shakti’s son and chief among those who were learned in the Vedas, performed a rakshasa sacrifice. Remembering Shakti’s slaughter, the great sage began to consume rakshasas, old and young, in that sacrifice. Not wishing to restrain him from this second vow, Vashishtha did not prevent him from destroying the rakshasas. The great sage sat at that sacrifice, with three blazing fires in front of him. He himself looked like a fourth fire. Many were the offerings that were poured at this radiant sacrifice and the sky was lit up, like the sun emerging from behind the clouds. Vashishtha and the other sages regarded the sage, blazing with his own radiance, like a second sun. Thereupon, the great and noble-minded sage Atri came to that place, wishing to put an end to the sacrifice, a task that would have been impossible for anyone else to accomplish.

‘“O destroyer of enemies! Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu also came to that great sacrifice, since they also desired that the rakshasas should live. O bull of the Bharata lineage! O Partha! On seeing that many rakshasas had already been killed, Pulastya spoke to Parashara, that chastiser of enemies. ‘O son! Do you find no obstructions in the way of this sacrifice? O son! Do you find pleasure in killing all these rakshasas, who are ignorant and innocent?[119] O Parashara! You are foremost among those who drink the soma juice. You should not destroy all my progeny in this way. You are a virtuous man. You should not think that the path of adharma will be good for you. King Kalmashapada himself wishes to ascend to heaven. Shakti’s younger brothers, sons of the great sage Vashishtha, are now enjoying great happiness in the company of the gods. O son! O hermit! All this was known to the great sage Vashishtha, including the destruction of the rakshasas. O Vashishtha’s descendant! You have only been an instrument in this sacrifice. Be fortunate and give up this sacrifice. Let it come to an end now.’ Having been thus addressed by Pulastya and the wise Vashishtha, Shakti’s son Parashara brought an end to the sacrifice. The sage threw away the fire that had been lit for the rakshasa sacrifice into the great forest that was to the north of the Himalayas. Even today, the fire is always visible there in all the seasons, consuming rakshasas, trees and rocks.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “Why did King Kalmashapada himself call and instruct his wife to go to his preceptor, supreme among those who are learned in the Vedas? Why did the great-souled maharshi Vashishtha, who knew the path of supreme dharma, agree to go to a woman who was forbidden? Why were these acts done earlier? I wish to know. Tell me in detail.”

‘The gandharva said, “O Dhananjaya! O one who cannot be repulsed! Listen to my answer to your question about the unassailable Vashishtha and King Mitrasaha.[120] O best of the Bharata lineage! I have already told you how the king was cursed by Shakti, Vashishtha’s great-souled son. Thus, under the influence of that curse, the king, that scorcher of enemies, came out of the city with his wife, his eyes rolling with anger. He went to a deserted forest with his wife and roamed around there.

Under the influence of the curse, he roamed around in that forest, frequented by many beasts and other animals, overgrown with many plants and creepers, dense with many large trees and echoing with horrible howls. Once, obsessed with extreme hunger and exhausted, he saw in a lonely part of the forest a Brahmana and a brahmani, about to engage in an act of sexual union. Seeing him, the pair was frightened and ran away, their desire unsatisfied.

'"Pursuing them, the king forcibly grabbed the Brahmana. Seeing that her husband had thus been seized, the brahmani said, 'O king who is always rigid in his vows! Listen to what I have to say. It is known in all the worlds that you have been born in the solar dynasty. You have always been established in the path of dharma and you have always served your preceptors. O unassailable one! Though you have been deprived of your senses through a curse, do not commit an evil act. When my season had come, I was about to unite with my husband so as to obtain offspring. But I have not been successful and have great need. O best of kings! Be merciful to me and let my husband go.' While she was crying thus, the king cruelly ate up her husband, the way a tiger devours a deer. On account of her anger, tears fell from her eyes on the ground and became a blazing fire that burnt up everything there. Grief-stricken and enraged at the death of her husband, the brahmani cursed rajarshi Kalmashapada, 'O evil-minded one! Today, you have cruelly devoured before my own eyes my illustrious and beloved husband, even though I was not satisfied. Therefore, through my curse, you will meet with instant death when you unite with your wife when she is in season. Rishi Vashishtha, whose sons you have eaten, will unite with your wife and she will give birth to a son. O worst of kings! That son will perpetuate your lineage.' Having thus cursed the king, that fortunate lady of the Angirasa lineage entered the flaming fire in his presence.

'"O scorcher of enemies! The immensely fortunate Vashishtha knew all this through his great austerities and his powers of knowledge that come through yoga. After a long time, the rajarshi was freed from the curse and went to his wife Madayanti when she was in season, but she repulsed him. Deluded by the curse, the king had no recollection of the curse. On hearing the lady’s words, that best of kings remembered the curse and was greatly alarmed. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was for this reason that the king requested Vashishtha to accept his own wife, because he suffered from the curse.”’

Section Twelve

Droupadi-svayamvara Parva

This parva has 263 shlokas and twelve chapters.

Chapter 174: 12 shlokas
Chapter 175: 20 shlokas
Chapter 176: 36 shlokas
Chapter 177: 22 shlokas
Chapter 178: 18 shlokas
Chapter 179: 23 shlokas
Chapter 180: 22 shlokas
Chapter 181: 40 shlokas
Chapter 182: 15 shlokas
Chapter 183: 9 shlokas
Chapter 184: 18 shlokas
Chapter 185: 28 shlokas

Svayamvara *is a form of marriage where the bride chooses her own groom. The parva is about Droupadi choosing her own groom.*

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'Arjuna said, "O gandharva! You know everything. Tell us who, learned in the Vedas, is fit to be appointed our priest." The gandharva said, "There is a tirtha in this forest known as Utkochaka. Devala's younger brother Dhoumya is engaged in practising austerities there. If you wish, you can appoint him as your priest."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Arjuna happily gave the gandharva his agneya weapon, in accordance with the prescribed rituals. He said, "O best of the gandharvas! Keep the horses for the moment. We shall take them from you when we need them. Be blessed.” Then the gandharva and the Pandavas respectfully saluted each other and left the beautiful banks of the Bhagirathi, to go wherever they wished.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas went to Utkochaka tirtha and Dhoumya’s hermitage. They instated Dhoumya as their priest. Dhoumya, foremost among those who know all the Vedas, received them with water to wash their feet and with offerings of fruits and roots from the forest. He agreed to be their priest. Having obtained the Brahmana at their forefront, the Pandavas were hopeful of obtaining riches and the kingdom and of winning Panchali in the svayamvara. With their mother constituting the sixth person of the group, those bulls of the Bharata lineage considered themselves well protected, now that they had a preceptor. For the noble preceptor knew the subtle nuances of the Vedas well. He made the virtuous sons of Pritha his disciples in learning all the knowledge. Seeing that those warriors were already endowed with intelligence, valour, strength and perseverance equal to that of the gods, he decided that they were already restored to their kingdom through their own virtues. He blessed them. Those kings among men decided to go with him to the svayamvara in Panchala.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then those tigers among men, the five Pandava brothers, set out to see Droupadi and the great and divine festival. Those tigers among men, the scorchers of enemies, and their mother saw many Brahmanas who were headed in the same direction. O king! Those Brahmanas asked the Pandavas, who were travelling as brahmacharis, “Where are you going? Where have you come from?” Yudhishthira said, “O revered ones who have seen the gods! Know that we are brothers who have come from Ekachakra and are travelling with our mother.”

‘The Brahmanas said, “Then you should now go to the house of Drupada of Panchala. A large svayamvara ceremony will be held there, with a lot of riches. We are going there ourselves. Let us go together. A great ceremony, with wonderful events, will take place there. The great-souled Yajnasena Drupada obtained a daughter from the middle of the sacrificial altar and her eyes are like lotus petals, with unblemished features and beauty, youth and intelligence. She is the sister of the powerful Dhrishtadyumna, Drona’s enemy. He arose from the blazing fire, as resplendent as the fire, with mighty arms, natural armour, sword and bow and arrows. His sister is the slender-waisted Droupadi whose form is flawless. Her body emits the fragrance of a blue lotus from a distance of one krosha. Yajnasena’s daughter will choose a husband at the svayamvara. We are going there to see her and witness the divine and great festival. Kings and princes from different regions will be present there—performers of sacrifices at which large quantities of alms are offered, those devoted to studying, pure, great-souled, those devoted to their vows, young, handsome, maharathas and those skilled in the use of weapons. Desiring victory,[1] those kings of men will give away a lot of riches, cows, foodgrains and other objects of pleasure. Accepting whatever they offer and witnessing the svayamvara and all the festivities, we will then go wherever we wish. Actors, bards, dancers, raconteurs, panegyrists and powerful wrestlers will assemble from many countries. O great-souled ones! After witnessing those wonderful sights and accepting what is offered, you can also return with us. You are handsome. You look like gods. On seeing you, Krishna[2] may decide that one of you is the best and choose you. This brother of yours is handsome of appearance and has powerful arms. He may win those wrestling bouts and obtain great riches.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “We will go with you to witness that supreme, great and divine festival, the lady’s svayamvara.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Having been thus addressed, the Pandavas headed for the southern part of Panchala, ruled by King Drupada. On their way, the brave Pandavas met the great-souled, pure-souled, unblemished and illustrious sage Dvaipayana and paid their respects to him, in accordance with the prescribed rites. He too showed them his respect and after their conversation was over, on his instructions, they proceeded to Drupada's palace. Those maharathas proceeded slowly, stopping when they saw beautiful forests and lakes. At last, Kuru's descendants, devoted to learning, pure, amiable and sweet of speech, arrived in Panchala. After seeing the city and the royal residence, the Pandavas lodged in a potter's house. Adopting the lifestyle of Brahmanas, they begged for their food. No one recognized those warriors when they stayed there.

'Yajnasena always desired to give Krishna to Kiriti,[3] Pandu's son, but he never revealed this to anyone. O Janamejaya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thinking of Kunti's son, the Panchala got a very hard bow constructed, one that no one else would be able to bend. He had an artificial machine[4] set up above and onto this machine he fixed a golden target. Drupada said, "He who can string this bow and, after stringing, shoot the target above with these arrows, will obtain my daughter." With these words, King Drupada announced the svayamvara everywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hearing this, all the kings assembled. Many great-souled rishis also came there, wishing to witness the svayamvara. O king! The Kouravas, led by Duryodhana, also came there, accompanied by Karna. Many illustrious Brahmanas also came from many countries. The great-souled Drupada duly worshipped the kings. All the citizens and all the kings took their seats, resulting in a roar like that of the ocean full of porpoises.

'The platform was constructed on the north-east of the city, on a flat and auspicious piece of ground. The beautiful meeting place was surrounded by houses on all sides. It was enclosed by a wall and a moat on all sides, decorated with gates and covered everywhere with a colourful canopy. It echoed to the sound of many musical instruments, was scented with *agaru*,[5] adorned with garlands and sprinkled with sandalwood water. Large and white palaces that were well built surrounded it on all sides, like the peaks of Kailash when they touch the sky. The windows were covered with golden trellises and the walls sparkled with mosaic work of precious stones. The stairs were easy to climb. The seats were covered with expensive cloth that was not like those that came from villages. They were white like swans and scented with agaru, so that the fragrance could be smelt one yojana away. Each palace had 100 doors and had beautiful seats and couches. The expensive beds had many metals on them, like the peaks of the Himalayas. All the kings were seated on the many storeys of these palaces, each one decorated with many ornaments and boastful of his success. Those tigers among kings were scented with the paste of black agaru and were greatly fortunate, devoted to the Brahmanas, protectors of their realms and loved by all the worlds because of their good deeds. When they were seated on their royal seats, the inhabitants of the city and of the country who had come to see Krishna also took their seats. The Pandavas took their seats with the Brahmanas and witnessed the unrivalled splendour of the king of Panchala. O king! For many days, the numbers who had assembled increased. Many jewels were distributed and many dancers and actors provided entertainment.

'O bull of the Bharata lineage! On the sixteenth day, when there was a crowd, Droupadi bathed, wore the best of clothing and adorned herself with many ornaments. She descended into the arena, carrying in her hand a beautifully adorned golden prize for the winner. After pouring offerings of ghee into the sacrificial fire according to prescribed rites, the priest of the Somakas,[6] a pure Brahmana, learned in the mantras, uttered salutations of peace to the fire and to Brahmanas and stopped the playing of all musical instruments.

'O ruler of the earth! When everything was quiet, Dhrishtadyumna went to the centre of the arena and spoke, in a thundering voice, words that were deep with meaning and sweet. "O assembled kings! Hear that this is the bow, that is the target and these are the arrows. With these five arrows, shoot the target through the hole in the centre of the machine. I truly say that the handsome and strong one, born in a noble family, who accomplishes this great feat today, will obtain as his wife my sister Krishna." Having thus addressed the assembled kings, Drupada's son spoke to Droupadi, recounting to her the lineages and deeds of the assembled kings.'

‘Dhrishtadyumna said, “Duryodhana, Durvisaha, Durmukha, Dushpradharshana, Vivimshati, Vikarna, Saha, Duhshasana, Sama, Yuyutsu, Vatavega, Bhimavegadhara, Ugrayudha, Balaki, Kanakayu, Virochana, Sukundula, Chitrasena, Suvarcha, Kanakadhvaja, Nandaka, Bahushali, Kunduja and Vikata—these and others are the immensely powerful sons of Dhritarashtra. These warriors have come with Karna for your hand.

‘“Hundreds are the famous and great-souled kings, bulls among the Kshatriyas—Shakuni, Bala, Vrishaka and Brihadbala, all these sons of the king of Gandhara have come. Adorned with every ornament, the great-souled warriors Ashvatthama and Bhoja, skilled in the use of all weapons, have come. The kings Brihanta, Manimana and the valiant Dandadhara, Sahadeva, Jayatsena, Meghasandhi of Magadha, Virata and his two sons Sankha and Uttara, Vardhakshemi, Susharma, King Senabindu, Abhibhu with his sons Sudamna and Suvarchasa, Sumitra, Sukumara, Vrika, Satyadhriti, Suryadhvaja, Rochamana, Nila, Chitrayudha, Amshumana, Chekitana, the immensely powerful Shrenimana, Chandrasena, the powerful son of Samudrasena, Jalasamdha, the father and son Vidanda and Danda, Poundraka, Vasudeva, the valorous Bhagadatta, Kalinga, Tamralipta, the king of Pattana, the maharatha Shalya, king of Madra with his sons, the brave Rukmagandha and Rukmaratha, the Kourava Somadatta and his three maharatha sons Bhuri, Bhurishrava and Shala, Sudakshina, Kamboja, the Kourava Dridhadhanva, Brihadbala, Sushena, Ushinara’s son Shibi, Samkarshana, Vasudeva, Rukmini’s brave son Samba, Charudeshna, Sarana, Gada, Akrura, Satyaki, the immensely powerful Uddhava, Hridika’s son Kritavarma, Prithu, Viprithu, Viduratha, Kanka, Samika, Saramejaya, the brave Vatapati, Jhilli, Pindaraka, the brave Ushinara, all famous as descended from the Vrishni lineage; Bhagiratha, Brihatkshetra, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, Brihadratha, Bahlika, the maharatha Shrutayu, Uluka, King Kaitava, Chitrangada, Subhangada, the patient king of Vatsa, the king of Kosala.

‘“O fortunate one! These and many other kings of many regions, famous on earth, have come here for you. These brave ones will try to shoot the excellent target for your hand. O beautiful one! You will choose as a husband the one who hits it.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Those youthful kings were adorned with earrings. Each regarded himself as the most skilled in the use of weapons. All of them stood up and brandished their weapons. They boasted at one another, insolent with beauty, valour, lineage, virtue, riches and youth. They were like kings of elephants from the Himalayas, drunk in the season of rut. They stared at each other in insolence. Mentally struck with desire, they suddenly stood up from their royal seats and exclaimed, “Krishna will be mine.” Assembled in that arena and eager to win Drupada’s daughter, they looked like gods who stood around Uma, the daughter of the king of the mountains. Their bodies were pierced with the arrows of the god of love.[7] They completely lost their hearts to Krishna.[8] They descended into the arena, feeling hatred for their own relatives for Droupadi’s sake.

‘The gods came in their heavenly chariots—the rudras, the adityas, the vasus, the twin Ashvins, all the sadhyas and all the maruts, with Yama and the god of wealth[9] at the forefront. There also came the daityas, the suparnas,[10] the great uragas,[11] the devarshis, the guhyakas,[12] the charanas,[13] Vishvavasu, Narada, Parvata, the chief gandharvas with the apsaras, Halayudha,[14] Janardana[15] and the chiefs among the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. The chiefs among the Yadus, always devoted to Krishna, were also there, witnessing it. On seeing the five Pandavas, like elephants in rut that had come to a lake full of lotuses, like a fire covered with ashes, the chief of the Yadus[16] began to wonder. He told Rama,[17] “That is Yudhishthira. That is Bhima and that is Jishnu[18] and those are the valorous twins.” Glancing at them leisurely, Rama cast a pleased glance at Janardana.

‘Biting their lower lips in anger, those other warriors, the sons and grandsons of kings, had set their eyes, hearts and natures on Krishna. Biting their lips and with faces that were like copper in colour, they only looked at her.[19] On seeing Droupadi, Pritha’s mighty-armed sons and the brave and great-natured twins were struck with the arrows of the god of love.[20] The place was full of gods, rishis, gandharvas, suparnas, nagas, asuras and siddhas, pervaded with divine fragrances and covered with divine garlands. A great roar arose from the drums,[21] and the sounds of the flute, the veena and cymbals echoed. The celestial routes were crowded with the heavenly chariots of the gods.

‘Then, one after another, those kings exhibited their valour for Krishna. But the bow was so strong that with all their strength, they could not string it. The firm wood of the bow recoiled and flung those brave rulers of men on the ground. They failed in their desire and could be seen on the ground, miserable and broken in spirit. That firm bow caused them pain and shattered their bracelets and earrings. Having lost hopes of obtaining Krishna, that assembly of kings was crestfallen. In that assembly, those kings who boasted of noble birth then became objects of derision. Kunti’s brave son Jishnu then arose, wishing to string the bow and place an arrow on it.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When all the kings gave up attempting to string the bow, the great-souled Jishnu arose from among the Brahmanas. On seeing Partha advance, with a complexion resplendent like that of Indra’s flag, the chief Brahmanas shook their deerskins and created a loud uproar. Some of them were pleased. Others were displeased. Others among them, who lived by their wisdom and were wise, told each other, “O Brahmanas! If Kshatriyas like Karna and Shalya, who are famous in the world, have great strength and are well versed in Dhanur Veda,[22] could not string the bow, how can this weakling Brahmana, with no knowledge of weapons, succeed? If he fails to succeed in an act that he has undertaken because of his juvenile inexperience, the Brahmanas will become objects of ridicule in the eyes of the kings. Therefore, stop him from attempting to string the bow. He is doing it out of vanity and childishness, inexperienced at being a Brahmana. We will not be ridiculed, not incur anyone's disrespect. Nor will we displease the kings of this world." Others said, "He is handsome and youthful. He is like the trunk of the king of elephants. His shoulders, arms and thighs are built well. In perseverance, he looks like the Himalayas. One who is so resolute may well accomplish the task. Without a doubt, he has great strength and great endeavour. Without these, he would not have gone on his own. Besides, among the three orders,[23] there is no task in the worlds that Brahmanas cannot accomplish. Brahmanas abstain from food, live on air, eat only fruits, observe rigid vows and become weak, yet retain the strength of their own energy. A Brahmana should not be looked down upon, whether his deeds are right or wrong. No one should consider him incapable of performing a deed, big or small, pleasing or unpleasant." The Brahmanas continued to voice their opinions in this way.

'Arjuna came to where the bow was and stood there like a stationary mountain. Circumambulating the bow in accordance with the rites, the scorcher of enemies bowed his head to the bow and joyously grasped it. In the twinkling of an eye, he strung the bow and grasped the five arrows. Through the hole in the machine, he suddenly pierced the target and it fell down on the ground. Thereupon, a great roar was heard in the sky and a great clamour arose in the assembly. The gods rained down celestial flowers on Partha's head, that killer of enemies. All the spectators waved their upper garments in joy, or uttered sounds of despair. Flowers showered down from the sky. The musicians played on hundreds of instruments. In a sweet voice, the bards and the raconteurs began to chant the praises of the hero. Seeing that destroyer of enemies, Drupada was extremely happy and wished to help Partha with his army, should the need arise.

'When the uproar reached its peak, Yudhishthira, foremost among those who tread the path of dharma, swiftly left the assembly and went home, accompanied by the twins, supreme among men. On seeing the target shot and on seeing Partha, the equal of Shakra,[24] Krishna was extremely happy. She went to Kunti's son with a garland of white flowers. All the Brahmanas paid homage to the one who had accomplished the unthinkable and had won her in the assembly. He soon left the arena, followed by the one who would be his wife.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the king expressed his desire to give his daughter to that great-souled Brahmana, all the assembled kings looked at each other and were filled with anger. The kings said, "We are assembled here and he passes us over like straw. He wishes to give Droupadi, supreme among women, to a Brahmana. This evil-hearted one does not respect us. Let us kill him. He does not deserve our respect or veneration because of qualities of age. On account of this, let us kill this wretch who insults kings and their sons. After inviting and entertaining in the proper fashion all the kings with food, he then shows them disrespect. In this assembly of kings, which is like a conclave of the gods, can he not find a single king who is his equal? The sacred texts clearly say that a svayamvara is for Kshatriyas; Brahmanas have no right in the choice of a husband. O kings! If this lady does not wish one of us as her husband, let us throw her into the fire and return to our kingdoms. Though that Brahmana has done injury to kings out of his impertinence and greed, he should not still be killed. After all, our kingdoms, lives, riches, sons, grandsons and all our other wealth exist for the sake of Brahmanas. But something must be done to prevent insult and to protect our own dharma, so that other svayamvaras do not end like this one." Having said this, those tigers among kings, with arms like clubs, rushed at Drupada with diverse weapons, so as to kill him.

'Seeing those angry kings rush at him with bows and arrows, Drupada was frightened and sought the protection of the Brahmanas. However, as those kings rushed at Drupada like mad elephants, Pandu's two sons,[25] the great archers who conquered their enemies, advanced to repulse them. Thereupon, all the kings, their fingers clad in armour and with their weapons raised, violently rushed towards the Kuru princes, Arjuna and Bhimasena. Bhima, the performer of amazing deeds, with immense strength and like a thunderbolt, tore up a large tree with his hands and stripped it of all its leaves, like an elephant. With that tree, the mighty-armed Bhima, Pritha's son and the destroyer of enemies, stood next to Partha, bull among men and with long and thick arms, like Yama with his terrible staff.

'On seeing the unthinkable feats of Jishnu and his brother, Damodara,[26] the one with superhuman intelligence, turned to his brother Halayudha, himself the performer of awesome deeds, and said, "O Sankarshana! The warrior who has the gait of a mad bull and who holds a great bow that is 4 cubits long in his hand must be Arjuna. If I am Vasudeva's son, there can be no doubt about this. The warrior who has uprooted a tree with his strength and is instantly ready to repulse the kings is undoubtedly Vrikodara.[27] No other mortal on earth can perform such a feat today. O Achyuta![28] The other one who left a while ago, with eyes like lotus petals, slender and with the gait of a powerful lion, humble, fair and with a long and shining nose, must have been Dharmaraja. I am sure that the other two youths, each like Kartikeya, must have been sons of the two Ashvins. I had heard that Pandu's sons and Pritha had escaped from the fire in the house of lac." Halayudha, with a complexion like that of clouds, happily spoke to his younger brother, "I am delighted that our father's sister Pritha, with the foremost of the Kurus, has escaped."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Those bulls among the Brahmanas shook their deerskins and water pots[29] and said, "Do not be frightened. We will fight with the enemies." Arjuna smilingly told those Brahmanas, "Stand aside as spectators. I will repulse those kings, like poisonous snakes, with mantras, with showers of hundreds of sharp-pointed arrows." Having said this, the maharatha took up the bow he had obtained as dowry and accompanied by his brother Bhima stood there like an immovable mountain. Seeing the Kshatriyas, with Karna leading them, furious to do battle, they fell upon them, like two elephants against hostile elephants. Eager to fight, those kings then said, “It is permissible to kill a Brahmana who is willing to fight.” Then the mighty Vaikartana[30] Karna rushed at Arjuna, eager to fight, like an elephant rushes at a rival over a female elephant. Shalya, king of the Madras, rushed at Bhimasena. Duryodhana and the others rushed at the Brahmanas, but they fought with them lightly and carelessly.

‘Seeing Vaikartana Karna rush towards him, the wise Arjuna stretched his mighty bow and pierced him with three arrows. The impact of these sharp arrows stunned Radheya[31] and he approached with greater circumspection. Then those two invincible warriors fought violently, each eager to vanquish the other. Such was the speed that they became invisible.[32] “Look at the strength in my arms”, “See how I countered that”, they taunted each other in words that only warriors understand. Seeing the valour in Arjuna’s arms, unparalleled on earth, Vaikartana Karna fought even more vigorously. Repulsing Arjuna’s swift arrows, Karna shouted out aloud and the warriors applauded his feat.

‘Karna said, “O foremost among Brahmanas! I am pleased with the strength of your arms, which do not tire in battle, and with your persistent control over weapons. O supreme among Brahmanas! Are you Rama,[33] the personification of the knowledge of weapons?[34] Or are you Harihaya[35] himself? Or are you Achyuta Vishnu himself? Have you assumed the form of a Brahmana to disguise yourself and are now fighting strongly with me for self-preservation, mustering the strength of your arms? When I am angry in the field of battle, no one except Shachi’s husband[36] and Pandava Kiriti[37] can withstand me.” Hearing these words, Phalguni[38] replied, “O Karna! I am not the science of weapons personified. Nor am I the powerful Rama. I am only a Brahmana, chief among warriors and supreme among those who have the knowledge of weapons. Through my preceptor’s grace, I have become skilled in the use of brahma and paurandara[39] weapons. O warrior! Wait for a bit. I stand here today, to vanquish you in battle.” At these words, Radheya Karna withdrew from the battle, because the maharatha thought that Brahmana strength was invincible.

‘In another part of the arena, Shalya and Vrikodara, both warriors with great strength and knowledge of fighting, were engaged in battle. Calling out to each other, they fought like two mad and great elephants, striking each other with clenched fists and knees. For a while, they dragged each other around in the duel. Then the immensely powerful Bhima raised Shalya up with his arms and hurled him down on the ground. The Brahmanas began to laugh. Bhimasena, bull among men, surprised everyone.[40] But though he hurled the powerful one on the ground, he did not kill him. When Shalya was thus hurled down by Bhima and Karna scared away, all the other kings were frightened and surrounded Vrikodara. They said, “These bulls among Brahmanas are supreme. Let us find out in what lineage they were born and where they live. Who can fight with Radheya Karna in battle except Rama, Drona, Sharadvata Kripa,[41] Devaki’s son Krishna and Phalguni, the scorcher of enemies? Who can fight against Duryodhana and who can vanquish in battle the powerful Shalya, king of Madra and chief among warriors, except the brave Baladeva and Pandava Vrikodara? Therefore, let us desist from this fight against the Brahmanas. Let us find out who they are and then we will happily fight with them again.” On witnessing Bhima’s feat, Krishna believed them to be Kunti’s sons. He gently restrained the assembled kings and said, “This lady has been won according to dharma.” Thereupon, those best of kings, skilled in battle, refrained from the fight and returned to their kingdoms, wonderstruck. Those who had assembled there went away, exclaiming that the Brahmanas had won the day and Panchali had become the wife of a Brahmana.

‘Surrounded by Brahmanas attired in the skins of deer and other animals, Bhimasena and Dhananjaya found it difficult to pass. Eventually, those radiant warriors among men freed themselves from the crowd, followed by Krishna. Their mother had been worried about various evils that might have occurred, since they were late in returning after begging for alms. She even thought that Dhritarashtra's sons might have recognized and killed those bulls among the Kurus. Had some terrible rakshasas, versed with powers of maya and firm in their enmity, killed them? However, could the great-souled Vyasa's predictions be wrong? Filled with love for her sons, these were the thoughts that occurred to Pritha. Then, late in the afternoon, Jishnu, in the company of many Brahmanas, entered with the Brahmana in the forefront,[42] like the sun surrounded by clouds.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Pritha's two illustrious sons went to the potter's house and to Pritha. With happiness in their hearts, those chiefs among men presented Yajnaseni and said, "See what alms we have got." She was inside the house and without seeing her sons, replied, "Share it together." Later, Kunti saw the lady and was miserable at what she had said.

'She was anxious not to commit adharma and began to think about what might be done. She took the happy Yajnaseni by the hand and went to Yudhishthira and said, "This daughter of Drupada was presented to me as 'alms' your younger brothers had obtained. O king! O son! As I am in the habit of doing, but in ignorance, I said what I thought was proper, 'Share it together.' O bull among the Kurus! Now tell me how those instructions of mine don't become a lie. How can the Panchala king's daughter not be touched by adharma, committing that which hasn't been done before?" Having been thus addressed by his mother, the wise king Yudhishthira, chief among the Kurus, sat for a while and thought.

'He consoled Kunti and spoke to Dhananjaya. "O Pandava! You are the one who won Yajnaseni. It is proper that you should make this princess happy. Let the sacred fire be lit and offerings made. You should marry her in accordance with the proper rites." Arjuna said, "O king of men! Since this is not the law that others accept, do not make me tread this path of adharma. You should marry her first, followed by the mighty-armed Bhima of wonderful deeds, then I, then Nakula after me and finally the energetic Sahadeva. O king! Vrikodara, I and the twins think that the lady should be yours. This is the state of affairs. After reflecting on it, please do what is appropriate, in accordance with dharma and fame and the welfare of the king of Panchala. Instruct us. We are all waiting for your command." Then they all looked at the illustrious Krishna who was standing there. They looked at each other and sat down, her image in their hearts.

'When those immensely radiant ones looked at Droupadi, their love for her arose and put their senses into turmoil. Panchali's charming form was created by the creator himself. It beguiled all living beings and was supreme to all others. Kunti's son Yudhishthira knew from their appearance what was going through their minds. O bull among men! He remembered Dvaipayana's words. Fearing that conflict might arise between the brothers, the king said, "This fortunate Droupadi will be a wife to all of us."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing the words of their eldest brother, all of Pandu's sons, of infinite energy, were pleased and began to think about the purport of those words. Suspecting them to be the foremost of the Kurus, the chief of the Vrishnis[43] and Rohini's son[44] then came to the potter's house, where those foremost among men were living. Krishna and Rohini's son saw Ajatashatru,[45] with long and thick arms, seated there. In a circle around him sat the others, like blazing fires. Vasudeva went to Kunti's son, foremost among those who follow dharma. He touched with his hands the feet of King Ajamidha[46] Yudhishthira and said, "I am Krishna." Rohini's son went to Yudhishthira and did the same. Seeing them, the descendants of Kuru were greatly delighted. O chief of the Bharata lineage! The chiefs of the Yadu lineage then touched the feet of their father's sister.[47]

‘Seeing Krishna, Ajatashatru, chief among the Kurus, asked him about his welfare and said, “O Vasudeva! When we are living here in disguise, how did you manage to track us down?” Vasudeva smiled and replied, “O king! Even when fire is covered, it comes out. Who but the Pandavas can display such valour among men? O destroyers of enemies! It was through good fortune that you escaped from that fire. It was through good fortune that Dhritarashtra’s evil son and his advisers did not succeed in their desires. Be blessed. Prosper, the way a fire hidden in a cave gradually expands and spreads. Permit us to return to camp. Otherwise, the kings may discover you.” Then, taking permission from the Pandavas, the eternally radiant one quickly went away, accompanied by Baladeva.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the two descendants of Kuru went towards the potter’s house, Panchala Dhrishtadyumna followed them. Having sent his attendants away, he hid himself near the potter’s house, unknown to those men.

‘In the evening, Bhima, the crusher of enemies, and Jishnu returned with the twins, after begging for alms. They happily handed over to Yudhishthira what they had got. Thereupon, the soft-spoken Kunti spoke to Drupada’s daughter. “O fortunate one! First, take a portion and offer it to the gods. Then give some alms to a Brahmana. Feed some to those who are needy and give some to men who are around. Then, divide the rest into two parts. O fortunate one! Give half to Bhima, because that dark youth with a strong body is like a mad bull and is a warrior who always eats a lot.” Hearing these excellent words, the chaste princess cheerfully did what she was asked to do, without any doubts. All of them ate the food.

‘Madri’s son, the ascetic Sahadeva, quickly spread out a bed of kusha grass on the ground. Thereafter, each of those brave warriors spread out his own deerskin and lay down to sleep on the ground. Those foremost among the Kurus lay down, with their heads facing the direction blessed by Agastya.[48] Kunti lay herself down along their heads and Krishna lay down along their feet. Though she lay on the ground on kusha grass with Pandu’s sons, like a foot pillow, she felt no grief. Nor did she feel disrespect for those bulls among the Kurus.

‘Then those warriors began to talk to each other—wonderful stories about wars, celestial weapons, chariots, elephants, swords, clubs and battleaxes. The Panchala king’s son heard all that they told each other during their conversation. His men saw how Krishna was lying there in that humble state. Prince Dhrishtadyumna set out[49] in great haste to tell King Drupada in detail everything that he had heard during the night. The Panchala king was sad, because he did not know where the Pandavas had gone. The great-souled one asked Dhrishtadyumna, “Where has Krishna gone? Who has taken her away? Is it a Shudra or one of low birth? Has a Vaishya who pays taxes placed his feet on my head? Has a garland been thrown away on a cremation ground? O son! Or is it a foremost man from our own varna, or is it one from a higher varna?[50] Or has a lower being[51] placed his foot on my head and defiled Krishna? I will be happy in my sacrifices if she has been united with Partha, that bull among men. Tell me truthfully. Which illustrious one has won my daughter today? Is there any chance that Vichitravirya’s sons,[52] foremost among the Kurus, are still alive? Is it perhaps Partha who took up the bow and shot the target today?”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed, Prince Dhrishtadyumna, foremost of the lunar dynasty, cheerfully told his father all that had occurred and by whom Krishna had been won.

‘Dhrishtadyumna said, “The handsome youth with the long and red eyes, dressed in black deerskin and like a god in his form, who strung that supreme bow and brought down the target on the ground, left hurriedly and without concern. He was soon surrounded by the chief among the Brahmanas, who offered him homage. He strode as if he had vanquished Diti’s sons,[53] surrounded by the gods and the rishis. Like an elephant bride happily follows the male elephant, Krishna followed, holding his deerskin. Unable to bear that sight, the assembled lords of men[54] were angered and advanced to fight him. At that, another hero arose in that assembly of kings. He uprooted a gigantic tree and drove away those masses of kings, like angry Yama strikes down all living creatures. O lord of men! Those assembled kings could only watch. Those foremost among men took Krishna and went away, resembling the sun and the moon. They went to a potter's house outside the city. A lady sat there, as radiant as a flame of fire. Around her sat three[55] foremost men, each one like a fire himself. I think she was their mother. Coming to her, those two heroes paid homage at her feet and asked Krishna to pay homage too. Leaving Krishna there, those foremost among men went out to beg for alms. It was Krishna who took from them the alms and offered a share to the gods and another to a Brahmana. She then served a part to that old lady and those five heroes among men and ate herself. O king! Then they all lay down to sleep together, with Krishna like a foot pillow. Their bed was made on the bare ground with darbha[56] grass on which deerskins were spread. They conversed on various subjects in voices that were as deep as dark clouds—wonderful tales that Vaishyas, nor Shudras, could speak of. Nor did those heroes speak of Brahmana tales. O king! There is no doubt that they are foremost among Kshatriyas. The stories that they told were about wars. Our hopes have clearly been fulfilled. We have heard that Pritha's sons escaped from the fire. From the way in which the bow was strung and the target brought down with strength, from the way in which they conversed with each other, it is certain that they are Pritha's sons, living in disguise." Thereupon, King Drupada was extremely happy.

'He sent his priest to them, directing him, "Go and tell them we know who they are. Ask them if they are by any chance the sons of the great-souled Pandu." As instructed by the king, the priest went to them and praised them. He told them in detail and in the right order the king's message. The priest said, "O first among those who deserve homage! The king of Panchala, the granter of wishes, wishes to know who you are. Seeing the one who has shot down the target, his joy has no bounds. Tell us the details of your family and your lineage. Place your feet on the heads of your enemies. Gladden the hearts of the king of Panchala and his men, and mine as well. King Pandu was a dear friend of King Drupada, who regarded him as his own self. He has all along desired that his daughter should be given to that Kourava as his daughter-in-law. O heroes of unblemished limbs! This desire was always in King Drupada's heart, that the strong and long-armed Arjuna should marry his daughter according to dharma." After the priest had spoken these words and was quiet, the king[57] looked at the humble messenger and instructed Bhima, who was next to him, "King Drupada's priest is worthy of respect and let him be given more than normal homage. Get water to wash his feet, and offerings be given." O ruler of men! Bhima did as he had been instructed and he[58] accepted the offerings and happily seated himself.

'Yudhishthira then spoke to the Brahmana. "The king of Panchala gave his daughter away according to his wishes and according to his own dharma. He set a price[59] and this brave one has won her in accordance with that. Therefore, no questions can be asked about his varna, action, intention, means of living, lineage or *gotra*.[60] All those questions have been answered by the act of stringing the bow and striking the target. In doing that, this great-souled one has won Krishna in an assembly of kings. Since that is the case, the king of the lunar dynasty has no reason to regret his decision or be unhappy. O Brahmana! King Drupada's eternal desire will certainly come to be true for the king, because I think that this king's daughter was unattainable otherwise. No one weak in strength or of low birth or unskilled in the use of arms could have strung that bow and shot down the target. Today, it is therefore not proper for the king of Panchala to grieve over his daughter. No man on earth can now undo the fact that he succeeded in shooting down the target." While Yudhishthira was uttering these words, another messenger swiftly came from the king of Panchala, to announce that the feast had been prepared.'

Section Thirteen

Vaivahika Parva

This parva has 155 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 186: 15 shlokas
Chapter 187: 32 shlokas
Chapter 188: 22 shlokas
Chapter 189: 49 shlokas
Chapter 190: 18 shlokas
Chapter 191: 19 shlokas

Vivaha *means wedding and this parva is about Droupadi's marriage.*

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'The messenger said, "Because of the wedding, King Drupada has prepared a good feast for the bridegroom's party. Come there with Krishna after finishing the daily rituals. Do not delay. These chariots, adorned with golden lotuses and drawn by excellent horses, are worthy of being ridden by those who rule the earth. Ascending on them, all of you come swiftly to the palace of the king of Panchala."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When he[1] left, all the bulls among the Kurus[2] sent the priest on ahead of them. Placing Kunti and Krishna on one chariot, they ascended those great chariots and left. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard from the priest the words of Dharmaraja, he[3] kept ready a large collection of things like fruits, sanctified garlands, shields, armour, seats, cattle, ropes, and other objects used in agriculture, to determine the nature of the Kurus.[4] The king also completely provided for all objects concerning other crafts and all articles used in sports—chariots, horses, armour that were shining, great swords, adorned horses and chariots, the best of bows and the choicest of arrows and spears and lances laced with gold, javelins, catapults and battleaxes, all instruments connected with war. There were beds and seats and many other objects of craftsmanship.

'Taking the righteous Krishna with her, Kunti entered the inner quarters of Drupada. The ladies worshipped the wife of the king of the Kouravas eagerly. O king! On seeing those chief among men, with eyes like those of powerful bulls, dressed in deerskin for upper garments, with broad shoulders and long arms that were like coiled snakes, with the gait of lions, the king, the king's advisers, the king's sons and the king's relatives and attendants were then extremely delighted. Without hesitation or surprise, those warriors then seated themselves on the best of seats, with separate footstools. One after another, they sat, according to age. Well-dressed male and female servants and skilled cooks brought all types of food worthy of kings, in plates made of gold and silver.

'Having eaten, those foremost among men were pleased, and relaxed. They examined all the objects that were laid out and the warriors showed the most interest in the various implements of war. On seeing this, Drupada's sons, the king himself[5] and all his chief advisers were delighted at having realized that the sons of Kunti were the sons and grandsons of kings. They paid their respects.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the greatly radiant king of Panchala spoke to Prince Yudhishthira in the form that is reserved for Brahmanas and cheerfully asked Kunti's son, "Should we know you as Kshatriyas or Brahmanas? Are you accomplished Vaishyas or are you born from the wombs of Shudras? Are you siddhas[6] who use their powers of maya to roam in all directions and have come here from heaven in search of Krishna?[7] O lord! Tell us the truth, because we are in great doubt. Will our hearts not be content when our doubts have been removed? O scorcher of enemies! Will our share of fate prove to be fortunate? From your heart, tell us the truth. Among kings, truthfulness is a better adornment than sacrifices and alms. Therefore, do not say that which is untrue. O destroyer of enemies! O you who are the equal of the gods! After hearing your reply, I will then make arrangements for the marriage according to what is proper."[8] Yudhishthira replied, "O king of Panchala! Do not be disheartened. Be happy. There is no doubt that your wishes have come true. O king! We are Kshatriyas and sons of the great-souled Pandu. Know me to be the eldest of Kunti's sons. These are Bhimasena and Arjuna. O king! Your daughter was won by these in an assemblage of kings. O king of kings! The twins are waiting there, where Krishna is. O bull among kings! Let all sorrow be dispelled from your heart. We are Kshatriyas. Like a lotus, your daughter has been transplanted from one pond to another. O great king! This is the truth that I have told you. You are like our preceptor and our main refuge." On hearing this, King Drupada's eyes brimmed over with joy.

'For some time, he could not answer Yudhishthira properly. Controlling his delight with great effort, the king, the conqueror of enemies, [9] spoke to Yudhishthira in the appropriate form. The one with virtue in his heart[10] asked how they[11] had escaped from that city.[12] The Pandava[13] narrated it in detail, from the beginning. On hearing the narration from Kunti's son, King Drupada censured Dhritarashtra, that ruler of men. Drupada, chief among all men who are eloquent, gave every assurance to Kunti's son Yudhishthira and vowed that he would restore him to his kingdom. On the king's invitation, Kunti, Krishna, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the twins took up residence in that great palace.

'O king! They continued to live there, treated with every respect by Yajnasena.[14] Later, the king and his sons spoke to those[15] who had been reassured. Drupada said, "Let the mighty-armed son[16] of Kuru today accept my daughter's hand in accordance with the prescribed rites. Today, the moment is an auspicious one." On this, the righteous-souled Yudhishthira replied, "O lord of people! Then I too, must take a wife."

Drupada said, “O lord! O warrior! Then you accept my daughter’s hand in accordance with the rites. Or give Krishna in marriage to whomsoever you wish.” Yudhishthira replied, “O king! Droupadi will be the queen to all of us. O lord of the people! This is what has already been ordered by my mother. I am yet unmarried, and so is the Pandava Bhimasena. Your jewel of a daughter has been won by Partha.[17] O king! It is our rule that every jewel we obtain must be equally shared. O best of kings! We are not willing to break that rule now. According to the prescribed norms, Krishna will be the wedded queen of all of us. According to age, let her accept our hands, one after another, before the fire.”

‘Drupada said, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It has been decreed that one man may have many queens. But we have never heard that one woman can have many men. O son of Kunti! Pure as you are, and well acquainted with the path of dharma, you should not commit an act that is counter to dharma, the Vedas and usual practice. Why has your intelligence become thus?” Yudhishthira replied, “O great king! Subtle is the path of dharma; we do not know its direction. Let us therefore follow the path that was trodden by illustrious men in ancient times. My tongue never utters that which is untrue. Nor has my mind ever turned to that which is adharma. This has been commanded by our mother and my mind also approves of it. O king! This is certainly dharma. Therefore, act accordingly, without hesitation. O ruler of the earth! Do not have any doubt on this score.” Drupada said, “O son of Kunti! You yourself, my son Dhrishtadyumna and Kunti must settle among yourselves what should be done now. Tomorrow, I will do that which is proper.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! At that, those three got together and discussed the matter. At that very moment, Dvaipayana arrived there, in accordance with his wishes.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘As soon as they saw him, all the Pandavas and the greatly illustrious son of Panchala[18] stood up. All of them welcomed and paid their respects to the great-souled Krishna.[19] The great-minded one returned their greetings and asked about their welfare. He then sat down on a radiant and golden seat. Instructed by Krishna, the one with infinite energy, those greatest among men[20] also sat down on expensive seats. O lord of the people! After some time, in sweet words, Parshata[21] asked the great-souled one about Droupadi.

'Drupada asked, "O fortunate lord! How can one woman become the wife of many, without leading to sin? Please explain this to us in detail." Vyasa replied, "This dharma has fallen into disuse because it runs counter to the Vedas and common practice. But on this, I wish to hear the opinions of each one of you."

'Drupada said, "In my view, this practice leads to a sin, because it is against the Vedas and common practice. O best of the Brahmanas! Nowhere can a wife of many be found. Nor did the illustrious ones, of ancient times, follow such a dharma. Those who have wisdom should never follow such a dharma. I can therefore never convince myself of acting in this way. To me, this dharma appears to be of doubtful morality." Dhrishtadyumna said, "O bull among the twice-born! O Brahmana! O one rich with austerities! If he follows the path that is righteous, how can an elder brother unite with the wife of his younger brother? The ways of dharma are always subtle and, therefore, we do not know the ways in entirety. Thus, we cannot say what is in accordance with dharma and what is not. O Brahmana! We cannot therefore perform such an act with a clear mind. I cannot say that Krishna should be the wife of five." Yudhishthira said, "My tongue never utters an untruth and my mind never turns to sin. When my mind approves, it cannot be sinful. I have heard in ancient tales that there was a lady named Jatila in the Goutama lineage. She was chief among all virtuous women and consorted with seven sages. O supreme among those who know the path of dharma! It is said that listening to the preceptor is virtue and among all preceptors, the mother is the foremost. She has commanded us that we must always share what we obtain. O best among the twice-born! Thus, do I consider this act virtuous." Kunti said, “It is as the virtuous Yudhishthira has said. I am frightened that my words might become untrue. How can I be saved from a lie?”

‘Vyasa replied, “O fortunate one! You will be saved from a lie. This is eternal dharma. O king of Panchala! I will not reveal this matter before everyone. You will alone hear how this practice was established and why this should be regarded as old and eternal. There is no doubt that what Kounteya[22] has said is in accordance with dharma.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then, the illustrious lord Dvaipyana Vyasa arose and, taking hold of the king’s[23] hand, went into the king’s palace. The Pandavas, Kunti and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna waited despondently for those two to return. Thereupon, Dvaipayana explained to the great-souled king how it came to be that these men’s marriage with a single wife was in conformity with dharma.’

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‘Vyasa said, “O king! In ancient times, the gods performed a great sacrifice in Naimisha forest. There, Vivasvata’s son[24] was the priest who killed the animals. O king! Since he was consecrated in that role, Yama did not kill any creatures.[25] Since death and time were suspended among creatures, the number of beings increased greatly. Then Shakra,[26] Varuna, Kubera, the sadhyas, Rudra, the vasus, the Ashvins—these and other gods gathered together and went to Prajapati, the creator of the world. Alarmed at the increase in the number of humans, they assembled and addressed the preceptor of the worlds. ‘We are trembling with fear. We wish to be happy again. We have come to seek protection with you.’ Brahma replied, ‘Why are you frightened of humans, when all of you are immortal? There should not be any fear in you from mortals.’ The gods said, ‘Since the mortals have become immortals, there is no difference any more. Upset at this equality, we have come to you to seek a distinction.’ Brahma replied, ‘Vivasvata’s son is now engaged in the great sacrifice. It is for this reason that humans are not dying. When he has single-mindedly finished his sacrificial acts, death will again return among them. When that time comes, Vivasvata’s son will be strengthened through your energies. When the time of death comes at the end, humans will have no energy left in them.' Hearing these words of the first-born god,[27] they[28] went where the gods were sacrificing. When those immensely strong ones assembled there, they saw a lotus[29] in the Bhagirathi.[30]

'"On seeing that lotus, they were surprised. Indra, chief among the warriors among them, went where the Ganga always issues and saw a lady as radiant as the fire. The lady had come there to fetch water and was immersed in the goddess Ganga. But she was weeping and teardrops fell from her eyes into the water and became golden lotuses. On seeing this wonderful sight, the wielder of the vajra[31] went up to the lady and asked, 'Who are you and why are you crying? I want to know the truth. If you wish, please tell me.' The woman replied, 'O Shakra![32] I am unfortunate and you may know who I am and why I am weeping. O king! I will lead the way. Come with me and you will yourself see why I am crying.' He[33] followed her and soon saw a handsome young man. He was surrounded by young women, was seated on a throne and was playing dice on the peak of the king of mountains.[34]

'"The king[35] of the gods spoke to him, 'Know that this universe and this world are under my sway. Know me to be the lord of everything.' But the person took no notice of what he had said and continued to be immersed in the dice. Indra became angry and repeated what he had said. On seeing that Shakra was angry, that god cast a glance at him and smiled. At that glance, the king of the gods was paralysed and stood motionless at the spot, like a pillar. When the game of dice was over, he[36] spoke to the weeping goddess, 'Bring him here. I will make sure that pride never enters his heart again.' As soon as the woman had touched him, Shakra's limbs were paralysed and he fell down on the ground. Then the god with the fierce energy told him, 'O Shakra! Never act like this again. Remove this great king of the mountains, because your strength and energy are beyond measurement. Enter the centre of the hole and wait with the others, who are like you and the sun in splendour.' He[37] rolled away the peak of the great mountain and saw four others who were like him in radiance. On seeing them, he was extremely saddened and said, 'Shall I also become like them?' Then, the god Girisha[38] looked at the wielder of the vajra with eyes dilated with anger and said, 'O Shatakratu![39] Enter this cavern, because in your folly, you have insulted me in front of my eyes.' Thus addressed by the lord, the king of the gods shuddered and shook, because of the curse. His limbs went limp, like the leaf of a fig tree stirred by the wind on the peak of the king of the mountains.

'"Shuddering at the god's sudden words, he[40] joined his palms and told the terrible god who has many manifestations, 'O Bhava![41] Show me a way out today.' Smilingly, the god with the terrible bow replied, 'Those who act like this, do not find an escape. These others were like you and will become again. Therefore, enter the cavern and lie down there. There is no doubt that all your fates will be the same. All of you will have to be born in human wombs. Having achieved great feats of violence there and having sent a large number towards their deaths, you will again attain the world of Indra through the merit of your actions. You will achieve all that I have said and much more, with varied significance.' The earlier Indras said, 'We will go from the world of gods to that of men. Salvation is difficult to obtain there. Let the gods Dharma, Vayu, Maghavan[42] and the Ashvins beget us on our mother.' Having heard this, the wielder of the vajra once again spoke to the greatest of the gods,[43] 'With my semen, I will create a man who can accomplish this task. He will be my son and will be the fifth among these.' In his good nature, the illustrious lord with the terrible bow granted them the wishes they desired. He ordained that the woman, the most beautiful in the worlds, who was none other than Shri[44] herself, would be their wife in the world of men. Thereafter, accompanied by them,[45] he[46] went to the god Narayana, who is beyond measure. He[47] approved of everything and thus it was that they were born on earth.

'"Hari[48] plucked two hairs from his body. One was white and the other was black. These two hairs entered the wombs of two women from the Yadu lineage, Rohini and Devaki. One of them[49] became Baladeva and the second one that was black became Keshava. Those ones who were like Shakra and were earlier confined in the mountain cavern are none other than the valorous Pandavas, while the Pandava Savyasachi[50] is a part of Shakra. O king! Thus it was that the former Indras were born as the Pandavas, and the celestial Lakshmi, earlier ordained to be their wife, was born as the divinely beautiful Droupadi. She whose radiance is like the sun and the moon and whose fragrance can be smelt from the distance of one krosha, cannot have arisen from the earth. At the end of the sacrifice, she arose through divine intervention. O ruler of men! I will happily grant you a most wonderful boon. With this divine eyesight, behold Kunti's sons, in their earlier divine forms."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then the pure Brahmana Vyasa, performer of extremely generous deeds, gave divine sight to the king through his ascetic powers. The king saw them in their earlier forms. He saw them divine and young, broad-chested and 5 cubits tall, adorned with golden garlands, crowns and jewels, with complexions as radiant as that of the fire or the sun, each resembling Shakra, dressed in divine garments that were beautiful and golden, resplendent with fragrant garlands that were the best, the equals of the three-eyed god,[51] the vasus and the celestial adityas, with every quality. On seeing the earlier Indras, King Drupada was surprised and pleased. With the power of divine maya that is beyond measure, he saw that supreme of women, Shri personified. In beauty, splendour and fame, he saw her to be the right wife for those Indras on earth. On seeing this wonderful sight, he touched the feet of Satyavati's son and said, with a tranquil mind, "O supreme rishi! For you, this is no wonder."

'Vyasa replied, "In a hermitage in a forest, there was once the daughter of a great-souled rishi, who was beautiful and pure, but could not get a husband. It is said that through her austerities, she pleased the god Shankara.[52] Pleased with her, the god himself spoke to her, 'Tell me what you want.’ Thus addressed, she repeatedly told the boon-granting supreme god, ‘I wish to have a husband who is accomplished in every way.’ Then the god Shankara happily granted her the boon and said, ‘O fortunate one! You will have five excellent husbands.’ The one who had pleased the god said, ‘O Shankara! I wish to have only one husband who possesses all the qualities.’ The god of gods, extremely pleased with her, again uttered these holy words. ‘You have addressed me five times, asking for a husband. O fortunate one! It shall be as you have asked. You will have good fortune and all this will happen in one of your future births.’ O Drupada! So this daughter, with the form of a goddess, was born to you. Krishna Parshati[53] was preordained to be the wife of five and remain unblemished. The divine Shri was born out of the great sacrifice to be the wife of the Pandavas. After performing severe austerities, she was born as your daughter. O King Drupada! That resplendent goddess, sought after by the gods themselves, was ordained to be the wife of five through her own actions. She was created by the self-creating one[54] to be the wife of these gods. On hearing this, act as you wish.”’

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‘Drupada said, “O maharshi! I sought to act in the way that I had said only when I had not heard these words from you. I cannot act against what has been ordained. I wish to act as you have said. The knot tied by destiny cannot be untied. There is nothing that results from our own actions. The rites set out for one husband must now become the rites for this rule.[55] Since Krishna herself repeatedly asked for many husbands in ancient times, the great god accordingly granted her the boon. The god himself knows what is best. Since Shankara has ordained it to be thus, dharma or adharma, I will commit no sin. Therefore, since Krishna is ordained to them, let them take her hand as they wish, according to the prescribed rites.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then the great lord[56] spoke to Dharmaraja, “O son of Pandu! Today is an auspicious day. The moon has entered the constellation Pushya. Today, you accept Krishna's hand first." At that, King Yajnasena[57] and his son made arrangements for the wedding. He made ready a lot of wealth for the marriage. After she had bathed and had been adorned with many jewels, he brought out his daughter Krishna. To witness the marriage ceremony, the king's friends and relatives happily came there, with advisers and many Brahmanas and chief citizens. Crowded with those who had come for alms, the extensive festive grounds thick with lotuses and lilies, lined with heaps of precious stones, his palace looked like the sky, studded with brilliant stars. Then the young Kuru princes bathed. Adorned with earrings and ornaments, dressed in expensive garments and perfumed with sandalwood paste, they performed the preparatory ceremony and other auspicious rites. O lord! Accompanied by their priest Dhoumya, as radiant as the fire, they then joyfully entered, in due order and one after another, like mighty bulls entering a pen.

'Then the priest[58] who knew the Vedas built and lit the sacrificial fire and poured offerings, with mantras. He then called Yudhishthira and united him with Krishna. Then the Veda-knowing one married them, making them walk around the fire, hand in hand. Then the priest took leave of that ornament of battle[59] and went out of the palace. Then those maharathas, bringers of fame to the Kuru lineage, sons of a king among men, took the hand of that supreme among women, in succession, one day after another.[60] The devarshi[61] told me something extremely wonderful, beyond human powers. That slender-waisted and great lady regained her virginity from one day to another.[62]

'When the marriage was over, Drupada gave those maharathas a lot of gifts—100 supreme chariots adorned with gold, each yoked to four horses with golden bridles; 100 elephants with lotus marks on them, like a hundred mountains with golden peaks; and 100 young maidservants dressed in expensive garments and adorned with ornaments and garlands. Making the fire his witness, the king of the lunar dynasty,[63] befitting his might, separately gave each of those[64] a lot of wealth, garments and ornaments and other riches. When the marriage was over and the mighty Pandavas, the equals of Indra, had obtained their Shri, along with her great wealth, they lived in the city of the king of Panchala.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After his alliance with the Pandavas, Drupada's fears were dispelled. He did not even fear the gods. All the ladies in the great-souled Drupada's household came to Kunti. They mentioned their names and saluted her, with their foreheads touching her feet. Dressed in a silken garment and with the marriage thread still encircling her,[65] Krishna also paid her respects to her mother-in-law and stood before her, her palms joined.

'Lovingly, Pritha bestowed her blessings on Droupadi, endowed with beauty and auspicious marks and with a pure disposition and good character. "As Indrani[66] is to Harihaya,[67] as Svaha[68] is to Vibhavasu,[69] as Rohini[70] is to Soma,[71] as Damayanti is to Nala, as Bhadra[72] is to Vaishravana,[73] as Arundhati is to Vashishtha and as Lakshmi is to Narayana, so may you be to your husbands. O fortunate one! May you be the mother of long-lived and valorous sons. May you be happy. May you be fortunate and prosperous. May you be strict in your vows and a wife to your husbands at the time of sacrifices. May you always pass your time serving your guests in the proper way—holy men, the aged, the young and your seniors. May you be anointed queen, with the righteous king,[74] in the kingdom and the capital of Kurujangala. Let the entire earth be conquered by your immensely powerful husbands and presented to Brahmanas in a great horse-sacrifice. O accomplished one! O treasure of all virtues! May all the riches of the world belong to you. May you be happy for 100 autumns. O daughter-in-law! I bless you today on seeing you in silken garments. I shall bless you again when you have given birth to a son with all the qualities."

‘After the Pandavas had taken a wife, Hari[75] sent them many golden ornaments, adorned with pearls and lapis lazuli. Madhava[76] also sent them expensive garments from many regions, blankets, deer skins, jewels that were beautiful and soft, and expensive beds, seats, vehicles and vessels, adorned with diamonds and lapis lazuli. Krishna also gave them thousands of young maidservants, adorned with ornaments, beautiful, accomplished and brought from many regions, well trained, and tame elephants, many excellent and caparisoned horses and many chariots, drawn by horses with large teeth and excellent colours, bedecked with golden cloth. And Madhusudana,[77] whose soul cannot be measured, also sent them in a separate heap crores of pure gold coins. In a desire to please Govinda,[78] Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, who was filled with pure joy, accepted all this.’

Section Fourteen

Viduragamana Parva

This parva has 174 shlokas and seven chapters.

Chapter 192: 29 shlokas
Chapter 193: 19 shlokas
Chapter 194: 25 shlokas
Chapter 195: 19 shlokas
Chapter 196: 28 shlokas
Chapter 197: 29 shlokas
Chapter 198: 25 shlokas

Agamana *means arrival or coming and this parva is about Vidura's arrival.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then trusted spies brought the news to the kings that the beautiful and fortunate Droupadi had got the Pandavas as her husbands and that the great-souled one who had strung the bow and had pierced the target was Arjuna, greatest among those who are victorious and a mighty wielder of the bow and arrows. The great-souled and strong one who had lifted up Shalya, the king of Madra, and had whirled him around and had frightened all men in the fight with a tree, himself without fear, was none other than Bhima, whose touch was terrible and who was the tormentor of armies of enemies. When they heard that Kunti's and Pandu's sons had assumed the disguise of peaceful Brahmanas, those rulers of men were greatly surprised, because they had earlier heard that Kunti and her sons had been burnt alive in the house of lac. Those rulers of men therefore regarded them[1] as having been born again. Remembering the extremely cruel deed of Purochana, they cursed Bhishma and the Kourava Dhritarashtra. When the svayamvara was over, all the kings learnt that the Pandavas had been chosen and returned the way they had come.

'On seeing that Arjuna, who was borne by white horses, had been chosen by Droupadi, King Duryodhana was very depressed and returned with his brothers, Ashvatthama, his maternal uncle,[2] Karna and Kripa. Full of shame, Duhshasana softly spoke to him, "O king! If Dhananjaya[3] had not been disguised as a Brahmana, he would never have succeeded in obtaining Droupadi. No one recognized him because of that. I think destiny is supreme and human endeavours are fruitless. O brother! Cursed be our human endeavours when the Pandavas are still alive." Thus, talking to one another and blaming Purochana, they entered Hastinapura, miserable and downcast. They were frightened and all their resolutions disappeared when they discovered that the immensely powerful sons of Pritha[4] had escaped the fire and were allied with Drupada. They thought of Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and all the other sons of Drupada, all skilled in the art of war.

'On learning that Droupadi had chosen the Pandavas and that Dhritarashtra's sons had returned in shame, their pride broken, Vidura was very happy. O lord of the people! The kshatta went to Dhritarashtra and said in great wonder, "The Kurus[5] are prospering from good fortune." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this from Vidura, Dhritarashtra, the son of Vichitravirya, was overjoyed and exclaimed, "What great fortune!" In his ignorance, the king of men, who only possessed the eyesight of knowledge, had thought that Droupadi had chosen his eldest son, Duryodhana. He ordered that many ornaments be made for Droupadi and sent word to his son Duryodhana that Krishna[6] should be brought in. It was then that Vidura told him that the Pandavas had been chosen, that those warriors were all in good health and that they had been duly honoured by Drupada. They had many allies and relatives now, with large armies.

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Pandu’s sons are dearer to me than they were to Pandu. O Vidura! My joy is greater, now that I know that those brave Pandavas are in good health, with friends. O kshatta! Which king, deprived of fortune on earth and in search of power, would not desire to have an alliance with Drupada and his relatives?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the king uttered such words, Vidura replied, “O king! May this intelligence of yours last for a hundred years.” O ruler of the people! Then Duryodhana and Radha’s son[7] came to Dhritarashtra and told him, “We cannot speak in Vidura’s presence. We wish to speak to you in private. What do you want to do now? O father! Do you take the prosperity of your rivals to be that of your own? O supreme among men! You applauded them before the kshatta. O one who is unblemished! You act one way when another needs to be done. O father! We must always act in a way so as to weaken their strength. The time has come for us to counsel one another, so that they[8] do not swallow us up, with our sons, armies and relatives.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “I myself have the worries that you do. But I do not wish to reveal my attitude to Vidura. Therefore, I particularly praised their qualities, so that Vidura does not know my true wishes, even through a gesture. This is the time. O Suyodhana![9] Tell me what you think. O Radheya![10] You also tell me what you think.”

‘Duryodhana said, “Let us now use skilled and able Brahmanas who have our trust to create conflict among the Pandavas, between the sons of Kunti and the sons of Madri. Or let us tempt King Drupada, his sons and all his advisers with large presents of wealth so that they abandon Kunti’s son, King Yudhishthira. Or let them[11] individually be told how difficult it is to live here,[12] so that the Pandavas decide to live there,[13] away from us. Or let artful and skilled men create dissension among the sons of Pritha.[14] Or let them[15] incite Krishna[16] against them. That should be easy, because they are many.[17] Let the Pandavas be dissatisfied with her, and she with them. O king! Let artful and skilled men secretly bring about Bhimasena’s death. He is the strongest among them. O king! When he is dead, they will lose their enterprise and their energy. Without him, they will no longer wish for the kingdom, because he is their only support. Arjuna is invincible in battle as long as he is supported from the back by Vrikodara.[18] Without him, Phalguna[19] is not even worth a fourth of Radheya[20] in battle. With Bhimasena dead, they will know their great weakness and knowing our great strength, the feeble ones will perish. O king! If the sons of Pritha come here and submit themselves to our desires, we can confidently destroy them. Or, one after another, we can seduce them with pretty women so that Krishna[21] is disenchanted with Kunti’s sons. Or we can send Radheya to bring them here and on the way here, get them killed through an attack by dacoits whom we trust. Employ, without delay, whichever of these strategies seems to you to be faultless. Time passes. As long as their confidence in King Drupada, who is like a bull, is not established, until then, we can succeed. But not afterwards. O father! These are my views. We should suppress them. O Radheya! What do you think? Are these views good or bad?”’

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‘Karna said, “O Duryodhana! In my view, your opinions are not distinguished by wisdom. O extender of the Kuru lineage! The Pandavas cannot be overcome through trickery. O brave warrior! In the past, you have used subtle tricks to suppress them, but you did not succeed. O king! Then they lived near you and were children who had not developed friends and allies. But you could not hold them down. They now live far away and have grown up. They have developed friends and allies. It is my firm conviction that Kunti’s sons cannot be injured through trickery. Nor can they be subjugated through vices, because they are protected by fate. They desire to have the kingdom of their fathers and grandfathers back. We can’t injure them through such means. It is impossible to create dissension among them. It is impossible to create dissension among those who have taken a common wife. Nor will we succeed in alienating Krishna[22] from them. She chose them in a time of adversity and they are now prosperous. Women have a quality that they desire many husbands. Krishna has got this and can't be alienated. The king of Panchala[23] is virtuous and does not crave for riches. Even if we give him our entire kingdom, it is certain that he will not desert the sons of Kunti. His son[24] also has all the good qualities and is attached to the Pandavas. Therefore, I do not think that any subtle strategy that you think of will ever be able to injure them.

'"O bull among men! But today, this is what is good and advisable for us. O lord of the earth! The Pandavas can be struck down as long as they have not established their roots. O lord! Agree to smite them with arms. As long as our side is strong and that of the Panchalas is weak, we should strike them with arms, without hesitation. O son of Gandhari! Strike them with arms quickly and with valour, before their chariots, their friends and their relatives gather. O king! Display your valour before the king of Panchala and his immensely brave son decide to take action. Show your valour before Varshneya[25] arrives with his Yadava army to restore the Pandavas to their kingdom. O ruler of the earth! Riches, diverse objects of pleasure, kingdoms—there is nothing that Krishna will not sacrifice for the sake of the Pandavas. The great-souled Bharata[26] acquired the earth through his valour. The slayer of Paka[27] obtained lordship of the three worlds through his valour. O lord of the earth! Valour is always praised among Kshatriyas. O bull among kings! Valour is the natural dharma of those who are brave. O king! Therefore, without any more delay, let us defeat Drupada with a large army with four components[28] and bring the Pandavas here. The Pandavas cannot be defeated through conciliation, gifts or dissension. Therefore, vanquish them with your valour. O ruler of men! After defeating them through your valour, rule over the extensive earth. I do not see any other way of accomplishing our objective."'

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Radheya’s words, the immensely powerful Dhritarashtra praised him and said, “O son of a suta! You are blessed with great wisdom and are skilled in the use of weapons. Such words that speak of valour are worthy of you. But let Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and the two of you consult each other and arrive at a course of action that is the best for our welfare.” Thereupon, the immensely famous King Dhritarashtra summoned all his advisers and consulted them.’

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‘Bhishma said, “I will never agree to a war with Pandu’s sons. There is no doubt that Pandu was as dear to me as Dhritarashtra is. To me, the sons of Gandhari are like the sons of Kunti. O Dhritarashtra! They must be protected as much by me as by you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Like they are to me and the king,[29] they should be the same way to Duryodhana and the other sons of Kuru. Therefore, I can never favour a war with them. Have a treaty with those warriors and give them land. For those best of the Kurus,[30] there is no doubt that this is the kingdom of their fathers and grandfathers. O Duryodhana! Just as you consider this kingdom to be your parental property, the Pandavas also see it as their paternal property. If the Pandavas, who practise austerities, cannot get this kingdom, how can it be yours or of anyone from the Bharata lineage? O bull among the Bharatas! If you think that you have acquired this kingdom through what is right, I think that they rightfully think that they obtained the kingdom before you. O tiger among men! Peacefully give them half of the kingdom. That will be the best for everyone. If you act in any other way, no good will come out of it. There is no doubt that you will be covered in dishonour.

‘“Try to preserve your good reputation. A good reputation is the source of supreme strength. It is said that a man who has lost his reputation, lives in vain. O son of Gandhari! O descendant of Kuru! As long as a man’s good reputation lasts, he does not die. He is destroyed when his good reputation is lost. Therefore, follow the dharma that is worthy of the Kuru lineage. O one with mighty arms! Act as your ancestors have acted before you. It is fortunate that those warriors are alive. It is fortunate that Pritha is alive. It is fortunate that the evil Purochana himself perished, without being successful. O son of Gandhari! From the time I heard what had happened to the sons of Kunti, I was not able to look at any living being. O tiger among men! People do not think Purochana as guilty as they think you. O king! Therefore, the escape of the Pandavas from that destruction and their reappearance is something that should be wished for. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Know that as long as those warriors are alive, the wielder of the vajra[31] himself cannot deprive them of their paternal property, because they are established in dharma and are united. They have been deprived of an equal share in the kingdom through adharma. If you wish to act in accordance with dharma, if you wish to do that which pleases me, if you wish to do that which is good, give them half.”’

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‘Drona said, “O king! It has been heard that Dhritarashtra’s friends who have been summoned for consultation should always speak that which is right and true and brings fame. My views are the same as those of the great-souled Bhishma. Let Kunti’s sons have a share in the kingdom. That is eternal dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Send a soft-spoken man to Drupada. Let him carry many riches for them. Let him carry many expensive presents with him. Let him speak to him[32] in good fortune that comes about because of this alliance. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let him repeatedly tell Drupada and Dhrishtadyumna that both you and Duryodhana are extremely pleased with what has happened. Let him say that this alliance is appropriate and pleasing. Let him repeatedly pacify the sons of Kunti and the sons of Madri. O king of kings! On your command, let him present Droupadi with many brilliant and golden ornaments. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let presents also be given to all the sons of Drupada and appropriate ones to all the Pandavas and Kunti. Thus pacifying Drupada and the Pandavas, he should immediately propose their return.[33] When those warriors receive the permission to return, let Duhshasana and Vikarna[34] go to receive them with a magnificent army. O best of kings! Let the sons of Pandu always be treated by you with honour. As desired by the people, let them be instated in their ancestral kingdom. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Bhishma and I believe that this should be your conduct towards the Pandavas, who are like your own sons.”

‘Karna said, “These two[35] have always been sustained, in all their actions, through your riches and your honour. What can be more surprising than that they should now offer advice that is not for your own good? How can the wise accept advice that is apparently good, rendered by a man with malice in his heart, though he hides his true intentions? In times of adversity, friends can neither do that which is good, nor that which is harmful. A man’s misery or happiness depends on destiny alone. A wise one, a fool, an old man, a child, one who has friends and one who has none finds anything anywhere. We have heard that in earlier times, there was a king named Ambuvicha. He was the king in Rajagriha and ruled over Magadha. He was a king who had no abilities. All that he did was to breathe air in and out. All his affairs were in the hands of his ministers. He had a minister named Mahakarni, who became the sole lord and thanks to the authority he had obtained, began to dishonour the king. That fool appropriated for himself everything that belonged to the king—his objects of desire, his women, his jewels, his riches and all his power. But having obtained all this, his avarice only increased and having appropriated everything else, he coveted the kingdom. We have heard that the king had no abilities, he only breathed air. But despite this, and despite all his attempts, he[36] could not take the kingdom away from him.[37] O lord of the people! There was no human endeavour in him.[38] The kingdom was his through destiny. If this kingdom is yours through destiny, it will remain with you without a doubt, notwithstanding the enmity of all the worlds. But if ordained otherwise, it will never remain with you, no matter how much you try. You are learned. Therefore, remembering all this, judging the honesty and dishonesty of your advisers, weigh the advice of those who have spoken for the good and those who have spoken for evil.”

‘Drona said, “We know that you say this out of malice and the reasons for that. You are wicked and to bring injury to the Pandavas, you find fault with us. O Karna! Know that what I have said is for the supreme welfare of everyone, for the propagation of the Kuru lineage. If you think this leads to evil, tell us that which brings supreme welfare. If my advice, leading to the supreme welfare I have described, is not followed, it is my opinion that the lineage of the Kurus will soon be destroyed.”’

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‘Vidura said, “O king! There is no doubt that your friends have spoken that which brings your greatest welfare. But words do not remain with those who are unwilling to listen. O king! Bhishma, the son of Shantanu and supreme among the Kurus, has spoken that which is for your greatest welfare. But you do not accept it. In many ways, Drona also said that which is for your welfare. But Karna, the son of Radha, does not believe this to be good for you. O king! After thinking about it, I do not find anyone who is a better friend to you than these two[39] lions among men, supreme in their wisdom. These two are old in age, in wisdom and in their knowledge of the sacred texts. O lord over kings! They regard the sons of Pandu with equal eyes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! There is no doubt that in virtue and truthfulness, they are not inferior to Rama, the son of Dasharatha, or Gaya.[40] Never before have they given you bad advice. Nor have they ever done that which brings you injury. Therefore, why should these tigers among men, whose strength comes from their truthfulness, give you advice that is not for your welfare? O ruler of men! These best of men are known in this world for their wisdom. They will never give you bad advice, nor say that which is wicked. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is my firm conviction that these two, well versed in what is right, will not take either side for the sake of personal gain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I consider this to bring the greatest welfare to you. O king!

There is no doubt that the Pandavas are your sons, as Duryodhana and the others are.

'"Therefore, those advisers who unwisely advise you against them, don't really have your interests at heart. O king! If you have partiality in your heart,[41] it is certain it does you no good to encourage your inner feelings. O king! Therefore, I certainly do not think that those two great-souled and illustrious ones have said anything that leads to evil. However, you are not inclined towards that. O tiger among men! What those bulls among men have said about their[42] invincibility is quite true. May you be fortunate. O king! Can the handsome Pandava, Savyasachi Dhananjaya,[43] ever be vanquished in battle by Maghavan[44] himself? Can the great Bhimasena, with strong arms and the strength of 10,000 elephants, ever be vanquished in battle by the gods? Can anyone who wishes to live vanquish in battle the twins,[45] well skilled in battle and like the sons of Yama himself? How can the eldest Pandava, in whom patience, compassion, mercy, truthfulness and valour are always present, ever be vanquished in war? With Rama[46] on their side, Janardana[47] as their adviser and Satyaki as their supporter, is there anyone whom they have not already vanquished in battle? Drupada is their father-in-law. Drupada's son, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and his other brave brothers are their brothers-in-law. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Knowing that they cannot be vanquished and knowing that their claim to the kingdom is prior to yours, you must act towards them in accordance with dharma.

'"O king! On account of the act of Purochana, you have been stained by great infamy. You must cleanse yourself of that by behaving kindly towards them. O king! We have earlier waged a great war with King Drupada. Our side will be strengthened if we can get him as an ally. O ruler of the people! The Dasharhas[48] are powerful and numerous. They will be where Krishna is. And where Krishna is, victory will certainly be there. O king! Unless cursed by destiny, who seeks to obtain through war that which can be obtained through conciliation? O king! Having heard that Pritha's[49] sons are alive, the inhabitants of the city and the country are extremely happy and eager to see them. Do what is pleasing to them. Duryodhana, Karna and Shakuni, the son of Subala, are evil, foolish and young. Do not listen to their words. O king endowed with all the qualities! Long ago, I told you that this kingdom and its subjects will be destroyed through Duryodhana's fault."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "Shantanu's son, the learned Bhishma, the illustrious rishi Drona and you yourself have spoken the truth and that which is best for me. There is no doubt that since those maharathas, the sons of Kunti, are the sons of Pandu, they are also my sons according to dharma. Since my sons are entitled to this kingdom, there is no doubt that Pandu's sons are also entitled to this kingdom. O kshatta![50] Go and honourably bring them[51] and their mother here. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Also bring with them Krishna[52] of divine beauty. It is through good fortune that the sons of Pritha are alive. It is through good fortune that Pritha is alive. It is through good fortune that those maharathas have obtained Drupada's daughter. It is through good fortune that our strength has increased. It is through good fortune that Purochana is dead. O greatly radiant one! It is through good fortune that my great grief has been dispelled."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thereupon, on Dhritarashtra's command, Vidura went to Yajnasena[53] and the Pandavas. O king! Having gone there, that righteous man, learned in all the shastras, addressed Drupada appropriately and waited on him. He[54] too received Vidura in the appropriate way and they courteously asked about each other's welfare. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He[55] saw there the Pandavas and Vasudeva.[56] He embraced them lovingly and asked about their welfare. One after another, they worshipped Vidura, who was immensely wise. O king! On Dhritarashtra's instructions, he repeatedly and affectionately asked

Pandu’s sons about their welfare. O lord of the people! He then gave the Pandavas, Kunti, Droupadi and Drupada’s sons the many jewels and other riches that had been sent by the Kouravas through him.

‘In the presence of the Pandavas and Keshava,[57] the supremely wise Vidura then addressed Drupada in modest words of affection. “O king! Listen to my words with your sons and ministers. Dhritarashtra, his sons, his ministers and his relatives have repeatedly and happily enquired about your welfare. O lord of men! He is delighted with this alliance with you. The immensely wise Bhishma, the son of Shantanu, and all the other Kouravas have enquired about your welfare in every way. The great archer Drona, the son of Bharadvaja and your beloved friend, has enquired about your welfare, embracing you. O king of Panchala! Dhritarashtra and all the other Kouravas regard themselves as fortunate at this alliance with you. O Yajnasena! This alliance with you has given them greater pleasure than acquiring a new kingdom.

‘“O lord! Knowing all this, you must allow the Pandavas to depart. The Kurus are extremely eager to see Pandu’s sons. These bulls among men have been away from home for a long time. They and Pritha must be eager to see their city. All the chief women of the Kuru lineage and all the inhabitants of the city and the country are waiting to see the Panchala princess, Krishna. O illustrious one! It is my view that without any more delay, you should issue instructions for the Pandavas to go there[58] with their wife. O king! When the great-souled Pandavas have got your permission, I shall send word to Dhritarashtra through swift messengers, and the sons of Kunti can leave, with Kunti and Krishna.”’

Section Fifteen

Rajya-labha Parva

This parva has a single chapter and there are only fifty shlokas. Rajya-labha *means the acquisition of the kingdom.*

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‘Drupada said, “O greatly learned Vidura! It is indeed as you have told me now. O lord! I am also greatly delighted at the alliance that we have just concluded. It is proper that these great-souled brothers should now return home. But it is not proper that I should say this myself, in my own words. If that is what the brave Yudhishthira, son of Kunti, Bhimasena and Arjuna, the twins,[1] who are bulls among men, and Rama[2] and Krishna, learned in the precepts of the law, desire, then the Pandavas should go there. Those two tigers among men[3] are always engaged in that which is good for them.”[4]

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! My followers and I are now dependent on you. We will do that which you tell us is for our own good.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At that, Vasudeva said, “I am of the view that they should go. But we must go by what King Drupada, who knows everything about the law, suggests.” Drupada replied, “Having thought about all the circumstances, my views are in agreement with what the mighty-armed and valiant Dasharha,[5] supreme among men, thinks. The time is right. There is no doubt that the greatly fortunate sons of Kunti, the sons of Pandu, are now as dear to me as they are to Vasudeva himself. Yudhishthira, Kunti's son and the son of Dharma, himself does not seek their welfare as much as Keshava, tiger among men, does." Then the great-souled Drupada gave them leave to depart. The Pandavas, Krishna and the extremely wise Vidura took with them Droupadi Krishna and the illustrious Kunti, and with pleasure and a leisurely pace, travelled towards the city of Hastinapura.[6]

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing that the warriors were coming, Kourava Dhritarashtra sent the Kouravas to receive the Pandavas—the great archer Vikarna, Chitrasena, the supreme archer Drona and Kripa, the son of Goutama. Then, surrounded by them, the maharatha and radiant warriors slowly entered the city of Hastinapura, their resplendence increasing. Those tigers among men were freed from their grief and sorrow. The city became radiant with wonder. Dear to the hearts of the people, the Pandavas heard loud exclamations from the citizens, always eager to do what was dear to them.[7] "The tiger among men, the one of righteous conduct,[8] has returned. He always protected us with the rule of law, as if we were his near relatives. It seems without doubt as if the great King Pandu, who loved the forest, has returned today from the forest, to do that which pleases us and is good for our welfare. Can there be any greater joy for us, now that the brave sons of Kunti have returned to the city? If we have given alms and sacrificial offerings, if we have performed austerities, let the Pandavas remain in the city for a hundred autumns." They[9] worshipped the feet of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma and others who deserved it, and asking about the welfare of everyone in the city, entered the place earmarked for them at Dhritarashtra's command.

'When those immensely strong and great souls had rested for some time, they were summoned by King Dhritarashtra and the son of Shantanu.[10] Dhritarashtra said, "O son of Kunti![11] Listen with your brothers to what I have to say. So that strife does not arise again, go to Khandavaprastha. No one can harm you there, if you are protected there by Partha, as the thirty gods are by the wielder of the vajra.[12] Go to

Khandavaprastha and take half the kingdom.” Those bulls among men accepted the king’s words and saluting everyone set out for that terrible forest. Having received half the kingdom, they entered Khandavaprastha.

‘With Krishna leading them, the invincible Pandavas went there and made it as beautiful a place as heaven. Led by Dvaipayana, the maharathas selected a pure and holy place, performed propitiatory ceremonies and measured out the land for a city. It was surrounded by moats as wide as the ocean and walls that rose high up into the sky. It was white like the clouds and like snow-covered mountains. This greatest of cities was as resplendent as Bhogavati[13] of the nagas. It was protected by terrible double-doored gates that were like two-winged Garudas. The high towers were like dense clouds, like many Mandara mountains. It was well covered with many weapons, with sharp spears and javelins like double-tongued snakes and impenetrable to the weapons of enemies. The splendid and spiralling turrets were guarded by warriors and well stocked with weapons of attack. There were many sharp hooks and shataghnis[14] and other weapons of war. Great iron chakras adorned that best of cities. The streets were wide and well laid out, preventing collisions among large chariots. It shone with many beautiful white mansions. Like a mass of dense clouds circled by lightning and reflecting the image of heaven, it came to be known as Indraprastha.

‘“In that lovely and beautiful place was the dwelling of the Kouravas.[15] It was full of every kind of treasure, like the palace of the treasurer[16] himself. O king! Brahmanas, the best of those who knew all the Vedas, went there. It was a desired habitation for those who knew all the tongues. Desiring to earn wealth, many merchants from every direction went there. Desirous of living there, came many artisans of every craft. Lovely gardens surrounded the city, with *amras,*[17]*amratakas,*[18]*nipas,*[19] ashokas,[20]*champakas,*[21]*punnagas,*[22]*nagapushpas,*[23]*lakuchas,*[24]*panasas,*[25] shalas,[26]*talas,*[27]*kadambas,*[28]*bakulas*[29] and *ketakas.*[30] These trees were

beautiful, full of flowers, and bent down with the burden of their fruit. *Amlokas*,[31] *lodhras*,[32] blossoming *ankolas*,[33] *jambus*,[34] *patalas*,[35] *kubjakas*,[36] *atimuktakas*,[37] *karaviras*,[38] *parij*
and many other kinds of trees were there, always adorned with flowers and fruit and swarming with many different kinds of birds. There echoed the calls of frenzied peacocks and delighted cuckoos. There were houses that were as white as mirrors and bowers full of creepers. There were artificial hillocks designed to bring pleasure. There were ponds filled with clear water and charming lakes that were fragrant with lotuses and water lilies and adorned with many swans, geese and chakravaka[40] birds. The beautiful ponds were surrounded by many trees and there were many beautiful and large tanks.

'O great king! Living in that large kingdom populated by holy people, the joy of the Pandavas continued to increase eternally. Thus, because of the righteous conduct of Bhishma and the king,[41] the Pandavas came to live in Khandavaprastha. With the five great archers,[42] each like an Indra, that best of cities was adorned like Bhogavati of the nagas. O king! Having settled them there and taking the consent of the Pandavas, the brave Keshava, with Rama,[43] then went to Dvaravati.'[44]

Section Sixteen

Arjuna-vanavasa Parva

This parva has 298 shlokas.

Chapter 200: 23 shlokas
Chapter 201: 32 shlokas
Chapter 202: 27 shlokas
Chapter 203: 30 shlokas
Chapter 204: 30 shlokas
Chapter 205: 30 shlokas
Chapter 206: 34 shlokas
Chapter 207: 26 shlokas
Chapter 208: 21 shlokas
Chapter 209: 24 shlokas
Chapter 210: 21 shlokas

This parva has 11 chapters, Chapters 200 through 210. The word vana *means forest and the word* vasa *means to live. So this parva is about Arjuna's sojourn in the forest and begins with the reasons for his banishment. It recounts his marriage to Ulupi and Chitrangada. This parva also has the Sunda and Upasunda story.*

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Janamejaya said, 'O one blessed with the power of austerities! All those great-souled Pandavas are my ancestors. After obtaining the kingdom of Indraprastha, what did those great-souled ones do? Those five rulers of men had a common wife in Krishna.[1] How did their lawful wife Droupadi follow their wishes? How did they, the immensely fortunate ones, prevent dissension among themselves? How did they behave with one another after they had united with Krishna? O one blessed with the power of austerities! I wish to hear all this in detail.'

Vaishampayana said, 'With Dhritarashtra's permission, the Pandavas, tigers among men and scorchers of enemies, obtained the kingdom and sported in pleasure with Krishna. Having obtained the kingdom, the immensely energetic and truthful Yudhishthira ruled over the earth in accordance with *dharma*,[2] together with his brothers. Having defeated their enemies, the immensely wise sons of Pandu, always devoted to truth and dharma, lived there in supreme happiness. Seated on extremely expensive royal thrones, those bulls among men performed all the duties towards the citizens.

'When those great-souled ones were thus seated together, *devarshi*[3] Narada,[4] who was travelling as he willed, happened to come there. Yudhishthira offered him his own excellent seat. As is prescribed, the wise Yudhishthira himself gave him offerings[5] and once the devarshi was seated, reported the state of the kingdom. The *rishi*[6] happily accepted the homage and blessing him, asked him to be seated. Thus instructed, King Yudhishthira sat down. He sent word to Krishna that the illustrious one had arrived. Hearing this, Droupadi carefully purified herself and went to the place where Narada and the Pandavas were assembled. That follower of dharma, Drupada's daughter, paid homage at the devarshi's feet and stood before him with joined palms, appropriately covered. The illustrious Narada, supreme among rishis, always truthful and with dharma in his heart, pronounced his blessings on the unblemished princess and then asked her to leave.

'When Krishna had left, the illustrious rishi told the Pandavas, with Yudhishthira at their head, "The immensely famous daughter of Panchala[7] is a single wife to all of you, in accordance with dharma. You must lay down a rule among yourselves, lest there be dissension. In ancient times, there were two *asura*[8] brothers named Sunda and Upasunda who were famous in the three worlds.[9] They were always together and were incapable of being killed by anyone else, except each other. They ruled over the same kingdom. They lived in the same house. They slept on the same bed. They sat in the same seat. They ate off the same plate. But they killed each other over Tilottama. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, seek to protect the friendship you have for each other and act so that there is no dissension amongst you.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O great sage! Whose sons were the asuras Sunda and Upasunda? How did the dissension originate? Why did they kill each other? They killed each other over desire for Tilottama. Whose *apsara,*[10] daughter of the gods, was she? O one blessed with the power of austerities! O Brahmana! We are greatly curious and wish to hear everything in detail. Please tell us.”’

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‘Narada said, “O Yudhishthira, son of Pritha![11] Then together with your brothers, listen to this ancient account, exactly as it happened. In ancient times, in the great asura Hiranyakashipu’s[12] lineage, there was a powerful and energetic lord of the *daityas*[13] named Nikumba. He had two immensely valorous sons who were terrible in their prowess. They never ate unless they were together and never went anywhere without each other. They always did what was pleasurable to the other and always spoke pleasantly to the other. They were similar in behaviour and conduct; like one divided into two. Similar in action and inclination, they grew up as immensely valorous and adopted the identical resolution of conquering the three worlds. After consecration, they went to the Vindhya mountains and practised terrible austerities there. They were exhausted with hunger and thirst. Their hair was matted and they were dressed in the bark of trees. But they continued to perform austerities until they acquired powers. They covered all their limbs with filth and lived on air. They offered their own flesh into the fire. They stood on the tips of their toes. Raising their arms and without blinking, they observed their vows for a long period. Heated by the power of the length of their austerities, an extraordinary incident occurred. The Vindhya began to belch out smoke.

‘“On seeing the terrible power of their austerities, the gods were frightened. The gods created various obstacles to prevent them from attaining their vows. They repeatedly tempted them with jewels and beautiful women. But the two of them stood firm against these temptations. Then the gods used the power of Maya[14] on the two great-souls, wherein their sisters, mothers, wives and relatives, trembling and frightened, were oppressed by a *rakshasa*[15] who chased them with a spear. Their hair and ornaments were dishevelled and their garments fell loose. The women seemed to be running towards them, exclaiming, ‘Save us!’ But even this could not break the vows of the ones who were great in their vows. When they were not shocked or grieved at this, the women and the demon all vanished.

‘“Then Brahma himself appeared before the great asuras. He who is the grandfather of all the worlds asked them to seek a boon. On seeing the god and grandfather, Sunda and Upasunda, those two brothers who were firm in their valour, stood before him with their hands joined. Together, they then spoke to the illustrious god. ‘O grandfather! If you are pleased with our austerities, then may we possess the knowledge of delusion and the knowledge of all weapons. May we be strong and may we have the power to change our form at will. If the illustrious lord is pleased with us, may we be immortal.’ Brahma replied, ‘Except for being immortal, everything else will be the way you wish. Choose a means of death that will make you the equal of the immortals. Since you have performed these austerities with an objective in mind, the boon of immortality cannot be granted to you. You have undertaken these austerities with a view to conquering the three worlds. O, lords of the daityas! For this reason, I cannot grant you the boon that you desire.’ Sunda and Upasunda said, ‘O, grandfather! Then let us not face any fear from any being, anything mobile or immobile, any object in the three worlds, other than each other.’ The grandfather replied, ‘I can grant you this boon, the way you have wished it. Your deaths will occur the way you have indicated.’ Having then granted them this boon, Brahma then asked them to refrain from austerities and returned to his world.

‘“Having obtained those boons, the two brothers, the lords of the daityas, who could no longer be slain by anyone in the worlds, then returned to their home. On seeing that the great asuras had obtained the boons and were successful in getting what they desired, all their well-wishers were extremely happy. The two great asuras cut off their matted locks. They wore crowns and dressed themselves in expensive ornaments and unblemished garments. Though it was not the right season, they observed the *koumudi*[16] festival. The lords of the daityas and their well-wishers happily enjoyed themselves in the festivities. In house after house were heard the words, 'eat', 'feed', 'pleasure', 'sing', 'drink' and 'give'. There were great bouts of drinking. A roar arose from the clapping of hands. The entire city of the daityas went wild with joy. As the daityas, who could assume any form at will, sported themselves in varied amusements, many years passed. But it seemed like a single day."'

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'Narada said, "When the festivities ended, the two great ones wished to conquer the three worlds. Having obtained the permission of their well-wishers and elders among the daityas, arranging their army and having sought counsel and performed the required rites, they set out in the night, when the constellation Magha[17] was in the ascendant. A large army of daityas went with them, carrying clubs, pikes, spears, all following the same dharma.[18] *Charanas*[19] sung their praises in auspicious songs that wished them victory. They set out with happiness in their hearts. The two daityas could assume any form at will and were intoxicated at the prospect of war. They rose into the sky and went to the habitation of the gods. Knowing that they were coming and aware of the boon that they had obtained from the illustrious one, the gods fled heaven[20] and went to Brahma's world. With their terrible valour, they conquered Indra's world and defeated masses of *yakshas*[21] and *rakshas*[22] and beings that frequent the sky. The two great asuras then vanquished the *nagas*[23] who dwell in the interior regions of the earth, all those who live in the oceans and all the *mleccha*[24] races.

‘“The two who were terrible in their rule, wished to subjugate the entire earth. They summoned their soldiers and uttered these harsh words. ‘With their great sacrifices and offerings, the *rajarshis*[25] and brahmanas increase the energy, strength and prosperity of the gods. Because of these acts, they cause injury to the asuras. Together, we must attack and completely destroy them.’ Having thus ordered them on the eastern shores of the great ocean, they set out in all directions with this cruel resolution in mind. The two powerful ones killed those who sacrificed and brahmanas who officiated at sacrifices, wherever they were seen. In hermitages of rishis who had controlled their souls, their soldiers grasped the sacrificial fires and flung them irreverently away. Because of the boon granted to them, the curses of the great-souled and angry ascetics had no effect. When the brahmanas saw that their curses had no effect, like when arrows strike stone, they gave up their vows and fled in all directions. Like snakes fleeing at the approach of Vinata’s son,[26] those on earth who were successful in austerities and were self-controlled and calm, ran away. All the hermitages were destroyed, the pots and ladles were broken and scattered. The entire universe was empty, as if it was the time of final destruction.

‘“When the rajarshis and rishis disappeared into hiding, the great asuras united in their decision to kill. They changed their forms and assumed ones of mad, rutting elephants with their temples oozing, and sent those who were in inaccessible regions to Yama’s abode. Sometimes they became lions and yet again, tigers. They also became invisible. With these forms, they slaughtered the rishis wherever they found them. Sacrifices and studying ceased and the brahmanas were exterminated. The earth bereft of festivals and sacrifices cried out in fear. All buying and selling ended. The worship of the gods was stopped. Sacred rites and marriages were not observed. Agriculture and the tending of cattle ended. Cities and hermitages were destroyed. Strewn with bones and skeletons, the earth was terrible to behold. Ceremonies for the ancestors were no longer observed. The sacred chants ceased. The universe was terrible and loathsome to behold. On witnessing these acts of Sunda and Upasunda, the moon, the sun, the planets, the stars, the constellations and the dwellers of heaven were depressed. Thus subjugating all the directions with their terrible acts, the two daityas lived in Kurukshetra, after vanquishing every enemy.”’

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‘Narada said, “On witnessing this great destruction, all the devarshis, the *siddhas*[27] and the supreme rishis were extremely distressed. They were ones who had conquered anger, mastered their souls and senses. Stirred by compassion for the universe, they went to the grandfather’s abode. There they saw the grandfather seated with the gods, surrounded by siddhas and *brahmarshis*.[28] The god Mahadeva[29] was there, with Agni[30] and Vayu.[31] The moon[32] and the sun[33] were there and Dharma and Parameshthi[34] and Budha.[35] The *vaikhanasas*[36] were there and the *valakhilyas*,[37] those who had resorted to the forest, the *marichipas*,[38] the unborn ones, those who were not deluded and other ascetics who were born from energy. All these rishis were paying homage to the grandfather. All the *maharshis*[39] went there and recounted the deeds of Sunda and Upasunda—what they had done, how they had done it, and in what order. Having recounted everything to the grandfather, all the masses of gods and the supreme rishis pressed him to act.

‘“On hearing all their words, the grandfather thought for an instant, trying to decide what should be done. Determining how they might be killed, he summoned Vishvakarma.[40] When he saw Vishvakarma, the grandfather ordered, ‘O, great ascetic! Create a lady who will be desired.’ Paying homage to the grandfather and listening attentively to his words, he thought about it and carefully created a divine damsel. First he carefully collected whatever was beautiful in the three worlds, mobile or immobile. He placed millions of gems on her body. The divine beauty that he created was the essence of gems. She was created by Vishvakarma with a great deal of diligence and was unmatched in beauty among all the women in the three worlds. There wasn’t the tiniest part of her body that wasn’t perfect in the wealth of its beauty and that failed to attract the gaze of the beholder. She was like Shri[41] herself, beautiful and desirable. She captivated the eyes and the hearts of all beings. Because she had been created bit by bit from the essence of all gems, the grandfather gave her the name of Tilottama.[42] The grandfather said, ‘O Tilottama! Go to the asuras Sunda and Upasunda. O fortunate one! Seduce them with your desirable beauty. Act in a way so that you create dissension among the two of them, when they see how perfect your beauty is.’ She agreed to do this.

‘“Paying homage to the grandfather, she circumabulated the gods assembled there. The illustrious one[43] faced the east, Maheshvara[44] faced the south. The other gods faced the north, while all the rishis faced various directions. But while she was thus circumabulating the gods, only Indra and the illustrious god Sthanu[45] managed to maintain their composure. But so great was his[46] desire to see her as she passed by his side, that another face with eyes having curved lashes emerged from the southern side. When she went behind him, another face emerged from the western side and when she went north, another face emerged on the northern side. For the great Indra too, one thousand large and red-tinted eyes appeared everywhere, on his back and on his sides. Thus, in ancient times, Mahadeva Sthanu came to possess four faces and the slayer of Bala[47] came to possess a thousand eyes. As Tilottama walked around, all the masses of gods and the rishis turned their faces in the direction that she followed. But for the god who was the grandfather, the eyes of all the great-souled ones were on her body. When the one with richness of beauty left for her appointed task, all the gods and the supreme rishis thought that the act had already been accomplished. After Tilottama had departed, the one with the welfare of the worlds in his mind,[48] asked all the gods and the rishis to leave.”’

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‘Narada said, “After conquering the earth, the two daityas had no other enemies or concerns. Having subjugated the three worlds, their desire had been attained. They were delighted at having robbed the gods, the *gandharvas*,[49] yakshas, nagas, kings and rakshas of all their gems and when they saw that they had not a single rival left, they were supremely content. Like the immortals, they gave up all endeavours and spent their time in pleasures, with women, garlands, fragrances, food, and delicacies in copious quantities, drink and various other objects that give rise to enjoyment. Like the immortals, they sported in their inner quarters, gardens, mountains and groves and in whatever region that struck their fancy.

'"One day, they went to sport in a rocky plain on the Vindhya Mountains that was dense with *shala*[50] trees crested with blossoming flowers. After every divine object of desire had been brought, the two contentedly sat on supreme seats, with beautiful women around them. Wishing to please the two, the women danced to the sound of music and delighted them with songs sung in their praise.

'"It was then that Tilottama appeared, plucking flowers in the forest. She was dressed in a single red garment, an attire that was very seductive. Gathering *karnikara* flowers along the banks of the river, she slowly approached the place where the two great asuras were. They had drunk the best of wine and their eyes were red. On seeing the one with the beautiful hips, they were struck by desire. They instantly left their seats and went to where she was. Filled with desire, they both asked for her favours. Sunda grasped the right hand of the one with the beautiful brows. Upasunda grasped Tilottama's left hand. They were intoxicated with the boon they had received, with their physical strength, with the riches and gems they possessed and with the wine they had drunk. Intoxicated with this madness and with the madness of desire, they contracted their brows and spoke to each other. 'She is my wife and your superior,' said Sunda. 'She is my wife and your sister-in-law,' replied Upasunda. In their anger, they shouted at each other, 'She is mine, not yours.' Overcome by desire for her, they grasped their terrible clubs. Uttering the words, 'I was the first,'[51] they attacked each other. Struck by those terrible clubs, both of them fell down on the ground. With blood streaming from their bodies, they looked like two suns dislodged from the sky. Then the women and the masses of daityas fled. Miserable and shuddering with fright, all of them took refuge in the nether regions.

'"Then the pure-souled grandfather arrived, with the gods and the maharshis and praised Tilottama. Brahma was pleased to grant her a boon. Delighted with her, the grandfather said, 'O, fortunate one! You will roam in the world of the *adityas*.[52] Your energy will be so great that no one will be able to look at you for a long time.' Having granted this boon to her, the grandfather of all the worlds, instated Indra in the three worlds. The illustrious one then departed for Brahma's world.

'"Those two were always together, they were always united with the same objective. But in their anger, they killed each other over Tilottama. O, supreme among the Bharata lineage! Out of my affection for you, I am telling you, so that there is no dissension among you because of Droupadi. O, fortunate ones! If you wish to please me, act accordingly."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O, king! Having been thus addressed by the great-souled maharshi Narada, they consulted with each other and arrived at a rule, in the infinitely energetic devarshi Narada's presence. If any one of them set eyes on Droupadi when she was lying with any one of the others, he would retire to the forest and live the life of a *brahmachari*[53] for twelve years. After the Pandavas, who always followed dharma, had established this rule, the great sage Narada was happy and went where he wished to go. O, descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, thus requested by Narada, they established a rule and no dissension arose between them.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After having established an agreement in this way, the Pandavas lived there. With the strength of their weapons, they brought under their sovereignty many kings. Krishna followed the wishes of all the five sons of Pritha, who were lions among men and immeasurable in their energy. She was extremely happy with the five valourous ones as her husbands, like Sarasvati[54] with her elephants,[55] and they were also delighted with her. Since the great-souled Pandavas abided by dharma, all the Kurus[56] increased in prosperity, were bereft of sin and were happy.

'O, lord of the earth! O, supreme among kings! After a long time had passed, thieves robbed a brahmana's cattle. When his wealth was thus stolen, the brahmana lost his senses in anger. He went to Khandavaprastha and angrily reproved the Pandavas. "O Pandavas! Mean, cruel and mindless thieves are forcibly robbing me of my wealth of cattle in your kingdom. Pursue them. The sacrificial offerings of a peaceful brahmana are being carried away by crows. The inferior jackal has invaded the deserted cave of a tiger. A brahmana's riches are being taken away by thieves. Dharma and *artha*[57] will be destroyed. I am crying for help. Take up your arms." As the miserable brahmana cried out to the Pandavas, Kunti's son Dhananjaya[58] heard his words.

'On hearing the words, the mighty-armed one told the brahmana not to fear. But Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was then lying with Krishna in the room where the great-souled Pandavas kept their weapons. The Pandava[59] was unable to enter the room. But he was also unable to go away as the wailing brahmana repeatedly urged him with his words. Kunti's son reflected in sorrow, "This ascetic brahmana's riches are being robbed. It is certainly my duty to dry his tears. If I do not protect someone who is weeping at our door, the great *adharma* of negligence will taint the king.[60] If I fail to protect, the adharma of our failing to protect will certainly be established in all the worlds. But it is also certain that if I enter the room without the permission of King Ajatashatru,[61] I will do him a great injury and I must be banished to the forest. There will either be great adharma or death in the forest. But dharma must be upheld, even if there is destruction of the body." O lord of the earth! Having thus resolved, Kunti's son Dhananjaya entered the room and took the king's permission.

'Grasping his bow, he happily told the brahmana, "O brahmana! Let us go quickly, so that those mean thieves do not go too far away and I can return your riches to you, from the hands of the robbers.” The mighty-armed one, with bow and armour and riding a chariot with flags, pierced the thieves with arrows and recovered the riches. Thus helping the brahmana and returning his riches of cattle to him, the Pandava obtained fame. The valorous Savyasachi,[62] scorcher of enemies, returned to the city. He paid his homage to all his superiors and was in turn praised by them. He then told Dharmaraja, “O, lord! Grant me permission to observe my vow. On seeing you, I have violated the rule and I must go and dwell in the forest, because that is the rule we made.” On suddenly hearing these unpleasant words, Dharmaraja was afflicted by grief and in a sorrowful voice, asked, “Why?” Yudhisthira told his brother Gudakesha,[63] a brother who never suffered from decay, “O unblemised one! If I am one with authority, listen to my words. O brave one! I know all the reasons why you entered the room and caused me displeasure and I have not felt any injury. There is no sin if a younger brother enters where the elder brother is lying with his wife. However, if an elder brother enters a room where the younger brother is lying with his wife, that is improper. O mighty-armed one! Refrain, listen to my words and do as I say. Your dharma has not suffered and no injury has been done to me.” Arjuna replied, “I have also heard from you that dharma must not be observed through pretences. I will not waver from the truth. The truth is my weapon.” With the king’s permission, he was consecrated in the rites of brahmacharya and went away to live in the forest for twelve years.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the mighty-armed one who extended the fame of the Kuru lineage departed, great-souled brahmanas who knew the Vedas, were knowledgeable in the *vedangas*,[64] those who were devoted to contemplation of the supreme being, those who were immersed in the supreme lord and bards who knew the ancient tales followed him. O king! There were also raconteurs, ascetics, those who dwelt in the forests and brahmanas who read divine tales in melodious voices. Surrounded by these and many others who were skilled in recounting stories, Pandu's son travelled like Vasava[65] surrounded by the Maruts.[66] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The bull among Bharatas saw beautiful and colourful woods, lakes, rivers, oceans, countries and sacred places of pilgrimage. Reaching the source of the Ganga, the lord began to live there. O Janamejaya! Now listen, as I tell you, about the wonderful act that the pure-souled charioteer, who was foremost among the Pandus, performed.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Kunti's son lived there with the brahmanas, the brahmanas performed many *agnihotras*.[67] O king! The fires were kindled and blazed as offerings were made into them. Offerings of flowers were made on both sides of the river by the learned and great-souled ones who were always unwavering in their vows and they successfully consecrated there. As a result of this, the source of the Ganga became extremely beautiful.

'One day, when this was going on, the son of Kunti and Pandu entered the Ganga to have a bath. O king! He performed his ablutions and offered water to his grandfathers. He was about to climb out of the water, wishing to perform rites to the fire. O great king! The mighty-armed one was grasped and pulled into the water by Ulupi, daughter of the king of the nagas, who could travel where she willed. There, in the revered palace of the naga named Kouravya,[68] the Pandava saw a fire that had been built up well. Kunti's son Dhananjaya performed his rites in that fire. Witnessing the unhesitating offering of oblations, Hutashana[69] was satisfied.

'After having performed his rites before the fire, Kunti's son smilingly uttered these words to the daughter of the naga king. "O beautiful one! O timid one! How did you perform such a courageous act? What beautiful land is this? Whom do you belong to and whose daughter are you?" Ulupi replied, "O Partha! The serpent Kouravya is descended from the lineage of Airavata. I am his daughter and a serpent named Ulupi. O Kounteya![70] I saw you descend into the water to have a bath and was robbed of my senses by the god of love.[71] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The god of love is churning me. I am yet a maiden. Please me today by giving yourself to me.” Arjuna said, “O fortunate one! I have been commanded by Dharmaraja[72] to observe brahmacharya for twelve years and do not have control over myself. O dweller in the water! I do wish to do that which brings you pleasure. But never before this have I spoken that which is untrue. O serpent-maiden! How can I bring pleasure to you and yet not do that which is untrue? How can I not violate dharma?”

‘Ulupi replied, “O Pandava! I know why you are roaming the earth. I know that you are observing brahmacharya on the instructions of your superior. This was the rule you made among yourselves for Drupada’s daughter, that anyone deluded enough to enter would retire to the forest and observe brahmacharya for a period of twelve years. The exile is therefore for the sake of Droupadi. You are observing that dharma. But in this case, dharma does not suffer. O large-eyed one! It is your duty to save those who are distressed. By saving me, dharma is not violated. O Arjuna! Even if there is a slight transgression of dharma, by granting me life, you will achieve greater dharma. O Partha! O lord! I desire you. Desire me in return. That is the view of those who are rigid in their vows. Know that if you do not do this, I will certainly die. O mighty-armed one! Grant me life and achieve supreme dharma. O supreme among men! I am now seeking refuge with you. O Kounteya! You have always protected those who are weak and without protectors. I am miserable and weeping and am seeking refuge with you. I am overcome with desire and am seeking you. Do that which is pleasurable to me. Satisfy my desire by giving yourself to me.” Hearing these words Kounteya then did what she wanted, accepting dharma to be the reason. The powerful one spent the night in the palace of the serpent. When the sun rose, he too arose from Kouravya’s abode.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O, descendant of the Bharata lineage! The son of the wielder of the *vajra*[73] told the brahmanas everything and left for the slopes of the Himalayas. He first went to Agastya’s banyan tree and then to Vasishtha’s mountain. Kounteya performed his ablutions on Bhrigu’s peak. He donated a thousand cows at sacred places of pilgrimage. That supreme among Kurus gave houses to brahmanas. That supreme among men then bathed at the place of pilgrimage known as Hiranyabindu and saw the best of mountains and sacred places. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That best of men then descended, accompanied by brahmanas. That bull of the Bharata lineage then left for the eastern direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One after another, the best of the Kurus saw many places of pilgrimage and the beautiful river Utpalini in the Naimisha forest—and the famous rivers Nanda, Upananda and Koushiki, the great rivers Gaya and Ganga. Having seen all these places of pilgrimage and having purified himself, he donated riches to the brahmanas. He went to every sacred place of pilgrimage in Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. Having seen them in the proper fashion, he gave away riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he approached the gates of the kingdom of Kalinga, the brahmanas who had followed the Pandava took their leave and departed. But with their permission, Kunti’s son, the valorous Dhananjaya, went on as far as the ocean, with only a few companions with him.

‘Passing beyond Kalinga, the lord saw many beautiful countries, and followers of dharma. He went and saw Mahendra Mountain, adorned with ascetics. Travelling slowly along the shores of the ocean, he arrived in Manalura. Having seen all the sacred places of pilgrimage there, the mighty-armed one went to visit the king who was the lord of Manalura—King Chitravahana, who was devoted to dharma. He had a beautiful daughter named Chitrangada. When he saw Chitravahana’s daughter of the beautiful hips, roaming around in the city at will, he was struck by desire. He went to the king and told him what he wished. The king then spoke to him in a placatory voice, “A king named Prabhamkara was once born in our lineage. He had no sons and performed supreme austerities for the sake of offspring. On witnessing his terrible austerities and homage, the god Mahadeva Umapati[74] Shankara was satisfied. The great lord granted him the boon that only a single offspring would be born in every generation of this lineage. Since then, in succession, only a single offspring has been born in our lineage. All my ancestors before me had sons. But a daughter was born to me and it is certain that she will have to carry forward my lineage. O supreme among men! I have always thought of her as my son. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In accordance with what is prescribed, I have therefore made her my *putrika*.[75] The son, the perpetuator of this lineage, will be the bride price. O Pandava! You can take her, as long as you agree to this condition.” Agreeing to this condition, he accepted the daughter and Kounteya lived in that city for three winters.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The bull of the Bharata lineage then went to the sacred places of pilgrimage to the south, near the ocean. These sacred places were adorned with ascetics. However, these ascetics stayed away from five places of pilgrimage that had been frequented by ascetics in earlier times—Agastyatirtha, Soubhadra, the immensely purifying Poulama, the calm Karandhama that provided the fruits of a horse-sacrifice and the great *tirtha*[76] Bharadvaja, which washes away all sins. On seeing these places of pilgrimage abandoned and shunned by intelligent sages who were devoted to dharma, the Pandava who was Kuru’s descendant joined his hands in salutation and asked the ascetics, “Why have those who are learned in the *brahman* abandoned these tirthas?” The ascetics replied, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Five crocodiles live in them and drag away those who are blessed with the power of austerities. That is the reason these tirthas are abandoned.” On hearing this, the mighty-armed and valorous one, supreme among men, went to see these tirthas, though the ascetics tried to restrain him.

‘He went to Soubhadra, named after a maharshi, and supreme among tirthas. The brave one, scorcher of enemies, swiftly immersed himself to have a bath. At that, a giant crocodile that lived in the water came and grasped Kunti's son Dhananjaya, tiger among men. But the mighty-armed Kounteya, supreme among those who are strong, seized the aquatic creature which began to struggle and got out of the water. O king! As soon as the famous Arjuna dragged the crocodile out, it turned into a beautiful woman, adorned in every ornament, radiant, charming, divine of form and alluring. On witnessing this great and extraordinary event, Kunti's son Dhananjaya was extremely pleased and asked the lady, "O, fortunate one! Who are you and how did you come to live in the water? Why have you been committing such great sins earlier?"

'The lady replied, "O mighty-armed one! I am an apsara who used to roam in the forests of the gods. I am the extremely powerful Varga, always the favourite of the lord of riches.[77] I had four beautiful friends, all capable of going anywhere at will. With them, I was once going to the abode of the protector of the worlds.[78] On our way, all of us saw a brahmana who was rigid in his vows. He was extremely handsome and was studying alone, in his solitude. O king! That entire forest was radiant with the energy of his austerities. Like the sun, he seemed to have illuminated that entire region. On witnessing the extraordinary sight of his terrible austerities, we descended in that region, so as to bring impediments to his pursuit of austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I, Sourabheyi, Samichi, Budbuda and Lata went to the brahmana at the same time. We sang and laughed and sought to tempt the brahmana. O brave one! But he did not pay any attention to us, even for an instant. The immensely energetic and pure one did not waver and was fixed in his austerities. O bull among kshatriyas! But the brahmana was angered and cursed us that we would become crocodiles and live in the water for a hundred years."'

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'Varga said, "O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! We were all extremely distressed and sought the refuge of the brahmana, who was blessed with the power of austerities and never decayed. We said, 'O brahmana! The god of love made us arrogant because of our youth and beauty. We did what should not be done. Please forgive us. That we had come to tempt a self-controlled one blessed with the power of austerities, who is rigid in his vows, is sufficient death for us. Those who think about dharma are of the view that women should not be slain. You are learned in dharma and because of that dharma, do not kill us. O you who are learned in dharma! It is said that a brahmana is a friend to all beings. Let this saying of the learned come true and bring welfare. Those who are good protect those who seek their refuge. We have sought refuge with you. You should therefore forgive us.’”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O brave one! At these words the brahmana, the performer of good deeds and with dharma in his soul, and as resplendent as the sun and the moon, was pacified. The brahmana said, “The words hundreds, thousands and forever are always used to indicate eternity. But the word hundred used by me should be understood as a limited period and not as eternity. Becoming crocodiles, you will seize and drag men down into the water. But a supreme man will drag you out of the water and onto land and you will then regain your earlier forms. Never before have I uttered a falsehood, not even in jest. From now on, all these tirthas will be famous everywhere as the tirthas of women. Those who are learned will know them to be sacred and the cleansers of all sins.”

‘Varga said, “We then paid our homages to the brahmana and circumambulated him. We left that region in misery, thinking, ‘When and how soon will we meet the man who will return our earlier forms?’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While we were thus thinking, the immensely fortunate devarshi Narada appeared instantly before us. O Partha! On seeing the devarshi whose radiance is infinite, all of us were filled with joy. Paying our homages to him, we stood there, with misery on our faces. He asked us the reason for our sorrow and we told him everything. Having heard exactly what had happened, he spoke to us. ‘There are five tirthas in the southern marshes of the ocean. They are sacred and beautiful. Go there immediately and live there. Pandava Dhananjaya, tiger among men, pure of soul, will certainly arrive there soon and free you from your misery.’ O brave one! On hearing these words, all of us came here. O unblemished one! It is true that you have set me free today. But my four friends are still there in the other waters. O brave one! Perform a good deed and set them all free."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O lord of the earth! Then the brave one, the best of the Pandavas, happily freed them all from that curse. O king! On ascending from the waters, the apsaras regained their own forms and looked as they had earlier. Purifying those tirthas and permitting them to leave, the lord went to the city of Manalura to see Chitrangada again. Through her, he had given birth to a son named King Babhruvahana. O king! Having seen him, the Pandava left for Gokarna.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then, one after another, the immensely powerful one visited all the other tirthas that were to the west and all those that were on the shores of the western ocean. Having visited them, he reached Prabhasa. When Madhusudana[79] heard that the invincible Bibhatsu[80] had reached the region of Prabhasa after visiting all the tirthas, Madhava[81] went to meet him, unknown to Kounteya. Krishna and Pandava saw each other in Prabhasa. They embraced each other and asked about each other's welfare. Then the beloved friends, who were like the rishis Nara and Narayana of yore,[82] sat down in the forest.

'Then Vasudeva asked Arjuna about what he had been up to and about why the Pandava was visiting all the tirthas. Thereupon, Arjuna recounted to him exactly what had happened. On hearing this, the lord Varshneya[83] approved. As they desired, Krishna and Pandava sported themselves in Prabhasa. They then went to the mountain Raivataka, to live there for some time. On Krishna's instructions, men had already decorated the mountain and stored it with a lot of food. Accepting everything that was offered, Pandava Arjuna, together with Vasudeva, watched the actors and dancers. Having given them permission to leave in accordance with the proper form, the immensely radiant Pandava went to sleep on a well-made and divine bed. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! He told Satvata[84] about the tirthas, mountains, rivers and forests he had seen. O Janamejaya! As he was thus speaking, lying on a bed that was like heaven, sleep crept up on Kounteya. He was awakened in the morning, with the sweet sounds of singing and the sounds of the *veena*,[85] chants and blessings. After he had performed the necessary acts, Varshneya greeted him happily.

'Riding on a golden chariot, they set off for Dvaraka. O Janamejaya! In order to pay homage to Kunti's son, even the huts of Dvaraka had been decorated. The citizens of Dvaraka were eager to see Kounteya and came out in hundreds and thousands onto the road followed by kings. There was a great common assemblage of Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas and hundreds and thousands of their women looked on. Having been respectfully worshipped by all the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas, he returned homage to those who deserved it, and was welcomed by everyone. All the young men paid their respects to the brave one, in the proper form. Those who were of his own age, embraced him again and again. With Krishna, he spent many nights in Krishna's beautiful home, full of jewels and every object of pleasure.'

Section Seventeen

Subhadra-harana Parva

This parva has fifty-seven shlokas and two chapters.

Chapter 211: 25 shlokas
Chapter 212: 32 shlokas

The word harana *means abduction. So this parva is about Subhadra's abduction. This is a very short parva.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'O king! After a few days, the great festival of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas was held on Mount Raivataka. The warriors gave away gifts to thousands of brahmanas in that festival of the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas on that mountain. O king! The region all around the mountain was adorned with palaces full of jewels. Every tree there was decorated with lamps. Together, all the musicians played their musical instruments, the dancers danced, and the singers sang songs. All the immensely energetic Vrishni youth were adorned with ornaments, as they rode on their colourful and golden chariots. Hundreds and thousands of citizens went there with their wives, some on excellent chariots and others on foot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Revati, the lord Haladhara[1] was intoxicated and was followed by many *gandharvas*.[2] The powerful Ugrasena, king of the Vrishnis, was there with his one thousand wives and was praised by the musicians. Rukmini's son[3] and Samba, always invincible in battle, were intoxicated and wore divine garlands and garments, sporting themselves like the gods. Akrura, Sarana, Gada, Bhanu, Viduratha, Nishatha, Charudeshna, Prithu, Viprithu, Satyaka, Satyaki, Bhangakara, Sahachara, Hardikya, Kritavarma and others not mentioned were there, surrounded by their respective wives and musicians. They then adorned Raivataka at the time of the festival.

'While this greatly wonderful commotion was going on, Vasudeva roamed around, Partha[4] with him. As they wandered, they saw Vasudeva's[5] beautiful daughter Bhadra, ornamented, and with her friends. On seeing her, Arjuna was struck by the god of love and Krishna noticed the signs that Partha's mind was intently riveted on her. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The one with the eyes of a lotus smilingly spoke these words, "How is it that the mind of one who lives in the forest is agitated by desire? O Partha! She is my sister and from the same womb as Sarana.[6] If your mind is set on her, I can speak to my father myself." Arjuna replied, "She is Vasudeva's daughter and Vasudeva's sister. She is beautiful. How can I not be captivated? If this daughter of the Vrishni lineage, your sister, becomes my wife, I must certainly have performed only good deeds. O Janardana![7] Tell me how I can obtain her. I will do everything that any man can." Vasudeva said, "O bull among men! A *svayamvara*[8] is the form of marriage for kshatriyas. O Partha! But that is uncertain if one doesn't know the inclination. Those who are learned in the ways of dharma say that for kshatriyas, who are warriors, abduction for marriage is permissible. O Arjuna! Therefore, abduct my beautiful sister. Who knows what she might do in a svayamvara?"

'O king! Having thus decided on the course of action, Arjuna and Krishna then sent off swift men as messengers, to inform Dharmaraja in Indraprastha of everything. On hearing, the mighty-armed Pandava[9] agreed.'

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Dhananjaya[10] learnt that the lady had gone to Raivataka. Having learnt of the sanction[11] and after obtaining Vasudeva’s permission, the bull of the Bharata lineage discussed and got Krishna’s sanction about the course of action. He mounted a golden chariot that had been constructed in the proper fashion. It was yoked with Sainya and Sugriva[12] and decorated with nets of small bells. Its roar was like that of a thundering cloud and it was stocked with every weapon. Its radiance was like the blazing fire and it struck terror in the hearts of enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Prepared, armoured with a sword and with guards on his elbows and fingers, he set out as if on a hunt.

‘Having worshipped Raivata, king of the mountains, and obtained the blessings of the gods and all the brahmanas, Subhadra circumambulated the mountain and set out for Dvaraka. Kunti’s son rushed at her and forced her onto his chariot. Abducting the sweet-smiling one, that tiger among men set out for his own city on his chariot, as if on air. On seeing Subhadra thus carried away, all the armed soldiers who were with her raised an alarm and dashed towards the city of Dvaraka. They arrived at the assembly hall named Sudharma and recounted the story of Partha’s valour to the presiding officer.[13] On hearing this, the presiding officer sounded his war drum, one that was ornamented with gold and had a terrible roar. On hearing that sound, the Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas then gave up their food and drink and came to the assembly hall.

‘Those tigers among men, the Vrishni and Andhaka *maharathas*[14] ascended their thrones, decorated with gold, covered with excellent cushions and adorned with gems and corals, with the radiance of blazing fires, like a hundred fires on their sacrificial altars. When they were seated like an assembly of gods, the presiding officer and his companions told them about Jishnu’s[15] conduct. On hearing this, the warriors among the Vrishnis, their eyes red with drinking, were intolerant of Partha and arrogantly stood up. “Quickly yoke the chariots, bring our lances, fetch the best bows and large armour.” Some asked their charioteers to yoke their chariots. Others themselves fetched their horses, harnessed in gold. As the chariots, armour and flags were brought, there was then a tumultuous uproar from those warriors among men.

‘At that time, Vanamali,[16] who was as tall as Mount Kailasha, who was intoxicated with wine and was dressed in blue, spoke, “O you who are not wise! What are you doing when Janardana is quiet? Without knowing what his thoughts are, why are you roaring in anger? Let the immensely wise one say what he intends to do. Whatever he proposes should be unhesitatingly done.” On hearing Halayudha’s[17] words, which deserved to be accepted, all of them exclaimed “excellent” and fell silent. Silence having been restored through the wise Baladeva’s calm words, all of them again took their seats in the assembly hall. Then Kamapala[18] spoke to Vasudeva, the scorcher of enemies. “O Janardana! Why are you seated here and looking on without a word? O Achyuta![19] It was for your sake that we honoured Arjuna. It now seems that evil-minded one, the defiler of his lineage, did not deserve the homage and honour. Will any man who regards himself as having been born in a good lineage break the plate that he has eaten from? Even if one has wished for such an alliance, should a supplicant who desires happiness have the courage to act thus, forgetting earlier favours? By insulting us and disregarding Keshava,[20] he has forcibly abducted Subhadra, summoning his own death. O Govinda![21] Like a serpent that has been trodden on, how can I bear him who has placed his feet on my head? Today, I will alone rid the earth of all Kouravas. I cannot tolerate this transgression of Arjuna’s.” At this, all the assembled Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas applauded the thundering one, whose voice was like the clouds and a war drum.’

Section Eighteen

Harana Harika Parva

This parva has eighty-two shlokas and only one chapter. The word harana means abduction. It also means gifts. Harika *means conveying or giving. So this parva is about Subhadra's abduction and the giving of gifts that followed.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'When all the Vrishnis began to repeat words of this nature, Vasudeva uttered words that were full of dharma and artha. "Gudakesha[1] has not brought dishonour to our lineage through his actions. There is no doubt that he has increased it.[2] Partha[3] knows that the Satvatas[4] never lust after riches. The Pandava also knows that the results of a svayamvara are uncertain. Who can contemplate the giving away of a daughter, as if she were an animal? Which man on earth would like to sell his daughter? I think Kunti's son saw these blemishes in the other methods. Therefore, in accordance with dharma, the Pandava abducted the lady. This alliance is appropriate. Subhadra is illustrious, Partha is equally so. Hence he abducted her by force. Who will not want Arjuna? He is born in the lineage of Bharata and the great-souled Shantanu. He is the son of Kuntibhoja's daughter. In all the worlds, with their Indras and Rudras, I do not see anyone who can vanquish Partha with valour, with that chariot to which my horses have now been yoked. As a warrior, Partha is swift in the use of weapons. Who is his equal? Go to Dhananjaya with a happy mind. Pacify him with extremely gentle words and make him come back. That is my view. If Partha goes to his city after forcibly vanquishing us, our fame will be destroyed. But there is no defeat in appeasement.” O ruler of men! On hearing Vasudeva’s words, they acted accordingly.

‘Restrained by them, Arjuna returned and married Subhadra. Kunti’s son lived there for a year and the lord spent the last part of his period[5] in Pushkara.

‘After the twelve years were over, he went to Khandavaprastha. He went to the king[6] and humbly paid his respects. Partha worshipped the brahmanas and went to Droupadi. Then, out of love,[7] Droupadi told Kuru’s descendant, “O Kunti’s son! Go to the daughter of the Satvatas. A second load always loosens the first tie, however strong.” Krishna[8] thus lamented in many ways. Dhananjaya pacified her a lot and asked for forgiveness. He quickly went to Subhadra, who was dressed in red silk. Partha sent her away to dress in garments worn by a cowherd lady. But the illustrious one looked beautiful even in that attire. Arriving in the best of houses, the famous and beautiful Bhadra, wife of a warrior, with copper-red eyes, paid homage to Pritha. Then, with a face as radiant as the full moon, Bhadra quickly went and paid homage to Droupadi, saying, “I am your maid.” Then Krishna arose and embraced Madhava’s[9] sister and lovingly said, “Let your husband not have a rival.” With a happy heart, Bhadra replied, “May it be that way.” O Janamejaya! The maharatha Pandavas were then happy in their hearts. Kunti was also extremely delighted.

‘Having heard that Arjuna, the best of the Pandavas, had reached Indraprastha, supreme among cities, the pure-souled Pundarikaksha[10] Madhava went there with Rama[11] and all the other warriors and maharathas from among the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Shouri, scorcher of enemies, went with a large army, surrounded by hundreds of soldiers and his brothers and sons. The immensely famous and wise Akrura, lord of donations of alms, vanquisher of enemies and general of the Vrishni warriors, went there. So did the immensely energetic Anadhrishti and the immensely famous Uddhava, the greatly intelligent and famous disciple of Brihaspati himself. Satyaka, Satyaki, the Satvata Kritavarma, Pradyumna, Samba, Nishatha, Shanku, the valorous Charudeshna, Jhilli, Viprithu, mighty-armed Sarana and Gada, supreme among those who are learned—these and many other Vrishnis, Bhojas and Andhakas went to Khandavaprastha, carrying many gifts with them. On hearing that Madhava had come, King Yudhishthira sent the twins[12] to receive Krishna. Having been received by them, the prosperous Vrishnis entered Khandavaprastha, which was adorned with flags and pennants. The roads were cleaned and sprinkled with water and decorated with many flowers. Cool sandalwood and the fragrance of other pure perfumes and the burning of aloe made every part of the city fragrant. The entire city was crowded with merchants and with people who had cleansed themselves.

‘The mighty-armed Keshava, supreme among men, arrived with Rama, surrounded by Vrishnis, Andhakas and the great Bhojas. He was worshipped by thousands of citizens and brahmanas. He then entered the king’s palace, which was like Purandara’s[13] abode. Yudhishthira welcomed Rama in the prescribed fashion. He kissed Keshava on the head[14] and embraced him in his arms. Extremely pleased, Krishna humbly paid homage and duly paid his respects to Bhima, tiger among men.[15] In accordance with the prescribed rites, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira welcomed the best of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. He worshipped some as his superiors. He greeted some as his equals. He welcomed some others with affection and was paid homage to by others.[16]

‘Then the immensely famous Vasudeva presented the best of riches to the groom’s party and as dowry to Subhadra from her relatives, one thousand golden chariots with nets of bells, each yoked to four horses and driven by skilled charioteers. From the land of Mathura, Krishna gave one thousand auspiciously coloured cows that were productive in yielding milk. As a sign of friendship, Janardana gave one thousand horses that were white like the colour of moonbeams and were adorned with gold; two times five hundred mules, white with black manes, that were trained and had the speed of the wind; one thousand young and fair women who were well dressed and had excellent complexions. Each wore a necklace of one hundred gold pieces, was adorned with ornaments and was skilled in bathing and every kind of service. The lotus-eyed Janardana gave ten man-loads of gold, both worked and unworked and with the radiance of the fire, from the land of Dasarha. As a mark of respect, the lover of valour, Rama, gave Partha one thousand supreme elephants in rut. These were as large as mountain peaks and had secretions flowing from their bodies in three streams. They never retreated in battle and were adorned with well-crafted, golden bells and were supremely saddled. Haladhara was happy and pleased with the alliance. The large quantity of gems and riches looked like an ocean. The garments and blankets were like the foam, the large elephants were like large crocodiles and the flags were like aquatic plants. This large river[17] entered into the ocean of the Pandus and filled it up to the brim, to the great despondency of their enemies.

'Dharmaraja Yudhishthira accepted all of it and paid homage to the Vrishni and Andhaka maharathas. Then the assembled great-souled ones, the best of the Kuru, Vrishni and Andhaka lineages, spent their time in pleasure, as do men of good deeds in the abode of the immortals. The Kurus and the Vrishnis amused themselves as they wished, with the loud clapping of hands and drinking bouts. Having spent many days in pleasure and being worshipped by the Kurus, the brave ones again returned to the city of Dvaravati. With Rama at their forefront, the maharathas from the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages departed, with the pure jewels given to them by the best of the Kurus. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But the great-souled Vasudeva remained with Arjuna in the beautiful city of Shakraprastha.[18] He roamed with Partha along the banks of the Yamuna.

'Then Keshava's beloved sister Subhadra gave birth to radiant Soubhadra, like Poulomi gave birth to Jayanta.[19] He was long-armed, of great strength, with the eyes of a bull and a vanquisher of enemies.

Subhadra's brave son, a bull among men, was known as Abhimanyu. Arjuna's son, a bull among men, was thus known because he was extremely wrathful.[20] Dhananjaya gave birth to that *atiratha*[21] from a Satvata lady, like fire is produced at a sacrifice from the womb of a *shami*[22] tree. At his birth, Kunti's son, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira, donated ten thousand cows and several thousand coins to brahmanas. From his childhood, he became a favourite of Vasudeva's and was like a moon to all his fathers[23] and the subjects. From his birth onwards, Krishna performed all the auspicious rites. The child began to grow, like the moon in the bright half of the lunar month. That vanquisher of enemies learned all the vedas from Arjuna, with the four divisions and the ten branches, and the art of archery, everything known to man and god. That extremely powerful one became skilled in the science of all weapons. He learnt all the special acts of handling weapons. In acquisition, use and in circular motions, Dhananjaya was pleased that his son Soubhadra became his equal. He could bear everything from his enemies. He was blessed with all the auspicious marks. He was invincible in battle and had the shoulders of a bull. His wide mouth was like that of a serpent. The mighty archer was as proud as a lion. His valour was like that of a mad elephant. His voice was like thunderous clouds. His face was like that of the full moon. He was Krishna's equal in valour, energy, beauty and form. Bibhatsu[24] saw in his son Maghavan[25] himself.

'The auspicious Panchali[26] also obtained five sons through her five husbands. They were brave and bright, like five mountains—Prativindhya was born from Yudhishthira, Sutasoma from Vrikodara,[27] Shrutakarman from Arjuna, Shatanika from Nakula and Shrutasena from Sahadeva. They were five maharathas. Panchali gave birth to five heroes, like Aditi gave birth to the Adityas. The brahmanas told Yudhishthira that according to the sacred texts, Prativindhya would be like the Vindhya mountains in knowledge of the weapons of his enemies and so he should be thus named.[28] The great archer Sutasoma, with energy equal to that of the sun and the moon, was born as a son from Bhimasena after he had performed one thousand *soma*[29] sacrifices.[30] Shrutakarman was born as a son after hearing of the great deeds performed by Kiriti.[31] Kourava Nakula, descendant of the Kuru lineage, named his son, who would extend his fame, after the royal sage Shatanika. Then Krishna gave birth to Sahadeva's son when the nakshatra Vahnidaivata was in the ascendant. He was therefore known as Shrutasena.[32] Droupadi's famous sons were born at intervals of one year. O lord of kings! They were devoted to each other's welfare. O best of the Bharata lineage! As is prescribed, from the time of birth, their rituals of birth, tonsure and wearing of the sacred thread were performed by Dhoumya.[33] After having studied the vedas, these observers of rigid vows learnt the use of all weapons, human and divine, from Arjuna. O tiger among kings! Followed by mighty and broad-chested sons who were like those born from the wombs of the gods, the Pandavas were extremely delighted.'

Section Nineteen

Khandava-daha Parva

This parva has 344 shlokas and twelve chapters.

Chapter 214: 32 shlokas
Chapter 215: 19 shlokas
Chapter 216: 34 shlokas
Chapter 217: 22 shlokas
Chapter 218: 50 shlokas
Chaper 219: 40 shlokas
Chapter 220: 32 shlokas
Chapter 221: 21 shlokas
Chapter 222: 18 shlokas
Chapter 223: 25 shlokas
Chapter 224: 32 shlokas
Chapter 225: 19 shlokas

The word daha *means to burn and, as a noun, also means a fire or a conflagration in the forest. So this parva is about the burning of the Khandava forest by Arjuna and Krishna. It has also stories of the survivors, Ashvasena, Maya and the Sharngaka birds.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'On the orders of King Dhritarashtra and those of Shantanu's son,[1] they lived in Indraprastha and brought under their rule many kings. All the people lived happily in Dharmaraja's refuge, like souls in bodies that have auspicious marks and perform deeds.[2] That bull among Bharatas[3] served dharma, artha and kama equally, looking upon the three as relatives, like one's own self. It was as if dharma, artha and kama had become personified on earth and with them, the king became like a fourth.[4] The vedas found a great student, the sacrifices a great performer and the castes[5] a pure protector in this ruler of men. Lakshmi[6] was established. Intelligence was revered. Dharma found a relative everywhere and extended on earth. With his four brothers, the king shone with radiance, like a great sacrifice assisted by the four vedas. Dhoumya and other brahmanas surrounded him and paid homage, like the chief immortals, each equal to Brihaspati, worshipers of Prajapati.[7] In the eyes and the hearts of the subjects, owing to their great affection, Dharmaraja was equal to the unblemished full moon. The subjects didn't love him only because he was their king. They also bore him affection because of his deeds. Pritha's intelligent son was always sweet in speech. He never uttered words that were improper, untrue, malicious or unpleasant. The immensely energetic and supreme one of the Bharata lineage found pleasure in devoting himself to the welfare of all the worlds, treating everyone like his own self. Through their great energy, all the Pandavas lived happily, devoid of distress, pacifying all the kings.

'After a few days, Bibhatsu told Krishna, "O Krishna! Warm days are here. Let us go towards the Yamuna. O Madhusudana! O Janardana! If you agree, let us sport there with our friends and return in the evening." Vasudeva replied, "O Kunti's son! O Pritha's son! That is my wish too. As long as we desire, let us sport with our friends in the water." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After consulting and obtaining Dharmaraja's permission, Partha, Govinda and their friends set out.

'They reached that beautiful pleasure ground, dotted with many trees and adorned with many tall houses, like Purandara's[8] abode. Flavoured and expensive food and drinks were spread out and many perfumed garlands were adorned for Varshneya[9] and Partha. They entered the place that was stocked with many pure and brilliant gems. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them began to sport as they pleased. Some women sported in the woods, others in the water and some others in the houses, wherever it pleased Krishna and Partha. In great intoxication, Droupadi and Subhadra gave away expensive garments and ornaments to the women. Some danced in great delight, others shouted. Some of the women laughed, others drank the excellent wine. Some began to weep, others fought among themselves. Some whispered secrets to each other and jested. The woods became the scene of prosperity, filled all around with the beautiful music of flutes, veenas and drums.

'While this was going on, the descendants of Kuru and Dasharha[10] went to a beautiful region that was not far off. O king! Having gone there, the two great-souled Krishnas,[11] conquerors of enemy cities, seated themselves on very expensive seats. Partha and Madhava amused themselves by recounting to each other the many deeds of valour and love they had performed earlier. When Vasudeva and Dhananjaya were thus happily seated together, like the two Ashvins[12] in heaven, a brahmana arrived. He was like a tall shala tree and his complexion was like heated gold. His beard was reddish brown and his limbs were well proportioned. His hair was matted and his attire was dark. He was radiant like the young sun[13] and his eyes were like lotus leaves. His complexion was tawny and he blazed with energy. On seeing that supreme among brahmanas approach, the two Krishnas, Arjuna and Vasudeva, quickly stood up.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'He then spoke to Arjuna and Vasudeva of the Satvata lineage. "You two, who are now so near the Khandava tract, are supreme in the world. I am a voracious brahmana who always eats unlimited quantities. O descendants of Vrishni and Pritha! I beg you. Give me enough food to satisfy myself." Having been thus addressed, Krishna and Pandava told him, "Tell us what kind of food will satisfy you. We will try to bring it for you."

'Having been thus addressed, the illustrious brahmana then told the warriors, who had asked him about the kind of food that should be prepared for him, "I do not eat ordinary food. Know me to be the fire. Therefore, seek to bring me the food that is appropriate for me. This

Khandava tract is always protected by Indra. So I am unable to burn it down because that great-souled one protects it. His friend, the naga Takshaka lives there with his kin and is protected by the wielder of the vajra and many other beings are also incidentally protected. Though I always wish to burn it down, I cannot do so because of Shakra's[14] energy. Whenever he sees me ablaze, he pours down floods of rain from the clouds. Though I earnestly wish to consume it, I cannot thus burn it down. Since the two of you are skilled in the use of arms, I have now come to you for help. I will now be able to burn Khandava down and that is the food I desire from you. You know about supreme weapons. Restrain the showers on all sides. Restrain all the creatures."[15] On hearing these words, Bibhatsu told the fire, who wished to burn down Khandava, despite being restrained by Shatakratu.[16] "I have many excellent and divine weapons with which I am capable of fighting many wielders of the vajra. O illustrious one! But I do not possess a bow that can bear the strength of my arms and withstand the strength and speed I bring to battle. Because of my speed, I need arrows that are inexhaustible. My chariot cannot bear all the arrows that I desire. I want divine horses that are white and as swift as the wind. And a chariot that will shine like the sun in its energy and will thunder like the clouds. Nor does Krishna possess a weapon that can equal his valour and Madhava requires one to kill the nagas and demons[17] in battle. O illustrious one! Tell us the means so that we may be successful and are able to restrain Indra from raining down on this extensive forest. O fire! We are ready to act according to our prowess. O illustrious one! But you should give us the means that can support us."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the illustrious fire, with the smoke as his banner, remembered Varuna, the lord of the worlds, Aditi's son and the god who lives in the water and is the lord of the waters. Knowing that he had been remembered, he too appeared before the fire. The smoke-crested one paid homage to the lord of the waters, the fourth lokapala,[18] the protector and the great god and said, “Quickly give me the bow, the two quivers and the chariot bearing the flag of a monkey that were obtained from King Soma. Partha will accomplish a great task with Gandiva[19] and Vasudeva with the *chakra*.[20] For that reason, let those be given to them.” Varuna told the fire, “I will give them.” Then he gave him that extraordinary gem of a bow, endowed with great valour and capable of extending fame and deeds. It was incapable of being hurt by any weapon, but could destroy all weapons. It was the chief of all weapons and was the destroyer of enemy armies. It alone was equal to one hundred thousand and was the extender of kingdoms. It was radiant, smooth and unblemished everywhere and adorned with many colours. For an eternity, it had been worshipped by the gods, the danavas and the gandharvas. He also gave him two inexhaustible quivers and a chariot with divine horses, with a monkey on the banner. The horses were silvery and were from the land of the gandharvas. They were in golden harnesses, as swift as the wind or the mind, and resembled white clouds. Every weapon was laden onto the chariot and it was incapable of being vanquished by the gods or the danavas. It was radiant, with a thunderous roar and was enchanting to all beings. Through his ascetic powers, it was created by Prajapati Bhoumana,[21] the lord of the worlds. Its form was like that of the sun and could not be gazed at. It was on this that Lord Soma had ascended when he vanquished the danavas. It was radiant in its beauty and was gigantic, like an elephant or a cloud. On this supreme of chariots was mounted an excellent flagpole, golden and resplendent like Shakra’s weapon. On the flagpole was a divine monkey marked with the signs of the lion and the tiger. It seemed to roar out from that adorned perch. There were many other great beings on that flag and their roars made enemy soldiers lose their senses.

‘Then Partha circumambulated that supreme chariot, adorned with many pennants. He worshipped all the gods and attired in armour, with guards for his fingers and wrists, and with a sword slung against his chest, ascended it, like a virtuous man on a *vimana*.[22] Arjuna was extremely delighted when be grasped the Gandiva, the divine and supreme of bows, created by Brahma in ancient times. Paying his homage to the fire, the valorous one grasped the bow with great force and strung it. When the powerful Pandava strung the bow, the hearts of those who heard the sound trembled. Having obtained the chariot, the bow and the two inexhaustible quivers, Kounteya thought himself to be powerful and accomplished for the task. Then the fire gave Krishna the chakra, with a vajra at its centre. On receiving this fiery and desirable weapon, he too became accomplished. The fire said, "O Madhusudana! There is no doubt that with this weapon you will be victorious in battle, even over those who are not human. It is certain that in the destruction of great enemies—humans, gods, rakshasas, pishachas, daityas, nagas—you will be the superior in battle. O Madhava! Whenever you hurl it at an enemy in the course of battle, it will irresistibly kill and return again to your hand." The illustrious Varuna also gave Hari a terrible club named Koumadaki,[23] the destroyer of daityas, with the roar of the thunder.

'The delighted Krishna and Arjuna told the fire, "O illustrious one! We are now armed with weapons and know their use. We are mounted on chariots with flags. We are eager to fight all the gods and demons together, not to speak of a single wielder of the vajra who wishes to fight for the sake of a naga." Arjuna said, "O fire! When the powerful Varshneya releases the chakra in battle, there is nothing in the three worlds that Janardana cannot vanquish. Having obtained the bow Gandiva and these two inexhaustible quivers, I am also capable of vanquishing the worlds in battle. O lord! Blaze as you wish and encircle this great forest. We are capable of helping you in your task." Having been thus addressed by Dasharha and Arjuna, the illustrious one assumed his energetic form and began to consume the forest. He surrounded it from all sides with his seven flames. As terrible as the fire at the end of a *yuga*, he began to angrily consume Khandava. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When he surrounded the forest from all sides, he roared like the clouds and burnt all the beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The blazing forest looked like Meru, king of the mountains, golden in its great radiance.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Those two tigers among men stationed themselves on their chariots on both sides of the forest and a great slaughter of all beings began in every direction. Wherever they saw a creature that dwelt in Khandava trying to escape, those two heroes pursued it. No hole could be seen in the swift power of the chariots.[24] Those two excellent chariots and the two charioteers seemed to be as one. As Khandava blazed, thousands of beings leapt in the ten[25] directions, uttering frightened yells. Some were burnt in one spot. Some were scorched. The eyes burst out for some. Some withered away. Some lost their minds and scattered. Some clung to their sons, others to their fathers and mothers. Out of affection, they were unable to let go and perished. Others rose up in their thousands, their forms distorted. But they were whirled around and again flung into the fire. Some rolled on the ground, their wings, eyes and feet scorched. They were seen there, their bodies destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the waterbodies began to boil. In their thousands, the turtles and the fishes were seen dead. In that destruction of beings in the forest, the burning bodies seemed like flaming torches. Those that ascended upwards were cut to pieces by Partha's arrows, as he laughingly flung them back into the flames. Uttering loud wails, their bodies pierced everywhere by arrows, from above, they were swiftly flung back again into the fire. Pierced by arrows and in flames, the sounds made by the forest-dwellers was heard, like the ocean when it was churned. The huge flames of the delighted fire rose up into the sky and created great consternation among the dwellers of heaven. They sought refuge with the thousand-eyed Purandara,[26] the king of the gods. The gods said, "O lord of the immortals! Why is the fire burning all these people? Is it the case that the end of the worlds has arrived?" Having heard this, the slayer of Vritra[27] himself looked down.

‘Harivahana[28] set out to save Khandava. Covering the sky with a great mass of clouds in many forms, the lord of the gods and the wielder of the vajra began to pour down rain. The thousand-eyed one showered down rain on the fire raging in Khandava from hundreds and thousands of clouds, in shafts as thick as the axles.[29] But the heat of the fire dried up these showers before they reached. Not a single one reached the fire. Then the slayer of Namuchi[30] became very angry with the fire. He again started to rain down, in many torrents. Then the flames fought with those showers, mingled with smoke and lightning. With the sound of the roar, that forest became terrible to look at.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Summoning his splendid weapons, Pandava Bibhatsu, repulsed the shower of rain with a shower of arrows. Pandava covered every side of Khandava with his arrows and drove away that rain from that forest. When the sky was covered with Savyasachi’s arrows, not a single being could escape from there.

‘Takshaka, the immensely powerful king of the serpents, wasn’t in the flaming forest then. He had gone to Kurukshetra. But Takshaka’s powerful son Ashvasena was there. He made great efforts to escape from the fire. However, oppressed by Kounteya’s arrows, he didn’t succeed in getting out. But his mother, daughter of the serpents, tried to save him. She first swallowed his head. Then she began to swallow his tail and in her haste to save her son, the serpent lady rose up. When Pandava saw this, he sliced off her head with a sharp arrow.[31] The lord of the gods saw this. Acting as saviour, the wielder of the vajra unleashed a shower of rain on Pandava and when this dazed him, Ashvasena instantly escaped. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing this terrible power of maya and having been deprived by the serpent, he cut down all the serpents into two and three pieces. Angrily, Bibhatsu cursed the serpent that had escaped and so did the fire and Vasudeva, to the effect that he would never attain fame.

‘Then Jishnu remembered the deception that had been played on him. He was angered and seeking to fight with the thousand-eyed one, covered the sky with his sharp arrows. On seeing Phalguna’s[32] wrath, the king of the gods unleashed his own blazing missile and it flashed across the entire sky. Then winds with terrible roars churned all the oceans. Masses of clouds, mingled with torrents of rain, were created. To counter them, Arjuna unleashed his own supreme weapon. The one who had the knowledge used a mantra to invoke the *vayavya* weapon. In an instant, it destroyed the energy and might of Indra’s clouds, rain and thunder. The clouds dried, the lightning died and the dark sky was pacified. Cool and pleasant winds began to blow and the sun’s orbit returned to normal. Delighted that there was no opposition any more and with the many offerings being made, the fire blazed up again and filled the world with its roar.

‘On seeing that the fire was protected by the two Krishnas, many feathered beings of the Suparna[33] lineage, including Garuda, rose up into the sky, eager to attack the warriors Krishna and Pandava with their wings, beaks and claws, as tough as the vajra. Many serpents also descended near Pandava, spewing terrible and flaming venom from their mouths. As soon as he saw these sky-dwelling creatures, Partha angrily cut them down with his arrows. Benumbed, their bodies fell into the flaming fire. At that, the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the serpents rose up, uttering loud roars and desiring to fight. They were armed with iron clubs, chakras and *bhushundis*,[34] with lightning in them. They were intent on killing Krishna and Partha, their great energy benumbed by their anger. Though they unleashed a fearful shower of weapons, Bibhatsu churned their upper limbs with his sharp arrows. The immensely energetic Krishna, destroyer of enemies, then wrought a great slaughter of daityas and danavas with his chakra. Pierced by arrows and struck with the force of the chakra, many powerful ones were pacified, like waves that reach a shore.

‘Then Shakra, the great lord of the thirty gods,[35] was angered. Riding a white elephant, he charged at them. Grasping lightning, he hurled his vajra weapon with great force and the slayer of demons announced to the gods that the two had been killed. On seeing that the king of the gods was about to hurl the great lightning, the gods grasped all their respective weapons—King Yama his *kaladanda,*[36] the god of wealth his *shibika,*[37] Varuna his *pasha,*[38] Shiva his *vichakra,*[39] the two Ashvins luminiscent *oshadhi,*[40] Dhata his *dhanu,*[41] Jaya his *musala,*[42] the immensely strong Tvashta a mountain, Amsha his *shakti*[43] and the god of death[44] his *parashva.*[45] Aryaman grasped a fearful *parigha*[46] and walked around. Mitra stood there, grasping a chakra that was as sharp as a razor. O lord of the earth! Pusha, Bhaga and Savita grabbed bows and swords and rushed at Krishna and Partha. O supreme among men! The Rudras, the powerful Maruts, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas resplendent in their energy, and many other gods armed with diverse weapons advanced towards Krishna and Partha, in a desire to kill them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that great battle, wonderful omens were witnessed, equal to those seen when all beings were exterminated at the end of a yuga.'

'The two Achyutas[47] saw the angry Shakra and the assemblage of the other gods. Those fearless and invincible warriors stood there, their bows ready. When they saw the gods advancing from every direction, they angrily repulsed them with arrows that were like the vajra. Repeatedly, the resolutions of the gods were shattered. In fear, they gave up the battle and sought refuge with Shakra. On seeing the gods repulsed by Madhava and Arjuna, the sages who dwell in heaven were astonished. Shakra was also extremely pleased at witnessing their constant prowess in battle and engaged in fighting them once again. In an attempt to question Savyasachi's valour, the chastiser of Paka[48] then cast down a gigantic shower of rocks. But intolerantly, Arjuna countered that shower. On seeing that his act was unsuccessful, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, increased the strength of his shower. But the son of the chastiser of Paka brought great pleasure to his father by destroying that shower of rocks with his swift arrows. Wishing to kill Pandu's son, Shakra then uprooted with his bare hands a giant peak of Mandara, with all its trees, and flung it. But Arjuna immediately splintered that peak of the mountain into a thousand pieces with his swift and straight, fire-tipped arrows. The sight of that mountain splintering was like that of the sky breaking, with the sun, the moon and the planets. Pieces of that giant mountain fell on the forest and killed many beings who lived in Khandava.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The inhabitants of Khandava were frightened at the fall of the mountain—danavas, rakshasas, serpents, hyenas, bears, elephants in rut, tigers, lions with manes, deer, buffaloes, hundreds of birds and other forest-dwellers. In great alarm, they and many other beings slithered away. They saw the raging fire and the two Krishnas, their weapons ready and the terrible roar scared them. Janardana let fly his chakra, radiant with its own energy, and small creatures, danavas and *nishacharas*[49] were instantly cut down in hundreds and hurled into the fire. Mangled by Krishna's chakra and covered with fat and blood, the rakshasas then seemed to be like twilight clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varshneya was like destiny, killing pishachas, birds, serpents and animals in their thousands. Released from the hand of Krishna, the slayer of enemies, the chakra repeatedly killed many beings and returned to his hand. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As he went about killing all the beings, the form of he, who is the soul of all beings, became dreadful.

'All the assembled gods and danavas could not vanquish Krishna and Pandava in battle. Nor could the gods save the forest with their strength or quench the fire, so they retreated. On seeing how the masses of gods had been turned away, Shatakratu was extremely pleased and praised Krishna and Pandava. When the gods were repulsed, a disembodied voice spoke to Shatakratu in a loud and deep tone. "Your friend Takshaka, supreme among serpents, is not here. At the time of Khandava's burning, he had gone to Kurukshetra. O Shakra! Listen to my words. You cannot defeat Vasudeva and Arjuna when they are steadfast in battle. They are the gods Nara and Narayana, famous in heaven. You yourself know their bravery and their valour. These two supreme and ancient sages are invincible in battle and cannot be conquered in any of the worlds. They deserve the worship of all the gods, asuras, yakshas, rakshas, gandharvas, humans, *kinnaras*[50] and serpents. O, Vasava![51] Therefore, depart from here with the gods. The destruction of Khandava is destined." Having heard these words and knowing them to be true, the lord of the immortals gave up his anger and jealousy and returned to heaven. O king! On seeing the great-souled Shatakratu leave, all the other dwellers of heaven also departed. When the two warriors, Vasudeva and Arjuna, saw the king of the gods leave with the other gods, they roared like lions.

'O king! Krishna and Pandava were delighted that the king of the gods had left. Fearlessly, they continued with burning the forest. Having vanquished the gods the way the wind scatters the clouds, Arjuna used showers of arrows to kill the beings who lived in Khandava. Not a single being could escape from there, they were cut down by Savyasachi's arrows. Even the greatest of beings could not look upon the invincible Arjuna in battle, not to speak of engaging him in a fight. Like the god of death himself, he pierced one with a hundred arrows and a hundred with one, and dead, they descended into the flames. They found no refuge along the banks, or in the uneven plains, or in the abodes of the ancestors and the gods. The heat increased and thousands of herds of beings cried out loudly in pain. Elephants, deer and birds cried out and the sound scared those who lived in the Ganga and the ocean. No one dared gaze at the mighty-armed Arjuna and the immensely strong Krishna, let alone fighting with them. With his chakra, Hari slew rakshasas, danavas and nagas and those who ventured along solitary paths. The heads and trunks sliced with the force of the chakra, the giant bodies fell into the mouth of the blazing fire. Aided by the flesh, torrents of blood and fat, the flames rose up into the sky, without a trace of smoke. Agni's eyes blazed, his tongue blazed and his wide-open mouth also blazed. The hair stood up, drinking up the fat of life, the eyes were tawny. The fire fed on the nectar that Krishna and Arjuna had provided and was extremely happy, satiated and contented.

'Then Madhusudana saw an asura named Maya suddenly attempting to escape from Takshaka's abode. The fire's charioteer was the wind and assuming the form of a hermit with matted hair and roaring like clouds, he pursued him with the intention of consuming him. Vasudeva stood with his chakra raised, ready to kill. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the raised chakra and the fire ready to consume him, Maya cried out, "O Arjuna! Save me." Hearing these scared words, Arjuna replied, "Do not be frightened." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Partha's words seemed to instil new life into Maya. Maya was Namuchi's[52] brother. When Partha told Maya he need not fear, Dasharha no longer desired to kill him and the fire did not burn him either. In that flaming forest, Agni did not burn six beings—Ashvasena, Maya and the four Sharngakas.'[53]

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Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! Why did Agni, the fire, not burn the Sharngakas when that forest was blazing? Tell me at once. O, brahmana! You have recounted the reason why Ashvasena and the danava Maya were not burnt. But you have not told us the reason for the Sharngakas. O, brahmana! It is extraordinary that the Sharngakas escaped from destruction. Recount to us why they were not destroyed in the conflagaration.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you everything exactly about why Agni did not consume the Sharngakas. O king! There was a great rishi renowned by the name of Mandapala. He was learned in dharma, rigid in his vows and chief among ascetics. He followed the path of the rishis who held up their seed,[54] was devoted to studying the sacred texts and dharma, was an ascetic and had achieved control over his senses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having attained the final goal of ascetism, he gave up his human body and went to the world of the ancestors. But he did not find the fruits of his acts there. The dwellers of heaven were seated around Dharmaraja[55] and he asked them, “Why have I not attained the worlds that should have been the fruit of my asceticism? What have I not done that this should be the fruit of my actions? O dwellers of heaven! I will do that which will get me the fruits of my asceticism and open that which is now closed. Tell me.” The gods replied, “O brahmana! Hear about the debts men are undoubtedly born with—to rituals, brahmacharya[56] and offspring, and these are respectively discharged through sacrifices, austerities and progeny. You are an ascetic and you have performed sacrifices. But you did not have any offspring. Because you did not have offspring, these worlds are closed to you. Therefore, have progeny and you will enjoy these worlds for an eternity. O sage! A son saves a father from the hell known as *put.*[57] O supreme among brahmanas! Therefore, try to obtain offspring.” On hearing these words of the dwellers of heaven, Mandapala began to wonder how he might obtain a large number of offspring swiftly. After thinking about this, he concluded that birds give birth to many offspring.

‘So he became a Sharngaka bird and united with a female Sharngaka bird named Jarita. Through her, he had four sons who were knowledgable about the brahman. While these young sons were still inside their eggs, the sage deserted them there in that forest with their mother and went off after Lapita.[58] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the immensely illustrious one went off after Lapita, out of affection for her children, Jarita became very thoughtful and anxious. O king! Those sons, the infant rishis still in their eggs, had undeservedly been abandoned by their father in Khandava forest. But out of love for her sons, Jarita could not discard them and after they were born, brought them up in her own way.[59]

‘After some time, the rishi Mandapala was wandering in the forest with Lapita and he saw Agni advance towards Khandava to consume it. Knowing his resolution and knowing his sons were still young, the brahmana sage prayed to the greatly energetic fire, lord of the world, scared about the protection of his sons. Mandapala said, “O Agni! You are the mouth of all the gods, you are the one who carries sacrificial offerings. You are the purifier who dwells invisibly in all living beings. The learned have said that you are one and have again said that you are three.[60] They think of you in eight forms[61] and imagine you as the one who carries sacrificial offerings. The supreme rishis say that you have created the entire universe. O fire! The universe is based on you and without you, it will be destroyed instantly. It is after paying homage to you that the brahmanas go to the eternal worlds they have earned through their actions, together with their wives and sons. O Agni! It is said that you are the fire in the clouds in the sky, in their lightning. The flames that emerge from you burn down all beings. O immensely radiant one! O Jataveda![62] You have created everything in this universe. Everything, mobile and immobile, every action and everything that exists is based on you. You have determined the ancient waters, everything in the universe is based on you. The offerings to the gods and the offerings to the ancestors, as prescribed, are based on you. O Agni! You are the one who burns down, you are Dhata,[63] you are Brihaspati.[64] You are the two Ashvins, the two Yamas,[65] Mitra, Soma and Anila."[66] O king! Having been thus prayed to by Mandapala, Agni was satisfied with the immeasurably energetic sage. With happiness in his heart, he asked him, "What good can I do for you?" With hands joined in salutation, Mandapala told the fire, "When you burn Khandava forest, please spare my sons." The illustrious bearer of sacrificial offerings gave him his word and at that time, he blazed into Khandava, wishing to consume it.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the fire blazed up, the Sharngakas were extremely distressed, miserable and extremely anxious, because they could not find any means of escaping. O lord of men! Listening to her young sons, their ascetic mother Jarita was stricken with grief and began to lament.

‘Jarita said, “This terrible fire is burning the inside of the forest and advancing towards us. It has blazed up the entire universe and is increasing my misery. My children still have imperfect understanding; they are without feathers and feet. Yet they are the ultimate refuge of our ancestors and are tugging at me. The blazing fire is advancing, licking the tall trees with its tongue and creating terror. My sons still do not have strength and are unable to escape. Nor can I escape somewhere else, taking my sons with me. I cannot abandon them and my heart is distressed. Which one of my sons will I leave and which will I take with me? What should I do? O my sons! What do you think? Even after thinking a lot, I can find no means of escape for you. I will now cover you with my body and die with you. In earlier times, your cruel father abandoned you, uttering these words, ‘My lineage will be established on Jaritari, because he is the eldest. Sarisrikva will have offspring, extending the lineage of my ancestors. Stambamitra will practise austerities and Drona will be supreme in knowledge of the brahman.’ Who will I take with me and leave and who will suffer the greatest of calamities?” She was bereft of judgement because she did not know what was the right course of action. Through her own thoughts she did not see any means whereby her sons might escape from the fire.

‘When she had spoken in this way, the four Sharngakas spoke to their mother. “O mother! Give up your love for us and go to a place where there is no fire. If we are destroyed, you will have other sons. O mother! But if you are destroyed, there will be no progeny in our lineage. O mother! After taking into consideration these two outcomes, the time has come for you to do that which is best for our lineage. Out of love for your sons, do not do anything that will destroy our lineage. The act of our father, who wishes to attain the worlds, must not amount to nothing.” Jarita replied, “Near this tree, there is a rat hole in the ground. Swiftly enter the hole and you will suffer no fear from the fire there. O sons! When you have entered it, I will cover the hole with dirt. That is the only means that I can think of to counter the blazing fire. When the fire has died out, I will return and remove the mass of dirt. If you wish to escape from the fire, listen to these words of mine.” The Sharngakas said, “We are only masses of flesh, without feathers, and the carnivorous rat will destroy us. On beholding this fear, we cannot enter. We do not know how we can escape being burnt by the fire or being eaten by the rat. How can our father attain fulfilment and how can our mother survive? The dwellers of the sky will either be destroyed in the hole by the rat or by the fire. Considering both the possibilities, it is better to be burnt than to be eaten. To die from being eaten by a rat in a hole is a most miserable death. But destruction of the body by fire has been sanctioned by the learned.”’

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‘Jarita said, “The rat emerged from this hole. The little creature was seized by a hawk in its claws and carried away. Therefore, you have nothing to be scared of.”

‘The Sharngakas replied, “We do not know for certain that the rat was carried away by a hawk. There may be others there and we have every reason to fear them. It is not certain that the fire will reach this place. The wind can be seen to be turning. O mother! But there is no doubt that the creatures in the hole will kill us. O mother! An uncertain death is superior to one that is certain. Take to the sky as you should. You will have other handsome sons.”

‘Jarita said, “I myself saw the powerful hawk approach the hole, roam around, and then fly away from the hole with the rat. I swiftly flew after the hawk, pronouncing blessings on it for having taken the rat away from the hole. ‘O king of hawks! Since you are flying away with our hated enemy, may you reside in heaven, golden, and without any enemies.’ When the hungry bird had finished eating, with its permission, I returned home. O sons! Enter the hole confidently, there is nothing you should fear. It is certain that I have seen the hawk carry away the rat.”

‘The Sharngakas replied, “O mother! We do not know whether the rat has really been carried away by the hawk. Without knowing, we cannot enter the hole.”

‘Jarita said, “I know that the rat has been carried away by the hawk. Therefore, there is no fear and do as I say.”

‘The Sharngakas replied, “It is not that you are trying to free us from our great fear through a falsehood. When a person’s knowledge is muddled, his acts do not result from intelligence. You have received no favours from us. You do not even know who we are. Who are we to you that you are trying to save us through so much suffering to yourself? You are young and beautiful and are capable of finding a husband. Follow your husband and you will obtain handsome sons. We will enter the fire and attain the beautiful worlds. If the fire does not consume us, you will come back to us again.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed, the Sharnga left her sons in Khandava and swiftly went to the regions where there was no fire and no fear. The blazing fire with its piercing flames arrived at the place where the Sharngakas, Mandapala’s sons, were. The Sharngakas saw the flames blazing in their energy. Jaritari addressed these words, so that the fire could hear.’

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‘Jaritari said, “The intelligent man stays awake before difficult times. When the difficult time arrives, there is no suffering at all. But he who is not intelligent and is not sensible knows nothing and suffers because of difficulties when a difficult time arrives.”

‘Sarisrikva said, “You are implacable and intelligent. The time has come when our lives are endangered. There is no doubt that only one among many is wise and brave.”

‘Stambamitra said, “The eldest is the protector, because the eldest saves in times of difficulty. If the eldest one does not know, what can the younger ones do?”

‘Drona said, “The one with the golden seed[67] is swiftly advancing towards our abode in flames. The seven tongues of the fire are lean and are eagerly licking.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words of his brother, Jaritari folded his hands on his forehead in salutation. O king! Listen to the way he praised the fire.

‘Jaritari said, “You are the soul of the wind, the purifier.[68] You are the body of the creepers. O virile one![69] You are the source of the water. The water is also your source. O most powerful one! Your flames are like the rays of the sun and they go above and below, and on every side.”

‘Sarisrikva said, “O you with the clouds in your banner! Our mother has ignored us and we do not know our father. Our wings have still not grown. O Agni! We have no protector but for you. You are the only hero and, therefore, protect us. O Agni! We are seeking refuge with you. In your benevolent form and in your seven flames, therefore, protect us. O Jataveda! You alone are the one that heats. O god! You alone are the one who heats the heavens. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! Protect us young rishis today and bypass this place.”

‘Stambamitra said, “O Agni! You alone are everything. The entire universe is established in you. You sustain all beings and you hold up everything that exists. O Agni! You are the bearer of all sacrificial offerings. You alone are the supreme sacrificial offering. The learned ones offer sacrifices to you, knowing you to be one and many. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! You are the creator of the three worlds. When the time arrives,[70] you kindle them and cook afresh. You are the mother of the entire universe. O Agni! You are the one in whom everything is established again. O lord of the universe! You remain inside and digest the food that beings eat.[71] Everything is established in you and you are always cooking and always expanding.”

‘Drona said, “O Jataveda! You are the sun with its rays. You suck up the water from the earth and the juices that are born in the ground. O Shukra! You take them all and return them again in the form of rain when it is time and cause everything to grow. O Shukra! It is from you that the verdant creepers grow again. The ponds, the seas and the giant oceans are born. O you whose rays are piercing! We are always dependent on Varuna.[72] Be benevolent and be our protector. Do not destroy us today. O fire! Your eyes have the colour of copper. Your neck is red and your trail is black. Save us, like the houses on the shores of the ocean.”’[73]

Vaishampayana said, ‘When he had been thus addressed by Drona of the unsullied deeds, Jataveda spoke to Drona, remembering the promise he had made to Mandapala. Agni said, “O Drona! You are a rishi. What you have uttered is the Brahman.[74] I will do what you desire and you have nothing to fear. Mandapala had mentioned all this to me earlier and had asked me to spare his sons when I consumed the forest. The word that I gave him and the words that you have just spoken are both of great importance. Therefore, tell me what I should do. O fortunate one! O brahmana! O illustrious one! I am extremely pleased with your praise.” Drona replied, “O Shukra! These cats cause us trouble all the time. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! Place them and all their relatives between your teeth.” O Janamejaya! After granting leave to the Sharngakas, Agni acted accordingly. Blazing up, he consumed the Khandava forest.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Mandapala had meanwhile begun to worry about his sons. Although he had spoken about them to the one with the piercing rays, his mind was still anxious. In his anxiety for his sons, he told Lapita, “O Lapita! My sons are still incapable of escaping. When the fire grows in strength and the wind blows swiftly, my sons will be incapable of freeing themselves. Their ascetic mother will be incapable of saving them. She will suffer misery when she sees that she cannot save her sons. My sons are incapable of running or flying. She will run around, lamenting her misery. How is my son Jaritari? How is Sarisrikva? How are Stambamitra and Drona and how is that ascetic?” Thus, rishi Mandapala lamented in that forest.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In her jealousy, Lapita replied in these words, “You need not suffer anxiety on account of your sons. You have yourself told me that they are powerful and energetic rishis. They have nothing to fear from the flames. In my presence, you spoke to Agni on their behalf. The great-souled and blazing one gave you his promise. Being the protector of the world, he will never utter a falsehood. They are eloquent in speech and your anxiety is not because of them. You are anxious because you are thinking of my enemy.[75] It is certain that you do not love me as much as you loved her earlier. It can never be right that one with two parties should display no love towards his relative, even when the one close to him suffers. Go to Jarita, for whom you are suffering. I will wander around alone here, like one who is allied with a wretch."[76] Mandapala replied, "I am not wandering around in this world because of the reasons you believe. I am roaming around for the sake of offspring and those I have are now facing suffering. He who casts off that which he has, for the sake of that which might be there, is stupid and the world disregards him. Do what you desire. These blazing flames of Agni are licking the giant trees and are giving birth to a hateful and malevolent sorrow in my heart." After the flames had passed by that spot, Jarita, who was attached to her sons, swiftly returned to the place where her sons were. Weeping and miserable in the forest, she saw that all her sons were well, having escaped from the fire. On seeing them, she wept again and again. She embraced her sons one by one and they too wept.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, Mandapala suddenly arrived there. But none of his sons displayed any signs of greeting. He spoke to each one of them again and again and also to Jarita. But none of them uttered a single word to the rishi, good or bad. Mandapala asked, "Which one of you is my eldest son and who is the one born after that? Who is the one in the middle and who is the youngest? I am speaking to you in misery. Why aren't you replying to me? I left you to the fire, but I did not find any peace." Jarita replied, "What do you have to do with the eldest one or with the one who came after him? What do you have to do with the one in the middle or with the youngest who is an ascetic? You had left me miserable in every way and gone away. Go back to the young Lapita, the one with the beautiful smile." Mandapala said, "Other than a different man, there is nothing in this world that is more fatal to women than a co-wife. Even the fortunate Arundhati, renowned in all the worlds and devoted to her vows, was distrustful of the supreme rishi Vasishtha. He was pure of heart and always devoted to her welfare. But she was ill disposed towards that *saptarshi*[77] and because of that insult, she is now a tiny star that is like fire covered with smoke. She is sometimes visible and sometimes invisible and is seen as an evil omen. You yourself had a connection with me to obtain offspring. Now it has come to this that you give up what you once desired and have become like her. A man should never commit the act of trusting a woman, even if she happens to be a wife. Once a woman has obtained sons, she no longer pays attention to her duties." At this, all his sons came and paid homage to him. O king! And he too provided reassurances to his sons.'

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'Mandapala said, "I kept the fire informed about your protection and Agni had earlier given me his word. On account of Agni's promise, the devotion to dharma that is there in your mother and the great energy that is there in you, I had not come here earlier. O sons! You had no reason to worry about your death. All of you are rishis, learned in the knowledge of the brahman. The fire knows that well enough."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having thus reassured his sons, Mandapala took his wife with him and leaving that region, went to another region. The illustrious lord with the piercing rays consumed the kindling Khandava forest, with the assistance of the two Krishnas and brought terror to beings and the world. The fire drank up rivers of fat and marrow. Agni was extremely satisfied and appeared before Arjuna.

'Then, surrounded by masses of Maruts, the illustrious lord of the gods descended from the sky and spoke these words to Partha and Madhava, "You have accomplished a feat that is difficult, even for the immortals. I am pleased. Choose boons that are difficult to obtain and beyond what humans can get." Partha asked for the boon that he might get all of Shakra's weapons. Then Shakra fixed the time for the receiving. "O Pandava! When the illustrious Mahadeva will be pleased with you, that is when I will give you all the weapons. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O Dhananjaya! I will myself know when that time has arrived. Because of your great asceticism, I will then bestow on you all my *agneya*[78] and all my vayavya weapons and all my other weapons and you will accept them." Vasudeva asked for the boon that he might always be loving towards Partha. The lord of the gods happily granted this boon. Having done so, the god who was the lord of the Maruts, took his leave of the fire and returned to heaven with the thirty gods.

'Having consumed the forest with its animals and birds for five days and one, the fire was extremely satiated and ceased. He had eaten flesh and drunk fat and blood. O lord of the world! He was filled with extreme joy and spoke to them. "O warriors! O tigers among men! You have gratified me to the point of extreme bliss. You now have my leave to go where you want." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus granted leave by the great-souled fire, the threesome of Arjuna, Vasudeva and the danava Maya wandered around for some time. They then seated themselves on the banks of the beautiful river.'

This ends the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata.

Sabha Parva

The word sabha means assembly hall or council and in the eighteen-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sabha Parva comes second. Understandably, this parva is about an assembly hall. Sabha Parva has seventy-two chapters. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 20 through 28 constitute Sabha Parva. There are two ways to number chapters in this translation. The first way is to do it consecutively within each of the eighteen parvas. That is, the numbering of the chapters begins afresh with Sabha Parva. This is the way the chapters are numbered in the Sanskrit text. The alternative is to number chapters consecutively right from the beginning. The former makes it easier to match the translation with the Sanskrit text, but the latter is probably more reader-friendly. The numbering of the chapters, from Sabha Parva onwards, uses both, so that the reader has choice. The first number is a consecutive one, from the beginning, and the second number (within brackets) is the numbering within Sabha Parva.

Section Twenty

Sabha Parva

This parva has 429 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 226(1): 19 shlokas
Chapter 227(2): 23 shlokas
Chapter 228(3): 34 shlokas
Chapter 229(4): 34 shlokas
Chapter 230(5): 116 shlokas
Chapter 231(6): 18 shlokas
Chapter 232(7): 26 shlokas
Chapter 233(8): 38 shlokas
Chapter 234(9): 25 shlokas
Chapter 235(10): 23 shlokas
Chapter 236(11): 73 shlokas

The name of the first section within this parva is also the same as the name of the parva. The word sabha having already been explained.

226 (1)

Vaishampayana said, 'In Vasudeva's presence, Maya joined his hands as a sign of respect and repeatedly worshipping him, spoke to Partha in flattering words, "O Kounteya! You have saved me from the angry Krishna and the fire that desired to consume me. Please tell me what I can do for you." Arjuna replied, "O great asura! You have done everything and can leave in peace. May you always be friendly towards us and may we always be friendly towards you." Maya said, "O illustrious one! O bull among men! What you have said is deserving of you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But as a token of my affection, I wish to do something for you. I am extremely wise, the Vishvakarma of the danavas. O Pandava! Therefore, I wish to do something for you." Arjuna replied, "You think that I have saved your life from instant death. But if that is the case, I cannot ask you to do anything. O Danava! But I do not wish to stand in the way of your resolution either. Therefore, do something for Krishna and that will be tantamount to doing something for me." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus urged by Maya, Vasudeva thought for an instant about what might be done for him. Having thought, Krishna said, "O Daitya! Build a wonderful assembly hall for Dharmaraja that you think to be worthy of him, so that no one from the world of men can construct an assembly hall that is its equal, even as they gaze at it amazed. O Maya! Build an assembly hall in which we will see the designs[1] of the gods, asuras and humans." Having heard these words, Maya was delighted. He drew up a design for an assembly hall for the Pandavas that was like a vimana.

'Then Krishna and Partha told Dharmaraja Yudhishthira everything that had happened and introduced Maya to him. Yudhishthira offered him the homage that he deserved. Maya accepted and paid his respects in return. O lord of the universe! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the daitya told Pandu's sons about the deeds of the gods in ancient times, in diverse places. After resting for a while, Vishvakarma[2] reflected and began to build an assembly hall for the great-souled Pandavas. According to the wishes of the great-souled Krishna and Pritha's sons, the immensely energetic one performed the initial rites on an auspicious occasion. The valorous one honoured thousands of the best brahmanas, fed them *payasa*[3] and donated a lot of riches to them. He then measured out a divine and beautiful plot that was ten thousand *kishku*[4] in every direction and was marked by all the good characteristics.'

227(2)

Vaishampayana said, 'Janardana lived happily in Khandavaprastha, beloved by the sons of Pritha and honoured by them. Wishing to see his father, he then made up his mind to leave. The one with the large eyes paid his homage to Dharmaraja and Pritha.[5] The one who is worshipped by the world worshipped his father's sister by touching her feet with his head. She inhaled the fragrance of Keshava's head and embraced him. Then the immensely famous Hrishikesha[6] Krishna went to see his sister and spoke to the soft-spoken and gentle Subhadra with tears in his voice. The illustrious one's words were brief, appropriate and loaded with goodness. She too worshipped him with her head bowed down and gave him messages for her relatives. Taking his leave from the beautiful one, Varshneya then went to see Krishna[7] and Dhoumya. The supreme among men worshipped Dhoumya in the appropriate way and consoling Droupadi, Janardana took her leave. The learned and strong one then went to the other brothers with Partha. Surrounded by the five brothers, Krishna looked like Shakra surrounded by the immortals. The bull among the Yadus then worshipped the gods and the brahmanas with garlands, chanting, obeisance and many kinds of fragrances.

'Having performed all these acts, the best of those who are supreme gave the brahmanas vessels full of curds, fruit, *akshata*[8] and riches and circumambulated them. They uttered their blessings and he set out, ascending his swift and golden chariot that had Tarkshya[9] on its banner. Carrying his club, chakra, Sharnga[10] and other weapons the lotus-eyed one left at an auspicious and excellent *muhurta,*[11] tithi[12] and nakshatra, pulled by his horses Sainya and Sugriva.[13] King Yudhishthira, lord of the Kurus, ascended after him and out of love for him, made the charioteer Daruka, supreme among charioteers, stand aside and himself grasped the reins. Arjuna also mounted and waved a golden-handled and white *chamara*[14] all around his head. The powerful Bhimasena and the twins followed Krishna, surrounded by the priests and the citizens. Keshava, the destroyer of enemy warriors was thus followed by the brothers and shone like a preceptor followed by his beloved disciples. Bidding the lamenting Partha farewell, Govinda embraced him. He then paid his homage to Yudhishthira, Bhimasena and the twins. The twins embraced him firmly in their arms and paid him homage. After making an agreement[15] with the Pandavas and persuading them and their followers to turn back, Madhusudana Krishna then left for his own city, in glory like Purandara. Out of affection, their eyes lovingly followed Krishna for as long as they could see, because their minds were still unsatisfied at the sight of Keshava. The handsome Shouri[16] swiftly disappeared from their sight. Their desires unsatisfied, since their hearts had left with Govinda, Pritha's sons turned back and those bulls among men returned to their city. Riding his chariot, Krishna reached Dvaraka in time.'

228(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'Maya then spoke to Partha Arjuna, supreme among victorious ones. "With your permission, I will now go away. But I will be back soon. To the north of Kailasha and near Mount Mainaka, where all the danavas perform sacrifices near the beautiful lake Bindu, I have collected jewels and treasure.[17] Vrishaparva[18] is always faithful to his promises and I have kept it in his sabha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If it is still there, I will go and bring it. I will then build a sabha for the Pandavas that will be famous, beautiful, pleasing to the heart and adorned with all the gems. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! There is a supreme club in lake Bindu, kept there by King Youvanashva[19] after he slew his enemies in battle. It is heavy and firm and is embellished with golden knobs, equal to one hundred thousand clubs and is capable of killing everything. That will be for Bhima what the Gandiva is for you. There is also Varuna's great conch shell, with an excellent sound, and named Devadatta. There is no doubt that I shall give you all these." Having told Partha this, the asura left towards the north-east.

'To the north of Kailasa, near Mount Mainaka, there is an illustrious peak named Hiranyashringa, filled with great gems. There is the beautiful lake Bindu, where King Bhagiratha lived for a long time, in his desire to see the Ganga, since known as Bhagirathi.[20] O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! The great-souled one, lord of all beings, performed one hundred great sacrifices. There were many golden sacrificial stakes at the spot, encrusted with gems. This was for the sake of beauty and not to set an example.[21] It was there that the thousand-eyed one, Shachi's husband, attained success. It was there that the eternal lord of all beings, whose energy is piercing, was worshipped by thousands of beings after creating all the worlds. It is there that Nara, Narayana, Brahma, Yama and Sthanu, as the fifth, perform sacrifices after the end of one thousand yugas. It is there that Vasudeva always faithfully performed sacrifices for one thousand years, for the sake of those who are good. It was there that Keshava placed thousands and tens of thousands of splendid sacrificial stakes and altars, garlanded in gold.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arriving there, he took the club and the conch shell and the crystal objects that were with Vrishaparva and were required for the sabha. He brought all this with the assistance of the servant rakshasas. Bringing all this back, the asura built a matchless sabha. It was beautiful, divine, encrusted with jewels and famous in the three worlds. He gave the supreme club to Bhimasena and the supreme conch shell Devadatta to Partha. O great king! The supreme assembly hall had golden pillars and a circumference of ten thousand kishku. Its beautiful form was radiant and divine, like the fire, the sun or the moon. Its splendour seemed to challenge the blazing splendour of the sun. Its radiance was divine, as if it was on fire with divine energy. It was like the sky covered with a mountain or a cloud—spacious, large, smooth, without blemish; a remover of fatigue. It had the best objects in it and its walls were garlanded with gems. It had many jewels, many treasures and had been built well by Vishvakarma.[22] The unrivalled beauty Maya gave it was such that Sudharma of the Dasharhas or Brahma's palace was no match. On Maya's instruction, eight thousand rakshasas, known as *kimkaras*,[23] guarded and protected the sabha. They could travel in the sky, were terrible and had large forms and great strength. Their eyes were red and yellow, their ears were like conch shells and they were armed.

‘Inside the sabha, Maya built a matchless tank full of lotuses. Their leaves were made of *vaidurya,*[24] and their stalks were made out of brilliant gems. There was the fragrance of lotuses and there were many fish[25] in the water. There were flowering lotuses and it was adorned with fish and turtles. Gentle steps led down into clear and pure water that was always present and was stirred by the wind. It was decorated as with dots of pearls.[26] On seeing the tank decorated with gems and precious stones, some kings did not recognize and fell into it, out of ignorance.[27] Around the sabha, there were giant trees that were always flowering. They were beautiful and dark, and cast cool shade. All the gardens were fragrant. All the ponds were adorned with swans, *karandavas*[28] and *chakravakas*.[29] The wind carried the fragrance of the flowers in the water and those on land everywhere and pleased the Pandavas. Such was the sabha that Maya built in fourteen months. When it was completed, he informed King Dharmaraja.’

229(4)

Vaishampayana said, ‘King Yudhishthira then entered. The lord of men fed ten thousand brahmanas with ghee, payasa, roots and fruits and gave them unused garments and many garlands. The lord gave each of them one thousand cows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The cries of “what an auspicious day” seemed to touch heaven. The supreme among the Kurus worshipped the gods with music, diverse songs and many fragrances. Then, for seven nights, the great-souled Yudhishthira was served by wrestlers, dancers, fighters, raconteurs and minstrels. When the homage had thus been paid, the Pandava and his brothers pleasured in that beautiful sabha, like Shakra does in heaven.

‘Rishis and kings from many countries were seated with the Pandavas in that sabha—Asita, Devala, Satya, Sarpamali, Mahashira, Arvavasu, Sumitra, Maitreya, Shunaka, Bali, Baka, Dalbhya, Sthulashira, Krishna Dvaipayana and we ourselves, Vyasa’s disciples—Shuka, Sumantu, Jaimini and Paila. Then there were Tittira, Yajnavalkya, Lomaharshana and his son Apsuhomya, Dhoumya, Animandavya, Koushika, Damoshnisha, Traivani, Parnada, Ghatajanuka, Mounjayana, Vayubhaksha, Parasharya, the two Sarikas, Balavaka, Shinivaka, Sutyapala, Kritasharma, Jatukarna, Shikhavana, Subala, Parijataka, the immensely fortunate Parvata, the sage Markandeya, Pavitrapani, Savarni, Bhaluki, Galava, Janghabandhu, Raibhya, Kopavegashrava, Bhrigu, Haribabhru, Koundinya, Babhrumali, Sanatana, Kakshivana, Oushija, Nachiketa, Goutama, Painga, Varaha, Shunaka, the immensely ascetic Shandilya, Karkara, Venujangha, Kalapa and Katha. These sages were immersed in dharma, were self-controlled and had their senses under restraint. There were many others who were learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas. All these supreme rishis waited upon the great-souled one in the sabha. They were learned in dharma and immaculate and discoursed about pure tales. In that same way, the best of kshatriyas also waited on Dharmaraja—the fortunate, great-souled, righteous and prosperous Munjaketu, Samgramajit, Durmukha, the valorous Ugrasena, the lord of the earth Kakshasena, the undefeated Kshemaka, Kamala the king of Kamboja, the mighty Kampana who alone made the Yavanas[30] tremble the way the Kalakeya asuras were made to tremble by the wielder of the vajra,[31] King Jatasura beloved by the Madras, kings Kunti and Kuninda of the Kiratas, Anga, Vanga and Pundra, Pandya, Udraja, Andhraka, King Sumana of the Kiratas, the king of the Yavanas, Chanura, Devavrata, Bhoja, Bhimaratha, Shrutayudha of Kalinga, Jayatsena of Magadha, Susharma, Chekitana, Suratha the destroyer of enemies, Ketumana, Vasudana, Kritakshana of Videha, Sudharma, Aniruddha, the immensely strong Shrutayudha, the invincible Anuparaja, the great alms-giver Kshemajit, Shishupala and his son, the king of Karusha, the invincible Vrishni princes who were like the gods, namely, Ahuka, Viprithu, Gada, Sarana, Akrura, Kritavarma, Shini's son Satyaki, Bhishmaka, Ahriti, the valorous Dyumatsena, the great archers from Kekaya, Yajnasena of the Somakas. O king! There were all the immensely powerful princes of the Vrishnis who had learnt the science of archery from Arjuna and were dressed in deer and antelope hides[32] and other princes who had been similarly taught—Rukmini son,[33] and

Samba and Yuyudhana Satyaki.[34] O ruler of the earth! These and many other kings were there. Dhananjaya's eternal friend Tumbaru was there, Chitrasena with his advisers and many other gandharvas and apsaras, skilled in singing and music, knowledgeable in the beating of *tala*[35] and kinnaras, who were excellent pupils of *laya*.[36] At Tumbaru's command, those learned ones sang in celestial tones, as was laid down in the rules, and pleasured and paid homage to Pandu's sons and the rishis who were assembled in the sabha, rigid in their vows and devoted to the truth. They paid homage to Yudhishthira the way the gods do so to Brahma in heaven.'

230 (5)

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the great-souled Pandavas were seated there and the great-souled gandharvas were also seated in the sabha, the immensely energetic rishi Narada was on a tour of the worlds and came there, accompanied by other rishis. O lord of kings! The devarshi's radiance was infinite and he could travel as he willed. He wished to please himself by seeing the Pandavas' sabha and arrived with Parijata, the wise Parvata, Sumukha and Soumya. On seeing rishi Narada, the chief of the Pandavas,[37] who knew everything about dharma, instantly arose, with his younger brothers. With humility, he worshipped him happily and offered him a seat in accordance with the prescribed rites. The righteous one offered him homage with jewels and everything that he desired. Having been thus worshipped by all the Pandavas, the great rishi who was learned in the Vedas asked Yudhishthira questions mixed with dharma, artha and kama.

'Narada asked, "Is your wealth spent properly? Does your mind find pleasure in dharma? Do you find happiness without making your mind suffer? O god of men! Do you follow the undecaying actions followed by your grandfathers before you, to bring dharma and artha to men? Do you hurt dharma by artha or artha by dharma or both for the sake of pleasures that kama brings? O supreme among victorious ones! O benefactor who knows the value of time! Do you always divide your time equally to the service of artha, dharma and kama? O unblemished one! Do you use the six royal qualities[38] to judge the seven means?[39] Do you test your strengths and weaknesses in the fourteen ways?[40] O supreme among victorious ones! After examining yourself and your enemies, do you follow the eight duties[41] before concluding an alliance? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Are your six chief officers[42] always devoted to you and not corrupted and lazy because of the riches they have earned? Are your deliberations based on reason and service of messengers and not divulged by you, your advisers or ministers? Do you pursue peace and war at the appropriate times? Do you follow the right course for those who are neutral and in the middle? O brave one! Are your ministers like you—wise, pure, capable of living, of good lineage and loyal to you? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The root of royal victories is in counsel, kept secret by advisers who are skilled in advice and learned in the sacred texts. You have surely not become a slave to sleep and you are awake at the appropriate time. In the dead of the night, do you think about what should be done and what should not? Surely you do not seek advice from only one, or from too many. Surely the counsel obtained from your ministers does not spread throughout the kingdom. When you have decided on action that has great utility but is easily accomplished, do you implement them quickly without placing obstructions in the way? Do you examine the outcome of your action, known and unknown? Once begun, do they have to be restarted or are they confused at the start? O king! O hero! Do people know of action accomplished or partly accomplished, but not those intended and not accomplished? Have you appointed wise teachers, knowledgeable in all the shastras, to instruct all the princes and chief warriors? Do you purchase a single learned man for one thousand foolish ones? In times of distress, it is the learned one who brings the greatest good. Are all your forts stocked with riches, food, weapons, water, instruments, artisans and archers? Even a single adviser who is intelligent, brave, self-controlled and clever can bring great prosperity to a king or a king’s son.

Do you use groups of three spies, who do not know one another, to find out about the eighteen ministers on the other side and the fifteen on your own territory?[43] O destroyer of enemies! Unknown to them, do you always keep watch over your adversaries, with care and on guard?

'"Is your priest humble, born of a good lineage, famous, untouched by jealousy and do you pay him homage? Is he in charge of the sacrificial fires and is he intelligent and upright, knowledgeable in the rituals? Does he always know the time when sacrifices and offerings must be rendered? Is the appointed astrologer skilled in the knowledge of rituals and in treating all the omens and destinies? Have you appointed superior servants in superior positions and medium ones in medium positions? Have you employed inferior servants in inferior positions? For the best tasks, have you appointed the best advisers, those who are without deceit and pure, up to their fathers and grandfathers? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Surely your subjects are not oppressed by harsh punishments when the ministers govern your kingdom. Do they slight you the way sacrificial priests slight those who have fallen[44] or wives slight oppressive husbands addicted to desire? Is your general bold, brave, intelligent, persevering, pure, well born, loyal and skilled? Are the chief warriors of your army skilled in every kind of warfare and are they known to exhibit great valour and prowess? Do you treat them respectfully? Are your soldiers given their rations and wages on time? Do you know that non-payment of rations and wages on time makes servants angry with their masters? The learned have described this as a great calamity. Are the sons of good families chiefly loyal to you? In the field of battle, are they ever ready to give up their lives for you? In military affairs, is there a single one who is beyond control and causes harm to many because of selfish reasons? If a man performs an extraordinary act beyond what he is required to do, does he obtain greater honour, rations and wages? Do you reward, with wealth and honour, men who are learned, humble and skilled in any type of knowledge in accordance with their qualities? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Do you support the wives of men who have given up their lives for you and those who have otherwise come to grief for your sake? O Partha! Do you offer protection, like to a son, to an enemy who has been defeated in battle, or surrenders, having become fearful and weak? O lord of the earth! Are you impartial towards everyone on earth and can they fearlessly come to you, like a father or a mother? O bull among the Bharata lineage! When you get to know that an enemy is in distress, do you inspect the three parts of your force[45] and swiftly advance on him, knowing that the rear of the army is the root of defeat? O great king! Do you pay wages to your soldiers in advance? O scorcher of enemies! Do you distribute riches from the enemy kingdom among the chiefs of your army, in accordance with what they deserve? O Partha! After having first controlled your own self and senses, do you seek to defeat enemies who are enslaved by their own passions and senses? Before marching against your enemies, do you first employ the four techniques of sama, dana, danda and bheda,[46] in accordance with their qualities? O lord of the earth! Do you first strengthen your base before marching out? Do you attack to win and having won, do you protect? Does your army have four types of forces[47] and is it divided into eight wings,[48] well trained by superior officers and capable of defeating the enemy? O scorcher of enemies! O great king! When attacking the enemy in battle, surely you do not kill during seasons of sowing and harvesting. Do the various agents in your kingdom and in those of the enemies carry on their appointed tasks and protect each other?

'"O great king! Are the servants who protect your food, garments and perfumes approved by you? Are your treasury, granary, stable, gates, armoury and revenue department guarded well by loyal servants whose virtue has been proved? O lord of the earth! Surely you first protect yourself against your servants, private and public, then protect them from your kinsmen and against each other. Do they know in the forenoon of your pleasures in drinking, gambling and sporting with women?[49] Are expenses covered with half the revenue, or a third or a quarter? Do you always sustain with food and riches your relatives, superiors, the aged, merchants, artisans, dependents, the helpless and the distressed? Do accountants and writers employed to look after revenue and expenditure always report to you in the forenoon about both? Surely you do not dismiss without reason servants who have your welfare at heart, are loyal, are capable and who have not committed errors before. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once you have determined the good, the indifferent and the bad, do you appoint them to the right posts? O lord of the earth! Do you appoint those who are avaricious, prone to thievery, quarrelsome and are under age? Do you oppress the kingdom with the strength of avaricious thieves, minors and women? Are the farmers content? Are the tanks in the kingdom large and full and placed at right distances, so that the harvest is not destroyed because of lack of rainfall? If food and seeds are scarce, do you grant farmers charitable loans at the rate of one *pratika* for one hundred?[50] O son! Are the professions[51] undertaken by those who are honest? O son! The happiness of the world depends on these professions. O king! Are the five[52] who are entrusted with the five duties brave and wise? Are they to be trusted and do they bring welfare to the countryside by working together? To protect the city, is the village guarded like a city and is the hamlet guarded like a village? Are all the remote parts under your supervision? Are thieves who steal and loot in your cities pursued over uneven and even terrain by your soldiers and forced to flee? Do you comfort and protect the women? But surely you do not trust them, nor reveal any secrets before them.

'"After hearing from your spies and reflecting on what needs to be done and knowing those who happen to be inside,[53] do you sleep comfortably and in security? O lord of the earth! O Pandava! Having slept during the first and second divisions[54] of the night, do you awake in the last[55] and think about dharma and artha? After waking at the right time and knowing the mysteries of time, do you always reveal yourself to men, properly adorned and accompanied by your ministers? O destroyer of enemies! Do guards dressed in red garments, armed with swords and adorned with ornaments, attend to you so as to protect you? O lord of the earth! In punishing those who deserve it and honouring those who deserve it, do you act like Yama, impartial between those you like and those you do not like? O Partha! Do you cure bodily ailments through medicines and restraint and mental ailments by serving the aged? The physicians appointed to look after your body must always be devoted to you and have your welfare at heart and are surely skilled in the eight divisions.[56] O lord of the world! Out of greed, delusion or pride, surely you do not dismiss plaintiffs and defendants who come to you. From greed or delusion, do you withhold a livelihood from men who seek your protection out of love and trust? Do citizens and residents of your kingdom, bought by your enemies, unite and rise up against you? O Yudhishthira! Is your weak enemy restrained with force and is your strong enemy restrained with good counsel or force or both? Are the chief rulers of the land devoted to you? If instructed by you, are they ready to give up their lives for you?

'"For the sake of your own welfare, do you pay homage to brahmanas and righteous ones, in accordance with their learning and qualities? Do you follow dharma with its three[57] sources, as practised by those who have come before you? Do you practise the rituals followed by them? Are brahmanas with good qualities offered tasty food in your house and paid dakshina?[58] With steadfastness of mind and complete self-control, do you perform *vajapeya*, *pundarika*[59] and other sacrifices? Do you bow in homage before relatives, superiors, gods, ascetics, places of worship, trees that bring welfare to men and brahmanas? O unblemished one! Is your intelligence and conduct like this, so that it bestows long life and fame and helps the cause of dharma, kama and artha? The kingdom of one who conducts himself in this way is never destroyed. Such a king subjugates the earth and attains great happiness. O bull among men! Surely no pure-souled and respected man is falsely charged with theft and put to death by avaricious ones who have no knowledge of the sacred texts and are not skilled. Surely he who is a thief and has been apprehended with stolen goods and tools in front of witnesses is not set free out of covetousness.[60] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Corrupted by bribes, do your advisers see falsely when disputes arise between the poor and the rich? Do you abhor the fourteen royal vices—atheism, falsehood, anger, negligence, procrastination, avoidance of the wise, laziness, restlessness of mind, consultation with only one person, consultation with those who are ignorant of artha, failure to act on something that has been decided, divulgement of counsel, abandonment of beneficial plans and addiction to material objects? Is your study of the Vedas successful? Are your riches successful? Is your marriage successful? Is your learning successful?"

'Yudhishthira asked, "How does the study of the Vedas become successful? How do riches become successful? How does marriage become successful? How does learning become successful?"

'Narada replied, "The Vedas become successful in agnihotra.[61] Riches become successful in consumption and donations. Marriage becomes successful when sons are born through union. Learning becomes successful in good conduct."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the immensely ascetic sage Narada then again questioned the righteous Yudhishthira.

'Narada asked, "O king! Do those who are paid from taxes on trade only take agreed taxes from merchants who come from far away in search of gain? When they bring their wares, are they treated well in your city and kingdom and not cheated with deception? O son! You always know about the ways of dharma and artha. Do you listen to words of dharma and artha from the aged, who always know what brings artha? Are honey and ghee given to brahmanas to increase crops, cattle, flowers, fruit, dharma and artha? Do you always give all the artisans materials, implements and wages for a period up to four months? O great king! Do you examine the work and praise the creator? Do you honour good ones among good people? O bull among the Bharatas! O lord! Do you follow all the sutras, especially those about elephants, horses and chariots? O bull among the Bharatas! Are sutras on the science of arms, instruments and architecture of cities regularly studied in your house? O unblemished one! Are you familiar with all the weapons, *brahma danda*[62] and all poisons that destroy enemies? Do you protect your kingdom against fear from fire, snakes, predators, disease and rakshasas? Knowing the ways of dharma, do you nurture like a father the blind, the dumb, the crippled, the deformed, the orphaned and mendicant ascetics?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard these words from the best of the brahmanas, the great-souled bull among the Kurus happily bowed down and worshipped his feet. The king spoke to the divine Narada. Yudhishthira said, “I will do what you have instructed, because my wisdom has increased even more.” Having said this, the king did as he had been instructed and obtained the earth, up to the boundaries of the ocean. Narada said, “A king who is always engaged in the protection of the four varnas[63] passes his time happily here and attains Shakra’s world.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the supreme maharshi finished speaking, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira worshipped him and was given permission to speak. Yudhishthira said, “O illustrious lord! What you have stated as just and dharma is certainly right. I duly observe what is just to the best of my powers. There is no doubt that acts performed by kings in ancient times, and the way in which they were performed, were successful in attaining just and proper objectives. O lord! I wish to walk along that righteous path. But we are not able to walk it the way those self-controlled ones did.” Having uttered these words and worshipped him, Yudhishthira, with his soul devoted to dharma, paused for some time. Then seeing that Narada, the sage who travelled the worlds, was comfortably seated and he was seated below him, the immensely wise Pandava asked him in the assembly of kings. Yudhishthira asked, “You always travel the many and varied worlds Brahma created in ancient times, at the speed of thought and like a witness. O brahmana! I am asking you. Tell me if you have ever seen anywhere a sabha like this, or one superior to it.” Hearing these words of Dharmaraja, Narada smiled and replied in soft words. Narada said, “O son! O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have never seen nor heard of an assembly hall like the bejewelled one that belongs to you in the world of men. I shall describe to you the sabhas of the king of the ancestors,[64] the wise Varuna, Indra and the one who dwells in Kailasa.[65] O bull among the Bharatas! If your mind wishes to hear, I will also describe Brahma's divine sabha, the dispeller of all fatigue." Having been thus addressed by Narada, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira and his brothers, in that assembly of kings, joined their hands in salutation. The great-souled Dharmaraja then replied to Narada, "Describe to us all those assembly halls. We wish to hear from you. O brahmana! What are those sabhas made of? How long are they and how wide? Who waits upon the grandfather[66] in his sabha? Who on Vasava, king of the gods, and who on Vaivasvata Yama?[67] Who wait on Varuna and Kubera in their sabhas? O devarshi! Tell us. We wish to hear all this exactly. We have been filled with great curiosity." Having been thus addressed by Pandava, Narada replied, "O king! Then hear about those divine sabhas, one by one."'

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'Narada said, "O Kourvaya![68] Shakra's divine sabha is radiant and he obtained it as a result of his acts. Shakra built it himself and it possesses the radiance of the sun. It is one hundred *yojanas*[69] wide and one hundred and fifty yojanas long. It is five yojanas high. It is airborne and can roam anywhere at will. It dispels old age, misery and fatigue. It is free from fear, and pure and auspicious. It is full of rooms and seats and is beautiful, adorned with celestial trees. O Partha! O descedant of the Bharata lineage! There is a supreme seat in that sabha and the lord of the gods sits there with Mahendrani Shachi, who is Shri and Lakshmi.[70] His form cannot be described. He wears a crown and red[71] bracelets on his upper arms. He is dressed in spotless garments and adorned with brightly coloured garlands. Hri, Kirti and Dyuti are with him.[72] O king! There the great-souled Shatakratu is always worshipped by all the Maruts, all the householders, the siddhas, the *sadhyas* and the masses of gods. They and their followers are all divine in form and adorned with ornaments. They worshipped the great-souled king of the gods, the vanquisher of enemies.

'"O Partha! All the devarshis worship Shakra. They are unblemished, cleansed of sin, radiant, like the fire in form, without blemish and without fatigue. They are performers of the soma sacrifice—Parashara, Parvata, Savarni, Galava, Shankha, Likhita, the sage Gourashira, Durvasa, Dirghatapa, Yajnavalkya, Bhaluki, Uddalaka, Shvetaketu, the lord Shatyayana, Havishmat, Gavishtha, King Harishchandra, Hridya, Udarashandilya, Parasharya, Krishihvala, Vataskandha, Vishakha, Vidhata, Kala, Anantadanta, Tvashta, Vishvakarma and Tumburu. They were born from wombs and not born from wombs. They lived on air and on fire. All of them worshipped the lord of the worlds, the wielder of the vajra—Sahadeva, Sunitha, the immensely ascetic Valmiki, Shamika, Satyavak, the truthful Prachetas, Medhatithi, Vamadeva, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Marutta, Marichi, the immensely ascetic Sthanu, Atri, Kakshivat, Goutama, Tarkshya, the sage Vaishvanara, the sage Kalakavrikshiya, Ashravya, Hiranyada, Samvartta, Devahavya and the powerful Vishvaksena. O Pandava! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the divine waters and herbs, Shraddha,[73] Medha,[74] Sarasvati,[75] artha, dharma, kama, lightning, clouds bearing rain, the winds, thunder, the eastern direction, the twenty-seven fires that convey sacrificial offerings, Agni, Soma, Indragni, Mitra, Savita, Aryama, Bhaga, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas, Shukra, Manthi, the sacrifices, the dakshinas, the planets, all the *stobhas*[76] and all the mantras uttered at sacrifices are seated there. O king! There are also the apsaras and the beautiful gandharvas. With dancing, music and songs, and various other forms of entertainment, they amuse Shatakratu, the king of the gods. O king of men! With hymns and rituals, they praise the valorous acts of the great-souled destroyer of Bala and Vritra. All the brahmana rajarshis and all the devarshis are there, riding various divine chariots that blaze like the fire. They are garlanded and adorned and all of them come and go. Brihaspati and Shukra go there together. O king! These and many other ascetics who are rigid in their vows, riding chariots that are like the moon and themselves, as handsome as the moon Bhrigu and the seven great sages[77] go there on Brahma's instructions. O king! I have myself seen this sabha of Shatakratu's, named Pushkaramalini. O great king! O unblemished one! Now hear about Yama's."'

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'Narada said, "O Yudhishthira! Listen. I will now describe Vaivasvata Yama's divine sabha, built by Vishvakarma. O king! O Pandava! That radiant assembly hall is one hundred yojanas long and wide and possesses the resplendence of the sun. It can roam everywhere at will. It pleases the heart and is neither too cold, nor too hot. Grief, old age, hunger, thirst, unpleasantness, misery, fatigue and obstructions are not found there. Every desire, human and divine, is satisfied there. O vanquisher of foes! There is an abundant supply of tasty food and drink. The garlands there have pure fragrances. The trees always bear flowers and fruit. There is tasty water, both hot and cold.

'"O son! Pure rajarshis and unblemished brahmarshis[78] happily attend upon Yama Vaivasvata there—Yayati, Nahusha, Puru, Mandhata, Somaka, Nriga, Trasadasyu, Turaya, Kritavirya, Shrutashrava, Aripranuda, Susimha, Kritavega, Kriti, Nimi, Pratardana, Shibi, Matysa, Prithavaksha, Brihadratha, Aida, Marutta, Kushika, Samkashya, Samkriti, Bhava, Chaturashva, Sadashvormi, the king Kartavirya, Bharata, Suratha, Sunitha, Nala from Nishadha,[79] Divodasa, Sumana, Ambarisha, Bhagiratha, Vyashva, Sadashva, Vadhryashva, Panchahasta, Prithushrava, Rushadgu, Vrishasena, the immensely powerful Kshupa, Rushadashva, Vasumana, Purukutsa, Dhvaji, Rathi, Arshtishena, Dilipa, the great-souled Ushinara, Oushinara, Pundarika, Sharyati, Sharabha, Shuchi, Anga, Arishta, Vena, Duhshanta, Sanjaya, Jaya, Bhangasvari, Sunitha, Nishadha,[80] Tvishiratha, Karandhama, Bahlika,[81] Sudyumna, the powerful Madhu, Kapotaroma, Trinaka, Sahadeva, Arjuna, Dasharathi Rama,[82] Lakshmana, Pratardana, Alarka, Kakshasena, Gaya, Gourashva, Jamadagni Rama,[83] Nabhaga, Sagara, Bhuridyumna, Mahashva, Prithvashva, Janaka, the king Vainya, Varishena, Puraja, Janamejaya, Brahmadatta, Trigarta, King Uparichara, Indradyumna, Bhimajanu, Gaya, Prishtha, the unblemished Naya, Padma, Muchukunda, Bhuridyumna, Prasenajit, Arishtanemi, Pradyumna, Prithagashva, Ajaka, the one hundred kings from Matsya,[84] the hundred Nipas,[85] the hundred Hayas,[86] the one hundred Dhritarashtras,[87] the eighty Janamejayas,[88] the one hundred Brahmadattas,[89] the one hundred fighting Iris,[90] the rajarshi Shantanu, your father Pandu, Ushadgava, Shataratha, Devaraja, Jayadratha, the rajarshi Vrishadarbhi, Dhaman and his ministers and, in addition, thousands of Shashabindus[91] who departed after performing many great horse sacrifices, with copious donations. O rajarshi! These pure rajarshis, of great fame and renown, waited upon Vaivasvata Yama in his sabha. There were Agastya, Matanga, Kala,[92] Mrityu,[93] performers of sacrifices, Siddhas, those whose bodies are based on yoga, those with fire in their mouths,[94] the ancestors—those who live on froth, those who live on vapours, those who receive oblations, those who seat themselves on kusa grass and those others who have bodies.[95] Free from disease and in embodied form, the wheel of time, the illustrious conveyor of sacrificial offerings,[96] men who performed evil deeds, those who died during the winter solstice, those of Yama's officers appointed to reckon time, *shimshapa*[97] and *palasha*[98] trees, *kasha*,[99] *kusha*[100] and other trees and plants worshipped Dharmaraja.[101] These and many others are the courtiers of the king of the ancestors. O Partha![102] I am incapable of enumerating their names and deeds. But this beautiful sabha is never crowded and is capable of going anywhere at will. Vishvakarma built it after spending a long time in austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It blazes with the luminosity of its own radiance. Ascetics who are fearsome in their austerities, rigid in their vows, truthful, calm, practised in renunciation, accomplished, purified through their holy deeds, all with radiant bodies and all attired in spotless attire, adorned with bracelets on their upper arms and garlands, with flaming earrings, performers of good and holy deeds and marked with signs, go there. Great-souled gandharvas and one hundred classes of apsaras are there, filling it everywhere with instrumental music, dancing, singing, laughter and sport. O Partha! Sacred fragrances and sounds and celestial garlands adorn it everywhere. Ten million righteous and intelligent men, in bodily form, always wait upon the great-souled lord of all beings. O king! Such is the sabha of the great-souled king of the ancestors. I will now describe to you Varuna's sabha, known as Pushkaramalini."'

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'Narada said, "O Yudhishthira! Varuna's celestial sabha is white in radiance. Its dimensions are exactly like those of Yama's, with white walls and portals. Vishvakarma built it under the water and it is surrounded with divine bejewelled trees, yielding flowers and fruit. It is carpeted with blue, yellow, black, dark, white and red flowers and there are bowers with clusters of blossoms. Hundreds and thousands of beautiful and sweet-toned birds of many varieties are there, with forms impossible to describe. That sabha is pleasant to the touch, not too cold, nor too hot. It is beautiful and white, ruled by Varuna, with many rooms and seats. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varuna sits there with Varuni,[103] adorned with celestial gems, ornaments and attire. Adorned and ornamented, bedecked with celestial garlands, the Adityas wait upon Varuna, the lord of the water, there. So do Vasuki, Takshaka, the serpent named Airavata, Krishna,[104] Lohita, Padma, the valorous Chitra, the nagas Kambala and Ashvatara, Dhritarashtra, Balahaka, Manimana, Kundaladhara, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya,[105] Prahrada, Mushikada and Janamejaya[106]—all spreading their hoods, marked with pennants and auspicious circular signs. O Yudhisthira! Without ever getting tired, these and many other serpents wait upon the great-souled Varuna—King Vairochana Bali,[107] Naraka the conqueror of the earth,[108] Prahrada, Viprachitti, the danavas known as Kalakhanjas, Suhanu, Durmukha, Shankha, Sumana, Sumati, Ghatodara, Mahaparshva, Krathana, Pithara, Vishvarupa, Surupa, Virupa, Mahashirsa, Dashagriva,[109] Vali,[110] Meghavasa, Dashavara, Kaitabha,[111] Vitatuta, Samhrada, Indratapana. These classes of daityas and danavas are all adorned with beautiful earrings, garlanded and crowned and attired in divine garments. They have been blessed with boons, are brave, and have all transcended mortality. They are all correct in observing their vows and worship the great-souled god Varuna, who holds them in dharma's noose.[112]

'"O Yudhishthira. There are the four oceans,[113] the river Bhagirathi, Kalindi,[114] Vidisha,[115] Venna,[116] Narmada, Vegavahini, Vipasha,[117] Shatadru,[118] Chandrabhaga,[119] Sarasvati,[120] Iravati, Vitasta,[121] Sindhu,[122] Devanada,[123] Godavari, Krishnavenna,[124] Kaveri the best of rivers—these and other rivers, fords and lakes, wells and springs, ponds and tanks, in embodied form. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The directions, the earth, all the mountains and all the aquatic creatures worship the great-souled one. All the masses of gandharvas and apsaras, skilled in singing and playing musical instruments, are seated and they praise Varuna. Mountains full of jewels and the juices of herbs are all there in embodied form, worshipping the lord. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such is Varuna's beautiful sabha, which I have myself seen in my earlier travels. Hear now about Kubera's sabha."'

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'Narada said, "O king! Vaishravana's[125] radiant and white sabha is one hundred yojanas long and seventy yojanas wide. O king! Vaishravana built it himself through the power of his austerities. It has the luminosity of the moon, is established in the sky and is like a peak of the mountain Kailasa. Held aloft by the *guhyakas*,[126] celestial and adorned with tall and golden trees, it seems to be fixed to the firmament. It radiates rays and is resplendent, fragrant with divine scents. Beautiful and resembling white clouds and mountain peaks, it seems to float in the sky. There sits the handsome King Vaishravana, adorned in lustrous earrings and attired in colourful ornaments and garments. He is surrounded by one thousand women. He is seated on a supreme and pure throne that is as radiant as the sun and is covered with divine spreads, with celestial footstools. Pure and fragrant breezes carry the perfume from extensive coral trees, scented groves, water lilies from the lotus pond known as Alaka[127] and Nandana[128] gardens, please the mind and heart and offer homage.[129] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gods and gandharvas, surrounded by crowds of apsaras, sing divine songs in celestial tones there."

'"There are Mishrakeshi, Rambha, the sweet-smiling Chitrasena, Charunetra, Ghritachi, Menaka, Punjikasthala, Vishvachi, Sahajanya, Pramlocha, Urvashi, Ira, Varga, Sourabheyi, Samichi, Budbuda and Lata. O Pandava! These and a thousand other masses of apsaras, skilled in singing and dancing, pay homage to the granter of riches. With these masses of gandharvas and apsaras, that sabha is never empty and is magnificent, filled with divine music, singing and dancing. There are the gandharvas known as kinnaras and others known as *nara*s—anibhadra, Dhanada, Shvetabhadra, Guhyaka, Kasheraka, Gandhakandu, the immensely strong Pradyota, Kustumbura, Pishacha, Gajakarna, Vishalaka, Varahakarna, Sandroshtha, Phalabhaksha, Phalodaka, Angachuda, Shikhavarta, Hemanetra, Vibhishana, Pushpanana, Pingalaka, Shonitoda, Pravalaka, Vrikshavasya, Aniketa, Chitravasa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These, and many other yakshas,[130] in hundreds and thousands, are in attendance. The fortunate Shri and Nalakubara[131] are always there. I and others like me go there often. Many preceptors and devarshis are often present there. O tiger among men! And also the three-eyed[132] illustrious god, Pashupati Umapati,[133] the wielder of the trident, the destroyer of Bhaganetra,[134] with the unblemished goddess,[135] and surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his followers[136]—dwarfs, horrible, hunchbacked, bloody-eyed, swift as thought, feeding on flesh, fat and marrow, fearful to see and hear, wielding many terrible weapons and like powerful wind storms. O king! He[137] is always seated with his friend,[138] the granter of riches. O king! Such is his sabha. I saw it while I was travelling through the sky. O king! I will now tell you about the grandfather's[139] sabha, where all fatigue is dispelled."'

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'Narada said, "O king! In ancient times, in the era of the gods, the illustrious and indefatigable lord Aditya[140] descended from heaven to see the world of men. O Pandava![141] He had earlier seen the sabha of the self-creating Brahma and in human form, described it to me, exactly as he had seen it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of Pandu! When I heard about this celestial, immeasurable, indescribable and disembodied sabha, which delights all living beings with its lustre and on learning about its qualities, I wished to see the sabha myself. O king! I then spoke to Aditya. 'O illustrious one! I wish to see the grandfather's sabha. O lord of cattle![142] Through what austerities and what deeds can one see it? O illustrious one! Please tell me what herbs and what powers of maya will allow me to set my eyes on that sabha.' O lord of men! Then the illustrious and valorous Surya[143] took me to Brahma's unblemished sabha, one that knows no fatigue. It is not possible to describe its form exactly. From one moment to another, it takes on an indescribable form. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I do not know its dimensions or its shape. I have never seen such beauty earlier. O king! That sabha always contributes to pleasure. It is neither too hot, nor too cold. As soon as one enters, hunger, thirst and all types of fatigue disappear. It has many different forms. It is beautifully coloured and resplendent. It is not supported by pillars. It does not decay and is eternal. Its self-radiance surpasses that of the moon, the sun and the flaming crest of the fire. On the rafters of the firmament, its radiance lights up the sun itself.

'"O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There sits the illustrious supreme god, the grandfather of all the worlds. Through the powers of his maya, the lord himself, and alone, constantly creates all the beings—Daksha, Pracheta, Pulastya, Pulaha, Marichi, Kashyapa, Bhrigu, Atri, Vasishtha, Goutama, Angiras, the mind, the sky, knowledge, wind, energy, water, earth, sound, touch, form, taste and smell, the root cause behind creation and evolution of the world, the moon with the constellations, the sun with its rays, wind, seasons, resolution and breath. Others too numerous to mention wait upon the self-creating one—artha, dharma, kama, bliss, hatred, austerities, self-control. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Pandava! O lord of the earth! The gandharvas and the apsaras go there together, and all the twenty-seven lords of the world,[144] Shukra,[145] Brihaspati,[146] Budha,[147] Angaraka,[148] Shani,[149] Rahu,[150] all the planets, mantra, *rathantara*,[151] Harimat,[152] Vasumat,[153] the Adityas with their lord,[154] all the gods known by diverse double names,[155] the Maruts, Vishvakarma, the Vasus, the classes of ancestors, all the sacrificial offerings, Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, Atharva Veda, all the sacred texts, histories,[156] the minor Vedas, all the Vedangas, cups for soma, sacrifices, all the gods, the distress-removing *Savitri*,[157] seven kinds of speech,[158] understanding, perseverance, learning, wisdom, intelligence, fame, forgiveness, sama hymns, songs of praise, different types of chants and commentaries with their arguments, in embodied form. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are *kshana*,[159] *lava*,[160] muhurta,[161] day, night, fortnights, months, the six seasons, years, the five yugas,[162] the four types of day and night,[163] the divine wheel of time that is eternal and indestructible, Aditi, Diti, Danu, Surasa, Vinata, Ira, Kalaka, Devi, Surabhi, Sarama, Goutami, Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Maruts, Ashvins, Vishvadevas, Sadhyas, ancestors who are as swift as thought, rakshasas, pishachas, danavas, guhyakas,[164] birds, serpents and animals. They worship the grandfather—the god Narayana himself, devarshis, the Valakhilya rishis, those born from wombs and those born from without wombs. O lord of men! Know that I have seen whatever exists in the three worlds, mobile and immobile, there. O Pandava! The eighty thousand rishis who have controlled their seed and the fifty thousand rishis who have offspring, I have seen these and the other dwellers of heaven go there, as they will. All of them worship him by lowering their heads and return as they had come. O king of men! The illustrious and immensely intelligent Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, the self-creator who is infinitely radiant and merciful towards all beings, the soul of the universe, receives their homage and treats them as they deserve, with calm words, honour, riches and objects of pleasure—gods, demons, serpents, sages, yakshas, birds, *kaleyas*,[165] gandharvas and apsaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O son! That pleasure-giving sabha is always agitated with the comings and goings. It is filled with every form of energy, divine, served by masses of brahmarshis, radiant with Brahma's riches, extremely beautiful and the dispeller of fatigue. O tiger among kings! Just as your sabha is unmatched among men, that sabha is likewise in all the worlds that I have seen. O Pandava! These are the sabhas that I have seen earlier among the gods. Your sabha is supreme to all in the world of men."

'Yudhishthira said, "O lord! O supremely eloquent one! From what you have described, it is as if the entire world of kings is in Vaivasvata's sabha. O illustrious one! You have said that all the serpents, the lords of the daityas, the rivers and the oceans are in Varuna's sabha. And that the yakshas, guhyakas, rakshasas, gandharvas, apsaras and Shiva[166] are in that of the lord of riches.[167] You have said that the maharshis,[168] all the classes of gods and all the sacred texts are in the grandfather's sabha. O sage! You have specifically listed that in Shatakratu's sabha are the gods, the gandharvas and various maharshis. O great sage! You have said that only one rajarshi, Harishchandra, is in the sabha of the great-souled king of the gods. What were his deeds, traits, austerities and rigidity of vows that this famous one alone rivals Shakra? O brahmana! When you went to the world of the ancestors, did you see the immensely fortunate Pandu, my father? O illustrious lord! What did he say? I wish to learn. I wish to hear all this, because my curiosity is great.”

‘Narada replied, “O lord of kings! O lord! Since you have asked me about the greatness of the wise Harishchandra, I will narrate it to you. He was a powerful king and sovereign over all the kings on earth. All the kings on earth were under his rule. O lord of men! Riding alone on his invincible chariot that was embellished with gold, he conquered the seven *dvipas*[169] with the power of his weapons. O great king! Having conquered the entire earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, he performed a great royal sacrifice. At his command, all the kings brought riches to that sacrifice and waited upon the brahmanas. That lord of men happily distributed to the priests, then and there, five times what they had asked for. When the rituals were completed, he gratified the brahmanas, who had assembled there from various directions, with many types of riches. The brahmanas, gratified with many types of food and delicacies, honoured with what they desired and satisfied with piles of gems, were satiated and said that he was more energetic and more famous than all the kings. O Partha! O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that it is for this reason that Harishchandra shines more brightly than thousands of other kings. O lord of men! Having completed his great sacrifice, the immensely powerful Harishchandra was instated in his kingdom and looked radiant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whichever king performs the great *rajasuya* sacrifice,[170] blissfully spends his time with Indra after the consecration is over. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who do not flee on the field of battle and are killed, they too attain his abode and spend their time in bliss. Those who give up their bodies after performing terrible austerities, they too go to that place and shine eternally.

‘“O Kounteya! Your father Pandu, descendant of the Kuru lineage, was amazed on witnessing King Harishchandra’s fortune. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! ‘You can conquer the earth. Your brothers follow you. Perform the great rajasuya sacrifice.’[171] O Pandava! O tiger among men! Act upon that wish. With your ancestors, you will then attain the great Indra’s world. O king! It is said that this great sacrifice is constrained by many obstacles. *Brahma rakshasas*,[172] destroyers of sacrifices, look for holes. A war may follow it, leading to the destruction of the earth.[173] For a small reason, a terrible destruction may ensue. O lord of kings! Reflect on this and do what is good for you. Always be watchful in protecting the four varnas. Grow prosperous. Rejoice. Gratify the brahmanas with gifts. Thus have I described in detail all that you asked me to. With your permission, I shall now leave for the city of the Dasharhas.”’[174]

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! O king! After having said this to Partha, Narada went away with all the rishis with whom he had come. O Kourava! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Narada had left, Partha and his brothers began to think about performing the supreme royal sacrifice.’

Section Twenty-One

Mantra Parva

This parva has 222 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 237(12): 40 shlokas
Chapter 238(13): 68 shlokas
Chapter 239(14): 20 shlokas
Chapter 240(15): 16 shlokas
Chapter 241(16): 51 shlokas
Chapter 242(17): 27 shlokas

The word mantra has different meanings, but here it means a process of consultation. This section is therefore about a process of consultation prior to the royal sacrifice.

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of the rishi, Yudhishthira sighed and thinking about performing rajasuya, could find no peace. He had heard about the glory of the great-souled rajarshis and had learnt that they had attained the pure worlds through their deeds and sacrifices. In particular, he thought about rajarshi Harishchandra, who had performed the sacrifice, and thought about performing rajasuya. Having honoured all those who were present in his sabha, and having been honoured by them in return, he consulted them about the sacrifice. The lord of kings and bull among the Kuru lineage, after reflecting a great deal, made up his mind to perform rajasuya. King Yudhishthira, protector of dharma, supreme among those who know all dharma, attentive to his subjects and always acting for the welfare of everyone without distinction, extraordinary in his energy and power, reflected on what would bring welfare to all the worlds. Having thus conducted himself and having thus reassured everyone like a father, no one could be seen who hated him and he came to be known as Ajatashatru.[1]

'That supreme among eloquent ones assembled his advisers and brothers and repeatedly asked them about rajasuya. Having been thus asked by the immensely wise Yudhishthira, who was eager to perform the sacrifice, the advisers then uttered words that were deep with meaning. "A consecrated king who wishes to achieve the characteristics of an emperor and attain the traits of Varuna, performs this rite, even though he is a king. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You are worthy of the status of an emperor and all your well-wishers think that the time has come for you to perform rajasuya. The time for the sacrifice, in which priests rigid in their vows establish six fires[2] to the chants of sama, is free and depends on kshatriya riches.[3] At the completion of the sacrifice, after offering all the oblations, the performer is consecrated as a universal emperor. O mighty-armed one! All of us serve you and you are capable. O great king! Do not reflect any more and set your mind on the rajasuya." Separately and together, thus did his well-wishers speak. O lord of the earth! Having heard these words, full of dharma, bold, pleasant and supreme, Pandava accepted them in his mind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of his well-wishers and knowing himself to be capable, he repeatedly reflected in his mind about rajasuya. The wise one again consulted his brothers, great-souled priests and advisers like Dhoumya and Dvaipayana.

'Yudhishthira asked, "How can this great rajasuya, worthy of an emperor and one I wish to perform, be accomplished?" O lotus-eyed one! Having been thus asked by the king, they then spoke these words to Yudhishthira, the one with dharma in his soul. "O king! You are learned in the ways of dharma. You are worthy of performing the great sacrifice of rajasuya." When the priests and sages uttered these words, his advisers and brothers applauded them. The immensely wise and self-controlled Partha, always desirous of the welfare of the worlds, thought again. A wise one who considers his powers, capacity, time, place, income and expenditure and acts with complete deliberation, never perishes. He thought that a sacrifice begun only with his one desire might bring ruin. Carefully bearing the weight on his shoulders, his thoughts went out to Krishna Janardana, as the right person to decide the course of action. Hari, supreme in all the worlds, is immeasurable, mighty-armed and without birth, born among men only because of his own wishes. His feats rival those of the gods and there is nothing that is not the consequence of his deeds. There is nothing that he cannot bear. Thus it was that Pandava thought of Krishna. Having arrived at this final conclusion, Partha Yudhishthira, swiftly sent a messenger to one who was like his preceptor and the preceptor of all beings.

'Riding a swift chariot, the messenger soon reached the Yadavas and the Dvaraka-residing Krishna in Dvaravati. Hearing that Partha was eager to see him, Achyuta[4] was also eager to see him and went to Indraprastha with Indrasena.[5] Travelling through many countries on the swift mounts, Janardana reached Partha in Indraprastha. Dharmaraja showed him homage in his house, like to a brother. So did Bhima. With a gladdened heart, he[6] then went to see his father's sister.[7] After that he sported himself with his beloved well-wisher, Arjuna, and like a preceptor, was worshipped by the twins. After he had rested himself in that pleasant place for some time and was refreshed, Dharmaraja came to him and told him about his plans. Yudhishthira said, "O Krishna! I wish to perform rajasuya. But it cannot be performed merely through my wishing it. You are omniscient. You are the one in whom everything is possible and you are the one who is worshipped everywhere. The king who is the lord of everything can perform rajasuya. O Krishna! My well-wishers have said that I should perform it. But my final decision will certainly be in consonance with what you say. Out of friendship, some do not notice faults. Out of desire for riches, some say that which is pleasant to hear. Some consider that to be the best course of action which brings them self-gain. It is often seen that people's advice is like this. You alone are above all motives, beyond desire and anger. You should tell me that which is supreme, for the welfare of the worlds.”’

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‘Krishna said, “O great king! Because of all your qualities, you are capable of performing rajasuya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though you know everything, I shall tell you something. Those who are known as kshatriyas in this world are remnants from kshatriyas who were exterminated by Jamadagni Rama.[8] O lord of the earth! O bull among the Bharata lineage! You know about the rules and the authority of words those kshatriyas established to decide lineage. All the kings and all the hierarchies of kshatriyas on this earth claim descent from Aila[9] and Ikshvaku.[10] O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that the kings from Aila’s lineage and those from Ikshvaku’s lineage constitute one hundred and one dynasties. O great king! The descendants of Yayati and Bhoja are also great in number and qualities and extend in the four directions. They and their prosperity are worshipped everywhere by the kshatriyas.

‘“However, after having enjoyed the middle kingdom,[11] a king named Chaturyu,[12] one of the one hundred and one dynasties, wished to create dissension among them. Jarasandha has inherited the empire by birth and that king’s influence extends everywhere. O king! O great king! The powerful Shishupala has gone to him like a disciple and has become his general. Vakra, the immensely strong king of Karusha, who fights with the powers of maya, and many other immensely valorous and great-souled ones, are also under his protection. The illustrious Hamsa and Dibhaka are also with the immensely valorous Jarasandha. And there are Dantavakra, Karusha,[13] Kalabha and Meghavahana. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhagadatta was your father’s old friend. On his forehead he wears a divine gem that is known as the supreme gem on earth. He is the one who punished the two *yavana*[14] kings Mura and Naraka and now, with unlimited powers like Varuna, is the king of the west.[15] Though he has lowered his head[16] through his speech and especially his deeds, his heart actually holds affection for you, like a father does. Your brave maternal uncle, Purujit, the extender of the Kuru lineage and the scorcher of his enemies, rules in the south-west extremities of the earth and is the only king who is affectionately loyal to you. Likewise, the evil king of the Chedis,[17] whom I did not kill earlier, has also gone over to Jarasandha. He is known in the world as the supreme being and out of delusion, always bears my signs.[18] There is also a king powerful in Vanga,[19] Pundra and Kirata,[20] known as Vasudeva of Pundra. O great king! There is also the powerful Bhishmaka Chaturyu[21] of Bhoja, a friend of Indra's and a slayer of enemies. Through his learning and strength, he has conquered Pandya[22] and Krathakaishika. The valorous Ahriti is his brother and is like Jamadagni Rama in battle. They also serve the king of Magadha.[23] We are his relatives[24] and always do what is agreeable to him. But though we honour him, he doesn't honour us and always does what is disagreeable to us. O king! Without bearing in mind his lineage and his strength, he has only seen Jarasandha's blazing fame and has placed himself under him. O lord! Out of fear for Jarasandha, the eighteen branches of the northern Bhojas have fled to the west and so have the Shurasenas, the Bhadrakaras, the Bodhas, the Shalvas, the Patachcharas, the Sustharas, the Sukuttas, the Kunindas and the Kuntis. The kings of the Shalveyas, together with their brothers and attendants, the southern Panchalas and the eastern Koshalas from the Kunti region have also fled. Out of oppressive fear for Jarasandha, the Matsyas and the Samnyastapadas have left the north in terror and fled to the south. All the Panchalas have abandoned their own kingdoms and fled in all directions.

'"Some time earlier, Kamsa,[25] mindless in folly, oppressed his relatives and married the two daughters of Brihadratha's son,[26] making them his queens. They are named Asti and Prapti and are Sahadeva's younger sisters. Strengthened by this alliance, that foolish one oppressed his relatives and became superior to all of them, though this brought him great ignominy. The evil-hearted one then oppressed the elders among the Bhoja kings and in a desire to save their relatives, they concluded an alliance with us. I served my relatives by marrying off Ahuka's daughter, Sutanu, to Akrura.[27] Then, with Samkarshana[28] acting as my second, I killed Kamsa and Sunama, with Rama's[29] assistance. O king! Though that immediate danger was averted, Jarasandha rose up in arms against us. The eighteen branches of the Yadavas consulted among themselves. Even if one killed with mighty weapons that can kill a hundred at a time,[30] one would not be able to kill him in three hundred years, because he had two supreme warriors named Hamsa and Dibhaka.[31] They were the strongest of the strong, with power like that of the immortals. When the valorous Jarasandha was united with these two brave warriors, there was no one in the three worlds who could vanquish them. Such was my view. O supremely wise among wise ones! This was not only my view. It was the view of all the kings who exist. O king! The great king famous as Hamsa was engaged in battle for eighteen days. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A rumour spread that Hamsa had been killed. On hearing that Hamsa had been killed, Dibhaka decided that he could not continue to live in this world without Hamsa. He drowned himself in the Yamuna and, in this way, met his death. When Hamsa, the vanquisher of enemy cities, heard the news about Dibhaka, he too immersed himself in the Yamuna and drowned. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When King Jarasandha heard about their deaths in the water, he left Shurasena[32] and returned to his own city.

'"When that enemy-killing king retreated, we were delighted and began to live happily in Mathura again. But the lotus-eyed wife of Kamsa, Jarasandha's daughter, went to her father, the king of Magadha. O lord of kings! O destroyer of enemies! She repeatedly urged him to kill her husband's killer. O great king! We remembered the advice we had given ourselves at the earlier council. O lord of men! Distracted at heart, we fled. O king! We divided our great riches into small portions and out of fear for him, fled separately, with our riches, kin and relatives. After thinking about this, we sought refuge in the western directions. O king! There is a beautiful city known as Kushasthali,[33] adorned by Mount Raivata.[34] We began to live there. We repaired its fortifications so that it became impregnable even to the gods. It was not just the bulls among the Vrishnis, even the women were capable of fighting from there. O killer of enemies! Without any fear, we now live there. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! When we look at the entry to that mountain, known as Madhavitirtha, we Madhavas have found supreme happiness.[35]

'"With our strength, we were capable of withstanding Jarasandha's oppression. But we have resolved to seek refuge with you. Our habitation is three yojanas deep and extends for three yojanas. At intervals of one yojana, there are one hundred gates and the portals are guarded by brave and valorous kshatriyas from the eighteen branches.[36] There are eighteen thousand warriors in our lineage. Ahuka has one hundred sons and each of them has three hundred more. Charudeshna and his brother,[37] Chakradeva, Satyaki, I myself, Rohini's son,[38] Samba who matches Shouri[39] in battle—these are the seven atirathas.[40] O king! Now listen to the others—Kritavarma, Anadhrishti, Samika, Samitinjaya, Kahva, Shanku and Nidanta, these seven are maharathas. The old king Andhakabhoja and his two sons make ten.[41] They are brave, capable of destroying the worlds, valorous and endowed with immense strength. They have now remembered the middle country[42] and live there, among the Vrishnis. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You alone possess the qualities of becoming a universal emperor. You are capable of becoming the sovereign of the kshatriyas. O king! But in my view, you are incapable of performing the rajasuya as long as the immensely powerful Jarasandha is alive. He has conquered and imprisoned all the kings in Girivraja,[43] the way a lion imprisons giant elephants in a cavern in that king of mountains.[44] That king Jarasandha wishes to sacrifice the lords of the earth. It was after worshipping Mahadeva that he defeated the kings on the field of battle. After having defeated the vanquished kings and their followers, he took them in fetters to his city and built a prison for men. O great king! Out of fear for Jarasandha, we too have had to abandon Mathura and have fled to the city of Dvaravati. O great king! If you wish to perform the sacrifice, seek to set them free and kill Jarasandha. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Without this, your sacrifice cannot commence. O supreme among those who are wise! This alone can lead to rajasuya. O king! O unblemished one! This is my view. Do you think otherwise? After reflecting on everything yourself and on cause and effect, tell us what is appropriate."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "Because you are wise, you have said what no one else could have said. No one can be seen on earth who dispels doubts the way you do. In each and every household, there are kings who do that which is for the welfare of their own. But none of them has attained the status of emperor, because the title of emperor encompasses everything. One who knows the power of others does not praise himself. He who is praised in comparison with others is worshipped. The earth is large and extensive and covered with many gems. O extender of the Vrishni lineage! It is by travelling far that one gets to know what is best. I consider tranquillity to be supreme, because from that freedom follows. I do not think the highest goal can be attained if I begin this rite. O Janardana! The wise ones who are born in every lineage know this. Sometimes, one among them will become supreme."

'Bhima said, "A king who has no enterprise is like an anthill. One who tries to rule a stronger one without a plan is weak. But if the plan is right, even a weak and enterprising king can defeat a strong enemy and attain goals that bring one's welfare. There is plan in Krishna, strength in me and victory in Partha Dhananjaya. Like three sacrificial fires, we will consume Magadha."[45]

'Krishna said, "A child grasps, without understanding the consequences of the action. Therefore, an enemy of immature understanding is not tolerated. We have heard that five have become emperors—Youvanashva by eliminating taxes, Bhagiratha through protection,[46] Kartavirya through the power of his austerities, the lord Bharata through his power and Marutta through his wealth. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that in accordance with the principles of dharma and artha, Brihadratha's son Jarasandha is now the one to be punished. One hundred and one dynasties of kings have failed to accept his suzerainty and he therefore claims his empire through force. Kings who possess jewels offer him homage. Since he has been evil from childhood, he is not content even with that. He uses force to conquer foremost men and kings who have been anointed. Not a single man can be seen who does not offer him tribute. O Partha! Thus has he brought under his power those kings, who number almost one hundred. How can a weaker king advance on him with hostile intent? O bull among the Bharata lineage! How can those kings, who have been cleaned and washed like animals in Pashupati's house,[47] be happy with their fate? It has been said that a kshatriya is honoured when he is killed by weapons. Why should we then not collectively oppose the Magadha? O king! Jarasandha has already brought under his sway eighty-six kings and waits for the others to complete his cruel act.[48] He who obstructs him from accomplishing this will obtain blazing fame. He who defeats Jarasandha will certainly become emperor."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "Intent on my selfish interest of becoming an emperor, how can I force you to go out, depending on strength and courage alone? Bhima and Arjuna are my eyes and you, Janardana, are my mind. What kind of life will be left for me without my eyes and my mind? When you have met Jarasandha's invincible and valorous forces, exhaustion alone will defeat you. What will your efforts serve? There is disaster if the opposite of what is intended becomes the outcome. O Janardana! Listen to my thoughts. I think it best to always refrain from this course of action. My heart is against it. The rajasuya is too difficult to accomplish."'

Vaishampayana said, ‘Partha,[49] who had obtained the supreme bow, the two inexhaustible quivers, the chariot, the pennant and the sabha,[50] now spoke these words to Yudhishthira. “O king! I have obtained the bow, weapons, arrows, valour, allies, land, fame and strength. Though they are desired, it is difficult to achieve them. Those who are learned always praise the greatness of noble lineage. But nothing equals power and nothing pleases me as much as valour. What purpose is served if one is born in noble lineage, but has no valour? O king! A kshatriya’s livelihood is always defeat.[51] He who has valour, but lacks all other qualities, will still vanquish his enemies. What purpose is served if one possesses all the qualities, but lacks valour? All qualities exist in nascent form in valour. Mental concentration, enterprise and fortune are the causes of victory. One who possesses the forces, but is careless, does not succeed and is not favoured by fortune. It is because of this that a powerful one perishes when confronted with his foes. Misery encompasses those without strength and also strong ones who are deluded. A king who wishes to attain victory must forsake both these routes to destruction. There is nothing that can surpass the act of destroying Jarasandha and freeing the kings when achieving the sacrifice. If we do not attempt this, we will certainly be regarded as bereft of all qualities. O king! We certainly possess the qualities. Why do you doubt our qualities? Red garments are easily available to those who later wish to obtain peace of mind.[52] But wishing to see you emperor first, we will therefore fight with the enemy.”’

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‘Vasudeva said, “Arjuna has exhibited the mind of one born in the Bharata lineage, especially of one who is Kunti’s son. We do not know the time of our death, whether it will be night or day. Nor have we heard of anyone attaining immortality by avoiding battle. For any man, the act that pleases the heart is one of attacking enemies in accordance with principles that are laid down. Any encounter guided by good policy attains success. However, if both sides are equal, there is uncertainty.[53] But equality between the two never happens. If that is the case, why should we not adopt a policy to approach the enemy and destroy him like a river destroying a tree? We will cover our weaknesses and exploit those of the enemy. It is the policy of the intelligent not to attack stronger enemies with battle formations and armies. This appeals to me too. If we can enter the enemy's abode without armies, attack him and attain our objective, we will not be blamed. O bull among men! He[54] alone enjoys eternal royal fortune, like the soul of all beings. But if he perishes, his forces perish. Desiring to free our relatives, even if we are killed by his survivors after we have killed him in battle, we will attain heaven."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O Krishna! Who is this Jarasandha? What is his valour and his prowess that he has not been burnt up when he touched you, like a moth before a flame?"

'Krishna replied, "O king! Listen to Jarasandha's valour and prowess. Learn why he has been spared by us, though he has caused us displeasure in many ways. There was a king named Brihadratha. He was the powerful ruler and lord of Magadha. He was proud in battle and had three *akshouhinis*.[55] He was handsome, valorous, fortunate and extremely powerful. His body always had sacrificial marks and he had the appearance of a second Shakra. He was like the sun's energy, like the earth in forbearance, like the destroyer Yama in his anger and like Vaishravana[56] in prosperity. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! Like the rays of the sun, the entire earth was covered by qualities his noble lineage brought. O bull among those of the Bharata lineage! That immensely valorous one married the twin daughters of the king of Kashi, blessed with beauty and riches. That bull among men had a contract in the presence of his wives that he would love them equally and not show preferences. O lord of men! This king then shone with his beloved and suitable wives, like elephant with two she-elephants. Between them, the lord of the earth was resplendent, like the embodied ocean between the Ganga and the Yamuna. His youth passed away, immersed in pleasures. But no son was born to him to carry forward his lineage, though he performed many auspicious rites, oblations and sacrifices, so as to obtain a son. But the best of kings did not obtain a son to extend his lineage. One day, he heard that Chandakoushika, the son of the great-souled Kakshivat, descended from Goutama, had become tired of ascetic pursuits. Roaming as he willed, he had come and had sought shelter under a tree. The king and his wives satisfied him with offerings of all kinds of jewels. That supreme among rishis was always truthful and devoted to the truth. He spoke to the king thus. 'O king! I am satisfied with you, you who are devoted to your vows. Ask for a boon.' Brihadratha and his wives bowed down before him. In a voice choked with tears of despair, since there was no prospect of setting eyes on a son, Brihadratha said, 'O illustrious lord! I am about to give up my kingdom and depart for the austerities of the forest. I am unfortunate. What will I do with a boon or with the kingdom?' On hearing this, the sage, seated under the shade of a mango tree, controlled his senses and began to meditate.

'"A mango fell into the lap of the seated sage. It was whole, without holes and without being touched by the beaks of birds. That supreme among sages picked it up, and pronouncing a mantra over it, handed the king that unblemished fruit, as means of obtaining a son. The immensely wise great sage spoke to the king. 'O king! Depart. Your wish has been fulfilled. O lord of men! Return.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Remembering the contract, that supreme of kings gave the single fruit to his two wives. Dividing the fruit into two equal parts, the beautiful ones ate it. The sage always spoke the truth and what he had said was certain. They both conceived as a result of eating the fruit. On seeing them, the king became extremely happy. O king! O immensely wise one! After some time, when the appropriate time arrived, the two queens gave birth to two half-bodies. Each had one eye, one arm, one leg, half a stomach, half a face and half a buttock. At the sight of these half-bodies, the two of them were miserable and trembled. The anxious sisters consulted each other. In great misery, they abandoned the two half-bodies, though they had life in them. The two midwives carefully wrapped up those imperfectly born half-bodies and left the inner quarters through a back gate. Discarding them, they returned in haste.

'"O tiger among men! There was a rakshasa woman named Jara and she noticed them, where they had been thrown at a crossroad. She lived on flesh and blood. Driven by destiny, that rakshasa woman united the two bodies, as it would become easier to carry. O bull among men! As soon as the two halves were united, they became one body and a brave child emerged. O king! The rakshasa woman's eyes widened in amazement. She was no longer able to carry the child, whose body was as hard as a vajra. The child balled his copper-red hands into fists, inserted them in his mouth and began to roar, like a monsoon cloud heavy with rain. O tiger among men! O destroyer of enemies! Extremely alarmed at this sound, the inmates of the inner quarters rushed out, together with the king. Weak and jaded, though their breasts were full of milk, the two queens suddenly came out and reclaimed their son. On seeing them in that condition and on seeing the king, who was so desirous of obtaining a son, and also on seeing the strong child, the rakshasa woman reflected, 'I live in the kingdom of a king who desires to obtain a son. Therefore, I should not carry off this small child, like a strip of cloud hides the sun.' Assuming human form, she spoke to the lord of men. The rakshasa said, 'O Brihadratha! This is your son. Accept him from me as a gift. He was born in the wombs of your two wives, as a result of the boon granted by the brahmana. He was abandoned by the midwives, but has been saved by me.' O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! At that, on obtaining the son, the beautiful daughters of the king of Kashi sprinkled him with the milk that was gushing out. Having seen all this and understood, the king was delighted. In human form, with a complexion like that of pure gold, the rakshasa woman did not look like a rakshasa at all. The king asked, 'Who are you, as golden as the womb of a lotus? You have given me my son. O fortunate one! You appear to me like a goddess. Please speak.'"'

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'"The rakshasa said, 'O lord of kings! O fortunate one! I am a rakshasa woman named Jara, who can assume any form at will. Worshipped by everyone, I live happily in your habitation. O righteous one! O king! Therefore, I have always thought about offering you a favour in return. It so happened that I saw the two half-bodies of your son. On my accidentally uniting them, the son surfaced. O great king! This was because of your own good fortune. I was only the instrument.'"

'Krishna said, "O king! Having said this, she disappeared, then and there. The king picked up the boy and entered his own house. The king then performed all the necessary rites for the child. He commanded that a great festival should be held in Magadha in honour of the rakshasa. The father was the equal of Prajapati[57] and bestowed a name on him. Since he had been united by Jara, he came to be known as Jarasandha.[58] The son of the king of Magadha grew up and became endowed with great energy, large and strong like a fire into which oblations have been offered.

'"After some time had passed, Chandakoushika, the illustrious and great ascetic, once again came to Magadha. Delighted at his arrival, Brihadratha went out with his advisers, subjects, wives and son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king showed him homage with water for washing the feet, gifts due to a guest and water to wash his mouth. Then he offered him his son and his kingdom. O king! The illustrious rishi accepted the king's worship and with a happy heart, told the one from Magadha,[59] 'O king! Everything is known to me through my divine sight. O Indra among kings! Listen to what will happen to your son. No king will be able to equal this valorous one in valour. O lord of the earth! Like the currents of rivers make no impression on mountains, weapons hurled by the gods will cause him no pain. He will blaze forth over the heads of all those who have been consecrated[60] and rob their light the way the sun shines over the lights of stars. Like moths to a flame, kings who possess large armies and mounts will meet their destruction before him. Like the lord of rivers and rivulets[61] receives swollen river water during the monsoon, he will seize the combined prosperity of all the kings. Like the earth, the abode of all crops, extensively supports good and evil, with immense strength, he will justly uphold the four varnas. All the rulers of men will be under his subjugation, just as all beings are subservient to the breath of life in their bodies. This Magadha,[62] immensely stronger than everything in all the worlds, will witness with his own eyes Rudra Mahadeva Hara, the destroyer of Tripura.'[63] O destroyer of your enemies! Having said this, the sage thought about all the acts he had to perform and dismissed King Brihadratha.

'"With his relatives and kin, the ruler of Magadha returned to his city and instated Jarasandha. King Brihadratha became detached from worldly pleasures. After instating Jarasandha, King Brihadratha, followed by his two wives, then left for the forest to lead a life of austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After his father and two mothers had retired to the forest for austerities, Jarasandha subjugated the kings with his own valour. After a long time of austerities in the forest, King Brihadratha and his wives attained heaven by virtue of their austerities. He had Hamsa and Dibhaka, incapable of being killed with any weapons. They were best among the intelligent in their counsel and skilled in the art of war. I have already told you about these mighty ones earlier. My view is that these three were more than a match for the three worlds. O valorous one! O great king! Such is the one whom the powerful Kukuras, Andhakas and Vrishnis[64] ignored, because that was the right policy."'

Section Twenty-Two

Jarasandha-vadha Parva

This section has 195 shlokas and five chapters.

Chapter 243(18): 30 shlokas
Chapter 244(19): 50 shlokas
Chapter 245(20): 34 shlokas
Chapter 246(21): 23 shlokas
Chapter 247(22): 58 shlokas

The word vadha *is the act of killing. This section is therefore about the killing of Jarasandha.*

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'Vasudeva said, "Hamsa and Dibhaka have fallen. Kamsa and his advisers have been killed. The time has therefore arrived for Jarasandha's killing. He is incapable of being defeated in battle by all the gods and the demons. But we understand he is capable of being vanquished in a battle of breath.[1] Policy exists in me. Power exists in Bhima. Valour exists in Arjuna. O king! We will overcome him like three fires. If that lord of men is confronted by the three of us alone, there is no doubt that he will engage one of us in a duel. Out of contempt for the worlds and his pride in himself, he will certainly challenge Bhimasena to a duel. The mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhimasena is his match, like death is of the worlds that confront their destruction. If your heart knows and if you have confidence in me, then, without losing any more time, entrust Bhimasena and Arjuna to me."'

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed by that illustrious one and on seeing Bhima and Partha[2] standing there with smiles on their faces, Yudhishthira replied, “O Achyuta! O Achyuta! Do not speak to me in that fashion. You are the lord of the Pandavas. We seek refuge with you. O Govinda! Everything that you have said is right. You never lead those whom Lakshmi has forsaken. As I follow your instruction, Jarasandha is dead. The kings have been set free. I have achieved the rajasuya. O supreme among men! You are the one who acts fast. Act so that I can accomplish this task for the world. Like a miserable and diseased man and like one without dharma, kama and artha, I have no incentive to live without the three of you. There is no Partha[3] without Shouri[4] and there is no Shouri without Pandava.[5] It is my view that there is nothing in the world that cannot be conquered by the two Krishnas.[6] This handsome Vrikodara is supreme among all strong ones. What can this immensely famous and valorous one not accomplish when he is with the two of you? When led properly, forces perform supreme deeds. The learned say that forces without skilled leadership are blind and benumbed. The wise always conduct water to places that are low. Those who are wise always lead their forces to places where there are holes.[7] For accomplishing our task, we will therefore seek refuge with Govinda, who is a man famous in the worlds and is knowledgeable about policy. Krishna’s strength comes from his wisdom and he knows the method and the means. If one wishes to accomplish one’s objectives, one should place him at the forefront. For the accomplishment of our objective, let Partha Arjuna follow Krishna, the best of the Yadavas, and let Bhima follow Dhananjaya. Policy, victory and strength will find success in valour.” Having been thus addressed, the three brothers,[8] Varshneya and the two Pandavas, left for Magadha.

‘They were radiant in the attire of brahmanas who had completed their studies.[9] Their well-wishers bade them farewell with affectionate words. Their bodies were like the sun, the moon and the fire. Inflamed with anger at the oppression of their relatives, their bodies were then terrible to behold. On seeing the two Krishnas, invincible in battle, united in the same purpose and with Bhima at their forefront, it was thought that Jarasandha was already dead. The two great-souled ones were the lords of all deeds, everything that drove the deeds of dharma, artha and kama. Having left the land of the Kurus, and traversing the middle of Kurujangala,[10] they reached the beautiful Padmasara[11] and traversed Kalakuta.[12] They then crossed Gandaki and Shona and Sadanira.[13] All these rivers arise from that same mountain. After crossing the beautiful Sarayu, they saw the eastern Koshala kingdom.[14] Passing through it, they went to Mithila, crossing the rivers Mala and Charmanvati.[15] Crossing the Ganga and the Shona, all the three headed eastwards and arrived at the indestructibe region of Magadha, covered with *kurava* trees.[16] Ascending Mount Goratha, they saw the city of Magadha,[17] always resplendent with cattle, overflowing with water and full of beautiful groves.'

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'Vasudeva said, "O Partha! This is the great and beautiful city of Magadha. It is rich in cattle and is always full of water. It is prosperous and has no disease and has many splendid mansions. O *tata*![18] There are five large mountains, the extensive Vaihara, Varaha, Vrishabha, Rishigiri and the beautiful Chaitya.[19] These five giant mountain peaks are covered with trees with cool shade and though separate, seem to collectively protect Girivraja. They seem to be concealed in a forest of fragrant and beautiful *lodhra* trees,[20] beloved by lovers, and with the tips of their branches covered with blossoms. It was here that the great-souled sage Goutama, rigid in his vows, begot on Ushinara's shudra daughter, sons like Kakshivana. Because he lived here in this place and because the kings here showed him homage, Goutama loved the Magadha lineage. O Arjuna! It was here that, once upon a time, Anga, Vanga and other greatly powerful kings came to Goutama's abode and found happiness. O Partha! Behold the beautiful array of *priyalas*[21] and the charming lodhras, growing near Goutama's abode. Arbuda and Shakravapi, serpents who scorched their enemies, lived here. This was the abode of Svastika and the supreme serpent Mani. Because of Mani, Magadha is never avoided by clouds.[22] Koushika and Goutama have indeed extended their favours here. Jarasandha imagines that the success of his objectives will continue. But we are about to attack him and today, his pride will be struck down."'

Vaishampayana said, 'After these words, all the brothers, Varshneya and the two Pandavas, with immense vigour, started for the city of Magadha and neared the impregnable Girivraja. The city was full of cheerful and healthy citizens, with large numbers of the four varnas and enlivened with festivities. They avoided the giant mountain that was the gate of the city, a place where Brihadratha's descendants and the citizens used to worship. That is the place where Brihadratha killed the bean-eating Rishabha.[23] Having killed the bean-eater, he had three kettledrums made and stretching the hide over them, had these placed in his city.[24] There, divine blossoms showered when the kettledrums were sounded. They rushed to the end where Chaitya[25] was, beloved by inhabitants of Magadha. In their desire to kill Jarasandha, it was like placing their feet on his head.[26] The peak was fixed, immensely large and ancient. It was always worshipped with flowers and garlands and was firmly established. With their large and mighty arms, the heroes broke it down.[27] They then saw the city of Magadha and entered it.

'At that time, the priests were showing homage to King Jarasandha. While he was seated on an elephant, they carried the sacred fire around him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The three of them entered, ready to do battle with Jarasandha, dressed as devoted snatakas, and with no weapons other than their bare arms. They saw the supremely prosperous shops, stocked with food and garlands, swollen with objects of every quality and with every object that satisfies desire. Having witnessed the prosperity along the streets, those supreme of men, Krishna, Bhima and Dhananjaya, proceeded along the royal road and those immensely powerful ones forcibly grabbed garlands from a garland-maker. Then, attired in many-coloured garments, adorned with garlands and beautiful earrings, they entered the palace of the wise Jarasandha, like lions from the Himalayas looking at a pen full of cattle. O great king! The arms of those mighty-armed warriors were smeared with sandal and aloe paste. They shone in radiance, like pillars made of rock. On seeing them, as large as elephants, with shoulders and chests as tall and broad as shala trees, the inhabitants of Magadha were astounded. Those bulls among men, immensely strong, passed through three rooms that were full of people and proudly arrived before the king.

'Jarasandha arose and greeted them and showed them homage with water to wash the feet, gifts due to a guest and a mixture with honey,[28] as is prescribed. Having shown these courtesies, the lordly king welcomed them. O king! This was because this was the vow, famous on earth, which he followed. Whenever he learned that snataka brahmanas had arrived, even if it was the middle of the night, the king who was a conqueror arose to greet them. On seeing their strange attire, Jarasandha, supreme among kings, approached them and was astonished. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! As soon as those bulls among men and slayers of enemies saw Jarasandha, they spoke thus. "O king! May there be health and welfare for you in everything." O tiger among kings! Having said this, they stood there, looking at the king and at each other. O Indra among kings! Jarasandha then told the Pandavas and the Yadava, who were disguised as brahmanas, "Please be seated." Blazing in radiance like fires at a sacrifice, those three bulls among men then took their seats.

'O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Then King Jarasandha, always devoted to the truth, spoke to them in a tone of disapproval, because of the way they were dressed, "This much is known to me. Nowhere on earth, nowhere in the world of men, do brahmanas who observe the snataka vow ever outwardly adorn themselves with garlands or fragrant paste. Who are you, thus adorned in flowers, though your arms bear the marks of wielding bowstrings? You seem to be brahmanas, but you bear the proud signs of kshatriyas. You are dressed in colourful attire and you outwardly sport garlands and fragrant paste. Tell me who you truly are, truth is the ornament of kings. Why did you break down the Chaitya mountain and enter my abode by means other than through the proper gate? Are you so fearless as to insult the king? This act does not mesh with your purported character. So tell me what your intention is. The brahmana's valour is particularly in his speech. You have arrived before me in this inappropriate way and you decline to accept the homage I offer you in courtesy. Why have you come to me?" At these words, the great-souled Krishna, skilled in the use of words, replied in words that were both serene and grave. "O king! Know that brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas all possess the right to observe snataka vows. There are rules that are general and those that are specific. A kshatriya who observes specific rules always obtains great prosperity. Good fortune is certain for those who adorn themselves with flowers and we have therefore worn them. A kshatriya's valour is in his arms, his valour is not in the power of speech. O son of Brihadratha! It has thus been said that his speech is never bold. O king! Brahma has placed his own energy in the arms of kshatriyas. If you wish to witness it, there is no doubt that you will witness it today. The wise always enter the house of a well-wisher through a gate, but use that which is not a gate for the house of an enemy. That is the reason we have avoided your gate. Know that whenever we enter the house of an enemy to accomplish an objective, we never accept his homage. That is our eternal vow."'

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'Jarasandha said, "I do not recall that I have ever exhibited any enmity towards you. After reflection, I cannot see any evil act I have done towards you. O brahmanas! If I have never done an evil act and am innocent, why do you regard me as an enemy? Tell me honestly, because that is the principle followed by the truthful. There is no doubt that if injury is done to an innocent man, there is a violation of dharma and one's mind suffers, even if one is a kshatriya. A man may be knowledgeable in the ways of dharma and may be great in the rigid observance of vows, but if he acts perversely and wickedly, he hurts his own welfare. You know that in the three worlds, I am supreme among righteous ones in the practice of the dharma of kshatriyas. I never hurt my subjects. Therefore, you speak in delusion.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O great king! There is someone from a lineage who has to undertake the tasks that lineage requires. The three of us have acted against you at his request. O king! The kshatriyas who live in this world have been abducted by you. Having committed this cruel act, how can you think of yourself as innocent? O supreme among kings! How can a king do violence to honest kings? Having oppressed the kings, you wish to sacrifice them to Rudra. O Brihadratha’s son! This act of yours may touch us too. We follow dharma and are capable of protecting dharma. Human sacrifices have never been seen. Why do you wish to sacrifice humans to the god Shankara? You are of the same varna. Yet, you are treating those of the same varna as animals. O Jarasandha! Is there any other mind that is as perverted as yours? We help all those who are distressed. For the protection of our kin, we have come here to counter you, the one who is acting so as to destroy our kin. O king! If you think that there is no man among the kshatriyas of this world who can do this, your mind is greatly deluded. O king! Which kshatriya who knows the nature of his own noble birth will not wish to attain unparalleled heaven by falling in the field of battle? O ruler of Magadha! With their minds on heaven, know that kshatriyas of the world are consecrated in the sacrifice of battles and worship them. O king! Victory is the womb of heaven. Great fame is the womb of heaven. Austerities are the womb of heaven and so is the straight route of battle. These are the qualities of the ever-victorious Indra. It is by being focussed on this that Shatakratu defeated the demons and is the protector of the world. What can be a better road to heaven than a battle with someone like you, since you are proud of the strength of your extensive Magadha army? O king! Do not deprecate others. Valour exists in every man. O lord of men! You are superior only if you don’t know of valour equal to yours and as long as glory equal to yours is not known. O king! Listen to me when I say we are capable of equalling it. O Magadha! Conquer your ego and pride when you are in the presence of your equals. Do not go to Yama's abode with your sons, your ministers and your armies. Dambhodbhava, Kartyavirya, Uttara and Brihadratha—these kings and their forces were destroyed here, because they ignored their superiors. We who wish to liberate the captive kings are not self-proclaimed brahmanas. I am Shouri Hrishikesha[29] and these two brave men are the two Pandavas. O king! O Magadha! Stand firm. We are challenging you. Either liberate all the kings or go to Yama's abode."

'Jarasandha said, "I never take a king until I have vanquished him. Who is here who has not been vanquished? Whom have I not conquered? O Krishna! It has been said that the livelihood and dharma of kshatriyas is to bring others under his sway through valour and then do as he pleases. O Krishna! These kings have been collected for a divine purpose. Remembering the duty of kshatriyas, how can I free them today out of fear? I am prepared to fight—army against army, one against one, or one against two or three, all at the same time, or separately."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the king gave orders that Sahadeva should be instated[30] and readied himself to do battle with those whose deeds were terrible. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! When the time for battle approached, the king remembered his generals Koushika and Chitrasena, whose names in this world had been Hamsa and Dibhaka. These were names that had earlier been renowned and worshipped by all the people in the world of men. O king! O tiger among men! And the lord Shouri, supreme among strong ones, with a valour equal to that of tigers, also remembered. This did the truthful Achyuta remember. It had been destined that Jarasandha would be killed by the valorous Bhima. Madhusudana, the younger brother of Haladhara, foremost among those who have controlled themselves, wished to show respect to Brahma and did not wish to kill him himself.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then Adhokshaja,[31] descendant of the Yadu lineage and eloquent in speech, spoke to King Jarasandha, who had resolved to do battle. "O king! With which one of us three have you made up your mind to fight? Who among us should be ready for the battle?” O king! Having been thus addressed by Krishna, the immensely radiant Magadha Jarasandha decided to do battle with Bhimasena. The priest brought chief herbs for alleviating pain and restoring consciousness to Jarasandha, who was impatient for the fight. A famous and learned brahmana performed the benedictions. In accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas, Jarasandha dressed himself appropriately. He removed his crown and tied up his hair. Jarasandha arose like an ocean that bursts through the shoreline. The intelligent king spoke to Bhima, whose valour was terrible. “O Bhima! I will fight with you. It is better to be vanquished by a superior one.” Having said this, the immensely energetic Jarasandha, conqueror of enemies, rushed at Bhimasena, like the demon Bali once rushed at Shakra.

‘After consultations with Krishna, the powerful Bhimasena had also had benedictions performed and, eager to fight, advanced towards Jarasandha. Those two supreme warriors, tigers among men and armed only with their bare arms, engaged each other, extremely eager and each desiring to defeat the other. The sounds of grasping, holding and releasing of the arms then resounded with a terrible roar, like the roar of thunderbolts striking mountains. Both of them were the strongest among those who were strong and were supreme in their eagerness. Desiring victory, each sought to exploit weaknesses in the other. O king! This duel between the powerful ones was like that between Vasava and Vritra and the terrible duel sometimes drove away the crowds that were near.[32] They pulled each other forward and broke away from each other’s holds. They threw the other one down and to the sides, dragging and grabbing the thighs. They insulted each other in loud words. They struck each other with rock-like blows. With broad shoulders and long arms, the two skilled fighters rained blows on each other with arms that were like iron clubs.

‘The duel started on the first day of the month of Kartika. Ceaselessly, it went on day and night. The great-souled fighters were still engaged on the thirteenth day. But on the night of the fourteenth day, the Magadha withdrew, as he was exhausted. O king! On seeing that the king was tired, Janardana spoke, as if to Bhima of the terrible deeds.[33] "O Kounteya![34] One should not press down on an enemy who is weakened in battle. If pressed down at such a time, he might completely give up his soul. O Kounteya! Therefore, you should not press down upon the king. O bull among the Bharatas! Fight him with your arms, so that he can be an equal." From these words of Krishna, the Pandava,[35] the destroyer of enemy warriors, got to know Jarasandha's weakness and determined to kill him. Vrikodara, descendant of the Kuru lineage and chief among those who are strong, then seized the unvanquished Jarasandha, with the intention of vanquishing him.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'With his mind firmly set on the desire of killing Jarasandha, Bhimasena then spoke to Krishna of the Yadava lineage, "O Krishna! O tiger among the Yadu lineage! Now that I have girded up my loincloth, this evil one shouldn't be spared by me of his life." Having been thus addressed, Krishna, tiger among men, then replied to Vrikodara, so as to rush him, because he wanted to see Jarasandha dead, "O Bhima! Then quickly show us the spirit that you have got from the gods and the power you have got from the wind.[36] Show it on Jarasandha." At these words, the immensely strong Bhima, the destroyer of enemies, lifted up the powerful Jarasandha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! He whirled him around one hundred times. Then throwing him down on his knee, he broke his back into two. Trampling him down, he roared out aloud. When Jarasandha was thus pressed down and the Pandava roared, there was such a loud roar that all beings were terrified. All those from Magadha were benumbed and expectant women aborted, on hearing Bhimasena and Jarasandha's roars. Has the Himalaya Mountain, or the earth, been torn apart? On hearing Bhimasena's roars, this is what the residents of Magadha thought. At night, the destroyers of enemies left the king's dead body at the gate of the palace, as if he was asleep, and left.

‘Krishna had Jarasandha’s chariot, with pennants, yoked. He asked the two brothers to ascend it and set his relatives[37] free. Having been freed from their great fear, the kings and lords of the earth presented many gems to Krishna, worthy of bearing gems. Unhurt, armed with weapons and vanquishing his enemy, he[38] mounted the divine chariot and left Girivraja with the kings. With the two brothers as warriors[39] and with Krishna as the charioteer, the chariot was incapable of being conquered by all the kings and seemed to be always killing. With the two warriors Bhima and Arjuna riding in it and with Krishna as the charioteer, the beautiful chariot was radiant and invincible to all archers. It was on this chariot that Shakra and Vishnu had fought in the battle that Taraka[40] had caused. It was this chariot that Krishna ascended and left. It glittered like molten gold and was garlanded with nets of small bells. It thundered like rain-bearing clouds. It was always victorious in battle and it always killed its enemies. It was on this chariot that Shakra had killed ninety-nine demons. Having obtained this chariot, those bulls among men rejoiced.

‘Then, on seeing the mighty-armed Krishna and his two brothers on the chariots, the citizens of Magadha were amazed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Divine horses, with the speed of the wind, were yoked to the chariot. When Krishna ascended it, it looked extremely beautiful. On that supreme chariot there was a flagstaff that did not seem to be attached to it at all. It was divine in origin, beautiful and with radiance that was like that of Indra’s weapons. It could be seen from a distance of one yojana. Krishna thought of Garuda and he immediately arrived, the instant he had been thought of, like the tall pillar of a temple.[41] Garuda, eater of serpents, then sat on that supreme chariot on the flagstaff, together with many other blazing beings that had their mouths open and roared loudly. Incapable of being seen by those beings, his blazing energy was like the midday sun with its one thousand rays. O king! That beautiful flagstaff never knocked against a tree. It was never injured by weapons. Though it was visible to gods and men, it was divine in origin. Achyuta, tiger among men, left on that divine chariot with the two

Pandavas, with the sound like that of thunder. King Vasu had obtained it from Vasava and Brihadratha from Vasu. In due course, it had passed from Brihadratha to the king who was Brihadratha's son. The mighty-armed and immensely illustrious Pundarikaksha came out from Girivraja and stopped on the level ground outside.

'O king! All the citizens, with the brahmanas in the forefront, approached him there to show homage, in accordance with the prescribed rites. The kings who had been liberated from their bondage, worshipped Madhusudana with words of praise. "O mighty-armed! O son of Devaki! Aided by the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, it is not surprising that the protection of dharma should be vested in you. Today, you have accomplished the task of rescuing kings who had been miserably immersed in Jarasandha's terrible mire of a lake. O Vishnu! O supreme among men! We languished in that terrible mountain fortress. It is our destiny that we have been freed and you have obtained blazing fame. O tiger among men! O bull among men! Please tell us what we should do. However difficult may be the task, know that the kings will accomplish it." Reassuring them, the great-minded Hrishikesha said, "Yudhishthira wishes to perform the rajasuya. He who lives by dharma wishes to become a sovereign emperor. All of you must aid him in the sacrifice." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then all those kings gave their words with happy hearts. The lords of the earth then made Dasharha[42] share in their riches. Though disinclined, Govinda accepted, out of affection towards them.

'The maharatha Sahadeva, Jarasandha's son, came out with his relatives and his advisers, with the priest at the forefront. Sahadeva bowed down low before Vasudeva, god among men, and bowed down in homage, with presents of many gems. Krishna provided assurances to the frightened one. Then and there, he instated Jarasandha's son.[43] Having been allied with Krishna and having obtained homage from the two Parthas,[44] the intelligent king again entered Brihadratha's city. The lotus-eyed Krishna, resplendent with supreme radiance and laden with many riches, left with the two Parthas.

‘Achuyta and the two Pandavas went to Indraprastha. On meeting Dharmaraja, he happily said, “O supreme among kings! Through good fortune, Bhima has killed the mighty Jarasandha. The kings who were imprisoned have been set free. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through good fortune, the skilled Bhimasena and Dhananjaya are well. They have returned unharmed to their own city.” Then Yudhishthira worshipped Krishna, as he deserved. He embraced Bhima and Arjuna in delight. Having eliminated Jarasandha and obtained victory through his brothers, Ajatashatru enjoyed himself with his brothers. The Pandava[45] and his brothers then went to the freed kings[46] and in accordance with age, showed them homage and paid their respects. They then gave them leave to depart. Having been thus instructed by Yudhishthira, the kings swiftly left for their own respective kingdoms on their different mounts, happy in their hearts. Thus did the immensely intelligent Janardana, tiger among men, get his enemy Jarasandha killed through the Pandavas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having ensured Jarasandha’s killing through his intelligence, that conqueror of enemies[47] then took leave from Dharmaraja, Pritha and Krishna[48] and from Subhadra, Bhimasena, Phalguna[49] and the twins. Having taken leave of Dhoumya, he prepared to leave for his own city in that chief divine chariot, radiant as the bright morning sun. It had been given to him by Dharmaraja and it thundered over the directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Led by Yudhishthira, the Pandavas circumambulated Krishna, whose deeds never decay. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the illustrious Krishna, Devaki’s son, departed, the Pandavas obtained great glory. They had won a great victory and had provided security to the kings. This deed added to that. O king! They themselves found great joy in Droupadi. The king[50] was then famous for the protection of his kingdom and in accordance with dharma, did whatever was consistent with dharma, kama and artha.’

Section Twenty-Three

Digvijaya Parva

This section has 191 shlokas and seven chapters.

Chapter 248(23): 26 shlokas
Chapter 249(24): 27 shlokas
Chapter 250(25): 20 shlokas
Chapter 251(26): 16 shlokas
Chapter 252(27): 28 shlokas
Chapter 253(28): 55 shlokas
Chapter 254(29): 19 shlokas

The word digvijaya *means the conquest of the directions, that is, the conquest of the world. This section is therefore about the conquest undertaken by the Pandavas.*

248(23)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Partha had obtained the supreme bow, the two inexhaustible quivers, the chariot, the flag and the sabha. He told Yudhishthira, “O king! I have the bow, weapons, arrows, valour, allies, land, fame and strength and whatever men desire and find difficult to obtain. O supreme among kings! I think we should act so as to extend our treasury. I wish to make other kings pay us tribute. On an auspicious day, moment and nakshatra, I will set out to conquer the region protected by Dhanada.”[1] On hearing Dhananjaya, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira replied in words that were soft and grave. “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Go, but only after brahmanas have uttered benedictions on you, so that our well-wishers may be delighted and our enemies immersed in grief. O Partha! Your victory is certain. Your desires will undoubtedly be fulfilled." Having heard this, Partha set out with a large army. He set out on the divine chariot, performer of extraordinary deeds, given by Agni. In similar fashion, Bhimasena and the twins, bulls among men, also worshipped Dharmaraja and set out with their armies. The son of the one who vanquished Paka[2] conquered all the regions protected by the lord of wealth—Bhimasena the east, Sahadeva the south and Nakula, skilled in the use of all weapons, conquered the west. O king! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira remained in Khandavaprastha.'

Janamejaya said, 'O brahmana! Please tell me in great detail the directions of their conquests, because I never tire of hearing about the great characters of my ancestors.'

Vaishampayana said, 'The sons of Pritha conquered the earth at the same time. I will first tell you about Dhananjaya's conquest. With great force, the mighty-armed Dhananjaya first conquered the kings of the land of Kuninda.[3] After conquering the Anartas,[4] Kalakutas and Kunindas, he placed Sumandala, the conqueror of evil, in charge of the rear of his army. O king! Together with him, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, vanquished the land of Shakala[5] and King Prativindhya, the king of Shakala. Shakala was one of the seven regions[6] and there was a tumultuous battle between Arjuna and the armies of the kings of Shakala.[7] O bull among the Bharata lineage! After defeating all of them, the mighty archer attacked Pragjyotisha.[8] O lord of the earth! There was a mighty king named Bhagadatta there and the great-souled Pandava fought a great battle with him. Pragjyotisha was surrounded by kiratas, *chinas*[9] and many other warriors who lived along the shores of the ocean.[10] Having continuously fought with Dhananjaya for eight days and finding him to be still untiring on the field of battle, the king smilingly said, "O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O son of the chastiser of Paka! This blazing valour in battle is appropriate for you. O son![11] I am a friend of Indra of the gods and can withstand Shakra in battle. But I cannot withstand you in battle. O

Pandava! What is it that you want? What can I do for you? O mighty-armed one! O son! Tell me. I will do what you wish." Arjuna replied, "King Yudhishthira, the son of dharma, is a bull among the Kurus. I wish that he may become the sovereign and others pay him tribute. You are my father's friend and have been affectionate towards me too. Therefore, I cannot command you. Please pay it[12] happily." Bhagadatta said, "O son of Kunti! You are to me the way King Yudhishthira is. I will do all that. What else can I do for you?"'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus conquered him, Kunti's son, the mighty-armed Dhananjaya then went towards the north, protected by the lord of riches.[13] Kounteya, bull among men, conquered the inner mountains, the outer mountains and the upper mountains. Having conquered all the mountains and all the kings who lived there, he brought them under his sway and extracted riches from all of them. O king! Having won the riches and the loyalty of those kings, he marched with them against Brihanta, who lived in Kuluta. The earth trembled with the sound of his supreme drums, the clatter of the edges of his chariot wheels and the roar of his elephants.

'The young Brihanta came out from his city with a fourfold army to do battle with Pandava. The battle between Brihanta and Dhananjaya was a great one. But Brihanta was unable to withstand Pandava's valour. Realizing that Kounteya could not be beaten down, the lord of the mountains,[14] whose intelligence was limited,[15] brought him all his riches. O king! Having established the kingdom, he set out with Kuluta[16] and swiftly threw Senabindu out of his kingdom. He then subjugated Modapura, Vamadeva, Sudamana, Susamkula and the northern Kulutas and their kings. O king! Having brought those men under Dharmaraja's rule, Dhananjaya then conquered five countries. On arriving in Divahprastha, Senabindu's great capital, the lord[17] set up a base there, with his fourfold army. Surrounded by them, that bull among men marched against King Vishvagashva Pourava. O king! After conquering in battle the brave warriors from the mountains, he used his flag-bearing troops to subjugate the city protected by Pourava. After vanquishing Pourava, Pandava defeated the seven mountain-dwelling dacoit tribes known as Utsavasamketa.[18] Then that bull among kshatriyas defeated the valorous kshatriyas from Kashmir and Lohita, using ten encircling armies. O king! Kounteya then took on the Trigartas, the Darvas, the Kokanadas and many other kshatriyas who attacked him collectively. The descendant of the Kuru lineage then conquered the charming city of Abhisari and defeated in battle Rochamana, who lived in Urasha. The son of the chastiser of Paka then conquered beautiful Simhapure, protected by Chitrayudhasura. Then, Kiriti,[19] bull among the Pandavas and descendant of the Kuru lineage, conquered the Suhmas[20] and the Cholas[21] with his entire army. The descendant of the Kuru lineage then conquered Bahlika[22] with supreme valour. They were difficult to defeat, so there was a great battle. Phalgu[23] Pandava, son of the chastiser of Paka, then took a select force and defeated the Daradas and the Kambojas.[24] The lord then defeated the bandits who live towards the north-east and those who live in the forests. Thereafter, the son of the chastiser of Paka subjugated the Lohas, the superior Kambojas and the northern Rishikas. The battle in Rishika, between the superior Rishikas and Partha was a fearful one, like the battle known as *tarakamaya*.[25] O king! After defeating the Rishikas in the field of battle, he extracted eight horses that had the colour of a parrot's breast. There were some others that had the colours of peacocks and still others that had both colours. Having thus conquered in battle the Himalaya and Nishkuta Mountains, the bull among men arrived at the white mountains and began to live there.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After having crossed the white mountains, the brave one arrived at the land where the Kimpurushas lived. They were protected by Drumaputra. There was a great battle in which many kshatriyas were slain. The best of the Pandavas won and extracted tribute. The son of the chastiser of Paka used his army and determination to conquer the region known as Hataka, protected by Guhyaka. Having won them over with conciliation, he set his eyes on the supreme Laka Manasa. He also saw all the places sacred to the rishis. On reaching Manasa, the lord Pandava conquered the regions around Hataka, protected by the gandharvas. As tribute, he obtained from the city of the gandharvas supreme horses that were the colour of partridges and speckled, with eyes like those of frogs. Pandava, son of the chastiser of Paka, then arrived at the northern country of Harivarsha and wished to conquer it too.

'On seeing him, some doorkeepers appeared. They were giant in form, great in valour and immense in strength. They smilingly told him, "O Partha! You are incapable of conquering this city in any way. O Achyuta![26] If you desire your own welfare, turn back. You already have enough. Any human who enters this city must certainly die. O valorous one! We are pleased with you. Your conquests are already many. O Arjuna! Nothing can be seen here that is left for you to conquer. This is the land of the Northern Kurus and there cannot be any wars here. O Kounteya! Even if you enter, you will not be able to see anything. Nothing that is here can be seen with human eyes. O tiger among men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, if there is anything else that you wish, please tell us. We will do your bidding." Having been thus addressed, Arjuna, son of the chastiser of Paka said, "I wish that the intelligent Dharmaraja should become an emperor. I shall not enter this land if it is restricted to humans. But let something be given by you as tribute to Yudhishthira." Then they gave him divine garments, divine ornaments and divine hides and skins as tribute.

'Thus did that tiger among men conquer the northern regions. He fought many great battles, with kshatriyas, and also with bandits. Having conquered those kings, he extracted tribute from them and obtained a lot of riches and many jewels, together with horses that had the colour of partridges, were speckled, or had the colour of parrot feathers or those of peacocks. They were all as swift as the wind. O king!

Surrounded by a gigantic fourfold army, the brave one returned again to the supreme city of Shakraprastha.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'At the same time, the valorous Bhimasena took his leave from Dharmaraja and left for the eastern direction. That tiger among the Bharata lineage had with him a great circle of forces, capable of oppressing the enemy's kingdom. He marched out to increase the enemy's sorrow. Pandava, tiger among kings, first went to the city of Panchala and used various means of conciliation to win the Panchalas over. Then that valorous one, bull among men, defeated the Gandakis and the Videhas[27] and after some time, went on to Dasharna.[28] There, King Sudharma of Dasharna performed a feat that makes one's hair stand up—he had a great duel with Bhima without any weapons.[29] On witnessing this deed, Bhimasena, the scorcher of enemies, made the immensely strong Sudharma the supreme general. O king! Bhima, terrible in valour, then marched towards the east and that large army seemed to make the earth tremble. O king! That warrior, strongest among the strong, defeated in battle Rochamana, the lord of Ashvamedha, and his younger brother. Without exerting terrible force in vanquishing him, the immensely valorous Kounteya,[30] descendant of the Kuru lineage, then conquered the eastern regions. He then went south to the great city of the Pulindas and conquered Sukumara and Sumitra, the lord of men. O Janamejaya! Then, on Dharmaraja's command, that bull among the Bharata lineage advanced on the immensely brave Shishupala.

'Having heard of Pandava's[31] intention, the king of Chedi,[32] the scorcher of enemies, came out of his city and welcomed him. O great king! When the bulls among the Kuru and Chedi lineages met, they asked about the welfare of each other's lineages. O lord of the people! The king of Chedi then smilingly offered his kingdom and told Bhima, "O unblemished one! What do you wish to do?" Bhima then told him about Dharmaraja's wish and that lord of men acted accordingly.[33] O king! Bhima spent thirty nights there as Shishupala's guest. After that, he left with his army and his mounts.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then that destroyer of enemies vanquished Kumara Shrenimana and Brihadbala, the lord of Koshala. In Ayodhya, the best of the Pandavas defeated, without having to perform very terrible deeds, the righteous and extremely strong Dirghaprajna. The lord then subjugated the land of Gopalakaccha, the northern Sottamas and the king who was the lord of the Mallas. Along the slopes of the Himalayas, the powerful one then ran into Jaradgava and in a short while, brought the entire country under his power. The bull among men defeated many countries in this fashion and conquered Unnata and the mountains of Kukshimanta. Pandava, great in valour and supreme among those who are strong, defeated in battle Subandhu, the king of Kashi, one who never retreated from battle. The mighty-armed Bhima, terrible in deeds and bull among the Pandavas, used his power to conquer Kratha, lord of the kings in the region of Suparshva, in battle. Then he conquered the immensely energetic Matsyas, the immensely strong Malayas, the invincible Gayas and all the lands with animals everywhere.[34] The mighty-armed one repulsed Mardavika and Mahidhara and having marched towards the north, conquered the foothills. The strong Kounteya used his strength to defeat the land of the Vatsas, the lord of the Bhargas, the lord of the Nishadas and many other owners of the land, led by Manimana. Pandava Bhima then conquered the southern Mallas and Bhogavanta, without having to expend terrible effort. The lord, tiger among men, used conciliation, without the need for terrible deeds, to win over the Sharmakas and the Varmakasa and King Janaka of Videha, the lord of the earth. Spending time in Videha, Kounteya Pandava defeated the seven lords of the kiratas in the region around Mount Indra.

'After that, the valorous Kounteya defeated the Suhmas and the eastern Suhmas in battle[35] and marched on towards Magadha. Defeating

Danda and Dandadhara and many kings, he attacked Girivraja, with all of them on his side. O king! Having subjugated Jarasandha’s son and extracted tribute from him, the powerful one marched with all of them against Karna.[36] The earth trembled with his fourfold army. The best of the Pandavas fought with Karna, the destroyer of enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He vanquished Karna in battle and brought him under his sway. He then defeated the powerful kings who lived in the mountains. Later, in a great battle, using only the strength of his arms,[37] Pandava defeated the immensely strong Modagiri. O king! He then defeated the immensely strong and brave Vasudeva, the king of Poundra and the immensely energetic king who dwelt in the marshes along the Koushiki.[38] Both these warriors were terrible in valour and were surrounded by large armies. O great king! He then attacked the king of Vanga.[39] He vanquished Samudrasena and King Chandrasena, the king of Tamralipta[40] and Kacha, the ruler of Vanga. The bull among the Bharata lineage conquered the ruler of the Suhmas, all those who lived along the ocean and all the mlecchas.

‘Having thus conquered many countries and extracting riches from them, Pavana’s powerful son[41] then reached the Louhitya.[42] He extracted tributes and riches of all kinds from all the kings of the mlecchas who lived in islands in the ocean—sandalwood, aloe, garments, the best of gems and pearls, gold, silver, diamonds and priceless coral. They showered the Pandava,[43] whose spirit was boundless, with great riches that amounted to hundreds of millions.[44] Returning to Indraprastha, Bhima, terrible in valour, tendered all those riches to Dharmaraja.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘In similar fashion, after worshipping Dharmaraja, Sahadeva left for the south with a large army. The lord first conquered the entire land of the Shurasenas.[45] The descendant of the Kuru lineage, supreme among powerful ones, then subjugated the king of Matsya.[46] In a great battle, he defeated Dantavakra, emperor among kings. Having forced him to pay tribute, he restored the throne to him. He then vanquished Sukumara and King Sumitra and conquered the other Matsyas and the Patachcharas. The illustrious one swiftly conquered the country of the nishadas and Goshringa, supreme among mountains. Then he defeated King Shrenimana. After conquering the new country, he marched against Kuntibhoja and he[47] happily accepted the suzerainty.[48] On the banks of the Charmanvati[49] he encountered King Jambaka's son,[50] who had earlier been defeated by Vasudeva because of an earlier enmity. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He instantly engaged in a battle with Bhoja and having defeated him, marched towards the south.

'Having extracted tribute and many riches from them,[51] he took all these and advanced towards the Narmada. The powerful and valorous son of the Ashvins defeated in battle Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti,[52] who were surrounded by large armies. Having extracted riches from them, he advanced towards the city of Mahishmati.[53] The powerful Pandava Sahadeva, bull among men, engaged in battle King Nila there. The great battle struck terror in the hearts of the fearful. It destroyed armies and threatened life. The illustrious god of fire provided succour to his enemy. Horses, chariots, elephants, soldiers and armour from Sahadeva's army were seen to be blazing. The mind of the descendant of the Kuru lineage was bewildered. O Janamejaya! He was incapable of giving a fitting reply.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Why did the illustrious Agni become Sahadeva's adversary in war? O brahmana! He was seeking to accomplish a sacrifice.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'It is said that the illustrious god of fire lived in Mahishmati and was once caught in an act of adultery. In earlier times, after he had sported himself as he willed in the disguise of a brahmana, he was brought before King Nila.[54] The virtuous king ordered him to be punished in accordance with the sacred texts and the illustrious fire-god blazed up in anger. On seeing this, the king was surprised and bowed his head before the wise one.[55] At this, the illustrious fire-god bestowed his favours on the king. The one who achieves the end of all sacrifices offered a boon to the king and the lord of the earth asked for the boon that his forces might always be free from fear. O king! Ever since then, whenever ignorant kings have tried to conquer that city, they have been consumed instantly by the fire. O extender of the Kuru lineage! From that day, the women from the city of Mahishmati became unacceptable.[56] Because of Agni's boon, the women could no longer be restricted.[57] They are their own mistresses[58] and act as they will. O supreme among men! O great king! From that day, out of fear of Agni, all kings have avoided that kingdom.

'O king! The virtuous Sahadeva saw that his soldiers were engulfed in fear and surrounded by the fire, they trembled like a mountain. He touched water and made himself pure and then spoke to Pavaka.[59] "O Pavaka! O one with the black trails! I worship you and it is for your sake that I have undertaken this task. You are the mouth of the gods. You are the sacrifice. You purify and you are the purifier. You are the bearer of sacrificial offerings. It is from you that the Vedas have come into being and thus it is that you are known as Jataveda. O bearer of sacrificial offerings! Please do not cause an obstruction to this sacrifice." Having uttered these words, Madri's son spread kusha grass on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In accordance with the prescribed rituals, that tiger among men sat down before the advancing fire, before all his frightened and anxious troops. Like the great ocean which does not cross the shoreline, the fire did not cross him. The fire approached Sahadeva, god among men and descendant of the Kuru lineage, and spoke to him in affectionate words, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Arise. I acted thus only to test you. I know all your intentions and those of Dharma's son.[60] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! However, I am bound to protect this city, as long as there are heirs to carry forward King Nila's lineage. O Pandava! However, I will accomplish what you desire in your heart.” Then Madri’s son arose with a happy heart. Bowing his head and joining his hands in salutation, the bull among men worshipped Pavaka. When Pavaka retreated, King Nila arrived and welcomed Sahadava, tiger among men and lord of all warriors. He[61] accepted the homage and made him a tributary. Then Madri’s victorious son advanced in a southern direction.

‘He vanquished the immensely energetic Traipuras.[62] The mighty-armed one conquered the lord of Potana. With a great deal of effort, the mighty-armed one then subjugated Ahriti, king of Surashtra,[63] whose preceptor was Koushika. While in the region of Surashtra, the intelligent one sent an ambassador to King Rukmin Bhishmaka of Bhojakata, who had great standing, was devoted to dharma and was a friend of Indra himself. O king! For the sake of Vasudeva,[64] the mighty-armed king and his sons happily accepted the suzerainty.

‘Taking a lot of riches, the lord of war went from there to Shurparaka and the region named Upakrita, ruled by a clan. The immensely energetic and immensely strong one conquered them and the region of Dandaka.[65] The immensely wise one conquered and brought under his sway the kings who are born from mleccha wombs and live in islands in the ocean, the man-eating nishadas, the Karnapravaranas, those known as the Kalamukhas and who are a cross between men and rakshasas, all of the Kolla mountains, Murachipattana, the island known as Tamra, Mount Ramaka and King Timingila. He used messengers to subjugate and obtain tribute from the forest-dwelling men who had only one leg[66] and the cities of Samjayanti, Picchanda and Karahataka. Likewise, he used messengers to subjugate and obtain tribute from the Pandya, the Dravidas, the Chodras,[67] the Keralas, the Andhras, the Talavanas, the Kalingas, the Ushtrakarnikas, the Antakhis,[68] the Romas[69] and the city of the Greeks.[70] O lord of kings! Madri’s intelligent son then went to Bharukaccha.[71] He sent envoys to the great-souled Poulastya Vibhishana.[72] The conqueror of enemies and one with dharma in his heart[73] used conciliation and knowing this to be determined by destiny, the intelligent lord[74] happily accepted the suzerainty and sent many kinds of riches—firstly sandalwood and aloe, and then divine ornaments, expensive garments and priceless jewels.

'Then the powerful and intelligent Sahadeva returned. He thus subjugated with conciliation and conquest. After making the kings pay tribute, the conqueror of enemies returned. O king! O Janamejaya! O bull among the Bharata lineage! He handed all of this over to Dharmaraja and having accomplished his task, lived happily there.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'I will now describe the deeds and conquests of Nakula and how that lord vanquished the region that had once been conquered by Vasudeva.[75] Taking a large army with him, the intelligent one left Khandavaprastha and headed towards the west. The earth trembled with the lion-like roars of his warriors and sounds made by the edges of his chariot wheels.

'He first marched on the prosperous and beautiful Rohitaka, beloved of Kartikeya. It was rich in cattle, horses, wealth and grain. There was a great battle there with the Mattamayuraka warriors. The immensely radiant one then conquered the desert region, the land known as Sairishaka that was rich in grain, Maheccha, the Shibis, the Trigartas, the Ambashthas, the Malavas, the five groups of Karpatas and the brahmanas known as Madhyamikaya and Vatadhana. Having circled again, that bull among men defeated the clans known as Utsavasamketa who dwelt in the forests of Pushkara, the immensely powerful Gramaneyas who lived on the banks of the Sindhu,[76] the clans of shudras and *abhiras*[77] who lived along the Sarasvati,[78] all those who live on fish and all those who live in the mountains, the land of the five rivers, the western Paryatas, the northern Jyotika, the city named Vrindataka and Dvarapala. The immensely radiant one defeated them all and the Harhunas and all the kings who dwelt to the west.

‘Having brought all this under his rule, the Pandava[79] sent messengers to Vasudeva and he[80] and his ten kingdoms accepted his[81] rule. Then he marched to Shakala, the city of the Madras. Using conciliation, the powerful one made an ally of his maternal uncle Shalya.[82] O lord of the earth! The king honoured him, as was due to a deserving guest. The lord of warriors took a large quantity of riches and departed. He then defeated the extremely fearful mlecchas who lived along the sides of the ocean, the Pahlavas and the Barbaras.[83] Having conquered all these kings and extracted tribute, Nakula, supreme among men, returned. O great king! Such were the riches collected by the great-souled one that ten thousand camels carried it with difficulty. In Indraprastha, Madri’s brave and fortunate son went to Yudhishthira and offered the riches to him. Thus did Nakula, bull among the Bharata lineage, conquer the western regions, protected by Varuna and conquered earlier by Vasudeva.’[84]

Section Twenty-Four

Rajasuya Parva

This section has ninety-seven shlokas and three chapters.

Chapter 255(30): 54 shlokas
Chapter 256(31): 25 shlokas
Chapter 257(32): 18 shlokas

This section is about the rajasuya or royal sacrifice.

255(30)

Vaishampayana said, 'Protected by Dharmaraja and supported by truth, with all the enemies subjugated, the subjects were always engaged in their respective tasks. Because revenue was collected in the right way and rule was in accordance with the principles of dharma, the clouds poured forth the desired rain and the country was swollen in prosperity. Because of the king's deeds, everything prospered, especially the breeding of cattle, agriculture and trade. O king! Dacoits and thieves, and even the king's servants, were not heard to speak lies to each other. Yudhishthira was always devoted to dharma and during his reign, there never were droughts, too much of rain, disease, fires or loss in consciousness. Other kings only came to him for pleasant tasks, to show respect and offer tribute out of their own volition, and not for any other reason. The accumulation of riches acquired through dharma became so large that it would have been impossible to spend it in hundreds of years. Having ascertained the size of his granary and treasury, King Kounteya,[1] lord of the earth, mentally decided to perform the sacrifice.

‘Separately and collectively, his well-wishers told him, “O lord! It is time for the sacrifice. Do what is necessary to perform it.” While they were speaking in this way, Hari[2] arrived—the ancient rishi, the soul of the Vedas, visible only to those who know him, supreme among all established things, the origin and dissolution of the universe, the preserver of what was, is and will be, Keshava, the destroyer of Keshi,[3] the protecting wall of all the Vrishnis and the one who provides sanctuary in times of distress. Having placed Anakadundubhi in charge of his forces and taking a great deal of riches for Dharmaraja, Madhava, tiger among men, arrived with a large army. He entered that supreme city to the sound of chariots, his wealth adding to the inexhaustible ocean of riches that were already there. With Krishna’s arrival, the city of the Bharatas rejoiced, like a place without a sun when the sun arrives, or a place without the wind when the wind arrives. Yudhishthira delightedly met him and offered him homage in accordance with the prescribed rites.

‘When they had asked about each other’s welfare and he[4] was happily seated, that bull among men[5] told Krishna, in the presence of Dhoumya and Dvaipayana at the forefront of the officiating priests, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins. “O Krishna! It is because of you that the entire earth is under my rule. O Varshneya! It is through your favours that I have obtained great riches. O Madhava! O son of Devaki! As is prescribed, I now wish to devote all this to the welfare of brahmanas and the sacrificial fire. O mighty-armed Dasharha![6] With my younger brothers as companions, please grant me permission for you to be instated in the sacrifice. O mighty-armed one! O Govinda! O Dasharha! When you have been instated in the sacrifice, I will become free from sin. O lord! O Krishna! Otherwise, grant me, and my younger brothers, permission to undertake this sacrifice. For, with your permission, I will be able to perform that supreme sacrifice.” After greatly praising his[7] many qualities, Krishna replied, “O tiger among kings! You are a universal emperor and can perform the great sacrifice. When you have performed the sacrifice and obtained its fruits, we will accomplish what we desire. Perform the sacrifice you wish. I am always established in your welfare. Appoint me in whatever office you want. I will act in accordance with all your words.” Yudhishthira said, “O Krishna! O Hrishikesha! When you are willingly present here, it is certain that my resolution will be achieved and my success is assured.” Having thus obtained Krishna’s permission, Pandava[8] and his brothers began to prepare the means for the rajasuya.

‘Pandava,[9] destroyer of his enemies, instructed Sahadeva, supreme among warriors, and all his advisers, “The brahmanas prescribe articles for this sacrificial ceremony. Let those be collected along with all the utensils and auspicious objects. Let the ingredients Dhoumya mentions be swiftly brought. In due order, as is required, let the men bring them. In their desire to do that which pleases me, let Indrasena,[10] Vishoka[11] and Arjuna’s charioteer Puru be employed to acquire the required food. O supreme among the Kuru lineage![12] Let every object of desire be brought, fragrant and succulent, so that the minds of brahmanas are delighted and pleased.” As soon as these words were uttered by the great-souled Dharmaraja, Sahadeva, supreme among warriors, announced that it had all been done.

‘O king! Dvaipayana then appointed the officiating priests.[13] They were immensely illustrious brahmanas, who seemed to be personifications of the Vedas themselves. Satyavati’s son[14] himself acted as the brahman. Susama, bull among the Dhananjayas, became the chanter of Sama.[15] Yajnavalka, supreme among those who are established in the brahman, became the chief adhvaryu. Vasu’s son Paila, aided by Dhoumya, became the hotar. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The groups of sons and disciples of these, all learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, became assistants to the hotars. Having invoked the auspicious day and arranging everything according to the rites, they organized the great sacrifice for the gods, in accordance with what is laid down in the sacred texts. Given specific instructions, artisans built large shelters that were filled with jewels and were like the mansions of the gods.

'Then that king, supreme among kings and supreme among the Kuru lineage,[16] instructed his adviser Sahadeva, "Quickly send swift messengers with invitations." Hearing the king's words, he[17] immediately sent messengers. "Invite to the kingdom all the brahmanas and all the owners of land, all the vaishyas and all the respected shudras. Bring them all here." On the Pandava's instructions, invitations were sent to all the lords of the earth and more messengers were sent with invitations.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the time was right, the brahmanas instated Kunti's son Yudhishthira in the rajasuya. O Indra among men! When Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, always devoted to dharma, was instated, he went to the sacrificial ground, surrounded by thousands of brahmanas, his brothers, his relatives, his well-wishers, his advisers and kshatriyas who had arrived from many countries. Accompanied by his ministers, that best of kings was like dharma personified. Brahmanas arrived from different directions. They were learned in all the branches of knowledge, the Vedas and the Vedangas. On Dharmaraja's instructions, thousands of artisans constructed separate dwelling places for them and their companions. These had all the qualities and were stocked with food and garments. O king! Shown due favours, the brahmanas lived there, recounting many tales and watching the actors and dancers. A great and unending sound was heard as those great-souled brahmanas cheerfully ate and spoke. "Give, give!" "Eat, eat!" Such were the sounds that were always heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja separately gave hundreds and thousands of cattle, beds, gold and women. Thus did the sacrifice of the great-souled Pandava begin, the unmatched warrior on earth, as Shakra is in the world of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then King Yudhishthira sent Pandava Nakula to Hastinapura, to bring Bhishma, Drona, Dhritarashtra, Vidura, Kripa and all the brothers who were attached to Yudhishthira.'

Vaishampayana said, 'The victorious Nakula went to Hastinapura and the Pandava[18] invited Bhishma and Dhritarashtra. Having heard of Dharmaraja's sacrifice and learned about sacrifices, they happily set out, with the brahmanas at the forefront. O bull among men! Others also came in hundreds, content in their hearts and desiring to see Pandava Dharmaraja's sabha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the kings arrived from all the directions. They brought with them many expensive jewels.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them were welcomed with honour—Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, the greatly intelligent Vidura, all the brothers with Duryodhana at the forefront, all the kings with the preceptor[19] at the forefront, Subala the king of Gandhara, the immensely strong Shakuni, Achala, Vrishaka, the supreme warrior Karna, Rita, Shalya the king of the Madras, the maharatha Bahlika, Somadatta of the Kuru lineage, Bhuri, Bhurishrava, Shala, Ashvatthama, Kripa, Drona,[20] Jayadratha the king of Sindhu, Yajnasena[21] and his son, Shalva the lord of the earth, the greatly famous Bhagadatta, king of Pragjyotisha, all the mlecchas who lived along the shores of the ocean, the kings from the mountains, King Brihadbala, Vasudeva from Pundra, the king of Vanga, the king of Kalinga, Akarsha, Kuntala, the Vanavasya, the Andhrakas, the Dravidas, the Simhalas, the king of Kashmir, the immensely energetic Kuntibhoja, the immensely strong Suhma, all the other kings and warriors from Bahlika, Virata and his sons, the maharatha Machella, kings, the sons of kings, the lords of many countries, the immensely valorous Shishupala, invincible in battle, and his son, Rama,[22] Aniruddha, Babhru, Sarana, Gada, Pradyumna, Samba, the valorous Charudeshna, Ulmuka, Nishatha, Pradyumna's valorous son and all the other Vrishnis who were maharathas. They all went to the Pandava's sacrifice. Many other kings from the middle regions also went to the great rajasuya sacrifice of Pandu's son.

'O king! On Dharmaraja's instructions, dwelling houses were provided to all of them. They had many rooms and were adorned with lakes and trees. There, Dharma's son showed them the best of honours. Having been shown due homage, all the kings went to their assigned dwelling houses—as tall as the peaks of Kailasa, beautiful, stocked with every kind of object and surrounded by strongly built and white walls on every side. There were nets of gold and the floors were paved with precious stones. The stairs were gentle to climb and there were expensive seats and carpets. They were decorated with wreaths and garlands and perfumed with the best of aloe. They were white like a swan's feathers and could be seen from the distance of a yojana. The doors were wide, permitting easy entry and were characterized by every quality. They were constructed out of many metals and looked like the peaks of the Himalayas.

'After resting there for some time, those lords saw Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, surrounded by many *sadasyas*[23] and donating innumerable gifts. O king! Crowded by sadasyas, kings and great-souled brahmanas, the place looked as beautiful as the vault of the sky,[24] crowded with immortals.'

257(32)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having shown homage to his grandfather[25] and preceptor[26] and having welcomed them, Yudhishthira spoke these words to Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Drona's son[27] and Vivimshati.[28] "All of you must show me every favour at this sacrifice. All my great riches here are yours. Be kind towards me, without any constraints, and as you desire." The eldest of the Pandavas had already been instated in the sacrifice. Having thus spoken, he immediately appointed each with a suitable office in the sacrifice. Duhshasana was put in charge of food and other objects of pleasure. Ashvatthama was appointed to the task of tending to the brahmanas. Sanjaya was appointed to the task of welcoming the kings. The immensely wise Bhishma and Drona were in charge of what should be done and what should not be done. The king gave Kripa the task of looking after the gold, gold coins and jewels and also the distribution of dakshina. Similarly, he appointed other tigers among men to other tasks.

‘Having been brought there by Nakula, the guests Bahlika, Dhritarashtra, Somadatta and Jayadratha enjoyed themselves, as if they were the masters. Kshatta[29] Vidura, knowledgeable in every aspect of dharma, was in charge of the treasury. Duryodhana received all the tribute that was brought. All the worlds assembled there, wishing to see Dharmaraja Pandava’s sabha and participate in the supreme fruits. No one came there with a tribute that was less than one thousand.[30] Everyone made Dharmaraja prosper with many jewels. The kings rivalled each other and, donating riches, proudly said, “Let the Kouravya attain the sacrifice with my riches alone.” O king! The sacrificial grounds of the great-souled Kounteya were resplendent with dwelling houses which had chariots in front, guards, soldiers, chariots of the lords of the earth,[31] brahmana dwelling houses, mansions constructed like divine chariots and decorated with many colourful jewels, the assembled kings, wealth and prosperity. Yudhishthira seemed to rival the god Varuna in riches. The sacrifice had six fires and large amounts of dakshina. Everyone was satisfied with every object of desire—abundance of grain and plenty of food. It was crowded by well-fed people. A large amount of gifts of jewels were brought to the assembly. Those skilled in the knowledge of mantras offered libations, clarified butter and oblations at the sacrifice and gratified the gods and the maharshis. Like the gods, the brahmanas were also gratified with gifts, food and great wealth. All the varnas were delighted at the sacrifice.’

Section Twenty-Five

Arghabhiharana Parva

This section has ninety-nine shlokas and four chapters.

Chapter 258(33): 32 shlokas
Chapter 259(34): 23 shlokas
Chapter 260(35): 29 shlokas
Chapter 261(36): 15 shlokas

Argha *(or arghya) is an offering made as a sign of veneration.* Abhiharana *is the act of fetching or taking. So* arghabhiharana parva *is about the offering of a gift, as a sign of respect, and the consequent dispute.*

258(33)

Vaishampayana said, 'At the time of the sprinkling of water,[1] all the brahmanas and kings entered the inside of the sacrificial enclosure. The maharshis, with the great-souled Narada at the forefront, seated themselves at the altar. With the rajarshis, they were as radiant as the gods and the devarshis in Brahma's abode. Those immensely energetic ones performed one rite after another and discussed it among themselves, "This is the right way," "that is not the right way," "there is no other way except this," thus did they speak a lot and argue with each other. Some made weak arguments appear strong. Others cited the sacred texts to make strong arguments appear weak. Some intelligent debaters tore apart the arguments of others, the way hawks fall upon raw pieces of meat thrown in the air. Some among them were great in their vows and knew the stories about dharma and artha. Others were supreme among those who had knowledge of the Vedas. Others found delight in recounting tales. The sacrificial altar was surrounded by gods, brahmanas and maharshis, all with knowledge of the Vedas, and looked as beautiful as the clear sky with its stars. O king! No shudra, or one without any vows, was near the inner altar of Yudhishthira's abode.

'On seeing the prosperity of the prosperous and intelligent Dharmaraja, all the consequences of that sacrifice, Narada became satisfied. O lord of men! On seeing the assembly of all the kshatriyas, the sage Narada began to think. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He remembered the ancient account about the partial incarnations that he had heard in Brahma's abode. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Knowing that this was an assembly of gods, Narada remembered Pundarikaksha Hari.[2] The lord Narayana, slayer of enemies of the wise ones[3] and destroyer of cities of the enemies, had himself been born as a kshatriya to keep his pledge. In ancient times, the creator of beings had himself commanded the gods, "You will regain your own worlds after you have killed one another." Having thus instructed all the gods, Shambhu[4] Narayana, the illustrious lord of the universe, was himself born in Yadu's dynasty. Having been born in the lineage of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis, the supreme one among those who extend lineages, shone with supreme prosperity, like the moon among the stars. Hari's strength of arms was worshipped by Indra, with all the gods. He is the destroyer of enemies and had been born in human form. "Oh! What can be a greater wonder than this? The self-creator will himself take away all these great and strong kshatriyas." These were the thoughts of the righteous Narada. He knew that Hari Narayana is the god who is worshipped through sacrifices. The intelligent one, supreme among those who know dharma, remained at the great sacrifice of the supremely intelligent Dharmaraja, so as to greatly honour him.

'O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhishma then spoke to King Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. "Let offerings be made to the kings, according to what they deserve. O Yudhishthira! It is said that one's preceptor, one's priest, one's relative, a snataka, a friend and a king—

these are the six who are deserving of such offerings. It is also said that when someone comes and stays for more than one year, he too becomes deserving. These kings have stayed with us for a very long time. O king! Therefore, let an arghya be brought for each of them. Let the first arghya be brought for he who is the most deserving among them.” Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Whom do you consider to be the one to whom the first arghya should be presented? Please tell me what is right.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through his intelligence, Shantanu’s son Bhishma then determined that Varshneya Krishna was the most deserving person on earth. “Among all these assembled here, he is the one who blazes with his energy, strength and valour, like the sun shines among the stars. This sacrificial place is lit up and gladdened by Krishna, like a sunless place with the sun and a windless place with the wind.” Having been thus instructed by Bhishma, the powerful Sahadeva offered the supreme arghya to Varshneya, in accordance with the rites prescribed. Krishna accepted it, in accordance with the rites laid down in the sacred texts. However, Shishupala could not tolerate this homage shown to Vasudeva. In that assembly, the immensely powerful king of Chedi censured Bhishma and Dharmaraja and then insulted Vasudeva.’

259(34)

‘Shishupala said, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage![5] When so many great-souled lords of the earth are present here, Varshneya does not deserve to be worshipped, as if he were a king. O Pandava! This honour shown to Pundarikaksha is not deserving of the great-souled Pandavas. O Pandavas! You are children and do not know the subtleties of dharma. This son of the river[6] can see little and has transgressed what is proper. Though he knows what is dharma, Bhishma acts like you out of favouritism and is worthy of censure in the world of honest ones. This man from Dasharha is not even a king. You have shown him homage. How does he deserve to be honoured foremost among all these kings? O bull among the Bharata lineage! You cannot consider Krishna to be the eldest when the aged Vasudeva[7] is here? How can the son he shown homage first? Or you may consider Vasudeva to be one who always does that which ensures your welfare. But then, when Drupada is here, how can Madhava be thus worshipped? O chief among those of the Kuru lineage! If you consider Krishna to be your preceptor, how can Varshneya be shown homage when Drona is here? O descendant of the Kuru lineage! If you consider Krishna to be the sacrificial priest, how can you show him homage when the brahmana Dvaipayana is present? O supreme among those of the Kuru lineage! Madhusudana is not a sacrificial priest, or a preceptor, or a king. Why have you shown him homage except out of favouritism? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you must worship Madhusudana, why did you bring these kings here, so as to insult them?

'"We did not offer tribute to the great-souled Kounteya out of fear, or out of avarice, or as a result of conciliation. We offered him tribute because he wished to become an emperor, in accordance with the dictates of dharma. Yet he now pays no attention to us. Krishna has not attained any signs of royalty, yet he is offered homage in the midst of this assembly of kings. This is nothing but an insult. The fame of Dharma's son, as someone who has dharma in his heart, has vanished. Who can offer deserving homage in this way to one who has deviated from dharma? Born in the lineage of the Vrishnis, he earlier slew a king.[8] Today, the devotion to dharma has deserted Yudhishthira. His meanness is evident from his offering the arghya to Krishna. O Madhava! If the Kounteyas are scared and if they have become mean as a consequence of their asceticism, surely you could have enlightened them about what kind of honour you deserve. O Janardana! If in their meanness they offered you a homage that you are not worthy of, why did you accept it? Though undeserving, you set great store on this homage, like a dog that has found an offering of sacrificial ghee and consumes it in private. O Janardana! This is not only an insult to the Indras among kings. The Kurus have also brought out your true nature. O Madhusudana! You are not a king and this royal homage to you is like a wife to the impotent or a beautiful sight to the blind. We have seen what King Yudhishthira is and we have seen what Bhishma is. We have seen what Vasudeva is. We have seen everything exactly as it is.”

‘With these words, Shishupala arose from his supreme seat and went out from the assembly, together with all the other kings.’[9]

260(35)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then King Yudhishthira rushed after Shishupala and spoke to him in these sweet and conciliatory words. “O lord of the earth! The words that you have spoken are not appropriate. O king! They are in violation of dharma, they are cruel and serve no purpose. O lord of the earth! Shantanu’s son Bhishma will never err in supreme dharma and do not insult him in vain. Look at these many lords of the earth, older than you. They accepted the homage shown to Krishna and you should also accept it. O lord of Chedi, Bhishma knows Krishna’s true nature and you yourself do not know it as well as the Kouravya[10] does.”

‘Bhishma said, “Krishna is the oldest in the worlds. He who does not accept the homage shown to him, deserves neither kind words, nor conciliation. A kshatriya who is supreme among warriors and having defeated a kshatriya in battle, sets him free from captivity, becomes his preceptor. In this assembly of kings, I do not see a lord of the earth who has not been defeated in battle through Satvata’s[11] energy. Not only is Achyuta supremely deserving of this homage, he deserves to be worshipped by all the three worlds. Many bulls among kshatriyas have been defeated by Krishna in battle. The entire universe and everything are established in Varshneya. Therefore, though there are elders here, we show homage to Krishna and no one else. You should not speak as you did. Your thoughts should not be of that kind. O king! I have attended upon many who are old in knowledge. When they recounted in their assemblies the qualities of Shouri, blessed with all the qualities, I have heard of those many qualities that are greatly revered by the honest. Many are the times when I have heard people talk about the deeds that this intelligent one has performed since birth. O king of

Chedi! We have not worshipped Janardana out of caprice. Nor have we shown him homage because of our special relationship with him or because we expect anything from him. He is the source of all happiness on earth, all the honest of the earth honour him. We offered him the homage because we knew of his fame, valour and victories. There is no one here, however young, who has not been examined. Passing over many who possess qualities and age, we chose Hari as the most deserving of honour. He is the oldest among brahmanas in knowledge and among kshatriyas, he is the greatest in strength. Both these are firm grounds for Govinda to be worshipped. He is learned in the Vedas and Vedangas and has infinite strength. Is there anyone else in the world of men who is as distinguished as Keshava? In Achyuta can always be found generosity, dexterity, learning, valour, modesty, deeds, supreme intelligence, humility, beauty, steadfastness, satisfaction and prosperity. Therefore, he has every quality. He is the teacher, father and preceptor. He is fit to be honoured and worthy of worship. Hrishikesha is the officiating priest, the preceptor, the bridegroom,[12] the snataka, the king and the friend. Therefore, Achyuta has been shown the homage. The worlds owe their origin to Krishna and in him are they dissolved. It is in Krishna that all the beings of this universe are established. He is passive nature, he is the active doer and he is eternal. He is supreme among all beings and it is for this reason that Achyuta is the eldest. Intelligence, mind, greatness, wind, energy, water, sky, earth and the four kinds of beings[13]—are all established in Krishna. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, the directions and the intermediate directions—are all established in Krishna. Since he does not know that Krishna is always everywhere, this Shishupala is only a child[14] and utters these words. It is only the intelligent man who can see the best of dharma and can act according to dharma, not this king of Chedi. Who among these great-souled lords of the earth, young or old, does not consider Krishna to be worthy of worship? Who does not show him homage? If Shishupala considers that this homage was undeserving, let him act as he sees fit, for this undeserving honour.'”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this, the immensely famous Bhishma became quiet. Then Sahadeva uttered these words of great import. “If there are any kings here who cannot tolerate the homage I have shown to Keshava Krishna, of immeasurable valour and the slayer of Keshi,[15] I place my foot on the heads of those strong ones. As I utter these words, let him give a fitting reply. Let the intelligent kings accept that he is the teacher, the father and the preceptor, one who is shown homage, who should be shown homage and who is deserving of homage.” When he displayed his foot, not one among those intelligent, wise, proud and powerful kings replied. At that, a shower of flowers rained down on Sahadeva’s head. An invisible voice exclaimed, “Excellent! Excellent!” Attired in black antelope skin, Narada, the foreteller of both the past and the future, the dispeller of all doubts and the knower of all the worlds, approved.

‘All the masses[16] who had been invited there, with Sunitha[17] at the forefront, seemed to be angry and their faces paled. The kings spoke of Yudhishthira’s instatement and the homage offered to Vasudeva. They were disgusted and decided they had deserved it. Though they were restrained by well-wishers, their forms were angry and they looked like roaring lions that were dragged away from raw meat. Krishna understood that this ocean of kings, surrounded by waves of soldiers, was getting ready to do battle. Sahadeva, god among men, completed the ceremony, worshipping especially the brahmanas and the kshatriyas who deserved such homage. When Krishna had been shown homage, Sunitha, the one who dragged his enemies, spoke to the lords of men. He was angry and his eyes were extremely copper-red. “Do you think that I am still the general of your army? Do we stand here ready to fight the assembled Vrishnis and Pandavas?” When he had thus inspired all the kings, the bull among the Chedis consulted with the kings about disrupting the sacrifice.’

Section Twenty-Six

Shishupala-vadha Parva

This section has 191 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 262(37): 15 shlokas
Chapter 263(38): 40 shlokas
Chapter 264(39): 20 shlokas
Chapter 265(40): 23 shlokas
Chapter 266(41): 33 shlokas
Chapter 267(42): 60 shlokas

Since vadha means killing this section is about the killing of Shishupala.

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing that ocean of kings angrily agitated like the sea, Yudhisthira spoke to the old Bhishma, best among those who are intelligent and the grandfather of the Kurus. It was like the greatly energetic Puruhuta[1] speaking to Brihaspati. "This great ocean of kings is agitated with anger. O grandfather! Tell me what I should do now. O grandfather! Tell me now, in detail and completely, what I must do to prevent an obstruction to the sacrifice, so that the welfare of the subjects is ensured." When Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, knowledgeable in dharma, uttered these words, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, thus spoke to him, "O tiger among the Kuru lineage! Do not be frightened. Can a dog kill a lion? I have already chosen a path that is auspicious and in conformity with good policy. All these rulers of the earth bark like a pack of dogs around a sleeping lion. O son! Like dogs angrily barking before a lion, they stand before the sleeping lion of the Vrishni lineage. As long as the lion Achyuta is asleep, this bull among Chedis and like a lion himself, makes those others seem like lions. O best of kings! O son! Shishupala has limited sense. Through he who is the soul of everything,[2] he desires to take all these kings to Yama's abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is certain that Adhokshaja[3] will take away Shishupala's energy. O Kounteya! O supreme among intelligent ones! You will be fortunate. The intelligence of the king of Chedi, and that of all these kings, has gone astray. Whomever that tiger among men[4] wishes to take, his intelligence goes as astray as that of the king of Chedi. O Yudhisthira! Madhava is the creator and the destroyer of the four kinds of beings that exist in the three worlds." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words, the king of Chedi replied to Bhishma in a harsh tone.'

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'Shishupala said, "You are old and you defile your lineage. You try to frighten all these kings with your threats. Are you not ashamed? You are supreme among all the Kurus. But since you live in the third state,[5] it is but appropriate that you should offer advice that runs counter to dharma. O Bhishma! With you at the forefront, it is but natural that the Kouravas should be like a boat tied to a boat, or like a blind man following the blind. You have once again injured our minds by specially recounting this one's deeds, such as the killing of Putana[6] and so on. O Bhishma! You are arrogant and stupid. If you wish to praise Keshava, why does your tongue not splinter into a hundred parts? O Bhishma! You are supposed to be old in wisdom. Yet you wish to praise a cowherd. His evil repute is recounted by even those who are like children among men.[7] O Bhishma! If he killed a vulture[8] when he was a child, what is extraordinary? Ashva and Vrishabha[9] weren't skilled in the art of war. O Bhishma! What is extraordinary if he kicked down an inanimate wooden cart with his foot?[10] O Bhishma! It is my view that there was nothing remarkable in holding up Govardhana mountain for a week.[11] It was nothing but an anthill. O Bhishma! When we hear from you that he ate great quantities of food while sporting on a mountain top, we are astonished even more. You are knowledgeable in dharma. What can be more extraordinary than killing the greatly strong Kamsa, whose food he had partaken? O Bhishma! O wretch of the Kuru lineage! You do not know dharma. I will now tell you the words of the righteous ones, since you do not seem to have heard them.

'"O Bhishma! Righteous, honest and virtuous ones have always instructed us, that in this world, one should not use weapons against women, cattle, brahmanas, those whose food has been partaken and those who seek refuge. It seems all this has been wasted on you. You speak to me about Keshava, praising him as old in wisdom, old and superior. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Do I not know anything? O Bhishma! How does the killer of a cow,[12] and the killer of a woman,[13] deserve praise? 'He is foremost among all intelligent ones.' 'He is the lord of this universe.' Hearing these words of yours, Janardana believes them to be true. But it is certain that all this is false. Even if a raconteur sings praises many times, those praises aren't praise for the raconteur. Like *bhulingas*[14] and vultures, every being acts according to its nature. There is no doubt that your nature is vile. The Pandavas think Krishna deserves worship. They must also be evil. You show them the path. You speak of dharma. But though you know about dharma, you have strayed from that path. O Bhishma! Which learned one, with dharma in his heart and supreme among all learned ones, will act as you have, ignoring the precepts of dharma?

'"O Bhishma! If you think you know dharma and think yourself to be wise in intelligence, why did you abduct the maiden Amba? She desired someone else. Your brother Vichitravirya followed the path indicated by the righteous ones. That king did not accept the maiden you had abducted. He is the one on whose wives others had to beget children.[15] You believe yourself to be wise. But in your sight, others fathered offspring. That is not the path of the righteous. O Bhishma! Where is your dharma? Your brahmacharya is in vain. There is no doubt that you uphold it as a result of delusion or impotency. I do not see you as one who knows dharma. I do not see you prospering. You have not served the old,[16] or those who speak of dharma. Offerings, alms, studying and sacrifices characterized by a lot of dakshina—these are not worth a sixteenth of what is obtained through a son. O Bhishma! Whatever is obtained through many vows and fasts certainly goes in vain if one does not have a son. You do not have offspring. You are old. You utter false words in the name of dharma. Like the swan in the story, you will now be killed by your own relatives.

'"O Bhishma! Learned men in ancient times told this story. So that you can hear, I will now recount it completely. In ancient times, an old swan lived near the ocean. He always spoke of dharma and instructed the birds. But his conduct was otherwise. 'Practise dharma and avoid evil.' These were the words the birds heard from that expounder of dharma. O Bhishma! For the sake of dharma, the other birds brought him food, creatures that lived in the sea.[17] O Bhishma! Those birds also left all their eggs with him and then roamed in the waters of the sea. But the evil one ate all those eggs. That swan was always attentive to his own interests, while the others were negligent. He ate all the eggs of others. When the number of eggs declined, an extremely intelligent one[18] was suspicious and kept a watch on him. Having witnessed the swan's evil act, the bird was extremely unhappy and spoke about it to all the other birds. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Those birds assembled. When they witnessed it themselves, they killed the untruthful swan. O Bhishma! Since your conduct is like that of the swan, these angry lords of the earth will kill you, like the birds killed the swan. O Bhishma! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who know the ancient tales sing a song about this. I will repeat it for you exactly. 'O one who rides on the chariot of wings! Your act of eating the eggs contradicts your words. You will be killed in anger, because your soul shows your falsehood.'"'

‘Shishupala said, “I held in great esteem the immensely strong King Jarasandha. He did not wish to fight with this one,[19] saying that he was no more than a servant. Who will regard as praiseworthy the act of killing Jarasandha, undertaken by Keshava, together with Bhimasena and Arjuna? Entering through a way that was no gate and disguised as a brahmana, Krishna saw the influence of the wise Jarasandha. Since he knew the nature of the brahman and was himself devoted to dharma, he first offered the evil one water to wash his feet, but it was refused. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Jarasandha invited Krishna, Bhima and Dhananjaya to partake of food, but Krishna acted in a contrary way.[20] You fool! If this one is the lord of the universe, as you think him to be, why did he not consider himself to be a brahmana? What is amazing to me is that though you make the Pandavas veer away from the path of the truth, yet they regard you as a righteous one. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Or perhaps it is not strange that you, old and like a woman, are regarded as their guide in all matters.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When he heard these long words, harsh and spoken harshly, the powerful Bhimasena, supreme among those who are strong, was angered. His eyes were naturally large, like lotuses. Because of anger, they became dilated and copper-red. All the kings saw him knit his brows in three furrows, like the three-coursed Ganga[21] on the three peaks of his forehead. They saw his face, teeth gnashed in anger, like destiny about to consume all beings at the end of a yuga. The strong-minded one was about to swiftly arise. But the strong-armed Bhishma restrained him, like Ishvara[22] checking Mahasena.[23] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhima was soon pacified by Bhishma. The teacher calmed his anger with various words. That destroyer of enemies could not transgress Bhishma’s words, like the ocean never crosses the shoreline, even though it is swollen after the rains. O lord of men! Though Bhimasena was angry with Shishupala, that brave one[24] did not tremble and remained steadfast in his manliness. Though that destroyer of enemies[25] kept jumping up, he[26] did not even think about him, like a lion ignoring small deer. On seeing Bhimasena, terrible in valour, thus angered, the powerful king of Chedi uttered words of jest, “O Bhishma! Let him go. Let all these lords of men watch him consumed by my power, like moths before a flame.” On hearing these words of the king of Chedi, Bhishma, supreme among those of the Kuru lineage and supreme among those who are intelligent, spoke these words to Bhima.’

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‘Bhishma said, “This one[27] was born in the royal lineage of Chedi with three eyes and four arms. As soon as he was born, he screamed and brayed like an ass. His father and mother, and their relatives, were struck with fear on seeing his malformed body and resolved to abandon him. The hearts of the king, his wife, his advisers and his priests were befuddled with anxiety. However, a disembodied voice spoke. ‘O king! This son that has been born will be fortunate and supreme in strength. Therefore, do not be scared of him. Carefully tend to the child. O lord of men! His death will not be at your hands. The time has not yet come. The one who will bring about his death with weapons has also been born.’ On hearing these invisible words, the mother became anxious as a result of affection for her son and said, ‘With hands joined in salutation, I bow down before the one who has uttered these words about my son. Please let him speak some more. I wish to know who will bring about my son’s death.’ At that, the invisible voice spoke again. ‘There is one on whose lap this child will be placed, whereupon the extra arms will fall down on the ground like five-headed snakes and the third eye on the forehead will disappear. He will be the slayer.’ On hearing of the three eyes and four arms and the invisible words, all the kings on earth came to see him.

‘“The lord of the earth showed them homage as they arrived, in accordance with what they deserved and placed his son separately on each king’s lap, one after another. But though the child ascended thousands of laps, what had been said did not come to pass. Then the Yadavas Samkarshana[28] and Janardana went to the capital of the Chedi kingdom to see the Yadavi who was their father's sister.[29] Rama and Keshava honoured every king in accordance with rank and superiority, inquired about everyone's welfare and seated themselves. After the two warriors had been shown homage, the queen herself placed her son on Damodara's[30] lap, with a pleasure that was more than usual. As soon as the child was placed on his lap, the extra arms fell off and the eye on the forehead sank.[31] On seeing this, she was miserable and frightened and prayed to Krishna for a boon. 'O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! I am afflicted with fear. Please grant me a boon. You provide relief to everyone who is oppressed. You are the refuge of everyone who is frightened.' 'Do not be afraid,' Janardana told his father's sister. 'O aunt! What boon will I give you? What shall I do? I will obey your words, be it possible or impossible.' At these words, she told Krishna, the son[32] of the Yadu lineage, 'O immensely strong one! Please pardon Shishupala's transgressions.' Krishna replied, 'O aunt! I will pardon one hundred offences of your son, even if they are offences that deserve death. Therefore, do not grieve.' O brave one! Such is this evil king Shishupala, evil in intelligence. Insolent because of Govinda's boon, he can now challenge you."'[33]

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'Bhishma said, "The Chedi king's intention of challenging Achyuta is not his own. There is no doubt that Krishna, lord of the universe, determined this. O Bhimasena! What king on earth dares abuse me now, as this defiler of his lineage has done, had it not been for incitement by destiny? O mighty-armed one! It is certain that he is but a small part of Hari's energy and the greatly famous Hari wishes to reclaim it. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! It is for this reason that the evil-minded king of Chedi roars like a tiger, without thinking about all of us."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Bhishma, the Chedi could not tolerate them and again spoke to Bhishma in anger.

‘Shishupala said, “O Bhishma! Let our enemies possess the influence that Keshava possesses.[34] You always arise and praise him like a bard. O Bhishma! If your mind finds pleasure in praising others, then praise the real kings, leaving out Janardana. Praise Darada of Bahlika, supreme among kings. When he was born, he tore the earth asunder. O Bhishma! Praise this Karna. He is the wielder of a mighty bow. He equals the thousand-eyed one in strength and is the ruler of Vanga and Anga. O Bhishma! Always praise Drona and Drouni.[35] The father and son are maharathas, supreme among brahmanas, and worthy of praise. O Bhishma! It is my view that if either of them is enraged, he can annihilate the earth, with all its mobile and immobile objects. O Bhishma! I do not see a lord of men who is Drona’s equal in battle, or that of Ashvatthama’s. Why don’t you wish to praise them? O Bhishma! Since your mind is always fixed on praising, why don’t you praise Shalya and the other rulers of earth? O king! But what can I do if you fail to heed the old ones. You have not heard what they, knowledgeable in dharma, said in ancient times. There are four things that must not be done—self-censure, worship of oneself, censure of others and worship of others.[36] These are not done by those who follow proper conduct. O Bhishma! If in your continual delusion you praise Keshava out of devotion towards him, no one will approve. How can you establish the entire universe in this evil-minded protector of herds, Bhoja’s[37] servant? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Or perhaps your devotion is not a natural one. Have I not mentioned the bhulinga bird earlier? O Bhishma! The bhulinga bird lives on the other side of the Himalayas. What it spoke was always devoid of meaning. ‘Do not act out of extreme courage’ was what it always said. But in folly, it always acted out of extreme courage. O Bhishma! That foolish bird used to pick out pieces of flesh that stuck between the teeth of a feeding lion. O Bhishma! There is no doubt that the bird’s life was dependent on the lion’s pleasure. You are based in what is not dharma and always speak like it. O Bhishma! There is no doubt that you live at the pleasure of these lords of the earth. There is no one like you, engaged in deeds that the worlds abhor.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Having heard these bitter words of the king of Chedi, Bhishma uttered these words, so that the king of Chedi could hear. “I truly live at the pleasure of these lords of the earth, I who do not consider these kings as equal to even straw.” Hearing these words of Bhishma, the kings became angry. Some of them trembled, and others censured Bhishma. On hearing Bhishma’s words, some mighty archers exclaimed, “Though old, this Bhishma is insolent and sinful. He deserves no pardon. Let all the angry kings assemble together and kill the evil-minded Bhishma like an animal, or burn him in a fire made out of straw.” Hearing these words, the intelligent Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, spoke thus to the lords of the earth. “O lords of the earth! I do not see an end to these words, since there will be more words. Therefore, all of you listen to me. Whether you kill me like an animal or burn me in a fire made out of straw, I place this foot of mine on all your heads. Govinda Achyuta is here. We have offered him worship. If anyone’s mind propels him towards death, let him challenge in battle Madhava Krishna, the wielder of the bow and the club, until he is brought down and his body merges with that of the god.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing these words of Bhishma, the immensely valorous king of Chedi desired to fight with Vasudeva and spoke to Vasudeva, “O Janardana! I am challenging you to battle. Come and fight with me, until I have killed you, along with all the Pandavas. O Krishna! Together with you, the Pandavas also deserve to be killed, since they have passed over the kings and worshipped you, who is not a king. O Krishna! It is my view that I must kill them. The evil-minded ones have acted like children and have offered homage to an undeserving one who is a slave and not a king.” Having uttered these words, that tiger among kings stood up and roared in anger.

‘Having heard these words, in the presence of all the kings and the Pandavas, Krishna replied in a soft voice. “O kings! This son of a lady of the Satvata lineage[38] is a great enemy of the Satvata clan. Though we have never done him harm, the cruel-minded one always seeks to injure us. O kings! Hearing that we had gone to the city of Pragjyotisha, this cruel one came and burnt down Dvaraka, though he is my father's sister's son. When the royal ones from Bhoja were sporting themselves on Mount Raivataka, he killed and captured all of them and took them to his own city. With certain evil in his heart, he wished to obstruct my father's sacrifice and stole the horse of the *ashvamedha,*[39] though it was surrounded by guards. The famous Babhru's[40] wife-to-be was travelling to the Souvira region to be married. But out of delusion and desire, he abducted her. He was cruelly disposed towards his maternal uncle, the ascetic Karusha and used his powers of maya to abduct Bhadra of Vishala.[41] For the sake of my father's sister, I have borne a great deal of unhappiness. However, it is fortunate that this is happening before all these kings. You are now witness to the malevolence he bears towards me. Know also the deeds that he has performed secretly. I can no longer pardon his offence today. He deserves to be killed only because of his insolence in front of this assembly of kings. Desiring a speedy death, this fool once offered himself to Rukmini.[42] But the fool did not obtain her, the way a shudra cannot hear the Vedas." Having heard these words of Vasudeva, all the assembled kings began to censure the king of Chedi.

'Having heard these words, the powerful Shishupala burst into laughter and uttered these scornful words. "O Krishna! Are you not ashamed to recount this, especially before all these kings? Rukmini was mine first.[43] O Madhusudana! No self-respecting man but you will admit before respectable ones that his wife had been someone else's first. O Krishna! Pardon me. Whether you pardon me or whether you show me respect, whether you bear friendship or enmity towards me, what can you possibly do to me?" When he was talking in this way, the illustrious Madhusudana, the destroyer of his enemies, angrily sliced off his head with the chakra. The mighty-armed one fell down like a mountain struck by the vajra. The kings saw a terrible energy rise up from the body of the Chedi king. O great king! It was like the sun rising in the sky. O lord of men! That energy then paid homage to the lotus-eyed Krishna, worshipped by the worlds, and entered his body. On seeing the energy enter the mighty-armed one, supreme among all beings, all of the lords of the earth thought that this was extraordinary. When the Chedi was killed by Krishna, the cloudless sky poured forth rain. The earth trembled and blazing lightning struck. Some of those lords of the earth did not speak a word. At a time when these indescribable things were happening, they looked on at Janardana. Some angrily rubbed one hand with the tip of another. Others bit their lips, losing their senses in anger. But there were other kings who privately praised Varshneya. Some were angry. Others were in the middle.[44] The maharshis were delighted and went to Keshava and praised him. So did the great-souled brahmanas and the immensely powerful kings.

'Pandava[45] then instructed his brothers to perform the funeral rites for the brave lord of the earth who had been Damaghosha's son. The brothers followed these instructions. Then Partha,[46] with all the other lords of the earth, instated his[47] son in the kingdom of Chedi.

'O king! Then occurred the sacrifice of the king of the Kurus and brought prosperity to everyone and joy to the young, with an abundance of opulence—with great quantities of riches and grain, large amounts of food and eatables, auspicious in its beginnings and with the obstructions to peace removed. It was protected by Keshava. Until the great sacrifice of rajasuya was completed, the mighty-armed Janardana, the lord Shouri, the wielder of the *sharnga*,[48] chakra and club, guarded it. On completion, after Dharmaraja Yudhishthira had bathed,[49] all the kshatriya kings came to him and uttered these words. "O Ajamidha![50] O one who is knowledgeable in dharma! Your prosperity has been extended. You have obtained sovereignty. Your fame has been extended. O Indra among kings! With this deed, you have accomplished a great act for dharma. O tiger among men! We crave your leave. We have been shown homage in every way we desire. We now wish to return to our own kingdoms. Please grant us leave." On hearing these words of the kings, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira worshipped each king as he deserved and told all his brothers, "All these kings have assembled here out of their own pleasure. These scorchers of enemies are now leaving for their own kingdoms and are seeking my permission. O fortunate ones! Conduct these kings to the ends of our kingdom." The Pandavas were always followers of dharma. Hearing their brother's instructions, they followed each principal king, as each one deserved. O king! The powerful Dhrishtadyumna quickly conducted Virata, the maharatha Dhananjaya the great-souled Yajnasena,[51] the immensely strong Bhimasena, Bhishma and Dhritarashtra, the great warrior Sahadeva the brave, Drona and his son, Nakula Subala and his son and the sons of Droupadi and Subhadra[52] the kings of the mountains. Other bulls among the kshatriyas conducted other kshatriyas. And worshipped properly, all the brahmanas departed.

'O bull among the Bharata lineage! On the departure of all the lords among kings and the brahmanas, the powerful Vasudeva spoke to Yudhishthira. "O son of the Kuru lineage![53] I seek your leave to go to Dvaraka. Through good fortune, you have achieved rajasuya, supreme among sacrifices." Having been thus addressed, Dharmaraja told Madhusudana, "O Govinda! It is through your favour that I have achieved this supreme sacrifice. Through your grace, all the kshatriyas have come under my sway and have attended upon me, bringing rich tributes. O brave one! Without you, we will find no pleasure. But of course you must go to the city of Dvaravati." Having been thus addressed, the greatly famous Hari, with the righteous Yudhishthira with him, went to Pritha and affectionately said, "O father's sister! Your sons have now obtained sovereignty and have obtained success and great riches. You should be pleased. Please grant me leave so that I can return to Dvaraka." Keshava then bade farewell to Subhadra and Droupadi. Then, accompanied by Yudhishthira, he came out of the inner quarters. O great king! After he had bathed and prayed and the brahmanas had blessed him, Daruka yoked the beautifully constructed chariot that looked like a cloud and came. It had the great Garuda[54] on the banner. The great-souled Pundariksha then circumambulated it and ascending, departed for the city of Dvaravati. The fortunate Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, accompanied by his brothers, followed the immensely strong Vasudeva on foot. Then Pundariksha Hari stopped the supreme chariot for a moment and spoke to Yudhishthira, Kunti's son. "O lord of the earth! Always remain steadfast in protecting your subjects, just as the god of rain[55] protects all beings and a large tree protects all birds. May you be the refuge of your relatives, like the thousand-eyed one[56] is of the immortals." After conversing with each other, Krishna and the Pandavas took each other's leave and went to their houses. O king! When Krishna, supreme among the Satvatas, had left for Dvaravati, only Duryodhana and Soubala[57] Shakuni, bulls among men, remained in that celestial sabha.'

Section Twenty-Seven

Dyuta Parva

This section has 734 shlokas and twenty-three chapters.

Chapter 268(43): 36 shlokas
Chapter 269(44): 22 shlokas
Chapter 270(45): 58 shlokas
Chapter 271(46): 35 shlokas
Chapter 272(47): 31 shlokas
Chapter 273(48): 42 shlokas
Chapter 274(49): 25 shlokas
Chapter 275(50): 28 shlokas
Chapter 276(51): 26 shlokas
Chapter 277(52): 37 shlokas
Chapter 278(53): 25 shlokas
Chapter 279(54): 29 shlokas
Chapter 280(55): 17 shlokas
Chapter 281(56): 10 shlokas
Chapter 282(57): 21 shlokas
Chapter 283(58): 43 shlokas
Chapter 284(59): 12 shlokas
Chapter 285(60): 47 shlokas
Chapter 286(61): 82 shlokas
Chapter 287(62): 38 shlokas
Chapter 288(63): 36 shlokas
Chapter 289(64): 17 shlokas
Chapter 290(65): 17 shlokas

Dyuta *means playing or gambling with dice, and also the resultant prize. So this section is about the gambling with dice.*

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Duryodhana, bull among the Bharata lineage, lived in that sabha and with Shakuni, he slowly inspected that entire sabha. There, the descendant[1] of the Kuru lineage saw many divine designs that he had never seen before in the city of Nagasahrya.[2] One day, Dhritarashtra’s son,[3] the lord of the earth, arrived at a place in the middle of the sabha that was paved with crystal. The king thought it to be water and, in alarm, raised up his clothes. His mind deluded, he wandered around the sabha, shame-faced and miserable. After some time, he mistook a lake with crystal water, adorned with crystal lotuses, for land and fell into the water with his clothes on. On seeing him fall into the water, the servants laughed out in delight and on the instructions of the king,[4] gave him fresh clothes. On seeing him in that fashion, the immensely strong Bhimasena, and Arjuna and the twins, all burst out in laughter. Since he was incapable of bearing insults, he could not tolerate this. To save his face, he did not even look at them. He again drew up his clothes to ascend firm land and all the people again laughed out aloud.[5] He mistook a closed door to be open and hurt his forehead against it. On another occasion, taking an open one to be closed, he stepped away from the doorway. O lord of the earth! He thus committed various errors there. Having taken Pandavya’s[6] leave, King Duryodhana set out for Gajasahrya.[7] On having witnessed the extraordinary opulence at the great rajasuya sacrifice, his mind was unhappy. As he travelled, he was inflamed at the prosperity of the Pandavas and evil thoughts were seeded in King Duryodhana’s mind.

‘O extender of the Kuru lineage! On seeing the happiness of the Parthas, the submission of the kings, the love the worlds had for them, from children onwards, and the supreme splendour of the great-souled Pandavas, Dhritarashtra’s son Duryodhana turned pale. As he travelled, he thought intently about the sabha and the unrivalled prosperity of the intelligent Dharmaraja. Dhritarashtra’s son Duryodhana was so inattentive, that he did not respond when Subala’s son repeatedly spoke to him. On seeing him so distracted, Shakuni responded, “O Duryodhana! Why are you travelling with all these sighs?”

‘Duryodhana replied, “O maternal uncle![8] I saw the entire earth brought under Yudhishthira’s suzerainty, conquered with the power and weapons of the great-souled one with white horses.[9] I witnessed the sacrifice of Partha,[10] like that of the immensely radiant Shakra among the gods. I am full of envy and am burning day and night. I am drying up like a shallow pond in the hot season.[11] Witness—when Shishupala was felled by the foremost of the Satvatas,[12] there wasn’t a single man who stood by his side. The kings were burnt with the flames of the Pandavas and pardoned the crime. Who can pardon that crime? Vasudeva’s great deed was improper and succeeded only because of the power of the great-souled Pandavas. Various kings brought many jewels to King Kounteya[13] and worshipped him, like vaishyas who pay taxes. On seeing the blazing prosperity of the Pandavas, I am afflicted with jealousy and am burning, though I am not made that way. I will throw myself into the fire, or consume poison, or immerse myself in water. I cannot bear to be alive. What true man in the worlds has the fortitude to see his rivals prosper, while his own self is in decline? If today I bore the prosperity that has befallen them, I would not be a woman, or one who is not a woman, or a man, or one who is not a man. On witnessing their lordship over the earth, the likes of their riches and the likes of their sacrifice, how can a man like me not be feverish? Alone, I am not capable of acquiring such royal prosperity, nor do I see any help. Therefore, I am thinking of death. On seeing the pure prosperity of Kunti’s son, I consider destiny to be supreme and endeavour to be meaningless. O Soubala! In the past, I have made attempts to kill him.[14] But he overcame all of them and prospered like a lotus in the water. Therefore, I consider destiny to be supreme and endeavour to be meaningless. The Dhritarashtras[15] are declining and the Parthas are always prospering. When I see their prosperity and that beautiful sabha and the derisive laughter of the guards, I burn as if with fire. O maternal uncle! Please allow me now to suffer in misery and tell Dhritarashtra about the envy that has pervaded me.’

‘Shakuni said, “O Duryodhana! You should not feel any jealousy towards Yudhishthira, because the Pandavas have always benefited from their good fortune. In the past, you have tried to kill them with many means. But those tigers among men escaped because of their good fortune. They obtained Droupadi as a wife and Drupada and his two sons as allies, and the valorous Vasudeva as an ally in winning the earth. O lord of the earth! They obtained an undiminished share of paternal wealth and extended it through their own energy. What is there to lament in this? Having satisfied the fire, Dhananjaya obtained the great bow Gandiva, two inexhaustible quivers and other celestial weapons. He subdued the lords of the earth with that foremost among bows and the valour of his own arms. What is there to lament in this? He freed the danava Maya from being burnt by the fire. Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, then made him build that sabha. On Maya’s command, the terrible rakshasas named Kinkaras guard that sabha. What is there to lament in this? O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have said that you have no allies. That is not true, because your maharatha brothers are always there to help you. The mighty archer Drona with his intelligent son,[16] Radheya the son of a suta,[17] the maharatha Goutama,[18] I and my brothers, and the valorous Soumadatti[19] are with you. With these as allies, conquer the entire world.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “O king! If you permit, I will defeat them[20] with you and the other maharathas. When I have conquered them, the entire earth will be mine, and all the lords of the earth and the sabha with its great riches.”

‘Shakuni said, “With the use of force, the masses of gods cannot defeat in battle Dhananjaya, Vasudeva, Bhimasena, Yudhishthira, Nakula, Sahadeva and Drupada and his son. They are maharathas, great archers, skilled in use of weapons and invincible in battle. O king! But I know the means through which Yudhishthira himself can be conquered. Listen and act accordingly.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “O maternal uncle! If there is a way to defeat them without any danger to our well-wishers and other great-souled ones, please tell me.”

‘Shakuni said, “Kunti’s son loves to gamble with dice, but does not know how to play. If challenged to play, that Indra among kings will not be able to refuse. I am skilled in gambling with dice, there is no one on earth, or in the three worlds, who is my equal. Challenge Kunti’s son to a game of dice. O king! O bull among men! With my skill in dice,[21] there is no doubt that I will win for you the kingdom and the blazing prosperity. O Duryodhana! Tell the king[22] all this. And if your father permits, there is no doubt that I will vanquish him.”[23]

‘Duryodhana replied, “O Soubala! You yourself say all this to Dhritarashtra, foremost among the Kurus, in the proper way. I will not be able to do it.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Having experienced the great rajasuya sacrifice of King Yudhishthira, wishing to do well to Duryodhana and having already heard Duryodhana’s words about what he desired, Soubala Shakuni went to Dhritarashtra with Gandhari’s son.[24] The lord of the earth was wise, though he was without sight, and was seated. Approaching the immensely intelligent one, Shakuni uttered these words. “O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Duryodhana is pale, yellow and thin. Notice that he is miserable and is always worrying. Why do you not examine and determine the exact reasons why your eldest son is so miserable with a grief that can only result from an enemy?” Dhritarashtra asked, “O Duryodhana! O son! What is the reason for your great grief? O son[25] of the Kuru lineage! If it is something that I can hear, please tell me. This Shakuni tells me that you are pale, yellow and thin and that you are worrying. I do not see any reason for your grief. O son! All my great riches are given to you. Your brothers and well-wishers never act so as to cause you displeasure. You wear the best of garments. You eat food laced with meat. You ride thoroughbred horses. Why are you then yellow and thin? Expensive beds, beautiful women, houses with all the qualities and pleasure grounds are there for your happiness. As with the gods, there is no doubt that all these await your command. O invincible one! O son! Why do you then grieve like a miserable one?"

'Duryodhana replied, "Like any miserable man, I do eat and dress. But I tolerate the passing of time, because I bear a terrible envy. He is truly a man who vanquishes his enemies and liberates his own subjects from the oppression of that enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satisfaction and pride destroy prosperity, so do compassion and fear. Immersed in these, no one achieves greatness. Having witnessed Kounteya Yudhishthira's blazing prosperity, I no longer find pleasure and that is what turns me pale. It is true that the prosperity of Kunti's son is invisible to me now. But I see the prosperity of my enemies and my own destitution as if before me now. It is for this reason that I have become pale, miserable, yellow and thin. Yudhishthira supports eighty-eight thousand snataka householders and each of them has thirty servant maidens. Besides this, ten thousand others always eat the best of food in Yudhishthira's house, served on golden plates. The king of Kamboja sends him black, dark and red skins of the *kadali*[26] deer, expensive blankets, chariots, women and cattle and horses in hundreds and thousands. A hundred she-camels roam there three hundred times. O lord of the earth! The kings brought diverse riches in great numbers to that foremost of sacrifices undertaken by Kunti's son. I have never seen nor heard of such an inflow of wealth as I saw at the sacrifice of the intelligent son of Pandu. O king! O lord! I cannot be at peace and continuously worry because I have seen that limitless flood of riches of my enemy. *Vatadhana*[27] brahmanas, possessing the wealth of cattle, stood at the gate in groups of one hundred. They brought three *kharvas*[28] of riches as tribute, but were turned back. When they brought beautiful golden *kamandalus*[29] and filled these with tribute, it was then that they were allowed entry. In Varuna's brass pots, the ocean brought him ambrosia[30] that was better than the one brought for Shakra by the wives of the immortals. There were one thousand of them,[31] adorned with many jewels and golden. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing all this, I felt as if afflicted with fever. They obtained these by going to the oceans of the east and the south.[32] They had also gone to the west. But no one can go to the north, except the birds. Listen to me as I describe an extraordinary incident there. Whenever one hundred thousand brahmanas had been fed, it was arranged there that a signal would always be given through the blowing of conch shells. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I continuously heard the repeated blowing of conch shells.[33] On hearing these great sounds, my hair stood up on end. O lord of men! Many kings crowded the place as spectators. O great king! Those kings brought all kinds of riches with them, when they came to the sacrifice of the intelligent son of Pandu. Like vaishyas, the lords of the earth became servers to the brahmanas. O king! The king of the gods, Yama, Varuna, or the lord of the guhyakas[34] does not possess riches equal to Yudhishthira's wealth. Ever since I have witnessed the overwhelming prosperity of Pandu's son, my heart has been burning and I can find no peace."

'Shakuni said, "O you whose valour is in truth! Listen to the means whereby you can obtain the unmatched prosperity that you have seen with the Pandava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am skilled in playing with dice, supreme on earth. I know their heart.[35] I know how to stake. I know the special art. Though Kounteya[36] loves dice, he has no knowledge. If challenged, he will certainly come. I will challenge him."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by Shakuni, King Duryodhana then instantly addressed these words to Dhritarasthra, "O king! This one[37] is skilled in dice. Through dice, he will win the wealth of Pandu's son. Please grant him permission." Dhritarashtra replied, "I always follow the counsel of my immensely wise adviser, Kshatta.[38] I will consult with him and then decide on the course of action. He places dharma in the forefront, has foresight and has our supreme welfare in mind. He will look at both sides[39] and tell us certainly what should be done.” Duryodhana said, “If you ask Kshatta, he will restrain you. O Indra among kings! And if you are restrained, I will certainly kill myself. O king! When I am dead, may you find happiness with Vidura. Enjoy the whole earth. What do you have to do with me?” Dhritarashtra heard those painful words, though they were affectionately uttered. Submitting to Duryodhana’s desire, he instructed his servants. “Let artisans immediately build for me a beautiful and large sabha, with a thousand pillars and a hundred doors, which is fit to be seen. When it is scattered with gems and dice everywhere, quietly come and report to me that it has been built well and that it is fit to be entered.” O great king! In an attempt to pacify Duryodhana, Dhritarasthra, lord of the earth, summoned Vidura, because he never took a decision without asking Vidura. Knowing the evils of gambling, he was still attracted towards it because of affection towards his son.

‘Having heard this, the intelligent Vidura knew that the door to *kali*[40] was nigh. On seeing that the path to destruction was about to be opened, he quickly came to Dhritarashtra. The brother came to the great-souled elder brother and bowing down, with his head touching the other’s feet, uttered these words. “O king! O lord! I do not approve of the decision you have taken. You should act in such a way that discord does not arise among your sons[41] because of this gambling.” Dhritarashtra replied, “O Kshatta! If the gods in heaven show us their favour, there is no doubt that there will be no quarrel between my sons and my other sons. Auspicious or not auspicious, benign or malign, let this gambling match between relatives, occur, as it is certainly destined. When I and Bhishma, bull among the Bharata lineage, are there, no evil can possibly occur, even if fate has decreed it. Immediately ascend a chariot that is yoked with steeds with the speed of the wind. Go to Khandavaprastha and bring Yudhishthira. O Vidura! I tell you that there will be no going back on my decision. I think it is supreme destiny that has led to this.” Having heard this, the intelligent Vidura thought that this should not be. Extremely unhappy, he went to the immensely wise son of the river.’[42]

Janamejaya asked, ‘How did that eventful gambling match among the brothers take place, which caused so much misery to my grandfathers, the Pandavas? O you who are immersed in the brahman! Who were the kings who were present in that sabha? Who among them approved of the match and who did not? O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear all this in detail, because this was the cause of the destruction of the world.’

The suta said, ‘Having been thus addressed by the king, Vyasa’s powerful student, knowledgeable in all the Vedas, recounted everything as it had happened.’[43]

Vaishampayana said, ‘O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O great king! If you wish to hear it, then listen. I will tell you in detail what happened. Knowing Vidura’s views, Dhritarashtra, the son of Ambika, again privately spoke these words to Duryodhana, “O Gandhari’s son! Forget the dice, Vidura does not approve of it. The immensely intelligent one will not speak in vain. I think what Vidura has said is for my supreme welfare. O son! Act accordingly, for I think that it will be for your welfare too. Vidura knows all the sacred texts, with their mysteries, that the illustrious and wise[44] devarshi Brihaspati, preceptor of Vasava, taught to the intelligent king of the gods. O son! I always follow his counsel. O king! The intelligent Vidura is considered as foremost among the Kurus, like the immensely wise Uddhava is acclaimed among the Vrishnis. O son! Dissension brings destruction to the kingdom, so give up the idea. You have obtained what the supreme texts say are what a son should obtain from his father and mother. O son! You have obtained the rank of your father and grandfather. You have studied, you have become learned in the sacred texts. You have always been reared at home. You are the eldest among your brothers and you have been established in the kingdom. Do you not consider this fortunate? You obtain the best of food and garments, unobtainable by other men. O mighty-armed one! O son! Having obtained this, why do you grieve? O mighty-armed one! This great kingdom of your father and grandfather is prospering. When you rule it, you shine like the lord of the gods in heaven. I know you to be wise. Then what is the reason for this grief? Why is your misery swelling up? Tell me.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “I am an evil man that I eat and dress, despite what I see. It has been said that a man who does not feel envy is a wretch. O Indra among kings! O lord! This ordinary prosperity does not please me. I am miserable on seeing the blazing prosperity of Kunti’s son. The entire earth is subject to Yudhishthira’s suzerainty. I am telling you that I am miserable, since I am still established here, alive. The Chaitrakis, the Koukuras, the Karaskaras and the Lohajanghas live in Yudhishthira’s abode, like prostrate slaves. The Himalayas, the oceans, the regions along the shores that produce all the gems and all others are inferior to Yudhishthira’s abode. O lord of the earth! Since I was the eldest and foremost, Yudhishthira offered me homage and appointed me to the task of receiving the gems. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Of the riches that were brought there, supreme and invaluable, one could not see the near end, nor the far one. My hands were too tired to receive all those riches. When those who had brought riches from distant places had left, I was still tired. Having brought gems from Bindusarovar,[45] Maya constructed a platform of crystal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the place full of lotuses, I took it to be water. On seeing me draw up my clothes, Vrikodara laughed at me. He thought me to be devoid of riches and deluded by the superior wealth of the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Had I possessed the ability, I would have killed Vrikodara there. The derision of a rival burns me. O lord of men! I again saw a similar pond full of lotuses. Thinking it to be made out of crystal, I fell into the water. At this, Krishna and Partha[46] laughed out loudly at me, and so did Droupadi and the other women. This pained my heart. My garments having become wet, the servants gave me others on the king’s[47] orders and this too made me more miserable. O lord of men! Listen when I tell you about another trick. In trying to go out through what looked like a door, but wasn’t a door, I hit my head against a crystal slab and got hurt. Then, on seeing this from a distance, the twins were amused. In great sorrow, they held me in their arms. Sahadeva then repeatedly told me, as if amazed, ‘O king! This is the door. Pass this way.’ I saw jewels there, whose names I had not even heard of earlier. That is the reason why my heart is burning.”’

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‘Duryodhana said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the main treasures I saw at the Pandava’s, brought by the lords of the earth from everywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing those riches, grown and mined, I no longer feel myself to be conscious. Kamboja gave riches in the form of skins of *eda*,[49] fine cat skins lined with gold, the best skins from deer, three hundred horses with parrot-like noses that were grey and of mixed colours and three hundred she-camels fattened with palm,[50] pulses[51] and nuts.[52] All the *govasana* and *dasamiya* brahmanas came to please the immensely fortunate and great-souled Dharmaraja.[53] They brought three kharvas of tribute, but were barred entry, and stood at the gate. When they brought beautiful and golden water pots[54] and offered their tribute in those, they were allowed entry. O great king! As tribute, the shudra kings who lived in Bharukaccha[55] brought one hundred thousand slave girls from the Karpasika region. They were dark and slender, with long hair and adorned in golden ornaments. They also brought *ranku*[56] hides, fit for the best of brahmanas, and horses from the Gandhara region. The men whose crops depend on the showers of Indra,[57] those who are born near the mouths of rivers, along the shores and banks of oceans and rivers, the Vairamas, the Paradas, the Vangas and the Kitavas, brought many riches and many jewels—goats, cattle, gold, donkeys, camels, honey from fruit and different types of garments. But restrained, they stood at the door.

‘“Maharatha King Bhagadatta, the brave ruler of Pragjyotisha and the strong ruler of the mlechhas, came with yavanas. He brought a tribute of thoroughbred horses, as swift as the wind, but was barred and stood at the gate. After presenting a receptacle that was like iron[58] and swords with handles of ivory, Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisha left. I saw that many people from different directions were refused admission at the gate, though they brought rich tributes of gold and silver—with two eyes, three eyes, one eye on the forehead, those who wore headdresses, those who had no fixed abode, Bahukas, cannibals and those with only one foot. They brought horses that were as swift as thought, with the colours of *indragopas*[59] and parrots, or with the colours of the rainbow[60] or red like the evening sky.[61] They were of many shades and there were also seized forest horses,[62] with the speed of the mind.

'"They also gave him[63] rich tributes of the best quality of gold. There were Chinas, Hunas, Shakas,[64] Oudras,[65] those who live inside mountains, Varshneyas, Harahunas, dark ones and those who live in the Himalayas. I do not remember the order of those who were barred entry at the gate. They gave much tribute in many forms. There were tens of thousands of asses, giant in form and with black necks. They were famous everywhere and trained well, capable of killing hundreds. There were large and colourful garments pleasant to the touch, from Bahlika[66] and China. There was wool, ranku[67] hides, silk, jute, cotton and thousands of other garments. They had the colour of lotuses and were soft, though not made of cotton. There were hides. There were long and sharp swords, double-edged swords,[68] spears, battleaxes and a hundred battleaxes from the other side of the ocean.[69] They brought juices, fragrances and many jewels in thousands. But despite the tribute, they were barred entry and stood at the gate. Shakas, Tukharas, Kankas, Romashas[70] and men with horns brought as tribute one hundred million[71] horses that could travel great and long distances. With crores of tribute of many kinds and unlimited gold, they stood at the door and were barred entry. Expensive seats, vehicles, beds, and many kinds of chariots adorned with gems and gold, made of ivory and decorated with gold, well-trained horses covered with tiger skins, many kinds of cushions, thousands of gems, *narachas*,[72] half-narachas, many kinds of weapons—this was the great tribute paid by the king from the east,[73] when he entered the great-souled Pandava's sacrificial arena."'

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'Duryodhana said, "O unblemished one! Listen to me as I describe the large and varied tribute, full of riches, given by the kings for the sake of the sacrifice. The kings who live along the banks of the river Shailoda, between Mounts Meru and Mandara, and enjoy the pleasurable shade of bamboo[74]—the Khasas, Ekashanas, Jyohas, Pradaras, Dirghavenus, Pashupas, Kunindas, Tanganas and Paratanganas brought large masses of *pipilika* gold in vessels, gathered by ants.[75] The strong residents of the mountains brought as tribute dark and coloured tails of yaks and others that were as white as moonbeams, a lot of sweet honey from the flowers of the Himalayas, garlands and water from the northern Kuru region and immensely powerful herbs from northern Kailasa. They bowed and stood at the gate of King Ajatashatru, but were denied entry. O lord of the earth! There were kings from the other side of the Himalayas, from the mountains where the sun rises, from the banks of Varishena and Lohitya,[76] from the banks of the ocean and kiratas who live on roots and fruit and wear skins. They brought large masses of sandal and aloe wood, *kaliya*,[77] skins, jewels, gold, fragrances, ten thousand kirata slave girls, beautiful animals and birds from distant regions and copious quantities of radiant gold from the mountains. But despite all this tribute, they were refused entry and waited at the gate.

'"O lord of the earth! Kayavyas, Daradas, Darvas, Shuras, Vaiyamakas, Oudumbaras, Durvibhagas, Paradas, Bahlikas, Kashmiras, Kundamanas, Pourakas, Hamsakayanas, Shibis, Trigartas, Youdheyas, the kings of Madra and Kekaya, Ambashthas, Koukuras, Tarkshyas, Vastrapas, Pahlavas,[78] Vasatas, Mouleyas, Kshudrakas, Malavas, Shoundikas, Kukkuras, Shakas, Angas, Vangas, Pundras, Shanavatyas, Gayas, Sujatayas, Shrenimanas—all illustrious kshatriyas with weapons in their hands—brought hundreds of tribute for Ajatashatru. The chiefs from Vanga and Kalinga, from Tamralipta and Pundraka, brought garments and silk from the Koushiki.[79] On the instructions of the king, the gatekeepers told them, 'If you bring large and great tribute, only then will you be admitted.' So they each gave one thousand elephants, with tusks like the shafts of ploughs, caparisoned in gold and covered in cushions with the colour of lotuses. They were as large as mountains, always in rut and came from the shores of Kamyaka Lake. They were covered in armour, patient and trained well. They[80] then entered the gate. These and many other masses came from all the directions. There were other great-souled ones who offered many gems. The gandharva kin Chitraratha, Vasava's friend, gave four hundred horses with the speed of the wind. The gandharva Tumburu happily gave one hundred horses that had the colour of mango leaves, with gold harnesses. O Kouravya! O lord of the earth! The famous king of the Shukaras gave many hundreds of valuable elephants. As tribute, Virata from Matsya gave two thousand rutting elephants, caparisoned in gold. O king! King Vasudana from the kingdom of Pamshu gave twenty-six elephants and one thousand horses, all harnessed in gold. O lord of men! They had great speed and strength and were of the right age. He offered this and many other riches to Pandava. O lord of the earth! Yajnasena gave Pritha's sons fourteen thousand servant girls, ten thousand male servants with their wives and twenty-six chariots pulled by elephants. He offered his entire kingdom for the sacrifice. The Simhalas offered the best jewels found in the ocean, lapis lazuli, pearls and conch shells and hundreds of covers for housing elephants. Many dark-complexioned men, eyes copper-red and attired in garments adorned with gems, brought tribute and waited at the gate, having been refused entry.

'"Brahmanas brought gifts out of affection, kshatriyas because they had been defeated and vaishyas and shudras out of servitude. Out of affection and respect, they waited on Yudhishthira—all the mlecchas and all the varnas, the superior, the middle and the inferior, arriving from many countries and many races. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In Yudhishthira's abode, I saw the kings make such large and great offerings to my enemy that I wish to die from grief. Now let me tell you about the servants of the Pandavas, to whom Yudhishthira supplies both raw and cooked food. There are three hundred thousand soldiers mounted on elephants. There are a hundred million chariots and innumerable foot soldiers. The raw food is measured out in one place, cooked elsewhere and distributed at another place. Auspicious sounds are heard. Among all the varnas, I have not seen a single one in Yudhishthira's abode who has not obtained food, is unhappy and has not been rewarded well. Eighty-eight thousand snatakas live a householder's life, each supported by thirty servant girls provided by Yudhishthira. They are happy and satisfied and always pray for the destruction of his enemies. In Yudhishthira's abode, ten thousand ascetics who have controlled their seed, eat from golden plates. O lord of the earth! Yajnaseni[81] does not eat until she has seen to it that everyone has eaten and is full, even hunchbacks and dwarfs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are only two who have not paid tribute to Kunti's son—the Panchalas because of the marriage alliance[82] and the Andhakas and the Vrishnis because of friendship."'

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'Duryodhana said, "The arya kings are devoted to truth and great in their vows, complete in their knowledge, eloquent and immersed in *vedanta,*[83] forbearing, modest, famous and with dharma in their hearts. Those kings who have been anointed wait on him.[84] There I saw many thousands of wild cows that had been brought by the kings as dakshina, with brass pots for milking. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As a mark of respect and of their own volition, the kings brought supreme vessels for the consecration there. Bahlika brought the chariot that was inlaid with gold. Sudakshina[85] yoked it with white horses from Kamboja. In affection, the immensely strong Sunitha[86] fixed the axle.

Willingly, the king of Chedi[87] himself fixed the flagstaff. The king from the south had the armour ready, Magadha[88] the garland and the headdress. The great archer Vasudana[89] held the king of elephants, sixty years old. Matsya[90] fixed the sides,[91] Ekalavya held the footwear. Avanti had the many kinds of water required for the final bath. Chekitana[92] gave the quiver, the king of Kashi the bow and Shalya the sword with a golden hilt and with straps inlaid with gold. Dhoumya and the immensely ascetic Vyasa performed the anointing, after having placed Narada and the sages Devala–Asita[93] at the forefront. The maharshis attended the *abhisheka*[94] with pleasure. Just as the saptarshis approach the great Indra, lord of the gods, in heaven, with Jamadagni's son,[95] the great-souled ones, learned in the Vedas and the mantras, came with large quantities of gifts.

'"Satyaki, with truth as his valour, held up the umbrella. Dhananjaya and Bhima fanned Pandava.[96] Varuna's conch shell had been constructed by Vishvakarma in ancient times with a thousand pieces of gold and had been given by Prajapati to Indra in that ancient era. The ocean now brought it for him[97] and Krishna anointed him with that. At this, I felt benumbed. They went to the western, eastern and southern oceans.[98] O father! But they did not go to the north, which is for the birds. To make it auspicious, hundreds of conch shells were blown and when they were blown together, my hair stood up at the roar. Kings were deprived of their own energy and fell prostrate on the ground. But Dhristadyumna, the Pandavas, Satyaki and Krishna as the eighth were valorous and kindly disposed towards each other.[99] They maintained themselves and on seeing me and the kings unconscious on the ground, laughed at us. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then, delightedly, Bibhatsu gave the principal brahmanas five hundred bullocks, their horns plated with gold. Like lord Harishchandra, Kounteya accomplished the rajasuya and his prosperity was supreme. Shambara's slayer,[100] Youvanashva, Manu, King Prithu and Bhagiratha couldn't rival this. O lord! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having witnessed Partha’s prosperity like that of Harishchandra, how should I see any good in remaining alive? O lord of men! A yoke attached by a blind man becomes loose. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The younger ones[101] are prospering, while the older ones[102] are decaying. O supreme among the Kurus! Having witnessed all this, I find no refuge, whichever way I look. That is the reason I am becoming thin. That is the reason I am pale and miserable.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “O son! You are the eldest and the son of my eldest wife.[103] Do not bear hatred towards the Pandavas. He who bears hatred is always as unhappy as in death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Yudhishthira is inexperienced. He is your equal in goals and in friends. He does not hate you. Why do you hate him? O king! O son! You are his equal in birth and valour. Why do you covet your brother’s riches? Do not desire out of delusion. Be calm and virtuous. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If you wish to accomplish the glory of a sacrifice, let the priests arrange for the great sacrifice known as *saptatantu*. The kings will bring you great riches, gems and ornaments, from affection and respect. O son! The terrible act of desiring another’s property brings misery. He who is satisfied with his own, remains anchored in his own dharma and is happy. The signs of wealth are lack of concern for another’s prosperity, constant perseverance in one’s own tasks and the protection of what one has obtained. The man who is unmoved in calamities and always skilled and engaged in his own, vigilant and humble, will always witness good fortune. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Give at sacrifices, enjoy the pleasures you desire, sport in the company of women and be at peace.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “You know. But you confuse me, like a boat tied to another boat. Are you not attentive to your own interests? Do you have hostile feelings towards me? Dhritarashtra’s sons[104] follow your command and I don’t rule them. You always say that everything must be done for the sake of the future. If the leader has lost the path because he has been deluded by the enemy, how can his followers follow that path? O king! You are old in your wisdom, you follow the elders and you have control over your senses. You should not confuse us, when we are engaged in our own tasks. Brihaspati has said that the royal path must be different from that followed by the worlds. Therefore, a king must always be vigilant in protecting his own self-interest. O great king! A kshatriya's path is one devoted to victory. O bull among the Bharata lineage! As long as one follows one's creed, dharma and lack of dharma are irrelevant. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A charioteer uses his whip to drive out in all the directions, wishing to attack the blazing fortunes of his enemy. Those who are skilled in weapons say that the weapon isn't only the one that cuts. A weapon is that which vanquishes the enemy, be it open or hidden. O king! Discontent is the root of prosperity. That is the reason I wish to be discontented. The supreme one is one who strives for prosperity. In attaining prosperity and riches, shouldn't self-interest be our way? Others take away what has been obtained before. That is known as the dharma of kings. It was during a period of truce that Shakra cut off Namuchi's[105] head, because he knew that enmity towards a foe is eternal. Like a snake swallows rats, the earth swallows up two—the king who does not strive and the brahmana who does not live at home. O lord of the earth! No one is by nature another man's enemy. The enemy is that one whose pursuits are the same as one's own, and not anyone else. He who stupidly watches the ascendance of the enemy's party, leaves a disease unattended and cuts off his own roots. An enemy may be insignificant. But if he is allowed to grow in valour, he will destroy one, the way an anthill destroys the roots of a tree it has grown on. O Ajamidha![106] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do not be pleased at the enemy's prosperity. The wise ones should not bear the burden of this policy on their heads. A person who wishes for an increase in his prosperity, the way he has himself grown since birth, grows and prospers with his relatives. Valour brings swift growth. As long as I do not obtain the wealth of the Pandavas, I will always be in doubt. I will either obtain those riches, or lay down my life in the field of battle. O lord of the earth! If I cannot equal him,[107] what is the point of being alive today? The Pandavas are always prospering and we are stagnating.”’

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‘Shakuni said, “Challenge the enemy to a game of dice. I will rob Pandu’s son Yudhishthira of the prosperity that you have seen, which has been burning you. Be clear that I will not fight in front of armies. Through the throw of dice, a skilful one can vanquish one that is not skilful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that the bow and arrows are my dice. The heart of the dice is the string of my bow. Know that the carpet[109] is my chariot.”

‘Duryodhana said, “O king! This one, who is skilled in dice, is ready to win over the prosperity of Pandu’s son with dice. O father! You should find that pleasing.”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “I always listen to the counsel of my brother, the great-souled Vidura. I will decide on the course of action after meeting with him.”

‘Duryodhana said, “O Kourava! There is no doubt that Vidura will make you refrain from the resolution. He is engaged in the welfare of the Pandavas and not mine. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![110] No man should engage in his task with another’s counsel, because two minds seldom agree on a course of action. Like a straw mat[111] during the rainy season, a fool that abhors fear stands and destroys himself. Neither disease nor Yama wait for prosperity to come. Therefore, let us act for the good while there is time.”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “O son! I never like a fight with those who are stronger. Enmity creates distortion, and that itself is a weapon, though it is not made of iron. O prince! You think that disaster will bring welfare, this terrible collection of quarrels. Once it starts, in one way or another, it will release bows, swords and arrows.”

‘Duryodhana said, “The ancient ones created the rules of dice. It leads to neither evil, nor blows. Today, you should approve of Shakuni’s words. Let your instructions be issued for the swift construction of a sabha.[112] Because the doors of heaven will become closer, it is appropriate for us to be engaged in this. Approve of this act with the Pandavas and we will then stand equal to them.”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “O Indra among men! I do not like the words that you utter. But do what brings you pleasure. Later, you will remember your words and suffer, because such words cannot bring prosperity to those who abide by dharma. A long time in the past, Vidura, who follows wisdom and learning, had foretold all this. The great calamity that will destroy the seed of the kshatriyas has now arrived and we are powerless.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having uttered these words, the wise Dhritarashtra decided that destiny alone was supreme. Fate robbed the king of his senses and he instructed his men[113] to obey his son’s words. “Carefully build one thousand pillars adorned with gold and lapis lazuli. Let there be a hundred gates with arches made of crystal. Let the beautiful sabha be swiftly built, one *krosha*[114] long and one krosha wide.” On hearing these words, without hesitation, thousands of wise and skilled artisans swiftly built the sabha and stocked it with every kind of object. Then, in a short space of time, they informed the king that the beautiful assembly hall was ready and that it had been adorned with multicoloured gems and beautiful golden seats. Then Dhritarashtra, lord of men, spoke to the learned Vidura, foremost among his advisers, “Go to Prince Yudhishthira and swiftly bring him here at my command. Say that he and his brothers should come here and see this beautiful sabha that I have built, with many gems and decorated with expensive beds and seats. We will then have a game of dice among well-wishers.” Knowing his son’s mind and that fate could not be avoided, King Dhritarashtra, lord of men, acted thus. Vidura, supreme among learned ones, did not approve of his brother’s words and thought them to be unjust. He spoke to him, “O king! I do not approve of this errand. Do not do this. I fear the destruction of our lineage. O Indra among men! When the sons are disunited, a quarrel is certain and I am concerned about this game of dice.” Dhritarashtra replied, “O Kshatta! Unless destiny turns adverse, I am not worried about a quarrel. The universe is under the control of the creator. The entire world does not run independently. O Vidura! Therefore, today, go to the king[115] at my command and quickly bring Kunti’s invincible son, Yudhishthira, here.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On King Dhritarashtra’s forceful command, Vidura started off towards the wise Pandavas, on horses that were noble and strong, trained well and possessing great speed. He proceeded swiftly and came to the king’s[116] city and after being worshipped by the brahmanas, the immensely intelligent one entered. The palace was like Kubera’s abode and the one with dharma in his heart[117] went to Dharmaputra Yudhishthira. Ajatashatru, the great-souled king who was always devoted to the truth, welcomed Vidura with due homage and worship and then asked about the welfare of Dhritarashtra and his sons.

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Kshatta! I do not see your mind to be happy. I hope everything is well. Are the sons[118] obedient to their elders? Are the commoners obedient to his rule?”

‘Vidura replied, “The great-souled king is well with his sons. Surrounded by his kin, he rules like Indra. O king! Surrounded by his sons who are obedient, he is content. He is without worries and is firm in the desires of his own heart. The king of the Kurus has first asked me to enquire about your health and welfare and then say, ‘I have built a sabha that matches yours. O son! Please come with your brothers and see it. O Partha! Assemble there with your brother and have a game of dice with your well-wishers. We will be delighted at your arrival and so will all the Kurus who are assembled there.’ The great-souled King Dhritarashtra has assembled gamblers there.[119] You will see the rogues[120] assembled there. I have come here for this. O king! Agree.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O Kshatta! Gambling can produce quarrels. Knowing this, which intelligent one will consent to gambling? What do you think is the right course of action for us? We are always obedient to your words.”

‘Vidura replied, “I know that gambling is the root of all misery. I made every effort to restrain him. However, the king has sent me to you. O wise one! Knowing this, do what is best.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Other than the sons of King Dhritarashtra, who are the other rogues[121] who are there to play? O Vidura! I am asking you. Tell me. Who are the hundreds with whom one will have to play?”

‘Vidura replied, “O lord of the earth! There is Shakuni, king of Gandhara. That king is eager to play, has a skilled hand and knows the nature of the dice. There are Vivimshati, King Chitrasena, Satyavrata, Purumitra and Jaya.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “It seems that some of the most feared rogues[122] have assembled there. They are sure to play with the powers of maya. However, everything is under the control of the creator. I will not refuse to play with those rogues. O Vidura! I do not wish to go and gamble on King Dhritarashtra’s command. A father always has a son’s welfare in mind. Therefore, tell me what I should do.[123] I have no desire to gamble with Shakuni. But if the confident[124] one challenges me in the sabha, I will never refuse, because that has been my eternal vow.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having thus spoken to Vidura, Dharmaraja instructed that all the arrangements for the journey should quickly be made. Next day, he set out with his army and his attendants, and with the honoured Droupadi and other women of the household. “Destiny robs us of reason, like a glare falling before the eye.[125] As if tied in a noose, man follows the will of the creator.” Uttering these words, King Yudhishthira set out with Kshatta. Partha, the destroyer of enemies, could not ignore the summons. He ascended the chariot given by Bahlika. Partha Pandava, the destroyer of enemies, dressed in royal garments, left with his brothers. Brahmanas walked ahead of him and his regal prosperity blazed. He was summoned by Dhritarashtra in accordance with what has been decreed by destiny.

‘Arriving in Hastinapura, he went to Dhritarashtra’s palace. Pandava, the one with dharma in his heart, met Dhritarashtra and Drona, Bhishma, Karna and Kripa. As is proper, the lord also met Drona’s son.[126] The mighty-armed one then met Somadatta, Duryodhana, Shalya, the valorous Soubala and all the other kings who had assembled there before him, and Jayadratha and all the other Kurus. Surrounded by his brothers, the mighty-armed one then entered the abode of the immensely wise King Dhritarashtra and met there Queen Gandhari, who was always devoted to her husband. She was surrounded by her daughters-in-law, like Rohini[127] by the stars. After showing homage to Gandhari and being welcomed by her in return, he saw his aged father,[128] the wise lord whose eyesight was his knowledge.[129] O king! The king inhaled the fragrances of the heads[130] of the descendants[131] of the Kuru lineage and of the four Pandavas,[132] led by Bhimasena. O lord of the earth! On seeing the handsome Pandavas, tigers among men, all the Kouravas were extremely delighted. Taking their leave, the Pandavas entered their houses, full of jewels. The women came to see them, Droupadi at their forefront. On witnessing Yajnasena’s[133] blazing prosperity, Dhritarashtra’s daughters-in-law were not enthused.

‘After having conversed with the women, the tigers among men went out. They performed physical exercises and the due rituals. After the daily rituals were over, they covered themselves all over with divine sandalwood. When their minds were pure, the brahmanas pronounced benedictions on them. Having eaten the best of food, they retired to their sleeping quarters. Women sung to them and the descendants of the Kurus went to sleep. They spent the pleasant night in sexual pursuits. After resting for some time, they discarded their sleep[134] to the sound of praises of bards. Having happily slept during the night, they performed all the daily rites in the morning and entered the beautiful sabha, crowded by rogues.’[135]

‘Shakuni said, “O king! The carpet has been spread out in the sabha and these people have found the time. O Yudhishthira! The time for gambling and fixing the nature of the dice has come.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O king! Dishonest gambling is evil. There is no kshatriya valour in that. Nor is there any good policy in it. Why do you then praise playing with the dice? O Shakuni! The learned do not praise deceitful gambling. Like a cruel person, do not defeat us through a crooked path.”

‘Shakuni said, “He who knows the numbers and is knowledgeable about deceptions, is tireless in the art of gambling and is extremely intelligent in gambling, is the one who knows all the techniques. Through handling the dice, one can defeat the enemy. Blaming destiny is pointless. O king! Let us gamble and have no anxiety. Let us immediately decide on the stakes and not tarry.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Asita–Devala are supreme among sages and always frequents the doors of the worlds. They have said that it is a sin to play with deceitful gamblers. It is best to win a battle through dharma, in which case, gambling is sanctioned. Aryas do not use mleccha language, nor use deceit in behaviour. Men who are truthful in their vows do not use trickery in a battle. We have always sought to protect deserving brahmanas with our strength. O Shakuni! Do not play beyond those limits and do not win in excess.[136] I do not desire happiness and riches through deceit. But even if a gambler plays without deceit, gambling is never praised.”

‘Shakuni said, “O Yudhishthira! The learned triumph over non-learned only through trickery. That is how the wise triumph over the stupid, but people don’t call it trickery. In approaching me for the game, if you think that I will resort to trickery, if that is your fear, then refrain from the game.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O king! Once challenged, I will not withdraw. That is the vow I have taken. Fate is the powerful one and we are in the power of destiny. Who in this assembly will I play with? What is the counter-stake? Let the gambling begin.”

‘Duryodhana said, “O lord of the earth! I will stake all my jewels and my riches. My maternal uncle, Shakuni, will gamble on my behalf.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “To me, it seems unfair that one man should gamble in another’s place. O learned one! You know this. However, if that is what you want, so be it.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When arrangements had been made for the gambling, all the kings, with Dhritarashtra at the forefront, entered the sabha—Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, the immensely intelligent Vidura. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Others also followed, not at all pleased in their minds. Those immensely energetic ones, with necks like those of lions, sat separately and together, on many colourful seats. O king! With the assembled kings, that sabha was radiant, like resplendent heaven when the gods have assembled. O great king! They were all brave warriors, learned in the Vedas and their forms were like that of the sun. Then the gambling between the well-wishers started.

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! This is a beautiful chain of gems, inlaid in supreme gold. It represents a lot of riches and has been procured from the whirl of the ocean.[137] O king! This is my stake. What is your counter-stake? Let it be placed in the proper order and I will win this gamble.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “I also possess many gems and riches. But they serve no particular end for me. I will win this gamble.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then Shakuni, who knew the heart of the dice, grasped the dice. And Shakuni told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “O Shakuni! You have won this gamble from me by using deceit. Let us now grasp the dice and play a thousand times. I have a hundred laden jars, each filled with a thousand gold coins. O king! That apart, my treasury has inexhaustible gold and much gold.[138] Those are the riches I now stake to gamble with you.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘As soon as he had spoken, Shakuni told the king, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “My royal chariot is covered with tiger skin and is worth a thousand. It is finely built, beautiful, makes a thunderous noise and is adorned with nets of bells. It gladdens the heart and brought us here. This sacred chariot, supreme among all chariots, roars like the clouds and the ocean. It is drawn by eight horses that are famous throughout the kingdom. They are noble and have the colour of ospreys. No one who walks the earth can escape their hooves. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard this, Shakuni used deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O Soubala! I have one thousand elephants that are in must. They have golden girdles and are hung with golden garlands. They are spotted.[139] They are well trained, with fine tusks and are capable of bearing kings. They can withstand every kind of noise in battle. They have giant tusks like shafts[140] and each bull has with it eight she-elephants. All of these elephants have the shade of new clouds[141] and are capable of battering down enemy cities. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard these words, Soubala laughed at Partha. Shakuni told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have one hundred thousand slave girls. They are young and extremely beautiful. They wear bracelets and armlets,[142] necklaces of gold coins and wear ornaments. They wear expensive garlands and ornaments, beautiful garments, and are anointed with sandalwood paste. They wear jewels and gold and all of them are dressed in sheer garments. They are skilled in singing and dancing. On my instructions, they wait upon and serve the snatakas, advisers and kings. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have thousands of male slaves. They are always dressed in fine garments and are skilled and ready to serve. They are wise, young, skilled and intelligent and wear polished earrings. With plates in their hands, they feed the guests day and night. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have as many[143] chariots. They have pennants and are equipped with golden vessels. There are also well-trained horses, charioteers and wonderful warriors. Regardless of whether they fight or do not fight, each of them receives one thousand as monthly salary. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard these words of Partha, the evil one resorted to deceit. Shakuni told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have gandharva horses that are spotted and have the colour of partridges. They have golden harnesses and were happily given by Chitraratha[144] to Gandivadhanva.[145] O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard this, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have ten thousand chariots, carts and horses. They are yoked to the best draught animals. I have thousands of soldiers from each varna. They drink milk and feed on rice and grain. There are sixty thousand of them and all of them have broad chests. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have four hundred treasure chests made of copper and iron. Each of them has five receptacles filled with beaten gold. O king! These are my riches that I now gamble with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”’

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‘Vidura said, “O great king![146] Listen to what I am going to tell you and learn, even though a dying man finds no pleasure in medicine. In earlier times, when the evil-minded Duryodhana, the destroyer of the Bharata lineage, was born, he cried out in the voice of a jackal. He is destined to cause our destruction. A jackal lives in your house in Duryodhana's form and you do not know this. From me, listen to what Kavya[147] said. 'The collector of honey obtains the honey, but does not know about the fall.[148] Having climbed, he will later be immersed, or fall down and perish.' Like the collector of honey, he[149] is drunk at the prospect of gambling with dice. He does not know of the fall, consequent to the enmity with these maharathas. O great king! You know the normal royal practice.[150] The Andhakas, Yadavas and Bhojas assembled and abandoned Kamsa. At their request, Krishna, the slayer of enemies, killed him[151] and all the relatives rejoiced for a hundred years. On your instructions, let Savyasachi oppress Suyodhana.[152] Let the Kurus be happy through the oppression of the evil one. O king! Purchase peacocks for this crow.[153] Purchase tigers for this jackal. Purchase the Pandavas and do not sink into this ocean of grief. 'For the sake of a family, a man should be sacrificed. For the sake of a village, a family should be sacrificed. For the sake of a country, a village should be sacrificed. For the sake of the soul, the earth should be sacrificed.' Thus spoke Kavya, the omniscient one, knowledgeable in all sentiments and terrible to all enemies, when he asked the great asuras to abandon Jamba.[154]

'"O king! It is said that there were forest-dwelling birds that vomited gold. A man took them to live in his house, but then killed them out of greed.[155] O scorcher of enemies! He was blinded because of his temptation for gold. Because of his greed, he destroyed both what he had and what he could have had. O bull among the Bharatas! Do not oppress the Pandavas because of your immediate desire. You will later rue your delusion, like the man who killed the birds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Like a maker of garlands, take flowers affectionately from the Pandavas one by one, as they flower. Like a maker of charcoal, do not burn down the roots of the tree. Do not go to your destruction with your sons, advisers and troops. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Who is capable of fighting with the Parthas when they stand together? O king! Not even the lord of the Maruts,[156] together with the Maruts.”’

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‘Vidura said, “Gambling is the root of all quarrels. Its consequence is dissension and great wars. Taking recourse to it, Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra’s son, creates terrible enmity. Because of Duryodhana’s crime, all the descendants of Pratipa[157] and Shantanu, together with their terrible armies and with the descendants of the Bahlikas, will be destroyed. Like an angry bull that breaks its own horns forcibly, Duryodhana’s stupidity will drive safety away from this kingdom. O king! A brave and wise man who disregards his sagacity and follows another’s mind, is like one who goes to the sea in a boat guided by a child and is immersed in terrible affliction. Duryodhana is gambling with Pandava and it pleases you because you think he is winning. But in this overdone deed is created a war that will lead to the destruction of all men. This badly designed act will lead to a decline in fruits. In the heart of the one who has resorted to counsel, there is great composure.[158] Friendship with Yudhishthira will lead to good fruit. Through pacification, the one with the excellent bow[159] will no longer exhibit enmity. O descendants of Pratipa! O descendants of Shantanu! O kings! Listen to Kavya’s words and do not cross the limits. The terrible fire has blazed forth. Extinguish it before there is a war. If Pandava Ajatashatru[160] is defeated in dice and his anger is not pacified by Vrikodara, Savyasachi and the twins, there will be no refuge in the terrible onslaught that will ensue. O great king! You are a source of great riches, as much as you desired, even before this game. Even if you win great riches from the Pandavas, what is the gain? Pritha’s sons are the source of wealth. We all know Soubala’s skills in the game. This one from the mountains[161] knows techniques of deceit with dice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let Shakuni return whence he came. The one from the mountains fights with the powers of maya.”’

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‘Duryodhana said, “O Kshatta! You always take pride in praising the fame of our enemies and secretly deprecate Dhritarashtra’s sons. O Vidura! We know whom you are friends to. You always look down upon us, as if we are children. The man whose love is elsewhere is clearly revealed, from the way he distributes censure and praise. Your tongue reveals your heart and mind and that your mind is antagonistic. We embraced you like a serpent. Like a cat you injure the one by whom you are sustained. It is said there is no sin worse than killing one’s protector. O Kshatta! How is it that you don’t fear sin? Having vanquished our enemies, we have obtained great fruits. O Kshatta! Do not use harsh words against us. You always praise friendship with those who hate us and that is the reason you harbour hatred towards us. A man becomes an enemy by uttering unpardonable words. He secretly hides the praise for the enemies. How does shame not stop you? You are now speaking whatever you desire.[162] We know your mind, and do not disregard us. Learn from proximity with those who are wise and old. O Vidura! Protect the fame you have earned so far. Do not concern yourself with the affairs of others. O Vidura! Do not deprecate us by mentioning your deeds. Do not always use such harsh words against us. O Vidura! I never ask you what you think. O Kshatta! Desist, because our patience is wearing down. There is one controller[163] and there is no second controller. That controller controls when a man is asleep in the womb. Through his control, like water flowing downwards, I flow in the direction appointed by him. He who uses his head to break a stone and he who feeds a serpent, are controlled in those deeds by his[164] instructions. He who wishes to control another by force only finds an enemy. A learned one looks up to those who act in friendship. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If one lights a blazing fire and does not escape from it, even the remnants of ashes will not be found anywhere. O Kshatta! One should not give shelter to someone who hates and is from the enemy's party, especially if that man bears ill will. O Vidura! Therefore, go wherever you wish. However well treated, an unchaste wife will always leave."

'Vidura replied, "O king![165] He who gives to a man in this fashion, for him all friendship comes to an end. The minds of kings are always unsteady. After granting protection, they slay with clubs. O son of a king! You do not think yourself to be a child. O evil-minded one! You consider me to be a child. One, who has first accepted a man as a well-wisher and then reviles him, is the one who is a child. One with an evil mind never does that which brings welfare, like a corrupt woman in the house of a learned brahmana. That which is certain does not please this bull among the Bharatas, like a sixty-year-old husband to a young woman. O king! If you only wish to hear words that please you in all deeds, regardless of good or bad, ask the women, the dull and the crippled. Go ask those who are likewise stupid. O descendant of the Pratipa lineage! It is certainly easy to find a man who says things that please you. It is rare to find those who render unpleasant and right advice. He who sticks to the path of dharma and offers advice to his lord, regardless of whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, however unpleasant, is a true aide to the king. O great king! Drink that which is healthy, bitter, pungent, hot, harsh, foul-smelling and revolting. This is what the good always drink and the evil refuse. Drink it and regain your calm. I always wish fame and prosperity to Vichitravirya's sons and their sons. Wherever you may be, I pay you my respects. May the brahmanas utter benedictions over me. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![166] I will carefully tell you this. Learned ones should never anger serpents that have venom in their eyes."'[167]

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'Shakuni said, "O Yudhisthira! You have lost great riches of the Pandavas. O Kounteya! Do you have any other riches that you have not lost yet?"

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O Shakuni! O Soubala! I know of unlimited riches that I possess. Why do you ask me about my wealth? I can stake *ayuta,*[168] *prayuta,*[169] kharva,[170] *padma,*[171] arbuda,[172] *shamkha,*[173] *nikharva*[174] and an entire ocean.[175] O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O Soubala! I have many cattle, horses, milch cows, sheep and goats, of many species, to the east of the Sindhu.[176] O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O king! The riches that I have left are my city, the country, the land of all the non-brahmanas and the nonbrahmana subjects. O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhisthira replied, “O king! These princes[177] are resplendent in their ornaments, their earrings, the golden decorations on their breasts and the other bodily decorations. O king! These are my riches that I will play with you for.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “This dark youth with the red eyes is Nakula, with long arms and the shoulders of a lion. He and everything that he possesses will be one stake.”

‘Shakuni said, “O King Yudhisthira! But Prince Nakula is dear to you. If he becomes part of our riches, what will you have left to gamble with?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this, Shakuni then flung the dice and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “This Sahadeva is the one who administers dharma. He is known in the worlds as a learned one. Though this beloved prince does not deserve it, I will play with him with one who is not loved.”’[178]

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Shakuni said, “O king! I have now won Madri’s two sons, dear to you. But I think you regard Bhimasena and Dhananjaya as dearer.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O foolish one! Without regard to what is proper, you are following that which is not dharma. You are trying to create dissension among those who are one of heart.”

‘Shakuni said, “O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! One who is intoxicated falls into a hole and remains there, like the trunk of a tree. You are our elder and our superior. I bow down before you. O Yudhishthira! When gamblers play, they utter mad ravings about what they have not seen, whether asleep or awake.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Like a boat, he carries us over to the other bank of battle. He is a powerful prince who defeats his enemies. The world knows that this warrior does not deserve it. O Shakuni! I will play with you for Phalguna.”’[179]

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Shakuni said, “Pandava Savyasachi, the foremost archer among the Pandavas, has been won and has become mine. O king! Now play with your beloved Bhima. That is all you now have left to throw.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “He is our leader and guide in battle. He is like the wielder of the vajra,[180] the enemy of the demons. He is great of soul, with slanted eyes and knitted brows. His shoulders are like those of a lion and his anger is long-lasting. There is no other man with strength like his. He is the slayer of enemies and foremost among those who wield the club. O king! Though this prince does not deserve it, I will play with you for Bhimasena.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Shakuni said, “O Kounteya! You have lost a great deal of riches. You have lost your brothers, your horses and your elephants. Tell us if there are any riches that you have not yet lost.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “I myself am left, especially loved by all my brothers. If won over, until the time of destruction, I will do whatever deed I am asked to do.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘At these words, Shakuni resorted to deceit and told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”

‘Shakuni said, “O king! You have allowed yourself to be won and you have committed the worst evil act. When there are riches left, it is evil to allow oneself to be won.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus spoke the one who was skilled in gambling with the dice. He had won in the game, one by one, the brave warriors of the world.’

‘Shakuni said, “But you have your beloved queen, who has still not been won in the game. Use Krishna Panchali[181] as a stake and using her, win back yourself.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “She is neither too short, nor too tall. She is neither too dark, nor too red. Her eyes are red with love and I will play with you for her. Her eyes are like the petals of lotuses in the autumn. Her fragrance is like that of lotuses in the autumn. Her beauty serves that of lotuses in the autumn. Her beauty is like that of Shri herself. Such is her lack of cruelty, her wealth of beauty and the goodness of her conduct, that every man desires her for a wife. She retires to bed last and she is the first one to wake up. She looks after the cowherds and the shepherds. She knows everything about what should be done and what should not be done. When covered with sweat, her face looks like a lotus or a jasmine. Her waist is shaped like an altar. Her hair is long. Her eyes are copper-red. She does not have too much of body hair. O king! O Soubala! I will make the beautiful Droupadi of Panchala, slender of waist, my stake. Let us play.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the intelligent Dharmaraja uttered these words, all the elders assembled in the sabha raised words of “shame”. O king! The sabha seemed to shake and the kings talked among themselves. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others broke out in sweat. Vidura buried his head in his hands and sat with a downcast face, thinking and sighing like a serpent, like one who has lost his senses. But Dhritarashtra was delighted and failing to control his emotions, repeatedly kept asking, "Has he won? Has the stake been won?" Karna, Duhshasana and their allies were happy. But tears began to flow down the eyes of others who were in the assembly hall. However, Soubala was insolent with success and proud of victory. He instantly flung the dice and said, "I have won."'

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'Duryodhana said, "O Kshatta! Bring Droupadi here, the beloved and honoured wife of the Pandavas. Let her sweep and perform our tasks. It will be good to see her with the serving girls."

'Vidura replied, "Through people like you, the impossible happens. O evil one! You do not know that you are tying yourself in a noose. You do not realize that you are extended over a precipice. You are only a deer, but you are angering tigers. O one who is greatly evil at heart! Angry serpents, full of great venom, have raised themselves above your head. Do not anger them and go to Yama's abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Krishna[182] has not yet become a slave. The king[183] offered her as stake when he was no longer his master. A bamboo bears fruit only to kill itself.[184] This king, Dhritarashtra's son, also bears fruit. He does not see that gambling leads to fearful enmity and that he is ripe, like one about to meet his destiny. No one should cause hurt, or act cruelly. Nor should one extract from one who is miserable. Words that cause pain and hurt others should not be uttered, because they lead to hell. From his lips, a man utters words that hurt. The one stung by them burns night and day. Therefore, learned ones do not utter words that unleashed on another, pierce the depths of the heart. When a weapon could not be found, by pawing the ground, it is said that a goat dug up a weapon that was used to cut its own throat.[185] Therefore, do not dig up an enmity with the sons of Pandu. No one speaks ill of the forest-dweller or householder. But like dogs, the same men bark at the ascetic who is full of learning.[186] Dhritarashtra's son does not know the crooked and terrible door that leads to hell. Duhshasana and many others among the Kurus will follow him there, through the route of gambling. Gourds may sink[187] and stones may float. Boats may eternally be lost on the seas. But King Dhritarashtra's deluded son will not listen to my words, which are appropriate[188] for him. It is certain that this will be the end of the Kurus, a terrible end that will lead to everyone's destruction. The words of Kavya and his well-wishers were apt.[189] But because greed has expanded, they are no longer listened to."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra's son was insolent with pride. He said, "Kshatta be damned." In the midst of all the revered ones in the assembly hall, he looked at the attendant and said, "O Pratikamin![190] Go and bring Droupadi here. You have no reason to fear the Pandavas. It is only Kshatta who is scared and speaks to the contrary. But he never wishes that our prosperity should increase." Having heard the words of the king, the suta attendant[191] swiftly departed and went to the queen of the Pandavas, like a dog entering a lion's lair.

'The attendant said, "O Droupadi! Yudhishthira was intoxicated by gambling and has lost you to Duryodhana. O Yajnaseni! Now come to Dhritarashtra's house. I must take you for the tasks you have to perform." Droupadi replied, "O Pratikamin! How can you speak like this? Can any prince stake his wife in a gamble? The king must have been deluded in his intoxication for the game. Could he not find anything else for the stake?" The attendant said, "Pandava Ajatashatru offered you as stake when there was nothing left as stake. The king had earlier staked his brothers and then himself. O Princess! He next staked you." Droupadi replied, "O son of a suta! Go back to the assembly hall and ask that gambler from the Bharata lineage whether he first lost himself or me. O son of a suta! After having found this out, come back to me.” He went to the assembly hall and repeated Droupadi’s words. “Droupadi wants to know, ‘Whose lord were you when you lost me? Did you lose yourself first or me?’” Yudhishthira sat there unmoved, like one who has lost his senses. He did not reply to the suta, in words that were either good or bad. Duryodhana said, “Let Panchali Krishna come here and ask the question herself. Let everyone in the sabha hear what they have to say to each other.” The attendant was in Duryodhana’s service and went to the king’s house.[192] Though miserable, the suta told Droupadi, “O Princess! Those in the assembly hall are summoning you. It seems to me that the destruction of the Kurus is near. O Princess! Since that weak-minded one[193] wants you in the sabha, he will no longer be able to protect our prosperity.” Droupadi replied, “The one who determines everything has destined thus. Both the young and the old are touched thus. It has been said that dharma is supreme in the worlds. If it is sustained, peace will be brought.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing of Duryodhana’s intentions, Yudhishthira sent a trusted messenger to Droupadi.[194] Panchali was going through her menses then. She was weeping and clad in a single garment tied below the navel, she went to the sabha and stood before her father-in-law.[195] Looking at the faces of the assembly, King Duryodhana delightedly told the suta,[196] “O Pratikamin! Bring her here. Let her be in front of us, so that the Kouravas can speak to her.” The suta was in his[197] servitude, but was scared of the wrath of Drupada’s daughter. Giving up his pride, he told the assembly, “How can I speak to Krishna?” Duryodhana said, “O Duhshasana! This son of a suta has limited intelligence. He is frightened of Vrikodara. Go and bring Yajnaseni here yourself. Our rivals are now under our control. They can do nothing.” Having heard his brother, the prince[198] arose. His eyes were red with anger. He entered the house of those maharathas and told Princess Droupadi, “O Panchali! O Krishna! You have been won by us. Look upon Duryodhana without any shame. O one with eyes like long lotus petals! You will now love the Kurus. You have been won in accordance with dharma. Come to the sabha." She arose in great distress and wiped her pale face with her hands. In distress, she ran to where the aged king's,[199] who was a bull among the Kurus, women were. Swiftly the angry Duhshasana rushed at her, letting out a great roar. The long, blue and flowing hair belonged to the wife of a lord of men and was now grabbed by him. At the time of the great rajasuya sacrifice, the hair had been sprinkled with auspicious waters. The valour of the Pandavas was vanquished and Dhritarashtra's son[200] grabbed it with force. She had protectors, but was without a protector. Grabbing her by her long hair, Duhshasana pulled and dragged her to the sabha, like a plantain tree buffeted by the wind. When she was thus dragged, she bent down her body and softly whispered, "It is the period of my menses now. O evil-minded one! I am only clad in a single garment. O you who are not an arya! Do not take me to the sabha thus." But he forcibly grabbed her by her black hair and told Krishna, "Pray to Krishna and Jishnu and Hari and Nara.[201] Cry out for help, but I will take you. O Yajnaseni! This may be the time of your menses. But whether you are clad in a single garment or in no garments at all, you have been won at the game and are now a slave. One can sport with a slave as one desires." Her hair was dishevelled. As she was pulled around by Duhshasana, her half-garment had come loose. She burnt with shame and mortification. In a soft voice, Krishna whispered again, "There are those in the assembly hall who are learned in the sacred texts. They follow all the righteous rites and are all like Indra. All of them are my preceptors or like them. I cannot stand before them in this fashion. O performer of evil deeds! O you who act as if you are not an arya! Do not strip me and do not debase me in this fashion. Even if all the gods with Indra become your allies, these princes[202] will not pardon you. The great-souled son of Dharma[203] always bases himself in dharma. The ways of dharma are subtle and only the skilled can discern this. But despite the words of my lord,[204] I will not commit even a tiny offence or deviate from my own qualities. You are performing a most unworthy act by dragging me among the Kuru warriors when I am in my menses. There is no one here who will praise you for that, though there is no doubt that they have the same inclinations as you. Shame! The descendants of the Bharata lineage have lost their dharma and their knowledge of the ways of kshatriyas. All the Kurus in this sabha have witnessed the transgression of the dharma of the Kurus. There is certainly no longer substance in Drona, Bhishma and in this great-souled one.[205] The foremost among the elders of the Kuru lineage have chosen to ignore this terrible transgression of dharma by the king." The slender-waisted one thus piteously cried out and cast a scornful and sidelong glance at her angry husbands. The Pandavas were inflamed by that sidelong glance and their bodies were filled with wrath. They didn't suffer that much from the loss of the kingdom, or the riches, or the chief jewels, as they did from Krishna's sidelong, angry and miserable glance. On seeing Krishna look at her miserable husbands, Duhshasana dragged her with even greater force, so that she almost lost her senses. He repeatedly called her "slave" and laughed uproariously. Karna was delighted at these words and approved of them by laughing out loudly. In similar fashion, Soubala, the king of Gandhara, applauded Duhshasana's deed. Among all those who were present in the assembly hall, with the exception of these and Dhritarashtra's son,[206] everyone was extremely miserable on seeing Krishna thus dragged into the sabha. Bhishma said, "O fortunate one! Since the ways of dharma are subtle, I cannot properly resolve the question you have posed. One without property cannot stake the property of others. But women are always the property of their husbands. Yudhishthira will abandon the entire earth with its riches before he gives up truth. The Pandava has himself said he has been won. Therefore, I cannot resolve this issue. Shakuni has no equal in dice. Kunti's son has voluntarily played with him. The great-souled one does not think he[207] has resorted to deceit. Therefore, I cannot answer the question." Droupadi replied, "Though he is himself unskilled, the king was challenged in this sabha by those who are skilled, evil-minded and deceitful, those who love the game of dice. How can it be said he chose voluntarily? The pure-hearted and foremost one among the Kurus and the Pandavas was robbed of his senses by inclinations towards deceit. He has understood everything only after he has been won and after the gambling is over. In this assembly hall are Kurus who are the lords of their sons and daughters-in-law. Let all of them examine my words and answer my question in the appropriate way.” Thus spoke the one who was miserable and weeping, while glancing at her miserable husbands. Duhshasana spoke many harsh, unpleasant and rude words to her. Vrikodara watched her being dragged, while she was in her menses and with her upper garments dishevelled. She did not deserve this. In extreme distress, he uttered words of anger to Yudhishthira.’

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‘Bhima said, “O Yudhishthira! Gamblers have many courtesans in their country. But they are kind even towards those, and do not stake them in gambling. In the gamble, we have lost to our enemies the riches and other excellent objects that the King of Kashi brought, the gems and other gifts that the other lords of the earth brought, mounts, riches, armour, weapons, the kingdom and even ourselves. Because you are our lord, my anger was not excited at all this. But I think you committed a most improper act in staking Droupadi. She did not deserve this. After obtaining the Pandavas, this maiden is suffering this despicable and cruel oppression from the Kouravas only because of your act. O king! It is because of her that my anger descends on you. I will burn your hands. O Sahadeva! Bring the fire.”[208]

‘Arjuna said, “O Bhimasena! Never before have you uttered words like these. The cruel enemies have destroyed your pride in dharma. You should not make the desires of the enemy come true. Observe the supreme dharma. According to dharma, one should never cross one’s elder brother. The king was challenged and he followed the dharma of the kshatriyas. He gambled because of the desires of the enemy. That is our great deed.”

‘Bhimasena replied, “O Dhananjaya! Had I not known that he has not done it for himself, I would forcibly have grasped his hands and burnt them in the blazing fire.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing the Pandavas thus miserable and Panchali’s affliction, Dhritarashtra’s son Vikarna spoke these words.[209] “O kings! Answer the question posed by Yajnaseni. If we do not decide on the question, we will certainly go to hell. Bhishma and Dhritarashtra, the eldest among the Kurus, are here, but they do not say anything. Nor does the extremely intelligent Vidura. Nor does Bharadvaja’s son,[210] the preceptor to all of us. Nor does Kripa. Why don’t these best among brahmanas answer the question? The lords of the earth have assembled here from all the directions. Let them forget their desire and their anger and speak according to their own thoughts. O kings! Reflect on the question that the beautiful Droupadi has repeatedly asked. Then answer as to which side of the issue you are on.” Thus did Vikarna repeatedly speak to all those who were present in the assembly hall. But none of the lords of the earth present said anything, good or bad. Vikarna again spoke to all those lords of the earth. He rubbed his hands against each other, sighed and said, “O lords of the earth! O Kouravas! Whether you say anything or not, I will tell you what I think is right. O best of men! It has been said that addiction to hunting, drinking, gambling and sexual intercourse are the four vices of kings. The man who is addicted to these deviates from dharma and the world does not approve of these improper deeds. This son of Pandu[211] was addicted to vice and challenged by deceitful gamblers, staked Droupadi. The unblemished one is common to all the Pandavas. Having first lost himself, the Pandava offered her as stake. Soubala, desirous of a stake, suggested Krishna. Reflecting on all these, I do not think she has been won.” On hearing these words, a great roar arose from all those who were in the sabha. They approved of Vikarna and censured Soubala. When the noise died down, Radheya, who was almost senseless with anger, gripped his lustrous arms[212] and uttered these words, “I have witnessed many distortions in Vikarna. Like fire destroys the block from which it has been kindled, his destruction will come from the fire he has created. Though urged by Krishna, those who are assembled here have not uttered a word. I consider that Drupada's daughter has been won in accordance with dharma, and so do they. O son of Dhritarashtra! Out of childishness, you alone are being torn to bits. Though but a child, you speak in this sabha what should be spoken by elders. O Duryodhana's younger brother! You do not know the reality of what dharma is. Like one with limited intelligence, you proclaim that Krishna has not been won, when she has been won. O Dhritarashtra's son! How can you think that Krishna has not been won? In this sabha, the eldest Pandava staked everything he possessed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Droupadi is included in all his possessions. When Krishna has been won in accordance with dharma, how can you think she has not been won? Droupadi was mentioned in the speech and the Pandava approved. According to what reason do you then think that she has not been won? If you think that bringing her into the sabha when she is clad in only a single garment is against dharma, listen to the words I have to say in response. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![213] It has been ordained by the gods that a woman should only have one husband. However, she submits to many and it is therefore certain that she is a courtesan. It is my view that there is nothing surprising in her being brought into the sabha in a single garment, or even if she is naked. In accordance with dharma, Soubala has won all the riches the Pandavas possessed, including her and themselves. O Duhshasana! This Vikarna is only a child, though he speaks words of wisdom. Strip away the garments from the Pandavas and Droupadi." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing these words, the Pandavas took off their upper garments and sat down in the sabha. O king! Then Duhshasana forcibly tugged at Droupadi's garments. In front of everyone in the sabha, he forcibly pulled. O lord of the earth! As Droupadi's garment was being tugged away, another similar garment appeared every time.[214] At this, a terrible uproar arose. All the assembled kings witnessed the most extraordinary sight in the worlds and approved. In the midst of the kings, Bhima then kneaded his hands. His lips trembling with rage, he cursed in a loud voice, “O kshatriyas! O those who live in this world! Hear these words of mine, never before uttered by any man and never to be uttered in the future. O lords of the earth! Having uttered these words, if I do not act accordingly, may I never tread on the path followed by my forefathers. In battle, I will forcibly tear asunder the breast of this evil and misguided one,[215] wretch among the Bharatas, and drink his blood.” On hearing these words, all the worlds were delighted. They worshipped him a lot and reviled Dhritarashtra’s son. When that mass of garments was piled up in the middle of the sabha, Duhshasana became tired and ashamed and finally sat down. On seeing the sons of Kunti in that state, all the gods and men in the sabha raised cries of “shame”, so that the hair on the body stood up. The people shouted, “The Kouravas do not answer the question,” and censured Dhritarashtra. Then Vidura, learned in all the ways of dharma, raised his arms and silenced those who were in the assembly hall. He spoke these words, “Having raised the question, Droupadi now weeps, like one without a protector. If those who are in the sabha do not answer the question, dharma will be oppressed. Like a blazing fire, one in distress comes to this sabha. Those who are in the sabha pacify him through true dharma. When a man in distress asks a question about dharma, those in the sabha must answer that question, without being driven by desire or anger. O lords of men! Vikarna has answered the question in accordance with what he thinks. You should also answer the question as you deem fit. If one seated in the assembly hall does not answer the question, even though he knows about dharma, he incurs half the demerit that comes from lying. And if one is seated in the assembly hall and answers the question falsely, even though he knows about dharma, he certainly incurs the complete demerit that comes from lying. In this context, the learned ones quote the ancient conversation that took place between Prahlada and the sage who was the son of Angirasa.”

‘Vidura said, “Prahlada was the king of the daityas and his son was Virochana. For the sake of a maiden, he[216] quarrelled with Sudhanva, the son of Angirasa. We have heard that out of desire for the maiden, they wagered their lives, each claiming that he was superior. When they were thus debating, they asked Prahlada, ‘Who among us is superior? Answer the question and do not lie.’ He was scared of this dispute and looked at Sudhanva. As flaming as the curse of a brahmana, Sudhanva angrily told him, ‘O Prahlada! If you utter a lie or if you do not answer at all, the wielder of the vajra will use the vajra to splinter your head into a hundred parts.’ When Sudhanva spoke these words, the daitya trembled like the leaf of a fig tree.[217] He went to the immensely energetic Kashyapa to consult him. Prahlada said, ‘O illustrious one! You are learned in the ways of dharma, for the gods, the demons and the brahmanas. Listen to this problem and tell me what dharma is. Please tell me, because I am asking you. In the hereafter, what worlds are attained by one who does not answer a question or answers it falsely?’ Kashyapa answered, ‘He who knows the answer to a question but does not answer it out of desire, anger or fear, brings upon himself a thousand of Varuna’s nooses. It takes an entire year for one of these nooses to be loosened. Therefore, one who knows the truth should speak the truth openly. When dharma is pierced with what is not dharma and goes to a sabha and those who are in the assembly hall do not take out the dart, it will pierce them. In a sabha where an act of censure is not condemned, half the demerit is attached to the head of that assembly, one fourth to the culprit and one fourth to those who do not condemn it. On the other hand, in a sabha where an act of censure is condemned, the head is free of sin and so are the ones assembled there, and demerit descends on the perpetrator. O Prahlada! Those who answer falsely to a question asked about dharma, destroy the merits of good deeds for seven generations of ancestors and seven generations of descendants. The grief of one whose property has been stolen, whose son has been killed, who has lost all in debt, who has been extorted by a king, or of a woman who has no husband, or of one distanced from his companions, or the misery of a co-wife, or of one deprived because of witnesses[218]—the lord of the thirty gods[219] has declared these miseries to be equal. He who speaks falsely obtains all these miseries. One becomes a witness because of what he has directly seen, heard or understood. Therefore, a witness who speaks the truth never deviates from dharma and artha.' Having heard Kashyapa's words, Prahlada spoke to his son. 'Sudhanva is superior to you, just as Angirasa is superior to me. Sudhanva's mother is superior to your mother. O Virochana! Sudhanva is the lord of your life.' Sudhanva replied, 'Since you have not deviated from dharma out of affection towards your son, I set your son free and he will live for a hundred years.' Hearing this about supreme dharma, let all those who are in this sabha reflect upon the supreme answer to Krishna's question."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Vidura's words, none of the kings uttered a single word. Karna told Duhshasana, "Take Krishna away to the quarters meant for the servant girls." The ascetic lady[220] was trembling, in shame and complained to the Pandavas, when Duhshasana dragged her in the middle of the sabha.'

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'Droupadi said, "I have a duty to perform, an act that I had not performed earlier, because dragged through the force of this powerful one, I had lost my senses. I offer my homage to all my superiors who are in this assembly of Kurus. Let it not be my crime that I have not done this before."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Dragged with even greater force, the ascetic lady was even more miserable. She did not deserve this. She fell down on the ground and lamented in the sabha.

'Droupadi said, "The assembled kings set their eyes on me in the arena of the svayamvara. Until being brought to this sabha, I have never been seen by anyone since, anywhere. One who has earlier not seen the wind or the sun in her house, has today been seen by this assembly of Kurus in the middle of the sabha. Earlier, the Pandavas have not allowed the wind to touch me in my house. They now bear it when I am touched by this evil-hearted one. Time has deviated. The Kurus permit their daughter and daughter-in-law, unworthy of such treatment, to be thus oppressed. Earlier, it has been heard that pure and chaste wives are not brought into the middle of a sabha. Where is the dharma of the lords of the earth? According to dharma, it has earlier been heard that wives are not brought into an assembly hall. That earlier eternal dharma has been lost among the Kouravas. How is it that the chaste wife of the Pandus, the sister of Parshata's son[221] and a friend to Vasudeva, has been brought into this assembly of kings? O Kouravas! I am Dharmaraja's wife and I was born in the same varna as he. Tell me whether I am a slave or not a slave, and I will act accordingly. O Kouravas! This mean one, the bringer of ill repute to the Kouravas, is firmly molesting me and I cannot bear it any longer. O kings! O Kouravas! I want you to answer, whatever you might think, and I will act accordingly. Have I been won or have I not been won?"

'Bhishma replied, "O fortunate one! I have already said that the course of dharma is supreme. Even the great-souled brahmanas in this world are incapable of comprehending its course. When a powerful man uses force, that is perceived as dharma by the world. But if a feeble one speaks about dharma, that is not regarded as dharma by others. I am incapable of answering your question certainly. The issue is subtle, deep, complicated and important. It is certain that all the Kurus have become addicted to avarice and delusion. Without a doubt, the destruction of the lineage will occur soon. O fortunate one! The lineage into which you have been born and the one in which you are established as a daughter-in-law, never deviates from the path of dharma, regardless of the disaster that might befall. O Panchali! Since you look at dharma, even though you are suffering, it is conduct that you yourself follow. Drona and the other elders, knowledgeable in dharma, sit here with lowered heads, as if their bodies are hollow.[222] It is my view that Yudhishthira is the supreme authority on the question. He should himself say whether you have been won or have not been won."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The kings who were there were scared of Dhritarashtra's son. They said nothing, good or bad, though they witnessed these many events and saw her crying, like a female osprey that has been hurt. On seeing that the sons and grandsons of the kings were silent, Dhritarashtra's son[223] smiled and spoke these words to the daughter of the king of Panchala, "O Yajnaseni! Let the question now be placed before the immensely powerful Bhima, Arjuna, Sahadeva and your husband Nakula. Let them reply to your words. O Panchali! Let them declare before all these aryas that Yudhishthira is not your lord. They must establish Dharmaraja as a liar.[224] You will then be freed from servitude. The great-souled son of Dharma is always established in dharma. He is the equal of Indra. Let him himself declare whether he is your lord or not. When he has spoken, you must quickly decide whom to love. All the Kouravas who are in this sabha are immersed in your affliction. Though they are aryas at heart, they cannot appropriately resolve the issue. They therefore look to your husbands for an answer." Hearing these words of the king of the Kurus, all those who were present in the assembly loudly applauded him. Some happily waved their garments. But sounds of "alas" were also heard. On hearing these pleasant words, all the kings in the assembly applauded the righteous act of the foremost among the Kurus. Turning their faces, all the kings looked at Yudhishthira. He was learned in the principles of dharma. What would he say? What would Bibhatsu, the Pandava who was undefeated in battle, say? What would Bhimasena and the twins say? They were curious and wondered. When the noise had died down, Bhimasena grasped his large arms, smeared with sandalwood paste, and spoke. "Had Dharmaraja Yudhishthira not been our superior and had he not been our lord of our lineage, we would not have tolerated this. He owns the merit of our austerities and he is even the lord of our lives. If he considers himself to have been won, then all of us have been won. But for that, no one who walks the ground of the earth with his feet would have escaped with his life after touching Panchali's hair. Look at my long and round arms, like iron clubs. Once inside them, not even Shatakratu can escape. But bound in the noose of dharma, out of respect for him[225] and restrained by Arjuna, I am not doing anything dreadful. If I am once freed by Dharmaraja, I will make my arms perform the act of swords and kill these evil sons of Dhritarashtra, the way a lion kills small animals.” At that, Bhishma, Drona and Vidura spoke and said, “Restrain yourself. With you, everything is possible.”’

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‘Karna said, “There are three who can own no property—a slave, a student and a woman. O fortunate one! You are the wife of a slave and have nothing of your own. You have no lord and are like the property of slaves. Enter[226] and serve us. That is the task for you in this household. O Princess! All the sons of Dhritarashtra are now your masters and not the sons of Pritha. O beautiful one! Choose another one for your husband, one who will not make you a slave through gambling. Remember the eternal rule among slaves. Sexual acts with one’s masters are never censured. Nakula, Bhimasena, Yudhishthira, Sahadeva and Arjuna have been won over. O Yajnaseni! Enter as a slave. The ones who have been won over can no longer be your husbands. Valour and virility are of no use to Partha[227] now. In the middle of the sabha, he has gambled away the daughter of Drupada, the king of Panchala.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing these words, Bhimasena couldn’t bear it any more. Like a man tormented, he breathed deeply. But he was devoted to the king[228] and tied down in the noose of dharma. He tried to burn him[229] down with the anger in his eye. Bhima said, “I cannot be angry at the words of the son of a suta.[230] It is truly the case that the dharma of slaves is upon us. O lord of men![231] Our enemies would not have dared hold me down, had you not staked her.” Hearing Radheya’s words, King Duryodhana then spoke to Yudhishthira, who sat silent, as if he had lost his senses. “O king! Bhima, Arjuna and the twins always follow your instructions. Answer the question as to whether you think Krishna has been won.” Having thus spoken to Kounteya, he became insolent with arrogance. He looked invitingly at Panchali and grasped his garment. Smiling at Radheya and tormenting Bhima, he exposed his left thigh to Droupadi, who was looking at him.[232] It was like the stem of a plantain tree, like the trunk of an elephant, as proud as the vajra and was marked with all the auspicious signs. On witnessing this, Vrikodara enlarged his red eyes. Among all the kings in the sabha, he spoke to them in compelling words. "If he fails to break that thigh with a club in a great battle, let Vrikodara not go to the worlds where his ancestors have gone." When he was thus enraged, sparks of fire issued out of every opening in his body, as if from the hollow of a tree that is on fire.

'Vidura said, "O kings! Look out for the extreme danger that emanates from Bhimasena. Watch, for this is like Varuna's noose. The great calamity that the gods had destined for the descendants of the Bharata lineage in ancient times, has come to pass. Dhritarashtra's sons have transgressed in gambling. They are now quarrelling about a lady in a sabha. There is great danger to what you have already obtained and what you wish to obtain.[233] The counsel of the Kurus is now based on evil advice. O Kurus! Know this to be dharma. If it is wrongly diagnosed, this entire assembly will be tainted. If this gambler had staked her before, he would not have been won and would have still been her master. But if a man puts up a stake when he is not the lord of anything, winning that stake is like obtaining riches in a dream. O Kurus! You have listened to Gandhari's son![234] But do not deviate from the path of dharma."

'Duryodhana responded, "I am willing to abide by Bhima's words, Arjuna's words and the words of the twins. O Yanjanseni! If they say that Yudhishthira wasn't their lord, then you will be freed from slavery."

'Arjuna said, "This great-souled King Dharmaraja, Kunti's son, was certainly our master when he first played with us as stake. But whose lord was he, once he had lost himself? O assembled Kurus! All of you should decide that."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At that time, in King Dhritarashtra's house, a jackal cried at the agnihotra.[235] O king! Donkeys brayed in response and from every direction, terrible birds joined in. Vidura, who was knowledgeable in everything, heard these terrible sounds, and so did

Subala's daughter.[236] Bhishma, Drona and the learned Goutama[237] heard and said, "Peace! Peace!" On hearing those terrible omens, Gandhari and the learned Vidura became miserable and told the king.[238] Then the king spoke these words. "O evil-minded Duryodhana! You have been destroyed. In this assembly hall of the bulls among the Kurus, in this sabha, you have used insolent words against a woman, especially a lawfully wedded wife like Droupadi." Having spoken these words, the intelligent Dhritarashtra stopped, for he was concerned about the welfare of his relatives. Using his knowledge and intelligence, he spoke these words, so as to pacify Krishna Panchali.

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Panchali! Choose from me whatever boon you desire. You are a chaste lady who follows supreme dharma and you are the most special of my daughters-in-law."

'Droupadi replied, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! If you wish to grant me a boon, I will choose this. The illustrious Yudhishthira, who follows all the ways of dharma, should not be a slave. Let these young boys, who do not know of Prativindhya's[239] intelligence, refer to him as the son of a slave when he arrives. He has been the son of a king earlier, like no man anywhere and ever. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He will die if he is brought up as the son of a slave."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O fortunate one! Ask for a second boon from me and I will grant it to you. My heart has convinced me that you do not deserve to obtain only a single boon."

'Droupadi replied, "With my second boon, I desire that Bhimasena, Dhananjaya, Nakula and Sahadeva, together with their chariots and their bows, should not be slaves."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O one who always follows the path of righteousness! Two boons do not honour you enough. Ask for a third. You are the best among all my daughters-in-law."

'Droupadi replied, "O illustrious one! Avarice destroys dharma and I am disinclined. O supreme among kings! I am not deserving of a third boon from you. It is said that the vaishya has one boon and a kshatriya and his wife can have two. O Indra among kings! A king can have three boons and a brahmana one hundred. O king! My husbands were reduced to an evil state, but have been rescued. They will obtain riches and prosperity through their own sacred deeds.”’

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‘Karna said, “Among all women in humankind, renowned for their beauty, we have not seen, nor heard, of the accomplishment of such a deed. When the sons of Pritha and the sons of Dhritarashtra were raging in anger, Krishna Droupadi brought solace. The sons of Pandu were immersed and drowning in an ocean without a boat. Panchali became their boat and brought them safely ashore.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard the words that a woman had become the salvation for the sons of Pandu, Bhimasena was extremely hurt. In the midst of the Kurus, he said unhappily, “Devala[240] has said that there are three stars[241] for a man—offspring, deeds and learning, since these are the source of creation. When the body has lost life and is hollow and impure, discarded by relatives, these are the three that survive. But our light has become dark, because our wife has been humiliated. O Dhananjaya! How can offspring from a defiled one serve any purpose?” Arjuna replied, “The Bharatas do not talk about words from inferior men, uttered or not uttered. They only converse about those from superior men. They remember good deeds and not enmity that has been shown. They know only the good because they have confidence in their own selves.” Bhima said, “Right now, I will kill all the enemies who have assembled here. O Indra among kings![242] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shall I tear them up by their roots? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Where is the need to debate this or suffer? Here and now, I am going to kill all of them and you can rule the earth without a rival.” Having said this, Bhimasena, surrounded by his younger brothers, glanced at his club, like a lion in the midst of deer. Partha,[243] whose deeds are unblemished, pacified him and cooled him. But the mighty-armed and valorous one streamed with anger. O lord of men! He was so angry that smoke, sparks and flaming fire issued from his ears and other openings in his body. His brows were furrowed and his face was terrible to behold, like Yama's form when destruction at the end of a yuga is near. 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yudhishthira restrained the mighty-armed one with his arms. He told him not to act in this way and to be quiet. Having restrained the mighty-armed one, whose eyes were red with anger, Yudhishthira approached his father Dhritarashtra, his hands joined in salutation.'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O king! You are our lord. Command us as to what we should do. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have always desired to be established under your rule."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "O Ajatashatru! Be fortunate. Go in peace and safety. On my instructions, rule your kingdom with your riches. But bear in mind the instructions that I, an old man, am giving. I have reflected on this and it is the supreme medication[244] for welfare. O Yudhishthira! O son! You know the subtle path of dharma. You are humble, immensely wise and serve your superiors. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Where there is intelligence, there is peace. Therefore, tread the path of serenity. A weapon does not cut what is not wood. But it does cut wood. Supreme men do not indulge in hostilities. They do not know enmity and see good qualities, leaving out bad qualities. O Yudhishthira! It is only the worst among men who use harsh words in a quarrel. Those who are average reply to such words, but the supreme among men never respond. Supreme men never converse about ill words, whether they are uttered or not uttered by inferior men.[245] They only remember good deeds and not deeds resulting from enmity. They only know the good because they have confidence in their own selves. In this assembly of good people, you have shown the character of an arya. O son! Do not take to your heart Duryodhana's harshness. Look at your mother Gandhari and me. We crave for your good qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Look at your old and blind father present before you. I wished to see my friends and judge the strengths and weaknesses of my sons. It was from this desire that I had earlier allowed the gambling match to take place. O king! There is no reason to feel sorry for the Kurus whom you rule. The intelligent Vidura, knowledgeable in all the sacred texts, is your adviser. There is dharma in you, valour in Arjuna, strength in Bhimasena and respect and service towards superior in the twins, foremost among men. O Ajatashatru! Be fortunate. Return to Khandavaprastha. Let there be fraternal love with your brothers.[246] May your mind always be established in dharma."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing these words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, supreme among those of the Bharata lineage, performed all the deeds that were appropriate for the occasion and left with his brothers. With Krishna,[247] they left in chariots that were like the clouds. In a happy frame of mind, they left for Indraprastha, supreme among cities.'

Section Twenty-Eight

Anudyuta Parva

This sections has 232 shlokas and seven chapters.

Chapter 291(66): 37 shlokas
Chapter 292(67): 21 shlokas
Chapter 293(68): 46 shlokas
Chapter 294(69): 21 shlokas
Chapter 295(70): 24 shlokas
Chapter 296(71): 47 shlokas
Chapter 297(72): 36 shlokas

As has been mentioned in the earlier section, the word dyuta means playing or gambling with dice, and also the resultant prize. The word anu *means after, behind, or in consequence of. So this section is about the aftermath of the gambling match.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'When they learnt that the Pandavas had been granted permission to leave with their gems, riches and treasures, what was the state of mind of Dhritarashtra's sons?'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! When he found out that the intelligent Dhritarashtra had given the permission, Duhshasana swiftly went to his brother.[1] O bull among the Bharata lineage! On arriving before Duryodhana and his advisers, the foremost of the Bharatas[2] spoke these miserable words, "O maharathas! That old man has made us lose everything that we had obtained with great difficulty. He has given those objects to our enemies." Then the proud Duryodhana, Karna and Soubala Shakuni got together and plotted against the Pandavas. They went to the intelligent King Dhritarashtra, Vichitravirya's son, and spoke to him these conciliatory words.

'Duryodhana said, "O king! Have you not heard what Brihaspati, the learned priest of the gods, told Shakra about policy? 'O destroyer of enemies! Enemies must be killed through every means possible, before they cause harm through war or force.'[3] We should offer homage to all the kings through riches obtained from the Pandavas. If we fight with them[4] thereafter, what reversal can befall us? If one places angry and venomous snakes that bring destruction on one's back and neck, how can one get rid of them? O father! The angry Pandavas will ride on chariots and hold their weapons. In their rage, they will destroy us like venomous serpents. Arjuna is attired in armour and has grasped his two supreme quivers. He is frequently picking up the Gandiva, breathing heavily and glancing around. We have heard that Vrikodara has swiftly raised his giant club and is riding on a chariot that has been yoked. Nakula has his sword and the shield marked with the signs of eight moons. Sahadeva and the king[5] have made their intentions clear through their gestures. They have ascended chariots that are stocked with many different kinds of arms. They have whipped up the teams of chariots and are ready to employ armies. We have caused them offence and they will not pardon us. Who among them will forgive Droupadi's oppression? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Be fortunate. We must again gamble with the Pandavas so as to send them to the forest. In this way, we will be able to bring them under our sway. Either they or we will be defeated in the gambling with dice and attired in deerskin, will enter the great forest for twelve years. The thirteenth year will have to be spent in an inhabited place, in disguise. If one is recognized, one will again have to go to the forest for twelve years. Either they or we will live here. Therefore, let the gamble begin. Let the dice be thrown again and let the Pandavas play. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is the most important task for us. This Shakuni is skilled and possesses all the knowledge about the secrets of dice. We will be firmly established in the kingdom and will have alliances. We will gather a vast, brave and invincible army and keep it content. O king! O scorcher of enemies! If they survive the vow after thirteen years, we will be able to defeat them. Let this find pleasure with you.”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “Then immediately bring them back, even if they have gone a long distance away. Let the Pandavas return and gamble with the dice again.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then Drona, Somadatta, the maharatha Bahlika, Vidura, Drona’s son,[6] the valorous son of the vaishya,[7] Bhurishrava, Shantanu’s son[8] and maharatha Vikarna collectively said, “Don’t have the gamble. Let there be peace.” But Dhritarashtra loved his son and ignored the desires of these well-wishers, all of whom could foresee the consequences. He summoned the Pandavas. O great king! Gandhari was always united with dharma. She was miserable because of affection towards her sons and spoke to Dhritarashtra, lord of the people. “When Duryodhana was born, the immensely intelligent Kshatta[9] told us that it would be better to send this destroyer of the lineage to the other world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as he was born, he howled like a jackal. O Kurus! Listen to this. He will be the destroyer of the lineage. O lord! Do not listen to the views of these wicked ones who are nothing but children. Do not become the cause for the terrible destruction of the lineage. Who will breach a dam[10] that has been constructed? Who will rekindle a dying fire? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons of Pritha are now established in peace. Who would want to anger them? O Ajamidha![11] You remember, but I am reminding you again. Either in good or in evil deeds, the sacred texts cannot instruct those who are evil in intelligence. O king! Nor will one with the intelligence of a child ever attain the wisdom of age. You should yourself be the leader to your sons. Let them not be torn apart from you. Let peace, dharma, the counsel of others and natural intelligence be your principles in framing policy. Prosperity built through cruelty is destroyed. If it is gently nurtured, it grows old and passes to sons and grandsons.” Having been thus addressed by Gandhari, who had seen the way of dharma, the great king replied, “It is certain that if the destruction of our lineage has come, I will not be able to prevent it. Let it be as they wish. Let the Pandavas return. Let those who are mine gamble again with the Pandavas.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On the intelligent King Dhritarashtra’s command, a Pratikamin spoke to Partha Yudhishthira, who had already gone a long distance away. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your father has said that the sabha has been covered with carpets. O king! O Pandava! The dice are ready. Come and play.” Yudhishthira replied, “Following the decisions of the creator, all beings attain good and evil. Even if I do not play again, neither can be prevented. This summon to gamble with the dice is the old one’s[12] command. Though I know that it will lead to ruin, I cannot disobey the command.” Having uttered these words, the Pandava returned with his brothers. Though he knew Shakuni’s resort to maya, Partha returned to gamble. Paining the hearts of their well-wishers, those maharathas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, again entered the sabha. They once again seated themselves, ready to gamble, ordained by destiny in the destruction of all the worlds.

‘Shakuni said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! The old one returned all your riches and I worship him for that. But listen to me, because there is one more stake with great riches. If we are defeated by you in gambling, we will enter the great forest for twelve years. We will wear the skins of ruru deer and spend a thirteenth year in disguise, but in inhabited places. If recognized, we will return to the forest for another twelve years. But if you are defeated by us, together with Krishna, you will live in the forest for twelve years, clad in deerskin. When the thirteenth year is over, as is proper, each will obtain his own kingdom back. O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With this stake, let us ready the dice and play another gamble with us.”

‘Those who were in the sabha said, “Alas! Why can’t his[13] relatives make him understand the great danger? The intelligent can understand this. But the bulls among the Bharatas do not understand it.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Partha, lord of men, heard the remarks of the people. But from shame and from his sense of dharma, again began to play with dice. The immensely intelligent one knew, but returned to the game, thinking about whether this would lead to the destruction of the Kurus. Yudhishthira said, “I am a king who always follows his own dharma. How can I not return when challenged? O Shakuni! I will play with you.” Shakuni replied, “O Pandavas! Ignore cattle, horses, many milch cows, innumerable sheep and goats, elephants, treasuries, gold and all the female and male slaves. There is a single stake of exile in the forest. Whether you or we lose, we will live in the forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is the stake with which we will play. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is one throw of the dice for a life in the forest.” Partha accepted the challenge and Soubala gathered the dice. Shakuni told Yudhishthira, “I have won.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been defeated, the sons of Pritha began to prepare for exile in the forest. One after another, they dressed themselves in deerskins and upper garments. Those destroyers of enemies had lost their kingdom and were attired in deerskin. On seeing them ready to leave for the forest, Duhshasana said, “The wheel has now begun to turn for the great-souled king, Dhritarashtra’s son. The Pandavas have been vanquished and have attained supreme misery. Today, the gods have come to us along their smooth celestial routes. We have become elders to our enemies in qualities, their elders and more numerous than they are. The Pandavas have descended into hell for a long time, for eternity. They have fallen from happiness and have lost their kingdom, destroyed for an eternity. The Pandavas were intoxicated with their strength and laughed at the sons of Dhritarashtra. They have been defeated and have lost their riches. They must go to the forest. They have to give up their multicoloured armour and their divine and radiant garments. All of them must now put on the skins of ruru deer. They have accepted the stake that Soubala offered. Their minds were always nourished by the thought that there were no men like them in the world. But today, the Pandavas will know themselves in adversity, like sesame seeds that are barren. O Kourava![14] Your stay will not be like that of great-minded ones.[15] The deerskins of the powerful Pandavas have not been consecrated.[16] Yajnasena was the immensely intelligent descendant of Somaka. He gave his daughter Panchali to the Pandavas. That was not a deed well done, because the Parthas, husbands of Yajnaseni, are impotent. O Yajnaseni! What pleasure will you derive, since those dressed in fine garments are now reduced to deerskins in the forest, without riches and without homes? Choose a husband who will bring you pleasure. All the Kurus who are assembled here are forbearing and self-controlled and have no dearth of riches. Choose one of them as your husband, so that you do not suffer from this change in fortune. All the Pandavas are now like sesame seeds without kernels, or deer that only have skin on them. They are like barren corn. Why do you show homage to the Pandavas who have fallen? Serving sterile sesame seeds is a waste of labour." Dhritarashtra's son uttered these cruel and harsh words in the hearing of the Parthas.

'Having heard these words, the impetuous Bhimasena suppressed his anger. Like a Himalayan lion dashing at a jackal, he suddenly approached him[17] and loudly rebuked him. "O cruel and evil one! You utter words that lead to failure. You are boasting among these kings because of the skills of Gandhara.[18] Just as your words pierce our hearts like arrows, I will make you remember all this when I pierce your heart in battle. I will send to Yama's abode all those who are your followers and protectors because of desire and avarice, together with all their relatives." Clad in his deerskin, Bhima uttered these angry words. But though immersed in grief, he stuck to the path of dharma. The other one[19] had no shame. He danced around in the middle of the Kurus and challenged him,[20] calling him a cow. Bhimasena said, "O Duhshasana! Cruel, harsh and rough words are possible for you. Who else will boast of riches obtained through deceit? If he does not rip apart your breast and drink your blood in battle, Partha Vrikodara will not go to the worlds attained by those with good deeds. In front of all the archers, I will kill the sons of Dhritarashtra in battle. I tell you truthfully that it is only after this that I will go to the abode of peace.” When the Pandavas were leaving the sabha, the evil king Duryodhana, in play and delight, sought to mimic through his own steps Bhimasena’s leonine gait. At that, Vrikodara half-turned his body towards him and said, “O stupid one! This will not make you successful. I will soon kill you, with your relatives, and give you my response by reminding you of this.” The powerful and proud Bhima witnessed this insult to himself, but controlled his anger. Following the king[21] in the assembly of Kurus, he spoke these words and went out, “I will be the slayer of Duryodhana. Dhananjaya will be the slayer of Karna. Sahadeva will kill Shakuni, the deceitful one with the dice. In the midst of this sabha, I will once again utter the words of grave and solemn import. The gods will surely make this true when there is a war between us. I will kill Suyodhana[22] with a club in battle. I will press down his head on the ground with my foot. As for this evil-hearted and cruel Duhshasana, whose valour is in his words, I will drink his blood like the king of deer.”[23]

‘Arjuna said, “The truthful Bhima’s resolutions are not known only in words. In the fourteenth year, what is going to occur will be witnessed. The earth will drink the blood of Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-hearted Shakuni and Duhshasana, as the fourth. O Bhimasena! On your instructions, I will kill in battle this jealous Karna, who uses his eloquence to praise the wicked.” For giving pleasure to Bhima, this is what Arjuna swears. “In battle, I will kill Karna and Karna’s followers with my arrows. With my sharp arrows, I will send to Yama’s abode all those other kings who will fight with me out of their folly. Let the Himalayas move from where they are established, let the sun be dimmed, let coolness be destroyed from the moon, if I deviate from this vow. In the fourteenth year, if Duryodhana does not restore the kingdom to us with proper honour, all this will certainly happen.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Partha said this, Sahadeva, Madri’s handsome and powerful son, grasped his own large arms. His eyes were red with anger and he sighed like a serpent. Desiring to kill Soubala, he uttered these words. “O foolish one! O destroyer of the fame of Gandhara! What you thought were dice are not dice, but sharp arrows that you have invited in battle. For you and your relatives, I will certainly accomplish what Bhima has said. I will do what I have to do and you can do everything that you wish to do. O Soubala! I will overpower you and swiftly kill you in battle with your relatives, if you stay and fight in accordance with the dharma of the kshatriyas.” O lord of the world! On hearing Sahadeva’s words, Nakula, the most handsome among men, uttered his words, “At this gambling match, Dhritarashtra’s sons have used harsh and insulting words towards Yajnaseni, so as to bring pleasure to Duryodhana. These sons of Dhritarashtra are evil and summoned by destiny, are soon to die. In their great numbers, I will show them the abode of Vaivasvata.[24] On Dharmaraja’s instructions and following Droupadi’s footsteps, I will soon relieve the earth of the sons of Dhritarashtra.” Having extended their arms to take these many oaths, all these tigers among men went to Dhritarashtra.’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “I bid farewell to all the descendants of the Bharata lineage, my old grandfather,[25] King Somadatta and the great king Bahlika. And to Drona, Kripa, all the other kings, Ashvatthama, Vidura, Dhritarashtra and to all of Dhritarashtra’s sons. And to Yuyutsu,[26] Sanjaya and all the others who are in this assembly. I am bidding farewell to all of you before I go. I will no doubt see you again on my return.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Out of shame, the righteous ones who were there could not say a word to Yudhishthira. But in their minds, they wished for the welfare of the intelligent one.

‘Vidura said, “Arya Pritha[27] is a princess. She should not go to the forest. She is delicate and old and has always been used to comfort. The illustrious one will remain in my house and be shown proper homage. O Parthas! Know this. And may you have welfare in every way. O

Yudhishthira! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know this to be my view that one who has been vanquished against dharma, never suffers from that defeat. You know dharma. Dhananjaya is knowledgeable in war. Bhimasena is the slayer of enemies. Nakula is one who collects wealth. Sahadeva is the one who administers. Dhoumya is supreme among those who know the brahman. Droupadi always follows the path of dharma and is skilled in the ways of dharma and artha. You love one another and always have kind words for each other. Because you are satisfied, you cannot be divided by enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This tranquillity brings welfare of every kind. No enemy can attack it, even if he is the equal of Shakra. In ancient times, when you lived in the Himalayas, Meru-Savarni[28] instructed you. So did Krishna Dvaipayana in the city of Varanavata, Rama[29] on the peak of Mount Bhrigu and Shambhu[30] by the Drishadvati.[31] Near Anjana, you have heard maharshi Asita. Dhoumya is your priest and there is Narada, who is always a witness. Do not give up the insight and intelligence that the rishis show homage to. O Pandava![32] With your intelligence you surpass Pururava, the son of Ila; with your strength you surpass the other kings; and in your service of dharma, you surpass the rishis. Set your minds on victory with Indra's resolution, Yama's control over anger, Kubera's charity and Varuna's self-control. In giving up one's self, you are like the moon. Obtain the sustenance of life from the water, forbearance from the earth, energy from the sun's disc and strength from the wind. Know that your own prosperity is due to the elements. May you be fortunate. May you be free from disease. I will see you return. O Yudhishthira! May you always act properly in all your deeds, in accordance with the principles of dharma and artha for times of calamity and distress. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I give you leave to depart. May you find what is good for you. I will see you again when you return, successful and content."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus addressed, the Pandava, whose valour was his truth, replied, "Thus shall it be." Bowing to Bhishma and Drona, Yudhishthira went away.'

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then, when she was ready to depart, in extreme grief, Krishna went to the famous Pritha and took her leave from her and the other ladies who were there. She paid her respects and showed homage to each, as each deserved, and then got ready to go. At that, great lamentations were heard from the inner quarters of the Pandavas. Kunti was extremely miserable on seeing that Droupadi was about to leave. She uttered these words, in a voice that was choked with grief. “O child! Do not grieve because of this great calamity that has befallen you. You know very well the dharma for women and you also possess good character and conduct. O one with the sweet smiles! I need not instruct you about the duties towards your husbands. Two families[33] have been graced by your qualities and righteous conduct. The Kurus in the assembly hall are fortunate that they have not been burnt down by your rage. O unblemished one! Blessed by my thoughts about you, travel on a route that has no difficulties. The minds of good women are not distorted by what is inevitable. You are protected by the dharma of your superiors and you will swiftly obtain prosperity. When you live in the forest, always keep an eye on my son, Sahadeva, so that his mind does not sink under this great calamity that has come.” The queen[34] replied, “So shall it be.” She went out, her hair undone, in a single garment that was stained with blood and marked with her flowing tears.[35]

‘As she wept and left, Pritha followed her, in grief. She saw all her sons, deprived of their ornaments and garments. Their bodies were covered in the skins of ruru deer and their faces were lowered in shame. They were surrounded by delighted enemies and mourning well-wishers. Driven by affection, she approached all her sons in that state. In words of great lamentation, she spoke to them and their relatives. “You have always followed good dharma. You have always been adorned by fortitude in conduct. You have never been mean. You have always been firm and devoted. You have always been respectful of the gods. Why should this calamity befall you? Why should there be this reversal in fortune? I do not see whose envy and wickedness have led to this.

Because I have given birth to you, all this may be because of my ill fortune. So despite possessing supreme qualities, you are suffering the oppression of limitless grief. You do not lack in valour, strength, courage, energy and fortitude. But thin of body, and deprived of your riches, how will you live in that desolate forest? If I had known that you were destined to live in the forest, after Pandu's death, I would not have brought you down from the Shatashringa Mountains to Gajasahrya.[36] I think your father was fortunate. His mind was set on austerities and wisdom. His mind was set on going to heaven before he encountered misery because of his sons. I think that Madri, knowledgeable in dharma and virtuous in every way, was fortunate. She had the foresight of knowing what was going to happen and attained supreme salvation. Love and thoughts and purpose determined my decision. Alas on my love for life. I suffer all this misery because of that." When Kunti lamented in this way, the Pandavas comforted her and showed her homage. Unhappily, they then set out for the forest. Vidura and the others, who were themselves aggrieved, consoled the afflicted Kunti. Explaining the reasons, and thus suffering even more, they slowly led her to Kshatta's[37] house. King Dhritarashtra's mind was immersed in grief. He asked Kshatta to come to him at once. So Vidura went to Dhritarashtra's house. In great anxiety, Dhritarashtra, lord of men, questioned him.'

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'Dhritarashtra asked, "How is Kounteya Dharmaraja Yudhishthira leaving? How about Bhimasena, Savyasachi and the two sons of Madri? O Kshatta! How about Dhoumya and the ascetic Droupadi? I wish to hear everything. Describe to me every act of theirs."[38]

'Vidura replied, "Kunti's son Yudhishthira is departing, covering his face with his garment. Pandava Bhima is spreading his long arms, as he goes. Savyasachi is following the king,[39] scattering sand. Madri's son Sahadeva has smeared his face, as he goes. Nakula, the most handsome man in this world, follows the king. His mind is despondent and he has smeared his entire body with dust. The large-eyed and beautiful Krishna follows the king. She is weeping and has covered her face with her hair. O lord of the earth! Dhoumya is chanting terrible sama hymns connected with Yama and as he treads the path, he is holding kusa grass in his hand.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “The Pandavas are going in many different forms. O Vidura! Please tell me why they are going in these different ways.”

‘Vidura replied, “Though your sons robbed him of his kingdom and his riches through deceit, the mind of the intelligent Dharmaraja does not deviate from dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This king is always kind to the sons of Dhritarashtra. Though he has been deprived through deceit, he refuses to open his eyes in anger. ‘I will burn these people down if I look at them through my terrible eyes.’ Thinking this, the Pandava king goes with his face covered. Now listen to me, as I tell you why Bhima is going in this way. O bull among the Bharata lineage! ‘There is no one equal to me in strength of arms.’ Knowing this, Bhima spreads his long arms as he goes. Proud of the strength of his arms, he displays his arms. He wishes to perform acts on the enemy that do justice to those arms. Kunti’s son Arjuna is capable of using both arms to shower arrows. Savyasachi follows the king, scattering sand. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Just as he scatters sand, in that fashion, he will release showers of arrows on his enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! ‘Let no one recognize my face today.’ Thinking this, Sahadeva travels with a smeared face. ‘Along the route, I may steal the hearts of women who look at me.’ Thinking this, Nakula travels with his entire body covered in dust. Droupadi is attired in a single garment. She is weeping and she is in her menses. Her hair has not been braided and her garment is smeared with blood. She has spoken these words. ‘In the fourteenth year, the wives of those who have caused my present plight, will find their husbands dead, their sons dead, their relatives dead and their beloved ones dead. Their bodies will be covered with the blood of their relatives. Their hair will not be braided and they will be in their menses. It is only after offering water to the dead that those aryas[40] will enter Gajasahrya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhoumya is the self-controlled priest. He is chanting sama hymns connected with Yama and is leading them from the front, towards the south-west. He holds *darbha* grass.[41] 'When the descendants of the Bharata lineage have been killed in battle, the elders of the Kuru clan will chant these sama hymns.' Dhoumya is proceeding with these words. 'Alas! Alas! Our lords are leaving. Witness this great misery.' This is what the miserable citizens are saying in every direction. The intelligent Kounteyas are leaving for the forest in this fashion, indicating through these signs and marks the resolutions that exist in their hearts. As those foremost among men are leaving Gajasahrya, lightning is flashing in the cloudless sky and the earth is trembling. O lord of the earth! Rahu has swallowed the sun, though this is not the time of *parvani*.[42] Meteors are descending throughout the city. Predatory animals are screaming, together with vultures, jackals and crows, in the temples of the gods, in sanctuaries and from the tops of walls and houses. O king! These are the great and terrible portents as the Pandavas leave for the forest. They indicate the doom of the Bharatas, since you have acted in accordance with evil counsel."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Narada now appeared in the sabha and stood before the Kurus. He was surrounded by maharshis and spoke these terrible words, "In the fourteenth year from now, because of Duryodhana's crime and through the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, the Kouravas who are here will be destroyed." Having uttered these words, the supreme of devarshis, graced with the great prosperity of the brahman, arose to the sky and swiftly disappeared.

'At this, Duryodhana, Karna and Soubala Shakuni thought that Drona would be their refuge and offered him the kingdom.[43] Drona spoke these words to the evil Duryodhana, Duhshasana, Karna and all the other Bharatas. "The brahmanas have said that the Pandavas, sons of the gods, should not be killed.[44] But with all my strength, I will do whatever I can for those who seek refuge with me. With all their hearts and devotion, the sons of Dhritarashtra and their king have come to me and I cannot abandon them. Destiny is always supreme. In accordance with dharma, the sons of Pandu have been defeated and have left for the forest. The Kouravas will live in the forest for twelve years. They will practise brahmacharya. But since they will fall prey to anger and intolerance, the Pandavas will return with enmity and be the cause of great grief to me. In a feud over friendship, I once dislodged Drupada from his kingdom. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![45] In his anger, he performed a sacrifice to obtain a son who would kill me. Through the austerities of Yaja and Upayaja,[46] he obtained a son named Dhrishtadyumna from the fire and the slender-waisted Droupadi from the middle of the altar. He[47] was given by the gods and has radiance like that of the fire. He was born with bow, arrows and armour. Since I am subject to the dharma of earth, I am possessed by great fear for him. This son of Prishata,[48] a bull among men, is now on their side. There will be great fear to my life if I ever have to battle him. He is famous in the world because it has been heard that he will kill me. Because of your deed, that time of destruction has arrived. Therefore, without any loss of time, do what is best for you. This happiness will last for a short time, like the shade of a palm tree in the winter. Perform great sacrifices, enjoy your pleasures and donate. In the fourteenth year, a great calamity will befall you. O Duryodhana! Depending on your inclinations, you have heard or understood. If you so desire, use pacification with the Pandavas." On hearing Drona's words, Dhritarashtra said, "O Kshatta![49] What the preceptor[50] has said is true. Go back to the Pandavas. If they do not return, offer respect to the Pandavas. Let these fortunate sons go with arms, chariots and infantry."'[51]

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Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! When the Parthas were defeated in gambling with the dice and had left for the forest, Dhritarashtra began to worry a lot. Dhritarashtra, lord of the people, was seated, worrying, sighing and with his mind distracted. At that time, Sanjaya[52] told him, “O lord of the earth! You have obtained the entire earth, with all its riches. O king! The Pandavas have left from the kingdom. Why are you grieving?” Dhritarashtra replied, “The maharatha Pandavas are terrible in battle and have allies. Knowing that the enmity will occur, should one not sorrow?” Sanjaya said, “O king! This great enmity is the consequence of your great deed. There will be complete destruction of the entire world and all the relatives. Though restrained by Bhishma, Drona and Vidura, your shameless and evil-minded son Duryodhana sent the Pratikamin, the son of a suta, to bring the Pandavas’ beloved wife Droupadi, the follower of dharma.”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “When the gods wish to defeat a man, they first take his intelligence away, so that his vision becomes distorted. When destruction is nigh and intelligence is clouded, an improper course of action appears as the proper course of action and sticks to the heart. That which is evil appears in the form of that which is good and that which is good appears in the form of that which is evil. When destruction is near, they appear thus and one is content. Destiny does not arrive with a club and strike one on the head with it. The strength of time is that it makes the opposite seem to be right. By dragging the ascetic Panchali into the middle of the sabha, those evil ones have caused this terrible calamity that makes the hair on the body stand up. She is beautiful and she is not born from a womb.[53] She has been born from the fire. She is illustrious and is knowledgeable in all dharma. Who but a deceitful gambler[54] could overpower her and drag her into the middle of an assembly hall? Following the dharma of women,[55] the one with the beautiful hips was covered in blood. Panchali was in single garment. She looked at the Pandavas, robbed of their riches, deprived of their thoughts, robbed of their wife, robbed of their prosperity, deprived of all their pleasures and reduced to a state of servitude. Bound by the noose of dharma, they were unable to exhibit their valour. Among all the assembled Kurus, Duryodhana and Karna spoke harsh and insulting words to the angry, defiant and miserable Krishna. O Sanjaya! The earth itself would be burnt down because of those wretched eyes. Would anything have been left of my sons? On seeing Krishna being dragged into the sabha, all the women of the Bharata lineage, who had assembled with Gandhari, loudly cried out in anguish. No agnihotras were offered in the evening, because the brahmanas were enraged at Droupadi's oppression. Terrible winds began to blow, as if the destruction of the beings had arrived. Terrible meteors descended from the sky and Rahu swallowed the sun. This was not the time of parvani. But a terrible fear was created in the minds of the subjects. Fearful fires blazed from the places where chariots are kept. All the flagstaffs crumbled, signifying disaster for the Bharatas. In Duryodhana's agnihotra, jackals howled in terrible tones. From all the directions, donkeys brayed back in response. O Sanjaya! Bhishma then left with Drona and so did Kripa, Somadatta and the maharatha Bahlika. At that time, prompted by Vidura, I told Krishna that I would grant her whatever boon she desired. Panchali then chose the Pandavas, whose energy is unlimited. I then allowed them to leave, with their chariots and their bows. It is then that the immensely wise Vidura, who knows all the dharma, spoke, 'O descendants of the Bharata lineage! This dragging of Krishna into the assembly hall will bring about your destruction. The daughter of the king of Panchala is the supreme Shri. It was decreed by destiny that Panchali would marry the Pandavas. The angry Parthas will never pardon her humiliation. Nor will the mighty archers, the Vrishnis, or the immensely energetic Panchalas. They are protected by Vasudeva, always fixed on the truth. Surrounded by the Panchalas, Bibhatsu will return. Among them, there will be the immensely strong and mighty archer Bhimasena. He will come whirling his club, like the staff of death. No kings will be able to withstand the sound of the intelligent Partha's Gandiva, or the speed of Bhima's club. Therefore, it seems to me that one should always have peace, and not war, with the Parthas. I have always thought that the Pandavas are stronger than the Kurus. With the force of his arms, Bhima killed in battle the immensely radiant and powerful King Jarasandha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You must ensure peace with the Pandavas. Without any hesitation, act impartially vis-à-vis the two parties.' O son of Gavalgana![56] Thus did Kshatta utter words that were steeped in dharma and artha. But out of the affection I bear for my son, I did not accept these words.”’

Aranyaka Parva

The word aranya *means forest and in the eighteen-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Aranyaka Parva comes third. This parva is about the Pandavas' sojourn in the forest. The word vana also means forest and this parva is also sometimes called Vana Parva. Aranyaka Parva has 299 chapters and is the second longest parva after Shanti Parva. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 29 through 44 constitute Aranyaka Parva. Following the practice we have followed, there are two numbers we have used when we give numbers to the chapters. The first number is a consecutive one, from the beginning, and the second number (within brackets) is the numbering within Aranyaka Parva.*

Section Twenty-Nine

Aranyaka Parva

This section has has 327 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 298(1): 42 shlokas
Chapter 299(2): 79 shlokas
Chapter 300(3): 33 shlokas
Chapter 301(4): 10 shlokas
Chapter 302(5): 20 shlokas
Chapter 303(6): 22 shlokas
Chapter 304(7): 24 shlokas
Chapter 305(8): 23 shlokas
Chapter 306(9): 12 shlokas
Chapter 307(10): 23 shlokas
Chapter 308(11): 39 shlokas

The first section within Aranyaka Parva is also called Aranyaka Parva, the word aranyaka having already been explained.

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Janamejaya asked, 'O supreme among brahmanas! When the Parthas were defeated at the gambling match through deceit by the evil-hearted sons of Dhritarashtra and their advisers and were angered, and also heard the harsh words uttered by those who created the enmity, what did the Kouravyas, my ancestors and supreme among men, do? Equal to Shakra in their energy, but having been suddenly dislodged from their riches and confronted with great misery, how did the Parthas spend their time in the forest? Who followed those who had attained that great misfortune? What did they eat? How did they conduct themselves?

Where did those great-souled ones dwell? O best among brahmanas! How did twelve years pass in the forest for those great-souled ones who were the destroyers of enemies? How did the princess,[1] supreme among women, immensely fortunate and always devoted to her husbands, one who always spoke the truth, endure the terrible misery of living in the forest, though she did not deserve it? O one blessed with the power of austerities! I wish to hear about the characters of those greatly radiant and energetic ones. O brahmana! Tell me, because my curiosity is great.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been defeated at the gamble with dice by the evil-hearted sons of Dhritarashtra and their advisers, the Pandavas were angered and left Gajasahrya. They emerged through the gate of the city known as Vardhamana. With Krishna[2] and with all their weapons, they headed towards the north. Indrasena[3] and the other servants, fourteen in number, followed them in swift chariots, accompanied by their wives. On learning that they were leaving, the citizens were overwhelmed with great grief. They assembled together, and speaking to each other, fearlessly censured Bhishma, Vidura, Drona and Goutama[4] repeatedly. "Everything in this lineage is insecure. We are not secure. Our houses are not secure, when the evil Duryodhana, aided by Soubala, Karna and Duhshasana, are covetous of the kingdom. When there is no lineage, there is no good conduct and no dharma, how can there be happiness? Duryodhana hates his superiors. He has abandoned good conduct and his well-wishers. He is avaricious of riches and insolent. He is mean and his character is reprehensible. Where Duryodhana is king, the earth cannot remain healthy. Let us all go where the virtuous Pandavas are going. They are great-souled and not given to wrath. They have control over their senses and enemies. They are modest and the performers of deeds. Their conduct is in accordance with dharma." Having spoken these words, all together, they followed the Pandavas.

'With hands joined in salutation, they spoke to the sons of Kunti and the sons of Madri. "O fortunate ones! Where will you go, leaving us who share in your grief? We will follow you, wherever you are going. We are greatly distressed at learning that you have been defeated by reprehensible enemies, in ways that are not in accordance with dharma. All of us are anxious. We have always been devoted to your happiness and well-being. We are devoted and attached to you. We have always been engaged in that which brings you pleasure. We do not wish to be completely destroyed by living in a kingdom that is ruled by a bad king. O bulls among men! Listen. We will tell you about merits and demerits that result from associating with those who possess good qualities and evil ones. Garments, water, sesame seeds and the ground become fragrant through association with flowers. It is the same from association with good qualities. Association with foolish ones gives birth to a net of delusion. Regular association with the righteous gives birth to dharma. Therefore, those who desire equanimity should associate with the wise, the old, the good, the austere and the righteous. One should serve those who are pure in three ways—learning, birth and deeds. They are superior to the sacred texts. Without performing rites, we will obtain merit by associating with righteous and meritorious ones, just as one obtains demerit by serving evil ones. The sight and touch of, and conversing and sitting with, evil ones, diminish those who follow dharma and make men unsuccessful. Association with mean ones diminishes the intelligence of men. Association with those who are medium gives birth to mediocrity and association with the best makes one supreme. There are qualities that are talked about in the world as giving rise to dharma, kama and artha. These have been mentioned in the Vedas and are sanctioned by the good and are the sources of conduct in the world. These good qualities exist in you, separately and collectively. We wish to ensure our welfare and desire to live among those who possess these good qualities." Yudhishthira replied, "We are fortunate that our subjects, with the brahmanas at the forefront, driven by affection and compassion, credit us with good qualities that we do not possess. With my brothers, I am requesting you. For the sake of that affection and compassion, do not act otherwise. Our grandfather Bhishma, the king,[5] Vidura, our mother and all our well-wishers are there in Nagasahrya. If you wish to do something for our pleasure, all of you must unite to take care of them and protect them. They are beside themselves with sorrow and grief. You have assembled from distant places. Please return now. It is certain that we will meet again. Let your minds be driven by affection for our kin, whom we leave in your care. Please perform this act, because that is the act that is placed supreme in my heart. If you do this, you will satisfy me and show me homage.” Having been thus advised by Dharmaraja, the subjects raised a terrible sound of wailing. “Alas! O king!” They were miserable and extremely grief-stricken. Remembering the good qualities of the Parthas, though unwilling, they returned after meeting the Pandavas.

‘When the citizens returned, the Pandavas ascended their chariots and went to a large banyan tree named Pramana, situated on the banks of the Jahnavi.[6] The Pandavas reached the banyan tree at the close of the day. The brave warriors touched the pure water and spent the night there. Stricken with grief, they spent the night there, subsisting only on water. Some brahmanas had followed them out of the love they bore for them, with their disciples and relatives. Some maintained the fire,[7] while others did not. Surrounded by those who knew the brahman, the king[8] was radiant. At the hour that is both beautiful and terrible,[9] the fires were lit and after chanting the name of the brahman, conversations continued. In voices that were as soft as those of swans, the foremost among the brahmanas consoled the king, supreme among Kurus, and they spent the entire night.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Those performers of unsullied deeds[10] were ready to leave for the forest. When night had passed and morning dawned, the brahmanas who subsisted by begging for alms stood before them. At that, Kunti’s son Yudhishthira spoke to them. “We have been robbed of everything. We have been robbed of our kingdom. We have been robbed of our prosperity. In our sorrow, we will now go to the forest and live on fruit, roots and meat. The forest is full of many dangers and has many predators and serpents. It seems to me that without a doubt, you will face many difficulties there. The sufferings of brahmanas overwhelm even the gods, not to speak of men. O brahmanas! Return where you wish to go." The brahmanas replied, "O king! We are ready to travel where you are travelling. Please do not abandon those who are devoted to you and those who can see what true dharma is. The gods themselves show compassion for their devotees, especially brahmanas who follow good conduct." Yudhisthira said, "O brahmanas! I too always have supreme devotion towards brahmanas. But the difficulties of my associates overwhelm me. My brothers are capable of collecting fruit, roots and deer. But they are deluded by the misery and the sorrow that has overtaken them, by the oppression faced by Droupadi and by the robbing of the kingdom. Since they are so miserable and wretched, I cannot impose painful tasks on them."[11] The brahmanas replied, "O lord of the earth! Do not have any thoughts in your heart about our subsistence. We will follow you. We will find our food ourselves in the forest. We will bring you good fortune through our meditation and our prayers. We will entertain you in the forest through stories and ourselves be happy." Yudhishthira said, "There is no doubt that it will be this way. We will find pleasure in associating with brahmanas. But because of the lowly condition to which I have been reduced, I only see my own inferiority. How can I witness all of you collecting your own food and suffer undeserved difficulties because of your affection for me? Shame on the evil sons of Dhritarashtra!" Having said this, the king sat down on the ground and began to sorrow.

'There was a learned brahmana named Shounaka. He was skilled in *samkhya yoga*[12] and he spoke to the king, "There are a thousand reasons for grief and a hundred reasons for fear that delude people every day. But not those who are learned. Intelligent ones like you do not get caught in deeds that are counter to knowledge and afflicted by many faults, so that welfare is destroyed. O king! The eight[13] forms of knowledge exist in you. This is the best of everything and destroys evil, and is in conformity with *shruti*[14] and *smriti.*[15] When calamities arise because of penury or hardship, or are caused by the deeds of kin, learned ones like you don't become miserable because of physical or mental sorrow. Listen. I will recount to you the shlokas that the great-souled Janaka[16] chanted in earlier times, for imparting stability to one's soul. 'The world is engulfed in two kinds of misery, those resulting from the mind and from the body. Individually and collectively, listen to the means of alleviating them. There are four kinds of reasons behind physical sorrow—disease, the touch of something painful, labour and distance from loved things. Mental and physical pain can be reduced through treatment, or by not thinking about them. These are the two courses of action. That is the reason intelligent physicians first try to pacify mental pain by saying that which brings pleasure and offering objects that bring pleasure. Just as a hot iron ball affects the water in a pot, mental pain affects the body. Just as water quenches fire, knowledge quenches mental ailments. When the mind is pacified, the body is also pacified. The root of all mental ailments is affection. Affection makes a man attached and that leads to misery. Attachment is the root of all unhappiness and attachment causes fear. Every kind of unhappiness and happiness results from attachment. It is attachment that leads to the desire for material objects. Both are evil, but the former has been said to be more serious.[17] The fire in a hollow tree burns down the entire tree, right to the roots. Like that, the evil of attachment, no matter how small, destroys dharma and artha. He who has withdrawn is not detached. But one who can see the faults[18] from proximity is dispassionate, bears no hatred and is detached from objects. Therefore, one should not be attached to one's allies, one's friends or the riches one has accumulated. Learning destroys attachment to that which results from one's body. Like water on a lotus leaf, one who is united with the learning of the sacred texts has controlled his soul and is not touched by affection. A man overcome with attachment is immersed in desire. From the desire that is created, thirst expands.[19] Thirst is everything evil and always disturbs man. It is terrible and leads to a lot that is against dharma. It ties one down in sin. Those who cannot give it up are deluded. It does not decay with the body's decay. It is like a fatal disease. He who discards this thirst, becomes happy. This thirst has no beginning and no end. It destroys men from inside their bodies. Like a fire that has no origin but has arisen, it destroys. Like kindling is destroyed by the fire that it has created, one who has not controlled his soul is destroyed through his natural avarice. Just as those who are alive are scared of death, those who have riches are always scared of the king, water, fire, thieves and relatives. A meat in the air is devoured by birds, on the ground by predatory beasts and in the water by fish. But one with riches is devoured everywhere. To some men, riches are the source of disaster. A man who is addicted to the superiority of riches will never attain superiority. Therefore, the acquisition of riches always increases the delusion of the mind and is the source of miserliness, insolence, vanity, fear and anxiety. The wise ones know that riches are the source of miseries in bodies. There is misery in earning riches, preserving it and in its decay. Its destruction brings unhappiness. Its expenditure brings unhappiness. Even then, people murder for riches. There is unhappiness in giving up riches. But there is unhappiness also in preserving it. Since its possession brings such misery, one should not think about its loss. Deluded ones are always dissatisfied, the learned are content. There is no end to thirst. Contentment is the supreme happiness. The learned ones know that youth, beauty, life, collection of riches, prosperity and association with loved ones are temporary and never crave for these. Therefore, one should refrain from accumulation of riches and consequent unhappiness. One who has accumulated riches is never seen without difficulties. For this reason, those who are righteous praise those who have no desire for wealth. It is better not to touch mud than wash after touching it.’[20] O Yudhisthira! Therefore, you should not have a desire for riches. If you wish to act in accordance with dharma, free yourself from desire for riches.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O brahmana! I do not desire riches because I wish to enjoy them after acquisition. I do not desire them out of avarice. I desire them so that I can support the brahmanas. O brahmana! How can someone like me, who is in the householder stage, fail to support and sustain those who follow him? It is taught that one must divide among all beings. One who is a householder should give to those who do not cook themselves.[21] The houses of good men should never lack four things—grass, ground, water and welcoming words. Those who are sick must be given a bed.[22] Those who are tired of standing must be given a seat.[23] Those who are thirsty must be given a drink and those who are hungry must be given food. One's eyesight must be given.[24] One's heart must be given. One's pleasant words must be given. One must stand up to greet the guest and offer him proper homage. Agnihotra, bulls, kin, guests, relatives, sons, wives and servants—burn down those who do not offer homage. No one should cook food only for one's own self. Nor should animals be killed in vain. No one should eat food oneself, without having offered it in the proper fashion. In the morning and in the evening, let food be spread out on the ground for dogs, *svapacha*s,[25] birds and the Vishvadevas.[26] Eating the food that is left is like partaking of ambrosia. What is left at the end of a sacrifice is also like ambrosia. It is said that one who leads the life of a householder while following these practices follows the supreme dharma. O brahmana! What do you think?"

'Shounaka said, "Alas! It is a great misery that the world is full of contradictions. The evil find satisfaction in that which scares the good. Driven by delusion and attachment, slaves to gratification of their senses, foolish men perform many acts for the sake of the penis and the stomach. Like a charioteer who has lost control over evil and wild horses, even sensible men lose their bearing and are led astray by their senses. When any of the six senses[27] comes close to an object, preconceived desire springs up in the mind and manifests itself through them. When the mind is directed towards enjoying the object of the senses, attachment and resolution are created. That resolution is the seed of desire towards an object, and pierced, one falls into the flames of avarice, like a moth in its greed for light. Thus, immersed in the great delusion of happiness and deluded by the desire for pleasure and food, he does not know his own self. He descends on earth, from one womb to another. As a result of ignorance, karma and thirst, he is whirled around in a wheel, changing from one being to another—from Brahma to a blade of grass, born repeatedly in water, on the ground and in the sky. This is the path of those who don't know. Listen to that of the ones who know. This is the way of those who are always devoted to superior dharma and seek to free themselves. These are the words of the Vedas. Act, but be detached from the act. According to this, one should not practise any dharma because of desire. It has been said that there is an eightfold path towards dharma—sacrifices, studying, gifts, austerities, truthfulness, forbearance, self-control and lack of avarice. Of these, the first four are established in *pitriyana*.[28] Therefore, one should always act because a deed has to be done, not because of desire. The second four represent *devayana*,[29] always followed by those who are virtuous. One whose soul is pure should always travel along these eight paths—through correct resolution and association, correct deprivation of the senses, correct observance of the specific vows, correct serving of superiors, correct regulation of food, correct studying and dissemination, correct renunciation of rituals and correct restraining of thoughts. Those who have conquered life[30] perform their deeds in this way. It is because they are united with the powers of yoga and are bereft of attachment and hatred that gods like the Rudras, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Vasus and the Ashvins are able to sustain beings and possess prosperity. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Like them, you must attain great equanimity. You must seek to obtain success in austerities and in yoga. Through your deeds, you have already obtained success for your father and your mother. So that you can sustain the brahmanas, you must now seek success in your austerities. Those who obtain such success can obtain whatever they wish because of that. Therefore, practise austerities. Accomplish everything that your soul desires."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Shounaka, Kunti's son Yudhishthira went to his priest and in the midst of his brothers, said, “These brahmanas are learned in the Vedas. When I left, they followed me. I am immersed in many miseries and do not have the powers to sustain them. I cannot abandon them. But nor do I have the powers to give to them. O illustrious one! Please tell me. What is the right course of action for me?” Dhoumya, supreme among those who uphold dharma, thought for a moment about what was the right course of action in accordance with dharma. He then spoke these words to Yudhishthira, “In ancient times, when beings were created, they suffered from great hunger. Like their own father, Savita[31] felt compassion for them. While proceeding on his northern course,[32] he used his energy to suck up the juices. Then, returning on his southern course,[33] the sun placed them in the earth. When he became lord of the fields, the lord of the herbs[34] collected the sun’s energy and created the clouds. Sprinkled with the moon’s energy, it is the sun himself who is created as the herbs with six flavours.[35] It is this that provides food to all beings on earth. Thus, it is the sun that provides food for sustaining the lives of all beings. He is the father of all beings. Therefore, seek refuge with him. All great-souled kings, pure in birth and in deeds, save all their subjects by resorting to great austerities. Bhima,[36] Kartavirya, Vainya and Nahusha—all of them saved their subjects through austerities, yoga and meditation. O one with dharma in your heart! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have been purified through your deeds. Like that, basing yourself in dharma, you must sustain the brahmanas by resorting to austerities.” Having been thus addressed by Dhoumya in words that were appropriate for the time, the pure-souled Dharmaraja undertook supreme austerities. After touching the waters of the Ganga and the wind, the one with dharma in his soul resorted to yoga and pranayama, controlled his senses and lived on air, worshipping Divakara[37] with offerings of flowers and fireless oblations.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘For the sake of the brahmanas, how did King Yudhishthira, bull among the Kurus, worship Surya, whose valour is extraordinary?’

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! After purifying yourself, listen attentively to my words. O Indra among kings! Find the time and I will tell you everything in detail. O immensely intelligent one! Listen to the one hundred and eight pure names[38] that were recited by Dhoumya to Partha, best among great-souled ones—Surya, Aryama, Bhaga, Tvashta, Pusha, Arka, Savita, Ravi, Gabhastiman, Aja, Kala, Mrityu, Dhata, Prabhakara, Prithivi, Apa, Teja, Kha, Vayu, Parayana, Soma, Brihaspati, Shukra, Budha, Angaraka, Indra, Vivasvat, Diptamshu, Shuchi, Shouri, Shanaischara, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Skanda, Vaishravana, Yama, Vaidyuta, Jathara, Aindhana, Tejaspati, Dharmadhvaja, Vedakarta, Vedanga, Vedavahana, Krita, Treta, Dvapara, Kali, Sarvamarashraya, Kala, Kashtha, Muhurta, Paksha, Masa, Ritu, Samvatsarakara, Ashvattha, Kalachakra, Vibhavasu, Purusha, Shashvata, Yogi, Vyaktavyakta, Sanatana, Lokadhyaksha, Prajadhyaksha, Vishvakarma, Tamonuda, Varuna, Sagara, Amshu, Jimuta, Jivana, Ariha, Bhutashraya, Bhutapati, Sarvabhutanishevita, Mani, Suvarna, Bhutadi, Kamada, Sarvatomukha, Jaya, Vishala, Varada, Shighraga, Pranadharana, Dhanvantari, Dhumaketu, Adideva, Aditya,[39] Dvadashatma, Aravindaksha, Pita, Mata, Pitamaha, Svargadvara, Prajadvara, Mokshadvara, Trivishtapa, Dehakarta, Prashantatma, Vishvatma, Vishvatomukha, Characharatma, Sukshmatma, Maitra and Vapushanvita. These are the sacred one hundred and eight names of the great-souled Surya, all deserving of praise.[40] They were recounted by the great-souled Shakra. Narada obtained them from Shakra and Dhoumya obtained them later. Yudhishthira got them from Dhoumya and obtained all that he desired.

'You who are served by the masses of the gods, the ancestors and the yakshas. You who are worshipped by the asuras, nishacharas and siddhas. You who are like the fire and the best of gold. O Bhaskara![41] With you in my mind, I bow down before you.[42] He who recites this at the time of sunrise with a calm frame of mind obtains sons and a treasury of riches and gems. Such a man can always remember his past lives. He obtains memory and supreme wisdom. Let a man recite this chant to the supreme of gods, after concentrating and purifying his mind. He will be freed from the fire and ocean of grief and will obtain everything that his mind desires.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'At that,[43] Divakara was pleased and showed himself to the Pandava in his own body. He was radiant and blazed like the fire. "O king! You will get everything that you wish for. I will provide you food for the twelve years. There will be no shortage of the four kinds of food in your kitchen—fruit, roots, meat and vegetables. There will be no shortage of many riches too." Having said this, he vanished.[44]

'Having obtained this boon, Kounteya, knowledgeable in the ways of dharma, arose from the water.[45] The one without decay grasped Dhoumya's feet and embraced his brothers. He went and met Droupadi. While she watched, the lord Pandava cooked the food in the kitchen. However, once cooked, the four kinds of forest fare[46] increased and became inexhaustible. With that, he fed the brahmanas. When the brahmanas had been fed and his younger brothers had also eaten, Yudhishthira later ate the remainder and this came to be known as *vighasa*.[47] After feeding Yudhishthira, Parshati[48] ate the remnants. The lord,[49] who was as radiant as Divakara himself, thus obtained a boon from Divakara and gave the brahmanas all that they desired. On the appointed tithis and nakshatras, with his priest at the forefront, he performed sacrifices in accordance with the mantras and the rituals. Thereupon, with their departure blessed, the Pandavas, with Dhoumya and surrounded by a mass of brahmanas, left for the forest of Kamyaka.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After the Pandavas had left for the forest, Ambika's son,[50] whose wisdom was in his eyes,[51] was tormented and happily seated himself.[52] The king spoke these words to the infinitely intelligent Vidura, who had dharma in his soul, "Your intelligence is like that of the pure Bhargava.[53] You know all the subtleties of supreme dharma. The Kouravas applaud you as one who is impartial. Tell me what is right for me and for them.[54] O Vidura! Now that all this has happened, what should be done? How can the citizens be made to show us respect? They[55] may destroy us from our roots. But I don't want their destruction either."

'Vidura replied, "O Indra among men! Dharma has three roots.[56] It has been said that the roots of a kingdom are also vested in dharma. O king! Therefore, sustain dharma to the best of your powers. Protect your sons and the sons of Pandu. What happened in the sabha destroyed dharma. Led by Soubala, those evil-hearted ones challenged Kunti's son to a gamble with dice and your son vanquished one who is devoted to the truth. O king! In this, you were misguided. O Kouravya! But I see a means of saving yourself, whereby your son can be cleansed of sin and be established in this world as a righteous one. O king! Let Pandu's sons regain everything that you took in excess of what is yours. It has been said that the supreme dharma of a king is to be content with what he has and not covet that of others. This is your foremost task, to gratify them[57] and censure Shakuni. Otherwise, no one may remain from your sons. O king! You should do this immediately. O king! If you do not do this, it is certain that the lineage of the Kurus will be destroyed. When angered, neither Bhimasena nor Arjuna will leave enemies unslain in a war. Savyasachi, skilled in the use of weapons, is their warrior. He possesses the bow named Gandiva, unmatched in the world. Bhima with the powerful arms is their warrior. Who in the world is beyond their reach? Earlier, as soon as your son was born, I told you what would have brought your well-being. O king! For the sake of the lineage, I asked you to abandon your son. But you did not perform that task. O king! If you do not now listen to what is good for you, you will have to regret it later. If your son agrees to rule the kingdom in friendship with the Pandavas, there will be no regret and together with your son, you will find happiness. But if the opposite happens, subdue him[58] and instate

Pandu's son as the king. O king! Let Ajatashatru,[59] who is devoid of passion, rule the earth in accordance with dharma. O king! Then all the lords of the earth will immediately offer us homage, like vaishyas. O king! Let Duryodhana, Shakuni and the son of a suta[60] happily wait upon the sons of Pandu. Let Duhshasana seek Bhimasena's pardon and that of Drupada's daughter, in the middle of the sabha. After pacifying Yudhishthira, offer him homage and instate him in the kingdom. O king! Asked by you, what else can I say? If you act according to what I have said, you will have performed the right task."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Vidura! These are the words you spoke in the sabha, for the sake of the Pandavas and for me. But this is for their welfare and not for mine. My mind does not approve of any of this. How have you arrived at this conclusion, if not for the welfare of the Pandavas? I now think that you don't have my welfare in mind. How can I abandon my son for the sake of the Pandavas? There is no doubt that they are my sons too but Duryodhana has been born from my own body. Speaking for the welfare of others and appearing as one impartial, how can you ask me to abandon my own body? O Vidura! Though I hold you in great respect, everything that your tongue has uttered in wrong. Stay or go, as you please. However much she is pacified, an unchaste wife always leaves."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having uttered these words, Dhritarashtra suddenly arose and went away to his inner quarters. Declaring that this was not the way it should be, Vidura went away to where the Parthas were.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'So as to live in the forest, the Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, left the banks of the Jahnavi with their followers and went to Kurukshetra. They worshipped at the Sarasvati, the Dhrishadvati and the Yamuna[61] and travelling from forest to forest, headed in a western direction. At last, on the banks of the Sarasvati, they saw before them the forest of Kamyaka, beloved by sages and located on a desert plain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Consoled and accompanied by the sages, the heroes settled down in that forest, teeming with many animals and birds. Vidura then decided to meet the Pandavas. In a single chariot, he went to the prosperous Kamyaka forest. Vidura reached that forest in a chariot drawn by swift horses. He saw Dharmaraja seated in a secluded spot, together with Droupadi, his brothers and brahmanas. From a distance, the truthful king saw Vidura speedily approach and told his brother Bhimasena, “What will Kshatta say when he meets us? Is it possible that he comes again at Soubala’s words, to challenge me once more to a gamble with dice? Does the mean Shakuni wish to win our weapons by playing once again with dice? O Bhimasena! If challenged by anyone, I am unable to refuse. Yet if the Gandiva is uncertain,[62] our winning back the kingdom is uncertain.” O king! Then all the Pandavas stood up and welcomed Vidura. After the due homage had been shown, Ajamidha[63] sat down among the sons of Pandu and made the usual enquiries.

‘After Vidura had rested, those bulls among men asked him the reason for his coming. He told them in detail about the conduct of Ambika’s son, Dhritarashtra. Vidura said, “O Ajatashatru! Dhritarashtra maintains me. He summoned me and after showing his respects, told me, ‘This is what has happened. Now impartially, tell me what is good for me and for them.’ I told him what is good for the Kouravas and also what will bring welfare to Dhritarashtra. But he did not like what I said. I could not think of any other course that would bring welfare. O Pandavas! I told him what would bring supreme welfare. But Ambika’s son did not listen to those words. Just as a sick man does not like medicine,[64] my words did not find pleasure with him. O Ajatashatru! Like an unchaste woman cannot be brought to the house of one who is learned, he cannot be brought to well-being. The bull among the Bharata lineage did not like what I said, like a maiden does not like a husband who is sixty years old. O king! The destruction of the Kouravas is certain. Dhritarashtra will never find supreme well-being. Just as water on a lotus leaf does not stick there, my medicine[65] did not stick to him. Then the angry

Dhritarashtra told me, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Go wherever your respect takes you. I do not desire you as an adviser any longer, to rule the earth or the city.’ O Indra among men! Having been thus abandoned by King Dhritarashtra, I have now come here to give you good advice. I will now repeat everything that I said in the sabha. Hear them and bear them in mind. The man who pardons the terrible miseries caused by his enemies and waits for his time, gradually extending himself like feeding a fire, that self-controlled man rules the entire earth alone. O king! If one shares one’s riches with one’s companions, the companions also share in one’s adversity. That is the way to gather one’s companions. It has been said that companions are the way to win the earth. O Pandava! Without any lamentations, truth is best. Food should be equally shared with one’s companions. One should never hold oneself above others. Such conduct increases the prosperity of kings.” Yudhishthira replied, “I will do what you advise me and, undisturbed by passion, follow your supreme intelligence. In every time and place, I will completely follow what you say.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Vidura had left for the hermitage of the Pandavas, the immensely wise Dhritarashtra repented. He went to the door of the sabha and deluded by his memories of Vidura, fell down unconscious in the presence of the lords of the earth. When he regained consciousness, he got up from the ground. Sanjaya was with him and the king told him these words, “My brother and well-wisher is like Dharma himself. On remembering him, my heart is being torn apart. Go quickly and bring my brother to me, one who is knowledgeable about dharma.” Uttering these words, the king lamented piteously. He was tormented by repentance and deluded by Vidura’s memory. Out of brotherly affection, the king again spoke these words to Sanjaya. “O Sanjaya! My brother Vidura suffered because of my evil wrath. Go and find out if he is still alive. That brother of mine is wise and has infinite intelligence. Never has he practised the slightest falsehood. Why should this supremely intelligent one suffer a wrong from me? O Sanjaya! That wise one should not give up his life. Go find him and bring him back.” On hearing the king’s words, Sanjaya approved and said that he would act accordingly.

‘Sanjaya set out for the Kamyaka forest. He soon arrived at the forest where the Pandavas were and saw Yudhishthira, attired in the skin of ruru deer. He was seated with Vidura, with thousands of brahmanas. He was surrounded by his brothers, like Shatakratu by the gods. Coming up to Yudhishthira, Sanjaya showed him homage and to Bhima, Arjuna and the twins, as each one deserved. The king[66] asked him about his welfare. When Sanjaya was happily seated, he explained the reasons for his coming and said, “O Kshatta! Ambika’s son, King Dhritarashtra, remembers you. Please go and see him quickly and revive the king. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![67] Take your leave of the Pandavas, supreme among men. O revered one! On the command of that lion among kings, return immediately.” Having been thus addressed, the intelligent Vidura, always affectionate towards his relatives, took Yudhishthira’s leave and returned to Gajasahrya. The powerful Dhritarashtra told the immensely wise one, “O unblemished one! O one who is knowledgeable in dharma! It is through good fortune that you have remembered me. It is through good fortune that you have come back. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Because of you, I could not sleep during the day and during the night. While awake, I saw my body as if it had no soul.” He then took Vidura on his lap and smelt the top of his head. He said, “Forgive what I had said to you in anger.” Vidura replied, “O king! I have forgiven you. You are my greatest preceptor. I have come here swiftly so as to see you. O tiger among men! O king! Men who have dharma in their hearts, come to those who are distressed, without thinking whether the deed should be done. Your sons are as dear to me as Pandu’s sons. But since they are now in distress, my intelligence went out towards them.” Having thus become reconciled towards each other, the immensely radiant brothers, Vidura and Dhritarashtra, obtained supreme happiness.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard that Vidura had returned and that he had been pacified by the king,[68] the evil-minded king who was Dhritarashtra’s son[69] burnt with anger. Darkness having entered his mind, the king summoned Soubala, Karna and Duhshasana and told them these words, “The adviser honoured by Dhritarashtra has returned. The learned Vidura is a well-wisher of the sons of Pandu and is always devoted to their welfare. Advice me about what is in my welfare, so that Vidura does not influence his[70] intelligence to again bring the Pandavas back. If I again see the Parthas return here in some way, I will certainly dry up, without life and without riches. I will consume poison or hang myself, or use a weapon or enter the fire. I will never again be able to witness their prosperity.”

‘Shakuni replied, “O king! O lord of the earth! Why are you falling prey to these childlike thoughts? They have gone after an agreement. Therefore, their return won’t happen. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All the Pandavas are always established in the truth of their words. O son! They will never accept your father’s words. If however they accept them and return again to the city, thus violating the agreement, we will again play, staking everything. Apparently obedient to the king[71] and maintaining a middle position,[72] we will protect ourselves and wait to see many weaknesses emerge in the Pandavas.”

‘Duhshasana said, “O immensely intelligent maternal uncle! It will be exactly as you say. The intelligent words you utter have always pleased me.”

‘Karna said, “O Duryodhana! All of us always try to accomplish what you desire. O king! I notice that all of us are united in our view.”

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed by Karna, King Duryodhana then turned his face away, without being greatly happy. On realizing this, Karna opened his radiant eyes wide. In great anger, he aroused himself, and spoke to Duhshasana and Soubala in wrath, “O lords of men! Listen to my true views. With servile hands, we are trying to do everything that pleases the king.[73] But while remaining stationary, we cannot always bring him pleasure. Let us now grasp our armour and weapons and mounting our chariots, go together and kill the Pandavas, who are roaming in the forest. When they have all been pacified and have left for the unknown journey,[74] we and Dhritarashtra's sons will be unchallenged. As long as they are distressed and as long as they are immersed in grief, as long as they are without allies, till then, we can do this. This is my view." Having heard these words, they applauded them repeatedly. All of them then praised the suta's son, saying that his words were excellent. Having said this, all those angry ones separately mounted their chariots. They then set out in a body, having made up their minds to kill the Pandavas. The pure-souled and illustrious lord Krishna Dvaipayana[75] saw this with his divine sight and got to know about their departure. He is the illustrious one who is worshipped by all the worlds. He came to them and restrained them. He then swiftly went to the place where the one whose wisdom was his sight[76] was seated, and spoke to him.'

306(9)

'Vyasa said, "O immensely wise Dhritarashtra! Listen to my words. I will tell you what will bring supreme welfare to all the Kouravas. O mighty-armed one! It does not please me that the Pandavas have gone to the forest and that they have been deceitfully defeated by Duryodhana's followers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After the completion of thirteen years, they will remember their oppression and in anger, unleash venom on the Kouravas. For the sake of the kingdom, why is your evil-souled and evil-minded son always angry? Why does he want to kill the Pandavas? Restrain finally the deluded one. Bring your son to the path of pacification. In trying to kill the ones who now live in the forest, he will be freed from his own life. Do what the wise Vidura has said. And Bhishma, and we, and Kripa, and Drona and other wise ones have told you. O immensely intelligent one! War with one's relatives is reprehensible. O king! This is not dharma, nor is it the way to fame. Refrain from it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Such is his obsession with the Pandavas, that if it is ignored, great disaster will follow. Or let your evil-souled son go to the forest. O king! Let him live with the Pandavas, alone and without allies. O lord of men! If from this association affection towards the Pandavas results in your son, you will have succeeded in your task. O great king! It has been said that the nature instilled in a man at birth does not leave him before his death. What do Bhishma, Drona and Vidura think? What about you? What is right must be done immediately, before the objective becomes impossible.”’

307(10)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O illustrious one! This affair of the gamble did not bring me pleasure. O sage! I think it was destiny which overcame me and made me agree. It did not bring pleasure to Bhishma, Drona or Vidura either, nor to Gandhari. There is no doubt that the gambling was caused by delusion. O illustrious one! I cannot abandon the insensible Duryodhana. O one with vows! Though I know, I am bound by affection for my son.”

‘Vyasa replied, “O king! O Vichitravirya’s son! What you have said is true. I know that a son is supreme and nothing is superior to a son. Indra himself realized this through the flow of Surabhi’s[77] tears. He understood that a son surpasses all other riches, no matter how expensive. O lord of the earth! In this connection, I will recount that great and supreme account, the conversation between Surabhi and Indra. O king! O son! In times long past, it is said that Surabhi, the mother of all cows, cried out in heaven. Out of compassion for her, Indra asked, ‘O fortunate one! Why are you crying like this? Is everything well with the gods, men and cattle? Or is there some misfortune that is more than slight?’ Surabhi replied, ‘O lord of the thirty gods! I do not see any calamity looming before you. O Koushika![78] I am sorrowing for my son and that is the reason I am weeping. My son is small and weak and he is burdened by the plough. See that terrible peasant beat him with a stick. O lord of the gods! I see him terribly exhausted and close to death. O lord of the gods! I am overcome with compassion for him and my mind is agitated. One of those two[79] is stronger and bears the burden of greater weight. But the other one has little strength of life and is thin, with nothing but veins. O Vasava! He bears the burden with great difficulty and that is the reason I am grieving. He is close to death and is repeatedly beaten with the stick. O Vasava! Look. He is unable to bear the burden. Driven by compassion for him, I am sorrowful and extremely miserable. I am weeping and tears of sorrow are flowing from my eyes.' Indra asked, 'O beautiful one! Thousands of your sons are equally oppressed. Why are you driven by compassion for this one? He is only one among several oppressed.' Surabhi replied, 'I have thousands of sons everywhere and I look upon them equally. O Shakra! But my compassion is truly greater for the son who is oppressed.' On hearing Surabhi's words, Indra was greatly surprised. O Kouravya! He became convinced that a son was dearer than one's own life. At that, the illustrious chastiser of Paka suddenly let loose a great shower of rain there and caused an obstruction to the act of ploughing.

'"O king! As Surabhi had said, all your sons may be equal to you. But among all your sons, your compassion should be greatest towards the one who is oppressed. O son! Just as Pandu was my son, you are also my son, and so is the immensely wise Vidura. It is out of affection towards you that I am telling you all this. O lord of the earth! You have one hundred and one sons to outlive you.[80] But Pandu's are seen to be only five and they are in a bad state and extremely miserable. How will they manage to remain alive? How will they prosper? Such thoughts about the miserable sons of Pritha torment my mind. O lord of the earth! If you wish the Kouravas to live, let your son Duryodhana go to the Pandavas and make peace."'

308(11)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O immensely wise sage! It is exactly as you say. I know this and so do all the other lords of men. O sage! What you consider to be beneficial for the welfare of the Kurus was also pointed out to me by Vidura, Bhishma and Drona. If you have compassion for the Kouravas, teach my evil-souled son Duryodhana."

'Vyasa replied, "O king! The illustrious rishi Maitreya has come to see you, after having spent time with the Pandava brothers. O king! For the sake of bringing rightful peace to this lineage of yours, this great rishi will instruct your son Duryodhana. O Indra among kings! Whatever he says should be done without any hesitation. If the task is not done, he will curse your son in rage."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, Vyasa went away and Maitreya appeared. The lord of men[81] came and worshipped him, together with his sons, offering gifts, water to wash his feet and performing other rituals. After the bull among sages had rested, Ambika's son, King Dhritarashtra, courteously asked him questions. "O illustrious one! Has your journey from Kurujangala[82] been comfortable? Are the brave warriors, the five Pandava brothers, well? Do those bulls among men desire to spend their time in accordance with the agreement? Will the fraternal affection among the Kurus continue unabated?" Maitreya replied, "Setting out on a journey of pilgrimage, I arrived in Kurujangala. While roaming around, I saw Dharmaraja in Kamyaka forest. He had matted hair, wore deerskins and was living in a hermitage. O lord! Many sages had assembled there to see the great-souled one. O great king! It was there that I heard about the blunder committed by your son and about the evil course of action he adopted through the gambling match. I have therefore come to you out of affection for the Kouravas. O lord! I have always had affection and love towards you. O king! When you and Bhishma are still alive, it is not proper that your sons should act against each other. O king! You yourself are the central pillar,[83] in both punishing and rewarding. Why did you then ignore this terrible evil that has now arisen? O descendant of the Kuru lineage![84] O king! What happened in the sabha was like the behaviour of *dasyus*.[85] You will no longer be able to shine in an assembly of ascetics." Then he turned to the intolerant King Duryodhana.

‘The illustrious rishi Maitreya spoke to him in soft tones, “O mighty-armed Duryodhana! O supreme among eloquent ones! Listen. O immensely wise one! The words I utter are for your welfare. O king! O bull among men! Do not fight with the Pandavas. Do what is good for you, for the Pandavas, for the Kurus and for the world. All those tigers among men[86] are brave warriors, valorous in war. All of them have the strength of ten thousand elephants and are as firm as the vajra. All of them follow the vow of truth and all of them have pride in their manliness. They have killed rakshasas, who can assume any form at will and are the enemies of the gods. These rakshasas had chiefs like Hidimba, Baka and Kirmira. When they left this place, he[87] obstructed the path of those great-souled ones. His soul was terrible and he was as immobile as a mountain peak. Bhima, supremely proud in battle and supreme in strength among strong ones, killed him like an animal, the way a tiger kills small animals. O king! Look at the royal conquest, where the mighty archer Jarasandha, with the strength of ten thousand elephants, was killed in battle by Bhima. They have Vasudeva as their relative and Parshata[88] as a brother-in-law. Which man, susceptible to old age and death, would dare confront them in battle?[89] O bull among the Bharata lineage! That is the reason you should strive for peace with the Pandavas. O king! Listen to my words. Otherwise, you will expose yourself to death.” O lord of the earth! Having heard these words spoken by Maitreya, Duryodhana smiled and drew patterns on the ground with his feet. With his arms, he slapped his thighs, which were like the trunks of elephants. The evil-minded one said nothing, but stood there, with his head slightly bent.

‘O king! On seeing Duryodhana ignore him and draw patterns on the ground, Maitreya was angered. Maitreya, supreme among sages, became overcome with anger. As if decreed by destiny, the sage got ready to curse him. Maitreya’s eyes were red with anger. He touched the air[90] and cursed Dhritarashtra’s evil-minded son, “Since you ignored me and since you did not find my words attractive, you will soon reap the fruits of your insolence. In the great war that will result from the enmity created by you, the powerful Bhima will smash your thigh with the blow of a club.” When he had uttered these words, Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, sought to pacify the sage and pleaded with him that this might not happen. Maitreya replied, “O king! O son! It is only if your son makes peace that what I have said won’t happen. But if the opposite occurs, it will happen.” O Indra among kings! Deviated from his objective, Duryodhana’s father then asked Maitreya how Kirmira had been killed by Bhima. Maitreya replied, “I will not tell you, since you are intolerant and my words find no favour with your son. After I have left, Vidura will tell you everything.” Having said this, Maitreya went away, just as he had come. Duryodhana also left the place, anxious about the killing of Kirmira.’

Section Thirty

Kirmira-vadha Parva

This section has 75 shlokas and only one chapter.

Kirmira was a rakshasa mentioned in the last section and as already explained the word vadha means killing. So this section is about the killing of Kirmira.

309(12)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Kshatta! I wish to hear about the killing of Kirmira. Tell me about the encounter between the rakshasa and Bhimasena.”

‘Vidura replied, “Hear about this superhuman deed of Bhima’s. Earlier, I have repeatedly heard about this in my conversation with them.[1] O Indra among kings! Having been vanquished in the game with dice, the Pandavas left this place. Having travelled for three days and three nights, they arrived at the forest known as Kamyaka. O king! In the dead of the night, when the midnight hour had passed, man-eating rakshasas, whose deeds are terrible, begin to roam around. Therefore, out of fear for the maneaters, we had heard that ascetics, cowherds and others who go to the forest, always maintain a distance from the forest at that time.

‘“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was at that time that they entered and saw a rakshasa obstructing their path. His eyes blazed and he was terrible. He held a blazing brand. With outstretched arms and a fearful face, he stood and obstructed the path along which the extenders of the Kuru lineage were travelling. Eight of his teeth jutted out. His eyes were copper-red. The hair on his head blazed and stood up erect. He looked like a monsoon cloud, tinged with the rays of the sun and lightning and adorned with a flock of cranes.[2] He let out a mighty roar and created the maya used by rakshasas. When he let loose his giant roar, it was like the roar of clouds filled with rain. Frightened by this roar, the birds fled in all directions. They cried out in fear and so did the animals that lived on the ground and in the water. As a result of deer, elephants, buffaloes and bears fleeing in all directions, it seemed as if the entire forest was running away from the roar. As a result of the wind generated by his thighs, many creepers laden with copper-red blossoms seemed to embrace the tall trees. At that time, a terrible wind began to blow and because of the dust, the sky lost the bear.[3] Like a great enemy that causes infinite grief to the five senses, he was still unknown to the five sons of Pandu. From a distance he saw the Pandavas, attired in black deerskins. Like the Mount Mainaka, he obstructed their entry into the forest.

'"On approaching near, the lotus-eyed Krishna[4] was terrified and closed her eyes in fear at the sight of something never seen before. She was the one whose hair had been dishevelled by Duhshasana's hand. She now stood there, like a river that had overrun its banks between five mountains. On seeing her lose her senses, the five Pandavas grasped her, like the five senses are attached to objects of pleasure. In the sight of the five sons of Pandu, the valorous Dhoumya accurately used many types of mantras to destroy the maya, terrible of form, created by the rakshasa. On seeing his maya destroyed, the immensely strong one widened his eyes in anger. The cruel one, who could assume any form at will, appeared like Yama himself.

'"Then the greatly wise King Yudhishthira spoke to him, 'Who are you and whom do you belong to? Tell us what we can do for you.' The rakshasa replied to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, 'I am Baka's brother and I am known by the name of Kirmira. Without any worries, I live in this deserted Kamyaka forest. I always defeat men in battle and then eat them up. Who are you who have appeared before me as food? Without any worries, I will defeat all of you in battle and then eat you up.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of the evil-hearted one, Yudhishthira told him everything about his name and lineage. 'You may have heard about me. I am Pandu's son, Dharmaraja. I am with all my brothers, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the others. I have been robbed of my kingdom and now wish to live in this forest. It is for this reason that I have come to this terrible forest that is your territory.' Kirmira said, 'This is my good fortune. Today, after a long time, the gods have granted me the wish that I have had. With my weapons always raised, I have roamed the earth with the intention of killing Bhimasena. But I could not find him. Through good fortune, I have come upon my brother's killer, fulfilling a long-cherished desire. O king! It was he who, in the disguise of a brahmana, killed my beloved brother Baka in Vetrakriyagriha.[5] Bhima has no strength in his chest. Therefore, he resorted to the strength of skills. My friend Hidimba used to live in the forest. He was earlier killed by this evil-hearted one and he then abducted his[6] sister. That fool has now come to me in this deep forest in the middle of the night, at a time when we roam around. Today, I will wreak the vengeance that I have sought for a long time. I will make large offerings of blood to Baka. Today, I will free myself of the debts I owe to my brother and to my friend. I will obtain supreme peace by removing this thorn of the rakshasas. O Yudhishthira! If Bhimasena was earlier freed from Baka, I will today devour him before your eyes. His life is long. But today, I will kill Vrikodara. I will eat him up and digest him, the way Agastya did the great asura.'[7] Having been thus addressed, Yudhishthira, devoted to the truth and with dharma in his soul, angrily censured the rakshasa, saying that this could not happen.

'"Thereupon, the mighty-armed Bhima swiftly uprooted a tree. It was ten *vyamas*[8] long. He then stripped it of its leaves. In an instant, the victorious Arjuna strung the Gandiva, with a force like that of the vajra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Restraining Jishnu, Bhima rushed at the terrible-looking rakshasa, uttering the words, 'Stay! Stay!' Having uttered these words, the angry Pandava[9] tightened the cloth around his waist. The strong one rubbed one hand against the other and bit his lips.

With the tree as a weapon, Bhima dashed forward with great force. Like Maghavan[10] hurling his thunder, he brought it down, like Yama's staff, on his[11] head. But in that battle, the rakshasa could be seen, completely unmoved. Like flaming thunder, he hurled his blazing brand. But Bhima, supreme among warriors, kicked the brand back at the rakshasa with his left foot. Kirmira then suddenly uprooted a tree and rushed at the Pandava in battle, like Dandapani.[12] A battle began with trees, such that all the trees were destroyed. This was like the ancient battle between the brothers Vali and Sugriva, in their desire for the fortune.[13] Like lotuses hurled at rutting elephants, the ends of the fallen trees splintered into many fragments. In that great forest, many trees were crushed like reeds and lay scattered like rags. O lord of the earth! That fight with the trees between the chief of the rakshasas and the supreme among men lasted but an instant. Then, as Bhima stood ready to fight, the angry rakshasa hurled a rock and Bhimasena staggered. When he was numbed by the force of the rock, the rakshasa rushed at him, like Svarbhanu[14] dashing at the sun and dispersing the rays with his arms. They then grappled with each other and dragged each other in different ways. They seemed to be like two fighting bulls. The fight between them was great, violent and terrible, like that between two proud tigers armed with fangs and claws.

'"Vrikodara was proud of the strength of his arms. He saw Krishna's eyes look towards him and remembered Duryodhana's oppression. His vigour increased. Intolerantly, he grabbed him in his arms, like an elephant whose rutting glands having burst, falls upon another elephant. In turn, the mighty rakshasa also grasped him. But Bhimasena, supremely strong among the strong ones, violently threw him down. As those two mighty warriors tried to crush each other with their arms in that battle, a terrible sound was heard, like that made by shattering bamboo. Then Vrikodara forcibly threw him down. Grabbing him by the waist, he shook him, like a violent wind shakes a tree. Having been thus seized by the mighty Bhima in battle, he weakened. But though he trembled and panted, he still dragged the Pandava. Noticing that he was exhausted, Vrikodara entwined him in his arms, like an animal is tied with ropes. Uttering a loud roar, like that of a broken war drum, the strong one whirled him around repeatedly, until his body was swollen and unconscious. Knowing that the rakshasa was exhausted, Pandu's son swiftly grasped him in his arms and then killed him like an animal. Vrikodara placed his knee on the evil rakshasa's hips and placing his hands on his throat, began to press down. Then, when his entire body was numb and his wide-open eyes were glazed, he hurled him on the ground and said, 'O evil one! You will no longer have to shed tears over Hidimba and Baka. You too have proceeded to Yama's abode.' Having said this, that supreme warrior among men looked at the rakshasa, his eyes wide with rage. He discarded the swollen body that no longer had life and was empty of mind with its garments and ornaments strewn about.

'"When the one with the form of a cloud was slain, those sons of the Indra among men[15] placed Krishna at the forefront. They praised Bhima for his many qualities and in a happy frame of mind, set out for the forest of Dvaita.[16] O lord of men! O Kourava! Thus it was that, on Dharmaraja's instructions, Kirmira was killed in battle by Bhimasena. Having freed the forest of its thorn, the undefeated king,[17] knowledgeable in dharma, lived there with Droupadi and made it his home. Consoling Droupadi, all those bulls of the Bharata lineage affectionately praised Vrikodara, with happiness in their minds. After the rakshasa had been destroyed through the strength of Bhima's arms, those warriors entered the peaceful forest that had been freed of its thorn. Passing along that road, I myself saw the evil-hearted and fearful body strewn in that great forest, killed through Bhima's strength. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! From the brahmanas who had assembled there, I heard the account of Bhima's exploit."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard this account about the killing of that supreme rakshasa, Kirmira, in battle, the king[18] seemed thoughtful and sighed, as if in sorrow.'

Section Thirty-One

Kairata Parva

This section has 1150 shlokas and thirty chapters.

Chapter 310(13): 120 shlokas
Chapter 311(14): 17 shlokas
Chapter 312(15): 22 shlokas
Chapter 313(16): 23 shlokas
Chapter 314(17): 33 shlokas
Chapter 315(18): 24 shlokas
Chapter 316(19): 33 shlokas
Chapter 317(20): 27 shlokas
Chapter 318(21): 38 shlokas
Chapter 319(22): 30 shlokas
Chapter 320(23): 51 shlokas
Chapter 321(24): 16 shlokas
Chapter 322(25): 26 shlokas
Chapter 323(26): 18 shlokas
Chapter 324(27): 25 shlokas
Chapter 325(28): 37 shlokas
Chapter 326(29): 35 shlokas
Chapter 327(30): 50 shlokas
Chapter 328(31): 42 shlokas
Chapter 329(32): 40 shlokas
Chapter 330(33): 58 shlokas
Chapter 331(34): 85 shlokas
Chapter 332(35): 21 shlokas
Chapter 333(36): 34 shlokas
Chapter 334(37): 41 shlokas
Chapter 335(38): 45 shlokas
Chapter 336(39): 30 shlokas
Chapter 337(40): 61 shlokas

Chapter 338(41): 26 shlokas
Chapter 339(42): 42 shlokas

Kiratas, as mentioned earlier, are mountain-dwellers who make a living through hunting. This section is so named because Shiva assumed the form of a kirata and fought with Arjuna.

310(13)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing that the Pandavas were tormented by misery, the Bhojas, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas assembled together and went to them in the great forest. The heirs of Panchala,[1] Dhrishtaketu the king of Chedi and the extremely valorous Kekaya brothers, famous in the world, went to meet the Parthas in the forest, full of anger and intolerance. They censured the sons of Dhritarashtra and asked, "What will we do?" All those bulls among the kshatriyas placed Vasudeva at their forefront. They surrounded Dharmaraja Yudhishthira and seated themselves around him. Vasudeva said, "The earth will drink the blood of Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-souled Shakuni and Duhshasana as the fourth. After that, all of us will instate Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. Those deceitful ones deserve to be slain. This is eternal dharma." Out of his preference for the Parthas, Janardana was angered. Since it seemed as though he would burn down all beings, Arjuna pacified him. On witnessing Keshava's[2] rage, Phalguna[3] recited the deeds the great-souled one had performed in his earlier bodies.[4]

'He is the one whose deeds are true, the man who cannot be measured, but whose energy is truly infinite. He is the lord of the Prajapatis and the intelligent Vishnu, lord of the worlds. Arjuna said, "O Krishna! In ancient times, you roamed in Mount Gandhamadana for ten thousand years, as a sage who had no abode.[5] O Krishna! In ancient times, you lived in the region of Pushkara for eleven thousand years, surviving on water alone. O Madhusudana! With your arms raised, standing on one leg and surviving only on air you spent one hundred years in the vast region of Badari.[6] O Krishna! You took off your upper garments and you were so thin that you seemed to be held by your veins. You lived on the banks of the Sarasvati for the sacrifice that went on for twelve years. O Krishna! O immensely energetic one! You went to the sacred pilgrimage of Prabhasa, known to all pure ones, and stood there on one leg for one thousand divine years, practising austerities and observing rites. O Keshava! You are the supreme soul of all beings, their beginning and their end. O Krishna! You are the store of all austerities and sacrifices and you are the eternal one. O Krishna! You killed Naraka, famous as Bhoumya, the one with the earrings.[7] You performed the first horse sacrifice. O bull among all the worlds! Having accomplished this deed, you became victorious over all the worlds. When all the daityas and danavas assembled together, you killed them in battle. O mighty-armed Keshava! You then gave lordship over everything to Shachi's husband.[8] You then manifested yourself in the world of men. O scorcher of enemies! You were Narayana and then you became Hari.[9] You then became Brahma, Soma,[10] Surya, Dharma, Dhata,[11] Yama, Anala,[12] Vayu,[13] Vaishravana,[14] Rudra, Kala,[15] the sky, the earth and the directions. You are without birth. You are the preceptor of everything that moves and is still. You are the creator. You are the supreme being. O Krishna! You are the original god. In the forest of Chitraratha, you performed the *turayana* sacrifice[16] and other sacrifices, donating large amounts of alms. You have great energy. O Janardana! At each sacrifice, you apportioned out one hundred times, according to the share, a hundred thousand gold pieces. O beloved of the Yadavas![17] You have been Aditi's son. O illustrious one! You are now famous as Vishnu, Indra's younger brother.[18] O scorcher of enemies! O Krishna! While you were only a child, you used your energy to cover heaven, sky and earth in three steps.[19] You have attained heaven. You ride the sky seated in the sun's chariot. You are the soul of all beings. Through your radiance, you are brighter than the sun. The Mouravas and the Pashas have been destroyed.[20] Nisunda and Naraka have been killed and the road to the city of Pragjyotisha has become safe again. Ahuti was killed at Jaruthi. Kratha, Shishupala and his followers, Bhimasena,[21] Shaibya and

Shatadhanva have been conquered. Your chariot is as resplendent as the sun and roars like the cloud. Riding on that, you defeated Rukmi in battle and obtained your queen from the Bhojas.[22] In your anger, you killed Indradyumna and the yavana Kasheruman. You have killed Shalva, the lord of Soubha, and you brought down Soubha itself. On the banks of the Iravati, you killed Bhoja, who was the equal of Kartavirya in battle. You also killed Gopati and Talaketu. O Janardana! You journeyed to the ocean and made Dvaraka, sacred, prosperous and loved by the rishis, your own.[23] O Madhusudana! O Dasharha![24] You show no anger, no jealousy and no falsehood. No cruelty or crookedness is established in you. O Achyuta![25] You are seated in the centre of the mind, radiant in your own energy. The rishis come to you there and ask for freedom from fear.[26] O Madhusudana! You gather up all beings at the end of a yuga.[27] O scorcher of enemies! You withdraw the entire universe into yourself and remain alone. No other one in the past has performed such deeds, nor will they in the future. O immensely radiant god! Such are the deeds you performed even when a child. O Pundarikaksha! Such are the deeds you performed with Baladeva's help. You lived in the abode of Vairaja[28] with Brahma himself." Having thus spoken, the great-souled Pandava, who was like Krishna's soul himself, fell silent.

'Janardana then spoke to Partha, "You are mine and I am yours. All that is mine is yours too. He who hates you also hates me. He who follows you also follows me. O invincible one! You are Nara and I am Hari Narayana. We are the rishis Nara and Narayana, born from that world in this world. O Partha! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are no other than I. I am no other than you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one can know any difference that exists between us." In that assembly of warriors, the kings became agitated. Panchali, surrounded by her valiant brothers, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, went to Pundarikaksha, who was seated with the Yadavas. Krishna[29] sought refuge with the one who is all refuge and uttered these words.

'"It has been said that when all the beings were first created, you were the only Prajapati.[30] Asita–Devala have said that you are the creator of all beings. O invincible one! O Madhusudana! You are Vishnu. You are the sacrifice. You are the sacrificer. You are the one for whom sacrifices are performed. Jamadagni's son[31] has said this. O supreme being! The rishis have said that you are forgiveness and the truth. Kashyapa has said that you are the sacrifice born from the truth. Narada has said that you are the supreme lord of the Sadhyas and the gods. O lord of prosperity! You are the creator of the worlds and you are the lord of the worlds. O lord! The sky is covered with your head and the earth with your feet. You are the stomach of all these worlds and you are the eternal being. You are the supreme one among all the rishis who burn with learning and austerities, who have purified their souls with asceticism and who have become content through contemplating their own souls. O supreme being! You are the refuge of all the rajarshis, the performers of pure deeds who withdraw from the field of battle[32] and who have the knowledge of every dharma. You are the lord. You are omnipresent. You are the soul of all beings. You are the earth. You are eternal. The rulers of all the worlds, the stars, the ten directions, the sky, the moon, the sun and the worlds are all established in you. O mighty-armed one! The mortality of all beings, the immortality of the dwellers of heaven and all the deeds of the worlds are established in you. O Madhusudana! Because of my love for you, I will tell you the account of my sorrows. You are the lord of all beings, be they divine or human. O Krishna! O lord! I am a wife to the Parthas. I am your friend. I am Dhrishtadyumna's sister. How could someone like me be dragged to the sabha? I was then in the dharma of women.[33] I was trembling. I was stained with blood. I was clad in a single garment. I was miserable. But I was dragged into that assembly of Kurus. On seeing me in that sabha, in the middle of all those kings, stained in my menses, those evil-minded sons of Dhritarashtra laughed at me. O Madhusudana! They wished to enjoy me like a slave girl, when the sons of Pandu, the Panchalas and the Vrishnis were still alive. O Krishna! According to dharma, am I not the daughter-in-law of both Bhishma and Dhritarashtra? But I was forcibly made a slave. The Pandavas may be extremely strong and supreme in war. But I censure them. They looked on when their famous wife, according to dharma, was molested. O Janardana! Shame on Bhimasena's strength! Shame on Partha's Gandiva! Both of them allowed me to be oppressed by insignificant ones. The eternal path of dharma is always followed by the righteous ones. The husband, however weak he may be, must protect his wife. When the wife is protected, the offspring are protected. When the offspring are protected, one's own soul is protected. One's own self is born in one's wife and that is the reason she is called *jaya*.[34] A wife should also protect her husband because he is born in her womb. The Pandavas never abandon someone who has sought refuge, but they abandoned me when I sought refuge. Five immensely energetic sons have been born to me from my husbands. O Janardana! For their sake too, I should have been rescued. Prativindhya was born from Yudhishthira, Sutasoma was born from Vrikodara, Shrutakirti was born from Arjuna, Shatanika was born from Nakula and Shrutakarma was born from the youngest.[35] All of them derive valour from the truth. O Krishna! They are maharathas like Pradyumna and you. They are supreme archers. Enemies cannot vanquish them in battle. Why did they tolerate the weak sons of Dhritarashtra? Having been deprived of their kingdom in violation of dharma, all of them became slaves, when, in my menses, I was dragged into the sabha in a single garment. O Madhusudana! Even when strung, the Gandiva cannot be handled by anyone other than Bhima, Arjuna and you. O Krishna! Shame on Bhimasena's strength and shame on Partha's Gandiva, if Duryodhana lives for more than an instant! O Madhusudana! A long time ago, when they were but children engaged in studying and observance of rites, he threw the non-violent ones and their mother out of the kingdom. It was that evil one who mixed freshly collected, hair raising and virulent poison in Bhimasena's food. O Janardana! O supreme being! O mighty-armed one! He digested it with his food and without any effects, because his time had not ended. O Krishna! Vrikodara was safely asleep in

Pramanakoti. It was he[36] who tied him up, flung him into the Ganga and went away. Though fettered, the mighty-armed and immensely strong Kounteya Bhimasena tore off his bonds and arose from the water. O Krishna! It was he[37] who caused virulent serpents to bite him[38] all over his body when he slept, but that destroyer of enemies did not die. On waking up, Kounteya killed all the serpents and he killed his[39] favourite charioteer with the back of his hand. Once again, when they were asleep and unconscious with the arya lady[40] in Varanavata, he[41] tried to burn them. Who could have acted in this way? It was then that the frightened and weeping arya lady, greatly oppressed and surrounded by flames, told the Pandavas, ‘I am slain. How will we find peace from the flames today? Without a protector, I will perish with my young sons.’ The mighty-armed Bhima Vrikodara’s valour is like the force of the wind. He comforted the arya lady and his brothers. ‘I will rise up like the bird Garuda, Vinata’s son and supreme among birds. I will fly up and we need not be afraid.’ He took up the arya lady on his left lap and the king[42] on his right. He took the twins on his shoulder and Bibhatsu on his back. Grasping all of them, the valorous one suddenly arose with force and the powerful one freed the arya lady and his brothers from the fire. Setting out in the night with their mother, all those famous ones arrived in the great forest, near the forest that was Hidimba’s. They were tired and extremely unhappy and fell asleep with their mother. When they were asleep, a rakshasa woman named Hidimba arrived.[43] That fortunate one firmly placed Bhima’s feet on her lap and happily caressed them with her soft hands. The broad-souled and strong Bhima, whose valour is his truth, then woke up and asked, ‘O unblemished one! What do you desire here?’ Having heard this conversation, the worst of rakshasas arrived. He was terrible to look at, his form was terrible and he let loose a loud roar. ‘O Hidimba! Whom are you talking to? Bring him to me and I will eat him up. Do not delay.’ But she was moved by compassion in her heart. The intelligent and unblemished lady felt pity. Then the man-eating terrible rakshasa uttered fearful roars and with great force, rushed at Bhimasena. Angered, the immensely strong rakshasa grasped Bhimasena's hand with his own hand and with great force. Making his hand as firm as Indra's thunder, like the vajra, he suddenly struck Bhimasena with his hand. His hand having been seized by the rakshasa's hand, the mighty-armed Vrikodara could not bear it and became angry. Then a terrible fight waged between Bhima and Hidimba. They were both skilled in the use of all weapons and this was as terrible as that between Vritra and Vasava.[44] Having killed Hidimba, Bhima left with his brothers, placing Hidimba[45] at the forefront. Ghatotkacha was born from her. Then, accompanied by their mother and surrounded by many brahmanas, those famous ones went towards Ekachakra. On this journey, Vyasa, always devoted to their welfare, was their adviser. The Pandavas, rigid in their vows, arrived in Ekachakra. There they killed an immensely strong maneater named Baka, who was as strong as Hidimba. Having killed him, Bhima, supreme among warriors, went with his brothers to Drupada's capital. O Krishna! While he lived there, Savyasachi won me, just as you yourself won Bhishmaka's daughter Rukmini. O Madhusudana! Partha won me at that svayamvara, achieving a great deed that others found extremely difficult. O Krishna! We have thus suffered many difficulties and are miserable and extremely unhappy. We have Dhoumya at the forefront, but we are without the arya lady.[46] They have the valour of lions and are greater than others in courage. Why do they ignore me when I am oppressed by inferiors? I have suffered such miseries at the hands of those who are weak, evil and the performers of evil deeds. I have burnt for a long time. I was born in a great lineage through divine destiny. I am the beloved wife of the Pandavas. I am the daughter-in-law of the great-souled Pandu. O Krishna! O Madhusudana! I am supreme among chaste ones. But I was seized by my hair, while the five who are like Indras looked on."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having uttered these words, the soft-spoken Krishna[47] wept and covered her face in her hands, soft as the bud of a lotus. On her upraised, full and well-formed breasts, marked with all the auspicious marks, Panchali showered teardrops of grief. She wiped her eyes and sighed repeatedly. In a voice choked with tears, she uttered these angry words, “O Madhusudana! I have no husbands. I have no sons. I do not have a brother or a father. Nor do I have any relatives. When I was oppressed by inferior ones, you ignored me, unmoved by sorrow. My grief that Karna laughed at me then will never be pacified.” Then Krishna spoke to her in that assembly of warriors, “O beautiful one! The wives of those who have angered you will weep like this. They will see the dead bodies lying on the ground, bereft of life. Their bodies will be covered with Bibhatsu’s arrows and will be drenched with blood. Do not sorrow. I will do whatever the Pandavas can do. I will make you a promise. You will be the queen of kings. The heavens may fall, the Himalayas may be rent asunder, the earth may splinter and the ocean may dry up. O Krishna! But my words will not be falsified.” Dhrishtadyumna said, “I will kill Drona. Shikhandi will kill the grandfather. Bhimasena will kill Duryodhana. Dhananjaya will kill Karna. O sweet-smiling one! With the aid of Rama[48] and Krishna, we are invincible in battle even with the slayer of Vritra,[49] not to speak of Dhritarashtra’s sons.” When these words were uttered, all the warriors looked towards Vasudeva and in their midst, the mighty-armed Keshava spoke these words.’

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‘Vasudeva said, “O lord of the earth![50] O king! Had I been present in Dvaraka earlier, this misfortune would not have befallen you. O invincible one! Even if I had not been invited to the gambling match by the Kouravas, by Ambika’s son[51] and by King Duryodhana, I would have gone and prevented the gambling by pointing out the many evils that result. I would have brought in Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Bahlika. For your sake, I would have told the king who is Vichitravirya’s son,[52] ‘O Kourava! O Indra among kings! O lord! Make your sons desist from this gambling.’ I would have pointed out the evils through which you have been removed from your seat and through which, in earlier times, Virasena's son was deprived of his kingdom.[53] O lord of the earth! Whatever has not been eaten up[54] is destroyed through gambling. I would have described how the addiction to gambling lasts continuously. Women, gambling, hunting and drinking are four things that arise out of desire. O king! It has been said that these lead to loss of prosperity. Those who are learned in the sacred texts hold that while this is true of all of them, it can be especially seen in the case of gambling. On a single day, one may lose all one's property. Misery is certain. Wealth that has not been enjoyed is lost. Only harsh words are left. O Kouravya![55] I would have recounted these and other bitter topics. O mighty-armed one! I would have spoken to Ambika's son about these effects of gambling. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![56] If my words had been accepted by him, the dharma of the Kurus would have remained undisturbed. O Indra among kings! O best of the Bharata lineage! If he had not accepted my soft words, which are like medicine,[57] I would have restrained him through force. In similar fashion, I would have destroyed all the courtiers and gamblers, ill-wishers masquerading as well-wishers. O Kouravya! It was my absence from Anarta[58] that led to all your misfortunes from gambling. O Pandu's son! O best of the Kurus! When I reached Dvaraka, I learnt everything about your misfortunes from Yuyudhana.[59] O Indra among kings! As soon as I heard this, my mind was filled with great anxiety. O lord of the earth! I have swiftly come here, in a desire to see you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All of us are beset with great difficulties, since we find you and your brothers immersed in this misfortune."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O Krishna! O descendant of Vrishni![60] Why were you absent? Where did you go and what did you do on your travels?"

'Krishna replied, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! O best of men! I went to Shalva's city Soubha to destroy it. Listen to the reasons. O best of the Bharata lineage! The valiant King Shishupala, Damaghosha's son, immensely energetic, mighty-armed and greatly famous, was killed by me at your rajasuya sacrifice over the issue of who should be given the homage. Because of his anger, that evil-souled one did not wish to see me receive it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing that he had been killed, Shalva was filled with terrible rage. He went to the empty Dvaraka, because I was with you then. O king! He went there ascended on Soubha,[61] which could go wherever it wished. In cruel fashion, he fought with the young bulls among the Vrishnis. He slew many brave Vrishni youth and the evil-minded one destroyed all the parks in the city. The mighty-armed one then shouted, ‘Where is that wretch of the Vrishni lineage? Where has the evil-souled Vasudeva, son of Vasudeva, gone?[62] He is desirous of doing battle and I will destroy his pride in battle. O Anartas![63] Tell me truthfully where he is, and I will go there. I will return after killing the slayer of Kamsa and Keshi. I truthfully swear on my weapons that I will not return without killing him. Where is he? Where is he? The lord of Soubha wished to fight me in battle and rushed around, from one place to another. That mean one has performed an evil deed. He is treacherous. I am angry at the killing of Shishupala. I will send him to Yama’s abode today. Through his evil nature, he has killed my brother Shishupala, lord of the earth.[64] I will kill him on the ground. Though a king, my brother was only a child. He wasn’t killed in proper battle. The brave one was killed when he wasn’t ready. I will kill Janardana.’ O great king! Thus did he lament.

‘“O descendant of the Kuru lineage![65] Thus abusing me, he took to the sky on Soubha, which is capable of going wherever it wishes. O Kouravya! On returning there, I learnt everything that the evilminded and evil-souled king of Marttikavata had said about me. O Kouravya! O king! With eyes red with rage, I made up my mind. I resolved in my mind to kill him. O Kourava! I heard about his oppression of Anarta, his abuse of me, his great insolence and his evil deeds. O lord of the earth! I therefore left to destroy Soubha. When I was looking for him, I found him whirling in the ocean. O king! I blew on Panchajanya,[66] which had been obtained from the water, and challenging Shalva to battle, got ready. At that time, a terrible battle took place between me and the danavas there. They were all vanquished and laid low on the ground by me. O mighty-armed one! It was this task that kept me from coming to you in Hastinapura then, though I had heard about the terrible gambling match.”’

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‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Vasudeva! O mighty-armed one! O immensely intelligent one! Tell me in detail about the destruction of Soubha, because I am not satisfied with what you have said.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O best of the Bharata lineage! When he heard that the mighty-armed King Shroutashrava[67] had been killed by me, Shalva marched on the city of Dvaravati. O Pandu’s son![68] The evil-minded Shalva laid siege to the city from every side, arranged his battle formations and stationed himself in the air.[69] That lord of the earth fought with the city from there. He attacked from everywhere and the battle began. O best of the Bharata lineage! O king! The city was ready everywhere, with flags, gates, troops, fences, machines, miners, barricaded streets, turrets, towers, hair-graspers,[70] catapults that hurled flaming missiles, water vessels,[71] kettledrums, musical instruments, army drums, kindling, straw, grass, shataghnis,[72] ploughs, bhushundis, rocks, clubs, weapons, battleaxes, iron shields and machines that hurled fire and iron. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything was in accordance with what is laid down in the sacred texts. There was a stock of many types of objects and it was guarded by Gada, Samba, Uddhava and the like. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! They were men capable of repulsing attacks. There were warriors from famous lineages, their valour having been witnessed in battle. The middle and upper parts of the fortifications were protected well and the upper parts had cavalry and infantry. Ugrasena, Uddhava and the others announced in the city that no one should drink, so that there should not be carelessness in protection. Knowing that they would be killed by King Shalva if they were intoxicated, all the Vrishnis and the Andhakas remained sober. The guards entrusted with the treasuries of Anarta swiftly drove out all the actors, dancers and singers. O Kouravya! The bridges were destroyed. All the boats were forbidden to ply. The moats were fortified with spikes. O best of the Kuru lineage! Because of the impending war, the reservoirs were destroyed. For a krosha[73] on every side, the ground was made uneven.[74] O unblemished one! Our fortress is naturally difficult to access. It is guarded well by nature. Nature has equipped it with special types of weapons. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was protected well. That city was stocked with every kind of weapon, like Indra's abode. O king! At the time when Soubha advanced, the city of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas was such that nothing could come out or go in without a seal.[75] O Kourava! O Indra among kings! Everywhere, along the roads and the open spaces where the roads meet, there were forces and many elephants and horses. O mighty-armed one! The soldiers had been paid wages and rations. They had been given weapons and armour. Nothing was pending. No one was given too little pay. No one was paid in excess. No one was shown preference. There was no one whose valour had not been tested. O king! Thus Dvaraka was prepared well. The soldiers had been paid a lot. O lotus-eyed one! It was defended by King Ahuka."'[76]

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'Vasudeva said, "O Indra among kings! But Shalva, the lord of Soubha, came to the city with many men, elephants and forces. The army controlled by King Shalva had four kinds of forces.[77] The army settled itself on plain ground, where there were plenty of sources of water. But the army avoided cremation grounds, temples of the gods, anthills and *chaityas*.[78] O king! The army formations were divided such that all the roads were covered and Shalva's troops encompassed all the nine slopes.[79] There was every kind of weapon and the soldiers were skilled in use of every kind of weapon. There were masses of chariots, elephants and horses, with infantry and flags. The army was well paid and well fed and bore all the marks of courage. There were colourful pennants and colourful chariots and bows. O Kouravya! O bull among men! He settled in Dvaraka, and like the king of the birds, attacked with great strength.

'"On seeing King Shalva's strength, all the young descendants[80] of the Vrishni lineage emerged, to do battle with him. O Kourava! They were unable to bear the invasion of King Shalva—Charudeshna, Samba and maharatha Pradyumna. They emerged in their chariots, all adorned in colourful attire and flags. They fought with King Shalva's warriors, who were like bulls. Samba took up his bow and in a happy frame of mind, fought with Kshemavriddhi, Shalva's adviser and the general of his army. O best of the Bharata lineage! Just as the one with one thousand eyes[81] unleashes rain, Jambavati's son[82] unleashed a great volley of arrows. O great king! Stationary like the Himalayas, the general Kshemavriddhi withstood that terrible shower of arrows. O Indra among kings! Then, using his powers of maya, Kshemavriddhi unleashed a greater net of arrows on Samba. But Samba tore apart that net of maya with his own maya and showered one thousand arrows on his[83] chariot. Samba pierced the general Kshemavriddhi and oppressed by Samba's arrows, he fled on his swift horses. When Shalva's cruel general fled, a powerful daitya named Vegavan attacked my son. O Indra among kings! O king! But Samba is the extender of the Vrishni lineage. Though Vegavan attacked him with force, the brave one withstood it. O Kounteya! The brave Samba, whose valour is based on truth, swiftly hurled a fast club at Vegavan. O king! Struck by it, Vegavan fell down on the ground, like a giant tree, rotten at the roots, collapses when struck by the wind. When that brave and giant asura was killed by the club, my son entered the enemy's large army and began to fight. O great king! The danava Vivindhya was a maharatha and a great archer. O king! He then began to fight with Charudeshna and a terrible duel ensued between Charudeshna and Vivindhya, like that between Vritra and Vasava[84] in ancient times. O great king! Enraged with each other, they shot arrows at each other and roared like mighty lions. Rukmini's son[85] then fixed a great weapon to his bow and chanted mantras over it. Its radiance was like that of the sun and it was capable of destroying the enemy. O king! In great rage, my son, the maharatha, challenged Vivindhya and let loose his weapon. The asura fell down dead.

'"On seeing Vivindhya dead and his army agitated, Shalva returned again on Soubha, which could go anywhere at will. Then the entire army of the residents of Dvaraka was alarmed, when they saw the mighty-armed Shalva arrive on earth in Soubha.[86] O Kounteya! O great king! Then Pradyumna came out and reassembled the army. He told the inhabitants of Anarta, 'All of you stay where you are and all of you watch me fight. In this battle, I will repel with force Soubha and its king. O Yadavas! Today I will destroy the soldiers of the lord of Soubha, using my hands to let loose iron weapons, that are like serpents, from my bow. Be reassured and do not be scared. Soubha's king will be destroyed. Attacked by me, the evil-souled one will be destroyed, together with Soubha.' O descendant of the Pandu lineage![87] When Pradyumna thus spoke with a happy heart, the brave warriors stood where they were and happily, began to fight again."'

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'Vasudeva said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! After having uttered these words to the Yadavas, Rukmini's son[88] ascended his golden chariot. It was yoked to tawny horses and the ornamented flag had a *makara*,[89] with its jaws gaping open. The mighty-armed one, best among archers, dashed at the enemy on swift horses that seemed to fly through the sky. The great bow roared when he strung it and the warrior held quivers and a sword, with his arms and fingers clad in armour. With lightning speed, he switched the bow from one hand to another and the daityas and all the residents of Soubha were confused. As he shot an arrow and fixed another one to his bow repeatedly, it was impossible to see a gap and the enemies were continuously killed in battle. The colour of his face did not change. There was no trembling of his body. All the worlds heard the sound of his wonderful valour, as he roared like a lion. The aquatic animal[90] that oppressed all fishes was on his golden flag-post, its jaws wide open, adorning the chariot. It created terror among the chief soldiers in Shalva's army. O king! Pradyumna, the destroyer of enemies, then rushed with great speed and attacked Shalva, who also wished to fight with him.

'"O extender of the Kuru lineage! Attacked by the brave Pradyumna in that great battle, Shalva was enraged and could not bear it. He was mad with anger and began to do battle with Pradyumna. Shalva, the destroyer of enemy cities, descended from the chariot that could go anywhere at will. A terrible battle then raged between Shalva and the warrior from the Vrishnis. All the worlds watched it, like that between Bali and Vasava.[91] That brave one[92] knew the use of maya and ascended a chariot that was ornamented with gold. It had a flag, a flagstaff and an undercarriage and was stocked with quivers. O Kouravya! O lord! Ascending that supreme chariot, that illustrious and immensely strong one, unleashed arrows at Pradyumna. At that, Pradyumna also used the speed of his arms to bewilder Shalva with a shower of arrows. Thus attacked in battle, the king of Soubha could not bear it. He discharged arrows at my son that were like blazing fire. O Indra among kings! Having been pierced by Shalva's arrows, Rukmini's son swiftly unleashed an arrow that could seek out the heart in battle. This arrow shot by my son pierced his armour. The feathered shaft pierced his heart and he fell down unconscious. When the brave King Shalva fell down unconscious, all the lords among the danavas ran away, cleaving the earth.[93] O lord of the earth! O king! Lamentations arose in Shalva's army, on seeing the lord of Soubha felled and deprived of his senses.

'"O Kouravya! But he regained his consciousness and arose. Then that immensely strong one suddenly unleashed an arrow at Pradyumna. Though the mighty-armed Pradyumna was pierced, he remained steady in battle. But he was struck around his collarbone and the brave one sank down on his chariot. O great king! Thus piercing Rukmini's son,[94] Shalva uttered a loud roar like a lion and it resounded through the earth.

O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thereupon, when my son was senseless, he swiftly again shot many arrows at him, which were difficult to repulse. O best of the Kouravas! Struck by these many arrows and deprived of his senses, Pradyumna was helpless in the field of battle."'

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'Vasudeva said, "When Pradyumna, supreme among strong ones, had been struck down by Shalva's arrows, the Vrishnis who had come to fight lost their calm and their resolution. Lamentations then arose in the army of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. O king! The enemies were delighted at Pradyumna's fall. Having seen him lose his senses, his trained charioteer Daruki[95] used his swift horses to take him away from the field of battle. The chariot hadn't gone very far, when that supreme of warriors regained his senses.

'"He grasped his bow and spoke thus, 'O Souti![96] What have you done? Why are you turning back? This is not the dharma of Vrishni warriors in battle. O Souti! Have you lost your senses at the sight of Shalva in that great battle? Are you unhappy on witnessing that battle? Tell me exactly.' Souti replied, 'O Janardana's son! I am not bewildered. Nor am I overcome with fear. O son of Keshava![97] But I think that you will find Shalva too difficult. O brave one! I am therefore retreating slowly. This evil one is powerful. When a warrior is knocked unconscious on the chariot, it is the charioteer's duty to protect him. Your life must always be protected by me, just as you always protect me. Thinking that a warrior must always be protected, I am taking you away. O mighty-armed one! You are alone. The danavas are many. O Rukmini's son! Thinking that this is not an equal battle, I am taking you away.' O Kouravya! The charioteer thus spoke to the one with the makara on his flag.

'"And he[98] said, 'O Suta! Turn the chariot back again. O Daruka's son! Never act in this way again. O Souti! Never retreat from a field of battle while I am still alive. One who has born in the Vrishni lineage never goes back on a word he has given and never kills an enemy who has fallen or has surrendered. Nor does he kill a woman, an aged one or a child, or one who has lost his chariot or his weapons, or is bewildered. You have been born in the suta lineage and you are well trained in the tasks of sutas. O Daruka's son! You know the dharma of Vrishnis in battle. O Souti! Since you know the conduct of Vrishnis in battle, you will never again, no matter what the situation is, leave the field of battle. What will Gada's elder brother, the invincible Madhava, tell me when he sees that I have been frightened and have fled the field of battle, struck by weapons on my back? The mighty-armed Baladeva, who is dressed in blue and is Keshava's elder brother, is addicted to wine. What will he say when he returns? O Suta! Sini's grandson[99] is a great archer and a lion among men? What will he say when he hears I have fled from battle? What will the victorious Samba say, or the invincible Charudeshna, or Gada, or Sarana? O charioteer! What will the mighty-armed Akrura tell me? The wives of the Vrishni warriors have always considered me brave, honourable, virtuous and manly. When they get together, what will they say? They will say, "Pradyumna is frightened and retreats from the great battle. Shame on him!" They will never say, "Well done!" O Souti! To a person like me, shame with ridicule is worse than death. Therefore, never withdraw again. Before he left for the sacrifice of the infinitely energetic Partha, lion among the Bharata lineage, Hari, the killer of Madhu, left this burden on me. O son of a suta! When the brave Kritavarma was about to come out to face Shalva, I restrained him, saying that he should refrain and that I would stop him. Because of his respect for me, Hridika's son[100] desisted. What will I tell the maharatha after abandoning the field of battle? What will I tell Pundarikaksha,[101] the mighty-armed and invincible man who wields the conch shell, the chakra and the club, when he returns? What will I tell Satyaki, Baladeva and the other Andhakas and Vrishnis, who have always taken pride in me? O Souti! Having abandoned the field of battle, with arrows piercing my back and having been carried away unconscious by you, I do not wish to live any longer. O Daruka's son![102] Turn the chariot back at once. Never act in this way again, not even if disaster looms. O Souti! After having fled the field of battle in fright and with arrows piercing my back, I do not think life is worth living. O son of a suta! Have you ever seen me suffer from fear, or flee from the field of battle like a coward? O Daruka's son! As long as I desired to fight, you should not have left the field of battle. Therefore, return to the field of battle.'"'

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'Vasudeva said, "Having been thus addressed, on that field of battle, the son of a suta then spoke to Pradyumna in soft and placating words, 'O Rukmini's son! I am not afraid to drive horses in battle. I know the conduct of the Vrishnis in battle and it is not different from what you have said. But it has been said that the duty of charioteers is to always protect the life of the warrior. And you were greatly afflicted. O hero! You were badly pierced through the arrows unleashed by Shalva. You had also lost consciousness and that is the reason I retreated. O foremost among the Satvatas! O son of Keshava![103] Now that you have regained your senses, in accordance with your wishes, you will see my skill in handling horses. I have been born from Daruka and I have been trained by him. Without any fear, I will now penetrate Shalva's great army.' O brave one! Having uttered these words, he tugged at the reins of the horses and drove them speedily. He drove them in circular motions, withdrawing them and releasing them again. In beautiful motions, the horses turned to the left and to the right, and everywhere. O king! Controlled by the reins, those supreme horses seemed to fly through the sky. O king! Knowing Daruki's light touch of hand, it seemed that the horses were on fire, but did not touch the ground with their feet. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He wheeled around Shalva's army so easily from the right that those who witnessed it thought that it was extraordinary.

'"Unable to tolerate this penetration by Pradyumna from the right, the king of Soubha suddenly unleashed three arrows at the charioteer. But Daruka's son gave no thought to these swift arrows. O mighty-armed one! He continued to drive the horses. Then the king of Soubha once again shot many arrows at my brave son, Rukmini's son.[104] But before they could strike, Rukmini's son, the destroyer of enemy warriors, exhibited his lightness of touch and smilingly, sliced them off with his own sharp arrows. On seeing all his arrows sliced down by Pradyumna, the king of Soubha resorted to the terrible maya of the asuras and unleashed his arrows. Knowing that daitya weapons had been released, he[105] sliced them off by unleashing enormously powerful brahma arrows. Those weapons always drink the blood of others and driving the other weapons away,[106] pierced him[107] in the head, chest and face, so that he was knocked down unconscious. Thus, oppressed by arrows, the mean Shalva fell down. So as to destroy the enemy, Rukmini's son fixed another supreme arrow. All the bulls of the Dasharhas used to worship this arrow, which was as radiant as the sun and the fire. On seeing it fixed to the bow, sounds of lamentation were heard in the sky. All the masses of gods, together with Indra and the lord of riches,[108] sent Narada and the immensely strong god of the wind. These two went to Rukmini's son and delivered the message of the gods, 'O brave one! You should never kill King Shalva. Restrain the arrow, because he is not to be killed by you in battle. There is no man who cannot be killed by this arrow. O mighty-armed one! But it has been destined by the creator that he will be killed in battle by Devaki's son[109] Krishna and that should not become false.' At that, Pradyumna was extremely delighted and withdrew that supreme arrow from the excellent bow and returned it to the quiver. O Indra among kings! Then Shalva arose, in an extremely miserable frame of mind. Oppressed by Pradyumna's arrows, he swiftly retreated with his troops. O Indra among kings! Vanquished by the Vrishnis, the cruel one left Dvaraka. He ascended Soubha and went up into the sky."'

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'Vasudeva said, "O king! When your great rajasuya sacrifice was over, I returned to the city of Anarta after he had left it. O great king! I saw that

Dvaraka had been robbed of its splendour. Studying and recitations had ceased. Beautiful women were bereft of ornaments. The forms of the gardens of Dvaraka were such that they could no longer be recognized. Alarmed at this, I asked Hridika's son,[110] 'O tiger among men! Why do the men and women of the Vrishni lineage look distressed? What has happened? I wish to hear all about it.' O supreme among kings! On being thus addressed, Hridika's son told me everything in detail, about the siege by Shalva and its relief. O best of the Kuru lineage! When I heard about everything in its entirety, I immediately made up my mind to kill King Shalva. O best of the Bharata lineage! I reassured the citizens of the city and also King Ahuka[111] and Anakadundubhi.[112] Smilingly, I spoke to all the chiefs among the Vrishnis, 'O bulls of the Yadava lineage! Always be careful in tending to the city. Know that I will leave to go and destroy King Shalva. I will not return to the city of Dvaravati without killing him. You will again see me after I have destroyed Shalva and the city of Soubha. Strike the three beats on the kettledrum that enemies find so terrible.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having thus been appropriately reassured by me, all the warriors happily told me to go and destroy the enemies. The delighted warriors blessed me and said farewell. The best of the brahmanas uttered benedictions over me and I bowed my head before Ahuka. Then I yoked Sainya and Sugriva to my chariot and drove away, the directions thundering with the roar. O king! I blew on Panchajanya, my supreme conch shell, as I left. O tiger among men! I departed with a large army that I had gathered. It had the four kinds of forces and shone with the radiance of victory.

'"I passed over many countries, mountains with many trees in them, lakes and rivers, until I reached Marttikavata. O tiger among men! I learnt there that Shalva had left the city on Soubha. But I followed after him. O destroyer of enemies! Having reached the bay of the ocean where large waves billow, I found Shalva on Soubha, in the middle of the ocean.[113] O Yudhisthira! Having seen me from a distance, the evil-souled one challenged me again and again to a battle. Then many arrows were shot from Sharnga,[114] capable of piercing the heart. But the arrows failed to reach his city and rage engulfed me. O king! That evil-natured and invincible wretch among the daityas began to rain thousands of showers of arrows on me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He showered arrows on my soldiers, my charioteer and my horses. But without thinking about this, we continued to fight. Then the warriors who were Shalva's followers in battle shot hundreds and thousands of curved arrows[115] at me. The asuras covered my horses, my chariot and Daruka himself with arrows that were capable of piercing the heart. O brave one! At that time, I could not see the horses, the chariot, or my charioteer Daruka. My soldiers and I were invisible because of those arrows. O Kouravya! Then I also released many tens of thousands of arrows from my bow, invoking them with divine and prescribed mantras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But Soubha was one krosha up in the sky and my soldiers and I could not see the object. All of them therefore only looked on, like spectators at the enclosure of a performance. But they happily cheered me on, clapping their hands and roaring like lions. The beautiful arrows released from my bow in that great battle entered the bodies of the danavas like locusts addicted to blood. At that, sounds of wailing increased inside Soubha. Those who had been killed by those sharp arrows fell into the great ocean. Having lost their arms and their necks, they assumed the form of headless trunks. With terrible roars, the danavas continued to fall down.

'"My conch shell Panchajanya originated in the ocean. It had the colour of cow's milk, jasmine, the moon, the stalk of a lotus or silver. I filled it with my breath. On seeing them fall, Shalva, the lord of Soubha, began to fight with me in a great battle of maya. He hurled iron clubs, barbed missiles, spears, lances, battleaxes and bhushundis incessantly at me. But I grasped them and destroyed all of them through my own maya. On seeing that his maya had been destroyed, he fought with me with mountain-peaks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At one moment, it seemed as if it was night. The next instant, it seemed as if it was morning. In one instant, it was a nice day. The next instant, it was a foul day. It was cold, followed by hot. Creating such maya, the enemy fought with me. But knowing this, I destroyed all this maya with my own. At the right time in battle, I scattered all of them with my arrows. O great king! O Kounteya! Then the sky seemed to blaze forth with a hundred suns. There were a hundred moons, and suddenly, there were ten thousand stars. Neither day nor night could be detected, nor the directions. I was then bewildered and attached the *prajna*[116] weapon. That weapon blew his arrows away, as if they were cotton. Then a tumultuous battle raged, making the hair stand up. O Indra among kings! Having obtained light, I again began to fight with the enemy."'

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'Vasudeva said, "O tiger among men! King Shalva, the great enemy, was engaged in battle with me and again arose into the sky. O great king! In his desire for victory, the evil-minded Shalva angrily hurled shataghnis, giant clubs, flaming lances, bludgeons and swords at me. With my fast arrows, I warded them off as they descended towards me from the sky. I sliced them into two and three parts. At that, a great uproar arose in the sky. He covered Daruka, my horses and my chariot with a hundred thousand nataparva arrows. Daruka was afflicted and spoke to me, 'O brave one! Though I am suffering from Shalva's arrows, I will stay here, because I must.' On hearing these pitiful words of my charioteer, I looked at him and saw that the charioteer had been wounded by the arrows. O best of the Pandavas! There was not a spot on his chest, his head, his torso and his two arms that had not been wounded by an arrow. Blood freely flowed from the wounds the shower of arrows had caused. He looked like a mountain of red chalk after a shower of rain. O mighty-armed one! I saw that though the charioteer still held the reins in battle, he was fatigued. He was suffering from Shalva's arrows and I cheered him.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this time, a man swiftly came to me from Dvaraka and spoke to me, in my chariot, like a well-wisher. O brave one! He was Ahuka's servant and he carried a message from him. O Yudhisthira! Listen to what he told me in a sad and breathless voice. ‘O valiant one! Ahuka, the lord of Dvaraka, has sent a message for you. O Keshava! Know what your father’s friend has told you. O descendant of the Vrishni lineage![117] O invincible one! While you were restrained, Shalva has attacked Dvaraka today. He has forcibly killed Shura’s son.[118] O Janardana! Therefore refrain from fighting here. Your greatest task now is to defend Dvaraka.’ Having heard his words, my mind was extremely distressed. I could not make up my mind about the right course of duty. O brave one! Having heard those unpleasant words, I mentally censured Satyaki, Baladeva and maharatha Pradyumna. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![119] Having entrusted the task of protecting Dvaraka and my father to them, I had come for the destruction of Soubha. How could the mighty-armed Baladeva, the destroyer of enemies, still be alive? What about Satyaki, Rukmini’s son, the valiant Charudeshna and the others led by Samba? The thought made me miserable. Had those tigers among men been alive, not even the wielder of the vajra[120] himself would have been able to kill Shura’s son.[121] But it was clear that Shura’s son had been killed and therefore it was clear that so had the others. I presumed that all the others, with Baladeva as the chief, had also been killed. I repeatedly kept thinking about all their destruction. O great king! Though I was greatly overwhelmed, I continued to fight with Shalva. O great king! I then saw that warrior, Shura’s son, himself fall from Soubha and at this, confusion overtook me. O lord of men! I saw the exact form of my father falling down, like Yayati fell down from heaven to earth after all the merits of his good deeds had been exhausted.[122] I saw him faded, deprived of his headdress. His garments and hair were dishevelled. He could be seen falling, like a planet that has lost all its merits. O Kounteya! Then Sharnga, supreme among bows, fell down from my hand and in complete bewilderment, I sat down on my chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing me bereft of my senses, a loud wail of lamentation arose from all my army, because they could see me on my chariot, as if I had lost my life. I saw the form of my father drop like a vulture[123] from the sky, with his arms extended and his feet extended. O mighty-armed one! As he fell, powerful warriors struck at him with lances and spears in their hands. My heart began to tremble.

'"O brave one! But I regained my senses in an instant. When I did, I could no longer see Soubha, or the enemies, or Shalva in that great battle. Nor could I see my old father. I then concluded in my mind that this was certainly nothing but maya. On regaining my senses, I again began to shoot hundreds of arrows."'

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'Vasudeva said, "O best of the Bharata lineage! Then I grasped my beautiful bow and with my arrows, began to slice off the heads of the enemies of the gods who were on Soubha. From Sharnga, I unleashed excellently prepared arrows at King Shalva. They had the forms of virulent serpents, were infinitely energetic and were capable of rising to great heights. O extender of the Kuru lineage! At that time, I could no longer see Soubha. It had disappeared because of the maya and I was surprised. O great king! The masses of danavas had deformed faces and dishevelled hair. They let out a great roar as I stood there. In that great battle, with the intention of destroying them, I affixed a weapon that could only kill by sound[124] and the uproar ceased. All those danavas who had raised the uproar were killed by my arrows, which blazed like the sun and which could strike only by sound. O great king! When the noise died down in one place, it arose again in another. I then shot my arrows at the other place where the noise arose. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, the asuras raised an uproar from all the ten directions, including the side and above, but I killed them.

'"O valiant one! Soubha was capable of going anywhere at will. Having gone to Pragjyotisha,[125] it suddenly reappeared, confounding my eyes. Then a danava in the form of a monkey, a destroyer of the world, suddenly covered me with a great shower of rocks. O Indra among kings! He repeatedly tried to kill me with this shower of mountains. Covered with those mountains, I looked like an anthill. O king! Covered with all those mountains, I became completely invisible, with my horses, my charioteer and my flag. At that, the heroes from the Vrishni lineage who were part of my troops became frightened and suddenly fled in all the directions. O lord of the earth! On seeing me in that state, when I became invisible, loud wails of lamentation were heard everywhere, in heaven, on the earth and in the sky. O king! My well-wishers were miserable in their minds and cried and wept, immersed in grief and sorrow. O brave one! O one without decay! My enemies were delighted. My friends were miserable. Later, after I had triumphed, this is what I heard. Then I took up my beloved vajra weapon. It was capable of destroying all rocks and using it, I shattered all the mountains. O great king! My horses had been oppressed by that burden of rocks and stood there trembling, weak in breath and effort. On seeing me appear like a sun in the sky after the net of clouds had dispersed, all my well-wishers repeatedly raised cheers.

'"O king! My charioteer bowed to me and with hands joined in salutation, said, 'O Varshneya! Look. Shalva, the lord of Soubha, is there. O Krishna! Do not ignore him now and take care about the task. O mighty-armed Keshava! Forget all gentleness and friendship towards Shalva. Kill Shalva. Do not allow him to live. O valiant one! O slayer of enemies! An enemy should be killed with all one's valour and even a weak enemy should not be disregarded by those who are strong, even if he is at one's feet, not to speak of one who is standing in battle. O tiger among men! O lord! Use all your efforts to kill him. O best among those of the Vrishni lineage! Do not delay any more. This one cannot be killed through gentleless. O brave one! Nor in my view can he be your friend, since he fought with you and oppressed Dvaraka.' O Kounteya! On hearing these words of my charioteer and knowing them to be true, I once again set my mind on the battle, with the intention of killing King Shalva and destroying Soubha.

'"O brave one! I asked Daruka to hold steady for an instant. I then affixed my beloved agneya weapon to my bow. It was irresistible and divine. It could not be cut and it was extremely energetic. It had great radiance and was capable of destroying everything in battle—yakshas, rakshasas, danavas and perverse kings. This great one could reduce all of them to ashes. My chakra is as sharp as a razor. It is unblemished and is like time, or Yama himself. I invoked mantras over this unmatched destroyer of enemies.[126] I asked it to destroy, with its own valour, Soubha and whatever enemies of mine were inside it. Having uttered these words, I angrily flung it, with the valour of my arms. It arose into the sky in the form of Sudarshana[127] and descended, like a second sun when the destruction of an era is near. It approached the city of Soubha, which had now lost its splendour. It sliced through the middle, just as a saw cuts through a piece of wood. Cut into two by the force of Sudarshana, Soubha fell down, like Tripura through Maheshvara's arrow.[128] When Soubha fell down, the chakra returned to my hand. I took it up once more and hurled it, saying, 'Go to Shalva.' Shalva was about to hurl a giant club in that great battle. The chakra suddenly blazed up with its energy and cut him into two. When that brave one was killed, the danavas were frightened and lost their senses. Chased by my arrows, they lamented and fled towards the sky. I then took my chariot close to Soubha. I blew on my conch shell and brought great delight into the hearts of my well-wishers. On seeing that the city, as high as Mount Meru, had been destroyed, with all its palaces and towers, and was in flames, the women fled. Thus it was that I killed Shalva in war and destroyed Soubha. Then I again returned to Anarta and delighted my well-wishers. O king! It was because of this that I could not go to Nagasahrya.[129] O destroyer of enemy warriors! Had I been there, Suyodhana would not have been alive."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus spoken to Kourava,[130] Madhusudana, the mighty-armed Supreme Being, took his leave from the intelligent Pandavas and got ready to depart. The mighty-armed one paid his respects to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira.[131] The king and the mighty-armed Bhima inhaled the fragrance of his head.[132] He asked Subhadra and Abhimanyu to ascend his golden chariot.[133] Having been duly shown homage by the Pandavas, Krishna then ascended the chariot.

Having comforted Yudhishthira, Krishna left for Dvaraka on a chariot that had the radiance of the sun and to which, Sainya and Sugriva had been yoked. When Dasharha[134] had left, Dhrishtadyumna, the son of Prishata,[135] took Droupadi's sons with him and left for his own city. After having met the Pandavas, Dhrishtaketu, the king of Chedi, took his sister with him and left for the beautiful city of Shuktimati.[136] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Kekayas also took their leave from the infinitely energetic Kounteya. Having paid their respects to all the Pandavas, they departed. Then the brahmanas and the vaishyas who lived there were also repeatedly urged to go, but they refused to abandon the Pandavas. O Indra among kings! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those great-souled ones remained in Kamyaka and the crowd that surrounded them was large and extraordinary. Honouring the great-souled brahmanas, in due course of time, Yudhishthira instructed his servants to yoke the chariots.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the lord of the Dasharhas[137] had left, Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Arjuna, the twins, Krishna[138] and the priest[139] ascended chariots that were extremely expensive and yoked to supreme horses. In forms that resembled that of Bhutapati,[140] the warriors left for the forest.[141] They gave golden coins, garments and cattle to those who were knowledgeable in studies, letters and mantras.[142] They were led by twenty armed servants with bows, shields, yellow arrows,[143] bowstrings, implements and arrows. All of them followed behind. Indrasena[144] swiftly collected the garments of the princess,[145] her nurses, maidservants and ornaments into another chariot and followed them.

'Then the citizens went to the best of the Kurus.[146] With dejected minds, they circumambulated him. All the brahmanas happily pronounced their blessings, as did all the chiefs of Kurujangala. With his brothers, Dharmaraja happily greeted them back. The great-souled lord stood there for some time, to see the great numbers of people in Kurujangala. The great-souled bull among the Kurus felt for them the way a father feels for his sons. For the chief of the Bharata lineage, they too felt the way sons feel for their father. The people approached in large numbers and stood around the chief of the Kurus. They lamented, “Oh, Protector!”, “Oh, dharma!” and the like, and tears rolled down all their shamed faces. “You are the supreme lord of the Kurus and we are subjects.[147] O Dharmaraja! Where are you going, leaving all the inhabitants of the cities and the countryside, like a father deserting his sons? Shame on the cruel-minded son of Dhritarashtra! Shame on the evil-minded Soubala and Karna! Those evil ones wish for destruction. O Indra among men! You are always devoted to dharma, but they harm you. O great-souled one! You have yourself established a great and unmatched city that is as radiant as a city of the gods. Shatakratuprastha is unfailing in deeds. O Dharmaraja! You are ours and where are you going, leaving us and that? Great-souled Maya built an unmatched sabha for you that was like the sabhas of the gods. It was like divine maya and had divine mysteries. O Dharmaraja! You are ours and where are you going, leaving us and that?” Then energetic Bibhatsu, learned in dharma, kama and artha, spoke in a loud voice to the gathering, “The king will make his home in the forest so as to rob the enemies of all their fame. With the brahmanas at the forefront, separately and collectively, let all the ascetics approach us and bless us. Let those who are learned in dharma and artha exactly tell us how we will attain our supreme success.” O king! When these words were uttered by Arjuna, all the brahmanas and all the varnas were delighted and rejoiced. They circumambulated the one who was supreme among all those who uphold dharma.[148] They said farewell to Partha,[149] Vrikodara, Dhananjaya, Yajnaseni[150] and the twins. Then they took Yudhishthira’s permission and sorrowfully returned to the kingdom, to wherever they lived.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When they had left, Kounteya Yudhisthira, who was always wedded to the truth and had dharma in his soul, told all his brothers, “We will have to live in this deserted forest for twelve years. Look for a place in this great forest that has many deer and birds, with many flowers and fruit, beautiful and pure and frequented by virtuous men. We will happily spend these many autumns[151] there.” When he had thus spoken, Dhananjaya replied to Dharmaraja, after having honoured that intelligent one like a preceptor and offering him the homage due to a preceptor. “You have worshipped the ancient maharshis. There is nothing in the world of men that is not known to you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have always worshipped brahmanas like Dvaipayana[152] and the immensely ascetic Narada. He[153] has control over himself and always roams at the gates of all the worlds, from the world of the gods to the world of Brahma and that of gandharvas and apsaras. Without a doubt, you know the ways of all brahmanas. O lord of the earth! You know their influence and everything. O king! You yourself know what will bring us the best welfare. O great king! We will fix our abode wherever you desire. There is a lake here known as Dvaitavana. It is frequented by virtuous people. It is beautiful and has many flowers and fruit. It is frequented by many types of birds. O king! If it so pleases you, I think we can spend our twelve years here. Or do you think otherwise?” Yudhishthira said, “O Partha! I agree with what you have said. Let us go to the great, pure and famous lake of Dvaitavana.” Thereupon, all the Pandavas, who always walked along the path of dharma, went to the sacred lake of Dvaitavana.

‘They were accompanied by many brahmanas. There were those who observed the agnihotra, those who did not maintain the fire, those who begged for food and those who lived in the forest. Many brahmanas went with Yudhishthira. There were many hundreds of ascetics, devoted to the truth and rigid in their vows. Accompanied by many brahmanas, the Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, arrived at the sacred and beautiful Dvaitavana. It was the end of the hot season and the lord of the land saw the great forest covered with shalas, palm trees, mango trees, *madhukas,*[154] *nipas, kadambas,*[155] *sarjas,*[156] *arjunas,*[157] and *karnikas.*[158] There were peacocks on the tops of those large trees, uttering sweet notes and there were large numbers of *datyuhas* and *chakoras.*[159] There were also wild cuckoos in the forest. In that forest, the lord of the land also saw the leaders of large herds of elephants, which flowed with rut and stood like mountains. They were accompanied by herds of she-elephants. On approaching the beautiful Bhogavati,[160] he[161] saw many who lived in the forest with dharma in their hearts, self-controlled, attired in skins and with matted hair. He also saw many emancipated rishis. The king, foremost among those who uphold dharma, got down from his vehicle and entered the forest, with his brothers and companions, like the infinitely energetic Shakra[162] in heaven. When the one who was devoted to the truth descended, masses of charanas[163] and siddhas and dwellers of the forest approached the lion who was an Indra among men and surrounded the intelligent one. He worshipped all the siddhas and was shown homage in return, like a king or a god. With his hands joined in salutation, the supreme one among those who uphold dharma entered,[164] together with all the foremost ones among the brahmanas. The great-souled one who was pure in his conduct was worshipped like a father by the ascetics who had dharma in their hearts. Having returned the homage, the king sat down at the foot of a large tree that was laden with flowers. Dhananjaya, Krishna, Bhima, the twins, foremost among the Bharata lineage, and the followers of that Indra among men also dismounted from their vehicles and all of them joined him. That large tree was bent with the weight of creepers and when the five great-souled Pandavas, all terrible archers, sat down, it looked like a giant mountain with herds of elephants around it.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Those sons of Indras among men were used to pleasures. But they had now attained misfortune and reached the forest.

Like Indras, they began to sport themselves in that sacred place, along the banks of the Sarasvati, with shala forests. In the forest, the king, who was a bull among Kurus, satisfied all the ascetics, sages and the best of brahmanas who were with him, by offering them the best of roots and fruit. When the Pandavas lived in that great forest, Dhoumya, their immensely energetic priest, who was like a father to the Kurus, performed sacrifices for the gods and the ancestors. Having lost their kingdom, the illustrious Pandavas lived there. While they lived there, the ancient rishi Markandeya, terrible and resplendent in his energy, arrived in their hermitage as a guest. When he saw all of them, Krishna Droupadi, Bhima and Arjuna in the middle of the ascetics, the great-souled one, infinite in his energy, remembered Rama and seemed to smile.

'Dharmaraja was miserable and said, "All these ascetics are ashamed. While all these ascetics are looking on, why do you look at me and smile, as if you are amused?" Markandeya replied, "O son! I am not delighted. Nor am I smiling. Happy pride has not possessed me. But on witnessing your misfortunes today, I have been reminded of Dasharatha's son, Rama, who was devoted to the truth. With Lakshmana, that king also lived in the forest on the instructions of his father. O Partha! In ancient times, I saw him once on Mount Rishyamukha, while he was wandering around with his bow. That great-souled one was the equal of the one with a thousand eyes,[165] the one who defeated Maya and killed Namuchi. The unblemished Dasharathi[166] lived in the forest on his father's instructions, so as to maintain his own dharma. He was like Shakra in his power, a great-hearted one who was invincible in battle. He gave up his comforts and roamed around in the forest. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. Nabhaga, Bhagiratha and other kings have conquered this earth, right up to the boundaries of the ocean. O son! They won the worlds by observing the truth. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O supreme among men! When he gave up his kingdom and his riches, the truth-abiding and virtuous king of Kashi and Karusha was called a mad dog.[167] Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Partha! O best of men! In ancient times, the righteous saptarshis who blaze in the sky observed the ordinances decreed by the creator. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Indra among men! O supreme among men! Look! Even tusked and powerful elephants, as large as mountain peaks, base themselves in accordance with the ordinances decreed by the creator. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Indra among men! Look! All beings conduct themselves in their own species in accordance with the ordinances decreed by the creator. Therefore, thinking that one is powerful, one should never follow that which is not dharma. O Partha! You have surpassed all beings in truth, devotion to dharma, appropriate conduct and humility. Your fame and energy are as radiant as that of the sun which gives out rays. O lord of the earth! O great-minded one! After having spent a difficult time in the forest in accordance with your promise, you will again obtain blazing prosperity from the Kouravas through your own energy." Having spoken these words to him and his well-wishers in the midst of all those ascetics, the maharshi took his leave of Dhoumya and the Parthas and left from there, in a northward direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Pandavas lived in Dvaitavana, the giant forest was filled with brahmanas. In every direction, the lake of Dvaitavana always resounded with chants of the brahman and became like the world of Brahma. The charming chants of yajus, samas and riks, in poetry and in prose, were intoned everywhere by the brahmanas and pleased the heart. The wise intonations of the brahman mingled with the twangs of the bowstrings of the Parthas and the beautiful unity between brahmana and kshatriya practices radiated.

‘One evening, when Kounteya Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was seated and surrounded by all the rishis, Dalbhya’s son Baka[168] spoke to him, “O Partha! O supreme among the Kurus! Look! In Dvaitavana, the hour has come for brahmanas and ascetics to kindle their sacrificial fires. Under your protection, they are observing dharma by following secret and rigid vows—Bhrigus, Angirasas, Vasishthas, Kashyapa, the immensely fortunate Agastyas and Atreyas of supreme vows.[169] All the supreme brahmanas in the world have assembled here with you. O Partha! O Kounteya! O Kourava! With your brothers, listen to the words I am going to say to you. Brahmanas are enriched by kshatriyas and kshatriyas are enriched by brahmanas. Thus rendered strong, they burn down enemies, like fire and wind together consume the forest. O son! If you wish to win this world and the next, do not wish to remain without brahmanas. Having obtained a disciplined brahmana who knows the ways of dharma and artha, a king can eliminate his enemies. Having conducted himself in accordance with supreme dharma and having protected his subjects, Bali could find no other refuge in this world other than that of a brahmana.[170] It was because of this that the asura Virochana’s son satisfied all his desires and never lacked in prosperity. Having obtained the earth through his alliance with brahmanas, he met misfortune when he began to oppress them. The earth and its riches do not remain eternally with one from the second varna[171] who does not have a brahmana. But right up to the boundaries of the ocean, the earth pays homage to one who is instructed by a disciplined brahmana. Like an elephant without restraint[172] in battle, a kshatriya’s strength declines, if it is not accompanied by brahmanas. The brahmana has unmatched insight, the kshatriya has unmatched strength. When the two are together, the entire world is delighted. Just as a great fire aided by the wind burns up dry wood, kings aided by brahmanas consume the enemy. To acquire what he has not got and to extend what he has got, an intelligent one should seek the advice of wise brahmanas. Therefore, to obtain what you have not got and to extend what you have got and to obtain the right refuge, you need a brahmana who is famous, knowledgeable in the vedas, wise and greatly learned. O Yudhishthira! Your conduct with brahmanas has always been excellent and your great fame therefore shines in all the worlds.” At this, all the brahmanas showed homage to Baka Dalbhya, as he praised Yudhishthira, and they were immensely delighted. Dvaipayana, Narada, Jamadagnya, Prithushrava, Indradyumna, Bhaluki, Kritacheta, Sahasrapad, Karnashrava, Munja, Lavanashva, Kashyapa, Harita, Sthunakarna, Agniveshya, Shounaka, Ritavak, Brihadashva, Ritavasu, Urdhvareta, Vrishamitra, Suhotra, Hotravahana—these and many other brahmanas of rigid vows spoke to Ajatashatru,[173] the way rishis speak to Purandara.’[174]

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Vaishampayana said, ‘One evening, the Pandavas who had gone to the forest were seated with Krishna and were talking to each other, afflicted with grief and sorrow.

‘The beloved, beautiful, learned and devoted Krishna spoke these words to Dharmaraja, “There is no sorrow over us in the mind of that evil, cruel and evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.[175] O king! When you were banished to the forest with me and your brothers, attired in deerskins, the evil-hearted and evil-minded one felt no torment. The heart of that performer of evil deeds is made of iron. Thus it was that he could address harsh words to his superior, who is supreme among those who follow dharma.[176] Having reduced you, always used to comforts and undeserving of hardship, to this misfortune, that evil-souled one, that performer of evil deeds, rejoices with his well-wishers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing you leave for the forest in your deerskins, there were four among all the Kurus who did not shed any tears—Duryodhana, Karna, the evil-souled Shakuni and the cruel and evil brother Duhshasana. O supreme among those of the Kuru lineage! All the others were overcome with grief and tears rolled down from their eyes. O great king! On seeing your bed now and remembering your earlier one, I sorrow for you. You are used to comforts and do not deserve this misery. Thinking of that jewelled seat, inlaid with ivory, in the middle of that sabha and seeing this one made of kusha grass, I am consumed with grief. I have seen you in the sabha, surrounded by kings. O king! On no longer seeing that, how can there be peace in my heart? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have seen you anointed with sandalwood paste, as radiant as the sun. On seeing you now anointed with mud, I am losing my senses. O Indra among kings! Earlier, I have seen you attired in white and expensive silk garments. I now see you dressed in tattered rags.[177] Earlier, food that catered to every kind of taste used to be taken from your house for thousands of brahmanas, on plates made out of gold. O king! O lord with all the qualities! From your house you provided food to the ascetics and the homeless. O king! Now that I can no longer see that, how can there be peace in my heart? O great king! Young cooks who wore polished earrings used to prepare and serve the best of tasty food for your brothers. I now see them in the forest, surviving on the fare of the forest. O Indra among men! They do not deserve this discomfort. My mind can find no peace. I see Bhimasena, unhappily living in the forest, immersed in thought. As time passes, are you not suffused with anger? Are you not angered to see that Bhimasena has to perform all these tasks himself? How can your anger not increase on seeing that one who is used to happiness is now in misery? He was served in many ways, the high and the low, with vehicles and garments. How can your anger not increase on seeing him in the forest thus? That powerful lord could have killed all the Kurus, but honouring your promise, Vrikodara tolerated everything. This two-armed Arjuna is the equal of the many-armed Arjuna.[178] In the speed with which he discharges arrows, he is like Yama, the destroyer. O great king! Through the power of his weapons, all the lords of the earth were forced to bow down at your sacrifice, tended to by brahmanas. This tiger among men has been worshipped by the gods and the demons. Look at Arjuna, immersed in thought. O king! How can your anger not increase? Partha is used to comforts and does not deserve this unhappiness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him in the forest thus, I am confounded that your anger does not increase. On a single chariot, he defeated gods, men and serpents. On seeing him in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? Through force, this scorcher of enemies obtained tribute from all the lords of the earth—extraordinarily constructed vehicles, horses and elephants. Shooting one swift arrow, he created five hundred arrows. On seeing him in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? Nakula is tall, dark and young and wields the best of shields in battle. On seeing him in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? O Yudhishthira! You have seen Madri's handsome and brave son, Sahadeva, in the forest. How can your anger not increase? I have been born in the lineage of Drupada. I am the daughter-in-law of the great-souled Pandu. On seeing me in the forest thus, how can your anger not increase? O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! It is certain that there is no anger left in you. Despite seeing your brothers and me, your mind is not miserable. But the sacred texts say that there is no kshatriya in the world without anger. But in you, today, I see that which is contrary to kshatriyas. O Partha! A kshatriya who does not display his energy when the time is right is always despised by all beings. Therefore, under no circumstances should you show and forgiveness towards your enemies. There is no doubt that you are capable of destroying all of them through your energy. But it is also true that a kshatriya who is not pacified when the time of forgiving arrives, is not loved by all beings and is destroyed here, and in the hereafter."'

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'Droupadi said, "On this, an ancient story is recounted, the conversation between Prahlada and Bali, the son of Virochana. Prahlada was Bali's father's father and was the Indra of the daityas. That immensely wise Indra of the asuras was one to whom all knowledge of dharma had been imparted. 'O father![179] Does forgiveness lead to welfare, or is it better to seek revenge? I have a doubt about this. So please tell me exactly by answering my question. You are knowledgeable about dharma. So please tell me, without a doubt, which of the two is better. I will then do exactly as you have instructed me.’ On being thus asked, the grandfather answered everything exactly. He was wise and answered everything exactly, so that the doubt in the question could be removed.

‘“Prahlada said, ‘O son![180] Revenge is not always superior. Nor is forgiveness always superior. Learn the nature of both, so that there is no scope for doubt. O son! A man who always forgives suffers from many faults. His servants treat him with contempt and others are also disrespectful. All the beings never bow down before him. Therefore, the learned say that perpetual forgiveness should be avoided. Disregarding him, the servants fall prey to many sins. Those with limited intelligence try to take his riches away from him. The servants also appropriate his vehicles, garments, ornaments, beds, seats, food, drink and all his other articles. They do not give to those to whom presents should be given, as instructed by the master to give, but fall prey to their own desires. The master is never shown the respect he deserves. To be ignored in this world is worse than death. O son! Slaves, sons, servants and even those who are not servants speak harsh words to such a forgiving person. They abuse the forgiving person and even desire his wife. The wife too follows her own desire and intelligence. Even if a slight bit of punishment is deserved and it is not meted out, those lovers of pleasure will injure him and resort to evil acts. These and other faults are always associated with those who are forgiving. O Virochana’s son! Now listen to the faults associated with those who never forgive. If in the wrong place, or even in a right one, a person is afflicted with passion and anger and metes out various punishments on the strength of his energy, he will be clouded because of his energy and will face conflicts with his allies. He will receive hatred from the worlds and from his relatives. Because of the contempt displayed, such a man suffers loss of riches and receives abuse, disrespect and disregard. He confronts remorse, hatred and confusion and creates enemies. If in anger, a man inflicts different kinds of punishments on men, he is swiftly deprived of his riches, life and relatives. If he equally uses his force on benefactors and those who wish him ill, such a man is shunned in the world, like a snake inside a house.

How can the world confer good fortune on someone who is shunned? People are sure to hurt him, as soon as they find a weakness. Therefore, one should not always be overpowering. Nor should one always be gentle. He who is gentle at the right time and harsh at the right time always finds happiness in this world and the next. Listen, I will now tell you in detail about the time when one should be forgiving. This has been recounted by the learned ones earlier and should always be followed. If a former benefactor commits a crime that is not too great, in view of the earlier favour, this transgression should be pardoned. Those who commit an offence out of stupidity and seek pardon should be forgiven, because learning is not easily available everywhere to men. Even if the offence is slight, an offender who commits a crime with full knowledge, but claims he did not know, should be punished, because this is crookedness. The first offence should be forgiven for all beings. But when they commit the second one, however slight, it should be punished. If a crime is committed unknowingly, it is said that this should be pardoned, but only after proper examination. Gentleness can vanquish gentleness and gentleness can also vanquish harshness. There is nothing that gentleness cannot vanquish. Therefore, gentleness is the stronger of the two. But one should act after considering the time and the place, the strengths and the weaknesses. The wrong time and place can lead to failure. Therefore, one should wait for the right time and place. Sometimes, an offender can be pardoned out of regard for the people. These have been described as the right times to forgive. At times other than these, it has been said that one should use one's energy.'"[181]

'Droupadi said, "O lord of men! Therefore, I think that the time for displaying your energy has come. The avaricious sons of Dhritarashtra are always engaged in doing harm. This is not the time to exhibit forgiveness towards the Kurus. The time has come to show energy, and punishment must be displayed. The mild are always disregarded. But people are careful of those who are harsh. He who knows the right time to employ both of these is a true lord of the earth."'

‘Yudhishthira said, “Anger destroys men and anger again leads to prosperity. O immensely intelligent one! Know therefore that both well-being and ill-being find their source in anger. O beautiful one! He who always restrains his anger obtains prosperity. O beautiful one! But he who never controls his anger, never obtains prosperity. The terrible anger contributes to his downfall. It has been seen that anger is the root of destruction for all beings. How can someone like me indulge in anger, when it brings about the destruction of the worlds? The angry man commits sin. The angry man may even murder his superiors. The angry man abuses his superiors with harsh words. When angered, one cannot distinguish between what should be said and what should not be said. There is nothing that such a person cannot do or say. From anger, one can kill someone who should not be killed, or honour someone who should be killed. An angry person can even send himself to Yama’s abode. On realizing these faults, the learned ones have said that anger must be conquered, if one wishes for supreme welfare in this world and the hereafter. The wise have controlled anger. O Droupadi! Thinking about this, why should someone like me also not act accordingly? That is the reason my anger does not increase.

‘“One who does not retaliate in anger against someone who is angered, saves himself and the other person from great fear. He is like a physician for both. A weak man may be oppressed by men who are stronger. But if he is angered in his folly, he brings about his own destruction. In the hereafter, there is no world for one who does not control one’s own self and destroys one’s own self. O Droupadi! It has therefore been said that those who are weak should control their anger. And though powerful, the wise one is not angered when oppressed. Having destroyed his oppressor, he finds delight in the next world. It is for this reason that wise men who have the knowledge, be they strong or weak, always forgive, even if they are in difficulties. O Krishna! The righteous always praise those who have controlled anger. The virtuous hold the view that victory comes to the forgiving and the good. Truth is superior to falsehood and gentleness to cruelty. For the sake of killing someone like Suyodhana,[182] how can someone like me show the anger, with its many faults, that is shunned by the virtuous? It is certain that learned and far-sighted ones call someone controlled when he has no anger in him. If a person uses wisdom to check an anger that has arisen, those who know the truth call such a person powerful. O one with the beautiful hips! An angry one cannot see the course of action accurately. An angry man does not see his tasks or his limits. The angry one kills those who should not be killed. He exhibits harshness towards his superiors. Therefore, it is the duty of anyone with power to keep anger at a distance. For one overcome with anger, it is not easily possible to attain courtesy, tolerance, valour, swiftness, energy and other qualities. By forsaking anger, a man can attain his true energy. O immensely wise one! But it is extremely difficult for an angry one to exhibit his energy when the time is right. Those who have no learning always think that anger is the same as energy. Passion has been given to humankind for the destruction of the world.

'"Therefore, a person who wishes to live appropriately must always forsake anger. It is certain that it is better to give up one's own dharma than fall prey to anger. It is all those who have no intelligence and limited senses who transgress this. O unblemished lady! How can someone like me do this? If men equal to the earth in forgiveness did not exist, there would be no peace among men, but dissension caused by anger. If injured ones return the injury and those oppressed by seniors return the oppression, the outcome will be a destruction of all beings and the establishment of that which is not dharma. O Krishna! O one with the beautiful face! If every man who is abused immediately abuses back, if one who is injured returns violence with violence, if fathers oppress their sons and sons oppress their fathers, if husbands oppress their wives and wives oppress their husbands, there can be no birth in a world thus angered. Know that the birth of all beings is conditional on conciliation. O Droupadi! All beings will be swiftly destroyed in such a world. Thus anger leads to the destruction and non-existence of all beings. It is because people as forgiving as the earth are seen in this world that beings keep getting born and there is existence. O beautiful one! A man must be forgiving in all his difficulties. It has been said that the birth of all beings results from forgiveness. If a man is insulted and oppressed by a stronger person, but always pacifies his anger and controls his anger, he is said to be learned and supreme. Such a man has influence in the eternal worlds. But one who has little knowledge and falls prey to anger is destroyed in this world and the next.

'"O Krishna! The great-souled and forgiving Kashyapa sung this hymn in honour of those who are eternally forgiving: 'Forgiveness is dharma. Forgiveness is sacrifices. Forgiveness is the Vedas. Forgiveness is the sacred texts. He who knows this is capable of forgiving everything. Forgiveness is the brahman. Forgiveness is the truth. Forgiveness is the past and the future. Forgiveness is austerities. Forgiveness is purity. Forgiveness holds up the entire world. Forgiving ones attain the worlds of ascetic ones who know the brahman and those who know about sacrifices. Forgiveness is the energy of the energetic. Forgiveness is the brahman of the ascetics. Forgiveness is the truth of those who are truthful. Forgiveness is alms. Forgiveness is fame.' O Krishna! The brahman, truth, sacrifices and the world are established in forgiveness and how can someone like me give up something like that? Those who perform sacrifices enjoy their worlds and those who forgive enjoy other ones. A man who is wise must always forgive. Whoever forgives everything attains the brahman. This world belongs to those who forgive. The next belongs to those who forgive. They are honoured here and in the hereafter and attain the pure goal. Men who always overcome their wrath through forgiveness obtain the supreme worlds. Therefore, forgiveness is considered supreme.

'"In praise of those who are forgiving, Kashyapa always chanted these verses. O Droupadi! Now that you have heard these verses about forgiveness, do not be angered. Our grandfather,[183] Shantanu's son, always praises peace. The preceptor[184] and Kshatta Vidura also speak about peace. Kripa and Sanjaya also speak about peace. Somadatta, Yuyutsu, Drona's son[185] and our grandfather Vyasa always speak about peace. Always urged by all of them towards peace, I think the king[186] will return the kingdom. If he does not, he will face destruction. A terrible time has come about. It will lead to the destruction of the Bharatas. O beautiful one! I am certain that this has been decreed by destiny a long time ago, and thereafter. Suyodhana is undeserving of forgiveness and therefore he finds none. I deserve it and therefore, forgiveness has taken possession of me. Forgiveness and gentleness are eternal dharma and the conduct of those who have control over their own selves. Therefore, that is the way I will act.”’

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‘Droupadi said, “I bow before Dhata and Vidhata,[187] who have confused you. You should follow the conduct of your father and grandfather. But your mind leads you in a different direction. A man never obtains prosperity in this world through dharma, gentleness, forgiveness, uprightness and tenderness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Else, this miserable calamity would not have befallen you. Neither you, nor your immensely energetic brothers, deserve this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then, and even now, they know that nothing is as loved by you as dharma, which is more dear to you than even life. The brahmanas, the superiors and even the gods know that your kingdom is for dharma and your life is also for dharma. I think that you can give up Bhimasena, Arjuna, Madri’s two sons and me, but you will never forsake dharma. I have heard from aryas[188] that a king protects dharma and dharma in turn protects him. But I think it does not protect you. O tiger among men! Like a man is followed by his own shadow, you have always steadily followed dharma. You have never disparaged your equals or your inferiors, not to speak of your superiors. Even after conquering the entire earth, your vanity did not increase. O Partha! You have always served the gods, the ancestors and the brahmanas through *svahas*,[189] *svadhas*[190] and other forms of worship. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have always satisfied brahmanas, ascetics, those who desire salvation and householders with every object that they desire. You have given forest-dwellers iron[191] vessels. In your house, there is nothing to be seen that cannot be given to brahmanas. O king!

Every morning and every evening, at the end of the *vaishvadeva* ritual,[192] you give to guests and servants and survive on what remains. Sacrifices to obtain wishes, sacrifices with animals, sacrifices to gratify desires, sacrifices connected with cooking and other sacrificial tasks are always performed. Even in this great and deserted forest, populated by bandits, your recourse to dharma has not diminished, even though you have been deprived of your kingdom. You have observed great sacrifices like the horse sacrifice, the rajasuya, the lotus sacrifice and the cow sacrifice and offered large quantities of dakshina.

'"O king! But after that, your intelligence was confounded and you were vanquished in an unequal game of dice. You lost your kingdom, riches, weapons, brothers and even me. You are upright, gentle, benevolent, humble and truthful. How could this attachment to dice degrade your intelligence? On witnessing your great unhappiness and your misfortune, my mind is agitated and extremely bewildered. I will recount an ancient tale to show how all the worlds are under the control of the supreme god.[193] Even before the seed is released, the lord Ishana[194] determines in advance happiness and unhappiness and pleasure and displeasure for all beings. O brave man! O king! These subjects are like wooden puppets and he controls their bodies and limbs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Covering all these beings like the sky, the supreme god decides on all that is good and all that is evil. A bird tied to a string is not its own master. Like that, they are under the control of the supreme god and are not their own master or anyone else's. Like a pearl on a string, like a bull with a rope through its nose, a man is under the control of the creator, is part of him and is given to him. Like a tree that has fallen from the bank into the middle of a river, he is at no time under his own control. Creatures are ignorant. Their happiness or unhappiness is not determined by themselves. They are sent by the supreme god to heaven or hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All beings are under the control of the creator, like the tips of straws are under the control of the strong wind. Yet again, the supreme god yokes himself to good deeds and evil ones. He pervades and roams in all beings, but is not noticed. This physical body is only the field. It is only the creator’s instrument and the illustrious one uses it to perform deeds, good and evil. Look at the powers of maya the supreme god exhibits. He confounds them with illusion and makes beings kill other beings. The sages who know the truth visualize this in a different way and alter their course, like the wind in the sky. But men think of it in a different way and the lord creates and alters them in a different way. O Yudhishthira! Like wood is broken with wood, stone again with stone, iron with iron and that which is insensate with that which has senses, like that, the great grandfather, the self-created one, the illustrious god is not detected, and kills beings with other beings. The lord unites and disunites them, as he desires. The illustrious one plays with all beings, like a child with his toys. O king! The creator does not act towards beings like a father or a mother. Like an inferior person, he seems to be driven by rage.

‘“My thoughts are agitated when I see that those who are good, righteous and modest suffer in their conduct, while evil ones are happy. O Partha! On witnessing your calamity and Suyodhana’s prosperity, I blame the creator who tolerates such inequality. He confers prosperity on Dhritarashtra’s cruel and avaricious son,[195] who lowers dharma and transgresses what the virtuous sacred texts say. What fruits does the creator obtain from this? If a performed deed follows its performer and no one else, then the supreme god has certainly been tainted by this evil deed. Or if the evil that is done does not taint the performer, then strength alone is the cause of everything and I grieve for those who are weak.”’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “O Yajnaseni! We have heard the words that you have spoken. They are sweet, well crafted and full of good expressions. But what you have said is atheism. O princess! I do not follow dharma because of its fruits. I give what should be given. I sacrifice what should be sacrificed. O Krishna! Without bothering about whether there is fruit or not, and to the best of my abilities, I do what a man who is a householder is supposed to do. O one with the beautiful hips! I do not follow dharma because of the fruits of dharma, but because I do not want to transgress the traditional texts and wish to follow the conduct of the virtuous. O Krishna! My mind is naturally fixed on dharma. He who wishes to milk dharma does not obtain the fruits of dharma. Nor does the evil-minded atheist, who having performed a task, has doubts. Do not doubt dharma, driven by pride, or in an attempt to debate. A man who doubts dharma is destined to be born as inferior species. Like shudras have no access to the Vedas, weak-minded ones who are doubtful about dharma and the ways of the rishis are barred from the undecaying and immortal worlds. O famous one! If one studies the Vedas, follows dharma and is born in a noble lineage, then kings who follow dharma refer to him as old.[196] Vile ones who transgress the sacred texts and have doubts about dharma in their evil-mindedness, are worse than even shudras and thieves.

'"With your own eyes, you have seen the immensely ascetic rishi Markandeya. Rendered immortal by dharma, the one whose soul is immeasurable had come here. Vyasa, Vasishtha, Maitreya, Narada, Lomasha, Shuka and other rishis, whose minds are virtuous, have obtained success through dharma alone. You have yourself seen them, possessing the powers of divine yoga, capable of every curse and boon, and superior to the gods themselves. They have always told me that dharma alone is the task to be followed. They are like the immortals and clearly have knowledge of the traditional texts. O fortunate one! Therefore, out of the confusion of passion or because your mind is agitated, you should not doubt the creator or dharma, or censure them. He who doubts dharma finds nothing else against which he can measure himself. He considers himself as the measure and proudly debases the superior. He thinks like a child that the world connected with pleasuring the senses alone is real, and is deluded about everything else. There is no atonement for one who doubts dharma. Despite all his reflections, there are no worlds for such a mean and evil one. The ignorant one, who does not acknowledge what has been proved, criticizes the meaning given to the Vedas and the sacred texts and is addicted to desire and avarice, descends into hell. O fortunate one! But he who unquestioningly and with a steady mind follows the path of dharma, obtains eternity in the hereafter. O Krishna! He who transgresses the proof given by the rishis, does not follow dharma and transgresses all the sacred texts, that deluded one doesn't obtain bliss in a hundred births. O Krishna! Do not doubt the dharma followed by the righteous, which has been recounted by the ancient rishis who know everything and can see everything. O Droupadi! Like a boat to a merchant who wishes to cross to the other shore of an ocean, dharma is the only boat that takes one to heaven and there is nothing else. O unblemished one! If the dharma followed by those who observe dharma had no fruit, then this entire universe would have been immersed in darkness and would not have been established. No one would have progressed towards salvation. Everyone would have lived the life of animals. There would only have been restraints and nothing would have been earned or gained. If austerities, brahmacharya, sacrifices, studying, generosity and honesty did not have their fruits, then the ancient ones and those who came before them, would not have observed these. If these deeds did not have fruits, there would have been extreme confusion.

'"Why do rishis, gods, gandharvas, asuras, rakshasas and all the other powerful lords follow dharma so assiduously? It is because they know that the creator will give the supreme fruits to those who follow dharma. O Krishna! This is eternal dharma. This dharma bears fruits. It has never been said that dharma has no fruits. It can be seen that learning and austerities also bear fruit. O Krishna! That is also the case with you. Remember the circumstances of your birth, as you have heard them. You also know how the powerful Dhrishtadyumna was born. O one with the sweet smiles! This is sufficient proof. Knowing that deeds have fruits, the wise one is content with only a little. But ignorant and stupid ones are not satisfied with even a lot. But after death, dharma gives them no happiness or deeds. O passionate one! The fruits of deeds, both good and evil, and their origins and ends are mysteries to even the gods. No one knows them. Beings are in darkness about them. They are protected by the gods and the maya of the gods is deep. Brahmanas who are lean of form, righteous in their vows and are austere, and having burnt down their sins are of a serene mind, they can see them. Not being able to see the fruit, one should not doubt dharma or the gods. Without distractions and envy, one should perform sacrifices and donations. Deeds have their fruits. That is the eternal dharma. This is what Brahma told his sons and it was known by rishi Kashyapa.[197] O Krishna! Therefore, let your doubt be destroyed like the mist.[198] Deciding that this is the way it is, give up your atheism. Do not speak ill of the supreme god who is the preserver of all beings. Learn about him. Worship him. Do not have the kind of thoughts you have had. O Krishna! It is through the grace of the supreme god that faithful mortals can tread the path of the immortals. Do not disregard him in any way."'

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'Droupadi said, "O Partha! I have not insulted or censured dharma in any way. Why should I censure the supreme god, the lord of all beings? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know me as one who is incoherent with grief. Listen to me with a calm mind, as I lament a lot more. O destroyer of enemies! Whatever is born must certainly perform tasks. Not even inferior ones, but only the immobile[199] can live without acting. O Yudhishthira! From the time one suckles at a breast to the time one is supine before death, all mobile beings act according to their nature. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Among mobile beings in particular, men wish to perform deeds that ensure conduct in this life and the next. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All beings know about ascent.[200] The world is a witness to the fact that they directly reap the fruits of their actions. I can see myself that all beings live in accordance with this ascent, even the creator[201] and the preserver,[202] like a crane in the water. You should do your own task, without becoming fatigued. You should be armed through your deeds. He who knows his own task is one in a thousand, if not rarer. Therefore, one should act, to protect and to extend what one has. If it[203] is eaten up without a new crop, it dwindles like the Himalayas. All subjects would have been destroyed had they not performed their tasks. Do we ever see people act, without their acts leading to fruits? We do not know of anyone in this world who makes a living without action. In this world, those who believe in destiny and those who believe in chance are both wrong. What is praised is intelligence based on action. He who is happily asleep and believing in destiny, makes no effort, that evil-minded one soon sinks like a pot in the water. This is also true of the one who believes in chance and though capable of action, fails to act. His seat is not permanent and he lives like a weak one, without a protector. If a man unexpectedly obtains something and it is thought that it has been obtained by chance, his efforts have not been successful. O Partha! If a man obtains something and describes it as destiny, then he certainly decides that it was divine decree and nothing but fate. The fruit that a man obtains through his own acts is directly seen through the eyes and is regarded as manliness. One who is naturally active obtains results without any obvious reason. O supreme among men! Know that this fruit is only natural. Whatever is thus obtained by a man through chance, divine destiny and as the natural outcome of deeds is the fruit of the man's earlier deeds.

'"According to the deeds men have earlier done, the preserver and the supreme god distribute them and their fruits in their respective tasks. Whatever task a man performs, good or bad, know that this has been decided by the preserver in accordance with the fruits of the earlier deeds. This body is only an instrument of the preserver to undertake acts and take actions. Under his control, one helplessly acts accordingly. O Kounteya! It is the great lord who appoints us to this task or that one and all beings are made to act, though they are themselves inert. Having fixed the objective in one's mind, one subsequently undertakes the task. A man who himself uses his intelligence first is therefore the cause, because of his resolution. O bull among men! It is not possible to count the number of deeds. Man is the reason behind the success of houses and towns. There is oil in sesame seeds. There is milk in cows. Finally, there is fire in wood. Using one’s intelligence, one should cleverly understand the means for attaining success. Thereafter one undertakes action, after ascertaining the reasons for success. It is on the success of their deeds that beings survive. An act that is well performed by a skilled actor is certainly different from another act that is felt to have been performed by one who is not skilled. Had man not been the reason behind the success of acts, there would have been no oblations and sacrifices, no disciples or preceptors. It is because a man is himself the actor that he is praised for the success of his deeds and blamed in the case of failure. How can one’s deeds be destroyed?

‘“Some say that everything is the outcome of chance, others that everything is the outcome of destiny. There are those who think it results from a man’s efforts. Others say the reason is threefold. Others hold that it is not enough to think of the task alone. Everything is invisible, be it chance or destiny. It is seen that results are the outcome of chance or destiny. Some of it is chance, some of it is destiny, some of it is the outcome of one’s own deeds. This is how a man obtains the fruits, there is no fourth reason. Learned and skilled ones who know say this. But even then, the preserver is the one who gives desirable and undesirable fruits to all beings. Had that not been the case, no beings would have been miserable. A man would have performed the act that would bring him his desired results. Had earlier acts not existed, his deeds would have led to success. Those men who do not see these three doors to success and failure are unsuccessful, like their own worlds. Tasks must always be performed. This is what Manu had decided. A man who does not act is always defeated. O Yudhishthira! If a man acts, he is usually successful. Those who are lazy rarely attain success. If there is a reason for failure, propitiation is indicated. O Indra among kings! But if the act is undertaken, one is freed from one’s debts. Misfortune characterizes the lazy man who sleeps. But a skilled one certainly obtains the fruits and attains prosperity. Intelligent men committed to acting never have doubts and are successful. But they do not seek to free from doubt those who doubt and are unsuccessful.

'"We have now been overtaken by misfortune. However, if you engage in action, there is no doubt that this misfortune will be removed. Even if you are unsuccessful, you will have the pride and this is also true of Vrikodara, Bibhatsu and the twin brothers. The tasks of others have obtained success and ours might also be. Without undertaking the task first, how can one know what the outcome will be? Having cleaved the earth with his plough and sown the seed, the farmer waits silently for the rains to be the cause. However, if the rains do not favour him, the farmer is not to be blamed. He knows he has done everything that any other man could have. Even if we do not obtain the fruits of success, the slightest bit of blame will not attach to us. The intelligent one keeps this in mind and does not blame himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if the objective is not attained, though one has acted, there is no reason to despair, because there are two other reasons too.[204] There is success and there is failure. But lack of inclination is a different thing altogether. Success in a task is the united outcome of many factors. If the required attributes are deficient, the fruit may be incomplete, or non-existent. O one without decay! But if the task is not begun, neither fruit nor attributes can be seen. According to his strength and power, the intelligent one brings together time, place, means and auspicious rites for prosperity. Those who are not deluded must act. Valour will be the instructor. Among the qualities required for action, valour is the most important. If an intelligent person sees one[205] who is superior in many qualities, he should employ conciliation and other kinds of tasks. O Yudhishthira! He should wish for his misery and destruction. This is true of oceans and mountains, not to speak of mortal men. By looking for the weaknesses in an enemy, a man satisfies a debt to himself, as well as to the enemy. A man should never think ill of himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Prosperity does not come to one who thinks of himself as having become overpowered. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the foundation for the success of the world. It is said that the reasons for success are many and depend on the time and the place.

'"In earlier times, a learned brahmana was lodged in my father's house.[206] O bull among the Bharata lineage! He told all this, first propounded by Brihaspati,[207] to my father. He also taught all this to my brothers. I overheard this conversation at home. O King Yudhishthira! He explained this to me comfortingly, when I would arrive on some task, or when I was serving, or when I was seated on my father's lap."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these words of Yajnaseni, the intolerant Bhimasena went to the king.[208] He sighed angrily and told him, "For the sake of kingship, tread along the road of dharma, one used by righteous ones. Deprived of dharma, artha and kama, what do you gain by living in this hermitage of ascetics? Duryodhana did not rob the kingdom through dharma, honesty or energy, but through deceitful gambling with dice. Our kingdom was stolen the way a weak scavenging jackal steals a piece of meat from stronger lions. O king! Why have you abandoned artha, which is the source of dharma and kama, tormenting yourself in this wilderness in some trifling pursuit of dharma? Protected by the wielder of the Gandiva,[209] our kingdom could not even have been robbed by Shakra. But because of our obedience to you, it was stolen in front of our eyes. While we were still alive, our riches were taken away from us because of you, like bilva fruit or cattle from those who are crippled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are always firm in desiring dharma. But it is because we sought to do what is pleasing to you, that we now face this great calamity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It was because our selves were under your control that we are now ploughing our friends and providing delight to our enemies. It was our stupidity that we did not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra. But because we followed your commands, that evil deed is now tormenting us. O king! Look at you, living in a home meant for animals. This is the act of a coward, not one served by the strong. This is not approved by Krishna,[210] or Bibhatsu, or Abhimanyu, or Srinjaya,[211] or I myself, or the two sons of Madri. Because you are dharma, you always oppress yourself by your vow towards dharma. O king! But isn't it possible that despair has condemned you to the life of an impotent? It is only cowards who are incapable of winning back their prosperity. They love despair, which bears no fruits and destroys everything. You have strength and sight. You can see your manliness. O king! But because you have resorted to gentleness, you do not feel our distress.

'"While we have always been forgiving, the sons of Dhritarashtra regard us as incapable. This causes more grief than death in battle. If all of us were to die in battle, in a straight fight and without turning back, that would have been better, because we would have obtained worlds after death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! And if we killed them all and obtained back the entire earth, that would also be superior. If we are always devoted to our tasks and established in our own dharma, if we wish to obtain great fame, if we wish to repulse enmity, then the signs are that for our own sake, we should embark on war. Our kingdom has been stolen by others. We will be praised and not censured. O king! Dharma that causes affliction to our friends and our own selves is vice. It is not dharma. It is bad dharma. A man who always resorts to dharma follows weak dharma. Dharma and artha desert him, like happiness and unhappiness leave a man who is dead. One who suffers dharma's afflictions for the sake of dharma alone is not learned. He does not know the true purpose of dharma, like a blind one does not know the rays of the sun. He who thinks that artha exists only for the sake of artha, does not know about artha. He is like a servant tending to cattle in the forest. He who excessively pursues artha and doesn't pay attention to the other two goals[212] deserves to be censured, like the killer of a brahmana, and should be killed by all beings. In that way, he who always pursues kama and ignores the other two goals of dharma and artha, is certain to be robbed of his friends and will be weak in dharma and artha. He is certain to be killed at the end of the kama, like a fish that roams with pleasure until the pond dries up. It is for this reason that the learned are never confused about dharma and artha. They are required for kama, like kindling for a fire. Dharma is the root of all artha and dharma is united with artha. Know that the two are rooted in each other, like the ocean and the clouds. One feels a sensation of pleasure when one touches objects that have artha. This kama is a state of the mind and has no physical existence. O king! A man who pursues artha should also strive for great dharma. He who strives for kama also seeks artha, because from kama one obtains nothing else. Kama yields no fruit other than desire, once that fruit is used up. The learned regard it as ashes from wood. O king! Just as a seller of meat kills small birds, in that way, it is the nature of that which is not dharma to kill beings. One who does not perceive the nature of dharma because of desire and avarice deserves to be killed by all beings. He remains evil-minded, here and in the hereafter. O king! It is known to you that artha is derived from the possession of objects. You also know about its nature and its various transformations. Its loss, or destruction at the time of old age and death, is regarded as a calamity. That affliction has now overtaken us. The five senses, the mind and the heart find pleasure when there is attachment to objects. In my view, that is the supreme fruit of one's deeds. Thus, dharma, artha and kama should be considered separately. A man should not be excessively addicted to dharma, or to artha, or to kama. All of them must always be served. The sacred texts decree that dharma must be followed in the first, artha in the middle and kama in the last.[213] The sacred texts decree that, in due order and according to age, kama must be observed in the first, artha in the second and dharma in the last.[214] O supreme among eloquent ones! Learned ones who know the nature of time apportion their time in due order, serving all of dharma, artha and kama. O king! O descendant of the Kuru lineage![215] Whether freedom from these or obtaining them is the superior goal for those who seek to obtain happiness is a question that you should reflect on, with every means at your disposal. O king! You should then swiftly act on obtaining either the former or the latter. He who lives a life of vacillation between the two is immersed in a miserable state.

'"You know dharma and you have always practised it. On knowing this, your well-wishers are urging you to act. O king! Donations, sacrifices, honesty, worship, retention of the Vedas and uprightness—

these represent powerful and supreme dharma, here and in the hereafter. O king! But one who is distressed and destitute cannot serve these. O tiger among men! This holds even if one has all the qualities. O king! The universe is based on dharma and there is nothing that is above dharma. O king! But dharma can only be served through great wealth. O king! Such wealth can never be obtained through begging or through impotence, but can always be obtained by one whose intelligence is based on dharma. O bull among men! Begging brings success to brahmanas. But that has been forbidden to you. Therefore, seek to obtain the artha that you desire by exercising your energy. Begging is not recommended, nor the life of a vaishya or a shudra. In the heart of kshatriyas, the special dharma is that of strength. The wise and the learned say that nobility is dharma. Therefore, strive for nobility and do not stop short of it. O Indra among kings! You know the eternal dharma. Awake! You have been born to perform cruel deeds,[216] those that other men suffer from. The fruits that you obtain by nurturing your subjects can never be condemned. O king! This is the eternal dharma that the preserver[217] has determined for you. O Partha! If you deviate from this, you will provide cause for laughter to the world. Men do not praise deviation from one's own dharma. O Kounteya! Make your mind that of a kshatriya. Forsake this lassitude of mind. Rely on valour. Bear the weight like a beast of burden. O king! No one has won the world with only dharma in his soul. No king has won prosperity and fortune in this way. One can obtain a kingdom by deceiving inferior ones, who have avarice in their hearts, with a sweet tongue, like one with a spear[218] obtains food. O bull among the Pandavas! The asuras were the elder brothers and were prosperous in every way.[219] But the gods conquered them through deceit. O lord of the earth! O mighty-armed one! Knowing that everything belongs to those with strength, win over the enemies by resorting to deceit. There is no archer who is equal to Arjuna in battle. There is no man who is my equal in wielding the club. O king! A strong one engages in battle on the basis of strength, not on the basis of greater numbers or greater enterprise. O Pandava! Therefore, resort to your prowess. Prowess is the source of artha. Nothing else is the source. It is not useless, like the shade of a tree during the winter. O Kounteya! If one desires greater artha, one should give up some artha, like seeds sown on the ground. There is no doubt about this. But when the gain of artha is equal to the expenditure made of artha, or smaller than it, expenditure is not the indicated task. That would be like scratching an ass. O Indra among men! In that way, a man who gives up a little bit of dharma for the sake of obtaining greater dharma is certainly considered to be wise. If an enemy possesses friends, learned ones make them their friends. Then, when the enemy is weakened because his friends have left him, they overcome him. O king! Those who are strong embark on a battle on the basis of prowess, not only enterprise or sweet words. That is how all the subjects are made one's own. By uniting together, weak ones can kill a stronger enemy, like bees kill someone trying to steal the honey.

'"O king! The sun sustains and destroys all beings with its rays. Be like the sun. O king! Just as it was observed by our grandfathers, we have heard the ancient accounts about the observance of austerities, so as to protect the earth in accordance with ordinances. On witnessing your affliction, the world has decided that the sun may lose its light and the moon its beauty. O king! Separately and collectively, when assemblies gather together in conversation, they praise you and censure the other.[220] O king! Over and above this, when brahmanas and the Kurus assemble, they happily talk about your adherence to the truth. They say you have never uttered a falsehood because of delusion, meanness, greed, fear, desire or wish for prosperity. If a king acquires demerits in an attempt to win the earth, all of that can later be countered through sacrifices and offering of large quantities of dakshina. O king! Just as the moon emerges from darkness, he is freed from all his sins by giving villages and thousands of cows to brahmanas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![221] O Yudhishthira! All the citizens and residents of the countryside, both young and old, often praise you. The kingdom vested in Duryodhana is like a dog's skin touched by milk, the brahman in a shudra, truth in a robber and strength in a woman. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! These are the words that have been uttered in the world since ancient times. Even women and children say it, as if it was part of studying.

'"Therefore, mount the chariot that is stocked with all the implements. Let the best of brahmanas pronounce benedictions over you, so that your supreme objective is successful. Set out instantly, and today itself, for Gajasahrya.[222] Surrounded by your brothers, who are skilled in the use of weapons and wield firm bows, and whose valour is like that of venomous serpents, you will be like the killer of Vritra[223] surrounded by the Maruts. Use your energy to destroy the weak enemies, like the destroyer of the asuras. O Kounteya! O immensely strong one! Rob the sons of Dhritarashtra of their prosperity. No man on earth can withstand the touch of arrows when they are unleashed from Gandiva. Shafted in feathers of vultures, they are like virulent serpents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When I am enraged in battle, no warrior, no elephant and no noble steed can withstand the force of my club. O Kounteya! With the help of the Srinjayas,[224] the Kekayas and the bulls among the Vrishnis, how can we not win back our kingdom in battle?"'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no doubt that all this is true. Your sharp words pierce me like barbs and weaken me. But I cannot blame you. My wrong course of action has brought this adversity and misery on us. I took up the dice with a desire to take away the sovereignty and kingdom of Dhritarashtra's son. It was thus that Subala's son, the skilful and deceitful gambler, played with me for Suyodhana's sake. O Bhimasena! Shakuni, the dweller of the mountains,[225] is knowledgeable in great maya. He hurled out the dice in the middle of the sabha. He used maya against me, who did not know any maya. It is then that I saw the deceit. I saw that the dice would always follow the wishes of Shakuni and favour him in odds and evens.[226] I was capable of restraining my mind then, but anger robs a man of his patience. O son![227] The self cannot be controlled when it is overcome by manliness, pride and valour. O Bhimasena! I do not take umbrage at what you have said. I think that this was destined to be. O Bhimasena! The king who is Dhritarashtra's son wished to rob us of our kingdom and inflict misery on us. Slavery was inflicted on us and it was Droupadi who became our only refuge.

'"Both you and Dhananjaya know what Dhritarashtra's son told us when we were summoned to the sabha yet again to gamble with dice. In front of all the Bharatas, he told us what one throw of the dice would entail. He said, 'O prince! O Ajatashatru! Without being concealed, you will have to live in the forest of your choice for twelve years. After that, you and your brothers will have to live for another year in concealment and without being detected. O father![228] O Partha! But when you are roaming thus, if the spies of the Bharatas hear of you or detect you, you will again have to spend a similar period in that fashion. Knowing this, you must give your certain promise. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you are not found out during that period and manage to confound my spies, I promise in this assembly of Kurus that you will have the five rivers back.[229] If we are defeated by you, 'all my brothers and I' will give up our comforts for a similar period and live accordingly.' This is what the king said earlier in the midst of the Kurus and I gave my promise. That abominable game of dice then began there. All of us were defeated and exiled. We are thus roaming around in these regions, in these difficult forests that are in the form of a calamity. Even then, Suyodhana did not wish for peace. He fell prey to even greater rage. He encouraged all the Kurus and all those who were under his control.[230] Having entered into an agreement before righteous ones, who would wish to break it for the sake of a kingdom? As an arya, I think that transgression of dharma is worse than death, even for the sake of ruling the earth.

'"You could have performed a brave deed then. You grasped your club at the time of the gamble. Had Phalguna not restrained you, you would have burnt my arms. O Bhima! That would not have been a misdeed then. Since you are aware of your manliness, why did you not speak up then and perform the deed at its appointed time. You have found the time now, when it is too late. When the time has passed, what is the point of censuring me? O Bhimasena! But I suffered from misery even more, when I saw Yajnaseni oppressed and though we saw it, we restrained ourselves. O Bhima! That was like drinking a poisonous juice. O brave one among the Bharata lineage! We cannot do anything now. We made an agreement in the midst of the Kuru warriors. We must wait for the time, until our happiness dawns again, like those who sow seeds wait for the fruit. If someone has been vanquished through deceit earlier and knows that the enmity will bear flowers and fruit, such a brave one truly lives in the world of the living and obtains many qualities through his manliness. He obtains all the prosperity in this world. I think that his enemies bow down before him. His friends gather around and worship him, and live off him, like the gods off Indra. Know that the promise I made will be true. I think dharma is superior to immortality and life. The kingdom, sons, fame, wealth—all of these are worth only a small fragment[231] of truth."'

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'Bhimasena said, "O great king! You have made an agreement with time, the arrow[232] that brings an end to everything. It has no end, it is without measure and it is like a current that carries everything away. I think that it follows the dharma of foam and the dharma of fruit. You are a mortal and you are tied down by time. How can you think that time is directly before you? O Kounteya! Like collyrium becomes less every time it is picked with a blade of grass,[233] one's life becomes less in an instant. Why should it[234] wait? Only one whose life has no end or one who knows the measure of one's life can wait for time, since one can then see everything clearly. O king! If we wait for time and for thirteen years, our lives will be shortened and we will be nearer death. The bodies of those who have bodies are always overtaken by death. Therefore, we should work towards obtaining the kingdom before death.

One who should extend the earth,[235] but does not avenge enmity, fails to achieve fame and remains incomplete, like a useless cow. If a man does not avenge enmity because he has little strength and enterprise, I think that his birth has been useless and that he has been born in an inferior lineage. O lord of the earth! Your arms will be laden with gold, you will attain fame. Use the strength of your arms to kill those who hate you in battle and enjoy the riches. O king! O destroyer of enemies! If a man goes to hell after killing a deceitful person, that instantly becomes like heaven to him.

'"The torment born from anger burns more than fire. I am tormented by it and cannot sleep during the day or at night. Partha Bibhatsu is foremost among those who draw the string of the bow. He is now supremely tormented like a lion in its den. Like a giant elephant, he is suppressing the great heat that arises inside him, though unaided, he can take on all the archers in the world. So as to please you, Nakula, Sahadeva and the aged mother[236] who has given birth to warriors are seated, benumbed and dumb. All our relatives, together with the Srinjayas, wish you well. But I and Prativindhya's mother[237] are greatly tormented and speak to you, though what I am saying will be agreeable to them too. All of them have attained great grief and all of them will welcome war. O king! No calamity can be greater than this. Mean and weaker ones have stolen our kingdom and are now enjoying it. O scorcher of enemies! You are bearing this misery so that your conduct is not tainted out of tenderness and gentleness. But no one will praise you for this. Your gentleness is like that of a brahmana. How have you been born as a kshatriya? Those who are born in that womb are usually cruel-minded. You have heard about the dharma of kings, as recounted by Manu. They are cruel, characterized by deceit and are against pacification. O tiger among men! There is work to be done. Why are you behaving like a crippled one? You have intelligence, valour, knowledge and birth.

'"O Kounteya! You wish to conceal us, like hiding the Himalaya Mountains in a handful of grass. You are famous throughout the earth.

You will not be able to live secretly, undetected. O Partha! The sun cannot pass undetected in the sky. How can Jishnu remain unrecognized? He is like a giant shala tree, like a palasha tree with branches and flowers. He is like a white elephant. O Partha! How will these two young brothers who are like lions, Nakula and Sahadeva, remain hidden? The princess Droupadi is the mother of brave ones and the performer of sacred deeds. O Partha! Krishna is famous. How will she remain unrecognized? O king! All the subjects know me, even the children. I see myself as unrecognized as Mount Meru. Besides, we have exiled many kings and the sons of kings from their kingdoms and they will now follow Dhritarashtra. Deprived and exiled by us, they will not have pacific feelings towards us. They will certainly try to injure us, so as to cause him pleasure. They will employ many spies against us. There will be a great danger that they will detect us and inform against us. We have already lived in this forest for thirteen months. Regard that as equal to that number of years. The learned ones have said that a month can substitute for a year, like *putika*[238] is a substitute for soma. Act accordingly. O king! You can also free yourself from this single sin[239] by satisfying with sacred food a bull that pulls a sacred burden. O king! Therefore, make up your mind to kill your enemies. For kshatriyas, there is no dharma other than that of fighting.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Bhimasena’s words, Kunti’s son Yudhishthira, a tiger among men and the scorcher of enemies, sighed and reflected. Having reflected for an instant and having decided what he should do, he immediately replied to Bhimasena, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O mighty-armed one! It is as you say. O one who is wise with words! But also listen to the words that I have to say. O Bhimasena! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Great sins that are begun only out of courage bring pain. O mighty-armed one! But an act that is well advised, well powered, well executed and well planned is successful in its objective and is divinely auspicious. Out of your own strength and insolence and out of rashness, you have thought about a deed that needs to be done. But listen to what I have to say about that. Bhurishrava, Shalya, the valorous Jarasandha, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Drona's valorous son[240] and Dhritarashtra's invincible sons with Duryodhana at the forefront—all of them have their weapons ready and are prepared to murder. The kings and the lords of the earth whom we suppressed have resorted to the Kourava side and are affectionate towards them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They now seek to do good to Duryodhana, not to us. Their treasury is full and they have a large army. They will make an effort to protect these. All the Kourava armies, with their sons, advisers and soldiers, have been given riches and honours everywhere. The warriors have been specially honoured by Duryodhana. It is my certain view that they will give up their lives for him in battle. Though the conduct of Bhishma, the mighty-armed Drona and the great-souled Kripa is equal,[241] they will certainly be driven by the royal morsels.[242] That is what I think. All of them are knowledgeable in the use of divine weapons and all of them are devoted to dharma. Therefore, no matter how precious, they will give up their lives in battle. My view is that they cannot be vanquished, even by the gods and Vasava. Then there is maharatha Karna, intolerant and always angry. He is skilled in the knowledge of all weapons and cannot be assailed, because he is covered with impenetrable armour. O Vrikodara! Without first defeating in battle all these foremost of men and without any allies, you cannot kill Duryodhana. I cannot go to sleep when I think of the lightness of hand of the suta's son.[243] He is foremost among all those who handle the bow." Bhimasena was intolerant. But having heard these words, he became pensive and alarmed at the truth of these words and did not reply anything.

'When the two Pandavas were thus conversing, Satyavati's son, the great yogi Vyasa arrived. When he arrived, he was duly worshipped by the Pandavas and the supreme among eloquent ones then spoke these words to Yudhishthira, "O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! O bull among men! I have swiftly come here, because with my insight I got to know what was passing through your heart. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O killer of enemies! I will dispel the fear that exists in your heart about Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna and Drona's son. I will tell you how they can be legitimately killed according to the rules. On hearing this, regain your composure and do what needs to be done." Then Parashara's son[244] spoke to Yudhishthira alone and that eloquent of speakers told him words of grave import. "O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! The time for you to regain your fortune will come. Partha Dhananjaya will overcome the enemies in battle. Accept from me this knowledge known as *pratismriti*, as I recount it to you. It is success personified. On receiving it from you, the mighty-armed Arjuna will be successful. O Pandava! For the sake of weapons, he must go to the great Indra, Rudra, Varuna, the lord of riches[245] and Dharmaraja.[246] Because of his austerities and valour, he has the power to see the gods. He is an immensely energetic rishi. He is the ancient, eternal and everlasting god who is Narayana's companion and a part of Vishnu.[247] When he has obtained weapons from Indra, Rudra and the Lokapalas,[248] the mighty-armed one will perform great deeds. O Kounteya! O lord of the earth! Think about leaving this forest and going to another forest that is more appropriate for your residence. It is never very pleasant to live in the same place for a long time. This can cause anxiety to the serene ascetics. Since you support many brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and the vedangas, the deer will be exhausted and the plants and herbs will decay." Having thus spoken, the illustrious lord, Satyavati's intelligent son Vyasa who was learned in yoga, taught Dharmaraja, who had purified himself, that supreme knowledge of yoga. He then took Kounteya's leave and instantly disappeared.

'Yudhishthira, the intelligent one with dharma in his soul, carefully nurtured that knowledge of the brahman in his mind, repeating it from time to time. He was happy with Vyasa's words. Leaving the forest of Dvaitavana, he went to the forest of Kamyaka, on the banks of the Sarasvati. O great king! Just as the rishis follow Indra of the gods, the brahmana ascetics, learned in words and sounds, followed him. On arriving in Kamyaka, the great-souled bulls among the Bharatas began to live there, with their advisers and followers. O king! Those intelligent ones lived there for some time. The warriors engaged themselves in the science of archery and listened to the supreme Vedas. They went out on hunts every day, seeking to kill deer with pure arrows.[249] In accordance with the rites, they offered oblations to the ancestors, the gods and the brahmanas.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After some time, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira remembered the sage's words. He spoke privately to Arjuna, bull among the Bharata lineage and whose wisdom was known. He smiled at him and gently took him by the hand. After thinking for an instant about their abode in the forest, Dharmaraja, the destroyer of enemies, secretly spoke to Dhananjaya. O king! The intelligent one thought about it there and said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The four parts of *dhanurveda*[250] are today established in Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Drona's son.[251] They know all types of brahma, divine and asura weapons, how to release them and how to counter them. They know the use of all weapons and how to counter them. All of them have been pacified by Dhirtarashtra's son. He has gratified them with gifts and treats them like preceptors. He always exhibits the best of conduct towards all the warriors. Thus revered by him, they will not fail to show their power when the time comes. Today, the entire earth is under Duryodhana's suzerainty. You are our last refuge and a great burden is vested in you. O destroyer of enemies! I see that the time has come for you to perform a task. O son![252] I obtained secret knowledge from Krishna Dvaipayana. If you use it, the entire universe will become visible to you. O son! Having attentively received this brahman, when the time is right, you must seek the favour of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Devote yourself to terrible austerities. Armed with a bow, armour and sword, be like a revered sage. O son! Without allowing anyone to pass you, traverse a path towards the northern direction. O

Dhananjaya! Indra possesses all the divine weapons. Out of their fear from Vritra, the gods gave all their powers to Indra. They are all accumulated in one place. Go to Shakra and he will give all the weapons to you. Be consecrated and set out immediately for the god Purandara."[253] Having uttered these words, the lord Dharmaraja imparted the knowledge to him, after he was consecrated according to the rites and controlled in speech, body and mind. The elder brother then gave the warrior brother the permission to leave.

'On Dharmaraja's instructions that he should meet the god Purandara, he grasped the bow Gandiva and the great inexhaustible quivers. He clad himself in armour, leather gloves, leather arm-guards and finger-guards. The mighty-armed one offered oblations into the fire and having received gold coins, the brahmanas pronounced their blessings. Having grasped his bow and arrows, sighing and casting a glance upwards, the mighty-armed one then left, for the sake of the destruction of Dhritarashtra's sons. On seeing Kounteya grasp his bow and arrows, the brahmanas, the siddhas and the invisible beings said, "O Kounteya! May you swiftly obtain the desire in your heart." Arjuna's gait was like that of a lion and his thighs were like the trunks of shala trees. The hearts of everyone went with him and Krishna[254] told him, "O mighty-armed Dhananjaya! O Kounteya! All that Kunti wished for you at the time of your birth and all that you desire for yourself must come true. Let none of us ever be born in the lineage of kshatriyas again. I always salute the brahmanas, who never have to make a living out of war. All your brothers will spend their waking hours in repeatedly praising and recounting your valorous deeds. O Partha! But if your sojourn proves to be a long one, we will find no satisfaction in our minds in our comforts, riches and even in our lives. O Partha! All our happiness and unhappiness is now established in you, our life and death, our kingdom and our prosperity. O Kounteya! I take leave of you. O Pandava! May all be well with you. I bow down before Dhata and Vidhata. May all be well along your path and may you be healthy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! May you be safe from all beings in the sky, the earth and heaven and may all other beings not create obstructions in your path.” The mighty-armed Pandava then circumambulated his brothers and Dhoumya, and grasping his beautiful bow, departed.

‘All the beings left the path the lustrous and valorous one traversed, resorting to yoga so as to be united with Indra. The great-souled one reached the sacred mountain in just one day. Having resorted to yoga,[255] he was as fast as thought and like the wind. Having crossed the Himalayas and Gandhamadana and traversing unwearied over inaccessible terrain during night and day, Dhananjaya reached Indrakila[256] and stopped there. He heard a voice from the sky asking him to stop. Then Savyasachi saw an ascetic seated under a tree. He was thin and yellow and his hair was matted. He blazed with the radiance of the brahman.

‘On seeing that he had stopped, the great ascetic spoke to Arjuna, “O son! Who are you? You have come here, clad in armour and with bow and arrows. You have girded on a sword and have leather gloves. You are following the dharma of kshatriyas. But there is no use for weapons here. This is a peaceful region populated by ascetic brahmanas who have controlled anger and delight. The bow has no use here, nor is there any fighting. Therefore, throw down your bow. You have reached your supreme objective.” Thus the brahmana repeatedly spoke to Arjuna, the brave one of infinite energy, as if he was an ordinary man. But so firm was he that he could not dislodge him from his resolution. Then the brahmana was extremely pleased and smilingly told him, “O fortunate one! O destroyer of enemies! I am Shakra. Choose a boon.” Having been thus addressed by the one with the thousand eyes,[257] Dhananjaya, the brave extender of the Kuru lineage, joined his hands in salutation and bowed and replied, “O illustrious one! This is the object of my desire. Please grant it to me as a boon. I wish to obtain from you today the knowledge of all weapons.” The great Indra was extremely pleased and smilingly replied, “O Dhananjaya! You have attained this place. What use will weapons be to you? Ask for desires and worlds. You have attained the supreme objective.” Having been thus addressed, Dhananjaya replied to the one with a thousand eyes, “I do not wish for worlds, desires or divinity, not to speak of happiness. O lord of the thirty gods! I do not wish for lordship over the gods. If I forsake my brothers in the wilderness and do not avenge the enmity, I will attain infamy in all the worlds for an eternity.” Having been thus addressed, the slayer of Vritra, worshipped in all the worlds, told Pandu’s son in consoling words, “O son! When you have seen the lord of all beings, the three-eyed Shiva who wields the trident, I will then give you all the divine weapons. O Kounteya! Act so that you are able to see the supreme god. When you have seen him, you will be successful and will go to heaven.” Having thus spoken to Phalguna, Shakra disappeared. Resorting to yoga, Arjuna remained there.’

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Janamejaya said, ‘O illustrious one! I wish to hear in detail how Partha, the one whose deeds are unsullied, obtained the weapons. What did the long-armed Dhananjaya, tiger among men, do? O one who knows about the brahman! What did he do while he lived there? How did he satisfy the illustrious Sthanu, lord of the gods? O supreme among brahmanas! Through your grace, I wish to hear all this. You are omniscient. You know everything, divine and human. O immensely wise one! The ancient battle between Arjuna, supreme among warriors and unvanquished in battle, and Bhava[258] was unparalleled and extraordinary and made one’s hair stand up. On hearing about it, the hearts of the brave Parthas,[259] lions among men, also trembled in despondency, delight and great surprise. Tell me everything about Partha’s[260] deeds. I do not see the slightest thing to censure in Jishnu. Recount to me everything about the character of that brave one.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O son! O tiger among the Kouravas! I will recount for you the divine, great and extraordinary story of that great-souled one. O unblemished one! Hear in detail the account of Partha’s meeting with Tryambaka,[261] god of the gods, where there was physical contact. On Yudhishthira’s instructions, the infinitely valorous one set out to see Shakra, lord of the gods, and Shankara,[262] god of the gods. To ensure that his task met with success, the immensely strong and mighty-armed Arjuna, bull among men, took his divine bow and sword.'

'O king! With a steadfast mind, Kouravya, Indra's son,[263] maharatha in all the worlds, set out in a northward direction for the peak of the Himalayas. His mind was fixed on austerities. He swiftly entered a terrible forest that was full of thorns. It was full of many flowers and fruit and was populated by many birds. It was full of many types of animals and was frequented by siddhas and charanas. When Kounteya entered the forest that was bereft of men, the sounds of conch shells and drums could be heard from heaven. A great shower of flowers fell down on the ground. A net of clouds covered everything with shade. Passing through the forest that was difficult of access, he approached the great mountain. In all his splendour, Arjuna then lived on the peak of the Himalayas. He saw many flowering trees there, resounding with the sweet sounds of birds. There were rivers with many currents, tinged like blue lapis lazuli,[264] echoing with the sounds of swans and ducks, the cries of cranes and resounding with the notes of male cuckoos, herons and peacocks. On seeing the beautiful woods and the pure, cool and clear water, the great warrior Arjuna was delighted. The great-souled Arjuna then engaged in terrible austerities in a beautiful region of that beautiful forest. He clad himself in darbha grass, bark and deerskin and carried a staff. In the first month, he ate fruits once every period of three nights was over. In the second month, it was for double the period.[265] In the third month, he ate once every fortnight, surviving on decayed leaves that fell down on the ground. When the fourth moon arrived and the moon was full, the mighty-armed son[266] of Pandu survived only on air. He raised his arms up, and without anything for support, stood on the tips of his toes. Because of the frequent baths he took, the matted hair of that great-souled one whose energy was infinite, became as lustrous as lightning and the lotus.

‘Then all the maharshis went to Pinaki.[267] They prostrated themselves before the immensely illustrious one with the dark throat[268] and sought his favours. They told him about Phalguna’s deeds, “This immensely energetic Partha has established himself on the peak of the Himalayas. He is engaged in difficult and terrible austerities and smoke is emerging in all the directions. O lord of the gods! None of us knows what he wishes for. He is tormenting us. It would be better if he were to be restrained.” Maheshvara replied, “In a happy frame of mind and without fatigue, swiftly return to wherever you have come from. I know the resolution that is fixed in his mind. He does not wish for heaven, or riches, or a long life. I will accomplish today everything that he wishes for.” Having heard Sharva’s[269] words, all the truthful rishis returned to their hermitages in happy frames of mind.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When all those great-souled ascetics had departed, the illustrious lord Hara,[270] the destroyer of all sins and the one with the pinaka in his hand, assumed the form of a kirata, blazing like a *kanchana* tree[271] and resplendent in form, like Meru among the mountains. He grasped his handsome bow and many arrows that were like venomous serpents. He descended with great force, like a flame, like a fire consuming the undergrowth. The illustrious one was accompanied by the goddess Uma,[272] attired in the same way and observing the same vow. All the beings, in their different forms, were then greatly delighted. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In his form of a hunter, and accompanied by thousands of women, he blazed forth. In an instant, that entire forest became silent. The sounds of streams and birds stopped.

‘As he approached Partha of the unblemished deeds, he saw the extraordinary sight of Muka, a son of Diti.[273] He had assumed the form of a boar and the supremely evil one wished to kill Arjuna. Phalguna picked up his Gandiva bow and arrows that were like venomous serpents. He strung his supreme bow and as the twang of the bowstring resounded, he said, “I have come here, without causing you any injury. But since you nevertheless desire to kill me, I will first send you to Yama’s abode today.” On seeing the firm-bowed Phalguna about to shoot, Shankara in the form of the hunter suddenly restrained him, “I was the one who sought this one with the colour of a blue cloud[274] first.” However, disregarding these words, Phalguna struck. At that very instant, the hunter also unleashed his immensely radiant arrow at the same target, like the crest of a fire or like lightning. The arrows shot by those two simultaneously struck Muka’s gigantic body, which was as solid as a mountain. The two arrows struck him like the force of lightning and the roar of thunder descended on a mountain. He was pierced by more arrows that were like serpents with flames in their mouths. Assuming the terrible form of a rakshasa, he then gave up his life.

‘On seeing the man with the golden complexion, dressed in the garb of a hunter and accompanied by women, Kounteya Jishnu, the destroyer of enemies, was delighted and smilingly told him, “O one with the golden complexion! Who are you, wandering in this deserted forest and accompanied by women? This animal had been chosen by me. Why did you pierce it? When the rakshasa had arrived here, I was the one who had picked him first. Whether you did this from desire or with the intention of insulting me, you will not escape with your life. What you have done towards me today is not in accordance with the rules of hunting. O one whose refuge is the mountains! Therefore, I will kill you today.” At Pandava’s words, the hunter laughed at him and told Pandava Savyasachi in soft words, “He became my target first. I was the one who chose him first. It was my shot that robbed him of his life. Insolent about your own strength, do not blame others for your own faults. O evil-minded one! You have insulted me. You will not escape with your life. Stay there. I will shoot arrows like thunder at you. Do the best you can and unleash your arrows at me.” Thereupon, both of them repeatedly shouted at each other. They shot arrows that were like venomous serpents at each other. Arjuna covered the hunter with a shower of arrows. But in a happy frame of mind, Shankara received them all. For an instant, the wielder of the pinaka received that shower of arrows, but stood there like an immobile mountain, unhurt in body. On seeing that his shower of arrows had no effect, Dhananjaya was extremely surprised and exclaimed, “Excellent! Excellent! Aha! This one with the delicate body makes a home on the peak of the Himalayas. But he receives the iron arrows[275] unleashed from the Gandiva and is not moved. Who is he? Is he a god? Is he Rudra himself? Is he a yaksha or the lord of the gods? The thirty gods often frequent this best of mountains. Except the god Pinaki, there is no one who can withstand the force of the net of thousands of arrows I have created. As long as it is anyone other than Rudra who stands here, be it a god or a yaksha, I will send him to Yama’s abode with my sharp arrows.” O king! Like the sun spreads out its rays, Jishnu then shot iron arrows by the hundreds, capable of piercing one’s weak spots. But the illustrious god, the one who brings fortune to the worlds and holds the trident in his hand, cheerfully received them, like a mountain withstands a shower of rocks. In a short while, all of Phalguna’s arrows were exhausted.

‘On seeing that all his arrows were exhausted, he began to tremble. Jishnu thought of the illustrious fire-god, who had earlier given him two inexhaustible quivers in Khandava. “What will I unleash from my bow now? My arrows have been exhausted. Who is this man who swallows up all my arrows? I will kill him with the curved end of my bow, like a terrible spear is used on elephants. Yama wields the staff and I will send him to his abode.” Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies, then grasped him with the curved end of his bow. But the mountain-dweller snatched away his divine bow. Bereft of his bow, Arjuna stood there, with a sword in his hand. Wishing to end the fight, he dashed at him with great force. With all the valour in his arms, the courageous descendant of the Kuru lineage[276] struck at his head with the sharp sword, one that even mountains could not resist. However, on striking his head, it shattered into pieces. Then Phalguna began to fight with trees and rocks. But the gigantic and illustrious god who was in the form of a hunter withstood the trees and the rocks. Smoke billowed from the immensely strong Partha's mouth. He struck that invincible one, who was in the form of a hunter, with fists that had the force of the vajra. However, the illustrious one who was in the form of a hunter struck Phalguna with terrible fists that were like Shakra's thunder. As a result of this fight with fists between Pandava and the hunter, the terrible sound of slapping arose there. That great and hair-raising battle with the fists went on for some time, like that ancient battle between Vritra and Vasava. The powerful Jishnu grasped the kirata and pressed his chest and the kirata struck Pandava with great force. As a result of the pressure of their arms and the pressing of their chests, a fire with smoke and embers emerged from their bodies. Then Mahadeva grasped his[277] body firmly and attacked him with energy and force, so that he was deluded of his senses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus oppressed by the god of the gods, Phalguna's body was bruised and became like a ball of flesh. He lost control over his body. Oppressed by the great-souled one, his breathing stopped. He fell down unconscious and Bhava was pleased.

'The illustrious god said, "O Phalguna! I am pleased with you because of your matchless deeds. There is no kshatriya who is equal to you in valour and endurance. O unblemished one! Your energy and valour has been equal to mine today. O mighty-armed one! O bull among men! I am pleased with you. Behold me. O large-eyed one! I will give you eyes.[278] You have been a rishi earlier. You will triumph over all your enemies in battle, even if they happen to be dwellers of heaven." At that, Phalguna saw that immensely radiant god, the god Mahadeva Girisha,[279] who wields the trident, and the goddess.[280] He knelt down on the ground and bowed down his head in homage. Partha, the conqueror of the cities of enemies, gratified Hara.[281] Arjuna said, "O Kapardin![282] O lord of all the beings! O destroyer of Bhaga's eyes![283] O illustrious god! O Shankara! Pardon my transgression. O illustrious one! It was in a desire to see you that I came to this great mountain, beloved by you, lord of the gods, and the supreme abode of the ascetics. O illustrious god, worshipped by all the beings! Be pleased. O Mahadeva! Pardon my crime and my extreme bravery. Out of ignorance and insolence, I fought with you. O Shankara! I seek refuge with you. Pardon me.” Then the immensely energetic Vrishabhadhvaja[284] smiled, and grasping Phalguna’s beautiful hands, said, “I have pardoned you.”’

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‘The illustrious god said, “You were Nara in an earlier body, the companion of Narayana. You spent many *ayuta*[285] years in fearful austerities in Badari.[286] There is supreme energy in you, like that in Vishnu, supreme among men. The universe is held up through the energy of the two of you, foremost among men. O lord! At the time of Shakra’s consecration, you and Krishna oppressed the danavas and you took up the great bow that thunders like clouds. O Partha! This Gandiva is fit for your hands. O supreme among men! It was that which I snatched from you, using my powers of maya. O Partha! These two quivers will again be inexhaustible, as they used to be for you. O Partha! I am pleased with you. Truth is your valour. O bull among men! Accept a boon from me. What is it that you desire? You are the one who shows respect. There is no one on earth who is your equal. Nor is there anyone in heaven. O conqueror of enemies! The kshatriyas find their chief in you.”

‘Arjuna replied, “O illustrious god! O Vrishadhvaja![287] O lord! If you wish to grant me that which I desire, I wish for the terrible and divine weapon known as *pashupata*.[288] It is known as *brahmashira*. It is fearful and is terrible in prowess. When the terrible end of a yuga approaches, it destroys the entire world. Through this weapon, I can burn down in battle danavas, rakshasas, spirits,[289] pishachas, gandharvas and pannagas.[290] When unleashed with mantras, it releases thousands of spears, fearful clubs and arrows that have virulent poison in them. With it, I will fight in battle Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the son of the suta,[291] who always speaks very harshly. O illustrious god! O destroyer of Bhaga’s eyes! This is my first wish. Through your grace, let me be empowered in my pursuit.”

‘The illustrious god said, “O Pandava! I will give you the great pashupata weapon, dear to me. You will be capable of bearing, releasing and withdrawing it. The great Indra, Yama, the king of the yakshas,[292] Varuna and Vayu do not know it. How can it be known to humans? O Partha! But it must not be suddenly released at any man. If it is released at someone who lacks in energy, it will destroy the entire universe. There is no one in the three worlds, mobile or immobile, who cannot be killed by it. It can be released through thought, eyes, words or the bow.”’[293]

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing this, Partha swiftly purified and composed himself. He went to the lord of the universe, who said, “Learn.” Then he taught the best of the Pandavas the mysteries of this weapon, including its withdrawal. It was like the embodied form of death. From then on, it waited on the great-souled one,[294] as it did on Tryaksha,[295] the husband of Uma. Arjuna accepted it with a delighted heart. At that, the entire earth, with its mountains, forests, trees, oceans, regions of groves, villages, cities and towns, began to tremble. When the moment came, the sounds of thousands of conch shells, drums and kettledrums were heard. A great whirlwind[296] occurred. The gods and the demons saw the embodied form of the blazing and terrible weapon by the side of the immensely energetic Pandava. Tryambaka[297] touched the immensely energetic Phalguna and everything that was impure in his body, was immediately destroyed. Then Tryambaka gave Arjuna permission to leave and go to heaven. Lowering his head in obeisance, Partha joined his hands in salutation and looked at the god. Then, the lord of the residents of heaven, the immensely wise Girisha, Shiva the husband of Uma, gave that supreme of men the great bow known as Gandiva, the destroyer of demons and pishachas. In front of the eyes of that supreme of men,[298] the great god then rose up into the sky, accompanied by Uma, leaving that supreme of mountains, with its white peaks, sides and caverns and frequented by birds and maharshis.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Like a setting sun before the eyes of the worlds, Pinaki Vrishabhadhvaja disappeared before his eyes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arjuna, the slayer of enemy warriors, was extremely astounded. He said, “I have seen the great Mahadeva in person. I am blessed and greatly favoured. For I have seen Tryambaka Hara Pinaki, the granter of boons, in person and have touched him with my hands. I know that I have accomplished my objective. I have already defeated my enemies in battle. All my objectives have been attained.” Then, lighting up all the directions, the handsome lord of the waters[299] arrived. His complexion was like that of lapis lazuli[300] and he was surrounded by aquatic creatures, nagas, male and female rivers, daityas, sadhyas[301] and gods.[302] Varuna, the self-controlled lord of all aquatic creatures, arrived in that region. Followed by yakshas, the lord Kubera also arrived. His complexion was like that of gold and he arrived in a splendid chariot. The illustrious lord of riches, extraordinary in form, came to see Arjuna, illuminating the sky. In similar fashion, the illustrious Yama, the powerful destroyer of the worlds and the one who makes the worlds prosper, also came in person. He was accompanied by the ancestors, embodied and disembodied. The destroyer of all beings, whose soul cannot be fathomed, came with a staff in his hand.[303] Dharmaraja, the son of Vivasvat,[304] arrived in a chariot that brightened up the three worlds, with guhyakas, gandharvas and pannagas. He was like a second sun when the end of the yuga has arrived. From that resplendent and multi-hued peak of that great mountain, they saw Arjuna there, engaged in austerities. In a short while, the illustrious god Shakra arrived. He was accompanied by Indrani[305] and was surrounded by masses of gods. He was seated on Airavata’s[306] head. The white umbrella that was held aloft his head shone like the lord of the stars[307] amidst white clouds. He was praised by gandharvas, rishis and those blessed with the power of austerities and having reached the peak of the mountain, he stood there like a rising sun.

'Yama, supremely knowledgeable in dharma, was established in the southern direction. That intelligent one then spoke these pure words, in a voice like the roar of clouds. "O Arjuna! Behold. All the protectors of the worlds have assembled here. We will give you sight, because you deserve to see us. In the past, you were an immensely strong rishi named Nara. O son! Instructed by Brahma, you have been born on earth. You have been born from Vasava, who is immensely valorous and powerful. O descendant of the Kuru lineage![308] You will pacify kshatriya*s* who are like fire to the touch and are protected by Bharadvaja,[309] immensely valorous danavas who have been born as men and the *nivatakavachas*.[310] The greatly valorous Karna is a part of my father, the sun-god, who heats all the worlds.[311] O Dhananjaya! He will be slain by you. You will kill in battle those parts of the gods, danavas and rakshasas that have been born on earth. O Kounteya! O dragger of enemies! They will then obtain their ends, as determined by the fruits of their own deeds. O Phalguna! Your fame will remain eternal in the world. You have pleased Mahadeva himself in a great battle. Along with Vishnu,[312] you will lighten the burden of the earth. O mighty-armed one! Accept the staff,[313] my weapon that cannot be repulsed. With this weapon, you will accomplish great deeds." Partha, the descendant of the Kuru lineage,[314] accepted it in accordance with the prescribed rites, with the mantras for holding, releasing and withdrawing.

'Varuna, the lord of aquatic creatures, was established in a western direction. His complexion was as dark as that of a cloud. The lord then uttered these words, "O Partha! You are foremost among the kshatriyas and you are established in the dharma of kshatriyas. Behold me with your large and copper-red eyes. I am Varuna, lord of the waters. When discharged by me, Varuna's noose[315] cannot be resisted. O Kounteya! I am giving it to you. Accept it, together with the mysteries and means of withdrawal. O brave one! At the time of the tarakamaya battle,[316] I used it to restrain thousands of great-souled daityas. O great-souled one! Accept it as a sign of my favour. Even Death will not be able to escape, if you assault him with this. When you are armed with this weapon and roam in the field of battle, there is no doubt that the earth will be bereft of all kshatriyas.” After Varuna and Yama had given their divine weapons, the lord of riches, who lives on the peak of Kailasa, spoke.

‘He said, “O mighty-armed one! O Savyasachi! Earlier, you were an eternal god. In an earlier era, your endeavours were always at our side. Accept this favourite weapon of mine, known as *antardhana*.[317] It is energetic, vigorous and resplendent. O destroyer of enemies! It can put the enemy to sleep.”[318] Then the mighty-armed Arjuna, descendant of the Kuru lineage,[319] accepted Kubera’s divine weapon in accordance with the rites.

‘The king of the gods now spoke to Partha, the performer of unsullied deeds. He pacified him in gentle words, in a voice that was like a cloud or a kettledrum, “O mighty-armed one! O one with Kunti as your mother! You are the ancient Ishana.[320] You have already obtained supreme salvation earlier and have personally gone the way of the gods. O conqueror of enemies! You must now accomplish a great task for the sake of the gods. You will now ascend to heaven. O immensely radiant one! Prepare yourself. My chariot will descend to earth for you, driven by Matali.[321] O Kourava! I will give you divine weapons there.” Having seen the lords of the worlds assembled on the peak of that mountain, intelligent Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, was astounded. Then the immensely energetic Arjuna paid homage to the assembled lords of the worlds in accordance with the rites, with words, water and fruit. The gods honoured Dhananjaya in return. All of them then returned as they had come, capable of going wherever they wished, with the speed of thought. Having obtained the weapons, Arjuna, bull among men, was delighted. He considered that his wishes had been satisfied and that his desires had been completely satisfied.’

Section Thirty-Two

Indralokabhigamana Parva

This section has 1175 shlokas and thirty-seven chapters.

Chapter 340(43): 38 shlokas
Chapter 341(44): 32 shlokas
Chapter 342(45): 38 shlokas
Chapter 343(46): 41 shlokas
Chapter 344(47): 12 shlokas
Chapter 345(48): 41 shlokas
Chapter 346(49): 43 shlokas
Chapter 347(50): 31 shlokas
Chapter 348(51): 29 shlokas
Chapter 349(52): 24 shlokas
Chapter 350(53): 21 shlokas
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Chapter 352(55): 13 shlokas
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Chapter 373(76): 19 shlokas
Chapter 374(77): 29 shlokas
Chapter 375(78): 23 shlokas
Chapter 376(79): 29 shlokas

Indraloka *means Indra's world and* abhigamana *means to go or visit. So this section is about the visit to Indra's world, meaning Arjuna's visit to Indra's world.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'O Indra among kings! After the lords of the worlds had left, Partha, the destroyer of enemies, thought about the chariot of the king of the gods. As the intelligent Gudakesha was thinking, the immensely resplendent chariot, driven by Matali, arrived. It removed the darkness from the sky and split the clouds. It filled the directions with a roar like that of giant clouds. It was stocked with swords, terrible spears, fearful-looking clubs, lances with divine power, giant flashes of lightning, vajras, *hudaguda*s with wheels,[1] implements that created gusts of wind and sounded like peacocks and large clouds, and fearful nagas that were giant in form and tall as white clouds and hard as rocks. The divine chariot, beautiful to the eye and full of maya, was drawn by ten thousand tawny horses that had the speed of the wind. He[2] saw there the immensely radiant and extremely blue flag known as Vaijayanta, as dark as a blue lotus[3] and with a staff that was ornamented with gold. He saw the charioteer seated on the chariot, adorned in molten gold. On seeing him, the mighty-armed Partha took him to be a god.

'While Phalguna was thus debating, Matali approached and bowing low, addressed Arjuna in these words, "O Shakra's son![4] The illustrious Shakra desires to see you. Swiftly ascend this chariot that has been sent by Indra. Your father Shatakratu, foremost among the gods, has told me, 'The thirty gods must see Kunti's son here in their abode.' Surrounded by the gods and masses of rishis and gandharvas and apsaras, Shakra himself is anxiously waiting to see you. On the instructions of the chastiser of Paka, ascend with me from this world to the world of the gods. Once you have obtained the weapons, you will return.” Arjuna replied, “O Matali! Let us go swiftly. Ascend this supreme chariot that is difficult to obtain, even through a hundred rajasuya and ashvamedha sacrifices. Even immensely fortunate kings, who have performed sacrifices and given a lot of dakshina, or *daivatas*[5] or danavas, cannot ascend this supreme chariot. He who has not performed austerities cannot see this great and divine chariot, or touch it. How can one ride it? O virtuous one! Once you have established yourself in the chariot and the horses have been steadied, I will ascend it thereafter, like a performer of good deeds along the righteous path.” Having heard these words, Matali, Shakra’s charioteer, swiftly ascended the chariot and controlled the horses with the reins. After that, Arjuna purified himself by bathing in the Ganga. Then Kounteya, descendant of the Kuru lineage,[6] happily recited his prayers, in accordance with the rites. In accordance with the rites, he offered oblations to the ancestors. Then he bid farewell to Mandara, king of the mountains. “O mountain! You are always the refuge of righteous ones, those whose conduct follows dharma, the sages whose deeds are holy and those who desire to traverse the road to heaven. O mountain! Through your favours, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas attain heaven and devoid of afflictions, roam with the gods. O king of the mountains! O great mountain! You are the refuge of sages and have places of pilgrimage. I have lived happily on you. But I must now leave, bidding you farewell. My eyes have seen many of your peaks, groves, rivers, springs and sacred places of pilgrimage.” With these words, Arjuna, the destroyer of enemy warriors, bid farewell to the mountain. He then ascended the divine chariot, blazing like the sun. It resembled the sun in its form. It was divine and the performer of extraordinary deeds. In a delighted frame of mind, the intelligent descendant of the Kuru lineage[7] ascended upwards.

‘His path became invisible to mortal ones who roam on earth. He saw thousands of chariots that were extraordinary in form.[8] There was no sun there, nor the moon, nor light, nor the fire. Everything shone there with the radiance of purity. Those are the brilliant regions that are seen in the forms of stars.[9] Though they are very large, because of the distance, they appear like lamps. Pandava saw them, full of radiance and beauty, resplendent in their own fires and established in their own abodes. There were rajarshis, siddhas, warriors slain on the field of battle, those who had obtained heaven through their austerities and had gathered in groups of hundreds, thousands of gandharvas with an energy like that of the radiant sun, guhyakas, rishis and masses of apsaras. On beholding those regions, with their own luminosity, Phalguna was astounded.

'In a friendly tone, he asked Matali and Matali replied, "O Partha! These are the performers of good deeds. They are established in their own abodes. O lord! From the earth, you have seen them in the form of stars." Then he saw, standing at the gate, the white elephant that is always victorious. This was the four-tusked Airavata, like Mount Kailasa. Travelling along the road traversed by the siddhas, the supreme one of the Kuru and Pandava lineages, shone, like the supreme king Mandhata in earlier times.[10] The lotus-eyed one passed through worlds earmarked for kings and then set his eyes on Amaravati, Shakra's city.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'He saw the beautiful city, frequented by siddhas and charanas. It was full of sacred trees that flower in every season. A fragrant breeze, mixed with the perfumes of sacred trees, intermingled with the sacred-scented breeze and fanned him. He saw the divine grove of Nandana,[11] frequented by masses of apsaras, and the celestial blossoming trees there welcomed him. This world of sacred deeds cannot be seen by those who have not burnt themselves with austerities, or those who do not maintain fires,[12] or those who have refrained from battle, or those who do not perform sacrifices and follow falsehood, or those who have abandoned the sacred learning of the Vedas, or those who have not bathed in the sacred waters of tirthas, or those who have been outside[13] donating gifts at sacrifices. The evil-minded ones who disrupt sacrifices, are mean, are addicted to drinking, violate their preceptor's bed,[14] or eat meat, can never see it. Having seen the divine grove, resounding with celestial songs, the mighty-armed one entered Shakra's beloved city. He saw thousands of divine vimanas that were capable of going anywhere at will. They were stationed and he saw tens of thousands[15] of them moving around. Pandava was praised by gandharvas and apsaras and he was fanned by sacred winds, redolent with the scent of flowers. The gods, gandharvas, siddhas and supreme rishis happily welcomed Partha, whose deeds were untiring. He was blessed and praised, accompanied by the sound of divine instruments. The mighty-armed one advanced along the starry path famous as *suravithi,*[16] accompanied by the sound of conch-shells and drums. On Indra's command, Partha travelled along it and was praised in every direction. The Sadhya, Vishvas,[17] Maruts, Ashvins, Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, unblemished brahmarshis, many rajarshis, the kings led by Dilipa,[18] Tumburu,[19] Narada and the gandharvas Haha and Huhu[20] were there. The descendant of the Kuru lineage[21] showed homage to all of them in the appropriate manner.

'Then the mighty-armed Partha descended from the supreme chariot and saw in person his father Shatakratu, the god Indra, the destroyer of enemies and the chastiser of Paka, the king of the gods. A beautiful white umbrella with a golden staff was held above his head. A divinely-scented fan was whisked. He was praised by Vishvavasu and the other gandharvas and foremost brahmanas chanted from the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas. Approaching near, the mighty Kounteya lowered his head and Shakra also embraced him with his round arms. He grasped him by the hand and made him sit on Shakra's sacred throne, worshipped by the gods and the devarshis. When he was bowed in obeisance, Indra of the gods, the slayer of enemy warriors, smelt his forehead and made him sit on his lap. At the command of the god with the thousand eyes,[22] Partha, whose soul was immeasurable, sat on Shakra's throne and appeared like a second Vasava.[23] Vritra's enemy[24] affectionately touched Arjuna's handsome face with his sacred and fragrant hands and pacified him. He gently caressed his long arms, hardened by the string of the bow and as handsome as golden columns. The destroyer of Bala[25] repeatedly caressed his arms with hands that were marked from holding the vajra. The one with a thousand eyes kept looking at Gudakesha with a smile. The eyes of Vritra's destroyer dilated with delight and were not satisfied. Seated on the same seat, they made the assembly hall shine, like the sun and the moon rising in the sky on *chaturdashi*.[26]

'Headed by Tumburu, gandharvas, skilled in songs and chants, sang and chanted there and engaged in supreme dancing. Ghritachi, Menaka, Rambha, Purvachitti, Svayamprabha, Urvashi, Mishrakeshi, Dundu, Gouri, Varuthini, Gopali, Sahajanya, Kumbhayoni, Prajagara, Chitrasena, Chitralekha, Saha, Madhurasvara—these and other beautiful lotus-eyed ones danced there. They were engaged in captivating the minds of the siddhas. The sides of their hips were wide and their breasts bounced. They stole the mind and the intelligence with their side-long glances, gestures[27] and sweetness.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then knowing Shakra's mind, the gods and the gandharvas welcomed Partha with a supreme arghya. They offered the king's son[28] *padya*[29] and *achamaniya*[30] and guided him to the entrance to Purandara's abode. Having been shown such homage, Jishnu lived in his father's house. Pandava learned about all the great weapons and the means of withdrawing them. From Shakra's hands, he received his beloved vajra weapon, impossible to withstand. This made a great roar and was like lightning, marked by the signs of clouds and peacocks.[31] On receiving the weapon, Pandava Kounteya thought of his brothers. But on Purandara's instructions, he lived there happily for five years. When Partha became skilled in the use of all weapons and the right time had come, Shakra told him, "O Kounteya! Now learn singing and dancing from Chitrasena. Learn the music that is only known to the gods and is unknown in the world of men. O Kounteya! If you learn this, it will bring your own welfare.” Purandara then gave him to Chitrasena as a friend. Partha lived happily with him, free from all disease.[32]

‘One day, while travelling around, maharshi Lomasha went to Shakra’s abode, with a desire to see Purandara. The great sage met and bowed in obeisance before the king of the gods. He saw Pandava seated on half of Vasava’s throne. Having obtained Shakra’s permission, the best of brahmanas, worshipped by all the maharshis, sat down on an excellent seat.[33] On seeing Partha seated on Indra’s throne, the thought occurred to him.[34] How could a kshatriya like Partha attain Shakra’s seat? What were his good deeds? What worlds had he won? How had he obtained a place worshipped by the gods? Shakra, the slayer of Vritra, divined his thoughts.

‘Shachi’s consort smilingly told Lomasha, “O brahmarshi! Hear about the thought that is passing through your mind. Though he has been born as a kshatriya, this one is not a mere mortal. O Maharshi! This mighty-armed one is my son, born from Kunti. He has come here for a specific reason, to obtain weapons. You have not recognized him as that ancient and supreme rishi. O brahmana! Listen to me. I will tell you who he is and his purpose. Know that those two supreme and ancient rishis, Nara and Narayana, are none other than Dhananjaya and Hrishikesha. O brahmana! The sacred and famous hermitage named Badari,[35] which cannot be seen even by the gods and the great-souled rishis, was the place where Vishnu and Jishnu dwelt. Served by the siddhas and the charanas, that is the place from where the Ganga arises. O brahmarshi! On my instructions, these two immensely radiant ones have been born on earth. These two immensely valorous ones will remove the earth’s burden. There are the asuras known as the Nivatakavachas. Deluded by the boon they have obtained, they are engaged in causing us injury. Insolent because of their strength, they are now talking about killing the gods. Having been granted the boon, they do not show regard for the gods. Those terrible and immensely strong sons of Danu live in the nether regions. All the armies of the gods together are incapable of fighting with them. O supreme among brahmanas! Vishnu, the illustrious slayer of Madhu, the unvanquished god Hari, whose illustrious divine part lived on earth as Kapila and with an instant glance destroyed the great-souled sons of Sagara[36] who were digging towards *rasatala*, is alone capable of this great task that has to be accomplished for our sake. There is no doubt that he, together with Partha, will undertake this great battle. This one[37] is equal to all of them. Having killed them in battle, the warrior will again return to the world of men. On my instructions, you should yourself return to earth. You will see the brave Yudhishthira dwelling in Kamyaka. He has dharma in his soul and is always devoted to truth. Convey my words and message to him. He should not be anxious on account of Phalguna. 'He will soon return, after accomplishing the task of obtaining weapons. Without the sacred valour of his arms and without having obtained the weapons, he will not be able to withstand Bhishma, Drona and the others in battle. The mighty-armed and great-souled Gudakesha has obtained the weapons. He has become skilled in divine dancing, music and singing. O lord of men! O destroyer of enemies! You yourself, with all your brothers, should see all the venerated places of pilgrimage. O Indra among kings! Having bathed at these sacred places of pilgrimage, you will be cleansed of sin and overcome your fever.[38] Bereft of sin, you will enjoy the kingdom.'[39] O best of brahmanas! O foremost among brahmanas! You have the power of austerities. You should protect him as he travels the earth. Terrible rakshasas always live in the passes of mountains and in uneven regions. Always protect him from them." Lomasha, great in austerities, promised accordingly. He then left for earth, towards Kamyaka forest. He met there Kounteya Dharmaraja, the destroyer of enemies, surrounded everywhere by ascetics and his brothers.'

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Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! What did the immensely energetic Dhritarashtra say when he heard of the extraordinary deeds of the infinitely energetic Partha?'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard from Dvaipayana, best of rishis, that Partha had gone to Shakra's world, the king who was Ambika's son[40] spoke these words to Sanjaya, "O charioteer! O suta! By any chance, do you know of the deeds of the intelligent Partha? Tell me everything in detail. My son is mad and follows the dharma of the vulgar.[41] He is evil in his soul and fixed on sin. That one of wicked intelligence will destroy the earth. The words of the great-souled one[42] are always true, even in jest. He has Dhananjaya as his warrior and will win the three worlds. When Arjuna shoots his barbed iron arrows, pointed at the tips and sharpened on stone, is there anyone who has conquered death and old age so as to withstand him? All my evil-souled sons are under the sway of death. A fight with the invincible Pandava confronts them. I think about this all the time. Yet I do not see a charioteer who can withstand Gandivadhanva in battle, even if Drona or Karna advance against him in battle, or Bhishma himself. There is no doubt a great calamity confronts the world. But I do not see our victory. Karna is contemptible[43] and negligent. The preceptor is old and also his teacher.[44] Partha is wrathful, driven by vengeance and powerful, steady in valour. Since all these are incapable of being vanquished, a terrible battle will occur. All these warriors are skilled in the use of weapons and all of them will attain great fame. None of them will wish for the lordship of everything if that were to be obtained through defeat. Therefore, there will be certain peace only when they have been killed, or when Phalguna is. But no one exists who can kill Arjuna, or even vanquish him. How will his wrath towards the evil ones be pacified? That warrior is the equal of the thirty gods and gratified Agni in Khandava. He conquered all the lords of the earth at the great rajasuya sacrifice. O Sanjaya! O son![45] When a bolt of thunder strikes the peak of a mountain, it leaves some remnants. But the arrows shot by Kiriti leave no remnant. Like the arrows of the sun scorch everything that is mobile and immobile, the arrows shot by Partha's arms will scorch my sons. It seems as if the armies of the Bharatas have already been scattered, frightened at the roar of Savyasachi's chariot. Kiriti stands like an assassin in battle, unleashing showers of arrows. The creator has created him like the destroyer of everything. But that which is bound to happen cannot be avoided.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! What you have said about Duryodhana is exactly as you have stated it. O lord of the earth! Nothing that you have said is untrue. On seeking the famous Krishna, their wife according to dharma, brought into the assembly hall, the infinitely energetic Pandavas have been filled with wrath. O great king! On hearing Duhshasana’s words that have terrible consequences, and those of Karna, I think that they have not been able to sleep. O great king! I have heard how Partha has used his bow in battle to satisfy Sthanu, who has eleven forms.[46] Kapardin, the illustrious lord of all the gods, himself fought with Phalguna in the disguise of a hunter, so as to test him. It was then that the lords of the world showed themselves to Arjuna, the valorous bull among the Kouravas, who performed austerities for the sake of weapons. There is no other man on earth, except Phalguna, who can dare to see those gods in their direct forms. O king! What man can wear out in battle a warrior whom Maheshvara could not wear out in the form that he had assumed? Having oppressed Droupadi and angered the Pandavas, they have brought this terrible and hair-raising calamity on themselves. On seeing Duryodhana display his thighs to Droupadi, Bhima’s lips trembled and he spoke these mighty words, ‘O evil one! O one who cheats with dice! After thirteen years have elapsed, I will smash your thighs with my club, which is like the vajra.’ All of them are supreme among warriors. All of them have infinite energy. All of them are skilled in every weapon. All of them are invincible, even to the gods. The Parthas are full of valour and vengeance. Because of their wrath, I think that they will kill your sons in battle.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O suta! What has Karna achieved by uttering those harsh words? It was extreme enmity that brought Krishna to the assembly hall thus. How can my sons be other than evil-minded when their eldest brother and superior[47] is not established in propriety? O suta! On seeing that I lack eyes, that bringer of misfortune thinks I lack enterprise and intelligence, and does not pay heed to my words. And those evil advisers, Karna, Soubala and the others, are bereft of intelligence and extend his many vices. Even if the infinitely energetic Partha shoots arrows playfully, they will scorch my sons, not to speak of when they are shot in wrath. Unleashed from the great bow with the strength of Partha's arms and energized with celestial mantras, they can strike down even the gods. What can one who has Hari Janardana, the protector of the three worlds, as his adviser, protector and well-wisher, not conquer? O Sanjaya! This is a great wonder that has been heard, that Arjuna clasped Mahadeva with his arms. All the worlds witnessed what had been done in Khandava earlier. With Damodara,[48] Phalguna aided the fire. When Partha, Bhima, Vasudeva and the Satvatas[49] are angered, nothing will be left of my sons, with their advisers and their relatives."'

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Janamejaya said, 'O sage! After having sent the brave Pandavas into exile, all these lamentations of King Dhritarashtra served no purpose. Why did the king agree with his son Duryodhana, whose intelligence is limited, and anger Pandu's sons, the maharathas? What did Pandu's sons eat when they lived in the forest? Tell me whether it was collected from the forest or cultivated.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Those bulls among men ate what was obtained from the forest and animals brought down with pure arrows, after having first offered it to the brahmanas. O king! When those great archers and warriors dwelt in the forest, brahmanas with fire,[50] and those without fire, followed them there. There were ten thousand great-souled snataka brahmanas who knew about the means of salvation. Yudhishthira sustained them there. After killing ruru deer, black antelopes and other sacrificial forest-dwelling animals with his bows, he offered them to brahmanas in accordance with the rituals. Not a single ill-complexioned or diseased person could be seen there. Nor was there anyone who was thin, weak, miserable or frightened. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, supreme among the Kouravas, maintained them like his beloved sons, relatives or brothers from the same womb. Like a mother, the illustrious Droupadi first served her husbands, then all the brahmanas, and then ate whatever food remained. For the sake of the meat of the deer, they wielded their bows and always made that race decay[51]—the king[52] towards the east, Bhimasena towards the south, the twins towards the west and also towards the north. Thus did they live in Kamyaka and five years passed. They were without Arjuna and were anxious about him. They engaged themselves in studying, meditating and sacrificing.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! Ambika's son Dhritarashtra let out a deep and hot sigh. He summoned suta Sanjaya and told him, "The two Pandavas, Nakula and Sahadeva, are greatly illustrious sons of the gods and are like the king of the gods in their resplendence. They are steadfast in battle, can fight from a distance and have resolution. Their hands are swift and they are steadfast in their anger. They are always firm and speedy. When they advance in battle with Bhima and Arjuna at the forefront, they will be established with the valour of lions and will be as invincible as the Ashvins. O Sanjaya! I do not see any remnants of my soldiers left. Those two sons of the gods are maharathas and cannot be repulsed in battle. Their anger at Droupadi's oppression will not be assuaged. The Vrishnis are great archers. The Panchalas are greatly energetic. They are protected in battle by Vasudeva, who never wavers from the truth. The Parthas will burn down the armies of my sons in battle. O son of a suta! Led by Rama[53] and Krishna, when the Vrishnis advance in battle, even the mountains will not be able to withstand the force. In their midst, is the mighty archer Bhima, whose valour is terrible. He will roam around with an iron club that kills all warriors. The kings on my side will not be able to tolerate the roar of Gandiva, as loud as thunder, or the force of Bhima's club. It is then that I will remember the words of my well-wishers, which should have been remembered, but which I did not heed earlier because I was obedient to Duryodhana."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! That ignoring was your great transgression. Though capable, you were deluded and did not restrain your son. Having heard that the Pandavas had been vanquished at dice, Achyuta Madhusudana swiftly went to Kamyaka to show his respect to the Parthas. So did Drupada's sons, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. So did Virata, Dhrishtaketu and the maharatha Kekayas. O king! Through a spy, I have learnt everything that they talked about when they met the defeated Parthas and I have told you that. When they met, they decided that Madhusudana would be Phalguna's charioteer if there was a battle and Hari agreed.[54] Krishna was also angered when he saw the Parthas in that state, attired in black deerskin for their upper garments. He told Yudhishthira, 'At the time of the rajasuya, I witnessed the prosperity of the Parthas in Indraprastha, so difficult to be obtained by other kings. I saw all the lords of the earth there, terrified because of the energy of your weapons—Vangas, Angas, Poundras, Udras, Cholas, Dravidas, Andhrakas, those who live along the shores of the ocean, those who live in cities, Simhalas, Barbaras, Mlecchas, those who live in forests, those from the western kingdoms, hundreds from along the ocean, Pahlavas, Daradas, all the Kiratas, Yavanas, Shakas, Harahunas, Chinas, Tukharas, Saindhavas, Jagudas, Ramathas, Mundas, those from kingdoms ruled by women, Tanganas and many others who came to serve you at the sacrifice. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That prosperity was transient and has been taken away. I will take away the lives of those who have robbed you of it. O Kouravya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Rama,[55] Bhima, Arjuna, the twins, Akrura, Gada, Samba, Pradyumna, Ahuka, the brave Dhrishtadyumna and Shishupala's son,[56] I will today kill Duryodhana in battle, together with Karna, Duhshasana, Soubala and whoever else stands against us in battle. You will live in Hastinapura with your brothers. You will possess the prosperity that the sons of Dhritarashtra have. You will rule over this earth.' Then, in that assembly of warriors, the king[57] spoke to him and with the brave Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, they listened. ‘O Janardana! I accept these words of yours to be true. O mighty-armed one! You will kill my enemies and their followers, but only after thirteen years have elapsed. O Keshava! Let me be true to my word. In the midst of the kings I gave my promise that I would dwell in the forest.’ On hearing these words of Dharmaraja, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, those present in the assembly gave their promise and pacified the wrathful Keshava with sweet words that were appropriate for the occasion. Then, in Vasudeva’s hearing, they told the unblemished Panchali,[58] ‘O queen![59] It is certain that Duryodhana will part with his life because of your anger. O beautiful one! We promise that this will be true. Do not sorrow. O Krishna! There are those who laughed at you then, on seeing you angered. Their flesh will be devoured by laughing beasts and birds. Their blood will be drunk by vultures and jackals. There were those who dragged you by the head[60] at the assembly hall. O Panchali! You will see their bodies strewn on the ground, dragged and devoured relentlessly by carnivorous animals. There are those who oppressed you and others who ignored you. They will be beheaded and the earth will drink their blood.’ Such were the many words that those bulls among men spoke. All of them were energetic warriors. All of them bore marks of battle. When thirteen years have elapsed, those maharathas appointed by Dharmaraja will advance against us, with Vasudeva at the forefront—Rama,[61] Krishna, Dhananjaya, Pradyumna, Samba, Yuyudhana,[62] Bhima, Madri’s sons, the princes of Kekaya and the sons of Panchala, together with Dharmaraja. All these warriors of the world are great-souled and invincible. They will be accompanied by their followers and soldiers. They will be like angry lions with manes. Is there anyone who desires to live who can withstand them in battle?”

‘Dhritarashtra replied, “At the time of the gambling, Vidura told me, ‘O lord of men! If you defeat the Pandavas, it is certain that this will bring about the end of the Kurus. A great fear will arise and there will be a torrent of blood. O suta! I think that this will now happen, the way

Kshatta had described it to me earlier. It is certain that there will be a battle, after the time promised by the Pandavas has elapsed.'"'

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Janamejaya asked, 'When the great-souled Partha went to Shakra's world for the sake of the weapons, what did Yudhishthira and the other Pandavas do?'

Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Partha went to Shakra's world for the sake of the weapons, those bulls among men lived in Kamyaka, together with Krishna.[63] One day, the best of the Bharatas, together with Krishna, were unhappily seated in a deserted spot. They sorrowed over Dhananjaya. There were tears in their throats and they were miserable. All of them were flooded with grief on account of the separation from Dhananjaya and were miserable because of the loss of the kingdom.

'Then the mighty-armed Bhima spoke to Yudhishthira, "O great king! It was on your instructions that the bull among men went. The lives of the sons of Pandu are established in Arjuna. If he is destroyed, there is no doubt that we ourselves, the Panchalas and their sons, Satyaki and Vasudeva will be destroyed. That energetic one departed, without thinking about the many difficulties he would confront. Bibhatsu went on your instructions. What can cause greater grief than that? All of us have depended on the arms of that great-souled one, thinking that we will triumph over our enemies and win the earth. It was the influence of the one with the bow that prevented me from killing all of Dhritarashtra's sons, together with Soubala, in the midst of that sabha. We have the strength of our arms and we are controlling the anger for which, you are the reason. We are protected by Vasudeva. If Krishna and we had killed the enemies led by Karna, we would have ruled the earth, conquered through the strength of our arms. All of us are faced with this calamity because of your vice of gambling. O king! We do not lack in manliness. We are supremely strong among those who are strong. O great king! You must bear in mind the dharma of kshatriyas. It is not the dharma of kshatriyas to reside in the forest. The learned have said that the supreme dharma of kshatriyas is to rule over the kingdom. O king! You know the dharma of kshatriyas. Do not stray from that path of dharma. O king! Let us kill the sons of Dhritarashtra before the twelve[64] years have passed. Return from the forest and summon back Partha and Janardana. O great king! O lord of the earth! Let us kill their armies and battle formations in a great battle. I will send the sons of Dhritarashtra to another world. Together with Soubala, Duryodhana, Karna and whoever else wants to fight back, I will kill all the sons of Dhritarashtra. After I have pacified them, you can return again to the forest. O lord of the earth! If we do this, no blame will be attached to you. O father![65] O destroyer of enemies! If a sin is committed, we can perform various sacrifices. O great king! Wiping it off in that way, we can attain supreme heaven. O king! This is the way it should be, if our king is not foolish or is not given to procrastination.[66] Indeed, you are always devoted to dharma. But it is certainly the way of the wise to kill those who are deceitful through deceitful means. There is no sin attached to killing deceitful ones through deceitful means. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! Those who are learned in dharma say that in accordance with dharma, a day and a night are equal to an entire year. O illustrious one! O great king! We have heard the words from the Vedas that in times of calamity, one entire year is equal to a day. O Achyuta![67] Therefore, if the Vedas are the authority, regard the passage of thirteen years as equal to a single day. O destroyer of enemies! This is the time to kill Duryodhana and his followers. O king! Otherwise, he will bring the entire earth under his suzerainty.” When Bhima said this, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira inhaled the fragrance of the Pandava’s head and spoke to him in tones of pacification, “O mighty-armed one! There is no doubt that you will kill Suyodhana, together with Gandivadhanva, but only after the thirteen years have passed. O Partha! O illustrious one! You have said that the time has arrived. But I cannot utter a lie, because that finds no place in me. O Kounteya! O invincible one! You will kill Suyodhana and his followers, but without resorting to deceit, because that will certainly be sin.” While Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was speaking to Bhima, the immensely fortunate and great rishi Brihadashva arrived.

‘He was a follower of dharma. And when Dharmaraja, with dharma in his soul, saw him arrive, he worshipped him with madhuparka,[68] as is prescribed in the sacred texts. When he was rested and seated, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira looked at him and addressed him in these piteous words, “O illustrious one! I have been robbed of my riches and my kingdom in gambling with dice. I was challenged by those who were skilled in deceit and skilled in playing with dice. I am not skilled in dice and the deceitful ones had decided on a course of evil. My wife is more precious to me than my own life and she was dragged into the sabha. Is there any king on earth who is as misfortunate as I am? Have you seen anyone else? Have you heard of anyone else? I think that there is no man who is more miserable than I am.” Brihadashva replied, “O great king! O Pandava! You have said you think that there is no man more unfortunate than you are. O unblemished one! O lord of the earth! On this, I can narrate an account, if you wish to hear it. This is the story of a king who was more miserable than you.” At this, the king[69] told the illustrious one that he wished to hear the account. He wished to hear about the king who found himself in a situation like his own.

‘Brihadashva said, “O king! O lord of the earth! O Achyuta! Then listen with your brothers. There was a king of the nishadhas by the name of Virasena. He had a son named Nala, learned in the ways of dharma and artha. We have heard that this king was deceitfully defeated by Pushkara and though he did not deserve it, lived unhappily in the forest with his wife. When that king lived in the forest, he never had any horses, any chariots, any brothers or any kin. But you are surrounded by your brave brothers, who are the equals of the gods and by the foremost among brahmanas, who are like Brahma himself. Therefore, do not sorrow.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O best among eloquent ones! I wish to hear in detail the account of that great-souled Nala. Please tell it to me.”’

‘Brihadashva said, “There was a strong king named Nala, the son of Virasena. He had all the good qualities and was handsome. He was skilled with horses. He stood at the head of all the kings among men, like the king of the gods. He was supreme to everyone and had energy like that of the sun. This brave king of the nishadhas was learned in the Vedas and devoted to brahmanas. He was truthful and commanded a great akshouhini. He loved dice. Beautiful women desired him. He was generous and had control over his senses. He was a protector and supreme among archers. He was like Manu[70] himself. Like him, there was in Vidarbha, Bhima, whose valour was terrible.[71] He was brave and had all the qualities. He had no offspring and desired to have offspring. For the sake of offspring, with fixedness of purpose, he made every endeavour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmarshi named Damana came to him. O Indra among kings! Bhima desired offspring and was knowledgeable about dharma. With his wife, he offered homage to the greatly resplendent one and satisfied him. Gratified, Damana conferred a boon on him and his wife—a gem among daughters and three generous and extremely famous sons, Damayanti, Dama, Danta and the immensely resplendent Damana. They had all the qualities and all of them were fearful and terrible in valour.[72] Damayanti was beautiful, energetic, famous and fortunate. The slender-waisted one obtained fame in the world because of her good fortune. When she came of age, hundreds of ornamented slave girls and friends waited on her, like Shachi herself. Among them, Bhima’s daughter, adorned in all the ornaments and flawless in her limbs, shone like a flash of lightning. She was extremely beautiful and her large eyes were like those of Shri. Such a beautiful one had not been seen or heard of before among gods, yakshas, men, or others. The beautiful lady disturbed the minds of the gods themselves.

‘“Nala, tiger among men, was unsurpassed on earth. He was so handsome that he was like Kandarpa[73] personified. In wonder, they repeatedly praised Nala in her[74] presence and Damayanti before the king of Nishadha.[75] Having incessantly heard about each other's qualities, they desired each other, though they had not seen each other. O Kounteya! That desire for the other became very strong. Nala became incapable of holding that desire in his heart. He retired alone to a grove near the inner quarters.[76] There he saw swans[77] whose wings were golden. As they were roaming in the grove, he grasped one bird. Then that roamer of the sky spoke to Nala, 'O king! Do not kill me. I will do that which will bring you pleasure. O king of the nishadhas! I will speak about you in Damayanti's presence, so that she never thinks of any other man but you.' Having been thus addressed, the king freed the swan and the swans ascended and flew to Vidarbha. Having arrived at the city of Vidarbha,[78] the birds descended from the sky before Damayanti and she saw them. On seeing those extraordinarily beautiful roamers of the sky, and surrounded by her friends, she happily wished to grasp them. The swans spread in different directions in that beautiful grove. Each lady then ran after a particular swan. The swan that Damayanti pursued took her to a secluded area and then addressed Damayanti in human language, 'O Damayanti! There is a king of the nishadhas by the name of Nala. He is like the Ashvins in beauty and there is no man equal to him. O beautiful one! O slender-waisted one! If you become his wife, your birth and your beauty will become successful. We have seen gods, gandharvas, men, serpents and rakshasas. But we have never seen one like him. One like him has not been seen before. You are a jewel among women. Nala is supreme among men. The union of the special with the special has all the qualities.' O lord of the earth! Thus did the swan speak to Damayanti and she replied to the swan. 'Speak this way to Nala.' O lord of the earth! The one who was born from an egg accordingly promised the lady from Vidarbha. He returned to Nishadha and told Nala everything."'

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'Brihadashva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of the swan, on account of Nala, Damayanti no longer had control over herself. Thinking about this, she became dejected, pale of complexion and thin. Damayanti became prone to sighing deeply. She would cast her glance up at the sky. She looked like one demented. She found no pleasure in her bed, in her seats or in enjoyment. She did not rest during the day or the night and continuously lamented and wept. Her friends saw her state and her form and knew from the signs that she was ill. O lord of men! Damayanti's crowd of friends reported this to the king of Vidarbha. They recounted her state. On hearing about this from Damayanti's crowd of friends, King Bhima began to think about the great task that he would have to perform for his daughter's sake. The king reflected on this and decided that his daughter had attained maturity. He saw that his task was to organize a svayamvara for Damayanti. O lord of the earth! O illustrious one! He invited all the brave lords of the earth to attend the svayamvara. On hearing that Damayanti's svayamvara would be held, on Bhima's instructions, all the kings came to King Bhima. The earth was filled with the roar of elephants, horses and chariots. Those great-souled kings could be seen with their decorated armies, bedecked in colourful garlands and ornaments.

'"At this time, the two supreme and ancient rishis, the great-souled Narada and Parvata, who were greatly rigid in their vows, were roaming around and those great-souled ones went to Indra's world. They entered the palace of the king of the gods and were received with homage. The lord with the thousand eyes[79] worshipped them and asked about their welfare, their health and about everything else. Narada said, 'O lord! O god! O illustrious one! O Maghavan![80] We are well in every respect. The entire world is well and so are the kings.' Hearing the words of Narada, the slayer of Bala and Vritra[81] asked, 'The righteous lords of the earth give up their lives in fighting. When the time for death arrives through weapons, they go towards it without hesitation. This eternal world is theirs and every object of desire, as it is for me. But I no longer see those brave kshatriyas. Why do those kings no longer come to me as my beloved guests?' Thus addressed by Shakra, Narada replied, 'O illustrious one! Listen as to why these lords of the earth can no longer be seen. The king of Vidarbha has a famous daughter by the name of Damayanti. In her beauty, she surpasses all the women on earth. O Shakra! Her svayamvara is due to take place soon. All the kings and the princes are going there. O destroyer of Bala and Vritra! All the kings crave for this jewel of the world and desire her immensely.' When they were conversing thus, the lords of the world,[82] together with Agni, all supreme among the immortals, came before the king of the gods. All of them then heard the great words that Narada spoke. On hearing these words, they happily said that they would go too. O great king! With their followers and with their vehicles, all of them went to Vidarbha, where all the lords of the earth had gone. O Kounteya! On hearing about that gathering of kings, King Nala also set out, happy in his heart and with his mind fixed on Damayanti. On their way, the gods saw Nala on the ground. He was like Manmatha[83] personified in his richness of beauty. The lokapalas saw that he was as resplendent as the sun. They wondered at the richness of his beauty and forgot about their resolution.[84] The gods stopped their vimanas in the sky and descending from the sky, addressed the king of Nishadha, 'O Nala! O Nishadha! O Indra among kings! You are always devoted to the truth. O supreme among men! Help us and become our messenger.'"

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'Brihadashva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nala gave his promise to do so. He then joined his hands in salutation and asked them, 'Who are you? Who desires that I should be his messenger? What is the task that I am required to perform? Tell me in detail.' Thus addressed by Nishadha, Maghavan replied, 'Know that we are the immortals and that we have come here for Damayanti's sake. I am Indra. This is Agni. This is the lord of the waters.[85] O king! This is Yama, who brings an end to human bodies. Go and tell Damayanti that the lokapalas, together with Indra, are arriving with a desire to see her. The gods Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama wish to obtain her. She should choose one of these gods for her husband.' Thus addressed by Shakra, Nala joined his hands in salutation and requested them not to send him for this purpose, as he had the same objective. The gods replied, ‘O Nishadha! You have already promised to do our bidding. O Nishadha! How can you then fail to do what we ask. Go immediately.’ Thus addressed by the gods, Nishadha again replied, ‘How can I enter a palace that is guarded so well?’ Shakra again told him that he would be able to enter. Having been thus addressed, he went to Damayanti’s residence.

‘“There he saw the daughter of Vidarbha, surrounded by a crowd of friends. She was radiant in her form and fortune and was supremely beautiful. Her limbs were extremely delicate. Her waist was slender and her eyes were beautiful. In her radiance, she seemed to dim the light of the moon. On seeing the sweet-smiling one, his desire increased. But bearing in mind the promise that he had given, he restrained his wishes. The beautiful ladies were bewildered on seeing Nishadha. They arose from their seats, overcome by his energy. Astounded, but extremely delighted, they praised Nala. But they did not say anything to him. They only thought about it in their own minds. What beauty, what radiance, what fortitude exist in this great-souled one! Who is he? Is he a god, a yaksha or a gandharva? The beautiful ladies were overcome by his energy and were bashful. They were not able to speak a single word to him. Damayanti was also struck with wonder. But she smilingly spoke to the brave Nala, who was also smiling. ‘Who are you? All your limbs are flawless and you are increasing my desire. O brave one! O unblemished one! You have arrived like an immortal. I wish to know how you have entered. How is it that you have not been noticed? On the strict instructions of the king, my palace is guarded well.’ Having been thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, Nala replied, ‘O fortunate one! Know me to be Nala. I have come here as a messenger of the gods. The gods Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama wish to obtain you. O beautiful one! Choose one of those gods as your husband. It is through their influence that I have been able to enter unnoticed. When I entered, no one saw me and no one restrained me. O fortunate one! It is for this purpose that I have been sent by the supreme among the gods. O beautiful one! Having heard this, make up your mind about what you wish to do.’”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “She bowed to the gods and smilingly told Nala, ‘O king! What can I do for you? Tell me with love and respect. I, and whatever riches I possess, are all yours. O lord! Show me love with respect. O king! I have been tormented by the words of the swan. O brave one! It is for your sake that I have assembled the kings here. O one who shows respect! I love you. If you reject me, for your sake, I will have to find refuge with poison, fire, water or the rope.’[86] Thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, Nala replied, ‘How do you desire a man when the lords of the worlds are here? I am not equal to the dust on the feet of those great-souled lords, the creators of the worlds. Turn your mind towards them. A mortal one who causes displeasure to the gods wishes for death. O beautiful and unblemished one! Therefore, save me by choosing from the supreme among the gods.’ Then the sweet-smiling Damayanti, whose voice was choked with tears, replied to King Nala in soft words, ‘O lord of men! I see a way, a way that will bring no sin. O king! Then no evil will be attached to you. O best of men! You and all the gods, with Indra at the forefront, must come together to where my svayamvara takes place. O lord of men! O tiger among men! There, in the presence of the lords of the world, I will choose you and no sin will be attached to you.’ O lord of the earth! Thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, King Nala returned to where the gods had assembled.

‘“The lords of the worlds, together with their lord,[87] saw him return. On seeing him, they asked him about everything that had happened. The gods asked, ‘O king! Did you see the sweet-smiling Damayanti? O king! O unblemished one! Tell us everything that she said.’ Nala replied, ‘As instructed by you, I entered Damayanti’s palace. It had large and excellent rooms and was surrounded by elderly guards with staffs. When I entered, because of your energy, no man saw me, except for the daughter of the king. I saw her friends and they saw me too. O lords of the gods! All of them were astounded on seeing me. I told the one with the beautiful face everything about you. O supreme among the gods! But she has set her heart on me and will choose me. The lady said, “O best of men! Let all the gods come with you to my svayamvara. O supreme among men! O mighty-armed one! I will then choose you in their presence and no sin will be attached to you.” O lords of the thirty![88] I have related to you exactly what occurred there. But it is for you to decide what should be done.’”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “When the auspicious time and the sacred day and moment arrived, King Bhima summoned all the lords of the earth to the svayamvara. On hearing this, all the lords of the earth, oppressed by love, swiftly went there, hoping to win Damayanti. The kings entered the large arena, decorated with golden pillars and beautiful gates, like lions entering a mountain. All the lords of the earth seated themselves on various seats, all of them adorned with fragrant garlands and dazzling earrings encrusted with gems. That arena was filled with kings, like Bhogavati[89] with serpents, or a cave in a mountain with tigers. Their broad arms were seen to be like clubs, well formed and with auspicious marks, like five-headed serpents. Their hair was beautiful and their noses were handsome. With these, the faces of the kings were as resplendent as stars in the firmament.

‘“Then the fair-faced Damayanti entered the arena and her radiance stole the eyes and the hearts of the kings. On whatever part of her body the sight of those great-souled ones happened to fall first, their glances remained fixed there, without straying away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the names of the kings were being recounted, Bhima’s daughter saw five men who were identical in appearance.[90] On seeing all of them there, undifferentiated in appearance, Vidarbha’s daughter was doubtful about which one of them was King Nala. Whichever one she looked at, seemed to be King Nala. Thus the beautiful one reflected and debated in her mind. How will I know which are the gods and how will I know which is King Nala? Vidarbha's daughter thought in this way and was afflicted with grief. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As she debated in this way, she remembered what she had heard about the marks of the gods. 'I have heard from the elders about the marks of the gods. But when they are established on the ground in this way, those cannot be perceived.' Having decided this and having reflected on this in many ways, she resolved that the time had come to seek refuge with the gods. Having shown homage to the gods in mind and words, she joined her hands in salutation before the gods and said in a trembling voice, 'On hearing the words of the swan, I have chosen the Nishadha to be my husband. If those words are true, then let the gods direct me towards him. I have never deviated in my mind and my speech. If that is true, then let the gods direct me towards him. If it is true that the gods themselves have decided that the king of Nishadha should be my husband, then let the gods direct me towards him. The lords of the worlds and the great god[91] should display their own forms, so that I may know King Punyashloka.'[92] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Damayanti's piteous lamentation and determining that she was supremely in love with Nishadha, pure in mind, intelligence, devotion and love, the gods did what she had asked for and revealed themselves in their abilities to bear marks.[93] She then saw all the gods, without sweat and with fixed glances. Their garlands were untouched by dust and they stood there, without touching the ground. And she also saw Nishadha, touching the ground, with his shadow next to him. His garland was faded with dust and he was perspiring. He was also identified by the blinking of his eyes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She saw the gods and she also saw Punyashloka Nishadha. In accordance with dharma, Bhima's daughter chose him. Bashfully, the large-eyed one touched the end of his garment[94] and placed an extremely beautiful garland around his shoulders. Thus did the beautiful one choose him as her husband. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that, the assembled kings suddenly let out sounds of lamentations. But the gods and maharshis uttered cries of approval, and struck with wonder, spoke words praising King Nala.

'"When Bhima's daughter chose Nishadha, all the immensely energetic lords of the worlds were delighted. Together, they gave Nala eight boons.[95] Shachi's husband Shakra happily gave Nala the boon that he would be able to see him[96] at sacrifices and would attain the supreme of sacred goals. Agni gave him the boon that he would be present whenever Nishadha desired it. Hutashana[97] gave him worlds that were as resplendent as he[98] himself. Yama gave him the capacity to taste the essence of food and supreme establishment in dharma. The lord of the water[99] promised to be present whenever Nishadha desired and also gave a fragrant garland. Thus did each give two boons. Having granted these boons, the gods returned to the world of the gods. Having witnessed Damayanti's wedding in great wonder, the kings were extremely happy and returned whence they had come. O king! Having obtained a gem among women, King Punyashloka pleasured with her, like the slayer of Bala and Vritra with Shachi. The king was extremely happy and as resplendent as the sun. He pleased his subjects by protecting them in accordance with the dharma of the brave. Like Yayati, the son of Nahusha,[100] he performed ashvamedha and many other sacrifices, offering large quantities of gifts. With Damayanti, Nala, like an immortal, again pleasured himself in woods and groves full of flowers. That lord of men sacrificed and sported thus. The lord of the earth protected the earth and all its treasures."'

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'Brihadashva said, "After Bhima's daughter had chosen Nishadha and the immensely energetic lords of the worlds were returning, they saw Dvapara, together with Kali.[101] On seeing Kali, Shakra, the slayer of Bala and Vritra, asked him, 'O Kali! Tell me where you are going with Dvapara.' Then Kali told Shakra, 'I am going to Damayanti's svayamvara. My mind has gone out to her. On going there, I will choose her.' Indra smilingly told him, ‘The svayamvara is over. In our presence, she has chosen King Nala as her husband.’ Thus addressed by Shakra, Kali was struck with rage. He spoke to all the gods and uttered these words, ‘In the midst of all the gods, she has chosen a man as her husband. Because of that, she certainly deserves severe chastisement.’ When Kali spoke in this fashion, the gods replied, ‘It is with our sanction that Damayanti has chosen Nala. Since he possesses all the qualities, who would not choose King Nala? He knows everything about dharma and observes all the vows. Truth, perseverance, generosity, austerity, purity, self-control and pacification can be found in him. It is certain that this king, tiger among men, is the equal of the lords of the worlds. O Kali! Such are the qualities of Nala. The deluded one, who wishes to curse him, only curses himself and kills himself. He suffers difficulties and immerses himself in a bottomless and great hell, without any means of crossing it.’ Thus speaking to Kali and Dvapara, the gods left for heaven.

‘“When the gods had departed, Kali told Dvapara, ‘O Dvapara! I cannot control my anger. I will take possession of Nala. I will dislodge him from his kingdom. He will not be able to sport with Bhima’s daughter. Help me by entering the dice.’”’[102]

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‘Brihadashva said, “Having made this agreement with Dvapara, Kali went to the place where the king of the nishadhas was. Always looking for an opportunity to enter,[103] he lived in the land of the nishadhas. After staying there for twelve years, Kali found his chance. After having passed urine and touching water, nishadha performed the evening ceremony,[104] without purifying himself by washing his feet first. Then Kali possessed him. Having possessed Nala, he went to Pushkara[105] and told him, ‘Come and play dice with Nala. With my help, you are certain to vanquish Nala in a game of dice. O king! Having vanquished King Nala, win over the Nishadha kingdom.’ Thus addressed by Kali, Pushkara went to Kali. Kali went to Pushkara and became a bull among cows.[106]

'"Pushkara, the destroyer of enemy warriors, went to the brave Nala and repeatedly asked his brother to play dice with the bull.[107] At that, the great-souled king was incapable of refusing the challenge. Although Vidarbha's daughter[108] looked on, he decided that the time for setting a stake had come. Having been possessed by Kali, Nala then lost his silver, his gold,[109] his vehicles, his yokes and his garments. So crazy was he about the dice that none of his well-wishers could make him refrain from his insensible craving for gambling. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the citizens and all the advisers came to see the king so as to restrain the afflicted one. Then the suta[110] came and told Damayanti, 'All the citizens are waiting at the gate with a specific purpose. Nishadha should be told the reason why all the subjects have assembled. They know that the king is learned in dharma and artha. They are miserable at his addiction.' At that, Bhima's daughter was oppressed with distress. Her mind was overcome by grief. In a voice choked with tears she told Nishadha, 'O king! The citizens are waiting at the gate with a desire to see you. They are accompanied by the advisers and all of them are driven by devotion to the king. They wish to see you.' She said this repeatedly. But the king was possessed by Kali and did not reply at all to the slim-waisted and bright-eyed one who was lamenting. Then all the citizens and all the advisers decided that his standing was gone. In shame and misery, they returned home. O Yudhishthira! In this way, the gambling between Pushkara and Nala went on for several months. Punyashloka kept on losing."'

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'Brihadashva said, "Then Damayanti saw that King Punyashloka had lost his senses and because of the gambling, was like one maddened. O king! But Bhima's daughter was not mad and was overcome by fear and grief. She thought about the great task that should be performed for the sake of the king. She was alarmed at his sin and wished to ensure his welfare. On seeing that Nala had lost all his possessions, she told her nurse, 'O Brihatsena! As if on Nala's instructions, go and bring all the advisers here. Go and tell them what objects have been lost and what riches still remain.' Having heard of Nala's summons, all the advisers remarked that their misfortune might have been reversed and returned. Thus all the subjects arrived for a second time and when Bhima's daughter reported this, he still did not reply. On seeing that her husband did not utter a single sentence in reply, Damayanti was overcome by shame and returned again to her house. When she learnt that the dice were always being unfavourable towards Punyashloka and that Nala had lost all his possessions, she told her nurse, 'O Brihatsena! O fortunate one! As if on Nala's instructions, go again and bring the suta Varshneya here. A great task has to be performed.' On hearing what Damayanti had said, Brihatsena summoned Varshneya through reliable servants.

'"Bhima's unblemished daughter was well versed about place and time. She knew that the time had come. She told Varshneya in a soft voice, 'You know that the king has always behaved properly towards you. Now that his moment of distress has arrived, you should help him. The more the king is defeated by Pushkara, the more his addiction towards gambling grows. The dice behave as if in Pushkara's control. Nala's destruction through the dice is thus seen. He does not listen to the sentences of his well-wishers and relatives, as he should. I think that nothing will be left of the great-souled Nishadha. The king is so intoxicated that he does not welcome my words either. O charioteer! I have sought refuge with you. Act in accordance with my words. My mind is not peaceful, in case he is destroyed. Yoke Nala's beloved steeds that have the speed of thought and taking the twins,[111] go to Kundina.[112] Leave the horses, the chariot and the children there, with my relatives. Then stay there if you wish, or go elsewhere.' Varshneya, Nala's charioteer, told Nala's chief advisers about Damayanti's words. O lord of the earth! They met, decided and gave their permission. He placed the twins on the chariot and left for Vidarbha. The suta left the horses and the excellent chariot there and also the daughter Indrasena[113] and the son Indrasena. Distressed and unhappy, he informed King Bhima about King Nala. He then roamed around and went to the city of Ayodhya. Extremely miserable, he presented himself to King Rituparna and was employed by the king as a charioteer.”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “After Varshneya left, because of Punyashloka’s gambling, Pushkara robbed him of his kingdom and whatever other riches remained. O king! When Nala had lost his kingdom, Pushkara laughingly told him, ‘Let our gambling continue. But what else do you have left as stake? Damayanti alone is left to you. Everything else has been won by me. If you think it proper, let Damayanti be your stake now.’ Thus addressed by Pushkara, Punyashloka was enraged. His heart seemed to be rent asunder and he said nothing in reply. Then the immensely famous Nala was driven by great anger. He looked at Pushkara and took off the ornaments from everywhere on his body. He wore only a single garment and was unclothed, increasing the misery of his well-wishers. Then, discarding his great prosperity, the king went out. Damayanti followed him, also attired in a single garment. With her, Nishadha spent three nights outside.[114]

‘“O great king! Pushkara had an announcement made in the city. ‘I will put to death anyone who sides with Nala.’ O Yudhishthira! Because of Pushkara’s words and because of his hatred, none of the citizens displayed any homage towards him.[115] Thus, though he was deserving of respect, he received no respect, though he was near the city. The king lived there for three nights, surviving only on water.

‘“After several days had passed, Nala began to suffer from hunger. He saw some birds and their plumage seemed to be made of gold. The powerful lord of Nishadha began to think that this would be his food now and also his riches.[116] He then covered them with the garment he was wearing. All of them grasped that garment and ascended into the sky. When they rose up, the birds saw Nala standing on the ground, naked, miserable and with his face downcast. They uttered these words, ‘O greatly foolish one! We are the dice. We came here to take away your garment. For we would have found no pleasure had you gone away with your garment.' On seeing the dice depart and himself naked, King Punyashloka told Damayanti, 'O unblemished one! These are the ones whose wrath robbed me of my riches. I cannot find a means of livelihood. I am miserable and hungry. Because of them, those of the Nishadha kingdom show me no homage. They have now become birds and have robbed me of my garment. I am your husband and face this great calamity. I am miserable and have lost my senses. Listen to my words, because they are for your own welfare. There are many roads here that head in a southern direction. They pass Avanti and Mount Rikshavat. There is the great mountain range of Vindhya and the river Payoshni that flows into the ocean. There are the hermitages of maharshis, with a lot of flowers and fruit. This road leads to Vidarbha and that one goes to Koshala. Beyond them, towards the south, is the region of Dakshinapatha.'[117] Damayanti was oppressed by grief and her voice was choked with tears. She spoke these piteous words to Nishadha, 'O king! My heart trembles and my limbs are going numb, as I repeatedly think about your resolution. You have lost your kingdom. You have lost your riches. You are naked, hungry and fatigued. How can I leave you in this secluded forest and leave? O great king! When you are fatigued and hungry and think about your earlier happiness in this terrible forest, I will reduce your misery. I tell you truthfully. It is the view of physicians that for all kinds of misery, there is no medicine that is equal to a wife.' Nala replied, 'O Damayanti! O slim-waisted one! What you have said is certainly true. When a man is in misery, there is no medicine or friend equal to a wife. O timid one! Why are you afraid? I do not wish to abandon you. O unblemished one! I would abandon myself before abandoning you.' Damayanti said, 'O great king! If you did not wish to abandon me, why did you point out the road that leads in the direction of Vidarbha? O king! I also know that you should not abandon me. O lord of the earth! But since your mind is deluded, you might choose to do that. O supreme among men! You have repeatedly pointed out the road to me. O one with the radiance of immortals! That is the reason my sorrow is increasing. O king! If it is your intention that I should go to Vidarbha, then if you so desire, let us go there together. O one who shows respect! The king of Vidarbha will show you homage. O king! Honoured by him, you will dwell happily in our house.’”’

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‘“Nala said, ‘There is no doubt that your father’s kingdom is my own. But I will never go there in these difficult circumstances. There was a time when I went there in my prosperity and increased your happiness. How can I go there in my misery and increase your unhappiness?”’

‘Brihadashva said, “Thus King Nala repeatedly spoke to Damayanti. He comforted the fortunate one, now covered in only half her garment.[118] With only a single garment between them, they roamed here and there. They were hungry, thirsty and fatigued, and eventually arrived at a public dwelling house.[119] On reaching that dwelling house, the king who was the lord of Nishadha sat down with the daughter of Vidarbha on the bare ground. He was naked and filthy. His hair was dishevelled and he was covered with dust. He was tired. With Damayanti, he slept on the ground. The fortunate and delicate Damayanti, devoted to austerities, had suddenly been overtaken by misfortune. She slept. O lord of the earth! As Damayanti slept, King Nala could not sleep, as he had slept earlier, because his mind was agitated with grief. He thought about the loss of his kingdom and the desertion by all his well-wishers and the difficulties in the forest. He kept thinking about these. What will happen from my acting in this way? What will happen from my not acting in this way? Is it better for me to die? Or should I abandon her? She is devoted to me and has suffered this unhappiness for my sake. But without me, it is possible that she might go to her relatives. If she is with me, this supreme one will certainly confront more unhappiness. But if I desert her, it is possible that she might find happiness. The lord of men reflected on these repeatedly in many ways. Then he decided that it would be superior if he deserted Damayanti. Realizing that he had no garments and that she had only a single garment, the king thought that he would tear her garment in half. But how could one tear the garment without the beloved one waking up? Thinking thus, King Nala began to wander around that dwelling house. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nala walked here and there. Then, near that dwelling house, he found an excellent and unsheathed sword. That scorcher of enemies used it to slice off half the garment. Leaving the daughter of Vidarbha asleep, he swiftly went away, bereft of his consciousness. But his heart was tied to her and he returned again to the dwelling house. On seeing Damayanti there, the king of Nishadha wept, 'My beloved one was earlier not seen by the wind or the sun. She is now sleeping, without any protection, on the ground of this dwelling house. The sweet-smiling one is clad in a sliced-off garment. When she regains consciousness, the one with the beautiful hips will be like one maddened. What will she do? Alone and deserted by me, how will this faithful and beautiful daughter of Bhima roam in this terrible forest, frequented by animals and predators?' Departing again and again, King Nala returned to the dwelling house again and again. He was drawn away by Kali but was drawn back by his love. It seemed as if the heart of the miserable one was divided into two. Like a swing, it went to the dwelling house and back from it. But Nala was attracted by Kali and deluded. Lamenting piteously many times, he deserted his sleeping wife. Touched by Kali, his soul was tainted and without thinking about it, the king went away, abandoning his miserable wife in that deserted forest."'

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'Brihadashva said, "When King Nala had departed, Damayanti awoke, having overcome her fatigue. The one with the beautiful hips was terrified in that deserted forest. She could not see her husband and was immersed in sorrow and misery.

'"Frightened because of Nishadha, she cried out aloud, 'O great king! O protector! O great king! O lord! Why did you forsake me? I am dead! I am destroyed! I am terrified in this deserted forest. O great king! You have always been knowledgeable in dharma. You have always spoken the truth. How could you have uttered a falsehood? While I was asleep, how could you have forsaken me in this forest? Why have you departed, abandoning a wife who was obedient and devoted to you, especially when she has caused you no harm? You have been wronged by your enemies. O lord of men! In earlier times, you had uttered some words in the presence of the lords of the worlds. How can you possibly make them come true? O bull among men! There has been enough of this jest. Let it not go any further. O invincible one! I am terrified. O lord! Show yourself to me. O king! I have seen you! I have seen you! O Nishadha! Stay there! I have seen you hidden behind the creepers. Why don't you reply to me? O Indra among kings! You are cruel! O king! You see me lamenting in this state, but do not come and comfort me in your arms. I am not sorrowing because of my own self, or because of anything else. O king! I am sorrowing because you will have to be alone. O king! In the evening, you will be thirsty, hungry and exhausted from labour. You will be under a tree and how will you exist without seeing me?' Thus she was immersed in terrible grief and blazing in her anger. Weeping and miserable, she dashed here and there. In one instant, the lady would stand up. In another instant, she would fall down unconscious. In one instant, she was frightened. In another instant, she wept loudly. Bhima's faithful daughter was tormented by terrible grief. She was distraught and sighed again and again. Then she spoke in a tearful voice, 'Nishadha is suffering because of the curse of some being and may he also be miserable in grief. Whatever sorrow befalls us, may his sorrow be greater. May the evil-minded one who has done this evil to Nala meet with greater sorrow. May he live a life that is full of unhappiness.' Thus did the wife of the great-souled king lament. She searched for her husband in that forest frequented by wild beasts. Bhima's daughter was like one maddened. She lamented and ran here and there, crying 'Alas! O king!' She dashed like one who had lost her senses.

'"She repeatedly sorrowed and lamented in piteous tones, like a female osprey, and dried up.[120] Suddenly, Bhima's daughter came upon a boa constrictor.[121] As she came near, the giant one, who was hungry, grasped her. As she was being devoured by the serpent,[122] she was overcome by grief. She wasn't sorrowful because of her own self, but sorrowed more about Nishadha. 'O protector! I am being devoured in this deserted forest by this serpent, like one unprotected. Why don’t you rush here? O Nishadha! How will you live when my memories come back to you? You will be freed from evil. You will again obtain your senses, your intelligence and your riches. O Nishadha! O tiger among kings! O giver of respect! When you are tired and hungry and exhausted, who will reduce your fatigue?’ At that time, a hunter of animals was roaming in the deep forest. He heard the sound of her cries and swiftly came to where she was. He saw the long-eyed one there, being devoured by the serpent. The hunter of animals swiftly came to her aid. With a sharp weapon, he severed the serpent’s head. The one who lived off hunting slashed at the serpent until it was motionless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The hunter freed her and cleaned her with water. He comforted her and asked her if she had eaten some food. ‘O one with the eyes of a deer! Whom do you belong to? Why have you come to this forest? O beautiful one! How is it that you have encountered this great difficulty?’ O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On his asking, Damayanti told him everything, exactly as it had occurred.

‘“The hunter of animals saw that she was covered with only half a garment. Her breasts and hips were heavy. Her limbs were unblemished and delicate. Her face was like the full moon. The lashes of her eyes were curved and her speech was sweet. On seeing this, he was overcome by desire. In this state, the hunter[123] spoke to her in soft and gentle words. But the beautiful one saw that he was comforting her out of desire. Damayanti was devoted to her husband. On realizing the wishes of the evil one, she was consumed by a terrible rage and seemed to blaze in anger. The evil-minded and mean one was about to violate her out of desire, but saw that the inviolate one seemed to be like the flame of a blazing fire. Deprived of her husband and her kingdom, the miserable Damayanti cursed in her anger, since the time of using words had passed. ‘If I have never thought of anyone other than Nishadha, then let this mean one, who makes a living out of animals, fall down dead.’ As soon as she had uttered these words, the one who made a living out of animals fell down lifeless on the ground, like a tree consumed by fire.”’

‘Brihadashva said, “When the lotus-eyed one had slain the killer of animals, she entered another deserted and dreadful forest, resounding with the sounds of many crickets. The forest was full of lions, tigers, boars, bears, rurus and elephants. It was full of large numbers of diverse birds and was frequented by mlecchas and bandits. It was dense with shala trees, bamboos, *dhavas,*[124] ashvatthas,[125] *tindukas,*[126] ingudas,[127] kimshukas,[128] arjunas,[129] *arishtas*,[130] *chandanas*,[131] *shalmalas*,[132] *jambus*,[133] mangoes, lodhras,[134] *khadiras*,[135] *shakas*,[136] cane, *kashmaris*,[137] *amalakas*,[138] *plakshas*,[139] kadambas,[140] *udumburas*,[141] *badaris*,[142] bilvas, *nyagrodhas*,[143] priyalas,[144] talas,[145] *kharjuras*,[146] *haritakas*[147] and *vibhitakas*.[148] She saw mountains that were full of a hundred different kinds of minerals, groves that resonated with the sounds of birds, caves that were extraordinary to behold, rivers, lakes, ponds, many types of animals and birds, a large number of pishachas, serpents and rakshasas that were terrible in form, pools, tanks, mountain peaks everywhere, streams and wonderful oceans. There the daughter of the king of Vidarbha saw herds of buffaloes, boars, bears, monkeys and serpents. With supreme energy, fame, steadfastness and beauty, the daughter of Vidarbha began to roam around alone, looking for Nala. King Bhima’s daughter was not frightened of anything. She wandered in that terrible forest, oppressed by her husband’s misfortune. O king! Vidarbha’s daughter lamented in great misery. Her limbs suffered from sorrow over her husband and sought refuge on a slab of stone.

‘“Damayanti said, ‘O one whose chest is like that of a lion! O mighty-armed one! O ruler of the people of Nishadha! O king! Where have you gone, abandoning me in this deserted forest? O brave one! You have performed sacrifices like ashvamedha and have given away large quantities of dakshina. O tiger among men! How is it that you have been false towards me? O tiger among men! O immensely radiant one! O bull among kings! O fortunate one! Make the words you uttered in my presence come true. O lord of the earth! You should also remember what the swans that roam in the sky said in your presence and what they said in my presence. O best among men! The four Vedas, studied with their extended branches and sub-branches, can be on one side and truth alone can balance them on the other side. O lord of men! O destroyer of enemies! O brave one! Therefore, you should follow the truth and make true what you promised in my presence. Alas, brave one! O unblemished one! Is it that I am no longer desired by you? Why do you not reply to me in this terrible forest? This terrible and fearful king of the forests is oppressing me with its wide-open jaws, as if it is hungry. Why don't you save me? You always used to say that I was your beloved and there was no second one who was dearer. O king descended from the Bharata lineage! O fortunate one! Make the words you uttered earlier come true. O ruler of men! Your beloved wife is lamenting, like one maddened. You desire her and she desires you. O protector! Why don't you reply to me? I am thin, miserable, pale and dirty. O lord of the earth! I am clad only in half a garment. I am alone and lamenting like one unprotected. O large-eyed one! I am like a solitary deer that has strayed from its herd. O oppressor of enemies! You are deserving of honour. But you do not honour me, when I am weeping thus. O great king! It is a faithful wife who is alone in this great forest. It is your wife who is speaking to you. Why don't you reply? O supreme among men! You were born in a noble lineage and have good conduct. You are handsome in all your limbs. But I do not see you today on this mountain. This great and terrible forest is frequented by lions and tigers. O ruler of Nishadha! Are you sleeping, seated or standing here? O best of men! Or have you left, extending my misery? I am oppressed by grief on account of you. In my misery, whom shall I ask "Have you by any chance seen King Nala wandering in this forest?" Today, who will tell me if Nala is lost in the forest? He is handsome and great-souled. He is the destroyer of enemy formations. I am looking for King Nala, with eyes like that of the lotus. Today, from whom will I hear the sweet words that he[149] is here? The tiger, the king of the forest, is advancing to meet me. He is handsome, with four teeth and a mighty jaw. But I am not frightened of him. I will tell him, "You are the king of the animals and the lord of this forest. Know me to be Damayanti, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha. I am the wife of the king of Nishadha, Nala, the slayer of enemies. O lord of animals! I am alone and am looking for my husband. I am oppressed by sorrow and I am thin. If you have seen Nala, please comfort me. O lord of the forest! O supreme among animals! If on the other hand, you know nothing about Nala, then eat me up and free me from this misery." The king of animals hears my lamentations in this forest. But on his own, he makes his way towards the sweet waters of the river that flows to the ocean.

"""This rocky mountain is sacred. It has many tall peaks. They are radiant and beautiful in their many hues. They stretch up to the sky. It is full of many minerals and is adorned with a myriad stones. It rises up like a flagstaff of this great forest. It is frequented by lions, tigers, elephants, boars, bears and deer. It resounds on all sides with the noise of many types of birds. It is adorned with kimshukas, ashokas, *bakulas*[150] and *pumnagas*.[151] There are many streams and peaks frequented by birds. I will now ask this king of mountains about the king.[152] "O illustrious one! O best of mountains! O divine-looking one! O famous one! O bringer of much fortune! O one who holds up the earth! I am seeking refuge with you and am bowing down before you. I am prostrating myself before you. Know that I am the daughter of a king. I am the daughter-in-law of a king. I am the wife of a king. I am famous by the name of Damayanti. My father is maharatha King Bhima, the lord of Vidarbha. He is the lord of the earth and the protector of the four varnas. He has performed rajasuya and ashvamedha sacrifices and offered a lot of dakshina. He is a revered one, best among kings. He has eyes that are large, beautiful and arched. He is like a brahmana and observes righteous conduct. He follows the truth and is free from jealousy. He always follows good conduct and has great prosperity. He is pure and observes dharma. He is a lord who has defeated masses of his enemies. He is one who completely protects the subjects of Vidarbha. O illustrious one! Know me, the one present before you, to be his daughter. O great mountain! My father-in-law is supreme among men and is the lord of Nishadha. He is famous by the name of Virasena, a name that was well chosen. That king’s son is brave and handsome and truth is his valour. He inherited the kingdom from his father and rules it well. He is the destroyer of enemies and is known by the names of Nala and Punyashloka. He is like a brahmana and is knowledgeable in the Vedas. He is eloquent and the performer of sacred deeds. He is a drinker of soma and maintains the fire.[153] He performs sacrifices and is a giver. He is a warrior and rules fairly. O best of mountains! Know that it is his wife who has come before you. I have lost my prosperity and I am without my husband. I am without a protector and I am beset by difficulty. I am looking for my husband, he who is supreme among the best of men. O supreme among mountains! You have hundreds of peaks that reach up into the sky. Is there any chance that you have seen King Nala in this terrible forest? His gait is like that of a king of elephants. He is valiant and wise. His arms are long and he is easily angered. He is brave and follows the truth. My husband has forbearance and is immensely famous. Is there any chance that Nala, king of the nishadhas, has been seen by you? O best of mountains! I am lamenting and I am alone. I am desolate. Why don’t you console me now, as you would a miserable daughter?”

““‘O brave one! O valiant one! O one who is knowledgeable in dharma! O one who is devoted to the truth! O lord of the earth! O king! If you are in this forest, then show yourself. When will I again hear Nishadha’s gentle and deep voice, like the sound of the clouds and like nectar to me? Let the beautiful words of the great-souled king address me as “Daughter of Vidarbha”. It is a voice that follows the sacred traditions,[154] brings welfare and is the dispeller of my sorrow.’”

‘Brihadashva said, “Having spoken in this way to the best of the mountains, Damayanti, the daughter of the king, then left for the northern direction. After having wandered for three days and nights, the beautiful lady saw an unequalled forest. It was as beautiful as a celestial garden and was populated by ascetics like Vasishtha, Bhrigu and Atri. These ascetics were self-controlled, restrained in food and were calm and pure. They lived on water and air. They only ate leaves. They were immensely fortunate and had controlled their senses. They were desirous of seeing the path to heaven. They were clad in bark and deerskin. These sages had mastered their senses. She saw that beautiful circle of hermitages, populated by ascetics. She saw the cluster of hermitages, frequented by many kinds of animals and large numbers of monkeys, in addition to the ascetics.

'"Her brows were lovely. Her hair was beautiful. Her hips were beautiful. Her breasts were beautiful. Her teeth and face were beautiful. She was radiant and she walked firmly. Her firm gait was rolling. The one who was loved by Virasena's son entered the circle of hermitages. She was immensely fortunate and a gem among women. She was the proud Damayanti. She bowed in obeisance before the aged ascetics and stood there in humility. All the ascetics uttered words of welcome. Those who were rich in austerities showed her homage in accordance with the prescribed norms and asked her to seat herself. 'Tell us what we can do for you,' they said. Then the one with the beautiful hips replied, 'O unblemished ones! O immensely fortunate ones! How do the austerities, the fires, dharma, the animals and the birds fare? Does everything proceed well? How about the following of your own dharma?' They said, 'O fortunate lady! O famous one! Everything goes well here. You are flawless in all your limbs. Tell us who you are and what you wish for. We are greatly amazed at seeing your supreme beauty and radiance. Do not sorrow and be comforted. Are you the great goddess of this forest or this mountain or this river? O fortunate and unblemished one! Tell us the truth.'

'"She told the rishis, 'O brahmanas! I am not the goddess of this forest or this mountain. Nor am I the goddess of this river. O you who are rich in austerities! Know me to be a woman. If all of you listen, I will tell you my account in detail. In the land of Vidarbha, there is an immensely radiant king by the name of Bhima. O supreme among brahmanas! All of you know me to be his daughter. The immensely famous and wise Nala is the king of Nishadha. He is brave and victorious in battle and that lord of the earth is my husband. He devotes himself to worshipping the gods and takes care of the brahmanas. He is immensely fortunate and immensely radiant and is the protector of the lineage of Nishadha. He observes the truth and is learned in dharma. He is wise and devoted to the truth. He is the destroyer of enemies. He is like a brahmana and is devoted to the gods. He is prosperous and the destroyer of the cities of enemies. That best of kings is named Nala and his radiance is the equal of that of the king of the gods. He is my husband. His eyes are large and his face is like the full moon. He is the destroyer of enemies. He has made offerings of the chief sacrifices and he is learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas. He is as resplendent as the sun and the moon and he has killed his enemies in battle. That lord of the earth was devoted to true dharma. However, he was challenged to a game of dice by some evil ones among men, those who were skilled in deceit and wished him ill. He was defeated through their skills and deceit and he lost his kingdom and his riches. Know me to be the wife of that bull among kings. Know that I am famous by the name of Damayanti and desire to see my husband. I am miserable and am wandering everywhere in these woods, mountains, lakes, rivers, ponds and forests. I am sorrowfully searching for my husband Nala. He is great-souled, skilled in the use of weapons and learned in war. O lords! By any chance, has a king by that name come to this beautiful hermitage? He is the lord of Nishadha and his name is Nala. O brahmanas! It is for his sake that I have come to this dreadful, terrible, fearful and horrible forest, frequented by tigers and animals. If I cannot find King Nala in a few days and nights, I will ensure my own welfare by freeing myself from this body. What is the purpose of my being alive, without that bull among men? What will become of me now, oppressed as I am out of sorrow for my husband?' Thus did Damayanti, Bhima's daughter, lament alone in that forest. The ascetics who always spoke the truth told her, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! The consequence of all this will be fortunate. Through the powers of our austerities, we can see that you will soon find Nishadha Nala, the ruler of Nishadha and the destroyer of his enemies. O Bhima's daughter! You will see the best of those who uphold dharma. He will be freed from his fever and absolved of all his sins. He will be adorned with all the gems.

He will be in his supreme city and will defeat all his enemies. O fortunate one! You will see your husband the king in fortunate circumstances, creating fear in the minds of his enemies and dispelling sorrow from the minds of his well-wishers.' Having thus spoken to Nala's beloved queen, the daughter of a king, the ascetics disappeared, together with their sacrificial fires and their hermitages. On witnessing this greatly extraordinary event, Damayanti, whose limbs were unblemished and who was the daughter-in-law of Virasena, was astounded. Was it a dream that I saw? What had occurred here? Where are all the ascetics and where is that circle of hermitages? Where are the pure waters of that beautiful river, frequented by many kinds of birds? Where is that mountain now, adorned with fruits and flowers? Bhima's daughter, the sweet-smiling Damayanti, thought about these for some time. She was miserable because of sorrow for her husband and her face turned pale.

'"She went to another region. She lamented, her voice choking with sobs and her eyes filled with tears. Then she saw an ashoka tree there. She went to that flowering ashoka tree, supreme among trees. It was weighed down with its branches and resounded with the notes of birds. 'Alas! In the midst of this forest, there is this beautiful tree. Burdened under its weight, it is as beautiful as the king of Dramida.[155] O beautiful ashoka![156] Free me from my sorrow. Is there any chance that you have seen the king, freed from sorrow and fear? He who is named Nala is Damayanti's beloved husband and the destroyer of enemies. Have you seen my beloved, the king of the Nishadhas? His body and skin are delicate and he is attired in only half a garment. Suffering through his vice, the brave one has resorted to the forest. O ashoka! Act accordingly,[157] so that I can go away from you without any sorrow. O ashoka! Be truthful to your name. Be the one who removes sorrow and dispel my sorrow.' Thus did the distressed one speak to the ashoka tree, and circled it thrice. Then Bhima's beautiful daughter entered a region that was even more terrible. She saw many trees and many streams there, many beautiful mountains and many kinds of animals and birds.

Wandering in search of her husband, Bhima’s daughter saw many valleys, slopes and extraordinary rivers.

‘“After the sweet-smiling Damayanti had travelled for a long time, she saw a large caravan with many elephants, horses and chariots. It was climbing along the banks of a beautiful river, with clear and pure water. The water was cool and the river was wide. It had pools and was covered with cane. It resounded to the noise of cranes, ospreys and chakravakas.[158] It was full of tortoises, crocodiles and large fish and adorned with sandbanks and islands. As soon as Nala’s famous wife saw that large caravan, the one with the beautiful hips approached it and entered among the people there. She was sorrowful and looked like one demented. She was covered in only half a garment. She was thin, pale and dirty. Her hair was covered with dust. On seeing her thus, some of the men were frightened and began to run away. Others began to think about this, while others cried out. Some laughed at her and others showed their anger. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But there were some who took pity on her and began to ask her questions. ‘O fortunate one! Who are you and whom do you belong to? What are you looking for in this forest? We are sorrowful on seeing you. Are you by any chance a woman? Tell us truthfully. Are you the goddess of the forest, the mountain or the region? O fortunate one! We are seeking refuge with you. Are you a *yakshi*, a *rakshasi*,[159] or a beautiful woman? Comfort us in every way. O unblemished one! Protect us. O fortunate one! Ensure in every way that this caravan can swiftly leave this place. Ensure this. We seek refuge with you.’ Damayanti, the king’s daughter, was thus addressed by the men from the caravan. Oppressed because of her husband’s vice, the faithful one then replied to the leader of the caravan, the caravan and the men who were there—young and old and children, and the ones who were the guides for the caravan. ‘Know me to be a woman. I am the daughter of a king of men. I am the daughter-in-law of a king and I am the wife of a king. I am yearning to catch sight of my husband. The king of Vidarbha is my father. My husband is the king of Nishadha. He is immensely famous by the name of Nala and it is that unvanquished one that I am searching for. If you know about the king, quickly tell me about my beloved Nala. He is a tiger among kings and the destroyer of masses of his enemies.’ The leader of that large caravan was named Shuchi. On hearing the words of the unblemished one, he replied, ‘O fortunate one! Listen to my words. O sweet-smiling one! I am a merchant and the leader of this caravan. I have not seen a man by the name of Nala. I have only seen this fearful forest frequented by elephants, leopards, buffaloes, tigers, bears and deer. No men inhabit it. May Manibhadra, the king of the yakshas, favour us today.’ She then told all the merchants and the leader of the caravan, ‘Please tell me where this caravan is going.’ The leader of the caravan replied, ‘This caravan belongs to Subahu, the truthful king of Chedi. O daughter of a king! It is going swiftly to that country for the sake of profit.’”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “The one with the unblemished limbs heard the words of the leader of the caravan. Desirous of seeing her husband, she accompanied him. After a long time and many days had passed, the merchants saw a pond in the midst of that large and terrible forest. It was extensive and beautiful on all sides. It was fragrant with lotuses. It was charming, with a lot of grass and kindling and had a lot of roots and fruit. It was frequented by masses of many kinds of birds. They saw that the water was clean and delightful and brought pleasure to the mind. Since the animals of transport were extremely tired, they resolved to rest there. With the permission of the leader of the caravan, they entered that supreme forest. When the day moved westwards, that great caravan settled down to rest. When it was midnight, everything was quiet. The tired caravan was asleep.

‘“A herd of elephants arrived to drink at a mountain stream and the water overflowed with their musk. They saw the supreme caravan asleep along their path, together with other elephants.[160] They suddenly trampled them, as they were asleep on the ground. A wail arose from the merchants as they sought for protection. They were blind from sleep and in their great fear, dashed towards the creepers in the forest. Some men were killed by the tusks of the elephants. Others were trampled by the feet. In great fear, a large number of cattle, donkeys, camels and horses and those who were on foot, fled. They injured each other. Uttering terrible roars, they fell down on the ground. Some climbed trees and when those broke, fell down on the uneven ground. In this way, that prosperous group of merchants was destroyed. When it was morning, the men who were still alive emerged from the creepers in the forest and sorrowed over the slaughter that had taken place. O lord of men! They grieved for brother, father, son and friend. The daughter of the king of Vidarbha lamented, 'What evil act have I committed in the past? I found an ocean of men in this deserted forest. Through my ill fortune, they have now been destroyed by a herd of elephants. It is certain that I will suffer more, for a long time to come. I have heard from the aged that no one dies before the time has come. Had that not been true, my miserable self would have been killed by this herd of elephants today. Indeed, nothing befalls men, if not brought about by destiny. I committed no sin, not even as a child, or in deeds, thought or words. What has brought about this misery? At the time of the svayamvara, the assembled gods who are the lords of the worlds were rejected by me for the sake of Nala. It must be because of their influence that I suffer this separation now.' The beautiful-limbed one sorrowed and lamented in this fashion. O tiger among men! She left with the brahmanas, learned in the Vedas, who had survived. She was miserable and overcome with sorrow.

'"After travelling for a long time, she arrived in the evening at a great city. This belonged to Subahu, the truthful king of Chedi. She entered that supreme city, clad only in half a garment. She was pale, thin and miserable. Her hair was loose and had not been washed. She walked like one who was demented. The citizens saw her enter the capital of Chedi in this way. In their curiosity, vulgar boys followed the lady. Surrounded by them, she approached the royal residence. The king's mother saw her from the palace, surrounded by these people. She restrained the people. O king! In her amazement, she made Damayanti ascend into that supreme palace and asked her, 'You have clearly been overtaken by misfortune. How is your form so beautiful? You blaze like lightning in the clouds. Tell me. Who are you and whom do you belong to? Even though you are shorn of ornaments, your form cannot be human. Your radiance is like that of an immortal or a brahmana. Though helpless, you have not been scared of these men.' On hearing these words, Bhima's daughter replied thus, 'Know me to be a woman who follows the same vows as her husband. Know me to be a *sairandhri*[161] of noble birth. I am a maidservant and live wherever I wish. I live alone on fruits and roots and find a bed wherever evening falls. My husband has innumerable qualities and has always been devoted to me. I have always followed my valiant husband, like a shadow. It was through ill fortune that he was extremely addicted to gambling. He was defeated in a game of dice and left alone for the forest. The brave one was clad in a single garment and was maddened with grief. So as to comfort him, I followed him into the forest. One day, in that forest, the brave one was overcome by hunger and thirst and had to go elsewhere. He was careless and lost even the single garment that he possessed. He was naked and maddened and lost whatever senses he possessed. I followed him, clad in my garment. But I could not sleep for many nights. Then, after a long time, I fell asleep and he abandoned me, though I had done no harm. He sliced my garment into two. I have been searching for my husband, tormented by grief, day and night. But I have not been able to find my beloved, who is the lord of my life and riches and like an immortal to me.' Her eyes filled with tears, she lamented thus in many ways. Bhima's daughter suffered. The king's mother, who herself suffered with her, then told her, 'O fortunate one! Stay with me, I am pleased with you. O blessed one! My men will hunt out your husband. Or perhaps, while he is roaming around here and there, he may arrive here on his own. O blessed one! Live here and you will get your husband back.' On hearing these words of the king's mother, Damayanti replied, 'O mother of brave ones! I can live with you, but I will not eat leftover food. Nor will I wash the feet of others. I will never speak to other men. If any man solicits me, he must be punished. But in the course of searching for my husband, I will see brahmanas. If this can be done, I will certainly stay with you. But if it is otherwise, my heart will never allow me to stay.’ The king’s mother told her with a happy mind, ‘I will do all this. A vow like this should be praised.’ O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of Bhima’s daughter, the king’s mother told her daughter Sunanda, ‘O Sunanda! Though she will be a sairandhri, know her to be like a goddess. Always enjoy yourself with her, without any anxiety in your mind.’”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “O lord of the earth! When King Nala had abandoned Damayanti, he saw a great forest fire in that deep forest. From the midst of the fire, he heard the voice of a being. It cried again and again, ‘Come here, Nala! Come here, Punyashloka!’ Nala replied, ‘Do not be afraid,’ and entered the centre of the fire.[162]

He saw the king of the snakes lying there in coils. Trembling, the serpent joined his hands in salutation and told Nala, ‘O king! Know me to a serpent named Karkotaka. O king! I had once captured an innocent brahmarshi who was extremely great in austerities. O lord of men! He had cursed me in his anger. Because of his curse, I am unable to move even a step from this place. If you rescue me, I will teach you that which will ensure your welfare. I will be your friend and there is no serpent who is my equal. I will become very light. Pick me up swiftly and leave.’ Having spoken these words, the lord of the serpents became as small as a thumb. Grasping him, Nala went to a region that was free of flames. He came to an open space that was free of the black-trailed fire.

‘“He wished to let the serpent go. But Karkotaka again told him, ‘O Nishadha! Walk on and count your steps as you proceed. O great king! I will ensure your great welfare when you do this.’ At that, he began to count and he was bitten at the tenth step. As soon as he had been bitten, his form instantly changed. On witnessing his deformed body, Nala stopped, looked at himself and was astounded. The lord of the earth saw that the serpent had assumed his own form. Then the serpent Karkotaka consoled Nala and said, ‘I have brought this change in your form so that no one may recognize you. O Nala! I have done this so that the person who has injured you with this great distress will unhappily reside inside you, stung by my venom.[163] O great king! As long as he does not free you, he will hurt from my venom all over his body. He will suffer from misery as long as he lives there. O lord of men! You were innocent and did not deserve to be harmed. I have protected you from the anger and envy of the one who has cheated you. O tiger among men! O lord of men! You will no longer face any fear from enemies who have fangs or from those who have knowledge of the brahman.[164] O king! You will suffer no pain on account of the poison. O Indra among kings! You will always be victorious in battles. O king! Go from here and say that you are the suta Bahuka. Go to Rituparna, who is extremely skilled in gambling with dice. O lord of the nishadhas! Leave now for the beautiful city of Ayodhya. In exchange for your skill with horses, that king[165] will give you the skill with dice. That prosperous one, descended from the lineage of Ikshvaku, will become your friend. When you have become skilled with the dice, you will ensure your welfare and prosperity. You will be reunited with your wife. Banish all sorrow from your mind. I tell you truthfully that you will obtain your kingdom and your children. O lord of men! When you desire your own form back, recall me in your mind and clad yourself in these garments. On wearing these garments, you will obtain your own form back.' Having said this, he then gave him two divine garments. O Kourava! O king! Having thus instructed Nala and given him the garments, the king of serpents disappeared, then and there."'

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'Brihadashva said, "When the serpent disappeared, Nishadha Nala left for Rituparna's city and entered there on the tenth day. He went before the king and spoke these words, 'I am Bahuka. I am skilled in driving horses and there is no one on earth who is my equal. I am skilled and can be asked about all difficulties connected with artha. I also know the art of cooking and especially on this, there is no one better than I am. If there is anything in this world connected with artisanship or any other difficult matter, I will seek to accomplish them all. O Rituparna! Therefore, maintain me.’ Rituparna replied, ‘O Bahuka! O blessed one! Reside with me. You will do all this. My mind has always been particularly attracted to the question of speed. Devise some means of yoking so that my horses travel fast. Be the superintendent of my stables and your salary will be a hundred thousand. Varshneya and Jivala[166] will always follow your instructions. O Bahuka! Spend your days happily with them and reside with me.’ Having been thus addressed and honoured, Nala lived there in Rituparna’s city, in the company of Varshneya and Jivala.

‘“While living there, the king continued to think about the daughter of Vidarbha. Every evening, he recited a shloka which said, ‘O ascetic! Hungry, thirsty, fatigued and miserable, where are you? Do you keep thinking about that unfortunate one? Whom are you attached to now?’ Having heard the king recite this in the night, Jivala said, ‘O Bahuka! I wish to hear about the one over whom you always sorrow.’ Thus addressed, King Nala replied, ‘There was one who lost his senses. There was a lady he thought much of and she was firmer towards him. Because of a certain reason, that unfortunate one was separated from her. Separated from her, that evil-minded one roams around, oppressed by unhappiness. Day and night, he is tormented by sorrow and cannot sleep. Remembering her at night, he recites this shloka. Having wandered around the entire earth and having obtained some things somewhere, he has now settled down, though he doesn’t deserve to. Remembering her, he always sorrows. That woman even followed the man into the difficulties of the forest. But the one with limited virtue abandoned her and it is difficult for her to be still alive. She is alone, young, inexperienced about the roads and unaccustomed to difficulties. She is hungry and thirsty and it is difficult for her to be still alive. Predators always roam in that great and terrible forest. O respected one! She was abandoned by the one with limited virtue, the evil-minded one.’ Thus did the king of Nishadha remember Damayanti, while he lived a life of disguise in the king’s house.”’

‘Brihadashva said, “When Nala had lost his kingdom and had left for the forest with his wife, Bhima sent brahmanas to search out and find Nala. Bhima gave them a lot of riches and asked them to go and find Nala and his daughter Damayanti. ‘Accomplish this task and find where the king of Nishadha is. I will give one thousand cows to whoever does this. I will give him a village to live in and it will be the size of a city. Even if Nala and Damayanti are not brought back, but are only discovered, I will give riches equal to ten thousand cows.’ Having been thus addressed, the brahmanas happily left in all the directions. They looked for Nishadha and his wife in many cities and countries.

‘“There was a brahmana named Sudeva. In his search, he came to the beautiful city of Chedi and saw Vidarbha’s daughter in the king’s palace. At that time, she was with Sunanda and it was the sacred time for the king to say his prayers. Only a little bit of her great beauty could be seen, like the luminosity of the sun engulfed in a net of haze. On seeing that large-eyed one, though she was extremely thin and dirty, he used different arguments to deduce that she was Bhima’s daughter. Sudeva said, ‘This lady’s beauty is exactly like what I have seen before. After seeing her, I have accomplished my objective today. She is like Shri and brings pleasure to the worlds. Her face is like the full moon. She is dark. Her breasts are beautifully rounded. Through her radiance, this goddess dispels darkness in all the directions. Her eyes are beautiful, like the lotus or the palasha. She looks like Manmatha’s Rati.[167] She is desired by all the worlds, like the rays of the full moon. Because of destiny and the adversity of fate, she has been dislodged from the lake of Vidarbha. Her limbs are encrusted with dirt and mud, exactly like the stalk of a lotus. Or she is like the night of the full moon when the moon has been swallowed up by Rahu.[168] She is miserable and despondent because of sorrow for her husband, like the course of a river that has run dry. She looks like a pond of lotuses devastated by the trunks of elephants, with the flowers decayed and the birds scattered in fear. She is delicate and her limbs are of noble lineage. She should be in a house that is a store of jewels. But she burns in the heat like the uprooted stalk of a lotus. She has the qualities of beauty and generosity. However, though she deserves them, she is not adorned in ornaments. She is like a sliver of the moon in the sky, when it is covered by dark clouds. She is deprived of objects of desire. She has been separated from her loved ones and distanced from her relatives. The miserable one sustains her body, in the hope of seeing her husband again. The husband is the supreme ornament for a woman, even if she has no other ornaments. Without him, even a beautiful woman does not seem beautiful. Without her, Nala must be facing great difficulties. How does he hold up his body, without immersing himself in sorrow? She is there, with eyes like a lotus with a hundred petals. She is one who deserves happiness. But seeing her unhappy, my mind also suffers. When will this radiant one reach the other shore, overcoming this unhappiness? When will this faithful one unite with her husband, like Rohini with the moon?[169] The Nishadha will certainly be delighted when he gets her back. The king who has lost his kingdom will regain it and the earth with it. Nishadha deserves Vidarbha's daughter and the black-eyed one deserves him. They are similar in conduct and age. They are similar in lineage. She is anxious to see her husband and he is immensely brave and powerful. It is my duty to comfort the wife. I will console the one with a face like that of the full moon. She has never before witnessed the misery she is suffering now. Because of her sorrow, she is now reflecting all the time.' Through different signs and arguments, he arrived at this conclusion.

'"The brahmana Sudeva then approached Bhima's daughter and said, 'O Vidarbha's daughter! I am Sudeva. I am your brother's beloved friend. I have come here on the instructions of King Bhima. I have come here looking for you. O queen! Your father is well and so are your mother and brothers. Your son and daughter, who will have long lives, are well. But because of you, though they are alive, the large numbers of your relatives seem to be bereft of their senses.' O Yudhishthira! Damayanti recognized Sudeva and one after another, asked him about all her well-wishers. O king! On suddenly seeing Sudeva, the best of brahmanas and her brother's friend, Vidarbha's daughter was overcome by grief and wept piteously. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sunanda saw her weeping there, overcome by grief, and conversing alone with Sudeva. She sent a message to her mother, 'Sairandhri is weeping piteously, ever since she met a brahmana. If you think fit, find out the reason.' Then the mother of the king of Chedi left the king's inner quarters and went to where the lady was meeting the brahmana. O lord of the earth! The king's mother summoned Sudeva and asked, 'Whose wife is this beautiful one and whose daughter? How has the one with the beautiful eyes been separated from her relatives and her husband? O brahmana! Do you know how she has come to this state? I wish to hear everything from you in complete detail. I am asking about the lady whose form is like that of a goddess. Tell me everything truthfully.' O king! Having been thus addressed, Sudeva, supreme among brahmanas, sat down in comfort and recounted the true story about Damayanti."'

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'"Sudeva said, 'The king of Vidarbha has dharma in his soul. His name is Bhima and his valour is terrible. This is his fortunate daughter, famous by the name of Damayanti. The king of the nishadhas has the name of Nala and he is the son of Virasena. This fortunate one is the wife of the wise Punyashloka. In a game of dice, that lord of the earth was robbed of his kingdom by his brother. He went away with Damayanti, without anyone knowing where they had gone. We have been travelling the entire earth in search of Damayanti. I finally discovered the lady in your son's house. No other woman is known to have a beauty like hers. Between the eyebrows of this dark one there is a natural mark.[170] It is shaped like a lotus and I have seen it before. But it has disappeared now. It is covered in dirt, like the moon covered by white clouds. This mark of prosperity was given to her by the creator. It can be faintly seen now, like the covered sliver of a moon on the first day of the lunar fortnight. But though her body is covered with dirt, her beauty has not been destroyed. Though she has not washed herself, it shines forth like gold.

This lady, this goddess, was identified by me from her body and from that mark, like a hidden fire can be detected from its heat.'"

'Brihadashva said, "O lord of the earth! When Sunanda heard these words of Sudeva, she cleaned the dirt that covered the mark. Having been cleansed of the dirt, Damayanti's mark became visible, like the moon appears in the clear sky. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the mark, Sunanda and the king's mother wept. They embraced her and stood there for some time. Shedding tears, the king's mother said in a soft voice, 'From this mark I know that you are my sister's daughter. O beautiful one! Your mother and I are the daughters of the great-souled Sudamna, the king of Dasharna. She was given to King Bhima and I was again given to Virabahu. I saw you being born, in my father's house in Dasharna. O beautiful one! This house of mine is like your father's house. O Damayanti! All my riches are like yours.' O lord of the earth! On hearing these words, Damayanti's mind rejoiced. She showed her respects to her mother's sister and spoke these words, 'Even though I was unknown, I lived here happily. I received all the objects of my desire and was always protected by you. There is no doubt that my stay here will now be happier still. O mother! But I have been away from home for a long time. Please give me permission to leave. My children have been taken there and the young ones are living there. They must be sorrowful because they are without their father and without me. How are they? I wish to go to Vidarbha. If you wish to do something that brings me pleasure, please give instructions that transport arrangements are made swiftly.' O king! On hearing these words, her mother's sister happily agreed. With her son's consent, the king's mother arranged for a handsome vehicle for her, carried by men.[171] It was guarded by a large force. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was stocked with plenty of food, drink and garments.

'"Then, after a short while, the beautiful one arrived in Vidarbha and all her relatives happily welcomed her, showing her homage. She saw that her relatives and her children were well, and so were her mother, her father and all her friends. O lord of the earth! The famous one, the fortunate Damayanti, worshipped the gods and the brahmanas in accordance with the best of rites. The king was delighted on seeing his daughter. He satisfied Sudeva by giving him a thousand cows, a lot of riches and a village. O king! The beautiful lady spent the night in her father's house. When she had rested, she spoke to her mother in these words."'

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'"Damayanti said, 'O mother! I tell you truthfully. If you wish to see me alive, please arrange it so that Nala, the brave one among men, is brought here."

'Brihadashva said, "Thus addressed by Damayanti, the queen was extremely distressed. O king! Her voice choking with tears, there was no reply that she could give. On seeing her in this state, everyone in the inner quarters began to weep and lament grievously. O great king! Then Bhima's wife spoke to him. 'Your daughter Damayanti is sorrowing on account of her husband. O king! Unrestrained by shame, she herself told me this. Ask your messengers to make efforts to find Punyashloka.' Thus asked by her, the king sent brahmanas who were in his service in every direction, with instructions that they should try to find Nala. Thus instructed by the king of Vidarbha, the bulls among the brahmanas came and told Damayanti that they were leaving. Bhima's daughter then told them that in every country and at every place where men gathered, they should repeatedly utter the following words. 'O gambler! O loved one! You are the one who sliced off half my garment. Where are you? You abandoned your beloved wife in a deserted region. It is in accordance with your instructions that she is still awaiting you, clad only in half a garment. The lady is tormented by grief. O lord of the earth! She repeatedly weeps because of that sorrow. O brave one! Show her your favour and reply to her words.' She told them that, as a mark of favour towards her, these were the words that they should utter, because a fire that has the wind with it burns down the forest. They should also say, 'The husband is always bound to protect and maintain his wife. You are learned in dharma. Why do you ignore these duties? You are famous, wise and kind and have been born to a noble lineage. But I fear that you have now become cruel and that is the reason my fortune has turned. O bull among men! O great archer! Show compassion towards me. You have often told me that compassion is the supreme dharma.' She told them that if anyone responded to these words, they should find out everything about that man and where he lived. 'O supreme among brahmanas! If any man replies to your words, convey those words immediately to me. After accomplishing your task, you must return here immediately, so that he does not find out that you are there on Bhima's instructions. Whether he is rich or poor, or desirous of riches, you must find out what it is that he desires.' O king! Having heard these words, the brahmanas went out in all the directions.

'"They searched for the sinner Nala. They went to cities, countries, villages, places where there were cowherds and hermitages. O lord of the earth! Everywhere, the brahmanas repeated exactly the words Damayanti had asked them to utter."'

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'Brihadashva said, "After a long time, a brahmana by the name of Parnada returned to the city and told Bhima's daughter, 'O Damayanti! I searched for Nishadha day and night and went to the city of Ayodhya. I presented myself before Bhangasvari.[172] O beautiful one! In a public place, I repeated those words before the immensely fortunate Rituparna, exactly as you had asked me to. On hearing those words, Rituparna, lord of men, did not reply. Nor did any of his courtiers respond, though those words were repeated by me several times. Then the king gave me permission to leave. A man named Bahuka is in Rituparna's service. He is the king's charioteer and is deformed and has short arms. He is skilled in driving vehicles swiftly and he is accomplished in cooking. When I was alone, he spoke a few words to me. He sighed several times and wept repeatedly. He asked me about my welfare and then addressed me in these words, "Though they confront great calamity, women of a good lineage protect themselves through their own efforts and there is no doubt that they win heaven for themselves. Even if they are abandoned by their husbands, they are never angry. He was trying to sustain his life and a bird stole his garment. He is tormented by anguish and a dark one should not be angry. Whether she is treated well or whether she is treated badly, when she sees her husband without his kingdom and without prosperity, a dark one should not be angry." On hearing these words of his, I instantly returned here. Having heard this, you decide and inform the king.' O lord of the earth! Damayanti listened to Parnada's words with tears in her eyes.

'"She went to her mother and secretly told her, 'O mother! Bhima should under no circumstances get to know about these words. In your presence, I wish to employ Sudeva, supreme among brahmanas. King Bhima should not know what my intentions are. If you wish to bring about my pleasure, you must act in this way. Let Sudeva go quickly. Let him perform the auspicious ceremonies that united me with my relatives. Let Sudeva go without delay. O mother! Let him go to the city of Ayodhya and bring Nala back here.' Later, after Parnada, supreme among brahmanas, had rested, the beautiful daughter of Vidarbha worshipped him and gave him a lot of riches. She said, 'O brahmana! When Nala comes here, I will give you even greater riches. O supreme among brahmanas! You have done so much for me. No one else will ever be able to accomplish more. It is because of this that I will soon be reunited with my husband.' Thus addressed by her, the high-minded one paid her his respects and pronounced auspicious blessings over her. Having accomplished his purpose, he returned home.

'"O Yudhishthira! Then Damayanti summoned that brahmana[173] again. In her mother's presence and engulfed by misery and sorrow, she told him, 'O Sudeva! Go to King Rituparna who lives in the city of Ayodhya and tell him, "Bhima's daughter Damayanti wishes for a husband again and will again hold a svayamvara. All the kings and the princes are going there. Having computed the time, this will be held tomorrow. O destroyer of enemies! If it is possible, go there quickly. She will choose a second husband at the time of sunrise, because it is not known whether the valiant Nala is dead or alive."' O great king! As he had been instructed, the brahmana Sudeva then went to King Rituparna and told him what he had been asked to.”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “Having heard these words of Sudeva, Rituparna, lord of men, spoke these words to Bahuka, in a comforting and soft voice, ‘O Bahuka! I wish to go to Vidarbha for Damayanti’s svayamvara. You are skilled with horses. Do you think that it can be done in a single day?’ O Kounteya! Having heard these words from the king, Nala’s mind was rent asunder with grief and the great-minded one was tormented with sorrow. He thought, ‘If Damayanti has decided to do something like this, she must be demented with grief. Or is it that she has thought of a great means for my sake? Why has the ascetic daughter of Vidarbha decided to perform this cruel act? I am mean and deceitful and my intelligence has been deluded by sin. In this world, feminine nature is fickle. My sin was also terrible. So must it then be. But will she act in this way and forget all her love? That slender-waisted one is anxious for my sake and is despairing. But she can never act in this way, especially because she has children. It is certain that we have to go there and truly find out what is happening. I will accomplish Rituparna’s desires, because that is what I want too.’ Bahuka decided this in his mind. In a dejected state of mind, he went to King Rituparna. He joined his hands in salutation and said, ‘O tiger among men! O lord of men! I give you my word that we will reach the city of Vidarbha in a single day.’ O king! Having obtained King Bhangasvari’s orders, Bahuka went to the stables and inspected the horses.

‘“Bahuka was repeatedly rushed by Rituparna. He then selected horses that were lean, but capable on the road. They were energetic and strong. They had been born in a noble lineage and were good in conduct. They were bereft of all inauspicious marks. Their nostrils were wide and their jaws were big. They were pure and possessed the ten locks of hair.[174] They were from the region of the Sindhu and were as swift as the wind. On seeing them, the king was a little angry and said, ‘What do you wish to do? You should not jest with me. How can these horses of mine, weak and lifeless, bear us? How can we travel such a long distance with these steeds?' Bahuka replied, 'There is no doubt that these horses will reach Vidarbha. O king! But if you so desire, tell me which ones you would like me to yoke.' Rituparna said, 'O Bahuka! You are the one who has knowledge of horses. You are the skilled one. Yoke the ones that you think will be swift and capable.' Then the skilled Nala yoked four horses to the chariot. They were bred from a noble lineage and were of good conduct. Then the king swiftly ascended the chariot that had been yoked, as the supreme horses knelt down on the ground.

'"O lord of the earth! Then the handsome King Nala, supreme among men, comforted the horses, which were endowed with energy and strength. Nala controlled the reins and made suta Varshneya ascend the chariot. Then those supreme horses were commanded by Bahuka in accordance with the rules. The chariot seemed to rise up into the sky, confounding the occupants. The wise king of Ayodhya was extremely surprised when he saw those horses carry them with the speed of the wind. Having heard the roar of the chariot and the control over the horses, Varshneya began to wonder about Bahuka's mastery over horses, 'Is this Matali, the charioteer of the king of the gods? Those great signs can be seen in the brave Bahuka. Or is this Shalihotra,[175] who knows about the breeding of horses? Has he now assumed this beautiful human form?[176] Or might it be King Nala, the destroyer of enemy cities? Has that king come here?'[177] He began to think in this way, 'Or perhaps Bahuka knows some of the knowledge that Nala possessed. The skills of Bahuka and Nala seem to be the same. Then again, his age seems to be the same as Nala's. This is not the immensely valorous Nala, but he has the same knowledge. Sometimes, great-souled ones roam the world in disguise, driven by destiny, or malformed because of what has been said in the sacred texts. My mind is divided because of the deformity of his body. But it is my view that I should not decide in the absence of proof. They are equal in age. It is the form alone that is the difficulty. But then again, Bahuka has all the qualities and I think that he is Nala.' O great king! Punyashloka's old charioteer kept on thinking in his mind. O Indra among kings! Together with the charioteer Varshneya, King Rituparna also kept thinking about Bahuka's expertise with horses. He was extremely delighted on witnessing his strength, valour, enthusiasm, control over horses and diligence."'

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'Brihadashva said, "Like a bird travelling in the sky, he swiftly crossed rivers, mountains, forests and lakes. As the chariot travelled, King Bhangasvari, the conqueror of enemy cities, saw that his upper garment had fallen down. When he saw that the garment had dropped as they were speeding, the great-souled king told Nala, 'I will go and get it. O immensely intelligent one! Restrain these immensely swift horses. Varshneya can then go and retrieve the garment.' Nala replied, 'Your garment fell down far behind. We have travelled more than a yojana since then. It is not possible to get it back now.' O king! While he was thus addressed by Nala, King Bhangasvari came to a forest where there was a vibhitaka tree laden with fruit.

'"On seeing the tree, the king immediately told Bahuka, 'O suta! Now witness my great prowess at counting. Everyone does not know everything. Indeed, there is no one who knows everything. O Bahuka! In this tree, the number of leaves and fruits that are still on it is more than those that have fallen down by one hundred and one. O Bahuka! There is one more leaf and one hundred fruit. Those two branches have five crore leaves. Take those two branches and their twigs. The fruits there will number two thousand and ninety-five.' At that, Bahuka descended from the chariot and told the king, 'O king! O oppressor of enemies! You have stated something that is beyond my perception. O king! If I count, nothing will be left to supposition. O great king! Witness as I count the number of vibhitakas. I do not know whether your statement is right or wrong. O lord of men! You will see as I count the number of fruit. Let Varshneya handle the reins of the horses for the moment.' The king told the suta,[178] 'We do not have any time to delay.' However, Bahuka told him with great humility, ‘Wait for only an instant. Or if you wish to hurry, take Varshneya as your charioteer. From here onwards, the road is smooth.’ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Rituparana comforted him and said, ‘O Bahuka! There is no one on earth who is your equal as a charioteer. You know about horses. I desired to go to Vidarbha with your help. I seek a favour with you. Please do not create obstacles. O Bahuka! I will do whatever you wish, and whatever you tell me, if you take me to Vidarbha today and show me the sunrise there.’ At that, Bahuka told him, ‘I will count the vibhitakas and then go to Vidarbha. Please do what I ask you to.’ Unwillingly, the king asked him to proceed with the counting. He dismounted from the chariot and swiftly cut down the tree. He was extremely surprised that, on counting, the number of fruits was exactly what the king had told him it would be. He said, ‘O king! This is extraordinary and I have seen your powers. O king! I wish to know the learning through which you have known this.’ But the king was in a hurry to leave and replied, ‘Know that I am versed with the heart of the dice and have expertise in counting.’ Bahuka said, ‘O bull among men! Give me that knowledge. And take from me the knowledge about handling horses.’ King Rituparna desired to imbibe the knowledge about horses and there was also the urgency of his task.[179] So he told Bahuka, ‘Let it be that way. Accept from me the supreme knowledge about the heart of the dice. O Bahuka! But let my knowledge about horses remain in your heart as a trust.’ Having said this, Rituparna gave his knowledge to Nala.

‘“When Nala had learned the knowledge of the dice, Kali emerged from his body, continuously vomiting from his mouth Karkotaka’s virulent venom. The fire of Kali’s curse, which had made the king thin and had oppressed him for a long time, making him lose control over his own self, also issued out. Kali’s self was freed from the poison and he assumed his own form. Nala, lord of the nishadhas, was angry and wished to curse him. Kali was frightened. He trembled and joined his hands in salutation. He said, ‘O king! Control your anger. I will give you supreme fame. In anger, Indrasena’s mother[180] had cursed me earlier, when you had abandoned her and I have been sorely oppressed since then. O Indra among kings! O invincible one! I have lived inside you in great misery. I have burnt day and night from the venom of the king of the serpents. If anyone from the world of men recounts your deeds incessantly, he shall have no reason to be scared of danger from me.' On hearing these words, King Nala controlled the wrath in his soul. Then the frightened Kali quickly entered the vibhitaka. When Kali had been conversing with Nishadha, he had been invisible to others.

'"King Nishadha, the destroyer of enemy warriors, was cured of his fever. Kali had been destroyed and the king had counted the number of fruit. He was extremely delighted and was again endowed with his earlier radiance. Then the energetic one ascended the chariot and drove the swift steeds. Having been possessed by Kali, the vibhitaka has come to acquire a bad reputation. Nala's heart was delighted. He repeatedly urged those supreme horses and they travelled like birds. The great-minded king proceeded in the direction of Vidarbha. When Nala had gone a long distance, Kali also returned home. O lord of the earth! King Nala was freed from his fever. O king! But though he was free of Kali, he was still separated from his old form."'

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'Brihadashva said, "Rituparna, for whom truth was his strength, arrived in Vidarbha in the evening. The people informed King Bhima about his arrival. On Bhima's words, the king entered the city of Kundina,[181] filling all the ten directions with the sound of his chariot. Nala's horses[182] heard the roar of the chariot and hearing this, rejoiced, just as they had in Nala's company earlier. Damayanti also heard the roar of Nala's chariot, which was like the deep rumbling of clouds at the onset of the monsoon. Like the horses, Bhima's daughter thought that the chariot roared as it used to before, when Nala used to control his horses. The peacocks in the palace, the elephants in the stables and the horses heard the roar of the great king's chariot. O king! On hearing the roar of the chariot, the peacocks and the elephants made expectant noises, because they thought the rains were imminent.

'"Damayanti said, 'The roar of the chariot fills up the entire earth and gladdens my heart. It must be King Nala. Today, if I do not see the valorous Nala, whose face is like the moon and who possesses innumerable qualities, there is no doubt that I will perish. If I am not engulfed today in the arms of that brave one, whose touch brings pleasure, there is no doubt that I will perish. If Nishadha does not come to me today, with a voice like the roar of the clouds and with a complexion of gold, there is no doubt that I will perish. If that Indra among kings, whose valour is like a lion and who can restrain a mad elephant, does not come to me, there is no doubt that I will perish. I do not remember the slightest falsehood. I do not remember the slightest injury in him. The great-souled keeps all his promises, made even in jest. My lord is forgiving, brave, gentle and generous and is in control of his senses. He is not addicted to low vices. Nishadha has always behaved towards me like an impotent one.[183] Remembering his qualities, I am tormented day and night. My heart is about to be rent asunder because of the sorrow of being separated from that beloved one.'"

'Brihadashva said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lamenting in this way and desiring to see Punyashloka, she ascended that large palace, as if bereft of her senses. She saw the chariot in the centre,[184] with King Rituparna, Varshneya and Bahuka on it. Then Varshneya and Bahuka dismounted from the supreme chariot. They unharnessed the horses and secured the chariot. O great king! King Rituparna alighted from the chariot and presented himself before Bhima, whose valour was terrible. Then Bhima welcomed him with the best of honours. He had suddenly come. The counsel of the women was not known.[185] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! 'You are welcome. What can I do?' asked the king. He did not know that the king had come for the sake of his daughter. The wise King Rituparna, whose truth was his valour, saw that there was no other king or prince there. There were no signs of a svayamvara, nor had an assembling of brahmanas occurred. Then the king, the lord of Koshala, thought about this in his mind and said, ‘I have come here to pay my respects.’ King Bhima began to reflect about this in his mind. There had to be some other reason for travelling more than a hundred yojanas, passing through many villages. The reason for his arrival had not been correctly stated. The minor reason identified could not have been the reason for his arrival. But the king showed him all due respect and repeatedly told him that he was tired and should rest. Thus treated with friendly homage, the king was pleased. He happily followed the king’s servants and went to the house that had been identified for him. O king! When King Rituparna had left with Varshneya, Bahuka grasped the chariot and went to the place where chariots were kept. He freed the horses and tended to them, as instructed in the sacred texts. Having comforted the horses himself, he sat down on a side of the chariot.

‘“The sorrowful Damayanti had seen King Bhangasvari, Varshneya the son of a suta and Bahuka, in that position. Vidarbha’s daughter began to think. Whose chariot roared in that way? The great sound was like Nala’s, but Nishadha was not to be seen. Was it possible that Varshneya had acquired the knowledge? Was that the reason why the roar of the chariot made a great sound like that of Nala’s? Or was it the case that Rituparna was the equal of King Nala? The roar of the chariot seemed to be like that of Nishadha’s. O lord of the earth! Damayanti debated in this way. O king! She then sent a lady messenger in search of Nishadha.”’

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‘“Damayanti said, ‘O Keshini! Go and find out who the driver of that chariot is. He is seated by the side of the chariot. He is malformed and has short arms. O fortunate one! Approach him and gently ask his about his welfare. O unblemished one! Ask and find out everything about this man. I have great anxiety that this is King Nala, because my mind is satisfied and my heart is calm. O one with the beautiful waist! In the course of the conversation, use Parnada’s words. O unblemished one! Pay attention to his reply.’”

‘Brihadashva said, “Then that female messenger carefully went to Bahuka, while the fortunate Damayanti looked on from the palace. Keshini said, ‘O Indra among men! Welcome. I wish you all welfare. Damayanti has asked a question. O bull among men! Listen to it attentively. When did you leave? Why have you come here? Tell me everything truthfully. The daughter of Vidarbha wishes to know.’ Bahuka replied, ‘The famous king of Koshala heard that Damayanti will hold a second svayamvara tomorrow. O beautiful one! On hearing this, the king set out with excellent steeds that are as swift as the wind and are capable of travelling a hundred yojanas. I am his charioteer.’ Keshini asked, ‘Who is the third man in your group? Whose is he and where has he come from? Why did this task have to be performed by you?’ Bahuka replied, ‘He was the charioteer of Punyashloka and is famous by the name of Varshneya. O beautiful one! When Nala fled, he went to Bhangasvari. I am skilled in handling horses and am an expert cook. Rituparna appointed me as his charioteer and his cook.’ Keshini asked, ‘Does Varshneya know where King Nala has gone? O Bahuka! Has he said anything in your presence?’ Bahuka replied, ‘Having brought the children of the evil-acting Nala here, he went away where he desired and has no knowledge of Nishadha. O famous one! There is no other man who knows anything about Nala. The lord of the earth roams the world in disguise, in a different form. Nala alone knows where he is, and the lady who is like his second self. Nala never reveals his signs in any way.’

‘“Keshini said, ‘The brahmana who earlier went to Ayodhya repeatedly uttered the words spoken by a lady “O gambler! O loved one! You are the one who sliced off half my garment. Where are you? You abandoned your beloved wife in a deserted region. It is in accordance with your instructions that she is still awaiting you, clad only in half a garment. The lady is tormented by grief. O lord of the earth! She repeatedly weeps because of that sorrow. O brave one! Show her your favour and reply to her words.” O immensely intelligent one! Speak and recount her beloved tale. The unblemished daughter of Vidarbha wishes to hear those words. Ever since she heard the reply you gave to the brahmana then, Vidarbha’s daughter has been desirous of hearing the words you uttered again.’ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When Keshini said this to Nala, his heart suffered and his eyes were filled with tears. Having suppressed his grief, the tormented lord of the earth again spoke those words in a voice that was choked with tears, ‘Though they confront great calamity, women of a good lineage protect themselves through their own efforts and there is no doubt that they win heaven for themselves. Even if they are abandoned by their husbands, they are never angry. Faithful women sustain their lives with their armour as character. He was trying to sustain his life and a bird stole his garment. He is tormented by anguish and a dark one should not be angry. Whether she is treated well or whether she is treated badly, she sees her husband without his kingdom and without prosperity, hungry and addicted to vice.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As he spoke these words, Nala was extremely miserable. He could not restrain his tears and began to weep. Then Keshini went away and told Damayanti everything that he had said, including the transformation that had come over him.”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “Having heard all this, Damayanti was overcome with grief. She suspected that he was Nala and told Keshini, ‘O Keshini! Go and examine Bahuka in many ways. Do not say anything. But stay near him and observe his conduct. O beautiful one! Whenever he does something, find out the reason. In particular, notice if he does anything attentively. O beautiful one! If fire is to be given to him, place an obstruction. If he asks for water, be in no hurry to give it to him. Observe everything about his conduct and come and tell me. Report to me everything about whatever else you happen to see.’ Thus addressed by Damayanti, Keshini left quickly. She determined that he had the marks of someone who was skilled in horses and returned. She told Damayanti everything that she had observed, everything about Bahuka, human and divine.

‘“Keshini said, ‘O Damayanti! Never before have I seen, or heard of, a man with conduct like this. He is firm and pure in his conduct. When he comes to a short passage, he never lowers his head. But on seeing him, the passage is elevated, and he comfortably passes through. Thus a narrow opening becomes a wide opening for him. The king sent a lot of many kinds of food for Rituparna and there was the flesh of many animals. A vessel had been provided for cleaning the meat. When Bahuka looked at the vessel, it filled up with water for cleaning. He then wished to cook and grasped a handful of straw. He made it into kindling and held it up and suddenly, it blazed up in flames. On witnessing that extraordinary sight, I was astounded and came back here. I also saw another great marvel there. O beautiful one! Though he touched fire, it did not burn him down. The water flowed rapidly on his instructions. I witnessed yet another great wonder. He took some flowers in his hand and pressed them gently. When these flowers were pressed in his hands, they became even more fresh and fragrant. Having witnessed these extraordinary wonders, I have swiftly come back here.’ Having heard about the deeds performed by Punyashloka, Damayanti decided that Nala was known through his acts and signs and had been regained.

‘“She guessed that her husband Nala had assumed the form of Bahuka. She wept and again told Keshini in a soft voice, ‘O beautiful one! Go yet again. When Bahuka is inattentive, take from the kitchen some meat that he has cooked and come back here.’ The one who performed desired actions went swiftly. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When Bahuka’s attention was elsewhere, Keshini took some warm meat and instantly brought it to Damayanti. In earlier times, she had often tasted meat prepared by Nala. On tasting it, she knew Nala to be the cook. She wept in great sorrow, overcome by grief. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She then washed her face and sent Keshini with the twins. Bahuka recognized Indrasena[186] and her brother. The king rushed to them, embraced them and placed them on his lap. Having regained his children, who were like divine children, Bahuka was overcome by great grief and cried loudly. Thus, Nishadha repeatedly displayed his mental anguish. Suddenly, he let his children go and told Keshini, ‘O beautiful one! These twins are just like my own children and on suddenly seeing them, I began to shed tears. You have been coming here quite often and people may interpret these signs wrongly. We are guests in your country. O beautiful one! Therefore, I bow down before you. Go away.’”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “Having seen all the agitations of the wise Punyashloka, Keshini quickly returned and reported it to Damayanti. Damayanti was sad and anxious because of the suspicion that this was Nala. She sent Keshini again to her mother,[187] ‘Suspecting him to be Nala, I have examined Bahuka in many ways. But I have doubts on account of his appearance. I wish to know this for myself. O mother! Let him come to me, or let me go to him, with or without my father’s knowledge.’ Thus addressed by the daughter of Vidarbha, the queen related this to Bhima and the king got to know about his daughter’s plan. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With the sanction of her father and mother, she had Nala brought to where she was staying.

‘“On suddenly seeing King Nala, the beautiful one was overcome with a terrible sorrow. O great king! She was dressed in a red garment. Her hair was matted, dirty and caked with mud. Damayanti spoke these words to Bahuka, ‘O Bahuka! Have you ever seen any man, who is said to know about dharma, abandon his sleeping wife in a deserted forest? Who will forsake his beloved and innocent wife, when she is overcome by fatigue? Who but Punyashloka Nala will leave? What offence have I committed towards that lord of the earth? When I was overcome with sleep, why did he desert me in the wilderness and go away? In earlier times, I had chosen him myself, in the presence of the gods. She loved him and was devoted to him. She was the mother of his children. How could he forsake her? He had accepted my hand in front of the fire, following the words of the swans. He had promised to sustain me. Where has that pledge gone now?’ O destroyer of enemies! When Damayanti was saying all this, tears of sorrow welled up in her eyes and flowed copiously. When Nala saw those tears of sorrow flow copiously from the black-pupiled and red-tinged eyes, he replied in words of sorrow, ‘O timid one! The loss of my kingdom was not brought about by me. It was brought about by Kali and he made me abandon you. O you who are best in the observance of dharma! In earlier times, when you were living in the forest and were miserable and sorrowful at my having lost my garment, you had cursed him. Ever since then, tormented by the curse, Kali has resided in my body. Burnt with that curse, he has been like kindling with fire in it. Now he has been conquered with my perseverance and austerities. O beautiful one! There will be an end to our miseries. Freeing me, that evil one has gone away. O one with the wide hips! It is because of this that I came here, for your sake and for no other reason. O timid one! But how could a woman like you abandon a husband who loved her and was devoted to her? How could you marry another? On the king's instructions, messengers have travelled all over the earth, proclaiming that Bhima's daughter will choose a second husband. Like a wanton one, and acting on her own desires, she will choose one who is her equal. On hearing this, Bhangasvari came here swiftly.' When she heard Nala's lament, Damayanti trembled and was frightened. She joined her hands in salutation and spoke these words."'

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'"Damayanti said, 'O ruler of Nishadha! O fortunate one! It does not behove you to be suspicious of sin or find fault with me. I rejected the gods and chose you. It was in order to bring you here that the brahmanas had gone in all the directions, singing my words in verses in the ten directions. O king! At last, a learned brahmana named Parnada discovered you in Koshala, in Rituparna's house. When I heard his words and the exact reply that you gave, I saw this means of bringing Nishadha here. O lord of the earth! O lord of men! Other than you, who in this world is capable of driving horses over more than a hundred yojanas in a single day? O lord of the earth! I touch your feet in worship and swear that I have not been unfaithful towards you, not even in my thoughts. If I have committed any sin, let the moving wind that courses through the world and is a witness to everything free me from my breath of life today. If I have committed any sin, let the sun which always travels the world with its sharp rays free me from my breath of life today. If I have committed any sin, let the moon which courses through all beings as a witness free me from my breath of life today. Let these three gods who hold up the three worlds relate the truth of exactly what has happened. Or let them abandon me today.'"

'Brihadashva said, "Thus addressed, the wind-god spoke from the sky and said, 'O Nala! I tell you the truth that she has not committed any sin. O king! Damayanti has protected her treasure of good conduct and has increased it. We have protected her for three years and are witness. This method that she has devised for your sake is unparalleled. But for you, there is no other man who can travel one hundred yojanas in a single day. O lord of the earth! Bhima's daughter has obtained you and you have obtained Bhima's daughter. Do not have any doubts about what you should do. Be united with your wife.' While the wind-god was speaking, a shower of flowers fell from above. The drums of the gods sounded and a pure breeze began to blow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing this marvel, King Nala, the destroyer of enemies, gave up all his doubts about Damayanti.

'"Then the lord of the earth donned the garment that does not decay and recalled to his mind the king of the serpents. He regained his old form. When Bhima's daughter saw her husband in his own form, the unblemished one embraced Punyashloka and cried loudly. Radiant as before, King Nala also embraced Bhima's daughter. He also embraced his children in the proper way and was delighted. The one with the beautiful face and the large eyes placed her head on his chest. Overcome with sorrow, she sighed heavily. The sweet-smiling one's limbs were covered with dirt and tears flowed down. She embraced that tiger among men for a long time.

'"O king! Then the mother of the daughter of Vidarbha happily informed Bhima about everything that had transpired between Nala and Damayanti. The great king replied, 'I will see Nala and Damayanti tomorrow, after he has rested and performed his ablutions.' O king! Then the happy couple conversed throughout the night about their earlier wanderings in the forest. They slept happily. He was united with his wife in the fourth year. He obtained all the objects of desire, attained all accomplishments and was supremely happy. Damayanti was extremely content at having regained her husband, like the earth with half-grown crops is, on receiving showers. She was united with her husband and all her fatigue had passed. Her fever was gone and her heart was filled with joy. All the desires of Bhima's daughter were met and she was as radiant as the night, when the moon had arisen."'

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'Brihadashva said, "After the night had passed, King Nala adorned himself in ornaments. With Vidarbha's daughter by his side, he went and met the king at the right time. Then Nala paid his respects to his father-in-law. Then the beautiful Damayanti also offered her respects to her father. Extremely delighted, Bhima welcomed him like a son. The lord also showed him due homage and comforted Nala, together with his devoted wife Damayanti. Thus honoured, King Nala also returned the honour in the proper way and offered his services to him.[188] A great roar of joy arose in the city. The people were delighted to see Nala return in this way. The city was decorated with flags, flagstaffs and garlands. The streets were watered and the royal roads cleaned and adorned with flowers. At every door, the citizens placed flowers that had been cut. The gods were worshipped in all the temples.

'"When King Rituparna heard that Bahuka was Nala and that he had been reunited with Damayanti, he was delighted. King Nala had him brought and begged forgiveness of the king. He who was intelligent begged forgiveness because of several reasons. Thus honoured, the surprised king spoke to Nishadha, 'I congratulate you that you have been happily reunited with your wife. O Nishadha! O lord of Nishadha! If I committed any crime when you lived in disguise in my house, if I committed an offence, knowingly or unknowingly, please pardon me.' Nala replied, 'O king! You have not committed the slightest crime. Even if you had, I would not have been angered and would have forgiven you. O lord of men! You have always been my friend and my relative. I have lived happily in your house and you have always provided me with every object of desire, more in your house than in my own. O king! Please exhibit your friendship in future too. Your knowledge about horses vests with me.[189] O king! If you so wish, I will happily impart it to you now.’ Having said this, Nishadha gave that knowledge to Rituparna. Having performed the prescribed deeds, he accepted it. When King Bhangasvari had obtained the knowledge about horses, he appointed another charioteer and left for his own city.[190] O lord of the earth! After Rituparna had left, King Nala did not reside in the city of Kundina for a long time.”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “O Kounteya! Nishadha lived there for a month. Then, with Bhima’s permission, he left for Nishadha with a small number of attendants. He left with a single radiant chariot, sixteen tusked elephants, fifty horses and six hundred infantry. The earth trembled when the lord of the earth travelled speedily. Then the great-minded one entered, swiftly and wrathfully.

‘“Virasena’s son, Nala, went before Pushkara and said, ‘O Pushkara! Let us play with dice again. I have acquired a lot of riches. Damayanti, and everything else that I have acquired, will be my stake. The kingdom will be yours. It is my certain resolution that the game of dice must occur again. O fortunate one! Let there be a single stake. Let us offer our lives as stakes. When the other’s possessions, kingdom and riches, have been won, it has been said that it is supreme dharma to have a counter-stake as the last one. If you do not wish to have a duel with dice, let there be a duel with chariots. O king! Let either you or I find peace. The aged have laid down the ordinance that an ancestral kingdom must be obtained back, through whatever means. O Pushkara! Choose one or the other, according to your intelligence. Choose the game of dice, or bend your bow in battle.’ Having been thus addressed by Nishadha, Pushkara began to laugh. He was certain in his mind that he was going to win and replied to the lord of the earth, ‘O Nishadha! It is your good fortune that you have obtained riches for a counter-stake. It is your good fortune that

Damayanti’s difficult times have now come to an end. O king! O uprooter of your enemies! It is your good fortune that you are still alive with your wife. I will win Vidarbha’s daughter, with all her ornaments and all these riches. She will then serve me, the way an apsara serves Shakra in heaven. O Nishadha! I have always remembered you and have been waiting for your return. I find no pleasure in gambling with those who are not my well-wishers. Having won the beautifully-hipped and unblemished Damayanti today, I will have accomplished my objective. She has always been in my heart.’ Having heard the words of the mad and insolent one, Nala was angered and desired to slice off his head with his sword.

‘“But though his eyes were copper-red with anger, the king smiled and said, ‘Let us stake. Why do you talk? Talk after you have won.’ Then the gamble between Pushkara and Nala commenced. O fortunate one! With a single stake, he was defeated by Nala. Thus, in the stake, he lost his entire store of treasures and his life. Having defeated Pushkara, the king laughingly told him, ‘This entire kingdom is now mine. All its thorns have been removed. O stupid one! O sinful king! You will not be able to set your eyes on Vidarbha’s daughter. You and your family have been reduced to the state of slaves. That I was earlier defeated by you was not because of your deeds. That deed was done by Kali. But fool that you are, you did not understand this. I will never ascribe to you the offences committed by others. May you live in happiness. I grant you your life. O brave one! Let there be no doubt about my affection for you. The fraternal love I have for you will never decrease. O Pushkara! You are my brother. Live for a hundred years.’ Having thus comforted his brother, Nala, for whom truth was his valour, embraced him repeatedly and sent him off to his own city. O king! Having been thus comforted by Nishadha, Pushkara joined his hands in salutation and replied to Punyashloka, ‘May your fame be without decay. May you live happily for ten thousand[191] years. O lord of the earth! You have granted me my life and a place to live in.’ Thus honoured by the king,[192] the king[193] lived there for a month. O king! Then Pushkara happily left for his own city, surrounded by his relatives, with a large army and accompanied by humble servants. O bull among men! His appearance was like that of the resplendent sun. After having sent Pushkara, the prosperous king, shorn of disease and laden with riches, entered his own city, which had been gorgeously decorated. Having entered, the lord of the Nishadhas comforted the citizens.”’

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‘Brihadashva said, “When the happy city had quietened down and a great festival had started, the king sent a large army to bring Damayanti. Damayanti’s father Bhima, terrible in valour, the destroyer of enemy heroes and indomitable in his soul, sent her with due honours. After the arrival of Vidarbha’s daughter with her children, King Nala spent his days in happiness, like the king of the gods in Nandana. The immensely famous king, having regained his kingdom, began to live there once more and became famous among all the kings of Jambudvipa.[194] As is prescribed, he performed many sacrifices and gave away a lot of dakshina. O Indra among kings! Soon, together with your well-wishers, you will also spend this time. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O best of men! Thus did Nala, the destroyer of enemy cities, confront this kind of unhappiness, together with his wife, because of gambling. O lord of the earth! Nala, who was alone, suffered this terrible and great grief. But he regained his prosperity. O Pandava! But you are accompanied by your brothers and Krishna.[195] Thinking about dharma, you are enjoying yourself in this great forest. O king! The immensely fortunate brahmanas, learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, are always with you. Where is the cause for sorrow? It is said that this account brings about the destruction of Kali. O lord of the earth! On hearing it, a person like you is capable of being consoled. Thinking that human prosperity is always transient, you should not sorrow over its coming and going. Those who recount Nala’s great tale and those who listen to it often, are never confronted by calamity. He obtains riches and prosperity flows towards him. He who hears this eternal, supreme and ancient history, obtains sons, grandsons, animals and an exalted position among men. There is no doubt that he is without disease and finds happiness. O king! I will destroy the fear that you see, that you may be challenged again by someone skilled with dice. O king! I know the heart of dice. Truth is your valour and I am pleased with you. O Kounteya! I will tell you. Learn it from me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The king[196] was extremely happy and told Brihadashva, "O illustrious one! I wish to know the secrets about the heart of the dice from you." Then the great-souled one gave the Pandava the secrets of the dice. Having given it, the immensely ascetic one went to Ashvashira[197] to bathe. When Brihadashva had left, he[198] heard from wise ones, brahmanas and ascetics that Savyasachi Partha was engaged in terrible austerities, surviving only on air. Those ones, who were rigid in their vows, had assembled there from large mountains and tirthas. They said, "The mighty-armed Partha is engaged in fearful austerities and so terrible are these austerities that the likes of them have not been witnessed before. Partha Dhananjaya is eternally engaged in the vows of an ascetic. The fortunate one is living alone like a hermit and is like the god Dharma personified." O king! On hearing that his beloved brother Jaya[199] was tormenting himself in the great forest through austerities, Pandava Kounteya suffered on his account. Tormented in his heart, Yudhishthira sought refuge in the great forest and questioned brahmanas who were versed in different kinds of knowledge.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O illustrious one! When my great-grandfather Partha left Kamyaka forest, what did the Pandavas[200] do without Savyasachi? It seems to me that the great archer, the vanquisher of enemy armies, was their refuge, like Vishnu is that of the Adityas. Without him, who is the equal of Indra in valour and has never withdrawn from the field of battle, how did my brave grandfathers spend their time in the forest?'

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O son! When Pandava Savyasachi left Kamyaka forest, the Kouravas were immersed in sorrow and grief. The Pandavas looked like jewels from a string that has been broken or birds whose wings have been clipped. All of them were unhappy. Without the one whose deeds are undecaying, the forest became like Chaitraratha[201] when Kubera is not there. O Janamejaya! In his absence, the Pandavas, tigers among men, lived joylessly in Kamyaka. O best of the Bharata lineage! Those valorous maharathas use pure-tipped arrows to kill many kinds of sacrificial animals for the brahmanas. Those destroyers of enemies, tigers among men, collected forest fare every day, and after having spread it out, offered it to the brahmanas. O king! After Dhananjaya’s departure, those bulls among men lived there, unhappy in their minds and anxious about him.

‘In particular, Panchali remembered the husband who was in the middle, the brave one who was absent. She told the foremost of the Pandavas,[202] “In the absence of the two-armed Arjuna, the equal of the many-armed Arjuna[203] and the best of the Pandavas, this forest seems cheerless to me. Wherever I look, the earth seems to be empty to me. This forest, with its many marvels and blossoming trees, no longer seems to be attractive in Savyasachi’s absence. This Kamyaka is as blue as monsoon clouds and is frequented by elephants in rut. But without Pundarikaksha,[204] it has no charm. The twang of his bow is like the roar of the thunder. O king! I remember Savyasachi and without him, I cannot find any peace of mind.” O great king! On hearing this lamentation, Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemy warriors, told Droupadi, “O beautiful one! O slim-waisted one! The words that you speak please the mind and they gladden my heart, like a sip of ambrosia. His arms were long and smooth and thick like clubs. They were round and marked from the string of the bow. With swords, weapons and clubs, with golden rings and arm-guards, they were like five-headed serpents. Without that tiger among men, the forest seems to have lost its sun. Depending on that mighty-armed one, the Panchalas and the Kurus do not fear even the powerful gods in battle. All of us found refuge in the arms of that great-souled one. We considered that we had routed our enemies and had obtained the earth. Without the brave Phalguna, I find no mental peace in Kamyaka. As I look upon this earth, it seems to me to be empty everywhere." Nakula said, "He went to the northern directions and defeated immensely powerful ones in battle. Vasava's son[205] obtained hundreds of excellent gandharva horses. O king! They had the colour of partridges and were dappled. They were as fast as the wind. He gave them to his beloved brother at the time of the great rajasuya sacrifice. Without that terrible archer, Bhima's younger brother, without the one who is an equal of the gods, I no longer wish to live in Kamyaka forest." Sahadeva said, "He won riches and women in battle. He defeated maharathas. In earlier times, he brought them all to the king at the time of the great rajasuya sacrifice. He is an immensely radiant one who vanquished all the Yadavas in the field of battle. With Vasudeva's consent, he single-handedly abducted Subhadra. When I see that Jishnu's seat is empty in our house, there can never be any peace in my heart. O great king! I think we should no longer live in this forest. O destroyer of enemies! Without that brave one, none of us finds this forest to be attractive."'

Section Thirty-Three

Tirtha-yatra Parva

This parva has 2294 shlokas and seventy-four chapters.

Chapter 377(80): 133 shlokas
Chapter 378(81): 178 shlokas
Chapter 379(82): 143 shlokas
Chapter 380(83): 114 shlokas
Chapter 381(84): 19 shlokas
Chapter 382(85): 23 shlokas
Chapter 383(86): 24 shlokas
Chapter 384(87): 15 shlokas
Chapter 385(88): 30 shlokas
Chapter 386(89): 22 shlokas
Chapter 387(90): 24 shlokas
Chapter 388(91): 28 shlokas
Chapter 389(92): 22 shlokas
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The chapters have two numbers, the first being the sequential numbering of the chapters right from the beginning. The second one, the number within brackets, is the sequential numbering of the chapters within Aranyaka Parva.

Tirtha *means a sacred place of pilgrimage and yatra means a journey. This section is thus primarily about the journey to sacred places of pilgrimage like Pushkara, Prabhasa, Dvaravati, Vinasana, Rudrakoti, Kurukshetra, Mrigadhuma, Naimisha, Saptasarasvata, Prithudaka, Samnihiti, Shakambhari, Suvarnaksha, Varanasi, Gaya, Shalagrama, Rishabha, Gokarna, Prayaga, Gandhamadana and Kailasa. It also has the stories of Agastya, Indra and Vritra, Sagara and Bhagiratha, Rishyashringa, Parashurama and Kartyavirya, Chyavana and Sukanya, Mandhata, Jantu, Shibi Ushinara, Ashtavakra, Yavakrita and the account of the encounter between Hanuman and Bhima.*

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Anxious on Dhananjaya’s account, the immensely fortunate and *maharatha*[1] Pandavas lived in the forest with Droupadi. Then they saw there the great-souled *devarshi*[2] Narada. He was radiant with the resplendence of the *brahman*[3] and his energy was like that of the blazing fire. The supreme one among the Kurus[4] was surrounded by his illustrious brothers and shone brilliantly, like Shatakratu[5] surrounded by the gods. Just as *savitri*[6] does not forsake the Vedas and the sun’s rays do not forsake Meru,[7] the faithful Yajnaseni[8] followed dharma and did not abandon the Parthas.[9] O unblemished one![10] The illustrious *rishi*[11] Narada accepted their homage and appropriately comforted Dharma’s son.[12] He spoke these words to great-souled Dharmaraja[13] Yudhishthira. “O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Tell me what will accomplish your purpose. What will I give you?” Then Dharma’s son, the king, bowed in obeisance with his brothers, and with hands joined in salutation, told the divine Narada, “O immensely fortunate one! O one who is worshipped by all the worlds! O one whose vows are great! If you are satisfied, I think everything has been accomplished through your grace. O unblemished one! O supreme among sages! But if you wish to show a favour to me and my brothers, please dispel a doubt that has arisen in my heart. Tell me what merits are obtained by someone who circles the earth[14] and visits all the tirthas? O brahmana! Please tell me this in detail.”

‘Narada replied, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen attentively to what Bhishma heard from Pulastya.[15] Hear it in detail. In earlier times, Bhishma, supreme among those who uphold dharma, was observing a vow for his father[16] on the banks of the Bhagirathi,[17] like a hermit. O great king! This was a pure and sacred region and was frequented by the devarshis. The immensely energetic one was at the mouth of the Ganga, in a place frequented by gods and *gandharvas*.[18] The immensely radiant one made offerings to the ancestors and the gods and satisfied the rishis in accordance with the prescribed rituals. After some time, when the immensely famous one was meditating, he saw the supreme rishi Pulastya, whose appearance was extraordinary. On seeing that terrible ascetic, blazing in fortune, he was extremely delighted and overcome by wonder. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhishma, best among those who uphold dharma, worshipped him in accordance with the prescribed rituals. He purified himself and concentrated his mind. He placed the *arghya*[19] on his head and announced his name to the supreme among brahmarshis. ‘O fortunate one whose vows are great! I am your slave Bhishma. At the mere sight of you, I have been cleansed of all my sins.’ O great king! O Yudhishthira! Having said this, Bhishma, supreme among those who uphold dharma, became silent and controlled his speech. He joined his hands in salutation. On seeing that Bhishma, best among those of the Kuru lineage, had become emaciated because of the rituals and the studying, the sage was pleased in his mind.

‘“Pulastya said, ‘O one who is knowledgeable about dharma! O immensely fortunate one! I am entirely satisfied with your humility, self-control and devotion to the truth. O unblemished one! O son! It is because of your dharma and because of your devotion to your father that you have been able to see me. I am extremely pleased with you. O Bhishma! My vision is unrestricted. Tell me what I can do for you. O best of the Kurus! O unblemished one! I will give you whatever you ask for.’

'"Bhishma replied, 'O immensely fortunate one! O one who is worshipped by all the worlds! O lord! If you are pleased with me and I have been able to see you, I think that all my tasks have been accomplished. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! If I have obtained your favour, I will tell you about a doubt in my heart. Please dispel it. O illustrious one! A doubt exists about the dharma that comes from the tirthas. I wish to hear about this from you, separately for each of them. Please tell me. O brahmana rishi! O infinitely valorous one! O one blessed with the riches of austerities! Tell me what merits are obtained by circling the earth.'

'"Pulastya said, 'O son! Listen to me with an attentive mind. I will recount to you the fruits from the tirthas, the ultimate goal of all the rishis. He who has controlled his hands, feet and mind and he who has learning, asceticism and deeds, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. He who is satisfied, controlled and pure, does not receive gifts[20] and has restrained his ego, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. He who is without deceit, without undertakings,[21] eats lightly, controls his senses and is freed from all sins, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. O Indra among kings! He who is without anger, truthful in conduct and firm in his vows and who regards all beings as his own self, obtains the fruits of the tirthas. In due order, the rishis have recounted in the Vedas all the fruits from sacrifices, exactly as they occur, in this life and the afterlife. O lord of the earth! The poor cannot perform these sacrifices. Sacrifices require many objects and a lot of ingredients in large quantities. Kings can attain them and so can some rich men. They cannot be attained by those without riches, without objects, without means and those who are alone. O lord of men! But listen to what the poor can obtain, the supreme equal of the fruits of sacred sacrifices. O supreme among those of the Bharata lineage! This is the supreme mystery of the rishis, the pure merit from visiting tirthas, superior even to sacrifices. He who has not fasted for three nights, not visited tirthas and not donated gold and cattle, is known as poor. The fruits obtained from *agnishtoma*[22] and other sacrifices, with large quantities of donations, are inferior to those obtained from visiting tirthas.'

'"There is in the world of men a tirtha of the god of the gods. It is famous in the three worlds and is known by the name of Pushkara.[23] Those who are immensely fortunate go there. O lord of the earth! At the time of the three *sandhyas*,[24] ten thousand crores of tirthas can be found in Pushkara. O lord! Adityas,[25] Vasus,[26] Rudras,[27] the Sadhyas,[28] with the Maruts[29] and gandharvas and *apsaras*[30] are always present there. O great king! It was there that the gods, demons and brahmarshis performed austerities and attained great merits and celestial *yoga.*[31] Even if one only desires Pushkara in one's mind, all the sins of that intelligent one are cleansed and he is revered in the vault of heaven. The immensely fortunate grandfather[32] always dwells there, happily worshipped by the gods and the demons. O immensely fortunate one! It was in Pushkara that the gods, with the rishis at the forefront, attained salvation and great merits. The learned ones say that he who bathes there and worships the gods and the ancestors, obtains ten times the merits of an *ashvamedha.*[33] O Bhishma! He who goes to Pushkara forest and feeds only a single brahmana, obtains through that deed happiness in this life and the afterlife. If he himself survives on vegetables, roots and fruits and faithfully and respectfully offers that to a brahmana, that wise man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O supreme among kings! Great-souled brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras who bathe in this tirtha are not reborn as inferior species. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A man who specially goes to Pushkara at the time of the full moon in the month of Kartika extends his merits and they become inexhaustible. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He who joins his hands in salutation and remembers Pushkara in the morning and the evening attains the fruits of bathing in all the tirthas. That man obtains Brahma's eternal world, without decay. Whatever sins a woman or a man has committed since birth are all instantly destroyed from bathing in Pushkara. O king! Just as Madhusudana[34] is the origin of all the gods, Pushkara is known as the origin of all the tirthas. He who lives constantly and purely in Pushkara for twelve years obtains all the sacrifices[35] and attains Brahma's world. He who performs *agnihotra*[36] for one hundred years and he who lives in Pushkara on the night of the full moon in Kartika are like equals. It is difficult to go to Pushkara. It is difficult to perform austerities in Pushkara. It is difficult to donate in Pushkara. It is extremely difficult to live there.

'"Having lived in Pushkara for twelve nights, restrained and with a controlled diet, one should circumambulate it and go to Jambumarga.[37] Jambumarga is frequented by the gods, the rishis and the ancestors and once one has entered, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world. A man who lives there for five nights and eats once in three days never confronts calamity and achieves supreme success. Having left Jambumarga, one goes to Tandulikashrama and never confronts calamity, being worshipped in heaven. O king! He who goes to Agastya's[38] lake and engages himself in worshipping the ancestors and the gods, residing there for three nights, obtains the merits of an agnishtoma.[39] He lives there on vegetables and fruits and obtains the supreme abode of Kumara.[40] He then reaches Kanva's[41] hermitage, full of prosperity and worshipped in the world. O bull among the Bharata lineage! From the beginning, that has been a sacred forest, full of dharma. As soon as one enters there, one is freed from all sins. He who restrains himself and controls his diet there, worshipping the ancestors and the gods, obtains all the objects of desire and the fruits of all sacrifices. Having circumambulated it, one should go to the place where Yayati fell.[42] This gives one the merits from a horse sacrifice. Restrained and controlled in diet, one should then go to Mahakala.[43] Having bathed in Kotitirtha,[44] one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. One who is learned in dharma should then go to the sacred place of Uma's consort.[45] This is famous in the three worlds by the name of Bhadravata.[46] Having gone there and seen Ishana,[47] he obtains the fruits of donating one thousand cows. Through Mahadeva's[48] grace, he obtains the status of a *ganapatya.*[49]

'"One then goes on to the river named Narmada, famous in the three worlds. Having offered oblations to the ancestors and the gods, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. The *brahmachari*[50] who is in control of his senses goes on to the southern waters, attains agnishtoma[51] and ascends a celestial chariot. Controlling himself and controlling his diet, he then goes to Charmanvati,[52] and obtaining Rantideva's permission, attains the fruits of agnishtoma. O Yudhishthira![53] O one learned in dharma! He then goes on to Arbuda, the son of the Himalayas. In earlier times, there used to be a hole in the earth here.[54] Vasishtha's hermitage, famous in the three worlds, is there. He who spends a single night there, obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[55] O tiger among men! As a brahmachari in control of one's senses, one should bathe in Pingatirtha and obtain the fruits from one hundred tawny cows.[56] O one learned in dharma! One then goes to Prabhasa, famous in the worlds.[57] The fire-god is himself always present there. The brave Anala[58] is the mouth of the gods and has the wind for his chariot. A man who bathes in that supreme tirtha, pure and restrained in mind, obtains the fruits of both agnishtoma and *atiratra*.[59] One then goes to the place where Sarasvati unites with the ocean. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He obtains the fruits of one thousand cows[60] and attains the world of heaven, blazing in resplendence like the fire. One should stay there for three nights and offer oblations to the ancestors and the gods. One then shines like the moon and attains ashvamedha.[61] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One then goes to the tirtha where a boon was granted. O Yudhishthira![62] Durvasa granted a boon to Vishnu there. A man who bathes where the boon was granted obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[63] Then, restrained and controlled in one's diet, one goes to Dvaravati. A man who bathes in Pindaraka[64] obtains a lot of gold. O immensely fortunate one! O destroyer of enemies! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is extraordinary that in that tirtha,[65] even today, coins can be seen, marked with the signs of the lotus and signs of the trident. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Mahadeva is always present there.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One goes on to where the Sindhu[66] unites with the ocean. With a restrained mind, one bathes in the waters of that king among tirthas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! One offers oblations to the ancestors, the gods and the sages. One obtains the world of Varuna and becomes resplendent in one's own energy. O Yudhishthira![67] The wise ones say that by worshipping the god who is the lord of Shankukarna, one obtains ten times an ashamedha.[68] O bull among the Bharata lineage! O supreme among the best of the Kuru lineage! After circumambulating it, one goes to the tirtha that is famous in the three worlds. This is renowned by the name of Drimi and is the cleanser of all sins. It is there that Brahma and the other gods worshipped Maheshvara.[69] A man who bathes there and worships Rudra, surrounded by the masses of the gods, removes all the sins he has committed since birth. It was there that Drimi, supreme among men, was honoured by all the gods. O best of men! Bathing there, one obtains a horse sacrifice.[70] O immensely intelligent one! O king! In earlier times, it was there that the lord Vishnu purified himself after slaying the thorns of the gods.[71] O one learned in dharma! One should then go to Vasudhara, universally worshipped. From merely going there, one obtains a horse sacrifice.[72] O best among the supreme of the Kurus! By bathing there, controlling his soul and worshipping the gods and the ancestors, one is glorified in Vishnu's world. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that tirtha, there is a sacred lake of the Vasus. Bathing there and drinking its water, one is favoured by the Vasus. O best of men! There is the famous Sindhuttama, the cleanser of all sins. Bathing there, one obtains a lot of gold. Having gone to Brahmatunga, pure and controlled in mind, a man who performs good deeds without any passion, attains the world of Brahma. There is Shakra's[73] tirtha named

Kumarika, frequented by the *siddhas*.[74] Having bathed there, a man swiftly attains Shakra's world. There is another tirtha named Renuka there, frequented by the gods. On bathing there, a brahmana becomes as unblemished as the moon.

'"Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Panchanada.[75] As has been extolled, in due order, one obtains the five sacrifices.[76] O one learned in dharma! One then goes to the supreme place known as Bhimasthana.[77] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! Bathing in Yoni,[78] a man becomes the son of a goddess and has a body adorned with golden earrings. He obtains the fruits of one hundred thousand cows.[79] Going to Girimunja and worshipping the grandfather,[80] one obtains the fruits of a thousand cows.[81] O one learned in dharma! Then one goes to the supreme tirtha known as Vimala.[82] Even today, golden and silver fish can be seen there. O best of men! Having bathed there, one obtains a horse sacrifice.[83] Cleansed of all sins and pure in soul, one attains the supreme goal. Then one should go to Malada, famous in the three worlds. At the time of the western[84] sandhya, one should perform ablutions in the ritual fashion. One should then offer *charu*[85] to the seven-flamed fire in accordance with one's powers. The learned say that such offerings to the ancestors become inexhaustible. Charu offered to the seven-flamed fire is superior to a hundred thousand cows,[86] a hundred royal sacrifices and one thousand horse sacrifices. O Indra among men! From there, one should specifically go to Vastrapada. Having gone to Mahadeva there, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O king! One then goes to Manimat. Practising brahmacharya, controlling one's mind and living there for one night, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma.

'"O Indra among kings! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then one should go to Devika,[87] famous in the world. It has been heard that brahmanas were created there. This is the place of the wielder of the trident, famous in the three worlds.[88] O bull among the Bharata lineage!

Bathing in Devika and worshipping Maheshvara, and offering charu in accordance with one’s capacity, a man obtains the fruits of a sacrifice that yields all desires. Rudra’s tirtha Kamakhya,[89] frequented by the divine sages, is also there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having bathed there, a man swiftly obtains success. Moving on to Yajana, Yajana[90] and Brahmavaluka and touching the waters of Pushpam, one overcomes sorrow and death. It is said that the sacred Devika, frequented by devarshis, is five *yojanas*[91] long and half a yojana wide. O one learned in dharma! Then in due order, one should go to Dirghasatra.[92] With Brahma at the forefront, the gods, the siddhas and the supreme rishis performed a long sacrifice there, rigid in their vows and donating *dakshina*.[93] O Indra among kings! O destroyer of enemies! By going to Dirghasatra, a man obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice and a horse sacrifice. Then, controlled and restrained in one’s diet, one should go to Vinasana.[94] The Sarasvati disappeared there in the midst of the desert and could again be seen in Chamasa, Shivodbheda and Nagodbheda. Bathing in Chamasodbheda,[95] one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. Bathing in Shivodbheda, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[96] Bathing in Nagodbheda, a man obtains the world of the nagas.[97]

‘“O Indra among kings! One moves on to Shashayana,[98] a difficult tirtha to attain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lotuses assume the form of rabbits there for an entire year. O Indra among kings! O best of the Bharata lineage! O tiger among men! Bathing in the waters there, at the time of the full moon in the month of Kartika, one is always radiant like the moon. O bull among the Bharata lineage! One obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[99] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Restrained, one should go on to Kumarakoti. Having bathed there, one should worship the ancestors and the gods. Thus one obtains the fruits of infinite cows[100] and uplifts one’s lineage. O one learned in dharma! Restrained in soul, one then goes to Rudrakoti. O great king! In ancient times, one crore self-controlled sages assemble there, filled with great joy and desiring to see Rudra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! ‘I will be the first one to see Vrishadhvaja.’[101] ‘I am the first to see him.’ O king! It is said that thus did the sages speak. O lord of the earth! In an attempt to prevent those self-controlled sages from becoming angry, the lord of yoga[102] resorted to yoga and created one crore Rudras, one before every sage. Each one separately thought, ‘I have seen him first.’ O king! Having been satisfied with the terrible energy of the sages and their supreme devotion, Mahadeva granted them a boon. ‘Your dharma will increase from today.’ O tiger among men! A pure man who bathes in Rudrakoti obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and rescues his lineage. O Indra among kings! From there, one should go to the confluence of Sarasvati, famous in the world and extremely sacred.[103] O Indra among kings! There the gods, the rishis, the siddhas and the *charanas*,[104] with Brahma at the forefront, go on the fourteenth day of *shuklapaksha*[105] in the month of Chaitra and worship Janardana.[106] Having bathed there, one obtains a lot of gold, is freed from all one’s sins and one’s soul is purified. One goes to the world of Brahma. O lord of men! On going to Satravasana, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[107] It is there that the sages completed their sacrifices.”’

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‘“Pulastya said, ‘O Indra among kings! One should then go to the applauded Kurukshetra. All those who go there are freed from all their sins. He who always says, “I will go to Kurukshetra, I will live in Kurukshetra,” is freed from sins. O Yudhishthira![108] One should live for a month on the banks of the Sarasvati. O lord of the earth! With Brahma at the forefront, the gods, the sages, the siddhas, the charanas, the gandharvas, the apsaras and the *pannagas*[109] always go to the immensely sacred Brahmakshetra.[110] O Yudhishthira![111] Even if one only wishes to go to Kurukshetra in one’s mind, all one’s sins are destroyed and one goes to Brahma's world. O extender of the Kuru lineage! He who goes to Kurukshetra with devotion, obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice and a horse sacrifice. O king! Saluting the immensely strong gatekeeper, the *yaksha* Machakruka,[112] one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[113] O one learned in dharma! O Indra among kings! One then goes to Vishnu's supreme region. This is known as Satata and Hari is there.[114] Bathing there and worshipping Hari, the lord of the three worlds, one obtains a horse sacrifice[115] and attains Vishnu's world. One should then go to the tirtha of Pariplava, famous in the three worlds. A man[116] obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra.[117] On going to the tirtha known as Prithivi, one obtains the fruits of a thousand cows.[118] O lord of men! Going on to Shalukini and bathing in Dashashvamedhika,[119] the visitor of tirthas obtains those fruits.[120] On going to the supreme tirtha of nagas known as Sarpadevi,[121] one obtains agnishtoma[122] and attains the world of nagas. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the gatekeeper Tarantuka.[123] Spending one night there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[124] One should then go to Panchanada,[125] controlled and restrained in diet. Having bathed in Kotitirtha, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice.[126] Going on to the tirtha known as Ashvins, one is reborn in beautiful form.

"“'O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the supreme tirtha known as Varaha.[127] In earlier times, Vishnu was established there in the form of a boar. O tiger among men! On bathing there, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Somatirtha in Jayanti.[128] Bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice. Bathing in Ekahamsa, a man obtains the fruits of a thousand cows.[129] O extender of the Kuru lineage! A visitor of tirthas then goes to Kritashoucha. Such a man becomes pure and attains Pundarika.[130] Then one goes to the wise Mahadeva at Munjavata.[131]

Having stayed there for one night, one attains the status of Ganapati.[132] O great king! Yakshi, famous in the world, is there. O Indra among kings! Going there, one attains the sacred worlds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is famous as the gate to Kurukshetra. The visitor of tirthas should control his soul and circumambulate it. Bathing in the lake there, which was created by the great-souled Jamadagnya Rama,[133] one should worship the ancestors and the gods. O king! One then becomes successful in one's endeavours and obtains a horse sacrifice.[134]

"'O lord of men! O Indra among kings! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Rama's lakes.[135] The radiant and energetic Rama destroyed the kshatriyas through his valour and created five lakes there. O tiger among men! It has been heard that he filled them with blood. Thus did he worship all his fathers and grandfathers. O lord of men! Then the ancestors were pleased and told Rama, "O Rama! O immensely fortunate Rama! O Bhargava![136] O lord! We are pleased with your devotion to your ancestors and your valour. O fortunate one! O immensely radiant one! Ask for a boon. What do you wish for?" O Indra among kings! At these words, Rama, supreme among those who can smite, joined his hands in salutation and told his ancestors who were established in the sky, "If you are pleased with me and if I have earned your favour, I wish to obtain a boon from my ancestors that I may again be satisfied through austerities. Overcome with anger, I destroyed the kshatriyas. Through your energy, may I be freed from that sin. Let these lakes become tirthas, famous on earth." Having heard Rama's pure words, the ancestors were extremely delighted and happily told Rama, "Especially because of your devotion to your ancestors, let your austerities become greater. The kshatriyas have been destroyed by you out of wrath. But you have been freed from that sin, because it was their deeds that brought them down. There is no doubt that these lakes of yours will become tirthas. One who bathes in these lakes and worships his ancestors, will please his ancestors and they will grant him everything that his mind desires, even if it is the most difficult of objects to obtain on earth, and even the eternal world of heaven." O king! Having granted this boon, Rama's pleased ancestors showed their respects to Bhargava and disappeared instantly. It was thus that Rama's lakes, those of the great-souled Bhargava, become sacred. O Indra among kings! If one leads the life of a brahmachari, pure in vows, and bathes in Rama's lakes and worships Rama, one obtains a lot of gold.[137]

"'O extender of the Kuru lineage! O king! A visitor of tirthas should go to Vamshamulaka and save his own lineage by bathing in Vamshamulaka. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One should then go to the tirtha known as Kayashodhana.[138] Bathing in that tirtha, there is no doubt that one can purify one's body. Having purified one's body, one goes to the supreme and sacred worlds. O Indra among kings! Then one should go to the tirtha that is famous in the three worlds. In ancient times, the powerful Vishnu rescued the worlds there. O king! Having gone to Lokoddhara[139] tirtha, famous in the three worlds, and bathing in that supreme of tirthas, one recovers[140] many worlds for one's own self. One should then go to the tirtha known as Shri[141] and obtain supreme prosperity. Composed, the brahmachari should then go to Kapila tirtha.[142] A man who bathes there and worships the gods and the ancestors, obtains the fruits of one thousand tawny cows.[143] With a controlled mind, one should then go and bathe in Surya tirtha.[144] Having worshipped the gods and the ancestors and having fasted, one attains agnishtoma[145] and goes to the world of Surya. Then, in proper order, the visitor of tirthas goes to Govambhavana.[146] Having performed one's ablutions there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[147] O extender of the Kuru lineage! The visitor of tirthas then goes to Shankhini.[148] Bathing in that tirtha of the goddess, a man obtains supreme beauty. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the gatekeeper Arantuka.[149] That tirtha of the great-souled Indra among the yakshas is on the banks of the Sarasvati. O king! Having bathed there, a man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O one who is learned in dharma! O lord of men! Then one should go to Brahmavarta. Bathing in

Brahmavarta, a man attains Brahma's world. O one who is learned in dharma! Then one should go to the supreme Sutirtha. The ancestors are always there, together with the gods. Having performed ablutions there, devoted to the worship of the ancestors and the gods, one obtains a horse sacrifice and attains the world of the ancestors. O one learned in dharma! In due order, one then goes to Ambuvashya. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Bathing in the tirtha of the lord of treasures,[150] one is cleansed of all disease and attains greatness in the world of Brahma.

"''O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is also Matri tirtha.[151] O king! On bathing there, one's offspring increase and one attains everlasting prosperity. Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Shitavana tirtha.[152] O great king! There is a great thing there, rare elsewhere. O lord of men! One is sanctified in one stroke only by looking at it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One is purified by shaving one's hair there. O great king! There is a tirtha there, known by the name of Shvanalomapaha.[153] O tiger among men! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Learned brahmanas who are devoted to tirthas, supreme among brahmanas, perform *pranayama*[154] in Shvanalomapaha.[155] O Indra among kings! Purified in this way, they become sanctified and attain the supreme objective. O lord of the earth! Then there is the tirtha known as Dashashvamedhika.[156] O tiger among men! Bathing there, one attains the supreme goal. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Manusha, renowned in the worlds. O king! There, a black antelope was oppressed by a hunter. Plunging into a lake, it assumed the form of a human.[157] Bathing there, as a brahmachari, and conquering one's senses, one is cleansed of all sins and having become pure in soul, attains greatness in the world of heaven. O lord of the earth! The river renowned as Apaga[158] is only a *krosha*[159] to the east of Manusha. This is frequented by the siddhas. A man offering a meal of grain[160] to the gods and the ancestors there attains all the great fruits of dharma. One brahmana fed there is equal to one crore brahmanas being fed. Bathing there and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, and staying there for only a single night, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma.

"“‘O Indra among kings! One should then go to Brahma’s supreme region. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is famous on earth as Brahma’s *udumbara*.[161] O bull among the Kuru lineage! O Indra among kings! Whoever bathes there, in the lake of the *saptarshis*,[162] in Kedara of the great-souled Kapishthala,[163] pure and controlled in mind, attains Brahma and cleansed of all sin and pure in soul, attains Brahma’s world. On going to Kapishthala and Kedara, difficult of access, all one’s sins are burnt through the powers of asceticism and one obtains the powers of disappearance. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Saraka,[164] famous in the worlds. On seeing Vrishadhvaja there on the fourteenth day of *krishnapaksha*,[165] one obtains everything that one desires and goes to the world of heaven. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! There are three crore tirthas in Saraka. O lord of the earth! There are wells and ponds in Rudrakoti. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The tirtha known as Ilaspada is there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing there and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one overcomes all misfortunes and attains a horse sacrifice.[166] O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing in Kimdana and Kimjapya, a man obtains immeasurable donations and prayers.[167] A man who performs ablutions in Kalashi, devoted and while controlling his senses, obtains the fruits of an agnishtoma sacrifice. O best among the supreme of the Kuru lineage! The tirtha of the great-souled Narada is to the east of Saraka and is famous by the name of Anajanma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On bathing in that tirtha,[168] after giving up his life, on the instructions of Narada, a man obtains worlds that are difficult to get. On the tenth day of shuklapaksha, one should go to Pundarika. On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of a *pundarika* sacrifice. One should then go to Trivishtapa, famous in the three worlds. The sacred river Vaitarani, the cleanser of all sins, flows there.[169] Bathing there, and worshipping Vrishadhvaja, the wielder of the trident, one’s soul becomes pure and cleansed of all sins, one goes to the supreme goal. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme Phalakivana. O king! The gods always sought refuge in Phalakivana. They performed great austerities for many thousands of years. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing in Drishadvati[170] and worshipping the gods, a man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! When one bathes in the tirtha of all the gods, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[171] On bathing in Panikhata and worshipping the gods, a man attains a royal sacrifice and obtains the world of the rishis.

““‘O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme tirtha of Mishraka. O Indra among kings! We have heard that there, the great-souled Vyasa, tiger among men, mixed all the tirthas for the welfare of brahmanas. A man who bathes in Mishraka bathes in all the tirthas. Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Vyasa’s grove. A man who bathes in Manojava obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[172] Going on to the tirtha of the goddess in Madhuvati,[173] a pure man, who bathes and worships the ancestors and the gods with devotion and purity, obtains the fruits of one thousand cows on the instructions of the goddess. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He who is restrained in diet and bathes at the confluence of the Koushiki and the Dhrishadvati, is freed from all sins. Then there is Vyasasthali.[174] The wise Vyasa was afflicted by sorrow over his son and determined to give up his body there.[175] O Indra among kings! The gods resurrected him there. One who goes to Sthali obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[176] O extender of the Kuru lineage! If one goes to the well named Kimdatta and offers a measure[177] of sesamum seeds there, one attains the supreme objective and is freed from all one’s debts. The tirthas known as Ahas and Sudina are difficult to access. O tiger among men! By bathing there, one attains the world of the sun. One should then go to Mrigadhuma, renowned in the three worlds. A man who bathes in the pond known as Ganga there, and worships Mahadeva, the wielder of the trident, obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. Bathing in Devatirtha, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[178] One should then go to Vamanaka, famous in the three worlds.[179] Bathing in the mark of Vishnu's foot there and worshipping Vamana, one becomes pure in soul and cleansed of all sins, attains Vishnu's world. Bathing in Kulampuna, a man purifies his own lineage. O tiger among men! A man who goes to Pavana's lake,[180] the supreme tirtha of the Maruts, and bathes there, attains greatness in Vayu's world. O lord of men! Bathing in the lake of the immortals, through the powers of the immortals, one attains greatness in the world of heaven, among the immortals. O Indra among kings! O best among supreme of men! By bathing in Shalishurpa in Shalihotra,[181] in accordance with the rites, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[182] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Shrikunja tirtha is on the banks of the Sarasvati. O king! On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma.

"“‘O extender of the Kuru lineage! One should then go to the grove known as Naimisha. O Indra among kings! It is said that in ancient times, the sages who lived in Naimisha,[183] rich in their austerities, went on a pilgrimage to Kurukshetra. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! They established a grove on the banks of the Sarasvati. This became a great and satisfying place for the sages to rest. A man who goes and bathes in that grove obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[184] A man who bathes in Kanyatirtha[185] obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O tiger among men! From there, one should go to Brahma's supreme region. Bathing there, a man who is from the other varnas becomes a brahmana. A brahmana who is pure in soul attains the supreme objective. O best of men! One should then go to the supreme Somatirtha.[186] O king! On bathing there, a man attains the world of the moon. Then one should go to the tirtha known as Saptasarasvata.[187] Mankanaka, famous in the world of the maharshis, found success there. O king! We have heard that, in ancient times, Mankanaka cut his hand with the tip of *kusha* grass. O king! From that wound flowed out the juices of vegetables. On seeing the vegetable juice, the great ascetic was filled with delight. The brahmana sage widened his eyes in wonder and began to dance. On seeing him dance, all mobile and immobile objects were benumbed by his valour and energy, and also began to dance. O king! O lord of men! Then the gods, with Brahma at the forefront, and the great ascetics, went to Mahadeva and told him about the rishi. "O God! You should act so that he stops dancing." In a desire to ensure the welfare of the gods, the god[188] went to the one who was dancing, having lost his senses in delight, and told him, "O maharshi! O one who is learned in dharma! Why are you dancing? O bull among the sages! Why are you so delighted today?" The sage replied, "O God! Can you not see vegetable juices flowing from my hand? On seeing this, I am greatly delighted and am dancing."'

'"Pulastya said, 'The god smiled and told the sage, who was deluded in his delight, "O brahmana! I am not surprised. Look at me." O best of men! O king! Having uttered these words, the wise Mahadeva pricked his thumb with his fingernail and from that wound emerged ashes, as white as snow. O king! On seeing this, the sage was struck with shame and fell down at his feet. "I think that there is no other god more supreme than the great Rudra. O wielder of the spear! You are the refuge of the worlds of the gods and the demons. You have created the universe, the three worlds and everything that is mobile and immobile. O illustrious one! It is into you that everything enters at the destruction of a *yuga*. The gods themselves are incapable of comprehending you. How can I? O unblemished one! Brahma and all the other gods can be seen in you. You are everything. You are the maker of the worlds, the one who makes them act. It is through your grace that the gods are free from fear and can rejoice." Having thus prayed to Mahadeva, the sage remained prostrate. The rishi said, "O Mahadeva! Through your grace, may my austerities never diminish." Then the god was delighted and spoke to the brahmarshi. "O brahmana! Through my grace, your austerities will increase thousandfold. O great sage! I will dwell with you in your hermitage. Those who bathe in Saptasarasvata and worship me will get everything that is difficult to obtain, in this world and the next. There is no doubt that they will go to Sarasvati's world."

""'One should then go to Oushanasa,[189] renowned in the three worlds.[190] Brahma, the gods, the sages and the ascetics are there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a desire to ensure Bhargava's[191] welfare, the illustrious Kartikeya is always present there at the time of the three sandhyas. O tiger among men! Bathing in the tirtha known as Kapalamochana, one is cleansed of all sins and is freed from all sins. O bull among men! One should then go and bathe in Agnitirtha, saving one's lineage and attaining the world of Agni. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Vishvamitra's tirtha is also there.[192] O great king! On bathing there, one is born as a brahmana. O tiger among men! If one goes to Brahmayoni,[193] pure and controlled in mind, and bathes there, one obtains Brahma's world. There is no doubt that seven generations of one's lineage are sanctified. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the tirtha that is renowned in the three worlds. O king! This is famous by the name of Prithudaka and belongs to Kartikeya. Having performed one's ablutions there, one should worship the ancestors and the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever improper act one has committed because of human intelligence, knowingly or unknowingly, whether one is a man or a woman, is destroyed as soon as one bathes there. One obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. The learned say that Kurukshetra is sacred. But the Sarasvati is more sacred than Kurukshetra. The tirthas are more sacred than Sarasvati and Prithudaka is more sacred than the tirthas. It is supreme among all the tirthas. He who meditates and then gives up his body in Prithudaka, will never be tormented by the fear of death.[194] This has been sung by Sanatkumara[195] and the great-souled Vyasa. O king! It is also the injunction of the Vedas that one should go to Prithudaka. O supreme among men! There is no other tirtha as sacred as Prithudaka. There is no doubt that it is purifying, pure and the destroyer of sins. O best of men! The learned say that even people who commit evil acts go to heaven if they bathe in Prithudaka.

““‘O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! There is another tirtha named Madhusrava there.[196] On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[197] O best of men! In due order, one should then go to the tirtha of the goddess, famous in the world and at the confluence of the Sarasvati and the Aruna.[198] Having bathed there after fasting for three nights, one is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra and sanctifies his lineage for seven generations. O extender of the Kuru lineage! There is another tirtha named Avatirna there. Out of compassion for the brahmanas, Darbhin created it in ancient times. There is no doubt that a twice-born who observes vows, takes up the sacred thread, fasts and follows rituals is a brahmana. O bull among men! But it has been seen from ancient times that one who bathes there, without rituals and without mantras, becomes a brahmana, with all the results of vows. O tiger among men! Darbhin[199] united the four oceans there. Bathing there, one never confronts any calamity. One obtains the fruits of four thousand cows.[200] O Indra among kings! From there, one should go to the tirtha named Shatasahasraka. The tirtha Sahasraka is also there, famous in the world. Bathing in those two, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows.[201] His donations and his fasting increase a thousandfold. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme Renuka tirtha.[202] Having performed ablutions there and engaged in the worship of the ancestors and the gods, one is cleansed of all sins and one’s soul becomes pure. One obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. On touching the water in Vimochana, controlling one’s anger and controlling one’s senses, one is freed from all sins connected with acquisition.[203] On going to Panchavata,[204] celibate and in control of one’s senses, one obtains great merit and greatness in the world of those who are virtuous. There Yogeshvara Sthanu Vrishadhvaja[205] is always present himself. One who goes there and worships the lord of the gods becomes successful. Varuna’s tirtha Oujasa[206] is resplendent in its own energy. There Brahma, the gods and the rishis, rich in austerities, instated Guha[207] as the general of the army of the gods.

““‘O extender of the Kuru lineage! To the east of Oujasa is Kuru tirtha. Bathing in Kuru tirtha, celibate and in control of his senses, a man is cleansed of all sins, becomes pure in soul and attains the world of the Kurus. Controlled and restrained in diet, one should then go to Svargadvara.[208] One attains the world of heaven and goes to the world of Brahma. O lord of men! Then the visitor of tirthas should go to Anaraka. O king! On bathing there, a man never confronts any difficulties. O lord of the earth! O best of men! Brahma himself is always present there, with the gods in attendance, with Narayana at their head. O Indra among kings! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Rudra’s wife is always present there. One who approaches the goddess never faces any difficulty. O great king! Vishveshvara,[209] Uma’s husband, is also there. One who approaches Mahadeva is freed from all blemishes. O great king! On going to Narayana Padmanabha,[210] the destroyer of enemies, one becomes radiant and goes to Vishnu’s world. O bull among men! On bathing at the tirtha of all the gods, a man discards all his misery and blazes like the moon. O lord of men! Then the visitor of tirthas should go to Svastipura. On going to that sacred tirtha and satisfying the ancestors and the gods, a man obtains the fruits of an agnishtoma sacrifice. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is a lake named Ganga there and a well. O lord of the earth! Three crores of tirthas are in that well.[211] O king! On bathing there, a man attains the world of heaven. Bathing in the river there and worshipping Maheshvara, a man attains the status of a Ganapati and rescues his lineage. One should then go to Sthanuvata, renowned in the three worlds. On bathing and staying there for a night, a man attains Rudra’s world. Then one should go to Badaripachana and Vasishtha’s hermitage there.[212] After fasting there for three nights, a man should eat jujubes.[213] O lord of men! One who lives only on jujubes for twelve complete years, and one who fasts there for three nights, are equal. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas then reaches Indra’s path. On fasting there for one day and one night, one attains greatness in Shakra’s world. Going to Ekaratra and fasting there for one night, controlled and truthful, one attains greatness in Brahma’s world. O one learned in dharma! Then one should go to the tirtha that is renowned in the three worlds. This is the hermitage of the great-souled Aditya, full of energy. On bathing there and worshipping Vibhavasu,[214] a man goes to the world of Aditya and rescues his lineage.

“‘‘O extender of the Kuru lineage! A man who is a visitor of tirthas should go and bathe in Soma tirtha. There is no doubt that such a man will go to the world of the moon. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the tirtha of the great-souled Dadhicha. O king! This is pure and purifying and is famous in the world. Angiras of the Sarasvata lineage, treasure of austerities, is there. A man who bathes in that tirtha obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and there is no doubt that he attains Sarasvati’s world.[215] Controlled and celibate, one should then go to Kanyashrama. O king! If one fasts and lives there for three nights, one obtains one hundred celestial maidens and goes to Brahma’s world. Brahma, the gods, the sages and the ascetics go there every month and obtain great merits. If one touches the water at Samnihiti when the sun has been devoured by Rahu,[216] one has obtained one hundred eternal horse sacrifices.[217] Whatever tirthas exist on earth and in the sky, female rivers, male rivers, lakes, all streams, wells, ponds and everything else that is sacred, there is no doubt that they are gathered every month at Samnihiti. Whatever evil act a man or a woman may have committed, there is no doubt that they are all destroyed on bathing there. One goes to Brahma’s world in a lotus-coloured vehicle. Having worshipped the yaksha gatekeeper Arantuka, if one touches the water in Kotirupa, one obtains a lot of gold. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! There is a tirtha, a pond named Ganga, there. O one learned in dharma! On bathing there, controlled and celibate, one obtains the eternal fruits of royal and horse sacrifices. There is a sacred tirtha Naimisha on earth and Pushkara in the sky. But in all the three worlds, Kurukshetra is special.

Even the dust carried away by the wind in Kurukshetra takes the performer of evil acts to the supreme objective. To the south is Sarasvati and to the north Drishadvati.[218] Those who live in Kurukshetra live in heaven. "I will go to Kurukshetra, I will live in Kurukshetra." He who utters this single sentence is cleansed of all sins. O king! Those who live in sacred Kurukshetra, Brahma's altar and frequented by the brahmarshis, there is no doubt that one should not sorrow for them. The region between Tarantuka and Arantuka and between Machakruka and Rama's lakes is Kurukshetra Samantapanchaka[219] and is known as the grandfather's northern altar.'"'[220]

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'"Pulastya said, 'O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the ancient Dharmatirtha. O king! There is no doubt that a man who bathes there, controlled and devoted to dharma, sanctifies his lineage for seven generations. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the supreme Karapatana. One obtains agnishtoma and goes to the world of the sages. O king! A man should then go to the forest Sougandhika.[221] Brahma, the gods, the sages and the ascetics are there and the siddhas, the charanas, the gandharvas, the *kinnaras*[222] and the great nagas. As soon as one enters the forest, one is freed from all sins. O king! The best of streams, the supreme of rivers, the immensely sacred goddess and river, Sarasvati, flows in Plaksha.[223] On performing one's ablutions there, from the water that issues from an anthill, and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. There is a tirtha named Ishanadhyushita[224] there, difficult of access and determined to be six throws of a *shamya* away from the anthill.[225] O tiger among men! It has been seen in the ancient accounts, that on bathing there, one obtains a thousand tawny cows and a horse sacrifice.[226] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O best of men! If one goes to Sugandha, Shatakumbha and Panchayajna, one obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The tirtha known as Trishulakhata is also there. On performing ablutions there, engaged in the worship of the ancestors and the gods, there is no doubt that after discarding one's body, one attains the status of a Ganapati.

"''O Indra among kings! One should then go the place of the goddess that is difficult of access. This is famous in the three worlds by the name of Shakambhari.[227] O lord of men! Strict in her vows, for a thousand divine years, she subsisted on vegetables, month after month. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rishis, ascetics and devotees of the goddess came there and the guests were entertained with offerings of vegetables. Her name of Shakambhari was thus established. On going to Shakambhari, celibate and controlled, one should live there for three nights, eating vegetables and restrained and pure. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through the grace of the goddess, a visit there is equal in fruits to living on vegetables for twelve years.

"''Then one should go to Suvarnaksha, renowned in the three worlds. In ancient times, to win his favours, Vishnu propitiated Rudra there. He obtained many rare boons, difficult even among the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The destroyer of Tripura[228] was satisfied and told him, "O Krishna! You will be more loved in the world. There is no doubt that your mouth will be the entire universe." O Indra among kings! Going there and worshipping Vrishadhvaja, one attains a horse sacrifice and the status of a Ganapati. Then a man should go to Dhumavati[229] and fast there for three nights, obtaining certainly everything that one desires in one's mind. O lord of men! Rathavarta is towards the south[230] of the goddess. O one learned in dharma! One should ascend it with faith, and in control of one's senses. Through Mahadeva's grace, one then obtains the supreme objective. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O immensely wise one! After circumambulating it, one should go to Dhara, the cleanser of all sins. O tiger among men! O lord of men! On bathing there, one never sorrows. O one learned in dharma! After showing obeisance to the great mountain, one should then go to the gate of the Ganga.[231] There is no doubt that this is like the gate of heaven. On bathing there in Kotitirtha, controlled in mind, one obtains pundarika sacrifice and saves one's lineage. On satisfying the gods and the ancestors in Saptaganga,[232] Triganga and Shakravarta, in accordance with the prescriptions, one obtains greatness in the world of the virtuous. Then bathing in Kanakhala[233] and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Kapilavata.[234] Staying there for one night, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. O Indra among kings! O best among the supreme of the Kuru lineage! This is the tirtha of the great-souled Kapila, king of the nagas. It is renowned in all the worlds. O lord of men! On performing ablutions in that tirtha of the nagas, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand tawny cows. Then one should go to Lalitika, Shantanu's supreme tirtha. O king! On bathing there, a man never confronts difficulties. A man who bathes at the confluence of the Ganga and the Sangama,[235] obtains ten horse sacrifices and rescues his lineage. O Indra among kings! From there, one should go to Sugandha, famous in the worlds. Cleansed of all sin and pure of soul, one attains greatness in Brahma's world. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Rudravarta. O king! On bathing there, a man obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O best of men! On bathing at the confluence of the Ganga and the Sarasvati, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven.[236]

"'"On going to Bhadrakarneshvara and worshipping the gods in accordance with the rites, one never confronts difficulties and goes to the world of heaven. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Kubjamraka. One obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and goes to heaven. O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Arundhativata. On touching the water at Samudraka, and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and rescues his lineage. Celibate and controlled in mind, one should then go to Brahmavarta. One obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. On going to the source of the Yamuna[237] and touching the water of the Yamuna there, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and attains greatness in the world of heaven. Then one should go to the tirtha named Darvisamkramana, famous in the three worlds. One obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. On going to the source of the Sindhu,[238] frequented by siddhas and gandharvas, and staying there for five nights, one obtains a lot of gold. On going thereafter to Vedi, extremely difficult of access, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and the goal of Ushanas.[239] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One should then go to Rishikulya[240] and Vasishtha. On going to Vasishtha, all the other varnas become brahmanas. O lord of men, having bathed in Rishikulya, a man attains the world of the rishis, if one lives there for one month and subsists on vegetables.'

'"On going to Bhrigutunga, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. On going to Virapramoksha, one is freed from all sins. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On going to the tirthas of Krittika and Magha, a virtuous man obtains the fruits of agnishtoma and atiratra. On going to the supreme Vidyatirtha in the evening, and touching the water there, one becomes skilled in all forms of knowledge. If one spends a night in Mahashrama, eating once a day, one is cleansed of all sins and attains the worlds of the pure. Living there for one month at the time of Mahalaya[241] and eating once in three days, one is cleansed of all sins, the soul becomes pure, and one obtains a lot of gold. One should then go to Vetasika, frequented by the grandfather.[242] One obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the objective of Ushanas. Then, on reaching the tirtha of Sundarika, frequented by the siddhas, as has been witnessed in the ancient texts, one becomes handsome. Then, going on to Brahmani, celibate and in control of one's senses, one goes to Brahma's world in a lotus-coloured vehicle. Then one should go to the sacred Naimisha, frequented by the siddhas. Brahma always resides there, together with the masses of the gods. Even if one desires to go to Naimisha, half of one's sins are destroyed. As soon as a man enters it, all his sins are cleansed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The wise visitor of tirthas should live in Naimisha for a month. All the tirthas of the earth are in

Naimisha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing there, controlled and restrained in diet, one obtains the fruits of a sacrifice in which cows are donated. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One also rescues one's lineage for seven generations. It is said by the wise ones that he who gives up his life in Naimisha through fasting, finds delight in the world of heaven. O supreme among kings! Naimisha is always sacred and holy.

'"On going to Gangobheda and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and is born like Brahma. Going to the Sarasvati, one should satisfy the ancestors and the gods. There is no doubt that one finds delight in Sarasvati's world. Celibate and controlled, one should then go to Bahuda. A man then obtains the fruits of a *devasatra*[243] sacrifice. Then one should go to the sacred Chiravati, surrounded by holy ones. Worshipping the ancestors and the gods there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Vimalashoka, one shines like the moon. Spending a night there, one attains greatness in the world of heaven. One should then go to Gopratara, the supreme of tirthas on the Sarayu. Rama went to heaven there, with his servants, forces and vehicles.[244] O lord of men! On bathing at the tirtha of Gopratara, a man is cleansed of all sins, becomes pure in soul and attains greatness in the world of heaven. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! If a man bathes in Rama's tirtha on the Gomati,[245] he obtains a horse sacrifice, and the man's lineage is saved. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The tirtha Shatasahasrika is there. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On bathing there, controlled and restrained in diet, one obtains the sacred fruits of one thousand cows. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme region of Bhartri. O king! On bathing in Kotitirtha and worshipping Guha,[246] a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. Such a man becomes energetic. On going to Varanasi and worshipping Vrishadhvaja, and bathing in the pond known as Kapila, one attains a royal sacrifice. O Indra among kings! On going to Markandeya's tirtha, difficult of access and famous in the worlds, located at the confluence of the Gomati and the Ganga, one obtains agnishtoma and rescues one's lineage. Celibate and in control of one’s senses, one should then go to Gaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On going there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. Akshayavata, famous in the three worlds, is there. O lord! Whatever is offered to the ancestors there becomes inexhaustible. On bathing in Mahanadi and satisfying the ancestors and the gods, one attains the inexhaustible worlds and saves one’s lineage. On going to Brahma’s lake, adorned with Dharma’s forests, one attains a pundarika sacrifice, as soon as night becomes dawn. O Indra among kings! Brahma’s sacrificial pole rises high in that lake. On circumambulating the pole, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice.

‘“O Indra among kings! One should then go to Dhenuka, famous in the world. O king! On staying there for one night and donating sesamum and a cow, all sins are cleansed, one becomes pure in soul and there is no doubt that one goes to the world of the moon. O great king! There is no doubt that, even today, there is a sign there. A cow, with her calf, used to roam over that mountain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Her hoof-marks, and those of her calf, can be seen there, even today. O Indra among kings! O supreme among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On touching water at these hoof-marks, whatever evil acts one has committed are destroyed. Then one should go to Gridhravata, the place where the wise god is established. On going to Vrishadhvaja, one should bathe in ashes. If one is a brahmana, one will obtain a vow of twelve years.[247] If one is from an inferior varna, all one’s sins will be destroyed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then one should go to Mount Udyanta, filled with the sound of singing. The footprint of Savita[248] can be seen there. Rigid in vows, a brahmana who observes the sandhya prayers there is like one who has observed sandhya prayers for twelve years. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The famous Yonidvara[249] is there. On going there, a man is freed from any mixing up of varnas.[250] O king! If a man lives in Gaya during both shuklapaksha and krishnapaksha, there is no doubt that his lineage is sanctified for seven generations. If one wishes for many sons, one should only go to Gaya, or perform a horse sacrifice, or set free a blue bull.[251]

O king! O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Phalgu.[252] He obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to great success. O Indra among kings! Controlled, one should then go to Dharmaprastha. O great king! O Yudhishthira! Dharma is always present there. Going there, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O Indra among kings! One should then go to the supreme Brahmatirtha. O Indra among kings! There, worshipping Brahma, whose energy is unlimited, a man obtains the fruits of a royal sacrifice and a horse sacrifice.

'"O lord of men! The visitor of tirthas should then go to Rajagriha.[253] On touching the warm water there, one becomes the equal of Kakshivat[254] and finds delight. On partaking from the daily offerings made to the yakshini there, a man becomes pure. Through the grace of the yakshini, one is freed from the sin of killing an embryo. Going to Maninaga, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. If one partakes from the daily offerings made to Maninaga, and stays there for one night, one is freed from all sins and terrible serpent's venom does not cause harm. O king! Then one should go to brahmarshi Goutama's forest. Bathing in Ahalya's[255] lake, one goes to the supreme objective. O king! On going to Shri,[256] one obtains supreme prosperity. O one learned in dharma! There is a spring there, renowned in the three worlds. Performing one's ablutions there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. There is also *rajarshi*[257] Janaka's well, worshipped by the thirty gods.[258] On performing one's ablutions there, one attains Vishnu's world. One should then go to Vinashana,[259] which frees from all sins. One obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of the moon. On going to Gandaki,[260] created from the water of all the tirthas, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of the sun. O one learned in dharma! One should then go to the hermitage Adhivamshya. O great king! There is no doubt that one finds delight among the *guhyakas*.[261] Going on to the river Kampana, frequented by the siddhas, one obtains a pundarika sacrifice and goes to the world of the sun. Then going to the river Vishala, renowned in the three worlds, one obtains agnishtoma and goes to the world of heaven. O lord of men! On going to the rivulet Maheshvari, one attains a horse sacrifice and rescues one's lineage. On going to the celestial pond, a pure man never confronts difficulties and attains a horse sacrifice. Celibate and controlled, one should then go to Maheshvarapada. On bathing in Maheshvarapada, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! There are one crore famous tirthas there and these were carried away by an evil-souled demon in the form a tortoise. O king! While they were being carried away, Vishnu recovered them through Vishnu's powers. O Yudhishthira! On performing ablutions at the one crore tirthas, one obtains a pundarika sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world. O Indra among kings! One should then go to Narayana's region. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hari always dwells near that place. Vishnu, the performer of extraordinary deeds, is famous by the name of Shalagrama there.[262] On going to Vishnu, without decay, the granter of boons and the lord of the three worlds, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world.

'"O one learned in dharma! There is a well there that frees from all sins. The four oceans are always present in this well. O Indra among kings! By touching the water there, one never confronts any difficulties. On going to Mahadeva,[263] Vishnu without decay and the granter of boons, one shines like the moon and is freed from all one's debts. If one touches the water in Jatismara, pure and controlled in mind, there is no doubt that one can recall one's past lives by bathing there. Going to Vateshvarapura and fasting and worshipping Keshava, there is no doubt that one satisfies all one's wishes and desires. Thereafter, on going to Vamana, one is freed from all sins. On worshipping the god Hari, one never confronts any difficulties. Then one should go to Bharata's hermitage, which frees from all sins. There, a man should go to the Koushiki,[264] the destroyer of great sins, and obtain the fruits of a royal sacrifice. O, one learned in dharma! Then one should go to the supreme forest of Champaka. Spending a night there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. Then one should go the supremely revered tirtha of

Jyeshthila. Fasting and spending a night there, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O bull among men! On seeing the immensely radiant lord of the universe there,[265] together with the goddess, one attains the world of Mitra and Varuna. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On going to Kanyasamveda, controlled and restrained in diet, one goes to the world of Prajapati Manu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever drink or food is offered at Kanya becomes inexhaustible. This is what sages, rigid in their vows, have said. On going to Nishchira,[266] renowned in the three worlds, one attains a horse sacrifice and goes to Vishnu's world. O tiger among men! There is no doubt that men who donate at the confluence of Nishchira, go to Brahma's world. Vasishtha's hermitage, renowned in the three worlds, is there. On performing ablutions there, one attains a horse sacrifice.

'"On going to Devakuta, frequented by masses of brahmarshis, one attains a horse sacrifice and rescues one's lineage. O Indra among kings! Then one should go the lake of the sage Koushika. In ancient times, Koushika's son Vishvamitra obtained success there. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On staying for a month at brave Koushika's place, one obtains within a month the merits of a horse sacrifice. He who dwells in that great lake, supreme among all the tirthas, never confronts any difficulty and obtains a lot of gold. On going to Kumara,[267] who dwells in Virashrama, there is no doubt that a man obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Agnidhara, renowned in the three worlds, and bathing there, one obtains agnishtoma and does not return from heaven. On going to the grandfather's[268] lake, established in the king of the mountains,[269] and performing one's ablutions there, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. From the grandfather's lake issues the stream of Kumaradhara, renowned in the three worlds and the purifier of the world. On bathing there, one knows in one's own mind that one has become successful. If one eats once in three days there, one is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. The peak of the great goddess Gouri is famous in the three worlds. A devoted man should climb, and touching the waters of Stanakunda[270] and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, obtain a horse sacrifice and go to Shakra’s world. Celibate and controlled, one goes to Tamraruna and obtaining a horse sacrifice, goes to Shakra’s world. One goes to the well named Nandini, frequented by the thirty gods. O extender of the Kuru lineage! One then obtains the fruits of a human sacrifice. On bathing in Kalika, the confluence of the Koushiki and the Aruna, and fasting for three nights, a learned one is freed from all sins. Going to Urvashi tirtha and the hermitage of the moon, and bathing in the hermitage of Kumbhakarna, a wise man is worshipped by the earth. Bathing in the sacred Kokamukha, celibate and careful in vows, it has been seen in the ancient accounts that one can recall one’s earlier births. A brahmana who has gone to Nanda becomes successful and accomplished in his soul. He is cleansed of all sins, becomes pure of soul and goes to Shakra’s world. On going to the island Rishabha, worthy of a visit and inhabited by curlews, and touching the waters of the Sarasvati, one becomes resplendent in a celestial vehicle. O great king! Ouddalaka tirtha is frequented by the sages. On performing one’s ablutions there, one is freed from all sins. On going to the sacred Dharmatirtha, frequented by brahmarshis, there is no doubt that a man obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Champa and touching the waters of the Bhagirathi and on going to Dandarka, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On going to the sacred Lavedika, frequented by holy ones, one obtains a horse sacrifice and is worshipped in a celestial vehicle.’”

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‘“Pulastya said, ‘On going to the supreme tirtha of Samvedya in the evening, and touching the water there, there is no doubt that a man obtains knowledge. O king! Then going to Louhitya, the tirtha created through Rama’s favour in ancient times, one obtains a lot of gold.[271] On going to Karatoya[272] and fasting there for three nights, following the rites laid down by the grandfather,[273] a man obtains a horse sacrifice. O Indra among kings! On going to the confluence of the Ganga with the ocean, the learned have said that one obtains ten times a horse sacrifice.

O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! If one goes to the island that is on the other bank of the Ganga,[274] bathing and fasting there for three nights, all one's desires are satisfied. Then one should go to the river Vaitarani,[275] the cleanser of all sins. Going to the tirtha known as Viraja, one shines like the moon. Sanctifying one's own lineage, one is cleansed of all sins. A man makes his own lineage pure and obtains the fruits of ten thousand cows.[276] On dwelling at the confluence of the Shona and the Jyotirathi, pure and restrained, and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one obtains the fruits of agnishtoma. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! On touching the water at Vamshagulma, the source of the Shona and the Narmada,[277] one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O lord of men! On going to Rishabha tirtha in Kosala and fasting there for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice. On going to Kosala and touching the waters at Kala tirtha, there is no doubt that one obtains the fruits of eleven bulls.[278] Performing ablutions in Pushpavati, and fasting for three nights, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and also rescues his lineage. Then bathing in Badarika tirtha, [279] controlled in mind, one obtains a long life and goes to the world of heaven.

"""Then, going to Mahendra, frequented by Jamadagni's son, and bathing at Rama tirtha,[280] a man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O King! On going to Matanga's Kedara[281] and bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On going to Mount Shri[282] and touching the water on the banks of the river, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the world of heaven. The immensely radiant Mahadeva dwells in great delight on Mount Shri with the goddess, together with Brahma and the thirty gods. On bathing at the lake of the gods there, pure and restrained in mind, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to supreme success. On going to Mount Rishabha in Pandya,[283] worshipped by the gods, one obtains a horse sacrifice and finds delight in the vault of the sky.[284] One should then go to Kaveri,[285] frequented by masses of apsaras. O king! On bathing there, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. Then one should bathe in Kanyatirtha,[286] on the shores of the ocean. O Indra among kings! On bathing there, one is freed from all sins. Then one should go to Gokarna,[287] renowned in the three worlds. O Indra among kings! It is in the middle of the ocean and is worshipped by all the worlds. Brahma, the gods, the rishis, the ascetics, the *bhutas*,[288] the yakshas, the *pishachas*,[289] the kinnaras, the great nagas, the siddhas, the charanas, the gandharvas, humans, the pannagas, rivers, oceans and mountains worship Uma's consort there. On worshipping Ishana there and fasting for three nights, a man obtains a horse sacrifice and attains the status of a Ganapati. A man who lives there for twelve nights becomes pure of soul. Then one should go to the region of Gayatri, famous in the three worlds.[290] After staying there for three nights, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. O lord of men! For brahmanas, something special can be witnessed there. O king! When one born of mixed varna recites the gayatri there, it becomes metrical and musical.[291]

"“‘On going to the pond of the brahmana rishi Samvarta, difficult of access, one obtains personal beauty and great fortune. On going to Venna[292] and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, a man obtains a celestial chariot drawn by peacocks and swans. Then one goes to Godavari, always frequented by the siddhas, obtaining a cow sacrifice and attaining Vasuki's world. On bathing at the confluence of Venna, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. On bathing at the confluence of Varada,[293] one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On going to Brahma's region and dwelling there for three nights, a man obtains the fruits of one thousand cows and goes to the world of heaven. On going to Kushaplavana, celibate and controlled in mind, and bathing and living there for three nights, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. Then one should go to the beautiful lake of the gods, the source of the waters of the Krishna and the Venna.[294] O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bathing in the lake known as Jatimatra and in the hermitage of the maiden, where the king of the gods performed one hundred sacrifices and went to heaven, one obtains one hundred agnishtomas from the act of merely going there. On bathing at the lake of all the gods, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. On bathing in the lake known as Jatimatra, a man can recollect his earlier lives. Then one should go the immensely pure Payoshni, supreme among rivers.[295] Worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one will obtain the fruits of one thousand cows. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On going to the Dandaka forest and touching the waters there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows as soon as one has bathed there. On going to the hermitage of Sharabhanga and the great-souled Shukra, a man never confronts any difficulty and rescues his lineage. On going to Shurparaka, frequented by Jamadagni's son and bathing in Rama's tirtha, a man obtains a lot of gold.[296] On bathing in Saptagodavari,[297] restrained and controlled in diet, one obtains great merits and goes to the world of the gods. Restrained and controlled in diet, one treads the path of the gods, and a man thus obtains the merits of a divine sacrifice.

"''One goes to the Tungaka forest, celibate and in control of one's senses. In ancient times, the rishi Sarasvata had taught the Vedas there. The Vedas were lost. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Seated on the upper garments of the maharshis, the son of the sage Angiras taught them and pronounced the syllables of 'OM', accurately and as they should be uttered.[298] Immediately, everything that had been learnt before returned to memory. The rishis, the gods, Varuna, Agni, Prajapati, the god Hari Narayana, Mahadeva and the illustrious grandfather[299] together with the immensely radiant other gods, appointed the immensely radiant Bhrigu as a priest for their sacrifice there. In accordance with the prescribed rites and in accordance with the prescribed rituals, and for the sake of the sages, the lord[300] once again invoked and worshipped the fire. Satisfied with their shares, the gods left for the three worlds and the sages went where they wished. O best of kings! When one enters Tungaka, whether one is a man or a woman, all one's sins are destroyed. O king! If a wise one dwells there for a month, controlled and restrained in diet, one goes to Brahma's world and saves one's lineage. On going to Medhavika and satisfying the ancestors and the gods, one obtains agnishtoma and memory and intellect. There is the peak named Kalanjara, renowned in the world.[301] On bathing in the lake of the gods there, one obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. O king! There is no doubt that a man who purifies his soul in Mount Kalanjara obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O lord of the earth! Then one goes to Mandakini, the cleanser of all sins, in Chitrakuta, best among the supreme of mountains.[302] On performing one's ablutions there and worshipping the ancestors and the gods, one obtains a horse sacrifice and goes to the supreme objective.

"“'O Indra among kings! Then one should go to the supreme region of Bhartri. O king! The god Mahasena[303] is always established there. A man who bathes in Kotitirtha, obtains the fruits of one thousand cows. After circumambulating it, one should go to Jyeshthasthana. On going to Mahadeva, one becomes as resplendent as the moon. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Yudhishthira![304] There is a famous well there and the four oceans reside in it. O Indra among kings! On touching the waters there and circumambulating it, pure and controlled in soul, a man goes to the supreme objective. O best among the Kuru lineage. Then one should go to the great Shringaverapura. O great king! In ancient times, Rama, Dasharatha's son, crossed there.[305] A man who bathes in the Ganga there, celibate and controlled, is washed of all sin and attains a horse sacrifice. O lord of men! On going to Mahadeva and worshipping and circumambulating him, one attains the status of a Ganapati.

"“'O Indra among kings! One should then go to Prayaga, praised by the rishis. There dwell Brahma and the other gods, the directions and the lords of the directions, the lords of the worlds, the sadhyas, the *nairritas*,[306] the ancestors, the supreme rishis with Sanatkumara at their head, the other brahmarshis led by Angiras, the nagas, the *suparnas*,[307] the siddhas, the *chakracharas*,[308] the rivers, the oceans, the gandharvas, the apsaras and the illustrious Hari, worshipped by Prajapati. There are three pits of fire and through their middle, Jahnavi,[309] worshipped among all the tirthas, flows out of Prayaga. The goddess who is Tapana's daughter is famous in the three worlds.[310] The Yamuna flows with the Ganga, the purifier of the world. The region between the Ganga and the Yamuna is known as the loins of the earth. The learned sages know that Prayaga is the supreme spot in these loins. Prayaga, Pratishthana, Kambala, Ashvatara and the tirtha of Bhogavati are known as Prajapati's altars. O Yudhishthira![311] The Vedas and sacrifices become personified there. Rishis, rich in austerities, worship Prajapati there. O king! The gods and chakracharas worship him with sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no other place as sacred as this. O lord! Prayaga's power is greater than that of all the tirthas. Even if a man hears of this tirtha, or chants its name, or obtains a bit of its clay, he is freed from sins. He who performs his ablutions at the confluence, strict in his vows, obtains the sacred fruits of royal and horse sacrifices. This sacrificial ground is worshipped even by the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if a little bit is given there, it becomes great. O son! Let not the words of the Vedas or the sayings of the world dissuade you from your intention of dying in Prayaga. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is said that there are sixty crore and ten thousand tirthas there. From merely bathing at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, one obtains all the merits of a truthful person learned in the four Vedas. Vasuki's supreme tirtha named Bhogavati is there.[312] On performing ablutions there, one obtains a horse sacrifice. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! On the Ganga there is the tirtha known as Hamsaprapatana,[313] famous in the three worlds, and Dashashvamedhika.[314] O great king! The region where the Ganga is, is fit for hermitages. The region along the banks of the Ganga is the place where success can be obtained. This truth should only be recited into the ears of brahmanas, righteous ones, one's son, well-wishers, disciples and dependents. This brings dharma. This brings sanctity. This brings purity. This brings happiness. This brings heaven. This brings beauty. This brings supreme purification. This is the secret of the maharshis, this is the cleanser of all sins. By learning this among brahmanas, one is freed from all blemishes.

““‘He who hears about the eternal sanctity of the tirthas, will always be pure. He will be able to remember his earlier births and will find delight in the vault of the sky.[315] Some of the tirthas recounted are easy of access, others difficult of access. But if one wishes to visit all the tirthas, one should go to the latter in one’s mind. In a desire to perform good deeds, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Maruts, the Ashvins and the rishis, who are equal to the gods, have gone there. O Kouravya! Good in vows and controlled, and according to the precepts, you must also go to the sacred tirthas and increase your merits. Those who are learned, those who are honest and those who have insight are able to reach these tirthas because of their virtue, their purity, their belief and their learning of the sacred texts. One who does not observe vows, one who has not cleansed his soul, one who is not pure, or one who is a thief, cannot bathe in these tirthas. O Kouravya! Nor can a man whose mind is crooked. You have always been good in conduct. You have always had insight on dharma and artha. O son! You have saved your fathers and all your ancestors. O king! The gods, with Brahma leading them, together with the masses of rishis, have always been satisfied by your dharma and your knowledge of dharma. You are equal to Vasava.[316] You will attain the world of the Vasus. O Bhishma! Your deeds will be great and you will obtain eternal fame on earth.’”

‘Narada said, “Having spoken these words and taking his[317] leave, the illustrious rishi Pulastya, pleased and in a delighted frame of mind, immediately disappeared. Bhishma, tiger among the Kuru lineage and with insight about the import of the sacred texts, travelled throughout the earth on Pulastya’s words. He who travels throughout the earth according to these instructions, after his death, obtains the fruits of one hundred horse sacrifices. O Partha![318] According to supreme dharma, you will obtain eight times those merits. Because you will lead the rishis there, your fruits will be eight times. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those tirthas are infested by masses of rakshasas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! No one except you can go there. He who awakes in the morning and recites this account of all the tirthas, as told by the *devarshi*,[319] is freed from all sins. The foremost among the rishis—Valmiki, Kashyapa, Atreya, Koundinya, Vishvamitra, Goutama, Asita-Devala, Markandeya, Galava, Bharadvaja, Vasishtha, the sage Uddalaka, Shounaka and his son, Vyasa who is supreme among those who meditate, Durvasa who is the best of sages and the great ascetic Galava[320]—all these supreme rishis, rich in austerities, are waiting for you. O great king! Go and visit the tirthas and meet them. The immensely radiant devarshi named Lomasha will come to you and you must travel with him. O one learned in dharma! You can go to the tirthas with me too. You will obtain great fame, as did King Mahabhisha.[321] O tiger among the Kuru lineage! Like Yayati who had dharma in his soul and like King Pururava, you will also blaze with your dharma. Like King Bhagiratha and like the famous Rama, you will also shine among all the kings, like the one with the rays.[322] Like Manu, like Ikshvaku, like the immensely famous Puru and like the immensely energetic Vainya, you will also be famous. Just as in earlier times, the slayer of Vritra[323] burnt down all his enemies, you will destroy your enemies and protect your subjects. O lotus-eyed one! Having obtained the earth, conquered with your dharma, you will obtain fame with your dharma, like Kartaviryarjuna.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having thus reassured the king, the illustrious rishi Narada took his leave of the great-souled one[324] and instantly disappeared. Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, reflected on this and recounted to the rishis the eternal merits that derive from going to the tirthas.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having ascertained the thoughts of his brothers and those of the wise Narada, King Yudhishthira then spoke to Dhoumya, who was like the grandfather[325] himself. “I have sent into exile Jishnu, tiger among men and for whom truth is his valour, the mighty-armed one whose soul is unlimited, for the sake of weapons. O one rich in austerities! That brave one is devoted and capable. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is like the lord Vasudeva himself. O brahmana! I know those two brave Krishnas,[326] the slayers of enemies, just as the powerful Vyasa knows Pundarikaksha[327] Vasudeva and Dhananjaya of the three *yuga*s.[328] Narada also knows this and has spoken to me about this. I know them to be the sages Nara and Narayana. Therefore, knowing that he was capable, I sent Arjuna to set his eyes on the king of the gods and obtain weapons from him. He is capable, he is the son of a god and he is not inferior to Indra. That is the reason he was exiled. Bhishma and Drona are *atirathas*[329] and Kripa and Drona’s son[330] are invincible. These immensely strong ones have been engaged by Dhritarashtra’s son for the war. They are all knowledgeable in the Vedas, they are valiant and they are all skilled in the use of weapons. Then there is also Karna, the maharatha who is the son of a *suta*[331] and has the knowledge of divine weapons. That immensely strong one has always wanted to fight with Partha. He has the speed of a horse and the strength of the wind. His arrows roar from a flaming base. The dust[332] is like the smoke. Unleashed by the wind of Dhritarashtra’s son, his weapons scorch. He has been unleashed, like the flames of destruction at the end of a yuga, released by time. There is no doubt that he will scorch my soldiers like dried grass. There is the wind raised by Krishna, with a great cloud of divine weapons and with his white steeds like cranes. The blazing Gandiva is like Indra’s weapon.[333] Only a shower of those arrows, unfurled from Arjuna’s cloud can pacify in battle Karna’s blazing flames. Bibhatsu, the destroyer of enemy cities, will certainly obtain from Shakra himself all the divine weapons and their knowledge. I keep thinking that he is equal to all of them. No one can act against him in battle, nor will the enemies be able to react. All of us Pandavas will see Dhananjaya with the weapons that he has obtained. Bibhatsu has never been seen to be dragged down under the weight of something he has undertaken. O supreme among those who have two feet! But in this Kamyaka forest, in that warrior's absence and with Krishna with us, we will never find peace of mind. Therefore, tell us of another forest that is sacred and lovely and has a lot of food and fruit, frequented by the performers of virtuous deeds. We should be able to spend some time there and wait for the brave Arjuna, for whom truth is his valour, to return, just as those desirous of rain wait for the clouds. Tell us about the different hermitages that have been listed by brahmanas, about lakes and rivers and beautiful mountains. O brahmana! Bereft of Arjuna, residence in this Kamyaka forest no longer seems attractive to us. Let us go in some other direction."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing all the Pandavas anxious and miserable in their minds, Dhoumya, who was like Brihaspati himself, reassured them and said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Let me mention sacred hermitages, directions, tirthas and mountains approved of by brahmanas. Listen as I speak. O king! O Yudhishthira! As I remember it, I will first describe to you the beautiful eastern direction, frequented by masses of rajarshis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that region there is a place named Naimisha, desired by the devarshis. There are sacred tirthas, holy to separate gods. The beautiful and holy Gomati flows here, frequented by devarshis. There is the sacrificial ground of the gods and Vivasvat's sacrificial site is here. Sacred Gaya, supreme among mountains and worshipped by rajarshis, is there. There is Brahma's sacred lake, frequented by rishis and the thirty gods. O tiger among men! It is for this reason that the ancient ones have declared that if one desires many sons, one should go to Gaya alone. O unblemished one! Mahanadi is there and also Gayashira. There is also a banyan tree, celebrated by the brahmanas as Akshayakarana.[334] O lord! The food that is given to the ancestors there, becomes inexhaustible. A great river named Phalgu flows there and its waters are sacred. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is also Koushiki, with many roots and fruit. Vishvamitra, rich in austerities, became a brahmana there. The sacred river Ganga is there. O son! Bhagiratha performed many sacrifices on its banks and gave away a lot of gifts.

'"O Kouravya! It is said that there is Utpala in Panchala. Koushika Vishvamitra[335] performed a sacrifice there with Shakra. On witnessing Vishvamitra's superhuman powers, Jamadagni's illustrious son recounted his lineage there.[336] In Kanyakubja,[337] Koushika drank *soma* with Indra and withdrawing himself from the kshatriya class, announced that he was a brahmana. O brave one! There is the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, renowned in the world. It is pure and sacred, supreme among purifying places, and is visited by the sages. In earlier times, the grandfather,[338] the soul of all beings, performed a sacrifice there. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That is the reason it has become famous as Prayaga.[339] O Indra among kings! O king! There is Agastya's supreme and great hermitage. There is the peak named Hiranyabindu on Kalanjara. O king! There is another mountain that is more pure and sacred than all other mountains. O Kouravya! This is the great-souled Bhargava's[340] Mahendra. O Kounteya! O Yudhishthira! In earlier times, the grandfather performed a sacrifice there and the sacred Bhagirathi was where the officiating priests were seated. O lord of the earth! The sacred and famous Brahmashala[341] is there. Its mere sight is pure and its banks are crowded by those whose sins have been cleansed. There is also the pure, auspicious, eternal, supreme and great hermitage of the great-souled Matanga, famous in the world by the name of Kedara. The beautiful Kundoda mountain has roots, fruits and water. The thirsty nishada[342] found water and shelter there. There is the beautiful grove of the gods there, adorned with ascetics. There are the rivers Bahuda and Nanda, on the peak of the mountain. O great king! I have recounted for you tirthas, rivers, mountains and sacred spots that are in the eastern direction. Now hear from me about sacred tirthas, rivers and mountains in the other three directions.”’

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‘Dhoumya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Now listen to the sacred tirthas in the southern direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will recount them in detail, to the best of my intelligence. In this direction is the sacred and auspicious river Godavari. It is pure, has many places to rest and a lot of water, and is frequented by ascetics. There are the rivers Venna and Bhimarathi, both capable of destroying the fear of sin. They are full of animals and birds and are adorned with the habitations of ascetics. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is the river of rajarshi Nriga, lord of the earth. This is the Payoshni, with beautiful tirthas and a lot of water, and frequented by brahmanas. The immensely ascetic and great yogi Markandeya sang the praises of Nriga’s lineage here. We have heard that this really happened when Nriga performed a sacrifice. Indra became drunk with soma and brahmanas with their gifts. O best of the Bharata lineage! On Mount Varunasrotasa, there is the sacred and pure forest of Mathara, with many roots and fruit. This has a sacrificial stake. It is said that to the north of Praveni, there is Kanva’s sacred hermitage and there are many forests inhabited by ascetics. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Two sacrificial altars of the great-souled Jamadagni are in Shurparka—Pashana tirtha and Purashchandra. O Kounteya! In Martya, there is Ashoka tirtha, with many hermitages. O Yudhishthira! In Pandya, there are the tirthas known as Agasyta and Varuna. O bull among men! In Pandya, there is the sacred one known as Kumari.[343]

‘“O Kounteya! Listen as I now recount Tamraparni.[344] The gods underwent austerities there, in a desire to attain greatness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gokarna is famous in the three worlds. O son! There is a lot of water there and the water is cool. It is sacred and auspicious. The lake is extremely difficult to access for men who have not purified their souls. Near that is the sacred hermitage of Agastya’s disciple, on Mount Devasabha. It is full of fruits and roots and is known as Trinasomagni. There is Mount Vaidurya, auspicious and beautiful, and full of many gems. Agastya's hermitage is there, with a lot of roots, fruit and water. O lord of men! I will now describe the sacred spots, hermitages, rivers, mountains and lakes in Surashtra. O Yudhishthira! The brahmanas speak of Chamasonmajjana there and of Prabhasa tirtha on the sea, belonging to the thirty gods. There is the auspicious Pindaraka, visited by the ascetics and the great Mount Ujjayanta, which brings swift success. O Yudhishthira! Narada, foremost among devarshis, has recited an ancient shloka about this. Listen. 'He who torments his body with austerities in Ujjayanta, on auspicious Mount Surashtra, frequented by animals and birds, attains greatness in the vault of the sky.'[345] The sacred Dvaravati is there. The ancient god Madhusudana, who is the eternal dharma, dwells there in person. The brahmanas who are knowledgeable in the Vedas and those who are learned about the nature of the soul say that the great-souled Krishna is the eternal dharma. It is said that Govinda is supremely pure among all purifiers, most sacred among all things sacred and most auspicious among all things auspicious. Pundarikaksha, the eternal god of the gods in the three worlds, Hari whose soul cannot be contemplated and Madhusudana dwells there."'[346]

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'Dhoumya said, "I will now recount for you the sacred and purifying places that lie to the west, in Avanti. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is the sacred river Narmada that flows in a western direction. It has *priyangus*[347] and groves of mangoes and groves of cane. The sage Vishrava's holy and famous habitation is there. The lord of riches, Kubera, who has a man as a mount, was born there.[348] There is a sacred and auspicious peak there, by the name of Vaiduryashikhara.[349] It abounds in green trees and there are divine flowers and fruit. O king! On the top of the peak there is the lake of a sage, with blooming lotuses and frequented by gods and gandharvas. O great king! Many wonders are to be seen on that mountain. That sacred and celestial place is always like heaven itself and is frequented by the devarshis. O destroyer of enemy cities! The rajarshi Vishvamitra's river is there and that sacred river known as Para has many lakes and holy tirthas. Nahusha's son Yayati fell on its banks, in the midst of righteous ones.[350] Though he fell, he again obtained the eternal words characterized by dharma. O son! There is also a sacred lake and Mount Mainaka. There is also Mount Asita, with many roots and fruit. O Yudhishthira! O Pandava! Kakshasena's sacred hermitage is there and also Chyavana's hermitage, famous everywhere. O lord! With a few austerities, men can obtain success there. O great king! There is also Jambumarga, the hermitage of rishis who have controlled their souls. O foremost among those who have pacified themselves! It is frequented by animals and birds. O king! O lord of the earth! There is Ketumala, which is most sacred and is always crowded by ascetics and Medhya and Gangaranya. There is the famous and sacred forest of Saindhava, frequented by brahmanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is the grandfather's[351] holy lake, by the name of Pushkara. This is the beloved hermitage of *vaikhanasas*,[352] siddhas and rishis. O best of the Kuru lineage! O supreme among those who have performed good deeds! Prajapati himself chanted this verse in praise of Pushkara. 'If a wise person desires to go to Pushkara even in his mind, all his sins are destroyed and he finds delight in the vault of the sky.'"'[353]

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'Dhoumya said, "O tiger among kings! I will now describe to you the sacred spots and purifying places in the northern direction. O Pandava! The sacred Sarasvati flows towards the ocean, with many pools[354] and adorned with groves. There is the immensely swift Yamuna. There is also the sacred and auspicious tirtha Plakshavatarana. After undertaking a sacrifice to Sarasvati, brahmanas performed their ablutions there. O unblemished one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is the sacred, famous, divine and auspicious Agnishira. Sahadeva sacrificed there, after throwing the sacrificial peg.[355] O Yudhishthira! It is because of this reason that Indra chanted a verse, which is still prevalent in the world and is sung by brahmanas. 'The fires that Sahadeva lit along the Yamuna were one crore[356] and the gifts were hundreds of thousands.' It was there that King Bharata, the immensely famous emperor, performed thirty-five horse sacrifices. O son! We have heard that Sarakasta, who satisfied the wishes of brahmanas in ancient times, has an extremely holy and famous hermitage there. O Partha! O great king! The river Sarasvati is always worshipped by those who are virtuous. In ancient times, the Valakhilya rishis performed sacrifices there. O Yudhishthira! The most sacred and famous Drishadvati is there. O lord of men! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The immensely sacred Vaivarnya and Varna, learned in the Vedas, learned in the rites of the Vedas and wise in the knowledge that is in the Vedas, always performed many sacred sacrifices there.

'"In ancient times, many gods gathered in Vishakhayupa, with Indra and Varuna, and performed austerities, so that the spot became extremely sacred. There is also holy and lovely Palashaka, where the great rishi Lord Jamadagni, immensely fortunate and immensely famous, performed a sacrifice. All the best of rivers came in person to meet the supreme rishi, each bringing its own waters, and stood around in servitude. O great king! Vishvavasu himself went there and on witnessing the valour of that great-souled and brave one, chanted this shloka. 'When the great-souled Jamadagni sacrificed to the gods, all the rivers arrived and worshipped him with honey.' O Yudhishthira! The place where the supreme peak of the mountain was swiftly splintered by the Ganga in Gangadvara is made beautiful by gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas and apsaras. It is the habitation of *kiratas*[357] and kinnaras. O king! This famous and sacred place is frequented by masses of brahmarshis. O Kouravya! Sanatkumara and sacred Kanakhala are there and the mountain named Puru, where Pururava was born. Bhrigu performed his austerities there, visited by masses of maharshis. O great king! That hermitage on the great mountain has become famous by the name of Bhrigutunga.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! The lord Vishnu Narayana is eternal and supreme among beings and is all that is, all that was and all that will be. His glorious, holy and extensive hermitage Badari is there, famous and renowned in the three worlds as a sacred place. Ganga, which carries warm waters, is different along Badari. O king! It carries cool waters laced with gold. The rishis and the gods always come and show their obeisance to the lord god Narayana, immensely fortunate and immensely energetic. O Partha! Where the supreme-souled eternal god Narayana dwells, the entire universe and all its tirthas are also there. He is sanctity. He is the supreme brahman. He is the tirtha. He is the hermitage of austerities. The devarshis, the siddhas and all the other ascetics also dwell there. Madhusudana is the original god, he is the great yogi. You should have no doubt that the place where he dwells is the most holy among all that is holy. O king! O lord of the earth! These are the sacred spots on the earth. O best of men! I have recounted the tirthas and purifying places. The Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Adityas, the Maruts, the Ashvins, and the great-souled rishis who know about the nature of the brahman, frequent these places. O Kounteya! If you go to these places with the bulls among the brahmanas and your immensely fortunate brothers, you will discard all anxiety."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Kourava lineage! While Dhoumya was speaking thus, the great and immensely energetic rishi Lomasha arrived. The king, who was the eldest of the Pandavas, his retinue and the brahmanas arose for the immensely fortunate one, just as the immortals arise in heaven for Shakra. Having worshipped him in accordance with what is prescribed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira asked him the reason for his arrival and the reason for his travels.

'Thus asked by Pandu's son, the great-souled one was pleased and replied in soft words, delighting the Pandava. "O Kounteya! While I was travelling all the worlds according to my wishes, I went to Shakra's residence and saw the lord of the gods there. I also saw your brave brother Savyasachi and was extremely astonished to see him share half of Shakra's throne. O tiger among men! On my seeing Partha seated in that fashion, the king of the gods told me there, 'Go to Pandu's sons.' Thus addressed, I have swiftly come to see you, with your younger brothers. I have come because of the words of Puruhuta[358] and the great-souled Partha. O son! O descendant of the Pandava lineage! I will tell you that which will bring you great delight. O king! Listen to my words, with your brothers and with Krishna. O bull among the Pandava lineage! On your words, the mighty-armed one went out for weapons. Partha has obtained from Rudra a great and unrivalled weapon. It is known as Brahmashira and Rudra obtained it after great austerities. That terrible weapon arose with the ambrosia[359] and Savyasachi has now obtained it, together with the mantras for withdrawing, repulsing and releasing it. O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The infinitely powerful Partha has obtained other divine weapons too—like *vajra* and *danda*—from Yama, Kubera, Varuna and Indra. He has learnt from Vishvavasu's son[360] singing, dancing, the chanting of *samas* and the playing of musical instruments, as is prescribed, according to the rules and according to the norms for learning. Thus Kounteya has become skilled in weapons and has learnt *gandharva veda.*[361] Bibhatsu, younger to your younger brother,[362] lives happily there. O Yudhishthira! I will now tell you the import of what the best of the gods told me for your sake. Listen to me. 'There is no doubt that you will go the world of men. O supreme among brahmanas. Repeat these words of mine to Yudhishthira.[363] "Your younger brother Arjuna will swiftly return, after obtaining weapons, but after accomplishing a great task for the gods, which the gods themselves are incapable of. Together with your brothers, devote yourself to austerities. Austerities are supreme and there is nothing greater than austerities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I know Karna exactly. In battle, he is not worth a sixteenth part of Partha. O destroyer of enemies! I will dispel the fear that exists in your mind about him[364] when Savyasachi has returned. O brave one! You have a desire in your mind towards visiting the tirthas. There is no doubt that Lomasha will tell you everything about this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whatever the maharshi tells you about the fruits of austerities and tirthas should be accepted by you as the bringer of welfare. It should not be otherwise.”’”’[365]

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‘Lomasha said, “O Yudhishthira! Now listen to what Dhananjaya has said. ‘O one rich in austerities![366] Make my brother Yudhishthira devote himself to the prosperity dharma brings. You know about the supreme dharma and about austerities. You also know about the eternal dharma that brings prosperity to kings. You also know about other supreme things through which men are purified. Therefore, bestow on the Pandava the merits that come through tirthas. Act with your entire mind in a way such that the king visits tirthas and gives away cattle there.’ This is what Vijaya[367] told me. ‘Protected by you, let him go to all the tirthas. You should protect him from rakshasas in difficult and uneven terrain. O supreme among brahmanas! Just as Dadhicha protected Indra of the gods and Angiras the sun,[368] protect the Kounteyas from rakshasas. There are many evil rakshasas who are the equal of mountains. If you protect the Kounteyas, they will not be able to attack them.’ On Indra’s word and appointed by Arjuna, I will travel with you and protect you from fear. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I have visited the tirthas twice earlier. With you, I will visit them for the third time. O Yudhishthira! O great king! Manu and other rajarshis, the performers of good deeds, have visited the tirthas, the dispellers of all fear. O Kouravya! Liars, those whose souls are not controlled, ignorant ones and the performers of evil acts do not bathe in tirthas, nor do men whose minds are crooked. But your mind has always been devoted to dharma. You are always learned in dharma, you are devoted to the truth. There is no doubt that you will be freed from all that is evil. O Kounteya! O Pandava! You will become like King Bhagiratha, like King Gaya and like Yayati.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “I am so overcome with delight that I cannot find words to answer. There is no one greater than one whom the king of gods remembers. Who can be greater than one who has your company, whose brother is Dhananjaya and who is remembered by Vasava? O lord! You have spoken to me about visiting the tirthas. I had already made up my mind, after Dhoumya’s words. O brahmana! Whenever you make up your mind about visiting the tirthas, it is my certain resolution that I will also go to the tirthas.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Lomasha then spoke to the Pandava, who had already made up his mind. “O great king! Travel light. If you travel light, it will be easier to go.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Let the brahmanas and ascetics who live on alms return, and the citizens who have followed me out of loyalty for their king. Let them go to the great king Dhritarashtra. In due time, he will give them their due allowances, those that they have been used to. If that lord of men does not give it, out of affection for us and to ensure our welfare, Panchala[369] will give it.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Burdened with great grief, the citizens left for the city of the elephant,[370] as did the brahmanas and the ascetics. Out of love for Dharmaraja, the king who was Ambika’s son[371] received them and gave them riches in the prescribed way. The king who was Kunti’s son lived happily in Kamyaka for three nights, with Lomasha and a few brahmanas.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! On seeing that Kounteya was about to leave, the brahmanas who still resided in the forest went to him and spoke to him. “O king! You are going to the sacred tirthas with your brothers and with the great-souled devarshi Lomasha. O great king! O

Pandava! O Kourava! Please take us with you. Without you, we will never be able to visit them. O lord of men! They are uneven and difficult of access and are frequented by predatory beasts. Men in small groups cannot go to those tirthas. Your brothers are brave and are always skilled in the use of bows. Under the protection of you valiant ones, we will be able to go there. O protector of the earth! O lord of the earth! Through your favours, we will also obtain the auspicious fruits of tirthas and vows. O king! Protected by your prowess, we will become pure by bathing in those tirthas and cleansed of sin by visiting those tirthas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By bathing in those tirthas, you will also obtain the rare worlds obtained by King Kartavirya, rajarshi Ashtaka, Lomapada and the brave king and emperor, Bharata. O lord of the earth! We wish to go with you and see Prabhasa and the other tirthas, mountains like Mahendra, rivers like Ganga and giant trees like Plaksha. O lord of men! If you have any love for brahmanas, then swiftly do what we are asking you to. This will bring about your welfare. O mighty-armed one! The tirthas are infested by rakshasas, who always bring impediments in the way of austerities. Protect us from them. O lord of men! Visit the tirthas that have been described by Dhoumya, the wise Narada and the great ascetic devarshi Lomasha. Visit them all in the prescribed way. Protected by Lomasha and accompanied by us, be cleansed of all sin.” Having been thus worshipped by them, his eyes filled with tears of joy.

‘The bull among the Pandavas was surrounded by Bhimasena and his other brothers. He told all the rishis, “So shall it be.” With Lomasha’s permission and that of the priest Dhoumya’s, the best of the Pandavas, self-controlled, made up his mind to leave, with his brothers and with Droupadi, unblemished of form. At that time, the immensely fortunate Vyasa, Narada and Parvata, all of them extremely intelligent, appeared before the Pandava in Kamyaka, desirious of seeing him. King Yudhishthira worshipped them in accordance with the proper rites. When they had been worshipped, the immensely fortunate ones spoke to Yudhishthira. “O Yudhishthira! O twins! O Bhima! Banish all that is evil from your minds. Be clean and pure and go to the tirthas. The brahmanas have said that control of the body is the vow for humans. The brahmanas say that purification of the mind and the intelligence is the vow for gods. O lord of men! A mind that is clean is enough for brave ones. Therefore, bear friendship in your minds and purified, go to the tirthas. Use your mental powers to purify and control your bodies through vows. Resort to the vows of the gods and you will obtain the fruits that have been recounted.” The Pandavas and Krishna promised that it would be this way. Their journey was blessed by all the sages, divine and human. O Indra among kings! They then touched Lomasha’s feet and those of Dvaipayana, Narada and devarshi Parvata. Accompanied by Dhoumya and other denizens of the forest, the brave ones departed when the full moon night of Margashirsha[372] was over and Pushya[373] was in the ascendant. They were attired in tough bark and deerskin. Their hair was matted. Clad in impenetrable armour, they set out to visit the tirthas. They were accompanied by Indrasena and the other servants and had fourteen chariots. There were other attendants in charge of the food. O Janamejaya! With weapons, with swords tied and with quivers and arrows, the brave Pandavas set out, their faces towards the east.’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “O supreme among devarshis! I do not think myself to be without qualities. But yet I am tormented by miseries, like no other king. O Lomasha! I think that my enemies do not possess any qualities. Nor do they follow dharma. Why do they then prosper in this world?”

‘Lomasha replied, “O king! O Partha! You should never grieve that those who do not follow dharma achieve prosperity because they do not follow dharma. A man may be seen to prosper, attain fortune and triumph over his enemies, though he does not follow dharma, but will be destroyed, down to his roots. O lord of the earth! I have seen many daityas and danavas prosper, though they do not follow dharma. But decay finally overcomes them. O lord! I have witnessed all this earlier, in the era of the gods. The gods found delight in dharma, but the asuras gave up dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods visited the tirthas, but the asuras did not. As a result of not following dharma, they were first filled with insolence. Insolence gave birth to vanity and vanity gave birth to anger. Anger resulted in a lack of shame and shamelessness destroyed their conduct. Because of their shamelessness, because of their lack of modesty, because of their evil conduct and because of their worthless vows, forgiveness, prosperity and dharma soon abandoned them. O king! Prosperity went to the gods and ill fortune went to the asuras. When ill fortune overwhelmed them, they lost their senses because of insolence. Dissension possessed the daityas and the danavas. O Kounteya! Overwhelmed by ill fortune and dissension and overtaken by insolence, the danavas lost all their rites and intelligence. Overwhelmed by insolence, they soon confronted destruction. Overcome by infamy, the daityas were soon completely destroyed. But the gods went to oceans, rivers and lakes. They followed dharma and visited other purifying places. O Pandava! They observed austerities and sacrifices and gave gifts and benedictions. They discarded all sin and ensured their welfare. Thus, they were generous and always observed rites. They went to the tirthas. Therefore, they obtained supreme prosperity. O Indra among kings! Like that, you will also bathe in the tirthas with your younger brothers. You will also regain prosperity. That is the eternal path. O lord of the earth! Just as King Nriga, Shibi and Oushinara, Bhagiratha, Vasumana, Gaya, Puru and Pururava were purified, through always observing austerities, touching water and visiting tirthas and seeing great-souled ones, you will also obtain fame and pure riches. O Indra among kings! Like that, you will also obtain great prosperity. Like Ikshvaku with his sons, subjects and relatives, like Muchukunda, Mandhata and King Marutta obtained pure fame, like the gods with their power of austerities, like the devarshis, you will also obtain it. But the sons of Dhritarashtra are enslaved by insolence and delusion. There is no doubt that they will soon be destroyed like the daityas.'"

Vaishampayana said, ‘O protector of the earth! Then those heroes, with the others,[374] lived here and there, and eventually arrived at the Naimisha forest. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas performed their ablutions at the sacred tirtha of Gomati and donated cattle and riches. The Kouravas repeatedly satisfied the gods, the ancestors and the brahmanas at Kanya tirtha, Ashva tirtha[375] and Gava tirtha.[376] O lord of the earth! After staying in Valakoti on Mount Vrishaprastha, all the Pandavas bathed in Bahuda. O lord of the earth! They offered sacrifices to the gods in Prayaga, the sacrificial ground of the gods. Devoted to the truth, they cleaned their bodies and performed supreme austerities at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. Having been cleansed of sin, those great-souled ones gave a lot of riches to brahmanas. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with the brahmanas, those sons of Pandu then went to Prajapati’s[377] altar, frequented by ascetics. The brave ones lived there, performing supreme austerities. They always satisfied the brahmanas with offerings obtained from the forest. They then went to Mahidhara, worshipped by rajarshi Gaya, unrivalled in radiance, learned in dharma and the performer of pure deeds. The lake Gayashira is there and the sacred Mahanadi. The extremely sacred and supreme Brahmasara[378] is there, frequented by rishis. There the illustrious Agastya went to Vaivasvata.[379] O king! That is where eternal Dharma himself lived. O lord of the earth! All the rivers originate from there. That is where Mahadeva, the wielder of the *pinaka*, is always present.[380] The great Akshayavata is there and the Pandavas performed *chaturmasya*[381] and the great sacrifice of the rishis there. Hundreds of brahmanas, rich in austerities, came there and performed the chaturmasya sacrifice in accordance with the rites laid down by the rishis. The learned brahmanas, learned in the Vedas and always devoted to austerities, talked about sacred accounts, while they were seated in the sacrificial ground of those great-souled ones.

‘O king! There was a brahmana named Shamatha. He was learned and immersed in vows and celibate. He spoke about Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage![382] Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas, is supreme among rajarshis. Listen to me as I recount his virtuous deeds. O king! His sacrifice had a lot of food and a lot of stipends. There were mountains of food, in hundreds and thousands. There were several hundred rivers of ghee and curd. There were thousands of flows of rich condiments. O king! Day after day, they were given to those who asked for them. The brahmanas ate special food that was cooked well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the time came for distributing gifts, the sound of the brahman rose up to heaven. Nothing could be heard but for the sound of the brahman. O king! The sacred sound travelled through the earth, the sky and the firmament and filled them and it was extraordinary. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Satisfied with the pure food and drink, men sung a verse that radiated in every region. ‘Who is there among beings who still wishes to eat at Gaya’s sacrifice? There are still twenty-five mountains of food left. No men earlier, nor men hereafter, will do what the immensely radiant rajarshi Gaya did at this sacrifice. The gods have been extremely satisfied by the offerings tendered by Gaya. They will never be able to accept anything offered by others.’ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Many such verses were sung at the sacrifice of the great-souled one, near the banks of the lake.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then King Kounteya, the giver of many gifts, departed. He went to Agastya’s hermitage and lived in Durjaya. The king asked Lomasha, supreme among eloquent ones, “Why was Vatapi immolated by Agastya here? What was the power of that daitya, killer of humans? What excited the anger of that great-souled one?”

‘Lomasha replied, “O descendant of the Kourava lineage! There was once a daitya named Ilvala. In earlier times, he lived in the city of Manimati and Vatapi was his younger brother. That son of Diti once spoke to a brahmana who had the power of austerities. 'O illustrious one! Grant me a son who is Indra's equal.' Since the brahmana did not give him a son who was Vasava's equal, the asura became extremely angry with the brahmana. If he[383] summoned with his words anyone who had gone to Vaivasvata's[384] world, that person would regain his body and be seen to be alive. He changed the asura Vatapi and cooked him well. He fed this to the brahmana and summoned him[385] back. O lord of the earth! O king! The great asura Vatapi smilingly ripped the brahmana's side apart and emerged. O king! He thus fed brahmana*s* again and again. The evil-minded daitya Ilvala caused violence to them.

'"At that time, the illustrious Agastya saw his ancestors hanging in a cave, with their faces downwards. He asked them, 'Why are you hanging upside down like this?' The ones learned in the nature of the brahman replied, 'For the sake of offspring.' They told him, 'We are your ancestors. We have reached this cave and are hanging upside down for the sake of offspring. O Agastya! If you give birth to excellent offspring for our sake, we will be freed from this hell. O son! You will also attain the supreme objective.' The energetic one, always devoted to the dharma of truth, told them, 'O forefathers! I will do what you desire. Remove the fever from your minds.' Then the illustrious rishi began to think about offspring. He could not see a fit enough lady in whom he could procreate himself.[386] He then chose those limbs from different beings that are regarded as unsurpassed. Collecting those limbs, he created a supreme woman. Having created her for himself, the immensely ascetic sage gave her to the king of Vidarbha, who was desirous of offspring.[387] The immensely fortunate one was born there, as radiant as lightning. She grew and her face was beautiful, her body was handsome. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as she was born, on seeing her, the king of Vidarbha was delighted and announced this to the brahmanas. O lord of the earth! All those brahmanas blessed her. The brahmanas gave her the name of Lopamudra. O great king! She grew up and her beauty was supreme. She swiftly grew, like a lotus in the water, or the auspicious crest of a fire. O Indra among kings! When she attained her youth, one hundred maidens adorned with ornaments and one hundred female servants served the beautiful one, attending to her instructions. O lord! Surrounded by the one hundred female servants and in the midst of the one hundred maidens, that energetic maiden blazed like Rohini[388] in the sky. When she attained her youth, though she was good in conduct and manners, no man asked for her hand, out of fear for the great-souled one.[389] The truthful maiden surpassed the apsaras in her beauty. She satisfied her father and her relatives with her good conduct. On seeing that Vidarbha's daughter was accomplished and had attained her youth, the father began to think in his mind, 'To whom shall I give my daughter?'"'

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'Lomasha said, "When Agastya thought that she had become capable of leading a householder's life, he went to Vidarbha, lord of the earth and said, 'O king! I have decided to be a householder for the sake of a son. O lord of the earth! I am asking for Lopamudra. Bestow her on me.' Having been thus addressed by the sage, the lord of the earth lost his senses. He was incapable of refusing and he was unwilling to give. The lord of the earth went to his wife and told her, 'The maharshi is full of valour. If angered, the flames of his curse will consume us.' At that time, on seeing the lord of the earth and his wife thus miserable, Lopamudra went to them and spoke these words. 'O lord of the earth! You should not be miserable on my account. O father! Bestow me on Agastya and save yourself.' O lord of the earth! On hearing his daughter's words, the king bestowed Lopamudra, in accordance with the appropriate rites, on the great-souled Agastya.

'"Having obtained Lopamudra as his wife, Agastya told her, 'Throw away those expensive garments and ornaments.' The long-eyed one's thighs were like those of Rambha.[390] The garments were beautiful to see, expensive and fine. But at that, she discarded them. She donned bark and skins and rags. The long-eyed one became an equal in her vows. On going to Gangadvara, together with the wife who was devoted to him, the illustrious one, supreme among rishis, undertook severe austerities. She then served her husband with love and respect. The illustrious Agastya also exhibited great affection towards his wife. O lord of the earth! Thus, a lot of time passed. One day, the illustrious rishi saw Lopamudra after a bath. She was radiant in her austerities. He was pleased with her servitude, her purity and her self-control. He was pleased with her loveliness and her beauty and summoned her for intercourse.

'"Then the beautiful one joined her hands in salutation, and as if in shame, spoke these words of love to the illustrious one. 'There is no doubt that a husband marries a wife for the sake of offspring. O rishi! But you should act towards me in accordance with the love I bear towards you. O brahmana! You should come to me on a bed like the bed in my father's house, in his palace. I desire that you should be garlanded and adorned in ornaments. I wish to be adorned in divine ornaments that please me.' Agastya replied, 'O Lopamudra! O one with the beautiful waist! O fortunate one! I do not possess riches that are equal to those of your father.' Lopamudra said, 'O great lord! In an instant, through your austerities, you can bring all the riches that can be found in the world of the living.' Agastya replied, 'What you say is true. But that will fritter away my austerities. Ask me to do that which will not waste my austerities.' Lopamudra said, 'O one rich in austerities! Only a little bit of my season is left. I do not wish to come to you in any other way. O one rich in austerities! I do not wish your dharma to be destroyed in any way. You should therefore do what I desire, while taking care of that.' Agastya replied, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! Your mind has decided in accordance with your desire. I will go. Stay here according to your wishes.'"'

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'Lomasha said, "O Kouravya! Knowing that King Shrutarvana had riches greater than those of any other king, Agastya went to him to beg for riches. Having heard of the arrival of the one who had been born in a pot,[391] the king went out with his advisers to the borders of his kingdom, to receive him with great respect. After having offered gifts to the guest in the prescribed manner, the king joined his hands in salutation and respectfully asked him about the reason for his arrival. Agastya said, ‘O lord of the earth! Know that I have come to you for riches. According to your capacity, give me a share, without taking away from others.’ Giving him a complete account of his income and expenditure, the king replied, ‘Now that you know, take from me whatever riches you desire.’ The brahmana looked on both sides impartially. On seeing that the income was equal to the expenditure, he thought that if he took anything away, he would cause oppression to beings.

‘“Therefore, taking Shrutarvana with him, he went to Vadhryashva. He received them at the borders of his kingdom, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Vadhryashva offered them the gifts due to guests and water for washing the feet, and with their permission, asked them the reason for their arrival. Agastya said, ‘O lord of the earth! Know that we have come to you with a desire for riches. According to your capacity, give us a share, without taking away from others.’ Then the king gave them a complete account of his income and expenditure and said, ‘Now that you know, take whatever is left.’ The brahmana looked on both sides impartially. On seeing that the income was equal to the expenditure, he thought that if he took anything away, he would cause oppression to beings. Then the three of them—Agastya, Shrutarvana and King Vadhryashva—went to Purukutsa’s son Trasadasyu, the possessor of great riches. O great king! On hearing of their arrival, Trasadasyu received them, together with his mounts, at the borders of his kingdom, in the prescribed manner. The supreme of kings from the Ikshvaku lineage showed them his respects in the appropriate fashion. When they were comfortable, he asked them the reason for their arrival. Agastya said, ‘O lord of the earth! Know that we have come to you with a desire for riches. According to your capacity, give us a share, without taking away from others.’ The king gave them a complete account of his income and expenditure and said, ‘Now that you know, take whatever is left.’

The brahmana looked on both sides impartially. On seeing that the income was equal to the expenditure, he thought that if he took anything away, he would cause oppression to beings. O great king! Then all those kings looked at one another. Together, they spoke to the great sage, ‘O brahmana! There is a rich danava named Ilvala on earth. Let us all go to him now and ask for riches.’ O king! The thought of asking riches from Ilvala seemed to them to be a proper one. So they went to Ilvala together.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “Having heard that the maharshi had arrived with the kings at the borders of his kingdom, Ilvala went out with his advisers, to show them his respects. O Kouravya! The best of asuras offered them his hospitality. He then cooked his brother Vatapi well. On seeing that the great asura Vatapi had been cooked as meat, all the rajarshis were miserable and lost their senses. But Agastya, supreme among rishis, told the rajarshis, ‘You should not act out of despondence. I will eat up the great asura.’ Then the great rishi seated himself on the best seat. Ilvala, king of the daityas, smilingly served him. Agastya then ate up all of Vatapi. When the eating was over, the asura Ilvala summoned him.[392] O son! But the great-souled Agastya only belched.[393] On seeing that the great asura had been digested, Ilvala was distressed. He joined his hands in salutation, and together with his advisers, asked, ‘Why have you come? Tell me what I can do for you.’ At that, Agastya smiled and replied, ‘O asura! We know your powers and that you are the lord of all riches. These ones are not that rich and my need for riches is great. Give us a share according to your capacity, but without taking away from others.’ At that, Ilvala bowed in obeisance before the rishi and told him, ‘If you know what I intend to give you, I will give you those riches.’ Agastya replied, ‘O asura! You intend to give the kings ten thousand cows each. O great asura! You wish to give them that much of gold. You wish to give me twice that much and a golden chariot. O great asura! You wish to give me two steeds with the speed of thought. Go and ask and you will find that the chariot is made of gold.' O Kounteya! On asking, it was found that the chariot was indeed made of gold. Miserably, the daitya gave them a lot of riches. The horses Vivaja and Suvaja were yoked to the chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the twinkling of an eye, all those riches were carried to Agastya's hermitage.

'"Agastya gave the rajarshis permission to leave. Then the sage did all that Lopamudra had desired. Lopamudra said, 'O illustrious one! You have done everything that I had desired. Now beget on me a son who is supreme in valour.' Agastya replied, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am pleased with your conduct. Listen as I tell you what I am thinking about the offspring. You can have a thousand sons, or a hundred equal to ten each, or ten equal to a hundred each, or one equal to a thousand.' Lopamudra said, 'O one rich in austerities! Let me have one son who is equal to one thousand. One learned and virtuous son is superior to many who are not righteous.' The sage promised that it would be that way. At the right time, he faithfully united with his wife, who was his equal in conduct and devotion. When the embryo had been conceived, he went away to the forest. When he had left for the forest, the embryo developed for seven autumns. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the seventh year had passed, an immensely wise son was born. He blazed in his powers and his name was Dridhasyu. That great and energetic rishi became that rishi's[394] son. The immensely famous one issued forth, as if reciting the Vedas and the Upanishads and their branches. Even as a child, that energetic one used to carry loads of kindling in his father's house and thus came to have the name of Idhmavaha.[395] On seeing him thus endowed, the sage was delighted. O king! Thus did the ancestors obtain the worlds they desired. This is Agastya's famous hermitage, adorned everywhere with flowers. This is where Vatapi of Prahrada's lineage was destroyed by Agastya. O king! His hermitage is beautiful and possesses all the qualities. You should bathe as you wish in this sacred Bhagirathi."'

‘Yudhishthira said, “O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear about that wise maharshi. Tell me in detail about Agastya’s deeds.”

‘Lomasha replied, “O king! O great king! Then listen to his divine, extraordinary and superhuman account, Agastya’s powers and his infinite soul. In Krita yuga,[396] there were some terrible danavas, invincible in battle. There were masses of them, famous as the Kaleyas, and they were extremely terrible. Arming themselves with many upraised weapons, they placed themselves under Vritra. They pursued the gods, led by the great Indra, everywhere. In ancient times, the thirty gods decided to act so that Vritra might be killed. Placing Purandara[397] at the forefront, they approached Brahma. On seeing all of them, their hands joined in salutation, Parameshthi[398] said, ‘O gods! I know the task that all of you wish to undertake. I will tell you the means whereby you can ensure Vritra’s killing. There is a famous, great and wise rishi by the name of Dadhicha. Together, go to him and ask him for a boon. The one with dharma in his soul and virtue in his mind will happily grant it to you. If you wish for victory, all of you must tell him these words. “For the welfare of the three worlds, give us your bones.” He will give up his body and give his bones to you. With those bones, fashion the firm and greatly terrible vajra. It will be large, capable of killing enemies. It will be sharp and will have six sides. It will make a terrible sound. With that vajra, Shatakratu will kill Vritra. I have told you everything. Do this without delay.’ Having been thus addressed, the gods took their leave of the grandfather.

‘“With Narayana at the forefront, they went to Dadhicha’s hermitage. It was on the other bank of the Sarasvati and covered with many trees and creepers. It resounded with the sound of bees, as if they were chanting sama hymns. This mixed with the sound of male cuckoos and was alive with the noise of *chakora*[399] birds. Buffaloes, boars, swamp deer and yaks roamed everywhere, without the fear of tigers. Male elephants, with juices flowing down their burst temples, sported with female ones in the ponds and thundered in every direction. The place echoed with the giant roars of lions and tigers. There were others that were hidden in caves and caverns. The place was extremely beautifully adorned with these and was like heaven. It was to this hermitage of Dadhicha's that the thirty gods went.

'"They saw Dadhicha there, as radiant as the sun. His beauty was resplendent, like the grandfather with Lakshmi. O king! The gods bowed in obeisance at his feet and saluted him. Then all of them asked for the boon, as Parameshthi had asked them to. At this, Dadhicha was extremely delighted. He addressed the supreme gods and said, 'O gods! I will act today for your welfare. For your sake, I will myself give up my body.' Having spoken thus, that best of men, in control of his breath of life, gave up his life. As they had been instructed, the gods collected the bones of the dead one. Delighted at the prospect of victory, the gods went to Tvashtar[400] and spoke to him. On hearing their words, Tvashtar was happy and began to work, carefully and diligently. He created the vajra, extremely terrible in appearance. Having constructed it, he happily told Shakra, 'O god! This vajra, the best of weapons, will today reduce to ashes the terrible enemies of the gods. Therefore, kill the enemy and having done that, happily live in heaven with your companions.' Having been thus addressed by Tvashtar, Purandara cheerfully and respectfully accepted the vajra."'

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'Lomasha said, "Then the wielder of the vajra, protected by the strength of the gods, attacked Vritra, who had then covered heaven and earth.[401] He was protected on all sides by the gigantic Kalakeyas. With their upraised weapons, they looked like mountains with peaks. O best of the Bharata lineage! In an instant, a great battle, terrorising the worlds, began between the gods and the danavas. Upraised swords clashed, wielded by the arms of warriors and directed at each other's bodies, creating a great sound. O lord of the earth! Heads descended from the sky onto the ground and looked like palm fruit loosened from their stalks. Clad in golden armour and armed with maces, the Kaleyas[402] rushed at the thirty gods, like mountains on fire. Unable to withstand the force of this onslaught, the thirty gods broke their ranks and fled in fear. On seeing them fly in fear and Vritra increasing in power, the thousand-eyed Purandara was greatly overcome by fear. On seeing Shakra afflicted with fear, the eternal Vishnu increased his strength by giving him a share of his own energy. Having seen Shakra thus protected by Vishnu, all the masses of gods and the unblemished brahmarshis gave him their own energy. Thus empowered by Vishnu, the gods and the immensely fortunate rishis, Shakra increased in strength. On knowing that the lord of the thirty gods had been strengthened, Vritra let out giant roars. The earth, the directions, the sky, heaven and all the mountains began to tremble at this roar.

'"On hearing that terrible and great roar, the great Indra was struck with extreme grief. O king! Immersed in fear, he swiftly unleashed the great vajra, so as to kill him. Struck by Shakra's vajra, the giant asura, wearing a golden garland, fell down, like the giant mountain Mandara in ancient times, when released from Vishnu's hand.[403] The supreme daitya was killed. But out of fear, Shakra fled and sought refuge in a lake.[404] In his fear, he refused to believe that his hand had released the vajra. In his fear, he refused to believe that Vritra was dead. All the gods were happy and delighted. The maharshis chanted Indra's praises. The gods assembled together and swiftly began to kill all the daityas, who were tormented at Vritra's death. They were killed by the thirty gods. In their fear, they entered the waves of the ocean and the infinite depths of the ocean, frequented by large fishes and full of gems. There they plotted and conspired about the destruction of the three worlds. Some smiled. Others were wise in suggesting courses of action, each according to his inclination. In due course of time, they arrived at the terrible decision that the first act should be to destroy all virtuous and learned ones and those who were ascetics. 'All the worlds are supported by austerities. Therefore, austerities must swiftly be destroyed. Whatever virtuous ones exist on earth, ascetics, knowledgeable in dharma and wise, their slaughter must swiftly be ensured. When they are destroyed, the world will be destroyed.' Having thus arrived at this decision of destroying the world, all of them were extremely happy. Varuna’s abode was full of jewels. They made it their citadel, among the giant waves.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “When they had sought refuge in the ocean that was Varuna’s abode, the Kaleyas began to act for the destruction of the three worlds. In their wrath, in the night, they always devoured sages and virtuous ones in hermitages and sacred places. In Vasishtha’s hermitage, the evil-souled ones devoured one hundred and eighty-eight brahmanas and nine other ascetics. On going to Chyavana’s sacred hermitage, frequented by brahmanas, they devoured one hundred sages who lived on fruit and roots. They thus acted during the night. During the day, they entered the ocean. In Bharadvaja’s hermitage, they destroyed twenty brahmacharis who lived on air and water. In this way, one after another, the danavas destroyed all the hermitages. Intoxicated by the strength of their arms and overcome by destiny, the Kaleyas chased and killed many masses of brahmanas in the night. O supreme among men! Nevertheless, though the daityas acted in this way towards hermits and ascetics, men did not know this. In the morning, the bodies of sages, emaciated from restrained diets, would be seen, lifeless on the ground. The earth was full of bodies without flesh, without blood, without marrow and without entrails, with masses of bones strewn like conch shells. The earth was covered with broken sacrificial pots and ladles and the remains of agnihotra sacrifices. Oppressed by the fear of the Kaleyas, the world lost all enterprise. Studying of the Vedas and the uttering of exclamations at the time of making oblations ceased. Sacrifices and rituals were destroyed.

‘“O lord of men! When men began to decay in this fashion, they were scared and in an attempt to save themselves, fled in all the directions. Some entered caves and others hid behind waterfalls. Still others were so anxious about death that they lost their lives out of fear. There were those who were brave and great archers. In great pride and with great care, they tried to hunt down the danavas. But they could not find them, because they had sought shelter in the ocean. Failing to find them, they were destroyed because of the exhaustion. O lord of men! The world neared destruction and all sacrifices and rituals were destroyed. The thirty gods were extremely distressed. With the great Indra, they assembled and consulted each other out of fear. They worshipped the unvanquished Vaikuntha[405] Narayana and sought refuge with him. Then the assembled gods spoke to Madhusudana, 'O lord! You are the creator, the sustainer and the protector. You are the world. You are the creator of everything, with limbs and without limbs.[406] O lotus-eyed one! In earlier times, when the earth was destroyed, for the welfare of the world, you raised it up, in the form of a boar.[407] O supreme among beings! In ancient times, you destroyed the extremely valorous and ancient daitya Hiranyakashipu in the form of *narasimha*.[408] The great asura Bali was incapable of being killed by all beings. In the form of a dwarf, you expelled him from the three worlds.[409] The asura who was a great archer was famous by the name of Jambha.[410] He was cruel and the obstructor of sacrifices and you ensured his destruction. Such are your deeds and they are too many to count. O Madhusudana! We are scared and frightened and you are our refuge. O god! O lord of the gods! It is for this reason and for the welfare of the world that we are bringing this to your notice. Protect the worlds, the gods and Shakra from this great fear.'"'

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'"The gods said, 'All the four types of beings[411] prosper because of these favours. Having prospered, they prosper the denizens of heaven through oblations.[412] Thus the different worlds prosper, each depending on the other. Through your favours, they are free from anxiety and are protected. Now this supreme fear has overtaken the worlds. We do not know who kills the brahmanas in the night. If the brahmanas decay, the earth will also decay. If the earth decays, heaven will also decay. O mighty-armed one! O lord of the universe! Through your favours, protect all the worlds, so that they do not advance towards their destruction.’

‘“Vishnu replied, ‘O gods! I know everything about the reasons behind the decay of beings. I shall tell you everything. Listen and be free of your fever. There is a famous class of extremely terrible Kaleyas. Having sought refuge with Vritra, they oppressed the entire universe. On seeing Vritra killed by the wise one with the thousand eyes,[413] they have entered Varuna’s abode, so as to save their lives. Having entered the terrible ocean, infested with crocodiles and sharks, they kill the sages by night, with the intention of destroying the worlds. But they cannot be destroyed, since they have sought refuge in the ocean. You should therefore set your minds on destroying the ocean. But except Agastya, who is capable of drying up the ocean?’”

‘Lomasha said, “On hearing Vishnu’s words about drying up the ocean, the gods took Parameshthi’s[414] leave and went to Agastya’s hermitage. There they saw Varuna’s great-souled son blazing in his energy. He was being worshipped by the rishis, just as the grandfather is by the gods. Going to the great-souled and undecaying son of Mitra and Varuna, seated in his hermitage among the mass of his austere deeds, the gods recited his praises. The gods said, ‘In ancient times, you were the refuge of the worlds when they were oppressed by Nahusha. For the welfare of the worlds, this thorn of the worlds was removed as the lord of the gods.[415] Vindhya, supreme among mountains, was angry with the sun and suddenly began to increase its height. But because it could not ignore your instructions, the mountain ceased to grow. When world was covered with darkness, all the subjects were oppressed because of their fear of death. But having obtained you as a protector, they attained the supreme objective. O illustrious one! Whenever we have been scared and frightened, you have always been our refuge. Therefore, we distressed ones are asking you for a boon. You are the granter of boons.’”’

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‘Yudhishthira asked, “O great sage! Why was Vindhya angered and why did he suddenly begin to grow? I wish to hear about this in great detail.”

‘Lomasha replied, “At the time of rising and at the time of setting, the sun used to circumambulate the great mountain Meru, the golden king of mountains. On seeing this, Mount Vindhya told Surya, ‘O Bhaskara![416] You always go around Meru. Circumambulate me in the same way.’ Having been thus addressed, Surya replied to the king of the mountains, ‘O mountain! I do not circumambulate him out of my own desires. He who created the universe has assigned this path for me.’ Having been thus addressed, the mountain was angered and suddenly began to increase. O scorcher of enemies! He sought to obstruct the paths of the sun and the moon. Then all the gods assembled and, with Indra, went to Vindhya, the great king of the mountains. They tried to restrain him from what he was doing, but he paid no attention to their words. Then the gods went to the sage Agastya, the ascetic who was supreme among those who followed dharma and radiant in his valour, in his hermitage. The gods told him everything. The gods said, ‘Consumed and overcome by anger, Vindhya, king of the mountains, is obstructing the paths of the sun, the moon and the nakshatras. O supreme among brahmanas! No one except you is capable of restraining him. O immensely fortunate one! Therefore, restrain him.’ On hearing the words of the gods, the brahmana went to the mountain.

‘“He went to Vindhya with his wife and told him, ‘O supreme among mountains! I wish that you should create a path for me. I have to go in a southern direction for some work. O Indra among mountains! Restrain yourself until I return from there and you can then grow as much as you wish.’ O destroyer of enemies! Having made this agreement with Vindhya, Varuna’s son went towards the southern direction and has not returned till this day. Just as you asked me to, I have told you everything about why Vindhya does not increase, because of Agastya’s powers.

‘“O king! Now listen and I will tell you how the Kaleyas were destroyed by all the gods, once they had obtained a boon from Agastya. Having heard the words of the thirty gods, Mitra and Varuna’s son asked, ‘Why have you come? What boon do you wish from me?’ Having been thus addressed, the gods spoke these words to the sage. ‘O great-souled one! O maharshi! We desire that you should act so as to drink up the great ocean. We will then be able to kill those enemies of the gods, the Kaleyas, with all their relatives.’ Having heard the words of the thirty gods, the sage said, ‘For the sake of the great happiness of the worlds, I will do what you desire.’ Having said this, the one who was rigid in his vows, went to the ocean, the lord of the rivers, with the gods and the rishis who were successful in their austerities. Men, nagas, gandharvas, yakshas and *kimpurushas*[417] followed the great-souled one, in a desire to witness the extraordinary feat. All of them went to the ocean, which was thunderous in its roar. It seemed to be dancing with the waves that leapt up at the wind. It seemed to laugh with its foam, as it dashed against the caverns. It was infested with many crocodiles and frequented by masses of diverse birds. With Agastya, the gods, the gandharvas, the great nagas and the immensely fortunate rishis approached the great ocean.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “On approaching the ocean, the illustrious rishi who was Varuna’s son told the gods and the rishis who had gathered with him, ‘For the welfare of the world, I will drink up Varuna’s abode. Swiftly make the arrangements that are appropriate.’ Having spoken these words, the undecaying son of Mitra and Varuna began to drink up the ocean in his anger, while all the worlds looked on. On seeing how the ocean was being drunk up, the immortals, together with Indra, were extremely astounded and began to worship him by chanting his praises. ‘You are the protector. You are the creator of the worlds. You ensure the welfare of the worlds. Through your grace, the universe, with all the immortals, will be saved from destruction.’ While he was worshipped by the thirty gods, the musical instruments of the gandharvas sounded in every direction. Divine blossoms were showered down on him. The great-souled one made the great ocean bereft of water.

‘“On seeing that the great ocean had been rendered waterless, the gods were extremely delighted. Grasping divine and supreme weapons, and with uplifted hearts, they began to kill those danavas. They were killed by the great-souled thirty gods, who were extremely strong and swift and roared out aloud. They were unable to withstand the force of the great-souled gods or bear that force. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Attacked by the thirty gods, the danavas let out terrible roars. Being attacked, they could put up a tumultuous fight only for an instant. They had already been burnt through the austerities of the sages who were pure in their souls. Therefore, though they tried their best, they could not prevent being destroyed by the thirty. They were adorned with golden armour, earrings and arm-guards. When they were killed, they looked extremely beautiful, like *kimshuka* flowers.[418] O supreme among men! Those among the Kaleyas who were not killed, cleft the goddess earth and sought refuge in the nether regions.

‘“On seeing the danavas killed, the thirty gratified the bull among sages with diverse praises and words. ‘O immensely fortunate one! Through your favours, the worlds have obtained great happiness. The Kaleyas, cruel in valour, have been killed through your energy. O mighty-armed one! You ensure the welfare of the worlds. Fill up the ocean again, by giving up the water that you had drunk.’ Having been thus addressed, the illustrious bull among sages replied, ‘The water has already been digested by me. Think of some other means and make your best efforts to fill up the ocean.’ Having heard the words of the maharshi, whose soul had been perfected, the assembled gods were surprised and distressed. They took each other’s leave and bowed in salutation to the bull among sages. O great king! All the subjects and brahmanas returned whence they had come. The thirty gods, together with Vishnu, went to the grandfather. They consulted again and again about filling up the ocean. All of them joined their hands in salutation and spoke about filling up the ocean.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “Then Brahma, the grandfather of the world, spoke to the assembled gods. ‘O gods! All of you depart, as you desire and as you wish. A great deal of time must pass before the ocean returns to its natural state. The great king Bhagiratha will do this because of his relatives.’”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O brahmana! O sage! How did the relatives become the cause? How was the ocean filled through Bhagiratha’s efforts? O one rich in austerities! O brahmana! I wish to hear this in detail. Tell me the supreme account of that king.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Dharmaraja, the Indra among brahmanas recounted the greatness of the great-souled Sagara.’

‘Lomasha said, “A king named Sagara was born in Ikshvaku’s lineage. He possessed beauty, character and strength and was powerful. But he did not have a son. O descendant of the Bharata linage! Having exterminated the Haihayas and the Talajanghas and having conquered other kings, he ruled over his own kingdom. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He had two wives who were proud of their beauty and their youth. O best of the Bharata lineage! One was from Vidarbha and the other from Shibi. O Indra among kings! Desirious of obtaining a son, the king performed great austerities, together with his wives, seeking refuge on Mount Kailasa. While he was engaged in great austerities and immersed in yoga, he saw the great-souled Tryaksha, the destroyer of Tripura, Shankara, Bhava, Ishana, Shulapani, Pinaki, Tryambaka, Shiva, Ugresha and Uma’s consort, the one with many forms.[419] As soon as he saw that granter of boons, the mighty-armed king, together with his wives, prostrated themselves and asked for a son. Hara was pleased and told the supreme among kings and his two wives, ‘O king! Considering the moment when you have asked me for a boon, sixty thousand brave sons who will be proud in war will be born to one of your wives. O supreme among men! One son will be born to the other wife. O king! But they will all be destroyed together. But you will have one brave descendant from the one who bears the single one.’ Having spoken these words, Rudra instantly vanished. King Sagara also returned to his residence with his wives, happy in his heart.

'"O best of men! Then his lotus-eyed wives, Vaidarbhi and Shaibya, conceived. In due time, Vaidarbhi gave birth to a gourd. Shaibya gave birth to a son who was as beautiful as the gods. The king then thought about throwing away the gourd. But he heard a voice from the sky, deep in sound. 'O king! Do not act in haste. Do not abandon your sons. Take the seeds out from the gourd. Let them be carefully preserved in a warm vessel partly filled with ghee. O king! You will then obtain sixty thousand sons. O lord of men! Mahadeva has decided that your sons will be born in this fashion. Do not make your mind act contrary to this.'"'

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'Lomasha said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words from the sky, the king, supreme among kings, respectfully acted as he had been asked to. O king! Sixty thousand sons were born to the rajarshi through Rudra's grace. They were terrible, the performers of cruel deeds and could travel around in the sky. Since they were many in number, they oppressed all the worlds, even the immortals. Addicted to fighting, they oppressed the thirty gods, the gandharvas, the rakshasas and all other beings. Slaughtered by the evil-minded sons of Sagara, together with all the gods, the worlds sought refuge with Brahma. The immensely fortunate grandfather of all the worlds told them, 'O thirty gods! With all the worlds, go back to where you came from. Within a short space of time, a great destruction of the sons of Sagara will occur. O gods! Their own great and terrible deeds will bring this on them.' O lord of men! Having been thus addressed, the gods and the worlds took the grandfather's leave and returned to where they had come from.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! Many days passed. The valorous King Sagara instated himself for a horse sacrifice. Protected by his sons, his horse roamed the earth and reached the terrible-looking and waterless ocean. Though they sought to protect it with care, it disappeared there. O son! Then Sagara's sons thought that the supreme horse had been abducted. Returing to their father, they told him that the horse had disappeared and had been abducted. He told them, ‘All of you go and search for the horse in all the directions.’ O great king! On their father’s instructions, they looked for the horse in all the directions, in places where there were no paths and everywhere, even in the bottom of the earth. Then all of Sagara’s sons assembled together, but could not find the horse or the person who had abducted the horse. They returned to their father, and joining their hands in salutation, said, ‘O king! On the king’s command, we have searched the entire earth, with its oceans, forests, islands, female rivers, male rivers, caves, mountains and wooded regions. O king! But we have not been able to find the horse, nor the person who has abducted the horse.’ Having heard their words, the king was angered and lost his senses. O king! Driven by destiny, he spoke these words to all of them. ‘O sons! Go away and do not return. Look for the horse in each direction. Do not return without the sacrificial horse.’ Accepting the command, Sagara’s sons began to search the earth once again.

‘“Then the brave ones saw a yawning hole in the earth. Sagara’s sons entered the hole and began to dig there. With spades and axes, they dug up the bed of the ocean. Being thus dug by the combined efforts of Sagara’s sons, Varuna’s abode was ripped apart on all sides and suffered extreme pain. Asuras, nagas, rakshasas and diverse other beings were killed by Sagara’s sons and screamed in pain. Hundreds and thousands of living beings were seen with severed heads, without torsos and with their thighs, bones and heads shattered. Thus, they continued to dig in the ocean, the abode of crocodiles.[420] A great deal of time passed, but the horse could still not be seen. O lord of the earth! In their anger, Sagara’s sons then dug the ocean in the north-eastern direction, until they reached the nether regions.[421] They saw the horse roaming around on the surface of the ground there and the great-souled Kapila, unsurpassed in a mass of energy and radiant in austerities, like a flaming fire.”’

‘Lomasha said, “O king! On seeing the horse, they shivered with delight. Driven by destiny, they showed no respect for the great-souled Kapila. O great king! Desirous of grabbing the horse, they dashed towards it in anger. Kapila, supreme among sages, was angered at this. Kapila, supreme among sages, was known as Vasudeva. He opened his eyes wide and created energy from them. That immensely energetic one burnt down the sons of Sagara.

‘“Having seen them burnt to ashes, the great ascetic Narada went to Sagara and told him. On hearing these terrible words from the mouth of the sage, the king was distracted for a moment. But then he thought of the words of Sthanu.[422] He thought about the horse. Then he reassured himself and summoned his son’s son, Anshuman, the son of Asamanja.[423] O tiger among the Bharata lineage! He spoke these words to his grandson. ‘My sixty thousand sons are boundlessly energetic. But on my account, they have been killed through Kapila’s energy. O son![424] O unblemished one! Your father has also been abandoned by me, for the sake of protecting dharma and for the welfare of the citizens.’”’

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O one rich in austerities! Why did Sagara, tiger among kings abandon his own valorous son, one who is difficult to abandon? Tell me.”

‘Lomasha replied, “Sagara had a son famous by the name of Asamanja. He was born through Shaibya. He used to grasp the weak and crying infants of the citizens by the hooves[425] and throw them into the river. Overcome by fear and grief, the citizens assembled together and with hands joined in salutation, all of them went and prayed to Sagara. ‘O great king! You are our protector from fears like the wheels of the enemy. You should therefore protect us from the terrible fear due to Asamanja.’ Having heard those terrible words of the citizens, the supreme of kings was distracted for an instant. Then he told his advisers, ‘Let my son Asamanja be expelled immediately from the city. If you wish to do that which brings me pleasure, perform this act swiftly.’ O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by that Indra of men, the advisers swiftly did what the king had asked them to. This is the entire account of how the great-souled Sagara banished his son for the welfare of the citizens. I will now recount to you everything about what Sagara told the great archer Anshuman. Listen to me.

'"Sagara said, 'O son! I am aggrieved that I abandoned your father, at the death of my sons and I am also tormented because I have not been able to obtain the horse. O grandson! Therefore, I am tormented by misery and am deluded because of impediment to the sacrifice. You must bring back the horse from hell.'"[426]

'Lomasha said, "Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Sagara, Anshuman sadly went to the place where the earth had been torn apart. Through that path, he entered the ocean and saw the great-souled Kapila and the horse. On seeing that ancient and supreme of rishis, he bowed down his head on the ground and informed him about the task for which he had come. O great king! Kapila was pleased with Anshuman. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The one with dharma in his soul told him to ask for a boon. First, he[427] asked for the horse needed for the sacrifice. Second, he asked for water to purify his fathers.[428] The immensely energetic Kapila, bull among sages, told him, 'O fortunate one! O unblemished one! I will give you the boons you have asked for. Forgiveness, dharma and truth are established in you. Sagara will become successful through you. Your father has truly got a son. Through your powers, the sons of Sagara will go to heaven. Your grandson will bring down the three-coursed one from heaven.[429] He will satisfy Maheshvara[430] and purify the sons of Sagara. O bull among men! Be fortunate and take back the sacrificial horse. O son! Complete the sacrifice of the great-souled Sagara. Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Kapila, Anshuman took the horse and returned to the sacrificial ground of the great-souled one.[431] There he bowed at the feet of the great-souled Sagara and told him everything and he inhaled the fragrance of his[432] head. He told him everything that he had heard and seen and about the destruction of the sons of Sagara. He told him that the horse had been brought to the sacrificial ground. On hearing this, King Sagara stopped grieving for his sons. He honoured Anshuman and completed the sacrifice.

'"When the sacrifice was completed, Sagara was honoured by all the gods. He thought of the ocean, Varuna's abode, as his son.[433] After ruling over the kingdom for a long time, the lotus-eyed one handed over the burden to his grandson and went to heaven. O great king! Anshuman, with dharma in his soul, ruled over the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, as his grandfather had. His son was Dilipa, devoted to dharma. Having handed over the kingdom to him, Anshuman left. But Dilipa had heard about the great destruction of his fathers.[434] Overwhelmed with grief, he thought about their end. The king made great efforts to bring down the Ganga. But though he tried with all his strength, he could not ensure the descent. He had a handsome son, devoted to dharma. He was known as Bhagiratha. He was truthful and no one spoke ill of him. Instating him in the kingdom, Dilipa resorted to the forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After obtaining success in austerities, in due course of time, that king went to the forest and then to heaven."'

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'Lomasha said, "That great king and emperor, a maharatha and a great archer, was the delight of the minds and eyes of all the worlds. That mighty-armed one heard about the terrible destruction of his fathers from the great-souled Kapila and how they had failed to attain heaven. With misery in his heart, the lord of men handed over the kingdom to his advisers and went to the slopes of the Himalayas to torment himself with austerities. Cleansed of sins, he performed austerities to worship Ganga. O best of men! He saw the Himalayas, supreme among mountains. It was adorned with peaks of many forms, decorated with minerals. It was embraced on all sides by clouds floating on the wind. It was adorned with rivers, groves and ridges. It was infested by lions and tigers in its caves and caverns. There were birds of diverse forms that sung diverse tunes—*bhringarajas*,[435] swans, *datyuhas*,[436] waterhens, peacocks, *shatapatras*,[437] cuckoos, *jivajivakas*,[438] chakoras with black-tinged eyes and those that love their young. The waterbodies were beautiful and decorated with lotuses. They were ornamented with the sweet notes of cranes. The flat plains were frequented by kinnaras and apsaras. In all directions, the trees had been marked by the sharp tusks of the elephants of the directions.[439] The place was frequented by *vidyadharas*[440] and adorned with diverse gems. It was infested by snakes with virulent poison, their tongues flaming. Some parts were like gold, others glittered like silver. Some places were like a mass of collyrium. He reached these Himalayas.

'"The best of men engaged in terrible austerities there. He lived for a thousand years on fruits, roots and water. After one thousand celestial years had passed, the great river Ganga showed herself in personified form. Ganga asked, 'O great king! What do you wish from me? What can I give you? O best of men! Tell me and I will do as you say.' Having been thus addressed, the king replied to the daughter of the Himalayas.[441] 'O granter of boons! O great river! My grandfathers, the sixty thousand great-souled sons of Sagara, were taken to Vaivasvata's eternal world by Kapila, while they were searching for the horse. They confronted Kapila's energy and were instantly destroyed. Having been destroyed, they cannot reside in heaven until their bodies are sprinkled with your water. O immensely fortunate one! Take my fathers, Sagara's sons, to heaven. O great river! I am praying to you for their sake.' Having heard the king's words, Ganga, worshipped by all the worlds, was extremely delighted with Bhagiratha's words and replied, 'O great king! There is no doubt that I will do what you say. But when I descend from the sky to the earth, my force will be difficult to bear. O king! There is no one in the three worlds who can withstand it, other than Nilakantha[442] Maheshvara, foremost among the gods. O mighty-armed one! Satisfy Hara, the granter of boons, through your austerities. The god will sustain my fall on his head. He will do what you desire for the welfare of your fathers.’ O king! On hearing these words, the great king Bhagiratha went to Mount Kailasa and satisfied Shankara[443] through austerities. O king! After some time had passed, the supreme of men obtained from him the boon that he would bear Ganga, so that his fathers might be entitled to reside in heaven.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “After hearing Bhagiratha’s words, to do that which would ensure the welfare of the gods, the illustrious one replied to the king, ‘O mighty-armed one! O supreme among kings! For your sake, I will bear the pure, auspicious and divine river of the gods when she falls from the sky.’ O mighty-armed one! Having said this, he[444] went to the Himalayas, surrounded by his terrible attendants, who held diverse upraised weapons. Having established himself there, he told Bhagiratha, best of men, ‘O mighty-armed one! Now ask the river, the daughter of the king of the mountains. I will bear the best of rivers when she falls from heaven. Having heard these words spoken by Sharva,[445] the king bowed and began to meditate on the Ganga, his mind controlled. On seeing the king meditating and Ishana[446] established there, the one with the pure waters was suddenly dislodged from the sky. On seeing her fall, the gods, together with the maharshis, and the gandharvas, the nagas and the rakshasas, assembled to witness the sight. Then Ganga, daughter of the Himalayas, infested with fish and crocodiles and full of giant whirlpools, fell down from the sky. O king! Hara bore Ganga, the girdle of the sky. Falling on his forehead, she looked like a garland of pearls. O king! Thus did the one who goes to the ocean divide herself into three streams. Her water, filled with foam, looks like an array of swans. In some places, she is coiled tortuously. In others, she stumbles. In others, she speeds like a drunken woman, clad in a garment of foam. In some places, her waters raise a great roar, uttering the supreme of sounds. In this fashion, she performed many acts on falling from the sky.

‘“On reaching the surface of the earth, she told Bhagiratha, ‘O great king! Show me the path that I should follow. O lord of the earth! It is for your sake that I have descended on earth.’ O best of men! Hearing these words, King Bhagiratha went to the place where the bodies of the great-souled sons of Sagara were kept, so that they might be purified with the sacred waters. Having borne Ganga, Hara, worshipped by the worlds, went to Kailasa, best of mountains, with the thirty gods. Going to the ocean with Ganga, the king forcefully filled up the ocean, Varuna’s abode. The king thought of Ganga as his daughter. His desires having been fulfilled, he offered oblations to his ancestors there. I have told you everything about the three-streamed Ganga and how she descended on earth to fill up the ocean, which was drunk up by the great-souled one for a specific reason, and how Agastya brought Vatapi, the killer of brahmanas, to his destruction. O lord! O great king! I have told you everything that you asked.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! In due course, Kounteya[447] travelled to the two rivers Nanda and Aparananda, the cleanser of sins and fear. On reaching Mount Hemakuta, the granter of health, the king saw many extraordinary and unthinkable things. From mere words, clouds are created there and there are showers of thousands of stones, so that people are saddened that they are incapable of ascending. The wind always blows there and the gods shower down. In evening and in the morning, the lord who is the bearer of sacrificial offerings,[448] is seen. The Pandava saw many such extraordinary things and again asked Lomasha about these extraordinary things.

‘Lomasha said, “O destroyer of enemies! O king! I will tell you as I have heard it earlier. Listen attentively to me. An ascetic by the name of Rishabha lived on this Mount Rishabha. The ascetic was aged many hundreds of years and was extremely prone to anger. On being addressed by others, he angrily told the mountain, ‘Shower stones on whoever utters a word here.’ The ascetic summoned the wind and said that not a sound should be uttered. Thus, if a man speaks a word, he is restrained by the clouds. O king! Through such deeds, the maharshi performed some acts out of anger and he restrained others from being done.

'"O king! We have heard that in ancient times, the gods came to Nanda and suddenly men assembled, in their desire to see the gods. The gods, with Shakra at the forefront, did not desire to be seen. By erecting mountains, they made the region difficult of access. O Kounteya! From that day, men cannot even look at the mountain, not to speak of ascending it. O Kounteya! One who has not performed austerities cannot see the great mountain, or climb it. Therefore, control your speech. It was here that the gods performed great sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their marks can be seen even today. The *durva* grass here is like kusha grass[449] and the ground is strewn with it. O lord of the earth! There are many trees that look like sacrificial stakes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods and the rishis live there even today. Their sacrificial fires can be seen in the evenings and in the mornings. O Kounteya! If one bathes there, one's sins are instantly destroyed. O best of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, perform your ablutions there, together with your younger brothers. Then, having washed your limbs in Nanda, go to Koushiki, where Vishvamitra performed terrible and supreme austerities."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The king and his companions washed their limbs there. Then they went to the sacred and beautiful Koushiki, the river whose waters are auspicious.'

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is the sacred Koushiki, the river of the gods. Vishvamitra’s hermitage is resplendent here. This is the hermitage of the great-souled Kashyapa, famous by the name of Punya. His son was Rishyashringa, an ascetic who had controlled his senses. Through the power of his austerities, he made Vasava[450] rain. Because of his fear, the slayer of Bala and Vritra[451] showered down at the time of a drought. Kashyapa’s son, the energetic lord, was born from a deer. He performed a great and extraordinary deed in Lomapada’s territory. When the crops were restored,[452] King Lomapada bestowed his daughter Shanta on him, as Savita did for Savitri.[453]

‘Yudhishthira asked, “How was Kashyapa’s son Rishyashringa born as the son of a deer? This is against the norms of sexual intercourse. How did he acquire asceticism? Why was Shakra scared of that wise child? Why did the slayer of Bala and Vritra shower down at the time of a drought? What kind of beauty did the princess Shanta, rigid in vows, possess? How did she tempt him when he was in the form of a deer? It has been heard that rajarshi Lomapada was a follower of dharma. Why did the chastiser of Paka[454] not rain down in his territory? O lord! O exalted one! Tell me all this exactly, and in detail. I wish to hear about Rishyashringa’s deeds.”

‘Lomasha said, “The brahmana rishi Vibhandaka had controlled his soul through austerities. He was as radiant as Prajapati and his semen was always successful. Hear how the powerful Rishyashringa was born as his son. He was extremely energetic and though young, was respected by the aged. He was born in a great lake. Going to the great lake, Kashyapa stayed there for a long time, engaged in austerities. The rishi, worshipped by the gods and the rishis, became exhausted. O king! There, when he was washing in the water, he saw the apsara Urvashi and spilt his semen. O king! A thirsty doe drunk it up with the water and conceived. Whatever has been decreed by destiny and laid down by fate must inevitably happen. From that doe was born a son, the great rishi Rishyashringa.[455] He was always engaged in austerities and grew up in the forest. O king! There was a horn on the head of that great-souled one and because of that, he became famous as Rishyashringa. O king! Except for his father, he never saw another man and therefore, his mind was always fixed on brahmacharya.

'"At that time, there was a lord of Anga famous by the name of Lomapada and he was Dasharatha's friend. It has been heard that, driven by desire, he committed falsehoods on brahmanas. That lord of the earth was then abandoned by brahmanas. Without a priest, the king acted as he willed. The one with the thousand eyes[456] stopped showering and the subjects suffered. The lord of the earth asked wise brahmanas, full of austerities, who were capable of making the lord of the gods shower again. 'How will Parjanya[457] rain again? Show me a way.' Thus asked, each of those wise ones expressed his own view. But one supreme sage among them told the king, 'O Indra among kings! The brahmanas are angry with you. Find a way to appease them. O king! Fetch the sage's son Rishyashringa. He lives in the forest, immersed in virtue, and is inexperienced about the female sex. O king! If that great ascetic comes to your territory, I have no doubt that Parjanya will immediately shower rain.' On hearing these words, the king performed deeds to cleanse his soul. He went away and returned only when the brahmanas had been appeased. On hearing that the king had returned, the subjects received him back. Then the lord of Anga summoned his advisers, who were wise in offering counsel. He consulted so that endeavours might be made to bring Rishyashringa. With the aid of his advisers, who were learned in the sacred texts, skilled in the ways of artha and knowledgeable about policy, the unblemished one thought of a method.

'"The lord of the earth summoned the foremost of courtesans. The king told the courtesans, who were skilled in everything, 'O beautiful ones! Find out some means of bringing the rishi's son Rishyashringa to my territory. Tempt him and gain his confidence.' Those women were scared out of fear for the king's curse. They turned pale, lost their senses and said that the task was impossible. But there was one among them who was old and she told the king, 'O great king! I will attempt to bring the one with the ascetic riches here. But you will have to ask for some objects of desire that I have in mind. I will then be able to tempt the rishi's son Rishyashringa.' The king ordered that everything she wished for should be obtained. He gave her a lot of riches and many gems. O lord of the earth! She took several women with her, endowed with youth and beauty. Then she swiftly went to the forest."'

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'Lomasha said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To ensure the success of the king's objective, she contructed a hermitage on a boat—both because the king ordered it and because it fitted with her own wishes. It was beautifully adorned with many artificial trees with flowers and fruit. It had many bowers and creepers that yielded succulent fruit to satisfy every desire. She made it extremely beautiful and enticing. That hermitage on a boat was beautiful, extraordinary and an unsurpassed sight. Then she moored the boat a short distance away from Kashyapa's hermitage. She sent out some men to survey the area frequented by the sage. Deciding on a course of action and perceiving a chance, the courtesan summoned her daughter, who possessed great intelligence, and sent her to Kashyapa's son. That skilled one went to the hermitage and approached the rishi's son, who was always engaged in austerities.

'"The courtesan said, 'O sage! Is everything well with the ascetics here? Are there plenty of roots and fruit? Do you find pleasure in this hermitage? I have come here to visit you. Are the austerities of the ascetics increasing? I hope your father has not diminished in energy. O brahmana! I hope he is pleased with you. O Rishyashringa! Are you able to pursue your studies?'

'"Rishyashringa replied, 'You shine with radiance like the light. I think that you are worthy of showing obeisance. I will give you water to wash your feet, and according to dharma, fruits and roots to satisfy your desires. Please be seated on this mat made of kusha grass, covered with black antelope skin and made comfortable. Where is your hermitage? O brahmana! What is the name of the vow that you are observing, like a god?’

‘“The courtesan said, ‘O son of Kashyapa! My beautiful hermitage is three yojanas away, on the other side of the mountain. My dharma is not to accept obeisance. Nor do I touch water to wash my feet.’

‘“Rishyashringa replied, ‘I will give you ripe fruit, *bhallas*,[458] *amlakas*,[459] *parushakas*,[460] *ingudas*,[461] *dhanvanas*[462] and *priyalas*[463] to satisfy your desires.’”

‘Lomasha said, “But having discarded all of these, she gave him extremely expensive food. This was beautiful to look at and extremely tasteful and they were very pleasurable to Rishyashringa. She gave him fragrant garlands and radiant and colourful garments and the best of drinks. Then she played, laughed and amused herself. She played at his side with a ball, like a flowering creeper that was moving around. She touched his body with hers and embraced Rishyashringa again and again. She bent the branches and plucked the flowers from trees like *sarjas*,[464] ashokas and *tilakas*.[465] Then, as if without shame, and overcome with liquour, she tempted the maharshi’s son. Having seen the change in Rishyashringa, she pressed him again and again with her body. Then, pretending that the time for agnihotra had come, she slowly went away, casting backward glances. At her departure, Rishyashringa was overcome with desire and lost his senses. Because of his feelings for her, he felt emptiness. He sighed again and again in distress.

‘“At that instant, Kashyapa Vibhandaka appeared. His eyes were tawny, like a lion’s. He was covered with body hair, up to the tips of his nails. He possessed learning, conduct and meditative faculties. He approached and saw his seated son, alone, immersed in thought, and with his mind disturbed. His eyes were raised up and he sighed repeatedly. Vibhandaka told his dejected son, ‘O son! Why has wood for the sacrificial kindling not been brought? Have you still not performed agnihotra today? Have the sacrificial ladles been cleaned? Have you brought out the sacrificial cow and her calf today? O son! You do not seem as you used to be. You are immersed in thought and have lost your senses. Why are you so dejected today? I am asking you. Who came here today?’”’

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‘“Rishyashringa replied, ‘A brahmachari came. He had matted hair and he was intelligent. He wasn’t too short and he wasn’t too tall. His complexion was golden. His eyes were long, like lotuses. He was radiant, like a son of the gods. His prosperous form was as radiant as the sun. His eyes were beautiful and black and white, like those of chakora birds. His matted hair was blue, clear, fragrant and extremely long, and braided with golden thread. Like lightning blazing in the sky, there were two receptacles under his throat. There were two balls under his throat.[466] They had no hair on them and were extremely beautiful. His waist was thin around the navel. But his hips were expansive. Like mine, a girdle blazed from under his garment. But his was made of gold. That apart, there was an extraordinary sight—a tinkling sound emerged from his feet.[467] Ornaments with a similar sound were also tied to his wrists. They were like this string of rosaries, but made a musical sound. They made a sound whenever he moved, like intoxicated swans in a pond. His garments were extraordinary to see. They were not like mine, but were beautiful. His face was also an extraordinary sight. His words brought gladness to the heart. His speech was like that of male cuckoos. When I heard it, it saddened the innermost parts of my heart. During the spring months, the forest is fragrant when fanned by the wind. O father! Like that, there was a supreme and sacred fragrance when the wind fanned him. His matted hair was tied neatly and arranged so that it divided his forehead into two equal halves. His ears seemed to be surrounded by circles.[468] They were coloured and beautiful of form. He held something that looked like a beautiful circular fruit[469] in his right hand.

It bounced repeatedly on the ground and rose up again, in an extraordinary way. He hit it and whirled around. His body was like a tree stirred by the wind. O father! On seeing that son of the immortals, my joy became supreme and desire was born in me. He embraced my body repeatedly. He grasped me by my matted hair and lowered my mouth. He placed his mouth on my mouth and uttered a sound that brought great pleasure to me. He did not desire water for washing the feet, or the fruits that I had brought. He told me that those were the vows followed by him. He gave me other novel types of fruit. I tasted all the fruits he gave me. These are not as succulent as those. They did not have skins like these have. Nor did they have seeds like ours. The generous one gave me liquids to drink. They were extremely fine in flavour. As soon as I drank them, great pleasure engulfed me and the ground seemed to move. These are the beautiful and fragrant garlands that he tied up with silken threads. Having scattered them here, he left for his own hermitage, blazing in austerities. I have lost my senses at his departure. My body seems to be burning. I wish to go to him immediately. I wish that he should always roam around here. O father! I shall go to him this very instant. Please tell me the name of the vow observed by him. I wish to observe it, together with him. I wish to observe the severe and austere rites practised by him.’”’

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‘“Vibhandaka said, ‘O son! These are rakshasas. They roam around in their extraordinary forms. They are unsurpassed in beauty and are extremely terrible. They always endeavour to create obstacles in the way of austerities. O son! They assume beautiful forms. They assume different forms to tempt. Those terrible deeds are used to dislodge the sages of the forest from the happiness of their worlds. Sages who are in control of their souls never serve them, particularly if they desire the worlds of the virtuous. O one who doesn’t perform evil acts! Those ones of evil deeds find delight in obstructing ascetics and destroying their austerities. O son! Those liquids are for those who aren’t virtuous. They are wine and desired by evil ones. These garlands, coloured, bright and fragrant, are not regarded by the learned as fit for sages.'"

'Lomasha said, "Having restrained his son and told him that these were rakshasas, Vibhandaka went out to search for her. After searching for three days, he failed to find her, and returned to his hermitage. When Kashyapa again went out to gather fruit, as was the practice for hermits, the courtesan again returned to tempt the sage Rishyashringa. As soon as he saw her, Rishyashringa was delighted. His mind was deluded and he told her, 'Let us go to your hermitage before my father returns.' O king! Then she tempted Kashyapa's only son into the boat and unmoored it. She tempted him through various means and brought him to the king of Anga. That extremely beautiful boat was moored within sight of a hermitage. A beautiful wood was created near the bank and named Rajashrama.[470] The king brought Vibhandaka's only son and lodged him in the inner quarters. And he suddenly saw the god[471] showering rain, until the world was full and flooded with water. His wishes fulfilled, Lomapada bestowed his daughter Shanta on Rishyashringa. To counter the wrath,[472] he instructed cattle to be placed on the roads and the land tilled. Along the road that Vibhandaka would follow, the king placed many animals and warriors to look after the animals. 'When maharshi Vibhandaka arrives in search of his son and asks you, you must join your hands in salutation and tell him, "O maharshi! These animals and this tilled land belong to your son. What can we do to please you? All of us are your servants and await your command."'[473] Meanwhile, after gathering roots and fruit, the sage who was exceedingly wrathful returned to his hermitage. He searched for his son and on not finding him there, became extremely angry. Rent asunder by rage, he suspected that this was the work of the king.

'"Deciding that he would burn up the king of Anga and all his possessions, he left for Champa.[474] Exhausted and hungry, Kashyapa arrived at settlements that were prosperous with cattle. He was honoured by the herdsmen in accordance with the prescribed rites, as if he was a king, and spent the night there. Having received great homage from them, he asked them, ‘O pleasant ones! Whose servants are you?’ All of them respectfully told him, ‘All these riches belong to your son.’ He was thus worshipped in region after region and heard similar pleasant words. Thus, his anger was greatly appeased and in a happy frame of mind, he approached the city of the king of Anga. He was worshipped by that bull among men. He saw his son, like Indra in heaven. He also saw his daughter-in-law Shanta there, looking like a flash of lightning. Having seen the villages, the settlements of cattle, his son and Shanta, his extreme anger was pacified. O Indra among men! Vibhandaka showed his supreme favours to that lord of the earth. The maharshi, as resplendent as the sun and the fire, left his son there and told him, ‘Having done everything that pleases the king, you will return to the forest once a son has been born.’ Rishyashringa acted according to his words. He returned to where his father was. Shanta tended to him,[475] like the devoted Rohini attends on the moon in the sky, like the fortunate Arundhati waits on Vasishtha, like Damayanti on Nala and like Shachi on the wielder of the vajra.[476] O Ajamidha![477] Like Nadayani Indrasena was always obedient to Mudgala,[478] thus was Shanta towards Rishyashringa in the forest. O Indra among men! Driven by love, she tended to him. That sacred hermitage is radiant here. The great lake, site of sacred deeds, is radiant here. O king! Having bathed here and purifying yourself, you will accomplish all your deeds and then go on to other tirthas.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Then the Pandava left Koushiki and one after another, went to all the other sacred places. O king! He went to the ocean, to the confluence of the Ganga. He performed his ablutions in the middle of the five hundred rivers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then, together with his brothers, the brave lord of the earth travelled along the shores of the ocean towards Kalinga.

‘Lomasha said, “O Kounteya! This is Kalinga, where the river Vaitarani flows. Here, under the refuge of the gods, Dharma performed sacrifices.

This is the northern bank, always frequented by brahmanas and inhabited by rishis. It is a sacrificial ground that has been made beautiful by a mountain. In ancient times, other rishis have also performed sacrifices here and gone to heaven along the route followed by the gods. O Indra among kings! This is the place where Rudra grasped the sacrificial animal.[479] O Indra among men! Rudra grasped the animal and said, ‘This is my share.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the animal was stolen, the gods told him, ‘Do not covet the property of others. Do not destroy all dharma.’ Later, they praised Rudra with sweet words. They satisfied him with a sacrifice and showed him honour. Then, discarding the animal, he followed the path traversed by the gods. O Yudhishthira! Listen to what is said about Rudra. ‘As a result of their fear of Rudra, the gods resolved that the supreme share of everything that was not stale would always be set apart for him. A man who touches the water here, while reciting this verse, has the route of the gods as his path and sees it with his eyes.’”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then all the immensely fortunate Pandavas, together with Droupadi, descended into Vaitarani and offered oblations to the ancestors. Yudhishthira said, “O Lomasha! O illustrious one! O one rich in austerities! Behold. As soon as I have bathed in this river, I have gone beyond what is human. O follower of good vows! Through your grace, I can see all the worlds. This is the sound of the great-souled hermits, as they recite their prayers.”

‘Lomasha replied, “O Yudhishthira! O lord of the earth! Keep quiet. The sound that you hear is at a distance of three hundred thousand yojanas. O king! The beautiful forest that manifests itself here belongs to the one who created himself.[480] O Kounteya! The powerful Vishvakarma performed a sacrifice here. At that sacrifice, the one who created himself gave the earth, with all its mountains, forests and regions, as a stipend to the great-souled Kashyapa. O Kounteya! As soon as she had been given away, the earth became dejected. In anger, she spoke to the illustrious lord of the worlds. ‘O illustrious one! You should not have given me away to a mere mortal. Your giving me away will be unsuccessful. I will go to rasatala.’[481] O lord of the earth! On seeing that the earth was dejected, the illustrious rishi Kashyapa pacified her. O Pandava! She was satisfied by his austerities and once again emerged from the water, establishing herself as an altar. O king! You can see it there, with all the signs of an altar. O great king! Ascend it, and you will be extremely valorous. As you ascend it today, I will myself pronounce the benediction. O Ajamidha! As soon as it is touched by a mortal, this altar immerses itself in the ocean again. ‘Agni, Mitra, the womb, the water, the goddess, Vishnu’s seed, the navel of amrita.’[482] O Pandava! Having recited these truthful words, swiftly climb up onto the altar.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the benediction had been pronounced on him, the great-souled Yudhishthira went into the ocean. When he had done all that he had been asked, he went to Mahendra and spent the night there.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After the lord of the earth had spent a night there, he, together with his brothers, showed the best of homage to the ascetics. Lomasha told him the names of all the ascetics who were there —the Bhrigus, the Angirases, the Vasishthas and the Kashyapas. On meeting them, the rajarshi[483] greeted them, with his hands joined in salutation. He then asked Akritavarna, the valorous follower of Rama,[484] “When will the illustrious Bhargava Rama show himself to the ascetics? On that occasion, I also wish to see Bhargava.” Akritavarna replied, “Rama knows everything in his soul and your arrival is already known to him. The ascetics see Rama on the fourteenth and the eighth lunar day. When this night is over, it will be the fourteenth lunar day.” Yudhishthira said, “You are a follower of the immensely strong and valorous son of Jamadagni. Earlier, you have yourself witnessed all his deeds. Therefore, tell us today how Rama vanquished all the kshatriyas in battle. Tell us everything about how he did it and the reasons.”

‘Akritavarna said, “There was an immensely strong and great king in Kanyakubja. He was famous in the world as Gadhi. He went to dwell in the forest. While he lived in the forest, a daughter was born to him and she was like an apsara. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhargava Richika wished to marry her. Then the king told the brahmana of the rigid vows, ‘There is a custom in our lineage, one that has been established since ancient times. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that a thousand swift and white horses must be given as a bride price and that they must each possess one black ear. O illustrious one! O Bhargava! But you cannot be asked to give this. My daughter should be given to a great-souled one like you.’ Richika replied, ‘I will give you one thousand swift and white horses, each with one black ear. Let your daughter become my wife.’ O king! Having promised this, he[485] told Varuna, ‘As a bride price, give me one thousand swift and white horses, each with one black ear.’ Varuna then gave him one thousand horses. The place from where the horses arose is famous as the tirtha of horses. In Kanyakubja, on the banks of the Ganga, Gadhi then bestowed his daughter Satyavati on him and all the gods were present there. Having obtained one thousand horses, having seen the inhabitants of heaven and having obtained a wife according to dharma, Richika, supreme among brahmanas, pleasured with the slender-waisted maiden as he desired.

‘“O king! When the marriage was over, the supreme of the Bhrigus came to see his son, together with his wife. Having seen them, he was delighted. When the elder was seated, worshipped by the masses of gods, husband and wife joined their hands in salutation and worshipped him. Then the illustrious Bhrigu was delighted and told his daughter-in-law, ‘O fortunate one! Ask for a boon. I will grant what you wish for.’ She pleased the elder for the sake of a son, for herself and for her mother. And he showed her his favours. Bhrigu said, ‘At the time of your seasons, you and your mother must bathe and observe the ritual for having a son. Then you must embrace separate trees—she an *asvattha* and you an udumbura.’[486] O king! But when they embraced the trees, they got them mixed up.[487] When Bhrigu returned one day, he realized the mix-up. The immensely energetic Bhrigu then told his daughter-in-law Satyavati, 'Your son will be a brahmana who will live the life of a kshatriya and your mother's great son will be a kshatriya who will live the life of a brahmana. His valour will be great and he will tread the path of the righteous.' But she sought her father-in-law's favours again and again. 'Let my son not be like this. I desire that my grandson should be like this.' O Pandava! He brought her satisfaction and said that it would be that way. When the time came, her son Jamadagni was born. He was energetic and radiant and was loved by the Bhargavas. O Pandava! The energetic one grew and surpassed many rishis in his knowledge of the Vedas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He was as brilliant as the sun and the knowledge of weapons was revealed to him, together with that of the four types of weapons."'[488]

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'Akritavarna said, "The immensely austere Jamadagni devoted himself to the study of the Vedas. Through his austerities, he brought the gods under his control. O king! He went to King Prasenjit and asked for Renuka, and the king gave her to him. When he obtained Renuka as his wife, the descendant of the Bhargava lineage returned to his hermitage and with her aid, engaged in austerities again. Four sons were born from her and Rama was the fifth. But though he was the youngest, Rama was superior to the others.

'"Once, when her sons had gone to gather fruit, Renuka, rigid in her vows, went to have a bath. She saw the king of Marttikavata there, Chitraratha by name. On seeing the prosperous king, garlanded with lotuses, sporting in the water with his wives, Renuka was filled with desire. Because of this unchaste behaviour, she lost her senses and moistened herself. Frightened, she returned to the hermitage. But her husband got to know. He saw that she had been dislodged from her constancy and that she had lost the beauty of purity. The immensely energetic and valorous one reproached her with words of 'Shame!' Then

Jamadagni's eldest son, with the name of Rumanvat, arrived—and then Sushena, Vasu and Vishvavasu, one by one. One after another, the illustrious one asked them to kill their mother. But because they were deluded and had lost their senses, they said nothing in reply. He then cursed them in great anger. As a result of the curse, they swiftly lost their minds and began to follow the conduct of animals or birds, or that of inanimate objects.

'"Rama, the destroyer of enemy warriors, entered the hermitage last. The great ascetic Jamadagni told him in great anger, 'O son! Kill your evil mother, without any compassion.' At that, Rama grasped his axe and sliced off his mother's head. O great king! The anger of the great-souled Jamadagni was suddenly appeased. He said in a pleasant voice, 'O son! At my words, you have performed a difficult feat. O one learned in dharma! Ask for anything you desire, as many wishes as may be there in your heart.' Thereupon, he asked that his mother might live again, that he should not retain any memory of the slaying, that he should not be touched by the sin, that his brothers might return to their natural state, that he might be unrivalled in battle and that he should have a long life. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great ascetic Jamadagni granted him everything that he wished for.

'"O lord! One day, when the sons had gone out as before, the brave Kartavirya, the king of the region along the shore, arrived. When he came to the hermitage, he was shown homage by the rishi's wife. But insolent from the madness of battle, he did not accept this homage. He destroyed the hermitage. Through force, he carried off the sacrificial cow's calf, though it kept crying. He tore down all the large trees. When Rama returned, his father himself told him what had happened. On seeing the cow weeping, Rama was overcome with great anger. In great wrath, he rushed towards Kartavirya. Bhargava, the destroyer of enemy warriors, bravely engaged him in battle. O king! He grasped his beautiful bow and with his sharp arrows, sliced off his one thousand arms,[489] each of which was like a club. Arjuna's heirs[490] became very angry at Rama. When Rama was not in the hermitage, they rushed at Jamadagni.

They killed the immensely valorous ascetic, who refused to fight and unprotected, kept calling out for Rama. O Yudhishthira! Having pierced Jamadagni with their arrows, Kartavirya’s sons, the destroyers of enemies, departed. When they had gone away and Jamadagni had died, the descendant of the Bhargava lineage returned to the hermitage with firewood. The brave one saw that his father had been overcome by death. He was miserable and lamented the one who had not deserved to meet this fate.”’

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‘“Rama said, ‘O father! It is because of my sins that you have been killed, like a deer in the forest, by the arrows of those mean and foolish wretches, Kartavirya’s heirs. O father! You were learned in dharma. You were always steady in the path of the righteous. You did not cause harm to any beings. How did you deserve a death like this? You were aged and you were unwilling to fight. You were established in your austerities. What sins they must have committed when they killed you with hundreds of sharp arrows. How can they tell their advisers and well-wishers that they have killed a virtuous man who was unwilling to fight?”’

‘Akritavarna said, “O king! Thus did he lament in piteous tones and in many ways. Then the immensely ascetic one performed all the funereal rites for his father. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rama, the vanquisher of enemy cities, then burnt his father in a fire and swore that he would destroy all kshatriyas. Extremely wrathful, immensely strong in battle and valorous, he then grasped his weapons. Alone, like the god of death, he killed Kartavirya’s sons. O bull among the kshatriya lineage! He then killed all the kshatriyas who were their followers. Rama, supreme among those who wield arms, destroyed them all. That lord removed kshatriyas from the earth twenty-one times. He built five lakes of blood in Samantapanchaka. The extender of the Bhrigu lineage offered oblations to his ancestors there.

'"Then Richika appeared before Rama in person and restrained him. Then Jamadagni's powerful son performed a great sacrifice. He satisfied the king of the gods and gave the earth to the officiating priests. O lord of the earth! He constructed a golden altar that was ten *vyamas*[491] long and nine in height and gave it to the great-souled Kashyapa. O king! With Kashyapa's permission, the brahmanas divided it into many pieces and they[492] thus came to be known as Khandavayanas. Having given the earth to the great-souled Kashyapa,[493] the infinitely valorous one began to live on Mahendra, the king of the mountains. Thus did enmity arise between him and the kshatriyas of this world. The entire earth was conquered by Rama, whose energy is infinite."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On the fourteenth lunar day, at the appropriate time, the great-souled Rama showed himself to the brahmanas and to Dharmaraja, together with his younger brothers. The Indra among kings worshipped the lord, together with his brothers. The supreme of kings offered the highest homage to the brahmanas. Having worshipped Jamadagni's son and having been honoured in return, the lord spent a night on Mahendra and then left for a southern direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The magnanimous king then went and saw many beautiful and sacred tirthas, some of which were along the shores of the ocean, and all of which were adorned by the presence of brahmanas. O son of Parikshit![494] Pandu's son bathed there and performed donations, together with his younger brothers, who were the sons and grandsons of kings. He then went to a sacred and broad river. The magnanimous one bathed there and offered oblations to the ancestors and the gods. Donating riches to the foremost among brahmanas, he went to Godavari, which heads towards the ocean. O king! Having been cleansed of his sins, he approached the ocean, sacred to the worlds, in Dravida. The brave one saw the extremely sacred Agastya tirtha and also Nari tirtha.

There he heard the story of Arjuna’s feat, incapable of being performed by others.[495] He was the foremost of archers. When he[496] was worshipped by the supreme rishis, Pandu’s son derived supreme delight. Accompanied by Krishna[497] and with his younger brothers, he bathed his limbs in those tirthas. Honouring Arjuna’s valour, the lord of kings found delight in the earth there. He donated one thousand cows in those supreme tirthas that are always full of water. Together with his brothers, he happily recounted the story of Arjuna’s donations of cattle. O king! One after another, he went to many sacred tirthas, those that were on the shores of the ocean and others too. When all his desires were satisfied, he saw the most sacred Shurparaka.

‘Then, after crossing a region on the shores of the ocean, he came to a forest that is famous on earth. In ancient times, the gods performed austerities there and kings regard it as the most sacred of places. There, he saw the altar of Richika’s son,[498] the one who was the foremost of archers and long and thick in the arms. It was surrounded by many ascetics and was worthy of being worshipped by the virtuous. O king! The lord of the earth saw the holy sites of the Vasus, the masses of Maruts, the two Ashvins, Vaivasvata,[499] the Adityas, the lord of riches,[500] Indra, Vishnu, the lord Savita,[501] Bhaga,[502] the moon, Divakara,[503] the lord of the waters,[504] the masses of Sadhyas, Dhata,[505] the ancestors, the great-souled Rudra with his masses of ganas, Sarasvati, the masses of Siddhas, Pushan[506] and all the other immortals. The king saw these beautiful sites and observed fasts there. The king gave away many expensive gems. Having bathed his limbs in all these tirthas, he returned again to Shurparaka. With his brothers, he again went to the tirthas along the shores of the ocean. He then went to the great tirtha of Prabhasa, acclaimed by brahmanas throughout the earth. With his younger brothers and with Krishna, the one with the large and red eyes bathed there, and offered oblations to the masses of gods and the ancestors. So did the brahmanas, together with Lomasha. He lived on water and air for twelve days. He performed ablutions at dawn and dusk. He surrounded himself with flames on all sides. Thus did the supreme upholder of dharma scorch himself with austerities. Rama[507] and Janardana got to know about his practice of severe austerities. The foremost of all the Vrishnis went to Ajamidha Yudhishthira, together with their armies. The Vrishnis saw the sons of Pandu lying down on the ground, their bodies smeared with dirt. On seeing Droupadi, who did not deserve this, they were extremely distressed and lamented loudly. But, strong in spirit, and in accordance with the prescriptions of dharma, he[508] went and offered homage to Rama, Janardana, Krishna's son Samba, Shini's grandson[509] and all the other Vrishnis. All of them also returned the homage to the Parthas and were welcomed by Pandu's sons. O king! They seated themselves around Yudhishthira, like the masses of gods around Indra. Extremely happy, he told them about the deeds of his enemies and about their dwelling in the forest. He told Krishna that Partha,[510] son of the king of the gods, had gone to Indra for weapons. They heard his words and were relieved. On seeing them lean and pitiful, the magnaminous ones from Dasharha[511] were saddened and tears streamed down from their eyes.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O one rich in austerities! When the Vrishnis and the Pandavas met in the tirtha of Prabhasa, what did they do? What did they converse about? All of them were great-souled and they were skilled in the use of every weapon. The Vrishnis and the Pandavas were well-wishers of each other.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having arrived at the sacred tirtha of Prabhasa, on the shores of the great ocean, the Vrishnis surrounded the heroic Pandavas and offered them homage. Then Vanamali Rama,[512] the wielder of the plough, the one who is as white as cow's milk, the *kunda* flower,[513] the moon, the lotus and silver, spoke to the lotus-eyed one.[514] "O Krishna! The pursuit of dharma does not lead to good and the pursuit of that which is not dharma does not lead to defeat. The great-souled Yudhishthira wears matted hair and is miserable in the forest, clad in the bark of trees. Duryodhana is the ruler of the earth and the earth does not swallow him up. From this, a man with limited intelligence will think that the pursuit of that which is not dharma is superior to dharma. When Duryodhana prospers and Yudhishthira is in grief, robbed of his kingdom, what is the duty of subjects in the matter? This is a doubt that perplexes men. This was a lord of men whose power was dharma. He followed the path of truth and dharma and was generous. Partha gave up his kingdom and his happiness. Should one forsake dharma and prosper? After banishing the Parthas, will Bhishma, the brahmana Kripa, Drona and the king,[515] the eldest of the lineage, find happiness? Shame on the evil-minded chiefs of the Bharata lineage! In the hereafter, what will that evil chief of the earth[516] tell his ancestors, when he meets them? Having deprived his innocent sons[517] of the kingdom, will he be able to say that he has treated his sons properly? He does not see with his intelligence the reasons behind his having been born sightless, among all the kings of this earth. It is because he banished the Kounteyas from the kingdom. There is no doubt that Vichitravirya's son,[518] together with his sons, after the performance of this cruel act, will not see trees of gold blossom in the world of the ancestors. Yudhishthira and his younger brothers are armed. They are tall, wide of shoulder and have red eyes. Did he not ask them and hear their reply? How could he have fearlessly banished them to the forest? Without any weapons, the long-armed Vrikodara can slay a large army of enemies. On hearing his roars, soldiers release their bowels and their bladders. He suffers now from hunger and thirst and is emaciated from journeys. But when he meets them, he will have weapons and arrows in his hands. He will then remember the extremely terrible dwelling in the forest. I am certain that he will not leave any survivors. On this earth, there will be no one else who is his equal in valour and strength. He is now thin from cold, heat, wind and sun. But in battle, he will not leave any survivors. Atiratha Vrikodara conquered the kings of the east[519] in battle, together with their followers, alone on a chariot and swiftly returned, unharmed, even though he is now miserable in the forest and is clad in barks. Look now at Sahadeva, an ascetic dressed in the garb of an ascetic now. In Dantakura, he defeated all the lords, the kings who had assembled from the south.[520] This brave one,[521] valorous in battle and alone on a chariot, conquered the kings of the west. He now lives in the forest on roots and fruit. He now sports matted hair and has dirt smeared on his body. This queen,[522] the daughter of an atiratha, arose from a prosperous sacrificial altar. She was always accustomed to a life of comfort and ease. How can she endure the great misery of dwelling in the forest? These are the sons of Dharma,[523] the wind, the lord of the gods and the Ashvins. They are the sons of the gods and deserve to be happy. Deprived of happiness, how can they roam around in the forest? Dharma's son was conquered, together with his wife, his brothers and his attendants, and was driven out. Duryodhana has begun to flourish. Why did the earth, with all her mountains, not collapse?"'

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'Satyaki said, "O Rama! This is not the time for lamentations. That time is past. Even if Yudhishthira does not say anything, let us all act according to what must be done now. There are those in the world who have protectors. They do not need to act themselves. O Rama! In all their deeds they have protectors, like Shibi and Yayati. O Rama! There are those who have to act themselves, but in their deeds, they find protectors in this world. Those brave ones among men are also protected. They never encounter difficulties, like those without protectors. The Parthas have Rama, Janardana, Pradyumna, Samba and me, all capable of protecting the three worlds. How can it be said that he and his brothers must live in the forest? It is appropriate that the army of Dasharha should march out today, with many kinds of weapons and coloured armour. Let Dhartarashtra[524] go to the eternal world of Yama.

Let all his relatives be overcome with Vrishni's strength. In your anger, you can encompass the entire earth, not to speak of the wielder of the Sharnga bow.[525] Slay Dhartarashtra and all his relatives, like Vritra was destroyed by the great Indra, the king of the gods. Partha[526] is my brother. He is my friend and my preceptor. He is like Janardana's own soul. It is for this reason that the best time has come. Let us perform this great and difficult deed. Through my supreme weapons, I will counter his[527] shower of arrows. I will kill all of them in battle. O Rama! With my supreme arrows, which are like the venom of serpents and the fire, I will forcefully slice off his head from his body. With the force of strength, I will use my sharp sword to slice off his head from his body in battle. Then I will kill all his companions, Duryodhana and all the other Kurus. O Rohini's son![528] I will take up my weapons on the field of battle and bring joy to all the residents of earth. I will alone kill the foremost warriors among the Kurus, like fire burns down straw at the great time of destruction. Nor will Kripa, Drona, Vikarna and Karna be able to withstand the sharp arrows shot by Pradyumna. I know the valour of your son.[529] I know the action of Krishna's son in battle.[530] Let Samba use the strength of his arms to subdue Duhshasana, with his chariot and his charioteer. When he is maddened in battle, there is no one who can withstand Jambavati's son in battle. When he was still a child, he suddenly destroyed Shambara's daitya army.[531] Ashvachakra's thighs were round and his arms were long and thick. He killed him in battle.[532] Where is the man who can go elsewhere, once Samba has grasped him in his arms in battle? If the time has come, a man who is in the clutches of death can never escape. Like that, once one has entered the clutches of battle, who can escape with his life? The two maharathas Drona and Bhishma, Somadatta surrounded by his sons, and all their armies, will be burnt down by Vasudeva's flaming arrows. Who is there in all the worlds, including the gods, whom Krishna cannot withstand? When he grasps his weapons and holds excellent arrows in his hand, when he holds the chakra weapon, he is invincible in battle. Let

Aniruddha[533] hold his sword and shield in his hands. Let him bedeck the earth with Dhritarashtra's sons—their heads severed from their bodies and dead, like a sacrificial altar strewn with kusha grass. Gada, Ulmuka, Bahuka, Bhanu, the youthful Nishatha—heroes in battle—Sarana and Charudeshna, who are maddened in battle—they must perform deeds that are deserving of their lineage. Let the brave kshatriya armies, with the foremost among the Vrishnis, the Bhojas and the Andhakas, kill the sons of Dhritarashtra in battle and earn extensive fame in this world. Let Abhimanu rule the earth as long as the great-souled Yudhishthira, supreme among the Kurus and best among those who serve dharma, fulfils the oath he swore at the time of the game with the dice.[534] After his enemies are vanquished by the arrows we unleash, let Dharmaraja enjoy the earth. There will be no sons of Dhritarashtra and the son of the suta[535] will be dead. This is our most important task and it will bring us fame."

'Vasudeva said, "O Madhava![536] There is no doubt that what you have said is true. O one whose spirit is strong! We accept your words. But the bull among the Kurus[537] will certainly not wish for land that has not been won through the strength of his own arms. For the sake of desire, or fear, or avarice, Yudhishthira will never abandon his own dharma. Nor will Bhima or Arjuna, or the atirathas the twins, or Krishna, the daughter of Drupada. Both Vrikodara and Dhananjaya are unrivalled in war on earth. Why should he not rule the earth when he has Madri's two sons worshipping him? When the great-souled lord of Panchala, the lords of Kekaya and Chedi[538] and we, march into battle together against the enemies, Suyodhana will depart the world of the living."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Madhava![539] It is not surprising that you should speak in this way. I must protect my truth more than my kingdom. Krishna alone knows what I am. I alone know what Krishna truly is. O Madhava! O foremost among the Shinis![540] When this foremost of men[541] knows that the time has come to display valour, then you and Keshava will vanquish Suyodhana in battle. Let the warriors of Dasharha now depart. I stand firm with my protectors and they are the protectors of the world of men. O you who cannot be measured! Stand fast in dharma. I will see you again, when we assemble together in happiness.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then they greeted one another and showed mutual respect. They embraced the elders and all those who were young. The foremost among the Yadus returned to their own houses and the king[542] went on to the tirthas. Having parted from Krishna, Dharmaraja went to the excellent tirtha constructed by the king of Vidarbha. He went and dwelt near Payoshni, whose waters were mingled with the soma juice that had been extracted there.’

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‘Lomasha said, “O king! When Nriga sacrificed there with soma and gratified Purandara, it has been heard that he[543] was extremely intoxicated. Here the gods, together with Indra and the Prajapatis, performed many different kinds of great sacrifices and donated large amounts of stipends. At seven horse sacrifices, King Amurtarayasa satisfied the wielder of the vajra with soma here. At these seven sacrifices, everything was made of gold, though at usual sacrifices, they are made of wood and clay. At these sacrifices of his, seven rituals became renowned. On each of his sacrificial stakes, seven rings were established. O Yudhishthira! The gods themselves, together with Indra, erected radiant and golden stakes at his sacrifices. At the grand sacrifices of Gaya,[544] the lord of the earth, Indra was intoxicated on soma and the brahmanas on stipends they received. The many grains of sand on this earth, the many stars in the sky and the many drops in rain can never be counted. O great king! Like that, uncountable were the riches that Gaya gave away to the *sadasyas*[545] at those seven sacrifices. Even if those objects can be counted, it is impossible to count the stipends given by that giver of stipends. The golden cows were constructed by Vishvakarma and he used these to gratify the brahmanas who assembled from many directions. O lord of the earth! When the great-souled Gaya performed his sacrifices, the earth was covered everywhere with sacrificial stakes and there was little space left for more. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He attained Indra's world through his deeds. One who bathes in Payoshni goes to the world attained by him. O Indra among kings! O unblemished one! Therefore, together with your brothers, bathe here. O protector of the earth! You will be cleansed of all sin."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Together with his brothers, the best of men bathed in Payoshni. Together with his brothers, the unblemished and energetic one went to Mount Vaidurya and the great river Narmada. O lord of the earth! In each place, the illustrious rishi Lomasha recounted for him the names of all the beautiful tirthas. As it pleased him and as it suited him, together with his brothers, he went to them one by one, donating riches in thousands to the brahmanas.

'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! On seeing Mount Vaidurya and descending into the Narmada, one attains the world of the gods and that of the kings. O best of men! This is the union of treta and dvapara. O Kounteya! Once one has reached this spot, one is cleansed of all sins. O son! This is the place of Sharyati's sacrifice, where the Ashvins drank soma in person, with Koushika.[546] The immensely ascetic Bhargava, the lord Chyavana, was angry with the great Indra and paralysed Vasava in his anger. He also obtained the princess Sukanya as his wife."

'Yudhishthira asked, "How did the illustrious one paralyse the chastiser of Paka? For what reason was the great ascetic Bhargava angered? O brahmana! Why were the Nasatyas[547] made to become drinkers of soma? O illustrious one! Tell me all this exactly as it happened."'

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'Lomasha said, "Maharshi Bhrigu had a son by the name of Bhargava Chyavana. This immensely radiant one performed austerities near this lake. O Pandava! That immensely energetic one established himself like a pillar in this spot for the brave. O lord of the earth! He remained in the same spot for a very long period of time. O king! After a long period of time, the rishi was covered by an anthill and that was covered with creepers. This was coverd by ants. Thus that intelligent one became like a mound of earth on every side. O king! He continued with his austerities inside that anthill.

'"After a long period of time, a king named Sharyati came to amuse himself in that beautiful and supreme lake. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were four thousand women with him, ones he had married. There was also a daughter named Sukanya and her brows were beautiful. Surrounded by her friends and adorned in diverse ornaments, she roamed around and approached Bhargava's anthill. On seeing the beautiful trees there, the one with the beautiful teeth began to roam around, surrounded by her friends. She was beautiful, young and intoxicated with pangs of love. She broke off the branches of the trees in the forest, burdened with heavy blossoms. The wise Bhargava saw her alone, when she was without her friends. Like a flash of lighning, he saw her clad in a single piece of garment and adorned in her ornaments. On seeing her roaming in the forest alone, the supremely radiant brahmarshi, endowed with the strength of austerities, was stirred by desire. He spoke to the fortunate one in his broken voice, but she could not hear him. Then Sukanya saw Bhargava's eyes through the anthill. Because of her curiosity, she was deluded of her intelligence. Exclaiming, 'What is this!' she pierced the eyes with a thorn.

'"He was easily stirred to great rage and when his eyes had been pierced, he was angered. He cursed Sharyati's soldiers that all their bowel and bladder movements should cease. On seeing that the bowel and bladder movements of his soldiers had stopped, the king was saddened and asked, 'The great-souled Bhargava is old and is especially prone to anger. He is always engaged in austerities. Who has injured him today, knowingly or unknowingly? Tell me the truth immediately.' At that, all the soldiers replied, 'We do not know of any injury. Do what you wish and find out through some other means.' Then the king himself used conciliation and threats. He asked his group of well-wishers, but they did not know anything. On seeing her father saddened and his soldiers oppressed by distress, Sukanya then said, ‘When I was roaming, I saw some shining being inside the anthill. I thought that it was a firefly and I pierced it.’ Having heard this, Sharyati immediately went to the anthill. He saw Bhargava there, aged in austerities and aged in age. Joining his hands in salutation, the lord of the earth prayed for his soldiers. ‘Please pardon what that girl did to you out of ignorance.’ Bhargava Chyavana then told the lord of the earth, ‘She is beautiful and generous. But she has been overcome by grief and delusion. O king! Give your daughter to me as a wife. O lord of the earth! I tell you truly that only then will I pardon.’ On hearing the rishi’s words, Sharyati did not hesitate at all. He gave his daughter to the great-souled Chyavana.

‘“After having married the maiden, Chyavana became pacified. Having obtained the favours, the king returned, together with the soldiers. The unblemished Sukanya obtained the ascetic as her husband. She always tended to him lovingly and observed the rules of austerities. The one with the beautiful face, devoid of discontentment, served the fire and the guests and swiftly began to worship Chyavana.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “O king! After some time, the gods who were the two Ashvins saw Sukanya. She had just bathed and was naked. On seeing the beautiful limbs of the one who was like the daughter of the king of the gods, the Nasatyas, the Ashvins, came to her and said, ‘O one with the beautiful thighs! Whose are you? What are you doing in this forest? O fortunate one! We wish to know about you. O beautiful one! Therefore, tell us.’ At that, Sukanya covered herself and told the best of the gods, ‘I am Sharyati’s daughter. I am Chyavana’s wife and property.’ The Ashvins laughed and again told her, ‘O fortunate one! Why has your father bestowed someone like you on a man who has already finished his travels?[548] O timid one! You are radiant in this forest like a flash of lightning. O beautiful one! We have not seen someone equal to you even among the gods. If you are adorned with every ornament and attired in excellent garments, you will dazzle even more with your unblemished limbs, and not smeared in dirt like this. Why does someone like you serve a husband who is overcome with age? O beautiful one! Love and desire have deserted him. O one with the sweet smiles! He is not capable of protecting you and sustaining you. Therefore, give up Chyavana. Therefore, accept one of us as your husband. You are like one born from a divine womb. Do not waste your youth.’ Having been thus addressed, Sukanya again told the gods, ‘I am devoted to my husband Chyavana. Do not have any doubts about that.’ They again told her, ‘We are the physicians of the gods. We will make your husband young and beautiful. Then choose a husband from the three of us. O one with the beautiful face! Tell him about this arrangement and bring him here.’ O king! At these words, she went to Bhrigu’s son and reported this to him. On hearing this, Chyavana told his wife that they should act in that way.

‘“On obtaining her husband’s permission, she said that the act should be done. On hearing her words that the act should be done, the Ashvins said that her husband should immerse himself in the water. Desirous of becoming handsome, Chyavana swiftly entered the water. O king! O lord! The Ashvins also entered the lake. After an instant had passed, all of them climbed out of the lake. All of them were young and divine in beauty, with dazzling earrings. All of them were equal in beauty, bringing delight to the mind. Then all of them told her together, ‘O fortunate one! O blessed one! O beautiful one! Choose one of us for your husband, whomsoever you desire. O one with the beautiful features! Choose whichever one is desired by you.’ On seeing all of them standing there, equal in beauty, the lady chose with her own mind and intelligence and chose her own husband.

‘“Having obtained a wife and the youthful beauty that he desired, Chyavana happily spoke these words to the greatly energetic Nasatyas. ‘You have endowed an aged one with youthful beauty and I have also obtained this lady as my wife. I am pleased with you because you have made me young and I give you the right to drink soma, even in the presence of the king of the gods. I tell you this truthfully.’ Having heard this, the two happily returned to heaven. Chyavana and Sukanya sported themselves, like the gods.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “On learning that Chyavana had become young, Sharyati was delighted and came with his soldiers to visit Bhargava in his hermitage. He saw Chyavana and Sukanya, beautiful like the children of the gods. King Sharyati was as delighted as if he had won the entire earth. With his wife, the lord of the earth was received with honour by the rishi. The king seated himself with the fortunate one[549] and began to converse about weighty matters. Then Bhargava told the king in a conciliatory tone. ‘O king! I will perform a sacrifice for you. Arrange for the ingredients.’ Sharyati, lord of the earth, was extremely delighted at this. O great king! He welcomed Chyavana’s words.

‘“On an auspicious day for the sacrifice, Sharyati constructed an excellent sacrificial ground and filled it with every desirable object. O king! It was there that Bhargava Chyavana performed a sacrifice. Hear about the extraordinary events that occurred there. Chyavana grasped a cup of soma then, so as to offer it to the divine Ashvins. But when he was about to offer the cup, Indra restrained him. Indra said, ‘In my view, these two Nasatyas are unworthy of being offered soma. They are the physicians of the gods and their acts make them unworthy of worship.’ Chyavana replied, ‘They are great in powers. They are great in soul. They are wealthy in beauty and riches. O Maghavan! They have made me young, like the ageless gods. Together with you and the other gods, why should they be unworthy of receiving offerings? O lord of the gods! O Purandara! Know that the Ashvins are also gods.’ Indra said, ‘These two are physicians and nothing but servants. They can adopt any form they desire. They roam the world of the mortals. How can they be deserving of soma?’ Despite Vasava repeating these words, Bhargava paid no heed to Shakra’s words and grasped the cup. On seeing that he was about to offer a share of the excellent soma to the Ashvins, the god, who was the destroyer of Bala, spoke these words. ‘If you willingly grasp the soma and offer it to them, I will hurl my vajra, supreme and terrible in form, at you.' Having been thus addressed, Bhargava smiled and looked at Indra. Following the procedure, he grasped some excellent soma and offered it to the Ashvins.

'"Then Shachi's husband hurled the vajra, terrible in form, at him. Just as he was about to hurl it, Bhargava paralysed his arm. Having paralysed him, Chyavana uttered mantras and made offerings to the fire. Having succeeded in his objective, the greatly energetic one was about to cause violence to the god. Having decided this, with the strength of his austerities, the sage created a gigantic asura by the name of Mada,[550] great in valour and immense in form. His body was incapable of being measured by the gods or the demons. His mouth was terrible. It was gigantic and full of sharp teeth. One of the jaws rested on earth and the other stretched up to heaven. He had four fangs that extended for ten thousand yojanas. His other fangs extended for ten yojanas. They had forms like walls and looked like the tips of spears. His arms were like mountains and each was ten thousand yojanas long. His eyes resembled the sun and the moon. His mouth looked like death. He licked his mouth with his darting tongue, as fickle as lightning. His mouth was agape and his sight terrifying, as if he was about to swallow up the earth by force. In great rage, he rushed at Shatakratu, as if to devour him. The world resounded from the noise of his great and terrible roar."'

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'Lomasha said, "On seeing Mada, terrible of face and with a gaping mouth like that of death himself, approach with the intention of devouring him, the god Shatakratu licked the corners of his mouth in fear. His arm was paralysed. Oppressed by fear, the king of the gods told Chyavana, 'O Bhargava! From today, the Ashvins will be deserving of soma. O brahmana! I truthfully give you my word. You do not undertake an endeavour that is unsuccessful. Your words are the supreme law. O brahmarshi! I know that you never act out of falsehood. You have decided today that these Ashvins are deserving of soma offerings. O

Bhargava! I engineered this to ensure that the power of your valour might spread once more and so that the fame of Sukanya and her father might spread in the world. Therefore, show your favours to me. Let it be as you wish.' At these words of Shakra, the great-souled Bhargava's wrath was swiftly appeased and he set Purandara free.

'"The valorous one divided Mada and distributed him in drinks, women, gambling and hunting, in which, it had earlier been created again and again. Having thus thrown Mada away, he satisfied Indra with soma and also the Ashvins, together with the other gods. Having performed the sacrifice for the king, the supreme among eloquent ones became famous in the worlds because of his valour and sported with his beloved Sukanya in the forest.

'"O king! His lake shines there, noisy with birds. Together with your brothers, you must offer oblations to the ancestors and the gods there. O protector of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having seen this and Sikataksha, you should go to the Saindhava forest and see the streams there. O great king! You should touch the water at all the pushkaras.[551] There is Mount Archika, inhabited by the learned. It is always full of fruit and always has flowing streams. The winds make it the supreme of regions. O Yudhishthira! There are many hundreds of sanctuaries constructed by the thirty gods there. This is the moon's tirtha, worshipped by the rishis, the vaikhanasa rishis and the valakhilyas. There are three sacred peaks and three springs. You can circumambulate them one by one and perform your ablutions, as you desire. O Kounteya! O lord of men! Shantanu, Shunaka and both Nara and Narayana obtained the eternal regions here. O Yudhishthira! The gods and the ancestors always sleep with the maharshis on Mount Archika and perform austerities there. Worship them. O lord of the earth! The rishis prepared the charu there. There is also Yamuna with the eternal currents, where Krishna engaged in austerities. O destroyer of enemies. The twins, Bhimasena, Krishna and we—all of us will go there together, lean and extremely ascetic. O lord of men! This is Indra's sacred stream. Dhata, Vidhata and Varuna ascended upwards there.[552]

O king! They dwelt here, forgiving and engaging in supreme dharma. This pure mountain is appropriate for those who are friendly and of upright minds. O king! Here is the Yamuna, frequented by masses of rajarshis. O king! Many sacrifices have been performed here. It is holy and banishes fear of sin. O Kounteya! The great archer, King Mandhata, himself performed a sacrifice here and so did Somaka Sahadeva, supreme among those who gave.”’

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‘Yudhishthira asked, “Mandhata was a tiger among kings, famous in the three worlds. O great brahmana! How was that supreme of kings, the son of Yuvanashva, born? How did that infinitely radiant one attain the supreme objective? The three worlds were as much under his control as under the great-souled Vishnu. I wish to hear about the character of that wise one. He was as resplendent as Shakra. How did he obtain the name of Mandhata? How was the one with unmatched valour born? You are a skilled one.”[553]

‘Lomasha said, “O king! Listen attentively to how that great-souled king came to obtain the name of Mandhata, recounted in the worlds. There was a lord of the earth named Yuvanashva, in the lineage of Ikshvaku. The protector of the earth performed many sacrifices and gave away a lot of stipends. The foremost among those who uphold dharma performed one thousand horse sacrifices and many other sacrifices, in which, there were many stipends. But the rajarshi, great in his soul and firm in his vows, had no sons. He entrusted the kingdom to his ministers and lived permanently in the forest. Contemplating his own soul, he engaged in the rules laid down in the sacred texts.

‘“Once, his heart was dry with thirst and he entered Bhrigu’s hermitage. O Indra among kings! On that night, the great-souled maharshi, who was Bhrigu’s son, performed a sacrifice so that Soudyumni[554] might obtain a son. Mantras were recited over water and a large pot was filled with this. O Indra among kings! It had been established there earlier, so that his wife might drink it and give birth to a son who was Shakra's equal. The maharshis had placed the pot on the altar. Exhausted as a result of staying up at night, they had gone to sleep. Soudyumni passed them. The king's throat was parched from thirst and he was desperate for a drink. He was exhausted. On entering the hermitage, he asked for a drink. Because he was tired, his throat was dry and no one heard him. His tone was like a bird's notes. On seeing the pot filled with water, the king swiftly ran towards it. Having drunk the cold water, the intelligent king's thirst was quenched and he was happy. He threw the rest of the water away and slept.

'"Later, the rishis awoke, along with the lord of men. On seeing that the pot was empty of water, all of them assembled together and asked, 'Who has done this?' Yuvanashva truthfully replied, 'It was I.' The illustrious Bhargava then said, 'This was not right. After austerities, this water had been collected for the sake of your son. O rajarshi! I performed terrible austerities in the name of the brahman, so that you might have an immensely strong and valorous son and passed it on.[555] He would have been immensely strong and immensely valorous and would have been full of the power of austerities. His valour would have been such that he would even have sent Shakra to Yama's abode. O king! These were the rituals through which the water had been prepared by me. O king! Your drinking the water today is not an act that should have been done. But it is now impossible to reverse the deed that has been done. What you have done must certainly have been decreed by destiny. Because you were thirsty, you drank water that had been sanctified with rites and mantras. O great king! That water was infused with my power and austerities. Therefore, you will yourself give birth to a son with these characteristics. We will perform the rites and sacrifices for you so that this supremely extraordinary event may occur and a valorous son, the equal of Shakra, is born.' Then one hundred years passed. The left side of the great-souled king was rent asunder and a son emerged, extremely energetic like the sun. But Yuvanashva, the lord of men, did not die and this was certainly extraordinary.

'"The immensely energetic Shakra came there to see him and Shakra inserted his own forefinger into the child's mouth. The wielder of the vajra said, ‘He will suck me.’ Then Indra and the other gods named him Mandhata.[556] O protector of the earth! Having sucked the forefinger offered by Shakra, the child grew to thirteen cubits.[557] O great king! The knowledge of the Vedas, together with that of dhanurveda and that of all the divine weapons, appeared before this lord at the instant that he thought about them. The bow named Ajagava, arrows made of horn and impenetrable armour instantly followed his commands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Maghavan Shakra himself instated him. He conquered the three worlds with his dharma, like Vishnu in his valour.[558] The great-souled one’s realm[559] was unobstructed. Gems flowed to the rajarshi of their own accord. O lord of the earth! This earth, with all its riches, belonged to him. He performed many varied sacrifices and gave away abundant stipends. O king! Having erected many sanctuaries in accordance and acquired abundant dharma, that immensely energetic and greatly radiant one obtained half of Shakra’s kingdom. In a single day, the wise one, always with dharma, brought the entire earth, with all its habitations and stores of jewels, under his control. O great king! The four corners of the earth are covered with his sacrificial grounds, where he performed sacrifices with donations. There is no spot that was not covered. O great king! It is said that the great-souled one gave brahmanas ten thousand *padmas*[560] of cattle. When there was a drought for twelve years, the great-souled one made it rain, so that the crops might grow, while the one with the vajra in his hand,[561] looked on. The great king of Gandhara was born in the lunar dynasty. But with a roar like that of the giant clouds, he killed him with his sharp arrows.[562] O king! The great-souled one subjugated the four types of beings. Through his austerities and energy, he established the worlds. This is the place where he, as radiant as the sun, offered sacrifices to the gods. Behold this sacred region, in the middle of Kurukshetra. O protector of the earth! I have narrated to you everything about the great character of Mandhata and his wonderful birth, about which you had asked me.”’

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‘Yudhishthira asked, “O supreme among eloquent ones! What was the valour of King Somaka? I wish to hear accurately about his deeds and his powers.”

‘Lomasha said, “O Yudhishthira! There was a king named Somaka, devoted to dharma. O king! He had one hundred wives, all equal to one another. Though he made great efforts, a son was not born to the lord of the earth, despite a long period of time having passed. One day, after he had grown old and continued to make efforts, a son named Jantu was born to him from those one hundred wives. O lord of the earth! When he was born, all those mothers surrounded him and always gave him everything that might bring him pleasure. One day, an ant bit Jantu on his hips and the child cried out in pain at this bite. Then all the mothers were extremely distressed. They surrounded Jantu and raised a great lamentation. The lord of the earth suddenly heard these loud cries, while he was seated in the midst of his advisers and priests. The king sent for news about what had occurred and the steward brought him news about what had happened to his son. Somaka swiftly arose with his advisers and went to the inner quarters. The chastiser of enemies consoled his son. Having consoled his son, the king emerged from the inner quarters. O king! He sat down with his advisers and priests.

‘“Somaka said, ‘Shame on having a single son. It is better to have none. All beings are always prone to distress and a single son is cause for misery. O brahmana! O lord![563] I examined these one hundred wives and married them for the sake of obtaining sons. But they did not produce offspring. As I endeavoured with all of them, somehow this single son named Jantu was born. What can be greater misery than that? O supreme among brahmanas! My time has passed and so has that of my wives.[564] Their lives are dependent on this single son and that is also the way for me. Isn’t there some ceremony or deed, large, small or difficult, so that I can obtain one hundred sons?’ The officiating priest replied, ‘There is such a deed, so as to obtain one hundred sons. O Somaka! If you can perform it, I will explain it to you.’ Somaka said, ‘Whether it is a good deed or a bad one, if it can get me one hundred sons, know that I will perform it. O illustrious one! Explain it to me.’ The officiating priest replied, ‘O king! I will perform the rite and you will sacrifice Jantu. Then, within a short while, one hundred fortunate sons will be born. When he is offered in the sacrifice, his mothers will inhale the smoke and all of them will give birth to extremely valorous sons. Jantu will also be born as your son from the same woman. A golden mark will be seen on his left side.’”’

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‘“Somaka said, ‘O brahmana! Whatever needs to be done, in whichever way, let it be done accordingly. In a desire to obtain sons, I will do everything that you ask me to.’”

‘Lomasha said, “Then Somaka peformed a sacrifice and offered Jantu. Out of affection for their son, the mothers forcibly tugged at him and cried out, ‘Alas! We are dead!’ Overcome with great distress, the mothers grasped him by his right hand. But the officiating priest grasped him by the left hand and pulled. As they screamed like female ospreys, he dragged their son away. Following the prescribed rites, he offered him as an oblation into the fire. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! As the offering was made, the distressed mothers inhaled the smoke and suddenly fell down on the ground. All the king’s women then conceived. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After ten months had passed, a total of one hundred sons were born to all of them and Somaka. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Jantu was the eldest and he was born to his former mother. They loved him more than their own sons. He had the golden mark on his left side. Among those one hundred sons, he was the best in terms of qualities.

‘“Then Somaka’s preceptor[565] went to the supreme world and after some time had passed, Somaka also followed him there. He saw him[566] being cooked in a terrible hell and asked, ‘O brahmana! Why are you being cooked in this hell?’ Then the preceptor, who was being cooked in terrible fires, told him, ‘O king! I sacrificed for your sake and these are the fruits of that deed.’ Having heard this, the rajarshi told Dharmaraja,[567] ‘I will enter this place. Set my priest free. This immensely fortunate one is being cooked in the fires of hell because of my deed.’ Dharma replied, ‘O king! No one ever obtains the fruits of someone else’s action. O supreme among givers! Behold! Your fruits are there.’ Somaka said, ‘Without this one, learned about the brahman, I do not desire these sacred worlds. I only desire to dwell with him, be it in the abode of the gods, or in hell. O Dharmaraja! My deed is identical with his. O god! Therefore, the merits or the demerits should be equal.’ Dharma replied, ‘O king! If that is your desire, then suffer those fruits with him, for an equal length of time. Later, you will obtain the objective of the virtuous.’ Then the lotus-eyed king did all that. He was the beloved of his preceptor. Together with his brahmana preceptor, and by virtue of his own deeds, he again obtained the radiant worlds. This is his sacred hermitage, radiant before us. A man who controls himself and spends six nights here, obtains the end of the virtuous. O Indra among kings! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Devoid of fever, and controlling our souls, we must spend six nights here. Ready yourself.”’

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‘Lomasha said, “O king! It is said that Prajapati himself sacrificed here in ancient times. That sacrifice, named *ishtikrita*, lasted for one thousand years. Ambarisha, the son of Nabhaga, performed a sacrifice on the banks of the Yamuna. Through his sacrifices and austerities, he attained the supreme objective. This is the region where King Nahusha[568] performed an extremely holy sacrifice and gave away ten padmas to the assisting priests. O Kounteya! The immensely energetic Yayati was a universal emperor who rivalled Shakra. Behold his sacrificial ground there. See how the ground is spiked with many different kinds of sacrificial altars and seems to sink down, under the weight of Yayati’s sacrificial deeds. Here is a *shami* tree[569] with a single leaf. There is a supreme sanctuary. Behold Rama’s[570] lake. Behold Narayana’s hermitage. O lord of the earth! This is the path followed by Richika's immensely energetic son[571] when he traversed the earth, immersed in yoga, on the banks of the stream Roupya.

'"O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When I recited this genealogy, listen to what a pishacha woman, adorned with *ulukhala*s,[572] once said. 'Eat curds in Yugandhara.[573] Spend the night in Achyutasthala. Then bathe in Bhutilaya and dwell there with your sons. After having spent one night there, if you stay for a second night, then the deeds of the day will be different from the deeds of the night.'[574] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, we will stay here tonight. This is Kurukshetra's gate. O king! It is here that King Yayati Nahusha performed sacrifices where many jewels were given away, and Indra was delighted. This is Plakshavatarana, the supreme tirtha on the Yamuna. The learned ones say that it is the gate to the vault of heaven. The supreme rishis performed sarasvata sacrifices here. O son! With their sacrificial stakes and mortars, they then went to take their final baths. Following dharma, King Bharata performed a horse sacrifice right here and let loose a black sacrificial steed to roam the earth. It was here that Marutta, tiger among men, performed a supreme sacrifice and seated himself, protected by Samvarta, foremost among devarshis. O Indra among kings! Bathe here and you will be able to see all the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having touched the water here, you will be cleansed of all evil deeds."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having bathed there with his brothers and having been worshipped by the great rishis, the foremost among the Pandavas then spoke these words to Lomasha. "I can see all the worlds through my austerities. O one for whom truth is valour! From here, I can also see the foremost among the Pandavas,[575] with his white steeds." Lomasha replied, "O mighty-armed one! That is true. Thus do the great rishis see. Look at the sacred Sarasvati, crowded by those for whom she is a refuge. O best of men! By bathing here, you will be cleansed of all sins. The celestial rishis performed the sarasvata sacrifice here. O

Kounteya! So did the rishis and the rajarshis. This is Prajapati's altar, extending five yojanas in every direction. This is the field of the great-souled sacrificer Kuru."'[576]

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'Lomasha said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If mortals perform austerities here, they go to heaven. O king! Men who desire to die, come here by the thousands. In ancient times, a benediction was pronounced by Daksha when he sacrificed here. 'The men who die here will have conquered heaven.' This is the sacred, divine and flowing river Sarasvati. O lord of the earth! This is Sarasvati's Vinashana. This is the gate to the land of the nishadas. O brave one! It is out of hatred for them that the Sarasvati enters the earth, so that the nishadas may not know her. This is Chamasodbheda,[577] where the Sarasvati can be seen. All the sacred and divine rivers that go towards the ocean merge into her here. O destroyer of enemies! This is the great tirtha known as Sindhu, where Lopamudra went to Agastya and accepted him for her husband. O one who shines like the sun! This is the dazzling tirtha of Prabhasa. This is sacred and holy, the cleanser of sin, and is favoured by Indra. The supreme tirtha by the name of Vishnupada can be seen there. Here is the extremely sacred and beautiful river Vipasha.[578] Because of sorrow for his sons, the illustrious rishi Vasishtha tied himself up and threw himself down, arising again, freed of his bonds.[579]

'"O destroyer of enemies! Behold, with your brothers, the region of Kashmira,[580] sacred in every way and frequented by maharshis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is here that a conversation took place between all the rishis from the northern region, Nahusha,[581] Agni and Kashyapa. O great king! The gate to Manasa[582] is evident here. In the midst of this mountain, the illustrious Rama[583] created a region for the rainwater to flow. This is the renowned Vatikashanda, where valour comes from truth. It is to the north of Videha and its gate cannot be breached. This is the auspicious place named Ujjanaka, where sacrifices of barley were made and where the illustrious rishi Vasishtha lived with Arundhati. This is the lake named Kushavan, where there are one trillion[584] beds of kusha grass. Rukimini's[585] hermitage is here and she conquered her anger and found peace here. O Pandava! O great king! You have heard of the great mountain Bhrigutunga, where meditations assemble. You will see it and the rivers Jala and Upajala, near the Yamuna. Performing a sacrifice there, Ushinara surpassed Vasava. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To know whether the king was an equal of the gods, Vasava and Agni came there. To test the great-souled Ushinara and desirous of granting him a boon, Indra became a hawk and Agni became a dove and came to his sacrifice. As a result of fear from the hawk, the dove alighted on the king's thigh, seeking refuge there. O king! Oppressed by fear, it nestled there."'

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'"The hawk said, 'All the kings of the earth say that you have dharma in your soul. Why do you therefore perform a deed that is against all dharma? O king! I am suffering from hunger and this is my decreed food. Do not protect it out of avarice for dharma. Otherwise, you will discard dharma.'

'"The king replied, 'O great bird! This bird is terrified out of fear for you and has sought shelter. To protect its life, it has sought refuge with me. O hawk! Do you not see that it is supreme *adharma* for me to give up this dove, which has sought refuge from fear? O hawk! It can be seen that this dove is agitated and trembling. It has come to me for its life. Giving it up merits condemnation.'

'"The hawk said, 'O lord of the earth! All beings sustain themselves through food. They prosper through food and live because of food. One can live for many nights after giving up objects that are difficult to discard. But one cannot live for a long time after giving up food. O lord of the earth! If I am deprived of my food, my life will give up my body and tread the path from which one does not return.[586] O one with dharma in your soul! After my death, my son and wife will perish. While protecting the dove, you are not protecting many lives. Dharma that stands in the way of another dharma is not dharma at all. It is evil dharma. O one for whom valour is based on truth! Dharma that does not conflict with anything is the right dharma. O lord of the earth! When there is a conflict, you must decide in accordance with what is important and what is unimportant. That should be dharma where there is no conflict. O king! After measuring the important with the unimportant and determining what constitutes dharma, and what does not constitute dharma, you must decide that to be dharma which is weightier and act accordingly.'

'"The king replied, 'O supreme bird! Your words seem to bring much welfare. Are you Suparna,[587] king of the birds? There is no doubt that you are conversant with dharma. You have spoken many attractive words, full of dharma. I do not see anything that is not evident to you. Then how can you think it virtuous to discard someone who has sought refuge? O bird! All your efforts are to get food. You are capable of appeasing your hunger through other food, that which is more plentiful. For your sake, I will now cook whatever you desire—cow, bull, boar, deer or buffalo.'

'"The hawk said, 'O great king! I do not desire a boar, a bull, a deer or anything else. I do not eat them. What use are they to me now? O bull among the kshatriyas! O protector of the earth! Give up the food that has been earmarked for me by destiny. Release the dove. It is the eternal rule that hawks eat doves. O king! Not knowing a plantain tree, do not climb it.'[588]

'"The king replied, 'O one who is worshipped by masses of birds! Rule over this prosperous kingdom of Shibi. O hawk! Alternatively, I will give you everything that you desire. O hawk! But I will not give up the bird that has sought refuge with me. O supreme bird! Tell me what deed I must perform so that you give this up. I will not give up this small bird.'

'"The hawk said, 'O Ushinara! O lord of men! If you have so much affection for the dove, then cut some flesh from your body and weigh it, so that it is equal to the dove. O king! When your flesh is equal to the dove, you can give it to me and I will find satisfaction.'

'"The king replied, 'O hawk! I think this request of yours is a favour. I will right now give you an equal amount of my own flesh.'"

'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! The king was learned in supreme dharma. The illustrious one cut his own flesh and weighed it against the dove. When he found that the dove was heavier than this flesh, King Ushinara again cut some more flesh and gave it. Thus, there was no more flesh left to weigh against the dove. Having given up all the flesh, he himself ascended the scales."

'"The hawk said, 'O one learned in dharma! I am Indra and that dove is the bearer of the sacrificial offerings.[589] We came to your sacrificial grounds to test you about dharma. O lord of the earth! This deed of yours, your cutting off flesh from your body, will be resplendent in the world. O king! As long as men talk in this world, so long will your eternal deed be established in this world.'"

'Lomasha said, "O Pandava! Behold the seat of that great-souled king. It is sacred and the cleanser of all sins. Look at it with me. O king! It is here that the gods and the eternal sages are always seen by brahmanas, who are great-souled and performers of holy deeds."'

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'Lomasha said, "O Indra among men! Behold the sacred hermitage of Shvetaketu, the son of Uddalaka, whose fame as a knower of mantras was recounted on earth. It always has trees full of fruit. Shvetaketu saw Sarasvati herself there, in her human form. When Sarasvati appeared, Shvetaketu told her, 'Give me the power of speech.' O king! At that time, Ashtavakra, the son of Kahoda, and Shvetaketu, the son of Uddalaka, were the foremost among those who knew the brahman and were uncle and nephew. Uncle and nephew, the illustrious brahmanas, went to the sacrifice of King Videha, lord of earth. They vanquished the immeasurable Bandi in a debate."

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What was the power of the brahmana who thus vanquished Bandi? Why was he born as Ashtavakra? O Lomasha! Tell me everything accurately.”

‘Lomasha replied, “Uddalaka had a self-controlled disciple. O king! He was known by the name of Kahoda. He served his preceptor and was devoted to him. He studied for a long time. There were many brahmanas who served as disciples. But the preceptor knew him to be the one. He gave him all his knowledge and his daughter Sujata as a wife. She conceived and the child, who was radiant as the fire, spoke to his studious father. ‘You have studied all night. O father! But you are not right.’ The maharshi was insulted among his own students. He cursed the child who was still inside the womb. ‘Since you spoke while you were still inside, you will be crooked in eight ways.’ He was born exactly as had been spoken and this maharshi became famous as Ashtavakra.[590] His maternal uncle was Shvetaketu, who was equal to him in age. While her son grew inside her, Sujata was extremely distressed. She was poor and desired riches. In a conciliatory tone, she privately spoke to her husband. ‘O maharshi! What will we do without riches? The tenth month is upon me. You have no riches. Once the delivery takes place, how will we overcome the calamity that confronts us?’ Having been thus addressed by his wife, Kahoda went to Janaka for riches. Bandi was skilled in debate. The brahmana was defeated by him and drowned in the waters.

‘“Uddalaka got to know that he had been defeated by a suta[591] and had drowned in the waters. He told Sujata, ‘This must be kept a secret from Ashtavakra.’ She kept this secret extremely well. When he was born, the brahmana heard nothing and thought that Uddalaka was his father and Shvetaketu was his brother. When Ashtavakra was twelve years old, Shvetaketu saw him seated on his father’s lap.[592] He grasped him by the hand and told the weeping one, ‘This is not your father’s lap.’ These harsh words pierced his heart and remained there, making him extremely unhappy. Weeping, he went home and asked his mother, ‘Where is my father?’ Sujata was extremely distressed. Scared of being cursed, she told him everything. Having got to know everything from his mother, the brahmana[593] spoke to Shvetaketu. ‘Let us go to King Janaka’s sacrifice. It has been heard that his sacrifice has many extraordinary things. We will hear debates among the brahmanas. We will also eat excellent food. We will become wiser. The chants of the brahman are auspicious and pacifying.’ Thus, the maternal uncle and nephew went to King Janaka’s prosperous sacrifice. Ashtavakra encountered the king on the road and was restrained.[594] He spoke these words to him.”’[595]

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‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘The road belongs to a blind one. The road belongs to a deaf one. The road belongs to a woman. The road belongs to a bearer of loads. The road belongs to a king. But when a brahmana is encountered on the way, the road must belong to the brahmana.’

‘“The king replied, ‘Then I now give up this road to you. Travel whichever way you desire. There is no fire that is a minor one.[596] Even Indra always bows down before brahmanas.’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘O son![597] We have come to see the sacrifice. Our curiousity cannot be greater. We have come as guests. Let us enter. O gatekeeper! We are waiting for your command. We wish to see the sacrifice of Indradyumna’s son.[598] We wish to see and speak to King Janaka. O gatekeeper! We are being consumed with anger and let that not cause affliction to you.’

‘“The gatekeeper said, ‘We are bound by the commands of Bandi. “Listen to the words I utter.[599] No brahmanas who are children will be allowed entry. Only the old and the learned, the best of brahmanas will be allowed to enter.”’

‘“Ashtavakra replied, ‘O gatekeeper! If entry is allowed to the aged, then I have a right to enter. We are aged because we have observed vows. We have a right to enter because of our knowledge of the Vedas.

We have served[600] and are in control of our senses. We have faithfully trodden the path of knowledge. It is said that children should not be slighted. If touched, a young fire also burns.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'If you know, recite the single-syllabled and many-formed verse invoking Sarasvati. Look at your limbs. You are a child. Do not boast. It is difficult to obtain success in debates.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'Age cannot be deduced from the growth of the body, just as the number of knots on a *shalmali* tree[601] does not indicate its age. Whether it is short or small in form, it is aged because it is full of fruit. A tree without fruit has no traits of age.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'The young receive intelligence from the old, and in due course of time, become aged too. It is impossible to obtain learning in a short time. Therefore, despite being a child, why do you speak as if aged?'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'One does not become old because one's hair has turned white. The gods know that, a child who is learned is old. The rishis have not decreed that the merit of dharma depends on years, grey hair, riches or relatives.[602] "One who has learning is great."[603] I have come here to meet Bandi in the king's presence. Go and announce this now to the king who is garlanded with lotuses. O gatekeeper! Today, you will witness me engaged in a debate with the learned. I may become superior, or I may become inferior, when all the others become silent today.'

'"The gatekeeper said, 'You are only ten years old. How can you enter a sacrifice reserved for entry to the humble and the learned? I will have to devise a means for you to enter. But you must take due care.'

'"Ashtavakra said, 'O king! O supreme among those of the Janaka lineage! You are worthy of praise. You have all the riches. You are the performer of sacrificial deeds, like King Yayati was the only one in ancient times. We have heard that the wise Bandi, after defeating those who know the Vedas in debate, employs your servants to immerse those broken ones in water. Having heard this from the brahmanas, I have come here today to engage in debate. Where is Bandi? Where can I find him? I will destroy him today, like the sun causing the stars to fade.’

‘“The king replied, ‘You hope to vanquish Bandi without knowing the other’s power with words. Those who know his powers are incapable of speaking thus. He has been tested by brahmanas skilled in debate.’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘Those who debated were not like me. That made him like a lion and he roars thus. When he meets me today, he will be destroyed, like a cart on the road with its axle broken.’

‘“The king replied, ‘He alone is supremely wise who knows what has six parts, twelve axles, twenty-four segments and three hundred and sixty spokes.’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘May the wheel[604] with twenty-four segments, six parts, twelve axles and three hundred and sixty spokes always protect you.’

‘“The king asked, ‘They are joined like horses and descend like hawks. Who among the gods gives them birth and who do they give birth to?’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘O king! Let them steer away from your house and even from the houses of your enemies. The one with the wind as a charioteer gives them birth and they also give birth to him.’[605]

‘“The king asked, ‘What does not close its eyes when it sleeps? What does not move when it is born? What has no heart? What increases in speed when force is imposed?’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘A fish does not close its eyes when it sleeps. An egg does not move when it is born. A stone has no heart. A river increases in speed when force is imposed.’

‘“The king replied, ‘I do not think that you are a man. You possess divine energy. You are not a child. I regard you as aged. There is no one who is your equal in the power of words. Therefore, I am throwing the gate open. There is Bandi.’”’

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‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘O king! There are kings who are assembled here, unrivalled in power, with their dreadful armies. The ones who debate, like swans cackling in a great expanse of water, should not find a means of escape. You pride yourself on being a great debater.[606] When you engage with me today, you will not flow like a river's current. O Bandi! My energy will blaze like fire on kindling. Stand firm before me today.'

'"Bandi replied, 'Do not awaken a sleeping tiger. The virulent snake is licking its mouth. If you kick it on the head with your feet, you will not excape. Be sure that you will be bitten. The extremely weak man is insolent and strikes a mountain, only to lacerate his hands and nails himself. No wounds can be seen on the mountain. Like all mountains before Mainaka, like calves before a bull, all the other kings are inferior to the king of Mithila.'"

'Lomasha said, "Ashtavakra roared in that assembly. O king! His wrath was aroused and he spoke to Bandi. 'Tell me the answer to my question. I will tell you the answer to your question.'"

'"Bandi said, 'There is only one fire, but it is kindled in many forms. There is only one sun that illuminates everything. There is only one warrior and slayer, the king of the gods. There is only one Yama, the lord of the ancestors.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'Indra and Agni roam together, as friends. There are two devarshis, Narada and Parvata. There are two Ashvins. There are two wheels to a chariot. As decreed by the creator, wife and husband live together.'

'"Bandi said, 'Beings are born thrice as a result of their deeds.[607] The *vajapeya* is united with three.[608] Thrice do the *adhvaryu*s perform the act of pressing.[609] It is said that there are three worlds and three sources of light.'[610]

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'There are four stages of life for a brahmana.[611] Four are required to complete the sacrifice. There are four directions and four varnas. It has always been said that cows have four feet.'[612]

'"Bandi said, 'There are five fires.[613] The *pankti* has five feet.[614] There are five sacrifices.[615] There are five organs of sense. It has been seen in the Vedas that apsaras have five tufts of hair.[616] There are five sacred rivers in the world.'[617]

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'When the sacrificial fire is prepared, six cows are the dakshina. There are six seasons in the wheel of time. There are six organs of sense.[618] There are six in Krittika.[619] It has been seen in all the Vedas that there are six *sadasykas*.'[620]

'"Bandi said, 'There are seven kinds of domestic animals and seven that are wild.[621] There are seven meters that carry the sacrifice.[622] There are seven rishis.[623] There are seven forms of offering homage.[624] The veena is known to have seven strings.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'Eight *shanas* bear a hundred.[625] Sharabha, the destroyer of the lion, has eight feet.[626] We have heard that among the gods, there is a class of eight Vasus. In all sacrifices, the sacrificial post has eight corners.'

'"Bandi said, 'When kindling sacrifices for the ancestors, nine verses are used. It is said that there are nine stages in creation. The brihati meter has nine syllables. Nine digits are always used in calculations.'[627]

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'In the world of men, it has been said that there are ten stages.[628] It has been said that a thousand is made up of ten complete hundreds. A woman who has conceived bears for ten months. There are ten Dasherakas, Dashas and Dasharnas.'[629]

'"Bandi said, 'Eleven animals are used in the *ekadashi* rite.[630] There are eleven sacrificial stakes. There are eleven changes in the breath of life.[631] It has been said that there are eleven Rudras among the gods.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'It has been said that there are twelve months in a year. The jagati meter is formed out of twelve syllables. It has been said that an ordinary sacrifice lasts for twelve days. The brahmanas say that there are twelve Adityas.'

'"Bandi said, 'It has been said that the thirteenth lunar day is terrible. The earth is formed out of thirteen islands …'"[632]

‘Lomasha said, “Having said this, Bandi fell silent. Then Ashtavakra completed the other half of the shloka. Keshi travelled for thirteen days.[633] It has been said that the *atichhanda* meter has thirteen syllables.” At that, when they saw that the suta’s son had fallen silent, a loud applause arose. His head was lowered and he was immersed in thought. But Ashtavakra went on reciting. In King Janaka’s grand sacrifice, there was a tremendous uproar. Hands joined in salutation, all the brahmanas went to Ashtavakra and worshipped him.

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘I have heard that, vanquishing learned brahmanas in debate, this one immersed them in water. Let Bandi follow the same dharma today. Seize him and immerse him also.’

‘“Bandi said, ‘I am the son of King Varuna. O Janaka! A sacrifice that will last for twelve years is taking place, equal in duration to your sacrifice. Therefore, I have sent the foremost brahmanas there. All of them had gone to witness Varuna’s sacrifice. But behold. They are returning. I worship the venerable Ashtavakra. Because of him, I will join the one who gave me birth.’

‘“Ashtavakra replied, ‘You immersed brahmanas in the water of the ocean. Though they were learned and intelligent, they lost in debate. I have now rescued their speech through my learning. Let the learned examine these words. Jataveda[634] Agni knows the houses of the learned and does not consume them. Thus the learned examine the words that are spoken, even if they are uttered by children, sons and those to be pitied. Has your energy become lean because of *shleshmataki*?[635] Or is that flattery has intoxicated you? You are like an elephant that has been goaded. O Janaka! You are hearing. But you are not paying attention to these words of mine.’

‘“Janaka said, ‘I am listening to your words. They are divine in form and superhuman. Your form is also celestial. Since you have vanquished Bandi in debate today, Bandi is yours, to do as you desire.’

‘“Ashtavakra replied, ‘O king! I have no use for Bandi alive. If Varuna is his father, immerse him in the water.’

'"Bandi said, 'I am the son of King Varuna. I have no fear from being immersed in the water. Ashtavakra will soon see his father Kahoda, who had been destroyed a long time ago.'"[636]

'Lomasha said, "Then Varuna's great-souled son showed homage to all the brahmanas. All of them arose and approached Janaka. Kahoda said, 'O Janaka! It is for this reason that men desire sons who will perform deeds. My son has performed the deed that I was unable to. O Janaka! To a weak one may be born a strong son, to a foolish one an intelligent one and to an ignorant one a wise one.' Bandi said, 'O king! May you be fortunate. Yama will use your sharp axe to chop off the heads of your enemies. At this sacrifice of King Janaka's, there were great recitations and the best of sama hymns were sung. Soma was drunk in copious amounts at the sacrifice. Delighted in heart, the gods themselves partook of their sacred shares.' O king! When all the brahmanas arose, more resplendent than they had been before, Bandi obtained King Janaka's permission and entered the waters of the ocean. Ashtavakra showed homage to his father. As is proper, he was worshipped by the brahmanas. Having vanquished the Bandi, he returned to the best of hermitages with his uncle. O Kounteya! Therefore, with your brothers and with the brahmanas, dwell here happily. O Ajamidha! With me, you will then go to other sacred places, devoted and pure in your deeds."'

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'Lomasha said, "O king! Madhuvila Samanga can be seen here.[637] This is the place where Bharata[638] bathed, known by the name of Kardamila. After Shachi's husband killed Vritra, we have heard that he was struck by misfortune.[639] He was cleansed of all his sins after bathing in Samanga. O bull among men! This is the place where Mainaka sunk into the earth. In ancient times, Aditi cooked food here, so as to obtain sons. O bull among men! Ascend this king of mountains and dispel your ill fame and misfortune, incapable of being expressed in words. O king! These are the Kankhala mountains, loved by the rishis. O Yudhishthira!

The great river Ganga is resplendent here. In ancient times, the illustrious Sanatkumara obtained success here. O Ajamidha! By bathing here, you will be cleansed of all your sins. O Kounteya! With your advisers, silently touch the waters of this lake, known as Punya, the mountain Bhrigutunga and the Ganga. The beautiful hermitage of Sthulasirasa is there. O Kounteya! Discard all sense of ego and anger. O Pandava! The beautiful hermitage of Raibhya is resplendent here. The wise Yavakrita, Bharadvaja's son, died there."

'Yudhishthira asked, "What powers did the rishi who was Bharadvaja's son possess? Why did the sage's son, Yavakrita, die? I wish to hear all this exactly as it happened. O Lomasha! I find delight in listening to the deeds of those who were equals of the gods."

'Lomasha said, "Bharadvaja and Raibhya were friends. They lived here happily, in the interior of the forest and in great friendship. Raibhya had two sons named Arvavasu and Paravasu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bharadvaja had a son named Yavakrita. Raibhya and his sons were learned. The other one[640] was an ascetic. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Right from childhood, their friendship was unparalleled. Yavakrita noticed that his father was an ascetic and received no honours. O unblemished one! But Raibhya and his sons were honoured by brahmanas. The energetic one was tormented by this and became overcome with anger. O Pandava! He performed terrible austerities in order to obtain knowledge of the Vedas. He burnt his body in a gigantic and flaming fire. The great ascetic generated anxiety in Indra's mind. O Yudhishthira! Indra went to Yavakrita and asked him, 'Why are you engaged in these supreme torments?' Yavakrita replied, 'O one who is worshipped by the masses of gods! I am performing this supreme austerity so that the Vedas, studied by brahmanas, become manifest in me. O chastiser of Paka! My efforts are for my own knowledge. O Koushika![641] O illustrious one! The knowledge of the Vedas must be acquired from a preceptor and take a long time. Therefore, I am engaged in this great endeavour.' Indra replied, 'O brahmana rishi! This is not the path for you. This is not the road you wish to traverse. O brahmana! Why do you wish to destroy yourself? Go and learn from a preceptor's mouth.'

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken these words, Shakra left. Yavakrita, whose valour was infinite, also left and once again engaged in austerities. O king! We have heard that with his terrible and great austerities, he caused great distress to the king of the gods. He was burnt by the terrible austerities of the great sage. The god who was the slayer of Bala came to restrain him again. 'The goal that you have set for yourself is not possible. You have not thought properly about how the knowledge of the Vedas can be manifested to you and your father.' Yavakrita replied, 'O king of the gods! If I do not succeed in my desired objective through these deeds, I will torment myself with greater austerities and engage in greater vows. O Maghavan! O king of the gods! Listen. If you do not satisfy my desires, everything that I wish for, I will slice off my limbs and offer them into the fire.' On realizing that the great-souled sage's resolution was firm, the intelligent and wise one thought of a means of restraining him.

'"Then Indra assumed the form of a brahmana ascetic, who was several hundred years old, feeble and overcome with consumption. He began to construct a bridge of sand on the Bhagirathi, at the tirtha where Yavakrita used to go for his ablutions. Since that supreme of brahmanas had not paid any heed to his words, Shakra sought to fill up the Ganga with scoops of sand. He filled his fists with sand and threw them into the Bhagirathi. Shakra attempted to construct the bridge so as to attract Yavakrita's attention. When Yavakrita, bull among sages, saw his attempts to bind up the river, he broke into loud laughter and uttered these words. 'O brahmana! What is going on? What do you wish to do? Why are you expending this great endeavour on this fruitless objective?' Indra replied, 'When I have bound up the Ganga through a bridge, it will be easy to cross. O son! People suffer great difficulties when they repeatedly try to cross it.' Yavakrita said, 'It is not possible to bind this mighty torrent. Refrain from that which is impossible and embark on something that is possible.' Indra replied, 'I have embarked on this task, just as you have embarked on austerities for the Vedas, a burden of mortification that is impossible to accomplish.’ Yavakrita said, ‘O lord of the thirty gods! O chastiser of Paka! If you think that my endeavours are as fruitless as yours, then tell me what you think is possible for me. O lord of the masses of gods! Favour me with boons so that I become superior to others.’ Then Indra granted the boons the great ascetic asked for. ‘As you desire, the Vedas will become manifest in you and your father. All your other desires will also be satisfied. O Yavakrita! You can go now.’ Having attained his objective, he went to his father and said …”’

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‘“Yavakrita said, ‘O father! The Vedas will become manifest in both you and me. I have obtained other boons through which we will be superior to others.’

‘“Bharadvaja replied, ‘O son! Since you have obtained all the boons that you desired, you must be proud. But once you are filled with pride, you will soon be miserably destroyed. O son! On this, an account recited by the gods is cited. In ancient times, there was a valorous sage by the name of Valadhi. He was afflicted by grief over his son and engaged in difficult austerities so that he might obtain a son who was immortal. He obtained this. But though the gods showed him their favours, they did not make him the equal of the immortals. “A mortal one can never be immortal and life must be subject to causes.”[642] Valadhi said, “O supreme among the gods! These mountains have been established for an eternal time and are indestructible. They will determine my son’s span of life.”[643] Later, a son was born to him. His name was Medhavi and he was prone to anger. Having heard about his origins, he became insolent and insulted the rishis. He roamed the earth, causing injury to the sages. Then he met the immensely energetic and intelligent Dhanushaksha. Medhavi insulted him and the valorous one cursed him. “Be reduced to ashes.” But at these words, he was not reduced to ashes. On seeing that Medhavi was not hurt, the valorous Dhanukaksha caused the determinant of his life to be shattered by buffaloes. When the determinant was destroyed, the child instantly died. The father grasped his dead son and began to lament. On seeing him loudly lament in great misery, all the ancient sages who were learned in the Vedas, recited a verse. Listen to it. "Under no circumstances, can one who is mortal change his destiny. Dhanushaksha shattered the mountains with buffaloes." Having thus obtained boons, young ascetics are filled with pride and swiftly meet their destruction. Do not become like them. Raibhya is immensely valorous and his sons are like that. O son! Therefore, be careful that you do not cross him. O son! If he is angered, he can crush you with his wrath. Raibhya is a learned ascetic and a great rishi prone to anger.'

'"Yavakrita replied, 'O father! I will do as you say. Have no anxiety on my account. You are my father and I will honour Raibhya as I honour you.'"

'Lomasha said, "Having thus replied to his father in sweet words, Yavakrita, who had nothing to fear, took great pleasure in causing injury to other rishis."'

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'Lomasha said, "One day, in the month of Madhava,[644] Yavakrita, who was without any fear, roamed around and arrived at Raibhya's hermitage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He saw the beautiful hermitage, adorned with trees in blossom. He saw his[645] daughter-in-law, roaming around like a kinnara lady. Having lost his senses because of desire, Yavakrita shamelessly told the bashful one, 'Come to me.' Knowing his conduct and fearing his curse, as well as the energetic Raibhya, she went to him and said, 'Let it be that way.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Taking her to a lonely spot, he injected her with seed. Raibhya, the destroyer of enemies, then returned to his own hermitage and saw his daughter-in law, Paravasu's wife, distressed and weeping. O Yudhishthira! He comforted her with sweet words and asked her the reason. The fortunate one then told him everything that

Yavakrita had said and also what she had replied, after carefully thinking it over.

'"Having heard of Yavakrita's misconduct, Raibhya was consumed by great anger and it seemed as if his heart would burn. The ascetic's anger was great. He plucked a lock from his matted hair, and observing the rites, offered it into the fire. A woman arose, exactly like the other one[646] in beauty. He again plucked out another lock and offered it into the fire. A rakshasa with terrible eyes, fearful in form, arose. The two of them then asked Raibhya, 'What should we do?' In anger, the rishi replied, 'Kill Yavakrita.' They promised that they would act as they had been asked to and went to kill Yavakrita. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The *kritya*[647] whom the great-souled one had created went to Yavakrita, and having deluded him, robbed him of his water-pot.[648] Without his water-pot, Yavakrita became unclean. The rakshasa then rushed at him, with an upraised spear. On seeing him approach with an upraised spear and with intent to kill, Yavakrita swiftly arose and dashed towards a pond. On finding that the pond was bereft of water, Yavakrita swiftly went to all the rivers. But they had also dried up.

'"Pursued by the terrible rakshasa with the upraised spear and in fear, he suddenly went to his father's agnihotra. But his entry was forcibly barred by a shudra guard who was blind. O king! The doorkeeper restrained him by force. While the shudra restrained Yavakrita, the rakshasa pursued him with the spear. His heart pierced, he fell down. Having killed Yavakrita, the rakshasa returned to Raibhya. With Raibhya's permission, he began to roam around with the one who was not an *arya*."'[649]

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'Lomasha said, "O Kounteya! Having completed the studies and rituals and having collected firewood, Bharadvaja entered his hermitage. On seeing him, all the fires used to stand up to greet him. But because his son had been killed, they did not stand up then. On witnessing this distortion in the agnihotra, the great ascetic spoke to the blind shudra house-guard who was seated there. ‘O shudra! Why are the fires not delighted on seeing me? Nor are you, as you used to earlier.[650] Is everything well in the hermitage? Is there any chance that my dim-witted son has gone to Raibhya? Tell me all this quickly. My mind is not at peace.’ The shudra replied, ‘Indeed, your dim-witted son did go to Raibhya. He is now lying dead, killed by a powerful rakshasa. He was pursued by the rakshasa with an upraised spear. But as a doorkeeper, I restrained him at the door of the place where the fire is kept. He desired water, but was certainly in an unclean state.[651] He was then swiftly killed by the rakshasa with the upraised spear.’

‘“On hearing these unpleasant words of the shudra, Bharadvaja grasped his dead son and lamented in great misery. ‘You performed austerities for the welfare of brahmanas, so that the Vedas not studied by brahmanas might become manifest in you. Your conduct towards the great-souled brahmanas was always driven by welfare. You exhibited no sin towards all beings. Nevertheless, you became harsh. O son! I prohibited you from seeing the place where Raibhya lives, because it is like Yama, the bringer of death. But you went to that mean place. The immensely energetic one knows me to be old and that you were my only son. But that supremely ill-minded one fell prey to anger. Because of Raibhya’s deed, I am now mourning for my son. O son! Because of your loss and your death, I will give up my life, the most precious thing on earth. Just as I am giving up my body out of sorrow for my son, Raibhya’s eldest son will soon kill him, though he will be innocent. Happy are men to whom sons have not been born. They roam happily, without having to grieve over a son. Who can be more evil than those who, grieving over the death of their sons and miserable and disturbed in senses, curse their dearest friends? Having seen my son dead, I have cursed my best friend. Where is there a second one who confronts such calamity?’ Having thus lamented in many ways, Bharadvaja cremated his son. Later, he himself entered a fire that had been kindled well.”’

‘Lomasha said, “At this time, the powerful and immensely fortunate King Brihaddyumna, for whom Raibhya was the sacrificial priest, performed a sacrifice. The intelligent Brihaddyumna appointed Raibhya’s two sons, Arvavasu and Paravasu, as assistants at the sacrifice. O Kounteya! Having obtained their father’s permission, they went there. Raibhya remained in the hermitage with Paravasu’s wife. One day, Paravasu returned home to see her. He saw his father in the forest, attired in black antelope skin. It was late in the night and he was blind from sleep. He saw his father roaming in the dense forest and took him to be an animal. Thinking that his father was an animal, he killed him. He did not do this out of a desire for violence, but because he wanted to protect his own body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He performed all the funeral rites.

‘“Then he returned to the place where the sacrifice was being held and told his brother, ‘You will never be able to accomplish this deed alone. I have killed our father, mistaking him to be an animal. Therefore, you observe the righteous rite that must be observed for killing a brahmana. O sage! I am capable of accomplishing the deed alone.’ Arvavasu replied, ‘Then you complete the intelligent Brihaddyumna’s sacrifice. For your sake, I will control my senses and act so as to expunge the sin of killing a brahmana.’ O Yudhishthira! Having completed the vow required for killing a brahmana, the sage Arvavasu again returned to the sacrifice.

‘“On seeing that his brother had returned, Paravasu spoke these words to Brihaddyumna, who was with his advisers. ‘See that this killer of a brahmana is not permitted to enter the sacrifice. There is no doubt that the mere glance of a killer of a brahmana will cause you injury.’ O king! Arvavasu was then thrown out by the servants, though he cried out repeatedly, ‘I am not the killer of a brahmana.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The servants kept calling him the killer of a brahmana. He did not admit that he had observed the vow of killing a brahmana for his own sake. ‘My brother performed the deed and I have freed him.’ O king! The gods were delighted at Arvavasu’s deeds. They instated him as the priest and Paravasu was dismissed. With Agni at the forefront, the gods granted him boons. He asked for the boon that his father might stand up alive, that his brother might be freed from the sin of killing their father and that both Bharadvaja and Yavakrita might rise up again. O Yudhishthira! All of them manifested themselves again.

'"Yavakrita then told the gods, with Agni at the forefront, 'I have observed and accomplished the vow of knowing the brahman. O supreme among the immortals! Using that particular rite, how was it that Raibhya was capable of slaying a learned ascetic like me?' The gods replied, 'O Yavakrita! O sage! Do not think it is the way you have spoken. Earlier, you have learned the Vedas in an easy way, without resorting to a preceptor. But he studied it with a great deal of difficulty, after satisfying his preceptors with his own deeds. He learnt about the supreme brahman over a long period of time and after tolerating suffering.' Thus did the gods speak to Yavakrita, with Agni at the forefront. Having revived all of them, the gods returned to heaven. O tiger among kings! This is the supreme hermitage, with trees that are always full of flowers and fruit. Spend the night here and you will be cleansed of all sins."'

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'Lomasha said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! O king! You have now left behind the mountains Ushirabija, Mainaka and Shveta and also the mountain Kala. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Ganga is resplendent here in seven streams. This region is beautiful and sacred. Agni always burns here. But this cannot be now seen by a mere man. But if you are collected and concentrate your minds, you will be able to see these tirthas. We will now ascend Mount Shveta and Mount Mandara. The yaksha Manichara, and Kubera, the king of the yakshas, dwell there. O king! O best of men! Eighty-eight thousand gandharvas who are swift in travelling and four times that number of kimpurushas and yakshas, in many different forms and wielding many different weapons, wait upon Manibhadra, the Indra of the yakshas. Their prosperity is immense. Their speed is equal to that of the wind. They are certainly capable of dislodging the king of the gods from his seat. O son! This region is secret and is protected by powerful *yatudhanas*.[652] O Partha! These mountains are difficult of access. Therefore, use supreme concentration. Kubera has other terrible advisers and rakshasas as friends. O Kounteya! We will meet them. Therefore, concentrate your valour. O king! Mount Kailasa extends for six hundred yojanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods assemble there, in that extensive region. O Kounteya! There are innumerable yakshas, rakshasas and kinnaras, serpents, divine birds[653] and gandharvas, in the direction of Kubera's abode. O Partha! O king! Protected by me and through Bhimasena's strength, and with your own austerities and control, mix with them now. May King Varuna and Yama, victorious in battle, and Ganga and Yamuna, and the mountains give you safety. 'O goddess Ganga![654] I hear your sounds from the top of Indra's golden mountain. O fortunate one! Protect him from these mountains, this Indra among men who is honoured by all those of the Ajamidha lineage.[655] O daughter of the mountains! This king is about to enter these mountains. Therefore, grant him your protection.'"

'Yudhishthira said, "Lomasha's confusion is unprecedented.[656] All of you guard Krishna and do not be careless. His view is that this region is difficult of access. Therefore, let us observe complete cleanliness."'

Vaishampayana said, 'He then told the greatly valorous Bhima, "O Bhimasena! Protect Krishna carefully. O son![657] Whether Arjuna is far or whether he is near, it is you Krishna resorts to in times of fear." Then the great-souled one went to the twins and inhaled the fragrance of their hands and embraced their bodies. In a voice choking with tears, the king said, "Do not be afraid. Tread carefully."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "There are hidden beings here, powerful rakshasas. O Vrikodara! We are capable of passing them with fire and austerities. O Kounteya! Resorting to strength, control your hunger and thirst. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Resort to your strength and dexterity. You have heard the words of the rishi about Mount Kailasa. O Kounteya! Use your intelligence to think about how Krishna will pass this place. O lord! Alternatively, return from here with Sahadeva, Dhoumya, the cooks, the superintendents of the kitchen, all the servants, the chariots, the horses and other brahmanas who cannot bear the difficulties of the road, with all of them. O Bhima! O one with the large eyes! The three of us will go on, restrained in our food and rigid in our vows—the immensely ascetic Lomasha, I and Nakula. Wait carefully for my return at Gangadvara. Dwell there and protect Droupadi until I return."

'Bhima replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The princess is oppressed by exhaustion and miserable. But in a desire to see Shvetavahana,[658] there is no doubt that she will travel. Your suffering is also acute at not being able to see him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It will be even more without Sahadeva, I and Krishna. If you so wish, let all the chariots return with the servants, the cooks, the superintendents of the kitchen and whoever else you think of. I do not wish to leave you here, in these mountains infested by rakshasas, in this uneven and difficult region. This immensely fortunate princess is devoted to her vows. O tiger among men! She will not be able to return without you. Like that, Sahadeva is always devoted to you. I know his mind and he will never return. O great king! In addition, all of us wish to see Savyasachi. All of us are desirous and therefore, all of us will travel together. If we cannot use our chariots to travel over these mountains with many caverns, we will travel on foot. O king! Do not worry. I will carry Panchali wherever she is incapable of travelling on her own. This is what I have decided in accordance with my intelligence. O king! Do not worry. I will also carry these two delicate warriors who are the delight of Madri.[659] I will bear them over difficult terrain, if they are incapable of doing it themselves."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Bhima! Since you have spoken like this, let your strength increase, so that you are capable of carrying Droupadi on this long journey, and also the twins. O fortunate one! No one else can do it. May your strength, fame, devotion to dharma and deeds increase. O mighty-armed one! If you are able to carry your brothers and Krishna, may you not suffer from exhaustion. May defeat never confront you.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then the beautiful Krishna laughed and spoke these words. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage![660] I will travel. Do not be anxious on my account.”

‘Lomasha said, “It is possible to traverse Mount Gandhamadana with austerities. O Kounteya! O king! Therefore, let all of us be united with austerities—Nakula, Sahadeva, Bhimasena, I and you—so that we are able to see Shvetavahana.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Having happily conversed in this fashion, they happily saw the extensive region of Subahu, prosperous with many elephants and horses, infested with kiratas, *tanganas* and full of hundreds of *kunindas*.[661] This Himalayan region is frequented by the gods and has many extraordinary things. On seeing them, Subahu, lord of the kunindas, was extremely delighted. He met them at the frontiers and welcomed them with homage. Having been thus worshipped, all of them happily dwelt there for some time. When the sun was clear,[662] they left for the Himalaya mountains. O king! The servants, Indrasena being the foremost, the superintendents of the kitchen, the cooks and all of Droupadi’s retinue were entrusted by the maharathas to the king who was the lord of the kunindas. The Pandavas, the immensely valorous descendants of the Kourava lineage, then slowly left that region on foot, together with Krishna. They were extremely happy at the prospect of seeing Dhananjaya.’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “O Bhimasena! O twins! O Panchali! Listen. There exists nothing in beings that is destroyed. Look at us roaming in the forest. We may tell each other that we are weak and oppressed, but though incapable, must travel in a desire to see Dhananjaya. It[663] burns my body, like fire on a pile of cotton. I do not see the brave Dhananjaya by my side. In a desire to see him, I live with my younger brothers in the forest. Because of the extreme oppression meted out to Yajnaseni, that brave one must also be burning.[664] I do not see the infinitely energetic Partha, Nakula's elder, the terrible wielder of the invincible bow. O Vrikodara! I am tormented on that account. With a desire to see him, I have visited beautiful tirthas, forests and lakes, together with you. I have not seen the brave Dhananjaya, devoted to the truth, for five years. O Vrikodara! Since I do not see Bibhatsu, it is consuming me. O Vrikodara! Since I do not see the dark and mighty-armed Gudakesha,[665] whose brave gait is like that of a lion, I am tormented. O Vrikodara! I do not see that best of men, accomplished in the use of weapons, skilful in battle and the equal of any archer. It is for this reason that I am tormented. Among the masses of enemies, he strides like angry Yama, the destroyer. Dhananjaya has the shoulders of a lion and is like a maddened elephant. He is not inferior to Shakra in strength and valour. Partha, the one with the white horses, is infinitely brave and is elder to the twins. On not being able to see Phalguna, I am immersed in immense grief. Even when he was insulted by an inferior man, he was always forgiving in his conduct. He gave shelter and protection to those who walked the straight path. But to those who were crooked and to those who sought to kill him through deceitful means, even if it happened to be the wielder of the vajra himself,[666] he was like virulent poison. The greatly strong Bibhatsu is infinite in his soul. The powerful one always granted protection to an enemy who sought refuge with him. He was always our refuge. He destroyed his enemies in battle. He robbed all their jewels and he brought all of us happiness. In earlier times, it was through his valour that I obtained many celestial jewels of different types, those that Suyodhana now possesses. O brave one! In earlier times, through the strength of his arms, I once possessed an assembly hall. O Pandava! It was full of all kinds of gems and was famous in the three worlds. He is like Vasudeva in his valour. He is Kartavirya's equal in war. He is invincible and unconquered in battle. I do not see Phalguna. The one who slew enemies with his valour was born after the immensely valorous Sankarshana,[667] after Bhima who is unvanquished in battle and after Vasudeva. The strength of his arms is equal to the power of Purandara. He is equal to the wind in his speed, to the moon in the beauty of his face and to eternal death in his anger.

'"O might-armed one! O brave one! Desiring to see that tiger among men, all of us will now enter Mount Gandhamadana. The exetensive Badari is there and the hermitage of Nara and Narayana. It is always inhabited by yakshas. We will see that supreme mountain. We will see Kubera's beautiful lotus pond, protected by rakshasas. Observing great austerities, we will traverse on foot. O Vrikodara! One who has failed in austerities cannot reach that region. Nor can one who is cruel or avaricious, or one who has not calmed himself. O Bhima! In order to follow Arjuna's footsteps, all of us will go there. We will be armed and strap our swords. We will be accompanied by brahmanas who observe great vows. Those who are not controlled encounter flies, gnats, mosquitoes, tigers, lions and reptiles. O Partha! But those who are controlled do not see them. Therefore, let us control our souls. Let us be restrained in our food. We will enter Mount Gandhamadana to see Dhananjaya."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'All of those infinitely energetic warriors were excellent archers. They had tautened bows and quivers full of arrows. They had armour for their arms and their fingers. They had swords. They grasped them and took the best of the brahmanas with them. O king! Together with Panchali, they proceeded towards Gandhamadana. They saw lakes, rivers, mountains and forests on the top of the mountain and trees that provided a lot of shade. There were regions that always had flowers and fruit, frequented by masses of devarshis. The brave ones controlled their souls and lived on roots and fruit. They travelled through high lands and low, regions that were uneven and full of dangers. They saw many different kinds of animals. The brave and great-souled ones then entered Mount Gandhamadana, frequented by rishis, siddhas and immortals, loved by gandharvas and apsaras and a mountain peopled by kinnaras.

‘O lord of the earth! As the brave ones entered Mount Gandhamadana, a violent storm arose, with a large quantity of rain. A gigantic cloud of dust arose, raising a mass of dry leaves. This suddenly covered the earth, the sky and heaven. Nothing could be seen when the sky was covered with dust. They were not even capable of communicating to one another what they thought in their minds. Their eyes were enveloped in the darkness and they could not see. They could not even see each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were battered by the storm of rocks and dust. The trees were torn asunder by the wind and were forcibly flung down on the ground. A great sound arose from other trees. “Is the sky falling down on the ground? Are the mountains splitting asunder?” Deluded by the wind, this is what all of them thought in their minds. They were battered by the wind and were frightened. They felt their way with their hands, groping for trees, anthills and uneven terrain along the road and lay down. Grasping his bow and grasping Krishna, the immensely strong Bhimasena sought shelter under a tree. Dharmaraja and Dhoumya lay down in that great forest. Sahadeva, who had the agnihotra with him, lay down under a mountain.[668] Nakula, the other brahmanas and the greatly asectic Lomasha were alarmed, and seeking refuge in the trees, lay down.

‘Then the wind died down. The storm of dust was calmed. A great downpour started from the heavy clouds. Aided by the swift wind, there was torrential rain and hail, incessantly. This flooded the ground on all sides. O lord of the earth! On every side, rivers that were headed towards the ocean were covered with foam and dirt and overflowed. Bearing large quantities of water and overflowing with foam, they rushed with a thunderous roar, uprooting gigantic trees. When the rain subsided, the wind died down, the water flowed down to the lower regions and the sun appeared, all of them slowly emerged and assembled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once again, the brave ones proceeded towards Mount Gandhamadana.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the great-souled Pandavas had travelled a short distance, Droupadi, who was not accustomed to travelling on foot, sat down. She was exhausted and miserable from the storm and the wind. The famous Panchali was delicate and fainted. When the black-eyed one fell down with faintness, she clasped her thighs with her round and beautiful arms. Trying to support herself with her thighs, which were like the trunks of an elephant, she suddenly fell down on the ground, like a trembling plantain tree. On seeing the one with the beautiful hips fall like a clinging creeper, the valorous Nakula dashed forward and grasped her. Nakula said, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The dark-eyed daughter of the king of Panchala is exhausted and has fallen down on the ground. Be considerate. She does not deserve unhappiness. But the one whose gait is slow has suffered great unhappiness. O great king! Comfort her. She is tired out through exhaustion.” On hearing these words, the king was extremely distressed. Bhima and Sahadeva also swiftly rushed towards her.

‘Kounteya[669] looked at her. She was wan in face and emaciated. Taking her on his lap, the one with dharma in his soul began to lament. “She was accustomed to sleeping on beautifully spread beds, in houses that were guarded well. This beautiful one is deserving of happiness. How is it that she has fallen down on the ground? Her feet are delicate. She is deserving of boons. Her face is like a lotus, but because of me, it is now darkened. Having been addicted to dice, what have I done out of my stupidity? With Krishna, I am now wandering around in this forest, infested by masses of animals. Her father, King Drupada, bestowed the large-eyed one, thinking that with the Pandavas as her husbands, Panchali would obtain happiness. None of that has happened. She is oppressed by exhaustion and unhappiness. She has fallen down on the ground because of my evil deeds.” When Dharmaraja Yudhishthira lamented in this fashion, Dhoumya and all the other supreme among brahmanas came to him. They comforted him and pronounced their benedictions over him. They recited mantras to keep the rakshasas away and performed rites. The supreme rishis recited mantras for the sake of peace. The Pandavas repeatedly touched her with their cold hands. Fanned by the cool breeze that had drops of water mixed in it, Panchali slowly recovered and regained consciousness. They laid out the distressed Krishna on antelope skins that were spread out. After having rested, the ascetic lady regained her senses. With calloused hands,[670] the twins slowly rubbed her red-soled feet, marked auspiciously. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira also comforted her.

'The best of Kurus then spoke to Bhimasena. "O Bhima! There will be many mountains. They will be uneven, covered with ice and difficult of access. O mighty-armed one! How will Krishna be able to traverse them?" Bhimasena replied, "O king! I will myself carry the princess, the twins and you, bull among men. O Indra among kings! Do not unnecessarily be anxious. Alternatively, my son is great in valour. He can roam the skies and is my equal in strength. If you say so, Ghatotkacha will carry all of us." Having been instructed by Dharmaraja, he remembered his rakshasa son. As soon as his father had thought of him, Ghatotkacha, with dharma in his soul, appeared. The mighty-armed one greeted the brahmanas and the Pandavas, hands joined in salutation, and they also welcomed him. Truth was his valour and he spoke to his father Bhimasena. "You thought of me and I swifly arrived to serve you. O mighty-armed one! What is your command? Without a doubt, I will do everything." On hearing this, Bhimasena embraced the rakshasa.'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O Bhima! This bull among rakshasas is learned in dharma. He is always brave and strong. This son born from you is devoted to us. Let him immediately carry his mother.[671] O Bhima! With the strength of your arms and your terrifying valour, I will remain unhurt and will journey to Gandhamadana with Panchali."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing his brother's words, Bhimasena, tiger among men, commanded his son Ghatotkacha, the destroyer of enemies. "O Hidimba's son! Your unvanquished mother is exhausted. O son! You are capable of going anywhere at will. You are strong. Take her up into the sky. O fortunate one! Carry her on your shoulders. Follow us in the sky. But travel low, so that she does not feel oppressed." Ghatotkacha replied, "I am alone capable of carrying Dharmaraja, Dhoumya, the princess and the twins. It shouldn't be surprising that I can do it now, when I have help."[672] Having said this, Ghatotkacha carried Krishna in the midst of the brave Pandavas. Others[673] carried the Pandavas. Lomasha, whose splendour was unrivalled, travelled along the path followed by the siddhas through his own powers, like a second sun. Commanded by the Indra among the rakshasas, other immensely powerful rakshasas took up all the brahmanas and travelled. They glanced at the extremely beautiful forests and groves and travelled towards the extensive Badari. Carried by those swift rakshasas whose strength was immense, the brave ones quickly covered a long distance in a short span of time.

'They saw many regions infested by *mlecchas*,[674] full of many stores of jewels. They saw mountains and foothills, the stores of many minerals. They were populated by vidyadharas and had large numbers of monkeys and kinnaras, in addition to kimpurushas and gandharvas. There were networks of rivers, frequented by many different kinds of birds. They were visited by many different kinds of animals. They were adorned by monkeys. Having passed over many regions and over northern Kuru, they saw the supreme and extraordinary Mount Kailasa. Near it, they saw the hermitage of Nara and Narayana. It was full of celestial trees that always bore flowers and fruit. They saw the beautiful Badari, with a circular trunk.[675] It was always tender and offered unfettered shade. It was supremely beautiful. It had tender leaves and was smooth and radiant. Its branches were large. They were expansive and were limitless in lustre. It was full of fruit that was tasty and divine. They dripped honey and were always celestial, beloved of the masses of maharshis. It was always populated by masses of different kinds of birds that frolicked madly. It grew in a region where there were no mosquitoes or gnats. There were many roots and fruits and a lot of water there. It was covered with blue grass and frequented by the gods and the gandharvas. It stood on a flat stretch of ground that was naturally beautiful. It was gentle from the touch of snow and was a beautiful region bereft of thorns.

‘Having reached the spot with the bulls among the brahmanas, all the great-souled ones descended slowly from the shoulders of the rakshasas. O king! Together with the bulls among the brahmanas, the Pandavas saw the beautiful hermitage, the refuge of Nara and Narayana. The sacred place was devoid of darkness, though it was untouched by the sun’s rays. It was free from afflictions like hunger, thirst, coldness and heat. It was the destroyer of all sorrow. It was crowded by masses of maharshis and complete with the attainment of the brahman. O great king! It was difficult of access to men who were outside the pale of dharma. It was celestial with the homage of offerings and oblations. It was maintained well and fragrant. There were offerings of celestial flowers and it was radiant everywhere. There were large stores for fire. It had lovely ladles. It was adorned with large and firm pots full of water. It was a place of refuge for all beings and resounded with the sound of the brahman. That hermitage destroyed all exhaustion and was a celestial hermitage. It was full of beauty and produced immeasurable merit. It was frequented by those who worshipped the gods. They lived on roots and fruit. They were in control of their senses and were attired in bark and black antelope skins. They were like the sun and the fire in their austerities and were controlled in their souls. Those maharshis had restrained their senses and were in search of salvation. Those immensely fortunate ones were learned in the brahman and were immersed in the brahman.

‘The intelligent Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, approached those immensely energetic rishis with his brothers, with restraint and purity. All the maharshis had divine sight. When they saw Yudhishthira, they welcomed him with great delight. Those who were always devoted to studies, pronounced their blessings over him. They were the equal of the fire and they happily welcomed him in accordance with the prescribed rites. They offered him pure water, flowers, roots and fruit. Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, was restrained and happily accepted the offerings of the maharshis. That beautiful place was divinely scented and was like Shakra's abode. O unblemished one! Together with Krishna and his brothers, and the brahmanas who were learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, the Pandava happily entered the pure place that was like heaven itself. The one with dharma in his soul saw Nara and Narayana's spot, worshipped by the gods and the devarshis. It was rendered beautiful by the Bhagirathi. The divine fruit dripped with honey and it was frequented by masses of brahmarshis. The great-souled ones approached and dwelt there with the brahmanas. They saw Mount Mainaka with its golden peak, frequented by masses of brahmanas, the auspicious Bindusara and the sacred and great tirtha of Bhagirathi, with its cool and clear water, with gems, corals and stones and adorned with beautiful trees. There were divine blossoms that heightened the pleasure of the mind. The great-souled Pandavas saw and roamed around there. They repeatedly made offerings to the gods and the ancestors. The brave bulls among men dwelt there with the brahmanas. The Pandavas, tigers among men, who were the equals of the immortals, took great pleasure in watching Krishna sport there in various ways.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Those brave tigers among men observed great purity and lived there for six nights, hoping to see Dhananjaya. The Pandavas sported with delight in that beautiful grove that was pleasing to all beings. It had trees ladened with blossoms and were bent down, burdened with fruit. It was beautiful everywhere, astir with flocks of male cuckoos. The foliage was tender and uninterrupted. It was cool with shade and charming. There were beautiful ponds with clear water. There were lotuses and lilies there, making every side dazzling.[676] The Pandavas were delighted at witnessing these beautiful sights there. A fragrant breeze wafted there, pleasant to the touch. This gladdened the hearts of all the Pandavas, Krishna and the bulls among the brahmanas.

'Then, in accordance with its own wishes, a breeze blew from the north-east. It carried with it a divine lotus with one thousand petals.

Panchali saw that beautiful and pure lotus descend on the ground, redolent with divine fragrance and carried by the wind. O king! The fortunate one approached that pure and supremely fragrant flower and extremely happily, told Bhimasena, "O Bhima! Look at this divine, dazzling and supreme blossom. It is full of fragrance and has delighted my heart. O destroyer of enemies! I will give this to Dharmaraja. But to satisfy my desire, get me others, so that I can take them back to the hermitage in Kamyaka. O Partha! If I am your beloved, get them for me in large numbers. I wish to take them back to the hermitage in Kamyaka." Having addressed these words to Bhimasena, the unblemished Panchali then took the flower to Dharmaraja.

'Learning about the queen's wishes, the immensely strong Bhima, bull among men, departed, to do that which would bring pleasure to his beloved. He swiftly left in the direction from which the breeze had carried the flower, so that he might obtain more flowers. He grasped his bow that was inlaid with gold and arrows that were like the virulent venom of snakes. He was like an angry king of the animals, or like an elephant in rut. The one with the strength of his arms wished to do that which would bring pleasure to Droupadi. The strong one was without fear or delusion and climbed up the mountain.

'It was covered with trees, creepers and lantanas and strewn with blue stones. The destroyer of enemies went up the sacred mountain, frequented by kinnaras. There were many kinds of minerals, trees and birds of different types. Adorned with all kinds of ornaments, it seemed to be like an arm of the earth, stretching upwards. Gandhamadana's peak was beautiful everywhere. His eyes and his desires were on it and he thought about it in his heart. The infinitely valorous one's ears, mind and eyes were fixed on the peaks that resounded to the sounds of male cuckoos and the humming of bees. The greatly energetic one inhaled the fragrance of the blossom everywhere and proceeded to climb up Gandhamadana, like a mad elephant in the forest. His father, the cool breeze that blows from Gandhamadana, took away his exhaustion and fanned by this, his body hair stood up.[677] To obtain the flowers, the destroyer of enemies traversed a region frequented by yakshas, gandharvas, gods and masses of brahmarshis. The clean sides of the mountain were streaked with minerals—golden, black and silver. The patterns were uneven, as if the mountain had been painted with fingers. With clouds clinging to the sides, the mountain seemed to be dancing, as if on wings. Because of the gushing of water from streams, it seemed to wear a string of pearls. It had lovely groves, waterfalls and caverns. Peacocks danced there, in tune with the anklets of apsaras. The elephants that guard the cardinal directions[678] had rubbed the rocky surface with their tusks. When the water was swiftly released from the streams and descended, it seemed as if the mountain was loosening its garments. The deer approached and curiously looked at him, unused to fear, with grass in their mouths. Vayu's son, the handsome Kounteya, proceeded happily, as if in sport, tearing away many nets of creepers with the force of his thighs. The one with the beautiful eyes wished to do that which would bring pleasure to his beloved. The youth was as tall as a golden palm and his body was like that of a lion. He was as strong as a mad elephant and he possessed the speed of a mad elephant. His copper-hued eyes were like that of a mad elephant and he was capable of withstanding a mad elephant. Seated by the sides of their beloveds, and invisible to the sight, the wives of yakshas and gandharvas, watched him and made expressive gestures.

'As if having adopted a new body, Pandava happily ascended Gandhamadana's beautiful peak. He remembered the many woes that had been inflicted by Duryodhana. Eager to perform the task that the forest-dwelling Droupadi had given, he thought, "Arjuna has gone to heaven. I have come away to fetch the flowers. What will the arya Yudhishthira do? Out of affection and out of distrust for what is in the forest, Yudhishthira, the best of men, will not release Nakula and Sahadeva.[679] How can I obtain the flowers quickly?" Thinking in this way, the tiger among men travelled with the speed of the king of the birds.[680] The earth shook when his feet struck it, like a storm at the end of an era. The immensely strong Vrikodara's speed frightened herds of elephants, lions, tigers and animals. The strong one forcefully uprooted many gigantic trees and brushed them aside with his chest. Pandu's son swiftly tore aside creepers and lantanas, as he climbed higher and higher up the peak of the mountain, like an elephant. He roared like a monsoon cloud, streaked with lightning. O lord! Awakened by that terrible sound and the twang of his bow, herds of animals were frightened and fled in all directions.

'On the slopes of the peak of Gandhamadana, the mighty-armed one then saw a beautiful grove of plantain trees that extended for many yojanas. The immensely strong one swiftly dashed towards it. Like a giant elephant oozing musth, like the wind among many trees, Bhima, supreme among those who are strong, uprooted the trunks of many plantain trees that were as large as many palm trees and thrust them aside. There were many large animals, herds of *ruru,*[681] monkeys, lions, buffaloes and aquatic animals. The lions and tigers were angered and attacked Bhimasena. They were extremely fearsome. Their jaws gaped and their roars were terrible. But Vayu's son, Bhima, used the strength of his arms and angrily killed elephants with elephants and lions with lions. The lord, the strong Pandava, used the palm of his hand to kill others. Thus killed by Bhima, lions, tigers and hyenas crept away fearfully, discharging urine and dung. Pandu's handsome and immensely strong son then swiftly entered the forest and filled all the directions with his roar. Hearing that terrible roar let out by Bhimasena, all the animals and birds in the forest were frightened and fled elsewhere. On hearing the sounds of the animals and the birds, thousands of birds flew up. Their wings were wet with water. On seeing those masses of aquatic birds, the bull among the Bharata lineage followed them and saw a beautiful and giant lake. Though it was fanned by clumps of golden plantain trees along its shores, stirred by the breeze, it was tranquil. The lake was adorned with many lotuses and lilies. Descending into the water, the strongest among strong ones sported around, like a gigantic elephant. Having sported there for a long time, the infinitely energetic one climbed out and swiftly entered the forest that was full of many trees. With the force of his breath, the Pandava blew on his conch shell. The sound of the conch shell, Bhimasena's roars and the terrible sound of the slapping of his arms resounded in the mountainous caverns. Hearing the loud sound of the slapping, like the roar of thunder, lions that were asleep in the mountainous caverns let out loud roars. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The roar of the lions frightened the elephants. The great mountain was filled with their loud trumpeting.

'Hanuman, bull among monkeys, was asleep. On hearing these roars, the monkey, gigantic in form, began to yawn. He was as gigantic as Indra's flagpole and he had been asleep in that clump of plantain trees. As he yawned, he lashed the ground with his tail and the sound was like that of Indra's vajra. Like a bellowing cow, on every side, the mountain echoed from the sound of the tail, through the mouths of the giant caverns. Rising above the sound created by the mad elephants, the sound of the lashing of the tail spread throughout the colourful peak of the mountain. On hearing the noise, Bhimasena's body hair stood up. In an attempt to identify the source, he roamed around the grove of plantain trees. Then the mighty-armed one found the lord of the monkeys in the middle of the plantain grove, lying down on an elevated and flat slab of stone. He was difficult to look at, like a flash of lightning. He was yellow, like lightning. He looked like a flash of lightning. He was as swift as lightning. His short and stout head rested on the crook of his arms. Because his shoulders were so large, the waist above his hips seemed to be slender. His tail was bent at the end and was covered with long hair. It was erect and dazzling, like a banner. His lips were red and his tongue had the complexion of copper. His ears were red and his brows moved. His face was like the moon with its beams and the teeth were round and sharp. The inside of the mouth was adorned with white and dazzling teeth. Above it, the extensive mane looked like a mass of ashoka flowers. The immensely radiant one was lying down in the midst of the golden plantain trees. His form was as resplendent as a blazing fire and he looked fearlessly with eyes that were as yellow as honey.

'Bhima, terrible in prowess, swiftly approached that gigantic and supremely powerful one, supreme among monkeys. He roared like a lion, so that the monkey might be forewarned. At Bhima's roar, the animals and the birds were frightened. The immensely powerful

Hanuman only opened his eyes a little. He looked at him contemptuously, through eyes that were yellow like honey. Smiling, the monkey addressed the human Kounteya. “I was ill and was happily asleep. Why did you wake me up? Do you not know that it is your duty to show compassion towards all beings? Since we have been born from inferior wombs, we do not know what dharma is. But men have intelligence and should show compassion towards animals. Why do you commit cruel deeds that cause injury to the body, speech and heart? They are against dharma. You are blessed with intelligence. You do not know what dharma is. You have not served old ones. You have limited intelligence and in your childlishness, are injuring animals. Who are you? Tell me. Despite being a man, why have you come to this forest that is shunned by men? From here onwards, the mountain is insurmountable and inaccessible, except by the siddhas. O brave one! You cannot go there. O immensely powerful one! I am restraining you out of compassion and friendliness. O lord! You cannot go beyond this place. If you accept my words, relax and eat these roots and fruit that taste like amrita. Then return.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing these words of the intelligent Indra among monkeys, Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies, said, “Who are you? Why have you assumed the form of an ape? It is a kshatriya, right after the brahmana varna, who is asking you. I am a Kourava and have been born in the lunar dynasty. Kunti bore me in her womb. I am a Pandava and am Vayu’s son. I am known by the name of Bhimasena.” On hearing these words of Bhimasena, Hanuman, Vayu’s son, smiled and told Vayu’s son.[682] “I am a monkey. I will yield you the path, as you wish. Do not continue on this path. Else, you will meet with destruction.” Bhima replied, “O monkey! I am not asking you about destruction, or about anything else. Arise and grant me right of way. Otherwise, you will confront destruction from me.” Hanuman said, “I am ill and therefore, do not have the strength to get up. If you are determined to go, then jump over me.” Bhima replied, “The *paramatman* without qualities[683] pervades your body and can be known only through knowledge. I cannot insult Him[684] by jumping over you. Through my studies, I know Him and all beings result from Him. Had that not been the case, I would have jumped over you and this mountain, just as Hanuman leapt over the ocean.” Hanuman asked, “Who is the one named Hanuman who leapt over the ocean? O best of the Kuru lineage! I am asking you. Tell me if you can.” Bhima answered, “He is my brother and is renowned because of his qualities. He has intelligence, power and strength. That handsome bull among the monkeys is extremely famous in the Ramayana. For the sake of Rama’s consort, this Indra among the apes leapt over the ocean that was one hundred yojanas wide in a single leap. That greatly valorous one is my brother. I am his equal in energy, strength and prowess and can chastise you in battle. Arise and grant me right of way. Otherwise, witness my manliness today. Do what I am asking you to, and do not go to Yama’s abode.” Knowing him to be strong and insolent because of the strength of his arms, Hanuman laughed at him in his heart.

‘He spoke these words. “O unblemished one! Show me your favours. Because of old age, I do not have the strength to get up. Exhibit compassion towards me. Pass by moving my tail aside.” With a contemptuous smile, Bhima grasped the giant ape’s tail with his left hand, but he was not able to move it. Then he tugged at the tail, raised erect like Indra’s weapon,[685] with both his hands. But even with both arms, the immensely strong Bhima was unable to move it. His eyebrows contracted. His eyes were dilated. His face became wrinkled with frowns. His body began to sweat. But Bhima could not dislodge it. However much he tried, he was not able to raise the handsome tail. With a face lowered in shame, Bhima stood by the monkey’s side. Kounteya bowed down and joining his hands in salutation, spoke these words. “O tiger among monkeys! Please show me your favours and pardon my harsh words. Whether you are a siddha, a god, a gandharva or guhyaka, please tell me who you are. I am asking you and wish to know. Who are you in the form of an ape?”

‘Hanuman said, “O destroyer of enemies! Since you are curious to know everything about me, I will tell you everything in detail. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! Listen. I was born in Kesari’s field[686] from Vayu, who gives life to the universe. O one with the lotus eyes! I am the monkey named Hanuman. All the chiefs of the monkeys waited upon the two kings of the apes, Sugriva the son of the sun, and Vali the son of Indra. I was a friend to the immensely brave Sugriva, the destroyer of enemies, like wind to the fire. For some reason, Sugriva was driven out by his brother[687] and lived with me, for a long time, in Rishyamukha. At that time, the immensely strong hero Dasharathi[688] Rama, who was Vishnu in human form, roamed on this earth. In order to please his father, that greatest of archers resorted to Dandakaranya, with his wife, with his younger brother and with his bow. Ravana abducted his wife forcibly from Janasthana, having deceived the immensely wise Raghava in the form of a deer.[689] Having lost his wife, together with his brother, Raghava searched for the path she had taken and met Sugriva, bull among monkeys, on the peak of a mountain. The great-souled Raghava became his friend. Having killed Vali, he instated Sugriva in the kingdom. He[690] sent monkeys to search for Sita. We and crores of monkeys left in one direction and a vulture gave us news about Sita.[691] To complete the task given by Rama, the performer of unblemished deeds, I swiftly jumped over the ocean that extended for one hundred yojanas. I saw the goddess in Ravana’s abode and after having told her my name, returned. Then brave Rama killed all the rakshasas. He regained his wife, who had been lost like the knowledge of the Vedas. When the brave Rama was instated,[692] I asked him that as long as the deeds of that enemy-destroying hero were recounted on earth, I should be alive that long. He agreed. Rama ruled over his kingdom for eleven thousand years and then went to heaven. O unblemished one! O son![693] Since then, apsaras and gandharvas sing of the deeds of that great hero and bring me pleasure here. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! This road is inaccessible to mortals. That is the reason I have restrained you from travelling along this road, frequented by the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I do not wish you to be oppressed or cursed. This is the celestial path of the gods and humans cannot travel along it. But the lake that you came in search of, is not far away."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the powerful and mighty-armed Bhimasena prostrated himself before his brother and happily spoke these gentle words to Hanuman, lord of the monkeys. "Since I have been able to see your illustrious self, no one is more fortunate than I am. Since I have been able to see you, this is a great favour to me. But I desire that you should today do that which is my wish. O brave one! I wish to see your unmatched form that you assumed when you leapt across the ocean, the abode of sharks. I will then be satisified and will have faith in your words." Having been thus addressed, the energetic ape began to laugh and said, "Neither you, nor anyone else, can see that form of mine. That was in another age that no longer exists. Time was different in krita yuga and it is different in treta and dvapara.[694] This is the time of decay and I no longer possess that form. The earth, rivers, ranges, mountains, siddhas, gods and maharshis must all conform to time and adjust their forms from one yuga to another yuga. Strength, size and power decline, and then increase again. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, do not wish to see that form. I am conforming to the rules of the yugas and no one can overcome time." Bhima said, "Then tell me the number of yugas and the conduct from one yuga to another yuga. What are the different forms of dharma, kama and artha, and variations in size, influence, existence and death?"

'Hanuman replied, "O son! Krita is the yuga when dharma is eternal. At the time of krita, supreme among yugas, there are no deeds to be done. Dharma knew no decay then. Nor were beings destroyed. That is the reason this yuga was known as krita.[695] Those qualities have gone now. O son! In krita yuga, there are no gods, demons, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas or serpents. There is no buying or selling. The sounds of Rig, Sama and Yajur did not exist. Nor did rites, or manual labour. When thought of, the desired fruits appeared. The only dharma was sannyasa. At the conjunction of the yugas, there is no disease, or decay of the senses. There is no discontentment, no lamentation, no insolence, no wickedness, no strife, no laziness, no enmity, no distortion, no fear, no sorrow, no envy and no jealousy. The supreme brahman, the supreme objective of all yogis, and the white Narayana were then in the souls of all beings. Brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras were all auspiciously marked in krita yuga and were equal in deportment. All beings were engaged in their own tasks. The stages of life, conduct, knowledge, wisdom and deed were equally distributed among the varnas and all of them obtained equal dharma. All of them were united with one Veda. All rituals were performed with one mantra. Though they may have followed different forms of dharma, they actually followed one Veda and one dharma. They followed the four ashramas and performed tasks without seeking the fruits, in accordance with the dictates of that time. They attained the supreme objective. Everyone sought for yoga in one's soul and being united with dharma, attained the objective. In krita yuga, the four varnas had four eternal feet.[696] This was known as krita yuga, devoid of the three qualities."[697]

'"Now hear about treta yuga. Sacrifices were introduced then. Dharma decayed by one quarter then and Achyuta[698] assumed a red complexion. Men were always addicted to the truth and devoted to the dharma of rituals. Sacrifices were introduced and many rituals became part of dharma in treta. These were motivated by reasons and rituals and donations were because of the fruits that they would bring. People never deviated from the path of dharma and were devoted to austerities and donations. In treta yuga, people performed deeds in accordance with their own dharma.

'"In dvapara yuga, dharma decayed by half. Vishnu assumes a yellow complexion and there are four Vedas. Some people know four Vedas.

Others know three, or two, or one. Still others know no hymns. The sacred texts have thus been divided into many parts and there are many rituals. Beings are engaged in austerities and donations because of their passions.[699] Because the single Veda is no longer known, the Vedas have been divided into many parts. There has been a deviation from the truth and there are only a few who are established in the truth. When one deviates from the truth, one becomes a prey to many diseases. One resorts to desire and there are many natural disasters. Being afflicted by these, some men resort to terrible austerities. Others, motivated by a desire to attain heaven, resort to deeds. Thus, having attained dvapara, beings decay because they are no longer devoted to dharma.

'"O Kounteya! Only one quarter of dharma remains in kali yuga. When this yuga arrives, Keshava's complexion becomes black. The rituals of the Vedas, dharma, sacrifices and deeds fall into disuse. There is excessive rain, disease, sin and vices like anger. There are many natural calamities. There are ailments and sicknesses. As the yugas proceed, dharma repeatedly decays. As dharma decays, beings repeatedly deteriorate. As beings deteriorate, the forces that sustain the world also go into a decline. As the yugas decay, even tasks performed in the name of dharma lead to perverse outcomes. This is the name of kali yuga, which will soon manifest itself. Even those who live for a long time must conform to the changes in the yugas. O destroyer of enemies! You were curious to know everything about me. Why should a learned man wish to know about things that are useless? O mighty-armed one! I have told you everything that you had asked me, including about the number of yugas. May you be blessed. Leave now."'

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'Bhima said, "I will never go without seeing your earlier form. If you are pleased with me, show me your own form."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words of Bhima, the ape smiled and showed him the form that he had adopted when he leapt over the ocean. In order to please his brother, he adopted that gigantic shape. His body grew in length and breadth. The immensely radiant monkey stood as large as a mountain, covering the plantain grove. Having attained that gigantic shape that was like a second mountain, with copper-coloured eyes, sharp teeth and eyes marked by frowns, the monkey lashed his long tail and enveloped the directions. Bhima, the descendant of the Kourava lineage, saw his brother's gigantic shape and was astounded. He was repeatedly delighted. On seeing his blazing energy, like the sun, or a golden mountain, or the sky on fire, Bhima closed his eyes.

'Hanuman then smiled and spoke to Bhimasena. "O unblemished one! You are capable of seeing my body up to this point. I can go on extending my body, as much as I desire. O Bhima! Amidst enemies, my body becomes gigantic through its own energy." On seeing Hanuman's immensely terrible body, the equal of Mounts Vindhya and Mandara, Pavana's son was bewildered.[700] Though he was delighted, his soul trembled. Bhima joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Hanuman, who was still established in that form. "O lord! O immensely valorous one! I have seen your extensive body. Now decrease it through your own powers. I am unable to look at you. You are like the rising sun. You are immeasurable. You are as inaccessible as Mount Mainaka. O brave one! It is a source of great wonder to me today that, though Rama had you at his side, he had to fight with Ravana himself. With the strength of your arms alone, you were capable of destroying Lanka with its armies and vehicles. O Marut's son![701] There is nothing that is impossible for you. Ravana, with all his armies, was no match for you in battle."

'Having been thus addressed by Bhima, Hanuman, bull among monkeys, replied in a soft and deep voice. "O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is as you say. O Bhimasena! That evil rakshasa was no match for me. But if I had killed that Ravana, the thorn of the worlds, Raghava's glory would have been diminished.[702] That is the reason I ignored him. By killing the rakshasa king, together with his armies, and taking Sita back to his own city, that brave one established his fame in this world. O immensely wise brother! You are devoted to ensuring my welfare. Protected by Vayu, depart now, along a path that is safe and secure. O best among the Kuru lineage! This path will lead you to Sougandhika forest[703] and the grove of the lord of riches,[704] guarded by yakshas and rakshasas. Do not perform the rash act of plucking any flowers there yourself. A man must specially honour the gods there. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When satisfied with sacrifices, oblations, reverence and mantras, the gods exhibit favours towards the faithful. O son![705] Therefore, do not act out of bravery. Observe your own dharma. Abiding by your own dharma, know and follow the supreme dharma. Without knowing dharma and without serving the aged, even the likes of Brihaspati are incapable of comprehending dharma and artha. One should carefully discriminate among situations where that which is not dharma goes by the name of dharma, and that which is dharma goes by the name of that which is not dharma. Those who are deluded in intelligence cannot distinguish. Dharma results from conduct. The Vedas are established on dharma. Sacrifices originate from the Vedas. The gods are established in sacrifices. The gods are sustained through sacrifices and rituals prescribed in the Vedas. Even men sustain themselves through the ordinances decreed by Brihaspati and Ushanas[706]—buying and selling, mining, trading, agriculture and animal husbandry. Everything is sustained through such vocations and dharma. For the three varnas,[707] three pursuits have been indicated in the sacred texts—study of the three Vedas, following a vocation and governing. When these are properly followed, the world's welfare is ensured. But if there is no pursuit of dharma and these three routes to dharma are not followed, this earth is not controlled and there is no governance. If beings do not follow dharma and their vocations, they will perish. By regularly following the three pursuits, beings prosper. There is one characteristic that marks the eternal dharma of the three varnas—sacrificing, studying and giving. These are three pursuits that are common to everyone. Performing sacrifices, studying and accepting[708] constitute the dharma of brahmanas. Protection is that of kshatriyas and providing sustenance is the dharma of vaishyas. Servitude to the other three varnas is known to be the dharma of shudras, as it is of those who are in their preceptor's house[709] and cannot therefore beg for alms or perform oblations and vows. O Kounteya! Your dharma is that of a kshatriya. Your dharma is protection. Be humble. Control your senses and follow your own dharma. He who has consulted elders, the honest, the intelligent and the learned, and then resorts to punishment by the staff, governs well. But a decadent one suffers. When a king punishes and rewards according to what is needed, it is then that the contours of the world are properly laid out. Therefore, spies must constantly be used to ascertain the state of the nation, the fortifications, the forces of friends and enemies, and their conditions of prosperity and adversity. Kings possess four means that lead to success—wise counsel, valour, punishment and reward and sagacity. Whether applied together or in isolation, *sama, dana, danda* and *bheda* can lead to success.[710] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Spies and counsel are the source of policies. Good counsel leads to success and one should consult with those who are skilled. In secret matters, one should not consult with a woman, with a fool, with a child, with one who is greedy, with one who is mean and with one who is touched by insanity. One should only consult with wise ones and get tasks undertaken by those who are capable. Policies must be devised by those who are gentle. Fools must always be avoided. Those who follow dharma must be engaged in matters related to dharma, learned ones in matters connected to artha, eunuchs in matters connected to women and cruel ones for the performance of cruel deeds. The nature of action, what should be done and what should not be done and the reasons behind any particular task, should be decided on the basis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of one's enemy, as well as one's own. Using one's intelligence, favours should be shown to righteous ones who have sought refuge. However, evil and unskilled ones must be repressed. When a king follows reward and chastisement properly, the boundaries of the world are laid out properly. O Partha! This is the difficult and terrible dharma that I have delineated for you.

Follow this humbly, in accordance with what has been prescribed as your own dharma. The brahmanas go to heaven through the dharma of austerities, control of the self and oblations. The vaishyas obtain the desired objective through donations, serving guests and rituals. Like that, the kshatriyas attain heaven on earth through protection and punishments. Without being addicted to desire and hatred, without avarice and controlling their anger, and chastising appropriately, they reach the worlds attained by the virtuous."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the monkey contracted his huge body, which he had extended through his own wishes. He once again embraced Bhimasena with his arms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus embraced by his brother, Bhima's exhaustion was destroyed and everything was at ease. With tears in his eyes, the ape once again told Bhima, in a voice that was choked and affectionate. "O brave one! Return to your own abode. But remember me in your thoughts. O best of the Kurus! Do not tell anyone that I am here. O immensely powerful one! When they have obtained leave from the abode of the lord of the riches, the wives of the gods and the gandharvas come to this region and to this time. My eyes have been satisfied and I have remembered Raghava. O Bhima! Through you, I have touched another human body. O brave one! O Kounteya! Now let your sight of me be successful too. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of our brotherhood, ask for a boon. If you wish that I should go to Hastinapura and kill the low sons of Dhritarashtra, I will do that. Or I will grind that city down with rocks. O immensely strong one! I will perform whatever deed you desire." On hearing these words of the great-souled one, Bhima was delighted and replied to Hanuman with happiness in his heart, "O bull among apes! You have already done everything for me. O mighty-armed one! May you be fortunate. Forgive me. I desire your favours. With a protector as valorous as you, all of us Pandavas have found a protector. With your energy, all of us will triumph over our enemies." Having heard these words, Hanuman told Bhimasena, “From brotherhood and out of my well wishes towards you, I will do that which will bring you pleasure. O brave one! O mighty-armed one! When you rush into the enemy’s battle formations, armed with arrows and spears, and utter a roar like that of a lion, I will add my own roars to that of yours. Seated on Vijaya’s flagstaff,[711] I will let loose terrible roars that will rob the enemies of their lives.” Having said this, he disappeared.

‘When that supreme of apes had left, Bhima, foremost among strong ones, travelled along that road to the extensive Gandhamadana. He thought about his[712] resplendent body, unmatched on earth. He thought about Dasharathi’s greatness and power. Travelling eagerly towards Sougandhika forest, he made lovely forests and groves tremble. He saw forests with blossoms and many colourful flowers and lotuses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He saw mad elephants that were streaked with mud, like masses of monsoon clouds. Proceeding fast, the handsome one saw bucks with does in the forest. They had grass in their mouths and their darting eyes looked at him. With great valour, Bhimasena entered the mountain that was infested with buffaloes, boars and tigers, as if forest trees that were in blossom, stirred by the breeze and with branches lowered by the burden of delicate and copper-red shoots, had invited him in. He passed ponds teeming with lotuses, with beautiful tirthas and groves, swarming with intoxicated bees. The lotuses seemed to join their hands in salutation. But Bhima’s mind was set on the peak of the mountain, full of flowers. With Droupadi’s words providing sustenance, he travelled faster. When the day had turned,[713] in the forest that was infested with deer, he saw a wide river. It was full of unblemished and golden lotuses. It was aswarm with intoxicated karandavas[714] and adorned with chakravakas.[715] It was as if a garland of spotless lotuses had been designed for the mountain. Near that river, the greatly powerful one saw the large Sougandhika forest. It was as radiant as the rising sun and brought him joy. On seeing this, Pandu’s son thought that his desires had been satisfied. His mind went out to his beloved, who was suffering as a result of dwelling in the forest.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On the peak of Kailasa and in that beautiful grove, he saw that beautiful pond, guarded by rakshasas. Its source was the mountainous waterfalls that were near Kubera’s abode. It was extremely beautiful, with a lot of shade and full of many trees and creepers. It was covered with yellow lotuses and divine golden lotuses. It made the world pure. It was auspicious and extraordinary to behold. Pandava, Kunti’s son, saw the clear, cool, light and pure water there, like amrita. He drank a lot of that auspicious water. The beautiful pond was covered with sougandhika lotuses. There were golden lotuses, with supreme fragrance. The stalks were made out of lapis lazuli.[716] They were beautiful and had many colours. Disturbed by the swans and the *karandakas*,[717] they scattered white pollen. This was the pleasure ground of the great-souled Kubera, king of the yakshas. It was shown great homage by the gandharvas, the apsaras and the gods. It was frequented by the rishis, yakshas, kimpurushas, rakshasas and kinnaras and was protected well by Vaishravana.[718]

‘On seeing that celestial pond, the immensely strong Kounteya Bhimasena was filled with great delight. On the instructions of their king,[719] hundreds and thousands of rakshasas, named *krodhavashas*, stood guard, armed with many different kinds of weapons. They saw Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies. Bhima, terrible in valour, was clad in deerskin and golden armour for his upper arms. He was armed and his sword was girded. When they saw him fearlessly advance to gather the lotuses, they shouted at one another, “Why has this maharatha, tiger among men, come here? He is clad in deerskin and bears arms. Inquire.” Then all of them approached the mighty-armed Vrikodara and asked the resplendent one, “Who are you? Tell us. You wear the garments of a hermit and we see that you are attired in bark. O immensely intelligent one. Tell us why you have come.”’

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‘Bhima replied, “I am Pandava Bhimasena. I am next in birth to Dharma’s son.[720] O rakshasas! I have come with my brothers to the extensive Badari. There, Panchali saw the supreme sougandhika. The wind carried it from here and she immediately wanted many more. O those who roam in the night! Know that I have come here to gather flowers, to do that which brings pleasure to the one with the unblemished limbs, my wife in accordance with dharma.”

‘The rakshasas said, “O bull among men! This is Kubera’s beloved pleasure garden. One who is subject to the laws of mortal earth cannot sport here. O Vrikodara! Devarshis, yakshas and gods have to seek the permission of the lord of the yakshas before they can drink or amuse themselves here. O Pandava! So do the gandharvas and the apsaras before sporting here. If an evil-minded one sports here against these rules, insulting the lord of riches, there is no doubt that he will meet with destruction. Ignoring him, you wish to take these lotuses away by force. Why do you then describe yourself as Dharmaraja’s brother?”

‘Bhima replied, “O rakshasas! I do not see the lord of riches anywhere near. Even if I were to see the great king, I would not trouble him by asking. It is the eternal dharma that kings should not beg. I do not wish to deviate from the dharma of kshatriyas by even a trifle. This beautiful lotus pond has been created from mountainous water springs. It is not part of the abode of the great-souled Kubera. It belongs equally to all beings, just as it does to Vaishravana. Since this is the state of affairs, who should ask whom for permission?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this to all the rakshasas, the powerful Bhimasena plunged in. All the rakshasas tried to restrain him, asking him to desist. They angrily abused him from all directions. But not paying any attention to the rakshasas, the one who was terrible in valour plunged in. All of them tried to restrain the immensely energetic one. “Grasp him.” “Bind him.” “Slash him.” “We will cook and feed on Bhimasena.” Angrily uttering such words, they raised their arms and distending their eyes, swiftly rushed at him. He grasped his giant club, inlaid with gold, and like Yama’s staff. He grasped it and swiftly hurled himself at them, shouting, “Stay there! Stay there!” The extremely terrible krodhavashas suddenly rushed at him with great force. They had spears, battleaxes and other weapons. Desiring to kill him, they encircled Bhima in terrible fashion. But the powerful one was born in Kunti's womb from the wind. He was swift and brave and the destroyer of his enemies. He was always devoted to truth and dharma. In valour, he was incapable of being vanquished by any foe. The great-souled one used many techniques. He destroyed the weapons of his enemies. On the banks of that pond, the brave one slew hundreds of them, including those who were the foremost. On seeing his valour and strength, the strength of his knowledge and the strength of his arms and unable to withstand him, despite their numbers, they suddenly fled in all directions, the foremost ones having been slain. They were destroyed and crushed, and bereft of their senses, took to the sky. Crushed by Bhima, the krodhavashas were shattered and ran away, towards the peak of Kailasa.

'Having thus vanquished hordes of daityas and danavas in battle, like Shakra, the one who was victorious over his enemies again plunged into the pond and collected lotuses, in accordance with his desires. Having drunk the water, which was like amrita, his valour and energy were completely restored. He plucked and gathered sougandhika lotuses, with a supreme fragrance. The krodhavashas had been overcome with Bhima's strength. They went to the lord of riches and extremely frightened, told him about Bhima's valour and strength in battle. Having heard their words, the god laughed and told the rakshasas, "Let Bhima take as many lotuses as he wishes for Krishna. I know the reason." Having taken their leave of the lord of riches and having controlled their anger, they returned to the foremost among the Kurus. They saw Bhima alone in that pond full of lotuses, sporting happily.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the bull among the Bharata lineage started to gather large numbers of those precious, divine, unblemished and colourful flowers. Suddenly, a large storm arose. It swiftly threw up the stones from below. It was harsh to the touch and carried with it the portents of battle. A giant meteor descended, immensely fiery in the storm. Covered in the darkness, the sun's rays were dimmed and it lost its radiance. While Bhima resorted to his terrible valour, a terrible whirlwind gathered. The earth began to tremble and a storm of dust descended. The directions turned red. Animals and birds screamed in harsh voices. Everything was covered in darkness and nothing could be seen.'

'On seeing these extraordinary happenings, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son and the foremost among speakers, spoke these words. "Who is attempting to overcome us? O Pandavas! You are always powerful in battle. Be fortunate and prepared. From what I can see, the time for displaying our valour has come." Having spoken these words, the king looked around. But Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, could not see Bhima. Then the destroyer of enemies asked Krishna and the twins, who were close by, about his brother Bhima, the performer of terrible deeds in battle. "O Panchali! Did Bhima desire to perform some deed? Or has the brave one, who is addicted to valour, already performed some courageous deed? Portents can suddenly be seen in all the directions. They indicate a great battle and foretell great dangers." The intelligent Krishna, his sweet-smiling and beloved queen, who always wished to bring him pleasure, replied to his words, "O king! A sougandhika was brought here by the wind today. I showed it to Bhimasena and lovingly told the brave one to bring many more back to me, if he should see them, and return quickly. O king! To bring me pleasure, the mighty-armed Pandava must have gone to the north-eastern direction." Having heard these words, the king told the twins, "In that case, let us immediately go where Vrikodara has gone. Let the rakshasas bear the brahmanas who are exhausted and tired, as the case may be. O Ghatotkacha! You are the equal of the immortals. You carry Krishna. It is my certain view that Bhima has gone a long distance away. He has been away for a long time and he is like the wind in his speed. In swiftly leaping over the ground, he is like Vinata's son.[721] He will leap up into the sky and descend, as he pleases. O those who roam in the night![722] With the aid of your powers, we will follow him, before he causes any offence to the siddhas and those who are learned in the brahman.” They agreed to these words.

‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! They were all led by Hidimba’s son, who was foremost among them and knew the region around Kubera’s pond. In a delighted frame of mind, they grasped the Pandavas and many other brahmanas, together with Lomasha. All of them travelled together until they saw the grove and the extremely beautiful pond with sougandhika lotuses. They saw the intelligent and great-souled Bhima along its banks and the bodies of the large-eyed yakshas that he had slain. He was standing on the banks of the river,[723] his club raised in his two arms, like Yama with a staff in his hand at the time of the destruction of beings. On seeing him, Dharmaraja embraced him again and again. He spoke to him in gentle words. “O Kounteya! What have you done? O fortunate one! Because of your courage, you have brought displeasure to the gods. If you wish to bring me pleasure, never commit such deeds again.” After having thus instructed Kounteya, they collected lotuses and amused themselves in that lotus pond, like the immortals.

‘At that time, the guards appeared. Their bodies were gigantic and they were armed with rocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they saw Dharmaraja, maharshi Lomasha, Nakula, Sahadeva and all the other bulls among brahmanas, they prostrated themselves in humility. Dharmaraja pacified those roamers of the night and they became calm. With Kubera’s permission, the bulls among the Kurus lived there for some time and sported themselves.’

Section Thirty-Four

Jatasura-vadha Parva

This parva has sixty-one shlokas and one chapter.

Vadha means to kill or slay and this section is about Bhima killing the demon named Jatasura.

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Vaishampayana said, 'The Pandavas lived comfortably on that mountain. When the rakshasas and Bhimasena's son[1] had left, and they were without Bhimasena, who had gone to roam around as he willed, a rakshasa abducted Dharmaraja, the twins and Krishna.[2] He had pretended to be a brahmana skilled in mantras and well versed in weapons. Having said this, he had served the Pandavas every day. He lived with the Parthas, covetous of their quivers and bows and waited for his chance. He was known by the name of Jatasura. When Bhimsena, the destroyer of enemies, went out to hunt, he assumed a different form. It was distorted, terrible and gigantic. Having grasped all the weapons and seizing Droupadi and the three Pandavas, he fled. But with a great deal of effort, Pandava Sahadeva extricated himself. Shouting for Bhimasena, he ran in the direction that the immensely strong one had taken.

'While he was thus being abducted, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira told him, "O stupid one! Dharma declines in you, but you do not see it. Whether one is a human or whether one belongs to inferior species, the gandharvas, the yakshas and the rakshasas, birds and animals, draw their sustenance from humans and so do you. If there is prosperity in our world, there is prosperity in your world too. If our world suffers, the gods suffer along with us. They prosper through worship and oblations to the gods and the ancestors,[3] offered through rituals. O rakshasa! We are the guardians and the protectors of the kingdom. If kingdoms are unprotected, how can there be prosperity? How can there be happiness? Unless there has been an act of injury, no rakshasa should ever harm a king. O one who lives off men! We have not committed the least bit of injury. One should never injure friends and those who are trustful, those whose food has been partaken of and those who have provided shelter. You found shelter with us. We showed you honour and you lived happily. O one who is not wise! Having partaken of our food, how can you abduct us? Since your conduct is fruitless, your age is fruitless and your intelligence is fruitless, you deserve a fruitless death—and these words will not be fruitless today. If you are truly evil-minded and devoid of all dharma, then return our weapons and win Droupadi after vanquishing us in battle. But if you are driven by ignorance in your mind and persist in performing this act, you will follow that which is not dharma and will only obtain ill fame in this world. O rakshasa! You have today laid your hands on this human woman. It is as if you have stirred up a vessel and drunk poison from it." Then Yudhishthira bore down heavily on him and oppressed by this weight, he[4] could not travel very fast.

'Yudhishthira told Nakula and Droupadi, "Do not be frightened of this stupid rakshasa. I have robbed him of his speed. Pavana's mighty-armed son cannot be far away.[5] He will arrive in an instant and the rakshasa will have no future." O king! On seeing that the rakshasa was deluded of his intelligence, Sahadeva spoke to Kunti's son, Yudhishthira. "O king! Nothing brings greater merit to a kshatriya than to fall in the field of battle and give up his life, or triumph over an enemy. O scorcher of enemies! Let us fight him in the field of battle. Either he will kill us, or we will kill him. O mighty-armed one! O king! The time and the place are right. O one for whom valour is truth! The time has come to show the dharma of kshatriyas. Whether we triumph or whether we are slain, we will attain the supreme objective. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the rakshasa is still alive when the sun sets, I will no longer be able to say that I am a kshatriya. O rakshasa! Stop! I am Pandava Sahadeva. Either kill me and take them today, or fall senseless.” While he was speaking thus, Bhimasena appeared by chance. The mighty-armed one looked like Vasava[6] with his vajra. He saw his two brothers and the famous Droupadi, and Sahadeva on the ground, challenging the rakshasa. He saw the stupid rakshasa, who had lost his path, his intelligence having been robbed by time. Driven by destiny, he was roaming around here and there.

‘On seeing his brothers and Droupadi being thus abducted, the mighty-armed Bhima was overcome with rage and told the rakshasa, “I had got to know about you earlier, when I saw you scrutinize our weapons. But though I did not have my trust in you, I did not kill you then. You were in the form of a brahmana and you had not uttered any unpleasant words towards us. You did what brought us pleasure and you did nothing that brought us displeasure. You were in the form of an innocent brahmana who was a guest. Anyone who kills such a person, even if he knows him to be a rakshasa, goes to hell. That apart, the time for your killing was not ripe. That time is ripe now, since your inclination is of this nature. Extraordinary destiny has made you abduct Krishna. You have swallowed the hook that stretches from the line of fate, like a fish in the water. How will you escape from me today? You will not be able to reach the region you have left for and where your mind has already gone. You will not be able to reach and you will traverse the path travelled by Baka and Hidimba.”[7] The rakshasa was driven by destiny. Having been thus addressed by Bhima, he was frightened and threw them all down.[8] Then he approached, so as to fight. His lips trembling in anger, he told Bhima, “O deluded one! I did not lose my directions because I was deluded. I was waiting for your sake. I have heard about the rakshasas whom you killed in battle. With your blood, I will offer funeral oblations to them today.” Having been thus addressed, Bhima smilingly licked the corners of his mouth. He was bursting with rage, like time and death personified.

‘With great force, he dashed at the rakshasa, to engage him in a bout of wrestling. On seeing that Bhima stood ready to fight, the rakshasa also forcefully dashed towards him, like Bali towards the wielder of the vajra.[9] When they were about to engage in that terrible battle with arms, Madri’s two sons[10] were also extremely angered and rushed forward. But Vrikodara, Kunti’s son, laughingly restrained them. He said, “Behold. I am capable of handling this rakshasa. O king![11] By myself, with my brothers, by the dharma that I have observed well and by my oblations, I swear that I will finish off this rakshasa.” Having said this, the two brave ones challenged each other. The rakshasa and Vrikodara grasped each other with their arms. They did not spare each other. Angrily, Bhima and the rakshasa engaged each other in a terrible battle, like a god and a danava. Uprooting trees, the two immensely strong ones hurled them at each other, roaring like clouds when the summer season is over. Those two, supreme among strong ones, shattered the trunks of trees with the force of their thighs. They rushed at each other, each desirous of victory. The duel with trees went too, causing the destruction of many large trees, like that ancient battle between the brothers Vali and Sugriva, lions among apes.[12] For some time, they repeatedly hurled trees at each other and struck each other, continuously roaring. When all the trees in the region had been torn down, and in an attempt to kill each other they had reduced them to hundreds of heaps, they immediately took up rocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those two immensely strong ones fought, like a king of mountains fighting with clouds. Those hard and terrible rocks flew around, like the vajra. They repeatedly struck each other with these. They were insolent because of their strength. After this, they rushed at each other and grasped each other with their arms, tugging like elephants. They struck each other with extremely terrible fists. The two great-souled ones raised a noise by gnashing their teeth. Then Bhima clenched his fist, like a serpent with five heads, and struck the rakshasa’s neck with great force. The rakshasa was exhausted from the force of Bhimasena’s blow with the fist. On seeing this, Bhimasena grasped the one who was extremely tired. The mighty-armed one, equal to the immortals, raised him up in his two arms. With great force, Bhima then flung him down on the ground. Pandava shattered all his limbs. Holding him with his elbow, he detached the head from the trunk. As a result of Bhimasena’s force, Jatasura’s head was severed and fell down on the ground, drenched in blood, the eyes bulging and the teeth clenched, like a fruit dislodged from a tree. Having killed him, the mighty archer went to Yudhishthira. The foremost among brahmanas praised him, like the Maruts praise Vasava.’

Section Thirty-Five

Yaksha-yuddha Parva

This parva has 727 shlokas and eighteen chapters.

Chapter 452(155): 90 shlokas
Chapter 453(156): 31 shlokas
Chapter 454(157): 70 shlokas
Chapter 455(158): 59 shlokas
Chapter 456(159): 35 shlokas
Chapter 457(160): 37 shlokas
Chapter 458(161): 29 shlokas
Chapter 459(162): 16 shlokas
Chapter 460(163): 53 shlokas
Chapter 461(164): 58 shlokas
Chapter 462(165): 23 shlokas
Chapter 463(166): 23 shlokas
Chapter 464(167): 28 shlokas
Chapter 465(168): 30 shlokas
Chapter 466(169): 35 shlokas
Chapter 467(170): 69 shlokas
Chapter 468(171): 17 shlokas
Chapter 469(172): 24 shlokas

Yuddha *means battle or fight and the section is named after a fight between Bhima and the* yakshas. *In this section, the Pandavas visit the sage Vrishaparva on Mount Gandhamadana and then travel to the hermitage of the sage Arshtishena, where they dwell, waiting for Arjuna's return. Reminiscent of Section 33, Droupadi sends Bhima to search for celestial flowers. Bhima fights with yakshas and rakshasas and kills the rakshasa Maniman. The Pandavas meet Kubera and Indra. Arjuna returns and recounts his adventures, repeating much of what has already been said in Sections 31 and 32 (Volume 1). These parts of Section 35 are not only repetitive, and sometimes inconsistent, they don't quite seem to belong. The only new information is about Arjuna's fight with the* nivatakavacha *demons and the demons who inhabited Hiranyapura.*

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the rakshasa had been killed, the lord Kounteya, the king,[1] returned to Narayana’s hermitage and began to live there again. One day, he assembled all his brothers, together with Droupadi, and remembering his brother Jaya,[2] told them, “Pure in our ways, we have lived in the forest and four years have passed. Bibhatsu promised that in the fifth year, he would come to the king of the mountains, the supreme peak that is white at the top. In a desire to meet him, we should also go to that region. The immensely energetic Partha[3] had decided on the time and had earlier made an agreement with me. ‘I will live as a student for five years.’ We will see Gandivadhanva, the destroyer of enemies, there, after he has returned from the world of the gods with the weapons he has obtained.” Having uttered these words, the Pandava consulted all the brahmanas and informed all the ascetics about the reasons. Having thus pleased the ones who were terrible in their austerities, Partha[4] circumambulated them. The brahmanas approved, because this was auspicious and would bring about welfare. “O bull among the Bharata lineage! These difficulties will soon be replaced by happiness. O one learned in dharma! After having traversed the road, you will protect the earth in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas.”[5] Then the king accepted the words of these ascetics.

‘The destroyer of enemies departed with his brothers and the brahmanas. The fortunate one was accompanied by Droupadi and followed by Hidimba’s son[6] and the other rakshasas and protected by Lomasha. He travelled part of the way on foot. In other parts, the immensely energetic one, who was rigid in his vows, together with his brothers, was carried by the rakshasas. Reflecting on the many difficulties, King Yudhishthira headed in a northern direction, infested by lions, tigers and elephants. He saw the mountains Mainaka and Kailasa, the foothills of Gandhamadana and the tall peak of Meru. There were many auspicious streams higher up on the mountains. He reached the sacred plateau of the Himalayas on the seventeenth day. O king!

Near Gandhamadana, the Pandava saw the auspicious crest of the Himalayas, covered with many trees and creepers and the extremely holy hermitage of Vrishaparva, surrounded by many trees in blossom that grew along whirlpools of water. The destroyers of enemies, the Pandavas, approached rajarshi Vrishaparva, with dharma in his soul. When he welcomed them, their exhaustion vanished. The rajarshi welcomed those bulls of the Bharata lineage, as if they were his sons. Thus honoured, those destroyers of enemies remained there for seven nights. On the eighth day, after consulting the rishi Vrishaparva who was famous in the worlds, they decided to start on their journey. One by one, they introduced the brahmanas to Vrishaparva. He honoured them, and they remained in his charge for the moment, like relatives. The Pandavas also left their supreme garments and pure ornaments in Vrishaparva's hermitage. He[7] was learned, skilled, knowledgeable on everything concerning dharma and knew the past and the future. The one who was learned in dharma instructed the bulls of the Bharata lineage, like his sons. Having obtained his permission, the brave and great-souled ones left in a northern direction, accompanied by Krishna and the great-souled brahmanas. King Vrishaparva went with them for a short distance. Then entrusting the Pandavas to the immensely energetic brahmanas, and instructing and blessing the sons of Kunti, Vrishaparva returned, after having given them directions about the road to follow.

'Truth was valour for Kounteya Yudhishthira. He proceeded on foot with his brothers, through a region that was infested with many kinds of animals. They sometimes dwelt on the slopes of mountains, covered with many different kinds of trees. On the fourth day, the Pandavas reached Mount Shveta. It looked like a gigantic cloud and was beautiful, with plenty of water. The beautiful top was covered with jewels and gold and had many peaks. They followed the route that had been indicated by Vrishaparva and saw many mountains in that region. They climbed higher up the mountain, with extremely inaccessible caverns and many impenetrable spots, without any discomfort. Dhoumya, Krishna and the great rishi Lomasha travelled together, and none of them faltered. Those immensely valiant ones reached the great Mount Malyavan. It was full of the noise of many animals and birds and was populated by many kinds of birds. It was extremely beautiful and was frequented by masses of monkeys. There were sacred ponds full of lotuses. There were pools and extensive groves. With their body hair standing up, they happily saw Mount Gandhamadana, the habitation of kimpurushas, frequented by vidyadharas and lady kinnaras, infested with elephants and lions and innumerable *sharabhas*.[8] They reached a region that resounded with the sweet sounds of many animals. With all this, Gandhamadana resembled the pleasure garden of Nandana.[9] In a happy frame of mind, Pandu's brave sons slowly entered this beautiful and sacred forest that brought delight to the mind and the heart. With Droupadi and the great-souled brahmanas, the brave ones heard the delightful, pleasant, melodious and charming sounds emerging from the mouths of birds.

'They saw many trees that were bent down because of the burden of their fruit. All of them were full of every kind of fruit and were radiant with every kind of flower—mangoes, blossoming hog-plums,[10] coconuts, *tindukas*,[11] *ajatakas*,[12] jiras,[13] pomegranates, citrus trees,[14] jackfruit, breadfruit,[15] plantains,[16] dates, tamarinds,[17] *paravatas*,[18] *kshoudras*,[19] beautiful *nipas*,[20] *bilvas*,[21] wood-apples,[22] roseapples,[23] *kashmaris*,[24] badaris, figs,[25] udumbaras,[26] fig trees,[27] holy fig trees,[28] *kshirinas*,[29] marking-nuts,[30] myrobalans,[31] *haritakas*,[32] *bibhitakas*,[33] *ingudas*,[34] *karaviras*,[35] *tindukas*[36] with a lot of fruit and many other trees that were on the slopes of Gandhamadana. There was succulent fruit as tasty as amrita. There were many champakas,[37] ashokas,[38] *ketakas*,[39] *bakulas*,[40] *pumnagas*,[41] *saptaparnis*,[42] *karnikaras*,[43] ketakas, *patalas*,[44] *kutajas*,[45] beautiful coral trees,[46] blue lotuses,[47], *parijatas*,[48] *kovidaras*,[49] pine-trees,[50] *shalas*,[51] palms,[52] *tamalas*,[53] *priyalas*,[54] bakulas, silk cotton,[55] *kimshukas*,[56] ashokas,[57] *shimshapas*[58] and *saralas*.[59] These were full of *chakoras*,[60] woodpeckers,[61] large bees,[62] parrots,[63] cuckoos, sparrows,[64] *haritas*,[65] birds,[66] pheasants,[67] *priyavratas,*[68] *chatakas*[69] and many other kinds of birds. They warbled beautiful notes that were pleasant to the ear. They also saw beautiful ponds full of clear water, with white water lilies,[70] white lotuses,[71] red lotuses,[72] blue lotuses,[73] white lotuses[74] and lotuses[75] on all sides. There were geese,[76] ruddy geese,[77] ospreys, waterfowl, ducks,[78] *plavas*,[79] swans, cranes, cormorants and many other aquatic birds everywhere. There were beautiful ponds full of lotuses. Excited bumblebees hummed there, intoxicated by the nectar of red lotuses that bloomed during the day. Red pollen fell into the lotus cups. They saw these beautiful sights on the slopes of Gandhamadana. And in the beautiful clusters of lotuses and groves of creepers that were everywhere, they saw peacocks with their peahens. They were extremely maddened by the desire that the drumming of the clouds brought. In sweet and melodious tones, they uttered their calls. The peacocks spread out the coloured plumage of their tails and danced redolently, as did other playful forest birds. Others roamed happily with their beloved ones in the valleys that were covered with creepers and lantanas. Where the woods were clear, they saw other birds in the holes of trees, beautiful and with splendid tails spread out like crowns.[80]

'They saw graceful *sindhuvara* trees on the peaks of the mountain. They looked like Manmatha's[81] javelins, covered with golden blossoms. There were beautiful *karnikaras*, blossoming like handsome earrings. They saw *kurubakas*[82] flowering in the forest, like a volley of Kama's[83] arrows, increasing desire among those who are in love. They saw *tilakas*,[84] like beautiful tilaka marks on the forest. They saw beautiful mango trees that were like Ananga's[85] arrows, abuzz with bees and clusters of flowers. There were many other trees on the peak of the mountain, like garlands—like gold, with flowers like a forest conflagration, red, black like collyrium and like lapis lazuli. There were shalas, tamalas, patalas and bakulas. Thus, one by one, the brave ones saw these everywhere on the slopes of Gandhamadana—frequented by masses of elephants and lions and tigers, resounding with the roars of sharabhas and many other cries, and covered everywhere with fruit and flowers. The forests were yellow-tinged like the sun. There were no thorns anywhere, or trees without blossoms. The trees on the slope of Gandhamadhana were tender, and dense with foliage and fruit. On the peaks of the mountain, the Parthas also saw lakes and rivers that were like clear crystal, populated by birds with white feathers, with the sounds of swans and cranes, with colourful lotuses and blue lotuses, with fragrant garlands and succulent fruit. The trees on the peak of the mountain were radiant with blossoms. There were many other groves full of trees there. There were many kinds of creepers, laden with leaves, flowers and fruit.

'On seeing those trees on that supreme of mountains, Yudhishthira told Bhimasena in affectionate words, "O Bhima! Look at this beautiful region all around us, the playground of the gods. We followed a path no human has followed. O Vrikodara! We have achieved success. O Partha! Creepers, lantanas and blossoms embrace the supreme of trees and adorn Gandhamadana's peak. O Bhima! Listen to the sound of the calls of peacocks, together with peahens, on the peak of this mountain. Chakoras, shatapatras, intoxicated cuckoos and *sarikas*[86] are perching themselves on these gigantic trees, full of foliage and flowers. O Partha! The birds are scarlet, yellow and red, on the tops of the trees. Many other jivas and jivakas are glancing at each other. Cranes can be seen on the green and red spots of grass that are everywhere and near the mountain springs. They are warbling in a beautiful voice, charming to all beings. There are bees, ruddy geese and birds with backs tinged in red. There are elephants with four tusks, with the hue of lotuses, and with the she-elephants. This great lake is beautiful, tinged with the hue of lapis lazuli. Water streams down from many waterfalls. O Bhima! They shine like the sun and are like autumn clouds. They adorn this giant mountain, with much silver and many minerals. In some places, it is dark like collyrium. In others, it is golden. In some places, the minerals are greenish yellow. In others, they have the complexion of ingudas. There are mountainous caverns that have the hue of evening clouds. Some are as red as rabbits. Other minerals are golden red. They are white and black, like clouds with the rays of the rising sun. In their many different forms, they are bringing great radiance to the mountain. O Partha! As Vrishaparva had said, gandharvas can be seen on the peak of the mountain, together with their wives, and kimpurushas. O Bhima! The sounds of songs, melodies and hymns can be heard in many ways, charming to all beings. Behold the great, pure and auspicious Ganga, the river of the gods. It is full of masses of swans and is frequented by rishis and kinnaras. O Kounteya! O destroyer of enemies! Behold this king of mountains, full of minerals, streams, kinnaras, animals, birds, gandharvas, apsaras, lovely woods, many types of predators and with a hundred different peaks." Those brave ones, the scorchers of enemies, were delighted in their minds at having traversed that supreme path and their hearts were not satisfied at looking at this king of the mountains. They then saw the hermitage of rajarshi Arshtishena,[87] full of garlands and trees laden with fruit. They went to the sage Arshtishena, who was learned in dharma and was so severe in his austerities that he was lean and seemed to be made up of veins alone.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having approached the ascetic, who had burnt away all his sins, Yudhishthira announced his name and happily greeted him, with his head bowed down. After that, Krishna, Bhima and the famous twins lowered their heads before the rajarshi and stood there, surrounding him. In that fashion, Dhoumya, learned in dharma and the priest of the Pandavas, approached the rishi who was rigid in his vows, in accordance with propriety. Through his divine sight, the sage who was learned in dharma had already recognized Pandu's sons, the best of the Kuru lineage, and greeting them, asked them to be seated. The great ascetic showed honours to the wise bull among the Kurus.[88]

'When he was seated with his brothers, he asked him about his welfare. "Does your mind ever turn towards that which is not true or do you follow dharma? O Partha! Does your conduct towards your mother and father ever diminish? Are your preceptors, all the elders and those who are learned worshipped by you? O Partha! Does your mind ever turn towards evil acts? O best of the Kuru lineage! Do you know how to reward a good deed and ignore an evil deed? Do you treat them according to the law and without any conceit? Do virtuous ones rejoice when such deserving ones are honoured by you? Though you dwell in the forest, do you follow that which is dharma? O Partha! Has Dhoumya been tormented by the way you treat him? Do you follow the dharma of donations, austerities, purity, uprightness and forbearance? O Partha! Do you follow the conduct of your fathers and grandfathers? O Pandava! Do you tread the path followed by the rajarshis? It is said that when a son or a grandson is born in one's lineage, the ancestors in the world of the ancestors either sorrow or laugh. 'What will happen to us if he performs evil deeds? Or will we prosper because he performs good deeds?' O Partha! He who honours his father, his mother, the fire, the preceptor and his own soul as the fifth, conquers both the worlds.[89] There are rishis who live on water and on the wind. At the time of *parvasandhi*,[90] they fly through the air and visit this greatest of mountains. O king! Kimpurushas, lovers with their beloveds, devoted to each other, can be seen on the peaks of this mountain. O Partha! Many masses of gandharvas and apsaras can be seen. They are attired in spotless garments and in those made of silk. There are masses of handsome and garlanded vidyadharas and masses of great serpents, giant birds[91] and other serpents. At the time of parvasandhi, the sounds of kettledrums, *panavas*,[92] conch shells and drums can be heard on this mountain. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You can hear all of that from this place. But you should never act or think so as to venture closer. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Beyond this point, it is impossible to go. That place is the sporting ground of the gods, beyond the access of humans. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that spot, all beings hate the fickle deeds of humans and rakshasas chastise them. O Yudhishthira! Beyond the peak of this mountain can be seen the radiant objective of devarshis, those who are supremely successful. O Partha! O destroyer of enemies! If one is fickle enough to continue on the journey beyond this point, the rakshasas kill him with iron spears and other means. At the time of parvasandhi, Vaishravana Naravahana[93] can be seen there in his prosperity, surrounded by apsaras. All the beings then see the lord of the rakshasas seated on the peak of the mountain, as resplendent as the rising sun. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The peak of that mountain is the sporting ground of gods, danavas, siddhas and Vaishravana. O son![94] At the time of parvasandhi, Tumburu[95] worships the lord of riches there and the sounds of his songs and hymns can be heard on Gandhamadana. O son! O Yudhishthira! At the time of parvasandhi, all the many different beings witness this wonderful sight here. O best of the Pandavas! Dwell here. Live on succulent fruit and other tasty food, until you see Arjuna. O son! Now that you have reached this place, you should never be fickle. O best of those who wield weapons! After living here, as you desire, and sporting yourself, you will protect the earth.”’

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Janamejaya asked, ‘How long did the great-souled sons of Pandu, all of them divine in valour, live on Mount Gandhamadana? O virtuous one! What did those great-souled ones, valorous in the world, subsist on, while they lived there? Tell me. Tell me in detail about Bhimasena’s prowess. What did the mighty-armed one accomplish in those Himalaya mountains? O, supreme among brahmanas! Did he wage war against the yakshas again? Did they ever meet Vaishravana? Arshtishena did say that the lord of riches visits the place. O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear all this in great detail. I am never satiated on hearing about their deeds.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘After having heard the instructions of the immensely energetic one,[96] good for their welfare, the bulls among the Bharata lineage always abided by them. They lived on the food of hermits, succulent fruits, the meat of deer shot with pure arrows[97] and different kinds of pure honey. The Pandavas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, dwelt on the slopes of the Himalayas. In this fashion, they lived there for five years, listening to the many words spoken by Lomasha. O lord! Ghatotkacha had left earlier with all the other rakshasas, saying that he would return whenever the occasion demanded. Many months passed while the great-souled ones dwelt in Arshtishena's hermitage and they witnessed many great marvels. While the Pandavas happily lived there and sported themselves, many immensely fortunate hermits and *charanas*, pure in soul and rigid in their vows, came to see the Pandavas and held conversations with the supreme of the Bharata lineage on celestial matters.

'After some time, a suparna suddenly carried away a handsome and giant serpent that used to dwell in the giant lake. The mighty mountain began to tremble and many large trees were torn down. With all beings, the Pandavas witnessed this extraordinary sight. Then, from that supreme mountain, a wind blew towards the Pandavas and carried many different kinds of beautiful and fragrant flowers. With their well-wishers and with the famous Droupadi, the Pandavas saw those divine flowers, with five different colours. At that time, when the mighty-armed Bhimasena was comfortably seated at a secluded spot on the mountain, Krishna told him, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! As a result of the forceful wind generated from the suparna's great force, five-coloured blossoms have been dropped near the river Ashvaratha and all the beings have witnessed this. Your great-souled brother,[98] always driven by truth, once restrained gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas and even Vasava himself, in Khandava. After killing the ones who resort to maya,[99] he obtained the bow Gandiva. You also possess enormous energy and great strength of arms. You are indomitable and irresistible and are the equal of Shatakratu[100] in your strength. Let all the rakshasas be terrified of the force and strength of your arms. O Bhimasena! They will leave this mountain and flee in the ten directions. Then, devoid of all fear and delusion, let all your well-wishers behold this supreme mountain, auspicious and adorned with colourful flowers. O Bhima! This thought has been in my mind for a long time. Protected through the strength of your arms, I wish to see the top of this mountain." The scorcher of enemies was maddened by Droupadi's words. The mighty-armed one could not stand it, like an excellent bull that has been beaten. His gait was like that of a lion or a bull. He was handsome and noble. His complexion was like that of gold. He was spirited and strong, powerful and proud. The brave Pandava's eyes were red and his shoulders were wide. He was like a maddened elephant in his valour. His teeth were like a lion's and his shoulders were expansive. He was as tall as a young shala tree. The great-souled one was beautiful in all his limbs. His neck was like a conch shell[101] and his arms were huge. He grasped his gold-plated bow, his sword and his quivers. Like an insolent lion, or like a maddened elephant, the strong one rushed towards the mountain, free from fear or delusion.

'All the beings saw him, wielding his arrows, sword and bow, like a king of the beasts,[102] or a maddened elephant. The Pandava was devoid of fear or delusion. To increase Droupadi's happiness, he grasped a club and penetrated the king of the mountains. Partha, the son of the wind-god, was not bothered by fatigue, fear, lassitude or envy. He came to a terrible-looking and uneven passage that only one person could pass through at a time. Through this, the immensely strong one ascended the peak, as tall as many palm trees. Agitating kinnaras, great serpents, hermits, gandharvas and rakshasas, the immensely strong one ascended the mountain. The bull among the Bharata lineage saw Vaishravana's abode there. It was ornamented with golden and crystalline buildings. Gladdening all beings, an extremely pleasant breeze blew there, arising from Gandhamadana, and carrying all the various fragrances in it. There were many beautiful trees of diverse kinds, extraordinary and colourful and beyond all thought. The bull among the Bharata lineage then saw the abode of the lord of the rakshasas. It was covered on all sides by a network of gems. It was pure and was adorned with beautiful flowers. The mighty-armed Bhimasena stood there, as immobile as a mountain. Prepared to give up his life, he held a club, a sword, a bow and arrows in his hand. He then blew on his conch shell and this made the body hair of his enemies stand up. He twanged his bow and slapped his arms and terrified all beings.

'Their body hair standing up, yakshas, rakshasas and gandharvas rushed towards the sound and approached Pandava. The clubs, maces, swords, spears, lances and battleaxes, taken up by the yakshas and rakshasas in their arms, began to blaze. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then a war started between them and him. With terrible force and speed, Bhima used his arrows to slice off the spears, lances and battleaxes hurled at him by those gigantic ones. The immensely powerful one pierced the bodies of the rakshasas with his arrows and they roared, while roaming around in the sky and on the ground. A great shower of blood rained down on the immensely strong one, flowing from the bodies of the rakshasas in every direction. Many heads and bodies of the yakshas and the rakshasas were seen to be sliced off through what Bhima's mighty arms released. All the beings then saw the handsome Pandava enveloped by the rakshasas, like the sun with masses of clouds. But just as the sun penetrates everything with its rays, the mighty-armed and powerful one, with truth as his valour, penetrated all of them with his arrows. They uttered loud roars and victorious cries. But all the rakshasas could not see any delusion in Bhimasena. All their limbs were wounded with his arrows and they were oppressed with their fear of Bhimasena. Throwing away their great weapons, they roared in scared and terrible voices. Discarding their clubs, spears, swords, lances and battleaxes, they fled in a southern direction,[103] scared of the one whose bow was firm.

'There remained a mighty-armed and broad-chested rakshasa. His name was Maniman and he held a spear and a club in his hands. He was Vaishravana's friend. The mighty-armed one exhibited his authority and his manliness. On seeing them flee, he smilingly said, "On reaching Vaishravana's abode, what will you tell the lord of riches, since several of you have been defeated in battle by a single man?" Having spoken these words, the rakshasa restrained them and dashed towards Pandava, with a lance, a spear and a club in his hands. On seeing him forcefully approach, like a maddened elephant, Bhimasena pierced his side with three calf-toothed arrows.[104] Angered, Maniman grasped a gigantic club. Having grasped it, he hurled it with great force at Bhimasena. That gigantic club flashed like lightning in the sky and was extremely terrible. But Bhimasena shot many arrows that had been sharpened on stone. However, all those arrows were blunted on the club and despite their great force, could not restrain its swift force. But the valorous one knew the art of fighting with a club and the courageous Bhima warded off the blow. Then the wise rakshasa grasped an extremely terrible javelin with a golden shaft and struck him with it. The extremely terrible weapon was blazing in flames and uttered a loud roar. It pierced Bhima's right arm and swiftly fell down on the ground. Having been severely pierced by the javelin, Kouravya, skilled in fighting with clubs, a mighty archer and infinite in valour, grasped his club. That club was made entirely out of iron. Brandishing it, Bhima rushed with great speed towards the immensely powerful Maniman. Maniman also grasped a giant and blazing spear. Uttering a great roar, he flung it at Bhimasena with force. But the one who was skilled in fighting with clubs splintered the spear with the end of his club and rushed to destroy him, like Garuda against a serpent. With the club in his hand, the mighty-armed one suddenly jumped up in the sky. He roared in battle and flung it. With the speed of the wind, like the vajra hurled by Indra, it struck the rakshasa. Having killed him, it fell down on the ground, like a she-demon.[105] All the beings saw how the rakshasa, terrible in strength, was felled by Bhimasena, like a bull by a lion. On seeing him dead on the ground, the remaining roamers of the night[106] uttered terrible cries of distress and fled in an eastern direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing the caves in the mountains resounding with many different kinds of noise and on not seeing Bhimasena, Kounteya Ajatashatru,[107] Madri's two sons, Dhoumya, Krishna,[108] the brahmanas and all the well-wishers were concerned. Leaving Droupadi in Arshtishena's care, the brave maharathas ascended up the mountain, arming themselves with weapons. Having reached the mountain's summit, the maharathas, mighty archers, looked around and saw Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies, and the gigantic rakshasas, dead and writhing, mighty in strength and extremely terrible, but felled by Bhimasena. The one with the mighty arms carried a club, a sword and a bow and was as radiant as Maghavan,[109] after slaying all the danavas in battle. Having traversed the supreme route, the Parthas stepped over these, embraced Vrikodara and seated themselves. With those four mighty archers, the mountain's summit looked as beautiful as heaven with the immensely fortunate *lokapala*s, foremost among the gods.[110]

'Having seen Kubera's abode and the felled rakshasas, the brother told his seated brother Pandava.[111] "O Bhima! O brave one! Whether you performed this evil act out of bravery or delusion, it is unworthy of you, like falsehood to a hermit. Learned ones well versed in dharma say that one should not perform deeds that are against the wishes of a king. O Bhimasena! You have offended the thirty gods through your deed. O Partha! If one's mind is attracted to evil, disregarding artha and dharma, it is certain that there will be fruits from that evil deed. If you wish to do that which pleases me, do not ever act like this again." Kunti's son Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul and knowledgeable about the different aspects of artha, spoke thus to his unvanquished brother. Having stopped speaking, the immensely energetic one began to reflect on the matter.

'Meanwhile, the rakshasas who had survived Bhimasena returned towards Kubera's abode. Travelling at great speed, they swiftly reached Vaishravana's abode. They wailed in terrible distress, oppressed by fear of Bhimasena. They had lost their arms and weapons. They were exhausted. Their garments were besmeared with blood. Their hair was dishevelled. O king! They told the lord of the yakshas, "O lord of riches! O god! Armed with clubs, maces, swords, javelins and lances, all the foremost warriors among the rakshasas have been killed. A man has swiftly penetrated the mountain and has single-handedly killed masses of krodhavashas[112] in battle. O lord of riches! O god! The foremost among chief rakshasas and yakshas have been killed and have lost their senses and their spirits. He has taken the mountain. We are the only ones who have escaped. Your friend Maniman has also been killed. This act has been done by a single man. Now do what should be done hereafter." Having heard this, the lord of all the masses of yakshas was enraged. His eyes became red with anger and he exclaimed, "How is that possible!" On hearing of Bhima's second offence,[113] the lord of riches and the lord of the yakshas was angered and instructed his horses to be yoked. The beautiful chariot was yoked with supreme gandharva horses that possessed all the good qualities. They were clear in the eye and were swift and strong. They were adorned with many gems. The chariot resembled a cloud and was as high as the peak of a mountain. The beautiful horses were yoked to the chariot and were ready to fly, like arrows. They were excited and neighed at each other, as if foretelling victory. The illustrious king of the yakshas[114] ascended the grand chariot and the immensely radiant one departed, praised by the gods and the gandharvas. As the great-souled lord of riches left, all the yakshas accompanied him. Their eyes were red. They were golden in complexion. They were gigantic in form and immensely strong. They were armed with weapons and had girded their swords. There were one crore[115] yakshas. They were brave and indomitable in spirit. They surrounded their king.

'The Pandavas saw the lord of riches, great and pleasant to look at, approach and their body hair stood up. On seeing Pandu's maharatha sons, great in spirit, with their bows and swords in their hands, Kubera was also delighted. With great speed, they[116] alighted on the peak of the mountain like birds and stood around the lord of riches, who was at the forefront. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that he[117] was delighted with the Pandavas, the yakshas and gandharvas, stood around indifferently.[118] The great-souled Pandavas, Nakula, Sahadeva and Dharma's son, who was always devoted to dharma, bowed down in obeisance before the illustrious lord of riches. The maharathas knew in their hearts that they had committed a crime. Therefore, all of them surrounded the lord of riches, hands joined in salutation. The handsome lord of riches was seated on his supreme Pushpaka,[119] constructed by Vishvakarma[120] and coloured along the sides. Thousands of giant yakshas and rakshasas, swift in speed and with pointed ears, seated themselves below the seated one. Hundreds of gandharvas and masses of apsaras surrounded and waited on him, like Shatakratu surrounded by the gods. With a beautiful golden garland on his head and with arrows, sword and bow in his hand, Bhimasena looked at the lord of riches. Despite being wounded by the rakshasas, Bhima felt no fear or exhaustion. Even in that state, he looked at Kubera.

‘On seeing Bhima standing there, desiring to fight and with sharp arrows, Naravahana told Dharma’s son, “O Partha! All the beings know that you have the welfare of beings in your heart. Therefore, with your relatives, live on this mountain without any fear. O Pandava! Nor should you be angry because of Bhimasena’s deed. They[121] had already been killed by destiny and your brother was only the instrument. Nor should you be ashamed at this violent deed of his. The destruction of the yakshas and the rakshasas had been determined by the gods earlier. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am not angry with Bhimasena. I am pleased. I have already satisfied myself with this deed of Bhimasena’s.” Having said this to the king,[122] he spoke to Bhimasena, “O son![123] O supreme among the Kuru lineage! This will not prey on your mind. O Bhima! You have embarked on this act of violence for Krishna’s sake. You have ignored me and the gods. You have destroyed the yakshas and the rakshasas, with the strength of your own arms. But even then, I am pleased with you. O Vrikodara! You have freed me from a terrible curse. Earlier, for some reason, I was cursed by the supreme rishi Agastya, because he had been angered. Because of your deed, I have now been freed from the curse following that transgression. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! O destroyer of enemies! Since I foresaw this grief, no crime attaches to you.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O illustrious one! Why were you cursed by the great-souled Agastya? O god! I wish to hear about the reasons behind the curse. It seems to me extraordinary that the wise one’s anger did not instantly consume you, with all your armies and your attendants.”

‘Vaishravana replied, “O lord of men! There was a council of the gods in Kushavati. I was going there, surrounded by three hundred *mahapadmas*[124] of terrible-looking yakshas, armed with various weapons. While going there, I saw the supreme rishi Agastya, practising terrible austerities on the banks of the Yamuna. The place was full of masses of birds and adorned with blossoming trees. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him standing there with his arms raised and facing the sun, a mass of energy and as radiant as a blazing fire that has been kindled well, my handsome friend Maniman, the lord of the rakshasas, was overcome by stupidity, ignorance, insolence and delusion. From the sky, he spat on the maharshi’s head. He[125] was angered and as though burning up the directions, said, ‘O lord of riches! Because this evil-minded one has insulted me and because he has injured me while you have looked on, this friend of yours, with all these armies, will meet their deaths at the hands of a human. O one with evil intelligence! You will also grieve, together with these armies. But you will be freed from your sin when you encounter that human. However, this terrible curse will not touch the powerful sons and grandsons of these armies. Go now. They will follow your orders.’ This was the curse that I had earlier received from the supreme of rishis. O great king! Your brother Bhima has freed me from that.”’

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‘Vaishravana said, “O Yudhishthira! Perseverance, steadfastness, place, time and valour—these are the five principles that determine results in this world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In krita yuga, men persevered and were skilled in their respective tasks and were well versed in the principles of valour. O best of kshatriyas! A kshatriya who has perseverance, knows the place and the time and the principle of all dharma, rules the earth. O Partha! O brave one! A man who acts in this fashion in all his deeds, obtains fame in this world and a good end after death. Shakra, the destroyer of Vritra, together with the Vasus, exhibited his valour at the right place and time and obtained the kingdom of heaven. The one who is evil in his soul and evil in his intelligence pursues evil alone. Not knowing the results of his actions, he is destroyed now, and after death. The stupid one who does not know the time and the difference between different types of deeds, is destroyed now, and after death, and his efforts are in vain. Violent, deceitful and evil-minded ones decide to commit sin, covetous of obtaining everything. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This Bhimasena is fearless. He does not know dharma. He is prone to violence. He is childish in intelligence. He is intolerant. Therefore, instruct him.

'"When you have returned to rajarshi Arshtishena's hermitage, for the first lunar fortnight,[126] dwell there without any fear. O Indra among men! O mighty-armed one! The gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the inhabitants of Alaka[127] and all the denizens of the mountain will protect you, and the supreme among brahmanas, on my orders. O king! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! This Vrikodara has been committing violent acts on this mountain. Restrain him. O Indra among kings! From now on, all the inhabitants of the forest will look after you, serve you and always protect you. O bull among men! My attendants will serve you with a lot of tasty food and drink. O son![128] O Yudhishthira! Just as Jishnu is under Mahendra's protection, Vrikodara under Vayu's, you under Dharma's, since you are his own son obtained through yoga, and the twins under the Ashvins, each son being respectively protected, from now on, you will be under my protection too. Phalguna, knowledgeable in all aspects of artha and well versed in all aspects of dharma, immediately younger to Bhimasena, has become skilled in heaven. O son! Right from his birth, every superior trait, perceived to lead to the attainment of the supreme of worlds, has been vested in Dhananjaya. Self-control, generosity, strength, intelligence, humility, perseverance and supreme energy—all of these are present in the great-spirited one, whose energy is infinite. O Pandava! Jishnu never commits a reprehensible act. Nor do men recount any falsehoods having been uttered by Partha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That extender of deeds of the Kuru lineage has been learning the art of weapons in Shakra's abode, honoured by the gods, the ancestors and the gandharvas. O Partha! The immensely energetic Shantanu, your father's grandfather, who brought all the lords of the earth under his suzerainty through dharma, is pleased in heaven with Partha Gandivadhanva.[129] That immensely valorous and greatly famous king, the upholder of his lineage, always honoured the ancestors, the gods, the rishis and the brahmanas and performed seven major sacrifices on the banks of the Yamuna. O king! That lord of kings, your great grandfather Shantanu, has attained heaven and now resides in Shakra's world. He has asked about your welfare."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Vrikodara, bull among the Bharata lineage, then laid down his spear, his club, his sword and his bow. He bowed down in obeisance before Kubera. The lord of riches, refuge of those who seek sanctuary, then told the one who had sought shelter, "May you be the one who destroys the pride of your enemies and increases the joy of your well-wishers. O scorcher of enemies! O bulls among the Bharata lineage! Dwell in these beautiful residences. The yakshas will procure for you everything that you desire. Having obtained the weapons and having obtained leave from Maghavan himself, Gudakesha Dhananjaya, bull among men, will return soon." Having thus instructed Yudhishthira, whose deeds were virtuous, the lord of the guhyakas, returned to his home in the supreme of mountains. Thousands of rakshasas and yakshas followed him in their vehicles, covered with decorated cushions and adorned with many different kinds of gems. Those supreme horses neighed as they proceeded like birds towards Kubera's abode, following Airavata's path.[130] The steeds of the lord of riches travelled as if they were splitting the sky, trailing clouds and feeding on the wind. On the instructions of the lord of riches, the dead bodies of the rakshasas were removed from the summit of the mountain. The wise Agastya had determined this at the time for the curse. And therefore they, together with Maniman, had been slain in battle. The great-souled Pandavas happily spent the night in those residences. They were free from anxiety and were honoured by all the rakshasas.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O destroyer of enemies! When the sun rose, having performed the rituals, Dhoumya came to the Pandavas with Arshtishena. Having bowed down at the feet of Arshtishena and Dhoumya, they worshipped all the brahmanas, hands joined in salutation.

'Then Dhoumya grasped Yudhishthira by the right hand. Looking towards the eastern direction, the maharshi said, "O great king! Mandara, the king of mountains, grandly covers the earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean. O Pandava! This direction, adorned with mountains, forests and groves, is protected by Indra and Vaishravana. O son![131] Learned rishis, knowledgeable in dharma have said that this is the abode of Mahendra and King Vaishravana. Beings worship the sun because it rises from there, as do rishis learned in dharma, siddhas, sadhyas and gods. King Yama, with dharma in his soul and the lord of all living beings, presides over the southern direction, the path followed by those who have died. This is sacred Samyamana, extraordinary to behold. Full of great prosperity, this is the abode of the king of the dead. O king! The learned ones call this king of the mountains Asta.[132] On attaining it, the sun is established in truth. Dwelling on this king of mountains and in the great ocean, King Varuna protects all beings. O immensely fortunate one! The great and famous Mount Meru is established in radiance in the northern direction and is the auspicious refuge of those who know the brahman. Brahma's sacrificial site[133] is there and Prajapati,[134] the soul of all beings and the creator of everything that is mobile and immobile, resides there. The great and auspicious Meru, free from disease, is also the abode of Brahma's mental sons, the seventh being Daksha.[135] O son![136] Every day, the seven devarshis, Vasishtha being the foremost, rise and set there.[137] Behold that auspicious region and the auspicious peak of Meru, where the grandfather[138] dwells with the gods, content in their souls. Beyond Brahma's abode, the supreme region of the supreme lord Narayana is resplendent. He is without beginning and without end. He is said to be the first cause of all beings. He is the true origin of all nature. Even the gods cannot see that divine and auspicious region, full of energy, without great endeavour. O king! Because of its own radiance, brighter than the sun and the fire, the region of the great-souled Vishnu is difficult for the gods and the danavas to see. When they reach there, all the stars no longer shine. The lord whose soul is never subdued, outshines them through his own brilliance. Through their devotion, combined with supreme austerities and perfected with pious deeds, accomplished in yoga and devoid of darkness and delusion, great-souled ascetics go there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having gone there, they never return to this world.[139] O immensely fortunate Yudhishthira! This region is eternal. It has no deterioration and no decay. This is the lord's region. Bow down before it. The illustrious Aditya,[140] the dispeller of all darkness, attracts all the stars and circumambulates it.[141] On having reached Asta and passing through evening, the sun traverses a northern course. O Pandava! Always devoted to the welfare of all beings, the sun circles Meru and reappears in the east. In a similar way, the illustrious moon divides the months into many parvasandhis and travels with the stars. Thus continuously circling the great Meru, the nourisher of all beings[142] returns to Mandara. In a similar way, the sun, the one who dispels darkness with his rays, follows the same unobstructed route and nourishes the world. When he desires to create the winter season, he takes a southern course[143] and winter descends on all beings. Then, returning, he uses his own energy to sap up the energy of all beings, mobile and immobile. Because of perspiration, tiredness, lassitude and exhaustion, all men are affected, and so are other beings. They are always inclined towards sleep. Thus, the sun traverses a path that cannot be determined. The illustrious one creates rains, reviving all beings. O Partha! Having prospered all beings, mobile and immobile, with pleasant rains, winds and warmth, the immensely energetic one resumes his course. O Partha! Thus the sun continuously traverses his course, following the wheel of time and attracting all beings. O Pandava! His course is eternal. He never stands still. Taking energy from beings, he returns it again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He measures out the deeds of all beings. The eternal lord creates night and day, *kala* and *kashtha*.'"[144]

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Vaishampayana said, 'They lived on that king of mountains. Those great-souled ones established themselves in good vows. They found pleasure and amused themselves, waiting to see Arjuna. Those valorous ones were extremely pure in their souls, energetic and devoted to truth and fortitude. Masses of gandharvas and maharshis were kindly disposed towards them and came to visit them. Having reached that supreme mountain, adorned with blossoming trees, the maharathas were extremely happy in their hearts, like the Maruts are on attaining heaven. They beheld the peaks and the ridges of that great mountain, resounding with the calls of peacocks and swans and strewn with many flowers, and felt great joy. Kubera himself tended to them. They saw on that supreme mountain streams with wooded banks and ponds full of lotuses, kadambas, karandavas and swans. There were beautiful pleasure grounds, coloured and prosperous, adorned along the sides with garlands and studded with gems that please the mind, like those that are in the possession of the king of riches. The peak of that mountain had many colours and was fragrant. It had large trees and was covered with masses of clouds. Though they were always devoted to austerities, when they roamed around, they could not fathom it. O warrior among men! Because of the energy of that great mountain and the luminescence of its great herbs, no difference could be seen between night and day. While dwelling there, those brave lions among men saw the rising and the setting of the sun, the infinitely energetic sun who lived there and nourished all beings, mobile and immobile. The brave ones saw how darkness was dispelled when the sun rose and how it returned when it had set. They saw how all the directions were enveloped in the nets spread by the rays of the sun. They waited for the arrival of the maharatha who was truthful in his vows. They studied and always performed the rituals. They followed dharma and were pure in their vows. They were always established in truth. "We will soon find joy in this spot, when Dhananjaya returns, having obtained the weapons." This is what the Parthas pronounced as a supreme benediction and they devoted themselves to austerities and yoga.

'They saw many beautiful mountains and forests, but constantly thought about Kiriti.[145] Every day and every night seemed like an entire year to them. From the moment when the great-souled Jishnu had obtained Dhoumya's permission and had left with matted hair, from that instant happiness had deserted them. How could they find pleasure when their hearts were with him? They had been stricken with grief ever since Jishnu, whose gait was like that of an elephant, had followed the instructions of his brother Yudhishthira and had left Kamyaka forest. They thought of the one whose steeds were white.[146] He had gone to Vasava in search of weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, the Bharatas spent a month in that mountain, immersed in melancholy.

'Then one day, when the maharathas were thinking of Arjuna, they rejoiced when they suddenly saw Mahendra's chariot approach, like a flash of lightning, and yoked to tawny horses. It suddenly blazed in the firmament, like a giant meteor hidden in the clouds or like the flaming crest of a fire that has no smoke. It was driven by Matali.[147] Kiriti could be seen in it, garlanded and adorned in the best of ornaments. Dhananjaya was the equal of the wielder of the vajra in his power and arrived at the mountain, dazzling in his beauty. When the one with the diadem on his head arrived at the mountain, he descended from Mahendra's chariot and first paid his respect at Dhoumya's feet, followed by Ajatashatru next.[148] He then bowed down at Vrikodara's feet and was himself worshipped by Madri's sons. Then he went to Krishna and comforted her. With humility, he stood below his brother.[149] Those who were there were extremely delighted at being reunited with the one who cannot be measured. The one who had the diadem on his head was also delighted on seeing them and praised the king. With happiness in their hearts, the Parthas approached and circled Indra's chariot. On this, the slayer of Namuchi had destroyed seven groups of Diti's sons.[150] The princes of the Kuru lineage were extremely happy. They showed honour to Matali, equal to what the king of the gods would have warranted. As was appropriate, they asked him about the welfare of the gods. In turn, Matali greeted them and instructed them, like a father does his sons. In that chariot that was unmatched in its splendour, he then returned to the lord of the gods.

'When the chariot of the supreme god had departed, Shakra's great-souled son, the destroyer of all enemies, presented all the expensive and beautiful gifts that Shakra had given. The ornaments that he lovingly gave to his beloved, Sutasoma's mother,[151] glittered like the sun's rays. Then he seated himself in the midst of the bulls of the Kuru lineage, resplendent like the sun and the fire. He sat in the midst of the brahmana rishis and recounted everything that had happened. "I have learnt these weapons from Shakra, the wind-god and Shiva themselves. Together with the gods, Indra was pleased at my conduct and my concentration." Having briefly told them about his entry into heaven,[152] Kiriti, the performer of pure deeds, happily went to sleep, spending the night with Madri's sons.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'At that time,[153] there was a tremendous sound in the sky, created by all the musical instruments of the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was the sound of chariot wheels and the tolling of bells. The cries of beasts of prey, animals and all kinds of birds resounded everywhere. The king of the gods, the destroyer of enemies, arrived, accompanied by gandharvas and apsaras on all sides, all riding vimanas that were like the sun. Purandara, the king of the gods, blazing in his supreme radiance, went up to the Parthas in a chariot that roared like the clouds, was adorned with gold and was drawn by tawny horses. Having arrived, the god with the thousand eyes descended. As soon as he saw that great-souled one, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, together with his brothers, approached that handsome king of the gods. The one who was generous in his gifts worshipped the one whose soul was infinite,[154] in accordance with the appropriate honours and the decreed rituals. The energetic Dhananjaya bowed in obeisance before Purandara and before the king of the gods, remained prone like a servant. The immensely energetic Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, saw Dhananjaya, his head bowed in humility. The king of the gods was extremely delighted on seeing Phalguna and inhaled the fragrance of his matted head, cleansed through austerities. The king[155] rejoiced in his heart and was overcome with delight.

'Purandara, the wise king of the gods, spoke to him. "O king! O Pandava! You will rule the earth. O Kounteya! Be fortunate. Return again to the hermitage of Kamyaka. O king! Having performed deeds that brought me pleasure, Pandava Dhananjaya has obtained all the weapons from me. No one in the worlds is capable of vanquishing him now." Having spoken these words to Kunti's son Yudhishthira, and having been worshipped by the maharshis, the one with the thousand eyes happily returned to heaven. The learned and controlled one who observes brahmacharya for a year, restrained and rigid in his vows, and studies this account of the meeting between the Pandavas and Shakra in the abode of the lord of riches, will never face obstructions and will live happily for a hundred autumns.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When Shakra had departed the way he had come, together with his brothers and Krishna, Bibhatsu showed homage to Dharma's son. Having inhaled the fragrance of the head of Pandava Arjuna, who had bowed down before him, he[156] happily told him in a voice that was broken from delight, “O Arjuna! How did you spend this time in heaven? How did you satisfy the king of the gods and how did you obtain the weapons? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Have you obtained all the weapons completely? Have the king of the gods and Rudra given you the weapons happily? How did you see Shakra and the illustrious wielder of the pinaka?[157] How did you obtain the weapons and how did you worship them? O destroyer of enemies! Why did the illustrious Shatakratu say that you had done that which brought him pleasure? What did you do to please him? O immensely radiant one! I wish to hear all this in detail, how you satisfied Mahadeva and the king of the gods. O unblemished one! O destroyer of enemies! O Dhananjaya! How did you please the wielder of the vajra? Tell me everything.”

‘Arjuna replied, “O great king! Listen to the way in which I beheld the god Shatakratu and the illustrious lord Shankara. O king! O destroyer of enemies! Having studied as you had asked me to, I retired to the forest according to your instructions to practise austerities. From Kamyaka, I went to Bhrigutunga and practised austerities there. When I had spent a night there, I met a brahmana on the road. O Kounteya! He asked me, ‘Where are you going? Tell me.’ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I then told him everything. O supreme among kings! O king! On hearing everything from me, the brahmana offered me homage and was pleased at me. He cheerfully told me, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Practise austerities. You will soon behold the lord of the gods.’ Then, following his instructions, I ascended Mount Shaishira[158] and practised austerities. O great king! For one month, I lived on roots and fruit. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! For the second month, I lived on water alone. And in the third, I abstained from food. In the fourth month, I stood with my arms upraised. It is extraordinary that I did not lose my strength. When the fourth had passed and the first day arrived,[159] a being in the form of a boar appeared before me. It dug the ground up with its tasks. It scratched it with its hooves. It rubbed it with its belly and continuously rolled over. It was followed by another great being in the form of a kirata.[160] He carried a bow, arrows and a sword and was accompanied by masses of women.

'"Taking up my bow and the quivers, I pierced that being,[161] which made one's hair stand up, with an arrow. At the same time, the kirata drew his powerful bow and pierced it even more firmly, as if making my mind tremble. O king! He told me, 'Why have you disregarded the rules of hunting and shot it? It was struck by me first. Stand still. I will destroy your insolence with my sharp arrows. Then that gigantic being rushed at me. While I stood like a mountain, he covered me with his great arrows. I also covered him with a mighty shower of arrows. I pierced him, like a mountain pierced by the vajra, with arrows that flamed at the tips and had feathered shafts, with mantras chanted over them. At that, he multiplied his body a hundred times and a thousand times. I pierced each of these bodies with my arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that, all the bodies became one again. O great king! On seeing this, I pierced it again. He now assumed a very small body with a large head and then a very large body with a small head. O king! Then assuming a single body, he rushed at me to do battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When I could not vanquish him in combat with arrows, I resorted to my *vayavya* weapon. But it was extraordinary that I could not hurt him with this. When that weapon was repulsed, I was struck with great wonder. O great king! Therefore, I resorted to greater endeavours. In that great battle, I enveloped him with many mighty weapons. I unleashed a shower of arrows at him—*sthunakarna, ayojala, sharavarsha, sharolbana, shailastra* and *ashmavarsha*.[162] O unblemished one! But he smilingly gobbled up all the weapons unleashed by me. When he had pacified all of them, I grasped my *brahmastra*.[163] He was then completely covered with flaming arrows. Thus covered by my great weapon, his body began to expand. Because of the energy unleashed by me, the world began to burn. In an instant, the directions and the sky began to blaze. But that immensely energetic one pacified that weapon in a moment. O king! When the brahmastra weapon was conquered, I was overcome by great fear. I grasped my bow and inexhaustible quivers and struck him with these. But he devoured those weapons too. With all the weapons repulsed and with all the weapons devoured, that being and I engaged in a wrestling bout. We dealt blows at each other with our fists and with the flats of our hands. But that being vanquished me and I fell down immobile on the ground. Then that being laughed and disappeared at that spot and time, with all the women. O great king! On seeing this, I thought that it was extraordinary.

'"O great king! Having done this, the illustrious one discarded the form of a kirata and appeared in another divine form, dressed in a wonderful garment. The illustrious god himself, with the bull on his banner,[164] yellow-eyed and capable of assuming many forms, the wielder of the pinaka,[165] could be seen in his own form, accompanied by Uma. O scorcher of enemies! After the battle, I stood there, and the wielder of the trident[166] told me, 'I am pleased with you.' Grasping the bow and the inexhaustible quivers that never run out of arrows, the illustrious one returned them to me and said, 'Ask for a boon. O Kounteya! I am satisfied with you. Tell me what I can do for you. O brave one! What is the desire of your heart? Tell me and I will grant whatever is in your heart, as long as it is not immortality.' Then, I joined my hands in salutation, with my mind set on obtaining weapons. I bowed to Sharva[167] and spoke these words, 'If the illustrious one is pleased with me, I ask for this boon. I wish to know about all the weapons that the gods possess.' The illustrious Tryambaka[168] told me, 'I will give. O Pandava! My own weapon, *roudra*, will always be present before you.' Satisfied, the lord granted me that *pashupata* weapon.[169] Having given me that eternal weapon, Mahadeva told me, 'This should never be used against humans. O Dhananjaya! This powerful weapon should only be used if you are hard-pressed. It can be used to counter all other weapons.' Because of Vrishadhvaja's favours, that divine weapon, capable of countering all other weapons, the destroyer of all enemies and capable of annihilating the armies of enemies, unassailable and impossible for gods, danavas and rakshasas to endure, stood personified by my side. After obtaining his[170] permission, I sat down there. In my very sight, the god disappeared.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through the favours of the great-souled Tryambaka, the god of the gods, I happily spent the night there. When the night had passed and I had completed the morning rituals, I saw the best of brahmanas whom I had met earlier. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I told him everything that had happened and my meeting with the illustrious Mahadeva. O Indra among kings! That supreme of brahmanas then happily told me, ‘You have seen Mahadeva in a way that no one else has. O unblemished one! You will see Vaivasvata[171] and all the other lords of the worlds. You will see Indra of the gods and he will give you weapons.’ O king! Having said this, he embraced me again and again. Then that brahmana, who was like the sun, went where he desired.

‘“O destroyer of your enemies! In the afternoon of that day, a pure breeze began to blow and it seemed to make the world new again. Near me, at the foot of Shaishira mountain, divine, fragrant and fresh flowers appeared. The sound of delightful and divine musical instruments was heard on all sides, together with chants in praise of Indra. Masses of apsaras and gandharvas began to sing various songs in front of the god of the gods. Masses of Maruts[172] arrived in celestial vehicles, together with Mahendra’s followers and those who live in his abode. Marutvan, accompanied by Shachi, arrived in ornamented chariots yoked to tawny horses, together with all the other immortals. O king! At that instant, Naravahana Kubera, supreme in prosperity, appeared before me. I saw Yama established in the southern direction and Varuna and the king of the gods, each established in one’s respective place. O great king! That bull among the gods then spoke to me in comforting words. ‘O Savyasachi![173] Look at all of us lokapalas established here. You have seen Shankara to accomplish a task for the gods. You will receive weapons from all of us who are around here.’ O lord! I then purified and prostrated myself before those best of the gods. In accordance with the prescribed rites, I received those powerful weapons.[174] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O destroyer of enemies! Having obtained the weapons, I obtained leave of the gods. Then all the gods returned the way they had come.

‘“Maghavan, lord of the gods, ascended his splendid chariot. The illustrious one, the destroyer of the enemies of the gods, smiled and spoke these words. ‘O Dhananjaya! I had known you even before you arrived here. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Later, I will reveal myself to you.[175] O Pandava! You have earlier bathed in the tirthas. You have earlier tormented yourself with great austerities. You will therefore go to heaven. You will have to practise supremely terrible austerities again.’ Then the illustrious one recounted all the austerities that would have to be performed. ‘On my instructions, Matali will take you to the world of the thirty gods. You are already well known to the gods and the great-souled sages.’ At this, I told Shakra, ‘O illustrious one! Please show your favours to me. O lord of the thirty gods! I seek you as my preceptor, so that I may learn about weapons from you.’ Indra replied, ‘O son! O scorcher of enemies! You will perform terrible deeds. The reason for which you wish to acquire weapons will be satisfied.’ Then I said, ‘O slayer of enemies! I will never use those celestial weapons against humans, except to ward off their weapons. O lord of the gods! Therefore, give me those divine weapons. O bull among the gods! I will later obtain the worlds that weapons can attain.’ Indra replied, ‘O Dhananjaya! I uttered those words in order to test you. Your words are worthy of someone who is my son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Go to my abode and learn all the weapons there—those of Vayu, Agni, Varuna, the masses of Maruts, of the Sadhyas, the grandfather,[176] the gandharvas, the serpents and the rakshasas, those of Vishnu, the nairritas[177] and my own.’ Having spoken those words to me, Shakra disappeared.

'"O king! I then saw Indra's chariot arrive. It was yoked to tawny horses. It was divine, magical and sacred and was driven by Matali. The lokapalas having left, Matali told me, 'O immensely radiant one! Shakra, the king of the gods, wishes to see you. O mighty-armed one! First attain perfection. Then perform supreme deeds. Behold the regions earned by those with pure deeds. Go to heaven in your physical body.' At Matali's words, I took my leave of Shaishira mountain. Circumambulating, I ascended that supreme chariot. Matali, expansive in generosity and an expert about horses, drove those steeds in the proper fashion, with the speed of the mind and the wind. O king! On seeing me seated steadily though the chariot was swinging, the charioteer was surprised and wonderingly said, 'Today, this seems to me to be wonderful and extraordinary. You are seated in this divine chariot, but have not moved even a foot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the horses make their first movements, I have noticed that even the king of the gods loses his balance. O extender of the Kuru lineage! But you are seated in this fashion, though the chariot is swinging. It seems to me that your powers have surpassed those of Shakra.' O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, Matali soared up into the sky and lovingly showed me Nandana and many other groves of the gods. I saw Shakra's abode of Amaravati. It was adorned with divine trees that yielded every object of desire and jewels. The sun did not light it up. No chill or heat was felt there. O king! There was no fatigue, dust, mud, darkness or old age. No sorrow, misery or pallor could be noticed there. O great king! O oppressor of enemies! There was no weariness among the inhabitants of heaven. O lord of the earth! There was no anger or greed, nor anything inauspicious. Beings in the abodes of the gods are always satisfied and happy. There are always flowers and fruit in trees that are green with foliage. There are many ponds full of lotuses and sougandhika flowers. The breeze is cool, fragrant, refreshing and pure there. There are many jewels everywhere and the ground is strewn with flowers. There are many beautiful animals and birds, with sweet voices. Many immortals can be seen, riding their vimanas. I saw the Vasus, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, the masses of Maruts, the Adityas and the Ashvins and offered homage to all of them. They gave me their blessings for valour, fame, energy, strength, the learning of weapons and victory in battle.

‘“I then entered that beautiful city, worshipped by gods and gandharvas. Hands joined in salutation, I stood before the king of the gods, the one with a thousand eyes. Shakra, supreme among generous ones, was delighted and offered me half of his throne. O one who is generous with gifts! Then Vasava honoured me and touched my body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For the sake of weapons and learning, I began to dwell in heaven, together with the gods and the gandharvas. O king! Vishvavasu’s[178] son Chitrasena became my friend and he taught me everything that the gandharvas knew. O king! Having obtained the weapons and having been honoured, I lived there happily in Shakra’s abode, getting everything that I wished for. I heard the sounds of songs and the splendid sounds of many musical instruments. O scorcher of enemies! I witnessed the dancing of the best of the apsaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without ignoring those, which I learnt properly, I specially devoted my attention to learning about weapons. At that, the thousand-eyed lord was satisfied with my wishes. O king! In this way, the period of my residence in heaven passed.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “When I was skilled in weapons and had obtained his confidence, Harivahana[179] touched my head with his hands and spoke these words. ‘Today, the masses of gods are incapable of vanquishing you in battle, not to speak of humans of the world who have not perfected their souls. You are immeasurable and unassailable. You are also incomparable in battle.’ Then, with his body hair standing up, the god again said, ‘O brave one! There will be no one who will be your match in fighting with weapons. You are never distracted. You are skilled. You are truthful and in control of your senses. You are like a brahmana. You are skilled in the usage of weapons. O extender of the Kuru lineage! You have obtained ten weapons and five.[180] O Partha! Know that you have no equal in all the five ways. O Dhananjaya! You know how to employ, restrain, return, pacify and counteract them.[181] You know everything about atonement and repulsion. O scorcher of enemies! The time has now come for you to pay your preceptor's fees. Promise to pay it and then I will tell you what you have to do.' O king! At that, I spoke these words to the king of the gods. 'If it is in my power to do it, then consider it done.' O king! Bala and Vritra's slayer smiled and told me, 'There is nothing in the three worlds that is impossible for you. The danavas named nivatakavachas are my enemies. They live in an inaccessible spot, along the shores of the ocean. They are thirty million in number and they are identical in form, strength and radiance. O Kounteya! Destroy them there. That will be the preceptor's fee.' He gave me the immensely radiant and divine chariot, driven by Matali. It was yoked to horses that had hair as beautiful as the feathers of peacocks. He tied an excellent diadem on my head. He gave me ornaments for the body, similar to those he himself wore and this supreme, beautiful and impenetrable armour, pleasant to the touch. I strung Gandiva with this string that does not decay.

'"I then set out on that resplendent chariot, on which, in earlier times, the lord of the gods vanquished Bali, Virochana's son. All the gods were alerted by the roar. O lord of the earth! Thinking me to be the king of the gods, they assembled and having seen me, asked, 'O Phalguna! What will you do?' I then told them exactly what had occurred and said, 'I will do this in battle. I am departing to kill the nivatakavachas. O immensely fortunate ones! O unblemished ones! O pure ones! Give me your blessings.' They were as satisfied and pleased with me as the god Purandara. 'Ascended on this chariot, Maghavan vanquished in battle Shambara, Namuchi, Bala, Vritra, Prahlada and Naraka. On this chariot, Maghavan vanquished in battle many thousands, *prayuta*s and *arbuda*s of daityas.[182] O Kounteya! You will also vanquish the nivatakavachas in battle and show your prowess, just as the self-controlled Maghavan did earlier. Here is the supreme conch shell with which you will conquer the danavas. Using this, the great-souled Shakra conquered the worlds.'[183] The gods gave me Devadatta,[184] obtained from the waters, and I accepted it. Then, for the sake of victory, the immortals praised me. Desiring to fight, I left for the terrible abode of the danavas, with the conch shell, armour and arrows, having grasped the bow firmly.”’

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‘Arjuna said, “Wherever I went, I was praised by the maharshis. Then I beheld the terrible ocean, the eternal lord of the waters. Towering waves could be seen there, full of foam, dashing against each other and scattering, like moving mountains. There were thousands of boats, laden with gems, in every direction. *Timingilas*,[185] tortoises, whales and crocodiles could be seen, immersed in the water like mountains. Thousands of conch shells could be seen in every direction, immersed in the water. They looked like stars in the night, covered by thin clouds. Thousands of gems floated in heaps. A terrible wind whirled over this and it was extraordinary. I crossed over that supreme and extremely forceful storehouse of waters and drew near to the city of the daityas. I saw it, infested with danavas. Matali swiftly descended on to the ground. He drove on to the city, filling it with the roar of the chariot. On hearing the roar of the chariot, like the sound of thunder in the sky, the danavas took me to be the king of the gods and were anxious. Their minds trembled. All of them stood there, holding arrows and bows, spears, swords, battleaxes, clubs and maces in their hands. Their minds trembling with fear, the danavas closed the gates. They arranged for the protection of the city and nothing could be seen.

‘“I took out the conch shell Devadatta, whose sound is great. Circling around the city of the asuras, I blew gently on it. That sound echoed everywhere and seemed to stupefy the sky. On hearing this, the immensely mighty beings trembled and hid themselves. Then all the nivatakavachas, Diti’s sons, appeared everywhere. They were clad in different kinds of armour and had many different weapons in their hands. There were gigantic iron lances, clubs, maces, spears and the wheels of chariots in their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were *shataghnis*,[186] catapults and brilliantly ornamented swords.

O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then, thinking about the route the chariot should take, Matali drove the horses along level ground. Because of the swift speed that he made the horses adopt, I could see nothing and it seemed to me to be extraordinary. Then the many martial danavas adopted distorted voices and shapes. That great sound made hundreds and thousands of fishes die, suddenly floating up in the sky, like mountains. With great force, the danavas rushed towards me. They discharged hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For the sake of the death of the nivatakavachas, a great and terrible fight occurred between them and me. Devarshis, masses of rishis among the danavas, brahmarshis and siddhas assembled to witness that great battle. Hoping for victory, the hermits praised me with eloquent and sweet voices, just as they praised Indra at the time of *tarakamaya*.”’[187]

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‘Arjuna said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Grasping weapons in order to do battle, all the nivatakavachas rushed towards me. With angry yells, those maharathas obstructed the path of my chariot. They surrounded me from all directions and enveloped me with a shower of arrows. Other immensely valorous ones grasped lances and spears in their hands. They used lances and catapults on me. A great shower of lances, clubs and javelins was continuously hurled and descended on my chariot. Other nivatakavachas rushed at me in battle. They were armed with sharp weapons and missiles. They were terrible and skilled in fighting, like death. I sliced them down in battle with many swift and straight arrows released from Gandiva and pierced each of them with ten.[188] Those arrows used by me, sharpened on stone, drove all of them back. Those horses were swiftly driven by Matali and as fleet as the wind, performed many manoeuvres of the chariot. The skilled Matali trampled many of Diti’s sons. Hundreds and hundreds of tawny horses were yoked to that great chariot. But in Matali’s hands, there seemed to be only a few. Through the hooves, the terrible noise of the chariot and my bows, hundreds of asuras were slain. Others, grasping their bows even when they were dead, and with their charioteers killed, were carried away on horses. Those who were skilled in fighting covered all the directions. With all these weapons, my mind was distressed.

'"But Matali's valour seemed supremely extraordinary to me. He guided the swift horses lightly. O king! With light hands, I cut down hundreds and thousands of asuras in that battle, together with their weapons. O slayer of enemies! The brave Matali, Shakra's charioteer, was pleased when I roamed around in these endeavours. Some were crushed by the horses, others by the chariot. Some died. Others gave up fighting. In that battle, other nivatakavachas challenged me and attacked me from all sides with great showers of arrows. With light arrows that had been invoked with the brahmastra weapon, I consumed them in hundreds and thousands. Those angry and gigantic asuras were oppressed by me. They oppressed me with a shower of arrows, spears and swords. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I then picked up the beloved weapon of the king of the gods, named *madhava*. It possessed supreme energy. Through the energy of that weapon, I sliced into a hundred pieces the swords, tridents and javelins that they hurled at me in their thousands. Having angrily sliced their weapons, I pierced each of them with ten arrows. The great arrows that were unleashed from Gandiva in that battle were like swarms of bees and Matali praised them. They also covered me with many arrows, as innumerable as locusts. But I powerfully repulsed them with my arrows. Being struck, the nivatakavachas again surrounded me from all directions, with a great shower of arrows. But I repulsed them with thousands of flaming, supreme and swift arrows that were capable of countering arrows. Like water draining from the peak of a mountain during the rainy season, blood began to flow from their mangled bodies. Pierced by the swift and straight-travelling arrows, with an impact like that of Indra's vajra, the danavas became extremely anxious. Their bodies were cut into a hundred pieces. Their weapons lost their energy. The nivatakavachas then began to fight me with the powers of maya."'[189]

‘Arjuna said, “Then a mighty shower of rocks appeared in all the directions. Those terrible rocks, as large as mountain, oppressed me grievously. But in that battle, with swift arrows that were like the vajra and were discharged from Indra’s weapon, I shattered them into a hundred splinters. When the rocks were shattered, there was a fire and those splintered rocks fell into it like sparks. When that shower of rocks was dissipated, there was a great shower of water. It poured down on me in flows that were as large as axles.[190] The shower descending from the sky, in thousands of powerful streams, enveloped the sky and the directions everywhere. Nothing could be seen because of the downpour of water, the roar of the wind and the roars of the daityas. The water covered everything between heaven and earth. Descending continuously on earth, that torrent confounded me. At that, I discharged the terrible, flaming and divine weapon named *vishoshana*,[191] obtained from Indra, and this dried the water up. O one who is deserving of honour! When the shower of rocks was destroyed by me and the shower of water dried up, the danavas used maya to unleash wind and fire. I destroyed all the fire with a weapon named *salila*.[192] I countered the force of the wind through a great weapon named *shaila*.[193] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When that had been countered, the danavas, indomitable in battle, resorted to many types of maya and yoga. There was a great shower that made one’s body hair stand up, consisting of terrible weapons, fire, wind and rocks. That shower, created through maya, oppressed me in battle. A terrible darkness then manifested itself in every direction.

‘“When the world was completely immersed in that terrible and dense darkness, the horses drew back and Matali tumbled forward. The golden whip fell down from his hand, onto the ground. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He repeatedly cried out, ‘Where are you?’ When he had lost his senses in this way, a terrible fear overcame me. Trembling and bereft of his senses, he told me, ‘O Partha! O unblemished one! In earlier times, there was a terrible war between the gods and the demons for the sake of amrita. I witnessed it. There was a terrible and great battle for the slaying of Shambara[194] and I was the charioteer of the king of the gods then too. Like that, I drove the steeds at the killing of Vritra. I also witnessed the terrible and great battle for Virochana's son.[195] O Pandava! I have seen those terrible and great battles. But never before have I lost my senses. It must certainly have been determined by the grandfather[196] that all beings will be destroyed. But for the destruction of the universe, I can find no other reason for this battle.' On hearing these words of his, and pacifying myself in my own mind, I got ready to confound this great strength of maya of the danavas.

'"I told the terrified Matali, 'Behold the strength of my arms, the might of my weapons and those of this bow Gandiva. O charioteer! Do not be scared. Be steady. With the maya of my weapons, I will now counter this terrible maya and repulse this terrible darkness.' O lord of men! Having said this, I unleashed the maya of my weapons for the welfare of the thirty gods, capable of deluding all beings. That maya having been dispelled, the lords of the asuras, infinitely energetic, again unleashed many different types of maya. It was suddenly light. Suddenly everything was immersed in darkness. The world could sometimes not be seen. Sometimes it was immersed in the water. When it was light, in that battle which made one's body hair stand up, Matali drove the chariot, yoked to horses that were handled well. Then the terrible nivatakavachas rushed towards me. Whenever I saw an opening, I sent them to Yama's abode. In that battle, for the destruction of the nivatakavachas, suddenly I could not see any of the danavas. They had covered themselves with maya."'

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'Arjuna said, "Invisible, the daityas fought me with maya. With the power of invisible weapons, I continued to fight with them. The shafted arrows from Gandiva, empowered with mantras, sliced off their heads, wherever they were. At that, thus killed by me in battle, the nivatakavachas suddenly withdrew their maya and retreated into their city again. The daityas having fled and everything visible again, I saw the dead danavas there, in hundreds and thousands. There were shattered weapons and ornaments. Heaps of dead bodies and armour could be seen. There was no room for the horses to move their feet. They[197] suddenly rose up and took to the sky. Invisible, the nivatakavachas covered the entire sky and showered down large rocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Other terrible danavas entered the interiors of the earth and restrained the feet of the horses and the wheels of the chariot. While engaged in the fight, they seized the tawny horses and the chariot and covered me, ascended on the chariot, in every direction with rocks. Because of the rocks that covered me, and because of the others that kept falling, the entire region where we were stationed looked like a cave. I was sorely oppressed, being enveloped with rocks. The horses had been restrained. On noticing that I was scared, Matali said, 'O Arjuna! O Arjuna! Do not be frightened. Discharge the vajra weapon.' O lord of men! On hearing these words of his, I unleashed the vajra weapon, the vajra that is loved by the king of the gods. I resorted to an immobile spot and invoked Gandiva with the mantra. I discharged sharp iron arrows that had the force of the vajra. Having been discharged from the vajra, those arrows became like the vajra themselves. They penetrated all the maya of the nivatakavachas. Struck by the vajras, those danavas clung to one another and fell down on the ground, like mountains. The arrows hunted out the danavas who had entered the interiors of the earth and had seized the horses and the chariot, and dispatched them to Yama's abode. That place was littered with the corpses of mountainous nivatakavachas, as if strewn with mountains. It was extraordinary that the horses, the chariot, Matali or I did not suffer any injury.

'"O king! Matali smiled and told me, 'O Arjuna! The valour exhibited by you is not seen even among the gods.' With masses of asuras having been slain, their wives began to lament in the city, like cranes during the autumn. Accompanied by Matali, I entered the city, terrifying the nivatakavacha women with the roar of the chariot. On seeing the tens of thousands of horses, like peacocks, and the chariot that blazed like the sun, masses of women began to flee. The sounds that those terrified women made with their ornaments was like that of hail descending on a mountain. The frightened daitya women entered their houses, made of gold and decorated with many beautiful gems. On seeing that supreme and wonderful city, superior to the city of the gods, I asked Matali, 'Why do the gods not live in this wonderful place? I think that it surpasses Purandara's city.' Matali replied, 'O Partha! This was earlier the city of the gods. But the gods were expelled from here by the nivatakavachas. They obtained the grandfather's favours through great and terrible austerities and obtained the boon that they should live here, free from all fear of the gods in battle. Then Shakra resorted to the illustrious one who creates himself[198] and said, "O illustrious one! Bearing our welfare in mind, you decide what is appropriate in this case." The illustrious one told Vasava what had been destined in this matter. "O slayer of Vritra! You yourself will assume another body and kill them."[199] Therefore, Shakra gave you weapons for their destruction. Even the gods could not kill the ones you have now slain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You arrived here when the time was right for their end and you have accomplished the task. O Indra among men! Mahendra conferred on you the supreme power of those supreme weapons for the destruction of the danavas.' Having killed the danavas and entering their city, I returned to the abode of the gods, together with Matali."'

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'Arjuna said, "While I was returning, I saw another great city. It was divine, as resplendent as the fire and the sun, and it could roam as it wished. It had trees that were covered with jewels, with colourful birds that had sweet voices. It was inhabited by Poulamas and Kalakeyas who were always happy.[200] It was impregnable, with turrets, entrances and four gates. It was covered with jewels everywhere and was celestial and wonderful to see. There were trees with flowers and fruit, covered everywhere with divine gems. There were extremely beautiful celestial birds. It was filled everywhere with asuras who were always happy, armed with weapons like spears, swords, clubs, bows and maces in their hands. O king! On seeing this extraordinary city of the daityas, I asked Matali, ‘What is this that I see here?’

‘“Matali replied, ‘There was once a daitya lady named Puloma and another great asura lady named Kalaka. They observed supreme austerities for one thousand celestial years. When they had completed the austerities, the one who created himself[201] granted them a boon. O Indra among kings! They chose the boon that their sons should not suffer much and should be incapable of being killed by the gods, the rakshasas and the serpents. This beautiful city that roams in the sky is the result of those good deeds. It is full of jewels everywhere and is incapable of being conquered even by the gods, the yakshas, the masses of gandharvas, the serpents, the asuras and the rakshasas. It contains all the objects of desire and qualities and is devoid of sorrow and disease. O best of the Bharata lineage! This was created for the Kalakeyas by Brahma. This is the divine city that is roaming around in the sky, avoided by the immortals. O brave one! It is inhabited by the Poulama and Kalakeya danavas. This great city is known by the name of Hiranyapura.[202] It is protected by the great Kalakeya and Poulama asuras. They are always happy there and cannot be killed by all the gods. O Indra among kings! They always live here happily, devoid of anxiety and with nothing left to ask for. It was earlier destined by Brahma that they would die at the hands of a human.’”

‘Arjuna said, “O lord! Having learnt that they could not be slain by the gods and the asuras, I happily told Matali, ‘Go swiftly to that city. I will use my weapons to destroy those who hate the thirty gods. There are no evil haters of the gods who do not deserve to be slain by me.’ In that divine chariot, yoked to tawny horses, Matali swiftly conveyed me to the city of Hiranyapura. On seeing me, Diti’s sons, adorned in colourful garments and ornaments, mounted their chariots and hastened at great speed. The chiefs of the danavas, terrible in valour, angrily attacked me with darts,[203] iron arrows, missiles,[204] spears, cudgels and clubs. I warded off this great shower of weapons. O king! Resorting to the strength of my knowledge, I unleashed a great shower of arrows. In that battle, I confounded all of them through the course of my chariot. Completely confounded, the danavas fell down on one another. They were so confounded that they rushed at each other. I sliced off their heads with hundreds of blazing arrows. Thus slaughtered by me, the daityas resorted to their city again. Using the power of maya that danavas possess, they rose up into the sky with their city. I restrained them with a great shower of arrows. I blocked the path of the daityas and restrained their movement. But the daityas were supported by their boon. With ease, that celestial city, divine in radiance and capable of going anywhere at will, remained suspended in the sky. It would suddenly plunge into the ground, then be established up in the sky again. It would swiftly adopt a diagonal movement and immerse itself in the waters. O lord of men! That giant city, capable of going anywhere at will, was like Amaravati. I attacked it with many types of weapons. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then I subdued the daityas, together with the city, with a net of arrows invoked with divine weapons. O king! It was wounded through the straight and iron arrows shot by me. The city of the asuras was destroyed and fell down on the ground. O king! Pierced by my iron arrows, as swift as the vajra, and driven by destiny, the asuras roamed around. Matali swiftly descended on the ground in that chariot, as radiant as the sun, as if taking a forward leap. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wishing to fight with me, those indomitable ones surrounded me with sixty thousand chariots. But I destroyed them with sharp arrows that had feathers of vultures as plumes. Thus vanquished in battle, they retreated like the waves of the ocean. Thinking that no man was capable of defeating them in battle, I discharged all my other weapons, one after the other.[205] But slowly, my divine weapons, and the thousands of chariots of those skilled warriors, neutralized each other. The maharathas roamed around, in different manoeuvres of their chariots. They could be seen in hundreds and thousands. They were adorned in colourful crowns and garlands for the head and dazzling armour and flags. With many beautiful ornaments, they delighted my mind.

'"In that battle, with all my showers of arrows, I was not able to oppress them. But they oppressed me. Thus hard-pressed by many who were accomplished in weapons and were skilled warriors, I felt pain in that great battle. A great fear took hold of me. In the battle, I bowed down to Rudra, god of the gods. Saying, 'May there be welfare to all beings,' I used the great weapon famous by the name of roudra, capable of destroying all enemies. I then saw a man with three heads, nine eyes, three faces and six arms, with hair blazing like the sun and the fire.[206] O scorcher of enemies! There were giant serpents with flaming tongues on his head. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On beholding that terrible and eternal roudra weapon, I lost my fear and attached it to Gandiva. I bowed in obeisance to the three-eyed and infinitely energetic Sharva.[207] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I discharged it, to defeat the lords of the danavas. O lord of the earth! As soon as I discharged it, it assumed thousands of different forms everywhere—deer, lions, tigers, bears, buffaloes, serpents, cattle, elephants, marsh-deer, sharabhas, bulls, boars, cats, hyenas, ghosts, *bhurundas*,[208] vultures, garudas, sharks,[209] pishachas, yakshas, haters of gods, guhyakas, nairritas, large fish with mouths like elephants, owls and masses of fish and tortoises, all brandishing many kinds of weapons and swords. There were yatudhanas,[210] wielding clubs and maces. There were many other beings in different forms. They filled up the universe when that weapon was discharged. Those many different forms—with three heads, four tusks, four faces and four arms—devoured the flesh, fat and marrow of the danavas. They continuously killed the ones who had gathered there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In an instant, I also killed the danavas with arrows that were destructive of enemies, as hard as the vajra and as radiant as lightning, blazing like the sun and the fire.

'"On seeing them destroyed through weapons shot from Gandiva, deprived of life and hurled down from the sky, I once again bowed to the god who destroyed Tripura.[211] On seeing that they had been destroyed, with all their celestial ornaments, shattered by the roudra weapon, the charioteer of the gods was extremely delighted. On seeing that I had performed a task that was impossible even for the gods, Matali, Shakra's charioteer, worshipped me. He joined his hands in salutation and said in a happy voice, 'The task that you have accomplished was impossible for the gods and the asuras. Even the lord of the gods could not have achieved this in battle. This great city that roamed around in the sky could not have been destroyed by the gods and the asuras. O brave one! You have vanquished it through the strength of your own valour, weapons and austerities.' When the city had been destroyed and the danavas killed, all the lamenting women emerged from the city. They were smitten by grief, their hair was dishevelled and they were miserable like ospreys. They threw themselves down on the ground, sorrowing over their sons, fathers and husbands. In miserable tones, they loudly grieved over their dead lords. They beat their breasts with their hands and the garlands and ornaments were thrown away. The city of the danavas was overcome with sorrow, misery and distress. It had lost all its splendour and all its lords had been slain. It was no longer radiant. Like a city of the gandharvas, like a pond deserted by elephants and like a forest that is full of dry trees, that city disappeared.

'"With a happy mind, Matali quickly took me from the field of battle to the abode of the king of the gods. I had accomplished my task. I had destroyed Hiranyapura and killed the great asuras and the nivatakavachas. I returned to Shakra. O immensely radiant one! Matali recounted my deeds in detail to the Indra of the gods, completely and exactly as it had happened—the destruction of Hiranyapura, the use of maya, the way it was repulsed and the slaying of the immensely powerful nivatakavachas in battle. On hearing this, the illustrious Purandara, the one with the thousand eyes, was delighted. In the midst of the Maruts, he spoke words like, 'Wonderful' and 'Well done'. Together with the other gods, the king of the gods repeatedly congratulated me and spoke these gentle words. 'In battle, you have accomplished a deed that was impossible for the gods and the asuras. O Partha! By slaying my enemies, you have paid a great preceptor's fee. O

Dhananjaya! You will always remain as steady in battle. You will know what has to be done and will not be confounded in using these weapons. The gods, the danavas, the rakshasas, the yakshas, the asuras and the gandharvas, together with masses of birds and serpents, will not be able to withstand you in battle. O Kounteya! Through the strength of your arms, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, will conquer the earth and protect it.'"'

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'Arjuna said, "At some point, on seeing that I had recovered from the wounds of the arrows and was comfortable, the king of the gods told me, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the divine weapons are yours now. There is no man on earth who is capable of vanquishing you. O son! When you are engaged in the field of battle, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna and Shakuni, together with all the other kings, are not worth one-sixteenth of you.'[212] The lord Maghavan then gave me this divine and impenetrable armour and a golden garland. He also gave me the conch shell Devadatta, which emits a great sound. Indra himself fixed this celestial diadem on my head. Shakra then gave me these divine garments and celestial ornaments, beautiful and many in number. O king! Thus honoured, I lived happily in Indra's abode, together with the children of the gandharvas. Extremely pleased with me, Shakra, together with the immortals, told me, 'O Arjuna! The time for your departure has come. Your brothers are remembering you.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Thus did I spend five years in Indra's abode, remembering the discord that was brought on us because of the gambling. Then, when you came to Mount Gandhamadana, I saw you on the peak, surrounded by your brothers."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Dhananjaya! You have obtained those weapons through good fortune. It is also through good fortune that you satisfied the king and the lord who is the king of the gods. O scorcher of enemies! O unblemished one! It is through good fortune that you beheld the lord Sthanu himself, together with the goddess, and satisfied him in the duel.[213] O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is through good fortune that you managed to meet the lokapalas. It is through good fortune that all of us have prospered and have set our eyes on you again. I now think that we have conquered the goddess earth, with her garland of cities, and have vanquished the sons of Dhritarashtra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But I wish to see those divine weapons with which you killed the valorous nivatakavachas."

'Arjuna said, "When it is dawn tomorrow, you will see all those divine weapons with which I destroyed the terrible nivatakavachas."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus recounted the incidents connected with his return, Dhananjaya spent the night there, together with his brothers.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the night had passed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira awoke and performed the necessary rituals, together with his brothers. Then he told Arjuna, the beloved of his brothers. "O Kounteya! Show us the weapons with which you destroyed the danavas." O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the immensely energetic Pandava Dhananjaya showed the celestial weapons that had been given by the gods, in due order, and after establishing himself in supreme purity. The earth was like his chariot and the radiant Dhananjaya seated himself on that. The trees on the mountain were like its axles and the beautiful bamboos like the spokes. He looked resplendent in his bright armour. He grasped the bow Gandiva and the conch shell Devadatta, born from the waters. In that radiance, mighty-armed Kounteya prepared to show those divine weapons, one after the other.

'As he got ready to employ those divine weapons, the earth and all its trees began to tremble under his feet. The rivers and the great ocean began to tremble. The mountains were rent asunder. The winds stopped blowing. The one with the thousand rays[214] stopped shining. The fires stopped burning. The Vedas were no longer manifest to those who were twice-born.[215] O Janamejaya! The beings that lived in the interiors of the earth were oppressed. All of them trembled and emerged. Covering their faces, they joined their hands in salutation and surrounded Pandava. Burnt by those weapons, they prayed to Dhananjaya. The brahmarshis, the siddhas, the maharshis and all mobile beings stood there. So did supreme rajarshis, gods, yakshas, rakshasas, gandharvas and birds. The grandfather[216] himself arrived, together with all the lokapalas, and the illustrious Mahadeva, with all his companions. O great king! Vayu covered Pandava with colourful, fragrant and divine flowers from every side. Instructed by the gods, the gandharvas sung many songs. O king! Masses of apsaras began to dance there. At that tumultuous time, instructed by the gods, Narada arrived. O king! He spoke these words, worthy of hearing, to Partha. "O Arjuna! O Arjuna! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do not discharge these divine weapons. They should never be used when there is no target. Even when there is a target, one should not use them unless one is hard-pressed. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Such a use of these weapons is a great sin. O Dhananjaya! If these weapons are properly preserved, as you have been taught, there is no doubt that they will lead to great happiness. O Pandava! But if they are not preserved well, they will lead to the destruction of the three worlds. Therefore, never attempt this again. O Ajatashatru![217] You will behold the weapons when Partha uses them in battle for the destruction of the enemies." O bull among men! After having restrained Partha, all the gods, and all the others who had assembled there, departed the way they had come. O Kouravya![218] When they had left, the Pandavas, together with Krishna, began to live happily in that forest.'

Section Thirty-Six

Ajagara Parva

This parva has 201 shlokas and six chapters.

Chapter 470(173): 22 shlokas
Chapter 471(174): 24 shlokas
Chapter 472(175): 21 shlokas
Chapter 473(176): 51 shlokas
Chapter 474(177): 33 shlokas
Chapter 475(178): 50 shlokas

Ajagara *means a boa constrictor, literally something that swallows a goat* (aja). *The Pandavas retrace their steps to Vrishaparva's hermitage and Badari and then go to visit King Subahu. From there, they go to the origins of the Yamuna and Dvaitavana, on the banks of the Sarasvati. Bhima is then grasped by Nahusha in the form of a boa and this is why this section is called Ajagara Parva. The highlight of this section is a dialogue between Yudhishthira and Nahusha, in the form of a boa.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'When that great charioteer, skilled in weapons, returned from the abode of Vritra's slayer, what did the Parthas accomplish next, now that they had been rejoined by the brave Dhananjaya?'

Vaishampayana said, 'Those Indras among men lived in that forest. The brave ones sported there on that beautiful mountain, the lovely pleasure ground of the lord of riches, with Arjuna, equal to Indra himself. On seeing those unmatched houses and pleasure grounds covered with many trees, Kiriti,[1] Indra among men, always immersed in his weapons and with the bow in his hand, roamed around a lot. Through the favours of King Vaishravana, those sons of a king had found an abode and no longer desired what beings want.[2] That time was a blessing for them. They were united with Partha and lived for four years there and these years they spent there seemed like a single night. With the earlier six, it was now ten years that the Pandavas had peacefully dwelt in the forest.

'Once, Vayu's intrepid son was seated near the king, together with Jishnu and the twins, the equals of the king of the gods.[3] In private, he gently spoke these beneficial words. "O king of the Kurus! In order to ensure that your oath remained true and to do that which would make you happy, we followed you into the forest and did not kill Suyodhana, together with his followers. We have lived here for eleven years. We are deserving of happiness, but Suyodhana has grasped that happiness. We should now deceive that scoundrel, lacking in intelligence and conduct. Let us happily resort to a life that will be incognito.[4] O king! On your instructions, we lived without anxiety and spent this time roaming in the forest. He will be deluded because we have lived nearby and will not get to know if we move to a distant region. Having spent one year in hiding, we will easily uproot that worst of men. O Indra among kings! On that scoundrel among men, Suyodhana, surrounded by all his followers, we will reap the enmity, with all its fruits and flowers. O Dharmaraja! Accept the world as your own. O god among men! Kill this grief. We are capable of roaming this mountain that is like heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your fragrant deeds may be destroyed in this world of the mobile and the immobile. But by regaining the kingdom of the bulls among the Kurus, you are capable of performing great deeds and great rituals. O Indra among men! You are always capable of obtaining whatever you want from Kubera. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Set your heart on the slaying of those who hate you and on punishing them, because they have oppressed you. O king! The wielder of the vajra is himself incapable of withstanding your terrible energy. O Dharmaraja! Nor will any pain be caused to you even if you confront all the gods. The one with Suparna on his banner and Shini's grandson are both engaged in that which ensures your welfare.[5] O god among kings! The foremost among the Shinis, the equal of Krishna in strength, is engaged likewise.[6] Krishna, together with the Yadavas, is engaged in that which will ensure your welfare. O god among men! So are these brave and skilled twins. Our prime objective is an increase in your influence. Encountering the enemies, we will pacify them." On ascertaining what was in their mind, the great-souled son of Dharma circumambulated Vaishravana's abode.[7]

'The energetic one was knowledgeable about dharma and artha. Dharmaraja bid adieu to the houses, the rivers, the lakes and all the rakshasas. He glanced down at the path through which he had ascended and looked again at the mountain and said, "O Indra among mountains! When my deeds are done, when my well-wishers and I have triumphed over the enemies and have won the kingdom, I will behold you again, for performing austerities with a restrained soul." Surrounded by all his brothers and the brahmanas, the lord of the Kurus was again carried along a similar path, with all the others, by Ghatotkacha—over mountains and waterfalls. On seeing them ready to leave, the maharshi[8] cheerfully instructed them, like a father to his sons. Together with Lomasha, they happily went to the sacred abode of the dwellers of heaven. Similarly instructed by Arshtishena, the Parthas, foremost among men, went and saw the beautiful tirthas, hermitages and many other great ponds.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'That supreme of mountains had cascading waterfalls and was full of kinnaras, birds and cardinal elephants.[9] The bulls among the Bharatas had lived happily there and found no pleasure in leaving it. But when the bulls among the Bharatas once again beheld Kailasa, Kubera's beloved mountain that looked like an ocean of clouds, they found great joy. The brave ones saw passes in the mountains, pens for cattle in the mountains, crevasses in the mountains and many sharp falls, with plains and lowlands here and there. There were other large forests, inhabited by many animals and deer. Armed with bows and swords, those foremost among men confidently went further. There were beautiful groves, rivers and ponds and caverns and recesses in the mighty mountains. By day and by night, those bulls among men always found places to rest there. After resting in this difficult terrain and traversing Kailasa, whose form is unthinkable, they reached Vrishaparva's supreme and beautiful hermitage. On meeting them, King Vrishaparva heartily welcomed them. Overcoming all confusion, they gave Vrishaparva a complete account of their safe stay.[10] They happily spent a night in that sacred hermitage, favoured by gods and maharshis. The brave ones then went to the giant Badari and happily dwelt there again. Then those great-souled ones, foremost among men, arrived at Narayana's region. They saw Kubera's lotus pond, favoured by gods and siddhas, and became devoid of grief. Pandu's sons, foremost among all men, saw those lotuses and became devoid of grief. They pleasured there, just as brahmana rishis enjoy themselves when they live in Nandana.

'Having spent a happy month in Badari, in due course, they went to the land of Subahu, the king of the kiratas, following the route that other brave ones had traversed earlier. They passed the lands of *chinas*,[11] *tukharas*,[12] *daradas*,[13] *darvas*[14] and *kunindas*[15] full of many jewels. The brave ones crossed the difficult terrain of the Himalaya region and saw Subahu's city. When he heard that all the sons and grandsons of kings had arrived, King Subahu was delighted and came out to welcome them. The bulls of the Kuru lineage greeted him in return. They met Subahu with all the charioteers headed by Vishoka, with Indrasena, with the servants, with the cooks and with their supervisors.[16] They stayed there happily for a night. Retaining all the charioteers and the chariots, they dismissed Ghatotkacha and his followers. They continued towards Yamuna, the king of mountains.[17] That mountain is full of springs. Its red and pale slopes are covered with a mantle of snow. The foremost among men reached the sacrificial pole Vishakha and lived there.[18] The great forest was like Chaitraratha[19] and was infested by boars, many animals and birds. Those foremost among hunters safely spent another year in that forest. In a cavern in that mountain, Vrikodara came upon an extremely strong serpent. It was oppressed by hunger and had the terrible form of death itself. Thereupon, his soul was pained through depression and delusion. But Yudhishthira, supreme among those who uphold dharma and whose energy is infinite, freed Vrikodara in an island there, when all his limbs had been grasped by the grasper.[20] The twelfth year had arrived and the Kurus pleasantly spent the time in the forest. They lived in the forest that was like Chaitraratha. They were fortunate and radiant in their austerities. Then the foremost ones among those who are devoted to the knowledge of arms, went to the neighbourhood of the desert. They went to Sarasvati and found Lake Dvaitavana, wishing to live there. On seeing them come to Dvaitavana and settling down there, the residents of that region arrived. They were engaged in austerities and restrained, devoted to rituals and meditation. They came with grass, water, vessels, offerings and stones for grinding. Sarasvati's banks were covered with many plakshas,[21] *akshas*,[22] *rohitakas*,[23] cane, *snuhas*,[24] badaris,[25] *khadiras*,[26] *shirishas*,[27] bilvas,[28] ingudas,[29] *pilus*,[30] shamis[31] and *kariras*.[32] This was a place loved by yakshas, gandharvas and maharshis. It was the sacrificial ground of the gods themselves. Those sons of a god among men lived there happily, roaming delightedly along the banks of the Sarasvati.'

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Janemejaya asked, 'O sage! How can Bhima, whose prowess is terrible and who has the strength of ten thousand elephants, have been overcome by dreadful fear on account of an ajagara? The insolent one challenged the lord of riches, of the Pulastya lineage, in battle.[33] He encountered and killed the foremost among yakshas and rakshasas at the lotus pond. You said that the destroyer of enemies was overcome by distress and fear. I am curious and wish to hear this in detail.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Having left the hermitage of King Vrishaparva, those foremost among archers lived in the forest that possessed many wonders. On seeing that beautiful forest, frequented by gods and gandharvas, Vrikodara began to roam around as he wished, bow and sword in his hands. He saw the pure regions on the Himalaya mountains, visited by masses of apsaras and frequented by gods, rishis and siddhas. It resounded everywhere with the sounds of chakoras, chakravaka birds, jivas,[34] jivakas,[35] cuckoos and *bhringarajas*.[36] It was covered with trees that were always full of flowers and fruit, tender because of the touch of snow. There was plenty of shade and it was pleasant to the mind and the eye. He saw mountainous streams tinged with the colour of lapis lazuli. The water was touched by snow and there were tens of thousands of geese and karandavas.[37] There were forests of devadaru trees[38] that seemed to act like a net for the clouds. These were mixed with yellow sandalwood and tall *kaliyakas*.[39] He went hunting on the flat terrain of the desert. The immensely strong one shot the deer with arrows that were pure.[40]

'Then he saw a gigantic serpent that makes one's body hair stand up. It had entered a mountainous cavern and had covered the entire cave with its body. Its coils were piled as high as a mountain. Its colour was yellow like turmeric and its colourful skin was speckled with circular marks like the sun and the moon. Its mouth was as wide as a cave and was adorned with four teeth. It constantly licked the corners of its mouth. Its eyes blazed and were copper-red in hue. Like destiny and like Yama, it struck terror in all beings. Through the moist hissing of its breath, it seemed to be reprimanding. The hungry boa suddenly grasped Bhimasena and forcefully seized him with both his arms. Because of the boon it had received, Bhimasena instantly lost his senses as soon as it touched him. The strength of Bhimasena's arms might have been more than that of others and his strength might have been able to withstand ten thousand elephants. But the energetic one was completely overcome by the serpent. Bhima trembled slowly, but he was completely unable to move. He was equal to ten thousand elephants. He had the shoulders of a lion. His arms were strong. But grasped, he lost his mettle. He was deluded because of the grant of the boon. For some time, the brave one tried terribly hard to extricate himself. But he did not succeed at all.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The energetic Bhimasena was thus overcome by the serpent. He began to think about the great and extraordinary valour of the serpent. He told the great serpent, "O serpent! If you so desire, please tell me. O best of serpents! Who are you and what will you do with me? I am Pandava Bhimasena, immediately younger to Dharmaraja. I possess the vigour equal to that of ten thousand elephants. How can I have been brought under your power? Many lions with manes, tigers, buffaloes and elephants have been encountered and slain by me in battle. O supreme among serpents! Danavas, pishachas and immensely strong rakshasas have not been able to withstand the force of my arms. Do you have the strength of knowledge or do you have the gift of a boon? In spite of my endeavours, you have been able to overpower me. O serpent! It is certain in my mind that the valour of men is useless, since you have been able to withstand my great strength." When the brave Bhima, whose deeds are unsullied, was speaking in this way, the serpent encircled him in one gigantic coil.

'Having thus overcome the mighty-armed one, but freeing his thick arms, the serpent said, "O mighty-armed one! I have been hungry for an extremely long time and it is fortunate that the gods and destiny have sent me my food. Life is dear to all beings that have bodies. O destroyer of enemies! O virtuous one! But I must certainly tell you the account now, how it was that I became a serpent. I attained this state because of the anger of the learned ones. Wishing to overcome the curse, I will tell you the serpent's account. You must have heard of the rajarshi named Nahusha. He was your ancestor and that of your forefathers. He was Ayu's son and the extender of that lineage. I am he. Because of the disrespect shown to brahmanas and because of Agastya's curse, I have attained this state.[41] Look at what fate has wrought on me. You are my descendant and you are extremely handsome. Therefore, you should not be killed by me. But look at destiny. I will devour you today. O supreme among men! Once I have grasped a prey on the sixth day, whether it is an elephant or a buffalo, it can never free itself from me. O best of Kouravas! You have not only been grasped by a serpent that belongs to the inferior species. I have the gift of a boon. When I was swiftly falling from the vimana on which Shakra is seated, I asked the illustrious supreme sage[42] to free me from the curse. Flooded with compassion, the energetic one replied, 'O king! You will be freed after some time has passed.' Then I fell down on the ground, but did not lose my memory. Therefore, what has been determined in ancient times is fixed in my mind and memory. The rishi told me, 'He who replies accurately to your questions, will free you from your curse. O king! Once grasped by you, even if it is a being that is stronger and superior to you, it will immediately lose its mettle.' Affectionate towards me and driven by compassion, those brahmanas then instantly disappeared.[43] O immensely radiant one! I thus assumed the form of a serpent. I live in this unholy hell, performing evil deeds, waiting for the appointed time."

'Then the mighty-armed Bhimasena told the serpent, "O great serpent! I am not angry with you. Nor do I blame myself. Sometimes a man is capable of bringing happiness or unhappiness. At other times, he is incapable. One's mind should not be worried at these comings and goings. How can one's own exertions rise above destiny? I think that destiny is supreme and endeavours are meaningless. Behold. Because of adverse destiny, I have lost the strength of my arms. Without any immediate reason, I have been reduced to this state now. But today, I do not sorrow as much over my own destruction as I do over my brothers, who have been dislodged from their kingdom and have been exiled to this wilderness. The Himalayas are difficult of access and are infested with yakshas and rakshasas. On seeing me thus, they will be confounded and will fall down. On hearing of my destruction, they will lose all enterprise. They follow dharma. It was I who drove them, because of my greed for the kingdom. Or perhaps the intelligent Arjuna, who knows all the weapons and is invincible to the gods, the gandharvas and the rakshasas, will be overcome by sorrow. The mighty-armed one, immensely strong, is capable, with his strength, of dislodging the king of the gods from his seat, not to speak of Dhritarashtra's sons, deceitful in gambling, hated by all the worlds and addicted to insolence and avarice. I sorrow over my poor mother, so loving towards her sons. She always wished that we might attain a greatness superior to that of others. O serpent! At my destruction, she will be without a protector. All the desires that she had for me will become unsuccessful. The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, followed their elder. They were always protected through the strength of my arms and were proud of their manliness. They will lose their enterprise. They will be dislodged from prowess and valour. At my destruction, they will be without protection. This is what I think." In this way, Vrikodara lamented a lot. He was coiled by the serpent and could not move at all.

'Kounteya Yudhishthira saw all the terrible omens and was disturbed in his mind. He thought about these evil portents. The sky to the south of the hermitage was ablaze.[44] A she-jackal stationed herself there and let out a terrible and dreadful howl. There was a dreadful-looking quail,[45] with one wing, one eye and one foot. It was seen to vomit blood, screeching harshly in the direction of the sun. A hot and rough wind began to blow, attracting gravel. All the animals and birds wailed towards the south. A black crow cawed from the back, "Go! Go!" His[46] right arm repeatedly trembled. There were tremors in his heart and in his left leg. Foretelling of evil, his left eye began to throb. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sensing great danger, the intelligent Dharmaraja asked Droupadi, "Where is Bhima?" Panchali answered that Vrikodara had been gone for a long time. Accompanied by Dhoumya, the mighty-armed king then left. He gave instructions to Dhananjaya to protect Droupadi. He instructed Nakula and Sahadeva to tend to the brahmanas. Then the lord followed Bhima's footprints from the hermitage and saw the earth marked with the signs of his passage. As the brave one, with the speed of the wind, had rushed forward on his hunt, the wind created by his thighs had broken down and strewn trees along the path. Following these signs, he reached the mountainous cavern and saw his younger brother immobile there, in the grasp of that Indra among serpents.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On seeing his beloved brother encircled in the coils of the snake, the wise Yudhishthira approached and told the brave one, "O one whose mother is Kunti! How has this misfortune befallen you? Who is this supreme of serpents, with a body that is equal to a mountain?" On seeing his elder brother Dharmaraja, he[47] told his brother everything that had happened and how he had come to be grasped. Yudhishthira said, "O serpent! Yudhishthira is asking you. Tell the truth. Are you a god, a daitya or a serpent? O serpent! What must be done for you, or what must be told you, so as to please you? What food must be brought to you? What must be done to set him free?"

'The serpent replied, "O unblemished one! I was earlier a king named Nahusha, your ancestor. O lord of men! I was Ayu's famous son and fifth in the line from Soma.[48] Through sacrifices, austerities, studying, self-restraint and valour, I obtained unrivalled lordship of the three worlds. Having attained that prosperity, insolence overcame me. Thousands of brahmanas carried my palanquin. Intoxicated with my fortune, I insulted those brahmanas. O lord of the earth! I have been reduced to this state because of Agastya. O Pandava! O king! But because of the favours of the great-souled Agastya, I have not lost my wisdom even now. I have obtained your younger brother as my food at the sixth point in time.[49] I will not free him. Nor do I desire any other food. But if you answer the questions I ask you, I will later free your brother Vrikodara."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O serpent! Tell me whatever you like. O serpent! If I can, I will answer and please you. You are certainly aware of what only a brahmana can know. O king of the serpents! On hearing your words, I will reply.”

‘The serpent asked, “O king! O Yudhishthira! Who is a brahmana and what should he know? From your words, I think that you are extremely wise.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O Indra among serpents! It is said that a brahmana is one in whom truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, good conduct, lack of cruelty, self-control and compassion can be seen. O serpent! He obtains knowledge of the supreme brahman, which is beyond happiness and unhappiness, and on attaining which, there is no sorrow. What else will you say?”

‘The serpent asked, “Truthfulness and knowledge of the brahman can be found in all the four varnas. O Yudhishthira! Truthfulness, charity, lack of anger, lack of cruelty, non-violence and compassion can also be found among shudras. O lord of men! You have said that the object of knowledge is beyond happiness and unhappiness. But there is nothing that is free from either. I do not think such a thing exists.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “If these traits, not even found in a brahmana, are seen in a shudra, he is not a shudra. A brahmana in whom a brahmana’s traits are not found, is a shudra. O serpent! It is said that one in whom these traits are found is a brahmana. O serpent! One in whom these traits are not found, is marked as a shudra. Then again, you have said that the object of knowledge does not exist, because there is nothing that is free from both those sentiments.[50] O serpent! It is your view that nothing can exist without those two. There is a state between cold and heat that is neither cold nor heat. Like that, there is something in between that is neither happiness, nor unhappiness. That is my view. O serpent! What do you think?”

‘The serpent said, “O king! O one with a long life! If you assert that a brahmana is known by his conduct, birth has no meaning, as long as those characteristics can be seen.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O great serpent! O immensely wise one! I think that among men, birth is difficult to determine, because of mixed birth among all the varnas. Men always beget children on women from all varnas. All men are equal in speech, intercourse, birth and death. The proof of this can be found in the words of the learned rishis, who have said ‘We sacrifice’ and so on, basing this entirely on conduct.[51] The birth rituals of a man are performed even before the navel chord has been severed. At that time, the mother is Savitri and the father is the preceptor.[52] Before initiation into knowledge of the Vedas, everyone is a shudra by conduct. When there is a difference of opinion on this, Svayambhuva Manu[53] has categorically stated, ‘The observance of rituals determines varna. If conduct cannot be seen, mixed races overwhelmingly dominate.’ O Indra among serpents! O great serpent! O supreme among serpents! I have earlier defined as a brahmana one in whom the principles of good conduct are seen.”

‘The serpent said, “O Yudhishthira! I have listened to your words. You know what should be known. How can I now devour your brother Vrikodara?”’

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‘Yudhishthira asked, “In this world, there is no one as knowledgeable as you in the Vedas and the Vedangas.[54] Tell me. Which are the deeds through which one attains the supreme objective?”

‘The serpent replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that one goes to heaven by giving to those who are worthy, speaking the truth and by always resorting to non-violence.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O serpent! Between generosity and truthfulness, which is seen to be superior? Between non-violence and good conduct, which is superior and which is inferior?”

‘The serpent replied, “The superiority or inferiority of generosity versus truthfulness or non-violence vis-à-vis good conduct is determined by whether the effects of these deeds are more or less important. There are times when truthfulness is regarded as superior to generosity. O Indra among kings! There are times when generosity is regarded as superior to truthfulness. O mighty archer! O lord of the earth! In that way, there are occasions when non-violence is superior to kind words and other occasions when kind words are superior. O king! In this fashion, the superiority depends on the effects. If there is anything else that you are thinking of, tell me. I will explain.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O serpent! What are the deeds through which one can attain heaven? What are seen to be the certain fruits of the disembodied soul? Explain these things to me.”

‘The serpent replied, “O king! Depending on one’s own deeds, there are seen to be three end goals—human birth, residence in heaven and rebirth as inferior species. These are the three ends. Through continuous acts of charity and deeds based on reasons of non-violence, one attains heaven from this world of men. O Indra among kings! Through the reverse deeds, a man is born as inferior species. O son![55] I will tell you about the specifics. A man who is addicted to desire and anger, and overcome by violence and avarice, is dislodged and is reborn as inferior species. It has separately been said that one who is born as inferior species, can be reborn as a human. Thus, cattle and horses are seen to have attained divine status. O son! Such is the goal of all animals, depending on one’s deeds. O king! The self should always be established in greatness. From one birth to another, the soul enjoys the fruits that come from a body, though it is distinct. This is the characteristic of all beings.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O serpent! Tell me exactly how the soul is established in a body and experiences sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. O immensely intelligent one! Do you also not separately experience these senses? O supreme among serpents! Tell me everything that I have asked.”

‘The serpent replied, “O one with a long life! When the soul has resorted to a physical body and has established itself in control, it experiences each of those senses, depending on their characteristics. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Learn from me that knowledge, intelligence and the mind are faculties that determine a soul’s enjoyment of the senses. O son! Through the mind, the embodied being experiences one after another, from one object to another, the senses that flow out of each of these objects. O tiger among men! The mind is thus the cause of all perceptions among animals. At the same time, it cannot experience multiple objects. O tiger among men! The soul is established between the eyebrows. It creates the intelligence about different kinds of objects. O tiger among kings! According to the wise, different kinds of experience flow from this intelligence. These are the ways of an embodied soul."

'Yudhishthira asked, "Tell me. What are the specific characteristics that distinguish the mind and the intelligence? What is said to be the supreme deed for those who wish to know about the soul?"

'The serpent replied, "O son! Through various distractions, the intelligence is said to follow the soul. Though consciousness is derived from it,[56] it is said to control the soul. Intelligence is not subject to the different qualities. But the mind has these qualities. O son! Thus have I distinguished between the mind and intelligence. But you yourself have knowledge about these matters. What do you think?"

'Yudhishthira said, "O best among those who are endowed with intelligence! Your intelligence is supreme. You know everything that there is to know. Why are you then asking me this question? You are omniscient. You dwelt in heaven. You were the performer of extraordinary deeds. I am confronted with great uncertainty. How did delusion overcome you?"

'The serpent replied, "Even an extremely strong and brave man is deluded by prosperity. It is my view that all those who are immersed in happiness become confused in intelligence. O Yudhishthira! I became deluded because of my prosperity. I was intoxicated. Though enlightened, I descended into this state and am enlightening you now. O great king! O scorcher of enemies! You have performed a service towards me. Because of my conversation with a virtuous one,[57] I have been freed from the grievous curse. In earlier times, I used to roam around heaven in a celestial chariot. Intoxicated with my vanity, I thought of nothing else. Brahmarshis, gods, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, kinnaras and all the residents of the three worlds had to pay me taxes. O lord of the earth! Such was the power of my glance, that whatever being my eyes happened to behold, the strength of my sight robbed him of his energy. Thousands of brahmarshis bore my palanquin. O king! This misconduct brought about my dislodging from prosperity. One day, when the sage Agastya was bearing me, my feet happened to touch him. In anger, destiny[58] then spoke these words, 'May you be destroyed. Become a serpent.' At that, I fell down from that supreme vimana. I lost all my ornaments. While I was falling down, with my face downwards, I saw that I had become a predatory serpent.[59] Then I asked that brahmana, 'Please free me from this curse. O illustrious one! I have transgressed out of my folly. Please pardon me.' As I was falling, he was overcome by compassion and told me, 'O lord of men! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira will free you from this curse, once the fruits of your insolence and terrible strength have decayed. O great king! You will then attain supreme fruits.' On witnessing the strength of his austerities, great wonder was born in me. That is the reason I asked you about the brahman and brahmanas. O king! Truthfulness, self-control, austerities, non-violence and constant benevolence are the means whereby men attain salvation, not through birth or lineage. Your immensely strong brother, Bhimasena, is safe and unhurt. O great king! May you be fortunate. I will return to heaven."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, King Nahusha discarded the body of a boa. Assuming a celestial form, he returned to the world of the thirty gods. The fortunate, Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, returned to the hermitage with his brother Bhima, accompanied by Dhoumya. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira told the assembled brahmanas the details of everything that had happened. O king! On hearing this, the brahmanas, the other three brothers and the famous Droupadi were astounded. All the best of the brahmanas desired the welfare of the Pandavas. Censuring Bhima's rashness, they told him not to act in this way. The Pandavas were extremely delighted at seeing the immensely strong Bhima freed from fear. They happily enjoyed themselves.'

Section Thirty-Seven

Markandeya Samasya Parva

This parva has 1694 shlokas and forty-three chapters.

Chapter 476(179): 18 shlokas
Chapter 477(180): 49 shlokas
Chapter 478(181): 41 shlokas
Chapter 479(182): 21 shlokas
Chapter 480(183): 32 shlokas
Chapter 481(184): 25 shlokas
Chapter 482(185): 54 shlokas
Chapter 483(186): 129 shlokas
Chapter 484(187): 55 shlokas
Chapter 485(188): 83 shlokas
Chapter 486(189): 31 shlokas
Chapter 487(190): 82 shlokas
Chapter 488(191): 28 shlokas
Chapter 489(192): 29 shlokas
Chapter 490(193): 27 shlokas
Chapter 491(194): 30 shlokas
Chapter 492(195): 39 shlokas
Chapter 493(196): 21 shlokas
Chapter 494(197): 44 shlokas
Chapter 495(198): 94 shlokas
Chapter 496(199): 34 shlokas
Chapter 497(200): 54 shlokas
Chapter 498(201): 20 shlokas
Chapter 499(202): 25 shlokas
Chapter 500(203): 51 shlokas
Chapter 501(204): 27 shlokas
Chapter 502(205): 29 shlokas
Chapter 503(206): 34 shlokas
Chapter 504(207): 20 shlokas

Chapter 505(208): 8 shlokas
Chapter 506(209): 25 shlokas
Chapter 507(210): 19 shlokas
Chapter 508(211): 31 shlokas
Chapter 509(212): 30 shlokas
Chapter 510(213): 52 shlokas
Chapter 511(214): 37 shlokas
Chapter 512(215): 23 shlokas
Chapter 513(216): 15 shlokas
Chapter 514(217): 14 shlokas
Chapter 515(218): 49 shlokas
Chapter 516(219): 58 shlokas
Chapter 517(220): 27 shlokas
Chapter 518(221): 80 shlokas

The Pandavas return to Kamyaka and are visited by Krishna and then by the sage Markandeya. The word samasya *means the completion or filling up of that which is incomplete. This section is so named because of a long conversation between the Pandavas and Markandeya. It has the stories of Manu, the flood and the fish, details about the four yugas (eras) and different kinds of fires, the stories of Vamadeva, Indradyumna, Dhundhumara, Koushika, Angiras and Skanda.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'While they were living there, the rainy season, which brings an end to the summer's heat and ensures happiness to all beings, arrived. Clouds heavy with thunder enveloped the sky and all the directions. Through night and day, it rained down continuously in hundreds and thousands of torrents, ending the heat. The net of the sun's rays disappeared and it was radiant with lightning. Grass sprouted from the earth and flies and reptiles were intoxicated. Sprinkled with water, everything was peaceful and the smoke and the dust vanished. When everything was covered with water, nothing could be discerned, plain and uneven terrain or rivers and land. The rivers were turbulent with water and made a loud whistling noise, like arrows. At the end of the summer, they made the groves look beautiful. Many different sounds could be heard in the groves—of boars, animals and birds, drenched with rain. *Stokakas*,[1] peacocks and male cuckoos were maddened and fluttered around, together with proud frogs. Thus, while they safely roamed around in the desert regions, the rainy season arrived in many forms and the roar of the clouds passed.

‘Autumn arrived, with masses of curlews and swans. The forest was covered with new enclosures. The water that flowed downwards became clear. Everything was peaceful in autumn and the great-souled Pandavas found it infested with animals and birds. The sky and the stars were clear. They saw that the nights were cooled by clouds, with the dust pacified, and shining with planets, many stars and the moon. They saw auspicious rivers and ponds, the bearers of cool water, adorned with white water lilies[2] and white lotuses.[3] They found great delight in roaming around the sacred tirtha of Sarasvati. Its banks were as wide as the sky and were covered with nipas[4] and wild rice. The brave ones, the wielders of firm bows, were extremely happy on seeing the sacred Sarasvati, overflowing with clear water. O Janamejaya! While they dwelt there, the sacred night of parvasandhi in autumn, in the month of Kartika, arrived.[5] All the Pandavas, the best of the Bharata lineage, spent that great and supreme conjunction in the company of the holy and great-souled ascetics. When the dark fortnight set in, the Pandavas, together with Dhoumya, the charioteers and the cooks, travelled to Kamyaka.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The Kounteyas, with Yudhishthira at the forefront, arrived in Kamyaka and were welcomed by the masses of sages. They began to live there with Krishna.[6] When Pandu’s sons dwelt safely there, they were surrounded on all sides by many brahmanas. Then a certain brahmana said, “The mighty-armed Shouri,[7] Arjuna’s beloved friend, self-controlled and endowed with wisdom, will come here. It is known to Hari that the extenders of the Kuru lineage have arrived here. Hari always wishes to see you and has your welfare in mind. The immensely ascetic Markandeya has lived for many years, devoting himself to studies and austerities. He will soon arrive to meet you.” While he was still speaking, Keshava could be seen. That supreme of charioteers was on his chariot, yoked to Sainya and Sugriva.[8] He was with Satyabhama, like Maghavan with Poulami.[9] Devaki's son had arrived to visit the best of the Kurus.

'Descending from his chariot, the wise one happily greeted Dharmaraja, as is prescribed, and Bhima, supreme among strong ones. He worshipped Dhoumya and was himself worshipped by the twins. Then he embraced Gudakesha[10] and spoke comforting words to Droupadi. Having seen the beloved warrior Phalguna, who had returned after a long time, Dasharha,[11] the destroyer of enemies, embraced him again and again. Similarly, Satyabhama, Krishna's beloved queen, embraced Droupadi, the beloved wife of the Pandavas. Then all the Pandavas, with their wife and their priest,[12] worshipped Pundarikaksha[13] and seated themselves around him. The wise Krishna was reunited with Partha Dhananjaya, the oppressor of asuras. The great-souled lord of beings was as radiant as the illustrious lord, when united with Guha.[14] The one with the diadem on his head recounted the details of what had happened in the forest to Gada's senior, exactly as they had occurred.[15] He then asked him how Subhadra was, together with Abhimanyu. In the prescribed fashion, Madhu's slayer[16] showed honours to Partha,[17] Krishna[18] and the priest.

'When Yudhishthira was seated with them, he praised the king[19] and spoke these words. "O Pandava! Dharma is superior to winning the kingdom. O king! It is said that austerity leads to it. You have lived by your own dharma, with truthfulness and virtue. You have won this world and the next. You first studied, and then observed the vows. You next became skilled in the use of weapons. You obtained riches by practising the dharma of kshatriyas. You have performed all the ancient sacrifices. You are not addicted to the dharma of sexual pleasure and desire. O Indra among kings! You have never acted out of desire. Nor have you given up dharma out of greed for artha. It is for these reasons that you are Dharmaraja. O king! O Partha! Though you obtained the kingdom, riches and objects of pleasure, benevolence, truthfulness, austerities, devotion, conciliation, forbearance and forgiveness always brought you supreme pleasure. O Pandava! When the assembled inhabitants of Kurujangala[20] saw Krishna afraid and outraged in the assembly hall, an act that was contrary to dharma and good conduct, who but you could have endured it? There is no doubt that you will soon protect your subjects again and be restored to all the prosperity that you desire. Once your oath has been fulfilled, we will act so as to chastise the Kurus." Then the lion of the Dasharhas spoke to Dhoumya, Krishna, Yudhishthira, the twins and Bhima. "It is your good fortune that Kiriti has happily returned, having obtained the weapons." The lord of the Dasharhas, together with his well-wishers, then spoke to Krishna Yajnaseni. "O Krishna! O Yajnaseni! Your young ones are devoted to truthful vows, show good conduct and wish to become foremost in the knowledge of weapons. They always associate with righteous ones. Your sons follow the path of meditation. O Krishna! Though your father and your brothers seek to attract them with the kingdom and the territory, these young ones find no attraction in the houses of Yajnasena[21] or their maternal uncles. In a desire to become foremost in the knowledge of weapons, they safely travelled in the direction of Anarta.[22] O Krishna! Your sons entered the city of the Vrishnis.[23] They do not feel any jealousy towards the gods.[24] Without fail, Subhadra always instructs them in conduct, just as you yourself would have instructed them, or the arya Kunti. O Krishna! Just as Rukmini's son is the instructor and guide of Aniruddha, Abhimanyu, Sunitha and Bhanu, he is just the same to your sons too.[25] Prince Abhimanyu is a skilled teacher. He constantly instructs the brave ones in fighting with clubs, swords, shields and missiles, and in handling chariots and horses. Like an instructor, Rukimini's son has given them many weapons and has taught them well. He finds great satisfaction in the valour of your sons and of Abhimanyu. O Yajnaseni! When your sons go out for sport, each of them is followed by a retinue of chariots, vehicles and elephants." Then Krishna again addressed Dharmaraja. “O king! Let the warriors of Dasharha, Kukura and Andhaka[26] always be intent on following your orders. Let them be established wherever you desire. The army of the Madhus[27] has infantry, horses, chariots and elephants. It raises a forceful storm with its bows and is led by Halayudha.[28] O Indra among men! It is ready to accomplish your tasks. O Pandava! Let Dhritarashtra’s son Suyodhana,[29] foremost among the performers of evil deeds, traverse the path followed by Soubha and Soubha’s lord, together with his relatives and well-wishers.[30] O Indra among kings! Live where you desire, for the time appointed by you in the assembly hall. But after that, when the Dasharha warriors have cut down the warriors,[31] the city of Nagapura[32] will await your return. When you have subdued your anger and cleansed your torment, when you have finished roaming around as you desire, then, bereft of sorrow, you will return to the prosperous city of Nagapura and regain your kingdom.” On hearing the detailed views of that great-souled one, supreme among men, Dharmaraja approved of them. He joined his hands in salutation and replied to Keshava, “O Keshava! There is no doubt that you are the refuge of the Partha Pandavas. When the time has come, there is no doubt that you will accomplish these deeds. As we have promised, we will spend a complete twelve years in this wilderness. O Keshava! After spending the stipulated time incognito, the Pandavas will resort to you again.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While Varshneya[33] and Dharmaraja were conversing in this way, the great ascetic Markandeya, with dharma in his soul, was seen to arrive. He had lived for many thousands of years and had become aged through his austerities. When the aged rishi, who had lived for many thousands of years, arrived—all the brahmanas, together with Krishna and the Pandavas, offered him worship. When the supreme among rishis was comfortably seated, with the approval of the brahmanas and the Pandavas, Keshava addressed him. “The Pandavas, the assembled brahmanas, Droupadi, Satyabhama and I myself wish to hear your supreme words. O Markandeya! Therefore, tell us about the sacred accounts of the past, characterized by eternal and wise good conduct on the part of kings, women and rishis.” While they were seated there, devarshi Narada, pure in soul, also arrived to see the Pandavas. All those bulls among men honoured the great-souled one. As has been decreed, they offered the learned one *padya* and arghya.[34] On knowing that they were about to hear Markandeya’s words, devarshi Narada approved of the proposal. Narada knew everything about time and smilingly told him, “O brahmarshi! Tell the Pandavas whatever you wish to say.” Thus addressed, the great ascetic Markandeya replied, “Wait for some time. There are many accounts to be told.” Thus addressed, the Pandavas, together with the brahmanas, waited for some time. They looked at the great sage, as radiant as the sun at noon.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing that the great sage was willing to speak, Pandava, the king of the Kurus,[35] asked him to begin his accounts. “You know everything about the eternal exploits of the gods, the daityas, the great-souled rishis and the rajarshis. We are of the view that you are worthy of our servitude and attendance. We have wished to meet you for a long time. Devaki’s son has also come here to see us. I see that I have been dislodged from happiness. I see all the evil sons of Dhritarashtra prospering. Then the thought strikes me that man is the agent for all his deeds, be they good or evil, and reaps the fruits. How can god then be the agent? O supreme among those who know about the brahman! Why is there happiness and unhappiness for men? Are those fruits in this body? Or in another body later? O supreme among brahmanas! How can the good and evil fruits of an embodied being follow him in this body and how are they united with him after death? Do we reap the fruits in this world or in another world after death? O Bhargava![36] When an animal is dead, where do his deeds remain?”

‘Markandeya replied, “O supreme among eloquent ones! What you have spoken is a question that is worthy of you. You know everything that there is to be known. But you are asking me so that the theory can be established. I will now narrate to you how men undergo happiness and unhappiness here, and in the hereafter. Listen with undivided attention. In the beginning, Prajapati[37] created pure embodied beings with unblemished bodies. They were all devoted to dharma. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! These ancient and sacred men were evolved from the brahman. Their strength and resolution did not waver. They were good in their vows and truthful. As they desired, they could all soar up to the sky to meet with the gods. Then they all descended again and roamed as they willed. These men could die when they willed. They lived when they willed. They faced few difficulties and had no fear. They were accomplished in their objectives and free from difficulties. They could see the masses of gods and the great-souled rishis. They could see everything about dharma. They were self-controlled and were devoid of envy. They lived for thousands of years and had thousands of sons. But over a period of time, they were restricted to walking on the earth alone. They were overcome by desire and anger. They began to thrive on duplicity and deceit. These men were overcome by greed and delusion and the gods abandoned them. They performed evil and impure deeds and were reborn as inferior species, or went to hell. They were repeatedly cooked in this world in different ways.[38] Their desires were in vain. Their resolutions were in vain. Their knowledge was in vain. They lost their senses. They were afraid of everything. They reaped the fruits of misery. Since they were often distinguished by their impure deeds, they were born in inferior families. They suffered from many forms of disease. They were evil in soul and became oppressive. Their lives became short and wicked. They suffered from their terrible deeds. They became dependent on every kind of desire. They were atheists and destroyed all institutions.

'"O Kounteya! After death, any animal's outcome is determined by his own deeds. But you asked about where learned and evil-minded deeds are stored. How are the fruits of evil and good deeds recovered? Listen to the understanding on this matter. In the original subtle body created by the gods, man accumulates a great store of good and evil deeds. When his life is over, he gives up the body that is almost destroyed and is immediately reborn in a different womb, without any gap. In that,[39] his good deeds follow him like a shadow. The fruits give birth to happiness or unhappiness. Those who lack the insight of knowledge think that an animal is governed by rules of death and is not affected by good or evil marks. O Yudhishthira! But this is the fate of those who are without intelligence. Beyond this, listen to the supreme fate of those who are wise. These men have tormented themselves with austerities. They are devoted to all the sacred texts. They are unwavering in their vows and are established in truth. They are always engaged in serving their preceptors. They are good in conduct and noble in birth. They are forgiving, self-controlled and extremely energetic. They are often born in pure wombs and are marked with auspicious signs. They are in control of their senses and have mastered them. Since they are pure, they do not suffer from disease. Because they suffer from few difficulties, they are without obstacles. Whether born prematurely, or in time, or even in the womb, they know everything through the sight of knowledge and about the relationship between their own souls and the supreme one. After having been born in this world of deeds, they regain heaven. Some things are due to destiny. Some things are due to chance. And some things are due to one’s own action. O king! That is how men come by their fate. Do not think otherwise. O supreme among eloquent ones! O Yudhishthira! Hear an account about what I think to be the supreme good in this world of men. Some find greatness here, and not in the hereafter. Others find greatness here, but not in the hereafter. Others find it in both and still others find it in neither. Those who have a great deal of riches always adorn their bodies and find pleasure. O slayer of enemies! But since they are addicted to bodily pleasures, they find enjoyment in this world, but not in the next. There are those who are united with yoga and austerities. While their bodies decay, they are addicted to studying. They are in control of their senses and devoted to the welfare of beings. O destroyer of enemies! They find enjoyment in that world, and not in this. There are those who first lead a life of dharma. In course of time, they obtain prosperity through dharma. They obtain a wife and perform sacrifices. They enjoy this world and the next. There are the ignorant ones who ignore learning, austerities and donations and do not have offspring. They do not find happiness in this world, nor in the next. But all of you are extremely valorous and powerful. You are divine in your energy. You have obtained learning. Your bodies are capable. To accomplish the task of the gods, you have been born in this world from the one hereafter. O brave ones! Having performed great deeds and having satisfied the gods, the rishis and the masses of ancestors with austerities, rituals and conduct, in due course, later attain heaven, the habitation of those who perform sacred deeds, through your own deeds. O Indra among Kouravas! Do not suffer from anxiety. Do not trouble your mind because of these difficulties. You are deserving of happiness."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then Pandu's sons told the great-souled Markandeya, "Tell us about the greatness of the foremost of brahmanas. We wish to hear about this."

'Thus addressed, the illustrious Markandeya, the great ascetic, extremely energetic and knowledgeable in all the sacred texts, replied, "There was once a handsome prince who was the king of the Haihayas. He was the pride of his lineage and the destroyer of enemy cities. He was powerful and handsome and he went out to hunt. When he was roaming around in that forest, overgrown with grass and bushes, he saw a sage who was clad in a black antelope skin as his upper garment. He mistook him to be a deer and killed him in the forest. He was pained and sorrowful at his deed and lost his senses. O lord of the earth! The lotus-eyed prince went to the kings of the Haihayas, great in their souls, and told them exactly what had happened. O son![40] On hearing about the violence done to a sage who lived on roots and fruits, and on seeing it,[41] they were distressed in their minds. They asked everywhere about whose son he was, and followed a road to the hermitage of Tarkshya

Arishtanemi.[42] They bowed down before the great-souled sage, whose vows were unwavering. They stood there, while the sage honoured them in return. Then they told the great-souled sage, ‘We are not deserving of these honours. Through our evil deeds, we have killed a brahmana.’ The brahmana rishi replied, ‘How have you killed a brahmana? Where is he? Tell me and behold the strength of my austerities.’ All of them then told him everything, exactly as it had happened. But when they returned, they could not see the dead body of the rishi there. They searched everywhere and were ashamed. They felt as if their senses had been in the midst of a dream. The sage Tarkshya then told them, ‘O destroyers of the cities of enemies! Is this the brahmana who had been killed by you? O kings! This is my son. He possesses the power of austerities.’ O lord of the earth! On seeing that rishi,[43] they were struck with great wonder and exclaimed, ‘This is extremely wonderful. We have seen him dead. How can a dead person be restored to life? It is through the power of austerities that he has become alive again? O brahmana rishi! We are desirous of hearing this, if indeed it can be heard.’ He[44] replied, ‘O kings! Death cannot exhibit its powers before us. I will briefly tell you about the reason for this. We know nothing but the truth. We do not even think of that which is false. Since we are always established in our own dharma, death holds no fear for us. We always speak about the welfare of brahmanas, and never about their evil deeds. Therefore, we have no fear of death. We serve our guests with food and drink. We always feed our servants. We live in a region inhabited by energetic ones. Therefore, we have no fear of death. I have only told you a very little bit. Now all of you return, without any envy. Do not be frightened that you have sinned.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then they agreed that it would be that way, and worshipped the great sage. The kings happily returned to their own kingdom.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Here more about the greatness of brahmanas. There was a rajarshi by the name of Vainya, who was instated in a horse sacrifice. We have heard that Atri desired to go to him for riches. But determining the nature of his dharma, he gave up this desire. After reflecting about this, the immensely energetic one decided to retire to the forest. He summoned the one who was his wife according to dharma, and his sons, and spoke to them. 'If we wish to reap great fruits, free from any hindrances, you should agree that it is best to swiftly retire to the forest.' Driven by dharma, his wife replied, 'Go to the great-souled Vainya and ask for a lot of riches from him. The rajarshi is donating gifts and will give you the riches you desire. O brahmana rishi! Having received a lot of riches and having distributed it among your servants and sons, then go wherever you wish. This is the supreme dharma, as indicated by those who are learned in dharma.' Atri replied, 'O great-souled one! The immensely fortunate Goutama has told me that Vainya is conversant with dharma and artha and is devoted to the vow of truthfulness. But he is surrounded by brahmanas who hate him. So Goutama has told me. Therefore, I have decided not to go there. When I speak words of well-being that are full of dharma, artha and kama, they will contradict them and render them useless. O immensely wise one! But I like the purport of your words and will go. Vainya will give cattle and a lot of riches.'

'"Having said this, the immensely ascetic one swiftly went to Vainya's sacrifice. On reaching the sacrificial grounds, Atri praised the king. 'O king! O Vainya! You are the foremost among all kings on earth. Masses of sages praise you and no one other than you knows dharma.' But the immensely ascetic rishi[45] spoke these angry words. 'O Atri! Do not speak such words again. You have not yet attained wisdom. In this world, Mahendra Prajapati[46] occupies the foremost place.' Atri then replied to Goutama, 'He[47] is as much of a sustainer as Prajapati Indra. You are the one who is confused. Your wisdom has been clouded by ignorance.' Goutama said, 'I know that I am not confused. You are the one who is suffering from delusion. On having seen him, you are speaking thus so as to satisfy him. You do not know what supreme dharma is, nor do you see any need for it. You are as stupid as a child.

Why have you then grown old?’ They thus argued, in full sight of the sages who had assembled for the sacrifice and they asked, ‘What are these two arguing about? Who permitted them entry into Vainya’s assembly? Why are they standing here and shouting in this fashion?’ O one knowledgeable in all dharma! Then Kashyapa, with supreme dharma in his soul, stepped between the disputants and asked them why they were quarreling. Goutama spoke to the supreme sages who were the assisting priests.[48] ‘O bulls among brahmanas! Listen to the question that has arisen between the two of us. Atri says that Vainya is the sustainer, and I have a great doubt on this score.’ On hearing this, the great-souled sages swiftly went to Sanatkumara to resolve the doubt, because he was learned in dharma.

‘“Having heard their words, reflecting the issue exactly, the great ascetic Sanatkumara replied in words that were in conformity with dharma and artha. Sanatkumara said, ‘Brahmanas are united with kshatriyas and kshatriyas with brahmanas. The king is foremost in dharma and he is the lord of his subjects. He is like Shakra, Shukra, the creator and Brihaspati.[49] He is Prajapati, Virata,[50] emperor, kshatriya, the lord of the earth and the lord of men. If one is praised with such words, how can he not be worthy of worship? The king has appellations like “the prime cause”, “the conqueror in battles”, “the one who attacks”, “the contented one”, “the fortunate one”, “the one who wins heaven”, “the one who is easily victorious”, “the expansive one”, “the one for whom anger comes from truth”, “the one who triumphs over enemies” and “the one who propagates dharma and truth”. Out of fear for that which is not dharma, the rishis conferred powers on kshatriyas. Through its energy, the sun removes darkness in heaven, among the gods. Like that, the king eradicates that which is not dharma from earth. Therefore, the proof of the sacred texts is that the king is foremost. I am in favour of the side that has spoken for the king.’ The great-souled king was extremely delighted that his side had won. He happily spoke to Atri, who had praised him earlier. ‘O brahmana rishi! You have earlier described me as the foremost and greatest among men and an equal to all the gods. Therefore, I will give you a lot of riches, one thousand *shyama* servant girls[51] adorned in excellent garments and ornaments, ten crores of gold coins and ten *bharas* of gold.[52] O brahmana! I must give you this, because I think you know everything.' The energetic and great-minded Atri accepted all this in the proper fashion. The great ascetic then returned to his home. Happily, the self-controlled one distributed these riches among his sons. For the sake of performing austerities, he then left for the forest."'

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'Yarkandeya said, "O brave one! O conqueror of enemy cities! Listen to what Sarasvati chanted, when she was asked by the wise sage Tarkshya about this matter. Tarkshya asked, 'O fortunate one! What is the best thing for a man here?[53] What should he do so that he does not deviate from his own dharma? O one who is beautiful in all her limbs! Instruct me. Instructed by you, I will not stray from my own dharma. How should one offer oblations into the fire? How should one worship and when? How does one ensure dharma is not destroyed? O fortunate one! Tell me all this, so that I can roam in this world, free from passion.' She was thus lovingly questioned by the one who desired to learn. He was supreme in his intelligence.

'"Sarasvati spoke to brahmana Tarkshya words that were full of dharma, the bringer of welfare. Sarasvati said, 'He who knows the brahman in every region, is always devoted to studying and is pure and calm, goes to the foremost among the cities of the gods, and finds bliss with the immortals. There are many beautiful and large lakes there, bereft of sorrow. They are extremely sacred and full of flowers. They are without mud and full of fish. There are golden lotuses. These are excellent tirthas. The performers of sacred deeds find glory and happiness on those banks, served by apsaras, who wear fragrant scents and are adorned with ornaments, their complexions like that of gold. Those who donate cattle attain the supreme world. By donating bulls, one roams in the world of the sun. By giving garments, one goes to the world of the moon. By giving gold, one attains the immortals. If one gives away a good cow that is easily milked and gives birth to fine calves, one that does not stray, one lives for as many years in heaven, as there are countable body hairs on his person. One who donates a strong, young and skilled bull that has infinite strength, and is capable of carrying burdens and drawing a plough, obtains the world that is obtained by donating ten cows. O Tarkshya! One who offers oblations into the fire for seven years, is good in vows and righteous in conduct, through one's deeds, purifies seven generations of forefathers and descendants.'

'"Tarkshya asked, 'O beautiful one! I am asking you. Please tell me. What is the ancient vow of agnihotra? Instructed by you, I will learn about the ancient vow of agnihotra.' Sarasvati replied, 'One who is impure, one whose hands have not been washed, one who does not know about the brahman and one who is not wise, cannot make such offerings. Even when hungry, the gods desire purity. They do not accept offerings from those who lack devotion. One who is not a *shrotriya*[54] should not be employed to render oblations to the gods. Such others will be like throwing the oblations away. O Tarkshya! I maintain that no one other than a shrotriya is entitled to offer agnihotra. Those who devotedly offer oblations into the fire, true in their vows, partaking only of leftover food,[55] attain the pure and fragrant world of cows.[56] They see the supreme and true god.' Tarkshya asked, 'O beautiful one! O goddess! You are wisdom. You are extremely fortunate. You are immersed in intelligence. You are the fruits of deeds. You are born in the body, but you are divine in feelings. I am asking you. Who are you?' Sarasvati replied, 'I have arisen from the agnihotra, to remove doubts in the minds of the brahmana rishis. I felt happy at having met you. Therefore, I have explained these things to you exactly and accurately.' Tarkshya said, 'There is no one who is your equal. You shine as radiantly as Shri.[57] Your divine form is extremely beautiful. O fortunate one! You are the goddess of divine wisdom.' Sarasvati replied, 'O foremost among bipeds! I thrive on the best of sacrificial offerings that the learned ones offer. I prosper on those oblations. O brahmana! That is how I become beautiful. O learned one! Whatever objects are rendered in offerings, made of wood or iron or originating in the earth, know that they help attain celestial beauty and wisdom.’ Tarkshya said, ‘This ensures supreme welfare. That is the reason resolute sages resort to this. Tell me about the supreme bliss that comes from supreme salvation, into which, the wise ones enter.’ Sarasvati replied, ‘Those who are supremely learned in the Vedas achieve that. It is the supreme and ancient soul. Through studying, donations, vows and sacred yoga, those who are rich in austerities are freed, devoid of sorrow. In the midst, there is a cane, holy and fragrant. It has a thousand pure and radiant branches.[58] The rivers stream forth from its roots, with waters that are extremely sacred and honeyed. The great rivers flow from branch to branch like grains of sand, with grain, cakes, meat and herbs, with the mud of *payasa*.[59] The fire is the mouth and the gods, together with Indra and the Maruts, come to the sacrifice and are worshipped. O sage! That is the supreme spot.’”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then the Pandava[60] again spoke to Markandeya. “Tell me about the account of Vaivasvata Manu.”

‘Markandeya replied, “O king! O tiger among men! Vivasvat[61] had a son. He was a maharshi and was extremely powerful. He had radiance equal to that of Prajapati. Manu surpassed his father and grandfather in vigour, energy, success and specifically, austerities. This lord of men practised terrible and great austerities, with his arms raised and standing on one foot, in Vishala Badari.[62] His head faced down and he did not blink. Firmly, he tormented himself with these terrible austerities for ten thousand years. Once, he was engaged in these austerities, clad in wet bark and with matted hair. A fish came up to him on the banks of the Virini[63] and spoke to him. ‘O illustrious one! I am a small fish and am frightened of the larger ones. You are good in your vows. Therefore, save me from those fish, especially because it is the rule among fish that large fish prey on smaller ones. This has always been decreed to be our conduct from time immemorial. Therefore, save me from this great sea of terror in which I am immersed. If you save me, I will return the deed.' On hearing these words of the fish, Manu was overcome with compassion. He grasped the fish in his hands. The fish had a body that shone like the moon's rays. Vaivasvata Manu took it out of the river and placed it in a small water pot. O king! Thus tended to well, the fish grew up and Manu specifically looked after it like a son. After a long period of time, the fish became so large that there was no longer any room for it in the water pot. When the fish saw Manu, it again told him, 'O illustrious one! Find a different place for me to live in.' Then the illustrious Manu took it out of the water pot. Manu took the fish to a large pond and threw it in. O destroyer of enemy cities! Thus thrown by Manu, the fish began to grow, for many years. The pond was two yojanas long and one yojana wide. O lotus-eyed one! O lord of the earth! O Kounteya! The fish could no longer move in that pond. On seeing Manu, the fish again said, 'O illustrious one! O righteous one! O father![64] Please take me to the Ganga, the wife of the ocean. I will live there, or wherever else you desire.' On hearing these words of the fish, Manu, the self-controlled lord, took it to the river Ganga and placed it there with his own hands.

'"O chastiser of enemies! The fish began to grow there for some time. On seeing Manu again, the fish spoke these words. 'O lord! Because of my large size, I cannot move around in the Ganga. O illustrious one! Therefore, show me your favours and quickly take me to the ocean.' O Partha! Manu then himself took the fish out of the waters of the Ganga. He took it to the ocean and placed it there. Despite the fish's great size, Manu could carry it easily. Its touch and smell were also pleasant. When the fish was thrown into the ocean by Manu, it seemed to smile and uttered these words. 'O lord! You have always protected me with great care. Now hear from me about the task you should perform when the time is right. O illustrious one! O immensely fortunate one! The destruction of everything on this earth, mobile and immobile, is near. The time for purging this world has arrived. Therefore, listen to what will bring your greatest welfare. The fear of destruction is nigh for everything that moves, stands, stirs and does not stir. That terrible time of destruction has arrived. You must therefore build a strong and sturdy boat and tether a rope to it. O great sage! You must then ascend it with the saptarshis. Take with you all the seeds that I have mentioned to you earlier. Ascend on the boat and preserve them separately. O one who is beloved of the sages! Wait for me on the boat. O ascetic! I will come to you and you will know me from my horn. I will now depart. Act according to my instructions. O lord! Do not be anxious.' He replied to the fish in these words, 'O lord! I will act accordingly.' Then they took leave of each other and went where they wished.

'"O great king! O brave one! O destroyer of enemies! As he had been instructed by the fish, Manu collected all the seeds. He built an excellent boat and sailed on the waves of the ocean. O lord of the earth! O destroyer of enemy cities! Manu thought about the fish. Knowing about his thoughts, the fish arrived. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! It had a horn. O Indra of Indras among men! When Manu saw the fish in the waters of the ocean, with the form of a large mountain, with a horn as it had said, he tied a noose around the rope and fastened it to the fish's head. O tiger among men! O destroyer of enemy cities! Tethered to the noose in the rope, with great speed, the fish tugged the boat into the waters of the ocean. O lord of men! The boat was tossed around in the ocean. It danced around on the roaring waves, like a drunken woman. On that great ocean, the boat was battered around by great waves. O destroyer of enemy cities! It was whirled around. The earth could not be seen, nor the directions. Everything was enveloped. O bull among men! There was water everywhere, including the sky and heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The world was covered by this turbulence. Everything was invisible, except for the seven rishis, Manu and the fish. O king! In this way, for a large number of years, the fish unceasingly pulled the boat on that flood of water. O bull among men! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The fish then pulled the boat to the highest peak of the Himalayas. In a smiling and soft tone, it told the rishis, 'Immediately tie the boat to this peak of the Himalayas.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of the fish, they quickly moored the boat there, to the peak of the Himalayas. O Kounteya! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that since that day, the highest peak of the Himalayas has been known as 'Nau-bandhana'.[65]

'"Then, without any hesitation, it spoke to the rishis who were assembled there. 'I am Prajapati Brahma. There is no one superior to me. I have saved you from this fear in the form of a fish. Manu will create all beings—gods, asuras and men, all the worlds, everything that moves and everything that does not move. Through terrible austerities and my favours, he will possess these powers of creating classes of beings and will not suffer from delusion.' Having spoken these words, the fish instantly disappeared. Vaivasvata Manu himself desired to create all beings. In the process of creating classes of beings, he was overtaken by delusion and performed great austerities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Through these great austerities, Manu was himself able to create all beings, exactly. I have recounted for you the ancient account known by the name of the fish. This famous account is the cleanser of all sins. A man who listens to Manu's account every day, is happy, is successful in all objectives and goes to the world of heaven."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'With humility, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira again asked the famous Markandeya, "O great sage! You have witnessed the end of many thousands of eras. No one is known who has lived for as long as you, except for the great-souled Brahma Parameshthi.[66] O brahmana! You worshipped Brahma at the time of the destruction, when there was no sky in this world and no gods and danavas. O brahmana rishi! When that destruction is over and the grandfather[67] arises again, you are the only one who witnesses the four types of beings[68] being exactly created by Parameshthi, after he has filled the directions with air and has dispersed the waters. O foremost among brahmanas! You have worshipped the preceptor of the world himself, the grandfather of all the worlds, with supreme meditation. O brahmana rishi! Therefore, through

Parameshthi's grace, death, the destroyer of everything and old age, the destroyer of the body, do not overcome you. When there is no sun and fire, no wind and moon, nothing is left of the sky and the earth, when the world with its mobile and immobile objects becomes one large ocean, when the masses of gods and asuras are destroyed and the great serpents uprooted, when the one with the infinite soul is on the lotus and finds his abode on the lotus,[69] you alone are there to worship Brahma, the lord of all beings. O supreme among brahmanas! Everything that has happened before has been seen by you. Therefore, we wish to hear the account about the reasons behind everything. O supreme among brahmanas! You have experienced these many times. There is nothing in all the worlds that is not always known to you."

'Markandeya replied, "I will recount this. I bow down before the one who creates himself,[70] and the ancient and eternal being without decay, Janardana,[71] whose eyes are long and wide and who is attired in yellow. He is the creator and special creator of all beings that are manifest.[72] He cannot be thought of. He is a great wonder. He is supreme purification. He is without beginning and without end. He is the imperishable being that is everywhere in the universe. He is without decay. He is the creator. But he is not created. He is the reason behind all energy. He is the being whom even the gods do not know. O tiger among men! In the beginning, after the destruction of the universe, there is krita yuga. It is said that this lasts for four thousand years.[73] It is preceded by a sandhya of four hundred years and succeeded by a sandhya of the same duration. Treta yuga is said to last for three thousand years. It is preceded by a sandhya and succeeded by another sandhya of three hundred years each. After that, dvapara yuga has a measure of two thousand years. It is preceded by a sandhya and followed by a sandhya of two hundred years each. The learned have said that kali yuga lasts for one thousand years. It is preceded by a sandhya and succeeded by a sandhya of one hundred years each. Know that the duration of the preceding sandhya and the succeeding sandhya is the same. When kali yuga has decayed, krita yuga returns again. This total period of twelve thousand years is known as a yuga. One thousand such cycles are known as one of Brahma's days. O tiger among men! When the entire universe retreats into Brahma's abode, the wise ones know this as the destruction of the worlds.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! When there is little time of one thousand years left at the end of a yuga, all men usually become the speakers of falsehood. O Partha! They perform sacrifices through representatives. They donate through representatives. When such a time arrives, vows are observed through representatives. The brahmanas perform the tasks of shudras. Shudras become the earners of wealth and resort to the dharma of kshatriyas. This is what occurs when the yuga decays. When kali yuga arrives, brahmanas abstain from sacrifices and studying. They discard the offerings of oblations to ancestors. They resort to eating anything. O son![74] Brahmanas no longer meditate and shudras become addicted to meditation. O lord of men! When the earlier form of the world decays, everything is perverse. There are many mleccha[75] kings. They rule on the basis of falsehood and evil. They resort to false promises. O supreme among men! Andhras, Shakas, Pulindas and Yavanas become kings, and Kambojas, Ournikas, shudras and *abhiras*.[76] Not a single brahmana makes a living from his own dharma then. O lord of men! Kshatriyas and vaishyas also do what they should not do. Men are limited in life expectancy and feeble in strength. They are weak in energy and valour. They have little substance and their bodies are weak. They rarely speak the truth. The country is generally empty and the directions are infested with animals and predators. When the end of the yuga is at hand, learning about the brahman is futile. The shudras address as 'bho' and the brahmanas address as 'arya'.[77] O tiger among men! At the end of the yuga, there are many animals. O lord of the earth! Everything that is fragrant no longer possesses any smell then. O tiger among men! What is succulent is no longer fit to be eaten then. There are many children, short in stature, devoid of good conduct. O king! When the destruction of the yuga is near, women use their mouths as their vaginas. The country is dotted with towers.[78] The crossroads are infested with jackals. O king! At the time of the destruction of a yuga, the women are covered with hair. O lord of men! The cows then yield very little milk. The trees yield very little of flowers and fruit and are full of crows. O lord of the earth! Brahmanas accept gifts from kings who are guilty of killing brahmanas and are the makers of false accusations. The brahmanas are overcome by avarice and delusion. They falsely invoke their own dharma. O lord of the earth! They roam the land in search of alms. Fearful of the burden of taxation, householders become robbers. Others assume the disguise of hermits, but earn a living from trade. Men then bear nails and hair under false pretences.[79] O tiger among men! Those practising brahmacharya become greedy for riches. They observe evil conduct in hermitages and are addicted to drinking. They unite with the wives of their preceptors. They pander to the desires of this world, nourishing their flesh and blood. O tiger among men! When the destruction of the yuga is near, hermitages are infested with many evil characters, who have the quality of living off the food of others. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The illustrious chastiser of Paka[80] no longer showers rain at the right time. All the seeds that are sown, no longer sprout. O unblemished one! The fruits of not following dharma become manifold. O protector of the earth! He who is united with dharma only has a short span of life. There is no dharma left then. O tiger among men! People generally sell goods with false weights. There is a lot of deceit associated with trade. People who are devoted to dharma, decay. The evil ones prosper. Dharma loses its strength and that which is not dharma becomes powerful. Men who are devoted to dharma have short spans of life and are poor. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, those who are against dharma have long spans of life and are prosperous. Subjects seek to attain their objectives by resorting to that which is not dharma. Having accumulated only a little, they become insolent. O king! Having become addicted to deceit, men generally rob riches that have been placed with them in trust. Predators that live off men, birds and animals roam around in parks and sanctuaries in cities. O king! Women conceive at ages of seven years and eight. Men who are ten and twelve years of age beget sons. When they are sixteen years old, men become aged and a man's lifespan is swiftly over. O great king! At the end of a yuga, young ones act like the old. The conduct that should be seen in the young is seen in the old. Women exhibit perverse conduct and deceive their husbands. These lascivious ones pleasure with servants, and even animals.

'"O great king! At the end of those one thousand yugas,[81] when life decays, there is a drought for many years. O lord of the earth! Because beings have weak lives and are starving, they die in large numbers on the surface of the earth. O lord of men! Seven blazing suns appear then. They drink up all the waters from the oceans and the rivers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything is then reduced to ashes, be it of wood or grass, dry or wet. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the fire of destruction arrives, together with the wind, in a world that has already been dried up by the suns. It penetrates the earth and goes all the way to the nether regions, generating great terror among the gods, the danavas and the yakshas. It burns down the world of the nagas and whatever can be found on earth. O protector of the earth! It burns down everything in an instant. Twenty yojanas at a time, that fire of destruction, helped by the inauspicious wind, consumes everything in hundreds and thousands, with all the gods, asuras, gandharvas, yakshas, serpents and rakshasas. That blazing lord burns up the entire universe. Then large clouds, extraordinary to see, arise in the sky. They are like herds of elephants, adorned with garlands of lightning. Some are dark like blue lotuses, others are like white lotuses. Some are like filaments. Other clouds are yellow. Still others have the complexion of a raven's egg. Some have the colour of lotus leaves. Others have the complexion of vermilion. Some have the shapes of large cities. Others are like herds of elephants. Some are like collyrium. Others have the shape of crocodiles.[82] The dense clouds are adorned with garlands of lightning. O great king! They are terrible in form and utter a terrible roar. Full of rain, they cover up the entire sky. O great king! They cover up the earth, with all its mountains, forests and mines. They fill and flood it with water. O bull among men! Instructed by Parameshthi, those clouds, with a terrible roar, flood everything. The copious quantities of water fill up the earth. They extinguish the extremely terrible and inauspicious fire. The clouds generate a flood for twelve years. Instructed by the great-souled one, the rains fill everything. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The ocean flows over its tideline. The mountains are splintered. In particular, the earth is also shattered. Then swift winds suddenly whirl the clouds in the sky and that gust tears them up. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The self-creating original god[83] drinks up these terrible winds and continues to sleep on his lotus bed. In that terrible ocean, everything is destroyed, mobile and immobile. The gods, the masses of asuras, the yakshas and the rakshasas are destroyed. O protector of the earth! There are no men, no animals and no trees. There is no firmament in this world. I alone wander around anxiously.

'"O supreme among kings! Once, when I roamed around in this terrible ocean of water, I was filled with great affliction at not seeing any being. O lord of men! I had floated around for a long time in this flood. I was exhausted. But I continued uninterrupted, since I could not find a place to rest. O lord of the earth! Then, in that great flood of water, I saw an extremely tall and wide banyan tree. O lord of men! The branches of that tree were extensive. O protector of the earth! O great king! There, on a bed adorned with celestial spreads, I saw a seated child. His face was like a lotus or the moon. His eyes were as large as a blossoming lotus. O protector of the earth! I was struck with great wonder. How could this child be lying there, when the entire world has been destroyed? O lord of men! Through the power of austerities, I can reflect upon the past, the present and the future. But I could not fathom this child. He had the complexion of an *atasi* flower.[84] He bore the *srivatsa* mark.[85] This seemed to me to be the abode of Lakshmi herself. The radiant child, with eyes like a lotus and bearing the srivatsa mark, spoke to me in words that were pleasant to hear. 'O son![86] I know that you are exhausted and desire to rest. O Markandeya! O Bhargava![87]

Rest here for as long as you wish. O supreme among sages! Enter my body. Rest here. That is the place that has been earmarked for you because of my favours.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by the child, I lost all interest in my long life and human state. Then that child suddenly opened his mouth wide. Propelled by destiny, I powerlessly entered his mouth. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O tiger among men! Thus suddenly entering the inside of his mouth, I saw the entire earth, covered with all its kingdoms and cities, the rivers Ganga, Shatadru, Sita, Yamuna, Koushiki, Charmanvati, Vetravati, Chandrabhaga, Sarasvati, Sindhu, Vipasha, Godavari, Vasvokasara, Nalini, Narmada, the rivers Tamra and Vena with pure waters that bring fortune, Suvena, Krishnavena, Irama, Mahanadi, Shona, Vishalya and Kampuna. O supreme among men! I saw many other rivers that flow on earth. I wandered around inside that great-souled one. I saw oceans infested with aquatic animals. I saw that supreme abode of the waters, a storehouse of gems. I saw the sky there, illuminated with the moon and the sun. It blazed with energy, like the fire and the sun. O king! I saw the earth, beautifully adorned with its forests. O king! The brahmanas were engaged in many sacrifices. The kshatriyas were engaged in ensuring the welfare of all the varnas. O lord of men! The vaishyas were engaged in agriculture. The shudras were always engaged in the servitude of the brahmanas.[88] O king! Then, wandering around inside the great-souled one, I saw the Himalayas and Mount Hemakuta. I saw Nishadha and Shveta, adorned with silver. O protector of the earth! O tiger among men! I saw Mount Gandhamadana and the great mountains Mandara and Nila. O great king! I saw the golden Mount Meru. I saw Mahendra and Vindhya, supreme among mountains. I saw Malaya and Mount Pariyatra. I saw many other mountains too. I saw all these inside his stomach, adorned with jewels. O lord of men! O lord of the earth! I saw lions, tigers, boars and serpents and all the other beings that populate the earth. I saw all these as I was roaming around there. O tiger among men! Having entered the inside and wandering around in various directions, I saw the masses of gods headed by Shakra, the gandharvas, the apsaras, the yakshas and the rishis. O lord of men! There were the daityas, the danavas and collections of kaleyas, the sons of Simhika and other enemies of the gods. Whatever could be seen in the world, mobile or immobile, everything could be seen inside the great-souled one. Surviving on fruits, I roamed around in this entire universe inside his body for more than one hundred years. O lord of the earth! But while I constantly roamed around and thought, nowhere could I see an end to the body.

'"O king! Not being able to find an end to the great-souled one, following the prescribed rites, I sought refuge, in both thought and deeds, with this great-souled one, the granter of boons and worthy among gods. O king! O supreme among men! Then suddenly, a gust of wind expelled me from the mouth of the great-souled one, the mouth having been opened wide. O lord of the earth! O tiger among men! Then, seated on the branch of the banyan tree, I saw the one who had swallowed up the universe. He was in the form of a child, with the srivatsa mark. O tiger among men! I saw the infinitely energetic one seated there. The immensely radiant one blazed in his yellow attire, bearing the srivatsa mark. He smiled and gently addressed me. 'O Markandeya! O supreme among sages! Tell me. Have you rested while you have been residing inside my body?' Instantly, I seemed to acquire a new insight. I saw myself with a new consciousness, free from the confines of the soul. O son![89] The soles of his well-established feet were coppery red. They were delicate and adorned with soft and red toes. I grasped them, placed them reverentially on my head, and worshipped him. I had seen the limitless powers of that infinitely energetic one. Humbly, I joined my hands in salutation and carefully approached him. I saw the lotus-eyed god who was the soul of all beings. Bowing before him with hands joined in salutation, I said, 'O god! I wish to know about you and about your supreme maya. O illustrious one! Having entered your body through your mouth, I saw all the worlds gathered in your stomach. O god! The gods, the danavas, the rakshasas, the yakshas, the gandharvas and the nagas and all the mobile and immobile objects in the universe were inside your body. O god! Though I ran and continuously roamed around inside your body, through your favours, my memory never failed me. O Pundarikaksha! O unblemished one! I wish to know why you have established yourself in the form of a child. Why have you swallowed up the entire universe? You should explain this to me. O unblemished one! O destroyer of enemies! For what purpose is everything in the universe inside your body? For how long will you be established here? O lord of the gods! I wish to hear this. It is a brahmana's desire. O lotus-eyed one! Tell me everything in detail. O lord! What I have seen is greatly beyond my comprehension.' Having been thus addressed by me, the handsome god of the gods, immensely radiant, supreme among eloquent ones, comforted me and spoke these words to me."'

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'"The god said, 'O brahmana! It is certain that the gods do not know me as I really am. But I am pleased with you and I will tell you how I create. O brahmana rishi! You are devoted to your ancestors and you have sought refuge with me. That is the reason you have seen me in person. Your brahmacharya is also great. The waters are known as *nara* and I consciously gave them that name. Because the waters are always my abode, I am known by the name of Narayana.[90] O supreme among brahmanas! I am known by the name of Narayana. My powers are eternal and undecaying. I am the creator and the destroyer of all beings. I am Vishnu. I am Brahma. I am Shakra, the lord of the gods. I am king Vaishravana.[91] I am Yama, the lord of the dead. I am Shiva. I am Soma. I am Kashyapa Prajapati. O supreme among brahmanas! I am the creator and the special creator.[92] I am the sacrifice. The fire is my mouth. The earth is my feet. The sun and the moon are my eyes. The directions and the sky are my body. The wind is established in my mind. I have performed many hundreds of sacrifices, in which large numbers of gifts have been given. I am the sacrifices performed by those learned in the Vedas. I am present in the sacrifices of the gods. On earth, the lords and kings of the kshatriyas, desirous of attaining heaven, sacrifice to me. The vaishyas, desirous of attaining heaven, also sacrifice to me. I become

Shesha and hold up this earth full of riches, bounded by the four seas and adorned by Meru and Mandara.[93] In earlier times, in the form of a boar, I used my valour to raise up the earth, when it was immersed in the water.[94] O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! As the *vadava* fire, I drink up the turbulent waters and disgorge them again.[95] Through my valour, in due order, the brahmanas emerged from my mouth, the kshatriyas from my arms, the vaishyas from my thighs and the shudras from my feet. The Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda issued from me and return to me. Ascetics desire supreme tranquility. They wish to control their souls. They are free from desire, anger and hatred. They are without attachment and have overcome sin. They are pure and without pride. They are always learned about matters concerning the soul. These brahmanas always meditate on me. They worship me. I am the light of destruction. I am Yama, the destroyer. I am the sun of destruction. I am the wind of destruction. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that the forms that can be seen in the sky in the form of stars are manifestations of me. So are the oceans, the storehouses of jewels and the four directions. Know them to be my garments, my beds and my abodes. O virtuous one! Desire, anger, happiness, fear and delusion—know them to be different forms of me. O brahmana! So are whatever is obtained by men through performing good deeds, speaking the truth, performing austerities and observing non-violence towards creatures. It is my rules that determine all beings who live in bodies. They do not act in accordance with their desires, but their minds are guided by me. There are brahmanas who have properly studied the Vedas. They perform different kinds of sacrifices. They pacify their souls and control their anger. They earn merits. O learned one! These are incapable of being earned by men who perform evil deeds and are overcome by greed—men who are mean, inferior and not in control of their souls. Know that I am the greatest reward that righteous men strive for. This is the path chosen by those who resort to yoga, but is impossible for ignorant ones to achieve. O learned one! Whenever dharma goes into a decline and adharma[96] raises its head, then I create myself. Whenever daityas, addicted to violence and incapable of being killed by the supreme among the gods, and terrible rakshasas are created in this world, then I am born in the houses of those who perform good deeds. I assume a human form and pacify everything.

““‘I create gods, humans, gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas and mobile and immobile objects. Then I destroy them with my maya. When the time arrives for acting, I think again about a body and create myself. Assuming a human form, I ensure that the boundaries are maintained. My complexion is white in krita yuga, yellow in treta yuga and red now in dvapara. It is black in kali yuga. At that time, adharma accounts for three-fourths.[97] When that period of destruction arrives, I assume the terrible form of time and myself destroy the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. I am the one with three strides.[98] I am the soul of the universe. I bring happiness to all the worlds. I am the lord. I go everywhere. I am Hrishikesha, whose stride is expansive. O brahmana! I am the one who moves the wheel of time. I am without form. I am the one who pacifies all beings. I am the endeavour behind the tasks of all the worlds. O supreme among sages! Thus my soul pervades all beings. O Indra among brahmanas! But no one knows me. O brahmana! O unblemished one! Whatever pain you have encountered while inside me, all of that is for your happiness and welfare. O supreme among sages! Whatever you have seen of the worlds, mobile and immobile, all of those have been ordained by my soul. The grandfather of all the worlds[99] is half of my body. I am the one known as Narayana. I hold the conch shell, the chakra and the mace. O brahmana rishi! Throughout the cycle of one thousand yugas, I, the soul of the universe and the grandfather of all the worlds, sleep. O supreme among sages! Throughout that period, I am established here, not a child but in the form of a child, until Brahma wakes up. O brahmana! It is I who granted you boons in the form of Brahma. You are worshipped by masses of brahmana rishis and I am satisfied with you. On seeing everything, mobile and immobile, flooded in a single ocean, you were afflicted. Knowing this, I showed you the universe when you entered my body. On seeing all the worlds there, you were astounded and did not understand. O brahmana rishi! Therefore, I brought you out through my mouth and told you everything about myself, incomprehensible to gods and demons. O brahmana rishi! Until the immensely ascetic and illustrious Brahma awakes, comfortably rest and roam here. O supreme among brahmanas! When the grandfather of all the worlds awakes, as if they are but one, I will create from my body the sky, the earth, light, wind and water and whatever else exists in the world, mobile and immobile.'"

'Markandeya said, "O son![100] After he had spoken thus, the extremely wonderful god disappeared. I then saw the creation of subjects, varied and manifold. O king! O best of the Bharata lineage! O best among all those who uphold dharma! At the end of the yuga, I witnessed all these wonderful things. O tiger among men! The lotus-eyed god whom I saw in earlier times, has now become your relative Janardana. O Kounteya! Because of the boon he bestowed on me, my memory has not failed me. I have a long life and I can die when I wish. He is the lord Krishna Varshneya, the ancient being. He is the mighty-armed Hari, who cannot be thought of, and who seems to be sporting. He is Satvata,[101] the creator and the special creator and the destroyer. He is Govinda with the srivatsa mark, the universal lord of all Prajapatis. On seeing this tiger of the Vrishni lineage, the original being Vishnu who has no birth and who is dressed in yellow garb, my memory has returned to me. Madhava is the father and mother of all beings. O bulls among the Kourava lineage! Seek refuge with the one who grants protection."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, the Parthas and the twins, bulls among men, together with Krishna Droupadi, bowed in obeisance before Janardana. O tiger among men! He comforted them in the sweetest of tones. Having consoled them, he honoured them in the appropriate fashion, since they were worthy of honour. Yudhishthira Kounteya then again questioned the great sage Markandeya about the kingdoms that would flourish on this earth. "O foremost among eloquent ones! O sage! O Bhargava! We have heard from you about the extraordinary destruction and creation that occurs at the end of a yuga. I am extremely curious to learn about what happens in kali yuga. If all dharma is confounded then, what will remain? What energy will be left to men? What will they eat and how will they sport? How long will they live? What garments will they wear at the end of a yuga? After what period of time, will krita yuga arise again? O sage! Tell these varied accounts in detail." At these words, the supreme among sages began to speak again. The great rishi wished to please the tiger among the Vrishnis and the Pandavas.

'Markandeya said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Listen to me. I will tell you about the future of all the worlds when the time of evil arrives. In the time of krita with its four feet,[102] everything was devoid of deceit and obstructions. In those earlier times, dharma was established among humans, like a bull. In treta, adharma took away one leg, but it was still established on three feet. In dvapara, it is said that dharma and its opposite are mixed half and half. But at that time,[103] three-quarters of adharma will be established in the world. Only one quarter of dharma will be established among men. O Pandava! Learn from me that life with valour, intelligence, strength and power will shrink among men, following the change in yuga. O Yudhishthira! Kings, brahmanas, vaishyas and shudras will only pretend to practise dharma. Men will be deceitful about dharma. Men in the world will be vain about their learning and will abbreviate the truth. Because truth will be destroyed, lifespans will be shortened. Because of this shortening in life, it will not be possible to acquire much learning. Uninstructed and lacking in knowledge, ignorance will make them a prey to greed. Men will be addicted to avarice, anger and desire, and will be stupid. They will bear enmity and will wish to kill each other. Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas will consort with each other and become the equal of shudras, devoid of austerities and truth. There is no doubt that the lowest will rise to the middle and the middle will sink to the bottom. At the end of the yuga, this will be the state of the world. Garments made of hemp will be considered to be the best. Grain eaten by the poor will be considered to be the best harvest. At the destruction of the yuga, men will consider their wives to be their enemies. They will live on fish and will milk goats and sheep. At the destruction of the yuga, men will destroy cows. Men will be against each other and will commit violence against each other. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, they will not meditate and will be atheists. They will dig up the banks of rivers with spades and sow herbs there. But at the time of the destruction of the yuga, these will yield little fruit. Men who have always been firm in their vows at funeral ceremonies and sacrifices to the gods, will become addicted to greed and will thrive on each other. The father will enjoy what belongs to the son and the son will enjoy what belongs to the father. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, rules about what should be eaten will be transgressed. Brahmanas will not observe vows and will criticize the Vedas. Deluded by their love for debate, they will not observe worship and sacrifices. Men will till lowlands and yoke milch cows. Men will employ calves that are one year old as beasts of burden. Though sons will kill their fathers and fathers will kill their sons, this will not be regarded as reprehensible. They will be without anxiety and will take great pride in this. The entire world will be overtaken by mleccha conduct. There will be no rites and sacrifices. There will be unhappiness everywhere and no festivities. Generally, men will rob the possessions of others, even of those who are weak and of their relatives and widows. There will be little valour and strength. There will be vanity. There will be addiction to avarice and delusion. Men will happily accept gifts given by the evil. They will accept them, themselves addicted to evil conduct. O Kounteya! Driven by evil intelligence, kings will hire assassins. The ignorant ones, thinking themselves to be wise, will seek to kill each other. When the destruction of the yuga is near, the kshatriyas will be the thorns of the world. They will not protect others. They will be greedy, insolent with pride and vanity. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, they will find delight in only resorting to chastisement. They will attack righteous ones and enjoy their wives and possessions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

They will feel no pity, even when there are cries of grief. No one will ask for a maiden. No one will give a maiden away. When the end of the yuga is near, women will choose themselves. When the end of the yuga has arrived, kings, discontented with what they possess and deluded in their intelligence, will use every means possible to steal the property of others. There is no doubt that the entire world will be overtaken by mleccha ways. When the destruction of the yuga has arrived, one hand will steal from the other. In this world, men who are vain about their learning, will abbreviate the truth. The old will think like children and the children will have the intelligence of the old. Cowards will take pride in their bravery and the brave will be depressed as cowards. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will not trust others. Overcome by greed and delusion, everyone will eat the same kind of food. Adharma will extend and there will be no dharma. O lord of men! There will be no brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas left. At the time of destruction of the yuga, the world will have only one varna. Fathers will not pardon their sons, nor sons their fathers. Wives will not tend to their husbands. When the end of the yuga has arrived, men will seek out cities and regions where barley and wheat are eaten. O lord of the earth! Men and women will eat whatever they wish. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will not tolerate each other. O Yudhishthira! The entire world will be overtaken by mlecchas. Men will no longer satisfy their ancestors through funeral ceremonies. No one will listen to another. Nor will anyone be a preceptor. O lord of men! The entire world will be enveloped in terrible darkness. The greatest lifespan will be for sixteen years. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, this is when the breath of life will be released. Girls who are five or six years old will give birth. Boys who are seven or eight years old will beget children. O king! O tiger among kings! At that time, at the end of the yuga, women will not find satisfaction with their husbands, nor men with wives. There will be few possessions. Linga will be in vain.[104] There will be violence. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, no one will give to another. The countryside will be full of towers. The crossroads will be full of jackals. At the time of the destruction of the yuga, women will be full of hair.

There will be cruel mleccha conduct everywhere. People will eat everything. They will be terrible in all their deeds. There is no doubt that men will be like this, when time comes to an end. At the time of buying and selling, everyone will steal everything from each other. O best of the Bharata lineage! At the end of the yuga, they will be driven by the love for riches. Though ignorant and without knowledge, they will perform rituals. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will act as they wish. When the end of the yuga has arrived, all men will naturally be the performers of cruel deeds and will not trust each other. They will destroy trees and groves without a thought. There is no doubt that all beings in the world will find it difficult to ensure a living. O king! Overcome by avarice, they will roam the earth. They will become brahmanas and will enjoy the property of brahmanas. Oppressed by shudras,[105] brahmanas will be frightened and will lament. They will wander all over the earth, without anyone to protect them. Men will be cruel and terrible and will kill others. They will cause violence to beings. When men act in this fashion, the yuga will come to an end. O extender of the Kuru lineage! O king! Brahmanas, the supreme among brahmanas, will be oppressed by bandits and will swiftly flee in fear like crows, seeking refuge in rivers, mountains and uneven terrain, oppressed by the burden of taxes. O protector of the earth! At the time of the destruction of the yuga, they will discard all patience. They will perform deeds that should not be performed and will serve the shudras. The shudras will explain dharma to brahmanas and their servants and they will listen to these explanations and proofs. Everything in the world will be utterly upside down. Discarding the gods, collections of bones[106] will be worshipped. At the end of the yuga, shudras will no longer serve brahmanas, in the hermitages of maharshis and in the residences of brahmanas. In places meant for the gods, in sanctuaries and in the abodes of the serpents, the earth will not be marked by abodes of the gods, but by collections of bones. When the yuga decays, these are the signs of the destruction of the yuga. Men will always become terrible, addicted to meat and liquor and weak in dharma. That is the time for the decay of the yuga. O king! At that time, flowers will be created in flowers and fruit in fruit. O great king! The yuga will decay t that time. When the rains shower down at the wrong time, the yuga will be over. The rituals of men will not follow the right order. Shudras[107] will quarrel with brahmanas. The earth will soon be infested with mleccha people. Overcome by the burden of taxation, brahmanas will flee in the ten directions. Without distinction, men in all countries will be oppressed by drought. They will resort to hermitages and live on fruits and roots. When the world is so turbulent, there will be no limits. Disciples will not heed their instructions, but will act in an unpleasant way. O sons! Preceptors will then have to live without any riches. Friends, kin and relatives will act only out of love for wealth. When the end of the yuga arrives, all beings will suffer from want. All the directions will blaze. All the constellations will move. All the stars will be adverse, all the winds will be turbulent. There will be many showers of meteors, indicative of great fear. The sun will torment with six others. There will be a thunderous noise and conflagrations in all the directions. From rising to setting, the sun will be obscured by the headless torso.[108] The illustrious one with the thousand eyes[109] will not rain at the right time. At the time of the end of the yuga, crops will not grow. Women will be harsh and cruel in speech and will love to cry. Women will not follow the words of their husbands. When the destruction of the yuga arrives, sons will kill their fathers and mothers. Women will kill their husbands and depend on their sons. O great king! Rahu will envelope the sun at the wrong time. When the end of the yuga arrives, fires will blaze up in all the directions. Travellers will ask for food and drink, but not receive it. They will not find shelter and will be thrown out. They will have to sleep on the road. When the end of the yuga is near, crows of ill omen, serpents, vultures, animals and birds will screech harshly. When the end of the yuga has arrived, men will be abandoned by their friends and relatives, kin and followers. When the end of the yuga has arrived, they will gradually seek refuge in other countries, regions, settlements and cities, with extremely terrible words of ‘Alas, father!’

and ‘Alas, son!’. In extreme affliction, men will roam around. Then, when the terrible time of the destruction of the yuga is over, beings gradually come into existence, beginning with brahmanas. When that period is over, the world begins to prosper again. The gods again become favourable, as they desire. When the sun, the moon, Tishya[110] and Jupiter are in conjunction in the same sign of the zodiac, then krita begins again. Rains shower at the right time and the stars become favourable. The planets revolve in a propitious way. Safety, abundance of food, health and recovery from disease are prevalent. Driven by time, a brahmana named Kalki Vishnuyasha will be born.[111] He will have great energy, great intelligence and valour. He will be born in a village named Sambhala, in an auspicious brahmana household. As soon as he thinks about it, all means of transport, weapons, warriors, missiles and armour will manifest themselves before him. He will be a king and emperor, triumphing on the basis of dharma. He will restore order in this turbulent world. When arisen, that radiant brahmana, immensely intelligent, will bring an end to the destruction by destroying everything. He will initiate the yuga.[112] Wherever he goes, he will be surrounded by brahmanas. That brahmana will then uproot the mean masses of mlecchas, wherever they may happen to be.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “After exterminating the rakshasas, he will hand over the earth to the brahmanas at a great horse sacrifice. Having established the sacred limits decreed by the self-creating one,[113] the performer of holy and famous deeds will retire to the forest when he attains old age. The men who live in the world will follow his good conduct. When thieves and rakshasas have been exterminated by the brahmanas, there will be safety again. When all the countries have been conquered, that tiger among brahmanas will establish black antelope skins, spears and tridents and other weapons there.[114] He will be praised by the Indras among brahmanas and will honour them in return. Kalki, supreme among brahmanas will roam around the earth, always engaged in the killing of *dasyus*.[115] When he exterminates dasyus, terrible lamentations of ‘Alas, father!’ and ‘Alas, son!’ will be heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When krita has arrived, adharma will thus be destroyed and dharma will flourish. People will again follow rituals. There will be groves, sanctuaries, large ponds, temples and many sacrifices and rituals on the arrival of krita yuga. Brahmanas will be righteous and hermits will be ascetics. Hermitages, earlier occupied by wretches, will have subjects engaged in truth. All the seeds sown will begin to grow. O Indra among kings! Every crop will grow in every season. Men will be devoted to donations, vows and rites. Brahmanas will happily be engaged in meditation and sacrifices and will desire dharma. Kings will govern the earth in accordance with the principles of dharma. In krita yuga, vaishyas will be engaged in trade, brahmanas in their six tasks[116] and kshatriyas in offering protection. Shudras will devote themselves to servitude of the three varnas. This will be the nature of dharma in krita yuga, treta and dvapara and in the last period of the yuga. I have recounted this to you. O Pandava! The numbers of the yugas are known to all the worlds. Thus have I told you everything about the past and the future, as I remember it. This is the Purana recounted by Vayu, lauded by the rishis.[117] Though I am immortal, I have witnessed and experienced many courses of life in the world.[118] I have told you about them.

‘“O one without decay! Now, with your brothers, listen to these other words of mine. They will free you from your doubts about dharma. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Always unite your soul with dharma. O king! Those who have dharma in their soul enjoy bliss, here and in the hereafter. O unblemished one! Listen to the auspicious words that I will now tell you. In the course of your acts, you should never oppress a brahmana. If angered, a brahmana can destroy the world through his oath.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard Markandeya’s words, the king, supreme among Kurus, replied in these words to the immensely wise and immensely radiant one. “O sage! If I wish to protect my subjects, what dharma should I follow? How should I act, so that I do not deviate from my own dharma?”

‘Markandeya replied, “Be compassionate towards all beings and try to ensure their welfare, without hatred. Be engaged in the protection of your subjects, as if they are your own children. Practise dharma and avoid adharma. Worship the ancestors and the gods. If you act out of ignorance, neutralize it by offering the right donations. Discard vanity and always be humble. Conquer the entire earth and remain in joy and happiness. This is dharma as it was, and as it will be. There is nothing in the past or the future that is not known to you. O son![119] Therefore, do not suffer because of your present misfortune. O mighty-armed one! Destiny is superior to all the gods too. Prodded by destiny, all beings are afflicted. O unblemished one! Do not have any doubts about what I have told you. If you doubt my words, your dharma will be destroyed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have been born in the famous lineage of the Kurus. You should practise everything in deed, thought and speech.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O best of brahmanas! The words that you have uttered are pleasant to hear. O lord! I will endeavour to act according to your instructions. O Indra among brahmanas! I have no greed, no fear and no envy. O lord! I will do everything that you have told me.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Having heard the words of the great-souled Pandava, all the Pandavas, together with the wielder of the Sharnga bow, were delighted.[120] Having heard the words of the intelligent Markandeya about the ancient accounts, they were struck with great wonder.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Pandava then spoke to Markandeya. “Tell me about the greatness of brahmanas.” Markandeya replied.[121]

‘“There was a king in Ayodhya, from the Ikshvaku lineage. His name was Parikshit and he went out hunting. Pursuing a deer alone on a horse, he travelled a long distance. On the way, he became exhausted, hungry and thirsty. In that part of the country, he saw a dark and dense cluster of trees. He entered the cluster of trees and in the middle, saw an extremely beautiful pond. He and his horse bathed there. He flung some lotus stalks in front of the horse.[122] Then, refreshed, he sat down on the banks of the pond. While he was lying there, he heard the sweet sound of singing. On hearing this, he began to wonder. 'I do not see the marks of any humans here. What singing is this then?' He then saw an extremely beautiful maiden, worthy of looking at. She was picking flowers and singing and wandered around to where the king was. The king said, 'O fortunate one! Whose are you?' The maiden replied, 'I am a virgin.' The king said, 'I wish that you should be mine.' The maiden replied, 'I can only be yours if you take an oath.' The king wanted to know what the condition was and the maiden replied, 'You must never show me water.' The king agreed to these words and having agreed, won her and sat down with her. While the king was thus seated, his soldiers arrived there. They had followed his footsteps. On seeing the king, they established themselves around him. Having fully recovered, the king mounted a palanquin with her and returned to his city. He pleasured there with her privately, out of sight of anyone.

'"The prime minister then asked the women who waited on the king. 'What is happening?' The women replied, 'We have seen something that we have not seen before. No water is brought here.' Having heard this, the minister constructed a grove. It had beautiful trees, with many roots, flowers and fruit. But it had no water. He went to the king in private and said, 'There is a beautiful grove without any water. Pleasure yourself happily there.' On hearing these words, the king entered the grove with the queen. One day, he was roaming in that wonderful grove with his beloved and became exhausted, hungry and thirsty. He saw a wonderful cluster of *atimuktas*.[123] On entering it with his beloved, the king saw a pond with clear water, covered by the creepers. As soon as he saw it, he sat down on its banks with his queen. The king told the queen, 'Let us descend into the water of this pond.' On hearing these words, she got down and immersed herself in the pond. But she did not surface again. The king searched for her, but could not find her. He had the water taken out and found a frog seated near the mouth of a hole. The angry king passed an order. 'Kill all frogs. Whoever wishes to see me, has to come with a dead frog as a tribute.' When this terrible destruction of the frogs continued, all the frightened frogs went to the king of the frogs and told him what was happening. Then the king of the frogs adopted the disguise of an ascetic and went to the king. Having approached, he said, 'O king! Do not be overcome by anger. Have mercy and do not destroy the innocent frogs. There are two shlokas on this. "Do not wish to kill all frogs. O unblemished one! Control your anger. People who are ignorant, destroy their extensive prosperity. Promise that when you meet them, you will control your wrath. Why must you continue with this adharma? What purpose will dead frogs serve?"' But the king's soul was overcome with grief for his beloved and he told the frog, 'I cannot forgive. I will kill those evil-souled ones who have devoured my beloved. The frogs deserve to be killed by me. O learned one! Do not try to obstruct me.' On hearing these words, his senses and mind were pained and he replied, 'O king! Show mercy. I am the king of the frogs and my name is Ayu. She was my daughter, named Sushobhana. She has this bad character and she has deceived many kings earlier.' The king replied, 'I desire her. Give her to me.' The father bestowed her on the king, with the words, 'Serve the king.' He also told his daughter, 'Since you have deceived many kings and have committed falsehood, your sons will be the haters of brahmanas.' Having obtained her, the king's heart was set on the pleasures of making love. It was as if he had won the wealth of the three worlds. He prostrated himself before the king of the frogs and in a voice choking with tears of joy, said, 'You have favoured me a lot.' Having bid farewell to his son-in-law, the king of frogs went away, to where he had come from.

'"After some time, the king had three sons through her. Their names were Shala, Dala and Bala. After some time, since his soul was set on austerities, the king instated the eldest Shala on the throne and left for the forest. One day, Shala went out hunting. He saw a deer and pursued it on his chariot. He told the charioteer, 'Drive me faster.' The charioteer replied to the king, 'Do not insist on this course of action. You would have been able to catch the deer only if Vamya horses had been yoked to the chariot.’ The king then told the charioteer, ‘Tell me about Vamya horses. Otherwise, I will kill you.’ Having been thus addressed by the king, he was frightened of the king’s anger, as well as of Vamadeva’s curse, and said, ‘Vamya horses are those that belong to Vamadeva. They are as swift as the mind.’ On hearing this, the king told him, ‘Go to Vamadeva’s hermitage.’ Having gone to Vamadeva’s hermitage, he told the rishi, ‘O illustrious one! I pierced a deer and it has run away. You should give me a couple of Vamya horses so that I can catch it.’ The rishi replied, ‘I will give you the Vamyas. But when you have finished, you must return them immediately.’ Having accepted the horses and having taken the rishi’s permission, he yoked the Vamya horses to his chariot and pursued the deer. But when he was travelling, he told the charioteer, ‘These horses are gems. They do not deserve to be possessed by a brahmana. I am not going to return them to Vamadeva.’ Having thus spoken, he caught the deer. He returned to his city and lodged the horses in the inner quarters of the palace. The rishi thought, ‘This prince is young. Having obtained these excellent horses, he is enjoying them. He will not return them to me. What a nuisance!’ Having thought this, when a month had passed, he told his disciple. ‘O Atreya! Go to the king and tell him that if he is through with the horses, he should return the Vamyas to your preceptor.’ He went and told the king. But the king replied, ‘These horses deserve to be possessed by kings. Brahmanas do not deserve such gems. What will brahmanas do with horses? Return.’ Returning, he told this to the preceptor.

‘“On hearing these unpleasant words, Vamadeva was filled with anger. He himself went to the king and asked for his horses. But the king refused. Vamadeva said, ‘O king! Return the Vamya horses to me. You have undertaken a deed that others cannot accomplish. Varuna will kill you with his terrible noose. You are trying to create a split between brahmanas and kshatriyas.’ The king replied, ‘O Vamadeva! These two bulls have been trained well and are docile. They are the appropriate mount for a brahmana. O maharshi! Take them and go wherever you want. The chants themselves bear someone like you.’[124] Vamadeva said, ‘O king! The chants indeed bear someone like me, but that is in the next world. O king! In this world, these are my mounts, and for others who are like me.’ The king replied, ‘Then let four donkeys bear you. They are excellent. Or there are fleet horses. Use those. But these Vamyas deserve to be possessed by a kshatriya like me. Behold. They cannot belong to you.’ Vamadeva said, ‘It has been said that a brahmana’s vow is terrible. O king! If I have lived by such vows, then terrible giants with bodies made of iron and holding sharp spears will slice you into four parts.’ The king replied, ‘O Vamadeva! Let those who bear sharp spears know that you, a brahmana, are willing to kill in speech, thought and deeds. On my instructions, let them kill you, with your disciple.’ Vamadeva said, ‘O king! A brahmana can never be chastised, in speech, thought and deeds. But one who is learned in the brahman and has practised austerities, can prove superior to the best in this world.’ O king! When Vamadeva spoke these words, rakshasas arose, terrible in form. With raised spears, they rushed towards the king, so as to kill him. In a loud voice, he cried out, ‘O brahmana! Even if all the Ikshvakus, Dala and the vaishyas who are ruled by me tell me, I will not give up the Vamyas. O Vamadeva! They are not ones who follow dharma.’ While he was still speaking, the yatudhanas[125] struck the lord of the earth and he fell down on the ground.

‘“On learning that the king had been killed, the Ikshvakus instated Dala on the throne. Brahmana Vamadeva then went to the kingdom and spoke these words to King Dala. ‘O king! It has been said in all dharma that gifts must be given to brahmanas. O Indra among kings! If you fear to transgress dharma, immediately give the Vamyas to me.’ Having heard these words of Vamadeva, the king was angered and spoke to his charioteer. ‘Bring me one of those beautiful and poisonous arrows that have been carefully kept. Pierced by it, Vamadeva will lie down prone on the ground in pain and dogs will tear him apart.’ Vamadeva said, ‘I know that you have a son who is ten years old. O Indra among kings! He has been born from your queen Shyenajit. Urged by my words, you will soon kill that beloved son with your terrible arrows.’ O king! Thus instructed by Vamadeva, that arrow, fiery in power, killed the prince in the inner quarters of the palace, as soon as it had been released by Dala. On hearing this, the king said, ‘O Ikshvakus! I will perform a pleasant task for you. I will kill this brahmana today. Bring me another of my fiery arrows. O lords of the earth! Witness my valour now.’ Vamadeva replied, ‘O Indra among men! This is a terrible and poisonous arrow. You have aimed it at me. But you will not be able to aim or shoot.’ The king said, ‘O Ikshvakus! Behold. I am unable to release the arrow that I have grasped. I will not be able to perform the task of killing him. Let Vamadeva live and may he have a long life.’ Vamadeva said, ‘Touch the queen with this arrow and you will be freed from your sin.’ The king did as he had been asked to and the princess spoke to the sage. ‘O Vamadeva! O brahmana! If I have honoured my husband and have lain down with him day after day, let me be able to serve brahmanas and attain the sacred worlds after death.’ Vamadeva said, ‘O one with the beautiful eyes! You have saved the king’s lineage. Ask for an unequalled boon and I will give it to you. O princess! O unblemished one! Rule over your relatives and this extensive kingdom of the Ikshvakus.’ The princess said, ‘O illustrious one! I ask for the boon that my husband should now be freed from his sin. May you bless him, with his sons and relatives. O foremost among brahmanas! This is the boon that I want.’ On hearing the princess’s words, the sage said that it would be that way. At that, the king was extremely happy. He bowed in obeisance and returned the Vamyas.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The rishis and the Pandavas again asked Markandeya, “Is there anyone who has a longer life than you?”

‘He told them, “Yes, there is a rajarshi named Indradyumna. When his merits were exhausted, he fell down from heaven, exclaiming, ‘My deeds have been lost.’[126] He came to me and asked me whether I knew him. I told him, ‘We are not chemists.[127] We pursue our goals by tormenting our bodies and minds. We do not perform acts for the sake of wealth. There is an owl in the Himalayas by the name of Prakarakarna. He may know you.’ But the Himalayas where he lives, is a long distance away from here. He became a horse and carried me to the place where the owl was. Then the rajarshi asked it, ‘Do you know me?’ It reflected for some time and then said, ‘No. I do not know you.’ Hearing these words, rajarshi Indradyumna again spoke to the owl. ‘Is there anyone who has a longer life than you?’ The owl replied, ‘There is a lake by the name of Indradyumna. A crane named Nadijangha lives there and he is older than we are.[128] Ask him.’ Indradyumna then took me and the owl to the lake where the crane named Nadijangha lived. We asked it, ‘Do you know the king named Indradyumna?’ It thought for a while and replied, ‘No. I do not know King Indradyumna.’ We asked it, ‘Is there anyone who has had a longer life than you?’ It replied, ‘There is a tortoise named Akupura who lives in this lake. He is older than I am.’ We replied, ‘Perhaps he knows about this king. Let us ask Akupura.’ The crane then spoke to the tortoise Akupura. ‘We need to ask you something. Please be kind enough to come to us.’ Hearing this, the tortoise emerged from the lake and came to where we were standing, on the banks of the lake. When it came, we asked it, ‘Do you know of this king named Indradyumna?’ It thought for some time and then its eyes were filled with tears. Its heart was agitated and it trembled. It almost lost its senses. Then it joined its limbs in salutation and said, ‘How can I not know that king? In earlier times, when kindling the sacrificial fire, he erected sacrificial stakes one thousand times.[129] This lake was created from the hooves of cattle he gave away as gifts. I have lived here ever since then.’ As soon as we heard these words of the tortoise, a celestial chariot descended from the world of the gods and words were heard about Indradyumna. ‘Heaven is ready for you. That is your appropriate place. Your deeds are great. Go there in a cheerful frame of mind. The words about sacred deeds touch the heaven and the earth. As long as there is sound, so long does man live. Whenever a being’s evil deeds are recounted on earth, he descends to the inferior worlds as long as those words are recounted. Therefore, right till the end, any man on earth should be engaged in good deeds. He should avoid evil conduct and seek refuge in dharma.’ On hearing this, the king replied, ‘Wait until I have returned these seniors to the places I brought them from.’ He brought me and the owl Prakarakarna to our usual places. Then he returned in that chariot to the place that was appropriate for him. Though I have a long life, this is what I have witnessed.” This is what Markandeya told the Pandavas.

‘The Pandavas happily said, “That was proper. You did the right thing in restoring King Indradyumna to heaven again, when he had fallen from the world of heaven.” He replied, “Devaki’s son Krishna also saved rajarshi Nriga, when he had descended into hell and was in distress. He returned him again to heaven.”’[130]

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira again asked Markandeya, without sin, old in his austerities and with a long life. “O one learned in dharma! You know about the gods, the danavas and the rakshasas, the various lineages of kings and the eternal lineages of the rishis. O supreme among brahmanas! There is nothing in this world that is unknown to you. O sage! You know about the celestial stories of men, serpents and rakshasas. O brahmana! The famous Kuvalashva was born in the unvanquished lineage of the Ikshvakus. I wish to hear the details about why his name was changed to Dhundhumara. O best among the Bhargava lineage! I wish to learn about this. What was the reason why the wise Kuvalashva’s name was changed?”

‘Markandeya replied, “O King Yudhishthira! I will tell you the story. Listen. The account of Dhundhumara is full of dharma. O lord of the earth! Listen to it, how King Kuvalashva of the Ikshvaku lineage, lord of the earth, became Dhundhumara. O son![131] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a famous maharshi by the name of Utanka. O Kourava! He had his beautiful hermitage in the desert regions. O great king! Wishing to worship Vishnu, the lord Utanka performed difficult austerities for a large number of years. Pleased with him, the illustrious and worthy one himself appeared before him. As soon as he saw him, the rishi prostrated himself and praised him with many hymns. ‘O god! All beings, with the gods, the asuras and men, and all mobile and immobile objects, have been created by you. O immensely radiant one! Brahma, the Vedas and all that is capable of being learnt has been created by you. O god! The heaven is your head. Your eyes are the moon and the sun. O one without decay! The wind is your breath. The fire is your energy. All the directions are your arms. The great ocean is your stomach. O god! The mountains are your thighs. O Madhusudana! The sky is your navel. The goddess earth is your feet. The herbs are your body hair. Indra, Soma, Agni, Varuna, the gods, the asuras and the great serpents bow down before you and praise you with many hymns. O lord of the earth! You permeate all beings. The immensely powerful practitioners of yoga and the maharshis praise you. When you are satisfied, the universe is at peace. But when you are angered, there is great fear. O supreme among beings! You alone are the dispeller of all fear. You are the cause of happiness to gods, humans and all beings. O god! Through three strides, you covered the three worlds. The prosperity of the asuras was destroyed by you. Through your valour, the gods attained supreme bliss. O immensely radiant one! It was your wrath that vanquished the Indras among the daityas. You are the creator and the destroyer of all beings. Worshipping you, all the gods attain happiness.’

‘“Having been thus praised by the great-souled Utanka, Vishnu Hrishikesha spoke to Utanka. ‘I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon.’ Utanka replied, ‘It is already enough of a boon that I have seen Hari, the eternal being, the divine lord who is the creator of the universe.’ Vishnu said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! I am pleased with your steadfastness and your devotion. O brahmana! O twice-born one! But you must accept a boon from me.’ O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Thus instructed by Hari to ask for a boon, Utanka joined his hands in salutation and asked for a boon. ‘O lord! O one with the lotus eyes! O great lord! If you are pleased with me, let my mind always be fixed on dharma, truth and self-control, eternally, and let me always be devoted to you.’ Visnu replied, ‘O brahmana! Through my favours, all this will happen. A yoga will manifest itself in you. United with it, you will accomplish a great task for the dwellers of heaven and the three worlds. A great asura named Dhundhu is now performing terrible austerities for the destruction of the worlds. Listen. I will tell you who will kill him. There will be a famous king by the name of Brihadashva. He will have an obedient and sacred son, known by the name of Kuvalashva. O brahmana rishi! On your instructions, this best of kings will use my powers of yoga and become Dhundhumara.'[132] Having thus spoken to Utanka, Vishnu disappeared."'

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'Markandeya said, "O king! When Ikshvaku died, Shashada became the king of Ayodhya and obtained the earth. He had the greatest dharma in his soul. Shashada had a valorous son named Kakutstha. Kakutstha's son was Anenas and Anenas's was Prithu. Prithu's son was Vishvagashva and Vishvagashva begot the wise Ardra. His son was Yuvanashva and his son was Shravasta. King Shravasta built Shravasti.[133] Shravasta's son was the immensely strong Brihadashva and Kuvalashva is known as Brihadashva's son. Kuvalashva had twenty-one thousand sons. All of them were learned, powerful and unassailable. Kuvalashva surpassed his father in all the qualities. O great king! In due course of time, Brihadashva instated the supremely brave Kuvalashva, who was always immersed in dharma, in the kingdom. Having handed over the prosperity to his son, the wise king Brihadashva, the destroyer of his enemies, went to a hermitage to practise austerities. O king! O Yudhishthira! Utanka, supreme among brahmanas, heard that rajarshi Brihadashva had left for the forest. Then the immensely energetic Utanka, limitless in his soul, went to that supreme among men, foremost among those who were skilled in the use of all weapons. He tried to restrain him.

'"Utanka said, 'O king! It is your duty to protect and you should perform that duty. It is through your favours that we live without anxiety. O king! Protected by a great-souled one like you, we will be without anxiety. Therefore, you should not depart for the forest. Great dharma can be seen in protecting the subjects. That cannot be seen in the forest. Therefore, give up such an inclination. O Indra among kings! There is no dharma that can be seen, which is like protecting the subjects. This is what rajarshis have practised earlier. Protect the subjects, as they should be protected by the king. O king! Else, I will not be able to perform my austerities without anxiety. There is a desert region near my hermitage and there is an ocean of sand known by the name of Ujjanaka. It is many yojanas long and many yojanas wide. An extremely valorous, powerful and terrible Indra among the danavas dwells there. He is the son of Madhu and Kaitabha and this extremely terrible one has the name of Dhundhu.[134] O king! This infinitely valorous one lives under the ground. O great king! Kill him and then go to the forest. He lies there, engaged in terrible austerities for the sake of destroying the world. O king! He will destroy the thirty gods and the world. He cannot be killed by the gods, the daityas, the rakshasas, the nagas, the yakshas or any of the gandharvas. O king! He has obtained such a boon from the grandfather of all the worlds. Destroy him and be fortunate. Do not have any other resolution. Achieve a great deed and attain eternal and undecaying fame. That cruel one sleeps under the sand. He breathes at the end of the year. At that time, the entire earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, begins to tremble. His breath raises a great cloud of dust that obstructs the path of the sun. The earth trembles for seven days. There are sparks and flames, mixed with terrible smoke. O king! It is for this reason that I cannot remain in my own hermitage. O Indra among kings! Therefore, destroy him for the welfare of the worlds. When this asura has been killed, the worlds will be healthy again. I think that you are quite capable of destroying him. Your energy will be increased by Vishnu's energy. Earlier, Vishnu gave me a boon for his destruction. Whichever king kills that terrible and great asura, will be united with Vishnu's own unassailable energy. O Indra among kings! Accept that energy, which the earth finds difficult to bear. O protector of the earth! The immensely energetic Dhundhu cannot be killed by someone who has limited energy, even if he tries for a hundred years.’”’

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‘Markandeya said, “O best of Kouravas! Having been thus addressed by Utanka, the unvanquished rajarshi joined his hands in salutation and said, ‘O brahmana! Your arrival will not be in vain. O illustrious one! I have a son, known by the name of Kuvalashva. He is intelligent and swift to act. His valour is unmatched on earth. There is no doubt that he will accomplish that which is pleasant for you. He is surrounded by his brave sons, all of whom have arms like clubs. O brahmana! Please give me permission to leave, since I have discarded all weapons.’ Having been thus addressed, the infinitely energetic sage agreed. The rajarshi directed his son to the great-souled Utanka. Having done this, he went to an excellent forest.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O illustrious one! O one rich in austerities! Who was this immensely valorous daitya? Whose son was he and whose grandson? I wish to know all this. O one rich in austerities! I have not heard of this immensely strong daitya. O illustrious one! O immensely wise one! O one rich in austerities! I wish to know everything in detail, the way it occurred.”

‘Markandeya said, “O king! O lord of men! Listen to it, exactly the way it happened. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the world became one terrible ocean and all mobile and immobile objects and all beings had been destroyed, the illustrious Vishnu, the eternal and undecaying being, the source of everything in the world, slept alone on the ocean. He was stretched out on the great serpent Shesha, whose energy is limitless. O illustrious one! The immensely fortunate Hari, the undecaying one and the creator of the world, slept in the coils of that great serpent, which encircled the expanse of the earth. While the god was thus asleep, a lotus sprouted from his navel and it was the equal of the sun in its radiance. From that lotus, which was like the sun and the moon in its splendour, emerged grandfather Brahma himself, the preceptor of the worlds. He is the four Vedas, with four forms and four faces. He is extremely strong and valorous and is unassailable because of his powers.

'"Once upon a time, the supremely brave danavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, saw the immensely radiant lord Hari, asleep on his celestial bed in the coils of the serpent, which was many yojanas long and many yojanas wide. He wore a diadem and the Koustubha gem.[135] He was attired in a yellow garment made of silk. O king! He blazed in his radiance, energy and beauty, equal to the extraordinary sight of a thousand suns. Madhu and Kaitabha were extremely surprised to see the lotus-eyed grandfather on the lotus. They tried to terrify the infinitely energetic Brahma. Repeatedly terrified by those two, the immensely famous Brahma shook the stalk of the lotus and Keshava woke up. Govinda saw those powerful danavas. On seeing them, the god said, 'O immensely strong ones! You are welcome. I am pleased with you. Ask for the best of boons.' O great king! Those two great asuras were extremely brave and began to laugh at Hrishikesha. They replied to Madhusudana, 'O supreme among gods! O god! We are the ones who grant boons. Ask for a boon from us. Without hesitation, ask for a boon and we will grant it to you.' The lord said, 'O brave ones! I will accept a boon from you. Grant me the boon that I desire. Both of you are endowed with great valour and there is no man who is your equal. O ones for whom truth is valour! I wish to kill you for the welfare of the world. Grant me the boon that this desire to kill you is satisfied.' Madhu and Kaitabha replied, 'O supreme among beings! We have never uttered a falsehood before, not even in jest. We have always been steadfast in our devotion to dharma and truth. There is no one who is our equal in strength, beauty, valour, tranquility, dharma, austerities, generosity, conduct, power and self-control. O Keshava! A great calamity confronts us. But do what you have said. It is impossible to overcome destiny. O god! O lord! O supreme among the best of the gods! But there is one thing that we wish you to do. You must kill us in a spot that is completely uncovered.[136] O one with the beautiful eyes! We will become your sons. O god! O supreme among gods! Know that this is the boon that we ask for.' The illustrious one replied, ‘It shall be that way. Everything will happen the way you have stated.’ Then Govinda thought, but he could not see any spot that was uncovered. When Madhusudana could not find such a spot in heaven and earth, the supreme god glanced at his own uncovered thighs. O king! Madhusudana then sliced off the heads of Madhu and Kaitabha, with the end of his sharp and terrible chakra.”’[137]

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‘Markandeya said, “They[138] had an immensely energetic and immensely radiant son by the name of Dhundhu. He had great energy and valour and performed austerities. He stood on one leg and became so thin that he was held together by his veins. Brahma was pleased with him and gave him the boon that he asked for from that lord. He asked, ‘I should be incapable of being killed by gods, danavas, yakshas, serpents, gandharvas and rakshasas.’ The grandfather told him that it would be that way. Having been thus addressed, he touched his[139] feet with his head and departed.

‘“Thus, after obtaining the boon, Dhundhu became immensely valorous and powerful. He remembered the killing of his fathers and went to Vishnu. The violent Dhundhu defeated all the gods and the gandharvas. He then began to cruelly oppress all the gods, together with Vishnu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is an ocean of sand known by the name of Ujjanaka. The evil-minded one went to that region. O lord! He oppressed, with all his strength, Utanka’s hermitage. He entered the interior of the earth and hid in the sand. Dhundhu, Madhu and Kaitabha’s fearful and powerful son, sought to obtain the strength of austerities, so that he could destroy the world. Near Utanka’s hermitage, his breath was flames of fire. At this time, King Kuvalashva went to Dhundhu’s residence, with his servants, soldiers and mounts. He was accompanied by his twenty-one thousand sons, the destroyers of enemies, and by Utanka. On Utanka’s request, the illustrious Vishnu injected the lord with his energy, for the welfare of the worlds. When the invincible one started out, a loud voice was heard from heaven. ‘This handsome one will become Dhundhumara.’ The gods showered down celestial flowers in all directions. The kettledrums of the gods began to sound on their own. While the wise one proceeded, a cool wind began to blow. The lord of the gods showered down, removing dust from the earth. O Yudhishthira! Just above the spot where the great asura Dhundhu was, the vimanas of the gods appeared in the sky. The gods, together with the gandharvas and the maharshis, assembled, curious to witness the battle between Kuvalashva and Dhundhu.

‘“O Kouravya! Invigorated with Narayana’s energy, the king swiftly advanced in all the directions, together with his sons. King Kuvalashva had that ocean of sand dug up. When Kuvalashva’s sons dug up that ocean of sand, after seven days, they saw the immensely strong Dhundhu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His terrible body was buried in the sand. It blazed like the energy of the sun. O great king! O tiger among kings! Dhundhu was asleep, covering the western direction with effulgence that was like the fire of destruction. Surrounded by his sons, Kuvalashva assaulted him with sharp arrows, clubs, maces, battleaxes, bludgeons and swords that were sharp and bright. Having been thus attacked, the immensely strong one was angered and arose. He wrathfully swallowed up the different types of weapons. He vomited flames from his mouth, like the fire of destruction. He burnt down all the sons of the king with his energy. O tiger among kings! In an instant, the angry one was about to consume the worlds with the flames issuing from his mouth, just as the lord Kapila had done earlier, when he had angrily burnt down the sons of Sagara.[140] It was extremely wonderful. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! When they had been burnt down in this way, the immensely energetic King Kuvalashva approached the great-souled one, who was like Kumbhakarna awakened.[141] O great king! O king! A great flow of water issued from the body of the king and this water doused the flames. Just as a practitioner of yoga uses yoga, the water pacified the flames. O best of the Bharata lineage! Then the king burnt down the cruel and powerful daitya with his brahmastra and ensured the welfare of all the worlds. Rajarshi Kuvalashva consumed the great asura with this weapon. That destroyer of enemies killed the enemy of the gods and became like the lord of the three worlds. From that day, he became known as Dhundhumara.

'"Then the thirty gods, together with all the maharshis, were delighted. They wished to grant him a boon. O king! Extremely delighted, he joined his hands in salutation, prostrated himself and spoke these words. 'Grant me the boon that I may donate my riches to the best of the brahmanas and that I may be invincible against my enemies. May I enjoy friendship with Vishnu and may I not exhibit enmity towards any being. May my mind always be devoted to dharma and may I have an eternal abode in heaven.' The delighted gods, together with the rishis, the gandharvas and the intelligent Utanka, told the king that it would be that way. After pronouncing various other auspicious benedictions on the king, the gods and the maharshis returned to their abodes. O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king had three sons left and their names were Dhridhashva, Kapilashva and Chandrashva. O king! The great-souled lineage of the Ikshvakus followed from them. O virtuous one! Thus did Kuvalashva kill the immensely valorous daitya Dhundhu, the son of Madhu and Kaitabha. From that day, King Kuvalashva has been known as Dhundhumara. Named thus, he became associated with many qualities. I have told you everything that you asked, famous as the account of Dhundhumara and his exploits. This sacred account is associated with Vishnu's praise. The man who listens to this, has dharma in his soul and begets sons. By listening to it on full moon days or days of the new moon,[142] one obtains a long life, becomes persevering, has no fear of disease and is devoid of afflictions."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O best of the Bharata lineage! Then King Yudhishthira asked the immensely radiant Markandeya an extremely difficult question about dharma.

'"O illustrious one![143] O brahmana! I wish to hear about the supreme greatness of women. Tell me the details about the subtleties of dharma. O brahmana rishi! O foremost one! The sun, the moon, the wind, the earth and the fire seem to be gods to me. O illustrious one! O great one! O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! So are the father, the mother, the cow and whatever else has been ordained. All of these have to be revered as preceptors and I look upon devoted wives in the same way. It seems to me that devotion to husbands and serving them must be very difficult. O lord! If you so wish, please tell me about the greatness of devotion to husbands. O unblemished one! Restraining the senses and controlling the mind, it must be very difficult to continuously think of husbands as gods. O illustrious one! O lord! This seems to me to be extremely difficult. O brahmana! The serving of the father, the mother and the husband by women and the dharma of womanhood seem to be extremely terrible and difficult to me. O brahmana! Faithful women are always devoted in their conduct. But this must be difficult, as are acts towards the father and the mother. There are women who are devoted to one single person and speak the truth. They bear an embryo in the womb for a full ten months. What can be more wonderful than that? They bear great difficulties and immense pain. O lord! They give birth to sons after great pain. O supreme among brahmanas! Then they rear them with great affection. I also think that those who perform cruel deeds and are abhorred for that, but always continue to perform them, must find it very difficult. O brahmana! Tell me in detail about the dharma of kshatriyas. O brahmana! Dharma must be difficult for a cruel and evil-minded one. O illustrious one! You are supreme among those who know the answers to questions. O best among those of the Bhrigu lineage! O one who maintains good vows! I wish to hear the answer to my question."

'Markandeya replied, "O best among the Bharata lineage! Yes, I will tell you everything about this extremely difficult question of yours. Pay attention to my words. O son![144] Some hold the mother to be superior, others the father.[145] However, the mother performs the most difficult task, she propagates the species. Through austerities, worshipping the gods, endurance and resorting to magical spells, fathers desire sons. O brave one! After undergoing such great difficulties, one obtains a son, difficult to obtain, and one wonders about what this son will end up doing. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A father and a mother wish for fame, deeds, wealth, prosperity, offspring and dharma for the son, a son who will make their desires successful and be devoted to dharma, one who will bring satisfaction to the father and the mother and will attain eternal fame and dharma in this world and the next. O Indra among kings! But a woman does not need sacrifices, funeral ceremonies or fasting. When she serves her husband, she obtains heaven. O king! O Yudhishthira! On this, listen attentively to the dharma of those who are devoted to their husbands.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a foremost among brahmanas by the name of Koushika. He studied the Vedas and was rich in austerities. He was an ascetic and followed dharma in his conduct. That supreme among brahmanas studied the Vedas, together with the Angas and the Upanishads.[146] One day, he was under a tree and was reciting the Vedas. A female crane was perched on the tree. At that time, it dropped some excrement on the brahmana. The brahmana was angered. Overcome by anger, he directed a terrible stare at the crane and injured by the brahmana, it fell down on the ground. On seeing that the crane had fallen down, bereft of its senses, the brahmana was overcome by compassion and regret. ‘Overcome by the force of passion and hatred, I have done that which I should not have.’ Having uttered these words several times, the learned one went to a village to beg for alms.

‘“O bull among the Bharata lineage! He wandered around the pure households that were in the village. He finally entered a household that he had visited before. He asked, ‘Please give.’ And the lady replied, ‘Wait.’ O king! While the housewife was cleaning the vessel for giving alms, her husband suddenly returned home, extremely hungry. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On seeing her husband, the devoted lady neglected the brahmana. She gave her husband water for washing the feet and the mouth and a seat. Then the dark-eyed one waited on her husband. She gave him tasty food to eat and spoke sweetly to him. O Yudhishthira! She always ate the food that had been left over by her husband. Always following her husband's thoughts, she thought her husband to be a god. In deeds, thoughts or any other way, she did not act in contrary fashion. Her sentiments were always devoted towards serving her husband. She was faithful, pure and skilled. She strove for the welfare of the household. She always followed that which would ensure her husband's welfare. She attended to gods, guests, servants, the father-in-law and the mother-in-law. She was always devoted to serving and was always in control of her senses. While the one with the beautiful eyes was thus tending to her husband, she noticed that the brahmana was standing there, wishing for alms. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The faithful one was ashamed.

'"The famous one emerged to give alms to the brahmana. The brahmana said, 'O one with the beautiful limbs! What is the meaning of this? You asked me to wait. You requested me to wait and did not dispose of me first.' O Indra among men! On seeing that the brahmana was burning in anger and flaming in his energy, the faithful one pacified him and spoke these words. 'O brahmana! Please pardon me. My husband is my greatest god. He had returned hungry and exhausted and I had served him first.' The brahmana said, 'Brahmanas are not superior and you make your husband to be superior. Though following the dharma of householders, you are insulting a brahmana. Even Indra bows down to such a one, not to speak of men on earth. O impudent one! Do you not know and have you not heard from the elders? Like a fire, a brahmana can burn down the entire earth.'

'"The lady replied, 'I am not insulting brahmanas. They are powerful and are the equals of the gods. O brahmana! O unblemished one! Please pardon my transgression. I know the energy of immensely fortunate and wise brahmanas. Through their anger, they made the waters of the ocean salty and undrinkable.[147] I know of sages who are blazing ascetics and in control of their souls. The fire of their anger has still not been pacified in Dandaka.[148] Because he oppressed brahmanas, the evil-minded cruel and great asura Vatapi was digested by the rishi Agastya.[149] I have heard a lot about the influence of those who know the brahman. O brahmana! Their anger is extremely great. But so are the favours of those great-souled ones. O brahmana! O unblemished one! You should pardon this transgression of mine. O brahmana! The dharma that I must serve my husband is a pleasant one for me. Among all the gods, my husband is the supreme god. O supreme among brahmanas! I must particularly serve that dharma. O brahmana! Observe the fruits of my serving my husband. It is known to me that you burnt down a crane through your anger. O supreme among brahmanas! But anger is the enemy that resides in the bodies of men. The gods know him to be a brahmana who has discarded the delusion of anger, and he who speaks the truth and satisfies his preceptor. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who does not harm even when he has been harmed. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who is in control of his senses, is devoted to dharma, is always engaged in studying, is pure and is in control of desire and anger. He who looks upon the world as his own self is intelligent and is learned in dharma. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who is devoted to all forms of dharma, who studies and teaches, who sacrifices and is a priest at the sacrifices of others. The gods know him to be a brahmana, who donates according to his capacity. The supreme among brahmanas who studies the Vedas is known as a brahmachari. He who studies without being distracted is known by the gods to be a brahmana. What ensures the welfare of brahmanas has been recounted—always speaking the truth and mentally not rejoicing in falsehood. O supreme among brahmanas! The eternal wealth of brahmanas is in studying, control of passions and restraint of the senses. Those who know dharma say that truth and uprightness are the supreme dharma. While eternal dharma is difficult to fathom, it is based on truth. The injunctions of the elders are that the proof of dharma is in the *shrutis*.[150] O supreme among brahmanas! It is evident that dharma can be seen in many ways and that it is subtle. You are learned in dharma. You are devoted to studying and are pure. O illustrious one! In my view you do not know the true meaning of dharma. There is a hunter who lives in Mithila. He serves his father and his mother, he is truthful and is in control of his senses. He will tell you about dharma. O fortunate one! O supreme among brahmanas! If you desire, go there. O unblemished one! Please pardon everything that I may have spoken in excess. All the ones who are learned in dharma say that women must not be injured.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am pleased with you and my anger has gone. The reprimands uttered by you have been extremely beneficial for me. O beautiful one! May you live in peace. I am leaving to improve myself.'"

'Markandeya said, "O supreme among men! Having obtained her permission, the brahmana Koushika censured himself and left for his own dwelling."'

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'Markandeya said, "The brahmana thought about the extraordinary matter the woman had specifically told him. He censured himself and his appearance became that of a guilty one. Then, thinking about the subtle course of dharma, he said, 'I must have devotion. I must go to Mithila. She said that a hunter who knew dharma, one who had perfected his soul, dwelt there. I should go there today, and ask the one who is rich in austerities about dharma.' Thus thinking in his mind, he showed faith in the lady's words, made certain by the pure one's words about dharma and her knowledge about the death of the crane. Filled with curiosity, he left for Mithila. He passed through many forests, villages and cities and arrived in Mithila, protected well by Janaka.[151] It was a holy city, rich in sacrifices and festivals. It was full of religious institutions.[152] It was adorned with turrets, palaces, houses and walls. It also had many chariots. He entered the beautiful city. There were many large roads, laid out well, lined with many wares. It was crowded with great numbers of horses, chariots, elephants and carts. The masses of people were happy and well fed and it was always full of festivities. As he passed, the brahmana saw many other things there. He asked about the virtuous hunter and was told about him by brahmanas. He went there and saw the ascetic seated in the midst of a slaughterhouse. He was selling the meat of deer and buffaloes. It was crowded with a large number of buyers and the brahmana waited.

'"On getting to know that a brahmana had arrived, he[153] suddenly arose and went to where the brahmana was standing alone. The hunter said, 'O illustrious one! O supreme among brahmanas! I salute you. Welcome. O fortunate one! I am only a hunter. Tell me what I can do for you. I know everything about the devoted wife telling you to go to Mithila. I know why you have come here.' On hearing his words, the brahmana was extremely surprised. The brahmana thought that this was the second wonder. The hunter told the brahmana, 'O illustrious one! O unblemished one! This is not an appropriate place for you. If it pleases you, let us go home.' The brahmana was extremely happy at these words. Making the brahmana precede him, he went to his house. On entering the house, he gave him a beautiful seat. The supreme among brahmanas accepted the water offered for washing the feet and the mouth. Once he was comfortably seated, he spoke these words to the hunter. 'It seems to me that a task like this is not appropriate for you. O son![154] I am extremely sorry that you have to perform this terrible task.'

'"The hunter replied, 'This is the occupation of my family and it has come down to me from my father and my grandfather. O brahmana! Do not be angry that I am engaged in this dharma. The creator has earlier decided that this should be my task and I am performing it. O supreme among brahmanas! I take care of my superiors and I serve my elders. I speak the truth. I do not envy. I donate according to my capacity. I live on what is left after offering to the gods, the guests and the servants. I do not speak ill of anything. Nor am I contemptuous of someone more powerful. O supreme among brahmanas! The deeds performed earlier, always follow the actor. In this world, the means of livelihood are agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. Governance and the three forms of knowledge are also in this world.[155] It has been said that servitude is for shudras, agriculture for vaishyas and fighting for kshatriyas. Brahmanas must always be engaged in brahmacharya, austerities, incantations and truth. A king must govern, in accordance with dharma, subjects who are engaged in their own tasks. He must redeploy those who are engaged in the wrong tasks into their own tasks. The king is the lord and he must always be feared by the subjects. Like deer restrained with arrows, he must kill those who are engaged in the wrong tasks. O brahmana rishi! O supreme among brahmanas! Under Janaka, there is no one who performs the wrong task. All the four varnas are engaged in their own tasks. King Janaka is such that even if his son were to be evil, he would chastise him with punishment. But he does not cause suffering to those who are righteous. Using spies well, the king sees that there is dharma everywhere. O supreme among brahmanas! Prosperity, the kingdom and punishment belong to the kshatriyas. Through observing their own dharma, kings can wish for great prosperity. O brahmana! I sell boars and buffaloes that have been killed by others. O brahmana rishi! I do not kill them myself, but sell them afterwards. I do not eat meat. I lie with my wife in her season. O brahmana! I fast during the day and eat at night. A person who is born with ill conduct may become one with good conduct. Even if he is born as a killer of animals, he may turn out to be a follower of dharma. The deviations of kings can cause great decay in dharma. Then adharma increases and subjects decay. Those who are stunted, dwarfs, hunchbacked ones, those with large heads, eunuchs, blind and deaf ones and those with elongated nipples are born then. Because of the adharma practised by kings, subjects always endure hardships. But King Janaka is one who looks at subjects with the eyes of dharma. He favours the subjects who are always devoted to their own dharma. As for me, whether men praise me or whether they censure me, I always satisfy them with tasks that are well performed. Kings who live their lives and find satisfaction in their own dharma and do not depend on others for a livelihood, are skilled and always ascend. Always donating food according to one's ability, forbearance, eternal devotion to dharma, reverence towards those who deserve it, constant compassion towards all beings and detachment are qualities that distinguish a man on earth. One should give up falsehood and perform good deeds, even if they are not solicited. One should not discard dharma out of desire, rashness or hatred. One should not rejoice excessively in good fortune, or be miserable in calamities. One should not be overpowered with difficulties and give up dharma. If one commits a reprehensible act, one should not commit it again. One should engage one's soul in what ensures welfare. Evil should not be countered with evil, one should always act out of virtue. The evil one who wishes to commit an evil act kills himself. Deceitful and wicked acts are not righteous. Those who think there is dharma in this, those who laugh at purity and those who are disrespectful towards dharma, there is no doubt that they will be destroyed. An evil one is swollen, like a bag full of air. But like the sun shows up forms, his soul shows him up. The fool may praise himself, but cannot flourish in this world. But even if he is not clean, a learned one's radiance shines. He does not speak ill of others. Nor does he praise himself. Those who have qualities don't obviously shine in this world. One who is tormented by his evil acts is freed from those sins. If he avers that he will not commit it again, he is freed from the second sin. O foremost among supreme brahmanas! One can also be freed from the sin through deeds. O brahmana! This is what can be seen in the shrutis about dharma. One who has ignorantly committed a sin earlier, can later destroy it by devotion to dharma. O brahmana! Even if sins have been committed out of ignorance, dharma can absolve men. After committing a sin, one should think that one wasn't the man who committed it. He should be faithful and do what is proper. He should be devoted and without hatred. This is how righteous ones cover the holes in their garments. After committing a sin, a man can still achieve that which is good. He can be freed from all sins, like the moon from the clouds. Like the sun rises and dispels the earlier darkness, establishment in that which is good ensures freedom from all sin. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that avarice is the root of all sin. Men who are not too wise, are goaded by greed and resort to sin. Just as wells are covered by grass, evil ones cloak themselves under dharma. Those who have self-control, those whose speech is pure, those who resort to dharma and those who exhibit good conduct, it is known that all of these are difficult to find.’”

‘Markandeya said, “Then the immensely wise brahmana asked the virtuous hunter, ‘O best of men! How will I know righteous conduct? O immensely intelligent hunter! Tell me this exactly.’

‘“The hunter replied, ‘O best among brahmanas! Sacrifices, donations, austerities, study of the Vedas and truthfulness—these are the five sacred things that always characterize good conduct. Having controlled desire and anger, having discarded arrogance, greed and deceit, those who are satisfied with dharma are righteous and are praised by the righteous. Those who perform sacrifices and are engaged in studying will never lack a means of livelihood. They observe good conduct and this is the second characteristic of those who are righteous. O brahmana! Serving seniors, truthfulness, lack of anger and generosity—these four are always present in those who are righteous. One can always obtain success by fixing one’s mind on good conduct. This can be obtained by practising these, and not through any other means. The Vedas are established in truth. Truth is established in self-control. Self-control is established in detachment. These always constitute righteous conduct. Men with deluded intelligence hate dharma. They follow a path that should not be traversed and descend into misery. Those who are good, well controlled, devoted to the shrutis and detachment, climb the path of dharma and are always devoted to truth and dharma. They control the supreme intelligence. These are people who follow virtuous conduct. They are obedient to their preceptors. They are knowledgeable and are established in the objective of dharma. Avoid atheists. They transgress limits. They are cruel and are established in evil intelligence. Seek knowledge and worship those who follow dharma. Using the boat of steadfastness, one can cross the river that has the five senses as its waters and is infested with the crocodiles of desire and avarice, and overcome birth. Dharma is gradually accumulated, through practising the great intelligence of yoga. It adorns righteous conduct, like a good colour on a white garment. Non-violence and truthfulness in speech ensure the greatest welfare for all beings. Non-violence is supreme dharma and it is established in truth. Deeds flourish when inclinations are established in truth. Truth is supreme and is cherished by those who have righteous conduct. Dharma is the conduct of the righteous and the righteous are characterized by their conduct. Every being is bound by its own nature, whatever it might be. The evil-minded one has no control over himself and has the sins of anger, desire and so on. It has been said that dharma is that which has been begun with justice. The virtuous have instructed that evil conduct constitutes sin. Those who are not prone to anger, those who do not hate, those who are not vain, those who are not selfish and those who are simple and serene are characterized by good conduct. Those who have grown old with the three Vedas are pure and intelligent and have conduct. Those who serve their preceptors and have self-control possess good conduct. It is a difficult task to achieve the deeds of those great ones. Through their own good deeds, they destroy any evil that they may have done. That good conduct is extraordinary, ancient, eternal and fixed. This is dharma. Learned ones who see dharma in this way, go to heaven. They are theists. They are humble. They are people who honour brahmanas. They conduct themselves in accordance with the rituals of the shrutis and go to heaven. The dharma stated in the Vedas is supreme. The Dharmashastras are the second.[156] Virtuous conduct of righteous ones is another. These are the three notions of dharma. The characteristics of good conduct are accomplishing knowledge, bathing in tirthas, forbearance, truthfulness, simplicity and purity. Those who are compassionate towards all beings and always practise non-violence and never utter harsh words are loved by the brahmanas. Those who are familiar with the fruits of good and evil deeds are good and are honoured by those who are good. They are just, have all the qualities and desire the welfare of all the worlds. These virtuous ones attain sacred heaven. They are firmly established in the path of the righteous. Those who give, those who share and those who are compassionate towards the distressed are righteous and are honoured by the righteous.

They are worshipped by everyone. They have the knowledge of the shrutis. They are ascetics. Those who show virtue in giving obtain happiness in this world and prosperity in the next. Even if their wives and servants suffer, righteous ones give in excess, when virtuous ones arrive. While their eyes are on their livelihood, they have dharma in their souls. Such virtuous ones prosper for an eternal period. Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, mildness, sincerity, the absence of enmity, humility, modesty, forbearance, self-control, serenity, wisdom, fortitude, compassion towards all beings and the absence of desire and hatred characterize the righteous, and they are honoured by the world. It is said that three things single out the supreme vows of the righteous —non-injury, generosity and truthfulness in every speech. The virtuous are those who are compassionate towards everything. They feel pity. They obtain the greatest satisfaction and traverse the supreme path of dharma. Those great-souled ones have good conduct and have firmly established themselves in dharma. They have no envy. They pardon. They are serene. They are satisfied. They speak pleasantly. They have discarded desire and anger. They follow the conduct of the righteous. Their deeds are in accordance with the shrutis. They follow the supreme path of the virtuous. They follow good conduct and are always devoted to dharma, never wavering. They ascend to the palace of wisdom and see the great masses who are deluded. O supreme among brahmanas! They observe the world in all its different pursuits, the extremely good deeds, as well as the evil ones. O foremost among the best of brahmanas! This is the entire account, as I have learnt it and as I have heard it, about the foremost qualities and conduct of the righteous. O brahmana! O bull among brahmanas!’”

‘Markandeya said, “O Yudhishthira! Thus did the hunter who knew about dharma speak to the brahmana.[157]

“‘“There is no doubt that the deeds that I perform are terrible. O brahmana! But destiny is powerful. And it is impossible to overcome deeds committed earlier. The sins committed earlier are the taints of karma.[158] O brahmana! I have endeavoured to kill this sin. When destiny has already killed something earlier, the killer is only the instrument. O supreme among brahmanas! We are only instruments of our karma. O brahmana! When they are killed and their meat sold, it is only their dharma that they should be used and eaten, so as to serve the gods, the guests, the servants and the ancestors. According to the shrutis, herbs, creepers, animals, deer and birds are the decreed food for all beings. O supreme among brahmanas! The compassionate King Shibi Ushinara obtained a heaven that is difficult to attain by offering his own flesh.[159] O brahmana! Earlier, in King Rantideva’s great kitchen, two thousand animals were slaughtered every day.[160] Rantideva gave food with meat every day. O supreme among brahmanas! His fame is unmatched. He always killed animals at chaturmasya.[161] It has been said in the shrutis that the fire desires meat. O brahmana! A brahmana always kills animals at sacrifices. They are purified through mantras and we have heard that they go to heaven. O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! If the fire had not desired meat earlier, who would have eaten it now? Even now, sages have articulated rules on the eating of meat. “He who always eats after offering to the gods and the ancestors, in accordance with the rules and with faith, no sin attaches to him from the act of eating.” It has been said in the shrutis that such a person is the equal of one who does not eat meat. A brahmana who has intercourse with his wife during her season is the equal of a brahmachari. The rules that differentiate truth from falsehood are recited even now. O brahmana! In earlier times, King Soudasa ate men.[162] He had been overtaken by a terrible curse. What do you think of that? O supreme among brahmanas! I cannot give up my own dharma. Knowing that this is due to my earlier deeds, I perform this task for my livelihood. O brahmana! It is considered to be adharma to give up one's own dharma. It is certainly dharma to adhere to one's own dharma. Deeds committed earlier never leave a being. The creator's ordinances foresaw the determination of these different forms of karma. It is seen that a being who is engaged in a cruel task has to think of performing good deeds so that he can be freed from its influence. There are different ways of freeing oneself from terrible karma—such as donations, truthfulness in speech, the service of superiors and the worship of brahmanas. I have always devoted myself to this dharma. O supreme among brahmanas! I should refrain from pride and from speaking too much. Agriculture is known to be a virtuous occupation. But it has been said that there is great violence in this. Ploughing kills many beings that lie inside the ground and many other hundreds of beings. What is your view on this? O supreme among brahmanas! *Vrihi*[163] and other seeds of rice are all living organisms. What is your view on this? O brahmana! Man hunts, kills and eats animals. They also cut trees and herbs. O brahmana! There are many living beings in trees and fruit. There are many in water too. What is your view on this? O brahmana! Everything is full of life and living beings. Fish eat fish. What is your view on this? O supreme among brahmanas! Beings live on other beings. What is your view on this? O brahmana! Through the mere act of walking, men trample with their feet many beings that resort to the ground. What is your view on this? Even wise and learned ones kill many beings when they are seated or asleep. What is your view on this? The entire earth and the sky are full of living beings. One causes injury to them unknowingly. What is your view on this? Those men of earlier times wondered and spoke about non-violence. O supreme among brahmanas! But in this world, who does not injure living beings? After reflecting a lot on this, there is no one who does not cause violence. O supreme among brahmanas! Even ascetics who are devoted to non-violence cause violence, though their efforts make it less. It can be seen that there are men who have great qualities and who are born in noble lineages. They may perform extremely terrible deeds. But they are not ashamed. Well-wishers do not praise well-wishers. Evil-wishers do not praise evil-wishers. Men who are righteous do not praise other righteous ones. Relatives do not praise relatives, even if they are prosperous. Foolish ones, thinking themselves to be learned, criticize preceptors. O supreme among brahmanas! There are many things in this world that can be seen to be contrary. Is this dharma or is it adharma? What is your view on this? Many things can be said about the dharma or adharma of our deeds. But he who adheres to his own dharma attains great fame.’”’

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‘Markandeya said, “O Yudhishthira! The skilled hunter, devoted to dharma, then again spoke to the brahmana rishi, supreme among those who uphold all forms of dharma.[164]

““‘The course of dharma is subtle. It has many branches and is infinite. And the old ones have instructed that the proof is what is stated in the shrutis. When life is at risk or at the time of marriage, speaking a falsehood is permitted. Sometimes, falsehood becomes truth and truth becomes falsehood. Whatever ensures the welfare of beings is held to be the truth. Acting in a contrary way ensures adharma. Behold the subtlety of dharma. O excellent one! Whether a man performs good deeds or evil ones, there is no doubt that he certainly reaps the fruits. One who has no learning is ignorant of the sins of his acts. On confronting a calamity, he blames the gods gravely. O supreme among brahmanas! Foolish, deceitful and fickle ones do not possess the wisdom, the good conduct or the manliness to save themselves when their happiness or unhappiness happens to be reversed. One will obtain whatever one desires, as long as the fruits of one’s deeds are not dependent on anything else. Controlled, skilled and intelligent men can be seen to be obstructed and unsuccessful in all their efforts. But those who are always ready to injure other beings and are ready to deceive the world, always lead a life of happiness. There are those who attain prosperity without even trying. There are those who endeavour a lot and obtain nothing. Wretched ones worship the gods and perform austerities to obtain a son. They remain in the womb for ten months and are born, but turn out to be a stain on the lineage. Others enjoy the riches, grain and objects of pleasure accumulated in immense quantities by their fathers and obtained through auspicious means. There is no doubt that human disease is the result of earlier deeds, men are like small animals tied up by the hunter. O brahmana! Just as hunters hunt deer, competent physicians who have skilfully collected medicines can treat them. Those who can have good food are then afflicted by evils of indigestion. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Behold, one is not able to eat. O supreme among brahmanas! There are many others with strong arms who suffer because they can find food with great difficulty. Thus the world is flooded with weeping, delusion and sorrow, helplessness, tossed and repeatedly washed away through powerful currents. If everything depended on a person, no one would live in misery and all objects of desire would be attained. No unpleasantness would be seen. Everyone wants to surpass others and endeavours as much as one can. But it doesn't happen that way. There are many who are seen to be born under the same stars and signs, but a great divergence is seen in the fruits of their deeds. O excellent one! O brahmana! No one can himself determine his fate. The deeds performed earlier are seen to lead to results here. O brahmana! It has been said in the shrutis that the soul is certainly eternal, but the bodies of all living beings perish in this world. Therefore, when the body dies, only the body is destroyed. Fettered by the bonds of deeds, the soul goes elsewhere.'

'"The brahmana asked, 'O supreme among those who uphold dharma! O supreme among those who are eloquent! In what way is the soul eternal? I wish to learn this in detail.'

'"The hunter said, 'The soul does not die when the body perishes. Only the foolish ones aver that it perishes. The soul moves on to another body. When the body dies, the form changes. No one except the actor obtains the fruits of deeds and shares in the happiness or unhappiness. Whatever deeds one may have done, those fruits remain and are not destroyed. Those who were unholy in conduct can become pure. The best of men can become sinners. A man is always pursued by his deeds. Determined by these, he is born again.'

'"The brahmana asked, 'O excellent one! How is he formed in the womb? How does he become good or evil? How are the good born good? How does that movement occur?'

'"The hunter replied, 'It is seen that the act of conception is linked to karma. O supreme among brahmanas! I will describe it to you swiftly and briefly. One is born again with the past accumulation, the good in good wombs and the evil in evil wombs. Through good deeds one becomes a god. And through mixed ones, a human. Through evil deeds, one descends below.[165] It is because of the sins performed by him earlier that a man is cooked in this life and is always afflicted by birth, old age and death. Tied by the bonds of earlier karma, a being wanders through thousands of inferior births and even goes to hell. Through the karma of one's own deeds, a being dies and suffers. To counteract that earlier misery, it is born in an unholy womb. Then it again accumulates a large amount of new karma. It is cooked again, like a diseased person who has eaten unwholesome food. Although it suffers many difficulties, it considers that unhappiness to be tinged with happiness. Therefore, the bonds are not loosened and a new karma arises again. Encircled by many miseries, it circles around the world. By casting off those bonds of deeds and by performing pure deeds, one can obtain the worlds of righteous ones and go to where there is no sorrow. The sinful one who performs evil deeds never goes to where there is an end to sin. Therefore, one should perform good deeds and abhor those that are evil. A man who is grateful and does not suffer from malice and does that which ensures welfare, obtains happiness, dharma, artha and heaven. Those who are clean, self-controlled, restrained, collected and wise, enjoy an unmatched existence in this world and the next. One must always follow dharma. One must always act in accordance with what is good. O brahmana! One must adopt a conduct that does not cause difficulties to others. There are those who are learned in the sacred texts. They are virtuous and knowledgeable about the sacred texts. In this world, one must follow one's own dharma. Without getting mixed up, that is the task one should perform. One who is wise finds pleasure in dharma. He lives his life on the basis of dharma. O supreme among brahmanas! When he is rich in dharma, he appreciates its qualities and waters the roots. The one with dharma in his soul acts thus and his mind becomes serene. He is satisfied with his friends. He finds happiness here, and in the hereafter. O excellent one! He obtains sound, touch, form and fragrance, as he wishes. He attains lordship. These are known to be the fruits of dharma. O great brahmana! But having obtained the fruits of dharma, one may not be satisfied. One who is dissatisfied looks at this dissatisfaction with the insight of knowledge. With the insight of wisdom, a man does not see any sin in this. If he so desires, without discarding dharma, he frees himself. Observing that the world is naturally subject to decay, he renounces everything and strives for salvation, using the right means and not the wrong ones. He thus avoids all evil deeds and accepts the detachment. He is devoted to dharma and obtains supreme salvation. Austerities are the best course for beings and its root is tranquility and self-control. Through this, one can obtain everything that the mind desires. O supreme among brahmanas! Through restraining the senses, truthfulness and self-control, one obtains the supreme abode of the brahman.'

'"The brahmana asked, 'O one who is rigid in his vows! What are these faculties that are called the senses? How can they be controlled and what are the fruits of this control? O foremost among those who uphold dharma! What are the fruits obtained from this? O best among those who follow dharma! I wish to know these details about dharma.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! O lord of men! At these words of the brahmana, the hunter who knew about dharma replied to the brahmana. Listen."

'"The hunter said, 'O supreme among brahmanas! The mind first operates in men and leads to perception. Because of this, they serve desire and anger. For that purpose, they undertake great endeavours.

They form the habit of serving the desires of beauty and smell. Then comes attachment and from this follows hatred. Avarice comes after that, followed by delusion. When they are overcome by avarice and battered by attachment and hatred, dharma is not generated in the intelligence. Instead, there is pretence about following dharma. Dharma is practised in deceit. One finds pleasure in acquiring artha through deceit. O supreme among brahmanas! One becomes successful in obtaining riches through deceit. The mind finds pleasure in this and evil becomes attractive. O supreme among brahmanas! Well-wishers and learned ones urge for restraint. But one is ready with replies from the shrutis and speaks of what is sanctioned by the shrutis. However, because of attachment, three sins of adharma are committed. There is sin in thought, speech and deed. Addicted to adharma, all the good qualities are destroyed. Only those who are similar in conduct remain friends with such an evil-acting one. As a consequence, unhappiness is reaped in this world and there is destruction in the next. All evil-souled ones are like this. Now hear about the gains from dharma. Through one's wisdom, one can foresee the sins. One is skilful in differentiating happiness from unhappiness and consorts with righteous ones. By practising virtuous deeds, one's intelligence turns to dharma.'

'"The brahmana said, 'You have truthfully described dharma. There is no one else who can speak about it in this way. It is my view that you are an extremely great rishi and your power is divine.'

'"The hunter replied, 'The immensely fortunate brahmanas are always rendered offerings first, together with the ancestors. In this world, with all one's soul, a learned one does that which is pleasing to them. O supreme among brahmanas! I will tell you what brings pleasure to them. After bowing in obeisance to brahmanas, I will tell you about the knowledge of brahmanas. Listen to me. O brahmana! This entire universe, everything in this universe and everything that cannot be vanquished and the great elements have the brahman in the soul. There is nothing beyond that. The great elements are the sky, the wind, the fire, the water and the earth. Sound, touch, shape, taste and smell are their properties. These properties have all the sub-properties, related to one another. In due order, all the properties have a hierarchy consisting of the three qualities. It is said that the sixth property is consciousness, also called the mind. The seventh is intelligence and pride follows that. There are five senses. There is *sattva, rajas* and *tamas.*[166] These are the seventeen that constitute what is not manifest.[167] The manifest and the unmanifest are concealed well within the organs of sense. Including the manifest and the unmanifest, there are twenty-four traits.[168] I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear?'""

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'Markandeya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is what the hunter who knew about dharma said and after hearing this, the brahmana again asked about things that are pleasant to the mind. 'O supreme among those who uphold dharma! It is said that there are five great elements. Please tell me about the exact qualities of these five.'

'"The hunter answered, 'The earth, the air, the fire, the water and the sky have separate qualities and I will tell you everything about their qualities. O brahmana! The earth has five qualities, the water has four qualities, the fire has three qualities and the air and the sky together have three qualities. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell—these are the five qualities of the earth, which has more qualities than the others. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana! O one who is rigid in his vows! Sound, touch, form and taste have been said to be the qualities of the water. Sound, touch and form are the three qualities of the fire. Sound and touch are the two properties of the air. The sky only has sound. O brahmana! Together, these fifteen qualities exist in the five elements and they are in all the beings on whom the worlds are established. O brahmana! They do not stand in opposition to one another, they exist as a combination. But when mobile and immobile objects become unbalanced, then, over a period of time, the soul moves from one body to another. In due order, they are destroyed. They are created again, in sequence. The five elements can be seen in everything, mobile and immobile, that this entire universe is encompassed by.

Whatever is created by the senses is known as the manifest. Whatever cannot be grasped by the senses bears the mark of the unmanifest. Sound and the others grasp an embodied body and make him subjugate to the senses. But if he can transcend this, he can see the world extended in his soul and his soul extended in the world. He is then capable of seeing the higher and the lower, and though still attached, can see all beings. He always sees all the elements in all their states. He is united with the brahman and is never attached to that which is unholy. Delusion that is enveloped in difficulties is overcome and the root of this is knowledge of the soul. The world is illuminated with intelligence and the road of knowledge can be seen. The intelligent ones have said that the illustrious one is without a beginning and without an end. He creates himself and does not decay. He is without compare and without manifestation. O brahmana! Everything that you have asked me has its base in austerities. Everything about heaven and hell is based on our senses. When restrained, they lead to heaven. When uncontrolled, they lead to hell. This subjugation of the senses is the key to yoga. This is the root of austerities. It is also the root of hell. By indulging in the senses, there is no doubt that one reaps sin. But by bringing them under control, one can attain salvation. If one can control these six[169] in one's soul, one never suffers a decline and one is not visited by sin or calamity. One has then conquered one's senses. It has been seen that a man's body is like a chariot. The senses are like horses and the soul controls them. When these good horses are skilfully controlled, one is self-controlled and happy, like a steady charioteer. When the six senses are always controlled in the soul, one is like a supreme and steady charioteer, wielding the reins in one's hand. When the senses are uncontrolled like horses on a road, the charioteer must steadily rein them in and it is certain that victory will be achieved. But if the mind is overpowered by these senses running wild, one loses one's intelligence, like a boat tossed on water by the wind. O brahmana! But one who perseveres steadily on these six and is not deluded about outcomes and fruit, concentrating on the insight of learning, reaps the fruits that are the outcome of his meditation.'"'

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‘Markandeya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The hunter who knew about dharma explained these subtle matters. Extremely attentively, the brahmana again asked him about a subtle matter. The brahmana said, ‘Now tell me exactly about the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. I am asking you, tell me exactly about their characteristics.’

‘“The hunter replied, ‘Yes, I will tell you what you have asked me. Because you have asked, I will tell you exactly about the characteristics of these qualities. Tamas is characterized by ignorance, while rajas motivates to action. It is said that sattva is the greatest because of its immense powers of illumination. One who is extremely ignorant, foolish, prone to dreaming, insensible, ugly, dark, prone to anger and lazy, is under the influence of tamas. O brahmana rishi! An excellent man who is ready in action and speech, affectionate, without enmity, industrious, steady and proud is under the influence of rajas. A man with illumination, persevering, without attachment and without enmity, without anger, wise and self-controlled, is under the influence of sattva. When one with the illumination of sattva suffers from the difficulties of the world, when one has learnt everything that has to be learnt, one hates the ways of the world. Then a form of detachment makes itself felt. Pride becomes milder and uprightness becomes stronger. Then all the conflicts[170] are pacified. Any restraint in anything then becomes unnecessary. O brahmana! One may be born as a shudra. But if he is established in his good qualities, he will become a vaishya, and even a kshatriya. Similarly, one who follows worthy conduct[171] can become a brahmana. Thus, I have told you everything about the qualities. What else do you wish to hear?’

‘“The brahmana asked, ‘What happens to the fire in the body when it is combined with the elements of the earth? Depending on where it is, how does the wind motivate?’”

‘Markandeya said, “O Yudhishthira! When the brahmana addressed this question to the hunter, the hunter replied to the great-souled brahmana.

'"The hunter answered, 'The fire resides in the head and protects the body. The fire is in the head and in *prana*[172] and motivates all action. Everything in the past, the present and the future is based on prana. It is the best that exists in beings and we worship this radiance of the brahman. It is the life force of all beings. It is the eternal being. It is the mind. It is intelligence. It is the ego. It is the seat of all beings. While residing in this way, everything is protected through prana. Later it goes in different directions, supported by *samana.* There is a fire in the bladder and the anus and this is known as *apana.* It bears the excrement and urine. Learned ones who know about the soul say that the three elements of endeavour, action and power are controlled by *udana.* It has been said that the breath that exists in every human joint is known as *vyana.* The fire that is there in the elements of the body is distributed by these winds. It triggers the juices, the elements and the humours and makes them circulate. Through the combination of the pranas, a fire is created. This is the digestive fire, which enables beings to digest food. Prana and vyana are placed between apana and udana and the fire resulting from this leads to the digestion. It extends itself up to the anus and bears the urine and the excrement. It has the three elements of endeavour, action and power and ones who are knowledgeable about the body know this by the name of udana. When the fire is present in all the joints of the human body, it is known by the name of vyana. The internal heat is distributed and supported by these different winds and they transform the juices, the constituents and the humours. Through the combination of prana and the other winds, a reaction is created. This gives rise to an internal heat in the body and facilitates digestion. Prana and vyana are established between apana and udana. The fire generated from this mingling facilitates digestion.[173] This extends up to the anus and is near the anus. The streams created from this are all the pranas in a body. Through the force of the fire, prana strikes at the root of the anus and recoiling, the fire ascends upwards again. The area above the navel is the region of undigested food. All the pranas are located at the centre of the navel in the body. Ten arteries radiate from the heart, upwards, downwards and sideways, and driven by the pranas, bear the essence of food. This is the path that practitioners of yoga traverse for the supreme objective. They are seated, having conquered difficulties. They are patient and their souls reside in their heads. In this way, prana and apana are established in all beings. The different components of a body go through eleven transformations.[174] Know that though a being is always embodied, it is subject to its earlier deeds. Know that the fire that is always inside is like the fire purified in a pan and is the *atman*.[175] It is always subject to yoga. Know that the god is inside it, like a drop inside a lotus. Know that he is always the *kshetrajna* and can be known through yoga.[176] Know that sattva, rajas and tamas are the attributes of life. Know that these qualities are an attribute of life and that the atman is in the paramatman. It is said that consciousness is the quality of life. It is the actor, and action marks everything. Those who know about the kshetra say that the supreme one created the seven worlds.[177] In this way, the eternal being is not manifest in all beings. It can be seen by those who are learned and possess the subtle knowledge of insight. One can purify one's heart and destroy the fruits of good and evil deeds. Through establishing one's soul in serenity, one can attain infinite bliss. The signs of serenity are that one sleeps happily and contentedly, like the radiance of a lamp that has been trimmed by one who is skilled in handling lamps. One should control one's mind, late in the evening and at night. After eating lightly, with a purified soul, one sees the supreme soul in one's own self. This is like seeing the light of a lamp with the lamp of one's mind. One who sees the supreme soul, beyond the human soul, such a person is liberated. Avarice and anger must be controlled through all means. This is the purifying ritual for austerities and is the means of crossing over. One must always protect austerities from anger. One must protect one's riches from envy, one's learning from vanity and insults and one's soul from distraction. Mildness is the greatest dharma. Forgiveness is the greatest strength. Knowledge of the self is the supreme knowledge. Truthfulness is the supreme vow. True speech is superior. The knowledge of truth ensures welfare. But the welfare of all beings is known as the supreme truth. One whose acts are always performed without being tied down by self-interest, one who has sacrificed everything, is wise and is one who has renounced. This is yoga with the brahman, something that cannot be taught or disturbed by a preceptor. This renunciation is known as yoga. There must not be violence to any being. One must traverse the path of friendliness. In this present life, one must never practise enmity. Self-negation, extreme satisfaction, selflessness and steadfastness lead to the supreme knowledge. The knowledge of the self is the supreme learning. One should give up one's possessions. One should use one's intelligence to be steady in one's vows. One then attains a firm place that is without sorrow, in this world and the next. The self-controlled sage who has restrained his mind, and is always engaged in austerities, will be unvanquished if he gives up the desire to win and becomes detached from attachments. Those that are regarded as qualities are no longer qualities in him. He then continuously embarks on a single task. O brahmana! He is only engaged in the task of achieving supreme bliss. Such a man renounces both happiness and unhappiness. He transcends all attachment and achieves the brahman. O supreme among brahmanas! I have briefly told you everything that I have heard, exactly as I have heard it. What else do you desire to hear?'"'

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'Markandeya said, "O Yudhishthira! When all this about the dharma of salvation had been told to the brahmana, he was extremely pleased. He spoke to the hunter who knew about dharma. 'You have told me everything, with all the arguments. It seems that there is nothing about dharma that you do not know.'

'"The hunter replied, 'O supreme among brahmanas! With your own eyes, behold my dharma. O bull among brahmanas! It is through this that I have achieved success. O illustrious one! Arise and swiftly enter my house. O one learned in dharma! You should see my mother and my father.'"

‘Markandeya said, “At these words, he[178] entered and saw an extremely beautiful house. It was lovely and whitewashed and was divided into four parts. It was like a house of the gods and was worshipped by the gods. It had excellent seats and beds and was fragrant with perfumes. After having eaten, his adored parents were comfortably seated on excellent seats. They were dressed in white. On seeing them, the hunter who knew about dharma prostrated himself, with his head at their feet. The old ones said, ‘O one who is learned about dharma! Arise. Arise. May dharma always protect you. We are extremely pleased with your purity. May you have a long life. O son! You have always been a good son. You have worshipped us for a long time. You have not acknowledged a god even among the gods themselves. Through self-control, you have attained the self-control of the brahmanas. O son! Your fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers have always been satisfied with you, because of your self-control and your worshipping of us. In thought, deed and words, you have never deviated from servitude. It seems to us that you have no other thought in your mind. O son! Like Jamadagni’s son Rama,[179] you have done everything to serve your aged parents. Indeed, you have done more.’ Then the hunter who knew about dharma introduced the brahmana to them and they welcomed the brahmana with honours.

‘“The brahmana accepted the honours and asked them, ‘Is everything well in your household, with your sons and your servants? Are you physically well, without any disease?’ The old couple replied, ‘O brahmana! Everything is well at home and the servants are fine too. O illustrious one! Did you confront any impediments in coming here?’ The brahmana happily said that he hadn’t faced any problems. The hunter who knew about dharma then spoke these words of great import to the brahmana. ‘O illustrious one! These two, my father and my mother, are the supreme gods for me and I do for them what is undertaken for the gods. There are thirty-three gods, with Shakra at the forefront. Just as they are worshipped by all the worlds, so do I tend to my aged parents. Just as brahmanas collect offerings for the gods, so do I unceasingly act for these two. O brahmana! My father and my mother are my supreme gods. O brahmana! I continuously satisfy them with flowers, fruits and gems. They are like the fires the learned ones speak about. O brahmana! They are everything to me, like sacrifices and the four Vedas. My life, my wife, my sons and my well-wishers are for them. With my sons and my wife, I always serve them. I bathe them myself and wash their feet. O supreme among brahmanas! I give them food myself. I only speak pleasant things to them, avoiding the unpleasant. So as to bring pleasure to them, I even do that which is adharma. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana! Knowing dharma to be my preceptor, I tirelessly serve them. O brahmana! It has been said that a man prospers through five gurus—the father, the mother, the fire, he himself and the preceptor. O supreme among brahmanas! If they are served properly, they always remain for him, like well-tended fires. That is the eternal dharma for those who are in the householder stage.'"'

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'Markandeya said, "Having introduced his parents to the brahmana as his greatest gurus, the hunter with dharma in his soul again spoke to the brahmana. 'Behold. I have obtained insight through the power of my austerities. It is for this reason that the devoted, self-controlled and truthful wife told you to go to Mithila, where a hunter who lives there would tell you about dharma.' The brahmana replied, 'O one who is learned about dharma! O one who is good in his vows! I remember the words of that devoted, truthful and virtuous wife. I know that you have good qualities.' The hunter said, 'O foremost among brahmanas! O illustrious one! There is no doubt that what you have said about me was completely foreseen by that faithful wife. O brahmana! It is to exhibit favours towards you that I showed you these things. O son![180] O brahmana! Now listen to the words that I am going to speak to you. O supreme among brahmanas! You have slighted your mother and father. O unblemished one! You left the house without their permission, for the sake of studying the meaning and the chanting of the Vedas. Your deeds caused great grief to your aged, ascetic and blind parents. Go and seek their favours, else great dharma will forsake you. You are an ascetic. You are great-souled. You are always devoted to dharma. But all of this has been futile. O brahmana! Therefore, listen to my words and do not act contrary to them. Return swiftly and show them your devotion. O brahmana rishi! I am telling you this for your own welfare.'

'"The brahmana answered, 'O fortunate one! O one who has the qualities and conduct of dharma. There is no doubt that everything that you have said is true. I am pleased with you.' The hunter said, 'You are the equal of the gods and you are always devoted to dharma that is ancient, eternal and divine, difficult of access to those who have not perfected their souls. Go swiftly to your mother and your father and worship them unceasingly. Beyond that, there is no other supreme dharma that I can see for you.' The brahmana replied, 'It is through good fortune that I came here. It is through good fortune that I met you. Men like you, exponents of dharma, are difficult to find in this world. Among one thousand men, one may find someone who is learned in dharma, or one may not. O fortunate one! O supreme among men! I am pleased with your truthfulness. I was descending into hell and you have saved me. O unblemished one! It had been destined and that is the reason I met you. O tiger among men! King Yayati fell and was rescued by his daughter's virtuous sons.[181] Like that, I have now been saved by you. As you have said, I will serve my mother and my father. One who has not perfected his soul does not know how to differentiate between dharma and adharma. The eternal dharma is incomprehensible to one who has been born in the womb of a shudra. I do not regard you as a shudra. There must be some reason. Perhaps you obtained the status of a shudra because of your specific deeds. O immensely intelligent one! I wish to know the details about this. O one who has controlled his soul! If you so desire, please tell me everything accurately.'

'"The hunter replied, 'O supreme among brahmanas! No brahmana should be crossed. O unblemished one! Therefore, hear everything that had happened to me in an earlier body. O son of foremost among brahmanas! I was a brahmana earlier. I studied the Vedas well and was skilled in the Vedangas. But it is because of my own sins that I have been reduced to my present state. There was a king who was my friend and he was skilled in the use of arms. O brahmana! Because of my association with him, I also became supreme in wielding the bow. Once upon a time, the king went out hunting. He was surrounded by his advisers and was with his foremost warriors. Near a hermitage, he killed many deer. O supreme among brahmanas! I also shot a swift and terrible arrow, with a plume that was bent downwards. It hurt a rishi. The brahmana fell down on the ground and shouted, "I am innocent. Who has performed this evil deed?" Still thinking him to be a deer, I rushed towards him and suddenly saw the sage. I saw that the rishi had been pierced by my arrow, with a plume that was bent downwards. My mind was troubled to see that I had performed an act that should not be performed. I then told the extremely ascetic brahmana, who was dying on the ground. "I performed this act out of ignorance. Please pardon me. O brahmana! I should be forgiven." Thus did I speak to the sage. But the rishi was overcome with anger and replied in these words. "O cruel one! O brahmana! You will be born as a hunter and will be born from a shudra womb."'""

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'"The hunter said, 'O supreme among foremost of brahmanas! When I had thus been cursed by the rishi, I spoke to the one who was eloquent with words. "O rishi! Please show me your favours. O sage! I performed this act out of ignorance today. O illustrious one! Please pardon me. Please show me your favours." The rishi replied, "There is no doubt that the curse that I have pronounced cannot be negated. But because of my mildness, I will now show you a favour. Even when you are born in the womb of a shudra, you will be learned about dharma. There is no doubt that you will serve your mother and your father. Through serving them, you will achieve great success. You will remember your earlier birth and you will go to heaven. When the curse has run its course, you will again become a brahmana." In this way, I was cursed by that terribly ascetic rishi in earlier times. O supreme among men! But he showed me his favours too. O supreme among brahmanas! I took the arrow out of his body. I carried him to the hermitage and he did not lose his life. These are the details of everything that befell me earlier. O supreme among brahmanas! I will go to heaven in the hereafter.’

‘“The brahmana replied, ‘O greatly intelligent one! All men are subject to unhappiness and happiness in this way. You should therefore not grieve over this. O son![182] You have performed a difficult task, you have learnt about your earlier life. O learned one! The taint of your evil deeds is because of the lineage you have been born into. After some time has passed, you will become a brahmana again. There is no doubt that I think you to be a brahmana even now. A brahmana who performs evil deeds is certain to meet with downfall. One who is vain and the performer of evil deeds is almost equal to a shudra. A shudra who is controlled, truthful and devoted to dharma, always rises. I think him to be a brahmana who becomes a brahmana because of his conduct. Through the taints of evil karma, one attains a terrible end. O supreme among men! I think that all of your sins have been destroyed. You should not be anxious on this account. You should not sorrow and you should not hesitate. You know about the ways of conduct in the world. You are always devoted to dharma.’

‘“The hunter said, ‘Like physical pain is destroyed with medicines, mental pain is destroyed with wisdom. This capacity for knowledge does not come equally to those who are fools. Men of limited intelligence are overcome by mental distress when they are confronted with calamities and are separated from that which is pleasant. All beings have some good qualities and some bad ones. Everyone is subject to this and there is no reason for grief. When one sees something unpleasant, one should swiftly withdraw. One should take countermeasures if one sees it coming. Nothing happens to the one who sorrows. He can only lament. Men who give up both happiness and unhappiness are learned ones who are satisfied with knowledge. They are really happy. The ignorant are always dissatisfied. The learned are always satisfied. There is no end to dissatisfaction. Satisfaction is supreme happiness. Those who do not sorrow have gone along that path. They can see the supreme objective. One should not immerse one’s mind in grief. Grief is a terrible poison.

Like an angry serpent, it kills those who are foolish and have not attained wisdom. One who is overcome by sorrow when difficulties surface, his energy is destroyed and he has no manliness. There is no doubt that the fruits of our deeds can be seen. One who falls prey to despair does not obtain that which is good. Instead, one should look for means to free oneself from misery. One should not sorrow, but be united with the good. If one thinks about the nature of all beings, one obtains supreme intelligence. One should not sorrow. One should obtain wisdom. One should look towards the supreme objective. O learned one! I do not sorrow. I am waiting for the time to pass. O brahmana! O excellent one! It is for this reason that I am not constrained.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'You have attained wisdom. You are learned. You have great intelligence. You are content in knowledge. You are devoted to dharma. You have nothing that I can sorrow about. I wish to take my leave. May you be in peace. May dharma protect you. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! May you not deviate in your duty towards dharma.'"

'Markandeya said, "Joining his hands in salutation, the hunter granted leave. The supreme among brahmanas circumambulated him and departed. When he returned, the brahmana began to always assiduously serve his mother, his father and the elders, in accordance with the prescribed rules. O Yudhishthira! O son![183] O foremost among those who uphold dharma! I have thus told you everything that you asked me about—the greatness of a faithful wife, the excellence of brahmanas and servitude towards the mother and the father by the hunter, recounted as dharma."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O brahmana! This supreme account of dharma is extraordinary. O supreme among those who know all forms of dharma! O supreme sage! Your account is the best. O learned one! Listening to you, to these pleasant accounts, it seemed to be but an instant. O illustrious one! But I am still not satisfied about listening to supreme dharma."'

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When Dharmaraja had heard these holy accounts, full of dharma, he again asked rishi Markandeya. “In ancient times, why did Agni leave for the forest? In Agni’s absence, how did the great rishi Angiras become fire and carry the oblations? Agni is one. But his acts are seen to be many. O illustrious one! I wish to know everything about this. How was Kumara[184] born? How did he come to be known as Agni’s son? How did Rudra beget him on Ganga and the Krittikas?[185] O descendant of the Bhargava lineage! I wish to hear about all this exactly. O great sage! I am full of curiosity.”

‘Markandeya said, “Ancient history is recounted about this. The bearer of oblations[186] was angered and went to the forest to perform austerities. The illustrious Angiras then transformed himself into Agni. Through his powers, he destroyed distress and darkness. In his hermitage, the immensely fortunate one surpassed Agni. Having become that, he then illuminated the world. Agni was then performing austerities and was tormented by this energy. The energetic one was extremely distressed, but did not know what to do. The illustrious Agni then thought, ‘This other Agni has been unleashed in the world by Brahma. While I was engaged in austerities, my services as Agni have been dispensed with. How can I become Agni again?’ While he was thus reflecting, Agni saw the great sage, providing heat to the world. He approached slowly and fearfully and Angiras told him, ‘Swiftly become Agni and bring prosperity to the worlds again. You are known to the three worlds and all objects, mobile and immobile. O Agni! You were the first to be created by Brahma, so that darkness could be dispelled. O destroyer of darkness! Swiftly regain your own position.’ Agni replied, ‘My deeds have been destroyed in this world and you have become Agni. You have become Agni. You are known as Agni and people do not know me. I have thrown away my role as Agni. You remain as the primary Agni. I will be the second, known as Prajapatyaka.’[187] Angiras said, ‘Perform the auspicious deeds that take beings to heaven. Be Agni, the dispeller of darkness. O god! O Agni! Perform the act of obtaining your first son through me.’ O king! On hearing these words of Angiras, Jataveda[188] did as he had been asked to. Angiras had a son by the name of Brihaspati. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On knowing that Angiras's son was Agni's first son, the gods arrived and asked about the reason for this. Having been thus asked by the gods, Angiras told them the reason for this and the gods accepted the explanation. I will now tell you about the different immensely radiant fires used for rites. They are known to the brahmanas by their many tasks and names."'

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'Markandeya said, "O extender of the Kuru lineage! Brahma's third son had Apava's daughter as a wife.[189] O king! Listen to the account of his offspring—Brihajjyoti, Brihatkirti, Brihadbrahma, Brihanmana, Brihanmantra, Brihadbhasa and Brihaspati. The first daughter of Angiras was the goddess Bhanumati. Among all his offspring, she was unmatched in beauty. Angiras's second daughter was named Raga. She was loved by all beings and that was the reason she was known as Raga.[190] Angiras's third daughter was Sinivali. Her form was thin and her body was sometimes seen and sometimes not seen. So it was said that she was like Kapardin's daughter.[191] Then Archismati was seen with her radiance and Havismati with her oblations. Angiras's sixth sacred daughter was named Mahishmati. The seventh of Angiras's daughters was Mahamati. She was radiant and was honoured at great sacrifices. This seventh daughter, Mahamati, was renowned. On seeing another immensely fortunate daughter, people wonderingly exclaimed that she was one and could not be divided. She was given the name of Kuhu."'[192]

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'Markandeya said, "Brihaspati's wife was the famous Chandramasi. She gave birth to six sacred fires and a daughter. The fire at which oblations of clarified butter are offered is named Shamyu, Brihaspati's immensely radiant son. Oblations are first offered to him at chaturmasya and the foremost animal at horse sacrifices. This energetic fire is one that is characterized by many-hued flames. Shamyu’s unmatched wife was Satya. Satya was born from Dharma. He[193] had the blazing Agni as his son, and three daughters who were good in their vows. The fire that is worshipped with the first share of offerings is Bharadvaja, said to be Agni’s first son. The fire that is Shamyu’s second son is known by the name of Bharata. At the time of full moon sacrifices, all the oblations are offered to it with ladles. There were three daughters who had Bharata as a husband. He had a son named Bharata and a daughter named Bhavati.[194] The fire named Bharata was the son of the fire named Prajapati Bharata. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He was greatly honoured and his appellation was ‘Great’. Bharadvaja’s wife was Vira and she gave birth to Vira.[195] It is said by the brahmanas that he is slowly offered the same oblations as Soma. There is a fire that is offered the second round of oblations with Soma and this is known as Rathaprabhu, Rathadhvana and Kumbhareta. On his wife Sarayu, he begot Siddhi and surpassed the sun in his splendour. He is the one who brought *agneya*[196] and he is always mentioned in invocations. The fire Nishchyavana always praises the earth. It never declines[197] in fame, energy or prosperity. The fire Vipapa is his son. He is without sin[198] and without taint and has pure and blazing flames. He is truthful and is the one who ensures deeds on time. The fire named Nishkriti[199] frees beings from lamentations. When worshipped well, he brings good fortune. His son is the fire named Svana, the creator of suffering. He inflicts severe suffering on people and makes them lament. Those who know about the soul, address a fire by the name of Vishvajit. He strides through the intelligence of all beings in the universe. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is a fire that is known as the internal fire. It digests food inside the bodies of all beings and is known by the name of Vishvabhuj. He is a brahmachari and self-controlled. He is always extensive in his vows. The brahmanas worship this fire with oblations of cooked food. He is famous as Gopati and a river was his beloved. Those who observe rites use this fire in all their rites. There is an extremely terrible fire by the name of Vadava. He drinks up water and has a tendency to rise. He has the name of Urdhvabhaj[200] and the wise know that he is established in prana. There is a fire to whom oblations are always offered in a household in a northward direction. This supreme one is known by the name of Svishtakrit. His daughter is named Manyati and she is the fire of anger that is incited in calm beings. She is the essence of anger and is thus named.[201] This terrible and cruel one is established in all beings by the name of Svaha. There is a fire that has been named Kama by the gods. There is no one among the thirty gods with his beauty and because his form is unequalled, he is so named.[202] The fire named Amogha destroys enemies in battle.[203] He wields a bow and is seated erect on a chariot, adorned with garlands. He restrains his anger. O immensely fortunate one! There is another known as Uktha, praised by the three *ukthas*. He is the creator of great speech and is therefore known as Sakamashva."'[204]

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'Markandeya said, "Kashyapa, Vasishtha, Prana's son Prana, Agni Angiras and Chyavana Trishuvarchaka performed terrible austerities for many years, so as to obtain a son. 'May we obtain a famous son who follows dharma. May he be Brahma's equal.' They uttered the five great *vyahritis*.[205] Then an immensely energetic and powerful fire with five colours was created. His head consisted of the fire made out of kindling. His arms were like the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His complexion was golden and his feet were black. Through their great austerities, these five gave him those five colours. The Vedas therefore know him as Panchajanya and he became the origin of the five lineages.[206] He performed great austerities for ten thousand years. He created beings and he created the terrible fire of the ancestors. He created *brihat* and *rathantara*, those stealers of vigour, from his head and his mouth.[207] He created Shiva from his navel, Indra from his strength, Vayu and Agni from his breath of life, the two accents[208] from his two arms, the universe and all the beings. Having created these, he created the five sons of the ancestors—Pranidhi, the son of Brihadurjas; Brihattara, the son of Kashyapa; Bhanu, the brave son of Angiras; Soubhara, the son of Varcha; and Anudatta, the son of Prana. These are known as those who created five lineages. Austerities created the fifteen gods who are the obstructers of sacrifices—the sacrifice, the dawn, Abhima, Atibhima and Bhimabalabala. Austerities created the five gods for sacrifices—Sumitra, Mitravat, Mitrajna, Mitravardhana and Mitradharma. Austerities also produced these five gods—Surapravira, Vira, Sukesha, Suvarcha and Surahanta. These three classes of five each are separately established. Placed here on earth, they obstruct those who wish to perform sacrifices in heaven. They cause obstructions and steal large quantities of oblations. They insolently create obstructions and steal, though oblations are carried by the fire. But if the fire has been skilfully placed, they cannot approach the oblations on the sacrificial altar. They cannot go near the fire. On both sides, the fire then carries the sacrificial offerings. If pacified through mantras, they do not steal the sacrificial offerings. Brihaduktha, another son of austerities, lives on earth. He is worshipped on earth by those who observe agnihotra properly. Rathantara is another fire that is the son of austerities. Learned adhvaryus know that his offerings are meant for Mitravinda.[209] He[210] was thus extremely satisfied with his immensely famous sons.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “The fire named Bharata is subject to severe restrictions. The fire named Pushtimati provides prosperity when it is satisfied. It is because it sustains all beings that it is known as Bharata.[211] The fire named Shiva is always engaged in the worship of Shakti. Since he alleviates the sufferings of everyone and brings purification, he is known as Shiva.[212] When Tapas[213] witnessed the great fruits from austerities, an extremely wise son named Purandara was born to him, with a desire to pass on these fruits. Another son named Ushma was born and this fire can be seen in all beings. A fire named Manu was also born and he officiates as Prajapati. The brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas speak of a fire named Shambhu. The brahmanas also speak of an extremely radiant fire named Avasathya. Thus Tapas created five sons from his sacrifice—Urjaskara and Havyavahana, they were like gold in their radiance.[214] O immensely fortunate one! When exhausted and pacified, the lord of the cows gave birth to terrible asuras and various other beings on earth.[215] Angiras created Tapas's son Manu, and Bhanu too. However, brahmanas who know the Vedas refer to him as Brihadbhanu. Bhanu's wife was Supraja, and so were Brihadbhasa and Somaja. They gave birth to six sons. Listen to the offspring. The fire that provides strength to all beings is Bhanu's first son and is known as Balada. The fire that is seen as terrible wrath in calm beings is Bhanu's second son and is known as Manyumat. The fire in whose honour oblations are offered at the time of the new moon or the full moon is known by the name of Vishnu, also named Dhritiman Angiras. There is a fire to whom the first offerings of oblations are made, together with Indra. He is Bhanu's son and is named Agrayana. In addition to these four,[216] there is a son named Niragraha who always takes oblations at chaturmasya sacrifices. He is Bhanu's son. Nisha was Manu's wife. She gave birth to a daughter, the two Agnishomas and five other fires. The radiant fire, who receives the first offerings at chaturmasya sacrifices, together with Parjanya,[217] is known as Vaishvanara. The fire that is said to be the lord of all beings is Manu's second son and has the name of Vishvapati. Svishtakrit[218] is regarded as the supreme, because there is great merit in offering oblations to him. The maiden named Rohini was Hiranyakashipu's daughter. Because of her deeds, she became the wife of a fire who was a Prajapati. There is another fire that resides in the bodies of all living beings in their breath of life. This is named Samnihita and leads to sound and form. There is a god whose path is marked in black and white.[219] He is the fire who bears oblations. He is the lord of all that leads to taints in untainted ones and is based in anger. The fire named Kapila is the expounder of sankhya yoga. Ascetics refer to him as the supreme rishi Kapila.[220] In various rites, there is a fire through which the first share of oblations is rendered to those who are deceased. This is known as Agrani. Thus, he[221] created different famous fires on earth. When there are seen to be defects in agnihotra sacrifices, they correct these. If the action of the wind makes the fires interact with each other, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Shuchi. If the fire to the south is mixed with the other two fires, eight different rites must be performed to the fire named Viti. If the sacrificial fire is mixed with the fire of a conflagration, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Shuchi. If the fire of agnihotra is touched by a woman who is in her season, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Dasyumat. If one hears that a living being has died, or if an animal dies, eight different rites must be performed to the fire Abhimat. A brahmana who has not rendered offerings into the fire for three nights, must perform eight different rites to the northern fire. He who still awaits the observance of new moon and full moon rituals, must perform eight different rites to the fire Pathikrit. If the fire of one who is expecting touches the agnihotra fire, eight different rites must be performed to the Agnimat fire.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Mudita was the beloved wife of Saha Apa. The lord of bhuh and bhuvah begot an excellent fire. This is known as the fire that is the lord of all beings. The brahmanas say that this fire is the lord of the earth and is in the souls of all beings. This great fire is the lord of all beings. This immensely energetic and illustrious fire always circulates. This fire is always worshipped at sacrifices by the name of *garhapatya.*[222] This fire bears the oblations that are made in this world. Saha’s extremely extraordinary and immensely fortunate son is known as Apamgarbha. He is known as the lord of bhuh, bhuvah and mahah. His son, Bharata, consumes the dead bodies of all beings. At agnishtoma sacrifices, the Niyata is the best rite for sustenance.[223]

'"On seeing Niyata arrive, he[224] was frightened and hid in the ocean. The gods sought him along every road and every direction, but could not find him. On seeing Atharva,[225] Agni said, 'O brave one! I am extremely weak. Please carry the oblations to the gods. O Atharva! Become one with sweetness in your eyes and perform this task for my pleasure.' Having thus spoken to Atharva, he went somewhere else. But the fish revealed where he was concealed, and angered, Agni told them, 'In your different forms, you will be the food of beings.'[226] Then the bearer of oblations spoke to Atharva again. Though the gods beseeched them, he paid no heed to their words and refused to bear the oblations. He gave up his entire body. Having discarded his body, he entered the earth. Having touched the earth, he created different types of minerals separately. From his mouth, he created fragrances and energy; from his bones, devadarus; from his phlegm, crystal; from his bile, emeralds; and from his liver, black iron. All beings blaze with these three substances.[227] His nails became mica and his arteries became coral. O king! Various other minerals were produced from his body. Having discarded his body, he remained established in supreme austerities. He was roused through the austerities of Bhrigu, Angiras and the others. Gratified through the power of austerities, the crested fire blazed forth in great resplendence. But on seeing the rishis, he was frightened and hid in the great ocean. The universe was scared and sought refuge with Atharva. The asuras, gods and rishis worshipped Atharva. On seeing Agni, Atharva himself created the worlds. While all the beings looked on, he churned the great ocean and the illustrious Atharva restored Agni to the earlier position that he had lost. Since then, he has always borne the oblations of all beings. While he roamed and travelled in many different countries, he[228] created the many different sacrificial hearths that are mentioned in the Vedas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The five rivers other than the Sindhu,[229] Devika, Sarasvati, Ganga, Shatakumba, Sarayu, Gandaki, Charmanvati, Mahi, Medhya, Medhatithi, the three rivers Tamravati, Vetravati and Koushiki, Tamasa, Narmada, Godavari, Venna, Praveni, Bhima, Medratha, Bharati, Suprayoga, Kaveri, Murmura, Krishna, Krishnavenna, Kapila and Shona—these rivers are famous as the mothers of the sacrificial hearths.

'"Adbhuta had a wife named Priya and her son was Viduratha. There are as many soma rites as the number of fires that have been mentioned. All these were born in Atri's lineage, but were Brahma's offspring through his mental powers. Desiring offspring, Atri created them in his own body. However, all these fires originated from Brahma's body. The account of the great-souled fires, and their origin, has thus been told by me. They are immeasurable and beautiful and are the dispellers of darkness. Know that they have the greatness of the fire Adbhuta[230] recounted in the Vedas. All these fires are really the same. There is only one illustrious fire that is to be known. It issued first from Angiras's body, in many different forms, like the jyotishtoma sacrifice.[231] Thus, the extremely great lineage of Agni has been recounted by me. When purified with different mantras, it bears the oblations of embodied beings."'

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'Markandeya said, "O unblemished one! Thus, the genealogy of the different fires has been recounted by me. O Kouravya! Now hear about the birth of the intelligent Kartikeya. I will tell you about Adbhuta's extraordinary and infinitely energetic son, whose deeds were extensive. He was born from the wives of the seven brahmana rishis. In ancient times, the gods and the asuras were always engaged in destroying each other. The danavas, terrible in form, were always able to vanquish the gods. On witnessing that his armies had been destroyed by them several times, Purandara[232] was greatly anxious about finding a general for his army. He thought, 'I must find an extremely powerful person who, on seeing the army of the gods destroyed, will have the valour to protect it.' On reflecting about this, he went to Mount Manasa and heard terrible lamentations that were voiced by a woman. 'Let someone come to me. Let a man come and protect me. Let him show me a husband. Or let him become my husband himself.' Purandara told her, 'Do not be afraid. You have no reason to be scared.’ When he said this, he saw Keshi[233] standing before him. He wore a crown on his head and held a club in his hand. He looked like a mountain, rich in minerals.

‘“Grasping the maiden by the hand, Vasava[234] told him, ‘Why are you acting towards this maiden like someone who is not an arya? Know me to be the wielder of the vajra and refrain from causing her any violence.’ Keshi replied, ‘O Shakra! Let her be. I desire her. O chastiser of Paka![235] Return to your city with your life.’ Having said this, Keshi flung his club at Indra, so as to kill him. But as it descended, Vasava sliced it into two with his vajra. Enraged, Keshi then flung the peak of a mountain. O king! On seeing that mountain peak descend, Shatakratu[236] splintered it with his vajra and it fell down on the ground. As it fell, the peak hurt Keshi. Having been thus hurt, he let go of the immensely fortunate maiden and fled. When the asura had left, Vasava spoke to the maiden. ‘O one with the beautiful face! Who are you? Whose are you? What are you doing here?’ The maiden answered, ‘I am Prajapati’s daughter, famous by the name of Devasena. My sister Daityasena has already been abducted by Keshi.[237] When Prajapati gave us permission, we sisters always used to come to Manasa to sport, together with our friends. The great asura Keshi always craved for our favours. O chastiser of Paka! Daityasena desired him, but I did not. O illustrious one! She was then abducted, but I have been freed through your strength. O lord of the gods! I desire that an invincible one like you should be my husband.’ Indra replied, ‘My mother is Dakshayani.[238] You are the daughter of my mother’s sister. I desire that you should tell me about your own strength.’ The maiden said, ‘O mighty-armed one! I am weak, but my husband will be strong. Through my father’s boon, he will be worshipped by the gods and the asuras.’ Indra replied, ‘O goddess! O unblemished one! What kind of strength will your husband possess? I wish to hear this from you.’ The maiden said, ‘He will be immensely valorous and immensely strong. He will vanquish the gods, the danavas, the yakshas, the kinnaras, the serpents and the rakshasas. He will be seen to vanquish all the evil ones. Together with you, he will vanquish all the beings. Such will my husband be. He will have the traits of a brahmana. He will be extensive in his deeds.' On hearing her words, Indra was unhappy and began to think, because there was no one who could be the husband the goddess had spoken of.

'"Then the one, whose radiance was like the sun,[239] saw the sun rise on Udaya.[240] He also saw the immensely fortunate moon enter the sun. The new moon had set in and it was a terrible instant. He saw the gods and the asuras fighting on Mount Udaya. Shatakratu saw that the dawn was tinged with red clouds. The illustrious one also saw that Varuna's abode[241] was red. He saw Agni enter the sun, bearing oblations offered with mantras by Bhrigu, Angiras and the others. He also saw the twenty-four parvas surrounding the sun.[242] It was a terrible instant. The moon, traversing the path of dharma, was united with the sun. On seeing the union of the sun and the moon, and on witnessing that terrible instant, Shakra began to think. 'This great conjunction is terrible and is united with energy. This conjunction of Agni, the sun and the moon is extraordinary. If the moon begets a son now, he may be the husband of the goddess. Agni has all the qualities too and Agni is also a god. If he begets a son, he may be the husband of the goddess too.' Having thought in this way, the illustrious one went to Brahma's world, taking Devasena with him. Worshipping the grandfather, he said, 'Please grant a brave husband for this goddess.' Brahma replied, 'O destroyer of danavas! It will be done as you have thought. There will be an embryo with great strength and valour. O Shatakratu! Together with you, he will be your army's general. That valorous one will be the husband of this goddess.' Hearing these words, the lord of the gods bowed in obeisance. Together with the maiden, he went to the abode of the devarshis. With Vasishtha at the forefront, those chief among the foremost of the brahmanas were extremely great in their vows. With Shatakratu leading them, the gods went to the sacrifice, thirsting for a share of the soma that had been obtained through austerities. Having performed the sacrifice in accordance with the prescribed rites, the great-souled ones[243] offered oblations to all the gods into the well-kindled fire. The Adbhuta fire, the bearer of oblations, was summoned from the sun's circle. According to the prescribed rules, the lord Agni emerged. He restrained his speech, and entered the sacrificial fire, into which, oblations had been offered with mantras. Various oblations had been rendered by the rishis and Agni accepted these. O best of the Bharata lineage! Having accepted them, he carried them to the residents of heaven.

'"When he emerged, he saw the wives of those great-souled ones.[244] They were seated in their hermitages and were happily bathing. Their complexions were as golden as sacrificial altars. They were as unblemished as a digit of the moon.[245] Their limbs glowed with the radiance of the fire. They were as extraordinary as the stars. On seeing the wives of those foremost among brahmanas, Agni became overcome with desire and his mind and his senses were stirred. But he thought, 'It is not proper for me to be excited. These are the wives of the foremost among brahmanas. They are beyond the reach of desire and I am desiring them. I cannot look at them, or touch them, without justified reason. I will therefore enter the household fire, and thereby, satisfy myself by always looking at them.' He entered the household fire and happily looked at them. He touched all of them with his flames, golden in complexion. Overcome by those beautiful ones, Agni lived there, his heart attracted by love for them. However, he was not able to obtain the wives of the brahmanas. And since his heart was tormented by desire, Agni decided that he would give up his body. He went to the forest. But Daksha's daughter, Svaha, had desired Agni earlier. For a long time, the beautiful one had been watching out for a weakness. However, the unblemished one did not find one in the god who was never distracted. But on learning that Agni had left for the forest, the beautiful one, who was tormented by desire, began to think. 'I will assume the forms of the wives of the saptarshis and seek out Agni. He is overcome with desire. I will seduce and desire him in those forms. On doing this, he will be delighted and my desire will be satisfied.'"'

‘Markandeya said, “Shiva[246] was the wife of Angiras. She was endowed with conduct, beauty and qualities. O lord of men! The goddess assumed her form first. The beautiful lady went to Agni and said, ‘O Agni! I am tormented by desire and you should satisfy my desire. O god! If you do not do this, know that I will kill myself. O Agni! I am the wife of Angiras and my name is Shiva. I have decided to come here after consulting my friends.’[247] Agni asked, ‘How did you know that I was suffering from desire? How did all the others, the beloved wives of the saptarshis, come to know this?’ Shiva said, ‘You have always been our beloved. But we were afraid of you. Now that we have got to know about your desire through signs, they have sent me to you. O Agni! I have come here to have intercourse with you. Now quickly satisfy the desire we feel. The mothers[248] are waiting for my return.’ Extremely happy, Agni then lived with Shiva.

‘“The goddess was pleased with this union and caught the semen in her hand. She thought, ‘If people see this form in the forest, they will speak about the misdeeds of the wives of the brahmanas with Agni. Therefore, to prevent this, I will become a Garudi and will easily escape from this forest.’[249] She then became a Suparni and left the great forest. She saw Mount Shveta, covered extremely well with reeds. The mountain was guarded by extraordinary seven-hooded serpents, with poison in their eyes. It was populated by rakshasas, pishachas, masses of terrible demons, female rakshasas and many animals and birds. She quickly went to the mountain peak that was difficult of access. She then hurriedly hurled the semen into a golden well. Then the goddess assumed the forms of the other wives of the great-souled saptarshis and united with Agni. But she was not able to assume the celestial form of Arundhati,[250] because of her faithfulness towards her husband and because of the power of her austerities. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Driven by desire, Svaha hurled Agni’s semen into the well six times.

‘“On the first day of the lunar fortnight, the energy of the semen that had fallen down gave birth to a son. He was worshipped by the rishis and because the semen had fallen down, he became Skanda.[251] He had six heads and twice that many ears. He had twelve eyes and twelve arms. But Kumara had one neck and one torso. The child assumed form on the second lunar day and became a child on the third lunar day. Guha's limbs were developed on the fourth lunar day. He was surrounded by a great mass of red clouds, with lightning in them, and looked like the sun rising on a gigantic red cloud. He held a giant bow in his hands, which made the body hair stand up. For the destruction of the enemies of the gods, it was placed there by the slayer of Tripura.[252] Seizing that supreme bow, he roared with a great strength, and this terrified the three worlds, with all their mobile and immobile objects. The roar was like that of masses of giant clouds and on hearing this, the great nagas Chitra and Airavata jumped up. On seeing them fall, Agni's son, with radiance like that of the morning sun, grabbed them with two of his hands. He held a spear in another hand. The one with the gigantic form, supreme among strong ones, grasped a cock in one hand.[253] Having grasped the cock, the immensely strong one roared terribly and sported. The strong one grasped a supreme conch shell in two of his arms and blew on it, striking fear even among powerful beings. As he played repeatedly, he pounded the sky with two of his other hands. It seemed as if Mahasena was about to drink up the three worlds with his mouths. On the mountain peak, the one whose soul was infinite, looked like the sun's rays at the time of sunrise. The one whose valour was extraordinary sat on the mountain peak. The one whose soul was infinite looked at the directions with his many faces. He saw the different types of beings and roared again. On hearing those roars, many beings fell down. They were terrified and anxious and sought refuge with him. All the beings of different varnas sought refuge with the god whom the brahmanas dub the greatest of all great companions. Arising, the mighty-armed one comforted all beings. He then drew his bow and shot arrows at the great Mount Shveta. With those arrows, Mount Krouncha, the son of the Himalayas, was rent asunder. Through that breach, swans and vultures travel to Mount Meru. On being shattered, the mountain fell down, uttering terrible lamentations. On seeing it fall, other mountains also screamed miserably. The supremely strong one heard those piteous lamentations. But he was not moved. The one whose soul is infinite, raised his spear and roared. The great-souled one then hurled his great spear and swiftly cleft the terrible peak of Mount Shveta. Having been thus shattered, Mount Shveta was miserable. Frightened of the great-souled one, it left the earth and arose, with the other mountains. This pained the earth and it trembled on all sides. In distress, it sought refuge with Skanda and was made strong again. The mountains also worshipped him and returned to earth. The worlds now worship Skanda on the fifth day of shuklapaksha."'

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'Markandeya said, "However, the rishis were concerned about ensuring the welfare of the worlds. On seeing these extremely terrible portents of different kinds, they became anxious and performed tasks to pacify the worlds. The people who lived in Chitraratha forest averred, 'These great calamities have descended on us because Agni had intercourse with the wives of the saptarshis.' Others, who had seen the goddess leave in the form of Garudi, said, 'You are responsible for this disaster.' No one knew that this deed had been done by Svaha. Having heard that Skanda was her son, Suparni slowly went to him and said, 'I am your mother.' On learning that an immensely energetic son had been born, the saptarshis abandoned their six wives, with the exception of the divine Arundhati. All the residents of the forest referred to him as the son of the six. O king! But Svaha repeatedly told the saptarshis, 'I know that he is my son. What is being said is not true.' After performing sacrifices for the saptarshis, the great sage Vishvamitra had followed Agni without being seen, when he had been tormented by desire. He knew everything, exactly as it had happened. Vishvamitra was the first to seek refuge with Kumara. He composed a celestial hymn of praise to Mahasena. The great sage performed all the thirteen birth and other rituals for Kumara.[254] He spoke about the greatness of the six-faced one, the virtues of the cock and the worship of the goddess Shakti and her companions. Vishvamitra performed rituals for the welfare of the world. Thus, the rishi Vishvamitra came to be loved by Kumara. The great sage came to know about Svaha's transformation of form and told all the sages that the women had not committed any crimes. But though they heard those details, all of them abandoned their wives.

'"On hearing about Skanda, the gods went and told Vasava, 'O Shakra! Skanda's strength cannot be tolerated. Kill him swiftly and without any delay. If you do not kill him now, he will become Indra. O Shakra! With his great strength, he will oppress the three worlds, us and you.' He replied to the ones who were miserable, 'This child is immensely strong. With his valour, he can destroy the creator of the worlds in battle. Let the mothers of the world now go to Skanda.[255] They have the power and the will to destroy him.' They[256] agreed to these words and went. But on seeing that his strength was unmatched, their faces became miserable. They thought that he was invincible and sought refuge with him. They told him, 'You are our son. We hold up the universe. Welcome all of us. We are overcome with affection for you. Our milk is flowing.' Mahasena worshipped them and complied with their wishes. Then the strongest of the strong saw his father Agni approach and together with the group of mothers, he[257] received his worship. He remained there with Mahasena, so as to protect him steadily. There was a lady among the mothers who had been created out of anger. She nursed Skanda like her own son, with a spear in her hand. She was the daughter of an ocean of blood and lived on blood. She embraced Mahasena and protected him like a son. Agni transformed himself into goat-faced Naigameya with many offspring.[258] He sported himself on the mountain with the child, as if with toys."'

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'Markandeya said, "The planets, the minor planets, the rishis and the mothers, all radiant and led by Agni, with masses of attendants and many other terrible residents of heaven, established themselves around

Mahasena, together with the groups of mothers. The lord of the gods wished for victory, but was unsure about victory.[259] He ascended Airavata's shoulders[260] and departed, together with the gods. Desiring victory over Mahasena, Indra travelled swiftly. The army of the gods was immensely radiant. It was terrible and extremely fast. It was adorned with colourful flags and decorations and had many vehicles and bows. It was dressed in beautiful garments and was adorned and served by prosperity. When Kumara saw Shakra advance, with the desire of killing him, he advanced. The immensely strong Shakra roared and advanced swiftly. This delighted the army of the gods, who wished to kill Agni's son. Worshipped by the thirty gods and the supreme rishis, Vasava approached near Kartikeya. Together with the gods, the lord of the gods roared like a lion. On hearing this sound, Guha roared like the ocean. On hearing this great sound, the splendid army of the gods lost its senses. It was agitated, like the ocean by a storm.

'"Having seen that the gods had approached with the desire of killing him, Agni's son was angered. He belched forth large flames of fire from his mouth. They burnt the army of the gods and made them writhe on the ground. The heads and the bodies were in flames and the arms and the mounts were ablaze. They looked like radiant clusters of stars that had suddenly been dislodged. Having been burnt, the gods abandoned the wielder of the vajra and sought refuge with Agni's son, thus obtaining peace. Having been deserted by the gods, Shakra hurled his vajra at Skanda. O great king! This split open Skanda's right side. When the side of the great-souled Skanda was split from the force of the vajra, another being was born. He was a youth, decorated in gold. He was clad in celestial earrings and wielded a spear. Since he was created from the entering of the vajra, he was known as Vishakha.[261] On seeing another one arise, like the fire of destruction, Indra was frightened. He joined his hands in salutation and sought refuge with Skanda. O excellent one! Skanda granted him safety, together with his army. The thirty gods were delighted and played on their musical instruments."'

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‘Markandeya said, “Now hear about Skanda’s companions. They were terrible and extraordinary. They were born when Skanda was struck by the vajra and are the minor Kumaras. These terrible ones steal children, whether they have been born or whether they are in the womb. From the force of the vajra, immensely strong daughters were also born from him. The Kumaras thought of Vishakha as their father. The illustrious one protects in battle, with the face of a goat. He is surrounded by the masses of daughters and all his own sons. While the mothers look on, Bhadrashakha[262] provides succour. So people on earth call Skanda the father of sons. In different regions, those who wish sons or have sons, always worship Rudra, Agni and the extremely strong Uma as Svaha.

‘“The maidens who the fire named Tapas had begotten, went to Skanda and he asked, ‘What will I do?’ The mothers replied, ‘Grant us this favour. May we be the supreme mothers of all the worlds. May we be worshipped. Do this for our pleasure.’ He replied that it would be this way. Then that great-souled one again said, ‘You will be of different kinds, auspicious and inauspicious.’ Thus, having fulfilled the resolution of making Skanda their son, the group of mothers went away. Kaki, Halima, Rudra, Brihali, Arya, Palala and Mitra became the seven mothers of children who have just been born. Through Skanda’s favours, each of them had a terrible son, named Shishu,[263] full of valour and red in the eye. Those who were born from Skanda’s group of mothers are known as the eight brave ones.[264] Together with the one who has the face of a goat,[265] they are referred to as the nine. O king! Know that the sixth of Skanda’s six heads has the face of a goat and is always worshipped by the group of mothers. The chief among his six heads is known as Bhadrashakha. It is through this that he created divine energy. All these incidents occurred on the fifth day of shuklapaksha. O lord of men! The extremely terrible war transpired on the sixth.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Skanda was seated, with golden armour. He wore a golden crest and crown. His eyes were golden and he was immensely radiant. His garments were tinged with red. His teeth were sharp and he was beautiful. He possessed all the auspicious marks. He was the beloved of the three worlds. He was the granter of boons. He was brave. He was young. He was adorned with earrings. In the form of an embodied lotus, Shri herself worshipped him. When the greatly famous Kumara was thus united with Shri, all the beings saw him, like the moon on the night of the full moon. The great-souled brahmanas worshipped the extremely powerful one.

‘“The maharshis spoke to Skanda in these words. ‘O fortunate one! O one with the golden complexion! May you be the saviour of the worlds. Though you have been born in six nights,[266] the worlds have been subdued by you. O supreme among gods! You have granted them freedom from fear again. You should therefore become Indra and free the three worlds from their fear.’ Skanda asked, ‘O ones rich in austerities! What does the Indra of all the worlds do? How does the lord of the gods always protect the masses of gods?’ The rishis replied, ‘Indra grants beings strength, energy, offspring and happiness. When he is satisfied, the lord of the gods grants everyone their shares. He withdraws it from those who perform evil deeds and grants it to those who perform good ones. The destroyer of Bala assigns beings to their tasks. He acts as the sun when there is no sun, and as the moon when there is no moon. He becomes the fire, the wind, the earth and the water and their origins. These are Indra’s tasks and Indra’s strength is immense. You are brave and you are supreme in strength. Therefore, you should be our Indra.’ Shakra said, ‘O mighty-armed one! O excellent one! You become Indra and bring happiness to everyone. You are a worthy one and we will instate you today.’ Skanda replied, ‘You alone will rule over the three worlds, fixed on victory. O Shakra! I will remain as your servant. I do not desire to become Indra.’

‘“Shakra said, ‘O brave one! Your strength is extraordinary. Kill the enemies of the gods. Amazed at your prowess, the worlds will ignore me. O brave one! Though I am established as Indra, I am inferior in strength and have been vanquished. Incessantly, they will attempt to bring about false dissension among us. O lord! When you have been separated, the world will be divided into two factions. The beings of the worlds will then decide to split into these two sides. O immensely strong one! Because of this division of beings, there will be strife then. O son![267] Let me assure you that you will then vanquish me in battle. Therefore, you should become Indra. Do not think about this.' Skanda answered, 'O fortunate one! You are my king, as well as of the three worlds. O Shakra! What can I do for you? Tell me what your instructions are.' Shakra said, 'O Skanda! If you have spoken true words according to your decision, and if you wish to follow my instructions, then listen to me. O immensely strong one! Be instated as the general of the gods. O immensely strong one! Following your words, I will remain as Indra.' Skanda answered, 'For the destruction of the danavas, for accomplishing the objectives of the gods, for the protection of cows and brahmanas, then instate me as the general.' So Maghavan,[268] together with all the masses of gods, instated him. He looked extremely handsome and was worshipped by the maharshis. The golden umbrella[269] sparkled like the circle of a fire that has been kindled well. Vishvakarma had created a golden and celestial garland. The slayer of Tripura[270] fastened this on him. O tiger among men! O scorcher of enemies! He himself arrived, with the famous goddess.[271] Extremely happily, the illustrious Vrishadhvaja[272] showed him homage. The brahmanas also refer to Agni as Rudra and he is thus Rudra's son. The semen secreted by Rudra became Mount Shveta. It was on Mount Shveta that the Krittikas placed Agni's semen.[273] All the residents of heaven saw Rudra offer homage to Guha, foremost among those who possess all the qualities. So he came to be known as Rudra's son. The child was born after Rudra entered Agni. Because he was born in this way, he became Rudra's son. It was thus that Skanda, foremost among the gods, was born as Rudra's son, through the energy of Rudra, Agni, Svaha and the six ladies.

'"Agni's son was attired in a pair of red garments that had no dust. His blazing body shone, like the sun attired in a pair of red clouds. Agni gave him a cock and that became his ornamental sign.[274] Perched on his chariot, it blazed like the red fire of destruction. His body was cased in armour that he had naturally been born with. It is always visible when the god goes into battle. O lord of the people! With Skanda, power, dharma, energy, beauty, truthfulness, devotion to brahmanas, lack of delusion, protection of devotees, destruction of enemies and protection of the worlds were also born. Having been thus instated by the masses of all the gods, in his ornaments, he looked happy and satisfied. His visage was as radiant as the full moon. Pavaki[275] was thus instated by the gods. The sounds of hymns from the Vedas, celestial music, the songs of the gods and the gandharvas and all the masses of apsaras arose. He sported, surrounded by many who were happy, satisfied and ornamented. Thus instated by the residents of heaven, Mahasena could be seen, like the rising sun when darkness has been destroyed. At that, thousands of armies of the gods came to him from all the directions and said that he was their lord. The illustrious one was surrounded by masses of all the beings. He was worshipped and praised and comforted them.

'"Having instated Skanda as the general, Shatakratu remembered Devasena, whom he had once freed. 'Brahma himself must have destined that he will be her husband.' Thinking this, the slayer of Bala fetched Devasena, adorned in her ornaments and told Skanda, 'O supreme among gods! Even before you were born, the self-creating one[276] destined this maiden to be your wife. Therefore, in accordance with the prescribed rites and to the chanting of mantras, accept her hand. The right hand of this goddess is like a lotus. Accept it.' Having been thus addressed, he accepted her hand, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Brihasapati recited the prescribed mantras and offered oblations. Thus, wise ones know Devasena to be Skanda's queen. The brahmanas know her as Shashthi, Lakshmi, Asha, Sukhaprada, Sinivali, Kuhu, Sadvritti and Aparajita. When Devasena obtained Skanda as her eternal husband, the goddess Lakshmi herself sought refuge with him, in embodied form.[277] Since Skanda was united with Shri on the fifth lunar day, this is known as Shripanchami.[278] He accomplished his objective on the sixth and this is known as the great *tithi* of *shashthi*.”’[279]

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‘Markandeya said, “When Mahasena was united with Shri and became the general of the gods,[280] the six goddesses who were the wives of the saptarshis came to him. They had been abandoned by the rishis, though they were devoted to dharma and were great in their vows. They swiftly went to the lord who was the general of the gods and said, ‘O son! Without any reason and driven by anger, our divine husbands have abandoned us. O son! We have been dislodged from our pure positions. It is said that someone reported we gave birth to you and they heard this falsehood. You should save us. O lord! Through your favours, we should attain eternal heaven. We wish that you should be our son. When you do this, you will be freed from your debt.’ Skanda replied, ‘O unblemished ones! You are truly my mothers and I am your son. You will obtain everything that you have asked for.’ When this had been said, he[281] asked Shakra, ‘What should be done?’ Asked thus by Skanda, Vasava replied, ‘Abhijit is Rohini’s younger sister, but is proud.[282] The goddess wishes to be the eldest and has gone to the forest to perform austerities. O fortunate one! I am bewildered, because a nakshatra has been dislodged from the sky. O Skanda! Consult with Brahma about that excellent time.[283] Brahma determined the time for Dhanishtha and the others. Rohini was the first and their number used to be complete.’ Having been thus addressed by Shakra, the Krittikas went to heaven. This nakshatra is presided over by the god of fire and shines in the form of a cart.[284]

‘“Vinata[285] told Skanda, ‘You are my son and you are entitled to offer me funeral oblations. O son! I wish to live with you always.’ Skanda replied, ‘I bow before you. Let it be that way. Instruct me with a mother’s affection. O goddess! Worshipped by your daughter-in-law, you will always live here.’ Then the entire group of mothers spoke to Skanda in these words. ‘The wise ones have praised us as the mothers of all the worlds. But we wish to be your mother. Therefore, show us honour.’ Skanda replied, ‘You will be my mothers and I will be your son. Tell me what I should do to satisfy your wishes.’ The mothers said, ‘In earlier times, others had been thought of as mothers of the world. Let us have that position and let them no longer have that position. O bull among gods! Let us be worshipped by the world, not them. Because of you, we have been deprived of our offspring.[286] Give them back to us.’ Skanda replied, ‘You cannot wish for offspring that have already been given away. But if you so wish, I can give you other offspring.’ The mothers said, ‘While we are with you, we wish to devour the offspring of those mothers.[287] Give them to us. They and their gods are different from you.’ Skanda replied, ‘I can give you offspring. But what you have asked for will be extremely painful. O fortunate ones! Protect the offspring as long as they are good and show you homage.’ The mothers said, ‘O fortunate one! O Skanda! As you desire, we will protect the offspring. O Skanda! O lord! If it pleases you, we wish to live with you always.’ Skanda replied, ‘In different forms, afflict the offspring of young humans until they have attained sixteen years of age. I will give you undecaying and terrible souls. With these, you will live in supreme happiness and also be worshipped a lot.’ At that, an extremely strong being, golden in complexion, sprung up from Skanda’s body to devour the offspring of humans. Oppressed by hunger, it suddenly fell down on the ground, unconscious.

‘“With Skanda’s permission, it became a *graha,*[288] terrible in form. Supreme brahmanas know it by the name of Skandapasmara.[289] The extremely terrible Vinata is known as the graha Shakuni. The rakshasa woman Putana is known by the learned as the graha Putana. She is terrible in form. She is fearful in form. She causes great pain and roams around in the night. The pishacha woman who is terrible in form is known as Shitaputana. Her form is fearful and she steals embryos from women. Aditi is known as Revati and her graha is known as Raivata. This extremely terrible and gigantic graha afflicts children. Diti, the mother of the daityas, is known as Mukhamandika. This inaccessible demoness happily feeds on the flesh of children. The Kumaras and the Kumaris are said to have been created from Skanda. O Kouravya! They are extremely large grahas and all of them devour embryos. They[290] are known as the husbands of the Kumaris. They are terrible in deeds, and without it being known, they snatch small children. O king! The wise know Surabhi to be the mother of cattle. Shakuni rides on her, and with her, devours children on earth. O lord of men! The goddess Sarama is the mother of dogs. She always robs the embryos of women. The mother of trees resides in a *karanja*.[291] Men who wish to have sons worship her in the karanja. These eighteen grahas, and others, are fond of meat and liquor.[292] They always live for ten nights in places where delivery takes place. Assuming a subtle form, Kadru enters a woman who is pregnant. She devours the embryo there and she[293] gives birth to a serpent instead.[294] The mother of gandharvas grasps the embryo and departs. On earth, that woman is seen as one whose foetus has vanished. The mother of apsaras grasps the embryo and sits and the learned refer to this as a foetus that is seated.[295] The daughter of the ocean of blood is known as Skanda's nurse. In a kadamba tree, she is worshipped by the name of Lohitayani.[296] Arya dwells among women, the way Rudra resides in men. Kumara's mother Arya is separately worshipped for the fulfilment of desires.

'"I have thus recounted for you the great grahas of the Kumaras. They are inauspicious up to sixteen years of age. After that, they turn auspicious. The listed group of mothers and the male grahas are always known by everyone as Skanda grahas, residing in the body. They are pacified through oblations, bathing, incense, collyrium, sacrifices and gifts, especially rites for Skanda. When thus worshipped and offered homage properly, all of them bestow welfare, long lives and energy on men. O Indra among kings! After worshipping Maheshvara, I will now recount the grahas that afflict men beyond the sixteenth year. The man who sees gods, whether asleep or awake, swiftly turns mad and the learned know this as *devagraha*. The man who sees his ancestors, whether seated or asleep, swiftly turns mad and this is known as *pitrigraha*. He who disrespects the siddhas angers them and is cursed by them, swiftly turning mad, and this is known as siddhagraha. He who inhales fragrances and tastes different flavours, swiftly turns mad and this is known as rakshasagraha. A man on earth who is touched by celestial gandharvas, swiftly turns mad and this is known as gandharvagraha. Over a period of time, a man who is entered by yakshas, swiftly turns mad and this is known as yakshagraha. A man who is always ascended by pishachas, swiftly turns mad and this is known as pishachagraha. A man whose mind is deluded and turbulent because of these evils, swiftly turns mad, and must be cured in accordance with the sacred texts. Men swiftly turn mad because of perplexity, fear and terrible sights, and must be cured through rites. There are three types of grahas—some are frolicsome, others are gluttons, and others are lustful. They afflict men until the attainment of seventy years of age. After that, fever is the equivalent of a graha for men. Grahas always avoid those who have not dispersed their senses and those who are controlled, pure and always attentive, and also those who believe in god and are devoted. This is the description of grahas that afflict men. Grahas do not touch men who are devoted to the god Maheshvara."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Skanda had done all this, to please the mothers, Svaha appeared before him and said, 'You are the son born from my womb. I wish that you should give me happiness that is extremely difficult to obtain.' Skanda replied to her, 'What kind of bliss do you wish for?' Svaha said, 'O mighty-armed one! I am Daksha's beloved daughter and my name is Svaha. Ever since I was a child, I have always desired Agni. O son! But the fire does not completely know how much I love him. O son! I wish to reside eternally with Agni.' Skanda replied, ‘O goddess! Whatever oblations are properly offered to gods and ancestors by brahmanas, with the recital of mantras and through Agni, will henceforth be rendered with the utterance of the word “svaha”. O beautiful one! Thus, you will always reside with Agni.’ Having been thus addressed and worshipped by Skanda, Svaha was satisfied. She was united with her husband Agni and offered homage to Skanda.

‘“Then Prajapati Brahma told Mahasena, ‘Go to your father Mahadeva, the destroyer of Tripura. For the welfare of the worlds, you have been born invincible, with Rudra entering Agni and Uma entering Svaha. The great-souled Rudra moistened Uma’s vagina with his semen. This was thrown on the mountain and created Minjika and Minjika.[297] The remaining semen flowed into the red river.[298] Other parts ascended into the rays of the sun and others fell on the earth. Still others adhered to the trees. Thus, it fell in five ways.[299] The wise ones know your terrible companions of many different forms, the eaters of flesh, as ganas.’ Mahasena agreed and the one whose soul was immeasurable, worshipped his father Maheshvara, and he in turn was affectionate towards his son. Those who wish to acquire riches should worship the five ganas with *arka* flowers and worship them if they wish diseases to be cured.[300] Those who wish to ensure welfare for children should always worship Minjika and Minjika,[301] generated from Rudra. Those who wish to obtain offspring should bow in obeisance before the divine women named Vriddhikas, who were born from trees and eat human flesh. Thus is known the innumerable masses of pishachas. O king! Now learn from me about the origins of the bells and the pennants. Airavata[302] had two bells known as Vaijayanti. The intelligent Shakra brought them himself and gave them to Guha. One of those bells was for Vishakha and the other for Skanda. The pennants of both Kartikeya and Vishakha are red. The immensely strong god Mahasena played happily with these toys, given to him by the gods. Surrounded by the masses of pishachas and the masses of gods, he was radiant on that golden mountain, blazing with prosperity. With that brave one, the mountain and its pure groves was radiant, like the beautiful caverns of Mandara with the rays of the sun. Mount Shveta was radiant with groves blossoming with *samtanaka* flowers,[303] groves of karaviras,[304] groves of parijatas, *japas*,[305] groves of ashokas, clusters of kadamba trees, masses of divine animals and masses of divine birds. All the masses of gods and all the devarshis were there. The clouds thundered like drums, like the sound of the turbulent ocean. The celestial gandharvas danced there, together with the apsaras. The great sound of happy beings was heard there. Thus the entire universe, together with Indra, gathered on Mount Shveta and happily beheld Skanda, not tired of looking."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Agni's illustrious son was instated as the general, the radiant lord Hara[306] was delighted and left for Bhadravata[307] in a chariot that had the complexion of the sun, together with Parvati. One thousand lions were yoked to that supreme chariot. Driven by destiny, it ascended into the bright firmament. It seemed to drink up the sky and terrified mobile and immobile objects. Those lions with handsome manes roared and went up to the sky. Pashupati was resplendent, seated on that chariot, together with Uma. It looked like the sun amidst clouds thick with lightning and Indra's bow.[308] The illustrious Naravahana, lord of riches,[309] together with the guhyakas, advanced in front on the beautiful Pushpaka. Behind Vrishadhvaja, the granter of boons, Shakra followed, ascended on Airavata, accompanied by the gods. The great yaksha Amogha was on the right side, with *jambhakas*,[310] yakshas and rakshasas adorned with garlands. Also on the right advanced the gods, the Maruts, armed with many different weapons, together with the Vasus and accompanied by the Rudras.[311] Yama, together with Mrityu,[312] terrible in form, advanced, surrounded on all sides by hundreds of terrible diseases. Behind Yama followed Rudra's beautiful, sharp and decorated trident, by the name of Vijaya. There was also the illustrious Varuna, lord of the ocean, advancing slowly with his terrible noose and surrounded by innumerable aquatic animals. Vijaya was followed by Rudra's spear, with maces, clubs, lances and several other supreme weapons. O king! The spear was followed by Rudra's extremely radiant umbrella and his water pot,[313] served by masses of maharshis. On the right was his radiant staff, accompanied by Shri, with Bhrigu, Angiras[314] and the gods worshipping it. Behind these was Rudra on his unblemished chariot, gladdening all the gods with his energy. The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas, the serpents, female rivers, male rivers, trees, masses of apsaras, nakshatras, planets, the children of the gods and different types of women followed Rudra at the rear. The lovely and beautiful women scattered showers of flowers. Parjanjya followed, worshipping the wielder of the pinaka.[315] Soma[316] held a white umbrella over his head. Agni and Vayu held whisks on either side. O king! Shakra was behind them, accompanied by Shri and all the rajarshis, singing praises of Vrishadhvaja.[317] Gouri, Vidya, Gandhari, Keshini and Mitrasahrya—all of them followed Parvati at the rear, together with Savitri. The different branches of knowledge, created by those who are wise and recited by Indra and the other gods, were in the vanguard. The rakshasas and grahas, holding pennants, were in front, as was Rudra's friend Pingala, the Indra of the yakshas, who ensures happiness to the world and is always busy in burning grounds. Accompanied by all these, the god happily travelled. His course was not certain. He was sometimes in the front, and sometimes at the back. Those on earth worship the god Rudra through good deeds, using the name Shiva. He is also known as Isha, Rudra and Pinaki. Maheshvara is worshipped with all kinds of objects. Thus, Krittika's son, the general of the gods and with the qualities of a brahmana, followed the lord of the gods, surrounded by the army of the gods.

'"Then Mahadeva spoke words of great import to Mahasena. 'Always, steadfastly, protect the seventh corps of the Maruts.' Skanda replied, 'O lord! I will protect the seventh corps of the Maruts. O god! Tell me quickly what else I should do.' Rudra said, 'O son! You will always see me in every task you undertake. By looking at me devotedly, you will ensure supreme welfare.’ Having said this, Maheshvara embraced him and gave him permission to leave. O great king! When Skanda was allowed to go, a great portent suddenly appeared. To bewilder all the gods, the firmament, with all its nakshatras, blazed. The earth trembled and groaned. The entire universe was enveloped in darkness. On witnessing this terror, Shankara[318] was disturbed. So were the immensely fortunate Uma and the gods, together with the maharshis. While they stood around in bewilderment, a great army appeared. It was like a mass of mountains or rain clouds. It was terrible to see and had many weapons. This terrible army roared and uttered diverse sounds. It advanced towards the illustrious Shankara and the gods to do battle. They hurled many showers of arrows on them, and mountains, *shatagnis*,[319] javelins, clubs and maces. From that great and terrible shower of weapons, the entire army of the gods was scattered in an instant and was seen to waver. Oppressed by the danavas, the army of the gods was mauled. The soldiers, the elephants and the horses were sliced down. The weapons and the maharathas were shattered. They were killed by the asuras, like a grove by many fires. It fell down burnt, like a forest full of large trees. The gods were mowed down, heads severed from bodies. They were slaughtered in that great battle and were without a protector. On seeing the army destroyed, the god Purandara, the slayer of Bala, spoke comfortingly to the army that was oppressed by the danavas. ‘O fortunate ones! O brave ones! Discard your fear. Grasp your weapons. Set your minds on valour. Do not be disheartened. Vanquish the extremely evil danavas, terrible in form. O fortunate ones! Attack those great asuras with me.’ Having heard Shakra’s words, the residents of heaven were comforted. Seeking refuge with Shakra, they attacked the danavas. Then all the thirty gods, the immensely strong Maruts and the Sadhyas, together with the Vasus, returned the attack with great force. The weapons that they angrily unleashed on the armies in battle, and the arrows, drunk up large quantities of blood from the daityas. The sharp arrows pierced their bodies, which could be seen to fall down, like serpents from a mountain.

O king! The bodies of the daityas were sliced by the arrows and fell down on the ground everywhere, like shredded clouds. In that battle, attacked by all the masses of gods with their diverse arrows, the army of the danavas was terrified and retreated. On seeing this, all the gods raised their weapons. There was great rejoicing and the sounding of many musical instruments. Thus an extremely terrible and fearful battle raged between the gods and the danavas, creating muck out of flesh and blood.

'"But suddenly those from the world of the gods were seen to be worsted. The terrible danavas slaughtered the residents of heaven. The chiefs among the danavas uttered terrible roars like lions. They sounded their musical instruments and there was a great noise from their kettledrums. An extremely strong and terrible danava emerged from the army of the daityas then. His name was Mahisha and he grasped a giant mountain. He looked like the sun, surrounded by dense clouds. O king! On seeing him raise the mountain, the gods fled. But Mahisha pursued the gods and flung the mountain. O king! The army of the gods was struck by that falling mountain, which was terrible in form. They were killed in large numbers and fell down on the ground. With the other danavas, Mahisha terrified the gods. He shattered them in battle, like a lion on small animals. On seeing Mahisha descend on them, Indra and the other gods fled from the field of battle. Their weapons and their pennants were strewn around. Then Mahisha was extremely angered and advanced towards Rudra's chariot. Approaching it, he seized the pole of Rudra's chariot. When the angry Mahisha suddenly seized Rudra's chariot, the sky and the earth groaned deeply and the maharshis fainted. Gigantic daityas, that were like clouds, roared. They were certain that they would triumph. But even in this state, the illustrious one[320] did not kill Mahisha in battle. He knew that the evil-minded one's death would be at Skanda's hands. The fearful Mahisha exulted at having seen Rudra's chariot. He roared, delighting the daityas and terrifying the gods.

'"When the gods confronted this terrible danger, Mahasena arrived. He flamed like the sun in his wrath. He was attired in red garments. He was adorned in red garlands and ornaments. His mouth was red. The mighty-armed lord was clad in golden armour. He was astride his chariot, golden in hue and like the sun. On seeing him, the army of the daityas suddenly lost their hearts in battle. O Indra among kings! The immensely strong Mahasena hurled a flaming spear, which was capable of shattering, at Mahisha. Once unleashed, it struck Mahisha's gigantic head. The head was severed from the body and Mahisha fell down, having lost his life. He hurled that spear again and again, slaying enemies by the thousands. As the gods and the danavas looked on, it then returned to Skanda's hand. The residual masses of the terrible daitya army were mostly killed by the wise Mahasena with his arrows. They were frightened and terrified and Skanda's unassailable companions killed and devoured them in hundreds. They ate the danavas and drank their blood. In a short time, they exterminated all the danavas and began to rejoice. Like the sun destroys darkness, a fire destroys trees and the wind dispels clouds, the famous Skanda destroyed enemies through his own valour. He was shown homage by the thirty gods and he worshipped Maheshvara. The son of the Krittikas was resplendent, like the gorgeous sun amidst its rays. When the enemies were destroyed by Skanda and Maheshvara had left, Purandara embraced Mahasena and spoke to him. 'O Skanda! You have killed Mahisha, who had received a boon from Brahma. The gods were like straw to him. You are foremost among victorious ones. O mighty-armed one! You have destroyed the thorn of the gods. In battle, you have killed a hundred danavas who were the equals of Mahisha. You have slain the enemies of the gods, who had oppressed us earlier. Your followers have devoured hundreds of other danavas. You are as invincible in battle as the illustrious husband of Uma.[321] O god! This will be famous as your first deed. Your fame will be eternal in the three worlds. O son of a god! The gods will be under your suzerainty.' Having spoken these words to Mahasena, Shachi's husband[322] stopped. He took the permission of the illustrious Tryambaka[323] and left, together with the other gods. Rudra returned to Bhadravata. The gods returned. Rudra spoke to the gods, ‘Regard Skanda as you regard me.’ Having killed masses of danavas, Agni’s son subjugated all the three worlds within a single day and was worshipped by the maharshis. He who attentively reads this account of Skanda’s birth, obtains prosperity here and Skanda’s world in the hereafter.”’

Section Thirty-Eight

Droupadi–Satyabhama-sambada Parva

This parva has eighty-eight shlokas and three chapters.

Chapter 519(222): 59 shlokas
Chapter 520(223): 12 shlokas
Chapter 521(224): 17 shlokas

Sambada *means conversation and this short parva has a conversation between Droupadi and Satyabhama. Krishna and Satyabhama return to Dvaravati.*

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When the brahmanas and the great-souled Pandavas were seated, Droupadi and Satyabhama entered together. They were extremely happy and seated themselves comfortably. O Indra among kings! They had seen each other after a long time. They were pleasant in speech and spoke to each other about the deeds of the kings from the Kuru and Yadu lineages. Then the slender-waisted Satyabhama, Krishna’s beloved queen and the daughter of Satrajit, spoke to Yajnaseni in private. “O Droupadi! How do you conduct yourself when you attend to the Pandavas? Those brave and young ones are the equals of the guardians of the world. O beautiful one! How do you keep them under your control? O one who is beautiful to behold! The Pandavas are always under your control. They always look towards you and do your bidding. Tell me the reason. Do you follow vows or is it austerities? Is it ablutions, bathing, mantras or herbs? Is it the valour of knowledge or the valour of roots? Is it meditation, oblations or medicaments? O

Panchali! O Krishna![1] Tell me about your famous knowledge of amorous matters, so that Krishna will always remain under my control.” Having said this, the famous Satyabhama stopped.

‘The immensely fortunate Droupadi, who was devoted to her husbands, replied. “O Satya! You are asking me about the practices of evil women. How can one praise those who travel along wicked paths? Such questions and uncertainties are not worthy of you. You yourself have enough intelligence. You are Krishna’s beloved queen. When a husband learns that a woman uses mantras or roots, he becomes as terrified of her as of a snake that has entered the house. How can someone who is anxious find peace? How can there be happiness without peace? No woman is able to control her husband through mantras. Those who propagate roots are enemies. They are violent and transmit poison and extremely terrible diseases. When a man accepts these powders through the tongue or the skin, there is no doubt that he will soon be killed. Women have caused dropsy, leprosy, old age, impotence, dumbness, blindness and deafness through these means. Addicted to wicked ways, these evil women cause great harm to their husbands. A woman should never act so as to cause displeasure to her husband. O illustrious Satyabhama! Listen. I will tell you everything about how I behave towards the great-souled Pandavas. I always avoid vanity, desire and anger. I always steadily serve the Pandavas and their wives.[2] In return for the love, I always place my soul in their souls. I always serve them without any sense of pride. I protect the hearts of my husbands, without being anxious about wrong words, wrong situations, wrong looks, difficult seats, difficult roads and difficult signs. That is the way I serve the maharatha Parthas, who are extremely terrible in their energy and are equal to the sun, the fire and the moon and who are capable of killing with their glances. My mind never turns to other men—be it a god, a man, a gandharva, a young one with ornaments, one who is rich or one who is handsome. I do not eat, bathe or sleep before my husband,[3] together with his servants, has performed these acts. When my husband returns home from the field, the forest or the village, I always get up to welcome him and offer him a seat and water. The stores for food are clean. The food is clean. I serve food at the right time. I am careful in maintaining the grain and ensure that the house is clean. I am direct and refined in speech. I do not consort with evil women. I always do that which is pleasant. I am never lazy. I do not laugh unless there is a joke. I do not tarry for a long time at the gate. I do not spend a long time in the toilet or in the garden. I do not laugh loudly or complain, or give cause for anger. O Satya! I am always engaged in steadfastly serving my husbands. In no way do I desire anything that does not bring my husband pleasure. When my husband is not at home because of some work connected with the relatives, I follow a vow of not using flowers or fragrances. When my husband does not drink or does not eat, neither do I. I always renounce everything that my husband does not enjoy. O beautiful one! I always base myself on what has been instructed. I am ornamented well. I am extremely careful. I am engaged in the pleasure of my husband. Earlier, my mother-in-law had told me about this dharma followed in the household—about offering alms, sacrifices, funeral ceremonies, cooking food on auspicious lunar days and everything else that should be respected. I know all that. I always follow them untiringly, day and night, with all my soul always fixed on humility and injunctions. My husbands are mild, righteous, truthful and the followers of true dharma. But I serve them as if they are angry and venomous serpents. It is my view that the eternal dharma of women is to be dependent on the husband. He is the god and he is the path. How can one cause him displeasure? I do not transgress my husbands in sleeping, eating or speech. I always control myself and never complain about my mother-in-law. O fortunate one! Through constant attention in daily pursuits and through servitude to the superiors, my husbands remain under my control. I always serve Kunti, the mother of brave ones and one who is always true in her words, myself—in her bathing, dressing and eating. I never cross her in issues of garments, ornaments or food. Pritha[4] is the equal of the earth itself and I never complain about her. Earlier, in Yudhishthira's abode, eight thousand brahmanas were fed every day on golden plates. Eighty-eight thousand *snataka* householders[5] were supported by Yudhishthira, with thirty servant girls for each. Other than this, ten thousand ascetics, with their desire under control, were fed well-cooked food on golden plates. All those brahmanas were knowledgeable about the brahman and had been given grants of land. I worshipped them in due order, with drink, garments and food. The great-souled Kounteya possessed one hundred thousand servant girls. They were adorned with necklaces and bracelets made of shells, gold around their necks, ornaments, expensive garlands, gold and sandalwood paste and sported their gems and their gold. They were skilled in dancing and singing. I knew the names, the forms, the food and the garments of each of them and also their work, what each one did and did not do. Kunti's intelligent son had one thousand maid servants, who used to serve the guests day and night, holding vessels in their hands. When Yudhishthira lived in Indraprastha, he possessed one hundred thousand horses and one hundred thousand elephants. Such were the king's instructions when he ruled the earth. I listened to them and laid down the number and tasks for all the servants and everything that was done in the inner quarters. I knew everything about the cowherds and the shepherds, what they did and did not do. I knew everything about the king's revenue and expenditure. O fortunate one! I alone knew everything about the famous Pandavas. Those bulls among the Bharatas passed on everything about the household to me. O one with the beautiful face! That is the reason they were devoted to me. This load was incapable of being borne by someone who was evil in soul. I gave up all pleasure, day and night. That treasury of my husbands, who followed dharma, was such an ocean that even Varuna could not manage it. I alone knew about the store. I endured hunger and thirst, day and night. I attended to the Kouravyas, and day and night were the same for me. I was the first to rise from my bed. I was the last to lie down. O Satya! That has always been my practice. I know this to be the greatest technique of making husbands devoted to you. I have not followed the practices of evil women. Nor do I desire to do that." Having heard these words from Krishna, full of dharma, Satya honoured Panchali, whose conduct always abided by dharma, and said, “O Panchali! O Yajnaseni! I have been at fault. Pardon me. Among friends, it does happen that words are spoken in jest, without having been intended.”’

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‘Droupadi said, “I will tell you about a way that is without deceit, for capturing the heart of the husband. O friend! If you follow that true path, you will be able to restrain your husband from other women. O Satya! In all the worlds, with all their gods, there is no god equal to the husband. You will obtain all your desires through his favours. But if he is angered, you will lose them. It is from there that you obtain offspring, various objects of desire, beds, seats, garments that are wonderful to see, garlands, fragrances, the world of heaven and extensive fame. Happiness cannot be obtained through easy means. It is through hardship that a virtuous woman finds happiness. Therefore, always worship Krishna with all your heart, love and affectionate deeds. Through beautiful seats, excellent garlands, various fragrances and prompt service, he will know that you love him and will himself embrace you with all his affection. When you hear your husband’s voice at the gate, you must arise and stand in the middle of the house. When you see him enter, you must swiftly give him a seat. You must worship him with water for washing the feet. Send your servant girls away. Arise and do every task yourself. O Satya! Let Krishna know that you love and worship him with all your soul. When your husband says something in your presence, protect it as a secret, even if it is not a secret. If one of your co-wives reports it to Vasudeva, he might feel disenchanted with you. Through whatever means, you must invite for meals those whom your husband loves, those who are devoted to him and those who desire his welfare. But you must always distance yourself from his enemies and opponents, those who wish him ill and those who are evil and deceitful. If the man is intoxicated or distracted, control your mind and maintain silence. You should never spend a long time alone with your sons, Pradyumna and Samba. You should be friends with women who are born in noble lineages and those who are virtuous and without sin. You must avoid those who are wrathful, addicted to drink, addicted to food, thieves, evil and fickle. This is the glorious secret of love, which leads to heaven and ensures the destruction of enemies. Therefore, adorn yourself with expensive garlands, ornaments, unguents and pure fragrances and worship your husband.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After having been seated with Markandeya, the other brahmanas and the great-souled Pandavas and spoken to them about pleasant subjects, Janardana Madhusudana took his leave in the appropriate way. Keshava ascended his chariot and asked for Satya. Then Satyabhama embraced Drupada’s daughter and spoke these cordial words to her, as was in conformity with her affectionate sentiments. “O Krishna! May you not suffer from any anxiety or grief. May you not lie awake at night. You will win the earth when your husbands, who are the equals of the gods, subjugate it. You are good in conduct. You have the propitious marks. O black-eyed one! No one like you can confront difficulties for long. I have heard that it is certain that, together with your husbands, you will enjoy the earth, without any enemies and without any thorns. O Drupada’s daughter! When the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed and the enmity has been avenged, you will behold the earth, protected by Yudhishthira. You will soon see those wives of the Kuru lineage, who, deluded by insolence, laughed at you when you left for banishment, in a state of despair. O Krishna! Know that all those who caused you misery, when you were in a situation that was unpleasant, will depart for Yama’s abode. Your sons Prativindhya, the illustrious Sutasoma, Arjuna’s son Shrutakarma, Nakula’s son Shatanika and Shrutasena begotten by Sahadeva are all brave and skilled. Your sons are skilled in use of weapons. They are living happily with Abhimanyu in Dvaravati, a place they love. Like you, Subhadra loves them with all her soul. Without any conflict, she is affectionate towards them and has no worries on their account. Pradyumna’s mother[6] loves them with all her soul. Keshava instructs them, with Bhanu[7] and the others. My father-in-law always looks after their food and attire. With Rama[8] and the others, all the Andhakas and Vrishnis are devoted towards them. O beautiful one! They love them as much as Praduymna.” Having spoken these affectionate and kind words, pleasant to the mind, she made up her mind to leave and went towards Vasudeva’s chariot. The beautiful Satyabhama, Krishna’s queen, circumambulated Krishna[9] and ascended Shouri’s[10] chariot. After he had smiled and comforted Droupadi, the best of the Yadu lineage, the scorcher of enemies, took his leave and left on those swift steeds.’

Section Thirty-Nine

Ghosha Yatra Parva

This parva has 519 shlokas and nineteen chapters.

Chapter 522(225): 31 shlokas
Chapter 523(226): 22 shlokas
Chapter 524(227): 24 shlokas
Chapter 525(228): 29 shlokas
Chapter 526(229): 29 shlokas
Chapter 527(230): 31 shlokas
Chapter 528(231): 21 shlokas
Chapter 529(232): 21 shlokas
Chapter 530(233): 21 shlokas
Chapter 531(234): 28 shlokas
Chapter 532(235): 25 shlokas
Chapter 533(236): 15 shlokas
Chapter 534(237): 15 shlokas
Chapter 535(238): 49 shlokas
Chapter 536(239): 26 shlokas
Chapter 537(240): 47 shlokas
Chapter 538(241): 37 shlokas
Chapter 539(242): 24 shlokas
Chapter 540(243): 24 shlokas

Ghosha *means a herdsman, as well as a station where cowherds assemble.* Yatra *means an expedition or invasion. This parva is named after an expedition the Kouravas undertake to see the ghoshas in Dvaitavana, where the Pandavas are residing. The Kouravas are captured by the gandharvas and are released by the Pandavas. At this insult, Duryodhana resolves to fast to death and is dissuaded. He returns to Hastinapura and performs a sacrifice.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'While those foremost among men lived in the forest, their bodies lean from the cold, the heat, the wind and the sun, they arrived at the lake and the sacred wood.[1] What did the Parthas do next?'

Vaishampayana said, 'When Pandu's sons arrived at the lake, they dismissed their people and gave them instructions. They then roamed through beautiful forests and mountains and regions that were along rivers. When those brave ones dwelt there, studying and engaged in austerities, many venerable ones, learned in the Vedas, came to visit them. Those foremost among men showed them homage. One day, a brahmana arrived to visit the Kurus. He was skilled in recounting tales. Having spent some time, he went as he willed to visit the king who was Vichitravirya's son.[2] Having been honoured by the aged king, supreme among the Kurus, he seated himself. On being asked, he began to recount stories about the sons of Dharma, Anila and Indra, and the twins.[3] They were in difficulties. They were lean in their bodies from the wind and the heat. They were almost prostrate through terrible misery. Though she had the brave ones for her protectors, Krishna was like one without a protector and was overwhelmed through suffering.

'On hearing his words, the king who was Vichitravirya's son was disturbed and was flooded with compassion. He had learnt that the sons and grandsons of a king had been immersed in a river of difficulties in the forest. His inner soul was full of misery. His sighs were full of tears shed for the Parthas. He thought that he himself was responsible for everything. He collected himself in some fashion and spoke these words. "Dharmaraja is the eldest of my sons. How is it that the truthful Ajatashatru, pure and devoted to the conduct of aryas, must now sleep on the ground? He earlier used to sleep on beds covered with soft *ranku*[4] skin. He is like Indra and used to be awoken every day by the praises of minstrels and bards. Before night is over, he is now awoken from the bare ground by flocks of birds. Vrikodara is lean in the body from the wind and the sun. His limbs are full of wrath. His limbs do not deserve this. Before Krishna's eyes, how does he sleep on the earth, on the surface of the ground? Arjuna is delicate and intelligent. He is under the control of the king who is Dharma's son. But yet, with all his limbs in pain, it is certain that he will not sleep at night, overcome by anger. On seeing the twins, Krishna, Yudhishthira and Bhima, devoid of happiness, he will sigh like an energetic serpent and it is certain that he will not sleep at night, overcome by anger. Though deserving of happiness, the twins are wretched. Their forms are the equal of the gods. It is certain that they are disturbed and will spend the nights awake, restrained only because of dharma and truth. The son of the wind-god is strong and is equal to the wind-god in strength. It is certain that his terrible energy is restrained by dharma. It is certain that he sighs, suffering this in rage. Tossing and turning on the ground, he desires the death of my sons. He is restrained by truth and dharma. He is waiting for the time when he can overcome them in battle. Ajatashatru was vanquished through deceit and Duhshasana spoke harsh words to him then. They must have penetrated Vrikodara's limbs and consumed his inside, like a fire burns kindling. Dharma's son never thinks about evil deeds. Dhananjaya always follows him. But dwelling in the forest, Bhima's anger is increasing, like a fire fanned by the wind. He is being tormented by that rage. The brave one is kneading one hand with the other. He is heaving terrible and warm sighs, as if he wants to burn down my sons and grandsons. The wielder of the Gandiva and Vrikodara are like the fire at the time of destruction. With arrows that blaze like thunder, they leave no residue from the armies of enemies. Duryodhana, Shakuni, the son of the suta[5] and the extremely evil-minded Duhshasana only saw the honey. They did not see the fall, nor Vrikodara and Dhananjaya. Having performed good or evil deeds, a man awaits the fruits of the deed that has been done. But the fruits often bind him. How can a man be freed from that? When the field has been ploughed well and the seed has been sown, when the god has rained at the right time, has it ever been seen that there is no fruit? I think that it is not possible without destiny. The Pandavas are always devoted to that which is right. But the one who knows the minds of dice[6] was not fair. Attached to my evil sons, neither was I. That became the fire of destruction for the Kurus. It is certain that the wind will blow, even if it is not instructed. It is certain that a woman who has conceived will give birth to offspring. It is certain that dawn signals the death of night and that evening signals the death of the day. Regardless of the acts performed by us and those performed by others, regardless of riches donated by men, when it comes to obtaining the fruits, what are the fruits one obtains? If nothing remains of deeds, why perform them? We protect our riches so that they are not divided, do not drain off, and are not eroded. If they are not protected, they would divide into a hundred parts. But it is certain that deeds are not destroyed in this world. Behold Dhananjaya's valour. From the forest, he went to Shakra's world. He obtained divine weapons of four kinds.[7] Having obtained the knowledge, he again returned to this world. Where is the man who has gone to heaven in his own body and desires to return again, unless he has seen the innumerable Kurus on the point of death, overcome by destiny? Arjuna Savyasachi is the wielder of the bow. The bow named Gandiva is the essence of the world. There are celestial weapons in his possession. Who can withstand the energy of those three?"[8] Having secretly heard these words of the king, Duryodhana and Soubala[9] were disturbed. They went to Karna and told him everything. The one with limited intelligence[10] was unhappy at what he had heard.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Together with Soubala, Karna heard these words of Dhritarasthra. At an appropriate time, he spoke thus to Duryodhana. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have exiled the brave Pandavas through your own valour. You now enjoy the earth alone, like the killer of Shambara in heaven.[11] O lord of men! O king! All the kings of the east, south, west and north pay tribute to you. The blazing Lakshmi used to serve the Pandavas earlier. O king! But with your brothers, you have now won her. O king! The blazing prosperity that we earlier saw, for a short time, with Yudhishthira in Indraprastha, is now with you and he is oppressed by sorrow. O king! You have snatched it from Yudhishthira with your intelligence and strength. O mighty-armed one! That radiance is seen to be with you now. O Indra among kings! O slayer of enemy warriors! All the kings are now established under your suzerainty and ask you what they should do. O king! The entire goddess earth is yours now—with the ocean as a garment, with mountains and forests, with villages, cities and mines, with many groves and countries, and adorned with habitations. O king! The brahmanas praise you and you are worshipped by the kings for your manliness. You shine among them, like the one with the rays[12] among the gods in heaven. O king! Surrounded by the Kurus, you shine like King Yama amidst the Rudras, Maruts and Vasava,[13] like the king of the nakshatras.[14] Let us go and see the Pandavas, residing in the forest and bereft of prosperity. They always slighted you and never showed you respect. O great king! It is said that the Pandavas reside, together with the forest-dwelling brahmanas, near Lake Dvaitavana. O great king! Go there with your supreme prosperity and torment the sons of Pandu with your energy, like the sun. You are established in your kingdom and they have been dislodged from their kingdom. You have wealth and they are deprived of wealth. They are without prosperity and you are full of prosperity. O king! Go and see the sons of Pandu. Let the Pandavas behold you like Nahusha's son Yayati, with great splendour and established in great fortune. O lord of the earth! This prosperity, that well-wishers and ill-wishers see in a radiant man, is considered to be real power. Like a man who stands on a mountain and looks down on earth, what happiness can there be that is greater than being on plain ground while one's foes are on uneven terrain? O tiger among kings! The birth of a son or the obtaining of a kingdom does not bring as much bliss as seeing one's enemies in misery. What happiness will there not be, on being successful oneself, and on seeing Dhananjaya attired in bark and skins? Let your wives, attired in excellent garments, see the miserable Krishna, attired in bark and skins, and thereby increase her grief. Bereft of riches, let her criticize her own self and her life. She felt grief in the midst of the assembly hall. But on seeing your wives adorned in ornaments, the grief will be greater.” O Janamejaya! Thus did Karna and Shakuni speak to the kings,[15] and having spoken, they fell silent.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When King Duryodhana heard Karna’s words, he was extremely delighted. But he again became sad and spoke these words. “O Karna! What you have told me has always been in my mind. But I will not obtain permission to go to where the Pandavas are. Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, always mourns for those brave ones. Because of the power of their austerities, he considers the Pandavas to be superior. If the king gets to know about our desires, he will seek to protect the future and not grant us permission. O immensely radiant one! There can be no reason to go to Dvaitavana than to exterminate the enemies who are in the forest. At the time of gambling with the dice, you know the words Kshatta[16] addressed to me, you and Soubala. Thinking of all those words and the other lamentations, I cannot make up mind as to whether one should go or not go. I will obtain great pleasure if I see Bhima and Phalguna,[17] together with Krishna, miserable in the forest. The pleasure that I will get from winning the earth is less than that from seeing the sons of Pandu, clad in bark and skins. O Karna! What joy can be greater than the sight of Drupada’s daughter Droupadi, clad in red[18] garments in the forest? If Dharmaraja, Bhimasena and Pandava[19] see me united with this supreme prosperity, it is worth living. But I do not see a means whereby we can go to the forest, or a means whereby the king will give us permission to go. Therefore, together with Soubala and Duhshasana, find out a skilful means whereby we can go to the forest. After I have thought about whether one should go or not go, I will approach the king tomorrow. When I am seated with Bhishma, supreme among the Kurus, together with Soubala, you must propose the reason that you have thought of. Having heard the words of Bhishma and the king about going, I will then entreat the grandfather[20] and decide on the course of action.” All of them agreed to this and returned to their houses.

‘When night was over, Karna came to the king. Karna smilingly told Duryodhana, “O lord of men! A means has been found. Listen. O lord of men! All the ghoshas[21] are in Dvaitavana, awaiting you. There is no doubt that we can undertake an expedition to the ghoshas. O lord of the earth! It is always proper to go on a ghosha expedition. O king! If you tell your father this, he will grant you permission.” While they were conversing in this fashion, having decided on the ghosha expedition, Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, smilingly replied. “I can see that this means of going is without any difficulties. The king will not only give us permission, he will press us to go. O lord of men! All the ghoshas in Dvaitavana are waiting for you. There is no doubt that we can go there on a ghosha expedition.” All of them then laughed and offered each other their palms.[22] Having decided on this, they went to see the foremost among the Kurus.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then they all went to Dhritarashtra and asked about the king’s welfare, and the king asked about them in return. A cowherd named Samanga had been instructed earlier. He approached Dhritarashtra and told him about the cattle that were nearby. O lord of the earth! Then Radheya[23] and Shakuni spoke to Dhritarashtra, lord of men and the foremost among kings. “O Kourava! The ghoshas are in beautiful regions. The right time for branding the calves has arrived. O king! This is also an excellent time for your son to go on a hunt. Therefore, you should give Duryodhana permission to go.” Dhritarashtra replied, “O son! Hunting and inspecting of cattle are worthy tasks. I remember that one should not trust cowherds completely. But I have heard that those tigers among men[24] are somewhere near. Therefore, I do not think that you should go there yourself. They were vanquished through deceit and now live in that great forest in misery. O Radheya! Those maharathas are capable and are always engaged in austerities. Dharmaraja is never angered. But Bhimasena is prone to anger. Yajnasena's daughter[25] is also full of fire. Full of insolence and delusion, you are certain to commit a transgression and they will burn you down with the power of their austerities. Or the brave and armed ones may be overcome with anger. With swords that are girded and with energetic weapons, they will burn you down. Even if you succeed in harming them through force of numbers, that will not be the act of an arya. But I do not think this to be possible. The mighty-armed Dhananjaya has lived in Indra's world. Having obtained celestial weapons, he has returned to the forest. In earlier times, when he had not obtained these weapons, Bibhatsu[26] had conquered the earth. Having obtained the weapons, why should the maharatha not be able to kill you now? If you listen to my words once you have gone there, even then, there will be reason for anxiety and it will be a sojourn of unhappiness. Some soldiers of yours may cause injury to Yudhishthira. Even if the act has not been intended, the sin will be ascribed to you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, let skilled men go there for the branding. I do not like the idea of your going there yourself." Shakuni said, "The eldest Pandava is learned in dharma. He has taken an oath in the assembly hall that he will live in the forest for twelve years. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the Pandavas follow him and are devoted to dharma. Kounteya Yudhishthira will never exhibit anger towards us. We are extremely desirous of going out on a hunt. We also wish to do the numbering.[27] We have no desire to see the Pandavas. There will be no conduct there that does not befit an arya. We will not go to the place that they have sought refuge in." Having been thus addressed by Shakuni, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, reluctantly gave Duryodhana permission to go, together with his advisers.

'Having obtained permission, Gandhari's son,[28] foremost among the Bharatas, left with a large army, together with Karna, Duhshasana and Shakuni the dice player, and surrounded by his other brothers and thousands of women. When the mighty-armed one departed to see Lake Dvaitavana, all the citizens, together with their wives, followed him to the forest. There were eight thousand chariots, thirty thousand elephants, many thousands of infantry and nine thousand horses, carriages, shopping carts, whores, traders, bards and men who were skilled in hunting, in hundreds and thousands. O lord of the earth! The departure of the king raised a mighty roar, like the deep rumble of the winds during the rainy season. While headed towards Lake Dvaitavana, with all his mounts, King Duryodhana camped at a distance of one *gavyuti*.'[29]

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Vaishampayana said, 'King Duryodhana resided in that forest and eventually reaching the ghoshas, began to live there. His attendants constructed his house in a lovely spot that had water and large trees, with all the qualities. Nearby, they also constructed many houses for Karna, Shakuni and all his brothers. The king saw his cows, in hundreds and thousands. He inspected them and had them all marked with numbers and brands. He had the calves marked and learnt which cows had given birth and which calves were young, so that the time for their weaning had not arrived. After having completed the task of counting and branding all calves that were three years old, the descendant of the Kuru lineage was surrounded by the cowherds and pleasured himself. As it pleased them, like the immortals, the citizens and soldiers in thousands sported in that forest. The cowherds were skilled in singing and knew the art of dancing and music. With their daughters, adorned in ornaments, they served Dhritarashtra's son. Surrounded by masses of women, the king was delighted and donated riches, food and many kinds of drink to them, according to what each one was worth. With all of them, he killed hyenas, buffaloes, deer, oxen,[30] bear and boar in every direction. With his arrows, he pierced elephants in that great forest. He captured deer in that beautiful region. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He drank milk and enjoyed succulent fruit. He saw beautiful forests in bloom. They swarmed with intoxicated bees and noisy peacocks.

'In due course, he went to sacred Lake Dvaitavana. He went there with supreme prosperity, like the great Indra, the wielder of the vajra. O lord of the earth! It so happened that on the same day, Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, performed the *sadyaska* sacrifice[31] undertaken by rajarshis. The supreme among the Kurus observed the divine rite and tendered offerings from the forest. Having observed it, the wise Kourava, lord of men, went with Droupadi, his wife according to dharma, to the lake.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with his younger brothers, Duryodhana instructed his servants to quickly construct pleasure houses. They said that they would act as Kouravya had asked them to. They went towards Lake Dvaitavana to build the pleasure houses. Having reached Lake Dvaitavana, the vanguard of the army of Dhritrarashtra's son was about to enter the forest, but was restrained at the gate by the gandharvas. O lord of the earth! O king! Surrounded by his masses, the king of the gandharvas had already arrived there from Kubera's abode. He was in the habit of sporting with masses of apsaras and the sons of the thirty gods and had therefore barred entry to the lake. O king! When the king's servants found that the lake had been barred, they returned to King Duryodhana. On hearing their words, Kouravya dispatched his war-crazy soldiers to evict the others. On hearing the words of the king, the soldiers in the vanguard went to Lake Dvaitavana and spoke to the gandharvas. "King Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's strong son, has come here to sport. Leave this place." O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed, the gandharvas laughed. They replied to those men in harsh words. "Your king Suyodhana is evil in his intelligence. How can he command us, as if we are his servants? We are inhabitants of heaven. There is no doubt that you are evil in wisdom, since you are heading towards death. You have lost your senses if you repeat his orders to us. All of you should swiftly go back to the Kourava king. If you do not do that, you will depart today for Yama's abode.” Having been thus addressed, the vanguard of the king’s army rushed back to where the king, Dhritarashtra’s son, was.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! All of them then went to Duryodhana. They told him what had been said about the Kourava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhritarashtra’s powerful son was filled with anger that his army had been restrained by the gandharvas. He told his soldiers, “Chastise the ones who do not follow dharma and dare to do that which brings me displeasure, even if Shatakratu and all the gods happen to be sporting there.” On hearing Duryodhana’s words, the immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra and thousands of soldiers armed themselves for battle. Repulsing the gandharvas, they forcibly entered the forest. They filled the ten directions with giant roars, like those of lions. The gandharvas sought to restrain the Kuru soldiers. O lord of the earth! But though restrained by the gandharvas peacefully, they ignored those gandharvas and entered the great forest. When Dhritarashtra’s sons and their servants did not stop, despite their words, they took to the sky and reported this to Chitrasena.[32] On hearing everything, the king of the gandharvas had the following to say about the Kouravas. In anger, Chitrasena said, “They do not behave like aryas. Punish them.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Taking their leave of Chitrasena, all the gandharvas grasped weapons and rushed at the sons of Dhritarashtra.

‘On seeing the gandharvas swiftly descend on them with raised weapons, the sons of Dhritarashtra could be seen to flee in all the directions. On seeing that the sons of Dhritarashtra were fleeing from the field of battle, the brave Vaikartana[33] was the only one who wasn’t reluctant to do battle. On seeing the great army of gandharvas descend on him, Radheya repulsed them with a mighty shower of arrows. With great lightness of hand, the suta’s son killed hundreds of gandharvas with *kshurapras*,[34] *vishikhas*,[35] *bhallas*,[36] *vatsadantas*[37] and iron arrows. The maharatha sliced off the heads of many gandharvas and in a short while, dispersed all of Chitrasena's army. Although the gandharvas were killed by the intelligent son of the suta, they returned again in hundreds and thousands. In a short instant, the earth was covered with gandharvas and Chitrasena's soldiers descended with great force. Then King Duryodhana, Shakuni Soubala, Duhshasana, Vikarna and other sons of Dhritarashtra ascended chariots that screeched like Garuda and began to kill those soldiers. They fought again, placing Karna at the forefront. There was the giant roar of chariots and the stamping of the feet of horses. Supporting Vaikartana, they repulsed the gandharvas. Then all the gandharvas descended on the Kouravas and the battle that raged was extremely terrible. It made the body hair stand up. Oppressed by the arrows, the gandharvas began to wilt. On seeing that the gandharvas were suffering, the Kouravyas roared loudly. On seeing that the gandharvas were frightened, Chitrasena was overcome with anger. He angrily flew up from his seat, resolving to kill them. That brave one began to fight with weapons of maya, following wonderful paths. The Kouravyas were bewildered because of Chitrasena's maya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It seemed as if each one of Dhritrarashtra's sons was assailed and surrounded by ten gandharvas.

'O king! Being thus oppressed by a great army, they were frightened. They fled the field of battle and went to where King Yudhishthira was, seeking refuge with him. Everywhere, the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra were being destroyed. O king! Vaikartana Karna was the only one who stood immobile like a mountain. Duryodhana, Karna and Shakuni Soubala were severely wounded in the field of battle, but kept fighting the gandharvas. With a desire to kill Karna in battle, hundreds and thousands of gandharvas rushed collectively towards him. With a desire to kill the son of the suta, the immensely strong ones surrounded him from all sides, with swords, javelins, spears and maces. Some sliced off the yoke,[38] others brought down the flagpole. Some brought down the shafts, the horses and the charioteer. Some sliced down the umbrella, others the fenders[39] and the diadem. In many thousands, the gandharvas shattered the chariot. Holding a sword and a shield in his hand, the son of the suta jumped down from the chariot. He leapt onto Vikarna’s chariot and whipped the horses, so that he might escape.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! When maharatha Karna was routed by the gandharvas, in the sight of the sons of Dhritarashtra, the entire army fled. O great king! On seeing all the sons of Dhritarashtra flee, Duryodhana refused to run away. On seeing the great army of gandharvas descend on him, the scorcher of enemies unleashed a great shower of arrows. Without thinking about this shower of arrows, and desiring to kill Duryodhana, the gandharvas surrounded his chariot from all sides. They cut down the yoke, shafts, fenders, pennants, charioteer, horses, *trivenu*[40] and seat into pieces that were as small as sesame seeds. Duryodhana was thus unseated from the chariot and fell down on the ground. The mighty-armed Chitrasena rushed at him and captured him alive. O Indra among kings! When he had been thus captured, the gandharvas surrounded Duhshasana on his chariot and captured him too. With Chitrasena, others rushed at Vivimshati and still others at Vindu and Anuvindu and all the wives of the kings. The soldiers of Dhritrarashtra’s sons were routed by the gandharvas.

‘Together with the ones who had been wounded before, they then went to the Pandavas. When the king had been captured, all the wagons, shopping carts, whores, carriages and vehicles sought refuge with the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra’s son was handsome, mighty-armed and immensely strong. But the king was taken prisoner by the gandharvas and the Parthas pursued them. Duhshasana, Durvishaha, Durmukha and Durjaya[41] were captured and tied by the gandharvas, as were all the wives of the kings. When the king had been captured, Duryodhana’s advisers were miserable. Lamenting in sorrow, all of them went to Yudhishthira. Bhimasena spoke to Duryodhana’s aged advisers, who were grief-stricken and miserable and were begging Yudhishthira. “They[42] came here for a different purpose, but something else has transpired. The gandharvas have accomplished what we should have undertaken. O son![43] This is the outcome of the king listening to evil counsel and indulging in deceitful gambling. We have heard it said that others bring down the enemies of one who is impotent. The gandharvas have performed this extraordinary act before our eyes. We are fortunate that, in this world, there exist men who wish to do that which is pleasant for us and while we were seated, they have taken up our burden and made us happy. We have been suffering from the cold, the heat and the wind and have become emaciated through our austerities. The evil-minded one was comfortable and wished to see us in this state. Those who followed the conduct of that evil-souled Kouravya, the adherent of adharma, are witnessing their own defeat. It is because adharma was performed that this instruction is now being given. I am telling you. You can see that the Kounteyas are not violent or evil." When Kounteya Bhimasena was speaking in this way, the king[44] said that this was not the time for harsh words.'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O son![45] Why are you speaking in this way to the terrified Kouravas who have sought refuge with us? They are confronted with difficulties. O Vrikodara! Dissension and quarrels occur among those who are related by blood. While enmity continues, the dharma of the lineage is not destroyed. If a stranger not related by blood seeks to harm a lineage, those who are good do not tolerate that stranger's violence. The evil-minded one[46] knows that we have been residing here for some time. But he has ignored us and done something that is unpleasant for us. Through Duryodhana's forcible capture by the gandharva and through a stranger's oppression of the women, our lineage has been sullied. O tigers among men! For the sake of those who have sought refuge with us and to save the lineage, arise and get ready, without any delay. Let Arjuna, you, and the brave and invincible twins free Dhritarashtra's son, Suyodhana, from captivity. O tigers among men! These chariots are stocked with all the weapons. They have golden flags and are driven by Indrasena[47] and the other charioteers. O sons![48] Ride them and fight the gandharvas in battle. Ceaselessly endeavour to free Suyodhana. O Vrikodara! Every king will protect one who has come for refuge, not to speak of someone as capable as you. Who can ignore cries for help and the sight of hands joined in salutation, even if it happens to be a certain enemy? O Pandava! Out of granting a boon, obtaining a kingdom, the birth of a son and freeing an enemy from misery, the last is superior to the other three. What can provide greater satisfaction to you than that Suyodhana should be in distress now and that his life depends on the strength of your arms? O Vrikodara! O brave one! There is no doubt that I myself would have rushed to help him, had the sacrifice not been going on.[49] O Bhima! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Try all the different means of conciliation to free Suyodhana. If the king of the gandharvas does not return him through conciliation, free Suyodhana through mild use of your valour. O Bhima! But if the Kouravas are not released through a mild battle, use every means possible to crush those who are contrary. They must be freed. O Vrikodara! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am only capable of giving you instructions, as long as the sacrifice is going on.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard these words of Ajatashatru,[50] Dhananjaya agreed to his senior’s[51] words about freeing the Kouravas. Arjuna said, “If the gandharvas do not free the sons of Dhritarashtra through peaceful means, the earth will drink the blood of the king of the gandharvas.” O king! Having heard the oath of the truthful Arjuna, the Kouravas took heart again.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Yudhishthira’s words, all the bulls among men, with Bhimasena at the forefront, arose with happy faces. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the maharathas clad themselves in impenetrable armour that was radiant with gold. They ascended chariots, all of which had pennants. With bows and arrows in their hands, the Pandavas blazed like the fire. Those chariots were equipped well and were yoked to swift steeds. Using those chariots, those tigers travelled fast. On seeing the maharatha sons of Pandu advance, the army of the Kouravas let out a great roar. The travellers of the sky[52] and the maharathas were not frightened and were flush with victory. In a short while, they encountered each other in that forest. All the gandharvas were flush at the prospect of victory. On seeing the four brave Pandavas advance into battle on their chariots and on seeing them as resplendent as the guardians of the worlds, the residents of Gandhamadana[53] established themselves in battle formations. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Remembering the words of the king who was Dharma's son, the first battle that was engaged was a mild one. But the soldiers of the king of the gandharvas were deluded in intelligence. They were incapable of realizing that something that was mild might benefit them.

'At that, Savyasachi, the invincible scorcher of enemies, addressed the travellers of the skies on the field of battle. "This is not an act that is worthy of the king of the gandharvas, oppressing the wives of other men and consorting with humans. Free the extremely brave ones, the sons of Dhritarashtra. On the instructions of Dharmaraja, free their wives." On hearing the words of the famous Pandava, the gandharvas laughed. They replied to Partha in these words. "O son![54] There is only one person on earth whose instructions we obey. Under his rule, we roam around, without any anxiety. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We do only what he commands us to do. Other than that lord of the gods, there is no one else who can command us." Having been thus addressed by the gandharvas, Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, replied to the gandharvas in these words. "O gandharvas! If you do not free the sons of Dhritarashtra through peaceful means, I will exhibit my valour and free Suyodhana myself." Having uttered these words, Partha Savyasachi Dhananjaya released sharp arrows, which travelled through the sky, at those roamers of the sky. The gandharvas were insolent of their strength and released a shower of arrows at the Pandavas, and the Pandavas did the same to those residents of heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus began a terrible battle between the swift gandharvas and the immensely swift Pandavas.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The gandharvas were bedecked with golden garlands and possessed celestial weapons. They enveloped them with blazing arrows from all the directions. There were four brave Pandavas and thousands of gandharvas. O king! They attacked each other in that battle and it was extraordinary. Just as the gandharvas had shattered the chariots of Karna and the sons of Dhritarashtra into a hundred pieces, they attempted to do it again. O king! Hundreds of gandharvas attacked them in that battle and the tigers among men repulsed them with many showers of arrows. Repulsed by showers of arrows in all the directions, those travellers of the sky could not approach near the sons of Pandu. On seeing that the gandharvas were angered, Arjuna used great and celestial weapons against them. In that war, insolent about his strength, Arjuna used his agneya weapon to send a million gandharvas to Yama’s abode. O king! With his sharp arrows, Bhima, the great archer and supreme among strong ones in battle, killed hundreds of gandharvas. O king! Insolent of their strength, Madri’s two sons fought and captured and killed hundreds of enemies. When the gandharvas were thus killed by the great-souled ones with celestial weapons, they took to the sky and took the sons of Dhritarashtra with them. But Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, saw them arise. He surrounded them on all sides with a great net of arrows. Having been tied down by that net of arrows, they were like birds in a cage. They angrily hurled showers of maces, spears and swords at Arjuna. But Dhananjaya pierced the bodies of the gandharvas with bhallas. Heads, legs and arms[55] fell down from above like a shower of rocks and the others took fright. When the gandharvas were being killed by the great-souled Pandava, who was on the ground, they showered down arrows on him from the sky. But Savyasachi, the energetic scorcher of enemies, repulsed all of them with his own weapons and began to pierce the gandharvas. Arjuna, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, unleashed his weapons—*sthunakarna, indrajala, soura,* agneya and *soumya.*[56] The gandharvas were burnt up by the arrows of Kunti's son. They were in supreme despondence, like the daityas at Shakra's hands. When they tried to escape upwards, his net of arrows restrained them. When they tried to slither away, Savyasachi restrained them with his bhallas.

'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the gandharvas terrified by Kunti's intelligent son, Chitrasena grasped a mace and rushed towards Savyasachi. In that battle, he held the iron mace in his hand. But with his arrows, Partha sliced the mace into seven pieces. On seeing that the mace had been cut into many pieces by the arrows of the nimble one, he[57] made himself invisible and began to fight with Pandava. Established in the sky, he repulsed those celestial weapons. The powerful king of the gandharvas hid himself through his powers of maya. Arjuna saw that he was invisible and was striking. He therefore attacked him with divine weapons that could travel in the sky, invoked with mantras. Arjuna was angered. Dhananjaya used the weapon known as *shabdabheda*[58] and restrained his disappearance into many different forms. Pierced by the weapons of the great-souled Arjuna, the gandharva revealed himself to his beloved friend.[59] On seeing his friend Chitrasena, fighting feebly in battle,[60] the bull among the Pandavas withdrew the weapon he had released. When all the other Pandavas saw that Dhananjaya had withdrawn his weapons, they too restrained their swift steeds and their bows and arrows. Chitrasena, Bhima, Savyasachi and the twins then asked about each other's welfare, while they were astride their respective chariots.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then the great archer and immensely radiant Arjuna smiled and spoke to Chitrasena in the midst of the gandharva soldiers. "O brave one! Why did you decide to chastise the Kouravas? Why did you capture Suyodhana with his wives?" Chitrasena replied, "O

Dhananjaya! The great-souled god resides here.[61] He knows the motives of the evil-souled Duryodhana and the evil Karna. Knowing that you were residing in the forest and suffering, though you did not deserve it, they came here to see you and the famous Droupadi. On learning their intentions, the lord of the gods told me, 'Go and bind Duryodhana and his advisers. Bring them here. Protect Dhananjaya and his brothers in battle. The Pandava is your beloved friend and your student.' On the instructions of the king of the gods, I swiftly came here. The evil one has been tied up and I will go to the abode of the gods." Arjuna replied, "O Chitrasena! Suyodhana is our brother. If you wish to do that which brings me pleasure, set him free. Those are Dharmaraja's instructions." Chitrasena said, "He is evil and is always mean. He does not deserve to be freed. O Dhananjaya! He has deceived Dharmaraja and Krishna.[62] Kunti's son, Dharmaraja, great in his vows, does not know why he decided to come here. After hearing the reason, do what you wish." Then all of them went to King Yudhishthira. Having gone there, they told him about all his[63] evil deeds.

'Having heard the words of the gandharva, Ajatashatru praised the gandharva and said that all of them should be set free. "It is fortunate that despite your strength and might, none of you has injured the evil sons of Dhritarashtra, or their advisers, kin and relatives.[64] O father![65] This is a great favour that the travellers of the sky have done to me. Because the evil-souled one has been freed, the honour of the lineage has not been tainted. I am delighted at having seen you. Tell me what your instructions are. Having obtained everything that you wish for, return swiftly." Thus, the gandharvas took their leave of the intelligent son of Pandu. Extremely delighted, they left with the apsaras, with Chitrasena at the forefront. With a divine shower of ambrosia,[66] the king of the gods revived the gandharvas who had been killed in the battle with the Kouravas. Having performed the difficult task of setting their relatives and all the wives of the kings free, the Pandavas were extremely pleased. The maharathas were honoured by the Kurus and their wives and sons. Amidst the Kurus, the great-souled ones were as resplendent as the fire.

Having freed Duryodhana, together with his brothers, Yudhishthira lovingly told him, “O son![67] Never commit such rashness again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One who is rash never comes to a happy end. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Return safely with all your brothers. If it pleases you, without any despondency, return to your houses.” Having been thus given permission by the Pandava, King Duryodhana was overcome with shame and returned to his city. With the Kouravya gone, Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, was honoured by the brahmanas, together with his brave brothers. Surrounded by the ones rich in austerities, like Shakra amidst the immortals, he pleasured himself happily in Dvaitavana.’

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Janamejaya said, ‘He was vanquished and bound by his enemies in battle. Later, he was freed by the great-souled Pandavas. The extremely evil-souled Duryodhana was always boastful, insolent and proud. He always looked down upon the manliness and generosity of the Pandavas. It seems to me that the wicked one’s entry into Hastinapura must have been difficult. He must have been overcome by shame and sorrow. His heart must have been full of grief. O Vaishampayana! Recount in detail his entry.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Dhritarashtra’s son, Suyodhana, was given his leave by Dharmaraja. His face was lowered in shame. He was extremely miserable. He returned slowly. The king left for his city, followed by four components of his army.[68] On the way, there was a region that was full of excellent grass and water. He set his vehicles free there. As he wished, he camped in an auspicious and beautiful spot of ground. In due order, his elephants, horses, chariots and infantry were stationed around him. The king seated himself on a couch that was like the fire in its radiance. He looked like the moon, eclipsed by Rahu. When night was over, Karna came to Duryodhana and spoke to him. “O son of Gandhari! It is fortunate that you are alive and fortunate that we have met again. It is fortunate that you have vanquished the gandharvas, who are capable of assuming any form at will. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is fortunate that I see all of your brothers. They are maharathas and have been victorious, triumphing over the enemies in battle. While you looked on, I was worsted by all those gandharvas. My own army was routed and I was incapable of ensuring that they remained there. I was sorely wounded by the arrows and hard-pressed. I ran away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I think it is extraordinary that I see you here, without harm and without injury, and with all your wives, riches and vehicles. You have freed yourself from that superhuman battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! There is no other man in this world who is like you, or can achieve what you have done in battle with your brothers." O king! Having been thus addressed by Karna, King Duryodhana lowered his head and spoke in a voice that was choked with tears.'

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'Duryodhana said, "O Radheya![69] I do not take offence at your words, because you do not know what transpired. You think that I defeated the gandharva enemies through my energy. O mighty-armed one! My brothers and I did fight with the gandharvas for a long time and there was destruction on both sides. But when those brave ones fought with the use of maya, the battle with the travellers of the sky was no longer equal. We then encountered defeat in the battle and were taken captive, together with the servants, advisers, wives, riches and vehicles. We were then extremely miserable and were abducted by them through the sky. Then, miserable, some of our advisers and soldiers went to the maharatha Pandavas and sought refuge. 'King Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's son, together with his younger brothers and his advisers and wives, is being carried away through the sky by the gandharvas. O fortunate ones! Please free the king and his wives. Otherwise, all the wives of the Kuru lineage will suffer a lot.'[70] The eldest of Pandu's sons has dharma in his soul. Having been thus addressed, he pacified his brothers and ordered them to free us. The Pandavas, bulls among men, went to that spot. Though they were capable, the maharathas tried conciliation first. But though they were conciliatory, the gandharvas did not free us. Then, insolent in their strength, Arjuna, Bhima and the twins unleashed many showers of arrows at the gandharvas. At that, all of them[71] gave up the fight and fled to the sky, though dragging our miserable selves along in delight. I then saw Dhananjaya, surrounded by nets of arrows on all sides, release his superhuman weapons. All the directions could be seen to be enveloped by the Pandava's sharp arrows. Chitrasena, Dhananjaya's friend, showed himself and he and the Pandava, scorcher of enemies, embraced each other. They asked each other about their welfare. On meeting each other, they discarded their armour and arms. The brave gandharvas mixed freely with the Pandavas. Chitrasena and Dhananjaya displayed each other honours."'

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'Duryodhana said, "When he met Chitrasena, Arjuna smiled. The scorcher of enemies spoke these words, which weren't those of an impotent one. 'O brave one! O supreme among gandharvas! You should release our brothers. They should not be oppressed as long as the sons of Pandu are alive.' O Karna! Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Pandava, the gandharva revealed the reason why we had come—to see the Pandavas and their wife in misery, devoid of happiness. When the gandharva revealed this through his words, I wished to enter a hole in the earth in shame. Together with the Pandavas, the gandharva then went to Yudhishthira and told him about our plans, handing us over to him in bonds. What greater misery can there be than being offered to Yudhishthira, miserable and tied, under the control of the enemy, and in the sight of the women? They have always been persecuted by me. They have always been my enemies. They set me free. I am evil-minded indeed, that I owe my life to them. O brave one! It would have been better had I encountered my death in that great battle, than to obtain my life in this way. Had I been killed by the gandharvas, my fame would have been recounted on earth. In Indra's world, I would have obtained the sacred worlds of eternal bliss. O bull among men! Listen to what I have now resolved to do. I will remain here and fast to death. The rest of you return home. Let all my brothers also return to the city now and also my well-wishers and relatives, with Karna and the others. With Duhshasana at the forefront, let them return to the city. Humiliated by the enemy, I will not return to the city. I used to rob the enemy of his honour and earn respect for my well-wishers. I have now inflicted sorrow on my well-wishers and have increased the delight of my enemies. Having returned to Varanahrya,[72] what will I tell the king? What will Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Drona's son,[73] Vidura, Sanjaya, Bahlika, Somadatta, the others who are honoured by the elders, the brahmanas, the chiefs of the various professions and those who are strangers, have to say to me? What will I reply to them? So far, I have stood on the heads of my enemies and have trod on their chests. Through my own sins, I have now been dislodged. What will I tell them? Insolent ones may obtain prosperity, learning and riches. But like me, because they are intoxicated by insolence, they cannot maintain that fortune for long. Out of my foolishness, I have committed an evil act. I was deluded by my own evil intelligence. That is the reason why I am confronted with this calamity. I will therefore fast to death. I am incapable of living any longer. No one with spirit wishes to remain alive after an enemy has saved him from a calamity. I am proud, but have lost my manliness. The enemy has laughed at me. The Pandavas have great valour and have looked down at me with disrespect."'

Vaishampayana said, 'While he was thinking in this way, he spoke these words to Duhshasana. "O Duhshasana! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to my words. You are being instated as a king by me and accept this. Protected by Karna and Soubala, rule over this extensive earth. Protect your brothers as confidently as the slayer of Vritra[74] protects the Maruts. Just as the gods earn a living from Shatakratu, let your relatives earn a living from you. Without any deviation, always provide livelihood to brahmanas. Always be the refuge for your relatives and well-wishers. Just as Vishnu looks after the masses of gods, look after the relatives. Protect the seniors. Go and govern the earth. Gladden all your well-wishers and chastise the enemies." Embracing him[75] by the neck, he asked him to go. On hearing these words, Duhshasana was miserable. He was extremely sorrowful and his words were choked with tears. He joined his hands in salutation. In a broken voice, he told his elder brother to relent. His heart burnt and he prostrated himself on the ground. In sorrow, he shed tears on his[76] feet and the tiger among men said, "This cannot be. The earth with its mountains can be shattered. They sky can be splintered. The sun can lose its light. The moon can lose its cool. The wind can lose its speed. The Himalayas can begin to walk. The water of the ocean may be dried up. The fire can lose its head. O king! But I will not govern the earth without you." He repeatedly spoke words asking him to relent. "In our lineage, you alone will be the king for one hundred years." He touched the feet of his elder brother, who deserved to be honoured by him.

'On seeing Duhshasana and Suyodhana in grief, Karna, who was himself miserable, approached and said, "O Kouravyas! Why are you overcome by childish grief, like two ordinary people? Sorrow can never be driven away through grieving. Grieving never alters the state of the one who is sorrowful. What will be gained through this lamentation? Get a grip on your own selves. Do not delight the enemies through this sorrow. O king! The Pandavas performed their duty in freeing you. Those who reside within a king's dominions, must always do that which is pleasant for him. Under your protection, the Pandavas have resided without any anxiety. You should not grieve like an ordinary person. Your brothers are despondent because you have decided to fast to death. O fortunate one! Arise and move around. Comfort your brothers. O king! I do not understand your present foolish conduct. O brave one! O destroyer of enemies! What is surprising in the Pandavas setting you free, when you were in the clutches of your enemies? O Kouravya! Those who live within the kingdom, especially those who are soldiers, must act for the pleasure of the king, whether they are known to him or not. It often happens that the foremost among men, capable of crushing enemy armies, are captured on the field of battle and are freed by ordinary soldiers. Men who are soldiers and reside within a king's dominions, must appropriately endeavour to accomplish the king's objectives. O king! The Pandavas live in your kingdom. Even if they have freed you now, what is the reason for this lamentation? O king! O supreme among kings! When you marched out with your army, what is improper is that the Pandavas did not follow you at the back. They are brave and powerful. But they withdrew from the field of battle, though they had earlier become your possessions in the assembly hall. You are enjoying the riches of the Pandavas. But look at the Pandavas. They are still powerful and are not fasting to death. O king! O fortunate one! Arise! You should not think about this. Those who live within a king's boundaries must do pleasant things for the king. Why should one lament about that? O Indra among kings! Listen to my words. O destroyer of enemies! If you do not act in accordance with them, I will stay here at your feet and serve you. O bull among men! Without you, I do not desire to live. O king! If you decide to fast to death, all the other kings will laugh at you." Having been thus addressed by Karna, King Duryodhana still decided not to rise, having set his mind on going to heaven.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'King Duryodhana was intolerant and was still determined to fast to death. O king! Shakuni Soubala spoke gently to him. "O Kourava! You have heard what Karna has told you and his words are right. Out of delusion, why should you throw away the riches that I obtained for you? O supreme among kings! Like a foolish one, why do you desire to give up your life? It seems to me that you have never visited the elders.[77] If one does not control sudden happiness or unhappiness, even if one obtains prosperity, it is destroyed, like an unbaked vessel in water. A king who is extremely timid, extremely impotent, procrastinating, absent-minded and addicted to the senses—is not served by prosperity. You have been served by a good act. Why do you exhibit this contrary sentiment of sorrow? You should not destroy the good act of the Parthas by resorting to this sorrow. You should reward the good act of the Pandavas by being happy. O Indra among kings! Instead, you are sorrowing and acting in a contrary way. Be gracious and do not give up your life. Be satisfied and remember the good deed. Return the kingdom to the Parthas and earn fame and dharma. By performing this act, you will show your gratitude. Be fraternal towards the Pandavas and give them their places again. You will be happy if you return the ancestral kingdom to them." Having heard Shakuni's words, and glancing with brotherly affection at Duhshasana prostrate at his feet, who was brave but was now acting timidly, he embraced Duhshasana, the scorcher of enemies, with his well-formed arms and raised him. He lovingly smelt the fragrance of his head.

'King Duryodhana was already sorrowful. Having heard Karna and Soubala's words, he was overcome with shame and became extremely despondent. Having heard his well-wishers, he angrily said, "I am no longer concerned with dharma, riches, friendship, prosperity or acts of pleasure. Do not be frustrated. Leave. I have made up my mind that I will fast to death. All of you return to the city and show honour to my superiors." But they replied to the king who was the destroyer of his enemies. "O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The path that you traverse is also ours. How can we return to the city without you?" He was addressed in many different ways by his well-wishers, advisers, brothers and relatives. But he had made up his mind and would not waver. In accordance with his resolution, Dhritarashtra's son spread *darbha* on the ground.[78] He purified himself by touching water and sat down on the ground. He was attired in rags and a garment made of kusha and established himself in the supreme rite. The tiger among kings maintained silence. He was desirous of going to heaven. He controlled his mind and cut himself off from the external world.

'On learning of his resolve, the daityas and the danavas, the terrible denizens of the nether regions, who had earlier been defeated by the gods, knew that their own side would be weakened because of

Duryodhana.[79] They performed a sacrifice so as to summon him. They were skilled in mantras and pronounced mantras uttered by Brihaspati and Ushanas. They performed the rites mentioned in the Atharva Veda and the Upanishads, those that were capable of being performed through mantras and prayers. There were brahmanas who were learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas and extremely firm in their vows. Extremely attentively, they uttered mantras and poured offerings of milk into the fire. When those rites were completed, Kritya arose from the fire.[80] O king! She was extremely wonderful and had a gaping mouth. "What must I do?" she asked. Extremely happy in their souls, the daityas told her, "The king who is Dhritarashtra's son is fasting to death. Bring him here." Thus commanded, Kritya agreed that she would do this, and departed. In an instant, she went to where King Suyodhana was. She grasped the king and entered the nether regions.[81] Within an instant, she brought him and handed him over to the danavas. On seeing that the king had been brought, the danavas assembled at night. All of them were delighted in their minds and their eyes were dilated in delight. They then spoke these proud words to Duryodhana.'

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'The danavas said, "O Suyodhana! O Indra among kings! O extender of the Bharata lineage! You are always surrounded by brave and great-souled ones. Why have you resorted to this rash deed of fasting to death? Suicide always brings a person down and ill words are spoken about such a person. Intelligent ones like you should never embark on contrary tasks that strike at the roots of their best interests. Restrain this resolution. O king! This is destructive of dharma, artha and happiness. It kills fame, power and fortitude and increases the happiness of the enemies. O lord! O king! Hear the truth about your divine origins and how this body of yours came to be created. Then resort to fortitude. O king! In ancient times, through our austerities, we obtained you from Maheshvara.[82] O unblemished one! The upper part of your body has been made from a collection of vajras and is impenetrable to every type of weapon.[83] The lower part was created by the goddess[84] herself, out of flowers, and its handsome form is attractive to women. O supreme among kings! O tiger among kings! Thus, your body was created both by Ishvara and by the goddess. You are divine, not human. There are extremely valorous kshatriyas, with Bhagadatta at the forefront. They are brave and skilled in the use of divine weapons and will kill your enemies. Therefore, do not grieve. There is no reason for fear. To aid you, many brave danavas have been born on earth. Other asuras will penetrate Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. Possessed by them, they will discard their kindness and fight with your enemies. O supreme among Kurus! When the danavas have possessed their inner souls, they will cast aside all affection and kill everyone in battle—sons, brothers, fathers, relatives, students, kin, young and old. Those tigers among men will be deluded through ignorance. They will be driven by the dictates of destiny. Their minds will be dark and they will discard all love. They will gleefully tell each other, 'You will not escape with your life.' They will establish themselves in their manliness and release every kind of weapon.[85] Priding themselves, those foremost ones among the Kurus will destroy a large number of people. The great-souled Pandavas will be capable of fighting back. Those greatly strong ones are favoured by destiny. O king! They will kill masses of daityas and rakshasas who have been born in the wombs of kshatriyas and who will fight with your enemies with clubs, maces, swords and missiles.[86] O brave one! Whatever fear there exists in your heart about Arjuna, for that too, we have devised a means for Arjuna. The soul of Naraka, who had been killed, has entered Karna. O brave one! Because of that enmity, he will fight Keshava and Arjuna.[87] Karna is supreme among warriors. He is proud in battle. That maharatha will defeat Partha and all the enemies in battle. The wielder of the vajra[88] knows this. To protect Savyasachi, he will rob Karna of his earrings and armour. But there are hundreds and thousands of daityas with us. We have also appointed rakshasas by the name of *samshaptakas*.[89] Those famous ones will kill the brave Arjuna. Do not sorrow. O king! This entire earth will be yours, without any rivals. Do not resort to despondency. That is not worthy of you. O Kourava! If you are destroyed, our side will be weakened. O brave one! Depart. You should never direct your intelligence towards any other task. You are our recourse, just as the Pandavas are of the gods."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus addressed him, the daityas then embraced that elephant among kings. Like a son, the bulls among the danavas consoled that invincible one. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They steadied his intelligence with loving words. Then they gave him permission to leave, saying, "Go," and "Be victorious." When he had obtained permission, Kritya again brought the mighty-armed one back to the spot where he had decided to fast unto death. Having placed the brave one down and having honoured him, Kritya took his permission to leave and instantly disappeared. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When she had disappeared, King Duryodhana thought that it had all been a dream. But a thought always remained with him. "I will vanquish the sons of Pandu in battle." Suyodhana thought that Karna and the samshaptakas had been given the task of killing of Partha, the slayer of enemies, and that they were capable of this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus did resolution harden in Dhritarashtra's evil-minded son, about defeating the Pandavas. Karna's mind and soul had been possessed by Naraka's soul. This turned his mind towards the cruel task of killing Arjuna. Various rakshasas possessed the intelligence of the brave samshaptakas. They were overtaken by rajas and tamas[90] and wished to kill Phalguna.[91] The minds of Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others were taken over by the danavas. O lord of the earth! They were no longer as affectionate towards the sons of Pandu. But King Suyodhana did not tell anyone this. When the night was over, Karna Vaikartana smiled at King Duryodhana, and joining his hands in salutation, spoke words full of reason to him. "No one who is dead can defeat his enemies. Only those who are alive witness fortune. O Kouravya! How does a dead one obtain fortune? Where is the victory? This is not the time for despondency, fear or death.” He then embraced the mighty-armed one with his arms and said, “O king! Arise. O destroyer of enemies! Why are you lying down? Why are you sorrowing? How can you desire to die when the enemy has been tormented through your valour? Or if fear has been engendered at the sight of Arjuna’s valour, I truly promise that I will kill Arjuna in battle. O lord of men! When thirteen years have elapsed, I swear on my weapons that I will bring the Parthas under your subjugation.” Having been thus addressed by Karna, remembering the words of the daityas and witnessing the prostrations of the others, Suyodhana arose. Having heard the words of the daityas, he adopted a firm resolution in his heart. The tiger among men asked his army to be prepared, with many chariots, elephants, horses and large numbers of infantry. O king! The great army marched like the waves of the Ganga. It had white umbrellas and pennants and extremely white whisks. It was extremely radiant with chariots, elephants and infantry, like the sky when the thick clouds have disappeared and autumn is yet to arrive. Indras among brahmanas pronounced benedictions of victory over him and praised him like an emperor. With hands joined in salutation, Dhritarashtra’s son, the lord of men, received the homage of garlands. O Indra among kings! Blazing in supreme prosperity, Suyodhana was in the front, together with Karna and the dice-player Soubala. Beginning with Duhshasana, all his other brothers were there, and Bhurishravas, Somadatta and the great king Bahlika. The extenders of the Kuru lineage followed that lion among kings on many types of chariots, horses and excellent elephants. O king! In a short while, they entered their own city.’

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Janamejaya asked, ‘O excellent one! When the great-souled Parthas lived in the forest, what did the sons of Dhritarashtra, great archers, do? What about Karna Vaikartana, the immensely strong Shakuni, Bhishma, Drona and Kripa? You should tell me all this.’

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! When the Parthas had left in that way and Suyodhana had been freed by the sons of Pandu and had returned to Hastinapura, Bhishma spoke these words to Dhritarasthra's son.[92] "O son![93] I had told you earlier, when you had intended to go to the forest of ascetics, that I did not like the idea of the trip. But you went despite that. O brave one! You were then forcibly taken captive by the enemies. You were freed by the virtuous Pandavas. But you still have no shame. O Gandhari's son! O lord of the earth! In your sight and in the presence of your army, the suta's son[94] was frightened of the gandharvas and fled from the field of battle. O Indra among kings! O son of a king! While you and your soldiers cried in distress, you witnessed the valour of the great-souled Pandavas and that of the mighty-armed and evil-minded Karna, the son of a suta. O supreme among kings! Whether it is in knowledge of arms, valour, dharma or devotion to dharma, Karna is not worth a small part of the Pandavas. O foremost among those who strive for peace! Therefore, for the welfare of this lineage, I think that peace with the great-souled Pandavas is desirable." O king! Having heard Bhishma's words, Dhritarashtra's son, the lord of men, laughed and abruptly departed with Soubala.

'On seeing him leave, Karna, Duhshasana and the other mighty archers followed the immensely strong son of Dhirtarashtra. O king! Having seen them depart, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, lowered his head in shame and left for his own house. O great king! When Bhishma had gone, Dhritarashtra's son, the lord of men, returned to that spot again and consulted with his advisers. "What is the best course of action for us? What is left to be done? How should we act now?"[95] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He sought advice thus. Karna replied, "O Duryodhana! O Kourava! Listen to what I have to say. O destroyer of enemies! Having listened to it, act accordingly. O brave one! O supreme among kings! The earth is yours now, without any rivals. O great-minded one! With your enemies killed, protect it like Shakra." Having been thus addressed by Karna, the king again spoke to Karna. "O bull among men! Nothing can be unattained by one who has someone like you. You are my aide and you are always ready to serve me. I will now tell you about my intention. Listen to it attentively. O son of a suta! On witnessing the great and supreme *rajasuya* sacrifice of the Pandavas, I am filled with the desire of undertaking it and satisfy my wishes." Having been thus addressed, Karna spoke to the king. "O supreme among kings! All the lords of the earth have now been brought under your subjugation. Summon the foremost among brahmanas and collect offerings, in accordance with the prescribed rites. O best of the Kuru lineage! Let all the ingredients and requirements for the sacrifice be collected. O king! O destroyer of enemies! Let the summoned officiating priests, learned in the Vedas, perform the rites in accordance with the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let your great sacrifice have plenty to eat and drink and let it also be extremely prosperous, with all the qualities." O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed by Karna, Dhritarashtra's son summoned the priest and spoke these words to him. "Arrange for rajasuya, the best of sacrifices, with the best of dakshina, and according to all the rites in the proper order." Having been thus addressed by the king, the bull among brahmanas replied. "O best of Kouravas! O supreme among kings! That best of sacrifices cannot be performed in your lineage as long as Yudhishthira is alive. O king! Your father Dhritarashtra, with a long life, is also alive. O supreme among kings! Because of these reasons, you cannot perform this sacrifice. O lord! However, there is another great sacrifice that is equal to the rajasuya. O Indra among kings! Listen to my words and perform that sacrifice. O king! All the lords of the earth who pay you tribute, will bring tributes of gold, worked and unworked. O supreme among kings! With this, you must have a plough constructed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Plough the sacrificial ground with this. O foremost among kings! Let a sacrifice be organized there, well arranged and with plenty of food. Without obstructions in any direction, let it be held there, in accordance with the rites. This sacrifice has the name of Vaishnava and is familiar to all righteous ones. No one except the ancient Vishnu has ever performed it. This great sacrifice is the equal of rajasuya, supreme among sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is attractive to us and will ensure your welfare. Let it be performed without obstructions and your desires will be fruitful.” Having been thus addressed by the brahmanas, Dhritarashtra’s son, the lord of the earth, spoke to Karna, Soubala and his brothers. “There is no doubt that the words of the brahmanas are attractive to me. If they are attractive to you, let me know that, without any delay.” Having been thus addressed, all of them agreed to what the king had said. Then, in due order, the king gave instructions to the appointed people. He instructed all the artisans to construct the plough. O best of kings! Everything that he had instructed was carried out in the due order.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then the artisans, all the chief advisers and the immensely wise Vidura spoke to Dhritarashtra’s son. “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The time for the supreme sacrifice has arrived. The extremely expensive plough, made out of gold, has been constructed.” O lord of the earth! On hearing this, Dhritarashtra’s son, foremost among kings, instructed the kings that the king of sacrifices should be initiated. Then the sacrifice, well designed and with many ingredients, was started. Gandhari’s son was consecrated, in due order, in accordance with the sacred texts. Dhritarashtra, the immensely famous Vidura, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna and Gandhari’s famous son were delighted. O Indra among kings! Swift messengers were dispatched to invite the kings and the brahmanas. As instructed, the messengers ascended on swift mounts.

‘Duhshasana spoke to a messenger who was about to start. “Go swiftly to Dvaitavana and invite the Pandavas, evil men, in accordance with what is prescribed, and also the brahmanas who are in that great forest.” He went to where the Pandavas resided. Bowing down to them, he said, “O great king![96] Duryodhana, supreme among kings, is observing a sacrifice. He is supreme among the Kurus and has acquired a lot of riches through his own valour. The kings and brahmanas are going there from all directions. O king! I have been sent here by the great-souled Kourava, with an invitation from the king who is Dhritarashtra’s son and is the lord of men. O king! He loves that sacrifice and you should come and witness it.” On hearing the messenger’s message, King Yudhishthira, tiger among kings, replied. “It is fortunate that King Suyodhana is performing the foremost of sacrifices. He will extend the deeds of his ancestors. We will go there, but we cannot do that now. We will have to abide by our oath until thirteen years have passed.” Hearing Dharmaraja’s words, Bhima said, “Dharmaraja Yudhishthira will go when that king has been hurled into a flaming fire lit with weapons and missiles.[97] When thirteen years have passed, the king who is Dhritarashtra’s son will be offered as oblation into the fire of war by the angry Pandavas. We will then come. Say this to Suyodhana.” O king! The other Pandavas did not speak any unpleasant words. The messenger reported everything to Dhritarashtra’s son.

‘Many foremost among men, many kings of countries and many immensely fortunate brahmanas went to the city of Dhritarashtra’s son. They were honoured, in accordance with the sacred texts, in accordance with their varnas and in due order. O lord of men! They were supremely delighted. O Indra among kings! Surrounded by all the Kouravas, Dhritarashtra’s son was extremely happy and spoke to Vidura. “O Kshatta![98] Act so that everyone is happy and has plenty of food. You should swiftly act so that everyone at the site of the sacrifice is satisfied.” O destroyer of enemies! The learned Vidura, devoted to dharma, entertained all the varnas, as he had been instructed. He happily honoured them and gave them food, drinks, garlands, fragrances and many garments. When the brave one had observed the sacrifice in accordance with the sacred texts and in the proper order, he comforted kings and brahmanas in thousands. The Indra among kings gave away a large quantity of riches. Then, having given all the kings permission to leave, surrounded by his brothers, he entered Hastinapura, together with Karna and Soubala.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! When he entered, bards sang praises of the unblemished one. Others eulogized the great archer, supreme among kings. Sprinkling fried grain and sandalwood powder over him, the people said, “O king! It is through good fortune that your sacrifice has been completed without any impediments.” There were others present, who were not careful in speech. They told the king, “Your sacrifice has not been equal to Yudhishthira’s sacrifice. It does not equal a sixteenth part of that sacrifice.” Thus some, who were voluble, spoke to that lord of men. However, his well-wishers said, “Your sacrifice has surpassed all the others. Purified by performing such a sacrifice, Yayati, Nahusha, Mandhata and Bharata have all gone to heaven.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing such pleasant words from his well-wishers, that lord of men was extremely pleased and entered his city and his own house. O lord of the earth! He bowed in obeisance at the feet of his father and mother, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the wise Vidura. He was himself honoured by his younger brothers, brothers whom he loved.

‘Surrounded by his brothers, he sat down on an excellent seat. O great king! The son of the suta arose and spoke to him, “O foremost among Bharatas! It is through good fortune that your great sacrifice has been completed. O best of men! When you have killed the Parthas in battle and have performed a rajasuya, I will honour you again.” The immensely famous son of Dhritarashtra, great among kings, replied, “O brave one! You have spoken the truth. O best among men! When the evil-souled Pandavas have been killed and the great sacrifice of rajasuya has been performed, you will honour me again.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With these words, the immensely wise Kourava embraced Karna and began to think about rajasuya, the greatest of sacrifices. That supreme of kings then spoke to the Kouravas who were by his side. “O Kouravas! When will I perform the supreme and extremely expensive sacrifice of rajasuya, after having killed all the Pandavas?” Karna then told him, “O elephant among kings! Listen to my words. I will not wash my feet until Arjuna is dead.” When Karna vowed to kill Phalguna[99] in battle, Dhritarashtra’s sons, maharathas and great archers, roared in approval. Dhritarashtra's sons thought that the Pandavas had already been conquered.

'O Indra among kings! Duryodhana then permitted those bulls among men to leave. The lord[100] entered his beautiful house, which was like Chaitraratha.[101] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those other great archers also went to their own houses. Prodded by the words of the messenger, the great archers, the Pandavas, began to think about the purport of those words and could not find any happiness. O Indra among kings! The news had been brought to them by spies that the son of the suta had taken a vow to kill Vijaya.[102] O lord of men! On learning this, Dharma's son was greatly anxious. He thought of the impenetrable armour that Karna, extraordinary in valour, possessed. He thought of all their difficulties and had no peace of mind. The great-souled one's intelligence was full of such thoughts. He decided to leave the forest of Dvaitavana, infested with many predators and animals. The king, who was Dhritarashtra's son, ruled the earth with his brothers and the brave Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. He consorted with Karna, the son of a suta, who was radiant in battle. King Duryodhana was always engaged in bringing pleasure to others. He honoured the chief brahmanas and performed sacrifices with a lot of donations. O king! That scorcher of enemies did that which brought pleasure to his brothers. The brave one had decided that the fruits of wealth were to be enjoyed and given.'

Section Forty

Mriga-Svapna-Bhaya Parva

This parva has sixteen shlokas and one chapter.

Mriga *means deer. Deer appear to Yudhishthira in a dream* (svapna) *and tell him about their fears* (bhaya)*, requesting the Pandavas to relocate from Dvaitavana.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'After having freed Duryodhana, what did the immensely strong Pandavas do in that forest? You should tell me this.'

Vaishampayana said, 'One night, when Kounteya Yudhishthira was asleep in Dvaitavana, the deer showed themselves to him in a dream. Their voices were choked with tears. They trembled and stood before him, their feet joined in salutation. The Indra among kings told them, "Who are you and what do you wish for? Tell me what you desire." Having been thus addressed by the famous Kounteya Pandava, the remaining deer[1] spoke to Yudhishthira. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We are the remnants of the deer in Dvaitavana. O great king! Find a residence somewhere else. Otherwise, all of us will be killed. All your brothers are brave and are skilled in the use of weapons. They have reduced the lineage of those that live in the forest, until only a few remain. O immensely intelligent one! A few of us have been left, as seed for the future. O Indra among kings! O Yudhishthira! Let us extend through your favours." On seeing the trembling and frightened deer, with only a few remaining as seed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was extremely unhappy. The king was always engaged in the welfare of all beings. He told them, “It shall be as you say. I will do what you have asked me to.” He took an oath in this fashion. When night was over, the supreme among kings was filled with compassion towards the deer and spoke to his brothers. “The deer that still remain spoke to me in a dream last night. They said, ‘O fortunate one! Only a few of us remain as seed. You should show compassion towards us.’ They spoke the truth. We should show compassion towards those who live in the forest. We have lived on them for one year and eight months. Therefore, let us go towards the supreme and beautiful forest of Kamyaka, which is full of large numbers of deer. It is located at the head of the desert, near the famous lake of Trinabindu. Let us pleasantly pass the rest of our time there.” O king! The Pandavas, learned in dharma, swiftly left, together with the brahmanas who lived with them, and followed by Indrasena[2] and the other servants. They followed an excellent road that was full of superb grain and pure water. They soon saw the sacred hermitage of Kamyaka, populated by ascetics. O best of the Bharata lineage! Surrounded by the bulls among the brahmanas, the Kouravyas entered it, like virtuous ones entering heaven.’

Section Forty-One

Vrihi-Drounika Parva

This parva has 117 shlokas and three chapters.

Chapter 542(245): 34 shlokas
Chapter 543(246): 36 shlokas
Chapter 544(247): 47 shlokas

Vrihi *means rice, or a grain of rice.* Drouni *or* drona *means a vessel, as well as a measure of capacity. Vyasa visits the Pandavas and tells them the story of Mudgala, who lived on a measure (drona) of rice (vrihi) and was generous enough to give it away. Mudgala was tested by the sage Durvasa and turned down an opportunity to go to heaven.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the great-souled Pandavas lived in the forest, they spent eleven years in great difficulties. Although they deserved happiness, those supreme among men confronted extreme misery and lived on fruits and roots. They kept thinking about when this period would be over. The mighty-aremd rajarshi Yudhishthira thought that this supreme misery had befallen his brothers because of the sin of his own deeds. The king did not sleep happily. His heart seemed to be pierced with stakes. At that time, he witnessed the calamity that had arisen from the game with the dice. On remembering the harsh words of the suta's son, the Pandava sighed in misery, retaining the great poison of his anger. Arjuna, the twins, the famous Droupadi and the immensely energetic Bhima, supremely strong among all of them, suffered extreme sorrow when they looked at Yudhishthira. The bulls among men thought that only a short period of time remained. Their bodies were so agitated with endeavour and anger that their appearances seemed to change.

‘After some time, the great yogi Vyasa, Satyavati’s son, came there to see the Pandavas. When Kunti’s son Yudhishthira saw him arrive, he approached and welcomed the great-souled one in accordance with the proper rites. Having satisfied Vyasa by prostrating himself, the descendant of the Pandava lineage, willing to serve and controlled in his senses, seated himself below him. On seeing that his grandson was lean from surviving on forest fare, the maharshi was driven by compassion and spoke in a voice that was choked with tears. “O mighty-armed Yudhishthira! O foremost among those who uphold dharma! Listen to my words. Those who do not torment themselves with austerities, do not find great happiness in this world. In due order, men experience happiness and unhappiness. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one experiences continuous happiness. A man who is wise has superior insight and knows that fortune rises and sets. He does not rejoice or sorrow. When there is happiness, one enjoys it. When there is unhappiness, one endures it, just as one who has ploughed the land waits for the right time. There is nothing superior to austerities. Austerities lead to greatness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that there is nothing that austerities do not lead to. O great king! Truthfulness, honesty, restraint from anger, willingness to share, self-control, calmness, freedom from envy, non-violence, purity and control of the senses—these are the methods used by men whose deeds are pure. People who are addicted to adharma, those who are deluded and follow the ways of inferior species, achieve births that bring difficulties and never attain happiness. Whatever acts are performed here, find fruits in the next world. Therefore, one should yoke one’s body to austerities and rules. O king! One should donate according to one’s ability, happily and devoid of envy, to the right person at the right time, showing homage and honours. One who is honest and truthful obtains a life without difficulties. One without anger and malice obtains supreme contentment. One with self-control and serenity never confronts difficulties. One who has controlled his soul is not tormented on seeing the prosperity of others. A man who gives the right share, and the one who receives, find happiness. One who is non-violent attains supreme health. He who honours those who deserve to be honoured, obtains birth in a great lineage. He who has conquered his senses, never confronts misfortune. If one's intelligence is directed towards good deeds, following the law of time, because of this, he obtains superior intelligence."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! O great sage! There is the dharma of giving and there are austerities. Which of these has greater qualities in the next world and which is said to be more difficult?"

'Vyasa said, "It is said that nothing is more difficult in this world than giving. There is great thirst for wealth and wealth is obtained through difficulty. Brave men give up the love for life and enter into great battles for the sake of wealth. They enter oceans and forests. Men resort to agriculture and rearing cattle and become servants for the sake of obtaining wealth. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to give up something that has been obtained with great difficulty. Therefore, there is nothing more difficult than giving and I hold charity to be superior. It must specially be said that riches that have been obtained through just means must be given away to virtuous ones, to the right person, and at the right time and place. But if the riches have been obtained through unjust means, the deed of observing the dharma of charity does not save the giver from great danger. O Yudhishthira! It has been said that even a small gift, given to the right person at the right time, and with a pure mind, brings eternal fruits in the hereafter. On this, there is an ancient account about how Mudgala obtained great rewards by giving away a drona of rice."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "Why did that great-souled one give up a measure of rice? O illustrious one! Whom did he give it to and in what fashion? Please tell me. I think that a person who follows dharma has had a successful birth if he has been able to please the illustrious one[1] who has made his dharma manifest.”

‘Vyasa said, “O king! Mudgala used to live in Kurukshetra. He was good in his conduct and had dharma in his soul. He was rigid in his vows. He was truthful and without envy. He survived by gathering grains of rice.[2] Though he drew his sustenance like a pigeon, he served the guests and performed rites. The great ascetic observed the sacrifice known as *ishtikrita*.[3] Together with his wife and son, the sage ate for a fortnight. For the next fortnight, he lived like a pigeon, collecting one drona of vrihi. Without any distortions, he observed the new moon and full moon sacrifices. He sustained his body on the food left after gods and guests had eaten. O great king! Indra himself, the lord of the three worlds, would arrive there with the other gods on auspicious lunar days, to partake of their shares. At such auspicious times, the one who lived like a sage, happily entertained the guests with food. When that great-souled one gave rice from his measure without any envy, whatever remained always increased when another guest arrived. Because of the pure way the sage gave away rice, it increased so that hundreds of learned brahmanas enjoyed it.

‘“O king! On hearing about the virtuous Mudgala, rigid in his vows, Durvasa, clad in nothing but air, went to him. O Pandava! The sage was in the form of a dishevelled lunatic. His head was shaven and he spoke harsh words. Having arrived, the supreme of sages spoke to the brahmana. ‘O supreme among brahmanas! Know that I have come here desirous of food.’ Mudgala told the sage that he was welcome. He offered him water to wash the feet and the mouth and devoted to his guests, gave the hungry one the supreme food he had obtained with great difficulties, though he seemed to be mad. Rigid in his vows, he was devoted. But the mad one was hungry and ate up all the tasty food that had been offered and Mudgala gave him more. When he had eaten all the food, he[4] smeared his body with the left overs and went away, the way he had come.[5] When the learned one[6] observed the next auspicious lunar day, he[7] came again and ate up all the rice that the one who lived on collections possessed. Thereupon, the sage[8] had to go without food and had to go out again to gather. But that hunger was incapable of upsetting Mudgala's temperament. There was no anger, jealousy, disrespect or agitation in the mind of that supreme of brahmanas, or in those of his sons and wife. In this way, firm in his resolution, Durvasa, supreme among sages, arrived at the right time on six occasions, to the one whose dharma was collection. But the sage could not see any distortions in his mind. He saw that the mind of that pure-hearted one was always pure and clean. Extremely delighted, the sage spoke to Mudgala. 'In this world, there is no one who is your equal, with your generosity and lack of envy. Hunger drives away all sense of dharma and removes self-possession. The tongue follows the senses and is attracted towards the succulent. Life is sustained through food. The mind is fickle and it is difficult to control it. The control of the mind and the senses is certain asceticism. It is difficult to give up with a pure mind that which has been earned through labour and misery. O virtuous one! But all this has been exactly achieved by you. We are delighted and favoured to have met you. Control of the senses, fortitude, generosity, self-control, serenity, compassion, truthfulness and dharma are all established in you. You have conquered the worlds through your deeds. You have obtained the supreme objective. Even the residents of heaven proclaim your great deeds of giving. O one who is extremely good in his vows! You will go to heaven in your own body.' While the sage Durvasa was still speaking in this way, a messenger of the gods arrived before Mudgala in a celestial chariot that was yoked to swans and cranes and had networks of bells. It was coloured, divinely scented and could travel wherever it wished. He[9] told the brahmana rishi, 'O sage! Ascend this chariot. Through your deeds, you have obtained the supreme objective.' The rishi told the messenger of the gods, 'O messenger of the gods! I wish that you should describe to me the qualities of those who reside in heaven. What are the attributes of those who live there? What are their austerities and their resolutions? What is the divine happiness in heaven and what are its shortcomings? Learned ones, who know about family customs, say that seven steps together is all that is required for friendship with the righteous.[10] O illustrious one! On the basis of that friendship, I am now asking you. Without any hesitation, tell me the facts and what is prescribed. On hearing your words, I will act in accordance with them.’”’

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‘“The messenger of the gods said, ‘O maharshi! Are you still thinking about what should be done about the supreme happiness of heaven? You have obtained a great honour and you are still deliberating about it, like one who is not wise. Know that the world which exists above is known by the name of heaven. It is high up. O sage! It has excellent streets, along which the vehicles of the gods travel. O Mudgala! Men who have not tormented themselves with austerities, those who have not performed great sacrifices, those who are untruthful and those who are atheists cannot go there. Men with dharma in their souls, those who have conquered their souls, the serene, the self-controlled, those who are without jealousy, those who are devoted to the dharma of giving and brave ones who bear injury marks on their bodies, go there. Through serenity and self-control, they are the best practitioners of dharma. O brahmana! Those worlds, meant for performers of pure deeds, are served by righteous ones. O Moudgalya![11] The gods, the Sadhyas, the Vishvas,[12] the maharshis, the *yamas*,[13] the *dhamas*,[14] the gandharvas and the apsaras live there. The many separate worlds of these masses of gods are separate, and one after another, are radiant, energetic and beautiful, satisfying all desires. The golden Mount Meru, the king of mountains, is there, extending for thirty-three thousand yojanas. O Mudgala! The celestial gardens are there. There is the sacred Nandana,[15] where the performers of pure deeds can pleasure. There is no hunger, thirst, fatigue, cold, heat or fear there, nor anything terrible or inauspicious, nor any disease. Fragrances, pleasing to the mind, are everywhere. Everything is pleasurable to the touch. O sage! There are sounds everywhere and they are pleasant to the ear and the mind. There is no sorrow or old age there, nor labour and repentance. O sage! The world that is obtained as the fruit of one’s own deeds is like this. It is possible for men to go there through their own good deeds. O Moudgalya! The bodies of those who live there are resplendent because of their own deeds, and not a consequence of their mothers or fathers. There is no sweat or bad smell, no excrement and urine. O sage! Dust does not soil one’s garments there. The beautiful garlands, with celestial fragrances, never fade. O brahmana! The residents travel on many celestial vehicles. They have no jealousy, sorrow or fatigue. They are devoid of confusion and envy. O great sage! They live there in heaven, in happiness.

““‘O bull among sages! But beyond these worlds, and higher up, there are Shakra’s worlds, with divine qualities. O brahmana! Beyond these are the sacred and effulgent worlds of Brahma. O brahmana! Rishis who have been purified through their sacred deeds go there. The gods of the gods, by the name of the Ribhus,[16] live there. These worlds are supreme and are worshipped even by the gods. These worlds are radiant in their own lustre and they yield every object of desire. These lords of the worlds[17] are not tormented on account of women and are free from envy. They do not offer oblations, nor do they feed on amrita. They possess divine bodies and do not have physical forms. These eternal gods of the gods do not crave for happiness. They are not transformed when the eras[18] change. How can they have old age, death, joy, pleasure or happiness? O sage! How can they have unhappiness, happiness, affection or hatred? O Moudgalya! That supreme state is craved even by the celestials. But that supreme salvation is difficult to obtain and cannot be got by those who are still subject to desire. There are thirty-three worlds.[19] The worlds of the learned are beyond these. Those who follow the best of restraints, or donate according to the norms, attain these. You have attained that because of your generous deeds. Enjoy the happiness that you have earned through your good deeds, illuminated by the radiance of your austerities. O brahmana! Such is the bliss of heaven, in many different worlds. I have described the qualities of heaven to you. Now hear about the taints. In heaven, while enjoying the fruits of deeds performed, one must enjoy them right up to the roots, and cannot perform any other deeds. In my view, this is a blemish, because there is a fall at the end of it and those who minds have been full of bliss, must fall. O Mudgala! After having witnessed that brilliance and prosperity, the discontentment and regret that follow the relocation to a different region, must be extremely difficult to endure. For those who fall, the consciousness is confounded. The passions cause agitation. The garlands fade and fear descends on those who are falling. O Moudgalya! These are the terrible taints that exist all the way up to Brahma's abode. But this is not true of the higher worlds of the performers of good deeds. For such men, the qualities are innumerable.[20] O sage! There is another supreme characteristic of those who have been dislodged from heaven. After their good deeds are over, they are born among men. They are born as immensely fortunate and enjoy their share of prosperity. But if one does not attain wisdom there, one obtains an inferior status.[21] The deeds performed in this world are enjoyed in the next. O brahmana! It has been said that this is a world of deeds. The next is one of fruits. O Mudgala! I have explained everything that you have asked me. Through your grace, without any delay, let us go to the region of the righteous.'"

'Vyasa said, "When Moudgalya heard these words, he reflected on them in his mind. Having thought about them, the best of sages replied to the messenger of the gods. 'O messenger of the gods! I bow down before you. O father![22] Please go, according to your wishes. If there are such great taints, I have nothing to do with heaven or happiness. There will be great unhappiness at the time of the fall, by those who have enjoyed heaven. There will be extremely terrible regret. Therefore, I do not desire heaven. I will only look for the infinite region where there is no sorrow, unhappiness or dislodging, once one has traversed the path and has reached there.' Having spoken these words, the sage gave the messenger of the gods permission to leave. He returned to a life of collecting rice and achieved supreme serenity. He looked on praise and blame equally. A brick, a stone and a piece of gold were the same to him. Through the yoga of knowledge, he was always engaged in meditation. Having obtained strength through the yoga of meditation, he obtained supreme wisdom. He attained the eternal and supreme success, the marks of supreme salvation.[23] O Kounteya! Therefore, you should not sorrow. You have been dislodged from a prosperous kingdom. But you will regain it through your austerities. Happiness follows unhappiness and unhappiness follows happiness in circles around a man, like the rim of a wheel. You have infinite valour and you will obtain the kingdom of your fathers and grandfathers, once the thirteen years have passed. You should discard the fever in your mind.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having spoken these words to the descendant of the Pandava lineage, the illustrious and wise Vyasa returned to his hermitage, for the performance of austerities.’

Section Forty-Two

Droupadi Harana Parva

This parva has 1247 shlokas and thirty-six chapters.

Chapter 545(248): 17 shlokas
Chapter 546(249): 13 shlokas
Chapter 547(250): 9 shlokas
Chapter 548(251): 21 shlokas
Chapter 549(252): 27 shlokas
Chapter 550(253): 26 shlokas
Chapter 551(254): 21 shlokas
Chapter 552(255): 59 shlokas
Chapter 553(256): 30 shlokas
Chapter 554(257): 10 shlokas
Chapter 555(258): 16 shlokas
Chapter 556(259): 40 shlokas
Chapter 557(260): 15 shlokas
Chapter 558(261): 55 shlokas
Chapter 559(262): 41 shlokas
Chapter 560(263): 43 shlokas
Chapter 561(264): 73 shlokas
Chapter 562(265): 30 shlokas
Chapter 563(266): 68 shlokas
Chapter 564(267): 54 shlokas
Chapter 565(268): 40 shlokas
Chapter 566(269): 14 shlokas
Chapter 567(270): 29 shlokas
Chapter 568(271): 27 shlokas
Chapter 569(272): 26 shlokas
Chapter 570(273): 33 shlokas
Chapter 571(274): 31 shlokas
Chapter 572(275): 69 shlokas
Chapter 573(276): 13 shlokas

Chapter 574(277): 41 shlokas
Chapter 575(278): 32 shlokas
Chapter 576(279): 23 shlokas
Chapter 577(280): 33 shlokas
Chapter 578(281): 108 shlokas
Chapter 579(282): 44 shlokas
Chapter 580(283): 16 shlokas

> Harana *means abduction and this parva is about Droupadi's abduction by Jayadratha. Jayadratha abducts Droupadi. The Pandavas defeat Jayadratha and free Droupadi, shaving Jayadratha's head in the process. Jayadratha obtains a boon from Shiva. This section then tells the story of the Ramayana and Savitri and Satyavan, where Savitri brings her husband, Satyavan, back from the land of the dead.*

545(248)

Vaishampayana said, 'Those maharathas, the best of the Bharata lineage, sported like immortals in the forest of Kamyaka, full of large numbers of deer. They gazed upon many forest regions in all directions and woods full of blossoms, beautiful according to the season. The Pandavas, the destroyers of enemies, equals of Indra and fond of hunting deer, roamed for some time in that great forest. One day, at the same time, all of them went out in the four directions, since those tigers among men, the scorchers of enemies, wished to obtain deer for serving the brahmanas. With the permission of maharshi Trinabindu, blazing in austerities, and Dhoumya, they left Droupadi in the hermitage. At that time, the famous king of the Sindhus, the son of Vriddhakshatra, was headed for the country of Shalva, desiring to get married.[1] He was surrounded by a large retinue, as was appropriate for a king. With the many kings who were with him, he stopped in Kamyaka. In that deserted forest, he saw the famous Droupadi, the beloved wife of the Pandavas, standing at the gate of the hermitage. Her form was radiant in its supreme beauty. It illuminated the forest region, like lightning on a dark cloud. "Is she an apsara, a daughter of the gods, or an illusion created by the gods?" Thinking this, all of them joined their hands in salutation and gazed at the unblemished one.

'The king of the Sindhus, Jayadratha, the son of Vriddhakshatra, was amazed and happy in his mind to see her unblemished limbs. He was deluded by desire and told King Kotikashya, “Who is this one with the unblemished limbs? Is she human? I do not desire to marry, since I have seen this extremely beautiful lady. I will take her with me and return to my own abode. O gentle one! Go and find out who she is. Whom does she belong to and where has she come from? Why has the one with the beautiful eyebrows come to a forest that is full of thorns? She has beautiful hips. She is the beauty of this world. She is slender of waist and her teeth are beautiful. Her eyes are large. Will she love me now? I will consider my desires to be satisfied if I can obtain this supreme of women. O Kotika! Go and find out who her protector is.” On hearing these words, Kotikashya, who was adorned with earrings, descended from his chariot and approached her, the way a jackal approaches the wife of a tiger, and asked her.’

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‘Kotikashya said, “O beautiful one! Who are you, standing alone in this hermitage and holding onto the lowered branch of a kadamba tree? O one with the beautiful brows! You are as radiant as the flames of a fire in the night, fanned by the wind. You are endowed with supreme beauty. Are you not scared of this forest? Are you a goddess, a yakshi or a danavi? Are you a beautiful apsara or a beautiful lady from the daitya lineage? Is your beautiful form that of a serpent princess? Are you a demoness who walks the forests at night? Are you the wife of King Varuna, or Yama, or Soma, or the lord of riches? Have you come from the abodes of Dhata, Vidhata, Savita, Vibhu or Shakra?[2] You have not asked us who we are, nor do we know who your protector is. O fortunate one! Increasing your respect, we are asking you who your powerful lord is. Tell us the names of your relatives, husband and lineage, and also the details of what you are doing here. I am the son of King Suratha and men know me as Kotikashya. The one who is seated on that golden chariot, like oblations being poured into the fire in an altar, is the king of Trigarta. His eyes are as long as a lotus and that brave one has the name of Kshemankara. The foremost son of the king of Kuninda is behind him, holding a giant bow in his hand. He is wide in the shoulders and is gazing at you in wonder. He always dwells in the mountains. A dark and handsome youth is standing near the pond. He is the son of Subala, king of the Ikshvakus. O one with the beautiful body! He is one who slays his enemies. There is one who is followed by twelve princes from Souvira, waving flags.[3] All their chariots are yoked to red horses, like blazing fires at sites of sacrifices. Their names are Angaraka, Kunjara, Guptaka, Shatrunjaya, Sanjaya, Supravriddha, Prabhankara, Bhramara, Ravi, Shura, Pratapa and Kuhara. He[4] is followed by six thousand on chariots and elephants, horses and infantry. O fortunate one! If you have heard of the name of Jayadratha, the king of Souvira, that one is he. After him, there are his undaunted brothers, Balahaka, Anika and Vidarana, and all the other brave and young ones from Souvira. But they are all inferior to the king in strength. The king is travelling with these companions, like Indra protected by the Maruts. O one with the beautiful hair! Now tell us what we do not know. Whose wife are you? Whose daughter are you?"'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then princess Droupadi replied to the question that the foremost of the Shibis[5] had asked. She glanced gently and let go off the branch. She gathered her silken upper garment and replied, "O son of a king! I know in my heart that it is not proper for someone like me to address you thus. But there is no other man or woman here who can reply to your question. O fortunate one! I am alone here and must therefore, give my own reply. Listen. I am alone in this forest. Being always devoted to my own dharma, how can I speak to you then? I know that you are the son of Suratha and that men know you by the name of Kotikashya. O Shaibya! Therefore, I will tell you about my relatives.[6] Listen. O Shaibya! I am the daughter of King Drupada and men know me as Krishna. I have chosen five men to be my husbands. You may have heard of them, since they come from Khandavaprastha. They are Yudhishthira, Bhima, Arjuna and the two brave sons of Madri. The

Parthas have left me here and have left in the four directions to hunt. The king[7] has gone east, Bhimasena south, Jaya[8] west and the twins to the north. I think that the time has come for those great charioteers to return. Depart after they have honoured you. Descend and unyoke your steeds. The great-souled son of Dharma loves guests and will be delighted to see you here.” Having thus spoken to Shaibya’s son, Drupada’s moon-faced daughter thought of the dharma of attending to guests and entered the extensive cottage, made out of leaves.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When all the kings were seated, the king of Souvira heard Kotikashya’s words and replied to Shaibya. “On hearing her words, my mind is besotted by her. She is supreme among women. Why have you returned from there? O mighty-armed one! I tell you truthfully. Now that I have seen this lady, all other women seem like monkeys to me. She has stolen my heart, from the moment that I have seen her. O Shaibya! Tell me if that fortunate one is human.” Kotikashya said, “She is the famous princess Droupadi Krishna. She is the revered queen of the five sons of Pandu. That respected one is the beloved of all the Parthas. O Souvira! Now that you have met her, let us happily proceed towards Souvira.” But Jayadratha, the lord of Souvira and Sindhu, was evil in his inclinations. He replied, “Let us go and see Droupadi.” He entered the empty hermitage, like a wolf entering a den of lions.

‘He himself was the seventh[9] and spoke these words to Krishna. “O one with the beautiful thighs! Are you well? Are your husbands in good health? Are those whose welfare you desire in good health?” Droupadi replied, “Kouravya King Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, is well. So am I, his brothers, and the others you have asked about. O son of a king! Accept this seat and water to wash your feet. Let me give you fifty deer for your breakfast. Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, will himself give you black antelopes, spotted antelopes, deer, fawn, *sharabhas*,[10] rabbits, white-footed antelopes, ruru, *shambara*,[11] oxen, many deer, boar, buffaloes and many others of the deer species.” Jayadratha said, “You have already done everything to ensure a good breakfast for me. Come. Ascend my chariot and discover complete happiness. The Parthas are wretched and live in the forest. They have lost their fortune and have been dislodged from their kingdom. They have lost their intelligence. You should not serve them. It is not wise to be devoted to husbands who have lost their fortune. One should be united with a husband when he is united with prosperity, but no longer reside with him when the fortune is destroyed. The sons of Pandu are without fortune. Their kingdom has been destroyed for an eternal period. Out of affection towards them, you should not suffer that misery. O one with the beautiful hips! Be my wife. Abandon them and obtain happiness. With me, share the kingdoms of Sindhu and Souvira.” At these words of the king of Sindhu, which made the heart tremble, Krishna left the spot, a deep frown on her face. The slender-waisted Krishna ignored his words in contempt and told the one from Sindhu, “Do not speak in this way again. Are you not ashamed?” Expecting her husbands to return soon, the unblemished one began to distract him with words, mingled with more words.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Her beautiful face was crimson with anger. Her eyes were red with anger. Her knitted brows were raised. With her face suffused, Drupada’s daughter again spoke to the king of Souvira. “You have insulted famous maharathas whose poison is virulent. O foolish one! Do you have no shame? Each of them is like the great Indra and is devoted to his own task. They have not wavered in battle against yakshas and rakshasas. O Suvira! Never speak ill of an ascetic, who is full of knowledge and deserves to be praised, whether he roams in the forest or lives the life of a householder. Only dogs speak like that. You will descend into the mouth of hell that has now opened. I do not think that there is anyone in this great assembly of kshatriyas who can hold you by the hand and prevent this. You hope to defeat and kill Dharmaraja. The rutting elephant is like the peak of a mountain and roams around in the valleys of the Himalayas. You are like a man who wishes to chase it from its herd, armed only with a stick. You are childish. The immensely strong lion was asleep. You have woken it, trying to pluck eyelashes from its face. You will have to run away, when you see the wrathful Bhimasena. The immensely strong, terrible and fully grown lion was asleep in its mountainous cavern. Like a man who has kicked it, you wish to counter the angry and terrible Jishnu.[12] You are like a mad man, who has stamped with his feet on the backs of two dark, fork-tongued serpents, virulent in their poison. You are seeking to battle with two brave men, the youngest of the Pandavas. The bamboo, the reed and the plantain bear fruit. But then they die and do not grow in size. A crab conceives only so as to perish. Like that, you wish to grasp me, although I am protected by them.”

‘Jayadratha said, “O Krishna! I know all this and I know what those sons of kings are like. But you will not be able to frighten me with those threats now. O Krishna! We have all been born in the seventeen noble lineages.[13] We possess the six qualities.[14] O Droupadi! We think that the sons of Pandu are devoid of these. Therefore, swiftly ascend this elephant or this chariot. You cannot dissuade us with words alone. Hope, by lamenting piteously, that you are able to obtain the favours of the king of Souvira.”

‘Droupadi replied, “Though I am extremely powerful, the king of Souvira now takes me to be weak. He thinks that I am not sure of myself and therefore, I will plead and demean myself before the king of Souvira. Both Krishnas[15] will follow my footsteps, riding together on a single chariot. Indra himself cannot abduct me, not to speak of a weak and wretched human. Kiriti,[16] the slayer of enemy heroes, terrifies the hearts of enemies on his chariot. When he enters your army for my sake, he will consume it like the summer’s dry wood. Janardana,[17] followed by Vrishni warriors, all the mighty archers from the Kekaya lineage, and all the other princes, will happily follow my footsteps. The arrows released from Gandiva by Dhananjaya’s arms are extremely swift and make a thunderous noise. They will make a terrible roar. The large showers of arrows released from Gandiva are extremely swift and are like locusts. There will be the roar of conch shells and the roar of leather gloves. The wielder of the Gandiva will release them repeatedly. When those arrows pierce your chest, what thoughts will pass through your mind? You will see Bhima advance, with a mace in his hand. Madri's two sons will stride in every direction, vomiting the poison of their anger. O wretched one! You will repent this for a very long time. In my thoughts, I have never been false to my husbands, extremely deserving of respect. Because of that truth, I will see you bound and dragged by the sons of Pritha. I may be violently seized by you. But you are incapable of frightening me. I will encounter those braves of the Kuru lineage and return again to Kamyaka forest."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Her eyes were dilated. She saw that they were about to seize her and remonstrated with them again. She cried out in fear, "Do not touch me." She also sought help with the priest, Dhoumya. Jayadratha grasped her by her upper garment, but she forcibly pushed him away. Pushed by her, that evil one fell, like a tree that has been uprooted. However, she was seized again with great force and the princess began to sigh repeatedly. Krishna showed obeisance at Dhoumya's feet and then Krishna was made to ascend the chariot. Dhoumya said, "Without vanquishing the maharathas, you cannot take her away. O Jayadratha! You should remember the ancient dharma of the kshatriyas. There is no doubt that you will reap the fruits of this mean and evil act. You will encounter the brave Pandavas, with Dharmaraja at the forefront." The famous princess was being carried away. Having said this, Dhoumya followed, by entering the ranks of the infantry.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having roamed in all the directions separately and having killed deer, boars and buffaloes, the Parthas, foremost among archers on earth, assembled together. The great forest teemed with deer and predators and was full of birds. On hearing the resounding cries of the deer, Yudhishthira spoke to his brothers. "The birds and animals are headed in the direction that has been lit up by the sun. They are making harsh noises and seem to be in great excitement, as if this mighty forest has been invaded by enemies. Let us hasten, forgetting the deer. My mind is burning with a raging fire. My intelligence is clouded. The breath of life in my body is tormented. Kamyaka now appears to me like a pond that has been robbed of its serpents by Suparna,[18] a kingdom that is without its king and its fortune, or a pot that has been emptied of its liquor by drunkards." The brave ones then headed for the hermitage on excellent chariots, yoked to Saindhava[19] steeds that had the speed of the wind or a storm. While they returned, they beheld a jackal howling hideously on the left hand side. On noticing it, the king[20] spoke to Bhima and Dhananjaya. "This jackal has appeared on our left hand side and the inferior animal is speaking. This clearly shows that the evil Kurus must have mounted a fierce attack on us." They had gone out for a hunt in the great forest. They now entered the grove[21] and saw the maid who used to serve their beloved wife. She was weeping.

'O Indra among kings! Indrasena swiftly descended from the chariot and rushing to the maid, who was stricken with grief, spoke these words. "Why are you lamenting and why have you fallen down on the ground? I hope evil ones have not caused violence to the princess Droupadi. Her form is without blemish and her eyes are extremely large. Her form is equal to the bulls among the Kurus. Even if the goddess has entered into the earth, ascended to heaven or plunged into the sea, the Parthas will follow her steps there, because Dharmaraja is gravely tormented. They are the destroyers of their enemies and bear their difficulties, unvanquished. This supreme jewel is as dear to them as their own lives. Who is the foolish one who will dare to carry her away? Does he not know that she has protectors now? She is like the walking heart of the Pandavas. Whose body will now be horribly pierced by sharp and terrible arrows that will then enter the earth? O timid one! Do not sorrow over her. Know that Krishna will return today. Having killed all their enemies, the Parthas will be united with Yajnaseni." Wiping her beautiful face, the maid then spoke to the charioteer Indrasena. "Ignoring the ones who are like five Indras, Jayadratha violated this place and abducted Krishna. The traces remain and are still fresh. The broken branches have not yet faded. Swiftly turn[22] and pursue. The princess cannot have gone far. All of you are the equals of Indra. Prepare yourselves with large, expensive and handsome armour. Grasp your great bows and arrows and swiftly travel along her steps. Else, she may be confounded through scolding and sticks. Her face will dry and her mind will be bewildered. She may give up her body to an unworthy person, like sacred oblations thrown into ashes.[23] Else, she may become an oblation to the fire, like a chaff of grain. Else, a wreath may be flung onto a burning ground. While the officiating brahmana is inattentive, the offering of soma on the altar may be licked by a dog. When you went for a hunt in the great forest, the jackal has destroyed the lotus.[24] Your loved one's face has a fine nose and beautiful eyes. Her brilliant and pure face is as beautiful as the moonlight. Let it not be touched by an evil one, like a dog that eats up a sacrificial cake. Follow her swiftly. Hasten, lest time passes you by."

'Yudhishthira said, "O fortunate one! Be quiet and control your words. You should not speak harsh words while we are here. Whether kings or princes, if they are deluded because of the insolence of their strength, they are certain to be deceived."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Saying this, they departed swiftly. They followed the remaining trails of the others. Like predatory beasts, they sighed repeatedly. They twanged their mighty bows. Then they saw the dust raised by the soldiers, thrown up from the hooves of the horses. Dhoumya was in the midst of the infantry and he addressed Bhima, asking him to attack. The princes comforted Dhoumya, who was extremely miserable in his mind, and asked him to return happily. Then they swooped down on that army, like hawks on raw meat. They were like the great Indra in their valour. They were angered at Yajnaseni's molestation. On seeing their beloved stationed on Jayadratha's chariot, their rage flared up. Vrikodara, Dhananjaya, the twins and the king, all mighty archers, called out to the king of Sindhu to stop. At this, the enemies lost all sense of direction.'

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing Bhimasena and Arjuna, the intolerant kshatriyas raised a terrible roar in that forest. On seeing the foremost pennants of those bulls among the Kurus, the evil-souled King Jayadratha was robbed of his energy. He spoke to Yajnaseni, resplendent on his chariot. “O Krishna! Five great chariots are advancing. I think they must be your husbands. You know them. O beautiful one! Point out to me the separate Pandavas, riding on their separate chariots.”

‘Droupadi replied, “O foolish one! How will it help you to know those great archers, now that you have performed your terrible and evil deed? My brave husbands have arrived here and you will have no remnants left in this war. However, you are about to die and everything should be told to such a person. It is the dharma that I should answer your question. On having seen Dharmaraja and his younger brothers, I suffer no pain or fear on account of you. Two beautiful drums[25] sweetly sound at the top of his pennant. They are named Nanda and Upananda. He knows how to decide about the true nature of dharma and those who are successful, always follow him. His complexion is like that of pure gold. His nose is high. He is lean and his eyes are large. He is known as the foremost among the Kurus, Yudhishthira, the son of Dharma, and my husband. He provides refuge even to an enemy. He is brave among men and is a follower of dharma, ready to give up his life for it. O foolish one! For your own welfare, run to him quickly. Discard your weapons and join your hands in salutation. You will see a mighty-armed one seated on his chariot, like a fully grown shala tree. He is biting his lips and his brows are furrowed. His name is Vrikodara and he is my husband. He is immensely strong and brave and is drawn by well-controlled and strong horses. The deeds that he has done are superhuman. He is known on earth by the name of Bhima. Nothing is left of those who commit crimes against him. He never forgets an enemy. He thinks of every possible way to avenge the enmity and even after that, he is not pacified. He is gentle, generous, forbearing and famous. He is brave among men. He is in control of his senses and serves his elders. He is Yudhishthira’s brother and disciple. His name is Dhananjaya and he is my husband. Desire, fear or avarice will never cause him to abandon dharma. He never performs a cruel act. His energy is equal to that of the fire-god. He is Kunti's son and he withstands and represses all his enemies. He is knowledgeable about everything concerning dharma and artha. The learned one removes the fear from those who are frightened. It is said that his form is the most beautiful on earth. All the Pandavas protect him. He is devoted to his vows and he is dearer to me than my life. This brave one is Nakula, my husband. The second one is light of hand and fights with the sword. He is mighty and intelligent and he is Sahadeva. O foolish one! You will witness his deeds in battle today, like Shatakratu against the army of the daityas. He is brave and skilled in the use of weapons. He is wise and learned. He performs acts that bring pleasure to the king, the son of Dharma. He is like the moon and the sun in his energy. He is the youngest of the Pandavas and is loved by them. There is no other man who is his equal in intelligence. He is eloquent in an assembly of the wise. He is brave and always intolerant. He is wise and learned. He is Sahadeva, my husband. He is ready to give up his life or enter the fire, rather than act against dharma. He is always wise and devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. He is brave among men and is dearer to Kunti than her life. Like a boat filled with gems on the edge of the ocean, riding on the back of a shark[26] and destroyed, you will see the soldiers in your army destroyed and freed[27] by the sons of Pandu. I have thus described to you the sons of Pandu, whom you have foolishly shown disrespect for. If you escape from them with an uninjured body, you will have been reborn, though you are still alive."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then the five Parthas, equal to five Indras, ignored the terrified infantry, standing with hands joined in salutation. They angrily attacked the army of chariots from all sides, with dark showers of arrows.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'While this was going on, the king of Saindhava told the kings, "Stand firm. Attack. Surround them." When the soldiers saw Bhima, Arjuna and the twins with Yudhishthira, the terrible sound of battle arose. On seeing those tigers among men, intoxicated with their strength, like tigers, those from Shibi, Sindhu and Trigarta were despondent. Bhima grasped a mace that was constructed entirely out of iron and was decorated with gold. He rushed towards Saindhava, who had been driven by destiny. Then Kotikashya placed himself in between. He surrounded and attacked Vrikodara with a large number of chariots. Though the arms of the warriors hurled many spears, javelins and iron arrows at him, Bhima did not tremble at all. With his mace, Bhima slew an elephant, the rider and fourteen foot soldiers who were in the vanguard of Saindhava's army. Wishing to seize Souvira, in the vanguard, Partha[28] slew five hundred maharathas, who hailed from the mountains. In an instant, in that battle, the king[29] himself killed one hundred brave and chief Souvira warriors who had attacked him. Nakula was seen to descend from his chariot, with a sword in his hand. Like scattered seeds, he severed the heads of those who were guarding at the rear. Like peacocks falling from a tree, Sahadeva fought warriors on elephants from his chariot and struck them down with his iron arrows. Then Trigarta descended from his great chariot with a bow. He was skilled with the club and slew the four horses of the king.[30] On seeing the foot soldier who was near, King Dharmaraja, Kunti's son, pierced him in the chest with an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon. Struck in the chest, the brave one began to vomit blood and fell down before Partha,[31] like a tree that had been uprooted. Since his horses had been slain, Dharmaraja, together with Indrasena, descended from his chariot and climbed onto Sahadeva's giant chariot. Picking out Nakula, Kshemankara and Mahamukha attacked him from both sides with showers of sharp arrows. While they showered arrows on him like monsoon clouds, Madri's son slew them with one large arrow[32] each. Suratha, the king of Trigarta, was skilled in fighting with elephants. He stood on the pole of his chariot and had Nakula's chariot destroyed by an elephant. But Nakula wasn't frightened and descended from his chariot. He held a sword and a shield in his hand. He whirled them and stood his ground, as immobile as a mountain. Suratha desired to kill Nakula and dispatched his supreme elephant, which angrily attacked with its trunk raised. But Nakula approached the elephant and sliced off the elephant's trunk and tusks, from the roots, with his sword. The elephant was adorned with anklets. It lowered its head, and with a giant roar, fell down on the ground, crushing the riders through this fall. Having accomplished this great deed, Madri's brave and maharatha son ascended Bhimasena's chariot to find some rest. On seeing King Kotikashya rush towards the battle, Bhima sliced off his charioteer's head, who was goading the horses, with an arrow that had the head of a razor. The king did not realize that his charioteer had been slain by the mighty-armed one. With the charioteer killed, the horses ran hither and thither on the field of battle. He[33] was without a charioteer and wished to flee. But Bhima Pandava, supreme among warriors, killed him with a javelin he hurled with his hand. Using sharp and iron arrows, Dhananjaya cut off the heads and bows of twelve from Souvira. With his arrows, the atiratha[34] slew in battle Shibis, the foremost among Ikshvakus, Trigartas and Saindhavas, as soon as they came within range. Many elephants with flags and many warriors with pennants were seen to have been killed by maharatha Savyasachi. Headless torsos and torso-less heads were strewn all over the entire earth. Dogs, vultures, herons, crows, ravens, kites, jackals and birds feasted on the flesh and blood of warriors who had been slain.

'On seeing that the brave ones had been killed, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, was terrified. He freed Krishna and got ready to run away. His soldiers were in disarray and he lowered Droupadi.[35] Then that worst of men ran towards the forest to save his life. On seeing Droupadi, with Dhoumya at the forefront, Dharmaraja asked Madri's brave son to pick her up on his chariot.[36] After Jayadratha had run away, Vrikodara slew the remaining soldiers with iron arrows. On seeing that Jayadratha was running away, Savyasachi restrained Bhima from killing off Saindhava's soldiers. Arjuna said, "I do not see Jayadratha on the field of battle. It is because of that evil one that we confronted this calamity. O fortunate one! Let us search for him. Why are you killing these soldiers? This is a pointless task. What do you think?” Having been thus addressed by the wise Gudakesha,[37] Bhimasena looked at Yudhishthira and eloquently spoke these words. “The foremost warriors of the enemy have been killed. Others have fled in different directions. O king! Take Droupadi with you and return from here. O Indra among kings! Take Droupadi to the hermitage with the twins and great-souled Dhoumya and comfort her. I will not allow the stupid king of Saindhava to escape alive, even if he escapes to the nether regions or has Shakra as a charioteer.” Yudhishthira replied, “O mighty-armed one! Though he is evil in his soul, Saindhava does not deserve to be killed. We must think of Duhshala and the illustrious Gandhari.” On hearing these words, Droupadi was agitated. Though bashful, she angrily spoke to Bhima. The wise one addressed her husbands, Bhima and Arjuna. “If you wish to do something that brings me pleasure, kill that wretch of a man. Saindhava is wicked, evil in his intelligence and brings ill fame to his lineage. An enemy who carries away one’s wife, though there is no cause for enmity, or steals the kingdom, should not be allowed to live, even if he craves pardon in battle.” Having been thus addressed, the two tigers among men went to search for Saindhava. The king returned with Krishna, together with the priest.

‘When he entered the hermitage, he saw that the seats and the pots were strewn around. Markandeya and the other brahmanas had been dispersed. The assembled brahmanas had been lamenting over Droupadi and the immensely wise one met them, together with his wife and brothers. On seeing that the king had returned and Droupadi had been brought back again, after the defeat of Sindhu and Souvira, they were delighted. Surrounded by them, the king seated himself there. The radiant Krishna entered the hermitage with the twins.

‘On learning that the enemy had travelled only one krosha, Bhima and Arjuna spurred their horses and swiftly rushed after him. Manly Arjuna performed an extraordinary act. He killed Saindhava’s horses from a distance that was one krosha away. He possessed divine weapons and he wasn’t disturbed in times of difficulty. He performed this difficult task with arrows that had mantras invoked over them. Then the brave Bhima and Dhananjaya rushed at the terrified and solitary Saindhava, who had lost his horses and was disturbed in his senses. Saindhava saw that his horses had been killed and was extremely miserable. Dhananjaya had performed an extremely valorous task. He[38] made up his mind to run away towards the forest. But seeing that he was running away, mighty-armed Phalguna followed him and spoke these words. “With such valour, how did you think of abducting a woman by force? O prince! Turn around. Flight does not become you. Leaving your followers in the midst of an enemy, how can you run away?” But though addressed by Partha,[39] Saindhava did not turn around. The strong Bhima suddenly rushed at him, exclaiming, “Stay! Stay!” “Don’t kill him,” responded the compassionate Partha.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing the two brothers raise their weapons, Jayadratha was extremely miserable. He wished to live and fled swiftly. But the powerful Bhimasena descended from his chariot and chased the one who was running away. He angrily grasped him by the hair on his head. Raising him up, he angrily crushed him down on the ground. Then grasping the king by the neck, he thrashed him. When he had regained his senses, he expressed a desire to rise up. But the mighty-armed one kicked him in the head with his feet. Bhima struck him with his thighs and his fists. Oppressed by these blows, the king lost consciousness. But Phalguna restrained the angry Bhimasena, saying, “O Kourava! For Duhshala’s sake, remember what the king[40] has said.” Bhimasena replied, “This wicked and stupid one does not deserve to be alive. This worst of men has oppressed Krishna, who did not deserve it. How can I possibly do what the compassionate king has said? Out of your childish intelligence, you are also always trying to restrain me.” Having said this, with an arrow that had a head shaped like a half-moon, Vrikodara shaved off his head until there were five tufts of hair left,[41] though he[42] said nothing. Vrikodara then told the king, “O stupid one! If you wish to remain alive, listen to what I am telling you. In public gatherings and assemblies, you must say that you are our slave. I will then grant you your life. This is known to be the custom of the victorious.” King Jayadratha was scared for his life and agreed. He told Bhima, tiger among men and one who makes the field of battle beautiful, that it would be this way.

‘Partha Vrikodara then bound him so that he could not move and placed the unconscious one, dirty with dust, on his chariot. Following Partha’s[43] request, he placed him on the chariot and went to the centre of the hermitage, where Yudhishthira was seated. Bhima displayed Jayadratha, who was in that state. On seeing him in that state, the king[44] laughed and said, “Set him free.” Bhima told the king, “Tell Droupadi that this evil-minded one has become a slave of the sons of Pandu.” Then the eldest brother affectionately replied, “If you have any respect for me, act so as to set him free.” Glancing at Yudhishthira, Droupadi also told Bhima, “Set the king’s slave free, the one you have shaved with five tufts left.” The king was freed and he showed his respects to Yudhishthira. In bewilderment, the king[45] honoured all the sages who were there. On seeing Jayadratha held up by Savyasachi, the compassionate King Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, said, “You are free. Go as a free man. But do not act in this way again. Shame on you. You lusted after a woman. You are mean and your companions are mean. Who but the worst of men can act in this fashion?” Though he was the performer of an evil act, on seeing him bereft of his senses, the king who was the foremost of the Bharatas, was moved by compassion. “May dharma increase in your intelligence. May your mind never turn towards adharma again. O Jayadratha! Go in peace, with your horses, your chariots and your infantry.” Being thus addressed, he was ashamed. He lowered his face a little and was silent.

‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Stricken with grief, the king went to Gangadvara and sought refuge with the god Virupaksha,[46] Uma’s consort. He performed great austerities and pleased Vrishadhvaja. Pleased with him, the three-eyed one accepted his sacrifices in person.

The god granted him a boon and he accepted it. Listen to it. “May I be able to vanquish the five Pandavas, on their chariots, in battle.” Thus spoke the king to the god and the god replied, “No. They are invincible in battle and cannot be killed in battle. But you will be able to restrain them, except for the mighty-armed Arjuna, whom even the gods find impossible to assail. He is foremost among those who are skilled in the use of weapons. He is protected by Krishna, known as the one who cannot be vanquished, and who holds the conch shell, the chakra and the mace.” Having been told this, the king went to his own abode. The Pandavas continued to live in Kamyaka forest.’

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Janamejaya asked, ‘After they had suffered incomparable miseries because Krishna had been abducted, what did the Pandavas, tigers among men, do?’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having freed Krishna and vanquished Jayadratha, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira sat down with the masses of sages. In the midst of those maharshis, who listened and lamented, the descendant of the Pandu lineage spoke these words to Markandeya. “O illustrious one! I think that time, and destiny created by the gods, is inevitable for all beings and cannot be transgressed. Our wife is learned about dharma and conducts herself according to dharma. How can she have been touched in this way, like a false allegation of theft against a pure one? She has never committed an evil deed. She has never committed an act that can be censured. Droupadi has always practised the greatest form of dharma among brahmanas. The foolish King Jayadratha abducted her by force. Because of that abduction of her, he had the hair on his head shaved off. He was defeated in battle, with all his companions. It is true that we have got her back after killing the Saindhava forces. But the act of abduction, while we were distracted, has sullied us. This life in the forest is full of misery. We sustain ourselves through hunting. This means that those who live in the forest cause violence to those of the deer family. This exile has been brought about by relatives who resorted to falsehood. Is there any other man who is more unfortunate than I? Have you seen, or heard of, any such one earlier?”’

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‘Markandeya said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Rama confronted incomparable misery. His wife, Janaki,[47] was forcibly abducted by a rakshasa. Having swiftly killed the vulture Jatayu by resorting to maya, Ravana, Indra of the rakshasas, abducted her from the hermitage, travelling through the sky. Resorting to the strength of Sugriva, Rama bound a bridge over the ocean, burnt Lanka with his sharp arrows, and obtained her back.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “In what lineage was Rama born? What was his valour? How gallant was he? Whose son was Ravana and what was his enmity with him? O illustrious one! Please tell me all this in detail. I wish to hear Rama’s account, the one whose deeds were unsullied.”

‘Markandeya said, “In the lineage of Ikshvaku, there was a great king by the name of Aja. His son was Dasharatha, pure and always devoted to learning. He had four sons who were learned in dharma and artha—Rama, Lakshmana, Shatrughna and the immensely strong Bharata. Rama’s mother was Koushalya and Bharata’s was Kaikeyi. Lakshmana and Shatrughna, scorchers of enemies, were the sons of Sumitra. O lord! Janaka was the king of Videha and his daughter was Sita. Tvashtra[48] himself created her, so that she might be Rama’s beloved queen. I have thus recounted to you the births of Rama and Sita. O lord of men! I will now tell you about Ravana’s birth. Ravana’s great grandfather was the god Prajapati[49] himself, the self-creating great ascetic and the lord of all the worlds. He had a beloved son named Pulastya, born through his mental powers. Through a cow, that lord had a son by the name of Vaishravana. But he abandoned his father and went to his grandfather. O king! His father was angered at this. He created another self, based on his own self. In great wrath, the brahmana created Vishrava from half of himself, so that Vaishravana could be countered. But delighted, the grandfather conferred immortality on Vaishravana. He also made him lord of riches and a guardian of the worlds. He was given friendship with Ishana and a son named Nalakubara. His capital became Lanka, inhabited by masses of rakshasas.”’[50]

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‘Markandeya said, “The sage Vishrava was born from half of Pulastya’s body, out of his anger. He glanced at Vaishravana with great anger. O king! But on knowing that his father was extremely angry with him, Kubera, lord of the rakshasas, always tried to please him. Living in Lanka, the lord of the yakshas,[51] Naravahana, sent three rakshasis to serve his father. O tiger among the Bharata lineage! They were always ready to satisfy the great-souled rishi and were skilled in dancing and singing. O lord of the earth! Their names were Pushpotkata, Raka and Malini. O king! They were slender of waist and rivalled each other in trying to do their best. Being pleased with them, the great-souled lord granted them boons. As they desired, he gave each of them a son, equal to a guardian of the world. Pushpotkata gave birth to two sons who were the lords of the rakshasas—Kumbhakarna and Dashagriva,[52] unmatched on earth in strength. Malini gave birth to a single son named Vibhishana. Raka gave birth to twins—Khara and Shurpanakha. Vibhishana surpassed all of them in beauty. He was immensely fortunate and always performed rites of dharma. Dashagriva was the eldest of them all and was a bull among the rakshasas. He was immensely energetic, immensely valorous, immensely spirited and brave. Kumbhakarna surpassed all of them in strength. He was a terrible stalker of the night and was frightening in battle because of his skills of maya. Khara was powerful in the use of the bow, hated brahmanas and ate raw flesh. The terrible Shurpanakha always used to obstruct religious rites. All of those brave ones were learned in the Vedas and all of them were good in the observance of their vows. They lived with their father on Mount Gandhamadana.

‘“They saw Vaishravana Naravahana there. He was seated with his father and possessed great prosperity. Jealousy was born in them and they resolved to perform austerities. They pleased Brahma with terrible austerities. Dashagriva stood on one foot for a thousand years. He controlled himself and lived on the wind, amidst five fires.[53] Kumbhakarna lay down on the ground, controlled in his food and controlled in his vows. The wise and generous Vibhishana fasted and meditated, surviving on one dry leaf and performing severe austerities throughout the period. With delighted minds, Khara and Shurpanakha served them and protected them, while they tormented themselves with austerities. When one thousand years had passed, the invincible Dashanana[54] cut off one of his heads and offered it into the fire and the lord of the universe was pleased at this. Brahma then went there himself and asked them to refrain from austerities.

'"He tempted each of them separately with a boon. Brahma said, 'O sons! Stop! I am pleased with you. Ask for boons, except for immortality, and I will give you whatever you ask for. All the heads that you have offered into the fire out of your great desire, will be reunited with your body according to your wishes.[55] There will be no disfigurement of your body and you will be able to assume any form that you desire. There is no doubt that you will be able to vanquish your enemies in battle.' Ravana replied, 'May I never suffer defeat at the hands of gandharvas, gods, asuras, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, kinnaras and demons.'[56] Brahma said, 'You will have no fear from all those you have mentioned, but for man. O fortunate one! This is the way I have ordained it.' At these words, Dashagriva was satisfied. Because of his evil intelligence, the man-eating one ignored men. In the same way, the great grandfather addressed Kumbhakarna. But since his reasoning was clouded by darkness, he asked for a long period of sleep. Granting this, he repeatedly spoke to Vibhishana, 'O son! Ask for a boon. I am pleased with you.' Vibhishana replied, 'May my mind not turn towards adharma, even in times of supreme difficulty. O illustrious one! The brahmastra weapon cannot be instructed. May it become manifest in me.' Brahma said, 'O destroyer of enemies! Though you have been born in a rakshasa womb, your intelligence does not turn towards adharma. I am granting you immortality.’ O lord of the earth! Having obtained this boon, rakshasa Dashagriva defeated the lord of riches[57] in battle and won Lanka from him.

‘“The illustrious one left Lanka and went to Gandhamadana, followed by the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the kimpurushas. Ravana fought and won the Pushpaka vimana from him. Then Vaishravana cursed him. ‘This will not bear you. It will carry the one who will kill you in battle. Since you have treated your elder[58] with contempt, you will soon perish.’ O great king! Vibhishana, with dharma in his soul, followed him,[59] united with great prosperity. The illustrious lord of the riches was satisfied with his younger brother. The wise one made him the general of the armies of both the yakshas and the rakshasas. All the immensely strong and man-eating rakshasas and pishachas assembled together and instated Dashanana as the king. Dashagriva could assume any form at will and travel through the sky. Intoxicated with his strength, he attacked the daityas and the gods and robbed them of their jewels. Because he made the worlds scream, he came to be known as Ravana.[60] Dashagriva, with strength at will, caused fear among the gods.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Then all the brahmarshis, siddhas and devarshis, with Agni leading them, went and sought refuge with Brahma. Agni said, ‘O lord! Vishrava’s son, Dashagriva, is immensely strong and cannot be killed, because you have earlier granted him a boon. The immensely strong one is oppressing all beings with injurious acts. O lord! Save us from him. There is no one else who can save us.’ Brahma replied, ‘O Vibhavasu![61] The gods and the asuras cannot defeat him in battle. What must be done to subdue him has already been ordained. For that purpose, at my request, the four-armed Vishnu, foremost among brave ones, has already descended on earth. He will accomplish this task.’ The grandfather addressed these words to them. ‘With the masses of gods, all of you take births on earth. To aid Vishnu, all of you beget brave sons on monkeys and bears, strong and capable of assuming any form at will.' At this, all the gods, the gandharvas and serpents happily descended on earth, with respective parts from their own bodies. In their presence, the god who is the granter of boons,[62] instructed a gandharva lady named Dundubhi so that the task of the gods might be accomplished. On hearing the grandfather's words, the gandharvi Dundubhi took the form of Manthara in the world of men. She was hunchbacked. All the foremost among the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, begot sons on the chief women among monkeys and bears. All of them were like their fathers, in fame and strength. They could shatter the peaks of mountains. Their weapons were shala and tala, trees and rocks. All their bodies were capable of withstanding the vajra. They were endowed with great strength. They could assume strength and valour at will. They were skilled in fighting. Each possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants. They had the speed of the wind. Some of them lived where they wished. Others lived in the forest. Having thus decreed everything, the illustrious one, the creator of the worlds, instructed Manthara about what she should do and how she should go about it. On hearing his words, she carried them out with the speed of the mind. She went here and there, bent on creating enmity."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! You have separately related the births of Rama and each of the others. O brahmana! Now I wish to hear about the reasons for their exile. Please recount it. O brahmana! Why were Dasharatha's brave sons, Rama and Lakshmana, and the famous Maithili[63] exiled to the forest?"

'Markandeya said, "King Dasharatha was delighted at sons being born. He was devoted to rites and to the practice of dharma. He always served his superiors. In course of time, his sons grew and became greatly energetic. They became learned in the Vedas and their secrets and were skilled in the use of weapons. O king! When they had completed the period of brahmacharya, they got married. At each such time, Dasharatha was pleased and happy. Among them, the eldest was Rama and he was known thus because he pleased the subjects.[64] He was charming and wise and was the delight of his father's heart. Then the king thought that he was too advanced in age. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He consulted his advisers and the priests, who were learned about dharma, about instating Rama as the heir apparent.[65] All of them, the best of advisers, thought that the appropriate time had arrived. His[66] eyes were red. His arms were large. His gait was like that of a mad elephant. His arms were long. His chest was broad. He was dark in complexion. His hair was curled. He was radiant, handsome and brave. He was like Shakra in his strength. He was learned in all dharma. He was like Brihaspati in his intelligence. Everyone was devoted to him. He was skilled in all forms of knowledge. He was in control of his senses. He was pleasant to behold, even to his enemies. He controlled those who were not virtuous. He protected those who followed dharma. He had fortitude. He was unassailable. He was victorious. He could not be vanquished. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! King Dasharatha looked at such a son, one who extended Kousalya's[67] joy, and was extremely delighted. On thinking about the qualities of the valorous and immensely energetic Rama, he happily spoke to his priest. 'O fortunate one! O brahmana! There is an auspicious conjunction of Pushya nakshatra today. Let all the requirements be gathered and let Rama be invited.' Hearing these words of the king, Manthara went to Kaikeyi and spoke these words at the appropriate time. 'O Kaikeyi! The king has proclaimed your great misfortune today. O unfortunate one! A fierce, angry and virulent serpent is biting you. Kousalya is indeed the fortunate one, since her son will be instated. Where is your good fortune if your son does not obtain a share of the kingdom?' On hearing these words, she[68] adorned herself in all her ornaments. She was radiant in her supreme beauty, with a middle that was shaped like an altar. She approached her husband secretly. Smiling charmingly, as if in love, the sweet-smiling one spoke these honeyed words. 'You are always truthful in your promises. O king! You had earlier promised me a wish. Grant me that favour now and free yourself of the burden.’ The king replied, ‘I am ready to grant you the boon. You will get what you desire. Is there anyone who must be killed today, though he does not deserve to be killed? Is there any one imprisoned, who must be freed today? Who should be given riches today? Or is there anyone, from whom it must be taken away? All the riches are mine, except those that belong to brahmanas.’ When she heard these words, she bound the king to his promise. Knowing her own strength, she spoke these words. ‘Let Bharata be instated with the ingredients that have been arranged for Rama. Let Raghava[69] go to the forest.’ The king heard these unpleasant and terrible worlds. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He was so miserable that he could not say anything. On learning what his father had said, the valorous Rama, with dharma in his soul, went to the forest, so that the king might remain true to his promise. O fortunate one! He was followed by the prosperous Lakshmana, with the bow in his hand, and his wife Vaidehi Sita, Janaka’s daughter.[70]

‘“When Rama had departed for the forest, following the due dharma of time, King Dasharatha gave up his body. With Rama having left and the king having departed, the queen Kaikeyi had Bharata brought and spoke these words to him.[71] ‘Dasharatha has gone to heaven. Rama and Lakshmana have left for the forest. Accept this large kingdom, without any obstacles, and with all its thorns removed.’ On hearing these words, the one with dharma in his soul replied, ‘You have committed a violent deed. Out of avarice for riches, you have killed your husband and destroyed this lineage. O mother! O destroyer of the lineage! You have brought ill fame on my head. Satisfy your desire now.’ Speaking thus, he began to weep. Thus displaying his character before all the subjects, he left after his brother Rama, desiring to bring him back. He placed Kousalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra in vehicles at the back. Then extremely miserably, he set out with Shatrughna, Vasishtha, Vamadeva, thousands of other brahmanas and residents of the city and the country, with the intention of bringing Rama back. He saw Rama and Lakshmana in Chitrakuta.[72] He had a bow in his hand and was adorned in the ornaments of ascetics. But fixed on making his father’s promise come true, Rama dismissed him. He ruled the kingdom from Nandigrama, with the sandals in front.[73] Rama was concerned that the inhabitants of the city and the country might return again. He entered the great forest near the hermitage of Sharabhanga. He paid his respects to Sharabhanga and found refuge in Dandakaranya. He lived in the beautiful region along the banks of the river Godavari.

‘“While he lived there, because of Shurpanakha’s deeds, Rama had a great enmity with Khara, who used to reside in Janasthana. In order to protect the ascetics, Raghava, devoted to dharma, killed fourteen thousand rakshasas on earth. By killing the immensely powerful Khara and Dushana,[74] the wise Raghava brought safety to that forest of dharma again. With those rakshasas slain, Shurpanakha, with her nose and lips sliced off,[75] went to her brother’s abode in Lanka. Unconscious with grief, the rakshasi went to Ravana. With dried blood on her face, she fell down at her brother’s feet. On seeing her so mutilated, Ravana became senseless with anger. He gnashed his teeth in anger and jumped up from his seat. He dismissed his advisers and privately asked her, ‘O fortunate one! Who has done this to you, without thinking of me and disrespecting me? Who has had a sharp spear pierced all over his body? Who is sleeping securely and happily, having lit a fire by his head? Who has kicked a terrible and virulent serpent? Who has touched the teeth of a lion with manes?’ While he was speaking these words, sparks of flame issued from the openings in his body, like from the hollows of a flaming tree at night. Then his sister told him everything about Rama’s valour and the defeat of Khara and Dushana, accompanied by the other rakshasas. Having decided on what was to be done, having comforted his sister and having made due arrangements for the protection of the city, the king[76] rose up into the sky. He crossed the mountains Trikuta and Kala and saw the great and deep ocean, the abode of makaras. Dashanana passed over it and went to Gokarna,[77] the secure and beloved region of the great-souled wielder of the trident. Dashanana went to Maricha, his former adviser. Because of his fear of Rama, he had earlier become an ascetic.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “On seeing Ravana arrive, Maricha respectfully showed him homage and gave him fruits, roots and other objects. When the rakshasa had rested and was appropriately seated, the one who was skilled with words spoke these words to the one who was eloquent with words.[78] ‘Your complexion is not in its natural state. Is everything well in your city? Do all your subjects honour you, as they used to do earlier? O lord of the rakshasas! What task has brought you here? Even if the task is difficult to accomplish, know that it has already been done.’ Ravana told him everything about what Rama had done. After listening, Maricha briefly told him, ‘You must not provoke Rama. I am acquainted with his valour. Is there anyone who can withstand the force of the arrows of that great-souled one? The bull among men is responsible for my leading the life of an ascetic. What evil-souled one has directed you to this course of action that will take you to the mouth of destruction?’ On hearing this, Ravana angrily berated him. ‘If you do not act in accordance with my words, it is certain that you will meet with death.’ Maricha then thought to himself, ‘It is better to die at the hands of a superior being. Since death is certain, I will do what he wants me to.’ Maricha then replied to the lord of the rakshasas. ‘What help can I render you? I will do it even if I am not capable.’ Then Dashagriva told him, ‘Go and tempt Sita. Become a deer with jewels on its antlers and with a skin that is adorned with gems. It is certain that on seeing you, Sita will send Rama after you. With Kakutstha[79] gone, Sita will be in my powers. I will then abduct her. The evil-minded one will cease to exist because of separation from his wife. Render this help to me.’ Having been thus addressed, Maricha performed the rites with water for himself.[80] Extremely miserable, he followed Ravana, who led the way. The two went to the hermitage of Rama, the one whose deeds were unsullied. They acted exactly as they had planned it earlier. Ravana assumed the form of an ascetic, with his head shaven and with a three-poled staff in his hand.[81] Maricha assumed the form of a deer and they went to that spot. Maricha showed himself to Vaidehi, in the form of a deer. Prompted by destiny, she sent Rama after him.

'"With a view to please her, Rama swiftly grasped his bow. He entrusted Lakshmana with the task of protecting her and went after the deer. He had his bow and had tied his quiver. He had his sword and guards for his arms and fingers. Rama followed the deer, like Rudra after the deer that is a star.[82] The rakshasa appeared before him and disappeared again, taking him far away. Rama knew him to be who he really was. Knowing him to be a traveller of the night,[83] the wise Raghava grasped an unfailing arrow and killed him, in the form of a deer. Struck by Rama's arrow, he imitated Rama's voice and called out, in a piteous voice, 'Alas, Sita! Lakshmana!' When Vaidehi heard those piteous words, she was about to run in the direction of the words. But Lakshmana spoke to her. 'O timid one! Do not be anxious. Who can strike Rama? O sweet-smiling one! You will see Rama return in a short while.' She was weeping. At these words, because of the tendency of women, she suspected her younger brother-in-law, though his pure character was his adornment. The chaste and faithful wife uttered harsh words. 'O stupid one! This is not the time for satisfying the desire in your heart. I would rather take a sword and kill myself, or throw myself from the peak of a mountain, or enter the fire, rather than abandon my husband Rama and serve a mean one like you, like a tigress waiting on a jackal.' Lakshmana loved Raghava and was always virtuous. On hearing these words, he covered up his ears and left for where Raghava was. He grasped a bow and followed Rama's footsteps.

'"Meanwhile, rakshasa Ravana made his appearance. Though he was wicked, he assumed a gentle form, like a fire hidden under ashes. He disguised himself as an ascetic, because he desired to abduct that unblemished one. On seeing him arrive, Janaka's virtuous daughter invited him, with fruits, roots, a seat and other things. But the bull among rakshasas ignored all this and assuming his own form, sought to appease Vaidehi. ‘O Sita! I am the king of the rakshasas, famous as Ravana. My beautiful city of Lanka is located on the other side of the great ocean. Among the beautiful women who are there, you will shine with me. O one with the beautiful hips! Become my wife and abandon the ascetic Raghava.’ When Janaki Sita heard words like these, the one with the beautiful hips covered up her ears and said, ‘Do not speak such words. The sky may fall with its stars. The earth may be shattered. The fire may become cold. But I will not desert the descendant of the Raghu lineage. Can a she-elephant, after serving a giant elephant that is in musth and ranges the forest, touch a hog? How can a lady who has drunk choice liquor[84] and drunk nectar made out of honey, be attracted by the juice of the jujube tree?’ Having spoken these words, she entered the hermitage again. Ravana followed the one with the beautiful hips and restrained her. Censured by his harsh words, she lost her senses. But he grasped her by the hair on her head and rose up into the sky. A vulture named Jatayu, who lived on a mountain, saw the ascetic lady being abducted, lamenting, ‘Rama! Rama!’”’

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‘Markandeya said, “The immensely valorous king of the vultures, Jatayu, was the son of Aruna and the brother of Sampati and was a friend of Dasharatha’s. When the bird saw his[85] daughter-in-law in Ravana’s arms, he angrily rushed at the lord of the rakshasas. The vulture told him, ‘O traveller in the night! Let her go. Let Maithili go. How can you carry her off as long as I am alive? If you do not give up the daughter-in-law, you will not escape with your life.’ Saying this, he powerfully attacked the Indra among rakshasas with his talons. He struck him with his wings and beak and lacerated him in many ways and large quantities of blood began to gush out,[86] like a mountain spring. Thus struck by the vulture, who wished to do that which would bring Rama pleasure, he grasped his sword and sliced off the wings of the bird. Having killed the king of the vultures, and looking like a mountain through scattered clouds, the rakshasa grasped Sita in his arms and rose up into the sky.

Whenever Vaidehi saw a circle of hermitages, a pond, a river or a well, she loosened and flung down her ornaments. On the slopes of a mountain, she saw five bulls among monkeys. The intelligent one flung down an expensive and celestial garment there. Driven by the wind, the beautiful yellow garment fell down in the midst of those Indras among monkeys, like lightning in a cloud.

'"While Vaidehi was thus being carried away, the wise Rama had killed the great deer. While he was returning, he saw his brother Lakshmana. On seeing his brother, he rebuked him. 'How could you leave Vaidehi in a forest infested with rakshasas?' He thought about his being drawn away by a rakshasa in the form of a deer and of his brother's arrival and was tormented by thoughts. Having rebuked him, Rama swiftly approached and said, 'O Lakshmana! Is Vaidehi still alive? I might not see her again.' Lakshmana then reported everything that Sita had told him, including the words that Vaidehi had spoken later. With a burning heart, Rama went towards the hermitage and saw the fallen vulture, like a mountain. Fearing him to be a rakshasa, Kakutstha drew his powerful bow and rushed towards him, together with Lakshmana. The energetic one then spoke to Rama and Lakshmana. 'I am the king of the vultures. O fortunate ones! I am a friend of Dasharatha's.' On hearing these words, they put aside their bright bows and asked, 'Who is this who is mentioning our father by name?' Then they saw that the wings of the bird had been sliced off. The vulture told them how Ravana had killed him, for Sita's sake. Raghava then asked the vulture for the direction in which Ravana had gone. Indicating this with a nod of his head, the vulture passed away. Kakutstha understood the sign of the gesture to mean the south. He performed the last rites in honour of his father's friend. They saw the hermitage, with its cushions and vessels scattered and its pots broken. The place was deserted and infested with an army of jackals. Overcome with unhappiness and grief at Vaidehi's abduction, the scorchers of enemies headed south, towards Dandakaranya. In that great forest, Rama, together with Soumitri,[87] saw many herds of deer running in different directions. They heard the terrible cries of many creatures, increasingly roaring like a forest fire.

'"In a short while, they saw Kabandha,[88] terrible in form. He was like a cloud or a mountain. His shoulders were as extensive as a shala tree. He had large arms. His large eye was located on his chest. He had a giant mouth on a giant belly. With great ease, the rakshasa grasped Lakshmana in his arms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Soumitri was instantly overcome by despair. Then, glancing towards Rama, he dragged him[89] towards his mouth, and afflicted with despair, he[90] told Rama, 'Look at my state. Vaidehi has been abducted. I am in this dire state. You have been dislodged from your kingdom. Our father is dead. Together with Vaidehi, I will not witness your return to Kosala and your instatement in the earthly kingdom of our fathers and grandfathers. Fortunate are those who will see you consecrated with kusha grass, parched rice and *shami*[91] wood, with a face like the moon amidst scattered clouds.' In this way, the wise Lakshmana lamented in various ways. Undaunted in the midst of this calamity, Kakutstha told him, 'O tiger among men! Do not be immersed in sorrow in this fashion. While I am here, there is nothing he can do. Slice off his right arm, and I will sever the left.' While he was speaking, Rama cut off his left arm with his extremely sharp sword, as if it was branch of sesamum. On seeing his brother Raghava standing there, the powerful Soumitri hacked the right arm with his sword. Lakshmana repeatedly smote the rakshasa on his side and losing his life, the gigantic Kabandha fell down on the ground. Then a divine-looking being was seen to emerge from his body. He was stationed in the sky, like the resplendent sun in the sky. The eloquent Rama asked him, 'Who are you? I am asking you. Tell me. How did this happen? It seems to me to be extraordinary.' He replied, 'O king! I am the gandharva Vishvavasu. Because of Brahma's curse, I had to be born in the womb of a rakshasa. Sita has been abducted by King Ravana, who resides in Lanka. Go to Sugriva and he will help you. Lake Pampa is near Mount Rishyamukha. It has pure water and teems with swans and ducks. Sugriva lives there with four advisers. He is the brother of Vali, the king of the monkeys who wears a golden garland. I can tell you this much. You will see Janaki again. It is certain that the king of the monkeys knows about Ravana’s abode.’ Having said this, to the amazement of the brave Rama and Lakshmana, the extremely radiant celestial being disappeared.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Miserable at Sita’s abduction, Rama then went to Lake Pampa, which was a short distance away. It was full of lotuses and blue lotuses.[92] The wind was pleasant and cool and the forest was redolent with the pleasant fragrance of amrita. There, his mind turned to his beloved. That Indra among kings remembered his beloved and lamented, tormented by the arrows of love. Soumitri told him, ‘O one who honours those who are worthy! Such sentiments should not touch you, like a self-controlled man should not be tainted by disease or the conduct of the aged. You have obtained information about Vaidehi and Ravana. Now use manliness and intelligence to recover her. Let us go to Sugriva, the bull among monkeys in the mountain. Be comforted, since I, your disciple, servant and aide, am with you.’ At these many different words of Lakshmana, Raghava recovered his natural state and thought about what should be done next. The brave brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, bathed in the waters of Pampa. After rendering offerings to the ancestors, they departed. They reached Mount Rishyamukha, full of many roots and fruits. The brave ones saw the five monkeys on the peak. Sugriva sent his wise adviser, the monkey Hanuman, who was as tall as a mountain, to them. Having first conversed with him, they went to Sugriva. O king! Rama then had an agreement of friendship with the king of the monkeys. When the monkeys were told about what had to be done, they displayed the garment that Sita had dropped while she was being abducted. Having thus obtained assurance, Rama himself instated Sugriva, the lord of the monkeys, as the king of all the monkeys on earth. Kakutstha also promised to kill Vali in battle. O king! Sugriva promised to bring Sita back.

‘“Having thus concluded an agreement and having reposed trust in each other, all of them went to Kishkindha and based themselves there, desirous of doing battle. Having reached Kishkindha, Sugriva let out a giant roar, like the noise of a flood. Vali could not tolerate this. But Tara[93] restrained him and said, ‘From the manner in which the mighty monkey Sugriva is roaring, I think that he has obtained a protector. You should not go out.’ At that, the eloquent Vali, adorned in a golden garland, the king of the monkeys, told Tara, whose face was like the lord of the stars,[94] ‘You are familiar with the voices of all beings and you possess intelligence. See and find out whose protection this fake brother of mine has obtained.’ Tara, with radiance like the lord of the stars, thought for an instant. Then the wise one spoke to her husband. ‘O lord of the monkeys! Listen to everything. The immensely powerful Rama is Dasharatha’s son and has lost his wife. That great archer has contracted an agreement of friendship with Sugriva, with one’s enemy regarded as the other’s too. His brother is unvanquished, mighty-armed and wise Soumitri Lakshmana, who stands by him for accomplishing the task. Mainda, Dvivida, the wind-god’s son Hanuman and Jambavan, the king of the bears, are Sugriva’s advisers and stand by him. All these great-souled ones are immensely strong and intelligent. Resorting to Rama’s valour, they are enough for your destruction.’ But the lord of the monkeys disregarded her words, which would have ensured his welfare. He was full of jealousy and suspected that her mind was attracted towards Sugriva. Having spoken harshly to Tara, he emerged from the mouth of his cave. He went to Sugriva, who was stationed near Malyavan and said, ‘O foolish you! You are fond of life. But you have been defeated by me many times earlier. Considering our relationship, I have freed you earlier. Why do you wish to rush to your death again?’ Thus addressed, Sugriva, the destroyer of enemies, spoke to his brother for a reason, as if to indicate to Rama that the time had come. ‘O king! Know that I have been robbed of my wife,[95] and robbed of my kingdom, by you. What is the purpose of being alive? That is the reason I have approached you.’ Speaking to each other in these and many other ways, Vali and Sugriva engaged in a fight, with shala trees, tala trees and rocks as weapons. They smote each other and flung each other down on the ground. Both of them moved wonderfully and struck each other with fists. Both of them dripped with blood, lacerated by nails and teeth. Those brave ones resembled blossoming kimshukas. No difference could be detected between the two fighters. Then Hanuman placed a garland around Sugriva's neck.[96] With that garland round his neck, the brave one was as radiant and handsome as Mount Malaya with a garland of clouds. Recognizing Sugriva through that mark, the great archer Rama drew his giant bow and chose Vali as a target. The twang of the bow was like the sound of a machine. Pierced in the heart through the arrow, Vali fell down. With his heart pierced and wounded, he began to vomit blood through his mouth. He saw Rama standing there, together with Soumitri. He rebuked Kakutstha and fell down unconscious on the ground. Tara saw him on the ground, like a dislodged lord of the stars. With Vali slain, Sugriva obtained Kishkindha back and also Tara, with a face like the lord of the stars, now that her lord had fallen. Worshipped by Sugriva, the wise Rama lived on the beautiful slopes of Malyavan for four months.

'"Having arrived at his city of Lanka, Ravana was overcome by the force of desire. He instated Sita in a house that was like Nandana.[97] It was located near a grove of ashoka trees and was like the hermitage of an asectic. She wore the garb of an ascetic and thinking of her husband, became lean. She was devoted to fasting and austerities. The large-eyed one lived there in misery, surviving on fruits and roots. To guard her, the lord of the rakshasas appointed rakshasis. They held lances, swords, spears, axes, clubs and flaming brands. Some of them had two eyes, others had three eyes. Some had eyes on the forehead. Some had long tongues, others had no tongue. Some had three breasts and one leg. Others had three heads of matted hair and one eye. These and others had flaming eyes. Their hair was as ugly as that of a young camel.[98] Incessantly, night and day, they surrounded Sita. Those pishachis were gruesome to look at and had terrible voices. They always scolded the black-eyed one in terrible and harsh words. 'Let us eat her. Let us tear her into shreds that are as small as sesamum. She lives here, but she disregards our lord.’ Thus did they censure and terrify her repeatedly. Afflicted with grief for her husband, she sighed and replied, ‘O aryas! Eat me up swiftly. I have no desire to be alive, without the lotus-eyed one[99] who has dark and curly hair. Separated from my beloved, I would rather live without food and shrivel away my frame, like a serpent inside a tala tree. But for Raghava, I will not go to any other man. Know this to be the truth. And do what you wish with me, thereafter.’ On hearing these words, the rakshasis, whose voices were grating, went and told the Indra of the rakshasas everything that had transpired.

‘“When all of them had left, a rakshasi named Trijata, who was learned about dharma and pleasant in speech, comforted Vaidehi. ‘O Sita! I will tell you something. O friend! Have trust in me. Give up your fear. O one with the beautiful thighs! Listen to my words. There is an intelligent and old bull among the rakshasas, by the name of Avindhya. With Rama’s welfare in mind, and for your sake, he told me this. “Having comforted and assured Sita, tell her these words of mine. Her husband Rama, with the powerful Lakshmana following him, are both well. For your sake, the illustrious Raghava has become friends with the king of the monkeys, who is like Shakra in his energy. O timid one! Have no fear. Ravana is censured by the worlds. O unblemished one! You are protected by Nalakubara’s curse. In earlier times, the evil one was cursed when he sought to obtain Rambha as his wife. This one is not in control of his senses. But he is incapable of forcibly violating any woman. Protected by Sugriva, and together with Soumitri, your wise husband will swiftly arrive here and will set you free. I have had an extremely terrible dream, signifying terrible calamity and the destruction of the evil-minded one who has demolished the lineage of Pulastya. That evil-souled roamer of the night is the performer of mean deeds and is terrible. Because of his nature and the taint of wicked conduct, he increases the fear of all beings. Having lost his senses because of destiny, he challenges all the gods. In my dreams, I have seen all the portents of his destruction. Smeared in oil and with his head shaven, Dashanana was immersed in mud. He was stationed on a chariot drawn by donkeys and was dancing. I have seen Kumbhakarna and the others naked, with their heads fallen. They were decorated with red garlands and ointments and were being dragged towards a southern direction.[100] I have seen Vibhishana alone, climbing up Mount Shveta, decorated with white garlands and ointments, crowned, and with a white umbrella over his head. He and his four advisers, bedecked with white garlands and ointments, will climb Mount Shveta and be freed from this great danger. The earth and the oceans will be made turbulent with Rama's weapons. Your husband will fill the earth with his fame. I have seen Lakshmana, astride a collection of bones. He was eating honey and payasa. He was glancing in all the directions. I have seen you protected by a tiger, weeping and with your body covered in blood. You have repeatedly travelled in a northern direction. O Vaidehi! O Sita! You will soon be reunited with your husband Raghava, together with his brother, and will find joy."' When the maiden with the eyes of a young deer heard these words of Trijata, she became hopeful of again being reunited with her husband. When those terrible and extremely fearsome pishachis returned, they saw her seated with Trijata, as she had been earlier."'

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'Markandeya said, "She was sorrowful and miserable on account of her husband. She was attired in soiled garments and what remained of her gems and ornaments. She was devoted to her husband and was weeping. She was seated on a slab of stone and was served by the rakshasis. Oppressed by the arrows of love, Ravana came to see her. The gods, danavas, gandharvas, yakshas and kimpurushas had not managed to vanquish him in battle. Oppressed by Kandarpa,[101] he went to the grove of ashoka trees. He was radiant and was attired in celestial garments. He had resplendent and jewelled earrings. He wore colourful garlands and a crown and was like spring personified. Having adorned himself carefully, he looked like *kalpavriksha.*[102] But with all these adornments, he was as terrible as a *chaitya* tree[103] in a cremation ground. The traveller of the night approached the slender-waisted one, and looked like the planet Saturn approaching Rohini. Having greeted the one with the beautiful hips and struck by the arrows of the one who has the flower as a banner,[104] he spoke these words to the one who was as terrified as a doe. 'O Sita! You have shown favours towards your husband for a long time. O one who is slender in form! Show me your favours. You should be adorned. O one with the beautiful hips! Love me, adorned in expensive garments and ornaments. O beautiful one! Be the foremost among all my women. I have daughters of the gods and the women of rajarshis. I have daughters of the danavas and the women of daityas. Fourteen crore[105] pishachas await my word and double that number of rakshasas, the eaters of men and the performers of terrible deeds. Three times that number of yakshas carry out my instructions. Only a few have sought refuge with my brother, the lord of riches. O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful thighs. When I am in my drinking hall, gandharvas and apsaras always attend on me, as they attend on my brother. I am the son of the brahmana rishi, the sage Vishrava himself. My fame is renowned as the fifth guardian of the world.[106] I eat celestial food and I have many different kinds of drink. O beautiful one! Whatever the thirty gods have, I possess that. Let all the evils of your sojourn in the forest be gone. O one with the beautiful hips! Be my wife, like Mandodari.'[107] Thus addressed, Vaidehi, the one with the beautiful face, turned her face away.

'"She thought of the traveller of the night as no more than a blade of grass and spoke to him, with inauspicious tears from her eyes drenching her firm breasts and beautiful thighs. Accepting her husband to be a god, Vaidehi spoke these words to the mean one. 'O lord of the rakshasas! I am unfortunate that I have had to listen to such words from you. I am miserable and unlucky that I have heard such words. O fortunate one! Be fortunate in your happiness, but turn these thoughts away. I am another man's wife and am always devoted to my husband. This helpless woman cannot be an appropriate wife for you. What pleasure will you find from violating a helpless woman? Your father is a brahmana. He was born from Brahma and is the equal of Prajapati. If you are the equal of a guardian of the world, how do you not follow dharma? Do you not have any shame at naming your brother, the lord of riches and the king of the yakshas,[108] the friend of the lord Maheshvara?' Having said this, the heavy-breasted Sita trembled and wept. The one who was slender in form covered her head and her face with her garment. Her hair was long and was braided well. Hanging from her head, it looked like a delicate and dark serpent. The indignant one was weeping. On hearing those extremely cruel words spoken by Sita and being rejected, Ravana, whose intelligence was wicked, spoke again. 'O Sita! Let the one with the makara on his banner burn my limbs through desire.[109] O one with the beautiful smile! O one with the beautiful hips! But I will not enjoy you against your wishes. What can I possibly do? Even now, you are devoted to Rama, a human who is nothing but our food.' Thus addressing the one with the unblemished limbs, the lord of masses of rakshasas instantly disappeared and went in whatever direction he desired. Surrounded by the rakshasis, Vaidehi was overcome by grief. Served by Trijata, she resided there."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Raghava, together with Soumitri, lived under Sugriva's protection on the slopes of Malyavan, he saw the clear sky. In that clear sky, the destroyer of enemies saw the unblemished moon,[110] the planets, the nakshatras and the stars. The breeze was redolent with the fragrance of water lilies, blue lotuses and lotuses.[111] The dweller in that cool mountain was suddenly stirred. The one with dharma in his soul was distracted at the thought of Sita captive in the rakshasa's abode. One morning, he spoke to the brave Lakshmana. 'O Lakshmana! Go to Kishkindha and seek out the lord of monkeys. He is intoxicated and ungrateful, follows the dharma of the vulgar and is only learned about his own selfish interests. That stupid one, the worst of the lineage, has been instated by me in the kingdom and all the monkeys, apes[112] and bears show him homage. O mighty-armed one! O extender of Raghu's lineage! With your aid, it is for his sake that I slew Vali in the forest of Kishkindha. I think that worst of monkeys to be the most ungrateful on earth. O Lakshmana! That stupid one ignores me and does not know me now. I think that, because of his ignorance, he does not know how to honour an agreement. He ignores me, though I have performed a good deed for him. If he lazily indulges in the happiness of desires, you must send him along the path followed by Vali, the destination of all beings. O Kakutstha! But if that bull among monkeys acts to as to serve our purpose, quickly bring him here. Go without any delay.' Lakshmana was always devoted to the words of his elders. Thus addressed by his brother, he grasped his beautiful bow, arrows and the string of the bow and departed.

'"On reaching the gates of Kishkindha, he entered, without anyone stopping him. Thinking him to be angry, the king of the monkeys went out to welcome him. With his wife, and humble in soul, Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, welcomed him and happily offered homage to the one who should be honoured. Without any fear, Soumitri told him Rama's words. O Indra among kings! On hearing all this, Sugriva, the lord of the monkeys, joined his hands in salutation. With his servants and wives, he spoke these words to Lakshmana, elephant among men. 'O Lakshmana! I am not evil in intelligence. Nor am I ungrateful, or one without compassion. Listen to the efforts I have made to find Sita. Skilled monkeys have been sent by me in all the directions. One month has been decided for all of them to return. O brave one! The entire earth, with its forests, mountains, villages, towns and mines, girded by the ocean, will be searched by them. That month will be complete in another five nights. Then, together with Rama, you will learn about the great service I have rendered.' Thus addressed by the wise Indra among monkeys, Lakshmana happily discarded his anger and returned the homage to Sugriva. Accompanied by Sugriva, he returned to Rama, who was on the slopes of Malyavan, and told him about what had been done towards their objective. As had been said, the foremost among monkeys began to return in their thousands, those who had gone in the three directions, other than towards the south. They told Rama, 'We have searched the entire earth, with the ocean as a girdle. But we have not been able to see Vaidehi or Ravana.' Though his heart was grief-stricken at this, Kakutstha was still hopeful and waited for the bulls among the monkeys who had gone in a southern direction.

'"When two months had passed, some monkeys hurriedly approached Sugriva and told him these words. 'O foremost among monkeys! O king! The great and extensive grove of Madhuvana was always protected by Vali. It is now being enjoyed by the son of the wind,[113] Vali's son Angada and other bulls among monkeys whom you had sent out in a southern direction.' Such acts were only possible by servants who had accomplished their duties. On hearing of this conduct, he[114] thought that they must have been successful. The wise bull among monkeys went to Rama and told him this. Rama also thought that Maithili must have been seen. When those monkeys, with Hanuman at the forefront, had rested, they approached the king of the monkeys, who was with Rama and Lakshmana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On observing Hanuman's gait and the complexion of his face, Rama was convinced that Sita must have been seen. The monkeys, with Hanuman at the forefront, were successful in their objective. They prostrated themselves before Rama, Sugriva and Lakshmana.

'"Rama picked up his bow and arrows and spoke to the ones who had arrived. 'Will you give me my life? Have you been successful? Having killed my enemies in battle and having recovered Janaka's daughter, will I again rule the kingdom of Ayodhya? I have been robbed of my wife and honour. As long as Vaidehi is not freed and my enemies are not killed in battle, I have no desire to be alive.' When Rama had spoken thus, the son of the wind replied. 'O Rama! My news is pleasant. Janaki has been seen by me. After searching the southern direction, with its mountains, forests and mines, we were exhausted. After some time, we saw a giant cave. We entered it and it was many yojanas long. It was dark, forested, deep and infested with insects. We traversed a long way through it and then we saw the splendour of the sun and a celestial palace nearby. O Raghava! That residence belonged to the daitya Maya. A lady ascetic named Prabhavati was engaged in austerities there. She gave us many objects to eat and drink. When we had regained our strength after eating, we proceeded along the road that she had pointed out. Emerging,[115] we saw the salty ocean and near it, the great mountains Sahya, Malaya and Dardura. Ascending Malaya, we beheld Varuna's abode and were extremely miserable, dejected and tired. We gave up all hope of life. We thought about this great ocean, which was many hundreds of yojanas wide. It was the abode of whales, crocodiles and large fish and we were extremely distressed. We decided to sit there and fast to death. In the course of our conversation, we began to talk about the vulture Jatayu. We then saw a terrible and fearsome bird that was as large as the peak of a mountain. It looked like another son of Vinata.[116] Desirous of eating us, it approached us and asked, "Who is it that is talking about my brother Jatayu? I am his elder brother Sampati and am the king of the birds. In a contest with each other, we rose up towards the seat of the sun. As a consequence of this, my wings were burnt, but not those of Jatayu. That was the last time I saw my beloved brother, the king of the vultures. My wings having been burnt, I fell down on this giant mountain." When he told us this, we told him about his brother being slain. We briefly told him about the calamity that had befallen you. O king! On hearing this, Sampati was extremely miserable. O destroyer of enemies! In a dejected frame of mind, he again asked us, "Who is Rama? Who is Sita? How was Jatayu killed? O supreme among monkeys! I wish to hear everything about all this." I then told him everything about the misfortune that had befallen you and the reason for our deciding to fast to death. But that king of birds made us arise with his words. "I know Ravana and his great city of Lanka. I have seen it across the ocean, in a valley of Mount Trikuta. Vaidehi must be there. I have no doubt on this score." Hearing him speak these words, we swiftly arose. O scorcher of enemies! We consulted about how one might cross the ocean. But no one had the courage to jump across the ocean. I invoked the energy of my father. With that, I jumped across the great ocean, a hundred yojanas, after having killed a water-dwelling rakshasi.[117] I then saw the faithful Sita in Ravana's inner quarters. Eager to see her husband, she was fasting and engaged in austerities. Her hair was matted and her body was caked with dirt. She was lean, wretched and an ascetic. Knowing her to be Sita through these various signs, I approached her and spoke to her in private. "O Sita! I am a monkey who is the son of the wind-god. I am Rama's messenger. Travelling through the sky, I have come here, hoping to see you. The brothers and princes, Rama and Lakshmana, are well. They are under the protection of Sugriva, the Indra of all the monkeys. O Sita! Rama, together with Soumitri, has asked about your welfare. Because of his sentiments of friendship, Sugriva has also asked about your welfare. Your husband will soon arrive here, with all the monkeys. O goddess! Have trust in me. I am a monkey and not a rakshasa." Thinking for an instant about what I had said, Sita replied, "From what Avindhya has said, I know you to be Hanuman. Avindhya is a mighty-armed rakshasa, revered by the elders. He told me that Sugriva is surrounded by advisers like you. Go now." Having said this, Sita gave me this jewel. The unblemished Vaidehi has worn it for a long time. Janaki also told me these words, so that you have your trust in me. O tiger among men! While dwelling on that great mountain of Chitrakuta, you hurled a straw at a crow. From this, you should believe.[118] Hearing this, I myself burnt down that city.' Rama then honoured the one who had brought such pleasant news."'

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'Markandeya said, "While Rama was seated there with them, on Sugriva's instructions, the foremost among the monkeys began to assemble there. Surrounded by one thousand crores of swift monkeys, Sushena, Vali's illustrious father-in-law, came to Rama. Surrounded by one crore of monkeys, Gaja and Gavaya, the immensely valorous Indras among monkeys, separately made their appearance. O great king! Gavaksha was terrible to look at and had the tail of a cow. He arrived with sixty thousand crore. The famous Gandhamadana lived in Gandhamadana. He brought one thousand crore of awesome monkeys. The intelligent monkey, Panasa, was immensely strong. He brought ten, twelve and thirty-five crore. The brave and aged monkey, by the name of Dadhimukha, was illustrious. He brought a great army of monkeys that were awesome in energy. Jambavan brought a hundred thousand crore of bears. They were dark and terrible in their deeds. Their foreheads were lined. There were many other leaders of herds of monkeys. O great king! Innumerable numbers assembled for the sake of Rama. They roared like lions, with the complexion of shirisha blossoms. As they ran around, a tumultuous sound was heard. Some were like the peaks of mountains. Others were like buffaloes. Some were like clouds in autumn. Others had faces that were like vermilion. The monkeys jumped up and fell down. They leapt up and raised dust. Monkeys arrived from all the directions. The large army of monkeys was like the ocean when it is full. On Sugriva's instructions, they set up their residences there. When all the Indras among monkeys had assembled from all the directions, when the lunar day was auspicious and so was the nakshatra, the illustrious Raghava marched out with Sugriva at the appointed hour. As if to shatter the world, the army was arranged in battle formations. Hanuman, the son of the wind-god, was in the front of the army. Soumitri, who was without any fear, protected the rear. The two Raghavas, with guards for the arms and the fingers, and surrounded by those foremost among monkeys, looked like the sun and the moon amidst the planets. That army of monkeys was armed with shala and tala trees and rocks as weapons. It looked like an extensive field of rice at the time of sunrise.

'"Protected by Nala, Nila, Angada, Kratha, Mainda and Dvivida, the extremely large army marched, for the sake of accomplishing Raghava's objective. Without any obstructions, it duly passed through extensive areas with a lot of roots and fruit, with an abundance of honey and meat and full of pure water and camped on the ridges of mountains. That army of monkeys then arrived at the salty ocean. That force, with its many pennants, looked like a second ocean. It went to the forest along the shore and began to reside there. Then, in the midst of the chiefs among the monkeys, Dasharatha's illustrious son told Sugriva words that were appropriate for the occasion. 'What do you think is the way to cross over the ocean? This army is large and the ocean is difficult to cross.' Some monkeys, who thought of themselves as learned, thought that the monkeys were capable of jumping over the ocean. Others thought of boats and other means of crossing. But having comforted all of them, Rama replied, 'No. O brave ones! All the monkeys are not capable of leaping over this expanse of one hundred yojanas. Therefore, this cannot be a firm view. There are not enough boats to bear this army. Besides, the interests of trade should not suffer because of us. Our army is vast and the enemy will look for weak spots.[119] The idea of leaping, or using boats, does not appeal to me. No. I will attack this treasure of water through some means and the one who lives below[120] will then show me a way. If he does not show me a path, I will burn him up with great and unassailable weapons that flame with the fire and the wind.' Having said this, Raghava, together with Soumitri, touched the water, and basing themselves on an expanse of kusha grass, repulsed the ocean. Then the god of the ocean, the illustrious lord of male and female rivers, showed himself in a dream to Raghava, surrounded by masses of aquatic creatures. Surrounded by hundreds of stores of gems, he addressed him in sweet words. 'O son of Kousalya! O bull among men! Tell me what I can do to help you.' Rama told him, 'I am of the Ikshvaku lineage and can therefore be regarded as your relative.[121] O lord of the male and female rivers! I desire that you show me a path for my army, so that I can go and kill Dashagriva, the wretch of the Poulastya lineage. If you do not give me the path that I am asking for, I will dry you up with arrows that have been invoked with mantras to make them celestial weapons.' On hearing Rama's words, Varuna's abode[122] was extremely aggrieved and stood there, hands joined in salutation. It spoke these words. 'I do not wish to obstruct you, or create any obstacles. O Rama! Listen to my words. Having heard, decide on your course of action. If I grant a passage for your marching army at your request, others will use the strength of their bows to also command me. There is a monkey named Nala who is venerated by the artisans. He is the powerful son of the god Vishvakarma Tvashtra.[123] I will bear whatever he throws into me—wood, straw or stone, and that will become a bridge.’ Having said this, he disappeared.

‘“Rama told Nala, ‘Build a bridge across the ocean. It is my view that you are capable of doing this.’ Through this means, Kakutstha had a bridge constructed. It was ten yojanas wide and a hundred yojanas long. Even today, that is famous on earth as Nala’s bridge. It was created on Rama’s instructions and is established like a mountain. Vibhishana, the brother of the Indra of the rakshasas and with dharma in his soul, met Rama there, with his advisers, and the great-souled one welcomed him. Sugriva had his misgivings that he might be a spy. But Raghava satisfied himself about the truth through his actions, gestures and conduct and showed him the honours. He instated Vibhishana as the king of all the rakshasas and made him Lakshmana’s adviser and well-wisher. O lord of men! In accordance with Vibhishana’s instructions, within a month, he, together with his army, crossed the ocean over the bridge. Then, having reached Lanka, he caused its many and large gardens to be ravaged by the monkeys. Ravana had two rakshasa advisers named Shuka and Sarana. They disguised themselves as monkeys and came as spies, but Vibhishana had them caught. When those roamers of the night revealed their real forms of rakshasas, Rama had then shown to his army. Later, he let them go. Having set up the quarters for his army in a grove in the city, the brave one sent the wise monkey Angada as his messenger to Ravana.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “That forest was full of many roots and fruits and had plentiful supplies of water. Kakutstha made his army live there and protected it appropriately. Following the sacred texts, Ravana fortified Lanka. It was naturally unassailable and had firm walls and turrets. There were seven moats filled with deep water, infested with fish and crocodiles. While these were invincible, they were bolstered with stakes made out of *khadira*.[124] It was difficult to attach because of catapults,[125] watchtowers and rocks. The soldiers had pots that were full of venomous snakes and resin powder. They were armed with clubs, firebrands, iron spikes, spears, swords and axes. There were shataghnis[126] and maces dipped in beeswax.[127] All the gates to the city were guarded by mobile and stationary posts. There were large numbers of infantry and many horses and elephants.

'"Arriving at Lanka's gate, Angada made himself known to the Indra of the rakshasas and entered fearlessly. In the midst of many crores of rakshasas, the immensely strong one was as radiant as the sun, surrounded by garlands of clouds. Having approached Poulastya, who was surrounded by his advisers, the eloquent one delivered Rama's message. 'O king! The immensely famous Indra of Kosala, Raghava, has sent you words that are appropriate to the occasion. Listen to them and act accordingly. Countries and cities that obtain kings who are unrefined in their souls and are the performers of injurious acts, are themselves injured and destroyed. You alone are guilty of forcibly abducting Sita. But this will lead to the destruction of others who are innocent. Intoxicated by strength and insolence, you have earlier injured many rishis who lived in the forest and have insulted the gods. You have killed rajarshis and abducted their weeping wives. The time has now come for the fruits of your evil deeds to be reaped. I will kill you, together with your advisers. Be a man on the field of battle. O stalker of the night! Though I am a mere human, you will witness the valour of my bow. Free Sita Janaki. If you do not release her, with my sharp arrows, I will rid the world of all rakshasas.' Hearing the harsh words of the messenger, King Ravana could not tolerate them and became senseless with rage.

'"At the signs of their lord, four stalkers of the night seized him[128] by his four limbs, like birds against a tiger. Angada leapt up onto a terrace of the palace, with the roamers of the night hanging onto his limbs. The force of his jump made the roamers of the night fall down on the ground, their hearts shattered from the blow. He again leapt and descended from the top of the palace. He jumped over the city of Lanka and returned to his army. The energetic monkey then went to the Indra of Kosala and told him everything. Praised by Raghava, he then rested.

Then the descendant of the Raghu lineage, with the efforts of all the monkeys, who were as swift as the wind, had the walls of Lanka breached. With Lakshmana leading the way, Vibhishana and the lord of the bears[129] demolished the impregnable southern gate of the city. He[130] then invaded Lanka with a hundred thousand crore of monkeys. They were skilled in battle and their complexions were as red as that of young camels.[131] The monkeys leapt up and jumped down and moved sideways. As a result of the dust that was raised, the sun became invisible and its light was dimmed. O king! In every direction, the rakshasas, with their wives and their elders, were amazed. They saw the walls turn tawny because of the monkeys, which seemed to be like shoots of rice, with the complexion of shirisha blossoms, like the rising sun and as white as reeds. They destroyed the pillars made of jewels and the turrets of the catapults. They shattered, broke and flung away the implements of war. With great strength, they grasped the shataghnis, chakras, iron bars and rocks, and with the force of their arms, hurled them into the middle of Lanka. Attacked by hundreds of monkeys, the masses of travellers in the night who were stationed on the turrets, ran away.

'"Then, on the instructions of their king, hundreds and thousands of rakshasas issued out. They could assume any form at will and their shapes were distorted. With a shower of arrows, they drove away the forest dwellers. Resorting to supreme valour, they established themselves on the walls. Those terrible-looking stalkers of the night cleared the walls of the monkeys and hung on there, like masses of flesh. Pierced by lances, many bulls among the monkeys fell down. Many stalkers of the night also fell down, crushed by broken pillars and ramparts. Thus the battle raged on between rakshasas and monkeys, as the brave ones pulled each other by the hair and fought and devoured with nails and teeth. The monkeys and rakshasas were struck, died and fell down on the ground there, but they did not let go of each other. Like clouds, Rama rained down a net of arrows. Having reached Lanka, those killed the stalkers of the night. The indefatigable and firm-bowed Soumitri sought out rakshasas who were stationed on the fortifications and killed them with iron arrows. With Lanka breached and the objective towards victory having been attained, on Raghava’s orders, the army then withdrew.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “When those soldiers were quartered, some groups of Ravana’s followers, pishachas and rakshasas, attacked them—Parvana, Putana, Jambha, Khara, Krodhavasha, Hari, Praruja, Aruja, Praghhasa and others. Remaining invisible, those evil-souled ones entered. But knowing this, Vibhishana removed their powers of invisibility. O king! On being seen, all of them were killed by the powerful monkeys, who could leap long distances, and fell down on the ground. Unable to tolerate this, Ravana marched out with his army. He erected a battle formation known as *ushanas*[132] and attacked the monkeys. On seeing Dashanana’s army advance, Raghava also emerged and attacked the stalker of the night with a battle formation recommended by Brihaspati.[133] A battle then started between Rama and Ravana. Lakshmana fought with Indrajit, Sugriva with Virupaksha, Nikharvata with Tara, Nala with Tunda and Patusha with Panasa. On that field of battle, using the strength of one’s arms, everyone fought with another whom he considered to be a match. That terrible battle made one’s body hair stand up, it was like the ancient one between the gods and the asuras. It kept on extending, increasing the fear of those who were cowards. Ravana attacked Rama with a shower of spears, lances and swords. Raghava attacked Ravana with sharp iron arrows. In a similar way, Lakshmana pierced Indrajit’s heart. Indrajit pierced Soumitri with many arrows. Without hesitation, Vibhishana discharged at Prahasta, and Prahasta at Vibhishana, showers of sharp arrows that had the plumes of birds on the shafts. There was an encounter between powerful and great weapons. It afflicted all the three worlds and everything that was mobile and immobile.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Then Prahasta suddenly rushed at Vibhishana. He was harsh in battle and struck him with a mace. Though struck by the mace with a terrible force, the intelligent and mighty-armed one did not stagger and stood firm like the Himalayas. Then Vibhishana grasped a gigantic and large spear that had a hundred bells attached to it. Invoking it with a mantra, he flung it at the other one’s head. With the speed of the vajra, it descended with great force and sliced off the rakshasa’s head. He was seen to fall down, like a tree struck by the wind. On seeing Prahasta, stalker of the night, killed in battle, Dhumraksha rushed at the monkeys with great speed. On seeing his terrible army, which was like a cloud, the bulls among the monkeys suddenly lost their heart in battle. On seeing the bulls among the monkeys suddenly lose their heart, Hanuman, tiger among monkeys and son of the wind-god, rallied them. O king! On seeing that the son of the wind was firmly established in battle, all the monkeys swiftly returned. There arose a great and tumultuous roar that made the body hair stand up. The soldiers of Rama and Ravana rushed at each other. In that terrible battle, which made the ground muddy with blood, Dhumraksha used his arrows to make the army of monkeys flee. But Hanuman, son of the wind-god and victorious over his enemies, swiftly grasped that mighty rakshasa. An awesome duel raged between the monkey and the brave rakshasa as they tried to kill each other, like that between Indra and Prahlada. The rakshasa struck the monkey with clubs and maces. The monkey struck the rakshasa with trees, complete with trunks and branches. Then the gigantic and intelligent Hanuman, son of the wind-god, killed Dhumraksha, with his horses, chariot and charioteer. On seeing the supreme rakshasa Dhumraksha killed, reassurance returned to the monkeys and they attacked and killed the soldiers. Thus slaughtered by the powerful and victorious monkeys, the rakshasas lost their resolution and fled towards Lanka in fear. The shattered remnants of the stalkers of the night retreated and returned to the city. On returning, they told King Ravana everything that had transpired.

'"On hearing that Prahasta and the mighty archer Dhumraksha, together with their soldiers, had been killed in battle by the bulls among monkeys, Ravana sighed deeply and arose from his excellent seat. He said, 'The time has come for Kumbhakarna to act.' Saying this, he used many musical instruments, loud in their sounds, to awaken Kumbhakarna from his deep and prolonged sleep. He awoke him with a great deal of effort. When Kumbhakarna was no longer asleep and was comfortably seated, Dashagriva, the lord of the rakshasas, spoke these words to him. 'O Kumbhakarna! You are fortunate that you can sleep in this way. You do not know of the terrible and great fear that has arisen. Rama, with his monkeys, has crossed the ocean over a bridge. Ignoring all of us, he is engaged in a great slaughter. I have abducted his wife, Sita Janaki. So as to recover her, he had a bridge constructed over the great ocean. He has killed Prahasta and many of our relatives. O destroyer of enemies! No one other than you is capable of killing him. O supreme among strong ones! March out now. O tormentor of enemies! Kill Rama and all the others in battle. Accompanied by a large army, Dushana's younger brothers, Vajravega and Pramathi, will follow you.' Having thus spoken to the mighty Kumbhakarna, the lord of the rakshasas gave instructions to Vajravega and Pramathi about what they should do. Those two brave ones, Dushana's younger brothers, agreed to Ravana's instructions. With Kumbhakarna at the forefront, they marched out from the city."'

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'Markandeya said, "When Kumbhakarna marched out from the city with his followers, he saw stationed before him that army of monkeys, flush with victory. The monkeys came up to him and surrounded him from all sides. They struck him with many gigantic trees. Discarding their fear, others struck at him with their nails and teeth. Many monkeys, engaged in the path of battle, used different means of fighting and different weapons to attack the terrible Indra among rakshasas. Thus struck, he only laughed and began to devour the monkeys, like Panasa, Gavaksha and the monkey Vajrabahu. On witnessing the harrowing deed of the rakshasa Kumbhakarna, Tara and the others were extremely frightened and let out a large lament. Hearing Tara's cries and those of other chiefs among monkeys, Sugriva fearlessly rushed at Kumbhakarna. With great force, the high-minded elephant among monkeys arrived before Kumbhakarna and powerfully struck him on the head with a shala tree. Though the great-souled one struck Kumbhakarna on the head with great force, the shala tree hurled by the monkey Sugriva only broke and did not hurt him. It was as if he was suddenly awakened at the touch of the shala tree. Kumbhakarna laughed and roared and seized Sugriva with great force. On seeing Sugriva grasped by the rakshasa Kumbhakarna, the brave Soumitri, the delight of his friends, rushed forward. Lakshmana, the destroyer of enemy warriors, unleashed an extremely swift and extremely large arrow, with golden tufts, at Kumbhakarna. That arrow pierced through his body armour and body. Covered with blood, it then penetrated the earth. With his heart shattered, the great archer Kumbhakarna released the lord of the monkeys. Grasping a rock as a weapon, he aimed that large rock and rushed at Soumitri. While he was advancing, he[134] sliced off two of those upraised arms with arrows that were sharp like razors and he[135] then became four-armed. But Soumitri sliced off all those arms, which held rocks as weapons, with arrows that were like razors. The body now assumed a gigantic size, with many legs, heads and arms and looked like a mass of rocks. Soumitri burnt it down with brahmastra. Struck by that celestial weapon, the immensely valorous one fell down in battle, like a tree that has been burnt and uprooted by a stroke of lightning.

'"On seeing the swift Kumbhakarna, who was like Vritra, fall down lifeless on the ground, the rakshasas fled in fear. On seeing the warriors run away, Dushana's younger brothers restrained them and angrily attacked Soumitri. On seeing Vajravega and Pramathi wrathfully advance towards him, Soumitri attacked them with feathered shafts. O Partha! A terrible battle raged between Dushana's younger brothers and the intelligent Lakshmana and it made the body hair stand up. He enveloped the rakshasas with a large shower of arrows. Those two brave ones also angrily rained down on him. That extremely terrible battle between Vajravega and Pramathi and the mighty-armed Soumitri lasted only for a short instant. The Hanuman, son of the wind-god, grasped the peak of a mountain and attacked Vajravega, taking away his life. The immensely strong monkey, Nila, rushed at Dushana's younger brother Pramathi and crushed him with a large rock. There was again a terrible battle between the forces of Rama and those of Ravana, as they attacked each other. The forest-dwelling ones killed rakshasas by the hundreds and rakshasa*s* killed the forest-dwelling ones.[136] But the number of rakshasas killed was more than that of monkeys."'

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'Markandeya said, "On hearing that Kumbhakarna with his followers, the great archer Prahasta and the immensely energetic Dhumraksha had been killed in battle, Ravana spoke to his son, the brave Indrajit. 'O destroyer of enemies! Kill Rama, Sugriva and Lakshmana. O good son! You have earned a blazing renown for me by vanquishing in battle Shachi's consort, the thousand-eyed one and the wielder of the vajra.[137] O destroyer of enemies! O supreme among those who wield weapons! Remain invisible or visible. Use the divine weapons obtained as boons. Kill my enemies. O unblemished one! Not to speak of the others, even Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva are incapable of withstanding the touch of your arrows. O unblemished one! O mighty-armed one! Even Prahasta and Kumbhakarna could not complete the task of avenging Khara. Go and accomplish that in battle. Using your sharp arrows, kill my enemies and their soldiers today. O son! Increase my delight, as you have done in the past by making Vasava captive.' O king! Having heard these words, Indrajit agreed. He donned his armour and mounted on his chariot, made his way towards the battlefield.

'"The bull among rakshasas then announced his name and challenged Lakshmana, who bore auspicious signs, to a duel. Lakshmana grasped his bow and arrows and slapping the palms of his hands, rushed forward, creating terror, like a lion among small animals. A terrible and fierce battle started between those two, both of whom desired victory, were skilled in use of divine weapons and defied each other in prowess. When Ravana’s son, supreme among strong ones, could not get the better of his adversary through arrows, he tried harder. With great force, he hurled many javelins at him. But Soumitri sliced those down with his sharp arrows. Cut down with those sharp arrows, they fell down on the ground. Then Vali’s illustrious son, Angada, uprooted a tree and rushing at Indrajit with great force, struck him on the head with it. However, the brave Indrajit was unperturbed. He grasped a lance and hurled it at his chest. But Lakshmana cut it down. The brave Angada was near him and Ravana’s son struck the bull among monkeys on the side with a club. Vali’s brave son ignored the blow. The one who was victorious over his enemies wrathfully hurled the trunk of a shala tree at Indrajit. O Partha! That tree, angrily hurled for the purpose of killing Indrajit, destroyed his chariot, together with the horses and the charioteer. With the horses and the charioteer dead, he jumped down from the chariot. O king! Ravana’s son instantly disappeared through the use of maya. Knowing that the rakshasa was skilled in many forms of maya and could become invisible, Rama arrived at that spot to protect his army. He then aimed his arrows, obtained through boons, at Rama and pierced the immensely strong Lakshmana all over his body. The brave Rama and Lakshmana fought with Ravana’s son, who remained invisible through the use of maya and fought them with his arrows. In great anger, he unleashed hundreds and thousands of arrows at all the limbs of those lions among men. On seeing that he was invisible while showering down arrows, the monkeys grasped large rocks and took to the sky. However, the rakshasa was invisible. Ravana’s brave son used maya and oppressed them severely with his arrows. Struck by the arrows, the two brave brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, fell down from the sky to the ground, like the sun and the moon.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “When he saw that the infinitely energetic brothers had fallen down, Ravana’s son bound them down with arrows obtained through a boon. Those brave ones, tigers among men, were bound down by Indrajit's arrows in battle, like birds trapped in a cage. On seeing them fallen down on the ground, covered in hundreds of arrows, Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, stood around them with all the other monkeys—Sushena, Mainda, Dvivida, Kumuda, Angada, Hanuman, Nila, Tara and Nala. Vibhishana, accomplished in his deeds, arrived at the spot. He brought the brave ones back to consciousness with the weapon known as *prajna*.[138] Using the great herb *vishalya*,[139] invoked with a divine mantra, Sugriva removed the thorns of arrows from their bodies. With the arrows removed from their bodies, those foremost among men recovered their senses. In a short while, the maharathas were freed from pain and fatigue. O Partha! Seeing that Rama was freed of his fever, Vibhishana joined his hands in salutation and told the descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage, 'O destroyer of enemies! This guhyaka has arrived here from Mount Shveta. He has brought this water on the instructions of the king of the yakshas.[140] O scorcher of enemies! The great king Kubera has sent this water so that you are able to see invisible beings. When this water has touched your eyes, you, and whoever else you give the water to, will be able to see all beings that are invisible.' Having agreed to this, Rama accepted the consecrated water and purified his eyes with it. So did the great-minded Lakshmana, Sugriva, Jambavan, Hanuman, Angada, Mainda, Dvivida, Nila and almost all the chiefs among monkeys.

'"Having accomplished his task, Indrajit went and told his father what he had done. Having told him this, he returned to the field of battle. Desirous of battle, he angrily advanced again. With Vibhishana's advice, Soumitri attacked him. He was flush with victory and had not yet performed his daily rites.[141] Having recovered his senses, Lakshmana was desirous of killing the enemy and angrily assailed him with arrows. Each warrior wished to vanquish the other and a battle began between them. It was extremely extraordinary, like that between Shakra and Prahlada. Indrajit pierced Soumitri with sharp arrows that penetrated the heart. Soumitri wounded Ravana's son with arrows that were like fire to the touch. Touched by Soumitri’s arrows, Ravana’s son was senseless with rage. He discharged eight arrows at Lakshmana, virulent as serpents. But listen carefully as I tell you how the brave Soumitri killed the other one with three feathered arrows that were like fire to the touch. Through one of these, he sliced off the arm that wielded the bow from the body. With the second one, he dropped the arm that held the iron arrows on the ground. The third arrow was lustrous and wide. With this, he cut off the head, which had a beautiful nose and was adorned with earrings. Severed of the head and the arms, the torso looked terrible. Having killed him, the supreme among strong ones, killed his charioteer with arrows. The horses dragged the chariot to Lanka and Ravana saw the chariot, bereft of his son. Knowing that his son had been killed, Ravana was overcome by grief and his eyes widened in fear. He was about to kill Vaidehi. She was in the ashoka grove, yearning to see Rama. The evil-souled one grasped a sword and rushed to her. Listen. Seeing that the one with evil intelligence had decided on this evil act, Avindhya calmed down the enraged one, giving him these reasons. ‘You are established as a great king. You should not kill a woman. This woman is captive in your house and is already dead. In my view, she will not be killed through the destruction of her body. Kill her husband. When he is dead, she will be dead. Shatakratu is not your equal in valour. In battle, you have frightened Indra and the thirty gods several times.’ With these and similar words, Avindhya pacified the angry Ravana and he accepted the advice. The stalker of the night resolved to march out himself. Having sheathed his sword, he instructed that his chariot should be prepared.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Angry at the death of his beloved son, Dashagriva ascended his chariot and marched out, adorned in gold and gems. He was surrounded by terrible rakshasas, with many weapons in their hands. He scattered the foremost among monkeys and advanced towards Rama. While he was angrily advancing, Mainda, Nila, Nala, Angada, Hanuman and Jambavan, together with their soldiers, surrounded him.

In Dashagriva's sight, those bulls among bears and monkeys destroyed his soldiers with trees. When he saw that his soldiers were being annihilated by the enemy, Ravana, the lord of the rakshasas and skilled in maya, resorted to maya. Hundreds and thousands of rakshasas were seen to emerge from his body. They held arrows, lances and swords in their hands. But Rama destroyed all those rakshasas with his divine weapons. The lord of the rakshasas then resorted to maya again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dashanana created forms that looked like Rama and Lakshmana and they rushed towards Rama and Lakshmana. O king! On reaching Rama and Lakshmana, those stalkers of the night descended on them, with long bows in their hands. On witnessing the maya of the Indra among rakshasas, the dauntless Soumitri, the descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage, spoke these words to Rama. 'Kill those evil-souled rakshasas, who have forms like yours.' Rama then slew the ones who looked like him.

'"Then, in that field of battle, Shakra's charioteer, Matali, arrived before Rama in a chariot that was as radiant as the sun and was yoked to tawny horses. Matali said, 'This is the supreme chariot that belongs to Maghavan himself. It is named Jaitra and is yoked to tawny horses. O Kakutstha! O tiger among men! Shakra used this splendid chariot in the war against daityas and danavas and killed hundreds. O tiger among men! Swiftly ascend this chariot, driven by me in battle. Defeat Ravana in battle. Do not delay.' When he heard Matali's words, Raghava was suspicious, thinking that this might be more maya on the part of the rakshasa. But Vibhishana told him, 'O tiger among men! This is not the maya of the evil-souled Ravana. O immensely radiant one! Therefore, swiftly mount Indra's chariot. Delighted, Kakutstha told Vibhishana that he would act accordingly. He mounted the chariot and angrily advanced towards Dashagriva. When Ravana advanced towards him, all the beings began to lament. The gods roared like lions in heaven and sounded drums. The stalker of the night hurled an extremely terrible javelin at Rama, like Indra's vajra and like Brahma's raised staff. Rama cut that javelin down with sharp arrows. On witnessing that difficult deed, Ravana was overcome by fear. Dashagriva was angered and released thousands and tens of thousands of sharp arrows and other kinds of weapons at Rama—*bhushundis*,[142] javelins, clubs, axes, different kinds of spears, shataghnis and arrows sharp as razors. On seeing the distorted maya created by the rakshasa Dashagriva, all the monkeys were scared and fled in all the directions. At that, Kakutstha took a supreme arrow out of his quiver. It was excellent in the head and in the shaft and had a golden shaft. He invoked it with brahmastra and fixed it to his bow. When Rama invoked that excellent arrow with the mantra of brahmastra, on witnessing that, all the gods and the gandharvas, with Indra at the forefront, rejoiced. With the invocation of brahmastra, all the gods, gandharvas and kinnaras thought that the rakshasa only had a short span of life left now. Rama then released the arrow, unmatched in its energy. It was terrible and resembled Brahma's raised staff, destined to kill Ravana. It enveloped the foremost among rakshasas, with his chariot, horses and charioteer, in a great mass of blazing flames. The thirty gods, together with the gandharvas and the charanas, were delighted to see that Ravana had been killed by Rama, whose deeds were unsullied. The five elements departed from the immensely fortunate Ravana. Through the energy of brahmastra, he was deprived of all the worlds. The ingredients of his body, together with his flesh and blood, were burnt so much by the brahmastra that even the ashes could not be seen."'

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'Markandeya said, "Having killed the mean Ravana, the Indra of the rakshasas and enemy of the gods, Rama, together with Soumitri, was extremely delighted. Dashagriva having been slain, the gods, with the rishis at the forefront, praised the mighty-armed one and pronounced benedictions of victory over him. All the gods praised the lotus-eyed Rama, as did the gandharvas and residents of heaven, and showered down flowers and words of praise. Having thus honoured Rama, they returned to where they had come from. O one without decay! It was as if a great festival was being held in heaven.

‘“Having killed Dashagriva, the immensely famous lord Rama, the destroyer of enemy cities, handed Lanka over to Vibhishana. The immensely wise and aged adviser Avindhya emerged, with Sita at the forefront, and with Vibhishana leading the way. With great humility, he told the great-souled Kakutstha, ‘O great-souled one! Accept this goddess. Janaki is of good conduct.’ Hearing these words, the descendant of the Ikshvaku lineage descended from his supreme chariot. He looked at Sita, who was enveloped in tears. Her limbs were beautiful and she was seated on a vehicle, oppressed by grief. All her limbs were covered with dirt. Her hair was matted. She was attired in a black garment. On seeing her, Rama was concerned that Vaidehi had been touched by another. He told her, ‘O Vaidehi! You are free. Go. I have done my duty. O fortunate one! You once had me as a husband and therefore, I did not think that you should grow old in the house of that rakshasa. Hence, I killed the stalker of the night. How can a man like me, who knows the ways of dharma, accept a woman, even for an instant, who has been held in another man’s arms? O Maithili! Whether you are of good conduct or evil conduct, I no longer have any interest in enjoying you now. You are like oblations that have been licked by a dog.’ On hearing these terrible words, the young goddess suddenly fell down on the ground, like a severed plantain tree. Her face had been flush with delight. But that disappeared in an instant, like breath on a mirror. Hearing these words spoken by Rama, all the monkeys, together with Lakshmana, stood around motionless, as if they were dead.

‘“Then the pure-souled and four-faced god, the grandfather and the creator of the world,[143] descended from a celestial chariot and appeared before Raghava, as did Shakra, Agni, Vayu, Yama, Varuna, the illustrious lord of the yakshas and the unblemished saptarshis. King Dasharatha arrived in a radiant and divine form, astride an extremely expensive celestial chariot that was resplendent and was drawn by swans. The firmament was then crowded with all the gods and gandharvas. It was as beautiful as the autumn sky, studded with stars. The illustrious Vaidehi arose in their midst and the beautiful one spoke these words to Rama, whose chest was wide. ‘O prince! I do not blame you, because I know the ways of women and of men. But listen to these words of mine. The air that is inside beings is always in motion. If I have committed an evil act, let it free my breath of life. If I have committed an evil act, let fire, water, space, earth and air[144] free my breath of life.' Then a sacred voice spoke from the firmament. It echoed in all the directions and gladdened the great-souled monkeys. Vayu said, 'O Raghava! This is the truth. I am the wind that is always in motion. O king! Maithili is without taint. Unite with your wife.' Agni said, 'O descendant of the Raghu lineage! I am the wind that resides in the bodies of all beings. O Kakutstha! Maithili has not committed a crime, even in the slightest way.' Varuna said, 'O Raghava! The juices in the bodies of beings owe their existence to me. I am asking you to accept Maithili back.' Brahma said, 'O son! This action on your part is not surprising. You are acquainted with the dharma of rajarshis. You are virtuous and follow the path of good conduct. Listen to these words of mine. O brave one! You have brought down the enemy of the gods, the gandharvas, the serpents, the yakshas, the danavas and the maharshis. Through my favours, he had earlier become invincible to all beings. For a specific reason, I ignored that evil one for some length of time. It was for the sake of his own death that the evil-souled one abducted Sita. But I protected her through Nalakubara's curse. He had earlier been cursed by him[145] that if he forced himself on any woman against her wishes, his head was certain to shatter into a hundred fragments as a consequence. O immensely radiant one! You should not have any doubt on this. You are the equal of the gods and the immortals and you have performed a great deed.' Dasharatha said, 'O son! O fortunate one! I am pleased with you. I am your father Dasharatha. O supreme among men! I grant you permission to rule the kingdom.' Rama replied, 'O Indra among kings! I bow down before you, if you are indeed my father. On your instructions, I will go to the lovely city of Ayodhya.' O lord of men! On hearing these words, his father was delighted and said, 'O Rama! O one with the red eyes! Go and rule Ayodhya.' Bowing to the gods and worshipped by his well-wishers, he was united with his wife, like the great Indra with Poulomi.[146] The scorcher of enemies then granted a boon to Avindhya and honoured and gave riches to the rakshasi Trijata. Brahma and all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, then told him, 'O son of Kousalya! What boons that you desire shall we grant you today?' Rama chose devotion to dharma, victory over enemies and revival of the monkeys who had been killed by the rakshasas. O great king! When Brahma pronounced words granting this, all the monkeys regained their senses and arose. The immensely fortunate Sita granted a boon to Hanuman and said, 'O son! You will live for as long as Rama's fame lasts. O Hanuman! O one with the yellow eyes! Through my favours, divine delicacies will always be present before you.' Then, while all those with unsullied deeds watched, the gods, with Shakra leading the way, vanished.

'"On seeing Rama united with Janaki, Shakra's charioteer was extremely delighted and, in the midst of his well-wishers, spoke these words. 'O one for whom truth is valour! You have removed the misery of the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, men, asuras and serpents. Therefore, all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the serpents will speak of your deeds as long as the earth exists.' Speaking these words to Rama, supreme among all wielders of weapons, he[147] took his leave and having honoured him, departed in the chariot that was as resplendent as the sun. With Sita at the forefront, together with Soumitri, together with all the monkeys, with Sugriva leading the way, Rama arranged for the protection of Lanka. With Vibhishana at the forefront, he again crossed the bridge over the abode of sharks.[148] Surrounded by his chief advisers who followed him, he used the Pushpaka vimana, which travelled through the sky and could go wherever it willed.[149] With all the monkeys, the king with dharma in his soul stayed for a while on the shores of the ocean, where he had slept earlier. When the time was right, Raghava assembled them and honoured them. He satisfied them with gems and gave them leave to depart. When the chiefs among monkeys, the monkeys with tails like cows and the bears had left, Rama returned to

Kishkindha with Sugriva. With Vibhishana following and with Sugriva, from Pushpaka vimana, he showed Vaidehi the forest. Having arrived at Kishkindha, Rama, foremost among warriors, instated Angada, who had accomplished his appointed tasks, as the heir apparent.[150] Together with them, and with Soumitri, Rama followed the same road[151] towards his city. Having reached Ayodhya, the lord of the kingdom sent Hanuman as a messenger to Bharata and he[152] observed the signs and told him[153] all the pleasant news. When Vayu's son had returned, he[154] went again to Nandigrama. He saw Bharata there, his limbs covered with dirt and attired in garments made of bark, seated on his seat, with Rama's sandals before him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been united again with Bharata and Shatrughna, valorous Raghava, together with Soumitri, rejoiced. On being reunited with their elder and on seeing Vaidehi, Bharata and Shatrughna were delighted. Having held the kingdom as a honoured trust, Bharata was extremely happy and returned it to the one who had come back. On an auspicious day, under the nakshatra Vaishnava,[155] Vasishtha and Vamadeva consecrated the brave one. Having been consecrated, he granted leave to his well-wishers to depart for their homes—Sugriva, foremost among monkeys, and Vibhishana, the son of Pulastya. He honoured them with all kinds of jewels and they were extremely happy and rejoiced. Having done his duty, he unhappily gave them permission to go. Having shown homage to Pushpaka vimana, Raghava, the descendant of the Raghu lineage, happily returned it to Vaishravana.[156] Assisted by the devarshis, he performed ten horse sacrifices, without any obstructions, on the banks of the Gomati, where three times the normal stipends were given.'"[157]

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'Markandeya said, "Thus did the mighty-armed Rama, whose energy was infinite, confront misfortune and live in the forest in earlier times. O tiger among men! Do not grieve. O scorcher of enemies! You are a kshatriya. On the basis of the valour of your arms, you are traversing a road that is blazing in its resolution. Not even the slightest bit of sin is to be found in you. Even Indra, and the gods and the asuras, may become despondent along this path. Together with the Maruts, the wielder of the vajra killed Vritra, the invincible Namuchi and the rakshasi Dirghajihva.[158] Everything in this world stays with those who have aides. Who cannot be overcome in battle by someone who has Dhananjaya as his brother? Bhima is terrible in his valour and is foremost among strong ones. Madri's two twin sons are young and great archers. O scorcher of enemies! With such aides, why do you grieve? With such aides, you can vanquish the soldiers of the wielder of the vajra, together with the Maruts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With such great archers as aides, who are the equals of the gods, you will vanquish all your enemies in battle. Look at Droupadi Krishna. She was abducted forcibly by the evil-souled Saindhava, who was intoxicated with his valour. But these great-souled ones accomplished the difficult task of obtaining her back, after vanquishing and subjugating King Jayadratha. Rama got Vaidehi back without any such allies. Through his terrible valour, he killed the rakshasa Dashagriva in battle. O king! Use your own intelligence to think about this. Monkeys and black-faced bears were his allies, creatures from a different species. O best of the Kurus! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, do not sorrow. O scorcher of enemies! Great-souled ones like you do not sorrow."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus consoled by the intelligent Markandeya, the king discarded his weakness of spirit and spoke again.'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O great sage! I do not grieve for myself, or for my brothers, or for the loss of the kingdom, but for Drupada's daughter. When we were oppressed by those evil-souled ones at the game of dice, we were saved by Krishna. But she was again forcibly abducted from the forest by Jayadratha. Have you ever seen, or heard of, a woman as immensely fortunate and as devoted to her husbands as Drupada’s daughter?”

‘Markandeya said, “O king! O Yudhishthira! Hear about the great fortune of a lady born in a high lineage. The princess Savitri obtained everything. There was a king in the land of Madra. He had dharma in his soul and was extremely devoted to dharma. The great-souled one was devoted to brahmanas, was united with the truth and had conquered his senses. That king had the name of Ashvapati. He performed sacrifices, was generous in giving and was skilled. He was the beloved of the citizens and the inhabitants of the countryside. He was engaged in the welfare of all beings. He was forgiving and truthful and had conquered his senses. He had no offspring. Because he was advancing in years, he was concerned. In order to obtain offspring, he resorted to severe rites. When it was time to eat, he restricted his food. He became a brahmachari and conquered his senses. O supreme among kings! He offered a hundred thousand oblations to Savitri.[159] He ate in limited quantities and skipped every sixth meal. He lived with these rules for eighteen years. When eighteen years were over, Savitri was pleased. O king! She arose from the agnihotra,[160] and with great delight, showed herself to the king. The one who grants boons then spoke these words to the king. ‘O king! I am satisfied with your brahmacharya, purity, self-control, rituals and your wholehearted devotion. O Ashvapati! O king of Madra! Ask for whatever boon you desire. But do not make the mistake of disregarding dharma.’ Ashvapati replied, ‘I am desirous of dharma and have observed these rites because I desire offspring. O goddess! May I have many sons who extend my lineage. O goddess! If you are pleased with me, then I ask for this boon. The brahmanas have told me that obtaining offspring is the supreme dharma.’ Savitri said, ‘O king! Knowing of your intentions in advance, I have already spoken about your objective of obtaining sons to the grandfather.[161] O pleasant one! Through the favours granted to you on earth by the self-creating one, an energetic daughter will soon be born to you. You need not make any reply to this.[162] I am delighted and am telling you this on behalf of the grandfather.' The king acknowledged Savitri's words and requested that, through her favours, this might occur soon. When Savitri had disappeared, the king returned to his own house. He lived happily in his kingdom and protected the subjects according to dharma.

'"Some time passed. The king, who was regulated in his vows, impregnated the womb of his eldest queen, who was devoted to dharma. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The embryo in the womb of the princess of Malava grew,[163] like the lord of the stars[164] in the sky during shuklapaksha. At the right time, she gave birth to a daughter who had eyes like a lotus. The king happily performed the rites for her. Because she had been given by Savitri when oblations with savitri[165] had been rendered, the brahmanas and her father gave her the name of Savitri. The king's daughter grew, like Shri[166] personified. In due course of time, the girl became a maiden. Her waist was slender and her hips were broad. She was like a golden image. On seeing her, people thought that they had obtained a celestial maiden. Her eyes were like the petals of a lotus, blazing in their energy. On seeing that energy, no one dared to marry her. On an auspicious day, having washed her hair and having fasted, she approached the gods and offered oblations into the fire, according to the prescribed rites and accompanied with recitations by brahmanas. When this was over, the goddess who was like Shri in her form, took the remaining flowers and went to her great-souled father. Bowing at her father's feet, she first offered the remnants to him. Then, joining her hands in salutation, the one with the beautiful hips stood by the side of the king. On seeing that his daughter had grown up and looked like a goddess, the king was unhappy that no one had wished to marry her yet.

'"The king said, 'O daughter! The time to give you away has arrived. But no one is asking me. Therefore, you yourself look for a husband, with qualities that are like your own. If you desire a man, tell me about him. Marry whom you wish. After deliberations, I will give you away. O fortunate one! I have heard what brahmanas have recited from the sacred texts. Listen to these words, as I recount them. "A father who does not give his daughter away is condemned. A husband who does not cohabit at the right time is condemned. A son, who does not protect his mother when her husband is dead, is condemned." On hearing my words, swiftly go and look for a husband. Act in a way so that we are not condemned by the gods.'"

'Markandeya said, "Thus addressing his daughter, he assigned aged ministers to her, for the arrangements, and asked her to go. Having learnt of her father's instructions, the intelligent one bowed bashfully at her father's feet and departed without any hesitation. She was seated on a golden chariot and was surrounded by the aged advisers. She went to the beautiful hermitages of the rajarshis. She showed her homage at the feet of the revered elders who were there. O son! She visited all the forests, one after another. At all the tirthas, the king's daughter gave away riches to the foremost among brahmanas and went from one region to another."'

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'Markandeya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On one occasion, Narada visited the king of Madra and was seated in the midst of the assembly hall, conversing with him. At that time, after visiting all the tirthas and all the hermitages, Savitri, together with the ministers, returned to her father's abode. On seeing her father seated with Narada, the beautiful one lowered her head at their feet.

'"Narada asked, 'O king! Where did your daughter go and where has she returned from? Why do you not give this maiden away to a husband?'

'"Ashvapati replied, 'I sent her out on that task and she has returned now. O devarshi! Now hear from her whom she has chosen as a husband.'"

'Markandeya said, "The beautiful one was instructed by her father to recount everything in detail. She obeyed, and driven by destiny, spoke these words. 'There is a kshatriya king in the land of Shalva and he has dharma in his soul. He is famous by the name of Dyumatsena. Later, he became blind. The intelligent one lost his eyesight and his son was still young. Because of old enmity, a neighbour spotted the weakness and seized the kingdom. With his young son and wife, he left for the forest. Having left for the great forest, great in his vows, he performed austerities there. His son was born in the city, but grew up in the hermitage. His name is Satyavan and in my mind, I have accepted him as my husband.' Narada replied, 'O king! In her ignorance, Savitri has committed a grave error, by choosing the virtuous Satyavan. His father speaks the truth. His mother speaks the truth. Therefore, brahmanas gave him the name of Satyavan.[167] When he was young, he loved horses and fashioned them out of clay, painting them. He was therefore known as Chitrashva.'[168] The king asked, 'Is the king's son energetic and intelligent? Is he forgiving and brave? Is he truthful and devoted to his father?' Narada replied, 'He is as energetic as the sun-god and as intelligent as Brihaspati. He is as brave as the great Indra and as forgiving as the earth.' Ashvapati asked, 'Is the king's son, Satyavan, generous towards brahmanas? Is he handsome and large-hearted? Is his appearance pleasant?' Narada replied, 'According to his own ability, in generosity, he is the equal of Rantideva, the son of Samkriti.[169] In devotion to brahmanas and truthfulness, he is like Shibi, the son of Ushinara.[170] He is like Yayati in his generosity.[171] He is as pleasant to behold as the moon. Dyumatsena's powerful son is as handsome as one of the Ashvins. He is self-controlled, mild, brave, truthful and in control of his senses. He is friendly, without malice, modest and forbearing. To state it briefly, those who have grown old in austerities and conduct always say that he is established in uprightness and righteousness.' Ashvapati asked, 'O illustrious one! You have spoken to me about all his qualities. Now tell me about his faults, if he has any.' Narada replied, 'He has only one blemish. His life is short. One year from now, Satyavan will give up his body.'

'"The king said, 'O Savitri! O beautiful one! Go and choose another one as your husband. This is a great blemish that overshadows all his qualities. The illustrious Narada is worshipped by the gods and he has told me that his life is short. He will give up his body within a year.'

'"Savitri said, 'The die is cast only once. The daughter is given away only once. "I give her away," is pronounced only once. All these three occur only once. Whether his life is long or short, whether he possesses qualities or is without qualities, I have chosen him as my husband once and will not choose a second one. Having made up my mind, I have voiced it in words. The act occurs thereafter. My mind has been made up.'

'"Narada said, 'O best of men! Your daughter Savitri's mind is firmly made up. It is impossible to dislodge her from the way of dharma. The qualities that Satyavan possesses do not exist in any other man. Therefore, it seems to me that your daughter should be given to him.'

'"The king said, 'O illustrious one! The words that you have spoken are true and should not be disregarded. O illustrious one! Since you are my preceptor, I will do as you say.'

'"Narada said, 'May your daughter Savitri be given away without any impediments. I will have to go away now. May all of you be fortunate.'"

'Markandeya said, "Having said this, Narada soared up into the sky and went to the region of the thirty gods. The king began to make arrangements for his daughter's marriage."'

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'Markandeya said, "The king reflected about the objectives behind the bestowal of his daughter and began to make all the arrangements for the marriage. On an auspicious lunar day, he invited all the brahmanas, all the officiating priests[172] and all the priests, and set out with his daughter. The king went to Dyumatsena's hermitage in the sacred forest, and accompanied by the brahmanas, approached the rajarshi on foot. He saw the immensely fortunate and blind king seated there, on a mat of kusha grass, under a shala tree. In accordance with what is prescribed, the king worshipped the rajarshi and introduced himself with a few restrained words. The king who was learned in dharma offered the king[173] an arghya,[174] a seat and a cow, and asked him why he had come. He[175] then told him everything about his wishes and intended course of action and about Satyavan. Ashvapati said, ‘O rajarshi! This is my beautiful daughter, named Savitri. O one learned in dharma! In accordance with your own dharma, accept her as your daughter-in-law.’ Dyumatsena replied, ‘Dislodged from our kingdom, we have resorted to living in the woods. We are controlled and practise the dharma of ascetics. Your daughter does not deserve a state of living in the forest. How will she be able to bear that hardship?’ Ashavapati said, ‘Both My daughter and I know that happiness and unhappiness may exist or they may not exist.[176] Therefore, you should not utter such words to someone like me. O king! I have come here after making up my mind. I have honoured you affectionately as a well-wisher and you should not kill my hopes. Since I have come here out of love, you should not refuse me. In this alliance, you are my equal and I am yours. Therefore, accept my daughter as your daughter-in-law and as Satyavan’s wife.’ Dyumatsena replied, ‘Earlier, I had desired to have an alliance with you. But dislodged from my kingdom, I did not think about it again. Let my cherished desire be accomplished today itself. You are a guest that I have wished for.’ Then the two kings summoned all the brahmanas who lived in the hermitage and in accordance with the rites, arranged for the wedding.

‘“Having given his daughter away in the appropriate fashion,[177] with garments, Ashvapati happily returned to his own house. Having obtained a wife who possessed all the good qualities, Satyavan was delighted. She was also happy at having obtained the husband her heart had wanted. When her father had departed, she gave up all her ornaments. She donned bark and garments that were red.[178] Through her servitude, qualities, affection and self-control and attending to all the wishes, she satisfied everyone. By tending to her body and all her garments and other objects, she satisfied her mother-in-law. Through her restrained words and worship of the gods, she satisfied her father-in-law. In a similar way, through her pleasant words, skilfulness, equanimity and tending to him in private, she satisfied her husband. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those virtuous ones lived in that hermitage for some time and performed austerities. But whether lying down or standing, during day and at night, in her mind, Savitri kept thinking about the words that Narada had spoken."'

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'Markandeya said, "O king! After a long period of many days had elapsed, the time of Satyavan's death arrived. Savitri counted every day that passed and Narada's words were always present in her heart. Having determined that his death would occur on the fourth day, for three nights, the beautiful one observed a vow of fasting and remained standing, day and night. Hearing about this difficult vow, the king was unhappy. He arose and consoled Savitri with these words. 'O daughter of a king! The vow that you have adopted is extremely severe. It is extremely difficult to remain standing for three nights.' Savitri replied, 'O father! Do not grieve over this act. I will complete the vow, which has been adopted with resolution. Resolution is the cause.'[179] Dyumatsena said, 'Under no circumstances can I ask you to give up your vow. Those like us should speak to you so that you complete it.' Having said this, the great-souled Dyumatsena refrained. Savitri remained standing, as if she had been made of wood. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thinking that her husband would die the next day,[180] Savitri remained standing and the day passed in misery. 'Today is the day.' Thinking this, she offered oblations into the blazing fire. She performed her morning rites when the sun had arisen four measures.[181] She bowed down before all the aged brahmanas and her mother-in-law and father-in-law, in due order, and restrained, stood standing before them with hands joined in salutation. For the sake of Savitri's welfare, all the residents of the hermitage and all the holy ascetics pronounced the benediction that she might never become a widow. Savitri, who was immersed in the yoga of meditation, wished in her mind that it might be this way and silently accepted the words of the ascetics. The king's daughter waited for the hour and the moment, thinking grievously about the words that Narada had spoken. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The king's daughter was standing alone and her mother-in-law and father-in-law affectionately told her, ‘You have perfectly completed the vow, as has been prescribed. It is now time to eat. After that, do whatever else remains to be done.’ Savitri replied, ‘I will eat when the sun has set and I have accomplished my desire. This is the resolution I have made in my mind about the time.’ When Savitri was conversing in this way about food, Satyavan grasped an axe. He placed it over his shoulder and proceeded to leave for the forest.

‘“Savitri told her husband, ‘You should not go alone. I will go with you. I am disinclined to be separated from you.’ Satyavan replied, ‘O beautiful one! You have never gone to the forest earlier. The road is difficult. You are thin from the vow and fasting. How will you be able to walk?’ Savitri said, ‘I am not weak from the fasting and I do not feel exhausted. I have made up my mind to go. You should not restrain me.’ Satyavan replied, ‘Since you have made up your mind to go, I will do what you desire. But first take leave of the elders, so that sin does not touch me.’ The one who was great in her vows went to her mother-in-law and father-in-law and said, ‘My husband is going to the great forest to collect fruit as food. I seek arya’s[182] and father-in-law’s permission to go with him. I cannot bear to be separated from him. Your son is going for the sake of agnihotra and for his elders. He cannot be restrained. He could have been restrained had he gone to the forest for any other reason. I have not ventured out of the hermitage for almost a year. I have great curiosity to see the forest in bloom.’ Dyumatsena replied, ‘From the day Savitri’s father gave her to me as a daughter-in-law, I do not remember her having ever requested me for anything. Let the daughter-in-law’s desires be satisfied. O daughter! But along the way, see that Satyavan does not get distracted from his task.’ With the permission of both, the famous one departed with her husband. She seemed to be laughing, but her heart was miserable. The large-eyed one saw colourful and beautiful woods in every direction, resounding with the cries of peacocks. Satyavan spoke these sweet words to Savitri. ‘Behold these rivers full of sacred waters and these supreme trees in blossom.’ The unblemished one always watched over her husband. Remembering the words of the sage, she thought that he was already dead. Walking gently, she followed her husband. Her heart was cleft in two and she waited for the time.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “Accompanied by his wife, the valorous one collected fruit and filled his vessel. Then he began to chop the wood. While he was chopping the wood, he began to sweat. Because of his exertions, he developed an ache in his head. Overcome with exhaustion, he went to his beloved wife and spoke these words. ‘I have developed an ache in my head because of these exertions. O Savitri! My limbs and my heart seem to be afflicted. O one whose words are restrained! I feel the signs that I am not well. I feel as if my head is being pierced with spikes. O fortunate one! I wish to sleep. I do not have the strength to stand.’ At that, Savitri came up to her husband and embraced him. She sat down on the ground and placed his head on her lap. Remembering Narada’s words, the ascetic one began to calculate the *muhurta*,[183] the kshana,[184] the hour and the day. In a short while, she saw a man who was attired in a yellow garment. He was crowned and handsome, with an energy that was like that of the sun. His complexion was smooth and dark and his eyes were red. With a noose in his hand, he looked terrible. He stood next to Satyavan and began to look at him.

‘“On seeing him, she gently placed her husband’s head on the ground and arose. With a trembling heart, she spoke miserably to him. ‘From your superhuman appearance, I know that you are a god. O god! If it pleases you, tell me who you are and what you desire here.’ Yama replied, ‘O Savitri! You are devoted to your husband and have the power of austerities. It is for that reason that I will reply to you. O fortunate one! Know me to be Yama. The life of Satyavan, your husband and the son of a king, has run out. I will bind him and take him. That is my intention.’ Having said this, in order to please her, the illustrious lord of the ancestors revealed everything about his wishes and said, ‘This handsome one is an ocean of qualities and is united with dharma. That is the reason I have come myself and have not sent one of my servants to take him.’ Then Yama forcibly took out from Satyavan’s body a being that was as long as a thumb and binding him with the noose, controlled him. With the life being taken out, the body faded and lost its breath. The body became motionless and was unpleasant to behold. Binding him thus, Yama proceeded in a southern direction.[185]

‘“Distressed, Savitri followed Yama. The immensely fortunate one was restrained in her vows and faithful to her husband. Yama said, ‘O Savitri! Go back. Perform the last rites for your husband. Your debt to your husband has been discharged. You have come as far as you possibly can.’ Savitri replied, ‘I must go wherever my husband is going, of his own volition, or if he is being taken. That is the eternal dharma. Because of austerities, devotion to elders, love towards my husband, vows and your favours, nothing will be able to obstruct my path. The learned ones, enlightened about the truth, have said that friendship is established by walking seven steps with another.[186] Placing this friendship at the forefront, I will tell you something. Listen. Those who are not in control of their souls do not observe dharma, right abode and right endeavour, even when they live in the forest. Those who are learned about dharma, extol it. Therefore, the learned say that dharma is the most important. By following the single dharma identified by the learned, we attain all the different paths. I do not wish for a second or a third mode. Hence, the learned have said that dharma is the most important.’ Yama said, ‘Go back. I am delighted with the words you have spoken. They have the right vowels and consonants and are full of reason. Ask for a boon, other than his life. O unblemished one! I will grant you any boon that you desire.’ Savitri replied, ‘My father-in-law has been dislodged from his kingdom and dwells in the forest. His eyes have been destroyed and he is in a hermitage. Through your favours, let the king regain his sight and become strong, resplendent like the sun and the fire.’ Yama said, ‘O unblemished one! I will grant you those boons, exactly as you have asked. I notice that you are tired from the journey. Refrain and go back. Otherwise, you will become exhausted.’ Savitri replied, ‘How can there be exhaustion when I am with my husband? I must certainly follow the path that my husband takes. I must go where my husband is being taken. O lord of the gods! Listen again to my words. It is said that a meeting with the virtuous is desirable. It is said that friendship with them is even better. Communion with the virtuous is never fruitless. Therefore, one should always associate with the virtuous.' Yama said, 'The words spoken by you are favourable and extend the intelligence of the intelligent. Your words ensure welfare. O beautiful one! Other than Satyavan becoming alive, ask for a second boon.' Savitri replied, 'My wise father-in-law has been robbed of his own kingdom earlier. May the king get it back. May that elder of mine never stray from his own dharma. That is the second boon that I ask from you.' Yama said, 'He will soon obtain his own kingdom back. The king will never deviate from his own dharma. O daughter of a king! Your desire has now been satisfied. Refrain and go back. Otherwise, you will become exhausted.' Savitri replied, 'You control all the beings through your rules. You follow the rules, and not your own caprices. Therefore, you are famous as the god Yama.[187] Now listen again to my words. The eternal dharma of the righteous is non-violence towards all beings in deeds, thoughts and words and kindness and benevolence. In this world, men are usually kind only up to their capacity. The righteous exhibit compassion even when their ill-wishers arrive.' Yama said, 'Your words are as satisfying as water to one who is thirsty. O beautiful one! Other than Satyavan's life, ask again for any boon that you desire.' Savitri replied, 'My father, the king, is without any sons. Let my father have a hundred sons as my brothers. Let them extend his lineage. That is the third boon that I crave from you.' Yama said, 'O beautiful one! Your father will have a hundred radiant sons who will extend the lineage. O daughter of a king! Your desire has now been satisfied. Return. You have come too far along the road.' Savitri replied, 'Since I am with my husband, it has not seemed like a long distance to me. My mind travels a greater distance. As you travel, listen to my words. Listen again to the words that I will speak. You are Vivasvat's powerful son.[188] The wise therefore call you

Vaivasvata. You please and control all beings through dharma. O lord! That is the reason you are the king of dharma. One does not trust oneself as much as one trusts the virtuous. Therefore, people are especially affectionate towards those who are virtuous. Friendship towards all beings engenders trust. That is the reason people are especially trustful towards those who are virtuous.'

'"Yama said, 'O beautiful one! O fortunate one! I have never heard words, from anyone else, like the ones that you have spoken. I am extremely pleased. Other than his life, ask for a fourth boon. And then, go.' Savitri replied, 'Let me have one hundred strong, brave and righteous sons through Satyavan's loins, so that they please us and extend the lineage. This is the fourth boon that I choose from you.' Yama said, 'O beautiful one! You will have one hundred strong, brave and righteous sons and they will please you. O daughter of a king! Do not get exhausted. Return. You have come too far along the path.' Savitri replied, 'The virtuous are always devoted to dharma. The virtuous do not tremble. Nor do they suffer. A union between the pious and the virtuous is always fruitful. The virtuous do not have any fear from the virtuous. The virtuous make the sun move through their truth. Through their austerities, the virtuous bear up the earth. O king! The virtuous determine the past and the future. The virtuous have no lassitude when they are in the midst of the virtuous. This is known to be the eternal conduct practised by aryas. The virtuous work for each other, without any expectations. Favours done by virtuous men are never fruitless. They do not destroy the objective, or honour. Since the virtuous always display such conduct, the virtuous are always the protectors.' Yama said, 'The more you speak, the more your words are full of dharma, pleasant to the mind, well articulated and full of deep meaning. O excellent one! The more am I inclined towards respecting you. O one controlled in vows! Ask for an unmatched boon.' Savitri replied, 'O one who gives respect! You have not made an exception to your favours, as you did with the other boons.[189] Therefore, I ask for the boon that Satyavan should live. Without my husband, I am like one who is dead. Without my husband, I do not desire any happiness. Without my husband, I do not desire heaven. Without my husband, I do not desire prosperity. Without my husband, I do not desire life. You have granted me the boon that I will have one hundred sons. Despite that, you are taking my husband away. I ask for the boon that Satyavan should live. It is then that your words will come true.’ Then Vaivasvata Dharmaraja Yama agreed to this and freed the noose. He cheerfully told Savitri, ‘O fortunate one! O one who delights your lineage! Look. I have freed your husband. Take him with you. He is free from disease and will be successful in his objectives. Together with you, he will live for four hundred years. Through his rites, sacrifices and dharma, he will attain fame in the world. Satyavan will beget one hundred sons on you. All of those kshatriyas will be kings, together with their sons and grandsons. Your names will be eternally famous on earth. Your father will beget a hundred sons on your mother Malavi. Their sons and grandsons will be eternally famous as the Malavas. Like your kshatriya brothers, they will be the equals of the thirty gods.’ Having bestowed those boons on her, the powerful Dharmaraja made Savitri return and left for his own abode.

‘“When Yama had left, having obtained her husband back, Savitri returned to the spot where her husband’s corpse was lying. On seeing her husband lying down on the ground, she approached him and embraced him. She sat down on the ground and raised his head onto her lap. Having regained his consciousness, he repeatedly looked at her with great love, as if having returned from a journey. Satyavan told Savitri, ‘I have slept for a long time. Why did you not wake me up? Where is the dark-complexioned man who was dragging me away?’ Savitri replied, ‘O bull among men! You have indeed slept for a long time on my lap. The illustrious god Yama, the controller of all beings, has departed. O immensely fortunate one! O son of a king! You are rested and have awoken from sleep. If you can, arise. Look. The night is now deep.’ Having regained consciousness, Satyavan arose, as if from pleasant slumber. Glancing at the woods in all the directions, Satyavan said, ‘O slender-waisted one! I set out with you, to gather fruits as food. Then, as I was chopping wood, I suffered from a headache. Tormented by the pain in my head, I could no longer stand up and lay down on your lap and slept. O beautiful one! I remember all this. In your embrace, sleep overcame my mind. I then saw a terrible and dark being, with great energy. O slender-waisted one! If you know, tell me if that was a dream. Or was it reality?' At that, Savitri told him, 'O son of a king! The night is deepening. Tomorrow, I will tell you everything, exactly as it happened. O fortunate one! Arise. Arise. O one good in your vows. See your parents. The night is deep now and the sun has gone down. The ones who wander around in the night are happily roaming around, with harsh voices. The sounds of leaves can he heard, as animals roam around in the forest. Stationing themselves in the south-west direction, jackals are howling terribly. They are making my heart tremble.' Satyavan said, 'The forest is covered with a terrible darkness and looks fearsome. Therefore, you will not be able to determine the path that we should follow.' Savitri replied, 'The forest has been burnt down. There is a dry tree that is still blazing. The flames fanned by the wind can be seen here and there. Bringing some fire from there, I will light a fire in all the directions. There is plenty of wood here. So remove all anxiety from your heart. I can see that your head is aching. You will not be able to determine the path in this forest enveloped in darkness. If you are unable to go, with your permission, we will go tomorrow morning, when the forest is visible. O unblemished one! If it so pleases you, we will spend the night here.'

'"Satyavan said, 'My headache has gone and I can see that my limbs are fine. If it pleases you, I wish to go and see my mother and my father. Earlier, I have never returned to the hermitage at the wrong time. My mother restricts me, even before evening has set in. My elders are anxious, even when I go out during the day. With all the other residents of the hermitage, my father will be looking for me. On several occasions before this, my mother and father have been unhappy and have rebuked me, saying that I have been out too long. Thinking about me, I wonder about the state they will be in now. On not seeing me, they must be sorely afflicted. One night, some time ago, the aged ones were extremely miserable on my account. With great love, they told me in a flood of tears, "O son! Without you, we cannot be alive for an instant. O son! We can certainly bear life as long as you are alive. You are the crutch for these aged and blind ones. Our lineage is based in you. Our funeral oblations, our fame and our offspring are established in you.” My mother is old. My father is old. I am their crutch. What state will they be reduced to, if they do not see me tonight? I blame that sleep. It is responsible for my father and my mother being anxious on my account, fearing harm and that I am in danger and a calamity confronts me. I have no interest in living without my mother and my father. I am sure that my blind father, who has the sight of wisdom, is anxious and despondent. He is asking all the residents of the hermitage about me. O beautiful one! I am not sorrowing on account of my own self. I am thinking about my father and my weak mother, who is devoted to him. They will now be in supreme distress because of me. I will live if they live, and they must be supported by me. I know that I must only perform tasks that bring them pleasure.’ Having said this, the one with dharma in his soul, devoted to his elders and loved by his elders, raised his arms in grief and began to lament loudly. Savitri followed the course of dharma. On seeing that her husband was overcome with grief after speaking in this way, she wiped the tears from his eyes and said, ‘If I have observed austerities, if I have offered oblations, this night will be safe for my mother-in-law, my father-in-law and my husband. I do not remember having spoken a falsehood, even in jest. By virtue of that truth, let my parents-in-law remain alive today.’ Satyavan said, ‘O Savitri! I wish to see my parents. Let us start, without any delay. O one with the beautiful hips! If I see that something unpleasant has happened to my mother and my father, I swear truthfully that I will no longer be alive. If your intelligence is devoted to dharma, if you wish to see me alive, if you wish to do that which ensures my pleasure, let us return to the hermitage.’ Then the beautiful Savitri arose and tidied her hair. She grasped her husband by the arms and made him arise. Having arisen, Satyavan wiped his limbs with his hand.

‘“He looked in all the directions and saw his vessel.[190] Savitri told him, ‘Collect fruit tomorrow. I will carry the axe, for the sake of obtaining that which you want.’ She hung the vessel from the branch of a tree. Grasping the axe, she returned to her husband. The one with the beautiful thighs then placed her husband's left hand on her shoulder. Embracing him with her right hand, the one whose gait was gentle, began to walk. Satyavan said, 'O timid one! I come here often and the paths are known to me. Besides, through the moonlight shining between the trees, I can make out. O beautiful one! Without any hesitation, walk along the path we came by in the morning, to gather fruit. The road branches into two near that palasha clump. Swiftly follow the path that heads in a northern direction. I am well. I am strong. I wish to see my parents.' Having said this, he quickly proceeded towards the hermitage."'

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'Markandeya said, "Meanwhile, the immensely strong Dyumatsena had regained his eyesight. He was happy in his heart and could see everything. O bull among men! He went to all the hermitages with his wife Shaibya and was extremely afflicted because of his son. The couple of them went to all the hermitages, rivers, forests and lakes and searched in all those regions. They looked up whenever they heard a sound, thinking that it was their son and rushed there, saying, 'Satyavan is coming with Savitri.' Their feet became split and rough, wounded, bleeding and pierced. Their limbs were sore from kusha grass and thorns. They ran around, as if mad. All the brahmanas who lived in the hermitages came to them, comforting and surrounding them. They brought them back to their own hermitage. There, the aged ones rich in austerities surrounded him, together with his wife. They comforted him, recounting wonderful tales about former kings. The aged ones, desirous of seeing their son, were comforted. But they remembered accounts of their son when he was young and were extremely miserable.

'"Oppressed by grief, they again began to lament in piteous tones and weep. 'Alas, son! Alas, faithful daughter-in-law! Where are you? Where are you?' Suvarcha said, 'Satyavan must be alive. His wife Savitri has austerities, self-control and conduct.' Goutama said, 'I have studied the Vedas, together with their branches, and I have accumulated great austerities. I have practised brahmacharya when young. I have satisfied my superiors and the fire. With self-control, I have observed all the vows. I have lived on the wind and have fasted. I have done everything that ensures welfare. Because of those austerities, I know everything that has been intended. Know this to be the truth. Satyavan is alive.' The disciple[191] said, 'The words that have emerged from the mouth of my preceptor can never be false. Therefore, Satyavan must be alive.' The rishis said, 'Savitri is a wife who bears all the auspicious marks. She has no signs of widowhood. Therefore, Satyavan must be alive.' Bharadvaja said, 'His wife Savitri is endowed with austerities, self-control and conduct. Therefore, Satyavan must be alive.' Dalbhya said, 'Since you have regained your eyesight and since Savitri completed her vow without partaking of food, Satyavan must be alive.' Mandavya said, 'From the way animals and birds are speaking in the tranquil directions and from the way you conduct yourself as a king, Satyavan must be alive.' Dhoumya said, 'Your son is loved by the people and has all the qualities. He has all the signs of a long life. Satyavan must be alive.' Thus comforted by those truthful and eloquent ascetics and reflecting about what they had said, he[192] remained there.

'"In a short while, Savitri, accompanied by her husband Satyavan, returned to the hermitage in the night and entered it cheerfully. The brahmanas said, 'O lord of the earth! We have seen you reunited with your son. You have regained your eyesight. The reunion with your son, the sight of Savitri and the regaining of your eyesight—these three blessings will extend your prosperity. It will certainly happen as we have said. We are repeatedly saying that you will swiftly extend in prosperity.' O Partha! All the brahmanas then kindled a fire and took their seats around King Dyumatsena. Shaibya, Satyavan and Savitri were standing to one side. But with the permission of everyone, they happily seated themselves. O Partha! Then all the residents of the forest, who were seated with the king, were driven by curiosity and asked the king's son, 'O illustrious one! Why did you not return home with your wife earlier? Why have you returned so late in the night? What obstacle stood in the way? O son of a king! Your father and mother were tormented and so were we. There must have been a reason for this. Therefore, tell us everything.’ Satyavan replied, ‘With my father’s permission, I went out with Savitri. When chopping down wood in the forest, my head started to ache. I know that, afflicted with pain, I slept for a long time. Never before have I slept for such a long time. Thinking that all of you might be tormented on my account, I returned so late in the night. That is the reason and there is no other.’ Goutama said, ‘Your father Dyumatsena’s eyesight was restored suddenly. You do not know the reason for that. Therefore, Savitri must speak. O Savitri! We wish to hear. You know the entire truth. I know you Savitri. You are like Savitri[193] in your energy. You know the reason behind everything. Therefore, speak the truth. If there is nothing that is a secret from you, tell us everything.’

‘“Savitri said, ‘It is exactly the way you know it to be. There is nothing that is beyond your thoughts. There is nothing that is a secret from me. Therefore, hear the truth. The great-souled Narada had foretold the death of my husband. Since today was the appointed time, I did not leave his side. When he fell asleep, Yama himself arrived with his attendants. Having bound him, he headed in the direction inhabited by the ancestors. I then began to satisfy the illustrious god with truthful words. He granted me five boons and listen to what they were. I obtained two boons for my father-in-law, the return of his eyesight and his kingdom. I obtained a hundred sons for my father and a hundred sons for myself. My husband Satyavan obtained a life of four hundred years. I steadfastly observed the vow for the sake of my husband’s life. I have now described to you all the reasons in detail, exactly as they occurred and how that great misery of mine has ended in happiness.’

‘“The rishis said, ‘The king’s lineage was immersed in calamity, in a pond full of darkness. O virtuous one! You are of good conduct. You have borne up the sacred dharma. You were born in a noble lineage and you have raised it up again.’”

‘Markandeya said, “The assembled rishis honoured and praised that best of women. They took their leave of that Indra among kings and his son. Then they returned to their own abodes through auspicious routes.”’

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‘Markandeya said, “The night ended. The sun’s disc arose. Having performed their morning rites, all the ones rich in austerities reassembled. The maharshis did not tire of recounting repeatedly to Dyumatsena everything about Savitri’s great glory. O king! Then all the subjects arrived from the land of Shalva and told the king about how his enemy had been slain by his own adviser. On learning that he had been killed by his minister, with his aides and well-wishers, they came and recounted everything that had happened. The soldiers of the enemy had run away. In unison, all the subjects had decided that he[194] should be their king. Irrespective of whether he possessed sight or did not have eyesight, he should be the king. They said that they had been dispatched to the king because of this decision. The vehicles had come and so had the four kinds of forces.[195] Therefore, now that his victory had been proclaimed in the city, they asked the fortunate king to leave, so that he might occupy the seat of his father and grandfathers for many nights. On seeing that the king now had sight and was healthy, all of them bowed their heads in subjugation, their eyes dilated with wonder.

‘“The king then greeted all the aged brahmanas who lived in the hermitage. All of them honoured him and he left for the city. Shaibya left, in Savitri’s company. They were in a decorated and radiant palanquin that was pulled by men and was surrounded by soldiers. The priests happily instated Dyumatsena and instated his great-souled son as the heir apparent.[196] Over a long period of time, Savitri gave birth to a hundred sons. They were brave, never retreated from battle and extended her fame. She also had one hundred extremely powerful brothers. They were begotten by Ashvapati, king of the Madras, on Malavi. Thus Savitri saved all of them from the misfortune that had arisen—herself, her father, her mother, her mother-in-law, her father-in-law, her husband and the entire lineage. In that fashion, the fortunate Droupadi, honoured because of her good conduct, will deliver all of you, like Savitri, born from a noble lineage.”’

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Thus instructed by that great-souled one,[197] the Pandavas lost their sorrow and their fever and continued to live in Kamyaka.'

Section Forty-Three

Kundala-aharana Parva

This parva has 294 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 581(284): 39 shlokas
Chapter 582(285): 17 shlokas
Chapter 583(286): 20 shlokas
Chapter 584(287): 29 shlokas
Chapter 585(288): 19 shlokas
Chapter 586(289): 23 shlokas
Chapter 587(290): 26 shlokas
Chapter 588(291): 28 shlokas
Chapter 589(292): 27 shlokas
Chapter 590(293): 23 shlokas
Chapter 591(294): 43 shlokas

Kundala *is an earring and Karna was naturally born with kundalas.* Aharana *means seizing or taking. Pritha (Kunti) serves Durvasa and obtains a boon. Through this, she invokes Surya and Karna is born. When she abandons Karna, he is adopted and raised by a charioteer. Karna is born with natural armour and earrings that make him invincible. Indra asks for these, and in return, gives Karna an invincible spear.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'O great brahmana! When Lomasha conveyed Indra's message to Pandu's son, Yudhishthira, he spoke these words. "When Savyasachi has gone from here,[1] I will remove the terrible fear that you do not talk about." O foremost among learned ones! What was that great fear concerning Karna? Why did the great-souled one[2] not talk about it to anyone?'

Vaishampayana said, ‘O tiger among kings! Since you have asked, I will tell you about it. O best of the Bharata lineage! Listen to my words. When twelve years were over and the thirteenth year had started, Shakra wished to ensure the welfare of the Pandavas and went begging to Karna. O great king! But learning about the intentions of the great Indra concerning the earrings, Vibhavasu Surya went to Karna.[3] The brave and truthful one, devoted to brahmanas, was lying down on an expensive bed that was covered with admirable spreads. O Indra among kings! The one with the rays showed himself in the night, at the end of a dream. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was driven by great compassion and love for his son. Through his powers of yoga, Surya assumed the form of a handsome brahmana, learned in the Vedas. For the sake of Karna’s welfare, he spoke these comforting words to him. “O Karna! O son! O foremost among those who speak the truth! Listen to my words. O mighty-armed one! Out of affection towards you, I will now speak words that are for your welfare. O Karna! To ensure the welfare of the Pandavas, Shakra will approach you in the form of a brahmana, so that he can take away your earrings. It is known in the entire world that your conduct is such that when righteous ones beg you for something, you give and do not wish anything in return. O son! You give to brahmanas whatever riches and other things they ask for. You do not refuse. Knowing this to be the case, the chastiser of Paka[4] will arrive himself. He will beg you for your earrings and armour.[5] When he asks for the earrings, you must not give them to him. Entreat him as best as you can, because that will ensure your supreme welfare. O son! When he talks to you about the earrings, you must again and again refuse him by citing many different kinds of reasons. Offer him other riches. Appease Purandara, who desires the earrings, through gems, women, objects of desire, riches of different kinds and by citing examples. O Karna! If you give away the beautiful earrings that you were naturally born with, your life will be shortened and you will come under the power of death. O one who is reverent! Arrayed in your armour and earrings, you cannot be slain by your enemies in battle. Remember these words. These two treasures arose from amrita. O Karna! If you desire to live, they must therefore be carefully protected by you.” Karna asked, “Who are you, who have shown yourself to me as my supreme well-wisher? O illustrious one! If you wish, tell me who you are, dressed in the attire of a brahmana.” The brahmana said, “O son! I am the one with the thousand rays. I have given you this advice as your well-wisher. Act in accordance with my words. That will be supremely beneficial for you.”

‘Karna said, “It is certainly in my best interests that the illustrious lord of the cows[6] is speaking to me today for my welfare. Listen to my words. O granter of boons! I am propitiating you and am speaking these words to you out of affection. If I am dear to you, you should not restrain me from observing this vow. O Vibhavasu! The entire world knows about this vow of mine. It is certain that I will give my life away to the foremost among brahmanas. O supreme among those who travel the skies! O foremost among the gods! If Shakra comes to me in the disguise of a brahmana and begs my excellent earrings and armour for the welfare of the sons of Pandu, I will give them to him. Then my deeds, famous in the three worlds, will not be destroyed. For those like us, ill fame, even if it saves one’s life, is not appropriate. A glorious death that is approved of by the world is appropriate. Therefore, I will give the earrings, together with the armour, to Indra. If the slayer of Bala and Vritra[7] comes to me and begs for the earrings to ensure the welfare of the sons of Pandu, it will extend my fame in the world and increase his ill fame. O radiant one! Even at the expense of my life, I desire for fame in this world. The famous one attains heaven. The one with ill fame is destroyed. Like a mother, fame ensures the life of a man in this world. Even if the body is alive, ill fame destroys life. O Vibhavasu! O lord of the world! The creator himself has recited an ancient shloka about how fame is life itself. ‘In the next world, fame ensures the supreme objective for a man. In this world, pure fame extends a man’s life.’ By giving away these objects that are natural to my body, I will obtain eternal fame, by giving them as gifts to brahmanas in accordance with the prescribed rites. By offering my body in battle, by performing this difficult deed and by vanquishing my enemies, I will obtain nothing but fame. O destroyer of Svarbhanu![8] By offering protection to those who are terrified in battle and seek to save their lives, by freeing the aged, the young and brahmanas from great danger, I will obtain supreme fame in this world. Know that my vow is to protect fame, even at the expense of my life. O god! By giving this supreme gift to Maghavan, in the disguise of a brahmana, I will traverse along the supreme path in this world.”’

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‘Surya said, “O Karna! Do not act against your own interests, or those of your well-wishers, sons, wives, mother and father. O supreme among those who live! Seek to obtain fame in this world and continued fame in heaven without sacrificing your life. There is no doubt that the eternal fame that you wish for, will disappear, if it is at the cost of your own life. O bull among men! In this world, as long as one is alive, one can perform tasks for the father, the mother, the sons and other relatives. O tiger among men! Learn from me that kings perform virile deeds the same way. O immensely radiant one! Men have fame when they are alive. When the body has been reduced to ashes, what use does fame serve one who is dead? It is not the dead, but living ones that know fame. The fame of a dead human is like a garland on one who has lost his life. It is because you are devoted to me that I am telling you this for the sake of your own welfare. This is for the reason that all my devotees should be protected by me. O mighty-armed one! I know that this one here is my greatest devotee and is devoted towards me. Therefore, act in accordance with my words. There is something supreme in you, created by a god. It is because of this that I am addressing you in this way and act without hesitation. O bull among men! This is a secret even to the gods and you cannot know this. Therefore, I cannot recount this secret to you. In due course of time, you will know it. O Radheya![9] I am telling you this again. Listen to my words. When the wielder of the vajra begs for the earrings, you should not give them to him. O immensely radiant one! With your beautiful earrings, you will be as resplendent as the azure moon in the sky, in the midst of the two Vishakhas.[10] Know that fame is useful to a man as long as he is alive. O son! Therefore, you should refuse Purandara when he comes for the earrings. O unblemished one! You will be able to repulse the desire of the king of the gods for the earrings with many kinds of words and by citing reasons again and again. O Karna! Use sweetly adorned words to repulse Purandara's design, reinforced by intelligent arguments. O tiger among men! You are Savyasachi's challenger. And Savyasachi, brave in battle, is your challenger. As long as you possess the beautiful earrings, Arjuna cannot vanquish you in battle, even if Indra himself becomes his arrows. O Karna! Therefore, if you desire to defeat Arjuna in combat, do not give your beautiful earrings to Shakra."'

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'Karna said, "O illustrious one! O lord of the cows! O one with the extremely fierce rays! You know that there is no other god to whom I am as devoted as to you. O lord of the cows! My affection towards you has always been greater than that towards my wife, my sons, my own self and my well-wishers. O one who spreads light! You know that there is no doubt that great-souled ones desire to return the love and devotion of their devotees and worshippers. Since your illustrious self knows that Karna loves you like no other god in heaven, you have spoken about my welfare. I repeatedly bow my head before you and seek your favours again and again. O one with the sharp rays! I am telling you this. Please pardon me. I am not frightened of death as much as I am of falsehood. Especially for all the brahmanas and all the righteous ones, I am ready to give up my life, without any hesitation. O god! O one who spreads light! In so far as the words about Pandava Phalguna are concerned, remove all torment and misery from your mind. Concerning Arjuna and me, I will vanquish Arjuna in battle. O god! You know about the great strength of weapons I have obtained from Jamadagni's son[11] and from the great-souled Drona. O foremost among the gods! Grant me permission to observe my vow. If the wielder of the vajra comes and begs for my own life, I will give it to him.”

‘Surya replied, “O son! O immensely strong one! If you wish to give your beautiful earrings to the wielder of the vajra, you should speak to him so that your victory is ensured. Because of your rule, you will have to give your earrings to Shatakratu. But as long as the earrings adorn you, you cannot be slain by any beings. O son! Therefore, the slayer of the danavas[12] wishes to ensure your destruction at the hands of Arjuna in battle and seeks to rob your earrings. With good and true words, you should propitiate Purandara, lord of the gods, who never deviates from his objective, again and again and tell him, ‘O one with the thousand eyes! I will give you my earrings and my excellent armour if you give me an invincible spear[13] that will destroy all my enemies.’ O Karna! It is only under this rule that you should give Shakra your earrings. With the spear, you will be able to kill your enemies in battle. O mighty-armed one! The spear of the king of the gods is such that, without killing hundreds and thousands of enemies, it does not return to the hand.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Saying this, the one with the thousand rays suddenly disappeared. After he had meditated, Karna told Surya about his dream.[14] Vrisha[15] then recounted to him everything in detail, all that he had witnessed and the conversation that had taken place between them in the night. On hearing this, the illustrious god Surya Bhanu, the destroyer of Svarbhanu, smiled and told Karna that this was all true. On knowing this to be true, Radheya, the destroyer of enemy warriors, waited for Vasava’s arrival, hoping to obtain the spear.’

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Janamejaya asked, ‘What was the secret that the one with the strong rays did not tell Karna? What were the earrings like? What was the armour like? O excellent one! Where did the earrings and the armour come from? O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear all this. Tell me.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! I will tell you about Vibhavasu’s secret, about what the earrings were like and about what the armour was like.

O king! In earlier times, a brahmana presented himself before Kuntibhoja.[16] He was terrible in energy and extremely tall. He had a beard and matted hair and held a staff in his hand. He was agreeable to look at and his limbs were flawless. He seemed to be ablaze in his energy. His complexion was the colour of honey and he was sweet in his speech. He adorned himself with austerities and studying.

'The immensely ascetic one told King Kuntibhoja, "Without being refused, I wish to beg for a meal in your house. O unblemished one! If you so desire, I will dwell in your house, provided that you or your followers do not cross me in any way. I will come and go as I desire. O king! No one should insult me about my bed or my seat." Kuntibhoja replied to him in pleasant words. "It shall be that way, and more than that." He told him again, "O great brahmana! My daughter, by the name of Pritha, is famous. That beautiful one has good conduct and is virtuous. She is self-controlled and honourable. She will wait on you and worship you, without showing you disrespect. You will be satisfied with her conduct and virtue." Having spoken in this way and having worshipped the brahmana in accordance with the prescribed rites, he spoke to his daughter Pritha, whose eyes were wide with wonder when she arrived. "O daughter! This immensely fortunate brahmana wishes to reside here. I have promised him that he can live in my house. O daughter! I have confidently told him that you know how to satisfy a brahmana. Act in a way so that my words are not falsified. The illustrious brahmana is an ascetic and is devoted to studying. Whatever the immensely ascetic one asks for, should be given without any hesitation. Brahmanas are supreme energy. Brahmanas are supreme austerities. It is because of the worship of brahmanas that the sun shines in the sky. Disrespecting those who deserve to be honoured, the great asura Vatapi and Talajangha were killed through the curse of a brahmana.[17] O daughter! A great burden is being placed on you. With self-control, always seek to satisfy the brahmana. O one who increases my joy! I know that from childhood, you have been attentive to brahmanas, all the elders, all the servants, friends, kin, mothers and me myself, in the appropriate way and with due honour. O one with the flawless limbs! There is no one among the subjects, in the city, in the inner quarters or among the servants, who is dissatisfied with you. I therefore think that you can handle this brahmana, who is prone to anger. O Pritha! You became my daughter in your childhood. You were born in the lineage of the Vrishnis and are Shura's beloved daughter. Earlier, when you were still a child, your father affectionately handed you over to me.[18] You are Vasudeva's sister and the foremost among my daughters. You became my daughter because he[19] promised his firstborn child to me. You were born in such a lineage and raised in such a lineage. You have moved from one kind of happiness to another kind of happiness. You are like a lotus that has moved from one pond to another. O beautiful one! Those who are born in low lineages, even if they are kept under check when they are children, often become deviants later. O Pritha! You have been born in the lineage of a king and possess extraordinary beauty. O beautiful one! You have all the qualities. O beautiful one! Discard your pride, insolence and vanity. O Pritha! Worship the brahmana, the granter of boons. That will ensure your welfare. O fortunate one! O unblemished one! Through this, you are certain to obtain good fortune. But if you anger the foremost among brahmanas, he will burn down my entire lineage."'

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'Kunti said, "O king! I will restrain myself and honour and worship the brahmana, just as you have promised. O Indra among kings! I do not lie. It is my nature to worship brahmanas. The performance of a pleasant task for you is my supreme bliss. Whether the illustrious one arrives in the evening, the morning, at night or in the middle of the night, he will not be angry with me. O Indra among kings! O supreme among men! The worship of brahmanas is for my own gain. I will follow your instructions and do that which ensures welfare. O Indra among kings! Be assured that the foremost among brahmanas will not be slighted while he resides in your house. I am telling you this truthfully. O unblemished one! I will pay particular attention towards what is pleasing to the brahmana and ensures your welfare. O king! Therefore, banish all fever from your mind. O lord of the earth! The brahmanas are immensely fortunate. When worshipped, they are capable of saving. When it is the opposite, they can kill. I have this knowledge and I will satisfy the foremost among brahmanas. O king! You will not suffer grief from that excellent of brahmanas on my account. O Indra among kings! When brahmanas are disrespected, they can cause the downfall of kings, like Chyavana, because of Sukanya's deeds in earlier times.[20] O Indra among men! Just as you have instructed and told the brahmana, I will serve that best of brahmanas with all restraint."

'The king said, "O fortunate one! O daughter! For my sake, for my welfare, for the welfare of the lineage and for your own sake, you must act in this way, without any hesitation."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, the immensely famous Kuntibhoja, devoted towards his children, handed over his daughter Pritha to the brahmana, saying, "O brahmana! This is my young daughter. She has been brought up in comfort. Do not take it to heart if she commits an act that is wrong. Immensely fortunate brahmanas are usually not angry towards the aged, the young and ascetics, even if the transgression is regular. Brahmanas should forgive even a great transgression. O foremost among brahmanas! Therefore, accept the homage that she renders to the best of her ability." The brahmana said that it would be this way. In a happy frame of mind, the king gave him a house that was as white as a swan or a beam of the moon. He arranged for a radiant seat in the place where the fire was maintained. He also gave him food and every other object. The princess cast aside her laziness and pride. With great effort, she devoted herself to worshipping and serving the brahmana. Pritha concentrated on purification and went to the brahmana. She served and satisfied him in the appropriate way, as if he were a god.'

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! The maiden, good in her vows, tended to the brahmana, rigid in his vows. She satisfied him, with a pure mind. O Indra among kings! The foremost among brahmanas sometimes said that he would return in the morning, but would return in the evening or at night. But at all hours, and always, the maiden worshipped him with food and shelter and gave him more and more. Day by day, her hospitality about food, other objects, beds and seats, increased and never decreased. O king! Even if the brahmana censured her, found fault with her or spoke unpleasant words, Pritha never did anything that displeased him. On several occasions, the brahmana returned when the time had passed, or did not return at all. He asked her to serve food when it was difficult to obtain. But she always said that everything was ready and served him. She was self-restrained, like a disciple, a son or a sister. O Indra among kings! That unblemished gem of a maiden created affection in that foremost among brahmanas, tending to his wishes. The supreme among brahmanas was satisfied with her character and conduct and with her many supreme efforts, she continued to serve him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Her father used to ask her in the morning and the evening. “O daughter! Is the brahmana satisfied with your service?” The famous one would reply that he was supremely satisfied. The great-souled Kuntibhoja felt great joy.

‘When one year had passed, the foremost among those who meditate had detected no misdeeds on Pritha’s part and had become her well-wisher. Delighted, the brahmana told her, “O fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am completely satisfied with your service. O fortunate one! Ask for a boon that is difficult for humans to obtain, so that you are able to surpass all women in your fame.” Kunti replied, “O foremost among those who are learned in the Vedas! All my desires have already been satisfied, since you and my father are pleased with me. O brahmana! What purpose will boons serve me?” The brahmana said, “O fortunate one! O one with the sweet smiles! If you do not wish for a boon from me, accept this mantra. Through it, you can summon the gods. O fortunate one! Whichever god you invoke through this mantra will be under your control. Whether willing or unwilling, the god will be under your control, pacified by the mantra, and will be like your servant.” O king! The unblemished one wasn’t capable of refusing a second time. She was scared that the foremost among brahmanas might curse her. O king! The brahmana instructed the one with the flawless limbs about the sequence of mantras, located towards the beginning of the sacred Atharva texts.[21] O Indra among kings! Having thus bestowed it, he told Kuntibhoja, “O king! I have lived happily in your house, satisfied by your daughter. She has always pleased me and honoured me. It is over.” Having said this, he disappeared. The king was overcome with wonder at seeing the brahmana vanish on the spot. He honoured Pritha.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When that foremost among brahmanas had departed and some time had passed, the maiden began to think about the strength and weakness of that sequence of mantras. “What is this sequence of mantras that the great-souled one has given me? I will soon find out its strength.” While thinking in this fashion, the young girl noticed that with puberty, her menses had arrived and she was ashamed. Pritha saw that the one with the thousand rays was blazing. On seeing the beauty of Bhanu in the morning, she was not satisfied. She became gifted with divine eyesight and she saw the god whose form was celestial, clad in armour and adorned with earrings. O lord of men! She became curious about the mantra. The beautiful one invoked the god. Having performed pranayama, she summoned the sun-god. O king! The sun-god swiftly appeared before her. His complexion was as yellow as honey. He was mighty-armed. His neck was like a conch shell. He seemed to be smiling. He wore bracelets on his upper arms and a diadem. He seemed to set the directions on fire. Resorting to yoga, he divided himself into two. While one heated from the sky, the other arrived before Kunti and spoke to her in sweet words. “O fortunate one! I have appeared here because I am under your control, thanks to the strength of the mantra. O queen! Now that I am under your control, what do you wish me to do? I will do whatever you ask me to.” Kunti replied, “O illustrious one! Return to the place you arrived from. O illustrious one! I summoned you out of curiosity. Please be gracious.”

‘The sun said, “O slender-waisted one! I will go as you have asked me to. But having invoked a god, it is not proper to send him away in vain. O extremely fortunate one! Your desire is to have a son through Surya. He will be unrivalled in this world in valour and he will wear armour and earrings. O one whose gait is like that of an elephant! Give yourself to me. O beautiful one! I will beget a son, like the one that you desire. O fortunate one! O sweet-smiling one! I will depart after having united with you. Else, I will leave in anger and will curse that brahmana[22] and your father. There is no doubt that I will consume them because of what you have done. Though he does not know about this offence, your father is stupid. That brahmana gave you this mantra without knowing about your character and conduct and I will impose extreme humility on him. O beautiful one! All the gods in heaven, with Purandara at the forefront, have seen how you have deceived me and seem to be smiling. Behold those masses of gods through your divine eyesight. I gave that to you earlier, so that you could see me.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The princess then saw the thirty gods, all stationed in the sky in their respective places, as resplendent and beautiful as the great and dazzling Aditya. On seeing them, the maiden was overcome with shame. Terrified, the goddess spoke these words to Surya. “O lord of the cows! Leave in your vimana. I am a maiden and this conduct of yours is causing me unhappiness. My father, my mother and other elders are the only ones who have the power to give the body away. In this world, preserving the body is honoured as the greatest dharma of women. O Vibhavasu! I summoned you to learn about the strength of the mantra. O lord! I have done this out of childish folly. Please pardon me.” Surya replied, “It is because you are a child that I am requesting you. Others do not obtain this from me. O Kunti! O maiden! Give yourself to me. O timid one! You will then obtain peace. You have invoked me and I cannot depart in vain. O one with the unblemished limbs! If I go away, the world will laugh at me. O beautiful one! All the gods will speak about me in jest. Therefore, unite with me and obtain a son who will be like me. O beautiful one! There is no doubt that he will be special in all the worlds.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The intelligent maiden spoke many sweet words and entreated the one with the thousand rays, but did not succeed. O king! When the maiden could not dissuade the dispeller of darkness, she was afraid of the curse and thought for a long period of time. “My father is innocent. How can I prevent the angry Vibhavasu from cursing him and that brahmana because of what I have done? Though energy and austerities destroy sin, those who are young can be deluded and should not draw near them. Because of my folly, I am now extremely terrified and have been grasped by the arm. How can I perform the task of giving myself up on my own?” Terrified of the curse, she thought about this in many ways. Though she kept smiling repeatedly, her limbs were suffering from delusion. O supreme among kings! She was frightened of the curse and for her relatives. O lord of the earth! Confounded by shame, she spoke these words to the god. Kunti said, “O god! My father is alive, and so are my mother and other relatives. Since they are alive, this violation of the rules should not happen. O god! If I unite with you, disregarding the rules, because of my deeds, the fame of this lineage will be destroyed in this world. O foremost among those who provide heat! But if you think that this is in accordance with dharma, I will comply with your desire, without being given away by my relatives. O irresistible one! I will remain virtuous even after giving myself to you. Dharma, fame, deeds and the lives of beings are manifest in you.”

‘Surya said, “O one with the beautiful smiles! O one with the beautiful hips! O fortunate one! Your father, your mother and your elders are not capable of bestowing you. Listen to my words. O beautiful one! O one with the beautiful complexion! O one with the beautiful buttocks! A completely free girl is known as *kanya* in this world, from the root *kan*, because she can desire everyone.[23] O beautiful one! You will not commit any adharma. How can I, with the welfare of the world in mind, commit adharma? O one with the beautiful complexion! It is natural in this world that all women and men should be without restraints.[24] Anything that is against this is a distortion. Having united with me, you will again become a virgin. You will have a mighty-armed and immensely famous son.”

‘Kunti said, “O dispeller of everything that is dark! If I obtain a son through you, may he have earrings and armour. May he be mighty-armed, brave and immensely strong.”

‘Surya replied, “He will be mighty-armed and possess earrings. O fortunate one! He will be clad in divine armour and both[25] of these will originate in amrita.”

‘Kunti said, “If my son’s earrings and the excellent armour are created out of amrita, as you have said, you may beget him on me. O god! O illustrious one! Then I will unite with you. May he have valour, beauty and energy and be united with dharma, like you.”

‘Surya replied, “O queen! O one who has been excited! O timid one! Aditi[26] herself gave me these earrings. I will give them to him, together with this excellent armour.”

‘Pritha said, “O illustrious god! O god! O lord of the cows! If my son is going to be as you have said, I will happily unite with you.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having told Kunti that it would be this way, the traveller in the sky and the enemy of Svarbhanu, used the self he had created through yoga to enter her and touched her on the navel.[27] The maiden was overwhelmed with Surya’s energy. The goddess fell down on her bed, bereft of her senses. Surya said, “O one with the beautiful buttocks! I have now finished. You will give birth to a son who will be the foremost among all wielders of weapons, but you will become a virgin.” O Indra among kings! Overcome with shame, the maiden requested Surya that it might be this way and the one who was rich in resplendence disappeared. Thus the daughter of the king of Kunti[28] was promised and bashfully asked for the sun-god. She fell down on that auspicious bed, overcome with confusion, like a broken creeper. Having confounded her with his fierce rays and having inserted himself in her through yoga, Bhanu did not taint her. The young maiden again recovered her senses.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O lord of the earth! In shuklapaksha of the tenth month, like the lord of the stars[29] in the sky, a child was conceived in Pritha's womb. The maiden with the beautiful buttocks was concerned that her relatives would censure her if they got to know about the conception. But people did not get to know. The young maiden lived in the inner quarters and was skilled at protecting herself. No one other than her nurse got to know. In due course of time, through the favours of the god, the maiden, who was excellent in her complexion, gave birth to a son. He was as radiant as the immortals. He was attired in armour and was adorned in golden and brilliant earrings. His eyes were tawny and he had the shoulders of a bull, like his father. As soon as the son was born, the beautiful one consulted the nurse. She placed the child in a basket that was prepared well on all sides. It was comfortable and soft, with covers, and lined with beeswax.[30] With tears in her eyes, she set it afloat on the waters of the river Ashva. O Indra among kings! Though she knew that it was improper for an unmarried maiden to have a child, out of affection for her son, she lamented piteously. She cast away the basket in the waters of the river Ashva.

'Having done this, Kunti wept and spoke these words. Listen to them. "O son! May you be safe from all the beings in the sky, the earth and heaven and from those that roam the water. May your paths be auspicious and may you be free from obstructions. O son! May those who meet you have no enmity in their minds. May King Varuna, lord of the waters, protect you in the water. May the wind-god, who travels everywhere, protect you in the sky. May your father, foremost among those who provide heat, protect you everywhere. O son! Driven by destiny, he is the one who has given you to me. The Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Sadhyas, Vishvadevas, the Maruts, together with Indra, the directions and the lords of the directions and all the gods must protect you, in terrain that is smooth and rough. Even if you are in a different region, I will get to know you through your armour. O son! Your father, the god Bhanu Vibhavasu is fortunate. Through his divine eyesight, he will see you flowing down the river. Blessed is the woman who will adopt you as her son. You are the son of a god and when you are thirsty, you will drink milk at her breast. What kind of a dream must the woman, who will adopt you, have had? You are like Aditya in your radiance. You are clad in divine armour. You are adorned in divine earrings. Your eyes are long and wide, like a lotus. Your palms are coppery red, like a lotus. You have a beautiful forehead and beautiful hair. O son! Fortunate are the ones who will see you crawling around on the ground, uttering inarticulate words and covered in dust. O son! Fortunate are those who will see you become a youth, like a lion with a mane, in the forests of the Himalayas." O king! Thus did Pritha piteously lament, in many ways, as she consigned the basket to the waters of the river Ashva, in the company of her nurse and at night. Overcome with grief for her son, the lotus-eyed one wept. Pritha yearned to see her son. She cast away the basket and returned again to the palace, overcome with grief, but frightened that her father might get to know.

'The basket flowed from the river Ashva to the river Charmanvati, from Charmanvati to Yamuna and from there, it went to Ganga. The waves of the Ganga bore the son and the basket to the city of Champa, the habitation of charioteers. With divine armour and earrings that were created from amrita, the son was protected by the gods, because of what had been ordained by destiny.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra had a friend and he was a suta named Adhiratha. At that time, he went to the Jahnavi,[31] together with his wife. O king! His wife was unrivalled on earth in her beauty. The immensely fortunate one was named Radha and she had no son, though she had undertaken special efforts to obtain offspring. She saw the basket floating along, as it willed. It was protected well and was beautiful with ribbons and a handle. The waves of the Jahnavi carried it near her. Driven by curiosity, the beautiful one grasped it. Then she told suta Adhiratha about this. He took the basket out of the water and used instruments to pry it open. Then he saw the boy there. With golden armour, he was as radiant as the morning sun. He had a beautiful face, adorned with radiant earrings. The suta, together with his wife, gazed, their eyes wide with wonder. He then took the boy onto his lap and spoke these words to his wife. "O timid one! O beautiful one! Since I have been born, I have not witnessed such a wonder. I think that a son of the gods has come to us. Since I have no offspring, I am certain that the gods have given me a son." O lord of the earth! Speaking thus, he handed over the son to Radha. Radha then accepted that divine-looking son in accordance with the prescribed rites. This son of a god was beautiful and as splendid as the cup of a lotus.

'She reared him appropriately and he grew up. He was brave. Since that time, she also gave birth to other sons. The boy was clad in expensive armour and wore golden earrings. On seeing this, the brahmanas gave him the name of Vasushena.[32] Thus the infinitely valorous one came to be the son of a suta and was known by the name of Vasushena. The lord was also known as Vrisha. The suta's eldest son grew up to be powerful in his limbs. Through a spy, Pritha got to know that he was clad in celestial armour. In due course, when suta Adhiratha saw that his son had grown up, he sent him to the city of Varanasahrya.[33] There, he went to Drona to learn about weapons. The brave one became Duryodhana's friend. Having obtained the four kinds of weapons from Drona, Kripa and Rama, he became famous in the world as a great archer.[34] Having allied himself with Dhritarashtra's son, he was engaged in enmity towards the Parthas. He always desired to fight with the great-souled Phalguna.[35] O lord of the earth! Ever since they first saw each other, he competed with Arjuna and Arjuna competed with Karna. On seeing that he possessed earrings and was clad in armour, Yudhishthira thought that he was invincible in battle and was miserable. O Indra among kings! At noon, Karna used to worship the radiant sun, standing in the water and with his hands joined in salutation. Brahmanas who desired riches approached him then. At that time, there was nothing that he would refuse to brahmanas. Indra assumed the form of a brahmana and approached, saying, “Give me.” “You are welcome,” replied Radheya.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing the king of the gods disguised as a brahmana, Vrisha welcomed him, though he did not know what his intentions were. Adhiratha’s son asked the brahmana, “Beautiful maidens with golden throats or villages full of many enclosures of cattle—what will I give you?” The brahmana replied, “I do not wish for beautiful women with golden throats, or any other objects that heighten pleasure. Give these to those who desire them. O unblemished one! I desire your natural armour and earrings. If you are true to your vows, slice these off and give them to me. O scorcher of enemies! I desire that you give these to me swiftly. I think that this gain is superior to all the other gains.” Karna said, “O brahmana! I will give you habitable land, women, cows and rice for many years, but not my armour, together with the earrings.” O best of the Bharata lineage! Thus did Karna entreat the brahmana, with many different kinds of words. But he did not desire any other boon. When that supreme among brahmanas wished for no other boon, Radheya laughed and spoke to him again. “O brahmana! My natural armour and earrings have been created from amrita. Because of them, I cannot be slain in all the worlds. I will not part with them. O bull among brahmanas! Take this extensive kingdom on earth, peaceful and without any thorns. Accept them in a happy frame of mind. O supreme among brahmanas! Without my earrings and natural armour, I will become vulnerable before my enemies.” When the illustrious chastiser of Paka did not ask for any other boon, Karna laughed and again addressed these words to him. “O lord! O lord of the gods! I know who you are. O Shakra! It is not proper for me to give you a boon that will be in vain. You are the lord of the gods himself and it is you who should give me a boon, since you are the lord of all other beings and the creator of all beings. O god! If I give you my earrings and armour, I will be liable to be killed. O Shakra! You will become an object of ridicule. O Shakra! Therefore, take my earrings and supreme armour, if you so wish. But take them in exchange. Otherwise, I will not give them." Shakra replied, "Ravi[36] had earlier got to know about my intended arrival. There is no doubt that he has told you everything. O son! O Karna! Therefore, ask for what you want. With the exception of my vajra, you can ask for whatever else you wish." At that, Karna happily approached Vasava.

'Content in his mind, he asked for the invincible shakti. Karna said, "O Vasava! In exchange for my armour and earrings, give me the invincible shakti that kills large numbers of enemies on the field of battle." O protector of the earth! For an instant, Vasava thought about this in his mind. With the spear in mind, he then spoke these words to Karna. "Give me the earrings and the armour from your body. O Karna! Take the shakti from me, but on one condition. When I am fighting with the daityas, this invincible shakti is released from my hand and having killed hundreds of enemies, returns again to my hand. O son of a suta! But in your hands, it will kill one powerful enemy who roars and blazes. Then, it will return to my hand." Karna replied, "I wish to kill only one enemy[37] in a great battle. He roars and blazes and is the source of fear for me." Indra said, "You kill one roaring and powerful enemy in battle. But the one you seek to kill is protected by a great-souled one who is known as the unvanquished boar,[38] Hari and the inconceivable Narayana by those who are learned in the Vedas." Karna replied, "O illustrious one! Nevertheless, give me the invincible shakti, capable of slaying one brave person, so that I can kill the powerful one. I will slice off the earrings and armour and give them to you. But after this, let my wounded limbs not look loathsome." Indra said, "O Karna! You will never look loathsome. You do not utter a falsehood and your body will not be scarred. O supreme among eloquent ones! O Karna! You will again possess the complexion and energy of your father. Your complexion will again become like his. But if you unleash this invincible weapon in a fit of fury, when you possess other weapons, there is no doubt that it will descend on you." Karna replied, "O Shakra! As you have told me, I will release Vasava's weapon only when I confront supreme danger. I promise you this truthfully." O lord of the earth! He then accepted the flaming shakti.

'He grasped his sharp sword and began to cut up his entire body. On seeing Karna cut up his own body, the gods, humans, danavas and masses of siddhas began to roar, because despite the pain, there were no distortions on his face. Celestial drums were sounded and divine flowers were showered down from above, at the sight of Karna, the brave man, smiling repeatedly as he cut up his own body with the sword. Having sliced off the divine armour from his body, while it was still wet, he gave it to Vasava. Then he sliced off and gave the earrings. Because of this deed, Karna came to be known as Vaikartana.[39] Shakra smiled at his deception, thinking that he had accomplished the objective of the Pandavas, and subsequently, soared up to heaven. However, he ensured Karna obtained fame in the world. Having heard that Karna had been deceived, all the sons of Dhritarashtra were miserable and their insolence was shattered. But on learning about the state that the son of the suta had been reduced to, the Parthas were happy in the forest.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Where did the brave Pandavas reside? How did they learn about these glad tidings? What did they do when the twelve years had passed? O illustrious one! Tell me everything about all this.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having defeated Saindhava[40] and got Krishna back and having heard the ancient and detailed accounts about gods and rishis from Markandeya, they left Kamyaka hermitage with the brahmanas. With all their chariots, servants, cooks and supervisors of the kitchen, the brave ones among men went to the sacred Dvaitavana, after having completed their entire dreadful stay in the forest.'

Section Forty-Four

Araneya Parva

This parva has 191 shlokas and five chapters.

Chapter 592(295): 17 shlokas
Chapter 593(296): 43 shlokas
Chapter 594(297): 74 shlokas
Chapter 595(298): 28 shlokas
Chapter 596(299): 29 shlokas

Arani *means wood used for kindling and this parva is named after that. Requested by a brahmana whose kindling has been lost, the Pandavas pursue a deer. Failing to answer a yaksha's questions, Nakula, Sahadeva, Arjuna and Bhima are killed, but are restored to life when Yudhishthira answers the yaksha's questions correctly.*

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Janamejaya asked, 'They experienced great sorrow when their wife was abducted. What did the Pandavas do when they obtained Krishna back?'

Vaishampayana said, 'They suffered supreme distress when Krishna was abducted. Together with his brothers, the undecaying king[1] left Kamyaka. Yudhishthira again went to beautiful Dvaitavana. They went towards Markandeya's beautiful hermitage, where there were succulent roots and fruit. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the Pandavas began to reside there with Krishna, controlled in their vows and living frugally on a diet of fruit. While Kunti's sons, King Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the two Pandavas who were Madri's sons lived in Dvaitavana, those scorchers of enemies, with dharma in their souls, devoted to brahmanas and rigid in their vows, experienced a great calamity that eventually ended in happiness. While Ajatashatru[2] was seated with his brothers in the forest, a brahmana swiftly approached and sorrowfully spoke these words to him. “I left my kindling and the churning rod[3] against a tree. But they stuck to the antlers of a deer that rubbed itself against it. O king! The great deer rushed away at great speed from the hermitage, using giant leaps. O king! Swiftly follow the footprints of that great deer. O Pandavas! Bring those back to me, so that my agnihotra is not spoilt.” On hearing the words of the brahmana, Yudhishthira felt sorry. Kounteya grasped his bow and left with his brothers. For the sake of the brahmana, all those archers and bulls among men prepared themselves and swiftly dashed after the deer. The Pandavas saw the deer at a short distance and hurled barbed arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows at it. But the maharathas could not pierce it. While they were trying in this way, the great deer disappeared. On seeing the deer disappear, those intelligent ones were exhausted and sorry. In that dense forest, they sought shelter under the cool shade of a banyan tree. Their limbs were sore with hunger and thirst and they seated themselves. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When they were seated, Nakula spoke to his eldest brother, with a heavy heart and lack of patience. “Dharma has never been given up in our lineage. Nor have objectives been lost through laziness. We are superior to all beings. O king! Why has this disaster befallen us again?”’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “There are no limits to misfortune. Nor effects or causes. Dharma distributes it, depending on merits and demerits.”

‘Bhima said, “The attendant dragged Krishna into the assembly hall like a servant. There is no doubt that we are confronted with this calamity because I did not kill him then.”

‘Arjuna said, “I tolerated the extremely harsh words spoken by the suta’s son, which penetrated the bones. There is no doubt that we are confronted with this calamity because of that.”

‘Sahadeva said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no doubt that we are confronted with this calamity because I did not kill Shakuni when he defeated you at the game of dice.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then King Yudhishthira spoke these words to Nakula. “O Madri’s son! Climb a tree and look in the ten directions. Look for water that is nearby, or trees that grow near water. O son![4] Your brothers are exhausted and thirsty.” Following these words, Nakula swiftly climbed a tree. After looking in all the directions, he told his eldest brother, “O king! I can see many trees that grow near water. I can hear the cries of cranes. There is no doubt that there is water somewhere here.” Kunti’s son Yudhishthira, steadfast in his truth, then told him, “O peaceful one! Swiftly go and fetch some water.” On his eldest brother’s instructions, Nakula agreed and quickly rushed towards the place where the water was. He saw the crystal clear water, surrounded by cranes. Just as he was about to drink it, a voice was heard from heaven. “O son![5] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Madri’s son! Answer my question. You can then drink it and take it.” But Nakula was very thirsty and ignored these words. He drank the cool water. Having drunk it, he collapsed and fell down. When Nakula did not return for a long time, Kunti’s son Yudhishthira told his brave brother Sahadeva, the scorcher of enemies. “O Sahadeva! Your brother has been gone for a long time. He is your immediate elder. Go and fetch your brother. Bring water too.” On hearing these words, Sahadeva proceeded in that direction. He saw his brother Nakula, lying down dead on the ground. He was sorely tormented at the sight of his brother. But he was oppressed by thirst. He rushed towards the water and the voice spoke these words. “O son![6] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. Answer my question. You can then drink it and take it, as you wish.” But Sahadeva was very thirsty and ignored these words. He drank the cool water. Having drunk it, he collapsed and fell down.

‘Then Kunti’s son Yudhishthira spoke to Vijaya.[7] “O Bibhatsu! O destroyer of enemies! Your brothers have been gone for a long time. O fortunate one! Go and bring them and the water.” At these words, Gudakesha grasped his bow and arrows. The intelligent one grasped his unsheathed sword and proceeded towards the lake. Shvetavahana saw his brothers, the tigers among men who had gone to fetch water, lying down dead on the ground. On seeing them, as if asleep, Kounteya, lion among men, was extremely distressed. He raised his bow and looked around in the forest. Savyasachi could not see any beings in that great forest. He was exhausted and rushed towards the water. As he rushed towards it, the voice was heard from the sky. “Why are you approaching? You will not be able to drink the water by force. O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you are able to answer my questions, you will be able to drink the water and take it.” Having been thus restrained, Partha said, “Show yourself and then restrain me. You will not be able to speak again in this fashion when my arrows pierce you.” Saying this, Partha invoked his arrows with mantras. He displayed his skill at shooting arrows targeted at sound, enveloping the directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He unleashed many showers of barbed arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows towards the sky.

‘The yaksha said, “O Partha! What purpose do these exertions serve? Answer my questions and then drink. If you do not answer the questions, you will cease to exist as soon as you drink.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘But having unleashed his invincible arrows, he was overcome by thirst. Ignoring the words, he drank and collapsed and fell down. Kunti’s son Yudhishthira then spoke to Bhimasena. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nakula, Sahadeva and the unvanquished Bibhatsu have been gone for a long time, having gone to fetch water. O fortunate one! Go and fetch them and bring the water.” Having been thus addressed, Bhimasena left in the same direction, where his brothers, tigers among men, had fallen down. On seeing them, Bhima was distressed and was oppressed by thirst. The mighty-armed one thought that this must have been the work of yakshas or rakshasas. He thought, “I will certainly have to fight today. But let me drink the water first.” Partha Vrikodara, bull among men, was thirsty and rushed towards the water.

‘The yaksha said, “O son![8] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Kounteya! Answer my question. You can then drink it and take it.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Bhima ignored the words of the infinitely energetic yaksha. He drank, collapsed and fell down. O bull among men! At this, the king who was Kunti’s son began to think. Tormented in his mind, the mighty-armed one arose. He entered the great forest, bereft of the sounds of people. It was infested with ruru deer, boar and birds. There were dark, colourful and beautiful trees, abuzz with the sounds of bees and birds. The immensely fortunate one entered the forest and saw the beautiful pond, as it was covered with a net of gold. It seemed to have been created by Vishvakarma.[9] It was covered with a bed of lotuses, *sindhuvaras*,[10] cane, ketakas,[11] karaviras[12] and pippalas.[13] He was exhausted and approaching the lake, gazed at it with wonder.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘He saw his dead brothers, as glorious as Shakra, like dislodged guardians of the world[14] when the end of the yuga had arrived. He saw Arjuna dead, with his bow and arrows scattered and Bhimasena and the twins, motionless and bereft of life. He shed tears of sorrow and breathed hot and deep sighs. Using his intelligence, he began to think. “Who has killed these brave ones? There are no marks of weapons on them. Nor are there any signs of footprints. I think it must be a great being that has killed my brothers in this way. I must reflect on this with concentration. Perhaps I will find out after drinking the water. Perhaps this is a deed that has been undertaken by Duryodhana, who cannot differentiate between what should be done and what should not be done, in secret, always aided by the wicked-minded king of Gandhara.[15] No brave person can trust that evil one, whose soul has not been perfected. Or perhaps that evil-souled one has employed secret servants.” Thus the mighty-armed one thought in many ways. But he did not think that the water was tainted through poison. He thought, “The faces of my brothers are healthy in complexion. These men are excellent and each one of them is capable of withstanding the shock of a flood of water. Who but Yama, the arbiter of destiny, can subjugate them?” Reflecting in this way, he entered the water. As he entered, he heard these words from the sky.

‘The yaksha said, “I am a crane that lives on aquatic plants and fish. I have taken your younger brothers to the land of the dead. O prince! If you do not answer my questions, you will be the fifth. O son![16] Do not be foolish enough to do this. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Kounteya! Answer my questions. Then drink and take the water.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “Are you the foremost among the Rudras, the Vasus or the Maruts? I am asking you. Which god are you? This is not the task of a bird.[17] Who is the greatly energetic one who has felled these four mountains[18]—Himalaya, Pariyatra, Vindhya and Malaya? O supreme among those who are strong! You have performed an extremely great deed. The gods, the gandharvas, the asuras and the rakshasas are incapable of withstanding them in a great battle. You have accomplished something that is extraordinary. I do not know what you are doing. Nor do I know your intentions. I am greatly curious, but I am also overwhelmed by fright. You are consuming my heart and have brought fever to my head. O illustrious one! I am asking you. Who are you, established here?”

‘The yaksha replied, “I am a yaksha. I am not an aquatic bird. It is I who killed all your greatly energetic brothers.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! On hearing these inauspicious words spoken by the yaksha in a harsh voice, he approached nearby and stood there. The bull among the Bharata lineage saw the yaksha, with malformed eyes and gigantic in form, as tall as a tala tree. He was as fiery as the fire and the sun and was invincible like a mountain. The immensely strong one stood on a mound and censured him in a voice that was as deep as the roar of thunder. The yaksha said, “O king! These brothers of yours were repeatedly restrained by me. But they tried to drink the water by force and I killed them. O king! This water should not be drunk by someone who desires his life. O Partha! Do not be foolish. I have obtained possession of this earlier. O Kounteya! Answer my questions. Then drink and take." Yudhishthira replied, "O yaksha! I do not desire what you have possessed earlier. Learned men never praise such desires, nor should men praise themselves on their own. O lord! Ask me. I will answer according to my wisdom."

'The yaksha asked, "What makes the sun rise and who are those near him? What makes him set and on what is he established?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "Brahma makes the sun rise and the gods remain near him. Dharma makes him set and he is established in truth."

'The yaksha asked, "How does one become learned? How does one attain greatness? O king! How does one obtain a second? How does one become intelligent?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "One becomes learned through the sacred texts.[19] One attains greatness through austerities. One obtains a second through perseverance.[20] One becomes intelligent by serving the elders."

'The yaksha asked, "What is the divine trait of brahmanas? What dharma of theirs is like that of the virtuous? What are their human traits? Which of their traits are like that of those without virtue?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "The study of the Vedas is their divine trait. Austerities are like that of the virtuous. Mortality is their human trait. Slander is like the conduct of those without virtue."

'The yaksha asked, "What is the divine trait of kshatriyas? What dharma of theirs is like that of the virtuous? What are their human traits? Which of their traits are like that of those without virtue?"

'Yudhishthira replied, "Arrows and weapons are their divine traits. Sacrifices are like that of the virtuous. Fear is their human trait. Desertion is like the conduct of those without virtue."

'The yaksha asked, "Which is the single sacrificial chant? What is the sacrificial formula? What do sacrifices need? And what can sacrifices not transgress?"

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The breath of life[21] is the single sacrificial chant. The mind is the sacrificial formula. Sacrifices need speech. Sacrifices cannot transgress speech.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is the best among those that descend? What is supreme among those that are sown? What is the best among those that stand? What is supreme among those that speak?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Rain is best among those that descend. Seeds are supreme among those that are sown. Cows are best among those that stand. Sons are supreme among those that speak.”[22]

‘The yaksha asked, “Who experiences the objects of the senses, is intelligent, is worshipped by all the beings in the world and breathes, but is not alive?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “A person who does not render offerings to the five—gods, guests, servants, ancestors and himself—breathes, but is not alive.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is heavier than the earth? What is higher than the sky? What is swifter than the wind? What is more numerous than men?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The mother is heavier than the earth. The father is higher than the sky. The mind is swifter than the wind. Worries are more numerous than men.”[23]

‘The yaksha asked, “What does not close its eyes while asleep? What does not move when it is born? What has no heart? What grows through speeding?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “A fish does not close its eyes while asleep. An egg does not move when it is born. A stone has no heart. A river grows through speeding.”

‘The yaksha asked, “Who is a friend to one who is travelling? Who is a friend at home? Who is a friend to one who is sick? Who is a friend to one who is about to die?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “A caravan is a friend to a traveller. A wife is a friend at home. A physician is a friend to one who is sick. Charity is a friend to one who is about to die.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What travels alone? What is born again after birth? What is a cure for cold? What is the greatest field?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The sun travels alone. The moon is born again after birth. Fire is the cure for cold. The earth is the greatest field.”

‘The yaksha asked, “In a single word, what is dharma? In a single word, what is fame? In a single word, what is heaven? In a single word, what is happiness?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “In a single word, dexterity is dharma. In a single word, generosity is fame. In a single word, truth is heaven. In a single word, conduct is happiness.”

‘The yaksha asked, ‘What is a man’s self? What is the friend given by destiny? What is the support of his life? What is the best refuge?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “A son is a man’s self. The wife is the friend given by destiny. Rains are the support of his life. Generosity is the best refuge.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is supreme among objects that are lauded? What is supreme among riches? What is the supreme gain? What is supreme happiness?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Dexterity is supreme among objects that are lauded. Knowledge of the sacred texts is supreme among riches. Health is the supreme gain. Satisfaction is supreme happiness.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is supreme dharma in this world? What dharma always leads to fruits? What does not grieve when it is controlled? What alliance never breaks?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Non-violence is supreme dharma. The dharma of the three[24] always leads to fruits. The mind does not grieve when it is controlled. An alliance with the righteous never breaks.”

‘The yaksha asked, “If abandoned, what makes one pleasant? If abandoned, what does not lead to sorrow? If abandoned, what ensures prosperity? If abandoned, what makes one happy?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The abandoning of pride makes one pleasant. The abandoning of anger does not lead to sorrow. The abandoning of desire ensures prosperity. The abandoning of desire makes one happy.”

‘The yaksha asked, “When is a man dead? When is a kingdom dead? When is a funeral ceremony dead? When is a sacrifice dead?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “A poor man is dead. A kingdom without a king is dead. A funeral ceremony performed without a learned brahmana is dead. A sacrifice without dakshina is dead.”

‘The yaksha asked, “What is the right direction? What is spoken of as water? O Partha! What is food and what is poison? What is the right time for a funeral ceremony? Then you can drink and take.”[25]

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The virtuous are the right direction. The sky is water. The cow is food. A request is poison. A brahmana is the best time for a funeral sacrifice.[26] O yaksha! What do you think?”

‘The yaksha said, “O scorcher of enemies! You have answered all my questions correctly. Tell me. Who is a man? Which man possesses all riches?”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “The reputation of good deeds touches heaven and earth. As long as that reputation remains, one is said to be a man. One to whom the pleasant and the unpleasant, happiness and unhappiness and the past and the future are equal, is a man who possesses all riches.”

‘The yaksha said, “O king! You have explained who is a man and which man possesses all riches. Therefore one of your brothers, whichever one you wish, will live.”

Yudhishthira replied, “O yaksha! Nakula is dark, with red eyes, mighty arms and a broad chest. He is as tall as a shala tree. He will live.”

‘The yaksha said, “You love Bhimasena and you depend on Arjuna. O king! Why do you then wish Nakula, who is your stepbrother, to be alive? Bhima has strength equal to ten thousand elephants. Why do you discard him and wish Nakula to live? People say that Bhimasena is your beloved. Out of what sentiments do you wish your stepbrother to live? All the Pandavas depend on the strength of Arjuna’s arms. But you discard him and wish Nakula to live.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Non-violence is supreme dharma. It is my view that this is the supreme objective. I am attracted to non-violence. O yaksha! Nakula shall live. Men know of me as a king who always follows dharma. I will not deviate from my own dharma. O yaksha! Let Nakula live. Madri is like Kunti and I see no difference between the two. I wish the same for both my mothers. O yaksha! Let Nakula live.”

‘The yaksha replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Since you think that non-violence is superior to artha and kama, all of your brothers will be restored to life.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘At the yaksha’s words, the Pandavas stood up. All their hunger and thirst disappeared in an instant.

‘Yudhishthira said, “Unvanquished, you are standing on one leg in the lake. I am asking you. Which god are you. I do not think that you are a yaksha. Are you one of the Vasus or one of the Rudras? Are you the foremost among the Maruts? Are you the wielder of the vajra, the lord of the thirty gods? Each of my brothers is capable of fighting hundreds and thousands. I do not see a means whereby all of them can be killed. I see that their senses have been restored and they have awakened pleasantly. Are you our well-wisher or are you our father?”

‘The yaksha replied, “O son! O one whose valour is mild! I am your father Dharma. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that I arrived with a desire to see you. Fame, truth, self-control, purity, uprightness, humility, steadfastness, charity, austerities and brahmacharya are my body. Know that non-violence, impartiality, peacefulness, austerities, purity and lack of envy are gates towards me. You have always been dear to me. It is fortunate that you are devoted to the five.[27] It is fortunate that you have conquered the six states.[28] Two occur early, two in the middle and two at the end, leading to the hereafter. I am Dharma. O fortunate one! I came here to test you and am satisfied with your non-violence. O unblemished one! I will grant you a boon. O Indra among kings! Ask for a boon. O unblemished one! I will grant it to you. Men who are devoted to me never suffer from misfortune.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “The deer ran away with his[29] kindling. May his fires not be destroyed. That is the first boon I ask for.”

‘Dharma replied, “O lord! O Kounteya! In order to test you, I robbed the brahmana of his kindling in the form of a deer.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The illustrious one granted him that boon. Then he asked the fortunate one, who was like an immortal, to ask for another boon.

‘Yudhishthira said, “The twelve years of dwelling in the forest have passed and the thirteenth has arrived. Wherever we may live, may people not be able to recognize us.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The illustrious one granted him that boon. He again comforted Kounteya, for whom truth was his valour. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if you travel the earth in your own forms, no one in the three worlds will be able to recognize you. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Through my favours, you will spend the thirteenth year, hidden and undetected, in the city of Virata. Whatever form each of you desires to assume in your mind, that will be the disguise you will adopt according to your wishes. Return the kindling to the brahmana, because I stole it in the form of a deer to test you. O son! Ask for a third boon that is great and unmatched. O king! You have been born from me and Vidura has also been born from a part of me.” Yudhishthira replied, “O eternal god of the gods! It is sufficient that I have set my eyes on your person. O father! I will happily accept whatever boon you are satisfied to grant me. O lord! May I always be able to conquer avarice, delusion and anger. May my mind always be inclined towards generosity, austerity and truth.” Dharma said, “O Pandava! You are naturally endowed with all the qualities. You are dharma yourself. But you will obtain what you ask for.” Having said this, the illustrious Dharma, who sustains the worlds, disappeared. The intelligent Pandavas were reunited and slept happily. Freed from exhaustion, all the brave ones returned to the hermitage and gave the kindling to the ascetic brahmana. A self-controlled man who restrains his senses and reads this great account of the restoration and meeting of the father and the son,[30] an account that extends fame, lives for a hundred years with sons and grandsons. Men who know of this good account are never inclined towards adharma and are not separated from their well-wishers. They do not steal the possessions of others or violate other people's wives. They never find pleasure in vile sentiments.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the Pandavas, for whom truth was their valour, had been granted leave by Dharma, they were ready to spend the thirteenth year in hiding and in disguise. Rigid in their vows, the intelligent ones seated themselves. Hands joined in salutation, those great-souled and righteous ones spoke to the ascetics, who had lived in the forest out of affection for them. The ones who had lived there, steady in their vows, sought their permission.[31] "All of you know everything about how the sons of Dhritarashtra have robbed us of our kingdom through deceit and have injured us in many other ways. Amidst great hardship, we have lived in the forest for twelve years. The thirteenth year, which must be spent undetected, still remains. We must spend that time in concealment and we seek your permission. The enemies who always resent us, the evil-souled Suyodhana and Karna with Soubala,[32] will try to create difficulties for us, our citizens and our relatives, should they manage to detect us. Will we again be established in our own kingdom and country, together with all the brahmanas?" Having spoken these words, King Yudhishthira, the pure son of Dharma, was oppressed by grief and with his voice choking with tears, lost his senses. Then all the brahmanas and his brothers comforted him.

'Dhoumya spoke these words, full of grave import, to the king. "O king! You are learned, self-controlled, true to your promises and in control of your senses. Such men are not confounded when they confront a calamity. In times of difficulty, even the great-souled gods have gone into hiding in many places, with the objective of subjugating their enemies. To accomplish the task of subjugating the strength of his enemies, Indra went to a hermitage in the land of the nishadhas, located on the slopes of a mountain, and hid there.[33] To kill the daityas, Vishnu spent a long time in hiding in Aditi's womb and was then born as

Hayashira.[34] Disguising himself in the form of a dwarf, the one whose form is that of the brahman, used his valour to rob Bali of his kingdom.[35] You have heard about this. O son! You have heard everything about how brahmarshi Ourva accomplished the objective of the worlds while hidden in a thigh.[36] O one learned in dharma! You have heard how Hari hid himself in Shakra's vajra so that Vritra might be killed. You have heard everything about how Agni entered and concealed himself in the water to accomplish the task of the gods. O son! The supremely energetic Vivasvat lived in hiding in earth and later burnt up all his enemies. Vishnu, terrible in his deeds, lived in Dasharatha's house and in disguise, killed Dashagriva in battle.[37] Thus did the great-souled ones live in disguise. Then they conquered their enemies in battle and you will also triumph in that way." Yudhishthira was thus comforted by the words of Dhoumya, who knew about dharma, and using his own intelligence and knowledge of the sacred texts, no longer wavered.

'The mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhimasena, foremost among strong ones, spoke to the king and raised his spirits. "O great king! Look at Gandivadhanva.[38] Because of his devotion to dharma and because of his own intelligence, he has not acted foolishly yet. Nakula and Sahadeva, terrible in their valour, are capable of slaying the enemies, but have always been restrained by me. We will not deviate from whatever task you assign to us. You must tell us what we should do and we will swiftly carry it out and vanquish our enemies." When Bhimasena spoke these words, the brahmanas pronounced supreme benedictions on them. Having bid farewell to the descendants of the Bharata lineage, all of them returned to their own houses. All those who were foremost in knowledge of the Vedas, ascetics and sages, pronounced their blessings in the prescribed way and desired to see them again. The five learned Pandavas arose with Dhoumya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave ones set out with Krishna. After traversing the distance of a krosha, they seated themselves at a spot. Those tigers among men were ready to begin their sojourn of concealment. Each of them was separately learned in the sacred texts. But all of them were also skilled in consultations. They were knowledgeable about when it was a time for peace and when it was a time for war. Before departing, they sat down and consulted each other.’

This ends Aranyaka Parva.

Virata Parva

The Pandavas have to spend the thirteenth year in disguise and in hiding. They decide to do this in the kingdom of Virata and this parva is named after that. In the 18-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Virata Parva is fourth. This parva has sixty-seven chapters. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 45 through 48 constitute Virata Parva. In the numbering of the chapters in this parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Virata Parva.

Section Forty-Five

Vairata Parva

This section has 282 shlokas and twelve chapters.

Chapter 597(1): 23 shlokas
Chapter 598(2): 27 shlokas
Chapter 599(3): 19 shlokas
Chapter 600(4): 49 shlokas
Chapter 601(5): 31 shlokas
Chapter 602(6): 16 shlokas
Chapter 603(7): 11 shlokas
Chapter 604(8): 33 shlokas
Chapter 605(9): 15 shlokas
Chapter 606(10): 13 shlokas
Chapter 607(11): 13 shlokas
Chapter 608(12): 32 shlokas

This section is named after Virata. Virata is the proper name, whereas Vairata is the adjective. In Section 44 (Volume 3), at the end of Aranyaka (Vana) Parva, a brahmana's kindling was robbed by a deer and the Pandavas pursued the deer. This section takes off from there. The Pandavas decide to spend the thirteenth year in disguise in King Virata's kingdom. In individual disguises, the Pandavas and Droupadi arrive in King Virata's court and are accepted by him. Yudhishthira becomes Kanka, Bhima becomes Ballava, Arjuna becomes Brihannada, Nakula becomes Granthika, Sahadeva becomes Tantipala and Droupadi becomes Sairandhri.

597(1)

Janamejaya asked, 'Oppressed by fear of Duryodhana, how did my great grandfathers live in disguise in the city of Virata?'[1]

Vaishampayana said, 'Having obtained boons from Dharma in that fashion,[2] the one who was foremost among upholders of dharma[3] returned to the hermitage and told the brahmanas everything that had happened. Having recounted everything to the brahmanas, Yudhishthira returned the kindling to the brahmana.[4] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then Dharma's son, the great-minded King Yudhishthira, called all his younger brothers and spoke to them in this way. "Dislodged from our kingdom, we have lived for twelve years and the thirteenth has arrived now. We will have to live through a difficult period. O Kounteya Arjuna! Therefore, think of a desirable place where all of us may dwell, without being detected by our enemies." Arjuna replied, "O lord of men! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Because of the boon that has been given to us by Dharma, we can roam undetected by men. I will recount the kingdoms where we may dwell. Some of them are beautiful and secluded. Which of these seems attractive to you? Around the kingdom of the Kurus, there are many beautiful countries with an abundance of food—Panchala, Chedi, Matsya, Shurasena, Patachchara, Dasharna, Navarashtra, Malla, Shalva and Yugandhara. O king! Which among these seems to you to be an attractive place to live in? O Indra among kings! Where will we dwell for a year?" Yudhishthira said, "O mighty-armed one! It will indeed be as the illustrious lord of all beings[5] has said. It cannot be otherwise. We must certainly dwell in a place that is beautiful, auspicious and pleasant, where all of us can live without any fear. Let us consult among ourselves. The powerful Matsya Virata will protect the Pandavas. He is aged, generous, with a great deal of riches and conducts himself in accordance with dharma. O son![6] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let us happily spend a year in the city of Virata.[7] We will perform tasks for him there.[8] O descendants of the Kuru lineage! Let each one of us describe the tasks that he will perform, the kind of duties that we will undertake for him." Arjuna replied, "O god among men! O virtuous one! What duty will you undertake in the kingdom of King Virata? What appeals to you? You are gentle, generous, modest and devoted to dharma. Truth is your valour. O king! O Pandava! Confronted by this calamity, what will you do? O king! You are not familiar with the hardships faced by ordinary people. How will you pass through this calamity that has come over you?" Yudhishthira said, "O descendants of the Kuru lineage! Listen to the duties that I will undertake. When I arrive before King Virata, bull among men, I will become a member of that great-souled king's assembly. I will pose as a brahmana named Kanka, skilled in dice and fond of gambling.[9] I will use beautiful dice made out of lapis lazuli, gold, ivory and lustrous fruit,[10] with black and red dots. If asked, I will tell the king that in earlier times I used to be Yudhishthira's friend, as dear to him as life itself. I have now told you how I wish to spend my time. O Vrikodara![11] What task will you perform in Virata?"'

598(2)

'Bhima said, "I think I will present myself before King Virata as a superintendent of the kitchen and give my name as Ballava. Since I possess culinary skills, I will cook him dishes. I will surpass all the skilled chefs who have cooked dishes for him earlier and thus generate affection in his mind. I will fetch large loads of wood for him. The king will be pleased on witnessing my great deeds. O king! If there are powerful elephants, or immensely strong bulls, that need to be overpowered by me, I will pacify them too. If there are warriors who need to be fought in the assembly, I will vanquish them also and increase his affection towards me. But I will never slay any of those fighters. I will bring them down so that they do not perish. If asked, I will say that I was cook, cattle-tender, chef and wrestler to Yudhishthira. O lord of the earth! I will act so as to protect myself on my own. I promise that I will carry myself in this way."

'Yudhishthira said, "He is foremost among men. In a desire to burn down Khandava, he was the one before whom Agni appeared in the disguise of a brahmana in earlier times. He was accompanied by Dasharha then.[12] He is immensely strong and mighty-armed. He is the invincible descendant of the Kuru lineage. What duty will Kounteya Dhananjaya undertake? He confronted the conflagration and satisfied the fire. Ascended on a single chariot, he vanquished Indra and killed the serpents and the *rakshasas*. He is supreme among warriors. What will Arjuna do? The sun is foremost among those that heat. The brahmana is supreme among bipeds, a poisonous one among snakes. Agni is supreme among those with energy. The *vajra* is supreme among weapons. A bull with a hump is supreme among cattle. The ocean is foremost among stores of water. Parjanya[13] is supreme among those who shower down. Dhritarashtra is supreme among *naga*s and Airavata[14] among elephants. The son is supreme among those who are loved and the wife among well-wishers. O Vrikodara! Just as there is a foremost among each specific category, this young Gudakesha[15] is foremost among all archers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is not inferior to Indra or Vasudeva. He is the wielder of the bow Gandiva and has white horses. What will Bibhatsu do?[16] He lived for five years in the abode of the one with a thousand eyes.[17] In a form that was as radiant as that of the gods, he obtained divine weapons. I think that he is the twelfth Rudra and the thirteenth Aditya.[18] His arms are smooth and long. His skin is tough, both on the right and the left,[19] from drawing the string of the bow and marked like bulls that bear loads. The armed Arjuna is supreme, like Himalaya among the mountains, the ocean among stores of water, Shakra[20] among the thirty gods, Agni among the Vasus, the tiger among animals and Garuda among winged ones. What will he do?"

'Arjuna replied, "O lord of the earth! I promise that I will undertake the duties of a eunuch. O king! It is difficult to conceal these great marks that the string of the bow has left. I will wear earrings as radiant as the fire on my ears. O king! I will wear a braid on my head and name myself Brihannada.[21] I will repeatedly recount stories and observe the characteristics of a woman. I will please the king and the others who live in the inner quarters through different forms of singing and dancing and the playing of varied kinds of music.[22] O king! I will teach the women in Virata's abode these arts. I will recount the many deeds, fruits and conducts of people. O Kounteya! I will disguise myself in this way. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If I am asked by the king, I will say that I was Droupadi's attendant in Yudhishthira's house. O Indra among kings! In this way, I will pleasantly spend my time in Virata's abode, disguising myself through deceit, just as Nala had done."'[23]

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Nakula! O son![24] You are delicate, brave, handsome and used to pleasure. What will you do and how will you act?”

‘Nakula replied, “I will become a keeper of horses for King Virata. I find pleasure in that kind of work and will give myself the name of Granthika. I am skilled in training horses and also in treating horses. O king of the Kuru lineage! I have always loved horses, just as much as you have. If people in the city of Virata question me, I will tell them that this is how I find pleasure.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Sahadeva! How will you find pleasure before him?[25] O son![26] What task will you undertake? How will you disguise yourself while roaming there?”

‘Sahadeva replied, “I will tend to the cows of King Virata. I am skilled in tending to cattle, milking them and counting them. Know that I will be called by the name of Tantipala. I will conduct myself skilfully and do not be anxious on my account. In earlier times, you have naturally used me for tending to cattle. O lord of the earth! I am acquainted with all the skills connected with that task, the traits and conduct of cattle and the auspicious marks. O lord of the earth! I know all this and other things extremely well. O king! I know which bulls possess marks that deserve worship, and the smell of whose urine makes barren cows give birth. I will conduct myself in this way, for this always brings pleasure to me. O king! No one will be able to recognize me and you will be happy.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “This is our beloved wife, dearer to us than our lives. She should be protected like a mother and worshipped like an elder sister. What duty will Krishna Droupadi perform and how will she conduct herself? She is not familiar with any of the duties and tasks that women perform. She is delicate and young and is a famous princess. She is immensely fortunate and devoted to her husbands. How will she conduct herself? Ever since birth, this beautiful one has known garlands, fragrances, ornaments and varied garments.”

‘Droupadi replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this world, there are unprotected maidservants known as *sairandhri*.[27] It is known to people that no other women conduct themselves in this fashion. If asked, I will call myself Sairandhri, adept at dressing the hair. Concealing myself in this way, I will enter the service of Sudeshna, the king's famous wife. On obtaining me, she will protect me. Do not be unhappy in this way."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Krishna! You speak well, deserving of one who has been born in a noble lineage. You do not know any sin. You are virtuous and always base yourself on righteous vows."'

600(4)

'Yudhishthira said, "You have stated the tasks and the duties that you will perform. To the best of my intelligence, I have decided that I approve of this. Let our priest leave, together with the superintendents of the kitchen and the cooks, and preserve the *agnihotra*[28] in Drupada's abode. It is my view that Indrasena[29] and the other charioteers should take the empty chariots and swiftly proceed to Dvaravati. Let all the women who tend to Droupadi go to Panchala[30] with the superintendents of the kitchen and the cooks. All of them must say, 'We do not know where the Pandavas are. All of them have deserted us and have left Dvaitavana.'"

'Dhoumya[31] said, "Devoted well-wishers can speak about things that are known. Therefore, I will speak and listen to my reasons. O princes! I will tell you about life in a king's abode and about how, having reached the king's household, you can free yourselves from harm. O Kouravyas! Life in a king's abode is difficult, even for those who are acquainted with it. For an entire year you will be unknown and will not be shown any honour, even though you deserve honour. When you are shown the door, take to the door. Do not repose any trust in kings. Seek out seats that no one else desires. Live in the king's abode without assuming that, as a favourite, one can ascend his vehicle, palanquin, seat, elephant or chariot. If evil-minded ones are suspicious of the seat that you occupy, do not ascend there again. That is the way one can live in a king's residence. One should never offer advice to the king, unless he has asked for it. Be seated in silence and honour him at the right time. Kings dislike those who disagree and people who speak lies. Wise ones never become friendly with the wives,[32] or with those who live in the inner quarters, or ill-wishers whom the king despises. With the king's knowledge, one should perform the most insignificant of tasks. If one conducts oneself in this fashion, one will be protected from any harm from the king. One should serve with the care one exhibits towards Agni or the other gods. There is no doubt that if one resorts to falsehood, one will confront violence. One should follow the instructions of the lord and avoid negligence, pride and anger. One should always offer advice that is good and pleasant, but one should attend more to the good than the pleasant. In every kind of conversation, one should be kindly disposed.[33] One should never say that which is unpleasant and brings no gain. A learned one serves, not thinking that he is favoured. Without any confusion, do that which is good and pleasant. One can live in the king's abode as long as one does not serve those who wish him ill, as long as one does not consort with those who seek to harm him and as long as one does not stray from one's station. The learned seat themselves to the right side or the left. It has been decreed that the place behind him is for armed guards. The grand seat in front of him has always been forbidden. One should not talk about prosperity in his presence.[34] This is regarded as extreme impertinence, even among the poor. Do not reveal to men the lies the king utters. Do not converse with men the king does not like. Do not be proud because of your bravery, or vain because of your intelligence. One becomes dear and comfortable by doing that which brings pleasure to the king. Having obtained rare riches and affection from a king, without any confusion, one must engage in that which is good and pleasant for the king. His anger can be a great obstacle. His favours can bring great fruits. Can anyone, who is honoured by the wise, think of causing harm to such a person? One should not forcefully move one's lips or thighs, or utter words with great force. Sneezing, breaking wind and clearing the throat should always be done gently. When there is an occasion for laughter, one should laugh gently, and not like one who is mad. But one should not be too solemn. Otherwise, one will be taken to be too severe. Instead, one should smile gently, showing oneself to be benevolent. One can always live in a king's abode if one does not show delight at a gain or sorrow at a dishonour, and is always attentive. If one is a learned counsellor who always pleases the king and the prince, one can always live there in prosperity. If a beloved adviser has fallen out of favour for some reason and does not blame the king, he will regain the favours once more. One who earns his livelihood from the king, or dwells in his kingdom, must be sagacious enough to recount his good qualities, both in his presence and in his absence. An adviser who strongly desires to obtain some objective from the king, will not remain in that position for long and faces a danger to his life. For the sake of what is seen to be one's one gains, one should not say anything that goes against the king. In particular, one should always advice the king at the right place. One who is always cheerful, strong, brave, faithful like a shadow, truthful, gentle and self-controlled, is capable of dwelling in a king's abode. If another one is instructed with a task, a person who jumps forward and asks what he should do is capable of dwelling in a king's abode. If one does not waver when given instructions, whether it is hot or cold, or night or day, one is capable of dwelling in a king's abode. One who lives away from home and does not remember one's loved ones and one who finds happiness in unhappiness is capable of dwelling in a king's abode. One should not dress like him.[35] One should not laugh loudly in his presence. One should not offer a great deal of advice. In this way, one will become dear to the king. Appointed to a task, one should not touch riches.[36] Having obtained unearned riches, one faces imprisonment or death. One should use vehicles, garments, ornaments and other objects that have been given, and thus become a greater favourite. O sons![37] Spend a year in this way, adorning yourselves with good conduct. You will then regain your possessions and act according to your pleasures."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O fortunate one! We have been instructed by you. No one but you can speak in this fashion, but for our mother Kunti and the immensely intelligent Vidura. It is now necessary to do what must be done, so that we can overcome our suffering and depart so as to achieve victory."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed by the king, Dhoumya, supreme among brahmanas, performed all the decreed rites that were necessary for their departure. He offered kindling to the fire and rendered oblations to the utterance of mantras, so that their prosperity might increase and they might conquer the earth. The six of them, with Yajnaseni[38] at the forefront, circumambulated the fire and the brahmanas, rich in austerities. Then they departed.'

601(5)

Vaishampayana said, 'Those brave ones girded their swords and were armed with other weapons. Their quivers were tied. They had guards on their fingers and wrists. They proceeded towards the river Kalindi.[39] On foot, they arrived at its southern bank. The archers lived there, finding fortifications in the mountains and the forests. The immensely strong great archers shot many different kinds of deer. To the north of Dasharna and the south of Panchala, the Pandavas passed through Yakrilloma and Shurasena. Attired as hunters, they entered Matsya from the direction of the forest. Having reached that country, Krishna told the king, "Behold. Many footpaths and different kinds of fields can be seen here. It is clear that Virata's capital is still far away. My fatigue is extremely great. Let us spend the night here." Yudhishthira replied, "O Dhananjaya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lift Panchali and carry her. Once we free ourselves from this forest, we will settle down in the capital." Like a king of elephants, Arjuna swiftly raised Droupadi up. Arjuna put her down when they reached the outskirts of the capital. On arriving at the capital, Kounteya[40] asked Arjuna, "Before entering the city, where will we keep our weapons? O son![41] If we enter the city with our weapons, there is no doubt that we will create anxiety among the people. We have made a promise that even if one of us happens to be discovered, we will have to return to the forest again for twelve years." Arjuna said, "O Indra among men! On this peak and close to the cremation ground, there is a gigantic *shami* tree.[42] It is impenetrable because of its fearsome branches and is difficult to climb. O king! Not a single man can be seen here. It is far away from the road and has grown in a forest frequented by animals and predators. Let us hang up our weapons there and then proceed towards the city. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We will then be able to enjoy ourselves as we please.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having thus addressed King Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, he took off his weapons there.

‘Partha, descendant of the Kuru lineage, loosened the string of the terrible Gandiva, which made a great roar and slaughtered masses of enemies. With it, alone on a chariot, he had vanquished gods, men and snakes and conquered many opulent countries. Yudhishthira, the brave scorcher of enemies, loosened the bow’s undecaying string, one with which he had protected Kurukshetra.[43] Lord Bhimasena loosened the string of the bow with which he had defeated the Panchalas in battle and with which, he alone, had conquered many enemies in the course of his conquest. Enemies were pacified in battle because of the twang of that bow. Mountains were rent asunder with the twang of Bhimasena’s bow, which was like that of thunder. O unblemished one! He had used it to oppress the king of Saindhava.[44] The brave Pandava who had roared in battle, loosened the string of the bow with which he had conquered the west.[45] The brave lord Sahadeva, whose conduct was honest,[46] loosened the string of the weapon with which he had conquered the southern direction. With the bows, they laid down their long and yellow swords, their extremely expensive quivers and arrows that were as sharp as razors. Having himself climbed the tree, Nakula deposited these bows. He tied them firmly with strong nooses to those branches that were extremely strong and wide and where he saw that showers of rain would not enter. The Pandavas also tied a dead body there, so that people would smell the stench of a corpse and avoid the shami tree from a distance. While they were tying the corpse to the tree, the scorchers of enemies were questioned by cowherds and herdsmen. They said, “This is our mother, who is one hundred and eighty years old. This is the dharma of our lineage, one that has been followed by our ancestors.” Then the Parthas, the destroyers of enemies, approached the city.

‘Yudhishthira gave them the names they would secretly address each other by—Jaya, Jayanta, Vijaya, Jayatsena and Jayadbala. In accordance with the promise that they had made, they entered the great city, to live in disguise in that kingdom for the thirteenth year.'

602(6)

Vaishampayana said, 'On his way to King Virata, who was seated in his assembly hall, Yudhishthira first fastened the dice, made of lapis lazuli and gold, to his side and gathered his garments around him. The immensely famous lord of men, extender of the Kourava lineage, went to the extremely generous lord of the kingdom.[47] He was worshipped by kings among men and was as difficult to approach as a venomous serpent.[48] He was a bull among men in his strength and beauty. He was grand and radiant, like an immortal. He was like the sun, enveloped in a great mass of clouds. The brave one was like the fire, covered in ashes. The Pandava approached, like the moon shrouded in clouds. On seeing this, King Virata questioned the advisers, brahmanas and vaishyas who were seated there. "Who is the one who has approached me, setting his eyes on my assembly hall for the first time? This supreme among men cannot be a brahmana. It seems to me that he must be a lord of the earth, though he doesn't possess a servant, a chariot or an earring. When he nears, he is as resplendent as Indra. It is my view that the marks on his body indicate that he is one whose head has been anointed.[49] He approaches me without any hesitation, the way a rutting elephant nears a pond full of lotuses." While he was thus reflecting, Yudhishthira, bull among men, approached Virata and spoke to him. "O emperor! Know that I am a brahmana who has lost everything and has come here in search of a livelihood. O unblemished one! O lord! I wish to live here with you, following your instructions." On hearing this, the king happily welcomed him.

'Thereafter, he spoke to him.[50] "Please accept our homage. O son![51] I am welcoming you with delight. Now tell me. From which king's dominion have you arrived here? Tell me truthfully, your name and your lineage. Which is the art that you wish to pursue here?" Yudhishthira replied, "In earlier times, I used to be Yudhishthira's friend. I am a brahmana from Vyaghrapada's lineage. I am skilled at throwing the dice and gambling. O Virata! I am known by the name of Kanka.” Virata said, “I grant you the boon that you desire. Rule over Matsya and I will serve you. I have always loved skilled and shrewd gamblers. You are like a god and deserve a kingdom.” Yudhishthira replied, “O lord of the earth! O Matsya! If there is ever a great dispute, I will never accept the views of anyone who is inferior. But no one whom I defeat will retain his riches. Through your favours, please grant me this boon.” Virata said, “If anything unpleasant is done towards you, I will kill even those who should not be killed. If it is a brahmana, I will exile him from my kingdom.[52] Let all the assembled citizens hear that Kanka is as much a lord of the kingdom as I am. You will be my friend and ride on the same vehicle. You will have many garments and a lot of food and drink. You will always look towards my inner and outer affairs. My door will always be open for you. When oppressed people approach you in search of work, you can always give them word on my behalf. There is no doubt that I will give them everything that has been promised. In my presence, you will not find anything to be scared of.” Having thus met King Virata and obtained the boon from him, the brave bull among men began to dwell there happily. He was shown the ultimate honours. No one there got to know about his true intentions.’

603(7)

Vaishampayana said, ‘After that, another one arrived. He was terrible in strength and his beauty was resplendent. His gait was as easy as that of a valorous lion. He held a spoon and a ladle in his hands. He also had an unsheathed black and iron sword that was devoid of any blemishes. He was in the form of a cook, but his radiance was supreme. He was like the sun illuminating the world. He was attired in extremely dark garments and was like the king of the mountains.[53] He approached the king of Matsya and stood there. On seeing the supreme one arrive, the king spoke to the assembled citizens. “Who is this handsome and young one whom we see? He is like a bull among men. His shoulders are as large as that of a lion. I have not seen a man like him before. He is like the sun. Though I have been reflecting, I am unable to determine correctly the intentions of this bull among men.” Pandava then approached Virata. The great-minded one spoke in words that seemed to be despondent. “O Indra among men! I am a cook named Ballava. Appoint me and I will cook you supreme dishes.” Virata replied, “You are one who offers honour. I do not believe that you are a cook. You seem to be the equal of the thousand-eyed one,[54] in your radiance, your beauty and your valour. O son![55] You are radiant and supreme among men.” Bhima said, “O Indra among men! I am a cook and your servant. I only know the best of dishes. O king! In earlier times, King Yudhishthira used to taste all of them. There is no one who is equal to me in strength. O king! I have always been skilled at wrestling. O unblemished one! I will bring you pleasure by fighting with elephants and lions.” Virata replied, “I grant you the boon that you will be employed in the kitchen. You will work there, since you have said that you possess those skills. However, I do not think that this work is appropriate for you. You deserve the entire earth, girded by the ocean. But let it be the way you desire. You will be appointed the chief chef in the kitchen, heading the men who have been appointed there earlier by me.” Thus Bhima was instated in the kitchen. He became a great favourite of King Virata’s. O king! While he lived there, no one, not even the servants, got to know who he was.’

604(8)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then the unblemished Krishna braided her hair, with curls at the tips. The mild and dark-eyed one hid it on the right side and donned a garment that was long, dark and extremely dirty. She thus assumed the garb of a sairandhri and began to roam around, as if she was in great trouble. On seeing her wandering around, men and women rushed to her and asked, “Who are you and what do you desire?” O Indra among kings! She then told them, “I am a sairandhri. I have come here, wishing to work for anyone who will feed me.” On seeing her beauty, her attire and the gentleness of her speech, they did not believe that she was a maidservant who had come in search of food.

‘Virata’s wife was the daughter of Kekaya and was greatly honoured. She looked down from the palace and beheld Drupada’s daughter. On seeing her in that state, without a protector and clad in a single piece of garment, she summoned her and said, “O fortunate one! Who are you and what do you wish to do?” O Indra among kings! She told her,[56] “I am a sairandhri and I have arrived here in search of work. I will work for anyone who feeds me.” Sudeshna[57] replied, “O beautiful one! Those you speak of[58] do not possess the beauty you have. Those like you have many and varied servant maids and servants. Your ankles are concealed. Your thighs are firm. You are deep in three places[59] and high in six.[60] You are red in the five places that should be red.[61] Your voice is as slow as that of a swan. You have beautiful hair and beautiful breasts. You are dark.[62] Your buttocks and breasts are full. You are endowed with all the qualities, like a mare from Kashmira. Your eyelashes curl gracefully. Your lips are like *bimbas*.[63] You are slender at the waist. Your neck is lined like a conch shell. Your veins are hidden. Your face is like the full moon. O fortunate one! Tell me truthfully who you are. You cannot be a servant maid. Are you a *yakshi*, a goddess, a *gandharvi* or an *apsara*[64]—Alambusha, Mishrakeshi, Pundarika, Malini, Indrani, Varuni, or the consort of Tvashtra, Dhata or Prajapati?[65] These goddesses are famous among the gods. Which of these are you?”

‘Droupadi replied, “I am not a goddess, or a gandharvi, or an *asuri*, or a *rakshasi*. I tell you truthfully that I am a sairandhri. I know how to dress hair and am skilful at grinding unguents. I can weave extremely beautiful and colourful garlands. I served Satyabhama, Krishna’s beloved queen and Krishna,[66] the wife of the Pandus and the solitary beauty in the Kuru lineage. I go wherever I can obtain a good life. I am happy as long as I can obtain excellent garments. The goddess herself used to call me by the name of Malini.[67] O goddess! O Sudeshna! I have arrived thus in your house.”

‘Sudeshna said, “There is no doubt that I can place you on my head, as long as the king does not desire you with all his heart and go to you. Behold! The ladies of the royal lineage and those who live in my abode are gazing at you with attachment. What man will you not infatuate? Behold! Even the trees that are established in my abode are bending down over you. What man will you not infatuate? When King Virata sees your superhuman beauty, with the beautiful buttocks and the beautiful hips, he will forsake me and go to you with all his heart. Your limbs are flawless. Your eyes are soft and long. O one with the beautiful smiles! On looking at you, any man who sees you will become attached and be overcome with desire. You are unblemished in all your limbs and he will come under the sway of the god of love. A she-crab conceives and brings about her own death.[68] O one with the beautiful smiles! I think that if I grant you residence, I will bring about my own destruction."

'Droupadi replied, "O beautiful one! Neither Virata, nor anyone else, can ever obtain me. I have five young gandharvas[69] as my husbands. They are the sons of a gandharva king who is extremely powerful. They always protect me. Any conduct that brings me grief ensures destruction. My gandharva husbands allow me to live in a house where I am not served any leftover food and where I am not asked to wash anyone's feet. If any man desires me, like any other common woman, before the night is over, he will enter another body.[70] O beautiful one! No one is capable of making me stray. Those powerful gandharvas always protect me from unhappiness."

'Sudeshna said, "O beloved one! I will then offer you residence, according to your desires. You will not wash the feet of others. Nor will you ever eat leftover food."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Krishna was thus comforted by Virata's wife. O Janamejaya! No one there got to know who she actually was.'

605(9)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having donned the supreme garments of a cowherd, Sahadeva also arrived. He adopted their language and presented himself before Virata. The king saw that resplendent bull among men arriving, and advancing towards the descendant of the Kuru lineage, asked him, "Whom do you belong to and where have you come from? O son![71] What do you wish for? O bull among men! Tell me truthfully. I have not seen you before." When he arrived before the king, Sahadeva, the destroyer of enemies, spoke in a voice that was as deep as the clouds. “I am a vaishya by the name of Arishtanemi. I used to number the cows for the bulls among the Kurus. O supreme one on earth! I wish to reside with you. I do not know where the Parthas, lions among kings, are. I know of no other means of livelihood. O king! I will not find pleasure in serving anyone other than you.” Virata replied, “You must be a brahmana or a kshatriya. You are as handsome as a lord of the earth, with the frontiers of the ocean. O destroyer of enemies! Tell me the truth. The duties of a vaishya are not appropriate for you. From what king’s kingdom have you arrived here? What kind of craftsmanship do you wish to pursue? In what capacity will you always reside with us? Tell me what salary you wish to be paid.” Sahadeva said, “King Yudhishthira is the eldest among the five sons of Pandu. He possessed herds of eight hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, another ten thousand and another twenty thousand cows. I was the one who numbered his cows and I was known by the name of Tantipala. Nothing is unknown to me about numbering—the past, the present and the future, and within a distance of ten *yojana*s.[72] The great-souled one, Yudhishthira, king of the Kuru lineage, was well acquainted with my skills and was always satisfied with me. I know how cattle can be multiplied swiftly and how one ensures that they never suffer from disease. These types of skills have always been known to me. Such craftsmanship has always been established in me. O king! I know the auspicious marks of bulls, the smell of whose urine makes barren cows give birth.” Virata replied, “I possess one hundred thousand. They have been classified according to colours and other qualities that are yet undetected. I put you in charge of the animals and the herdsmen. Henceforth, let my animals be in your care.” O lord of the earth! Thus, unknown to the king, that supreme among men lived there happily. No one else found out who he was. He was also paid a salary, according to his wishes.’

606(10)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Then another handsome one made his appearance. He was a giant man, but was adorned in the ornaments of women. He wore earrings that were as large as walls and turrets, made out of long and beautiful conch shells adorned with gold. His long and abundant hair was combed. He was mighty-armed and his valour was like that of an elephant. The earth trembled as he advanced. He approached Virata, who was seated in his assembly hall, an oppressor of enemies who had disguised himself. However, his supreme radiance was dazzling. This was the son of the great Indra, and like a king of elephants in his valour. On seeing him arrive in the assembly hall, the king asked all those who were nearby, "Where has he come from? I have not heard of him before." But none of the men there said that they knew him. In amazement, the king spoke these words. "You are a beautiful man and have all the endowments. You are dark and young and are equal to the leader of a herd of elephants. You wear beautiful conch shells that are adorned with gold. You have loosened your hair in a braid and are adorned with earrings. Your hair is peaked and abundant. But your attire seems to be wrong. You must be an archer, with armour and arrows. Climb onto a swift vehicle. Be like my sons, or like me myself. I am an old man now and wish to ease my burdens. Swiftly protect the entire region of Matsya. Someone with your form cannot be a eunuch. It seems to my mind that there is no way this can be true."

'Arjuna replied, "I sing, dance and play musical instruments. I am excellent in dancing and skilled in singing. O god among men! Give me Uttara.[73] I will myself be the dancer to that goddess. There is no point in recounting how I came by this form. It will only increase my misery. O god among men! Know my name to be Brihannada. I have been abandoned by my father and my mother as a son and a daughter."[74]

'Virata said, "O Brihannada! I will grant you the boon that you have asked for. Instruct my daughter, and others like her, in dance. I do not think that such a duty befits you. You deserve the entire earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having tested Brihannada in dancing, music and other arts, and on determining that he was a eunuch, the king of Matsya permitted him to enter the quarters of the princess. Lord Dhananjaya instructed Virata's daughter in singing and music, as well as her friends and attendants. Pandava became very dear to them. Self-controlled Dhananjaya lived there in disguise and did what pleased them. No one there, outside or in the inner quarters, got to know about him.'

607(11)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then another lordly Pandava was seen to approach King Virata, when he was inspecting his horses. As he arrived, the people saw him, like the disc of the sun freed from behind the clouds. He began to examine the horses that were in every direction. On seeing him engaged in examining, the king of Matsya, the destroyer of enemies, spoke to his attendants thus. "This man is an equal of the immortals. Where has he come from? He is examining my horses with great thoroughness. It is certain that he is skilled in the knowledge of horses. Let him swiftly be brought before me. This brave one's appearance is like that of an immortal." The destroyer of enemies[75] now spoke to the king. "O king! O fortunate one! May you be victorious. O king! I have always been esteemed because of my knowledge of horses. I will become the skilled charioteer of your horses." Virata replied, "I will give you vehicles, riches and a house. You deserve to be the charioteer of my horses. But where have you come from and whom do you belong to? Why have you come here? Tell me about the arts that are known to you."[76] Nakula said, "King Yudhishthira is the eldest of the five sons of Pandu. O destroyer of enemies! I was earlier employed as the tender of his horses. I know the nature of horses and everything about subduing them. I can control wicked ones and I know everything about healing them. No steed that belongs to me is ever timid. No mare of mine is wicked, not to speak of stallions. People, and Pandava Yudhishthira, knew me by the name of Granthika." Virata replied, "From today, let all the horses and mounts that I possess be entrusted to your care. Let all my charioteers, and all those who yoke horses, be subordinate to you from now on. O one who is like the gods! Tell me what you wish for. What kind of salary do you desire? The tending of horses does not become you. It seems to me that you are as radiant as a king. To me, your appearance is as pleasant as that of Yudhishthira himself. How can the Pandava[77] find any pleasure dwelling in the forest, without any servants?" Thus the young one, who was like the best of the gandharvas, was happily honoured by King Virata. No one got to know about him and he roamed around, making himself agreeable. Thus did the Pandavas, whose sight always bore fruit, dwell in Matsya, following the pledge that they had given. They lived a careful life of concealment. But the lords of the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, were extremely miserable.'

608(12)

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! While the Pandavas resided in the city of Matsya, what did the extremely valorous Pandavas do?'

Vaishampayana said, 'While the descendants of the Kuru lineage lived there in disguise, honoured by the king, listen to what they did. O lord of the earth! As a courtier, Yudhishthira became the beloved of others in the assembly, as well as of Virata and his son. Pandava knew the heart of the dice and played with the dice as he pleased, as if they were birds tied to a string. Unknown to Virata, Dharmaraja, tiger among men, distributed the riches that he won among his brothers, to each one according to what he deserved. Bhimasena sold Yudhishthira meat and other kinds of food that were given by Matsya. Arjuna sold the old garments that he obtained from the inner quarters and passed on all the proceeds to the Pandavas. Pandava Sahadeva assumed the attire of a cowherd. He gave the Pandavas curds, milk and ghee. Because of his duties with the horses, Nakula satisfied the lord of men[78] and obtained riches. He gave this to the Pandavas. The ascetic Krishna looked after all the brothers. The beautiful one acted so that they might remain undetected. O lord of men! Thus the *maharathas*[79] looked after each other, living in disguise, but looking after Krishna.

'There was a great festival of austerities in Matysa in the fourth month.[80] Men honoured it and celebrated it with great expense. O king! Thousands of wrestlers arrived there from all the directions. They were gigantic in size and immensely valorous, like Kalakhanja *asuras*.[81] They were insolent of their valour and were proud of their strength and were honoured by the king. Their shoulders, waists and necks were like those of lions. They were free from dirt and were in great spirits. Before the king, they had been victorious and honoured in the arena earlier. There was a gigantic one among them and he challenged all the wrestlers. As he strode around the arena, not a single one dared to take him on. When all the other wrestlers were despondent and had lost their spirits, the king of Matsya asked his cook to fight with the wrestler. Thus instructed, Bhima was unable to refuse the king in public and unhappily made up his mind.[82] That tiger among men entered the giant arena with the light gait of a tiger and brought delight to Virata. To the delight of the assembly, Kounteya girded himself. Bhima then challenged the wrestler, who was like Vritra[83] himself. Both of them were extremely energetic and both of them were terrible in their valour. They were intoxicated, like giant elephants that were sixty years old. Bhima, the destroyer of enemies, grasped the roaring wrestler and tugged him with his arms. He also roared like a tiger seizing an elephant. Then the mighty-armed and brave Bhima raised the wrestler up and whirled him around, to the supreme amazement of the other wrestlers and the residents of Matsya. Having whirled him around a hundred times, until he lost his mind and his senses, the mighty-armed Vrikodara flung him down on the ground. The brave Jimuta,[84] famous in the world, was thus slain. Together with his relatives, Virata was greatly delighted. In his joy, the great-minded king gave a lot of riches to Ballava in that great arena, like Vaishravana.[85] After having defeated a large number of wrestlers and immensely strong men in the same way, he obtained the supreme of favours from the king of Matsya. No other man could be found who was a match for him. He was then made to fight with tigers, lions and elephants. In the presence of the women from the inner quarters, Virata repeatedly made Vrikodara fight with angry lions that were extremely powerful.

‘Pandava Bibhatsu satisfied Virata and all the women from the inner quarters with his singing and his excellent dancing. O supreme among kings! Nakula satisfied the king with the trained and swift steeds that he assembled there. On seeing Sahadeva’s trained bulls, the king was delighted and gave him a lot of riches. Thus did those bulls among men live there in disguise. They performed various duties for King Virata.’

Section Forty-Six

Kichaka-Vadha Parva

This section has 353 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 609(13): 21 shlokas
Chapter 610(14): 21 shlokas
Chapter 611(15): 41 shlokas
Chapter 612(16): 16 shlokas
Chapter 613(17): 29 shlokas
Chapter 614(18): 36 shlokas
Chapter 615(19): 30 shlokas
Chapter 616(20): 34 shlokas
Chapter 617(21): 67 shlokas
Chapter 618(22): 30 shlokas
Chapter 619(23): 28 shlokas

Vadha *means to kill and is also the act of slaying. Kichaka is Virata's general and Sudeshna's brother and lusts after Droupadi. Kichaka is killed by Bhima, which explains the name of this section.*

609(13)

Vaishampayana said, 'The maharatha Parthas lived in disguise in the city of Matsya and ten months elapsed. O lord of the earth! O Janamejaya! Yajnaseni[1] lived there in great unhappiness, serving Sudeshna, though she deserved to be served herself. Virata's general saw the lotus-eyed Panchali roaming around in Sudeshna's abode. As soon as he saw her roaming around like a goddess, like a daughter of the gods, Kichaka[2] desired her and was oppressed by the arrows of love. Burning with the fire of desire, the general went to Sudeshna and smilingly said, “I have not seen this beautiful one in Virata’s abode earlier. This beautiful one’s form intoxicates me, like scent generated from liquor. O beautiful one! Who is this one who steals the heart, with the form of a goddess? O beautiful one! Where has she come from and whom does she belong to? She oppresses my mind and has brought me under her control. I think that there is no medicine that can cure me now. Behold! It seems to me that your beautiful serving maid possesses extreme beauty. It is not fitting that she should work for you. She should command me and everything that I possess. Let her grace my beautiful and grand residence, with all its many elephants, horses, chariots, great riches and opulence, with a lot of food and drink and with its handsome gold and colourful adornments.” After consulting Sudeshna, Kichaka went to the daughter of the king[3] and spoke to Krishna in a comforting voice, like a jackal confronting a queen of deer[4] in the forest. “O beautiful one! Your supreme form and your youth are useless if you are alone, like a beautiful garland that is not worn. O beautiful one! Though you are handsome, you are lacking in radiance. O one with the beautiful smile! I will give up the wives I have had before. O beautiful one! I will station myself as your servant. O one with the beautiful face! I will always be under your control.”

‘Droupadi replied, “O son of a *suta*![5] You desire me. But I am not one who should be coveted. I am a sairandhri, born from an inferior lineage. I am terrible to look at and I perform the duty of dressing hair. O fortunate one! I am another one’s wife. This conduct is beneath you. Wives are loved by all beings. Think of what is dharma. In no way should your mind turn towards another one’s wife. Men who are good in their vows always avoid that which should be abhorred. Men who are evil-souled and overcome by delusion covet that which should not be coveted and attain ill fame. They confront grave danger. O son of a suta! Do not rejoice. Otherwise, you may lose your life today, by desiring that which is difficult to obtain. I am protected by brave ones. I cannot be obtained by you. My husbands are gandharvas. They will be angered and will kill you. Cease and do not bring about your own destruction. You desire to traverse a path that men cannot walk on. You are like a stupid child who is on a bank and wants to cross over to the other bank. You may enter the earth, or you may rise up into the sky. You may flee to the furthest shore of the ocean. But you will not be able to free yourself from them. My husbands are the powerful sons of the gods. O Kichaka! You firmly desire me now, as if you are ill and the night of your death has arrived. You desire me, like a child who is asleep on his mother's lap and wishes to obtain the moon."'

610(14)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus turned down by the princess, Kichaka was overcome by a terrible lust that could not be controlled. He went to Sudeshna and told her, "O Kaikeyi![6] Act so that I can be united with Sairandhri. O Sudeshna! Otherwise, I will give up my life." Hearing his many lamentations, the goddess who was Virata's queen felt compassion for him. She debated in her mind and thought about what would best serve her purpose, regarding Krishna. Sudeshna then told the suta, "Have some liquor and food prepared for the festive day. On that day, I will send her to you, asking her to fetch some liquor for me. Thus sent, without any obstructions, you can try to seduce her in private, comforting her according to your desires and uniting with her, if she agrees." Hearing these words of his sister, Kichaka returned home. He procured supremely refined liquor, fit to be served to a king. He made his excellent cooks prepare the meat of goat and lambs, large quantities of the meat of deer and supreme food and drink.

'Once this was done, having been informed by Kichaka, Queen Sudeshna sent Sairandhri to Kichaka's residence. Sudeshna said, "O Sairandhri! Arise and go to Kichaka's house. O fortunate one! I am overcome by thirst. Go and fetch me something to drink." Droupadi replied, "O princess! I will not go to his residence. O queen! You know that he has no shame. O one with the unblemished limbs! O beautiful one! I will not be addicted to desire in your house and I will not be unfaithful to my husbands. O goddess! O beautiful one! You know about the conditions I set when I entered your house earlier. O one with the beautiful hair! Kichaka is a fool and is insolent with desire. On seeing me, he will cause me dishonour. O beautiful one! I will not go there. O princess! You have many other servant maids who follow your instructions. O fortunate one! Send one of them instead. It is certain that he will dishonour me.” Sudeshna replied, “If you have been sent by me, he will not cause any violence to you.” With these words, she gave her a golden goblet with a cover. Anxious and weeping and seeking protection with fate, she left for Kichaka’s house to fetch the liquor. Droupadi said, “If it is true that I do not know anyone other than the Pandus, then through that truth, let Kichaka not be able to overpower me when I reach that place.” Then the weak one worshipped Surya[7] for an instant. Surya got to know everything from the slender-waisted one and instructed an invisible rakshasa to protect her. Under no circumstances was the rakshasa supposed to leave the side of the unblemished one.

‘On seeing Krishna approach like a frightened doe, the suta arose, as if one wishing to cross a river has found a boat.’

611(15)

‘Kichaka said, “O one with the beautiful hair! Welcome. My night has happily turned into day. I have obtained you as my mistress. Do what brings me pleasure. Let them bring golden garlands, conch shells, earrings made out of gold, silken garments and other skins. I have arranged that a divine bed should be spread out for you. Come with me there and drink the honeyed liquor.”

‘Droupadi replied, “The princess has sent me to you to fetch liquor. She told me she was thirsty and I should quickly fetch her something to drink.”

‘Kichaka said, “Some other fortunate one will take refined liquor to the princess.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this, the suta’s son grasped her by the right hand. Having been thus seized, she threw Kichaka down on the floor. She rushed to the assembly hall where King Yudhishthira was seated and sought protection. Kichaka pursued the fleeing one and grasped her by the hair. While the king looked on, he flung her down and kicked her with his foot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, the rakshasa who had been employed by the sun god pushed Kichaka away with the force of the wind. Struck by the strength of the rakshasa, he fell down on the ground. He was whirled around and was motionless, like a tree that has been uprooted. Both Bhimasena and Yudhishthira were seated there and looked on. They could not bear the sight of Krishna being kicked by Kichaka. The great-minded Bhima wished to kill the evil-minded Kichaka and gnashed his teeth in anger. O king! But Dharmaraja restrained Bhima by pressing his thumb with his own.[8]

'Drupada's daughter was weeping and clung to the door of the assembly hall. The one with the beautiful hips glanced at her husbands, whose appearances were dejected. She was also bent on protecting the pledge they had taken in the name of dharma. With terrible eyes that seemed to burn down, she told Matsya, "The son of a suta has kicked me with his foot. I am the revered wife of those whose enemies do not dare to sleep when they traverse the earth. The son of a suta has kicked me with his foot. I am the revered wife of those who give and do not ask, those who are truthful and are like brahmanas. The son of a suta has kicked me with his foot. I am the revered wife of those whose war drums and bow twangs are continually heard. The son of a suta has kicked me with his foot. I am the revered wife of those who are energetic and self-controlled, who are powerful and extremely proud. The son of a suta has kicked me with his foot. I am the revered wife of those who, had they not been bound by the noose of dharma, are capable of destroying the entire world. They provide succour to those who seek refuge. They are roaming the world in disguise. Where are those maharathas now? Those powerful and infinitely energetic ones are suffering like eunuchs, while their beloved and chaste wife is tortured by the son of a suta. Where is their intolerance? Where do their valour and energy flow? They cannot protect their wife from being tortured by an evil-minded one. What can I possibly do with Virata, when dharma is being reviled? He witnesses an innocent one being tortured, but tolerates it. O king! You are not acting like a king in your treatment of Kichaka. Your dharma is that of a *dasyu*[9] and is not deserving of an assembly hall. I do not see any adherence to one's own dharma in Kichaka, or in Matsya. It seems to me that the courtiers are also oblivious of dharma. O King Virata! I will not censure you in this assembly of people. O Matsya! But it is not right that I should be tortured in your presence. The courtiers have witnessed that Kichaka is being treated as an exception." Virata replied, "I do not know anything about your quarrel, since that occurred outside my sight. Unless I know the truth, how can I judge skilfully?" Having learnt what had happened, those present in the assembly honoured Krishna a lot. They congratulated her and condemned Kichaka. The courtiers said, "The man who possesses this long-eyed one with the unblemished limbs as a wife, has obtained the supreme and need not sorrow over anything." The courtiers saw Krishna and honoured her in this fashion.

'Because of anger, there were drops of perspiration on Yudhishthira's forehead. Kouravya spoke to the princess who was his beloved queen. "O Sairandhri! Do not stay here. Go to Sudeshna's abode. The wives of brave ones suffer on account of their husbands. Though suffering, they conquer the worlds of their husbands through their servitude. I think that your husbands do not see this as a time for anger. Therefore, the gandharvas, who are like the sun in their energy, are not rushing to help you. O Sairandhri! You do not know that this is not the right time and are prancing around like a dancing girl. You are disturbing the Matsyas, who are gambling in the king's assembly hall. O Sairandhri! Depart and the gandharvas will act so as to bring you pleasure." Droupadi replied, "I follow dharma for the sake of those who are extremely tolerant. If the eldest one is addicted to dice,[10] anyone can oppress them." Having spoken these words, Krishna rushed to Sudeshna's residence. The one with the beautiful hips had her hair flowing freely and her eyes were red with anger. When she stopped crying, her face was like the lunar disc in the sky, freed from a net of clouds. Sudeshna asked, "O one with the lovely hips! O beautiful one! Who has oppressed you and why are you crying? O fortunate one! Whose happiness will end today and who has acted towards you in an unpleasant way?" Droupadi replied, "Kichaka kicked me when I went to fetch liquor for you. The king looked on in the assembly hall, as if this had occurred in private.” Sudeshna replied, “O one with the beautiful hair! If you so think, I will have Kichaka killed. He has been intoxicated by desire and has lusted for one who is not obtainable.” Droupadi said, “He has caused injury to others and they will kill him. I think it is certain that he will go today to the world beyond.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been kicked by the son of a suta, the beautiful princess Krishna blazed forth and planned the general’s death. Drupada’s daughter then went to her own residence and having purified herself, the slender-waisted Krishna washed her body and her garments with water. Weeping, she thought about how she might emerge from her misery. “What will I do? Where will I go? How will my task be accomplished?” While she was thinking in this way, Bhima surfaced in her mind. “Other than Bhima, no one can act so as to bring pleasure to my mind.” She arose from her bed in the night. The spirited and chaste Krishna possessed a protector. Afflicted with great grief in her mind, the sweet-smiling Panchali swiftly went to Bhimasena in the kitchen, like a three-year old cow born in the forest approaches a bull, or a she-elephant approaches a large bull-elephant. She was like a creeper embracing a large and flowering *sala* tree[11] on the banks of the Gomati, like the wife of the king of animals[12] waking up a sleeping lion in the deserted forest. Unblemished Panchali spoke to Bhimasena in words that were as sweet as a veena uttering *gandhara* notes.[13] “O Bhimasena! Arise! Arise! How can you sleep as if you are dead? The evil one, who molested the wife of someone who is not dead, is still alive. My enemy, the evil-doing general, is still alive.” Awoken by the princess, Kouravya arose from his bed and seated himself on a couch covered with cushions, looking like a monsoon cloud. He asked his beloved queen, “Why have you come to me in this hurried fashion? Your complexion is not natural. You appear to be pale and wan. Tell me everything in detail, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable, so that I know. Having heard everything, I will decide what should be done next. O Krishna! I am trusted by you in all deeds. I have repeatedly saved you from all dangers. Quickly tell me what you desire, what task needs to be done. Then return to your bed before the others arise.”’

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‘Droupadi said, “How can a woman, who has Yudhishthira as a husband, not be sorrowful? You know all my miseries. Why are you asking me? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It burns me that an usher dragged me to an assembly hall, in the midst of the courtiers, calling me a servant maid. O lord! Which other daughter of a king, but for Droupadi, would wish to live like me, after enduring such miseries? When dwelling in the forest, who else but me would endure being molested a second time by the evil-minded Saindhava?[14] Barring me, who else can bear to be alive after having been kicked by Kichaka with his feet, in the presence of the king of Matsya and while that gamester looked on?[15] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have been tormented by several miseries like these. O Kounteya! Don’t you know them? How does it profit me to be alive? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O tiger among men! The evil-minded Kichaka is King Virata’s general and brother-in-law. While I dwell in the king’s residence in the disguise of Sairandhri, the evil-minded one incessantly addresses me, asking me to be his wife. O destroyer of enemies! Thus addressed by one who deserves to be killed, my heart is bursting out, like a fruit that time has ripened.

‘“You should censure your elder brother, who is addicted to gambling. It is because of his deeds that I confront these unending calamities. Who else but him, addicted to gambling, would give up his kingdom, all his possessions and his own self, so as to spend a life in the forest? If he had played from morning till evening for many years and wagered property worth one thousand *nishkas*[16] each time, there would have been no decrease in the value of his golden ornaments, golden coins,[17] garments, vehicles, teams of animals, goats, sheep, horses and mules. Under the guise of a gambling match, he has been dislodged from all his prosperity. He is now silent like a stupid person, reflecting about his own deeds. When he went out, ten thousand elephants, garlanded with gold and bearing the marks of lotuses, followed him. He now earns a livelihood through dice. A hundred thousand infinitely energetic men showed homage to the great king Yudhishthira in Indraprastha. A hundred thousand servant maids always served him in the kitchen, with plates in their hands, serving guests morning and night. The supreme among generous ones gave away a thousand nishkas. He is now confronted with this great calamity because of his gambling. Many bards and minstrels, with beautiful voices and adorned with decorated and bejewelled earrings, showed him homage in the morning and the evening. One thousand rishis were always seated in his assembly hall. They were rich in austerities and learning and all their wishes were attended to. Without any distraction, he supported the blind, the aged, the unprotected and the destitute of the kingdom. Yudhishthira was always devoted to non-violence. He has now found hell as Matsya's servant. Yudhishthira calls himself Kanka, the gambler in the king's assembly hall. At the time when he lived in Indraprastha, all the kings brought him tribute. He now seeks a salary from others. He was a protector of the earth and all the kings were under his suzerainty. The king has now lost his powers and is under someone else's control. Like the one with the rays,[18] he dazzled the entire earth with his energy. But that Yudhishthira is now a gambler in King Virata's court. O Pandava! Behold that Pandava! He was one whom kings honoured in his assembly hall, accompanied by the rishis. He is now seated below another. The immensely wise one now seeks livelihood from another. Who will not suffer on seeing the undeserving Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, thus? The entire earth served that brave one in his assembly hall. He is now seated below another. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Behold that descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am now like an unprotected one, having suffered from many such misfortunes. I am now in the midst of an ocean of grief. O Bhima! Do you not see?"'

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'Droupadi said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about my great unhappiness. I am telling you this out of great misery and you should not be angry with me. I am bereft of my senses when you fight with tigers, buffaloes and lions in the inner quarters and Kaikeyi[19] watches you. On seeing me unconscious, Kaikeyi will arise and tell her women, ‘I think this affection is born out of this sweet-smiling one living with the cook and she sorrows when he fights with these immensely brave beings. Sairandhri is beautiful in form and Ballava is extremely handsome. The minds of women are impossible to fathom. But it seems to me that they are made for each other. Sairandhri is always overcome by pity because they happily live together. They have lived in this royal household for the same duration of time.’ Through such words, she always makes me known. When she sees me angered, she suspects that I am attached to you. When she utters such words, I am overtaken by great grief. I am immersed in sorrow over Yudhishthira and I cannot bear to be alive.

‘“Alone on a single chariot, he defeated gods, men and serpents. That youthful one is now a dancing master for King Virata’s daughter. The one with the infinite soul satisfied the fire god in Khandava. Partha has now gone to the inner quarters, like a fire covered in a well. He was a bull among men and enemies were always frightened of him. Dhananjaya is now in a form that is despised by the world. Enemies trembled at the twang of his bow and the slapping of his palms. He now pleases women with the sweet sounds of his singing. A diadem that was like the sun always adorned his head. Dhananjaya’s unkempt hair is now braided. All the celestial weapons are known to that great-souled one. He is the repository of all knowledge and now wears earrings. Thousands of kings, whose energy was unlimited, could not cross him and overcome him in battle, just as the great ocean does not cross the shoreline. That youthful one is now a dancing master for King Virata’s daughter. He hides himself in disguise and serves the daughter. O Bhima! The earth, with its mountains and forests and mobile and immobile objects, trembled at the roar of his chariot. He is the immensely fortunate one whose birth destroyed Kunti’s sorrow. O Bhimasena! I now sorrow over your younger brother. He is adorned in golden ornaments and earrings and sports conch shells in his hands.[20] On seeing him approach, my mind is immersed in sorrow. O Bhima! The archer Dhananjaya wears his unkempt hair in a braid. O Bhima! On seeing him surrounded by young maidens, my mind is immersed in sorrow. He is equal to a god. When I see Partha surrounded by young maidens, in the midst of musical instruments, like a bull-elephant in rut surrounded by she-elephants, and in the service of Virata, king of the Matsyas, who pays him, I can no longer see any of the directions. Surely the *arya*[21] does not know the difficulties Dhananjaya has to confront, or those that Ajatashatru[22] is immersed in, having become addicted to evil gambling.

'"The youngest Sahadeva is a lord of warriors. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him tend to cattle, in the disguise of a cowherd, I become pale. O mighty-armed one! I repeatedly reflect upon Sahadeva's conduct. Truth is his valour. But I do not know of any evil act that Sahadeva has done, as a consequence of which, he should attain such unhappiness. O best of the Bharata lineage! On seeing your beloved brother, appointed by Matsya, like a bull among the cattle, fever overcomes me. He is clad in red garments and he is foremost among the cowherds. He shows homage to Virata. Arya[23] always praised brave Sahadeva because of his honoured reputation, his conduct and his virtuous nature. 'He is modest, sweet in speech, devoted to dharma and dear to me. O Yajnaseni! Comfort him in the forest, even at night.' O best of warriors! O Pandava! On seeing Sahadeva engaged with cows, covering himself with calf skins at night, how can I bear to live?

'"He[24] always possessed the three qualities of beauty, weaponry and intelligence. He now tends to Virata's steeds. Behold! How times have changed! The great king looks and the assembled populace watches when Damagranthi[25] trains horses and drives them swiftly. I have seen him wait upon the prosperous Virata of Matsya, supreme in his radiance, showing off the horses. O Partha! O scorcher of enemies! How can you think that I will be happy? Because of Yudhishthira, I am afflicted with a hundred different kinds of miseries. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are other miseries too, greater than these. O Kounteya! Listen and I will tell you about them. These many types of unhappiness are drying up my body. What can be a greater misery than that? And all of this is happening while you are still alive."'

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‘Droupadi said, “Because of the crafty one who is addicted to dice, I roam around in the king’s residence in the form of a sairandhri, washing for Sudeshna. O scorcher of enemies! I am a princess. Look at the extreme and improper acts I perform. Like a diseased one, I am waiting for the time when all my difficulties will be over. For mortals, it is said that prosperity, success, victory and defeat are only transient. Thinking of this, I am waiting for my husbands to arise again. That which leads to a man’s victory may lead to his defeat too. I am waiting for that. Men give and beg, kill and are killed, in that order. I have heard that they kill, and are then killed by enemies. There is nothing that is too heavy for destiny. Nor can destiny ever be transgressed. Therefore, I am waiting for destiny to manifest itself. Where there was no water earlier, there may be water again.[26] Thinking of this reversal, I am waiting for us to arise again. If one is not successful because of destiny, even though affairs have been conducted well, it is said that learned ones should endeavour to make destiny turn favourable. I will tell you the reason behind my words, whether you ask me or do not ask me. I am immersed in grief and I will tell you. I am the queen of the sons of Pandu and the daughter of Drupada. Having attained such a plight, who but me would wish to live? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O destroyer of enemies! These sorrows that I have been overtaken by, bring disgrace to all the Kurus, the Panchalas and the Pandavyas. I am sustained by many brothers, fathers-in-law and sons. What woman, other than me, can bear to be so unhappy? In my childhood, I must have performed an act to displease the creator. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His ill favours have brought me this misfortune. O Pandava! Look at the pallor of my complexion, the likes of which I have not had, even in the worst of difficulties. O Bhima! O Partha! You know how happy I used to be earlier. I have now become a servant maid. I am helpless and can find no peace.

‘“I think it cannot be anything other than fate. The mighty-armed Partha Dhananjaya, whose bow is terrible, has been pacified, like a fire that is covered. O Partha![27] It is impossible for men to comprehend the fate of beings. I know that this downfall of ours could not have been thought of earlier. You are the likes of Indra and you have always glanced at my face. I am supreme among women. But you now look towards the faces of those who are inferior. O Pandava! Look at my plight, something that I did not deserve. Though all of you are alive, look at how times have changed. The entire earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, was under my control. I am frightened of Sudeshna and am under her control. Earlier, I used to have servants before me and behind me. But I now walk before Sudeshna and follow her at the back. O Kounteya! Listen to another misery that I find to be insufferable. I have never before had to grind unguents, not even for my own self—only for Kunti. O fortunate one! I now have to grind sandalwood. O Kounteya! Look at my hands. They have never looked like this earlier.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this, she showed him both her calloused hands.

‘Droupadi said, “I was never scared of Kunti, or any one of you. But I now stand like a servant maid before Virata, always terrified. ‘What will the emperor tell me? Have I prepared the unguents properly? Perhaps Matysa will not like sandalwood when it has been ground by others.’”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Narrating her miseries to Bhimasena, the beautiful Krishna wept silently and glanced towards Bhimasena. Her voice was choked with tears. She sighed repeatedly. Bhimasena’s heart was shattered and she said, “O Bhima! In earlier times, the offence that I have caused to the gods cannot have been trifling. O Pandava! I am unfortunate that I continue to be alive, when I should be dead.” Vrikodara, the destroyer of enemy warriors, then placed the swollen and calloused hands of the trembling one against his face and began to weep. The valorous Kounteya grasped them. Extremely miserable, and in a voice choked with tears, he spoke these words.’

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‘Bhimasena said, “Shame on the strength of my arms and on Phalguna’s[28] Gandiva! Your hands used to be red earlier, but are now covered in callouses. I would have created a great uproar in Virata’s assembly hall, but Dharmaraja restrained me with a glance. O beautiful one! Knowing his intentions, I controlled myself. That we have been dislodged from the kingdom, that I have not killed the Kurus, Suyodhana, Karna and Soubala Shakuni, that I have not sliced off the evil Duhshasana's head—all of these burn me, like stakes impaled in my heart. O fortunate one! Do not abandon dharma. O one with the beautiful hips! O immensely intelligent one! Conquer your anger. If King Yudhishthira hears this censure from you, he is certain to give up his life. O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful hips! O slender-waisted one! So will Dhananjaya and the twins. When they have gone to the other world, I will no longer be capable of being alive. O beautiful one! Sukanya, the daughter of Sharyati, followed Bhargava Chyavana, who had become a termite hill, into the forest, so as to pacify him.[29] You may have heard of the beauty of Nadayani Indrasena. In earlier times, she followed her aged husband, though he was one thousand years old.[30] You may have heard about Janaka's daughter, Vaidehi Sita. She followed her husband when he dwelt in the great forest.[31] Rama's beloved queen was molested by a rakshasa. Though she went through many difficulties, the one with the beautiful hips followed no one other than Rama. O timid one! Like that, Lopamudra possessed youth and beauty. By renouncing all the objects of desire that can be obtained by men, she followed Agastya.[32] O fortunate one! Just as these beautiful ladies[33] became famous because of their devotion to their husbands, you will also triumph because of all your qualities. Wait for a little more time. Only a month and a half is left. When thirteen years are completed, you will become a king's queen again."

'Droupadi replied, "O Bhima! I shed tears because I was suffering. I could not control my misery. I did not censure the king.[34] O Bhimasena! O mighty-armed one! One need not dwell over what is past. The present is here and it is time for you to act. O Bhima! Kaikeyi is anxious that I surpass her in beauty. She is constantly worried that the king[35] might approach me. Knowing her intentions, the evil-minded Kichaka, knowing his own false intentions, always propositions me. He has angered me. O Bhima! But I have repeatedly controlled my anger. I have told Kichaka, who has lost control over his own soul because of lust, ‘Protect yourself. I am the beloved wife and queen of five gandharvas. Those brave and invincible ones, who act out of courage, will slay you.’ On being thus addressed, the evil-souled Kichaka replied, ‘O Sairandhri! O one with the beautiful smiles! I am not frightened of gandharvas. I will kill a hundred, and a hundred thousand, gandharvas who are assembled in battle. O timid one! Give me a chance.’ Thus addressed, I again spoke to the suta who was overtaken by lust. ‘You do not have the strength to counter the famous gandharvas. I am born in a noble lineage and am virtuous in conduct. I have always been established in dharma. O Kichaka! I do not desire that anyone should be killed. That is the reason that you are still alive.’ Thus addressed, the evil-souled one burst out in loud laughter. He does not stay on the right path. Nor does he follow dharma. The evil-souled one is evil in his sentiments and is overcome by lust and desire. The insolent and evil-souled one has been repulsed repeatedly. But whenever he sets sight on me, he molests me and I am certain to give up my life. While all of you seek to observe dharma, a great dharma is being destroyed. The wife must be protected at the appropriate time. If the wife is protected, the offspring are protected. If the offspring are protected, one’s own self is protected. I have heard brahmanas speak about the dharma of different *varna*s.[36] There is no dharma for kshatriyas other than the destruction of enemies. While Dharmaraja looked on, Kichaka kicked me with his foot. O Bhimasena! O immensely strong one! It was in your sight too. It was you who protected me from the terrible Jatasura and together with your brothers, also from Jayadratha.[37] Kill the evil one who molests me in this way. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because he is favoured by the king, he causes me grief. This one is overtaken by lust. Destroy him like an earthen pot against stone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is responsible for many of my miseries. If the sun rises tomorrow morning and he is alive, I will drink poison, rather than fall into Kichaka’s clutches. O Bhimasena! It is better for me to die now, in front of you.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this, she clung to Bhima’s chest and started to weep. Having embraced her, Bhima offered her great consolation. He thought of Kichaka in his mind and licked the corners of his mouth.’

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‘Bhimasena said, “O fortunate one! O timid one! I will do what you have said. I will kill Kichaka today, together with all his relatives. O Yajnaseni! O one with the beautiful smiles! Discard your sorrow and grief. Tomorrow evening, set up a tryst with him. The king of the Matsyas has built a dancing hall. Maidens dance there during the day and retire to their houses at night. O timid one! There is a divan there. It has been constructed well, with sturdy legs. There, I will show him his grandfathers who have died earlier. When you converse with him, make sure that no one sees you. O fortunate one! But act so that he goes there.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having thus talked and shed tears of sorrow, but bearing up their spirits, they waited for the night to be over. When the night had passed and it was dawn, Kichaka arose. He went to the royal palace and told Droupadi, “I kicked you with my foot in the assembly hall, in the king’s sight. When someone stronger than you molested you, you could find no protector. It is said that Virata is the king of the Matsyas only in name. As a general of the army, I am the real king of the Matsyas. O timid one! Be happy and I will become your servant. O one with the beautiful hips! I will instantly give you one hundred nishkas. I will also give you one hundred servant maids and another one hundred servants. I will give you chariots drawn by she-mules. O timid one! Let us be united.” Droupadi replied, “O Kichaka! I will agree. But you must accept a condition first. None of your friends or brothers must know that you have gone to unite with me. I am scared that the illustrious gandharvas may get to know. If you promise this, then I will come under your control.” Kichaka said, “O one with the beautiful hips! I will do exactly as you have said. O fortunate one! I will go alone to your secluded house to unite with you. O one whose thighs are like plantain trees![38] I am crazy with desire for you. The gandharvas, as dazzling as the sun, will not be able to see you there.” Droupadi replied, “There is a dancing hall that the king of the Matsyas has built, maidens dance there during the day and retire to their houses at night. Go there when it is dark and the gandharvas will not get to know. There is no doubt that we will then not be detected in sin.”

‘O king! Thinking of the conversation that she had had with Kichaka, the remaining half of the day seemed to be like an entire month. Kichaka went home, extremely delighted. The fool did not know that his death had arrived in the form of a sairandhri. He was fond of fragrances, ornaments and garlands. Intoxicated with love, he decorated himself with these. While he was doing these tasks, time seemed to be inordinately long. He thought about the one with the long eyes. Though he would soon be freed of all his prosperity, he seemed to increase in prosperity, like the wick of a burning lamp that is about to be extinguished. Kichaka was intoxicated with desire and completely trustful. He thought about the union and did not notice that the day was passing.

‘Then Droupadi went to Bhima in the kitchen. The fortunate one seated herself next to Kouravya, her husband. The one with the beautiful hair spoke. “O scorcher of enemies! As you had said, I have fixed an assignation with Kichaka in the dancing hall. In the night, Kichaka will come to the deserted dancing hall alone. O mighty-armed one! Kill Kichaka. O Kounteya! Kichaka, the son of a suta, is intoxicated with insolence. O Pandava! When he goes to the dancing hall, rob him of his life. Because of his pride, the son of a suta looks down on the gandharvas. You are supreme among warriors. Uproot him, like an elephant does a stalk. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wipe away my tears of misery. O fortunate one! Salvage your own honour and that of your lineage.” Bhimasena replied, “O one with the beautiful thighs! You are welcome. You have brought me pleasant news. O beautiful one! I will do that, without anyone else’s aid. O beautiful one! The news of your assignation with Kichaka has brought me the same delight that I felt on killing Hidimba.[39] By my brothers and by dharma, I am truthfully pledging that I will kill Kichaka, the way the lord of the gods slew Vritra.[40] Whether in private, or in public, I will bring down Kichaka. It is certain that if the Matsyas get in the way, I will kill them too. I will then kill Duryodhana and regain the earth. Let Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, worship the Matsyas, if he so desires." Droupadi said, "O lord! O brave one! If you do not wish to deviate from the pledge you have taken on my account, bring down Kichaka in secret." Bhimasena replied, "O timid one! I will do exactly as you have said. O unblemished one! Today, I will remain invisible in the darkness. The evil-souled Kichaka craves for what cannot be obtained. I will crush his head, like an elephant does a *bilva* fruit."[41] Bhima went there first, hidden in the night, and seated himself, waiting for Kichaka, like an invisible lion waiting for deer.

'Kichaka adorned himself according to what pleased him. At the appointed hour, he arrived in the dancing hall, hoping to unite with Panchali. That room was enveloped in great darkness. Thinking this to be a sign, he entered. The infinitely energetic Bhima had already arrived there earlier and was stationed alone. The extremely evil-minded one went up to him, reclining on the divan and blazing in anger because of the molestation caused to Krishna, like death. Kichaka was intoxicated with lust and approached him. His heart filled with delight, he smilingly told him, "I have brought you a lot of riches of different kinds. All of this is for you and I have arrived quickly. The women who are in my household have suddenly begun to praise me, saying that there is no other man who is as well dressed and handsome as I am." Bhimasena replied, "It is my good fortune that you are so handsome and it is good fortune that you are praising yourself. I do not think that you have ever been caressed the way you are going to be caressed now." Having said this, the mighty-armed Kounteya Bhima, terrible in valour, leapt up and laughed at that worst of men. Bhima seized him by the hair, adorned with garlands and fragrances.

'Thus grasped forcibly by the hair, that supreme among strong ones freed his hair with his strength and grasped Pandava by the arms. A wrestling match started between those angry lions among men, like two powerful bull-elephants fighting over a she-elephant during the spring season. Though he was angry, Bhima reeled when the powerful Kichaka struck him and brought him down to the ground, on his knees. Having been thrown down on the ground by the powerful Kichaka, Bhima swiftly arose like a serpent that has been struck with a staff. The suta and Pandava were both insolent and proud of their strength. The strong ones grappled in the dead of the night in that deserted place. That best of houses trembled repeatedly, when those strong and enraged ones roared at each other. Bhima struck the powerful one on the breast with the palm of his hand. But Kichaka, tormented by anger, did not budge by even a single step. For some time, the suta, oppressed by Bhima's strength, bore the force, impossible to bear on earth. But then his strength began to fade. On knowing that he was weakening, the immensely strong Bhimasena grasped him to his chest with force and pressed until he lost his senses. Vrikodara, supreme among victorious ones, was driven by wrath and was panting. He grasped Kichaka painfully by the hair. The immensely strong Bhima began to roar, like a tiger hungry for meat that has grasped a large deer. He forced his feet, his hands, his hand, his neck and all his limbs into his trunk, just as the wielder of the Pinaka once did with an animal.[42]

'Thus all the limbs were rendered into a mound of flesh. The immensely strong Bhimasena then showed this to Krishna. The greatly energetic one, descendant of the Pandu lineage, told Droupadi, "O Panchali! Behold! This is what has happened to the one driven by lust." Having thus killed Kichaka, his anger vanished and he was pacified. He took his leave of Krishna Droupadi and quickly returned to the kitchen. Having ensured that Kichaka was slain, Droupadi, supreme among women, was delighted and all her miseries disappeared. She told the guards of the assembly hall, "Kichaka has been killed by my gandharva husbands. He lusted after another one's wife. Come and see." On hearing her words, the guards of the dancing hall swiftly arrived in thousands, holding torches. Entering the house, they saw that Kichaka had been killed. They saw him lifeless, splattered with blood. "Where is the neck? Where are the feet? Where are the hands? Where is the head?" Having thus wondered, they decided that he had been killed by a gandharva.'

Vaishampayana said, ‘At that time, all the relatives assembled there and on seeing Kichaka killed, surrounded him from all sides and began to weep. All their body hair stood up and they were terrified when they saw Kichaka. All his limbs were mangled, like a turtle that has been dragged to the land. He had been crushed by Bhimasena, like a *danava* by Indra. They sought to take him outside, wishing to perform his funeral rites. Then the assembled sons of the suta saw Krishna. The unblemished one was stationed nearby, leaning against a pillar. Among the assembled sutas, an Upakichaka[43] said, “Let us swiftly kill this unchaste one, because of whom Kichaka has been slain. Or let us not kill her. Let us burn her with her beloved. Though he is dead, let us do what would have brought the son of suta pleasure.” Then they told Virata, “Kichaka has been killed because of her. We will burn her with him. You should give us permission.” O lord of the earth! Knowing the valour of the sutas, the king gave permission that Sairandhri should be burnt with the son of the suta. They approached the terrified and lotus-eyed Krishna. She was stupefied and the Kichakas forcibly grabbed her. All of them raised and tied the slender-waisted one and carried her in the direction of the cremation ground. O king! The unblemished one was thus borne away by the sons of the suta. Krishna wailed for her protectors, because she did have protectors.

‘Droupadi said, “Jaya! Jayanta! Vijaya! Jayatsena! Jayadbala![44] Hear my words. The sons of the suta are carrying me away. The twangs of their bows and the slapping of their arms is heard in great battles. The roars of their chariots are terrible. They are swift. They are the powerful and illustrious gandharvas. Hear my words. The sons of the suta are carrying me away.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘As soon as he heard the wail of Krishna’s piteous words, Bhima unhesitatingly leapt up from his bed. Bhimasena said, “O Sairandhri! I have heard the words that you have spoken. O timid one! You have no reason to fear the sons of the suta.” Having spoken these words, the mighty-armed one stretched and extended his body and changed his attire, in a great rage. He emerged, but not through a door.[45] Bhimasena scaled the ramparts and swiftly uprooted a tree. He dashed towards the cremation ground, following the Kichakas. That tree was ten *vyamas* long[46] and he brandished it, with its trunk and its branches. The strong one rushed towards the sutas, like the god of death with a staff in his hand. The impact of his thighs made *nyagrodha*, *ashvattha* and *kimshuka* trees fall down on the ground and these were piled in a heap. On seeing the gandharva arrive,[47] like an extremely enraged lion, all the sutas were terrified and trembled in sorrow and dread. The Upakichakas were about to burn their elder brother and saw the gandharva advance like death. Trembling in sorrow and dread, they told each other, “A powerful and angry gandharva is advancing, brandishing a tree. Swiftly release Sairandhri. She is the reason for this great danger.” On seeing the tree that had been uprooted by Bhimasena, they released Droupadi and fled towards the city.

‘When Bhima saw them running away, like the wielder of the vajra seeing the danavas,[48] he dispatched one hundred and five of them to Yama’s abode. O lord of the earth! He then released Krishna and comforted her. The mighty-armed one, the invincible Vrikodara, told Panchali Droupadi, whose face was despondent and whose eyes were full of tears, “O timid one! Those who molested you, though you are blameless, have been killed. O Krishna! Return to the city. You have nothing to fear. I will go to Virata’s kitchen through a different route.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus one hundred and five were slain there, like a giant forest that has been razed down, with its trees scattered. O king! One hundred and five Kichakas were killed. Including the general earlier, there were one hundred and six sutas. Men and women gathered to see that great and extraordinary deed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were extremely astounded and had nothing to say.’

619(23)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing that the sutas had been killed, they went and told the king, “O king! The gandharvas have killed more than one hundred sons of the suta. Like the giant peak of a mountain shattered by a vajra, the sutas can be seen, scattered on the ground.

Sairandhri has been set free and is returning to your residence. O king! The entire city now faces danger. Sairandhri is beautiful and the gandharvas are extremely powerful. There is no doubt that men are addicted to sexual intercourse. O king! Swiftly lay down some rules so that your city is not destroyed by one who is in the disguise of a sairandhri.” On hearing their words, Virata, the lord of the armies, said, “Let the funeral rites be performed for the sutas. Kindle a fire well and let all of them be cremated together. Swiftly burn the Kichakas, with jewels and fragrances.” Filled with fear, the king then spoke to his queen Sudeshna, “When Sairandhri arrives, tell her these words in my name. ‘O Sairandhri! O fortunate one! Go wherever you desire! O one with the beautiful hips! The king is scared of being defeated by the gandharvas.’ I cannot tell her this myself, because she is protected by the gandharvas. But women cannot cause offence. That is the reason I am asking you to tell her.” Krishna had been freed from danger and the sons of the suta had been destroyed. She had been freed by Bhimasena and returned to the city, like a young and spirited doe that had been frightened by a tiger. She washed her limbs and her garments with water.

‘O king! On seeing her, the men fled in the ten directions. Frightened of the gandharvas, some of them closed their eyes. O king! Panchali saw Bhimasena standing at the door of the kitchen, like a large and crazy elephant. She was surprised and softly spoke to him in a secret language,[49] “I honour the king of the gandharvas, who has freed me.” Bhimasena replied, “The men who roam here are under her control now. Having heard her words, they are roaming without any debts.”[50] She saw mighty-armed Dhananjaya in the dancing hall. He was instructing Virata’s daughter in dancing. Emerging from the dancing hall with Arjuna, the maiden saw Krishna arrive, who had been molested though she had been innocent. The maiden said, “O Sairandhri! It is fortunate that you have been freed. It is fortunate that you have returned. Though you were innocent, you were molested and it is fortunate that the sutas who caused this have been slain.” Brihannada said, “O Sairandhri! How were you freed? How were those evil ones slain? I wish to hear everything exactly as it happened.” Sairandhri replied, “O Brihannada!

What do you have to do with a sairandhri? O fortunate one! You live happily in the quarters meant for women. You will not confront the miseries a sairandhri does. You must be asking about my unhappiness in jest.” Brihannada said, “O fortunate one! Brihannada also faces supreme unhappiness, having been reduced to an inferior life. O girl! You do not understand this.” Together with the maiden, Droupadi entered the king’s residence.

‘She had no desire to run away and went before Sudeshna. The princess then communicated Virata’s words to her. “O Sairandhri! Swiftly go wherever you desire to go. O fortunate one! The king is scared of being defeated by the gandharvas. That apart, you are young and have beautiful eyebrows. Your beauty is unsurpassed on earth.” Sairandhri replied, “O beautiful one! Let the king excuse me for thirteen days.[51] There is no doubt that the gandharvas will have accomplished their tasks by then. They will then take me away and do whatever brings you pleasure. It is certain that they will do that which is best for the king and his relatives.”’

Section Forty-Seven

Go-Grahana Parva

This section has 1009 shlokas and thirty-nine chapters.

Chapter 620(24): 21 shlokas
Chapter 621(25): 17 shlokas
Chapter 622(26): 10 shlokas
Chapter 623(27): 28 shlokas
Chapter 624(28): 14 shlokas
Chapter 625(29): 28 shlokas
Chapter 626(30): 30 shlokas
Chapter 627(31): 24 shlokas
Chapter 628(32): 50 shlokas
Chapter 629(33): 21 shlokas
Chapter 630(34): 19 shlokas
Chapter 631(35): 26 shlokas
Chapter 632(36): 47 shlokas
Chapter 633(37): 15 shlokas
Chapter 634(38): 58 shlokas
Chapter 635(39): 23 shlokas
Chapter 636(40): 27 shlokas
Chapter 637(41): 23 shlokas
Chapter 638(42): 31 shlokas
Chapter 639(43): 21 shlokas
Chapter 640(44): 22 shlokas
Chapter 641(45): 26 shlokas
Chapter 642(46): 18 shlokas
Chapter 643(47): 19 shlokas
Chapter 644(48): 23 shlokas
Chapter 645(49): 23 shlokas
Chapter 646(50): 23 shlokas
Chapter 647(51): 17 shlokas

Chapter 648(52): 28 shlokas
Chapter 649(53): 69 shlokas
Chapter 650(54): 20 shlokas
Chapter 651(55): 25 shlokas
Chapter 652(56): 28 shlokas
Chapter 653(57): 19 shlokas
Chapter 654(58): 13 shlokas
Chapter 655(59): 44 shlokas
Chapter 656(60): 19 shlokas
Chapter 657(61): 29 shlokas
Chapter 658(62): 11 shlokas

Go *means cattle and* grahana *means to seize. So this section is about seizing cattle. With Kichaka's death, Virata is weakened and the Kouravas and Trigartas invade Matsya to rob Virata of his cattle. Virata is defeated by Susharma, the king of the Trigartas. However, the four Pandavas (Yudhishthira, Bhima, Nakula, Sahadeva) defeat Susharma and free Virata. Meanwhile, the Kurus rob Virata's kingdom of sixty thousand cattle. However, they are defeated by Arjuna, with Uttara as a charioteer. The Kurus return and the cattle are regained.*

620(24)

Vaishampayana said, 'O lord of the earth! When Kichaka and his younger brothers were killed, people thought about how oppressive they had been and were amazed. There was speculation in the city and the countryside. "Kichaka was loved by the king because of his valour and great spirit. The evil-minded one oppressed men and molested their wives. It is certain that the gandharvas have killed the evil-souled and wicked one." O great king! In country after country, people talked about Kichaka, who had been the destroyer of enemy armies and had been invincible.

'Dhritarashtra's son had employed spies. They searched many villages, kingdoms and cities. Accomplishing the task that they had been assigned, they inspected countries and returned anxiously to Nagapura.[1] They saw King Kouravya, Dhritarashtra's son, together with Drona, Karna, Kripa and the great-souled Bhishma. They told Duryodhana, who was seated in the assembly hall with his brothers and the maharathas from Trigarta.[2] "O Indra among men! Always observing great care, we searched for the Pandavas in that great forest. It is deserted and is infested with wild animals. It is covered with many different kinds of trees, creepers and a large number of vines, shrouded with various thickets. The Parthas are extremely firm in their valour and we have not been able to find out where they have gone. We searched for their footsteps along every possible road, on mountain peaks, summits, many countries, in inhabited regions, mountainous villages and cities. O Indra among men! We have searched in many directions, but have not been able to find the Pandavas. O fortunate one! O bull among men! They have completely disappeared. O supreme among charioteers! O Indra among men! While we searched for those warriors, we followed their charioteers for some time. We enquired in the right fashion and have got to know everything. O scorcher of enemies! The charioteers reached Dvaravati without the Parthas. O king! The Pandavas are not there, nor Krishna, devoted to her husbands. They have completely vanished. Homage to thee! O bull among the Bharata lineage! We do not know the destinations or the residences of those great-souled ones. Nor do we know about the conduct or the deeds of the Pandavas. O Indra among men! O lord of the earth! Instruct us. While searching for the Pandavas, what will we do next? But listen to our pleasant words, which will ensure your fortune and welfare. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great-souled Kichaka, King Matsya's suta, who defeated the Trigartas with a large army, has been brought down and killed in the night by invisible gandharvas. O one without decay! The evil-souled one and his brothers are dead. O Kouravya! Hearing this pleasant news about the destruction of our enemy, you should be content and can decide on what should be done next."'

621(25)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, King Duryodhana thought for a long time and then spoke to those who were in the assembly hall. "It is indeed very difficult to examine all courses of action up to the ultimate end. Therefore, all of you must try to determine where the Pandavas have gone. They were to spend the thirteenth year in concealment. Most of it has passed and only a little bit remains. If the Pandavas, who follow the vow of truth, can spend the remaining part of the year, they will have fulfilled their pledge. Because of their miseries, it is certain that they will all be angry with the Kouravas, like kings of serpents and virulent snakes. But if they are detected before the time has passed, all of them will again return to the forest, forced to control their wrath and wearing miserable disguises. Therefore, take measures to swiftly detect them. Our kingdom will then be without dissension, without decay and without rivals for a long time." Karna then said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let other men go, those who are shrewder, more skilled and loyal. Let those spies swiftly travel in disguise and roam in countries that are prosperous and populated, in assemblages of virtuous ones and mendicants, along roads and places of pilgrimage and places where mining takes place. Let them carefully ask men, with humility. The Pandavas are living in disguise. They must be sought by skilled spies, who are themselves disguised. Employ many, one after another, to search in rivers and bowers, places of pilgrimage, villages, cities, beautiful hermitages and mountainous caverns." The younger brother Duhshasana was addicted to evil traits. He then told his older brother, "All of us should pay attention to what Karna has said. As instructed, let all the spies search in all those places. Let many others be employed and let them search in every country, in the proper way. Nothing has been known about their destinations, residences and occupations. They are dwelling in great secrecy. Or perhaps they have gone to the other shore of the ocean. They are vain about their bravery and they may have been eaten up in the great forest by predators. Or they may have confronted a calamity and been destroyed for eternity. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, forget all anxieties. O lord of men! If you so wish, do what must be done with appropriate enthusiasm."'

622(26)

Vaishampayana said, 'Drona was immensely valorous and knew everything about artha. He then spoke. "Those who are like them never face destruction or defeat. They are brave and possess learning. They possess intelligence and are in control of their senses. They are knowledgeable about dharma and are grateful. They are devoted to

Dharmaraja. They know the nature of policy, dharma and artha. He[3] is like an attentive father towards them. The eldest brother is always established in dharma and follows the truth. He obeys his elders. O king! The great-souled brothers follow their brother. Ajatashatru[4] is humble and follows his brothers. Why should Partha[5] not follow a conduct that ensures the welfare of those obedient and great-souled ones? That is the reason they have been waiting for this time to arrive. I have perceived in my mind that such persons cannot have been destroyed. Therefore, waste no time and decide on the course of action that must be followed. Think about the right course of action and think about where they might be residing. The sons of Pandu are always self-controlled. They will be difficult to detect. It is certain that they are brave. They do not commit sin and are devoted to austerities. Partha is pure in soul and possesses all the qualities. He is truthful, virtuous and upright. He is like a mass of energy and can blind anyone's eyes. Knowing thus, let us search for them again. Let us use brahmanas, spies, *siddhas*[6] and all others who know them."'

623(27)

Vaishampayana said, 'Bhishma, Shantanu's son, was the grandfather of the Bharatas. He was learned in the sacred texts and knew about places and time and the nature of everything. He knew all about dharma. After the preceptor had spoken, he praised those words. To ensure the welfare of the Bharatas, he addressed these words to them. In accordance with his devotion towards dharma, he spoke about his affection for Yudhishthira, who knew about dharma. Such words are always liked by the virtuous and the strict, but are difficult for dishonest ones to accept.

'Bhishma thus spoke words that are honoured by the righteous. "It is exactly as brahmana Drona, who knows everything about artha, has said. The Pandavas possess all the auspicious marks and cannot be destroyed. They are learned and have good conduct. They observe righteous vows. They follow the instructions of the aged. They are devoted to truthful vows. They know about auspicious times and follow rites at those times. They are pure in their vows. They cannot be destroyed when they uphold the ways of the virtuous. The Pandavas are protected through dharma and through their own valour. It is my view that they cannot have been destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you my thoughts on what should be done about the Pandavas. This is the right policy and it can only be appreciated by those who follow good policy, not by others. When we think about the Pandavas, we should do what it is possible for us to do. Listen to me when I tell you. We should use intelligence, not animosity. O son![7] I never give such counsel to those who are dishonest. One who follows the instructions of elders is always established in truthfulness. Good advice must always be given, and never that which is evil. If one wishes for dharma, one must always speak according to one's intelligence. I do not think the way these other people do. Wherever King Yudhishthira is, whether it is in the city or the countryside, the people will not be envious, malicious, insolent or jealous. The people there will all be devoted to their own dharma. There will be many incantations to the *brahman*.[8] Oblations will be completed. There will be many sacrifices, with a lot of gifts. There is no doubt that the rain god will always shower there at the right time. The earth will be full of grain and free from disease. The grain will be succulent and the fruit will have all the qualities. The garlands will be fragrant and the words will be soft and auspicious. The wind will be pleasant to the touch and all meetings will be friendly. Where King Yudhishthira lives, there will not be any fear. The cows will be plentiful, not weak and difficult to milk. Milk, curds and butter will be tasty and good for the health. Whatever be the country where King Yudhishthira is, food and drink will be succulent, with all the qualities. Taste, touch, smell and sound will possess all the qualities. Wherever King Yudhishthira is, all sights will be delightful. Everything will possess its own qualities in this thirteenth year. O son! In the country where the Pandavas obtain protection, people will be content, cheerful, pure, health, honourable towards gods and guests, devoted towards all beings, generous, with great energy and devoted to the eternal dharma. They will discard the impure and serve the pure. They will sacrifice and observe good vows. Such will people be, wherever King Yudhishthira is. O son! They will give up false speech. Everything will be pure, beneficial and auspicious. Wherever King Yudhishthira lives, everyone will strive for the auspicious and possess auspicious intelligence. The men there will always seek to ensure welfare. O son! The one with dharma in his soul is invisible and cannot be detected by brahmanas. How can ordinary men then be capable of finding out the Partha? Truth, perseverance, generosity, complete peace, extreme forgiveness, humility, prosperity, fame, great energy, non-violence and honesty exist in him. The intelligent one has taken care about his disguised place of residence. I have described his destination with due care. What else can I say? Now think about this and decide what seems beneficial to you. O Kouravya! If you have any faith in me, do this quickly."'

624(28)

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Sharadvan's son, Kripa, spoke the following words. "Everything that the aged one[9] has said about the Pandavas is full of dharma and artha, is appropriate, and has been argued with reason. Listen to what I have to say, and it is similar to Bhishma's words. Let us reflect about how we can determine their destinations with the use of those who live in places of pilgrimage. Let us follow a policy that ensures our welfare. O son![10] One should not ignore even ordinary enemies. O son! In the field of battle, the Pandavas are skilled in the use of all weapons. The great-souled Pandavas are in disguise and are dwelling in secret until the time is up. When the time arrives for them to return, you should determine your own strength in your own kingdom and that of other kingdoms. There is no doubt that the time for the Pandavas to rise is near. When the time has elapsed, the great-souled and immensely strong Parthas will be full of great endeavour. The Pandavas are infinitely energetic. Therefore, decide on forces, a treasury and a policy so that, when the time arrives, we can deal with them in an appropriate way. O son! I think that you should get to know everything about your own strength and those of all your friends, whether they are strong or weak. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We should know our strength, whether it is superior, inferior or equal. Whether we are happy or unhappy, we will then be able to enter into an agreement with our rivals. With those who are stronger, we will use *sama*, *bheda*, *dana* and *danda*.[11] With those who are weak in strength, we will use force in the appropriate way. Having pacified our friends, we will easily raise an army. When you have extended your treasury and your forces well, you will obtain complete success. You will then be able to counter powerful enemies who arrive, and even the Pandavas, who are weaker in forces and vehicles. O Indra among men! Having thus determined a decision in accordance with your own dharma and the appropriate time, you will attain happiness for a long time."'

625(29)

Vaishampayana said, 'King Susharma of Trigata, the leader of a large number of chariots, had been repeatedly defeated earlier by Kichaka, the suta of the Matsyas, accompanied by the Salveyakas. When the time was right, that lord swiftly spoke these words of grave import. O lord! His forces, together with those of his relatives, had earlier been defeated by that powerful one. He now looked at Karna and spoke to Duryodhana. "In earlier times, using his greater powers, the king of Matsya oppressed my kingdom. The powerful Kichaka was his general. The evil-souled one was terrible and invincible and was famous on earth because of his valour. That wicked and cruel one has now been killed by the gandharvas. O king! On his being killed, it is my view that Virata has lost his insolence and is without endeavour and without refuge. O unblemished one! If it pleases you, let me, all the Kouravas and the great-souled Karna go there. I think that this occurrence requires immediate action that will fetch us benefits. Let all of us go to that kingdom, which is full of foodgrains. We will take away all its jewels and many riches. We will rob the villages and provinces and divide them up. We will invade his city by force and take away the many thousands of excellent cattle. O lord of the earth! The Kouravas, together with the Trigartas, arrayed well, will take away all the cattle. We will rob him of his virility and force an alliance on him. We will kill all his soldiers and bring him under our suzerainty. Having brought him under our subjugation, we will dwell there happily. There is no doubt that this will increase your strength.”

‘On hearing these words, Karna told the king, “Susharma has spoken words that are appropriate to the occasion and they are for our welfare. Let our forces yoke their mounts and swiftly march out. O unblemished one! Let us arrange our forces, or whatever else that you desire. Consult with the wise elders among the Kurus, our grandfather, the preceptor Drona and Sharadvan’s son, Kripa. Do what all of them think and let us advance. We should advance quickly and overpower that lord of the earth. What do we have to do with the Pandavas? They are weak in riches, forces and manliness. They have either been destroyed, or have reached Yama’s abode. O king! Let us attack Virata’s kingdom without any anxiety. Let us grab his cattle and his many other riches.” King Duryodhana swiftly accepted Vaikartana[12] Karna’s words. He himself instructed Duhshasana, who was always devoted to his commands. “Consult with the elders and swiftly yoke the army. As instructed, we will go there, with all the Kouravas. As instructed, let maharatha King Susharma also go there, with all his forces and vehicles. Let him go to Matysa first, but concealing his intentions. We will follow him, but a day later. Preparing ourselves well, we will advance towards Matsya’s territory. Suddenly arriving in Virata’s city, we will swiftly subdue the cowherds and take away their great riches. There are hundreds of thousands of handsome cattle, with all the qualities. We will divide our forces into two and rob him of these.” O lord of the earth! As commanded, Susharma marched in a south-eastern direction. He began to rob the cattle on the seventh lunar day of *dharmapaksha*.[13] O king! On the following day, the eighth day, all the Kouravas joined forces and robbed thousands of cowsheds.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! The infinitely energetic and great-souled Pandavas had adopted disguises and dwelt in Virata’s excellent city. While they lived there, the promised period elapsed. They performed tasks for Virata, lord of the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After the end of the thirteenth year, Susharma swiftly robbed a large number of cattle. A herdsman then arrived at the city with great speed and descended from his chariot. He saw the king of Matsya seated, wearing earrings and bracelets. He was surrounded by brave warriors, all adorned with earrings and armlets. He was surrounded by his advisers, together with the Pandavas, bulls among men. The great king, the extender of the kingdom, was seated in his assembly hall. He approached Virata, bowed in worship, and said, "The Trigartas have vanquished us, together with our relatives, in battle. They are taking away hundreds and thousands of cattle. O Indra among men! Rescue your animals quickly, or they will be lost." When he heard this, the king of Matsya assembled his army.

'There were a large number of chariots, elephants and horses. There were flags and infantry. The kings and the princes donned their armour, bright and colourful and prepared well. Virata's beloved brother, Shatanika, donned armour made out of molten gold and made firm with an underlay of iron. Madirashva, younger to Shatanika, wore invincible and firm armour that was constructed well. The king of Matsya wore impenetrable armour, adorned with a hundred suns, a hundred circles, a hundred dots and a hundred eyes. There were one hundred lotuses and *sougandhikas*[14] embossed on Suryadatta's armour, plated with gold and as bright as the sun. Virata's eldest son, the brave maharatha Shankha, wore shining armour made out of iron, with one hundred eyes embossed on it. There were hundreds of maharathas armoured in this way. Armed and ready to fight, they looked like gods. Their chariots were bright and large and had been prepared well. Each of the maharathas yoked horses with golden harnesses to their respective chariots. Matysa's glorious standard was raised on his golden and divine chariot, resplendent like the sun and the moon. There were many other pennants of different types, adorned in gold. The brave kshatriyas affixed them to their respective chariots.

'Then the king of Matsya spoke to his younger brother Shatanika. "In my view, there is no doubt that Kanka, Ballava, the one in charge of the cows,[15] and the brave Damagranthi will fight. Give them chariots with flags and pennants. They should have colourful armour, both firm and malleable. Let them wear these on their bodies and give them weapons. Those men have the bodies of brave ones, like the trunks of kings of elephants. It is my view that they have never refused to fight." Having heard the king's words, Shatanika, whose understanding was swift, followed the king's instructions and gave chariots to the Parthas—Sahadeva, the king,[16] Bhima and Nakula. Those charioteers placed devotion to the king in the forefront and happily yoked the chariots that had been given by the lord of men. Their deeds were unsullied and they donned the colourful armour, both firm and malleable, that had been given by Virata. Those scorchers of enemies donned them on their bodies and were armed. All of them were skilled in fighting and swift, but were still in disguise. Those bulls among the Kurus followed Virata—the four brave Pandava brothers, with truth as their valour. There were terrible mad elephants, musth strewing down their temples. They were sixty years old, with well-formed tusks, and were like monsoon clouds. They had skilled riders as mounts, trained in elephants, and these followed the king, like moving mountains. The foremost and skilled among the followers of Matsya were obedient and happy. They had eight thousand chariots, one thousand elephants and sixty thousand horses, and advanced. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O great king! As it emerged, Virata's beautiful army was resplendent and followed the footprints of the cattle. Virata's army were splendid. There were firmly armed infantry and a large number of elephants, horses and chariots.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Emerging from the city, the brave and armed ones arranged themselves in battle formsations. The Matsyas encountered the Trigartas when the sun had gone down. The Trigartas and the Matsyas were powerful and irrepressible in battle. The immensely strong ones roared at each other in anger, eager to grasp the cattle. Brave ones, skilled in handling elephants, were ascended on elephants and goaded them with spikes and hooks. There ensued a terrible and tumultuous fight, which made the body hair stand up. O king! As the sun went down, it was like that between the gods and the asuras. Dust arose from the ground and nothing could be seen. Covered with dust raised by the soldiers, birds fell down on the ground. The sun disappeared behind the thick shower of arrows that were released. The firmament was ablaze, as if with fireflies. The bows of the archers were plated with gold. Those brave ones in the world shot with the right hand and the left and were smitten down. Chariots fought with chariots and infantry with infantry. Cavalry fought with cavalry and elephants with mighty elephants. O king! As they engaged in battle, they struck each other with swords, sharp spears, lances, spikes and javelins. The brave ones possessed arms that were like clubs. They struck each other in that battle, but the brave ones were unable to vanquish the enemy heroes. Severed heads could be seen, covered with dust, with mangled lips, but with the noses intact, ornamented and adorned with earrings and with the hair dressed. In that great battle, the bodies of kshatriyas could be seen there, shattered into many parts by the arrows, resembling the trunks of shala trees. The earth was covered with heads wearing earrings and smeared with sandalwood, like the bodies of serpents. The earth was covered with dust and the flow of blood made this subside. But the terrible and dreadful combat went on, without any restraint.

'Shatanika killed one hundred. Vishalaksha killed four hundred.[17] Those maharathas penetrated the large army of the Trigartas. They engaged in hand to hand, hair to hair and nail to nail combat. On noticing the collection of chariots of the Trigartas, they penetrated with Suryadatta at the front and Madirashva at the back.[18] Virata destroyed five hundred chariots in that battle. He killed hundreds of horses and five maharathas. Following different routes, that leader of charioteers penetrated that mass of chariots, until he encountered Susharma of Trigarta, mounted on a golden chariot, in that field of battle. Those two great-souled and immensely strong ones struck each other, roaring at each other like bulls in a pen of cows. Those charioteers circled each other on chariots. They swiftly discharged arrows, like clouds unleashing torrents of rain. Intolerant and angry, skilled in use of weapons, they attacked each other with sharp arrows, swords, lances and clubs. Then the king pierced Susharma with ten arrows and each of his four horses with five arrows each. But Susharma was irrepressible in battle and supreme in use of weapons. He struck the king of the Matsyas with fifty sharp arrows. In the evening, with everything covered in dust, the soldiers of the king of Matsya and Susharma could not see each other.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The world was then covered in darkness and dust. The warriors paused for an instant, without breaking the battle formations. Then the moon arose, dispelling the darkness. It made the night clear and gladdened the kshatriyas engaged in battle. When everything could be seen, the battle resumed. It assumed a terrible form and they could not see each other. Susharma of Trigarta, and his younger brother, rushed at the king of Matsya and surrounded him from all sides with chariots. Descending from their chariots, those bulls among the kshatriyas, grasped clubs in their hands and dashed towards the horses.[19] The powerful ones were angry and attacked each other with clubs, swords, battleaxes and sharp arrows that had fine and yellow tips.[20] Having vanquished all the forces of the king of Matysa with his army, Susharma, the lord of Trigarta, skilfully defeated Matsya and rushed at the great-spirited Virata. He separately killed the horses and the charioteers who were on both sides. With the king of Matsya having lost his chariot, he[21] captured him alive. Susharma molested him, like one driven by lust acting towards a weeping bride. He made him ascend his own chariot and departed with his swift steeds.

‘Virata was supremely strong. But he was bereft of his chariot and was captured. The Matsyas, oppressed by the Trigartas, were frightened and fled. On seeing that they were terrified, Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, spoke to the mighty-armed Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies. “Susharma of Trigarta has captured the king of the Matsyas. O mighty-armed one! Free him, so that he does not fall into the clutches of the enemy. All of us have lived happily in his house. All our wishes have been met and we have been honoured well. O Bhimasena! You must act thus and free us of the debt we owe him for our dwelling there.” Bhimasena replied, “O king! On your instructions, I will free him. Behold my extremely great deed when I fight with the enemies. Resorting to the strength of your arms, stand here, on one side, together with our brothers. Witness my valour now. This gigantic tree stands here, with a well-formed trunk that is like a club. I will uproot it and drive away the enemies.” On seeing that his brave brother was glancing at the tree, like an angry elephant, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira spoke to him. “O Bhima! Do not act rashly. Let the tree stand there. You should not perform such superhuman deeds with a tree. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! People will then recognize you to be Bhima. Get hold of some other weapon that is used by men—a bow, or a spear, a sword or a battleaxe. O Bhima! Grasp a weapon used by humans and free the lord of the earth, so that you are not noticed by others. The immensely strong twins will guard your wheels. O son![22] Thus, arrayed in battle formation, free the king of Matsya.” Then all of them goaded their horses. Using divine weapons, they impatiently attacked the Trigartas. On seeing that the Pandavas were returning on their chariots, Virata’s large army took heart again. They were extremely enraged and performed wonderful deeds in battle.

‘Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, killed one thousand. Bhima made seven hundred others see the world hereafter. Nakula killed seven hundred with his arrows and the powerful Sahadeva killed three hundred heroes. O bull among men! Following Yudhishthira’s orders, those bulls among men, destroyed that large army of Trigarta. Maharatha King Yudhishthira swiftly rushed at Susharma and showered him with arrows. Susharma was extremely enraged and impatiently pierced Yudhishthira with nine arrows and his horses with four. O king! Then Vrikodara, Kunti’s son, approached Susharma and destroyed his horses. Having killed the warriors stationed at the rear with supreme arrows, he angrily brought down the charioteer from the chariot. The brave one who protected his[23] wheels was famous by the name of Shonashva. He was frightened on seeing that Trigarta had been robbed of his chariot. Then Virata descended from Susharma’s chariot. Grasping his[24] club, he powerfully attacked him. Though he was old, with a club in his hand, he attacked him like one who was young. Bhima, terrible in form and wearing earrings, jumped down from his chariot and grasped the king of Trigarta, like a lion grasping small deer. Bereft of his chariot, maharatha Trigarta was thus grasped. All of Trigarta's soldiers were afflicted by fear and dispersed.

'After Susharma had been defeated, the immensely strong sons of Pandu retrieved all the cattle and got back all the riches. They had the strength of their own arms. They were humble. They were rigid in their vows. They happily spent the night amidst the forefront of that army. The maharatha Kounteyas had displayed superhuman courage and Virata showed them homage and honoured them with riches. Virata said, "All these jewels are yours, just as they are mine. All of you perform the tasks you wish to. Do what you wish, in accordance with what brings you happiness. O destroyers of enemies! I will give you bejewelled maidens and many riches and whatever else comes to your mind. It is because of your prowess that I have been freed today and am safe. Therefore, you are now lord of the Matsyas and of everything else." All the Kouravas,[25] with Yudhishthira at the forefront, separately showed their homage to Matsya and, hands joined in salutation, said, "O lord of the earth! We are delighted with everything that you have said. It is a matter of satisfaction to us that you have now been freed from your enemies." The king of Matsya, mighty-armed Virata and supreme among kings, was extremely pleased and again told Yudhishthira, "Come. I will instate you as the king of Matsya. O destroyer of enemies! I will give you everything that your mind desires—gems, cattle, gold, jewels and pearls. You deserve everything. O Vaiyaghrapadya! O Indra among brahmanas![26] I show you homage in every way. It is because of you that I am now alive and am able to see my kingdom and children. The enemy, who caused me violence, is now within my powers." Then Yudhishthira again spoke to Matsya, "O Matsya! We welcome the pleasant words that you have uttered. Always resort to non-violence and be extremely happy always. O king! Let messengers go to your city to announce the pleasant news of your victory to your well-wishers." At these words, the king of Matsya instructed his emissaries, “Go to the city and announce my victory in battle. Let the princes be ornamented and let them come out of the city. Let there be musical instruments. Let all the courtesans adorn themselves.” They went to the city that very night. At the time of sunrise, the messengers announced Virata’s triumph.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After Matsya followed Trigarta to recover his animal, Duryodhana and his advisers invaded Virata’s kingdom. Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Kripa who was supremely skilled in weapons, Drona’s son,[27] Soubala, the lord Duhshasana, Vivimshati, Vikarna, the valorous Chitrasena, Durmukha, Duhsaha and other maharathas invaded King Virata’s kingdom of Matsya. They swiftly captured the cattle stations and plundered the riches of cattle. Encircling them on every side with a large collection of chariots, the Kurus seized sixty thousand cows. The cowherds were killed by those maharathas in that terrible encounter and a great lamentation arose. The chief of the cowherds was terrified. In great affliction, he quickly mounted a chariot and left for the city. Entering the city, he went to the king’s residence. Descending swiftly from the chariot, he entered and recounted what had happened.

‘He saw Matsya’s insolent son, named Bhuminjaya, there. He told him everything about how the animals of the kingdom had been plundered. “The Kurus are taking away sixty thousand cows. Cattle bring prosperity to the kingdom. Arise and bring them back. O prince! If you have our welfare in mind, swiftly march out yourself. King Matysa left you in charge of the empty kingdom. In the midst of the courtiers, that lord of men takes pride in you. ‘My son is like me. He is brave and is an extender of the lineage. He is a warrior who is skilled in the use of arrows and weapons. My son is always courageous.’ Make those words of that Indra among men come true. O supreme among those who possesses animals! Restrain the Kurus and recover the animals. Burn them down with your terrible shafts and energetic arrows. Unleash arrows with golden shafts, with smooth tufts, from your bow. Destroy the enemies, like the leader of a herd of elephants. Your bow is like a veena, the string is the chord. The handle is the base. The loops are the two blocks at the end. The arrows are the notes and strike them in the midst of the enemies. Your steeds are as white as silver. Let them be yoked to the chariot. O lord! Your pennant has the emblem of a golden lion. Let it be raised. Your arrows have golden shafts. They are smooth at the tip. Let them be released from your skilful hands and they will overshadow these kings like the sun and reduce their lives. Defeat all the Kurus in battle, like the wielder of the vajra[28] against the asuras. Having attained great fame, return again to the city. You are the son of the lord of Matsya. You are the supreme refuge of the kingdom. Let all of us who reside in the kingdom find refuge in you today." Having been thus addressed by these terrible words in the midst of the women, he[29] proudly spoke these words in the inner quarters.'

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'Uttara said, "I wield a firm bow and I will today follow the footprints of the cattle, but only if someone skilled in horses becomes my charioteer. But I do not know of any man who can drive me. Swiftly look for a charioteer who can drive me out. My charioteer was killed in the great battle that lasted for twenty-eight nights, if not for an entire month. As soon as I find another man who is skilled in knowledge of horses, I will quickly ride out, with my giant standard raised. I will enter the ranks of the enemy army, with its many elephants, horses and chariots. The Kurus will be defeated through the valour of my weapons and power and I will bring back the animals. In battle, I will terrify Duryodhana, Shantanu's son,[30] Vaikartana Karna, Kripa, Drona and his son[31] and all the other great archers who have assembled, like the wielder of the vajra against the danavas. I will bring back the animals in an instant. Finding that the kingdom is deserted, the Kurus are taking away the riches of cattle. What can I possibly do if I am not there? Today, the assembled Kurus will witness my valour. 'Is it Partha Arjuna himself who is vanquishing us?'"'[32]

Vaishampayana said, 'He repeatedly spoke these words in the presence of the women and Panchali could not tolerate his reference to

Bibhatsu.[33] In the midst of the women, the ascetic one approached him. With a bashful expression, she softly spoke these words. “This extremely handsome youth is known by the name of Brihannada and resembles a gigantic elephant. He has been Partha’s charioteer. He was the great-souled one’s disciple and was not inferior to him in the use of the bow. O brave one! I have seen him earlier, when I dwelt with the Pandavas. When the conflagration of the fire burnt down the great Khandava,[34] it is he who drove Arjuna’s supreme steeds. With him as charioteer, Partha conquered all the beings in Khandavaprastha. There is no other charioteer like him. O brave one! Your maiden sister has beautiful hips and there is no doubt that he will follow her orders. If he becomes your charioteer, there is no doubt that you will vanquish all the Kurus and return swiftly with the cattle.” On being thus addressed by Sairandhri, he spoke to his sister. “O one with the unblemished limbs! Go and bring Brihannada here.” Thus sent by her brother, she quickly went to the dancing hall where the mighty-armed Pandava lived, hidden in his disguise.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! On seeing his friend, the large-eyed princess, he[35] smiled and asked her why she had come. Approaching that bull among men, in the midst of her friends, the princess affectionately spoke these words. “O Brihannada! The kingdom’s cattle are being robbed by the Kurus. My archer brother is leaving to defeat them. But not long ago, the charioteer of his chariot was slain in battle. There is no other charioteer who is equal to him as a charioteer. O Brihannada! While he was looking for a charioteer, Sairandhri spoke to him about your skill in handling horses. O Brihannada! Be good enough to act as a charioteer for my brother, before the Kurus drive our cattle too far away. If you do not act in accordance with the request I am affectionately making to you, I will give up my life today.” At these words of his friend, the one with the beautiful hips, the scorcher of enemies went to the prince, like a maddened elephant. The large-eyed one followed him, like an elephant calf following a she-elephant.

‘On seeing him from a distance, the prince spoke to him. “With you as a charioteer, Partha satisfied the fire god in Khandava. Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, conquered the entire earth. Sairandhri knows the Pandavas and spoke to me about you. O Brihannada! Drive my horses too, when I fight with the Kurus and recover our riches of cattle. In earlier times, you were Arjuna’s favourite charioteer. It is with your aid that the bull among Pandavas conquered the earth.” Having been thus addressed by the prince, Brihannada replied, “What capacity do I possess to be a charioteer in a field of battle? Singing, dancing, or the playing of a musical instrument would have been different. I can do that. O fortunate one! How can I drive a chariot?” Uttara said, “O Brihannada! You will become a singer or a dancer again. Swiftly ascend the chariot and control these supreme horses.” Pandava, the scorcher of enemies, knew everything. But before Uttara, he committed mistakes in jest. He donned the armour upside down on his body. The large-eyed maidens laughed when they saw this. On seeing him thus confused, Uttara himself fastened the expensive armour on Brihannada. He himself donned superb armour that was as dazzling as the sun. Having raised a pennant with a lion, he instructed him to be the charioteer. The brave one had Brihannada as his charioteer and rode out, with expensive bows and many beautiful arrows.

‘Uttara[36] and the other maidens who were her friends told him, “O Brihannada! When you have defeated the Kurus, led by Bhishma and Drona, in battle, you must bring back many beautiful dresses for our dolls, colourful and fine.” Partha, descendant of the Pandu lineage, smilingly replied in words that were like the rumbling of the clouds, “If Uttara vanquishes those maharathas in battle, I will bring back divine and beautiful garments for you.” Having spoken these words, brave Bibhatsu drove the chariot towards the Kurus, who had many kinds of flags and pennants.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having emerged from the capital, Virata’s son, Prithivinjaya,[37] told his charioteer, “Go where the Kurus are. Having defeated all the Kurus who have assembled in search of victory and having quickly recovered the cattle, I will return to my city again.” Then the descendant of the Pandu lineage goaded those excellent steeds. Urged by that lion among men, those horses, which were as fleet as the wind and were bedecked in golden garlands, carried them, as if they seemed to touch the sky. Having travelled a short distance, Matsya’s son and Dhananjaya, the destroyers of enemies, beheld the powerful Kuru army. They approached the Kurus near a cremation ground. They saw the gigantic army, which made a sound like that of the ocean and was like a forest with many trees crawling through the sky. O supreme among men! The kings saw the dust swirling around, making it difficult for beings to see and extending up to the sky. The giant army was full of elephants, horses and chariots. It was protected by Karna, Duryodhana, Kripa and Shantanu’s son,[38] and by the intelligent and great archer Drona, together with his son.[39]

‘On seeing this, Virata’s son was frightened and his body hair stood up. He told Partha, “I cannot fight with the Kurus. On seeing them, my body hair is standing up. There are many terrible warriors, impossible for even the gods to vanquish. I cannot repulse the Kuru soldiers, who seem to stretch to eternity. I cannot enter the army of the Bharatas, with its terrible bows, large numbers of chariots, elephants and horses, and full of infantry and flags. On seeing the enemy in the battlefield, my soul has begun to tremble. Drona, Bhishma, Kripa, Karna, Vivimshati, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, Somadatta, Bahlika and brave King Duryodhana, supreme among charioteers, are there. There are many other radiant and great archers, all skilled in fighting. On seeing the Kurus, armed and arranged in battle formation, my body hair has begun to stand up and I have been overcome with lassitude.” On saying this, the stupid one wished to return and lamented foolishly before Savyasachi, who did not withdraw. “My father has gone to fight with the Trigartas and has left me alone in charge. He has taken all the soldiers and I have no soldiers. I am alone against many and I am only a child. They are skilled in weapons and possess experience. I cannot fight with them. O Brihannada! Return.” Arjuna replied, “You are miserable from fear. Why are you increasing the delight of your enemies? The enemies haven't yet done anything against you in the battlefield. You yourself told me to take you towards the Kouravas. I will take you to the place where there are many flags flying. O mighty-armed one! I will take you to the midst of the Kurus, who are assassins[40] and like vultures looking for flesh, even if they fight from inside the earth. You boasted of your manliness before women and men, before we set out. Why do you not wish to fight? O brave one! If you return home without having recovered the cattle, all the men and women will laugh at you. Sairandhri praised me because of my deeds as a charioteer. I will not be able to return to the city without having recovered the cattle. Sairandhri praised me and you ordered me. Why should I not fight with all the Kurus? Be steadfast." Uttara said, "Let the Kurus rob many riches from the Matsyas, as they wish. O Brihannada! Let men and women laugh at me." Having spoken these words, the evil-souled one jumped down from the chariot. Sporting earrings, he abandoned his pride and threw away his bow and arrows.

'Brihannada said, "Running away has never been said to be the dharma of brave kshatriyas. Dying in battle is superior to running away in fear." Speaking these words, Kounteya Dhananjaya descended from that supreme chariot. He pursued the prince who was running away. His long braid trailed and his red garment fluttered. On seeing him run with his trailing braid and not knowing that it was Arjuna, some soldiers laughed on seeing his strange form. But on seeing him run swiftly, the Kurus said, "Who is disguised in this form, like a fire beneath ashes? He seems to be partly a man and partly a woman. Though he is in the form of a eunuch, he seems to resemble Arjuna. He has the same head and neck, and arms like clubs. His gait is also the same. This can be no one other than Dhananjaya. Dhanajaya is to men what the lord of the gods[41] is to the immortals. Who in this world, other than Dhananjaya, will come alone to fight with us? Virata left a single son in that deserted city. He has ventured forth because of his childish folly, not because of his manliness. That must be Partha Arjuna who is running there in disguise. Uttara made him his charioteer when he emerged from the city. It seems to us, having seen our flags, he is frightened and is running away. It must certainly be Dhananjaya who is running after him to restrain him.” Individually, all the Kurus thought in this way. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But having seen the Pandava in disguise, they were unable to arrive at any definite conclusion. Meanwhile, Dhananjaya ran after Uttara. Within one hundred steps, he seized him by the hair.

‘Seized by Arjuna, Virata’s son began to lament in many piteous words, as if he had been sorely oppressed. “I will give you a hundred nishkas made out of pure gold.[42] I will give you eight sparkling *vaidurya*[43] gems set in gold. I will give you a chariot with a golden standard, drawn by well-trained horses and ten mad elephants. O Brihannada! Let me go.” While the insensate one was lamenting in these words, the tiger among men laughed and brought him to the chariot. Partha spoke to the frightened one, who had lost his senses. “O destroyer of enemies! If you are incapable of fighting with the foes, control the horses while I fight with the enemy. Protected by the strength of my arms, let us penetrate this unassailable and terrible mass of chariots, protected by heroes who are maharathas. O foremost among princes! O scorcher of enemies! Do not be afraid. You are a kshatriya. I will fight with the Kurus and recover your animals. Enter that impenetrable and unassailable mass of chariots. O best among men! Be my charioteer while I fight with the Kurus.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having thus spoken to Virata’s son, the unvanquished Bibhatsu reassured Uttara for an instant. Then Partha, supreme among warriors, made the unwilling and insensate one, oppressed by fear, ascend the chariot.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On seeing that bull among men ascend the chariot in the form of a eunuch and head for the shami tree, after having made Uttara ascend the chariot, the supreme charioteers among the Kurus, with Bhishma and Drona at the front, were all agitated in their minds out of fear of Dhananjaya. On seeing them lose their endeavour and on witnessing extraordinary omens, the preceptor Bharadvaja,[44] supreme among wielders of weapons, said, “Violent and turbulent winds are blowing, rough and harsh in tone. The sky is covered in a darkness that has the complexion of ashes. The clouds are extraordinary to look at, with a rough hue. Many weapons are coming out of their sheaths. Jackals are lamenting and the directions are ablaze with a terrible light. The horses are shedding tears. The flags are fluttering, though there is nothing to move them. Since many such portents can be seen, be steadfast, because a great battle must be near. Protect yourselves and arrange yourselves in battle formations. Wait for a slaughter and protect the wealth of cattle. This is a brave and mighty archer, supreme among those who are skilled in all weapons. There is no doubt that it is Partha who has arrived in the form of a eunuch. This is the valorous Partha, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies. He will not refrain from battle, even against masses of Maruts.[45] The brave one suffered difficulties in the forest and was trained by Vasava.[46] He is intolerant and there is no doubt that he will do battle. O Kouravas! I do not see a warrior who is capable of repulsing him. It is said that Partha satisfied Mahadeva[47] himself in a battle.” Karna replied, “You always belittle us by speaking about Phalguna’s qualities. But Arjuna isn’t worth one *kala*[48] of me or Duryodhana.” Duryodhana said, “O Radheya![49] If it is Partha, my task will be accomplished. Once recognized, they will have to roam again for another twelve years. Or if it is some other man in the form of a eunuch, I will soon bring him down to ground with extremely sharp arrows.” When Dhritarashtra’s son, scorcher of enemies, spoke these words, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Drona’s son honoured his manliness.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On reaching the shami tree, Partha told Virata’s son, whom he knew to be extremely delicate and not experienced in battle, “O Uttara! Instructed by me, swiftly fetch my bows. Yours will not be able to withstand my strength, or bear great pressure, or strike down an elephant, or sustain the force of my arms when I defeat the enemies. O Bhuminjaya! Therefore, quickly climb this shami tree that is covered with foliage. The bows of the sons of Pandu are hidden there—Yudhishthira, Bhima, Bibhatsu and the twins, as well as the flags, the arrows and the divine armour of those brave ones. There is also Partha’s extremely mighty bow, Gandiva. This is capable of extending the kingdom and is alone the equal of one hundred thousand others. It is capable of withstanding exertions. It is as large as the king of grass.[50] It is the equal of all weapons and creates destruction among enemies. It is embellished with gold, divine, smooth, broad and without any blemishes. It can withstand heavy pressure. It is terrible and beautiful to look at. All the other bows are equally powerful and firm.” Uttara replied, “It has been heard that a corpse is tied to this tree. I am a prince. How can I touch it with my hands? I have been born in the kshatriya lineage and that does not befit me. I am a great prince who knows about mantras and sacrifices. O Brihannada! If I touch it, my body will become as polluted as that of a bearer of corpses. How can you ask me to touch it and become the subject of condemnation?” Brihannada said, “O Indra among kings! You may become the subject of condemnation, but you will remain clean. Do not be frightened. There are bows here and no corpses. You are spirited and have been born as the heir to the Matsya lineage. O son of a king! Why should I ask you to perform a reprehensible act?” Thus addressed by Partha, Virata’s son, adorned in earrings, descended from the chariot and reluctantly climbed the shami tree.

‘Dhananjaya, the destroyer of enemies, remained on the chariot and instructed him from there. “Remove the covers quickly.” He removed the covers from every side and saw Gandiva and the other four bows. Having been freed, the bows were as resplendent as the rays of the sun. A divine radiance glowed, like the planets at the time of their risings. On seeing their forms, like sighing snakes, his body hair stood up and he was terrified for an instant. He then touched those radiant and giant bows. O king! Virata’s son spoke these words to Arjuna.

‘Uttara asked, “This supreme bow is worth a thousand crores of gold. It is embossed with one hundred golden eyes. Whom does it belong to? This supreme bow has excellent sides and is easy to hold. Its back shines with golden and tusked elephants. Whom does it belong to? The back of this supreme bow is embellished with sixty fireflies set in patterns made out of pure gold. Whom does it belong to? This supreme bow is dazzling in its lustre. The rays of three golden suns decorate it. Whom does it belong to? This supreme bow is adorned with gold and jewels and is decorated with golden locusts made out of pure gold. Whom does it belong to? These one thousand iron arrows are borne by feathers. They have gold and silver tips and are in golden quivers. Whom do they belong to? These large arrows are broad. They have the feathers of vultures and have been sharpened on stone. These arrows are completely made out of iron and are yellow, like the colour of turmeric. They have excellent tips. Whom do they belong to? This black quiver has the marks of five tigers and the ears of sows. It holds ten arrows. Whom does it belong to? These seven hundred arrows wish to drink blood. They are large and long and are entirely made out of copper. Whom do they belong to? These arrows have the feathers of parrots and the lower halves are well made. The upper halves are made of iron and have yellow embellishments made of gold. They have been sharpened on stone. Whom do these belong to? This long sword has a stone at the tip and stones at the back. It is in a large and excellent scabbard made out of tiger skin, decorated in golden patterns and tinkling with bells. Whom does this large sword belong to? This divine sword is without blemishes and has a golden hilt. Whom does it belong to? This unblemished sword is in a scabbard made out of cow skin. Whom does it belong to? It has been made out of gold in the country of the *nishadha*s and is capable of bearing a great weight. This sword with a golden hilt is in a scabbard made out of the skin of an animal with five nails.[51] It is excellent in form and is yellow like the sky. Whom does it belong to? This yellow and heavy sword is in a golden scabbard that is made out of molten gold and has the complexion of the fire. It is supreme and without blemishes. Whom does it belong to? O Brihannada! I am asking you. Tell me exactly. I have become overcome with great and extreme wonder at witnessing all these things.”

‘Brihannada said, “The one you have asked about first is Partha’s bow Gandiva, famous in the worlds and capable of destroying enemy armies. It is supreme among all weapons and is embellished with pure gold. This is Arjuna’s supreme weapon. It is equal to one hundred thousand others and is the extender of kingdoms. Using this, Partha defeated gods and men in battle. For eternity, gods, danavas and gandharvas have worshipped it. Brahma held it earlier, for one thousand years. Then Prajapati held it for five hundred and three years,[52] Shakra for eighty-five, King Soma for five hundred and Varuna for a hundred years. Partha, borne by white steeds, has possessed it for sixty-five years. This supreme bow is extremely powerful and greatly divine. It is supreme in its resplendent form and is honoured by gods and mortals. That bow, with the golden grip and excellent sides, is Bhimasena’s. Using this, Partha,[53] the scorcher of enemies, conquered the entire eastern direction. O son of Virata! This supreme bow, with the handsome grip and decorated with fireflies, belongs to King Yudhishthira. The one on which radiant and golden suns blaze, resplendent with energy, is Nakula’s weapon. The one that is embellished with golden locusts is the bow of Madri’s son, Sahadeva. O son of Virata! These thousand arrows are as sharp as razors and are feathered. These arrows are like the venom of snakes and belong to Arjuna. Their energy blazes in battle and they are swift. When the warrior unleashes them in battle against enemies, they are not exhausted. These sharp arrows destroy enemies and belong to Bhima. They are broad and long and have the form of crescent moons. These arrows are yellow and have golden shafts and belong to Nakula. They have been sharpened on stone and are in a quiver that has the marks of five tigers. With this quiver, Madri’s intelligent son conquered the entire western direction in battle. These arrows that are as radiant as the sun and are throughout made of iron, belong to the intelligent Sahadeva. They are decorated and are capable of performing action. These great arrows are sharp, yellow, long-shafted and broad and belong to the king.[54] They have golden tufts and three joints. This long sword has the mark of a bee in the front and at the rear. It is firm and is capable of withstanding great burdens. It was used by Arjuna in battle. This extremely large sword has a sheath that is made of tiger skin and belongs to Bhimasena. It is divine and is capable of withstanding great burdens. It causes terror among enemies. This supreme sword has a golden hilt and belongs to the intelligent Kourava Dharmaraja. It has an excellent blade and quiver. This firm sword is capable of withstanding great burdens and belongs to Nakula. It is colourful and is in a sheath made out of the skin of an animal with five nails.[55] This giant sword is in a sheath that is made out of the skin of a cow and belongs to Sahadeva. It is firm and is capable of withstanding all burdens."'

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'Uttara said, "These weapons of the great-souled Parthas, who are swift in their deeds, are decorated in gold and are resplendent in their beauty. But where are Partha Arjuna and Kouravya Yudhishthira, Nakula, Sahadeva and Pandava Bhimasena? All of them are great-souled and are capable of destroying all enemies. But after they lost their kingdom in the game of dice, nothing has been heard about them. Where is the famous Panchali Droupadi, a jewel among women? After they were defeated in the game of dice, Krishna followed them into the forest."

'Arjuna replied, "I am Partha Arjuna. The gamester is Yudhishthira. Ballava, who cooks dishes for your father, is Bhimasena. Nakula is the one who tends to the steeds and Sahadeva is with the cattle. Know that Sairandhri, because of whom the Kichakas were slain, is Droupadi."

'Uttara said, "I have heard ten names of Partha[56] earlier. I will have faith in your words if you can recount all of them to me."

'Arjuna replied, "I will tell you my ten names—Arjuna, Phalguna, Jishnu, Kiriti, Shvetavahana, Bibhatsu, Vijaya, Krishna, Savyasachi and Dhananjaya."

'Uttara asked, "Why are you named Vijaya? Why are you Shvetavahana? Why is your name Kiriti? Why are you Savyasachi? Why are you Arjuna, Phalguna, Jishnu, Krishna, Bibhatsu and Dhananjaya? Tell me everything in detail. I have heard the reasons why the brave one obtained those names."

'Arjuna replied, "I have conquered all the countries and obtained all their wealth. I stand in the midst of riches. That is the reason I am known as Dhananjaya.[57] When I go out to fight against those who are indomitable in battle, I never return without vanquishing them. That is the reason I am known as Vijaya.[58] When I fight in battle, white steeds with golden harnesses are yoked to my chariot. That is the reason I am Shvetavahana.[59] I was born on the slopes of the Himalayas when the two *nakshatras* of Purva and Uttara Phalguni were in the firmament.[60] That is the reason I am known as Phalguna. In earlier times, when I fought with the bulls among the danavas, Shakra gave me a diadem, as radiant as the sun, for my head. That is the reason I am Kiriti.[61] I have never committed a terrible act in battle. Therefore, I am known among gods and men as Bibhatsu.[62] Both my hands are right hands when I draw the Gandiva. Therefore, I am known among gods and men as Savyasachi.[63] My complexion is rare on this earth with its four corners. I perform pure deeds and that is the reason I am known as Arjuna.[64] I am difficult to reach. I cannot be repressed and I do the repressing. I am the son of the chastiser of Paka.[65] That is the reason I am famous among gods and men as Jishnu.[66] Affectionately, my father gave me my tenth name of Krishna, since the child had a dark complexion."[67]

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Virata's son showed his homage to Partha and said, "My name is Bhuminjaya and I am also known as Uttara. It is my good fortune that I have beheld Partha. O Dhananjaya! You are welcome. O red-eyed one! O mighty-armed one! O one with arms like the trunks of a king among elephants! You should pardon me for what I have said out of ignorance. You have earlier performed many wonderful and difficult deeds. I have now overcome my fears and I feel great affection towards you."'

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'Uttara said, "O brave one! Ascend this large chariot with me as the charioteer. Which of the armies would you like to attack? As instructed by you, I will take you there."

'Arjuna replied, "O tiger among men! I am pleased that you no longer have any fear. O one who is skilled in battle! I will disperse all of your enemies in battle. O immensely intelligent one! Be steady and behold me fight with the enemies. I will accomplish extremely terrible deeds. Swiftly tie all these quivers to my chariot. Take that polished sword that is embellished with gold. I will fight with the Kurus and recover your animals. Protected by my arms, this chariot of yours, with its three poles and quivers, with many flags, will be like a city protected by turrets and gates. Its sides will be guarded by my resolution. When I am angered, the twang of my bow will make the axle sound like kettle drums. I, the wielder of the Gandiva, will be established on the chariot in battle. I am incapable of being vanquished by enemy soldiers. O son of Virata! Shed all your fears."

'Uttara said, "I am no longer afraid of them. I know that you are steadfast in battle. I know that you are the equal of Keshava, or Indra himself, in battle. But thinking about one thing, I am overcome by confusion. It is certain that I am foolish, because I cannot arrive at any conclusion. You have the form of a brave one and bear all the auspicious marks. Through what adverse circumstances did you become a eunuch? You are like the wielder of the trident,[68] or a king of the gandharvas, or the god Shatakratu.[69] I think of you roaming in the attire of a eunuch."

'Arjuna replied, "I am telling you truthfully, I have observed this vow for a year, on the instructions of my elder brother.[70] I have observed brahmacharya. O mighty-armed one! I am not a eunuch, but united with dharma, have followed another.[71] O son of a king! Know that my vow has been completed."[72]

'Uttara said, "I am extremely delighted today that my conclusions have not been proved wrong. Those who are supreme among men cannot be eunuchs like these. I have now obtained an aide in battle and can fight even with the immortals. My fears have been destroyed. Tell me what I should do. I will control your horses, which are capable of vanquishing the chariots of enemies. O bull among men! I have been trained in driving a chariot by an expert. O bull among men! Know that I have been trained as a charioteer, like Daruka for Vasudeva and Matali for Shakra.[73] The horse that is yoked to the right of the pole is like Sugriva and when his feet touch the ground, they can hardly be seen.[74] I think that the other beautiful horse that is yoked to the left of the pole is like Meghapushpa in its speed. I think that the beautiful horse with the golden harness that is yoked to the left of the axle is superior in strength and speed to Sainya. I think that the one that is yoked to the right of the axle is superior in strength and speed to Balahaka. This chariot is capable of bearing an archer like you in battle. While stationed on this chariot, it is my view that you will be able to fight."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The brave and strong one[75] took the bracelets off from his arms. He donned beautiful wrist guards that would sound like drums. He tied his black and curly hair in a white garment. He swiftly strung Gandiva and drew the bow. When the bow was drawn, it uttered a great sound, as if a giant rock had been dashed against another rock. The earth trembled and a turbulent wind began to blow. The birds were confused in the sky. The giant trees began to tremble. From the sound that was like the roar of thunder, the Kurus got to know that Arjuna was on the chariot and was drawing the best of bows with his arms.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having made Uttara his charioteer and having circumambulated the shami tree, Dhananjaya gathered all his weapons and marched out. The maharatha took down the banner with the lion and placed it below the shami tree.[76] He rode out with Uttara as the charioteer. He hoisted on the chariot the golden banner with the mark of a monkey with the tail of a lion, one created with divine illusion by Vishvakarma.[77] He thought of the favours of the fire god. Having divined his thoughts, he[78] instructed those beings to be on the flag. Maharatha Bibhatsu Kounteya Shvetavahana was established on the colourful chariot, with a flag and quivers. He donned his wrist guards and grasped his bow and arrows. With the supreme of monkeys on his banner, he set out in a northern direction. The strong one, the destroyer of enemies, blew powerfully on his deep-sounding and large conch shell and this made the body hair of his enemies stand up. At that sound, the swift horses knelt down on the ground. Uttara was terrified and sat down on the chariot. Kounteya Arjuna grasped the reins and made the horses stand up. He embraced and comforted Uttara and said, “O foremost among princes! Do not be frightened. O scorcher of enemies! You are a kshatriya. O tiger among men! Why are you despondent in the midst of the enemy? You have heard the sounds of conch shells before, as well as the loud sounds of kettle drums and the roar of elephants when they are stationed in battle formations in armies. Why are you then so frightened by the sound of the conch shell? Why is your form so despondent and why are you so terrified, as if you are an ordinary man?”

‘Uttara replied, “I have heard the sounds of conch shells and the loud sounds of kettle drums, and also the roars of elephants when they are stationed in battle formations in armies. But never before, have I heard the sound of a conch shell like this. Never before, have I seen a banner like this. Never before, have I heard the sound of a bow twanging like this. My mind is terribly agitated from the sound of this conch shell, the twang of the bow and the roar of the chariot. I have lost sense of all the directions and my heart is trembling. The banner has covered everything and the directions are no longer evident to me. The sound of the Gandiva has deafened my ears.”

‘Arjuna said, “Stand firmly on this chariot and to one side. Place your feet firmly on it. Grasp the reins firmly. I am going to blow the conch shell again.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The earth trembled from the sound of the conch shell, the roar of the chariot and the thunder of the Gandiva.

‘Drona said, “From the roar of the chariot, the blast of the conch shell and the trembling of the earth, it can be no one other than Savyasachi. Our weapons are no longer shining and our horses have lost their spirits. Although there is kindling, the fires do not blaze. This does not augur well. All the animals are running towards the sun, wailing terribly. The crows are alighting on our standards. This does not augur well. The vultures[79] are flying towards our left and this portends great danger. The jackals are howling and running around in the midst of the army and are escaping uninjured. This portends great danger. I can see that your[80] body hair is standing up. The soldiers have already been conquered and no one wishes to fight. Their faces are pale and all the warriors have lost their senses. Let us let the cattle go. Let us stand here, armed and arranged in battle formations.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘In that battle, King Duryodhana then spoke to Bhishma, Drona, the tiger among charioteers, and the great maharatha Kripa. “Both Karna and I have told the preceptor this several times. I will say it again, because I am not satisfied with having spoken it earlier. When they were defeated, our pledge was that they would dwell for twelve years in the forest and undetected for one year in any country. The thirteenth year is not yet over. Bibhatsu, who was supposed to live in disguise, has appeared before us. If Bibhatsu arrives before the period of concealment is over, the Pandavas will have to dwell again in the forest for twelve years. Their avarice may have made them forget, or we may have been confused. Bhishma should know whether they have exceeded, or fallen short of, the stipulated period. If things are not clear, there is always scope for doubt. Something that is thought of in one way, may turn out to be another. We followed the northern direction in order to fight with the army of the Matsyas. However, if Bibhatsu arrives, we cannot turn away. We came here to fight with the Matsyas, on behalf of the Trigartas. The many depredations of the Matsyas have been recounted to us. They[81] sought refuge with us out of fear and we have given them our promise. The arrangement was that they would first, on the afternoon of the seventh lunar day, seize the great wealth of cattle of the Matsyas and we would again do the same at sunrise on the eighth lunar day. They may not have been able to find the cattle, or they may have been defeated. They may have deceived us and concluded an alliance with the Matsyas. Or the Matsya, together with his countrymen, may have defeated them. With his entire army, he is now advancing towards us to fight. It is possible that an extremely valorous one among them is leading the way, so as to defeat us. Or it may be Matsya himself. Whether it is the king of Matsya, or whether it is Bibhatsu, who has arrived, it is our agreement that all of us must fight. Why are our supreme charioteers, Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Vikarna and Drona's son[82] standing idly on their chariots? All of these maharathas seem to be confused at this time. There is no other option but to fight. Therefore, resolve yourselves accordingly. If, to save our cattle, we have to confront in battle the god who wields the vajra[83] or Yama himself, who would flee to Hastinapura? There may be doubt about the horses. But who among the foot soldiers will remain alive, even if they have been pierced by arrows and dispersed in the deserted forest?[84] Setting the preceptor aside, let us decide on the course of action. He[85] knows their[86] minds and tries to terrify us. I can perceive his special affection towards Arjuna. As soon as he sees Bibhatsu arrive, that is the reason he praises him. Decide on a course of action so that our army is not destroyed in a foreign land, in the great forest and in the summer. Decide on a course of action so that this army is not confused and routed by the enemy. Having heard the neighing of horses, why should one praise the enemy? Horses always neigh, whether they are walking or standing. The wind always blows. Vasava[87] always showers down. The roar of the thunder can be heard many times. What does this have to do with Partha and why should he be praised? That can only be out of love towards him and hatred and anger towards us. Preceptors are indeed compassionate and wise. They can see what is wrong. But they should never be consulted when a great danger arrives. Learned ones are adornments when they recount their beautiful tales in fine palaces, assemblies and dwelling houses. Learned ones are adornments when they perform wonderful acts in assemblies of people and when sacrificial offerings have to be prepared. They know the weaknesses of others and human character. Learned ones are adornments when they point out defects in the preparation of food. But ignore learned ones when they praise the qualities of enemies. Instead, decide on a course of action so that the enemy can be killed. Let the cattle be protected. Let the soldiers immediately be arranged in battle formations. Arrange for guards in the appropriate places, so that we can fight with the enemy.'"

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‘Karna said, “I see that all you honourable ones[88] are frightened and terrified. All of you do not wish to fight and are standing idly. Whether it is the king of Matsya or Bibhatsu who has come, I will restrain him, the way the shoreline holds back the abode of *makaras*.[89] Arrows with straight feathers will be shot from my bow and they will not be repulsed, like gliding snakes. They have golden tufts and are extremely sharp at the tip. Released from my hand, these arrows will cover Partha, like locusts covering a tree. These winged shafts will firmly strike against the string of the bow, and the sound of the slapping of palms will be like that of a kettledrum. Bibhatsu has concentrated for eight and five years[90] and is fondly looking forward to a battle in which he will strike me. Kounteya, with the qualities of a brahmana, is the right receptacle to receive thousands of arrows shot by me. This great archer is famous in the worlds. O best of the Kurus! But in no way am I inferior to Arjuna. I will release these golden arrows, shafted with the feathers of vultures, and the sky will seem to be covered with fireflies. I gave my word to Dhritarashtra’s son[91] earlier and I will repay that debt today. I will kill Arjuna today. My feathered arrows will split the sky and envelope the directions. They will appear like locusts in the firmament. Partha’s touch is like that of Indra’s vajra and he is as energetic as the great Indra. But I will oppress him, the way an elephant is oppressed with flaming torches. He is as unassailable as the fire. But I will assail him with swords, spears and arrows. The flaming Pandava burns down enemies. But the force of my horses will be like a storm and the roar of my mass of chariots will be like thunder. The shower of my arrows will be like a great cloud and I will pacify Pandava. The arrows released from my bow will be like the virulent poison of snakes to Partha. Those arrows will pierce him, like serpents gliding into a termite hill. I have obtained weapons from Jamadagni’s son, supreme among rishis.[92] Using their power, I can fight with Vasava himself. With an arrow,[93] I will kill the monkey that is stationed on the top of his standard. It will fall down on the ground today, uttering a terrible roar. The other beings who are stationed on the enemy’s flag will be tormented. Oppressed by me, they will fly in all the directions and their wails will rise up into the sky. Today I will uproot with its roots the stake that has been impaled in Duryodhana's heart for a long time. I will bring down Bibhatsu from his chariot. Today, the Kouravas will see Partha bereft of his chariot, with his horses dead and his manliness destroyed, sighing like a serpent. Let the Kurus go as they wish, taking only the riches[94] with them. Or let them be stationed on their chariots and witness my battle."'

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'Kripa said, "O Radheya! Your mind is always wicked and you are inclined towards war. You do not understand natural objectives, nor do you consider the consequences. We should think about the many courses of action that are laid down in the sacred texts. Those who are learned in the ancient accounts have said that a war is the worst. A war guarantees victory only if it is at the right time and the right place. But if it is conducted at the wrong time, it does not bring any fruits. Valour at the right place and the right time is recommended for our welfare. We must decide on a course of action in accordance with what is favourable. The learned do not gauge how much of load a chariot can take on the words of its maker. Reflecting on all this, it is not desirable for us to encounter Partha. He saved the Kurus alone and he satisfied Agni alone.[95] He alone spent five years in the pursuit of brahmacharya.[96] He was alone when he raised Subhadra onto a chariot and summoned Krishna to a duel.[97] In the forest, Krishna won back Krishna when she was being abducted.[98] He alone spent five years in Shakra's abode, learning the use of weapons.[99] He extended the fame of the Kurus by defeating Samyamini alone.[100] That destroyer of enemies swiftly vanquished Chitrasena, king of the gandharvas, in a battle, together with his invincible army.[101] In a similar way, he alone defeated the Nivatakavacha and Kalakhanja danavas, whom even the gods could not slay.[102] O Karna! What act have you single-handedly performed earlier? Have you, like each of them,[103] brought lords of the earth under your sway? Even Indra himself is incapable of facing Partha in battle. He who wishes to fight with him had better take some medicine. You wish to extend your right hand and use your forefinger to pluck out a fang from an angry and virulent snake. Or while roaming alone in the forest, and without a goad,[104] you wish to climb onto a mad elephant and drive it into the city. Or smearing yourself with clarified butter and attired in bark, you wish to pass through a blazing fire that has been kindled with clarified butter, fat and marrow. What manliness is there in tying a giant rock around one's neck, binding oneself, and then trying to swim across the ocean? O Karna! If one is unskilled in weapons and extremely weak, and yet wishes to fight with Partha, who is skilled in weapons and strong, that shows foolishness. He has been deceived by us for thirteen years. He is now like a lion that has been freed from its nooses. He will destroy all of us. We have unwittingly run into Partha waiting alone, like a fire hidden in a well. We confront supreme danger. Although Partha is invincible in battle, we will fight him together when he comes upon us. Let the soldiers be armed and stationed in battle formations. O Karna! Drona, Duryodhana, Bhishma, you, Drona's son and I—all of us will fight Partha. Do not be rash. Though Partha is fierce, like the one with an upraised vajra in his hand,[105] if all six chariots[106] are united together, we will be able to repulse him. With the soldiers arranged in battle formations and with the supreme archers ready, we will fight Arjuna in battle, like the danavas against Vasava."'

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'Ashvatthama said, "The cattle have not been conquered yet. They have not crossed the boundary. Nor have they reached Hastinapura. O Karna! Why are you boasting? Even after having won many battles, obtaining a great deal of riches and winning many enemy lands, there is no manliness in boasting. The fire burns without a word. The sun shines in silence. The earth bears its beings, mobile and immobile, in silence. The deeds of the four varnas have been laid down by the learned ones, so that they may achieve the objective of wealth without committing a sin. Having studied the Vedas, brahmanas must sacrifice and officiate at sacrifices. Kshatriyas must use the bow and sacrifice, but officiate at the sacrifices of others. Having acquired objects, vaishyas must perform deeds for the brahman.[107] Having obtained the earth in accordance with the sacred texts, those immensely fortunate ones behaved well towards their preceptors, even if they were devoid of qualities. What kshatriya should be satisfied at having obtained a kingdom through gambling? That is cruel and should be for other ordinary men. Having obtained riches through deceit and fraud, what wise man will boast of it, like a vendor of flesh? In which duel in battle have you vanquished Dhananjaya, Nakula or Sahadeva? Whose riches have you robbed? Has Yudhishthira, or Bhima, supreme among strong ones, ever been defeated by you? And in which battle did you win over Krishna?[108] O performer of evil deeds! She was dragged into the assembly hall in a single garment, when she was in season. In search of gain, you have severed the great root of a sandalwood tree.[109] O brave one! You made them perform tasks and what did Vidura have to say then?[110] We have seen that men exhibit conciliation, to the best of their ability. So do other beings, even insects and ants. The Pandavas are incapable of pardoning Droupadi's molestation. Dhananjaya has appeared for the destruction of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Appearing as a learned one, you speak your words repeatedly. But will Jishnu not end this enmity, leaving no vestiges left?[111] Kunti's son Dhananjaya is not frightened of fighting the gods, the gandharvas, the asuras or the rakshasas. When he is enraged and descends on anyone in battle, he destroys him, like a tree is brought down through Garuda's force. He is superior to you in valour. He is equal to the king of the gods[112] in archery. He is Vasudeva's[113] equal in battle. Who will not show homage to Partha? He will fight and destroy divine[114] with divine, human with human, weapons with other weapons. What man is Arjuna's equal? Those who know about dharma know that a student comes only after a son. That is the reason why Drona loves Pandava. Will you fight with Pandava the way you gambled and won Indraprastha and the way you dragged Krishna to the assembly hall? This wise uncle of yours, Shakuni of Gandhara,[115] is a deceitful gambler and is learned about the dharma of kshatriyas. Let him fight here now. Gandiva does not cast dice, not *krita*, nor *dvapara*.[116] Gandiva releases flaming, sharp and pointed arrows. When released from Gandiva, dreadful, extremely energetic and tufted with vulture feathers, they can even pierce the interiors of mountains. Antaka, Shamana, death[117] and the fire with the mare's head[118] leave something behind, but not an enraged Dhananjaya. Let the preceptor[119] fight with Dhananjaya if he wishes. I will not fight with him. Our purpose is to fight with Matsya, if he comes here, following the footprints of the cattle."'

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'Bhishma said, "Drona's son sees it well. Kripa sees it well. Karna wishes to fight, in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas. No learned man can find fault with the preceptor. Considering the time and the place, it is my view that we should fight. What learned man who possesses five armed enemies, as radiant as the sun,[120] will not be confused at their ascendancy? Even men, who are conversant with dharma, are confused when it comes to their own interests. O king! That is the reason I am speaking these words, whether they please you or not. What Karna spoke, was for the purpose of inciting enterprise in us. The preceptor's son[121] should pardon us, because a great task has to be undertaken. Kounteya has arrived and this is not the time for dissension. You,[122] the preceptor and Kripa must pardon everything. You are skilled in the use of weapons, like the sun in its radiance. Just as spots can never be removed from the moon, you have the power of brahmanas and *brahmastras* are established in you.[123] The four Vedas may be seen together in one place,[124] and the power of kshatriyas in another single place. We have not heard of these two together in any person, other than the preceptor of the Bharatas and his son. This is my view. Brahmastras and the Vedas are not seen together anywhere else. The preceptor's son should forgive. This is not the time for dissension. Let us all fight in unity with the son of the chastiser of Paka,[125] who has now arrived. The learned ones have spoken about the weaknesses of an army and it is the view of the learned ones that dissension is the foremost and the worst."

‘Ashvatthama replied, “Let the preceptor forgive and there should be peace here again. If the preceptor was insulted, that was done in anger.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that, Duryodhana asked Drona’s pardon, together with Karna, Bhishma and the great-souled Kripa.’

‘Drona said, “I have already been pacified by the words that Shantanu’s son Bhishma spoke first. We should now engage and decide on a supreme course of action so that when Duryodhana is engaged, no clouds descend on the soldiers, out of rashness or out of confusion. Dhananjaya would not have shown himself, had the period of dwelling in the forest not been over. He will not pardon us today, without having recovered the riches.[126] Let us follow a course of action so that he cannot confront and defeat the sons of Dhritarashtra in any way. O Gangeya![127] Remember the words that Duryodhana had addressed you earlier and speak what is right.”’

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‘Bhishma said, “Parts of *kalas*, *muhurtas*,[128] days, fortnights, months, nakshatras, planets, seasons and years are joined together and the wheel of time revolves in accordance with these measurements of time. Because of an excess of time and deviations in the paths of bodies in the sky, there is an addition of two months in every cycle of five years.[129] I think that calculated in this way, during the passage of thirteen years, there are five additional months and twelve nights.[130] They have done everything that they had promised to do. Knowing this for certain, Bibhatsu has arrived. All of them are great-souled and knowledgeable about dharma and artha. They have Yudhishthira as the king. Why should they act contrary to dharma? The Kounteyas are not avaricious and they have accomplished a difficult feat. They have Yudhishthira as their king. Why should they act contrary to dharma? They do not wish to acquire the kingdom by any means possible. Else, the descendants of the Kuru lineage would have displayed their valour at that time. They are bound by the nooses of dharma and they have not deviated from the vow of kshatriyas. If there is a choice between being called untruthful and confronting defeat, the Parthas would choose death over being untruthful. But the time has now arrived. Such is the valour of those bulls among men, the Pandavas, who are protected by the wielder of the vajra, that they will not give up what is their due. We must counter in battle the supreme among those who are skilled in weapons. Therefore, let everything be swiftly done, so that our objectives are not taken over by others, and so that the virtuous ones of the world do not think that we are against welfare. O Kourava! O Indra among kings! I have never witnessed a battle where success has been assured. Dhananjaya has arrived. When one engages in battle, there is prosperity and adversity, victory and defeat. One will confront one or the other. I have seen this without a doubt. Therefore, let us carry out the tasks that are needed for war, as long as those deeds are in conformity with dharma. Dhananjaya has arrived."

'Duryodhana replied, "O grandfather! I will not give the kingdom away to the Pandavas. Therefore, without any delay, let us make arrangements for the battle."

'Bhishma said, "If it pleases you to listen, hear what my advice is. Take one-fourth of the army and quickly leave for the city. Let another one-fourth gather the cattle and leave. We will counter Pandava with the remaining half of the army, or Matsya if he arrives again, or Shatakratu himself. Let the preceptor be stationed in the middle, with Ashvatthama on the left. Let the wise Kripa, the son of Sharadvat, protect the right flank. Karna, the armoured son of the suta, should be stationed in the front. I will station myself behind the entire army, so as to protect it."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The maharatha Kouravyas thus arranged themselves in battle formations. Arjuna approached swiftly, his chariot uttering a roar. They saw the top of his standard. They heard the roar of his chariot. They heard the terrible sound of Gandiva, when it was twanged. On seeing all this, and on seeing the maharatha, the wielder of Gandiva, arrive, Drona spoke these words. "The top of the standard, which can be seen from a distance, belongs to Partha. That noise is like that of a monsoon cloud and the monkey is roaring. The best of charioteers is stationed on his chariot and he is supreme among charioteers. He draws Gandiva, the best of bows, with a sound like that of thunder. These two arrows have fallen together at my feet. These two other arrows have passed me by, touching my ears. Having dwelt in the forest and having accomplished superhuman deeds, Partha is now honouring me and putting questions to my ears."

'Arjuna said, "O charioteer! Stop the horses at a place from where I can use arrows on that army, until I am able to see that wretch among the Kuru lineage[131] in the midst of the soldiers. When I see that insolent one, I will ignore all the others and pounce down on his head. Then all of them will be defeated. Drona is stationed there and Drona's son is after him. Bhishma, Kripa and Karna, great archers, are stationed there. But I do not see the king[132] there. He must have gathered the cattle and left. Anxious to save his life, he must have resorted to the southern road. Leaving the chariots and soldiers here, go to where Suyodhana is. O son of Virata! That is the place where I will fight, because the battle there will not be without meat. Having defeated him, I will gather the cattle and return."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words, Virata's son carefully reined the horses. He used the reins to restrain them from where the bulls among the Kurus were. He goaded the mounts in the direction towards which Duryodhana had gone. Ignoring the assembled chariots, Shvetavahana left. Drona got to know his intentions and spoke these words. "Bibhatsu does not wish to station himself here, when the king is far away. He is advancing swiftly. Let us attack his flanks. When he is enraged, no one can fight him single-handedly in battle, other than the god with the thousand eyes[133] and Devaki's son Krishna. What will we do with these cattle and these great riches, if Duryodhana sinks like a boat in Partha's water?" Meanwhile, Bibhatsu went on and announced his name himself. He swiftly covered the soldiers with arrows that were like locusts. Because of the mass of arrows unleashed by Partha, the warriors were dispersed. They could not see the earth or the sky, because they were enveloped with arrows. They had no inclination to fight. But nor did they have an inclination to run away. In their minds, they honoured Partha's swiftness. He then blew the conch shell that makes the body hair of enemies stand up. He drew his excellent bow and incited the beings on his flag. At the sound of the conch shell and the roar of the chariot's wheels, and those of the inhuman beings who resided on the flag, the cattle raised their tails up and wailed on all the sides. They returned towards the southern direction."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having routed the enemy's soldiers and having conquered the cattle, Arjuna, the supreme of archers, in a desire to do that which brought him pleasure, advanced in Duryodhana's direction. The cattle ran away towards the Matsyas. Thinking that Kiriti had been successful and seeing him advance towards Duryodhana, the foremost among the Kurus swiftly descended on him. Beholding their many soldiers, arranged in deep battle formations, with many flags, the destroyer of enemies spoke these words to Matsya Virata's son. "Use these golden reins to swiftly drive these white horses in that direction. Endeavour to quickly take me to where that mass of lion-like warriors is gathered. That evil-minded son of the suta wishes to fight me, like an elephant against another elephant. O prince! Duryodhana's favours have made him insolent. Take me to him." Using the golden reins and driving the large horses that were as swift as the wind, Virata's son broke through that army of charioteers and bore Pandava to the middle. On seeing this, maharatha Chitrasena, Samgramajit, Shatrusaha and Jaya advanced to help Karna and countered the advancing Bharata[134] with their arrows and spears. With the flames of his bow and the scorching force of his arrows, that foremost among men burnt down the chariots of those bulls among the Kurus, like a fire consuming a forest. A terrible battle ensued. *Atiratha*[135] Vikarna, foremost among the Kurus, fiercely attacked Partha, Bhima's junior, from a chariot and showered down arrows on him. He[136] drew the firmly stringed bow that was embellished with the best of gold and routed Vikarna. He shattered the standard that was on his chariot. With his standard destroyed, he[137] fled. Unable to control his anger, wishing to accomplish superhuman deeds and seeing the oppression of the mass of soldiers, Shatrumtapa showered down arrows on the scorcher of enemies. He hurled the nail of a tortoise[138] at Partha. Pierced by that atiratha king and immersed amidst the flags of the Kurus, he pierced Shatrumtapa with five swift arrows and killed his charioteer with ten. Having been pierced by that bull among the Bharatas, with an arrow that sliced through the armour on his body, the king[139] fell down dead on the ground, like a tree[140] dislodged from the peak of a mountain by the wind. Those brave bulls among charioteers were shattered in that battle by a braver bull among charioteers. They trembled, like a gigantic forest that shivers at the time when a gale strikes it. Those foremost young ones among men were killed by Partha. In their fine garments, they seemed to be asleep on the ground. They were the granters of riches and were like Vasava in their valour. But they were vanquished by Vasava's son in battle. They were like grown elephants from the Himalayas, clad in armour made out of iron and gold. Thus slaying the enemies on the field of battle, the wielder of the Gandiva, foremost among men, began to roam around in that battlefield in different directions. He was like a forest fire at the end of the summer. At the time of spring, the wind that blows in the sky scatters the leaves. Like that, Kiriti scattered his enemies and the atiratha roamed around on the battlefield on his chariot. Vaikartana's younger brother, spirited Samgramajit, drove red horses and he killed those steeds. With a single arrow, he sliced off his crowned head. On seeing his brother slain, Vaikartana, the suta's son, exhibited his valour, like a king of elephants displaying his tusks, or like a tiger attacking a large buffalo. Vaikartana attacked Pandava with twelve arrows. He pierced the bodies of all the horses and that of Virata's son with those arrows. It was like a king among elephants being struck by an elephant. He[141] took out sharp arrows from his quiver and stretching the string of the bow right up to his ear, pierced the body of the suta's son with his arrows. With arrows unleashed like lightning from his bow, the destroyer of enemies pierced him in battle, in the arms, the thighs, the head, the forehead, the neck and in all the parts of the chariot. Thus wounded by the arrows shot by

Partha, and scorched by Pandava’s arrows, like a swift elephant that has been defeated by another elephant, Vaikartana fled from the forefront of the battle.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After Radheya fled, the others, with Duryodhana in the lead, attacked with their respective armies and showered Pandava with arrows. On seeing those many soldiers, arranged in battle formations, attacking him with arrows, Virata’s son said, “What is your intention? O Jishnu! You are stationed on this beautiful chariot and I am your charioteer. Towards which part of the army will I advance next? I will go where you ask me to.”

‘Arjuna replied, “O Uttara! You can see the red-eyed one clad in the skin of a tiger. He is unhurt. He is stationed on a chariot with a blue flag. That is Kripa and those are his chariots and soldiers. Take me to him. I will show that firm-bowed one my dexterity in use of weapons. The one with the pure and golden water pot on his flag is the preceptor Drona himself, supreme among those who have knowledge of all weapons. O brave one! Circumambulate him cheerfully, without obstructing him in any way. That is the eternal dharma. If Drona strikes at my body first and I strike him back in return, he will not be angered. There is one who can be seen not far from him, with a bow on the top of his standard. That is the preceptor’s son, maharatha Ashvatthama. I have always honoured him, and so have all the wielders of weapons. When you encounter his chariot, restrain again and again. There is one in that mass of chariots, clad in golden armour. He is stationed, surrounded by one-third of the army. An elephant on a golden flag can be seen at the top of his standard. That is Dhritarashtra’s son, the illustrious King Suyodhana. O brave one! Take this chariot before him. He can destroy the chariots of enemies. The king is indomitable in energy and is irrepressible in battle. In swiftness in the use of weapons, he is regarded as the foremost among Drona’s pupils. But I will show him many times what it means to be swift in use of weapons in battle. The one who has a beautiful elephant’s enclosure embellished on his standard is Vaikartana Karna, whom you have known earlier.[142] When you approach the chariot of that evil-souled Radheya, be careful, because he always challenges me in a battle. There is one whose flag is blue and is decorated with five stars. The brave one is stationed on his chariot, his hands encased in guards. He has a large bow. He is stationed on his chariot and his supreme flag is decorated with stars and the sun. A white and unblemished umbrella is held aloft his head. He is at the head of a great mass of chariots, with many flags and pennants. He is like the sun stationed before a mass of clouds. His golden armour can be seen, like the moon and the sun. His golden helmet seems to trouble me. This is Shantanu's son Bhishma, a grandfather to all of us. He is blessed with royal prosperity, but obeys Duryodhana's instructions. You should approach him last, so that he does not cause an obstruction for me. When I fight with him, control the horses carefully."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Virata's son carefully drove Savyasachi to Kripa, who was ready to engage with Dhananjaya.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The army of the Kurus could be seen, with the foremost among archers. It moved like clouds stirred by gentle winds at the end of the summer. The horses were nearby, mounted by armed warriors. There were elephants that were terrible in form, goaded by clubs and hooks. O king! Then Shakra arrived, riding handsomely, and with the masses of gods—together with the Vishvadevas, the Ashvins and the masses of Maruts. Crowded with gods, yakshas, gandharvas and giant serpents, the cloudless sky was dazzling, as if with the planets. They had come to witness the power of their weapons, when used by humans and the terrible and great fight that was imminent between Bhishma and Arjuna. The *vimana*[143] of the king of the gods had one hundred thousand golden pillars. It possessed other gems and jewels that held up the palace. It was divine and was capable of travelling anywhere at will. It was decorated with all kinds of jewels. It was radiant in the sky. Together with Vasava, there were thirty-three gods there and gandharvas, rakshasas, snakes, ancestors and maharshis. There were the kings Vasumana, Balaksha, Supratardana, Ashtaka, Shibi, Yayati, Nahusha, Gaya, Manu, Kshupa, Raghu, Bhanu, Krishashva, Sagara and Shala. They were extremely resplendent and could be seen on the vimana of the king of the gods. Agni, Isha, Soma, Varuna, Prajapati, Dhata, Vidhata, Kubera, Yama, Alambusha, Ugrasena and the gandharva Tumburu were there, each in the place appointed for him and each in his vimana. All the classes of gods, the Siddhas and the supreme rishis arrived to witness the fight between Arjuna and the Kurus. The sacred fragrance of all the divine garlands was everywhere, like flowers in the forests at the beginning of spring. The red and red-tinged umbrellas of the gods could be seen while they stood there, and their garments, garlands and fans. All the dust of the earth subsided and it was permeated by rays. Carrying the divine fragrance, the wind gratified the warriors. The sky seemed to be colourfully decorated and ornamented by the vimanas that had already arrived and those that were arriving. These were decorated with many gems and were colourful and wonderful, brought by the supreme gods.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The great-spirited Kripa was supreme among wielders of weapons. He was immensely valorous and powerful. Meanwhile, in a desire to fight with Arjuna, that maharatha arrived. Those two immensely powerful charioteers, like the sun, got ready to fight. They stationed themselves, looking like two clouds in the autumn. Partha was famous in the world. Drawing the supreme weapon of Gandiva, he discharged many iron arrows that were capable of piercing the heart. But using sharp arrows and iron arrows that drank blood, Kripa sliced Partha's arrows into hundreds of thousands of pieces, before they could reach him. At that, maharatha Partha was enraged, and exhibiting many circular movements, enveloped the directions with a shower of arrows. The lord Partha, whose soul was infinite, covered the sky with arrows and unleashed hundreds of them on Kripa. He was hit by sharp arrows that were like the crests of fire and enraged, released one thousand arrows on the infinitely energetic Partha. The great-souled

Kripa roared on the field of battle. Then the brave Arjuna released four swift arrows, golden at the tips and with straight shafts, from Gandiva and pierced his[144] horses. The four horses were pierced with those excellent arrows. Struck by those sharp arrows that were like flaming serpents, all the horses suddenly reared up and Kripa was dislodged from his place. When the descendant of the Kuru lineage[145] saw that Goutama[146] had been dislodged from his place, the destroyer of enemy warriors did not pierce him, with a desire to preserve his honour. Having regained his position, Goutama swiftly pierced Savyasachi with ten arrows that were shafted with the feathers of herons. Then Partha sliced his bow with a sharp arrow and made it fall down from his hand. He broke off the armour with other sharp arrows that pierced the heart. However, Partha did not pierce the body. Freed of the armour, his body was radiant, like a snake shedding its skin at the right time. When one bow had been cut down by Partha, Goutama grasped another and strung it. It was extraordinary. Kunti's son cut that down too, with arrows that had smooth shafts. In this way, Sharadvat's son took up many other bows in his hand. But Pandava, the destroyer of enemy warriors, cut them all down. With all his arrows shattered, the powerful charioteer picked up a javelin and hurled it at Pandu's son, like flaming lightning. That javelin was embellished with gold and descended from the sky, like a giant meteor. But Arjuna cut it down with ten arrows. When it was brought down onto the ground by the intelligent Partha, it shattered into ten pieces. In between, Kripa grasped arrows and a bow and swiftly pierced Partha with ten sharp arrows. The greatly energetic Partha was angered in battle. He retaliated with thirteen arrows that had been sharpened on stone, as energetic as the fire. He struck down the yoke with one and used four arrows to kill the four horses. Using a sixth, he sliced off the charioteer's head from the body. In that battle, the immensely strong one cut down the bamboo poles with three and the axles of the wheels with two. With a twelfth arrow, he sliced down the standard. Then smilingly, Phalguna, smote Kripa on the chest with a thirteenth arrow that was like the vajra. His bow was shattered. He was bereft of his chariot. His horses were slain. His charioteer was dead.

Kripa quickly jumped down with a club in his hand and hurled a club. But that heavy and decorated club was repulsed by Arjuna with his arrows. To save the intolerant Sharadvat in that field of battle, all the warriors then showered Partha with arrows from all sides. Virata's son, the charioteer, then turned the horses to the left, executing a *yamaka* turn,[147] so as to restrain those fighters. Extremely swiftly, those bulls among men then took Kripa, who was without a chariot, away from Kunti's son Dhananjaya.'

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'Arjuna said, "O fortunate one! O venerable one! A golden altar, as radiant as the crest of the fire, is held aloft a golden standard, decorated with golden flags. That is Drona's army. Take me there. His horses are seen to be red and large and they have been trained to bear well. They are quiet and have the complexion of coral. Their faces have the hue of copper and they are pleasant to look at. They are yoked to his supreme chariot and they have been trained in every kind of knowledge. He has long arms and is extremely energetic. He is endowed with strength and beauty. He is famous in all the worlds. He is the powerful Bharadvaja.[148] He is the equal of Ushanas[149] in his intelligence, the equal of Brihaspati[150] in his knowledge of policy. The four Vedas are vested in him, and brahmacharya too. All the divine weapons, with means of withdrawing them, and the entire knowledge of archery,[151] are always vested in him. Forgiveness, self-control, truthfulness, non-violence, uprightness—these and many other qualities exist in that supreme of brahmanas. I wish to fight with that immensely fortunate one in battle. O Uttara! Therefore, swiftly bear me to the preceptor."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus spoken to by Arjuna, Virata's son urged the horses, with golden harnesses, in Bharadvaja's direction. Pandava, supreme among charioteers, descended with great force. Drona advanced towards Partha, like a mad elephant towards another. He blew his conch shell, with the roar of a hundred drums, and the entire army was agitated like the ocean. On seeing those excellent red horses mix in battle with ones that were the colour of swans and as swift as the mind,[152] all the men who were in that fight were amazed. They saw those two charioteers, endowed with valour, in the forefront of the battle, the preceptor and the disciple, Drona and Partha. They were undefeated, learned, intelligent and immensely strong. Each was like the other and they engaged each other. On seeing this, the great army of the Bharatas trembled repeatedly. On reaching Drona's chariot with his own chariot, the valorous maharatha Partha smiled in delight. The mighty-armed Kounteya, the destroyer of enemy warriors, honoured him and spoke to him in soft and conciliatory words. "We have lived the stipulated duration in the forest. We now wish for the act in return. Do not be angry with us. You are always invincible in battle. O unblemished one! I will not strike you first, unless you strike me. I have decided this in accordance with my intelligence. Now do what you deem to be fit." Thus addressed, Drona despatched more than twenty arrows at him. But Partha, swift of hand, sliced them down before they could reach him. Displaying his swiftness in discharge of weapons, the valorous Drona showered Partha's chariot with a thousand arrows. Thus the duel between Bharadvaja and Kiriti commenced. In that battle, both equally released tufted arrows, blazing in energy, at each other. Both of them were famous for their deeds, both were as swift as the wind. Both were knowledgeable in the use of divine weapons. Both were extremely energetic. When they unleashed their nets of arrows, they confounded the kings. All the assembled warriors were astounded and applauded and honoured the release of arrows. "Who but Phalguna is capable of countering Drona in battle? The dharma of kshatriyas is terrible. He has to fight with his preceptor." These were the words spoken by those who were stationed in the forefront of that battle.

'Those two brave maharathas drew near and covered each other with arrows, to defeat the other. Bharadvaja was angered and drew an invincible and large bow that was plated with gold at the back. He countered Phalguna. He discharged a net of arrows towards Arjuna's chariot. They were as bright as the sun and had been sharpened on stone. They shrouded the rays of the sun. The mighty-armed maharatha pierced Partha with extremely fast and sharp arrows, like clouds showering a mountain with rain. Pandava happily grasped the divine bow Gandiva, capable of destroying enemies at great speed and capable of bearing a supreme burden. He released many colourful and golden arrows from that bow and repulsed the valorous Bharadvaja's shower of arrows. It was extraordinary. Partha Dhananjaya roamed around on his chariot and it was a sight fit to behold. He displayed all his weapons simultaneously in all directions. With his arrows, he covered the entire sky with one large shadow. Drona could no longer be seen, as if he was enshrouded in fog. When he was covered with these supreme arrows, his form seemed to be like that of a mountain, with fires blazing in every direction. On seeing that his chariot was covered by Partha's arrows in that battle, he drew his beautiful bow, with a roar that was like that of the clouds. He drew that supreme and terrible weapon, which was like a circle of fire. Drona, the adornment of assemblies, then countered all those arrows. A great sound arose, like that when bamboos are burnt. Gold-tufted arrows were discharged from his supreme bow. The one whose soul was immeasurable enveloped the directions and the rays of the sun. Those arrows were golden-tufted and straight. When they traversed the sky, they were seen to be like many beings.[153] The tufted arrows were released from Drona's bow and it seemed as if there was one long and single arrow in the sky.[154] Thus releasing great arrows that were decorated in gold, those two brave ones covered the sky, as if with meteors. Decorated with the feathers of herons and peacocks, the arrows looked like a flock of geese travelling in the autumn sky. There ensued a terrible and fearful battle between the great-souled Drona and Pandava, like that between Vritra and Vasava.[155] They wounded each other, like elephants with their tusks. They shot arrows at each other from bows that were completely stretched. They fiercely decorated that field of battle. From one part of the battlefield to another, they released divine weapons. Arjuna, supreme among victorious ones, used sharp arrows to counter the arrows, sharpened on stone, released by the best of preceptors. Indra's son displayed his own terrible aspect and swiftly covered the sky with many arrows.

'Drona, foremost among teachers and supreme among the wielders of arms, began to play with the supremely energetic Arjuna, tiger among men, who was trying to kill him in that battle. He used arrows with straight shafts. Bharadvaja unleashed divine weapons in that great battle. Phalguna countered every weapon with another weapon. The duel between those two angry and intolerant lions among men was like that between the gods and the danavas. Drona released Aindra, Vayavya and Agneya weapons[156] and Pandava used his own weapons to devour them. Those two brave and great archers released sharp arrows and covered the entire sky, like a shadow, with showers of arrows. When Arjuna released arrows and they descended on the bodies,[157] the sound that was heard was like that of lightning on mountains. O lord of the earth! Elephants, charioteers and horses looked like blossoming kimshuka flowers,[158] drenched in blood. When they fell down, the arms of the maharathas were adorned with colourful armlets and their armour and pennants were golden. Oppressed by Partha's arrows, many warriors died there. The armies were confounded in that encounter between Drona and Arjuna. Both of them brandished their bows, capable of withstanding great burdens. In that battle, they covered each other with arrows and bore the retaliation. A voice was heard from the sky, praising Drona. "Drona has performed an extremely difficult task of fighting with Arjuna, who is the destroyer of enemies, extremely valorous, firm in his hand and unassailable. The maharatha is the conqueror of all the gods, the daityas and the snakes." On beholding Partha's fixedness, learning, dexterity and great reach in battle, Drona was amazed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Partha raised the invincible and divine bow Gandiva and drew it with his arms. He released a shower of arrows, like a cloud of locusts. Even the wind was not capable of gliding through those arrows. There was not even an instant between Partha's shooting an arrow and the next one, no gap could be seen. In that extremely terrible battle of swiftly released weapons, Partha shot the arrows faster and faster. Then hundreds and thousands of straight-tufted arrows descended simultaneously on Drona's chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The wielder of the Gandiva enveloped Drona with arrows and a great lamentation arose from the army. Maghavan[159] himself applauded Pandava's swiftness with weapons and so did the gandharvas and apsaras who had assembled there.

'Then the preceptor's son, leader of charioteers, suddenly encircled Pandava with a great number of chariots. Though Ashvatthama was greatly enraged with Partha, in his heart, the great-souled one applauded his deeds. Overcome by anger, he confronted Partha in that battle and showered him with arrows, like Parjanya[160] showering rain. The mighty-armed one turned his horses towards Drona's son and thus Partha gave Drona a chance to retreat. His armour and flag had been shattered with supreme arrows and getting the opportunity, the brave one left on his swift horses.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'He[161] arrived with great speed, showering a great net of arrows, like clouds charged with rain. Partha countered him. There was a great battle, like that between the gods and the asuras. Like Vritra and Vasava, they covered each other with nets of arrows. The sun did not shine then. Nor did the wind blow. The sky was enveloped and shadowed by a net of arrows in every direction. O conqueror of enemy cities! There was a great sound of slapping, as the two warriors fought each other and tried to kill each other, like the sound of bamboos being burnt. Arjuna destroyed his horses and only a few were left alive. O king! They were so confused that they could not make out the directions. Partha was roaming around. Drona's immensely valorous son detected a subtle weakness and sliced off the string of his bow with an arrow that was as sharp as a razor. On witnessing this superhuman feat, the gods applauded. From a distance of eight bow-lengths, Drona's son, bull among men, again pierced Partha in the heart with an arrow that was shafted with feathers of herons. The mighty-armed Partha laughed out aloud and powerfully corded Gandiva with a new string. Partha drew it in the shape of a half-moon and countered him, like the mad leader of a herd of elephants against another crazy elephant. Those two warriors were unrivalled on earth. In the midst of that field of battle, an extremely great duel ensued, making the body hair stand up. On seeing those two great-souled and brave ones, like two leaders of herds engaged in combat, all the Kurus were astounded. Those two brave bulls among men struck each other with arrows that were like virulent poison and like flaming serpents. The great-souled Pandava possessed two divine and inexhaustible quivers. Therefore, the brave Partha stood on that field of battle, immobile as a mountain. But Ashvatthama's arrows were speedily discharged in that battle and were exhausted. Thus, Arjuna proved to be superior to him.

'Then Karna grasped an extremely large bow. He drew it in great anger and a great sound of lamentation arose. Partha looked in the direction where the bow had been drawn and seeing Radheya there, his anger increased. He was overcome by anger and wished to kill Karna. With dilated eyes, the bull among the Kurus glanced towards him. O king! He turned away from Drona's son, although the soldiers swiftly brought thousands of arrows to him. The mighty-armed Dhananjaya, conqueror of enemies, ignored Drona's son and suddenly rushed towards Karna. With eyes red in anger, Kounteya approached him, hoping for a duel in battle. He said …'

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'Arjuna said, "O Karna! You uttered many proud words in the midst of the assembly hall, to the effect that there was no one who was your equal in war. Disregarding all of dharma, you spoke harsh words. But I think that your wish is impossible to accomplish. You ignored me and spoke words earlier. O Radheya! Now, with me and in the midst of these Kurus, make that true. You watched when evil-souled ones oppressed Panchali in the assembly hall. You will now reap the fruits of that. Being bound down by the noose of dharma, my rage was restrained earlier. O Radheya! You will now witness the victory of my anger in battle. O Karna! Now fight with me and let all the Kurus and their soldiers witness it."

'Karna replied, "O Partha! Carry out in deeds what you have spoken in words. It is known on earth that deeds are superior to words. What you suffered earlier was because your powers were insufficient. O Partha! I will accept it only if I witness your valour. If your rage was restrained earlier because you were bound down by the noose of dharma, you are tied down even now, though you consider yourself to be free. You say that you are conversant with dharma and artha. If you have dwelt in the forest in accordance with the promise, why do you wish to break that agreement now?[162] O Partha! If Shakra himself decides to fight on your behalf, I will not deviate from displaying my valour. O Kounteya! Your desire will soon be fulfilled. You will fight with me today and witness my strength."

'Arjuna said, "When fighting with me, you have earlier fled from the field of battle. O Radheya! That is the reason why you are still alive, though your younger brother has been killed. Which man other than you will see his brother dead, and then flee from the forefront of battle? Then you speak like this in the midst of truthful ones."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having thus spoken to Karna, the unvanquised Bibhatsu attacked him and released arrows that could penetrate body armour. Karna countered with arrows that were like the crests of flames and rained down a great shower of arrows, like monsoon clouds. The terrible net of arrows covered every direction. They separately pierced his[163] horses, arms and guards on his hands. Unable to tolerate this, he sliced off the strap of Karna's quiver with a straight-tufted arrow, sharp at the tip. Grasping other arrows from his quiver, Karna pierced Pandava on the hand, so that his grip weakened. The mighty-armed Arjuna then sliced off Karna's bow. He[164] hurled a javelin at him, but Partha cut that down with arrows. Then Radheya's large infantry attacked. But they were sent to Yama's abode with arrows released from Gandiva. Bibhatsu then stretched his bow up to his ears and killed his horses with sharp arrows that could take a great weight. They fell down dead on the ground. The mighty-armed and valorous Kounteya took up another flaming arrow and pierced Karna in the chest. The arrow pierced his armour and penetrated his body. He was immersed in darkness and lost consciousness for some time. Suffering great pain, he left the field of battle in a northern direction. Arjuna and maharatha Uttara started to censure him.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having defeated Vaikartana, Partha told Virata’s son, “Take me to the army where there is a golden palm.[165] Our grandfather, Shantanu’s son Bhishma, is stationed on a chariot there. He looks like an immortal and is stationed there, wishing to fight with me. I will cut down the string of his bow in a battle. You will witness today a colourful and divine weapon unleashed by me. It will streak like lightning in the midst of a storm in the sky. The Kurus will witness my Gandiva, with a golden back. All the assembled enemies will debate among themselves, ‘Is he shooting with the right hand or the left?’[166] I will make an impassable river flow, with waves of blood, eddies of chariots and elephants as crocodiles. It will flow towards the next world. This forest of Kurus has hands, feet, heads, backs and arms as branches. I will cut it down with straight-tufted arrows. The Kourava soldiers will be vanquished by my bow alone. Like a fire in the forest, I will create a hundred paths. Pierced by me alone, you will see the soldiers twirling on a wheel. Stand firmly on the chariot, over plain and uneven ground. I will pierce with my arrows the mountain that rises up into the sky. Earlier, on Indra’s instructions, I killed thousands and hundreds of Poulamas and Kalakhanjas in battle.[167] I have obtained my firm grip from Indra and my dexterity of hand from Brahma. I have learnt from Prajapati deep, terrible and wonderful techniques.[168] I destroyed Hiranyapura on the other side of the ocean, after vanquishing sixty thousand charioteers who wielded terrible bows.[169] The forest of the Kurus has the banners as the trees, the soldiers as the grass and the chariots as groups of lions. I will consume it with the energy of my weapons. With my straight-tufted arrows, I will draw them out from the nests of their chariots, like the wielder of the vajra destroyed the asuras alone. I obtained the Roudra weapon from Rudra, Varuna[170] from Varuna, the Agneya weapon from Agni, Vayavya from Matarishvan[171] and the vajra and other weapons from Shakra. The terrible sons of Dhritarashtra are protected by lions among men. But I will uproot them. O son of Virata! Remove all your fears.” Thus assured by Savyasachi, Virata’s son penetrated the intelligent Bhishma’s terrible army of chariots.

‘The mighty-armed Dhananjaya advanced to conquer his enemies, but the one who was terrible in his deeds[172] countered this fearful advance. Four immensely strong ones advanced towards the one with the terrible bow—Duhshasana, Vikarna, Duhsaha and Vivimshati. They were skilled and spirited and adorned with colourful garlands and ornaments. They advanced and countered Bibhatsu, the wielder of the terrible bow. Duhshasana pierced Virata’s son Uttara with an arrow. With a second one, the brave one pierced Arjuna on the chest. Jishnu[173] circled. With an arrow that was shafted with the feathers of vultures and had a broad tip, he sliced off his[174] bow that was decorated with polished gold. He then pierced him in the breast with five arrows. Oppressed by Partha’s arrows, he fled from the field of battle. With arrows that were sharp, straight and shafted with the feathers of vultures, Dhritarashtra’s son Vikarna then pierced Arjuna, the slayer of enemy warriors. But Kounteya immediately pierced him with straight-tufted arrows on his forehead and thus wounded, he fell down from the chariot. Then, seeking to rescue their brother in battle, Duhsaha, together with Vivimshati, rushed towards Partha and enveloped him with sharp arrows. But the alert Dhananjaya struck both of them at the same time with sharp arrows that were shafted with the feathers of vultures and killed their horses. With their horses slain and their limbs pierced, the two sons of Dhritarashtra were borne away by their followers, who arrived on other chariots. Thus the unvanquished Bibhatsu, the diademed and immensely strong Kounteya, accomplished in striking the target, covered all the directions.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the maharatha Kouravas now got together and counter-attacked Arjuna with determination. But the one whose soul cannot be measured covered the maharathas everywhere with showers of arrows, like mountains shrouded with fog. The giant elephants trumpeted. The horses neighed. The kettledrums and conch shells resounded. A terrible tumult arose. Piercing the bodies of men and horses, slicing through iron armour, Partha's shower of arrows struck in thousands. Partha swiftly strode and shot arrows in that battle, ablaze like the resplendent autumn sun at midday. Struck by terror, the charioteers leapt down from their chariots and the cavalry from their horses. The infantry began to flee on the ground. When the great-souled one's arrows pierced the armour, made of copper, silver and iron, there was a mighty roar. The entire battlefield was strewn with bodies of those who had lost their senses, and with elephants, horses and other animals which had been robbed of their lives by the sharp arrows. The earth was covered with the corpses of those who had fallen down from their stations on the chariots. Dhananjaya seemed to be dancing in that battle, with a bow in his hand. On hearing Gandiva's twang, like the roar of the thunder, all the beings were frightened and fled from the great field of battle. The fallen heads could be seen in the forefront of that battle, with earrings and headdresses embellished with gold. The earth was strewn with bodies that had been destroyed by the arrows, with the arms holding bows and the hands decorated with ornaments. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Because the heads were struck down with sharp arrows, it seemed as if a shower of rocks had fallen down from the sky. Having displayed his terrible self, Partha, whose valour was terrible, roamed around, after having been restrained for thirteen years. The brave Pandava unleashed the anger of his wrath on the sons of Dhritarashtra. On witnessing his valour as he burnt down the soldiers, all the warriors sought peace, while Dhritarashtra's son[175] looked on. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having terrified the soldiers and routed the maharathas, Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, roamed around. He made a terrible river flow. Its current was made out of blood. The moss was made out of bones. It was as if destiny had fashioned it at the end of an era.[176] There was a terrible flow of bows and arrows. The mud was made out of flesh and blood. The great chariots were like giant islands. There was the roar of conch shells and drums. Thus Partha created a giant river of blood that was difficult to cross. No one could make out when he affixed his arrows and released them, or when he drew the Gandiva, because no gap could be discerned.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then Duryodhana, Karna, Duhshasana, Vivimshati, Drona and his son, and Kripa who was an atiratha in battle, returned angrily to the battle again, wishing to cause violence to Dhananjaya. They drew their sturdy and powerful bows. O great king! The one with the monkey on his banner[177] went forward to meet them on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun, with his flag unfurled. Kripa, Karna and Drona, supreme among charioteers, immensely valorous and with great weapons, sought to repulse Dhananjaya. They released a flood of arrows, like rain from monsoon clouds. A shower of arrows descended on Kiriti. They stationed themselves nearby and with great determination in that field of battle, swiftly showered him with many arrows that possessed feathered shafts. Having been thus covered from every direction with divine weapons, not even a space of two fingers could be seen on him. But maharatha Bibhatsu laughed and fixed his divine Aindra[178] weapon on Gandiva. It was as radiant as the sun. In that battle, the diademed and powerful Kounteya covered all the Kurus with arrows that burnt like the rays of the sun. Gandiva was like lightning in the clouds, like fire in the mountains and as long as Indra’s weapon.[179] It was like Parjanya’s showers and like lightning in the sky. Like a bird, Gandiva enveloped the ten directions. All the charioteers were completely terrified and sought peace. They were bereft of their senses. Losing their consciousness, all the warriors lost heart in the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus, all the soldiers were shattered and fled in all the directions. They lost hope that they would remain alive.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Then Shantanu’s son Bhishma, powerful and invincible, advanced towards Dhananjaya, while all the warriors were being killed in battle. He took up the best of bows, decorated with gold, and arrows that were sharp at the tip, capable of piercing the vitals of the heart. A white umbrella was held aloft his head. The tiger among men was as radiant as a mountain at the time of sunrise. Ganga’s son[180] blew on his conch shell and delighted the sons of Dhritarashtra. He circled[181] and prepared to battle Bibhatsu. On seeing him advance, Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies, received him gladly, like a mountain receives a cloud full of rain.

‘The brave Bhishma shot eight arrows at Partha’s banner. They were extremely swift and hissed like serpents. Those blazing and feathered arrows struck the banner of Pandu’s son and struck the monkey and other beings that were stationed on the top of the standard. With an arrow that was sharp and broad, Pandava sliced off Bhishma’s umbrella and it fell down on the ground. With firm and swift arrows, Kounteya struck his banner, the horses yoked to his chariot and the two charioteers who guarded his flanks. Then a terrible battle began between Bhisma and Pandava, like that between Bali and Vasava,[182] and it made the body hair stand up. When Bhisma and Pandava fought each other in that battle, arrows countered arrows in the sky and seemed like fireflies during the rains. O king! As Partha shot arrows with his left hand and his right, Gandiva looked like an unbroken circle of fire. He enveloped Bhishma with hundreds of sharp arrows, like a rain cloud covering a mountain with a shower of rain. With his own arrows, Bhishma repulsed Arjuna and countered that shower of arrows, like a shoreline beating back waves. In that battle, the shower of arrows was splintered and fell down around Phalguna’s chariot. A shower of arrows with golden shafts then arose from Pandava’s chariot, like a swarm of locusts. But yet again, Bhishma cut them down with hundreds of sharp arrows. All the Kurus applauded. “Wonderful! Bhishma has accomplished a difficult task in fighting with Arjuna. Pandava is powerful, young, skilled and swift. Truly, who other than Shantanu’s son Bhishma, Devaki’s son Krishna, or the immensely strong preceptor who is Bharadvaja’s son, is capable of withstanding Partha's force in battle?" Using weapons to counter weapons, those bulls among men seemed to be playing. Those immensely strong ones confounded the sights of all beings. Those great-souled ones roamed on that field of battle, using Prajapatya, Aindreya, the extremely terrible Agneya, Koubera, Varuna, Yamya and Vayavya weapons.[183] All the beings who witnessed the battle were astounded. They said, "O mighty-armed Partha! Wonderful! O Bhishma! Wonderful! It is not for men to witness this great battle with mighty weapons between Bhishma and Partha." Thus the battle between those two, who were skilled in the use of all weapons, went on. Then Jishnu fixed a broad and sharp arrow to his bow and sliced down Bhishma's bow, which was decorated with gold. In an instant, the mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhishma grasped another bow in the field of battle, strung it, and angrily released many arrows at Dhananjaya. But Arjuna shot many sharp and colourful arrows at Bhishma and the immensely energetic Bhishma shot many at Pandava. They were both skilled in the use of divine weapons and incessantly shot arrows at each other. O king! Neither of the great-souled ones could be seen to be superior. The diademed Kounteya and Shantanu's brave son, both atirathas, covered the ten directions with their arrows. At times, Pandava surpassed Bhishma. At other times, Bhishma surpassed Pandava. O king! That battle was extraordinary in this world.

'Pandava killed the brave warriors who guarded Bhishma's chariot. O king! Killed by Kounteya, they were piled up in front of the chariot. Shvetavahana's[184] feathered shafts seemed to have wings. They leapt up when released from Gandiva, wishing to destroy the enemy. They leapt up from his chariot, white and adorned in gold, like a flock of geese seen in the sky. He released his deep and divine weapons and it was marvellous. All the gods, together with Vasava, assembled in the sky to witness this. On witnessing this extraordinary sight, the powerful gandharva Chitrasena was extremely delighted and told the king of the gods these words of praise. "Look at the way these arrows, the destroyers of enemies, travel. As Jishnu releases his divine weapons, they are linked in a chain. Men will not believe this, because they[185] do not exist among them. There has been a wonderful collection of these ancient and great weapons. The soldiers are incapable of looking at Pandava. He dazzles like the midday sun in the sky. They are both famous in their deeds. They are skilled in battle. They are equal in their exploits. They are extremely difficult to vanquish in battle.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing these words, the king of the gods honoured the duel between Partha and Bhishma with a divine shower of flowers. Having perceived a weakness, Shantanu’s son Bhishma attacked Savyasachi from the left side. But Bibhatsu laughed out aloud. With a broad and sharp arrow, shafted with the feathers of vultures, he sliced down the infinitely energetic Bhishma’s bow. With ten arrows, Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, pierced the brave and careful one on his chest. Thus oppressed, Ganga’s mighty-armed son, invincible in battle, clung to the pole of the chariot and stood there for a long time. On seeing that he had lost his senses, the charioteer remembered his instructions, and controlling the horses that were yoked to the chariot, drove away, so as to protect the maharatha.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When Bhishma had left the forefront of that battle and had run away, Dhritarashtra’s great-souled son raised up his standard and himself advanced towards Arjuna. Dhananjaya, extremely valorous and wielder of the terrible bow, was roaming around in the midst of the enemy hordes. He drew his bow up to his ears and with an arrow pierced him in the middle of his forehead.[186] The arrow’s tip was extremely sharp and golden. O king! Struck by it, the performer of great deeds looked as beautiful as a mountain with a single peak. Pierced by the arrow, warm blood gushed out of the wound. The golden arrow was as beautiful as a flowery garland. Struck by the arrow, he was angered and rushed at Duryodhana in wrath. He took out arrows that were like poison and fire and spiritedly pierced the king.[187] Duryodhana was extremely energetic and attacked Partha and the brave one[188] attacked Duryodhana alone. Those two brave ones among men fought each other. They were both equal and were born in the lineage of Ajamidha.[189]

Vikarna also rode on a gigantic and rutting elephant that was as large as a mountain and with four chariots protecting the elephant's legs, attacked Kunti's son, Jishnu. That Indra among elephants swiftly bore down on him. Dhananjaya grasped an extremely swift iron arrow. Drawing his bow up to his ears, he pierced it between its temples. The arrow released by Partha was shafted with the feathers of vultures. It penetrated the elephant, right up to the feathers. Like the vajra released by Indra shatters a mountain, it shattered the one that was like a mountain.[190] The king of elephants was tormented by that arrow. Its limbs began to tremble and its soul was distressed. It slowly fell down on the ground, like the peak of a mountain that has been struck by a thunderbolt. When the supreme of tusked ones fell down on the ground, Vikarna was terrified and dismounted swiftly. He fled for a full eight hundred paces and climbed onto Vivimshati's chariot. Having slain the elephant with the arrow, like the vajra strikes down a mountain or a cloud, Partha used a similar arrow to pierce Duryodhana on the chest. The elephant and the king having both been pierced, Vikarna having been routed with the infantry that guarded him, the foremost among warriors were frightened of the arrows released from Gandiva, and swiftly fled.

'Having seen that the elephant had been killed with an arrow and that all the warriors had run away, the foremost among Kurus[191] retreated on his chariot from the field of battle and went to a spot where Partha was not present. But Kiriti was still eager to do battle. The destroyer of enemies addressed Duryodhana, who had been pierced by the arrow and was vomiting blood, and was swiftly trying to run away in terrible fright. Arjuna said, "Renounce your deeds and great fame. Why are you running away in this way and refraining from battle? Why aren't trumpets being sounded for you now, the way they were sounded when you set out to do battle? I obediently follow Yudhishthira's instructions. I am the third of the Parthas[192] and I am steadfast in battle. Therefore, turn around and show me your face. O son of Dhritarashtra! Remember how Indras among men[193] are supposed to act. You have been named Duryodhana earlier, but that name will be uttered on earth in vain.[194]

There is no Duryodhana left in you. You are running away and refraining from battle. I do not see anyone to protect Duryodhana, either at the front or at the back. O foremost among Kurus! Therefore, run away from the battle. Protect your beloved life from the Pandava.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Dhritarashtra’s great-souled son was thus summoned to do battle. He was brought back by that goad of words, like a mad elephant with a goad. The maharatha became intolerant because of the insulting words spoken by the spirited atiratha.[195] Like a serpent that has been stepped on with the sole of the foot, the brave one turned his chariot back. Karna saw that he was turning around. He also returned and tended to his[196] wounded limbs. He advanced towards Duryodhana’s right flank and got ready to fight with Partha, the brave one among men, who was adorned in a golden garland. Shantanu’s son Bhishma also returned. He swiftly prodded his horses with golden harnesses and protected Duryodhana from the rear from Partha, the mighty-armed one who wielded a bow. Drona, Kripa, Vivimshati and Duhshasana also swiftly returned. All of them swiftly arrived with bows and arrows to protect Duryodhana. Partha saw those armies return, like heavy clouds. Like a swan advancing towards a descending cloud, the spirited Dhananjaya advanced towards them. They grasped divine weapons and surrounded Partha from every direction. They showered down arrows on him, like clouds showering rain on the summit of a mountain. The wielder of the Gandiva used weapons to counter the weapons of the bulls among the Kurus. The destroyer of enemies then made the weapon named sammohana[197] appear. This was impossible to counter. He covered all the directions and all the smaller directions with sharp arrows that had fine tips and fine shafts. With the roar of the Gandiva, the immensely strong one struck terror in their minds. He then grasped the giant conch shell in both his hands, one that had a deep and trembling sound. Partha, the destroyer of enemies, used this to make the sound echo in the directions, the smaller directions, the sky and the earth. At the roar of the conch shell blown by Partha, the foremost among the Kurus fell down unconscious. They gave up their invincible bows and all of them resorted to peace.[198]

‘When they had lost consciousness, Partha remembered Uttara’s[199] words. He told Matsya’s son, “Go from the centre to where the Kurus are lying unconscious. Bring the preceptor’s and Sharadvat’s son’s[200] extremely white garments and Karna’s beautiful one. Those of Drona’s son and the king[201] are blue. O brave one among men! Go and fetch those garments. I think that Bhishma knows how to counter the weapon and is still in his senses. Therefore, when you approach those who have not lost their senses, you should leave his vehicles to the left.”[202] Virata’s great-souled son handed over the reins and jumped down from the chariot. He gathered the garments of the maharathas and again swiftly ascended his own chariot. Virata’s son then drove those four well-trained horses with golden harnesses. Bearing Arjuna, the white steeds passed through the midst of the army and its standards. When that foremost among men passed through, the spirited Bhishma shot arrows at him. But he killed Bhishma’s horses and struck him in the side with ten arrows. Having killed his charioteer, Arjuna, the wielder of the invincible bow, left Bhishma on the field of battle. He emerged from the midst of that mass of chariots, like the one with the thousand rays shatters Rahu.[203]

‘Dhritarashtra’s son, foremost among the Kurus, regained his consciousness soon and beheld Partha, the equal of the great Indra. He saw him stationed alone, away from the field of battle. He quickly asked,[204] “How did he escape from you? Oppress him, so that he cannot escape.” Shantanu’s son laughingly replied, “Where did your intelligence disappear? Where was your valour? You had given up your colourful bow and your arrows. You were immersed in complete peace then. Bibhatsu is incapable of cruel deeds. His mind is never immersed in sin. He will not give up his own dharma even for the sake of the three worlds.[205] That is the reason all of us have not been killed in this battle. O foremost among the Kurus! Return swiftly to the Kuru kingdom. Let Partha return with the cattle he has conquered.” On hearing these words of the grandfather, which were meant for his welfare, Duryodhana gave up all desire to fight. The intolerant king sighed deeply, but kept silent. All the others saw the wisdom in Bhishma's words and knew the increasing fire within Dhananjaya. They therefore made up their minds to return and carefully protected Duryodhana.

'On seeing the foremost among the Kurus leave, Partha Dhananjaya was delighted in his mind. The great-souled one followed them for an instant, so as to honour his superiors. He bowed down, with his head on the ground, before the aged grandfather, Shantanu's son and the preceptor Drona. He used colourful arrows to show homage to Drona's son, Kripa and all his superiors. Partha then used an arrow to slice off Duryodhana's jewelled crown from his head. Having greeted the brave ones who deserved to be honoured, he filled the world with the roar of Gandiva. The brave one suddenly sounded Devadatta[206] and shattered the minds of his enemies. Having vanquished all his enemies, his pennant, garlanded with gold, was radiant. On seeing the Kurus leave, Kiriti happily told the son of Matsya, "The animals have been won. Make the horses return. The enemies have left. Let us return happily to the city."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having defeated the Kurus in battle, the one with the eyes of a bull[207] gathered and brought back Virata's great riches. When the sons of Dhritarashtra had all been shattered and had left, many Kuru soldiers emerged from the dense woods. Their hearts trembled in fright and they appeared, here and there. They could be seen standing there, their hair dishevelled and with their hands joined in salutation. They were hungry and thirsty and exhausted and in an alien land, they were not in their senses. They bowed down in homage before Partha and asked, "What will we do?" Arjuna replied, "O fortunate ones! Be safe. There is no reason for you to be scared. I assure you that I have no desire to kill those who are miserable." On hearing these words of assurance, the assembled warriors praised him and wished for a long life, deeds and fame for him. Shattered and vanquished, the Kurus returned.

‘On the road back, Phalguna spoke these words. “O brave prince! O mighty-armed one! Wait until all the cattle and all the cowherds have been collected. We will return to the city of Virata in the afternoon, after the horses have rested, have had their drink and have been tended to. The cowherds should now be swiftly dispatched by you. Let them go to the city with the good news that announces your victory.”[208] Uttara quickly told the messengers, “On Arjuna’s instructions, go and proclaim my victory.”’

Section Forty-Eight

Vaivahika Parva

This section has 179 shlokas and five chapters.

Chapter 659(63): 54 shlokas
Chapter 660(64): 37 shlokas
Chapter 661(65): 21 shlokas
Chapter 662(66): 29 shlokas
Chapter 663(67): 38 shlokas

Vivaha *means wedding. After defeating the Kurus and winning back the cattle, Arjuna and Uttara return. The Pandavas reveal themselves. Arjuna and Subhadra's son, Abhimanyu, is married to Virata's daughter, Uttara.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'Leading an army, Virata had also won back his riches. With the other four Pandavas, he cheerfully entered the city. After defeating the Trigartas in battle and winning back all the cows, the great king, together with the Parthas, was radiant, surrounded by his prosperity. The brave one increased the delight of his well-wishers. He seated himself on his throne and all the ordinary subjects, together with the brahmanas, showed him homage. The king of Matsya, together with his army, honoured them in return. Then he gave the brahmanas, and the ordinary subjects, permission to leave. King Virata of Matsya, the leader of an army, then asked about Uttara. "Where has he gone?" All the women and maidens who dwelt in the inner quarters of the palace happily replied, "The Kurus abducted the wealth of cattle. Prithivinjaya was angry. He rashly went out alone, together with Brihannada, to defeat the six atiratha charioteers who had attacked us—Drona, Shantanu's son, Kripa, Karna, Duryodhana and Drona's son." On hearing that his son, eager to fight, had gone out alone on a chariot, with Brihannada as his charioteer, King Virata was tormented by grief and told his chief advisers, "Hearing that the Trigartas have been routed, all the Kurus and the lords of the earth will certainly not remain unmoved. Therefore, let those of my warriors, who have not been injured by the Trigartas, go out with a large army to protect Uttara." For the sake of his son, he swiftly instructed horses, elephants, chariots and a large number of brave infantry to advance, with many weapons and decorated with ornaments. King Virata of Matsya, the leader of an army, quickly instructed the army that consisted of four parts,[1] "Swiftly find out whether the prince is dead or alive. With a eunuch as his charioteer, I think that he cannot be alive." Dharmaraja then laughed and told Virata, oppressed and tormented by the Kurus, "O Indra among men! If Brihannada is his charioteer, no enemy will now be able to take away the cattle. Served well by that charioteer, your son is capable of defeating in battle all the lords of the earth, together with the Kurus, even the gods, the asuras, the yakshas and the serpents." Meanwhile, the swift messengers dispatched by Uttara arrived in the city of Virata and announced the news of his victory.

'The chief adviser described everything to the king—the supreme victory, the defeat of the Kurus and Uttara's return. "All the cattle have been won back. The Kurus have been defeated. Uttara, the scorcher of enemies, is safe, together with his charioteer." Kanka[2] said, "It is through good fortune that the cattle have been recovered and the Kurus defeated. O bull among kings! It is through good fortune that we have heard that your son is alive. It is certain that one, who has Brihannada as his charioteer, will triumph." On hearing about the victory of his infinitely energetic son, King Virata was extremely delighted and his body hair stood up. He rewarded the messengers with garments and instructed his ministers, "Let the royal roads be decorated with flags. Let all the gods be honoured with offerings of flowers. Let princes, foremost warriors, well-ornamented harlots and all the musicians go out to receive my son. Let a man with a bell quickly mount an intoxicated elephant. Let him go to the crossroads and proclaim my victory. Let Uttara[3] go to receive Brihannada, surrounded by many maidens who bear the garments and ornaments of love."[4] On hearing the words of the lord of the earth, everyone held auspicious marks[5] in the hands and bore cymbals, trumpets and conch shells. There were beautiful women in gorgeous garments. There were bards and raconteurs. There were trumpets and other pleasant-sounding musical instruments. They emerged from immensely strong Virata's city, to receive his infinitely valorous son.

'After the soldiers, the maidens and the ornamented harlots had left, the immensely wise king of Matsya happily said, "O sairandhri![6] Fetch the dice. O Kanka! Let the gambling commence." When he said this, Pandava[7] looked at him and replied, "We have heard it said that one should not play with a gambler who is rejoicing. Now that you are so delighted, I should not play with you. I always act so as to bring you pleasure. But if you so wish, let it commence." Virata said, "Even if I do not gamble, today, you will not be able to save my women, my cattle, my gold and whatever other riches I possess."[8] Kanka replied, "O Indra among kings! Why do you wish to gamble? O one who grants honours! There are many vices and many sins in gambling and it should be avoided. You may have heard of, or seen, Pandava Yudhishthira. He lost his extremely large and prosperous kingdoms and his brothers, who were the equals of the thirty gods. He lost everything through gambling. Therefore, I find no pleasure in gambling. O king! But if it pleases you to gamble, we will play." While the gambling was going on, Matsya told Pandava, "Behold! My son has vanquished the likes of the Kurus in battle." At this, Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, replied to the king of Matsya, "How can one who has Brihannada as a charioteer not be victorious?" At this, the king of Matsya was enraged and told Pandava, "O brahmana! You are praising a eunuch, as if he is equal to my son. Do you not know what should be said and what should not be said? You are insulting me. Why should he not defeat all the warriors, with Bhishma and Drona at the forefront? O brahmana! For the sake of our friendship, I will pardon you this affront. But if you wish to live, you must not speak in this fashion again.” Yudhishthira said, “O Indra among kings! If Drona and Bhishma are there, Drona’s son, Vaikartana and Kripa, and Duryodhana and many other maharathas, even if Shatakratu is himself there, surrounded by masses of Maruts, who other than Brihannada can fight all of them together?” Virata replied, “I have restrained you in many ways. But you do not control your words. If there is no one to restrain, who will observe dharma?” Having said this, the enraged king struck Yudhishthira on the face with the dice and angrily censured him. So powerfully was he struck that blood began to flow from his nose. Partha caught it in his hands before it fell down on the ground. The one with dharma in his soul glanced at Droupadi, who was standing at one side. Having got to know his intentions, and obedient to the wishes of her husband, the unblemished one filled a golden vessel with water. She used this to gather the blood that flowed from Pandava.

‘Thereafter Uttara, adorned with pure fragrances and many garlands, happily and slowly entered the city. He was welcomed by the citizens, the women and the residents of the countryside. He approached the gate of the palace and sent word to his father. The gatekeeper entered and told Virata, “Your son Uttara is standing at the gate, together with Brihannada.” Delighted, the king of Matsya told his *kshatta*,[9] “Bring both of them here immediately. I am anxious to see them.” But the king of the Kurus[10] swiftly whispered in the kshatta’s ears, “Let Uttara enter alone. Do not allow Brihannada to enter. The mighty-armed one has sworn an oath. If anyone wounds my limbs, or if anyone makes blood flow from my body without it being in an act of battle, he will certainly not remain alive. If he sees this blood flowing from my body, he will become angry and will not tolerate it. He will kill Virata, together with his advisers, his army and his vehicles.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Prithivinjaya, the eldest son of the king, then entered. He showed obeisance at his father’s feet and then saw

Dharmaraja. He was seated alone on the floor at one end, distracted, and smeared with blood. Sairandhri[11] attended to him. Quickly, Uttara asked his father, “O king! Who has struck him? Who has perpetrated this evil act?” Virata replied, “I have struck this wretch and he deserves more than this. When I praised your bravery, he praised the eunuch.” Uttara said, “O king! You have done that which should not have been done. Swiftly ask for his pardon. Otherwise, this brahmana’s terrible poison will burn you down, right down to the roots.” Having heard his son’s words, Virata, the extender of the kingdom, sought the forgiveness of Kounteya, who was like a fire hidden behind ashes. Pandava told the king, who was begging his pardon, “O king! I have already forgiven you. There is no anger left in me. O great king! If that blood from my nose had fallen down on the ground, there is no doubt that you would have been destroyed, together with your kingdom.[12] O king! I do not blame you for striking one who had committed no crime. O great king! One who is powerful is always prone to quickly perform terrible acts.” When the bleeding had stopped, Brihannada entered. He saluted Virata and Kanka and remained standing.

‘After seeking Kouravya’s pardon, Matsya began to praise Uttara, who had returned from the field of battle, in Savyasachi’s hearing. “O one who extends Kaikeyi’s joy![13] I have truly obtained an heir in you. I do not have, nor will there be, sons who are your equal. O son! How was your encounter with Karna? He does not miss a step when he takes a thousand steps. O son! How was your encounter with Bhishma? There is no one equal to him in the world of men. He is as calm as the ocean and as unbearable as the fire of destruction. The brahmana[14] is the preceptor of the warriors among the Vrishnis[15] and the Pandavas. He is the preceptor of all the kshatriyas and is supreme among all wielders of arms. O son! How was your encounter with Drona? The brave son of the preceptor is supreme among those who have knowledge of all weapons. He is famous as Ashvatthama. How was your encounter with him? On seeing Kripa in battle, people are distressed, like traders whose goods have been lost. O son! How was your encounter with him? Prince

Duryodhana has shattered mountains with his great arrows. O son! How was your encounter with him?”

‘Uttara replied, “The cattle have not been won back by me. Nor have I vanquished the enemies. All those deeds have been accomplished by the son of a god. On seeing me run away in fear, that young son of a god restrained me. He is like the one with the vajra in his hand[16] and ascended my chariot. He has won back the cattle and he has vanquished the Kurus. O father! All these brave deeds are his. They have not been accomplished by me. He released arrows and repulsed Sharadvat’s son,[17] Drona, Drona’s valorous son, the son of the suta[18] and Bhishma. Like the leader of a herd of elephants, he shattered Duryodhana in the battle and told that immensely strong and frightened prince, ‘I do not see any escape for you in Hastinapura. O son of a Kourava! Save your life through endeavour. O king! You will not be able to save your life by running away. Make up your mind to fight. If you win, you will enjoy the earth. And if you are killed, you will enjoy heaven.’ That tiger among men then returned and discharged arrows that were like the vajra. Surrounded by his advisers, the king stood on his chariot, like a hissing serpent. On seeing this, my body hair stood up. O revered one! My thighs began to tremble. But he struck that army, which was like a mass of clouds, with his arrows. That young one was like a lion and repulsed that army of chariots. O king! He laughed and stripped the Kurus of their garments. Alone, that brave one surrounded the six charioteers, like an angry tiger amidst deer roaming in the forest.”

‘Virata asked, “Where is that brave and mighty-armed one, the immensely famous son of a god? He is the one who has won back my riches, which had been conquered by the Kurus in battle. I wish to see that immensely strong one and show him homage. That son of a god has protected you and my cattle.”

‘Uttara said, “O father! The powerful son of a god disappeared. But I think that he will reappear tomorrow, or the day after.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘While this was being described, Pandava[19] remained concealed in his disguise. Virata did not know that Partha Arjuna was residing there. Having obtained the great-souled Virata’s permission, Partha himself gave those garments to Virata’s daughter. They were extremely expensive and fine and the beautiful Uttara happily accepted those garments. O king! Kounteya then secretly devised a plan with Uttara,[20] about everything that should be done vis-à-vis Yudhishthira. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Together with Matsya’s son, the bull among men cheerfully carried this out.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On the third day, the five Pandava brothers bathed themselves and donned white garments, having completed the pledge that they had made.[21] Adorning themselves in ornaments, and with Yudhishthira at the forefront, the maharathas were as resplendent as elephants marked with the signs of the lotus.[22] They went to Virata’s assembly hall and seated themselves on thrones meant for lords of the earth. They were as radiant as fires on sacrificial altars. While they were seated there, Virata, lord of the earth, arrived at the assembly hall to perform all his royal duties. On seeing the handsome Pandavas, blazing like fires, with Kanka seated there in the form of a god, like the lord of the thirty gods attended by the Maruts, Matsya told him, “I put you in charge of the dice and appointed you the official gamester. Why are you ornamented and why are you seated on the royal throne?”

‘O king! On hearing Virata’s words, Arjuna laughed and spoke the following words. “O king! This one deserves to be seated on Indra’s throne. He has the qualities of a brahmana. He is learned in the sacred texts. He is generous. He is the performer of sacrifices. He is rigid in his vows. He is a bull among the Kurus. He is Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira. His deeds are established on this earth, like the rays of the rising sun. O king! When he dwelt in the land of the Kurus, ten thousand powerful elephants used to follow him at the back. Thirty thousand chariots and well-trained and handsome horses, with golden harnesses, always used to follow him from behind. There were eight hundred bards, with earrings studded with polished gems, together with minstrels chanting his praises, like rishis praising Shakra earlier. O king! Like the immortals wait on the lord of riches,[23] the Kurus, and all the kings, waited on him, like servants. O great king! All the lords of the earth offered him tribute then, like ordinary vaishyas. The king was excellent in his vows and eighty-eight thousand great-souled *snatakas*[24] earned their living off him. O lord! In accordance with dharma, he protected his subjects like sons, the aged, the unprotected, the disabled and the crippled. Such was his dharma, his self-control over anger and his carefulness in observing vows. He was extremely generous. He had the qualities of a brahmana. The lord of the earth was always truthful. The lord Suyodhana was tormented because of his prosperity and his power, together with his followers, Karna, Soubala and the others. O lord of men! It is impossible to recount all his qualities. These are vested in the great king Pandava, bull among the lords of the earth. Does such a king not deserve a seat that is meant for a lord of the earth?"'

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'Virata said, "If this is King Kouravya Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, where is his brother Arjuna? Where is the powerful Bhima? Where are Nakula, Sahadeva and the famous Droupadi? From the time they were defeated in the gambling match, no one has got to know about the Parthas."

'Arjuna replied, "O lord of men! This cook of yours, known by the name of Ballava, is the mighty-armed Bhima, whose speed and valour are terrible. To fetch divine sougandhika flowers for Krishna, it is he who killed the demons on Mount Gandhamadana.[25] He is the gandharva who slew the evil-souled Kichaka.[26] It was he who slew tigers, bears and boars in your women's quarters. The one who tends to your horses is Nakula, the scorcher of enemies. The one who looks after your cattle is Sahadeva, the other one of Madri's maharatha sons. These two bulls among men are capable of withstanding thousands of warriors and are handsome and famous. They now wear the garments and ornaments of love.[27] O king! This lotus-eyed, slender-waisted and sweet-smiling sairandhri is Droupadi. It is because of her that the Kichakas were killed. O great king! I am Arjuna and you have no doubt heard about me. I am Partha, the younger brother of Bhima and elder to the two twins. O great king! We have happily spent our period of concealment in your abode, like beings inside a womb."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When Arjuna had revealed the five brave Pandavas, Virata's son recounted Arjuna's valour. "This is the one who was like a lion among deer in the midst of the enemies. He ranged among the mass of charioteers and killed the best of them. With a single arrow, he pierced and killed a giant elephant in the battle. Adorned with a golden harness, it fell down, embedding its tusks on the ground. It is he who won back the cattle and defeated the Kurus in battle. It is the sound of his conch shell that deafened my ears." On hearing these words, the powerful king of Matsya, who had insulted Yudhishthira, told Uttara, "I think the time has come to seek the favour of the Pandavas. If you so think, I will bestow Uttara on Partha."[28] Uttara replied, "They deserve worship, homage and honour and I think that the time has come. Let the immensely fortunate Pandavas, who are deserving of honour, be honoured." Virata said, "When I myself came under the power of enemies in the field of battle, it was Bhimasena who rescued me and won back the cattle.[29] It is through the valour of their arms that we have been victorious in battle. With all our advisers, let us seek the favours of Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, bull among the Pandavas, and his younger brothers. Let the fortunate lord among men forgive everything that we have said in ignorance. Pandava has dharma in his soul." Virata was extremely delighted and he made an alliance with the king. He offered the great-souled one his entire kingdom, together with the royal staff, the treasury and the capital.

'Then addressing all the Pandavas, with Dhananjaya at the forefront, the powerful king of the Matsyas repeatedly kept on saying that he was fortunate. He repeatedly embraced and inhaled the fragrance of the heads[30] of Yudhishthira, Bhima, Madri's two sons and Pandava.[31] Virata, lord of an army, was not satisfied from looking at them. He happily told King Yudhishthira, "It is through good fortune that all of you have returned safely from the forest. It is through good fortune that you have spent the period of concealment, undetected by those evil-souled ones.[32] I am offering this kingdom, and whatever else I possess, to the Parthas.

May the Kounteyas accept everything, without any hesitation. Let Savyasachi Dhananjaya accept Uttara. That supreme among men is the right husband for her.” Thus addressed, Dharmaraja glanced towards Partha Dhananjaya. When his brother looked at him, Arjuna spoke these words to Matsya. “O king! I will accept your daughter as my daughter-in-law. Such an alliance between supreme Matsyas and Bharatas will be proper.”’

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‘Virata asked, “O best of the Pandavas! Why do you refuse to accept my daughter as your wife? Accept her. I am offering her to you.”

‘Arjuna replied, ‘Dwelling in your inner quarters, I always observed your daughter. Whether in private or in public, she always trusted me as her father. I was loved by her and respected because of my skills in dancing and singing. Your daughter has always thought of me as her teacher. O king! I lived for a year with a woman who is nubile. O lord! Suspicion on your part, or that of your subjects, is not misplaced. O lord of the earth! Therefore, I am asking for your daughter. I have been pure and have been in control of my senses. Because of my self-control, she has been kept pure. There is no difference between a daughter and a daughter-in-law, nor that between a son and one’s own self. I do not see any misdemeanour in this and purity will be preserved. O scorcher of enemies! I am terrified of curses and false accusations. O king! That is the reason I will accept your daughter Uttara as my daughter-in-law. O lord of the earth! My mighty-armed son Abhimanyu is Vasudeva’s nephew.[33] He is just like a child of the gods. He is learned in all weapons and is loved by the one who wields the *chakra*.[34] He is the right son-in-law for you and a husband for your daughter.”

‘Virata said, “This is indeed appropriate for Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, the best of the Kurus. Pandava is learned and wise and always follows dharma. O Partha![35] What do you think should be done after this? If one has an alliance with Arjuna, all one’s desires are completely satisfied.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the Indra among kings said this, Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, gave his consent to the alliance between Matsya and

Partha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Virata, lord of the earth, and Kounteya[36] sent messengers to all their friends and Vasudeva. Thus, after the thirteen years were over, all the five Pandavas began to live in Virata's Upaplavya.[37] Bibhatsu Pandava went to bring Janardana, Abhimanyu and the other Dasharhas from the Anarta region.[38] O lord of the earth! The kings of Kashi and Shaibya, who were affectionate towards Yudhishthira, arrived with two *akshouhinis*.[39] The immensely strong and powerful Yajnasena[40] arrived with one akshouhini, and Droupadi's brave sons and the unvanquished Shikhandi. There was the invincible Dhrishtadyumna, supreme among those who wield all weapons. There were others with many akshouhinis, those who sacrificed with a lot of donations. All of them were learned in the use of weapons and all of them were brave and were ready to give up their lives.[41] Matsya, supreme among those who uphold dharma, was happy at seeing that they had come. He was happy that he had bestowed his daughter on Abhimanyu. After the lords of the earth had arrived from different directions, Vasudeva Vanamali arrived, and so did the wielder of the plough.[42] Hardikya Kritavarma, Yuyudhana Satyaki, Anadhrishti, Akrura, Samba and Nishatha arrived.[43] Those scorchers of enemies brought Abhimanyu and his mother with them. Indrasena[44] and the others arrived there, taking good care of the chariots, having remained away for one entire year. Ten thousand elephants arrived and one million horses. There were a full one hundred million chariots and one billion foot soldiers. There were many supremely energetic Vrishnis, Andhakas and Bhojas. They followed that tiger among the Vrishnis, the greatly resplendent Vasudeva. Krishna separately gave each of the great-souled Pandavas a collection of women, gems and garments.

'In accordance with the rites, the marriage between the Matsyas and the Parthas took place. Conch shells, kettle drums, trumpets and drums were assembled and played in Matysa's palace, honoured by the Parthas. Many hundreds of diverse deer and other animals were slain. Liquor and other celestial drinks were brought in large quantities. There were many skilled singers and raconteurs, dancers and minstrels. The assembled bards, together with the minstrels, began to chant praises. With

Sudeshna leading the way, the supreme women from the Matsyas arrived. All of them were beautiful in their limbs and wore earrings that were studded with excellent gems. They were well complexioned, noble, beautiful and ornamented. But Krishna surpassed them in beauty, fame and prosperity. They surrounded the ornamented Princess Uttara and honoured her, as if she was a daughter of the great Indra. Dhananjaya Kounteya accepted Virata's unblemished daughter for his and Subhadra's son. Kunti's son, the great king Yudhishthira, stood there, equal in beauty to Indra, and accepted her as his daughter-in-law. When Partha had accepted her and honoured Janardana, the wedding ceremony of Subhadra's great-souled son was performed. He gave him[45] seven thousand horses that possessed the speed of the wind, two hundred supreme elephants and a great deal of riches. Once the marriage was over, Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, gave the brahmanas the riches that Achyuta[46] had brought—thousands of cows, gems, diverse kinds of garments, excellent ornaments, vehicles and beds. There were great festivities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The city of the king of Matsyas was resplendent and crowded with people who were happy and well fed.'

This ends Virata Parva.

Udyoga Parva

In the 18-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva is fifth. The word *udyoga* means effort, exertion or perseverance. With the period of exile over, efforts are made to give the Pandavas a share in the kingdom and avoid the imminent war. This explains the naming of the parva. When this does not work, the parva ends with preparations for the inevitable war. Udyoga Parva has 197 chapters. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 49 through 60 constitute Udyoga Parva. In the numbering of the chapters in Udyoga Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within the parva.

Section Forty-Nine

Udyoga Parva

This section is also known as Udyoga Parva. It has 575 shlokas and twenty-one chapters.

Chapter 664(1): 25 shlokas
Chapter 665(2): 13 shlokas
Chapter 666(3): 23 shlokas
Chapter 667(4): 27 shlokas
Chapter 668(5): 18 shlokas
Chapter 669(6): 18 shlokas
Chapter 670(7): 36 shlokas
Chapter 671(8): 37 shlokas
Chapter 672(9): 52 shlokas
Chapter 673(10): 47 shlokas
Chapter 674(11): 22 shlokas
Chapter 675(12): 32 shlokas
Chapter 676(13): 25 shlokas
Chapter 677(14): 15 shlokas
Chapter 678(15): 32 shlokas
Chapter 679(16): 34 shlokas
Chapter 680(17): 20 shlokas
Chapter 681(18): 25 shlokas
Chapter 682(19): 32 shlokas
Chapter 683(20): 21 shlokas
Chapter 684(21): 21 shlokas

There are consultations in Drupada's court about the next course of action. In preparation for war, the Kurus and the Pandavas send word to their allies. However, Drupada's priest is sent to the Kurus as a messenger. Duryodhana and Arjuna go to Krishna to seek his help. Arjuna opts for the unarmed Krishna, who will not take part in the fight and Duryodhana happily accepts Krishna's large army. Balarama says that he will remain neutral, while Kritavarma helps Duryodhana. Duryodhana persuades Shalya to switch to the Kourava side. However, Shalya promises Yudhishthira that he will distract Karna when Karna and Arjuna fight. Shalya tells the Pandavas the story of Trishira, Vritra, Indra and Nahusha. The Kouravas assemble eleven *akshouhinis of soldiers, while the Pandavas assemble seven akshouhinis. Drupada's priest delivers the message. Dhritarashtra promises to reflect on this and send Sanjaya back as a messenger.*

664(1)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the foremost among the Kurus had happily celebrated Abhimanyu's wedding with their respective parties, they safely rested for four nights. Then they went to Virata's assembly hall. The assembly hall of the king of the Matsyas was prosperous. It was marvellous, decorated with the best of gems and jewels. There were seats and fragrant garlands. Those aged among the lords of men arrived there. Virata and Drupada, the two Indras among men, seated themselves on the seats that were at the front. There was also the grandfather of Rama and Janardana, aged and revered by the lords of the earth.[1] The foremost among the Shinis, together with Rohini's son, was seated near the king of Panchala.[2] Janardana and Yudhishthira were seated near the king of Matsya. All the sons of King Drupada were seated there, Bhima, Arjuna and Madri's two sons. There were Pradyumna and Samba, brave in battle, and Virata's son, together with Abhimanyu.[3] Droupadi's sons seated themselves, on beautiful seats that were decorated with gold. They were the equals of their fathers in bravery. The maharathas who were seated there dazzled in their colourful garments and brilliant jewels. With all the prosperous and assembled kings, it was as if the sky was covered with unblemished planets. As was proper, those brave ones among men conversed with each other on various subjects. Then they reflected for some time and all the kings looked in Krishna's direction. Having finished their conversation, those lions among kings who had been assembled by Madhava, looked towards him. They listened to his words, of deep meaning and great significance, about what should be done regarding the Pandavas.

'Krishna said, "It is known to all of you how Yudhishthira was defeated by Soubala[4] in a deceitful game of dice and lost his kingdom. He made an agreement that he would spend some time in exile. They are capable of swiftly conquering the earth. But they stuck to their pledge and conducted themselves in accordance with it. The sons of Pandu are foremost among the Bharatas. But they stuck to that terrible vow of six plus seven years. They spent the terrible thirteenth year near you, but were undetected. They bore many hardships. All of you know everything about that. With that over, think about what is best for the king who is Dharma's son and for Duryodhana. Think about what is best for the Kurus and the Pandavas, what is in accordance with dharma, is appropriate, and also ensures glory. Dharmaraja will not crave the kingdom of the gods, if that is not in accordance with dharma. He will instead desire the lordship of a village, if that is in accordance with dharma and artha. It is known to all the kings that he was robbed of his ancestral kingdom by Dhritarashtra's sons through falsehood. They[5] confronted great and unbearable difficulties. Dhritarashtra's sons did not vanquish the Parthas in battle, through their own energy. But even then the king,[6] together with his well-wishers, desires to see them healthy and happy. The sons of Kunti and the sons of Madri are heroes among men. They only wish to obtain what the sons of Pandu won for themselves, by conquering and subjugating the kings of the earth.[7] You know everything about how they[8] used different means to kill these destroyers of enemies, even when they were children. They seized their kingdom through unholy and terrible means. Witness their increasing avarice and Yudhishthira's devotion to dharma in his soul. Reflect on the relationship between them. Separately and collectively, decide on a course of action. They have always been devoted to the truth and have faithfully completed the period of the covenant. Therefore, if they are not treated fairly now, let them kill all the assembled sons of Dhritarashtra. On learning that the king[9] is oppressing them,[10] all their well-wishers will gather around them. Let them be brought down in battle. Those who wish to fight will be slain. But if it is your view that they[11] are too feeble and too few to be able to defeat them, let all the well-wishers gather together and endeavour to destroy all of them.[12] Duryodhana's intentions are still not known now. Nor does one know what he plans to do. With the intentions of the enemy not being known, how can one decide on an appropriate course of action? Therefore, let someone who is devoted to dharma go there, a man who is controlled, pure and born of a noble lineage. Let the messenger try to persuade them that half of the kingdom should be returned to Yudhishthira."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! On hearing Janardana's sweet and calm words, full of dharma and artha, his elder brother[13] strongly welcomed and applauded those words and spoke these words of his own.'

665(2)

'Baladeva said, "You have heard Gada's elder brother.[14] These words are in conformity with dharma and artha. These will ensure welfare for Ajatashatru[15] and also ensure welfare for King Duryodhana. By giving up half of the kingdom, the brave sons of Kunti are striving to ensure that which is good. Dhritarashtra's son should also give up half of the kingdom and happily spend his time with us. Provided that the rivals act in a similar fashion, by obtaining the kingdom,[16] it is certain that the brave ones among men will be pacified and will find joy. Their pacification will also ensure the welfare of the subjects. I will be happy if someone goes there to ascertain Duryodhana's intentions and conveys to him Yudhishthira's words, so that welfare is ensured for the Kurus and the Pandavas. Let him meet Bhishma, foremost among the Kurus, Vichitravirya's noble son,[17] Drona and his son, Vidura, Kripa, the king of Gandhara[18] and the son of the suta,[19] and also the other sons of Dhritarashtra, who are foremost among strong ones and foremost among those who are learned. They are established in their own dharma. They are heroes in this world and they are aged in learning and in years. When all these elders and citizens have collected and assembled together, he must bow down and speak his words, so that the welfare of Kunti's son is ensured. Under no circumstances should they be angered. They have ensured their welfare by resorting to their strength. Yudhishthira was addicted to gambling and they approached him with affection. It was thus that he lost his kingdom. He was warned by all his well-wishers, the brave ones among the Kurus, because he was not skilled in gambling.[20] But Ajamidha[21] challenged the son of the king of Gandhara, who was skilled in gambling with the dice. There were thousands of other gamblers whom Yudhishthira could have defeated with the dice. But he ignored them and challenged Soubala, who defeated him with the dice. He was defeated by the one who gambled against him and the dice were always against him. Having commenced, he lost his head and was convincingly defeated. Therefore, there is no crime that attaches to Shakuni. Thus, let him show obeisance to Vichitravirya's son and speak many words that are conciliatory. In this way, the man[22] may be able to persuade Dhritarashtra's son and bring him around to what is in our interest."'

Vaishampayana said, 'While the foremost among the Madhus[23] was thus speaking, the foremost among the Shinis[24] suddenly stood up. He censured his words and in great anger, spoke these words.'

666(3)

'Satyaki said, "The way a man speaks, reflects the nature of his soul. The form of your words reflects the nature of your soul. There are brave men and there are cowards. Both are firm distinctions and can be seen among men. A eunuch and an extremely powerful man may be born in the same lineage, just as one branch of a tree yields fruit and another one does not yield fruit. O one who bears the standard of a plough! I am not censuring the words that you have spoken. O Madhava! I am censuring the ones who are listening to your words. In the midst of this assembly, without any fear, how can one speak the slightest evil about Dharmaraja? Those who were skilled with dice challenged the great-souled one and defeated him. He was unskilled with dice and acted in accordance with faith. How can this be a victory in accordance with dharma? Had they come to the house of Kunti's son while he was playing with his brothers and defeated him there, that would have been a victory in accordance with dharma.[25] They challenged a king, who was always devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. Then they defeated him through deceit.[26] Can there be anything more supremely sacred than that? Having observed the supreme covenant, why should he approach in obeisance? Having been freed from that exile in the forest, he has obtained his ancestral share. Even if Yudhishthira were to desire someone else's property, it is not proper that he should ask for someone else's property. Are they[27] acting in accordance with dharma, if they are not prepared to give up the kingdom? The Kounteyas have passed the prescribed period of concealment. Though Bhishma and the great-souled Drona have pleaded with them, they claim that they have been recognized.[28] They are not prepared to give the sons of Pandu their ancestral riches.

'"I will use the force of sharp arrows and persuade them on the field of battle. I will make them fall down at the feet of the great-souled Kounteya. If they refuse to bow in obeisance before the wise one, they, together with their advisers, will go to Yama's abode. They will not be able to withstand an angry Yuyudhana[29] who is eager to fight. Can the mountains withstand the force of a thunderbolt? Who can withstand the wielder of the Gandiva bow, the one who uses the chakra in battle,[30] me, or the unassailable Bhima? The twins wield firm bows and are extremely radiant, the equals of Yama. If one wishes to live, can one approach Parshata Dhrishtadyumna,[31] or the five Pandavas who have extended Droupadi's glory? When they are intoxicated with pride, is there anyone who is equal to the sons of Pandu in status or in valour? Soubhadra[32] is a great archer and even the immortals find it difficult to withstand him. Gada, Pradyumna and Samba are the equals of destiny, the thunderbolt and the fire. After killing Dhritarashtra's son in battle, together with Shakuni and Karna, we will instate the Pandavas. There is no adharma attached to killing an enemy who is an assassin.[33] There is adharma and infamy in begging from enemies. Therefore, without any delay, let us satisfy the desires of his[34] heart. The Pandavas must obtain the kingdom that was given to them by Dhritarashtra. Let Pandu's son, Yudhishthira, obtain his kingdom today, or let them all be killed on the field of battle and go to sleep on the ground."'

667(4)

'Drupada said, "O mighty-armed one! There is no doubt that it will be this way. Duryodhana will not hand back the kingdom sweetly.

Dhritarashtra loves his son and will follow him. So will Bhishma and Drona out of poverty, and Radheya and Soubala out of folly.[35] It is my view that Baladeva's words were not appropriate, because they apply to a man who wishes to act properly right from the beginning. Dhritarashtra's son should never be addressed through gentle words. I think that it is impossible to persuade that evil-minded one through gentleness. One exhibits gentleness towards a donkey and roughness towards a cow. Duryodhana, the one with evil intelligence, will not pay any heed to gentle words. I think that if gentle words are used, that evil one will take the speaker to be weak. If gentle words are used, that stupid one will think that he has triumphed. Let us do this. Let us make preparations here. Let us send word to our allies to collect forces for us. Let messengers who travel swiftly go to Shalya,[36] Dhrishtaketu,[37] the lord Jayatsena[38] and all the Kekayas. Duryodhana is certain to send messengers to all of them also. But those who are righteous and have been allied to us earlier, will accept the first request. Therefore, let us make haste and let us request those Indras among men first. It is my view that a great task is about to be undertaken.

'"Send word to Shalya quickly and to the kings who are under his suzerainty, and to King Bhagadatta, who dwells by the eastern ocean. And to Amitouja, Ugra, Hardikya, Ahuka, the extremely wise Malla and the lord Rochamana. Let Brihanta be brought and the King Senabindu, Papajit, Prativindhya, Chitravarma, Suvastuka, Bahlika, Munjakesha, the lord of Chedi, Suparsha, Subahu, the maharatha Pourava, the kings who rule over the Shakas, the Pahlavas and the Daradas, the Kambojas, the Rishikas, the western Anupakas, Jayatsena, the king of Kashi, the kings of the five rivers,[39] the unassailable son of Kratha, the kings of the mountainous regions, Janaki, Susharma, Maniman, Poutimatsyaka, the king of the land of Pamshu, the valorous Dhrishtaketu, Oudra, Dandadhara, the valorous Brihatsena, Aparajita, Nishada, Shreniman, Vasuman, the immensely energetic Brihadbala, Bahu the conqueror of enemy cities, King Samudrasena with his valorous son, Adari, Nadija, King Karnaveshta, Samartha, Suvira, Marjara, Kanyaka, Mahavira, Kadru, Nikara, the terrible Kratha, Nila, Viradharma, the valorous

Bhumipala, Durjaya, Dantavakra, Rukmi, Janamejaya, Ashadha, Vayuvega, King Purvapali, Bhuriteja, Devaka, Ekalavya's son, the kings of Karushaka, the valorous Kshemadhurti, Uddhava, Kshemaka, King Vatadhana, Shrutayu, Dridhayu, Shalva's valorous son and the lord of the Kalingas, Kumara, who is unassailable in battle. I think that it is desirable that word should be sent to them as quickly as is possible. O king! This brahmana is my priest. He should be swiftly sent to Dhritarashtra. Tell him the words that he should speak—how Duryodhana is to be addressed, and the king who is Shantanu's son, how Dhritarashtra is to be addressed, and Drona, supreme among learned ones."'

668(5)

'Vasudeva said, "These words are appropriate for the wise leader of the Somakas.[40] They will ensure welfare and success for the infinitely energetic King Pandava. If we wish to act in accordance with right policy, this should indeed be the first course of action. A man who acts contrary to this will be foolish. But our relationships with the Kurus and the Pandavas are equal, though at the moment we happen to be with the Pandavas. Like all of you, we have been brought here because of the wedding. With the marriage having been concluded, we will return happily to our houses. You are the oldest among the kings in age and learning.[41] There is no doubt that all of us are like your pupils. Dhritarashtra has always shown you a great deal of honour. You are a friend to the preceptors Drona and Kripa.[42] For the welfare of the Pandavas, you should be the one who should send word. It is certain that whatever message you send will be acceptable to all of us. If the bull among the Kurus seeks peace, as is proper, there will be no great loss to the fraternal feelings that exist between the Kurus and the Pandavas. If Dhritarashtra's son acts contrary to this, out of insolence and delusion, send word to the others[43] and then summon us. Then, having enraged the wielder of Gandiva, the stupid and evil-minded Duryodhana will confront his destiny, together with his advisers and his relatives."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having shown homage to Varshneya, Virata, lord of the earth, sent him home, together with his followers and his relatives. When Krishna had left for Dvaraka, with Yudhishthira at the forefront, all of them[44] made preparations for war, together with King Virata. Together with his relatives, Virata—and Drupada, lord of the earth—sent word to all the lords of the earth. On receiving word from the lions among the Kurus and Matsya and Panchala, all the extremely powerful lords of the earth gathered cheerfully. On learning that a great force was being gathered for the sons of Pandu, Dhritarashtra's son also assembled many lords of the earth. O king! The entire earth was thronged with lords of the earth who arrived for the sake of the Kurus and the Pandavas. The forces of those brave ones arrived from every direction. With her mountains and forests, the goddess earth seemed to tremble. With Yudhishthira's approval, Panchala despatched his priest, who was old in wisdom and in years, to the Kurus.'

669(6)

'Drupada said, "Among all beings, beings who sustain life through intelligence are superior. Among those that have intelligence, men are superior; and among men, brahmanas. Among brahmanas, those who know the Vedas are superior; and among those who know the Vedas, those who have achieved understanding. It is my view that you are the foremost among those who have achieved understanding. You have been born in a distinguished lineage and possess age and learning. In wisdom, you are the equal of Shukra and Angirasa.[45] You know everything about the kind of conduct Kourava follows. You know the conduct of Kunti's son, Pandava Yudhishthira. The Pandavas were deceived by their enemies, with Dhritarashtra's knowledge. Though Vidura entreated him, he followed his son alone. It was on Shakuni's advice that Kunti's son had been challenged earlier. He was unskilled in dice and they were skilled in dice, but he was steadfast in the pure conduct of a kshatriya. Thus it was that Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was deceived. Under no circumstances will they return the kingdom of their own accord. But you should speak words full of dharma to Dhritarashtra. It is certain that you will then win the hearts of his soldiers. Vidura will also act in accordance with your words and bring about dissension in Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. With dissension among his advisers and reluctance among his warriors, he will then face a task in bringing them together again. Meanwhile, the intelligent Parthas will happily and single-mindedly devote their attention to military matters and to the collection of supplies. There will be dissension among the others and you will spend a long time there. There is no doubt that they will not be able to pay attention to military matters. I feel that this necessary task is your main purpose in being there. After meeting with you and listening to your words, Dhritarashtra may decide to act according to dharma. You are united with dharma and you will act in accordance with dharma. To those who are compassionate, recount the hardships confronted by the Pandavas. To the elders, speak about the dharma that has been observed in the lineage earlier. I have no doubt that you will be able to estrange their minds. You have nothing to fear from them. You are a brahmana who has knowledge of the Vedas. You are being sent on a task as a messenger. And specifically, you are old. To bring success to the objective of the Kounteyas, leave swiftly for the Kouravyas, when there is a conjunction of Pushya and at the muhurta of Jaya.'"[46]

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been instructed in this way by the great-souled Drupada, the priest, whose conduct was excellent, departed for the city of Nagasahrya.'[47]

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Vaishampayana said, 'After Krishna and Baladeva Madhava had left for Dvaravati, with hundreds of Vrishnis, Andhakas and all the Bhojas, the king who was Dhritarashtra's son, secretly employed messengers and spies and got to know everything that the Pandavas were attempting. Having heard that Madhava[48] had left, he himself set out for the city of Dvaraka.[49] He took a force with him that was not too large, and superb horses that were equal to the wind. On that very day, Kounteya Dhananjaya, the son of Pandu, went to the beautiful city of the Anarta.[50]

Those two tigers among men, descendants of the Kuru lineage, arrived in Dvaraka. They went to Krishna and saw that he was supine and asleep. When Govinda was asleep, Suyodhana entered. He seated himself on a supreme seat that was towards Krishna's head. Then the great-souled Kiriti entered. With his hands joined in salutation, he stood towards Krishna's feet. On waking up, Varshneya saw Kiriti first. He welcomed both of them with the appropriate honours. Madhusudana asked them the reason for their arrival. Then Duryodhana smiled and told Krishna, "You should come to my aid in this battle. Your friendship with me and Arjuna is equal. O Madhava! Your relationship with us is also equal. O Madhusudana! Today, I have come to you first. From ancient times, the virtuous serve those who arrive first. O Janardana! You are now supreme among the virtuous ones in this world. You always deserve honour. You always follow virtuous conduct."

'Krishna replied, "I have no doubt that you arrived earlier. O king! But I saw Partha Dhananjaya first. O Suyodhana! Since you arrived first and since I saw him first, I will help both of you. But it has been said that the younger one should have the first choice. Therefore, I will offer the first choice to Partha Dhananjaya. There is a large number of one hundred million cowherds, equal to me in strength. They are famous as Narayanas and all of them are warriors who have fought in battle. These warriors, who are unassailable, will be the soldiers on one side. I will not bear weapons and will not fight in the battle. I will be on the other side. O Partha! According to your preferences, choose either of these two first. It is dharma that you should have the right of choice first."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At these words of Krishna, Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, chose Keshava, though he would not fight in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Knowing that Krishna was excluded from the battle, Duryodhana was extremely delighted at having obtained the thousands and thousands of warriors. O lord of the earth! He accepted all those soldiers. Then the fearsomely strong one went to Rohini's immensely strong son.[51] He reported to him the reason why he had come. Shouri[52] replied to Dhritarashtra's son in the following words. "O tiger among men! It is appropriate that you should know everything that I have said earlier in the kingdom of Virata, on the occasion of the wedding. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is for your sake that I sought to restrain Hrishikesha.[53] O king! I said repeatedly that my relationship with both of you was equal. But Keshava did not accept the words that I had spoken. I cannot exist for an instant without Krishna. I will come to the aid of neither Partha, nor Duryodhana. After looking towards Vasudeva, this is the decision I have arrived at. You have been born in the Bharata lineage, one that is honoured by all the lords of the earth. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Go and fight in accordance with the dharma of the kshatriyas." At these words, he embraced the one who wields the plough as a weapon. Knowing that Krishna had excused himself from the war, he thought that his own victory had been assured. The king who was Dhritarashtra's son then went to Kritavarma. Kritavarma gave him an army that consisted of one akshouhini. Surrounded by all these terrible soldiers, the descendant of the Kuru lineage returned happily, causing delight to his well-wishers.

'When Duryodhana had left, Krishna asked Kiriti, "I will not take part in the battle. What did you think of when you decided to choose me?" Arjuna replied, "There is no doubt that you are alone capable of slaying all of them. O supreme among men! I am also capable of slaying them alone. Your deeds are famous in this world and this fame will also devolve on you. I too wish to be famous and that is the reason I have chosen you. It has always been my desire that you should be my charioteer. I have desired this over many nights and you should satisfy my wishes." Vasudeva said, "O Partha! It is appropriate that you desire to rival me. I will be your charioteer. Let your desire be satisfied." Having been thus delighted, Partha, accompanied by Krishna and surrounded by the foremost among the Dasharhas, returned to Yudhishthira.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O king! On getting to know through messengers, Shalya, together with his maharatha sons, marched towards the Pandavas, surrounded by a large army. His army's camp extended for one and a half yojanas.[54] That bull among men was the lord of such a large army. Those brave warriors were dressed in colourful armour. They had colourful flags and bows. All of them wore colourful ornaments. They had colourful chariots and vehicles. Those hundreds and thousands of warriors wore their native attire and ornaments. Those bulls among the kshatriyas were the generals of the army. The beings were frightened and the earth trembled. Resting often, the army slowly marched towards the Pandavas. Duryodhana heard about the maharatha's great army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He hastened towards him himself and showed him homage. In his honour, Duryodhana had pavilions constructed in beautiful regions, ornamented and adorned with gems. When he arrived at those pavilions, he was shown homage by Duryodhana and his advisers in every region, like an immortal. Then he reached another pavilion that was as resplendent as the abode of a god. It was full of all objects and possessed superhuman loveliness. He began to think very highly of himself and lowly about Purandara.[55] That bull among the kshatriyas was delighted and asked the servants, "Which one of Yudhishthira's men has constructed these pavilions? Bring the builders of the pavilions here. It is my view that they should be rewarded." Duryodhana had concealed himself there and now showed himself to his maternal uncle.[56] On seeing him and learning of the efforts he had undertaken, the king of Madra embraced him. He told him in great delight, "Accept whatever you desire." Duryodhana replied, "May your words be true. Please grant me a boon that will ensure my welfare. It is appropriate that you should be the general of my entire army." Shalya said, "Agreed. What else do you wish me to do?" Gandhari's son kept on repeating, "Agreed! Agreed!" Having taken his leave of Shalya, he then returned to his own city. Shalya went to the Kounteyas to tell them what he had done.

'Having gone to Upaplavya, Shalya went to the camp and saw all the Pandavas there. When he went there, as was prescribed, the sons of Pandu offered him water to wash the feet,[57] the gift for a guest[58] and a cow. Then the king of Madra, the slayer of enemies, asked them about their welfare. He embraced Yudhishthira with great delight, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins who were his sister’s sons. Having seated himself, Shalya then told Partha,[59] “O tiger among kings! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Are you well? O supreme among victorious ones! It is good fortune that you have been freed from dwelling in the forest. O king! O Indra among kings! You performed an extremely difficult act in dwelling in the secluded forest, together with your brothers and Krishna. You performed an extremely difficult act in spending that terrible period of concealment. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is only unhappiness for one who has been dislodged from his kingdom. How can there be happiness? All this great misery has been brought on by Dhritarashtra’s son. O king! O scorcher of enemies! You will obtain happiness after you have killed your enemies. O great king! O lord of men! You know about the nature of this world. O son![60] That is the reason you never act out of greed.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then the king told him about his encounter with Duryodhana and everything about how he had been served and the boon that he had granted. Yudhishthira replied, “O king! You performed a good deed, when you were happy in your own soul. O brave one! You must observe the pledge that you have given to Duryodhana. O fortunate one! O lord of the earth! But there is an act that I wish you to perform. O great king! You are the equal of Vasudeva in battle. O supreme among kings! When Karna and Arjuna confront each other in a duel, there is no doubt that you will perform the task of being Karna’s charioteer. O king! If you wish to satisfy my desires, you must protect Arjuna. Your task will be to sap the energy of the son of the suta and ensure our victory. O maternal uncle! Though this is not a task that should be done, you must do it.” Shalya said, “O Pandava! O fortunate one! You are asking me to sap the energy of that evil-minded son of a suta in battle. It is certain that I will be his charioteer in battle. He has always thought of me as Vasudeva’s equal. O tiger among the Kurus! When he wishes to fight in the field of battle, it is certain that I will speak words that do him harm. O Pandava! They will make him lose his pride and lose his energy. He will then be easy to kill. I tell you this truthfully. O son! I will do whatever you have asked me to do. I will do whatever else brings you pleasure. Together with Krishna, you have suffered miseries because of the gambling match. The son of the suta has spoken harsh words. O immensely radiant one! You have suffered hardships because of Jatasura[61] and Kichaka. Droupadi underwent several unholy sufferings, like Damayanti.[62] O brave one! All this unhappiness will result in the rise of happiness. Do not think that all this is because of your deeds. Destiny is more powerful. O Yudhishthira! Even great-souled ones confront difficulties. O lord of the earth! Even the gods have faced unhappiness. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have heard that the great-souled Indra, the king of the gods, had to experience great unhappiness, together with his wife."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "O Indra among kings! How did the great-souled Indra confront supreme and terrible unhappiness, together with his wife? I wish to know this."

'Shalya said, "O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to this old and ancient historical account, about how Indra had to face unhappiness, together with his wife. There was Tvashtra Prajapati.[63] He was foremost among the gods and was a great ascetic. Out of hatred for Indra, he created a son with three heads. This immensely radiant one,[64] who was universal in form, coveted Indra's station. His three faces were terrible and were like the sun, the moon and the fire. He studied the Vedas with one mouth, he drank liquor with another. With another, he glanced at all the directions, as if he was going to drink them up. He was an ascetic, mild and self-controlled. He was engaged in dharma and austerities. O destroyer of enemies! His austerities were so great and terrible that they were extremely difficult to accomplish. Having witnessed his austerities, valour, truthfulness, Shakra was depressed that he might become Indra.[65] 'How can one get him addicted to desire, so that he does not torment through these great austerities? If Trishira continues to grow, he will swallow up the three worlds.'[66] O bull among the Bharata lineage! That intelligent one thought about this in many ways. He then instructed the apsaras to seduce Tvashtra's son. 'Go quickly, without any delay. Seduce Trishira and get him addicted to the pleasures of desire. O ones with the beautiful hips! Wear the garments of love. Adopt a charming demeanour. O fortunate ones! Tempt him and pacify my fear. O one with the beautiful limbs! I feel ill. I do not feel like myself. O ladies! Swiftly take away my extremely terrible fear.' The apsaras replied, 'O Shakra! O destroyer of Bala![67] We will make endeavours to seduce him, so that you have nothing to fear. That treasure among ascetics seems to burn everything down with his eyes. O god! We will go together and try to seduce him. We will try to bring him under our control and remove your fear.' Being instructed by Indra, they went to Trishira. There, the ones with the beautiful limbs adopted all kinds of allurements to seduce him. They showed their dances. They exhibited the beauty of their limbs. But having seen this, the great ascetic was not perturbed. He was in control of his senses and was as calm as the full ocean. They made supreme efforts and returned to Shakra. All of them joined their hands in salutation and told the king of the gods, 'O lord! This one is extremely difficult to distract. It is impossible to sway him from his firmness. O immensely fortunate one! Do what must be done hereafter.' The immensely wise Shakra honoured the apsaras and sent them away.

'"He began to think about a way of killing the great-souled one. The brave and powerful king of the gods began to think about this in silence. The wise one began to think about a means of killing Trishira. He thought, 'I will swiftly strike him with the vajra today, so that he quickly ceases to exist. One who is stronger must not ignore a weak enemy who is strengthening.' Deciding on a course of action that was in accordance with the sacred texts, he firmly made up his mind to kill him. In great anger, Shakra hurled his vajra at Trishira. It was fearsome and terrible in form. It was like the fire. Injured and slain by the firm vajra, he fell down dead on the ground, like a mountain peak that has been shattered. On seeing him slain by the vajra and lying down like a mountain, Indra of the gods still found no peace, because his energy still blazed forth. Though he had been killed, his energy blazed forth, as if he was still alive. Shachi's consort[68] saw a woodcutter who had arrived there, engaged in his work. On seeing him, the chastiser of Paka[69] quickly said, ‘Listen to my words. Immediately cut off his heads.’ The woodcutter replied, ‘His shoulders are extremely broad and my axe will not be able to cut through. Besides, I am incapable of performing a deed that is condemned by the virtous.’ Indra said, ‘Do not be afraid. Swiftly act according to my words. Through my favours, your weapon will become as strong as the vajra.’ The woodcutter replied, ‘I must know who you are and why you have performed this terrible deed today. I wish to hear all this. Tell me everything accurately.’ Indra said, ‘O woodcutter! I am Indra. Know me to be the king of the gods. Act according to my words. O woodcutter! Do not reflect on this.’ The woodcutter replied, ‘O Shakra! How is it that you are not ashamed of this cruel deed? Having killed the son of a rishi, are you not scared of the sin that comes from killing a brahmana?’ Indra said, ‘To purify myself, I will perform an extremely difficult task of dharma later. This was an extremely valorous enemy and I have killed him with my vajra. O woodcutter! I am anxious and frightened about this even now. Swiftly cut off his heads and I will show you my favours. When animals are sacrificed, men will give you their heads as a share. O woodcutter! This is the favour that I will show to you. Swiftly do that which brings me pleasure.’ Having heard these words of the great Indra, the woodcutter sliced off Trishira’s heads with his axe. When the heads had been cut off, birds like *kapinjalas*, *tittiras* and *kalavimkas* issued from them.[70] From the mouth through which the Vedas had been studied and *soma* juice had been drunk, kapinjalas quickly flew away. O king! O Pandava! From the mouth through which he glanced in every direction and seemed to drink them up, tittiras flew out. O bull among the Bharata lineage! From the mouth through which Trishira used to drink liquor, kalavimkas flew away. When the heads had been cut off, Maghavan[71] was freed from his fever and happily went to heaven. The woodcutter also returned to his own home.

‘“On hearing that his son had been killed by Shakra, Tvashtra Prajapati’s eyes reddened in rage and he spoke these words. ‘My son was always intent on austerities. He was forgiving, self-controlled and the master of his senses. He committed no crime. Yet violence has been done to him. For this reason, I will create Vritra, with a view to destroying Shakra. Let the worlds witness my valour and the great strength of my austerities. Let the evil-souled and evil-minded Indra of the gods also behold.’ That extremely famous and enraged ascetic touched water. He offered oblations into the fire. Having created the terrible Vritra, he told him, ‘O enemy of Indra! Through the strength of my asceticism, increase in power.’ He grew and touched the sky and was like the sun and the fire. ‘What shall I do?’ he asked, like the sun at the time of destruction. Having been told that he should kill Shakra, he went to heaven. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! There ensued an angry and extremely terrible battle and the valorous Vritra grasped Shatakratu Indra of the gods. Overcome with rage, Vritra opened his mouth and swallowed him. When Shakra had been swallowed by Vritra, the lords of heaven were terrified. Those greatly spirited ones created a yawn that would be Vritra’s destruction. When Vritra yawned, the destroyer of Bala contracted his limbs and emerged from the gaping mouth. Ever since then, the yawn has remained in all living beings. On seeing Shakra emerge, all the gods were delighted. Vritra and Vasava again engaged in a battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It was a terrible fight that went on for a long time. Because of the power of Tvashtra’s austerities, Vritra’s power increased in that battle and Shakra retreated. When he retreated, the gods were immersed in supreme despondency. They were deluded because of Tvashtra’s energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with Shakra, they sought the advice of all the sages. O king! Deluded by fear, they reflected about what should be done. In their minds,[72] all of them went to the imperishable and great-souled Vishnu. All of them seated themselves on the peak of Mandara, wishing to kill Vritra.”’

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‘“Indra said, ‘O gods! This entire indestructible universe has been pervaded by Vritra. There is nothing that is equal to him and can stand up to him. I was capable in earlier times. But I am now incapable. O fortunate ones! What can I do? It seems to me that it is extremely difficult to overcome him. This energetic and great-souled one is infinitely valorous in battle. He will devour the three worlds, with all the gods, the asuras and men. O residents of heaven! Therefore, listen to what I have decided. We must approach the abode of the great-souled Vishnu. We must consult with him about the means for killing this evil-souled one.'"

'Shalya said, "At these words of Maghavan, the gods, together with the masses of rishis, then sought refuge with the immensely strong god Vishnu, one with whom refuge should be sought. All of them were oppressed with the fear of Vritra and spoke to Vishnu, the lord of all the gods. 'O lord! You covered the three worlds in three strides.[73] O Vishnu! You killed the daityas in battle and obtained the *amrita*.[74] Having bound down the great daitya Bali, you made Shakra the lord of the gods. You are the lord of all the worlds. Everything is vested in you. You are the god who is the great god. You are revered by all the worlds. O supreme among the immortals! Become the salvation of Indra and the gods. O destroyer of asuras! The entire universe has become pervaded by Vritra.' Vishnu replied, 'I will certainly do that which ensures your supreme welfare. I will tell you a means whereby he will cease to exist. With all the rishis and the gandharvas, go to the spot where the one with the universal form resides. Use conciliation towards him. You will then be able to vanquish him. O gods! Shakra will go there. Using my energy, I will invisibly enter his supreme weapon, the vajra. O supreme among gods! Go there with the rishis and the gandharvas. Without any delay, bring about a truce between Vritra and Shakra.' Having been thus addressed by the god, the rishis and the denizens of heaven went together, having placed Shakra at the forefront.

'"All those greatly energetic ones approached him. He was burning the ten directions with the radiance of his energy. He seemed to be swallowing the three worlds and was like the sun and the moon. Together with Shakra, the gods saw Vritra there. The rishis approached and spoke to Vritra in pleasant words. 'O invincible one! The entire universe is pervaded by your energy. But you will not be able to vanquish Vasava, who is supremely valorous. Since the two of you began to fight, a very long period of time has elapsed. All the beings, including the gods, the asuras and men, are oppressed. O Vritra! Let there always be friendship between you and Shakra. You will then obtain happiness and eternally dwell in Shakra's world.' Hearing these words of the rishis, the greatly strong asura Vritra bowed his head in obeisance before all of them and said, 'O immensely fortunate ones! O all the gandharvas! O unblemished ones! I have heard everything that you have said. Now listen to me. O gods! We are both extremely energetic. How can there be friendship between us?' The rishis replied, 'Righteous ones should meet, at least once. After that, what is destined will happen. No one transgresses an agreement with a righteous person. Therefore, there should be an agreement between those who are righteous. An agreement between the righteous is firm and eternal. Even in times of difficulties, the wise say that this is desirable. Great welfare derives from an agreement with a righteous person. That is the reason wise ones do not cause violence to righteous ones. Indra is honoured by righteous ones and great-souled ones reside with him. He also speaks the truth, isn't mean, follows dharma and is determined in his decisions. Let there always be peace between you and Shakra. You must have trust. Do not think otherwise.' Having heard the words of the maharshis, the immensely radiant one told them, 'O illustrious ones! I must certainly revere ascetics. O gods! If you carry out everything that I am asking you to, I will do everything that these bulls among the brahmanas have asked me to do. O Indras among brahmanas! I will be incapable of being killed by Shakra, together with the gods, by anything that is dry, anything that is wet, anything made of stone or wood, by any weapon, by the vajra,[75] and during the day or during the night. Such an agreement with Shakra will always please me.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! The rishis said that it would be this way. When this agreement had been made, Vritra was delighted.

'"But Shakra was always full of resentment. He kept thinking about a means of killing Vritra. The destroyer of Bala and Vritra was always anxious and kept looking for a weakness. One day, he saw the great asura on the shores of the ocean. It was evening and the extremely lovely, but terrible, muhurta had arrived.[76] He thought about the boon that the great-souled one had been granted. 'It is the terrible evening. It is not night or day. He is the enemy who has robbed me of everything. I can certainly kill him now. He is immensely powerful and has a gigantic body. If I do not kill the great asura Vritra through deceit today, it will not be good for me.' Shakra thought in this way and remembered Vishnu. He saw the foam in the ocean, as large as a mountain. 'This is not wet, nor dry. Nor is it a weapon. If I fling it at Vritra, he will perish in an instant.' With the vajra, he swiftly flung the foam at Vritra. Vishnu entered the foam and destroyed Vritra. With Vritra dead, the darkness vanished from all the directions. An auspicious breeze began to blow and the beings rejoiced. All the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the serpents and the rishis praised the great Indra with many hymns. Having been honoured by all the beings, he pronounced benedictions on all the beings. With the enemy having been slain, Vasava was delighted, and together with the gods, showed his homage to Vishnu, who is learned in dharma and is supreme in the three worlds.

'"After the extremely valorous Vritra, who had terrified the gods, had been killed, Shakra was overcome by falsehood[77] and was extremely depressed. After having killed Trishira earlier, he had taken on the sin of killing a brahmana. Bereft of his senses and consciousness, Indra of the gods went to the extremities of the world. Overcome by his own sins, he no longer possessed any wisdom. He remained immersed in water, writhing like a serpent. Thanks to the fear of having killed a brahmana, Indra of the gods was destroyed. The earth seemed to be ravaged.[78] There were no trees and the groves dried up. The flows stopped in the rivers and the ponds were without water. Because of the lack of rains, there was great distress among the beings and the gods. All the maharshis were extremely terrified. The entire universe was without a king and was confronted with calamities. The frightened gods thought, 'Who will be our king now?' The gods and the rishis in heaven no longer had a king of the gods. And none of the gods had a desire to be the king."'

'Shalya said, "Then all the rishis and all the gods said, 'Nahusha is majestic. Let us appoint him king of the gods and the lord of the thirty gods.' All of them went to him and said, 'O lord of the earth! Be our king.' O king! Nahusha thought about his own welfare and told the gods and the masses of rishis, accompanied by the ancestors, 'I am weak. I am incapable of protecting you. It is a powerful one who should be the king. Shakra was always powerful.' All the gods, with the rishis at the forefront, again told him, 'You will be endowed with the power of our austerities. Protect the kingdom of heaven. There is no doubt that we are terribly afraid of each other.[79] O Indra among kings! Be our king in heaven. You will absorb the energy of gods, danavas, yakshas, rishis, rakshasas, gandharvas and all beings as soon as you behold them. You will then be powerful. Always placing dharma at the forefront, be the lord of all the worlds and the herdsman of the brahmarshis and gods in heaven.' Having obtained this extremely rare boon, he became the king in heaven.

'"He had always had dharma in his soul. But he now became addicted to desire. Nahusha, the king of the gods, sported in many different ways in all the gardens of the gods, in the grove of Nandana,[80] in Kailasa on the slopes of the Himalayas, on the mountains Mandara, Shveta, Sahya, Mahendra and Malaya and in oceans and rivers, surrounded by apsaras and the maidens of the gods. He listened to many kinds of celestial accounts, pleasant to the ear, and to all kinds of musical instruments and songs with sweet sounds. Vishvavasu,[81] Narada, masses of gandharvas and apsaras and the six seasons in personified form, waited upon the Indra of the gods. A fragrant breeze blew—pleasant, charming and cool.

'"While the great-souled Nahusha was sporting in this way, his eyes fell upon the goddess who was Shakra's beloved queen. On seeing her, the evil-souled one spoke to all his courtiers. 'Why doesn't the goddess who is Indra's queen serve me? I am Indra of the gods now. I am also the lord of the worlds. Let Shachi swiftly come to my abode today.' On hearing these words, the goddess was distraught and told Brihaspati, 'O brahmana! Protect me from Nahusha. I am seeking refuge with you. O brahmana! You have always told me that I bear all the auspicious marks. You have spoken of me as the beloved of the king of the gods, deserving of happiness, and as one who will never be a widow. I will be the wife of one and will be devoted to my husband. Let those words that you have spoken to me earlier, come true. O illustrious one! O lord! What you have said earlier has never been false. O supreme among brahmanas! Therefore, ensure that what you have said comes true.' At this, Brihaspati told Indrani,[82] who was confounded with fear, 'O goddess! What I have told you will certainly come true. You will soon see Indra, king of the gods, return here. I tell you truthfully that you have nothing to fear from Nahusha. In a short while, I will unite you with Shakra again.' Nahusha heard that Indrani had gone and sought refuge with Brihaspati Angirasa.[83] The king was enraged."'

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'Shalya said, "On seeing that Nahusha was enraged, the gods, with the rishis at the forefront, went and told Nahusha, the king of the gods, whose visage was terrible. 'O king of the gods! Conquer your anger. O lord! The universe, with all its asuras, gandharvas, kinnaras and giant serpents, is terrified at your wrath. O virtuous one! Conquer this anger. Those who are like you are never enraged. That goddess is the wife of another. O lord of the gods! Be pacified. Turn your mind away from the sin of molesting another one's wife. O fortunate one! You are the king of the gods. You should protect the subjects in accordance with dharma.' He was addressed in this way, but did not accept these words. He was deluded by desire. Then the lord of the gods spoke to the gods about Indra. 'The illustrious Ahalya was the wife of a rishi. But Indra had raped her earlier, while her husband was still alive.[84] Why did you not restrain him then? In earlier times, Indra performed many cruel deeds. He acted against dharma and resorted to deceit. Why did you not restrain him then? Let the goddess serve me. That will be the best for her. And that will always ensure welfare for the gods too.' The gods replied, 'O lord of heaven! We will bring Indrani here, as you wish. O brave one! O lord of the gods! Conquer your anger and be pleased.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, the gods, together with the rishis, went to Brihaspati and told Indrani the inauspicious words. 'We know that Indrani has sought refuge in your abode and that you have granted her freedom from fear. O Indra among brahmanas! O supreme among *devarshis*! O greatly radiant one! The gods, together with the gandharvas and the rishis, seek your favours. Let Indrani be handed over to Nahusha. Nahusha is the greatly radiant king of the gods and is superior to Indra. Let this one with the excellent complexion and with the excellent thighs accept him as her husband.' Having been thus addressed, the goddess shed loud tears.

'"She was miserable and weeping and spoke these words to Brihaspati. 'I do not wish to have Nahusha as my husband and give up my lord. O brahmana! I have sought refuge with you. Save me from this great calamity.' Brihaspati replied, 'It is certain that I will not give up Indrani, who has sought refuge with me. She follows dharma. Her conduct is in accordance with dharma. O unblemished one! I will not give you up. I do not wish to perform an act that should not be done, especially because I am a brahmana. I have heard about dharma. I am truthful in my conduct. I know the injunctions of dharma. I will not do this. O supreme among the gods! Depart. In these matters, Brahma recounted a song in earlier times. Listen to it. "He who hands over to the enemy someone who has sought refuge, his seed will not grow at the time of sowing. His rains will not shower at the time of rains. When he wishes for protection, he will not receive it. That insensate one will have a barren harvest. That one, whose mind has been deluded, will be dislodged from the world of heaven. The gods refuse to accept the offerings of one who gives away a frightened one who has sought succour. His offspring will perish before the right time. His ancestors will always discard him. If one hands over a frightened one who has sought succour to the enemy, the gods and Indra hurl their vajra at him." Knowing this, I will not hand over Shachi Indrani, who is famous in the world as Shakra's beloved wife. O best among the gods! What is good for her will also be good for me. Let us act according to that. I will not give Shachi away.' Then the gods told their preceptor, who was supreme in the Angirasa lineage, ‘O Brihaspati! You advise us about the best course of action.’ Brihaspati replied, ‘Let this beautiful goddess ask for some time from Nahusha. I think this will ensure Indrani’s welfare and ours too. Time brings many impediments. It is time which leads to another time. Because of the boon he has obtained, Nahusha is insolent and powerful.’ When he had spoken thus, the gods were delighted and told him, ‘O brahmana! What you have spoken is for the welfare of all the denizens of heaven. O best of brahmanas! Let us seek the favours of this goddess.’ Then all the gods, with Agni at the forefront, anxious to ensure the welfare of all the worlds, told Indrani, ‘You bear the entire universe, with everything that is immobile and mobile. You are true and devoted to one husband. Go to Nahusha. That lord of the earth, Nahusha, who lusts after you, will soon be destroyed. Shakra will become the lord of the gods again.’ Having thus decided on a course of action that would ensure success, Indrani went to Nahusha, whose visage was terrible.

‘“She was bashful. Having beheld her in her youth and beauty, the evil-souled Nahusha was delighted. He lost his senses because of desire.”’

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‘Shalya said, “Having seen her, Nahusha, king of the gods, addressed her thus. ‘O one with the beautiful smiles! I am Indra of the three worlds. O one with the beautiful thighs! O one with the beautiful complexion! Serve me as your husband.’ Having been thus addressed by Nahusha, the goddess, who was devoted to her husband, trembled in fear, like a plantain tree during a storm. She joined her hands in salutation and bowed her head before Brahma. She told Nahusha, king of the gods whose visage was terrible, ‘O lord of the gods! I am asking for some time from you. I do not know where Shakra is. I do not know where he has gone. O lord! Let me try to ascertain the truth. Alternatively, if this cannot be found out, I will serve you. I am telling you this truthfully.’ Having been thus addressed by Indrani, Nahusha was delighted. Nahusha replied, ‘O one with the beautiful hips! It will be as you say. Once you have got to know, your task is to come here. Remember the truth you have sworn.’ Thus given permission by Nahusha, the beautiful one departed. The ascetic one went to Brihaspati’s abode.

‘“O supreme among kings! On hearing her words, the gods, with Agni at the forefront, began to consult about what might be done for the sake of Shakra. They went and met Vishnu, the god of the gods and anxious, the ones who were eloquent with words addressed these words to the lord Vishnu. ‘Shakra, the lord of the masses of gods, has been burdened because he has killed a brahmana.[85] O lord of the gods! You are our refuge. O lord! You were there before the universe was created. You assumed the form of Vishnu for the sake of protecting all beings. When Vasava slew Vritra through your valour, he was burdened because he had killed a brahmana. O supreme among the masses of gods! You decide on a way for him to be freed.’ Having heard the words of the gods, Vishnu replied, ‘Let Shakra offer a sacrifice to me. I will purify the wielder of the vajra. Having worshipped me, let the chastiser of Paka perform a holy horse sacrifice. Without any fear, he will then become Indra of the gods again. The evil-minded Nahusha will ensure his destruction through his own deeds. O gods! You must be patient and endure him for some time.’ Having heard the pure and true words of Vishnu, which were like amrita, all the masses of gods, the preceptors[86] and the gods went to the region where Shakra had hidden himself, anxious with fear.

‘“Then the great-souled and great Indra performed the extremely great horse sacrifice. O king! This was for the sake of purifying him from the taint of killing a brahmana. O Yudhishthira! He distributed the killing of a brahmana over trees, rivers, mountains, the earth and women.[87] With it having been thrown out and distributed among beings, the lord of the gods was cleansed of his fever. Vasava’s soul became pure and he assumed his earlier form. The slayer of Bala saw that Nahusha was not going to move from his position. Having obtained the boon, he was now unassailable, because he had absorbed the energy of all beings. Therefore, the god who was Shachi’s husband vanished again. Waiting for the appropriate time, he remained invisible to all beings. When Shakra seemed to have been destroyed, Shachi was immersed in grief. In great misery, the goddess began to lament. ‘Alas, Shakra! If I have ever given, if I have ever received gifts, if my seniors have been satisfied with me, if there is any truth in me, I will only have one husband. I am bowing down before this divine and auspicious goddess Night, which has now embarked on a northern course.[88] May my wishes be fulfilled.’ When Night arrived, the goddess worshipped her. Because of her devotion to her husband and because of her truthfulness, Upashruti[89] appeared before her. The goddess asked Upashruti, ‘Show me the region where the king of the gods is. Use the truth to show me the truth.’”’

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‘Shalya said, “On seeing that the goddess[90] was endowed with youth and beauty, thus did Upashruti appear before the beautiful and virtuous one. Indrani was delighted and showing her homage, said, ‘O one with the beautiful face! I wish to know who you are. Tell me.’ Upashruti replied, ‘O goddess! I am Upashruti. Since I am satisfied with your truthfulness, I have shown myself before you. You are devoted to your husband. You have restraint and are self-controlled. I will show you Shakra, the god who killed Vritra. O fortunate one! Follow me quickly and you will be able to see that supreme among gods.’ As the goddess[91] went on ahead, Indrani followed her. Having traversed many forests of the gods and many mountains, she crossed the Himalayas and went to its northern slopes. She came to an ocean that was many yojanas wide. She then went to a large island that was covered with many trees and creepers. She saw a divine lake there, populated by many kinds of birds. It was pure and a hundred yojanas broad, with a similar length. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thousands of divine lotuses bloomed there, with five colours, and bees buzzed around. She broke the stalk of a lotus and entered with her.[92] She saw Shatakratu, who had also entered there. On seeing her lord in that extremely tiny form, the goddess and Upashruti also assumed extremely tiny forms.

‘“Indrani praised Indra for the famous deeds he had performed earlier. Having been thus praised, the god Purandara told Shachi, ‘Why have you come here and how did you get to know that I was here?' She then told him about what Nahusha had tried to do. 'When he became the Indra of the three worlds, he became insolent because of his valour. O Shatakratu! Having become insolent, the evil-souled one asked me to serve him. That evil one has granted me some time. O lord! If you do not save me, he will bring me under his powers. O Shakra! I am tormented because of this and have come to you. O mighty-armed one! Destroy that terrible Nahusha. His mind is set on evil. You are the destroyer of daityas and danavas. Reveal your own self. O lord! Regain your own energy. Rule the kingdom of the gods.'"'

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'Shalya said, "Having been thus addressed by Shachi, the illustrious one replied, 'This is not the time for valour. Nahusha is superior in strength. O beautiful one! The rishis have made his powers increase because of the oblations he has offered to the gods and the ancestors.[93] O goddess! I will indicate a course of action and you should carry it out. You must carry this task out in secrecy. O beautiful one! You must not talk about it in any way. O slender-waisted one! Go to Nahusha and tell him when you are alone, "O lord of the universe! Come to me in a celestial vehicle that is borne by the rishis. I will then happily come under your control." Tell him this.' Thus addressed by the king of the gods, his lotus-eyed wife told him that it would be this way. She went to Nahusha. When Nahusha saw her, he was surprised and spoke these words. 'O one with the beautiful thighs! You are welcome. O sweet-smiling one! What can I do for you? I am devoted to you. Love me. O fortunate one! O spirited one! What task do you wish me to perform for you? Do not be shy. O slender-waisted one! You should have trust in me. O goddess! I truthfully swear that I will do whatever you ask me to.' Indrani replied, 'O lord of the universe! I am waiting out the time that you have granted to me. O lord of the gods! After that, you will become my husband. There is a task that I desire in my heart. O king of the gods! Think about it. O king! I will tell you about it, provided that you do what brings me pleasure. Out of love, I am speaking these words to you. If you carry them out, I will come under your control. As his vehicles, Indra possessed horse, elephants and chariots. O lord of the gods! I desire a vehicle from you that has not existed earlier, one that Vishnu, Rudra, the asuras or the rakshasas do not possess. O great king! O lord! Let all the rishis bear you together on a palanquin. O king! That will bring me pleasure. You should not be the equal of the asuras or the gods. With your valour, you should grasp all their energy by glancing at them. O brave one! No one will be able to stand before you.'

'"Having been thus addressed, Nahusha was extremely delighted. The Indra of the gods spoke these words to the unblemished one. 'O one whose complexion is beautiful! You have spoken about an extraordinary vehicle. O goddess! I have taken a strong fancy towards it. O one with the beautiful face! I am under your powers. One who makes the sages carry his vehicle cannot be weak in strength. I am a powerful ascetic. I am the lord of the past, the present and the future. When I am angry, the universe ceases to exist. Everything is vested in me—the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the kinnaras, the serpents and the rakshasas. O sweet-smiling one! All the worlds are not enough to counter my anger. I take the energy from anyone I look at with my eyes. O goddess! There is no doubt that I will act in accordance with your words. The seven rishis[94] will bear me and all the brahmarshis. O beautiful one! Behold my greatness and my prosperity.' Having spoken thus, he gave the goddess with the beautiful face permission to leave.

'"He did not possess the qualities of a brahmana. He was powerful and intoxicated. He was insolent because of the boon. He yoked the rishis, who were established in the rules, to his celestial vehicle. That evil-souled one was overcome by desire and made the rishis bear him. Having been dismissed by Nahusha, she told Brihaspati, 'Only a little bit of the time that Nahusha granted me is left. Hunt out Shakra quickly. I love him and show me compassion.' The illustrious Brihaspati told her, 'It will be this way. O goddess! You have no reason to fear the evil-minded Nahusha. He will not last for a long time. That worst of men has been destroyed. He is ignorant of dharma. O beautiful one! He has made the maharshis carry him and has been slain.[95] I will offer oblations for the destruction of that evil-minded one. I will go to Shakra. O fortunate one! Do not be afraid.’ Having kindled a fire in accordance with the prescribed rites, the immensely energetic Brihaspati offered oblations to discover where the king of the gods was. The illustrious god of the fire himself appeared. He adopted the extraordinary form of a woman and suddenly disappeared. With the speed of the mind, he searched the directions, the sub-directions, the mountains, the forests, the earth and the sky, and returned within a brief moment to Brihaspati. Agni said, ‘O Brihaspati! I cannot see the king of the gods anywhere. Only the waters remain to be searched and I am incapable of entering the waters. O brahmana! I have no means of going there. What else can I do for you?’ Having been thus addressed, the preceptor of the gods said, ‘O greatly resplendent one! Enter.’ Agni replied, ‘I cannot enter the waters. That will be my destruction. I am seeking refuge with you. O immensely radiant one! Be pacified. The fire arose from the waters,[96] kshatriyas from brahmanas and iron from stone. Their energy goes everywhere, but is pacified if they return to their wombs.’”’

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‘“Brihaspati said, ‘O Agni! You are the mouth of all the gods. You carry the oblations. You are inside all beings[97] and roam around like a secret witness. The wise ones have spoken of you as one, and again as three.[98] O bearer of oblations![99] Without you, the universe is instantly destroyed. Having bowed down before you, the brahmanas go to whatever eternal destinations they have won because of their own deeds, together with their wives and their sons. You are the bearer of oblations. You are the supreme oblation. You are worshipped at sacrifices. You are the supreme sacrifice. O bearer of oblations! Having created the three worlds, you become the kindling and cook them when the time has come.[100] You gave birth to this entire universe. O Agni! You are the foremost reason for its establishment again. O Agni! You are the source of all water. You are the blazing lightning. The flames that issue from you burn all beings. Water is based on you. Everything is this entire universe is based on you.

O purifying one! There is nothing in the three worlds that is not known to you. Everyone loves one's womb, so enter the water without any fear.[101] I will make you grow with my eternal brahmana mantras.'"

'Shalya said, "Having been thus praised by the illustrious and supreme sage Brihaspati, the bearer of oblations spoke these supreme words. 'I tell you truthfully that I will show Shakra to you.' The fire entered the water, with its oceans and ponds. It went to the lake where Shatakratu was secretly hidden. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He searched through the lotuses and found Indra of the gods in the middle of a stalk. He returned quickly and told Brihaspati, 'The lord is hidden inside the stalk of a lotus, in a very tiny form.' With all the gods, rishis and gandharvas, Brihaspati went there and propitiated the slayer of Bala because of his earlier deeds. 'O Shakra! You killed the great and terrible asura named Namuchi, and Shambara and Bala, both of whom were terrible in valour. O Shatakratu! Grow and destroy all the enemies. O wielder of the vajra! Arise and see the gods and the rishis who have come. O great Indra! O lord! You saved the world by killing the danavas. You used the foam of the waters, strengthened through Vishnu's energy, to slay Vritra earlier. O king of the gods! O lord of the universe! You are worshipped by all beings. You are the one who should be worshipped. There is no other being in the world who is your equal. O Shakra! You sustain all the beings. You ensured the greatness of the gods. Save the world of the gods. O great Indra! Increase in strength.' When he had been thus propitiated, he slowly grew. He assumed his own form and became endowed with strength. The god asked his preceptor Brihaspati, who was standing before him, 'What task remains? The great asura who was the son of Tvashtra has been killed and so has the extremely gigantic Vritra who wished to devour the world.'[102] Brihaspati replied, 'The human King Nahusha has obtained the kingdom of the gods through the energy of the gods and the masses of rishis. He is grievously oppressing all of us.' Indra asked, 'How did Nahusha obtain the kingdom of the gods, difficult to attain? O Brihaspati! What austerities did he possess and what was his valour?'

'"Brihaspati said, 'The frightened gods wished for a Shakra, after you had given up the position of the great Indra. All the gods, the ancestors, the rishis and the masses of gandharvas then assembled. O Shakra! They went and told Nahusha, "Be our king and the herdsman of the universe." Nahusha replied, "I do not have the capacity. You must make me increase through the energy of your austerities." The gods acted in accordance with these words. He became a king with terrible valour. Having obtained the kingdom of the three worlds, that evil-souled one makes the ascetics bear him throughout the world. There is poison in his extremely terrible eyesight and it robs the energy. Nahusha must never look at you. All the gods are frightened of Nahusha. They roam in secret, so that he may not look at them.'"

'Shalya said, "Thus spoke the best of the Angirasa lineage, Brihaspati. At that time, Kubera, guardian of the world, and the ancient Vaivasvata Yama, and the gods Soma and Varuna also arrived. When they arrived, they told the great Indra. 'It is extremely fortunate that the son of Tvashtra and Vritra have been slain. It is extremely fortunate that you are hale and unhurt. O Shakra! We see that your enemies have been killed.' Shakra then replied in the appropriate way and incited them against Nahusha. 'Nahusha, the king of the gods, is terrible in form. Therefore, you must assist me against him.' They said, 'Nahusha is terrible in form. O god! There is poison in his eyes and we are frightened of him. O king! O Shakra! If you truly vanquish Nahusha, we should also be entitled to our share.'[103] Indra replied, 'It shall be that way. The lord of the waters,[104] Kubera and Yama will also be instated with me. Uniting today, we will vanquish the enemy Nahusha, whose eyesight is terrible.' Then the flaming fire told Shakra, 'Give me a share also and I will render you assistance.' Shakra said, 'You will also get a share. In great sacrifices, there will be one share for Indra and Agni together.'[105] Having thought about this, the illustrious and great Indra, the chastiser of Paka, made Kubera the lord of all the yakshas and riches, Vaivasvata of the ancestors and Varuna of the waters. With due honours, Shakra, the granter of boons, gave them these lordships."'

'Shalya said, "When the intelligent king of the gods was thinking about a means for killing Nahusha, together with the guardians of the world,[106] the illustrious ascetic Agastya appeared. He showed homage to Indra of the gods and said, 'It is fortunate that you have gained in strength. Vishvarupa[107] has been destroyed and the asura Vritra has been slain. O Purandara! It is through good fortune too that Nahusha has been dislodged from the kingdom of the gods. O destroyer of Bala! It is through good fortune that I look upon you now.' Indra replied, 'O maharshi! Welcome. I am happy to see you. Please accept from me water for washing the feet, water for washing the mouth, the cow and the arghya.'[108] Having been thus honoured, that supreme of sages, bull among brahmanas, seated himself and the lord of the gods happily asked him, 'O illustrious one! O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear from you how Nahusha, whose mind was set on evil, has been dislodged from heaven.'

'"Agastya said, 'O Shakra! Listen to the pleasant news of how the evil-souled and evil-acting King Nahusha, insolent because of his strength, has been dislodged from heaven. The immensely fortunate devarshis and the unblemished brahmarshis were exhausted at having to bear the evil-acting Nahusha. O god! O supreme among victorious ones! They posed a question to Nahusha. "Brahma has chanted mantras that should be used when cows are sprinkled.[109] Are these accurate?" O Vasava! This is the question they asked. Nahusha's senses were confounded because of darkness and he replied in the negative. The rishis said, "You are engaged in adharma. You do not know dharma. For us, they are accurate, because the maharshis have uttered them earlier." O Vasava! While he was arguing with the sages, oppressed by adharma, this man touched my head with his foot.[110] O consort of Shachi! Because of this, he lost his energy and his prosperity. I told the anxious one who was oppressed by fear, "This was undertaken by Brahma earlier and was observed by the brahmarshis.[111] They should not be censured and you have censured them. You have touched my head with your foot. O stupid one! The rishis are like Brahma and are unassailable. You have made them carry around your vehicle. Therefore, you will lose your brilliance and will be dislodged from heaven. O evil one! With all your merits exhausted, you will be dislodged and will descend on earth. You will roam for ten thousand years in the form of a giant serpent. After this period is over, you will return again to heaven." O destroyer of enemies! Thus, the evil-souled one was dislodged from the kingdom of heaven. O Shakra! It is through good fortune that the thorn of brahmanas has been uprooted and we are flourishing. O consort of Shachi! Return to heaven and protect the worlds. Conquer your senses and conquer your enemies. Be praised by the maharshis.'"

'Shalya said, "The gods, surrounded by the masses of maharshis, were extremely satisfied. So were the ancestors, the yakshas, the serpents, the rakshasas, the gandharvas, the maidens of the gods and all the masses of apsaras. O lord of the earth! All the lakes, rivers, mountains and oceans approached and said, 'O destroyer of enemies![112] It is through good fortune that you are flourishing. It is through good fortune that the evil Nahusha has been dislodged by the wise Agastya. It is through good fortune that the one who was evil in his conduct has become a snake on the face of the earth.'"'

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'Shalya said, "Then Shakra was praised by the masses of gandharvas and apsaras. He ascended Airavata, the king of elephants, who possessed all the auspicious marks. The immensely energetic god of the fire was there, maharshi Brihaspati, Yama, Varuna and Kubera, lord of riches. Surrounded by all the gods, gandharvas and apsaras, Shakra, the destroyer of Vritra, went to the three worlds. Having been united with the great Indrani, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, was supremely delighted and began to rule as the king of the gods.

'"The illustrious Angira[113] appeared. He honoured Indra of the gods with mantras from Atharva Veda and he bestowed a boon on Atharva Angirasa.[114] 'This Veda will be known by the name of Atharva Angirasa. For example, you will also obtain a share in the sacrifice.'[115] O great king! Having thus honoured the illustrious Atharva Angirasa, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, gave him permission to leave. Indra honoured the thirty gods and the rishis, rich in austerities. O king! He happily ruled over the subjects, in accordance with dharma. Such were the difficulties confronted by Indra, together with his wife. With a desire to kill his enemies, he lived in disguise.

'"O Indra among kings! You should not be angry because you confronted difficulties in the great forest, together with Droupadi and your great-souled brothers. O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Kourava lineage! You will also regain your kingdom, the way Shakra obtained it after killing Vritra. The evil-acting Nahusha was evil in intelligence and hated brahmanas. Because of Agastya's curse, he was destroyed for an eternal period of time. O destroyer of enemies! This will also happen to your evil-souled enemies. Karna, Duryodhana and the others will soon confront their destruction. O brave one! O lord! With your brothers and Droupadi, you will then enjoy the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. This is the account of Shakra's victory, equal in importance to the Vedas. It should be heard by a king who wishes for victory. O supreme among victorious ones! It is for that reason that I have recounted it, for the sake of your victory. O Yudhishthira! Great-souled ones are strengthened when they are praised. O great-souled Yudhishthira! Because of Duryodhana's crimes and the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, the defeat of the kshatriyas will occur. He who always reads this account of Indra's victory, has his soul cleansed and having won heaven, rejoices in the afterlife. That man does not have any fear from enemies and he is never without sons. He never confronts a calamity. He always has a long life. He is triumphant everywhere and is never vanquished."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! The king was thus assured by Shalya. In accordance with the prescribed rites, the supreme among those who uphold dharma showed Shalya homage. Having heard Shalya's words, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, spoke these words to the mighty-armed king of Madra. "There is no doubt that you will be Karna's charioteer and your task is to destroy Karna's energy through your prowess." Shalya replied, "I will do as you have asked me to do and everything else that I am able to do for your sake.” O destroyer of enemies! Having taken his leave from Kounteya, Shalya, the handsome lord of Madra, then went with his army to Duryodhana.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The brave maharatha Satyaki of the Satvatas then arrived with a large army, with the four types of forces, before Yudhishthira. His immensely valorous warriors had arrived from many countries. They were courageous and wielded many weapons. The army was beautiful. It had battleaxes, slings, spears, javelins, clubs, lances, swords, axes, nooses, unblemished scimitars, swords,[116] bows, helmets and many different kinds of arrows that had been washed in oil. With all these weapons, that army dazzled like a cloud. The soldiers shone, like lightning in the midst of a cloud. O king! That akshouhini of soldiers joined Yudhishthira’s army and having entered, vanished, like a small river into the ocean. In a similar way, Dhrishtaketu, bull among the Chedis, brought an akshouhini to the infinitely energetic Pandavas. Jayatsena of Magadha, Jarasandha’s son, arrived before Dharmaraja with one akshouhini of soldiers. O Indra among kings! Pandya, who dwelt by the shores of the ocean, arrived before Yudhishthira, surrounded by many kinds of warriors. When that force arrived, the soldiers looked extremely radiant. O king! Strong and well attired, it was worthy of being looked at. Drupada had an army that consisted of soldiers from many regions. There were handsome and brave men and his maharatha sons too. King Virata of Matsya, the lord of an army, came to the Pandavas, with kings from the mountainous regions. In this way, the great-souled sons of Pandu assembled seven akshouhinis. They had many flags. The Pandavas wished to fight with the Kurus and this delighted them.

‘The delight of Dhritarashtra’s son also increased. Bhagadatta, lord of the earth, gave him one akshouhini of soldiers. That army had *chinas* and *kiratas* and was covered with gold.[117] That army looked like a forest of *karnikaras*.[118] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In a similar way, the brave Bhurishrava and Shalya arrived before Duryodhana, each with one separate akshouhini. With the forces of the Bhojas and the Andhakas, Hardikya Kritavarma went to Duryodhana with one akshouhini. Among those tigers among men, those soldiers, with garlands of wild flowers, looked like crazy elephants sporting in the forest. Among the others, there were those from Sindhu and Souvira, with Jayadratha at the forefront. The lords of the earth arrived and seemed to make the mountains tremble. That large akshouhini of soldiers was resplendent, like many different kinds of rain clouds stirred by the wind. O lord of the earth! Sudakshina of Kamboja joined Kouravya with one akshouhini, together with the Yavanas and the Shakas.[119] Those soldiers looked like a swarm of locusts. Having joined Kouravya, they seemed to disappear.[120] Nila, resident of Mahishmati,[121] came with Nilayudha, and with the immensely valorous lords of the earth who lived in the southern regions. The two kings of Avanti,[122] surrounded by large forces, came to Suyodhana with one akshouhini each. The five brothers, who were kings of Kekaya and were tigers among men, came to Kouravya with one akshouhini and delighted him.[123] O bull among the Bharata lineage! From other directions, many other great-souled lords of the earth arrived and brought three more armies.[124] Thus, Duryodhana had eleven armies. They wished to fight with the Kounteyas and were covered with many flags. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was no space left in Hastinapura then, not even for the foremost kings and the leaders of their armies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The region of the five rivers,[125] Kurujangala,[126] the forest of Rohitaka,[127] the entire desert region, Ahichhatra,[128] Kalakuta, the banks of the Ganga, Varana, Vatadhana and the mountains around the Yamuna—this entire region was extremely large and full of treasure and grain. It was completely covered by the forces of the Kouravas. This was the army that the priest, who had been sent by the king of the Panchalas to the Kouravas, saw.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Drupada’s priest went to Kouravya. Together with Bhishma and Vidura, Dhritarashtra’s son welcomed him with honours.

He[129] asked them about their welfare and whether they were all in good health. In the midst of the leaders of the army, he then spoke the following words. “All of you know what the eternal dharma of kings is. But though it is known, I will refer to it, because it leads up to the words that I will say. It is known that Dhritarashtra and Pandu are sons of the same father. There is no doubt that they possess equal rights to what belonged to their ancestors. The sons of Dhritarashtra have now obtained those ancestral riches. Why have the sons of Pandu not obtained a share of the ancestral riches? This is the way it is. In earlier times too, it is known that the Pandavas did not obtain a share of the ancestral objects. The sons of Dhritarashtra gathered them. There have been several occasions when attempts have been made on their lives. But because their lives were not over, they could not be sent to Yama’s abode. Through their own powers, the great-souled ones again obtained a kingdom. But together with Soubala, that was deceitfully taken away from them by the mean sons of Dhritarashtra. That act was undesirable, but this one[130] approved it. With their wife, these brave ones were terribly mistreated in the assembly hall. They went through many extremely terrible hardships in the forest. Then, in Virata’s city, it was as if they went through another birth.[131] These great-souled ones went through extreme difficulties, as if they had performed evil acts. Having left all that, and all the earlier difficulties, behind, the bulls among the Kurus[132] only wish for conciliation with the Kurus. Knowing their conduct and the conduct of Duryodhana, the well-wishers of Dhritarashtra’s son should entreat with him. Those brave ones do not wish to fight with the Kurus. The Pandavas want what is theirs, without destroying the world. Whatever reasons Dhritarashtra’s son cites in favour of a war, cannot be regarded as a reason, because they[133] are stronger. Dharma’s son has assembled seven akshouhinis. They are eager to fight with the Kurus and are waiting for instructions. There are other tigers among men, who are equal to thousands of akshouhinis. There are Satyaki and Bhimasena and the extremely strong twins. These eleven armies are assembled on one side. But on the other side, there is the mighty-armed Dhananjaya, who possesses many forms. Just as Kiriti surpasses all armies, so does the mighty-armed and immensely radiant Vasudeva. Knowing the multitude of their armies, Kiriti's valour and Krishna's wisdom, which man will wish to fight? Since the stipulated time has passed, in accordance with dharma, you must return what should be returned. Do not let time pass by idly."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing his words, the immensely radiant Bhishma, aged in wisdom, applauded him and spoke these words, which were appropriate to the occasion. "It is fortunate that the Pandavas and their relatives are well. It is fortunate that they have allies now and it is fortunate that they are devoted to dharma. It is fortunate that those brothers, the descendants of the Kuru lineage, desire peace. It is fortunate that they, together with Damodara,[134] do not desire a war. There is no doubt that you have spoken the truth in every way. It is my view that because you are a brahmana, your words are too sharp. There is no doubt that the Pandavas went through hardships, here and in the forest. There is no doubt that, according to dharma, they have a claim on all their ancestral riches. Kiriti Partha is powerful. He is immensely strong and is skilled in the use of weapons. Who is there who can withstand Pandu's son, Dhananjaya, in battle? Even the wielder of the vajra cannot, how can other archers? It is my view that he can stand up against the three worlds."

'While Bhishma was still speaking these words, Karna glanced in Duryodhana's direction and angrily and insolently said, "O brahmana! What you have said is not unknown by any being in the world. What is the point of repeating it again and again? In earlier times, for Duryodhana's sake, Shakuni defeated Pandu's son, Yudhishthira, in the gambling match. He went to the forest for a stipulated time. Without that time being over, he now desires his ancestral kingdom back.[135] The king depends on the strength of the Matsyas and the Panchalas. O learned one! Duryodhana will not give up even one foot of ground because of fear. But if it is according to dharma, he will hand over the entire earth, even to an enemy. If they desire the kingdom of their fathers and grandfathers again, they will again have to roam around in the forest for the time that had been sworn. Then they can approach Duryodhana's lap, without any reason for fear. Their present intentions are against dharma. This is plain stupidity. If the Pandavas forsake dharma and wish for a war, they will remember my words when they confront the best of the Kurus." Bhishma responded, "O Radheya! How can you speak? You should remember your own deeds, when Partha alone vanquished the six charioteers in battle.[136] If we do not act as this brahmana has spoken, we will certainly be killed on the field of battle and will have to eat dust." Dhritarashtra pleaded with Bhishma and placated him. He censured Radheya.

'He then spoke these words. "The words spoken by Shantanu's son, Bhishma, are for our own welfare, for the welfare of the Pandavas and for the entire universe. After reflecting about this, I will send Sanjaya to the Parthas. Therefore, you should now go back to the Pandavas without any delay." Kouravya[137] then treated him hospitably and sent him back to the Pandavas. Having summoned Sanjaya to the assembly hall, he spoke these words.'

Section Fifty

Sanjaya-Yana Parva

This section has 311 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 685(22): 39 shlokas
Chapter 686(23): 27 shlokas
Chapter 687(24): 10 shlokas
Chapter 688(25): 15 shlokas
Chapter 689(26): 28 shlokas
Chapter 690(27): 27 shlokas
Chapter 691(28): 14 shlokas
Chapter 692(29): 51 shlokas
Chapter 693(30): 47 shlokas
Chapter 694(31): 23 shlokas
Chapter 695(32): 30 shlokas

The word yana *means going or voyage. So this parva is about Sanjaya's journey as a messenger. Dhritarashtra sends Sanjaya as an emissary to the Pandavas. This mission doesn't succeed, though Krishna says that he will go as a messenger to the Kouravas. Yudhishthira asks for five villages (through Sanjaya). Sanjaya returns to Hastinapura.*

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'Dritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! They have said that the sons of Pandu have reached Upaplavya. Go there and show homage to Ajatashatru and tell the unblemished one that it is fortunate that they have stationed themselves in that village. O Sanjaya! Honour them all, in words of conciliation. Say that they did not deserve the difficulties of dwelling in exile. Say they will soon be at peace with us. Though they have been falsely acted against, they retain affectionate feelings towards us. O

Sanjaya! I have never seen any kind of falsehood on the part of the Pandavas. Having obtained all the riches through their own valour, the Pandavas offered them to me. Having scrutinized the Parthas for misdemeanours, I have never been able to find any sin in them. They have always performed tasks for dharma and artha, and not in pursuit of happiness, pleasure or desire. They have endured hot and cold, and hunger and thirst. They have controlled sleep, lassitude, anger and delight. They have overcome delusion with fortitude and wisdom. The Parthas have sought to obtain dharma and artha. When the time is right, they have given away riches to their friends. Even living together for a long time does not diminish their friendship. The Parthas honour with homage and riches those to whom these are due. In Ajamidha's lineage,[1] there is no one who hates the Parthas, except that evil, hateful and evil-minded Duryodhana and the even more inferior Karna. Those two engendered anger in those great-souled ones, when they tried to reduce their pleasure and comfort. Duryodhana is used to pleasures and because his valour has increased, he thinks that he is in the right. As long as the Pandavas are alive, only a child can think that their share can be taken away.

'"Ajatashatru's footsteps are followed by Arjuna, Keshava, Vrikodara, Satyaki, Madri's two sons and all the Srinjayas.[2] It is better to give it to him than to fight. Savyasachi, the wielder of the Gandiva, is capable of subjugating the earth alone on his chariot. The unassailable and great-souled Keshava Vishnu is the lord of the three worlds. Which mortal man can stand before him? He is worthy of being honoured by all the gods. The shower of his arrows is like the roar of the clouds and they are as swift as locusts.[3] With a single chariot, the wielder of the Gandiva conquered the northern direction and the northern Kurus.[4] Savyasachi robbed them of their riches and forced the soldiers to follow and pay tribute. In Khandava, Savyasachi, the wielder of the Gandiva, defeated Indra and the gods.[5] Phalguna rendered the offerings to the fire god and increased the honour and the fame of the Pandavas. There is no one who is Bhima's equal in wielding the club, or his equal in riding an elephant. It is said that he is Arjuna's equal on the chariot and he has the valour of ten thousand elephants in the strength of his arms. He is well trained, skilled and swift. As an enemy, he will swiftly burn down the sons of Dhritarashtra. He is intolerant and powerful and even Vasava will be unable to defeat him in battle. Phalguna's brothers[6] have been taught well. They are extremely intelligent and strong and their arms are swift. Like vultures destroying a flock of birds, the sons of Madri will not leave any remnants among the Kurus. The swift Dhrishtadyumna is in their midst and he is regarded as one of the Pandavas. With his advisers, the joy of the Somakas[7] has devoted his soul for the victory of the Panadavas. The aged Virata, the lord of the Shalveyas,[8] is one with whom they have lived for a long time. He has opted for the Pandavas, together with his sons. I have heard that he is devoted to Yudhishthira. The five brave and spirited brothers, who are great archers, have been barred from Kekaya.[9] They desire to obtain the kingdom of Kekaya, and eager to fight, follow the Parthas. All the brave ones among the lords of the earth have been assembled for the sake of the Pandavas. I have heard that these brave ones are devoted to him.[10] With great affection, they have resorted to Dharmaraja. There are warriors who dwell in the mountainous passes on earth. They are pure and have been born in noble lineages. There are valorous *mlecchas*[11] with many weapons. They have single-mindedly assembled for the sake of the Pandavas. The limitless King Pandya is equal to Indra in battle. He is accompanied in battle by many warriors. He is valorous in this world and his energy cannot be countered. That great-souled one has arrived for the sake of the Pandavas. I have heard that Satyaki learnt about weapons from Drona, Arjuna, Vasudeva, Kripa and Bhishma and that he is an equal of Krishna's son.[12] He is also devoted to the cause of the Pandavas.

'"The Chedis and the Karushakas have also joined him, with all the enterprising lords of the earth. In their midst, blazing in prosperity like the sun, used to be the flaming king of Chedi. He was regarded as unassailable in battle. In drawing the bow, he was foremost on earth. He was chief among the kshatriyas. But using his powerful force, Krishna crushed and killed him. In earlier times, he crushed Shishupala in battle, thus increasing the fame of the Yadavas. All the Indras among men, the kings of the Karushas, then increasingly extolled his honour. When Krishna rode on his chariot with Sugriva, they realized that Keshava was invincible.[13] They ran away, deserting the king of Chedi, like small animals at the sight of a lion. Whoever insolently wishes to engage in a duel with Vasudeva, is smitten down lifeless by Krishna, like a karnikara[14] struck down in a storm. O Sanjaya! O son of Gavalgana! On remembering what I have been told about Keshava's valour, undertaken for their[15] sake, and on remembering Vishnu's other deeds, I cannot find any peace. No enemy can withstand those who are led by that lion among Vrishnis. My heart trembles when I hear that the two Krishnas[16] are united on the same chariot. I hope my evil-minded son, whose intelligence is contrary, does not fall foul of them in a fight. O Sanjaya! Otherwise, they will burn down the Kurus, like Indra and Vishnu against the armies of the daityas. It is my view that Dhananjaya is Shakra's equal and the Vrishni warrior[17] is the eternal Vishnu. Kunti's spirited son, Pandava Ajatashatru, is humble and has sought refuge in dharma. The intelligent one has been deceived by Duryodhana. I hope that in his anger, he does not burn down the sons of Dhritarashtra.

'"I am not afraid of Arjuna, Vasudeva, Bhima or the twins, as much as I have always feared the flaming rage of that king. O suta![18] He is united with austerities and brahmacharya. Any resolution that he sets his mind on, is always successful. O Sanjaya! I am extremely terrified of his anger on the field of battle and I know that his cause is just. Therefore, swiftly depart on your chariot. Having gone to the abode of the king of Panchala, you must ask Ajatashatru about his welfare repeatedly, in words full of affection. O son![19] When you meet Janardana, immensely wise, brave and generous, on my instructions, you must ask him about his good health too. Say that Dhritarashtra wishes for peace with the Pandavas. O suta! There is no word of Vasudeva's that Kunti's son will not carry out. Krishna is as dear to them as their own selves. He is intelligent and is always attentive to their cause. On meeting the Pandavas, the Srinjayas, Janardana, Yuyudhana and Virata, on my instructions, you must ask about their health and also that of the five sons of Droupadi. O Sanjaya! At the right time, whatever you think should be said for the welfare of the Bharatas, say that in the midst of the kings, but do not say anything that incites them to the war.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing the words of King Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya went to Upaplavya to meet the infinitely energetic Pandavas. Having approached King Yudhishthira, who had dharma in his soul, the son of the suta first bowed down before him. Sanjaya, Gavalgana’s son, the son of the suta, then said, “O king! O Ajatashatru! It is fortunate that I see you healthy, with all your aides, who are the equals of the great Indra. The wise and aged King Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, has asked about your health. Is Bhima, foremost among the Pandavas, well, and also Arjuna and Madri’s two sons? How about the princess Krishna Droupadi, devoted to truth, the wife of warriors and the mother of sons? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She is the spirited one for whom you offer sacrifices and wish for good fortune.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “O son of Gavalgana! O Sanjaya! You are welcome. O suta! I am delighted and honour you. O learned one! Let me tell you that I am well and my younger brothers are also well. O suta! It has been a long time since I heard about the welfare of King Bharata, the aged one of the Kuru lineage![20] O Sanjaya! I am looking at you with delight, because I think that it is like looking at that Indra among men in person. Our grandfather is aged, intelligent, immensely wise and has all the qualities of dharma. O son![21] Is Kouravya Bhishma well? Does he conduct himself as he used to do earlier? Is the great-souled King Dhritarashtra, Vichitravirya’s son, well, together with his sons? O son of a suta! Is Pratipa’s son, the intelligent and great King Bahlika, well? O son! Are Somadatta, Bhurishrava, Satyasandha, Shala, Drona and his son and the brahmana Kripa, all great archers, well? Are they free from disease? O Sanjaya! They are the foremost archers on earth and all of them are on the side of the Kurus. They are immensely wise and are learned in all the sacred texts. They are foremost among archers on this earth. O son! Are they being treated with due honours? Are those wielders of bows free from disease? Drona’s son, the handsome and great archer whose conduct is good, lives in that kingdom. O son! Is the immensely wise Prince Yuyutsu, the son of a vaishya, well?[22] O son! Is the adviser Karna well? He is the one whose advice the evil Suyodhana follows. O son! Are the aged ladies, the mothers of the Bharatas, the cooks and the wives of the servants well? How about the daughters-in-law, the sons, the nephews, the sisters and the sons of the daughters? Are they at peace? O son! Does the king continue to properly support the brahmanas, as he used to do earlier? O Sanjaya! I hope Dhritarashtra's sons have not discontinued what I used to give to the brahmanas. Does King Dhritarashtra, together with his sons, overlook the transgressions committed by brahmanas? He is the refuge. Does he overlook any shortages they confront in their livelihood? The creator has decreed this pure light in the world of the living for the welfare of all beings. If those evil ones do not restrain their avarice, there will be complete destruction for the Kouravas. Does King Dhritarashtra, together with his sons, make arrangements for the livelihood of the advisers? Are there ill-wishers, who dwell as well-wishers, and bring about dissension and ruin? O son! Do all the Kurus talk about the crimes committed by the Pandavas? When they see the masses of dasyus[23] assemble, do they remember Partha,[24] the foremost warrior? O son! Do they remember the straight-flying and whirring arrows released from the string of the bow? Do they remember the roar of Gandiva? I have not seen anyone on earth who is Arjuna's equal or superior in battle. With a single stroke, he can release sixty-one sharp and well-shafted arrows that have been sharpened on stone. With the club in his hand, Bhimasena is spirited. He makes masses of his enemies tremble. He is like a rutting elephant that tears down a bed of reeds. Do they remember him? Sahadeva, Madri's son, vanquished the assembled Kalingas and Dantakura.[25] The immensely strong one fought with his left hand and his right. Do they remember him? O son of Gavalgana! O Sanjaya! You saw when I sent Nakula out and he brought the western direction under my sway.[26] Do they remember Madri's son? They were defeated in Dvaitavana, when they embarked on their ill-advised expedition with the cattle. The evil-minded ones were taken captive by the enemy and were freed by

Bhimasena and Jaya.[27] I protected Arjuna from the rear and Bhimasena and the twins guarded his flanks. The wielder of the Gandiva defeated the enemies and was unhurt. Do they remember him? O Sanjaya! Through good deeds one cannot make everything all right. With all our souls, we have not been able to sway Dhritarashtra's son."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O Pandava! You have described what you are capable of. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! You have asked about the Kurus and the people. O father![28] O Partha! Those intelligent ones, the best of the Kurus that you have asked about, are well. O Pandava! Know that there are aged and virtuous men around Dhritrashtra's son, but there are evil ones too. Dhritarashtra's son has given to enemies. Why should he then take away the shares of brahmanas? If he follows adharma in his behaviour towards you, like injuring those who do not injure you, that would not be right. If Dhritarashtra, together with his sons, hates those who like you are righteous, that would not be right and would be like injuring one's friends. He does not approve of this and is extremely tormented. O Ajatashatru! The aged one is sorrowing. Having consulted with brahmanas, he has heard that hating one's friends is the most grievous of sins. O god among men! They remember you in their assemblies and Jishnu, the foremost among warriors, in battles. When there is the sound of drums and conch shells, they remember Bhimasena, who wields the club in his hand. In the midst of battle, they remember Madri's two sons, who advanced in all the directions, continuously showering arrows on soldiers. Those maharathas were never perturbed in battle. O king! I think that no one knows the destiny that will befall a man. O Pandava! You have all the qualities of dharma, yet you have had to confront difficulties in the form of hardships. O Ajatashatru! You have been able to overcome your hardships, and even greater ones, because of your wisdom. All the sons of Pandu are like the equals of Indra and will not deviate from dharma for the sake of desire. O Ajatashatru! With the aid of your wisdom, you will be able to bring about the peace that will protect the sons of Dhritarashtra, the Pandavas, the Srinjayas and all the other kings who have gathered. O Ajatashatru! O king! Listen to the words your father Dhritarashtra told me in the night, when his advisers and his sons had gathered.”’[29]

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‘Yudhishthira said, “The Pandavas and the Srinjayas have assembled, together with Janaradana, Yuyudhana and Virata. O son of Gavalgana! O son of a suta! Tell us what Dhritarashtra has instructed you to say.”

‘Sanjaya said, “I show homage to Ajatashatru, Vrikodara, Dhananjaya, the sons of Madri, Shouri Vasudeva, Yuyudhana, Chekitana and Virata, and also to the aged lord of Panchala, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and Yajnaseni.[30] All of you listen to my words, which I speak for the welfare of the Kurus. King Dhritarashtra welcomes peace. He has asked me to swiftly yoke my chariot. If the king,[31] his relatives, his brothers and his sons so desire, let the Pandavas find peace. The Parthas are endowed with all the qualities of dharma. They are steadfast, mild and upright. They have been born in a noble lineage and are non-violent and generous. They are restrained by shame and are determined in their deeds. Mean deeds do not befit you. O Bhimasenas![32] Such is your spirit. Any mean act by you would be glaring, like a spot of collyrium on a white garment. Who will knowingly commit an evil act that is seen to bring about complete destruction? That will be sin and will lead to devastation and hell. A victory obtained thus will be equal to a defeat. Blessed are those who act for their relatives. They are your sons, your well-wishers and your relatives. If prosperity can be ensured for the Kurus, they are prepared to give up their lives, which are of limited value, for your cause. O Parthas! If you subjugate the Kurus, and destroy and vanquish all your enemies, your being alive will be equal to being dead. It is not right that you should live after killing your kin. Who is capable of fighting with you, even if Indra and all the gods were to help? You have Keshava, Chekitana and Satyaki and are protected by Parshata’s arms.[33] O king! But who can withstand in battle and vanquish the Kurus, protected by Drona, Bhishma, Ashvatthama, Shalya, Kripa and the others, and protected by Radheya and the other lords of the earth? The king who is Dhritarashtra's son has a large army. Who can withstand it, without being killed and destroyed? Therefore, I do not see the slightest welfare, either in victory, or in defeat. Why should the Parthas commit an act that is against dharma, like those born in low and inferior lineages? Therefore, I bow down and seek the favours of Vasudeva and the aged lord of Panchala. With hands joined in salutation, I seek refuge with you. How can there be safety for the Kurus and the Srinjayas? O Vasudeva! There is not a single one of your words that Dhananjaya will fail to follow. He will give up his life, if you were to ask him. O learned one! I am speaking to you, so that my objective is accomplished. The king,[34] with Bhishma at the forefront, desires that there should be supreme peace amongst you."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O Sanjaya! What words have you heard from me, desirous of fighting, that you are frightened of war? O son! The absence of war is superior to war. O suta! Having obtained that,[35] who goes to war? O Sanjaya! If all of a man's desires are satisfied, without his having done anything, I know that he will never do anything.[36] There is nothing more foolish than going to war. Why should a man go to war, unless he has been cursed by destiny? The Parthas undertake tasks that bring about happiness, for the sake of dharma and the welfare of the world. He, who undertakes tasks for the sake of happiness, avoids difficult tasks that bring on unhappiness. He desires happiness and tries to avoid unhappiness.

'"But one, who seeks to bring pleasure to his senses, is overcome by desire and torments his own body. Having become confounded, he confronts unhappiness. A fire that has been kindled becomes more energetic and stronger if more kindling is added. Thus, even if the objective has been attained, desire is not satisfied and is like a fire with clarified butter added to it. Look at the great abundance of objects of desire that the king who is Dhritarashtra's son enjoys. Compare it with our diminished lot. He is not the lord of inferior beings. He does not hear the songs of inferior beings. He does not inhale the fragrance of inferior garlands. He does not use inferior unguents. He does not don inferior garments. Why have we then been banished from the land of the Kurus? Having thus driven us out, his heart is still consumed by the desire in his body. The king is himself partial and it is not proper that he should expect others to be impartial. The way one behaves towards others, is exactly reflected in the way others behave towards one's own self. At the end of the cold season,[37] in the height of summer, one has kindled a fire in a dense forest with dry wood, so that it grows because of the wind. Having done this, one suffers when one tries to escape. O Sanjaya! Having obtained the prosperity, why does King Dhritarashtra lament now? He has always accepted the evil-minded advice of his evil son and his stupid advisers. Unworthy himself, Suyodhana flouted the good advice rendered by the trustworthy Vidura. Because of affection towards his son, King Dhritarashtra knowingly deviated from the path of dharma. He[38] is wise among the Kurus and wishes for the welfare of the Kurus. He is extremely learned, eloquent and of virtuous conduct. But out of affection for his son, King Dhritarashtra did not listen to Vidura. He[39] himself desires honour, but does not show honour. He is selfish and envious and transgresses dharma and artha for the sake of his own interests. He is ill-spoken and is overcome by intolerance. He is addicted to desire and his heart is evil. He is perverse and insults those who are superior. He seeks for revenge. He injures his friends. O Sanjaya! He is evil-minded. Out of affection for that son, King Dhritarashtra knowingly deviated from the objective of dharma. O Sanjaya! When gambling, it occurred to me that the destruction of the Kurus might have arrived. Though Vidura spoke laudable and wise words, Dhritarashtra paid no attention to them. When they no longer followed the advice of Kshatta,[40] the Kurus started to face hardships. As long as they followed his wise advice, the kingdom continued to prosper. O suta! Now hear from me about the ones who advise Dhritarashtra's son. They are Duhshasana, Shakuni and the son of the suta.[41] O son of Gavalgana! Behold his stupidity.

'"Therefore, when I reflect on it, I do not see how there can be welfare for the Kurus and the Srinjayas. Dhritarashtra has usurped the wealth of others and has exiled the far-sighted Vidura.[42] Dhritarashtra and his son now aspire for a great kingdom on this earth, without any rivals. It is because of this that there cannot be any peace. They think that whatever is mine, should also be theirs. Karna thinks that it is possible to take up weapons against Arjuna in battle. There were many great battles in earlier times? Why was Karna not a source for recourse then?[43] Karna knows and so does Suyodhana, Drona knows and so does the grandfather,[44] and all the other Kurus also know that there is no wielder of the bow like Arjuna. All the Kurus know, and so do all the other assembled lords of the earth, that Duryodhana can perform evil acts only if Phalguna, the destroyer of enemies, is not present. Dhritarashtra's son thinks that he can take away the riches that I have gathered, from the Pandavas. Knowing these intentions, Kiriti will fight with a bow that is as long as a palm tree. The sons of Dhritarashtra survive as long as they have not heard the twang of the extended Gandiva. Overlooking the force of the angry Bhimasena, Suyodhana thinks that he has been successful in his objective. O son! Even Indra cannot take away my riches as long as Bhimasena is alive. O suta! There are Dhananjaya, Nakula and the brave Sahadeva too. O suta! The aged king, together with his son, should use his intelligence. O Sanjaya! Otherwise, the sons of Dhritarashtra will be consumed by the rage of the Pandavas in battle. You know the hardships that we have confronted. O Sanjaya! In your honour, I pardon them. You know what we have obtained earlier from the Kouravas and the conduct that we have shown towards Dhritarashtra's son. We will behave in the same way today. As you have said, we will strive for peace. Let me have my kingdom in Indraprastha. Let Suyodhana, foremost among the Bharatas, agree."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O Pandava! You have always based yourself on dharma. O Partha! That is famous in the world and can be seen. But this great flow of life is always transient. O Pandava! On noticing that, stay away from destruction. O Ajatashatru! If the Kurus refuse to return your share without a war, I think that it is better to be a beggar in the kingdoms of Andhaka and Vrishni than to obtain a kingdom through war. A man's life lasts for a short time. That flow is always subject to unhappiness and is unstable. Therefore, one should not shorten life. O Pandava! One should never resort to an evil act. Desire is created in man. O Indra among men! This causes obstructions in the path of dharma. If a persevering man strikes it[46] down in advance, he obtains unparalleled praise in this world. O Partha! The thirst for riches is a bond. It ties one down from the pursuit of dharma. He who chooses dharma is enlightened. He, who strives for desire, is diminished because of that. O father! He, who places dharma at the forefront of all deeds, obtains great radiance, like the sun. A man, who diminishes dharma, may obtain the earth. But because of his evil intelligence, he will be ruined. You have studied the Vedas. You have followed brahmacharya. You have observed sacrifices. You have donated to brahmanas. You know about the supreme objective. You have given many of your years to pleasure. He, who devotes himself excessively to pleasure and does not perform deeds according to the practice of yoga, is extremely unhappy when his riches are exhausted. He is incited by the force of desire and is immersed in misery. In the same way, a foolish one, who abandons dharma and follows adharma in the pursuit of riches, does not believe in the hereafter. When he gives up his body, that evil one is burnt in the hereafter. The deeds that have been performed are not destroyed in the hereafter, be they good or be they evil. The good and evil deeds precede the doer. The doer only follows them from behind. Your deeds are as pure as the fragrant and succulent food offered with devotion to brahmanas and the stipends offered at sacrifices, in accordance with the proper rites. O Partha! Deeds are performed in this world. In the hereafter, there are no deeds to be performed. You have performed great deeds, applauded by righteous ones, for the sake of the hereafter. Death brings an end to old age and fear. There is no hunger or thirst, nor anything that causes unpleasantness. There is no deed that remains to be done, but for the satisfaction of the senses.

'"O Indra among men! Such are the fruits of our deeds. O Pandava! Do not bear the load of what is pleasing to the heart and arises out of anger or the pursuit of happiness. Do that which brings pleasure in both the worlds. After an act is over, there remains one's good name, truthfulness, self-control, honesty and non-violence. Horse-sacrifices, royal sacrifices and other sacrifices are evil deeds that transgress the limits.[47] O Parthas! After all this time, if you follow common norms and perform evil deeds, what was the reason for the Pandavas to spend many unhappy years in the forest, for the sake of observing dharma? You could have assembled an army without the exile. It was under your control earlier. The Panchalas have always been your advisers and Janardana and the brave Yuyudhana. That's also true of the king of Matsya, who rides a golden chariot, and his sons; and Virata, with his warrior sons; and the kings whom you had conquered earlier. All of them would have gathered to your side. With all these great aides and a powerful army, honoured by Vasudeva and Arjuna, you would have slain the best of warriors in the arena of battle. You would have destroyed the insolence of Dhritarashtra's son. Why did you increase the strength of your rivals? Why did you reduce the number of your aides? O Pandava! If you wished to fight, why did you dwell for so many years in the forest and why have you picked the wrong time now? O Pandava! A foolish one desires to fight, or one who is unaware of dharma and deviates from the path that ensures welfare. Even a wise person, or one who knows about dharma, can deviate from the path of welfare because of anger. O Partha! But your intelligence is not fixed on adharma. Never have you committed an evil act out of anger. What is the reason for you to be attracted to a course of action that is counter to wisdom? O great king! Wrath is a bitter headache that does not result from disease. It destroys fame and gives rise to evil fruits. Unlike those who are sinful, those who are righteous should swallow it. Swallow your anger and be pacified. Who desires to be tied down by evil? Forgiveness is superior to pleasures, when the latter results from Shantanu's son, Bhishma, and Drona and his sons being slain. O Partha! Kripa, Shalya, Somadatta's son, Vikarna, Vivimshati, Karna, Duryodhana—having killed all these, tell me what kind of happiness you will obtain. O king! Having obtained the entire earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, you will not be able to conquer old age and death, pleasure and displeasure, happiness and unhappiness. Knowing this, do not wage war. If you wish this because of the desires of your advisers, and it is because of them that you are about to err like this, then give everything to them and go away. Do not deviate from the path that leads you to the road followed by the gods."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O Sanjaya! You have undoubtedly spoken the truth. As you have said, dharma is supreme among all deeds. O Sanjaya! But you should not censure me before you know whether I am following dharma or adharma. Adharma sometimes adopts the guise of dharma. And dharma sometimes appears as adharma. According to their intelligence, the learned ones distinguish between the two. When there is a calamity, depending on one's livelihood, dharma and adharma should be followed accordingly.[48] O Sanjaya! Know from me that in times of calamity, the pursuit of dharma often implies the first.[49] When one's natural means of livelihood has gone, one should strive to perform the duties that have been laid down. O Sanjaya! When the natural means of livelihood are present, both should be censured.[50] The creator has laid down a course of action for brahmanas who wish to remedy wrongs. O Sanjaya! When there is a time of calamity, those who do not act, or those who do not act correctly, are both reprehensible. According to livelihood, the right course of action has always been laid down, including for those who are not brahmanas and for those who do not follow the Vedas. It is only those righteous ones who can tell us what is best. This is the path that has been followed by our fathers earlier, and by our grandfathers and those who have preceded them. Those who are wise undertake these tasks and I do not think that this is the way of the unrighteous. O Sanjaya! Through the path of adharma, I do not crave whatever riches exist on this earth, whatever is with the thirty gods and beyond them, in Prajapati's world, in heaven, or in Brahma's world. The learned Krishna is the lord of dharma. He is skilled and knows about the right policy. He is honoured by the brahmanas. In many ways, he has instructed many powerful kings like the Bhojas. The immensely famous Keshava must tell me whether I should be censured for giving up peace and following my own dharma of embarking on a fight.[51] Vasudeva wishes for the welfare of both sides. The Shinis, the Chaitrakas,[52] the Andhakas, the Varshneyas, the Bhojas, the Kukkuras[53] and the Srinjayas resort to Vasudeva's intelligence to subdue their enemies and delight their well-wishers. Led by Krishna, Ugrasena and all the others among the Vrishnis and the Andhakas are like the equals of Indra. They are intelligent and have truth as their valour. The immensely strong Yadavas are prosperous. Babhru, the king of Kashi, has obtained supreme prosperity after having obtained Krishna as a brother and an instructor.[54] Vasudeva satisfies all his desires, like a showering cloud brings satisfaction to beings after the summer. O son! This is the kind of person Keshava is. We know that he knows how to decide on a course of action. We are devoted to the virtuous Krishna. We will not transgress Keshava's words."'

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'Vasudeva said, "O Sanjaya! I desire that the Pandavas are not destroyed and that they are prosperous. I love them. O suta! In the same way, I desire the prosperity of King Dhritarashtra and his many sons. O Sanjaya! It has always been my desire that there should be peace between them and I have told them this. I hear that this is also desired by the king.[55] I think that this is also best for the Pandavas. O Sanjaya! Pandava[56] has already exhibited a kind of peacefulness that is extremely difficult to attain. Though Dhritarashtra and his sons are avaricious, there need not be any quarrel between them. O Sanjaya! You know the nature of dharma better than I do or Yudhishthira does. O Sanjaya! Why are you then finding fault with Pandava, who is endeavouring to accomplish his own duty? As is known, his conduct towards his relative has always been virtuous, right from the beginning. On the present issue, there is a difference of opinion among the brahmanas. Some say that deeds bring success in the hereafter. Others discard deeds and say that success comes from learning. It is known to brahmanas that those who have food, but fail to eat it, will remain hungry. It is only knowledge which leads to deeds that bears fruit, not other kinds.[57] Deeds can be seen to bear fruits. One who is thirsty is satisfied by drinking water.

'"O Sanjaya! Therefore, the rites of deeds have been laid down and it is deeds that circulate. Thus, I think that there is nothing superior to deeds. It is weak and vain to speak otherwise. Elsewhere,[58] the gods are radiant because of their deeds. It is because of deeds that the wind blows. Determining day and night through his deeds, the sun ceaselessly rises every day. Ceaselessly, the moon goes through fortnights and months, through nakshatras and conjunctions. The fire burns ceaselessly and through his deeds, kindles for the welfare of beings. Through her strength, the goddess earth ceaselessly bears a heavy load. The rivers ceaselessly bear the waters that satisfy the wishes of all beings. The destroyer of Bala[59] has a lot of energy and ceaselessly showers down, resounding in the sky and in heaven. He ceaselessly practises brahmacharya, desiring to be the foremost among the gods. Shakra gave up happiness and his mind's desires. He became the foremost through his deeds. He steadfastly protects truth and dharma, with self-control, fortitude, equanimity and amiability. Cultivating all these, the foremost Maghavan obtained the kingdom of the gods. Brihaspati controlled his mind and restraining his soul in the proper fashion, followed brahmacharya. He gave up happiness and controlled his senses. He thus obtained praise and reverence from the gods.[60] The nakshatras shine because of their deeds. So do the Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Vishvas,[61] King Yama, Vaishravana Kubera, the gandharvas, the yakshas and the shining apsaras. The sages shine there[62] because they observe brahmacharya, study the Vedas and follow the rituals. You know this to be the dharma of all the worlds and for brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. You know what learned ones know.

'"O Sanjaya! Why are you then pleading for the Kouravas? Know that he is always devoted to the sacred texts and to *ashvamedha* and *rajasuya*.[63] He is also united with bows and armour, with arm guards, chariots and weapons. If the Parthas knew of some other means of accomplishing the objective, without slaughtering the Kouravas, whereby dharma could be saved and the purity of deeds preserved, they would force Bhimasena to follow the conduct of an arya.[64] But if they are engaged in deeds followed by their ancestors, and in the process, destiny makes them confront death, that death will be regarded as praiseworthy, because they will have accomplished their own deeds, to the best of their capacities. I think that you know everything and I would like to hear your response to a question. Is it better for a king to wage war in accordance with dharma, or is it better for him not to wage war in accordance with dharma? O Sanjaya! You must first consider the division into the four varnas and the deeds that are decreed for each. After having determined the duty of the Pandavas, you can then praise or censure it, according to your inclination. A brahmana must study, sacrifice, give, visit the sacred *tirtha*s, teach, officiate for those who are fit to sacrifice and receive gifts that he knows he can accept. A king must protect his subjects, act in accordance with dharma, steadfastly give, perform sacrifices, study all the Vedas, take a wife and observe the sacred deeds of a householder. A vaishya must not study. He must steadfastly sustain agriculture, animal husbandry and trade, accumulate riches, do what is pleasant for brahmanas and kshatriyas and observe the conduct of dharma and the sacred deeds of a householder. The ancient dharma of shudras is known to be that he must serve and honour brahmanas. Both study and sacrifice are prohibited for him. He must ceaselessly ensure the welfare of all beings. The king must tirelessly protect all the varnas in the pursuit of their own dharma. He must not be addicted to desire and must be impartial across all beings. He must never be addicted to desire that is adharma. If there is someone with all the qualities of dharma, he must acknowledge his superiority. He must chastise inferior subjects. If he acts in this fashion, he is virtuous. If he violently seizes land that belongs to others, intoxicated because of his powers, he angers destiny and this leads to strife between kings, creating armour, weapons and bows. For the task of killing dasyus, Indra created armour, weapons and bows. Whether riches are stolen secretly in private, or whether they are stolen forcibly in public, the two crimes are equally reprehensible. O Sanjaya! How is the act of Dhritarashtra's son different?

'"Overcome by intolerance and because of his avarice, he thinks that whatever he desires is dharma. The share of the Pandavas was determined. Why should we be robbed of those by others? If we are killed in battle, that will be praiseworthy. Inheritance is better than the conquest of another's kingdom.[65] O Sanjaya! In the midst of their kingdom,[66] recount this ancient dharma to the Kouravas. Those who have been assembled by Dhritarashtra's sons are stupid and evil and are under the control of death. Behold again the evil deed that the Kurus committed in the midst of their assembly hall. The illustrious Droupadi is the beloved wife of the Pandavas and she has virtuous conduct. With Bhishma at the forefront, the Kurus ignored it when she was seized by that lecher[67] and was forced to weep. If the Kurus who were assembled there, young and old, had tried to prevent it then, Dhritarashtra would have performed an act I would have approved of. This would have been a good deed for his sons too. Disregarding all norms, Duhshasana dragged Krishna to the midst of the assembly hall, with her fathers-in-law persent. Brought there, she was in a pitiable state, but found no protector other than Kshatta.[68] The kings in that assembly hall were such wretches that they were incapable of protesting. For the sake of dharma, Kshatta was the only one who spoke. Knowing dharma, he censured the one who possesses limited intelligence.[69] You did not speak of dharma in that assembly hall. But you see it fit to instruct the Pandavas now. However, when she was brought into that assembly hall, Krishna did perform a pure deed that was extremely difficult. Like a boat in the midst of the ocean, she freed herself and the Pandavas from that difficult situation.[70] When Krishna stood before her fathers-in-law in that assembly hall, the son of the suta[71] spoke to her. 'O Yajnaseni! You have no other recourse left. Go to Dhritarashtra's house. They have been defeated and are no longer your husbands. O beautiful one! Choose another man as your husband.' This was as heart-rending as a stake. They were extremely terrible and pierced the heart. Karna's words were like arrows that possessed great energy. They were embedded in Bibhatsu Phalguna's heart. When they donned garments that were made of black antelope skin, Duhshasana also spoke these harsh words. 'All of you are like sterile and destroyed sesamum seeds. You have been ruined and will go to heaven for a very long time.' Shakuni, the deceitful king of Gandhara, spoke to the Parthas at the time of gambling with the dice. 'Nakula has been won. What stake is left other than Krishna Yajnaseni?'[72] O Sanjaya! You yourself know these reprehensible words that were spoken at the time of the gambling.

'"I wish to go there myself, to settle matters before there is a disaster. If I can bring peace to the Kurus, without sacrificing the interests of the Pandavas, I will accomplish a great and auspicious task. I will free the Kurus from the noose of death. I will speak words that are full of wisdom. They will be based on dharma and will be in conformity with the principles of non-violence. When I go there, I hope the Kurus honour me and the sons of Dhritarashtra listen to my words. If it is otherwise, Phalguna will ride on his chariot and Bhima will arm himself for war. Know that because of their own evil deeds, the wretched sons of Dhritarashtra will be burnt down. When the Pandavas were vanquished,[73] Dhritarashtra's son spoke many terrible words. Wielding a club in his hand, the enraged Bhimasena will remind Duryodhana about these at the right moment. The angry Suyodhana is a giant tree. Karna is the trunk and Shakuni constitutes the branches. Duhshasana is the abundance of flowers and fruit. The foolish King Dhritarashtra is the root. Yudhishthira is a giant tree that is full of dharma. Arjuna is the trunk and Bhimasena constitutes the branches. The sons of Madri constitute the abundance of flowers and fruit. The brahman and brahmanas constitute the root. King Dhritarashtra and his sons are the forest. O Sanjaya! The Pandavas are the tigers. Do not cut down the forest with its tigers. Do not banish the tigers from the forest. Without the forest, the tiger is killed. Without the tigers, the forest is cut down. Therefore, the tiger protects the forest and the forest sustains the tiger. O Sanjaya! Dhritarashtra's sons are like the creepers of dharma, but the Pandavas are shala trees. A creeper cannot grow without resorting to a large tree. The Parthas are positioned to serve, but those scorchers of enemies are also positioned, ready to fight. Let Dhritarashtra, lord of men, decide on what he has to do. The great-souled Pandavas are the followers of dharma and are positioned for peace. But they are capable of fighting. O learned one! Relate this accurately."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O god among gods among men! O Pandava! I will now take your leave and go. May you be fortunate. As a result of the distress in my mind, I hope I have not spoken words that should not be spoken and caused you distress. I am taking my leave of Janardana, Bhimasena, Arjuna, Madri's sons, Satyaki and Chekitana. May you be happy and prosperous. O kings! Look at me with eyes that are full of equanimity."

'Yudhishthira replied, "O Sanjaya! With our permission, depart in peace. You have not said anything unpleasant. They know, and all of us know, that when you speak in the midst of an assembly hall, you are pure in your soul. O Sanjaya! You were sent as an appropriate messenger. You are extremely dear to us. You have spoken words full of welfare and you have exhibited good conduct. O suta! Your views have not been clouded by delusion. When we have spoken the truth, you have not been angered. You have not spoken harsh and piercing words. Nor have you spoken bitter and acerbic words. O suta! We know that your words are guided by dharma and artha and that they are full of meaning, not meant to hurt. For us, you are a beloved messenger. Vidura is the only other one who could have come here. In earlier times, we have seen you frequently. You are our friend, like Dhananjaya himself. O Sanjaya! Having quickly departed from here, serve the brahmanas who are deserving of worship. They are pure and brave and are devoted to the Vedas.[74] They have been born in noble lineages and have all the qualities of dharma. The brahmanas are devoted to studying and live on alms. There are ascetics who always live in the forest. Greet all the elders on my behalf. O raconteur! Ask about the welfare of each one.

'"You must meet King Dhritarashtra's priest, his preceptors and all his sacrificial priests.[75] O son![76] You must greet each one, as he deserves. O suta! You must meet each one and ask about his welfare. Our beloved preceptor[77] follows brahmacharya and the Vedas and never deviates from the right course of action. You must greet and honour Drona, as he deserves. He is the one who made the four techniques of weaponry known again.[78] You must swiftly go to Ashvatthama and ask about his welfare. He has studied and follows the Vedas.[79] He is the one who made the four techniques of weaponry known again. He is as swift as the son of a gandharva. You must then go to the abode of Sharadvat's son.[80] He is a maharatha and supreme among those who know about weapons. O Sanjaya! You must remember me repeatedly and touch Kripa's feet with your hand. You must also grasp the feet of Bhishma, supreme among the Kurus, and mention me to him. Valour, non-violence, austerities, wisdom, good conduct, learning and fortitude reside in him. O Sanjaya! You must salute the aged king[81] and tell him that I am well. He governs the Kurus with the sight of wisdom. He is extremely learned and the learned one tends to the aged.

'"O Sanjaya! Dhritarashtra's eldest son is evil, stupid, deceitful and prone to bad conduct. He now rules over the entire earth. O son![82] You must ask about Suyodhana's welfare. O Sanjaya! His younger brother is equally evil. He has always been like him in conduct.[83] He is a great archer and supreme among the Kuru warriors. O son![84] You must ask about Duhshasana's welfare. O son![85] You must ask about the welfare of the son of the vaishya.[86] He has never liked the idea of a war. He is immensely wise and has all the qualities of dharma. He is supreme among all wise ones and is never confused. O son![87] Ask about the welfare of Chitrasena.[88] He is unmatched in cutting and playing with dice.[89] He is extremely deceitful and is skilled in gambling and knows the heart of the dice. He is incapable of being defeated in duels with the dice. You must greet the learned bull of the Bahlika lineage, who has always had no other desire than that of there being peace among the Bharatas. He may happily greet me again, as he used to do earlier. It is my view that Somadatta must also be honoured. He is supreme among those who possess all the qualities. He is learned and is never cruel.

Because of his affection, he has always endured all the injury.[90] O Sanjaya! Somadatta's son[91] is the most venerable among the Kurus. He is our brother and friend. He is a great archer and supreme among charioteers. Ask him about his welfare and that of his advisers. There are other young ones who are chief among the Kurus. They are our sons, grandsons and brothers. If you meet them along the way, on my behalf, ask about their welfare. Dhritarashtra's son has assembled kings to fight against the Pandavas. There are the foremost among the Vasatis, the Shalvakas, the Kekayas, the Ambashthas and the Trigartas. There are brave ones from the east, the north, the south, the west and all the mountainous regions. They are non-violent and are proper in conduct. O son![92] Ask all of them about their welfare. There are those who ride on elephants, horses and chariots, infantry and large masses of aryas. Tell all of them that I am in good health. Ask all of them if they are in good health. There are advisers who have been appointed by the king. There are gatekeepers and others who lead the army. There are those who calculate revenue and expenditure. There are great ones who think about his[93] welfare. The king from the mountainous region of Gandhara, Shakuni, is unrivalled in cutting and playing with the dice. O suta! He heightens the honour of Dhritarashtra's son. O son![94] He is false in his intelligence. But ask him about his welfare. O son![95] Ask about Vaikartana's[96] welfare. He is unmatched in deluding the deluded. The Pandavas are impossible to vanquish. But alone, on a single chariot, that brave one hopes to defeat them. Ask about the welfare of the infinitely intelligent and far-sighted Vidura. He is devoted to us. He is our senior and our servant. He is our father, our mother and our well-wisher. He is our adviser.

'"O Sanjaya! The aged women who possess all the qualities are regarded by us like our mothers. Meet with all those aged women when they are assembled together, and on our behalf, show them honour. 'O those among you who have sons who are alive! Do your sons treat you properly and without violence?' O Sanjaya! Having said this, subsequently tell them that Ajatashatru and his sons are well.[97] O Sanjaya! There are those whom you know to be our wives.[98] O son![99] All of them should be asked about their welfare. ‘Are you protected properly? Do you have fragrances? Are you uncensured and not distracted when you undertake the duties of the household? O fortunate ones! Do you behave properly towards your fathers-in-law? Are you well and are you treated without violence? Can you ensure your own conducts, so that your husbands remain devoted towards you?’ O Sanjaya! There are those whom you know to be our daughters-in-law.[100] They have all the qualities and have been born in noble lineages. When you meet them, tell them that Yudhishthira has happily saluted those mothers of children. O Sanjaya! You must meet the maidens in their houses. On my behalf, you must ask them about their welfare and say, ‘May you be fortunate and may you have husbands who are devoted to you. May you also be devoted to your husbands.’ O son![101] You must ask about the welfare of the courtesan women. ‘Do you have ornaments, garments and fragrances? Are you happy and prosperous, without being frightened? Are your visits short? Are your words shorter?’[102] The sons of the servant maids, the servants of the Kurus, the many hunchbacked and crippled ones who have sought refuge, must be told that I am well. Ask how the worst among them fares. ‘Do you continue to be engaged in your old pursuits? Does Dhritarashtra’s son provide you objects of pleasure? There are those who have lost limbs, or are miserable, or dwarfs. Does Dhritarashtra’s son treat you non-violently?’ There are many who are blind and aged. There are many who have to earn a living through their hands. Tell them that I am well and ask how the worst among them fares. ‘Do not be unhappy because of this sorry life. This must be because of sins committed in earlier lives. After subduing my enemies through the aid of my well-wishers, I will sustain you with garments and food. I used to provide stipends to brahmanas. I will provide more in the future. I will see all of you properly taken care of.’ Tell the king[103] whatever you hear about their success. There are those who are unprotected, weak and always stupid, preoccupied with their own selves. They are miserable in every way. O son![104] You must ask about their welfare on my behalf.

'"O son of a suta! There are others who have sought refuge with Dhritarashtra's son, arriving from many directions. On seeing them, or anyone who is deserving of honour, ask if they are well in every way. There are those who have come and others who are arriving—kings and messengers from all the directions. O suta! Ask all of them about their welfare. Later, you should tell them that I am well. There are no warriors on earth who are equal to the ones Dhritarashtra's son has obtained. But dharma is eternal. And my dharma is that all immensely strong enemies must be destroyed. O Sanjaya! You must make Dhritarashtra's son, Suyodhana, listen to my final words. 'The heart in your body has a desire to rule the Kurus without any rivals. This has no rationale. We will not do anything that doesn't bring you pleasure. Give us our Shakrapura.[105] O foremost among the warriors of the Bharata lineage! Otherwise, be prepared to fight.'"'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O Sanjaya! The creator places the righteous, the unrighteous, the young, the old, the weak and the strong under his control. The lord grants learning to children and childishness to the learned. He grants all this when he provides the seed in a being. There is no need to tell you more. You will report it the way it actually is, now that we have cheerfully consulted each other. O son of Gavalgana! Go to the Kurus and show homage to the immensely strong Dhritarashtra. Touch his feet and ask about his welfare. When he is seated, surrounded by the Kurus, tell him, 'O king! It is through your valour that the Pandavas are living happily. O destroyer of enemies! It is through your favours that they obtained a kingdom while they were still young. After having established them in a kingdom first, do not destroy them by ignoring them now.' O Sanjaya! No one should enjoy everything alone. 'O father! We will live together. Do not fall prey to enmity.' In the same way, lower your head in homage and recount my name to Shantanu's son, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Bharatas. After having greeted him, you should tell the grandfather, 'When Shantanu's lineage was drowning, you rescued it once.[106] O father![107] O grandfather! Act again in that fashion so that your grandsons live with affection among themselves.’ You should speak in the same way to Vidura, the adviser to the Kurus. ‘O peaceful one! O one who wishes for the welfare of Yudhishthira! Speak words of peace.’

‘“Then you should repeatedly speak to the intolerant Prince Suyodhana, entreating him when he is seated in the midst of the Kurus. When Krishna was brought alone into the assembly hall, evil was done towards her. But we ignored it patiently, so that the Kurus might not be slaughtered. The Pandavas have borne hardships earlier and will do so again, though they are stronger now. All the Kurus know this. ‘O peaceful one! You sent us into exile, with deerskin as our garments. We bore those miseries, so that the Kurus might not be slaughtered. When Duhshasana, with your approval, oppressed Krishna by the hair in the assembly hall, we overlooked that also. O scorcher of enemies! But we will fight for our rightful share now. O bull among men! Turn your mind away from avarice and from grasping the possessions of others. O king! Let there be peace and harmony amongst us. We wish for peace. Give us one province from your kingdom—Kushasthala, Vrikosthala, Asanti, Varanavata and whichever else you pick as the fifth and the last. O Suyodhana! Give five villages to the brothers.’[108] O Sanjaya! O immensely wise one! Let there be peace between us and our relatives. Let brother be united with brother, and let father be united with son. With smiles, let the Panchalas mingle with the Kurus. I desire to see the Kurus and the Panchalas uninjured. O son![109] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let all of us live happily in peace. O Sanjaya! I am as ready for peace, as I am for war. For the sake of dharma and artha, I can be mild. But I can also be terrible.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘With the permission of Pandava, Sanjaya then departed, having carried out all the instructions of the great-souled Dhritarashtra. Having reached Hastinapura, he entered swiftly and reaching the inner quarters, told the gatekeeper, “O gatekeeper! Tell Dhritarashtra that I have returned after meeting the Pandavas. If he is awake, tell him that Kshatta[110] wishes to enter after the king knows about his return.” The gatekeeper said, “O lord of the earth! I bow down before you. Sanjaya is here and is waiting at the gate, wishing to meet you. Your messenger has returned, after meeting the Pandavas. O king! Issue orders about what he should do.” Dhritarashtra replied, “Tell him that I am well and am waiting for him. Let Sanjaya be welcome and let him enter. I have always been ready for him. Why is Kshatta waiting at the gate then?” With the king’s permission, the son of a suta entered the large palace that was protected by wise and brave aryas. The king who was Vichitravirya’s son was seated on a throne and he joined his hands in salutation. Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! I am Sanjaya and I am bowing down before you. I have returned after meeting the Pandavas, gods among men. Yudhishthira, Pandu’s intelligent son, has greeted you and has asked about your welfare. O king! He has affectionately asked about your sons and wishes to know if you are happy with your sons and grandsons, and with your well-wishers and advisers, and with all those who are earning a living through you.” Dhritarashtra replied, “O son![111] O Sanjaya! I am greeting you on your return. Is Partha Ajatashatru happy? Is the king well with his sons, his advisers and the younger Kouravas?”[112]

‘Sanjaya said, “Pandu’s son is well with his advisers, even more than you had had known him earlier. The intelligent one does that which ensures dharma and artha. He is extremely learned, has foresight and follows good conduct. The non-violent Pandava is devoted to supreme dharma. He thinks that dharma is superior to riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who know him know that he will not follow happiness or pleasure that is against the norms of dharma. A man is controlled by others,[113] like a wooden puppet on a string. When I witness Pandava’s hardships, I think that earlier karma[114] determines the destiny of beings. On seeing the taints of your deeds, with the evil it leads to and its terrible form, I think that as long as a man desires that which is right, a man obtains praise. Ajatashatru has given up evil, like a snake discards its useless skin. Having transferred sins to you, the brave Yudhishthira is resplendent in his conduct. O king! Learn how your deeds have harmed you. They are not united with dharma and artha and are not the conduct of aryas. O king! You have only obtained ill fame. That evil cannot be removed and will be with you in the hereafter. You have ignored them and have followed your son and wish to obtain an objective that is impossible to attain. The earth has loudly proclaimed that this is adharma. O foremost among those of the Bharata lineage! This was not an act that was worthy of you. One who is weak in intelligence, one who is born from an inferior lineage, one who is violent, one who remembers enmity for a long time, one who does not know about the conduct of kshatriyas and one who is weak in valour, such a person will not be able to overcome the disaster that adharma brings. One who is born in a noble lineage, one who follows dharma, one who is famous, one who is greatly learned, one who is in control of his soul and one who places dharma and artha over everything else, such a person lives happily. In no other way, can one overcome destiny. How can one who has intelligent advisers, who are well versed in the canons of dharma and artha, be foolish enough to commit such a violent act, as if one did not possess all the good counsel? These learned advisers have assembled together and have always advised about your tasks. They have arrived at the firm conviction that the hell that will wreak the destruction of the Kurus is imminent. The Kurus will be destroyed before their time, if Ajatashatru counters the evil with evil and passes on the evil to you. There will be censure for you in this world. Was it not in accordance with the will of the gods that Partha set his eyes on the supreme world?[115] He ascended there, and was honoured. There is no doubt that this wasn't because of human action. In examining the qualities of deeds, that which has been and that which will be, King Bali came to the conclusion that the present was transient.[116] He decided that destiny was the root cause of everything. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the skin and the tongue—these are the sources of knowledge for beings. When the thirst has been quenched, these are content. Therefore, one should happily control them.[117] There are others who think that if performed well, a man's deeds take on forms of their own. The child is the outcome of the deeds of the mother and the father and in due course, grows through the intake of food. O king! One is subject to pleasant and unpleasant, happiness and unhappiness, censure and praise. One censures others for committing a crime and praises them for good conduct. I censure you for discord among the Bharatas. This will lead to the destruction of many beings. Because of the crimes of your deeds, the Kurus will be burnt up, like the one with the black form[118] burns up dry wood. O king! O Indra among kings! Among all those in this world, you alone have come under the control of the sons that were born to you. At the time of the gambling match, you praised the one whose soul was overtaken by desire. Now witness the calamity that has been brought down on him. O Indra among men! You accepted those who are unworthy. O king! You rejected those who are worthy. O Kouravya! You are now feeble and are incapable of protecting this extensive earth. I am exhausted from the speed of the chariot. O lion among men! I seek your permission to sleep. In the assembly hall tomorrow, the assembled Kurus will listen to the words that Ajatashatru has sent.”’

Section Fifty-One

Prajagara Parva

This section has 541 shlokas and nine chapters.

Chapter 696(33): 104 shlokas
Chapter 697(34): 83 shlokas
Chapter 698(35): 67 shlokas
Chapter 699(36): 72 shlokas
Chapter 700(37): 60 shlokas
Chapter 701(38): 44 shlokas
Chapter 702(39): 70 shlokas
Chapter 703(40): 30 shlokas
Chapter 704(41): 11 shlokas

Prajagara *means sleeplessness, lying awake at night. This parva is so named because Dhritarashtra cannot sleep at night. He still does not know Yudhishthira's message and summons Vidura. Vidura advises Dhritarashtra.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'The immensely wise Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, told the gatekeeper, "I wish to see Vidura. Bring him here immediately." Having been sent by Dhritarashtra, the messenger told Kshatta,[1] "O immensely wise one! Our lord, the great king, wishes to see you." Having been thus addressed, Vidura went to the king's palace and said, "O gatekeeper! Inform Dhritarashtra that I am here." The gatekeeper said, "O Indra among kings! On your instructions, Vidura has arrived. He wishes to see your feet. Instruct me about what he should do." Dhritarashtra replied, "Allow the immensely wise and far-sighted

Vidura to enter. I am always ready to see Vidura.” The gatekeeper said, “O Kshatta! Enter the inner quarters of the wise and great king. The king has told me that he is always ready to see you.” Vidura then entered Dhritarashtra’s abode. He joined his hands in salutation and told the lord of men, who was immersed in thought, “O immensely wise one! I am Vidura and I have arrived here on your instructions. Please tell me if there is anything that I should do.” Dhritarashtra said, “O Vidura! Sanjaya has returned. He has left after berating me. He will recount Ajatashatru’s words in the midst of the assembly hall. I do not yet know the words that brave one among the Kurus[2] has addressed towards me. Therefore, my body is burning and I am suffering from sleeplessness. What do you think should be heard by someone who is awake and whose mind is burning? O son![3] Tell me. You are knowledgeable about dharma and artha. Ever since Sanjaya has returned after meeting the Pandavas, I am unable to obtain the peace of mind that I should. All my senses are distracted now. I am reflecting about what he is going to say.” Vidura replied, “If a weak one is attacked by a stronger enemy, if one’s faculties are weak, if one has lost everything to a lecher or a thief, one is overcome by sleeplessness. O lord among men! It is certain that you have not been touched by these great calamities. Nor can you be tormented because you are covetous of the riches of others.” Dhritarashtra said, “I wish to hear from you words about dharma and about that which leads to supreme welfare. In this lineage of *rajarshis*, you are the only one who is regarded as wise.”

‘Vidura said, “One who does not serve that which is censured, is praised. He is not an atheist and has faith. These are the signs of one who is learned. One who does not deviate from his objective because of anger, joy, pride, false modesty and a false sense of vanity, is regarded as learned. One whose planned deeds and counsel are not known to others, but are known only after the tasks have been executed, is regarded as learned. He whose deeds are not obstructed by cold and heat, fear and affection, prosperity and adversity, is regarded as learned. One who wisely follows dharma and artha, and artha over kama for the sake of the hereafter, is regarded as learned. They exert to the best of their ability. They act to the best of their ability. They disregard nothing. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such men are regarded as learned. He learns quickly. He listens patiently. He pursues the objective because of artha, not because of kama. If not asked, he does not dabble in the affairs of others. These are the first signs of a wise and learned one. They do not hanker after the unobtainable. They do not sorrow over what has been lost. They are not deluded in times of adversity. Such men are regarded as learned. He decides on a course of action and does not stop before the task has been accomplished. He does not waste time and is in control of his soul. Such a man is regarded as learned. They are attracted towards the tasks of aryas. They perform tasks that bring prosperity. They do not disregard that which ensures welfare. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such ones are learned. He is not overjoyed because of honours. He is not tormented because of neglect. He is as undisturbed as a pond near the Ganga. Such a person is regarded as learned. He knows about the nature of all beings. He is familiar with the nature of all deeds. He knows the nature of men. Such a man is regarded as learned. He is skilled in words. He can talk about diverse subjects. He is quick to understand and possesses intellect. He can quickly explain what is in the texts. Such a man is regarded as learned. His wisdom facilitates his learning. His learning facilitates his wisdom. He does not transgress the norms laid down for aryas. Such a person obtains the appellation of a learned one.

'"If one is not learned and vain, if one is poor and proud, if one strives for artha without performing deeds, the learned regard such persons as stupid. He gives up his own objectives and tends to the objectives of others. He resorts to falsehood for the sake of his friends. Such a person is regarded as stupid. He desires that which should not be desired. He gives up those that should be desired. He hates those who are stronger. Such a person is stupid in intelligence. He acts like a friend towards an enemy. He hates and harms those who are friends. He postpones tasks that should be performed. He procrastinates in every way. He takes a long time over something that should be done fast. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such a person is stupid. He enters when he is not invited. He speakes a lot, even though he has not been asked. He trusts those who should not be trusted. He is worst among men and is stupid in his intelligence. Though he is the one who should be blamed, he is quick to blame others. He is angered, though he has no powers. Such a person is regarded as the most stupid among men. He ignores his own strength. He gives up dharma and artha. He wishes to obtain that which is unattainable, but without performing tasks. He is said to be stupid in his intelligence. O king! He instructs those who are not his pupils. He serves those who are hollow. He honours those who are ignoble. Such a person is known as stupid in intelligence. However, one who has obtained a great deal of riches, learning and power, and yet roams around without any show of pride, he is said to be learned. Who can be crueller than one who eats, lives and dons expensive garments alone, without sharing them with his servants? One person performs evil deeds, but the fruits are borne by many. Others enjoy, while the doer alone is blamed. A single arrow released by an archer may kill, or it may not kill. But when an intelligent person uses his intelligence,[4] it can destroy a kingdom, together with its king.

'"Having differentiated between the two[5] with the use of the one,[6] bring the three[7] under your control by using the four.[8] Conquer the five.[9] Know the six.[10] Stay away from the seven[11] and be happy. Poison kills one. Only one is killed with a weapon. But the disclosure of counsel destroys a kingdom and a king, with the subjects. One should not eat tasty food alone. One should not think only about one's own objectives. One should not travel alone. One should not be awake alone, when the others are asleep. There is one without a second.[12] O king! You have not been able to comprehend Him. He is the truth. He is the staircase to heaven. He is like a boat in the ocean. Those who are forgiving have one taint, and there is not a second one to be seen. People think that a forgiving one is incapable. There is one dharma that is supreme. Forgiveness alone brings supreme peace. Learning brings supreme satisfaction. Non-violence takes one to happiness.

'"The earth destroys two, like a snake destroys those who live in holes—a king who is not aggressive, and a brahmana who has not dwelt away from home.[13] Through two deeds, a man can be radiant in this world—by not speaking harsh words and by not requesting dishonourable ones. O tiger among men! There are two kinds of people who trust others—women who desire those who are desired,[14] and people who honour those who are honoured.[15] There are two sharp thorns that dry up the body—desire on the part of those who are poor, and anger on the part of those who are powerless. O king! There are two kinds of men who are established above heaven—powerful ones who are forgiving, and generous ones who are poor. There are two kinds of abuse of property that has been acquired through rightful means—giving it to those who are unworthy, and not giving it to those who are worthy.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! It has been heard that there are three courses of action for men—inferior, medium and superior. This is known to those who are learned in the Vedas. O king! There are three kinds of men—inferior, medium and superior.[16] They should accordingly be employed in three different kinds of duties. O king! There are three who cannot own property—a wife, a slave and a son. Whatever riches they obtain, belongs to the one who owns them.

'"Those who are learned have said that a greatly strong king should avoid consultations with four—those who have limited intelligence, those who procrastinate, those who are lazy and those who are flatterers. O father![17] You have been blessed with fortune. While you are following the dharma of a householder, four kinds of people should dwell in your house—a relative who is aged, one who is born from a noble lineage but is in distress, a friend who is poor and a sister who does not have offspring. O great king! When he was asked by Indra of the thirty gods, Brihaspati said that four things bear instant fruit. Listen to them—the resolution of the gods, the intellect of the wise, the humility of the learned and the destruction of those who perform evil deeds.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! Men must carefully tend to five fires—the father, the mother, the fire, one's own self and the preceptor. Through worshipping five, one obtains fame in this world—gods, ancestors, men, mendicants and guests. There are five who follow, wherever you go—friends, enemies, those who are neutral, those you live on and those who are supported by you. On earth, if there is a hole in any of the five senses,[18] it is like wisdom draining out from the bottom of a water pot.

'"A man who desires prosperity must avoid six vices—sleep, drowsiness, fear, anger, laziness and procrastination. A man must avoid these six, like a broken boat in the ocean—a preceptor who does not teach, an officiating priest who has not studied, a king who does not protect, a wife who speaks unpleasantly, a cowherd who desires a village and a barber who desires the forest. There are six qualities that a man must never give up—truthfulness, generosity, endeavour, lack of jealousy, forgiveness and fortitude. He who always controls these six qualities within himself and has conquered his senses, is never touched by sin and is united with prosperity. There are six who live off six others and there isn't a seventh like this—thieves live on those who are careless, physicians on diseases, wayward women on lechers, priests on those who offer sacrifices, kings on those who quarrel and the learned always live on fools.

'"A king must always avoid addiction to seven vices. Otherwise, kings who have established themselves are often destroyed because of these—women, dicing, hunting, drinking, harsh words as the fifth, great severity of punishment and the abuse of wealth.

'"There are eight causes that lead to a man's destruction—first, hatred of brahmanas; acting against brahmanas; acquiring the wealth of brahmanas; a desire to kill brahmanas; delight when they are censured; disapproval when they are praised; not remembering them when tasks have to be performed; and finding fault when they ask. Knowing these vices, a wise and learned man should avoid them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are the eight that are the fresh butter of delight and are seen to provide happiness when they are present—union with friends, large inflows of wealth, the embrace of a son, sexual intercourse, pleasant conversation at the right time, high positions for one's allies, the attainment of desired objectives and honour in the assembly of men.

'"The abode has nine gates, three pillars and five witnesses. These are presided over by the soul.[19] The learned one who knows this is supreme among the wise.

'"O Dhritarashtra! There are ten who do not know dharma. Listen to who they are—the intoxicated, the deluded, the insane, those who are tired, those who are angry, those who are hungry, those who are hasty, those who are timid, those who are greedy and those who are driven by lust. These are the ten. Therefore, a learned one should avoid such sentiments.

'"On this, an ancient history is recounted, about what the Indra among the asuras, told Sudhanva for the welfare of his son.[20] 'The king who gives up desire and anger and donates riches to worthy ones is discriminating, learned and is quick to act. He is regarded as an authority by all the worlds. He knows how to make other men trust him. Once crimes have been established, he punishes with the staff. He knows his limits and is also forgiving. All prosperity descends on such a person. He does not think lightly of a weak enemy, but uses his intelligence to deal with him. He does not desire conflict with those who are strong. He exhibits valour when it is the right time and is wise. He is not distressed in a time of calamity. He perseveres in his efforts, without being distracted. In times of unhappiness, he conquers his soul. Such an eminent one triumphs over his enemies. He never remains away from home without a purpose. He does not have an alliance with the wicked, or consort with another person's wife. He is not insolent, or prone to thievery. He is not ungrateful, or addicted to liquor. A person who avoids these traits is always happy. He never strives extremely hard for objectives. When he is appealed to, he states the exact truth. He does not enter into a quarrel over a trifle. He is not stupid and is not angered when he is not honoured. He is not envious towards others. When he is weak, he does not enter into a feud. He does not speak too much and pardons a quarrel. Such a person is praised everywhere. He never dons the demeanour of the arrogant. He never speaks to others about his manliness. He does not utter harsh words in a moment of forgetfulness. People always look upon him affectionately. He does not revive enmity that has been pacified. He does not have excessive arrogance, or excessive humility. When faced with difficulties, he does not act out of anger. Such a person is regarded as supreme among those who follow arya codes of conduct. He is not supremely delighted at his own happiness. He is not content at the unhappiness of others. After having donated, he does not repent later. Such a person is regarded as virtuous and arya in conduct. He wishes to know about the dharma and conduct of different countries and different races.[21] Wherever he goes, he always learns about the superior and the inferior. Such a person is regarded as a lord by great ones. He avoids insolence, delusion, jealousy, evil action, hatred against the king, ingratitude and historical enmity, and conversations with the drunk, the insane and the wicked. Such a person is regarded as foremost among wise ones. Self-control, purity, devotion to the gods, auspicious acts, penances, as laid down by many people—one who observes these daily rites, is honoured by the gods. He has a matrimonial alliance with an equal, and not with someone who is inferior. He has friendships and dealing and conversations with those who are equal. He places the possession of special qualities above everything else. He is wise and his conduct is in accordance with the best policy. He eats in moderation, after having shared with those who are dependent on him. He sleeps little, but performs a lot of tasks. If asked, he gives even to his enemies. Calamities never confront a person with a soul like that. The desires, intentions and motivations behind his deeds are never known to others. His counsels are kept secret. Such a person's objectives are never unfulfilled, not even by a trifle. He is engaged in the welfare of all beings. He is truthful, mild, generous and is pure in his sentiments. He is known among his relatives as a great gem. Such a man is ashamed of his own faults. He is revered by all the worlds as a preceptor. His energy is infinite. His mind is excellent and he is controlled. He is radiant in his energy, like the sun.'[22]

'"King Pandu was tormented by a curse. Five sons were born to him in the forest, the equals of five Indras. Under your supervision, those children grew up and were trained. O Ambika's son![23] They are now waiting to follow your instructions. O father![24] If you return their rightful kingdom back, you will be happy and rejoice with your sons. O Indra among men! Your intentions will no longer be questioned by gods and men.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “What should a tormented and sleepless person do? Tell me what you think is the right course of action. O son![25] Amongst us, you are skilled in knowledge of dharma and artha. O Vidura! Instruct me and tell me exactly. O one who is not weak in spirit! Use your wisdom to tell me what you think to be the best for Ajatashatru and tell me what you think to be the best for the Kurus. I am anxious about evil and can foresee evil. O learned one! Tell me completely and truthfully about everything that Ajatashatru desires.”

‘Vidura replied, “Even if one is not asked, one should speak to one whom one does not wish to see defeated—be it good or bad, hateful or pleasant. O king! Therefore, since I desire the welfare of the Kurus, I will tell you. I will speak words that ensure welfare and are in accordance with dharma. Listen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do not set your mind on deeds that can only be attained through falsehood and inappropriate means. O king! If a deed undertaken correctly through appropriate means does not succeed, a learned one does not distress his mind over that. Deeds have consequences and one should duly reflect on a deed and its consequences. An act should not be undertaken in haste. Examining a deed and its consequences, and one’s own capacity, a wise one decides whether an act should be done or should not be done. If he[26] does not know about the expanse of his kingdom, about how it can be extended, how it might decay, the treasury, population and punishments, his kingdom does not remain. One who remembers these measures and knows about dharma and artha, is one who retains the kingdom. Having obtained a kingdom, one should not become haughty, because haughtiness destroys prosperity, just as old age destroys physical beauty. Because it does not consider the consequences, a greedy fish goes by appearances and swallows an iron hook that is concealed in a dainty morsel. One who desires prosperity should consider what can be swallowed, whether it can be digested if swallowed, and whether it will ensure welfare if digested. If one plucks fruits that are not ripe from a tree, one does not obtain any juice from them. But then again, the seed is destroyed. If one obtains right fruit at the right time, one obtains juice from the fruit, and again fruit from the seed. Bees suck honey, but protect the flowers. In that way, one[27] should take riches from people, but without causing them violence. Flower can be collected after flower, but the root must not be severed. One should be like the maker of a garland in a grove and not like a burner of charcoal.[28] Think about an intended action. 'How will I gain from it? How will I gain if I don't do it?' Having thought in this way, a man should decide whether to do something, or not do it. There are acts that should not be undertaken, because the exertions spent on them will be fruitless. There are others that bring gain, require little effort and bring great gain. A wise man undertakes these swiftly and removes obstacles from these. If he[29] looks at everything in a straightforward way, as if he is drinking it with his eyes, his subjects love him, even if he is seated immobile and silent. When one looks favourably at the world in four ways—through sight, thoughts, speed and deeds—the world also looks upon one favourably. But if beings are frightened of him, like deer fear the hunter, he may obtain the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, but will still lose it.

'"One may obtain the kingdom of fathers and grandfathers through one's own energy. But if one uses inappropriate deeds, one can cause its destruction, like wind scattering the clouds. The earth is full of riches. It promotes and increases the prosperity of a king who follows the dharma followed by virtuous ones from the beginning. If one abandons dharma and resorts to adharma, the earth contracts, like a piece of leather inserted into fire. The efforts made to protect one's own kingdom should be similar to those that are made to destroy another one's kingdom. A kingdom should be obtained through dharma. It should be protected through dharma. With dharma as the root, the kingdom will be prosperous and will not decay or be destroyed. One should look for substance in everything, the ravings of a lunatic or the crawling of an infant, like gold extracted from rock. A wise man collects good conduct, good speech and good deeds, like one who lives off ears of corn gathers them.[30] Cows see through their sense of smell. Brahmanas see through the Vedas. Kings see through spies. Ordinary people see through their eyes. A cow that is difficult to milk faces a great deal of discomfort. O king! But one that is easy to milk is not discomforted. That which is bent without heating, is not heated. The wood that is bent on its own is never heated. Because of this image, a wise one bends to one who is stronger. Bending before someone who is stronger is like bending before Indra himself. Animals are sustained by clouds,[31] kings by their friends and relatives. Husbands are the relatives of wives. The Vedas are the relatives of brahmanas. Dharma is sustained through truth. Learning is sustained through yoga. Beauty is sustained through ablutions. Lineage is sustained through conduct. Grain is sustained through it being measured. Horses are sustained through exercise and cows through constant supervision. Women are sustained through bodices.[32]

'"It is my view that if there is inferior conduct, noble lineage signifies nothing. Good conduct stands out, especially among one who is low-born. He who is envious of another one's riches, beauty, valour, lineage, happiness, fortune and honour, suffers from a disease that has no cure. If one is frightened of doing the wrong thing, not doing the right thing, or of one's counsel being disclosed at the wrong time, this is like getting intoxicated on liquor. Those who are prone to intoxication get drunk because of knowledge, get drunk because of riches, and as a third reason, get drunk because of noble birth. But the virtuous are strong because they control such intoxication. If those who are virtuous ask those who are not virtuous for a small favour, those who are not virtuous think that they have come to be regarded as virtuous. The soul is the refuge of the virtuous. The virtuous are the refuge of the virtuous. The virtuous are the refuge of those who are not virtuous. But those who are not virtuous are never the refuge of those who are virtuous. A well-dressed one triumphs in an assembly, a possessor of cattle triumphs in a congregation. One with a vehicle triumphs over a road. One with good conduct triumphs everywhere. Good conduct is most important in a man. If that is destroyed, there is nothing to be gained from life, riches, wealth or relatives. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Meat is the supreme dish for the rich, cow's milk for those who are in the middle and salt for those who are poor. But the poor always have the best of food. Their hunger generates succulence in the food, extremely rare among those who are opulent. Those who are rich in the world have no capacity to eat. O Indra among kings! But the poor digest pieces of wood. Those who are inferior fear a loss in livelihood and those who are in the middle fear death. The greatest fear for those who are supreme on earth is disrespect. The evil intoxication with riches is worse than intoxication with liquor and similar objects. He who is intoxicated with riches does not come to his senses until he confronts a downfall. In this world, men are obsessed with their senses, unless they control the objects of their senses, just as the nakshatras are tormented by the planets. For one who is conquered by attraction towards the natural five senses, calamities increase, like the moon waxing during *shuklapaksha*. One who wishes to conquer his advisers without conquering himself and one who wishes to conquer his enemies without conquering his advisers are eventually destroyed. He who first conquers his soul, as it is in the form of a country, will certainly conquer his advisers and his enemies. He who controls his senses, conquers his advisers, wields his staff against those who cause offence, acts with deliberation and is patient, is blessed with prosperity.

'"O king! A man's body is like a chariot. The soul is the charioteer and the senses are the horses. When those excellent horses are skilfully controlled, the patient charioteer is happy. When they[33] are not controlled, that leads to destruction, just as uncontrolled and untrained horses bring calamity to a charioteer on the road. One who is foolish is guided by his senses. He sees good where there is evil and evil where there is good. He thinks that unhappiness is happiness. If one gives up dharma and artha and comes under the control of the senses, one swiftly decays and loses prosperity, life, riches and wife. One who owns riches but is himself owned by the senses, is dislodged from this riches because he is conquered by his senses. One should seek to know the soul, with the mind, the intelligence and the senses controlled. The soul is one's friend and the soul is also one's enemy. O king! Desire and anger are like two large fish that are caught in a small net and lead to the destruction of wisdom. If one considers dharma and artha before accumulating possessions, then having obtained the possessions, one is always happy. He who does not conquer the five inner enemies[34] that lead to the destruction of intelligence, but wishes to conquer other enemies, is subjugated by his enemies. It can be seen that great-souled kings are killed through their own deeds, because they have not been able to control their senses and because they lust for other kingdoms. Those who commit sin and those who do not commit sin receive equal punishment if they consort with each other, just as wet kindling burns when it is mixed with the dry. Therefore, one should never ally with the wicked. A man who is deluded and does control the five enemies and their five needs, is swallowed by disaster. Lack of malice, uprightness, purity, contentment, pleasant speech, self-control and truthfulness are not the attributes of those who are evil in their souls. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are inferior are not characterized by knowledge of the soul, steadfastness, patience, constant adherence to dharma, carefulness in speech and generosity. Those who are stupid try to cause injury to the wise through anger and slander. The speaker[35] bears the guilt, but one who forgives is freed. Violence is the strength of the evil and decreed punishment is the strength of kings. Service is the strength of women. Forgiveness is the strength of those who possess qualities.

'"O king! It has been thought that control of speech is the most difficult. It is not possible to speak wisely and copiously on many and varied subjects. Words spoken well bring many benefits. O king! In the same way, words spoken ill bring many evils. A forest pierced by arrows or cut down by axes grows again. But a terrible wound caused by harsh speech is never healed. Shafted arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows can be plucked out from a body. But it is impossible to uproot the stakes of words from the heart. The arrows of words are released from the mouth. Pierced by these, one sorrows night and day. They descend on the weak spots of others. Therefore, learned ones do not release these on others. When the gods wish to vanquish a man, they distract his intelligence and they see right in what is wrong. The intelligence is tainted and destruction is nigh. Wrong, in the appearance of right, is not removed from his heart. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That clouded intelligence has now overcome your sons because of their enmity towards the Pandavas, and you do not know this. O Dhritarasthra! Yudhishthira has all the auspicious marks and is fit to rule the three worlds. He is your pupil and should reign. Even more than all your sons, he has been honoured by fortune. He has energy and wisdom and knows about the nature of dharma and artha. O Indra among kings! He is supreme among those who uphold dharma and because of his compassion and non-violence, and because of his respect towards you, he has undergone many hardships.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “O immensely intelligent one! Yet again, tell me words that are full of dharma and artha. I am not satisfied from listening to your varied words.”

‘Vidura replied, “It is probably the case that bathing in all the tirthas and kindness towards all beings are equal. But perhaps kindness is superior. O lord! Always be kind towards your sons. You will obtain supreme fame here and in heaven after your death. O tiger among men! As long as a man’s pure deeds are recounted in this world, he obtains greatness in the world of heaven. On this, the ancient history of the conversation between Virochana and Sudhanva, over Keshini, is cited.

‘“Keshini asked,[36] ‘O Virochana! Are brahmanas or the sons of Diti superior? With whom should Sudhanva not be seated on the couch?’

‘“Virochana replied, ‘O Keshini! We are the descendants of Prajapati and are the supreme among beings. This entire world belongs to us. Who are the gods and who are the brahmanas?’

‘“Keshini said, ‘O Virochana! Be seated here and we will await Sudhanva’s arrival in the morning. I will see both of you together in this pavilion.’

'"Virochana replied, 'O fortunate one! O timid one! I will do as you say. In the morning, you will see me and Sudhanva together.'

'"Sudhanva said,[37] 'O son of Prahlada! I cannot touch that golden seat occupied by you. I will then descend to the same level as you and I cannot be seated with you.'

'"Virochana replied, 'O Sudhanva! You deserve a wooden plank, a handful of *kusha* grass or a cushion made of grass. You do not deserve to sit on the same seat as I.'

'"Sudhanva said, 'Even your father honours me and sits below me when we are seated together. You are a child reared in happiness at home and do not know anything.'

'"Virochana replied, 'O Sudhanva! I am offering gold, cows, horses and all the other riches that we asuras possess, as a stake. Let us put the question to those who know.'

'"Sudhanva said, 'O Virochana! Forget your gold, cows and horses. Let us stake our lives and put the question to those who know.'

'"Virochana replied, 'Having staked our lives, where will we go? I will not stand before the gods, nor before men.'

'"Sudhanva said, 'After having staked our lives, we will go to your father. Prahlada will not utter a falsehood, even for the sake of his son.'

'"Prahlada said, 'These two have never been together before and have now appeared together. They are arriving by the same road, like two angry serpents. You have never travelled together before. O Virochana! How is it that you are travelling together now? I am asking you about your friendship with Sudhanva.'

'"Virochana replied, 'There is no friendship between me and Sudhanva. We have staked our lives. O Prahlada! I am asking you a question. Please do not utter a falsehood.'

'"Prahlada said, 'Let water and *madhuparka*[38] be brought for Sudhanva. O brahmana! You deserve to be honoured by me. A fat and white cow has been prepared for you.'

'"Sudhanva replied, 'Water and madhuparka have been offered to me on the way. O Prahlada! Answer the question that we are asking you.'

'"Prahlada said, 'O brahmana! You are like another son who is standing before me as a witness. When the two of you are debating a question, who am I to say anything about it? O Sudhanva! I am asking you a question. Where does the false witness, who neither speaks the truth nor lies, spend the night?'

'"Sudhanva replied, 'A false witness spends the night like a woman ignored,[39] like one who has been defeated in gambling, or like one whose limbs are exhausted from carrying a load. A false witness spends the night like someone who is debarred from the city and remains hungry outside the gates, where he always sees many enemies. A lie for the sake of an animal implies that five are killed.[40] A lie for the sake of a cow implies that ten are killed. A lie for the sake of a horse implies that one hundred are killed. A lie for the sake of a man implies that one thousand are killed. A lie for the sake of gold implies that those who have been born, and those who are yet to be born, are killed. A lie for the sake of land implies that everything is killed. Therefore, do not lie for the sake of land.'

'"Prahlada said, 'O Virochana! Angiras is superior to me and Sudhanva is superior to you. His mother is superior to your mother. Therefore, you have been won by him. O Virochana! This Sudhanva now owns your life. O Sudhanva! I desire that you should give it[41] back to Virochana.'

'"Sudhanva replied, 'O Prahlada! Since you have adhered to dharma and have not uttered a falsehood out of affection, I will give you this rare present of a son. O Prahlada! Virochana, this son of yours, has been given by me to you. He should wash my feet before the maiden.'"

'Vidura said, "O Indra among kings! Therefore, you should not utter a falsehood for the sake of land. By deviating for the sake of your son, do not head towards destruction with your sons and your advisers. The gods do not protect with a staff, like herdsmen looking after animals. They give wisdom to those they wish to protect. There is no doubt that a man obtains success to the extent that he sets his mind on doing that which is good. Hymns do not save from calamities one who resorts to illusion and deceit. When the time for destruction arrives, hymns desert him, like birds who have grown wings leaving a nest. It is said that one should discard intoxicating liquor, quarrels that are extensive and with many, discord between the husband and the wife, dissension among relatives, hatred towards the king, disputes between women and men and a road that is wrong. There are seven who should not be summoned as witnesses—a palmist,[42] a trader who has been a thief earlier, a skilled fowler, a physician, an enemy, a friend and an actor.[43] An agnihotra performed out of pride, silence that is based on pride, studying that is done out of pride and sacrifices performed out of pride—these are four things that are not fearful. But they become fearful when they are performed inappropriately. An arsonist, a poisoner, a pimp,[44] a seller of soma, one who makes arrows, a soothsayer, one who injures friends, one who consorts with another's wife, an abortionist, one who violates his preceptor's bed, a brahmana who drinks liquor, one who is unnecessarily harsh in use of words, a base person, an atheist, one who criticizes the Vedas, a bribe-taker, an outcast, one who is niggardly despite possessing riches and one who injures when asked for protection—these are the equals of those of who kill brahmanas. Gold is tested in a fire made of straw, one who is noble through the yoke that he bears, a virtuous man through his conduct, a brave one at the time of fear, a patient one when confronted with calamity and well-wishers and enemies in times of great hardship. Old age destroys beauty, hope destroys steadfastness, death destroys life, jealousy destroys dharma, anger destroys prosperity, association with the ignoble destroys conduct, lust destroys modesty and vanity destroys everything. Prosperity arises from auspicious roots. It increases because of strong action. Its roots are based on skill. It is based on self-control.

'"There are eight qualities that illuminate a man—wisdom, noble birth, self-control, learning, valour, restraint in speech, generosity according to capacity and gratitude. O father![45] These are great qualities, but there is one quality that gathers them together. When a king honours a man, that quality shines over all the other qualities. O king! In the world of men, these eight are regarded as the signs of attainment of heaven. Of these, four are innate qualities of the virtuous and the other four are qualities pursued by the virtuous. Sacrifices, generosity with gifts, studying and austerities are innate qualities of the virtuous. Self-control, truthfulness, uprightness and non-violence are the four qualities pursued by the virtuous. There is no assembly where there are no elders. They are not elders if they do not speak about dharma. There is no dharma where there is no truth. There is no truth when there is immersion in falsehood. Truth, beauty, learning, knowledge, noble birth, good conduct, strength, riches, valour and eloquence of speech—these ten ensure good social relationships. An evil man performs evil action and reaps evil fruits. A good man performs good action and reaps good fruits. Evil acts, when performed again and again, destroy wisdom. A man whose wisdom has been destroyed, always performs evil deeds. The wisdom of a man, who repeatedly performs good deeds, prospers. When wisdom prospers, a man always performs good deeds. A man who is envious, a man who is malicious, a man who is cruel and a man who always makes enemies out of others, will quickly confront great hardships, as they follow their evil ways. A man who is without envy, a man who is accomplished in wisdom and a man who always follows good conduct, never confronts great hardships and is lustrous everywhere. He who learns wisdom from a wise one is learned. He obtains dharma and artha through his wisdom and can strive towards happiness. During the day, he should act so that he can sleep happily at night. He should act during the eight months so that he can live during the monsoons happily.[46] During the young years, one should act so that one can live happily in old age. Throughout one's life, one should act so that one can live happily in the afterlife. People speak well of food that has been digested, a wife whose youth has passed, a warrior who is beyond battles and an ascetic who has crossed over to the other side.[47] If one tries to cover up a hole with riches that have been obtained through adharma, it will remain uncovered and another will surface elsewhere. The preceptor controls those who control their souls. The king controls evil-souled ones. Vaivasvata Yama controls those who sin secretly. The powers of rishis, rivers, those born in noble lineages and great-souled ones cannot be recovered,[48] nor those of women and those who are evil in conduct. O king! One who worships brahmanas, one who is generous, one who is liberal towards his relatives and a kshatriya who looks towards heaven, rule the earth for a long time. The brave, the learned and those who know how to serve—these are the three kinds of men who pluck golden flowers from the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Deeds performed through intelligence are the best, those performed with the arms are medium, and those performed by bearing loads with the thighs are the worst.

'"Duryodhana and Shakuni are stupid, and Duhshasana is also like that. So is Karna. Having entrusted your riches to them, how can you hope to thrive? O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas possess all the qualities. They look upon you as a father. Treat them like sons."'

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'Vidura said, "In this connection, we have heard the ancient history of the conversation between Atreya and the Sadhyas quoted. The maharshi,[49] rigid in his vows, was roaming around in the form of a swan. In ancient times, the gods, the Sadhyas, asked the immensely wise one. 'O maharshi! We are the gods known as the Sadhyas. We can see you, but we are unable to understand who you are. It is our view that you are learned, steadfast and intelligent. Tell us great words that are full of wisdom.'

'"The swan replied, 'O immortals! I have heard that one's task is to be steady, self-controlled, truthful and devoted to dharma. Having loosened all the knots of one's heart, one should equally control that which is pleasant and that which is unpleasant. When one is reviled, one should not revile in return. One should endure it. This torments the one who reviles and you enjoy the fruits of his good deeds. Do not revile. Do not insult an enemy. Do not quarrel with friends, or serve those who are inferior. Do not be vain. Do not be inferior in conduct. Avoid harsh words and those that come from anger. Terrible words pierce the innards, the bones and the hearts of men and burn them. Therefore, one must avoid harsh and angry words. One who seeks delight in dharma, must always avoid them. If one hurts men with harsh and scathing words, words that are like wounding thorns to men, such an unfortunate person bears death and misery on his face. When an enemy strikes with extremely sharp arrows that burn like the fire and the sun, and though pierced one withstands it, a wise one knows that the fruits of the good deeds of the other one[50] devolve on him. If one serves a virtuous man or one who is not virtuous, an ascetic or a thief, just as garments are coloured by dyes, one is accordingly coloured by one's associates. If one does not revile in return when one is reviled and does not make others revile, if one does not strike back in return when one is struck and does not make others strike, if one does not wish to injure an assailant, the gods wish for the association and arrival of such a person. First, it is better not to speak than to speak. Second, if one speaks, one should speak the truth. Third, if one speaks, one should say that which is pleasant. Fourth, if one speaks pleasant truth, it should be in accordance with dharma. A man becomes like the one he converses with, like the one he serves, and like the one he wishes to be. One becomes free of whatever one keeps oneself away from. By turning away from everything, the least bit of unhappiness vanishes. Such a person is not vanquished, nor does he wish to vanquish others. He has no enmity, nor does he strike back. He is equally disposed towards praise and blame. He does not sorrow and he does not rejoice. He wishes for the welfare of everyone and his mind does not harbour ill will towards anyone. He is truthful, mild and self-controlled. Such a man is superior. One who does not placate without reason, one who gives what he has promised and one who knows good deeds and bad ones—such a man is medium. He who is difficult to control, he who strikes back instead of being instructed, he who cannot control himself when overcome by anger, he who is ungrateful, he who is without friends and evil-souled—these are the signs of a worst man. He does not appreciate the good things done by others. He is distrustful of himself. He drives away his friends. Such a man is the worst. If one desires prosperity for one's own self, one must serve superior men and medium ones at the right time. But one must never serve the worst. Riches can be obtained through force, constant endeavour, wisdom and manliness. But this still does not warrant complete praise, or the conduct that characterizes those born in great lineages.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “The gods desire those who have been born in great lineages, those who are extremely learned and are always devoted to dharma and artha. O Vidura! I have a question to ask you. What makes a lineage great?”

‘Vidura replied, “Great lineages of appropriate conduct are those in which seven qualities are resident—austerity, self-control, knowledge of the brahman, sacrifices, purity, marriages and constant donation of food. They do not deviate from good conduct, nor do their descendants suffer. They practise dharma through good conduct. They desire to distinguish their lineages through deeds. They discard falsehood. Such are great lineages. Through the non-performance of sacrifices, through bad marriages, through neglect of the Vedas and through transgression of dharma, lineages degenerate. By destroying what is due to the gods, by stealing the property of brahmanas and by causing offence to brahmanas, lineages degenerate. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By oppressing brahmanas and speaking ill of them and by stealing what has been entrusted to them, lineages degenerate. Lineages that own cattle, men and horses are not reckoned as foremost lineages if they are inferior in conduct. Lineages that are deficient in riches, but are good in conduct, accumulate great fame, and are reckoned as the foremost of lineages. Let no one in our lineage engender enmity. Let no one who is an adviser to the king steal someone else’s property, exhibit enmity towards friends, indulge in falsehood or deceit and eat before the ancestors, the gods and the guests. No one who kills a brahmana, no one who hates a brahmana and no one who causes an obstruction to agriculture should have an association with us. A seat made of straw, a place on the floor, water and sweet words as the fourth, are never lacking in the homes of the good. O king! O immensely wise one! Those who observe good conduct and are pure in their deeds and devoted to dharma, offer these with complete devotion to others. O king! Even though it is thin, a *syandana* tree[51] can bear loads that other larger trees cannot. Thus, those born in great lineages can bear great burdens that other men cannot.

'"He whose anger engenders fear, is not a friend. He who has to be served with anxiety, is not a friend. He is a friend who can be trusted like a father. Others are friends only by association. If someone is not a relative, but acts through friendly sentiments, he is a relative, a friend, a refuge and a protector. A man who is fickle in his mind and does not serve the elders, if his disposition is changing and is not constant, it will be difficult for him to collect friends. Prosperity deserts those who are fickle in their minds, those who are not in control of their souls and those who are under the control of their senses, just as swans desert a dry lake. Sudden anger and pacification without reason are not the signs of those who have good conduct, like clouds that are not constant. There are those who are served by their friends, but are ungrateful and do not treat them well. Even predatory beasts do not touch their corpses. Whether one is rich or poor, one must always ask favours from friends. Without asking, one does not know whether the friends are deep or shallow. Grief destroys beauty. Grief destroys strength. Grief destroys knowledge. Grief brings on disease. Nothing is gained through sorrow, only the body is tormented. This only delights the enemies. Therefore, do not sorrow in your mind.

'"Man dies and is born again and again. Man withers and grows again and again. Man asks, and is asked, again and again. Man grieves, and is grieved over, again and again. Happiness and unhappiness, prosperity and adversity, gain and loss, death and life—all of these touch everyone by turn. Therefore, a wise person neither rejoices, nor grieves. The six senses[52] are not constant. Wherever one of them increases disproportionately, the intelligence oozes out, like water from a pot with holes."

'Dhritarashtra said, "The king[53] shines like a thin and high flame. I have treated him with falsehood. He will destroy my evil sons in battle. Everything always seems to be a cause for anxiety and therefore, my mind is always anxious. O immensely intelligent one! Tell me that which will relieve me of my anxiety."

‘Vidura replied, “O unblemished one! I see no peace for you, other than in learning, austerities, control of the senses and discarding of avarice. Intelligence drives away fear. Austerities lead to greatness. Service of preceptors leads to knowledge. Yoga leads to peace. Those who desire salvation roam around, free from love and hatred, and without resorting to the merits of donations and the merits of the Vedas. After studies that have been learnt well, after battles that have been fought well, after deeds that have been performed well and after austerities that have been performed well, happiness increases. Those who have been separated from their relatives cannot find sleep, no matter how well the beds may have been prepared. O king! They find no pleasure from intercourse with women, or from the praises of bards and minstrels. Those who have been separated from their relatives do not observe dharma. Those who have been separated in this way do not find happiness. Those who have been separated in this way do not attain fame. Those who have been separated in this way do not appreciate peace. They are not satisfied with the advice offered to them. They cannot find yoga and *kshema*.[54] O Indra among men! Those who are separated have no end, but for destruction. Milk is possible in cows. Austerities are possible in brahmanas. Fickleness is possible in women. Like that, fear is possible from one’s relatives. Those who are learned use the metaphor of many long and thin threads. When they are joined together, because they are many, they can bear a large load. O Dhritarashtra! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Relatives are like kindling. When separated, they produce smoke. But when they are together, they blaze. O Dhritarashtra! Those who are severe towards brahmanas, women, relatives and cows fall down, like ripe fruit from stalks. A large tree that stands on its own, even if it is strong and firmly rooted, can in an instant be brought down by the wind, with its branches and its trunk. But if trees grow together and are firmly rooted, because they support each other, they can withstand stronger winds. Whatever be the qualities he may possess, enemies think that a single man is capable of being harmed, like a single tree against the wind. But because of mutual assistance and mutual support, relatives prosper together, like lotuses in a lake. Brahmanas, cows, women, children, relatives, those whose food one has partaken and those who have sought refuge must not be killed. O king! Even if he is rich, there is no quality greater in a man than that he should be without disease. O fortunate one! Those who are ill are the equals of those who are dead. Even if there is no disease, anger is like a headache. It is harsh, sharp and pungent and leads to evil. The good swallow it up, while the evil do not swallow it. O great king! Drink it up and be pacified. Those who are oppressed by disease do not care about the fruits. Nor do they obtain any satisfaction from objects. Those who are diseased are always full of unhappiness. They do not know the comforts of riches, or of happiness.

'"O king! I spoke to you before, when I saw Droupadi won at the gambling match. But you did not listen to my advice. 'Restrain Duryodhana. Stop him from gambling. Those who are learned, shun deceit. It is not strength if it runs counter to mildness. The mixed nature of dharma should be swiftly followed. Prosperity that is based on cruelty is destroyed, but if it is both mild and firm, it descends to the sons and the grandsons.' Let the sons of Dhritarashtra protect the Pandavas. Let the sons of Pandu protect your sons. Let the Kurus be united in their counsel and have the same enemies and friends. O king! Let them live in happiness and prosperity. O Ajamidha! You are now the pillar of the Kouravas. The lineage of the Kurus depends on you. The Parthas are young and have been tormented by their sojourn in the forest. O father![55] Preserve your fame by protecting them. Ensure an alliance between the Kouravas and the sons of Pandu. Let your enemies not seek out a weakness. O god among men! Let all of them be established in truth. O Indra among men! Restrain Duryodhana."'

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'Vidura said, "O Indra among kings! O son of Vichitravirya! O fortunate one! O Indra among men! Svayambhuva Manu[56] named seventeen kinds of men who strike the air with their fists and seek to bend Indra's unbendable bow and also seek to bend the unbendable rays of the sun—he who instructs one who should not be taught; he who is angered; he who worships his enemies; he who fails to protect women; he who asks for what should not be asked; he who boasts; he who is well born, but does not perform proper acts; he who is weak, but always fights with someone stronger; he who speaks to someone who does not have faith in him; he who desires what should not be desired; he who is a father-in-law, but jokes with his daughter-in-law; he who dwells with his daughter-in-law, but expects to be respected; he who sows his seed in another man's field;[57] he who slanders women excessively; he who having received something from someone, does not remember it; he who having given, boasts about it; and he who seeks to prove that an evil person is honest. These men pursue the wind with nooses in their hands.[58] A man must be treated in accordance with what he is, and how he acts. That is dharma. One who uses deceit, must be treated with deceit.[59] One who is virtuous, must be treated with virtue."

'Dhritarashtra said, "It has been said in all the Vedas that a man has a life expectancy of one hundred years. What is the reason for not attaining that entire age?"

'Vidura replied, "O lord of men! Too much talk, too much pride, lack of renunciation, anger, avarice and enmity with friends—these are six sharp swords that slice off the life expectancies of embodied beings. O fortunate one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is these that kill a man, not death. He who goes to the wife of someone who trusts him, he who violates his preceptor's bed, a brahmana who marries a shudra woman or drinks liquor and one who kills someone who seeks refuge—all these are the equals of a killer of brahmanas. The learned texts say that penances must be performed for associating with these. A generous householder whose words are not mixed with falsehood, one who eats last,[60] one who does not cause any violence, one who does not do any harm, one who avoids discord, one who is grateful, one who is truthful, one who is mild—such a learned person goes to heaven. O king! It is easy to find men who are always pleasant in speech. But it is difficult to find a speaker or a listener for unpleasant, but appropriate words. A king has a friend in a person who resorts to dharma and regardless of what is pleasant or unpleasant to his lord, provides unpleasant but appropriate counsel. A man must be abandoned for the sake of the lineage. A lineage must be abandoned for the sake of the village. A village must be abandoned for the sake of the country. The earth must be abandoned for the sake of the soul. One must preserve riches for the sake of a calamity. One must protect one's wife with one's riches. One must always protect oneself with one's wife and riches.

'"O king! O descendant of Pratipa![61] At the time of the dicing, I had told you that it was not right. O son of Vichitravirya! But that brought you displeasure, like medicine and diet to a man who is diseased. You have vanquished the Pandavas, who are like peacocks with many-coloured feathers, with the sons of Dhritarashtra, who are like crows. You have given up the lions and have resorted to the assembled jackals. O Indra among men! When the time comes, you will sorrow over this. The servants are devoted to a lord who is not angry all the time and faithfully seek to ensure his welfare. They do not forsake him in times of difficulty. One should not seek to increase the prosperity of strangers by curtailing the wages that are paid to servants. Deprived of comforts and denied what has been due to them, even affectionate advisers turn against their lord. Having first accounted for everything that must be done and having determined wages according to the tasks, one must then seek to obtain appropriate allies. Allies accomplish what is difficult to achieve. He who knows all the intentions of his lord, performs his tasks tirelessly. He speaks for his welfare and is affectionate and noble.[62] He knows his own strengths and should be regarded as one's own self.[63] If a servant is instructed but pays no attention to the words, or if he answers back when he is instructed, if he argues because of insolence over his wisdom, he must instantly be dismissed.

'"Lacking in pride, manly, swift to act, compassionate, polished, incapable of corruption, free from disease and generous in speech—it is said that these eight qualities must characterize a messenger. A sensible man must never go to the house of a stranger at the wrong time, out of a sense of confidence. He must not conceal himself at a crossroads in the night. He must not desire a woman whom the kings want. One should not seek counsel with one who is in disguise, or one who associates with lowly company. There is no need to say that such a person is untrustworthy, but one should dismiss him on some pretext. A compassionate king must avoid financial transactions with a harlot, the servant of a king, a son, a brother, a widow with infant children, a mercenary and one who has devoted servants.[64] Eight qualities adorn a man who bathes—strength, beauty, pureness in pronunciation of vowels, delicacy of touch, fragrance, cleanliness, prosperity and association with beautiful women. Six qualities adorn those who eat in moderation—immunity from disease, long life, happiness, strength, possession of children who are healthy and freedom from accusations about being a glutton. One who performs improper acts, one who eats excessively, one who is hated by men, one who is deceitful, one who is cruel, one who has no sense of time or space, one who does not know how to dress—such people should not be given a lodging in the house. Even if one is in need, one must not solicit help from a miser, one who speaks with malice, one who is not learned, one who has fallen into evil ways, one who respects the unworthy, one who is cruel, one who makes enemies out of others and one who is ungrateful. There are six worst kinds of men one must not serve—those engaged in vile deeds, those who speak a lot, those who always utter lies, those lacking in devotion, those who are devoid of affection and those who are vain. Success depends on one's aides and aides depend on one's success. They depend on each other and each cannot succeed without the other. After one has obtained sons and not burdened them with one's debts, one must arrange a livelihood for them. After marrying off one's daughters properly, one must resort to the forest and live the life of a hermit. One must act for the welfare of all beings and for that which brings happiness to one's own self. This must be done for the sake of god and this is the root behind the success of dharma and artha. Intelligence, power, energy, spirit, resilience and resolution—if one possesses these, why should one be afraid that one might not have a livelihood?

'"Behold the evils from having engaged in a quarrel with the Pandavas. Even the gods, together with Shakra, tremble at them. This enmity with your sons leads to a life full of constant anxiety and the destruction of fame, leading to the delight of your enemies. You are an equal of Indra. This anger of Bhishma's, of Drona's, and of King Yudhishthira's, when ignited, will destroy the world, like a white planet that obliquely descends from the sky. Your hundred sons, together with Karna, and the five Pandavas can rule the entire earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. O king! The sons of Dhritarashtra are the forest and it is my view that Pandu's sons are the tigers. Do not cut down the forest with its tigers. Do not drive the tigers away from the forest. The forest is protected by the tigers. The tigers are protected by the forest. Those who are evil in intelligence do not wish to know about the good qualities of others, as much as they wish to know about the qualities they don't possess. If one wishes artha to be accomplished completely, one must adhere to dharma right from the beginning. Artha is not separated from dharma, just as amrita is not separated from the world of heaven. All this, whether it is natural or not natural, is known to one who withdraws from evil and devotes himself to welfare. He who serves dharma, artha and kama at the right time, obtains a combination of dharma, artha and kama here, and in the hereafter. O king! One who controls the rising force of anger and delight obtains prosperity and is not deluded when there is a calamity.

'"Listen to me. Men always possess five kinds of strength and the strength of arms is said to be the most inferior of strengths. O fortunate one! The obtaining of good advisers is said to be the second strength. Those who wish to be victorious have said that the obtaining of riches is the third strength. O king! One's natural strength, obtained from a father and a grandfather, is the strength of noble birth and is said to be the fourth strength. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But all these strengths are collected in the strength that is said to be the most superior, the strength that derives from wisdom. If a man does great injury to another man and thereby excites his enmity, he cannot presume to be secure, only because he is a long distance away. In deciding on what should be done, no wise man can be certain about women, kings, snakes, studying, those who serve the enemy, objects of desire and the span of life. For one who has been pierced by the arrow of wisdom, there are no physicians or medicines, no mantras chanted with oblations, no benedictions, no incantations and no successful antidotes to poison.[65] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A man should not ignore a snake, a fire, a lion, or a son born from a noble lineage. All of them are extremely energetic. The energy of fire is great in this world. It is hidden in wood, but does not consume the wood, unless it is ignited by others. But when the wood is drilled and kindled through friction, it[66] uses its energy to swiftly burn up the wood, the forest and everything else. In the same way, those born in noble lineages have the energy of the fire. They are forgiving and seem to have no form, like fire inside wood. You and your sons follow the way of creepers. It is my view that Pandu's sons are the shala trees. Creepers cannot grow without resorting to a large tree. O king! O son of Ambika! You and your sons are the forest. O father![67] Know that the Pandavas are the lions in the forest. Devoid of the lions, the forest will be destroyed. Without the forest, the lions will be destroyed."'

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'Vidura said, "When an aged one arrives, a young person's life force rises up. He regains it by rising up and offering a respectful welcome.[68] A seat must be given to a virtuous person who has arrived. Water must be brought so that he can wash his feet. After he has been asked about his welfare, one can then recount one's own affairs. He must be patiently offered food, reflecting on what is appropriate. The learned ones have said that a person's life is in vain if one who is versed with the mantras does not accept his water, madhuparka and cow at his house, because of his avarice, fears and miserliness. A physician, a maker of arrows, an impure man, a thief, a cruel one, a drunkard, an abortionist, a mercenary and one who sells the sacred texts[69] do not deserve to be offered water as guests, even if they are liked by the host. Salt, cooked food, curds, milk, honey, oil, ghee, sesamum seeds, meat, roots and fruits, vegetables, dyed garments, all fragrances and molasses must not be sold.[70] One who does not fall prey to anger, one who regards a lump of earth and gold equally, one who has discarded grief, one who is beyond friendship and enmity, blame and praise and pleasure and displeasure and one who roams around completely oblivious, is a true mendicant. A foremost and pure ascetic lives on wild rice, roots, nuts and vegetables. He is in control of himself and is always attentive to fire sacrifices. He dwells in the forest and is always attentive towards his guests. After causing injury to an intelligent person, one should not be satisfied because one is a long distance away. An intelligent person has long arms and when injured, will cause hurt in return. One should not trust those who should not be trusted. Those who can be trusted should not be trusted too much. Hardships created by such trust can destroy the roots. One should not be envious. One must protect one's wife. One must share one's property. One must be pleasant in speech. One must be mild. One must speak sweetly to women, but one must not come under their control. Women are the prosperity of a household. They deserve respect. They are immensely fortunate. They are pure. They light up the house. Therefore, they must be specially protected. The supervision of the inner quarters should be given to the father, the kitchen to the mother and the cows should be given to someone who is equal to one's own self. However, agriculture must be attended to by one's own self. The conduct of trade can be left to the servants. Brahmanas must be served by the sons.

'"Fire arose from water. Kshatriyas arose from brahmanas. Iron arose from rock. All their energy is pacified when they return to their wombs. Virtuous ones born in noble lineages have energy like that of the fire. They are forgiving and do not have a form, like fire that is hidden in wood. A king whose counsel is not known by insiders or outsiders, but who looks at everything with his own eyes, will enjoy prosperity. One should not speak about what one wishes to do. One's deeds of dharma, kama and artha will be seen, without the counsel being divulged. Having ascended the peak of a mountain or the roof of the palace, or going to a forest that is devoid of grass, one should make one's plans. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One who is not a well-wisher should not get to know about the ultimate plan, nor should a well-wisher who is not learned, or a learned one who does not possess self-control. The desire for artha and the protection of counsel depend on the adviser. A king whose attendants get to know about all his deeds only after they have been performed, and whose counsels are kept secret, will certainly be successful. If one commits forbidden acts out of ignorance, one even loses one's life as a consequence of those deeds. The performance of praiseworthy deeds brings happiness. Their non-performance leads to great injury later. O king! One should possess conduct that is respected and know about the six means for stability, increase and decrease.[71] Else, the earth will become independent.[72] If his anger and delight are infallible, if he himself looks after what should be done, if he has complete information about his treasury, the earth and its riches will be under his control. A lord of the earth should be content with his title and his umbrella.[73] He should divide his riches among his servants and not keep everything for himself. A brahmana knows a brahmana in the same way that a husband knows his wife, a king knows his advisers and one king knows another king. An enemy who deserves to be killed should not be freed when he is under your control. If he is not killed, he will soon become a source of danger. One must always try to restrain one's anger against gods, kings, brahmanas, the aged, the young and the sick. A wise person avoids pointless quarrels, only fools seek them. Through this, one obtains fame in this world and does not confront disasters. Women do not wish to obtain a eunuch as their husband. Like that, no one wishes to have a lord whose favours are fruitless and whose anger is also pointless. Intelligence does not always lead to riches. Stupidity does not always lead to poverty. Only the wise know about the ways of this world. Others do not. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are stupid always disrespect those who are learned, have good conduct, are aged in age and aged in intelligence and are elders in prosperity and birth. Those who are ignoble in conduct, lacking in wisdom, envious, performers of adharma, wicked in speech and prone to anger, confront disaster. Absence of deceit, generosity, observance of rites at the right time and appropriateness in speech make one dear to all beings. One who is without deceit, skilful, grateful, intelligent and upright, is surrounded by a family, even if one's treasury is empty. Fortitude, serenity, self-control, purity, compassion, kindness in speech and friendliness towards friends—these are the seven kindlings of prosperity. O lord of men! One who does not share his property, one who is evil in soul, one who is ungrateful, one who is shameless—such a person is worst among men and must be avoided in this world. One cannot sleep happily at night, if there is a snake in the house. Like that, being guilty oneself, one should not incite those who are inside the house to anger against those who are innocent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are tainted with evil can destroy yoga and kshema. Just as the gods are propitiated, they must always be tended to. Possessions owned by women, those who are foremost among those who are intoxicated and those who possess ignoble conduct—there is no doubt that all of these are in danger. O king! When a woman, a deceitful one or a child is in control, there is no doubt that one will helplessly sink, like a boat made of stone in a river. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that the learned ones are those who can grasp the general principles, rather than the specific details. The details are a trifle. A man who is praised by deceitful ones, who is praised by minstrels and who is praised by harlots, does not live for long.

'"Having abandoned those supreme archers, the infinitely energetic Pandavas, you have entrusted the great prosperity of the Bharatas to Duryodhana. You will soon see him dislodged from that, just as the foolish Bali, intoxicated with his riches, was dislodged from the three worlds."'

702(39)

'Dhritarashtra said, "Man is not the master of his destiny. He is like a wooden puppet dangling from a string. The creator has made him subject to destiny. Therefore, continue to speak. I am patiently listening to your words."

'Vidura replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By speaking when it was not the right time, even Brihaspati's intelligence seems like ignorance and he is insulted. One is loved because of his gifts. Yet another is loved because of his pleasant words. Yet another is loved because of his strength of mantras and roots.[74] But one who is loved, is loved. One who is hated is not virtuous, or intelligent, or learned. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the pure deeds are ascribed to a loved one and all the evil ones to one who is hated. O great king! There is no loss, if that loss brings on a gain. But that should be thought of as a loss, which having been gained, destroys much more. Some are prosperous because of qualities, others because they possess riches. O Dhritarashtra! Avoid those who are superior in riches, but are devoid of qualities."

'Dhritarashtra said, "All that you have said has been approved of by the wise and is for my welfare. But I cannot abandon my son. Where there is dharma, there is victory."

'Vidura replied, "He who naturally possesses the qualities and is endowed with humility, will not ignore the slightest bit of suffering that is caused to all beings. Those who malign others, are fond of unhappiness confronted by others and seek to foment quarrels among others will always jump at such an opportunity. There is great sin in accepting riches from, and great danger in giving riches to, those who have evil in their sight. There is extremely great danger in dwelling with them. One should avoid association with those who are known to be wicked. One should avoid men who possess similar and other great taints. When an association with a well-wisher comes to an end, if one is inferior, one's affection is also destroyed, as are the fruits and happiness that derive from an association with a well-wisher. He[75] then seeks to malign and endeavours to bring about destruction. Even if the injury was slight, because of his delusion, he cannot find any peace. One should not associate with such low and cruel ones who have not been able to control their souls. A wise person will use his intelligence to examine this with skill and maintain a distance. He who helps poor, miserable and diseased relatives, will obtain the prosperity of sons and cattle and earn eternal fame. Those who desire their own welfare must help the relatives to prosper. O Indra among kings! Therefore, act virtuously, so that the lineage can be extended. O king! By acting well towards your relatives, you will be united with prosperity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Even if they do not possess qualities, relatives must be protected. How can one refuse those who possess qualities and desire favours? O lord of the earth! Be gracious towards the miserable Pandavas. O lord! Give them a few villages so that they can sustain themselves. O lord of men! By doing this, you will obtain fame in this world. O father![76] You are aged. Your sons will be protected through this deed. What I speak is for your own welfare. Know that I am affectionate towards you. O father![77] One who wishes for welfare should not quarrel with relatives. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He should enjoy the happiness with his relatives. Eating together, conversing together, exhibiting affection towards each other—this is what should be done among relatives. There should never be conflict. In this world, relatives rescue and relatives make one sink. Those who follow good conduct, rescue. Those who follow evil conduct, make one sink. O Indra among kings! O one who shows honour! Follow good conduct towards the Pandavas. Surrounded by them, you will become unassailable before your enemies. If a relative is oppressed, like a deer confronting one with smeared hands,[78] when he meets his prosperous relative, he takes on the other person's demerits.[79] O best among men! You will be tormented later on, when you hear that they or your sons have been slain. Reflect on this. Do not perform a deed that will make you ascend your bed and be tormented. This life is uncertain. One should not act in this way from the outset. It is not true that no man other than Bhargava strays.[80] But one who is intelligent must consider the consequences of action. O lord of men! If Duryodhana committed an evil act earlier, as the elder of the lineage, you must remedy it. Having established them in their stations, you will be freed from sins in this world. O best of men! You will be revered by the learned ones. Wise ones have spoken about the fruits that bring happiness. One should think about them and act accordingly. One will then obtain eternal fame.

'"Humility destroys bad conduct. Valour destroys adverse circumstances. Forgiveness always destroys anger. Good conduct destroys evil omens. O king! A lineage should be judged in accordance with its servants, arenas of action, abode, food and attire. He whose mind is inclined towards appropriate conduct, even in secret, and he who is inclined towards wisdom—for these two, friendship is never destroyed. Like a well covered with grass, a learned one must avoid those who are evil in intelligence and have no wisdom. Friendship with them is destroyed. Nor should a wise one have friendship with one who is arrogant, stupid, fearsome, rash and a follower of adharma. One should desire friendship with those who are grateful, followers of dharma, truthful, lacking in meanness, firm, loyal, in control of their senses and established in that which one should be attached to. Withdrawal from the senses is more difficult than death. Serving them in excess brings destruction, even for the gods. The learned say that mildness towards all beings, lack of jealousy, forgiveness, fortitude and respect for one's friends ensures a long life. By resorting to his intelligence, an extremely firm man follows the conduct of supplanting an objective that has been frustrated, with one that is better to follow. A man who is firm in his resolution about how to deal with what will happen, and about the consequences of earlier deeds, is established in the present and his objectives are not destroyed. One is always borne by what one follows in one's deeds, thoughts and speech. Therefore, one must follow what ensures welfare. Undertaking what is auspicious, yoga, learning, resilience, truthfulness and constant service to virtuous beings, ensure prosperity. Perseverance is the root of prosperity, destroying unhappiness and bringing happiness. One who is like this attains greatness and supreme happiness. O father![81] There is nothing more glorious and more healing than an act of forgiveness by a powerful one, everywhere and at all times. A weak person must forgive everything. A strong person must do that for the sake of dharma. If a person regards gain and loss equally, forgiveness is always established in him. Follow happiness as long as it does not destroy dharma and artha. But one should not follow kama, in accordance with the conduct of those who are foolish. There is no prosperity for those who are oppressed by unhappiness, those who are confounded, those who are atheists, those who are lazy, those who are dishonest, those who are not self-controlled and those who are devoid of enterprise. An honest man may be united with honesty and may be mild. Thinking that this shows a lack of strength, an evil-minded one may oppress him. Because of this fear, prosperity does not approach a person who is extremely noble, extremely generous, extremely valorous and extremely devoted to vows, just as those who are insolent about their wisdom. The fruit of the Vedas is the agnihotra. The fruit of good conduct is learning. The fruits of wives are intercourse and sons. The fruits of riches are generosity in giving. One who earns riches through adharma and uses this to perform deeds for the hereafter does not obtain those fruits after death, because those riches were obtained through inappropriate means. One who has remnants left[82] should not be scared of wildernesses, forests, difficult terrain, extreme hardships, delusions and upraised weapons. Resilience, self-control, dexterity, steadfastness, fortitude, learning and beginnings based on contemplation—know these to be the roots of success. Austerities are the strength of ascetics. Knowledge of the brahman is the strength of those who wish to know the brahman. Violence is the strength of those who are not virtuous. Forgiveness is the strength of those who possess qualities. These eight do not cause obstructions to a rite—water, roots, fruits, milk, oblations, the pleasure of brahmanas, instructions of a preceptor and medicine. One should not do that to others which is injurious to one's own self. This is accumulated dharma. Everything else follows from desire. Anger should be conquered with lack of anger. Wickedness should be conquered with goodness. Miserliness should be conquered with generosity. Falsehood should be conquered with truth. One should never trust women, deceitful ones, sloths, cowards, those who are terrible, men who are insolent, thieves, those who are ingrates and atheists. There are four things that increase because of reverence, good conduct and constant servitude to superiors —fame, lifespan, renown and strength. Do not vainly set your mind on success that can be obtained through excessive exertion, transgression of dharma or obeisance to enemies. One should sorrow over a man who is without learning. One should sorrow over a couple that has no offspring. One should sorrow over subjects who are hungry. One should sorrow over a kingdom that has no king. Those who have bodies age through travels. Mountains age through rain. The lack of intercourse ages women. Harsh words age the mind. The Vedas are tarnished if they are not recounted. Brahmanas are tarnished from lack of vows. Curiosity tarnishes chaste women. Banishment from home tarnishes women. Silver tarnishes gold. Tin tarnishes silver. Lead tarnishes tin. Dust tarnishes lead. Do not vanquish sleep with more sleep. Do not vanquish women through desire. Do not conquer a fire by kindling it. Do not conquer thirst through liquor. One who conquers friends by giving, one who conquers enemies in battle and one who conquers wives through food and drink, is successful in his life.

‘“Those who have thousands live. Those who have hundreds also live. O Dhritarashtra! Give up this desire. There is no other way to live. All the rice, barley, gold, animals and women on earth are not sufficient even for a single man. On beholding all this, do not be deluded. O king! O king! I am again telling you that you will behave well towards your sons if you treat them and the sons of Pandu equally.”’

703(40)

‘Vidura said, “On being addressed by righteous men, if a man acts without success in mind and without transgressing his capacity, then he quickly finds fame. When they are gratified, righteous ones can bring about happiness. He who gives up a great objective that is tainted with adharma, without being induced, sleeps in peace and discards all his unhappiness, like a snake that casts off old skin. Falsehood by the superior, treachery towards a king and constant falsehood before a preceptor—these are equal to slaying a brahmana. Even the slightest bit of jealousy, death and discord destroy prosperity. Lack of servitude, haste, boastfulness—these are the three weapons that destroy learning. How can a person who seeks happiness find learning? How can a person who seeks learning find happiness? A person who seeks happiness should give up learning. A person who seeks learning should give up happiness. Fire is never satiated with wood. The great ocean is never satiated with rivers. Death is never satiated with all the beings. A woman with beautiful eyes is never satiated with men. Hope destroys steadfastness. Death destroys prosperity. Anger destroys riches. Miserliness destroys fame. Failure to tend destroys animals. O king! Even one single angry brahmana destroys a kingdom. A goat, brass, a chariot, honey, antidotes,[83] a bird, a learned brahmana,[84] an aged relative and a friend who faces adversity—these must always be kept in the house. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Manu[85] has said that for the sake of good fortune, a goat, an ox, sandalwood, a veena, a mirror, honey, butter, iron, copper,[86] a conch shell, gold, the nave of a wheel and yellow pigment for honouring gods, brahmanas and guests must be kept in a household. O father![87] I am telling you all these supreme and sacred words that are extremely special. Do not give up dharma out of desire, fear, greed, or even for the sake of life itself. Dharma is eternal. Happiness and unhappiness are transient. Life is eternal. Its constituent elements are transient.[88] Give up the transient and establish yourself in the eternal. Be content. Contentment is the supreme gain.

'"Behold the immensely fortunate Indras among men who possessed great strength. After ruling the earth, full of grain and riches, they gave up their kingdoms and extensive objects of desire and came under the power of death. O king! People raise and take out of the house a son, reared with difficulty, who has been killed. Their hair is dishevelled and they lament piteously. They fling him into the midst of the funeral pyre, like a piece of wood. Once a person is dead, another person enjoys the riches, just as crows[89] and the fire consume the elements of the body. Surrounded by two things, merits and demerits, one goes to the other world. After casting it[90] away, relatives, well-wishers and sons return. But for the man who has been flung into the fire, his own deeds follow him. Above this world, and below the next, there is the greatest expanse of darkness. O king! Know that the senses are greatly deluded there. May you not attain it. After listening to these words, if you follow them entirely, you will obtain supreme fame in this world of the living and you will confront no fear, here or in the hereafter. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The soul is a river. Purity represents its tirthas. Truthfulness is its water. Steadfastness constitutes the banks. Self-control represents the waves. Bathing in these, a performer of pure deeds purifies himself. The soul becomes pure and is like water in the eternal waters. There is a river in which the five senses are the water and desire and anger are the crocodiles. Make a boat out of steadfastness and cross the difficult eddies of repeated birth. After due honours, one who asks the counsel of his relatives who are aged in wisdom, aged in dharma, aged in learning and years, and follows them about what should be done and what should not be done, is never deluded. Protect your penis and stomach with steadfastness, the hands and the feet with the eyes, the eyes and the ears with the mind and the mind and speech with deeds. A brahmana who is always attached to ablutions, always dons the sacred thread, always studies, avoids food offered by outcasts,[91] speaks the truth and follows the tasks instructed by the preceptor—is never dislodged from Brahma's world. A kshatriya who studies the Vedas, offers oblations to the fire, performs sacrifices, protects the subjects, wields weapons for the sake of cattle and brahmanas, purifies his soul and is killed in battle—goes to heaven. A vaishya who studies, distributes his wealth at the right time to brahmanas, kshatriyas and those who are dependent on him and inhales the sacred smoke of the three pure fires[92]—obtains divine happiness in heaven after death. A shudra who shows homage in due order to brahmana, kshatriya and vaishya classes[93] and satisfies them—enjoys happiness in heaven after he has given up his body, because his sins are burnt up. I have told you about the dharma of the four varnas. Listen to the reason why I have told you this. O king! Pandu's son[94] is falling short of the dharma of kshatriyas. You should instruct him to follow the dharma of kings."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "This is just as you have always been instructing me. O amiable one! My mind also turns towards that which you have told me. My inclination has always been to turn towards the Pandavas. But whenever I meet Duryodhana, it turns in a contrary direction. No mortal one is capable of transgressing destiny. I think that destiny is the one who acts and human endeavour is futile."'

704(41)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Vidura! Is there anything that you have not spoken about so far? Tell me, since I am eager to listen to you. You are speaking about wonderful things.”

‘Vidura replied, “O Dhritarashtra! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The ancient and eternal youth Sanatsujata has said that there is no death. O great king! That supreme among intelligent ones will speak to you. He will bring out everything that is overt and covert, clinging to the heart.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “Do you not know what that eternal one will tell me? O Vidura! You must tell me, if you have that much of wisdom left.”

‘Vidura replied, “I have been born from a shudra womb. It is for that reason that I cannot tell you anything more. But I know about the eternal intelligence of that youth. He was born in a brahmana womb and speaks about matters that are extremely secret. I will be censured by the gods by speaking to you about those.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Vidura! Tell me. Here, and in this body of mine, how can I meet the ancient and eternal one?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Vidura thought about the rishi who was rigid in his vows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! And having got to know about those thoughts, he showed himself. Vidura received him in accordance with the decreed rites and tasks. When he was rested and happily seated, Vidura told him, “O illustrious one! There is a doubt in Dhritarashtra’s mind, which I am incapable of explaining. You should speak to him. On hearing this, this Indra among men will transcend all happiness and unhappiness, all gain and loss, and all pleasure and displeasure. Then old age and death will not overcome him, or fear and intolerance, hunger and thirst, insolence and power, hatred, lassitude, desire, anger, decline and rise.”’

Section Fifty-Two

Sanatsujata Parva

This section has 121 shlokas and four chapters.

Chapter 705(42): 32 shlokas
Chapter 706(43): 37 shlokas
Chapter 707(44): 24 shlokas
Chapter 708(45): 28 shlokas

This section is named after Dhritarashtra's questioning of the sage Sanatsujata. Sanatsujata instructs Dhritarashtra.

705(42)

Vaishampayana said, 'The intelligent King Dhritarashtra honoured the words that Vidura had spoken. Desiring supreme intelligence, the great-souled one privately questioned Sanatsujata.

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanatsujata! I have heard about your teaching that death does not exist. Yet, the gods and the asuras observed brahmacharya for the sake of immortality. Which of these is true?"

'Sanatsujata replied, "Some hold that deeds ensure immortality. Others say that there is no death. O king! Listen to my words on this, so that you no longer have any doubts. O kshatriya! Know that both of these statements are true. Know that the wise regard death as delusion. I am telling you that confusion is death. Therefore, I am telling you that there is immortality where there is no confusion. The asuras were vanquished because of their ignorance. Had they not possessed ignorance, they would have been like the brahman. Death is not a tiger that consumes beings. Its form is not one that can be fathomed. Some hold that Yama is death, but others do not agree. Immortality is the soul's pursuit of brahmacharya. That god[1] rules his kingdom in the world of the ancestors. He is auspicious towards those who are pure and is inauspicious towards those who are impure. Through instructions issued from his mouth, men suffer death in the form of anger, delusion and confusion. Being overcome by confusion, they leave for the hereafter and descend again.[2] Following him, the gods also go into a decline. Thus it is that this death[3] is also known by the name of death. But there are those who are attracted to the fruits of deeds. Because of their karma, they go there,[4] without transgressing death. There are learned ones who think and kill their desires, when they try to rise, realizing that these should not be respected. Because learned ones have killed their desires, though assuming the form of death, death cannot destroy them. A man who follows his desires is destroyed, together with the desires. A man who can conquer his desires can withstand all passion. Darkness appears to beings in the form of hell. Deluded, they eagerly rush towards it and fall into the hole.[5] The sense of ego kills such a person first. Desire and anger grasp him and kill him later. Childish ones are thus despatched towards their death. But steady ones who have fortitude can transgress death. O kshatriya! If a man thinks of nothing,[6] how can a tiger made out of straw attack him? If the soul is confused through anger and desire, death exists within one's own body. Know that this is how death is born. One who is established in knowledge has no fear of death. If the object[7] is destroyed, so is death, just as mortal beings are destroyed when they confront death."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "There are those here who do not follow dharma. There are also those who follow dharma. Is dharma destroyed by evil or is evil destroyed by dharma?"

'Sanatsujata replied, "The fruits of both are enjoyed, that of dharma and of its opposite.[8] A learned one uses dharma to give up adharma. Know that dharma is stronger."

‘Dhritarashtra said, “It is said that the eternal worlds are obtained by brahmanas who perform pure deeds in accordance with dharma. O learned one! It is said that there are different regions, depending on the deeds that have been performed.”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “There are brahmanas who are not proud of their strength. They do not try to surpass the strong with strength. In the hereafter, they are radiant in the world of heaven. Wherever a brahmana thinks food and drink are abundant, like grass during the rainy season, this is the place that he should savour. Where there is inauspicious danger, one should control one’s pride. It is best not to act in excess, or try to establish superiority over other people. If one is not tormented because another one proclaims one’s superiority, if one does not enjoy the property of brahmanas, food offered by such a person is regarded as acceptable by the righteous. A dog always eats its own vomit and causes injury to its own self. Like that, those who proclaim their own valour, eat their own vomit. A brahmana thinks that his conduct should always be unknown. Even if he dwells among his relatives, nothing will be known about him. What other brahmana is capable of destroying his inner soul? O kshatriya! It is because of such conduct that he can visualize the brahman that dwells inside him. He is never exhausted. He is honoured because he does not accept gifts from others. He never causes impediments. He is well versed, even if he does not seem to be well versed. Such a wise brahmana knows the brahman. These brahmanas are not rich in the wealth of men. They are rich because of the Vedas. They are difficult to assail. They are difficult to shake. Know that because of knowledge, they have the brahman in their bodies. Because he has to exert himself, a person, who knows that sacrifices have been performed to all the gods, is not the equal of a brahmana.[9] One who is honoured, though he does not exert himself, is truly honoured. When honoured, he does not think about it. Nor does he suffer because he is not honoured. One who is honoured should think that only the learned show honours. If one is not honoured, one should not think that stupid ones, skilled in adharma and adept in the ways of the world, do not know how to honour a revered person. Honour and silence[10] cannot travel together. Know that this world is that of honour and that one is of silence. Prosperity is the abode of happiness, though it runs counter to the objective.[11] O kshatriya! For someone who is devoid of wisdom, the prosperity of the brahman is extremely difficult to obtain. Virtuous ones have spoken of many different kinds of doors to that, all difficult to uphold. There are six that counter pride and delusion—truth, uprightness, modesty, self-control, purity and knowledge.”’

706(43)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “There may be a brahmana who has learnt the chants of the Rig, the Yajur and the Sama Veda. If he performs a sin, will he be tainted, or will he not be tainted?”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “One who is learned in the chants of the Sama, the Rig and the Yajur will not be saved from his evil deeds. I am not speaking a falsehood to you. The metres do not save a deceitful one, who has resorted to deceit, from sin. When their wings have grown, birds flee a nest. Like that, the metres desert one whose time of destruction has come.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O learned one! If the Vedas are incapable of saving one who is without dharma, why have the brahmanas eternally talked about them?”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “The austerities performed in this world are seen to yield fruits in another. When they are established in rich austerities, brahmanas obtain those worlds.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “How can austerities be prosperous and how can they fail to be so? O Sanatsujata! Tell me this, so that we may get to know.”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “O king! There are twelve vices like anger and another six like cruelty. Brahmanas who know about the sacred texts are knowledgeable about the qualities that prevent dharma—anger, desire, avarice, delusion, possessiveness, compassion,[12] discontent, pride, sorrow, lust, jealousy and aversion—these are the twelve human vices that men must always avoid. O Indra among kings! Every single one of them waits for a weakness in a man, like a hunter waits for a deer.

Maligning others,[13] covetousness, vanity, vindictiveness, anger and fickleness—if these six vices are left uncontrolled, they incite men towards evil in their dharma. They do not perform any good in extremely difficult situations. Scheming to enjoy, hatred, pride in deceit, regrets after giving, the weakness of miserliness, praise of one's kin and hatred of women—these are the seven cruel vices. Dharma, truthfulness, self-control, austerities, lack of envy, modesty, forgiveness, contentment, sacrifices, generosity, fortitude and learning—these are the twelve great vows for a brahmana. If one dwells with these twelve, one is capable of ruling the entire earth. Even if one is distinguished by the presence of three, two or only one of these, know that one does not possess anything. Self-control, renunciation and lack of ignorance—immortality is vested in these. Learned brahmanas say that truthfulness is the foremost. There are eighteen qualities that work against self-control—perverseness in what is done or not done, falsehood, discontent, desire, acquisitiveness, covetousness, anger, sorrow, thirst, desire, treachery, jealousy, possessiveness, regret, gloating, forgetfulness, slander and vanity. The learned say that one who is free from these vices is self-controlled. There are six types of renunciation regarded as superior—lack of rejoicing when one obtains something pleasant; lack of misery when something unpleasant is generated; giving to worthy supplicants without being asked for, as long as it is not a beloved wife or sons. Even if one is asked for what should not be asked, this is known as the third quality. Relinquishment of objects, non-fulfilment of desire and giving up the fruits of deeds[14]—if one possesses these qualities, even if one possesses objects, a man is one who renounces, with the intelligence of a student. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are eight vices that lead to ignorance and these vices must be avoided—those that come from the five senses, the mind, the past and the future. A person who is freed from these is happy. Only austerities which are free from these vices, and are united with the qualities, become prosperous and successful. O Indra among kings! This is what you asked me. What else do you wish to hear?"

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Some people have said that there are five Vedas, with ancient accounts as the fifth.[15] Others say that there are four Vedas and still others say that there are three Vedas. Others say that there are two Vedas and still others say that there is one Veda. There are others who accept no hymns. O brahmana! Therefore, what should I now regard as the true Veda?”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “Because there is ignorance about the single Veda, many Vedas have been thought of. O Indra among kings! There is one truth and all of them are established in that truth. Ignoring the Vedas, wisdom is sought in the great one.[16] If gifts, studying and sacrifices are followed out of greed, the resolutions of those proud ones deviate from the truth. Therefore, one should undertake a sacrifice only for the sake of the truth. When a man performs this with the mind, speech and deeds, he is successful in his intentions and is established in his intentions. Without being secretive, one should be consecrated in a rite. The word *satyam* is derived from the root *sat*[17] and is the supreme objective and truth. The results of knowledge are direct. Those of austerities are generated indirectly. A brahmana who recites a lot, should only be known as one who recites a lot. O kshatriya! Therefore, do not regard a brahmana to be superior only because he recites. He who has not deviated from the truth should be known as a brahmana. O kshatriya! When the class of rishis was created, Atharvan[18] chanted these ancient hymns. Those who learnt them were known as those who recited hymns. But they do not know the one[19] who should be known through the Vedas. O king! There are some who know the Vedas and there are some who know what should be known through the Vedas. He who knows the Vedas knows what should be known through the Vedas. He who knows what should be known through the Vedas is established in truth. I know him to be a brahmana who explains skilfully and is capable of removing doubts, having dispelled all his own doubts. The One[20] cannot be found by going to the east or the south, or the west, or diagonally, or in any direction at all. One should think about this while meditating in silence, being immobile even in one’s thoughts. The brahman that is established in the inner soul will then manifest itself. He who maintains silence is a *muni*;[21] one does not become a muni by residing in the forest. He who knows the one without decay is said to be the supreme hermit. One who knows the grammar behind everything is said to be a grammarian. But a man who can directly see all the worlds is a man who sees everything. O kshatriya! A brahmana who is established in the truth sees the brahman, by following in due order, what is prescribed in the Vedas. This is what I am telling you. Know this.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanatsujata! These supreme words that you have spoken about the brahman have the form of the entire universe. These supreme words are extremely rare among desirable objects. O young one! Therefore, speak to me.”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “You have happily asked me about the brahman, but it is not something that can be obtained in a hurry. I will tell you the ancient knowledge about the one who is not manifest. This can be successfully known through the practice of brahmacharya.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “You have said that the eternal knowledge about the one who is not manifest can be successfully obtained through the practice of brahmacharya and not through the performance of acts at prescribed points in time. How does one then obtain the immortality of the brahman?”

‘Sanatsujata replied, “Those who conquer their desires in this world, while patiently establishing themselves on the brahman, are firmly based on truth, and pluck the soul out of the body, like a stalk of *munja* grass.[22] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The father and the mother create the body. But the birth instructed by the preceptor is the true birth, because that is free of age or death.[23] Those who enter a preceptor’s womb and become embryos there, observing brahmacharya, become learned in the sacred texts in this world and attain supreme yoga after they give up their bodies. The preceptor fills the ears with the truth, practises truth and confers immortality. He should be regarded as the father and the mother. Knowing of his deeds, one should not cause him any injury. A disciple must always show respect to his preceptor. Pure and without distraction, he should study. His pride should not be annoyed, nor should he be angered, at tasks he is asked to perform. This is the first quarter of brahmacharya. Doing what pleases the preceptor, in deeds, thoughts and speech, even at the expense of life and riches, is said to be the second quarter. The conduct towards the preceptor should be the same as that towards the preceptor's wife, acting as one is instructed and performing what is pleasant. This is said to be the third quarter. Thinking oneself to be wise, one should never tell a preceptor that one isn't responsible for a deed. Even if one thinks this, one should not say it. This is the fourth quarter of brahmacharya. One should dwell by presenting to the preceptor whatever objects one obtains. For those who are righteous and possess many qualities, the conduct should be the same towards the preceptor's son. When one dwells in this way, one prospers in this world. One obtains many sons and fame. All the directions shower down upon him and many people dwell with him in turn, for the sake of brahmacharya. It is through such brahmacharya that the gods attained divinity, the immensely fortunate and learned rishis attained the world of Brahma and the gandharvas and the apsaras obtained their beauty. It was with such brahmacharya that the sun was born earlier. O king! He who lies down and torments his entire body with austerities, will transcend childishness and become learned. In due course of time, he will conquer death. O kshatriya! The worlds that people conquer through deeds they have performed are finite. But through knowledge, one obtains the entire brahman. There is no other path to traverse."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "Does he[24] appear white or red? Is he dark, black like collyrium, or brown? In what form does a righteous and learned brahmana visualize the seat of that immortal and undecaying one?"

'Sanatsujata replied, "He does not appear as white or red, as black, or with the complexion of iron. Nor does he have the complexion of the sun. He is not established in the earth or the sky. He is not to be found in the waters of the ocean. He does not resort to the stars, or the lightning. His form cannot be seen in the clouds. He cannot be found in the wind or the gods, nor can he be seen in the moon or the sun. He is not the mantras of the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda or the Atharva Veda, nor can he be seen in the unblemished Sama Veda. O king! It is certain that he cannot be seen in great vows and in *rathantara* and *barhata*.[25] He is the darkness that is impossible to cross. He is beyond death and beyond destruction. His form cannot be seen, it is as thin as a razor's edge, but he is also larger in form than the mountains. He is the foundation. He is immortality. He is the worlds. He is the brahman. He is fame. He is the source of all beings and at the time of destruction, he is the one into whom they flow. He is without division and gigantic. His fame soars up. The words of the wise say that he is immutable. Everything in the universe is established in him. Those who know him become immortal."'

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'Sanatsujata said, "He is the seed and is a great and blazing light. He is the resplendent one whose fame is great. He is the one whom the gods worship. It is because of him that the sun shines. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Everything originates with the brahman's seed. It is because of the brahman's seed that everything flourishes. It is because of the seed that stars burn in the middle of the sky and the sun obtains its radiance. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. It is because of him that there is water in the middle of the ocean. It is because of him that the two gods are in the firmament.[26] They hold up what flows in and what flows out, in the earth and in heaven.[27] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Both these gods carry earth and heaven. The seed bears the directions and the universe. The rivers flow from those directions and the great oceans are created from these. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Based on the wheels, the steady chariot ceaselessly works. He has a flaming crest and the celestial and ageless horses bear him in the sky.[28] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. There is no form that is similar to his. He can never be seen with the eyes. Learned ones who get to know him through their minds and their hearts, become immortal. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. There is a terrible river with twelve flows protected by the gods and one drinks from it.[29] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Like a bee, there are those who drink the honey only for half a month.[30] He is the lord who has ordained oblations for all beings. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. There is an ashvattha tree with golden foliage. They alight like featherless birds there. Having obtained feathers, they fly out in different directions.[31] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. The complete is taken out from the complete. It is from the complete that the complete universe is created. The complete is taken from the complete. But it is the complete that remains.[32] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. The wind is created from him and it in him that it subsides. Agni and soma were created from him. All life depends on him. One knows everything through him. One is incapable of describing him. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Apana dissolves into *prana*, prana dissolves into the moon.[33] The moon dissolves into the sun. The sun dissolves into the supreme. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. When it ascends out of the water, the swan does not raise one foot. If it did raise it,[34] there would be no death, nor immortality.[35] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. There is one great-souled god. He is the being who swallows the fire. If one knows this being, one's soul will never come to any harm. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Even if the thousands and thousands of wings are spread out to fly, they must return to the centre and what is in the centre, with the speed of thought.[36] He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. His form is stationed beyond the range of sight. Only those who are extremely pure in soul can see him. A wise one desiring welfare sees him through the mind. Those who resort to him, become immortal. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Because of their own learning and their own conduct, mortal ones hide him, like snakes in their holes. But only foolish ones are deluded by this and deceived and confounded, follow the dangerous road. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. There is neither existence, nor is there non-existence. Therefore, what source can give rise to death or immortality? Both truth and falsehood are based on the same truth. Truth and falsehood originate in the same womb. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Among men, whether they are righteous or wicked, these are not seen in an equal way.[37] Having been united with the divine knowledge of immortality, one should taste that honey. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. The heart is not tormented because of abuse.[38] Nor do lack of studying and lack of agnihotra matter. The mind becomes as light as the brahman. Those who are wise and persevering obtain him. He is the one whom the yogis see. He is the eternal and illustrious lord. Thus, one sees one's own soul in all beings, all engaged in various tasks. After this, why should there be any sorrow? There is a great deal of water in a well that overflows in all the directions. Like that, brahmanas who wish to know can use all the Vedas.[39] The great-souled being is the size of a thumb. Though he resides in the heart, he cannot be seen. He is unborn. He ceaselessly roams, throughout night and day. Knowing this, a wise one is full of bliss. I am I. I am also the mother, the father and the son. I am the soul of everything, whether I exist or whether I do not exist. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am the ancient grandfather,[40] the father and the son. You dwell in my soul. But you are not mine and I am not yours. The soul is the foundation. The soul is the birth. I am the foundation without decay that the Vedas speak about. I am subtler than the most subtle. With excellent intelligence, I am awake in all beings. Know him to be the father of all beings, dwelling in the lotus in all beings.'"[41]

Section Fifty-Three

Yana-Sandhi Parva

This section had 726 shlokas and twenty-four chapters.

Chapter 709(46): 17 shlokas
Chapter 710(47): 103 shlokas
Chapter 711(48): 47 shlokas
Chapter 712(49): 45 shlokas
Chapter 713(50): 61 shlokas
Chapter 714(51): 19 shlokas
Chapter 715(52): 16 shlokas
Chapter 716(53): 19 shlokas
Chapter 717(54): 66 shlokas
Chapter 718(55): 16 shlokas
Chapter 719(56): 60 shlokas
Chapter 720(57): 29 shlokas
Chapter 721(58): 30 shlokas
Chapter 722(59): 23 shlokas
Chapter 723(60): 29 shlokas
Chapter 724(61): 18 shlokas
Chapter 725(62): 31 shlokas
Chapter 726(63): 16 shlokas
Chapter 727(64): 15 shlokas
Chapter 728(65): 9 shlokas
Chapter 729(66): 15 shlokas
Chapter 730(67): 21 shlokas
Chapter 731(68): 14 shlokas
Chapter 732(69): 7 shlokas

Yana *means moving or journey as a verb and conveyance as a noun.* Sandhi *means both connection and peace or alliance. So the name of this parva can be interpreted in two different ways, and both are correct. First, there is the straightforward meaning of a journey (Sanjaya's)* *for peace. Second, this section is the connecting section between two separate journeys, Sanjaya's and Krishna's. Sanjaya conveys Arjuna's message and there is a discussion in the assembly of the Kurus. Karna refuses to fight until Bhishma has fallen. The section ends inconclusively, with a reference to Krishna's impending mission.*

709(46)

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus, the king[1] conversed with Sanatsujata and the intelligent Vidura and the night passed. When the night had passed, all the kings entered the assembly hall and were delighted to see the suta.[2] With Dhritarashtra at the forefront, all of them went to the king's splendid assembly hall, desiring to hear the words the Parthas had sent, in conformity with dharma and artha. The extensive arena was plastered white and was decorated with gold. It was extremely beautiful, like the rays of the moon, and was sprinkled with excellent water. It was strewn with beautiful seats made of gold, wood, stone and ivory, which were covered with excellent cushions.

'O bull among the Bharata lineage! Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Shalya, Kritavarma, Jayadratha, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, Somadatta, Bahlika, the immensely wise Vidura, maharatha Yuyutsu—all these assembled together with other royal warriors. Having placed Dhritarashtra at their head, they entered the splendid assembly hall. O king! Duhshasana, Chitrasena, Shakuni Soubala, Durmukha, Duhsaha, Karna, Uluka and Vivimshati placed the intolerant Duryodhana, king of the Kurus, at their head and entered the assembly hall, like gods entering Shakra's abode. O king! O king! When those brave ones, with arms like clubs, entered the assembly hall, it looked like a mountainous cavern full of lions. Having entered the assembly hall, those great archers, who adorned any gathering and were as radiant as the sun, seated themselves on extremely expensive seats. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When all the kings were seated, the gatekeeper informed them that the son of the suta had arrived. "Our messenger has swiftly returned on the chariot, drawn by Saindhava horses that can bear loads well, from the Pandavas." Wearing his earrings, he[3] quickly descended from the chariot and entered the assembly hall, which was full of great-souled lords of the earth.

‘Sanjaya said, “O Kouravas! Know that I have returned after having gone and met the Pandavas. Know that the Pandavas salute all the Kurus, in accordance with their ages. They honour the elders according to age and those who are of the same age as friends. According to age, they honour those who are their juniors. O lords of the earth! On the instructions of Dhritarashtra, I earlier went from here to visit the Pandavas, and listen to what I have to say.”’

710(47)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! O son![4] I am asking you in the midst of these kings about the words spoken by the great-souled Dhananjaya, indomitable in spirit, foremost in battle, and the destroyer of the lives of evil-souled ones.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Let Duryodhana listen to my words about what Arjuna spoke. The great-souled Dhananjaya is ready for battle. He said this with Yudhishthira’s permission and in Keshava’s hearing. Knowing the strength of his arms, he does not have the slightest fear. Kiriti is steadfast and ready to do battle. In Vasudeva’s presence, he told me, ‘Tell Dhritarashtra’s son in the midst of the Kurus and in the hearing of the kings who have assembled to kill the Pandavas. Tell them all the words that I have spoken, so that the king[5] and his advisers hear it.’ Just as all the gods listen to the words of the king of the gods, the wielder of the vajra, in that way, all the Pandavas[6] and Srinjayas listened to the capable words spoken by Kiriti. ‘Arjuna, the wielder of the Gandiva, is ready to do battle.’ With eyes like red lotuses, he spoke these words.

““‘If Dhritarashtra’s son does not give the kingdom to King Yudhishthira Ajamidha, then it is certain that the evil deeds committed by the sons of Dhritarashtra earlier will remain unaccounted.[7] If there is a desire to fight with Bhima and Arjuna, the sons of the Ashvins[8] and Vasudeva, with Shini’s son[9] who has raised his weapons, with Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi, with Yudhishthira, who is equal to Indra and can burn up earth and heaven with the ire of his thoughts—if Dhritarashtra’s son wishes to fight with these, then all the objectives of the Pandavas will be successful. Do not act so as to ensure the objectives of the Pandavas. Instead, should you so wish, come and fight.[10] Pandava,[11] who acts in accordance with dharma, was banished to the forest and slept on a bed of grief. Dhritarashtra's son will lie down and die on a more miserable bed and that will be his final one. The evil-souled son of Dhritarashtra governed the Kurus and the Pandavas through evil conduct. But he[12] possessed modesty, wisdom, austerities and self-control and conquered his anger through the protection of dharma. Though he was deceived, he was respectful and upright. He possessed austerities, self-control and the protection of dharma. He spoke the truth and was pleasant, even when he was deceived. He endured the infinite hardships. The eldest Pandava has controlled his soul. He has controlled his anger for many terrible years. If that is unleashed on the Kurus, Dhritarashtra's son will repent his decision to fight. When a fire with its black trails is kindled during the summer, it burns down the dry wood. Thus will Yudhishthira's angry and blazing glance burn down the armies of Dhritarashtra's son.

"“‘When Dhritarashtra's son sees the intolerant Pandava Bhimasena in battle, terrible in speed and with a club in his hand, vomiting the poison of his anger, he will then repent this fight. When he sees Bhima, terrible in form and with a club in his hand, begin to kill, like a mighty lion entering a pen of cows, Dhritarashtra's son will regret this war. He is extremely fearsome and is without fear. He is skilled in the use of weapons. He will slay the assembled enemy forces. He will counter an ocean of chariots on a single chariot. He will destroy a mass of infantry with his club. He will swiftly destroy many soldiers. That brave one will bring down the soldiers of Dhritarashtra's son, like a forest sliced down with an axe. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Dhritarashtra's son will see his mighty army scattered, like a village that is mostly made of straw burnt by a fire, or ripe grain burnt by lightning. With the foremost warriors dead, the terrified soldiers will be reluctant. They will mostly be in flight, with no one left with any enterprise. They will be burnt by Bhimasena's weapons. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Nakula, skilled and foremost charioteer among all charioteers, will use his right hand and shoot down hundreds of enemy soldiers. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Though he was earlier used to happiness, Nakula slept on a bed of unhappiness in the forest for a very long time. He will sigh hard, like an enraged serpent. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. He will see kings who are willing to fight on Dharmaraja's instructions, ride white chariots and attack his soldiers. He will see them abandon his side. Thereafter, Dhritarashtra's son will repent. The Kourava will see five brave ones, who are children, but not like children in their skill with weapons.[13] They will give up their lives to fight the Kekayas.[14] Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Sahadeva, the killer, will mount a chariot that is adorned with golden stars. Its wheels make no noise and it is yoked to well-trained horses. He will slice off the heads of kings with floods of arrows. Dhritarashtra's son will see him mounted on the chariot, skilled in the use of weapons, and attacking in all the directions in that extremely fearful war. On seeing him in battle, Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Sahadeva is spirited and swift to act. He is restrained by modesty, skilled and truthful. He is extremely strong and steadfast in all dharma. He will terribly slaughter soldiers as he finds his way towards the one from Gandhara.[15] When he sees Droupadi's sons, brave and great archers who are skilled in the use of weapons, expert in fighting with chariots, advance in battle, like terrible and poisonous serpents, then will Dhritarashtra's son regret the war. Abhimanyu is the slayer of enemy heroes. He will shower arrows on enemies, like a cloud showering rain. Soubhadra[16] is skilled in the use of his arms and is like Krishna's equal. When he advances, Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. He will see Soubhadra, who is a child, but is not like a child in valour. He will descend on that mass of enemies, like death itself. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is Indra's equal. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war.

""'The young Prabhadrakas are swift to act and skilled.[17] Their valour is like that of lions. They will strike the sons of Dhritarashtra, together with their soldiers. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. The aged Virata and Drupada are maharathas. Each will advance with his soldiers against the enemy, when they see Dhritarashtra's son, together with his soldiers. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Drupada is skilled in the use of weapons. He will be enraged in battle. Mounted on his chariot, he will use arrows to slice off the heads of younger ones. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Virata is the slayer of enemy heroes. He will penetrate the enemy army in its weak spots. He will be at the forefront of the Matsyas, who are terrible in form. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. Matysa Virata's eldest son[18] is terrible in form and is foremost among warriors. He has donned armour for the sake of the Pandavas. When he sees him, Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. When Shantanu's virtuous son,[19] foremost among the Kouravas, has been killed in battle by Shikhandi, I tell you truthfully and without any doubt, that none of our enemies will be alive any more. Shikhandi will be on a chariot drawn by celestial horses and protected well. He will advance towards Bhishma on his chariot and will mow down masses of chariots. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. He will see the resplendent Dhrishtadyumna, at the forefront of the Srinjaya forces. The intelligent Drona instructed him about secret weapons.[20] Dhritarashtra's son will repent then. He[21] is the immeasurable general. He will vanquish the sons of Dhritarashtra. He is capable of withstanding enemies and will advance against Drona in battle. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. He is modest, learned, strong and intelligent. He is blessed by prosperity and he is foremost among the Somakas.[22] Since our leader is the foremost among the lions of the Vrishni lineage,[23] our enemies will not be able to withstand us. Tell him this also.[24] There is no need to look for anyone else. We have chosen Shini's grandson, Satyaki, as our adviser. He is a charioteer and is without a rival in battle. He is immensely strong, without fear and skilled in the use of weapons. When instructed by me, the lord of the Shinis will shower arrows on the enemy, like a cloud showering rain. He will envelope the warriors with a net of arrows. Then Dhritarashtra's son will regret the war. When he desires to fight, he is steady. The great-souled one's arms are long and his bow is firm. The enemies will be like ashes in a fire. They will be like cows that have scented a lion. The great-souled one’s arms are long and his bow is firm. He can shatter the mountains and destroy all the worlds. He is skilled in the use of weapons and has dextrous hands. He is radiant like the sun stationed in the firmament. The Yadava, the lion of the Vrishni lineage, is skilled and subtle in his knowledge of the yoga of weapons. He has been instructed in what is said to be the most famous yoga. All the qualities exist in Satyaki’s form. Satyaki Madhava’s golden chariot is yoked to four white horses. When Suyodhana sees it in the field of battle, the evil one, who has no control over his soul, will repent.

““‘He will see the chariot studded with gold and gems. It is yoked to white horses and has a monkey on its banner. He will see it, driven in the battle by Keshava. Then the evil one, who has no control over his soul, will repent. The evil-minded one will hear the great sound of Gandiva, as it is brandished by me in that great battle. The sound will be like thunder, when the string of the bow strikes against my wrist guards. Then Dhritarashtra’s stupid and evil-minded son, with wicked companions, will regret the war. He will see his soldiers destroyed by that dark shower of arrows in the battle, like a herd of cows. Like lightning emerging from the clouds, they will kill thousands of enemies in the encounter. My arrows will pierce the bones and penetrate the hearts. Then Dhritarashtra’s son will regret the war. He will see masses of arrows, released from Gandiva’s string, descend with sharp tips and destroy horses, elephants and armoured soldiers. Then Dhritarashtra’s son will regret the war. The evil one will see the arrows of our enemies countered and repulsed by my arrows. They will be obliquely sliced by my arrows with razor tips. Then Dhritarashtra’s son will regret the war. The arrows released from my arms will strike down the heads of his young warriors, like birds plucking fruit from the top of a tree. Then Dhritarashtra’s son will regret the war. He will see warriors brought down from chariots, giant elephants and horses. They will be slain and brought down by my arrows in the arena. Then Dhritarashtra’s son will regret the war. Like death with a gaping mouth, the flaming shower of arrows released by me will bring down the enemy assassins, the masses of infantry and masses of chariots in every direction. Then the evil-minded one will repent. The dust from my chariot will cover every direction. He will see his own soldiers completely bewildered, oppressed by Gandiva. After that, the evil-minded one will repent. Duryodhana will see all his soldiers, bereft of their senses, shattered in their limbs and overwhelmed. Their horses, warriors, kings and elephants will be slain. They will be thirsty, exhausted and terrified. Killed, or about to be killed, they will lament piteously. Hair, bones and skulls will be scattered around, as if Prajapati[25] left his work incomplete. On seeing this, the evil-minded one will repent. In that battle, Dhritarashtra's son will see Gandiva, Vasudeva, the divine conch shell Panchajanya, Devadatta, the inexhaustible quivers and me on my chariot.[26] In destroying the Kouravas, in burning that assembled mass of bandits,[27] I will burn like a fire, like the one between the end of a yuga and the onset of another yuga. Then Dhritarashtra's son will repent, together with his sons. Having been overcome by anger, with his brothers, with his sons and with his soldiers, the weak-minded one will see his prosperity destroyed. He will tremble when his insolence has been destroyed. Thereafter, Dhritarashtra's wicked son will repent.

"''On an earlier occasion, I had finished my meditations in the morning. When I arose from the water, a brahmana spoke these pleasant words. "O Partha! You will have to perform an extremely difficult task. O Savyasachi! You will have to fight with your enemies. Destroying the enemies, Indra, with the vajra in his hand and drawn by tawny horses, will lead from the forefront in this battle. Alternatively, Krishna Vasudeva will protect your rear, on a chariot yoked to Sugriva."[28] In this battle, I have chosen Vasudeva as my aide, in preference to the great Indra, with the vajra in his hand. I have obtained Krishna so as to slay the dasyus. But I think the gods have ordained this for me. Though he has resolved not to fight, a man whom Krishna wishes to triumph will be victorious over all his enemies, be they Indra with the gods, or men. There is no need to worry. One who wishes to defeat the brave and spirited Vasudeva Krishna in a battle is like one who desires to swim across the ocean, the great store of immeasurable waters, with his bare arms. Mount Shveta is high and lofty with rocks and it is like trying to shatter it with one's arms. The hands, with their nails, will be split. But nothing will happen to the mountain. Instead of vanquishing Vasudeva in battle, one should try to pacify a blazing fire with one's hands, restrain the sun and the moon, or rob the gods of amrita. Alone on a chariot, he destroyed the kingdom of the king and abducted Rukmini of Bhoja.[29] He obtained a resplendent and famous wife and she bore him the great-souled Roukmineya.[30] Having defeated all of Nagnajit's sons, he spiritedly churned Gandhara and forcibly freed Sudarshaniya, beloved of the gods, from bondage.[31] He killed Pandya by striking him on the chest.[32] He vanquished the Kalingas in Dantakura. He burnt down the city of Varanasi, which remained for many years without a protector.[33] He was challenged by Ekalavya, the king of Nishadha, who was thought to be invincible. But Krishna killed him and robbed him of his life, forcefully smashing him against a rock, like Jambha.[34] With Baladeva as a second, he killed Ugrasena's extremely wicked son,[35] who was radiant in the midst of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, and returned the kingdom to Ugrasena. He battled Soubha, which travelled in the sky, and the terrible King Shalva, who used maya.[36] At Soubha's gates, he grasped the one who had killed one hundred.[37] Is there any mortal one who can withstand him? There was the terrible and impregnable fortress city Pragjyotisha of the asuras. The extremely strong Naraka, born of the earth, stole Aditi's beautiful and bejewelled earrings. Together with Shakra, the gods tried to get them back. But they could not match him, and fled, terrified. However, they witnessed Keshava's valour and strength and his irresistible weapons. Knowing Keshava's true nature, they entrusted Krishna with the task of killing the dasyus.[38] Vasudeva pledged to perform that extremely difficult task, since he possessed the wealth of success. Piercing with lances and striking with razors, he killed six thousand in Nirmochana. He killed Mura and he killed rakshasa warriors. Then the brave one entered Nirmochana. There, a great battle took place between the immensely strong one[39] and the even stronger Vishnu. He was killed by Krishna and was robbed of his life. He was like a karnikara tree uprooted by the wind. Having regained the bejewelled earrings, having killed the earth-born Naraka and Mura, the wise one was surrounded by prosperity and fame. The one with the unmatched power returned. On witnessing the terrible deed he had wrought in battle, the gods then granted him boons. "When you battle, you will not be overtaken by fatigue. You will face no impediments in the sky and in the water. Weapons will never penetrate your body." Krishna was gratified at these. The immensely strong and immeasurable Vasudeva is like this. He always possesses the qualities. Vishnu is unassailable and infinitely valorous. Dhritarashtra's son wishes to vanquish him. Though the evil-souled one doubts him, looking towards us, he[40] has ignored it. If he thinks that he will be able to engender a quarrel between Krishna and me and make it flourish, and thus become capable of robbing the Pandavas, he will know what is true when he goes to war.

"“'I convey my respects to the king who is Shantanu's son, to Drona and his son, and to the unrivalled son of Sharadvat.[41] Wishing to obtain the kingdom, I will fight them. I think that dharma will direct weapons at those who fight against the Pandavas, who have conducted themselves in accordance with dharma. The sons of Pandu were vanquished through deceit by violent ones and have waited for a long period of twelve years, spending a life of hardship, as promised, in the forest. We have lived one year of concealment. While the Pandavas are still alive, how can the sons of Dhritarashtra suddenly rob them of their station? If they conquer us in a battle, with the gods headed by Indra as aides, the practice of adharma will be superior to that of dharma. Then it will be certain that being virtuous is pointless. If he thinks that a man is not bound down by his deeds, and if he does not think that we are superior to him, then, with Vasudeva as a second, I hope to kill Duryodhana and his companions. If a man is tied down by his karma, and even if a man is not tied down by his own karma, looking towards both of these possibilities, the defeat of Dhritarashtra's son is proper. O Kurus! I am telling you what is evident. The sons of Dhritarashtra will be destroyed in this war. If the Kurus seek to attain their objectives without a war and if they do not fight, they will then survive. Having killed the sons of Dhritarashtra and Karna, I will conquer the entire kingdom of the

Kurus. Do whatever you can, according to your capacity. With your wives and your sons, enjoy whatever is sweet. There are aged brahmanas among us. They are extremely learned, and possess virtuous conduct and noble lineage. They are acquainted with the astrology of the years and are certain about the knowledge of the nakshatras, the high and low of the mysteries of destiny, divine questions, *mrigachakra*[42] and muhurtas. They have predicted the victory of the Pandavas and the great destruction of the Kurus and the Srinjayas.[43] Ajatashatru[44] already thinks that success has been obtained in defeating our enemies. Janardana, lion among the Vrishnis, knows what is hidden and does not see any reason for doubt. Without being distracted, I myself know and see the shape of the future. My ancient foresight has not suffered. The sons of Dhritarashtra will die in this war. The Gandiva bow yawns without being touched. Without being touched, the strings of the bow shudder. The arrows jump out from the mouths of the quivers and repeatedly wish to fly out at every instant. My happy steel[45] emerges from its scabbard, like a snake that has discarded its old skin. Terrible voices are heard from my standard, "O Kiriti! When will your chariot be yoked?" Crowds of jackals are howling in the night. Rakshasas fall down from the firmament. Deer, jackals, white-necked ones,[46] crows, vultures, cranes and hyenas are emerging. On seeing my chariot yoked with the white steeds, birds[47] are flying at the back. I will alone shower down arrows and convey the warrior kings to the world of the dead. I will separately despatch each weapon along its route, like a fire that consumes a forest during the summer—Sthunakarna, the terrible Pashupata and Brahmastra[48]—all of which were given to me by Shakra. I will swiftly release them for the sake of slaying. No remnants will be left of any of the beings. I will obtain peace and supreme bliss. O son of Gavalgana![49] Tell them that is my firm resolution. Look at the delusion of Dhritarashtra's son. He seeks to quarrel with those who have always been his aides when he has confronted his enemies, even if the gods, with Indra at the forefront, were on their side.[50] Shantanu's son, the aged Bhishma, Kripa, Drona and his son and the intelligent Vidura—all of them have said this. Let it be that way. Let all the Kurus enjoy long lives.’”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When all the kings had assembled, Shantanu’s son, Bhishma, spoke these words to Duryodhana. “Once, Brihaspati and Ushanas[51] presented themselves before Brahma. So did Indra with the Maruts, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Adityas, the Sadhyas, the celestial saptarshis, the gandharva Vishvavasu and the masses of beautiful apsaras. They bowed in obeisance before the ancient grandfather of the worlds. The denizens of heaven surrounded the lord of the universe. Then the ancient gods, the two rishis Nara and Narayana, departed—as if drawing out the minds and energy of the residents of heaven. Brihaspati asked Brahma, ‘O grandfather! Who are these two? Tell us. They do not worship you.’ Brahma replied, ‘These two ascetics illuminate heaven and earth. They are blazing and resplendent, pervasive and extremely strong. They are Nara and Narayana, who travel from one world to another world. Because of the fruits of their austerities, they possess great energy and valour. Through their deeds, these two certainly bring delight to the worlds. They are worshipped by the gods and the gandharvas, for the destruction of the asuras.’ Having heard this, together with the masses of all the gods, with Brihaspati at the forefront, Shakra went to the place where these two were performing their austerities. At that time, the residents of heaven were terrified because of the war between the gods and the asuras. They desired a boon from the great-souled Nara and Narayana. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! They asked Shakra to choose a boon. When he asked for their help, they told Shakra that they would act according to his wishes. With their help, Shakra conquered the daityas and the danavas. In a battle for Indra’s cause, Nara, the scorcher of enemies, killed hundreds and thousands of his enemies, the Poulamas and the Kalakhanjas.[52] Stationed on a chariot that whirled around in the field of battle, Arjuna used his arrows to kill Jambha, who was ready to swallow the sacrifice. He penetrated Hiranyapura, which was on the other side of the ocean, after vanquishing sixty thousand Nivatakavachas in battle. This scorcher of enemy cities has vanquished the gods, together with Indra. The mighty-armed Arjuna satisfied the god of fire.[53] In the same way, Narayana killed many others in that battle. Behold! These two immensely valorous ones have arrived as the maharatha warriors Vasudeva and Arjuna. It is said that they are the ancient gods Nara and Narayana. They are invincible in the world of men, and even against Indra, the gods and the asuras. It is said that Narayana is Krishna and Phalguna[54] is Nara. Narayana and Nara are one being, but have been divided into two. They have earned eternal and indestructible worlds because of their deeds. When the time for war has arrived, they are repeatedly born there and here. This is the task that they have to perform. That is what Narada, knowledgeable about the Vedas, told the assembled circle of the Vrishnis. O Duryodhana! O son![55] When you see Keshava with the conch shell, chakra and club in his hands, the terrible archer Arjuna grasping his weapons, and the two eternal and great-souled Krishnas[56] stationed on a single chariot, you will then remember my words. Why else has this destruction of the Kurus presented itself? O son![57] Your intelligence has turned away from dharma and artha. If you do not heed my words, you will hear that many have been killed. All the Kurus pay attention to your inclinations alone. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You follow the instructions of only three people—the low-born son of a suta, Karna, who was cursed by Rama;[58] Shakuni Soubala; and your mean and wicked brother Duhshasana."

'Karna replied, "O grandfather! You have lived for a long time. You should not speak in this way. I have been established in the dharma of kshatriyas and have not given up my own dharma. What is the evil conduct for which you are censuring me? The sons of Dhritarashtra know that there is no sin in me. Instead, in every deed, I have sought to please King Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana, because he is the one who rules the kingdom."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing Karna's words, Shantanu's son, Bhishma, again spoke to the great king Dhritarashtra. "He always speaks about killing the Pandavas. But he is not a sixteenth part[59] of the great-souled Pandavas. Know that the calamity that is about to confront your evil-souled sons is the work of this evil-minded son of a suta. Your evil-minded son Suyodhana depends on him. He ignores those brave sons of the gods, the destroyers of enemies.[60] What extremely difficult task has he[61] accomplished in the past that can rival any one deed accomplished by any one of the Pandavas earlier? In Virata's city, he saw his own beloved brother killed through Dhananjaya's valour.[62] What did he do then? Dhananjaya attacked all the Kurus together, defeated them and won back the cattle. Was he not there then? In the expedition over the cattle, your son was captured by the gandharvas.[63] The son of a suta is behaving like a bull now. Where was he then? Wasn't it Partha and the great-souled Bhima, together with the twins, who defeated the gandharvas then? O bull among the Bharata lineage! O fortunate one! He is deficient in dharma and artha and has always spoken many such falsehoods." When the great-souled Bharadvaja[64] heard Bhishma's words, he showed his respects to Dhritarashtra in the midst of those kings and said, "O king! O best of the Bharata lineage! Act in accordance with what Bhishma has said. You should not follow the advice of those who are greedy for kama and artha. Before embarking on a battle, I think that we should negotiate with the Pandavas. I know that Pandava Arjuna will do everything that he has spoken in the words reported by Sanjaya. There is no archer who is his equal in the three worlds." But ignoring the superior words spoken by Bhishma and Drona, the king asked Sanjaya about the Pandavas. When the king did not properly answer Bhishma and Drona, all the Kurus lost any hope of remaining alive then.'

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'Dhritarashtra asked, "What did the king, Pandava, Dharma's son, say when he heard that many soldiers had assembled against him? O suta! How is Yudhishthira preparing himself for the war? When he is worried, among his brothers and sons, whose face does he look at? Is there any among them who strives to pacify the war? He is knowledgeable about dharma and follows dharma. However, he has been enraged by the wicked deceipt.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “The Panchalas and Pandavas look towards the king’s face. O fortunate one! Yudhishthira rules all of them. The separate arrays of chariots of the Pandavas and the Panchalas salute Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, when he arrives. Kounteya’s radiant energy is like the sun rising out of darkness and the Panchalas honour this mass of energy. The Panchalas, Kekayas, Matsyas, even cowherds and shepherds, worship Pandava Yudhishthira, who brings them delight. Brahmana women, princesses and the daughters of vaishyas, when they are sporting, assemble to see Partha, when he is clad in his armour.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! What forces have the Pandavas gathered against us? How are Dhrishtadyumna and his soldiers? What is the strength of the Somakas?”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus questioned in the assembly hall where the Kurus had gathered, Gavalgana’s son repeatedly heaved deep sighs and seemed to be lost in thought. Then, as if determined by destiny, the suta fell unconscious. In that assembly hall where the kings had gathered, a man said, “O great king! Sanjaya is unconscious and has fallen down on the ground. He is bereft of his senses and his wisdom and cannot utter a word.” Dhritarashtra replied, “Sanjaya has seen the maharatha sons of Kunti. His mind must have been agitated at the sight of those tigers among men.” Sanjaya regained consciousness.

‘Having been comforted, he told the great king Dhritarashtra in the assembly hall where the Kurus had gathered, “O Indra among kings! I have seen the maharatha sons of Kunti. They are lean because of the restraints they faced while dwelling in the abode of the king of Matsya. O great king! Listen to the ones the Pandavas have gathered against you. There is Ajatashatru, supreme among those who uphold dharma. O great king! He is the one against whom dharma is measured. He has dharma in his soul and never deviates from truth for the sake of anger, fear, desire, objectives, or any other reason. The Pandavas have gathered him against you. The Pandavas have gathered Bhimasena against you. There is no one on earth who is his equal in the strength of arms. That archer brought all the lords of the earth under his suzerainty. After escaping from the house of lac, Vrikodara, Kunti's son, was their protector and saved them from the man-eating Hidimba.[65] When Yajnaseni was abducted by the king of Sindhu, Vrikodara, Kunti's son, was their protector.[66] When all the Pandavas were being burnt in Varanavata, he is the one who freed them.[67] He has been gathered against you. He is the one who killed the Krodhavashas and penetrated the uneven and terrible Mount Gandhamadana in order to please Krishna.[68] The substance and valour of ten thousand elephants is in his arms. He has been gathered against you. The Pandavas have gathered Vijaya[69] against you in battle. In earlier times, with Krishna as a second, the brave and valorous one defeated Purandara in battle and satisfied the god of fire.[70] He satisfied in battle Mahadeva himself, the god of the gods, the consort of Uma, Girisha, the wielder of the trident.[71] That archer has subjugated all the lords of the world. The Pandavas have gathered Vijaya against you. Nakula is a warrior who uses wonderful weapons in battle. He conquered the western regions, populated by masses of mlecchas. He is brave and handsome and is supreme among archers. O Kouravya! The Pandavas have gathered Madri's son against you. The Pandavas have gathered Sahadeva against you. In battle, he conquered Kashi, Anga, Magadha and Kalinga. There are only four men on earth who are his equal in valour—Ashvatthama, Dhrishtaketu, Pradyumna and Rukmi.[72] The Pandavas have gathered that Sahadeva against you. He is the youngest and a brave one amongst men. He brought delight to Madri. O Kurus! Shikhandi, skilled in the use of weapons, has been gathered against you. In earlier times, she was the daughter of the king of Kashi and performed great austerities, desiring to kill Bhishma.[73] O bull among the Bharata lineage! When she died, she was born as the daughter of Panchala and, by destiny, became a man. O tiger among men! He knows about the qualities and taints of both women and men. That Panchala is unassailable in battle and conquered Kalinga. We have heard that a yaksha turned her into a man for the sake of killing Bhishma. The Pandavas have gathered that terrible and great archer against you. There are five brothers who are Kekaya princes and are great archers. They are warriors with beautiful armour. They have been gathered against you. Yuyudhana,[74] the Vrishni warrior, has long arms and is swift in the use of weapons. He is steadfast and truth is his valour. He is against you. The Pandavas have gathered Virata against you in battle. The great-souled one offered refuge to the Pandavas for some time. The maharatha lord of Kashi, who is king in Varanasi, has become a warrior on their side and has been gathered against you. Though they are children, Droupadi's great-souled sons are invincible in battle. Their touch is like that of virulent serpents and the Pandavas have gathered them against you. The Pandavas have gathered Abhimanyu against you in battle. He is Krishna's equal in valour and Yudhishthira's equal in self-control. The Pandavas have gathered Dhrishtaketu, the king of Chedi, against you. He is unmatched in renown and valour and is immensely famous. That maharatha is invincible when he is enraged in battle and he is Shishupala's son. The Pandavas have gathered Vasudeva against you. He is the refuge of the Pandavas, just as Vasava is of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They have Sharabha, the brother of the king of Chedi, together with Karakarsha, and have gathered them against you. They have Jarasandha's son, Sahadeva, and Jayatsena. There is the extremely energetic Drupada, with a large army. He is ready to give up his life for the sake of the Pandavas and is gathered against you. These and many other lords of the earth have come from the east and the north. With hundreds of them, Dharmaraja is prepared."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "All the ones that you have named possess great enterprise. But Bhima alone is equal to all of them together. O son![75] The angry and intolerant Bhimasena creates as great a fear in me, as that of a great *ruru* deer at the sight of a tiger. I am awake throughout the night, letting out deep and warm sighs. O son![76] I am as terrified of Vrikodara as a weak animal is of a lion. This mighty-armed one is Shakra's equal in his energy. I do not see anyone in this army who can withstand him in battle. That intolerant son of Kunti and Pandu is firm in his enmity. He does not smile, even in jest. He is mad. He has a sidelong glance. He has a loud voice. He is great in his speed. He is great in his enterprise. He has mighty arms. He is immensely strong. He will destroy my wicked sons in battle. Vrikodara is a bull in the Kuru lineage. When he brandishes his club in battle, like the god of death wielding his staff, the thighs of the enemies give away. I can see that terrible club in my mind's eye, made of steel[77] and burnished with gold, like Brahma's upraised staff. Like a strong lion wandering around among herds of deer, Bhima will roam around amidst my forces. He is a voracious eater and intolerant. His valour is cruel. Ever since his childhood, alone, he has exhibited violence towards my sons. My heart was upset, when during childhood, Duryodhana and the others were oppressed by him, like a fighting elephant. My sons have always been oppressed by his valour. Bhima, terrible in valour, has been the cause of this dissension. I can see Bhima before me in the field of battle, senseless in rage and devouring arrays of men, elephants and horses. He is the equal of Drona and Arjuna in weapons. His speed is equal to the wind. O Sanjaya! Tell me about the brave and intolerant Bhimasena. I think it was a great gain that this intelligent one, the destroyer of enemies, did not kill all my sons at that time. Through his terrible strength, he has slaughtered yakshas and rakshasas earlier. Which man can withstand his force in battle? O Sanjaya! Even as a child, he was never under my control. How can the Pandava be under my control when my evil sons have made him suffer? He is cruel. Because of that cruelty, he will break, but he will not bend. He has a sidelong glance. His brows are furrowed. How can Vrikodara be pacified? His shoulders are wide. He is irresistible. He is fair and is as tall as a palm tree. In height, Bhimasena is a *pradesha*[78] taller than Arjuna. He surpasses horses in speed. He surpasses elephants in strength. He has a rumble in his voice. The medium Pandava is strong and has eyes that have the complexion of honey. I have earlier heard from the mouth of Vyasa, that the Pandava was like that in form and strength, even when he was a child.[79] Bhima is supreme among warriors. Enraged in battle, he will use his iron club to destroy chariots, elephants, horses and men. He is always intolerant, angry and fearsome. His valour is cruel. O son![80] Because he has acted against my wishes, he has been insulted earlier. That iron club is heavy and decorated with gold. It has excellent sides and excellent rings. It is capable of killing one hundred. When it is swung, with a hundred roars, how will my sons bear it? The ocean known as Bhimasena has no shores. It cannot be crossed and is unfathomable. It is impenetrable. It has the arrows as its waves. O son![81] Only fools can seek to cross it. Those children think themselves to be learned and do not heed my words. Seeing only the honey, they do not think of the fall that will come. They wish to fight against a wind in the form of a man. The creator controls them, like great deer by a lion. O son![82] The club is made of steel.[83] It is four cubits[84] long and has six sides. It is infinitely energetic. It is terrible to the touch. When it is flung, how will my sons withstand it? He will whirl it around and smash the heads of elephants. He will lick the corners of his mouth and repeatedly shed tears of rage. He will utter a terrible roar when he counters the elephants that attack him. He will roar back at those mad and descending elephants. He will penetrate the paths followed by chariots and destroy the best soldiers. He will blaze like a fire. Which of my sons will escape? The mighty-armed one will carve out a path by driving back my army. He will seem to be dancing, with a club in his hand, as if displaying the end of the era. He will be like a rutting elephant that destroys trees in blossom. In battle, Vrikodara will rout the soldiers of my sons. He will rob chariots of their men and pennants. He will shatter the drums. That tiger among men will dislodge charioteers and riders, like the torrents of the Ganga flooding the banks and uprooting many trees. O Sanjaya! He will destroy the great army of my sons. O Sanjaya! Oppressed by Bhimasena's strength, my sons, their servants and the kings will come under his power. With Vasudeva at his aide, it was he who penetrated the inner quarters of the immensely valorous King Jarasandha, and killed him. This entire goddess earth had been conquered by the strong and intelligent Jarasandha, the Indra of Magadha, who then oppressed her. Because of Bhishma's prowess, the Kurus, and the Andhakas and the Vrishnis, because of their policies, did not come under his[85] sway. Perhaps it was destined that way. With the strength of his arms, Pandu's son swiftly went there. Without any weapons, the brave one killed him. What can be greater than that? He is like a snake that has accumulated its poison for a long time. O Sanjaya! In battle, he will release that energy against my sons. With the club in his hand, Bhimasena will kill my sons, like the great Indra, supreme among the gods, once killed the danavas with the vajra. I can see the irresistible and inevitable Vrikodara, fierce in speed and valour. His eyes are more red than copper and he will descend. Who can stand in front of that man, even if he fights with his bare arms, without a club, without a bow, without a chariot and without armour?

'"Bhishma, the brahmana Drona and Sharadvat's son, Kripa, know about the valour of that intelligent one, just as I do. Knowing the vow of aryas and unwilling to break their agreements, those bulls among men will establish themselves at the forefront of my army. Destiny is always powerful, especially over men. I can see them triumph, but I cannot restrain my sons. Those great archers will station themselves on the ancient path followed by Indra. They will give up their lives in the turmoil and protect their fame on earth. O son![86] The Pandavas are to them just as my sons are. They are Bhishma's grandsons and the pupils of Drona and Kripa. O Sanjaya! Because they are aryas, these three aged men will certainly repay whatever refuge and gifts we have offered them. When a brahmana takes up weapons and wishes to follow the dharma of kshatriyas, it is said that death is the supreme objective. However, I grieve for all those who wish to fight with the Pandavas. The danger foretold by Vidura at the beginning has now arrived. O Sanjaya! I do not think that knowledge can counter misery. Instead, when sorrow is excessive, it overwhelms knowledge. Even free rishis, who watch over the travails of the world, rejoice at its happiness and sorrow over its unhappiness. Why should I not be affected? I am a thousand times more attached to my sons, my kingdom, my wife, my grandsons and my relatives. I have great doubts about whether I will see supreme peace in the future. I think and see the destruction of the Kurus. This great destruction of the Kurus seems to have started with the game of dice. This evil act was performed by that wicked one out of greed and desire for prosperity. I think that this is the dharma of time, which extends beyond the end. Everyone is affixed, like a rim to a wheel,[87] and no one is capable of running away. O Sanjaya! What can I do? How can I do it? Where will I go? Because they have come under the clutches of time, the wicked Kurus will be destroyed. O son![88] I am helpless before the destruction of one hundred of my sons. I can hear the lamentations of the women. How is death going to touch me? Like a blazing fire during summer is urged by the wind and burns the deadwood, the Pandava will wield the club in his hand, and assisted by Arjuna, will slay my own."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "We have never heard false words from him.[89] He has Dhananjaya as his warrior and can rule over the three worlds. Even though I think about it continually, I do not see any charioteer who can counter the wielder of the Gandiva in battle. He will shoot shafted and hollow arrows that will traverse their paths and penetrate the heart. There is no one who can counter the wielder of the Gandiva in battle. Drona and Karna are brave bulls among men. They may be able to withstand him because of their greatness. But there is no doubt that I will not have victory in this world. Karna is compassionate, but he is rash. The preceptor is senior and aged. The powerful Partha wields a firm bow and has conquered all exhaustion. He is capable of countering them and there will be a terrible battle, with both sides undefeated. All of them are warriors who are knowledgeable about weapons and all of them have attained great fame. They may possess the riches of all the gods, but they will not obtain victory. There can certainly be peace if both of them[90] are killed, or if Phalguna is. But Arjuna's defeat will not happen. Nor is there anyone who can kill him. How can his rage, which has arisen against the wicked ones, be pacified? There are others who know about weapons. They conquer and are conquered. But it has been heard that Phalguna only has victory as the outcome. He challenged the thirty-three gods and satisfied Agni in Khandava. He defeated all the gods. I know of no instance of his defeat. His charioteer is Hrishikesha, who is his equal in character and conduct. O son![91] His victory is certain, just as Indra's victory is. We have heard that three forces have come together on a single chariot now, the two Krishnas[92] and the stringed Gandiva bow. There is no bow like that, nor a warrior, or a charioteer. But the wicked ones who follow Duryodhana do not know this. O Sanjaya! O son![93] When the blazing thunderbolt descends on the head, it may leave a residue, but the arrows released by Kiriti leave no remnant. I can already see Phalguna blazing forth. He severs the heads from the trunks with his shower of arrows. The energy of his arrows radiates in all the directions. Ignited by Gandiva, they burn down the armies of my sons. They are terrified at the roar of Savyasachi's chariot. I can see the large army of the Bharatas tremble and flee. Like a large fire burns down deadwood and grows and spreads everywhere, with large flames fanned by the wind, he will consume those who are mine. In battle, the assassin Kiriti will release a large number of sharp arrows. He will be like death, who robs everything, and has been ordained by the creator to slaughter everything. I see and hear of many kinds of omens in the abode of the Kurus and around them, before the start of the war. Destruction certainly confronts the Bharatas."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "All the Pandavas are brave and desire victory. Their followers have also resolved to give up their lives and have set their sights on victory. You yourself have spoken about those mighty enemies of mine—the Panchalas, the Kekayas, the Matsyas, the Magadhas and the kings of Vatsa. There is also the powerful one, who if he so wishes, can subjugate all the worlds, together with Indra. Krishna is supreme in the universe and he is also set on victory for the Pandavas. Satyaki swiftly obtained all knowledge from Arjuna.[94] Shini's son will be stationed in the field of battle and will shower arrows, like seeds. Dhrishtadyumna of Panchala is a maharatha and is the performer of cruel deeds. He is strong in the knowledge of supreme weapons and will fight my armies in the war. O son![95] Great fear is generated in me from Yudhishthira's anger, Arjuna's valour and the twins and Bhimasena. Those Indras among men will cast out a superhuman net over my soldiers. O Sanjaya! That is the reason I am lamenting. Pandu's son[96] is handsome and intelligent. He possesses the signs of prosperity and the radiance of brahmanas. He is wise and his insight is excellent. He has dharma in his soul. He is surrounded by excellent friends and advisers and he has horses to yoke and those who will yoke them. His brothers, fathers-in-law and sons are maharathas. The Pandava, tiger among men, possesses fortitude and can maintain secrecy. He is non-violent, generous and modest, and truth is his valour. He is extremely learned and has perfected his soul. He serves the aged and has conquered his senses. He has all the qualities. Which wicked one will burn himself by descending into that kindled fire, like an insect? One with stupid intelligence is certain to die if he doesn't avoid the Pandava's fire. The king is like a tall and thin flame, with a complexion of pure gold. He will bring about the destruction of my wicked sons in battle. I think that it is best not to fight. O Kurus! Listen to me. If there is a war, it is certain that the entire lineage will be destroyed. This is supreme peace and it will pacify my mind. If you do not wish for war, let us try for peace. If you try for this, Yudhishthira will not ignore you. He abhors adharma and blames me as having been the cause."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you have said. It can be seen that Gandiva will destroy the kshatriyas in battle. You have always been wise. But I do not know how, despite knowing the spirit of Savyasachi, you have allowed yourself to be controlled by your sons. O great king! There is no time now. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Right from the beginning, you yourself have always maltreated the Parthas. A father who guides with his heart is always the best well-wisher. He should practise what is beneficial. One who disregards this cannot be called a superior. O great king! When you heard that they had been defeated at the game of dice, you laughed like a child and exclaimed, 'We have won! We have gained!' When harsh words were addressed towards the Parthas earlier, you ignored them. Though you knew that they had conquered the kingdom for themselves, you did not foresee your own downfall. O great king! Only the ancestral kingdom and Kurujangala are yours. It was only later that you obtained the entire earth, when those brave ones conquered it. The Parthas won the earth with the valour of their arms and handed it over to you. O supreme among kings! But you think that you obtained it yourself. O supreme among kings! When your sons were grasped by the king of the gandharvas and were drowning in a sea without bows, it was the Parthas who brought them back. O king! You laughed like a child when the Pandavas were deceitfully defeated in the game of dice and had to repeatedly roam around in the forest. When Arjuna showers his many sharp arrows, even the oceans dry up, not to speak of those who are born from flesh. Phalguna is the best among archers. Gandiva is supreme among bows, Keshava among all beings, Sudarshana[97] among all chakras. Among all standards, the standard that bears the monkey is supreme.[98] The one with the white steeds will bear these on his chariot in the field of battle and destroy us. O king! He will fling us away, like the upraised wheel of time. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The entire earth now belongs to him. O supreme among kings! He who has Bhima and Arjuna as his warriors, is the king. Attacked by Bhima, your army will be almost submerged. With Duryodhana at the forefront, the Kouravas will see this and confront destruction. O great king! Your sons, and the kings who follow them, will be oppressed by fear of Bhima. O lord! They will not be victorious. The Matsyas no longer revere you, nor do the Panchalas and the Kekayas. All the Shalveyas and Shurasenas hate you and have gone over to the Parthas, knowing the valour of that intelligent one.[99] They are united with dharma and do not deserve to be killed or injured. That evil man,[100] together with his followers, must be restrained in every way. O great king! You should not grieve over your son. At the time of the game with the dice, I told you, and so did the intelligent Vidura. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! All your lamentations about the Pandavas, as if you are incapable, are pointless.'"

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‘Duryodhana said, “O great king! Do not be frightened. Do not sorrow on our account. O king! O lord! We are capable of defeating our enemies in war. When the Parthas were exiled to the forest, Madhusudana went to them with a large army that had subjugated the kingdoms of enemies. The Kekayas, Dhrishtaketu, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and many other kings followed the Parthas. The maharathas assembled, not far away from Indraprastha. Having assembled together, they censured you, together with the Kurus. Yudhishthira was near them, seated on an antelope skin. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Krishna at the forefront, they showed him homage. The kings said that he should act so as to take back the kingdom. They desired to uproot you, together with your followers. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! When I heard this, I was scared that my relatives would be destroyed and told Bhishma, Drona and Kripa then, ‘It is my view that the Pandavas will stick to the time they have agreed to. Vasudeva desires that we should be completely exterminated. It is my view that, with the exception of Vidura, all of you great-souled ones will be slain. Dhritarashtra is knowledgeable about dharma. That supreme among Kurus cannot be slain. O father![101] Having uprooted all of us entirely, Janardana wishes to hand over the entire kingdom of the Kurus to Yudhishthira. Has the time come for submission and running away? Will we fight against the enemy and give up our lives? If we fight against them, defeat will certainly be ours, because all the lords of the earth are under Yudhishthira’s suzerainty. The kingdom is dissatisfied with us and all our friends are enraged. We are being censured by all the kings and all our relatives. There is no taint in submitting to our relatives for an eternal period. But I grieve for my father. He is a lord of men and has wisdom as his sight. Is it because of my deeds that he faces this unhappiness and endless hardships. Indeed, your sons restrained the others in order to bring me pleasure. O supreme among men! You have always known this from earlier times. Driven by enmity and revenge, the maharatha Pandavas will exterminate the lineage of King Dhritarashtra and his advisers.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that, on seeing that I was extremely worried, with my senses tortured, Drona, Bhishma, Kripa and Drona's son replied, 'O scorcher of enemies! There is nothing to fear if we are attacked by others. O lord of men! The others are not capable of vanquishing us in battle. Each one of us is alone capable of vanquishing all the lords of the earth. Let them advance. We will demolish their pride with sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, when his father had died, the angry Bhishma had defeated all the lords of the earth, alone on a single chariot. Enraged, the best of the Kuru lineage had killed many of them and terrified, they had sought refuge with Devavrata.[102] When supported by us in battle, Bhishma is alone capable of defeating the enemy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, give up your fear.' At that time, this was the determination of these infinitely energetic ones. In earlier times, the entire earth was under the control of the enemies.

'"They are now incapable of defeating us in battle. The enemies have lost their allies and the Pandavas have lost their valour. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The earth is now under our subjugation. The kings have joined with us, in happiness and in grief. O scorcher of enemies! For my sake, all the kings are prepared to enter the fire and the ocean. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! You should know this. They are laughing at you because of your grief and your many terrified lamentations when you praise the enemy, thinking you to be mad. Each of these kings is alone capable of countering the Pandavas. Each one thinks that to be true of himself. Dispel your fear. Even Vasava is incapable of vanquishing our entire army. It cannot be destroyed even by Brahma, the one who created himself. O lord! Yudhishthira is frightened of my army and my prowess. Earlier, he only asked for five villages.

'"You think Kunti's son, Vrikodara, to be capable. But that has no basis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You do not know my prowess. There is no one on earth who is my match in fighting with the club. There has never been an equal and there will never be one. I undertook a lot of hardships to reach those shores of learning. Therefore, I have nothing to fear from Bhima, or anyone else. O fortunate one! When I studied under him, Samkarshana[103] said, 'It is certain that there is no one who is equal to Duryodhana in wielding the club.' I am Samkarshana's equal in battle. And in might, I am his superior on earth. Bhima will not be able to withstand the blows of my club in battle. O king! With one angry, severe and swift blow, I will dispatch Bhima to Vaivasvata's[104] domain. O king! I wish to see Vrikodara with the club in his hand. This has been my wish and the desire of my heart for a very long time. Slain by my club, Partha Vrikodara will fall down lifeless on the ground, with his body shattered. Struck by the force of my club, even the Himalaya Mountains will shatter into one hundred thousand pieces. He[105] knows it, and so do Vasudeva and Arjuna—there is no one equal to Duryodhana in fighting with the club. Therefore, shed your fear of Vrikodara in the great battle. O king! I will kill him. Do not be distracted.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! After he has been slain by me, many charioteers who are Arjuna's equal or superior will swiftly overpower him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Drona's son, Karna, Bhurishrava, the lord of Pragjyotisha, Shalya and Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu—each one of them is alone capable of killing the Pandavas. They will swiftly despatch them to Yama's abode. Why should the soldiers of all the kings be unable to defeat Partha Dhananjaya alone? That is not reasonable. Hundreds and thousands of arrows showered by Bhishma, Drona, Drona's son and Kripa will despatch Partha to Yama's abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The grandfather[106] was born from Ganga and Shantanu and is like a brahmarshi, difficult for even the gods to overcome. His father was pleased and told him, 'You will not die unless you wish to do so.' Drona was born in a wooden vessel, from the brahmarshi Bharadvaja. O great king! Drona's son, supremely skilled in the use of weapons, has been born from Drona. Kripa is foremost among preceptors and was born through maharshi Goutama in a clump of reeds. I think that this illustrious one cannot be killed. These three, Ashvatthama's father, mother and maternal uncle, were not born from human wombs.[107] O great king! That brave one is also on my side. O great king! All these maharathas are the equals of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In a battle, they can even oppress Shakra. In my view, Karna is the equal of Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rama[108] has told him that he is his equal. Karna possessed beautiful and radiant earrings that he was born with. The great Indra obtained these from the scorcher of enemies for the sake of Shachi.[109] O great king! He obtained a supreme, terrible and infallible spear in return. When struck by that spear, how can Dhananjaya survive? O king! My victory is certain, like a fruit in my hand. The complete defeat of our enemies on earth is certain.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On a single day, Bhishma alone will kill ten thousand. Drona, Drona's son and Kripa are great archers who are his equal. O scorcher of enemies! The band of *samshaptaka* kshatriyas[110] have resolved, 'Arjuna will kill us, or we will kill Dhananjaya.' O lord! The kings think that they are capable of killing Savyasachi. O king! Why do you then suffer from this grief? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Bhimasena has been killed, which of the others will continue to fight? O scorcher of enemies! If you know of anyone amongst the enemy, tell me about him. There are the five brothers, Dhrishtadyumna and Satyaki. O king! These seven warriors are the prime strength of the enemy. O lord of the earth! But our superior ones are Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others—Drona's son, Vaikartana Karna, Somadatta, Bahlika, the king of Pragjyotisha, Shalya, the king of Avanti, Jayadratha, Duhshasana, Durmukha, Duhsaha, Shrutayu, Chitrasena, Purumitra, Vivimshati, Shala, Bhurishrava and your son Vikarna. O king! I have assembled eleven akshouhinis. With seven, the enemy has fewer. How can there be defeat? Brihaspati has said that an army that is weaker by one-third, can be fought. O king! My soldiers outnumber the enemy by one-third. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I see that the enemy lacks in many qualities. O lord of the earth! I see that we possess many qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On knowing all this, the superiority of our army and the inferiority of the Pandavas, you should not be prey to this confusion."'

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken thus, that destroyer of enemy cities questioned Sanjaya again, because he wished to know about what was appropriate for the time.’

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‘Duryodhana said, “O Sanjaya! Kounteya Yudhishthira has obtained seven akshouhinis. Together with the kings, what does he plan to do in preparation for the war?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! In great happiness, Yudhishthira is preparing for the war. Bhimasena, Arjuna and the twins are not scared. Bibhatsu Kounteya has yoked his divine chariot and, invoking mantras, is radiating in all the directions. We have seen him ready, like a cloud tinged with lightning. After invoking the mantras, he happily told me, ‘O Sanjaya! Behold the portents. We will be victorious.’ Bibhatsu told me this and I also saw this to be true.”

‘Duryodhana said, “You happily praise the Parthas, who were defeated in the game of dice. Tell me. What kind of chariot does Arjuna possess? What is the nature of his standard?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O lord of the earth! O lord! Together with Shakra, Tvashta and the creator, Bhouvana thought of and created many beautiful things.[111] With their celestial maya, they created many beautiful forms for the standard—extremely expensive, celestial, heavy and light. In all directions, sideways and upwards, his standard is one yojana long. It is not entangled, even if it is surrounded by trees. Such is the maya that Bhouvana has created. Shakra’s bow[112] sparkles in the sky in many hues and we do not know what it is. Such is the standard that Bhouvana has created. It can be seen in many forms. From a fire, smoke ascends up into the sky. It has energy as its body, but has many forms. Such is the standard that Bhouvana has created. It has no weight and it does not face any impediments. He has excellent and white horses that are as fleet as the wind. They are divine and a gift from Chitraratha.[113] Even when some are killed, one hundred will always remain. This was the boon that was granted earlier. The king[114] has large and ivory-coloured horses yoked to his chariot, a match for his valour. In battle, Bhimasena has mounts that are as swift as the wind and have the hue of antelopes. Sahadeva has mounts with speckled bodies, with backs that have the colour of partridges. In affection and delight, his brother Phalguna gave them to him. These horses are superior to those of his brave brother. Madri's son, Nakula Ajamidha,[115] has supreme and bay horses that were given by the great Indra. They are equal to the wind in strength and speed and they bear the brave one, like Indra, the slayer of Vritra. There are horses that are their equal in age and valour. They are well trained and have no equals in their speed. They bear Subhadra's son and Droupadi's sons. These are large horses that were given by the gods."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! Whom else did you see assembled there, to fight for the sake of the Pandavas against the army of my sons?"

'Sanjaya replied, "I saw Krishna, the foremost of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis arrive, and Chekitana and Yuyudhana Satyaki. These two maharathas pride themselves on their manliness and have joined the Pandavas with one akshouhini each. The king of Panchala came, surrounded by one akshouhini and his ten brave sons, Satyajit and the others, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. Drupada increased their fame and they are protected by Shikhandi. He covered the bodies of all his soldiers.[116] Virata arrived with his sons, Shankha and Uttara, with Suryadatta and the other brave ones, Madirashva leading the way. The lord of the earth was surrounded by his brothers and sons and joined the Parthas, surrounded by one akshouhini of soldiers. Jarasandha's son from Magadha and Dhrishtaketu, the king of Chedi, arrived, each followed and surrounded by one akshouhini. All the five brothers from Kekaya, with red standards, were surrounded by one akshouhini and joined the Pandavas. These are the numbers that I saw assembled there, for the sake of the Pandavas, and wishing to fight with the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. The immensely intelligent Dhrishtadyumna is the army's general. He knows about the battle formations used by men, gods, gandharvas and asuras. O king! Shikhandi has been given the task of killing Bhishma, Shantanu’s son. He will be supported by Virata and the warriors from Matsya. The powerful king of Madra has been assigned to the eldest son of Pandu.[117] But there were some who held the view that the two are mismatched. Duryodhana, with his sons and one hundred brothers, and the kings who have come from the east and the south, are Bhimasena’s share. It has been held that Arjuna’s share is Vaikartana Karna, Ashvatthama, Vikarna and Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu. Partha Arjuna has also accepted as his share all those on earth who pride themselves on their bravery and think themselves to be invincible. The five great archers, the princes from Kekaya, have accepted as their share the Kekayas who will fight in the battle.[118] The Malavas, Shalvas and Kekayas are part of their share too, as are the two foremost ones from Trigarta who are samshaptakas.[119] All of Duryodhana and Duhshasana’s sons have been accepted by Subhadra’s son as his share, and also King Brihadbala.[120] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the mighty archers who are Droupadi’s sons and have standards decorated with gold, will attack Drona. Chekitana wishes to fight Somadatta in a duel of chariots. Yuyudhana wishes to fight with Kritavarma, from the Bhoja lineage. Madri’s brave son Sahadeva, who roars in battle, has accepted as his share the task of killing your brother-in-law, the son of Subala.[121] The deceitful Uluka and the masses of Sarasvatas have been thought of as the share of Nakula, Madri’s son. O king! There are other kings who will fight in the battle. The sons of Pandu have assigned them, depending on who challenges whom. This is the way in which the army has been divided into parts. You and your son must do whatever has to be done, swiftly.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “All my sons are stupid. They are deceitful gamblers. They are lost, because they will have to fight the powerful Bhima in the forefront of the battle. All the kings of the earth have been assigned according to the dharma of time. They will enter the fire of Gandiva, like insects entering a flame. I can see my enemy destroyed by those great-souled ones, who have been made enemies. In a battle, who will follow those who have been shattered by the Pandavas in a fight?

All of them are brave atirathas.[122] They are famous in their deeds and powerful. Each is equal in energy to the sun and the fire. They are victorious in battle. Yudhishthira is their leader and they are protected by Madhusudana. Those two brave Pandavas, Savyasachi and Vrikodara, Nakula, Sahadeva, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki, Drupada, Dhrishtadyumna's son, Uttamouja from Panchala, the invincible Yudhamanyu, Shikhandi, Kshatradeva, Virata's son Uttara, those from Kashi, Chedi and Matsya, all the Srinjayas, Virata's son Babhru, the Panchalas and the Prabhadrakas, from whom Indra himself cannot steal the earth if they are unwilling—all of these are brave ones who are steady in war. They can shatter the mountains. All these are powerful men who possess all the qualities. O Sanjaya! While I grieve, these are the ones my wicked sons wish to fight."

'Duryodhana said, "Both the sides come from the same lineage. Both the sides walk on earth. Why do you then think that only the Pandavas can be victorious? The grandfather,[123] Drona, Kripa, the invincible Karna, Jayadratha, Somadatta and Ashvatthama are extremely intelligent and great archers. O father! Forget the Pandavas. Even the immortals, led by Indra, are incapable of vanquishing them in a fight. O father! The brave Pandavas are aryas in conduct, they are like the fire. But the entire earth is on my side and against them. The Pandavas are incapable of even looking at my army. I am sufficiently powerful to challenge the Pandavas, together with their sons, in a battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All these kings wish to do that which ensures me pleasure. They will restrain them, like deer caught in a net. Through my great collection of chariots and net of arrows, the Panchalas and the Pandavas will be subjugated."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! My son is raving like a lunatic. He will not be able to vanquish Dharmaraja Yudhishthira in battle. Bhishma has always known how famous the great-souled Pandavas are, their knowledge of dharma and their strength, together with that of their sons. That is the reason I do not wish to fight with those great-souled ones. O Sanjaya! But tell me again about their efforts. Who is igniting the swift Pandavas? They are great and flaming archers. Who is offering oblations into those who are like fire?"

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhrishtadyumna always incites them and says, 'O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Fight and do not be frightened of the war. There are kings who have surrounded Dhritarashtra's son and will assemble in that tumultuous battle, like a lake of armour. Those angry ones will gather for that battle, with their followers. But I alone will devour them, like a whale devours fish in the ocean. I will restrain Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Drona's son, Shalya and Suyodhana—just as the shoreline restrains the abode of the sharks.'[124] When he spoke in this way, King Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, told him, 'The Panchalas and the Pandavas together depend on your fortitude and valour in this war. Save all of us in this battle. O mighty-armed one! I know that you are always established in the dharma of kshatriyas. You are alone capable of countering the belligerent Kouravas. O scorcher of enemies! Whatever you decide, will be for our welfare. There are those who are shattered and running away from the field of battle, seek refuge. It is better to purchase a man who stands his ground and shows his valour and manliness than one thousand of those others. You know that policy. O bull among men! You are courageous. You are brave. You are valorous. There is no doubt that you are the saviour of those who are frightened in battle.' When Kounteya Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, spoke these words, without any fear, Dhrishtadyumna addressed me in this way. 'O suta! Tell all those who have come as Duryodhana's warriors from different countries—Bahlikas, Kurus who are descended from Pratipa's lineage, the Sharadvats, the son of the suta, Drona and his son, Jayadratha, Duhshasana, Vikarna, King Duryodhana and Bhishma. Without any delay, go swiftly and tell them this. It is best that you come to peace with Yudhishthira. Otherwise, Arjuna, protected by the gods, will kill you. Swiftly give Pandava, the brave one in the world, what he wants. There is no warrior on earth who is Savyasachi Pandava's equal. He is supreme in the use of weapons in the proper way. The celestial chariot of the wielder of the Gandiva is protected by the gods. No man can defeat him. Do not even think about fighting against him.’”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “Since his childhood, the brahmachari Pandava has possessed the energy of kshatriyas. Despite my lamentations, these stupid ones wish to fight him. O Duryodhana! O best of the Bharata lineage! Refrain from war. O destroyer of enemies! There are no circumstances under which war is praised. Together with your advisers, half the earth should be enough for you to live on. O destroyer of enemies! Give Pandu’s sons what is due to them. All the Kurus think that it is in accordance with dharma that you should make peace with the great-souled sons of Pandu. O son! Look at the different constituents of your army. This has been created for your detriment. But because of your folly, you do not realize this. I do not want a war. Nor does Bahlika want it. Nor do Bhishma, Drona, Ashvatthama, Sanjaya, Somadatta, Shalya, Kripa, Satyavrata, Purumitra, Jaya and Bhurishrava desire war. When they are oppressed by enemies, these are the ones the Kurus seek refuge with. O son! They do not applaud this war and you should find that acceptable. You yourself do not desire it. Karna is making you do this, and Duhshasana, with evil in his soul, and Shakuni Soubala.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “When I challenge them, I am not placing the burden of the war on you, Drona, Ashvatthama, Sanjaya, Vikarna, Kamboja, Kripa, Bahlika, Satyavrata, Purumitra, Bhurishrava, or any of the others on your side. O father! Karna and I will perform this sacrifice of the war. O bull among the Bharata lineage! We have been consecrated and Yudhishthira will be the sacrificial animal. The chariot will be the altar, the sword will be the ladle, the club will be the larger ladle and the armour will be the assisting priests. The horses will be the four officiating priests. The arrows will be the *darbha* grass. Fame will be the oblations. O king! Having sacrificed ourselves to Vaivasvata[125] in this war, we will return in triumph, having slain our enemies and surrounded by prosperity. O father! Three of us—Karna, my brother Duhshasana and I, will kill the Pandavas in battle. I will kill the Pandavas and rule over this earth. Or the sons of Pandu will enjoy the earth after having killed me. O king! I can give up my life, my riches and my kingdom. O king! O one without decay! But I cannot live together with the Pandavas. O venerable one! I will not give up to the Pandavas as much of land as can be pricked with the point of a sharp needle.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O son! I sorrow for all you kings who are following this stupid one to the eternal world of Vaivasvata. Duryodhana has been disowned by me. These supreme warriors will be like tigers among herds of ruru deer. The Pandavas will gather together and kill the best of your warriors. It seems to me that the army of the Bharatas is like a frightened woman who has fallen down and has been molested by one with long arms. Increasing the overflowing strength that Partha already possessed, Shini’s son, Madhava,[126] will station himself in the field of battle, showering arrows like seeds. Bhimasena will be at the forefront of the army and he will be a rampart, behind which, all of them will fearlessly seek refuge. When you see the elephants brought down by Bhima in battle, their tusks shattered, their temples broken and blood oozing, they will seem to be like splintered mountains. When you are frightened at Bhima’s touch, you will then remember my words. You will see your army burned down by Bhimasena. The charioteers and elephants will be slain. You will see that destruction, like the trail of a fire, and remember my words. If you do not have peace with the Pandavas, you will confront a great danger. You will find peace only when Bhimasena kills you with the club. When you see the army of the Kurus brought down in battle, like a large forest that has been destroyed, you will then remember my words.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! After the king had spoken in this way to all the kings, he again turned to Sanjaya and asked him …’

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‘Dhritarashtra asked, “What did those two great-souled ones, Vasudeva and Arjuna, say? O immensely wise one! Tell me. I wish to listen to your words.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to me and I will tell you how I found Krishna and Dhananjaya and what those two brave ones said. O king! After purifying myself, I entered the quarters of those gods among men, looking at my toes and joining my hands in salutation. Abhimanyu and the twins are not allowed entry into the abode where the two Krishnas, and Krishna[127] and the beautiful Satyabhama, reside. Both of them were drunk with liquor and both had their bodies smeared with sandalwood. They wore garlands, excellent garments and were adorned with divine ornmanets. The two destroyers of enemies were seated on a large and golden couch, which was covered with many carpets. I saw that Keshava’s feet were on Arjuna’s lap, while the great-souled Arjuna’s were on Krishna and Satya.[128] Partha pointed out a golden footstool to me. After touching it with my hands, I seated myself on the ground.[129] When Partha removed his feet from the footstool, I saw two longitudinal auspicious marks on the soles of his pure feet. Having seen those two dark, large and young men seated on the same seat, like the trunks of shala trees, I was struck by great fear. They were like Indra and Vishnu together. The evil-souled one[130] does not understand this, because he depends on Drona and Bhishma and listens to Karna’s bragging. Since these two obeyed Dharmaraja’s instructions, I became convinced in my mind that his desires would be met. Having been honoured with food and drink and a garment, and having been shown respect, I placed my hands on my head[131] and conveyed the message. Partha’s hand bore the auspicious marks made by a bow and arrows. With this, he nudged Keshava’s feet, prompting him to reply. Krishna is like Indra in his valour. He was adorned with all the ornaments and he was as upright as Indra’s standard. The most eloquent of speakers spoke these words. They were appropriate and pleasant words. But though they were mild, they were extremely terrible and frightening for Dhritarashtra’s sons. I listened to the words of the one who should be heard. The syllables were trained and clear. They were meant for everyone’s welfare. But at the end, they dried up my heart.”

‘“Vasudeva said, ‘O Sanjaya! In the presence of the foremost among the Kurus and in Drona’s hearing, speak these words to the intelligent

Dhritarashtra. "Offer a large number of sacrifices and donate stipends to the brahmanas. Enjoy yourselves with your sons and wives. A great danger confronts you. Distribute your riches among deserving ones. Have sons born out of love. Do good deeds towards those you love. The king[132] will soon be victorious. That old debt is still impaled in my heart, because I have not repaid it. When I was far away, Krishna cried out, 'Govinda!'[133] Savyasachi's Gandiva bow is full of power and is invincible. He has an enmity with you and that is the reason I am helping him now. With me as an aide, who wishes to challenge Partha, even if it were to be Purandara himself, unless because of destiny, his time has come? He can raise the earth with his arms. He can angrily burn down these beings. He can dislodge the thirty gods from heaven. Who can defeat Arjuna in battle? Among the gods, asuras, men, yakshas, gandharvas and serpents, I do not see anyone who is capable of withstanding the Pandava in battle. An extraordinary wonder in the city of Virata is spoken about and is sufficient example, when a single one was enough to counter many. Faced with Pandu's son alone in the city of Virata, they were shattered and fled in all the directions. This is sufficient example. Such strength, valour, energy, speed, dexterity of hand, perseverance and fortitude are found in no one other than Partha."""

'Sanjaya said, "Thus spoke Hrishikesha, delighting Partha with words that roared like the chastiser of Paka[134] in the sky, when it is the time for rains. After having heard Keshava's words, Kiriti Arjuna, the one with the white horses, himself spoke words that were extremely terrifying."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'The lord of men possessed the eyesight of wisdom. Having heard Sanjaya's words, he began to consider the pros and cons of the war. The intelligent one considered them in detail, the good and the bad. He reflected on them, wishing for victory for his sons. The intelligent lord of men reflected on the strengths and the weaknesses, the powers of the two sides in battle. He concluded that the Pandavas possessed superior strength and energy, both divine and human and that the Kurus were weaker in strength.

‘He addressed Duryodhana. “O Duryodhana! This anxiety does not leave my mind. I know this to be the truth, and do not deduce it from my imagination. All beings have excessive affection towards their sons and, according to capacity, do everything to please them and ensure their welfare. In a similar way, it is usually seen that those who have been benefited wish to bring great pleasure to their benefactors in return. Therefore, remembering the good deeds performed by Arjuna in Khandava, Agni will help him in the terrible encounter between the Kurus and the Pandavas. Dharma and many other residents of heaven will be invoked and be on the side of the Pandavas, out of affection for their sons. Desiring to protect them from the fear of Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others, I think that their wrath will be ignited, like lightning. The Parthas are tigers among men. They have human valour and are skilled in the use of weapons. With the gods as their aides, they cannot be repulsed. He possesses the supreme and celestial bow Gandiva, which is irresistible. He has Varuna’s divine and great inexhaustible quivers, always filled with arrows. He possesses the monkey on his celestial standard, which blazes trails of smoke. His chariot has no equal in the four corners of earth. It has the roar of a giant cloud and when men hear its giant, fearful and thunderous roar, the enemies are terrified. The worlds know him for his superhuman valour. The kings know him to be one who can vanquish the gods in battle. He has been seen to grasp five hundred arrows and release them in an instant, so that they descend a long distance away. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Drona’s son, King Shalya of Madra and men who are neutral declare that when Partha is stationed in battle, even superhuman kings cannot counter him. He is a tiger among men and is a destroyer of enemies. In a single burst, he unleashes five hundred swift arrows. The Pandava is Kartavirya’s[135] equal in the valour of his arms. This Arjuna is a great archer and is protected by the great Indra and Upendra.[136] I see us being slaughtered by him in the great battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I think about these things throughout day and night. I remain sleepless and without happiness, thinking about peace for the Kurus. A great destruction has presented itself before the Kurus. O son! I have always favoured peace with the Parthas, and not this war. I have always thought that the Pandavas have greater strength than the Kurus.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing his father’s words, Dhritarashtra’s intolerant son was extremely angered and again said, “O supreme among kings! If you think that the Parthas cannot be countered because they are helped by the gods, throw away your fears. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods obtained their divinity because they are impervious to love, hatred, malice and avarice and because they ignore all sentiments. Dvaipayana Vyasa and the immensely ascetic Narada have told us this in earlier times, and so has Rama, Jamadagni’s son.[137] O bull among the Bharata lineage! The gods never act like humans, driven by love, hatred, malice and avarice. If Agni, Vayu, Dharma, Indra and the Ashvins favour the Parthas because of their affection, they would not have faced hardships.[138] Therefore, you should not have any worries on this account. The gods always ignore sentiments that have nothing to do with divine affairs. Their divinity would be called into question if the gods were seen to be motivated by love, hatred and avarice. When the fire wishes to burn the worlds and surrounds them in all the directions, wishing to burn them down, I can invoke mantras and it praises me. The energy that the residents of heaven possess is supreme. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But the gods cannot match me and they know it. O king! While the worlds look on, with my mantras, I can establish the shattered mountains and summits of the earth. When the sensate and insensate, the mobile and immobile, face destruction and there is a terrible and large roar, with a shower of rocks and a gale, driven by compassion for all beings, I can pacify everything, while the universe looks on. Chariots and infantry can march over the water I have solidified. I am the one who directs the affairs of the gods and the asuras. When I go with my akshouhinis to any country, whatever be the reason, there the waters follow my instructions and my desires. O king! There is no fear from snakes and other beings within my dominion. When beings are asleep, they do not face terrible violence. O king! Parjanya[139] showers down on those who reside there, without their asking for it. All the subjects are based on dharma and they are not afflicted by anything. The Ashvins, Vayu, Agni, the Maruts, the slayer of Vritra and Dharma are unable to protect those whom I hate. If they had been capable of saving my enemies with their great powers, the Parthas would not have endured unhappiness for thirteen years. I tell you truthfully. The gods, the gandharvas, the asuras and the rakshasas are not capable of saving the ones whom I hate. It has never been the case that the good and evil I respectively wish to bestow on both my friends and enemies have failed to materialize. O scorcher of enemies! Whatever I have mentioned as inevitable, has never failed to happen. That is the reason I am known as one who speaks the truth. The world is a witness to my greatness and it is famous everywhere. O king! I have said all this to reassure you and not because I wish to praise myself. O king! I have never indulged in self-praise earlier. One who praises one's own self is inferior. You will hear that I have defeated the Pandavas, together with the Matsyas, Panchalas, Kekayas, Satyaki and Vasudeva. Rivers are destroyed when they reach the ocean. Like that, they and their followers will be destroyed when they reach me. I possess supreme intelligence. I possess supreme energy. My valour is supreme. I possess supreme learning. I possess supreme yoga. All these distinguish me over them. Whatever the grandfather,[140] Drona, Kripa, Shalya and Shala know about weapons—all that is vested in me." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken thus, wishing to fight, the scorcher of enemies questioned Sanjaya, to determine the time to accomplish different tasks.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Disregarding Vichitravirya's son,[141] who kept reflecting on the Parthas, Karna addressed Dhritarashtra's son[142] in the assembly of Kouravas, so as to cheer him up. "In earlier times, when Rama found that I had obtained the brahmastra weapon from him under false pretences, he told me, ‘When your end has come, it will not appear before you.’[143] The maharshi possessed fierce energy and was capable of burning up the entire earth, along with her oceans. I had committed a grave crime. But even when the maharshi imposed that grave curse, he did it pleasantly. Because of my servitude and manliness, his mind was gratified by me. I still possess the weapon and I still have some life left. Therefore, the burden is mine and I am capable of bearing it. Through the favours of the rishi, I will kill the Panchalas, the Karushas and the Matsyas in an instant. I will kill the Parthas, with their sons and grandsons. I will give you the worlds I will obtain with my weapons. Let grandfather,[144] Drona and all the foremost among kings stay with you. I will go with the best soldiers and kill the Parthas. That is my burden.” While he was saying this, Bhishma responded, “What are you saying? Your intelligence has been numbed by destiny. O Karna! Do you not know that once the foremost ones have been killed, Dhritarashtra’s sons will be dead? With Krishna as his second, Dhananjaya burnt down Khandava. Hearing about that should be sufficient to restrain your soul and those of your relatives. The great-souled, illustrious and great Indra, the lord of the thirty gods, bestowed a spear on you. In battle, you will see it shattered and reduced to ashes, struck down by Keshava’s chakra. There is a radiant arrow with the mouth of a serpent.[145] You have always honoured and protected it with the best of garlands. It will be struck by the arrows of Pandu’s sons. O Karna! Together with you, it will be destroyed. O Karna! Vasudeva, who killed Bana and Bhoumya,[146] himself protects Kiriti. In tumultuous battles, he has killed many enemies who are your equal and superior.” Karna said, “There is no doubt that the great-souled lord of the Vrishnis is as you have described him, and even greater. But let me respond to the harsh words that the grandfather has spoken. Let him listen to the consequences. The grandfather will see me in the assembly hall, but not in the war. But until he has obtained peace, I will lay down my weapons and all the kings of the earth will not witness my power.”[147] The great archer spoke in this way. He left the assembly hall and went to his own residence. O king! Amidst the Kurus, Bhishma laughed and told Duryodhana, “This son of a suta is sworn to the truth. How will he now discharge his burden? He will witness battle formations and counter battle formations and heads shattered, as there is a destruction of the world by Bhimasena. 'While Avanti, Kalinga, Jayadratha, Bahlika and Vedidhvaja are stationed, I will kill thousands and tens of thousands of enemy soldiers.'[148] When he obtained weapons from the unblemished and illustrious Rama through deceit, proclaiming himself to be a brahmana, Vaikartana, the worst of men, destroyed his dharma and his austerities." When Bhishma, Indra among kings, had spoken, and Karna had departed after laying down his weapons, Duryodhana, Vichitravirya's foolish descendant, spoke to Shantanu's son.'

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'Duryodhana said, "All the Parthas have been born like other men. Why do you think that they alone can be victorious? All of us have been born in the same way. All of us are from human wombs. O grandfather! How do you know that the Parthas will be victorious? For victory, I do not depend on you, or Drona, Kripa and Bahlika, or the other Indras among men. I, Vaikartana Karna and my brother Duhshasana will kill the five Pandavas in battle with sharp arrows. O king! I will then perform a great sacrifice and offer a large quantity of stipends. I will satisfy the brahmanas with cattle, horses and riches."

'Vidura replied, "O son![149] We have heard the aged ones tell us the story of a fowler who spread his net out on the ground to catch birds. Two equally strong birds were captured in that net. But they grasped the net and took to the sky. When the fowler saw them rise up into the sky, he did not lose his senses, but dashed after them. There was a sage in a hermitage, and he had finished his ablutions, when he saw the fowler running after the birds that he was trying to catch. They were in the sky and he was swiftly following them on the ground. O Kouravya! The sage then addressed him with this shloka. 'O hunter! It seems to me extraordinary that with your feet on the ground, you are chasing those in the sky.' The fowler replied, 'Together, these two are carrying my net away. But once they begin to quarrel, they will come under my control.'

Doomed to die, the birds began to quarrel. When they quarrelled, the stupid ones fell down on the ground. Ensnared by the noose of death, they began to fight ferociously with each other. Undetected, the fowler approached them and caught them. In a similar way, relatives who fight over possessions are overcome by their enemies, like those birds. Relatives should eat together, converse together, ask about each other and assemble together. They should never quarrel. As long as they serve their elders with excellent intentions, they are as invisible as a forest protected by lions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But those who have obtained extensive prosperity, but continue to remain mean, hand over their riches to those who hate them. O son of Dhritarashtra! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Relatives are like kindling that smoke when separated. But when they are together, they blaze away. I will tell you about something that I once saw on a mountain. O Kouravya! When you have heard this, do what you think is best. Together with kiratas and brahmanas, the equals of the gods, who were learned in incantations and medicines, we once travelled to the northern mountains. We went to Mount Gandhamadana, which is like a grove. It was lit up with a large quantity of herbs and was frequented by siddhas and gandharvas. All of us saw some yellow honey there, but it didn't come from bees. It was placed in an uneven mountainous crevice and was as large as the amount a pot can hold. This was Kubera's favourite drink and was guarded by virulent serpents. On drinking it, a mortal man becomes immortal. One without sight gets his eyesight back. One who is aged becomes young. This is what those brahmanas, conversant with herbs, told us. O lord of the earth! When the kiratas saw it, they wished to grasp it. They were destroyed in that mountainous cavern that was full of snakes. In that way, this son of yours wishes for the earth alone.[150] Because of his delusion, he sees the honey, but does not see the downfall. Duryodhana wishes to fight with Savyasachi in battle. But I do not see that he possesses the requisite energy and valour. On a single chariot, he[151] conquered the entire earth. Patiently, that brave one is looking towards you and is waiting. Drupada, king of the Matsyas, and an enraged Dhananjaya will be like fires fanned by the wind and will leave no remnants in battle. O Dhritarashtra! Take King Yudhishthira on your lap. When two sides fight in battle, there is no clear victory for either side.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Duryodhana! O son! Think about what I am telling you. Like one who does not know the route, you think that the wrong path is the right one. You wish to envelope the energy of the five great-souled sons of Pandu. But it is as great as the five elements. Kounteya Yudhishthira is established in supreme dharma. Without attaining the supreme objective,[152] you cannot know him. Kounteya Bhimasena has no one equal to him in strength. He is a killer in battle. But you are challenging him, like a tree against a great storm. Which intelligent one wishes to fight against the warrior who is the wielder of Gandiva? He is supreme among those who know all the weapons, like Meru is among mountains. Whom can Panchala Dhrishtadyumna not vanquish? He releases arrows in the midst of the enemy, like the king of the gods with the vajra. Satyaki is also invincible and is revered by the Andhakas and Vrishnis. He is always engaged in the welfare of the Pandavas and will destroy your soldiers. Then again, which intelligent person will fight with Krishna Pundarikaksha,[153] who is superior to the three worlds? His wives, relatives, kin, his own self and the earth are on one side and Dhananjaya alone on the other. The invincible Vasudeva, in control of his soul, is where the Pandava is. His[154] forces, impossible for the earth to withstand, are where Keshava is. O son! Abide by the words your virtuous well-wishers have spoken for your welfare. Listen to the aged grandfather Bhishma, Shantanu’s son. Listen to what I have said for the welfare of the Kurus. Drona, Kripa, Vikarna and the great king Bahlika think the same way that I do. You should listen to them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them are learned in dharma and are equally affectionate towards you. Your forces, together with those of your brothers, were scattered in Virata’s city. Before your eyes, they had to relinquish the cattle in a great fight. We have heard the extraordinary account told about that city, where one was enough for many. That is sufficient proof. This is what Arjuna alone accomplished. What will all of them do together? Know them to be your brothers and give them a means of sustenance.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘The immensely wise Dhritarashtra spoke to Suyodhana in this way. He again asked the immensely fortunate Sanjaya. “O Sanjaya! Tell me what else Arjuna said after Vasudeva had spoken. I am extremely curious.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “After hearing Vasudeva’s words, in Vasudeva’s hearing, the invincible Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, spoke these words at that time. ‘O Sanjaya! Go to the grandfather who is Shantanu’s son, Dhritarashtra, Drona, Karna, the great king Bahlika, Drona’s son, Somadatta, Shakuni Soubala, Duhshasana, Shala, Purumitra, Vivimshati, Vikarna, Chitrasena, the king Jayatsena, Vinda, Anuvinda, the two from Avanti, the Kourava Durmukha, the invincible Saindhava,[155] Bhurishrava, King Bhagadatta, King Jalasandha and all the other kings who have assembled to fight for the cause of the Kouravas. O suta! Having gathered for the sake of Dhritarashtra’s son, they are destined to die in the blazing fire of the Pandavas. As is proper, honour them and ask about their welfare. When they have assembled, tell them my words. O Sanjaya! Tell this in the midst of that assembly of kings to Suyodhana, foremost among wicked ones. “The prince is intolerant and evil-minded. Dhritarashtra’s son is avaricious and wicked in his soul.” O Sanjaya! Tell him my complete words, while he listens with his advisers.’ Having thus started, the wise Partha Dhananjaya, with long and red eyes, looked towards Vasudeva and told me these words that were full of dharma and artha. ‘You have listened attentively to the words spoken by the great-souled chief of the Madhus. Those words are mine too and convey them to all the assembled kings. Let all the assembled ones endeavour so that there isn’t a great sacrifice of battle, with arrows as the smoke of fire, chariots as chants and the ladle of the bow pouring oblations on your soldiers. Since you did not return to Yudhishthira, the destroyer of enemies, what he desires as his share, I will use my sharp arrows to send you, with your horses, infantry and elephants, to the pure region of the ancestors.'[156] Then I quickly took my leave of Dhananjaya and the four-armed Hari.[157] I returned with the radiance of the immortals, to report those great words to you."'

728(65)

Vaishampayana said, 'When Dhritarashtra's son, Duryodhana, refused to accept those words, all those lords among men stood up and were silent. O great king! After all the kings of the earth had arisen, the king questioned Sanjaya in private. He was under the control of his sons and wished for their victory. He tried to arrive at a conclusion about himself, the others and the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra said, "O son of Gavalgana! Tell me about the strength and the weakness of our own army. You know everything about the Pandavas. How are they superior? In which way are they inferior? You know everything about the strengths of both sides. You are skilled about the decisions that bring dharma and artha. O Sanjaya! I am asking you. Tell me everything. Which of the two sides will cease to exist in the battle?" Sanjaya replied, "I will tell you, as long as it is not in secret. O king! Otherwise, you will hold that against me. O Ajamidha! Bring your father,[158] who is great in his vows, and Queen Gandhari. O Indra among men! They are knowledgeable about dharma and skilled in their determination. They will dispel any hatred you might feel. It is only in their presence that I will tell you everything about Vasudeva and Arjuna's thoughts." Having got to know[159] about the intentions of Sanjaya and his son, the immensely wise Krishna Dvaipayana arrived there and said, "O Sanjaya! Tell Dhritarashtra what he has asked. Answer his question completely. In this connection, tell him everything exactly as you know it, about Vasudeva and Arjuna."'

729(66)

'Sanjaya said, "Arjuna and Vasudeva are supremely honoured archers. They have everything in them and have been born in this way because of their own wishes. O lord! The intelligent Vasudeva's chakra is hidden in the firmament and works through the powers of maya. It may be hidden from the Pandavas, but the Pandavas honour it. I am briefly telling you about their strengths and weaknesses. Listen. As if in play, the immensely strong Janardana Madhava defeated Naraka, Shambara, Kamsa and the king of Chedi, who was terrible in form. Purushottama[160] pervades the earth, the sky and heaven. He is supreme in his soul and everything is under his control. O king! You have repeatedly asked me about the Pandavas, wishing to know about the strengths and weaknesses of their forces. If you place the entire universe on one side and Janardana on the other, Janardana will exceed the essence of the entire universe. Through his mind, Janardana can reduce the entire universe to ashes. But nothing in the universe can reduce Janardana to ashes. Wherever there is truth, wherever there is dharma, wherever there is modesty, wherever there is uprightness, Govinda is present there. Wherever there is Krishna, victory exists there. As if in play, Purushottama Janardana, the soul of all beings, guides the earth, the sky and heaven. Using the Pandavas as his instruments and keeping the world in delusion, he wishes to burn down your stupid sons, who are devoted to adharma. Through his own yoga, the illustrious Keshava makes the wheel of time, the wheel of the universe and the wheel of the yugas ceaselessly go round and round. I tell you truthfully that the illustrious lord alone governs time and death, the mobile and the immobile. Hari, the great yogi, is the lord of everything in the universe. But he yet undertakes tasks, like any ordinary tiller of the soil. Thus, Keshava deceives the world with the maya of his yoga. But men who seek refuge with him are not deluded.”’

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‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! How is it that you know Madhava as the great lord of all the worlds? Why do I not know that? Tell me this.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! You do not possess the knowledge. But my knowledge is not lacking. Devoid of knowledge and overcome by darkness, you do not know Keshava. O father![161] Through this knowledge, I know Madhusudana of the three yugas[162] as the god who is the creator and the end of all beings, though he has himself not been created.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O son of Gavalgana! What is the extent of the faith that you always have in Janardana, as a result of which you know the Madusudana of the three yugas?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O fortunate one! I do not fall prey to maya. I do not pretend to act in accordance with dharma. I become pure in sentiments through my faith. I know Janardana from the sacred texts.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Duryodhana! Resort to Hrishikesha Janardana. O son! We have trust in Sanjaya. Seek refuge with Keshava.”

‘Duryodhana replied, “If Keshava, Devaki’s illustrious son, wishes to destroy the worlds, because of his avowed friendship with Arjuna, I will not seek refuge with him, not even now.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Gandhari! This son of yours is extremely evil in his mind. He is envious, wicked in soul and insolently ignores the words of his superiors. He is proceeding towards his downfall.”

‘Gandhari said, “O one who is evil in soul![163] You desire for prosperity. You do not listen to the instructions of the seniors. You will lose your prosperity and your life. You do not pay heed to your father and me. You increase the delight of your enemies and you also increase my sorrow. When you are killed by Bhimasena, you will remember these words of your father.”

‘Vyasa said, “O king! O Dhritarashtra! Listen to me. You are loved by Krishna. Sanjaya is your messenger and he will yoke you to what will ensure your welfare. He knows the ancient and the new Hrishikesha.[164] Listen to him with great attention. He will free you from this great danger. O Vichitravirya’s son! Men are confounded by the darkness of anger and delight. Bound down by many different kinds of nooses, they are not content with their own riches. Because of desire and ignorance, they repeatedly come under Yama’s control. They are like ones without eyes being led by ones without eyes and are borne by their own deeds. There is only one path followed by learned ones. When one sees it, one overcomes death. Such a great person does not become attached.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Tell me about the path along which there is no danger, traversing along which, one attains Hrishikesha and obtains supreme peace.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “A man who has not controlled his soul cannot know Janardana, whose soul is controlled. Without controlling the soul and without restraining the senses, the performance of rites is inappropriate. There is no doubt that the unwavering renunciation of the senses, the steady abandonment of desire and the constant avoidance of violence constitute the womb of knowledge. O king! Constantly and steadily restrain your senses. Do not permit your intelligence to deviate. Control and direct it. Learned brahmanas say that the mastering of the senses is the certain path to knowledge. This is knowledge and the path that the learned ones traverse. O king! Keshava cannot be attained by those who have not controlled their senses. One who has controlled himself through yoga, and knows the sacred texts, is one who is favoured.”’

731(68)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! I am asking you. Tell me again about Pundarikaksha. O son![165] When I know the meanings of his names and his deeds, I will be able to obtain Purushuttoma.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “I have heard Vasudeva’s auspicious names recited. From that, as far as I can make out, Keshava cannot be measured. Because he clothes all beings, because he is the womb of all the gods, he is known as Vasudeva.[166] He is known as Vishnu because he is virile.[167] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that he is known as Madhava because of his silence, his meditation and his yoga.[168] Because he has the essence of everything within himself, and because he killed Madhu, he is known as Madhusudana.[169] The word *krishi* means the earth, while *na* means bliss. Since Krishna means the combination of these two, he is the eternal Krishna. Pundarika means the supreme region that is eternal, without decay and is everlasting. Because his nature is like that, he is known as Pundarikaksha. He is Janardana because he oppresses dasyus.[170] Because he never lacks in vigour,[171] because his vigour never diminishes, he is known as Satvata because of vigour. Because he is like a bull, he is known as Vrishabhekshana.[172] Since he has not been born from a mother, the one who is the destroyer of armies is known as Aja.[173] He is self-resplendent and because he controls[174] the gods, he is known as Damodara. Because of his delight and happiness and because he is the lord of happiness and prosperity, he is known as Hrishikesha.[175] Because he bears up heaven and earth in his arms, he is known as Mahabahu.[176] Since he never falls downwards,[177] he is known as Adokshaja. He is known as Narayana because he is the path followed by men.[178] He is Purushottama because he fills up[179] and destroys again. He is Sarva[180] because he is the origin and the dissolution of everything that exists and does not exist, and because he is a witness to everything. Krishna is established in truth and truth is established in him. Govinda is the truth that is beyond truth and that is the reason he has the name of Satya.[181] The god is known as Vishnu because of his valour. He is known as Jishnu[182] because of his triumphs. He is Ananta[183] because he is eternal. He is Govinda because he knows about the cattle.[184] He can make the unreal appear as real. Thus, he deludes all beings. Such is he, the illustrious one who is always with hermits. He is always based in dharma. The mighty-armed Achyuta will arrive[185] to prevent violence.”’

732(69)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! I envy those who have eyes, because they can see Vasudeva before them. His supreme and radiant form illuminates the direction and the sub-directions. He will speak words that deserve to be honoured, because they will be for the good of the Bharatas and the Srinjayas. Those unblemished words should be accepted by those who wish to live, though they need not be accepted by those who are doomed. He will come to us, the solitary champion of the Satvatas. He is the bull who guides the Yadavas. He destroys enemies and causes terror among them. He takes away fame from those who hate him. The assembled Kurus will see the great-souled and venerable destroyer of enemies. That best of the Vrishni lineage will speak words of non-violence and thus win over my side. He is the eternal and wise rishi. He is an ocean of words. He is a pot among all ascetics. He will come with the golden-feathered Garuda Arishtanemi.[186] He is the lord of all beings and the refuge of the universe. He is the ancient being with one thousand heads. He has no beginning, no middle and no end. His deeds are infinite. He is the one who places the seed. Though without birth, he is the creator. He is supreme and higher than the supreme. I seek refuge with him. He is the creator who made the three worlds, the gods, the asuras, the serpents and the rakshasas. He is foremost among wise lords of men. He is Indra's younger brother. I seek refuge with him."'

Section Fifty-Four

Bhagavat-Yana Parva

This section has 2055 shlokas and sixty-eight chapters

Chapter 733(70): 93 shlokas
Chapter 734(71): 37 shlokas
Chapter 735(72): 23 shlokas
Chapter 736(73): 23 shlokas
Chapter 737(74): 18 shlokas
Chapter 738(75): 20 shlokas
Chapter 739(76): 20 shlokas
Chapter 740(77): 21 shlokas
Chapter 741(78): 18 shlokas
Chapter 742(79): 9 shlokas
Chapter 743(80): 49 shlokas
Chapter 744(81): 72 shlokas
Chapter 745(82): 29 shlokas
Chapter 746(83): 18 shlokas
Chapter 747(84): 21 shlokas
Chapter 748(85): 17 shlokas
Chapter 749(86): 23 shlokas
Chapter 750(87): 26 shlokas
Chapter 751(88): 104 shlokas
Chapter 752(89): 41 shlokas
Chapter 753(90): 28 shlokas
Chapter 754(91): 22 shlokas
Chapter 755(92): 53 shlokas
Chapter 756(93): 62 shlokas
Chapter 757(94): 45 shlokas
Chapter 758(95): 21 shlokas
Chapter 759(96): 25 shlokas
Chapter 760(97): 20 shlokas

Chapter 761(98): 19 shlokas
Chapter 762(99): 16 shlokas
Chapter 763(100): 15 shlokas
Chapter 764(101): 23 shlokas
Chapter 765(102): 29 shlokas
Chapter 766(103): 38 shlokas
Chapter 767(104): 26 shlokas
Chapter 768(105): 18 shlokas
Chapter 769(106): 18 shlokas
Chapter 770(107): 21 shlokas
Chapter 771(108): 19 shlokas
Chapter 772(109): 26 shlokas
Chapter 773(110): 22 shlokas
Chapter 774(111): 23 shlokas
Chapter 775(112): 20 shlokas
Chapter 776(113): 21 shlokas
Chapter 777(114): 22 shlokas
Chapter 778(115): 18 shlokas
Chapter 779(116): 21 shlokas
Chapter 780(117): 23 shlokas
Chapter 781(118): 22 shlokas
Chapter 782(119): 28 shlokas
Chapter 783(120): 18 shlokas
Chapter 784(121): 22 shlokas
Chapter 785(122): 61 shlokas
Chapter 786(123): 27 shlokas
Chapter 787(124): 18 shlokas
Chapter 788(125): 26 shlokas
Chapter 789(126): 49 shlokas
Chapter 790(127): 53 shlokas
Chapter 791(128): 52 shlokas
Chapter 792(129): 34 shlokas
Chapter 793(130): 31 shlokas
Chapter 794(131): 42 shlokas
Chapter 795(132): 40 shlokas
Chapter 796(133): 37 shlokas
Chapter 797(134): 21 shlokas
Chapter 798(135): 30 shlokas
Chapter 799(136): 26 shlokas
Chapter 800(137): 22 shlokas

Yana *means moving or journey as a verb and conveyance as a noun. The parva is so named because Krishna (Bhagavan) goes as a messenger to the Kurus. There are the stories of Dambhodbhava, Matali's search for a son-in-law, Galava's obstinacy, Yayati and Vidula and her son. However, Krishna fails and war is inevitable.*

733(70)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Sanjaya had returned, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira told Dasharha, the bull among the Satvatas. “O Janardana! The time has arrived for friends. I can see no one other than you who can help to tide over our difficulties. O Madhava! It is only by resorting to you that we can fearlessly obtain our share from the son of Dhritarashtra. He is insolent because of his delusion and his advisers. O destroyer of enemies! Just as you protect the Vrishni’s from all hardships, you should also protect the Pandavas. Save us from this great danger.” Bhagavan[1] replied, “O mighty-armed one! I am present. Tell me what you wish to say. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will do everything that you ask for.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “You have heard what Dhritarashtra and his sons wish to do. O Krishna! What Sanjaya told me, is exactly what Dhritarashtra is thinking. His soul stands revealed. A messenger says what he is told to speak. If he speaks otherwise, he should be killed. He wishes for peace with us without returning our kingdom. He is greedy and wicked in his mind. He treats others worse than his own self. On Dhritarashtra’s instructions, we have lived in the forest for twelve years, and yet another autumn in concealment. O lord! We did that under the assumption that Dhritarashtra would abide by the agreement with us. O Krishna! The brahmanas who are with us know that we have not broken the covenant. The aged King Dhritarashtra cannot see his own dharma. Or even if he sees it, out of affection, he follows the instructions of his evil son. O Janardana! The king follows Suyodhana’s counsel. He is greedy and deceitful, because he acts so as to ensure his own welfare. O Janardana! What can be more miserable than my not being able to take care of my mother and friends? O Madhusudana! The Kashis, Chedis, Panchalas and Matysas are on my side and you are our protector. O Govinda! But I only asked for five villages—Kushasthala, Vrikasthala, Masandi, Varanavata and any other village as the fifth and last one. ‘O father![2] Give us any five villages or towns, where we can reside together and sustain a living without difficulty.’ But the evil-souled Dhritarashtra did not grant even this, thinking that everything belongs to him.[3] What can be more miserable than that? When a man is born and brought up in a noble lineage, but covets the possessions of others, avarice destroys his wisdom. When wisdom is destroyed, so is modesty. When modesty is destroyed, dharma is constrained. When dharma is destroyed, prosperity is destroyed. When prosperity is destroyed, a man is killed. Lack of prosperity is like death to a man. O son![4] Relatives, well-wishers and brahmanas turn away from one who has no riches, like birds fly away from a tree that has no blossoms or fruit. O son! In my view, this is like death. When a man has fallen and his relatives turn away from him, it is like the spirit and breath of life leaving one who is dead. Shambara[5] has said that there is nothing worse for a man than a situation where he cannot see how food can be obtained, today or tomorrow. Riches are said to constitute supreme dharma. Everything is established in prosperity. The rich live in this world. Men who do not possess riches are dead. If one resorts to one's strength and robs a man of his riches, along with him, one destroys his dharma, artha and kama too. Having reached that state, some men prefer death. Others resort to villages, still others resort to forests. Some wander around, seeking to destroy themselves. Some become insane. Others come under the control of their enemies. Still others become slaves, so as to obtain the riches of others. For a man, the destruction of prosperity is a worse calamity than death. Prosperity is the source of dharma and kama. Death is the eternal dharma of the world. It is the end of all beings and there is no one who is an exception. O Krishna! A man who has naturally been poor, does not suffer as much as one who has possessed fortune and prosperity and enjoyed happiness, having subsequently descended to an inferior state. When one faces great hardships because of one's own crimes, one blames Indra and the other gods, but never one's own self. Familiarity with all the sacred texts cannot reduce that suffering. Sometimes, he is angry with his servants. Sometimes, he censures his well-wishers. He is always subject to anger and loses his senses. Having come under the control of confusion, he resorts to cruel deeds. From these evil deeds, mixed births[6] result. Mixed births are the way to hell and are the final outcome of evildoers. O Krishna! If he does not wake up on time, he goes to hell.

Wisdom alone is the awakening. The eye of wisdom can save him. When a man regains his wisdom, he looks towards the sacred texts. When he is established in the sacred texts, he regains dharma and modesty becomes his best limb. A modest man avoids evil and his prosperity increases. When he obtains prosperity, he truly becomes a man. He is always established in dharma and he is calm in his soul. He is always engaged in deeds and does not follow adharma. His intelligence does not turn towards evil. One who is without modesty and without senses, is neither a woman, nor a man. According to dharma, he has no rights and is just like a shudra. A man who is modest satisfies the gods, the ancestors and his own self. He becomes immortal because of this. This is the ultimate objective for those who perform pure deeds.

'"O Madhusudana! You have seen all this directly in me. You have seen how I have spent those nights, deprived of the kingdom. There is no way for us to give up that prosperity. It would be better for us to die, while striving towards that. O Madhava! Our first intention is that we should enjoy that common prosperity, in peace with each other and treating each other equally. The stage that comes beyond that is terrible and will lead to the destruction of deeds, if we are to obtain the kingdom after killing the Kouravas. O Krishna! No enemy deserves to be killed, even if he is not related and even if he is not an arya. On the contrary, they are our relatives and our seniors are their aides. Their death will be evil. How can a war be desirable? That is the evil dharma of kshatriyas. But we have been born as kshatriyas. It happens to be our dharma, even if it is adharma. Any other form of conduct is not recommended for us. A shudra performs servitude. A vaishya lives by selling goods. Killing is the means of livelihood for us, while begging is the conduct for brahmanas. A kshatriya kills another kshatriya. A fish lives on another fish. A dog kills another dog. O Dasharha! Behold how each follows the decreed dharma. O Krishna! Dissension is always present in a fight. Lives are lost in a battle. In spite of strength and adherence to policy, there can be victory or defeat in a battle. Life and death are not determined by a being. O supreme among the Yadu lineage! Until the right time has come, one does not find happiness or unhappiness. One man may kill many. Many may unite to kill a single man. A coward may kill a brave one. An infamous one may kill one who is famous. Victory may go to either side. Either side may confront defeat. This is also true of destruction. If one tries to flee, there will be death and destruction. But in all cases, a war should be avoided. Where is the killer who is not killed in return? O Hrishikesha! For one who has been killed, victory and defeat are equal. I do not think that defeat is different from death. O Krishna! It is certain that one who is victorious also suffers from a loss. At the end, a beloved one will be killed by someone from the other side. O Krishna! When he is rendered weak because he can no longer see his sons or brothers, he will be completely overwhelmed by a disdain for life. Those who are modest, brave, aryas and compassionate are killed in battle. But an inferior one may escape. O Janardana! Even after killing others, we are overcome by remorse. There is evil, even for those who survive. The survivors gather their strength so as to destroy those who remain. In a desire to end the enmity, they seek complete annihilation. But victory engenders enmity, because those who are defeated are unhappy. A man who can cast aside victory and defeat is both happy and peaceful. But a man who has created enmity always sleeps in misery. He doesn’t have ease of mind, like living in a house full of snakes. He who annihilates everybody is bereft of fame and always obtain ill fame among all beings. Enmity is not pacified and is sustained for a long period of time. There are those who remain to recount it to men who are born in the lineage. O Keshava! Enmity is never settled through another enmity. O Krishna! It becomes stronger, like fire fed with oblations. There is no exception to this and peace will always remain unattainable. This is the continual taint in those who seek to establish their own superiority. Manliness is a strong weakness in the heart. One can find peace only by completely casting it aside from one’s mind. O Madhusudana! By uprooting the enemy by the roots, we may be able to accomplish our objective. But that will be crueller still. We can gain peace by giving up our claim, but that will be like death. There is no doubt that this leaves the prospect of destruction, for our enemies and our own side.[7] We do not wish to give that up. Nor do we desire a destruction of the lineage. Peace through submission is desirable. There are those who are striving in a desire to avoid the war. If those attempts at pacification fail, a war is unavoidable and is not a sign of weakness. When attempts at pacification fail, the results are terrible. Learned ones have seen these signs in a quarrel between dogs. There is a wagging of tails first. Then there is a bark. Then there is a bark in return. After that, there is a retreat and the display of teeth. Then there is loud barking and the quarrel. O Krishna! The stronger one wins and eats the other one's flesh. That is the case with men too and there is no difference. The stronger always acts in the same way with the weak. There is disregard and aggression and the weak one surrenders to the strong. It is always appropriate that a father, a king and an aged one should be revered. O Janardana! That is the reason Dhritarashtra is worthy of our honour and worship. O Madhava! But Dhritarashtra's affection towards his son is strong. As long as he is under his son's control, he will laugh at our submission. O Krishna! Now that the time has come, what do you think should be done next? O Madhava! How can we avoid the diminishing of artha and dharma? O Madhusudana! O supreme among men! In this difficult situation, you are the most appropriate person for us to consult. You are our friend. You wish us well. You know the consequences of all deeds. O Krishna! You are our well-wisher and you know the answer to everything."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus addressed, Janardana replied to Dharmaraja. "For the welfare of both the sides, I will myself go to the assembly of the Kurus. O king! If I succeed in obtaining peace without giving up your interests, I will obtain great merits and the deed will have great consequences. I will free the masses of Kurus and Srinjayas from the noose of death. I will also free the Pandavas, the sons of Dhritarashtra and the entire earth." Yudhishthira said, "O Krishna! It is not my view that you should go to the Kurus. However well you articulate your words, Suyodhana will not listen to them. All the assembled kshatriya kings follow Suyodhana. O Krishna! It does not appeal to me that you should arrive in their midst. O Madhava! If hatred is exhibited towards you, we will not obtain any pleasure from gaining objects, or happiness from attaining divinity, or the prosperity of all the immortals.” Bhagavan replied, “O great king! I know the wicked nature of Dhritarashtra’s son. But through this, we will not be blamed by all the kings of the world. All the kings of the earth combined are not enough to withstand me, if I am enraged in battle, like inferior animals before a lion. If they act against me in any way, I will burn up all the Kurus. That is my intention. O Partha! My going there will not be fruitless. There will be some gain in going there, since we will not be blamed by the others.” Yudhishthira said, “O Krishna! If it pleases you, then go in peace to the Kouravas. Perhaps there will be some gain from it. I will see you again when you return. O lord! O Vishvaksena![8] Go to the Kurus and bring peace among the Bharatas. Let us all live in peace, with happy minds and happy hearts. You are a brother. You are a friend. You are dear to Bibhatsu and to me. We have no doubt that you wish us well. Go safely for our welfare. You know us and you know the others. You know artha. You know how to speak. O Krishna! Tell Suyodhana what will be good for us. O Keshava! You can tell them whatever is in conformity with dharma, whether it is for peace, or whether it is for enmity.”’

734(71)

‘Bhagavan said, “I have listened to Sanjaya’s words and I have also heard your words. I know everything about their intentions and I also know what you have in mind. Your intelligence is based on dharma. Their minds are turned towards enmity. You will cherish everything that can be gained without resorting to a war. O lord of the earth! But following rituals is not the task of a kshatriya. In all the stages of life, it has been said that a kshatriya should not resort to begging for a livelihood. Victory or death on the field of battle has been eternally ordained by the creator. This is the natural dharma of kshatriyas and weakness in that is not praised. O Yudhishthira! It is not possible to have a livelihood by resorting to weakness. O mighty-armed one! Display your valour. O scorcher of enemies! Conquer the foes. O scorcher of enemies! The sons of Dhritarashtra are extremely avaricious. They have obtained affection, they have obtained friends and they have obtained strength by living with them[9] for a long time. O lord of the earth! Therefore, peace with the Kurus is not desirable. Because of Bhisma, Drona, Kripa and the others, they think themselves to be stronger. O king! As long as you act mildly towards them, they will take your kingdom away. O destroyer of enemies! Dhritarashtra's son will not do what you wish, because of kindness, because of compassion, or because of dharma and artha. O destroyer of enemies! O Pandava! This alone is proof, that they left you in a loincloth, and did not repent their evil deed. In the sight of the grandfather, Drona, the intelligent Vidura and the foremost among the Kurus, who knew exactly what had happened, that wicked one did not repent his cruel deeds. You are generous, mild, self-controlled and follow dharma. O king! But he used deceit to defeat you in a game of dice. O king! When one's conduct is of this nature, do not resort to affection. They deserve to be killed by all the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Why not by you? Insolent and delighted, he eloquently maligned you and your brothers and told his brothers, 'The Pandavas have nothing that they can call their own now. Their names and their lineages will not survive either. After a long period of time has passed, they will confront defeat. Their subjects will no longer honour them. Their natural subjects have also been destroyed.' He uttered such harsh words and many others. He boasted among his relatives, when you were banished to the forest. Those who were assembled there, saw that you were without blame. They were seated in the assembly hall, their throats choked with tears and they wept. The kings and the brahmanas did not praise him then. All the courtiers censured Duryodhana. O destroyer of enemies! For someone born in a noble lineage, there can be censure and there can be death. O king! But death is several times superior to a reviled and wicked life. O king! He has been dead since the instant he was censured for his shamelessness before all the kings of the earth. O great king! One whose conduct is of this nature can be killed effortlessly, like a tree whose roots have been severed, so that it is precariously balanced on its trunk. The evil-minded one is ignoble to all the worlds and should be killed, like a snake. O destroyer of enemies! O king! Therefore, kill him and do not hesitate.

'"O unblemished one! But it pleases me, and is also worthy of you, that you should bow in obeisance and show your respects to your father[10] and Bhishma. O king! I will myself go and resolve the doubts of all those who are in two minds about Duryodhana. In the midst of the kings, I will expound your manly qualities and his transgressions of these. On hearing my words, in conformity with dharma and artha, the lords of the earth and the kings from the various countries will recognize you to possess dharma in your soul, and one who speaks the truth. They will know that he acts out of avarice. When the four varnas are assembled, among the old and the young, among inhabitants of the town and the country, I will censure him. When you are striving for peace, no adharma will be attached to you. The kings will blame the Kurus and Dhritarashtra. When he is forsaken by all the worlds, what will be left to be done? O king! With Duryodhana slain, there remains nothing else to be done. With this intention, I will go the Kurus. I will not relinquish your objective. I will strive for peace and notice their intentions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having observed the conduct and preparations of the Kouravas for war, I will leave and return to ensure your victory. In every way, I expect a war with the enemies. It seems to me that all the portents indicate that. The beasts and the birds are making terrible sounds. When it is night, the foremost of elephants and horses are assuming terrible forms. Signifying evil, the fire is assuming many colourful and terrible forms. Had death not arrived to destroy the world of men, this would not have been the case. Ready the weapons, arrows, armour, chariots, elephants and standards. Let all the warriors be trained. Let them ready the horses, elephants and chariots. O Indra among men! Let everything be ready for battle. Let everything be kept ready. O king! O foremost among the Pandavas! As long as he lives, Duryodhana is incapable of returning the prosperous kingdom that was once yours, and which he robbed in the gambling with the dice."'

735(72)

'Bhimasena said, "O Madhusudana! You should speak in such a way that the Kurus resort to peace. Do not frighten them with war. He is intolerant and is always angry. That extremely spirited one hates prosperity in others. One should not address strong words towards Duryodhana. One should act peacefully towards him. His disposition is naturally wicked. His mind is equal to that of a dasyu. He is intoxicated with prosperity and bears enmity towards the Pandavas. He does not have far-sightedness and is cruel. He is deceitful and wicked in his valour. His anger lasts for a long time and the evil-souled one is fond of deceit. Even if he dies, he will not surrender, or give up what he thinks belongs to him. O Krishna! I think that peace with someone like that is extremely difficult. He does not listen to the words of his well-wishers. He has discarded dharma. He loves falsehood. He goes against the words and intentions of his well-wishers. Overcome by anger, his nature is based on wickedness. His natural wickedness is like that of a snake provoked with a straw. You know everything about Duryodhana's soldiers, their conduct, their nature, their strength and their valour. In earlier times, the Kurus, together with their sons, were content and so were we. We rejoiced with our relatives, like Indra's seniors. O Madhusudana! But because of Duryodhana's anger, the Bharatas will burn, like a forest burns with fire at the end of winter.

'"O Madhusudana! Eighteen kings are famous as those who annihilated their kin, their well-wishes and their relatives. At the end of the period of dharma,[11] Bali was born among the asuras. He was prosperous and blazed in his energy. Udavarta was born among the Haihayas, Janamejaya among the Nipas, Bahula among the Talajanghas, the insolent Vasu among the Krimis, Ajabindu among the Suviras, Kusharddhika among the Surashtras, Arkaja among the Balihas, Dhoutamulaka among the Chinas, Hayagriva among the Videhas, Varapra among the Mahoujasas, Bahu among the Sundaravegas, Pururava among the Diptakshas, Sahaja among the Chedi-Matysas, Brihadbala among the Prachetas, Dharana among the Indra-Vatsas, Vigahana among the Mukutas and Shama among the Nandivegas. They defiled their lineages. O Krishna! They were the worst of men and were born at the end of the yuga. At the end of a yuga,[12] driven by destiny, Duryodhana has now been born in the lineage of the Kurus. He is the worst of his lineage. He is a wicked and evil man. Therefore, speak softly to him, in conformity with dharma and artha. Act generally in accordance with his desires and do not exhibit terrible valour before him. O Krishna! We would rather follow Duryodhana and be under his control, than let the lineage of the Bharatas be destroyed. O Vasudeva! Act so that he and the other Kurus become indifferent towards us. Otherwise, the Kurus will be destroyed. O Krishna! Speak to the aged grandfather and the courtiers, so that there is fraternity among the brothers and Dhritarashtra's son is pacified. This is why I say and the king[13] approves. Arjuna has never been in favour of war, because there is great compassion in Arjuna."'

736(73)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the mighty-armed Keshava heard these words of Bhima, which were without precedence in terms of their mildness, he laughed. The mountains seemed to have become light. The fire seemed to have become cold. That is what Rama's younger brother, Shouri, the wielder of the Sharnga bow, thought.[14] Vrikodara Bhimasena was seated, overcome with compassion. To incite him, like a wind fanning the fire, he said, "O Bhimasena! On other occasions, you have advocated war. You have desired to suppress the cruel sons of Dhritarashtra, who find delight in murders. O scorcher of enemies! You do not sleep. You lie down and remain awake, with your face downwards. You have always spoken terrible, violent and harsh words. When you sigh, your breath burns like the fire. O Bhima! Your mind is not at peace, like a fire with smoke. You lie down alone and groan, like a weak person unable to bear a load. People who do not know the reason think that you are mad. O Bhima! You are like a roaming elephant, which uproots trees, groans and stamps down on the ground with its feet. You find no pleasure in the company of people. O Pandava! You stay away from them. Whether it is night or day, you do not welcome anyone. You suddenly smile, or weep because of a mysterious reason. You are sometimes seated, resting your head on your thighs. Or you are seen, sometimes frowning, or licking your lips. O Bhima! All this is because you are angry. ‘As certainly as the sun rises in the east with its light, as certainly as it sets in the west, circling the pole star with its rays, thus do I swear and there will be no deviation from my vow. I will attack the intolerant Duryodhana and kill him with a club.’ This is what you swore on your club earlier, in the midst of your brothers. O scorcher of enemies! Is it the same mind that now turns towards pacification? Now that the time for war has arrived, those who wished war are turning away. O Bhima! Are you frightened? O Partha! Or is it that you have seen portents, when you are asleep or when you are awake, and those make you turn towards peace? You do not show any manliness in you. You are like a eunuch. You have been overcome by cowardice. That is the reason your mind has swerved. Your heart trembles and your mind is full of despair. Your thighs are paralysed. That is the reason you want peace. O Partha! The minds of mortal men are inconstant and fickle, like the kernel of a shalmali tree that is swayed by the wind. This distorted intelligence is as rare in you as human speech is in cows. The minds of the sons of Pandu will be immersed, like a boat in water. That Bhimasena should speak words like these, is as extraordinary to me as mountains moving around. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Look back at your own deeds and the lineage into which you have been born. Arise! Do not yield to despair. O brave one! Be steady. O scorcher of enemies! This lassitude is not like you. A kshatriya does not obtain that which he does not seize through his energy.”’

737(74)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Vasudeva spoke to him in this way, the one who was always angry and intolerant, controlled himself like a well-trained horse and instantly replied, “O Achyuta! You have not completely understood what I wish to do. Truth is my valour and I am delighted at the prospect of war. O Dasharha! Because you have lived with me for a long time, you know my spirit. Or is it that you do not know me at all, like one swimming in a lake without a boat? Is that the reason you are censuring me with words that are off the mark? O Madhava! How can someone who knows me, Bhimasena, speak in the perverse way that you have chosen to do? O descendant of the Vrishni lineage! Therefore, let me tell you a few words about my own manliness and my strength. These are not equalled by anyone else. It is always the case that an arya should not praise himself. But because you have excessively reviled me, I will tell you about my own strength. O Krishna! Behold. This is earth and that is heaven, from which, all beings and all immobile objects have originated. It is the mother of everything. If these two[15] suddenly collide in anger, like mountains, I will hold them apart with my arms, with all their mobile and immobile objects. Behold the space between my two arms. They are like giant clubs. I do not see a man who can escape after having been grasped by them. The Himalaya mountains, the oceans and the wielder of the vajra and the killer of Bala himself—even if all three try together, they cannot free one whom I have grasped with my strength. I call kill all the kshatriyas who have assembled for the war, wishing to kill the Pandavas. I can fling them down on the ground and trample them with my feet. O Achutya! You are not unfamiliar with my valour and the way in which I defeated all the kings and brought them under my control. O Janardana! If it is the case that you do not know me, with radiance like that of the rising sun, you will find out when you see me in the fierce turmoil of battle. O unblemished one! Why have you pierced me with harsh words, like pricking a boil with a needle? I have told you what I think I am. But know that I am greater than that. You will see me when the turmoil of battle begins. You will see elephants, charioteers and riders destroyed by me. You and the worlds will see me angrily kill men and bulls among the kshatriyas, destroying the supreme among the best. My marrow has not wasted away and my mind is not trembling. Even if all the worlds are enraged, I have no fear. O Madhusudana! It is only because of goodness of heart that I have shown compassion and have patiently endured all the hardships, so that the Bharatas are not annihilated because of us.'"

738(75)

'Bhagavan said, "To determine your intentions, I spoke to you out of affection, not to belittle you, or to display my learning, or out of anger, or because I doubted you. I know your greatness of spirit. I know the strength you possess. I know your deeds and I am not trying to find fault with you. O Pandava! The qualities I see in you are a thousand times more than those you see yourself. You have been born in a lineage that is worshipped by all the kings. You are surrounded by relatives and well-wishers. O Bhima! That is the kind of person you are. O Vrikodara! There are those who question dharma and seeking to draw a distinction between destiny and human endeavour, fail to arrive at a conclusion. The same reasons that lead a man to succeed also bring about his failure. The consequences of human action are always uncertain. Even wise ones, competent to judge matters, may decide in one way, though the consequences are the opposite. This is like the changing direction of the wind in the sky. The deeds performed by a man may be well thought out, well advised and conducted well. But destiny may act in a contrary way. Then again, human endeavour can counter what destiny has done, or not done. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is like cold and heat, hunger and thirst.[16] And yet again, a man may undertake deeds that are thought out well and these are not countered by destiny. These are the signs of destiny and human endeavour.[17] O Pandava! The world cannot sustain itself through anything other than action. A man who knows this will act, regardless of the fruits, determined by both endeavour and destiny. He who possesses this intelligence will engage in his own deeds. He will not suffer from failure, or exult at success. O Bhimasena! This is all that I meant to say. We cannot be certain of complete success in a battle with the Kurus. Since destiny constantly changes, one should not let go of the reins. Nor should one fall prey to despair and exhaustion. That is all that I meant to say.

'"O Pandava! I will go to Dhritarashtra tomorrow morning. I will try to bring about peace without sacrificing your interests. If I succeed in obtaining peace, I will attain infinite fame. Your desires will be satisfied and their supreme welfare will be ensured. But if the Kurus stick to their resolution and do not listen to my words, there will be war and terrible deeds will ensue. O Bhimasena! In that war the burden will be on you. Arjuna will have the responsibility of guiding the chariot and the others will be dragged along. I will be Bibhatsu's charioteer in that war. That is what Arjuna desires, because I do not myself wish to fight. O Vrikodara! It was because I had some doubt about your intentions that I provoked you and addressed you as an eunuch. It was to ignite your energy."'

739(76)

'Arjuna said, "O Janardana! Yudhishthira has said everything that there is to be said. O scorcher of enemies! O lord! But listening to your words, it seems to me that you think that peace will not be obtained easily. That may be because of the avarice of Dhritarashtra's son, or because of our weakness. You also think that human valour may be fruitless and that human endeavour may not bear fruit, even when it is accompanied with deeds. What you have said may be true, or it may not be true. But there is nothing that should be looked upon as impossible. You think that our hardships have not been good for our cause. But they have performed deeds and have no fruits to show for it. O lord! When performed correctly, deeds do bear fruit. O Krishna! Therefore, act so that we may find refuge with the others. You are the foremost well-wisher of the Pandavas and the Kurus, just as the brave Prajapati is of the gods and the asuras. Do what is healthy for the Kurus and the Pandavas. I think that it will not be difficult for you to accomplish what is good for us. O Janardana! If that is the case, your task will be carried out. There is no doubt that you will accomplish this merely through the act of going there. O brave one! Deal with that evil-souled one as you deem appropriate. Do everything depending on what you think is proper. O Krishna! Whether you want us to seek refuge with them, or whatever else it is that you desire, the matter will have weight. Does that evil-souled one not deserve death, together with his relatives? O Madhusudana! He could not tolerate the prosperity he saw with Dharma's son.[18] Unable to find a way that was in conformity with dharma, he violently stole it, with the aid of one who was deceitful with dice. How can a man who is an archer and a kshatriya refuse when he is challenged, even if it means the loss of his life? O Varshneya! When I saw us vanquished through adharma and exiled to the forest, Suyodhana became mine to kill. O Krishna! It is not strange that you should wish to do something for your friends. But how will the chief task be implemented, through mildness or enmity? If you think that their immediate slaughter is better, let it be instantly done, without any more reflection. You know how Droupadi was molested by the evil-minded one in the midst of the assembly hall and that the others tolerated it. O Madhava! I do not think that such a person will treat the Pandavas fairly. Good counsel to him will be like seed sown on barren land. Therefore, do what you think is best for the welfare of the Pandavas. O Varshneya! Let us act swiftly on whatever needs to be done next."'

740(77)

'Bhagavan said, "O mighty-armed one! O Pandava! It will be as you say. O Bibhatsu! Everything depends on two courses of action.[19] A field may be cleared and made fertile by a farmer. O Kounteya! But if it does not rain in the right season, there will be no fruit. It is said that man may make efforts, such as through irrigation. But even there, it is certain that there can be a drought because of destiny. Our great-souled ancestors have decided this in their wisdom—the affairs of the world depend on both human effort and destiny. I will exert myself to the best of human endeavour. But there is nothing that I can do to counteract destiny. The evil-minded one acts after discarding both dharma and truth. And he does not repent that kind of conduct. His wicked intentions are encouraged by his advisers—Shakuni, the son of the suta and his brother Duhshasana. He will not give up the kingdom for the sake of obtaining peace. O Partha! Not unless Suyodhana and his relatives are killed. Even if Dharmaraja gives everything up and surrenders to him, the evil-minded one will not hand over the kingdom he is asking for. I do not think there is any point in telling him what Yudhishthira wants. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja has himself stated the reasons. The Kourava will do everything that is wicked. Because he will act in this way, he deserves to be killed by anyone in this world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He deserves to be killed by me, or anyone in this world. He maltreated all of you when you were children.

The cruel and evil-minded one wrested your kingdom. The wicked one had no peace, once he saw Yudhishthira's prosperity. O Partha! He has repeatedly tried to create dissension between you and me, but I have never accepted his evil intentions. O mighty-armed one! You also know his supreme desire and that I always seek to ensure Dharmaraja's welfare. O Arjuna! Knowing his intentions and my supreme desires, why are you suddenly suspicious, as if you do not know? O Partha! You also know the supreme destiny that has been ordained. How can you then think that one should surrender to the enemy? O Pandava! O Partha! Through word and deed, I will do whatever it is possible for me to do. But I do not expect peace with the enemy. Is this not the supremely beneficial peace that Bhishma desired, when the cattle were robbed? A year has passed, but has it been accomplished?[20] Once you had decided, they were defeated then. Suyodhana will not be satisfied with parting with the smallest bit for the shortest period of time. I will always act in accordance with Dharmaraja's instructions. But the wicked deeds of that evil-souled one will also have to be considered."'

741(78)

'Nakula said, "O Madhava! Dharmaraja knows about dharma and is also generous. He has spoken many words that are in conformity with dharma. O Madhava! Bhimasena knows the king's mind. O Madhava! He has spoken about peace, but also about the strength of his arms. In the same way, you have heard what Phalguna had to say. O brave one! You have also spoken about your own views. O Purushottama! Having heard what everyone has to say, at the appropriate time, you should do what you think to be the best. O Keshava! Different views are expressed at different times. O scorcher of enemies! But at the right time, a man himself has to decide on the task. Something may be thought of in one way, but actually happens in another way. O Purushottama! Therefore, in this world, the views of men change. When we lived in the forest, we had one kind of view. O Krishna! We had another when we lived in concealment, and yet another when we revealed ourselves. O Varshneya! The love for the kingdom that we have now, did not exist as much when we roamed around in the forest. O brave one! O Janardana! When you heard that our period of exile in the forest was over, these seven akshouhinis have been assembled through your grace. These tigers among men have strength and manliness that is impossible to think of. On seeing them take up arms in battle, which man will not tremble? Therefore, in the midst of the Kurus, you should speak words of pacification. Speak words such that the evil Suyodhana is not hurt and frightened. Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, the unvanquished Bibhatsu, Sahadeva, I, Rama,[21] Keshava, the immensely valorous Satyaki, Virata and his sons, Drupada and his advisers, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, the brave king of Kashi and Dhrishtaketu of Chedi are here. Which mortal man of flesh and blood will fight them on the field of battle? O mighty-armed one! There is no doubt that you will accomplish the objectives of Dharmaraja merely through the act of going there. O unblemished one! Vidura, Bhishma, Drona and Bahlika are capable of understanding what is good for them, when you explain it to them. They are the ones who will persuade Dhritarashtra, lord of men, and the wicked Suyodhana and his advisers. O Janardana! With you speaking and Vidura listening, what can the two of you not counter and prevent from deviating from the path?"'

742(79)

'Sahadeva said, "What the king has said is eternal dharma. O scorcher of enemies! But you should act in such a way that there is war. O Dasharha! Even if the Kurus wish for peace with the Pandavas, you should provoke them to war. On having seen Panchali molested in the assembly hall, how can my anger towards Suyodhana be pacified without him being killed? O Krishna! If Bhima, Arjuna and Dharmaraja wish to stick to dharma, I will give up dharma and wish to fight them in battle."

'Satyaki said, "O mighty-armed one! The immensely intelligent Sahadeva has spoken the truth. My anger at Duryodhana will only be pacified after he has been killed. When you saw the wretched Pandavas in the forest, clad in bark and deerskin, you know that your anger was ignited. O Purushottama! Therefore, what Madri's brave son, bull among men, has said is the view of all the warriors."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When the immensely intelligent Yuyudhana was speaking these words, a terrible roar, like that from lions, arose from all the warriors who were there. All the brave ones applauded his words in every direction, saying that he was right. In their desire for war, they gladdened the heart of Shini's descendant.'

743(80)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing the king's words, which were in conformity with dharma and artha and ensured welfare, Krishna[22] was afflicted with grief. She spoke to Dasharha, who was seated there. King Drupada's daughter possessed long and black hair. She applauded the words of Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki. On seeing that even Bhimasena spoke in favour of peace, she was extremely dejected. With tears in her eyes, the spirited one spoke these words.

'"O Madhusudana! O mighty-armed one! You know about dharma. O Janardana! You know how the Pandavas were deprived of their happiness through the deceit of Dhritarashtra's son and his advisers. You know about the advice that the king secretly gave to Sanjaya. O Dasharha! You know what Yudhishthira told Sanjaya. You have heard everything. 'O immensely radiant one![23] O father! O mighty-armed one! Give us five villages—Kushasthala, Vrikasthala, Masandi, Varanavata and whichever other village you decide as the fifth and the last, for us to live in.' O Keshava! Duryodhana and his advisers were to be addressed in these words. O Krishna! O Dasharha! Yudhishthira was modest and desired peace. But though he heard these words, Suyodhana did not comply.[24] O Krishna! If Suyodhana desires peace without returning the kingdom, there is no point in going there to strive for peace. O mighty-armed one! Together with the Srinjayas, the Pandavas are capable of withstanding the terrible and angry forces of Dhritarashtra's son. Our objectives are incapable of being obtained through conciliation and generosity. O Madhusudana! Therefore, you should not show any compassion towards them. O Krishna! If we wish to save our lives, enemies who cannot be pacified through conciliation and generosity should be chastised through the staff. O Achyuta! O mighty-armed one! Therefore, swiftly hurl a mighty staff at them, together with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas. The Parthas are capable of doing this and it will bring you fame. O Krishna! Do what will bring happiness to the kshatriyas. O Dasharha! If a kshatriya follows his own dharma, he should kill a kshatriya who has become avaricious, and even a non-kshatriya. O father![25] The only exception is a brahmana, even if he commits every kind of sin. The brahmana is the preceptor of all the varnas and has precedence in everything. O Janardana! Those who know dharma know that while it is a sin to kill someone who should not be killed, it is also a sin not to kill someone who should be killed. O Krishna! O Dasharha! Act so that this sin does not touch you, together with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas and their soldiers. O Janardana! Because of my faith, I will say what has often been said earlier. O Keshava! Has there been a woman like me on earth? I am the daughter of King Drupada and have arisen from the middle of a sacrificial altar. O Krishna! I am Dhrishtadyumna's sister and your beloved friend. I have become a member of the Ajamidha lineage and am the daughter-in-law of the great-souled Pandu. I am wife to the five sons of Pandu, who are like five Indras in their radiance. Through these five maharathas, I have given birth to five brave sons. O Krishna! Under dharma, they bear the same relationship towards you that Abhimanyu does. O Keshava! Such a woman was grabbed by the hair and was molested when she went to the assembly hall, while the sons of Pandu looked on and you were still alive. While the Kouravas,[26] the Panchalas and the Vrishnis were alive, I was brought to the middle of the assembly hall and made a servant maid to those evil ones. The Pandus looked at me, without any anger and without making any effort. O Govinda! I thought of you in my mind, wishing that you might save me. The illustrious king, who is my father-in-law, told me, 'O Panchali! It is my view that you deserve to have a boon. Ask for a boon.' I replied, 'Let the Pandavas, with their chariots and their weapons, be freed from servitude.' O Keshava! They were freed at my words, but were sent to dwell in the forest. O Janardana! You are aware of these and other hardships. O lotus-eyed one! Save me, along with my brothers, my kin and my relatives. O Krishna! According to dharma, I am the daughter-in-law of both Bhishma and Dhritarashtra. Yet, I was forcibly made a slave. O Krishna! If Duryodhana remains alive for a single instant, shame on Bhimasena's strength, shame on Partha's skill with the bow. O Krishna! If you wish to show favours towards me, if you are compassionate towards me, you should direct your entire wrath at Dhritarashtra's sons."

'Having said this, the black-eyed one with the beautiful hips used her left hand to gather the side of her hair. It was soft and curled at the tips and was beautiful to see. It was extremely dark and was perfumed with sacred fragrances. It bore all the auspicious marks and shone like a giant snake. The lotus-eyed one approached Pundarikaksha with the gait of an elephant. Her eyes filled with tears, Krishna[27] told Krishna, "O Pundarikaksha! This was grasped by Duhshasana. You should remember this at all times, when you seek to bring about a peace with the enemy. O Krishna! If Bhima and Arjuna are so mean as to desire peace, my aged father will fight, with his maharatha sons. O Madhusudana! With Abhimanyu at the forefront, my five immensely valiant sons will also fight with the Kurus. How can my heart have any peace until I see Duhshasana's dark hand severed and covered with dust? Thirteen years have passed, while I have waited. I have hidden my anger in my heart, like a kindled fire. My heart has been pierced and oppressed by the stake of Bhima's words. The mighty-armed one can only see dharma now." Her throat choked with tears, the long-eyed one spoke in this way. Krishna trembled and wept, her voice choked with tears. Hot tears flowed down from the eyes of the one with the beautiful hips and moistened her large breasts.

'The mighty-armed Keshava comforted her. "O Krishna! You will soon see the women of the Bharata lineage weep. O timid one! O beautiful one! They will weep as you are crying now, because their kin and relatives will be slain, with their friends killed and their soldiers killed. Together with Bhima, Arjuna and the twins, I will act in accordance with Yudhishthira's instructions and according to what destiny has ordained.

Cooked by destiny, if the sons of Dhritarashtra do not listen to my words, they will be killed and will lie down on the ground, food for dogs and jackals. The Himalaya mountains may move. The earth may shatter into a hundred fragments. The sky, with all its nakshatras, may fall down. But my words will not be false. O Krishna! I am telling you this truthfully. Control your tears. With the enemies killed, you will soon see your husbands united with prosperity.”’

744(81)

‘Arjuna said, “You are the supreme well-wisher of all the Kurus. As a relative, you have always been loved by both the sides. O Keshava! You are capable of restoring health to the Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra and bringing about peace and you must act accordingly. O Pundarikaksha! You should go to the intolerant Suyodhana for the sake of peace. O destroyer of enemies! Tell the Bharatas what must be said. If you speak to him words that are in conformity with dharma and artha, auspicious and directed towards health, and the foolish one does not accept them, he will fall prey to destiny.”

‘Bhagavan said, “I will go to King Dhritarashtra with a desire to accomplish what is in accordance with dharma, and what is good for the health of the Kurus.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When darkness had passed and the clear sun had risen, at the muhurta of *maitra,* when the sun’s rays were mild, in the month of Koumuda and the nakshatra of Revati, when autumn was over and winter had arrived, in a season when there is an abundance of crops and happiness, the foremost among spirited ones got ready.[28] He listened to the auspicious and sacred benedictions pronounced by happy and well-trained brahmanas, like Vasava listening to the benedictions of rishis. He performed the morning ablutions and bathed. He purified and ornamented himself. Janardana worshipped the sun and the fire. He touched a bull on its tail and showed his respects to the brahmanas. He circumambulated the fire and looked at all the auspicious objects that were before him. He acknowledged Pandava’s words. Satyaki, Shini’s grandson, was seated and he addressed him. “Ready the chariot, with the conch shell, the chakra and the club. Also include the quivers, the spears and all kinds of weapons. Duryodhana, Karna and Soubala are evil in their souls. A stronger person should not ignore an enemy, however weak he might be." Knowing Keshava's instructions, his servants rushed to prepare and yoke the chariot of the one who wields the chakra and the club. It was as radiant as the fire of destruction. It could travel in the sky. It was adorned with two wheels that were like the sun and the moon. It was decorated with figures of half-moons, full moons, fish, animals, birds and many different kinds of flowers and was embellished with gems and jewels. It was large and beautiful and was as radiant as the rising sun. It had excellent flags and excellent pennants, decorated with jewels and gold. It was invincible and was full of objects, and was covered with tiger skins. It diminished the fame of enemies and increased the delight of the Yadu lineage. They yoked it to the horses Sainya, Sugriva, Meghapushpa and Balahaka, all of whom had been bathed and dressed in excellent harnesses. There was a standard with the Indra among birds[29] on it and the chariot uttered an excellent roar, thereby increasing Krishna's glory. Shouri ascended the chariot, like the performers of pure deeds ascend vimanas. It was like a summit of Mount Meru and roared like clouds or battle drums.

'Purushottama made Satyaki ascend the chariot and departed. The earth and the sky resounded with the sound of the chariot. In an instant, everything was clear and the sky was bereft of clouds. Auspicious winds began to blow. The dust settled down. Auspicious birds and animals circled and followed Vasudeva's departure. Cranes, woodpeckers and swans circled and followed Madhusudana, voicing auspicious sounds in every direction. To the chanting of mantras, great oblations were offered into the fire. There was no smoke and flames circled around. Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Bhuridyumna, Gaya, Kratha, Shukra, Narada, Valmika, Maruta, Kushika and Bhrigu, devarshis and brahmarshis, circled Indra's younger brother Krishna, who had brought happiness to the Yadu lineage. Thus honoured by masses of immensely fortunate maharshis, Krishna left for the abode of the Kurus. As he left, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, followed him, and so did Bhimasena, Arjuna, the twins who were the sons of Madri and Pandu, the valiant Chekitana, King Dhrishtaketu from Chedi, Drupada, the king of Kashi, the maharatha Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata and his sons and the Kekayas. To ensure success, all these kshatriyas followed the bull among the kshatriyas.

'In the presence of the kings, having followed Govinda for some distance, the resplendent Dharmaraja Yudhishthira spoke these words to Keshava, who is the lord of all beings and is the eternal god of the gods. He is learned about dharma, steadfast and is wise about all beings. He is constant in his intelligence and does not follow wrong conduct because of desire, fear, greed or selfishness. He has all the qualities and is marked with the *srivatsa* sign.[30] Kounteya embraced him and gave him a message. "The lady[31] has reared us from childhood. Fasts and austerities are her nature and she is always devoted to auspicious rites. She is devoted in worship to gods and guests and servitude towards her elders. O Janardana! She is affectionate towards her sons and is loved by us. O destroyer of enemies! She has saved us from fear of Suyodhana and great death, like a boat saves one in the terrible ocean. O Madhava! She has always suffered hardships, though she does not deserve it. You should ask about her welfare. Comfort her, because she is overcome with grief over her sons. When you have greeted her, embrace her and tell her about the Pandavas. O destroyer of enemies! She did not deserve unhappiness. But ever since she got married, she has suffered from hardships and deceit in her father-in-law's house. O Krishna! O destroyer of enemies! My mother has suffered a lot. Will there be a time when this tide of suffering will turn, so that I can give her happiness? When we were exiled, out of affection for her sons, she was miserable and ran after us. But we left the weeping one behind and left for the forest. O Keshava! One cannot die of grief, as long as she is alive. Our mother was honoured by the Anartas, but she was deeply grief-stricken because of her sons. O Krishna! O lord! Salute her on my behalf and also Kouravya Dhritarashtra and the kings who are our seniors. O Madhusudana! Embrace Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, the great king Bahlika, Drona's son, Somadatta and all the Bharatas separately, and the immensely wise

Vidura, who is unfathomable in his intelligence, knowledgeable about dharma and the adviser of the Kurus.” In the midst of the kings, when Yudhishthira had spoken to Keshava thus, he circumambulated Krishna and took his leave.

‘Bibhatsu followed his friend, who was a bull among men. He told the unvanquished Dasharha, the slayer of enemy warriors. “O lord! O Govinda! All the kings know about our earlier consultations, concerning half of the kingdom. O mighty-armed one! I will be delighted if they give it to us courteously, without any disrespect. They will be saved from a great fear. But Dhritarashtra’s son doesn’t know about the right code of conduct. O Janardana! If he acts in a contrary way, I will certainly annihilate the kshatriyas.” When Pandava spoke in this way, Vrikodara was delighted. Pandava’s[32] form repeatedly shook because of his rage. While trembling, Kounteya emitted loud roars. Having heard Dhananjaya’s words, his mind was filled with great delight. On hearing his roars, the archers trembled and all the mounts released dung and urine. Having thus spoken to Keshava and voiced his intentions, he[33] embraced Janardana and, having taken his leave, departed. All the kings also returned.

‘Janardana progressed on his journey, drawn by the mounts Sainya and Sugriva. Under Daruka’s[34] whip, Vasudeva’s horses seemed to kiss the road and devour the sky. Along the road, the mighty-armed Keshava saw that many radiant rishis were stationed, shining with the resplendence of brahmanas. Janardana swiftly descended from his chariot and honoured them. He worshipped all the rishis in the proper way and asked, “Are all the worlds in good health? Is dharma followed? Do the other three varnas follow the instructions of brahmanas?” Having worshipped them with honours, Madhusudana said, “O illustrious ones! Have all of you been successful in your objectives? O illustrious ones! What is your purpose? What do you wish to be done? O illustrious ones! For what purpose have you descended on earth?” Jamadagni’s son approached Madhusudana, his friend in earlier good deeds.[35] Embracing Govinda, he said, “O Dasharha! O immensely radiant one! The devarshis who are the performers of good deeds, the extremely learned brahmanas, the rajarshis and the venerable ascetics once witnessed the ancient battle between the gods and the asuras. O Janardana! They wish to see all the kshatriyas on earth and the kings gathered in the assembly hall, with you voicing what is true. O Keshava! O Madhava! We are going to witness that great spectacle, wishing to hear the words that you will speak, in conformity with dharma and artha. O scorcher of enemies! You will speak to the Kurus in the midst of those kings. Bhishma, Drona and the others, the immensely intelligent Vidura and you, tiger among the Yadava lineage, will gather in that assembly hall. O Madhava! O Govinda! We wish to hear your celestial words, full of truth and welfare, and theirs too. O mighty-armed one! Let us take your leave now. We will see you again. O brave one! May your journey be without obstacles. We will see you in that assembly hall."'

745(82)

Vaishampayana said, 'Ten mighty-armed maharathas, destroyers of enemy warriors, followed Devaki's son, with weapons in their hands. O destroyer of enemies! There were one thousand foot soldiers and riders. O king! There were hundreds of others, with plenty of provisions.'

Janamejaya asked, 'How did the great-souled Dasharha Madhusudana travel? What portents were seen when that immensely energetic one progressed?'

Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled one travelled, listen to the extraordinary portents. Some were divine, driven by destiny. Others were adverse portents. In the clear sky, there was thunder, with lightning. Behind him, Parjanya showered down fiercely, though there were no clouds. The seven great rivers, supreme among rivers, flow in an eastern direction.[36] All of them reversed direction. All the directions were reversed and nothing could be discerned. O king! Fires were ignited and the earth trembled. Hundreds of wells and water pots overflowed and water flowed out. The entire earth was covered in darkness. O king! Because of the dust, the directions and the sub-directions could not be seen. There was a loud roar in the sky, though nothing could be seen. O king! There were extraordinary things in every region. A storm from the south-western direction devastated Hastinapura. With a harsh and terrible roar, it uprooted a large number of trees. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Along whatever route Varshneya progressed, there was a pleasant breeze and everything was favourable. There was a shower of flowers, with a large number of lotuses. The roads became smooth and pleasant, without prickly grass and thorns. O king! Wherever the mighty-armed one went, he was honoured by brahmanas. The granter of riches was worshipped with madhuparka and flowers. Women gathered along the road and showered fragrant and wild flowers on the great-souled one. He passed the beautiful Shalibhavana, which had an abundance of crops. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It was a happy spot, where supreme dharma was followed. He saw many animals and beautiful villages, pleasant to the heart. There were diverse cities and many kingdoms. The people there were protected by the Bharatas and were always happy, happy in their hearts. They were without anxiety and were ignorant about any evil designs on the part of enemies. The residents of the city of Upaplavya came out in large numbers to see Vishvaksena. They stood along the road. All of them honoured the famous lord, who had arrived in that country as a guest, blazing like a fire, with the homage that he deserved.

'Keshava, the slayer of enemy heroes, arrived in Vrikasthala. The clear sun's scattered rays were red. He swiftly descended from the chariot and performed the appropriate ablutions. He gave instructions that the chariot should be unyoked and seated himself for the evening rites. Having unharnessed the horses and tended to them, in accordance with the sacred texts,[37] Daruka removed their armour and released them. After he had done all that, Madhusudana said, "To accomplish Yudhishthira's objective, we will spend the night here." Getting to know about his intention, the men instantly set up camp there and obtained excellent food and drink. O king! The foremost brahmanas from the village, noble in birth and conduct, modest and devoted to the tasks of brahmanas, approached the great-souled Hrishikesha, the destroyer of enemies. They worshipped him with benedictions and auspicious words. Having worshipped the great-souled Dasharha, honoured by all the worlds, they offered him their houses, with all their riches. The lord told them that they had done enough and returned their homage in the appropriate way. Having entered their houses, he returned again,[38] in their company. Keshava offered succulent food to the brahmanas and himself ate in their company. All of them spent the night in comfort.'

746(83)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having got to know from messengers about Madhusudana's departure, Dhritarashtra was filled with delight. He honoured the mighty-armed Bhishma and told him, Drona, Sanjaya, the immensely intelligent Vidura and Duryodhana and his advisers, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage![39] I have heard of a great and extraordinary wonder. Women, children and aged people are talking about it in every house. Some are doing it out of faith. Others are doing it in groups. Different accounts are circulating in squares and in assembly halls—the valorous Dasharha has arrived for the sake of the Pandavas. Madhusudana should always be revered and honoured by us. The course of the entire world depends on him. He is the lord of all beings. Madhava possesses fortitude, valour, wisdom and energy. That foremost among men should be revered because he is the eternal dharma. He must be worshipped for the sake of happiness. If he is not honoured, there is unhappiness. If Dasharha, the scorcher of enemies, is satisfied with our veneration, in the midst of all the kings, we will be successful in all our objectives. O scorcher of enemies! Make immediate arrangements for his worship. Erect pavilions along the route and let them be stocked with all desirable objects. O Gandhari's son![40] O mighty-armed one! Act so that satisfaction towards you is created in him. O Bhishma! What do you think?" Bhishma and all the others approved these words of King Dhritarashtra. They said that these words were excellent. Having obtained their approval, King Duryodhana began to look for beautiful sites for those pavilions. In one beautiful site after another, he had pavilions built and filled them with every kind of gem, colourful seats that possessed many different qualities, women, fragrances, ornaments, fine garments, excellent food and drink of different types and perfumed garlands. The king donated all these. So that they could live in the village of Vrikasthala, King Kourava specially built a residence and filled it with many beautiful jewels. All these superhuman arrangements were made worthy of the gods. King Duryodhana then informed Dhritarashtra about what had been done. However, Dasharha Keshava ignored all those pavilions, with their many different kinds of jewels, and went to the abode of the Kurus.’

747(84)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Kshatta![41] Janardana has set out from Upaplavya. He is now residing in Vrikasthala and will arrive here in the morning. Janardana is the lord of the Ahukas and the foremost among all the Satvatas. He is immensely intelligent, immensely valorous and immensely spirited. Madhava is the lord and the protector of the prosperous kingdom of the Vrishnis. The illustrious one is the great-grandfather of the three worlds. Happy in their minds, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas honour his wisdom, just as the Adityas, the Vasus and the Rudras listen to Brihaspati’s intelligence. I will show my homage to the great-souled Dasharha. O one learned in dharma! Listen to what you will see. I will give him sixteen golden chariots. Each will be yoked to four excellent horses from the Bahlika region and they will be extremely dark in complexion. I will also give Keshava eight war elephants with tusks that are like poles and they will always ooze musth. Each will have eight attendants. I will give him one hundred servant maids who are beautiful and possess golden complexions. They have never given birth. I will give him an equal number of male servants. I will give him eighteen thousand woollen garments that are extremely pleasant to the touch. They have been brought by those who dwell in the mountainous regions. I will give him one thousand deerskins that have been brought from the country of China[42] and whatever else deserves to be given to Keshava. I will give him this extremely energetic and clear jewel that sparkles by day and night. I will give it to him, because Keshava deserves it. I will also give him a cart drawn by a mule, which can travel fourteen yojanas in a single day. Every day, I will give him eight times the food that his mounts and men can consume. With the exception of Duryodhana, all my sons and grandsons will adorn themselves, and mounting excellent chariots, will go out to meet Dasharha. Thousands of the best courtesans, beautiful, immensely fortunate and adorned with ornaments, will go out to meet Keshava on foot. Beautiful maidens, who have not been seen by men, will leave the city and go and meet Janardana and they will go without their veils. Let all the subjects of the city, women, men and children, see the great-souled Madhusudana, who is like the sun. Let all the directions be covered with large flags and pennants. Let the roads be sprinkled with water and cleaned of dust. Duhshasana's house is superior to Duryodhana's house. Let it be quickly decorated for him. It is adorned with many beautiful pavilions and is pure and lovely. It is full of riches in every season. All my riches, and those of Duryodhana, are in that house. There is no doubt that Varshneya should be given everything that he deserves."'

748(85)

'Vidura said, "O king! You are extremely revered by the three worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are loved by the world and respected by us. Having reached an age that leans towards the west,[43] whatever you say should not be against the sacred texts or reasoning. You are well established because you are old. O great king! The subjects know that dharma is established in you, like lines in rocks, rays in the sun and waves in the ocean. O lord of the earth! You are always honoured by the world because of your qualities. Together with your relatives, you must always seek to protect these qualities. Resort to honesty. Out of childishness, do not destroy your kingdom, your sons, your grandsons, your well-wishers and those you love. O king! What you wish to give Krishna, as a guest, is a lot. But Dasharha deserves all this and more, even the entire earth. But I truthfully say that you are not giving this to Krishna because of dharma or to show him affection, but because of your own self. It is because of deception and falsehood that you are giving him all these gifts. O king! Despite your external deeds, I know your inner secrets. O king! The five Pandavas only desire five villages. If you do not wish to give them that, how can there be peace? You wish to win over the mighty-armed Varshneya through riches and use this means to create a rift between him and the Pandavas. But I tell you truthfully that he cannot be separated from Dhananjaya through riches, effort or maligning.[44] I know Krishna's greatness. I know that his devotion is firm. I know that he will not give up Dhananjaya, who is as dear as his life itself. Janardana will look at nothing other than a pot full of water, enough to wash his feet, and nothing other than inquiries about his health. Therefore, show the great-souled and venerable one the hospitality that he desires. O king! Act accordingly, because Janardana is deserving of honour. Keshava has arrived, hoping for the welfare of the Kurus. O king! Give him that through which the objective may be attained. Dasharha desires peace between you and Duryodhana, and the Pandavas. O Indra among kings! Therefore, do what he says. O king! You are the father and they are your sons. You are aged and the others are children. Therefore, act like a father towards them, because they act like sons towards you."'

749(86)

'Duryodhana said, "Everything that Vidura has said about Krishna is true. Janardana is firmly devoted to the Parthas and it is impossible to separate them. O Indra among kings! Therefore, the many different kinds of riches you proposed to bestow on Janardana as hospitality should never be given to him. Though Keshava deserves all that, this is not the time and the place. O king! Adhokshaja[45] will think that you are honouring him because of fear. O lord of the earth! It is my certain conviction that anything that causes disrespect should never be undertaken by a wise kshatriya. The divine and lotus-eyed Krishna deserves to be worshipped by the three worlds. I know everything about that. O lord! But one should not act so as to give him anything. That is the right course, now that war has been decided on. War cannot become peace through pretence."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, addressed these words to the king who was

Vichitravirya’s son. “Whether he is treated well or maltreated, Janardana will not be angered. Though he is insulted, Keshava is incapable of insulting others. O mighty-armed one! Whatever he has mentally decided as the right course of action cannot be thwarted by anyone through any means. Without any hesitation, we should do what the mighty-armed one asks us to do. Using Vasudeva as our salvation, we must swiftly make peace with the Pandavas. Janardana has dharma in his soul. He is certain to say that which is in conformity with dharma and artha. You should address him in affectionate words, together with your relatives.”

‘Duryodhana said, “O king! This prosperity is mine alone and there is no circumstance under which I will share it. O grandfather! I cannot bear to share it, and then continue to live. Listen to the great task that I have decided upon. I will capture Janardana, the refuge of the Pandavas. When he is captured, the Vrishnis, the entire earth and the Pandavas will submit. He will be here tomorrow morning. This must be accomplished so that Janardana does not get to know. Tell me how this can be done, so that we do not confront any danger.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Dhritarashtra and his advisers heard these terrible words about causing violence to Krishna, they were distressed and distracted. Dhritarashtra addressed these words to Duryodhana. “If you are the protector of your subjects, do not speak in this way. This is not eternal dharma. Hrishikesha is a messenger and our beloved relative. He intends no evil towards the Kouravas. How can it be right that he should be captured?”

‘Bhishma said, “O Dhritarashtra! This extremely evil son of yours is the ultimate. Though he is urged by his well-wishers, he chooses disaster over that which will ensure welfare. Because of his wicked followers, this wicked one has deviated from the path. But you continue to follow him, without paying heed to the words of your well-wishers. If this extremely evil son of yours and his advisers touch Krishna, whose deeds are unsullied, they will be destroyed in an instant. I cannot bear to listen any more to the fruitless words of this wicked, cruel and evil-minded one who has discarded dharma.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this, the aged one, foremost among the Bharatas, was extremely enraged. Bhishma, whose truth was his valour, arose and left the place.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having arisen next morning, Krishna performed all his morning rites. He took leave of the brahmanas and left for the city. O king! Having taken leave of the mighty-armed one, who was about to leave, all the residents of Vrikasthala returned. Adorned, Dhritarashtra’s sons, with the exception of Duryodhana, Bhishma, Drona and Kripa advanced to meet him when he arrived. O king! There were many inhabitants of the city too, desiring to see Hrishikesha. They came in many different kinds of vehicles and others were on foot. He met them along the road. Surrounded by Bhishma of the unsullied deeds, Drona and the sons of Dhritarashtra, he entered the city. The city was adorned in Krishna’s honour. The royal roads were decorated with many different kinds of gems. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! There was no one who stayed at home—woman, aged or child. They all wished to see Vasudeva. O great king! At the time when Hrishikesha entered, no men stood along the royal road. They prostrated themselves in his honour. The great mansions were full of beautiful women and seemed to sway on the ground, because of that great weight. Because the royal road was full of men, the speed of Vasudeva’s swift horses was restrained.

‘Pundarikaksha, the destroyer of enemies, entered Dhritarashtra’s white house. It was adorned with many pavilions. After passing through three rooms in the royal abode, the destroyer of enemies went to the king who was Vichitravirya’s son. When Dasharha approached him, the immensely famous lord of men, who possessed the sight of wisdom, stood up, together with Drona, Bhishma, Kripa, Somadatta and the great king of Bahlika. All of them arose from their seats and honoured Janardana. Having approached the famous King Dhritarashtra and Bhishma, Varshneya swiftly honoured them with eloquent words. Madhusudana first honoured them in accordance with dharma. In accordance with age, Madhava then greeted the other kings. Janardana then met Drona and his famous son and Bahlika, Kripa and Somadatta. There was a large and golden throne there, exquisite in workmanship. On Dhritarashtra's instructions, Achyuta seated himself there. As is the custom, Dhritarashtra's priests offered Janardana a cow, madhuparka and water. With the rites due to a guest having been observed, Govinda, surrounded by the Kurus, stayed with all the Kurus for some time joking with them and asking all the relatives about their welfare. The immensely fortunate one was thus honoured and worshipped by Dhritarashtra. Having taken his leave of the king, the destroyer of enemies then left.

'Having met the Kurus in the appropriate way in that assembly of the Kurus, Madhava then went to Vidura's beautiful house. Vidura received Janardana with every kind of benediction and honoured Dasharha with every object of desire. After having greeted Govinda as a guest, Vidura, who was knowledgeable about every kind of dharma, asked Madusudana about the welfare of the sons of Pandu. Vidura was his beloved well-wisher, wise and always established in dharma, and bereft of any sins. Dasharha, supreme among wise ones, could always see everything and told Kshatta everything about the Pandavas in detail, and their endeavours.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'After meeting Vidura, Janardana Govinda, the destroyer of enemies, went to meet his father's sister[46] in the afternoon. When she saw Krishna approach, radiant as a pleasant sun, Pritha embraced him around the neck. Remembering the Parthas, she began to weep. She had seen Varshneya Govinda after a long time and he was always a companion to her spirited sons. Pritha began to shed tears. When Krishna, lord among warriors, had seated himself and the rites due to a guest had been performed, with her voice choked with tears and with her mouth dry, she said, "They have always been devoted to serving their elders from childhood. They have wished each other well and have been similar in their minds. They were deprived of their kingdom through deceit and though they deserved to be with people, were banished to desolate regions. They were humble and had conquered anger and delight. They possessed the qualities of brahmanas. They spoke the truth. The Parthas have abandoned their beloved happiness and I have been left behind, in the midst of tears. They left for the forest and took my heart, with its roots, with them. O Keshava! How did the great-souled Pandavas deserve this? O son![47] They lived in that great forest, infested by lions, tigers and elephants. They lost their father in their childhood and I have always reared them. Without seeing their parents, how did they live in that great forest? O Keshava! Ever since childhood, the Pandavas have woken up to the sounds of conch shells, kettledrums, drums and flutes. At home, they were woken by the trumpeting of elephants, the neighing of horses and the roar of chariot wheels. There were the sounds of conch shells and drums and notes of flutes and veenas. There were sounds of brahmanas honouring the auspicious times of the day. They honoured brahmanas by distributing garments, gems and ornaments. The great-souled brahmanas blessed them with hymns and benedictions. In the best of palaces, they slept on the skins of *ranku* deer and awoke to chants uttered by the venerated, for those who deserve to be honoured. In the great forest, they heard the roars of cruel predators. O Janardana! They did not deserve this and they could not have slept there. O Madhusudana! They awoke to the sweet sounds of kettledrums, drums, conch shells and flutes, the singing of women and the praises of bards and minstrels. In that great forest, how could they awake to the roars of predatory beasts?

'"He is modest and firm in his truth. He is self-controlled and compassionate towards all beings. He has control over desire and hatred. He follows the path followed by the virtuous. He bears the extremely difficult burdens of Ambarisha, Mandhata, Yayati, Nahusha, Bharata, Dilipa, Shibi Oushinara and the ancient rajarshis. He is characterized by goodness of conduct. He is learned in dharma and follows the truth. He possesses all the qualities and deserves to be the king of the three worlds. He is Ajatashatru, with dharma in his soul. He has the complexion of pure gold. He is best among all the Kurus in dharma, learning and conduct. He is handsome and has long arms. O Krishna! How is Yudhishthira?

'"Vrikodara has the strength of ten thousand elephants and the force of a storm. That Pandava is wrathful. But he is loved by his brother and always does what brings pleasure to him. O Madhusudana! He is the brave one who killed Kichaka and his relatives, the Krodhavashas, Hidimba and Baka. He is Shakra's equal in valour and the equal of the force of the wind in speed. He is Maheshvara's equal in rage. He is Bhima, supreme among warriors. That scorcher of enemies has controlled his anger, his strength and his intolerance. Despite his intolerance, the Pandava has controlled his soul and follows the instructions of his brother. The great-souled one is a mass of energy and his strength is supreme because of his infinite energy. O Janardana! Bhimasena is terrible in his appearance. O Varshneya! Tell me. How is Vrikodara now?

'"The strong Pandava in the middle has arms like clubs. O Krishna! O Keshava! With his two arms, Arjuna rivals the thousand-armed Arjuna[48] and always surpasses him. With a single thrust, he unleashes five hundred arrows. In archery, the Pandava is the equal of King Kartavirya. He is the equal of the sun in his energy. He is the equal of maharshis in his self-control. He is the equal of the earth in his forgiveness. He is the equal of the great Indra in his valour. O Madhusudana! With his valour, he brought all the kings under the suzerainty of the Kurus and they obtained a great, radiant and famous overlordship. All the Kouravas honour his terrible strength of arms. The Pandava is supreme among all the charioteers. Truth is his valour. The Pandavas seek refuge with him, like the gods with Vasava. He is your brother and your friend. How is Dhananjaya now?

'"He is compassionate towards all beings. He is restrained because of his modesty. He is great in the use of weapons. He is mild and delicate. He follows dharma and I love him. Sahadeva is a brave and great archer and shines in assemblies. O Krishna! He is devoted to serving his brothers. He is young and skilled in dharma and artha. O Madhusudana! His brothers always honour the conduct of the great-souled Sahadeva, whose conduct is always designed to ensure welfare. The brave Sahadeva is supreme among warriors and defers to his elders. He used to serve me. O Varshneya! Tell me about Madri's son.

'"He is delicate, young and brave. He is a handsome Pandava. O Krishna! He is always as loved by his brothers as their own lives, although he possesses a different body. Nakula is immensely strong and a great archer and his valour is diverse. O Krishna! My son has been reared in comforts. Is he well? O mighty-armed one! Will I again see Nakula? Since birth, he has been reared in comforts. He is delicate and a maharatha. He does not deserve this unhappiness. I cannot find peace if I am separated from Nakula for even the twinkling of an eye. O brave one! But look at me. I am still alive.

'"O Janardana! Droupadi is the beloved of all my sons. She has been born in a noble lineage and possesses good conduct. She is endowed with all the qualities. She speaks the truth and chose the world of her husbands over the world of her sons.[49] Having left her beloved sons, she followed the Pandavas. She was born in a noble lineage and has been honoured with all the objects of desire. She is fortunate in every way. O Achyuta! How is the illustrious Droupadi? She has five husbands and they are brave warriors, equal to the fire. They are great archers. But Droupadi has only faced unhappiness. O destroyer of enemies! I have not seen Droupadi, who is truthful in speech, for fourteen years. Worrying about her sons, she must be tired out. Droupadi has such conduct, yet she has not obtained eternal happiness. It is then certain that a man does not obtain happiness because of his meritorious deeds. Bibhatsu, Yudhishthira, Bhimasena and the twins are not dearer to me than Krishna.[50] When I saw her brought to the assembly hall, it brought me greater pain than anything I had confronted before. Without wishing for it, Droupadi was brought before her fathers-in-law. While all the Kurus watched, she was brought to the assembly hall in a single garment. She was brought there by an ignoble one, who was overcome by anger and avarice.[51] Dhritarashtra, the great king Bahlika, Kripa, Somadatta and the distressed Kurus were present there. Among all those who were there in the assembly, I respect Kshatta[52] alone. A man becomes an arya because of what he does, not because of riches or learning. O Krishna! The great-souled Kshatta's great intelligence is profound. Because of his conduct, he is established like an ornament of the world."

'She was both distressed and happy at having seen Govinda arrive.[53] She began to recount the many kinds of unhappiness that she had faced. "O destroyer of enemies! Gambling with the dice and the killing of deer were sins practised by evil kings in earlier times. Could those have brought them happiness? I am tormented because Krishna[54] was molested in the assembly hall by Dhritarashtra's son, in the midst of the Kurus. This could not have been good. O scorcher of enemies! They were exiled to the forest and banished. O Janardana! There are many kinds of unhappiness that I have faced. O Keshava! They lived in concealment and were separated from their children. O scorcher of enemies! Nothing makes me and my sons suffer more than that we will now be deceived by Duryodhana in the fourteenth year. If happiness does not follow unhappiness, the fruits of meritorious deeds will be destroyed. I have not distinguished between the sons of Dhritarashtra and the Pandavas. O Krishna! That is the truth and because of this, I will see you and the Pandavas emerge from this battle, surrounded by prosperity, and with the enemies slain. They[55] have such spirit that they are incapable of being vanquished. But it is my father who should be blamed, and not I, or Suyodhana. While I was still playing as a child, with a ball in my hands, my father gave me away to Kuntibhoja, like a wicked man gives away riches.[56] I was given to Kuntibhoja, a friend, as a mark of great-souled friendship. O scorcher of enemies! I have been deceived by my father and my fathers-in-law. O Krishna! I have been extremely unhappy. What has been the point of my being alive? When I was giving birth to Savyasachi, a voice told me in the night, 'Your son will conquer the earth and his fame will touch heaven. Having killed the Kurus in a battle among men, Dhananjaya Kounteya will obtain the kingdom and will perform three sacrifices with his brothers.' I have never doubted this. I bow down to what dharma has ordained and to the great Krishna. Dharma always sustains subjects. O Varshneya! If there is any dharma, all this will become true. O Krishna! You will accomplish everything that has been said. O Madhava! I am a widow. My prosperity has been destroyed and I have enemies. But nothing distresses me as much as separation from my sons. I do not see Dhananjaya, the wielder of the bow Gandiva, and supreme among those who are skilled in the use of all weapons. How can there be peace in my heart? O Govinda! I have not seen Yudhishthira, Dhananjaya, the twins and Vriokodara for fourteen years. Men perform funeral ceremonies[57] for those whose lives have been destroyed. O Janardana! They seem to be dead to me, and I to them. O Madhava! Tell King Yudhishthira, who has dharma in his soul, 'O son! Your dharma is diminishing. Your deeds are in vain.' O Vasudeva! Shame on those who live like me, under the protection of others. It is better not to exist, than to obtain life through such inferior means. Also tell Dhananjaya and Vrikodara, who is always ready, 'The reason why a kshatriya gives birth to sons, and the appropriate time, has arrived. The time has come. And if the time passes, no matter how respected you are by the worlds, you will do that which is extremely cruel. If you act in this cruel way, I will abandon you for an eternity. When the time has arrived, one should even give up one's own life.' Tell Madri's two sons, who are always devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. 'Even at the cost of your lives, choose the comforts that can only be obtained through valour.' O Purushottama! For a man who lives according to the dharma of kshatriyas, there is always delight at obtaining objects that are gained through valour. O mighty-armed one! Go there and speak to brave Pandava Arjuna, supreme among those who wield all the weapons. 'Follow the path adopted by Droupadi.'[58] You know that when Bhima and Arjuna are extremely enraged, they can despatch even the gods on the final destination.[59] It was an insult to them that Krishna[60] was brought to the assembly hall and Duhshasana and Karna addressed her in harsh words. While the foremost among the Kurus looked on, Duryodhana assailed the intelligent Bhimasena, and will now witness the consequences. Having once embarked on an enmity, Vrikodara cannot be pacified. Even an old enmity with Bhima cannot be pacified until that destroyer of enemies has brought an end to all his foes. The robbing of the kingdom, the defeat at the game of dice and the exile of my sons has not caused me as much of unhappiness, as that of the large and dark lady brought to the assembly hall in a single garment. She was made to listen to harsh words. What can be greater misery than that? She was in her seasons then.[61] The one with the beautiful thighs has always been devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. Though she had protectors, Krishna[62] found no one to protect her then. O Madhusudana! But my sons and I have you as a protector, and Rama,[63] supreme among strong ones, and maharatha Pradyumna. O Purushottama! I can therefore bear all these miseries now, because the invincible Bhima and Vijaya,[64] who cannot be dislodged, are alive." She was overcome with grief because of her sons.

'Shouri, friend to the Parthas, comforted his father's sister, Pritha. "O sister of my father! Where is there a woman like you in this world? You are the daughter of King Shura and went to the lineage of the Ajamidhas.[65] You have been born in a great lineage and were transplanted from one lake to another. You are a goddess who is fortunate in every way. You have been greatly honoured by your husband. You have given birth to warriors. You were the wife of a warrior. You are adorned with all the qualities. O immensely wise one! Someone like you can tolerate both happiness and unhappiness. Sleep, laziness, anger, delight, hunger, thirst, cold and heat have been conquered by the Parthas. They are always engaged in that which brings bliss to warriors. The Parthas have given up the happiness of ordinary people. They are always engaged in the happiness that brings delight to heroes. Those immensely strong ones are great in their endeavour. They are not satisfied with mere trifles. Those who are patient serve that which is ultimate. Those who are mediocre love the happiness of ordinary people. Those who are patient bear supreme hardships for the sake of superhuman comforts, and obtain ultimate delight, not enjoyment that is mediocre. They consider the ultimate to be happiness and anything that is intermediate to be unhappiness. The Pandavas and Krishna[66] offer you their respects. Having conveyed that they are well, they ask whether you are well. You will soon see the Pandavas in good health, having accomplished all their objectives, the lords of all the worlds and surrounded by prosperity, with their enemies slain.” Having been thus reassured, Kunti overcame the darkness of ignorance, though she still suffered from grief on account of her sons. She replied to Janardana, “O Madhusudana! O mighty-armed one! O Krishna! O scorcher of enemies! Do whatever you see and think to be good for their sake, without transgressing dharma and without resorting to deceit. O Krishna! I know about the influence of your truth and your noble birth, and the intelligence and valour that you display in establishing your friends. In our lineage, you are dharma, you are truth and you are the greatness of austerities. You are the saviour. You are the great brahman. Everything is established in you. Everything will be as you say. Truth is established in you.” Govinda took his leave of her and circumambulated her. The mighty-armed one left for Duryodhana’s residence.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having taken his leave of Pritha and circumambulating her, Shouri Govinda, the destroyer of enemies, went to Duryodhana’s residence. It possessed supreme prosperity and was like Purandara’s[67] abode. Without being stopped by the gatekeepers, he passed through three rooms. The immensely famous one then ascended into a palace that was radiant with prosperity. It was like a cloud in the sky and arose like the peak of a mountain. Surrounded by the Kurus and thousands of kings, he saw the mighty-armed son of Dhritarashtra seated there. He also saw Duhshasana, Karna and Shakuni Soubala, seated near Duryodhana. Dasharha approached. The immensely famous son of Dhritarashtra arose, together with his advisers, and honoured Madhusudana. Varshneya Keshava met Dhritarashtra’s son and his advisers and the kings and greeted them, in accordance with their age. Achyuta seated himself on a golden couch that had been constructed well. It was strewn with many kinds of covers. After offering him a cow and madhuparka, Kourava offered Janardana his house and his kingdom. All the Kurus, together with the kings, honoured him and having seated himself, Govinda was as radiant as the pleasant sun. Then King

Duryodhana offered Varshneya, supreme among victorious ones, some food. But Keshava declined.

'In that assembly of Kurus, Duryodhana then spoke to Krishna. His tones were mild, but there was wickedness in his heart. Glancing towards Karna, Kourava said, "O Janardana! We have offered you food, drink, garments and beds. These have been brought for you. Why do you not accept? You have offered help to both sides. You are engaged in the welfare of both. O Madhava! You are Dhritarashtra's beloved relative. O Govinda! You know everything about dharma and artha. O wielder of the chakra and the club! I wish to hear about your reasons." Having been thus addressed, the immensely intelligent Govinda, grasped his own mighty arms and replied in a voice that sounded like a flood or a cloud. The words were completely articulated. They were distinct and were pronounced correctly, without any slurring. The lotus-eyed one told the king these supreme words about his reasons. "Messengers enjoy and accept the honours when they have been successful in their objectives. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You, together with your advisers, can honour me after I have been successful in my objective." Having been thus addressed, Dhritarashtra's son replied to Janardana, "You should not act in this improper way towards us. O Madhusudana! O Govinda! Whether you are successful or unsuccessful, we have tried to honour you and have failed. O Madhusudana! We do not know the reason why you have done this. O Purushottama! We offered you the homage in an act of affection. O Govinda! We have no enmity with you, nor any quarrel. Reflecting on this, you should not have spoken as you have." Having been thus addressed, Dasharha Janardana glanced at Dhritarashtra's son, together with his advisers, and laughed and said, "I never transgress dharma for the sake of desire, anger, hatred, self-interest in gaining objects, debate or avarice. Food should be accepted because of love, or because of necessity. O king! But I do not have affection for you. Nor am I in need. O king! Without any reason, you have hated the Pandavas from birth. All of them are your brothers and possess all the qualities. They have acted kindly towards you. This irrational hatred of the Pandavas is not warranted. The Pandavas are established in dharma. Who can speak against them for any reason? He who hates them hates me. He who follows them, follows me. Know that I am immersed like a single soul in the Pandavas, who act in accordance with dharma. He who follows desire and anger and, because of his delusion, hates those who possess qualities is known to be the worst among men. He is confounded because of his avarice and anger. He is foolish in the way he regards his relatives who have the fortunate qualities. He has not controlled his soul and has not been able to conquer his anger. His prosperity will be swiftly destroyed. But one who possesses all the qualities and acts out of affection in the heart acts out of affection and conquers everyone. Fame is established in him for a long time. I think that all this food has been tainted and cannot be accepted. It is my view that I should only eat the food offered by Kshatta." Having spoken these words to the intolerant Duryodhana, the mighty-armed one left the white mansion of Dhritarashtra's son. The mighty-armed and immensely intelligent Vasudeva departed. He went to the abode of the great-souled Vidura.

'While the mighty-armed one stayed in Vidura's house, Drona, Kripa, Bhishma, Bahlika and all the Kurus went to visit him. The Kurus told Madhusudana, "O Varshneya! We are offering you our gems and our houses." However, the immensely energetic Madhusudana told the Kouravas, "All of you must leave. I have been honoured in every kind of way." When the Kurus had left, Kshatta made every effort, with every object of desire, to honour the unvanquished Dasharha. Kshatta brought large amounts of food and drink that was pure and excellent for great-souled Keshava. Madhusudana first satisfied the brahmanas with this. Krishna gave supreme gifts to those who knew the Vedas. Like Vasava with the Maruts, he then enjoyed Vidura's pure and excellent food.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'At night, after he had eaten and rested, Vidura told him, "O Keshava! It was not a wise decision for you to come. O Janardana! That ignorant one acts counter to artha and dharma. He insults those who deserve respect, though he himself craves for respect.

He ignores the instructions of the aged. The foolish and evil-souled one goes against dharma and the sacred texts. O Janardana! Dhritarashtra's wicked son is incapable of being controlled by his superiors. His soul is full of desire. He thinks himself to be wise. He harms his friends and is suspicious of everyone. He does not do what he should. He is ungrateful. He has given up dharma and is addicted to falsehood. He is full of these and many other vices. Because of this, he will not accept your advice and will not accept what is good for him. O Madhusudana! He sees these soldiers who have been brought together on this earth and without examining his own soul, in his foolishness, thinks that his objectives have been accomplished. Dhritarashtra's evil-minded son will not accept peace. He has decided that Karna alone is capable of defeating all the others. He has the greatest faith in Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Drona's son and Jayadratha. Therefore, his mind is not set on peace. O Janardana! The sons of Dhritarashtra, together with Karna, have made up their minds that the Parthas will not be capable of countering Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. O Keshava! Because of brotherly feelings, you are endeavouring to bring about peace. But all the sons of Dhritarashtra have resolved that they will not return to the Pandavas what is rightly theirs. Any words addressed towards them will be pointless. O Madhusudana! When good and bad advice is equal, a wise man does not speak, like a singer who is restrained in the midst of the deaf. O Madhava! Those foolish ones have no reverence for others. You should not speak to them, like brahmanas don't to *chandalas*.[68] Because of his strength, this foolish one will not pay heed to your words. Therefore, it will be fruitless for you to speak any words to him. O Krishna! It does not appeal to me that you should descend in the midst, when all these evil-minded ones are gathered together. They are evil in intelligence. They are wicked. They are many and they are evil in intelligence. O Krishna! It does not appeal to me that you should speak words in their midst. Because of his delusion and insolence, he does not listen to his elders and accept what is superior. Because of his age, insolence, delusion and intolerance, he will not accept what is good for him. He possesses a strong army. O Madhava! If you speak to him, I have a great anxiety that he will not act in accordance with your words. O Janardana! All the sons of Dhritarashtra have arrived at the conclusion that even Indra, together with the immortals, is incapable of vanquishing them in battle. Among those who are thus inclined and overcome by desire and anger, your words will be ineffective, no matter how effective they may be. The evil and foolish one is stationed in the midst of his army, with elephants, soldiers, chariots and horses. Duryodhana thinks that he has no reason to be afraid of anyone else's anger and that he has conquered the entire earth. Dhritarashtra's son aspires for a great kingdom on earth, without any rivals. No peace can be obtained from such a person, one who thinks that he has obtained all the prosperity that can be achieved. The earth has been cooked by destiny. All the warriors on earth have assembled together, for Duryodhana's sake and to fight with the Pandavas. The kings and the lords of the earth have gathered together. All of them have old enmities with you.[69] O Krishna! It is you who have robbed the kings of their possessions. It is because of their anxiety from you that these brave ones have sought refuge with Dhritarashtra's son and have gathered around Karna. They are with Duryodhana and are ready to give up their own selves. All the warriors are happy at the prospect of fighting with the Pandavas. O brave Dasharha! It is not my view that you should enter into their midst. There are many evil-minded ones gathered there. O destroyer of enemies! Why should you go in the midst of these foes? O mighty-armed one! Even the gods are incapable of withstanding you in any way. O slayer of enemies! I know your power, manliness and intelligence. O Madhava! I have the same affection for you as I have for the Pandavas. I speak because of my affection, great reverence and friendship."'

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'Bhagavan said, "You have spoken as an immensely wise and discerning one should. You have spoken as a well-wisher like you should speak to a well-wisher like me. This is truly in accordance with dharma and artha and befits you. The words spoken by you are truly like those spoken by a father and a mother. What you have told me is true, appropriate and worthy of being followed. O Vidura! But listen attentively to the reason why I have come. O Kshatta! I have come to the Kouravas with complete knowledge about the evil soul of Dhritarashtra's son and the enmity of the kshatriyas. However, one who will relieve the earth, with all its horses, chariots and elephants, of her burden and free her from the noose of death, will achieve supreme dharma. If a man strives for an act of dharma to the best of his capability, even if he is not successful, I have no doubt that he obtains merits. Those who are knowledgeable about dharma know that if one thinks of an evil deed in one's mind, but does not consent to do it, one does not suffer from the fruits. O Kshatta! Therefore, I will sincerely try to bring about peace between the Kurus and the Srinjayas. Otherwise, they will be destroyed in this war. This extremely terrible calamity has now arisen before the Kurus. This is because of Karna and Duryodhana, but all the others are also responsible. The wise say that one who does not rush, to the best of his capacity, to help a friend who faces distress is cruel. A friend should be prevented from performing an improper act, even by grasping him by the hair. If one strives for this, to the best of one's strength, one cannot be blamed. My words are appropriate, pure, beneficial and in conformity with dharma and artha. O Vidura! Together with his advisers, Dhritarashtra's son should accept them. I will sincerely try for the welfare of the sons of Dhritarashtra, the Pandavas and all the kshatriyas on earth. Though I strive for welfare, if Duryodhana suspects me, my heart will at least be satisfied that I have been freed from a debt.[70] If a friend does not intervene, to the best of his endeavours, and maintains a distance, when there is dissension among relatives, the wise know that he is not a friend. Those who do not know about dharma and are foolish and hostile should not say that Krishna, though capable, did not restrain the angry Kurus and Pandavas. I have come here to help both sides. After having made the effort, I will no longer be blamed by men. After having listened to my beneficial words, in conformity with dharma and artha, if that child ignores them, he will come under the power of destiny. If I can bring about peace with the Kurus, without harming the cause of the Pandavas, I will accomplish a great objective and earn merit, saving the Kurus from the noose of death. If Dhritarashtra's sons pay attention to my virtuous and wise words, full of dharma and artha and designed to ensure welfare, I will earn the respect of the Kurus for having come here. All the kings of the earth together are not sufficient to withstand me when I am enraged, like deer before a lion."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having spoken these words, the bull of the Vrishni lineage and the source of joy to the Yadu lineage lay down to sleep on a bed that was pleasant to the touch.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'While these two intelligent ones were conversing in this way, the night, auspicious with the nakshatras, passed. The great-souled Vidura was listening to many words about dharma, artha and kama, diverse in their purport, sentences and syllables, spoken by the infinitely energetic Krishna and he did not desire that the night should pass. Neither did Krishna. Then, many bards and minstrels with good voices awoke Keshava, to the sound of conch shells and drums. Dasharha Janardana, bull among all those of the Satvata lineage, arose and performed all the necessary morning ablutions. Having bathed in water, meditating and offering oblations into the fire, Madhava adorned himself in ornaments and worshipped the rising sun.

'Duryodhana and Shakuni Soubala came to the unvanquished Krishna Dasharha, while he was performing the morning rites. They told Krishna, "O Govinda! Dhritarashtra has arrived in the assembly hall with all the Kurus, with Bhishma at the forefront, and all the other kings and lords of the earth. They are waiting for you, like the immortals await Shakra in heaven." Govinda welcomed them with extremely conciliatory words. Then, when the clear sun had risen, Janardana, the scorcher of enemies, gave the brahmanas gold, garments, cows and horses. When the unvanquished Dasharha had given many gems and was waiting, his charioteer arrived and greeted him. On the instructions of the immensely intelligent one, the divine chariot was brought. It roared like a monsoon cloud and was decorated with every kind of jewel. Janardana circumambulated the fire and the brahmanas. He donned the Koustubha jewel and was radiant in his supreme prosperity. Surrounded by the Kurus and protected by the Vrishnis, Shouri Krishna, the joy of all the Yadavas, ascended the chariot. After Dasharha had ascended, Vidura, knowledgeable in dharma, foremost among all beings and supreme among all those who uphold dharma, also ascended. Duryodhana and Shakuni Soubala followed Krishna, the scorcher of enemies, on a second chariot. Satyaki, Kritavarma and maharatha Vrishnis followed Krishna on chariots, horses and elephants. As they travelled, the beautiful and colourful chariots roared. They were decorated in gold and were yoked to excellent horses. In a short while, Krishna, resplendent in his wisdom and prosperity, came upon a large road that was frequented by rajarshis. The dust had been swept and it had been sprinkled.[71] As Dasharha proceeded, there was continuous music from drums, conch shells and other musical instruments. Brave and young warriors from all the worlds, scorchers of enemies and with the valour of lions, surrounded Shouri's chariot as he travelled. Many thousand of others preceded Krishna in colourful and wonderful attire, with swords, spears and other weapons. There were more than one hundred elephants and thousands of supreme horses that followed the brave and unvanquished Dasharha as he progressed. The entire city of the Kurus was full of children, women and the aged, who wished to see Janardana, the scorcher of enemies, arrive on his chariot. There were many women who crowded on the balconies, so that the foundations seemed to sway under the burden. He proceeded slowly, honoured by the Kurus, listening to the many words, glancing in all directions and returning the homage to those who should be honoured.

'Keshava and his followers then reached the assembly hall. The sounds of conch shells and flutes filled all the directions, resounding in the sky. The entire assembly of infinitely energetic kings trembled in delight, desiring Krishna's arrival. As Krishna neared, the lords of men trembled when they heard the roar of the chariot, with a noise like that of a monsoon cloud. Shouri, bull among all the Satvatas, reached the gate of the assembly hall and dismounted from the chariot, which was like Mount Kailasa. Similar to clouds and mountains, it was radiant in its energy. He entered the assembly hall, which was like the abode of the great Indra. The immensely famous one held Vidura and Satyaki with his two hands. O king! He overshadowed the Kurus with his radiance, like the sun over the nakshatras. Karna and Duryodhana were in front of Vasudeva. Kritavarma and the Vrishnis were behind Krishna. With Dhritarashtra at the forefront, Bhishma, Drona and all the others arose from their seats and honoured Janardana. When Dasharha arrived, the immensely famous lord of men who possessed wisdom as his sight[72] arose, together with Bhishma, Drona and the others. When the great king Dhritarashtra, lord of men, arose, all the thousands of kings stood up in every direction. On Dhritarashtra's instructions, a golden seat that was excellent in every way had been prepared for Krishna. Madhava greeted the king, Bhishma and Drona with a smile. The one with dharma in his soul greeted the other kings in accordance with age. The kings, the lords of the earth and all the Kurus worshipped Keshava Janardana when he entered the assembly hall. Dasharha, the scorcher of enemies and the conqueror of enemy cities, stood in the midst of the kings and saw that the rishis had assembled in the sky. On seeing the rishis, with Narada at the forefront, Dasharha softly told Bhishma, Shantanu's son, "O king! The rishis have arrived to witness this assembly on earth. They should be invited, offered seats and shown a great deal of honours. No one is capable of being seated as long as they don't have seats. Let the sages, who have controlled their souls, be immediately worshipped." On seeing the rishis arrive at the gate of the assembly hall, Shantanu's son ordered the servants to quickly bring seats for them. They brought many large and beautiful seats, smooth and decorated with jewels and gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they had accepted the *argha*,[73] they seated themselves. Krishna seated himself, and so did the kings in their respective seats. Duhshasana showed Satyaki his excellent seat. Vivimshati brought a golden seat for Kritavarma. The great-souled and intolerant Karna and Duryodhana shared the same seat, not far away from Krishna. O lord of the earth! Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, was protected by all those from Gandhara and sat on a seat, together with his son. Vidura sat on a seat that was crested with jewels and was covered with white deerskin. His seat touched the seat where the immensely wise Shouri was seated.

'For a long time, all the kings glanced towards Dasharha. They looked at Janardana, as if they were drinking amrita, and were not satisfied. Janardana was attired in a yellow garment and had the complexion of an *atasi* flower.[74] He sat in the midst of that assembly hall, like a jewel that has been set in gold. With their minds on Govinda, all of them were seated and silent. Not a man who was there said anything.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When all the kings had seated themselves and were silent, Krishna, whose teeth were excellent, began to speak in a voice that rumbled like a drum or like a cloud at the end of the summer. Madhava addressed Dhritarashtra so that everyone in the assembly hall could hear him.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! May there be peace between the Kurus and the Pandavas, without any endeavours at war on the part of the warriors. That is the reason why I have come. O king! I have nothing else to say, no other words that can be beneficial. O destroyer of enemies! You know everything that deserves to be known. O lord of the earth! This lineage of yours is supreme among all the kings. It is known for its learning and conduct and possesses all the qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Compassion, sympathy, kindness, non-violence, uprightness, forgiveness and truthfulness—all these distinguish the Kurus. O king! Belonging to a lineage that is great in these ways, an improper act on your part is especially to be deplored. O supreme among the Kurus! O father![75] You are foremost among those who restrain the Kurus when they act in accordance with falsehood, whether with outsiders or insiders. O Kouravya! With Duryodhana leading the way, these sons of yours have turned their backs on dharma and artha and have strayed into violence. They are wicked. They have transgressed honour. They have lost their senses because of their avarice, even towards their chief relatives. O bull among men! You know this. An extremely terrible calamity has arisen before the Kurus. O Kouravya! If it is ignored, it will destroy the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you wish to do so, you are capable of pacifying this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is my view that it will not be difficult to obtain peace. O king! Peace depends on you. O lord of the earth! It depends on me. O Kouravya! Establish[76] your sons and I will establish the others.[77] O Indra among kings! Your sons and their followers must obey your instructions, because if they act in accordance with your instructions, that will ensure their great welfare. O king! What is beneficial for you will also be beneficial for the Pandavas. They wish to be instructed by you, while I endeavour for peace. O lord of the earth! Reflect on the consequences and then act accordingly. O lord of men! You are capable of uniting the Bharatas. O king! Protected by the Pandavas, you will be established in dharma and artha. O lord of men! However much you try, you will not obtain people like them. When the great-souled Pandavas protect you, not even Indra with the gods can withstand you. How can kings? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Who will wish to fight against a side that has Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Vivimshati, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, Somadatta, Bahlika, Saindhava, Kalinga, Kamboja, Sudakshina, Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Savyasachi, the twins and the immensely energetic maharatha Satyaki? O destroyer of enemies! With the Kurus and the Pandavas, you will become invincible before your enemies and will become the unrivalled lord of the world. O lord of the earth! O scorcher of enemies! Lords of the earth who are your equal and kings who are your superior will seek alliances with you. Protected in every direction by your sons, grandsons, brothers, fathers and well-wishers, you will live happily. O lord of the earth! Give primacy to their interests and treat them well, as you have in the past, and you will enjoy the entire earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with the Pandavas and your own,[78] you will triumph over enemies and this will be in your own interests. O scorcher of enemies! O lord of men! If you are united with your sons and advisers, you will enjoy land that will be conquered by them.

'"O great king! But if there is war, a great destruction can be seen. O king! There will be destruction on both sides. What dharma do you see in that? The Pandavas may be killed in battle, or your immensely strong sons. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Tell me the happiness that you will feel then. They are brave ones, skilled in the usage of weapons, and all of them, the Pandavas and your own, wish to fight. Save them from a great danger. If there is a battle, we will not see all the Kurus, or the Pandavas. Brave ones will be destroyed on both sides. Charioteers will kill charioteers. O supreme among kings! All the kings of earth have gathered together. They are under the influence of anger and will destroy your subjects. O king! Save the world and do not destroy your subjects. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! If you return to your natural state, some remnants may be left. They are pure. They are generous. They are modest. They are aryas. They are born of pure lineages. They are related to one another. O king! Save them from this great danger. Let the lords of the earth meet each other in auspicious circumstances. Let them eat and drink together and let them return to their respective homes, with excellent garments and beautiful garlands, and duly honoured. O scorcher of enemies! Let the intolerance and enmity be restrained. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When so much of your age has elapsed, let the affection that you once felt for the Pandavas return again, now and for always. They lost their father when they were children and were reared by you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Protect them in a proper way, as you would your own sons. You should especially protect them when they face hardships. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Otherwise, your dharma and your artha will be destroyed. O king! The Pandavas have conveyed their homage and seek your favours, saying, ‘On your instructions, we and our followers have faced unhappiness. We have dwelt for twelve years in the forest. We lived for a thirteenth year in concealment, unknown to others. We spent that time, certain that our father would not deviate from the agreement. O father! We have adhered to the agreement. The brahmanas know this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, adhere to the agreement with us, as we have. O king! We have suffered many hardships. We should now obtain our share of the kingdom. Since you know about dharma and artha, it is for you to save us. Seeing that you are our senior, we have borne many hardships. Therefore, act towards us as a mother or a father. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The conduct of a disciple towards his preceptor is supreme. If we deviate from the path, it is for the father to establish us there. O king! Establish us on the right path and follow that yourself.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your sons have said this to the assembly. ‘To those who know about dharma and are in the assembly hall, anything inappropriate is improper, such as when dharma is destroyed by adharma and truth by a falsehood. If this happens in the sight of those who are in the assembly hall, they are themselves killed. Dharma has been pierced by adharma and has come to this assembly hall. If the stake is not taken out, those who are in the assembly hall are themselves pierced. Dharma destroys them, like a river uproots the trees along its banks.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who can see dharma, and are silently waiting for it to manifest itself have spoken what is true, righteous and just. O lord of men! What can you tell them, except returning their share?

‘“Let the lords of the earth who are in this assembly hall speak. O bull among the kshatriyas! If I have spoken in accordance with dharma and artha, if I have spoken the truth, free those kshatriyas from the noose of death. O best of the Bharata lineage! Make peace. Do not come under the control of anger. As is proper, return to the Pandavas their share of the ancestral kingdom. O scorcher of enemies! Be successful with your sons and enjoy the prosperity. O lord of men! You know that Ajatashatru is always established in the dharma of the righteous and you know his conduct towards you and your sons. There was an attempt to burn him. There was an attempt to exile him. But he has returned again to you as a refuge. You and your sons banished him to Indraprastha. Dwelling there, he brought all the lords of the earth under his suzerainty. O king! But he has always placed you above him and has never crossed you. When he conducted himself in this way, Soubala conquered him through ultimate deceit, because he coveted the kingdom, the riches and the grain. When he was reduced to such a state, Krishna[79] was brought to the assembly hall. But Yudhishthira, whose soul is unfathomable, did not swerve from the dharma of kshatriyas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish their welfare and yours, dharma, artha and happiness. O king! Do not destroy your subjects. O lord of the earth! Control your sons, who have overstepped the limits of greed and think that which is not artha to be artha, and that which is artha to be not artha. The Parthas, the destroyers of enemies, are stationed, ready to serve you and ready to fight. O king! O scorcher of enemies! Station yourself in what you perceive to be healthy."'

Vaishampayana said, 'In their hearts, all the lords of the earth welcomed these words. But no one present ventured to speak first.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Keshava spoke these words, all those who were in the assembly hall sat immobile in their seats, their body hair standing up. No man present ventured to voice a reply. All the kings thought in their hearts. All the kings there remained silent.

'Jamadagni's son[80] then spoke these words in that assembly of the Kurus, "O king! Listen to the example that I am going to cite. Do not entertain any doubt about it not being true. When you have heard it, if you so think fit, decide on what is best for you. In earlier times, there was a king named Dambhodbhava. He conquered the entire earth. We have heard that he enjoyed the entire earth. When night had passed, this valorous maharatha would always awake in the morning and ask brahmanas and kshatriyas, 'Is there anyone, a shudra, a vaishya, a kshatriya or a brahmana who wields weapons, who is my equal or superior in battle?' Saying this, the king roamed around the earth. He was so intoxicated with great insolence that he thought of no one else. There were noble and learned brahmanas who feared nothing. They cautioned the king against his repeated expressions of pride. But though he was forbidden, that wicked one kept questioning those brahmanas. He was vain and intoxicated with his prosperity. Those great-souled brahmanas were ascetics. They observed the vows of the Vedas. Blazing with anger, they told the insolent king, 'There are two lions among men who have fought in battles in many lives. O king! There is no way that you will be their equal.' Having been thus addressed, the king again asked those brahmanas, ‘Where are those brave ones? Where have they been born? What are their deeds? Who are they?’ The brahmanas replied, ‘We have heard that they are the two ascetics Nara and Narayana. They have come to this world of men. O king! Fight with them. It is said that the great-souled Nara and Narayana are tormenting themselves with great austerities in some undetermined region of Gandhamadana.’”

‘Rama[81] said, “The king gathered a large army with six divisions. He intolerantly marched to where those unvanquished ones dwelt. He went to the uneven and terrible Mount Gandhamadana. He advanced, looking for those two unvanquished ascetics. He saw those supreme among men, lean from hunger and thirst, their veins holding them together. They were afflicted by the cold, the wind and the heat. He approached them, touched their feet and asked about their welfare. They honoured the king with roots, fruits, a seat and water and asked him, ‘What can be done for you?’ Dambhodbhava replied, ‘The earth has been conquered with my arms and all the enemies have been slain. I have now come to this mountain, wishing to fight with you. Grant that to me as a mark of hospitality. I have desired this for a long time.’ Nara and Narayana said, ‘O supreme among kings! Anger and avarice have been banished from this hermitage. There are no fights in this hermitage. Where are the weapons and where is the malice? Go and desire a fight elsewhere. There are many kshatriyas on earth.’ Though spoken to in this way, he kept on insisting. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They refused and repeatedly tried to placate him.

‘“But Dambhodbhava was eager to fight and challenged the ascetics. O Kourava! Nara then picked up some blades of grass in his fist and told him, ‘O kshatriya! You desire to fight. Come and fight. Bring all your weapons and prepare your army. From now onwards, I will destroy your love for war forever.’ Dambhodbhava replied, ‘O ascetic! If you think that is enough of a weapon to be used against us, then I will fight with you. I have come here desiring a fight.’ Having said this, desiring to kill the ascetic with his army, Dambhodbhava enveloped him from all directions with a shower of arrows. Those terrible arrows were capable of piercing the bodies of others. But the sage repulsed them all with his blades of grass. Then the unvanquished one released a blade of grass as a terrible weapon. It was incapable of being countered and an extraordinary event took place. Through the power of maya, the sage used that blade of grass to slice off the eyes, ears and noses of the soldiers. The king saw that the sky was white with these blades of grass. He fell down at Nara's feet and prayed for salvation. Nara is a safe sanctuary for those who desire it. He told the king who had sought refuge, 'Have the qualities of a brahmana. Have dharma in your soul. And do not act in this way again. Overcome by insolence, do not ever insult anyone again, whether he is inferior or superior. O king! That will ensure your supreme welfare. Obtain wisdom. Overcome avarice. Be without vanity. Have control over your soul. Be self-controlled and forgiving. Be gentle and peaceful. O king! Protect your subjects. You have our leave to go. Be fortunate. Do not act in this way again. On our request, ask the brahmanas about their welfare.' Then the king bowed down before the feet of those great-souled ones. He returned to his own city and accumulated a lot of dharma.

'"The deed accomplished by Nara in ancient times was great. But Narayana was superior to him because of his many qualities. O king! Therefore, discard your vanity and go to Dhananjaya[82] before a weapon has been affixed to Gandiva, the best of bows. He possesses Kakudika, Shuka, Naka, Akshisamtarjana, Santana, Nartana, Ghora and Ajyamodaka as the eighth.[83] All men who are pierced by these confront their death, or move around insane, or lose their senses and become unconscious, or go to sleep, or jump around, or vomit, or urinate, or incessantly cry and laugh. Partha's qualities are innumerable and Janardana is superior to him. You have known him as Kunti's son, Dhananjaya. O great king! But know that Nara and Narayana are Arjuna and Keshava, brave warriors and bulls among men. If you know this, do not harbour any suspicions about me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Be an arya in your resolution and make peace with the Pandavas. O best of the Bharata lineage! If you think it best that there should not be any discord with you, strive for peace and do not set your mind on war. O best of the Kuru lineage! Your lineage is extremely revered on earth. O fortunate one! Let it continue to be that way. Think about what is best for you.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard the words of Jamadagni’s son, the illustrious rishi Kanva addressed these words to Duryodhana, in the midst of the assembly of the Kurus. “Brahma, the grandfather of the world, is eternal and without decay. The illustrious rishis Nara and Narayana are like that. Among all the Adityas, Vishnu alone is eternal, without birth, without end and the eternal lord and god. The others—the moon, the sun, the earth, the water, the wind, the fire, the sky, the planet and the stars—are subject to death. When there is the final dissolution of the universe, all of them give up the three worlds and are created again and again. There are others who die in an instant—men, animals, birds and those which are born in inferior species,[84] inhabiting the world of the living. Having enjoyed their great prosperity, kings are destroyed by age. They confront death and enjoy their good deeds and bad deeds. Therefore, you should have peace with Dharma’s son. Let the Pandavas and the Kurus rule the earth. O Suyodhana! You should not think that you are strong. O bull among men! It is the strong who decide that others are strong. O Kourava! Among those who are strong, it is not strength alone that makes them strong. All the Pandavas are strong because of the valour of the gods. In this context, an ancient story is told about Matali, when he searched for a suitor to whom he could give his daughter away. The lord of the three worlds[85] has a charioteer named Matali. A single daughter was born in his lineage. She was famous in the worlds because of her beauty. She was as beautiful as a goddess and was famous by the name of Gunakeshi. She surpassed all other women in her beauty and form. O king! Knowing that the time had arrived, together with his wife, Matali decided to give her away and worried, thought about the matter. ‘In families of men who are weighty, virtuous, prosperous, famous, gentle and spirited, the growing up of a daughter is deplorable. The mother’s family, the father’s family and the one into which the daughter is given—these three families are afflicted. I have used the eye of my mind to search in the two worlds of gods and men. But there is no one who satisfies me as a suitor—among gods, daityas, gandharvas, men and the many rishis. No one is suitable as a groom.’[86] In the night, Matali discussed this with his wife Sudharma and decided to travel to the world of the serpents.[87] ‘As a groom, I do not see anyone in the worlds of gods and men who is equal to Gunakeshi in beauty. But there is certain to be one among the serpents.’[88] Having discussed in this way with Sudharma, he circumambulated her and having inhaled the fragrance of his daughter’s head, entered the earth.”’

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‘Kanva said, “When Matali was travelling along the road, he met maharshi Narada. Because he so desired, he was going to see Varuna. Narada asked, ‘Where are you going? O charioteer! Is it on your own task, or on the instructions of Shatakratu?’ Being questioned by Narada, who was travelling along the same road towards Varuna, Matali told him everything about his own objective. The sage told him, ‘Let us travel together. I have myself descended from heaven to see the lord the waters.[89] I will tell you everything when we see the nether regions of the earth. O Matali! After having searched there, we will approve of a suitable groom.’ Matali and Narada immersed themselves in the nether regions of the earth. The great-souled ones saw the guardian of the world who was the lord of the waters. There, Narada received the homage due to a devarshi and Matali also received honours due to the great Indra. In a happy frame of mind, they told Varuna about their task and having taken his leave, went to the world of the serpents. Narada knew everything about all the beings who dwelt in the nether regions of the earth and described everything in detail to his companion.

‘“Narada said, ‘O son![90] You have now seen Varuna, surrounded by his sons and grandsons. Now behold the regions of the lord of the waters. They are fortunate and prosperous in every way. This immensely wise one is the son of Varuna, the lord of the cows. He is specially distinguished because of his good conduct and purity. This is his beloved son Pushkara, whose eyes are like lotuses. He is beautiful and handsome and has been chosen by Soma's daughter as her husband. She is famous by the name of Jyotsnakali and she is second only to Shri[91] in her beauty. It has been said that this son of a cow has been made the eldest son of Aditya himself.[92] Behold Varuni's abode.[93] It is constructed out of gold everywhere. O friend of the lord of the gods! By obtaining this, the gods obtained their divinity. O Matali! You can see all those radiant weapons. They belong to the daityas, who were ousted from the kingdom.[94] Since they are indestructible, they still remain. O Matali! They were conquered by the gods and require great power to be used. O Matali! There are many species of rakshasas and many species of *bhutas*[95] here. They possessed divine weapons that had been constructed by the gods earlier.[96] There is a great fire here, a fire that was created in Varuna's lake.[97] Theres is also Vishnu's chakra, surrounded by a fire without smoke. This is the bow Gandiva,[98] created for the destruction of the world. Because it is always protected by the gods, the bow is known by the name of Gandiva.[99] When the time for action has arrived, it is always certain that it has the strength of one hundred thousand breaths of life. It chastises and brings under its control kings who are allied with the rakshasas. This is the staff first created by Brahma, imbibed with knowledge of the brahman. This is a great weapon for Indras among men and has been pronounced to be that by the great Shakra. The sons of the lord of the waters bear this great weapon. This is the umbrella of the king of the waters[100] and is kept in the room reserved for umbrellas. Like a cloud, it showers cold waters everywhere. The water that showers from this umbrella is as pure as the moon. But it is enveloped in darkness and nothing can be seen. O Matali! There are many extraordinary sights here. But because of the task you have to accomplish, let us quickly leave this spot.'"'

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‘“Narada said, ‘This city is located in the navel[101] of the world of the serpents. This is known as Patala and is frequented by daityas and the danavas.[102] Living beings and immobile objects are washed down here by the waters and enter, uttering loud noises because they are oppressed by fear. Feeding on the water, the fire known as asura always blazes forth here. But it knows its own restrictions and keeps to its limits. Having killed their enemies, the gods drunk the amrita here and kept the remnants. It is from here that the waxing and waning of the moon can be witnessed.[103] At every conjunction of time, it is from here that the divine Hayashira arises.[104] It is golden in complexion and fills the universe with water. All the objects that have the form of water fall down here. Therefore, this supreme region is famous by the name of Patala.[105] For the welfare of the universe, it is from here that Airavata accepts the water and sprinkles it on the clouds. The great Indra then showers this down as rain.[106] Many kinds of aquatic creatures, in diverse shapes and forms, dwell here. They roam in the water, drinking the water, which is like the rays of the moon. O charioteer! During the day, some inhabitants of the nether regions of Patala are pierced by the rays of the sun and die. They are revived again at night. The moon arises every day, enveloped in its rays. It touches the amrita and revives the beings with this touch. The daityas dwell here, addicted to adharma. Vasava has robbed them of their prosperity and they are tied down here, oppressed by destiny. Maheshvara, the lord of all beings and famous by the name of Bhutapati,[107] performed severe austerities here for the welfare of all beings. The brahmanas who observe the rites of the cow dwell here. They are maharshis devoted to studying and teaching. They have given up their lives and have conquered heaven. A person who lives anywhere, feeds on anything and wears anything, is said to observe the rite of the cow. Airavata, the king of elephants, Vamana, Kumuda and Anjana, supreme among elephants, were born in the lineage of Supratika.[108] Look here and see if there is a groom who appeals to you because of his qualities. O Matali! We will then go to him and make efforts to choose him as a groom. There is an egg that is placed in these waters. It blazes with its radiance. It has been here since the time when beings were created.[109] It is not shattered. Nor does it move. I have never heard the story about its birth or creation. No one knows about its father or its mother. O Matali! At the time of destruction, it is said that a gigantic fire arises from it and consumes all the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects.'"

'Kanva said, "On hearing what Narada had said, Matali replied, 'There is no one here who appeals to me. Let us swiftly go somewhere else.'"'

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'"Narada said, 'This supreme and excellent city is known as Hiranyapura of the daityas and the danavas, who roam around with a hundred different kinds of maya. Maya fashioned it in his mind and Vishvakarma created it with a great deal of effort.[110] It was placed in the nether regions of Patala. Having been granted a boon in ancient times, the brave and greatly energetic danavas lived here, practising a thousand different kinds of maya. Shakra, or Varuna, or Yama, or the lord of riches,[111] or any of the others, could not control them. The asuras known as the Kalakhanjas were created from Vishnu's feet. The Nairritas and Yatudhanas were created from Brahma's altar.[112] They had teeth and terrible forms and were valorous, with the speed of the wind. They were endowed with the prowess of maya. They lived here and protected themselves. The danavas named Nivatakavachas were invincible in battle. You know that even Shakra was incapable of restraining them. O Matali! You yourself, together with your son Gomukha, have repeatedly been shattered by them and also the king of the gods, Shachi's consort, together with his son. O Matali! Behold those mansions, constructed out of gold and silver. They have been designed and constructed with diverse kinds of wonderful artisanship. They have green lapis lazuli, red coral, white coral that is like the sun and radiant diamonds. They shine like the earth, mountains or rocks, and seem to be like the stars. They are as radiant as the sun and like a blazing fire. They have colourful nets of jewels and are tall, standing close to one another. It is impossible to describe their forms, constituents and qualities. They are large and possess all the qualities. Look at the sporting grounds of the daityas and their beds. The vessels and the seats are bejewelled and extremely expensive. Look at the mountains which are like clouds, with currents of water flowing down them and trees that can move around at will and provide blossoms and fruit one desires. O Matali! Is there anyone here who appeals to you as a groom? Or if you so wish, let us go towards some other direction on earth.'"

'Kanva said, "Matali then spoke to the one who had addressed him in this way. 'O devarshi! I do not wish to do anything that causes displeasure to the denizens of heaven. Though the gods and the danavas are brothers, they are always engaged in enmity. I cannot find pleasure in an alliance with the enemy's party. It is better that we should go somewhere else. I should not look at the danavas. I know this of myself. I wish to give that lotus away.'"'

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'"Narada said, 'This is the world of the Suparnas. They are birds which kill serpents. They are not exhausted in their valour, in travelling, or in bearing loads. O charioteer! This is the lineage that has descended from the six sons of Vinata's son[113]—Sumukha, Sunamna, Sunetra, Suvarchasa, Surupa, the king of the birds, and Subala. There were hundreds and thousands who were born and reared in Vinata's lineage, born in the lineage of the king of the birds. They were born in Kashyapa's lineage and extended it.[114] All of them are endowed with prosperity. All of them are marked by the srivatsa sign.[115] All of them aspire for good fortune and bear strength. They are kshatriyas in their deeds and are ruthless in feeding on serpents. Because they destroy their relatives,[116] they never attain the status of brahmanas. O Matali! Listen. I will recount the names of the foremost ones to you. This lineage is extremely revered because it is favoured by Vishnu. Vishnu is their god and Vishnu is their refuge. Vishnu is always in their hearts. Vishnu is always their objective. There are Suvarnachuda, Nagashi, Daruna, Chandatundaka, Anala, Anila, Vishalaksha, Kundali, Kashyapi, Dhvajavishkamba, Vainateya, Vamana, Vatavega, Dishachakshu, Nimesha, Nimisha, Trivara, Saptavara, Valmiki, Dvipaka, Daityadvipa, Sariddvipa, Sarasa, Padmakesara, Sumukha, Sukhaketu, Chitrabahu, Anagha, Meghakrita, Kumuda, Daksha, Sarpanta, Somabhojana, Gurubhara, Kapota, Suryanetra, Chirantaka, Vishnudhanva, Kumara, Paribarha, Harita, Susvara, Madhuparka, Hemavarna, Malaya, Matarishva, Nishakara and Divakara. I have recounted Garuda's descendants only as examples. They are the foremost ones in fame, deeds and spirit. O Matali! If none of these appeals to you, let us proceed. I will take you to a region where you may find what you are looking for.'"'

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'"Narada said, 'This is the seventh of the nether regions of earth, named Rasatala.[117] Surabhi, the mother of all cows, who was created from amrita, dwells there. She is always overflowing with milk and is the source of all the essences of earth. That single supreme essence is distilled from the core of the six essences.[118] In ancient times, this unblemished one arose from the grandfather's[119] mouth, when he was satisfied with amrita and regurgitated its essence. The flow of her milk descended on the surface of the earth and created a lake that is known as the sacred and extremely supreme ocean of milk. It is surrounded by blossoming foam in every direction. The supreme sages who drink foam dwell there. O Matali! They are known as the drinkers of foam because they survive on foam. They are engaged in terrible austerities and the gods are terrified of them. O Matali! From her, a cow was born for each of the directions. They live there, as those who protect those directions and it is said that they support the directions. Surabhi's calf named Surupa sustains the eastern direction. Varuna's western direction is sustained by Subhadra. O Matali! She is great in her influence and has the form of the universe. The calf named Sarvakamadugha sustains the northern direction. O Matali! She is devoted to dharma and is named after Ilavila's son.[120] The gods and the asuras got together and churned the waters of the ocean, which was mixed with their milk, using Mandara as a churning rod. O Matali! They obtained the liquor known as Varuni, Lakshmi, amrita, Uchchaihshrava, the king of the horses, and Koustubha, jewel among all gems. Surabhi provides her milk as *sudha* for those who drink sudha, as *svadha* for those who drink svadha and as amrita for those who drink amrita.[121] In ancient times, a song was sung by the residents of Rasatala. The learned ones of this world heard this in ancient times and still sing it. "Dwelling in Rasatala brings greater happiness than in the world of the serpents, or in heaven, or in the vimanas of the gods."'""

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'"Narada said, 'This city is named Bhogavati and is ruled over by Vasuki. It is as beautiful as Amaravati, the beautiful city of the king of the gods. The naga Shesha is stationed here. Because of his austerities, foremost in the worlds, and his power, he always holds up the earth. In size, he is as large as Mount Shveta and he is adorned in many kinds of ornaments. He is immensely strong. He has a thousand[122] on his head and a flaming tongue. Adorned in many kinds of ornaments, the nagas who are Surasa's sons dwell here. They have many different kinds of forms and live here happily. They are marked with the signs of jewels, svastikas, chakras and *kamandalus*. They are many thousands in number. All of them are strong and naturally terrible. Some have one thousand heads. Others have five hundred faces. Some have one hundred heads. Others have three heads. Some have three heads. Others have seven faces. They have strong coils and gigantic forms, with the coils resembling mountains. In a single lineage, there are many thousand, million and crore of nagas. Listen to the most famous ones. There are Vasuki, Takshaka, Karkotaka, Dhananjaya, Kaliya, Nahusha, Kambala, Ashvatara, Bahyakunda, Maninaga, Apurana, Khaga, Vamana, Elapatra, Kukura, Kukuna, Aryaka, Nandaka, Kalasha, Potaka, Kailasaka, Pinjaraka, the naga Airavata, Sumanomukha, Dadhimukha, Shankha, Nanda, Upanandaka, Apta, Kotanaka, Shikhi, Nishthurika, Tittiri, Hastibhadra, Kumuda, Malyapindaka, the two Padmas, Pundarika, Pushpa, Mudgaraparnaka, Karavira, Pitharaka, Samvritta, Vritta, Pindara, Bilvapatra, Mushikada, Shirishaka, Dilipa, Shankhashirsa, Jyotishka, Aparajita, Kouravya, Dhritarashtra, Kumara, Kushaka, Viraja, Dharana, Subahu, Mukhara, Jaya, Badhira, Andha, Vikunda, Virasa and

Surasa. These and many others are known as Kashyapa's descendants.[123] O Matali! See if there is anyone here who appeals to you as a groom.'"

'Kanva said, "Matali was listening attentively and continuously glancing at one particular one. He seemed to be delighted and asked Narada, 'There is this one who is standing before the Kouravya Aryaka. He is radiant and handsome. Whose lineage is he descended from? Who are his father and mother? From what serpent is he descended? Of what great lineage is he the flag-bearer? He has energy, fortitude, beauty and age. My mind finds delight in him. O devarshi! He will be a worthy husband for Gunakeshi.' On seeing that Matali was delighted at having seen Sumukha, he[124] then told him about his greatness, birth and deeds. 'His name is Sumukha and he is a king of the nagas. He has been born in Airavata's lineage. He is the grandson of Aryaka on the father's side and of Vamana on the mother's. O Matali! His father is the naga named Chikura, who has recently been reduced to the five elements by Vinata's son.'[125] Delighted, Matali then addressed Narada in these words. 'O father![126] This supreme among serpents pleases me as a son-in-law. I am delighted with him and let us make swift endeavours. O sage! I wish to bestow my beloved daughter on this serpent.'"'

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'"Narada said, 'This is Shakra's beloved well-wisher and charioteer and his name is Matali. He is pure and of good conduct and possesses all the qualities. He is energetic, valiant and strong. Apart from being a charioteer, he is Shakra's friend and adviser. In battle after battle, there has been little difference in power between him and Vasava. He drives the supreme chariot Jaitra, to which one thousand bay horses are yoked. Through his strength of mind, he controls them in battles between the gods and the asuras. Vasava uses his strength to defeat others only after he has vanquished them with his horses. The destroyer of Bala strikes with his weapons only after he[127] has struck first. He has a daughter with beautiful thighs. She is unsurpassed on earth in beauty. She is truthful and of good conduct and has all the qualities. She is known by the name of Gunakeshi. O one with the radiance of an immortal![128] He has been searching in the three worlds. Your grandson Sumukha appeals to him as a husband for his daughter. O Aryaka! O supreme among serpents! If this appeals to you, without any delay, make arrangements for accepting this maiden. Like Lakshmi in the lineage of Vishnu, like Svaha in the lineage of the fire, may the slender-waisted Gunakeshi be like that in your lineage.[129] Therefore, accept Gunakeshi for the sake of your grandson. She is his equal in beauty, like Shachi is the equal of Vasava. Though he doesn't have a father, we choose him as a groom because of his qualities and out of great reverence for you and Airavata. Sumukha possesses the qualities of conduct, purity, self-control and so on. Matali has come to you in person, ready to bestow his daughter. It is proper that you should also honour him.'"

'Kanva said, "Aryaka was both happy and miserable. He was happy because of his grandson, but sad because his son was dead. He told Narada, 'O devarshi! Do not think that I do not approve of your words. Who will not desire an alliance with Shakra's friend? O great sage! But I am hesitant on account of a weakness. O father![130] My immensely radiant son, who gave him his body, has been devoured by Vinata's son and we are miserable on that account. O lord! When Vinata's son went away, he said, "I will devour Sumukha after a month." This will certainly happen, because I know his determination. Therefore, my delight has been destroyed because of the words of Suparna.' Matali then told him, 'My mind has been made up. I have decided that Sumukha, born from your son, will be my son-in-law. This serpent must come with me and Narada and go and see Vasava, the lord of the three worlds and the lord of the gods. I will endeavour to find out how much of his lifespan remains. O supreme one! I will attempt to counter Suparna. Let Sumukha come with me to the lord of the gods, for the accomplishment of this task. O serpent! May you be fortunate.' Then all of those immensely energetic ones went to see the immensely radiant king of the gods, Shakra, where he was seated, together with Sumukha. The illustrious four-armed Vishnu also happened to be there. Narada related everything about Matali. Vishnu then told Purana, the lord of the world, ‘O Vasava! Give him amrita and make him an equal of the immortals. Through your wish, let Matali, Narada and Sumukha obtain their cherished desires.’ Thinking about the valour of Vinata’s son, Purandara told Vishnu, ‘You should grant it.’ Vishnu replied, ‘You are the lord of all the worlds and of everything that is mobile and immobile. O lord! Who will dare to take back what you have given?’ Thus did Shakra grant the serpent a supreme lifespan. But the destroyer of Bala and Vritra did not give him amrita. On obtaining the boon, Sumukha’s face became extremely radiant. He obtained a wife. And according to his desires, returned home. Having succeeded in their objective, Narada and Aryaka were delighted, and after honouring the greatly radiant king of the gods, departed.”’

‘Kanva said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The immensely strong Garuda heard the account about how Shakra had granted the serpent a long life. Suparna was extremely enraged and went to Vasava, stopping the three worlds with the great wind created by his wings.

‘“Garuda said, ‘O illustrious one! When I was hungry, you gave me a boon of your own accord.[131] Why are you ignoring that and going back on it? The creator, the lord of all beings, has ordained my food, ever since all beings have been created. What is the reason for your going against that? I have chosen this great naga for my sustenance and have chosen the time. O god! I have to sustain my large offspring through him. O king of the gods! Now that this decision has been frustrated, I cannot cause violence to another, unlike you, sporting according to your wishes and your whims. Therefore, I will have to give up my life now, together with my relatives and the servants in my house. O Vasava! I hope you are happy. O slayer of Bala and Vritra! But this is certainly what I deserve. When I was a lord of the three worlds, I chose to become the servant of another one.[132] As long as you are the lord of the gods, Vishnu is not responsible for this. O Vasava! The kingship of the three worlds and the kingdom is vested in you for eternity. I also have Daksha’s daughter as my mother and Kashyapa as my father.[133] With ease, I can also bear the burden of the worlds. I am also unassailable by all beings and I also possess great strength. In the war with the daityas, extremely great deeds have also been performed by me. Diti’s sons have also been killed by me [134]—Shrutashri, Shrutasena, Vivasvan, Rochanamukha, Prasabha and Kalakaksha. I make efforts to station myself on your younger brother’s[135] standard and serve and bear him. Is that the reason you disrespect me? Who else is capable of bearing that load? Who else is stronger than I am? Though I am distinguished in this way, yet I bear him and his relatives. Since you have restrained me from my food, I have been shown disrespect by you and have also lost his.[136] O Vasava! Among all those who have been born from Aditi and possess strength and valour, you are certainly the one who is strongest among them all. But without any exhaustion, I can bear you on a single one of my feathers. O father![137] Therefore, reflect on who is the stronger one.'"

'Kanva said, "When the one who wields the wheel of the chariot[138] heard these extremely threatening words of the bird, he spoke to Tarkshya,[139] desiring to trouble the one who cannot be troubled. 'O Garuda! You think yourself to be strong, but you are extremely weak. O one who has been born from an egg! In our presence, you should not praise yourself in this way. Even when they are together, the three worlds are incapable of bearing my body. I myself bear myself and bear you too. To establish the truth of your words, bear my right arm alone. If you can bear it, your self-praise will be established to be true.' Then the illustrious one placed his[140] arm on his[141] shoulder and he fell down oppressed by that load, unconscious and bereft of his senses. The entire weight of the earth, together with its mountains, was as much as a single arm of his body. Achyuta, supreme among strong ones, did not press down with all his strength. He did not want to rob him of his life. The bird was bereft of its wings. His body was spread out. He was unconscious. He was bereft of his senses. Oppressed by that great burden, he began to shed his feathers. The bird who was Vinata's son then bowed his head before Vishnu. He was unconscious and bereft of his senses. In misery, he spoke these words. 'O illustrious one! You have extended a well-formed arm that is like the essence of the worlds and have pressed me down on the face of the earth. O god! You should forgive me. I am confused and am a bird with limited intelligence. Dwelling on your standard, I was consumed by the fire of my strength. O god! O lord! I did not know of your supreme strength. That is the reason I thought myself to possess a valour that was unmatched by anyone else.' The illustrious one was then pleased with Garuda and affectionately told him that he should not act in this way again. O Gandhari's son! O son! Like that, you are alive only as long as you do not attack the sons of Pandu in battle. Bhima, Vayu's extremely strong son, is foremost among the wielders of weapons. Dhananjaya is Indra's son. Who will they not kill in battle? Vishnu, Vayu, Shakra, Dharma and the two Ashvins are gods.[142] You are incapable of even looking at them. O son of a king!

Therefore, end the hostilities and seek peace. With Vasudeva as a sanctuary, you should protect your lineage. The immensely ascetic Narada has witnessed all this and Vishnu's greatness with his own eyes. He is the wielder of the chakra and the club."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Duryodhana had listened to all this with sighs and frowns on his face. He glanced towards Radheya then and laughed out aloud. Ignoring the words of the rishi Kanva, the evil-minded one slapped his thigh, which was like the trunk on an elephant, and said, "I will act as the creator has created me, according to what is in the future and my destiny. O maharshi! What will this pointless conversation achieve?"'

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Janamejaya said, 'He[143] has been prone to evil from his birth, coveting the riches of others and confounded by avarice. He acts in ways that are not like those of an arya and is determined to bring about his own death. He is the cause of grief to his kin and relatives and increases their misery. He causes difficulties for his well-wishers and increases the delight of his enemies. Why did his relatives and well-wishers not restrain him from this deviant path? Out of friendship and affection, why did the illustrious one[144] and the grandfather not stop him?'

Vaishampayana said, 'The illustrious one spoke appropriate words and so did Bhishma. Narada also said many things. Listen to them.

'Narada said, "Rare is a well-wisher who listens. Rare is a well-wisher who offers beneficial advice. Where there is a well-wisher, there is no friend.[145] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I think that your well-wishers should be heard. One should not stick to obstinacy. Stubbornness is extremely terrible. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about how obstinacy led to Galava's defeat. In ancient times, Dharma sought to test Vishvamitra's austerities. He went to him himself, adopting the form of the illustrious rishi Vasishtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Having adopted the form of one of the saptarshis, he went to Koushika's[146] hermitage, as if he was hungry and wished to satisfy his hunger. With reverence, Vishvamitra cooked some *charu*.[147] Because of the extreme care he took on this, he could not attend to him in other ways. But without waiting for this food, he[148] ate what had been offered by other ascetics. Having brought the warm food, Vishvamitra came to him. The illustrious one said, ‘I have already eaten. Stay here.’ And departed. O king! The immensely radiant Vishvamitra stood there. Because of his devotion, he grasped the food with his two hands and placing it on his head, stood nearby. He stood immobile like a pillar, subsisting only on air. At that time, the sage Galava made efforts to take care of him. Out of respect, reverence and affection, he did what brought him[149] pleasure. After one hundred years had passed, Dharma appeared before Koushika in Vasishtha’s disguise and wished to eat. He saw the intelligent maharshi Vishvamitra stationed there in devotion, subsisting on air and bearing the food on his head. Dharma accepted it and it was still warm and fresh. Having eaten, he said, ‘O brahmana rishi! I am pleased.’ Then the sage left. Because of Dharma’s words, Vishvamitra was delighted and giving up the state of a kshatriya, assumed the state of a brahmana. Vishvamitra was pleased at the service and devotion of his disciple, the ascetic Galava, and said, ‘O son! O Galava! You have my permission to go wherever you desire.’ Having been thus addressed, Galava, supreme among sages was pleased. He told the immensely radiant Vishvamitra in gentle words, ‘What dakshina[150] will I give you for having performed the task of my preceptor? Man’s rites only succeed when dakshina has been given. When dakshina has been paid, virtuous ones are freed from their debts. Dakshina is the fruit of a sacrifice, obtained in heaven, and is therefore said to constitute peace. O illustrious one! Tell me. What will I give my preceptor?’ The illustrious Vishvamitra knew that he had already been honoured by his service and repeatedly asked him[151] to go away. But despite Vishvamitra repeatedly asking him to leave, Galava kept repeatedly asking, ‘What will I give?’ The ascetic Vishamitra was slightly enraged at Galava’s great obstinacy and told him, ‘Give me eight hundred horses that are as white as the rays of the moon and possess a single black ear each. O Galava! Go now and do not delay.’””

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‘Narada said, “When Galava was thus addressed by the intelligent Vishvamitra, he could not sleep, sit or eat. His body became skeletal and green, because he was overcome by worry and misery. He began to think excessively and was consumed by his exasperation. ‘Where can I get prosperous friends? Where can I obtain riches and treasure? Where can I get eight hundred horses that are as white as the rays of the moon? How can I devote myself to eating? How can I devote myself to happiness? Though I am alive, I am not devoted to it. What is the point of this devastated life? I will go to the other side of the ocean, or to the other side of the earth, and give up my life. What is the point of remaining alive? I am without riches. I am unsuccessful. I have given up different kinds of fruits. I am bearing the burden of a debt. How can such a person hope for happiness? If one has enjoyed the riches of one’s well-wishers, offered as a mark of affection, and is unable to repay the favour, death is superior to remaining alive. Having promised to do something, if one does not accomplish that task, one is tormented with false words and all the fruits of sacrifices are destroyed. There is no beauty in a liar. A liar does not obtain offspring. A liar obtains no lordships. How can he find an auspicious end? How can there be fame for an ungrateful person, or a proper station, or happiness? An ungrateful person is disrespected. There is no salvation for an ungrateful one. There is no life for one without riches. Will such a wicked person sustain himself through crookedness? Unable to return a favour, such a wicked person is certainly destroyed. I am such a wicked person. I am ungrateful. I am wretched. I am a liar. Having succeeded in studying with my preceptor, I am unable to accomplish what he has asked me to do. After having undertaken supreme endeavours, I will free myself of this life. Never before have I asked for anything from the gods. All the thirty gods revere me because of my sacrifices. I will go to Vishnu, the lord of the three worlds and the god who is foremost among the gods. Krishna is the refuge and he is the supreme refuge for those who seek it. He pervades all the gods and the asuras and all the comforts are established in him. I bow down, wishing to see that undecaying and great yogi.’

'"When he said this, his friend Garuda, Vinata's son, appeared before him. He was delighted and to undertake a kind act, said, 'I think that you are my well-wisher. It is my view that a well-wisher must help, to the best of capacity, his well-wisher obtain the object that he desires. O brahmana! I possess the means. O brahmana! I have spoken earlier to Vasava's younger brother[152] on your behalf and he has acceded to my wishes. Let us happily go to the region that is beyond this earth. O Galava! Let us swiftly go.'"'

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'"Suparna said, 'O Galava! I have received instructions from the god who is the source of all knowledge. Tell me. Towards which direction do you wish to go first—east, south, the western direction or the north? O foremost among brahmanas! O Galava! Where will I go? The sun rises from the east and illuminates all the worlds. When it is dawn, the austerities of the Sadhyas take place there. Intelligence was first born in the east and from there, permeated the entire universe. Dharma's two eyes are established there.[153] Offerings are rendered through the mouth there and the oblations spread to all the directions. O foremost among brahmanas! This is the gate through which the day begins its journey. It is in the east that Daksha's women[154] gave birth to subjects. It is the direction where Kashyapa's offspring prospered. This is the root of the prosperity of the gods and Shakra was instated in the kingdom of the gods there. O brahmana rishi! Even the gods performed austerities there. O brahmana! It is because of these reasons that this direction is known as *purva*. In earlier times, this was the first region to be covered by the gods.[155] All the ancient ones gaze upon the eastern direction. One who craves happiness, should perform all the divine tasks in the eastern direction. The illustrious one who gives birth to the worlds,[156] first chanted the Vedas there. To those who know about the brahman, the sun god first recited the *savitri* here.[157] O supreme among brahmanas! The sun god bestowed the hymns of the Yajur Veda here. It was here that those gods, who had obtained the required boon, earlier drank soma at sacrifices. The flame that bears oblations was satisfied here through objects that have the same origin as itself.[158] It is here that Varuna descended to Patala and obtained his prosperity. O bull among brahmanas! It is here that the ancient Vasishtha's birth, rise to eminence and death took place. The first sound of "Om" was created here, one thousand times. The sages who drink soma drank it near the altar here. It is here that Shakra kills many boars and forest-dwelling beasts, as shares in the sacrifice for minor gods. The sun rises here and in his rage, kills all ungrateful men and asuras. This is the gate to the three worlds and to heaven and happiness. This is the eastern quarter. If you so wish, let us go there. My task is to please the one[159] whose instructions I obey. O Galava! Tell me, and I will go. Or listen to me about another direction.'""

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'"Suparna said, 'In ancient times, Vivasvat performed a *shrouta*[160] sacrifice here. Because he offered dakshina to his preceptor, this direction is known as dakshina.[161] It is there that *pitripaksha* of the three worlds is established.[162] O brahmana! It is said that the gods who sustain themselves on warm oblations also dwell here.[163] The Vishvadevas also live here, together with the ancestors. They are worshipped through sacrifices in this world and are given equal shares. O brahmana! This is known as Dharma's second gate. Time is computed here through *trutis* and *lavas*.[164] The devarshis always dwell here, as do those who dwell in the world of the ancestors. All the rajarshis, having transcended pain, live here. Dharma, truth and karma are heard of here. O foremost among brahmanas! Immersed in one's karma, one goes there. O foremost among brahmanas! This is the direction that everyone must traverse.[165] But confounded by ignorance, they do not obtain happiness. O bull among brahmanas! There are thousands of Nairritas there. They have been created to obstruct those who have not perfected their souls. O brahmana! There, in the groves of Mandara, dwell brahmana rishis and gandharvas sing songs that steal the heart and the mind. Raivata heard the chants of the Sama Veda being sung here.[166] He gave up his wife, his advisers and his kingdom and left for the forest. O brahmana! Savarni and Yavakrita's son[167] established limits here and the sun does not transgress them. The great-souled Poulastya Ravana, the king of the rakshasas, performed terrible austerities here and obtained immortality from the gods as a boon.[168] Because of his conduct, Vritra became Shakra's enemy here. All living beings are reduced to the five elements here. O Galava! Men who are the performers of evil deeds are cooked here. The river Vaitarani is here and is surrounded by people who cannot cross it.[169] After having faced extreme happiness, men confront extreme unhappiness here. On returning here,[170] the sun releases tasty water. Having reached the solstice, with the nakshatra Dhanishtha,[171] it again begins to release the cold. O Galava! In earlier times, I was oppressed by hunger here and began to think about satisfying it. I obtained a large elephant and a large tortoise that were fighting with each other.[172] The great rishi Shakradhanu was born here from the sun. He is the one who is known as the divine Kapila, the one who consumed Sagara's sons.[173] Here the brahmanas named the Shivas became learned in the Vedas and obtained success. After having studied all the Vedas, they attained Yama's abode. This is the city named Bhogavati, ruled over by Vasuki, the serpent Takshaka and Airavata. At the time of death, one encounters a great darkness here. It cannot be penetrated by the sun or the black-trailed fire itself. O Galava! You will yourself travel along this path of grief. Tell me if you wish to go.[174] Otherwise, hear about the west.'''

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'''Suparna said, 'This is the beloved region of King Varuna, the lord of the cows. This kingdom of the waters has always been the source of his powers. At the end of the day, the sun himself sheds his rays here. O supreme among brahmanas! That is the reason this direction is known as the last.[175] The illustrious and divine Kashyapa instated Varuna here, to rule over the kingdom of the waters and aquatic creatures. Having drunk the six rasas of Varuna here, the moon becomes young at the beginning of shuklapaksha and dispels darkness. Vayu vanquished the daityas here and subsequently fettered them. O brahmana! They sleep and sigh here, oppressed by the great nagas. The mountain named Asta[176] accepts the beloved sun here and from this, the western twilight spreads. At the end of the day, night and sleep spread from here, seeming to steal away half the lives of living beings. It was here that Shakra aborted the goddess Diti when she was asleep and the masses of Maruts were born from that.[177] Here, the root of the Himalayas extends as far as the eternal Mandara. Even if one travels for one thousand years, one does not reach the end. Having reached the shores of the golden ocean, near the golden mountain, Surabhi yields milk here. Here, in the midst of the ocean, can be seen the torso of Svarbhanu.[178] Resembling the sun, he tries to kill the sun and the moon. The loud chanting by Suvarnashira can be heard here. His body hair is golden and he is invisible and immeasurable. On the instructions of the sun, Harimedha's daughter Dhvajavati was stationed in the sky here and was asked to remain there.[179] O Galava! During the day and during the night, the wind, the fire, the water and the sky are freed from any unhappiness that their touch causes. From this point on, the sun travels in a diagonal direction[180] and all the nakshatras enter the sun's circle. Together with the sun, they circle for twenty-eight nights. Having emerged again from the sun, they have conjunctions with the moon. This is the eternal source of the rivers and the ocean is created from them. The waters of the three worlds are here and this is Varuna's abode. This is the residence of Ananta, the king of the serpents. This is the supreme residence of Vishnu, who is without a beginning and without an end. This is also the abode of the wind, a friend of the fire. This is the abode of maharshi Kashyapa, the son of Maricha. Thus, in my description of the directions, I have recounted the western path. O Galava! O supreme among brahmanas! Tell me the direction in which you wish to go.''"

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'"Suparna said, 'Since one is absolved from sins and obtains supreme welfare, learned ones therefore refer to it as the northern direction.[181] O Galava! The road to the north is golden and is said to be between the western and eastern directions. O bull among brahmanas! The north is the supreme of directions. People who are not tranquil, have not controlled their souls and are not devoted to dharma cannot dwell there. Krishna Narayana and Jishnu, supreme among men, live there in the hermitage of Badari, as does the eternal Brahma. Here, on the slopes of the Himalayas, Maheshvara always resides. The moon was instated as the king of the brahmanas here. O one who is learned about the brahman! When Ganga descended from the sky, Mahadeva held her here and gave her to the world of men. The goddess[182] performed austerities here to obtain Maheshvara. Desire, anger, mountains and Uma were created here. O Galava! The lord of riches[183] was instated here on Kailasa as the lord of the rakshasas, the yakshas and the gandharvas. This is the beautiful Chaitraratha and the hermitage of the Vaikhanasas.[184] O bull among brahmanas! Mandakini and Mandara are here. There is the forest of Sougandhika, guarded by the Nairittas. There are meadows and groves of plantains and the Santanaka mountains. The Siddhas are here, always controlled. O Galava! They can roam around as they wish in excellent vimanas and can enjoy them as they wish. The seven rishis are here and the goddess Arundhati.[185] This is said to be the place of Svati, because it rises here.[186] When a sacrifice was performed, the grandfather determined that this would be Dhruva's[187] place. The stars, and the moon and the sun, always circle around him. O supreme among brahmanas! The great-souled and truthful sages named Dhama protect the gate of Gayantika here. Their origins, shapes, or the strength of their austerities, are not known. O Galava! They have created one thousand orbits that can be enjoyed as one desires. Whenever a man penetrates beyond this, he vanishes. O bull among brahmanas! No one has ever gone beyond this, except the god Narayana and the undecaying Nara Jishnu. This is the region of Ilavila's son,[188] known as Kailasa. The ten apsaras known as Vidyutprabhas were born here. When Vishnu strode the three worlds, he placed a foot in the spot known as

Vishnupada.[189] O brahmana! This is the northern direction. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana rishi! King Marutta performed a sacrifice here, at Ushirabija, and there is a golden pond there. Jimuta is a great-souled brahmana rishi and the sacred and clear pond of the Himalayas, full of lotuses, waits upon him in person there. Having donated all those great riches to brahmanas, the maharshi left for the forest known as Jimutavana. O bull among the brahmanas! O Galava! The guardians of the directions always gather here in the morning and in the evening, loudly wishing to know who desires what. O foremost among brahmanas! This is the northern region, foremost in its qualities.[190] It is known as the north because it is foremost in all deeds. O son![191] I have now described the directions to you in detail. I have described all four in due order. Which one do you wish to go to? O foremost among brahmanas! O brahmana! I am ready to show you all the directions and the entire earth. O brahmana! Climb up on me.'"'

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'"Galava said, 'O Garutman![192] O enemy of the kings of serpents! O Suparna! O Vinata's son! O Tarkshya! Take me to the east, where Dharma's two eyes are stationed. Take me to the eastern direction, the one you have described first. You have said that the gods are present there. You have truly said that dharma and truth reside there. I wish to meet all those gods. O Aruna's younger brother! I wish to see those gods.'"

'Narada said, "Then Vinata's son told the brahmana, 'Mount on me,' and the sage Galava climbed onto Garuda.

'"Galava said, 'O destroyer of serpents! As you travel, your beauty can be seen, like the sun, the one who brings light in a thousand rays, in the forenoon. O bird! As you travel, I can see how the trees are uprooted by the wind created by your wings and leave a trail behind. O traveller in the sky! The storm created by your winds seems to drag up the earth, with its oceans, mountains, forests and groves. Because of the great force created by the wind of your wings, the water seems to be raised up into the sky, with its fish, serpents and crocodiles. I can see fish, whale and *timingilas*,[193] similar in their forms, churned up and also serpents, similar in forms to men. I have been rendered deaf because of the roar of the great ocean. I can hear nothing. I can see nothing. I do not even know why I am here. Please travel slowly. Remember that you may kill a brahmana. O father![194] O bird! The sun cannot be seen, or the directions, or the sky. I can only see darkness. I cannot discern your body. O one born from an egg! I can only see your two eyes, glistening like jewels. I cannot see your body, nor my own. At every step, I see fire rising out of the water. Swiftly extinguish it and again restore tranquillity to my eyes. O Vinata's son! You have been travelling for a long time. Stop now. O destroyer of serpents! There is no reason for me to go. O one who travels at great speed! Refrain, because I cannot bear your speed. I have promised my preceptor eight hundred horses that are as white as the rays of the moon, with a single black ear each. O one born from an egg! But I see no means of keeping that pledge. Therefore, the only path that I can see is to give up my own life. I possess no riches. I do not have wealthy well-wishers. Even with great riches, this objective is incapable of being attained.'"

'Narada said, "Galava spoke many miserable words in this way. But Vinata's son laughed and continued to travel. He replied, 'O brahmana rishi! If you wish to kill yourself, you cannot be very wise. Death cannot be artificially chosen. Death is determined by the supreme god. Why did you not tell me this earlier? There is great ease with which you will accomplish your objective. On the breast of the ocean, there is this mountain named Rishabha. O Galava! Rest here and having eaten, we will return.'"'

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'Narada said, "The brahmana and the bird descended on the summit of Rishabha. They saw the brahmana lady Shandili practising austerities there. After Suparna had greeted her and Galava had worshipped her, she welcomed them and they seated themselves on grass that had been spread out. They quickly ate the cooked food she offered, consecrated with mantras. Having lost their senses because of this, they slept on the ground. After some time, Suparna woke up and wished to leave. The traveller in the sky saw that his wings had fallen off. The bird became like a lump of flesh, with only a mouth and feet. On seeing him, Galava was distressed and asked, 'How have you come to this state? What is the cause? How long will we have to remain here? Have we thought of something that is evil and transgressed dharma? Surely this cannot have been the result of a small transgression on your part.' Suparna told the brahmana, 'O brahmana! I did entertain the thought of taking this Siddha to where Prajapati, the god Mahadeva, the eternal Vishnu, Dharma and sacrifices reside, so that she might live there also. O illustrious goddess![195] For my own good, I bow down before you. I harboured this thought in my mind and have certainly come to grief because of this. But it was only out of great respect for you that I wished to do something like this. Whether it was a good deed, or whether it was a bad deed, you should forgive me because of your greatness.' Thus spoken to, she was placated.

'"She told the king of the birds and the bull among the brahmanas, 'O Suparna! Do not be afraid. You will possess beautiful wings again. O son! I have been slighted by you and I do not tolerate slights. Evil ones who slight me will be dislodged from the superior worlds. I am devoid of any inauspicious marks. I am unblemished in every way. I have achieved supreme success. Through good conduct, one obtains dharma. Through good conduct, one obtains riches. Through good conduct, one obtains prosperity. Through good conduct, one destroys inauspicious portents. O lord of the birds! May you have a long life. Go wherever you wish. Never censure a woman, even if she deserves to be censured. You will possess strength and valour, as you did earlier.' His wings grew up again and they were stronger than before. Having taken Shandili's leave, he left in the direction from where he had come. But they did not come across horses of that description.

'"Vishvamitra was stationed along that road and saw Galava. The most eloquent of speakers told him in the presence of Vinata's son, 'O brahmana! You have promised me of your own volition. The time has come to meet that pledge. Do what you think is proper. Since I have waited this long, I will wait for a little more. O brahmana! Determine a path to accomplish success.' Galava was extremely distressed and Suparna told him, 'I have myself heard what Vishvamitra has told you. O best of brahmanas! O Galava! Let us go and consult together. Until you have given your preceptor what you have promised in entirety, you cannot even sit down.'"'

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'Narada said, "Galava was distressed. Suparna, supreme among those who have wings, told him, 'Gold is created in the ground and is purified by fire. It is because of this that it is known as *hiranya*.[196] Since it supports and sustains the prosperity of the three worlds, it is always known as dhana.[197] Shukra is the lord of riches. When the two constellations of Proshthapada[198] are in the ascendance, Shukra grants men the riches that they have earned. Those riches are guarded by Aja Ekapada,[199] Ahi Budhnya[200] and the lord of riches. O bull among brahmanas! They cannot be obtained if they are meant to be unobtainable. Without riches, you are incapable of obtaining the horses. Ask a king for riches, one who has been born in a lineage of rajarshis. Such a king will be able to satisfy us, without oppressing his subjects. There is a king who has been born in the lunar dynasty. He is my friend. Let us approach him. He possesses a great deal of riches on earth. He is a rajarshi named Yayati, the son of Nahusha, and truth is his valour. When he is asked by you and requested by me, he will himself give it. He possessed wealth that was as great as that of the lord of riches. But by giving up some of those riches, the learned one cleansed himself.' While they were conversing and thinking in this fashion, they reached King Yayati in Pratishthana.

'"After accepting the honours, the argha and the excellent food, Vinata's son was subsequently asked about the reason for their arrival. 'O son of Nahusha! This is my friend Galava. He is an ocean of austerities. O king! He has been Vishvamitra's pupil for ten thousand years. When he was given permission to leave, this illustrious brahmana wished to return the favour and asked his preceptor about what should be given as a dakshina. When he kept asking, his teacher was enraged and asked him to give, though he knew that his riches were limited. “Give me eight hundred pure-born horses that are as white as the rays of the moon and possess one black ear each. O Galava! If you so desire, give this to your preceptor as a gift.” This is what Vishvamitra, the store of austerities, told him in anger. It is for this reason that this bull among brahmanas is tormented by a great grief. He is incapable of returning the favour and has sought refuge with you. O tiger among men! When he has accepted alms from you, he will be free from his miseries. He will be freed from the debt to his preceptor and will practise great austerities. He will give you a share of those austerities. You are full of a rajarshi’s austerities, but you will be filled even more. O lord of men! O lord of the earth! Those who give away a horse obtain as many worlds as there are body hairs on a horse. He is the right vessel to receive and you are the right person to give. This will be like milk sprinkled into a conch shell.’””

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‘Narada said, “On hearing Suparna’s supreme words, the king thought repeatedly and at last made up his mind. The lord who had performed one thousand sacrifices was generous and was the lord of gifts. Yayati, the king of all the Vatsas and the Kashis, spoke these words. On seeing his beloved friend Tarkshya and Galava, bull among the brahmanas, an example of austerities, and considering that this act of giving alms was praiseworthy and would bring renown to himself, he thought, ‘These two have come to me, ignoring all the other kings of the solar dynasty.’ He said, ‘My birth has become successful today. O Tarkshya! O unblemished one! My country has been saved by you today. O friend! But I wish to tell you that I am no longer as wealthy as you knew me to be earlier. I don’t possess that kind of riches. O friend! My wealth is lesser now. O traveller in the sky! But at the same time, I cannot render your arrival here unsuccessful. Nor do I dare to frustrate the desires of this brahmana rishi. I will give him something that will make his endeavour successful. If one arrives and is frustrated in one’s wishes, one burns down the lineage. O son of Vinata! It is said that there is nothing more evil in the world of the living than saying, “I have nothing.” This destroys and frustrates the hopes of a man who has arrived for something. A man who is thus unsuccessful causes damage to the sons and grandsons.[201] This daughter of mine will establish four lineages. She is as beautiful as a daughter of the gods and follows every kind of dharma. O Galava! Because of her beauty, this maiden has always been solicited by gods, men and asuras. Therefore, accept my daughter. Kings will certainly give their kingdoms for her as a bride price, not to speak of eight hundred horses with black ears. Accept Madhavi, this daughter of mine. O lord! The only boon that I ask for is that I should have grandsons through my daughter.’ Having accepted the maiden, Galava left with the bird. Saying, ‘Let us look again,’ he left with the maiden. The bird said, ‘The path for obtaining the horses has now been obtained.’ Having said this, he took Galava’s leave and returned to his own abode.

‘“When the king of the birds had left, Galava, travelled with the maiden, thinking about kings who had the capacity to pay the bride price. He thought of Haryashva Ikshvaku of Ayodhya, supreme among kings, immensely valorous and with the four constituent parts[202] in his army. He loved brahmanas and was the beloved of the citizens. He possessed treasuries, granaries and soldiers. He desired peace for his subjects and performed supreme austerities. The brahmana Galava went to Haryashva and said, ‘O Indra among kings! This maiden of mine will give birth and extend lineages. O Haryashva! Accept her as your wife and give me a bride price. I will tell you what the bride price is. Hearing this, arrive at a decision.’”’

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‘Narada said, “King Haryashva thought about many things. He released warm sighs at the lack of offspring. Then the supreme among kings said, ‘She is high in the six high points.[203] She is slim in the seven places that should be slim.[204] She is deep in the three places[205] that should be deep. She is red in the five places that should be red.[206] She is fit to be seen in many worlds of gods and asuras and by many gandharvas. She has many auspicious marks. She is capable of giving birth to many. I am capable of giving birth to a son who will be an emperor.[207] O foremost among brahmanas! Tell me the bride price, remembering the state of my riches.' Galava replied, 'Give me eight hundred horses that have one black ear each. They must be as white as the moon. They must be built well and they must have been born in this country. Then this beautiful and long-eyed one will be the mother of your children, just as kindling is the womb of fires.' On hearing these words, King Haryashva, who was overcome with desire, was miserable. The rajarshi told Galava, supreme among rishis, 'I only have two hundred horses of the sort that you desire, though there are hundreds of other sacrificial horses that are roaming around. O Galava! I will give birth to a single son through her. Grant me this desire as a boon.' When the maiden heard these words, she told Galava, 'One who knows about the brahman once granted me a boon. After each time that I give birth, I will become a virgin again. Therefore, give me to the king and accept those supreme horses. By going to four kings in succession, you will obtain all the eight hundred horses. I will also have four sons. O supreme among brahmanas! Act in this way for the sake of your preceptor. I think that this is wise. O brahmana! What do you think?' Having been thus addressed by the maiden, the sage Galava told King Haryashva, 'O Haryashva! O best of men! Accept this maiden. Give birth to a single son through her, for one quarter of the bride price.' He[208] applauded Galava and accepted the maiden. At the right time and the right place, he obtained the son that he had wished for. He was named Vasumana. He was greater in riches than the Vasus. That lord of men resembled one of the Vasus and he became a great granter of riches.

'"After some time, the intelligent Galava presented himself again. He met Haryashva, who was delighted in his mind, and told him, 'O king! A son has been born to you and he is like the young sun in his radiance. O lord of men! It is now time for me to go to another king in search of alms.' Haryashva was truthful in his words and truthful in his manliness. Since those horses were extremely rare, he returned Madhavi. Madhavi gave up the radiant prosperity of the king. Of her own will, she became a virgin again and followed Galava. The brahmana said, ‘Let the horses remain with you for the moment.’ With the maiden, he went to Divodasa, the lord of his subjects.”’

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‘“Galava said, ‘There is an immensely valorous lord of men named Divodasa. That lord is the lord of Kashi. He is a descendant of Bhimasena.[209] O fortunate one! Let us go there quickly. Do not sorrow. That lord of men is devoted to dharma. He is self-controlled and is devoted to the truth.’”

‘Narada said, “When the sage went to the king, he was greeted with honours. Galava then requested him to have offspring.”

‘“Divodasa replied, ‘O brahmana! I have heard about all this already. There is no need to say more. O supreme among brahmanas! As soon as I heard about this, I wished that this should happen. You have passed over many other kings and have come to me and this shows me great honour. There is no doubt that this will come to pass. O Galava! But so far as horses are concerned, I have the same number. Therefore, I will also give birth to one king through her.’”

‘Narada said, “The foremost among brahmanas agreed to this. He gave the maiden to the lord of the earth and the king accepted her in accordance with the prescribed rites. The rajarshi pleasured with her like Ravi[210] with Prabhavati, Vahni[211] with Svaha, Vasava with Shachi, Chandra with Rohini, Yama with Dhumorna, Varuna with Gouri, Dhaneshvara[212] with Riddhi, Narayana with Lakshmi, the ocean with Jahnavi,[213] Rudra with Rudrani, the grandfather[214] with the altar, Vasishtha’s son with Adrishyanti, Vasishtha with Akshamala, Chyavana with Sukanya, Pulastya with Sandhya, Agastya with Vaidharbhi, Satyavan with Savitri, Bhrigu with Puloma, Kashyapa with Aditi, Richika’s son[215] with Renuka, Koushika with Haimavati, Brihaspati with Tara, Shukra with Shataparva, Bhumipati with Bhumi, Pururava with Urvashi, Richika with Satyavati and Manu with Sarasvati. After King Divodasa pleasured with her, Madhavi gave birth to a single son named

Pratardana. At the right time, the illustrious Galava came to Divodasa and told him, ‘O lord of the earth! Return the maiden to me. But keep the horses here, while I go elsewhere for a bride price.’ At the right time, Divodasa, lord of the earth who was established in truth and had dharma in his soul, returned the maiden to Galava.”’

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‘Narada said, “The famous Madhavi gave up her riches. Truthful to her words, she became a virgin and followed the brahmana Galava. Galava’s thoughts were fixed on accomplishing his own objective. He went to the city of Bhoja to see King Oushinara. He went and told the king, for whom valour was truth, ‘This maiden will bear you two sons who will be kings. Through this, you will attain your objectives, here and in the hereafter. O king! You will have two sons who will be like the sun and the moon. O one learned in all manner of dharma! But as a bride price, you will have to give me horses that have the complexion of the moon and they must each possess one black ear. You must give me four hundred of these. I am seeking these horses for my preceptor’s sake and not for my own. O great king! If you are capable, do it without thinking about it. O rajarshi! You are without offspring. O king! Give birth to two sons. Through these sons as boats, you will save your ancestors and yourself. O rajarshi! One who bears the fruit of sons is not cast out from heaven. He does not go to the terrible hell, where those without sons go.’ Having heard this and much else spoken by Galava, King Ushinara[216] gave him this reply, ‘O Galava! I have heard the words that you have spoken. O brahmana! My heart is inclined towards what you have said, but destiny is powerful. O supreme among brahmanas! I only possess two hundred such horses, though there are many thousands of others that are roaming around. O Galava! I will only have one son through her. O brahmana! I will also follow the path that the others[217] have. O supreme among brahmanas! I will also pay you the same price. My riches are for the enjoyment of the inhabitants of the cities and the country, not for myself.[218] O one with dharma in the soul! If a king uses the riches of others to satisfy his own desires, he obtains neither dharma nor fame. Therefore, I will accept the maiden. Give her to me. This maiden is like one born from the gods and a single son will be born to me.’ Galava, foremost among brahmanas, then worshipped King Ushinara, who had spoken many beneficial words. After giving her to Ushinara, Galava left for the forest. Like a meritorious one enjoys his prosperity, he[219] pleasured with her in mountainous caverns, waterfalls in rivers, diverse gardens, forests, groves, beautiful houses, the roofs of palaces, pavilions, vimanas and secluded rooms. In course of time, a son was born and he was as radiant as the young sun. That supreme among kings was famous by the name of Shibi. The brahmana Galava presented himself and accepted the maiden back. O king! He then left to visit Vinata’s son.”’

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‘Narada said, “Vinata’s son laughed and told Galava, ‘O brahmana! It is through good fortune that I see that you have been successful.’ On hearing these words spoken by Vinata’s son, Galava told him that one-fourth of his task still remained to be accomplished. Suparna, supreme among birds, told Galava, ‘You should not make any more efforts on this task. You will not be successful. O Galava! In earlier times, in Kanyakubja, Richika tried to obtain Gadhi’s daughter, Satyavati, as his wife, and was told, “O illustrious one! Give me one thousand horses that have the complexion of the moon and possess one black ear each.”[220] Richika agreed and went to Varuna’s abode. He obtained the horses at Ashvatirtha[221] and gave them to the king.[222] The king gave them away to brahmanas at a pundarika sacrifice. Many kings bought these from them, two hundred each. O supreme among brahmanas! While they were being led across the Vitasta, the remaining four hundred were killed.[223] O Galava! That being the case, no more can be obtained. O one with dharma in your soul! O bull among the brahmanas! Instead of the two hundred, give Vishvamitra this maiden, together with the six hundred you possess. O bull among brahmanas! You will then transcend your confusion and be successful.’ Galava agreed to this. Taking the maiden with him, and together with Suparna, he went to Vishvamitra.

'"Galava said, 'Accept six hundred horses of the kind that you desired. Accept this maiden instead of the two hundred. She has born three sons, devoted to dharma, to rajarshis. O supreme among men! You will give birth to a fourth. Then you will obtain all eight hundred horses in their entirety. After having freed myself of my debt, I will happily perform austerities.'"

'Narada said, "Vishvamitra saw Galava and the bird and the maiden with the beautiful thighs and said, 'O Galava! Why did you not give her to me earlier? Then all the four sons would have been mine and would have extended the lineage. I will accept this maiden to have one son through her. Let all the horses remain in my hermitage.' The immensely radiant Vishvamitra then pleasured with her. Madhavi gave birth to a son named Ashtaka. As soon as the son was born, the immensely radiant Vishvamitra instructed him about dharma and artha and gave him the horses. Ashtaka went to the city that was as radiant as a city of the moon. Having returned the maiden to his disciple,[224] Koushika[225] left for the forest. Galava, together with Suparna, was delighted in his mind that the dakshina had been paid and told the maiden, 'You have given birth to one son who will be the lord of generosity, another who will be a warrior, yet another who will be devoted to truth and dharma, and another who will perform sacrifices. O one with the beautiful thighs! Therefore, depart. You have saved your father through sons. O one with the beautiful waist! You have saved four kings[226] and me.' Galava also gave permission to Suparna, the destroyer of serpents, to leave. Returning the maiden to her father, he left for the forest."'

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'Narada said, "The king[227] wished to hold a svayamvara for her. He went to a hermitage that was at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. Madhavi ascended a chariot that was adorned with garlands and flowers. Puru and Yadu[228] followed their sister to the hermitage. Serpents, yakshas, men, winged creatures, animals, birds and dwellers of mountains, trees and groves gathered there. There was also an assemblage of lords of men from many countries. The forest was full of rishis who were like Brahma. The beautiful one was asked to choose a groom. But when the suitors were announced in due order, she chose the forest as her groom. The maiden descended from the chariot and bowed down before her relatives. Yayati's daughter went to the sacred forest and performed austerities. She observed diverse fasts, rites and restraint. She made herself light[229] and lived like a doe. She subsisted on excellent grass that was pungent and sweet, with soft and green blades that were like lapis lazuli. She drank excellent water that was holy, pure, cool and clean, flowing from streams. She roamed in forests where the lion, the king of deer, was absent. They were deserted and dense, but were free of conflagrations. Together with the deer, the forest-dwelling one was like a doe. She practised brahmacharya and earned a great deal of dharma.

'"Yayati followed the conduct of kings who had preceded him. He lived for many thousand years and then succumbed to the dharma of time. Puru and Yadu, supreme among men, extended two lineages. Because of this, Nahusha's son[230] obtained status in this world and the next. Having arrived in heaven, King Yayati attained greatness. Like a maharshi, the illustrious king obtained the best of fruits in heaven. After many thousand years had passed in many excellent ways among the great rajarshis and maharshis who were there, Yayati, confounded by ignorance, insulted all men, gods and the masses of rishis.[231] The god Shakra, the destroyer of Bala, detected his folly and all the rajarshis censured him. They glanced at Nahusha's son and reflected, 'Who is he, the son of which king? How did he arrive in heaven? What deeds brought him success? What austerities has he performed? How is he known in heaven? By whom is he known?' The kings who resided in heaven reflected in this way. They glanced at each other and asked such questions about King Yayati. The hundreds of guardians of vimanas, the protectors of the gates of heaven and the keepers of the seats were asked, and replied that they did not know him. All their knowledge was clouded and no one recognized the king. In an instant, the king lost all his energy."'

‘Narada said, “He was divested from his station and lost his seat. His mind trembled and he was tormented by the flames of grief. His garlands withered. His knowledge vanished. His crown and armlets fell down. He was dizzy and all his limbs turned numb. His ornaments and garments were dishevelled. He became invisible. Though he could see, he could not see any of the others. He was void and his mind was empty. He was about to fall down on the surface of the earth. ‘What inauspicious thoughts have I harboured in my mind, causing offence to dharma? What has led me to losing my station?’ The king thought in this way. But the kings, Siddhas and apsaras who were there, could no longer see Yayati. He was without a support and was dislodged. There was a man who was in charge of throwing out those whose merits had been exhausted. O king! On the instructions of the king of the gods, he came and told Yayati, ‘You are intoxicated because of your insolence. There is no one you have not disrespected. Your pride has dislodged you from heaven. O son of a king! You do not deserve it. No one knows you here. Go and fall down.’ Thus did he speak. ‘Let me fall down among virtuous ones.’ About to fall down, Nahusha’s son spoke these words thrice. That foremost among travellers thought about the path that he should take.

‘“At that moment, he saw four bulls among kings in Naimisha and fell down in the midst of the kings. Pratardana, Vasumana, Ushinara’s son Shibi and Ashtaka were performing a *vajapeya* sacrifice to satisfy the lord of the gods. The smoke from that sacrifice arose up to the gates of heaven. As he fell down towards the ground, King Yayati smelt this, which was like a river of smoke, like the Ganga, joining earth and heaven. The king floated down towards the ground. He descended among those four prosperous ones, foremost among those who sacrifice. The king fell down among the four who were like the guardians of the world. They were lions among kings and like the great fire into which oblations are offered. They were his relatives.[232] Rajarshi Yayati descended in that sacred sanctuary. He was radiant in his beauty and all the kings asked him, ‘Who are you? Whom are you related to? Which country and city are you from? Are you a yaksha, god, gandharva or rakshasa? You do not have the form of man. What objective do you desire?'

'"Yayati replied, 'I am rajarshi Yayati. I have fallen from heaven because my merits have been exhausted. Desiring that I should fall among righteous ones, I have descended amidst you.'

'"The kings replied, 'O bull among men! May your wishes come true. Accept all our fruits of the sacrifice and the dharma.'

'"Yayati said, 'I am not a brahmana who can accept riches. I am a kshatriya. My mind is not inclined to destroying the merits of others.'"

'Narada said, "At that time, the kings saw Madhavi, who was leading the life of a doe. When she arrived, they greeted her and asked, 'What is the reason behind your coming here? What instructions of yours must we carry out? O one rich in austerities! We will follow your commands. All of us are your sons.' On hearing their words, Madhavi was extremely delighted. She went to her father Yayati and honoured him. On seeing that her sons had their heads bowed down, the ascetic lady said, 'O Indra among kings! These are your daughter's sons. They are my sons. They are not strangers. They will save you. Those are the ancient ordinances. O king! I am your daughter Madhavi, who is living the life of a deer. I have also earned dharma. Accept half of that. O king! All men have a share in the fruits of offspring. O lord of the earth! That is the reason they wish to have daughter's sons like you.' Then all the kings bowed down their heads before their mother and honoured and saluted their maternal grandfather. They filled the earth with their soft, unmatched and gentle words addressed towards him. The kings saved their maternal grandfather, who had been dislodged from heaven. At that time, Galava arrived there and told the king, 'Ascend to heaven with one-eighth of my austerities.'"'

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'Narada said, "As soon as he was recognized by those virtuous ones, Yayati, bull among men, regained his divine status and was freed from his fever. He had celestial garlands and garments. He was adorned in divine ornaments. He had celestial fragrances and qualities. He no longer touched the ground with his feet.[233] Vasumana was famous in the world as the lord of giving. In a loud voice, he first spoke these words to the king. ‘I have obtained merit in this world through my commendable treatment of all the varnas. I will give that to you. The fruits of being generous, the fruits of being forgiving and possessing good conduct and the fruits of maintaining fires—I bestow all that on you.’ Pratardana, bull among kshatriyas, then spoke these words. ‘I have always been devoted to war and have been addicted to dharma in this way. I have obtained fruits in this world and earned fame, through the dharma of kshatriyas. I bestow these consequences of being brave on you.’ The intelligent Shibi Oushinara spoke these sweet words. ‘I have never uttered a falsehood to children, women, or even in jest—or in battles, calamities and emergencies. Go to heaven by virtue of that truth. O king! I can give up my life, my kingdom, my deeds and my happiness, but I cannot forsake truth. Go to heaven by virtue of that truth. I have pleased dharma with truth, the fire with truth and Shakra with truth. Go to heaven by virtue of that truth.’ Rajarshi Ashtaka, the son of Koushika and Madhavi, who knew about dharma, also spoke to the one who had performed many hundreds of sacrifices.[234] ‘O lord! I have performed hundreds of *pundarika* and *gosava* sacrifices and vajapeya sacrifices too. Obtain the fruits of those. I have no jewels, riches or other possessions that have not been used in these sacrifices. Go to heaven by virtue of that truth.’ As his grandsons spoke to that lord of men one by one, the king gradually left the earth and ascended towards heaven. In this way, through their own dharma, sacrifices, generosity and deeds, those four kings and grandsons who had been born in royal lineages and extended their lineages, saved their maternal grandfather Yayati, who had been dislodged from heaven, through their good deeds. They rescued the immensely wise one and made him ascend to heaven.

‘“The kings said, ‘O king! We are your daughter’s sons and we possess the dharma and qualities of kings. We have the qualities of all dharma. O king! O lord of the earth! Ascend to heaven.’”’

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‘Narada said, “Having been thus made to ascend to heaven by those kings who were extremely generous in the gifts they gave, Yayati took leave of his grandsons and was established in heaven. There was a shower of fragrant flowers. There was an auspicious breeze with a holy scent. Amidst this, he attained that eternal station because of the fruits earned by his grandsons. This was enhanced with his own deeds and he was resplendent with supreme prosperity. He was happily received in heaven by masses of gandharvas and apsaras, with singing and dancing. There was the sound of drums being beaten. He was applauded by many gods, rajarshis and bards. He was offered excellent hospitality and was honoured by the gods. He obtained the fruits of heaven. The grandfather[235] spoke to the happy and serene king, as if satisfying him with these words. ‘Through your deeds in the world, you have entirely accumulated the four parts of dharma. This eternal world is yours. You will again have eternal fame in heaven because of your good deeds. O rajarshi! Darkness had clouded the intelligence of all those who dwell in heaven. They did not recognize you because of this. Because you were not known, you fell down. You have returned here again after your grandsons affectionately saved you. You have regained the station you had won through your deeds. This is immoveable, eternal, sacred, supreme, permanent and without decay.’ Yayati replied, ‘O illustrious one! I have a doubt. Please dispel it. O grandfather of the world! It is not proper that I should ask anyone else. I protected and extended my subjects for thousands of years. I performed many sacrifices and gave a flood of gifts and obtained great fruits. How could they be exhausted in such a short span of time? Why did I fall down? O illustrious one! You know that I had obtained eternal worlds.’ The grandfather replied, ‘You have protected and extended your subjects for thousands of years. You have perfomed many sacrifices and given a flood of gifts. You obtained fruits. But all of those were destroyed through a single taint and you were thrown down. O Indra among kings! The residents of heaven censured you because of your insolence. O rajarshi! If there is vanity, strength, violence, wickedness and deceit, this world cannot become eternal. O king! You should not disrespect those who are superior, inferior, or in the middle. No one can be an equal to those who are consumed by vanity. There is no doubt that men who recount the story of your fall and subsequent ascendance will be freed from all calamities.' O lord of the earth! In ancient times, Yayati was diminished by this taint of insolence and Galava because of his excessive obstinacy. Those who desire their own welfare should listen to the advice of well-wishers who wish them well. One should not be stubborn. Obstinacy gives rise to destruction. O Gandhari's son! Therefore, give up insolence and anger. O brave one! Make peace with the Pandavas. O king! Abandon your wrath. O king! Whatever is given, whatever is done, whatever austerities are observed, whatever sacrifices are performed—these are never destroyed. They do not diminish. No one other than the doer enjoys these. This great and supreme account is revered by those who are extremely learned and are without hatred. In this world, those who examine it and study it in great detail, learn about the three objectives[236] and conquer the earth."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "O illustrious one! O Narada! It is exactly as you have stated it to be. I also wish for the same thing. But I am not the master."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, he addressed Krishna. "O Keshava! You have told me what is good for heaven and for this world, what is in accordance with dharma and what is just. O son![237] But I cannot act on my own account. Nor can I do what pleases me. O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Anga[238] and Duryodhana are wicked and act against my instructions. O Purushottama! Endeavour to persuade. O Janardana! You will accomplish an extremely great task as a well-wisher." Varshneya then spoke to the intolerant Duryodhana.

'Knowing everything about the nature of dharma and artha, he spoke these sweet words. "O Duryodhana! O supreme among the Kurus! Listen to these words of mine. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is especially for your welfare and that of your well-wishers. You have been born in an immensely wise lineage! It is proper that you should act in the right way. You have learning and good conduct. You are endowed with all the good qualities. Those who are born in inferior lineages are evil in their soul, violent and without shame. O son![239] They are the likes of those who act in the ways you are thinking of. In this world, the inclinations of virtuous ones are in conformity with dharma and artha. O bull among the Bharatas! Those who are wicked are seen to act in a contrary way. This adharma and obstinacy shown by you is terrible and will bring about the great destruction of lives. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of what you have done, there have been many instances of ill fame. Abandon that which is against artha. O scorcher of enemies! You should do what is best for your welfare and for that of your brothers, servants and friends. Free yourself from a deed that will be against dharma and against fame. O tiger among men! O bull of the Bharata lineage! Make peace with the Pandavas. They are wise and brave. They have great enterprise and are self-controlled and extremely learned. O lord of the earth! O scorcher of enemies! That will be beneficial and pleasant for the intelligent Dhritarashtra, the grandfather,[240] Drona, the immensely intelligent Vidura, Kripa, Somadatta, the intelligent Bahlika, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, Sanjaya, your relatives and your many friends. O son![241] The entire earth finds refuge in peace. You have modesty. You have been born in a noble lineage. You are learned. You are not violent. O son![242] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Abide by the instructions of your father and mother. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is said that everything that a father instruct is supreme. O son![243] Peace with the Pandavas appeals to your father. O foremost among the Kurus! O son![244] This should appeal to you and your advisers also. He who hears the instructions of his well-wishers, but does not act in accordance with it, is eventually burnt, like one who has eaten kimpaka.[245] Because of delusion, if one does not pay heed to beneficial words and procrastinates, one fails to accomplish one's objective and has to lament subsequently. He who listens to beneficial words and acts accordingly, giving up his own views, obtains happiness in this world. He who acts contrary to words that ensure artha and kama and listens to perverse advice, comes under the control of his enemies. If one transgresses the views of the virtuous and follows the views of the wicked, one's well-wishers will soon lament one's destruction. He who abandons his foremost advisers and serves inferior ones, will face a terrible calamity, with no prospect of overcoming it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He who serves those of false conduct and does not listen to righteous well-wishers, preferring others to those who are his own, is cursed by the earth. You are against those brave ones. O bull among the Bharatas! You seek help from others who are wicked, incapable and foolish. Other than you, is there a man on this earth who will abandon maharatha relatives who are equal to Shakra and seek refuge with others? Ever since birth, you have always maltreated the Kounteyas. But no anger has been generated in the Pandavas, who have dharma in their souls. O son![246] O mighty-armed one! Ever since birth, the Pandavas have been falsely treated, but they have treated you well. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You should act in the same way towards them. Do not be overcome with anger against your foremost relatives. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The undertakings of wise ones follow the three objectives.[247] If all three objectives cannot be pursued at the same time, men follow dharma and artha. If those two cannot be reconciled, a wise one follows dharma. A medium person opts for artha. A child chooses kama. If one is driven by the senses and gives up dharma because of greed, and strives for kama and artha through inappropriate means, one is ruined. One who pursues kama and artha must still resort to dharma. Kama and artha can never be separated from dharma. O lord of the earth! It is said that dharma alone is the route towards all three objectives. If one strives for them in this way, one prospers, like a fire in a dry tree. O son![248] O bull among the Bharata lineage! You desire a great and radiant lordship that is accepted by all the kings. But you are not resorting to the right means. One should not maltreat those who treat one's own self in the right way. That is like cutting down a tree with an axe. One should not strike down the views of someone one is not trying to vanquish. If a wise person's views are not struck down, they ensure welfare. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! One should never ignore anyone in the three worlds, if that person is willing to give up his life, even if that person is an ordinary one—not to speak of the Pandava bulls. If a man comes under the influence of intolerance, there is nothing that he knows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the excessive growth will be cut down. You will witness the proof. O son![249] An alliance with the Pandavas is superior to one with the wicked. If you live affectionately with them, you will obtain every object of desire. O supreme among kings! You will enjoy the land conquered by the Pandavas. But leaving the Pandavas behind you, you seek salvation with others—Duhshasana, Durvisaha, Karna and Soubala. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Depending on them, you desire prosperity. They are no match for you in knowledge of dharma and artha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are no match for the Pandavas in valour. Nor are you, and all the kings combined, enough to look upon the face of an enraged Bhimasena in battle. O son![250] This entire army of kings assembled by you, with Bhishma, Drona, Karna, Kripa, Somadatta's son Bhurishrava, Ashvatthama, Jayadratha—all of them are incapable of withstanding Dhananjaya. An angry Arjuna is incapable of being vanquished by the gods, the asuras, men and the gandharvas. Do not get fixated on battle. In this entire army of kings, is there a single man who can face Arjuna in the field of battle and return safely to his home? O bull among the Bharata lineage! What is the point of this destruction of men? Show me one man whose victory will amount to a victory for you. In Khandavaprastha, he defeated the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the asuras and the serpents. Which man can fight with him? In the same way, a great wonder is heard about Virata's city. A single one was enough to counter many. That was sufficient proof. Nevertheless, you wish to defeat in battle the invincible, unassailable and undecaying Jishnu, the brave Arjuna. With me as a second, who can challenge Partha when faced with him in battle? Not even Purandara himself! He can pluck out the earth with his arms. In his rage, he can burn up beings. He can topple the gods from heaven. Who will defeat Arjuna in battle? Look at your sons, your brothers, your kin and your relatives. O supreme among Bharatas! Let them not be destroyed because of what you do. Let the Kouravas survive. Let this lineage not be destroyed. O lord of men! May you not be called a destroyer of the lineage. May your deeds not be destroyed. These maharathas will establish you as the heir apparent and your father Dhritarashtra, lord of men, as the great king. O son![251] Do not ignore the prosperity that is about to rise. If you give up half to the Parthas, you will obtain great prosperity. Listen to the words of your well-wishers and make peace with the Pandavas. Living in affection and friendship with them, you will always be fortunate."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! After listening to Keshava's words, Shantanu's son Bhishma addressed the intolerant Duryodhana. "The words spoken by Krishna are those of a well-wisher who desires peace. O son![252] Listen to them and do not act out of anger. O son![253] By not listening to the words of the great-souled Keshava, you will not obtain well-being, happiness, or good fortune. O son![254] The mighty-armed Keshava has told you how to act in accordance with dharma and artha. O king! Follow that path and do not bring destruction for your subjects. The prosperity of the Bharatas blazes among all the kings. While Dhritarashtra is alive, do not destroy it because of your evil-mindedness. By acting against Keshava's truthful and beneficial words, you yourself, your advisers, your sons, your animals, your relatives, your father and the intelligent Vidura will confront death because of your own perversity. O best of the Bharatas! Do not travel along a deviant path followed by the evil-minded. Do not be the destroyer of your lineage! Do not be a wicked man. Do not cause grief to your aged father and mother." Then Drona spoke these words to Duryodhana, who was under the influence of intolerance and was sighing repeatedly. "O son![255] Keshava spoke words to you that are in conformity with dharma and artha. So did Shantanu's son, Bhishma. O lord of men! Pay heed to them. These two are wise, intelligent, self-controlled, extremely learned and wish to ensure your welfare. O scorcher of enemies! Accept the words that they have spoken for your benefit. O immensely wise one! Act in accordance with what Krishna and Bhishma have spoken. Do not listen to the words of those who are inferior in intelligence. Those who are encouraging you have never acted in your interest. When there is a war, they will thrust the enmity of others around your neck. Do not destroy the Kurus and all your sons and brothers. Know that when Vasudeva and Arjuna are together, that power is invincible. This opinion of your well-wishers, Krishna and Bhishma, is correct. O son![256] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you do not accept it, you will rue it later. Arjuna is greater than what Jamadagni's son[257] has said. Krishna, Devaki's son, is one whom even the gods find difficult to withstand. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But what is the point of telling you about your happiness and welfare? You have been told all this. Do as you please. O supreme among the Bharatas! I am not interested in telling you anything more." After these words had been spoken, Kshatta Vidura looked at Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra's intolerant son, and said, "O Duryodhana! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I do not sorrow for you. I grieve for these two old ones, Gandhari and your father. As long as an evil-hearted one like you is their protector, they will wander around, unprotected. They have lost their friends. They have lost their advisers. They are like birds that have lost their wings. Grieving, they will roam the entire earth as beggars, having given birth to such a wicked and evil man, the destroyer of his lineage." King Dhritarashtra then addressed Duryodhana, who was seated with his brothers, surrounded by all the kings. "O Duryodhana! Listen to what the great-souled Shouri has said. Accept his auspicious and eternal words. They will get us what we aspire for and protect what we already possess.[258] Through the help of Krishna, whose deeds are unsullied, together with all the kings, we will obtain everything that we desire. O son! With Keshava's support, go to Yudhishthira. Act so that complete safety and good health of the Bharatas can be ensured. O son! With Vasudeva as the tirtha, go to the meeting. O Duryodhana! I think that the time has arrived now. Do not neglect the chance. If you abandon the peace that is being asked from you, you will rebuff Keshava and your defeat will be ensured. He has spoken thus for your own welfare."'

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Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Dhritarashtra’s words, Bhishma and Drona again spoke in his support to Duryodhana, who was not acting according to the instructions. “As long as the two Krishnas[259] are not armoured, as long as the Gandiva is resting, as long as Dhoumya[260] does not offer the foremost forces of the enemy into the fire of war, as long as the modest and great archer Yudhishthira does not angrily glance at your soldiers, till then, we may find peace. As long as we do not see the mighty archer Partha Bhimasena take his position among the divisions of his own army, till then, we may find peace. As long as he does not roam around and increase the delight of the soldiers, as long as he does not shatter the heads of those who are fighting on elephants in the war, as long as the destroyer of enemies does not use his club, as if against fruits on trees that have been ripened with time, till then, we may find peace. As long as Nakula, Sahadeva, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, Shikhandi and Shishupala’s son, all skilled in the use of weapons, do not armour themselves and swiftly penetrate, like crocodiles in the great ocean, till then, we may find peace. As long as arrows tufted with the feathers of vultures do not descend on the delicate bodies of kings, till then, we may find peace. As long as those swift and great archers do not use great iron arrows that can travel far to strike the breasts of warriors who have been anointed with sandalwood and aloe and are adorned with gold plates and necklaces, till then, we may find peace. Let Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, elephant among kings, hold you by the hands, while you bow your head down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let that extremely generous one[261] place his right hand, marked with the signs of a pennant, goad, elephant and flag, on your shoulder as a mark of peace. When you are seated, let him place his hands, adorned with gems and with jewels on the fingers, on your back. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let the mighty-armed Vrikodara, whose shoulders are like a shala tree, embrace you and speak to you in conciliatory tones, for the sake of peace. O king! Honoured by the three, Arjuna and the twins, you will affectionately inhale the fragrance of their heads. On seeing you united with the brave Pandava brothers, let these lords of men release tears of joy. In a spirit of fraternity, let this be proclaimed in all the capital cities of the kings of the earth. Enjoy this and be bereft of fever."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these unpalatable words in that assembly of the Kurus, Duryodhana spoke these words to the famous and mighty-armed Vasudeva. "O Keshava! Before speaking, you should have reflected on the matter. Why have you spoken as if you are specially censuring me? O Madhusudana! You have said that you are devoted to the Parthas. But have you examined the strengths and the weaknesses of the two causes? You, Kshatta, the king,[262] the preceptor and the grandfather censure only me, and not any other king. But I do not perceive that I have done anything wrong. But all of you, including the kings, blame only me. O destroyer of enemies! O Keshava! On thinking about this, I do not see the slightest bit of wrong that I have committed. O Madhusudana! The Pandavas happily agreed to the gambling match. They lost their kingdom to Shakuni. How was this my crime? O Madhusudana! I ordered that whatever riches the Pandavas lost then, should instantly be returned to them. O foremost among victorious ones! It was not my crime that the invincible Parthas were defeated in another gambling match and exiled to the forest. On the basis of what disrespect do they seek the enmity now? O Krishna! The Pandavas are incapable, but are happily against us. What have we done to them? Because of what wrong do the Pandavas, together with the Srinjayas, wish to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra? Because of terrible deeds and words, we will not tremble and bow down out of fear, not even to Shatakratu. O Krishna! O slayer of enemies! I do not see anyone, who follows the dharma of kshatriyas, who can aspire to vanquish us in battle. O Madhusudana! Bhishma, Kripa, Drona and their armies are incapable of being defeated in battle by the gods, not to speak of the Pandavas. O Madhava! If observing our own dharma, we face death in the field of battle from a weapon, because our time has come, that will ensure heaven. O Janardana! The supreme dharma for kshatriyas is that we should lie down on a bed of arrows in the field of battle. O Madhava! If, on the field of battle, we lie down on beds meant for warriors, without bowing down before the enemy, we will not repent it. Is there anyone born in a noble lineage, following the dharma of kshatriyas, who will bow down out of fear, wishing to protect himself? 'Manliness lies in raising oneself and not losing enterprise. Even if all the joints are broken, one should not bow down before anyone.' These are the words of Matanga,[263] cherished by those who desire their own welfare. A man like me only bows down before dharma and brahmanas. Without paying attention to anyone else, that should be one's conduct, as long as one lives. This is the dharma of kshatriyas and that has always been my view. O Keshava! As long as I am alive, they will not obtain the share of the kingdom that my father once gave them. O Janardana! O Madhava! As long as Dhritarashtra is the king, we will lower our weapons and sustain ourselves from him. This kingdom should not have been given away. O Janardana! But when I was a child and not independent, it was given away, out of ignorance or fear. O descendant of the Vrishni lineage! But it cannot be obtained again by the Pandavas. O mighty-armed one! O Keshava! As long as I am alive, I will not give to the Pandavas even that much of land that can be held on the point of a sharp needle."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Dasharha's eyes showed his anger. In the assembly of Kurus, he laughed and spoke these words to Duryodhana. "You wish to obtain the bed of a warrior and your desire will be fulfilled. Station yourself with your advisers and there will be a great destruction. O foolish one! You think that there is nothing reprehensible in your conduct towards the Pandavas. Let all the lords of men listen. You were tormented with the prosperity of the great-souled Pandavas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You plotted a gambling match with Soubala. O son![264] Your relatives are superior and are honoured by virtuous ones. They are not crooked in their conduct. How could they engage in a deceitful act with that deceitful one?[265] O immensely wise one! Gambling with the dice destroys the joy of the virtuous. Among those who are not virtuous, it creates dissension and difficulties. It was you who started this terrible and wicked gambling match with your wicked relatives, ignoring the norms of good conduct. Who else but you could have treated the wife of a relative in that way, bringing Droupadi to the assembly hall and speaking to her in that way? She has been born in noble lineage. She possesses good conduct. She is dearer to them than their lives. You maltreated that queen of the sons of Pandu. All the Kurus know how Duhshasana addressed the Kounteyas, the scorchers of enemies, in the assembly of the Kurus, when they were being exiled. Which virtuous man will act towards his relatives, in this contemptible way? They have followed righteous conduct. They have been devoid of greed. They have always acted in accordance with dharma. Karna, Duhshasana and you repeatedly used harsh words that are used by those who are violent and are not aryas. When they were children, together with their mother, you made great efforts to burn them up in Varanavata. But you were unsuccessful. At that time, the Pandavas and their mother lived for a long time in concealment in Ekachakra, in a brahmana's house. Through poison, through the bonds of snakes, you made every effort to destroy the Pandavas. But you were unsuccessful. This was your inclination towards the Pandavas. You were always devoted to falsehood. How have you not commited a crime towards the great-souled Pandavas? You have committed many such cruel deeds towards the Pandavas. You have resorted to false conduct, like one who is not an arya. You are now against everyone. Your mother and father, Bhishma, Drona and Vidura have all told you that you should make peace. O king! But you do not desire peace. There is great benefit to both you and Partha[266] in peace. O king! But because of the feebleness of your intelligence, this does not appeal to you. O king! But going against the advice of your well-wishers, you will not obtain salvation. O lord of the earth! You are acting against dharma and against fame." Dasharha was speaking to the intolerant Duryodhana in this way.

'Duhshasana then spoke these words in that assembly of the Kurus. "O king! It seems that if you do not have an alliance with the Pandavas on your own volition, the Kouravas will tie us up and hand us over to Kunti's son. O bull among men! Bhishma, Drona and your father will give the three of us—you, Vaikartana and I—to the Pandavas.” On hearing his brother’s words, Suyodhana, Dhritarashtra’s son, arose in rage, hissing like a giant serpent. That evil-minded one paid no attention to anyone—Vidura, Dhritarashtra, the great king Bahlika, Kripa, Bhishma, Drona or Janardana. Insulting those who deserve to be honoured, the uncontrolled, wicked and shameless one departed. Having seen that bull among men leave, all his brothers, advisers and all the kings followed him.

‘On seeing Duryodhana angrily rise and leave the assembly hall, together with his brothers, Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, said, “He who is overcome by anger and acts against dharma and artha, will soon be laughed at by his ill-wishers, when he is in difficulties. This evil-minded son of King Dhritarashtra does not know what is right. He suffers from false pride because of the kingdom. He is under the power of anger and avarice. O Janardana! I think the time has come for all the kshatriyas to be cooked by destiny, because in their delusion, all the kings and their advisers are following him.” The valiant and lotus-eyed Dasharha heard Bhishma’s words and told Bhishma, Drona and all the others who were there. “This is the supreme taint of all the elders among the Kurus, that they are not forcibly restraining this evil-minded king who is misusing his prosperity. O destroyers of enemies! I think the time has come to act in this way. O unblemished ones! Listen to me. If that is done, everything may still be well. Reflect on my words, which are for your welfare. O descendants of the Bharata lineage! See if they appeal to you as conducive to your welfare. While the aged king of Bhoja was still alive, his evil-minded and selfish son,[267] overcome by anger, seized his father’s riches. Kamsa, Ugrasena’s son, was abandoned by his relatives. For the welfare of his relatives, I punished him in a great battle. The other relatives and I then honoured and instated Ahuka’s son, Ugrasena, as the king again and thereby extended the kingdom of the Bhojas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![268] For the sake of the lineage, all the Bhojas, Andhakas and Vrishnis abandoned the solitary Kamsa and lived in happiness. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the gods and the asuras were arrayed in battle formations, with their weapons raised, and the world was divided into two sides and was about to be destroyed, Parameshthi Prajapati[269] said, ‘The asuras, together with the daityas and the danavas, will be defeated. The Adityas, the Vasus and the Rudras will dwell in heaven. In this battle, the gods, the asuras, men, gandharvas, serpents and rakshasas will angrily kill one another.’ Thinking this, Parameshthi Prajapati told Dharma, ‘Bind the daityas and the danavas and give them to Varuna. Having been thus addressed and instructed by Parameshthi, Dharma bound the daityas and the danavas and handed them over to Varuna. Having bound them with Dharma’s nooses and with his own nooses, Varuna, lord of the waters, has since then always carefully confined the danavas to the ocean. In the same way, fetter Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni Soubala and Duhshasana and hand them over to the Pandavas. A man should be abandoned for the sake of a lineage. A lineage should be abandoned for the sake of a village. A village should be abandoned for the sake of a country. The earth should be abandoned for the sake of the soul. O king! O bull among the kshatriyas! If you bind up Duryodhana and make peace with the Pandavas, the kshatriyas will not be destroyed for your sake.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When Dhritarashtra, lord of men, heard Krishna’s words, he quickly spoke to Vidura, learned in all manner of dharma. “O son![270] Go and bring the immensely wise and far-sighted Gandhari here. Together with her, I will be able to persuade the evil-minded one. If she can pacify that evil-souled and evil-minded one, we will be able to abide by the words of our well-wisher, Krishna. She might be able to show the path to the one who has been overtaken by avarice. He has evil intentions and evil aides. With her words, she may prove capable. If she can avert this great and terrible calamity brought on by Duryodhana, we will be saved and obtain peace, achieving for eternity what we wish to obtain and protecting that we possess.”[271] On hearing the king’s words and following Dhritarashtra’s instructions, Vidura brought the far-sighted Gandhari. Dhritarashtra said, “O Gandhari! This evil-minded son of yours does not follow my instructions. Because of his greed for prosperity, he is sporting with his riches and his life. That wicked one is evil in his conduct and evil-souled. Ignoring his well-wishers, that foolish one has disrespectfully left the assembly hall.” On hearing her husband’s words, the famous princess Gandhari spoke these words, with the greatest welfare of everyone in mind. “Swiftly summon the son who is afflicted with a desire for the kingdom. The kingdom cannot be ruled by a person who seeks to destroy dharma and artha. O Dhritarashtra! But you yourself are to be greatly blamed for this. You knew that he was wicked. But out of affection for your son, you followed his intentions. He is obsessed with desire and anger. He is greedy and overcome by confusion. O king! He is incapable of being restrained through force. Dhritarashtra is reaping the fruits of giving the kingdom to a stupid, evil-souled and greedy one, who has evil aides. How can an immensely wise one overlook dissension amongst one’s own relatives? When you have separated from your own relatives, your enemies will overcome you. O great king! If a difficulty can be averted through conciliation and gifts, why should one bring down a staff on one’s own relatives?” At these words of the mother and on Dhritarashtra’s instructions, Kshatta again brought the intolerant Duryodhana to the assembly hall.

‘Wishing to hear what his mother had to say, he again entered the assembly hall. He sighed like a serpent in his anger and his eyes were copper-red. On seeing her deviant son enter, Gandhari censured him and spoke these appropriate words. “O Duryodhana! O son! Listen to my words, for the welfare and happiness of you and your relatives. If you resort to peace, you will honour Bhishma, your father and me, and also the other well-wishers, with Drona at the forefront. O immensely wise one! O bull among the Bharatas! A kingdom cannot be obtained, protected or enjoyed through one’s own desires alone. Without controlling one’s senses, one cannot retain a kingdom for a long time. One who is intelligent and has controlled one’s soul, can protect a kingdom. Desire and anger draw a man away from success. A king conquers the earth after subjugating these two enemies. It is great to be a lord and master of the world. An evil-souled one may obtain the kingdom and that status, but cannot retain it for long. One who aspires for greatness must subject his senses to dharma and artha. With the senses under control, the intelligence increases, like a fire with kindling. If they are not under control, they can lead to destruction, like an unskilled charioteer and uncontrolled horses on the road. If one wishes to control one's advisers without controlling one's own soul, with both one's own self and one's advisers out of control, one is subjugated. He who first controls his own soul, like conquering a country, then becomes successful in conquering his advisers and his enemies. Prosperity descends on a person who controls his senses, conquers his advisers, holds up the staff against delinquents, acts after deliberation and is steadfast. Desire and anger in the body destroy wisdom and are like two fish caught in a fine-meshed net. If desire and anger increase, the gods are scared of discord, and bar the gates to heaven to such a person if he travels there. A king who knows how to completely control desire, anger, avarice, insolence and pride, conquers the earth. If a king wishes for dharma and artha and defeat of the enemies, he must always devote himself to controlling his senses. He who is overcome by desire and anger and acts falsely towards his own, or those of others, will have no aides. They are brave, immensely wise and are the destroyers of enemies. O son! Having united with those Pandavas, you will happily enjoy the earth. O son! It is indeed as Bhishma, Shantanu's son, and maharatha Drona have told you. Krishna and the Pandavas are invincible. Seek refuge with the mighty-armed Krishna, whose deeds are unsullied. Keshava will be delighted at the happiness of both sides. A man, who does not follow the instructions of wise and learned well-wishers who desire his welfare, causes delight to his enemies. O son! There can be no welfare from a war, nor dharma and artha. How can there be happiness? Nor can there be eternal victory. Do not set your mind on war. O immensely wise one! O destroyer of enemies! Bhishma, your father and Bahlika gave Pandu's sons a part of the kingdom out of fear of dissension. You can see the fruits of that gift, since you now enjoy the entire earth, with those brave ones having killed the thorns.[272] O destroyer of enemies! Give the sons of Pandu what is due to them, if you and your advisers wish to enjoy the remaing half of the kings.[273] Half of the earth is sufficient for you and your advisers to sustain yourselves. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By adhering to the advice of your well-wishers, you will attain fame. The Pandavas are prosperous. They have controlled their souls. They are intelligent. They have mastered their senses. O son! By engaging in a war with them, your great happiness will be destroyed. Control the wrath of your well-wishers. O bull among the Bharata lineage! After giving the sons of Pandu their own rightful share, rule over the kingdom. The hardship that they have suffered for thirteen years is enough. O immensely wise one! Pacify the sentiments of desire and anger. The son of the *suta*[274] is firm in his anger and so is your brother, Duhshasana. They desire success, but are incapable of standing up to the Parthas. If Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Bhimasena, Dhananjaya and Dhrishtadyumna are enraged, it is certain that all the subjects will be destroyed. O son! Because you are overcome by intolerance, do not destroy the Kurus. The entire earth is touched by this, either on your side, or that of the Pandavas. If you foolishly think that Bhishma, Drona and Kripa and the others will fight with all their strength, this is not going to happen. They know their own selves. In kingship affection and status, they regard you and the Pandavas equally. And dharma transcends everything. Even if they lay down their lives, scared that the king will no longer give them a stipend, they will not be able to look King Yudhishthira in the face. It is not seen that men obtain artha out of avarice. O son! O bull among the Bharatas! Therefore, control your greed and be pacified.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘But he[275] disregarded his mother’s sensible words. He had no control over his soul and he again left in anger. Having left the assembly hall, Kourava sought the advice of King Soubala Shakuni, skilled in dice. They decided on a course of action—Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni Soubala and Duhshasana as the fourth. “Janardana is swift in his action. Before he captures us, with King Dhritarashtra and Shantanu’s son, we will forcibly capture Hrishikesha, that tiger among men, like Indra seized Virochana’s son.[276] On hearing that Varshneya has been seized, the Pandavas will lose their spirits. They will lose all their enterprise, like serpents whose fangs have been destroyed. That mighty-armed one is the refuge and armour for all of them. When the bull among all the Satvatas, the granter of boons, has been captured, all the Pandavas, together with the Somakas, will lose their initiative. Therefore, despite Dhritarashtra being angered, let us capture Keshava, who is swift in his action. Let us imprison him and fight with the enemies.” Satyaki was wise and knew how to understand signs. He swiftly got to know about the wicked intentions of those wicked and evil-souled ones.

‘Having got to know, he emerged with Hardikya.[277] He told Kritavarma, “Swiftly yoke the army and arrange them in battle formations. Armour them and wait at the gate of the assembly hall. Meanwhile, I will talk to Krishna, whose deeds are unsullied.” The brave one entered the assembly hall, like a lion entering a mountainous cavern and communicated the intention to the great-souled Keshava. Thereafter, he laughingly told Dhritarashtra and Vidura about their intention. “They wish to perform a deed that is against dharma and artha and is censured by virtuous ones. The wicked ones wish to perform a task that cannot be performed. These foolish and evil-souled ones have gathered to commit crimes earlier. They have been overcome by desire and anger and have fallen prey to wrath and avarice. The ones with limited intelligence wish to capture Pundarikaksha. Like children and idiots, they wish to capture a flaming fire in a piece of cloth.” Hearing Satyaki’s words, the far-sighted Vidura told the mighty-armed Dhritarashtra in that assembly of the Kurus. “O king! O scorcher of enemies! Destiny is encompassing all your sons. They are attempting to commit a reprehensible deed that is incapable of being performed. They plan to overcome, capture and oppress Pundarikaksha, the younger brother of Vasava himself. This tiger among men is invincible and unassailable. They will no longer exist, like insects before a fire. If Janardana so wishes, he can despatch all of them to Yama’s abode, like an enraged lion with deer. But he will never embark upon a reprehensible act. Achyuta Purushottama will never deviate from dharma.” On hearing Vidura’s words, Keshava glanced towards Dhritarashtra and, in the hearing of his well-wishers, spoke these words. “O king! If those enraged ones wish to capture me with their energy, let them try. O lord of the earth! I know their strength and I will be able to control those angry ones. But I am not interested in doing anything that can be censured. By desiring the riches of the Pandavas, your sons will lose their own. If this is what they want, Yudhishthira will accomplish his objective. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! At this instant, I can capture them and their followers and hand them over to the Parthas. There can be nothing wrong with that act. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! But I do not wish to perform such a reprehensible deed in your presence, generated out of anger and evil intelligence. O king! But if this is what Duryodhana wants, so be it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will allow for all possibilities.” On hearing this, Dhritarashtra told Vidura, “Quickly go and bring that wicked Suyodhana, who is greedy for the kingdom, together with his friends, his advisers, his brothers and his followers. Let me again see if I can bring him to the right path.” Kshatta again brought the reluctant Duryodhana to the assembly hall, together with his brothers and surrounded by all the kings.

‘King Dhritarashtra then spoke to Duryodhana and Karna, Duhshasana and the kings who surrounded them. “O cruel one! O one born in sin! With your assistants, you are embarking on a heinous deed. Your aides are wicked. Together with them, you wish to perform an evil deed. This is incapable of being done. It brings ill fame. It is censured by those who are righteous. Only foolish ones like you, who bring ill repute to their lineages, can think of this. Pundarikaksha is indomitable and unassailable. Together with your evil advisers, you wish to oppress and capture him. All the gods, together with Vasava, are incapable of using force against him. But you desire that like a wicked one, like a child asking for the moon. You do not know that gods, men, gandharvas, asuras and serpents are incapable of withstanding Keshava in battle. No hand can grasp the wind. No hand can touch the moon. No head can bear the earth. No force can grasp Keshava.” After Dhritarashtra had spoken in this way, Kshatta Vidura spoke these words to Dhritarashtra’s intolerant son Duryodhana, who was looking on. “At the gate of Soubha, Dvivida, Indra among the apes, enveloped Keshava with a mighty shower of rocks.[278] Desiring to capture Madhava through his valour, he made every kind of endeavour. But he was incapable of grasping him and now you wish to use force. At Pragjyotisha, Naraka and the other danavas could not grasp Shouri and now you wish to use force. In his childhood, when he was a mere infant, he killed Putana.[279] O bull among the Bharata lineage! He held up Govardhana to protect the cows. He slew Arishta, Dhenuka, the immensely strong Chanura, Ashvaraja and the wicked Kamsa.[280] He slew Jarasandha, Vakra, the valiant Shishupala and Bana and killed many kings in battle. He has conquered King Varuna and the infinitely energetic fire god. When he stole the *parijata* flowers, he defeated Shachi’s consort himself. When he was asleep on the single and large ocean, he killed Madhu and Kaitabha.[281] In another birth, he killed Hayagriva.[282] He is the one who does everything. He has not been created. He is the source of all virility. Without any effort, he does whatever he wishes to do. You do not know Govinda Achyuta, whose valour is terrible. His anger is like that of a virulent serpent. His mass of energy cannot be vanquished. You are seeking to assail the mighty-armed Krishna, whose deeds are unsullied, like an insect against a fire. You and your advisers will be destroyed.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘When Vidura spoke in this way, the valiant Keshava, the destroyer of large numbers of the enemy, spoke to Duryodhana, Dhritarashtra’s son. “O Suyodhana! In your folly, you think of me as a single person. O one with extremely evil intelligence! You desire to overpower and capture me. Here are all the Pandavas, and the Andhakas and the Vrishnis. Here are the Adityas, the Rudras, the Vasus and the maharshis.” Saying this, Keshava, the destroyer of enemy warriors, laughed out aloud. When the great-souled Shouri was laughing, the thirty gods sprouted from his sides. They were like lightning, but were as small as a thumb. They were as radiant as the fire. Brahma appeared on his forehead and Rudra on his chest. The guardians of the world were on his arms[283] and Agni was created from his mouth. The Adityas, the Sadhyas, the Vasus, the Ashvins, Indra and the Maruts and the Vishvadevas manifested themselves and the forms of the yakshas, the gandharvas and the rakshasas also appeared. Sankarshana[284] and Dhananjaya appeared on his two arms, the archer Arjuna on the right and Rama, the wielder of the plough, on the left. Bhima, Yudhishthira and Madri's two sons appeared on his back. The Andhakas and the Vrishnis, with Pradyumna at the head, appeared in front of Krishna, with their great weapons raised up. The conch shell, the chakra, the club, the spear, the Sharnga,[285] the plough and Nandaka[286] could be seen. And many other weapons were raised up. They were radiant in all the directions, around Krishna's many arms. From his eyes, nose and ears emerged extremely terrible flames of fire with smoke. Rays like those of the sun emerged from the pores of his body. When they saw the terrible form of the great-souled Keshava, all the kings were frightened in their hearts and closed their eyes, with the exception of Drona, Bhishma, the immensely intelligent Vidura, the immensely fortunate Sanjaya and the rishis, rich in austerities, because the illustrious Janardana gave them divine sight.

'At the great and extraordinary sight of Madhava on the floor of that assembly hall, the drums of the gods were sounded and flowers were showered down. The entire earth trembled and the oceans shivered. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All the lords of the earth were extremely astounded. Then that tiger among men, destroyer of enemies, withdrew his real form, which was divine, extraordinary, colourful, prosperous and radiant. Madhusudana took the permission of the rishis and grasping Satyaki and Hardikya by the hand, departed. Narada and the other rishis also disappeared and that was another extraordinary marvel in that confusion.

'On seeing him leave, the Kouravas, together with the kings, followed that tiger among men, like the gods follow Shatakratu. However, ignoring that entire circle of kings, Shouri, whose soul cannot be measured, went out, like a fire trailing smoke. His chariot was large and bright, decorated with bells. It was colourful with nets of gold. It was light and roared like a cloud. It was covered with bright tiger skins and was yoked to Sainya and Sugriva. Daruka appeared. Maharatha Hardikya Kritavarma, the revered hero of the Vrishnis, also appeared, riding on his chariot. Shouri, destroyer of enemies, was about to leave on his chariot, which had been prepared. The great king Dhritarashtra again spoke to him. "O Janardana! You have seen how much power I possess over my sons. O destroyer of enemies! You have witnessed all of it and nothing has happened without your seeing it. O Keshava! Knowing that I wish for peace among the Kurus and have made efforts and knowing about my condition, you should not have any doubts about me. O Keshava! I have no evil intentions towards the Pandavas. You know the words that I have spoken to Suyodhana. O Madhava! All the Kurus and the kings who are the lords of the earth know that I tried for peace and made every kind of effort." Then the mighty-armed one told Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, Drona, the grandfather Bhishma, Kshatta, Bahlika and Kripa, "You have witnessed what happened in the assembly of the Kurus, when that wicked and evil one arose repeatedly in anger. Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, has said that he is helpless. I wish to take leave from all of you. I will go to Yudhishthira now." Having sought their permission thus, Shouri, bull among men, left on his chariot. Those brave and great archers, bulls among Bharatas, followed him—Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Kshatta, Dhritarashtra, Bahlika, Ashvatthama, Vikarna and maharatha Yuyutsu. While the Kurus looked on, he left on his bright and large chariot, decorated with bells, and went to his father's sister, Pritha.'[287]

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Vaishampayana said, 'He entered her house,[288] bowed at her feet and told her everything that had happened in the assembly of the Kurus.

'Vasudeva said, "Many kinds of acceptable and beneficial words were spoken by me and the rishis, but he[289] did not accept them. Cooked by destiny, all of them are under Duryodhana's control. I seek your leave. I will swiftly go to the Pandavas. What shall I tell the Pandavas on your behalf? O immensely wise one! I wish to hear your words and will act accordingly.”

‘Kunti replied, “O Keshava! Tell the great-souled King Yudhishthira, ‘Your dharma has greatly declined. O son! Do not act in vain. O king! You have learned the sacred texts, but not properly, and have missed out on their insight. You have focused on the literal words and therefore, your intelligence only focuses on limited dharma. Consider the complete dharma that was created by the one who created himself.[290] The kshatriya was created from his chest, to earn a living through the valour of his arms, always resorting to cruel deeds for the protection of the subjects. Hear about an example that I have heard from the elders. In earlier times, Vaishravana was once delighted and gave the earth to rajarshi Muchukunda,[291] but he did not accept it. “I desire to enjoy a kingdom that I have obtained through the strength of my arms.” On hearing this, Vaishravana was surprised and delighted. Subsequently, King Muchukunda did rule over the earth, earned through the strength of his arms, completely following the dharma of a kshatriya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a king protects his subjects and they act in accordance with dharma, the king enjoys one-fourth of that dharma. When a king acts in accordance with dharma, he warrants the status of a god. If he practises adharma, he goes to hell. If a lord imposes chastisement on the four varnas in accordance with the dharma that they should follow, that ensures that they do not transgress dharma. If a king follows chastisement properly and completely, this signifies the commencement of the best era, known as krita yuga. You should have no doubts about whether the era creates the king, or the king creates the era. It is the king who creates the era. The king is the creator of krita yuga, treta and dvapara. The king is also the cause of the fourth yuga.[292] If a king is the cause of krita, he enjoys heaven for eternity. If a king is the cause of treta, he enjoys heaven, but not for eternity. By leading to the commencement of dvapara, a king obtains an appropriate share of those fruits. An evil-acting one dwells in hell for an eternity.[293] The earth is touched by a king’s taints and he is also touched by the earth. Observe the dharma of kings that was followed by your fathers and grandfathers. The conduct that you wish to establish yourself in, is not that of a rajarshi. If a king is touched by lassitude and is based on non-violence, he does not obtain the fruits that result from protecting the subjects. Pandu, I and your grandfather did not bless you earlier, so that you might act in accordance with your intelligence. Sacrifices, generosity, austerities, valour, wisdom, offspring, greatness, strength and energy are what we always asked for. When they are satisfied through pure worship, the gods give men constant svaha, constant svadha,[294] long lives, riches and sons. Ancestors and gods always desire generosity, learning, sacrifices and the protection of the subjects in their sons. Whether it is dharma or adharma, you should follow it by virtue of your birth. O son! You are learned and have been born in a noble lineage. But you are oppressed because you have been following the wrong conduct. When earth-dwellers are hungry, they search for a brave one who is the lord of generosity. They seek refuge with him for their satisfaction. What can be a greater dharma than that? When one who follows dharma obtains a kingdom, he always satisfies everyone—some through gifts, some through force, and others through truthful conduct. A brahmana must live on alms, a kshatriya must protect, a vaishya must devote himself to earning riches and a shudra must serve them. Begging is forbidden for you and you should not resort to agriculture.[295] O son! You are a kshatriya, you are the one who saves from injuries, you sustain yourself through the strength of your arms. O mighty-armed one! Your ancestral right has been immersed. Raise it up again. Use conciliation, generosity, dissension, chastisement[296] and policy. What can be a greater misery for me than that I should be in this state, with my relatives destitute? O one who causes delight to your enemies! After having given birth to you, I have to look towards the alms given by others. Fight according to the dharma of kings and do not keep your ancestors immersed. With your merits exhausted, together with your younger brothers, do not travel along the evil route.'"'

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‘Kunti said, “O scorcher of enemies! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between Vidula[297] and her son. She told him about what he should do for his welfare. She was famous and was born in a noble lineage. She was radiant and was also wrathful. Vidula was far-sighted, fortunate and devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. She was renowned in the assemblies of kings because of her learned words and great erudition. The lady named Vidula was truthful. She once censured the son who was born from her womb, when he was defeated by the king of Sindhu and was lying down, dejected in his intelligence. He was miserable and ignorant about dharma. He increased the delight of his enemies.

““‘Where did you come from?[298] You were not born from me or your father. You are such a coward that you have no anger. You are like a lowly branch. You are a man, but are acting like a eunuch. You can remain hopeless for the rest of your life. But for your own welfare, bear the burden. Do not think of yourself as inferior. Do not be satisfied with trifles. Set your mind on great welfare. Do not be afraid. Show some spirit. Arise. You are a coward. Don’t lie there in this defeated state. You are the delight of all your enemies. You are causing grief to all your relatives. An inferior[299] river is soon filled, the paws of a mouse are soon filled, a coward is greatly satisfied and content with little. Without uprooting the fangs of a snake, are you going to die like a dog? Or will you exhibit some valour, even at the expense of your life? Will you be seen circling silently and unafraid in the sky like a hawk, waiting for a weakness in the enemy? Why are you lying down like a corpse, as if you have been struck by lightning? Arise, you coward! Do not lie down, defeated. Do not vanish in your misery. Make yourself famous through your own deeds. Do not be medium, inferior, or the worst. Be strong. Blaze up, even if it is only for an instant, like a kindling of *tinduka*.[300] Do not burn like the flame of husk. Do not lead the fugitive life of a crow. It is better to blaze for an instant, than to only yield smoke for a long time. Let no son be born in a royal house who is as mild as a she-mule. As long as a person performs manly deeds and achieves the greatest objective, he acts according to dharma and triumphs and there is no need for him to censure himself. Whether he is unsuccessful, or whether he is successful, a learned person does not lament. He moves on to the next task, without setting store by his life. Either display your valour, or head towards an objective that is certain.[301] O son! When you have placed dharma first, why should you remain alive?[302] O eunuch! Your sacrifices, your donations and all your deeds have been destroyed. The roots of your enjoyment have been severed. Why should you remain alive? If one is sinking and is about to fall, one should grasp the enemy by the thigh.[303] Even if one has been destroyed by the roots, one should never sorrow. One should remember the achievements of well-bred horses. One should arise, lift the burden and excel. Know your own manliness and achieve spirit and honour. The lineage has been immersed because of your own deeds. Raise it up. If men do not talk about a person's feats as greatly extraordinary, he only increases the ranks of the ordinary. He is neither a woman, nor a man. A man whose generosity, austerities, valour, learning, riches and gains are not famously spoken about, is his mother's excrement.[304] One becomes a man through deeds of learning, austerities, prosperity and valour. A man who surpasses others in deeds, has truly been born. Do not resort to the livelihood of one with a begging bowl. This is wicked, reprehensible, cruel and vile and leads to misery. It is followed by cowards. Enemies welcome such a feeble man. The worlds despise him. He is inferior in his food and garments. He gains nothing and is inferior. He lives on nothing and he is himself only nothing. His relatives obtain no happiness from having got such a person as a relative. We have been banished from our kingdom. We have no means of livelihood. We have fallen in status. We have been deprived of all the objects of desire. We have been dislodged from our positions. We are nothing. O Sanjaya![305] I have given birth to Kali in the form of a son. He is not virtuous and acts contrary to the norms of his varna. You are the destroyer of the lineage and you have nothing in you. You have no anger. You have no enterprise. You have no valour. You are the delight of your enemies. Let no woman give birth to a son like this. Do not only produce smoke. Blaze up. Attack and conquer the enemies. Even if it is for an instant, blaze up over the heads of the enemies. One is a man to the extent one is intolerant and unforgiving. One who is forgiving and does not have anger, is neither a woman, nor a man. Satisfaction destroys prosperity and so do lack of anger, lack of enterprise and fear. Nothing great can be obtained without enterprise. Liberate yourself from these evil traits. Liberate yourself from your own self. Have steel in your heart and hunt again for what belongs to you. A man is called *purusha* because he vanquishes a city.[306] If one lives like a woman, one falsifies one's name. There are brave and spirited ones who roam around with the valour of lions. Their fate may be determined by destiny, but the subjects rejoice. He who hunts for prosperity, giving up his own self and his beloved happiness, soon brings delight to his advisers.'

'"The son replied, 'If you do not behold me,[307] what is the use of this entire earth to you? What will ornaments, objects of desire and life itself mean to you?'

'"The mother said, 'Let your enemies obtain the worlds of those who lament, "What should be done now?" Let your well-wishers travel to the worlds meant for those who have great souls. Do not follow the conduct of those who are deserted by their servants and live on alms given by others, those who are miserable and without spirit. O son! May brahmanas and our well-wishers obtain their sustenance through you, just as all beings obtain lives through rain and the gods through Shatakratu. O Sanjaya! A man on whom all living beings depend, like a tree with ripe fruit, is one whose life has meaning. A brave and valiant one, who sustains the happiness of his relatives, like the thirty gods by Shakra, leads a virtuous life. A man who lives on the strength of his arms obtains fame in this world and an auspicious objective in the hereafter.'"'

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'"Vidula said, 'If you wish to give up your manliness in your present state, you will soon follow the path travelled by the inferior. A kshatriya who does not display energy to the best of his capacity and who does not exhibit his valour, desiring to remain alive, is said to be a thief. My meaningful, appropriate and beneficial words do not reach you, like medicine to someone who is about to die. It is true that the king of Sindhu has many satisfied subjects. But they are weak and foolish and are waiting for a calamity to strike them. When they see you collect aides one by one and behold your manliness, they will lose heart and his enemies will join you. Conduct alliances with them and roam around in mountainous forts, waiting for the time when he will be destroyed. He is not beyond old age. Nor is he immortal. You are Sanjaya only in name. I do not see it in you.[308] O son! Live up to your name. Do not make your name false. When you were only a child, an immensely wise brahmana who had foresight said, "After confronting great hardships, he will prosper again." Remembering those words, I hope that you will be victorious. O son! Therefore, I am repeatedly telling you about this. If others thrive on the perseverance with which a person pursues his goals, and if he pursues these goals with reflection, that person will certainly be successful. Your ancestors also confronted prosperity and adversity. O Sanjaya! Knowing this—fight. Do not turn back. Shambara[309] has said that there is nothing more miserable than not seeing where today's and tomorrow's meal will come from. He said that this is a greater misery than the death of one's husband and sons. Poverty is nothing but progressive death. I have been born in a great lineage. I have gone from one pond to another.[310] I have been the mistress of everything fortunate. I have been extremely honoured by my husband. Earlier, masses of well-wishers saw me bedecked in expensive garlands and ornaments, adorned in excellent garments. I am in penury now. O Sanjaya! When you see me and your wife extremely weak, what purpose can life have for you? The slaves and servants who used to work for us, the preceptors and the foremost priests have left us, because they no longer have sustenance. On seeing this, what purpose can life have for you? If I do not see you today, performing the illustrious and praiseworthy deeds that you used to earlier, how can there be peace in my heart? My heart is shattered when I have to say no to brahmanas. Neither my husband nor I, have ever said no to a brahmana. Others seek refuge with us. But we do not seek refuge with others. If I now have to depend on others for a living, I will give up my life.

““‘When there are no shores, provide us a shore. When there are no boats, be our boat. When there is no status, find us status. Revive those of us who are dead. If you do not cling to life, you are capable of withstanding all your enemies. But if you follow this conduct of an eunuch, depressed in mind and troubled in soul, then free yourself of this wretched life. A brave one becomes famous by killing a single enemy. Indra became the great Indra by slaying Vritra alone. He obtained the great Indra’s cup for drinking soma and the lordship of the worlds. He proclaimed his name in battle and challenged the armoured enemies. When he drives away the best of armies and kills the best of warriors in an excellent battle, a brave one obtains great fame. His enemies tremble and bow down before him. Men who are cowards are helpless. If a skilled warrior is prepared to give up his life in battle, they satisfy every desire that he has for riches. Even if there is terrible danger to the kingdom, even if there is doubt about remaining alive, virtuous ones do not leave any remnants of an enemy who is near. The kingdom is a road to heaven, it is like amrita itself. It allows for only one[311] and it is closed to you. Knowing this, descend like a firebrand on the enemy. O king! Defeat your enemies in battle. Follow your own dharma. O fortunate one! Let the enemies not see you in this extremely dejected state, surrounded by our miserable people and delighted foes. Let me not be miserable at seeing you in this miserable state. Pleasure with the maidens of Souvira.[312] Boast about your prosperity, as you used to do earlier. Do not be so exhausted and come under the control of the maidens of Sindhu. You are young and handsome, possess learning and have been born in a good lineage. You are renowned and famous in the world. One like you should not act in this way, like a bull that cannot bear the burden. I think that this is worse than death. If I see you speaking pleasant words to the enemy, or following behind him, how can there be peace in my heart? No one born in this lineage has ever followed others. O son! You should not live in this way, sustaining yourself on another. I know the eternal heart of kshatriyas, as described by our ancestors and those who came after them, and also by the ancestors of the enemy and those who came after them. A kshatriya who has been born in this world and knows about the dharma of kshatriyas, will never bow down before another, either out of fear or to earn a living. Stand upright in manliness. Do not make efforts to bend. It is better to break at the joints than to bend down. O Sanjaya! You should be strong in your mind and roam around like a rutting elephant, bowing down before brahmanas and dharma. Control the other varnas and chastise all those who perform evil acts. Whether you possess allies or do not possess allies, you should always live in this way.’””

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‘“The son said, ‘O mother! You have converted your heart into steel. There is no compassion in you. Incited by the wisdom of bravery, you have become intolerant. Shame on the conduct of kshatriyas, about which you are censuring me, as if I am a stranger. You are speaking such words to your only son. If you can no longer see me, what purpose will the entire earth have for you? What use will there be of ornaments, or of the pleasures that life brings?’

‘“The mother replied, ‘O son! Everything done by the learned is for the purpose of dharma and artha. O Sanjaya! I have incited you with a view to those ends. The great moment has arrived for you to decide on your course of action. With the time having arrived, if you do not act accordingly, you will be dishonoured and commit a deed of extreme cruelty. O Sanjaya! You have already been touched by ill fame. If I do not speak to you in this way, my affection towards you will be like that of a she-ass, without strength and without purpose. Abandon the path censured by the righteous and frequented by the stupid. This is the great ignorance to which all beings cling. If your conduct is that of the virtuous, you will be my beloved, that is, if you have the qualities of dharma and artha and never follow anything else. This recognizes destiny and human endeavour and is the conduct of the virtuous. If one finds delight in a son or a grandson who does not have humility and does not exert himself, one loses the fruits of obtaining offspring. Those who perform deeds that should not be performed are censured. Such inferior men obtain no happiness, in this world and the next. O Sanjaya!

A kshatriya has been created to fight and be victorious, for always performing cruel deeds and protecting the subjects. Whether he triumps, or whether he is slain, he attains Indra’s world. But in Shakra’s sacred and celestial world, the happiness that a kshatriya obtains from subjugating his enemy, is missing. Let the spirited man who has been defeated many times be tormented by rage and wait to exact vengeance on the enemy. In what other way can he find peace, other than giving up his own life or bringing down the enemy? In this world, a wise man is not delighted with a trifle. It is certain that a person who is delighted with a trifle, will not remain happy with that trifle. In the absence of what he desires, a man will not be radiant. It is certain that he will feel empty, like the Ganga after flowing into the ocean.’

‘“The son said, ‘O mother! You should not speak in this way, certainly not to your son. You should look for compassion, like one who is deaf and mute.’

‘“The mother replied, ‘It is a great pleasure to me that you look on it in this way. You are inciting me in this way, so that I can incite you some more. I will honour you when you have killed all the Saindhavas and I see you victorious, free of all your worries.’

‘“The son said, ‘I have no treasury. I have no allies. How can I obtain the success of victory? This is my extremely terrible state and I know about my own self. I have withdrawn from the kingdom, like a performer of evil deeds withdraws from heaven. This being the situation, I cannot see any means. You are mature in your wisdom and I am asking you. Tell me exactly and I will act entirely in accordance with your instructions.’

‘“The mother replied, ‘O son! You should not demean yourself because of your earlier failures. Objects that were not obtained earlier can be obtained. In the same way, those that were obtained can be destroyed. Stupid ones cannot obtain objects through anger at their absence. O son! The fruits of all deeds are never permanent. Knowing that they are not permanent, one may be successful or one may fail. But those who do not act, never obtain success. Lack of trying has only one consequence—failure. However, for those who try, there are two consequences—

success or failure. O son of a king! He who knows in advance that all success is impermanent, repels growth and prosperity and acts against his own interests. One should arise. One should awake. One should yoke oneself to the task that must be done. Without any hesitation, one must always make up one's mind that something needs to be done. One should consider auspicious signs and honour brahmanas and the gods. O son! There is swift prosperity for such a wise king. Like the sun rising in the east, Lakshmi returns to him. I have instructed you with many instances and words and you have appreciated them. Now display your form. Exhibit your manliness. It is appropriate that you should obtain the objects that you desire. Examine those who are angry, greedy, weak, dishonoured and disrespected and those who hate him.[313] In this way, you can bring them together and create great dissension in his ranks, like an extremely swift wind that disperses the clouds. Be the first to give them gifts. Make efforts. Speak pleasantly to them. As soon as the enemy knows that you are ready to give up your life, he will shrink away from you, like from a snake that has penetrated his house. If one knows that the enemy is too powerful to be conquered, one should use conciliation, friendliness and similar methods. Through such methods, one can obtain riches and extend them. Friends gather around those who are prosperous and serve them. O son! Then again, relatives desert one whose prosperity has been dissipated. They do not gather around such a man, but shun him. If one can convert an enemy into an ally and obtain his trust, one can then think about regaining the kingdom.'"'

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'"The mother said, 'Confronting any calamity, the king should never be afraid. Even if his heart is shattered, he should not exhibit this fear. On seeing that a king is frightened, everyone is scared. The kingdom, the soldiers and the advisers become divided in their views. Some may seek refuge with the enemy, others may desert the king. Others who have been slighted earlier may try to strike back. Though powerless, only extreme well-wishers remain with him, desiring salvation, like a cow whose calf has been tethered. They sorrow over his sorrow, as if over relatives who have died. Even those who were honoured before and those who were regarded as well-wishers, covet the kingdom of a king who has confronted a hardship. Do not be frightened. Otherwise, your well-wishers will desert you in their fear. I have said all this to you, questioning your power, manliness and intelligence. I have attempted to incite you, like a strong person behaving towards a weaker one. O Sanjaya! If you have understood everything that I have said, then arise. Be peaceful in your mind and strive for victory. We possess a large treasury that is not known to you. No one except I knows about this and I will give this to you. O Sanjaya! You still possess many hundreds of well-wishers. O brave one! They will accompany you, in happiness and unhappiness. They will not retreat and each is worth one hundred. These are appropriate allies for a man who wishes to obtain what he wants. They are advisers who are destroyers of the enemy.'

'"The son replied, 'Even if one hears such words, colourful, meaningful and with purport and rhythm, from a person with limited intelligence, how can one not cast away the darkness? With you, one who can see the past and the future, as my leader, I will shoulder this burden, even if it is in the water and is ebbing away. Because I wished to hear every word from you, I have generally been silent, but for contradicting you once in a while, like one who is not satisfied with amrita obtained from a relative at the time of a hardship. I will now endeavour to destroy the enemy and accomplish victory.'"

'Kunti said, "He was incited like an excellent horse, prodded by the arrows of her words. He carried out all her instructions, exactly as she had said. These words inspire terror. They are supreme in increasing energy. When a king is exhausted from the depredations of an enemy, an adviser should recount them. This history is known as 'Jaya'.[314] It should be heard by one who wishes for victory. Having heard it, he will swiftly conquer the earth and oppress the enemies. This[315] leads to the birth of a son. This leads to the birth of a brave son. If a pregnant woman repeatedly hears it, she is certain to give birth to a warrior who will be learned, valiant, austere, brave, self-controlled and an ascetic, radiant with the prosperity of brahmanas, honoured in the words of the virtuous, resplendent, strong, immensely fortunate, a maharatha, daring, unassailable, victorious and invincible. He will chastise those who are evil and protect those who act in accordance with dharma. The kshatriya lady will give birth to such a brave son, for whom his truth will be his valour.”’

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‘Kunti said, “O Keshava! Tell Arjuna this. ‘When you were born, I was seated in the maternity chamber, surrounded by women from the hermitage. A voice was then heard from the sky. It was divine in form and pleasant to hear. “O Kunti! This son of yours will be the equal of the one with a thousand eyes.[316] In a battle, he will vanquish all the assembled Kurus. With Bhimasena as his second, he will overturn the world. Your son will be the conqueror of the earth and his fame will touch heaven. With Vasudeva as his ally, he will kill the Kurus in the field of battle. He will regain the paternal share that had been lost. Together with his brothers, the illustrious one will perform three horse sacrifices.”’ O Achyuta! If I know Bibhatsu Savyasachi, who is devoted to the truth, it must be as it was spoken. I know that he is strong and unassailable. O Dasharha! It must therefore be as the voice had spoken. O Varshneya! If there is any dharma, it must truly be that way. O Krishna! You will also bring about everything. I do not doubt the truth of what the voice had spoken. I bow down before the great dharma. It is dharma that sustains living beings. Speak these words to Dhananjaya.

‘“Speak these words to Vrikodara, who is always ready. ‘The time for which a kshatriya lady gives birth has arrived. Those who are bulls among men do not waver when an enmity surfaces.’ You have always known about Bhima’s intelligence. That destroyer of enemies cannot be pacified until the enemy has been destroyed.

‘“O Krishna! O Madhava! Speak these words to the fortunate and illustrious Krishna,[317] learned in all forms of dharma and daughter-in-law of the great-souled Pandu. ‘O immensely fortunate one! O one born in a noble lineage! O illustrious one! You have always behaved towards all my sons as is appropriate and as one should behave.’

'"Speak to the two sons of Madri, both of whom are devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. 'Choose the enjoyments that can be gained through valour over life itself.' O Purushottama! If a man lives according to the dharma of kshatriyas, he is always delighted at prosperity that is gained through valour. It was while you looked on that Panchali, who was devoted to every kind of dharma, was harshly addressed. It is not proper for you to forgive that. The unhappiness from the loss of the kingdom, the defeat at the game of dice and the banishment of my sons was nothing compared to the unhappiness when that large, dark and weeping lady was brought to the assembly hall and made to listen to harsh words. In my view, that was a greater misery. The one with the beautiful thighs has always been devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. She was following the dharma of women then.[318] Though she has protectors, at that time, Krishna[319] obtained no protectors there.

'"O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Tell this to Arjuna, tiger among men, supreme among those who wield all weapons. 'Follow the path indicated by Droupadi.' You know that when Bhima and Arjuna are enraged, they are like two Yamas and can convey even the gods to the final destination. Both were insulted when Krishna[320] was brought to the assembly hall and Duhshasana addressed terrible and harsh words towards her, while all the brave Kurus looked on. Remind him about that again. Ask about the welfare of the Pandavas and Krishna and her sons. O Janardana! Also tell them that I am extremely well. Travel along a safe path and protect my sons."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Mighty-armed Krishna saluted and circumambulated her. Then he strode out, like a lion in his gait. He granted leave to Bhishma and the other bulls among the Kurus.[321] He made Karna[322] ascend his chariot and left with Satyaki. When Dasharha had left, all the Kurus assembled together and talked about the great and extraordinary wonders that had occurred in connection with Keshava. They said, "The entire earth is confounded and has been snared in the noose of death. It will be destroyed because of Duryodhana's stupidity." Purushottama left the city and talked for a long time with Karna. Having given Radheya permission to leave, the delight of all the Yadavas goaded his horses towards a great speed. Urged by Daruka, the horses seemed to drink up the sky and dashed with the speed of the mind and the wind. Having covered a great distance like swift kites, the horses, bearing the wielder of the Sharnga bow, reached Upaplavya while the sun was still high in the sky.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After listening to Kunti’s words, maharatha Bhishma and Drona spoke these words to Duryodhana, who was beyond control. “O tiger among men! You have heard the words Kunti spoke in Krishna’s presence. They are foremost and full of meaning. They are in conformity with supreme dharma. With Vasudeva’s approval, the Kounteyas will act accordingly. O Kourava! They will not be pacified without the kingdom. You oppressed the Parthas and Droupadi in the assembly hall. But they were then restrained by the noose of dharma and had to tolerate it. However, Arjuna, skilled in the use of weapons, and Bhima, firm in his resolution, and Gandiva, the two quivers,[323] the chariot and the standard, Yudhishthira and Vasudeva as the ally, will no longer forgive. O mighty-armed one! Earlier, you have yourself witnessed how the intelligent Partha vanquished everyone in battle, in the city of Virata. The nivatakavacha danavas, terrible in their deeds, were burnt in battle with his *roudra* weapon, the weapon with flames. Karna and the others and you yourself with your armour and chariot, were freed at the time of the expedition of the cattle. This is sufficient proof. O foremost among Bharatas! Make peace with your brothers, the Pandavas. Save this entire earth, which is headed towards the jaws of death. Your elder brother’s[324] conduct is in accordance with dharma. He is affectionate. He is gentle in speech. He is pure. Get rid of these evil intentions and go to that tiger among men. If the Pandava sees that you have laid down your bow, the illustrious one will smoothen his brows and bring peace to our lineage. Having gone to him with your advisers, embrace that son of a king. O destroyer of enemies! Honour the king, as you used to do earlier. Let Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, Bhima’s elder brother, embrace you in his arms with affection when you greet him.

Bhima is supreme among warriors. He has shoulders, thighs and arms like a lion and his arms are round and large. Let him embrace you with those arms. Kunti's son, Gudakesha Partha Dhananjaya, has a neck like a lion and eyes like lotuses. Let him salute you. The sons of the two Ashvins are tigers among men and are unmatched in their beauty on earth. Let them affectionately honour you, as they would for an elder. Let these kings, with Dasharha at the forefront, release tears of joy. O king! Having discarded your vanity, be united with your brothers. Together with your brothers, rule the entire earth. Having happily embraced each other, let these kings return. O Indra among kings! Refrain from war. Listen to the reasons of your well-wishers. In the case of a war, the certain destruction of the kshatriyas can be seen. The stars are against us. Birds and animals are behaving in a terrible way. Flaming meteors are seen to descend on your army. O lord of the earth! Our mounts are miserable and seem to be weeping. Vultures are circling our soldiers in every direction. The city and the king's residence no longer seem to be as they used to be before. The directions are blazing and jackals are inauspiciously howling in every direction. Listen to the words of your father and mother and of your well-wishers. O mighty-armed one! Peace or war depends on you. O destroyer of enemies! If you do not heed the advice of your well-wishers, you will see your soldiers oppressed by Partha's arrows. You will hear Bhima's loud roars and see his strength in battle. On hearing these and Gandiva's roar, you will remember my[325] words. If you do not find my words to be acceptable, all of this will come to pass."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, he[326] was distracted. He glanced sideways and lowered his face. He furrowed the middle of his brows and did not say anything. On seeing him thus distracted, those bulls among men[327] glanced at each other and spoke these words to the one who had not replied.

'Bhishma said, "Partha[328] is devoted. He is devoid of jealousy. He possesses the qualities of a brahmana. He is devoted to the truth. What can be greater misery than having to fight with him?”

‘Drona said, “O king! Dhananjaya is dearer to me than my own son Ashvatthama. The one with the ape on his standard[329] shows more reverence towards others than anyone else. If I have to fight with Dhananjaya, whom I love more than my own son, as a result of following the dharma of kshatriyas, shame on the life of kshatriyas. Because of my favours, there is no other archer in the world who is equal or superior to Bibhatsu as an archer. One who betrays his friends, one who is wicked in his sentiments, one who is an atheist, one who is dishonest and one who is deceitful, does not obtain worship from the virtuous, like an idiot who has arrived at a sacrifice. Though restrained from evil, an evil-souled one desires evil. Though tempted by evil, a person who is pure in soul desires purity. Though they have been treated with falsehood, they still remain affectionately inclined. O supreme among Bharatas! But your taints will lead to a bad end. You have been addressed by the eldest among the Kurus, by me, by Vidura and also by Vasudeva. But you do not see what is beneficial. ‘I have the forces.’ Thinking this, you wish to cross over. That is like crossing the Ganga, with its crocodiles, alligators ands sharks,[330] during the rainy season. You think that you are now dressed in Yudhishthira’s garments. But because of your avarice, you have only obtained the prosperity that he has cast away, like a garland. Even in the forest, together with Droupadi, Partha Pandava[331] enjoys a kingdom,[332] surrounded by his brothers, who wield weapons. Who can outlive him? When he met Ilavila’s son,[333] whom all the kings serve as servants, Dharmaraja surpassed him in radiance. He obtained gems in Kubera’s abode. Desiring the kingdom, the Pandavas are ready to invade your prosperous kingdom. We[334] have offered gifts. We have offered oblations. We have studied. We have satisfied the brahmanas with riches. We have lived our lives. Both of us know that we have accomplished our tasks. But you are discarding happiness, the kingdom, friends and riches. You wish to wage war on the Pandavas. But you will confront a great calamity. Droupadi, the one who is truthful in her conduct, desires their victory. That goddess is terrible in her austerities and vows. How can you defeat the Pandava? Janardana is his adviser and Dhananjaya, foremost among those who wield all weapons, is his brother. Brahmanas who have fortitude and have controlled their senses, are his companions. He is brave and terrible in his austerities. How can you defeat the Pandava? I am telling you again, as a well-wisher who desires to save the life of a well-wisher who is immersing himself in an ocean of disaster. Refrain from this war with those brave ones. Have peace with them, so that the Kurus can prosper. With your sons, advisers and forces, do not advance towards defeat.”’

Section Fifty-Five

Karna-Upanivada Parva

This section has 351 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 801(138): 28 shlokas
Chapter 802(139): 57 shlokas
Chapter 803(140): 20 shlokas
Chapter 804(141): 49 shlokas
Chapter 805(142): 30 shlokas
Chapter 806(143): 12 shlokas
Chapter 807(144): 26 shlokas
Chapter 808(145): 40 shlokas
Chapter 809(146): 35 shlokas
Chapter 810(147): 35 shlokas
Chapter 811(148): 19 shlokas

Nivada *is an invitation and* upa *has the connotation of secret. This section is in the nature of a secret invitation to Karna. Both Krishna and Kunti try to wean Karna away, but fail.*

801(138)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! Before Madhusudana left, surrounded by the princes and the advisers, he instructed Karna to ascend the chariot. What did the destroyer of enemy warriors tell Radheya on the chariot? What comforting words did Govinda tell the son of a suta? Krishna speaks in a voice that roars like a flood or a cloud. O Sanjaya! Whether it was mildly, or whether it was sharply, what did he tell Karna?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to what Madhusudana, whose soul cannot be measured, told Radheya. I will recount the words in their entirety, both sharp and mild. They were pleasant and in conformity with dharma. They were truthful and beneficial. They were acceptable to the heart.

'"Vasudeva said, 'O Radheya! You have served brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas. Free of jealousy and attentively, you have asked them about the truth. O Karna! You know the eternal teachings of the Vedas. You know about the sacred texts of dharma and their subtleties. People who know about the sacred texts say that a son who is born to a maiden before her marriage is as much of a son as one who is born from a father after marriage. O Karna! You have been born in this fashion.[1] According to dharma, you are Pandu's son. According to the instructions of the sacred texts of dharma, come with me and you will become a king. The Parthas are on your father's side and the Vrishnis are on your mother's side. O bull among men! Know that both these sides are your own lineage. O son![2] Come with me now and the Pandavas will recognize you as a Kounteya who has been born before Yudhishthira. The five Pandavas will grasp your feet as brothers, together with the five sons of Droupadi and Subhadra's unvanquished son.[3] The kings and princes who have gathered together in the cause of the Pandavas and all the Andhakas and Vrishnis will grasp your feet. The kings, the wives of kings and the daughters of kings will bring gold, silver and earthen vessels, herbs, all kinds of seeds, all kinds of gems and creepers for your anointment.[4] At the sixth point in time,[5] Droupadi will have intercourse with you. Let the brahmanas who are acquainted with the four Vedas consecrate you today, assisted by the priest of the Pandavas,[6] the five Pandava brothers who are bulls among men, Droupadi's five sons, the Panchalas and the Chedis. You will be seated on the skin of a tiger. I will myself instate you as king and the lord of the earth. Kunti's son, King Yudhishthira, will be the heir apparent. Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, rigid in his vows and with dharma in his soul, will ascend the chariot behind you and hold a white umbrella.[7] O Kounteya! The immensely strong Bhimasena will hold a giant white umbrella above your head when you are consecrated. Your chariot will have hundreds of bells that make a noise and will be strewn with the skins of tigers. It will be yoked to white horses and Arjuna will drive it. Abhimanyu, Nakula, Sahadeva and Droupadi's five sons will always be stationed near, for your instructions. The Panchalas and maharatha Shikhandi will follow you. I will myself follow you and so will all the Andhakas, Vrishnis and Dasharhas. O lord of the earth! The Dasharhas will be part of your family. O mighty-armed one! Enjoy the kingdom, together with your Pandava brothers. Practise meditation. Offer oblations. Observe other auspicious signs. Let the Dravidas, together with the Kuntalas, follow you, with the Andhras, Talachakras, Chuchupas and Venupas. Let bards and minstrels sing your praises in many ways. Let the Pandavas proclaim Vasushena's[8] triumph. O Kounteya! Surrounded by the Parthas, like the moon is by the nakshatras, rule over the kingdom and delight Kunti. Let your friends rejoice and let your enemies suffer. Today, let there be fraternity between you and your Pandava brothers.'"'

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'"Karna said, 'O Keshava! I have no doubt that you are affectionately speaking to me as a well-wisher. O Varshneya! As a friend, you wish for my welfare. I also know everything about my being Pandu's son under the norms of dharma. O Krishna! These are the instructions of the sacred texts of dharma, as you have interpreted them. O Janardana! As a maiden, she conceived me in her womb through the sun. Once I was born, she abandoned me on the instructions of the sun. O Krishna! I was born in this way, Pandu's son under the norms of dharma. However, Kunti did not think of my welfare and cast me out as one undesired. As soon as he saw me, the suta Adhiratha took me home. O Madhusudana! Out of affection towards me, he gave me to Radha.[9] Out of affection towards me, milk flowed from Radha's breasts. O Madhava! She accepted my urine and my excrement. How can someone like me ignore the ancestral oblations that are due to her? I am learned in dharma. I have always devoted myself to listening to the sacred texts of dharma. Suta Adhiratha thinks of me as a son. Out of affection towards him, I have always thought of him as a father. O Madhava! O Janardana! Out of affection towards his son, he had my birth rites performed, in accordance with the prescriptions of the sacred texts. He got the brahmanas to name me Vasushena. O Keshava! When I attained youth, he had me married to wives. O Janardana! I have given birth to sons and grandsons through them. O Krishna! My heart is tied with bonds of affection to them. O Govinda! The entire earth, masses of gold, delight and fear cannot incite me to be false towards these. O Krishna! In Dhritarashtra's lineage, I have obtained refuge with Duryodhana. I have enjoyed a kingdom for thirteen years, without any thorns. I have offered oblations and performed many sacrifices, but in the company of sutas. I have issued invitations and undertaken matrimonial alliances, but in the company of sutas. O Krishna! O Varshneya! On obtaining me on his side, Duryodhana has raised his weapons and is ready for war with the Pandavas. O Achyuta! Therefore, I have been confidently chosen as the supreme warrior to counter Savyasachi in a duel with chariots. O Janardana! I cannot be false to Dhritarashtra's intelligent son because of death, bondage, fear or greed. O Hrishikesha! If I do not fight with Savyasachi now in a duel with chariots, that will bring ill fame to both me and Partha.

"“‘O Madhusudana! There is no doubt that you have spoken with my welfare in mind. There is no doubt that all the Pandavas will act in accordance with your instructions. O Purushottama! You should not reveal this conversation between us. O descendant of the Yadava lineage! I think that this will be in everyone's interests. If the king who has dharma in his soul and is rigid in his vows[10] knows that I am Kunti's first son, he will not accept the kingdom. O Madhusudana! O destroyer of enemies! Even if I obtain this large and prosperous kingdom, I will hand it over to Duryodhana. Yudhishthira has dharma in his soul. He has Hrishikesha as a leader and Dhananjaya as a warrior. May he be the king forever. O Madhava! Maharatha Bhima, Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupadi's sons, Uttamouja, Yudhamanyu, Satyadharma, Somaki, Chaidya, Chekitana, the unvanquished Shikhandi, the Kekaya brothers who have the complexions of fireflies, maharatha Kuntibhoja who has the complexion of a rainbow,[11] Bhimasena's maternal uncle, maharatha Senajit and Virata's son Shankha are on his side. The earth and the kingdom will be his. O Janardana! You are his treasury. O Krishna! This large assemblage of kshatriyas has been brought together. This resplendent kingdom, famous among all the kings, has already been won.[12] O Varshneya! Dhirtarashtra's son will undertake a sacrifice with weapons. O Janardana! You will be the one who will witness this sacrifice. O Krishna! When the sacrifice is performed, you will be the *adhvaryu*.[13] Bibhatsu, with the ape on his banner, will gird himself as the *hotar*. Gandiva will be the ladle. The valour of men will be the clarified butter. Unleashed by Savyasachi, *aindra*, *pashupata*, *brahma* and *sthunakarna*[14] will be mantras. Matching his father in valour and even surpassing him, Subhadra's son will be the *gravastotra*.[15] Yet again, the immensely strong Bhima, the tiger among men whose roars in the field of battle destroy an army of elephants, will be the udgatar and *prastota*.[16] The eternal King Yudhishthira has dharma in his soul. He knows about incantations and oblations and about the brahman. O Madhusudana! The sound of the conchshells, drums and kettledrums, resounding like roaring lions, will be the *subrahmanya*.[17] Nakula and Sahadeva, Madri's two illustrious and extremely valiant sons, will be the *shamitar*s.[18] O Govinda! The chariots will have spotted flagpoles and will be stocked with spotless spears. O Janardana! These will be the sacrificial poles at the sacrifice. Shafted arrows, hollow arrows, iron arrows, arrows with heads like the teeth of calves and javelins will be the pots of soma. The bows will be the strainers.[19] The swords will be broken fragments from the jars. The heads will be the sacrificial cakes. O Krishna! Blood will be the oblations offered at this sacrifice. Maces, lances and unblemished clubs will be the kindling. The pupils of Drona and Sharadvata Kripa will be the superintending priests.[20] The arrows unleashed by the wielder of the Gandiva, by maharathas and by Drona and Drona's son, will be the ladles. Satyaki will be the *pratiprasthanika*.[21] Dhritarashtra will be the performer of the sacrifice and the great army will be the wife.[22] O mighty-armed one! When this *atiratra*[23] sacrifice is observed, the immensely strong Ghatotkacha will be the shamitar. O

Krishna! Because he was born from a fire, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna will be the dakshina at the sacrifice when oblations[24] are offered.

““‘O Krishna! I regret the harsh words I used against the Pandavas to please Dhritarashtra’s son. I am now tormented by that deed. O Krishna! When you see me killed by Savyasachi, that will be the *punashchiti*[25] of their sacrifice. When Pandava[26] roars loudly and drinks Duhshasana’s blood, that will be the drinking of soma. O Janardana! When the two from Panchala[27] bring down Drona and Bhishma, that will be the conclusion of the sacrifice. O Madhava! When the immensely strong Bhimasena kills Duryodhana, that will signify the end of Dhritarashtra’s sacrifice. O Keshava! Dhritarashtra’s daughters-in-law and granddaughters-in-law will gather together, their lords killed, their sons killed, their protectors killed. O Janardana! Together with Gandhari, they will weep at the sacrificial site, frequented by dogs, vultures and ospreys. That will be like the bath after the sacrifice. O Madhusudana! O bull among kshatriyas! These kshatriyas are aged in learning and aged in years. Because of your doings, let them not have a fruitless death.[28] O Keshava! Let this entire circle of kshatriyas meet their death through weapons in Kurukshetra, the most sacred spot in the three worlds. O Pundarikaksha! O Varshneya! Therefore, channel your desires so that all the kshatriyas can ascend to heaven. O Janardana! As long as the mountains are there and as long as the rivers flow, the eternal fame of this deed shall resound till then. The brahmanas will speak about the great battle of Bharata.[29] O Varshneya! In gatherings, they will proclaim the glory of the kshatriyas. O Keshava! Bring Kounteya here, to fight with me. O scorcher of enemies! Always keep this conversation between us secret.’””

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‘Sanjaya said, “Having heard Karna’s words, Keshava, the destroyer of enemy warriors, smiled. He then laughed and spoke these words. ‘O Karna! Are you not tempted by the offer of a kingdom? Do you not desire to rule the earth that I will give to you? The victory of the

Pandavas is certain. There is no scope for any doubt on that score. The triumphal banner of the Pandavas can be seen, with the terrible king of the apes perched at the top. It was constructed by Bhouvana with divine maya. It has been raised, as radiant as Indra's banner. Many terrible and divine beings can be seen on it, evoking fear. It is not obstructed by mountains and forests. It has been raised up diagonally and is one yojana tall. O Karna! Dhananjaya's radiant flag has been raised and is equal to the fire in its form. When you see the one with the white horses in battle, with Krishna as the charioteer, using the weapons of Indra, Agni and the Maruts and hear the roar of Gandiva, as forceful as thunder, there will no longer be treta, krita or dvapara. When you see Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, in battle, protecting his great army with incantations and oblations, as unassailable as Aditya and tormenting the soldiers of the enemy, there will no longer be treta, krita or dvapara. When you see the immensely strong Bhimasena in the field of battle, dancing in the battle and drinking Duhshasana's blood, like a rutting elephant that has slain a challenging tusker, there will no longer be treta, krita or dvapara. When you see Madri's maharatha sons in battle, routing the army of Dhritarashtra's son like two elephants, shattering the chariots of enemy warriors and engaged in hurling weapons, there will no longer be treta, krita or dvapara. When you see Drona, Shantanu's son and Kripa in battle, with King Suyodhana and Jayadratha of Sindhu fiercely dashing to attack and restrained by Savyasachi, there will no longer be treta, krita or dvapara. O Karna! Depart from here and tell Drona, Shantanu's son and Kripa this. This is a pleasant month, with food and fuel easily obtained. The herbs and forests are ripe and prosperous now. The trees are full of fruit and with few flies. There is no mud. The water is tasty. It is not warm, nor is it cold. The time is pleasant. It will be the new moon[30] seven days from now. Let the fight begin on that day, because that is said to be Shakra's day. Also tell all the kings who have assembled to do battle. "I will accomplish everything that you wish for." The kings and the princes who are following Duryodhana will be killed through weapons and attain the supreme goal.'"

‘Sanjaya said, “On hearing these auspicious and beneficial words from Keshava, Karna honoured Krishna Madhusudana[31] and spoke these words. ‘O mighty-armed one! Knowing everything, why did you wish to confuse me? The destruction of the entire earth is imminent. Shakuni, Duhshasana and Dhritarashtra’s son, King Duryodhana, and I are responsible. O Krishna! There is no doubt that there will be a great and terrible war between the Pandavas and the Kurus, with the mud of blood. The kings and the princes who follow Duryodhana’s instructions will be burnt in the battle with the flames of weapons and will go to Yama’s abode. O Madhusudana! Many terrible dreams are seen. There are fearful portents and extremely terrible omens. They signify the defeat of Dhritarashtra’s son and Yudhishthira’s victory. O Varshneya! There are many signs and they make the body hair stand up. The sharp and extremely radiant planet Shanaishchara[32] is oppressing the nakshatra Prajapatya,[33] implying greater suffering for all beings. O Madhusudana! Angaraka[34] is retrograde in Jyeshtha and is aspiring for Anuradha, as if seeking its friendship.[35] O Krishna! O Varshneya! A great calamity confronts the Kurus, in particular because the planet is oppressing Chitra.[36] The signs on the moon are distorted and Rahu is obstructing the sun. Meteors are showering down from heaven. There are storms and earthquakes. The elephants are trumpeting. O Madhava! The horses are shedding tears and no longer find pleasure in fodder and water. O mighty-armed one! When such omens are seen, it is said that a great calamity is at hand and that it will be the terrible destruction of beings. O Keshava! It is seen that though horses, elephants and men are eating little, they are releasing large quantities of excrement. O Madhusudana! The learned ones have said that these are the signs of the defeat of the entire army of Dhritarashtra’s son. O Krishna! It is said that the mounts of the Pandavas are happy. The animals are circumambulating them from the right and that is a sign of their victory. O Keshava! But all the animals are circumambulating Dhritarashtra’s son from the left. Invisible voices can be heard and these are signs of his defeat. Peacocks, *pushpashakunas*,[37] swans, cranes, chatakas and masses of *jivamjivakas*[38] follow the Pandavas. Vultures, crows, *badas*,[39] hawks, *yatudhanas*, jackals and masses of flies follow the Kouravas. There is no sound of drums in the army of Dhritarashtra's son. But even when they are not struck, the drums of the Pandavas are making a sound. The wells in the army of Dhritarashtra's son are making a sound like that of cows and bulls. That is a sign of his defeat. O Madhava! The gods are showering down flesh and blood. A radiant city of the gandharvas has appeared. It has walls, moats, turrets and beautiful gates. At dawn and at dusk, a black mace can be seen to envelope the sun. This signifies a great calamity. A jackal is howling terribly and that is a sign of his[40] defeat. Terrible birds with black necks hang around. Then they fly away towards the dusk, a sign of his defeat. O Madhusudana! He first hates the brahmanas, then his elders and his faithful servants. That is a sign of his defeat. The eastern direction is red. The southern direction has the complexion of weapons. O Madhusudana! The western direction looks like an unbaked vessel. O Madhava! For Dhritarashtra's son, all the directions are on fire. These signs that are seen presage a great calamity. O Achyuta! I had a dream in which I saw a palace with a thousand pillars. I saw Yudhishthira, together with his brothers, ascending this. All of them were seen to wear white headdresses and white garments. I saw all of them seated on beautiful seats. O Krishna! O Janardana! I saw you in that dream, draping the earth, strewn with blood, with entrails. The infinitely energetic Yudhishthira ascended a heap of bones. He happily ate ghee mixed with *payasa*[41] from a golden vessel. I saw Yudhishthira swallow the earth, which you had given him. It is evident he will enjoy the earth. Vrikodara, terrible in his deeds, ascended a mountain. That tiger among men held a club in his hand and seemed to be eyeing the earth. This clearly shows that he will kill us in a great battle. O Hrishikesha! I know that where dharma exists, victory exists there. O Hrishikesha! Together with you, Dhananjaya held the Gandiva and mounted a white elephant.[42] He shone in supreme radiance. O Krishna! There is no doubt that you will slaughter all the kings, with Duryodhana in the forefront, in battle. Nakula, Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki were adorned in white bracelets and necklaces and wore white garlands and garments. Those tigers among men ascended excellent vehicles that were drawn by men. Those three great ones had white umbrellas and garments. O Janardana! O Keshava! I saw three from the army of Dhritarashtra's son too, wearing white headdresses. You know who they are—Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma. O Madhava! All the other kings were seen with red headdresses.[43] O mighty-armed one! O Janardana! Ascended on a vehicle drawn by camels, Bhishma and Drona, together with me and Dhritarashtra's son, headed in the direction ruled by Agastya.[44] O Janardana! In a short while, we reached Yama's abode. There is no doubt that I and the other kings, and the circle of kshatriyas, will enter Gandiva's fire.'

'"Krishna replied, 'O Karna! The destruction of the earth is now near, since your heart does not find my words to be acceptable. O son![45] The destruction of all beings is imminent. That which is wrong appears to be right and is not removed from the heart.'

'"Karna said, 'O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! If we remain alive, we may perhaps see you again after this great battle, which will lead to the destruction of all the brave kshatriyas. O Krishna! Otherwise, we will certainly meet in heaven. O unblemished one! Now it seems that we will only meet there again.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Saying this, Karna embraced Madhava tightly. Having obtained Keshava's permission, he descended from the chariot. Having ascended his own chariot, decorated with gold, Radheya returned with us,[46] dejected in his mind. Together with Satyaki, Keshava then left at a greater speed, repeatedly urging his charioteer, 'Go! Go!'"'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Krishna's entreaties having failed, he left the Kurus and went towards the Pandavas. Kshatta went to Pritha and in a soft and sorrowful tone, spoke these words. "O one whose sons are alive! You know that I am always inclined towards kindness. Though I have raised my voice, Suyodhana has not accepted my words. King Yudhishthira has the Chedis, Panchalas, Kekayas, Bhima, Arjuna, Krishna, Yuyudhana[47] and the twins on his side. Desiring dharma, he has camped in Upaplavya. Though he is strong, desiring friendship with his kin, he acts like one who is weak. King Dhritarashtra is aged in his years, but does not seek peace. Intoxicated by the insolence of his son, he is walking along the path of adharma. The dissension has arisen because of the evil intelligence of Jayadratha, Karna, Duhshasana and Soubala. Using adharma, in this fashion, they robbed the kingdom from one who follows dharma. But in this way, dharma's consequences bind one down. Who will not suffer from fever when the Kurus forcibly oppress dharma in this way? Keshava has left without obtaining peace and the Pandavas will prepare for war. Thus, the bad policy followed by the Kurus will lead to the destruction of warriors. I think about this and cannot sleep, during the day and at night." Kunti heard these words, spoken by one who desired welfare. She began to sigh in grief and her mind was also distressed.

'She thought, "Shame on artha! It is because of this that there will be this great carnage of relatives. There can only be defeat in this war among friends. If the assembled Pandavas, Chedis, Panchalas and Yadavas fight the Bharatas, what can be greater misery than that? I can see that there is a certain taint associated with war, but it is also there in the case of defeat in war. For those who are without riches, it is better to die. But there cannot be a victory in the destruction of relatives. The grandfather, Shantanu's son, the preceptor who is foremost among warriors and Karna are with Dhritarashtra's son and that increases my fears. The preceptor Drona will never willingly wish to fight with his disciples. Why should the grandfather not be kindly disposed towards the Pandavas? This leaves only one[48] who unnecessarily follows the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra. Because of his evil delusions, he has always hated the Pandavas. He is immensely strong in his resolution and he is also powerful. Karna has always been against the Pandavas and I am now tormented by that. Today, I hope to turn Karna's mind towards the Pandavas. I will meet him, tell him the truth and seek to obtain his favours. Satisfied, the illustrious Durvasa granted me a boon. When I dwelt in the inner quarters of my father, King Kuntibhoja's abode, I was honoured by the ability of summoning the gods. With a trembling heart, I thought about this in many ways, about the strength and weakness of the mantra and about the brahmana's boon. Because of the nature of a woman, who also possessed childish sentiments, I thought about this repeatedly, though I was protected by a trusted nurse and surrounded by friends. How could I avoid taints and how could I preserve my father's reputation? How could I do something good for myself, without committing a sin? Thinking about that brahmana and bowing down before him, I was overcome by curiosity and behaved like a child. Though I was still a maiden, I summoned the sun god to me. Though I was a virgin, I conceived him in my womb. He was protected like my son. Why should he not listen to my words, which will be beneficial for the cause of his brothers?"

'Thinking in this fashion, Kunti decided on an excellent course of action.[49] So as to bring success to her objective, she went towards the Bhagirathi. On the banks of the Ganga, Pritha heard the sounds of incantations, being recited by her compassionate and truthful son. He was facing the east, with his hands raised up. The ascetic lady waited behind him, until the meditations were over. She was the daughter of a Kourava and descended from the Vrishni lineage. She stood there, behind Karna's upper garments,[50] oppressed by the sun, like a garland of lotuses that has dried. He was rigid in his vows and meditated until his back was heated by the sun. When he turned around, he saw Kunti and joined his hands in salutation. As was appropriate, the immensely energetic one, who was supreme among those who upheld dharma, honoured her.'

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'Karna said, "I am Karna, the son of Radha and Adhiratha, and I salute you. Tell me. Why have you come here? What can I do for you?"

'Kunti replied, "You are the son of Kunti, not of Radha. And Adhiratha is not your father. O Karna! You have not been born in a lineage of sutas. Know these words of mine to be true. While I was still a maiden, I gave birth to you. In Kuntibhoja's abode, you were the first one I carried in my womb. O Partha! You are my son. The duty of the god Tapana Virochana[51] is to produce light. O Karna, supreme among those who wield weapons! He gave birth to you through me. You were born with earrings and armour. You were born as the son of a god, surrounded in radiance. You were born as my invincible son, in my father's house. Because of your ignorance, you do not know your true brothers. Since you are my son, you should not serve the sons of Dhritarashtra. O son! It is the determination of dharma that the fruits of dharma accrue to men who satisfy their fathers, or their one-eyed mother.[52] Earlier, Arjuna earned prosperity for Yudhishthira and the sons of Dhritarashtra robbed it because of their greed. Separate yourself from them and enjoy it. Today, let the Kurus witness the fraternal union between Karna and Arjuna. Let those who are evil bow down. Let Karna and Arjuna be like Rama[53] and Janardana. If the two of you are united in your minds, what can you not achieve in this world? O Karna! Surrounded by your five brothers, you will shine, like Brahma surrounded by the Vedas and the five Vedangas.[54] You have all the qualities. You are the eldest and the best among all the relatives. The words 'son of a suta' will no longer be used for you. You will be a valiant Partha."'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Then Karna heard a voice that issued from the sun. It was spoken affectionately like a father and came from the sun god himself. "O Karna! Pritha has spoken the truth. Act in accordance with your mother's words. O tiger among men! You will obtain the greatest benefit, if you act entirely in accordance with her words." Thus addressed by his mother, and by his father, the sun god himself, Karna's resolution did not falter, because he was always established in the truth.

'Karna said, "O kshatriya lady! It is not that I disbelieve the words spoken by you, or contradict that acting in accordance with your words is the gate to dharma. But your action towards me was extremely evil. By casting me out, you have destroyed the fame and renown that I could have possessed. I have been born a kshatriya, but I did not obtain the rites that were due to a kshatriya. All this was because of you. What wicked enemy could have done anything worse? You showed me no compassion at the time when it was required. You deprived me of my rites. But you are now asking me to act. Earlier, you have never sought my welfare as a mother. However, desiring your own welfare alone, you have now come to me and are addressing me. Who does not suffer when Dhananjaya is aided by Krishna? If I now go over to the Parthas, who will not think that I am frightened? I have not been known as their brother before. This has been revealed at the time of the battle. If I go to the Pandavas, who will speak of me as a kshatriya? The sons of Dhritarashtra have given me a share in every object of desire. They have honoured me and given me every kind of happiness. How can I act counter to that now? They have always served me and have always bowed down before me, like the Vasus before Vasava. They now confront a feud with an enemy. They think that with my life, they can withstand the enemies. How can I act against the desire that is there in their minds? Using me as a boat, they wish to cross over to the other shore of this shoreless and impassable war. How can I abandon them? For those who have earned a living from the sons of Dhritarashtra, the time has arrived. I must devote myself to that task, even if there is a risk to my life. There are those who are satiated and treated well. But when the time arrives for a task, these wicked ones are ungrateful and act counter to what should be done. They are faithless towards the king. They are servants who steal the ancestral offerings of their master. These evil-acting ones do not obtain this world, or the next. In the cause of Dhritarashtra's son, I will fight with your sons. I will use all my strength and my power. I will not lie to you. I will seek to abide by the conduct of a non-violent and truthful person. But even if they are beneficial, I will not act in accordance with your words now. However, your appeal to me will not be fruitless. Though I can counter and kill them, I will not kill all of your sons in battle—Yudhishthira, Bhima and the twins, everyone other than Arjuna. In Yudhishthira's army, I will fight with Arjuna. Having killed Arjuna in battle, I will obtain fruits. Or I will be killed by Savyasachi and attain fame. O illustrious one! The number of your sons will not be less than five. You will either be without Arjuna and with Karna, or if I am killed, you will be with Arjuna."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard Karna's words, Kunti trembled with grief. She embraced her son Karna, who was firm because of his fortitude, and said, "It must be this way then. O Karna! The Kouravas will go to their destruction, as you have said. Destiny is extremely powerful. O destroyer of enemies! But you must promise me about the safety of four of your brothers. You have given me that pledge and you must discharge that promise. May you be safe and in good health." Pritha spoke these words to Karna. Delighted, Karna honoured her. Then, both of them left in different directions.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'Having returned to Upaplavya from Hastinapura, Keshava, the destroyer of enemies, told the Pandavas everything that had happened. They spoke to each other for a long time and held repeated consultations. So as to rest, Shouri went to his own residence. After having taken their leave of all the kings, headed by Virata, when the sun had set, the five Pandava brothers performed their evening prayers. Then their minds turned towards Krishna and they had Dasharha brought for more consultations.

'Yudhishthira asked, "O Pundarikaksha! When you went to Nagapura,[55] what did you tell Dhritarashtra's son in the assembly hall? You should tell us that."

'Vasudeva replied, "When I went to Nagapura, what I told Dhritarashtra's son in the assembly hall was true, healthy and beneficial. But the evil-minded one did not accept it."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Hrishikesha! Duryodhana cannot be controlled. When he deviated from the proper path, what did the grandfather, senior among the Kurus, tell him? What did the mighty-armed preceptor, Bharadvaja, say? What about our younger father, Kshatta, supreme among those who uphold dharma? Tormented over his sons,[56] what did he tell Dhritarashtra's son? What did all the kings who were in the assembly hall have to say? O Janardana! Tell us everything, exactly as it happened. You have already told us all the words spoken by the two foremost among the Kurus[57] to the wicked one who is overcome by desire and avarice and thinks himself to be wise. O Keshava! But unpleasant things do not remain in my heart. O Govinda! O illustrious one! I wish to hear their words. O son![58] Act so that time does not pass. O Krishna! You are our refuge. You are our protector. You are our preceptor.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O king! O Indra among kings! Listen to the words that King Suyodhana spoke to me in the midst of that assembly of the Kurus. After I had spoken my words, Dhritarashtra’s son laughed. Then Bhishma was extremely enraged and spoke these words. ‘O Duryodhana! Listen to my words, for the sake of the welfare of the lineage. O tiger among kings! Having heard my words, act in the interests of your own lineage. O son![59] My father was King Shantanu, famous in the worlds. I was the only son of someone who was the best among all those who had sons. He began to think, “How can I have a second son? The learned ones say that having a single son is like having no son at all. How can my lineage not be destroyed? How can the fame continue to be extended?” Having got to know about his desire, I brought him Kali[60] as my mother. For the sake of my father and my lineage, I took an extremely difficult oath that I would not be a king and would hold up my semen.[61] This is known to you. I have cheerfully lived here, abiding by my promise. O king! Through her was born my younger brother Vichitravirya, with dharma in his soul. He was mighty-armed and prosperous and an extender of the Kuru lineage. When my father ascended to heaven, I instated him in my kingdom as a king. I myself behaved like a servant who was inferior to him. O Indra among kings! After defeating an array of kings, I brought him appropriate wives. You have heard about this many times. I then confronted Rama in a duel.[62] Because of fear of Rama, the citizens banished him from the city.[63] Because of excessive addiction to his wives, he was soon afflicted by pulmonary disease. Without a king, the lord of the gods no longer rained down on the kingdom. The subjects suffered from hunger and fear and came and spoke to me.

‘‘‘The subjects said, “All the subjects are decaying. For the sake of our welfare, become our king. O fortunate one! O extender of Shantanu’s lineage! Dispel these calamities. All your subjects are suffering from an extremely terrible disease. O Gangeya![64] Only a few ones are left. You should save us. O brave one! Dispel this disease. As is dharma, protect the subjects. When you are yourself alive, do not let this kingdom head towards destruction.”’

‘“Bhishma said, ‘The lamentations of the subjects failed to move my heart. I remembered that adherence to an oath is virtuous conduct. O great king! The citizens, my fortunate mother Kali, the servants, the priests, the preceptors and the extremely learned brahmanas were greatly distressed and kept urging me, “Be our king. The kingdom protected by Pratipa[65] is being destroyed. O immensely intelligent one! For the sake of our welfare, be our king.” At these words, I joined my hands in salutation. I was unhappy and extremely miserable. O son! I kept repeatedly telling them about the oath I had taken to honour my father and for the sake of the lineage, that I would hold up my semen and would not be a king. O king! Then I joined my hands in salutation and repeatedly told my mother, “O mother! I have been born from Shantanu and will extend the Kuru lineage. It was for your sake that I took the oath and I cannot falsify it. Even for your sake, do not impose this burden on me. O one who is devoted to her sons! O mother! I am your servant, awaiting your command.” O great king! Having thus entreated my mother and the subjects, together with my mother, for the sake of my brother’s wives, I solicited the great sage Vyasa and sought the rishi’s favours for the sake of offspring. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! He showed us his favours and begot three sons.[66] Being blind and deprived of the rites, your father could not be a king. Thus, the great-souled Pandu, famous in the world, became a king. Since he was a king, his sons are the inheritors of their father’s share. O son![67] Do not quarrel over this. Give them half of the kingdom. As long as I am alive, which man can rule the kingdom? Do not slight my words. I have always desired peace. O son! O king! I do not differentiate between them and you. These are also the views of your father, Gandhari and Vidura.

The words of the elders should be heard. Do not ignore my words. Otherwise, you will destroy everybody, yourself and the earth also.’”’

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‘Vasudeva said, “After Bhishma had spoken, Drona, who was capable of speaking, addressed these words to Duryodhana, in the midst of the kings. ‘O fortunate one! O son![68] Just as Pratipa’s son, Shantanu, was established for the welfare of the lineage, Devavrata Bhishma is also established for the welfare of the lineage. Pandu, the lord of men, was also like that. He was truthful and in control of his senses. He became the king of the Kurus. He had dharma in his soul. He was good in his vows and was extremely controlled. Later, the extender of the Kuru lineage gave the kingdom to his elder, the intelligent Dhritarashtra, and to the younger, Kshatta. O king! O Kouravya! O unblemished one! After having established the one without decay[69] on the kingdom, he left for the forest with his wife. Vidura, tiger among men, humbly accepted a position that was inferior to him[70] and served him, like one fanning him with a whisk. O son![71] In the appropriate way, all the subjects accepted Dhritarashtra as the lord of men, just as they had accepted Pandu, lord of men. After having handed over the kingdom to Dhritarashtra and Vidura, Pandu, the destroyer of enemy cities, roamed around the entire earth. Vidura, devoted to the truth, was in charge of building up the treasury, gifts, the superintendence of the servants and everyone’s subsistence. Bhishma, the immensely energetic conqueror of enemy cities, was in charge of peace and war and the care of the king. While he was on the throne, the immensely strong King Dhritarashtra was always followed by the great-souled Vidura. Having been born in this lineage, how can you decide to break up the lineage? O lord of men! Together with your brothers, enjoy all the objects of desire. I am not saying this out of any weakness, or for any riches. O supreme among kings! I eat what Bhishma gives me, not what you give. O lord of men! I do not wish to draw my sustenance from you. Drona goes where Bhishma goes. Do what Bhishma has asked you to. O destroyer of enemies! Give the sons of

Pandu half of the kingdom. O son![72] I have always behaved equally as a teacher to both you and them. The one with the white horses[73] is the same to me as Ashvatthama. What is the need to speak a lot? Where there is dharma, victory is there.' O great king! The infinitely energetic Drona spoke in this way.

'"Then Vidura, devoted to the truth and knowledgeable about dharma, glanced towards his father's[74] face and spoke these words. 'O Devavrata! Listen to the words that I am going to speak. This lineage of the Kouravas was destroyed[75] and you made it rise up again. Therefore, when I am lamenting, do not ignore my words. Who is the one named Duryodhana, born in this lineage? He is a defiler of the lineage. He is overcome by greed and you are following his inclination. He does not behave like an arya. He is ungrateful. He has lost his senses because of avarice. His father can see dharma and artha, but he acts contrary to his instructions. The Kurus will be destroyed because of Duryodhana's deeds. O great king! Act so that the destruction does not occur. O immensely radiant one! Earlier, you created me and Dhritarashtra, like a painter fashions a painting. Do not destroy us now. O mighty-armed one! Do not look at this destruction of the lineage and ignore it, like Prajapati, who creates beings in order to destroy them. With the destruction imminent, if your intelligence has failed you, leave for the forest, with me and Dhritarashtra. Or swiftly bind down the wicked and stupid son of Dhritarashtra, who is extremely evil in his intelligence. Let the kingdom now be protected by the Pandavas. O tiger among kings! Show your favours. A great destruction of the Pandavas, the Kurus and the infinitely energetic kings can be seen.' Having spoken in this way, Vidura, distressed in his mind, stopped. He was immersed in his thoughts and sighed repeatedly. Then King Subala's daughter,[76] scared for the lineage, angrily spoke words full of dharma and artha to her evil-minded and violent son Duryodhana, while all the kings looked on. 'Let the kings who have entered the king's assembly hall, the brahmarshis and the courtiers listen while I speak about your crimes and those of your evil advisers and followers. This kingdom of the Kurus is ruled through a continuous process of succession. That is the dharma of the lineage, as it has come down to us. With your wicked intelligence and violent deeds, you wish to cause injury to the kingdom of the Kurus. The intelligent Dhritarashtra is established in the kingdom, with his younger brother, the far-sighted Vidura. O Duryodhana! Because of your delusion and desiring to be king, how can you cross both of them? As long as Bhishma is there, the king and the greatly fortunate Kshatta are subservient to him. Since he[77] knows about dharma, the great-souled son of the river does not desire to be a king of men. The kingdom inalienably belonged to Pandu. His sons should now rule, and no one else. This entire kingdom belongs to the Pandavas, because it has descended to them from their ancestors and they will leave it to their sons and grandsons. The intelligent Devavrata is devoted to the truth. He is great-souled and is foremost among the Kurus. We must accept everything that he has said about dharma. We must act according to our own dharma. Let us follow the one whose vow is great.[78] Let the king and Vidura speak. Let us act in accordance with what our well-wishers say. For a very long time, let us hold dharma up in front. Yudhishthira, the son of Dharma, should rule. He has rightfully obtained the kingdom of the Kurus. This has been instructed by King Dhritarashtra and Shantanu's son has said that this is the most important.'"'

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'Vasudeva said, "O lord of men! When Gandhari had spoken thus, Dhritarashtra, lord of men, spoke to Duryodhana in the midst of the kings. 'O Duryodhana! O son! O fortunate one! Listen to what I am going to tell you and act accordingly, if you wish to respect your father. Soma Prajapati[79] extended the lineage of the Kurus at the beginning. Nahusha's son, Yayati, was sixth in the line from Soma. He had five sons, all supreme among rajarshis. The illustrious and immensely energetic Yadu was the eldest. Puru was younger than him and he extended our lineage. He was born from Sharmishtha, the daughter of Vrishaparva. O foremost among the Bharatas! Yadu was the son of Devayani and was the maternal grandson of the infinitely energetic Kavya Shukra.[80] The ancestor of the Yadavas[81] was powerful and was honoured for his valour. But because he was full of insolence and extremely evil-minded, he insulted the kshatriyas.[82] Because he was deluded by his strength and insolence, he did not follow the instructions of his father. The unvanquished one insulted his father and brothers. Yadu was the strongest one in the four corners of the earth. Having subjugated all the kings, he lived in Nagasahrya.[83] His father, Nahusha's son, Yayati, was enraged. O Gandhari's son! He cursed him and threw him out of the kingdom. Yayati also angrily cursed his other sons, the brothers who were insolent because of their strength. The best of kings then instated his youngest son, Puru, in the kingdom and he remained devoted to him.[84] Thus, if he is insolent, an eldest son can be deprived of the kingdom. If he serves his seniors, even a youngest one can obtain the kingdom. My father's grandfather, Pratipa, knew everything about dharma. He was a lord of the earth who was famous in the three worlds. That lion among kings ruled the kingdom in accordance with dharma. Three sons were born to him. They were famous and were like the gods in form. Devapi was the eldest and Bahlika came next. O son! The intelligent Shantanu, my grandfather, was the third. Devapi was supreme among kings and greatly energetic. He was devoted to dharma, truthful and served his father. He was revered by the citizens of the town and the country. He was honoured by the virtuous. He was loved by everyone, the young and the aged. He was generous and devoted to the truth. He was engaged in the welfare of all beings. He obeyed the instructions of his father and also those of the brahmanas. He was the beloved brother of Bahlika and the great-souled Shantanu. Those great-souled ones were extremely fraternal towards each other. However, Devapi possessed a disease of the skin. In due course of time, the aged and best of kings made arrangements for a consecration, in accordance with the sacred texts. The illustrious one performed all the auspicious rites. But all the brahmanas and the elders, together with the citizens of the town and the country, restrained him from consecrating Devapi. When the king heard about the prevention of the instatement, his voice choked with tears. The king sorrowed over his son. He[85] was generous, learned about dharma and devoted to the truth. He was loved by the subjects. However, he was tainted by a disease of the skin. The gods do not approve of a lord of the earth who is inferior in his limbs. Because of this, that best among kings was restrained by those bulls among brahmanas. On seeing that he[86] was distressed and was sorrowing over his son, and died because of this, Devapi resorted to the forest. Bahlika also gave up the kingdom and went to his maternal uncle's lineage. He abandoned his father and brothers and obtained another prosperous city instead. O king! On Bahlika's instructions, after his father had died, Shantanu, famous in the world, became the king and ruled the kingdom. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the same way, I was the eldest, but was deficient in a limb.[87] After a great deal of reflection, the intelligent Pandu barred me from the kingdom. Though he was younger to me, Pandu obtained the kingdom as a king. O destroyer of enemies! On his death, the kingdom belongs to his sons. If I could not obtain the kingdom, how can you desire the kingdom? This kingdom rightfully belongs to the great-souled Prince Yudhishthira. With his great qualities, he will be the protector of the lineage of the Kouravas. He is truthful. He is never distracted. He abides by the sacred texts. He is loved by his friends and is virtuous. He is loved by the subjects and is kind towards his well-wishers. He has mastered his senses and is the protector of righteous ones. Forgiveness, patience, control, uprightness, truthfulness to vows, learning, single-mindedness, compassion towards beings and control—Yudhishthira has all these qualities of a king. You are not the son of a king and you are not an arya in your conduct. You are always greedy and evil-minded towards your friends. You are insolent. How can you hope to seize a kingdom that, according to the line of succession, belongs to another? Devoid of your delusion, give them half of the kingdom, with the vehicles and the attendants. O Indra among men! The remainder will be enough for you to obtain a living, together with your younger brothers.'"'

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‘Vasudeva said, “Having been thus addressed by Bhishma, Drona, Vidura, Gandhari and Dhritarashtra, the evil one was not brought to his senses. Not understanding, he angrily arose, his eyes red with rage. Wishing to give up their lives, the kings rushed after him. The king[88] repeatedly instructed the kings, who were bereft of their senses. ‘Go to Kurukshetra. It is Pushya today.’[89] Driven by destiny, having made Bhishma the general, together with their soldiers, those lords of the earth then cheerfully left. Those lords of the earth have assembled eleven akshouhinis of soldiers. Bhishma is at the forefront, with a palm tree on his standard.

‘“O lord of the earth! Therefore, do what is appropriate under the circumstances. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have repeated the words that were spoken in my presence by Bhishma, Drona, Vidura, Gandhari and Dhritarashtra in the assembly of the Kurus. O king! Hoping for fraternity, I first used conciliation, to prevent dissension in the lineage of the Kurus and ensure the welfare of the subjects. When I saw that peace was not acceptable, I resorted to alienation and recounted your deeds, divine and human. When I saw that Suyodhana ignored my words of conciliation, I assembled all the kings and tried to sow seeds of dissension. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord! I showed them extraordinary and terrible manifestations and superhuman exploits. I censured the kings. I denigrated Suyodhana. I repeatedly tried to frighten Radheya and Soubala. I repeatedly recounted the meanness of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Through eloquence and counsel, I tried to create disunity among the kings. Using conciliation again, I spoke to them about gifts, so that a division could be created in the lineage of the Kurus and I could be successful in my objective. I said, ‘The children, all the Pandavas, will abandon their pride and seek refuge with Dhritarashtra, Bhishma and Vidura. Let them give the kingdom to you and let them not remain as lords. Let it be as the king,[90] Gangeya and Vidura have said. Let the entire kingdom be yours, only give up five villages. O supreme among kings! Surely your father can sustain them.’ Having been spoken to in this way, the evil-minded one was not ready to change his views. For that wicked one, I can see no other means but the fourth one of chastisement.[91] Those lords of the earth have marched out to Kurukshetra, to their perdition. I have told you everything that occurred in the assembly of the Kurus. O Pandava! They will not give up the kingdom without a war. All of them are headed for destruction and are confronting death.”’

Section Fifty-Six

Abhiniryana Parva

This section has 169 shlokas and four chapters.

Chapter 812(149): 84 shlokas
Chapter 813(150): 27 shlokas
Chapter 814(151): 27 shlokas
Chapter 815(152): 31 shlokas

Abhiniryana *means the act of marching out. The two sides march out to Kurukshetra.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'Dharmaraja Yudhishthira heard these words of Janardana. In Keshava's presence, the one with dharma in his soul then spoke to his brothers. "You have heard what transpired in the assembly hall, in the assembly of the Kurus. You have also thought about everything that Keshava has said. O supreme among men! Therefore, divide my soldiers now. Seven akshouhinis have assembled together for victory. Listen to the names of seven generals when I recount their names—Drupada, Virata, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Satyaki, Chekitana and the valorous Bhimasena. All these generals are warriors who are ready to lay down their lives. All of them are learned in the Vedas and are brave. All of them possess good conduct and are devoted to their vows. All of them are humble and know about policy. They are skilled in the art of war. They are skilled in the use of arrows and are capable of fighting with all weapons. One who will lead all seven armies must know about army formations. He must be able to withstand Bhishma, who is like a fire with flames as arrows, on the field of battle. O Sahadeva! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O tiger among men! You tell me first. Who is capable of being our general?"

'Sahadeva replied, "He has been with us in our times of unhappiness. He is a valiant king. He is conversant with dharma and resorts to it. We resorted to him to obtain our share. Powerful Matsya Virata is skilled in the use of weapons and is unassailable in battle. He can withstand Bhishma and those maharathas in the field of battle."'

Vaishampayana said, 'When Sahadeva, eloquent in the use of words, had spoken these words, Nakula followed with these words. "He stands out in age, learning, fortitude, birth in a noble lineage, humility and greatness of family. He is illustrious and skilled in the use of all weapons. He learnt the use of weapons from Bharadvaja.[1] He is unassailable and is devoted to the truth. He has always rivalled Drona and the immensely strong Bhishma. He is a general who prides himself on being foremost in the arrays of kings. He is surrounded by sons and grandsons, like a tree with one hundred branches. In anger, together with his wife, this lord of the earth performed terrible austerities for Drona's destruction. He is brave and adorns any assembly. That bull among kings has always supported us like a father. Our father-in-law Drupada should be at the head of our army. He will be able to withstand both Bhishma and Drona. That is my view. O king! This king knows about divine weapons and he is a friend of Angiras."[2]

'When Madri's two sons had spoken, Vasava's son Savyasachi, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, who was like Vasava himself, spoke these words. "He arose through the power of austerities and by satisfying the rishi.[3] He is immensely strong and is a divine person. He is like the fire in his complexion. He bore a bow and a sword. He was clad in armour. The spirited one was ascended on a chariot that was yoked to celestial horses. He arose from the bed of fire. The valiant one's chariot roared like a gigantic cloud. The brave one is capable of withstanding a lion and he is like a lion in his valour. He has the sinews of a lion. He is mighty-armed. He has the chest of a lion. He is immensely strong. The brave one roars like a lion. He has the shoulders of a lion. He is immensely radiant. He has excellent brows. He has excellent teeth. He has an excellent chin. He has excellent arms. He has an excellent face and he is not thin. He has excellent clavicles. He has extremely large eyes. He has excellent feet. He has an excellent stance. Like a rutting elephant, he cannot be penetrated by any weapon. He has been born for Drona's destruction. He is truthful and a master of his senses. I think that Dhrishtadyumna can withstand Bhishma's weapons, which are like the lightning in their touch and are like serpents with flaming jaws. Like the fire, they descend with the force of Yama's messengers. They are like the terrible vajra in their impact and Rama[4] himself confronted them once in battle. I do not see a man who can withstand the one with the great vow,[5] with the exception of Dhrishtadyumna. O king! That is my view. He is swift in the use of his hands. He is a colourful warrior. It is my view that he should be our general. He is handsome and wears impenetrable armour. He is like an elephant that leads the herd."

'Bhima said, "Shikhandi, Drupada's son, has been born to kill him.[6] O Indra among kings! This is what the assembled Siddhas and rishis said. When he uses divine weapons in the midst of battle, men gaze at his form, as if he is the great-souled Rama.[7] O king! When there is a fight, I do not see anyone who can pierce Shikhandi with a weapon in battle, when he is armoured and is astride his chariot. O king! In a duel, no one other than Shikhandi can withstand Bhishma, who is great in his vows. I think that this brave one should be our general."

'Yudhishthira said, "O sons![8] The substance and lack of substance of everything in the universe[9] and the strengths and weaknesses of everything, past and future, are known to Keshava, who has dharma in his soul. Whoever Dasharha Krishna names should be our general, regardless of whether he is skilled in the use of weapons or not, regardless of whether he is aged or old. O sons![10] He is the root, whether it is our victory, or our disaster. Our lives, our kingdom, our successes, our failures, our happiness and our unhappiness are vested in him. He is the one who has created and he is the one who has placed.[11] Our success is based on him. Whoever is named by Dasharha Krishna should be the general of our army. Let the one who is foremost among speakers speak, because the night is passing. Having appointed a general under Krishna's instructions, when the rest of the night has passed, we will march out to the field of battle, anointing our weapons with fragrances[12] and performing auspicious ceremonies."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard Dharmaraja's intelligent words, Pundarikaksha glanced towards Dhananjaya and said, "O great king! It is also my opinion that the powerful and valiant warriors who have been named as possible generals of the army are all capable and can crush the enemy. In a great war, they will generate fear in Indra, not to speak of the avaricious sons of Dhritarashtra, evil in their intelligence. O mighty-armed one! O destroyer of enemies! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To please you, I have made great efforts to bring about peace. We have paid off our debt to dharma and we can't be blamed by those who wish to do that. That childish son of Dhritarashtra thinks himself to be wise and thinks that he has become successful because of his strength. He thinks that we are weak. It is best to arrange your army. I think that they can only be persuaded through death. Dhritarashtra's sons will not be capable of standing up when they see Dhananjaya, an enraged Bhimasena, the twins who are like Yama and the intolerant Dhrishtadyumna, seconded by Yuyudhana, Abhimanyu, Droupadi's sons, Virata, Drupada, the leaders of the akshouhinis and the Indras among men who are firm in their valour. Our armies have substance. They are invincible. They are unassailable. There is no doubt that we kill the forces of Dhritarashtra's son in battle." When Krishna had spoken in this way, those best of men were delighted in their hearts and a great roar arose from them, "Get it yoked!" The soldiers swiftly rushed around.

'There were the sounds of horses and elephants and the roar of wheels in every direction. There was the tumultuous sound of conch shells and drums in every direction. When the Pandavas marched out with their soldiers on every side, the unassailable army looked like the overflowing Ganga. Bhimasena and Madri's armoured sons were at the front of the army. Subhadra's son, Droupadi's sons, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, the Prabhadrakas and the Panchalas followed Bhimasena. The sound that arose was like the ocean at the time of the full moon. The delighted soldiers roared as they proceeded and seemed to touch the heaven. The armed forces were happy and were capable of penetrating the ranks of the enemy. Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, advanced in their midst. Wagons, carts for vending, brothel houses, caravans, treasure chests, war machines, armouries, physicians, doctors, the invalids in the army and the thin and weak troops and the attendants were gathered together by the king and advanced. The truthful Panchali Droupadi remained in Upaplavya with the women, surrounded by servant maids and servants. Pandu's sons advanced after leaving stationary and mobile troops behind to guard their base camp. They also left large defensive columns. O king! They proceeded while distributing cows and gold to the brahmanas who gathered around and praised them, as they rode on chariots decorated with gems. The Kekayas, Dhrishtaketu, the lordly son of the king of Kashi, Shreniman, Vasudana and the unvanquished Shikhandi were cheerful and satisfied. They were armoured and held weapons. They were adorned in ornaments. All of them surrounded and followed King Yudhishthira. Virata, Yajnasena of Somaka,[13] Sudharma, Kuntibhoja, Dhrishtadyumna's sons, forty thousand chariots, five times that number of horses, ten times that number of infantry and sixty thousand riders were at the back. Anadhrishti, Chekitana, the king of Chedi and Satyaki —all these surrounded Vasudeva and Dhananjaya and marched. They reached Kurukshetra, armed and arrayed in battle formations. The Pandavas seemed to be like roaring bulls. On entering Kurukshetra, those destroyers of enemies blew on their conch shells. In similar fashion, Vasudeva and Dhananjaya also sounded their conch shells. When they heard the resounding roar of Panchajanya,[14] which was like the roar of thunder, all the soldiers rejoiced. The sound of conch shells and drums mingled with the leonine roars of those swift ones and echoed on earth, in the sky and among the oceans.

'There was a spot that was plain and pleasant, with plenty of fodder and fuel. King Yudhishthira made the army set up camp there, avoiding cremation grounds, sanctuaries of gods, hermitages of rishis and places of pilgrimage. This was an agreeable region, without any salinity. It was pure and auspicious. Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, the lord of the earth, made arrangements for a camp there. When the exhausted mounts had rested, he cheerfully advanced again, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of kings. Wandering around in every direction, Partha and Keshava drove away hundreds of platoons from the army of Dhritarashtra's son. Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and the powerful charioteer Yuyudhana Satyaki measured out the camp.[15] This reached up to the sacred river Hiranvati in Kurukshetra. It was easy to cross there. The water was pure and was free from stones and mud. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Keshava had a moat dug up there. For the sake of protection, he instructed that a platoon of troops should be posted there. In the appropriate way, Keshava also instructed that hundreds and thousands of camps should be erected for the other lords among men, along the lines of those for the great-souled Pandavas. They had an abundance of water and kindling there and they were unassailable. They were stocked with items of consumption, food, grain and drink. There were separate and expensive camps for those kings. O Indra among kings! They looked like vimanas that had descended on the surface of the earth. Hundreds of wise artisans, who were paid wages, were employed there and there were extremely skilled physicians, with every kind of requirement. King Yudhishthira ensured that strings of bows, bows, armour, weapons, honey, clarified butter, mountainous heaps of resin[16] and sand, plenty of water and fodder, chaff and charcoal were made available to every camp. There were giant machines used in war, iron arrows, javelins, swords, battle axes, bows and armour to be worn by the men on their chests. There were elephants clad in armour, with spikes attached to them. They looked like mountains and each was capable of fighting a hundred thousand warriors. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On learning that the Pandavas had set up their camp there, their friends arrived at that spot, with their soldiers and their mounts. They had observed brahmacharya. They had drunk soma. They had given away large quantities of dakshina. Those lords of the earth now assembled for the victory of the sons of Pandu.'

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Janamejaya said, ‘Yudhishthira advanced with his soldiers, with a desire to fight and, protected by Vasudeva, set up camp in Kurukshetra. He was followed by Virata and Drupada with their sons, and surrounded by hundreds of kings, like the great Indra, protected by maharatha Adityas. On hearing this, what did King Duryodhana do? O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear this in detail. On that terrible occasion, what transpired in Kurujangala? Even the army of the gods would have trembled to fight those who gathered there—the Pandavas, Vasudeva, Virata, Drupada, Dhrishtadyumna from Panchala, maharatha Shikhandi and valorous Yuyudhana, unassailable even to the gods. O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear all this in detail, about what the Kurus and the Pandavas did.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Dasharha had left, King Duryodhana spoke to Karna, Duhshasana and Shakuni. “Adhokshaja[17] was unsuccessful and has returned to the Parthas. There is no doubt that he will speak to them in anger. Vasudeva desires war between the Pandavas and me. Bhima and Arjuna will adhere to his desires. Ajatashatru will follow Bhima and Arjuna. I have acted badly towards him and his brothers in the past. Virata and Drupada have had an enmity towards me. Those two leaders of armies will also follow Vasudeva. There will be a terrible war that will make the body hair stand up. Therefore, with great attention, let us make all the arrangements for war. Let the lords of the earth set up hundreds and thousands of camps in Kurukshetra. They should be spacious and spaced so that the enemy cannot attack them. Water and kindling should be available nearby. The roads should be such that supplies can be carried. There must be stores of treasure. Let them be stocked with many kinds of weapons and adorned with flags and banners. Let the roads emerging from the city be levelled. Let an announcement be made that we will march out tomorrow.” They promised that they would act in that way and followed the instructions on the next day. The great-souled ones were delighted at the prospect of destroying the lords of the earth.[18] On hearing the king’s instructions, all the kings were enraged and arose from their expensive seats. They slowly touched their arms, which were like clubs and had golden armlets and were smeared with sandalwood and aloe. With hands like lotuses, they donned their headdresses and put on their lower and upper garments and ornaments. The foremost among charioteers tended to the chariots, those skilled in horses to the horses. Those who were skilled about elephants got the elephants ready. All of them prepared large quantities of colourful and golden armour and many different weapons. The foot soldiers took up many weapons and covered their bodies with colourful and golden armour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The city of Dhritarashtra's son was festive. It was full of cheerful and agitated men. The crowd of men looked like an ocean. The chariots, elephants and horses were like fish. There was the roar of conch shells and drums. The stores of treasure were like jewels. The colourful ornaments were like waves. The spotless weapons were like foam. The palaces were like a garland of mountains. The roads and shops were like giant lakes. O king! That great ocean of the king of the Kurus was like the ocean, with the warriors looking like a rising moon.'

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Vaishampayana said, 'On remembering Vasudeva's words, Yudhishthira again asked Varshneya, "How did the wicked one speak? O Achyuta! At the present moment, what is the best course of action for us? How should we behave so that we do not stray from our own dharma? O Vasudeva! You know the intentions of Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni Soubala and also that of my brothers and me. You have heard the words of both Vidura and Bhishma and you have heard everything that Kunti, great in her wisdom, wisely spoke. Reflect on all this again. O mighty-armed one! Reflect on all this and tell us unhesitatingly about our capacity." On hearing these words of Dharmaraja, in conformity with dharma and artha, Krishna spoke these words, in a voice that rumbled like a cloud or a drum. "I spoke beneficial words in conformity with dharma and artha. But for the Kouravya, deceit is wisdom and he did not listen. The one with the evil mind did not listen to Bhishma or Vidura, or to what I said. He ignored everything. He does not desire dharma. He does not desire fame. The evil-minded one resorts to Karna and thinks that he has won everything. Suyodhana even gave instructions for my capture. But the evil-souled one with a wicked resolution failed to accomplish his wishes. Bhishma and Drona did not speak what they should have. O one without decay! With the exception of Vidura, all of them follow him. Shakuni Soubala, Karna and Duhshasana are stupid and told the foolish one things about you that should not be said. What is the point of repeating everything that the Kouravas said? In brief, the evil-souled one treats you in a way that you do not deserve. In all the kings who constitute your army is there as much evil and as much lack of good as there is in him? We should not completely forsake our interests and seek peace with the Kouravas. Therefore, war will follow." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Vasudeva's words, all the kings were silent and looked towards the king's face. Yudhishthira understood the intentions of the lords of the earth. With Bhima, Arjuna and the twins, he gave the instructions that the yoking should be done.

'When the instructions for yoking were given, the soldiers were delighted. A joyous sound was heard in the army of the Pandavas. On seeing that those who should not be killed would be killed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira sighed and told Bhimasena and Vijaya,[19] "I went to the forest and endured hardships to avoid an extreme calamity. But in spite of our efforts, it is upon us. Despite our making efforts, it is almost as if we had made no efforts. We have been unsuccessful in our attempts and great Kali[20] is upon us. How will we fight with those who should not be killed and accomplish our task? How will we kill our preceptors and elders? That cannot be victory." On hearing the words of Dharmaraja, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, repeated to him the words that Vasudeva had spoken. "Devaki's son has conveyed the words of Kunti and Vidura. O king! You have understood them in their entirety. It is my firm view that they will not suggest anything that is adharma. O Kounteya! Therefore, we should not turn back without fighting." Vasudeva heard Savyasachi's words. He smiled and told Partha, "It is just as you have said." O great king! The Pandavyas then firmly made up their minds about the war. With their soldiers, they passed the night in comfort.'

815(152)

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When night had passed, King Duryodhana deployed his eleven akshouhinis. The lord of the earth divided all his men, elephants, chariots and horses into different battalions, depending on whether they were superior, average or inferior. There were axles,[21] quivers, fenders,[22] javelins, holders for arrows,[23] spears, cases for arrows,[24] assault poles,[25] standards, flags, javelins, many kinds of ropes, nooses, carpets, *kachagrahavikshepas*,[26] oil, molasses, sands, pots filled with poisonous snakes, resin, dirt, wooden spikes with bells, coverlets of tiger skins, coverlets of leopard skins, syringes,[27] horns, missiles,[28] different kinds of weapons, axes, spades, sesame oil, linseed oil and butter. With all these, the colourful form of the army blazed like fire. There were warriors clad in armour, firm in their knowledge of weapons. There were those who were born in noble lineages and knew about horses. They were engaged as charioteers. The chariots were stocked with herbs and minerals and were decorated with flags and banners. Each chariot was yoked to four horses and each was stocked with weapons and hundreds of bows. The horses were happy. One charioteer was in charge of the two horses in front, and another for the two horses at the side. They were foremost among charioteers and each charioteer knew about horses. Each was protected by a city and was incapable of being attacked by the enemy. There were thousands of chariots with seats and golden garlands. Like the chariots, the elephants were decorated and stocked with minerals. There were seven men on each elephant, making it look like a mountain full of jewels. O king! There were two who held goads.[29] There were two who were excellent archers. There were two who were supreme in fighting with swords. One held a spear and the flag. O king! Kouravya's entire army was full of thousands of crazy elephants and all of them were stocked with weapons and stores of treasure. There were tens of thousands of horses clad in colourful armour. They bore ornaments and flags. They were trained well and controlled well. Each was harnessed in gold. There were hundreds and thousands of them, all controlled by the riders. There were the foot soldiers, with many different kinds of forms and nature. They had different kinds of armour and weapons. Those men were adorned with golden garlands.

'There were ten elephants for every chariot. There were ten horses for every elephant. There were ten foot soldiers for every horse, guarding its legs in every direction. For every chariot, fifty elephants were kept in reserve. For every elephant, there were one hundred horses. For every horse, there were seven men. A *sena*[30] consisted of five hundred elephants and the same number of chariots. Ten senas constituted a *pritana* and ten pritanas constituted a *vahini*. However, vahini, pritana, sena, *dhvajini, sadini, chamu,* akshouhini and *varuthini* are also used to mean the same thing. In this way, the battle formations of the intelligent Kourava numbered eleven akshouhinis, while the army of the Pandavas had seven akshouhinis. For men, five times fifty is said to constitute a *patti*. Three pattis constitute a *senamukha*, which is also known as a *gulma*. Ten gulmas make up a *gana* and there were tens of thousands of ganas in Duryodhana's army. These were armed ones who were eager to fight. The mighty-armed King Duryodhana examined many intelligent warriors and appointed those men as his *senapatis*.[31] In proper form and with honours, the best of men who were in charge of his separate akshouhinis were brought before him. These kings were consecrated—Kripa, Drona, Shalya, maharatha Saindhava,[32] Sudakshina from Kamboja, Kritavarma, Drona's son, Karna, Bhurishrava, Shakuni Soubala and maharatha Bahlika. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! From one day to another, and at different times of the day, he himself met them and gave them different kinds of instructions. All of them were instructed in this way. They, and the soldiers who followed them, were happy and wished to please the king and do what the king desired.'

Section Fifty-Seven

Bhishma-Abhishechana Parva

This section has 122 shlokas and four chapters.

Chapter 816(153): 35 shlokas
Chapter 817(154): 34 shlokas
Chapter 818(155): 38 shlokas
Chapter 819(156): 15 shlokas

Abhishechana *means the act of consecration, typically with sprinkling of water. This section is so named because it is about Bhishma being consecrated as the commander-in-chief on the Kourava side.*

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Vaishampayana said, 'Dhritarashtra's son joined his hands in salutation and spoke these words to Shantanu's son, Bhishma, accompanied by all the lords of the earth. "When there is a war, without a general, even a large army is destroyed like a nest of ants. The views of two leaders are rarely identical and they seek to rival each other in valour and fame. O immensely wise one! It is said that all the brahmanas once assembled together. They raised kusha grass as flags and attacked the infinitely energetic Haihayas. O grandfather! They were followed by the vaishyas and the shudras. The three varnas were on one side. On the other side, there were the bulls among the kshatriyas. In that war, the three varnas were repulsed again and again. Though the kshatriyas were alone, they triumphed over that giant army. O grandfather! The supreme among brahmanas asked the kshatriyas about this and the ones who knew about dharma told them about the precise reason. ‘In war, we listen to a single one who is immensely intelligent. All of you separately follow your own inclinations.’ Then the brahmanas made a single brahmana their general. He was brave and skilled in policy and they defeated the kshatriyas. Those who choose a single skilled and brave one, untainted and devoted to their welfare, as their general are victorious over the enemies in battle. You are the equal of Ushanas.[1] You have always been my well-wisher. You cannot be led astray. You are established in dharma. Become our general. You are like a sun to those who shine. You are like a moon to the herbs. You are like Kubera to the yakshas. You are like Vasava to the Maruts. You are like Meru to the mountains. You are like Suparna[2] to the birds. You are like Kumara[3] to the demons.[4] You are like the bearer of oblations[5] to the Vasus. When we are protected by you, like the residents of heaven are by Shakra, we will certainly be invincible, even to the thirty gods. You march in front of us, like the son of the fire[6] leads the gods. We will follow you, like cows follow a bull.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you say. However, you and the Pandavas are equal before me. O lord of men! I must speak about their welfare also. However, because I have pledged to do so, I must fight in your cause. I do not see any other warrior on earth who is my equal, with the exception of that tiger among men, Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya. He is mighty-armed. He knows all the divine weapons. However, Pandava will never fight me openly in the war. In an instant, through the strength of my weapons, I can make this entire universe destitute of men, gods, asuras and rakshasas. O lord of men! But Pandu’s sons cannot be slain by me. Therefore, I will always slay ten thousand warriors every day. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Unless they kill me first in an encounter, in this way, I will bring about their downfall. O king! There is one condition under which I will willingly become your general, not otherwise. You should hear about this. O lord of the earth! Let Karna or me fight first. This son of a suta always seeks to rival me in battle.”

‘Karna said, “O king! As long as Gangeya[7] is alive, I will never fight. I will fight with the one who wields the Gandiva only after Bhishma has been killed.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘In the prescribed way, Dhritarashtra’s son then consecrated Bhishma, the giver of large quantities of dakshina, as the general and he blazed forth. On the king’s instructions, drums and conch shells were sounded in hundreds and thousands. Eager men played musical instruments. There were many types of roars like lions and the noise of mounts. A shower of blood and mud descended from the sky. There were storms and the earth trembled. There was the sound of elephants trumpeting. All this made the minds of all the warriors downcast. There were invisible voices. Meteors streaked through the sky. Jackals uttered fearful howls. The directions seemed to blaze. O king! When the king consecrated Gangeya as the general, there were terrible portents in hundreds. After consecrating Bhishma, the destroyer of enemy forces, as the general, he[8] made the foremost of brahmanas recite and gave them a lot of cattle and gold. Strengthened by their benedictions and surrounded by his soldiers, he placed the son of the water in the forefront and marched out with his brothers. With a large army, he went to Kurukshetra. With Karna, Kourava surveyed Kurushetra. O lord of men! He then set up camp in a level spot. This region was pleasant and without salinity. There was plenty of fodder and kindling. The camp was as radiant as Hastinapura itself.’

817(154)

Janamejaya said, ‘Bhishma, great in soul and son of the water, was supreme among those who wielded weapons. He was the grandfather of the Bharatas and was like a standard for the entire earth. He was Brihaspati’s equal in intelligence. He was the earth’s equal in forgiveness. He was the ocean’s equal in gravity. He was the equal of the Himalayas in steadfastness. He was like a Prajapati in generosity. He was like the sun in energy. In destroying enemies with a shower of arrows, he was like the great Indra. He was consecrated in that terrible sacrifice of war, which made the body hair stand up, for many nights. On hearing this, what did mighty-armed King Yudhishthira, supreme among all wielders of weapons, say? What did Bhimasena, Arjuna and Krishna say?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Yudhishthira was immensely intelligent and was skilled about dharma and artha to be followed in times of calamities. He summoned all his brothers and Satvata Vasudeva. The foremost among speakers spoke these comforting words. "Survey the army. Be attentive and armoured. Our first battle will be with the grandfather. Therefore, look for seven leaders for the army."[9]

'Vasudeva said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Now that the time has come, you have spoken what should be said. The words that you have spoken are appropriate. O mighty-armed one! What you have proposed as the next step appeals to me. Let us choose seven leaders for your army and consecrate them."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Then Yudhishthira summoned Drupada, Virata, the bull among the Shinis,[10] Dhrishtadyumna of Panchala, King Dhrishtaketu, Shikhandi of Panchala and Sahadeva of Magadha. These seven brave and great archers were delighted at the prospect of war. In the appropriate fashion, he consecrated them as the leaders of his army and Dhrishtadyumna as the overall general. He[11] arose from the fire for Drona's destruction. When all those great-souled ones were assembled together, Gudakesha Dhananjaya was made the lord of the generals. Sankarshana's[12] younger brother, the handsome and immensely intelligent Janardana, was made Arjuna's guide and the controller of his horses.

'On seeing that a great battle was imminent, the wielder of the plough[13] entered King Pandava's residence, in the company of Akrura and the others, Gada, Samba, Ulmuka and so on, with Rukmini's son[14] and Akrura's son led by Charudeshna. The mighty-armed one was protected by the foremost among the Vrishnis, who arrived like tigers intoxicated with their strength, like the Maruts protect Vasava. He was dressed in a blue silk garment and he was like the summit of Mount Kailasa. The illustrious one's gait was like that of a lion. His eyes were red with intoxication. On seeing him, Dharmaraja and the immensely radiant Keshava arose and so did Partha Vrikodara, the performer of terrible deeds, the wielder of the Gandiva, and all the other kings who were present there. All of them approached and worshipped the one who had the plough as a weapon. With Vasudeva leading the way, King Pandava grasped him by the hand and all of them welcomed him. The one with the plough as a weapon saluted Virata, Drupada and the elders. The destroyer of enemies then sat down with Yudhishthira.

'Rohini's son[15] glanced at Vasudeva. When all the kings were seated around him, he said, "There will be an extremely fearful and terrible slaughter of men. I think that this is certainly because of destiny and is incapable of being averted. When you emerge from the battle with your well-wishers, I hope that I will see you again, without disease and without injuries on your bodies. There is no doubt that all the assembled kshatriya kings have been cooked by fate. There will be a great slaughter, with flesh, blood and mud. I repeatedly spoke to Vasudeva in private. 'O Madhusudana! Behave impartially towards your relatives. The Pandavas and King Duryodhana are the same to us. Therefore, if he wishes, you should help him again and again.' But because of you, Madhusudana did not act in accordance with my words. He has looked towards Dhananjaya and been devoted to you in every sentiment. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that the victory of the Pandavas is certain, because that is what Vasudeva has decided. Without Krishna, I have no interest in looking at this world. Therefore, I have followed whatever Keshava desires. But both these brave ones, Bhima and King Duryodhana, skilled in fighting with clubs, are my students and are equal in my affection. Therefore, I will visit the sacred tirthas along the Sarasvati. I cannot remain indifferent to the destruction of the Kouravas." Having spoken this, the mighty-armed one took his leave of the Pandavas. Rama left to visit the tirthas, asking Madhusudana to return.'

818(155)

Vaishampayana said, 'At that time, the great-souled King Bhishmaka Hiranyalomna, who was a friend of Indra himself, arrived. He was the immensely famous lord of the Bhojas and Ahritis and was the lord of the southern region.[16] His son was famous in the world as Rukmi. The lion of the *kimpurushas* lived on Gandhamadana and he became his student and learnt the entire science of war, with its four branches, from him.[17] The mighty-armed one obtained the great Indra's bow, which was divine and indestructible, and equal to Gandiva and Sharnga[18] in energy. Those who reside in heaven possess three divine bows—Varuna's Gandiva, the great Indra's bow Vijaya and Vishnu's Sharnga, which is said to be a celestial bow that is full of energy. Krishna wields it and strikes terror in the soldiers of enemies. The son of the chastiser of Paka[19] obtained Gandiva from the fire god in Khandava. The immensely energetic Rukmi obtained Vijaya from Druma. Hrishikesha obtained the supreme bow Sharnga after destroying the nooses of Mura, killing the energetic Mura, killing Naraka, the son of the earth, and obtaining sixteen thousand women and many jewels.[20]

'Rukmi obtained the bow Vijaya, which roared like a cloud and was capable of terrifying the universe. He came to the Pandavas. The brave one was insolent of the strength of his arms and had not forgiven the earlier instance of Rukmini being abducted by the intelligent Vasudeva. He had taken an oath that he would not return without killing Janardana. He had collected a giant army with four branches,[21] capable of attacking at a great distance. With this, he had pursued Varshneya, supreme among those who wield all weapons, wishing to kill him. It possessed many weapons and armour and was like the overflowing Ganga. He attacked Varshneya, the lord and master of all yoga. O king! But he was repulsed and ashamed. He did not return to Kundina.[22] At the spot where the destroyer of enemy heroes was vanquished by Krishna in battle, he constructed a supreme city by the name of Bhojakata.[23] It had a large army and many horses and elephants. O king! This city is still famous on earth by the name of Bhojakata. Surrounded by a large army, the immensely valorous king of Bhoja came to the Pandavas with an akshouhini. He possessed armour, a sword, arrows, a bow, guards for his palms, a chariot and a flag that had the complexion of the sun. He entered that large camp of soldiers. When the Pandavyas got to know, to bring pleasure to Vasudeva, King Yudhishthira arose and honoured him. On being shown respect by the sons of Pandu and having received the appropriate homage, he saluted all of them in return. After he had rested with his soldiers, in the midst of those brave ones, he spoke to Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, "O Pandava! If you are afraid, I will stand as your aide on the field of battle. In the course of the war, I will help you so that your enemies will not be able to bear it. There is no man on this earth who is equal to me in valour. O Phalguna! When I have killed your enemies in battle, I will hand them over to you." Having been thus addressed in the presence of Dharmaraja and Keshava, in the hearing of all the kings of the earth and the others, the intelligent Kounteya glanced towards Vasudeva and Pandava Dharmaraja. He laughed and spoke in a tone of friendliness. "O brave one! At the time of the expedition with the cattle, I fought with the immensely powerful gandharvas. Who was my aide then and who was my friend then? I fought in the terrible battle of Khandava, infested by gods and danavas. Who was my aide then? I fought in a battle with the Nivatakavachas and the Kalakeya danavas. Who was my aide then? O son![24] I fought with many Kurus in the city of Virata. Who was my aide then? In battle, I am indebted to Rudra, Shakra, Vaishravana,[25] Yama, Varuna, the fire god, Kripa, Drona and Madhava. I firmly wield the divine bow Gandiva, full of energy. I possess inexhaustible quivers. I am sustained by divine weapons. I have been born in the lineage of the Kouravas. In particular, I am Pandu's son. I call myself Drona's student. Vasudeva is my aide. How can I cause ill fame to myself by saying that I am afraid? O tiger among men! I cannot speak such words to the wielder of the vajra himself. O mighty-armed one! I am not frightened. I do not need your help. Go wherever you wish to. Or remain here, if it so pleases you." Rukmi then returned with that army, which was like an ocean. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In a similar fashion, he approached Duryodhana. Arriving there, that lord of the earth spoke in the same way. But since he prided himself on his valour, he was rebuffed there too.[26]

'O great king! Thus, two of them withdrew from the war—the Varshneya who was Rohini's son and Rukmi, the lord of the earth. Rama went on a visit to the tirthas and after Bhishmaka's son had also departed, the Pandavas again seated themselves in consultations. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Frequented by all the kings, Dharmaraja's assembly looked like the firmament glittering with stars, with the moon lording over it.'

819(156)

Janamejaya asked, 'O bull among brahmanas! When the soldiers and battle formations had been marshalled in Kurukshetra, driven by destiny, what did the Kurus do?'

Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! The soldiers and battle formations were ready. O great king! Dhritarashtra spoke these words to Sanjaya. "O Sanjaya! Come and tell me everything and omit nothing, about the marshalling of soldiers in the armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas. I think that destiny is supreme and human endeavour amounts to nothing. I know about the taints and great destruction a war will give rise to. But I am not able to restrain my foolish son, who was deceitful in gambling with the dice. I am incapable of restraining him and ensuring my own self-interest. O suta! I have the intelligence to foresee these evils. But when I meet Duryodhana, my mind becomes perverse. O Sanjaya! That being the case, what is going to happen will occur. That apart, the revered dharma of a kshatriya is to give up his life in battle."

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! The question that you have posed is deserving of you. But it is not proper that you should lay the entire blame on Duryodhana. O king! Listen especially to what I have to say on this. If a man confronts a calamity because of his own evil deeds, he should not ascribe the fault to time or destiny. O great king! If a man commits every deed that is reprehensible, because of having committed those censurable crimes, he deserves to be killed by all the worlds. O foremost among men! When the Pandavas and their advisers were deceitfully defeated in the game of dice, they bore their hardships because of their respect for you. Hear from me about the slaughter that will happen in the course of the war of horses, elephants and infinitely energetic kings. O great king! Be steadfast when you hear about the destruction of all the worlds and the slaughter of all beings in the great war. Do not be distracted. A man is not the agent of his good or evil deeds. A man is like a wooden puppet on a string. Some are controlled by the great lord, others by the wishes of destiny, and still others because of their earlier deeds. These three different sources can be seen.”’

Section Fifty-Eight

Uluka-Yana Parva

This section has 101 shlokas and four chapters.

Chapter 820(157): 18 shlokas
Chapter 821(158): 41 shlokas
Chapter 822(159): 13 shlokas
Chapter 823(160): 29 shlokas

Yana *means moving or journey as a verb and conveyance as a noun. The parva is so named because Duryodhana sends Uluka as a messenger to the Pandavas.*

820(157)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! O king! When the great-souled Pandavas were established along the Hiranvati, Duryodhana, together with Karna, Soubala and Duhshasana, summoned Uluka and secretly told him, ‘O Uluka! O son of a gambler! Go to the Pandavas and the Somakas. In Vasudeva’s hearing, go and tell them my words. “What has been thought of for many years has come to pass. There will be a war between the Pandavas and the Kurus, terrible to the worlds. O Kounteya![1] You spoke great and boastful words that Sanjaya recounted in the midst of the Kurus. The time has arrived. Carry out your pledge. Do everything that you promised. O Pandava! Remember the anger, the robbing of the kingdom, the exile to the forest and the molestation of Droupadi. Be a man. The purpose for which a kshatriya lady bears a son in her womb has arrived. Display your strength, valour, bravery, supreme dexterity in use of weapons and manliness in war and free yourself from your anger. Whose heart will not be shattered if he is dislodged from his prosperity for a long time? Who will not be oppressed and distressed? If a brave one is born in a noble lineage and desires the riches of others, how can his anger not be ignited, if his kingdom has been lost? Now act in accordance with the great words that you have uttered. The learned say that one who does not act is an evil man. There are two objectives behind a battle—the subjugation of enemies and the restoration of the kingdom. Therefore, act in accordance with your manliness. Defeat us and rule over the entire earth. Or be killed by us and go to the world of the brave. O Pandava! Remember the exile from the kingdom, the hardship of dwelling in the forest and Krishna's molestation. Be a man. Display your wrath to those who have used unpleasant words against you repeatedly, in the course of your wanderings. Wrath is manliness. O Partha! Be a man. Display your anger, strength, valour, knowledge, yoga and dexterity in the use of weapons in battle." O Uluka! On my behalf, speak these words to the foolish, ignorant and glutton eunuch Bhimasena. "O Vrikodara! Though impotent, you took an oath in the midst of the assembly hall. If you are capable, drink Duhshasana's blood." The weapons have been consecrated. Kurukshetra is free of mud. The horses have been fed and are fat. The soldiers have been paid. Tomorrow, together with Keshava, fight.'"'[2]

821(158)

'Sanjaya said, "The son of the gambler reached the spot where the soldiers of the Pandavas were encamped. He approached the Pandavyas and spoke to Yudhishthira, 'You know about the words spoken by messengers and the words I speak are in accordance with the instructions of Duryodhana. Therefore, on hearing them, you should not be angry.'

'"Yudhishthira replied, 'O Uluka! Do not be afraid. Speak, without any anxiety. What are the thoughts of Dhritarashtra's avaricious and short-sighted son?'"

‘Sanjaya said, “Then, in the midst of the radiant and great-souled Pandavas, all the Srinjayas, the famous Krishna, Drupada and his sons, Virata and all the other lords of the earth, he[3] spoke these words. ‘The great-souled king who is Dhritarashtra’s son has conveyed these words. O Yudhishthira! While the brave ones among the Kurus hear, listen to them. “You were defeated in a game of dice and Krishna was brought into the assembly hall. A man who prides himself on his manliness should be angered because of this. You were banished for twelve years in the forest, exiled from your hearth. You lived for another year as Virata’s servant. O Pandava! Be enraged at the robbing of the kingdom and your exile in the forest. Remember Droupadi’s molestation and be a man. O Pandava! Though impotent, Bhimasena took an oath. If he is capable, let him drink Duhshasana’s blood. The weapons have been consecrated. Kurukshetra is free of mud. The roads have been levelled. The soldiers have been paid. Tomorrow, together with Keshava, fight. How can you boast without encountering Bhishma in battle? That is like a foolish person who is attempting to climb Mount Gandhamadana. Drona is foremost among warriors. He is the equal of Shachi’s consort[4] in battle. O Partha! Without vanquishing him in battle, how can you hope to win back your kingdom? He is the preceptor who wields the brahma bow. He is skilled in both the Vedas.[5] He is a champion who cannot be dislodged in battle. One cannot hope to separate him from his soliders. O Partha! It is a great delusion to think that Drona can be defeated. We have never heard that Mount Meru has been overturned by the wind. Or perhaps the wind will move Meru and the sky may fall down on the earth. If what you have said is to come true, the yugas will have to be reversed now. Having encountered the terrible and deadly weapons of either of them,[6] which elephant, horse or man will be able to return home safely? How can any being that touches the ground with its feet remain alive in the field of battle? You are like a frog that lives in its well. You do not know that an army of kings has assembled. It is invincible and is like an army of the gods. It is protected by Indras among men, like heaven is by the thirty gods. There are those from the east and the west, the south and the north. There are Kambojas, Shakas, Khasas, Shalvas, Matsyas, Kurus from the middle regions, Mlecchas, Pulindas, Dravidas, Andhras and Kanchyas. There is this extensive mass of warriors. Like the Ganga, it is incapable of being crossed. I am stationed in the midst of my army of elephants. Why are you so stupid and feeble-minded that you wish to fight with us?"'

'"Having spoken these words to Dharma's son, King Yudhishthira, Uluka turned towards Jishnu and said, 'O Arjuna! Fight without boasting. What is the need to boast so much? Success is the outcome of action. Success does not come about through boasting. O Dhananjaya! In this world, if success came about because of boasting rather than action, everyone would be successful. Even the wretched can boast a lot. I know that Vasudeva is your aide. I know that Gandiva is as tall as a palm tree. I know that there is no warrior who is your equal. Knowing all this, I took away your kingdom. Great success is not obtained because of the circle of dharma. Through his thoughts, the creator brings all beings under his control. While you lamented, I enjoyed this kingdom for thirteen years. I will rule it again for a longer time, after killing you, with your relatives. Where was your Gandiva when you were defeated at the game of dice and made a slave? O Phalguna! Where was Bhimasena's strength then? You were not saved by Bhimasena's club or Partha and his Gandiva. Without the unblemished Krishna,[7] there would have been no deliverance. It was the beautiful one who freed you from your servitude. You were then engaged in work undertaken by subhumans, tasks that are performed by slaves. I then rightly said that you were like barren sesamum seeds. Did Partha not wear a braid in Virata's city then? Kounteya Bhimasena exhausted himself as a cook in Virata's kitchen then. That showed my manliness. That is the way kshatriyas punish kshatriyas who flee from the field of battle. They are consigned to the ranks of gamblers. They are restricted to kitchens. They are made to wear braids. O Phalguna! Out of fear for Vasudeva, or out of fear for you, I will not hand over the kingdom to you. Together with Keshava, fight. Illusion, magical tricks and terrible deceptions will not frighten me. I have gathered up my weapons to do battle and they will only make me roar back in return. One thousand Vasudevas and one hundred

Phalgunas may attack me. But I will use invincible arrows to drive them away in the ten directions. Go and fight with Bhishma. Break your head against a mountain. Swim across this deep ocean of men, using your arms. Sharadvata[8] is a giant fish. Vivimshati is a school of fish. Brihadbala is a giant wave. Soumadatti is a timingila.[9] Duhshasana is the flood. Shala and Shalya are the fish. Sushena and Chitrayudha are the serpentine crocodiles. Jayadratha is the mountain. Purumitra is the depth. Durmarshana is the water. Shakuni is the shore. These weapons are like flows in this ocean of warriors. You will be immersed in it and your senses will be destroyed through exhaustion. Together with all your relatives, you will be slain. You will then grieve and lament all of this. Your mind will then turn away, like an unholy one from heaven. O Partha! You will refrain from any thoughts about ruling the earth. This kingdom will be extremely difficult for you to rule. It will be like the achievement of heaven by someone who has no austerities.’”’

822(159)

‘Sanjaya said, “Uluka then again spoke many words to Arjuna, as he had been asked to do. He angered him with the stakes of his words, like a virulent serpent. On hearing his words, the Pandavas were extremely enraged. They were already angry and the son of the gambler incited them even more. They arose from their seats and flailed their arms around. They were wrathful like virulent serpents and glanced towards each other. With a drooping head, Bhimasena glanced towards Keshava. His eyes were red at the corners. He sighed like a serpent. On seeing that the son of the wind[10] was distressed and extremely enraged, Dasharha smiled and replied to the son of the gambler. ‘O son of a gambler! Leave swiftly and tell Suyodhana that his words have been heard. Their intent has been understood. It shall be the way he has said. But also tell Suyodhana these words from me. “O evil-minded one! Wait for tomorrow. Be a man. O foolish one! You think that Janardana will not fight and Partha has chosen him as a charioteer. Therefore, you need not be frightened. But there will be a terrible time when I will burn down all the kings in my rage, like a flame consumes straw. However, because of

Yudhishthira’s instructions, I will be the charioteer of the great-souled Phalguna. He himself knows the way to fight. Even if you run away to the three worlds, even if you enter the ground, you will see Arjuna’s chariot in front of you tomorrow. If you think that Bhimasena’s roar amounts to nothing, you can be certain that Duhshasana’s blood will be drunk. Partha, or King Yudhishthira, or Bhimasena, or the twins, do not pay the slightest attention to your contrary ramblings.”””’

823(160)

‘Sanjaya said, “The bull among the Bharata lineage[11] listened to Duryodhana’s words. His eyes were extremely red and he glanced at the son of the gambler. The immensely famous Gudakesha glanced towards Keshava. He grasped his large arms and spoke to the son of the gambler. ‘He who relies on his own valour and challenges the enemy is said to be a man. He is not frightened and acts in accordance with his complete strength. But he who challenges enemies on the basis of the valour of others is the weakest among kshatriyas. In this world, he is among the worst of men. You[12] resort to the valour of others and think yourself to be brave. O foolish one! You are yourself a coward and you desire that others should be slain. You have consecrated the eldest among all the kings and are boastful.[13] His intelligence is directed towards welfare and he is in control of his senses. He is immensely wise and his death is certain. O evil-minded one! We know of your intentions. You are the defiler of your lineage. You think that out of kindness, the Pandavas will not slay Gangeya. O son of Dhritarashtra! You are boasting because of his valour. But while all the archers look on, I will kill Bhishma first. You son of a gambler![14] Go to the Bharatas. Go and tell Dhritarashtra’s son, Duryodhana. Tell him that Savyasachi Arjuna has said that it will be this way. There will be slaughter when the night has passed. His[15] spirit is never dejected. He is true to his word. He delighted the Kurus and in their midst said, “I will kill the Pandava soldiers and the Shalveyas. That will be my burden. I can kill everyone in the world, with the exception of Drona. You need not have any fear on account of the Pandavyas.”

Therefore, you regard this kingdom as already having been obtained and think that the Pandavas have lost. Filled with insolence, you do not see the disaster that confronts you. Therefore, in the first encounter, I will kill the eldest among the Kurus[16] in everyone's presence. When the sun has arisen, protect the one who speaks the truth with banners and chariots. Bhishma is your refuge. But while you look on, I will use my arrows to make him fall down from his chariot. Tomorrow, Suyodhana will know what it means to be boastful. He will see the grandfather pierced through my shower of arrows. In rage, in the midst of the assembly hall, Bhimasena spoke to the short-sighted man who is your brother, Duhshasana. He does not know about dharma. He is always full of enmity. He is evil in his intelligence. He is violent. O Suyodhana! He[17] took an oath and you will see it come true. O Suyodhana! You will soon witness the terrible fruits of pride, insolence, anger, harshness, abrasiveness, cruelty, bitter words, hatred of dharma, resort to adharma, transgression of the elders, partiality of vision and all evil deeds. O lord of men! With Vasudeva as my second, I will be enraged. O foolish one! How can you hope to remain alive or aspire to the kingdom? Bhishma and Drona will be pacified. The son of the suta will be brought down. You will then lose all hope of remaining alive, your kingdom and your sons. O Suyodhana! You will see that your brothers and your sons have been killed. When they are killed by Bhimasena, you will remember all your evil deeds. Keshava has no need to make a promise for a second time. I am telling you the truth. All of this will come true.' O king! The son of the gambler heard and remembered all these words. On obtaining leave, he left the way that he had come.

'"On returning from the Pandavas, the son of the gambler went to Dhritarashtra's son. In the assembly of the Kurus, he went and repeated everything that had been spoken. After listening to Arjuna and Keshava's words, the bull among the Bharata lineage spoke to Duhshasana, Karna and Shakuni. He ordered the king's army and the forces of the allies to be readied. Before sunrise, all the soldiers were yoked and arranged in battle formations. On Karna's instructions, messengers were sent out on chariots, camels and mares. Others went out on well-trained and extremely fast horses. On Karna’s instructions, they surveyed the entire army. All the kings were instructed that everything should be yoked before sunrise.”’

Section Fifty-Nine

Ratha-Atiratha-Samkhya Parva

This section has 231 shlokas and nine chapters.

Chapter 824(161): 12 shlokas
Chapter 825(162): 33 shlokas
Chapter 826(163): 22 shlokas
Chapter 827(164): 38 shlokas
Chapter 828(165): 27 shlokas
Chapter 829(166): 39 shlokas
Chapter 830(167): 14 shlokas
Chapter 831(168): 25 shlokas
Chapter 832(169): 21 shlokas

In increasing order of strength, rathas*, maharathas and atirathas are charioteers.* Samkhya *means count or numbers and this section is so named because these charioteers and their strengths are enumerated.*

824(161)

'Sanjaya said, "Having heard Uluka's words, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, instructed the army to march out, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. That army had the four kinds of forces—infantry, chariots, elephants and horses. It was as terrible and unshakeable as the earth itself. It was protected by Bhimasena and the others and maharathas like Arjuna. Commanded by Dhrishtadyumna, it was invincible and was as pervasive as the ocean. The great archer from Panchala,[1] unassailable in battle, was at the forefront. Dhrishtadyumna led the troops, desiring an encounter with Drona. In accordance with their strength and inclinations, he assigned the rathas.[2] The suta's son was assigned to Arjuna, Duryodhana to Bhima, Ashvatthama to Nakula, Shaibya to Kritavarma and Saindhava to Varshneya Yuyudhana.[3] In the encounter with Bhishma, he instructed Shikhandi to be at the forefront. Shakuni was assigned to Sahadeva, Shala to Chekitana, Shalya to Dhrishtaketu, Goutama[4] to Uttamouja and the five Trigartas to Droupadi's sons. He assigned Subhadra's son[5] to Vrishasena and the remaining kings, because he considered him to be superior even to Partha in battle. Having thus divided the warriors, separately and collectively, the great archer, whose complexion was like the fire, earmarked Drona as his own portion. The great archer, Dhrishtadyumna, was the commander. The intelligent one arranged battle formations in the prescribed fashion and made up his mind to do battle. He yoked the soldiers of the Pandavas in the appropriate places. He stood ready on the field of battle, for the victory of the sons of Pandu."'

825(162)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "When Phalguna had sworn that he would kill Bhishma in battle, what did my evil sons, Duryodhana and the others, do? I can already see my father Gangeya killed by Partha, the firm wielder of the bow, in battle, with Vasudeva at his aide. The great archer, Bhishma, is supreme among warriors. His wisdom is infinite. What did he say when he heard the words that Partha spoke? Gangeya is greatly intelligent and valiant. He is extremely skilled. What did he do when he became the commander of the Kouravas?"'

Vaishampayana said, 'At that, Sanjaya told him everything that was said by the infinitely energetic Bhishma, the aged one among the Kurus.

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Shantanu's son, Bhishma, became the commander. He delighted Duryodhana by speaking these words to him. 'I bow down before Kumara,[6] the general who wields a spear in his hand. There is no doubt that I will be your general. I know about the tasks connected with soldiers, and in particular, about battle formations.[7] I know the tasks that should be assigned to servants and those who are not servants.[8] O great king! In marching troops out, in engaging in battle and in pacifying enemies, I am learned, as learned as Brihaspati himself. I know how to prepare the great battle formations of gods, gandharvas and humans. I will use those to confound the Pandavas. Be bereft of your anxiety. I will fight according to the right principles. I will protect your army. I will follow the sacred texts. O king! Discard the fever from your mind.'

'"Duryodhana said, 'O Gangeya! I have no fear from gods and asuras combined. O mighty-armed one! I am telling you this truthfully, not to speak of now, when you are our invincible general and Drona, tiger among men, is stationed, eager to do battle. The two of you, foremost among men, are stationed on my side. Victory will be mine. O foremost among the Kurus! It is certain that even the kingdom of the gods will not be difficult to obtain. O Kourava! But I wish to know the total number of rathas among us and among the enemy and also the atirathas. The grandfather is skilled in knowing about the enemy and about us. With all these other lords of the earth, I wish to hear this.'

'"Bhishma said, 'O Gandhari's son! O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! Listen to the number of rathas in your own army, those who are rathas and those who are atirathas. There are many thousand, tens of thousands and millions of rathas among your soldiers, but listen to the most important ones. You are foremost among the rathas and so are all your brothers, Duhshasana and the others—one hundred together. All of you are skilled in striking with weapons and are knowledgeable about slicing and piercing. You can ride on chariots and on the shoulders of elephants. You know about fighting with clubs, swords and shields. You are skilled drivers. You can strike with weapons. You are skilled in use of weapons. You can bear burdens. In the use of arrows, you are the students of Drona and Kripa Sharadvata. The spirited sons of Dhritarashtra have been wronged by the Pandavyas and will kill the Panchalas, who are intoxicated with battle. O foremost among the Bharatas! I myself will be your supreme commander. I will frustrate the Pandavas and pierce your enemies. But I should not speak about my own qualities. They are known to you. Kritavarma of Bhoja, supreme among the wielder of weapons, is an atiratha. There is no doubt that he will accomplish your objective in battle. He is invincible in the knowledge of weapons. He can strike from a distance. He is firm in bearing weapons. He will kill your enemies, like the great Indra against the danavas. It is my view that the great archer Shalya, the king of Madra, is an atiratha. He has always rivalled Vasudeva in battle after battle. He has forsaken his own sister's sons.[9] Shalya is a supreme ratha. In battle, he will fight with Krishna, the wielder of the chakra and the club. Like the waves of an ocean, he will flood the enemy with arrows. Bhurishrava, skilled in the use of weapons, is your well-wisher and will be engaged in your welfare. Soumadatti[10] is a great archer and is the leader of a mass of rathas. He will bring about a great reduction in the forces of the enemy. O great king! It seems to me that the king of Sindhu[11] is the equal of two rathas. O king! That supreme among rathas will fight valiantly in battle. Earlier, he was oppressed by the Pandavas at the time of Droupadi's abduction. He will remember that molestation and will fight with the enemy heroes. O king! After that, he resorted to terrible austerities. He obtained the extremely rare boon that he would fight with the Pandavas on the field of battle. In battle, this tiger among rathas will remember that enmity. O son![12] He will fight with the Pandavas, even giving up his own life, which is so difficult to abandon.'"'

826(163)

'"Bhishma said, 'It is my view that Sudakshina of Kamboja has the qualities of a single ratha. He will fight with the enemies in battle, desiring to accomplish your objectives. O supreme among kings! When this lion among rathas strives in your cause, the warriors among the Kurus will witness his valour, like that of Indra. He controls a mass of chariots that are fierce, swift and armed. O great king! These Kambojas are like a swarm of locusts. Nila, resident of Mahishmati, is clad in blue armour. The rathas under his control will rout the enemy. O king! In earlier times, he had an enmity with Sahadeva.[13] O king! O supreme among the Kurus! He will always fight in your cause. Vinda and

Anuvinda of Avanti are supreme rathas. They are skilled in battle. O son![14] They are firm in their bravery and are valiant. These two tigers among men will consume the soldiers of the enemy with clubs, spikes, iron arrows and javelins that are hurled from the hand. Desiring battle, in the field of battle, they will be like the leaders of herds of elephants, sporting amidst their herds. They will roam around like the god of death. It is my view that the five brothers from Trigarta are great rathas. In Virata's city, an enmity was created between them and Partha.[15] O Indra among kings! In the battle with the army of the Parthas, they will be like sharks[16] that stir up the billowing waves of the Ganga. O Indra among kings! They are five rathas and Satyaratha is their leader. They will remember those earlier deeds and will fight in battle. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he was conquering the directions, Pandavya, Bhimasena's younger brother and the one with the white horses, humiliated them. These maharathas will attack and kill the Parthas, the supreme and best among their great archers and the skilled kshatriyas. Your son Lakshmana and Duhshasana are both tigers among men. They will never retreat from the field of battle. They are young and delicate, but are spirited princes. They especially know about fighting and everything about leadership. It is my view that these two supreme rathas, tigers among rathas, are brave rathas who are devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. They will accomplish great deeds. O great king! Dandadhara, bull among men, is equal to a single ratha. Protected by his army, he will fight when he advances into battle. O son![17] It is my view that Brihadbala, the king of Kosala, is supreme among rathas and is a ratha. He is firm in speed and valiant. He will fight in battle, causing delight among his own forces. He is a great archer and is terrible in the use of weapons. He is engaged in the welfare of the sons of Dhritarashtra. O king! Kripa Sharadvata is the leader of leaders among rathas. He will give up his own beloved life and will destroy your enemies. The preceptor Sharadvata is maharshi Goutama's son. Like Kartikeya, he was born from a clump of reeds. He is invincible. O son![18] He will be like a fire in the field of battle. He will shatter this diverse army, with different types of weapons and bows.'"'

'"Bhisma said, 'O lord of men! Your maternal uncle Shakuni is equal to a single ratha. There is no doubt that he has brought about this enmity with the Pandavas and will fight. His unassailable soldiers do not retreat from the field of battle. They carry many kinds of strange weapons and possess the speed of the wind. Drona's son is a great archer and is superior to all archers. He is colourful in the field of battle and is a maharatha who is firm in wielding weapons. O great king! When released from his bow, his arrows are like those of the wielder of the Gandiva himself and are linked together in one continuous line. But I cannot count this brave one in the list of supreme rathas, though this greatly famous one is capable of burning up the three worlds. He has accumulated anger and energy through austerities, while he dwelled in a hermitage. And since he was generous, Drona bestowed celestial weapons on him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O supreme among kings! But he has a single great taint and because of that, I do not regard him as a ratha or an atiratha. He loves his own life too much. This brahmana always wishes for a long life. There is no one who is equal to him in either army. On a single chariot, he is capable of slaying even the army of the gods. Through the slapping of his arms, this handsome one can cause mountains to be shattered. The brave one has an infinite number of qualities. He is a striker and his radiance is terrible. He roams around and cannot be tolerated. He is like the god of death, with a staff in his hand. He is greatly intelligent and has the neck of a lion. He is like the angry fire that rages at the end of an era. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is capable of pacifying what is left of this war.

"'His father is immensely energetic. Though he is aged, he is superior to those who are younger. I have no doubt that he will accomplish great deeds in the field of battle. A fire will be kindled from the force of his weapons and the soldiers will be like deadwood. This will burn down the soldiers of Pandu's sons, resolved as they are on victory. This bull among men is a leader among all the leaders of rathas. He is the son of Bharadvaja. For the sake of your welfare, he will be the performer of terrible deeds. This aged preceptor is the teacher of all those who have been consecrated.[19] He will bring about the end of the Srinjayas, but Dhananjaya is his beloved. The great archer will never kill Partha, the performer of unsullied deeds. He will remember his role as a preceptor and the blazing qualities obtained by him[20] and will never kill him. The brave one has always praised Partha's many qualities. Bharadvaja[21] looks upon him as more than his own son. On a single chariot, the powerful one can use his divine weapons to slay the gods, the gandharvas and the danavas, even when they are united in the field of battle.

"''O king! I regard Pourava, tiger among kings, as a maharatha. It is my view that he is a valiant ratha who can destroy the chariots of enemy heroes. With his own large army, he will scorch the forces of the enemy. He will burn the Panchalas down, like the one with black trails burns deadwood. The prince Satyavrata is supreme among rathas and is a maharatha. O king! He will stride amidst the enemy's forces, like time. O Indra among kings! His warriors will roam around, in diverse armour and weapons. They will roam around in battle, destroying your enemies. Karna's son, Vrishasena, is foremost among ratha and is a maharatha. He is supremely strong among strong ones and will destroy the forces of the enemy. O king! Jalasandha of Magadha is one of your supreme rathas and is greatly energetic. He is the destroyer of enemy heroes and will lay down his life in battle. He is skilled in riding on the shoulders of elephants and will fight in the battle. Or the mighty-armed one will fight from chariots and will destroy the forces of the enemy. O great king! It is my view that this bull among men is a ratha. For your sake, he will lay down his life, and that of his soldiers, in the great battle. He is a valiant warrior and is colourful in battle. O king! He will cast aside his fear and fight with the enemies.

"''O king! It is my view that Bahlika, who cannot be restrained in battle, is an atiratha. The brave one is like Vaivasvata's[22] equal in battle. He will never retreat from the field of battle. O king! Like a storm, he will always attack the enemy in battle. O great king! The general Satyavat is a maharatha. He is a charioteer who performs extraordinary feats in war and destroys the chariots of enemies. He will never be seen to be distressed at the prospect of battle. He will astound the enemy who are arrayed in the path of his chariot. The virtuous one will perform valiant deeds. That supreme man will be the performer of extremely great exploits in your cause.

"'"Alayudha is an Indra among rakshasas. He is the performer of cruel deeds and is extremely strong. O king! He will remember his earlier enmity[23] and kill the enemy. He is the supreme ratha among all the soldiers of the rakshasas. He possesses the powers of maya and, firm in his enmity, will roam around in battle.

"'"The brave and powerful Bhagadatta is from Pragjyotisha. He is a skilled ratha and is foremost among those who wield a goad on an elephant. In earlier times, there was a war between him and the wielder of the Gandiva. O king! That lasted over many days and each desired to be victorious over the other. O Gandhari's son! Subsequently, because of his friendship with the chastiser of Paka,[24] he concluded an alliance with the great-souled Pandava. This king is skilled in fighting from the shoulders of elephants and he will fight in this war, like Vasava, king of the gods, on Airavata.'"'

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'"Bhishma said, 'Both brothers, Achala and Vrishaka, are invincible rathas. They will destroy your enemies. They are strong. They are tigers among men. They are firm in their anger. They are ones who can strike. They are foremost among those from Gandhara. They are young and handsome. They are extremely strong. This friend of yours is always devoted to you and is always harsh about wanting war. O king! He incites you in this war with the Pandavas. Karna Vaikartana is harsh, boastful and inferior. He is your adviser, leader and friend. He is insolent and has been extremely uplifted by you. O king! He is not a full ratha. Nor is he an atiratha. Because he is always generous, he has been separated from the divine earrings he was born with. Because of Rama's curse, the words of the brahmana and because he will be separated from his implements,[25] it is my view that he is only half a ratha. When he meets Phalguna, he will not be able to escape with his life.'"

‘Sanjaya said, “The mighty-armed Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, then spoke. ‘It is exactly as you have said and there is no falsehood in this at all. In battle after battle, I have seen him retreat. Karna is generous. But he is also distracted. It is my view that he is half a ratha.’ When he heard this, Radheya’s eyes widened in anger. O Indra among kings! He spoke to Bhishma, lashing him with his words. ‘O grandfather! As you wish, you pierce me with the arrows of your words. I am innocent, but you have hated me at every step. For Duryodhana’s sake, I have tolerated all of this. You now think that I am incapable and am a coward. There is no doubt that I think that you are half a ratha. O Gangeya! I do not lie when I say that you always wish ill to the Kurus and the entire universe. But the king does not realize this. These kings are equal in their names and deeds. Who else but you will reduce their energy just before the battle, by creating dissension among them? In describing their qualities, you are highlighting their demerits. O Kourava! Age, grey hair, wealth and relatives cannot make a kshatriya a maharatha. Kshatriyas are known to be foremost because of their strength, brahmanas are known to be foremost because of their mantras, vaishyas are known to be foremost because of their riches and shudras are known to be foremost because of their years. You have differentiated between rathas and atirathas according to your own inclinations, because of your own desires and enmity. You are deluded. O Duryodhana! O mighty-armed one! Consider this in the proper way. Discard Bhishma, whose sentiments are evil. He will bring about dissension. O king! Once there is discord within the army, it will be difficult to bring it together again. O tiger among men! This is true if the source of the army is one, it is even more so when it comes from different origins. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this war, this division has already penetrated our warriors. He is sapping our energy, in front of our very eyes. What does the dim-witted Bhishma know about the science of rathas? I will repluse the armies of the Pandavas. When they encounter my invincible arrows, the Pandavas and the Panchalas will be dispersed in the ten directions, like bulls before a tiger. Where is the turmoil of battle and the counsel of good advice and where is the aged and evil-souled Bhishma, driven by destiny? He always boasts that he can alone fight the entire universe. With his deluded vision, he does not think that any other man exists. The sacred texts certainly say that we must listen to the aged. But it is also the view that one should not listen to the extremely old. They are like children. O tiger among kings! In an excellent fight, there is no doubt that I will kill the Pandavas alone, though the fame for this will accrue to Bhishma. O lord of men! You have appointed Bhishma your commander and the commander is credited with qualities, never the warriors. O king! I will never fight as long as Gangeya is alive. But once Bhishma has been slain, I will fight with all the maharathas.'"'

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'"Bhishma said, 'For the sake of Dhritarashtra's son, I have taken up this extremely large burden of the war, as great as the ocean. This has been thought of for many years. The time has now arrived and the body hair stands up. O one who has been born from a suta! I must not cause false dissension and that is the reason you are still alive. Jamadagni's son, Rama, did not hurt me when he released great weapons.[26] What can you do? Righteous ones do not approve of the praise of one's own might. O vile one! O defiler of your lineage! But I am telling you because you have provoked me. All the kshatriya kings gathered at the svayamvara organized by the king of Kashi. I vanquished them on a single chariot and swiftly abducted the maidens. I alone repulsed thousands of such soldiers in battle and vanquished them in battle. Once they confronted a hated man like you, a great destruction has arrived before the Kurus. Be a man. Fight with Partha in battle, whom you seek to challenge. O extremely evil-minded one! I will watch you escape from that fight.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Then the great-minded king who was Dhritarashtra's son spoke up. 'O Gangeya! Look towards me. There is a great task that must be performed. You must first think about what is my supreme welfare. Both of you[27] will perform great deeds for me. I wish to hear about the supreme rathas among the enemy. I wish to hear about the atirathas and the leaders of masses of rathas. When it is morning and the night has passed, there will be a war.'

'"Bhishma said, 'O king! I have recounted the numbers of your rathas and atirathas and also those who are half of rathas. O king! O mighty-armed one! If you are curious, together with the lords of the earth, now listen to the names among the Pandavas, to the strengths of the Pandavas and the number of their rathas. King Pandava, Kunti's descendant, is a foremost ratha. O son![28] There is no doubt that he will rage like a fire in battle. O Indra among kings! Bhimasena has eight times the qualities of a ratha. That man is energetic and insolent and possesses the strength of ten thousand elephants. Madri's two sons, bulls among men, are both rathas. They are like the Ashvins in their beauty and energy. There is no doubt that they will remember their hardships and will roam around in the front of the army, like Rudra. All these great-souled ones are tall and are like the trunks of shala trees. They are more than a span taller than other men. All of these immensely strong sons of Pandu are capable of withstanding lions. All of them have observed brahmacharya and are extreme ascetics. Those tigers among men are modest. They are as proud of their strength as tigers. They are all superhuman in their speed, striking ability and combativeness. O bull among Bharatas! In their conquests, they have defeated all the kings of the earth. O Kourava! No man can ever withstand their weapons, clubs or arrows, or string their bows and fix their arrows. Even when they were children, all of them were superior to you in raising the club, shooting arrows, running, striking targets, eating and wrestling in the dust. Proud of their strength, like tigers, they will attack your army. They will destroy it in battle. Try to avoid the encounter with them. One by one, they can kill all the kings of the earth. O Indra among kings! You have yourself witnessed what occurred at the time of the rajasuya sacrifice. They will remember Droupadi's molestation and the harsh words at the time of the gambling match. Like death, they will roam around on the field of battle. Gudakesha's eyes are red and he has Vasudeva as an aide. O brave one! There is no ratha who is equal to him in either army, nor among gods or earlier danavas, serpents, rakshasas and yakshas, not to speak of men. I have not heard of any ratha who has been, or will be, as accomplished as the intelligent Partha. O great king! Vasudeva is the charioteer and Dhananjaya is the warrior. The bow is the divine Gandiva and the horses have the speed of the wind. The divine armour is impenetrable. The great quivers are inexhaustible. There are the weapons of the great Indra, Rudra, Kubera, Yama and Varuna. His clubs are terrible to see. He has many weapons, with the vajra as the foremost. There were thousands of danavas who lived in Hiranyapura. He slew them on a single chariot. Where is there a ratha like him? He is enraged. He is strong. Truth is his valour. That mighty-armed one can destroy your army, while protecting his own. I can stand up to Dhananjaya, and so can the preceptor. O Indra among kings! But there is no third person, in either army. He will shower down arrows from his chariot, like the cloud at the end of the summer season, when there is a mighty storm. The accomplished Kounteya has Vasudeva as an aide. He is young and skilled. Both of us are aged and exhausted.'"

'Sanjaya said, "When the kings heard the words of Bhishma, their hearts trembled. Their sturdy arms had golden bracelets. They were anointed with sandalwood paste. In their minds, they remembered the earlier speed and strength of the Pandavyas, as if they could see them in front of their eyes."'

830(167)

'"Bhishma said, 'O great king! All the five sons of Droupadi are maharathas. It is my view that Virata's son, Uttara, is also a great ratha. O great king! Abhimanyu is the leader of leaders among rathas. He will be the equal of Partha in battle, perhaps even of Vasudeva. He is skilled and colourful in the use of weapons. He is spirited and firm in his valour. He will remember the hardships his fathers faced and display his valour. The brave Madhava Satyaki is the leader of leaders among rathas. He is the most intolerant among the Vrishni warriors. He has conquered all fear. O king! I think that Uttamouja is a great ratha and that the valiant Yudhamanyu, bull among men, is a foremost ratha. They have many thousands of chariots, elephants and horses. To bring pleasure to Kunti's son, they will fight along with the Pandavas and against your soldiers, willing to give up their lives. O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! They will be like the fire and the wind, helping each other. The aged Virata and Drupada are invincible in battle. It is my view that those extremely valiant bulls among men are maharathas. Though they are aged in years, they are devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. They will strive with their extreme capacity to walk the path travelled by heroes. O Indra among kings! They have an alliance with them and possess valour and strength. They follow the conduct of aryas. They are great archers. They are bound by the noose of affection. O bull among men! Because of various reasons, all mighty-armed men become brave or cowards. But these two are firm in their affection towards Partha, they are united in their purpose. O lord among men! They will act with all their strength, giving up their lives against the enemy. They each control a separate akshouhini and will strive fiercely. They will protect their relatives and perform great deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are great archers and are heroes in this world. They will give up their own lives. While preserving their resolutions, they will perform great exploits.'"'

831(168)

'"Bhishma said, 'O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In my view, Shikhandi, the destroyer of enemy cities and the son of the king of Panchala, is a foremost ratha on Partha's side. He will fight in the battle, destroying the earlier state of affairs.[29] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He will establish his supreme fame among your soldiers. He has many soldiers, among the Panchalas and the Prabhadrakas. He will perform great deeds with his array of chariots. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhrishtadyumna is the overall commander of all the soldiers. O Indra among kings! It is my view that he is an atiratha. He is the student of Drona, a maharatha. He will fight in the war, destroying the enemies in battle, like the illustrious Pinaki,[30] when he is enraged at the destruction of an era. Those who love war talk about his array of chariots. They are as extensive as the ocean and are like the masses of gods in battle. O king! O Indra among kings! In my view, Dhrishtadyumna's son, Kshatradharma, is equal to half a ratha. He is young and still lacks in training. Shishupala's brave son, Dhrishtaketu, is the king of Chedi and is a maharatha. He is a great archer and has a matrimonial alliance with the Pandavas.[31] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with his sons, the brave lord of Chedi will perform great exploits that will be difficult even for a maharatha to accomplish. O Indra among kings! It is my view that Kshatradeva, the destroyer of enemy cities, is devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas and is a supreme ratha on the side of the Pandavas. Jayanta, Amitouja and Satyajit are maharathas. All these great-souled ones, supreme among the Panchalas, are maharathas. O son![32] They will fight in the battle, like enraged elephants. Aja and Bhoja are valiant maharathas on the Pandava side. They will strive to their utmost capacity to help the Pandavas. They are swift in the use of weapons. They are colourful in battle. They are skilled. They are firm in their valour. O Indra among kings! The five brothers from Kekaya are indomitable in war. All of them are foremost among rathas and all of them have red flags. Those with the names Kashika, Sukumara, Nila, King Suryadatta, Shankha and Madirashva are foremost among rathas and all of them possess the signs of battle. They are skilled in the use of all weapons. It is my view that all of them are great-souled. It is my view that King Chitrayudha is a supreme ratha. He adorns the field of battle and is devoted to Kiriti. Chekitana and Satyadhriti are maharathas on the Pandava side. It is my view that those two tigers among men are foremost among rathas. O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is no doubt in my mind that Vyaghradatta and Chandrasena are foremost among rathas. O Indra among kings! Senabindu, who has the name of Krodhahanta, is a lord who is the equal of Vasudeva and Bhimasena. In the course of the battle, he will fight valiantly with your soldiers. You should think of himself as a supreme ratha, proud in battle, and equal to Drona, Kripa and I myself. The king of Kashi is extremely swift in the use of weapons and can be prided on being a supreme ratha. He is the vanquisher of enemy cities and it is my view that he possesses the qualities of a single ratha.

Drupada's young son, Satyajit, is valorous and proud in battle and is the equal of Dhrishtadyumna. He should be counted as an atiratha. He desires fame and will perform supreme deeds for the Pandavas. There is another great and brave ratha who is skilled and is devoted to the cause of the Pandavas. He is extremely brave and he is the king of Pandya. He is a great archer and is firm in wielding the bow. He is a supreme ratha on the Pandava side. O foremost among Kouravas! Both Shreniman and King Vasudana are atirathas. O scorcher of enemies! That is my view.'"'

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'"Bhishma said, 'O great king! Rochamana is a maharatha on the Pandava side. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He will fight against the enemy soldiers in this battle, like an immortal. Kuntibhoja's son, Purujit, is a great archer and is extremely strong. He is Bhimasena's maternal uncle and it is my view that he is an atiratha.[33] He is a brave and great archer, skilled and trained. He is capable of fighting in colourful ways. It is my view that he is a bull among rathas. He will fight with valour, like Maghavan[34] against the danavas. He has many famous warriors, all of whom are skilled in fighting. The brave one will fight for the sake of his sister's son. Engaged in ensuring the welfare of the sons of Pandu, the king will perform extremely great deeds. O great king! The lord of the rakshasas[35] is the son of Bhimasena and Hidimba. It is my view that he knows several things about maya and is the leader of leaders among rathas. O son![36] He loves war and will use maya to fight in the field of battle. There are brave rakshasas and advisers who follow his instructions. There are many other lords from many countries. With Vasudeva at the forefront, they have assembled for the sake of the Pandavas. O king! These are the principal ones on the side of the great-souled Pandavas—those who are, in my view, rathas, atirathas and equal to half a ratha. O king! They will lead Yudhishthira's terrible army in battle, protected by the brave Kiriti, like the great Indra himself. Those brave ones are marching against you in battle, desiring victory. I will fight against them, wishing for victory, or death in the field of battle. I will face Partha and Vasudeva together, the wielder of the chakra and the Gandiva. They are supreme men, like the sun and the moon in conjunction at the time of twilight. I will lead the rathas, together with your soldiers, against the soldiers of the sons of Pandu. I will be at the head of the battle. O king! I have recounted the foremost rathas and atirathas to you, both yours and theirs. O king! O Indra among Kouravas! I have also mentioned some who are half a ratha. There are Arjuna, Vasudeva and the other kings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As soon as I see them, I shall drive them back. But I will not kill the mighty-armed Shikhandi from Panchala, when I see him with weapons raised, marching against me in battle. The world knows that in order to bring pleasure to my father, I gave up the kingdom that was due to me and adopted a vow of brahmacharya. I instated Chitrangada in the kingdom of the Kouravas and consecrated the infant Vichitravirya as the heir apparent. Among all the kings on the earth, I then became famous as Devavrata. I will never kill someone who has been born as a woman, or someone who has been a woman earlier. O king! You may have heard that Shikhandi was earlier a woman. She was born a woman and became a man later. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will not fight with him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! I will kill all the other lords of the earth, whomsoever I encounter on the field of battle, with the exception of the sons of Kunti.’”

Section Sixty

Amba-Upakhyana Parva

This parva has 755 shlokas and twenty-eight chapters.

Chapter 833(170): 22 shlokas
Chapter 834(171): 9 shlokas
Chapter 835(172): 23 shlokas
Chapter 836(173): 18 shlokas
Chapter 837(174): 26 shlokas
Chapter 838(175): 30 shlokas
Chapter 839(176): 42 shlokas
Chapter 840(177): 24 shlokas
Chapter 841(178): 38 shlokas
Chapter 842(179): 31 shlokas
Chapter 843(180): 39 shlokas
Chapter 844(181): 36 shlokas
Chapter 845(182): 16 shlokas
Chapter 846(183): 27 shlokas
Chapter 847(184): 18 shlokas
Chapter 848(185): 23 shlokas
Chapter 849(186): 36 shlokas
Chapter 850(187): 40 shlokas
Chapter 851(188): 18 shlokas
Chapter 852(189): 18 shlokas
Chapter 853(190): 23 shlokas
Chapter 854(191): 20 shlokas
Chapter 855(192): 30 shlokas
Chapter 856(193): 66 shlokas
Chapter 857(194): 22 shlokas
Chapter 858(195): 20 shlokas
Chapter 859(196): 19 shlokas
Chapter 860(197): 21 shlokas

Upakhyana *is a short tale or episode and this section is so named because it has the short account of Amba, who was reborn as Shikhandi. This section ends Udyoga Parva and everything is set for the war.*

‘Duryodhana asked, “O foremost among the Bharata lineage! When you see Shikhandi in the field of battle, with arrows raised and ready to slay you, what is the reason for you not to kill him? O mighty-armed one! You said earlier that you would kill the Panchalas and the Somakas. O Gangeya! O grandfather! Tell me the reason for this.”[1]

‘Bhishma replied, “O Duryodhana! Together with the lords of the earth, listen to the reason why I will not kill Shikhandi when I see him in the field of battle. My father, King Shantanu, was a bull among the Bharata lineage and had dharma in his soul. O bull among men! In course of time, he met his destiny. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! I then fulfilled my promise. I consecrated my brother Chitrangada as the great king. When he died, abiding by the instructions of Satyavati and in accordance with the decreed rites, I instated Vichitravirya as the king. O Indra among kings! Though he was young, he was consecrated by me in accordance with dharma. Vichitravirya had dharma in his soul and glanced towards me for everything. O son![2] I desired to obtain brides for him and reflected on those who would be equal in beauty and lineage. O mighty-armed one! At that time, I heard that the three daughters of the king of Kashi would be given away in a *svayamvara*.[3] All of them were unrivalled in beauty and their names were Amba, Ambika and Ambalika. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All the kings of the earth had been summoned there. O Indra among kings! Amba was the eldest and Ambika was the one in the middle, while Ambalika was the youngest princess. On a single chariot, I went to the capital of the lord of Kashi. O mighty-armed one! O lord of the earth! I saw the three ornamented maidens there and the kings, the lords of the earth, who had assembled there. Established in battle, I challenged all those kings. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I raised those maidens onto my chariot. Knowing that they were being offered as *viryashulka*,[4] I raised them onto my chariot and told all the lords of the earth who had assembled there, ‘Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, is taking these maidens away by force.’ I repeated the challenge. ‘O kings! Use the limits of your strength to set them free. O lords of men! I am forcibly abducting them, in front of your eyes.’ At this, all those lords of the earth arose, with weapons upraised. Enraged, they instructed their charioteers to yoke the chariots. Some were on chariots that were like the clouds. Others were on elephants and were warriors who fought on elephants. Other lords of the earth were on the backs of horses. They arose, with weapons upraised. O lord of the earth! Those lords of the earth surrounded me from all directions. With a great mass of chariots, they attacked me from all sides. I repulsed them with a great shower of arrows. I vanquished all those kings, like the king of the gods against the *danava*s. I brought down their colourful and gold-embellished standards. With a single arrow each, I brought them down on the ground. O bull among men! I laughed and used my flaming arrows to bring down their horses, elephants and chariots in that battle. On seeing the dexterity of my palms, they were shattered and retreated. After vanquishing those lords of the earth, I returned to Hastinapura. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O mighty-armed one! I recounted my deed to Satyavati and handed over the maidens for my brother.”’

CHAPTER 834(171)

‘Bhisma said, “O best of the Bharata lineage! I approached my mother, the mother of brave ones and saluting her, told the daughter of the Dasha lineage,[5] ‘I have vanquished the kings and have obtained these daughters of the lord of Kashi for Vichitravirya. I have abducted them in accordance with the norms of viryashulka.’ O king! She inhaled the fragrance of my head. With her eyes filled with tears, Satyavati told me, ‘O son! It is through good fortune that you have obtained victory.’ With Satyavati’s permission, a date was fixed for the marriage. The eldest daughter of the lord of Kashi spoke these bashful words. ‘O Bhishma! You are knowledgeable about dharma and you are skilled in all the sacred texts. You should listen to my words and then act towards me in accordance with dharma. In my mind, I had earlier chosen the lord of Shalva as my groom. Without this being known to my father, he had also chosen me in secret. I desire someone else. O king! O Bhishma! Especially because you are a Kourava, how can you, who have studied the sacred texts, make someone like that live in this household? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Now that you know this, make up your mind about what should be done. O mighty-armed one! You should do that which is appropriate. O lord of the earth! It is evident that King Shalva is waiting for me. O mighty-armed one! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! You should take pity on me. O brave one! We have heard that you are famous in this world for being truthful to your vows.'"'

CHAPTER 835(172)

'Bhishma said, "O lord of men! I then informed Kali[6] Satyavati, the advisers, the brahmanas and the priests and allowed the eldest maiden, Amba, to leave. On obtaining the permission, the maiden went to the capital of the lord of Shalva. She was protected by aged brahmanas and accompanied by her nurse. Travelling the entire distance, she went to that lord of men and told King Shalva these words. 'O mighty-armed one! O immensely radiant one! I have arrived here, before you.' O lord of the earth! But the lord of Shalva smiled and told her, 'O one with the beautiful complexion! You have belonged to another one before this and I do not wish you as my wife. O fortunate one! Therefore, return again to the descendant of the Bharata lineage! After you have been forcibly abducted by Bhishma, I do not desire you. You were won by Bhishma and seemed to be delighted then. He defeated all the lords of the earth in a great battle. O one with the beautiful complexion! You have gone to another one before. I am a king who is instructed by dharma and am skilled in knowledge. How can I accept as my wife a lady who has gone to someone else before? O fortunate one! Go wherever you wish. Do not waste your time here.' O king! Amba was struck by the arrows of the god of love and told him, 'O lord of the earth! Do not speak in this fashion. I wasn't happy when I was abducted by Bhishma, the destroyer of enemies. After driving away the lords of the earth, he used force on me and I was weeping. O lord of Shalva! I love you. Love me back in return. I am an innocent maiden. Dharma does not approve of the abandoning of those who love you. I have come here after obtaining the permission of Gangeya, who never retreats from the field of battle. I have obtained his permission and have come here before you. O lord of the earth! The mighty-armed Bhishma does not want me. I have heard that all Bhishma's exertions were for the sake of his brother. O king! Gangeya has given my sisters, Ambika and Ambalika, whom he had also abducted, to his younger brother Vichitravirya. O lord of Shalva! I have never desired any man other than you. O tiger among men! I swear on my head that I have not thought of anyone but you. O Indra among kings! I have come before you and I have not gone to any other man earlier. O Shalva! I am telling you the truth. I swear on my own self that this is the truth. O one with the large eyes! Love me. A maiden has come to you of her own accord. I have not been to any other man earlier. O Indra among kings! I desire your favours.' O foremost among the Bharata lineage! But though she spoke in this way, Shalva abandoned the daughter of the king of Kashi, the way a snake discards its old skin. She sought his favours with these and many other words. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But the king who was the lord of Shalva did not show her his favours. Then the eldest daughter of the king of Kashi was overcome by anger. With tears in her eyes and with her voice choking with tears, she said, 'O lord of the earth! Having been discarded by you, I will go wherever I wish. I will go to the virtuous. It has been rightly said that where there is virtue, there is truth.' O Kouravya! The maiden spoke in this way and lamented piteously. But the lord of Shalva abandoned her and Shalva repeatedly said, 'O one with the beautiful hips. Go. Go from here. I am frightened of Bhishma. You are Bhishma's property.' She was thus addressed by Shalva, who was not far-sighted. She departed wretchedly from the city, weeping like a female osprey."'

CHAPTER 836(173)

'Bhishma said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As she departed from the city, she thought to herself. 'There is no young woman on earth who faces such a difficult situation as me. I have been separated from my relatives. I have been treated badly by Shalva. I am incapable of returning to the city of Varanasahrya.[7] Bhishma granted me permission because I wished to go to Shalva. Will I blame myself or the unassailable Bhishma? Or should it be my foolish father who arranged for the svayamvara? Is it my own fault that I did not jump down from Bhishma's chariot? When that terrible war raged on earlier, should I have descended and run away to Shalva? The consequences are that I have to endure the fruits of this conduct, like a foolish person. Shame on Bhishma. Shame on my evil father, whose intelligence is foolish. He offered me as viryashulka, as if I am a woman who can be offered at a price. Shame on me. Shame on King Shalva. Shame on the creator. It is because of everyone's bad sentiments that I now confront this calamity. In every way, a man must endure what destiny has determined. But Shantanu's son, Bhishma, is the chief reason for my hardship. I see that I now have to exact vengeance on Bhishma, through austerities and fighting. It is my view that he is the reason behind my misery. But which lord of the earth is capable of withstanding Bhishma in battle?' Having reflected in this way, she left the city.

'"She went to the hermitages of great-souled ascetics who were sacred in their conduct. Surrounded by those ascetics, she spent a night there. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The one with the sweet smiles told them everything about herself and the details of what had happened, the abduction, the release and the abandonment by Shalva. A great brahmana named Shaikhavatya lived there. He was rigid in his vows and aged in his austerities. He was a preceptor in the sacred texts and in the *aranyaka*s.[8] Shaikhavatya, the great ascetic and sage, spoke to the distressed maiden, who was sighing and was overcome by grief and misery. 'O fortunate one! Now that this has happened, what can ascetics do for you? We are immensely fortunate ones who live in hermitages. We are great souls engaged in austerities.' O king! But she told him, 'Show me a favour. I wish to wander around and perform extremely difficult austerities. Because of my stupidity, I must have performed deeds in earlier bodies. I have must acted in evil ways and this must certainly be the fruit. O ascetics! I am not interested in returning to my relatives. I have been rejected. I am unhappy. I have been wronged by Shalva. O ascetics! O those who are devoid of sin! I wish to be instructed here. You are the equals of the gods. Be compassionate towards me.' He then consoled the maiden with examples, sacred knowledge and reasons. Together with the other brahmanas, he comforted her and promised that he would act accordingly."'

CHAPTER 837(174)

'Bhishma said, "Then all the ascetics engaged themselves in their respective tasks. The ones who followed dharma wondered about the maiden and thought, 'What will we do?' A few among those ascetics said, 'We should take her back to her father's residence.' Others thought that I[9] should be censured. Some others thought of going to the lord of Shalva and asking him to take her back. Others said no to this, because she had been rejected by him. All the ascetics, rigid in their vows, again said, 'O fortunate one! This having occurred, what can we learned ones do? O fortunate one! Listen to these beneficial words. There is no need for you to wander around. O fortunate one! Depart from here and go to your father's residence. The king, your father, will know what should be done next. You possess all the qualities. O fortunate one! Go and dwell there happily. O fortunate one! You have no refuge other than your father. O one with the beautiful complexion! For any *arya* lady, the husband or the father is the refuge. A husband is the refuge when things are smooth. A father is the refuge when things are rough. Roaming around is extremely difficult, especially for someone who is delicate. O beautiful one! Being a princess, you are naturally delicate. O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful complexion! There are many taints associated with dwelling in a hermitage. There will be none in your father's residence.' The brahmanas spoke these words to the ascetic lady.

‘On seeing you alone in this deserted and dense forest, kings will solicit you. Therefore, do not set your mind on this.’

‘“Amba replied, ‘I cannot go again to my father’s residence in the city of Kashi. There is no doubt that I will be disrespected by my relatives. O ascetics! It was different when I dwelt in my father’s residence as a child. O fortunate ones! I will not go where my father is now. O foremost among brahmanas! I wish to practise austerities under the protection of ascetics, so that I do not confront great ill fortune, in this world or the next.’”

‘Bhishma said, “When those brahmanas were reflecting on this, the ascetic *rajarshi* Hotravahana arrived in that forest. All the ascetics honoured the king. They worshipped and welcomed him and offered him a seat and water. After he had seated himself and had rested, in his hearing, those residents of the forest again spoke to the maiden. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the story of Amba, the daughter of the king of Kashi, her mother’s father[10] trembled and arose. O lord! He placed the maiden on his lap and comforted her. He asked her about the entire story of the reasons behind her hardships. In detail, she told him exactly what had happened. Then the rajarshi was overcome by great grief and misery. The extremely great ascetic thought in his mind about what should be done next. He trembled and in great grief, told the distressed maiden, ‘O fortunate one! Do not go to your father’s residence. I am your mother’s father. O daughter! Depend on me. I will dispel your sorrows. O daughter! You have become desiccated. I think you have had enough. Listen to my words and go to the ascetic Rama,[11] Jamadagni’s son. Rama will remove your extremely great unhappiness and sorrow. If he does not listen to his words,[12] he will kill Bhishma in battle. Go to the foremost among the Bhargavas, whose energy is like that of the fire of destruction. That great ascetic will establish you on a smooth path.’ She repeatedly shed many tears. She lowered her head before Hotravahana, her mother’s father, and said, ‘I will follow your instructions and will go. But will I be able to see that arya, famous in the world? How will Bhargava destroy my terrible misery? I wish to learn about this and I will go there after that.’”’

CHAPTER 838(175)

‘“Hotravahana said, ‘O child! You will see Rama, Jamadagni’s son, in the great forest. He is engaged in terrible austerities.He is devoted to the truth. He is extremely strong. The *rishis,*[13] those who are learned in the Vedas, the *gandharvas*[14] and the *apsaras*[15] always worship Rama on Mahendra, the foremost among mountains. O fortunate one! Go there. He is aged in austerities and is firm in his vows. After saluting him by lowering your head, tell him these words of mine. O fortunate one! Tell him once again about what you desire. On hearing my name, Rama will do everything that you wish for. O child! Rama is my friend. He is affectionate towards me and is my well-wisher. The brave one is Jamadagni’s son. He is supreme among those who wield all weapons.’

‘“While King Hotravahana was speaking to the maiden in this way, Akritavrana, Rama’s devoted follower, appeared.[16] All the sages arose in their thousands and so did King Hotravahana from Srinjaya, aged in years. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! As is appropriate, those residents of the forest asked about each other’s welfare. Then they seated themselves around him[17] and conversed about delightful subjects, beautiful and celestial ones. O Indra among kings! They were happy and delighted. When they had finished, the great-souled rajarashi Hotravahana asked Akritavrana about Rama, foremost among maharshis. ‘O Akritavrana! Where is it possible to see Jamadagni’s powerful and mighty-armed son, foremost among those who have knowledge of the Vedas?’

‘“Akritavrana said, ‘O lord! O king! Rama always speaks about you. “Rajarshi Srinjaya is my beloved friend.” It is my belief that Rama will be here tomorrow morning. You will see him when he comes here, desiring to meet you. O rajarshi! Why has this maiden come to the forest? Who does she belong to and what is her relationship to you? I wish to know this.’

'"Hotravahana replied, 'O lord! She is my daughter's daughter. She is the beautiful daughter of the king of Kashi. O unblemished one! She is the eldest and, with her sisters, was at the svayamvara. She is famous by the name of Amba and she is the eldest daughter of the lord of Kashi. O one rich in austerities! Ambika and Ambalika are younger to her. O *brahmarshi*! For the sake of these maidens, all the kshatriya kings gathered in the city of Kashi and there was a great festival. Then the immensely valorous and greatly energetic Bhishma, Shantanu's son, slighted the kings and abducted the three maidens. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![18] The pure-souled Bhishma vanquished the lords of the earth and went to Gajasahrya[19] with the maidens. The lord then handed them over to Satyavati, for the sake of a marriage with his brother Vichitravirya. O bull among brahmanas! On seeing that arrangements had been made for a marriage, in the midst of the ministers, this maiden told Gangeya, "In my mind, I have chosen the brave lord of Shalva as my husband. O one who is learned about dharma! When I have thought of someone, you should not give me to someone else." When he heard these words, Bhishma consulted with his ministers. Bhishma made up his mind to give her up and with Satyavati's permission, gave her leave to go to Shalva, the lord of Soubha. O brahmana! The maiden was delighted at that time and went and told him, "I have been given up by Bhishma. Act towards me in accordance with dharma. O bull among kings! In my mind, I have chosen you earlier." However, suspicious of her conduct, Shalva rejected her. Deciding to undertake austerities, she came to this hermitage. I recognized her when she recounted her lineage. She thinks that Bhishma alone is responsible for her unhappiness.'

'"Amba said, 'O illustrious one! It is just as Srinjaya King Hotravahana, the creator of my mother's body, has said. O one rich in austerities! I do not wish to go back to my own city. O great sage! I will be insulted there and am ashamed. O supreme among brahmanas! I will do what the illustrious Rama asks me to. O illustrious one! It is my view that this is what I should do.'"'

'"Akritavrana said, 'O fortunate one! O woman! O child! There are two hardships. Which of these do you actually wish to redress? O fortunate one! If it is your view that the lord of Soubha should be urged, then, desirous of your welfare, the great-souled Rama will ask him accordingly. Or if you wish to see Bhishma, the son of the river, vanquished in battle by the intelligent Bhargava Rama, he will do that also. O one with the beautiful smiles! We will think about what should be done after hearing your words, and those of Srinjaya.'

'"Amba replied, 'O illustrious one! When he abducted me, Bhisma acted out of ignorance. O brahmana! Bhishma did not know that my mind was set on Shalva. Before deciding, you should bear this in mind too. Having decided in accordance with what is right, then determine what should be done. O brahmana! Decide what needs to be done about both Bhishma, tiger among the Kurus, and the king of Shalva. I have told you exactly about the reasons for my unhappiness. O illustrious one! In accordance with the reasons, decide on a course of action.'

'"Akritavrana said, 'O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful complexion! What you have said about dharma is correct. Now listen to these words of mine. O timid one! If the son of the river had not taken you to Gajasahrya, on the instructions of Rama, Shalva would have bowed down his head and accepted you. O fortunate one! O beautiful one! But you have been won over and abducted. O one with the beautiful waist! Therefore, King Shalva has a doubt about you. Bhishma is insolent about his manliness and victory. I think it is appropriate that action should be taken against Bhishma.'

'"Amba replied, 'O brahmana! That has always been the great desire in my heart, if only I could kill Bhishma in battle. O mighty-armed one! Whether you think that the fault lies with Bhishma or King Shalva, chastise the one because of whom I have faced this extreme misery.'"

'Bhishma said, "While they were conversing in this way, the day passed. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was night and a pleasant and cool breeze blew. Then Rama appeared, like the blazing fire in his energy. O king! He was surrounded by his disciples. The sage had matted hair and was clad in bark. The unblemished one with an indomitable soul held a bow in his hand and a sword and a battle axe. O tiger among kings! He approached King Srinjaya. On seeing him, all the ascetics and the immensely ascetic king arose, hands joined in salutation. So did the ascetic maiden. They eagerly honoured Bhargava with *madhuparka*.[20] Having been shown homage, he seated himself among them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Jamadagni's son and rajarshi Srinjaya conversed about earlier times. When this conversation was over, in due course of time, the rajarshi spoke these sweet words, full of meaning, to the immensely strong Rama, foremost among the Bhrigus. 'O Rama! This is my daughter's daughter. O lord! She is the daughter of the king of Kashi. O one who knows what should be done! Listen to her and decide on an appropriate course of action.' Rama replied, 'Tell me your supreme account.' She approached Rama, who was like a blazing fire. The beautiful one lowered her head at Rama's feet. She touched them with hands that were like the petals of lotuses and stood before him. Her eyes were filled with tears and she wept in grief. She sought refuge with the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, the one who is everyone's refuge.

'"Rama said, 'O daughter of a king! You are like Srinjaya to me. Tell me about the grief in your mind and I will act in accordance with your words.'

'"Amba replied, 'O illustrious one! O one who is great in his vows! I have sought refuge with you. I am immersed in this ocean and mud of sorrow. O lord! Save me.'"

'Bhishma said, "Rama saw her beauty, her youthful age and her extremely delicate form and began to think. 'What is she going to say?' Flooded by compassion, Rama, supreme among those of the Bhrigu lineage, thought in this fashion for a long time. Rama spoke to the one with the beautiful smiles. 'Tell me.' She told Bhargava everything, exactly as it had happened. After having heard the words of the princess, Jamadagni's son made up his mind and told the one with the beautiful thighs, 'O beautiful one! I will send word to Bhishma, foremost among the Kurus. When he has heard my words, in conformity with dharma, that lord of men will act accordingly. O fortunate one! If Jahnavi's son[21] does not act in accordance with my words, I will use the energy of my weapons to burn him down in battle, together with his advisers. O princess! Or if you are so inclined, I will force the brave lord of Shalva to a course of action.'

'"Amba replied, 'O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! When Bhishma heard that my mind had earlier turned towards King Shalva, he discarded me. I went to the king of Soubha and spoke words that were difficult to speak.[22] But doubting my character, he did not accept me. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! You should think about all this and then use your own intelligence to decide on the right course of action. Bhishma, the one who is mighty in his vows, is the root cause of my hardship. He used force to overcome and abduct me. O mighty-armed one! Bhishma is the reason behind this unhappiness. Kill him. O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! It is because of him that I am wandering around in this supreme misery. O Bhargava! He is greedy and insolent because of his victory. O unblemished one! It is appropriate that you should take revenge against him. O lord! When the descendant of the Bharata lineage was abducting me, I thought of this resolution in my mind, that the one who is great in his vows should be killed. O Rama! O unblemished one! Therefore, fulfil this desire of mine. O mighty-armed one! Kill Bhishma, like Purandara[23] slew Vritra.'"'

CHAPTER 840(177)

'Bhishma said, "O lord! Having been thus asked to kill Bhishma, Rama spoke to the weeping maiden, who kept urging him repeatedly. 'O descendant of Kashi! O one who is beautiful in complexion! I do not voluntarily take up weapons, except for the sake of those who are learned about the *brahman*.[24] What else can I do for you? O princess! Both Bhishma and Shalva will listen to my words and obey my instructions. O one with the unblemished limbs! I can do that. Do not grieve. O beautiful one! But I cannot take up weapons in any way, unless I am instructed to do so by brahmanas. That is my resolution.'

'"Amba replied, 'O illustrious one! Dispel the grief that Bhishma has unleashed on me. O lord! Without any delay, kill him.'

'"Rama said, 'O daughter of Kashi! If you speak the word, no matter how revered he is, Bhishma will follow my instructions and lower his head at your feet.'

'"Amba replied, 'O Rama! If you wish to do that which brings me pleasure, kill Bhishma in battle. Since you have made your promise, it is proper that you should make that pledge come true.'"

'Bhisma said, "O king! While Rama and Amba were arguing in this way, Akritavrana spoke these words to Jamadagni's son. 'O mighty-armed one! You should not give up the maiden who has sought refuge with you. O Rama! Kill Bhishma, who roars like an *asura*, in battle. O Rama! O mighty sage! If Bhishma challenges you in battle, he will either be vanquished, or he will act in accordance with your words. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! The task of this maiden will then be done. O brave one! O lord! The words that you have spoken will come true. O Rama! O great sage! Once upon a time, you took a pledge. O Bhargava! You promised the brahmanas that if a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya or a shudra came to hate brahmanas, you would kill him in battle. O one who provides refuge! Even for the sake of your own life, you said you were incapable of forsaking a terrified person who seeks refuge with you, even if all the kshatriyas assemble against you in battle. O Bhargava! You said you would slay such insolent ones. O Rama! Bhishma, the extender of the Kuru lineage, is triumphant. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Confront him in a battle and fight with him.'

'"Rama replied, 'O supreme among rishis! I remember the promise I made in earlier times. I will do what can be achieved through conciliation. O brahmana! The task that this maiden from Kashi has set her mind on is great. I will take this maiden and myself go to Bhishma. Insolent in war, if he does not act in accordance with my words, it is my certain resolution that I will kill that insolent person. The arrows that I unleash do not remain in bodies.[25] You learnt that earlier, in the battle with the kshatriyas.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having spoken in this way, the immensely intelligent Rama arose, together with those who knew about the brahman, having made up his mind to leave. The ascetics spent the night there. They offered oblations into the fire. They prayed and meditated. Then they departed, desiring to kill me. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With those bulls among brahmanas and with the maiden, Rama went to Kurukshetra. Having reached the Sarasvati, those great-souled ascetics, with the foremost among the Bhrigus at the forefront, began to dwell there."'

CHAPTER 841(178)

'Bhishma said, "O king! On the third day after he had established himself on that level terrain, the one who is great in his vows sent word to me, saying that he had arrived. On learning that the immensely strong lord, the store of energy, had arrived on the outskirts of my kingdom, I was delighted. O Indra among kings! With a cow in front of me and surrounded by brahmanas, sacrificial priests who were the equals of the gods and other priests, I went there. On seeing me arrive, Jamadagni's powerful son received the homage and spoke these words to me. 'O Bhishma! What were your thoughts when you abducted the daughter of the king of Kashi against her wishes? You then abandoned her later. You have dislodged her from both inferior and superior dharma.[26] Who can now go to someone who has been touched by you? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because she has been abducted by you, she has been refused by Shalva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O tiger among men! Therefore, following my counsel, take her back and let the princess abide by her own dharma. O king! O unblemished one! You do not deserve to treat her with such neglect.' On seeing that his mind wasn't that agitated,[27] I spoke to him. 'O brahmana! There is no way that I can give her to my brother again. O Bhargava! She has told me that she has given herself to Shalva earlier. Having obtained my permission, she went to the city of Soubha. Because of fear, compassion, avarice or gain, I cannot abandon the dharma of kshatriyas. That is the vow that I follow.'

'"Rama's eyes dilated with anger and he said, 'O bull among the Kurus! If you refuse to act in accordance with my words, I will kill you today, together with your advisers.' In great rage, Rama spoke these words repeatedly. His eyes were wide with anger. I repeatedly tried to pacify that scorcher of enemies with sweet words. But I was incapable of pacifying that tiger of the Bhrigu lineage. I then bowed my head down before that supreme among brahmanas and asked, 'What is the reason behind your desire to fight with me? When I was a child, you yourself taught me the four kinds of weapons.[28] O mighty-armed one! O Bhargava! You have instructed me and I am your student.' His eyes red with anger, Rama told me, 'O Bhishma! You know that I am your preceptor. O Kouravya! O lord of the earth! Yet, to bring about my pleasure, you are refusing to take back the daughter of Kashi. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I am not interested in peace with you. O mighty-armed one! Take her back and save yourself and your lineage. Since you have tainted her, she will not find a husband.'

'"When he spoke in this way, I told Rama, the destroyer of enemy cities, 'O brahmarshi! Since this cannot be done, what is the point of striving towards it? I see my earlier teacher, Jamadagni's son. O illustrious one! I seek your favours, like in earlier times. Who will allow a woman to dwell in his house, established like a snake, knowing that she desires another? This is the great taint associated with women. O immensely radiant one! Even the fear of Vasava will not make me give up dharma. Without any delay, show me your favours, or do whatever you must do. O pure-souled one! O lord! An ancient shloka has been heard, chanted by the great-souled and immensely intelligent Marutta. "If a preceptor does not know what should be done and what should not be done, if he deviates from the right path and if he is arrogant, it is one's duty to abandon him." Because you are my preceptor, I have been affectionate and have greatly honoured you. But you are not acquainted with the conduct of a preceptor and I will therefore, fight with you. However, I cannot kill a preceptor in battle, especially one who is a brahmana, especially one who is rich in austerities. I am at peace with you. If one sees a brahmana with an upraised weapon, as if he is the kin of a kshatriya, and angrily kills him in the field of battle, without running away from the fight, dharma is clear that no sin is committed from killing a brahmana. O one rich in austerities! I am a kshatriya. I am established in the dharma of kshatriyas. A man does not commit adharma if he reacts in response to what another person has done. Instead, his welfare is ensured. If a person knows about artha and dharma and about the time and the place, even if he has doubts about what ensures artha, there is no doubt that he should do that which ensures welfare. In this case, there is doubt about where artha lies. But you are acting as if you know what is right. O Rama! Therefore, I will fight with you in a great battle. You will witness the valour of my arms and my superhuman bravery. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Given this, I will do whatever I can. O brahmana! I will fight with you in Kurukshetra. O Rama! O great sage! Prepare yourself for the duel. O Rama! You will be killed by hundreds of my arrows. Sanctified by my weapons in that great battle, you will obtain the worlds that you have earned for yourself. O one who is in love with war! Return from here and go to Kurukshetra. O mighty-armed one! O one rich in austerities! I will fight with you there. O Rama! That is the place where you had once sanctified your father.[29] O Bhargava! I will kill you there and sanctify you there. O Rama! O one who is unassailable in war! Go there swiftly. You have boasted in the past, saying that you are a brahmana. O Rama! You have often boasted in assemblies that you have exterminated kshatriyas from the world. But listen to my words. At that time, Bhishma had not been born and there were no kshatriyas like me, who could dispel your insolence about war and your love for fighting. O mighty-armed one! But Bhishma, the destroyer of enemy cities, has been born now. O Rama! There is no doubt that I will destroy your insolence in war.’”’

CHAPTER 842(179)

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then Rama began to laugh and spoke to me. ‘O Bhishma! It is your good fortune that you wish to fight with me in battle. O Kouravya! Together with you, I will go to Kurukshetra. O scorcher of enemies! I will do what you have asked me to and you should also go there. O Bhishma! Let your mother Jahnavi watch me kill you with hundreds of arrows, so that you become the food of vultures, crows and cranes. O king! Let the goddess,[30] worshipped by *siddhas*[31] and *charanas*,[32] be miserable when she sees you slain by me today and weep. The immensely fortunate river, the daughter of Bhagiratha, does not deserve to see this.[33] But she has given birth to an evil and diseased one like you, who cherishes war. O Bhishma! Come with me and let us go together. Let there be a battle today. O Kouravya! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Take everything, chariots and other things.' Rama, the vanquisher of enemy cities, spoke these words to me. O king! I bowed my head before him and said that it would be this way.

'"After speaking these words, desirous of fighting, Rama went to Kurukshetra. I entered the city[34] and told Satyavati everything. I performed the propitiatory rites and was blessed by my mother. O immensely radiant one! The brahmanas pronounced sacred words of benediction. I mounted a beautiful and silver chariot, yoked to white horses. It had been constructed well and had been prepared well. It was strewn with the hides of tigers. It was loaded with great weapons and every kind of implement. O king! It was driven by a brave charioteer born in a noble lineage, skilled in the knowledge of horses. He had often witnessed my deeds. I was covered in beautiful and white armour. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I grasped a white bow. O lord of men! A white umbrella was held aloft my head and white whisks were brandished. I was attired in white. My headgear was white. All my ornaments were white. Applauded with benedictions of victory, I left Gajasahrya. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I arrived in Kurukshetra, the field where the battle would be fought. O king! Goaded by the charioteer, the horses, with the speed of the mind and the wind, swiftly bore me to the supreme field of battle. Like me, the powerful Rama also swiftly reached Kurukshetra. O king! In battle, we wished to show our valour to each other. I stood before the supreme ascetic Rama, so that he could see me. I grasped my supreme conch shell and began to blow on it. O king! All the brahmanas, the ascetics who lived in the forest, the gods and the masses of rishis assembled to witness the divine battle. Celestial garlands manifested themselves repeatedly. Divine musical instruments sounded. There was the rumbling of masses of clouds. All the ascetics who followed Bhargava surrounded the field of battle as witnesses.

'"The goddess who is my mother desires the welfare of all beings. O king! She manifested herself before me and said, 'What is it that you wish to do? O extender of the Kuru lineage! I will go to Jamadagni's son and plead with him. I will repeatedly tell him, "Do not fight with Bhishma, your student." O son! O king! And you should not behave so obstinately towards a brahmana. Why do you wish to fight with Jamadagni's son in a battle?' She censured me. 'O son! Do you not know that Rama, the destroyer of kshatriyas, is equal to Hara[35] in valour? Why do you wish to fight with him?' I joined my hands in salutation before the goddess. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! I accurately told her everything that had transpired at the svayamvara. O Indra among kings! I told her how I had tried to obtain Rama's favours earlier and about the ancient love of the daughter of the king of Kashi. My mother, the great river, then went to Rama. For my sake, the goddess sought to pacify the rishi Bhargava. She said, 'Do not fight with Bhishma, your student.' He replied to her, 'It is Bhishma that you should restrain. I am here because he is not doing what I desire.'"

'Sanjaya[36] said, "Out of affection towards her son, Ganga then returned to Bhishma. But his eyes were red with anger and he did not pay heed to her words. The great ascetic, foremost among the Bhrigus, with dharma in his soul, then appeared. The supreme among the brahmanas challenged him again to the battle."'

CHAPTER 843(180)

'Bhishma said, "I laughed and spoke to the one who stood ready for battle. 'You are standing on the ground and I do not wish to fight with you while I am established on my chariot. O brave one! O mighty-armed one! O Rama! Mount a chariot and armour yourself, if you wish to fight with me in battle.' In that field of battle, Rama smiled and told me, 'The earth is my chariot. O Bhishma! The Vedas bear me, like well-trained horses. The wind is my charioteer. The mother of the Vedas is my armour.[37] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I am protected well by these and will fight in the battle.' O son of Gandhari! Rama's truth is his valour and while speaking in this way, he covered me on all sides with a great shower of arrows. I then saw Jamadagni's son stationed on a celestial chariot. It was stocked with all kinds of radiant weapons that were extraordinary to look at. It was created from his mind and was sacred. It was as expansive as a city. It was yoked to celestial horses that were ready. It was decorated with gold. O mighty-armed one! It was adorned with a banner that had the sign of the moon embellished on it. He held a bow and his quivers were fastened. He had guards on his arms and fingers. His friend Akritavrana, learned in the Vedas and beloved of Bhargava, acted as his charioteer. Wishing to fight, Bhargava delighted my heart by repeatedly saying, 'Attack' and challenging me to do battle. He was unassailable and extremely strong and was like the rising sun. Alone, I approached Rama, the destroyer of kshatriyas. When I was at a distance of three shots of an arrow,[38] I restrained my mounts. I descended. Putting aside my bow, I advanced towards that supreme of rishis. I showed homage to Rama, supreme among brahmanas, in the prescribed fashion and offered him worship, speaking these supreme words. 'O Rama! I will fight with you in battle, though you are better than me and superior. You are my preceptor. You follow dharma. O lord! Bless me so that I may be victorious.'

'"Rama replied, 'O foremost among the Kurus! This is what should be done by those who desire prosperity. O mighty-armed one! This is dharma for those who fight with their superiors. O lord of the earth! Had you not approached me like this, I would have cursed you. O Kourava! Make every effort to fight in this battle and resort to fortitude. I cannot bless you for your victory, because I am standing here, wishing to defeat you. Go and fight in accordance with dharma. I am pleased with your conduct.'"

'Bhishma said, "I bowed before him and swiftly ascended my chariot. Desiring battle, I once again blew on my conch shell, which was decorated with gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A battle then ensued between him and me. As we sought to defeat each other, it lasted for many days. He was the first one to strike me, with nine hundred and sixty-nine arrows that were shafted with the feathers of cranes. They were like the fire in their energy. O lord of the earth! My four mounts and my charioteer were restrained in that battle. But since I was armoured, I remained firm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I bowed to the gods and brahmanas. While he stood established on that field of battle, I smiled and replied to him. 'Though you have behaved harshly towards me, I have honoured you as a preceptor. O brahmana! Listen again to what must be done if one wishes to accumulate a store of dharma. I will not strike the Vedas that are there in your body, your great brahmana characteristics, or the extremely great austerities that you have collected. O Rama! I will strike the dharma of kshatriyas that you have resorted to. When a brahmana raises his weapons, he becomes like a kshatriya. Behold the valour of my bow. Behold the strength of my arms. O brave one! I will slice your bow and arrows into two.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! I shot a sharp arrow[39] at him. The ends of his bow were shattered and it fell down on the ground. I shot nine hundred arrows towards Jamadagni's son. They had lowered tufts and were shafted with the feathers of cranes. They were directed towards his body and were spurred on by the wind. Those arrows sped on, seeming to spout blood, like serpents. All the limbs in his body were wounded and blood flowed out from those wounds. O king! At that time, Rama looked like Meru spouting out its minerals, or an *ashoka* tree at the end of the winter, covered with red blossoms, or like a *kimshuka* tree.[40]

'"At this, Rama was overcome by anger and took up another bow. He showered down sharp arrows, with golden shafts, on me. There were many terrible arrows, capable of piercing the heart. They were extremely fast and made me tremble. They were like flames, or the poison of snakes. I again summoned my patience in that battle. Enraged in that battle, I unleashed one hundred arrows at Rama. They were sharp and were like the fire or the sun, or like the venom of snakes. Struck by these, Rama seemed to lose his consciousness. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I was overcome by compassion and censured myself. ‘Shame on battles and on kshatriyas!’ O king! I was overcome by sorrow and repeatedly said, ‘I am evil. I have committed a sin by acting like a kshatriya. My preceptor is a brahmana. He has dharma in his soul. He has been oppressed by my arrows.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I did not strike Jamadagni’s son any more. Having heated the earth, once the day was over, the one with the thousand rays[41] departed and the fight was over.”’

CHAPTER 844(181)

‘Bhishma said, “O lord of the earth! My charioteer was revered for his skill in these matters. He removed the shafts from himself, from the horses and from me. The horses were bathed and rolled around on the ground. They obtained water and were refreshed. When the sun arose in the morning, the battle resumed. On seeing me swiftly approach, stationed and armoured on my chariot, the powerful Rama ensured that his chariot was also completely ready. When I saw that Rama was desirous of doing battle, I cast aside my excellent bow and swiftly descended from my chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As earlier, I showed him homage and then mounted my chariot again. Without any fear and ready to fight, I stood before Jamadagni’s son. He enveloped me with a great shower of arrows. I also covered him with a shower of arrows. O king! Enraged, Jamadagni’s son again released arrows at me and they were like snakes with flaming mouths. O king! Swiftly, I repeatedly sliced them down in the sky with hundreds and thousands of sharp bhallas.

‘“O mighty-armed one! At this, Jamadagni’s powerful son released divine weapons at me and I repulsed them with my weapons. I wished to perform the superior deeds. In every direction, a great roar could be heard in the firmament. I used the *vayavya*[42] weapon against Jamadagni's son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rama countered this with his *guhyaka* weapon.[43] I invoked the mantra and released the *agneya* weapon.[44] The lord Rama countered this with a *varuna* weapon.[45] In this fashion, I countered Rama's celestial weapons and Rama, the destroyer of enemies and knowledgeable in divine weapons, repulsed mine. O king! Rama, supreme among brahmanas and Jamadagni's immensely strong son, then suddenly turned to the left and enraged, struck me in the chest. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! I fainted and fell down on that supreme chariot. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! On seeing me in that miserable state and oppressed by Rama's arrows, my charioteer quickly carried me away to the distance of one *goruta*.[46] All of Rama's followers, Akritavrana and the others, were extremely delighted when they saw that I had fallen down pierced, having lost my consciousness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They cheered, and so did the maiden from Kashi.

'"When I had regained consciousness and got to know what had happened, I told my charioteer, 'O charioteer! Go where Rama is. I have regained my senses and my pain has gone.' O Kouravya! The extremely beautiful horses seemed to be dancing. They were as fleet as the wind. The charioteer bore me back on them. O Kourava! On having reached Rama, wishing to vanquish him, I was angry and covered the raging one with a net of arrows. Those arrows flew straight. But in that battle, Rama sliced them down with his own arrows, shooting three arrows for each one that I did. All my arrows were extremely sharp. However, in that great battle, all of them were sliced into two by hundreds of Rama's arrows. Wishing to kill Rama, Jamadagni's son, I again unleashed a flaming arrow that was extremely radiant and was like time itself. He was struck deeply and pierced by that arrow. Rama swiftly lost consciousness and fell down on the ground. When Rama fell down on the ground, a lamentation arose everywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The world was anxious, as if the sun had fallen down.

Extremely anxious and overcome by grief, all the ascetics and the maiden from Kashi rushed towards the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage. They embraced him and comforted him gently, with cool water in their hands. O Kourava! They pronounced benedictions for his victory.

'"Rama arose. Though he was confused, he spoke these words to me. 'O Bhishma! Stand there. You are dead.' He affixed an arrow to his bow and released it. In that great battle, the swift arrow struck me on my left side. I was extremely agitated, like a tree whirled by the wind. O king! In that great battle, he killed my horses with swift weapons. His dexterity with arrows was such that he could carry away a single one of my body hair. To counter him in that battle, I also used swift weapons. O mighty-armed one! I unleashed an arrow that could not be countered and all those arrows, Rama's and mine, remained in the air[47] and swiftly covered the sky in every direction. The sun was covered in this net of arrows and no longer provided any heat. The wind could not pass through them, as if it had been restrained by clouds. The wind trembled and dashed against the sun's rays. From this friction, a fire was created in the sky. The arrows blazed, because of the colourful fire that had been created by them. O king! Everything on the ground was then reduced to ashes. O Kourava! Rama was angry and shot hundreds, thousands, millions,[48] one hundred millions, ten thousands, ten trillions and billions of swift arrows at me. But in that battle, I sliced them down with my own arrows, which were like the poison of snakes. O king! I shattered them and made them fall down on the ground, like serpents. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Thus did the battle continue then. When twilight had passed, my preceptor withdrew."'

CHAPTER 845(182)

'Bhishma said, "O supreme among the Bharata lineage! When I encountered Rama the next day, there was again a terrible and tumultuous battle. From one day to the next, the brave lord, who has dharma in his soul and knows about the use of divine weapons, released many celestial weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But, in that terrible battle where one is ready to give up one’s precious life, I repulsed them with weapons that could be used for countering. When many weapons were thus destroyed, the immensely energetic Bhargava became wrathful. He fought, ready to give up his own life. Having been restrained by weapons, Jamadagni’s great-souled son grasped a spear that was terrible in form. It was like a flaming meteor that had been created by time itself. It blazed at the tip and covered the world with its energy. It flamed towards me, like the sun at the time of destruction. With my fiery arrows, I sliced it into three and it fell down on the ground. At that, a breeze with a sacred fragrance began to blow. When this was sliced down, Rama’s anger was ignited. He hurled twelve other terrible spears at me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am incapable of describing their forms, their energy and their speed. But I watched them in confusion. They advanced from all the directions, like giant meteors, or the fire. They had many forms and energy and flamed at the tips. They were like twelve suns, at the time of the destruction of the world. O king! When I saw that net of arrows[49] extending, I sliced them down with my net of arrows. In that battle, I shot twelve arrows and countered those spears, terrible in form. Jamadagni’s great-souled son then hurled another terrible spear at me. It possessed a golden shaft and was colourful, with a golden tassel. It was like a giant meteor and was flaming. O Indra among men! I repulsed it with my sword and shield and it fell down. In that battle, I used divine arrows against Jamadagni’s son and showered his celestial horses and his charioteer. On seeing that his colourful spear, which had the form of an unleashed snake, had been repelled, the great-souled one, the oppressor of the Haihaya,[50] was overcome by anger and grasped a divine weapon. A mass of flaming arrows, without tufts,[51] manifested itself, like a terrible swarm of locusts. They pierced and completely overwhelmed my body, my horses, my chariot and my charioteer. My chariot was covered everywhere with those arrows. O king! And so were my mounts and my charioteer. The yoke of the chariot, the wheels and the axle were shattered through those arrows. When that shower of arrows was exhausted, I also showered arrows on my preceptor in return. Bhargava's body, and his mass of brahmana energy, were pierced by those arrows and began to discharge a lot of blood. Rama was tormented by my net of arrows. I was also suffering from many deep wounds. When the sun headed for the mountain behind which it sets, the fighting ended in the afternoon."'

CHAPTER 846(183)

'Bhishma said, "O Indra among kings! The unblemished sun arose in the morning and Bhargava's battle with me resumed again. Rama, supreme among those who wield weapons, stationed on a fast-moving chariot, showered a net of arrows on me, like Shakra at a mountain. My charioteer, my well-wisher, was hurt by that shower of arrows and fell down from the chariot. I was dejected. Being greatly struck by the force of those arrows, my charioteer became deeply unconscious and fell down on the ground. Oppressed by Rama's arrows, my charioteer gave up his life. O Indra among kings! For an instant, I was also overcome by fear. O king! When my charioteer was killed and my mind was agitated, Rama hurled deadly arrows at me. While I was still overwhelmed on account of the charioteer, Bhargava powerfully drew his firm bow and pierced me with an arrow. O king! It was an arrow that drank blood. It struck me on the clavicle. O Indra among kings! When I fell down, it fell down with me on the ground. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Rama then thought that I was dead. He repeatedly roared in delight, thundering like a cloud. O king! When I fell down, Rama rejoiced. Together with his followers, he emitted a loud roar. The Kurus were at my side and there were others who had come to witness the fight. When I fell down, they were supremely distressed.

'"O lion among kings! When I fell down, I saw eight brahmanas. They possessed the radiance of the sun and the fire. They surrounded me from every direction and in that field of battle, supported me with their arms. Supported by those brahmanas, I did not actually touch the ground. I was held up in the air by them, as if they were relatives. It was as if I was asleep in the air and they sprinkled drops of water on me. O king!

The brahmanas who were supporting me spoke to me. ‘Do not be scared. Everything will be fine.’ Sustained by those words, I suddenly arose and saw my mother, foremost among rivers, stationed on my chariot. O Indra among Kouravas! I saw that the great river was controlling and steering my horses. I touched my mother’s feet and those of Arshtishena[52] and ascended my chariot. She had protected my chariots, my horses and my implements. I joined my hands in salutation and asked her to leave. I then myself controlled those horses, which were as fleet as the wind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I fought with Jamadagni’s son, until the day was over. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, I shot an arrow at Rama. It was fast and extremely powerful. It pierced him in the heart. Oppressed by that arrow, Rama lost his senses. He let go of his bow and sank down on the ground on his knees. When Rama, the one who gave away thousands,[53] fell down, clouds covered the sky and showered copious quantities of blood. Meteors fell down in hundreds. There were storms and earthquakes. Suddenly, Svarbhanu[54] swallowed up the blazing sun. Harsh winds began to blow. The earth trembled. Vultures, crows and cranes were delighted and circled around. The directions blazed. A jackal repeatedly howled in a terrible voice. Drums sounded in horrible tones, though they had not been struck. When the great-souled Rama became unconscious and fell down on the ground, there were all these terrible and fearful portents. The soft rays of the sun were covered. Enveloped in dust, it prepared to set. Night arrived, with a cool and pleasant breeze. Both of us withdrew from the fight. O king! In this way, there was a ceasefire then. When day dawned, it started again. From one day to another, it thus went on for twenty-three days.”’

CHAPTER 847(184)

‘Bhishma said, “O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! That night, I bowed my head before the brahmanas, the ancestors, all the gods, the beings who roam in the night and to night itself. I retreated to my bed and in private, reflected about this in my mind. ‘This extremely terrible and great battle between Jamadagni’s son and me has been going on for many days. I cannot defeat the immensely valiant brahmana in the field of battle. He is immensely strong. If I am capable of vanquishing Jamadagni’s powerful son, let the gods be favourable and show me the way tonight.’ O Indra among kings! Wounded by arrows, I fell asleep that night. The foremost among brahmanas had raised me when I had fallen down from the chariot. They had held me and comforted me, asking me not to be afraid. O great king! When it was almost dawn, on my right side, they appeared in a dream. O extender of the Kuru linage! Listen. They surrounded me and spoke these words. ‘O Gangeya! Arise and do not be frightened. You have nothing to be scared of. O tiger among men! We are protecting you, because you have sprung from our own bodies. There is no way in which Rama, Jamadagni’s son, can defeat you in battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But you will vanquish Rama in battle. You will recognize this beloved weapon of yours. When you were in an earlier body, you used to be familiar with it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This was created by Vishvakarma. It is Prajapatya and is known by the name of *prasvapan*.[55] Rama does not know about this, nor does any other man on earth. O mighty-armed one! O Indra among kings! Remember it and use it with force. O lord of men! Rama will not be killed with this weapon. O one who shows honours! Therefore, there will be no sin if you use it. Oppressed by the force of your arrow, Jamadagni’s son will fall asleep. O Bhishma! Having thus defeated him, you will then make him rise up again, with this beloved weapon of yours, named *sambodhana*.[56] O Kouravya! When you are stationed on your chariot in the morning, act as we have asked you to. Whether one is asleep, or whether one is dead, we regard the two as equal. O king! Rama will never become mortal. Therefore, when it arrives before you,[57] use prasvapan.’ O king! Having said this, all those supreme among brahmanas disappeared. All those eight were similar in form. All of them were radiant, like the sun personified.”’

CHAPTER 848(185)

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When night was over, I woke up. I thought about my dream and was extremely delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then a tumultuous battle started between him and me. It was extraordinary for all beings and made the body hair stand up. Bhargava showered arrows down on me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I countered them with a net of arrows. Thereupon, the greatly ascetic was again supremely enraged. Like it had happened the day before, he angrily hurled a spear at me. It was like Indra’s *vajra* to the touch. It was as resplendent as Yama’s staff. It flamed like the fire and licked all directions of that field of battle. O tiger among the Bharata lineage! With great force, it struck me on the shoulder. It was like the altar of a sacrificial fire in the sky.[58] Thus wounded by the mighty-armed Rama, whose eyes were red, terrible streams of blood began to flow, like minerals streaming from mountains.

‘“I was extremely angry at Jamadagni’s son. I hurled an arrow at him. It was like death, like the poison of serpents. O great king! The brave one, supreme among brahmanas, was struck on the forehead and shone like a mountain, with a peak at the top. He was extremely angry and turned towards me. Powerfully, he drew his bow and shot an arrow at me. It was like time and death. It was terrible and was capable of destroying enemies. Like a hissing serpent, the terrible arrow struck me on the chest. O king! Covered with blood, I fell down on the ground. When I regained my senses, I hurled an unblemished spear at Jamadagni’s intelligent son. It flamed like lightning. It struck that foremost among brahmanas between the arms. O king! He lost his senses and began to tremble. His friend Akritavrana, the great ascetic and brahmana, embraced him and repeatedly comforted him with auspicious words. Thus comforted, Rama, the one with the great vows, became angry and was overcome with intolerance. He manifested the supreme weapon known as *brahma*. To counter it, I also used the supreme brahma weapon. It blazed, appearing like something at the end of an era.[59] O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The two brahma weapons encountered each other in mid-air, without reaching either Rama or me.

O lord of the earth! The sky became only a great mass of energy and all the beings were distressed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of the energy of those weapons, the rishis, the gandharvas and the gods were extremely tormented and oppressed. The earth, with its mountains, forests and trees, trembled. The tormented beings were supremely afflicted. O king! The sky blazed. The ten directions were full of smoke. Those that were in the sky were no longer capable of remaining in the firmament. There was a great lamentation in the world, with the gods, the asuras and the *rakshasa*s. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I decided that this was the time and prepared to release my beloved prasvapan weapon, as those who knew about the brahman had asked me to. As soon as I thought about the weapon in my mind, it appeared before me.”’

CHAPTER 849(186)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! At this, there was the sound of a great tumult in the sky. ‘O Bhishma! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Do not release prasvapan.’ But I aimed that weapon at the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage. While I was aiming prasvapan, Narada spoke these words to me. ‘O Kourvaya! The masses of gods are established in the firmament. They are restraining you now. Do not use prasvapan. Rama is an ascetic with brahmana qualities. He is a brahmana and your preceptor. O Kouravya! You should never show him disrespect in any way.’ Then I saw those eight, who knew about the brahman, stationed in the sky. O Indra among kings! They smiled and spoke softly to me. ‘O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Do as Narada has asked you to. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That will be supremely beneficial for the world.’ In that field of battle, I then withdrew the weapon prasvapan. In that battle, in accordance with the prescription, I readied the blazing *brahmastra*.[60] O prince! On seeing that the weapon had been withdrawn, Rama was enraged. He suddenly raised his voice and spoke these words. ‘I have been defeated by the extremely evil-minded Bhishma.’[61] Then Jamadagni’s son saw his father, and his father, and his father also.[62]

'"They surrounded him and in a comforting voice, spoke these words. 'O son! Never act in such a rash way again, especially fighting with a kshatriya like Bhishma. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! It is the dharma of kshatriyas to fight. The supreme riches of brahmanas are studying and observing vows. Earlier, we asked you to do this for a specific purpose[63] and you took up arms and performed a fierce deed. O son! You have fought enough with Bhishma. You have been defeated. O mighty-armed one! Withdraw from the field of battle. O fortunate one! Let there be an end to wielding the bow. O unassailable one! O Bhargava! Give it up and practise austerities. Bhishma is Shantanu's son and he has been restrained by all the gods. They have asked him to withdraw from the battle. They have repeatedly told him, "Do not fight with Rama, your preceptor. O extender of the Kuru lineage! It is not proper for you to defeat Rama in battle. O Gangeya! In the field of battle, show respect to this brahmana. We are your seniors and therefore, we are restraining you." Bhishma is foremost among the Vasus. O son! It is fortunate that you are still alive. Shantanu's son, Gangeya, is an immensely famous Vasu. How can he be defeated by you? O Rama! Refrain. Arjuna is foremost among the Pandavas. He is Purandara's powerful son. He is the brave Nara Prajapati, the ancient and eternal god.[64] He is famous in the three worlds as the valiant Savyasachi. At the right time, it has been ordained by the self-creating one[65] that he will be the cause of Bhishma's death.' Thus addressed by his ancestors, Rama replied to his ancestors. 'I will not refrain from this battle. That is the vow that I observe. I have never withdrawn from the forefront of battle earlier. O grandfathers! If it so pleases you, let the son of the river withdraw from the fight. There is no way that I will withdraw from this fight.' O king! Then those sages, with Richika at the forefront and with Narada, approached me and said, 'O son![66] Honour the supreme brahmana and withdraw from the battle.' I told them, 'No, because of my respect for the dharma of kshatriyas, my vow in this world is that I will never withdraw from a fight. I will not withdraw and retreat. I will not be pierced by arrows on my back. Greed, misery, fear or the possibility of gain cannot make me abandon this eternal dharma. This is my firm resolution.’ O king! Then all the sages, with Narada at the forefront and Bhagirathi, my mother, stood in the midst of that field of battle. Firm in my resolution to continue fighting, I stood in that field of battle, with an arrow fixed to my bow.

‘“In that field of battle, they again spoke collectively to the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage. ‘O Bhargava! Be pacified. The heart of brahmanas is like butter. O Rama! O Rama! O supreme among brahmanas! Refrain from fighting. O Bhargava! Bhishma is incapable of being killed by you and you by Bhishma.’ All of them addressed him in this way and obstructed him in the field of battle. His ancestors made the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage lay down his weapons. Then I again saw those eight, who were knowledgeable about the brahman. They were as resplendent as eight rising planets. While I stood on the field of battle, they spoke these affectionate words to me. ‘Go to the mighty-armed Rama, your preceptor. Do what is beneficial for the world.’ On seeing that Rama had withdrawn because of the words of his well-wishers and for the welfare of the world, I acted in accordance with the words that had been spoken to me. I was severely wounded. But I went up to Rama and honoured him. Rama, the great ascetic, smiled affectionately at me and said, ‘O Bhishma! In this world, there is no kshatriya like you who roams the earth. Go. In this fight, I have been extremely satisfied with you.’ In my presence, Bhargava summoned the maiden. In the midst of those ascetics, he spoke these miserable words.”’

CHAPTER 850(187)

‘“Rama said, ‘O beautiful one! In the sight of all the worlds, to the supreme extent of my capacity, I have shown great manliness. But in battle, I have not been able to establish my superiority over Bhishma, supreme among those who wield weapons, even though I exhibited my supreme weapons. This is the ultimate of my power. This is the ultimate of my strength. O fortunate one! Go wherever you wish. What else can I do for you? Seek refuge with Bhishma. There is no other recourse for you. Unleashing his great weapons, Bhishma has vanquished me.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having spoken in this way, the great-minded Rama sighed and was silent. The maiden then spoke to the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage. ‘O illustrious one! It is just as your illustrious self has said. The intelligent Bhishma is invincible in battle, even to the gods. You have performed my task to the best of your capacity and the best of your endeavours. In this battle, you have been unrestrained in valour and have used many weapons. But in the end, he could not be surpassed in battle. Under no circumstances, will I go back to Bhishma again. O one rich in austerities! O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Instead, I will go where I can myself bring Bhishma down in battle.’ Her eyes red with anger, the maiden spoke in this way. Thinking about my death, she made up her mind to engage in austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After taking leave from me, Rama, supreme among the Bhrigu lineage, went with the sages to Mahendra, from where he had come. Praised by the brahmanas, I ascended my chariot and having entered the city, told my mother, Satyavati, everything that had transpired. O great king! She congratulated me. I instructed wise men to watch over the maiden’s doings and from one day to another, they reported to me her goings, words and deeds. Every day, they were engaged in ensuring my welfare. From the moment the maiden left for the forest to perform austerities, I was miserable and wretched. It was as if I had lost my senses. O son![67] No kshatriya can vanquish me in battle with valour, except one who knows about the brahman, has performed austerities and is rigid in his vows.

‘“O king! Because of my fear, I informed Narada and Vyasa about her deeds. Both of them told me, ‘O Bhishma! You should not be despondent about the deeds of the daughter of Kashi. Through human efforts, who can counteract destiny?’ O great king! The maiden resorted to a circle of hermitages that was on the banks of the Yamuna and engaged in superhuman austerities. She gave up food. She became thin and coarse. She had matted hair. She became covered with dirt and mud. Rich in austerities, she lived on air for six months and was like a pillar. Later, the beautiful one went to the banks of the Yamuna and stood in the water for one year, without taking any food. After that, for another year, she survived on a single leaf every day. She was terrible in her anger and stood on the tips of her toes. She continued in this way for twelve years and heated up heaven. None of her relatives were capable of restraining her. She went to Vatsabhumi,[68] frequented by siddhas and charanas. This was the hermitage of great-souled ascetics whose deeds were sacred. In that sacred region, she bathed day and night. O king! O Kouravya! The maiden from Kashi roamed around, as she willed, in the hermitage of Nanda, in the sacred hermitage of Uluka, the hermitage of Chyavana, the region of the brahman, Prayaga, the sacrificial region of the gods, the forests of the gods, Bhogavati, the hermitage of Koushika, the hermitage of Mandavya, the hermitage of Dilipa, Rama's lake[69] and the hermitage of Pailagargya. O king! O lord of the earth! The maiden from Kashi bathed at these *tirtha*s and performed terrible austerities.

'"O Kouraveya! My mother arose from the water and asked her, 'O fortunate one! Why are you undergoing this pain? Tell me truthfully.' O king! The unblemished one joined her hands in salutation and replied, 'O one with the beautiful eyes! Bhishma has not been defeated by Rama in battle. When he raises his arrows, who else can strive against that lord of the earth? I will myself observe extremely difficult austerities for Bhishma's destruction. O goddess! I will roam around the earth in order to kill that king. May this be the fruit that I obtain in another body.' The river that goes to the ocean then said, 'O beautiful one! You are following a crooked path. O one with the unblemished limbs! O lady! This desire of yours is impossible to accomplish. O maiden from Kashi! O beautiful one! If you observe a vow for Bhishma's destruction, if you indeed give up your body in this vow, you will only become a crooked river that has water during the rainy season. You will have terrible tirthas that no one will recognize. You will only flow during the rains and will remain dry for eight months. You will have terrible and fearful crocodiles and will be horrible to all beings.' O king! Having spoken thus, my immensely fortunate and beautiful mother smiled and tried to restrain the maiden from Kashi.

‘“‘The one with the beautiful complexion did not eat or drink water, sometimes for eight months, sometimes for ten months. O Kourvaya! In her desire for more tirthas, the daughter of the king of Kashi again roamed around and fell into[70] Vatsabhumi. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! She became a river in Vatsabhumi, known as Amba.[71] She only flows in the rainy season. She has many crocodiles and terrible tirthas. She is crooked. O king! Through her austerities, half of the maiden became a river in Vatsa. The other half remained a maiden.”’

CHAPTER 851(188)

‘Bhishma said, “All the ascetics saw that she was firm in her resolution to perform austerities. O son![72] They tried to stop her and asked, ‘What do you wish to accomplish?’ The rishis were aged in their austerities and the maiden replied to them, ‘I have been abandoned by Bhishma and have been dislodged from the dharma I would have obtained through a husband. O ones rich in austerities! I have consecrated myself for his death and not for the sake of any world.[73] I have resolved that I will achieve peace only through Bhishma’s death. It is because of his deeds that I have obtained this eternal and infinite misery. I have been deprived of the world of a husband. I am neither a woman, nor a man. O ones rich in austerities! I will not desist until I have slain Gangeya in battle. This is the resolution in my heart and I am engaged for this purpose. I am disgusted with my state as a woman and I have made up my mind to become a man. I wish to exact vengeance on Bhishma. I should not be dissuaded again.’ The god who wields the trident, Uma’s consort, manifested himself. In the midst of the *maharshis*, he showed his own form to the beautiful one. He satisfied her with a boon and she asked for my defeat. The god replied to the intelligent one, ‘You will kill him.’ At this, the maiden spoke to Rudra. ‘O god! How can a woman like me be victorious in battle? O Uma’s consort! Since I am a woman, my mind is deep.[74] O lord of beings! You have promised Bhishma’s defeat. O one with the bull on the banner![75] Act so that your promise comes true, so that I can kill Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, in battle.’ The

Mahadeva, with the bull on his banner, spoke truthfully to the maiden. ‘O fortunate one! I do not utter false words. What I have said will come true. You will attain manhood and will kill Bhishma in battle. When you enter another body, you will remember everything. You will be born as a maharatha in Drupada’s lineage. You will be an extremely honoured warrior who is swift in the use of weapons. O fortunate one! Everything will be exactly as I have said it will be. You will become a man after some time has passed.’ Having thus spoken, Mahadeva Kapardi Vrishadhvaja[76] disappeared, while all the brahmanas looked on. In the sight of those maharshis, the unblemished one, the one with the beautiful complexion, gathered wood from the forest. She constructed an extremely large funeral pyre and set fire to it. O great king! When the fire was blazing, with rage igniting her senses, she said, ‘This is for Bhishma’s destruction.’ O king! On the banks of the Yamuna, the eldest daughter of Kashi entered the fire.”’

CHAPTER 852(189)

‘Duryodhana asked, “O Gangeya! How did the one who had been a maiden earlier become Shikhandi? O grandfather! O foremost among men in a battle! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma said, “O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! The beloved wife and queen of King Drupada did not have any sons. O great king! At that time, King Drupada satisfied Shankara for the sake of an offspring. Having determined to bring about our death, he resorted to terrible austerities.[77] He said, ‘O illustrious one! I wish to have a son to exact vengeance on Bhishma.’ But he obtained a daughter from Mahadeva, not a son. The god of gods replied, ‘You will have a female child, who will be male. O lord of the earth! Return. It will not be otherwise.’ He returned to the city and told his wife, ‘O queen! I have made endeavours for a son and have performed great austerities. But Shambhu has said that we will have a daughter who will later become a man. When I repeatedly pleaded with him, Shambhu replied, “That is destiny and it cannot be otherwise. It is fated that way.”’ When her season arrived, King Drupada's spirited wife purified herself and united with Drupada. As had been decreed by destiny, she conceived at the right time, through Parshata.[78] O lord of the earth! This is what Narada told me. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When the lotus-eyed queen conceived, out of hope for a son, the mighty-armed King Drupada happily tended to his beloved wife. King Drupada was childless. O lord of men! At the right time, Drupada's illustrious queen gave birth to a daughter who was supreme in her beauty. O Indra among kings! The king was without a son and had it proclaimed, 'A son has been born to me.' O lord of men! King Drupada concealed the facts and had all the rites performed for a son, as if he had a son. Drupada's queen protected the secret and made every effort to say that a son had been born. Other than Parshata, no one else in the city knew. Out of respect for the words of the god with extraordinary energy,[79] he concealed that it was a daughter and said that it was a son. The king performed all the rites connected with birth and everything else that was decreed, as if it was a male child. He was known as Shikhandi. I alone knew, through a spy, through Narada's words, through the words of the god[80] and through Amba's austerities."'

CHAPTER 853(190)

'Bhishma said, "Drupada took great care about all his relatives. O Indra among kings! Shikhandi[81] became supremely skilled in painting and the arts. In the use of arrows and other weapons, she became Drona's student. O great king! The beautiful[82] mother asked the king to find a wife for the daughter, as if she were a son. Parshata saw that his daughter had become mature. Knowing that she was a woman, with his wife, he began to worry. Drupada said, 'My daughter has become mature and this increases my sorrows. Following the words of the one who wields the trident, I have concealed her. O great queen! That can never turn out to be false. How can the creator of the three worlds utter a falsehood?' The wife replied, 'O king! If it pleases you, listen to the words that I have to say. O son of Prishata! Having heard, you should then carry out your own tasks. O king! Let her take a wife in accordance with the prescribed rites. It is my firm view that his[83] words will come true.' Having thus decided on a course of action, the couple chose as a bride the daughter of the lord of Dasharna. King Drupada, lion among men, asked about all the kings who had pure lineages. As Shikhandi's wife, he chose the daughter of the king of Dasharna. The king of Dasharna was known as Hiranyavarma. The lord of the earth gave his daughter away to Shikhandi. King Hiranyavarma of Dasharna was an extremely powerful king. He was unassailable and possessed a large army. He was high-minded.

'"O supreme among kings! When the marriage had been performed, the maiden attained maturity and so did the maiden Shikhandi. Having obtained a wife, Shikhandi returned to Kampilya.[84] For some time, the maiden did not know that she[85] was a woman. When Hiranyavarma's daughter got to know this about Shikhandi, she was ashamed and reported to her nurses and friends that Shikhandi, the daughter of the king of Panchala, was a maiden. O tiger among kings! The nurses from Dasharna were supremely distressed and sent messengers[86] with the news. All the messengers told the lord of Dasharna about the deception, exactly as it had happened and the king was filled with anger. O great king! At that time, Shikhandi conducted himself like a male in the royal household. Disregarding the fact that he was a woman, he sported himself happily. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! When Hiranyavarma heard about this a few days later, he was afflicted with anger. The king of Dasharna was overcome with terrible rage. He sent a messenger to Drupada's abode. Kanchanavarma's[87] messenger went to Drupada. He took him aside and privately said, 'O king! The king of Dasharna has spoken these words. O unblemished one! He is extremely enraged at having been deceived by you. "O king! I have been insulted by you and your bad counsel, that out of the delusion in your heart, you have sought my daughter for your own daughter. O evil-minded one! You will now reap the fruits of that deception. Be steady. I will uproot you, with your relatives and your advisers."'"'

‘Bhishma said, “O king! Thus addressed by the messenger, Drupada was like a thief who had been caught in the act and could not utter a word. He made extreme efforts to pacify his in-law, through messengers who used sweet words to argue this wasn’t the case. But the king[88] again ascertained the truth of the matter, that the daughter of Panchala was actually a maiden, and swiftly marched out. In accordance with the words of the nurses, he sent messengers to all his infinitely energetic friends about the deception that had been practised on his daughter. That supreme among kings assembled an army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He made up his mind to invade Drupada. O Indra among kings! King Hiranyavarma consulted with his friends about what should be done vis-a-vis the king of Panchala. All the great-souled kings decided, ‘O king! If it is true that Shikhandi is a woman, we will bind the king of Panchala and take him home. We will instate another king as the king of Panchala. We will kill King Drupada, together with Shikhandi.’ Having learnt about their resolution, the lord of men[89] again sent his *kshatta*[90] to Parshata with the words, ‘Be steady. I am going to kill you.’ King Drupada was timid by nature. In addition, the lord of men was guilty. He was overcome by dreadful fright. After having sent the messenger from Dasharna away, Drupada became extremely distressed. The lord of men, the king of Panchala, met his wife in private and spoke these words to Shikhandi’s beloved mother. His heart was overcome by great fear and oppressed with grief. ‘My extremely powerful in-law is full of anger. King Hiranyavarma will attack me with an army. I am a fool. What will I now do about our daughter? It is suspected that your son Shikhandi is actually a woman. Having determined that this is the truth and thinking that he has been deceived, with his friends, his forces and his followers, he wishes to destroy me. O one with the beautiful hips! O lovely one! Tell me what is true and what is false. O fortunate one! Having heard your words, I will act accordingly. I am in danger and so is the child Shikhandi. O queen! O one with the fair complexion! You also confront a great hardship. I am asking you to tell me everything. O one with the beautiful hips! O one with the beautiful smiles! Do not be frightened about Shikhandi. Knowing the truth, I will make arrangements. O one with the beautiful thighs! I was myself deceived because of the lawful rites that had been performed for a son. Thus I deceived the king of Dasharna, the lord of the earth. O immensely fortunate one! Tell me and I will act for our welfare.' The lord of men knew, but wished to establish his innocence before others.[91] Thus addressed, the queen replied to the lord of the earth in public."'

CHAPTER 855(192)

'Bhishma said, "O lord of men! O mighty-armed one! Then Shikhandi's mother told her husband everything about the maiden Shikhandi. 'O king! I was without a son and was scared of my co-wives. Though Shikhandi was born as a girl, I reported that she was male. O best of men! O bull among kings! Out of affection towards me, you performed the rites for a son, though those for a daughter should have been performed. O king! Then you got the daughter of the lord of Dasharna as a wife. You remembered the purport of the words the god had spoken earlier. Though born as a girl, she would become a man later. So we overlooked it.' On hearing this, Drupada Yajnasena reported the entire truth to his advisers. O king! The king consulted with them, about what should be done to protect the subjects. O Indra among men! Though he had himself deceived the king of Dasharna, he was certain the matrimonial alliance was an appropriate one and was attentive to the consultations. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The city was naturally protected for times of emergency. O Indra among kings! He fortified it more and adorned it everywhere. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Together with his wife, the king was extremely distressed at this enmity with the lord of Dasharna. Thinking about this great enmity with his in-law in his mind, he began to worship the gods. O king! On seeing him thus devoted to the gods and worshipping them, his wife, the queen, spoke these words. 'In times of prosperity, the worship of the gods is truly praised by the virtuous. Great worship is recommended for those who are immersed in an ocean of grief. Worship all the gods. Let there be large quantities of donations. Let oblations be offered into the fire, so that Dasharna can be countered. O lord! Think in your mind about how he can be restrained without a fight. Through the grace of the gods, all of this will happen. O one with the large eyes! Have consultations with your ministers, so that the city is not destroyed. O king! Act accordingly. O lord of the earth! Destiny, together with human endeavour, brings great success. But when they act against each other, neither succeeds. Therefore, together with your advisers, take appropriate measures for the city. O lord of the earth! Then worship the gods, as you please.' The spirited maiden, Shikhandi, was overcome with grief at seeing them converse in this fashion and was filled with shame. She thought, 'It is because of me that both of them are suffering.' She made up her mind to kill herself.

'"Having been overcome by terrible misery, she decided this and left the residence for the deep and deserted forest. O king! This happened to be ruled by a *yaksha*[92] named Sthunakarna. O lord! Because they were afraid of him, people avoided that forest. Sthuna's abode was constructed with bricks and was plastered white. It was full of smoke from parched grain. It had high walls and a gate. O king! Drupada's daughter, Shikhandi, entered there. She fasted for many days and dried her body out. The yaksha Sthuna had eyes like honey and showed himself to her. 'Why have you begun to do this? Tell me and I will do it without any delay.' She replied to the yaksha, 'This is impossible to accomplish.' However, the guhyaka[93] told her, 'I will do it. O daughter of a king! I am the follower of the lord of riches.[94] I am one who grants boons. I will even give what cannot be granted. Tell me what you wish.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Then Shikhandi told everything, in complete detail, to the foremost of yakshas, Sthunarkarna. 'O yaksha! My father faces a calamity and will soon be destroyed. In great anger, the lord of Dasharna is invading him. The king with the golden armour[95] is great in his strength and great in his energy. O yaksha! Therefore, save me and my father and my mother. You have promised that you will relieve my unhappiness. O yaksha! O unblemished one! Through your favours, make me a man, before that king attacks my city. O great yaksha! O guhyaka! Bestow your favours on me.’”’

CHAPTER 856(193)

‘Bhishma said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! The yaksha heard Shikhandi’s words. Overpowered by destiny, he thought about this in his mind. O Kourava! This was indeed destined for my grief. He said, ‘O fortunate one! Listen to me. I will do what you desire, but there is a condition. For a limited period of time, I will give you my male organ. But I tell you truthfully that when that time is over, you must return to me. I am a lord whose wishes always come true. I can roam in the sky and can assume any form at will. Save your city and your relatives through my favours. O daughter of a king! I will bear your female organ. Promise me this and I will do what brings you pleasure.’ Shikhandi replied, ‘O illustrious one! I will return your male organ to you. O one who roams in the night! You will only bear my female organ for a limited period of time. When King Hemavarma[96] has returned to Dasharna, I will become a maiden again and you will become a man.’ O king! Having said this, they made an agreement with each other. They transferred to each other their respective organs. O lord of men! The yaksha Sthunakarna wore the female organ and Shikhandi obtained the yaksha’s blazing form. O king! Having become a man, Shikhandi from Panchala happily entered the city and went and met his father. He told Drupada everything, exactly as it had happened. On hearing this, Drupada was overcome with joy. Together with his wife, he remembered Maheshvara’s words.

‘“O king! He sent a message to the lord of Dasharna. ‘My son is a man. You should have faith in me.’ The king of Dasharna suddenly approached. Drupada, the king of Panchala, was full of grief and anger. When the lord of Dasharna approached Kampilya, he sent a messenger, supreme in the knowledge of the brahman, to him,[97] with the words, ‘Honour him well and tell him this, on my instructions. “O evil-minded one! You chose my daughter for your daughter. There is no doubt that you will witness the fruits of that disrespect today."' O supreme among kings! Having been thus addressed, the brahmana messenger left for the city, under the instructions of the king of Dasharna. The foremost one approached Drupada in the city. O Indra among kings! Together with Shikhandi, the king of Panchala honoured him well and offered him a cow and the gift given to a guest.[98] He did not accept those honours and spoke these words in reply. 'The brave king Kanchanavarma has spoken thus. "O vile one! You have deceived me for the sake of your daughter. O evil-minded one! You will reap the fruits of that wicked deed. O lord of men! Give me a fight. In the head of the battle today, I will uproot you, together with your advisers, your sons and your relatives."' O best of the Bharata lineage! In the midst of his ministers, the king heard all these insulting words, spoken by the lord of Dasharna through that foremost messenger. He bowed and said, 'O brahmana! You have delivered the words that my in-law has spoken. My messenger will carry the reply.' Drupada sent a brahmana messenger, knowledgeable in the Vedas, to the great-souled Hiranyavarma. O king! He went to the king who was the lord of Dasharna and repeated the words spoken by Drupada. 'Let proper enquiries be made to show that my son is a man. Someone has uttered a falsehood. What has been heard should not be faithfully believed.' On hearing Drupada's words, the king was distressed. He despatched supreme ladies, who were extremely beautiful in form, to ascertain if Shikhandi was a woman or a man. Having been sent, they learnt the truth. O Indra among Kouravas! They reported everything to the immensely powerful king of Dasharna—that Shikhandi was a man. Having done this, the king was delighted. He approached his in-law and cheerfully dwelt with him. That lord of men happily gave Shikhandi elephants, horses, cows and many hundreds of servant-maids. Having been honoured and having again conveyed his daughter,[99] King Hemavarma was pacified that there had been no sin and returned happily. Shikhandi was also delighted.

'"After some time had passed, Naravahana Kubera[100] was touring through the worlds and arrived in Sthuna's residence. The protector of riches hovered over his house[101] and inspected it. He saw that the yaksha Sthuna's abode was colourfully ornamented, with many kinds of garlands. There was parched grain and fragrances and beautiful canopies. It was delightful with the smoke of incense. It was adorned with flags and pennants. There was food and drink, grain and meat and a supply of liquor. When he saw that place, decorated in every direction, the lord of the yakshas spoke to the yakshas who were following him. 'O infinitely valiant ones! Sthuna's residence is decorated well. But why is the extremely evil-minded one not appearing before me now? The evil-souled one knows that I am here. But he does not appear before me. It is my view that a severe punishment should be levied on him.' The yakshas replied, 'O king! A daughter named Shikhandi was born to King Drupada. For her, and for some reason, he has given her his marks of a man. He has accepted the marks of a woman. Having become a woman, he remains in his house. That is the reason he has not appeared. He is ashamed that he now has the form of a woman. O king! That is the reason you have not seen Sthuna today. Having heard this, do what you think is proper. Let the vimana be stationed here.' The lord of yakshas replied, 'Let Sthuna be brought here.' And repeatedly said, 'I will punish him.' O lord of the earth! O great king! On being summoned by the Indra among the yakshas, he went and stood there, ashamed in his female form. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The lord of riches was extremely wrathful and cursed him. 'O guhyaka! This female form of the sinful one will remain.' Thus did the great-souled lord of the yakshas speak. 'O one who has committed an evil act! Since you have insulted the yakshas in your wicked wisdom and have given your organ away to Shikhandi, accepting the organ of a woman, in your extremely vile intelligence, you have committed an act that has never been done before. Therefore, from now on, you will be a woman and not a man.' For the sake of Sthuna, the yakshas sought to appease Vaishravana.[102] They repeatedly asked him to set a time limit to the curse. O son![103]

Then the great-souled Indra among the yakshas replied to his followers, all those masses of yakshas, wishing to set a limit to the curse. 'When Shikhandi has been killed in battle, the yaksha Sthuna will regain his old form. Let the great-spirited one not be anxious.' Having thus spoken, the illustrious god, worshipped by the yakshas and the rakshasas, departed with all his followers, who could travel in an instant.

'"Having been cursed, Sthuna lived there. At the appointed time, Shikhandi came to the one who travels in the night. He approached him and said, 'O lord! I have arrived before you.' Sthuna was delighted and repeatedly told him, 'I am pleased with you.' On seeing that the prince Shikhandi had arrived, without being deceitful about it, he told him everything that had transpired. The yaksha said, 'O son of a king! It is because of you that Vaishravana has cursed me. Go and happily travel the world, as you desire. I think that this, your coming here and the sight of Poulastya,[104] has been destined from earlier and cannot be countered.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed by the yaksha Sthuna, Shikhandi was filled with great joy and returned to his city. He worshipped brahmanas, gods, sanctuaries and crossroads with many fragrances and garlands and a great deal of riches. Drupada of Panchala and his relatives found extreme delight in his son, Shikhandi, who had accomplished his objective. O bull among the Kurus! He gave Shikhandi to Drona as a student. O great king! This was a son who had been a woman earlier. Shikhandi, the son of a king, together with Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and all of you, learnt the four parts of *Dhanurveda*. O son![105] Through spies, who pretended to be stupid and were deaf and blind, appointed by me against Drupada, I got to know exactly what was going on. O great king! Thus, Drupada's offspring is both a woman and a man. O foremost among the Kouravas! He became a supreme *ratha*.[106] The eldest daughter of the king of Kashi was known by the name of Amba. O bull among the Bharata lineage! She was born in Drupada's lineage as Shikhandi. When he appears before me with a bow in his hand, desiring to fight, I will not glance at him even for an instant and will not strike. This has always been my vow and it is renowned throughout the earth. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! I will not shoot arrows at a woman, one who has earlier been a woman, one who has the name of a woman and one who has the form of a woman. Because of this reason, I will not kill Shikhandi. O son![107] I know the truth about Shikhandi's birth. Therefore, I will not kill him, when he seeks to slay me. Bhishma would rather kill himself than kill a woman. When I see him stationed in battle, I will not kill him."

'Sanjaya said, "On hearing this, King Kouravya Duryodhana thought for some time, reflecting that this was worthy of Bhishma."'

CHAPTER 857(194)

'Sanjaya said, "When the night had passed and it was morning, in the midst of the entire army, your son again asked the grandfather. 'O Gangeya! The supreme army of the Pandaveyas has many men, elephants and horses and is full of many *maharathas*. It is protected by immensely strong and great archers, Bhima, Arjuna and the others, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. It is as if it is protected by the guardians of the world themselves.[108] It is unassailable. It is as unstoppable as a raging ocean. In a great battle, this ocean of soldiers cannot be ruffled even by the gods. O Gangeya! O immensely radiant one! By what time will you be able to destroy it, or the great archer the preceptor, or the immensely strong Kripa? Or Karna, who prides himself in war, or Drona's son,[109] supreme among brahmanas? All of you in my army are knowledgeable about the use of divine weapons. Therefore, I wish to know this. I have always had a supreme curiosity in my heart about this. O mighty-armed one! Tell me about this.'"

'Bhishma replied, "O foremost among the Kurus! O lord of the earth! This is indeed worthy of you, that you should ask about the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy and about your own side. O king! O mighty-armed one! Hear about the limits of my strength in battle, the limits of my weapons and the valour of my arms in battle. In battle, an ordinary man must be fought without deceit. Those who know maya[110] must be fought with maya. That is the determination of dharma. Let me divide the days, taking the forenoon of each day as my share. O immensely radiant one! I think that I can take ten thousand warriors as my share. It is my view that I can take one thousand rathas as my share. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this fashion, I can kill the soldiers of the Pandavas. In this way, always armoured and always ready, I can destroy this great army over a certain period of time. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If I am stationed in battle and unleash my great weapons, which are capable of killing hundreds and thousands, I can kill them in one month."

'Sanjaya said, "O Indra among kings! On hearing Bhishma's words, King Duryodhana then asked Drona, supreme among the Angiras lineage. 'O preceptor! In how much time can you slay the soldiers of the sons of Pandu?' Drona smiled and replied, 'O best of the Kurus! I am aged. My energy and strength are weak. It is my view that with the fire of my weapons, I can consume the army of the Pandavas in one month, just like Bhishma, Shantanu's son. That is the limit of my power and strength.' Kripa Sharadvata said two months and Drona's son promised the destruction of the army in ten nights. But Karna, skilled in the use of great weapons, promised it in five nights. When the son of the one who heads to the ocean[111] heard the words of the suta's son, he laughed out aloud and spoke these words. 'O Radheya! As long as you have not encountered Partha in battle, wielding arrows, a sword and a bow, with Achyuta Vasudeva steering the chariot, till that time you can think in this way. You are capable of speaking a lot and saying anything that you want.'"'

CHAPTER 858(195)

Vaishampayana said, 'O best of the Bharata lineage! Having heard this, Kounteya[112] summoned his brothers in private and spoke these words to them. "I have spies in the army of Dhritarashtra's son. When night had passed, they brought me this news. Duryodhana asked the son of the river, the one who is great in his vows. 'O lord! How long will you take to kill the soldiers of the Pandus?' He told the evil-minded son of

Dhritarashtra that he would take a month. Drona promised the same period of time. Goutama[113] said double the time. We hear that Drona's son, skilled in the use of great weapons, promised ten nights. When Karna, skilled in the use of divine weapons, was asked in the assembly of the Kurus, he promised to kill the army in five days. O Arjuna! Therefore, I wish to hear your words. In how many days can you destroy the enemies in battle?" Thus addressed by the king, Gudakesha Dhananjaya looked towards Vasudeva and replied in these words. "All of them are great-souled and skilled in the use of weapons. They can fight in many ways. O great king! There is no doubt that they will kill your soldiers. But I speak the truth when I say that you should not be tortured in your mind. When I have Vasudeva as an aide, on a single chariot, I can slay the three worlds in an instant, with the immortals, with their mobile and immobile objects, and with everything that is the past, the present and the future. That is my view. I possess the terrible and great weapon that Pashupati gave me when there was a duel with the hunter.[114] At the end of a yuga, that is employed by Pashupati to destroy all the beings. O tiger among men! I know how to use that. Gangeya does not know this, nor do Drona and Goutama. O king! Neither do Drona's son and the son of the suta. One should not use such divine weapons to kill ordinary people in battle. Without resorting to deceit, we will vanquish our enemies in battle. O king! These tigers among men are your aides. All of them are skilled in the use of divine weapons. All of them delight in war. All of them have bathed themselves in *Vedanta*[115] and are invincible. O Pandava! They will even kill the soldiers of the gods in battle. Shikhandi, Yuyudhana,[116] Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Bhimasena, the twins, Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja, Virata and Drupada, who are the equals of Bhishma and Drona in battle, and you yourself are capable of annihilating the three worlds. You are like Vasava in your radiance. If a man looks at you in anger, there is no doubt that he will soon cease to exist. O Kourava![117] I know this.'"

CHAPTER 859(196)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The sky was clear in the morning. On the instructions of Dhritarashtra’s son, Duryodhana, the kings advanced towards the Pandavas. All of them had bathed and purified themselves. They were garlanded and were dressed in white garments. They wielded weapons and banners. Benedictions had been pronounced on them and oblations offered into the fire. All of them were learned in the Vedas. All of them were brave. They were excellent in the observance of vows. All of them had performed deeds. All of them possessed many auspicious signs. They were extremely strong and wished to earn supreme worlds[118] in the field of battle. All of them were focused in their minds and trusted each other. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, the Kekayas and the Bahlikas—all of them marched out, with Bharadvaja[119] at the forefront. There were Ashvatthama, Shantanu’s son, Saindhava Jayadratha, rathas from the south, the west and the mountainous regions, Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, everyone from the east and the north, Shakas, Kiratas, Yavanas, Shibis and Vasatis. Their own soldiers accompanied and surrounded the maharathas. All these maharathas marched out in the second division of the army—Kritavarma with his soldiers, the immensely strong Trigartas and King Duryodhana, surrounded by his brothers. Shala, Bhurishrava, Shalya and Brihadbala from Kosala followed at the rear, with Dhritarashtra’s son at the forefront. These maharathas desired to fight and were armoured. They advanced over the plain ground to the western[120] side of Kurukshetra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Duryodhana set up a camp there and with its decorations, it looked like a second Hastinapura. O Indra among kings! Even skilled men who lived in the city, could not distinguish between the city and the camp. The Kouravya king constructed many other similar fortresses, in hundreds and thousands, for the kings. O king! The hundreds of dwellings of the troops stretched out on that field of battle in a circle and extended over five *yojanas*.[121] According to their energy and their strength, the lords of the earth entered their respective camps. There were thousands of these and they were opulent. For those great-souled ones and their soldiers, and also for those who would not fight, King Duryodhana apportioned out excellent food. There were elephants, horses, men, artisans, others who followed, bards, singers, minstrels, traders, courtesans and whores.[122] There were also those who had gathered as spectators. In the proper way, King Kourava attended to all of them.'

CHAPTER 860(197)

Vaishampayana said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a similar way, Kounteya Yudhishthira, the son of Dharma, urged his warriors, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. He instructed the leaders of the Chedis, the Kashis and the Karushas, who were firm in their valour, the general Dhrishtaketu, the destroyer of enemies and the slayer of foes, Virata, Drupada, Yuyudhana, Shikhandi and the two great archers from Panchala, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja. The brave ones wore colourful armour and were adorned in golden earrings. They blazed like a fire in a sacrificial altar, when clarified butter is poured into it. The great archers were as resplendent as planets. The lord of the earth, bull among men, honoured the soldiers in the appropriate fashion and instructed the soldiers to advance. Pandu's son first sent Abhimanyu, Brihanta and all the sons of Droupadi, who were led by Dhrishtadyumna. Yudhishthira despatched Bhima, Yuyudhana and Pandava Dhananjaya in the second part of the army. As the delighted warriors collected their weapons of war and moved and dashed around, the sound seemed to touch heaven. With the other kings and with Virata and Drupada, the king himself marched at the rear. That army with terrible archers had Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. It looked like the Ganga, overflowing, retreating and then flowing again. So as to confuse the intelligence of the sons of Dhritarashtra, the king again regrouped his army. Pandava ordered Droupadi's sons, great archers, Nakula, Sahadeva, all the Prabhadrakas, ten thousand horses, two thousand elephants, ten thousand infantry, five thousand chariots and the invincible Bhimasena to be the first division of the army. He placed Virata, Jayatsena from Magadha, the two maharathas from Panchala, Yudhamanyu and

Uttamouja, both of whom were valiant and great-souled and wielded clubs and bows, in the middle. Vasudeva and Dhananjaya also followed them in the centre. These men wielded weapons and were consumed with rage. Those brave ones carried twenty thousand flags. There were five thousand elephants and chariots everywhere, with infantry and soldiers, brandishing bows, swords and clubs. There were thousands in the front and thousands at the rear. The other kings mainly surrounded the spot where Yudhishthira himself was, with his soldiers and an ocean of troops. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were thousands of elephants, tens of thousands of horses and thousands of chariots and infantry. Depending on these, he marched against Dhritarashtra's son, Suyodhana. There were hundreds and thousands, and tens of thousands, of men at the rear. In thousands and tens of thousands, those delighted men sounded thousands of kettledrums and tens of thousands of conch shells.'

This ends Udyoga Parva.

Bhishma Parva

In the 18-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Bhishma Parva is sixth. This segment covers the first ten days of the war and is named after Bhishma, because Bhishma was the commander during this phase of the battle. Other than Bhishma, no major warriors are killed in this parva which also includes the Bhagavad Gita. This parva has 117 chapters. In the 100-parva classification of the Mahabharata, Sections 61 through 64 constitute Bhishma Parva. In the numbering of the chapters in Bhishma Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within the parva.

Section Sixty-One

Jambukhanda-Vinirmana Parva

This parva has 378 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 861(1): 34 shlokas
Chapter 862(2): 33 shlokas
Chapter 863(3): 46 shlokas
Chapter 864(4): 35 shlokas
Chapter 865(5): 21 shlokas
Chapter 866(6): 16 shlokas
Chapter 867(7): 53 shlokas
Chapter 868(8): 31 shlokas
Chapter 869(9): 21 shlokas
Chapter 870(10): 74 shlokas
Chapter 871(11): 14 shlokas

Vinirmana *means creation, as well as measuring out, the latter meaning being relevant here. Jambukhanda or Jambudvipa is one of the continents on earth. It is the central one. This section is about geography and is so named because it gives the measure of Jambukhanda.*

CHAPTER 861(1)

Janamejaya asked, 'How did those brave ones, the Kurus, the Pandavas, the Somakas and the extremely fortunate kings who had assembled from many countries, fight?'

Vaishampayana said, 'O lord of the earth! Listen to how those brave ones, the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Somakas, fought in Kurukshetra, the region where austerities were performed. Arriving in Kurukshetra, the extremely powerful Pandavas, together with the Somakas, were desirous of victory and advanced against the Kouravas. All of them were accomplished in the study of the Vedas and rejoiced at the prospect of battle. They wished to be victorious in the fight and were ready to be slain in the field of battle. They advanced towards the invincible army of Dhritarashtra's son and, together with their soldiers, set up camp on the western side, facing the east. In the prescribed fashion, Kunti's son, Yudhishthira, instructed that thousands of camps should be set up in the region beyond Samantapanchaka.[1] The entire earth seemed to be devoid of horses, men, chariots and elephants, with only children and the aged remaining. O supreme among kings! That large army was as large as the entire spread of Jambudvipa,[2] over which the sun radiates heat. All the varnas were together and the expanse covered many yojanas, encompassing in due course, all the regions, rivers, mountains and forests. King Yudhishthira, bull among all men, instructed that the best of food, and every object of enjoyment, should be supplied to them and their mounts. Yudhishthira assigned diverse kinds of signs to them, so that in this fashion, they would know that they belonged to the Pandaveya side.[3] With the time for battle having arrived, Kouravya[4] instructed that all of them should have signs and emblems, so that they might be recognized. When Dhritarashtra's great-minded son saw the tops of the standards of the Parthas, he and all the kings arrayed themselves against the Pandavas. He was in the midst of one thousand elephants and was surrounded by his brothers, with a white umbrella held aloft his head. On seeing Duryodhana thus, all the Pandava soldiers were delighted. All of them blew on giant conch shells and sounded thousands of kettledrums. The Pandavas and the valiant Vasudeva were delighted to see that their soldiers were rejoicing. To delight their warriors, Vasudeva and Dhananjaya, tigers among men who were stationed on their chariot, blew their divine conch shells. Both Panchajanya and Devadatta resounded.[5] At this, like deer on hearing the sound of a roaring lion, the warriors and the mounts released urine and excrement. At that time, Dhritarashtra's army was frightened on hearing this. A terrible dust arose and nothing could be seen. Enveloped in the dust raised by the soldiers, the sun disappeared. Clouds rained down showers of flesh and blood and this covered all the soldiers. It was extraordinary. Then, near the ground, a wind arose, carrying small stones. The troops were afflicted with this, but the dust was dispelled. O king! The two armies stood ready and stationed in Kurukshetra, delighted at the prospect of battle, like two turbulent oceans. The encounter between those two armies was extraordinary, like two oceans when the end of a yuga has arrived. When the Kouravas[6] assembled their armies, the entire earth became empty, with the exception of the aged and children.

'O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then the Kurus, Pandavas and Somakas had an agreement and established rules of dharma that would be followed in the war. When hostilities ceased, there would be friendliness towards each other, as was the appropriate behaviour earlier. There would be no resort to deceit again. Those engaged in a war of words would be countered with words. Those who had withdrawn from the midst of battle should not be killed under any circumstances. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A ratha should only fight with a ratha, one on an elephant with another on an elephant, one on a horse with another on a horse and a foot soldier with a foot soldier. Any striking should be in accordance with appropriateness, valour, energy and age and after a challenge had been issued. It should not be against one who was unsuspecting or distressed, or was engaged in fighting with another, or was distracted or retreating. One who was without a weapon or without armour should never be killed. One should never strike charioteers, those carrying burdens,[7] those carrying weapons and those who sound kettledrums or conch shells. Having concluded this agreement, the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Somakas looked at each other in supreme wonder. Those great-souled bulls among men stationed themselves and together with their soldiers, were extremely delighted in their minds.'

CHAPTER 862(2)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the terrible war was imminent, the illustrious rishi Vyasa, best among all those who knew all the Vedas and Satyavati's son, the grandfather of the Bharatas, watched, in the morning and the evening.[8] The illustrious one could see the past, the present and the future. He met the king, Vichitravirya's son,[9] in private, in distress and in sorrow over the evil conduct of his sons and spoke these words.

'Vyasa said, "O king! The time has arrived for you, your sons and the lords of the earth. They have assembled in battle and will kill each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their time is over and they will be destroyed. Remember that all this is due to destiny and do not sorrow in your mind. O lord of the earth! If you wish to witness the battle, I will give you sight, so that you can see the war."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "O supreme among brahmarshis! I do not wish to see my relatives being killed. Through your energy, I wish to hear about the smallest details in this war."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Since he did not wish to see the war, but wished to hear about it, the lord of all boons granted a boon to Sanjaya.[10]

'Vyasa said, "O king! This Sanjaya will describe the war to you. Nothing in this entire battle will remain unseen to him. O king! Having obtained this divine eyesight, Sanjaya will know everything about the battle and will recount it to you. Whether it is evident or hidden, whether it is night or day, Sanjaya will know everything, even if it is thought of in the mind. Weapons will not pierce him. Nor will he be constrained by exhaustion. Gavalgana's son will emerge alive from the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will spread the deeds of the Kurus and all the Pandavas. Do not sorrow. This was destined a long time ago. Therefore, you should not sorrow. It could not have been averted. Where dharma exists, victory is there."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having spoken in this way, the illustrious great-grandfather[11] again spoke to the mighty-armed Dhritarashtra. "O great king![12] There will be a great destruction in this battle. Many fearful portents can be seen. Hawks, vultures, crows, herons and wild crows are assembling in great numbers at the ends of the forests. These birds are extremely agitated at seeing the prospects of a war. These predators will feed on the flesh of elephants and horses. With the terrible sound of 'khatakhata', signifying a calamity, the herons are flying in the centre, towards the southern direction.[13] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have always been observing, both at dawn and dusk. When it rises, the sun is covered by headless torsos.[14] They have three colours. They are white and red at the edges and are black in the neck. They are tinged with lightning. They look like clubs and envelope the sun. Irrespective of what time of the day it is, during the day and at night, I have seen the sun, the moon and the stars blazing. This signifies destruction. Even when it is the full moon night in Kartika, the moon is so bereft of radiance that it cannot be seen. It has the complexion of fire and the sky has the same complexion. Heroes, kings and brave princes, with arms like clubs, will be killed. Those brave kings will cover the earth. At night, I always hear a terrible sound in the sky, that of a boar and a cat fighting. The idols of the gods sometimes tremble and sometimes laugh. They vomit blood from their mouths, sweat and fall down. O lord of the earth! Kettledrums sound without being struck. The great chariots of the kshatriyas move, without being yoked. Cuckoos, woodpeckers, blue jays, watercocks, parrots, herons and peacocks utter terrible sounds. When the sun rises, hundreds of locusts can be seen. They are like ornamented warriors wielding arms, armoured and riding on horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At both dawn and dusk, the directions blaze, as if on fire. There are showers of blood and bone. O king! Arundhati is famous and revered by virtuous ones in the three worlds. She moves Vasishtha to the back.[15] O king! Shanaishchara is based in Rohini and is oppressing it. The mark on the moon has disappeared, signifying a great danger.[16] Even when there are no clouds, a great and terrible roar can continuously be heard. The mounts weep and shed drops of tears.”’

CHAPTER 863(3)

‘Vyasa said, “Cows give birth to asses. Sons have intercourse with their mothers. When it is not the season, trees in the forest can be seen to produce flowers and fruit. Princes are pregnant and are giving birth to monsters. Predatory birds are feeding on other birds and jackals on other animals. Inauspicious animals with terrible teeth are born, with three horns, four eyes, five legs, two penises, two heads and two tails. They have wide open jaws and are emitting inauspicious sounds. There are horses with three feet, crests, four eyes and horns. In your city, the wives of those who are learned about the brahman are seen to give birth to birds and peacocks. O lord of the earth! Mares give birth to calves and she-dogs to jackals. Cocks, mynahs[17] and parrots are uttering inauspicious sounds. Women are giving birth to four and five daughters at the same time. As soon as they are born, they are dancing, singing and laughing. In their houses, inferior ones can be seen to be playing, suckling, dancing and singing. These are signs of a great calamity. Driven by destiny, other children are seen to paint armed men who are running around, with staffs in their hands. Desirous of fighting, they are laying siege to cities. Lotuses, blue lotuses and night-lotuses[18] are growing on trees. Strong winds are blowing and the dust is not abating. The earth is trembling and the sun seems to have been swallowed by Rahu.[19] The white planet has passed beyond Chitra and is established there.[20] In particular, all this shows harm for the Kurus. There is an extremely terrible comet and it is based in Pushya and is oppressing it.[21] This great planet will be inauspicious for the armies. Angaraka is retrograde and is in Magha, while Brihaspati is in Shravana.[22] The son of the sun is in Bhaga nakshatra and is oppressing it.[23] O lord of the earth! Shukra is rising towards Purva Proshthapada. Having crossed it, it is glancing towards Uttara.[24] The dark planet is blazing, with smoke and fire. It is based in, and is attacking, Indra's energetic nakshatra, Jyeshtha.[25] Dhruva is flaming and is circling towards the left in a terrible way.[26] The harsh planet is established between Chitra and Svati.[27] The one with radiance like the fire is retrograde, having completed its regular course.[28] It is full of the energy of the brahman and is red in its body. It is established in Shravana. The earth that produces fruit is full of every kind of grain.[29] Every stalk of barley has five ears and every stalk of paddy a hundred ears. Cattle are the foremost in all the worlds and they sustain the entire universe. When they are milked after calving, they only yield blood.

'"The bows radiate rays of light. The swords are flaming terribly. The weapons are seen to be unsheathed. A battle is at hand. The weapons, the water, the armour and the standards are shining with the complexion of the fire, foretelling great destruction. In every direction, animals and birds can be seen, emitting harsh noises and their mouths blazing. This signifies a great calamity. A bird with one wing, one eye and one leg is flying in the sky at night. It is screaming terribly, repeatedly vomiting blood. The blazing planets are stationed, with copper-red crests. But the radiance of saptarshi[30] has been dimmed. The two blazing planets, Brihaspati and Shani, are near Vishakha[31] and have become stationary for a year. The terrible planet is established like a comet and has robbed Krittika, the first among nakshatras in brilliance, of its radiance.[32] O lord of the earth! The nakshatras were earlier classified into three groups.[33] Budha's[34] glances are descending on them and this engenders great fear. Earlier, the night of the new moon used to be on the fourteenth, fifteenth or sixteenth lunar day. But like now, I do not know of it occurring on the thirteenth. On the thirteenth lunar day and in the same month, eclipses of the sun and the moon took place. These eclipses occurred at the wrong times, signifying a destruction of living beings. All the directions are covered in dust and dust is showering everywhere. There are terrible and ill portents in the clouds. Blood showers down in the night. There are also terrible showers of flesh on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight. The rakshasas are not satiated and utter terrible roars in the middle of the night. The great rivers are flowing in the opposite direction and water has turned into blood. The wells are foaming and roaring like bulls. Meteors are descending with roars, inter-mingled with dry thunder.[35] It is now night and the impaired sun will arise at dawn. Giant and fiery meteors have covered everything in the four directions. Maharshis have said that when the sun is thus afflicted, the earth will drink the blood of thousands of kings. From Kailasa and Mandara and also from the Himalaya mountains, thousands of sounds are heard, as the summits fall down. There are giant tremors in the ground and because of this, the four oceans are repeatedly overflowing their shores. Fierce winds that are full of pebbles are blowing, crushing the trees. In villages, towns and sanctuaries, trees are falling down. When brahmanas pour oblations into the fire, it becomes yellow, red or blue. The flames bend to the left and have a bad smell. They are generally full of smoke and make harsh sounds. O lord of the earth! Touch, smell and taste have become contrary. The standards of kings tremble repeatedly and emit smoke. Kettledrums and war drums release showers of coal dust. From the tops of palaces and the gates of cities, vultures form circles and fly to the left, uttering terrible cries. They are uttering terrible cries of 'paka, paka'[36] and so are the crows. They are perching on the tops of standards and this forebodes the destruction of the kings. Distressed and weeping horses and thousands of elephants are trembling and are running here and there, releasing urine and dung. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard this and the time having arrived, do what is necessary, so that the world does not head towards destruction."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard the words of his father, Dhritarashtra said, "I think that all of this has been ordained earlier and there is no doubt that it will happen. If there is a battle and kshatriyas kill, in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas, they will attain the world of heroes and only obtain happiness. These tigers among men will give up their lives in this great battle and will obtain fame in this world and great happiness for a long time in the other world."'

CHAPTER 864(4)

Vaishampayana said, 'O supreme among kings! Having been thus addressed by his son Dhritarashtra, the sage who is an Indra among wise ones, engaged in supreme meditation. The greatly ascetic one, who knew about time, then again spoke these words. 'O Indra among kings! There is no doubt that time destroys the universe. It again creates the worlds. There is nothing that is eternal. Show the path of dharma to your relatives, the Kurus, your kin and your well-wishers. You are capable of restraining them. It has been said that the slaughter of relatives is inferior. Do what brings me pleasure. O lord of the earth! Death himself has been born in the form of your son. Slaughter has not been praised in the Vedas. It can never be beneficial. He who kills, kills the dharma of his lineage, and it is like killing one's own body. Destiny has brought you to this path, though you are capable of following the path of virtue. In the form of the kingdom, calamity looms and makes you give up what brings happiness, for the destruction of the lineage and the earth. Your wisdom has suffered greatly. Show your sons dharma. O unassailable one! What is there in a kingdom, if one obtains sin with it? Preserve your fame, dharma and deeds and go to heaven. Let the Pandavas obtain their kingdom and the Kouravas obtain peace." Thus, the Indra among brahmanas sorrowfully spoke these words to Ambika's son, Dhritarashtra, and the one who was skilled in speech again spoke these words.

'Dhritarashtra said, "My knowledge of what exists and what does not exist is like yours. I know the exact truth. O father! But people are deluded because of selfishness. Know me to be such an ordinary person. O one whose power is unmatched! Through your favours, show me the firm direction. O maharshi! They are not under my control. I do not desire to commit a sin. You represent sacred dharma, fame, deeds, fortitude and learning. You are the revered grandfather of the Kurus and the Pandavas."

'Vyasa replied, "O Vichitravirya's son! O king! Openly tell me what is in your mind. As you wish, I will dispel your doubts."

'Dhritarashtra said, "There are signs that portent victory in a battle. O illustrious one! I wish to hear exactly about these."

'Vyasa replied, "The fire[37] has a cheerful radiance and its flames rise up straight. It circles to the right and the crest is devoid of smoke. The oblations offered have a sacred fragrance. These are said to be the signs of victory. When the conch shells and drums are sounded, there is a great and deep sound. The sun and the moon have pure rays. These are said to be the signs of victory. Whether they are seated or flying, the crows utter beneficial cries. O king! Those who are at the back urge an advance, while those at the front urge restraint.[38] When vultures, swans, parrots, cranes and woodpeckers utter beneficial cries and circle to the right, the brahmanas say that victory in a battle is certain. When the ornaments, armour and flags are golden in complexion and radiant, incapable of being looked at, such men obtain the favours of happiness and defeat the soldiers of the enemies. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When spirited warriors utter happy shouts and when their garlands do not fade, they overcome their enemies in battle. Those who utter kind words before penetrating enemy formations and those who warn before striking are victorious. When hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell are undistorted and auspicious and the warriors are always happy, victory is certain. Winds that blow, clouds, crows become favourable and so are the showers from clouds and rainbows. O lord of the earth! These are the signs of victory. O lord of men! But if these are contrary, that is a sign of death. Whether the army is small or large, the cheerfulness of the masses of warriors is said to be a certain sign of victory. If a single warrior is frightened, he can cause an extremely large army to be alarmed and flee, even those who are brave warriors. If a large army is broken up, it is incapable of being rallied. It is like a herd of deer frightened by the mighty force of the water. Once a great army is routed, it is incapable of being rallied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing it shattered, even brave warriors become dejected. On seeing the fright and the flight, the fear increases in every direction. O king! The army is suddenly scattered and is destroyed by the enemy. O lord of the earth! Even a brave one, a leader of many soldiers of the four types,[39] is incapable of rallying such a giant army. An intelligent person always endeavours and always looks for ways. It is said that success through negotiations is the best, and that through dissension[40] is medium. O lord of the earth! Victory obtained through battle is the worst. There are many great evils associated with fighting and slaughter is said to be the first. Even fifty brave ones who know each other, are cheerful, are not bound by family ties and are firm in their resolution, can crush a large army. Even five, six or seven can ensure victory, as long as they do not retreat. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vinata's son, Garuda, does not seek a large number of followers for assistance, when he sees a large number of birds.[41] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The number of soldiers does not ensure victory. Victory is uncertain. That depends on destiny. Even those who are victorious in battle, have to suffer losses."'

CHAPTER 865(5)

Vaishampayana said, 'O intelligent one! Having spoken these words to Dhritarashtra, Vyasa departed. On hearing these words, Dhritarashtra meditated on them. Having thought about them for some time, he sighed repeatedly. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He asked Sanjaya, the one whose soul was controlled. "O Sanjaya! Those brave lords of the earth are delighted at the prospect of battle. They wish to strike each other with different kinds of weapons. For the sake of the earth, those lords of the earth are prepared to give up their lives. They will not be pacified. They will strike each other to increase the numbers in Yama's abode. Desiring earthly prosperity, they will not tolerate each other. O Sanjaya! Therefore, I think that the earth must possess many qualities. Tell me about them. Many thousands, millions, tens of millions and hundreds of millions of brave people have gathered in Kurujangala.[42] O Sanjaya! I wish to hear the exact details of the expanse of the countries and cities from which they have come. Through the favours of the brahmana rishi Vyasa, whose energy is infinite, you possess the lamp of divine intelligence and the eyesight of knowledge."

'Sanjaya replied, "O immensely wise one! According to my wisdom, I will tell you about the qualities of the earth. Behold them with the eyesight of the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I bow down before you. There are two kinds of beings in this world, mobile and immobile. Depending on birth, mobile beings are of three kinds—those born from eggs, those from sweat[43] and those from wombs. O king! Out of all mobile beings, those born from wombs are the best. Of those born from wombs, humans and animals are supreme. O king!

They[44] have diverse forms and are divided into fourteen groups. Seven dwell in the forest and seven live in villages.[45] O king! Lions, tigers, boars, buffaloes, elephants, bears and monkeys—these seven are said to be forest dwellers. Cattle, goats, men, sheep, horses, mules and donkeys—these seven are considered to be village dwellers by righteous ones. O king! These are the fourteen kinds of animals, domestic and wild. O lord of the earth! These have been mentioned in the Vedas and sacrifices are established on them. Out of domestic ones, men are the best and lions among wild ones. All beings sustain their lives by living on each other. Those that are immobile are said to be *udbhijas* and these have five species—trees, shrubs, creepers, plants and those without stems, of the species of grass.[46] There are thus nineteen kinds.[47] They have five universal constituents.[48] There are twenty-four all together. These are described as *gayatri* and this is known to the world.[49] He who truly knows all these to be the sacred gayatri, possesses all the qualities. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He will not be destroyed. Everything is born from the earth. When destroyed, everything goes into the earth. All beings are established in the earth. The earth is eternal. He who possesses the earth, possesses all the mobile and immobile objects in the universe. That is why the kings desire it and are prepared to kill each other.”’

CHAPTER 866(6)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! O one who knows about the measure of different things! Tell me about the names and the measures of rivers, mountains, places inhabited by people, everything else on earth and forests. O Sanjaya! Tell me everything.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! Because everything in the earth is based on the five universal constituents, the learned regard all of them as equal. These are bhumi, apa, vayu, agni and akasha. Each of them does not possess a quality from the preceding one. Therefore, bhumi is the foremost, as has been said by the rishis who know the truth about the qualities. These are sound, touch, sight and taste, with smell as the fifth.[50] O king! There are four qualities in apa, it does not possess smell. There are three qualities in tejas—sound, touch and sight. Vayu has sound and touch, while akasha has only sound. O king! These five qualities exist in the five constituents of matter, and beings in all the worlds are established on them. When there is homogeneity, they exist separately and independently.[51] When they do not exist in their natural state, they depend on each other and embodied beings are created. There is no exception to this. They are destroyed, with the one that succeeds merging into the one that precedes it. They are created in that way too, with each resulting from the one that precedes it.[52] All of them cannot be measured. Their forms are those of the lord himself.[53] Beings consisting of the five bhutas are seen in the universe. Men use reason to try and identify their measure.[54] But these are things that cannot be thought of. They cannot be fathomed through reason. They are beyond nature and this is a sign that they are inconceivable. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I will now tell you about the island named Sudarshana.[55] O great king! This island is circular and in the form of a wheel. It is full of rivers and other waterbodies. It has mountains that look like masses of clouds. It has cities of different types and beautiful countries. It has trees laden with flowers and fruits and is prosperous, with riches and crops. It is surrounded in every direction by the salty ocean. Just as a man can see his own face in a mirror, the island Sudarshana can be seen in the disc of the moon. Two of its parts look like the *pippala*[56] and two others look like a large hare. It is surrounded on all sides with every kind of medicinal plants. Besides this, everything else is water, and listen as I briefly describe this to you.”’

CHAPTER 867(7)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have briefly described that island. Now tell me about it in detail. Tell me about that part of the land that looks like a hare. Then tell me about the measure of the part that looks like a pippala.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus addressed by the king, Sanjaya spoke these words.

‘“O great king![57] From the east to the west, there are six mountains that are full of jewels. In both directions, they are immersed in the eastern and western ocean. They are named Himavan; Hemakuta; Nishadha, supreme among mountains; Nila, full of lapis lazuli; Shveta, with the complexion of silver; and the mountains known as Shringavan, made up of every kind of mineral. O king! These are mountains frequented by siddhas and charanas. The distance from one to the other is one thousand yojanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are many sacred countries or *varsha*s. In all of these, dwell many different kinds of beings. This is the varsha known as Bharata and the one known as Himavat comes after that. The region known as Harivarsha is beyond Hemakuta. O great king! To the south of Nila and to the north of Nishadha, is a mountain named Malyavan that stretches from the east to the west. Beyond Malyavan is the mountain known as Gandhamadana. Between these two,[58] there is the circular and golden mountain of Meru. It is as radiant as the rising sun, or a fire without smoke. O lord of the earth! It is said to be 84,000 yojanas high and 84,000 yojanas deep.[59] The worlds are established on it, above and diagonally. O lord! There are four islands along its sides. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are Bhadrashva, Ketumala, Jambudvipa and Uttara Kuru, the abode of those who have performed virtuous deeds. The bird Sumukha, Suparna’s[60] son, saw that all the birds on Meru had golden feathers and thought that there was no difference there between superior, average and inferior birds. He therefore decided to leave the place. The supreme among stellar bodies, the sun, always revolves around it.[61] So do the moon, all the nakshatras and Vayu.[62] O great king! That mountain is full of divine flowers and fruit. It is full of mansions that are made out of polished gold. O king! The masses of gods, gandharvas, asuras, rakshasas and masses of apsaras always go to that mountain to sport there. Brahma, Rudra and Shakra, the lord of the gods, assemble there, to perform different kinds of sacrifices, with a lot of donations. Tumburu, Narada, Vishvavasu, Haha and Huhu[63] went there and satisfied the foremost among immortals with different kinds of hymns. O fortunate one! The seven sages, and the great-souled Kashyapa Prajapati, always go there on the day of the new moon and the full moon. O lord of the earth! Kavya Ushanas[64] also goes to the summit, with the *daityas*. The jewels that exist in all the mountains come from the jewels there. A fourth part of those is enjoyed by the illustrious Kubera. He gives only a sixteenth part of those riches to men.

'"On its northern side is the divine, auspicious and beautiful forest of Karnikara. It is full of flowers everywhere and extends across several mountains. The illustrious Pashupati[65] himself, the creator of beings, sports there, surrounded by divine beings and accompanied by Uma. He wears a radiant garland of *karnikara* flowers[66] that extends down to his feet. His three eyes blaze, like three rising suns. The Siddhas are extremely terrible in their austerities. They are excellent in their vows and truthful and can see him. Those who are evil in conduct are incapable of seeing Maheshvara. O lord of men! A stream of milk issues from the summit of that mountain. This is the sacred and auspicious Ganga, the beautiful Bhagirathi. She has three flows[67] and is worshipped by the virtuous. She flows with a terrible roar. With great force, she descends into the beautiful lake Chandramas. That sacred lake is like an ocean and has been created from her. Even the mountains are incapable of bearing her. But in earlier times, Maheshvara bore her on his head for a hundred thousand years.

'"O lord of the earth! Ketumala is on the western side of Meru. Jambukhanda is also there and is extremely large.[68] It is like Nandana.[69] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The lifespan there is ten thousand years. The men have golden complexions and the women are like apsaras. Everyone is without disease and devoid of sorrow. They are always delighted in their minds. Humans born there have the complexion of molten gold. On the summit of Gandhamadana, Kubera, lord of the guhyakas, spends his time in delight, with the rakshasas and surrounded by masses of apsaras. There are smaller mountains and hills at the feet of Gandhamadana. The maximum lifespan there is eleven thousand years. O king! The men there are dark, energetic and extremely strong. All the women have the complexion of lotuses and are extremely beautiful to look at. Shveta is beyond Nila and Hiranyaka is beyond Nila.[70] The varsha named Airavata is bounded by Shringavat.[71] O great king! The two varshas to the south and the north are in the form of a bow. Ilavrita is in the middle of the five varshas.[72] A varsha that is towards the north surpasses one to its south in qualities like lifespan, stature, health, dharma, kama and artha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Beings live together in these varshas. O great king! The earth is thus covered with mountains. The large mountain Hemakuta also has the name of Kailasa. O king! Vaishravana[73] sports there with the guhyakas. To the north of Kailasa and near Mount Mainaka, there is the large and divine Mount Manimaya, with a golden peak. To its side,[74] there is the large, divine, auspicious and beautiful Vindusara,[75] with golden sand. After having seen Ganga Bhagirathi, King Bhagiratha lived there for many years. There are many sacrificial stakes made out of gems there and sanctuaries made out of gold. The immensely famous one with a thousand eyes[76] attained salvation there. The creator Bhutapati,[77] the eternal lord of all beings, supreme in his energy, is worshipped there, surrounded by his followers. Nara, Narayana, Brahma, Manu and Sthanu,[78] as the fifth, are always present there. The goddess with the three flows[79] first showed herself there. She emerged from Brahma's world and divided herself into seven streams—Vasvokasara, Nalini, the sin-cleansing Sarasvati, Jambunadi,[80] Sita, Ganga and Sindhu as the seventh. She is inconceivable and divine and the lord himself[81]thought of ways of dividing her. At the end of a yuga, it is there that sacrifices have been performed on a thousand occasions. The Sarasvati can be seen sometimes and sometimes she is invisible. Ganga, with the seven flows, is thus famous in the three worlds.

'"The rakshasas live on Himavat, the guhyakas on Hemakuta. The *sarpa*s, the *nagas,*[82] the *nishada*s and those rich in austerities live on Gokarna. Shveta mountain is said to be the abode of gods and asuras. O king! The gandharvas live on Mount Nishadha and brahmarshis on Nila. O great king! Shringavat is where the ancestors wander around. O great king! These are the divisions into seven varshas. Diverse types of mobile and immobile beings are placed in them. Different types of prosperity, divine and human, can be seen in them. This is incapable of being described. But those who desire their own welfare, have faith in them. O king! You asked me about the divine region that is in the form of a hare and I have told you. On two sides of the hare, to the north and to the south, there are two varshas. The ears[83] are Nagadvipa and Kashyapadvipa. O king! The head is the beautiful Mount Malaya, with the hue of copper. This is the second part of the dvipa that has the shape of a hare."

CHAPTER 868(8)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! What is to the north and on the eastern side of Meru? O immensely intelligent one! Tell me everything about Mount Malyavan."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! To the south of Nila and on the northern side of Meru is Uttara Kuru, inhabited by the siddhas. The trees there yield sweet fruit and are always full of flowers and fruit. The flowers have excellent fragrance and the fruits are succulent. O lord of men! Some of the trees there yield fruit that satisfy every desire. O lord of men! Other trees there are known as those that yield milk. They yield milk that is like amrita, with the six different kinds of taste.[84] They also yield garments[85] and the fruits are also ornaments. The entire ground is strewn with jewels and fine golden sand. O lord of men! Everything is pleasant to the touch and there is no mud. The men who are born there are those who have been dislodged from the world of the gods. Whether on plain or uneven terrain, everyone is similar in beauty and qualities. Twins are born there and the women are the equals of apsaras. They drink the milk there and the milk is like amrita. When the twins are born, they grow up equally. They are similar in beauty and qualities and wear similar garments. O lord! Like *chakravakas*,[86] they are devoted to each other. They are without disease, devoid of sorrow and always delighted in their minds. O great king! They live for eleven thousand years and never abandon each other. There is a bird named Bharunda. It has sharp beaks and is extremely strong. When they die, this picks up the dead and hurls them into mountainous caverns. O king! I have briefly described Uttara Kuru to you.

'"I will now describe the eastern side of Meru to you exactly. O lord of the earth! Bhadrashva is the first. There is a forest of *bhadrasala*[87] there and a large tree named Kalamra. O great king! Kalamra is beautiful and always has flowers and fruit. This dvipa is one yojana in expanse and is frequented by siddhas and charanas. The men there are white and possess energy and great strength. The women there are lovely. They are beautiful to look at and have the complexion of the moon. They have the radiance of the moon. They have the complexion of the moon. Their faces are like the full moon. Their bodies are as cool as the moon and they are skilled in dancing and singing. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The lifespan there is ten thousand years. They always remain young by drinking the juice of Kalamra. To the south of Nila and to the north of Nishadha, there is a large and eternal jambu tree by the name of Sudarshana. It has fruits that provide every object of desire. It is sacred and is worshipped by the siddhas and charanas. The eternal Jambudvipa owes its naming to this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That king of trees rises up to heaven. O lord of men! It is one thousand and one hundred yojanas tall. When measured by hand, the fruit of that is two thousand and five hundred cubits in circumference. When ripe, it bursts and falls down on the ground with a loud noise. O king! It releases a juice that is silvery in colour. O lord of men! The juice of the jambu fruit becomes a river. Having circled Meru, this goes to Uttara Kuru. O lord of men! People are always delighted at having drunk this juice. Having drunk the juice of this fruit, they do not suffer from old age. There is a gold named Jambunada there and it is used for divine ornaments. Men who are born there have the complexion of the rising sun. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The fire known as Samvartaka blazes on the summit of Malyavan. This is the fire of destruction. On the summit of Malyavan, towards the east, are smaller mountains. Malyavan extends for one thousand and fifty yojanas. Men who are born there have the complexion of gold.[88] They have all been dislodged from Brahma's world and are knowledgeable about the brahman. They torment themselves through austerities and hold up their semen. For the sake of protecting beings, they enter the sun. There are sixty-six thousand of them.[89] They surround the sun and travel ahead of the sun. Having been heated by the sun for sixty-six thousand years, they enter the lunar circle."'

CHAPTER 869(9)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! Tell me the names of the varshas and the mountains. And tell me accurately about those who dwell in the mountains."

'Sanjaya said, "To the south of Shveta and to the north of Nila, is the varsha named Ramanaka.[90] Men who are born there are white in complexion. All of them are extremely handsome to look at. The people born there are fond of sexual pleasures. O great king! Happy in their minds, they live for eleven thousand and five hundred years. To the south and to the north of Mount Shveta, is the varsha named Hairanyavat[91] and the river Hairanvati. O great king! Everyone there is rich, handsome and a follower of the yakshas. O king! They are extremely strong and are always delighted in their minds. O lord of men! The lifespan there is eleven thousand and five hundred years. O lord of men! Shringavat has three peaks. One is made of jewels and another is extraordinary and is made of gold. Another has jewels everywhere and is adorned with beautiful mansions. The goddess Shandili,[92] who illuminates herself, always resides there. O lord of men! To the north of that peak and on the frontiers of the ocean, is the varsha named Airavata,[93] which is supreme because of Shringavan. The sun does not heat there. Men do not decay there. The moon and the nakshatras cover[94] and are the only source of illumination there. Humans who are born there have the radiance of lotuses, the complexion of lotuses, eyes that are like the petals of lotuses and fragrance like the petals of lotuses. They do not blink their eyes. Extremely fragrant, they do not partake of food and are in control of their senses. O king! All of them have been dislodged from the world of the gods and are without sin. O lord of men! O supreme among Bharatas! Men have a lifespan of thirteen thousand years there. The lord Hari dwells to the north of the milky ocean, in Vaikuntha. His chariot is made out of gold and has eight wheels. It is yoked to beings and has the speed of the mind. It has the complexion of fire and is extremely swift. It is embellished with gold. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He is the lord of all beings and all prosperity. He is finite and infinite. He is the one who acts. He is the one who makes everyone act. O king! He is earth, water, sky, wind and energy. He is the sacrifice for all beings. The fire is his mouth.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by Sanjaya, the high-minded king, Dhritarashtra, meditated about his sons. O great king! Having thought, he again spoke these words. “O son of a suta! There is no doubt that time destroys the universe and creates everything again. There is nothing that is eternal. Nara and Narayana know everything and hold up all beings. The gods call him Vaikuntha and he is known as Lord Vishnu.[95]”’

CHAPTER 870(10)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Tell me about Bharatavarsha, where this senseless army has gathered, and for which, my son Duryodhana is so avaricious. The sons of Pandu desire it and my mind is immersed in it. O Sanjaya! I am asking you, because you are skilled.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Listen to my words. The Pandavas are not covetous about this. It is Duryodhana who covets it, and so does Shakuni Soubala. There are other kshatriyas, who are the kings of many countries, who are greedy about Bharatavarsha and cannot tolerate each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now describe to you the land that is named after Bharata.[96] O king! This is loved by the god Indra, Vaivasvata Manu,[97] Prithu Vainya>,[98] the great-souled Ikshvaku,[99] Yayati,[100] Ambarisha,[101] Mandhata,[102] Nahusha,[103] Muchukunda,[104] Shibi Oushinara,[105] Rishabha,[106] Aila,[107] King Nriga[108] and other powerful kshatriyas. O great king! O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O scorcher of enemies! All of them loved Bharata and I will describe this varsha as I have heard it.

‘“O king! Listen as I tell you what you have asked. Mahendra, Malaya, Shuktiman, Rikshavan, Vindhya, Pariyatra—these are the seven noble mountains.[109] O king! Near them, there are thousands of other mountains that are unknown. They are full of substance and large, with beautiful foothills. There are other unknown and inferior mountains, inhabited by those who have inferior means of subsistence. O Kouravya! O lord! There are aryas and *mlecchas*[110] and men from mixed lineage. O lord of men! O Kourava! They drink water from the rivers—the great Ganga, Sindhu, Sarasvati, Godavari, Narmada, the great river Bahuda,[111] Shatadru,[112] Chandrabhaga,[113] the great river Yamuna, Drishadvati,[114] Vipasha,[115] Vipapa, Sthulavaluka, the river Vetravati,[116] the downward-flowing Krishnavena,[117] Iravati,[118] Vitasta,[119] Payoshni,[120] Devika,[121] Vedasmriti, Vetasini, Trideva, Ikshumalini, Karishini, Chitravaha, the downward-flowing Chitrasena, Gomati, Dhutapapa, the great river Vandana, Koushiki,[122] Trideva,[123] Kritya, Vichitra, Lohatarini, Rathastha, Shatakumbha, Sarayu,[124] Charmanvati,[125] Vetravati,[126] Hastisoma, Disha, Shatavari, Payoshni,[127] Bhaimarathi, Kaveri, Chuluka, Vapi, Shatabala, Nichira, Mahita, Suproyaga, Pavitra, Kundala, Sindhu,[128] Vajini, Puramalini, Purvabhirama, Vira, Bhima,[129] Oghavati,[130] Palashini, Papahara, Mahendra, Pippalavati, Parishena, Asikni,[131] Sarala, Bharamardini, Puruhi, Pravara, Mena, Mogha, Ghritavati, Dhumatyamati, Krishna, Suchi, Chhavi, Sadanira, Adhrishya, the great river Kushadhara, Shashikanta, Shiva, Viravati, Vastu, Suvastu, Gouri, Kampana, Hiranvati, Hiranvati,[132] Chitravati, the downward-flowing Chitrasena,[133] Rathachitra, Jyotiratha, Vishvamitra, Kapinjala, Upendra, Bahula, Kuchara, Ambuvahini, Vainandi, Pinjala, Venna,[134] the great river Tungavena, Vidisha, Krishnavenna,[135] Tamra, Kapila, Shalu, Suvama, Vedashva, the great river Harisrava, Shighra, Picchila, the downward-flowing Bharadvaji, the downward-flowing Koushiki,[136] Shona,[137] Bahuda,[138] Chandana,[139] Durgamanta, Shila, Brahmamedhya, Brihadvati, Charaksha, Mahirohi, Jambunadi, Sunasa, Tamasa,[140] Dasi, Trasamanya, Varanasi,[141] Lola, Adhritakara, the great river Purnasha, Manavi and the great river Purnasha. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are others—Sadaniramaya, Vritya, Mandaga, Mandavahini, Brahmani, Mahagouri, Durga, Chitropala, Chitrabarha, Manju, Makaravahini, Mandakini,[142] Vaitarani,[143] the great river Koka, Shuktimati, Maranya, Pushpaveni, Utpalavati, Lohitya,[144] Karatoya,[145] Vrishabhangini, Kumari, Rishikulya, Brahmakulya, Sarasvati, Supunya, Sarva and the revered Ganga. O lord of men! All of these are mothers of the universe. All of them are extremely strong.[146] Other than these, there are hundreds and thousands of other rivers. O king! To the extent I remember, I have described these rivers to you.

'"After this, listen to me as I recount the names of countries. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are Kuru, Panchala, Shalva, Madreya, Jangala, Shurasena, Kalinga, Bodha, Mouka, Matsya, Sukuta, Soubala, Kuntala, Kashi, Koshala, Chedi, Vatsa, Karusha, Bhoja, Sindhu, Pulinda, Uttamouja, Dasharna, Mekala, Utkala, Panchala, Koushija, Ekaprishtha, Yugandhara, Soudha, Madra, Bhujinga, Kashi,[147] Parakashi, Jathara, Kukkusha, Sudasharna, Kunti, Avanti, Parakunti, Govinda, Mandaka, Shanda, Vidarbha, Upavasika, Ashmaka, Pamsurashtra, Goparashtra, Panitaka, Adirashtra, Sukutta, Balirashtra, Kerala,[148] Vanarasya, Pravaha, Vakra, Vakrabhaya, Shaka, Videha, Magadha, Suhma, Vijaya, Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Yakrillomana, Malla, Sudeshna, Prahuta, Mahisha, Karshika, Vahika, Vatadhana, Abhira, Kalatoya, Aparandhra, Shudra, Pahlava, Charmakhandika, Atavi, Shabara, Marubhouma, Marisha, Upavrisha, Anupavrisha, Surashtra, Kekaya, Kuttaparanta, Dvaidheya, Kaksha, Samudranishkuta and Andhra. O king! O lord of men! There are other mountainous regions and regions on the outside of the mountains—Angamalada, Magadha, Manavarjaka, Mahyuttara, Pravrisheya, Bhargama, Pundra, Bharga, Kirata, Sudoshna, Pramuda, Shaka, Nishada, Nishadha, Anarta, Nairrita, Dugula, Pratimatsya, Kushala, Kunata, Tiragraha, Taratoya, Rajika, Ramyakagana, Tilaka, Parasika, Madhumanta, Prakutsaka, Kashmira, Sindhu, Souvira, Gandhara, Darshaka, Abhisara, Kuluta, Shaibala, Bahlika, Darvika, Sakacha, Darva, Vataja, Amaratha, Uraga, Bahuvadya, Kouravya, Sudamana, Sumallika, Vaghra, Karisha, Kashi,[149] Kulinda, Upatyaka, Vanayu, Dashaparshva, Romana, Kushabindu, Kaccha, Gopalakaccha, Langala, Paravallaka, Kirata, Barbara, Siddha, Videha,[150] Tamralingaka, Oushtra, Pundra, Sairandhra, Parvatiya and Marisha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There are other countries to the south—Dravida, Kerala,[151] Prachya, Bhushika, Vanavasina, Unnatyaka, Mahishaka, Vikalpa, Bhushaka, Karnika, Kuntika, Soudrida, Nalakalaka, Koukuttaka, Chola, Konkana, Malavana, Samanga, Kopana, Kukura, Angadamarisha, Dhvajini, Utsava, Sanketa, Trigarta, Sarvaseni, Tryanga, Kekaraka, Proshtha, Parasancharaka, Vindhya, Pulaka, Pulinda, Kalkala, Malaka, Mallaka, Paravartaka, Kulinda, Kulika, Karantha, Kuraka, Mushaka, Stanavala, Satiya, Pattipanjaka, Adidaya, Sirala, Stuvaka, Stanapa, Hrishividharbha, Kantika, Tangana and Paratangana. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! There are other mleccha people to the north—Yavana, Kamboja, Daruna, other mleccha people, Sakshadruha, Kuntala, Huna, Parataka, Maradha, China and Dashamalika. These are inhabited by others born from kshatriya, vaishya and shudra lineages. There are *shudra-abhira*s, Daradas, Kashmiras, Pashus, Svashikas, Tukharas, Pallavas, Girigahvaras, Atreyas, Bharadvajas, Stanayoshikas, Oupakas, Kalingas, different races of *kirata*s,[152] Tamaras, Hamsamargas and Karabhanjakas.

'"O lord! I have only given brief indications about these countries. If the earth and its qualities and strengths are properly used, it becomes like a milch cow that yields objects of desires and leads to the great fruit of the three objectives.[153] The brave kings who know about dharma and artha are covetous of these. Because of greed for these riches, they have readily agreed to give up their lives in battle. The earth is the refuge and is desired by those who have the bodies of gods and men. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The kings desire to enjoy the earth and have become like dogs that are trying to snatch meat from each other. Their desires will never be satisfied. O king! It is for this reason that the Kurus and the Pandavas have tried to obtain the possession of the earth through conciliation, gifts, dissension and chastisement.[154] O bull among men! If the earth is looked after well, she becomes the father, the mother, the son and heaven for all beings."'

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'Dhritarashtra said, "O suta! O Sanjaya! Tell me about the dimensions, the lifespan, the good and evil fruits and the past, present and future of Bharatavarsha, Haimavat and Harivarsha. Tell me in detail."

'Sanjaya said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! O extender of the Kuru lineage! There are four yugas in Bharatavarsha—*krita*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *pushya*.[155] O lord! The first is krita yuga and after that treta yuga follows. Dvapara comes after that and pushya follows thereafter. O supreme among Kurus! O supreme among kings! The measure of the lifespan in krita yuga is said to be four thousand years. O lord of men! That of treta is three thousand years. In the present one of dvapara, it is two thousand. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No fixed lifespan has been prescribed for pushya. People will die in the womb, or once they are born. O king! Men are born in krita and have offspring who are immensely strong, great in spirit and possess all the qualities. There are sages and those rich in austerities. O king! They are great in their endeavour, great-souled, devoted to dharma and truthful. O king! Those born in krita yuga are rich and handsome, with long lifespans. Kshatriyas born in treta yuga are extremely brave warriors, supreme among those who wield bows. Those brave ones are emperors.[156] O great king! When dvapara begins, all the varnas have great endeavour and great valour. But they seek to kill each other. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are born in pushya are limited in their energy and men are wrathful. They are greedy and untruthful. They suffer from jealousy, vanity, anger, deception and malice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is wrath and greed on earth in pushya. O king! O lord of men! The part that remains of dvapara is very small.[157] Haimavat is superior to Harivarsha in all qualities and so on.'"[158]

Section Sixty-Two

Bhumi Parva

This parva has eighty-seven shlokas and two chapters.

Chapter 872(12): 37 shlokas
Chapter 873(13): 50 shlokas

Bhumi means land or the earth and this section is so named because it has a description of the earth.

CHAPTER 872(12)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! You have described Jambukhanda exactly to me. Now tell me exactly about its expanse and dimensions. O Sanjaya! Without leaving any gaps, also tell me exactly and accurately about the dimensions of the oceans, Shakadvipa, Kushadvipa, Shalmalidvipa and Krounchadvipa. O son of Gavalgana! Tell me everything about Rahu, the moon and the sun."

'Sanjaya said, "O king! There are many dvipas spread throughout the earth. But I will tell you about seven of them and about the moon, the sun and the planet.[1] O lord of the earth! The mountain of Jambu extends, in its entirety, over eighteen thousand and six hundred yojanas. It is said that the salty ocean is double this in expanse. It[2] has many countries and is decorated with jewels and coral. It is decorated with many beautiful mountains that have diverse kinds of minerals. Inhabited by siddhas and charanas, the ocean is circular. O king! I will tell you exactly about Shakadvipa. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Listen to me, as I describe it to you appropriately. O lord of men! In dimensions, it is double the size of Jambudvipa. O great king! The ocean is double this in expanse. O foremost among Bharatas! It[3] is surrounded on all sides by the milky ocean. There are many sacred countries there. People who are there, do not die. How can there be famine there? They[4] are endowed with forgiveness and energy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have briefly and exactly told you about Shakadvipa. O great king! What else do you desire to hear?"

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! You have, briefly and exactly, told me about Shakadvipa. O immensely wise one! Now accurately, tell me everything in detail."

'Sanjaya said, "O king! There are seven mountains there and they are adorned with gems. They are stores of jewels. Listen to the names of the rivers that are there. O lord of men! Everything there is supreme in qualities and sacred. The supreme one is known as Meru and is the abode of gods, rishis and gandharvas. O great king! The mountain named Malaya extends towards the east. The clouds are generated there and spread out in all the directions. O Kouravya! Next is the large mountain Jaladhara. Vasava always extracts supreme water from there. O lord of men! It is from this that we obtain showers during the monsoon. The tall mountain of Raivataka is always established there. The grandfather has decreed that Revati nakshatra should be above it in the sky.[5] O Indra among kings! To the north, is the large mountain named Shyama. O lord of countries! All the people there are dark in complexion."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! A great doubt has arisen in my mind now, because of what you have said. O son of a suta! Why are the people there dark in complexion?"

'Sanjaya said, "O immensely wise one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In all the dvipas, there are those who are fair and those who are dark in complexion. O king! There is also a mixture of the two complexions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But because it is full of such people, it is known as Shyama.[6] O illustrious one! Because the people there are dark, this mountain is called Shyama. O Indra among Kouravas! Beyond this, there is the great mountain Durgashaila. Then there is Kesara. The wind that blows there has the fragrance of saffron.[7] Measured in yojanas, each[8] is twice the height of the one that has preceded it. O Kouravya! The learned have said that there are seven varshas there. O great king! That of the great Meru is Mahakasha, that of Jalada is Kumudottara, that of Jaladhara is said to be Sukumara, that of Raivata is Koumara, that of Shyama is Manichaka and that of Kesara is Modaki.[9] Beyond that, is Mahapuman,[10] in the middle of Shakadvipa. O Kouravya! O great king! In length, breadth and circumference, this is as large as the famous and large tree that is in the midst of Jambudvipa. There are many sacred countries there, where Shankara[11] is worshipped. The siddhas, the charanas and the gods go there. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the people follow dharma there, and so do the four varnas. They are engaged in their own tasks and no instances of theft can be seen. O great king! They have long lives and are free from old age and death. The people there prosper, like rivers during the monsoon. The rivers there are full of pure water. O Kouravya! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Ganga divides herself into several flows—Sukumari, Kumari, Sita, Kaveraka, Mahanadi, the river Manijala and Ikshuvardhanika. O extender of the Kuru lineage! There are many other sacred rivers there, in hundreds and thousands, and Vasava draws water from them to shower down. It is impossible to enumerate the names, lengths and dimensions of these. All these rivers are holy. As the worlds know, there are four sacred countries there—Maga, Mashaka, Manasa and Mandaga. O king! Magas are usually brahmanas and are devoted to their own tasks. The kings of Mashaka are devoted to dharma and tend to every desire.[12] O great king! The vaishyas of Manasa earn their living through deeds. With all their desires gratified, they are brave and are firmly devoted to dharma and artha. The shudra men of Mandaga always follow the conduct of dharma. O Indra among kings! There is no king there, no punishment, and no one to be punished. They are devoted to their own dharma and protect dharma and each other. One is capable of saying this much about that dvipa. Only this much can be heard about the immensely energetic Shakadvipa.'"

‘Sanjaya said, “O Kouravya! O great king! I will tell you about what is heard about the dvipa to the north. Listen to me. There is an ocean there, with waters made out of clarified butter.[13] Beyond that, there is an ocean with waters made of curd.[14] Next is an ocean with waters made out of liquor.[15] And there is another ocean with water made out of sweat.[16] O lord of men! Each of these dvipas is double the size of the one that has preceded it. O great king! They are surrounded by mountains on all sides. In the dvipa that is in the centre, there is a great mountain named Goura, made out of red arsenic. O king! To the west is a mountain named Krishna, which resembles Narayana. Keshava himself protects the divine jewels there. Prajapati is seated there and bestows happiness on beings. Other than the countries, *kusha* grass grows in the midst of Kushadvipa. O king! The *shalmali*[17] tree is worshipped in Shalmalidvipa. There is the mountain of Mahakrouncha in Krounchadvipa. It is a store of gems. O great king! It is always worshipped by the four varnas. O king! There is the extremely large mountain of Gomanta, which is a store of every kind of mineral. The handsome and lotus-eyed lord, Narayana Hari, always resides there, praised by those who have obtained salvation. O Indra among kings! There is another mountain in Kushadvipa and it is marked with coral. There is a second golden and inaccessible mountain named Sudhama. O Kouravya! There is the third radiant mountain, Kumuda. The fourth has the name of Pushpavan and the fifth is Kushoshaya. The sixth has the name of Harigiri and these six are the foremost among mountains. As one progresses, the space between two mountains is double that between the preceding two.

‘“The first varsha is Oudbhida and the second is Venumandala. The third is Rathakara and the fourth is known as Palana. The fifth varsha is Dhritimat and the sixth varsha is Prabhakara. The seventh varsha is Kampila and this is the collection of seven varshas. O lord of the universe. Gods, gandharvas and other beings roam and sport there. People do not die there. O king! There are no bandits there and no mleccha tribes. O king! Everyone there is usually fair and delicate. O lord of men! I will tell you about the remaining varshas, as it has been heard. O great king! Listen with an attentive mind. In Krounchadvipa, there is a large mountain named Krouncha. Beyond Krouncha is Vamanaka and after Vamanaka is Andhakaraka. O king! Beyond Andhakara[18] is Mainaka, supreme among mountains. O king! Beyond Mainaka is Govinda, best among mountains. O king! Beyond Govinda is the mountain named Nibida. O extender of the lineage! The range between successive mountains is double.[19] Listen. I will tell you about the countries that are located there. The country near Krouncha is Kushala, while that near Vamana[20] is Manonuga. O extender of the Kuru lineage! The country beyond Manonuga is Ushna. Pravaraka is beyond Ushna, Andhakaraka beyond Pravara.[21] The country beyond Andhakaraka is said to be Munidesha. Dundubhisvana is said to be beyond Munidesha. O lord of men! This is frequented by siddhas and charanas and people are generally fair. O great king! These countries are frequented by gods and gandharvas. There is a mountain named Pushkara in Pushkara and it is full of gems and jewels. The god Prajapati himself, always resides there. O lord of men! All the gods, accompanied by the maharshis, always worship him with eloquent words and reverent homage. Different kinds of jewels from Jambudvipa are used in this. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In all these dvipas, people and brahmanas observe *brahmacharya*[22] and self-control and are truthful. Health and life expectancy progressively becomes double.[23] O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The land in each of these dvipas constitutes a single country. In each of these countries, only a single dharma is seen. The lord Prajapati himself raises his staff of chastisement there. O great king! He always resides in those dvipas and protects them. O king! He is the king. He is the one who provides bliss.[24] He is the father. He is the grandfather. O foremost among men! He protects all the mobile and immobile beings. O Kouravya! O great king! Cooked food manifests itself before the beings there and they always eat it. Beyond this is seen the world named Sama. O great king! This has four corners and thirty-three circles. O Kouravya! O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The four elephants, revered by the worlds, reside there.[25] O king! They are Vamana, Airavata, Supratika who has rent temples and mouth, and another one.[26] I cannot enumerate the dimensions of these elephants. That has always remained unknown—upwards, downwards and diagonally. O great king! The wind freely blows there from all the directions and the elephants seize it with trunks that are extremely radiant, designed to draw up, and with tips like lotuses. As soon as the elephants have seized the wind, they release it with their breath. O great king! It arrives here and sustains all beings.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have told me in detail about the first.[27] You have also described the dvipas. O Sanjaya! Now tell me what is left.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! O foremost among the Kouravas! I have spoken about the dvipas. Now listen as I exactly tell you about the planets and Svarbhanu[28] and about their dimensions. O great king! It has been heard that the planet Svarbhanu is spherical. Its diameter is twelve thousand yojanas. O unblemished one! Because it is large, its circumference is forty-two thousand yojanas.[29] That is what the ancient and learned ones have said. O king! The diameter of the moon is said to be eleven thousand yojanas. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! The circumference of this great-souled one, who provides cool rays, is thirty-eight thousand and nine hundred yojanas.[30] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O king! The diameter of the sun is ten thousand yojanas and its circumference is thirty-five thousand and eight hundred. O unblemished one! This is because it is so large. Thus it has been heard about the extremely benevolent and fast-moving giver of light. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are the dimensions indicated for the sun. O great king! Because of its large size, at the appropriate time, Rahu envelopes both the moon and the sun. I have briefly recounted this to you. O great king! With the sight of the sacred texts, I have told you everything that you had asked, exactly. Be at peace. As instructed there,[31] I have told you about the creation of the universe. O Kouravya! Therefore, pacify your son Duryodhana.[32] O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Having heard the delightful account of Bhumi Parva, a king obtains prosperity and success and is honoured by virtuous ones. The life expectancy, strength, deeds and energy of such a lord of the earth increase, if he follows the vows and listens to it on the day of the new moon or the full moon. His ancestors and grandfathers are gratified. You have now heard everything about the merits that have earlier flowed from Bharata Varsha, where we now are.'"

Section Sixty-Three

Bhagavad Gita Parva

This parva has 994 shlokas and twenty-seven chapters.

Chapter 874(14): 13 shlokas
Chapter 875(15): 75 shlokas
Chapter 876(16): 46 shlokas
Chapter 877(17): 39 shlokas
Chapter 878(18): 18 shlokas
Chapter 879(19): 44 shlokas
Chapter 880(20): 20 shlokas
Chapter 881(21): 17 shlokas
Chapter 882(22): 22 shlokas
Chapter 883(23): 47 shlokas
Chapter 884(24): 72 shlokas
Chapter 885(25): 43 shlokas
Chapter 886(26): 42 shlokas
Chapter 887(27): 29 shlokas
Chapter 888(28): 47 shlokas
Chapter 889(29): 30 shlokas
Chapter 890(30): 28 shlokas
Chapter 891(31): 34 shlokas
Chapter 892(32): 42 shlokas
Chapter 893(33): 55 shlokas
Chapter 894(34): 20 shlokas
Chapter 895(35): 34 shlokas
Chapter 896(36): 27 shlokas
Chapter 897(37): 20 shlokas
Chapter 898(38): 24 shlokas
Chapter 899(39): 28 shlokas
Chapter 900(40): 78 shlokas

This section is so named because it includes the Song Celestial or the Bhagavad Gita, the teachings of Krishna to Arjuna. The section begins with the dramatic news that Bhishma has been killed. When Sanjaya tells Dhritarashtra this, Dhritarashtra (and the reader) is *astounded, wishing to know how this came to be. After a description of the arrangements for war, the rest of this section is the Bhagavad Gita.*

CHAPTER 874(14)

Vaishampayana said, 'Sanjaya, Gavalgana's son, was wise. He could see everything, the past, the present and the future. In great distress, he suddenly rushed from the field of battle to where Dhritarashtra was immersed in thought and told him that Bhishma, the intermediate one of the Bharata lineage, had been killed. [1] "O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am Sanjaya and I bow down before you. Shantanu's son, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Bharatas, has been slain. He was foremost among all warriors. He was the resort of all archers. That grandfather of the Kurus is now lying down on a bed of arrows. Depending on his valour, your son embarked on that game of dice. O king! That Bhishma is now lying down, having been killed on the field of battle by Shikhandi. On a single chariot, that maharatha had earlier defeated all the lords of the earth in a great battle in Kashi. [2] Descended from the Vasus, he fought with Rama, Jamadagni's son, in a battle. Jamadagni's son could not kill him. But he has now been slain by Shikhandi. He was like the great Indra in his valour and like the Himalayas in his steadfastness. He was like the ocean in his gravity and like the earth in his patience. Arrows were like his teeth. The bow was his mouth. The sword was his tongue. He was invincible. He was a lion among men. Today, your father [3] has been brought down by the one from Panchala. [4] On seeing him ready for battle, the large army of the Pandavas trembled in fear, like a herd of cattle on seeing a lion. He protected your army and formations for ten nights. He performed extremely difficult deeds and has now departed, like the setting sun. Like Shakra, [5] he calmly showered thousands of arrows. For ten days, every day, he killed ten thousand warriors in battle. Like a tree struck by the wind, he has been killed and is lying down on the ground. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He did not deserve this and this is because of your evil counsel."'

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “How has Bhishma, bull among the Kurus, been killed by Shikhandi? My father was the equal of Vasava. How has he been brought down from his chariot? O Sanjaya! What happened to my sons when they were deprived of Bhishma? He was powerful and was like the gods. He observed brahmacharya for the sake of his superior. [6] He was great in spirit and great in strength, a great archer. When that maharatha, a tiger among men, was killed, what was the state of their [7] minds then? My mind is pierced with great grief on hearing that he has been killed. He was a bull among the Kuru lineage. He was a brave one who did not waver. He was a bull among men. When he advanced, who followed him? Who were the ones who preceded him? O Sanjaya! Who was at his side and who advanced with him? He was a bull among kshatriyas who could not be dislodged. Which brave ones were with that bull among rathas when he suddenly penetrated the formation of chariots? Who were at the rear? [8] That destroyer of enemies, who was like the sun and an equal of the one with the thousand rays, suddenly attacked the enemy soldiers and spread terror amidst the enemy. On the instructions of Kourava, [9] he performed difficult deeds in battle. He devoured their ranks. Who tried to repulse him? O Sanjaya! He was accomplished and unassailable. When Shantanu’s son advanced against them in battle, how did the Pandavas counter him? He slaughtered the soldiers. He possessed arrows for his teeth. He was swift. The bow was his gaping mouth. The terrible sword was his tongue. He was invincible. He was the ultimate of tigers among men. He was modest. He had never been vanquished. How could Kounteya bring down such an unvanquished one in battle? He was a terrible and fierce archer. He was stationed on his supreme chariot. With his sharp arrows, he sliced off the heads of enemies. On seeing him ready in battle, like the invincible fire of destruction, the great army of the Pandavas always trembled. That destroyer of troops destroyed the soldiers for ten nights. After having accomplished extremely difficult deeds, he has now departed like the setting sun. Like Shakra, he created a shower of inexhaustible arrows. In ten days, he slaughtered a hundred million warriors in battle. He is lying down on the bare ground, like a tree destroyed by the wind. This is because of my evil counsel. That descendant of the Bharata lineage did not deserve this. On witnessing the terrible valour of Bhishma, Shantanu's son, how was the army of the Pandavas capable of striking him down? How did the sons of Pandu engage with Bhishma in battle? O Sanjaya! While Drona was still alive, how could Bhishma not be victorious? When Kripa was near him, and so was Bharadvaja's son, [10] how could Bhishma, supreme among warriors, be killed? Bhishma was an *atiratha*. [11] Even the gods were incapable of withstanding him. How could Shikhandi of Panchala kill him in battle? He always rivalled Jamadagni's extremely powerful son [12] in battle. Jamadagni's son, who was Shakra's equal in valour, could not defeat him. How could Bhishma, with the strength of a maharatha, be killed in battle? O Sanjaya! Without knowing about that brave one, I cannot obtain any peace. O Sanjaya! Which of my great archers did not desert that undecaying one? On Duryodhana's instructions, which brave ones surrounded him? When all the Pandavas advanced against the undecaying Bhishma, with Shikhandi at the forefront, were the Kurus frightened? Did they abandon him? The roar of his bow, with its shower of arrows, was like a giant cloud. The great twang of his bow was like a tall and mighty cloud. He showered arrows on the Kounteyas, together with the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. He slaughtered the brave warriors of the enemy, like the wielder of the vajra against the danavas.

'"He was like a terrible and surging ocean, with his invincible arrows like crocodiles. The bows were like waves. That interminable ocean was without boats and without islands. The clubs and swords were like whirling sharks. [13] The masses of horses and elephants were like crocodiles. There were many spirited horses, elephants, infantry and chariots. All those warriors of the enemy were immersed in that battle. Through his energy and anger, that scorcher of enemies consumed them. Which brave one could repulse him, like the shore against the abode of sharks? [14] O Sanjaya! For Duryodhana's sake, Bhishma, the destroyer of enemies, performed deeds in battle. Who were in front of him then? Bhishma was infinitely energetic. Who protected his right axle? With devotion and care, who guarded him at the back from enemy warriors? So as to protect him, who were immediately in front of Bhishma? When that brave one fought in battle, which brave ones protected his front axle? O Sanjaya! Who were stationed at his left axle and attacked the Srinjayas? Who protected his unassailable advance guard? Who protected his sides? He has traversed along the difficult path. [15] O Sanjaya! Who were the ones who fought with the enemy warriors in general? If our brave ones protected him and were protected by him, how did he not swiftly vanquish that invincible army [16] in battle? He was like the lord of all the worlds, the supreme god Prajapati. O Sanjaya! How were the Pandavas capable of striking him? He was our refuge and the Kurus resorted to him when fighting with the enemy. O Sanjaya! You have told me that Bhishma, tiger among men, has fallen. My son resorted to the great strength of that valiant one and ignored the Pandavas. How could he have been slain by the enemy? My father was great in his vows. He was unassailable in battle. In earlier times, desiring to slay the danavas, all the gods sought his help. When he was born, the immensely valiant Shantanu, the protector of the world, gave up sorrow, grief and dejection. He possessed the qualities of a son. He was wise. He was devoted. He was a refuge. He was devoted to his own dharma. He was pure. He knew the truth about the Vedas and the *Vedanga*s. [17] How could he have been killed? He was skilled in all weapons. He was modest. He was self-controlled. He was calm. He was spirited. On hearing that Shantanu's son has been killed, I think that the rest of my army has already been slain. It is my view that adharma has become stronger than dharma. The Pandavas desire the kingdom and have killed their aged senior. Jamadagni's son, Rama, is supreme among those who know all weapons. In earlier times, when he raised his weapons for the sake of Amba, he was defeated by Bhishma in battle. [18] He was the equal of Indra in deeds. He was foremost among all archers. You have said that Bhishma has been killed. What can be a greater misery than this? Jamadagni's valiant son, Rama, the destroyer of enemy warriors, who made it a vow to kill kshatriyas, could not defeat him in battle. That extremely intelligent one has now been killed by Shikhandi. It is thus evident that Drupada's son, Shikhandi, is superior in energy, valour and strength to the immensely valorous Bhargava, [19] invincible in battle. That brave one [20] was accomplished in battle. He was skilled in the use of all weapons. He was knowledgeable about supreme weapons. That bull among the Bharata lineage has been killed. In that assembly of enemies, who were the brave ones who followed that destroyer of foes? Tell me how the battle between Bhishma and the Pandavas proceeded.

'"O Sanjaya! With that brave one killed, my army is like a woman without a son. My soldiers are like a demented herd of cattle, without a protector. In a great battle, his manliness was supreme in the worlds. When he fell, what was the state of my army then? O Sanjaya! Despite being alive, what strength remains in us now? We have caused our greatly valorous father to be killed, chief among virtuous ones in the world. We are immersed in fathomless water, without seeing a boat that we can use to cross. I think that my sons must be grief-stricken, extremely miserable at Bhishma's death. My heart must be made out of extremely hard stone. On hearing about the death of Bhishma, tiger among men, it is not being rent asunder. He was a bull among the Bharata lineage and possessed weapons, intelligence and policy. He was immeasurable and unassailable. How was he killed in battle? One cannot be freed from death through weapons, valour, austerities, intelligence, steadfastness or giving up. Destiny is extremely powerful and cannot be transgressed by anyone in the world. O Sanjaya! You have told me that Bhishma, Shantanu's son, has been killed. Tormented by grief on account of my sons, I thought of the great misery and sought salvation from Shantanu's son, Bhishma. O Sanjaya! When he saw Shantanu's son lying down on the ground like a sun, to whom did Duryodhana resort? O Sanjaya! When I reflect with my intelligence on the lords of the earth who are on my side and those of the enemy, I do not see what remnants will be left in either army. The dharma of kshatriyas, as instructed by the rishis, is terrible, since, desiring the kingdom, the Pandavas have killed Shantanu's son. We also desired the kingdom and have killed our grandfather. The Parthas, and my sons, are established in the dharma of kshatriyas and no crime attaches to them. O Sanjaya! When there is a great calamity, even a virtuous person should perform this task. One should exhibit ultimate valour, to the best of one's capacity. This has been laid down. He was modest and unvanquished. O son! [21] When he was engaged in slaughtering soldiers, how did the sons of Pandu counter Shantanu's son? How were the soldiers arrayed and how did he fight with the great-souled ones?

'"O Sanjaya! How was my father, Bhishma, killed by the enemies? When Bhishma was killed, what did Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni Soubala and Duhshasana say? This gambling board is strewn with the bodies of men, elephants and horses. There are terrible arrows, lances, clubs, swords and spikes as dice. Those evil ones have entered the assembly hall of this difficult war. Those bulls among men are gambling and have offered their lives as stakes. Who was won? Who won? O Sanjaya! Who was successful in his objective? Other than Bhishma, Shantanu's son, who else has been brought down? Tell me. After hearing that Devavrata [22] has been slain, I cannot obtain peace. My father [23] was the performer of terrible deeds. On hearing this, I am grief-stricken. Thinking about the great injury that will befall my sons, my heart was anguished. O Sanjaya! You have made that fire blaze, by sprinkling clarified butter on it. On seeing that Bhishma, famous in all the worlds, and the one who had accepted a great burden, has been slain, I think that my sons must be grieving. I wish to hear about the misery that has arisen from Duryodhana's deeds. O Sanjaya! Therefore, tell me everything exactly as it has happened in that war that will destroy the earth, brought about by the evil intelligence of my son. O Sanjaya! Tell me everything, whether it is good or bad. In his desire for victory, what did Bhishma finally accomplish in the battle? He possessed energy. He was skilled in weapons. How was the battle between the soldiers of the

Kurus and the Pandavas? Tell me exactly, in due order, with the time of occurrence.”’

CHAPTER 876(16)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! You are a worthy person and the question that you have asked is fitting. However, you should not ascribe the fault to Duryodhana. One who suffers because of his own evil conduct, should not blame other men. This is not right and you should not do this. O great king! A man who is reprehensible in all his conduct deserves to be killed by everyone because of those censurable deeds. The Pandavas are not wise about deceitful ways. They waited, with their followers and advisers. They looked towards you and bore it. They forgave and dwelt for a long time in the forest. O lord of the earth! Hear about this gathering of horses, elephants and infinitely energetic kings, which I have seen through sight obtained through the strength of yoga. Do not sorrow in your mind. O lord of men! All this has been preordained earlier. I bow down before your father, Parashara’s wise son.[24] Through his favours, I have obtained divine and supreme wisdom. O king! I have sight beyond the senses and can hear from a great distance. I know the minds of others and am acquainted with the past and the future. I always know about rising and travelling through the sky. The great-souled one has granted me the boon of not being touched by weapons in battle. Listen in detail to the wonderful and extraordinary account. The great battle between the Bharatas makes the body hair stand up.

‘“O great king! When the soldiers were arrayed in accordance with the prescribed battle formations, Duryodhana spoke to Duhshasana. ‘O Duhshasana! Let the chariots be yoked immediately for Bhishma’s protection. Instruct all our soldiers to advance swiftly. What I have thought about for many years, has now come to pass. With their soldiers, the Pandavas and the Kurus have met. I do not think that there is anything in this battle more important than Bhishma’s protection. If he is protected, he will kill the Parthas and the Somakas, together with the Srinjayas. That pure-souled one has said, “I will not kill Shikhandi. I have heard that he was a woman earlier. Therefore, I will avoid him in battle.” It is my view that because of this, Bhishma must be specially protected. Let all my soldiers station themselves, resolving to kill Shikhandi. Let all the soldiers from the east and the west, the south and the north, skilled in weapons, protect the grandfather. If unprotected, an extremely strong lion can be killed by a wolf. Let a lion not be killed by the jackal Shikhandi. Yudhamanyu protects Phalguna’s [25] left and Uttamouja protects the right. Phalguna protects Shikhandi. Partha protects the one whom Bhishma will avoid. O Duhshasana! Act so that Gangeya is not slain.’

‘“When night had passed, a great roar arose from all the lords of the earth. ‘Yoke! Yoke!’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sound of conch shells and drums was like the roar of lions. There was the neighing of horses and the clatter of the wheels of chariots. Elephants trumpeted. Warriors roared. They slapped their arms and there was a tumultuous sound everywhere. O great king! When the sun arose, all the soldiers in the large armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas arose and completed all the arrangements. O Indra among kings! Your sons and the Pandavas possessed elephants and chariots decorated with gold. They could be seen in their radiance, like clouds streaked with lightning. An array of many chariots could be seen, like cities. Your father was extremely resplendent, like the full moon. The warriors were stationed in their battle formations, with bows, scimitars, swords, [26] clubs, javelins, spears and other shining weapons. O lord of the earth! There were elephants, chariots, infantry and horses. There were hundreds and thousands of them, spread like a net. Resplendent standards of many different kinds could be seen. They were brilliant and there were thousands of them, belonging to us and to the enemy. They were golden and were adorned with jewels. They blazed like the fire. The kings possessed thousands of radiant standards. They shone like the great Indra’s standard and resembled the great Indra’s abode. The brave ones who desired to fight, glanced at them. Indras among men were at the forefront of their troops. Their weapons were raised. They had colourful guards on their palms and possessed quivers. Their eyes were like those of bulls. Shakuni Soubala, Shalya, Jayadratha from Sindhu, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Shrutayudha from Kalinga, King Jayatsena, Brihadbala from Koshala and Satvata Kritavarma—these ten tigers among men were brave and possessed arms like clubs. They were performers of sacrifices at which a lot of gifts were donated. Each of them headed one *akshouhini*. [27] Other than this, there were many others who followed Duryodhana. There were immensely strong kings and princes, knowledgeable about policy. They could be seen armoured, heading their armies. All of them were attired in black deerskin. They had standards and wore garlands of *munja* grass. [28] They prepared themselves for Duryodhana's sake and were ready to go to Brahma's world. [29] They stationed themselves, heading the ten large armies. The eleventh large army of Kourava, Dhritarashtra's son, stood in front of all the soldiers, with Shantanu's son at the head. The undecaying one was in a white headdress. He had white horses and was clad in white armour. O great king! Bhishma could be seen like the rising moon. Stationed on his silver chariot, Bhishma had a standard with a golden palm tree. He could be seen by the Kurus and the Pandavas like the one with the sharp rays, [30] enveloped by white clouds. Dhrishtadyumna, the great Srinjaya archer, was at the forefront [31] and they looked like small animals, glancing at a large and yawning lion. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, all of them trembled repeatedly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are the eleven large divisions of your army. The seven divisions of the Pandavas were also protected by great men. They were like two oceans meeting at the end of an era, infested with crazy sharks [32] and giant crocodiles. O king! We have not seen or heard of anything like this earlier, like those armies encountering each other in the prescribed manner.'"

CHAPTER 877(17)

‘Sanjaya said, “Just as the illustrious Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa had said, in that fashion, all the lords of the earth assembled for the encounter. On that day, the moon approached Magha. [33] The seven large and blazing planets [34] appeared in the sky. When the sun arose, it seemed to be divided into two parts. When the blazing sun arose in the sky, it had a flaming crest. The directions blazed. Desiring to feed on bodies, flesh and blood, jackals and crows cried out. Each day, the aged grandfather of the Kurus and Bharadvaja’s son arose and with concentration, wished that the Parthas might not be killed and that the sons of Pandu might be victorious. Those undecaying scorchers of enemies fought for your sake only because they had taken a pledge. Your father, Devavrata, was knowledgeable about every aspect of dharma. He summoned all the lords of the earth and spoke these words to them. ‘O kshatriyas! This great door that leads to heaven has been opened up. Pass through it and go the worlds of Shakra and Brahma. [35] This is the eternal path, indicated by the ancient ones, and those who have preceded them. Honour yourselves by fighting with great attention. Through such deeds, Nabhaga, Yayati, Mandhata, Nahusha and Nriga have been successful and have reached the supreme goal. It is adharma for a kshatriya to die from disease in his home. The eternal dharma is to die in the field of battle.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed by Bhishma, all the lords of the earth went to the heads of their armies and were resplendent in their supreme chariots. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But because of Bhishma, Vaikartana Karna, together with his advisers and relatives, cast aside his weapons in that battle. Without Karna, your sons and all the kings on your side marched out. They roared like lions and this resounded in the ten directions. There were white umbrellas and flags and pennants, elephants and horses. With charioteers, chariots and infantry, the army was splendid. There was the sound of drums and cymbals and also the noise of kettledrums. The earth trembled because of the roar of the wheels of chariots. The maharathas had golden armlets and bracelets and bows. They were as radiant as mobile mountains.

'"Bhishma's standard had a large palm tree with five stars. The general of the Kuru army was like the clear sun. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! As instructed by Shantanu's son, all the kings and great archers who were on your side stationed themselves. With all the kings, Shaibya Govasana [36] advanced on a king among elephants that was bedecked with flags and deserved to carry kings. Ashvatthama, whose complexion was like the lotus, was at the head of all the soldiers. He was ready and his standard was adorned with a lion's tail. Shrutayudha, Chitrasena, Purumitra, Vivimshati, Shalya, Bhurishrava, maharatha Vikarna—these seven great archers were adorned in excellent armour. They rode their chariots and followed Drona's son, ahead of Bhishma. Their great standards were resplendent on their supreme chariots. The golden flags were seen to be blazing. Drona, foremost among preceptors, had a golden altar on his standard, adorned with a water pot and the sign of a bow. Duryodhana's large standard had a bejewelled elephant and led hundreds and thousands of soldiers. Pourava, Kalinga, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Kshemadhanva, Sumitra and other rathas were in front of him. [37] The king of Magadha guided the forces from the front, on an extremely expensive chariot that bore the standard of a bull. He was protected by the lord of Anga [38] and the great-souled Kripa. That extremely large army from the east looked like scattered autumn clouds. The immensely famous Jayadratha stationed himself at the forefront of the soldiers. [39] He had a beautiful silver standard, marked with the sign of a boar. A hundred thousand chariots, eight thousand elephants and sixty thousand horses were under his command. O king! Commanded by the lord of Sindhu, foremost among standard bearers, that large army was resplendent with chariots, elephants and horses. Together with Ketumat, the lord of all the Kalingas advanced with sixty thousand chariots and ten thousand elephants. His large elephants were like mountains. They were adorned with implements of war, [40] spears, quivers and standards and were beautiful. Kalinga was resplendent with a standard that bore the sign of a tree. He had a white umbrella and golden whisks. O king! Ketumat was also on an elephant, with a colourful and supreme goad. [41] He was stationed in that battle, like the sun amidst clouds. King Bhagadatta was stationed on a supreme elephant and was radiant in his energy. He was like the wielder of the vajra. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti were regarded as Bhagadatta's equal. They rode on the shoulders of elephants and followed Ketumat. O king! Instructed by Drona, the king who was Shantanu's son, the son of the preceptor, [42] Bahlika and Kripa, the arrays of chariots were arranged in *vyuhas* [43] with excellent heads. The elephants were the body. The horses were the sides. That fierce formation was ready to descend and attack on all sides."'

CHAPTER 878(18)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! After some time, a tumultuous sound could be heard, when the warriors prepared to fight, and it made the heart tremble. There were the sounds of conch shells and drums. Elephants trumpeted. The wheels of the chariots thundered and the earth seemed to be torn apart. The horses neighed. The warriors roared. O unassailable one! The armies of your sons and those of the Pandavas encountered each other and trembled. The elephants and the chariots were decorated with gold and were seen to be radiant, like clouds with lightning. O lord of men! Those on your side had many different kinds of standards. They were adorned with golden rings and shone like the fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those on your side [44] and those on the side of the enemy were seen to be as pure as the great Indra's standard, in the great Indra's abode. The brave ones were clad in golden armour. They blazed like the fiery sun. Armoured, they seemed to be like the blazing planets. They held upraised weapons and wore guards on their palms. They possessed standards. They had eyes like bulls. They were great archers and placed themselves at the forefront. O lord of men! Among your sons, there were those who protected Bhisma from the rear—Duhshasana, Durvisaha, Durmukha, Duhsaha, Vivimshati, Chitrasena and maharatha Vikarna. There were also Satyavrata, Purumitra, Jaya, Bhurishrava and Shala. They were followed by twenty thousand chariots. Abhishaha, Shurasena, Shibi, Vasati, Shalva, Matysa, Ambashtha, Trigarta, Kekaya, Souvira, Kitava and those from the east, west and the north Malava—all the brave ones from these twelve regions [45] advanced, ready to give up their lives. They protected the grandfather with an array of large chariots. With an army that consisted of ten thousand swift elephants, the king of Magadha followed that array of chariots. Those who protected the wheels of chariots and the feet of the elephants in the midst of that army numbered six million. The infantry marched in advance, with bows, shields and swords in their hands. There were many hundreds and thousands of them and they fought with nails and lances. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! The eleven akshouhinis of your sons looked like the Ganga separated from the Yamuna."'

CHAPTER 879(19)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "On seeing the eleven akshouhinis arranged in battle formation, how did Pandava Yudhishthira, possessing fewer soldiers, arrange his counter-formations? Bhishma knew about all vyuhas—those of men, gods, gandharvas and asuras. How did Kounteya Pandava counter them?"

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing the soldiers of Dhritarashtra's sons arranged in battle formation, Dharmaraja Pandava, with dharma in his soul, spoke to Dhananjaya. 'O son! [46] We know from the words of maharshi Brihaspati that a small number of soldiers must be arranged in condensed form, while a larger number can be extended at will. When a small number has to fight with a larger one, the arrangement should be *suchimukha*. [47] Compared to those of the enemy, our soldiers are few. O Pandava! Following the words and instructions of the maharshi, arrange the vyuha.' On hearing the words of Dharmaraja, Phalguna replied, 'O king! I will arrange a vyuha that is extremely invincible. This immovable vyuha is known by the name of Vajra and has been designed by the wielder of the vajra. Bhima is supreme among wielders of weapons. He is like a turbulent storm. No enemy can withstand him in battle. He will fight at the forefront. That supreme of men will pacify the energy of the enemy's soldiers. He is skilled in all the techniques used in war. He will lead us and fight from the front. On seeing him, all the kings, with Duryodhana at the forefront, will be confused and will retreat, like small animals at the sight of a lion. With him as a wall, all of us will resort to him, like all the immortals resort to the wielder of the vajra, and our fear will be dispelled. Bhima is foremost among the wielders of weapons. Vrikodara is a bull among men and is the performer of terrible deeds. Especially when he is enraged, there is no man in the world who can glance at him. Bhimasena wields a firm club, with substance like the vajra. When he roams around with great force, he can dry up the ocean. O lord of men! Kekaya, Dhrishtaketu and the valiant Chekitana—these advisers also look towards him. So do Dhritarashtra's sons.' This is what Bibhatsu said. O venerable one! When Partha spoke in this way, all the soldiers applauded the eloquent one in that field of battle. Having spoken in this way, the mighty-armed Dhananjaya did what he had said. Phalguna arranged the forces in the form of the vyuha and advanced.

'"On seeing the advancing army of the Kurus, the mighty army of the Pandavas seemed to be like the overflowing, surging and moving Ganga. Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Nakula, Sahadeva and valiant Dhrishtaketu were in the vanguard. Surrounded by one akshouhini, the king [48] was at the rear, protecting them from the back with his brothers and sons. Madri's immensely radiant sons protected Bhima's wheels. The swift sons of Droupadi and Subhadra protected the rear. They were protected from the rear by maharatha Dhrishtadyumna of Panchala, together with the brave Prabhadrakas, foremost among rathas. Shikhandi was behind them, protected by Arjuna. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He [49] advanced, determined to bring about Bhishma's destruction. Maharatha Yuyudhana [50] guarded Arjuna's rear and the two from Panchala, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja, guarded his wheels. Kunti's son, King Yudhishthira, was in the centre of the army, surrounded by large and crazy elephants that were like moving mountains. For the sake of the Pandavas, the valorous Panchala

Yajnasena [51] placed himself behind Virata, with one akshouhini. O king! The chariots and great standards bore many signs. They were adorned with the best of gold and looked like the sun and the moon. Asking them to advance, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna, together with his brothers and sons, protected Yudhishthira from the rear. Surpassing all the chariots and many standards on your side and those of the enemy, a giant ape was stationed on Arjuna's standard. Many hundreds and thousands of infantry advanced in front, protecting Bhimasena. They had swords, lances and scimitars in their hands. There were ten thousand elephants, with musth trickling from their temples and mouths. They were brave and were adorned with glittering nets of gold. They were like moving mountains. They flowed like clouds. [52] They were like mad mountains. They possessed the fragrance of lotuses. They followed the king at the rear, like moving mountains. Bhimasena whirled his terrible club, which was like a *parigha*. [53] The invincible and great-minded one was capable of crushing a large army. He was incapable of being looked at, like the sun, and was scorching, like the one with the rays. From a close distance, none of the warriors was capable of looking at him. The vyuha named Vajra was difficult to penetrate and faced every direction. [54] The bows were like streaks of lightning [55] and this terrible formation was protected by the wielder of the Gandiva. Arranging the army in this counter formation, the Pandavas waited. Protected by the Pandavas, it was invincible in the world of men.

'"At dawn, both sets of soldiers waited for the sun to rise. A wind, with drops of water, began to blow. Though there were no clouds, thunder could be heard. Dry winds began to blow from all directions and carried sharp stones from the ground below. Dust arose and covered the earth in darkness. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Large meteors fell down in an eastern direction. They struck the rising sun and were shattered, with a loud noise. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the armies were arranged in this way, the sun lost its luminescence and the earth roared and trembled. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The roar of thunder was repeatedly heard from all the directions. O king! A thick dust arose and nothing could be seen. The giant standards, adorned with nets of bells, golden ornaments and flags, and like the sun in their resplendence, were suddenly struck by the wind. All of them made a jingling sound, like a forest of palm trees. Thus those Pandavas, tigers among men, were stationed, delighted at the prospect of battle. They were in a counter-formation against the army of your sons. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They seemed to suck the marrow out from the warriors. [56] Bhimasena could be seen at the forefront, with a club in his hand."'

CHAPTER 880(20)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! My army, with Bhishma as the leader, and that of the Pandavas, with Bhima as the leader, desired to fight. When the sun arose, which of these was cheerful when it approached the other? To which side were the moon, the sun and the wind adverse? Against which army did predators utter inauspicious sounds? Which were the young ones who had cheerful complexions on their faces? Tell me all this, exactly and in detail."

'Sanjaya said, "O Indra among kings! When the two armies were equally arranged in vyuhas, they were equally cheerful. They were equally beautiful, as resplendent as forests. They were full of elephants, chariots and horses. Both the armies were large and terrible in form. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Each one was incapable of withstanding the other. It was as if both had been created for conquering heaven. Both were protected by virtuous men. Dhritarashtra's sons, the Kurus, faced the west. The Parthas were stationed facing the east, ready to fight. The Kouravas were like the army of the Indra of the daityas, the Pandavas were like the army of the Indra of the gods. The wind blew from behind the Pandavas. The predators howled from behind the sons of Dhritarashtra. The elephants of your son could not bear the sharp smell from the musth of those Indras among elephants. [57] Duryodhana was on an elephant with the complexion of a lotus. It was armoured and had rent temples. It possessed a golden girdle. He was stationed in the midst of the Kurus and the bards and the minstrels praised him. A white umbrella with a golden chain, as brilliant as the moon, was held aloft his head. Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, followed him, surrounded in every direction by mountainous people from the region of Gandhara. The aged Bhishma was in front of all the soldiers. He had a white umbrella, a white bow, a conch shell, a white headdress, a white flag and white horses, and looked like a white mountain. All the sons of Dhritarashtra were in his army and also Shala, who came from the country named Bahlika. The kshatriyas from Ambashtha, those from Sindhu and Souvira and the brave ones from the land of the five rivers [58] were also there.

'"The great-souled Drona was on a golden chariot with red horses. He was mighty-armed and his spirit never waned. He was the preceptor of almost all the kings. He was like an Indra on earth, protecting from the rear. Vardhakshatri, Bhurishrava, Purumitra, Jaya, Shalva, Matsya and all the Kekayas, with their brothers, were in the midst of all the soldiers. They possessed an army of elephants and wished to fight. Sharadvat's great-souled son [59] always fought in the front. He was the great archer Goutama, wonderful in fighting. With Shakas, Kiratas, [60] Yavanas [61] and Pahlavas, he stationed himself in the forefront of the army. That large army was protected by maharathas from Andhaka, Vrishni and Bhoja and also those from Sourashtra and the south-west, skilled in the use of weapons. There was also Kritavarma, who advanced behind your army. There were ten thousand *samshaptaka* rathas, [62] who had been created for death or for triumphing over Arjuna. O king! They were skilled in the use of weapons. They advanced with the brave Trigartas, resolved to follow Arjuna at every step. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were ten thousand fierce elephants on your side. A hundred chariots were assigned to each elephant, a hundred horses were assigned to each chariot, ten archers were assigned to each horse and ten shield-bearers were assigned to each archer. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did Bhishma arrange your troops in battle formation. From one day to another, Bhishma, the general and Shantanu's son, arranged it in human vyuhas, or vyuhas of gods, gandharvas and asuras. With a large number of maharathas, it was like the ocean on the night of the full moon. Arranged in a vyuha by Bhishma, the army of Dhritarashtra's son was stationed facing the west, ready to fight. O Indra among kings! Your side was innumerable with standards. It was terrible. But though it was not like yours, [63] it seemed to me that the one of the Pandavas was larger and invincible, with leaders like Keshava and Arjuna."'

CHAPTER 881(21)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing the large army of Dhritarashtra's sons, ready to fight, Kunti's son, King Yudhishthira, was overcome by grief. Pandava saw the impenetrable vyuha that Bhishma had crafted. Having seen that it was impenetrable, he was distressed and spoke to Arjuna. 'O Dhananjaya! O mighty-armed one! When the grandfather fights on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra, how will we be able to fight with them in this battle? Bhishma, the destroyer of enemies, whose energy is manifold, has crafted this immovable and impenetrable formation, in accordance with the decrees of the sacred texts. O destroyer of enemies! Together with our soldiers, we now have doubts. How can we be successful against this great vyuha?' O king! Thus addressed by Partha Yudhishthira, the destroyer of enemies, who was overcome by grief at the sight of your army, Arjuna replied, 'O lord of the earth! Listen. Those who are few can vanquish many brave ones who are superior in wisdom and possess qualities. O king! You do not suffer from malice and I will tell you the means. O Pandava! The rishi Narada, and Bhishma and Drona, know this. On an earlier occasion, at the time of the battle between the gods and the asuras, the grandfather himself said this to the great Indra and the denizens of heaven. "Those who desire victory, do not triumph through strength and valour, but through truth, non-violence, devotion to dharma and endeavour. One must give up adharma, avarice and delusion and resort to endeavour. One must fight without pride. Where there is dharma, there will be victory." O king! Know that it is for this reason that our victory in this battle is certain. Narada has said that where there is Krishna, victory is there. Victory is

Krishna's quality, it follows Madhava. Victory is one of his qualities and humility is another. Govinda is infinite in his energy. He is without pain even amidst a multitude of enemies. He is the eternal being. Where there is Krishna, victory is there. In earlier times, Hari manifested himself. He is Vaikuntha. [64] He has no weakness before weapons. In a loud tone, he spoke to the gods and the asuras, "Who among you wishes for victory?" The vanquished ones [65] replied, "We will follow Krishna and thereby obtain victory." Through his favours, Shakra and the other gods obtained the three worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, I do not see any reason for despondency. You have the lord of the universe and the lord of the thirty gods and because of this, you are assured of victory.'""

CHAPTER 882(22)

'Sanjaya said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Then King Yudhishthira arranged his soldiers in a counter-formation against Bhishma's and said, 'O extenders of the Kuru lineage! The Pandavas are arrayed in a counter-formation, in accordance with the injunctions. Desiring to attain supreme heaven, fight well.' Protected by Savyasachi, Shikhandi stood in the middle of the army. Protected by Bhima, Dhrishtadyumna was in the front. O king! The southern segment was protected by the handsome Yuyudhana, [66] foremost archer among the Satvatas and Shakra's equal. Yudhishthira was on a chariot that was like the great Indra's vehicle. It bore an excellent standard with gold and jewels and had a golden harness. He was stationed in the midst of his array of elephants. An extremely white and beautiful umbrella, with a handle made of tusks, was held aloft his head. Maharshis circumambulated him and sung his praises. Priests, maharshis and aged ones chanted his praises so that his enemies would be destroyed. They used meditation, mantras and herbs and pronounced words of benediction. The supreme among Kurus gave the great-souled brahmanas garments, cows, fruits, flowers and gold. He advanced like Shakra of the immortals. Arjuna's chariot possessed one hundred bells. It was embellished with the best of gold and was as resplendent as the fire, blazing like a thousand suns. It was yoked to white steeds and possessed excellent wheels. It had an ape on its banner. It was driven by Keshava and he [67] was stationed on it, with the Gandiva and arrows in his hands. There was no archer who was equal to him on earth. Nor will there ever be such a one. Bhimasena assumes a terrible form for the destruction of your sons. Without any weapons and with his bare hands, in a battle, he can reduce to ashes men, horses and elephants. The twins were with Vrikodara and they protected the brave charioteers. In this world, he [68] is like the great Indra himself. He was like an angry lion that was playing. Vrikodara was as insolent as a king of elephants. On seeing him in the vanguard of the army, the spirit of your soldiers was overcome by fear and anxiety and they trembled, like elephants caught in the mud.

'"O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Janardana then spoke to Gudakesha, [69] the invincible prince who was stationed in the midst of the army. Vasudeva said, 'Bhishma will attack our soldiers like a lion. He will protect with his power and strength. He is the flag of the Kuru lineage. That performer of three hundred horse sacrifices is there. Other soldiers surround the illustrious one, like clouds enveloping the one with the virtuous rays. O foremost among brave ones! Slay those troops, wishing to fight with the bull among the Bharata lineage.'"

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! Which warriors from which side were delighted and advanced to fight first? Who were confident in their minds and who were dejected and dispirited? Who struck first in the battle that makes the heart tremble? Was it from my side or that of the Pandavas? O Sanjaya! Tell me all this. Amidst whose soldiers were garlands and pastes fragrant? [70] Whose warriors roared and uttered auspicious words?"

'Sanjaya said, "At that time, the soldiers from both sides were cheerful. The garlands and pastes of both sides were equally fragrant. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The soldiers were arrayed in battle formation and when they met each other, there was an extremely terrible encounter. There was the tumultuous sound of musical instruments, intermingled with that of conch shells and drums. There was the trumpeting of elephants and the soldiers were filled with joy.”’

CHAPTER 883(23)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! Having gathered on the holy plains of Kurukshetra, wanting to fight, what did my sons and the sons of Pandu do?”

‘Sanjaya said, “At that time, on seeing the Pandava soldiers assembled in battle formation, King Duryodhana went to the preceptor [71] and spoke the following words. ‘O preceptor! Look at this great army of the Pandavas, assembled in battle formation by the son of Drupada, [72] your talented student. Here there are courageous warriors with mighty bows, the equals of Bhima and Arjuna in battle—Yuyudhana, [73] Virata, Drupada and other maharathas, Dhristaketu [74] and Chekitana, [75] the valiant king of Kashi, Purujit from the Kuntibhoja clan and Shaibya, greatest among men, the powerful Yudhamanyu, [76] the brave Uttamouja, [77] the son of Subhadra, [78] the sons of Droupadi—all of them are maharathas. O best among brahmanas! Now you should know the main warriors and leaders in my army. For your knowledge, I am naming them. You yourself, and Bhishma, and Karna, and Kripa, who wins battles, Ashvatthama, and Vikarna [79] and the son of Somadatta. [80] There are many other brave warriors, ready to give up their lives for my sake. All of them are skilled in battle and they are armed with various weapons of attack. [81] That army of ours, protected by Bhishma, is unlimited. But this army of theirs, protected by Bhima, is limited. [82] All of you occupy your respective positions at all the entry points to the army formations. It is Bhishma who must be protected.’

‘“Creating happiness in his [83] heart, the powerful eldest of the Kuru clan and the grandfather roared loudly like a lion and blew his conch shell. Then, suddenly, conch shells and kettledrums, other kinds of drums and trumpets began to blare. That sound became tremendous.

Then, seated in a great chariot to which white horses were harnessed, Madhava [84] and Pandava [85] blew their divine conch shells. Hrishikesha [86] blew the conch shell named Panchajanya and Dhananjaya [87] blew the conch shell named Devadatta. Vrikodara, [88] whose deeds give rise to fear, blew the giant conch shell named Poundra. King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, blew the conch shell named Anantavijaya. Nakula blew the conch shell named Sughosha and Sahadeva blew the conch shell named Manipushpaka. The king of Kashi, with the great bow, and maharatha Shikhandi, Dhristadyumna, Virata and Satyaki, who is never defeated, Drupada, the sons of Droupadi, and the mighty-armed son of Subhadra, all of them blew their separate conch shells, O lord of the earth! That tremendous sound echoed in the sky and on earth and pierced the hearts of those who were on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Then, the son of Pandu, [89] with the monkey on his banner, saw the friends of Dhritarashtra thus arranged in battle formation and got ready to use his weapons. O lord of the earth! He raised his bow and told Hrishikesha the following words. 'O Achyuta! [90] Place my chariot in between the two armies, while I look at those who are desirous of battle and are assembled here. Let me see with whom I will have to fight in this war-related business. In a desire to do good to the evil-hearted son of Dhritarashtra, they have gathered here, desirous of fighting. I want to see them.' O, descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus spoken to by Gudakesha, [91] Hrishikesha placed that magnificent chariot between the two armies, in front of Bhishma, Drona and all the other rulers of the earth and said, 'O Partha! Look at those of the Kuru clan who are assembled here.' There, Partha saw fathers and grandfathers, teachers and maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and friends, [92] fathers-in-law and well-wishers in those two assembled armies.

'"Seeing them, all the friends and relatives assembled there, the son of Kunti was overcome with great pity. [93] And in sadness, uttered the following words. 'O Krishna! Having seen these relatives here, assembled with a desire to fight, my body is going numb and my mouth is going dry. My body is quivering and my body hair is standing up. My skin is burning and the Gandiva is slipping from my hands. O Keshava! I cannot stand and my mind is in a whirl. The omens that I see are ill ones. I don't see any good that can come from killing one's relatives in a war. O Krishna! I don't want victory. Nor do I want the kingdom or happiness. O Govinda! What will we do with the kingdom or with pleasures or with life itself? Those for whose sake we want the kingdom and pleasures and happiness, they are gathered here in war, ready to give up their lives and their riches—preceptors, fathers, sons and grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives. O Madhusudana! I don't want to kill them, even if they kill me. Forget this earth, even for the kingdoms of the three worlds. O Janardana! What pleasure will we derive from killing the sons of Dhritarashtra? Although they are assassins, [94] sin alone will be our lot if we kill them. Therefore, we cannot kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, with their friends. O Madhava! How can we be happy after killing our relatives? Although their minds are befuddled with greed and they do not see the sin that comes from opposing friends or from destroying the family line. O Janardana! We can see the sin that comes from destroying the family line. Why should we not have the knowledge to refrain from committing this sin? When the lineage is destroyed, the traditional family dharma is also destroyed. When dharma is destroyed, evil overwhelms the entire lineage. O Krishna! When evil arises, the women of the family become corrupted. O descendant of the Vrishnis! When the women are corrupted, hybrid castes are born. [95] Hybrid castes ensure that the lineage, and those who destroyed the lineage, both go to hell. Because their ancestors fall [96] and are deprived of offerings of funereal cakes and drink. From those sins of those who destroy the lineage and from hybrid castes being generated, the ancient dharma of the castes and the dharma of the family are both destroyed. O Janardana! If the family dharma is destroyed, those men are doomed to spend an eternity in hell. So we have heard. Alas! Because of our greed for the kingdom and for happiness, we have got ready to kill our relatives. We are certain to commit a great sin. With me unarmed and unresisting, if the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapons in their hands, kill me in battle, that will be better for me.' Saying this, in that battlefield, Arjuna sat down in his chariot. He threw away his bow and arrows, his mind overwhelmed with grief."'

CHAPTER 884(24)

'Sanjaya said, "Seeing him [97] thus overcome with pity, [98] his eyes filled with tears and struck thus with grief, Madhusudana spoke the following words.

'"The lord said, 'O Arjuna! From where, when we have this emergency, has this kind of weakness overcome you? This does not lead to heaven or fame, and characterizes those who are not aryas. O Partha! Give up this weakness, this is not deserving of you. O one who scorches the foes! Give up this petty weakness of heart.'

'"Arjuna said, 'O Madhusudana! How will I use arrows to fight in this war against Bhishma and Drona? O slayer of enemies! They are deserving of worship. In this world, it is better to beg for alms than to kill one's respected preceptors. If I kill my elders, the wealth and other objects of desire that I enjoy, will be drenched in their blood. I don't know which is better for us, they defeat us or we defeat them. The sons of Dhritarashtra are in front of me. Those are the people we don't want to kill in order to live. My normal nature has been overtaken by a sense of helplessness. [99] Confused about what is dharma, I am asking you. Tell me that which is decidedly best for me. I am your disciple. I have sought refuge in you. Instruct me. This grief is exploiting my senses and I don't see what will remedy that, even if I win lordship over the gods, or this earth, without any enemies and prosperous.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having said this to Hrishikesha, Gudakesha, the scorcher of foes, told Govinda, 'I will not fight,' and fell silent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To the person who was immersed in grief between the two armies, as if with a smile, Hrishikesha spoke the following words.

'"The lord said, 'You speak as if you are wise, but you are grieving over those that one should not sorrow over. The wise don't sorrow over those who are dead or those who are alive. It is not the case that I, or you, or these kings, did not exist before this. Nor is it the case that we won't exist in the future, all of us will be there. The soul passes through childhood, youth and age in this body, and likewise, attains another body. The wise don't get bewildered by this. O Kounteya! Because of contact between senses and objects, feelings of warmth and cold, pleasure and pain result. But these are temporary and are created and disappear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, tolerate these. O best among men! The wise person who is not affected by these and who looks upon happiness and unhappiness equally, attains the right to immortality. That which is untrue doesn't have an existence. That which is true has no destruction. But those who know the truth realize the ends of both these. [100] But know that which pervades all of this is never destroyed. No one can destroy that which is without change. [101] It has been said that all these bodies inhabited by the soul are capable of destruction. But the soul is eternal, incapable of destruction and incapable of being established through proof. Therefore, O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Fight. He who knows this [102] as a slayer and he who thinks of this as something that is slain, both of them do not know. This is not a slayer, nor can it be slain. This is never born, nor does it ever die. This does not come into existence because it has been born. This has no birth, it is eternal and without destruction. It has no end. When the body is killed, this is not killed. [103] O Partha! He who knows this to be without destruction, eternal, without birth and incapable of change, how can that person cause anyone to be slain? Or how can he slay anyone? Like a person discards worn-out clothes and accepts others that are new, like that, the soul discards worn-out bodies and attains others that are new. Weapons cannot cut this. [104] Fire cannot burn this. Nor can water wet this. And the wind cannot dry this. This cannot be cut. This cannot be burnt. This cannot be wetted. And this cannot be dried. This is eternal and is everywhere. This is stable and does not move. This has no beginning. It has been said that this has no manifestation, that this cannot be thought of and that this has no transformation. [105] Therefore, knowing this to be like that, you should not grieve.

‘‘‘O mighty-armed warrior! But if you think this to be subject to continual birth and continual death, even then, you should not grieve for this. Because death is inevitable for anyone who is born and birth is inevitable for anyone who is dead. Therefore, because this is inevitable, you should not grieve. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Beings are not manifest in the beginning. They are manifest in the middle and are not manifest again after death. What is there to sorrow over? [106] Some people see this [107] as a wonder. Like that, some others speak of this as a wonder. And some others hear of this as a wonder. But having heard, they are unable to understand this. [108] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In everyone’s body, the atman is indestructible. Therefore, you should not mourn about any being. [109]

‘‘‘Also considering your natural dharma, you should not waver. Because there is nothing better for a kshatriya than a war fought for the sake of dharma. O Partha! This war has arrived on its own, like an open door to heaven. Happy are the kshatriyas who obtain a war like this. But if you do not take part in this war in the cause of dharma, then you will forsake your natural dharma and fame, and sin will accrue to you. And all people will forever talk about your ill fame. For someone who is honoured, dishonour is worse than death. These great warriors will think that you have withdrawn from the war because of your fear. And those who have so far respected you will lighten their opinion of you. Your enemies will say many things that should not be said and will criticize your prowess. Is anything more painful than that? If you are slain, you will attain heaven. If you win, you will enjoy the earth. O Kounteya! Therefore, arise, deciding certainly to fight. Therefore, get ready to fight, looking upon happiness and unhappiness, gain and loss and victory and defeat equally. And sin will not touch you. O Partha! You have just been told the wisdom that comes from knowledge of the self. [110] Now listen to the knowledge about yoga. [111] When united with this knowledge, you will be able to discard the bonds of action. In this, [112] the possibility of effort coming to waste does not exist. Nor is there the chance of committing a sin. Even a little bit of this dharma protects from great fear. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! This certain knowledge is unwavering. [113] But for those who cannot focus, their wisdom is many-branched and like the infinite. O Partha! Those who are ignorant say these flowery words, praising the Vedas [114] and claiming there is nothing else. They are addicted to desire, think of heaven as the supreme objective and are enamoured of the fruits of birth and action. [115] They praise many rites and rituals that lead to pleasure and wealth. They are addicted to pleasure and wealth and because of those words, their minds are deluded. They cannot focus on one object—the intellect that allows one to discriminate. The Vedas deal with the three *gunas*. [116] O Arjuna! Rise above the three gunas. Without doubt, [117] always resort to sattva. Do not be bothered about that which is yet to be attained or preserving what has already been attained. [118] Realize the atman. Whatever purpose is achieved by many small bodies of water is also achieved by one large body of water. Like that, whatever all the Vedas achieve is achieved by a person who knows the brahman. You have the right to action alone. You never have the right to the fruit. Do not be motivated to act because of the fruit. But don’t be motivated to not acting either. O Dhananjaya! Perform action by resorting to yoga. [119] Give up attachment. Look upon success and failure equally. This equal attitude is known as yoga. O Dhananjaya! Action is far inferior to the yoga of wisdom. [120] Seek refuge in this wisdom. Pitiable are those who crave after the fruit. He who has this wisdom, discards good action and evil action in this life itself. Therefore, use yoga in what you do. Yoga is the skill of action. The learned who have this wisdom abandon the fruit of action and are freed from the fetters of birth. They certainly attain that place which is bereft of all blemishes. When your intellect transcends this maze of delusion, then you will attain indifference between that which has already been heard and that which is yet to be heard. [121] Your mind is distracted at what you have heard. But when your intellect is unwavering and focused on samadhi, then you will attain yoga.' [122]

'"Arjuna asked, 'O Keshava! What are the signs of a person who has attained samadhi and whose intellect doesn't waver? How does he speak, how does he sit and how does he walk?'

'"The lord said, 'O Partha! A person is said to be unwavering in intellect when he banishes all desires from his mind. He is content within his own atman. He is not disturbed by unhappiness and he is beyond desiring happiness. He has overcome attachment, fear and anger and he is known as a sage who is unwavering in his intellect. In everything, he has no emotion, regardless of whether something pleasant or something unpleasant has been attained. He is not pleased, nor is he dissatisfied and in him, wisdom is established. Like a tortoise withdraws its limbs, such a person withdraws his senses, in every way, from sensual objects. In him is wisdom established. Sensual objects are withdrawn from the body of a person who is starving himself; [123] but not desire. In him, [124] who has seen the paramatman, even desire is restrained. O Kounteya! Even if a learned man takes care, the turbulent senses violently steal his mind. He who is devoted to me, controls all those [125] and focuses his mind on me. If a person can so control his senses, in him is wisdom established. If a man thinks about sensual objects, this gives birth to attachment about those. [126] From attachment is created desire and desire gives birth to anger. Anger gives birth to delusion and delusion leads to confusion of memory. [127] From confusion of memory comes loss of intellect and loss of intellect results in destruction. But he who has controlled his mind is freed from attachment and hatred. [128] Having used himself to control his senses, he uses these to enjoy objects and satisfy himself. When there is such serenity, in him is eliminated all unhappiness. Because in the mind of someone at peace, wisdom is quickly established. He who has no control, has no intellect. He who has no control, has no thought. [129] Without thought, there is no peace. How can there be happiness for someone who has no peace? The wind rocks a boat on the water. Like that, the mind follows a sense [130] devoted to objects and even a single sense robs him of wisdom. O, mighty-armed one! Therefore, he whose senses have been withdrawn from objects in every way, in him has wisdom been steadily established. When it is night to ordinary beings, the controlled person is awake then. When ordinary beings are awake, the sage perceives that as night. Just as the waters enter an ocean and leave the full ocean undisturbed, like that, all sensual objects enter that person, but leave him at peace, unlike those attached to desire. A man who gives up all desire and exists without longing, without ego and without a sense of ownership, he attains peace. O Partha! This is the state of being established in the brahman. If one attains this, one is not deluded. Even at the end, [131] established in this state, one attains union with the brahman.'"'

CHAPTER 885(25) [132]

'"Arjuna said, 'O Janardana! If in your opinion knowledge is superior to action, then why are you engaging me in this terrible action? These mixed words seem to be confounding my intellect. Tell me definitely that one thing that is best for me.'

'"The lord said, 'O pure of heart! I have said it before that in this world, there are two paths. There is jnana yoga for those who follow sankhya and there is karma yoga for *yogi*s. [133] Without performing action, man is not freed from the bondage of action. And resorting to *sannyasa* [134] does not result in liberation. No one can ever exist, even for a short while, without performing action. Because the qualities of nature [135] force everyone to perform action. The ignorant person who exists by controlling his organs of action, [136] while his mind remembers the senses, is said to be deluded and is a hypocrite. [137]

O Arjuna! But he who restrains the senses through his mind and starts the yoga of action with the organs of action, while remaining unattached, he is superior. Therefore, do the prescribed action. [138] Because action is superior to not performing action. And without action, even survival of the body is not possible. O Kounteya! All action other than that for sacrifices shackles people to the bondage of action. [139] Therefore, do action for that purpose, without attachment. Earlier, [140] Prajapati [141] created beings, accompanied by a sacrifice [142] and said—with this, [143] may you increase, and may this grant you all objects you desire. Through this, [144] cherish the gods and those gods will cherish you. By cherishing each other, you will obtain that which is most desired. Because, cherished by the sacrifice, the gods will give you all desired objects. He who enjoys these without giving them [145] their share, is certainly a thief. Righteous people who enjoy the leftovers [146] of sacrifices are freed from all sins. But those sinners who cook only for themselves live on sin. Beings are created from food and food is created from rain clouds. Rain clouds are created from sacrifices and sacrifices are created from action. Know that action is created from the Vedas and the Vedas are created from the brahman. Therefore, the omnipresent brahman is always present in sacrifices. [147] In this way, the cycle goes on and he who does not follow this, is addicted to his senses and lives a sinner's life. O Partha! He lives in vain. But the man who takes pleasure in the atman, is content with the atman and is satiated with the atman, has no duties. In this world, he has no need for action, nor anything to lose from inaction. He doesn't need the refuge of any being for anything. Therefore, be unattached and always perform prescribed action. Because a man who performs action when unattached attains the highest liberation.

"“‘Janaka [148] and others attained liberation through action. One should perform action with an eye to preserving the worlds. Whatever a great man does, ordinary people also do that. Whatever he accepts as duty, others also follow that. O Partha! In the three worlds, I have no duties. There is nothing I haven't attained, there is nothing yet to be attained. Yet, I am engaged in action. O Partha! If I ever relax and stop performing action, then men will follow my path in every way. If I don't perform action, then all these worlds will be destroyed. I will be the lord of hybrids [149] and responsible for the destruction of these beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Ignorant people perform action by being attached to that action. But the wise perform similar action unattached, for the welfare and preservation of the worlds. The wise will not befuddle the minds of the ignorant who are attached to action. Being knowledgeable, they will themselves perform all action and keep them [150] engaged. All action is completed, in every way, through the qualities of nature. [151] He who is deluded by the ego, thinks that he is the doer. O mighty-armed one! But he who truly knows the division of the qualities [152] and different types of action [153] knows that qualities manifest themselves in senses and does not get attached. [154] Those who are deluded by nature's qualities are attached to action by senses and organs. The omniscient should not disturb [155] those ignorant and misguided people. Focusing your mind on the supreme being, vest all action in me. Be without desire, without ownership and without fever [156] and fight. People who, faithfully and without finding fault, always follow this view of mine, they too are freed from the bondage of action. [157] But know that those who in an attempt to find fault don't follow this view of mine, they have no sense and all their knowledge will be deluded and destroyed. Even a wise person acts according to his own nature. Nature drives all beings. Why should one use restraint? [158] For each sense, in its respective area, attachment and aversion are certain. [159] But don't be overcome by those. They are obstacles. One's own dharma, [160] even if followed imperfectly, is superior to someone else's dharma, even if followed perfectly. It is better to be slain while following one's own dharma. Someone else's dharma is tinged with fear.'

'"Arjuna said, 'O descendant of the Vrishni lineage! By whom are these men compelled? Despite being unwilling, it is almost as if they are forced into evil action.' [161]

'"The lord said, 'This is desire. This is anger. These are born from the rajas quality. These are insatiable and great sins. [162] Here, [163] know them to be enemies. Like smoke covers the fire, like dust covers the mirror, like the womb covers the foetus, in that way, this [164] is covered by that. [165] O Kounteya! This is the perennial enemy of the wise. Knowledge is covered by this desire that is insatiable like the fire. All senses, the mind and intellect, are its [166] seat. This [167] uses these [168] to veil knowledge and delude beings. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, you should first control your senses. Destroy this [169] that is like sin and is the destroyer of knowledge. [170] It is said the senses are superior. [171] The mind is superior to the senses. Intellect is superior to the mind. That [172] is superior to intellect. O mighty-armed one! In this way, use intellect to realize that which is superior to the intellect. Use your inner strength to calm the atman [173] and destroy the enemy that is difficult to defeat, in the form of desire.'"'

'"The lord said, 'I instructed this eternal yoga [174] to Vivasvat [175] and Vivasvat told it to Manu. Manu told it to Ikshaku. In this way, handed down by tradition, the royal sages [176] knew this. [177]

O scorcher of foes! In this world, because of the long passage of time, this yoga has been destroyed. [178] You are my follower and friend. [179] Therefore, today, I will tell you that old yoga, because this is excellent and secret knowledge.'

'"Arjuna said, 'Your birth was later and Vivasvat's birth was earlier. How will I understand that you instructed this earlier?'

'"The lord said, 'O Arjuna! Many are the births that you and I have been through. I know them all. O scorcher of foes! You know not. I have no birth. I am indestructible. I am the lord of all beings. But even then, though existing in my own nature, I come into existence through my own resolution. [180] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whenever dharma goes into a decline and adharma is on the ascendance, then I create myself. To protect the righteous and to destroy the sinners and to establish dharma, I manifest myself from yuga to yuga. [181] O Arjuna! He who thus knows the nature of my divine [182] birth and action, he is not born again when he dies, but attains me. Many, purified through the meditation of knowledge, have immersed themselves in me and sought refuge in me, discarding attachment, fear and anger. O Partha! Whoever worships me, in whatever way, I entertain them in that way. Everywhere, men follow along my path. In this world, people who desire success in their action, worship gods. Because in the world of men, success through action occurs quickly. [183] In accordance with gunas and action, the four varnas were created by me. [184] But despite being the creator of these, know me to be constant [185] and not the agent. [186] Actions do not touch me, nor do I desire the fruits of action. He who knows me in this fashion, is not tied down by action. Knowing this, those who sought liberation in the past, performed action. Therefore, you perform action alone, the path followed by predecessors in earlier times. Even the wise are confused about what is action and what is inaction. [187] Therefore, I will tell you what action [188] is. Knowing this, you will be freed from evil. Action itself has to be understood and prohibited action must also be understood. Inaction must also be understood. Because the path of action is difficult to comprehend. He who perceives inaction in action and perceives action in inaction, he is wise among men, has yoga and has the right to all action. [189] He whose efforts are always devoid of desire for fruit and ego, [190] he whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge, the learned call him wise. He who has given up attachment to action and its fruit is always content and without refuge. [191] Even when he is immersed in action, he does nothing. Without attachment, controlled in mind and senses, having discarded all ownership [192] and performing action only through the body, [193] he does not attain the bondage of sin. Satisfied with unsought gains, [194] beyond opposites, [195] bereft of envy and regarding success and failure equally, even if he performs action, he is not bound down. Beyond attachment, free [196] and with a mind established in knowledge, when he performs action for a yajna alone, [197] everything is destroyed. [198] The receptacles used for offerings [199] are the brahman. The oblations are the brahman. In the fire that is the brahman, the offerer, who is the brahman, performs the sacrifice. He who sees thus and is immersed in the brahman in all action attains the brahman alone as a destination.

““‘Other yogis perform divine yajnas. [200] Others use the yajna as an offering to the fire that is the brahman. [201] Others offer senses like hearing as offerings to the fire that is self-control. [202] Others offer sounds and other objects to the fire that is the senses. [203] Others offer all action of the senses [204] and action of the breath of life [205] as offerings to the fire of self-control, [206] lit up through knowledge. Some use the yajna of offering gifts, others use the yajna of penance. Some use the yajna of yoga and still others, firm in their resolve and careful, use the yajna of knowledge. [207] Others offer the prana breath in the apana breath [208] and the apana breath in the prana breath. [209]

Others restrain the flow of the prana and apana breath and practise pranayama. [210] Others control their food and offer the senses to the breath of life. [211] All these, learned in the yajnas, become sinless through yajnas. The leftovers [212] of sacrifices are like amrita and those who partake of these attain the eternal brahman. O best of the Kuru lineage! Those who don't perform yajnas have no existence in this world, forget other worlds. Many yajnas of this type are prescribed in the brahman's mouth. [213] Know them all to be the outcome of action. Knowing this, you will attain liberation. O scorcher of foes! A yajna performed with knowledge is superior to a yajna full of objects. [214] O Partha! All actions and their fruit end in knowledge. Attain that knowledge by prostrating, questioning and serving. The wise, those who are versed with the truth, will instruct you in wisdom. O Pandava! Knowing that, you will never fall prey to this kind of delusion again. Through this, you will see all the beings in your atman and then in me. Even if you are a greater sinner than all the other sinners, you will cross all oceans of sin with the boat of knowledge alone. O Arjuna! Like a raging fire burns to ashes pieces of wood, like that, the fire of knowledge burns all action to ashes. In this world, there is nothing as pure as knowledge. With the passage of time, he who is accomplished in yoga, himself attains that [215] within his heart. Knowledge is attained by the faithful, the unwavering and those who control their senses. Having attained knowledge, they quickly achieve supreme peace. The ignorant, the faithless and the doubting are destroyed. For the doubting person, this world, other worlds and happiness don't exist. O Dhananjaya! He who has offered up all action through yoga and he who has used knowledge to slice away doubt, actions cannot bind such a person—who is focused on the atman. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, use the sword of knowledge to slice away this doubt in your heart, resulting from your own ignorance. Follow yoga! Arise!’”’

CHAPTER 887(27) [216]

‘“Arjuna said, ‘O Krishna! You are asking me to give up all action and you are also asking me to practise yoga. [217] Between these two, tell me decidedly which one is better.’ [218]

‘“The lord said, ‘Renunciation and action both lead to liberation. But of these two, karma yoga is superior to renunciation of action. O mighty-armed one! He who does not desire and he who does not hate, know him to be a perpetual sannyasi. [219] Freed from opposites, [220] he is happily freed from bondage. The ignorant, [221] not the wise, speak of renunciation and action as distinct. [222] If one of these is followed properly, the fruits of both result. Whatever place is attained by the followers of knowledge is also attained by those who practise action. He truly sees, who sees renunciation and action as identical. O mighty-armed one! Without action, renunciation is only the cause of unhappiness. [223] The sage who uses yoga attains the brahman quickly. He who practises yoga, he who is pure of heart, he who has controlled his body, he who has controlled his senses, he who sees his own atman in the atman of all beings, he is not tied down, even if he performs action. The wise who follow yoga know that they are not doing anything even when they see, hear, touch, smell, eat, go, dream [224] or breathe, speak, discard, accept, open and close. [225] They think of the senses circulating among the senses. [226] He who establishes himself in the brahman [227] and giving up attachment, performs action, is not touched by sin, like water on the leaf of a lotus. To purify their hearts, yogis give up attachment [228] and perform action only with their bodies, minds, intellect and senses. Attached to yoga and discarding attachment to fruits of action, they attain perpetual peace. [229] Those who do not follow yoga and are attached to fruits because of desire remain in bondage. Discarding all action through his mind, [230] the person who controls his body, the city with the nine gates, [231] remains in happiness. He doesn't do anything himself. Nor does he cause anyone to do anything. The atman [232] doesn't create ownership in the body, nor action. Nor does it create a relation with the fruits of action. Nature [233] acts. The omnipresent lord doesn't accept the sins or the good deeds of anybody. Knowledge is shrouded in ignorance. That is why beings are deluded. But in those in whom that ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of the atman, in them that knowledge expresses the great truth, [234] like the sun. Those whose intellect is focused on that, [235] egos are focused on that, devotion is focused on that and adherence is focused on that, those in whom sins have been destroyed through knowledge, those beings are not reborn. [236] The wise look equally upon a brahmana who is learned and humble, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste. [237] Those whose minds are established in equality overcome the earth in this world. [238] Because the brahman is equal and without fault, therefore, they [239] remain established in the brahman. Established in the brahman, such a person learned in the brahman, is poised in intellect and without delusion, not delighted at receiving something pleasant, or agitated at receiving something unpleasant. Unattached to external objects, his mind focused on the brahman, he obtains the happiness that vests in the atman. He enjoys eternal bliss. Pleasures from touch [240] have a beginning and an end and are the reason for unhappiness. O Kounteya! The wise person does not obtain pleasure from these. In this, [241] before giving up the body, he who can tolerate the forces of desire and anger is a yogi and such a man is happy. He whose happiness is inside, [242] he whose pleasure is inside and he whose light is inside, that yogi alone has realized the brahman and obtains liberation in the brahman. Those who are without sin, without doubt, controlled in mind and engaged in the welfare of all beings, such rishis attain liberation in the brahman. Freed from desire and anger, controlled in mind and knowing the atman, such sages attain liberation in the brahman all around them. [243] Banishing external objects of touch from the mind, focusing the eyes between the two eyebrows, controlling the prana and the apana breath equally within the nose, [244] poised in the senses, mind and intellect, beyond desire, fear and anger, wishing liberation, such a sage is always free. Knowing [245] me to be the enjoyer of all yajnas and penance, the lord of all the worlds and the well-wisher of all beings, attains peace.’””

CHAPTER 888(28) [246]

‘“The lord said, ‘An ascetic [247] and a yogi is he who performs prescribed action without attachment to the fruits of the action, not someone who gives up sacrifices [248] and action. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! What is known as asceticism, know that to be yoga. Because without giving up desire, no one can become a yogi. For a sage desirous of ascending to yoga, action is said to be the means. For a person who has ascended to yoga, tranquillity [249] is said to be the means. When a person who gives up desire loses addiction to sensual outcomes and is also not attached to action, then he is said to have ascended to yoga. Use the atman to raise the atman. Do not lower the atman. The atman is the atman’s friend and the atman is the atman’s enemy. [250] The atman which has been used to conquer the atman is the atman’s friend. For someone who has failed to control the atman, the atman harms like an enemy. For someone who has controlled the atman [251] and is tranquil, [252] the paramatman [253] is undisturbed with cold, warmth, happiness, unhappiness and respect and disrespect. He whose atman is satiated with knowledge, [254] who is undisturbed and has conquered his senses, and he who looks upon a lump of earth, stone and gold equally, is said to be yogi who has achieved union. Equal in treatment towards well-wisher, colleague, [255] enemy, neutral, [256] arbiter, a hateful person, friend [257] and a righteous person or a sinner, he [258] is superior.

"“‘Seated in a secluded place, alone, controlled in mind and body, without desire, without receiving and giving, [259] a yogi should always try to pacify his atman. In a pure place that is not too high and not too low, unmoving, he will place his seat, cloth and hide on kusha grass. [260] There, focusing the intellect, controlling the action of the mind and the senses, seated on that seat, he will practise yoga to purify the atman. Still, body, head and neck erect and unmoving, gazing at the tip of one's nose [261] and not looking in any other direction. Tranquil in the atman, without fear, established in the rite of brahmacharya, controlling the mind and uniting the intellect with me, immerse yourself in me. In this way, the yogi will always pacify the atman and be unwavering in his mind, and established in me, will attain supreme and peaceful liberation. O Arjuna! He who eats too much cannot achieve yoga. Nor he who doesn't eat at all. Nor he who sleeps too much or stays awake too much. He who is measured in food and movement, measured in effort towards action, measured in sleep and awakening. For him, yoga destroys unhappiness. When the intellect is specially controlled and established in the atman, in that situation, indifferent towards all desire, yoga is said to have been achieved. For a yogi whose intellect is controlled and the atman is united, know the simile to be a lamp that doesn't flicker in a place where there is no wind. When the mind is controlled and rendered inactive through the practice of yoga, when the atman sees the atman in the atman and is satiated. [262] When he [263] feels the extreme bliss that is beyond the senses and realized through the intellect, undisturbed from truth. [264] Obtaining that, not [265] thinking other gains to be superior to this. Established in that, not disturbed even by great unhappiness. Know this, without any contact with unhappiness, to be yoga. Without hopelessness, [266] one must practise that yoga with perseverance. Forsaking in entirety all desire that results from wishes, [267] using the mind itself to restrain the senses from everything, using concentrated intellect to gradually withdraw, establishing the mind in the atman and thinking about nothing, [268] withdrawing from whatever the fickle and restless mind veers towards, withdrawing it from that, bring it under the control of the atman. Tranquil in mind, having pacified the rajas quality, without sin, [269] having attained the brahman, the yogi achieves supreme happiness. Like that, always concentrating on the atman, the pure yogi easily obtains intense bliss from proximity to the brahman. The person immersed in yoga looks on everything equally and sees the atman in all beings and all beings in the atman. He sees me everywhere and everything in me. I am never invisible to him. Nor is he invisible to me. He is based in equality and worships me, I who am present in everything. Wherever that yogi is, he is established in me. O Arjuna! He who compares [270] with his own self and regards happiness and unhappiness in everything [271] equally, that yogi is supreme, according to me.'

'"Arjuna said, 'O Madhusudana! Because of restlessness, [272] I don't see the yoga based on equality that you have propounded as permanent. O Krishna! The mind is restless and the senses strong and firm. Therefore, I think restraining it is as difficult as the wind.' [273]

'"The lord said, 'O mighty-armed one! There is no doubt that the mind is restless and difficult to control. But O Kounteya! Through practice and detachment, it can be restrained. My view is that yoga is difficult for someone whose mind is uncontrolled. But it is possible to achieve for someone whose mind is controlled and who makes special effort.'

'"Arjuna said, 'O Krishna! A person who has faithfully practised yoga, but later becomes careless and his mind deviates from yoga, cannot achieve liberation through yoga. What happens to him? O mighty-armed one! Distracted from the path of attaining the brahman, such a wavering person is dislodged from both, [274] like a torn cloud. Doesn't he perish? O Krishna! I have this doubt that only you can completely eliminate. Because there is no one other than you who can remove this doubt.'

'"The lord said, 'O Partha! In this world, nor in the other world, is there any destruction. Because, O son, [275] a person who acts well [276] never comes to grief. He who has deviated from the path of yoga attains the worlds of the righteous [277] and dwells there for many years. Thereafter, he is born in a righteous and wealthy household. Or he is born in the family of wise yogis. But such birth is very rare in this world. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In that birth, obtains [278] that intelligence [279] about liberation from an earlier birth and thereafter, strives again for liberation. Because of that earlier practice, is almost involuntarily, attracted. [280] A person who seeks yoga transcends the Vedas. [281] Striving harder than on that earlier occasion, pure in heart, the yogi obtains liberation after many lives and later, achieves the supreme objective. The yogi is superior to those who practise austerities, superior to the learned [282] and superior to those who perform action. [283] That is my view. O Arjuna! Therefore, become a yogi. My view is that he who is devoted and worships me, with his self immersed in me, is the most accomplished among all yogis.'"'

CHAPTER 889(29) [284]

'"The lord said, 'O Partha! Listen to how you will know, without any doubt, the complete truth about me—mind attached to me, seeking refuge in me and immersed in yoga. I will completely tell you about the knowledge with self-realization. [285] Knowing that, there is nothing more remaining to know. Among thousands of men, rarely one tries for liberation. Among those who try for liberation, perhaps one [286] gets to know my true nature. Earth, water, fire, [287] air, sky, mind, intellect and ego—these are the eight parts of my nature. These are inferior nature. [288] O mighty-armed one! Besides this, know my superior and other nature [289] that is the essence of living beings. The universe is held up by this. Know all matter [290] to be born from these. [291] I am the reason for the creation of the entire universe and its destruction. O Dhananjaya! There is nothing superior to me. Like jewels on a string, all this is threaded in me. O Kounteya! In the water, I am the sap. In the sun and the moon, I am the radiance. In all the Vedas, I am the Om syllable. [292] In the sky, I am the sound. In humans, I am manifest as prowess, [293] and as pure fragrance in the earth. I become energy in the fire, life in all living beings. I become austerity in ascetics. O Partha! Know me to be the eternal seed of all beings. I am intellect in the intelligent. I become energy in those who are energetic. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am strength, without desire and without attachment, [294] in those who are strong. In all living beings, I become desire that is sanctioned by dharma. [295] And know all the three conditions, with sattva, rajas and tamas predominating, [296] to be derived from me. I am not in them. They are in me. This entire universe is deluded by these three gunas and the resultant conditions. And is not able to know me, who is above these and without change. It is indeed difficult to overcome this divine aspect [297] of mine, immersed in gunas. Those who seek refuge in me alone, they are able to overcome this maya. The evildoers, ignorant and worst among men, lose their knowledge because of maya and resort to demonic states. They do not worship me. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Arjuna! There are four types of people, pure of heart, who worship me—those who are suffering, those who want satisfaction, [298] those who want self-knowledge and those who know. Of these, those who know, always united and worshipping only one, [299] are the best. I am extremely beloved by one who knows. And he is also my beloved. All these [300] are righteous. But the man who knows is like my atman. That is my view. Therefore, the united man who knows seeks refuge in me, the supreme of objectives. After many births are over, he attains the knowledge that Vasudeva is everything and attains me. Such great souls are extremely rare. Those whose knowledge has been robbed by those desires, according to their own nature, follow prescribed rites to worship other gods. Whatever form a devotee wishes to worship faithfully, in whatever way, in that [301] and that, [302] I make the faith firm and unwavering. With that faith, whatever form is worshipped and whatever fruits are obtained as a result, are actually bestowed by me alone. The fruits of those [303] who have little intellect come to an end. [304] Worshippers of gods attain the gods. My devotees attain me. Those who are ignorant don't realize my supreme and unchanging nature and think of me, the one who is unmanifest, as manifest. Shrouded in my powers of yoga and maya, I am not evident to everyone. I am not born and am without change. But the ignorant world does not know me. O Arjuna! I know all beings in the past, the present and the future. But no one knows me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O scorcher of foes! All beings are deluded at birth from opposite sensations, [305] resulting from desire and aversion. But those whose sins have been overcome and those who are virtuous in action, they are freed from the delusion of opposite sensations and worship me, firm in their vows. Those who want to free themselves from decay and death and seek refuge in me, they know about the brahman, about the individual atman [306] and about action in its entirety. Those who know me as the one who underlies all beings, all gods and all yajnas, right till the time of death, their mind is fixed on me and they know me.'"'

CHAPTER 890(30) [307]

'"Arjuna asked, 'O supreme among men! What is that brahman, what is the individual atman [308] and what is action? What is said to underlie all beings and what is said to underlie all gods? [309] O Madhusudana! Who underlies all yajnas [310] in this body and how? By those who can control their atmans, how are you known at the time of death?'

'"The lord said, 'The indestructible brahman is the supreme spirit and its inhabitation of individual beings is called adhyatma. Action is the offering [311] that leads to the creation and sustenance of all beings. O supreme among those who possess bodies! Perishable elements are adhibhuta and the *purusha* is adhidaiva. In this body, I myself am adhiyajna. At the time of death, he who remembers me, gives up his body and leaves, he attains my essence. There is no doubt about this. O Kounteya! Whatever essence is remembered at the time of death, giving up the body, a person immersed in that essence is the essence that he attains. Therefore, always think of me. And fight. With mind and intellect offered to me, you will without doubt attain me alone. O Partha! United in the practice that is like yoga, without following anyone else, thinking of the divine supreme spirit with the mind, attains that. [312] He who thinks of the omniscient, without beginning, the controller of everything, finer than the minutest, the upholder of everything, with a form that is beyond thought, self-resplendent like the sun and beyond darkness, [313] at the time of death, [314] with devotion, with the mind fixed, with the strength of yoga used to hold the breath of life between the brows, he attains the resplendent supreme spirit. He is the one whom those who know the Vedas speak of as indestructible, he is the one into whom unattached yogis enter, he is the one to attain when brahmacharya is practised, I will briefly tell you about reaching that goal of supreme liberation.

““‘Using all the senses and organs [315] to control the mind and restrain it in the heart, bearing the breath of life between the brows, establishing one’s atman in yoga, uttering the single syllable Om that is the brahman and remembering me, he who gives up his body and leaves, he attains the goal of supreme liberation. O Partha! He who does not think of other things and remembers me every day and all the time, I am easily attainable to that yogi who is always focused. [316] Great souls who attain me, because they have achieved supreme liberation, are freed from rebirth, which is transient and the abode of sorrow. O Arjuna! From all the worlds up to *brahmaloka*, beings have to return. [317] But O Kounteya! There is no rebirth for those who have attained me. [318] Those who know that a thousand yugas are Brahma’s day and a thousand yugas are Brahma’s night know the truth about day and night. [319] When Brahma’s day arrives, every manifest object is created from the unmanifest. When Brahma's night arrives, like that, everything dissolves into the unmanifest. These [320] are the beings who are born again and again and destroyed when night arrives. O Partha! When day arrives, they are involuntarily created again. But superior to that unmanifest is the other supreme and eternal unmanifest being that is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed. [321] What is spoken of as the unmanifest and indestructible, what is said to be the supreme liberation, attaining which beings do not have to return, that is my supreme abode. O Partha! All beings are established in that. And by that is everything pervaded. That supreme purusha can only be attained through unwavering devotion. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the road [322] which, if traversed, doesn't lead to yogis being reborn and about the road which, if traversed, leads to rebirth. The resplendence of the fire, the day, the bright half of the lunar month, [323] the six months when the sun heads north, [324] along that path those who worship the brahman attain the brahman. [325] Smoke, night, the dark half of the lunar month [326] and the six months when the sun heads south, [327] along that path, the yogi attains the energy of the moon and returns again. [328] In this world, these two paths of light and darkness are said to be eternal. One leads to non-return and the other leads to return. O Partha! Knowing these two paths, a yogi is never deluded. O Arjuna! Therefore, at all times, resort to yoga. Knowing the prescribed good fruit that accrues from knowledge of the Vedas, yajnas, practice of austerities and donation of alms, the yogi transcends all these and attains the supreme and original abode.'"'

CHAPTER 891(31) [329]

'"The lord said, 'You are not a detractor. [330] I will tell you this extremely secret knowledge with self-realization. [331] Knowing this, you will be freed from all evil. This is extremely secret and the king of knowledge. [332] It is the best, pure, leads to direct and eternal results, is sanctioned by dharma and is easy to practise. O scorcher of foes! People who show disrespect to this dharma don't attain me and traverse the path of death and this world. This entire universe is pervaded by me in my unmanifest form. All beings are established in me. But I am not established in them. Witness my divine yoga. Again, the beings are not established in me. [333] My atman holds up the beings and sustains the beings, but I am not established in the beings. Know that like the great wind, which goes everywhere, and is always established in the sky, all beings are established in me. O Kounteya! At the time of destruction, [334] all beings are dissolved in my nature and at the time of creation, I create them. I keep my nature under control and repeatedly create these many beings, helpless according to their own nature. [335] O Dhananjaya! But I am unattached to those acts and am established in indifference. Those acts cannot tie me down. O Kounteya! Because of my lordship, nature gives birth to this universe with its moveable and immovable objects. Because of this, the universe is repeatedly created. [336] The ignorant do not know my supreme nature as the great lord of all beings. They show disrespect to me as someone who has adopted a human form. Their desire is fruitless, their action is fruitless, their knowledge is fruitless, their minds waver and their deluded nature is ruled by demonic qualities. [337] O Partha! But those great souls who seek refuge in divine qualities are unwavering in their minds and worship me, knowing me to be the indestructible origin of all beings. Careful and firm in their rites, they [338] faithfully offer obeisance and always sing my praise, always focused on worshipping me. Some worship me through the yajna that is the path of knowledge. Some worship me as one, others as separate. [339] Worshipping as one means regarding the worshipper and the worshipped as identical. This can be called the I, who pervade the universe, am worshipped in many forms. I am *kratu*, I am yajna, I am *svadha*, [340] I am the herbs, I am the mantra, I indeed am the clarified butter, I am the fire, I am the offering. I am the father, mother, grandfather and sustainer of this universe. I am all that is pure and is to be known. I am the Om syllable. I am also the *Rik*, *Saman* and *Yajus*. [341] I am the goal, the sustainer, the controller, the witness, the abode, the sanctuary, the well-doer, the creator, the destroyer, the preserver, the repository and the indestructible seed. [342] O Arjuna! I provide heat. I attract the water and rain it down again. I am immortality and death. I am the eternal and the transient. [343] Those who know the three arts [344] worship me through yajnas, drink the soma juice and purified of sins, wish to attain heaven. They attain sanctified heaven [345] and in heaven, enjoy the celestial objects enjoyed by the gods. Having enjoyed the greatness of heaven, when their good deeds are exhausted, they enter the mortal earth. In this way, the practitioners of the three dharmas, [346] followers of desire, go back and forth. Those who worship me, minds focused on me alone and always immersed in me, I preserve for them what has been attained and what is yet to be attained. [347] O Kounteya! Those with devotion who faithfully worship other gods, they too, worship me alone. But not in the indicated way. Because I alone am the receiver of offerings and the granter of fruits at all yajnas. But they do not know my true nature and therefore, are cast down. [348] Those who worship the gods attain the gods. Those who worship the ancestors attain the ancestors. [349] Those who worship the elements [350] attain the elements. And mine [351] attain me. He who faithfully worships me with a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, from that pure-hearted person, I gladly accept those faithful offerings. O Kounteya! Whatever you do, whatever you partake, whatever you offer, whatever you donate, whatever you meditate, offer that to me. In this way, you will be freed from the bondage of the fruits of righteous and evil action. With your self in the yoga of sannyasa, [352] freed, you will attain me. I am the same to all beings. I have no one I hate, nor anyone I love. But those who worship me with devotion, they are established in me. And I am established in them. Even if the most evil of persons worships me single-mindedly, he should be thought of as a righteous person. Because his resolve is correct. Swiftly, he [353] becomes a righteous person and attains eternal peace. O Kounteya! My worshippers are never destroyed. This you can vouch for. O Partha! Even those who are of evil birth, women, vaishyas and shudras, [354] having sought refuge in me, they will certainly attain supreme liberation. There is no need to repeat [355] about pure brahmanas and devoted rajarshis. This earth is temporary and leads to unhappiness. Therefore, having attained, [356] worship me. With mind immersed in me, become my devotee, my worshipper and one who offers obeisance to me. In this way, with your atman united in me as the refuge, you will attain me alone.’””

CHAPTER 892(32) [357]

‘“The lord said, ‘O mighty-armed one! Listen once more to my supreme words. These are pleasing you and for your welfare, I am saying this. The host of gods does not know of my origin. [358] Nor do the maharshis. Because, in every way, I am the original cause of the gods and the great sages. He who knows me as without origin and without birth and as the greatest lord of the worlds, is freed from delusion among men [359] and freed from all sins. Intellect, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forgiveness, truthfulness, control over the senses, control over thoughts, happiness, unhappiness, creation, destruction, fear and freedom from fear, non-violence, equality, [360] satisfaction, austerity, donations, fame and lack of fame—all these states of beings indeed owe their origin to me. The seven great sages, [361] the four who came before them [362] and the Manus [363] owe their origin to me and were created from my resolution. In this world, everything is descended from them. There is no doubt that he who truly knows my divine yoga [364] is united with unwavering yoga. [365] I am the origin of everything. From me is everything instituted. Knowing this, the wise, immersed in devotion, worship me. Minds on me, lives in me, explaining my nature to each other, and always conversing, [366] they [367] attain satisfaction and happiness. I provide that kind of yoga of intellect to those who are always immersed in me and lovingly worship me. Using that, they attain me. With compassion towards them, I am always established inside them as the bright lamp of knowledge, destroying the darkness born out of ignorance.'

'"Arjuna said, 'You are the supreme brahman, the supreme abode and supreme sacredness. You are the eternal purusha, self-resplendent, the predecessor of the gods, without birth and omnipresent. All the sages and Devarshi Narada [368] and Asita-Devala [369] and Vyasa [370] describe you thus. You have yourself also told me this. O Keshava! I accept all that you are telling me as true. Because, O Lord, even the gods and the demons do not know your manifestations. [371] O supreme being! O creator of beings! O lord of beings! O lord of the gods! O lord of the universe! You alone know your own self through your own self. Whatever divine powers you use to pervade these worlds, you alone are capable of relating to me in detail those self-resplendent divine powers. O yogi! How can I always think of you and know you? O illustrious one! In what objects can you be thought of by me? O Janardana! Tell me once again, in detail, about the power of your yoga. Because, hearing your immortal words, I am not satisfied.'

'"The lord said, 'O foremost among the Kuru lineage! All right. I will tell you about my main divine manifestations. Because there is no end to the detail of my powers. [372] O Gudakesha! I am the atman established in the heart of all beings. It is I who am the origin, the middle and also the end of all beings. [373] I am Vishnu among the adityas. [374] I am the radiant sun among the shining bodies. I am Marichi among the maruts. [375] I am the moon among the stars. [376] I am the Sama Veda among the Vedas. [377] Among the gods, I am Vasava. I am the mind among the senses. And in beings, I am the consciousness. I am Shankara among the *rudras*. [378] I am Kubera among the yakshas and the rakshas. [379] I am fire among the *vasus*. [380] I am Meru. [381] O Partha! Know me to be Brihaspati, [382] foremost among the priests. Among generals, I am

Skanda. [383] Among waterbodies, I am the ocean. Among great sages, I am Bhrigu. [384] Among words, I am the single syllable. [385] Among yajnas, I am *japa* yajna. [386] Among immovable objects, I am the Himalayas. Among all trees, I am the fig tree. [387] And among divine sages, I am Narada. Among gandharvas I am Chitraratha. [388] And among those who have attained liberation, I am the sage Kapila. [389] Among horses, know me to be Ucchaishrava, arising from the immortal nectar. [390] Among great elephants Airavata and among men, the king. Among weapons I am vajra. [391] Among cows I become *kamadhenu*. [392] I become Kandarpa for procreation. [393] And among snakes I am Vasuki. [394] Among serpents I am Ananta. Among those who inhabit the water, I am Varuna. [395] Among the ancestors I am Aryama. [396] Among those who control, [397] I am Yama. Among demons I am Prahlada. [398] Among those wh devour, [399] I am time. And I am the lion [400] among animals. Among birds, I am the son of Vinata. [401] Among those that purify, I am the wind. Among those who bear weapons, I am Rama. Among fish, I am the shark. [402] And among rivers, I am Jahnavi. [403] O Arjuna! I alone am the beginning, the end and the middle of all created objects. Among all forms of knowledge, I am knowledge of the self. Among debaters, *vada*. [404] Among letters, I am the letter ‘A’. Among different forms of *samasa*, I am dvanda. [405] Indeed I am indestructible time. My face is in every direction. I am the controller of destiny. I am death that robs everything. And I am the origin of the future. Among women, I am fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intellect, fortitude and forgiveness. In the Sama Veda, I am *brihat sama*. [406] Among metres, I am gayatri. Among months, I am Margashirsha. [407] Among seasons, I am *kusumakara*. [408] I am gambling among those who wish to cheat. [409] I am energy in the energetic. I am victory, perseverance, I am the sattva quality in the righteous. I am Vasudeva among the Vrishnis. I am Dhananjaya among those of the Pandu clan. I am Vyasa among the sages. Among the wise, I am the wise Ushanasa. [410] I am *danda* among those who rule. [411] I am strategy for those who wish to win. Among secret subjects, I am silence. I am knowledge among the wise. O Arjuna! Whatever is the seed of origin of every being, that is me alone. There is nothing moveable or immovable that can come into being without me. O scorcher of foes! There is no end to my divine glory. Whatever I have stated of this expanse of glory is only a brief indication. Know that whatever object is glorious, prosperous or indeed extremely powerful, that has originated from a part of my energy. O Arjuna! But what is the need to know all these details? I am established, holding up this entire universe with only a part of me.’”’

CHAPTER 893(33) [412]

‘“Arjuna said, ‘Out of compassion for me, the extremely secret adhyatma knowledge that you have stated has destroyed this delusion of mine. O one with eyes like lotus leaves! From you I have heard in detail about the creation and destruction of all beings, and also your eternal greatness. O supreme lord! What you have said about yourself is indeed like that. O supreme being! I wish to see your divine form. O lord! If you think that I am worthy of seeing that, then, O lord of yoga, show me your indestructible self.’

‘“The lord said, ‘O Partha! Behold my divine multi-dimensioned, multi-hued, multi-shaped hundreds and thousands of forms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! See the adityas, the vasus, the rudras, the *ashvinis* and the maruts. [413] See the many wonderful things you have never seen before. O Gudakesha! In my body, in one place, see the entire universe, with all that is moveable and immovable. Also see today, whatever else you want to see. You will not be able to see me with your own eyes. Therefore, I am giving you divine sight. Witness my divine glory.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Having said this, Hari, the great lord of yoga, then showed Partha the divine and supreme form—with many mouths and eyes, with many miraculous things to see, adorned in many resplendent ornaments, with many divine weapons raised, with divine garlands and clothing, anointed with divine fragrances, extremely wonderful everywhere, resplendent, infinite, with faces in every direction. If the brilliance of a thousand suns simultaneously rises in the sky, then that brilliance can rival the brilliance of that great soul. Then Pandava saw the entire universe in one place, divided into many parts, in that great god of gods' body. Then, amazed and with his body hair standing up, Dhananjaya bowed down before the god with his head lowered and, with joined palms, said…

'"Arjuna said, 'O lord! In your body I see all the gods and all the different types of beings, the divine sages and all the serpents and the creator Brahma, seated on a lotus. O lord of the universe! O universal form! I see you, with many arms, many stomachs, many faces and many eyes, everywhere. And I don't see an end, a middle or a beginning to you. With a crown, with a mace, with the chakra, resplendent everywhere, like a mass of energy, impossible to see, [414] brilliant like the burning fire and the sun, impossible to measure, I see you in every direction. I have no doubt that you are eternal and supreme and the only thing worth knowing. You are the supreme refuge of this universe. You are the indestructible and original being, the upholder of ancient dharma. I behold you without beginning, middle and end, infinite in strength, with uncountable arms, the sun and moon in your eyes, face like ignited fire, scorching this universe with your energy. O great soul! This space between the sky and the earth is pervaded only by you. The directions are also pervaded. Witnessing this miraculous and terrible form, the three worlds are suffering. [415] That array of gods is entering you alone. Some are frightened and, with joined palms, are craving protection. The array of great sages and pure souls are uttering words of pacification and are worshipping you, with pure and profound prayers. The rudras, the adityas, the vasus and the *saddhyas*, [416] the *vishvadevas*, [417] the ashvinis and the maruts, those who partake warm food, [418] the gandharvas, the yakshas, the asuras and arrays of the siddhas [419] are all gazing at you with amazement. O mighty-armed one! The worlds are terrified, and so am I, at witnessing your great form, with many faces and eyes, many stomachs, many arms, thighs and feet, fearsome with many teeth. O Vishnu! Touching the sky, resplendent, multi-hued, mouths stretched out, eyes large and fiery—seeing you, I am frightened and I cannot maintain my fortitude and peace. Seeing your several faces, fearsome with teeth and blazing like the fire of destruction, I have lost my sense of direction. I cannot find happiness. O lord of the gods! O refuge of the universe! Have mercy. All those sons of Dhritarashtra, with the collected kings, and Bhishma, Drona and that son of a suta [420] and the chief warriors on our side are dashing into your fearsome mouth with the terrible teeth. Some of them can be seen, heads smashed and attached to the joints of the teeth. Truly, like many currents in rivers head towards and enter the ocean, thus, those warriors of this earth are entering your mouths, flaming in all directions. As moths driven to destruction speedily enter a blazing fire, like that, these people are also swiftly entering your mouths, for destruction. O Vishnu! In all directions, you are repeatedly licking, having swallowed all the worlds [421] with your flaming mouths. Your fierce resplendence is scorching, having filled the universe with energy. Who are you? Tell me, you of the fierce form! I bow down before you. O great god! Be merciful. I wish to know you, you who are the beginning. Because I do not understand your inclination.'

'"The lord said, 'I am the terrible destroyer [422] of people. I am now about to destroy these people. Even without you, [423] all the warriors in the opposing army formations will not exist. O Savyasachi! Therefore, arise! Attain fame. Triumph over enemies and enjoy the undisputed kingdom. These have already been slain by me. You will only be the instrument. Kill Drona and Bhishma and Jayadratha and Karna and the other brave warriors also, already killed by me. Don't be apprehensive. You will be able to triumph over enemies in battle. Fight.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Hearing these words of Keshava's, the trembling Kiriti [424] joined his palms and saluting Krishna, again said in a faltering tone, bowing down in fear…

'"Arjuna said, 'O Hrishikesha! It is natural that the universe is extremely delighted to hear of your glory and is attracted to you, the rakshas are scared and flee in all directions and all the arrays of siddhas bow down. O great soul! O infinite! O lord of the gods! O refuge of the universe! You are greater than Brahma and the original agent. Why should you not be saluted? The manifest and the unmanifest and the indestructible [425] that is beyond, is also you. You come before the gods. You are the eternal being. You are the abode of the universe after destruction. You are the knower, that which is to be known and the supreme abode. By you is the universe pervaded and you are infinite in form. You are Vayu, [426] Yama, [427] Agni, [428] Varuna, [429] Shashanka, [430] Prajapati [431] and the great-grandfather. [432] I salute you a thousand times. And again salute you. And yet again salute you. I salute you in front and from the back. I salute you everywhere, in every direction. O possessor of infinite energy and unlimited strength! You pervade everything. Therefore, you are everything. Without knowing your glory and also this, [433] inadvertently and in affection, thinking of you as a friend, expressions like O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend, have been rudely used by me. O Achyuta! [434] At times of sport, sleeping, sitting or eating, alone or in front of other equals, in jest, you have faced irreverence, and for that, I crave forgiveness from you, whose power is beyond thought. O infinite power! You are the father, worshipped, teacher and also the greatest of all movable and immovable objects in the worlds. In the three worlds, there is no one equal to you. Where can there be someone greater than you? O god! For that reason, I prostrate my body and bow before this revered god, craving your blessings. Like a son's by the father, a friend's by a friend and a lover's by the beloved, forgive. [435] O god! Having seen that which has not been witnessed before, I am delighted. But again, my mind is disturbed by fear. Therefore, show me your earlier form. O lord of the gods! O abode of the universe! Be merciful. I wish to see your earlier form, crowned, with a mace and chakra [436] in hand. O thousand-armed one! O universal form! Become manifest in your four-armed form.' [437]

'"The lord said, 'O Arjuna! Having been pleased, with my powers of yoga, I have shown this resplendent, infinite, primeval and supreme universal form. Apart from you, this has not been seen by anyone before. O great hero of the Kuru lineage! Not through the Vedas, yajnas, study, nor through donations, nor even action or severe austerities, can this form of mine be witnessed by anyone other than you in this human world. Be not fearful at witnessing this fierce form of mine. Be not bewildered. Overcoming fear, with a happy mind, may you behold that, my earlier form."'

'Sanjaya said, "Having said this, Vasudeva again showed Arjuna his natural form. Having again assumed his peaceful form, the great soul assured the scared Arjuna.

'"Arjuna said, 'O Janardana! Having seen your peaceful and human form, my mind is now calmed and I am in control of my senses. I have become normal.'

'"The lord said, 'The form of mine that you have seen is difficult to witness. The gods themselves are always desirous of seeing this form. Not through the Vedas, nor austerities, nor donations, nor even yajnas, is it possible to see me in the form that you have seen me in. O scorcher of foes! O Arjuna! It is only through single-minded devotion that this form of mine can be truly known or seen, or it becomes possible to get immersed in me. O Pandava! He who undertakes action for my sake, is attached to me, is devoted to me, is detached and without enmity towards all beings, attains me.'"'

CHAPTER 894(34) [438]

'"Arjuna said, 'In this way, there are devotees who are always immersed in you and worship you and there are those who think of the unmanifest and the indestructible. [439] Who among these is the best yogi?' [440]

'"The lord said, 'Those who worship me, with minds fixed on me and always united in me with supreme devotion, in my view, they are the best yogis. But those who worship the indestructible, indescribable, unmanifest, omnipresent, unthinkable, original, [441] immovable and constant, controlling properly the senses and looking upon everything equally, acting for the welfare of all beings, they only attain me. Those who wish to immerse their minds in the unmanifest, find it more difficult. Because those who possess bodies [442] attain the goal of the unmanifest with great perseverance. [443] O Partha! Those who offer all action to me, are devoted to me and with single-minded yoga, meditate on me and worship me with minds rendered unto me, I become swiftly their rescuer from this mortal world that is like an ocean. Establish your mind in me alone. [444] Fix your intellect on me. After that, [445] there is no doubt that you will live with me alone. O Dhananjaya! If you cannot steady your mind and fix it on me, then practise yoga [446] and wish to attain me. If you don't succeed in the practice, then do only my deeds. [447] Even if you do acts for my pleasure, you attain liberation. If however, you are unable to perform these deeds also, then control your mind, give up attachment to the fruits of all action and seek refuge in the yoga that is mine. [448] Knowledge is superior to practice. Meditation is superior to knowledge. Giving up attachment to the fruits of action is superior to meditation. After renunciation, tranquillity is attained. [449] He who has no hatred for all beings, is friendly and also displays compassion, is without sense of ego, without pride, regards happiness and unhappiness in the same way and is forgiving, is always satisfied, a yogi and controlled in mind, firm in resolution [450] and with mind and intellect immersed in me, such a devotee of mine is dear to me. He from whom other people are not disturbed and he who is not disturbed by other people and he who is free from delight, dissatisfaction, [451] fear and concern, is dear to me. Without desire, [452] pure, enterprising, neutral, without pain and one who has renounced all fruit, [453] such a devotee is dear to me. He who is not delighted, nor hates, he who does not sorrow, nor desires, he who has given up good and evil, [454] such a devotee is dear to me. Equal between friend and enemy, and respect and insult, equal between cold and warmth, happiness and unhappiness and without all attachment, like between criticism and praise, restrained in speech, [455] satisfied with whatever is obtained, without habitation [456] and controlled in mind, such a devoted man is dear to me. Those who are devoted and look upon me as the supreme goal and worship according to this immortal dharma mentioned earlier, such devotees are extremely dear to me.'"'

CHAPTER 895(35) [457]

'"The lord said, 'O Kounteya! This body is known as the *kshetra*. [458] He who knows this is called the *kshetrajna* by those who have the knowledge. [459] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In every field, know me to be the kshetrajna. My view is that knowledge about kshetra and kshetrajna is knowledge. [460] Briefly, hear from me what is that kshetra, its nature and its transformation, and cause and effect within it. Also that [461] and its power. The rishis have sung this [462] in different metres in several diverse ways. The definite logical arguments are also there in the Brahmasutra passages. [463] The great elements, [464] the ego, the intellect and the unmanifest, [465] the ten organs of sense [466] and the single one [467] and the objects of the five senses, [468] desire, hatred, happiness, unhappiness, combination, [469] consciousness, patience, these together are said to be the kshetra and its transformations. Lack of ego, lack of arrogance, lack of injury, [470] forgiveness, humility, servitude towards teachers, purity, single-mindedness [471] and control over the self, detachment towards gratification of the senses and lack of vanity, indifference towards unhappy travails like birth, death, aging and disease, non-attachment, [472] no sense of belonging in wife, son and home, always equality in mind whether good or evil results, faithfulness in devotion to me, fixedness and non-deviation in yoga, habitation in secluded spots, aversion to crowds, devotion to knowledge about the atman and search for true knowledge—these are known as knowledge. Anything opposed is ignorance. I will state that which is to be known. Knowing that, attains immortality. [473] That brahman, without origin, is my form. It is said, both eternal and transient. [474] That [475] has hands and feet everywhere, eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, and ears everywhere, is established in everything in this world. Manifest in the qualities of all the senses, but without any senses, alone, like the abode of everything, without qualities and the preserver of all qualities. [476] That is outside all beings and yet inside them, moving and unmoving, beyond knowledge because of subtleness, far and yet near. That is indivisible, but exists in every being in divided form. Know [477] as the preserver, destroyer and creator of all beings. That is the light of all bright bodies. Said to be beyond darkness. Knowledge, that which is to be known and attainable through knowledge, is established in the heart of everything. [478] Briefly, kshetra and that which is knowledge, and to be known, have been stated. Knowing this, my devotee attains my nature. [479] Know both prakriti and purusha to be without origin. And know transformations and the qualities [480] to result from prakriti. [481] Prakriti is said to be the reason behind caus and effect, [482] purusha said to be [483] for happiness and unhappiness in enjoyment, because purusha is established in prakriti and enjoys prakriti's qualities. [484] And its [485] good and evil birth is because of its association with these qualities. The supreme being in this body is known as one who witnesses, one who allows, one who sustains, one who enjoys, the supreme lord and the paramatman. He who knows the nature of purusha, and of prakriti, with the qualities, whatever be the position he is in, will not be reborn. Some, through meditation, see the atman in the atman with the atman. [486] Others use sankhya yoga [487] and still others use karma yoga. And others, failing to know, [488] hear from others and worship. Even they, who are devoted to hearing, transcend death. O best of the Bharata lineage! Whatever movable and immovable objects are created, know them to result from the link between kshetra and kshetrajna. He truly sees who beholds the indestructible supreme lord equally in all beings, while everything else is destructible. He who sees the great lord equally established in everything, he doesn't kill the atman with the atman, [489] and therefore, attains supreme liberation. He who perceives all action as being performed by prakriti and the atman as a non-agent, he truly beholds. When he sees the different aspects of beings as established in one [490] and also everything manifested from there, he attains the brahman. O Kounteya! Because it is without origin and without qualities, this paramatman is unchanging and although based in the body, does nothing. It is not attached. [491] As the sky that is everywhere is not attached because of its subtlety, like that, the atman is not attached, though it is in every body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Just as a single sun lights up the entire world, like that, a single *kshetri* lights up all kshetras. [492] Those who, through their eyes of knowledge, know the difference between kshetra and kshetrajna in this way and freedom from beings and prakriti, [493] they attain the supreme goal.''''

CHAPTER 896(36) [494]

'''The lord said, 'I am again stating the excellent and supreme out of all types of knowledge. Knowing that, all the sages are freed from this [495] and attain supreme liberation. Seeking refuge in this knowledge and attaining my true nature, they are not born at the time of creation, nor suffer at the time of destruction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great brahman [496] is my womb. Into that, I place the seed. [497] And from that, all the beings are created. O Kounteya! The different forms that are created in all wombs, the great brahman [498] is like their mother [499] and I am the father who provides the seed. O mighty-armed one! The qualities sattva, rajas and tamas, generated from nature, bind the indestructible atman in the body. O sinless one! Among these, [500] sattva is shining because it is pure and is without sin, but ties down the atman because of attachment to happiness and knowledge. [501] O Kounteya! Know rajas to be based on desire and the origin of thirst and attachment. [502] That [503] binds the atman [504] firmly because of attachment to action. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know tamas to be born from ignorance and the source of delusion in every being. That [505] binds firmly through error, [506] sloth and sleep. [507] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sattva attaches to happiness and rajas attaches to action. Tamas veils knowledge and attaches to errors. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sattva overcomes rajas and tamas and becomes strong, rajas, sattva and tamas, and tamas, sattva and rajas. [508] Know that when the light of knowledge is ignited in all the gates of this body, [509] it is only then that sattva becomes strong. O best of the Bharata lineage! Greed, [510] inclination, beginnings of action, [511] restlessness and desire—these are created when rajas becomes strong. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Darkness, lack of enterprise, inadvertence and delusion—these are created when tamas becomes strong. If a being dies when sattva becomes strong, then he attains the shining [512] world reserved for those who have the supreme knowledge. Death when rajas become strong leads to rebirth as someone addicted to action. And death when tamas, [513] leads to rebirth as subhuman species. [514] It has been said that sattva-type action has the fruit of pure happiness, rajas-type has the fruit of unhappiness and tamas-type has the fruit of ignorance. From sattva, wisdom results, and from rajas, greed, and from tamas, only inadvertence, delusion and ignorance result. Those with a preponderance of sattva ascend above. [515] Those with rajas stay in the middle. [516] Those with despicable tamas qualities, descend below. [517] When the seer doesn't see any agent other than the qualities and knows that which is beyond the qualities, he attains my nature. [518] When the being transcends the three qualities that are the origin of the body, he attains immortality, free from birth, death, old age and unhappiness.'

'"Arjuna said, 'O lord! From what signs does one know one who has transcended? What is his conduct? And how does he transcend these three qualities?'

'"The lord said, 'O Pandava! He who is engaged in knowledge and inclination and delusion and yet does not hate, nor desire if these are withdrawn. [519] He is established in indifference and the qualities don't disturb him. Knowing the action of the qualities to be of this form, he is steady and doesn't waver. Equal between happiness and unhappiness, established in himself, [520] equal between earth, stone and gold, similar in treatment of the loved and the hated, tranquil, similar between praise and censure. He who treats respect and insult alike, friend and enemy alike and discards all beginnings of action, [521] he is said to have transcended the qualities.' He who worships me single-mindedly and with unwavering devotion, he transcends these qualities and is worthy of attaining the state of the brahman. Because I am the embodiment of the brahman—indestructible, immortal, [522] and also of eternal dharma and absolute bliss.'"' [523]

CHAPTER 897(37)

'"The lord said, 'They say the ashvattha tree, [524] with a root above and branches below, is indestructible. He who knows that its leaves are the metres [525] knows the truth. Specially nurtured by the gunas, with objects [526] as its shoots, its branches extend upwards and downwards. In the world of men, its rootlings [527] stretch downwards, the cause of action. In this, [528] this form [529] is not felt, nor the end, nor the beginning. Nor even its establishment. Slicing the thick root of this ashvattha with the weapon of firm detachment, thereafter, one must seek that goal, the attainment of which means no return, [530] stating, "I seek refuge in that original being, from whom this eternal process is created," without pride and delusion, having conquered the fault of attachment, constant in the knowledge of the atman, having restrained desire, freed from the opposites of happiness and unhappiness, the wise go to that indestructible goal. Attaining that, there is no return. The sun cannot light that, [531] nor the moon, nor fire. That is my supreme abode. Indeed, part of my eternal form is established as beings in nature and attracts the mind and six [532] senses to the world of beings. Like the wind carries away fragrance from receptacles, [533] the lord, [534] when it discards one body and attains another one, takes these [535] with it and leaves. This [536] is established in the ears, the eyes, touch, the tongue, the nose and also the mind and enjoys objects. The deluded do not see the establishment and also the enjoyment and progress, with the qualities as attributes. [537] Those with eyes of wisdom, see this. Careful [538] yogis, established in the atman, see this. Despite care, those who are not established in the atman, and are without consciousness, don't see this. The energy in the sun that lights up the entire world, that in the moon and that too in the fire, know that energy to be mine. I enter the earth and hold up the beings with my energy. As the watery moon, I nourish all the herbs. [539] I am established in the bodies of beings as the fire of digestion. I mingle with the prana and apana breath [540] and digest the four types of food. [541] I am established in the hearts of all beings. I result in memory and knowledge and their lack. Indeed, it is I who am the knowledge of the Vedas and the origin of Vedanta. And I am the knower of the Vedas. [542] The destructible and the indestructible, these two purushas exist in the world. All these beings are destructible. [543] The fixed is known as the indestructible. [544] That apart, there is a supreme purusha known as the paramatman, who enters the three worlds and sustains them—the indestructible Lord. Because I am beyond destruction and superior even to the indestructible, therefore, I am known as the supreme being [545] in this world [546] and in the Vedas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without delusion, he who knows me as the supreme being, he is omniscient and worships me in every way. O pure one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus, this extremely secret knowledge has been related by me. This understanding leads to knowledge and accomplishment.’”’ [547]

CHAPTER 898(38) [548]

‘“The lord said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Absence of fear, pureness of heart, [549] steadiness in jnana yoga, [550] donation, and control, [551] yajnas, self-study, [552] practice of austerities and simplicity, [553] absence of injury to others, truthfulness, lack of anger, renunciation, tranquility, lack of criticism of others, compassion towards beings, lack of avarice, gentleness, sense of shame, [554] steadfastness, energy, forgiveness, perseverance, cleanliness, absence of hatred, absence of ego—these belong to the person born towards divine wealth. [555] O Partha! Arrogance, insolence, egoism, anger, cruelty and ignorance—these belong to birth towards demonic wealth. Divine wealth is for liberation. Demonic wealth is for bondage. O Pandava! Do not sorrow. You have been born towards divine wealth. O Partha! In this world, two types of beings are created, divine and demonic. The divine has been stated in detail. Hear from me about the demonic. Demonic people do not know about inclination and disinclination. [556] In them, there is no purity nor righteousness, nor even truthfulness. They say the world is full of falsehood, [557] without basis, [558] without a lord, created without continuity [559] and with no reason other than to satisfy desire. Resorting to such views, with distorted minds, little intelligence and cruel action, they perform evil deeds. They are born to destroy the world. Seeking refuge in insatiable desires, deluded with a sense of insolence, pride and arrogance, accepting search of the untrue [560] and performing impure rites, they act. Resorting to immeasurable thoughts till the time of destruction, [561] convinced certainly that the enjoyment of desire is supreme, tied down with the noose of a hundred hopes, prone to lust and anger and accepting evil means for the sake of desire gratification, they wish to accumulate wealth. Today I have gained this. I will get that desired object later. I have this and again that wealth will also be mine. This enemy has been killed by me. I will also kill the others. I am the lord, I am the enjoyer. I am the successful, strong and happy. I am wealthy and of noble descent. Who is there equal to me? I will perform yajnas, I will donate. [562] I will pleasure myself. Deluded by ignorance in this way, minds distracted by many thoughts, caught in the net of delusion, addicted to gratification of desires, they are hurled into impure hell. Self-glorifying, haughty, proud because of wealth, they insolently perform unsanctioned rites that are yajnas only in name. Resorting to vanity, strength, insolence, desire and anger, they hate me in their own bodies and in the bodies of others and are disfavoured. In this world, I hurl those hateful, cruel, evil and worst among men into demonic births, [563] several times. O Kounteya! From birth to birth, the deluded don't attain me and obtaining demonic births, go down even further. [564] Desire, anger and avarice—these are the three types of doors to hell and destroyers of the atman. Give up these three. O Kounteya! The man who is freed from these three dark doors and follows that which is good for the atman, thereafter attains the supreme goal. He who deviates from the prescription of the shastras [565] and acts as he desires like doing, that person doesn't attain liberation or happiness or the supreme goal. Therefore, in deciding what should be done and what should not be done, the shastras are your test. In this, [566] get ready to perform action knowing what the shastras prescribe.'"'

CHAPTER 899(39)

'"Arjuna said, 'Those who discard [567] the prescriptions of the shastras, but worship [568] with recourse to faith, what is their devotion like? Is it sattva, rajas or tamas?'

'"The lord said, 'According to their nature, people show three kinds of faith—sattva-type, rajas-type and tamas-type. Listen to this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Everyone's faith follows his inner nature. This being [569] is full of faith. The kind of faith one has makes the person. Those of the sattva-type worship the gods, those of the rajas-type, yakshas and rakshas. [570] The others, of the tamas-type, worship ghosts [571] and devils. [572] Those who perform terrible austerities, not sanctioned by the shastras, full of insolence and ego and deriving strength from desire and attachment, [573] devoid of consciousness, torture the elements in the body and also me, inside the body. [574] Know them to be driven by demonic resolution. The favoured food of all is of three types and so too, sacrifices, meditation and donations. Listen to the distinction between these. The sattva-type favour food that increases life expectancy, vitality, [575] strength, freedom from disease, happiness and joy—tasty, oily, nourishing and pleasant. The rajas-type favour food that is extremely spicy, acidic, salty, hot, pungent, dry and burning—increasing unhappiness, sorrow and disease. The tamas-type favour food cooked a long time ago, [576] no longer succulent [577] and with a bad smell, stale [578] and tasted by others [579] —impure. The sacrifices performed according to prescribed rites, pacifying the mind, without attachment to fruits and only because such sacrifices ought to be performed, are of the sattva-type. O best of the Bharata lineage! But know sacrifices performed in search of fruits or indeed because of insolence, [580] to be of the rajas-type. Sacrifices without following prescribed rites, without donating food, without mantras, without donations and without faith, are said to be of the tamas-type. Worship of gods, brahmanas, [581] teachers and the wise, purity, simplicity, brahmacharya and non-violence [582] —these are known as physical austerities. Not uttering words that lead to anxiety, speaking the truth and that which is pleasant and leads to welfare, [583] and self-study [584] —these are known as verbal austerities. Tranquility of mind, lack of cruelty, reserve in speech, control of one's self, purity in attitude [585] —all these are known as mental austerities. These three types of austerities performed single-mindedly by men, without attachment to fruits and with supreme faith, are said to be of the sattva-type. Austerities performed with the objective of obtaining praise, respect or worship, and based on insolence, are said to be of the rajas-type and in this, [586] are temporary and uncertain. Austerities performed on the basis of delusion, resulting in the oppression of one’s self or undertaken to destroy others, are said to be of the tamas-type. Alms donated for the sake of donation, [587] to those who have not benefited the donor, [588] and based on place, time and subject [589] —are said to be of the sattva-type. But donations for the sake of return favours or for the fruits or given unwillingly, are said to be of the rajas-type. Donations in the wrong place, at the wrong time and to the wrong subject, given without respect and disdainfully—are said to be of the tamas-type. “Om tat sat”—in these three ways, the brahman has been described in the sacred texts. From this, in the past, brahmanas and the Vedas and yajnas have been created. Therefore, according to prescribed rites, sacrifices, donations and austerities by those who are learned in the brahman, are always undertaken after uttering “Om”. Those who desire liberation, give up desire for fruits and undertake sacrifices, donations and austerities after uttering “Tat”. O Partha! “Sat” is used to signify existence and superiority. And the word “Sat” is also used for auspicious acts. Steadfastness in sacrifices, donations and austerities is known as “Sat” and action performed towards those ends is also indeed known as “Sat”. O Partha! Sacrifices, donations and austerities and any other action, undertaken without faith, are known as the opposite of “Sat”, with nothing [590] in this world or in the afterworld.’”’

CHAPTER 900(40)

‘“Arjuna said, ‘O mighty-armed one! O Hrishikesha! O slayer of Keshi! [591] I wish to separately understand the essence of renunciation and relinquishing.’ [592]

‘“The lord said, ‘The wise know the relinquishing of action that satisfies desires as sannyasa. The discriminating call the relinquishing of the fruits of all action *tyaga*. Some learned people say that all action is associated with evil and should be relinquished. Some others say that action like sacrifices, donations and austerities should not be relinquished. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Listen to my decided views about that relinquishing. O tiger among men! It has been said that relinquishing is of three types. Sacrifices, donations and austerities are not to be relinquished. Those actions certainly have to be performed, because sacrifices, donations and austerities purify the hearts of the learned. O Partha! But even these actions should be performed through relinquishing attachment and fruits. [593] That is my decided and supreme view. It is not advisable to renounce indicated action. [594] Discarding this through delusion is known as tamas-type. [595] He who relinquishes action because action leads to discomfort and requires physical exertion, performs rajas-type relinquishing. He doesn't receive the fruits from relinquishing. O Arjuna! Sattva-type relinquishing is known as that where attachment and fruits are relinquished and action is performed only because it is indicated action. Immersed in the sattva quality, steady in learning and without doubt, the relinquisher doesn't hate disagreeable action or become addicted to agreeable action. He who possesses a body cannot give up action in its entirety. Because he relinquishes fruits of action, he is known as a true relinquisher. Those who don't relinquish face three types of fruits of their action in the afterworld—bad, good and mixed. But *sannyasi*s don't. [596] O mighty-armed one! In the sacred texts, [597] five reasons are described in support of performing all action. Hear these from me. The abode and also the agent, different types of instruments and different and various types of endeavour—and the fifth is the divine. [598] Whatever action, appropriate or inappropriate, a man begins through the body, the mind and speech, is caused by these five. Although this is the state of affairs, [599] he who thinks of the absolute atman as the agent, his intelligence is unrefined and that ignorant person doesn't see. [600] He who has no sense of ego and whose intelligence is unattached, even if he slays all these people, doesn't really kill and is not tied down. [601] Knowledge, that which can be known and the knower, are the three impetuses behind action. [602] The action, the instrument and the agent form the base for action. According to qualities, three types of differences in knowledge and action and the agent are described in sankhya. [603] Listen properly to that too. That which in all beings, in differentiated form, sees the undifferentiated and indestructible substance, [604] know that to be sattva-type knowledge. But the knowledge through which one sees in all beings, in differentiated form, differentiated and separate substances, know that to be rajas-type knowledge. But that which is attached to a single action, [605] is illogical, trivial and without true knowledge, that is known as tamas-type. [606] Action where fruits have been relinquished, without attachment, without love or hate, performed only because it is indicated, is known as sattva-type. [607] Again, action undertaken, with great difficulty, by those with desire for fruits or with a sense of ego, is known as rajas-type. Action begun under delusion, without consideration of consequences, destruction, injury [608] and one's own capabilities, is known as tamas-type. An agent who is without attachment, without sense of ego, patient and enthusiastic, equal in attitude towards success and failure, is known as sattva-type. An agent who is attached, desirous of fruits of action, avaricious, injurious, [609] impure and swayed by joy and sorrow, is known as rajas-type. An agent who is not steady, vulgar, [610] insolent,fraudulent, disrespectful, [611] lazy, despondent and procrastinating is known as tamas-type. O Dhananjaya! According to quality of intellect and perseverance, there are three types of differences. Listen to what is being said, separately and comprehensively. O Partha! The intellect [612] that knows inclination and disinclination, right action and wrong, fear and freedom from fear, bondage and liberation, is sattva-type. O Partha! The intellect through which one does not correctly understand dharma and adharma and right action and wrong, is rajas-type. O Partha! The intellect through which one thinks evil action is righteous, and in every way thinks the opposite, [613] shrouded in ignorance, that is tamas-type. O Partha! The perseverance through which one uses unwavering yoga to focus the functions of the mind, the breath of life and the senses, that perseverance is sattva-type. O Partha! O Arjuna! The perseverance through which dharma, artha and kama are sought and according to the area, fruits desired, is known as rajas-type. O Partha! The perseverance through which the misguided person doesn't discard dreaming, [614] fear, sorrow, despondency and ego, is known as tamas-type. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Now hear from me about the three types of happiness. Where happiness comes from gradual practice and there is an end to unhappiness, that which is initially like poison but at the end like ambrosia, based on the tranquility of one's intellect focused on the atman, that is known as sattva-type. That which comes from association with objects and the senses and is initially like ambrosia but at the end like poison, that happiness is said to be rajas-type. The happiness that, at the beginning and at the end, binds and deludes the atman and that which is created from sleep, sloth and inadvertence, [615] is known as tamas-type. On earth, in heaven and even among the gods, there doesn't exist anything that is free from these three qualities generated from nature.

"''O scorcher of foes! The actions [616] of brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and also shudras are separately segregated in accordance with qualities that result from their natures. Control over the mind, control over the senses, meditation, purity, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, self-realization and indeed faith are natural actions for brahmanas. Valour, bravery, perseverance, dexterity, willingness to fight, generosity and capacity to rule [617] are natural actions for kshatriyas. Agriculture, preservation of cattle and trade are natural actions for vaishyas. Servitude is natural action for shudras. A man who faithfully follows his indicated course of action, attains liberation. Listen to how liberation is obtained by following one's indicated course of action. Through his own action, man obtains liberation by worshipping him who is the origin of beings and their endeavour, and him who pervades all this. [618] Even when performed imperfectly, svadharma [619] is superior to someone else's dharma, performed well. Sin does not result if one's natural action is undertaken. O Kounteya! Natural action should not be discarded, even if it is tainted. Because all action is tainted, just as fire is shrouded by smoke. He who is detached everywhere, has conquered his atman, [620] has overcome desire through sannyasa, [621] attains the supreme liberation of freedom from action. O Kounteya! Learn briefly from me how one who has attained liberation attains the brahman. That is the supreme form of knowledge. United with pure intellect, controlling the atman with perseverance, discarding objects like sound and renouncing love and aversion, inhabiting a secluded place, eating little, restraining speech, body and the mind, constantly practising meditation, seeking refuge in renouncement, discarding ego, power, insolence, desire, anger and possessions, [622] tranquil and without ego, he is fit for merging with the brahman. Tranquil in merging with the brahman, such a person does not sorrow and does not desire. Looking upon every being equally, he attains supreme devotion towards me. Through devotion, he comprehends my true nature, who I am and my different forms. Then, after knowing my true nature, enters. [623] Seeking refuge in me, he always performs all action and, through my blessings, attains the eternal and indestructible abode. Through the mind, offering up all action to me, devoted to me and seeking refuge in buddhi yoga, [624] always immerse your mind in me. With mind immersed in me, with my blessings, you will overcome all difficulties. But if, through a sense of ego, you don't listen to me, you will be destroyed. Through a sense of ego, you are thinking that you will not fight. But this resolution is false. Nature [625] will compel you. O Kounteya! Whatever you don't wish to do because of delusion, you will have to undertake in spite of that, because you are tied down by your natural duty. O Arjuna! The lord is established in the hearts of all beings and through maya, makes all beings whirl, as if they are mounted on machines. [626] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In every way, seek refuge in him alone. Through his blessings, you will attain supreme tranquility and the eternal abode. I have explained to you this knowledge, which is the most secret of all secrets. Having examined it completely, do what you wish to do. Listen yet again to my supreme words, the most secret of all secrets. You are my dearly beloved. Therefore, I am telling you what is good for you. Immerse your mind only in me, be devoted to me, worship me, bow in obeisance before me. I am pledging that you will attain me, because you are my beloved. Discard all dharmas [627] and seek refuge only in me. I will free you from all sins. Do not sorrow. You should not state this [628] to those who do not meditate, [629] or are devoid of devotion or do not wish to hear. Nor to those who show me disrespect. There is no doubt that he who explains this most secret knowledge to my devotees, displays supreme devotion towards me and will attain me alone. Among men, there is no one who does greater service to me. [630] In the world, there is no one, and there will be no one, more dear to me. And he who will study this dialogue [631] of ours on dharma, my view is that he will worship me through jnana yoga. The man who only listens with faith and without disrespect, he too will be freed from sin and attain the worlds attained by those who are pure of deeds. O Partha! Have you listened to this with single-minded concentration? O Dhananjaya! Has your delusion of ignorance been destroyed?'

'"Arjuna said, 'O Achyuta! Through your blessings, my delusion has been destroyed. I have obtained knowledge about what should be done and what shouldn't be done. [632] I am steady. I no longer suffer from doubt. I will do what you instruct.'"

'Sanjaya said, "I have thus heard this wonderful and thrilling [633] dialogue between the great souls Vasudeva and Partha. Through the blessings of Vyasa, I have heard this supreme and secret yoga directly from Krishna, the lord of all yoga, when he stated it. O king! Remembering again and again this sacred and wonderful dialogue between Keshava and Arjuna, I have repeatedly been exhilarated. O king! Remembering that extremely wonderful universal form of Hari, I am greatly amazed and repeatedly exhilarated. Wherever [634] there is Krishna, the lord of yoga, and Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, exist prosperity, victory, increase in wealth and sound policy. That is my conviction.”’

Section Sixty-Four

Bhishma Vadha Parva

This parva has 3947 shlokas and seventy-seven chapters.

Chapter 901(41): 104 shlokas
Chapter 902(42): 30 shlokas
Chapter 903(43): 83 shlokas
Chapter 904(44): 48 shlokas
Chapter 905(45): 63 shlokas
Chapter 906(46): 56 shlokas
Chapter 907(47): 30 shlokas
Chapter 908(48): 70 shlokas
Chapter 909(49): 40 shlokas
Chapter 910(50): 115 shlokas
Chapter 911(51): 43 shlokas
Chapter 912(52): 22 shlokas
Chapter 913(53): 34 shlokas
Chapter 914(54): 44 shlokas
Chapter 915(55): 132 shlokas
Chapter 916(56): 28 shlokas
Chapter 917(57): 36 shlokas
Chapter 918(58): 61 shlokas
Chapter 919(59): 29 shlokas
Chapter 920(60): 79 shlokas
Chapter 921(61): 70 shlokas
Chapter 922(62): 40 shlokas
Chapter 923(63): 21 shlokas
Chapter 924(64): 18 shlokas
Chapter 925(65): 33 shlokas
Chapter 926(66): 22 shlokas
Chapter 927(67): 41 shlokas
Chapter 928(68): 33 shlokas
Chapter 929(69): 41 shlokas
Chapter 930(70): 37 shlokas
Chapter 931(71): 36 shlokas

Chapter 932(72): 26 shlokas
Chapter 933(73): 71 shlokas
Chapter 934(74): 36 shlokas
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Vadha *means the act of killing. This section is so named because it is about the killing of Bhishma. The first ten days of the battle have Bhishma as the commander-in-chief. This section thus describes the first ten days of the battle. On the first day, Virata's son, Uttara, is killed. The second day has the Pandavas victorious, the highlight being Bhima's destruction of the Kalingas. There is a ding-dong battle on the third day, with Bhishma triumphant initially (which is when Krishna decides to take up arms), followed by Arjuna's victory. The Pandavas triumph on the fourth day and fourteen of Duryodhana's brothers are killed by Bhima. While there is a lot of fighting on the fifth day, the highlight is Bhurishrava's killing of ten of Satyaki's sons. On balance, the Pandava side is more successful on the sixth day. While there is a great deal of fighting, there is nothing that merits a special mention on the seventh day. On the eighth day, Bhima kills eight of Duryodhana's brothers. Iravat, Arjuna's son, kills several of Shakuni's brothers and is himself killed by the rakshasa Alambusa. Bhima again kills nine of Duryodhana's brothers. On the ninth day, the Pandavas eventually get the worst of it. Krishna decides to kill Bhishma and is restrained by Arjuna. The Pandavas consult Bhishma about how he may be killed and are advised to use Shikhandi. The tenth day is marked by Bhishma's downfall.*

CHAPTER 901(41)

'Sanjaya said, "At that, on seeing Dhananjaya take up Gandiva and his arrows again, the maharathas[1] let out a tremendous roar. The brave Pandavas and Somakas and their followers were delighted and blew on conch shells that had been generated from the ocean. Drums, *peshis*,[2] *krakachas*[3] and trumpets made from the horns of cows were sounded together and there was a tumultuous sound. O lord of men! Gods, together with gandharvas, ancestors, siddhas and masses of charanas came to witness. The immensely fortunate rishis arrived, with Shatakratu at the forefront, desiring to see that great slaughter. O king! On seeing that the two armies, resembling two oceans, were ready to fight and were repeatedly moving, the brave Yudhishthira removed his armour and cast aside his supreme weapons. He swiftly descended from his chariot. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira joined his hands in salutation and advanced on foot, glancing towards the grandfather.[4] Restrained in speech, he advanced towards the east, where the enemy forces were stationed. On seeing him advance, Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, also swiftly descended from his chariot and followed him, together with his brothers. The illustrious Vasudeva also followed him at the rear. Extremely anxious, the foremost kings[5] also advanced.

'"Arjuna said, 'O king! What are you doing? Why have you abandoned your brothers and are advancing on foot towards the east, where the enemy forces are stationed?'

'"Bhimasena said, 'O Indra among kings! Where are you going, having thrown your armour and weapons away? O lord of the earth! You have abandoned your brothers and are going towards the armoured enemy soldiers.'

'"Nakula said, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are my eldest brother. On seeing you advance in this fashion, my heart is terrified. Tell us where you are going.'

'"Sahadeva said, 'O king! A terrible fear confronts us in this battle, in the form of those whom we have to fight. Why are you advancing towards the enemy?'"

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Though he was addressed in this way by his brothers, Yudhishthira did not utter a single word, but continued to advance. The immensely wise and great-minded Vasudeva smiled and told them, 'I know his intentions. He will fight with the enemy kings only after he has shown his respects to Bhishma, Drona, Goutama,[6] Shalya and all the other seniors. It has been heard in the accounts of earlier eras, that he who shows his respects towards his seniors and revered relatives in accordance with the sacred texts, and then fights with them, is certain to be victorious in battle. That is my view.' While Krishna was speaking, a great sound of lamentation arose in the army of Dhritarashtra's son, but the other one[7] remained silent. On seeing Yudhishthira from a distance, Dhritarashtra's son's soldiers conversed among themselves. 'This one is a disgrace to his lineage. The king has been frightened and is advancing towards Bhishma. Yudhishthira, together with his brothers, will seek shelter. When Dhananjaya, Pandava Vrikodara, Nakula and Sahadeva are protectors, why is the Pandava[8] frightened? Though he is famous on earth, he cannot have been born in a lineage of kshatriyas. His heart is frightened and he is dispirited at the prospect of battle.' Then all the soldiers praised the Kouravas. They were delighted in their minds and waved their garments around. O lord of the earth! All the warriors censured Yudhishthira and his brothers, together with Keshava. The Kourava soldiers cried ‘Shame!’ to Yudhishthira. O lord of the earth! Then they again became completely silent. What would the king say? What would Bhishma speak in reply? What about Bhima, who prided himself in battle? What about Krishna and Arjuna? What would they say? O king! Both armies were extremely curious on account of Yudhishthira. Surrounded by his brothers, he[9] penetrated the enemy army, full of arrows and lances, and swiftly advanced towards Bhishma. Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, was ready for battle. The Pandava king grasped his feet with both his hands and spoke these words.

‘“Yudhishthira said, ‘O invincible one! O father![10] We are inviting you to fight with us. O father! Grant us the permission. Give us the blessings.’

‘“Bhishma replied, ‘O lord of the earth! O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you had not come to me before this battle, I would have cursed you so that you might be defeated. O son! O Pandava! I am pleased with you. Fight and be victorious. Whatever else you might desire, obtain all that in this battle. O Partha! Ask for a boon. What is it that you desire? May it be such that you do not face defeat. A man is the servant of wealth. But wealth is never anyone’s servant. O great king! This is the truth. I am tied to the Kouravas because of wealth. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! That is the reason the words spoken by me are those of a eunuch.[11] The Kouravyas have robbed me through wealth. Other than battle, what else do you wish for?’

‘“Yudhishthira said, ‘O immensely wise one! Your counsel has always been directed towards my welfare. Fight on the side of the Kouravas. That has always been the boon I have asked.’

‘“Bhishma replied, ‘O king! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! How can I help you? What shall I do? I will fight on the side of the enemy. What else do you have to say?’

‘“Yudhishthira said, ‘You are invincible. How will we be able to vanquish you in battle? If you wish to provide counsel for our welfare and you find this to be desirable, tell me this.’

'"Bhishma replied, 'O Kounteya! Even if it were to be Shatakratu himself, as long as I fight in battle, I do not see any man who can vanquish me.'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O grandfather! I bow down before you. I am asking you to tell me about a means of victory. How can an enemy kill you in battle?'

'"Bhishma replied, 'O son! I do not see anyone who can defeat me in battle. The time for my death has not arrived. Come to me again later.'"[12]

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! With his head lowered in homage, Yudhishthira accepted Bhishma's words and again showed him homage. In the midst of his brothers and while all the soldiers looked on, the mighty-armed one then advanced towards the preceptor's chariot. Having honoured Drona, he circumambulated him. The king spoke beneficial words to the invincible one. 'O illustrious one![13] I am requesting you. How can I fight without incurring a sin? O brahmana! With your permission, how can I triumph over all the enemies?'

'"Drona replied, 'O great king! Having decided to fight, if you had not come to me, I would have cursed you for your complete defeat. O Yudhishthira! O unblemished one! I have now been honoured by you and am satisfied. I grant you permission. Fight and be victorious. I will also do what you desire. Tell me what your wishes are. O great king! This being the case, other than the battle, what else do you want? A man is the servant of wealth. But wealth is never anyone's servant. O great king! This is the truth. I am tied to the Kouravas because of wealth. That is the reason I am tied like a eunuch.[14] Other than battle, what else do you want? I will fight for the sake of the Kouravas. But my prayers will be for your triumph.'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O brahmana! Pray for my victory and counsel me about what is good for me. Fight for the sake of the Kouravas. That is the boon I ask of you.'

'"Drona replied, 'O king! When you have Hari as an adviser, your victory is certain. I wish that you are able to vanquish your foes in battle. Where there is dharma, Krishna is there. Where there is Krishna, victory is there. O Kounteya! Go and fight. Ask me. What will I tell you?'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O foremost among brahmanas! Listen to what I am asking and telling you. You have never been defeated. How can we vanquish you in battle?'

'"Drona replied, 'As long as I am fighting in battle, you cannot be victorious. O king! Together with your brothers, try to kill me quickly.'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O mighty-armed one! Tell us the means whereby you can be killed. O preceptor! I am bowing down before you. I am showing you homage and asking you.'

'"Drona replied, 'O son![15] As long as I am stationed in battle, when I am angrily fighting and am incessantly showering arrows, I do not see the enemy who can kill me. O king! Except when I am ready for death and have withdrawn myself from weapons and my senses, no warrior can kill me in battle. I tell you that this is true. I also tell you truthfully that if I hear extremely unpleasant news from a man whose words should be respected, I will abandon my weapons in battle.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Having heard these words from Bharadvaja's wise son,[16] he took the preceptor's permission and went towards Sharadvat's son.[17] Having honoured Kripa and circumambulated him, the king, skilled in the use of words, spoke these words to the one who was foremost among unassailable ones. 'O preceptor![18] I seek your permission to fight with you, without incurring any sin. O unblemished one! If I obtain your permission, I will defeat all enemies.'

'"Kripa replied, 'O great king! Having decided to fight, if you had not come to me, I would have cursed you for your complete defeat. A man is the servant of wealth. But wealth is never anyone's servant. O great king! This is the truth. I am tied to the Kouravas because of wealth. O great king! It is my view that I must fight for their sake. That is the reason I am tied like a eunuch.[19] Other than battle, what else do you want?'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O preceptor! Listen to my words. Alas! I have to ask you this.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having spoken these words, the king was dejected, and bereft of his senses, fell silent. But having divined what he wished to say, Goutama replied.[20] 'O lord of the earth! I am incapable of being slain. Fight and be victorious. O lord of men! I am pleased that you have come. I will arise every day and pray for your victory. I am telling you this truthfully.' O great king! Having heard these words of Goutama, the king took Kripa's permission and went to where the king of Madra was. Having honoured Shalya, he circumambulated him. The king spoke these beneficial words to the invincible one. 'O revered one![21] I seek your permission to fight with you, without incurring any sin. O great king! If I obtain your permission, I will defeat the enemies.'

'"Shalya replied, 'O great king! Having decided to fight, if you had not come to me, I would have cursed you for your defeat in battle. I am pleased with the honour you have shown me. Let it be as you desire. I grant you permission. Fight and be victorious. O brave one! Tell me anything else that you want. What can I give you? A man is the servant of wealth. But wealth is never anyone's servant. O great king! This is the truth. I am tied to the Kouravas because of wealth. O nephew![22] I will do what you wish for and act according to your desires. I am speaking to you like a eunuch.[23] Other than battle, what else do you want?'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O great king! Always counsel me about my supreme welfare. If you desire, fight for the enemy's cause. That is the boon I desire.'

'"Shalya replied, 'O supreme among kings! In the present case, tell me what I can do to help. I wish to fight in the enemy's cause. I am tied to the Kouravas because of wealth.'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'This was truly the boon I had asked for when the preparations were being made. When the son of the suta fights, you should act so as to diminish his energy.'

'"Shalya replied, 'O son of Kunti! This desire of yours will be satisfied. Go and fight as you please. I will try for your victory.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having taken leave of his maternal uncle, the lord of Madra, Kounteya, surrounded by his brothers, emerged from that large army. In that field of battle, Vasudeva went to Radheya.[24] For the sake of the Pandavas, Gada's elder brother spoke to him.[25] 'O Karna! I have heard that out of enmity towards Bhishma, you will not fight. O Radheya! Until Bhishma has been killed, come over to our side. O Radheya! If you perceive both sides to be equal, after Bhishma has been killed, go and fight again and help Dhritarashtra's son.'

'"Karna replied, 'O Keshava! I will not do anything that causes displeasure to Dhritarashtra's son. Know that I am engaged in Duryodhana's welfare and have given up my life for him.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words, Krishna refrained. He then returned to the Pandavas, who had Yudhishthira in the forefront. In the midst of the soldiers, the eldest Pandava loudly said, 'He who chooses us, will be regarded by us as an aide.' Yuyutsu[26] glanced towards them and with a delighted mind, spoke to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, Kunti's son. 'O great king! O unblemished one! If you accept me, in this battle, I will fight for your cause and against the sons of Dhritarashtra.' Yudhishthira replied, 'Come. All of us will fight with your ignorant brothers. O Yuyutsu! O mighty-armed one! Vasudeva and all of us accept that you will fight in our cause. O prince! O immensely radiant one! It seems that you will be the sole strand and the only one to offer funeral cakes[27] in Dhritarashtra's lineage. Accept us. We accept you. Dhritarashtra's evil-minded and intolerant son will cease to exist.' Your son Yuyutsu then abandoned the Kouravyas. Accompanied by the sound of drums, he went to the army of the sons of Pandu. Together with his younger brothers, King Yudhishthira happily donned his armour again, as resplendent as gold. All those bulls among men ascended their chariots. They arranged themselves in battle formations, as they had earlier. They instructed that hundreds of drums and smaller drums[28] be played. In different ways, those bulls among men roared like lions. On seeing the Pandavas, tigers among men, stationed on their chariots, all the kings, together with Dhrishtadyumna, were delighted and roared again. They had witnessed the magnanimity of the sons of Pandu, who honoured those who should be shown honour. All the lords of the earth applauded this. The kings spoke about the friendship, compassion and kindness those great-souled ones displayed towards their relatives, on the appropriate occasions. 'Excellent', 'superb'—these words of praise were heard everywhere. There were auspicious chants about their deeds, attracting the mind and the heart.[29] All the mlecchas and aryas who were there, and saw or heard about the conduct of the sons of Pandu, wept, their voices choking with tears. The spirited ones instructed hundreds of giant drums, pushkaras and conch shells, as white as milk, to be sounded."'

CHAPTER 902(42)

'Dhritarashtra said, "My soldiers, and those of the others, were arranged in battle formations. Who was the first to strike, the Kurus or the Pandavas?"

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Your son Duryodhana advanced with his brothers,[30] placing Bhishma at the forefront of the army. Delighted in their minds and wishing to fight with Bhishma, so did the Pandavas, with Bhimasena at the forefront. There were clamorous sounds in both the armies, with krakachas, trumpets made out of the horns of cows, drums, kettledrums, tambourines and the roars of horses and elephants. O king! With a tumultuous sound, they rushed at us and we at them. In that great encounter and confrontation, the giant armies of the Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra trembled, like a forest stirred by the wind. The loud roar of those masses of kings, elephants, horses and chariots, dashing against each other at that inauspicious hour, was like that of the ocean agitated by a storm. When that tumultuous sound arose and made the body hair stand up, the mighty-armed Bhimasena roared like a bull. Bhimasena's roars transcended the sounds of conch shells and drums, the trumpeting of elephants and the lion-like roars of the soldiers.

Bhimasena's loud roar surpassed the neighing of thousands of horses in both the armies. On hearing the roar of that brave one, which was like the sound of the clouds or the sound of Shakra's thunder, your soldiers were frightened. All the animals excreted urine and dung, like animals do at the sound of a lion. He showed himself in a terrible form and roared like a giant cloud. He terrified the soldiers of your sons and attacked them. O king! When that mighty archer attacked them, he was surrounded by all the brothers who are your sons—Duryodhana, Durmukha, Duhsaha, Shala, atiratha Duhshasana, Durmarshana, Vivimshati, Chitrasena, maharatha Vikarna, Purumitra, Jaya, Bhoja and Somadatta's valorous son.[31] They showered him with arrows, like clouds enveloping the sun. They brandished their giant bows, which were like clouds tinged with lightning. They unleashed sharp arrows that were like virulent serpents.

'"At that, Droupadi's sons, Subhadra's maharatha son,[32] Nakula, Sahadeva and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna repulsed the sons of Dhritarashtra and pierced them with sharp arrows. They shattered them, like summits with the great force of thunder. In that first encounter, with the terrible sound of bows twanging against arm-guards, neither your side, nor that of the other, retreated. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I witnessed the dexterity of Drona's disciples. O king! They shot many arrows, which always found their mark. The roar of the bows did not cease, even for an instant. The flaming arrows were like stars in the sky. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the other kings were spectators, witnessing the spectacular encounter between relatives. O king! Remembering the injuries they had suffered from each other, the maharathas were enraged and challenged and strove. With elephants, horses and chariots, the armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas were extremely beautiful on the field of battle, like figures on a painting. Then all the kings grasped their bows. Instructed by your son, they advanced with their armies. Thousands of kings were instructed by Yudhishthira. They roared and attacked your son's army. The encounter between the soldiers of both the armies was terrible. Because of the dust raised by the soldiers, the sun disappeared. They advanced. They retreated. They advanced again. One could not detect any difference between ours and those of the enemy. An extremely fearful and tumultuous battle raged. But your father[33] surpassed all the other soldiers.”’

CHAPTER 903(43)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! In the forenoon, there was an extremely fearful and terrible battle that destroyed the bodies of kings. Desiring victory in that battle, the Kurus and the Pandavas roared like lions, resounding in the sky and earth. There was a roar, the slapping of palms and the sound of conch shells. The brave ones roared at each other, like lions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The bows twanged against arm-guards. There were the footfalls of the infantry and the loud roars of horses. Staffs and goads[34] descended. Weapons resounded. As the elephants dashed towards each other, bells jingled. There was a tremendous roar that made the body hair stand up. There was the roar of chariots, like the sound of the clouds. Cruel in their intentions and prepared to give up their lives, all of them[35] raised their standards and advanced against the Pandavas.

‘“O king! Grasping a terrible bow, like the staff of death, Shantanu’s son himself advanced against Dhananjaya. Arjuna grasped the bow Gandiva, famous in the world. In the forefront of that battle, the spirited one advanced against Ganga’s son. Those two tigers of the Kuru lineage wished to kill each other. Ganga’s son pierced Partha in that battle, but he did not waver. O king! Pandava did the same to Bhishma, but could not make him waver. The great archer Satyaki dashed against Kritavarma. There was a tumultuous encounter between the two and it made the body hair stand up. Roaring and using sharp arrows, Satyaki pierced Kritavarma and Kritavarma Satyaki. They oppressed each other. With arrows in their bodies, those immensely strong ones were as resplendent as flowering kimshukas,[36] blossoming in the spring. The great archer Abhimanyu fought with Brihadbala.[37] O lord of the earth! In that battle, the king of Kosala sliced down the standard of Subhadra’s son and brought down his charioteer. When his charioteer was brought down from the chariot, Subhadra’s son was enraged. O great king! He pierced Brihadbala with nine arrows. With a sharp and yellow arrow, he sliced off his standard. With another he brought down his *parshni*.[38] With yet another, he brought down his charioteer. O king! They were angry and continued to weaken each other with sharp arrows. In that battle, Bhimasena fought with your proud maharatha son Duryodhana, who had been the cause of the enmity. Both of those tigers among men were immensely strong and were foremost among the Kurus. In that field of battle, they enveloped each other with showers of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the wonderful ways those great-souled and skilled ones fought, all the beings were astounded. Duhshasana advanced against maharatha Nakula and pierced his innermost organs with many sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Smiling, Madri’s son used sharp arrows to slice down his[39] standard, bow and arrows. He then pierced him with twenty-five small arrows. Your son is unassailable. In that great battle, he pierced and brought down Nakula’s horses, arrows and standard. Durmukha attacked the immensely strong Sahadeva. He fought him in that great battle and pierced him with a shower of arrows. In that great battle, the brave Sahadeva used an extremely sharp arrow to bring down Durmukha’s charioteer. Both of them were invincible in battle and attacked each other. Desiring to repulse each other, they used terrible arrows to create fright. King Yudhishthira himself advanced against the king of Madra. The king of Madra sliced the revered one’s[40] bow into two. When his bow was sliced, Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, took up another bow that was stronger and more forceful. Angered, the king told the lord of Madra, ‘Wait’ and covered him with straight-tufted arrows.

‘“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Dhrishtadyumna attacked Drona with a firm bow that was capable of destroying enemies. Thus angered, Drona sliced it into three and unleashed an extremely terrible arrow that was like the staff of death. Thus despatched in that battle, it penetrated his[41] body. Taking up another bow and fourteen arrows, Drupada's son pierced Drona in that encounter. O great king! In that battle, the violent Shankha[42] attacked Somadatta's son[43], who was also a violent warrior. Exclaiming 'Wait', 'Wait', the brave one pierced him[44] in the right arm in the battle. Somadatta's son then pierced Shankha in the shoulder. O lord of the earth! The bout between those two proud ones was as terrible as that between Vritra and Vasava. O lord of the earth! Enraged in that battle, maharatha Dhrishtaketu,[45] immeasurable in his soul, attacked Bahlika, who was also the embodiment of anger. O king! In that battle, Bahlika roared like a lion and oppressed the intolerant Dhrishtaketu with many arrows. The king of Chedi was angered and in that encounter, swiftly pierced Bahlika with nine arrows. It was like one mad elephant against another. They angrily attacked each other in that encounter and roared repeatedly. They fought in great rage, like Angaraka and Budha.[46] The rakshasa Ghatotkacha was terrible in deeds. He attacked Alambusha, the performer of cruel deeds, like Shakra against Bala.[47] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Ghatotkacha wounded the enraged and extremely strong rakshasa with ninety sharp arrows. In that encounter, Alambusha pierced Bhimasena's extremely strong son in many places with straight-tufted arrows. Wounded by arrows in that battle, they looked like the immensely strong Bala and Shakra in the battle between the gods and the asuras.

'"O king! In that battle, the powerful Shikhandi attacked Drona's son. Angered at this, Ashvatthama wounded Shikhandi with an extremely sharp iron arrow and made him tremble. O king! At this, Shikhandi struck Drona's son with a well-crafted, extremely sharp and extremely pointed arrow. In that bout, they struck each other with many other kinds of arrows. O king! Virata was the general of an army and in that battle, he quickly and impetuously attacked the brave Bhagadatta. Virata was extremely angry. He showered arrows on Bhagadatta, like clouds showering on a mountain. But in that encounter, Bhagadatta, lord of the earth, quickly enveloped Virata, like clouds around the rising sun. Sharadvat's son, Kripa, attacked Brihadkshatra from Kekaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kripa shrouded him with a shower of arrows. The angry Kekaya also showered arrows on Goutama. Having killed each other's horses and having sliced down each other's bows, both of them were bereft of their chariots. They wrathfully advanced against each other, intending to fight with swords. The battle that they fought was terrible in form and extremely fearful. King Drupada, the scorcher of enemies, intolerantly advanced against Jayadratha from Sindhu, who was cheerfully waiting. The king of Sindhu pierced Drupada with three tufted arrows and in that battle, was wounded in return. They fought a bout that was terrible in form and extremely fearful. It delighted the hearts of spectators and was like that between Angaraka and Shukra.[48]

'"Your son Vikarna possessed swift horses. He advanced against the immensely strong Sutasoma[49] and a battle started. Though Vikarna pierced Sutasoma, he could not make him waver. Nor could Sutasoma make Vikarna waver and it was wonderful. In the cause of the Pandavas, maharatha Chekitana, tiger among men, angrily advanced against the valorous Susharma.[50] O great king! In that battle, Susharma repulsed maharatha Chekitana with a great shower of arrows. Chekitana was enraged in that great encounter and enveloped Susharma with arrows, like a great cloud on a mountain. O Indra among kings! The powerful Shakuni attacked the powerful Prativindhya, like a crazy elephant against another crazy one. Enraged, Yudhishthira's son pierced Soubala with sharp arrows in that battle, like Maghavan against a danava. In that battle, Shakuni also wounded the immensely wise Prativindhya with straight-tufted arrows. O Indra among kings! In that battle, Shrutakarma[51] attacked the valiant maharatha, Sudakshina from Kamboja. In that battle, Sudakshina pierced Sahadeva's maharatha son, but could not make him waver, like Mount Mainaka. At that, Shrutakarma was enraged and oppressed the maharatha from Kamboja with many arrows, wounding him all over his body. In that battle, the angry Iravan took great care and attacked the intolerant Shrutayusha.[52] In the encounter, Arjuna's maharatha son killed the horses of his opponent and roared loudly, being honoured by the soldiers. In that battle, the wrathful Shrutayusha used a supreme club to kill the horses of Phalguna's son and they continued to fight. In the battle, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti advanced against the valiant maharatha, Kuntibhoja, who was at the head of his army, together with his son. We witnessed the extraordinary valour of those from Avanti there. They stationed themselves calmly, though they faced a large army. Anuvinda hurled a club at Kuntibhoja. But Kuntibhoja swiftly repulsed him with a torrent of arrows. Kuntibhoja's son pierced Vinda with an arrow. But he also pierced him in return and it was wonderful. O revered one! In that battle, together with their soldiers, the five brothers from Kekaya fought with the five from Gandhara, together with their soldiers. Your son Virabahu fought with Virata's son, Uttara, supreme among charioteers, and pierced him with sharp arrows. Uttara also pierced the steadfast one with sharp arrows. O king! In that battle, the king of Chedi attacked Uluka.[53] Uluka pierced him with sharp and feathered arrows. O lord of the earth! The battle that they fought was terrible in form. Unable to vanquish each other, they angrily wounded each other.

'"Thus, in that battle, there were thousands of duels between chariots, elephants, horses and infantry, on their side and on ours. For a short instant, the field of battle looked beautiful. O king! But it soon became maddening and nothing could be seen. In that battle, elephants were against elephants and chariots against chariots. Horses were against horses and infantry against infantry. The battle became extremely difficult and confusing. In that battle, large numbers of warriors attacked each other. The assembled devarshis, siddhas and charanas witnessed that terrible battle, equal to that between the gods and the asuras. O revered one! Thousands of elephants and chariots and masses of horses and foot soldiers behaved in a contrary way.[54] O tiger among men! It was repeatedly seen that chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry fought with each other."'

CHAPTER 904(44)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the hundreds and thousands of bouts that took place there, without showing any considerations of respect. The son did not recognize the father, or the father the son born from his own loins. A brother did not recognize a brother there, nor a sister’s son his maternal uncle. The maternal uncle did not recognize his sister’s son, nor did a friend recognize his friend there. The Pandavas and the Kurus fought as if they were possessed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Some tigers among men used chariots to bring down and shatter chariots, destroying their yokes. Axles of chariots clashed against axles of chariots. Seats clashed against seats of chariots. Some united against others who were united. They all wished to rob each other of their lives. Some chariots could not move, because they were obstructed by other chariots. Gigantic elephants had their temples shattered and fell down on other elephants. They were angry and used their tusks to attack each other in many places. Elephants adorned with decorations[55] and standards attacked the elephants of the enemy. O great king! These were giant elephants that encountered other powerful ones. Injured by the tusks, they were greatly distressed and roared. But these were disciplined because of their training. Urged by pikes and goads, elephants that were in musth attacked others that were in musth. Attacked by those that were in musth, giant elephants ran away everywhere, shrieking like cranes. There were trained elephants, with shattered temples and mouths. These supreme elephants were wounded by swords, lances and iron arrows. Pierced in their innards, they fell down and lost their lives. Others uttered terrible roars and ran away in different directions. The foot soldiers who guarded the elephants were armed and possessed broad chests. They had swords, bows, unblemished battleaxes, clubs, maces, catapults,[56] lances, iron bludgeons and sharp and polished cutlasses.[57] O great king! Grasping these, they could be seen to run in every direction, desirous of taking each other’s lives. The resplendent cutlasses were steeped in the blood of brave men and seemed to shine brilliantly. The swords were whirled by the arms of brave ones and made a whizzing sound. As they descended on the inner organs of enemies, they generated a tremendous sound. They were shattered by clubs and maces and by supreme swords. They were gored by the tusks of the tusked ones and wounded by the tusks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In every place, large numbers of men were oppressed and let out sounds of lamentation, like those of men who are about to die.

'"Those who were on extremely swift horses, with tails like those of swans, attacked others on horses. They hurled giant spears that were decorated with gold and were swift, sharp and polished. They descended like snakes. There were some great rathas on swift horses. They sliced off the heads of other brave rathas who were on horses. A ratha on a horse approached many who were within the shooting distance of an arrow and used straight-tufted iron arrows to kill them. There were crazy elephants that were like mountains or clouds and were adorned with gold. They brought down horses and crushed them with their feet. The elephants were struck on their humps and their flanks. They were pierced by spikes and some of them roared in agony. There was terrible confusion there. Many supreme elephants suddenly threw down horses and their riders and crushed them. Using the tips of their tusks, elephants flung down horses and their riders. They crushed chariots and their standards and roamed around. There were some giant male elephants, extremely energetic because of the musth strewing down their temples. They slew horses and riders with their trunks and their feet. Some horses and chariots were flung away by the elephants. All of them were thrown away in all the directions, with a loud noise. Swift, polished and sharp arrows were like serpents. They descended on the bodies of men and riders and pierced their iron armour. Polished javelins were hurled by the arms of brave ones. O lord of the earth! They were terrible, like giant meteors, and descended. Blazing swords were taken out from sheaths made out of the skins of tigers and leopards. Once unsheathed, these polished swords were used to kill the enemies in battle. There were soldiers who had their sides sliced open. Despite this, they angrily attacked with swords, shields and battleaxes. Some were pierced by javelins. Others were cut down by battleaxes. Some were destroyed by elephants. Others were oppressed by horses. Some were crushed by the wheels of chariots. Others were brought down by sharp arrows. O king! Thus oppressed, the men loudly called for their relatives, their sons, fathers, brothers and kin, their maternal uncles and nephews. In that field of battle, some others called for others.[58] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A large number of combatants lost their weapons. Their thighs were broken and their hands and arms torn apart. Their sides were shattered. Some were still alive and could be seen to be screaming from thirst. O lord of the earth! They had only a little bit of strength left and were overcome by thirst. They had fallen down on the ground in that battle and asked for water. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Others were weak and were covered in blood. Assembled there, they censured themselves and your son.

'"O venerable one! But there were other brave kshatriyas. Having acted in enmity towards each other, they did not cast away their weapons. Nor did they lament. They roared in delight towards each other. Lying there, they could be seen to bite their teeth with their own lips. Their bows were contracted and they glanced towards each other. There were others who suffered from wounds and had been oppressed by arrows. But even then, those extremely strong ones bore the pain silently and were firm in their hearts. There were other brave charioteers who had lost their chariots in battle. They had been thrown down and wounded by the supreme elephants. Having been brought down, they asked for the chariots of others. O great king! They were as beautiful as blossoming kimshuka trees. Many terrible cries were heard in every division of the armies. It was an extremely terrible encounter that destroyed heroes. In that battle, the father killed the son and the son killed the father. The sister's son killed the maternal uncle and the maternal uncle killed the sister's son. O king! A friend killed a friend and a relative killed a relative. Thus was the battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas. No mercy was shown in that fearful and terrible encounter. On encountering Bhishma, the army of the Parthas trembled. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The mighty-armed one's standard was adorned with five stars and a palm tree. It was made out of silver. O king! When ascended on his great chariot, Bhishma looked like the moon on Meru.”’

CHAPTER 905(45)

‘Sanjaya said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Most of that terrible forenoon passed, an extremely terrible time that was destructive of great warriors. Then, urged by your son, Durmukha, Kritavarma, Kripa, Shalya and Vivimshati went to Bhishma and began to protect him. Protected by those five atirathas, the maharatha[59] penetrated the Pandava army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhisma’s palm standard was seen to slice through the Chedis, the Kashis, the Karushas and the Panchalas in diverse ways. Bhishma’s bow and weapons then sliced off the heads[60] with extremely forceful, straight-tufted and broad-headed arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! As the chariot travelled along its path, Bhishma seemed to be dancing. Some elephants were pierced by him in their vital parts and screamed piteously.

‘“Abhimanyu was extremely enraged and rushed towards Bhishma’s chariot, stationed on his own chariot, which was yoked to supreme and tawny horses. His standard was embellished with pure gold and looked like a karnikara.[61] He attacked Bhishma and those supreme charioteers.[62] Striking the palm standard with sharp arrows, the brave one fought with Bhishma and his followers. He pierced Kritavarma with one and Shalya with five arrows and weakened his great-grandfather with nine sharp arrows. He drew his bow back fully and released an arrow that sliced down the standard embellished with gold.[63] With a broad-headed and straight-tufted arrow that was capable of penetrating every kind of armour, he severed the head from the body of Durmukha’s charioteer. With another broad-headed arrow, he sliced down Kripa’s bow, decorated with gold. With many sharp and pointed arrows, he wounded all of them. The extremely angry maharatha seemed to be dancing around. On witnessing his dexterity, even the gods were satisfied. On seeing the success with which Krishna’s son[64] hit the targets, all the charioteers, with Bhishma at the forefront, thought that he possessed the spirit of Dhananjaya himself. His bow twanged like Gandiva and when it was stretched and stretched again in every direction, it seemed to whirl like a circle of fire. Bhishma, the destroyer of enemy heroes, advanced towards him with great speed and in that battle, pierced Arjuna's son with nine arrows. He used three broad-headed arrows to slice down the standard of the immensely energetic one. Bhishma, rigid in his bows, used three broad-headed arrows to strike his charioteer. O venerable one! Kritavarma, Kripa and Shalya also pierced Krishna's son. But they could not make him tremble and he was as firm as Mount Mainaka. The brave one was surrounded by maharathas who were on the side of Dhritarashtra's son. Nevertheless, Krishna's son showered down arrows on those five charioteers. He repulsed their great weapons with showers of arrows. Releasing arrows towards Bhishma, Krishna's son roared loudly. O king! When he endeavoured thus in battle and released arrows towards Bhishma, his strength of arms was seen to be extremely great. Though he was valorous, Bhishma showered arrows at him. But in that battle, he sliced down all the arrows released from Bhishma's bow. In that encounter, the brave one used nine invincible arrows to slice down Bhishma's standard. At this, the people let out a loud shout. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It[65] was made out of silver and was decorated with gold. It was extremely large and bore the mark of a palm. Sliced down by the arrows of Subhadra's son, it fell down on the ground. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the standard had been brought down by the arrows of Subhadra's son, Bhima roared loudly, so that Subhadra's son might be encouraged. Then, in that extremely terrible moment, the extremely strong Bhishma made many great and celestial weapons manifest themselves. The great-grandfather, immeasurable in his soul, enveloped Subhadra's son with hundreds and thousands of arrows with drooping tufts.

'"At this, ten great maharatha archers from the Pandava side swiftly advanced on their chariots, so as to protect Subhadra's son. O lord of the earth! They were Virata and his son, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Bhima, the five from Kekaya and Satyaki. When they advanced towards him in battle, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, pierced Panchala[66] with three and Satyaki with sharp arrows. He drew his bow completely back and used a sharp and tufted arrow, like a razor at the tip, to slice down Bhimasena's standard. O supreme among men! Bhima's standard was decorated with gold and bore the mark of a lion. Brought down by Bhisma, it fell down from the chariot. At this, in that battle, Bhima pierced Bhishma, Shantanu's son, with three arrows, Kripa with one and Kritavarma with eight. Riding on an elephant, Virata's son, Uttara, attacked the king who was the lord of Madra.[67] As that king of elephants advanced towards his chariot in that battle, irresistible in force, Shalya countered it. However, that king of elephants was enraged. It placed its leg on the yoke of the chariot and killed the four large and well-trained horses. Though the horses were killed, the lord of Madra remained on his chariot. So as to kill Uttara, he hurled a lance that was like a serpent. His[68] body and armour were pierced and he was submerged in great darkness.[69] With the grip on goad and lance loosened, he fell down from the shoulder of the elephant. Shalya grasped a sword and descended from his supreme chariot. With great valour, he sliced off the great trunk of that king among elephants. With its inner parts pierced by showers of arrows and with its trunk severed, the elephant let out a terrible roar. It fell down on the ground and died. Having performed this extraordinary deed, the maharatha lord of Madra swiftly ascended Kritavarma's radiant chariot.

'"On seeing that his brother Uttara had been slain and seeing that Shalya was stationed resplendently with Kritavarma, Shankha, Virata's son, blazed in anger, like a fire into which oblations have been poured. Wishing to kill Shalya, the lord of Madra, the powerful one extended his great bow, decorated with gold and bearing the mark of the sun, and attacked him. Surrounded on all sides by a large number of chariots, he advanced towards Shalya's chariot and enveloped him with a shower of arrows. On seeing him advance, with the valour of a crazy elephant, seven of your charioteers surrounded him from every direction,[70] wishing to protect the lord of Madra, who seemed to be advancing into the jaws of death. Roaring like thunder, the mighty-armed Bhishma grasped a bow that was as long as a palm tree and attacked Shankha in that battle. When they saw the immensely strong and great archer, the army of the Pandavas trembled, like a boat that is tossed around in a storm. Then Arjuna swiftly advanced and placed himself in front of Shankha, so as to protect him from Bhishma and a battle raged between the two. There were great cries and exclamations as the two warriors fought each other in that encounter. The energy of one seemed to merge into the energy of the other[71] and everyone was astounded. Then Shalya grasped a club in his hand and descended from his great chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He killed Shankha's four horses. When his horses were slain, Shankha alighted from his chariot and grasping a sword, ran towards Bibhatsu's[72] chariot. Climbing onto it, he found peace again. Many shafted arrows were released from Bhishma's chariot and they covered everything on earth and in the sky. Bhishma, foremost among the wielders of weapons, used his arrows to kill large numbers of Panchalas, Matsyas, Kekayas and Prabhadrakas. Abandoning the battle with Pandava Savyasachi, he[73] rushed towards Panchala Drupada, surrounded by his soldiers. O king! He enveloped his beloved relative with many arrows. Like a forest consumed by a fire at the end of winter, Drupada's soldiers were seen to be consumed by those arrows. Bhishma was stationed in that battle, like a fire without smoke. He was like the sun at midday, scorching with his energy. The Pandava warriors were incapable of glancing at Bhishma. Oppressed by fear, the Pandavas looked in every direction. But without seeing a protector, they were like cattle afflicted by the cold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The soldiers were slaughtered in large numbers and retreated in despondence. The Pandava troops uttered great sounds of lamentation. Shantanu's son, Bhishma, held a bow that was always drawn in the form of a circle. He released flaming arrows that were like poisonous snakes. Rigid in his vows, he created a continuous stream of arrows in every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After indicating which one he would target, he killed many Pandava rathas. When the soldiers were crushed and shattered in every way, the sun set and nothing could be seen. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing Bhishma stationed in that great battle, the Parthas withdrew their soldiers.”’

CHAPTER 906(46)

‘Sanjaya said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the troops were withdrawn on the first day, Duryodhana was delighted at having seen the enraged Bhishma in battle. With all his brothers and all the lords of the earth who were on his side, Dharmaraja swiftly went to Janardana. O king! Having witnessed Bhishma’s valour and overcome with great sorrow as he reflected on his defeat, he spoke to Varshneya. ‘O Krishna! Behold the great archer Bhishma, whose valour is terrible. He consumes my soldiers with his arrows, like a fire consumes dry grass. How can we possibly glance at that great-souled one? He is licking up my soldiers, like a fire fed with oblations. On seeing that immensely strong tiger among men, armed with a bow, my soldiers are afflicted with arrows and flee. The angry Yama, the wielder of the vajra, Varuna with the noose and Kubera with the club can be vanquished in battle. But the immensely energetic and greatly strong Bhishma is incapable of being conquered. Without a boat, I am immersed in the fathomless waters of Bhishma. O Keshava! Because of the weakness of my own intelligence, I have encountered Bhishma. O Govinda! It is better for me to retire to the forest and dwell there. I should not offer all these lords of the earth to death, in Bhishma’s form. O Krishna! Bhishma is knowledgeable about great weapons and he will destroy my soldiers. Like insects dash into a blazing fire and are destroyed, my soldiers will advance towards their destruction. O Varshneya! I have resorted to valour for the sake of a kingdom and am heading towards destruction. My brave brothers are afflicted, oppressed by arrows. Because of me and because of affection towards their brother, they have been dislodged from their kingdom and from happiness. We place a great value on life and now, life seems to be extremely difficult to attain. For the remaining part of my life, I will perform severe austerities. O Keshava! I will not bring about the destruction of my friends in battle. With his divine weapons, the immensely strong Bhishma incessantly kills many of my armed rathas, who are themselves foremost among the wielders of arms. O Madhava! Swiftly tell me what should be done for my own welfare. I see Savyasachi stationed in battle, as if he was a neutral spectator. Bhima alone remembers the dharma of kshatriyas. Using the valour of his arms, the mighty-armed one fights to the best of his capability. To the best of his capacity, this great-minded one kills warriors with his club. He performs difficult deeds on elephants, chariots, horses and infantry. O venerable one! But even if he were to fight for a hundred years, in a fair fight, this brave one is incapable of destroying the soldiers of the enemy. This friend of yours[74] is alone knowledgeable about all weapons. On seeing us consumed by Bhishma and the great-souled Drona, he looks on with indifference. Bhishma's divine weapons, and those of the great-souled Drona, are repeatedly consuming all the kshatriyas. O Krishna! Such is Bhishma's valour that, if he is enraged, together with all the kings on his side, he will certainly annihilate us. O lord of yoga! Look for a maharatha and great archer who can pacify Bhishma in battle, like clouds of rain against a conflagaration. O Govinda! It is through your favours that the Pandavas will kill their enemies, regain their own kingdom and find delight with their relatives.' Having said this, the great-souled Partha remained silent for a long time, deep in reflection and with his senses robbed by misery.

'"On learning that Pandava was oppressed by sorrow, with his senses robbed by unhappiness, Govinda spoke, delighting all the Pandavas. 'O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Do not sorrow. You should not sorrow when all your brothers are brave and archers who are famous in all the worlds. O king! I am engaged in ensuring your welfare and so are maharatha Satyaki, the aged Virata and Drupada and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna. O supreme among kings! So are all these kings and their soldiers. O lord of the earth! They are waiting for your favours and are devoted to you. The immensely strong Parshata Dhrishtadyumna has always been engaged in your welfare and doing that which pleases you. He has been appointed as overall commander. The mighty-armed Shikhandi is certain to bring about Bhishma's death.' Having heard this, the king spoke to maharatha Dhrishtadyumna, in that assembly and in Vasudeva's hearing. 'O Dhrishtadyumna! O venerable one! Listen to what I am telling you. You should not transgress the words that I will speak. With Vasudeva's approval, you are our supreme commander. O bull among men! You are the commander of the soldiers of Pandu, just as in earlier times, Kartikeya always was that of the gods. O tiger among men! Display your valour and kill the Kouravas. O venerable one! O bull among men! I will follow you, Bhima and Krishna, together with the sons of Madri and the armoured sons of Droupadi, and the foremost among all the other lords of the earth.' Delighting everyone, Dhrishtadyumna replied, 'O Partha! In earlier times, I have been ordained by Shambhu as the one who will kill Drona. O lord of the earth! I will now fight in battle with Bhishma, Drona, Shalya, Jayadratha and all the others intoxicated at the prospect of battle.' When that great archer, the Parshata who was unassailable in battle, the destroyer of brave ones and an Indra among kings, spoke in this way, everyone loudly applauded.

'"Partha told Parshata, the commander of the army, 'The vyuha[75] known by the name of Krouncharuna is the destroyer of all enemies.[76] When the gods and the asuras fought in earlier times, Brihaspati told this to Indra. Therefore, deploy this battle formation, which is destructive of enemy soldiers. This has not been seen before. Let the kings, together with the Kurus, now see it.' Having been thus addressed by that god among men, like Vishnu speaking to the wielder of the vajra, when it was morning, he placed Dhananjaya in the forefront of the entire army. His[77] standard had been constructed by Vishvakarma on Indra's[78] instruction and it was extremely beautiful as it fluttered in the path of the sun. It was decorated with flags and possessed the complexion of Indra's weapon.[79] It coursed through the sky like a traveller of the skies and was like a city of the gandharvas. O venerable one! It seemed to be dancing along, along the path that the chariot took. Partha, the wielder of Gandiva, was adorned with this jewel. He was adorned with it, like the self-creating one[80] is with the sun. King Drupada was at the head, surrounded by a large army. O lord of men! Kuntibhoja and Chedi were the two eyes.[81] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dasharnas, Prayagas, together with masses of Dasherakas, Anupakas and Kiratas were the neck. O king! Together with Patachcharas, Hundas, Pouravakas and Nishadas, Yudhishthira was the back. Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's sons, Abhimanyu and maharatha Satyaki were the wings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Pishachas, Daradas, Pundras, together with Kundivishas, Madakas, Ladakas, Tanganas, the further Tanganas, Bahlikas, Tittiras, Cholas and Pandyas. O king! These countries formed the right wing. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Agniveshyas, Jagatundas, Paladashas, Shabaras, Tumbupas, Vatsas, together with the Nakulas,[82] Nakula and Sahadeva resorted to the left wing. There were ten thousand chariots on the joints of the wings, a hundred thousand on the head, a hundred million and twenty thousand on the back and one hundred and seventy thousand on the neck. O king! There were many elephants, like mobile mountains, on the joints of the wings, the wings and the tips of the wings. The rear was protected by Virata, together with Kekaya, the king of Kashi and Shaibya[83] and thirty thousand chariots. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the Pandavas constitute a great vyuha and having clad themselves in armour and stationed themselves in battle, waited for the sun to rise. Their white umbrellas were radiant and had the hue of the sun. They were giant and unblemished and adorned their elephants and chariots."'

CHAPTER 907(47)

'Sanjaya said, "O venerable one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The infinitely energetic Partha created that extremely terrible battle formation. On seeing that impenetrable and great Krouncha vyuha, your son went to the preceptor, Kripa, Shalya, Somadatta's son, Vikarna and Ashvatthama, together with Duhshasana and all his brothers and the many brave warriors who were assembled there for the battle. At that time, he spoke these words, delighting all of them. 'All of you are armed with many weapons and are learned in the sacred texts and in arms. You are maharathas. Alone, each one of you is capable of slaying the sons of Pandu and their soldiers in battle, and you are united. Our forces are protected by Bhishma and are unlimited. O supreme among kings! Their forces are limited. Let the Samsthanas, Shurasenas, Venikas, Kukkuras, Arevakas, Trigartas and Yavanas remain with Shatrunjaya,[84] Duhshasana, the brave Vikarna, Nanda, Upanandaka[85] and Chitrasena,[86] together with the Panibhadrakas and with their respective troops at the forefront, protect Bhishma.' O venerable one! Then Drona, Bhishma and your sons created a giant vyuha to counter that of the Pandus. Like the lord of the gods, Bhishma advanced, leading a large army and surrounded by a large number of soldiers. O lord of the earth! The powerful and great archer, Bharadvaja's son,[87] followed him, with the Kuntalas, Dasharnas, Magadhas, Vidarbhas, Mekalas, Karnas[88] and Pravaranas. With all these soldiers, Bhishma was resplendent. The Gandharas, Sindhus, Souviras, Shibis and Vasatis and Shakuni and his own soldiers, protected Bharadvaja's son. With the Ashvatakas, Vikarnas,[89] Sharmilas, Kosalas, Daradas, Chuchupas, Kshudrakas and Malavas, Soubala and his soldiers and with all his brothers, King Duryodhana cheerfully advanced. O venerable one! Bhurishrava, Shala, Shalya, Bhagadatta and Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti guarded the left flank. Somadatta's son, Susharma, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Shatayu and Shrutayu guarded the right flank. Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma guarded the rear, with a large number of soldiers. Their rear was protected by kings from many countries and Ketuman, Vasumana and the powerful son of the king of Kashi.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of your soldiers were delighted at the prospect of battle. They cheerfully blew on their conch shells and roared like lions. On hearing these sounds, the aged grandfather of the Kurus was delighted. The powerful one roared like a lion and blew on his conch shell. At this, conch shells, kettledrums, many different kinds of drums and battle-drums began to sound and there was a tumultuous uproar.[90] Hrishikesha and Dhananjaya were stationed on a giant chariot drawn by white horses and respectively blew on the excellent conch shells Panchajanya and Devadatta, decorated with gold and jewels. Vrikodara, terrible in deeds, blew on the giant conch shell Poundra. Kunti's son, King Yudhishthira, blew on Anantavijaya. Nakula blew on Sughosa and Sahadeva on Manipushpaka. The king of Kashi, Shaibya, maharatha Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, maharatha Satyaki, the great archer from Panchala[91] and Droupadi's five sons—all of them blew on giant conch shells and roared like lions. The extremely loud and tumultuous roar created by those warriors echoed on earth and in the sky. O great king! Thus did the cheerful Kurus and Pandavas assemble again for battle, with a desire to torment each other in the encounter."'

CHAPTER 908(48)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "Having assembled in battle formation in this way, what did mine and those of the others do? How did those supreme among wielders of weapons strike?"

'Sanjaya replied, "All the troops were arranged in battle formation. The warriors were armoured and waited. The standards were raised up. On seeing his army, which was like the limitless ocean, your son, King Duryodhana, stationed himself in its midst and spoke to all the warriors on your side. 'You are armoured. Now fight.' Their minds were full of cruelty and they had given up the desire to live. With their standards raised, all of them rushed against the Pandavas. A terrible battle started and it made the body hair stand up. Your chariots and elephants were mixed up with that of the enemy. Charioteers released sharp arrows that were full of energy and shafted with gold. These descended on elephants and horses. When the battle commenced, the mighty-armed and armoured Bhishma, terrible in his valour, grasped a bow. The aged grandfather of the Kurus advanced and showered arrows on those brave men—Subhadra's son,[92] Bhimasena, Shini's maharatha son,[93] Kekaya, Virata, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and the lords of Chedi and Matsya. At the encounter with that brave one, the great vyuha[94] wavered. The battle that was fought by all the soldiers was extremely great. Many horse-riders, charioteers and the foremost among elephants were slain. Masses of chariots on the Pandava side began to flee.

'"Arjuna, tiger among men, saw maharatha Bhishma. He angrily told Varshneya, 'Go where the grandfather is. O Varshneya! It is evident that when he is extremely enraged, engaged in Duryodhana's welfare, this Bhishma will destroy my army. O Janardana! Protected by the one who wields a firm bow, Drona, Kripa, Shalya, Vikarna and the sons of Dhritarashtra, with Duryodhana at the forefront, will slaughter the Panchalas. O Janardana! For the sake of our soldiers, I will go where Bhishma is.' Vasudeva replied, 'O Dhananjaya! O brave one! Be careful. I will take you towards the grandfather's chariot.' O lord of men! Having said this, Shouri[95] took the chariot, famous in the worlds, towards Bhishma's chariot. The horses had the complexion of cranes.[96] As it advanced, many flags fluttered. The standard was raised and the extremely terrible ape roared on it. The chariot was as radiant as the sun and it roared like a giant cloud. Pandava slaughtered the soldiers of the Kouravas and the Shurasenas and the one who dispelled the sorrow of his well-wishers swiftly advanced to the battle. He descended with the force of an intoxicated elephant, using his arrows to bring down warriors in that battle. Shantanu's son, Bhishma, was protected by warriors who were led by Saindhava[97] and those from the east, Souvira and Kekaya and encountered him with force. Who other than the grandfather of the Kurus and the two rathas Drona and Vaikartana[98] are capable of withstanding the wielder of the Gandiva in battle?

'"O great king! Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kouravas, pierced Arjuna with seventy-seven iron arrows. O king! Drona pierced him with twenty-five arrows, Kripa with fifty, Duryodhana with sixty-four, Shalya with nine arrows and Vikarna pierced Pandava with ten broad-headed arrows. But though he was struck in every direction with sharp arrows, the mighty-armed and great archer did not suffer and was like a mountain that has been pierced. O bull among the Bharata lineage!

Kiriti's[99] soul is beyond measure. In return, he struck Bhishma with twenty-five arrows, Kripa with nine, Drona, tiger among men, with sixty arrows, Vikarna with three, Artayani[100] with three and the king[101] with five arrows. Satyaki, Virata, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's sons and Abhimanyu surrounded Dhananjaya. The great archer Drona was engaged in ensuring Gangeya's[102] welfare. Panchala,[103] supported by the Somakas, advanced against him. Bhishma, best among charioteers, swiftly pierced Pandava with eighty sharp arrows. At this, your warriors were extremely delighted. The powerful Dhananjaya was a lion among charioteers. On hearing these roars of applause, he cheerfully penetrated their midst and having done that, sported with his bow and took aim at those maharathas. Dhananjaya reached the midst of those lions among charioteers. On seeing that his own soldiers were tormented by Partha in that battle, King Duryodhana, lord of men, spoke to Bhishma. 'O father![104] Pandu's powerful son is accompanied by Krishna. O Gangeya! He is destroying our soldiers and severing our roots, even though you and Drona, supreme among charioteers, are alive. It is because of you that maharatha Karna has discarded his weapons and does not fight in this battle with Partha, though he always has my welfare in mind. O Gangeya! Act so that Phalguna may be killed.' O king! Having been thus addressed, your father, Devavrata,[105] exclaimed, 'Shame on the dharma of kshatriyas,' and advanced towards Partha's chariot.

'"O king! All the kings saw that these two, both drawn by white horses, were ready to do battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They roared like lions and blew on their conch shells. O venerable one! When Bhishma was stationed in battle, Drona's son,[106] Duryodhana and your son Vikarna surrounded him. All the Pandavas surrounded Dhananjaya. When they were stationed in battle, a great duel commenced. In that battle, Gangeya pierced Partha with nine arrows and Arjuna pierced him back with ten arrows that penetrated the inner organs. O Kourava! Arjuna prided himself on his skills in battle. With a thousand well-directed arrows, Pandava enveloped Bhishma in every direction. But Bhishma, Shantanu's son, repulsed Partha's net of arrows with his own net of arrows. Both of them were extremely cheerful. Both of them found delight in the battle. They fought against each other, each desiring to counter the other. But neither was superior to the other. The net of arrows released from Bhishma's bow were seen to be repulsed by Arjuna's arrows. In that fashion, the nets of arrows released from Arjuna's bow were all cut down by Gangeya's arrows and fell down on the ground. Arjuna pierced Bhishma with twenty-five sharp arrows. And in that battle, Bhishma pierced Partha with thirty arrows. Those extremely strong ones wounded each other's horses, pierced the standards and struck the chariots and wheels of the chariots. The destroyers of enemies seemed to be playing. O great king! Bhishma, supreme among the wielders of weapons, was enraged. With three arrows, he pierced Vasudeva between the breasts. O king! Pierced by Bhishma's arrows, Achyuta Madhusudana was resplendent in that battle, like a blossoming kimshuka. On seeing Madhava thus pierced, Arjuna became extremely angry. In that encounter, he pierced Gangeya's charioteer with three arrows. In that encounter, the brave ones took aim against each other and endeavoured to kill each other, but did not succeed. The chariots advanced and retreated, traversing wonderful circles. Both charioteers displayed their skill and dexterity in many ways. O king! In seeking their objective, the maharathas repeatedly changed their positions and adopted different paths, so that they could strike each other. Both of them roared like lions and blew on their conch shells. Loud noises could be heard as the maharathas twanged their bows. There was the sound of conch shells and roars from the axles of the chariots. The earth began to tremble, as if there was an earthquake underneath. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one could detect a weakness in either of them. Both of them were powerful and valiant in battle. Each was equal to the other. It was only through the signs that the Kouravas could approach Bhishma and also through the signs that the sons of Pandu could approach Partha.[107] O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing the valour displayed by these best of men in the battle, all the beings were struck with wonder. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, no weakness was discernible in either of the two, like those established in dharma. Nor could any deceit be seen. In that battle, both became invisible because of the nets of arrows and suddenly became visible again.

'"On witnessing the valour, the gods, together with the gandharvas, the charanas and the rishis, spoke to each other. 'When they are enraged, neither of these maharathas is capable of being vanquished in battle, even by the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas and all the worlds. The worlds will regard this extremely marvellous battle as wonderful. Such a battle will never take place again. In the encounter, Bhishma is incapable of being vanquished by the intelligent Partha, even though he uses his bow, chariot, horses and arrows in the battle. In that fashion, in a battle, even the gods cannot conquer Pandava. Though he makes every endeavour, Bhishma cannot vanquish that archer in an encounter.' O lord of the earth! We heard these words of praise spoken about both Gangeya and Arjuna in that battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While they fought, your warriors and those of the Pandaveyas, killed each other in the battle. They valiantly used polished and sharp swords, polished battleaxes, many kinds of arrows and diverse types of weapons and other arms. As long as that extremely terrible battle continued, the brave ones on either side killed one another. O king! There was a great encounter between Drona and Panchala.[108]"'

CHAPTER 909(49)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! Tell me how the great archer Drona and Parshata Panchala fought and strove against each other in that battle. O Sanjaya! It is my view that destiny is superior to human endeavour, since Shantanu's son, Bhishma, could not vanquish Pandava in battle. When Bhishma is enraged in battle, he can destroy all mobile and immobile objects in the worlds. O Sanjaya! With his energy, why could he not escape from Pandava in that encounter?"

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Be patient and hear about that extremely terrible battle. Pandava is incapable of being vanquished by the gods, together with Vasava. With sharp arrows, Drona wounded Dhrishtadyumna and used a broad-headed arrow to bring down his charioteer from the safety of the chariot. O venerable one! Using the best of arrows, the wrathful one wounded Dhrishtadyumna’s four horses. The brave Dhrishtadyumna smiled, and asking Drona to wait, pierced him with nine sharp arrows. At this, Bharadvaja’s powerful son, immeasurable in his soul, enveloped the intolerant Dhrishtadyumna with arrows. With a desire to kill Parshata, he then grasped a terrible arrow. It was like Shakra’s vajra to the touch and resembled the staff of death. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Bharadvaja’s son was about to use it in battle, a great lamentation arose from all the soldiers. We then witnessed Dhrishtadyumna’s extraordinary manliness. Like an immobile mountain, the brave one remained stationed in battle. As the terrible and flaming arrow rushed towards him, like his own death, he sliced it down and unleashed a shower of arrows on Bharadvaja’s son. On witnessing that extremely difficult deed accomplished by Dhrishtadyumna, all the Panchalas, together with the Pandavas, were delighted and roared loudly. With a desire to kill Drona, the valiant one then hurled a lance, decorated with gold and lapis lazuli, with great force. On witnessing the gold-adorned lance suddenly descending in the battle, Bharadvaja’s son smiled and sliced it down into three parts. O lord of men! Having seen that his lance had been thus repulsed, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna unleashed a shower of arrows in Drona’s direction. But the greatly famous Drona repulsed this shower of arrows and in the midst of this, sliced down the bow of Drupada’s son. When his bow had been sliced down in that battle, the immensely famous and powerful one hurled a giant club towards Drona. It was as firm as a mountain. Having been thus forcefully hurled, the club headed towards Drona, for his destruction. We then witnessed the extraordinary valour of Bharadvaja’s son. He countered the gold-adorned club with dexterity. Having repulsed the club, he despatched broad-headed arrows towards Parshata. They were extremely sharp and yellow. They were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. In that battle, they penetrated his armour and drank his blood. Then the great-minded Dhrishtadyumna picked up another bow. In that encounter, he used his valour to pierce Drona with five arrows. Those two bulls among men were covered with blood. O king! They looked as beautiful as flowering kimshukas in the spring. O king! Intolerant with anger and displaying his valour at the head of his troops, Drona again sliced down the bow of Drupada's son. When the bow had been sliced down, the one with the immeasurable soul covered him with arrows with drooping tufts, like clouds raining on a mountain. He used a broad-headed arrow to bring down his charioteer from the safety of the chariot. With four sharp arrows, he brought down his four horses. He roared like a lion in that battle. With another broad-headed arrow, he sliced down the leather guard from his[109] hands. His bow was sliced down. He was without a chariot. His horses were killed. His charioteer was slain. Displaying great manliness, he tried to leap down, with a club in his hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But before he could descend from his chariot, he[110] used his arrows to shatter the club into fragments and it was an extraordinary feat. The powerful one with the excellent arms[111] then grasped a large and divine sword and a huge and beautiful shield marked with the marks of one hundred moons. In a desire to kill Drona, he rushed towards him with force, like a lion looking for meat dashes towards a crazy elephant in the forest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We then witnessed the extraordinary manliness of Bharadvaja's son, his dexterity in the use of weapons and the strength of his arms. He repulsed Parshata with a shower of arrows. Though he was strong, he could not advance any further in that battle. We saw maharatha Dhrishtadyumna stationed there, using the shield in his hands to ward off the shower of arrows.

'"Then the mighty-armed and powerful Bhima suddenly arrived, wishing to aid the great-souled Parshata in that battle. O king! He pierced Drona with seven sharp arrows and swiftly took up Parshata on his own chariot. King Duryodhana despatched Kalinga to protect

Bharadvaja's son, with a large number of soldiers. O lord of men! On the instructions of your son, that large army of Kalingas rushed towards Bhima. Drona, supreme among charioteers, abandoned Panchala and encountered and fought with the aged Virata and Drupada. In that battle, Dhrishtadyumna went to help Dharmaraja. A tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. This was between the Kalingas and the great-souled Bhima. It was terrible in form and awful, and was destructive of the universe."'

CHAPTER 910(50)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "The immensely strong and brave Bhimasena roams around with a club, like death with a staff in his hands. He is the performer of extraordinary deeds. Kalinga, the general of an army, was instructed. But with his soldiers, how did he encounter him[112] in battle?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O Indra among kings! Thus instructed by your son, the immensely strong one was protected by a large army and advanced towards Bhima's chariot. That large army of the Kalingas was full of chariots, elephants and horses and was armed with many mighty weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the army of the Kalingas marched towards him, led by Ketuman and the son of Nishada, Bhimasena, accompanied by the Chedis, descended on it. Together with Ketuman, the angry Shrutayu[113] arranged his troops in battle formation and advanced before Bhima and Chedi in that battle. The king of Kalinga possessed many thousands of chariots. Other than Ketuman, the Nishadas had ten thousand elephants. O king! In that battle, they surrounded Bhimasena from all directions. With Bhimasena at the forefront, the Chedis, the Matsyas and the Karushas swiftly advanced against the Nishadas and the other kings. A fierce battle raged, terrible in form. In a desire to kill each other, the warriors on both sides dashed forward. The sudden battle that was fought between Bhima and his enemies was terrible. O great king! It was like that between Indra and the large army of the daityas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the armies fought on that field of battle, a tumultuous noise arose, like the roar of the ocean. O lord of the earth! The warriors killed each other. The entire ground was like a cremation ground, strewn with flesh and blood. Driven by the desire to kill, the warriors could not distinguish between their own and those of the enemy. Those brave ones were invincible in battle and even killed those from their own side. There was an extremely fierce fight, between the few and the many.[114] O lord of the earth! The Chedis fought with the Kalingas and the Nishadas. The extremely strong Chedis exhibited their manliness, to the best of their capacity, but then abandoned Bhimasena and retreated.

'"When the Chedis retreated, Pandava did not retreat. Resorting to the strength of his own arms, he faced all the Kalingas. The immensely strong Bhimasena remained stationary on his chariot. He enveloped the Kalinga army with sharp arrows. The great archer who was the king of Kalinga and his maharatha son, famous by the name of Shakradeva, attacked Pandava with arrows. But the mighty-armed Bhima brandished his beautiful bow. Resorting to the strength of his arms, he fought with Kalinga. In that battle, Shakradeva shot many arrows. In that battle, he killed Bhimasena's horses with those arrows and showered down clouds of arrows, like a downpour at the end of the summer. But the immensely strong Bhimasena remained stationed on his chariot, despite his horses having been slain, and hurled a club made completely of steel at Shakradeva.[115] O king! The son of Kalinga was thus killed. With his standard and charioteer, he fell down from the chariot onto the ground. On seeing that his own son had been killed, the king of Kalinga surrounded Bhima from every direction with many thousands of chariots. At this, the mighty-armed Bhima discarded that giant club. He grasped a sword, so as to accomplish a terrible deed. O bull among kings! That bull among men also took up an unparalleled shield. It was marked with stars and half-moons and was made out of gold. The enraged Kalinga touched the string of his bow. He grasped a terrible arrow that was like the venom of a serpent and despatched it at Bhimasena, desiring to kill that lord of men. Despatched with force, that sharp arrow descended. O king! However, Bhimasena sliced it into two with his huge sword. He then roared in delight, frightening the soldiers. In that encounter with Bhimasena, Kalinga became even angrier. He swiftly hurled fourteen lances that had been sharpened on stone. O king! But before they could reach him, the mighty-armed Pandava used his supreme sword to swiftly cut them down in the sky.

'"The bull among men saw that Bhanuman[116] was advancing towards him. Bhanuman enveloped Bhima with a shower of arrows and roared powerfully, making the sound echo in the sky. But Bhima was not prepared to tolerate that lion-like roar in that great battle. He possessed a giant roar himself and roared loudly. At this shout, the Kalinga soldiers were frightened. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, they no longer regarded Bhima as human. O great king! Bhima let out a loud roar. O venerable one! With the sword in his hand, he used the supreme elephant's tusks[117] to climb onto the back of that king of elephants. With that large sword, he sliced Bhanuman down the middle. The scorcher of enemies killed the duelling prince in this way. His sword was capable of bearing a great load and he then made it descend on the neck of the elephant. With its neck severed, that leader of elephants screamed and fell down, like the summit of a mountain shattered by the battering of the sea. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That descendant of the Bharata lineage then descended from the elephant that was falling down.

'"Armoured, he stood on the ground, indomitable in soul and with a sword in his hand. He roamed around along many paths, bringing down frightened elephants. Everywhere, he looked like a whirling circle of fire. The lord slaughtered masses of horses, elephants, masses of chariots and large numbers of infantry, covering them with blood. Intoxicated with his valour, Bhima was seen in that battle, roaming around like a hawk amidst the enemy. With great force, he sliced off their bodies and their heads and also those who fought on elephants, using his sharp sword in that battle. He fought wrathfully on foot, increasing the terror of his enemies. He was like Yama at the time of destruction and confounded them. Only the foolish ones roared and advanced towards him, as he forcefully roamed around on that great field of battle, with his sword unsheathed. That powerful destroyer of enemies cut down chariots, the yokes of chariots and killed the horses yoked to chariots. Bhimasena was seen to display many different kinds of motions. He whirled around and leapt up. Pandava was seen to strike towards the sides and advance in front. The great-souled Pandava sliced down some with his supreme sword. Some shrieked as they were pierced in their inner organs and fell down, bereft of their lives. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many elephants had their tusks and trunks severed. Others had their temples shattered. Without any riders, they killed their own soldiers as they screamed and fell down. O king! Broken lances, the heads of the drivers of elephants, colourful seats on the elephants, the sides blazing in gold, spikes that adorned the collars,[118] standards, weapons, quivers and other machines, colourful bows, beautiful pots with fire in them, goads, different kinds of bells and hilts that were embellished with gold—all these were seen by us, already fallen, or falling down, together with the riders. The elephants were slain, with the front and rear of their bodies, and their trunks, shattered. That arena seemed to be strewn with mountains that had fallen down. Having killed many giant elephants, that bull among men began to destroy the horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He brought down the foremost of horse-riders. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The battle between him and them was extremely terrible. In the great battle, we saw the hilts of swords, thongs, reins resplendent in gold, cushions, spikes, extremely expensive swords, armour, shields and colourful carpets strewn over the ground. There were also sparkling weapons with colourful inlays. He made the earth look as if it was strewn with lilies. The immensely strong Pandava leapt up and brought some charioteers down. He cut them and their standards down with his sword. The renowned one repeatedly dashed in all the directions. He astounded the people by traversing diverse paths. He killed some with his legs. He brought down others and pressed them down. He beheaded some with his sword and frightened others with his roars. The force of his thighs brought others down on the ground. Others fled on seeing him, dying out of terror.

'"Then the swift and large army of the Kalingas, which had surrounded Bhishma[119] in battle, attacked Bhimasena. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Shrutayu was at the head of the Kalinga army and on seeing him, Bhimasena attacked him. On seeing him advance, Kalinga, whose soul was immeasurable, pierced Bhimasena between the breasts with nine arrows. Struck by Kalinga's arrows, Bhimasena was like an elephant goaded with a hook and blazed in anger, like a fire into which kindling had been offered. Ashoka then brought a chariot decorated with gold and Bhimasena ascended this chariot with that supreme of charioteers.[120] Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies, swiftly climbed onto that chariot. He advanced towards Kalinga, exclaiming, 'Wait. Wait.' At this, the powerful Shrutayu was enraged and displaying the dexterity of his hands, despatched sharp arrows at Bhima. He was pierced by nine sharp arrows released from that supreme bow. O king! Having been thus wounded with force by Kalinga, the immensely famous Bhima was like a serpent that had been struck with a staff. Partha Bhima, the supreme among strong ones, was enraged and stretching his bow, killed the king of Kalinga with seven iron arrows. With razor-like arrows, he despatched Satyadeva and Satya, the protectors of the chariot wheels of the immensely strong Kalinga, to Yama's abode. In that battle, Bhima, the one whose soul is immeasurable, then used iron arrows and sharp weapons to send Ketuman to Yama's abode.

'"The kshatriyas in the Kalinga army, with many thousands of soldiers, became wrathful and attacked the intolerant Bhimasena. O king! The Kalinga surrounded Bhimasena with lances, clubs, swords, spikes, scimitars[121] and battleaxes. They enveloped him with a terrible shower of arrows. However, though enveloped, the immensely strong Bhima swiftly grasped a club and sent seven hundred warriors to Yama's abode. The destroyer of enemies again sent two thousand Kalingas to the world of the dead and this was extraordinary. In that battle, the brave Bhima,[122] great in his vows, repeatedly killed the Kalinga soldiers. The great-souled Pandava robbed elephants of their riders. They were wounded with arrows and wandered around shrieking, like clouds struck by the wind, trampling their own soldiers. The powerful and mighty-armed Bhima blew on his conch shell and the hearts of all the Kalinga soldiers trembled. O scorcher of enemies! The Kalingas were overcome by confusion. O king! The soldiers and all the mounts trembled, as Bhima roamed around everywhere in that field of battle, like an Indra among elephants. He dashed around, following many different paths and repeatedly leaping up. Terrified of Bhimasena, confusion was engendered in the soldiers and they trembled, like a large lake that is agitated by a crocodile. Frightened by Bhima's extraordinary deeds, the brave ones fled in all directions and were then rallied again.

'"Parshata, the commander of the army of the sons of Pandu, told his soldiers to fight with all the Kalinga warriors. On hearing the words of the general, the cohorts, with Shikhandi at the forefront, came to help Bhima, with masses of chariots and warriors. Pandava Dharmaraja followed all of them, on the back of a large number of elephants with the complexion of clouds. Thus urging his own soldiers, Parshata, surrounded by many virtuous men, went to guard Bhimasena's flanks. To the king of Panchala,[123] there was no one in the world as beloved as Bhima and Satyaki and he was engaged in their welfare. The mighty-armed Parshata, the destroyer of enemy warriors, saw that Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies, was roaming around amidst the Kalingas. O king! The scorcher of enemies uttered many large shouts. In that battle, he blew on his conch shell and roared like a lion. On seeing that gold-embellished chariot to which horses with the colour of pigeons were yoked and the red standard, Bhimasena was assured. On seeing Bhimasena, immeasurable in his soul, attacked by the Kalingas, Dhrishtadyumna advanced to his rescue. Beholding Satyaki from a distance, Dhrishtadyumna and Vrikodara, the spirited and brave ones, began to fight with the Kalingas in that battle. Swiftly advancing there, Shini's descendant,[124] supreme among victorious ones and a bull among men, started to protect Partha and Parshata's flanks. He grasped his bow and arrows and created havoc there. In that encounter, he adopted a terrible form and killed the enemy. Bhima caused a river of blood to flow there, with mud created by the flesh and blood of the Kalingas. The immensely strong Bhimasena traversed the impassable river that flowed between the armies of the Kalingas and the Pandavas. O king! On seeing the enraged Bhimasena there, the soldiers exclaimed, 'In Bhima's form, this is death itself that is fighting with the Kalingas.' Hearing their loud cries in battle, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, swiftly advanced towards Bhima, surrounded by battle formations and soldiers.

'"Satyaki, Bhimasena and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna advanced towards Bhishma's gold-embellished chariot. In that encounter, they surrounded Gangeya from all sides and without losing any time, each of them pierced Bhishma with three terrible arrows. But your father Devavrata, the great archer, pierced all of the striving ones back in return, using straight-tufted arrows. Having countered those maharathas with thousands of arrows, he used his arrows to kill Bhima's horses, which were clad in golden armour. Although his horses were slain, the powerful Bhimasena remained stationed on his chariot. He powerfully hurled a spear towards Gangeya's chariot. But in that battle, before that spear could reach him, your father Devavrata sliced it into three and it fell down on the ground. O bull among men! Bhimasena then grasped a large and heavy club made out of steel[125] and leapt down from his chariot. Desiring to do that which would bring pleasure to Bhima, Satyaki used his arrows to swiftly bring down the aged Kuru's charioteer. When his charioteer was killed, Bhishma, supreme among charioteers, was borne away from the field of battle by horses that were as fleet as the wind. O king! When the one who is great in his vows was thus carried away, Bhimasena blazed, like a fire consuming dry grass. He remained stationed in the midst of the Kalinga soldiers and killed them all. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one from your side dared to oppose him. Dhrishtadyumna took up that supreme of charioteers on his own chariot. In the sight of all the soldiers, he took away that famous one. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Honoured by the Panchalas and the Matsyas, he embraced Dhrishtadyumna and then went to Satyaki.

Satyaki, for whom his valour is truth, delightedly told Bhimasena, while Dhrishtadyumna, tiger among men, looked on, 'It is through good fortune that the king of Kalinga, the princes Ketuman and Shakradeva of Kalinga and all the Kalingas have been slain in battle. They possessed many elephants, horses and chariots. The Kalingas possessed large battle formations. But through the valour of your own arms, they have been vanquished by you single-handedly.' Having said this, Shini's long-armed descendant, the destroyer of enemies, swiftly ascended onto the chariot and embraced Pandava. Then the maharatha again climbed onto his own chariot and angrily began to kill those on your side, thus increasing Bhima's strength."'

CHAPTER 911(51)

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the forenoon of that day had passed, and when there was a great destruction of chariots, elephants, infantry and horse-riders, Panchala fought with three maharathas—Drona's son, Shalya and the great-souled Kripa. With ten sharp and swift arrows, Panchala's immensely strong heir[126] killed the horses of Drona's son, which were renowned in the world. Deprived of his mounts, Drona's son swiftly ascended Shalya's chariot and showered arrows on Panchala's heir. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna was engaged in a duel with Drona's son, Subhadra's son quickly attacked, showering sharp arrows. O bull among men! He pierced Shalya with twenty-five arrows, Kripa with nine and Ashvatthama with eight. However, Drona's son also quickly pierced Arjuna's son with shafted arrows. Shalya pierced him with twelve and Kripa with three sharp arrows. On seeing that your grandson was thus engaged in battle, your grandson Lakshmana rushed at him in great anger and there was an encounter between the two.[127] O king! In that battle, Duryodhana's son angrily pierced Subhadra's son with nine arrows and it was an extraordinary sight. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Abhimanyu was filled with ire and with dextrous hands, pierced his brother with five hundred arrows. At this, Lakshmana used shafted arrows to slice down his[128] bow at the handle. O great king! On seeing this, the people raised a loud shout. Then Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemies, discarded that shattered bow and picked up another bow that was more beautiful and stronger. Those two bulls among men happily fought against each other, countering each other's efforts and piercing each other with sharp and shafted arrows. On seeing that his maharatha son was thus assailed by your grandson, King Duryodhana, lord of men, rushed towards the spot. When your son advanced, all the kings used masses of chariots to surround Arjuna's son from every direction. O king! But he was a brave and invincible warrior, equal in valour to Krishna. Despite being surrounded by those heroes, he was not distressed.

'"On seeing that Subhadra's son was fighting there, Dhananjaya swiftly advanced there, intending to save his son. With chariots, elephants and horses and with Bhishma and Drona at the forefront, all the kings forcefully attacked Savyasachi. A thick dust suddenly arose from the ground, raised by the elephants, horses, chariots and infantry and it seemed to obstruct the path of the sun. When those thousands of elephants and hundreds of kings approached within striking distance of his[129] arrows, none of them could advance any further. All the beings lamented loudly and all the directions were covered in darkness. The army of the Kurus seemed to be terrible and dreadful. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Because of the numerous arrows shot by Kiriti, the sky, the directions, the earth or the sun could not be seen. Elephants were deprived of the standards on their backs. Many charioteers were deprived of their horses. Having been deprived of their chariots, many charioteers were seen to be wandering around there. Other charioteers discarded their chariots and were seen to flee. They were seen there, weapons in their hands and with bracelets on their upper arms. O king! Because of their fear of Arjuna, horse-riders gave up their horses and elephant-riders their elephants. They fled in all the directions. The kings were seen to fall down from their chariots, elephants and horses. They were seen to fall down, oppressed by Arjuna. O lord of the earth!

Assuming a terrible form there, Arjuna used his terrible arrows to cut down the upraised arms of men who held clubs, swords, lances, quivers, bows, arrows, goads and standards. O venerable one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Heavy maces and clubs, lances, catapults, swords, sharp battleaxes, javelins, shields and armour were shattered in that battle and fell down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Flags, shields, many kinds of whisks, umbrellas, golden rods and tassels were strewn around. O venerable one! There were whips, halters, thongs and reins. They were seen to be scattered on the field of battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was not a single man in your army who could advance against the brave Arjuna in battle. O lord of the earth! In that encounter, whoever advanced against Partha was pierced by sharp and shafted arrows and conveyed to the world of the dead. When all the warriors on your side were scattered, Arjuna and Vasudeva blew on their supreme conch shells.

'"On seeing that the army had been shattered in that battle, your father, Devavrata, smiled and told Bharadvaja's brave son, 'This brave and powerful son of Pandu is united with Krishna. He is dealing with our soldiers only as Dhananjaya can. No one is capable of vanquishing him in battle today. His form seems to be like that of the destroyer at the end of an era. It is impossible to rally our great army now. Behold. They are looking at each other and are running away. The sun can be seen aloft the supreme mountain Asta.[130] It is as if it has robbed the sight of the entire world. O bull among men! I think the time has come for retreat. The warriors are exhausted and frightened and will never fight.' Having spoken thus to the supreme preceptor Drona, maharatha Bhishma arranged that your army should be withdrawn. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your soldiers, and those of the others, were withdrawn. The sun set and evening set in."'

CHAPTER 912(52)

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When night had passed and it was morning, Shantanu's son, Bhishma, instructed that a battle formation should be created. Wishing to ensure victory for your sons, Shantanu's son, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, formed the great vyuha known as Garuda. Your father Devavrata stationed himself on Garuda's mouth and Bharadvaja's son and Satvata Kritavarma were the eyes. Ashvatthama and the famous Kripa were the head, supported by Trigartas, Matsyas, Kekayas and Vatadhanas. O venerable one! Bhurishrava, Shala, Shalya, Bhagadatta, Madrakas, Sindhus, Souviras and those from the land of the five rivers, together with Jayadratha, constituted the neck. King Duryodhana, together with his brothers and followers, constituted the back. O great king! Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, together with the Kambojas and the Shakas and the Shurasenas, constituted the tail. Magadhas and Kalingas, together with masses of Dasherakas, were armoured and stationed themselves on the right wing of the vyuha. Kananas, Vikunjas, Muktas, Pundravishas, together with Brihadbala, were stationed on the left wing.

'"On seeing this battle formation of your soldiers, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, together with Dhrishtadyumna, arranged a counter vyuha for the encounter. This vyuha was in the form of a half-moon and this vyuha was extremely terrible. Bhimasena stationed himself on the right horn. He was surrounded by kings from many countries, wielding many different kinds of weapons. Maharatha Virata and Drupada were next to him. Next to him was Nila, accompanied by Nilayudha. Next to Nila was maharatha Dhrishtaketu. He was surrounded by the Chedis, the Kashis, the Karusha and the Pouravas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the Panchalas and the Prabhadrakas were stationed in the midst of the large army, ready for battle. Dharmaraja was also there, surrounded by an army of elephants. O king! Satyaki was also there, together with Droupadi's five sons. Abhimanyu was there and beyond him was Iravan. O king! Bhimasena's son[131] was there, together with the maharatha Kekayas. Next to him, on the left flank, was the foremost of men.[132] His protector was Janardana, the protector of the entire universe. It was thus that the Pandavas formed a giant vyuha as a counter vyuha, for the death of your sons and of those who have assembled on your side. The battle between those on your side and those of the enemy then commenced, seeking to kill each other in a melee of chariots and elephants. O lord of the earth! Masses of horses and masses of chariots were seen there. They were seen to descend on each other, seeking to kill each other. Masses of chariots dashed towards each other, or engaged each other individually. They created a tumultuous sound, mixed with the sound of drums. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As they sought to kill each other in that tumultuous battle, the shouts of the brave men on your side, and on theirs, seemed to touch heaven."'

CHAPTER 913(53)

'Sanjaya said, "Your soldiers and those of the others were arranged in battle formation. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After that, Dhananjaya slaughtered a large number of charioteers on your side. In that battle, he used his arrows to bring down large numbers of charioteers. They were thus killed by Partha, like death at the time of the destruction of a yuga. But in that encounter, the sons of Dhritarashtra endeavoured to repulse the Pandavas. They strove for blazing fame and preferred death to retreat. O king! Thus single-minded in their objective in that battle, they broke through the Pandava ranks in many places and were themselves broken. Both the Pandava and the Kourava were broken and fled, reassembling again. Nothing could be seen. A cloud of dust arose from the ground and shrouded the sun. No one was in a position to distinguish the directions or the sub-directions. The battle raged everywhere, through inferences drawn on the basis of signs, names and family names.[133] However, in that encounter, the vyuha of the Kouravas was protected by Bharadvaja's intelligent son, who was devoted to the truth, and it could not be broken. In that fashion, nor could the great vyuha of the Pandavas, protected by Savyasachi and guarded well by Bhima.

'"O king! Men, infantry, chariots and elephants emerged from the heads of both the armies and engaged in fighting with each other. In that great battle, those riding horses brought down those riding horses, using polished and sharp swords and lances in that encounter. In that terrible battle, charioteers used gold-decorated arrows to bring down charioteers. Those riding on elephants used iron arrows, arrows and spikes against those riding on elephants and used these to bring each other down. In that battle, large numbers of infantry engaged against infantry and happily cut each other down with catapults and battleaxes. In that battle, in both the armies, infantry brought down charioteers and charioteers brought down infantry, using sharp weapons. Those riding elephants brought down those riding horses. Those riding horses brought down those stationed on elephants and it was extraordinary. Here and there, the supreme among those riding on elephants brought down foot soldiers and warriors riding on elephants were seen to be brought down by them in return. Large numbers of infantry were slaughtered by those riding horses and large numbers of those riding horses were brought down by foot soldiers. They were seen to be brought down in hundreds and thousands. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The ground was strewn with destroyed standards, bows, lances, javelins, clubs, maces, *kampanas*,[134] spears, colourful armour, *kanapas*,[135] goads, polished swords, gold-shafted arrows, cushions, carpets and extremely expensive coverlets and seemed to be strewn with garlands of flowers. In that great battle, the bodies of men, horses and fallen elephants made the ground impassable and mud was created by flesh and blood. The dust that had arisen from the ground settled down because of the blood from the battle. O lord of men! Because of this, the directions again became clearly visible. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many headless torsos were seen to arise from the ground, as a portent that all the beings in the universe would be destroyed. In that extremely terrible and fearful battle, charioteers could be seen to flee in every direction.

'"Bhishma, Drona, Saindhava Jayadratha, Purumitra, Vikarna and Shakuni Soubala were invincible in battle and were like lions in their valour. They repeatedly broke the Pandava ranks in battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, Bhimasena, the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, Satyaki, Chekitana and Droupadi's sons oppressed your sons, together with all the kings, like the gods against the danavas. Those bulls among kshatriyas killed each other in that battle. Drenched in battle, they assumed terrible forms, like dazzling danavas. In both the armies, brave ones triumphed over their enemies and seemed to be like the best of planets in the firmament. With one thousand chariots, your son Duryodhana advanced to do battle with the Pandavas and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha. All the Pandavas, together with a large army, advanced to do battle with Drona and Bhishma, the brave scorchers of enemies. The enraged Kiriti advanced against the best of kings. Arjuna's son and Satyaki advanced against Soubala's army. An extremely terrible battle commenced between those on your side and those of the enemy, each trying to defeat the other, and it made the body hair stand up."'

CHAPTER 914(54)

'Sanjaya said, "The kings were angry and saw Phalguna in that battle. They surrounded him on all sides with many thousands of chariots. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having surrounded him with a large number of chariots, they enveloped him in all directions with many thousands of arrows. Enraged in battle, they hurled polished and sharp lances, clubs, maces, javelins, battleaxes, bludgeons and pestles towards Phalguna's chariot. That shower of weapons descended on him like a flight of locusts. But Partha countered all of them with gold-decorated arrows. O Indra among kings! On witnessing Bibhatsu's superhuman lightness of hand, the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the pishachas, the serpents and the rakshasas honoured Phalguna with words of praise. With a large army and together with Soubala, the brave ones from the land of Gandhara surrounded Satyaki and Abhimanyu in that battle. With many different kinds of weapons, the angry ones who were on Soubala's side wrathfully cut down Varshneya's supreme chariot into tiny fragments.[136] In that extremely fearful battle, Satyaki abandoned his chariot and the scorcher of enemies swiftly ascended onto Abhimanyu's chariot. Stationed on the same chariot, they swiftly countered Soubala's army and pierced it with many sharp and straight-tufted arrows. In that battle, Drona and Bhishma made endeavours to fight with Dharmaraja’s army. They destroyed it with sharp arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. In the sight of all the soldiers, the king who was Dharma’s son and the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons began to oppress Drona’s army. The great battle that was fought was tumultuous and made the body hair stand up. It was like the extremely terrible battle that was earlier fought between the gods and the asuras. Bhimasena and Ghatotkacha performed extremely great deeds. Then Duryodhana arrived and repulsed both of them. We witnessed the valour displayed by Hidimba’s son[137] and it was extraordinary. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he fought, he surpassed his father in battle. Pandava Bhimasena was enraged. He smiled and pierced the intolerant Duryodhana in the chest with an arrow. At this, King Duryodhana lost his senses from this blow. He sank down on his chariot and fainted. O king! On seeing that he had lost his senses, the charioteer swiftly carried him away from the field of battle and his soldiers ran away. While the Kourava soldiers were running away in all directions, Bhima pursued them and killed them with sharp arrows.

‘“In Drona’s sight and in the sight of Gangeya, Parshata, foremost among charioteers, and the Pandava who was Dharma’s son began to slaughter their soldiers with sharp and straight-tufted arrows that were capable of killing the enemy. In that battle, the soldiers of your sons started to run away. O lord of the earth! Maharatha Bhishma and Drona were incapable of restraining them, though Bhishma and Drona did try to restrain them. While both Drona and Bhishma looked on, the soldiers fled. Thousands of chariots fled in all directions. Subhadra’s son and the bull among Shinis were stationed on a single chariot. In that battle, in every direction, they began to slaughter the soldiers of Soubala. Shini’s descendant and the bull among the Kurus[138] were resplendent, like two suns in the firmament after the night of the new moon had passed. O lord of the earth! Arjuna angrily showered down arrows on the soldiers, like clouds pouring down rain. Thus slaughtered in that battle with Partha’s arrows, the Kourava soldiers were overcome by sorrow and fright and trembled and ran away. On seeing that the soldiers were running away, maharatha Bhishma and Drona, became angry and having Duryodhana's welfare in mind, tried to restrain them. O lord of the earth! At this, King Duryodhana himself reassured the troops and restrained them from running away in every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wherever your son could be seen, there the maharatha kshatriyas were restrained. O king! Wherever they were restrained, the ordinary soldiers saw them and were also restrained, ashamed and desiring to rival each other. O lord of the earth! That army was thus forcefully rallied and looked like a full ocean when the moon rises.

'"Having seen that the army had been rallied, King Suyodhana swiftly went to Bhishma, Shantanu's son, and spoke these words to him. 'O grandfather! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the words I am speaking to you. O Kourava! When you are alive, and so is Drona, supreme among those who are skilled in weapons, together with his son and well-wishers, and so is the great archer Kripa, I do not think it is praiseworthy that my soldiers should flee in this way. I do not think that the Pandavas are a force capable of withstanding you in battle, or Drona, or Drona's son, or Kripa. O grandfather! The Pandavas are certainly being favoured by you. O brave one! That is the reason you are pardoning them this act of killing my soldiers. O king! You should have told me earlier, before this encounter commenced, that you would not fight in a battle with the Pandavas, or with Parshata, or with Satyaki. On hearing your words and those of the preceptor and of Kripa, together with Karna, I would then have reflected on what should be done. O bulls among men![139] If I do not deserve to be abandoned by both of you in this battle, then fight in accordance with your valour.' Having heard these words, Bhishma laughed repeatedly. His eyes were full of anger and he spoke these words to your son. 'O king! On many occasions, I have spoken words for your welfare and you should have accepted them. The Pandavas are incapable of being vanquished in battle even by the gods, together with Vasava. O supreme among kings! Though I am aged now, I will do what I am capable of doing and I will do it to the best of my capacity. Behold it with your relatives. While all the worlds look on, I will alone repulse the sons of Pandu now, together with their soldiers and relatives.’ O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by Bhishma, your son was extremely delighted and instructed that conch shells and drums should be sounded. O king! Having heard this loud roar, the Pandavas blew on their conch shells and instructed that drums and tambourines should be sounded.”’

CHAPTER 915(55)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “When Bhishma was especially angered and distressed because of my son and took that terrible vow in that battle, what did Bhishma do when he encountered the Pandaveyas. O Sanjaya! Tell me what the Panchalas did to the grandfather.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the forenoon of that day had passed and when the great-souled Pandavas were delighted at having accomplished victory, your father, Devavrata, learned in all kinds of dharma, advanced on the swiftest of steeds towards the army of the Pandavas. He was protected by a large army and by all your sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A tumultuous battle ensued between us and the Pandavas, because you did not follow dharma. It made the body hair stand up. There was the twanging of bows there, as they struck against the palms. A tremendous sound arose and it was capable of splintering mountains. ‘Wait’, ‘I am stationed here’, ‘Know this one’, ‘Retreat’, ‘Be steady’, ‘I am steady here’, ‘Strike’—these were the sounds that were heard everywhere. Golden body-armour, crowns and standards fell down and it was like the sound of boulders descending on stony ground. Hundreds and thousands of heads and ornamented arms fell down immobile on the ground. With the heads sliced off, some supreme among men still stood, with their bows raised and holding weapons. An extremely swift river of blood began to flow. Its mud was terrible with flesh and blood and the bodies of elephants were like stones in it. The bodies of excellent horses, men and elephants flowed in it then, as it flowed towards the world of the hereafter. It was delightful to vultures and jackals. O king! A battle like this has not been seen earlier, nor heard of. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Such was the one between your sons and the Pandavas. Because of the warriors who had been brought down in battle, chariots could not find a path there. The bodies of fallen elephants were like blue summits of mountains. O venerable one! Strewn with colourful armour, standards and umbrellas, the field of battle was as beautiful as the autumn sky. Though they were oppressed and wounded by arrows, some armoured ones were seen to dash towards the enemy in battle, without any fear. Many who fell down in the battle cried, 'O father! O brother! O friend! O relative! O companion! O maternal uncle! Do not abandon me.' There were others who exclaimed, 'Come here. Why are you frightened? Where are you going? I am stationed in battle. Do not be afraid.'

'"Bhishma, Shantanu's son, was there, his bow always stretched in a circle. He released blazing arrows that were like the venom of virulent snakes. Rigid in his vows, he released arrows in all the directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He picked out the Pandava charioteers and killed them. With a dextrous hand, he seemed to be dancing around in the chariot. O king! He could be seen everywhere, like a circle of fire. Though the brave one was alone in that battle, because of his dexterity, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas saw him as many hundreds and thousands. Everyone there thought that Bhishma had used maya on his own self. In one moment, he was seen in the eastern direction. In the next moment, he was seen in the western direction. They saw the lord in the north and immediately saw him in the south. Thus the brave Gangeya was seen in that battle. There was no one among the Pandaveyas who was capable of glancing at him. They only saw many arrows shot from Bhishma's bow. Having seen him perform such great feats in the battle there, with the slaughter of the army, the brave ones uttered many lamentations. Your father wandered around in superhuman form and driven by destiny, thousands of kings fell down like insects, led to the fire of the angry Bhishma. In that battle, not a single one of Bhishma's arrows failed to be successful, because of the large numbers that were arrayed against him, and descended on the bodies of men, elephants and horses. With a single shafted arrow that was released well, he brought down an armoured elephant, like the vajra shattering a mountain. With an extremely sharp iron arrow, your father killed two or three elephant-riders, armoured and standing together, at a single stroke. Whoever approached Bhishma, tiger among men, in that battle, was seen to be brought down onto the ground in an instant. Thus, Dharmaraja's large army was slaughtered through Bhishma's valour and shattered in a thousand ways. Tormented by the shower of arrows, the large army trembled, while Vasudeva and the great-souled Partha looked on. Though the brave ones made every endeavour, they could not restrain the maharathas who were oppressed by Bhishma's arrows. He slaughtered that large army with a valour that was like that of the great Indra. O great king! It was routed such that no two persons were seen together. Men, elephants and horses were pierced. Standards and axle-shafts fell down. The soldiers of the sons of Pandu lost their senses and lamented. Father killed the son and the son killed the father. Driven by the force of destiny, a friend challenged a beloved friend to a fight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many soldiers on the side of the sons of Pandu were seen to run away, with their armour discarded and with their hair dishevelled. The soldiers of the sons of Pandu, and even the leaders among them, were seen to be as confounded as a herd of cattle. They lamented in woe.

'"On seeing that the soldiers were routed, Devaki's son[140] stopped that supreme of chariots and spoke to Partha Bibhatsu. 'O Partha! The hour that you desired, has now arrived. O tiger among men! If you wish to be free from confusion, strike. O brave one! In earlier times, in the assembly of kings, you had said that you would kill the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra, with Bhishma and Drona at the forefront, with all the relatives and those who wished to fight against you in battle. O Kounteya! O destroyer of enemies! Act accordingly now and make your words come true. O Bibhatsu! Behold. Your army is being driven back in every direction. Behold. All the kings in Yudhishthira's army are running away, on having seen Bhishma in battle, with his mouth gaping open. They are frightened and are being destroyed, like small animals by a lion.' Having been thus addressed, Dhananjaya replied to Vasudeva, ‘Drive the horses through this ocean of soldiers to where Bhishma is stationed.’ O king! Madhava then drove those silver-white steeds to the place where Bhishma’s chariot, which was like the sun and was difficult to look at, was stationed. Having seen the mighty-armed Partha advance to fight in the battle against Bhishma, Yudhishthira’s great army rallied again.

‘“Bhishma, foremost among the Kurus, roared repeatedly, like a lion. He swiftly enveloped Dhananjaya’s chariot with a shower of arrows. In an instant, with the horses and with the charioteer, the chariot disappeared. It was covered by that great shower of arrows and could no longer be seen. But the spirited Vasudeva was not agitated. Though the horses had been wounded by Bhishma’s arrows, he patiently continued to drive them. Partha picked up his divine bow, with a twang that was like the clap of thunder. He sliced down Bhishma’s bow with three arrows. With his bow sliced down, your father Kouravya again picked up a large bow and strung it in the twinkling of an eye. He drew the bow with his two hands and its twang was like the roar of the clouds. But the enraged Arjuna sliced down that bow too. At this, Shantanu’s son applauded his dexterity. ‘O Partha! O mighty-armed one! O descendant of Pandu! Wonderful. O Dhananjaya! Such a great deed is deserving of you. O son! I am pleased with you. Fight hard with me now.’ Having thus praised Partha and having grasped another large bow, in that battle, the brave one released arrows towards Partha’s chariot. Vasudeva displayed his supreme skill in handling horses. By driving around in swift circles, he avoided all those arrows. O venerable one! However, with great force, Bhishma used sharp arrows to pierce Vasudeva and Dhananjaya all over their bodies. Thus wounded by Bhishma’s arrows, those two tigers among men were adorned like two roaring bulls, with the scratches of thorns on them. Yet again, extremely angry, Bhishma used straight-tufted arrows to cover the two Krishnas[141] on every side. Though enraged, Bhishma repeatedly smiled and used his sharp arrows to make Varshneya tremble and wonder.

‘“Krishna witnessed Bhishma’s valour in battle and saw the mildness with which the mighty-armed Partha countered him. In that encounter, Bhishma created an incessant shower of arrows. In the midst of the two armies, he was like the tormenting sun. He was killing the best of the best among the soldiers of Pandu's son. Bhishma was like the fire of destruction amidst Yudhishthira's army. The lord Keshava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, could no longer tolerate this. The one with the immeasurable soul thought that Yudhishthira's army would not be able to survive. In a battle, Bhishma was capable of destroying the gods and the danavas in a single day, not to speak of taking on the sons of Pandu, with their soldiers and their followers, in a fight. The large army of the great-souled Pandava began to flee. Having seen the Somakas shattered and fleeing in that battle, the Kouravas were delighted and advanced to the fight, gladdening the grandfather. He[142] thought, 'For the welfare of the Pandavas, I will armour myself and kill Bhishma today. I will relieve the burden of the great-souled Pandavas. Though Arjuna has been struck with sharp arrows in this battle, he does not know his duty in this encounter, on account of the respect he has for Bhishma.' While he was reflecting in this way, the wrathful grandfather again unleashed arrows towards Partha's chariot. Because of the many arrows that were flying around, all the directions were enveloped. The sky, the directions and the earth could not be seen. Nor could the sun, the possessor of the rays, be seen. The tumultuous wind seemed to be mixed with smoke. All the directions were agitated.

'"Drona, Vikarna, Jayadratha, Bhurishrava, Kritavarma, Kripa, Shrutayu, the lord and king of Ambashtha,[143] Vinda and Anuvinda, Sudakshina, those from the east, all the large numbers of Souviras, the Vasatayas, the Kshudrakas and the Malavas—on the instructions of the king who was Shantanu's son, all of these swiftly advanced to do battle with Kiriti. Shini's grandson saw that Kiriti was surrounded by a net with hundreds and thousands of horses, infantry and chariots and a large number of elephants. Shini's brave descendant, foremost among the wielders of arms, swiftly advanced to where the soldiers were, wielding a giant bow. The brave one from Shini's lineage suddenly arrived to aid Arjuna, like Vishnu helping the destroyer of Vritra. The elephants, horses, chariots and standards were shattered and all the warriors were frightened by Bhishma. Yudhishthira's soldiers were running away. On seeing this, Shini's brave descendant said, 'O kshatriyas! Where are you going? This is not the dharma of virtuous men, as it has been recounted in the ancient texts. O brave ones! Do not forsake your oaths. Follow the dharma of those who are brave.' Vasava's younger brother[144] was unable to tolerate the act of the foremost among the kings running away. In that battle, he saw that Bhishma was exerting all his powers, that Partha was mild and that the Kurus were advancing from every direction.

'"Unable to tolerate it, the great-souled and illustrious one, the protector of all the Dasharhas, spoke approvingly to Shini's descendant. 'O brave descendant of the Shini lineage! Those who are running away, are indeed running away. O Satvata! Let those who are still here, also flee. Behold. In this battle, I will today bring down Bhishma from his chariot and also Drona and all their followers. O Satvata! There is no charioteer among the Kouravas who will escape when I am enraged in battle today. I will grasp the terrible chakra and rob the one who is great in his vows, of his life.[145] O descendant of Shini! I will kill Bhishma and his followers and Drona, the foremost among charioteers. I will act so as to bring pleasure to Dhananjaya, the king,[146] Bhima and the two Ashvins.[147] I will kill all the sons of Dhritarashtra and the foremost among kings who are on their side. In a cheerful frame of mind, I will today give the kingdom to King Ajatashatru.' Having said this, Vasudeva's son discarded the reins of the chariot and raised the chakra in his hand. It possessed an excellent handle and was like the sun in its radiance. It was like the vajra in its power. The great-souled one made the earth tremble with his footsteps. With great force, Krishna rushed towards Bhishma. The great Indra's younger brother was angry. He rushed towards Bhishma, as he was stationed in the midst of his troops. He was like a lion that wished to kill a king of the elephants. He was blind in his anger and agitated in his pride. The ends of his yellow garments trailed in the air and looked like a cloud charged with lightning in the sky. Sudarshana looked like a glorious lotus, with Shouri's beautiful arm as the stalk. It was like the original lotus, as resplendent as the morning sun, which emerged from Narayana's navel.[148] Krishna's anger was like the rising sun that caused the lotus to bloom and its beautiful petals were as sharp as a razor. On seeing that the great Indra's younger brother was angry and roaring and that he was wielding the chakra, all the beings shrieked in lamentation. They thought that the destruction of the Kurus was nigh. Having grasped the chakra, Vasudeva looked like the fire of destruction that consumes the world of the living. The preceptor of the worlds arose like the fire of destruction that would destroy all beings. On seeing the god, foremost among men, advance with the chakra, Shantanu's son remained fearlessly stationed on his chariot, with the bow and arrows in his hand. He said, 'O lord of the gods! O one whose abode is the universe! O wielder of the Sharnga bow! O one with the chakra in your hand! Come. I am bowing down before you. O protector of the worlds! Bring me down from this supreme chariot. You are the wonderful refuge of everyone in a battle. O Krishna! If I am killed by you today, I will obtain supreme welfare in this world and in the next. O protector of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis! You have shown me great honour and my valour will be celebrated in the three worlds.' However, Partha swiftly descended from his chariot and ran after the foremost of the Yadus. With his thick and long arms, he seized Hari's large and thick arms. The original god, whose name is the great yogi, was consumed by great wrath. Though he was seized in this way, Vishnu dragged Jishnu after him with great force, like a great storm carries away a tree. But as he was swiftly advancing towards Bhishma, Partha forcibly grasped him by the feet. O king! Thus grasping him with force, Kiriti succeeded in stopping him at the tenth step. When Krishna had stopped, bedecked with a beautiful and golden garland, Arjuna happily bowed down before him and said, 'O Keshava! You are the refuge of the Pandavas. Control your anger. O Keshava! I swear in the names of my sons and brothers that I will not deviate from the acts that I have promised to carry out. O younger brother of Indra! Instructed by you, I will certainly destroy the

Kurus.’ Hearing the promise and the pledge, Janardana was happy and was pacified. He was always engaged in the welfare of the supreme among the Kouravas.[149] With the chakra, he again ascended on the chariot.

‘“The slayer of enemies again grasped the reins. Shouri grasped his conch shell Panchajanya and blew on it, making the directions resound with its roar. The foremost among the Kurus saw him, adorned with a necklace, armlets and earrings. His curved eyelashes were smeared with dust. With gleaming teeth, he grasped the conch shell and they set up a loud cry. Tambourines, drums, kettledrums and smaller drums began to sound, mixed with the sound of chariot wheels. Lion-like terrible roars were uttered among the Kuru soldiers. There was the roar of Partha’s Gandiva, ascending into the sky and the directions like the clap of thunder. The bright and polished arrows released from Pandava’s bow covered all the directions. Together with Bhishma and Bhurishrava and an army, the lord of the Kouravas[150] advanced against him. He held raised arrows in his hand and was like a fire[151] that would consume dry wood. Bhurishrava shot seven gold-tufted and broad arrows at Arjuna. Duryodhana hurled an extremely forceful lance, Shalya a club and Shantanu’s son a spear. But he used seven arrows to counter the seven supreme arrows shot by Bhurishrava. With a razor-sharp arrow, he countered the lance that had been released from Duryodhana’s hand. Shantanu’s son had hurled a spear at him, as resplendent as lightning. But as it descended, the brave one used two arrows to cut this down and also the club that had been released from the arms of the king of Madra. He used the strength of his two arms to draw the beautiful bow Gandiva, whose energy was immeasurable. In accordance with the prescriptions, he invoked the extremely terrible and wonderful weapon of the great Indra and made it appear in the sky. The great-souled and great archer, Kiriti, used that weapon to counter all the soldiers. It showered down a mass of polished arrows, with the complexion of the fire. The many arrows that were released from Partha’s bow cut down chariots, standards and bows and the arms that held them. They penetrated the bodies of the enemy kings, the gigantic elephants and the large number of horses. Having covered all the directions and the sub-directions with his extremely sharp arrows, Partha created terror in their minds with the twang of Gandiva. Thus did Kiriti oppress them and as that terrible encounter raged, the sounds of conch shells and kettledrums were surpassed by Gandiva's roar.

'"When they got to know the sound of Gandiva, the brave ones among men, with King Virata at the forefront, and the valiant King Drupada of Panchala, went to the spot, with uplifted hearts. But wherever the sound of Gandiva was heard, all your soldiers were immersed in despair there and not a single one would venture forth. In that extremely terrible slaughter of kings, many brave ones were slain, together with their chariots and charioteers. Elephants were tormented and brought down with iron arrows, with their giant banners and seats made out of pure gold. They lost their lives and were suddenly brought down, their bodies mangled by Kiriti. Partha used a firm hand to bring them down with the force of his sharp, polished and broad-headed arrows. The implements of war were shattered, the fortifications were destroyed. In that battle, Dhananjaya brought down large standards and the best of pennants and large numbers of infantry, chariots, horses and elephants. Struck by the arrows, they lost their lives. Their bodies became immobile and they fell down on the ground. O king! In that great battle, their armour and their bodies were mangled by the supreme weapon named after Indra. With a flood of sharp arrows, Kiriti made an extremely terrible river flow on the field of battle. The blood was the bodies of men wounded by weapons. The foam was human fat. Its expanse was broad and it flowed swiftly. The banks were formed by the dead bodies of elephants and horses. The mud was the entrails, marrow and flesh of men. Many hordes of rakshasas and demons populated it. The moss was formed by heads, with the hair attached. Thousands of bodies were borne in the flow and the waves were formed by many shattered fragments of armour. The bones of men, horses and elephants were the stones. A large number of crows, jackals, vultures and herons and many predatory beasts like hyenas were seen to line up along its banks, as that terrible and destructive river flowed towards the nether regions. That terrible river was as cruel as the great Vaitarani.[152] Created through the masses of Arjuna's arrows, that extremely fearful river conveyed fat, marrow and blood.

'"The Chedis, the Panchalas, the Karushas and the Matsyas, together with all the Parthas, began to roar. The soldiers and leaders of the army[153] were terrified, like a herd of deer at the sight of a lion. The wielder of the Gandiva and Janardana roared in great delight. The Kurus, together with Bhishma, Drona, Duryodhana and Bahlika, saw that Indra's terrible weapon had extended everywhere and was like the end of a yuga. Their limbs were sorely wounded from the weapon and they saw the sun was withdrawing its rays. They saw that twilight was near and that the sun was streaked with red. They decided to withdraw. Having performed deeds and won fame in the world, Dhananjaya had triumphed over the enemies. Having completed his tasks, together with his brothers, the lord of men retired to his camp for the night. When night set in, there was a terrible and great uproar among the Kurus. 'In the battle, Arjuna has killed ten thousand charioteers and seven hundred elephants. All those from the eastern regions, all the masses of Souviras, the Kshudrakas and the Malavas have been brought down. Dhananjaya has accomplished a great deed. No one else is capable of accomplishing this. O king![154] King Shrutayu, the lord of Ambashtha, Durmarshana, Chitrasena, Drona, Kripa, Saindhava, Bahlika, Bhurishrava, Shalya and Shala, together with Bhishma, have been vanquished by Kiriti, the maharatha of the world, through the valour of his own arms.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken these words, all those who were on your side went to their camps. There were thousands of torches to bring illumination and many beautiful lamps. All the warriors and leaders among the Kurus settled down for the night, terrified of Kiriti."'

CHAPTER 916(56)

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When night had passed, the great-souled Bhishma was full of anger. Placing himself at the head of the Bharata army and surrounded by a large number of troops, he advanced against the enemy. Drona, Duryodhana, Bahlika, Durmarshana, Chitrasena and the extremely strong Jayadratha, and many other powerful kings with their armies, surrounded him on all sides. O king! Surrounded by these great maharathas, all of whom possessed energy and valour, that supreme of kings was radiant at the forefront of those kings, like the wielder of the vajra when he is surrounded by the gods. Giant standards fluttered on the backs of mighty elephants stationed in front of the troops. They were beautiful and colourful—red, yellow, black and brown. That army had the king who was Shantanu's son, maharathas, elephants and horses. It was as dazzling as clouds tinged with lightning, or the sky when clouds gather at the onset of the monsoon. Protected by Shantanu's son, that great and large army of the Kurus suddenly rushed towards Arjuna to do battle, like a terrible and flowing river. It possessed diverse kinds of powerful forces, with innumerable elephants, horses, infantry and chariots along the sides. The vyuha was like a giant cloud. From a distance, the great-souled one with the king of apes on his standard saw it.[155] The brave bull among men, with the white horses, was stationed on his chariot with the tall standard. The great-souled one was at the head of a large army and advanced against all the forces of the enemy. He possessed excellent equipment and the shaft of the chariot was supreme. In that battle, he was aided by the bull among the Yadus. On seeing the ape on the standard, all the Kouravas, together with your sons, were dejected.

'"They saw that the king of vyuhas was protected by Kiriti, the maharatha of this world, with his weapons upraised. There were four thousand elephants at each of its four corners. This vyuha was like the one that had been prepared the preceding day by Dharmaraja, the descendant of the Kourava lineage. The foremost among the Panchalas and the foremost among the Chedis advanced towards the spot. A great roar arose from every direction and thousands of drums were sounded. There was the blowing of conch shells, mixed with the sounds of drums. All the soldiers roared like lions. As the brave ones twanged their bows, there was the great sound of arrows. In an instant, the sky was filled with the loud sound of drums, kettledrums and cymbals and the great noise of conch shells being blown. Enveloped in that sound, the sky was also covered by fine dust that arose from the ground. On seeing that canopy spread all over, the brave warriors dashed forwards to battle each other. Rathas were brought down by rathas, together with their charioteers, horses, chariots and standards. Elephants were struck and brought down by elephants. Infantry was brought down by infantry. Those who advanced were brought down by others who advanced. The wounds from the arrows were wonderful to behold. Lances and swords fell down. Well-trained horses clashed against well-trained horses. The brave ones held excellent shields marked with the signs of golden stars and used them against excellent arrows. These were shattered by battleaxes, lances and swords and fell down on the ground. Some rathas and their charioteers were mangled by the tusks and mighty trunks of elephants and fell down. Bulls among elephant-riders clashed against bulls among rathas and killed by arrows, fell down on the ground. Having heard the wails of horse-riders struck by the force of elephants or the lamentations of horse-riders and infantry whose limbs were crushed by the tusks of elephants, many men were distressed and fell down.

'"Many elephants, horses and chariots were running away and there was a great terror among the horse-riders and infantry. Bhishma, surrounded by maharathas, saw the one who had the king of apes on his standard. Shantanu's son had a palm tree on his standard, embellished with the marks of five palm trees. He rushed against the valiant Kiriti, who possessed well-trained and swift horses and great weapons and arrows with the resplendence of the vajra. O king! Many other warriors, with Drona, Kripa, Shalya, Vivimshati, Duryodhana and Somadatta's son at the forefront, advanced against Indra's son, who was like Shakra himself. Arjuna's brave son, Abhimanyu, was skilled in the knowledge of all weapons and was clad in golden and colourful armour. He rushed out from the mass of rathas and attacked. He confounded the great weapons of all those maharathas. Karshni[156] performed deeds that were incapable of being countered. He was like the illustrious fire on a sacrificial altar, when the one with the flames has been invoked with great mantras. In that battle, the spirited Bhishma swiftly created a river, with the blood of enemies as the foam. But he avoided Subhadra's son and attacked maharatha Partha. Kiriti grasped Gandiva, extraordinary to behold. Its roar was exceedingly loud. He cast out a net of arrows and repulsed the net of great weapons.[157] The supreme among all wielders of the bow, with the king of apes on his standard, then showered down a net of arrows and polished and broad-headed arrows on the great-souled Bhishma. All the worlds, the Kurus and the Srinjayas, witnessed the duel between Bhishma and Dhananjaya, the two spirited ones who were the foremost among virtuous men, accompanied by the terrible roars of the bows."'

CHAPTER 917(57)

'Sanjaya said, "O venerable one! Drona's son, Bhurishrava, Shalya, Chitrasena[158] and Samyamani's son[159] fought with Subhadra's son. While he was fighting with these five tigers among men alone, people saw that he was extremely energetic and was like a young lion against elephants. No one was equal to Krishna's son[160] in sureness of aim, courage, valour, knowledge of weapons and dexterity. When Partha saw his son, the scorcher of enemies, thus displaying his valour in that battle, he uttered a roar like a lion. O lord of the earth! O Indra among kings! Having seen your grandson oppress your soldiers in this way, those on your side surrounded him from all directions. But Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemies, was not dispirited. Using his energy and strength, he attacked the sons of Dhritarashtra. When he was fighting with the enemy in that battle and using his large bow, he was like the sun in radiance and was seen to use dextrous moves. He pierced Drona's son with one arrow and Shalya with five. He sliced down the standard of Samyamani's son with eight. Somadatta's son[161] hurled a gold-shafted and giant lance at him and it was like a serpent. But he cut it down with sharp arrows. Arjuna's heir repulsed the hundreds of extremely terrible arrows that Shalya shot and slew his four horses. Bhurishrava, Shalya, Drona's son, Samyamani's son and Shala were struck with terror at the strength of arms displayed by Krishna's son and could not withstand him.

'"O Indra among kings! The Trigartas, the Madras, the Kekayas, with a number of twenty-five thousand, were urged by your son. They were foremost among those who were skilled in the use of weapons and were incapable of being vanquished by enemies in battle. They surrounded Kiriti and his son, desiring to kill them. O king! The Panchala general, conqueror of enemies, saw from a distance that the father and son, bulls among charioteers, had been surrounded. With many thousands of elephants and chariots and surrounded by hundreds of thousands of horse-riders and infantry, the scorcher of enemies angrily stretched his bow and advanced against the army of Madras and Kekayas. Protected by the illustrious and firm wielder of the bow and with masses of chariots, elephants and horses, that army was resplendent as it advanced towards the fight. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! While he was advancing towards Arjuna, Panchala struck Sharadvat[162] in the shoulder with three arrows. He killed ten Madrakas with ten arrows. With a broad-headed arrow, he cheerfully killed Kritavarma's horses. With an iron arrow that was broad at the tip, the scorcher of enemies killed Damana, the heir of the great-souled Pourava. At this, Samyamani's son pierced Panchala, who was invincible in battle, with thirty arrows and his charioteer with another ten. Having been thus wounded, that great archer licked the corners of his mouth with his tongue and used a broad-headed and extremely sharp arrow to slice down the bow.[163] O king! He swiftly wounded him with another twenty-five and killed his horses and the two charioteers who protected his flanks.[164] O bull among the Bharata lineage! With his horses slain, Samyamani's son remained stationed on the chariot and looked at the great-souled son of Panchala.[165] Grasping an extremely terrible sword that was made out of iron, he advanced on foot towards the chariot of Drupada's son. He was like a large wave, or like a serpent descending from the sky. He whirled his sword and with the blazing sword, looked like the resplendent sun at the time of destruction. He was like a crazy elephant in his valour. The Pandavas and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna saw him. On seeing him advance towards him, with a sharp sword in his hand and holding a shield, Panchala's son was overcome with rage. He was beyond the range of arrows, but was swiftly advancing towards the chariot. The enraged general shattered his head with a club. O king! When he fell down dead, the extremely polished sword and shield were loosened from his hands and fell down on the ground. Thus did the great-souled son of the king of Panchala exhibit his terrible valour and having killed him with his supreme club, obtained supreme fame.

'"O venerable one! When the prince, the maharatha and great archer, was killed, loud cries of lamentation arose among your soldiers. Having seen that his son had been slain, Samyamani angrily and forcefully advanced against Panchala, invincible in battle. A great battle commenced between those two brave ones, both of whom were invincible in battle and all the kings among the Kurus and the Pandavas looked on. Samyamani, the destroyer of enemy heroes, struck Parshata with three arrows, like a mighty elephant with goads. Shalya, the adornment of any assembly, also angrily struck the brave Parshata on his chest and another encounter commenced."'

CHAPTER 918(58)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! I think that destiny is superior to human endeavour, since the soldiers of my sons are being killed by the soldiers of Pandu. O son![166] You always tell me that those on my side are being slaughtered and you always tell me that the Pandavas are not being killed and are happy. O Sanjaya! You tell me that those on my side are devoid of manliness and have fallen down, or are falling down, or are being killed. They are fighting to the best of their capacity and are endeavouring for victory. But while those on my side are decaying, the Pandavas are obtaining victory. O son! I am always hearing about the great, terrible and intolerable misery that has been caused by Duryodhana's misdeeds. O Sanjaya! I do not see any means whereby the

Pandavas may decay and those on my side are able to obtain victory in this battle.”

‘Sanjaya replied, ‘O king! Be patient and listen to the slaughter of the bodies of men and the destruction of elephants, horses and chariots and all of this great evil originates with you. Shalya oppressed Dhrishtadyumna with nine arrows. He was enraged and oppressed the lord of Madra with iron arrows. We then witnessed Parshata’s extraordinary valour, as he swiftly countered Shalya, the adornment of assemblies. As they engaged in battle, no gap could be seen and the battle between the two seemed to last only for an instant. O great king! In that encounter, Shalya sliced down Dhrishtadyumna’s bow with a broad-headed, yellow and sharp arrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He enveloped him with a shower of arrows and it was like clouds showering down rain on mountains at the time of the monsoon. When Dhrishtadyumna was thus tormented, Abhimanyu became angry. With great force, he dashed towards the chariot of the king of Madra. Having reached the chariot of the lord of Madra, Karshni, whose soul was immeasurable, pierced Artayani with three arrows. O king! Those on your side wished to counter Arjuna’s son in battle. They surrounded the chariot of the king of Madra and stationed themselves there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O fortunate one! Duryodhana, Vikarna, Duhshasana, Vivimshati, Durmarshana, Duhsaha, Chitrasena, Durmukha, Satyavrata and Purumitra stationed themselves in battle, so as to protect the chariot of the lord of Madra. O lord of the earth! At this, the angry Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi’s sons, Abhimanyu and the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons[167] discharged many different kinds of weapons. In great delight, they sought to kill each other. O king! It is because of your evil policy that they engaged in battle. When that terrible encounter commenced between the ten rathas on either side, all the other rathas, on your side and on those of the enemy, became spectators. The maharathas discharged many different kinds of weapons. They roared at each other and struck each other. They were inflamed with anger and desired to kill each other. They were intolerant of each other and discharged great weapons. Overcome with anger in that great battle, Duryodhana pierced Dhrishtadyumna with four sharp, swift and terrible arrows. Durmarshana pierced him with twenty, Chitrasena with five, Durmukha with nine arrows, Duhsaha with seven, Vivimshati with five and Duhshasana with three. O Indra among kings! In return, Parshata, the tormentor of enemies, displayed the dexterity of his hands and pierced each of them with twenty-five. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, Abhimanyu pierced Satyavrata and Purumitra with ten arrows each. In that battle, the sons of Madri, the delight of their mother, enveloped their maternal uncle[168] with a wonderful torrent of arrows. O great king! The sons of his sister were supreme charioteers and were repulsing him. But Shalya enveloped them with many arrows. Despite being covered, the sons of Madri did not waver.

'"The immensely strong Bhimasena saw Duryodhana. Pandava grasped a club, thinking that he would bring an end to the strife. On seeing the mighty-armed Bhimasena with his upraised club, like the peak of Kailasa, your sons were terrified and fled. However, Duryodhana was angered. With ten thousand swift elephants, he engaged the army of Magadhas against him.[169] With that army of elephants, and placing the Magadhas in front of him, King Suyodhana advanced against Bhimasena. Vrikodara saw that army of elephants descending on him. Roaring like a lion, he leapt down from the chariot, with a club in his hand. He grasped the heavy and great club, with a heart like that of a mountain. He attacked that army of elephants, like death with a gaping mouth. Killing the elephants with the club, the powerful one wandered around in battle. The mighty-armed Bhimasena was like Vasava with the vajra. He let out a loud roar and this made the mind and the heart tremble. At Bhima's mighty roar, the elephants gathered together and lost all power of motion. The sons of Droupadi, Subhadra's maharatha son, Nakula, Sahadeva and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna were guarding Bhima's rear. They attacked the elephants with a shower of arrows, like clouds pouring down on mountains. With razor-sharp and broad-headed arrows and yellow *anjalikas*, the Pandavas severed the heads of those who were fighting on elephants.[170] The heads fell down and so did adorned arms and hands with goads held in them. It seemed like a shower of stones. Seated on the backs of elephants, those who were fighting on elephants lost their heads. They looked like broken trees on the summits of mountains. We saw other large elephants slain and brought down by Dhrishtadyumna, the great-souled Parshata. In that battle, the king of Magadha advanced on an elephant that looked like Airavata,[171] towards the chariot of Subhadra's son. On seeing Magadha's mighty elephant advance towards him, Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, killed it with an arrow. After depriving him of his elephant, Karshni, the destroyer of enemy cities, used a broad-headed and silver-shafted arrow to slice off the king's head.

'"Pandava Bhimasena penetrated that army of elephants. He roamed around the field of battle, crushing elephants, like Indra against mountains. In that battle, we saw Bhimasena kill elephants with a single stroke, like mountains shattered by the vajra. Elephants had broken tusks, broken temples, broken bones, broken backs and broken heads. They were slain like mountains. They trumpeted and lay down on the ground. Other elephants refused to fight in the battle. Some issued urine. In pain, others issued excrement. We saw dead elephants strewn along whichever path Bhimasena took, like mountains. Others vomited blood. Other giant elephants had their frontal globes smashed. Some lost their senses and fell down on the ground, like mountains on the face of the earth. Bhima wandered around on the field of battle, like death with a staff in his hand. His body was smeared with fat, blood, lard and marrow. Vrikodara whirled his club, drenched with the blood of elephants. He seemed to be as terrible as Pinaki, the wielder of Pinaka.[172] Crushed by the angry Bhimasena, the remaining army of your elephants suddenly fled. The charioteers and great archers, with Subdhadra's son at the forefront, protected the brave one as he fought, like the wielder of the vajra is by the immortals. He held the club that was drenched in blood and was himself drenched in the blood of elephants. Bhimasena, terrible in his soul, then seemed to be like death himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We saw him whirl his club in every direction. In that battle, we saw him dancing around like Shankara. O great king! We saw his terrible, heavy and devastating club, like Yama's staff and with a sound like that of Indra's vajra. It was covered in hair and marrow and was smeared with blood. It was like Rudra's Pinaka, when he angrily kills animals. Just as a herdsman uses a stick to drive a herd of animals, your army of elephants was driven back by Bhima's club. They were killed by that club and by arrows from all directions. Your elephants were scattered and ran away, crushing their own soldiers. Like a great storm that scatters the clouds, the elephants were driven away in that tumult by Bhima. He stood, like the wielder of the trident[173] in a cremation ground."'

CHAPTER 919(59)

'Sanjaya said, "When that army of elephants was destroyed, your son, Duryodhana, instructed all the soldiers to kill Bhimasena. On your son's instructions, all the soldiers uttered terrible roars and rushed against Bhimasena. That large army was incapable of being assailed, even by the gods. It was as difficult to cross as the turbulent ocean, on the night of the new or full moon. It was full of chariots, horses and elephants. There was the sound of conch shells. There were a large number of kings in it and it was incapable of being agitated. As it advanced, Bhimasena stationed himself in the battle, against a large ocean. He was like the shore, withstanding that ocean of soldiers. O king! In that battle, we faithfully witnessed Bhimasena's wonderful, extraordinary and superhuman deed. Without any hesitation, Bhimasena countered all those kings, horses, chariots and elephants with his club. That supreme of charioteers used his club to check that large army. Bhima stood immobile in that melee, like Mount Meru. At that extremely tumultuous and supremely dreadful time, his brothers, his sons, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's sons, Abhimanyu and maharatha Shikhandi did not abandon Bhimasena, because of the fear that was engendered from that great force.

'"He[174] grasped a heavy and great club that was made of steel[175] and rushed against your soldiers, like Death with a staff in his hand. The lord smashed large numbers of chariots and large numbers of horses. Bhima wandered around in that battle, like the fire of destruction at the end of a yuga. He killed everyone in that encounter, like the lord of death at the end of a yuga. Pandava crushed large numbers of chariots with the force of his thighs. He was like a crazy elephant and all of them were like reeds before an elephant. He brought down charioteers from chariots and elephant-riders from elephants. He brought down horse-riders from the backs of horses and crushed infantry on the ground. With the dead bodies of men, elephants and horses, the field of battle looked like the abode of the dead. He was like Rudra with the Pinaka, destroying animals in his anger. With the terrible and destructive club, which made a sound like Indra's vajra, Bhimasena looked like Yama, with a staff in his hand. The great-souled Kounteya whirled his club and assumed an extremely terrible form, like death at the time of the destruction of a yuga. He repeatedly shattered that large army. He was seen to be like death himself and all of them became dispirited. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wherever Pandava cast his eye, with his club upraised, all the soldiers there seemed to vanish. He shattered the soldiers and was unvanquished by the army. He devoured the soldiers, like the destroyer with a gaping mouth. He grasped the great club and performed terrible deeds there.

'"On seeing Vrikodara thus, Bhishma swiftly advanced towards him. He was on a giant chariot with the radiance of the sun and it roared like the clouds. He enveloped everything with a shower of arrows, like clouds showering down rain. On seeing Bhishma advance, like the destroyer with a gaping mouth, the mighty-armed and intolerant Bhima rushed towards him. At that instant, Satyaki, the brave descendant of the Shini lineage, devoted to the truth, attacked the grandfather. He began to kill the enemy with his firm bow and made the soldiers of your son tremble. He was borne on silver steeds and unleashed arrows from his firm bow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among all those on your side, there was no second one capable of withstanding him.[176] Alambusa, seated on a supreme king of elephants, pierced him with sharp and terrible arrows. But Shini's brave grandson pierced him with four arrows and advanced on his chariot. On seeing the foremost of the Vrishni lineage thus advancing, circling in the midst of the enemy, repeatedly repulsing the bulls among the Kuru lineage and roaring, no one, not even the best, was capable of withstanding him. He tormented like the midday sun. O king! With the exception of Somadatta's son, there was no one there who was not cheerless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that all the charioteers on his side had been routed, Bhurishrava, Somadatta's son, grasped a terrible and powerful bow and advanced, desiring to fight with Satyaki."'

CHAPTER 920(60)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Extremely enraged, like a gigantic elephant, Bhurishrava pierced Satyaki with nine arrows. While all the worlds looked on, Satyaki, immeasurable in his soul, used straight-tufted arrows to repulse Kourava.[177] At this, King Duryodhana, surrounded by his brothers, surrounded Somadatta's son, who was striving in that battle. In the same fashion, the immensely energetic Pandavas swiftly surrounded Satyaki in that encounter and stationed themselves for battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhimasena was extremely angry. He raised his club and confronted all your sons, with Duryodhana at the forefront. Surrounded by several thousand chariots and inflamed with anger, your son, Nandaka, pierced the immensely strong Bhimasena with sharp arrows, tufted with the feathers of herons and sharpened on stone. In that battle, Duryodhana was also angry and struck the immensely strong Bhimasena in the chest with three sharp arrows. At this, the mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhima climbed onto his own chariot, supreme among chariots, and told Vishoka,[178] 'These brave maharathas, the sons of Dhritarashtra, are extremely strong. They are extremely angry and are trying to kill me in battle. While you look on, there is no doubt that I will kill them today in this encounter. O charioteer! Therefore, in this encounter, drive the horses carefully.' Having said this, Partha pierced your son, Duryodhana, with nine sharp arrows that were decorated with gold. He pierced Nandaka in the chest with three arrows. Duryodhana pierced the immensely strong Bhima with six. With another three extremely sharp arrows, he pierced Vishoka. O king! In that encounter, as if he was smiling, the king[179] sliced off Bhima's radiant bow from his hand with three sharp arrows. On seeing that Vishoka was oppressed in that encounter by the sharp arrows discharged by your archer son, Bhima was unable to tolerate it. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In great rage, he grasped a divine bow, with the desire of killing your son. In his anger, he grasped a kshurapra arrow, tufted with hair. With this, Bhima sliced off the king's supreme bow. Discarding the bow that was sliced down, he[180] was inflamed with wrath and swiftly grasped another bow that was stronger. He took up an extremely terrible arrow that was as radiant as destiny and death. In great rage, he struck Bhimasena in the chest with this. Having been thus deeply wounded in the chest, he was in pain and sunk down on the floor of the chariot, having lost his senses. On seeing that Bhima was thus wounded, all the Pandava maharathas and great archers, with Abhimanyu at the forefront, could not tolerate this. Those extremely energetic ones unleashed a tumultuous shower of terrible and sharp weapons on your son's head. Meanwhile, the immensely strong Bhimasena regained consciousness. He again pierced Duryodhana with five arrows. Pandava, the great archer, then pierced Shalya with twenty-five arrows that had golden tufts and thus pierced, he fled from the field of battle.

'"Fourteen of your sons then attacked Bhima—Senapati, Sushena, Jalasandha, Sulochana, Ugra, Bhimaratha, Bhima,[181] Bhimabahu, Alolupa, Durmukha, Dushpradharsha, Vivitsu, Vikata and Soma. Their eyes were red with rage and they shot many arrows towards Bhimasena, piercing him simultaneously. The immensely strong Bhimsena saw your sons and the brave one licked the corners of his mouth, like a wolf amidst smaller animals. With a kshurapra arrow, Pandava sliced off

Senapati’s head. He pierced Jalasandha and despatched him to Yama’s abode. He killed Sushena and sent him to the land of the dead. With a bhalla arrow, he brought down Ugra’s head, with the helmet and earrings and as handsome as the moon, to the ground. O venerable one! In that encounter, Bhima then used seven arrows to despatch Bhimabahu to the land of the dead, together with his horses, his standard and his charioteer. O king! Smilingly, Bhimasena swiftly despatched the brothers, Bhima and Bhimaratha, to Yama’s abode. In the sight of all the soldiers, in that great encounter, Bhima used a kshurapra arrow to convey Sulochana to Yama’s abode. On witnessing Bhimasena’s terrible valour, your remaining sons were struck with fear on account of Bhima.[182]

‘“Shantanu’s son then spoke to all the maharathas. ‘This Bhima, wielding a fierce bow, is angry in battle and is slaughtering the maharatha sons of Dhritarashtra, though they are wise, superior, brave and united and the kings are being scattered.’ Having been thus addressed, all the soldiers on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra angrily rushed at the immensely strong Bhimasena. O lord of the earth! Bhagadatta mounted an elephant with rent temples and swiftly descended on the spot where Bhima was stationed. Descending in that battle, he used arrows sharpened on stone, so that in the encounter, Bhimasena became invisible, like clouds covering the sun. Depending on the strength of their own arms, the maharathas, with Abhimanyu at the forefront, could not tolerate that Bhima should be thus enveloped. They released a shower of arrows from all directions. The elephant was pierced by arrows from all directions. The elephant of the king of Pragjyotisha was pierced by a shower of extremely energetic and excellent weapons of many types. It was oppressed and covered with blood. In that battle, it looked like a giant cloud that was tinged with the rays of the sun. The elephant was exuding musth. Goaded by Bhagadatta, it rushed against them, like Death urged by the Destroyer. It doubled its speed and made the earth tremble. On beholding its gigantic and extremely terrible form, all the maharathas thought that it was intolerable and became dispirited. O tiger among men! The maharatha king, who was a great archer, used an arrow with drooping tufts to strike him on the chest. Thus struck, his limbs stiffened and losing his senses, he grasped the pole of the standard.[183] On seeing that the others were terrified and that Bhimasena had lost his senses, the powerful and strong Bhagadatta began to roar.

'"O king! On seeing Bhima in this state, the rakshasa Ghatotkacha became angry. Assuming a terrible form, he created fearful maya, capable of creating terror among cowards. He disappeared in an instant and then again assumed a terrible form. He rode on Airavata, created through the use of his own maya. Other elephants that were the guardians of the directions followed it—Anjana, Vamana and Mahapadma.[184] Rakshasas were seated on these extremely radiant and giant elephants. O king! These three were gigantic in form and exuded a lot of musth. They were energetic, courageous and powerful and extremely strong and valiant. Ghatotkacha goaded his own elephant. The scorcher of enemies wished to kill Bhagadatta and his elephant. The other rakshasas, immensely strong, goaded the other elephants, each of which possessed four tusks. They descended on Bhagadatta's elephant and simultaneously pierced it with their tusks. Oppressed and pained by those elephants and wounded by the arrows, it uttered a giant roar, like the sound of thunder. On hearing the roar and the extremely terrible and fearful sound, Bhishma spoke to Drona and King Suyodhana. 'In fighting in this battle with Hidimba's evil-souled son, the great archer Bhagadatta confronts a mighty danger. This rakshasa resorts to great illusion and the king is also extremely wrathful. These extremely valorous ones will confront each other, like Death and the Destroyer facing each other. We can hear the great roars of the delighted Pandavas. We can hear the great lamentations of the frightened elephant.[185] O fortunate ones! Let us go and protect the king. If he is not swiftly protected in this encounter, he will lose his life. O extremely valiant ones! Therefore, let us proceed without delay. This great and terrible encounter has commenced and it is making the body hair stand up. This brave leader of an army[186] is devoted to us and has been born in a noble lineage. O ones without decay! It is appropriate that we should save him together.' On hearing these words of Bhishma, with Bharadvaja's son at the forefront, and accompanied by all the kings, they advanced to protect Bhagadatta.

'"With great speed, they advanced to the spot where he was stationed. On seeing that they were advancing, with Yudhishthira at the forefront, the Panchalas, together with the Pandavas, followed the enemy from behind. On seeing that large army, the powerful Indra among the rakshasas let out an extremely loud roar, which was like the sound of thunder. On hearing this roar and on seeing the fighting elephants, Shantanu's son, Bhishma, spoke to Bharadvaja's son. 'I do not wish to fight with Hidimba's evil-souled son. He is full of strength and valour now and has support. The wielder of the vajra himself is incapable of vanquishing him in battle now. He is certain in his aims and can strike. Our mounts are exhausted and at the end of the day, are wounded and lacerated on account of the Panchalas and the Pandaveyas. Therefore, I do not think that we should fight any more with the victorious Pandavas. Let it be announced that we will withdraw for the day. Tomorrow, we will fight with the enemy again.' On hearing the grandfather's words, the Kouravas, who were oppressed by the fear of Ghatotkacha, were happy and resorted to the advent of night. The Kouravas retreated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas were victorious and roared like lions, sounding conch shells and flutes. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus did the battle rage on that day, between the Kurus and the Pandavas, with Ghatotkacha at the front. O king! The Kouravas returned to their own camps. When night arrived, they were ashamed at having been defeated by the Pandaveyas. The bodies of the maharatha sons of Pandu were wounded by arrows. But they were delighted at the outcome of the battle and returned to their camps. O great king! They placed Bhimasena and Ghatotkacha in the front and in great delight, honoured them. They roared in many different kinds of ways and this mixed with the sounds of the trumpets. They roared like lions and this mingled with the sounds of conch shells. The great-souled ones roared and made the earth tremble. O venerable one!

This agitated the hearts of your sons. When night fell, those scorchers of enemies retired to their camps. King Duryodhana was miserable at his brothers having been killed. He reflected on this for some time, overcome by sorrow and tears. He then made arrangements in all the camps, according to what is decreed. He was tormented by sorrow and pained, on account of his brothers.”’

CHAPTER 921(61)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! I am struck by great fear and wonder on hearing of the deeds of the sons of Pandu. Even the gods will find it extremely difficult to accomplish these. O Sanjaya! O suta! On hearing about the defeat of my sons in every way, I am overcome with grave thoughts about what will happen. Vidura’s certain words are oppressing my heart. O Sanjaya! Because of destiny, it is seen that everything is occurring as he said it would. Bhishma is the foremost among brave ones and is supreme among those who possess the knowledge of weapons. That warrior is fighting with the army of the Pandavas. What do the great-souled and immensely strong sons of Pandu possess? O son![187] What supreme boons have they obtained? What knowledge have they accumulated? They do not suffer any decay, like masses of stars in the firmament. I cannot endure the repeated slaughter of my soldiers at the hands of the Pandavas. Because of destiny, this extremely terrible punishment is descending on me. The sons of Pandu cannot be killed and my sons are being slaughtered. O Sanjaya! I cannot detect any reason as to why this should be the case. Nor do I see any means of overcoming this misery. I am like a man who is trying to cross the mighty ocean with his arms. There is no doubt that all my sons will meet a terrible death. I do not see a brave one who can protect those on my side in battle. O Sanjaya! In this battle, the destruction of my sons is certain. O suta! Tell me the specific reason for this. I am now asking you about the true reason and you should tell me everything. What did Duryodhana do, on seeing that his troops were running away in battle? What about Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Soubala, Jayadratha, the mighty archer who is

Drona's son and the immensely strong Vikarna? What did those great-souled ones determine to do then? O immensely wise one! O Sanjaya! Did my sons retreat?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! Listen attentively to what you wish to hear. Nothing was accomplished because of mantras and nothing was caused by maya. O king! Nor did the Pandavas create a fresh calamity. They are fighting in a just cause and they are fighting according to their powers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They have performed all their deeds and tasks in accordance with dharma. The Parthas have always acted so as to obtain great fame. Resorting to dharma, those immensely strong ones have never retreated from a fight. They have obtained supreme prosperity. Where there is dharma, victory exists there. O king! That is the reason the Parthas cannot be killed in battle and that is the reason they are victorious. Your evil-souled son has always acted according to evil. He is cruel and has performed inferior deeds. That is the reason he is decaying in this battle. O lord of men! Your son has performed many violent deeds. He has deceived the sons of Pandu, acting like inferior men. They disregarded all the offences committed by your son. O Pandu's elder brother! The Pandavas have always ignored them. O lord of the earth! Your son has not shown them appropriate honour. This is the outcome of those evil deeds. These are the extremely terrible fruits of that, like that of *kimpaka*.[188] O great king! With your sons and well-wishers, you are tasting that. O king! Though you were restrained by your well-wishers, Vidura, Bhishma and the great-souled Drona, you did not realize this. I also tried to restrain you, but you did not accept those words. Those were beneficial words. They were like medicine. But you rejected them, like a dying man who does not accept medicines. You accepted the views of your sons and hoped to defeat the Pandavas. Listen to my words about the true reasons. You have asked me about them. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about the reasons behind the victory of the Pandavas. O scorcher of enemies! I will tell you exactly as I have heard it. Duryodhana himself asked the grandfather about this, when he saw that all his maharatha brothers were vanquished in the battle. When night fell, Kourava was overwhelmed with sorrow in his heart. In humility, he went to the immensely wise grandfather. O lord of men! Hear from me what your son said at that time.

'"Duryodhana said, 'You, Drona, Shalya, Kripa, Drona's son, Hardikya Kritavarma,[189] Sudakshina from Kamboja, Bhurishrava, Vikarna and the valiant Bhagadatta—all of these are renowned as maharathas and all of them have been born in noble lineages. It is my view that they are sufficient for all the three worlds. All the assembled Pandavas cannot stand before them in valour. A doubt has therefore arisen in my mind and I am asking you about this. How are the Kounteyas obtaining victory at every step? Who is their support?'

'"Bhishma replied, 'O king! O Kourava! Listen to the words that I am going to speak to you. I often spoke to you. But you did not act in accordance with my words. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I asked you to act so that there might be peace with the Pandavas. O lord! I thought that this would have been beneficial for both you and the world. O king! You would have happily enjoyed the earth with your brothers. You would have chastised all ill-wishers and delighted your relatives. O son![190] But on earlier occasions, you did not heed my words. Because you dishonoured the Pandus, you are now confronted with this calamity. They are the performers of unsullied deeds. O lord! O great king! I will tell you the reasons why they cannot be killed. Listen. There is no one in this world who can vanquish the Pandavas in battle. There has been no such person, nor will there be. They are protected by the wielder of the Sharnga bow.[191] O son! O one learned in dharma! Listen exactly to what was chanted and recounted in the ancient accounts, by sages whose souls were controlled. In ancient times, all the gods and rishis assembled and worshipped the grandfather[192] on Mount Gandhamadana. Seated in their midst, Prajapati[193] saw an excellent and blazing vimana stationed in the sky. Having got to know everything about it through his powers of meditation, Brahma joined his hands in salutation. With his soul filled with delight, he bowed before the supreme being, the supreme lord. On seeing that Brahma had stood up, all the rishis and gods also stood, hands joined in salutation, beholding that great marvel.

““‘Brahma, supreme among those who have knowledge of the brahman, worshipped him and said, “You are the end of the universe. You are the creator of the universe. You are supreme. You are supreme dharma. You are the glory of the universe. You are the manifestation of the universe. You are the refuge of the universe. You are the action of the universe. You are the controller. You are the lord of the universe. You are Vasudeva. You are the soul of yoga. You are divinity and I seek refuge in you. Victory to the great god of the universe. Victory to the one who is engaged in the welfare of the worlds. Victory to the illustrious lord of all yoga. Victory to the one who is before and after yoga. The lotus was created from your navel. You possess large eyes. Victory to the one who is the lord of all the lords in the universe. You are the past, the present and the future. Victory to the one who creates tranquillity in the soul. You are the store of innumerable qualities. Victory to the one on whom everything depends. You are Narayana. You are impossible to comprehend. Victory to the one who is the wielder of the Sharnga bow. You are the one who possesses all the secret qualities. The universe is your form. You are free from disease. You are the lord of the universe. You are mighty-armed. Victory to the one who is engaged in the welfare of the worlds. O mighty serpent! O great boar! O one with the tawny mane! Victory to the lord. O one with the yellow garment! O one who is the lord of the directions. O one in whom the universe resides! O one without decay! You are the manifest. You are the unmanifest. You are in control of your senses. You possess vigorous senses. Your soul is beyond measure. You are the only one who knows about your own self. Victory to the deep one who satisfies all desires. You are infinite. You are known as the wise one. You are eternal. You are the one who causes all the worlds to be manifest. You accomplish all your tasks. You act according to wisdom. You know about dharma. You are the one who is the harbinger of victory. Your soul is mysterious. You are the soul of all beings. You are the origin of everything that comes into existence. You know about the nature of all beings. You are the lord of the worlds. Victory to the one who makes all beings appear. You are the self-creating one. You are the immensely fortunate one. You are the one who acts so as to bring about the destruction of everything. You are the one who inspires all thoughts in the mind. Victory to the brahman, beloved of all beings. You act for the sake of creation and destruction. O lord of desire! O supreme lord! You are the origin of amrita. You are the origin of virtue. You are the fire at the end of a yuga. You are the one who grants victory. You are the lord of all Prajapatis. O god! The lotus was created from your navel. O immensely powerful one! You are the one who was created from his own self. You are the great being. You are the one with action in his soul. Victory to the one who is active. The goddess earth constitutes your feet. The directions are your arms. The firmament is your head. I am your form. The gods are your limbs. The sun and the moon are your eyes. O lord! Austerities performed because of truth, dharma and desire are your strength. The fire is your energy. The wind is your breath. Water is created from your sweat. The Ashvins are always your ears. The goddess Sarasvati is your tongue. The devoted sacraments of the Vedas are vested in you. The universe finds refuge in you. You are the lord of yoga. It is impossible to know your measure, your dimensions, your energy, your valour, your strength or your yoga. The gods are devotedly faithful to you. They are immersed in your rules. O Vishnu! O supreme lord! O great lord! They always worship you. Through your favours, I have created rishis, gods, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, pishachas, men, animals, birds and reptiles on earth. O one who created the lotus in your navel! O large-eyed one! O Krishna! O dispeller of all misery! You are the destination of all beings. You are the leader. You are the mouth of the universe. O lord of the gods! It is through your favours that the gods are always happy. O god! It is through your favours that the earth is always without fear. O large-eyed one! You have taken birth to extend the lineage of the Yadus, so that dharma may be established and the daityas destroyed. O lord! For upholding the universe, do what I have asked you to. O lord! O Vasudeva! Through your favours, I have exactly sung all that is extremely mysterious in your essence. Create the god Samkarshana[194] out of your own self. O Krishna! Create Pradyumna out of your own self.[195] Aniruddha is known as the undecaying Vishnu and create him out of Pradyumna. It is Aniruddha who created me, Brahma, the upholder of the universe.[196] I have been created by Vasudeva’s essence and I have therefore been created by you. O lord! Divide yourself into different parts and take birth in the world of men. There, for the welfare of all the worlds, act so that all the asuras can be killed. Establish dharma. Obtain fame. Obtain the essence of yoga. O infinitely valorous one! The brahmarshis of the world and the gods are devoted to you and chant your names and about your supreme soul. They are all established in you. All beings find refuge in you. You are the one who provides them sanctuary. O well-armed one! You are the granter of boons. You have no beginning. You have no middle. You have no end. You possess the supreme yoga. You are a bridge for the worlds. That is what the brahmanas sing.”””’

CHAPTER 922(62)

‘“Bhishma said, ‘Then the illustrious god, the lord of all the lords of the world, replied to Brahma in a soft and deep voice. “O son![197] Through yoga, I have come to know everything that you desire. It will be as you wish.” Saying this, he instantly disappeared. At this, the gods, the rishis and the gandharvas were filled with great wonder. All of them were filled with great curiosity and spoke to the grandfather. “O lord! Who was the one before whom your illustrious self bowed down? You worshipped him using supreme praises. We desire to hear this.” Thus addressed, the illustrious grandfather replied to all the gods, the brahmarshis and the gandharvas in soft and sweet words. “He is the supreme *Tat*.[198] He is the one who exists now and he is the one who will exist in the future. He is the supreme one. He is the lord who is the soul of all beings. He is the brahman who is the supreme goal. O bulls among gods! I had a conversation with that cheerful one. For the welfare of the universe, I sought the favours of the lord of the universe. I requested him to be born in the world of men and to be known as

Vasudeva. I asked him to be born on earth for the death of the asuras. The immensely strong and terrible daityas, danavas and rakshasas, who have been killed in the battle, have been born among men. It is for their death that the illustrious and mighty one has been born in a human womb and is roaming around on earth, accompanied by Nara. The supreme rishis Nara and Narayana are ancient. They are invincible in battle, even by the united immortals. Ignorant ones will not know the rishis Nara and Narayana. Vasudeva is the great god of all the worlds and should be worshipped by you. I, Brahma, the lord of the universe, am his offspring. O supreme among the gods! You should never disregard him as a mere man. He is extremely valorous and holds the conch shell, the chakra and the club. He is the supreme mystery. He is the supreme goal. He is the supreme brahman. He is the supreme glory. He is without decay. He is the one who is not manifest. He is the eternal one. He is the supreme being whose praise is chanted as Purusha. But no one knows him. He is supreme energy. He is supreme happiness. He is the supreme truth praised by Vishvakarma. The illustrious Vasudeva, whose valour is infinite, should not be disregarded as a mere man by all the gods and Indra, or by all the worlds. The evil-minded one, who disregards and speaks of Hrishikesha as a mere man, is the worst of men. The great-souled yogi has adopted a human form. He who disregards Vasudeva, is spoken of as one who is immersed in darkness. That god is the soul of the mobile and the immobile. He is the immensely radiant one who bears the *srivatsa* mark.[199] The lotus sprouted from his navel. He who does not know this is spoken of as one who is immersed in darkness. He is diademed and wears the Koustubha jewel.[200] He is the one who dispels the fear of his friends. He who disregards the great-souled one, will be immersed in terrible darkness. O supreme among the gods! Having known the truth about Vasudeva, the lord of the lords of the worlds, all the worlds should show him obeisance.” Having spoken these words to the masses of gods in earlier times, the illustrious soul of all the worlds returned to his own abode.

‘“‘“The gods, the gandharvas, the sages and the apsaras listened to Brahma’s chants, and happily returned to heaven. O son![201] In earlier times, the learned rishis spoke about Vasudeva in their assembly and I heard this. O one who knows about the sacred texts! I also heard this from Rama, Jamadagni’s son, the wise Markandeya, Vyasa and Narada. Having heard the nature of the great-souled and illustrious Vasudeva, the lord of the lords of the worlds and the undecaying one, from whom was created Brahma, the father of the universe, why should men not worship and show obeisance to Vasudeva? O son! You have been restrained earlier by the sages, learned in the Vedas, and been asked not to enter into a fight with the intelligent Vasudeva and also with the Pandavas. But because of your delusion, you did not understand. I think of you as a cruel rakshasa who is immersed in darkness. That is the reason you hate Govinda and Pandava Dhananjaya. O king! I am telling you that he is eternal and undecaying. He is the eternal one who pervades all the worlds. He is the controller. He is the creator. He is the eternal upholder. He holds up all the three worlds. He is the lord and the preceptor of the mobile and the immobile. He is the warrior. He is victory. He is the victorious. He is the lord of all nature. O king! He is full of truth. He is devoid of darkness and passion. Where there is Krishna, dharma exists there. Where there is dharma, victory exists there. His greatness is yoga and yoga is his own self. O king! It is because the sons of Pandu hold this up that victory will be theirs. He always provides beneficial counsel to the Pandavas. He always gives them strength in battle and protects them from fear. He is the eternal god. He is the auspicious one who is full of mystery. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have asked me about the one who is famous by the name of Vasudeva. Brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras, each with their respective marks, always perform their own duties and serve the one who should be worshipped. At the end of dvapara yuga and at the beginning of kali yuga, he is the one whom Satvata Samkarshana eulogized in the appropriate way.[202] All the worlds of gods and men, with the cities and right up to the frontiers of the ocean, where men have lived for years and years, have been repeatedly created by

Vasudeva.’”’

CHAPTER 923(63)

‘“Duryodhana said, ‘In all the worlds, Vasudeva is spoken of as the great being. O grandfather! I wish to know about his origin and his glory.’

‘“Bhishma replied, ‘Vasudeva is the great being. He was created with the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one superior to Pundarikaksha can be seen. Markandeya spoke about Govinda’s extraordinary greatness. He is the great-souled Purushottama. He is in all beings and is the soul of all beings. He created the three elements of water, air and energy. He is the god who created the earth. He is the lord of all the lords of the worlds. The great-souled Purushottama was lying down on water. The god who is everywhere was asleep in his yoga. He created fire from his mouth. He created wind from his breath of life. Through his mind, the undecaying one created Sarasvati and the Vedas. He initially created the worlds, with the gods and the masses of rishis. He decreed the decay and death of all beings and also their birth and growth. He is dharma. He is learned in dharma. He is the granter of boons. He is the one who satisfies all desire. He is the actor. He is action. He is the ancient god and is himself the lord. He created the past, the present and the future, and everything. Janardana created the two sandhyas,[203] the directions, the sky and the rituals. Govinda created the austere rishis. The great-souled and undecaying lord created the universe. He created Samkarshana, the first among all beings. He created the god Shesha, whom the learned know of as Ananta. He holds up all beings and the earth, with all its mountains.[204] Through their yoga of meditation, brahmanas speak of him as the immensely energetic one. The great asura named Madhu was born from the secretion of his ears. He was extremely terrible in his deeds and terrible in his intelligence. He was about to kill Brahma, but Purushottama slew him. O son! Having killed him, the god Janardana came to be worshipped by gods, danavas, men and rishis as Madhusudana.[205] He is the boar. He is the lion. He is the lord with the three steps.[206] He is the mother. He is the father. He is

Hari for all beings. There is no one superior to Pundarikaksha, nor will there ever be. O king! He created the brahmanas from his mouth, the kshatriyas from his arms, the vaishyas from his thighs and the shudras from his feet. He is the refuge of all beings. He is the essence of the brahman. He is the essence of yoga. One can attain the great god Keshava by devoutly performing austerities on the nights of the new moon and the full moon. Keshava is supreme energy. He is the grandfather of all the worlds. O lord of men! The sages know him as Hrishikesha.[207] Know him to be the teacher, the father and the preceptor. When Krishna favours someone, he wins the undecaying worlds. If a man confronts fear and always seeks refuge with Keshava, or reads about this, such a man obtains sanctuary and happiness. Men who attain Krishna are never deluded. Janardana always saves those who are immersed in great fear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yudhishthira knows about the truth of this. O king! With all his soul, he has sought refuge with the great-souled Keshava, the lord of the universe. He is the lord of yoga and he is the lord of the earth.'"'

CHAPTER 924(64)

'"Bhishma said, 'O great king! Hear this hymn from me. It was chanted by Brahma himself and, in ancient times, recounted to those on earth by the brahmarshis and the gods. "You are the god of the sadhyas. You are the illustrious god who is the lord of all the gods. You know about the creator of the worlds. Thus did Narada speak about you. Markandeya has described you as the past, the present and the future. You are the sacrifice among all sacrifices. You are austerity among all austerities. You are the god of all the gods. Thus did the illustrious Bhrigu describe you. You are the terrible and ancient form of Vishnu, the lord of all beings. You are Vasudeva among the Vasus. You are the one who established Shakra. You are the god of the gods and the god of all beings. Thus did Dvaipayana speak of you. In earlier times, at the time of the creation of all beings, you have been spoken of as Daksha Prajapati. You are the creator of all the worlds. Thus did Angiras speak of you. That which is not manifest is your body. That which is manifest is established in your mind. The gods have been created from your words. Thus did Devala speak of you. Your head extends up to heaven. Your two arms hold up the earth. The three worlds are in your stomach. You are the eternal Purusha. Men who are purified through austerities know of you in this way. To rishis who are satisfied with knowledge of the soul, you are truth. O Madhusudana! You are sole refuge of generous royal sages who do not retreat from the field of battle and who resort to the supreme forms of dharma." O son! This is the nature of Keshava and I have recounted it you, both briefly and in detail. With affection in your mind, turn towards Keshava.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Having heard this sacred account, your son formed a high opinion of Keshava and the maharatha Pandavas. O great king! Bhishma, Shantanu's son, again spoke to him. 'O son! You have heard about the glory of the great-souled Keshava and about the essence of Nara. You had asked me about them. You have heard about the reasons why Nara and Narayana have been born among men and why those two brave ones cannot be vanquished or slain in battle. O king! Nor can the Pandavas be worsted in battle. Krishna is firm in his devotion to the illustrious Pandavas. O Indra among kings! That is the reason I am telling you that you should strive for peace with the Pandavas. Enjoy the earth, with your powerful brothers around you. If you disregard the gods Nara and Narayana, you will be destroyed.' O lord of the earth! Having spoken in this way, your father became silent. Having taken his leave of the king, he left to sleep for the night. The great-souled king bowed to him and left for his own camp. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He spent the night on a white bed."'

CHAPTER 925(65)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! When the night had passed and the sun had arisen, both the armies assembled to fight again. In great rage, wishing to kill each other, they advanced against each other. All of them glanced at each other and assembled for the encounter. O king! Because of your evil counsel, the Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra arrayed themselves in vyuhas and counter-vyuhas.They armed and arrayed themselves and attacked each other. O king! Bhishma protected himself in every direction in the form of a makara vyuha.[208] O king! The Pandavas also protected themselves in the form of a vyuha. Your father, Devavrata, advanced with a great army of chariots. He was surrounded by supreme charioteers and other chariots, infantry, elephants and horse-riders, all stationed in accordance with their appropriate ranks. The illustrious Pandavas saw that they were ready for battle. They arranged themselves for battle in the form of a *shyena*,[209] the invincible vyuha that is the king of all vyuhas. The immensely strong Bhimasena was radiant at the mouth. The invincible Shikhandi and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna were the eyes. The brave Satyaki, with truth as his valour, was the head. Wielding the Gandiva bow, Partha was stationed at the neck. With an entire akshouhini, the illustrious and great-souled Drupada, together with his sons, stationed himself for battle on the left wing. Kekaya, the leader of an akshouhini, was stationed on the right wing. Droupadi's sons and Subhadra's valiant son formed the back. The illustrious King Yudhishthira, handsome in his prowess, was himself at the rear, with his two intelligent brothers.[210]

'"The battle commenced with Bhima penetrating the makara's mouth. He advanced against Bhishma in that encounter and enveloped him with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Using great weapons, Bhishma brought these down. In that great battle, he confounded the soldiers of the sons of Pandu, who were stationed in arrays. On seeing that the soldiers were confounded, Dhananjaya swiftly advanced. In the forefront of that battle, he pierced Bhishma with one thousand arrows. Having repulsed the weapons that had been released by Bhishma in that encounter, he delighted his own soldiers, who were stationed in battle. At this, King Duryodhana spoke to Bharadvaja's son. The supreme among strong ones had earlier witnessed the terrible slaughter of his soldiers and the death of his brothers in the battle. Remembering this, the maharatha said, 'O preceptor! O unblemished one! You have always had my welfare in heart. We have sought refuge with you and with

Bhishma, the grandfather. With this, there is no doubt that we can hope to vanquish even the gods in battle, not to speak of the sons of Pandu, who are inferior in valour and power in this encounter.' O venerable one! Having been thus addressed by your son, while Satyaki looked on, Drona penetrated the Pandava ranks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satyaki countered Drona's progress and a tumultuous battle commenced. It made the body hair stand up. Bharadvaja's powerful son was enraged. In that encounter, as if smiling, he pierced Shini's descendant on his shoulders with ten sharp arrows. O king! At this, extremely enraged, Bhimasena wished to protect Satyaki from Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, and pierced him. O venerable one! In that battle, Drona, Bhishma and Shalya angrily enveloped Bhimasena with arrows. O venerable one! Abhimanyu became angry, and so did Droupadi's sons. They used sharp arrows to wound all the warriors with upraised weapons. In the great battle, the great archer, Shikhandi, angrily advanced against the immensely strong Bhishma and Drona, who were causing this torment. The brave and powerful one grasped a bow that had the sound of a cloud. Shikhandi swiftly showered arrows that shrouded the sun. However, on confronting him, the grandfather of the Bharata lineage remembered that he had been a woman earlier and withdrew from the battle. O great king! At this, instructed by your son and with a desire to protect Bhishma, Drona rushed to battle. Shikhandi confronted Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, and fled from the field of battle, as if from the fire that burns at the destruction of an era. O lord of the earth! With a large army, your son advanced to protect Bhishma and desiring a great victory. O king! But with Dhananjaya at the forefront, the Pandavas advanced against Bhishma, firm in their resolution of ensuring victory. A terrible and extremely wonderful battle ensued, like that between the gods and the danavas. Each side desired victory and eternal fame."'

CHAPTER 926(66)

'Sanjaya said, "Shantanu's son, Bhishma, then fought a tumultous battle, wishing to save your sons from their fear of Bhimasena. In the forenoon, there was an extremely terrible battle between the kins on the Kuru and Pandava sides, with the destruction of the foremost among warriors. While that extremely fearful battle was raging on, there was a great and tumultuous sound that seemed to touch the sky. Giant elephants roared. Horses neighed. There was the sound of drums and conch shells and there was a mighty roar. Those valiant and extremely strong ones fought with each other, desiring victory. They roared at each other, like great bulls among herds of cows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, heads were sliced down with sharp arrows and descended like a shower of stones from the sky. They still wore earrings and helmets, blazing in gold. O bull among the Bharata lineage! These heads were seen to fall down. The bodies were wounded by arrows. The severed arms still held on to bows. Adorned with ornaments, they were seen to be strewn all over the ground. The bodies bore armour. The upper arms were decorated with bracelets. The faces were like moons. The eyes were red. O lord of the earth! There were all the bodies of elephants, horses and men. In an instant, the earth was covered with a thick dust. In that thick cloud of dust, the weapons were like lightning. The sound made by the weapons was like the clap of thunder. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The ensuing tumultuous and fierce encounter between the Kurus and the Pandavas made a river of blood flow there. It was an extremely fearful, terrible and tumultuous fight and it made the body hair stand up. Unassailable in that battle, the kshatriyas showered down arrows. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Afflicted by the shower of arrows in that encounter, your elephants, and those belonging to the enemy, screamed in agony. With their riders slain, the horses ran around in the ten directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your warriors, and those of the enemy, were oppressed and wounded by arrows. They leapt up and fell down. O lord of the earth! Horses, elephants and chariots were seen to whirl around in the battle there. Driven by destiny, the kshatriyas killed each other there with clubs, lances and arrows with drooping tufts. Other brave ones, skilled in battle, struck each other with bare arms that were like clubs made completely out of iron. O lord of the earth! The brave ones, on your side and that of the Pandavas, killed each other with clenched fists, thighs and palms. Charioteers were bereft of their chariots. Desiring to kill each other, they rushed at each other, with excellent swords in their hands. Surrounded by a large number of Kalingas and with Bhishma at the forefront, King Duryodhana charged against the Pandavas. At this, all the Pandavas surrounded Vrikodara. Inflamed with rage, they rushed against Bhishma on swift mounts.”’

CHAPTER 927(67)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing Bhishma engaged in a fight with his brothers and the other kings, Dhananjaya raised his weapons and rushed against Gangeya. At Panchajanya’s[211] roar, Gandiva’s twang and on seeing Partha’s standard, all those on our side were overcome with terror. It was like a tree that did not waver, like a comet that had arisen.[212] It was colourful and possessed many hues. It was divine and bore the mark of the ape. O great king! We saw the wielder of the Gandiva’s standard to be of this type. It was like lightning in the midst of clouds, resplendent in the sky. The maharatha warriors saw Gandiva, with a back encrusted with gold. We heard his loud roars, like the roars of Shakra himself, and the terrible sound with which he slapped his palms as he went about killing your soldiers. As he showered arrows in every direction and enveloped all the directions, it was like a torrential cloud that was charged with lightning. With terrible weapons, Dhananjaya advanced against Gangeya. We were confounded by these weapons and could not distinguish between the eastern and the western direction. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your warriors could not distinguish between the directions. They were overcome with exhaustion. They were bereft of their weapons. They were bereft of their senses. They clung to each other for comfort. With all your sons, they sought succour with Bhishma. In that battle, Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, became the refuge of the oppressed ones. Overcome with terror, charioteers jumped down from their chariots and horse-riders from the backs of their horses. Even the infantry fell down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the roar of Gandiva, which was like the rumbling of thunder, all your soldiers were frightened and seemed to decay.

'"There were a large number of the best of Kamboja horses, fleet of foot. This was surrounded by a large army from the land of Govasana,[213] with many thousand *gopa*s.[214] O lord of the earth! This was surrounded by Madras, Souviras, Gandharas, Trigartas, all the best among the Kalingas, the king of Kalinga,[215] nagas and a large number of men, with Duhshasana at the forefront. It was accompanied by King Jayadratha and all the kings. Instructed by your son, there were fourteen thousand supreme horse-riders and they surrounded Soubala. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, all these on your side assembled against Pandava, on separate chariots and mounts. The chariots, elephants, horses and infantry raised an extremely thick cloud of dust and it made the battle seem even more fearful. Bhishma was supported by a large army with spears, lances, iron arrows, elephants, horses, chariots and warriors and attacked Kiriti. The king of Avanti engaged the king of Kashi and Bhimasena engaged Saindhava. Ajatashatru fought with Shalya, bull among the Madras, together with his sons and advisers. Vikarna fought with Sahadeva and Chitrasena with Shikhandi. O lord of the earth! The king of Matsya engaged Duryodhana and Shakuni. Drupada, Chekitana and maharatha Satyaki fought with the great-souled Drona, together with his son. Kripa and Kritavarma advanced against Dhrishtaketu. In this fashion, there was a melee with horses, elephants and chariots. In every direction, the soldiers fought with each other. Though there were no clouds, there was terrible lightning. Dust enveloped the directions. O lord of the earth! With terrible sounds, large meteors were seen to fall down. A mighty storm began to blow and a shower of dust fell down. The soldiers were shrouded in dust and the sun disappeared in the sky. Covered by that dust, though they continued to fight with upraised weapons, all the soldiers were confused and dispirited. As they were released from the arms of brave ones, the net of arrows, capable of piercing every kind of armour, raised a loud noise. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Weapons were released from excellent arms and blazed in the sky, like radiant stars. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Shields were seen to be scattered around in all the directions. They were colourful and made from the hides of bulls. They were decorated with golden nets. Heads and bodies were seen to fall in every direction, sliced off by swords with the complexion of the sun. Maharathas fell down on the ground there. The wheels, axles and shafts of their chariots were shattered. Their giant standards were brought down. Their horses were slain. With the charioteers slain, some horses were maimed with weapons and fell down, dragging the chariots with them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those best of horses still had their harnesses on. But they were wounded by arrows and their bodies were mangled. They could be seen there, dragging the yokes after them. O king! Extremely powerful elephants were seen to kill rathas who fought on chariots, with their charioteers and horses, single-handedly. While large numbers of soldiers were being killed, many elephants were seen to sniff in the air, inhaling the scent of the musth exuded by other elephants. In the midst of that large army, elephants were killed with lances and iron arrows and fell down, deprived of their lives. In the midst of the army, the field was strewn with the dead bodies of the best of elephants. The elephants crushed warriors as they fell down, with their elephant-riders and their standards. O great king! In that battle, the shafts of chariots were seen to be shattered by the trunks of elephants that resembled the king of elephants.[216] Tuskers shatterd large numbers of chariots. In that battle, they crushed and dragged down charioteers by the hair, as if they were the branches of trees. As chariots fought with chariots, the best of elephants dragged them down, running in all the directions with a loud noise. As they were thus dragged away by the elephants, they looked like masses of lotus stalks, dragged away from ponds by other elephants. Thus, the field of battle was strewn with a large number of horse-riders, infantry and maharathas, and their standards.'"

CHAPTER 928(68)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! With Virata of Matysa, Shikhandi swiftly attacked Bhishma, the mighty archer who was extremely difficult to vanquish. O bull on the earth! In that battle, Dhananjaya advanced against Drona, Kripa, Vikarna and many other brave kings who were great archers and extremely powerful, and also against the great archer Saindhava, together with his advisers and relatives and the kings from the west and the south. In that encounter, Bhimasena attacked your intolerant son Duryodhana, the great archer, together with Duhsaha. Sahadeva advanced against Shakuni and maharatha Uluka, the father and son who were great archers and were extremely difficult to vanquish in battle.[217] O great king! Maharatha Yudhishthira had been deceived by your sons. In that battle, he attacked the army of elephants.[218] Pandava Nakula was a brave warrior who could make enemies cry in battle. He attacked the excellent chariots of the Trigartas. Satyaki, Chekitana and Subhadra’s maharatha son were invincible in battle and advanced against Shalva and the Kekayas. Dhrishtaketu and rakshasa Ghatotkacha were extremely difficult to defeat. In that encounter, they attacked the army of chariots that belonged to your sons. General Dhrishtadyumna was immensely strong and immeasurable in his soul. O king! In that battle, he attacked Drona, whose deeds were extremely wonderful. Thus the great archers on your side fought with the Pandavas. Having encountered each other in battle, the brave ones proceeded to strike each other down. When it was midday and the sun had reached the midpoint of the sky, burning down with its fierce rays, the Kurus and the Pandavas began to kill each other. Chariots roamed around on the field of battle. They had standards decorated with gold and pennants. They were covered with tiger skins and were beautiful. As they encountered each other in that battle, wishing to kill each other and roaring like lions, a tumultuous sound arose. In that battle, the brave Srinjayas and Kurus performed extremely terrible deeds and struck each other and it was an extraordinary sight. O king! O tormentor of enemies! We could not see the sky, the directions, or the sun, or the sub-directions. Arrows were released in every direction. There were lances with polished tips, iron spears and yellow swords. These possessed radiance like that of blue lotuses. There were colourful armour and the brilliance of ornaments. The radiance from these made the sky, the directions and the sub-directions blaze. O king! The field of battle was resplendent. There were lions among rathas and tigers among men and they confronted each other in battle. O king! They blazed in that battle, like planets in the sky.

'"While all the soldiers looked on, Bhishma, foremost among charioteers, angrily repulsed the immensely strong Bhimasena. In that encounter, the arrows used by Bhishma were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. They were extremely forceful and washed in oil and they wounded Bhima. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The immensely powerful Bhimasena was enraged. He hurled an extremely powerful javelin that was like a venomous serpent. As that gold-shafted and invincible lance suddenly descended in that encounter, Bhishma sliced it down with straight-tufted arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After this, using a broad-headed, yellow and sharp arrow, he sliced Bhimasena's bow into two. At this, Satyaki quickly attacked Bhishma in that battle. O lord of men! He shot many arrows at your father. Bhishma then affixed an extremely terrible and sharp arrow and brought down Varshneya's[219] charioteer from his chariot. O king! When the charioteer of the chariot was slain, the horses fled. They ran hither and thither, with the speed of the mind and the wind. At this, a tumultuous uproar arose from all the soldiers. There were lamentations of woe from those who were on the side of the great-souled Pandavas. 'Run', 'grab the horses', 'advance swiftly'—such loud noises followed Yuyudhana's chariot.[220] While this was going on, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, began to kill the Pandava soldiers, like the slayer of Vritra against the asuras. When the Panchalas and Somakas were being killed by Bhishma, the noble ones[221] resolved to fight and attacked Bhishma. With a desire to kill those in the army of your sons, the Parthas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, rushed against Shantanu's son in that encounter. O king! Your soldiers, with Bhishma and Drona at the forefront, advanced forcefully against the enemy and another battle commenced."'

‘Sanjaya said, “With three arrows, Virata pierced maharatha Bhishma. With another three arrows, he pierced the maharatha’s steeds. At this, Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, the great archer, immensely strong and skilled in the use of his hands, used ten gold-tufted arrows to pierce him back in return. With a firm hand, Drona’s son, the maharatha who was terrible in wielding the bow, used six arrows to pierce the wielder of Gandiva between his breasts. At this, Phalguna, the slayer of enemy heroes, sliced down his bow. The destroyer of enemies used extremely sharp arrows to wound him. He[222] became senseless with rage and grasped an even more powerful bow. In that encounter, he could not tolerate his bow being sliced down by Partha. O king! He pierced Phalguna with nine sharp arrows and pierced Vasudeva with seventy supreme arrows. At this, the eyes of Krishna and Phalguna became coppery red in wrath. They sighed long and deep and began to think repeatedly. The wielder of Gandiva, the destroyer of enemies, grasped his bow with his left hand. He angrily affixed sharp and straight-tufted arrows. They were terrible and were capable of robbing one of one’s life. In that encounter, he swiftly pierced Drona’s son, supreme among strong ones, with these. In that battle, they pierced through his armour and drank up his blood. But though pierced by the wielder of Gandiva, Drona’s son was not distressed. Without being perturbed, he showered back arrows in return. O king! In that battle, he wished to protect the one who was great in his vows.[223] The bulls among men applauded this great deed of his, of being able to counter the two Krishnas[224] together. He remained fearlessly stationed in that battle, fighting all the soldiers. From Drona, he had learnt about releasing and withdrawing extremely difficult weapons. ‘This is the son of my preceptor. This is Drona’s beloved son. In particular, he is a brahmana and is worthy of my veneration.’ Thinking this, the brave Bibhatsu, the tormentor of his enemies and foremost among charioteers, showed mercy towards Bharadvaja’s son. In that battle, Kounteya, the tormentor of his enemies, gave up the fight with Drona’s son. The brave one swiftly began to kill your soldiers.

'"Duryodhana pierced the mighty archer Bhimasena with ten gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone and were shafted with the feathers of vultures. Extremely enraged, Bhimasena grasped a colourful and firm bow, which was capable of slaying the enemy, and ten sharp arrows. He drew the bow back to his ear and aimed those sharp, forceful and extremely energetic arrows. With these, he powerfully pierced the king of the Kurus on his broad chest. A gem hung from his chest on golden threads. When he was pierced, this was as resplendent as the sun surrounded by planets. When oppressed by Bhimasena, your energetic son could not tolerate it, like a snake unable to bear the slap of a palm. O great king! He became extremely wrathful and desiring to protect his own soldiers, used gold-tufted arrows that were sharpened on stone to pierce Bhima. In that battle, they fought and wounded each other. Those two immensely strong sons of yours were like the gods.

'"Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, pierced Chitrasena, tiger among men, with ten arrows and Purumitra with seven. He was the equal of Shakra in battle and pierced Satyavrata with seventy. The brave one seemed to dance around on the field, causing great grief to us. Chitrasena pierced him back with ten arrows, Saytavrata with nine and Purumitra with seven. He was pierced and wounded and was covered with blood. However, Arjuna's son sliced down Chitrasena's great and colourful bow, which was capable of repulsing the enemy. He used an arrow to pierce his armour and oppress him. At this, all the brave and maharatha princes on your side united together and angrily began to pierce him with sharp arrows. But he was supreme in the knowledge of weapons and wounded all of them with sharp arrows. On witnessing this deed accomplished by him, your sons surrounded him. He was capable of consuming soldiers in a battle, like a fire consumes deadwood in the forest after the winter season is over. As he chastised your soldiers, Subhadra's son was radiant. O lord of the earth! On beholding the deeds of Satvati's son[225] in that battle, your grandson, Lakshmana, the bearer of auspicious marks, swiftly attacked him. Abhimanyu angrily pierced Lakshmana with six arrows and his charioteer with three. O king! But

Lakshmana pierced Subhadra's son with sharp arrows. O great king! This seemed to be extraordinary. Subhadra's extremely powerful son used sharp arrows to slay Lakshmana's four arrows and his charioteer, and then attacked him. When the horses were killed, Lakshmana, the destroyer of enemy heroes, remained stationed on his chariot. He angrily hurled a javelin towards the chariot of Subhadra's son. It was terrible in form and unassailable and suddenly descended, like a snake. But Abhimanyu used sharp arrows to slice it down. At this, Goutama's son[226] took Lakshmana up on his own chariot and carried him away on the chariot, while all the soldiers looked on.

'"That extremely fearful battle raged on. Warriors violently struck each other, wishing to kill each other. The great archers on your side and the maharatha Pandavas fought each other in that battle, prepared to lay down their lives and killing each other. Their hair was dishevelled. They lost their armour. They were bereft of their chariots. Their bows were sliced down. The Srinjayas and the Kurus fought on, with their bare arms. The mighty-armed and immensely strong Bhishma, angrily began to kill the soldiers of the great-souled Pandavas with divine weapons. Horses, elephants, men, charioteers and horse-riders were slain and brought down there and the earth was covered with them."'

CHAPTER 930(70)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! The mighty-armed Satyaki, invincible in battle, drew a supreme bow, capable of withstanding a great burden, in that battle. He discharged many tufted arrows that were like virulent serpents. He displayed the deep, light and wonderful dexterity of his hands. He drew the bow, affixed arrows to it, discharged them and affixed others so swiftly that he seemed to be like a beautiful cloud that was showering down rain. He killed the enemies in that battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! King Duryodhana saw that he was blazing and despatched ten thousand chariots against him. But valiant Satyaki, for whom truth was valour, was a great and supreme archer. He used divine weapons to slay all of them. Having accomplished this terrible deed, he grasped his bow and confronted Bhurishrava, the extender of the deeds of the Kuru lineage, in that battle. On seeing that the soldiers had been brought down by Yuyudhana, he[227] angrily attacked him. He stretched an extremely large bow that had the complexion of Indra's weapon.[228] O great king! He displayed the dexterity of his hands and released thousands of arrows that were as virulent as serpents and were like the vajra. O king! These arrows were like the touch of death to Satyaki's followers and they fled, leaving the invincible Satyaki alone in that fight.

'"On seeing this, Yuyudhana's ten sons advanced against Bhurishrava, the great archer, in that battle. They were maharathas and immensely strong. They were clad in excellent armour and bore many different kinds of weapons and standards. All of them were extremely angry in that great battle and spoke to the one who had the mark of a sacrificial stake on his standard.[229] 'O immensely strong one! O relative of the Kouravas![230] Come and fight with us, either singly, or together. You will obtain great fame if you vanquish us in battle. Or we will vanquish you in battle and obtain great satisfaction.' Thus addressed, the immensely strong and brave one, who was foremost among men and prided himself on his valour, saw them stationed there and replied, 'O brave ones! You have spoken well. If that is your desire, fight with me now. I will endeavour to kill all of you in battle.' Having been thus addressed, the brave ones who were swift in action showered the great archer, the destroyer of enemies, with arrows. O great king! That tumultuous encounter commenced when it was afternoon. In that field of battle, there was a single one on one side and many united ones on the other. They enveloped that single-handed and foremost warrior with arrows. O king! It was like clouds showering down on a giant mountain. When unleashed, that shower of arrows was like Yama's staff, or like the vajra. But before they could reach him, the maharatha swiftly sliced them down. We then beheld the extraordinary valour of Somadatta's son. He single-handedly fought with many, without any fear. O king!

The ten maharathas created a shower of arrows. They surrounded the mighty-armed one, wishing to kill him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! In that battle, Somadatta's son used ten arrows to angrily slice down their bows. O king! When their bows had been sliced down, in that encounter, the maharatha instantly used sharp, straight-tufted and broad-headed arrows to slice off their heads. Thus slain, they fell down on the ground, like trees struck by lightning.

'"O king! On seeing that his brave and immensely strong sons had been killed in battle, Varshneya[231] roared and attacked Bhurishrava. In that battle, chariot dashed against chariot and the two immensely strong ones oppressed each other. In that encounter, they slew the horses of each other's chariot. Deprived of their chariots, the maharathas jumped down on the ground. They grasped great swords and supreme shields and attacked each other. As they were stationed for battle, those tigers among men were dazzling. Satyaki was wielding a supreme sword. O king! But Bhimasena swiftly approached him and took him up on his chariot. O king! And while all the archers looked on in that battle, your son picked up Bhurishrava on his chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! While that battle raged on, the angry Pandava began to fight with maharatha Bhishma. When the sun had assumed a reddish tinge, Dhananjaya swiftly killed twenty-five thousand maharathas. They had been instructed by Duryodhana to slay Partha. But they approached him and met their destruction, like insects before a flame. At this, the Matsyas and the Kekayas, skilled in the knowledge of fighting, surrounded maharatha Partha and his son. At that moment, the sun disappeared and all the soldiers were overcome with confusion. O great king! It was evening and with his mounts exhausted, your father, Devavrata, instructed that the soldiers should withdraw. Having encountered each other, the Pandava and Kuru troops were filled with great fear and anxiously retired to their camps. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having retired to their own camps, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas, and the Kurus, rested, as was appropriate."'

CHAPTER 931(71)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The Kurus and the Pandavas spent the time in different ways and when night had passed, they emerged again to fight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great sound arose from those on your side and theirs. The foremost among rathas prepared to do battle and elephants were readied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Infantry and horses were armoured. The tumultuous sound of conch shells and drums was everywhere. At this, King Yudhishthira spoke to Dhrishtadyumna. ‘O mighty-armed one! Construct the vyuha known as makara, which is capable of tormenting the enemy.’ O great king! Thus addressed by Partha, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna, foremost among rathas, accordingly instructed the rathas. Drupada and Pandava Dhananjaya were at the head. Maharatha Sahadeva and Nakula were the eyes. O great king! The immensely strong Bhimasena was the beak. Subhadra’s son, Droupadi’s sons, rakshasa Ghatotkacha, Satyaki and Dharmaraja were stationed at the neck of the vyuha. O great king! Virata, the leader of an army, was at the back, surrounded by Dhrishtadyumna and a large army. The five brothers from Kekaya were on the left flank. Dhrishtaketu, tiger among men, and the valiant Karakarsha were stationed on the right flank, so as to protect the vyuha. O great king! The illustrious maharatha Kuntibhoja and Shatanika were stationed at the feet, surrounded by a large army. The great and might archer Shikhandi, surrounded by the Somakas, and Iravat stationed themselves at the tail of the makara. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the Pandavas array themselves in the form of a great vyuha. O great king! When the sun arose, they armoured themselves and stationed themselves for battle. They had elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. They raised their colourful standards and umbrellas. They armed themselves with sharp and polished weapons and swiftly advanced against the Kouravas.

‘“O king! Your father, Devavrata, saw this vyuha and arranged his soldiers in the form of a giant counter-vyuha that had the shape of a curlew.[232] Bharadvaja’s son, the great archer, was at its beak. O lord of men! Ashvatthama and Kripa were the eyes. Kritavarma, foremost among men and foremost among all archers, was at the head, together with the kings of Kamboja and Bahlika. O venerable one! O great king! Shurasena and your son, Duryodhana, were at the neck, surrounded by many kings. O foremost among men! The king of Pragjyotisha was at the chest, together with the Madras, Souviras and Kekayas, and surrounded by a large army. Together with his own army, Susharma, the king of Prasthala,[233] armoured and stationed himself along the left wing. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Tusharas, Yavanas, Shakas and Chuchupas stationed themselves along the right wing of that vyuha. O venerable one! Shrutayu, Shatayu and Somadatta's son were stationed at the rear of the vyuha, protecting each other.

'"The battle between the Pandavas and the Kouravas commenced. O great king! When the sun had arisen, there was a great encounter. Charioteers confronted charioteers and elephants confronted elephants. Those riding on horses advanced against those riding on horses. But those on chariots also attacked horse-riders. O king! In that great battle, chariot-riders not only attacked chariot-riders, but also elephants. Elephant-riders fought against chariot-riders and chariot-riders fought against horse-riders. Chariot-riders fought against infantry and horse-riders fought against infantry. O king! They were full of wrath and attacked each other in that encounter. Protected by Bhima, Arjuna, the twins and the other maharathas, the army of the Pandavas was as beautiful as the night sky with stars. Your army was also resplendent with Bhishma, Kripa, Drona, Shalya, Duryodhana and the others, like the firmament circled by planets.

'"On seeing Drona, the valiant Kounteya Bhimasena, borne by swift horses, advanced against the men who were in the army of Bharadvaja's son. Drona was enraged in the battle. O king! In that encounter, the valiant one pierced Bhima in his inner organs with nine iron arrows. However, though Bhima was forcefully struck in that conflict, he despatched the charioteer of Bharadvaja's son to Yama's abode. Bharadvaja's powerful son began to control the mounts himself. He consumed the Pandava soldiers, like a fire amidst a mass of cotton. O supreme among men! Thus slaughtered by Drona and Bhishma, the Srinjayas and the Kekayas were defeated and began to run away. Your soldiers were also mangled by Bhima and Arjuna. They lost their senses there, like a proud and beautiful woman.[234] Both the vyuhas were penetrated and there was a destruction of the best of brave ones. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was terrible distress in your army and in theirs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We witnessed the extraordinary sight of all your soldiers and those of the enemy fighting with a single objective in mind. O lord of the earth! The maharatha Pandavas and Kouravas fought with each other. They repulsed each other's weapons."'

CHAPTER 932(72)

'Dhritarashtra said, "Our army is supreme and possesses many qualities. It has many different components. O Sanjaya! It has been arranged in a vyuha according to the sacred texts and should be unassailable. We have sustained it and it has always been extremely devoted to us. The soldiers are disciplined and free from vice and they have exhibited their valour earlier. They are not too old. Nor are they too young. They are not lean. Nor are they fat. They are active and tall. Their bodies are well-developed and they are free from disease. They are armoured and trained in the use of weapons. They possess many kinds of weapons. They are skilled in fighting with swords, bare arms and in fighting with clubs. Lances, swords, clubs, iron maces, catapults, javelins and all kinds of maces, kampanas, bows, kanapas, different kinds of slings, fighting with the bare fists—they are skilled in all these. They are devoted to training. They have persevered in exercises. They have devotedly learned everything about the handling of weapons. They have trained in mounting and descending, riding, moving forward, stepping back, striking effectively, advancing and retreating and are skilled. In many ways, they have been tested with elephants, horses, chariots and vehicles. Having been appropriately tested, they have been given the right kind of pay. This has not been influenced by lineage, favours, relationships, the strength of friendship, or connections of birth or marriage. They are prosperous people and noble. Their relatives have been treated well by us and are satisfied. We have shown them many favours. They are famous and honoured. O son![235] They are protected by many victorious ones who are the foremost among men, famous in the worlds because of their prominent deeds. They are like the guardians of the worlds. They are protected by many kshatriyas, who are honoured by all the people on earth. They have to come because of their own wishes, with their armies and their followers. This is like a large ocean, with rivers flowing into it from all directions. There are many elephants and chariots. Though these do not actually have wings, they seem to possess wings. Our many warriors constitute the terrible waters. The mounts are the waves. It is full of slings, swords, clubs, lances, bows and javelins. There are standards and ornaments that are embellished with jewelled cloth. The advancing mounts are like the agitating force of the wind. It is like a great and roaring ocean, without any limits. It is protected by Drona and Bhishma and also protected by Kritavarma, Kripa and Duhshasana and others who are led by Jayadratha. It is also protected by Bhagadatta and Vikarna, Drona's son, Soubala and Bahlika and many other great-souled ones who are the foremost warriors of the world. That this should be slaughtered in battle can only be because of earlier destiny. O Sanjaya! Such a preparation[236] on earth has never been seen before, by men, or by the immensely fortunate and ancient rishis. This large army is prosperous with every kind of weapon. If it should be killed in battle, how can that be anything other than destiny? O Sanjaya! To me, everything seems to be contrary. Such a terrible army cannot fight with the Pandavas in battle. Perhaps the gods have assembled here in the cause of the Pandavas. O Sanjaya! Perhaps they are fighting against my soldiers and that is the reason they are being killed. O Sanjaya! Vidura had earlier spoken about what was beneficial medicine for me. But my evil-minded son, Duryodhana, did not accept it. It is my view that the great-souled and omniscient one had known all this earlier. O son! He knew what was going to happen. It was preordained destiny. O Sanjaya! Perhaps all this is exactly as the creator had ordained it earlier. That is the reason it cannot be countered.”’

CHAPTER 933(73)

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is because of your own sins that you have confronted this calamity. O king! Duryodhana failed to foresee what you saw as the outcome of adharma in action. O lord of the earth! It was because of your sins that the gambling match had taken place earlier. It is because of your sins that the battle with the Pandavas has commenced. Having committed the evil yourself, you must now enjoy the fruits. O king! One must bear the consequences of the deeds one commits, in this world or in the next, and you have obtained what is appropriate. O king! Therefore, though you confront this great calamity, be patient. O venerable one! Listen, while I describe the account of the battle.

‘“With sharp arrows, Bhimasena penetrated your great army. The brave one then confronted all of Duryodhana’s younger brothers—Duhshasana, Durvishaha, Duhsaha, Durmada, Jaya, Jayatsena, Vikarna, Chitrasena, Sudarshana, Charuchitra, Suvarmana, Dushkarna, Karna[237]—and a large number of other maharathas. When he approached and saw these sons of Dhritarashtra, the immensely strong Bhima was excited with rage. In that battle, the great army was protected by Bhishma. But he penetrated into it. On seeing him there, those lords of men spoke to each other. ‘Vrikodara Bhima is here. Let us rob him of his life.’ Partha was thus surrounded by the brothers, who had made up their minds. He was like the sun, surrounded by large and evil planets at the time of the destruction of all beings. Though Pandava was in the midst of the vyuha, he was not frightened. It was like the great Indra, when he confronted the danavas in the battle between the gods and the asuras. O lord! Hundreds and thousands of rathas covered the single-handed one from all directions, with terrible arrows and he reciprocated. In that battle, the brave one paid no attention to the sons of Dhritarashtra and killed the foremost of brave warriors, on elephants, horses and chariots. O king! The great-minded Bhimasena knew the intentions of his relatives and had made up his mind to kill all of them. Pandava descended from his chariot and grasped a club. With this, he began to kill the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarasthra, which was like a great ocean.

'"When Bhimasena had penetrated, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna swiftly abandoned Drona[238] and went to where Soubala was. That bull among men shattered your large army. In that battle, he came upon Bhimasena's empty chariot. In that encounter, he saw Bhimasena's charioteer, Vishoka. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna was distressed and lost his senses. Exremely miserable, he asked in a voice that was choked with tears, the words emerging through his sighs. 'Where is Bhima? I love him more than my own life.' Vishoka joined his hands in salutation and told Dhrishtadyumna, 'The powerful and strong Pandaveya instructed me to wait here and plunged into the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra, as large as an ocean. That tiger among men cheerfully spoke these words to me. "O charioteer! Control the horses and wait here for an instant, while I swiftly slay those who have raised their weapons against me." When they saw the immensely strong one advance with the club in his hand, all the others on our side also advanced to fight. A tumultuous and fearful battle commenced. O king! Your friend penetrated that great vyuha and entered. 'Parshata Dhrishtadyumna heard Vishoka's words. In that field of battle, the immensely strong one replied to the charioteer. 'O suta! If I abandon my affection for the Pandavas and abandon Bhimasena in the battle, there is no reason for me to remain alive. What will the kshatriyas say, if I return without Bhima? After all, I was present when Bhima showed such single-mindedness in battle. With Agni at the forefront, the gods inflict harm on those who forsake their aides and return home unharmed. The immensely strong Bhima is my friend and my relative. That destroyer of enemies is devoted to me and I am devoted to him. I will therefore go where Vrikodara has gone. Behold me slay the enemies, like Vasava against the danavas.' Having said this, the brave one penetrated the midst of the Bharata soldiers,[239] following the path traversed by Bhimasena, marked out by elephants ravaged with the club. He saw Bhima consuming the ranks of the enemy. He shattered those kings in battle, like a powerful wind devastating trees. In that battle, charioteers, horse-riders, infantry and elephant-riders were killed and roared loudly in lamentation. O venerable one! There were cries of woe among your soldiers, as Bhimasena, wonderful in different means of fighting, slew them. All those who were skilled in the use of weapons surrounded Vrikodara from all sides. Without any fear, they showered weapons at him from all directions. Parshata saw that Pandava Bhimasena, foremost among the wielders of weapons, was attacked on all sides by those brave ones of the world, accompanied by their terrible assembly of soldiers. His limbs were mangled from the arrows. He was treading on the ground with a club in his hand, vomiting the poison of his wrath. He was like death at the time of destruction. Parshata went and comforted Bhimasena. The great-souled one removed the arrows from his body and lifted him up onto his own chariot. He embraced and comforted Bhimsena, in the midst of the enemy.

'"While that great battle was going on, your son approached his brothers and told them, 'This son of Drupada is evil in his soul. He has arrived to help Bhimasena. All of you go and kill him. Let the enemy not seek out our soldiers.' The sons of Dhritarashtra were incited by their elder brother. They heard his words and attacked in intolerance. They raised their weapons with a desire to kill, like terrible comets at the time of the destruction of a yuga. The brave ones grasped colourful bows. They made the earth tremble with the twang of their bows and the roar of their chariot wheels. They showered arrows on Drupada's son, like clouds pouring down water on the tops of mountains. But that colourful warrior[240] was not perturbed in the battle and sliced them all down with his own sharp arrows. Your brave sons were stationed around him in that battle, striving their utmost. But Drupada's young and fierce son was determined to kill them. O king! Extremely angry, the maharatha released the weapon known as *pramohana*[241] at your sons, like the great

Indra in a battle against the daityas. In that battle, those brave ones among men lost their senses. Afflicted by the pramohana weapon, they lost their minds and their spirits. When they saw that your sons were unconscious and had lost their senses, as if their time had come, all the Kurus fled in all the directions, together with the horses, the elephants and the chariots.

'"At that time, Drona, foremost among the wielders of weapons, confronted Drupada and pierced him with three terrible arrows. O king! Having been thus pierced by Drona in the field of battle, King Drupada remembered his earlier enmity.[242] O king! He fled. Having thus defeated Drupada, the powerful Drona blew on his conch shell. On hearing the sound of this conch shell, all the Somakas were frightened. The energetic Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, heard that your sons had become unconscious in battle because of the pramohana weapon. O king! In his anxiety, Drona swiftly went to that part of the battlefield. Bharadvaja's powerful son, the great archer, saw Dhrishtadyumna and Bhima wandering around in that great field of battle. The maharatha saw that your sons were overcome by unconsciousness. He unleashed the weapon known as *prajna*, to counter the *mohana* weapon.[243] Your maharatha sons again regained their breath of life. They returned to the battle against Bhima and Parshata.

'"Yudhishthira summoned and addressed his own soldiers. 'Let twelve brave rathas armour themselves. And with Subhadra's son at the forefront, to the best of their ability, follow the footsteps of Bhima and Parshata in the battle. Let us find out what has happened to them. My mind is not at peace.' Having been thus addressed, those brave and valiant warriors, all of whom prided themselves on their manliness, agreed and accepted what they had been asked to do. They departed together, when the sun had reached the midpoint in the sky. The Kekayas, Droupadi's sons and the valiant Dhrishtaketu had Abhimanyu at the forefront and were surrounded by a large army.[244] In that battle, those destroyers of enemies arranged themselves in the vyuha known as *suchimukha*.[245] In that battle, they broke through the ranks of chariots that belonged to the sons of Dhritarashtra. Those great archers advanced, with Abhimanyu at the forefront. O lord of men! Your soldiers were terrified of Bhimasena and had lost their senses because of Dhrishtadyumna. They were incapable of resisting and were like a woman in the streets, who faces a person who is drunk. Those great archers advanced with standards that were decorated with gold. They advanced swiftly to protect Dhrishtadyumna and Vrikodara. On seeing the great archers, with Abhimanyu at the forefront, those two were delighted and began to slaughter your soldiers.

'"Brave Parshata of Panchala suddenly saw his preceptor advancing towards him.[246] He gave up the desire to kill your sons. He made Kekaya take Vrikodara up on his chariot and advanced in great rage against Drona, skilled in the use of weapons. At this, Bharadvaja's powerful son, the destroyer of enemies, became angry and used a broad-headed arrow to slice down his bow. For the sake of Duryodhana's welfare and remembering the food he had obtained from his master,[247] he released hundreds of arrows towards Parshata. But Parshata, the destroyer of enemy heroes, took up another bow and pierced Drona with seventy gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone. Drona, the destroyer of enemies, sliced down his bow yet again. The valiant one then swiftly used four supreme arrows to despatch his four horses to Vaivasvata's[248] eternal and terrible abode. He despatched another broad-headed arrow and killed his charioteer. With his horses killed, the mighty-armed maharatha descended from his chariot and climbed onto Abhimanyu's great chariot. While Bhimasena looked on and while Parshata looked on, the infinitely energetic Drona shattered the forces and made their army of chariots, horses and elephants tremble. The assembled maharathas were powerless to counter this. Having been killed by Drona's sharp arrows, those soldiers swayed, like a turbulent ocean. When they saw those soldiers in that state, your troops were delighted. They saw the enraged preceptor consume the ranks of the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the warriors roared in applause."'

CHAPTER 934(74)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having regained his senses, King Duryodhana once again repulsed the undecaying Bhima with showers of arrows. Yet again, your maharatha sons united together. With raised weapons, they fought with Bhima in that battle. In that battle, Bhimasena again climbed onto his own chariot. The mighty-armed one went to the spot where your sons were. He grasped an extremely forceful, firm and colourful bow that was capable of slaying the enemy. In the battle, he pierced your sons with arrows. At this, King Duryodhana pierced the immensely strong Bhimasena in his vital parts with an extremely sharp iron arrow. Thus pierced by your archer son, the great archer’s eyes became red with rage. He forcefully drew his bow and wounded Duryodhana in the arms and the chest with three arrows. But despite being wounded, the king remained there, like an immobile king of mountains. All of Duryodhana’s brave younger brothers were ready to give up their lives. In the battle, they saw the two angry ones striking one another and remembered their earlier resolution of afflicting the one whose deeds were terrible. O great king! As they descended on him, the immensely strong Bhimasena rushed against them, like an elephant against other elephants. O great king! In great rage, the energetic one struck your immensely famous son, Chitrasena, with an iron arrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He also struck your other sons in that conflict, with many different kinds of arrows, gold-tufted and extremely fast.

‘“Those twelve maharathas, Abhimanyu and the others, had been sent by Dharmaraja to follow in Bhimasena’s footsteps. O great king! They advanced against your immensely strong sons. Those brave ones were stationed on chariots that were like the sun and the fire in their energy. All of them were great archers and blazed in their prosperity. On seeing them resplendent in that great battle, with shining and golden armour, your immensely strong sons gave up the fight with Bhima. But Kounteya was unable to tolerate the sight of their leaving alive. In that battle, Abhimanyu, accompanied by Bhimasena, attacked. On seeing them, and on seeing Parshata, your maharatha soldiers, Duryodhana and the others, grasped their bows. Borne by fast horses, they went to the spot where those rathas were stationed. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the afternoon, there was a terrible battle between the powerful ones on your side and on the side of the enemy. Abhimanyu killed Vikarna's extremely swift horses. He then pierced him with twenty-five *kshudraka*[249] arrows. O king! With his horses slain, maharatha Vikarna abandoned his chariot and climbed onto Chitrasena's radiant chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Stationed on a single chariot, those two brothers, the extenders of the Kuru lineage, enveloped Arjuna's son with a net of arrows. Durjaya and Vikarna pierced Krishna's son[250] with five iron arrows. However, Krishna's son did not waver and was immobile, like Mount Meru. O venerable one! In that encounter, Duhshasana fought with the five from Kekaya. O Indra among kings! It was an extraordinary fight. Enraged in battle, Droupadi's sons repulsed Duryodhana. O lord of the earth! Each of them pierced your son with three arrows. But your son was invincible in that battle with Droupadi's sons. O king! He wounded each of them separately with sharp arrows. Pierced in return, he was covered in blood and was radiant. He was like a mountain, with streams mixed with minerals flowing down it.

'"O king! In that battle, the powerful Bhishma killed the Pandava soldiers, like a herdsman driving large numbers of animals. O lord of the earth! The roar of Gandiva was heard then, as Partha began to slaughter the soldiers along the right flank. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, headless torsos stood up in every direction, amongst the soldiers of both the Kurus and the Pandavas. It was like an ocean of blood, with the chariots as the eddies. The elephants were the islands and the horses were the waves. The chariots were boats that tigers among men used to cross that ocean of soldiers. The best of men were without arms, without armour and without bodies. They were seen to fall down, in hundreds and thousands. Crazy elephants were slain, their bodies splattered with blood. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The earth seemed to be strewn with mountains. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We witnessed an extraordinary sight, both among those on your side and theirs. There was no man there who did not wish to do battle. Thus did the brave ones fight, striving for great fame. Those on your side fought with the Pandavas, desiring victory in battle.”’

CHAPTER 935(75)

‘Sanjaya said, “The sun assumed a reddish tinge. Desiring victory and wishing to kill him, King Duryodhana attacked Bhima. On seeing that brave one amongst men, firm in his enmity, advance towards him, Bhimasena was extremely enraged and spoke these words. ‘I have desired this moment for many years and the time has now arrived. If you do not flee from the battle, I will kill you today. I will dispel the misery of Kunti today and the difficulties we faced during our exile in the forest. I will kill you and dispel Droupadi’s woes. At the time of gambling with the dice, you insulted the Pandavas. O Gandhari’s son! Witness the calamity that has befallen you because of your evil act. In earlier times, you relied on the views of Karna and Soubala. You did not think of the Pandavas and did as you wished. When Dasharha came as a supplicant,[251] you disregarded him because of your delusion. In delight, you gave Uluka a message to deliver to us. I will kill you today, with your relatives and your kin. I will avenge all the evil deeds you have committed earlier.’ Having said this, he repeatedly stretched his terrible bow. He took up terrible arrows that were as radiant as the great vajra. In great anger, he swiftly shot twenty-six arrows at Suyodhana. They were flaming, with crests like fire, and they had tongues like the vajra. After that, he struck his bow with two and his charioteer with another two. With four arrows, he despatched his[252] swift horses to Yama’s abode. The scorcher of enemies then used two arrows that were released with great force. With these, he sliced down the king’s umbrella from his supreme chariot. With three more, he sliced down the flaming and supreme standard. Having sliced it down, while your son looked on, he emitted a loud roar. That handsome standard, decorated with many gems, fell down from the chariot. It suddenly fell down on the ground, like lightning from the clouds. It was resplendent like the sun and was beautiful with jewels. It was marked with the sign of an elephant. All the kings saw that the standard of the lord of the Kurus had been brought down. In that battle, as if he was smiling, Bhima then used ten arrows to slay his mighty elephant.

'"At this, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, foremost among rathas, stationed himself on Duryodhana's flank, supported by many good warriors. O king! Kripa, foremost among rathas, picked up the infinitely energetic Kouravya, the intolerant Duryodhana, on his own chariot. He had been deeply pierced and wounded in that battle with Bhimasena. O king! Duryodhana sat down on the floor of the chariot. Desiring to kill Bhima, Jayadratha surrounded him from all sides. There were many thousand chariots on all of Bhima's directions. O king! Then Dhrishtaketu, the valiant Abhimanyu, the Kekayas and Droupadi's sons fought with your sons.

'"O king! The delicate and famous Abhimanyu's chariot was surrounded from all directions by eight great archers—Chitrasena, Suchitra, Chitrashva, Chitradarshana, Charuchitra, Sucharu, Nanda and Upanandaka. But the great-souled Abhimanyu swiftly wounded each of them with five straight-tufted arrows. These were like the vajra, or like death itself, and were released from his colourful bow. All of them were unable to tolerate this. They showered down sharp arrows on the supreme chariot of Subhadra's son, like clouds showering down on Mount Meru. Though he was skilled in weapons and invincible in battle, he was oppressed in that encounter. O great king! But Abhimanyu made all of them tremble, like the wielder of the vajra against the great asuras, in the battle between the gods and the asuras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The foremost among charioteers despatched fourteen broad-headed and terrible arrows towards Vikarna. They were like venomous serpents. With these, he cut down his standard, his chariot and his horses and seemed to be dancing around in the battle. Subhadra's immensely strong son then again used yellow arrows that did not waver from their course. They were pointed and had been sharpened on stone and were shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They descended on Vikarna and pierced his body. Having done this, they penetrated the ground, like flaming serpents. Those gold-tufted and gold-tipped arrows could be seen stuck to the ground. They were drenched with Vikarna's blood and seemed to be vomiting blood. On seeing that Vikarna had been thus wounded in the battle, all his other brothers attacked those charioteers, with Subhadra's son at the forefront. They swiftly advanced on their own chariots and attacked those other chariots, which were as radiant as the sun. Invincible in battle, they began to pierce each other in that encounter.

'"Durmukha pierced Shrutakarma[253] with seven swift arrows, sliced down his standard with one and pierced his charioteer with seven. Shurtakarma's horses were caparisoned with nets of gold and were as fleet as the wind. He advanced closer and killed them with six arrows and then brought down his charioteer. But despite his horses having been slain, maharatha Shrutakarma remained stationed on the chariot. In great anger, he hurled a flaming javelin that was like a giant meteor. The illustrious Durmukha's large armour was penetrated. Having shattered the armour, it penetrated the ground, blazing in its great energy. The immensely strong Sutasoma saw that he[254] was without a chariot. While all the soldiers looked on, he took him up on his own chariot. O king! The brave Shrutakirti[255] then attacked your son Jayatsena in that battle, wishing to kill the illustrious one. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the great-souled Shrutakirti stretched his bow in battle, smilingly, your son, Jayatsena, sliced it down with an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow. Shatanika saw that his brother's bow had been sliced down. The energetic one swiftly arrived there, roaring repeatedly like a lion. In that battle, Shatanika firmly drew his bow and pierced Jayatsena with ten arrows. Using another extremely sharp arrow that was capable of penetrating all kinds of armour, Shatanika powerfully struck Jayatsena in the chest. Dushkarna was near his brother then. Senseless with rage, he sliced down the bow of Nakula's son in that battle. However, the immensely strong Shatanika took up another supreme bow that was capable of bearing a great load and affixed sharp arrows. In the presence of his brother,[256] he asked

Dushkarna to wait and released sharp arrows that were like flaming serpents. O venerable one! He sliced down his bow with one arrow and killed his charioteer with two. In that battle, he then pierced him with seven more. With twelve sharp arrows, the unblemished one killed all his horses, which were speckled and were as swift as the mind. In that battle, he used another broad-headed and well-released arrow to angrily pierce Dushkarna deeply in the chest. O king! On seeing that Dushkarna had been smitten,[257] five maharathas surrounded Shatanika from all sides, wishing to kill him. They enveloped the illustrious Shatanika with a torrent of arrows.

'"Extremely wrathful, the five brothers from Kekaya advanced to the attack. O great king! On seeing them advance, like elephants against giant elephants, your maharatha sons—Durmukha, Durjaya, the youthful Durmarshana, Shatrunjaya and Shatrusaha, all of them wrathful and illustrious, countered the brothers from Kekaya. Their chariots were like cities, with many colours and decorated with flags, and horses as fleet as thought had been yoked to them. The brave ones held supreme bows and were adorned with colourful armour and standards. They descended on the enemy soldiers, like lions moving from one forest to another forest. A tumultuous battle ensued, with chariots and elephants. It was extremely terrible, where they sought to kill each other. O king! Because of enmity towards each other, they increased the numbers in Yama's kingdom. But since the sun was about to set, that extremely terrible battle lasted only for a short while. Thousands of charioteers and horse-riders were strewn around. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, was excited with rage. He used straight-tufted arrows to slaughter the soldiers of the great-souled ones. He used his arrows to despatch the Panchala soldiers to Yama's undecaying realm. O king! Having thus shattered the Pandava army, the great archer withdrew his soldiers and returned to his own camp. Having seen Dhrishtadyumna and Vrikodara, Dharmaraja inhaled the fragrances of their heads and happily retired to his own camp."'

CHAPTER 936(76)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Those brave ones were driven by enmity towards each other. They retired to their respective camps, drenched in blood. Having rested for some time, they honoured each other in accordance with the proper forms. They were then seen armoured again, desiring to do battle. O king! Your son was overwhelmed with anxiety and blood was trickling from his limbs. He told the grandfather, ‘Our soldiers are terrible and fierce. They are arrayed and bear many standards. But the brave Pandava rathas have swiftly shattered, slain and oppressed us. Having confounded all our warriors, they have obtained fame. The makara vyuha was like the vajra. But Bhima penetrated it and wounded me with arrows that were like the staff of death. O king! On seeing him enraged, I was overcome with fear and lost my senses. I cannot find peace even now. You are truthful in your vows. Through your favours, I wish to obtain victory and slay the Pandavas.’ When he was thus addressed, Ganga’s great-souled son, foremost among the wielders of weapons, knew that Duryodhana was overcome by grief. Though his mind was distracted, the intelligent one replied, ‘O prince! I will make supreme efforts to penetrate their army, as much as I can. I wish to grant you victory and joy. But I will not hide anything for your sake. These maharathas are terrible and many. There are illustrious and supreme among brave ones. They are skilled in the use of weapons. They have become the aides of the Pandavas in battle. They have overcome fatigue and they are vomiting the venom of their wrath. Those brave ones are firm in their enmity towards you. They are incapable of being vanquished easily. O king! O brave one! But for your sake, I will strive against them to the best of my ability, giving up my life. O high-minded one! In this battle, for your sake, I will no longer attempt to remain alive today. For your sake, I will take on the gods, the daityas and all the worlds, not to speak of the enemies here. O king! To bring you pleasure, I will fight with the Pandavas and do everything that you desire.’ On hearing these words, Duryodhana was supremely content and delighted.

‘“He cheerfully instructed all the soldiers and all the kings to advance. On hearing his instructions, the chariots, horses, infantry and elephants began to advance. O king! They were happy and were armed with a large number and many kinds of weapons. O king! With elephants, horses and infantry, your army was extremely resplendent. There were masses of tuskers, stationed in arrays and commanded well. The warriors, gods among men and skilled in the use of weapons, stationed themselves amidst the masses of soldiers. The arrays of chariots, infantry, elephants and horses advanced, proceeding along the proper formations. They raised a dust that was tinged like the morning sun and shrouded the sun's rays. There were bright standards on chariots and elephants. In every direction, they fluttered in the air. O king! In that battle, their different colours looked like clouds tinged with lightning in the sky. The kings twanged their bows and a tumultuous and terrible sound arose. This was like the roar of the ocean, when it was churned by the gods and the great asuras in the first yuga.[258] With that great roar and with many forms and colours, the army of yoru sons was greatly agitated. The soldiers were ready to kill the soldiers of the enemy and looked like masses of clouds at the end of a yuga."'

CHAPTER 937(77)

'Sanjaya said, "O foremost amongst the Bharata lineage! Gangeya saw that your son was still immersed in thought. He then again spoke these pleasing words to him. 'O king! I, Drona, Shalya, Satvata Kritavarma, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, Somadatta's son, Saindhava, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Bahlika and the Bahlika forces, the powerful king of Trigarta, the invincible king of Magadha, Brihadbala from Kosala, Chitrasena, Vivimshati, many thousand rathas with radiant and giant standards, horses from many countries and horse-riders astride them, crazy kings of elephants with musth issuing from their shattered temples and mouths, brave infantry armed with many different kinds of weapons, warriors with raised weapons who have assembled in your cause from many countries— these and many others have assembled in your cause, ready to give up their lives. It is my view that they are capable of defeating even the gods in battle. O king! But I must always tell you words that are for your own welfare. The Pandavas are incapable of being vanquished, even by the gods, with Vasava. They have Vasudeva as their aide and are like the great Indra in their valour. O Indra among kings! In every way, I will act according to your words. I will defeat the Pandavas in battle, or they will defeat me.’ Having thus spoken, he gave him the sacred *vishalyakarani*.[259] This herb possessed great efficacy and he[260] used it to heal his wounds.

‘“When it was morning and the sky was clear, the valiant Bhishma, skilled about vyuhas, himself arranged his soldiers in an array that was in the form of the *mandala* vyuha.[261] O foremost among men! It abounded in many different kinds of weapons. It was full of the foremost warriors, tuskers and infantry. There were many thousands of chariots in every direction. There were large numbers of horse-riders, wielding swords and lances. There were seven chariots near every elephant and there were seven horses near every chariot. There were ten archers near every horse-rider and there were seven with shields near every archer. O great king! Such was the vyuha in which your maharatha soldiers were arrayed. Protected by Bhishma, they were stationed, ready for the great battle. Ten thousand horses, as many elephants, ten thousand chariots and your armoured sons, the brave Chitrasena and the others, protected the grandfather. He was seen to be protected by those brave ones and those immensely strong kings were themselves armoured. In that battle, Duryodhana was armoured and was stationed on his chariot. He blazed in prosperity, like Shakra in heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great roar arose from the army of your sons. There was the tumultuous sound of chariot wheels and the noise made by musical instruments. Arrayed by Bhishma, the battle formation of the sons of Dhritarashtra advanced towards the west. It was in the form of a giant vyuha known as mandala, impenetrable and the destroyer of the enemy. O king! It was beautiful in every direction and was incapable of being assailed by the enemy.

‘“On seeing the extremely terrible vyuha known as mandala, King Yudhishthira himself created the vyuha known as vajra. The different divisions were stationed in the form of this array. The charioteers and horse-riders roared like lions. Desiring to do battle, the warriors wished to break each other’s vyuhas. Here and there, with their soldiers, the brave ones began to strike. Bharadvaja’s son advanced against Matsya and Drona’s son against Shikhandi. King Duryodhana attacked Parshata himself. O king! Nakula and Sahadeva advanced against the lord of Madra. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti attacked Iravat.[262] In that encounter, all the kings fought against Dhananjaya. Bhimasena strove in that battle and countered Hardikya.[263] O king! In that battle, Arjuna’s illustrious son[264] fought with your sons Chitrasena, Vikarna and Durmarshana. Hidimba’s son, supreme among rakshasas, advanced forcefully against the great archer from Pragjyotisha and it was like a crazy elephant encountering another crazy elephant.[265] O king! The rakshasa Alambusa was enraged in that war. He attacked Satyaki, invincible in battle, together with his soldiers. Bhurishrava made every effort in that battle and fought against Dhrishtaketu. Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, confronted King Shrutayu.[266] In that battle, Chekitana fought against Kripa. The remaining ones fought against maharatha Bhima.

‘“Thousands of kings surrounded Dhananjaya, with spears, lances, iron arrows, maces and clubs in their hands. Arjuna became extremely angry and told Varshneya, ‘O Madhava! Look at the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra, arrayed for battle. They have been arranged in this formation by the great-souled Gangeya, knowledgeable about vyuhas. O Madhava! Look at these armoured and brave ones, wishing to do battle. O Keshava! Behold the king of Trigarta, together with his brothers. O Janardana! While you look on, I will kill all of them today. O foremost among the Yadu lineage! They are wishing to fight against me in this field of battle.’ Having spoken thus, Kounteya touched the string of his bow and showered arrows towards the masses of kings. Those supreme archers also showered back arrows in return and it was like clouds pouring down onto a lake during the monsoon season. O lord of the earth! In that great battle, the two Krishnas were seen to be completely covered through those showers of arrows and a great lamentation arose amidst the soldiers. The gods, the devarshis, the gandharvas and the giant serpents were struck with great wonder, when they saw the two Krishnas in that state. O king! At this, Arjuna was enraged and unleashed the *aindra*[267] weapon. We witnessed Vijaya's extraordinary valour. The showers of weapons released by his enemies were repulsed by his innumerable arrows. O lord of the earth! Among those thousands of kings, horses and elephants, there was not a single one who was not wounded. O venerable one! Partha pierced others with two or three arrows each. Having been thus killed by Partha, they sought refuge with Bhishma, Shantanu's son. At that time, they seemed to be immersed in fathomless waters and Bhishma became their protector. Your soldiers confronted a calamity there and were scattered. O great king! They were agitated, like the great ocean in a storm."'

CHAPTER 938(78)

'Sanjaya said, "Susharma[268] retreated from the battle. The brave ones were routed by the great-souled Pandava. However, the battle continued. Your army, which was like the ocean, had been agitated. Gangeya swiftly advanced towards Vijaya. O king! On witnessing Partha's valour in battle, Duryodhana hastened towards all those kings and spoke to them. The brave and immensely strong Susharma was at the forefront and was stationed in the midst of all the soldiers. These words delighted them. 'This Bhishma, Shantanu's son, wishes to fight with Dhananjaya with all his heart. He is the best of the Kurus and is willing to give up his own life. With all the soldiers of the Bharata army, he will advance against the army of the enemy. All of you unite in the battle and protect the grandfather.' O great king! Having been thus urged, all the divisions of all those kings of men followed the grandfather. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, swiftly went to where Arjuna was and the immensely strong one of the Bharata lineage had also been advancing towards him. He was resplendent on a great chariot that roared like the clouds. Large white horses were yoked to it and the terrible ape was on the standard. On seeing Dhananjaya Kiriti advance in battle, all the soldiers in your army were frightened and let out a tumultuous roar. Krishna held the reins in that battle and looked as dazzling as the sun in midday. They were unable of glancing at him. Like that, the Pandavas were incapable of glancing at Bhishma, Shantanu's son. His horses were white and he held a white bow. He looked like the white planet when it has risen.[269] He was surrounded on every side by the extremely great-souled Trigarta and his brothers, your sons and many other maharathas.

'"Bharadvaja's son pierced Matsya with an arrow in that encounter. He brought his standard down with one arrow and sliced down his bow with another. Discarding his broken bow, Virata, the leader of an army, quickly took up another bow that was powerful and could bear a great burden. He used venomous arrows that were like flaming serpents. He pierced Drona with three of these and his horses with four. He pierced his standard with one and his charioteer with five. With a single arrow, he pierced his bow. Drona, bull among brahmanas, became angry. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Using eight straight-tufted arrows, he killed his horses and his charioteer with a single one. With his horses slain and his charioteer also slain, the best of charioteers jumped down from his chariot and swiftly ascended Shankha's chariot.[270] The father and the son were on the same chariot and powerfully countered Bharadvaja's son with a great shower of arrows. O lord of men! Bharadvaja's son became enraged in that battle. He despatched an arrow that was like a venomous serpent towards Shankha. In that encounter, it pierced his heart and drank up his blood. Then the arrow fell down on the ground, smeared in blood. Killed by the arrow released by Bharadvaja's son, he fell down from the chariot. While his father looked on, the bow and arrows dropped from his grasp. On seeing that his son had been killed, Virata gave up the fight and fled in fear. Drona was like death with a gaping mouth. Bharadvaja's son swiftly attacked the great army of the Pandavas. In that battle, he scattered hundreds and thousands of them.

'"O great king! Shikhandi confronted Drona's son in battle and struck him between the brows with three swift and iron arrows. With those three adhering to his forehead, that tiger among men looked like Mount Meru with three golden peaks. O king! Ashvatthama became angry. In that encounter, in an instant, he showered down many arrows at Shikhandi's charioteer, standard, horses and weapon and brought them down. With his horses slain, the supreme of rathas descended from his chariot. He grasped a sharp sword and a polished shield. O great king! Shikhandi, the scorcher of enemies, strode around in the field of battle with a sword, like an angry hawk. Drona's son did not find an opportunity to strike him and it was extraordinary. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Supremely enraged, Drona's son unleashed many thousand arrows in that battle. But when that extremely terrible shower of arrows descended in that encounter, the supreme among strong ones struck them down with his sharp sword. The shield was polished and was decorated with a hundred moons on it. In that encounter, Drona's son shattered his shield and his sword. O king! He pierced him with many sharp arrows. Though pierced and wounded, Shikhandi whirled the fragment of the sword that had been shattered by the arrows and swiftly hurled it, like a blazing serpent. It suddenly descended, as radiant as the fire of destruction. But in that encounter, Drona's son displayed the dexterity of his hands. He sliced it down and pierced Shikhandi with many iron arrows. O king! Shikhandi was severely wounded by those sharp arrows. He quickly ascended the chariot of the great-souled Madhava.[271]

'"The angry Satyaki, strongest among strong ones, attacked the cruel rakshasa Alambusa in that battle and pierced him with many terrible arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But in that encounter, the Indra among rakshasas sliced his bow down with an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon and pierced him with many arrows. He used the maya of rakshasas and showered down arrows on him. We then witnessed the extraordinary valour of Shini's descendant. Despite being pierced by sharp arrows in that encounter, he disregarded them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varshneya then invoked the aindra weapon, which the illustrious Madhava had obtained from Vijaya.[272] Using that weapon, he reduced the maya of rakshasas to ashes. From every direction, he showered Alambusa with terrible arrows, like the slayer of Bala[273] showering rain on mountains. He was thus oppressed by the great-souled Madhava. Out of fear, the rakshasa gave up the fight with Satyaki and fled. While your warriors looked on, Shini's descendant triumphed over the Indra among rakshasas, whom even Maghavan found difficult to defeat, and roared. Satyaki, with truth as his valour, killed your soldiers with many sharp arrows and they ran away in fear.

'"O great king! At that time, Dhrishtadyumna, Drupada's powerful son, encountered your son, lord among men, and in that encounter, enveloped him with straight-tufted arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was shrouded by Dhrishtadyumna's arrows. But your son, lord of men and Indra among kings, was not perturbed. In that encounter, he pierced Dhrishtadyumna back with ninety arrows and it was extremely wonderful. O venerable one! The commander[274] became angry and sliced his bow down. The maharatha swiftly killed his four horses and quickly pierced him with seven extremely sharp arrows. When his horses were killed, the mighty-armed one, strong among rathas, leapt down from his chariot. He advanced on foot towards Parshata, with a sword in his hand. The immensely strong Shakuni, who was devoted to the king, arrived. He took the king of all the worlds up on his own chariot. Having defeated the king, Parshata, the destroyer of enemy heroes, began to slaughter your troops, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras.

'"In that battle, Kritavarma attacked maharatha Bhima and covered him with arrows. He was enveloped, like the sun with large clouds. But Bhimasena, scorcher of enemies, laughed in that battle. Extremely angry, he unleashed arrows on Kritavarma. O great king! But the atiratha from the Satvata lineage, skilled in the use of weapons, did not waver. He enveloped Bhima with sharp arrows. The immensely strong Bhimasena killed his four horses. He brought down his charioteer and his beautiful standard. The destroyer of enemy heroes covered him with many arrows.

He was wounded in every limb and looked like a porcupine. O great king! With his horses slain, he quickly abandoned his chariot and went to the chariot of your brother-in-law Vrishaka, while your son looked on.[275] Bhimasena angrily rushed to attack your soldiers. He began to slaughter them in great rage, like Death with a staff in his hand.”’

CHAPTER 939(79)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! As you have described them, I have heard about the many wonderful duels that took place between those on the side of the sons of Pandu and those on my side. O Sanjaya! But you have never spoken about those on my side being happy. You have always described the sons of Pandu as happy and as those who are never routed. O suta! You have spoken about those on my side being distressed and deprived of energy in the battle. There is no doubt that this is because of destiny.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O bull among men! Those on your side are striving to do battle, to the best of their capacity and the best of their enterprise. They are displaying supreme manliness, to the best of their capability. The water of Ganga, the river of the gods, is sweet. But when it merges into the great ocean, it attains the quality of salinity. O king! The manliness of the great-souled ones on your side is like that. When they confront the brave sons of Pandu in battle, they obtain no success. They are trying to the best of their strength and are performing extremely difficult tasks. O foremost among the Kurus! You should not censure them because they have merged with the Kouravas. O lord of the earth! This great and terrible destruction of the earth, and the extension of Yama’s kingdom, has come about because of your crimes and those of your sons. O king! Since it is because of your own sins, you should not grieve over this. The lords of the earth desire the worlds that can be obtained by performing good deeds in battle. Striving for heaven, they are fighting and penetrating the army formations. O great king! On the forenoon of that day, there was a great destruction of people, like that in the battle between the gods and the asuras. Listen with single-minded attention.

'"The two great-souled and great archers from Avanti, immensely strong, saw Iravat in that battle and encountered him with ferocity. The battle that took place between them was tumultuous and made the body hair stand up. Iravat was extremely enraged. He quickly pierced those brothers, who were like gods, with sharp and straight-tufted arrows. In that encounter, those wonderful warriors pierced him back. O king! They fought on and there was nothing to differentiate the two parties. They sought to kill the enemy and neutralized each other's endeavours. O king! Iravat used four arrows to despatch his four horses to Yama's abode.[276] O venerable one! With two extremely sharp and broad-headed arrows, he sliced off his bow and standard. O king! In that encounter, this was extraordinary. At this, Anuvinda discarded his chariot and climbed onto Vinda's chariot. He grasped a supreme and new bow that was capable of bearing a great burden. In that battle, those two brave ones from Avanti, supreme among rathas, were stationed on the same chariot. They swiftly showered arrows on the great-souled Iravat. They released extremely swift arrows, decorated with gold. They covered the sky and reached the path of the sun. Iravat became extremely angry in that battle and showered down arrows on those maharatha brothers. He brought down their charioteer. Having lost his life, the charioteer fell down on the ground. The horses were no longer controlled and dragged the chariot off in various directions. O great king! The son of the naga king's daughter triumphed in this way. He quickly displayed his manliness and began to slaughter your soldiers. Thus killed in battle, the great army of the sons of Dhritarashtra reeled around in many directions, like a man who has drunk poison.

'"Hidimba's son, Indra among the rakshasas, advanced against Bhagadatta. The immensely strong one was on a chariot that had the complexion of the sun and possessed a standard. The king of Pragjyotisha was seated on a king of elephants, like the wielder of the vajra in ancient times, in the *tarakamaya* battle.[277] The gods, together with the gandharvas, and the rishis assembled and were unable to differentiate between Hidimba's son and Bhagadatta. Just as Shakra, the lord of the gods, had driven the danavas away with weapons, in that encounter, the king[278] drove the Pandavas away in all directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas were driven away in all the directions and within their own ranks, could not find a single one who could protect them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But we saw Bhimasena's son stationed on his chariot there, though the other maharathas had fled with dispirited hearts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the soldiers of the Pandus returned again, in that encounter, your soldiers let out a terrible roar. O king! In that great battle, Ghatotkacha enveloped Bhagadatta with arrows, like clouds raining down on Mount Meru. The king repulsed the arrows released from the rakshasa's bow and in that battle, quickly pierced Bhimasena's son in all his inner organs. He oppressed him with many straight-tufted arrows. But the Indra among rakshasas was not distressed and was like an immobile mountain. At this, Pragjyotisha became angry. In that encounter, he hurled fourteen javelins. However, the rakshasa sliced them down. Having sliced the javelins down with his sharp arrows, the mighty-armed one pierced Bhagadatta with seventy gold-tufted arrows. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But Pragjyotisha only laughed. In that battle, he used arrows to bring down his four horses. Though the horses were slain, the powerful Indra among rakshasas remained stationed on his chariot. He powerfully hurled a javelin towards Pragjyotisha's elephant. This possessed a golden shaft and was extremely swift. As it suddenly descended, the king cut it down into three and shattered, it fell down on the ground. On seeing that the javelin had been destroyed, Hidimba's son fled and left the field of battle, like in ancient times, Namuchi, supreme among daityas, had fled from Indra.[279] The brave and valiant one,[280] famous for his manliness, won that battle. O king! He was invincible in battle, like Yama and Varuna. O king! In that battle, he began to crush the Pandava soldiers with his elephant, like a wild elephant destroying the stalks of lotuses.

'"In that battle, the lord of Madra fought with the twins, the sons of his sister. He enveloped the sons of Pandu with a cloud of arrows. Finding himself engaged in battle with his maternal uncle, Sahadeva repulsed him with a shower of arrows, like clouds shrouding the sun. Covered by that shower of arrows, he seemed to be happy.[281] On account of their mother, the twins were also extremely delighted. O king! In that battle, smilingly, the maharatha[282] used four supreme arrows to despatch Nakula's four horses to Yama's abode. With the horses slain, the maharatha[283] quickly descended from his chariot and ascended onto his illustrious brother's vehicle. In that battle, the brave ones stretched their bows while stationed on the same chariot. In a short while, they angrily covered the chariot of the king of Madra with arrows. He was shrouded with many straight-tufted arrows released by his sister's sons. But the tiger among men did not waver and was like a mountain. As if laughing, he destroyed that shower of arrows. Sahadeva became angry. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The valiant one picked up an arrow and released it in the direction of the king of Madra. That arrow released by him was as forceful as Garuda. It pierced the king of Madra and fell down on the ground. Having been severely wounded and pained, the maharatha sat down on the floor of his chariot. O great king! He lost his consciousness. On seeing that he had fallen down and had lost his senses in that encounter and had been oppressed by the twins, his charioteer drove his chariot away. On seeing that the chariot of the lord of Madra had retreated, the sons of Dhritarashtra lost heart. All of them were distressed and thought that he was no longer alive. Having vanquished their maternal uncle in battle, Madri's maharatha sons were delighted. They blew their conch shells and roared like lions. O lord of the earth! O king! Filled with joy, they attacked your soldiers, like the immortal Indra and Upendra[284] attacking the army of the daityas."'

CHAPTER 940(80)

‘Sanjaya said, “When the sun reached the midpoint, King Yudhishthira saw Shrutayu and urged his horses towards him. The king attacked Shrutayu, the scorcher of enemies and pierced him with nine sharp and straight-tufted arrows. But, in that encounter, the king, the great archer, countered the arrows shot by Dharma’s son and struck Kounteya with seven arrows. In that battle, these penetrated his armour and drank up his blood, as if all the vital forces in the great-souled one’s body had been sucked out. Pandava was severely wounded by the great-souled king. However, in that encounter, he pierced the king in the heart with an arrow that was like a boar’s ear. With another broad-headed arrow, Partha, foremost among rathas, quickly brought down the great-souled one’s standard from his chariot and made it fall down on the ground. O king! On seeing that his standard had been brought down, King Shrutayu pierced Pandava with seven sharp arrows. At this, Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, blazed up in anger, like the fire that burns at the end of a yuga and consumes all beings. O great king! On seeing Pandava enraged, the gods, the gandharvas and the rakshasas were pained and anxious. All the beings thought that, thus enraged, the king would destroy the three worlds then. O king! When Pandava was thus angered, the rishis and the gods uttered great words of benediction so that there might be peace in the worlds. He was overcome with rage and licked the corners of his mouth. His appearance was as terrible as that of the sun at the time of the destruction of a yuga. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the soldiers in your army became distressed and thought that they would no longer remain alive. But the immensely famous one controlled his anger through patience. He sliced down Shrutayu’s great bow from his hand. After the bow had been sliced down, while all the soldiers looked on in that battle, the king used an iron arrow to pierce him between the breasts. O king! Nimble on his feet, the great-souled and extremely strong one, then used sharp arrows to kill his mounts and his charioteer. On witnessing the king’s manliness and with his horses slain, Shrutayu gave up his chariot and swiftly fled from the field of battle. Dharma’s son defeated the great archer in that encounter. O king! Because of this, all of Duryodhana’s soldiers became reluctant to do battle. O great king! Having accomplished this, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, began to slaughter your soldiers, like Death with a gaping mouth.

'"While all the soldiers looked on, Varshneya Chekitana enveloped Goutama, supreme among charioteers, with arrows. In that encounter, Kripa, Sharadvat's son, countered all those arrows. O king! Fighting with care in that battle, he pierced Chekitana with arrows. O venerable one! He used another broad-headed arrow to slice down his bow. Displaying his lighteness of hand in that encounter, he brought down his charioteer. O king! He killed his horses and the two charioteers who protected his flanks.[285] Satvata[286] swiftly leapt down from his chariot and grabbed a club. With that club, capable of killing heroes, that supreme among wielders of clubs killed Goutama's horses and brought down his charioteer. Goutama stood on the ground and shot sixteen arrows at him. Those arrows pierced Satvata and entered the ground. Chekitana became angry. Wishing to kill Goutama, like Purandara against Vritra, he again hurled his club. That polished and great club was as hard as stone. On seeing it descend, Goutama repulsed it with thousands of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Chekitana drew his sword out from its sheath. With supreme lightness, he attacked Goutama. Goutama discarded his bow and took up an extremely sharp sword. O king! He advanced with great speed towards Chekitana. Both of them were extremely strong and both wielded supreme swords. They began to strike each other with those extremely sharp swords. Those bulls among men were struck with the force of each other's swords and fell down on the ground, the abode of all beings. Their limbs became unconscious and they were exhausted because of their exertions. Because of his affectionate feelings, Karakarsha, invincible in battle, swiftly rushed to the spot. He saw that Chekitana was in that state and while all the soldiers looked on, took him up on his own chariot. O lord of the earth! The brave Shakuni, your brother-in-law, swiftly took Goutama, supreme among rathas, up on his chariot.

'"O king! In anger, the immensely strong Dhrishtaketu pierced Somadatta's son[287] in the chest with ninety arrows. O great king! With those arrows on his chest, Somadatta's son looked resplendent, like the sun with its rays at midday. However, in that battle, Bhurishrava killed maharatha Dhrishtaketu's horses and charioteers with supreme arrows and he was deprived of his chariot. On seeing that he had been deprived of his chariot and that his horses and his charioteer had been slain in that encounter, he enveloped him with a great shower of arrows. O venerable one! The great-minded Dhrishtaketu then abandoned his chariot and ascended Shatanika's vehicle.

'"O king! The rathas Chitrasena, Vikarna and Durmarshana were clad in golden armour and attacked Subhadra's son. O king! A terrible encounter commenced between Abhimanyu and those armed ones, like that in the body between *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*.[288] O king! In that great battle, he deprived your sons of their chariots. But remembering Bhima's pledge, the tiger among men did not kill them.[289] Bhishma was unassailable, even to the gods. In that battle, surrounded by many kings and hundreds of elephants, horses and chariots, he swiftly advanced to rescue your sons. On seeing this and on seeing that maharatha Abhimanyu, who was only a child, was alone, Kounteya, the one borne on white steeds, told Vasudeva, 'O Hrishikesha! Drive the horses to the spot where those numerous chariots are. There are many brave ones there, skilled in the use of weapons and invincible in battle. O Madhava! Drive the horses so that they cannot slay our soldiers.' Thus urged by the infinitely energetic Kounteya, in that encounter, Varshneya drove the chariot yoked to the white horses there. O venerable one! When Arjuna angrily advanced into battle, a great uproar was created by your troops. Kounteya advanced to the kings who were protecting Bhishma. O king! He spoke these words to Susharma. 'I know that you are the foremost among warriors and that you bear extreme enmity towards us from earlier times. You will now behold the extremely terrible fruits of that. I will today show you your deceased ancestors.' Having heard these harsh words spoken by Bibhatsu, the slayer of enemies, Susharma, the leader of a large number of charioteers, did not speak anything in reply, pleasant or unpleasant. But he advanced against the brave Arjuna, surrounded by a large number of kings. O unblemished one! In that battle, Arjuna was surrounded by your sons from every direction, to the front, the rear and the sides. They enveloped him with arrows, like clouds covering the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! An extremely terrible battle commenced between those on your side and the Pandavas and in that encounter, blood flowed like water.”’

CHAPTER 941(81)

‘Sanjaya said, “The powerful Dhananjaya was breathing like a snake that had been trodden on with the foot. He raised his arrows. In that battle, he continuously used arrows to slice down the bows of those maharathas. In that battle, he instantly sliced down the bows of those valiant kings. The great-souled one simultaneously pierced them with arrows, wishing to slay those illustrious ones. O king! Some of those kings fell down on the ground, drenched in blood. They were oppressed by Shakra’s son. Their bodies were mangled and their heads fell down. Some died because their armour and their bodies were penetrated. They were overcome by Partha’s strength and resorted to the ground. They assumed wonderful forms and were simultaneously destroyed. On seeing that those warriors and princes had perished, the king of Trigarta quickly advanced towards Partha. Thirty-two charioteers, who were protecting from the rear, were also with him. They surrounded Partha and drew their bows with a loud noise. They showered him with a great rain of arrows, like clouds pouring down rain on a mountain. In that encounter, Dhananjaya was oppressed by that shower of arrows and anger was engendered in him. He used sixty arrows that had been washed in oil and killed the ones who had been protecting from the rear. Having vanquished the sixty rathas, the illustrious Dhananjaya was delighted.[290] Having killed the forces of those kings, Jishnu advanced to slay Bhishma. The king of Trigarta saw that the ranks of his maharatha relatives had been killed. He swiftly advanced to kill Partha in battle, with the lords of the earth following him. On seeing that they were advancing against Dhananjaya, foremost among the wielders of weapons, with Shikhandi at the forefront, they[291] advanced to protect Arjuna's chariot. They raised sharp weapons in their hands. Partha also saw that those brave ones were advancing against him, together with the king of Trigarta. In that battle, he pierced them with sharp arrows shot from the bow Gandiva. The skilled warrior wished to fight with Bhishma and saw Duryodhana and Saindhava and the other kings. For a brief moment, the brave Jishnu used his strength to counter them. But then the infinitely valorous and greatly energetic one avoided those kings, Jayadratha and the other kings. With a bow and arrow in his hand, the spirited one, terrible in his strength, went to where Gangeya was.

'"The great-souled Yudhishthira, terrible in his strength, also advanced swiftly, his anger having been excited. In that encounter, he avoided the lord of Madra, whose deeds were infinite and who had been assigned as his share.[292] To do battle, with the sons of Madri and Bhimasena, he went to the spot where Bhishma, Shantanu's son, was stationed. Ganga's son was wonderful in battle. He was set upon by all the maharathas together. But Shantanu's great-souled son was not distracted. King Jayadratha was terrible in his valour and spirited. He was a warrior who was unwavering in his aim. He advanced against those maharathas and sliced down their bows with his supreme bow. The great-souled Duryodhana was overcome with the poison of anger. His wrath having been ignited, he used arrows that were like fire to fight with Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, the twins and Partha. They were also pierced with arrows shot by Kripa, Shalya, Shala and the lord Chitrasena and their[293] anger increased, like the gods when they confronted the assembled daityas. Shikhandi's weapon had been sliced down by the king who was Shantanu's son. On seeing that he was running away in that battle, the great-souled Ajatashatru became wrathful and spoke these words of anger to Shikhandi. 'You spoke these words to me, in the presence of your father. "Using arrows that are clear and have the complexion of the sun, I will kill Bhishma, who is great in his vows. I say this truthfully." This was the pledge you took and you are not making it come true. You are not killing Devavrata in battle. O brave one among men! You have become false in your oath. Protect your dharma and the fame of your lineage. Behold. Bhishma is fighting with terrible force. He is tormenting the masses of my soldiers. The net of his arrows is fierce in its energy. Like Death himself, he is killing everything in an instant. Your bow has been sliced down by the king who is Shantanu's son. You have been vanquished and are running away from the field of battle. You are abandoning your relatives and your brothers. Where are you going! This is not becoming of you. Bhishma is infinite in his valour. On seeing him, our soldiers are routed and are fleeing. O Drupada's son! You are certainly frightened. The complexion of your face is distressed. O brave one among men! Honouring his commands, Dhananjaya is engaged in this great battle. O brave one! You are famous on earth! Why are you now frightened of Bhishma?' Dharmaraja's words were harsh. But he heard them and perceived them to be full of sound reason. O king! Having honoured these instructions, the great-souled one swiftly set about the task of killing Bhishma.

'"Shikhandi advanced towards Bhishma with great force. Shalya countered him with weapons that were terrible and extremely difficult to resist. O king! However, Drupada's son was like Indra in his power. He saw those weapons, which were as powerful as the fire at the destruction of a yuga, and was not confounded at all. The great archer countered those weapons with his own arrows. To counter them, Shikhandi took up another terrible weapon known as Varuna. The gods stationed in the firmament and the sky saw those weapons[294] repulsed by this weapon. O king! In that battle, the great-souled and brave Bhishma sliced down the bow and colourful standard of Pandu's son, King Yudhishthira Ajamidha. On seeing that Yudhishthira was overcome with fear and had cast aside his bow and arrows in that battle, Bhimasena grabbed a club and advanced on foot against Jayadratha. On seeing Bhimasena advance with great speed with the club, Jayadratha pierced him from every direction with five hundred sharp and terrible arrows that were like Yama's staff. But the swift Vrikodara, his heart full of rage, paid no attention to these arrows. In that battle, he slew the mounts which bore the king of Sindhu in that encounter, ones that had been born in Aratta.

[295] Your son[296] was unrivalled in his prowess and was like the king of the gods. On seeing Bhimasena, he swiftly advanced on his chariot to kill him, with his weapons raised. Bhima suddenly roared. Uttering threats, he rushed towards him with a club. In every direction, the Kurus saw this upraised club, like Yama's staff. All of them wished to avoid the descent of the terrible club and abandoned your son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a tumultuous and extremely terrible melee and they were all confounded. But despite seeing the great club descend, Chitrasena did not lose his senses. He discarded his chariot and resorted to fighting on foot, grasping a polished sword and shield. He leapt down, like a lion from the peak of a mountain, and resorted to the face of the earth. In that battle, the club descended on the colourful chariot and killed the horses and the charioteer. It then fell down on the ground, like a flaming and giant meteor that has been dislodged from the sky and has fallen down. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing the extraordinary, extremely great and unrivalled feat accomplished by your son,[297] all the soldiers were delighted and honoured him. They uttered a roar in every direction."'

CHAPTER 942(82)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that the spirited Chitrasena was without a chariot, your son, Vikarna, picked him up on his own chariot. An extremely tumultuous and fierce battle raged there. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, swiftly attacked Yudhishthira. With their chariots, elephants and horses, the Srinjayas trembled. They thought that Yudhishthira was already inside the mouth of death. However, the lord Kouravya Yudhishthira, together with the twins, attacked the great archer and tiger among men, Bhishma, Shantanu's son. In that battle, Pandava shot thousands of arrows. They enveloped Bhishma, like clouds covering the sky. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gangeya received a net of innumerable arrows, in hundreds and thousands. O venerable one! Bhishma also released a net of arrows. It looked like a swarm travelling through the sky. In that battle, in an instant, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, made Kounteya invisible in the encounter through the net of arrows he shot in groups. King Yudhishthira was enraged and despatched an iron arrow at the great-souled Kouravya. It was like a virulent serpent. O king! But before it could reach him in that encounter, maharatha Bhishma used a kshurapra arrow to slice down the weapon released from the bow. Having destroyed the iron arrow in battle, which was like death, Bhishma killed the horses, decorated with gold, of the Indra among Kouravas. With the horses slain, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, abandoned the chariot and swiftly ascended the chariot of the great-souled Nakula. Bhishma, the destroyer of enemy cities, was extremely enraged in that battle. He attacked the twins and covered them with arrows. O great king! On seeing that they were oppressed by Bhishma's arrows, he[298] desired Bhishma's death and anxiously thought about the means.

'"Yudhishthira addressed all the kings and well-wishers who were following him. 'All of you unite and kill Bhishma, Shantanu's son.' All the kings heard the words that Partha had addressed and they surrounded the grandfather with a large number of chariots. Your father, Devavrata, was surrounded in every direction. O king! He seemed to be playing with his bow and brought down those maharathas. While all the Parthas looked on, Kourava strode around on that field of battle, like a lion cub in the forest amidst a herd of deer. He roared in the battle and frightened the brave ones with his arrows. O great king! They were frightened on seeing him, like a herd of deer at a lion. The kshatriyas saw the movements of that lion among the Bharata lineage in that battle. He was like a fire consuming dry wood, aided by the wind. In that encounter, Bhishma brought down the heads of the rathas, like a skilled man bringing down ripe fruit from a palm tree. O great king! As those heads fell down on the ground, there was a tremendous sound, like that of stones falling down. There was a tumultuous and extremely terrible battle. There was great and extreme confusion among all those soldiers. The vyuhas of the kshatriyas were thus shattered. In that battle, they challenged one another to a fight. Shikhandi forcefully approached the grandfather of the Bharatas, asking him to wait. But Bhishma avoided

Shikhandi in that battle, remembering Shikhandi's feminine nature.[299] Instead, he angrily attacked the Srinjayas. On seeing maharatha Bhishma, the Srinjayas were delighted. They roared like lions and uttered many other shouts. These mingled with the sound of conch shells. O lord! This was a time when the sun was stationed on the other side of the directions.[300] A battle with chariots and elephants commenced.

'"Panchala Dhrishtadyumna and maharatha Satyaki oppressed the soldiers terribly, using a shower of spears and javelins. O king! In that battle, they used many arrows to strike down those on your side. O bull among men! Though those on your side were killed in that battle, the noble ones were resolved to fight in that battle and did not retreat from the encounter. In that battle, those maharatha men strove to the best of their endeavours. But a great lamentation arose among the great-souled ones on your side. On hearing this terrible lamentation amidst the maharathas on your side, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti attacked Parshata. Those swift maharathas slew his horses. They enveloped Parshata with a shower of arrows. At this, the extremely strong Panchala quickly jumped down from his chariot. He swiftly ascended the chariot of the extremely great-souled Satyaki. King Yudhishthira was surrounded by a large army. With this, in that battle, he angrily attacked the scorchers of enemies from Avanti. O venerable one! Your sons made every effort to surround Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti. O bull among the kshatriya lineage! Arjuna angrily fought against the kshatriyas. He fought in that battle, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. Drona was also angry in that battle, wishing to do that which would bring your son pleasure. He began to consume all the Panchalas, like a fire amidst a mass of cotton. O lord of the earth! With Duryodhana at the forefront, your sons surrounded Bhishma in that battle and fought against the Pandavas.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the sun assumed a reddish tinge, King Duryodhana spoke to all those who were on your side. 'Do not delay.' They fought on and accomplished extremely difficult tasks. But the sun ascended the Asta mountain[301] and could no longer be seen. An extremely terrible river began to flow and its current and waves were made out of blood. It was infested with masses of jackals and it was the moment of twilight. Jackals let out fearful howls and it was inauspicious. The terrible field of battle was infested with the spirits of the dead. Rakshasas, pishachas and others who fed on flesh were seen in every direction, in hundreds and thousands. Arjuna vanquished the kings who followed Susharma, together with their followers. In the midst of his divisions, he then proceeded towards his own camp. O Indra among kings! Since it was night, surrounded by the soldiers and with his brothers, King Kourvaya Yudhishthira also went to his own camp. Having vanquished the rathas headed by Duryodhana in battle, Bhimasena also went to his own camp. In the great battle, Duryodhana was surrounded by the kings. With Bhishma, Shantanu's son, he swiftly went to his camp. Surrounded by all their armies, Drona, Drona's son, Kripa, Shalya and Satvata Kritavarma also went to their camps. O king! Surrounded in the battle by all the warriors, Satyaki and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna also went to their camps. O great king! When it was night, thus did the scorchers of enemies, on your side and on that of the Pandavas, retreat. The Pandavas and the Kurus went to their own camps. O great king! They entered and honoured each other. The brave ones made arrangements for protecting themselves and set up outposts, according to the prescribed methods. They removed the stakes[302] and bathed in different kinds of water. Benedictions were pronounced and all of them were praised by bards. Those illustrious ones sported, to the sound of singing and the playing of musical instruments. For a short while, everything seemed to be like heaven. The maharathas did not speak at all about what transpired in the battle. O king! Having been exhausted, all the people in the armies slept. O king! With the large numbers of elephants and horses, it was seen to be beautiful.'"

CHAPTER 943(83)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those lords of men spent the night happily, engrossed in sleep. Then the Kurus and the Pandavas again emerged to fight. A great sound arose from both the armies, as they emerged to do battle. It was like the great ocean. King Duryodhana, Chitrasena, Vivimshati, Bhishma, supreme among rathas, and the brahmana who was Bharadvaja’s son united themselves and arrayed the great army of the Kouravas. O king! They armoured themselves and formed a vyuha to counter the Pandavas. O lord of the earth! Your father, Bhishma, constructed a great vyuha. It was as terrible as the ocean, with the mounts as its waves. Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, advanced at the forefront of all the soldiers. He was supported by the Malavas, those from the south and those from Avanti. Bharadvaja’s powerful son was next to him. The Pulindas, the Paradas and the lesser Malavas were with him. O lord of the earth! The powerful Bhagadatta was next to Drona, together with the Magadhas, the Kalingas and the Pishachas. Brihadbala, the king of Kosala, was behind Pragjyotisha, together with the Mekalas, the Tripuras and the Chichchilas. Next to Brihadbala was the brave Trigarta, the lord of Prasthala. He was accompanied by a large number of Kambojas and thousands of Yavanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s brave son was next to Trigarta and advanced to do battle. He roared like a lion and made the earth resound. Surrounded by his brothers, Duryodhana was next to Drona’s son and Kripa Sharadvat was behind him. It was thus that the great vyuha advanced, like an ocean. O lord! There were resplendent flags and dazzling umbrellas. There were colourful bracelets and extremely expensive bows.

‘“On seeing the great vyuha of your soldiers, maharatha Yudhishthira quickly addressed Parshata, the supreme commander. ‘O great archer! Behold the vyuha that has been constructed. It is like an ocean. O Parshata! Without any delay, create a counter vyuha.’ Having been thus addressed, the brave Parshata constructed an extremely terrible vyuha. O great king! It was called Shringataka[303] and it was destructive of the vyuhas of enemies. Bhimasena and maharatha Satyaki were at the two horns, with many thousands of chariots, horses and infantry. The foremost of men, the one with the white horses and the ape on his standard, was next to them. King Yudhishthira was in the centre, with the Pandavas who were Madri's sons. Other kings who were great archers, skilled in the use of weapons, filled up the vyuha with their soldiers. Abhimanyu was at the rear, with maharatha Virata, Droupadi's delighted sons and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the Pandavas array themselves in the form of a gigantic vyuha. The brave ones stationed themselves in that battle, wishing to fight and desiring victory. The tumultuous sound of drums mingled with the sound made by conch shells. Armpits were slapped and a terrible noise arose in all the directions.

'"In that battle, the brave ones then confronted each other. O king! They glanced at each other in rage, without blinking their eyes. O Indra among men! They challenged each other, summoning each other by name first. A battle commenced. The battle that started was terrible in form and fearful. Those on your side, and those of the enemy, sought to kill each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sharp iron arrows descended in that battle. They were like fearful snakes with gaping mouths. There were polished and extremely energetic lances that had been washed in oil. O king! They were as radiant as lightning[304] in the clouds. There were polished and thick clubs, covered in cloth and decorated with gold. They were seen to descend, like beautiful summits of mountains. There were radiant swords, as clear as the sky. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were shields made out of the hides of bulls, with a hundred moons marked on them. O king! They were resplendent in that battle, as they descended in every direction. O lord of men! The two armies encountered each other in that battle. They dazzled like the armies of the gods and the daityas, when arrayed against each other. In that battle, they clashed against each other in every direction. In that supreme battle, chariots quickly clashed against chariots. As those bulls among men fought, the yokes of one got entangled with the yokes of another. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Tuskers fought with tuskers and because of the friction, flames were seen in every direction, mingled with smoke. In all directions, struck by lances, some warriors on elephants were seen to fall down, like the summits of mountains. Infantry was seen to kill each other. The brave ones fought in many colourful ways and used lances and bare nails. Thus did the soldiers of the Kurus and the Pandavas attack each other. Many terrible weapons were used in that battle, to despatch others to the eternal worlds.[305] The chariot of Bhishma, Shantanu's son, roared in that battle. He advanced against the Pandus and confounded them with the twang of his bow. The chariots of the Pandavas also emitted a terrible roar. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, they advanced together. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the battle between you and them commence. Men, horses, chariots and elephants got entangled with each other."'

CHAPTER 944(84)

'Sanjaya said, "In that battle, the powerful Bhishma was enraged. Like the sun, he tormented in every direction and the Pandavas were incapable of glancing towards him. On the instructions of Dharma's son, all the soldiers rushed towards Gangeya, who was causing oppression with his sharp arrows. But the great archer Bhishma prided himself in battle. With his arrows, he brought down the Somakas, together with the Srinjayas and the Panchalas. Though they were slaughtered by Bhishma, the Panchalas and the Somakas gave up their fear of death and quickly attacked Bhishma. O king! In that battle, the brave Bhishma, Shantanu's son, powerfully sliced off the arms and the heads of those rathas. Your father, Devavrata, deprived the rathas of their chariots. The heads of horse-riders fell down from the horses. O great king! Confounded by Bhishma's weapons, we saw elephants lying around like mountains, deprived of their riders. O lord of the earth! Among the Pandavas, there was no one other than the immensely strong Bhimasena, foremost among rathas, who could resist him. In that encounter, he was the one who engaged Bhishma. There was a terrible battle between Bhishma and Bhima and an extremely terrible and fearful roar arose from all the soldiers.[306] The delighted Pandavas also roared like lions. Surrounded by his brothers, King Duryodhana protected Bhishma in that battle, which resulted in a destruction of men. Bhishma was supreme among rathas. But Bhima slew his charioteer. The horses were no longer controlled and dragged the chariot away in all directions.

'"With a swift arrow, the destroyer of enemies sliced off Sunabha's head. He was slain by that extremely sharp kshurapra and fell down on the ground. O great king! When your maharatha son was killed in that battle, seven of his brothers could not tolerate this. Adityaketu, Bahvashi, Kundadhara, Mahodara, Aparajita, Panditaka and the invincible Vishalaksha attacked Pandava in that encounter. They were clad in colourful armour and sported diverse standards. Those scorchers of enemies attacked in that battle, wishing to fight. In that encounter, Mahodara pierced Bhimasena with nine arrows, like the killer of Vritra against Namuchi. Each was like the vajra. Adityaketu pierced him with seventy, Bahvashi with five, Kundadhara with ninety and Vishalaksha with seven. O great king! Maharatha Aparajita, the vanquisher of enemies, pierced the immensely strong Bhimasena with many arrows. In that encounter, Panditaka also pierced him with three arrows. But in that battle, Bhima did not tolerate the attacks of his enemies. The destroyer of enemies grasped the bow in his left hand. Your son, Aparajita, possessed an excellent nose. In that battle, he used an arrow with a drooping tuft to slice off his head. In that encounter, he was defeated by Bhima and his head fell down on the ground. While all the people looked on, he used another broad-headed arrow to despatch maharatha Kundadhara to the land of the dead. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, the one with the immeasurable soul then grasped another arrow and despatched it towards Panditaka.[307] The arrow killed Panditaka and penetrated the ground. It was like a serpent that kills a man whose time has come. Remembering his earlier hardships, the one whose soul is not depressed then used three arrows to slice off Vishalaksha's head and make it fall down on the ground. The great archer then struck Mahodara between the breasts with an iron arrow. O king! Pierced in the battle, he was slain and fell down on the ground. In the encounter, he sliced off Adityaketu's standard with an arrow. He used an extremely sharp and broad-headed arrow to slice off the enemy's head. The angry Bhima then used an arrow with a drooping tuft to despatch Bahvashi towards Yama's abode. O lord of the earth! Your other sons fled. They remembered the words that he had spoken in the assembly hall.[308]

'"Because of his brothers, King Duryodhana was distressed. He spoke to all the warriors, 'There is Bhima. Let him be killed in battle.' O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed, your sons, the great archers, saw that their brothers had been killed and remembered the beneficial words that the immensely wise Kshatta[309] had spoken. The words of the one who could foresee were now coming true. O lord of men! You were overcome by avarice and confusion, because of affection towards your sons. In earlier times, you did not understand the purport of those great and beneficial words. Given the way the powerful Pandava is killing your sons, it seems that the mighty-armed one has been born for the sake of killing the Kouravas. O venerable one! King Duryodhana was overcome by great grief and distress. He went to Bhishma and began to lament. 'My brave brothers have been killed by Bhimasena in battle. All the soldiers are fighting to the best of their capacity. But they are being killed. You seem to be neutral and are constantly disregarding us. I have chosen to traverse an evil path. Behold my destiny.' On hearing Duryodhana's cruel words, your father, Devavrata's, eyes filled with tears and he spoke these words. 'O son![310] I uttered these words earlier, and so did Drona, Vidura and the illustrious Gandhari. But you did not understand. O destroyer of enemies! It was decided by me earlier that I will not escape from this battle with my life. Neither will the preceptor. I tell you truthfully that whichever son of Dhritarashtra Bhima sets his eyes on in this battle will be killed by him in the encounter. O king! Therefore, be patient. Be firm in your resolution to fight. Fight with the Parthas in this battle, setting your sights on heaven as the objective. No one is capable of vanquishing the Pandavas, the gods with Indra, or the asuras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, fix your mind on the battle. Be patient and fight.'"'

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! On seeing that many of my sons are being killed by a single person, what did Bhishma, Drona and Kripa do in that battle? O Sanjaya! From one day to another, my sons are going to their perdition. O suta! I think that they have been completely overtaken by terrible destiny, since all my sons are being defeated and are never victorious. O son![311] My sons are in the midst of Bhishma, Drona, the great-souled Kripa, Somadatta’s valiant son, Bhagadatta, Ashvatthama and many other brave and extremely great-souled warriors. Yet they are being killed in the battle. Other than destiny, what can this be? The evil Duryodhana did not comprehend the words that I had spoken earlier. O son! He was restrained by me, and by Bhishma and Vidura. So did Gandhari, always desiring his welfare. But because of his delusion, the wicked one did not understand earlier and is now reaping the fruits. In this battle, the angry Bhimasena is killing and conveying my insensate sons to Yama’s abode.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Kshatta’s supreme words were for your own welfare. They have now come true. O lord! You did not comprehend them then. Vidura had asked you to restrain your sons from the gambling match with the Pandavas and not oppress them. He is a well-wisher with your welfare in mind and spoke truthfully. But you did not heed his words, like a dying man who refuses good medicine. The words spoken by the virtuous have now come to be true. Vidura, Drona, Bhishma and other well-wishers spoke beneficial words that were not accepted and the Kouravas are headed towards destruction. O lord of the earth! All of this is the consequence of what transpired earlier. Now listen to the account of the battle, exactly as it unfolded. It was midday and an extremely great and terrible encounter commenced. O king! There was destruction of men. Listen, as I describe it. On the instructions of Dharma’s son, all the soldiers were enraged and attacked Bhishma, wishing to kill him. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, maharatha Satyaki, together with their armies, advanced against Bhishma. In that encounter, Arjuna, Droupadi’s sons and Chekitana united and advanced against the kings who were following Duryodhana’s command. The brave Abhimanyu, Hidimba's maharatha son and Bhimasena were enraged and attacked the Kouravas. The Pandavas divided themselves into three parts and fought against the Kouravas. O king! The Kouravas also began to kill the enemies in battle.

'"Drona, best among rathas, angrily advanced against and fought with the Somakas and the Srinjayas, despatching them to Yama's eternal abode. O king! When they were slaughtered in battle by the archer who was Bharadvaja's son, a great lamentation arose among the great-souled Somakas. Drona killed many kshatriyas in that battle. They were seen to be unconscious, like men afflicted with disease. There were groans, moans and shrieks in that field of battle. There were continuous sounds, like those uttered by men overcome with hunger. The immensely strong and angry Bhimasena was like terrible death amidst the Kouraveyas and caused carnage. In that great battle, soldiers killed each other. A terrible river began to flow, with waves of blood. O great king! That battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas was great and assumed a terrible form. It extended Yama's kingdom. In particular, Bhima was incited with rage in that battle. He descended on the army of elephants and despatched them to the land of the dead. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Elephants were struck by Bhima's iron arrows. Some of them fell down. Others were paralysed. Others shrieked. Still others ran away in different directions. O venerable one! Great elephants had their trunks sliced off, their feet sliced off. Terrified, they shrieked like cranes. They fell down on the ground. Nakula and Sahadeva attacked the army of horses. The horses possessed golden harnesses. Their caparisons were made out of gold. They were seen to be slain in hundreds and thousands. O king! The earth was strewn with horses that had fallen down. Some lost their tongues. Others could not breathe. Still others shrieked in agony and lost their lives. O best of men! The earth was beautiful with horses of many different forms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! The earth looked resplendent, yet terrible, because in that encounter, Arjuna also killed many horses. O king! There were broken chariots, shattered standards, extremely dazzling umbrellas, golden necklaces, bracelets, heads with earrings, loosened headdresses, pennants and the beautiful floors, yokes and reins of chariots everywhere. The earth was as beautiful as spring with its flowers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandus were also confronted with this kind of destruction when the angry Bhishma, Shantanu's son, Drona, supreme among rathas, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Kritavarma were enraged. And when those on the other side became angry, those on your side met with decay."'

CHAPTER 946(86)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! When that terrible destruction of brave ones was going on, the illustrious Shakuni Soubala attacked the Pandavas. O king! Hardikya Satvata,[312] the destroyer of enemy heroes, attacked the army of the Pandavas in that encounter. Pandava's brave powerful son, the scorcher of enemies, attacked your soldiers in a cheerful frame of mind. He possessed the foremost of speedy horses, the best of those from Kamboja and from the land of the rivers, those from Aratta, Mahi, Sindhu, white ones from Vanayu and others from mountainous regions. There were other swift ones of the Tittira breed, as fleet as the wind. They were armoured and ornamented in gold. They were trained well. This brave son of Arjuna was named Iravat. He was born from the intelligent Partha and was the son of the daughter of the king of the nagas. When her husband was slain by Suparna,[313] she was distressed and depressed in her mind. She was also childless and was bestowed by the great-souled Airavata.[314] She was overcome by the pangs of desire and Partha accepted her as his wife. Thus it was that Arjuna's son was born in another one's field.[315] Protected by his mother, he grew up in the world of the nagas. Because of his hatred for Partha, his evil-souled uncle abandoned him.[316] He was handsome and brave and possessed all the qualities. Truth was his valour. He quickly went to Indra's world when he heard that Arjuna had gone there. The one for whom truth was his valour, went to his great-souled father. He anxiously bowed before him. Joining his hands in salutation, he humbly said, 'O fortunate one! O lord! I am Iravat. I am your son.' He told Pandava everything and reminded him of the circumstances about how he had met with his mother. He embraced his son, who was exactly like him in all the qualities. In the abode of the king of the gods, Partha was delighted. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The mighty-armed Arjuna then commanded him in the world of the gods and affectionately told him about his duty. 'Come to us when it is the time for war.' O lord! He agreed and went away. In accordance with those words, he presented himself, since the time for battle has come. O king! He was surrounded by many swift horses, with all the complexions that one desires. Those horses bore golden harnesses and were of many hues. They were as swift as thought. O king! They suddenly arrived and were like swans in the great ocean. They attacked the large numbers of your horses, which were also exceedingly fast. They struck each other on the chests and on the noses. O king! Those extremely swift horses suddenly fell down on the ground. Those masses of horses clashed against each other and were shattered and fell down. An extremely terrible sound was heard, like that when Suparna descends. O great king! Thus it was that they clashed against each other in the battle. The horse-riders fiercely began to kill each other. A tumultuous and fearful encounter raged. On both sides, large numbers of horses dashed around in all directions. The brave ones were mutilated with arrows. The horses were slain. They were overcome with exhaustion. They began to diminish in number, destroying each other with their swords.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the armies of horses were whittled away and only a few were left, Soubala's brave younger brothers rode out in the forefront of that battle. They were astride supreme horses that were like the touch of the wind in their speed. They were as fleet as the wind. They were well-trained and not too old or young. Those six were powerful—Gaja, Gavaksha, Vrishaka, Charmavat, Arjava and Shuka.[317] They advanced with a great army and were supported by Shakuni and their own extremely strong warriors. They were armoured and skilled in battle. They were terrible in form and extremely strong. O mighty-armed one! With that extremely large army, desiring heaven and victory, they penetrated that supremely invincible army.[318] Unassailable in battle, those from Gandhara cheerfully entered there. On seeing that they had cheerfully penetrated, the valiant Iravat spoke to his own warriors, who were adorned with colourful ornaments and weapons in that battle. 'Act according to the decreed policy, so that all the warriors of the sons of Dhritarashtra can be killed in this battle, together with their followers and their mounts.' Agreeing, all of Iravat's warriors began to slay the ranks of the enemy, though the enemy was invincible in battle. On witnessing that their ranks were being brought down in that battle, all of Subala's sons could not tolerate this state of affairs in the encounter. All of them attacked and surrounded Iravat. They incited each other to attack him with sharp lances. The brave ones dashed around and created a great melee. The great-souled Iravat was pierced by those sharp lances. Blood began to flow from his body and he looked like an elephant wounded by a goad. He was severely wounded on his chest, his back and his sides. O king! He was alone and faced many. But he was not distressed and did not lose his fortitude. Iravat was enraged in that battle. The destroyer of enemy cities confounded all of them by piercing them with sharp arrows. The scorcher of enemies uprooted all the lances from his own body and used them to strike Subala's sons in that battle. He unsheathed a sharp sword and grasped a shield. He swiftly advanced on foot, wishing to kill Subala's sons in that encounter. Having regained their senses, all of Subala's sons became angry and advanced against Iravat. But displaying the dexterity of his hands with the sword and proud of his strength, Iravat attacked all those sons of Subala. He roamed around with such great speed, that Subala's sons, though they were on fleet horses, could not find an opportunity to strike him. However, in that battle, seeing him stationed on the ground again, all of them surrounded him at close quarters, wishing to capture him. The destroyer of enemies saw that they were near him. He used his sword to slice off their right hands and their left and mutiliated other parts of their bodies. All their arms were adorned with various ornaments. They were seen to fall down. They too, without their limbs, fell down on the ground, devoid of their lives. O great king! In that extremely terrible battle where brave warriors were slaughtered, only Vrishaka escaped, though he was severely wounded.[319]

'"On seeing that all of them had fallen down, Duryodhana was frightened. He spoke to the extremely terrible rakshasa who was terrible in form. The scorcher of enemies was a great archer and was skilled in maya. He was the son of Rishyashringa.[320] He had earlier become an enemy of Bhimasena on account of the slaying of Baka.[321] 'O brave one! Witness the strength of Phalguna's son. He is skilled in maya and has caused the unpleasant and terrible destruction of my forces. O son![322] You are capable of going anywhere at will. You are skilled in the use of weapons of maya. You are the sworn enemy of Partha. Therefore, kill him in battle.' The rakshasa, terrible in form, agreed to these words. He roared like a lion and advanced to where Arjuna's young son was. He was surrounded by his own soldiers, who were brave and armed. They were accomplished in fighting, were astride mounts and were armed with polished lances. He wished to kill the immensely powerful Iravat in battle. The valiant and swift Iravat was enraged. The slayer of enemies countered the rakshasa who was seeking his death. On seeing that he was descending on him, the extremely powerful rakshasa swiftly resorted to his powers of maya. He created a large number of illusory horses. They were ridden by terrible rakshasas, who wielded spears and javelins. Two thousand of these armed ones angrily advanced. The two sides clashed and quickly sent each other to the land of the dead. When the soldiers on both sides had been killed, the two of them, invincible in battle, attacked each other in that encounter, like Vritra against Vasava. On seeing the rakshasa, invincible in battle, advance against him, the extremely strong Iravat was enraged and attacked him. When the evil-minded one approached close, he used his sword to slice off his blazing sword and shattered his shield into five parts. On seeing that the bow had been severed, he quickly resorted to the sky and angrily confounded Iravat with his maya. But Iravat also rose up into the sky and confounded the rakshasa with his own maya. He was invincible too and could assume any form at will. He knew about the body's inner organs and pierced his body with his arrows. O great king! The foremost among rakshasas was repeatedly wounded through these arrows, but he became hale again and regained his youth. Maya is natural to them, and according to their wishes, so are energy, age and beauty. Thus, though the rakshasa's limbs were repeatedly mangled, they healed. Iravat used his sharp battle axe to repeatedly slice angrily at the immensely strong rakshasa. That brave and powerful rakshasa was repeatedly sliced like a tree and roared terribly, making a tumultuous sound. Wounded by the battleaxe, the rakshasa began to profusely shed blood. The powerful one became enraged and continued to battle forcefully. On seeing that the enemy was so energetic in the battle, Rishyashringa's son assumed an extremely terrible and gigantic form. While everyone looked on, he tried to grasp him in the forefront of that battle. But seeing this maya employed by the great-souled rakshasa, Iravat angrily created his own maya. He was overcome by anger and he was one who never retreated from battle. O king! His mother's relatives approached him and he was surrounded by many nagas in that battle, assuming a great form like Bhogavat.[323] The rakshasa was enveloped by many kinds of nagas. Enveloped by those nagas, that bull among rakshasas thought and assumed the form of Suparna,[324] so that he could devour the nagas. On seeing that his mother's relatives were devoured through maya, Iravat was confused. And the rakshasa killed him with his sword. Iravat's head was adorned with earrings and a diadem and was as radiant as a lotus or the moon. The rakshasa made it fall down on the ground.

'"On seeing that Arjuna's brave son had been slain by the rakshasa, the sons of Dhritarashtra, together with the kings, became free from sorrow. The great and terrible battle commenced again. The armies attacked each other and the carnage was great and terrible. Horses, elephants and infantry became mixed with each other and were killed by tuskers. Chariot-riders and elephants were also killed by foot soldiers. O king! Rathas, on your side and on theirs, killed masses of infantry and chariot-riders and many horses in that encounter. Arjuna did not know that his son had been killed and in that battle, slew many kings who were protecting Bhishma. O king! The immensely strong ones, on your side and on that of the Srinjayas, fought each other in that battle, offering their lives as oblations. Their hair was dishevelled. They were without armour. They were without chariots and their bows had been severed. But they confronted each other and fought with their bare arms. The immensely strong Bhishma killed many maharathas with arrows that penetrated the innards and made the soldiers of the Pandavas tremble. He killed many men in Yudhishthira's army, and many elephants, horse-riders, chariot-riders and horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing Bhishma's valour in that battle, we thought that it was as extraordinary as Shakra's valour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhimasena and Parshata were also like that. The battle fought by the Satvata archer[325] was also terrible. On witnessing Drona's valour, the Pandavas were overcome by fear. They thought that he was alone capable of killing all the soldiers in battle, not to speak of a situation where he was surrounded by warriors whose bravery was famous on earth. O great king! Oppressed by Drona in that battle, they spoke in this fashion. O bull among the Bharata lineage! While that terrible encounter continued between the two armies, the brave ones did not pardon each other. Those immensely strong ones were engrossed in that battle, as if they were overcome by rakshasas and demons. The archers on your side, and those of the Pandaveyas, were enraged. We did not see anyone seeking to protect his life. O lord of men! It was a battle like that of warriors from among the daityas themselves."'

CHAPTER 947(87)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! On seeing that Iravat had been killed in the battle, what did the maharatha Parthas do?"

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that Iravat had been killed in the battle, Bhimasena's son, the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, let out a loud roar. O king! At the sound of this roar, the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, with its mountains and forests, seemed to tremble violently. So did the sky, the directions and all the sub-directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this extremely loud roar, the thighs and other limbs of all your soldiers began to tremble. They quaked and began to sweat. O Indra among kings! All those on your side became dispirited. They seemed to be in the coils of a snake and were like elephants frightened of a lion. The rakshasa let out that extremely loud roar. He raised a flaming spear and assumed a terrible form. He was surrounded by terrible bulls among rakshasas, wielding many weapons. They advanced in great anger, like Yama at the destruction of an yuga. On witnessing him advance, in anger and with a terrible form and beholding that his own soldiers were frightened and were running away, King Duryodhana attacked Ghatotkacha. He grasped a large bow and repeatedly roared like a lion. The lord of Vanga himself followed him at the back, with ten thousand elephants that were like mountains and were exuding musth. O great king! On seeing that your son was advancing, surrounded by an army of elephants, the traveller of the night[326] became angry. O Indra among kings! A tumultuous battle commenced between the rakshasa and Duryodhana's soldiers and it made the body hair stand up. That army of elephants was like a mass of clouds, charged with lightning. On beholding it advance, the angry rakshasas grasped weapons in their hands. They roared in many different ways, like thundering clouds full of lightning. They began to strike down the elephant-riders with arrows, javelins, swords, iron arrows, catapults, spears and battleaxes. They killed the mighty elephants with the peaks of mountains and trees. Their temples were shattered. Blood began to flow from the mangled bodies of the elephants. O great king! We saw that they were killed by those travellers of the night. The warriors on elephants were scattered. O great king! On seeing this, Duryodhana attacked the rakshasas. He was overcome by intolerance and gave up all desire to protect his own life. The immensely strong one released arrows towards the rakshasas. The great archer slew the foremost among the rakshasas. O best of the Bharata lineage! Your son, Duryodhana, was angry. The maharatha used four arrows to kill four of them—Vegavat, Maharoudra, Vidyutjihva and Pramathi. O best of the Bharata lineage! The one whose soul is immeasurable showered down arrows that were irresistible, towards that army of travellers in the night. O venerable one! On seeing that great deed of your son, Bhimasena's extremely strong son blazed forth in anger. He twanged his great bow, with a sound like that of Indra's vajra. The scorcher of enemies forcefully attacked Duryodhana. O great king! On seeing him advance, like Death urged on by the Destroyer, your son, Duryodhana, was not distressed. The cruel one[327] angrily spoke to him, his eyes red with rage. 'It is because of your great cruelty that they were exiled for a long time. O king! You defeated the Pandavas in a deceitful game of dice. O one with evil intelligence! It was because of this that Droupadi Krishna was brought to the assembly hall, though she was in her menses and was clad in a single garment. You caused her hardship in many ways. While they dwelt in the hermitage, it was to bring you pleasure that the evil-souled Saindhava tormented her, disrespecting my fathers. O worst of your lineage! Because of this and many other insults, I will bring about your end today, if you do not flee from the field of battle.' Having said this, Hidimba's son drew his gigantic bow. He bit his lip[328] and licked the corners of his mouth. He covered Duryodhana with a great shower of arrows, like the slayer of Bala[329] bringing down a shower of rain on a mountain during the monsoon."'

CHAPTER 948(88)

'Sanjaya said, "That shower of arrows was difficult to withstand, even by the danavas. But that Indra among kings withstood it in battle, like a giant elephant bearing rain. Overcome with rage, he sighed like a serpent. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your son confronted a supreme danger. He released twenty-five extremely sharp iron arrows. O king! They suddenly descended on that bull among rakshasas, like angry and violent serpents on Mount Gandhamadana. He was pierced by them and blood began to flow. He was like an elephant with a shattered temple. The maneater then made up his mind to destroy the king. He grasped a giant javelin that was capable of shattering a mountain. It blazed like a giant meteor and was like Maghavan's vajra. The mighty-armed one raised it, wishing to kill your son. The lord of Vanga was astride an elephant that was like a mountain.[330] On seeing it raised, he swiftly advanced towards the rakshasa. That supreme of elephants was powerful and was extremely fast. He reached the path where Duryodhana's chariot was stationed and protected your son's chariot with the elephant. O great king! On seeing that the path had been restricted by the intelligent king of Vanga, Ghatotkacha's eyes became red with rage. He raised a giant javelin and hurled it towards the elephant. O king! When it was hurled from his arms, the elephant was struck. It was covered with blood and hurt grievously, fell down and died. When the elephant fell down, the powerful lord of Vanga quickly jumped down and resorted to the ground.

'"Duryodhana saw that the supreme of elephants had fallen down and that his soldiers were scattered. He was gravely distressed. He held the dharma of kshatriyas to be of paramount importance and was also proud of his own self. Though he had been defeated, the king remained as immobile as a mountain. He affixed a sharp arrow that was like the fire at the time of destruction and in great rage, unleashed it at the terrible traveller of the night. The arrow was as radiant as Indra's vajra. On seeing it descend, the gigantic Ghatotkacha avoided it through his dexterity of movement. He roared terribly again, his eyes red with anger. This frightened all beings, like clouds at the end of a yuga. On hearing the fearful roar of the terrible rakshasa, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, went to the preceptor and said, 'I have heard the terrible roar emitted by the rakshasa. I have no doubt that Hidimba's son is fighting with King Duryodhana. No being is capable of vanquishing him in battle. O fortunate one! Therefore, go there and protect the king. The immensely fortunate one has been attacked by the evil-souled rakshasa. O scorchers of enemies![331] This is the supreme duty for all of us now.' On hearing the words of the grandfather, the maharathas used the utmost speed to quickly go to the spot where Kourava was—Drona, Somadatta, Bahlika, Jayadratha, Kripa, Bhurishrava, Shalya, Chitrasena, Vivimshati, Ashvatthama, Vikarna, the one from Avanti[332] and Brihadbala. Many thousand rathas followed them. They advanced to rescue Duryodhana, your son, who was oppressed. That invincible army was protected by the best in the worlds. The supreme of rakshasas saw that it was advancing to kill him. However, like Mount Mainaka, the mighty-armed one did not tremble at all. Surrounded by his relatives, he grasped a giant bow. With spears, clubs, bare hands and many kinds of weapons, a tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. The rakshasas were on one side and the foremost of Duryodhana's soldiers on the other. O great king! The tremendous sound of bows being twanged could be heard everywhere, as if bamboos were being burned. Weapons descended on bodies protected by armour. O king! That sound was like that of mountains being shattered. O lord of the earth! Javelins were hurled from the arms of brave ones and as they travelled through the sky, they looked like snakes. The Indra among rakshasas became extremely angry. The mighty-armed one drew his extremely large bow and let out a terrible roar. In anger, he used an arrow in the shape of a half-moon to slice down the preceptor's bow. He roared and used a broad-headed arrow to bring down Somadatta's standard. He used three arrows to pierce Bahlika between the breasts. He pierced Kripa with one arrow and Chitrasena with three. He drew his bow to the full extent and used a well-aimed arrow to strike Vikarna in the joint of his shoulders. Covered in blood, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The one whose soul was immeasurable was wrathful. He despatched fifteen iron arrows in the form of half-moons towards Bhurishrava. These swiftly penetrated his armour and penetrated the ground. He next struck Vivimshati and Drona's charioteers. They fell down on the floors of their chariots, giving up the reins of their horses. The standard of the king of Sindhu bore the mark of a boar and was decorated with gold. O great king! He uprooted that with an arrow in the shape of a half-moon and used another to sever his bow. The great-souled one's eyes were red with rage. He used four iron arrows to slay the four horses of Avanti. O great king! He stretched his bow back to the fullest extent and used a yellow and sharp arrow to pierce Prince Brihadbala. Gravely pierced and wounded, he sank down on the floor of the chariot. The lord of the rakshasas was full of great rage and was stationed on his chariot. He shot many arrows that were sharp at the tip and were like venomous serpents. O great king! Though Shalya was skilled in battle, they pierced him.”’

CHAPTER 949(89)

‘Sanjaya said, “In that battle, the rakshasa made all those on your side retreat from battle. O best of the Bharata lineage! He then rushed at Duryodhana, wishing to kill him. On seeing him forcefully descend on the king, many on your side, unassailable in battle, attacked him, wishing to kill him. Those immensely strong ones twanged bows that were as long as palm trees. They roared like a group of lions and together, attacked the one who was alone. They surrounded him from every direction and showered down arrows. It was like the slayer of Bala showering rain on mountains during the autumn. He was severely pierced and wounded, like an elephant with a goad. He quickly rose up into the sky, like Vinata’s son.[333] Stationed there, he uttered mighty roars, like clouds during the autumn. His terrible roars echoed in the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. O best of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the sounds emitted by the rakshasa, King Yudhishthira spoke these words to Bhimasena. ‘The rakshasa is certainly fighting with the maharatha sons of Dhritarashtra. That is the reason we are hearing the sounds of these terrible roars. O son![334] I see that the burden he has taken on is too much. The angry grandfather is ready to kill the Panchalas. For the sake of protecting them, Phalguna is fighting with the enemy. O mighty-armed one! Two tasks now present themselves.[335] Having heard this, go and protect Hidimba’s son. He confronts a great danger.’ Obeying the words of his brother, Vrikodara swiftly advanced. He roared like a lion, frightening all the kings. O king! He proceeded with great force, like the ocean at the time of the new moon or the full moon. He was followed by Satyadhriti and Souchitti, invincible in battle, Shrenimat, Vasudana and the lord who was the son of the king of Kashi. There were many other maharathas, with Abhimanyu at the forefront, Droupadi’s sons, the valiant Kshatradeva, Kshatradharma and Nila, the lord of the marshy regions, together with his own soldiers. They surrounded Hidimba's son with a large number of chariots. There were six thousand elephants that were always crazy, with riders prepared to strike. They advanced to protect Ghatotkacha, Indra among the rakshasas. They roared like lions. There was a great sound from the wheels of the chariots. There was a roar from the sound of the hooves. The earth began to tremble. On hearing the sounds of those advancing ones, the faces of your soldiers paled. They were anxious because of their fear of Bhimasena. O great king! They abandoned Ghatotkacha and fled from the field of battle.

'"A battle then commenced between the great-souled ones on your side and those of the enemy. Neither side wished to retreat from the encounter. The maharathas used many different kinds of weapons. They attacked each other and struck each other. That extremely terrible battle struck terror in the minds of those who were cowards. Horse-riders encountered elephant-riders, infantry clashed with chariot-riders. O king! In that encounter, they challenged each other and attacked each other. Because of that clash, a terrible and great dust arose, from chariots, horses, elephants, infantry, footsteps and wheels. That dust was thick, like red smoke, and covered the arena of the battle. O king! It was impossible to distinguish those on one's own side from those of the enemy. The father did not recognize the son. The son did not recognize the father. No mercy was shown in the encounter and it made the body hair stand up. O best of the Bharata lineage! There was the sound of weapons and the roar of men. There was an extremely large din, like that of bamboos being burnt. A river of blood began to flow there and the waves were elephants, horses and men. The hair[336] constituted the weeds and moss. The heads and bodies of men fell down in that battle and a great sound was heard, like that of stones falling down. The earth was strewn with the torsos of men, the mangled bodies of elephants and the mutiliated bodies of horses. The maharathas released many different kinds of weapons. They attacked each other and struck each other. Urged by horse-riders, horses clashed against horses. In that battle, they dashed against each other and fell down, devoid of life. Men attacked men, their eyes extremely red with rage. They struck each other with their chests and thus killed each other. Urged by the trainers, elephants attacked the elephants of the enemy. And in that encounter, they slew the others with the points of their tusks. They were adorned with pennants and were covered in blood. In that clash, they looked like clouds tinged with lightning. Some had their trunks sliced into two. Others had their bodies lacerated. They fell down in that tumult, like mountains with their wings sliced off.[337] Some supreme elephants had their sides ripped open by other elephants. They shed large quantities of blood, like mountains exuding minerals. Some were slain through iron arrows, others were pierced by javelins. Without their riders, they were seen to be like mountains without summits. Some of them were blind with anger and madness. No longer controlled, they crushed hundreds of chariots, horses and infantry in that encounter. Horse-riders pierced horses with spears and javelins. They rushed against each other, confused about the directions. Rathas born in noble lineages fought with other rathas, ready to give up their bodies. They resorted to the best of their strength and acted without any fear. O king! Those skilled in battle sought fame, or heaven, and fought each other, as if in a svayamvara. Thus the battle raged there, and it made the body hair stand up. The great army of the sons of Dhritarashtra were generally made to retreat.”’

CHAPTER 950(90)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that his own soldiers had been killed, King Duryodhana angrily attacked Bhimasena, the destroyer of enemies. He grasped a giant bow, which had a sound like that of Indra’s vajra. He covered Pandava with a great shower of arrows. He was full of rage. He affixed an extremely sharp arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon and was tufted with hair. He sliced down Bhimasena’s bow with this. Thereafter, the maharatha saw an opportunity. He affixed an extremely sharp arrow that was capable of shattering a mountain. With this, the mighty-armed one struck Bhimasena in the chest. He was severely pierced and wounded and licked the corners of his mouth. The energetic one sought the support of his standard, which was decorated with gold. On seeing Bhimasena in that dispirited state, Ghatotkacha blazed up in anger, like a fire that can consume everything. With Abhimanyu at the forefront, all the maharatha Pandavas dashed angrily towards the king, roaring loudly. On seeing them advance, in fury and rage, Bharadvaja's son spoke these words to the maharathas on your side. 'O fortunate ones! Go swiftly and protect the king. I think he confronts a great danger and is submerged in an ocean of distress. These maharatha Pandavas are great archers and are angry. With Bhimasena at the forefront, they are attacking Duryodhana. With victory in mind, they are using many different kinds of weapons. They are uttering terrible roars and are terrifying the kings.'[338] On hearing the words of the preceptor, with Somadatta at the forefront, many on your side attacked the army of the Pandavas—Kripa, Bhurishrava, Shalya, Drona's son, Vivimshati, Chitrasena, Vikarna, Saindhava, Brihadbala and the two great archers from Avanti. They surrounded Kourava. They advanced only twenty steps and began to strike each other. The Pandavas and the sons of Dhritrashtra sought to kill each other.

'"Having spoken those words, Bharadvaja's mighty-armed son stretched his own gigantic bow and pierced Bhima with twenty-six arrows. Yet again, the mighty-armed one quickly enveloped him with arrows. It was like the slayer of Bala showering rain on a mountain during autumn. However, Bhimasena was extremely strong. The great archer swiftly pierced him back on the left side with ten arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was severely pierced and wounded. He was also elderly in years. He became unconscious and suddenly sat down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing that the preceptor was wounded, King Duryodhana himself, and Drona's son, became angry and attacked Bhimasena. Each of them was like Yama at the end of a yuga. On seeing them advance, the mighty-armed Bhimasena quickly grasped a club. He instantly descended from his chariot and stood, as immobile as a mountain. That heavy club looked like Yama's staff, raised in battle. On seeing him with the upraised club, like the summit of Kailasa, Kourava and Drona's son rushed at him, together. Vrikodara also swiftly rushed at those supreme among strong ones, as they forcefully advanced against him. On seeing him advance in rage, terrible in his visage, many Kourava maharathas quickly attacked him. With Bharadvaja's son[339] at the forefront, all of them wished to kill Bhimasena. They hurled many different kinds of weapons towards Bhima's chest. Together, all of them oppressed Pandava from every direction. On beholding that the maharatha was oppressed and faced a great danger, Abhimanyu and the other Pandava maharathas advanced to rescue him, ready to give up their lives. The brave lord of the marshy regions was Bhima's beloved friend. Nila possessed a complexion that was blue like the clouds and in anger, he attacked Drona's son. The great archer had always sought to challenge Drona's son. He drew his large bow and pierced Drona's son with arrows. O great king! It was like Shakra piercing the invincible danava Viprachitti, who was the terror of the gods, in earlier times. Through his anger and energy, he had terrified the three worlds. In that way, Nila pierced him with arrows that were well-tipped.[340] Drona's son was wounded and covered with blood and overcome with rage. He drew his colourful bow, with a roar like that of Indra's vajra. The supreme among intelligent ones made up his mind to destroy Nila. He affixed polished and broad-headed arrows that had been crafted by a blacksmith and slew his[341] four horses and brought down his standard. With a seventh broad-headed arrow, he pierced Nila in the breast.[342] He was severely pierced and wounded and sat down on his chariot.

'"King Nila possessed the complexion of the clouds. On seeing that he was unconscious, Ghatotkacha became angry. Surrounded by his brothers, he impetuously rushed towards Drona's son, who was the ornament of any battle. In that fashion, many other rakshasas, invincible in battle, also advanced. On seeing that rakshasa, terrible in form, advance towards him, Bharadvaja's spirited son became angry and killed many rakshasas, who were terrible in form, especially those enraged rakshasas who were leading from the front. On seeing that they were repulsed as a consequence of the arrows released from the bow of

Drona’s son, Ghatotkacha, Bhimasena’s son who was gigantic in size, became angry. He resorted to great maya that was fearful in form and extremely terrible. In that encounter, the lord of the rakshasas, skilled in the use of maya, confounded Drona’s son. Because of that maya, all those on your side retreated. They saw each other lying down immobile on the face of the ground, writhing in convulsions, miserable and covered in blood. Drona, Duryodhana, Shalya, Ashvatthama and the other great archers who were generally regarded as the foremost among the Kouravas were also in that state. All the chariots seemed to be shattered, the elephants brought down. Horses and horse-riders were cut down in thousands.[343] On seeing this, all the soldiers on our side fled towards their camps. O king! I[344] and Devavrata shouted, ‘Fight. Do not run away. This is the maya of rakshasas in battle. It has been applied by Ghatotkacha.’ But they were confounded and did not stay. Though both of us shouted in this way, they were frightened and did not pay attention to our words. On seeing that they were running away, the Pandavas thought that they were victorious. Together with Ghatotkacha, they roared like lions. The roars and the sounds of conch shells and drums resounded in every direction. Thus all your soldiers were routed by Hidimba’s evil-souled son and fled in different directions. It was time for the sun to set.”’

CHAPTER 951(91)

‘Sanjaya said, “After that mighty battle, King Duryodhana went to Gangeya. He honoured him and in humility, told him everything exactly as it had happened, about Ghatotkacha’s victory and about his own defeat.[345] O king! While narrating, the invincible one sighed repeatedly. He then spoke these words to Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus. ‘O lord! We sought refuge with you, just as the enemy resorted to Vasudeva, and we embarked on this terrible conflict with the Pandavas. I possess eleven illustrious akshouhinis. O scorcher of enemies! They are with me and follow your command. O tiger among the Bharata lineage! But I have been defeated by the Pandava warriors, led by Bhimasena.

They have resorted to Ghatotkacha. My body is burning, like a dry tree being consumed by a fire. O immensely fortunate one! O scorcher of enemies! I desire your favours. O grandfather! I wish to kill that outcast among rakshasas myself.' O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On hearing these words of the king, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, spoke these words to Duryodhana. 'O king! O Kourava! Listen to the words that I am speaking to you. O great king! O scorcher of enemies! This is about how you should conduct yourself. O son![346] O destroyer of enemies! One's own self must always be protected in battle, in every situation. O unblemished one! It is your duty to fight with Dharmaraja, Arjuna, the twins and Bhimasena. Upholding the dharma of a king, a king must strike at a king. I, Drona, Kripa, Drona's son, Satvata Kritavarma, Shalya, Somadatta's son, maharatha Vikarna and your brave brothers, with Duhshasana at the forefront, will fight against the immensely strong rakshasa for your sake. However, if your hatred for that terrible Indra among the rakshasas is great, let King Bhagadatta advance in battle and fight against the evil-minded one. He is Purandara's equal in battle.' Having said this, in the presence of the king, the one who was eloquent with words, spoke these words to King Bhagadatta. 'O great king! Swiftly advance against Hidimba's son, who is invincible in battle. While all these archers look on, take care and counter the rakshasa, evil in deeds, in the battle, just as Indra resisted Taraka in ancient times.[347] O scorcher of enemies! Your weapons are celestial and so is your valour. In earlier times, you have had many encounters with asuras. O tiger among kings! In this great battle, you will be able to resist him. O king! Surrounded by your own soldiers, you will be able to vanquish the bull among the rakshasas.' On hearing Bhishma's words, the leader of an army roared like a lion and swiftly advanced towards the enemy.

'"O venerable one! On seeing him advance, roaring like a cloud, the Pandava maharathas became enraged and dashed towards him—Bhimasena, Abhimanyu, the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, Droupadi's sons, Satyadhriti, Kshatradeva, the lord of Chedi, Vasudana and the lord of Dasharna. Bhagadatta advanced against them on Supratika.[348] A terrible and fearful encounter started between the Pandus and Bhagadatta and it extended Yama's kingdom. The rathas released extremely energetic arrows, fierce in their speed. O great king! These descended on the elephants and the chariots. They shattered the great elephants that were urged by the elephant-riders. They clashed and fell against each other, without any fear. They were blind with madness and overcome with rage and in that great battle, attacked each other with the tips of tusks that looked like clubs. They gored each other with these. The horses possessed bushy tails and their riders had lances in their hands. Goaded by the riders, they swiftly attacked each other. Foot soldiers attacked foot soldiers with spears and javelins. Hundreds and thousands fell down on the ground. O king! In that encounter, brave rathas used barbed and hollow arrows and slew each other, roaring like lions. The battle raged and it made the body hair stand up. The great archer, Bhagadatta, attacked Bhimasena on an elephant with shattered temples, with musth strewing down in seven streams. It was like a mountain with rainwater flowing down from it in every direction. O unblemished one! He was stationed on Supratika's head and showered down thousands of arrows, like Maghavan showering rain from Airavata. The king tormented Bhima with that shower of arrows, like the slayer of Bala showering down rain on a mountain during the monsoon. Bhimasena became angry. Enraged, the great archer showered down arrows and slew more than one hundred soldiers who were protecting his[349] feet. On seeing that they had been slain, the powerful Bhagadatta became angry. He urged that Indra among elephants towards Bhimasena's chariot. Thus urged, the elephant advanced forcefully towards Bhimasena, the scorcher of enemies, like an arrow released from the string of a bow. On witnessing it advance, the Pandava maharathas, with Bhimasena at the forefront, impetuously advanced towards it. O venerable one! They were those from Kekaya, Abhimanyu, all of Droupadi's sons, the lord of Dasharna, the brave Kshatradeva, the lord of Chedi and Chitraketu. All of them were angry. These immensely strong ones exhibited their supreme and divine weapons. They angrily surrounded the elephant from every direction. Pierced by many arrows, that giant elephant was covered with blood from its wounds and looked like a colourful king of mountains with minerals flowing from it.

'"The lord of Dasharna was on an elephant that looked like a mountain. Stationed on that, he attacked Bhagadatta's elephant. But in that encounter, Supratika, the king of elephants withstood the advancing elephant, like the shoreline counters the ocean. On seeing that the great-souled Dasharna's king of elephants was repulsed, even the Pandava soldiers applauded. O supreme among kings! Pragjyotisha then angrily hurled fourteen javelins towards the elephant. These swiftly penetrated the excellent armour, embellished with gold, and shattered it, like serpents entering a termite hill. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Severely pierced and wounded, the elephant quickly and forcefully retreated, its craziness pacified. It fled with great speed, uttering loud shrieks and crushing its own ranks, like a violent storm amidst trees. When that elephant was vanquished, the Pandava maharathas roared like lions and advanced to do battle. With Bhima leading, they attacked Bhagadatta. They released many kinds of arrows and used different kinds of weapons. O king! They were angry and intolerant. On seeing them advance and on hearing their terrible roars, Bhagadatta, the great archer, angrily and fearlessly urged his own elephant. That supreme of elephants was urged by the goad and the toe. It assumed the form of the fire of destruction.[350] It crushed a large number of chariots, elephants and horses, together with their riders. It angrily crushed hundreds and thousands of foot soldiers. O king! It began to rampage around everywhere in that battle. O great king! Agitated, that large army of the Pandus seemed to diminish, like leather that is exposed to the fire.

'"On seeing that his own ranks were scattered by the intelligent Bhagadatta, Ghatotkacha became angry and attacked Bhagadatta. O king! His visage was gruesome, harsh and flaming. His eyes burnt. Burning with rage, he assumed a terrible form. He grasped a giant spear that was capable of shattering a mountain. The immensely strong one hurled it forcefully, wishing to kill the elephant. It was surrounded by sparks of flaming fire in every direction. On seeing it forcefully descend towards him in that battle, flaming away, the king sliced it down with a beautiful arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon. He severed that extremely large spear with a powerful arrow. Divided into two and dislodged, the spear, decorated with gold, fell down on the ground. It was like the great vajra, released by Shakra and coursing through the sky. On seeing that the spear had been severed into two and brought down, the king grasped a mighty javelin with a golden handle. It was like the flame of a fire. Asking the rakshasa to wait, he hurled it at him. On seeing it descend towards him from the sky, like lightning, the rakshasa roared. He leapt up and grasped it quickly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While all the lords of the earth looked on, he placed it on his thighs and broke it. It was extraordinary. Having witnessed this deed accomplished by the powerful rakshasa, the gods in heaven, together with the gandharvas and the sages, were astounded. With Bhimasena at the forefront, the great archers among the Pandavas made the earth resound with their roars of applause.

'"However, the powerful Bhagadatta, the great archer, could not bear to hear the roars of delight uttered by those great-souled ones. He stretched his great bow, which had a sound like that of Indra's vajra. He quickly attacked the maharatha Pandavas. He shot many polished and sharp iron arrows that were as radiant as the fire. He pierced Bhima with one arrow and the rakshasa with nine, Abhimanyu with three and the Kekayas with five. In that battle, he stretched his bow back to its full extent and used a gold-tufted arrow to pierce Kshatradeva's right arm, so that his supreme bow, with the arrow affixed to it, fell down on the ground. He struck Droupadi's five sons with five. He angrily killed Bhimasena's horses and used three arrows to bring down his standard, bearing the mark of a lion. With three other arrows, he pierced his charioteer. O best of the Bharata lineage! Severely pierced and wounded by Bhagadatta in that battle, Vishoka sank down on the floor of the chariot. O great king! Bereft of his chariot, Bhima, supreme among rathas, quickly leapt down from his large chariot and grasped a club. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him with the upraised club, like a mountain with a summit, all those on your side were overcome with terrible fear. At this time, Pandava, with Krishna as his charioteer, arrived, slaughtering the enemy in thousands. Those tigers among men, scorchers of enemies, father and son, Bhimasena and Ghatotkacha, were fighting with Pragjyotisha there. O king! O best of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the maharathas were fighting there, Pandava quickly began to shower down arrows. Maharatha King Duryodhana swiftly urged his soldiers, full of chariots, elephants and horses. As that great army of the Kouravas forcefully advanced, Pandava, borne on white steeds, powerfully countered them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Mounted on his elephant in that encounter, Bhagadatta scattered the Pandava army and advanced towards Yudhishthira. O venerable one! A tumultuous battle commenced between Bhagadatta and the Panchalas, Srinjayas and Kekayas, with the warriors raising their weapons. In the course of that battle, Bhimasena told Keshava and Arjuna the detailed account of how Iravat had been killed, exactly as it had occurred.”’

CHAPTER 952(92)

‘Sanjaya said, “On hearing that his son Iravat had been killed, Dhananjaya was overcome by great grief. He sighed like a serpent. O king! In that battle, he spoke these words to Vasudeva. ‘There is no doubt that the immensely wise Vidura had foreseen all this earlier. The one with great intelligence had known about the terrible destruction of the Kurus and the Pandavas. It was for this reason that he tried to restrain Dhritarashtra, the lord of men. O Madhusudana! Many brave ones who cannot be slain have been killed by the Kouravas in this battle. We have also killed those on their side. O best of men! Evil acts are being perpetrated for the sake of artha. Shame on artha. For its sake, this slaughter of kin is being perpetrated. For one who possesses no wealth, death is preferable to this acquisition of wealth through the slaughter of relatives. O Krishna! What will we gain by killing these assembled relatives? Because of Duryodhana’s crimes, and those of Shakuni Soubala, and because of Karna’s evil counsel, all the kshatriyas are headed towards destruction. O Madhusudana! O mighty-armed one! I now understand the king’s wise act, when he sought only half the kingdom from Suyodhana, or only five villages. But the evil-minded one did not grant it. On seeing so many brave kshatriyas lying down on the ground, I censure myself severely. Shame on the livelihood of kshatriyas. In this battle, the kshatriyas will know me as incapable. O Madhusudana! I no longer derive pleasure from this battle with relatives. However, swiftly drive the horses towards the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. With my two arms, I will cross the ocean that this battle is, one that is difficult to cross. O Madhava! This is not the time to act like a eunuch.' Thus addressed by Partha, Keshava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, urged those white horses, which were as fleet as the wind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great roar arose amidst your soldiers. It was like the ocean at the time of the new moon or the full moon, agitated by the force of the wind.

'"O great king! It was afternoon and a battle commenced between Bhishma and the Pandavas, with a roar like that of the clouds. O king! In that encounter, your sons surrounded Drona, like the Vasus around Vasava, and attacked Bhimasena. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, Kripa, supreme among rathas, Bhagadatta and Susharma attacked Dhananjaya. Hardikya and Bahlika attacked Satyaki. King Ambashtha countered Abhimanyu. O great king! Others who were left encountered other maharathas. A terrible battle that was fearful in form commenced. O lord of men! On seeing Bhimasena, your son blazed in that battle, like oblations being poured onto a sacrificial fire. At that time, your sons covered Kounteya with arrows. O great king! It was like monsoon clouds pouring down on mountains. O lord of men! He was thus enveloped by your sons in many ways and licked the corners of his mouth. The brave one was as proud as a tiger. O king! Bhima brought down Vyudoraska with an extremely sharp and broad-headed arrow and he was deprived of his life. With another sharp, yellow and broad-headed arrow, be brought down Kundalina, like a lion bringing down a small animal.[351] O venerable one! Having approached your sons, he swiftly took up seven extremely sharp and yellow arrows. Firm in wielding the bow, Bhimasena despatched these arrows and brought down your sons, extremely great maharathas, from their chariots. These were

Anadhrishti, Kundabheda, Vairata, Dirghalochana, Dirghabahu, Subahu and Kanakadhvaja. O bull among the Bharata lineage! As they fell down, these brave ones were radiant, like blossoming and dappled trees that fall down during the spring. O lord of the earth! Your remaining sons fled. They thought that the immensely strong Bhimasena was like Death himself. On seeing that the brave one had consumed your sons in the battle, Drona showered arrows on him from every direction, like rain pouring on a mountain. We beheld the manliness of Kunti's son and it was extraordinary. Though he was restrained by Drona, yet he killed your sons. Like a bull bears a downpour of rain from above, Bhima tolerated the shower of arrows released by Drona. O great king! Vrikodara performed a wonderful deed. While repulsing Drona, he killed your sons in that battle. Arjuna's elder brother played with your brave sons, like an immensely strong tiger roaming around amidst deer, or like a wolf stationing itself amidst animals and driving those animals away. Thus did Vrikodara drive your sons away in that battle.

'"Gangeya, Bhagadatta and maharatha Goutama countered the violent Pandava Arjuna. In that encounter, the atiratha repulsed all their weapons with his own weapons. He despatched many brave soldiers on your side to the land of the dead. Abhimanyu used his arrows to deprive King Ambashtha, famous in the world and foremost among rathas, of his chariot. Deprived of his chariot, he was about to be slain by Subhadra's illustrious son. O lord of men! In shame, he quickly leapt down from his chariot. In the battle, he hurled his sword at Subhadra's great-souled son and ascended onto the chariot of the great-souled Hardikya. Subhadra's son was the destroyer of enemy heroes and was skilled in all the techniques of war. On seeing the sword descend towards him, he avoided it through his dextrous movements. O lord of the earth! At this, loud sounds of applause were heard among all the soldiers. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, others fought with your soldiers. And those on your side fought with the soldiers of the Pandus. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a great battle between those on your side and theirs. They killed each other fiercely and performed extremely difficult deeds. O venerable one! In that battle, the brave ones seized each other by the hair. They fought with their nails and teeth and with their fists and thighs. They used their arms and palms and extremely sharp swords. They sought out each other's weakness and despatched each other to Yama's abode. The father killed the son and the son the father in that battle. Those men fought there, desperate and firm in their resolution.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, beautiful bows with golden handles and extremely expensive ornaments were loosened from the hands of those who had been slain. There were sharp arrows, with tufts made of pure gold and silver and washed in oil. They were as resplendent as snakes that have cast off their skin. There were swords decorated with gold, with handles made out of ivory. There were shields and bow-sheaths for the archers, with golden backs. There were spears, javelins, swords and spikes. All of these were decorated with gold and embellished with gold. They were as bright as gold. O venerable one! Heavy clubs were destroyed and fell down. There were maces, battleaxes and catapults. Colourful spears, decorated with gold, fell down. There were many types and forms of carpets and whisks and fans. There were many types of weapons, dislodged from men who had fallen down. Though they had lost their lives, the maharathas seemed to be alive. Their bodies were shattered through clubs. Their heads were smashed through maces. The men lay on the ground, crushed by elephants, horses and chariots. O king! The earth was strewn everywhere with the bodies of slain horses, men and elephants, which looked like mountains, and seemed to be beautiful. Spears, swords, arrows, javelins, scimitars, spikes, lances, darts, battleaxes, clubs, catapults and *shataghnis*[352] fell down on the field of battle there. The earth was strewn with bodies that had been shattered by weapons. Some were silent. Others made slight sounds. They were covered with blood. The earth was strewn with the bodies of those who had been killed by the enemy and looked beautiful. The arms of the spirited ones had leather guards and bracelets and were smeared with sandalwood paste. Their shattered thighs were like the trunks of elephants. The crowns of the heads were adorned with jewels. The heads bore earrings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth was resplendent with the bull-eyed ones who had fallen down. The earth was covered with armour and golden ornaments drenched in blood. It looked as beautiful as a fire with calm flames. Ornaments were strewn around and bows had fallen down. Bows and gold-tufted arrows were scattered in every direction. There were many shattered chariots, garlanded with nets of bells. Dead horses were lying around, with protruding tongues and drenched in blood. There were the floors of chariots, standards, quivers and pennants. Large and white conch shells belonging to the brave ones were scattered around. Elephants were supine on the ground, their trunks severed and the earth looked as beautiful as a lady adorned with many different kinds of ornaments. There were tuskers in great pain, pierced with lances. They repeatedly let out moans through their trunks. That field of battle was beautiful, as if with mobile mountains. There were carpets of many different hues and cushions for the elephants. Dazzling goads, with handles made of lapis lazuli, fell down. Bells for the kings among elephants were scattered around everywhere. There were colourful seats and hides of *ranku* deer. There were colourful necklaces and golden harnesses for the elephants. There were many shattered implements and lances and kampanas. There were shattered golden breastplates for the horses, soiled with dirt. The severed arms of the horse-riders fell down, with the bracelets still there. There were polished and sharp javelins and polished swords. Torn headdresses were scattered around there. There were colourful arrows in the shape of the half-moon, decorated with gold. There were cushions for the horses and the hides of ranku deer. There were colourful and extremely expensive gems for the crests of those Indras among men. Umbrellas were scattered around, and whisks and fans. The faces were as beautiful as the lotus or the moon and were still adorned with earrings. The brave ones were ornamented and their beards were well-trimmed. O great king! They were beautiful and radiant, with golden earrings. The earth looked like the sky, with its array of planets and stars. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did those two large armies, yours and that of the enemy, clash against each other in that battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were exhausted, scattered and routed. Night set in and nothing could be seen in the field of battle. The soldiers of the Kurus and the Pandavas retreated. The terrible and fearful night set in and the Kurus and the Pandavas withdrew from that extremely terrible encounter. With the time having come, they retreated to their own camps.”’

CHAPTER 953(93)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Then King Duryodhana, Shakuni Soubala, your son Duhshasana and the invincible son of the suta assembled and consulted each other. How could the sons of Pandu, together with their followers, be vanquished in battle? King Duryodhana spoke to all his advisers, addressing particularly the son of the suta and the immensely strong Soubala. ‘I do not know the reason why Drona, Bhishma, Kripa, Shalya and Somadatta’s son are unable to resist the Parthas in this battle. They are not being killed, but are demolishing my army. O Karna! In this battle, my army is becoming weaker and my weapons are being exhausted. I have been deceived by the Pandavas. They cannot be slain, even by the gods. I am full of doubt as to what I should do in this battle.’ O great king! The son of the suta then spoke to the king. ‘O best of the Bharata lineage! Do not grieve. I will do what is agreeable to you. Let Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, withdraw from this great battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Gangeya has withdrawn from the battle and has cast aside his weapons, I will kill the Parthas, together with all the Somakas, while Bhishma witnesses the battle. O king! This is the pledge I truthfully take. O king! Bhishma has always acted kindly towards the Pandavas. Bhishma is incapable of vanquishing those maharathas in battle. Bhishma is proud of his prowess in battle and always loves an encounter. O father![353] How can he defeat the Pandavas when he encounters them in battle?[354] Therefore, you should quickly go to Bhishma’s camp. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should request Bhishma to cast aside his weapons in battle. When Bhishma casts aside his weapons, you will see the Pandavas killed. O king! I will alone accomplish this in the battle, together with their well-wishers and their relatives.’ Having been thus addressed by Karna, your son, Duryodhana, spoke these words to his brother, Duhshasana. ‘O Duhshasana! Let all those, who will come with me, be appropriately dressed. Quickly make all the arrangements.’ O king! Having thus spoken, the lord of men then addressed Karna. ‘O supreme among men! O scorcher of enemies! Having requested Bhishma to withdraw from the battle, I will swiftly return and come before you. O tiger among men! You will then act in this battle.’ O lord of the earth! Without any delay, your son departed.

‘“He left with his brothers, like Shatakratu with all the gods. His brother, Duhshasana, quickly made his brother, who was a tiger among kings and with the valour of a tiger, ascend a horse. The king was adorned with armlets and bracelets and wore a crown on his head. O great king! Dhritarashtra’s son was as resplendent as the great Indra. He was smeared with fragrant sandalwood paste. He looked like a *bhandi* flower[355] and had a golden complexion. He was clad in garments that had no dirt on them. The king proceeded with the sporting gait of a lion. He was as beautiful as an autumn sun with unblemished rays. That tiger among men departed for Bhishma’s camp. He was followed by great archers, who were famous in all the worlds as archers. His brothers, great archers, also followed him, like the thirty gods with Vasava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were others astride horses, and still others astride elephants. Others on chariots, the foremost of men, surrounded him in every direction. His well-wishers had taken up arms for the sake of protecting the lord of the earth. They were with him, like the immortals with Shakra in heaven. The maharatha among the Kouravas was worshipped by the Kurus. O king! He went towards the illustrious Gangeya’s abode. The king was followed and surrounded by his brothers in every direction. Occasionally, he raised his right arm. It was as muscular as the trunk of an elephant and was capable of destroying all enemies. He raised that arm and accepted the worship of the kings, who were in every direction, hands joined in salutation. He heard sweet words from the residents of many countries. The immensely illustrious one was praised by bards and minstrels. The lord of all the lords of the worlds honoured all of them in return. Great-souled ones surrounded him in every direction with golden lamps, with fragrant oil as fuel. The king was surrounded by these auspicious and golden lamps. He was as beautiful as the moon, surrounded by the resplendent large planets. There were attendants with golden headdresses, and with drums and sticks in their hands. They gently asked the people in every direction to make way. Having reached Bhishma's beautiful abode, the lord of men got down from his horse and approached Bhishma. He paid his respects to Bhishma and sat down on an excellent and golden seat. It was beautiful everywhere and was covered with a wonderful carpet.

'"He joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Bhishma, his voice choking and his eyes full of tears. 'O destroyer of enemies! We sought your protection and resorted to this war. In the battle, we thought we possessed the enterprise to defeat the gods and the asuras combined, together with Indra, not to speak of the brave sons of Pandu, with their well-wishers and their relatives. O lord! O Gangeya! Therefore, you should show your compassion towards me. Slay the brave sons of Pandu, like the great Indra against the danavas. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You earlier said that you would kill the Somakas and the Panchalas, together with the Pandavas. Act accordingly and make your words come true. Kill the assembled Parthas and the great archers, the Somakas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Make those words come true. O lord! O king! If you protect the Pandavas because of compassion, because of your hatred of me, or because of my misfortune, then I seek your permission to allow Karna, the ornament of any battle, to fight. He will defeat the Parthas, with their well-wishers and their relatives, in battle.' Having said this, the king, your son Duryodhana, did not say anything more to Bhishma, whose valour was terrible."'

CHAPTER 954(94)

'Sanjaya said, "These words spoken by your son were like stakes and Bhishma was pierced by them. He was overcome by great grief, but did not say anything unpleasant in reply. Overcome by grief and anger, he thought for a very long time. Wounded by these stakes, he sighed like a serpent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The supreme among those who know the worlds then raised his eyes. He seemed to burn the worlds, with the gods, the asuras and the gandharvas, with his anger. However, he spoke these conciliatory words to your son. 'O Duryodhana! Why are you piercing me with words that are like stakes? To the best of my strength, I have always sought to do that which brings you pleasure. Desiring your welfare, I am ready to give up my life in this battle. When the brave Pandava gratified Agni in Khandava, he defeated even Shakra in battle. That is proof.[356] O mighty-armed one! When the gandharvas captured you, Pandu's energetic son freed you. That is proof. O lord! At that time, all your brave brothers ran away. And so did Radheya, the son of a suta. That is proof. In Virata's city, he singly attacked all of us together. That is proof. He was angry and defeated both me and Drona in battle. He robbed the garments of Karna, Drona's son and the great maharatha Kripa. That is proof. Partha vanquished the Nivatakavachas in battle, whom even Vasava found to be invincible in an encounter. That is proof. Who is capable of vanquishing Pandava, who prides himself in an encounter, in battle? O Suyodhana! Because of your delusion, you do not know what should be said and what should not be said. A man who is about to die thinks that all trees are made of gold. O Gandhari's son! In that fashion, you are looking at everything in a contrary way. You have yourself created this great enmity with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas. Fight with them in the battle now and show us your manliness. O tiger among men! I will myself kill all the assembled Somakas and the Panchalas, avoiding Shikhandi. Slain by them in battle, I will go to Yama's abode. Or, I will kill them in battle and give you pleasure. Shikhandi was earlier born as a girl in the king's abode. By virtue of a boon, she was born as a man.[357] This is that lady Shikhandi. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will not kill him, even if it means giving up my own life. Shikhandi is the one whom the creator made a lady earlier. O Gandhari's son! Sleep happily. I will fight a great battle tomorrow, one that will be spoken about as long as the earth exists.’ O lord of men! Having been thus addressed, your son departed. He paid respects to his elder by lowering his head and left for his own residence. Having returned, the king asked his attendants to leave. The destroyer of enemies quickly entered and having entered, the king passed the night.”’

CHAPTER 955(95)

‘Sanjaya said, “When night passed and it was morning, the king arose. The king instructed all the warriors, ‘Prepare for battle. In the encounter today, the angry Bhishma will kill all the Somakas.’ O king! On hearing Duryodhana’s many lamentations in the night, he[358] regarded them as instructions unto himself. He was supremely depressed and censured what the other had said. Shantanu’s son thought for a long time and desired to encounter Arjuna in battle. O great king! Duryodhana understood from the signs what Gangeya had been thinking about and instructed Duhshasana. ‘O Duhshasana! Let chariots quickly be yoked, so that Bhishma can be protected. Let thirty-two entire divisions be instructed accordingly. What we have thought about for many years has now come to pass. With their soldiers, the Pandavas will be slain and the kingdom will be obtained. I think that Bhishma’s protection is our task now. Protected by us, he will cheerfully slaughter the Parthas in this battle. The one with the pure soul said, “I will not kill Shikhandi. He was a lady earlier. Therefore, I should avoid him in battle. O mighty-armed one! The world knows that, in an attempt to bring pleasure to my father, I gave up women and a prosperous kingdom earlier.[359] O foremost among men! Therefore, I will not kill in battle anyone who has been born a woman, or has been a woman earlier. I am telling you this truthfully. O king! Shikhandi was a woman earlier and you have heard me tell you this when preparations were being made for the war. She was born as Shikhandini. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been a woman, she was born as a man and wishes to fight. But I can never release arrows at her. O son![360] But if there are any other kshatriyas who desire the victory of the Pandavas in battle, I will kill them all—as soon as they come within reach of my arrows.” These were the words spoken to me by Gangeya, foremost among the Bharata lineage and skilled in knowledge of the sacred texts. Therefore, with all my heart, I think that Bhishma’s protection is most important. In the great forest, a wolf can kill a lion that is unprotected. Let Shikhandi not be like a wolf that kills a tiger. Let our maternal uncle, Shakuni, Shalya, Kripa, Drona and Vivimshati make endeavours to protect Gangeya. If he is protected, victory is certain.' On hearing Duryodhana's words, all the kings surrounded Gangeya from every direction, with a large number of chariots. Your sons surrounded Gangeya and got ready to fight. The earth and the firmament trembled and the Pandavas were agitated. The maharathas[361] possessed chariots and well-trained elephants. Armoured, they stationed themselves and surrounded Bhishma in that battle. Just as the thirty gods protect the wielder of the vajra in a battle between the gods and the asuras, in that way, all of them were stationed to protect the maharatha.

'"King Duryodhana again spoke to his brothers. 'Yudhamanyu is protecting Arjuna's left wheel and Uttamouja the right, while Arjuna is protecting Shikhandi. O Duhshasana! Act so that he cannot kill Bhishma, while protected by Partha and while he[362] is abandoned by us.' On hearing his brother's words, your son, Duhshasana, left with the army, with Bhishma at the forefront. On seeing Bhishma surrounded by that large number of chariots, Arjuna, best of rathas, spoke to Dhrishtadyumna. 'O unblemished one! Let Shikhandi, tiger among men, be placed in front of Bhishma. O one without decay! Establish the Panchala there and I will myself be his protector.' Bhishma, Shantanu's son, then advanced with his soldiers. In that encounter, he stationed his soldiers in the form of a large vyuha known as *saravatobhadra*.[363] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kripa, Kritavarma, maharatha Shaibya, Shakuni, Saindhava, Sudakshina from Kamboja and all your sons were stationed in front of all the soldiers and in front of the vyuha, together with Bhishma. O venerable one! Drona, Bhurishrava, Shalya and Bhagadatta armoured and stationed themselves on the right flank of the vyuha. Ashvatthama, Somadatta and the two maharathas from Avanti protected the left flank, together with a large army. O great king! O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To counter the Pandavas, Duryodhana stationed himself in the midst of the vyuha, surrounded by the Trigartas. Alambusa, best among rathas, and maharatha Shrutayu armoured and stationed themselves at the rear of the vyuha and behind all the soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did those on your side construct a vyuha. When they were armoured, they looked like blazing fires. At this, King Yudhishthira, Pandava Bhimasena and Madri's sons, Nakula and Sahadeva, armoured and stationed themselves in the vyuha, ahead of all the soldiers. Dhrishtadyumna, Virata and maharatha Satyaki, the destroyers of enemy ranks, stationed themselves, with a large army. O great king! Shikhandi, Vijaya,[364] the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, the mighty-armed Chekitana and the valiant Kuntibhoja were ready for battle, surrounded by a large army. The great archer, Abhimanyu, maharatha Drupada and the five brothers from Kekaya were armoured and stationed ready for battle. O venerable one! Thus did the brave Pandavas, invincible in battle, create a great vyuha as a counter-vyuha in that encounter and were ready to fight.

'"In that encounter, the kings on your side suddenly rushed, with great enterprise, to do battle. O king! Placing Bhishma in the front, they advanced against the Parthas in that battle. O king! In a similar way, the Pandavas placed Bhimasena at the forefront, wishing to fight against Bhishma and desiring victory in that encounter. There were war cries and sounds of joy. There were the sounds of saws and cow horns. The Pandavas played on battledrums, drums, cymbals and smaller drums and there was a terrible roar, as they advanced. There were the sounds of battledrums, drums, other drums and conch shells on our side. There were delighted roars, like those of lions, and other shouts, as we roared back in return and quickly advanced against them. We advanced forcefully and angrily and a tumultuous sound arose. They rushed against each other and struck each other. Because of that great sound, the earth began to tremble. Birds uttered terrible shrieks and began to fly around. The sun had risen with all its rays, but now seemed to be dimmed. There was a turbulent wind, signifying great disaster. Fearful jackals began to roam around, howling terribly. O great king! All of this seemed to tell us that a great calamity was at hand. O king! The directions blazed and ash began to shower down. There was a shower of bones mixed with blood. The mounts began to weep and tears began to fall from their eyes. O lord of the earth! Because of their anxiety, they discharged urine and excrement. Man-eating rakshasas began to roar in terrible tones. We saw that jackals, cranes and crows began to swoop down. Dogs uttered many terrible howls. Flaming meteors struck against the sun and suddenly fell down on the ground. All this signified a great fear. In that great encounter, the two large armies of the Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra clashed. There was the din of conch shells and drums and this caused a tremor, like that of a forest agitated by a storm. In that inauspicious moment, kings, elephants and horses clashed against each other and the tremendous noise was like that of oceans agitated by a tempest.”’

CHAPTER 956(96)

‘Sanjaya said, “The energetic Abhimanyu, foremost among rathas, was borne on steeds that were of a tawny colour and advanced against Duryodhana’s large army. He brought down a shower of arrows, like clouds pouring down rain. The bulls among the Kurus who were on your side could not resist Subhadra’s angry son in battle. That destroyer of enemies possessed a great number of weapons and he immersed himself in that inexhaustible ocean of soldiers. O king! In that encounter, he released many arrows that destroyed enemies. They conveyed the brave kshatriyas to the abode of the king of the dead. In that battle, Subhadra’s angry son unleashed arrows that were like Yama’s staff. They were flaming and terrible, like poisonous serpents. Phalguna’s son quickly brought down charioteers from their chariots, horse-riders from the backs of horses and elephant-riders together with the elephants. In that great battle, the lords of the earth cheerfully honoured his extraordinary deeds and praised Phalguna’s son. Subhadra’s son drove away many colourful armies, like masses of cotton blown away by the wind in every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Driven away by him, your soldiers could not find a protector and were like elephants stuck in the mud. O king! Having driven all your soldiers away, Abhimanyu, supreme among men, stood like a flaming fire, without any smoke. All those on your side could not counter that destroyer of enemies and were like insects, driven by destiny, before a flaming fire. Having struck all the enemies of the Pandavas, the maharatha and great archer was like the wielder of the vajra with his vajra. His bow had a golden back. O king! As it was moved around in every direction, it was seen to be as radiant as lightning.[365] The arrows released from his bow in that battle were sharp and yellow. They were like flocks of bees, visiting blossoming trees in the forest. That is the way Subhadra's great-souled son roamed around. His chariot roared like the clouds and people could not find an opportunity to strike him. He confounded Kripa, Drona, Drona's son, Brihadbala and Saindhava, the great archer. He moved around with skill and dexterity. O venerable one! As he tormented your army, I saw that his bow was drawn in the shape of a circle and was like the circular halo that is around the sun. Brave kshatriyas saw this and were tormented by his arrows. Because of his deeds, they thought the world now had two Phalgunas. O great king! Oppressed by him, that great army of the Bharatas ran here and there, like a woman intoxicated with liquour. He drove away your soldiers and made the maharathas tremble and delighted his well-wishers, like Vasava after vanquishing Maya.[366] Driven away by him in that battle, your soldiers uttered lamentations of woe and these sounded like the roar of the clouds.

'"O venerable one! On hearing that awful wail amidst your soldiers, like that of the ocean agitated by the force of the wind at the time of the new moon or the full moon, King Duryodhana spoke to Rishyashringa's son. 'This great archer who is Krishna's son[367] is like a second Phalguna. He is driving away the soldiers in rage, like Vritra against the army of the gods. I do not see any other great medicine against him in this battle, except your own self. O best of the rakshasas! You are skilled in all forms of knowledge. O brave one! Go swiftly and slay Subhadra's son in battle. We will kill Partha, with Bhishma and Drona leading us.' Thus addressed and following the instructions of your son, the powerful and strong Indra among the rakshasas quickly advanced to do battle. He emitted a loud roar, like the slayer of Bala at the time of the monsoon. O king! At this great sound, the mighty army of the Pandavas trembled in every direction, like a full ocean. O king! Frightened by that roar, many men gave up their beloved lives and fell down on the ground. Krishna's son was delighted and grasped his bow and arrows. He seemed to be dancing around on his chariot and attacked the rakshasa. The rakshasa was enraged and approached Arjuna's son in that battle. Stationing himself at a short distance, he started to drive away the soldiers. In that battle, he killed the great army of the Pandavas. The rakshasa attacked them in the encounter, like Bali against the army of the gods. O venerable one! There was great oppression and slaughter among those soldiers. The rakshasa, terrible in form, killed them in that battle. He released thousands of arrows on the great army of the Pandavas. The rakshasa displayed his valour and drove them back in that battle. Thus slaughtered by the rakshasa, terrible in form, the army of the Pandavas was frightened and fled from the field of battle. He crushed those soldiers, like an elephant amidst lotuses.

'"In that encounter, the immensely strong one then attacked the sons of Droupadi. The great archers who were Droupadi's sons were armoured and became wrathful. All of them advanced against the rakshasa, like five planets against the sun. Prativindhya swiftly pierced the immensely strong rakshasa with sharp, vigorous and iron arrows. They penetrated his armour and the supreme among rakshasas looked resplendent. He was like a giant mass of rain clouds, penetrated by the rays of the sun. O king! He was struck by arrows that were embellished with gold and Rishyashringa's son looked like a mountain with a flaming summit. In that great battle, the five brothers pierced the Indra among rakshasas with sharp arrows that were embellished with gold. O king! Pierced by terrible arrows that were like angry snakes, Alambusha became as angry as a king of elephants. O great king! O venerable one! He was pierced within a short instant. Having been wounded, the maharatha remained unconscious for a long time. When he regained consciousness, in his rage, he increased his dimensions to double of what they were. He sliced down their arrows, standards and bows. As if smiling, he pierced each of them with three arrows. Maharatha Alambusa seemed to be dancing around on his chariot. The rakshasa was angry and in his rage, the immensely strong one killed the horses and the charioteers of the great-souled ones. In great delight, he again pierced them with extremely sharp arrows. He used many different kinds of arrows, in hundreds and thousands. Those great archers were bereft of their chariots by the rakshasa and the traveller of the night swiftly rushed against them, wishing to kill them. On seeing them thus oppressed in battle by the evil-souled rakshasa, Arjuna's son attacked the rakshasa in that battle. The battle that commenced was like that between Vritra and Vasava. All those on your side and the maharatha Pandavas witnessed it. They encountered each other in that great battle and blazed with rage. O great king! They were immensely strong and their eyes were red with rage. The warriors glanced towards each other, like the fire at the destruction of a yuga. There was a terrible encounter that was fierce and awful. It was like that between Shakra and Shambara,[368] during the battle between the gods and the asuras."'

CHAPTER 957(97)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! Arjuna's brave son killed many maharathas in battle. How did Alambusa counter him in the encounter? How did Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, fight with Rishyashringa's son? Tell me all this in detail, exactly as it occurred in the course of the battle. O Sanjaya! What did Dhananjaya do against my soldiers, and Bhima, foremost among strong ones, rakshasa Ghatotkacha, Nakula, Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki? O Sanjaya! Tell me all this, because you are skilled."

'Sanjaya replied, "O venerable one! I will later tell you about the battle that took place between the Indra among the rakshasas and Subhadra's son. It made the body hair stand up. I will also recount to you the valour of Arjuna and Pandava Bhimasena in the battle and that of Nakula and Sahadeva in the encounter. I will also tell you about the extraordinary and wonderful deeds of those on your side, performed without fear and with Bhishma and Drona at the forefront. In that encounter against maharatha Abhimanyu, Alambusa roared extremely loudly. He advanced, roaring again and again, and asking him[369] to wait. O king! In that battle, Subhadra's son also roared repeatedly like a lion. He attacked the great archer who was Rishyashringa's son and was also a sworn enemy of his fathers. The man and the rakshasa, foremost among rathas, swiftly confronted each other in battle on their respective chariots, like a god and a danava. The foremost among rakshasas was skilled in maya and Phalguna's son was skilled in the use of divine weapons. O great king! Krishna's son used three sharp arrows to pierce Rishyashringa's son in that battle and then again pierced him with five arrows. Alambusa became angry and pierced Krishna's son in the chest with nine swift arrows, like forcefully striking a giant elephant with a goad. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, the traveller of the night, swift in action, used a thousand arrows to oppress Arjuna's son. Abhimanyu became angry. He shot nine sharp arrows with drooping tufts at the rakshasa's giant chest. They quickly pierced his body and penetrated his inner organs. O king! The limbs of that supreme among rakshasas were mangled and he was as beautiful as a mountain with blossoming kimshukas. Bearing those gold-encrusted arrows, the best of the rakshasas, immensely strong, was as dazzling as a flaming mountain. O great king! At this, Rishyashringa's immensely strong son became wrathful. He enveloped Krishna's son, who was like the great Indra, with arrows. He released sharp arrows that were like Yama's staff. These pierced Abhimanyu and fell down on the ground. Arjuna's son shot arrows that were decorated with gold. They pierced Alambusa and penetrated the ground. In that battle, Subhadra's son used straight-tufted arrows to make the rakshasa retreat, like Shakra in a battle against Maya. Having been repulsed, the rakshasa, the scorcher of enemies, wished to kill his enemies in the battle and resorted to his great powers of dark maya. He caused everything on the ground to be enveloped in darkness. Abhimanyu could not be seen. And those on one's own side, or that of the enemy, could not be distinguished in that battle. On seeing that terrible and great gloom, Abhimanyu, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, invoked the supreme weapon known as *bhaskara*.[370] O lord of the earth! At this, everything in the universe again became visible. Thus, the maya of the evil-souled rakshasa was destroyed. In that encounter, the greatly valorous Indra among rakshasas became angry. He shrouded the supreme of men with straight-tufted arrows. The rakshasa used many other kinds of maya. But Phalguna's son, skilled in the use of all weapons and with an immeasurable soul, countered all of them. The rakshasa's maya was destroyed and he was wounded with arrows. He discarded his chariot and fled in great fear.

'"After having defeated the rakshasa, who used deceitful means to fight, Arjuna's son began to crush your soldiers in the battle. He was like a wild king of elephants, crazy with musth, agitating a pond that was full of lotuses. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, saw that the soldiers were being routed. He surrounded Subhadra's son with a large number of chariots. Many brave maharathas among the sons of Dhritarashtra created a circle around him. A single one fought against many and they struck him with firm arrows. That brave ratha was like his father in valour. He was Vasudeva's equal in valour and strength. He was supreme among all wielders of weapons and in that battle, performed many deeds that were like the two of them, his father and his maternal uncle.[371] O king! Dhananjaya began to destroy your soldiers. Wishing to rescue his son, the intolerant one arrived at the spot where he[372] was fighting with Bhishma. O king! In that battle, your father, Devavrata, attacked Partha in the encounter, like Svarbhanu[373] against the sun. O lord of the earth! With chariots, elephants and horses, your sons surrounded Bhishma in that battle, wishing to protect him in every direction. O king! In that fashion, the Pandavas surrounded Dhananjaya. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The armoured ones engaged in a great battle.

'"O king! Sharadvata stationed himself in front of Bhishma. He pierced Arjuna with twenty-five arrows. To accomplish a pleasant task for Pandava, Satyaki attacked him, like a tiger against an elephant, and pierced him with sharp arrows. Goutama was enraged. In return, he swiftly pierced Madhava[374] in the chest with nine arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons. Shini's descendant became extremely angry at having been pierced. The maharatha unleashed a terrible arrow at Goutama, one capable of taking his life away. On seeing it descend with great force, as radiant as Shakra's vajra, Drona's son, driven by supreme rage, angrily sliced it down into two. Avoiding Goutama, supreme among rathas, in that battle, Shini's descendant then attacked Drona's son in that encounter, like Rahu in the sky against the moon. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, Drona's son sliced his bow into two and once his bow had been severed, oppressed him with arrows. The destroyer of enemies picked up another bow that was capable of bearing a great burden. O great king! He struck Drona's son in the arms and the chest with six arrows. Having been thus pierced and wounded, he lost his senses for some time. He sat down on the floor of his chariot, using the pole of his standard for support. Having regained his senses, Drona's powerful son angrily pierced Varshneya[375] in that encounter with iron arrows. These pierced Shini's descendant and penetrated the ground, like a powerful and young snake entering a hole during the spring. In that encounter, Drona's son roared like a lion. He used another broad-headed arrow to sever Madhava's supreme standard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! He again unleashed a shower of arrows to envelope him, like clouds covering the sun at the end of summer. O great king! Satyaki destroyed that net of arrows and quickly covered Drona's son with many nets of arrows. He was like the sun that had emerged from a net of clouds. Shini's descendant, the destroyer of enemy heroes, scorched Drona's son. The immensely strong Satyaki roared and again enveloped him with thousands of arrows. On seeing that his son was eclipsed, like the moon afflicted by Rahu, Bharadvaja's powerful son attacked Shini's descendant. O king! In that great battle, he pierced him with extremely sharp arrows, desiring to rescue his son, who was being tormented by Varshneya. In that battle, having defeated the maharatha son of his preceptor, Satyaki then pierced Drona with twenty arrows that were completely made out of iron. Kounteya, borne on white steeds, was immeasurable in his soul. In that encounter, the maharatha angrily attacked Drona. O great king! In that great battle, Drona clashed against Partha and it was like Budha and Shukra[376] meeting each other in the firmament.”’

CHAPTER 958(98)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did those brave and great archers, Drona and Pandava Dhananjaya, encounter each other in that battle? Tell me. Pandava was always the beloved of Bharadvaja’s intelligent son. O Sanjaya! In any encounter, the preceptor was always the beloved of Partha. Those two rathas are proud in battle and are as fierce as lions. How did Dhananjaya and Bharadvaja’s son clash against each other in the encounter?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “In a battle, Drona does not know Partha as someone who is dear to himself. Placing the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront, Partha does not acknowledge a preceptor in an encounter. O king! Kshatriyas do not avoid each other in an encounter. Without any fear, they fight with their fathers and their brothers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Partha pierced Drona with three arrows. But he[377] paid no heed to the arrows that had been released from Partha’s bow in that battle. In that battle, Partha again covered him with a shower of arrows and he[378] blazed in anger, like a conflagration in a deserted forest. In that battle, Drona released straight-tufted arrows towards Arjuna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! But those were speedily countered. O king! King Duryodhana instructed Susharma to protect Drona’s flank in that battle. The angry king of Trigarta drew his bow and in that battle, enveloped Partha with arrows with iron heads. O king! The arrows released by both of them[379] were resplendent in the sky. O great king! They looked like swans in the autumn sky. O lord! Those dazzling arrows reached Kounteya and penetrated, like birds entering a tree that is lowered from the burden of succulent fruit. Arjuna, supreme among rathas, roared in that battle. In that encounter, he pierced the king of Trigarta and his sons with arrows. Partha pierced them, like the fire at the destruction of a yuga. But having made up their minds to die, they did not retreat from the encounter with Partha. They showered arrows towards Pandava's chariot. O Indra among kings! Pandava countered that shower of arrows with his own shower of arrows. He was like a mountain receiving a downpour of rain. We witnessed the extraordinary dexterity of Bibhatsu's hands. The brave one countered many showers of arrows that were difficult to withstand, like the wind scattering masses of clouds. The gods and the danavas were delighted with Partha's deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Partha angrily advanced against Trigarta in battle. O great king! He released the vayavya weapon against the head of their army. A turbulent wind arose in the sky. It brought down masses of trees and killed the soldiers. Drona beheld that extremely terrible vayavya weapon. O great king! He released the extremely terrible weapon known as *shaila*.[380] When Drona released this weapon in the great battle, the wind was pacified and the directions became placid. But Pandu's brave son made the Trigartas, roaming around on their chariots, dispirited in that battle. They lost their valour and retreated.

'"King Duryodhana, Kripa, supreme among rathas, Ashvatthama, Shalya, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti and Bahlika and the army of the Bahlikas surrounded Partha from every direction with a great number of chariots. In a similar way, Bhagadatta and the immensely strong Shrutayu surrounded Bhima from every direction with a large army of elephants. O lord of the earth! Bhurishrava, Shala and Soubala quickly countered Madri's sons with many colourful arrows. With all the sons of Dhritarashtra and their soldiers, Bhishma attacked Yudhishthira and surrounded him from every direction. On seeing that army of elephants descend, the brave Partha Vrikodara licked the corners of his mouth, like a king of deer in a forest. The best of rathas grasped a club in the great battle. He swiftly got down from his chariot and terrified your soldiers. On seeing him, with the club in his hand, the elephant-riders made endeavours to surround Bhimasena from every side in that battle. But Pandava penetrated the midst of the elephants and began to roam around. He was like the sun in the middle of a large mass of clouds. The bull of the Pandava lineage slew that army of elephants with his club. He was like the wind, scattering a large mass of clouds. Those tuskers were slaughtered by the powerful Bhimasena. They shrieked in that battle, roaring like clouds. There were many wounds on his body, resulting from the tusks of the elephants. Partha dazzled in the forefront of that battle, like a flowering ashoka tree. He seized some elephants by their tusks and uprooted their tusks. He used those tusks to strike the elephants on their temples. He brought them down in that battle, like Yama with the staff in his hand. The club was covered with blood and his body was spattered with fat and marrow. With blood on his armlets, he seemed to be like Rudra. O king! Thus slaughtered, the remaining mighty elephants fled in all the directions, crushing their own soldiers in the process. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The gigantic elephants were driven away in all the directions. All of Duryodhana's soldiers retreated from the field of battle."'

CHAPTER 959(99)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! It was midday and the encounter raged. There was a terrible battle, destructive of people, between Bhishma and the Somakas. Gangeya, best among rathas, pierced the Pandava soldiers with hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows. Your father, Devavrata, crushed those soldiers, like a herd of cattle, crushing reaped paddy. Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Virata and Drupada attacked Bhishma in that battle and struck the maharatha with arrows. He pierced Dhrishtadyumna and Virata with three arrows each. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He then dispatched an iron arrow towards Virata. O king! Pierced by Bhishma, the destroyer of enemies, in that battle, those great archers became as angry as serpents that have been trod upon. Shikhandi pierced the grandfather of the Bharatas. But the undecaying one thought him to be a woman and did not strike him back. In that battle, Dhrishtadyumna was overcome with rage, like a flaming fire. He used three arrows to pierce the grandfather in the arms and the chest. Drupada pierced Bhishma with twenty-five arrows, Virata with ten arrows and Shikhandi with twenty-five. O great king! The great-souled Bhishma was pierced in that battle and was as beautiful as a blossoming red ashoka tree in the spring. Gangeya pierced them back with three arrows that travelled straight.[381] O venerable one! He severed Virata's bow with a broad-headed arrow. In the forefront of that battle, he took up another bow and pierced Bhishma with five sharp arrows and his charioteer with three. O great king! Bhima, Droupadi's five sons, the five brothers from Kekaya and Satvata Satyaki, desiring Yudhishthira's welfare, attacked Gangeya. They wished to protect Panchala Dhrishtadyumna in that battle. O lord of men! All those on your side raised their weapons to protect Bhishma and attacked the Pandu soldiers with their own soldiers.

'"There was an extremely terrible battle between those on your side and those on their side. It involved men, horses, chariots and elephants and extended Yama's kingdom. Charioteers clashed with charioteers and sent them to Yama's abode. Others attacked, men, elephant-riders and horse-riders. They used straight-tufted arrows to dispatch each other to the hereafter. O lord of the earth! Many terrible weapons were used there. Chariots lost their horses, rathas and charioteers and in that battle, were dragged away in different directions. O king! In that battle, they crushed many men and horses. They seemed to be like the wind, or like the cities of the gandharvas. Energetic and armoured rathas were bereft of their chariots. They were adorned with earrings and headdresses and all of them were ornamented with golden armlets. They were the equals of the sons of the gods in beauty and bravery and Shakra's equal in fighting. They surpassed Vaishravana[382] in prosperity and Brihaspati in wisdom. O lord of the world! The brave ones who were there were the lords of all the worlds. They were seen to be driven away, like ordinary men. O best of men! The tuskers were bereft of the best of riders. They ran around and fell down, shrieking loudly and crushing their own ranks. O venerable one! Their armour, whisks, umbrellas and standards were strewn around, as were the housings, bells and lances. Devastated, they were seen to run away in the ten directions. They were like mountains or clouds and roared like rain clouds. O lord of the earth! Some elephant-riders were deprived of their elephants, both on your side and on theirs. They were seen to run away in that encounter. There were horses that had come from many countries and were decorated with gold. They were as fast as the wind and were there in hundreds and thousands. With the horses slain, horse-riders grasped swords in every direction. They were seen to run away, or chase others away, in that encounter. In that great battle, elephants clashed with elephants that were running away and swiftly crushed infantry and steeds. O king! In that battle, elephants crushed chariots and chariots clashed against infantry and horses. O king! In that battle, horses crushed men in the course of the encounter. O king! In this fashion, they crushed each other in diverse ways. That terrible battle raged and it gave rise to great fear. A fearful river began to flow, with blood as its waves. It was choked with masses of bones and the hair[383] was like moss and weeds. Chariots were the lakes and arrows were the currents, with horses as the unassailable fish. It was covered with heads as pebbles. It was infested with elephants as crocodiles. Armour and headdresses constituted the foam. Bows were islands and swords were turtles. Flags and pennants were trees along the banks. Men were the banks that the river destroyed. It was infested with large numbers of predatory creatures and it extended Yama's kingdom. O king! In that great battle, many brave kshatriyas gave up their fear. They sought to cross the river on boats made out of horses, elephants and chariots. In that battle, this river conveyed all the cowards who had become overcome by lassitude, just as Vaitarani conveys all those who are dead to the capital of the king of the dead. The kshatriyas present witnessed the great carnage. They exclaimed, 'It is because of Duryodhana's crimes that the Kouravas are headed towards destruction. The sons of Pandu possess many qualities. Why did Dhritrashtra's son, the lord of men, hate them? He is evil in his soul. He has been overcome by avarice.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many words of this kind were heard there. They were full of praise for the Pandavas and were extremely terrible about your sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing these words spoken by all the warriors, your son, Duryodhana, who had caused offence to all the worlds, spoke these words to Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and Shalya. 'Fight with pride. What is the reason for delay?' O king! The extremely terrible battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas raged again, a consequence of the gambling with the dice. O Vichitravirya's son! You paid no attention when the great-souled ones tried to restrain you then. Behold the fruits of that. O king! O lord of the earth! The sons of Pandu, their soldiers, their followers and the Kouravas do not desire to protect their lives in this battle. That is the reason there is this terrible destruction of people. O tiger among men! O king! It has been caused by destiny and your evil policy."'

CHAPTER 960(100)

'Sanjaya said, "O tiger among men! There were kings who were following Susharma's lead and Arjuna used sharp arrows to dispatch them to the abode of the king of the dead. In that battle, Susharma pierced Partha with arrows. He again pierced Vasudeva with seventy and Partha with nine. The maharatha who was Shakra's son repulsed them with his own shower of arrows. In that battle, he dispatched Susharma's warriors to Yama's abode. They were slain by Partha, like the fire at the destruction of a yuga. O king! Those maharathas were overcome with fear and fled from the field of battle. O venerable one! Some abandoned their horses. Others gave up their chariots. And still others discarded their elephants and fled in the ten directions. Others fled from the field of battle, with their horses, elephants and chariots. O lord of the earth! They ran away with great speed. In that great battle, foot soldiers threw away their weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As they ran away, they ignored everything else. They were repeatedly restrained by Susharma of the Trigartas and by other chiefs among the kings. But they did not stay in that battle.

'"On seeing that his army was being routed, your son, Duryodhana, placed Bhishma at the forefront of the battle, ahead of all the soldiers. Using the best of his great endeavour, he attacked Dhananjaya, for the sake of protecting the life of the lord of Trigarta. He alone remained stationed in the battle, together with all his brothers, and showered many different kinds of arrows. The remaining men ran away. O king!

The Pandavas were armoured. For Phalguna’s sake, they used their best endeavours to go to the spot where Bhishma was. They knew that the wielder of Gandiva was invincible. But cries of lamentation had arisen in all directions from the spot where Bhishma was. In that encounter, the brave one with the palm tree on his standard used straight-tufted arrows to shroud the army of the Pandavas. All the Kurus and the Pandavas seemed to be one single mass. O great king! They fought and the sun reached midday. Satyaki pierced Kritavarma with five iron arrows. The brave one remained stationed in the battle, releasing thousands of arrows. King Drupada pierced Drona with sharp arrows. He again pierced him with seventy arrows and his charioteer with seven. Bhimasena pierced his great-grandfather, King Bahlika, and emitted a loud roar, like a tiger in a forest.[384] Arjuna’s son pierced Chitrasena with many fast arrows. Chitrasena was severely pierced in the chest with three arrows. These two great ones among men encountered each other in the battle and were radiant. O king! They were like the extremely terrible Budha and Shanaishchara in the sky.[385] Subhadra’s son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, roared powerfully, after having slain his horses with four arrows and his charioteer with nine. O lord of the earth! With his horses slain, the maharatha swiftly descended from his chariot and climbed onto Durmukha’s chariot. Drona pierced Drupada with straight-tufted arrows and the valorous one also swiftly pierced his charioteer. At the head of his soldiers, King Drupada was thus oppressed. Remembering his earlier hostility, he retreated on swift horses. In an instant, Bhimasena deprived King Bahlika of his horses, charioteer and chariot, while all the soldiers looked on. O great king! Bahlika, supreme among men, was overcome by panic and confronted a great danger. He swiftly climbed onto maharatha Lakshmana’s chariot. Satyaki repulsed maharatha Kritavarma. O king! He attacked the grandfather with many arrows. He pierced Bharata[386] with sixty sharp arrows that were tufted with hair and seemed to be dancing around on his chariot, brandishing his large bow. The grandfather hurled a giant and iron javelin towards him. It was decorated with gold and was extremely swift. It was as beautiful as a maiden of the serpents. On seeing it suddenly descend, extremely energetic and like death, the immensely famous Varshneya destroyed it with his dexterity. That extremely terrible javelin could not touch Varshneya. It fell down on the face of the ground, like a giant meteor that has lost its brilliance. O king! At this, Varshneya forcefully grasped and hurled a javelin towards the grandfather's chariot. It was terrible to behold. In that great battle, it was hurled through the force of Varshneya's arms. It advanced with great force, like a fatal night advancing towards a man. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing it suddenly descend, Gangeya used two extremely sharp kshurapra arrows to slice it into two, so that it fell down on the ground. Having severed the javelin, he angrily struck Satyaki on the chest with nine arrows and the destroyer of enemies smiled as he did this. O Pandu's elder brother! The Pandavas surrounded Bhishma in that battle, with their chariots, elephants and horses, so that Madhava[387] might be rescued. A tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. In that encounter, both the Pandavas and the Kurus desired victory."'

CHAPTER 961(101)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Duryodhana saw that Bhishma was angry in the battle. O great king! He also saw that he was surrounded by the Pandavas, like clouds in the sky surrounding the sun after summer is over. He addressed Duhshasana. 'This brave and great archer, Bhishma, is the destroyer of enemies. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He has been covered on all sides by the brave Pandavas. O brave one! It is your duty to protect the extremely great-souled one. In this battle, protect Bhishma, our grandfather, so that he can kill the Panchalas and the Pandavas in this encounter. I think that it is our duty to protect Bhishma. Bhishma, the great archer, is our protector and is also our grandfather. With all your soldiers, surround the grandfather. If you protect him, you will perform a difficult task in this battle.' In the encounter, having been thus addressed, your son, Duhshasana, stationed himself around Bhishma, surrounding him with a large army. Subala's son had many hundreds and thousands of horses. The riders had polished spears and wielded swords and spikes. They were proud and extremely swift. This was a force with standards. These supreme among men were trained and skilled in battle. They surrounded Nakula, Sahadeva and Pandava Dharmaraja from every direction and repulsed those best of men. King Duryodhana sent ten thousand brave horse-riders to restrain the Pandavas. They penetrated with great force, like Garudas advancing to do battle. O king! The earth was struck with the hooves and trembled because of the sound. A great noise from the hooves of the horses could be heard then. It was like a large forest of bamboos being burnt on a mountain. As they advanced there, a great cloud of dust arose. It rose up into the path of the sun and shrouded the sun. The army of the Pandavas was agitated because of the force of these horses, as if a flock of swans had descended onto a large lake with great force. Nothing could be heard because of the sounds of neighing.

'"O great king! In that battle, King Yudhishthira and the Pandavas who were Madri's sons spiritedly checked the force of those horse-riders, like the shoreline checks the forceful waves of the great ocean on the night of the full moon, when the waters are full because of the rains. O king! The rathas used straight-tufted arrows to sever the heads of the horse-riders from their bodies. O great king! They were slain and brought down by those who wielded firm bows. It was like elephants killed by mighty elephants and hurled into mountainous caverns. They[388] roamed around in the ten directions and used extremely sharp javelins and straight-tufted arrows to slice off the heads. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The horse-riders were struck by swords. Their heads fell down, like fruit from large trees. O king! Horses and their riders were seen to be slain there. They fell down and were falling down, in hundreds and thousands. Having been thus slaughtered, the horses were overcome by fear and fled. It was like deer trying to protect their lives at the arrival of a lion. O great king! In that great battle, the Pandavas vanquished the enemy. Having driven the enemy away in the battle, they blew on their conch shells and sounded their drums.

'"In the midst of the soldiers, Duryodhana was seen to be distressed. O best of the Bharata lineage! He spoke these words to the king of Madra. 'This eldest son of Pandu has vanquished my maternal uncle. O mighty-armed one! While you have looked on, the powerful one has driven my soldiers away. O mighty-armed one! Repulse him, the way the shoreline beats back the abode of makaras. On account of your strength and valour, you are known to be irresistible.' Having heard the words of your son, the powerful Shalya advanced with a large number of chariots to the spot where King Yudhishthira was stationed. Shalya suddenly descended with an extremely large force, with the thrust of the great ocean. Pandava countered him in that battle. In that encounter, maharatha Dharmaraja used ten arrows to swiftly strike the king of Madra between the breasts. Nakula and Sahadeva struck him with three arrows that were aimed straight. The king of Madra pierced each of them with three arrows. He again pierced Yudhishthira with sixty sharp arrows. Overcome with anger, he struck the two sons of Madri with two arrows. The mighty-armed Bhima then beheld the king in that battle. He approached the king of Madra, as if advancing into the jaws of death. The vanquisher of enemies advanced to the spot where Yudhishthira was stationed in the battle. An extremely terrible and fearful battle raged. The sun was blazing in the other direction then."'[389]

CHAPTER 962(102)

'Sanjaya said, "Your father was enraged. In that battle, he used supreme and sharp arrows to pierce the Parthas and their soldiers in every direction. He pierced Bhima with twelve arrows and Satyaki with nine, Nakula with three arrows and Sahadeva with seven. He struck Yudhishthira with twelve arrows in his chest and arms. The immensely strong one then pierced Dhrishtadyumna and roared. Nakula pierced him with twelve arrows and Madhava[390] with three. Dhrishtadyumna pierced the grandfather back with seventy arrows, Bhimasena with five and Yudhishthira with twelve. Having pierced Satyaki, Drona pierced Bhimasena. He pierced each of them with five sharp arrows that resembled Yama's staff. But each of them pierced the bull among brahmanas back with three arrows that were straight in their aim and were like giant snakes. The Souviras, the Kitavas, those from the east, those from the west, those from the north, the Malavas, the Abhishahas, the Shurasenas, the Shibis and the Vasatayas did not avoid Bhishma in that battle, though they were slaughtered by his sharp arrows. Other great-souled ones on the side of the Pandaveyas were slaughtered. The Pandavas were attacked by those who wielded many weapons in their hands. O king! But the Pandavas still surrounded the grandfather. The invincible one was surrounded on all sides by a large number of chariots. Consuming the enemy, he blazed up like a fire engendered in a deserted forest. His chariot was the source of the fire. The bow, swords, javelins and clubs were the kindling. His arrows were the sparks. Bhishma was himself the fire that consumed the bulls among the kshatriyas. His arrows had golden tufts and the feathers of vultures. They were extremely energetic. He enveloped the enemy force with barbed, hollow and iron arrows. He used sharp arrows to bring down elephants and chariots. That large number of chariots looked like a forest of palm trees with the heads lopped off. O king! In that battle, the mighty-armed one, supreme among all wielders of weapons, deprived chariots, elephants and horses of their riders. The twang of his bow-string and the slapping of his palms were like the clap of thunder. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the beings were agitated and trembled. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your father's arrows were incapable of being countered. Released from Bhishma's bow, those arrows did not only strike the armour on the bodies. O king! Brave ones were slain on their chariots. O great king! With the swift horses still yoked, we saw them[391] being dragged around all over the field of battle. There were fourteen thousand maharathas from the Chedis, the Kashis and the Karushas. They were famous, born in noble lineages and were ready to give up their lives. Their standards were decorated with gold and all of them refused to retreat from the field of battle. They clashed against Bhishma in that battle, as if against Death with a gaping mouth. All of them were submerged in the world of the hereafter, together with their horses, chariots and elephants. O king! We saw hundreds and thousands of chariots. Some had their floors and axles chattered. Others had completely broken wheels. The bumpers of the chariots were fragmented and the charioteers were brought down. O lord of the earth! O venerable one! Arrows, excellent armour, spikes, clubs, maces, swords, arrows with iron heads, the floors of chariots, quivers and wheels were broken and were strewn around. There were arms that still held bows and swords. There were heads with earrings. There were palm-guards and finger-guards and standards that had been brought down. There were bows shattered into many fragments. All these were scattered on the ground. O king! There were elephants with the riders slain and horses devoid of riders. They lay there, in hundreds and thousands. The brave ones[392] made every effort to restrain the maharathas who were running away. But they did not succeed, because of the oppression created by Bhishma's arrows. With valour like that of the great Indra, he slaughtered that large army. O great king! It was destroyed in such a way that no two people ran away together. Chariots, elephants and horses were pierced and standards and seats brought down. There was lamentation in the army of the sons of Pandu and they lost their senses. Father killed the son and the son killed the father. Driven by the force of destiny, a friend attacked a beloved friend. Many soldiers in the army of the sons of Pandu tore apart their armour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With disheveled hair, they were seen to run away. They were like a herd of cattle, crazy with fear and running around. Chariot-riders, elephants and soldiers in the army of the sons of Pandu were seen to be shrieking in piteous tones.

'"On seeing that the army was routed, the descendant of the Yadava lineage controlled the supreme chariot and spoke to Partha Bibhatsu. 'O Partha! The moment that you have wished for, has now arrived. O tiger among men! Strike and free yourself from this confusion. O brave one! O Partha! Earlier, in the assembly of kings, in Virata's city and in Sanjaya's presence, you said, "I will slay all the soldiers in the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra, with Bhishma and Drona at the forefront. I will kill them and their followers and all those who fight against me in the battle." O

Kounteya! O destroyer of enemies! Do this and make your words come true. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Remember the dharma of kshatriyas and fight.’ Thus addressed by Vasudeva, Bibhatsu lowered his face and cast a sideways glance. As if unwillingly, he spoke these words. ‘Having killed those who should not be killed, I will obtain the kingdom, with hell as the ultimate objective. Or is it better to suffer the misery of dwelling in the forest? Which will be better for me? Drive the horses towards Bhishma. I will do what you have asked me to. I will bring down the aged and invincible grandfather of the Kurus.’ At this, Madhava urged the horses that had the complexion of silver. O king! He took them to the spot where Bhishma was, difficult to look at, like the sun with its rays. On seeing the mighty-armed Partha ready to fight with Bhishma in that battle, Yudhisthira’s large army returned again. Bhishma, best of the Kuru lineage, roared repeatedly like a lion. He swiftly showered down arrows on Dhananjaya’s chariot. In an instant, because of that great shower of arrows, nothing could be seen of the chariot or the charioteer. However, Vasudeva was without fear. Satvata resorted to patience and goaded the horses, which had been wounded by Bhishma’s arrows. Partha grasped his divine bow that roared like the clouds. He used sharp arrows to sever Bhishma’s bow and made it fall down. With the bow severed, Kouravya again grasped a giant bow. In only an instant, your father strung the bow, which made a sound like that of the clouds. But in his anger, Arjuna sliced down this second bow too. At this, Shantanu’s son praised his dexterity. ‘O Partha! Well done. O mighty-armed one! O Kunti’s son! Well done.’ Having thus addressed him, he grasped another beautiful bow. In that battle, Bhishma released many arrows towards Partha’s chariot. Vasudeva displayed supreme skill in handling the horses. He executed circular motions and avoided all those arrows. Wounded by arrows, Bhishma and Partha, tigers among men, looked beautiful. They were like two angry bulls, marked with the signs of horns.

‘“Vasudeva saw that Partha was fighting mildly. Bhishma was continuously showering down arrows in the battle. Stationed between the two armies, he was as scorching as the sun. He was killing the best of the best in the army of Pandu's son. Against Yudhishthira's forces, Bhishma was like the destruction at the end of a yuga. The mighty-armed Madhava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, could not tolerate this. O venerable one! He abandoned Partha's horses, which had the complexion of silver. Full of anger, the great yogi descended from the great chariot. The powerful one advanced towards Bhishma, with his arms as weapons. The spirited one had a whip in his hand and roared repeatedly like a lion. The lord of the universe seemed to make the earth shatter with his footsteps. Krishna's eyes were coppery red with anger. The infinitely radiant one wished to kill him. In the great battle, those on your side lost their senses. They saw Madhava advance against Bhishma in that battle, as if he would swallow him up. 'Bhishma has been slain. Bhishma has been slain.' Such lamentations were uttered by the soldiers. All the men were frightened at the sight of Vasudeva advancing. Janardana was dressed in yellow garments. He was dark blue, like a jewel. As he advanced against Bhishma, he was as beautiful as a cloud with a garland of lightning. It was like a lion advancing on an elephant, or the leader of a herd advancing against another bull. The spirited bull among the Yadava lineage roared and advanced. On seeing Pundarikaksha descend on him in the battle, Bhishma was not frightened. He stretched his great bow in the encounter and addressed Govinda without any fear in his heart. 'O Pundarikaksha! Come. O god of the gods! I bow down before you. O best of the Satvata lineage! Bring me down in this great battle. O god! O unblemished one! Slain by you in this battle, I will obtain supreme welfare in this world and in the next world. O Govinda! In the three worlds, I have obtained great honour in the battle today.' The mighty-armed Partha ran after Keshava and embraced him in his two arms. But despite being grasped by Partha, the lotus-eyed Purushottama Krishna still proceeded with great force, dragging him along. Partha, the destroyer of enemy heroes, now grasped Hrishikesha's legs with force and managed to stop him at the tenth step. His[393] eyes were full of rage and he was sighing like a serpent. Arjuna, the destroyer of enemy heroes, spoke these words of distress to him. 'O mighty-armed one! Refrain. You should not do this. O Keshava! You earlier said that you would not fight in this war. O Madhava! The world will say that you have uttered a falsehood. Let the entire burden be on me. I will kill the one who is rigid in his vows. O Madhava! If it is otherwise in this battle, let there be a curse on my truth and my good deeds. O destroyer of enemies! I will do everything so that the end of the foes is ensured. Behold. As I wish, I will bring down the invincible one who is great in his vows today, like the full moon at the end of an era.' Madhava heard these words of the great-souled Phalguna. He did not say anything. But in great rage, he again ascended onto the chariot.

'"Those two tigers among men were stationed on the chariot. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, again showered down arrows, like clouds raining down on a mountain. Your father, Devavrata, took the lives of the warriors, like the rays of the sun absorb energy from everything after winter has passed. Just as the Pandavas had shattered the ranks of the Kurus in battle, your father shattered the ranks of the Pandava soldiers in battle. The soldiers were slain and routed. They lost their enterprise and were bereft of their senses. In that battle, they were incapable of looking at Bhishma. Scorching them with his own energy, he was like the midday sun. They were slain by Bhishma, as if he was Death at the time of the destruction of a yuga. O great king! The Pandavas were afflicted with fear and glanced at him. They could not find a protector, like cattle that had sunk into mire. In the battle, they were like weak ants afflicted by a strong person. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The maharatha was unassailable. He scorched the kings with his arrows. They were incapable of looking at Bhishma. His arrows scorched like the rays of the sun. While the soldiers of the Pandus were routed, the one with the thousand rays[394] began to set. The soldiers were overcome by fatigue. Their hearts were set on withdrawing."'

CHAPTER 963(103)

'Sanjaya said, "While they were still fighting, the sun set. Terrible twilight set in and the field of battle could no longer be seen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! King Yudhishthira saw that twilight had set in and that his own soldiers were being slaughtered by Bhishma, the destroyer of enemies. They had discarded their weapons and, surrounded by the enemy, had begun to run away. In the battle, maharatha Bhishma was incited by supreme anger. He saw that the Somakas had been vanquished and that the maharathas were dispirited. He thought for a short while and gave the instructions for withdrawal. King Yudhishthira instructed that the soldiers should be withdrawn. In a similar way, your soldiers were also withdrawn at the same time. O best of the Kurus! Having withdrawn the soldiers, the maharathas entered their camps, having been wounded in the battle. The Pandavas reflected on what should be done vis-à-vis Bhishma in the battle. Oppressed by Bhishma, they could not find any peace. In the battle, Bhishma had vanquished the Pandavas, together with the Srinjayas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was worshipped by your sons and praised by them. With the delighted Kurus surrounding him in every direction, he entered his camp. It was night and all the beings lost their senses. Towards the beginning of that terrible night, the Pandavas, the Vrishnis and the invincible Srinjayas sat down to have a consultation. All those immensely powerful ones thought that the time had come to consult about what would be beneficial for them. Those wise ones anxiously consulted to determine what would be best.

'"O king! King Yudhishthira consulted for a long time. He glanced towards Vasudeva and spoke these words. 'O Krishna! Behold the great-souled Bhishma, terrible in his valour. He crushes my soldiers like an elephant amidst a clump of lotuses. We do not even have the enterprise to glance at the great-souled one. He is like an expanding fire that is consuming my soldiers. He is like the terrible and great serpent Takshaka, whose venom is virulent. O Krishna! In the battle, the powerful Bhishma uses sharp weapons. He grasps his bow in the encounter and releases sharp arrows. It is possible to vanquish an angry Yama, the king of the gods with the vajra in his hand, Varuna with his noose and the lord of riches with his club. But if he is enraged, it is impossible to defeat Bhishma in a great battle. O Krishna! It is because of this reason that I am immersed in an ocean of grief. Having confronted Bhishma in the battle, I am suffering from weakness of intelligence. O invincible one! I will go to the forest. It is beneficial that I should go there. O Krishna! I have no desire to fight. Bhishma always kills us. He is like a flaming fire, towards which insects are attracted. I will obtain the same result of death by daring to fight with Bhishma. O Varshneya! Despite being valorous, for the sake of the kingdom, I am being conveyed towards destruction. My brave brothers are sorely afflicted through arrows. It is because of me, and because of affection towards their brother, that they were dislodged from the kingdom. O Madhusudana! Krishna[395] was oppressed because of what I had done. I think that being alive has great value. But it is now extremely difficult to remain alive. If I remain alive today, I will spend the remaining part[396] in pursuing supreme dharma. O Keshava! If you show your favours towards me and towards my brothers, tell me what I should do. O Keshava! But this should be without contravening my own dharma.' Krishna heard these words and their detailed description.

'"Overcome by compassion, he comforted Yudhishthira and replied, 'O Dharma's son! You should not grieve. You are devoted to the truth. Your brave brothers are invincible and are the destroyers of enemies. Arjuna and Bhimasena are as energetic as Vayu and Agni. Madri's two sons are as valorous as the lord of the thirty gods. O Pandava! For the sake of the good relationship that exists between us, employ me to fight with Bhishma. O king! Instructed by you, there is nothing I will not do in this great battle. While the sons of Dhritarashtra look on, if Phalguna does not desire it, I will challenge Bhishma, the bull among men, in this battle and kill him. O Pandava! If you see that Bhishma's death will ensure that you win the kingdom, alone on a chariot, I will slay the aged grandfather of the Kurus today. O king! Witness my valour in this battle, like that of the great Indra. I will use great weapons and bring him down from his chariot. There is no doubt that someone who is an enemy to the sons of Pandu is my foe too. My welfare is your welfare. All that is mine is yours. Your brother is my friend, relative[397] and disciple. O lord of the earth! For Arjuna's sake, I can slice off and give my own flesh. This tiger among men will also lay down his life for my sake. O father![398] This is our understanding, that we will protect each other. O Indra among kings! Employ me, so that I can be your protector. In Upaplavya, Partha earlier took an oath before many people. "I will slay Gangeya." I should protect the oath that the intelligent Partha took. If Partha gives me permission, there is no doubt that I should perform this task. Or let Phalguna bear this limited burden in battle. Let him kill Bhishma, the destroyer of enemy cities, in battle. If Partha stirs himself, there is nothing that he cannot accomplish in battle, even if the thirty gods have raised their arms against him, together with the daityas and the danavas. O lord of men! They can be killed by Arjuna in battle, not to speak of Bhishma. Bhishma, Shantanu's immensely valorous son, has now become perverse and has lost his intelligence. He will not live for long. He no longer understands what his duty is.'

'"Yudhishthira replied, 'O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! It is exactly as you have spoken. All of them together are not capable of withstanding your force. O tiger among men! With an immensely strong one like you as my protector, I am always certain of obtaining everything that I desire. O supreme among victorious ones! With Govinda as a protector, I can vanquish the gods, together with Indra, in battle, not to speak of Bhishma in this great battle. But I cannot make your words come false for the sake of glorifying my own objective. O Madhava! As you had promised, help us, but without taking part in the fight. O Madhava! Bhishma had come to an agreement with me. "For your sake, I will proffer advice. But I will never fight for you. O lord! I tell you truthfully that I will fight for Duryodhana's cause." O Madhava! He may provide counsel, as to how we can obtain the kingdom. Let all of us go to Devavrata, to ask him about the means whereby he may be killed. O Madhusudana! Together with you, let all of us go and ask him. O supreme among men! Together with you, let all of us quickly go to Bhishma. O Varshneya! If this seems desirable to you, let us go and seek Kourava's counsel. O Janardana! He will offer us beneficial and truthful advice. O Krishna! In this battle, let us do what he asks us to do. The one who is rigid in his vows will give us counsel and victory. We lost our father when we were children and he reared us. O Madhava! This is the aged grandfather whom I wish to kill. He is the father of our beloved father. Shame on the livelihood of kshatriyas.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! On hearing these words, Varshneya spoke to the descendant of the Kuru lineage. 'O mighty-armed one! I have always liked whatever you have said. Devavrata Bhishma is accomplished. He can burn down with his glance. Let us go to the one who is the son of the one who goes to the ocean[399] to ask about the means of his death. He will certainly speak the truth, especially if he is asked by you. Let us go there, to ask the grandfather of the Kurus.' 'O Madhava! Let us bow down our heads and go and ask him for counsel. He will offer us counsel about how we can fight with the enemy.'[400] O Pandu's elder brother! Having thus consulted, all the brave Pandavas, together with the valiant Vasudeva, departed. They discarded their weapons and armour and proceeded to Bhishma's residence. They entered and bowed their heads in obeisance before Bhishma. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas worshipped him. They lowered their heads and sought Bhishma's protection. The mighty-armed Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, told them, 'O Varshneya! Welcome. O Dhananjaya! Welcome. O Dharma's son! O Bhima! O twins! Welcome. What is the task that I can accomplish for you now? What will extend your pleasure? Even if it should prove to be extremely difficult, I will do it with all my heart.' With affection, Gangeya repeatedly spoke in this way. Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, was miserable in his soul and spoke these words. 'O one who is learned in dharma! How will we obtain victory and the kingdom? How can this destruction of subjects be stopped? O lord! Tell us this. You yourself tell us the means whereby we can bring about your own death. O king! How will we be able to withstand you in battle? O grandfather of the Kurus! You do not exhibit the slightest bit of weakness. In the battle, your bow is always seen, whirling around in a circle. No one can distinguish when you affix an arrow, aim or stretch your bow. O mighty-armed one! We see you stationed on your chariot, like the sun. O slayer of enemy heroes! You slaughter men, horses, chariots and elephants. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Which man is capable of killing you? O supreme among men! You bring down a great shower of arrows. Because of you, my large army is decaying from one day to another. How can we defeat you in battle? How can the kingdom be ours? How can there be peace among my soldiers? O grandfather! Tell us this.' O Pandu's elder brother! Shantanu's son then spoke these words to Pandava. 'O Kounteya! As long as I am alive in battle, your prosperity will never be seen. I tell you this truthfully. After you have vanquished me in battle, your victory over the Kouravas is certain. If you wish to obtain victory in this battle, strike me down quickly. O Partha! You have my permission to happily strike at me. I think it is good for you that you know my nature.[401] After I have been killed, everyone else will be killed. Therefore, do as I am asking you to.'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'Tell us the means whereby we may defeat you in battle. When you are enraged in battle, you are like Yama with a staff in his hand. It is possible to defeat the wielder of the vajra, or Varuna, or Yama. But you are incapable of being defeated in battle, even by the gods and the asuras, together with Indra.'

'"Bhishma replied, 'O mighty-armed one! O Pandava! What you have said is true. I am incapable of being defeated in battle, even by the gods and the asuras, together with Indra. But this is when I grasp my weapons in battle and grasp my supreme bow. O king! But when I cast aside my weapons, the maharathas can kill me in battle. I do not wish to fight with someone who has cast his weapons aside, someone who has fallen down, someone whose armour and standard have been dislodged, someone who is running away, someone who is frightened, someone who solicits sanctuary, someone who is a woman, someone who bears the name of a woman, someone who is disabled, someone who only has one son, someone who does not have a son and someone who is difficult to look at. O Partha! Hear about the vow that I took a long time ago. I will never fight if I see an inauspicious sign on the standard. O king! This son of Drupada is a maharatha in your army. Shikhandi is a brave and victorious one who always desires to fight. But he was a woman earlier. He became a man later. All of you know everything about how this came about. In the battle, let the brave Arjuna place Shikhandi ahead of him. Let the armoured one attack me with sharp arrows. I will see an inauspicious sign on the standard then, especially that of someone who was earlier a woman. Even if I have grasped my bow, I will never strike him then. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let Pandava Dhananjaya then strike me from every side with his arrows. Truly, with the exception of the immensely fortunate Krishna and Pandava Dhananjaya, I do not see anyone in the worlds who is capable of killing me. Therefore, placing him[402] at the front, let Bibhatsu strive his utmost to bring me down. Victory will be obtained. O Kounteya! Act in accordance with the words I have spoken. You will then be able to defeat the assembled sons of Dhritarashtra in the battle.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having taken his permission and having shown their respects to the great-souled Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, the Parthas then returned to their own camp. Gangeya prepared himself for his departure to the next world. Arjuna was tormented by grief and he was overcome with shame. He said, 'O Madhava! How can I fight with my senior, the aged one of the lineage? He is accomplished in wisdom and intelligence. How can I fight with the grandfather in a battle? O Vasudeva! As a child, I used to play with the great-minded one. O Gada's elder brother! I used to sully the great-souled one's garments with the dust on my body, when I used to climb onto his lap as a child. He is the father of my father, the great-souled Pandu. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am not your father, but your father's father." These are the words he used to tell me in my childhood. How can he be killed by me now? I wish that my soldiers are killed. I cannot fight with that great-souled one. O Krishna! Which do you think is superior, victory or death?' Krishna replied, 'O Jishnu! Earlier, you have promised to kill Bhishma in the battle. O Partha! Established in the dharma of kshatriyas, how can you not kill him now? O Partha! Bring him down from his chariot, like a tree that has been struck by lightning. Without killing Gangeya in battle, victory cannot be obtained. This has been determined by destiny earlier. The killing has been ordained by destiny. Bhishma's killer is an earlier Indra.[403] It cannot but be otherwise. O invincible one! Bhishma is like Death with a gaping mouth. No one other than you is capable of fighting with him, not even the wielder of the vajra himself. O mighty-armed one! Kill Bhishma. Listen to these words of mine. This is what the immensely intelligent Brihaspati told Shakra in earlier times. “O Shakra! One must kill someone who possesses all the qualities, if he comes as an assassin, or if he arrives to kill.” O Dhananjaya! This is the eternal dharma in which kshatriyas have been established. They must fight, protect and perform sacrifices, without any malice.’ Arjuna replied, ‘O Krishna! It is certain that Shikhandi will be the cause of Bhishma’s death. As soon as he sees Panchala, Bhishma will withdraw. Therefore, we will place Shikhandi ahead of all of us. It is my view that this is the means for bringing about Gangeya’s downfall. I will restrain the other great archers with my arrows. Shikhandi will fight with Bhishma, the best of warriors. I have heard from the chief of the Kurus that he will not kill Shikhandi. He was born as a maiden earlier and became a man later.’ Having decided this, the Pandavas, together with Madhava, retired to their own beds. The bulls among men were happy.”’

CHAPTER 964(104)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did Shikhandi fight with Gangeya in that battle? How did Bhishma advance against the Pandavas? Tell me this.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “The morning was clear and it was time for the sun to rise. Many drums, kettledrums and tambourines were sounded. Conch shells with the complexion of curds were blown in every direction. The Pandava warriors placed Shikhandi at the forefront and marched out. O great king! They constructed a vyuha that was capable of destroying all enemies. O lord of the earth! Shikhandi was stationed at the forefront of all the soldiers. Bhimasena and Dhananjaya protected his wheels. Droupadi’s sons and Subhadra’s valiant son were behind him. Satyaki and maharatha Chekitana protected them. Dhrishtadyumna was behind them, protected by the Panchalas. O bull among the Bharata lineage!

The lord, King Yudhishthira, marched out, together with the twins, roaring like lions. Virata was behind him, surrounded by his soldiers. O great king! Drupada advanced behind him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The five brothers from Kekaya and the valiant Dhrishtaketu protected the Pandu soldiers from the rear. The Pandavas arranged the large army of soldiers in the form of this vyuha. They advanced in the battle, ready to give up their lives. O king! In that fashion, the Kurus placed the immensely strong Bhishma at the forefront of all their soldiers and advanced against the Pandavas. He was protected by your invincible and extremely strong sons. The great archer, Drona, was behind them, together with his maharatha son. Bhagadatta was behind him, surrounded by a large army of elephants. Kripa and Kritavarma followed Bhagadatta. Sudakshina, the powerful king of Kamboja, was behind them, as were Jayatsena from Magadha, Soubala and Brihadbala. There were many other great archers and kings, with Susharma at the forefront. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They protected your army's rear. From one day to another, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, created a different kind of vyuha for the battle—sometimes it was asura, sometimes it was pishacha, sometimes it was rakshasa.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The battle between those on your side and those of the enemy commenced. O king! They struck each other and extended Yama's kingdom. The Parthas, with Arjuna at their head, placed Shikhandi at the forefront. They advanced against Bhishma in the battle and released many kinds of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were oppressed by Bhima's arrows. They were covered in blood and left for the next world. Nakula, Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki advanced against your soldiers and afflicted them with energy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were being slain in that battle. They were incapable of resisting the great army of the Pandavas. Your soldiers were slaughtered in every direction. O king! They were oppressed by those maharathas and were seen to run away in different directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side could not find a protector. They were slaughtered by the sharp arrows of the Pandavas, together with the Srinjayas.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “On seeing that the army was thus oppressed by the Parthas, what did the valiant Bhishma do, when he became enraged in that battle? O Sanjaya! How did the scorcher of enemies advance against the Pandavas in battle? O Sanjaya! How did he kill the brave Somakas? Tell me this.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! When the soldiers of your sons were oppressed by the Pandavas and the Srinjayas, I will tell you what the grandfather did. O Pandu’s elder brother! The brave Pandavas were delighted. They advanced and began to slaughter your son’s army. O Indra among men! There was a destruction of men, elephants and horses. Bhishma could not tolerate that the enemy was slaying the soldiers in the battle. The great archer attacked the Pandavas, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. He was invincible and was prepared to give up his own life. O king! He attacked the five supreme maharathas among the Pandavas.[404] These were the ones who were exerting themselves in the battle and he checked them with his arrows. He used iron arrows, *vatsadantas*[405] and sharp anjalikas. He was angry and killed many elephants and horses in that battle. O king! That bull among men brought down charioteers from their chariots, horse-riders from the backs of horses, assembled foot soldiers and elephant-riders from the backs of elephants. He terrified the enemy. In that battle, the maharatha Pandavas quickly attacked Bhishma together, like the wielder of the vajra assailed by asuras. He released sharp arrows that were like Shakra’s vajra to the touch. He was seen in every direction, having assumed a terrible form. As he fought in that battle, his bow was always seen whirling around in a circular motion, like Shakra’s giant bow. O lord of the earth! On witnessing his deeds in that battle, your sons were filled with supreme wonder and honoured the grandfather. The Parthas were dispirited at the way your brave father was fighting in the battle. They glanced towards him, like the immortals towards Viprachitti. They could not resist the one who was like death with a gaping mouth.

'"On the tenth day of the battle, he began to consume Shikhandi's array of chariots with his sharp arrows, like the one with the black trails[406] burns a forest. Shikhandi pierced him between the breasts with three arrows. Bhishma was like an angry and virulent serpent, like the Destroyer who had been created by Death. Having been thus severely pierced, he glanced towards Shikhandi. He was enraged, but was unwilling.[407] He smiled and said, 'Whether you desire it or not, I will never fight with you. You are still the Shikhandini[408] that the creator made.' On hearing these words, Shikhandi became senseless with anger. In the battle, he licked the corners of his mouth and spoke to Bhishma. 'O mighty-armed one! I know you to be the destroyer of the kshatriyas. I have heard about your battle with Jamadagni's son. I have also heard many things about your divine powers. Knowing of your prowess, I wish to fight with you today. O supreme among men! I wish to do what is pleasant for the Pandavas and for my own self. O supreme among men! I wish to fight against you in the battle today. It is certain that I will kill you. I am swearing this truthfully, in front of you. Having heard these words of mine, do what you must do. Whether you wish to strike me or whether you do not, you will not escape with your life. O Bhishma! O victorious one! Take a final look at this world.' O king! Having said this, he pierced Bhishma with five straight-tufted arrows, having already wounded him with the arrows of his words. On hearing his words, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, thought that the time had come and incited Shikhandi. 'I will now fight behind you and destroy the enemy with my arrows. Ignited with rage, attack Bhishma, whose valour is terrible. The immensely strong one will not be able to cause you any pain in the battle. O brave one! O mighty-armed one! Therefore, attack Bhishma. O venerable one! If you return without killing Bhishma in battle, the worlds will look at you, and at me, with disrespect. O brave one! Exert yourself in this great battle so that we are not ridiculed. Make endeavours in the battle and repulse the grandfather. Drona, Drona's son, Kripa, Suyodhana, Chitrasena, Vikarna, Saindhava Jayadratha, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Sudakshina from Kamboja, the brave

Bhagadatta, the maharatha from Magadha, Somadatta’s son, the rakshasa who is Rishyashringa’s son and is brave in battle, the king of Trigarta and all the other maharathas—I will restrain them in battle, like the shoreline holds back the dwelling place of makaras. I will hold back in battle all the Kurus, together with their soldiers. You strive against the grandfather.’”’

CHAPTER 965(105)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “How did Panchala Shikhandi attack the grandfather Gangeya, when he was enraged in battle? He has dharma in his soul and is rigid in his vows. When Shikhandi raised his weapons, who protected the army of the Pandavas? Those maharathas desired victory and acted swiftly when it was the time to act fast. How did the immensely valorous Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, fight on the tenth day with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas? I cannot tolerate the thought of Bhishma being overthrown by Shikhandi in battle. Was his[409] chariot shattered? Did his bow break into fragments?”

‘Sanjaya said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! When he fought in that battle, Bhishma’s bow was not shattered. Nor was his chariot broken. He used straight-tufted arrows to kill the enemies in that encounter. O king! Many hundred and thousand maharathas on your side and large numbers of chariots, elephants and horses, with excellent harnesses, advanced to do battle, placing the grandfather at the forefront. O Kouravya! The victorious one stuck to his vow. Bhishma continuously slaughtered the soldiers of the Parthas. The great archer fought and killed the enemy with his arrows. All the Panchalas, together with the Pandavas, could not resist him. When the tenth day arrived, he scorched the army of the enemy. He released sharp arrows in hundreds and thousands. O Pandu’s elder brother! The Pandavas were incapable of defeating Bhishma, the great archer, in battle. He was like Yama with a noose in his hand. O great king! Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies and the one who was never defeated, arrived at the spot, causing terror among all the rathas. He roared like a lion. He repeatedly drew his bow and released a shower of arrows. Partha roamed around on the field of battle, like Death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were frightened at the sound. O king! They fled in great fear, like deer because of a lion. On witnessing that Partha was victorious and that your soldiers were oppressed by him, Duryodhana was greatly tormented and spoke to Bhishma. ‘O father![410] This son of Pandu is borne by white horses and has Krishna as a charioteer. He is scorching all those on my side, like the one with the black trails in a forest. O Gangeya! Behold. The soldiers are running away in every direction. O foremost among warriors! They are being slaughtered and driven away by Pandava in this battle. They are like a herd of cattle being driven by a herdsman in the forest. O scorcher of enemies! My soldiers are being driven away. They are being shattered by Dhananjaya’s arrows. They are running away, here and there. It is like a herdsman driving away a herd of cattle in the forest. O scorcher of enemies! My soldiers are being driven away in that fashion. They are being shattered through Dhananjaya’s arrows and are fleeing in different directions. The invincible Bhima is driving away my soldiers. Satyaki, Chekitana, the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons and the valiant Abhimanyu are scorching my army. The brave Dhrishtadyumna and rakshasa Ghatotkacha, immensely strong, are impetuously driving away my soldiers. In every way, my soldiers are being slaughtered by those immensely strong ones. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In making them remain in this battle, I do not see any succour other than you, tiger among men and like the gods in your valour. You are my refuge in this oppression. You should swiftly counter them.’ O great king! Thus addressed, your father, Devavrata, thought for some time and made up his mind.

‘“Shantanu’s son consoled your son. ‘O Duryodhana! O lord of the earth! Be patient and listen to what I have to say to you. O immensely strong one! In earlier times, I had taken a pledge that I would kill ten thousand great-souled kshatriyas every day and would then return from the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! For the sake of your welfare, I have carried out the pledge I made to you. I will perform an even greater task in this great battle today. I will sleep after being slain, or I will kill the Pandavas today. O tiger among men! I will today free myself from the great debt I owe you. O king! You offered me food as my master. I will be slain at the forefront of the army.' Having spoken these words, the best of the Bharata lineage scattered arrows among the kshatriyas. The invincible one attacked the Pandava army. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Gangeya stationed himself in the midst of the army, like an angry and virulent serpent, and the Pandavas surrounded him. On the tenth day, he exhibited his strength. O king! The descendant of the Kuru lineage killed hundreds and thousands. He sucked out the energy from the best of the Panchalas and the immensely strong princes, like the sun sucking up water with its rays. O great king! The spirited one killed ten thousand elephants and then killed ten thousand horses, with their riders. The best of men killed two hundred thousand foot soldiers. Bhishma was dazzling in that battle, like a flame without smoke. No one among the Pandaveyas was capable of looking at him. He was like the scorching sun, when it is on its northern path. But though they were oppressed, the Pandaveyas, great archers, together with the maharatha Srinjayas, attacked and sought to kill Bhishma. There were many who fought with Bhishma, Shantanu's son, then. The mighty-armed one looked like a mountain that was occupied by clouds. Your sons surrounded Gangeya from every direction, together with a large army, and the battle raged on."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O king! Arjuna then witnessed Bhishma's valour in battle. He told Shikhandi, 'Advance towards the grandfather. You should not exhibit the slightest fear of Bhishma today. I will bring down the supreme of rathas with sharp arrows.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed by Partha and having heard what Partha had said, Shikhandi attacked Gangeya. O king! Having heard what Partha had said, Dhrishtadyumna, and the maharatha who was Subhadra's son, cheerfully attacked Bhishma. The aged Virata and Drupada and the armoured Kuntibhoja attacked Bhishma, while your son looked on. O lord of the earth! Nakula, Sahadeva, the valorous

Dharmaraja and all the other soldiers attacked Gangeya, having heard what Partha had said. The maharathas on your side united and counter-attacked, according to their capacity and according to their endeavour. Listen. I will describe it. O great king! Chitrasena attacked Chekitana, who was advancing in the battle against Bhishma, like a young tiger attacks a bull. O great king! In the encounter, Dhrishtadyumna had swiftly approached Bhishma and Kritavarma repulsed him. Bhimasena was enraged and wished to kill Bhishma. O great king! Somadatta's son quickly countered him. The brave Nakula released many arrows. Wishing to ensure that Bhishma remained alive, Vikarna repulsed these. Sahadeva was advancing towards Bhishma's chariot. In the battle, Sharadvata Kripa angrily countered him. On seeing that Bhimasena's immensely strong son, the rakshasa who performed cruel deeds, wished to kill Bhishma, Durmukha powerfully attacked him. In the encounter, Rishyashringa's son angrily repulsed Satyaki. O great king! Abhimanyu was advancing towards Bhishma's chariot. O great king! Sudakshina of Kamboja repulsed him. The aged Virata and Drupada, the destroyers of enemies, had united. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Ashvatthama was enraged and repulsed them. The eldest of Pandu's sons wished to kill Bhishma. Bharadvaja's son made efforts in the battle to counter Dharma's son. Arjuna was hastening in the battle, with Shikhandi at the forefront. O great king! He was approaching Bhishma, scorching the ten directions. Duhshasana, the great archer, countered him in the battle. There were other Pandava maharathas who were advancing towards Bhishma in the battle. Other warriors on your side countered their advance.

'"Dhrishtadyumna forcefully advanced against the immensely strong Bhishma alone. He repeatedly addressed the soldiers. 'This Arjuna, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, is advancing against Bhishma in battle. Advance. Do not be frightened. Bhishma will not be able to touch you. When Arjuna fights in a battle, even Vasava loses interest, not to speak of Bhishma. The brave one has lost his spirits in the battle. He has but a short time to live.' On hearing the words of their commander, the Pandava maharathas cheerfully advanced towards Gangeya's chariot.

The bulls among men on your side cheerfully resisted them, as they advanced in that battle, like a powerful storm. O great king! Maharatha Duhshasana abandoned his fear. He wished to ensure that Bhishma remained alive and attacked Dhananjaya. In that encounter, the brave Pandavas advanced towards Gangeya's chariot and towards your maharatha sons. O lord of the earth! We witnessed a wonderful and colourful incident. Having reached Duhshasana's chariot, Partha was checked. He was restrained, like the shoreline checks the turbulent and great ocean. The angry Pandava was repulsed by your son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Both of them were the best of rathas and were invincible. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Both of them were radiant and were as handsome as the moon or the sun. Both of them were overcome with anger and wished to kill each other. They clashed in that great battle, like Maya and Shakra in earlier times. O great king! Duhshasana wounded Pandava with three arrows and Vasudeva with twenty. On seeing that Varshneya was wounded, Arjuna was overcome with rage. He pierced Duhshasana with one hundred iron arrows. In the encounter, they penetrated his armour and drank his blood. O best of the Bharata lineage! Duhshasana was angered at this. He pierced Partha in the forehead with five straight-tufted arrows. O great king! With those arrows on his forehead, the supreme of Pandavas was radiant, like Meru's lofty peaks. Pierced by your archer son in the battle, Partha, the great archer, looked like a blossoming kimshuka tree. Thus wounded, Pandava became angry. Extremely angry, he attacked Duhshasana, like Rahu attacking the moon on the night of the new moon or full moon. O lord of the earth! Your son was afflicted by the powerful one. In the battle, he pierced Partha with arrows that were sharpened on stone and tufted with the feathers of herons. The spirited and valorous Partha sliced down his bow. After this, he struck your son with nine arrows. Stationing himself in front of Bhishma, he[411] grasped another bow and shot twenty-five arrows at Arjuna's chest and arms. O great king! At this, Pandava, the destroyer of enemies, became angry. He released many arrows that were like Yama's staff. But though they were released by Partha, your son sliced them down before they could reach him. It was wonderful. Your son pierced Partha with sharp arrows. Partha became wrathful in that battle and fixed arrows to his bow. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone and he released them in the encounter. O great king! These penentrated the great-souled one's body, like swans entering a pond. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your son was afflicted by the great-souled Pandava. He avoided Partha in the battle and swiftly found refuge in Bhishma's chariot. He seemed to be submerged in fathomless waters and Bhishma was like an island. O lord of the earth! Your son was brave and valiant. When he regained consciousness, he again restrained Partha with extremely sharp arrows, like Vritra against Purandara. Though he was pierced by the immensely valorous one, Arjuna was not distressed."'

CHAPTER 967(107)

'Sanjaya said, "The armoured Satyaki raised his weapons against Bhishma in the battle. The great archer who was Rishyashringa's son repulsed him in the encounter. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Madhava[412] was enraged in the battle and, as if he was smiling, pierced the rakshasa with nine arrows. O king! O Indra among kings! The enraged rakshasa wounded Madhava, the bull among the Shini lineage, with sharp arrows. Madhava, Shini's descendant and the destroyer of enemy heroes, became wrathful in the battle and released a shower of arrows towards the rakshasa. The rakshasa roared like a lion and pierced Satyaki, the mighty-armed one for whom truth was his valour, with sharp arrows. In the battle, Madhava was severely wounded by the rakshasa. But the spirited one resorted to his patience. He laughed and roared. In the encounter, the angry Bhagadatta wounded Madhava with sharp arrows, like a mighty elephant being goaded. Shini's descendant, supreme among rathas, gave up the encounter with the rakshasa. He released straight-tufted arrows towards Pragjyotisha. The king of Pragjyotisha, skilled in the use of his hands, grasped a sharp and broad-headed arrow and sliced down Madhava's giant bow. The destroyer of enemy heroes grasped another one that was even more powerful. In the encounter, he angrily pierced Bhagadatta with sharp arrows. The great archer was pierced and repeatedly licked the corners of his mouth. He grasped a firm and iron javelin that was decorated with gold and lapis lazuli. It was as terrible as Yama's staff and he hurled this towards Satyaki. It was hurled through the force of his arms. O king! On seeing it suddenly descend in the battle, Satyaki severed it into three fragments with his arrows. It fell down on the ground, like a giant meteor that has lost its brilliance. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the javelin had been destroyed, your son[413] surrounded Madhava with a large number of chariots. On seeing that maharatha Varshneya had been surrounded, Duryodhana was extremely happy and spoke to all his brothers. 'O Kouravas! Act so that the warrior Satyaki may not escape with his life. Go there with a large number of chariots. If he is killed, I think that the great army of the Pandavas will also be slain.' The maharathas accepted his words and agreed to do this. With Bhishma at the forefront, they began to fight with Shini's descendant.

'"Abhimanyu was advancing against Bhishma in the battle. The powerful king of Kamboja restrained him in the encounter. Arjuna's son pierced the king with straight-tufted arrows. O king! He again pierced the king with sixty-four arrows. Wishing to see that Bhishma remained alive, in that encounter, Sudakshina pierced Krishna's son with nine arrows and his charioteer with nine. When those two valorous ones clashed, the encounter was wonderful and great. Shikhandi, the scorcher of enemies, attacked Gangeya. Virata and Drupada, the aged maharathas, rushed forward to battle Bhishma, resisting that large army. Ashvatthama, supreme among rathas, became angry and repulsed them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A battle commenced between them. O king! O scorcher of enemies! Virata used ten broad-headed arrows to strike Drona's son, the great archer who was the ornament of any battle. Drupada also used three sharp arrows to pierce him. The preceptor's son stationed himself in front of Bhishma. As the aged Virata and Drupada advanced towards Bhishma, Ashvatthama pierced them with ten arrows. We witnessed the extraordinary and great conduct of those aged ones. In the battle, they repulsed the terrible arrows shot by

Drona’s son. Sharadvata Kripa rushed against the advancing Sahadeva, like an angry elephant attacks another elephant in the forest. O king! In that battle, maharatha Kripa quickly struck Madri’s son with seventy arrows decorated in gold. But Madri’s son used his arrows to slice down his bow into two. Once the bow had been severed, he pierced him with nine arrows. Wishing to ensure that Bhishma remained alive, he[414] grasped another bow that was capable of bearing a great burden. In anger, but cheerfully, he struck Madri’s son in that battle with ten sharp arrows. O king! Desiring to kill Bhishma, Pandava was angry and struck back the intolerant one. The battle that raged was terrible and fearful. Wishing to ensure that Bhishma remained alive, Vikarna, the scorcher of enemies, angrily pierced Nakula in that battle with sixty arrows. Nakula was severely wounded by your archer son. But he pierced Vikarna back with seventy-seven arrows that had been sharpened on stone. For the sake of Bhishma, those scorchers of enemies and tigers among men bravely fought against each other, like two bulls fighting in a pen.

‘“Ghatotkacha was engaged in fighting, slaying your soldiers. For Bhishma’s sake, your valiant son, Durmukha, confronted him in battle. O king! But Hidimba’s son was enraged. He struck Durmukha, the scorcher of enemies, in the chest with ninety sharp arrows. The brave Durmukha used sixty arrows that were crafted well at the tip to pierce Bhimasena’s son and in the forefront of the battle, roared in great delight. Wishing to kill Bhishma, Dhrishtadyumna advanced in the battle. But wishing to ensure that Bhishma remained alive, Hardikya countered him. Varshneya struck the brave Parshata with five iron arrows and again quickly struck him between the breasts with fifty arrows.[415] O king! Parshata struck Hardikya with nine sharp arrows that were decorated with the feathers of herons. For Bhishma’s sake, they severely confronted each other in that great battle. They encountered each other like Vritra and the great Indra. The immensely strong Bhimasena advanced against Bhishma. In the battle, Somadatta’s son used an extremely sharp and gold-tufted iron arrow to strike Bhima between the breasts. O supreme among kings! With that stuck to his chest, the powerful Bhimasena looked like Krouncha in earlier times, struck by Skanda's javelin.[416] They angrily attacked each other in that battle and repeatedly released arrows that were like the sun and had been polished by artisans. Wishing to kill Bhishma, Bhima fought with the maharatha who was Somadatta's son. Wishing to ensure Bhishma's victory, Somadatta's son fought with Pandava. They performed tasks and out-performed each other in that battle. O great king! Surrounded by a large army, Yudhishthira advanced towards Bhishma and was countered by Bharadvaja's son. The roar of Drona's chariot was like the sound of the clouds. O king! O venerable one! On hearing it, the Prabhadrakas trembled. O king! In the battle, the great army of Pandu's son was checked by Drona and could not move a single step. O lord of men! Chekitana was enraged in the battle and advanced towards Bhishma. But your son, Chitrasena, repulsed the one who was angry in form. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For Bhishma's sake, the brave maharatha Chitrasena fought against Chekitana to his utmost capacity. Chekitana also fought against Chitrasena and the battle between the valiant ones was extraordinary. Arjuna was restrained in many different kinds of ways. But he repulsed your son[417] and crushed his soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Duhshasana resisted Partha to his utmost capacity, having determined that Bhishma could not be killed. The soldiers of your son were slaughtered in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were agitated there by the best of the rathas."'[418]

CHAPTER 968(108)

'Sanjaya said, "The brave and great archer was like a crazy elephant in his valour. He grasped a giant bow that was capable of restraining a crazy elephant. He brandished that best of bows and drove away the maharathas. The maharatha slaughtered the army of the Pandaveyas. The valiant one was skilled in reading portents and glanced in every direction. Having tormented the soldiers, Drona addressed his son. 'O son! This is the day when maharatha Partha will try his utmost to slay Bhishma in battle. My arrows are rising up and my bow is outstretched.

But when I try to fix my weapons, they are falling off. My mind is without cheer. The peaceful directions have turned terrible and birds and animals are wandering around. Inferior vultures are swooping down towards the army of the Bharatas. The sun has lost its splendour and all the directions have turned red. The earth seems to be suffering and the mounts seem to have been destroyed. Herons, vultures and cranes are repeatedly shrieking. Jackals are howling in inauspicious tones and this signifies a great calamity. Giant meteors are falling down from the centre of the sun's disc. The headless torso of parigha is stationed, covering the sun.[419] The discs of the sun and the moon have become terrible. They signify a terrible danger, pertaining to the mangling of the bodies of kings. In the temples of the Indra among the Kouravas, the gods are trembling, laughing, dancing and weeping. The planets are circling inauspiciously, keeping the moon to the left. O illustrious one! The moon is rising with its crescent inverted. The bodies of the kings seem to be destroyed. Though they are armoured, the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra are no longer radiant. A great sound has arisen amidst both the armies, because of Panchajanya's roar and Gandiva's sound. It is certain that Bibhatsu will use supreme weapons in this battle. He will avoid all the others in the encounter and advance towards the grandfather. The pores in my body are contracting. My mind is weakening. O mighty-armed one! I am thinking about the encounter between Bhishma and Arjuna. Partha is conversant with deceit. He will place the evil-minded Panchala at the forefront of the battle and advance to fight with Bhishma. Bhishma had earlier said that he would not kill Shikhandi. The creator made him a woman and he later became a man through destiny. Yajnasena's maharatha son[420] bears an inauspicious mark on his standard. The son of the one who goes to the ocean[421] will not strike someone who bears an inauspicious mark on his standard. Having thought of all these things, my mind is severely distressed. In the battle today, Partha will attack the aged one of the Kuru lineage. Yudhishthira's anger, the encounter between Bhishma and Arjuna and the rage of my weapons in battle certainly portend ill for all subjects.

Pandava is spirited, powerful and brave. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is firm in his valour. He can shoot from a great distance and can strike powerfully. He is skilled in understanding the signs. He is invincible in battle, even by the gods, with Vasava. He is strong and intelligent. He has conquered exhaustion. He is supreme among warriors. Pandava possesses terrible weapons and is always victorious in battle. Avoid his path and go to the spot where the one who is rigid in his vows is stationed. O mighty-armed one! Behold the visage of what is about to transpire. The armours of the brave ones are decorated with gold. They are expensive and beautiful. They will be shattered with straight-tufted arrows. The tops of the standards, the javelins and the bows will be fragmented. There are polished and sharp spears and lances blazing in gold. There are pennants on elephants and all these will be destroyed by the angry Kiriti. O son! This is not the time when dependents should seek to protect their lives. Go, placing heaven at the forefront, and fame and victory. The whirlpool of horses, elephants and chariots is extremely terrible and is difficult to cross. The one with the ape on his banner is crossing the river of battle on his chariot. Regard for brahmanas, self-control, generosity, austerities and greatness in conduct—these can be seen in the king.[422] Dhananjaya is his brother. Bhimasena is powerful and so are the Pandavas who are Madri's sons. Varshneya Vasudeva is stationed as their protector. The evil-minded sons of Dhritarashtra are overcome by anger. While he[423] has scorched his body through austerities, the Bharatas have been scorched through anger. Partha can be seen, with Vasudeva as his refuge. He is shattering all the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra, in every direction. Kiriti can be seen to be agitating the soldiers, like a giant whale agitating large fish at the mouth of a river. Sounds of lamentation and woe can be heard at the head of the army. Go and confront the son of Panchala. I will go and confront Yudhishthira. The centre of the infinitely energetic king's vyuha is difficult to penetrate. It is like the interior of the ocean and atirathas are stationed in every direction. Satyaki, Abhimanyu, Dhrishtadyumna, Vrikodara and the twins, lords among men, are protecting the king. He is like Upendra[424] and is dark. He is as tall as a giant shala tree. He is advancing amidst the soldiers, like a second Phalguna. Take up your supreme weapons and grasp your giant bow. Advance against King Parshata[425] and fight with Vrikodara. Who does not wish that his beloved son may live for an eternal period? However, placing the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront, I am employing you in this task. In this battle, Bhishma is scorching the great army. O son! In battle, he is the equal of Yama and Varuna.’””

CHAPTER 969(109)

‘Sanjaya said, “Bhagadatta, Kripa, Shalya, Satvata Kritavarma, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Saindhava Jayadratha, Chitrasena, Vikarna and the youthful Durmarshana—these ten warriors from your side fought against Bhimasena. They were accompanied by a large army that had come from many countries. O king! In the battle over Bhishma, they sought great fame. Shalya struck Bhimasena with nine arrows, Kritavarma with three arrows and Kripa with nine arrows. O venerable one! Chitrasena, Vikarna and Bhagadatta struck Bhimasena with ten broad-headed arrows each. Saindhava struck him with three arrows in the joints of his shoulders. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti struck him with five arrows each. Durmarshana struck Pandava with twenty sharp arrows. O great king! The illustrious one struck all the maharathas from the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra, brave ones in all the worlds, separately. The immensely strong Bhimasena pierced them with many arrows. He pierced Shalya with fifty and Kritavarma with eight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He severed Kripa’s bow, with an arrow fixed to it, from the middle. After severing the bow, he pierced him with five arrows. He pierced Vinda and Anuvinda with three arrows each, Durmarshana with twenty and Chitrasena with five. Bhima pierced Vikarna with ten arrows and Jayadratha with five. He again struck Saindhava with three arrows and roared in delight. Goutama, supreme among rathas, grasped another bow and angrily pierced Bhima with ten sharp arrows. He was pierced by those many arrows, like a giant elephant that has been goaded. The mighty-armed and powerful Bhimasena became angry. In that battle, he wounded Goutama with many arrows. As dazzling as Yama at the end of an era, he pierced Saindhava's horses and his charioteer with three arrows and sent them to the land of the dead. With his horses slain, the maharatha quickly jumped down from his chariot. In that battle, he released many sharp arrows towards Bhimasena. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O best of the Bharata lineage! But Bhima used a broad-headed arrow to sever the bow of the great-souled Saindhava into two, from the middle. O king! With his bow severed, bereft of a chariot and with his horses and charioteer slain, he quickly climbed onto Chitrasena's chariot. In the battle there, Pandava performed an extraordinary deed. The maharatha pierced all those maharathas with his arrows and repulsed them. While all the worlds looked on, he deprived Saindhava of his chariot.

'"Shalya could not tolerate Bhimasena's valour. He affixed sharp arrows that had been polished by an artisan. Asking Bhima to wait, he pierced him with seventy arrows. O venerable one! In that battle, for Shalya's sake, Kripa, Kritavarma, Bhagadatta, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Chitrasena, Durmarshana, Vikarna and the valiant king of Sindhu, scorchers of enemies, quickly pierced Bhima. He pierced each of them back with five arrows. He pierced Shalya with seventy arrows and yet again with ten. Shalya pierced him with nine arrows and yet again with five. He then used a broad-headed arrow to severely strike his charioteer in his inner organs. On seeing that Vishoka[426] had been wounded, the powerful Bhimsena struck the king of Madra in the arms and the chest with three arrows. He pierced each of the other great archers with three arrows each. Having wounded them in that battle, he roared like a lion. Pandava was unassailable in battle. But the great archers made great efforts. Without any hesitation, each of them severely wounded him in the inner organs with three arrows each. But despite being pierced, Bhimasena, the great archer, was not distressed. He was like a mountain on which showers of rain were pouring down from the clouds. The immensely illustrious one severely pierced Shalya with nine arrows. O king! He firmly pierced Pragjyotisha with one hundred arrows. Using an extremely sharp kshurapra and displaying the dexterity of his hands, he severed the great-souled Satvata's bow, with an arrow fixed to it. O scorcher of enemies! Kritavarma grasped another bow and struck Vrikodara in the midst of his forehead with an iron arrow. In that encounter, Bhima pierced Shalya with nine iron arrows, Bhagadatta with three and Kritavarma with eight. He pierced Goutama and the other rathas with two arrows each. O king! In that encounter, they pierced him back with sharp arrows. He was thus afflicted in every direction by those maharathas. But he disregarded them like straw and roamed around, without any pain. Those best of rathas were not distracted and released hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows towards Bhima.

'"The brave maharatha Bhagadatta hurled an immensely forceful javelin in the battle. It was extremely expensive and possessed a golden handle. The strong-armed King Saindhava hurled a spear and a lance. O king! In that encounter, Kripa used a shataghni and Shalya an arrow. The other great archers released five energetic arrows each, in Bhimasena's direction. But the son of the wind god used a kshurapra to slice down the spear. He severed the lance with three arrows, as if it were the stalk of a sesamum plant. He shattered the shataghni with nine arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons. The immensely strong one sliced down the arrow shot by the king of Madra and severed the javelin that had been suddenly and forcefully hurled by Bhagadatta in the battle. As for the other terrible arrows, he used straight-tufted arrows to strike them down. Bhimasena was proud in battle and struck each of them with three arrows. Each of those great archers was wounded with three arrows. In the great battle, Dhananjaya arrived there. He arrived on his own chariot and beheld maharatha Bhima, striking the enemy warriors in the battle with his arrows. O bull among men! On seeing the two great-souled Pandavas united, all those on your side gave up all hope of victory. In the battle, Arjuna advanced to fight with maharatha Bhishma. Wishing to kill Bhishma, he placed Shikhandi at the forefront. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Those ten warriors on your side had been fighting in the battle with Bhima. On seeing them stationed there and wishing to do that which would bring pleasure to Bhima, Bibhatsu attacked them. King Duryodhana incited Susharma for the death of both Arjuna and Bhimasena. ‘O Susharma! Go swiftly, surrounded by your large army. Vanquish the sons of Pandu, Dhananjaya and Vrikodara.’ On hearing this instruction, Trigarta, the lord of Prasthala, attacked the archers Bhima and Arjuna in the battle. He surrounded them with many thousands of chariots in every direction. A battle commenced between Arjuna and the enemy.”’

CHAPTER 970(110)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the battle, maharatha Arjuna exerted himself against Shalya. In the encounter, he shrouded him with straight-tufted arrows. He pierced Susharma and Kripa with three arrows each. O Indra among kings! In the battle, he wounded Pragjyotisha, Saindhava Jayadratha, Chitrasena, Vikarna, Kritavarma, Durmarshana and the two maharathas from Avanti with three arrows each. These were swift and were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. In the battle, the atiratha oppressed your army with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the encounter, Jayadratha pierced Partha with arrows and while stationed on Chitrasena’s chariot, swiftly pierced Bhima. In the battle, Shalya and Kripa pierced the mighty-armed Jishnu, supreme among rathas, with many arrows that struck at the inner organs. O lord of the earth! O venerable one! In the encounter, your sons, Chitrasena and the others, struck each of them, Arjuna and Bhimasena, with five sharp arrows. But those foremost of rathas, the Kounteyas, bulls among the Bharata lineage, continued to oppress the large army of the Trigartas in the encounter. In the battle, Susharma pierced Partha with many sharp arrows. The powerful one roared and the sound echoed in the sky. Other brave rathas pierced Bhimasena and Dhananjaya with sharp and swift arrows that were tufted with gold. In the midst of those rathas, the Kounteyas, supreme among rathas, looked beautiful as they seemed to be sporting and roamed around in their chariots. They were like powerful lions amidst a herd of cattle. They shattered the bows and arrows of many brave ones in the battle. They brought down the heads of hundreds of brave kings. They shattered many chariots and killed hundreds of horses. In the great battle, they brought down elephant-riders from their elephants. O king! Many charioteers and riders were seen to be devoid of their lives. O king! They were immobile in every direction. Elephants were slain. Foot soldiers and horses lost their lives. The earth was strewn with many shattered chariots. Many umbrellas and standards were broken and were brought down. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were discarded goads and cushions, diadems, armlets, necklaces, hides of ranku deer and discarded headdresses, whisks and fans. There were severed arms with sandalwood paste smeared on them. The earth was strewn with the thighs of Indras among men.

'"We witnessed Partha's extraordinary valour in the battle. He used his arrows to restrain and strike all the warriors in your army. On seeing that Bhima and Arjuna were united, your son was frightened and quickly rushed towards Gangeya's chariot, in great fear. Kripa, Kritavarma, Saindhava Jayadratha and Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti were the ones who did not give up the battle then. In the encounter, Bhima, the great archer, and maharatha Phalguna crushed the army of the Kouravas in terrible fashion. In the encounter, tens of thousands and millions of arrows were quickly showered down on Dhananjaya's chariot. The maharatha repulsed that net of arrows. In the encounter, Partha began to send them to the land of the dead. Maharatha Shalya became enraged in that battle. As if playing, he struck Jishnu in the chest with a straight-tufted and broad-headed arrow. Partha used five arrows to sever the bow from his hand. He then used other sharp arrows to severely wound him in his inner organs. In the battle, the lord of Madra grasped another bow that was capable of bearing a heavy burden. O great king! He angrily wounded Jishnu with three arrows and Vasudeva with five. He struck Bhimasena in the chest and the arms with nine. O great king! Drona and the maharatha from Magadha were instructed by Duryodhana and came to the spot where Partha and Pandava Bhimasena were. O great king! The maharathas were slaying the great army of the Kouravas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the encounter, the young Jayatsena pierced Bhima, who possessed terrible weapons, with eight sharp arrows. Bhima pierced him back with ten arrows and again with seven. With a broad-headed arrow, he brought down his charioteer from the seat of the chariot. The horses were no longer controlled and fled in different directions, dragging away the king of Magadha, while all the soldiers looked on. Detecting a weakness, Drona pierced Bhimsena with sixty-five extremely sharp iron arrows that had been sharpened on stone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhima prided himself in battle. In the encounter, he pierced his preceptor, who was like his father, with nine broad-headed arrows and followed it up with another sixty. Arjuna pierced Susharma with many iron arrows and scattered his soldiers, like the wind dispersing a mass of clouds.

'"Bhishma, the king,[427] Soubala and Brihadbala angrily attacked Bhimasena and Dhananjaya. The brave Pandavas and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna attacked Bhishma, who was advancing in the battle, like death with a gaping mouth. Shikhandi approached the grandfather of the Bharatas. He was cheerful and had abandoned fear. He attacked the one who was rigid in his vows. The Parthas, headed by Yudhishthira, placed Shikhandi at the forefront. Together with the Srinjayas, they fought against Bhishma in that battle. All those on your side placed the one who was rigid in his vows at the forefront. They fought against the Parthas in that battle, with Shikhandi at the forefront. For the sake of victory over Bhishma, the battle that commenced there among the Kouravas[428] was terrible. O lord of the earth! The sons of Pandu wished to triump over Bhishma and those on your side wished Bhishma's victory in the battle. It was like gambling with the dice and victory or defeat became the stake. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna incited all the soldiers. 'O supreme among men! Attack Gangeya. Do not be scared.' On hearing the words of the commander, the army of the Pandavas quickly advanced against Bhishma. In that great battle, they were ready to give up their lives. O great king! Bhishma, best of rathas, resisted that army as it descended on him, like the shoreline against the great ocean."'

CHAPTER 971(111)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did the immensely valorous Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, fight on the tenth day of the battle against the Pandavas and the Srinjayas? How did the Kurus repulse the Pandavas in the battle? Tell me about the great battle fought by Bhishma, the ornament of all battles.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will describe to you the battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas and the detailed account of that encounter. Listen. Using his supreme weapons, from one day to another, Kiriti killed the angry charioteers on your side and sent them to the next world. The victorious Kouravya, Bhishma, also stuck to his pledge and always created a great destruction among the army of the Parthas. On seeing Bhishma fight amidst the maharatha Kurus and Arjuna with the Panchalas, people were uncertain.[429] On the tenth day, Bhishma and Arjuna encountered each other. There was an extremely dreadful carnage. O king! Bhishma, Shantanu’s son and the scorcher of enemies, skilled in supreme weapons, slaughtered many tens of thousands of warriors. O king! There were many whose families, names and lineages were not known. All of them refused to retreat and the brave ones were slain by Bhishma’s weapons. Having scorched the army of the Pandavas for ten days, the scorcher of enemies, with dharma in his soul, gave up all desire to remain alive. He desired a quick death and stationed himself at the forefront of the battle. ‘I will no longer kill the best of men in the forefront of the battle.’ O great king! Having thought in this way, Devavrata, your mighty-armed father, addressed these words to the Pandava who was near him. ‘O Yudhishthira! O immensely wise one! O one who is knowledgable in all the sacred texts! O son![430] Listen to my words. They are about attaining dharma and heaven. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am extremely disgusted with this body of mine. I have spent a lot of time in slaying a large number of beings in battle. Therefore, place Partha at the forefront, with the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. If you wish to do that which brings me pleasure, make endeavours to kill me.’ Knowing that this was his command, Pandava, who knew about the truth, made efforts to fight against Bhishma in the battle, together with the Srinjayas. O king! On hearing Bhishma's words, Dhrishtadyumna and Pandava Yudhishthira instructed their army. 'Advance and fight. Vanquish Bhishma in the battle. You will be protected by Jishnu, who is unwavering in his aim and who is triumphant over enemies. This great archer, Parshata, is the commander. It is certain that Bhimasena will protect you in the battle. There is no need to fear Bhishma. The Srinjayas have no task other than to fight. With Shikhandi at the forefront, there is no doubt that we will obtain victory over Bhishma.' On the tenth day, the Pandavas took a vow to triumph or to go to Brahma's world. They advanced, senseless with rage. They placed Shikhandi and Pandava Dhananjaya at the forefront. They resorted to supreme efforts to bring about Bhishma's downfall.

'"The kings of many countries were instructed by your son. They were with Drona and his son and with an immensely strong army. The powerful Duhshasana was there, with all his brothers. Bhishma was in the midst of the battle and they sought to protect him. The brave ones on your side placed the one who was rigid in his vows at the forefront. In the battle, they fought with the Parthas, who had placed Shikhandi at the forefront. With Shikhandi at the forefront, the Chedis, the Panchalas and the one with the monkey on his banner advanced towards Bhishma, Shantanu's son. Drona's son fought with Shini's grandson and Dhrishtaketu with Pourava. Yudhamanyu fought with Duryodhana and his advisers, Virata and his soldiers with Jayadratha, the scorcher of enemies and Vriddhakshatra's heir,[431] and his soldiers. The great archer, the king of Madra, fought with Yudhishthira and his soldiers. With due protection, Bhimasena advanced against the army of elephants. Drona was invincible and impossible to resist. He was supreme among those who wielded all weapons. Panchala[432] and the Somakas advanced against him. Prince Brihadbala had a lion on his standard. He advanced against Subhadra's son, the scorcher of enemies who had a karnikara flower on his standard. Together with the kings, your sons attacked Shikhandi and Pandava Dhananjaya in the battle, wishing to kill them.

'"Both the armies were valorous and the advance against each other was extremely terrible. As the soldiers advanced, the earth trembled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The two armies clashed against each other. Both those on your side and those of the enemy were delighted to see Shantanu's son in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As they angrily advanced against each other, a terrible sound arose in every direction. There was the sound of conch shells and drums. Elephants trumpeted. The soldiers roared terribly, like lions. All the Indras among men had complexions like that of the sun and the moon. The armlets and diadems the brave ones wore lost their brilliance because of the cloud of dust that was raised. The weapons seemed to be flashes of lightning. The terrible twang of bows could be heard. There was the sound of arrows and conch shells and the great roar of drums. In both the armies, the clatter of the chariots could be heard. There were large numbers of spears, lances, swords and masses of arrows hurled by both the armies, and because of this, the sky lost its lustre. In that great battle, charioteers and riders struck each other. Elephants fought with elephants, infantry with infantry. A great battle raged between the Kurus and the Pandavas for the sake of Bhishma. O tiger among men! It was like hawks fighting over a piece of meat. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a terrible encounter between the warriors. They sought to kill each other and defeat each other in that battle."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Abhimanyu fought against your valiant son, who was supported by a large army for Bhishma's sake. In the battle, Duryodhana struck Krishna's son with nine arrows with drooping tufts. He was enraged in the battle and again struck him with three arrows. In that encounter, Krishna's son angrily hurled a javelin towards Duryodhana's chariot. It was terrible and seemed to have been created by Death itself. O lord of the earth! On seeing it suddenly descend, dreadful in form, your maharatha son severed it into two with a kshurapra. On seeing the javelin fall down, Krishna's son became extremely enraged. He struck Duryodhana in the arms and the chest with three arrows. O best of the Bharata lineage! He again struck the king, the intolerant Duryodhana, between the breasts with ten terrible arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The battle between the two was dreadful and wonderful. It created pleasure among those who witnessed it and was applauded by all the kings. For the sake of Bhishma's death and Partha's victory, those brave ones, Subhadra's son and the bull among the Kurus, fought in that battle.

'"Drona's son, bull among the brahmanas, was enraged in the battle. The scorcher of enemies struck Satyaki in the chest with an iron arrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shini's descendant, immeasurable in his soul, struck the preceptor's son in all of his inner organs with nine arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. In the encounter, Ashvatthama struck Satyaki with nine arrows and again wounded him in the arms and the chest with thirty. Having been thus pierced by Drona's son, the immensely illustrious and great archer from the Satvata lineage pierced Drona's son back with three arrows.

'"In the battle, maharatha Pourava covered Dhrishtaketu with arrows and severely wounded the great archer. However, the extremely strong maharatha, Dhrishtaketu, pierced Pourava in the encounter with thirty sharp arrows. Maharatha Pourava severed Dhrishtaketu's bow and having pierced him with sharp arrows, emitted a powerful roar. O great king! He grasped another bow and pierced Pourava with seventy-three sharp arrows that had been whetted on stone. Those two noble maharathas who were great archers rained down a great shower of arrows towards each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They severed each other's bows and slew each other's horses. Bereft of their chariots, the maharathas began to fight with each other with swords. Each had a beautiful shield made out of the hide of a bull, decorated with the signs of one hundred moons and marked with the signs of one hundred stars. O king! They grasped extremely brilliant and polished swords and rushed towards each other. They were like lions in the great forest, wishing to have intercourse with the same female. They circled in wonderful motions, advanced and retreated. They exhibited their movements, wishing to strike each other. Incited with rage, Pourava asked Dhrishtaketu to wait and struck him on his frontal bone with the large sword. In the encounter, the king of Chedi[433] struck Pourava, bull among men, on the shoulder joint with the sharp tip of his giant sword. O great king! Those destroyers of enemies advanced against each other in the great battle. They struck each other with great force and both of them fell down. O king! Your son, Jayatsena, took Pourava up on his own chariot and carried him away from the field of battle. O king! In the encounter, the powerful Sahadeva, Madri's son and the scorcher of enemies, carried Dhrishtaketu away from the battle.

'"Chitrasena pierced Susharma with nine swift arrows.[434] He again pierced him with sixty and yet again with nine arrows. O lord of the earth! In that battle, Susharma became enraged with your son and pierced him with one hundred sharp arrows. O king! Chitrasena became angry in the battle and pierced him with thirty arrows with drooping tufts and was pierced back in return.

'"O king! In the battle over Bhishma, which increased fame and honour, Subhadra's son fought with Prince Brihadbala. The king of Kosala pierced Arjuna's son with five iron arrows and again pierced him with twenty straight-tufted arrows. Subhadra's son pierced Brihadbala with nine iron arrows. But despite piercing him again and again, he could not make him waver in the battle. Phalguna's son then severed the bow of the king of Kosala and wounded him with thirty arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons. But Prince Brihadbala grasped another bow and in that battle, angrily pierced Phalguna's son with many arrows. O scorcher of enemies! They fought this battle for Bhishma's sake. O great king! In that battle, those wonderful fighters were excited with anger and were like Maya and Vasava in the battle between the gods and the asuras.

'"Bhimasena fought against that army of elephants. He was as resplendent as Shakra, with the vajra in his hand, after shattering mountains. Bhima killed elephants that were like mountains. They fell down in large numbers, making the earth resound with their roars.

Those shattered elephants were like large mountains made out of collyrium. They were strewn over the ground, like shattered mountains.

'"In the battle, the great archer, Yudhishthira, fought with the king of Madra. He was protected by a large army and oppressed him. In that encounter for the sake of Bhishma, the valiant king of Madra was enraged and afflicted the maharatha who was Dharma's son.

'"The king of Sindhu pierced Virata with nine straight-tufted and sharp arrows and again wounded him with another thirty. O great king! In the forefront of that battle, Virata struck Saindhava between the breasts with thirty sharp arrows. Matsya and Saindhava possessed colourful bows and swords. Their armour, weapons and standards were handsome. They looked handsome and resplendent in that battle.

'"Drona advanced against the son of Panchala[435] in the great battle and used straight-tufted arrows in the great clash. O great king! Drona severed Parshata's giant bow and wounded Parshata with fifty arrows. But Parshata, the destroyer of enemy heroes, grasped another bow and in that encounter, fiercely unleashed arrows at Drona. The maharatha repulsed those arrows with his own shower of arrows. Drona released five arrows towards Drupada's son. O great king! Parshata, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became enraged at this. In the battle, he hurled a club towards Drona and it was like Yama's staff, decorated with golden garments. On seeing it suddenly descend towards him in that battle, Drona countered it with fifty arrows. O king! Because of the unassailable arrows released by Drona, it shattered into many fragments. Shattered and fragmented, it fell down on the ground. On seeing the club destroyed, Parshata, the destroyer of enemies, hurled a javelin towards Drona. It was beautiful and was completely made out of iron. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Drona sliced it down with nine arrows. In that encounter, he afflicted Parshata, the great archer. In this fashion, there was a great battle between Drona and Parshata. O great king! It was fearful and dreadful and was fought over Bhishma.

'"Arjuna approached Gangeya and oppressed him with sharp arrows. He angrily advanced against him, like a crazy elephant attacking another in the forest. The powerful and immensely strong Bhagadatta counter-attacked Partha on a crazy elephant that had musth flowing down three streams. On seeing it suddenly descend towards him, like the great Indra's elephant, Bibhatsu took the greatest care in repulsing it. In that encounter, the powerful King Bhagadatta was astride an elephant and countered Arjuna with a shower of arrows. In the great encounter, Arjuna used extremely sharp and polished arrows that had the complexion of silver to pierce the elephant in battle. O great king! Kounteya kept addressing Shikhandi. 'Proceed. Proceed. Go towards Bhishma. Kill him.' O Pandu's elder brother! O king! Pragjyotisha abandoned Pandava and quickly went towards Drupada's chariot. O great king! Placing Shikhandi at the forefront, Arjuna advanced against Bhishma and in that battle, an encounter commenced, when the brave ones on your side fiercely attacked Pandava. All of them advanced, roaring in rage, and it was extraordinary. O lord of men! There were many divisions in the army of your sons. Arjuna scattered them, like the wind disperses a mass of clouds in the sky. Shikhandi approached the grandfather of the Bharatas. Quickly and eagerly, he pierced him with many arrows.

'"In the battle, Bhishma killed the Somakas who were following Partha. He repulsed the soldiers of the maharatha Pandava. The chariot was the storehouse for the fire. The bow constituted the flames. The javelins and clubs were the kindling. He released a great shower of flaming arrows and consumed the kshatriyas in the battle. He was like a large fire that consumes deadwood when it moves around, driven by the wind. Bhishma blazed like that, showering his divine weapons. There were gold-shafted, straight-tufted and sharp arrows. The immensely illustrious Bhishma roared in the directions and the sub-directions. O king! He brought down chariots and elephants, with their riders. The chariots roamed around, like palm trees that had been shorn of their tops. O king! In that battle, chariots, elephants and horses were bereft of men. Bhishma, supreme among those who wield all weapons, roamed around. The clap of his palms and the twang of his bow were like the clapping of thunder. O king! In every direction, the soldiers were disturbed and trembled. O lord of men! The arrows of your father were invincible. The unassailable arrows released by Bhishma never failed to penetrate the bodies. O king! The chariots had no men. But they were still yoked to swift horses. O lord of the earth! With the speed of the wind, we saw them being dragged around in different directions. There were fourteen thousand famous maharathas from the Chedis, the Kashis and the Karushas. They were born in noble lineages and were ready to give up their lives. These brave ones did not retreat from battle. Their standards were decorated in gold. With their horses, chariots and elephants, they advanced in battle against Bhishma and confronting the one who was like death with a gaping mouth, they left for the other world. O great king! There was not a single maharatha among the Somakas, who having approached Bhishma in that battle, returned alive from the engagement. In that battle, he sent all those warriors to the capital of the king of the dead. On seeing them conveyed there, all the people witnessed Bhishma's valour.

'"The only exceptions were Pandu's brave son, borne on white horses and with Krishna as his charioteer, and Panchala Shikhandi, who was infinitely energetic in battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Shikhandi approached Bhishma in that battle and in that great encounter, struck him with one hundred arrows. Gangeya glanced at Shikhandi with anger blazing in his eyes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He seemed to burn him down with the look in his eyes. O king! But while all the world looked on, he remembered that he was a woman. Bhishma did not strike him in battle, though he[436] did not understand the reason. O great king! Arjuna addressed Shikhandi. 'Advance quickly and kill the grandfather. O brave one! What do you wish to say? Kill maharatha Bhishma. I do not see anyone else in Yudhishthira's army who can kill him. Nor is there anyone who can fight with grandfather Bhishma in this battle. You are the exception. O tiger among men! I am telling this truthfully.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed by Partha, Shikhandi quickly pierced the grandfather with many kinds of arrows. Your father, Devavrata, paid no heed to these arrows. Enraged in the battle, he countered Arjuna with arrows. O venerable one! In that encounter, he released sharp arrows and dispatched all the soldiers of the maharatha Pandava to the other world. O king! Supported by their large army, the Pandavas surrounded Bhishma and enveloped him, like clouds around the sun. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The descendant of the Bharata lineage was covered in every direction. In that battle, he consumed the enemy, like a flaming fire burns down a forest.

'"We then beheld the extraordinary manliness of your son. So as to protect the one who was rigid in his vows, he fought with Partha. All the worlds were gratified at the deeds of your great-souled archer son, Duhshasana, in that battle. In that battle, he alone fought with Partha and his followers and fought so fiercely that the Pandavas were unable to resist him. O great king! In that encounter, Duhshasana deprived rathas of their chariots and tuskers of their riders. He shattered them with sharp arrows and brought them down on the ground. With other arrows, he drove the tuskers away in different directions. He was like a fire that has obtained kindling and blazes with fierce flames. In that way, your son blazed and consumed the Pandavas. No Pandava maharatha could defeat the noble one of the Bharata lineage. Nor did anyone venture against him. The only exception was the great Indra's son, borne on white steeds and with Krishna as his charioteer. O king! Vijaya Arjuna defeated him in that encounter. While all the soldiers looked on, he then advanced against Bhishma. Though he had been vanquished, your son resorted to the strength of Bhishma's arms. O king! Intoxicated in that battle, he repeatedly comforted his side and continued to fight resplendently against Arjuna. O king! In that battle, Shikhandi pierced the grandfather with arrows that were like the vajra to the touch and were like the poison of serpents. O lord of men! But these did not cause your father any pain. Gangeya received all these arrows with a smile, like a man suffering from heat craves the pouring down of rain. In that fashion, Gangeya received the shower of arrows from Shikhandi. O great king! As Bhishma consumed the soldiers of the great-souled Pandavas, the kshatriyas saw his terrible visage in that battle.

'"O venerable one! Your son[437] spoke to all the soldiers. 'Attack Phalguna in the battle and surround him with chariots from all sides. Bhishma is knowledgable about dharma and will protect all of us in this battle. Give up your great fear and counter-attack the Pandavas. There is the blazing palm tree.[438] Bhishma is stationed there and is protecting us, and the honour and the armour of all the sons of Dhritarashtra in this battle. Even if the thirty gods endeavour, they cannot assail Bhishma, not to speak of the great-souled Partha and his soldiers. They are mortal beings. O warriors! Therefore, do not run away. We have obtained Phalguna in this battle. I will endeavour to fight against Phalguna in the battle today, together with all of you. O lords of the earth! Make efforts.' O king! On hearing the words of your archer son, the powerful maharathas united against Arjuna—Videhas, Kalingas and large numbers of Dasherakas. With the Nishadas and the Souviras, the Bahlikas, the Daradas, those from the east, those from the west, the Malavas, the Abhishahas, the Shurasenas, the Shibis, the Vasatayas, the Shalvas, the Shrayas, the Trigartas, the Ambashthas and the Kekayas advanced in the great battle. They attacked Partha in the encounter, like insects drawn to a fire. O great king! The maharathas were with all their armies. Dhananjaya invoked and affixed divine weapons. Bibhatsu, the immensely strong one, quickly released those extremely forceful weapons and consumed them with his arrows, like a fire before insects. The one with the firm bow created thousands of arrows. Gandiva was seen to be blazing in the sky. O great king! Oppressed by those arrows, the chariots and the standards were shattered. The kings could not approach the one with the monkey on his banner. Rathas were brought down with their standards, horses with their riders, elephants with elephant-riders. They were afflicted by Kiriti's arrows, created through Arjuna's arms. The earth was strewn in all directions with the many forces of the kings, which were running away. The mighty-armed Partha drove away those armies.

'"In that encounter, he then dispatched arrows towards Duhshasana. They possessed iron heads and they pierced your son, Duhshasana. All of them then entered the ground, like snakes penetrating a termite hill. He killed his horses and brought down his charioteer. The lord used twenty arrows to deprive Vivimshati of his chariot. He severely wounded him with five arrows with drooping tufts. He pierced Kripa, Shalya and Vikarna with many iron arrows. Kounteya, borne on white steeds, deprived them of their chariots. O venerable one! Having been deprived of their chariots and having been vanquished in battle by Savyasachi, these five—Kripa, Shalya, Duhshasana, Vikarna and Vivimshati—fled. O king! Having defeated those maharathas in the forenoon, Partha blazed in the battle, like a fire without any smoke. He showered down arrows, like the rays of the sun. O great king! He brought down many other kings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of that shower of arrows, the maharathas retreated from the field of battle and a great river of blood began to flow between the armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas. Elephants, horses and large numbers of rathas were slain by the rathas. Rathas killed elephants and elephants killed horses and infantry. Bodies were sliced in the middle and heads lopped off. Elephants, horses, chariots and warriors fell down in all directions. The shattered bodies were still radiant with expensive earrings and armlets. Princes and maharathas fell down, or were falling down. Some were mangled by the wheels of chariots, others were trod on by elephants and horses. Foot soldiers, horses, horses with horse-riders, elephants, horses and masses of chariots were seen to fall down in every direction. The earth was littered with broken chariots and shattered wheels, yokes and standards. The masses of elephants, horses and chariots were covered with blood. It looked as beautiful as an autumn sky covered with red clouds. Dogs, crows, vultures, wolves, jackals and other dreadful animals and birds howled at the sight of the feast of flesh. Many kinds of winds were seen to blow in all the directions. Rakshasas and demons were seen to be roaring. Golden ropes and expensive flags were seen to be covered in smoke, suddenly stirred by the wind. There were thousands of white umbrellas and pennants of the maharathas. They were seen to be scattered around in hundreds and thousands. Elephants were afflicted by arrows and fled in all directions, with their standards. O Indra among men! Kshatriyas, holding clubs, javelins and bows, were seen to have fallen down on the ground.

'"O great king! Bhishma used a divine weapon and in the sight of all the archers, advanced against Kounteya. In the battle, the armoured Shikhandi also endeavoured to attack. At this, Bhishma withdrew that weapon, which was like the fire. At this time, Kounteya, borne on white horses, confounded the grandfather and killed your soldiers."'

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'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were many in the ranks of both the sides and they were arrayed in vyuhas. All of them advanced, aspiring to attain Brahma's world. In the encounter that followed, similar types of soldiers did not fight. Rathas did not fight with rathas, nor foot soldiers with foot soldiers. Horses did not fight with horses, nor elephants with warriors on elephants. In that great and dreadful clash between the armies, there were perversions. There were men, elephants and chariots scattered all over the place. In that great and terrible destruction, there was no discrimination.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shalya, Kripa, Chitrasena, Duhshasana and Vikarna quickly resorted to their chariots. Those brave ones made the standards of the Pandavas tremble in the battle. In the encounter, the soldiers of the Pandus were slaughtered by those great-souled ones. They could not find a protector and were like a boat submerged in the water. Just as the winter strikes the inner organs of cattle, like that, Bhishma wounded the inner organs of the sons of Pandu. The great-souled Partha did likewise towards your soldiers. Many elephants that were like mountains or clouds were brought down. Partha was also seen to bring down leaders among men. He struck them with thousands of iron arrows. The great elephants were seen to fall down there, shrieking piteously. Great-souled ones were killed, their bodies still adorned with ornaments. There were beautiful and scattered heads, still wearing earrings. O king! That extremely terrible encounter was destructive of the supreme among brave ones. Bhishma fought with the valiant Pandava Dhananjaya. O king! On witnessing the valour with which the grandfather fought, the Kouravas placed Brahma's world at the forefront and did not retreat. They wished to be killed in battle, so that they might attain heaven. The Pandavas did not retreat from that destruction of the supreme among brave ones either. O great king! O lord of men! The Pandavas remembered the many and varied hardships that they had to suffer earlier on account of you and your son. The brave ones abandoned fear in that battle and placed Brahma's world at the forefront. They cheerfully fought with your sons and those on your side.

'"In the battle, the maharatha commander[439] addressed the soldiers. 'O Somakas! Together with the Srinjayas, attack Gangeya.' On hearing the words of the commander, the Somakas, together with the Srinjayas, attacked Gangeya and showered down weapons on him from every direction. O king! Thus assailed, your father, Shantanu's son, became intolerant and started to fight with the Srinjayas. O father![440] His achievements were glorious. In earlier times, the intelligent Rama[441] had imparted an instruction of weapons to him, one that could destroy the armies of enemies. He resorted to that instruction, capable of destroying the forces of the enemy. The aged grandfather of the Kurus, Bhishma, slew ten thousand of enemy heroes from the ranks of the Parthas every day. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But with the tenth day having been reached, Bhishma alone slew seven maharathas from the Matsyas and the Panchalas in the encounter and killed innumerable elephants and horses. In the great battle, the great-grandfather killed five thousand rathas and fourteen thousand men. He again killed one thousand elephants and ten thousand horses. O lord of the earth! Your father killed them through the strength of his instruction. He agitated the ranks of all the kings and brought down Virata's beloved brother, Shatanika. O great king! Having killed Shatanika in the battle the powerful Bhishma brought down another one thousand kings with broad-headed arrows. In the army of the Parthas, there were kings who had followed Dhananjaya. Whichever one among these approached Bhishma was sent to Yama's abode. In this way, Bhishma remained at the head of the army and surpassed the soldiers of the Parthas. He covered them and all the ten directions, with his net of arrows. He performed extremely great deeds on the tenth day. With the bow and arrows, he was stationed between the two armies. O king! None of the kings were capable of glancing at him. He was like the scorching midday sun in the sky, during the summer. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Just as Shakra scorched the army of the daityas in battle, Bhishma scorched that of the Pandaveyas.

'"On witnessing his valour, Madhusudana, the son of Devaki, affectionately spoke these words to Dhananjaya. 'This Bhishma, Shantanu's son, is stationed between the two armies. Kill him with your power and become victorious. He is shattering our soldiers there. Go and use your strength to repulse him there. O lord! No one other than you is capable of withstanding Bhishma's arrows.' O king! The one with the monkey on his banner was incited at that moment. He used his arrows to make Bhishma, his standard, his chariot and his horses disappear. But the bull, the foremost among the Kurus countered Pandava's arrows with his own torrent of arrows and dispersed the many showers of arrows that had been targeted towards him. O great king! The valiant Dhrishtaketu, the king of Panchala, Pandava Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, the twins, Chekitana, the five from Kekaya, Satyaki, Subhadra's son, Ghatotkacha, Droupadi's sons, Shikhandi, the brave Kuntibhoja, Susharma,[442] Virata and many other immensely strong ones among the Pandaveyas were oppressed by Bhishma's arrows and were immersed in an ocean of grief. Phalguna rescued them. With great force, Shikhandi grasped a supreme weapon. Protected by Kiriti, he dashed towards Bhishma. Knowing what must be done in the battle, the victorious Bibhatsu killed all the followers[443] and himself rushed against Bhishma. Satyaki, Chekitana, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, Drupada and the Pandavas who were Madri's sons also attacked Bhishma, protected by the one whose bow was firm. In that battle, Abhimanyu and Droupadi's five sons also attacked Bhishma in the encounter, holding up great weapons. All of them were firm in wielding the bow and never ran away from the field of battle. They pierced

Bhishma with well-aimed arrows all over his body. However, the one whose soul was never distressed disregarded all those arrows released by the best of kings. He penetrated the Pandava army. As if smiling, the grandfather repulsed all those arrows. Bhishma smiled repeatedly at Panchala Shikhandi and remembering that he had been a woman, did not target a single arrow at him. But he killed seven maharathas from Drupada's army of rathas. Cries of lamentation then arose among the Matsyas, the Panchalas and the Chedis, all of whom had attacked the solitary one. With supreme horses, a cluster of chariots, elephants and foot soldiers, they enveloped the solitary one, like clouds around the sun. Bhishma, the son of Bhagirathi, scorched many enemies in that battle. There was a battle between Bhishma and Kiriti, who placed Shikhandi at the forefront, there, like that between the gods and the asuras."'

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'Sanjaya said, "All the Pandavas placed Shikhandi at the head. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, they surrounded Bhishma from all sides and wounded him, using extremely terrible shataghnis, javelins, battleaxes, clubs, maces, spears, many types of catapults, gold-tufted arrows, spikes, lances, kampanas, iron arrows, vatsadantas and slings. Together with all the Srinjayas, they assailed Bhishma. His armour was shattered and he was oppressed everywhere, in many ways. But despite having been pierced in his inner organs, Gangeya was not distressed. The radiant bow and arrows and weapons seemed to be like the flames of a fire, fanned by the wind. The roar of the wheels of his chariot was the heat. His great weapons constituted the fire itself. His colourful bow was extremely resplendent and the one with the great bow was the destroyer of brave ones. Bhishma was like the fire at the end of a yuga, traversing through the enemy. He passed and brought down masses of chariots in that battle. He was again seen, roaming around in the midst of those kings among men. He ignored the king of Panchala and Dhrishtaketu and forcibly penetrated into the midst of the Pandava army. He pierced Satyaki, Bhima, Pandava Dhananjaya, Drupada, Virata and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna with extremely forceful arrows that could penetrate the armour of enemies. These six were struck with arrows that made a terrible roar and were as radiant as the sun. However, the maharathas repulsed those sharp arrows. Each of them struck Bhishma with great energy, using ten arrows each. In that battle, Shikhandi released arrows towards the one who was great in his vows. These were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone and swiftly penetrated Bhishma. Placing Shikhandi at the forefront, Kiriti impetuously attacked Bhishma and severed his bow. When Bhishma's bow was sliced down, the maharathas—Drona, Kritavarma, Saindhava Jayadratha, Bhurishrava, Shala, Shalya and Bhagadatta could not tolerate this. Extremely enraged, these seven attacked Kiriti. The maharathas displayed supreme and divine weapons. They attacked in great anger and enveloped Pandava. As they advanced towards Phalguna, sounds could be heard. It was like the sound being raised by the oceans at the time of the destruction of a yuga. 'Bring forward.[444] Grasp. Fight. Slice off.' Such were the tumultuous sounds as they advanced towards Phalguna's chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing that dreadful sound, the Pandava maharathas attacked, so as to protect Phalguna. Satyaki, Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, Drupada, rakshasa Ghatotkacha and Abhimanyu—these seven were enraged and became senseless with anger. They wielded colourful bows and swiftly advanced. The battle that commenced was dreadful and made the body hair stand up. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was like the battle between the gods and the danavas.

'"Kiriti, best among rathas, was protected by Krishna and in that battle, after Bhishma's bow had been severed, pierced him with ten arrows. He struck down his charioteer with ten and his standard with one. Gangeya grasped a bow that was more powerful. However, Phalguna sliced that down with a sharp and broad-headed arrow. Pandava was enraged and one after another, Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, severed every bow that Bhishma took up. When the bows were severed, he[445] became wrathful and licked the corners of his mouth. In great wrath, he grasped a javelin that was capable of shattering mountains. In anger, he hurled this towards Phalguna's chariot. On seeing it descend, like the flaming vajra, the descendant of the Pandava lineage brought the javelin down with five sharp and broad-headed arrows. O best of the Bharata lineage! When that javelin, hurled angrily by Bhishma's powerful arms, was severed with five arrows by the enraged Kiriti, it was shattered and fell down on the ground, like lightning[446] dislodged from a mass of clouds. On seeing that the javelin had fallen down, Bhishma was overcome with anger. In the battle, the brave and intelligent one, the destroyer of the cities of enemies, began to think. 'I am capable of slaying all the Pandavas with a single bow, had the immensely strong Vishvaksena[447] not been their protector now. There are two reasons for me not to fight with the Pandavas—the Pandus cannot be killed[448] and Shikhandi's feminity. In earlier times, when my father married Kali,[449] my father was satisfied and granted me the boon that I would be invincible in battle, except when I decided to die myself. I think the time has come for me to decide on my death.' On learning that this was the decision of the infinitely energetic Bhishma, the rishis and the Vasus, who were stationed in the sky, spoke these words to Bhishma. 'O brave one! We are extremely delighted with the decision you have taken. O great archer! Act in accordance with your decision and withdraw from the battle.' When those words were spoken, an auspicious and fragrant breeze began to blow. In all the directions, it was moistened with drops of water that smelt nice. The drums of the gods were sounded with a great roar. O king! A shower of flowers fell down on Bhishma. O king! But the words spoken were not heard by anyone there, with the exception of the mighty-armed Bhishma and me, because of the energetic sage.[450] O lord of the earth! There was great agitation among the thirty gods, at the prospect of Bhishma, beloved of all the worlds, falling down from his chariot.

'"Having heard the words of the masses of gods, the great-minded one, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, dashed towards Bibhatsu, though he had been pierced by sharp arrows that were capable of penetrating every kind of armour. O great king! Shikhandi angrily struck the grandfather of the Bharatas in the chest with nine sharp arrows. In the battle, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, was wounded by him. O great king! But he did not tremble and was like a mountain during an earthquake. Bibhatsu laughed and drew back the Gandiva bow. He pierced Gangeya with twenty-five kshurapras. Dhananjaya was enraged and again swiftly struck him all over the body with one hundred arrows that penetrated all his inner organs. In the great battle, the others also wounded him severely. But these gold-tufted arrows, sharpened on stone, did not cause him the slightest bit of pain. Placing Shikhandi at the forefront, the wrathful Kiriti attacked Bhishma and severed his bow once again.[451] He pierced him with ten arrows and sliced down his standard with one. He struck his charioteer with ten arrows and made him tremble. Gangeya took up another bow that was stronger still. In that great battle, in the twinkling of an eye and as soon as that other bow was taken up, Dhananjaya severed it into three with sharp and broad-headed arrows. In this fashion, he severed many bows.

'"At this, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, determined that he would not fight with Bibhatsu any more. However, he was pierced by twenty-five kshudrakas and thus pierced, the great archer spoke to Duhshasana. 'This maharatha Pandava Partha is enraged in the battle. In this encounter, he has shot many thousands of arrows towards me. No one is capable of vanquishing him in battle, not even the wielder of the vajra. No brave one is capable of defeating me, the gods, the danavas and the rakshasas, not to speak of extremely weak mortals.' While he was speaking thus, Phalguna placed Shikhandi in the forefront of the battle and pierced Bhishma with sharp arrows. Bhishma was severely pierced by the sharp arrows released by the wielder of Gandiva. He smiled and spoke to Duhshasana again. 'These are like vajra and thunder to the touch. They are sharp at the tip and have been released well. They have been shot in a continuous stream. These cannot be Shikhandi's arrows. They have penetrated my firm armour and have mangled my inner organs. They have struck me with the force of clubs. These cannot be Shikhandi's arrows. They are like Brahma's staff to the touch. They possess the force of the vajra and are impossible to resist. They are robbing me of my life. These cannot be Shikhandi’s arrows. They are like angry serpents, full of virulent poison and with their tongues protruding. They are penetrating my inner organs. These cannot be Shikhandi’s arrows. They are destroying my life, like messengers sent by Yama. They are like clubs and maces to the touch. These cannot be Shikhandi’s arrows. They are slicing through my body, like the month of Magha distresses cattle.[452] These are Arjuna’s arrows. These cannot be Shikhandi’s arrows. All the kings together cannot cause me any grief. The only exception is the brave Jishnu, the wielder of Gandiva and with the monkey on his banner.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken this, Shantanu’s son hurled a javelin, as if he was going to burn up Pandava. It was flaming at the tip and had sparks throughout. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While all the brave ones among the Kurus looked on, he[453] used sharp arrows to sever it into three and made the three parts fall down. At this, Gangeya grasped a shield that was made of gold and a sword. He was determined to obtain victory, or go to the world of the hereafter. But before he could get down from his chariot, the armoured one[454] shattered the shield into a hundred pieces and it was extraordinary.

‘“He roared like a lion and incited his soldiers. ‘Attack Gangeya. Do not have the slightest bit of fear.’ With javelins, lances, masses of arrows from every direction, spears, swords, many other weapons, vatsadantas and broad-headed arrows, all of them attacked the one who was fighting single-handed. The Pandavas let out terrible roars, like lions. O king! Your sons wished to see that Bhishma was victorious. They surrounded him and roared like lions. O Indra among kings! On the tenth day, when Bhishma and Arjuna clashed, there was a dreadful battle between those on your side and those of the enemy. In a short while, there was a whirlpool, like when Ganga meets the ocean. The soldiers fought, wishing to kill each other. Because it was covered with blood, the earth became difficult to cross. It was impossible to distinguish the plain ground from the uneven. On the tenth day, stationed in that battle, though he was pierced in his vital organs, Bhishma killed ten thousand warriors. In a similar way, Partha Dhananjaya was stationed at the forefront of the army and drove away the soldiers from the centre of the Kuru army. We were scared of Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, who was carried on white horses. We were oppressed by his sharp arrows and fled from the great battle. The Souviras, the Kitavas, those from the east, those from the west, those from the north, the Malavas, the Abhishahas, the Shurasenas, the Shibis, the Vasatayas, the Shalvas, the Shrayas, the Trigartas, the Ambashthas and the Kekayas—warriors from these twelve[455] countries were wounded and oppressed by the arrows, while Kiriti was fighting in that battle, wishing to kill Bhishma. The single one was surrounded by many from all directions. They defeated all the other Kurus and showered him with arrows. 'Bring down. Seize. Pierce. Tear.' O king! These and other tumultuous sounds were heard around Bhishma's chariot. Having slain hundreds and thousands with his shower of arrows, there wasn't even the span of a single finger on his body that was not mangled.

'"While your sons looked on, thus the lord, your father, was wounded with sharp-tipped arrows released by Phalguna and fell down from his chariot. There was a little bit of the day left. When Bhishma fell down from his chariot, great sounds of lamentation were heard from the gods in heaven and the kings in every direction. On seeing that the great-souled grandfather had fallen down, together with Bhishma, all our hearts also fell down. When the mighty-armed one fell down, the earth seemed to roar. The great archer fell down, like an uprooted pole that has been erected in Indra's honour. Because he was covered with a large number of arrows, he did not touch the ground. The great archer, bull among men, was supine on a bed of arrows. When he fell down from the chariot, a divine essence permeated him. The clouds showered rain and the earth trembled.

'"When he fell down, it was seen that the sun was diminished. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave one did not allow his senses to depart, but thought about the right time.[456] He heard divine voices from everywhere in the sky. ‘Why should the great-souled Gangeya, tiger among men and the supreme among those who wield all weapons, decide on a time that is dakshinayana?’[457] On hearing these words, Gangeya replied, ‘I am still here.’ Though he had fallen down on the ground, he retained his life. Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, wished to wait till uttarayana. Knowing his decision, Ganga, the daughter of the Himalayas, sent maharshis to him, in the form of swans. Adopting the forms of swans from Manasa,[458] they swifty arrived to see Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus. The grandfather, the best of men, was lying down on his bed of arrows. In the form of swans, the sages approached Bhishma. They saw Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus, on his bed of arrows. On seeing him, the great-souled ones circumambulated Gangeya, the best of the Bharata lineage. The learned ones spoke to each other. ‘The sun is in the south now. Why should the great-souled Bhishma depart during dakshinayana?’ Having spoken in this way, the swans started to leave for the southern direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing this, the immensely intelligent one began to think. Shantanu’s son then said, ‘I will never depart when the sun remains in the south. This is my resolution. I will leave for my earlier abode when the sun moves to the north. The swans have spoken the truth. I will retain my life, wishing for uttarayana. I have always had complete control about when I would give up my life. Therefore, I will retain my life, wishing to die during the northern course. This is the boon that my great-souled father granted me. His boon was that I could determine my time of death and let that come true. Since I possess control, I will retain my life.’ Lying down on the bed of arrows, he spoke these words to the swans.

‘“When the immensely energetic Bhishma, the head of the Kurus, fell down, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas roared like lions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When that great spirit among the Bharatas was brought down, your son did not know what to do. There was dreadful confusion among the Kurus then. With Duryodhana at the head, the kings sighed and wept. For a very long time, they were immersed in sorrow and were deprived of their senses. O great king! They were immobile and their minds were no longer on the fight. It was as if they had been grabbed by the thighs. They did not advance against the Pandavas. The immensely energetic Bhishma, Shantanu's son, who was incapable of being killed, had been brought down. O king! The great destruction of the Kurus seemed certain. The foremost among our brave ones had been brought down, mangled by sharp arrows. He had been vanquished by Savyasachi and we did not know what we should do. The Pandavas were victorious and obtained their supreme objective. All of those brave ones used arms like clubs to sound giant conch shells. O lord of men! The Somakas and the Panchalas were delighted. Those extremely powerful ones sounded thousands of tambourines. Bhimasena slapped his arms and roared dreadfully. When Gangeya had been brought down, the brave ones in both the armies laid down their weapons. Some lamented. Others ran around. And still others lost their senses. Others censured the life of kshatriyas and honoured Bhishma. The rishis and the ancestors praised the one who was great in his vows. The ancestors of the Bharatas also praised him. The valiant one resorted to the yoga described in the great Upanishads. The intelligent one meditated and remained there, wishing for the right time."'

CHAPTER 975(115)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! What was the state of the warriors without Bhishma? He was powerful and was like a god. He followed brahmacharya for the sake of his senior. When Bhishma did not strike Drupada's son because he despised him, I thought that the Kurus and the other kings had been killed. I cannot think of a greater misery. I am evil-minded and have heard about my father being brought down. O Sanjaya! My heart must certainly be made out of stone. On hearing that Bhishma has been brought down, it has not shattered into a hundred fragments. I cannot even think about Devavrata being brought down in the battle. In earlier times, he could not be slain by Jamadagni's son, despite his use of divine weapons. What did Bhishma, lion among men and the one who desired victory, do when he had been brought down? O Sanjaya! Tell me.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “He was brought down on the ground in the evening. On seeing the aged grandfather of the Kurus, the sons of Dhritarashtra were distressed and the Panchalas were delighted. He lay down on that bed of arrows, without touching the ground. A tumultuous sound of lamentation arose among all the beings. He was like a tree that stood at the boundary of the assembly of the Kurus and he was brought down. O king! O lord of the earth! On seeing Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, with his armour and standard shattered, the kshatriyas in both the armies, those of the Kurus and the Pandavas, were overcome with fear. The sky was covered in darkness and the sun lost its splendor. On seeing that Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, had been brought down, the earth seemed to be shrieking. This was the best among those who were learned about the brahman. This was the best among those who knew about the objective of the brahman. While the bull among the Bharata lineage lay down, this is what all the beings said. In earlier times, when Shantanu was overcome by desire, he followed his father’s command. The bull among men held up his seed. As the middle one among the Bharata lineage[459] lay down on the bed of arrows, this is what the rishis, the siddhas and the charanas reflected. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Bhishma, Shantanu’s son and the grandfather of the Kurus, was brought down, your sons did not know what to do. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their faces were pale and lost all their beauty. They were overcome with great shame and their heads hung down. Having obtained victory, the Pandavas were stationed at the heads of their ranks. All of them sounded great conch shells that were decorated with gold. O unblemished one! They loudly sounded trumpets. O king! We saw the immensely strong Bhimasena in the field of battle. Kounteya was sporting, overcome with great delight. The extremely strong one had killed many enemies in battle. The Kurus were overcome by great confusion. Karna and Duryodhana sighed repeatedly. When Bhishma, the chief among the Kouravas, was brought down, a great lamentation of weakness arose amidst all of them.

'"On seeing that Bhishma had fallen, your son, Duhshasana, used great speed and proceeded towards Drona's army. The brave and armoured one, and his own soldiers, had been instructed by his brother.[460] Urging his own army on, that tiger among men now departed. O great king! On seeing Duhshasana, the Kurus surrounded him, wishing to hear what he had to say. Kourava informed Drona that Bhishma had been brought down. Hearing this unpleasant news, Drona suddenly fell down from his chariot. O venerable one! Having regained his senses, Bharadvaja's powerful son restrained his soldiers.[461] On seeing the Kurus withdraw, the Pandavas and their soldiers also retreated. They sent messengers on swift horses to instruct the respective soldiers everywhere to refrain from fighting. The kings removed their armour and went to the spot where Bhishma was. Hundreds and thousands of warriors withdrew from the battle. They went to the great-souled one, like the immortals before Prajapati. They approached the supine Bhishma, the bull among the Bharata lineage. The Kurus and the Pandavas showed him their obeisance and stood there. The Pandus and the Kurus bowed before him and stood there.

'"The great-souled Bhishma, Shantanu's son, spoke to them. 'O immensely fortunate ones! Welcome. O maharathas! Welcome. I am delighted to see you. You are the equals of the immortals.' With his head hanging down, he greeted them. 'My head is hanging down. Please give me a pillow.' The kings present there brought many soft and delicate pillows that were excellent. But the grandfather did not accept them. The tiger among men laughed and told those kings, 'O kings! These are not appropriate for a hero's bed.' The best of men then saw and addressed Pandava, the maharatha of all the worlds. 'O Dhananjaya! O long-armed one! My head is hanging down. Give me a pillow that you think to be appropriate.' He honoured the grandfather and grasped his giant bow. With his eyes full of tears, he spoke these words. 'O best of the Kurus! O supreme among those who wield all weapons! Command me. O invincible one! O grandfather! I am your servant. What can I do for you?' Shantanu's son replied, 'O son![462] My head is hanging down.

O best of the Kuru lineage! O Phalguna! Give me a pillow. O brave one! Quickly grant me one that is appropriate for this bed. O Partha! O mighty-armed one! You are the best of all archers. You know about the dharma of kshatriyas. You possess intelligence and qualities.' Having been thus addressed, Phalguna quickly prepared to do as he had been instructed. He grasped Gandiva and arrows with drooping tufts. He took the permission of the great-souled one who was the middle one of the Bharata lineage. He shot three extremely forceful and sharp arrows and supported the head of his senior. Bhishma, the best of the Bharata lineage and learned about dharma and artha, was satisfied and praised Dhananjaya for having given him that pillow. Kunti's son was the best of warriors and brought delight to his well-wishers. He spoke to him. 'O Pandava! You have done well by giving me something that is appropriate for this bed. Had you done otherwise, I would have cursed you in rage. O mighty-armed one! This is the way in which kshatriyas should remain established in their dharma and sleep on a bed of arrows.' Having spoken thus to Bibhatsu, he spoke to all the kings and princes. 'See what Pandava has given me. I will sleep on this bed until the sun changes its path. Until it has traversed, the kings will be able to see me. When the sun goes beyond Vaishravana's direction[463] and the supremely energetic rays scorch the worlds from his chariot, I will give up my life, like a well-wisher who takes leave from a beloved one. O kings! Let a ditch be dug around the spot where I am. Pierced by a hundred arrows, I will worship the sun. O kings! Abjure the enmity and give up this battle.' Many physicians came to him, those who were skilled in the knowledge of uprooting stakes. They possessed every kind of implement and were skilled and well-trained. On seeing them, Jahnavi's son spoke these words. 'Honour the physicians. Give them what needs to be given and let them go. I have been reduced to this state. What do I have to do with physicians? I have attained the supreme state that is praised by those who follow the dharma of kshatriyas. O lords of the earth! When I am lying on a bed of arrows, this should not be my dharma now.[464] O lords of men! I should be immolated with these arrows on my body.’ Having heard these words, your son, Duryodhana, honoured the physicians in accordance with what they deserved and gave them permission to leave.

‘“The lords of the different countries were overcome with great wonder. They beheld the supreme dharma on which the infinitely energetic Bhishma was established. O lord of men! Having given a pillow to your father, all the maharatha Pandavas and Kurus again approached the great-souled one, supine on that supreme bed. Having bowed before Bhishma, they circumambulated him. Having arranged for Bhishma’s protection, all those brave ones went to their own camps in the evening and reflected in great misery. With bodies covered in blood, they retired. The maharatha Pandavas were delighted at Bhishma’s downfall. At the appropriate time, Yadava approached the maharatha Pandavas and spoke to Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son. ‘O Kouravya! It is through good fortune that you have been victorious. It is through good fortune that Bhishma has been brought down. The maharatha was devoted to the truth and could not be slain by humans. He was skilled in the use of all weapons. O Partha! This was destiny. He could kill with his eyes. He could burn down with his terrible sight.’ Thus addressed, Dharmaraja replied to Janardana, ‘We have obtained victory through your favours. Your wrath is defeat. O Krishna! You are our refuge. You assure your devotees freedom from fear. O Keshava! It is not extraordinary that those whom you always protect in battle should be victorious. You are always devoted to our welfare. We always seek refuge in you. It is my view that this is not extraordinary at all.’ Having been thus addressed, Janardana smiled and said, ‘O supreme among kings! The words that you have spoken can only come from someone like you.’”’

CHAPTER 976(116)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! After night had passed, all the kings, the Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra, approached the grandfather. The brave one, supreme among the Kurus, was lying down on a bed meant for heroes. The kshatriyas showed their obeisance to the bull among the kshatriyas. There were maidens everywhere, with powdered sandalwood, fried paddy and garlands. There were women, children and aged ones, and others who had gathered as spectators. They approached Shantanu's son, who was like the dispeller of darkness.[465] There were trumpets, courtesans, harlots, male dancers, female dancers and minor dancers. They approached the aged grandfather of the Kurus. The fighting ceased. The armour was cast aside. The Kurus and the Pandavas discarded their weapons. They approached the invincible Devavrata, the destroyer of enemies. They greeted each other affectionately, according to age, as they used to do in earlier times.[466] With the hundreds of kings assembled there, Bhishma looked resplendent. The descendant of the Bharata lineage was as radiant as a circle of gods in the firmament. The kings who honoured the grandfather were as brilliant as the gods worshipping the grandfather,[467] the lord of the gods.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! Bhishma bore his pain with fortitude. He was scorched by the arrows. But he spoke to the kings with a cheerful mind and addressed them. 'My body is tormented with these arrows. I am losing my senses because of the arrows. I wish to have a drink.' O king! All the kshatriyas brought him excellent water pots filled with cold water.' On seeing that these had been brought, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, replied, 'O son![468] I am incapable of using objects of human pleasure now. I am lying on a bed of arrows, away from human enjoyment. I am established here, waiting for the moon and the sun to return along their paths.' Having spoken in this way, Shantanu's son rebuked all those kings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He addressed the mighty-armed Dhananjaya. The mighty-armed one approached and paid his respects to the grandfather. He stood there, hands joined in salutation, and asked, 'What will I do?' O king! On seeing Pandava Dhananjaya standing there in obeisance, Bhishma, with dharma in his soul, affectionately addressed him. 'My body is burning. I am covered with these great arrows. My inner organs are in pain and my mouth is dry. O Arjuna! You can use your bow to give me water for my body. O great archer! You alone are capable of giving me water in accordance with what is proper.' Having been thus addressed, the valiant Arjuna mounted his chariot. He grasped Gandiva with force and stretched the bow. The sound of the palm against the string of the bow was like the clap of thunder. On hearing this, all the beings and all the kings were frightened. On his chariot, the supreme of rathas circumambulated the supine one, who was the best of the Bharatas and supreme among those who wielded all weapons. The immensely illustrious one invoked and affixed a flaming arrow. While all the worlds looked on, he applied the *parjanya* weapon. Partha pierced the earth to Bhishma's right side. A clear and pure stream of water arose. It was cool and like amrita. It possessed a divine fragrance. With that cool stream of water, Partha satisfied Bhishma, the bull among the Kurus, whose valour and deeds were divine. Partha was like Shakra in his deeds. At this deed of his, all of the lords of the earth were struck with great wonder. On beholding Bibhatsu's superhuman and extraordinary deed, all the Kurus trembled, like cows stricken by the cold. All the kings waved their upper garments in wonder. A tremendous sound of conch shells and the beating of drums was heard everywhere.

'"O king! In the presence of all the kings, Shantanu's son was satisfied. He honoured Bibhatsu and spoke to him. 'O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You have done something wonderful. O infinitely radiant one! Narada spoke of you as an ancient rishi. With Vasudeva as your aide, you will perform great deeds that even Indra of the gods, with the other gods, will not attempt. O Partha! Those who are aware know that you will bring about the destruction of all the kshatriyas. Among all the brave men on earth, you alone are the one who can wield the bow. You are the best among men on earth, like Garuda among the birds, like the ocean is the best among all stores of water, like the cow is the best among all quadrupeds, like the sun is supreme among those with energy, Himalaya is foremost among all mountains, the brahmana is best among all classes and you are the foremost among all archers. Dhritarashtra's son paid no heed to the words repeatedly spoken by me and those uttered by Vidura, Drona, Rama,[469] Janardana and Sanjaya. He is beyond all intelligence. Duryodhana is like one who is bereft of his senses. He paid no attention to my words. He will soon be overwhelmed by Bhima's strength and weapons and will be killed.' On hearing these words, Duryodhana, the Indra among the Kouravas, became distressed.

'"Shantanu's son glanced at him and said, 'O king! Transcend your anger and listen to my words. O Duryodhana! You have seen how the intelligent Partha created a stream of water that is cool and bears the fragrance of amrita. There is no one else in this world capable of accomplishing this feat. Agneya, Varuna, Soumya, Vayavya, Vaishnava, Aindra, Pashupata, Brahma, Parameshtha, Prajapatya, Dhatu, Tvashtu, Savitu[470] and all the other divine weapons—among all the men on earth, Dhananjaya alone is the one who knows them. So does Krishna, Devaki's son. But no one else knows them. O son![471] It is impossible to vanquish Pandava in battle. The deeds of the great-souled one are superhuman. He is spirited in battle. The brave one is the ornament of any battle. He is accomplished in battle. O king! O son! Make efforts towards peace. O son! As long as the mighty-armed Krishna controls himself in this assembly of Kurus, make efforts towards peace with the brave Parthas. O son! As long as your army is not destroyed through straight-tufted arrows shot by Arjuna, make efforts to bring about peace. O king! As long as your brothers and the remnants of these many kings remain stationed in battle, endeavour to bring about peace. O son! As long as your army is not consumed by the blazing anger in Yudhishthira's eyes, endeavour to bring about peace. O great king! O son! As long as Nakula, Sahadeva and Pandava Bhimasena do not destroy your entire army, it will please me if there is fraternal feeling between you and the Pandavas. O son! Let this feud end with my death. Have peace with the Pandavas. O unblemished one! Let these words spoken by me be acceptable to you. I think that this will be good for you and for the lineage. Abandon your anger and let there be peace with the Parthas. What Phalguna has already done is sufficient. Let Bhishma's death lead to affection. O king! Be pacified and let the remaining ones be alive. Give the Pandavas half of the kingdom. Let Dharmaraja go to Indraprastha. O Indra among the Kouravas! Do not kill your friends and be censured by the kings. Do not be famous for your evil deeds. With my end, let there be peace among the subjects. Let the kings depart cheerfully. O king! Let father and son, maternal uncle and nephew and brother and brother be happily united. If you do not accept my words, because you are overcome by delusion and because your intelligence is clouded, at the appropriate time, you will be destroyed and will remember all of Bhishma's words. I tell you truthfully that you will bear a great burden.' Having spoken these affectionate words to Bharata in the hearing of those kings, the son of the one who goes to the ocean became silent. His inner organs were in pain because of the stakes. Nevertheless, he overcame his pain and controlled his soul."'

CHAPTER 977(117)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! After Bhishma, Shantanu's descendant had become silent, all the kings again returned to their own abodes. On hearing that Bhishma had been brought down, Radheya, bull among men, swiftly came to him, partly because he was terrified. He saw the great-souled one, lying down on his bed of arrows, like the lord, the god Kartikeya, lying down after his birth.[472] The brave one's eyes were closed. His voice choked with tears, Vrisha[473] worshipped the feet of the immensely radiant one who had fallen down. 'O best of the Kurus! I am Radheya. I have been in your sight, but you have always regarded me with hate.' He spoke these words. On hearing these words, the aged Kuru used his strength to slowly open his closed eyes and glanced at him. He spoke these affectionate words. He asked the guards to leave and once they were alone, glanced at him with benevolence.

'"Gangeya embraced him with one arm, like a father towards a son. 'Come. Come. You have always been my adversary and have always sought to rival me. If you had not come before me, there is no doubt that it would not have been good for you. You are a Kounteya. You are not Radheya. I have known this from Narada and from Krishna Dvaipayana[474] and Keshava. There is no doubt about this. O son![475] I do not hate you. I am telling you this truthfully. I have spoken harsh words towards you for the sake of reducing your energy. It is my view that you hated the Pandavas without any reason. O descendant of the sun! That is the reason I have spoken many harsh words to you. I know your valour in battle and that the enemy cannot withstand you. I know your devotion towards brahmanas, your valour and your supreme attachment to generosity. There is no man like you and you are like an immortal. I spoke harsh words towards you to prevent dissension in the lineage. In the use of arrows, in aiming at a target, in dexterity and in the strength of your weapons, there is no one like you, with the exception of Phalguna and the great-souled Krishna. O Karna! You went to the king's capital and as a single archer, defeated all the kings in battle, for the sake of the king of the Kurus. The powerful King Jarasandha was invincible in an encounter and prided himself in battle. But even he wasn't your equal. You are devoted to brahmanas. You are truthful. You are like the sun in your energy and are superior to anyone else. You have been born from a god. You are invincible in battle. You are more than a man on earth. Today, I am giving up the anger I felt towards you earlier. Human endeavour is incapable of overturning destiny. O destroyer of enemies! The brave Pandavas are your brothers. O mighty-armed one! If you wish to please me, go to them. O son of the sun! With my end, let all the enmity be over. Let all the kings on earth be free from all danger.'

'"Karna replied, 'O immensely wise one! I know all this. There is no doubt about anything that you have said. O invincible one! I am a Kounteya and have not been born from a suta. But Kunti abandoned me and I was brought up by a suta. I have enjoyed Duryodhana's prosperity and have no interest in making that false now. My prosperity, body, life and fame are all for Duryodhana's sake. O one who is greatly generous! I am prepared to give all that up. I have depended on Suyodhana and have always angered the Pandavas. The outcome is inevitable and no one is capable of counteracting it. Who can overcome destiny through human enterprise? O grandfather! The omens indicate the destruction of the earth. These were noticed and spoken about in the assembly by you. I know everything about the Pandavas and Vasudeva being invincible to all other men. Nevertheless, I am interested in fighting. O father![476] You have always cheerfully given me permission to fight. O brave one! Since I have decided to fight, please give me permission. You should also forgive me any harsh and unpleasant words that I may have spoken against you, out of anger or folly, and any injurious acts that I may have performed.’

‘“Bhishma replied, ‘O Karna! If you cannot discard the extremely terrible enmity that has been created, I grant you permission. Fight with a desire to attain heaven. Be free of anger and intolerance and perform the acts of the king to the best of your capacity and endeavour. Observe the conduct of the virtuous. I grant you the permission. May you obtain what you desire. There is no doubt that you will attain the worlds obtained through the practice of the dharma of kshatriyas. Resort to strength and valour and fight, without any vanity. There is nothing more desired by a kshatriya than a battle in accordance with dharma. I tried for a very long time to bring about peace. But I was not successful. Where there is dharma, victory will be there.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “When Gangeya had spoken in this way, Radheya honoured him and obtained his favours. He then ascended his chariot and drove towards your son.”’

This ends Bhishma Parva.

Drona Parva

Drona Parva continues with the account of the war. After Bhishma's death, Drona is instated as the commander of the Kourava army and some of the most ferocious fighting takes place in Drona Parva, when Drona is the commander for five days, days eleven to fifteen. The highlights of Drona Parva are the deaths of the sworn warriors, Abhimanyu, Jayadratha and Ghatotkacha. In the 18-parva classification, Drona Parva is the seventh. In the 100-parva classification, Drona Parva covers Sections 65 through 72. Drona Parva has 173 chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Drona Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Drona Parva.

Section Sixty-Five

Dronabhisheka Parva

This parva has 634 shlokas and fifteen chapters.

Chapter 978(1): 49 shlokas
Chapter 979(2): 37 shlokas
Chapter 980(3): 23 shlokas
Chapter 981(4): 15 shlokas
Chapter 982(5): 40 shlokas
Chapter 983(6): 43 shlokas
Chapter 984(7): 36 shlokas
Chapter 985(8): 39 shlokas
Chapter 986(9): 73 shlokas
Chapter 987(10): 51 shlokas
Chapter 988(11): 31 shlokas
Chapter 989(12): 28 shlokas
Chapter 990(13): 80 shlokas
Chapter 991(14): 37 shlokas
Chapter 992(15): 52 shlokas

Abhishekha *means instatement or consecration and the parva is named after Drona's consecration as the supreme commander. After the consecration, this section also describes the eleventh day of the battle. Drona promises to capture Yudhishthira alive. Despite a lot of fighting, nothing of great significance occurs on the eleventh day, though Drona kills some Panchala warriors.*

CHAPTER 978(1)

Janamejaya asked, 'Devavrata was unmatched in spirit, energy, strength, bravery and valour. On hearing that he had been killed[1] by Shikhandi of Panchala, what did King Dhritarashtra, with his senses overcome by sorrow, do? O brahmana rishi! His valiant father was slain. O illustrious one! His son wished to obtain the kingdom after vanquishing the great archers, the Pandavas, with rathas like Bhishma and Drona. O illustrious one! When the supreme among archers was killed, what did Kouravya[2] do? O supreme among brahmanas! Tell me all this.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Hearing that his father had been killed, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, could find no peace. Kouravya[3] was overcome by anxiety and sorrow. The king continually reflected on his misery. Gavalgana's son,[4] pure in soul, again came before him. It was night and Sanjaya had returned to the city of Nagasahrya from the camp. O great king! On hearing that Bhishma had been killed, Ambika's son was extremely distressed. Wishing for the victory of his sons, Dhritarashtra lamented in woe and asked…

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O son![5] The Kurus were driven by destiny. After conquering the misery as a consequence of Bhishma, whose valour was terrible, what did they do? The immensely energetic, brave and invincible one had been killed. The Kurus were immersed in an ocean of grief. What did they do? O Sanjaya! The great army of the great-souled Pandavas was capable of leading to the greatest fear in the three worlds. On Devavrata, the bull among the Kurus, having been killed, what did the kings do? O Sanjaya! Tell me."

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Listen, with a concentrated mind, to my words. I will tell you what your sons did when Devavrata was killed in battle. O king! Truth was Bhishma's valour. When he was killed, those on your side, and the Pandavas, thought about this separately. Having thought about the dharma of kshatriyas, they were both astounded and delighted. Having censured their own dharma, they bowed down before that great-souled one. They thought of the infinitely energetic Bhishma lying down on his bed of arrows. O tiger among men! His pillow was made out of straight-tufted arrows. Having made arrangements for Bhishma's protection, they conversed with each other. Having circumambulated Gangeya, they took his permission. Then they glanced towards each other, eyes red in anger. Driven by destiny, the kshatriyas emerged again to do battle. Trumpets and drums made a loud noise. Your soldiers, and those of the enemy, marched out. O Indra among kings! When Jahnavi’s son fell down, the day had passed. Destiny had robbed them of their senses and they had been overcome by anger. They disregarded the beneficial words that the great-souled Gangeya had spoken. The best ones of the Bharata lineage marched out, armed with weapons. Because of your delusion and that of your sons, and because of the death of Shantanu’s son, the Kouravas, together with the kings, seemed to have been summoned by death. They were like cattle without a herdsman, in a forest that was full of carnivores. Without Devavrata, they were extremely anxious in their minds. The best of the Bharata lineage had been brought down. The army of the Kurus looked like the firmament, devoid of stars, or the sky without any air, or the earth with crops destroyed, or words without refinement, or the ancient army of the asuras after Bali had been brought down, or a beautiful woman[6] who is a widow, or a descending river whose waters have dried, or a cow hemmed in by wolves in the forest when the leader of the herd has been killed, or a large mountainous cavern rendered impotent because the lion has been killed. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! After Jahnavi’s son was brought down, the army of the Bharatas was like a feeble boat being tossed around on the great ocean by a tempest striking it from all directions. It was sorely afflicted by the brave and powerful Pandavas, who did not waver in their aim. With its horses, chariots and elephants, that army was extremely anxious. The men were seen to be distressed and dispirited. The kings and the soldiers were individually frightened. Without Devavrata, they were submerged in the nether regions.

‘“The Kouravas then remembered Karna, who was like Devavrata himself. He was foremost among those who wielded all weapons and he was as resplendent as a guest. They resorted to him, like a person confronting a calamity turns to a friend. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the kings cried out, ‘Karna. Karna. Radheya, the son of a suta, is prepared to lay down his life for our welfare. Together with his advisers and relatives, the immensely illustrious one has not fought for ten days. Summon him quickly.’ While all the kshatriyas looked on, when Bhishma counted the rathas in accordance with their strength and valour, the mighty-armed one was counted as only half a ratha.[7] Karna, bull among men, is twice that.[8] Though he was thus enumerated among rathas and atirathas, he is foremost and is revered by all brave ones. He is keen to fight with Yama, Kubera, Varuna and the lord of the gods. O king! At that time, he angrily spoke to Gangeya. 'O Kouravya! As long as you are alive, I will never fight. O Kourava! But if you manage to kill the Pandaveyas in the great battle, I will take Duryodhana's permission and leave for the forest. O Bhishma! But if you are slain by the Pandavas and ascend to heaven, I will kill all those whom you think to be rathas on a single chariot.' O great king! Having thus spoken, the immensely illustrious Karna did not fight for ten days, with your son's permission. O king! Bhishma exhibited valour in the battle and in the encounter, bravely killed innumerable warriors on the side of the Pandaveyas. The greatly energetic and brave one, who never wavered in his aim, was then brought down. Like those wishing to cross with a boat, your sons thought of Karna. Together with all the kings, your sons exclaimed and said, 'Karna! This is the time for you to come.' He is unassailable in his manliness and he received instructions in weapons from Jamadagni's son.[9] Our minds turned towards Karna, as if towards a friend in times of hardship. O king! He is alone capable of saving us from this great fear, like Govinda always saves the thirty gods from extremely grave calamities."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus did he[10] speak about Karna, supreme among warriors. Dhritarashtra sighed like a serpent and spoke these words to him. "Your minds then turned towards Vaikartana Karna. You saw that Radheya, the son of a suta, was ready to lay down his life. Did the warrior succeed in saving the distressed ones? Truth is his valour. They were depressed and frightened and sought safety with him, having honoured him. That warrior is foremost among all archers. But when Bhishma, the refuge of the Kouravas, was slain, did he succeed in filling the breach and did he fill the enemy with fear? Did he bring success to my sons, who were wishing for victory?"'

CHAPTER 979(2)

‘Sanjaya said, “On learning that Bhishma had been slain, Adhiratha’s son, the son of a suta, wished to save the Kurus, who were like a shattered boat in the fathomless ocean. He bore fraternal feelings towards the distressed ones. He wanted your son’s army to cross over. On hearing that Shantanu’s maharatha and undecaying son, Indra among men, had been brought down, Vrisha Karna,[11] the destroyer of enemies and supreme among those who wield bows, swiftly arrived. After Bhishma, supreme among rathas, was slain by the enemy, the Kurus were like a boat submerged in the ocean. He wished that your son’s army might be able to cross over.

‘“Karna said, ‘He possessed fortitude, intelligence, valour, energy, self-control, truth, all the qualities of a hero and divine weapons. Humility, affection and pleasant speech existed in Bhishma. He was always grateful and killed those who hated brahmanas. These attributes were eternal in him, like Lakshmi in the moon. That destroyer of enemy heroes has now obtained peace and I think that all the other warriors have already been killed. Because everything in this world is assigned by action, there is nothing that is permanent. When the one who was great in his vows has been slain, who can certainly say today that the sun will rise tomorrow? He possessed the power of the Vasus. He was born from the energy of the Vasus. That lord of the earth has returned to the Vasus again. O Kurus! You should sorrow for your riches, your sons, the earth and the army.’”[12]

‘Sanjaya said, “The granter of boons, the one who was great in his powers, was brought down. Shantanu’s son was foremost in the world and was greatly energetic. The Bharatas were defeated and dispirited. O king! Karna began to console your sons and your soldiers and hearing this, the brave ones lamented and shed tears from their eyes, as copious as the words of woe. But urged by the kings, they returned again to the great battle and roared again. The bull among all maharatha*s* then spoke these delightful words to the bulls among rathas.

'"Karna said, 'This transient world is always moving.[13] Noticing this, I think of everything as temporary. When all of you were present, how could that bull among the Kurus, who was like a mountain, be brought down in battle? Shantanu's maharatha son has been brought down, as if the sun has resorted to the ground. The kings are unable to withstand Dhananjaya, like trees against a storm that uproots mountains. With the foremost ones killed, they are dispirited and their bravery has been destroyed by the enemy. I will be their protector now and protect the army of the Kurus in battle, just as the great-souled one did. Such a burden now devolves on me. I notice that this world is transient. Since that skilled one has been brought down in the battle, why should I have any fear about the battle? I will roam around on the field of battle and use my straight-tufted arrows to convey the bulls among the Kurus[14] to Yama's abode. Knowing that fame is the supreme objective in this world, I will kill the enemy in battle, or lie down myself. Yudhishthira possesses steadfastness, intelligence, dharma and spirit. Vrikodara is the equal of one hundred elephants in valour. Arjuna has enterprise and is the son of the lord of the thirty gods. That army is not easy to defeat, even by the immortals. The twins are the equal of Yama in battle and that army also has Satyaki and Devaki's son. It is like death with a gaping mouth. A coward who approaches that army will not return. The learned ones say that austerities have to be countered with austerities and force with force. My mind is firmly fixed on resisting the enemy and protecting my own. O charioteer! I will go and counter the power of those intelligent ones and obtain victory today. I will accomplish this deed of a virtuous man, or give up my life and follow Bhishma. I will kill large numbers of the enemy in battle, or having been slain, will go to the world of heroes. The women and children are crying for help. The manliness of Dhritarashtra's son has been defeated. O charioteer! I know my duty. Therefore, I will vanquish the enemies of the son of Dhritarashtra. I will protect the Kurus and slaughter the sons of Pandu, even if it means that I have to give up my life in this dreadful fight. I will kill large numbers of the enemy in battle and give the kingdom to Dhritarashtra's son. Fasten my beautiful, golden and bright armour, radiant with jewels. Bring my helmet, like the sun in brilliance, and my bow and arrows, like virulent snakes. Fasten sixteen quivers and divine bows. Also bring swords, lances, heavy clubs and the conch shell that is decorated with gold. Bring my victorious and golden standard, with the complexion of a lotus and bearing the marks of a victorious and healthy elephant. Have it cleaned with an excellent garment and decorate it with colourful garlands and nets. Bring swift and white horses that have the hue of the clouds. They should be well-fed and bathed in water from golden pots, and sanctified with mantras. They should possess golden harnesses. O son of a charioteer! Quickly. Quickly. Bring an excellent chariot with nets of gold, decorated with gems and with the radiance of the moon and the sun. Let it be furnished with all objects and weapons. Let it be yoked to swift horses. Bring colourful and powerful bows with the supreme of bowstrings, so that they are capable of striking. Let the large quivers be filled with arrows. Let me be dressed with body-armour. Swiftly bring me everything needed for departure. O brave one! Let golden and brass vessels be filled with perfume. Bring garlands and adorn my body with them. Let the drums quickly announce my victory. O charioteer! Take me swiftly to the spot where Kiriti, Vrikodara, Dharma's son and the twins are. I will confront and kill them in battle. Or I will be slain by the enemy and follow Bhishma. That army has King Yudhishthira, who is firmly devoted to the truth, Bhima, Arjuna, Vasudeva, Satyaki and the Srinjayas. I think that it cannot be defeated by the kings. But even if Death, who robs everything, were to continually protect Kiriti in this encounter, I will confront him in battle and slay him. Or I will follow Bhishma's path to Yama. I am not saying that I will go there in the midst of these brave ones. Those who create dissension among friends and those who are weak in their devotion are evil-minded and are not my aides.'"[15]

'Sanjaya said, "He rode out on an excellent, supreme and firm chariot, which possessed a beautiful seat that was decorated with gold. It had a standard and was yoked to steeds that were as fleet as the wind. He rode out for victory. The bull among rathas, on white horses, was worshipped by the great-souled Kurus. The terrible archer left for the battle and went to where the bull among the Bharata lineage[16] was. The army was large and had standards. Karna’s chariot was embellished with gold, pearls, jewels and diamonds. It was yoked to well-trained horses and roared like the sound of the clouds. It was as energetic as the sun. The archer was resplendent on his resplendent chariot. He was like the fire in his complexion and like the fire in his brilliance. Adhiratha’s maharatha son was stationed on his chariot, like the king of the gods established on his own vimana.”’

CHAPTER 980(3)

‘Sanjaya said, “The great-souled and infinitely energetic one was lying down on his bed of arrows. He was like an ocean that had been dried up by a mighty wind. Savyasachi had used his divine weapons to bring down the great archer and shattered the hopes your sons entertained for victory and their armour and their peace. He was like an island for those who wish to cross an ocean that cannot be traversed. He was covered in a mass of arrows, like flows in the river Yamuna. He was like the intolerable and giant Mount Mainaka, brought down on the ground, like the sun which has been dislodged from the firmament and has fallen down on earth. This was as unthinkable as Shatakratu being vanquished by Vritra in earlier times. All the soldiers were confounded at Bhishma having been brought down in the battle. He was the bull among all the soldiers. He was the objective of all archers. Your father, great in his vows, was covered with Dhananjaya’s arrows. The brave one, bull among men, was lying down on a bed meant for heroes.

‘“On seeing Bhishma, the middle one of the Bharata lineage, Adhiratha’s son descended from his chariot. He was tormented and his voice was choked with tears. He joined his hands in salutation. Having worshipped him, he spoke these words. ‘O fortunate one! I am Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Speak sacred and auspicious words to me today. Open your eyes and look at me. No man can ever enjoy the fruits of his good deeds on earth, since you, aged and devoted to dharma, are lying down on the ground. O supreme among the Kurus! In filling the treasury, in counsel, in constructing vyuhas, in using weapons, I do not think I can see anyone like you among the Kurus. You are united with intelligence and purity. You have saved the Kurus from danger. Having deluged the warriors, you are now proceeding to the world of the ancestors. O best of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas will now cause a destruction of the Kurus, like enraged tigers destroying deer. The brave Kurus are acquainted with Gandiva's roar and will be terrified by Savyasachi now, like the asuras by the wielder of the vajra. In today's battle, the Kurus and the other kings will be frightened by the sound released from Gandiva, like the clap of thunder. The brave one[17] will be like a fire before kindling and will be like a great conflagration that burns down trees. Kiriti's arrows will destroy the sons of Dhritarashtra in this way. O illustrious one! Wherever the wind and the fire advance together in a forest, they burn down as they wish. There is no doubt that Partha is like fire before kindling. O tiger among men! There is no doubt that Krishna is like the wind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Panchajanya's roar and Gandiva's sound, all the soldiers will be overcome by terror. The destroyer of enemies will advance on a chariot with a monkey on the banner. O brave one! Without you, the kings will not be able to withstand that sound. Other than you, who among the kings is capable of fighting with Arjuna on the field of battle? The learned ones speak about his celestial deeds. The encounter between the intelligent one and Tryambaka[18] was superhuman. As a result of this, he obtained a boon that is difficult for those with unclean souls to get. If you permit me, I will fight with that excellent Pandava today. I am incapable of tolerating him. He is like an extremely terrible and poisonous snake which kills with its glances alone. I have placed death, or victory, at the forefront.'"'

CHAPTER 981(4)

'Sanjaya said, "When he spoke in this way, the aged grandfather of the Kurus heard him. His mind was delighted and he spoke words that were appropriate to the time and the place. 'May you be established amidst your well-wishers, like the ocean among rivers, the sun among all stellar bodies, truth among the virtuous, fertile ground among seeds and clouds among all beings. May your relatives depend on you, like the immortals on the one with a thousand eyes.[19] Through the strength of your own arms and your valour, you did what brought pleasure to Dhritarashtra's son. O Karna! You went to Rajapura and killed the Kambojas.[20] You went to Girivraja[21] and vanquished the kings, with Nagnajit at the forefront, and the Ambashthas, the Videhas and the Gandharas. O Karna! In earlier times, you brought those who dwelt in the Himalayas and Kiratas, who were harsh in battle, under Duryodhana's suzerainty. In every such place, you fought for Duryodhana's welfare. O brave one! O Karna! You conquered many greatly energetic ones. O son![22] Just as Duryodhana, with his relatives, his kin and his friends, is the refuge of the Kouravas, so are you. I am granting you an auspicious permission. Go and fight with the enemy. Lead the Kurus in battle and bring victory to Duryodhana. You are like my grandson, just as Duryodhana is. According to dharma, all of us are yours, just as we are his.[23] O best of men! Learned ones say that in this world, association with the virtuous is more important than a relationship resulting from birth. Do not make your relationship with the Kurus false. Protect Duryodhana's army, as if it were your own.' On hearing these words, Vaikartana Karna honoured his feet and quickly went to the spot where the warriors were. He saw that large and extensive mass of men. The broad-chested and well-armed soldiers were arranged in battle formation. On seeing the great archer, Karna, arrive for battle, the Kurus honoured him. They slapped their arms and roared like lions. They twanged their bows and made other kinds of sounds."'

CHAPTER 982(5)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! On seeing Karna, tiger among men, stationed on his chariot, Duryodhana was delighted and spoke these words. 'Now that it is protected by you, I think this army has found a protector. Now do what we are capable of, and what seems to be appropriate.'

'"Karna replied, 'O tiger among men! O king! You are the wisest. You tell us. Someone whose objective is at stake, sees things in a way that another person never can. O lord of men! All of us wish to hear your words. It is my view that you will never say anything that is inappropriate.'

'"Duryodhana said, 'Bhishma was our commander. He was senior and valiant. He was well-endowed with learning, possessed knowledge of weapons and had all the qualities. O Karna! He obtained great fame by slaying large numbers of the enemy. The great-souled one fought well for ten days and protected us. He performed extremely difficult deeds and is ascending to heaven. Who do you think should be our commander after him? Without a leader, the army cannot last for an instant in battle, like a boat in the water without a boatman. Just as a boatman steers a boat, a charioteer controls a chariot, a commander ensures that an army is not led astray. You are the best in battle. Look at all the great-souled ones among us and find a commander who can succeed Shantanu's son. O venerable one! Whoever you mention will be accepted by all us as our commander in this battle.'

'"Karna replied, 'All these supreme among men are great-souled. But we should not examine details about who should be our commander. All of them have been born in noble lineages. All of them know how to withstand onslaught. All of them possess strength, valour and intelligence. They are grateful and modest and do not retreat from battle. However, all of them cannot be the leader at the same time. There must be only one, who possesses special qualities. All these rival one another. If one is specially honoured, the others will be dispirited. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is clear that they will not fight. Among all us warriors, the preceptor is aged and is our senior. Drona, supreme among those who wield all weapons, should be made the commander. He is supreme among those who know the brahman. He is unassailable. If Drona is made the commander, who can stand against that? He is the equal of Shukra and Angiras in his learning.[24] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Drona advances into battle, there is not a single warrior among all these kings who will not follow him. He is foremost among all the leaders of soldiers and among those who wield weapons. He is foremost in intelligence. O king! He is also your preceptor. O Duryodhana! Quickly make the preceptor the commander, just as, wishing to defeat the asuras in battle, the immortals chose Kartikeya.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Drona was standing in the midst of the army. On hearing Karna's words, King Duryodhana spoke these words to him. 'Because of the superiority of your varna, the lineage in which you have been born, your learning, your age, your intelligence, your valour, your capacity, your invincibility, your knowledge of artha and law, your austerities, your gratitude and your superiority in all the qualities, I do not think there is anyone among all the kings who is your equal as a protector. Protect us, like Vasava among all the gods. O supreme among brahmanas! With you as our leader, we wish to vanquish the enemy. You are like Kapali among the Rudras, Pavaka among the Vasus, Kubera among the yakshas, Vasava among the Maruts, Vasishtha among the brahmanas, the sun among those with energy, Dharma among the ancestors, the king of the waters among the Adityas, the moon among stellar bodies and Ushanas among the sons of Diti.[25] You are the foremost among leaders of soldiers. Therefore, be our commander. O unblemished one! Let these eleven akshouhinis follow your instructions. Create a counter-vyuha against the enemy and kill them, like Indra against the danavas. Advance in front of us, like Pavaka's son ahead of the gods.[26] We will follow you, like a herd of bulls following their leader. You are terrible in wielding the bow. You are a great archer. On seeing you stationed at our forefront, stretching your divine bow, Arjuna will not strike. O tiger among men! If you become our commander, it is certain that I will defeat Yudhishthira in battle, together with his followers and relatives.' After he had spoken in this way, all the kings exclaimed, 'Victory to Drona.' They roared mightily like lions and delighted your son. The soldiers were filled with joy and wished for the prosperity of that supreme among brahmanas. With Duryodhana at their head, they desired great fame.

'"Drona said, 'I know the Vedas and the six *angas*.[27] I know about artha. I am conversant with human knowledge. I am acquainted with the weapons of Tryambaka and with many other kinds of weapons. You have described my qualities and I will try to exhibit them, wishing to bring about your victory. I tell you truthfully that I will fight with the Pandavas.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Having thus obtained Drona's permission, your son instated him as the commander, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Drona was consecrated as the commander by the kings, with Duryodhana leading the way, just as in ancient times Skanda was instated by the gods, with Shakra at the forefront. The men created a mighty sound, mixed with the noise of musical instruments. Amidst this noise and joy, Drona became the commander. There were sounds like those on auspicious occasions and the pronouncement of benedictions. Minstrels, bards and raconteurs chanted praise, to the sound of singing. The foremost among brahmanas uttered benedictions for great fortune and victory. They honoured Drona according to the rites and thought that the Pandavas had already been defeated."'

CHAPTER 983(6)

'Sanjaya said, "Bharadvaja's maharatha son became the commander. He arranged the soldiers in the form of a vyuha and set out to do battle, together with your sons. Saindhava, Kalinga and your son, Vikarna, were armoured and stationed themselves on the right flank. Shakuni supported them, with the best of horse-riders, and advanced with the warriors from Gandhara, wielding polished lances. Kripa, Kritavarma, Chitrasena and Vivimshati, with Duhshasana at the forefront, advanced and protected the left flank. They were supported by the Kambojas, with Sudakshina leading the way. They advanced on extremely swift horses, together with the Shakas and the Yavanas. The Madras, the Trigartas, the Ambashthas, the residents of the west and the north, the Shibis, the Shurasenas, the Shudras, the Maladas, the Souviras, the Kitavas and all those from the east and the south placed your son at the head, with the son of the suta at the rear. They delighted all the soldiers and added force to the army. Vaikartana Karna advanced at the head of all the archers. His blazing standard was giant in size and delighted his own army. That giant standard was resplendent with the sign of a healthy elephant and dazzled like the sun. On seeing Karna, no one thought about the calamity consequent to Bhishma's downfall. All the kings, together with the Kurus, were freed from their grief. In joy, the large number of warriors began to converse with one another. 'On seeing Karna in battle, the Pandavas will not be able to remain on the field of battle. Karna is capable of vanquishing the gods, together with Vasava, in battle. The sons of Pandu are inferior in bravery and valour. How can they remain in battle? The strong-armed Bhishma saved the Parthas in the battle. But there is no doubt that Karna will destroy them with his sharp arrows.' O lord of the earth! In delight, they spoke to each other in this way. They honoured and praised Radheya and advanced.

'"Drona instructed that our vyuha should be in the form of a cart.[28] O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The vyuha of the enemy was in the form of a curlew.[29] Cheerfully, the great-souled Dharmaraja instructed this. Those bulls among men, Vishvaksena[30] and Dhananjaya, with the monkey on the standard, were at the front of their vyuha. This was the hump[31] of all the soldiers and the objective of all the archers. The infinitely energetic Partha's standard fluttered in the path of the sun. It illuminated the army of the great-souled Pandava, like the blazing sun on the earth at the end of a yuga. Arjuna is foremost among archers, Gandiva is supreme among bows, Vasudeva is supreme among beings and Sudarshana is supreme among chakras. These four kinds of energy[32] were borne by the chariot with white horses and it stationed itself in front of the hostile army, like the upraised wheel of time. Thus did the great-souled ones stand in front of those powerful armies—Karna before yours and Dhananjaya before that of the enemy. There was enmity between them and they wished to kill each other. In that battle, Karna and Pandava glanced towards each other.

'"Bharadvaja's maharatha son powerfully advanced. There was dreadful lamentation and the earth began to tremble. The wind raised a violent and terrible dust that was as tawny as silk. This covered the sky and the sun. Though there were no clouds in the sky, a shower of flesh, bones and blood fell down. O king! Thousands of vultures, hawks, wild crows, herons and crows repeatedly swooped down on the soldiers.[33] Jackals howled hideously and many fearful creatures swooped down on the left side of your army, desiring to eat the flesh and drink the blood.[34] Flaming and blazing meteors were seen to descend, covering the field of battle in every direction with their tails. They roared and caused a trembling. O king! When the commander of the army[35] advanced, the gigantic solar disc thundered and seemed to emit lightning. There were many other fearful portents, inauspicious for the warring heroes and signifying a destruction of lives. Thus the battle between the Kuru and Pandava soldiers commenced, each side wishing to kill the other. The entire earth was full of that noise. The Pandavas and the Kouravas were extremely enraged. They grasped weapons and sought to kill each other with sharp arrows. The immensely radiant and great archer[36] rushed towards the Pandava soldiers with great force, showering hundreds of sharp arrows. O king! On seeing Drona advance, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas countered him, separately showering arrows. That great army was agitated and shattered by Drona. The Panchalas were destroyed, like a mountain by a storm. In a short instant, Drona unleashed many kinds of divine weapons in that battle and oppressed the Pandavas and the Srinjayas. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Panchalas were slaughtered by Drona and trembled, like the danavas before Vasava. The brave maharatha, Yajnasena's son,[37] skilled in the use of divine weapons, used showers of arrows to penetrate Drona's army in many places. He repulsed Drona's shower of arrows with several showers of arrows. The powerful one killed the Kuru soldiers. In the battle, the mighty-armed Drona restrained his own soldiers and attacked Parshata. He released a great shower of arrows towards Parshata, like the angry Maghavan forcefully attacking the danavas. Drona’s arrows made the Pandavas and the Srinjayas tremble. They were repeatedly routed, like deer by a lion. O king! The powerful Drona travelled through that army of the Pandvas like a circle of fire[38] and it was wonderful. His chariot was like a city in the sky, constructed by one conversant with sacred texts. The harnessed horses were controlled well. The standard fluttered in the wind. The pole of the standard was as bright as crystal and he tormented the enemy with his arrows. He was astride that supreme chariot and slaughtered the soldiers of the enemy.”’

CHAPTER 984(7)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing Drona slaughter the horses, charioteers, rathas and elephants, the Pandavas were distressed and surrounded him. King Yudhishthira spoke to Dhrishtadyumna and Dhananjaya. ‘Make endeavours to counter the one who was born from a pot and surround him.’[39] Arjuna and Parshata, with their followers, surrounded him, together with all the maharathas—the Kekayas, Bhimasena, Subhadra’s son, Ghatotkacha, Yudhishthira, the twins, Matsya, Drupada’s son, Droupadi’s cheerful sons, Dhrishtaketu, Satyaki, the enraged Chekitana and maharatha Yuyutsu. O king! There were many other kings who followed the Pandavas. In accordance with their lineage and their valour, they performed many deeds. On seeing that the army of the Pandavas was thus protected in battle, Bharadvaja’s son glanced at them, with anger in his eyes. He was stationed on his chariot, invincible in battle, and was overcome by terrible rage. He pierced the Pandava army, like the wind scattering clouds. He attacked the chariots, horses, men and elephants in every direction. Though he was old, Drona roamed around, like a mad young man. His horses were crimson in colour and were as fleet as the wind. They were covered in blood. O king! Those horses thus assumed a beautiful appearance. On seeing that angry one, rigid in his vows, descend like death, the Pandava warriors fled in every direction. Some fled in fright. Others returned. Some glanced at him and an extremely dreadful noise arose, causing delight among brave ones and leading to fright among those who were cowards. This completely filled the space between the sky and the earth. Yet again, Drona announced his name in the battle. He shot hundreds of arrows at the enemy and assumed a dreadful form. Though he was aged, the powerful Drona acted like one who was young. The intelligent one was like death amidst the Pandava soldiers. The fierce one sliced off the heads and the arms with their ornaments. The maharatha rendered the chariots empty and roared. O lord! Because of his roars of delight and because of the force of his arrows, the warriors trembled in the field of battle, like cattle because of the winter. As a result of the roar of Drona's chariot, the stretching of his bowstring and the sound of his bow, a great sound arose in the sky. Many thousands of arrows were released by him. They covered all the directions and descended on the elephants, the horses and the chariots. His extremely forceful bow was like the fire, with arrows as its flames. The Panchalas and the Pandavas attacked Drona. But he dispatched the rathas, elephants and horses to Yama's abode. In a short while, Drona covered the earth with the mud of blood. He showered supreme weapons and arrows in every direction. Drona covered the directions with his net of arrows and nothing could be seen. Foot soldiers, chariots, horses and elephants were shrouded and his standard could be seen, roaming around, like a cloud tinged with lightning.

'"With the bow and arrows in his hand, Drona used arrows to penetrate the five brave ones from Kekaya and the king of Panchala and then attacked Yudhishthira's army. Bhimasena, Dhananjaya, Shini's grandson, Drupada's son, Shibi's son, the lord of Kashi and Shibi were delighted. They roared and covered him with a large number of arrows. They were assailed by arrows released from Drona's bow. These were colourful and gold-tufted. They pierced the bodies of elephants and young horses and penetrated the ground, the tufts covered with blood. The earth was strewn with large numbers of warriors, chariots, elephants and horses, mangled by the arrows. They fell down on the ground and looked like dark clouds in the sky. Desiring the prosperity of your sons, Drona crushed the armies of Shinis's descendant, Bhima, Arjuna, Shibi, Abhimanyu, the king of Kashi and many other brave ones in that battle. O Indra among Kouravas! The great-souled one performed this, and many other deeds, in the battle. O king! Having scorched the world, like the sun at the time of destruction, Drona went to heaven. On his golden chariot, the brave one killed hundreds and thousands of Pandava warriors in the battle and was brought down by Parshata. He killed more than two akshouhinis of brave ones who never retreated. After that, the wise one attained the supreme objective. O king! The one on the golden chariot performed extremely difficult deeds and was then killed by the Pandavas and the Panchalas, the performers of inauspicious and cruel deeds. O king! When the preceptor was killed in the battle, there was a roar among the beings in the firmament and also among the soldiers. This resounded in heaven, the earth, the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. A great sound of 'shame' was heard among all the beings. The gods, the ancestors and all those who were his relatives saw that Bharadvaja's maharatha son was slain. Having obtained victory, the Pandavas roared like lions. The earth trembled because of that loud roar."'

CHAPTER 985(8)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "How could the Pandavas and the Srinjayas kill Drona in battle? Among those who wielded all weapons, he was extremely skilled. Did his chariot break? When he was striking, did his bow shatter? Was Drona distracted and was that the reason for his death? O son![40] How could Parshata slay him? He was incapable of being oppressed by enemies. He showered large numbers of gold-tufted arrows. The foremost among brahmanas possessed dexterity of hand. He was accomplished and colourful in fighting. He could shoot from a great distance. He had self-control. He was skilled in war. The maharatha was undecaying and supreme. He was careful and performed terrible deeds in battle. It must be destiny that Panchala's son killed him. It is my view that it is manifest that destiny is superior to human endeavour. The brave Drona has been killed by the great-souled Parshata. The four types of weapons were established in the brave one.[41] The preceptor Drona knew supreme weapons and has been slain. He used to be on a golden chariot, covered with the skins of tigers and decorated with pure gold. On hearing that he has been killed, I am now overcome with sorrow. O Sanjaya! No one dies because of the hardship that someone else faces. On hearing that Drona has been slain, I am dead, though I am alive. My heart is made out of hard stone. Despite learning that Drona has been killed, it has not shattered into a hundred parts. He was worshipped by brahmanas and princes who desired the qualities of knowledge of the brahman, the Vedas and weapons. How could he have been taken away by death? This is like the ocean drying up, Mount Meru moving, or the sun falling down. I cannot tolerate Drona's downfall. He restrained the proud and protected those who followed dharma. The scorcher of enemies was prepared to give up his life to attain the objective of my wicked and evil sons. Their victory depended on his valour. He was the equal of Brihaspati and Ushanas in his intelligence. How could he have been killed? His large Saindhava horses were crimson. They were garlanded in gold. They were fleet as the wind and were yoked to his chariot. They were beyond the reach of all sounds of battle. They were powerful and neighed in joy. Those Saindhavas were controlled and were trained in bearing.[42] They were firm in the midst of battle and never suffered from distress or exhaustion. They withstood the trumpeting of elephants in battle and the sound of conch shells and drums. They tolerated the twanging of bowstrings and the shower of arrows and weapons. They had conquered their breathing and had conquered pain and they assured victory over the enemy. Those fleet horses quickly bore the chariot of Bharadvaja's son. How could they be overpowered? They were yoked to the golden chariot and controlled by the foremost of men. O son! How could they not cross that Pandava army? He was mounted on a supreme chariot, decorated with pure gold. What feats did Bharadvaja's brave son not accomplish in war? He made warriors weep. All the archers in the world depended on his knowledge. Drona was devoted to the truth. He was powerful. What did he accomplish in battle? He was foremost among all the great ones who wielded the bow, like Shakra in heaven. He was the performer of terrible deeds. Which rathas countered him in battle? On seeing the one on the golden chariot, did the Pandavas run away? Unleashing divine weapons, did he destroy that inexhaustible army? Or did Dharmaraja, together with his younger brothers and with Panchala as the harness, surround Drona from every direction with all the soldiers? Did Partha restrain the rathas with his arrows? Parshata, the performer of evil deeds, must have assailed Drona then. With the exception of Dhrishtadyumna, protected by the terrible Kiriti, I do not see anyone capable of killing the vigorous one. When the Kekayas, the Chedis, the Karushas and the other kings surrounded and agitated the brave preceptor, while he was performing a difficult deed, like ants against a serpent, the wicked Panchala must have killed him then. That is my view. He studied the four Vedas and the fifth one about the accounts.[43] He was the refuge of the brahmanas, like the ocean is of the rivers. How could that aged and powerful brahmana have been killed through a weapon? He was intolerant and proud, though he often suffered on my account. Though he did not deserve it, he reaped the fruits of his action through Kounteya. All the wielders of the bow on earth depended on his deeds for their livelihood. He was devoted to the truth. He performed good deeds. How could he have been killed by those who desire prosperity? He was foremost. He was great-spirited and extremely strong, like Shakra in heaven. How could he have been killed by the Parthas, like a whale by smaller fish? He was dexterous in the use of his hands. He was powerful. He was firm in wielding the bow. He was the destroyer of enemies. No one, wishing to remain alive, faced him on the field and remained alive. As long as he was alive, two sounds never left him—the sound of the brahman by those who desired the Vedas and the sound of the bowstring by those who wielded the bow. I cannot tolerate Drona being killed in battle. He was like the lion and the elephant in his valour. O Sanjaya! He was invincible. The fame of his strength was never assailed. Who protected the great-souled one on the right flank and on the left? When he fought in the battle, which brave one was in front of him? Who were the brave ones who confronted him and gave up their lives, traversing the path of death? Who were the brave ones who faced Drona in battle and attained the supreme objective? O Sanjaya! Even if one faces a great hardship, one must do one's duty, in accordance with one's valour and one's capacity. All of this was established in him. My mind is distracted. O son! Let us stop for some time. O Sanjaya! I will ask you again, after I have regained my senses."'

CHAPTER 986(9)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having asked the son of the suta in this way, he was afflicted by terrible sorrow. Dhritarashtra lost all hope about his sons being victorious and fell down on the ground. On seeing that he had lost his senses and had fallen down, the attendants sprinkled him with water. The water was extremely cold and was perfumed. They fanned him. O great king! On seeing that he had fallen down, the women of the Bharata lineage surrounded him from every direction and gently rubbed him with their hands. They gently raised the king up from the ground. With tears choking their throats, the beautiful women placed him on his seat. Having attained his seat, the king was still not conscious. He was immobile. They stood around him and fanned him. Having slowly regained his senses, the king trembled. He once again began to ask the suta, Gavalgana's son, about what exactly had happened.

'"He is like the rising sun.[44] He can dispel darkness through his own light. When Ajatashatru advanced, how did Drona counter him? He is like an elephant with shattered temples. He is angry and swift. He is resplendent and single-minded in purpose. He is incapable of being repulsed by a rival. When he advanced for victory, like one who desires intercourse with a female,[45] which brave warriors fought with that supreme of men in the field of battle? That mighty-armed one is capable of consuming Duryodhana's entire army with his terrible glance. He has intelligence and is devoted to the truth. The supreme archer can destroy with his sight, even if he is not protected, and he is fixed on victory. He is self-controlled and is revered by the entire world. Which brave ones surrounded him? That undecaying king is supreme among archers and is difficult to resist. When Kounteya, tiger among men, swiftly advanced and attacked Drona, who on my side countered him? Which brave ones surrounded the advancing Bhimasena? Bibhatsu is extremely valorous. He rides on a chariot that is like a dense cloud. He creates a tumultuous shower, like thunder. He showers arrows, like Maghavan showering rain. The one with the monkey on his banner envelopes the sky with his mass of arrows. All the directions resound with the clapping of his palms and the roar of his chariot wheels. The sound of his arrows makes him difficult to cross. His anger can thwart the clouds. His arrows are as swift as thought. His fierce arrows penetrate the inner organs. He floods the entire earth with blood, so that men find it difficult to traverse. In that battle, Duryodhana made endeavours and raised his terrible club. What did he do when Vijaya, the wielder of Gandiva, used arrows sharpened on stone and tufted with the feathers of vultures? When the intelligent one did this and destroyed the army with the sound of Gandiva, what was his[46] state of mind then? Arjuna performed terrible deeds and advanced fiercely. When Dhananjaya used his arrows to attack Drona, what did he do? He was like the wind scattering clouds, or like a tempest destroying reeds. Which man can stand against the wielder of Gandiva in battle? Soldiers trembled and brave ones were touched by fear. Who were those who did not forsake Drona and who were the inferior ones who ran away? Who were the ones who gave up their lives and advanced towards death? Dhananjaya had vanquished superhuman combatants. Those on my side are incapable of withstanding the force of his white horses. Gandiva's noise is like the roll of thunder. Vishvaksena is the charioteer and the warrior is Dhananjaya. It is my view that this chariot cannot be vanquished, even by the gods and the asuras. The brave Pandava is delicate, young, brave and handsome. He is intelligent and skilled. He is wise in war and truth is his valour. When Nakula emitted a loud roar, what did all the Kouravas do? When the intelligent one advanced, which brave ones surrounded him? Sahadeva is like an angry snake with virulent poison. He is invincible in battle. When he advanced against the enemy, who countered him? He is noble in his vows. He cannot be assailed. He is modest and unvanquished. When he advanced against Drona, which brave ones surrounded him? He[47] crushed the large army of the Souvira kingdom. He obtained as his queen the desirable princess of Bhoja, who was beautiful in all her limbs. Truthfulness, fortitude, valour and brahmacharya are always completely vested in him. Yuyudhana is a bull among men. He is strong. He is truthful in his deeds. He is never distressed. He is unvanquished. He is Vasudeva’s equal in battle and is regarded as second to Vasudeva. Instructed by Dhananjaya, he has become as brave as his preceptor in deeds. He is Partha’s equal in use of weapons. Who restrained him when he advanced against Drona? He is supremely brave among the Vrishnis. He is valiant among all archers. He is Rama’s[48] equal in weapons, fame and valour. He is supreme in truthfulness, fortitude, self-control, valour and brahmacharya. All these are in Satvata,[49] just as the three worlds are in Keshava. Vested with all these qualities, he is incapable of being resisted by the gods. When that great archer advanced, which brave ones surrounded him? The best of the Panchalas is loved by all those who have been born from noble lineages. Uttamouja always performs supreme deeds in battle. He is always engaged in Dhananjaya’s welfare and in supreme injury towards me. He is the equal of Yama, Vaishravana, Aditya, the great Indra and Varuna. He is famous as a maharatha and fought against Drona in the battle. He was prepared to give up his life in that tumult? Which brave ones surrounded him? Dhrishtaketu was the only one among the Chedis who went to the Pandavas. When he advanced against Drona, who opposed him? The brave Ketuman slew Prince Sudarshana at the other end of the gate to the mountains.[50] When he advanced against Drona, who countered him? The tiger among men was a woman earlier and is conversant with his own good and bad qualities. Yajnasena’s son, Shikhandi, is never distressed in battle. He was the reason behind the death of the great-souled Devavrata in battle. When he advanced towards Drona, which brave ones surrounded him? In all the qualities, the brave one surpasses

Dhananjaya. His weapons are always truth and brahmacharya. He is Vasudeva's equal in valour and Dhananjaya's equal in strength. He is like the sun in his energy and like Brihaspati in his intelligence. The great-souled Abhimanyu is like death with a gaping mouth. When he advanced towards Drona, which brave ones surrounded him? Subhadra's son is the destroyer of enemy heroes. He is young, but is as celebrated as the ocean. When he advanced against Drona, what was the state of your mind then?[51] Droupadi's sons are tigers among men. They rushed towards Drona in that battle, like rivers towards the sea. Which brave ones repulsed them? Those children gave up all play for twelve years. They observed supreme vows and for the sake of weapons, served Bhishma. They were Kshatranjaya, Kshatradeva, Kshatradharma and Manina, the brave sons of Dhrishtadyumna. When they advanced against Drona, who opposed them? The Vrishnis look upon him as the equal of one hundred armoured ones in battle. When the great archer Chekitana advanced against Drona, who countered him? Anadhrishti was the son of Vriddhakshema and was never distressed in his soul. He once abducted the princess of Kalinga in a battle. Who restrained him when he advanced against Drona? The five brothers from Kekaya are devoted to dharma and truth is their valour. Their complexion is like fireflies. Their armour, weapons and standards are red. Those brave ones are the sons of the Pandavas's mother's sister and desire their victory.[52] When they attacked so as to kill Drona, which brave ones surrounded them? The angry kings fought against him for six months in Varanavata, wishing to kill him, but could not defeat him. He is the lord of battles. He is supreme among archers and is brave. He is extremely strong and is unwavering in his aim. When that tiger among men attacked Drona, who countered Yuyutsu? In Varanasi, wishing to obtain a wife, the maharatha used a broad-headed arrow in battle to bring down the son of the king of Kashi from his chariot.[53] Dhrishtadyumna, the great archer, is the counsellor of the Parthas. He was created for Drona's death and is engaged in causing injury to Duryodhana. In the battle, he consumed the warriors and shattered the ranks. When he advanced towards Drona, which brave ones restrained him? Shikhandi's son, Kshatradeva, was reared in Drupada's lap and is skilled in use of weapons. Who restrained his advance against Drona? Ushinara's maharatha son[54] covered the entire earth with the pole of his chariot, as if girding it with the hide of a calf. He is foremost among those who kill the enemy. He performed ten horse sacrifices, a substitute for all sacrifices, and provided an abundance of food, drink and *dakshina*. He protected his subjects as if they were his own sons. The brave one gave away as many cattle as dakshina as there are grains of sand in the waters of the Ganga. No man has accomplished such a deed earlier, nor will any man perform this feat in the future. The gods themselves exclaimed, 'This is an extremely difficult deed. In the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects, we do not see a second person like Ushinara's son, who has been born, or will be born.' Shaibya is brave. After death, he will go to places that are not attainable by men of this world. Who repulsed the grandson Shaibya, when he advanced towards Drona, like death with a gaping mouth? Virata of Matsya has an army of chariots and is the killer of enemies. When he advanced against Drona in battle, which brave ones surrounded him? Vrikodara's son grew up in a single day.[55] He is immensely strong and powerful. He is a terrible rakshasa and knows the use of maya. He causes great terror among those on my side. He desires the victory of the Parthas and is a thorn for my sons. Who restrained the mighty-armed Ghatotkacha's advance towards Drona? O Sanjaya! There are many others who have their objective in mind. They are prepared to give up their lives in battle. Who can they not vanquish? Their refuge is the tiger among men, the wielder of the Sharnga bow. He desires the welfare of the Parthas. How can they be defeated? He is infinite. He is the preceptor of the worlds. He is the eternal protector of the worlds. The divine Narayana is the protector in all battles. He is the lord with the celestial soul. The learned ones speak about his divine deeds. I will recount his deeds with devotion and thus obtain calmness in my own self."'

CHAPTER 987(10)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Hear about Vasudeva’s divine deeds. Govinda performed them and no other man can ever replicate them. O Sanjaya! When the great-souled one was brought up as a child in a family of cowherds, he made the strength of his arms known to the three worlds. When he dwelt in the forests along the Yamuna, he killed the king of horses,[56] who was like the wind in speed and Uchchaishrava’s equal in strength. There was a terrible danava in the form of a bull.[57] He arose among the cows, like death. Though still a child, he killed him with his arms. The one with lotus eyes also killed great asuras like Pralamba, Naraka, Jamba, Pitha and Muru, who was like a mountain. The immensely energetic Kamsa was protected by Jarasandha. But with his valour alone,[58] Krishna killed him and his followers in battle. The brave Sunama, the king of Shurasena, was the leader of an entire akshouhini. The valiant one was the second brother of Kamsa, the king of Bhoja. With Baladeva as his second, Krishna, the slayer of enemies, spiritedly consumed him in a battle, with all his soldiers. The brahmana rishi Durvasa was extremely prone to rage. He worshipped him with his wife and obtained a boon from him.[59] The lotus-eyed and brave one vanquished many kings at the svayamvara of the daughter of the king of Gandhara.[60] As if they were born horses, the intolerant kings were yoked to the wedding chariot and lacerated with whips. The mighty-armed Jarasandha was the leader of an entire akshouhini. Janardana thought of a way so that he might be killed by someone else.[61] The brave and powerful king of Chedi was the leader of kings. In the dispute over the arghya, he was killed like an animal.[62] Soubha, the city of the daityas, was established in the sky. It was protected by Shalva and was invincible. Through his valour, Madhava brought it down into the ocean.[63] He defeated in battle Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Magadha, Andhaka, Kasi, Kosala, Vatsa, Garga, Karusha and Pundra. O Sanjaya! Avanti, the south, the mountains, Dasheraka, Kashmiraka, Ourasaka, Pishacha, Samandara, Kamboja, Vatadhana, Chola, Pandya, Trigarta, Malava and Darada were difficult to conquer. Ashvas, Shakas and

Yavanas and their followers arrived from different directions. But Pundarikaksha vanquished them. In earlier times, he penetrated the abode of makaras, inhabited by aquatic creatures. In the midst of the waters, he vanquished Varuna in battle.[64] Hrishikesha slew Panchajana, who resided in the nether regions of *patala* and obtained the divine conch shell Panchajanya.[65] Together with Partha, the immensely strong one satisfied Agni in Khandava and obtained the invincible agneya weapon, the chakra.[66] He rode on Vinata's son and caused terror in Amaravati.[67] The brave one brought *parijata* from the great Indra's residence. Knowing his valour, Shakra tolerated this. We have not heard of any king who has not been vanquished by Krishna. O Sanjaya! Pundarikaksha performed an extremely wonderful deed in my assembly hall.[68] Who else can do this? Because of that, I have sought refuge with him in devotion. I look upon Krishna as the lord. I know everything about it, having witnessed it myself. There is no end to his valour, or to his intelligence. O Sanjaya! Nor can anyone reach the limit of Hrishikesha's deeds.

'"Gada, Samba, Pradyumna, Viduratha, Agavaha, Aniruddha, Charudeshna, Sarana, Ulmuka, Nishatha, Jhalli, the valiant Babhru, Prithu, Viprithu, Samika, Arimejaya—these and other powerful Vrishni heroes are skilled in striking. They will station themselves in battle, in the ranks of the Pandava army. They will be summoned by the great-souled hero among the Vrishnis, Keshava. It is my view that everything will then confront a great danger. Where Janardana is, the brave Rama will be there.[69] He wields the plough and wears a garland of wild flowers. His strength is like that of ten thousand elephants. He is like the summit of Kailasa. The brahmanas describe Vasudeva as the father of everything. O Sanjaya! Will he fight for the cause of the sons of Pandu? O son![70] If Keshava dons his armour for the sake of the Pandavas, there is no one in our army who can withstand him. If all the Kurus manage to defeat all the Pandavas, for their sake, Varshneya will take up his supreme weapons. That mighty-armed tiger among men will kill all the kings and the Kouravas in battle and give the earth to the sons of Kunti. Hrishikesha is the charioteer and Dhananjaya is the warrior in that chariot. Where is the ratha in our army who will confront them in battle? There is no means whereby the Kurus can be seen to obtain victory. Tell me everything about how the battle continued. Arjuna is Keshava's soul and Krishna is Kiriti's soul. Arjuna is always victorious and Krishna's deeds are eternal. All the qualities are vested in Keshava, beyond measure. Because of his delusion, Duryodhana does not know Krishna Madhava. Because of his delusion and because he is driven by destiny, the noose of death is in front of him and he does not know Dasharha Krishna and Pandava Arjuna. Earlier, those great-souled ones were the gods Nara and Narayana. They were a single soul and are seen by men on earth as divided into two. They are famous and invincible. If they wish, they can destroy the army with their minds. But because they are humans, they do not wish that.[71] The destruction of the yuga is near and the people are deluded. O son! That is the reason for the death of Bhishma and the great-souled Drona. Death can never be prevented through brahmacharya, the study of the Vedas, rites or weapons. Those brave ones were revered by the worlds. They were skilled in the use of weapons and were invincible in battle. O Sanjaya! On hearing that Bhishma and Drona have been slain, why should I remain alive? After learning about the death of Bhishma and Drona, we will now have to seek refuge with Yudhishthira, about whose prosperity we used to be jealous earlier. This destruction of the Kurus has come about because of my deeds. O suta! When one is ripe for slaughter, even a blade of grass is like the vajra. Yudhishthira will obtain unmatched prosperity in this world. It is because of his anger that the great archers, Bhishma and Drona, have been brought down. Dharma is naturally on his side, though humans typically have adharma. Destiny is cruel and it is time for everything to be destroyed. O son! Even learned men cannot think of means to counteract it. Everything progresses because of destiny. That is my view. Therefore, tell me everything, exactly as it happened, about that supreme hardship, without discarding anything. It cannot be crossed and leads to grievous reflection.'"

‘Sanjaya said, “I will describe everything to you, exactly as I saw it, about how Drona was made to sit down and was brought down by the Pandus and the Srinjayas. Having been appointed the commander, in the midst of all the soldiers, Bharadvaja’s maharatha son spoke these words to your son. ‘O king! You have shown me great honour by appointing me the commander today, after that bull among the Kouravas, the son of the one who goes to the ocean. O king! You will obtain fruits that are commensurate with your action. What desire of yours can I satisfy today? Tell me what you desire.’ At this, Duryodhana thought and consulted Karna, Duhshasana and the others. He told the invincible preceptor, foremost among victorious ones, ‘If you wish, grant me the boon that you will capture Yudhishthira, foremost among charioteers, alive and bring him before me.’ On hearing your son’s words, the preceptor of the Kurus, spoke these words, bringing delight to all the soldiers. ‘The king, Kunti’s son, whom you wish to be captured, is fortunate. O extremely invincible one! You have only asked for the boon that he should be captured, not that he should be killed. O tiger among men! Why did you not desire that he should be killed? O Duryodhana! There is no doubt that you know about what should be done. It is wonderful that Dharma’s son should not have an enmity like that towards you. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! If you wish to remain alive and protect your own lineage, then after vanquishing the Pandavas in battle, give them a share of the kingdom and act according to fraternal relations. The king who is Kunti’s son is fortunate. The intelligent one has been born auspiciously. He is truly Ajatashatru.[72] Even you are affectionate towards him.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by Drona, your son suddenly displayed the sentiments that always course through him. Even someone like Brihaspati is incapable of controlling his countenance. O king! Therefore, your son joyfully spoke these words. ‘O preceptor! If Kunti’s son is killed by you, I will not be able to obtain victory. If Yudhishthira is slain, there is no doubt that the Parthas will slaughter all of us. They are incapable of being killed in battle, even by all the immortals. The one among them who is left, will destroy us. But he[73] is truthful in his pledges. When he is brought here, we will defeat him again in a gambling match. The Kounteyas will follow him again to the forest. Thus my victory will manifest itself for a long time to come. That is the reason I do not desire Dharmaraja's death.' Drona was intelligent and was knowledgeable about artha. Having ascertained his crooked intention, he thought about this for some time and then granted him the boon.

'"Drona replied, 'If Yudhishthira is not protected by the brave Arjuna in battle, you can think that the eldest Pandava has already been brought under your control. O son![74] But Partha is incapable of being repulsed in battle, even by Indra and the gods and the asuras. That is the reason I cannot advance against him. In the knowledge of weapons, there is no doubt that he has been my disciple earlier. He is young and has accomplished many deeds. He is single-minded in purpose. He has obtained many weapons from Indra and Rudra. O king! You have also incensed him and I cannot advance against him. Let Partha be removed from the field of battle, by whatever means that are possible, and Dharmaraja will be vanquished. O bull among men! Once he has been captured, you think that victory will be yours. Think of means, so that his capture is beyond doubt. I will capture the king, who is devoted to truth and dharma. O king! There is no doubt that I will bring him under your control today, as long as he is stationed in the battle before me, even for an instant. But let Dhananjaya, Kunti's son and tiger among men, be removed. With Phalguna present, Partha Yudhishthira is incapable of being captured in battle, even by Indra and the gods and the asuras.'"

'Sanjaya said, "After Drona promised the king's capture, your extremely foolish sons thought that he had been already captured. Your son knew that Drona was partial towards the Pandavas. Therefore, to make him stick to the pledge, he made the counsel generally known. O destroyer of enemies! Duryodhana proclaimed among all the soldiers that Pandava would be captured."'

‘Sanjaya said, “The soldiers heard that Yudhishthira would be captured. They roared like lions and this mingled with the sounds of their arrows and their conch shells. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja got to know everything about this through his spies, and about what Bharadvaja’s son desired to do. He summoned all his brothers and all the soldiers. Dharmaraja spoke these words to Dhananjaya. ‘O tiger among men! You have heard about what Drona wishes to do today. Let all appropriate measures be taken accordingly. O destroyer of enemies! It is true that Drona has taken a pledge. But it is not infallible and everything depends on you. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, fight near me today, so that Duryodhana cannot obtain what he desires from Drona.’

‘“Arjuna replied, ‘O king! Just as I can never act so as to bring about the preceptor’s death, I will never forsake you. O Pandava! I would rather give up my life than fight against my preceptor and kill him. O king! Dhritarashtra’s son wishes to capture you in the battle. He will never accomplish his desire in the world of the living. As long as I am alive, Drona will never be able to capture you. Even if the wielder of the vajra himself, together with the gods and the daityas, were to try to capture you in battle, they will fail. O Indra among kings! As long as I am alive, you should not be frightened. Drona is foremost among wielders of weapons and among those who wield all weapons. I do not remember having ever uttered a falsehood. I do not remember ever having been vanquished. I do not remember having not fulfilled a pledge I have made, even partially.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Conch shells, drums, cymbals and tambourines were then sounded in the residence of the Pandavas. The great-souled Pandavas roared like lions. The fearful twang of bowstrings and the slapping of palms rose up into heaven. On hearing the conch shells sounded by the great-souled Pandavas, your army also caused musical instruments to be played. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The arrays and divisions, on your side and theirs, slowly advanced towards each other, wishing to fight in the battle. A tumultuous battle commenced between the Pandavas and the Kurus and Drona and the

Panchalas, and it made the body hair stand up. O king! Though they made every endeavour, the Srinjayas were unable to drive back Drona's army, because it was protected by Drona himself. The armed and mighty rathas of your son were unable to drive back the Pandava soldiers, because they were protected by Kiriti. Protected thus, the respective soldiers seemed to be subdued, like blossoms that are asleep in the forests in the night. O king! He[75] was on a golden chariot, as radiant as the sun. He shattered the divisions and roamed around, amidst the ranks. He was on a single chariot. But he acted so quickly in that battle, that the terrified Pandus and Srinjayas thought there were several of him. He released terrible arrows that travelled in every direction. O great king! There was fright in the army of the Pandaveyas. He seemed to be like the sun when it has attained midday, radiating a hundred rays and quickly drawing out sweat. That is what Drona looked like then. O venerable one! The Pandaveyas were incapable of glancing towards him in that battle, like the danavas towards the great Indra, when enraged. Bharadvaja's powerful son confounded the soldiers. He swiftly pierced Dhrishtadyumna's army with his sharp arrows. He seemed to cover and obstruct all the directions and the sky with his arrows. He crushed the army of the Pandus, even where Parshata was."'

CHAPTER 990(13)

'Sanjaya said, "There was great confusion in the army of the Pandavas. Drona roamed amidst the Pandavas, like a fire consuming deadwood. He burnt those soldiers, as if Agni himself had arisen. On seeing him on the golden chariot in that battle, the Srinjayas trembled. He was swift in continuously stretching the bow. The twang of his bow could be heard, like the clap of thunder. Rathas, riders, elephants, horses and foot soldiers were mangled through the terrible arrows released by his hands. His arrows were like roaring clouds at the end of the summer, assisted by the wind. They were like a hailstorm and created terror among the enemy. O king! The lord roamed amidst the soldiers, agitating and terrifying them. He increased the fear that humans have for the foe. His bow, decorated with gold, was like clouds tinged with lightning. It was repeatedly seen, as he roamed around on a chariot that was like dense clouds. The brave one was truthful, wise, always devoted to dharma and extremely terrible. He was like the controller at the end of a yuga, creating a terrible river. Its currents resulted from the power of his intolerance. It was full of large numbers of predators and overflowed with masses of soldiers. The heroes were trees along the banks, which were being eaten away. The blood was the water. The chariots were eddies. Elephants and horses were the banks. Armour constituted rafts, the flesh was the mud. The foam was formed out of fat, marrow, bones and excellent headdresses. The battle seemed to be completely covered by a cloud. It was infested with fish in the form of javelins. Men, elephants and horses flowed along, driven by the force of the arrows. The bodies were like the tops of trees, the arms were like snakes. The heads were like tender fruit. The swords were like fish. The chariots and elephants were like lakes and it was decorated with many ornaments. The maharathas were hundreds of whirlpools. The dust of the earth was like garlands. In that battle, it was possible for the greatly valiant ones to cross it. But cowards found it difficult to cross. Brave ones were strewn around like snakes. The ones who were alive were like aquatic birds. Torn umbrellas were like gigantic swans. The crowns were like smaller birds. The chakras were tortoises, the clubs were crocodiles, the arrows were smaller fish. It was populated by large numbers of terrible wild crows, vultures and jackals. In that battle, the powerful Drona killed beings with his arrows. O supreme among kings! Hundreds of them were conveyed to the world of the ancestors. Hundreds of bodies caused obstructions. The hair constituted moss and weeds. O king! Such was the terrible river that began to flow there and it increased one’s fear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus was their army defeated by those on your side.

‘“With Yudhishthira at the forefront, all of them attacked Drona from every direction. On seeing them advance, the brave ones on your side wielded firm bows and attacked them back on every side. The battle that commenced made the body hair stand up. Shakuni was conversant with a hundred different kinds of maya and attacked Sahadeva, piercing his charioteer, standard and chariot with sharp arrows. However, Madri's son wasn't greatly enraged. He pierced his standard, bow, charioteer and horses with arrows and then pierced his maternal uncle with sixty. At this, Soubala grasped a club and jumped down from his supreme chariot. O king! With that club, he brought down his[76] charioteer from his chariot. O king! Thus bereft of his chariot, the immensely strong one grasped a club in his hands. The brave ones began to sport in that battle, like two mountains with peaks. Drona pierced the king of Panchala with ten arrows, was himself pierced back in turn by many arrows and pierced back again with more than a hundred arrows. Bhimasena pierced Vivimshati with twenty sharp arrows. Though he was pierced, the brave one did not tremble and it was extraordinary. O great king! Vivimshati suddenly deprived Bhima of his horses, standard, bow and arrows and all the soldiers honoured this feat. But the brave one[77] could not tolerate the victory of the enemy in battle. With his club, he brought down his charioteer and all his horses. The brave Shalya seemed to be smiling. As if to anger him, he pierced Nakula, the beloved son of his sister, with arrows. In the battle, the powerful Nakula brought down his horses, umbrella, standard, charioteer and bow and blew on his conch shell. Dhrishtaketu severed the many kinds of arrows Kripa released towards him. He then pierced Kripa with seventy arrows and then used three more to bring down the sign on his standard. Kripa countered him with a great shower of arrows. In this fashion, in that battle, the brahmana[78] countered Dhrishtaketu and fought with him. Satyaki pierced Kritavarma between the breasts with an iron arrow. Having pierced him, he smiled and pierced him with seventy arrows, piercing him again with others. But Bhoja[79] pierced him with seventy-seven sharp arrows. However, Shini's descendant did not waver, like a mountain before a swift wind. Senapati quickly struck Susharma in his inner organs and he[80] struck him back in the shoulder joint with a lance. With the immensely valiant Matsyas, Virata attacked Vaikartana in the battle and it was extraordinary. This was terrible manliness on the part of the son of the suta. He countered the soldiers with his straight-tufted arrows. Drupada himself confronted King Bhagadatta. O great king! The battle between the two, skilled in the use of weapons, was wonderful and created terror among beings. O king! In the battle, the valiant Bhurishrava enveloped Yajnasena's maharatha son[81] with a shower of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! Shikhandi was enraged at this and pierced Somadatta's son with ninety arrows, making him tremble. The rakshasas, Hidimba's son and Alambusa, fought an extraordinary battle against each other, wishing to kill each other. They proudly created a hundred different kinds of maya and used maya against each other. They disappeared as they wandered around, giving rise to great wonder. Chekitana fought a terrible battle with Anuvinda, like that between Bala and the immensely strong Shakra, when the gods and the asuras fought. O king! Lakshmana fought fiercely with Kshatradeva, like Vishnu in ancient times, when he fought against Hiranyaksha.[82]

'"Pourava was on swift horses and his chariot was stocked with every implement. O king! He roared and attacked Subhadra's son. The immensely strong one swiftly attacked, desiring to fight. Abhimanyu, the destroyer of enemies, fought a great battle with him. Pourava enveloped Subhadra's son with a storm of arrows. Arjuna's son brought down his standard, umbrella and bow on the ground. Subhadra's son pierced Pourava with seven swift arrows. He then pierced his horses and charioteer with five arrows. The soldiers were delighted at this and he roared repeatedly like a lion. Arjuna's son then quickly affixed an arrow that was certain to kill Pourava. But Hardikya[83] used two arrows to slice down his bow and arrow. Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, cast aside that shattered bow. He grasped a sharp sword and a shield. He exhibited his own valour and whirled it, as he moved around. He whirled it in front of him and brandished it in the air. He leapt up and shook it. O king! No difference could be distinguished between the sword and the shield. He leapt onto the shaft of Pourava's chariot and suddenly roared. Having ascended onto Pourava's chariot, he grasped him by the side of the hair. He killed the charioteer with a kick and sliced down the standard with his sword. He raised him up, like Tarkshya[84] agitating the water of the ocean and raising up a snake from it. All the kings saw him with his disheveled hair. He looked like an unconscious bull, when it has been brought down by a lion. Jayadratha could not tolerate the sight of Pourava having been brought down, afflicted and without a protector, and in the control of Arjuna's son. He grasped a shield marked with the giant wings of a peacock and decorated with a hundred bells, and a sword. He roared and jumped down from his chariot. On seeing Saindhava, Krishna's son[85] let go of Pourava. He swiftly leapt down from the chariot, like a hawk alighting. Spears, lances and swords were hurled towards him by the enemy. But Krishna's son sliced them down with his sword or countered them with his shield. He displayed the strength of his own arms to the soldiers. The strong one again raised his giant sword and shield. The brave one advanced against Vriddhakshatra's heir,[86] who was a sworn enemy of his father's. It was like a tiger advancing against an elephant. They cheerfully advanced and attacked each other, using swords as weapons, like a tiger and a lion using teeth and claws to fight. No one could distinguish any difference between those lions among men and the motions of the sword and the shield.[87] When they whirled their swords and brought them down, or when they fended off each other's blows, no special difference could be seen between the weapons. They roamed around in excellent motions, advancing and retreating. The great-souled ones looked like mountains with wings. As he extended his sword to strike, Jayadratha struck the shield of Subhadra's illustrious son. The sword stuck in the radiant shield, which had plates made out of gold and the great sword snapped when the king of Sindhu tried to extract it forcefully. On seeing that the sword had been shattered, Jayadratha was instantly seen to retreat six steps and climb onto his chariot again. In the battle, Krishna's son resorted to his supreme chariot and all the kings surrounded him from every direction. Arjuna's immensely strong heir raised his shield and sword and roared, glancing towards Jayadratha.

Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, then abandoned the king of Sindhu and tormented the soldiers, like the sun on the earth. In the encounter, Shalya hurled a terrible javelin at him. It was made completely out of iron and was decorated with gold. It was as radiant as the flames of a fire. As it descended, Krishna's son leapt up and caught it, like Vinata's son grasping a supreme serpent that has fallen from above. He then unsheathed his sword. On witnessing the dexterity and spirit of that infinitely energetic one, all the kings roared like lions. Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, then used the valour of his arms to hurl the javelin, radiant with lapis lazuli, back at Shalya. It was like a snake that had just cast off its skin. It reached Shalya's chariot and slew his charioteer and brought him down from the chariot. Virata, Drupada, Dhrishtaketu, Yudhishthira, Satyaki, the Kekayas, Bhima, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the twins and Droupadi's sons uttered sounds of acclamation. There were many different kinds of sounds from arrows and diverse roars like lions. They arose and delighted Subhadra's son, who had not retreated. But your sons could not tolerate those signs of victory on the part of the enemy. O great king! They suddenly surrounded him and enveloped him with sharp arrows, like clouds pouring down on a mountain. Artayani,[88] the slayer of enemies, wished to do what would bring pleasure to your sons and was enraged because of the overthrow of his charioteer. He attacked Subhadra's son."'

CHAPTER 991(14)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! You have described to me many wonderful duels. On hearing what you have said, I envy those who possess eyes. Men in the world will speak of this as wonderful, the fight between the Kurus and the Pandavas, like that between the gods and the asuras. I am never satisfied on hearing about this supreme battle. Therefore, tell me about the encounter between Artayani and Subhadra's son."

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that his charioteer had been sent to the regulator,[89] Shalya grasped a club that was completely made out of iron. He leapt down from his supreme chariot and roared in anger. He looked like the flaming fire of destruction, or Death with a staff in his hand. Bhima grasped a mighty club and quickly rushed towards him. Subhadra's son also grasped a gigantic club that was like the vajra and summoned Shalya to a fight. But Bhima made efforts and restrained Subhadra's son. The powerful Bhimasena approached Shalya in that battle and stood immobile, like a mountain. The king of Madra saw the immensely strong Bhima and forcefully advanced towards him, like a tiger towards an elephant. Thousands of trumpets and conch shells were sounded. There were roars like those of lions and the mighty sounds of drums. On seeing those two, equal in spirit, rush towards each other, there were sounds of applause among hundreds of Pandavas and Kurus. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among all the kings, there is no one other than the lord of Madra who can withstand Bhimasena's force in battle. There is no warrior in this world, other than Vrikodara, who can withstand the force of the club of the great-souled lord of Madra. Bhima's mighty club was tied in hemp and decorated with gold. It caused great delight among the people. When wielded, it seemed to blaze. Shalya's beautiful club was also like a giant flash of lightning, when he roamed and whirled it around. They wandered around in circles and lowered their clubs. They roared like bulls, as if with horns lowered. They wielded their clubs and executed circular motions. In the encounter, there was no difference between those lions among men. Struck by Bhimasena, Shalya's gigantic club emitted extremely terrible sparks of fire and the club was shattered. In similar fashion, when struck by the enemy, Bhimasena's club was as resplendent as a tree covered with fireflies during the evening of the monsoon. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king of Madra hurled a club in that battle.[90] It blazed through the sky and created many fires. Similarly, Bhimasena hurled a club at the enemy and tormented his soldiers, like a giant meteor that was falling down. The best of clubs struck each other. They sighed like the maidens of serpents and created fire. They were like giant tigers using claws, or giant elephants using tusks. They roamed around, striking each other with clubs. In a short while, struck by clubs, they were covered with blood and the great-souled ones looked like flowering kimshukas. The sounds of the clubs wielded by those lions among men could be heard in all the directions, like that of Shakra's vajra. The club of the king of Madra struck Bhima on the left and the right. But he did not waver, like a mountain that has been struck. Similarly, the immensely strong Bhima's club struck the lord of Madra. But he bore it with patience, like a mountain struck by the vajra. They raised their giant clubs and attacked each other with great force. They repeatedly roamed around, executing circular motions. They approached each other by eight steps and suddenly attacked each other like elephants wishing to kill each other, with clubs like iron rods. They were severely wounded from the force of each other's clubs. The brave ones simultaneously fell down, like shattered poles of Indra. Shalya was deprived of his senses, having been struck by the club, and sighed repeatedly. O great king! On seeing this, maharatha Kritavarma quickly approached him, as he was unconscious and immobile like a serpent, having been struck by the club. Maharatha Kritavarma swiftly lifted the lord of Madra up onto his own chariot and carried him away from the field of battle. The brave Bhima was unconscious, like someone who is drunk. However, the mighty-armed one raised himself in an instant and could be seen, with the club in his hand. Your sons saw that the lord of Madra had retreated. O venerable one! They trembled, with their elephants, chariots, infantry and horses. Those on your side were routed by the Pandavas, who desired victory. They were frightened and fled in different directions, like clouds scattered by the wind. The maharatha Pandaveyas defeated the sons of Dhritarashtra. O king! The illustrious ones were radiant and roamed around on the field of battle. They roared fiercely like lions and blew on their conch shells in delight. Drums were sounded, together with kettledrums and tambourines."'

CHAPTER 992(15)

'Sanjaya said, "Your great army was shattered in that battle by the Pandus. On seeing this, Vrishasena exhibited the power of his weapons and began to protect it single-handed. O venerable one! Vrishasena released arrows in the ten directions. He roamed around and pierced men, horses, chariots and elephants. The mighty-armed one released thousands of mighty and flaming arrows. They were like the rays of the sun during the summer. O great king! Rathas and riders were oppressed by them and suddenly fell down on the ground, like trees broken by the wind. O king! In that battle, masses of horses, masses of chariots and masses of elephants were brought down in every direction in hundreds and thousands. On seeing him fearlessly roam around in that battle alone, all the kings[91] surrounded him and attacked him together. Nakula's son, Shatanika, attacked Vrishasena and pierced him with ten iron arrows that penetrated the inner organs. At this, Karna's son severed his bow and brought down his standard. Wishing to protect their brother, Droupadi's other sons rushed towards him. They made Karna's son disappear because of the shower of their arrows. Rathas, with Drona's son at the forefront, advanced towards them. O great king! They quickly enveloped Droupadi's maharatha sons with many types of arrows, like clouds on a mountain. Out of affection towards their sons, the Pandavas quickly countered them, together with warriors from the Panchalas, Kekayas, Matsyas and Srinjayas. The battle that raged between those on your side and the sons of Pandu was fearful and tumultuous and made the body hair stand up, like that between the gods and the danavas. The Kurus and the Pandavas fought well, excited by anger. They glanced towards each other, having earlier engendered the animosity towards each other. Because of that wrath, those infinitely energetic ones seemed to be like the supreme of birds[92] and the serpents, battling in the sky. With Bhima, Karna, Kripa, Drona, Drona's son, Parshata and Satyaki, the field of battle was resplendent, as if the sun of destruction had arisen. The immensely strong ones fiercely fought in that battle, seeking to kill each other, like Bali of the danavas against the gods. Yudhishthira's army let out a mighty roar and began to slaughter your soldiers, driving the maharathas away.

'"On seeing that the army was routed and sorely oppressed by the enemy, Drona said, 'O brave ones! Do not run away.' Drona possessed red horses. He was angry. He was like an elephant with four tusks. He penetrated the Pandava army and attacked Yudhishthira. Yudhishthira pierced him with sharp arrows tufted with heron feathers. But Drona severed his bow and quickly rushed against him. The illustrious Kumara from the Panchalas was protecting his[93] wheels and countered the advancing Drona, like the shoreline against the lord of the rivers. On seeing Drona, bull among the brahmanas, thus repulsed by Kumara, delighted leonine roars and sounds of applause were heard. In that great battle, Kumara angrily pierced Drona in the chest with an arrow and repeatedly roared, like a lion. But in that encounter, the immensely strong Drona repulsed Kumara. Having overcome all fatigue, he displayed the dexterity of his hands and released many thousands of arrows. The brave one, supreme among brahmanas, devoted to the conduct of aryas and well-versed in the use of weapons, slew Kumara, the protector of the chariot wheels. He penetrated the midst of the army and roamed around in all the directions. Bharadvaja's son, bull among rathas, was the protector of your soldiers. He pierced Shikhandi with twelve arrows, Uttamouja with twenty, Nakula with five, Sahadeva with seven, Yudhishthira with twelve, each of Droupadi's sons with three, Satyaki with five and Matsya with ten. In that battle, he agitated the warriors and rushed against them. With a desire to capture him, he advanced towards Yudhishthira, Kunti's son. O king! Maharatha Yugandhara repulsed Bharadvaja's son, who was enraged, like the ocean agitated by a storm. Having pierced Yudhishthira with straight-tufted arrows, he[94] brought Yugandhara down from the chariot with a broad-headed arrow. Virata, Drupada, the Kekayas, Satyaki, Shibi, Vyaghradatta from Panchala, the valiant Simhasena and many others sought to protect Yudhishthira. They showered many arrows and obstructed his path. O king! Vyaghradatta from Panchala pierced Drona with fifty sharp arrows and the soldiers roared. Maharatha Simhasena swiftly pierced Drona, rigid in his vows, and suddenly laughed out in delight. Drona dilated his eyes and rubbed the string of his bow. He slapped his palms loudly and attacked. The powerful one used broad-headed arrows to sever the heads, adorned with earrings, of Simhasena and Vyaghradatta from their bodies. He used a shower of arrows to torment the maharatha Pandavas and approached Yudhishthira, like death, the destroyer. O king! A loud sound arose in Yudhishthira's army, among all the warriors, when the one who was rigid in his vows approached him. On witnessing Drona's valour, this is what the soldiers said. 'The king has been slain. The king who is Dhritarashtra's son will be successful today. In this battle, he will return to us and to Dhritarashtra's son.'[95] While your soldiers were thus conversing, maharatha Kounteya swiftly arrived.

'"His chariot roared. He had created a terrible river. The water was blood and the chariots were eddies. It was full of the bodies and bones of brave ones and it conveyed beings to the world of the dead. Masses of arrows were the giant foam and it was infested with fish in the form of javelins. Having routed the Kurus, Pandava quickly crossed that river. Kiriti suddenly attacked Drona's army and shrouded and confounded it with a giant net of arrows. The illustrious Kounteya quickly affixed arrows and shot them incessantly, so that no one could distinguish a gap between these.[96] O great king! The directions, the sky, the firmament and the earth disappeared, covered by the arrows. O king! Nothing could be seen in the field of battle then. The wielder of Gandiva created a great darkness with his arrows. With the sun about to set, dust covered everything. Enemy could no longer be distinguished from well-wisher. Drona, Duryodhana and the others announced a withdrawal. Knowing that the enemy was extremely terrified and no longer had its mind on the fight, Bibhatsu slowly withdrew his own soldiers. The Pandus, Srinjayas and Panchalas praised Partha with pleasant words, like rishis praising the sun. Having vanquished the enemy, Dhananjaya returned to his own camp, behind all the other soldiers. He was happy and was with Keshava. Pandu's son was radiant on his colourful chariot, which was decorated with excellent and expensive emeralds, crystals, gold, diamonds and quartz. He was as radiant as the moon in the sky, adorned with stars."'

Section Sixty-Six

Samshaptaka Vadha Parva

This parva has 717 shlokas and sixteen chapters.

Chapter 993(16): 49 shlokas
Chapter 994(17): 31 shlokas
Chapter 995(18): 39 shlokas
Chapter 996(19): 64 shlokas
Chapter 997(20): 53 shlokas
Chapter 998(21): 29 shlokas
Chapter 999(22): 63 shlokas
Chapter 1000(23): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1001(24): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1002(25): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1003(26): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1004(27): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1005(28): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1006(29): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1007(30): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1008(31): 77 shlokas

Samshaptakas are warriors who have taken an oath and these warriors (primarily the Trigartas) take an oath to die or kill Arjuna. This section is named after that oath. With Arjuna out of the way, the idea is that Drona will capture Yudhishthira. On the twelfth day of the battle, Arjuna kills several of the samshaptaka warriors. Drona kills many of the Panchalas, Matsyas and Kekayas. Bhima kills the king of Anga. Bhagadatta kills the king of Dasharna and Ruchiparva and unleashes the vaishnava *weapon on Arjuna, which is countered by Krishna. Arjuna kills Bhagadatta. Arjuna kills Vrishaka and Achala, Shakuni's brothers. Ashvatthama kills Nila of Mahishmati. Arjuna kills three of Karna's brothers.*

CHAPTER 993(16)

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of the earth! The soldiers returned to their own camps and retired, according to their respective ranks, arrays and divisions. Having asked the soldiers to withdraw, Drona was supremely distressed. He glanced towards Duryodhana, and in shame, spoke these words. ‘I had told you earlier that if Dhananjaya is present, even the gods are incapable of capturing Yudhishthira in the battle. All of you endeavoured against Partha, but you were repulsed. Do not doubt my words that Krishna and Pandava are invincible. O king! But if the one with the white horses can be taken away, then Yudhishthira will come under your control today.[1] In the battle, let someone challenge him in a different part of the field and I will not return without vanquishing Kounteya.[2] O king! While Dhrishtadyumna looks on, I will use the void, while Arjuna is absent from the battle, to penetrate the army and capture Dharmaraja. Know that you will see me find ways to seize him. O king! If Pandava Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, stays before me even for an instant in the battle, there is no doubt that I will forcibly seize him today, with all his men and soldiers. This will be superior to an overall victory in the battle.’ O king! On hearing Drona’s words, the lord of Trigarta, together with his brothers, spoke these words. ‘O king! The wielder of Gandiva has always treated us badly. O bull among the Bharata lineage! We have not caused him injury, but he has injured us. We remember those many instances of injury and are consumed by the fire of wrath. We can never sleep at night. The one with the divine weapons is now before our eyes. We will do everything that your heart desires and brings you pleasure and also brings us fame. We will draw him away from the field of battle and kill him. Let the earth be without Arjuna today, or without the Trigartas. We swear this before you and this pledge will not be falsified.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! Satyaratha, Satyadharma, Satyavarma, Satyeshu and Satyakarma—these five brothers arrived,[3] with ten thousand chariots, and spoke in this way. They took the pledge in that battle. The Malavas and the Tundirekas came with thirty thousand chariots. Susharma of Trigarta, tiger among men and the lord of Prasthala,[4] came with the Machellakas, Lalitthas and Madrakas, with ten thousand chariots and his brothers and took the oath. There were another ten thousand from many different countries. They arrived specially, for purposes of taking the oath.

'"They brought kindling so that each one could separately light a fire. They brought garments of kusha grass and colourful armour. They donned the armour, smeared themselves with clarified butter and clad themselves in the garments of kusha grass. The brave ones used bowstrings as girdles. They had given away hundreds and thousands of dakshina and had performed many sacrifices. They had sons. They had performed deeds to obtain worlds.[5] Having performed the deeds, they were ready to lay down their lives. They had devoted their souls to fame and victory. Through an excellent fight, they quickly aspired to obtain worlds that can be got through sacrifices at which a lot of dakshina is offered and rites, of which, brahmacharya and the study of the sacred texts are the foremost. Each of them separately satisfied the brahmanas by giving them gold coins, cows and garments. Then they addressed each other affectionately. They lit fires with black trails and took an oath for the battle. In front of the fires, firm in their resolution, they took the pledges. They took that oath for slaying Dhananjaya and loudly spoke these words, in the hearing of all beings. 'There are worlds for those who lie, those who kill brahmanas, drunkards, worlds for those who have intercourse with the preceptor's wife, those who rob the property of brahmanas, those who steal a king's grant,[6] those who forsake someone who seeks refuge, those who kill someone who seeks a favour, those who are arsonists, those who kill cows, those who are wicked, worlds for those who hate brahmanas, those who are overtaken by folly and do not have intercourse with their wives when it is the right season or have intercourse on the day of a shraddha, those who injure their own souls, those who misappropriate something left in trust, those who destroy learning, those who fight out of anger, those who follow inferior ones, worlds for those who are atheists, those who abandon their fires and their ancestors and there are worlds for those who are evil in conduct. If we return from the battle without killing Dhananjaya, or if we retreat because we are afflicted by his weapons, those[7] will be ours. If in this battle, we accomplish feats that are difficult to perform in this world, there is no doubt that we will obtain desirable worlds.’ O king! Having spoken in this way, they advanced to do battle. The brave ones challenged Arjuna in the southern direction.[8]

‘“Partha, tiger among men and the destroyer of enemy cities, was thus challenged and quickly spoke these words to Dharmaraja. ‘I have a vow that I will not retreat if I am challenged. O king! The samshaptakas are repeatedly challenging me. Susharma, together with his brothers, is challenging me to a battle. You should give me permission to kill him, together with his followers. O bull among men! I am incapable of tolerating this challenge. Know that these enemies have already been killed in battle. I tell you this truthfully.’ Yudhishthira replied, ‘O son![9] You have heard what Drona desires to do. Act so that his intentions become false. Drona is brave and powerful. He is skilled in the use of weapons and has conquered fatigue. O maharatha! He has sworn to capture me.’ Arjuna said, ‘O king! This Satyajit will protect you in battle today. As long as this Panchala is alive, the preceptor’s desire will not be fulfilled. If this lord Satyajit, tiger among men, is killed in the battle, you should never remain here, even if you are surrounded by everyone on our side.’ At this, the king gave Phalguna the permission and embraced him. He glanced at him affectionately and pronounced many benedictions on him. Having made these arrangements, the powerful Partha advanced against the Trigartas. He was like a hungry lion, hunting a herd of deer to satisfy his hunger. Duryodhana’s soldiers were filled with great delight. With Arjuna gone, they were extremely wrathful at the prospect of capturing Dharmaraja. With great energy, the soldiers rushed towards each other, like the powerful Ganga and Sarayu at the time of the monsoon, when they are overflowing with water.”’

CHAPTER 994(17)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The samshaptakas were delighted. They stationed themselves and their chariots on level ground, arrayed in a vyuha in the shape of a half-moon. O venerable one! On seeing that Kiriti was advancing towards them, those tigers among men were delighted. They roared loudly. That noise resounded in the directions and the sub-directions and covered the sky. Because the ground was covered with only a few men, there were no echoes. On seeing that they were extremely delighted, Dhananjaya smiled a little and addressed these words to Krishna. ‘O one who has Devaki as a mother! Behold. At a time when they should be weeping, the Trigarta brothers are delighted. They are about to be killed in the battle. Or perhaps, this is certainly a time for the Trigartas to rejoice. They will obtain excellent worlds that cannot be obtained by those who are cowards.’ Having spoken these words to the mighty-armed Hrishikesha in the battle, Arjuna encountered the army of the Trigartas, arranged in a battle formation. Phalguna grasped the conch shell Devadatta, embellished with gold and blew it with great force, filling all the directions. The samshaptaka chariots were terrified at the sound. In that battle, they were motionless, as if they were made out of stone. Their mounts dilated their eyes, with the ears, heads and lips paralysed. Their feet did not move. They excreted urine and vomited blood.

‘“When they regained consciousness, the army was arrayed again and simultaneously released arrows tufted with heron feathers towards Pandu’s son. However, Arjuna used fifteen swift arrows to counter thousands of those. The valiant one was swift and severed the arrows before they could reach him. Each of them then pierced Arjuna with ten sharp arrows. But Partha pierced them back with three arrows each. O king! Each of them then pierced Partha with five arrows. But the valorous one pierced each of them back with two arrows. They became extremely angry and enveloped Arjuna and Keshava with sharp arrows, like rain showering down on a lake. Hundreds and thousands of arrows were released towards Arjuna, like hordes of bees descending on flowering trees in a forest. Subahu pierced and penetrated Savyasachi’s diadem with thirty arrows that were as hard as rock. Those gold-tufted arrows stuck to Kiriti’s diadem and he looked like a sacrificial post decorated with gold. In the encounter, Pandava used a broad-headed arrow to sever Subahu’s arm-guard and enveloped him with a shower of arrows. Susharma, Suratha, Sudharma, Sudhanu and Subahu pierced Kiriti with ten arrows each. But the one with the monkey on his banner countered each of them separately with arrows. He pierced them back and severed their golden standards with broad-headed arrows. Having sliced down Sudhanu's bow, he killed his horses with arrows. Then he severed his helmeted head from his body. When that brave one was brought down, his followers were terrified. In fear, they fled towards Duryodhana's army. Vasava's son was extremely angry and slaughtered that large army with his net of arrows, like the sun's rays dispelling darkness. The army was shattered and fled in different directions. Savyasachi was overcome with great rage and the Trigartas were overcome with fear. They were slaughtered by Partha's straight-tufted arrows. They remained there, bereft of their senses, like a frightened herd of deer. The angry king of the Trigartas[10] spoke to the maharathas. 'O brave ones! Do not run away. You should not be overcome by fear. You pledged and took a terrible oath before all the soldiers. Having gone there, what will you tell the foremost ones among Duryodhana's soldiers? For this deed of ours in this battle, will we not be ridiculed in this world? All of us should unite and return to our respective divisions.' O king! Having been thus addressed, those brave ones repeatedly blew on their conch shells and gladdened each other. The masses of samshaptakas returned again, like the Narayana cowherds[11] that have returned to their death."'

CHAPTER 995(18)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing the samshaptaka army return again, Arjuna spoke to the great-souled Vasudeva. 'O Hrishikesha! Drive the horses towards the army of the samshaptakas. They will not return alive from the battle. That is my view. Today, you will witness the terrible strength of my weapons and my arms. I will bring them down, like an angry Rudra against animals.' Hearing this, Krishna smiled and addressed him with auspicious words. The invincible one conveyed Arjuna to the spot where he desired to go. They were radiant on a chariot drawn by white horses and because of this, seemed to cause a loss of the senses, like a vimana that has risen in the sky. The chariot performed circular motions, it moved forwards and back. O king! It was like Shakra's chariot, in the battle between the gods and the asuras in ancient times. The angry Narayanas raised different kinds of weapons in their hands. They surrounded Dhananjaya and enveloped him with a storm of arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, they made Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, invisible, together with Krishna. In that encounter, Phalguna became wrathful and showed double his valour. In that battle, he grasped the Gandiva and touched its string. There were frowns on his forehead, a sign of rage. Pandava blew on the great conch shell Devadatta. Arjuna resorted to the weapon known as *tvastra*, which was capable of destroying large numbers of the enemy at the same time. Many thousand of separate forms appeared.[12] Confused by these many different forms, they began to kill each other. Thinking each other to be Arjuna, they began to kill each other. 'This is Arjuna. This is Govinda. These are Yadava and Pandava.' They were confused and speaking in this way, they killed each other in that battle. They were confused by that supreme weapon and destroyed each other in this way. In that battle, the warriors were as beautiful as flowering kimshukas. The thousands of arrows released by those brave ones were reduced by that weapon to ashes and it conveyed them to Yama's abode.

'"Bibhatsu laughed and used his arrows to shatter the Lallittha, Malava, Machellaka and Trigarta warriors. Those brave kshatriyas were propelled by destiny. They were slaughtered and released many different showers of arrows towards Partha. Shrouded by that terrible shower of arrows, Arjuna, Keshava or the chariot could no longer be seen there. On seeing that the arrows had found their mark, they told each other in delight. 'Krishna and Arjuna have been killed.' They waved their garments in the air. The brave ones sounded thousands of drums, tambourines and conch shells. O venerable one! They emitted terrible roars, like lions. Krishna was covered in sweat and was exhausted. He told Arjuna, 'O Partha! Where are you? I cannot see you. O slayer of enemies! Are you alive?' He who knows all sentiments, thus adopted human sentiments. On discerning this, Pandava swiftly used the vayavya weapon and dispelled that shower of arrows. The illustrious Vayu[13] created a storm that blew away the samshaptakas, with their horses, elephants, chariots and weapons, as if they were heaps of dry leaves. O king! As they were borne away by the wind, they looked beautiful. O venerable one! They were like birds, flying away from trees at the right time.[14] Having afflicted them in this way, Dhananjaya swiftly killed hundreds and thousands of them with his sharp arrows. He used broad-headed arrows to sever their heads and their arms, still grasping weapons. He used his arrows to bring down thighs that were like the trunks of elephants. Some were wounded on their backs. Others lost their legs, or their heads, eyes and fingers. Dhananjaya deprived their bodies of many limbs. Their many chariots looked like the cities of gandharvas. He shattered them, and the horses, chariots and elephants, with his arrows. With the standards brought down, some of those groups of chariots looked like forests of palm trees, with the heads lopped off. There were elephants with excellent weapons, standards, goads and warriors. They were brought down, like wooden mountains struck with Shakra's vajra. There were horses with tails like whisks and armoured riders. Wounded by Partha's arrows, they fell down on the ground, with their entrails and eyes plucked out. Foot soldiers held swords that looked like nails. But these dropped from their hand and their armour was shattered. Their inner organs were mangled. They were killed and whirled around. They fell and were falling down. Because of this, the field of battle looked terrible. A great cloud of dust had arisen and was now pacified by the shower of blood. Strewn with many headless torsos, the ground became difficult to cross. In that battle, Bibhatsu's chariot was fierce and radiant. He sported around like Rudra, slaughtering animals at the time of destruction. Killed by Partha, the horses, chariots and elephants became anxious. But they continued to rush at him, like guests visiting Shakra.[15] O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The ground was strewn with many slain maharathas. With all of them lying there, it looked like the world of dead spirits. While Savyasachi was thus furiously engaged, Drona and his battle formations attacked Yudhishthira. There were many armed ones in arrays and they swiftly attacked, so as to capture Yudhishthira. There was a great and tumultuous encounter.”’

CHAPTER 996(19)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! When the night had passed, Bharadvaja’s maharatha son spoke to King Suyodhana. ‘I have made arrangements for the masses of samshaptakas to be engaged with Partha.’ When Partha had left to battle with the samshaptakas and kill them, Drona and his battle formation advanced against the great army of the Pandavas. O best of the Bharata lineage! He advanced, wishing to capture Dharmaraja. On seeing that Bharadvaja’s son had arranged his vyuha in the form of a Garuda,[16] Yudhishthira created a counter-vyuha that was in the form of a half-circle. Bharadvaja’s maharatha son was himself stationed in the mouth of the Suparna. King Duryodhana was at the head, with his brothers and followers. Kritavarma and the supremely radiant Goutama[17] were the eyes. Bhutavarma, Kshemasharma, the valiant Karakarsha, Kalingas, Simhalas, those from the east, brave Abhiras, Dasherakas, Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Hamsapadas, Shurasenas, Daradas, Madras and Kekayas, with hundreds and thousands of elephants, horses, chariots and infantry, were stationed at the neck. Bhurishrava, Shala, Shalya, Somadatta and Bahlika—these brave ones were surrounded by one akshouhini and resorted to the right flank. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti and Sudakshina from Kamboja were stationed on the left flank, with Drona’s son stationed at the forefront. Kalingas,[18] Ambashthas, Magadhas, Poundras, Madrakas, Gandharas, Shakunis, those from the eastern regions,[19] those from the mountainous regions and the Vastayas were at the rear. Vaikartana Karna, with his sons, kin and relatives, was at the tail, surrounded by a large army that raised many different kinds of standards. Jayadratha, Bhimaratha, Samyati, Triksabha, Jaya, Bhuminjaya, Vrisha, Kratha and the immensely strong Naishadha were surrounded by a large army and placed the world of Brahma as the objective.[20] O king! They were skilled in war and placed themselves in the centre of the vyuha. The vyuha constructed by Drona had foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants. It was seen to be as turbulent as an ocean lashed by a storm. Those wishing to do battle emerged from its flanks and its sides. They were like clouds tinged with lightning, emerging in all the directions during summer. O king! Pragjyotisha[21] was resplendent in the midst, astride an elephant that had been properly prepared. He looked like the rising sun. The king was adorned with garlands and a white umbrella was above his head. He looked like the full moon, in conjunction with Krittika.[22] The elephant was blind with madness and was like a gigantic mountain, on which giant clouds were showering down. It looked like a mass of collyrium. He[23] was surrounded by many brave kings from the mountainous regions, adorned with diverse weapons, and was like Shakra, surrounded by masses of gods.

'"Yudhishthira saw that superhuman vyuha, incapable of being vanquished by enemies in battle. He spoke these words to Parshata. 'O lord! Your horses have the complexion of pigeons.[24] Determine a policy so that I am not captured today by the brahmana.' Dhrishtadyumna replied, 'O one who is excellent in vows! No matter how hard Drona tries, he will not be able to bring you under his control. I will check Drona today, together with his followers. O Kouravya! As long as I am alive, you should not be anxious. Drona will never be able to defeat me in battle.' Having said this, Drupada's powerful son, with horses that had the hue of pigeons, released arrows and himself attacked Drona. On seeing the evil omen of Dhrishtadyumna stationed before him,[25] Drona instantly became distressed. On seeing this, your son Durmukha, the destroyer of enemies, wished to do that which would bring pleasure to Drona and countered Dhrishtadyumna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A terrible battle raged between the brave Parshata and Durmukha and they were each other's equal. Parshata swiftly enveloped Durmukha with a net of arrows and countered Bharadvaja's son with a great shower of arrows. On seeing that Drona had been sorely countered, your son confounded Parshata with a shower of many different kinds of arrows. While the one from Panchala and the foremost among the Kurus were thus engaged in battle, Drona killed many of Yudhishthira's soldiers with arrows. They were routed in diverse directions, like clouds by the wind. Partha's soldiers were thus scattered.

'"For a short while, the encounter seemed to be pleasant. O king! But it then became violent and no consideration was shown to anyone. O king! As they fought each other, they could not distinguish friend from foe. The battle raged on, on the basis of guessing and signs. The rays of the sun reflected on the gems on headdresses, necklaces, ornaments, swords and shields and they assumed the complexion of the sun. The chariots, elephants and horses streamed banners and seemed to assume the form of clouds, with flocks of cranes in them. Men killed men. Horses fiercely killed horses. Charioteers killed charioteers and elephants killed supreme elephants. In a short instant, there was a terrible and fierce encounter between elephants and other supreme elephants, all bedecked with pennants. As they rubbed their bodies against each other and clashed against each other with their tusks, flames tinged with smoke arose from the friction. Because of the fire generated from the tusks, the standards were brought down. They looked like masses of resplendent clouds in the sky, tinged with lightning. The earth was strewn with elephants that roared as they were brought down, like clouds shrouding the autumn sky. The elephants were slaughtered with showers of arrows and javelins and roared, like clouds during a deluge. Some supreme elephants were struck with arrows and javelins and were terrified. Others shrieked and fled, frightening all beings. Some elephants were wounded by the tusks of other elephants. They roared in tones of woe, like clouds at the time of a terrible calamity. Some elephants were driven back by other supreme elephants. But urged by excellent goads, they returned to the battle. Elephant-riders struck elephant-riders with arrows and javelins. With weapons and goads dislodged, they fell down from the backs of elephants to the ground. Many elephants were bereft of their riders and wandered in different directions. They fell down when they encountered each other, like scattered clouds. They bore slain drivers and the best of warriors. Those giant elephants wandered in all the directions, as if they were solitary.[26] Some elephants were attacked. Others were attacked with javelins, swords and battleaxes. They uttered roars of distress and fell down. Bodies that were like mountains fell down suddenly. The earth was suddenly struck and quaked, and seemed to be shrieking. The earth was strewn in every direction with warriors, elephant-riders, pennants and elephants and was beautiful, as if it was covered with hills. In that battle, elephant-riders on elephants were pierced in their hearts. Charioteers were brought down with broad-headed arrows and lances and goads were strewn around. Other elephants were wounded with iron arrows and shrieked like cranes. They fled in the ten directions, crushing foes and friends. O king! The earth was covered with masses of elephants, horses, charioteers and their bodies and the slush of flesh and blood. Chariots, with wheels and without wheels, and with the maharathas, were uprooted by elephants with the tips of their tusks. Chariots were bereft of charioteers and elephants were bereft of riders. With their riders slain, horses and elephants fled in different directions, afflicted by the arrows. The father killed the son and the son killed the father. In that tumultuous battle, nothing could be distinguished. In that slush of blood, men sank down, up to their ankles. They were as dazzling as giant trees in a conflagration. The garments, armour, umbrellas and standards were all seen to be drenched red in blood. Masses of horses, masses of chariots and masses of men were brought down. They were again crushed into many pieces by the wheels of chariots. The soldiers were like an ocean. The masses of elephants were the mighty currents. The slain men were the moss. The masses of chariots were eddies. Desiring victory and prosperity, warriors immersed themselves in that ocean, using their mounts as large boats, and sought to confound the others.[27] Each of those warriors was covered with a shower of arrows, but did not deviate from the objective. Though they lost their signs,[28] they did not lose heart. In that terrible and fearful battle, Drona confounded the enemy and rushed towards Yudhishthira.”’

CHAPTER 997(20)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Drona was near him, Yudhishthira was not frightened, but received him with a mighty shower of arrows. Sounds of applause arose in Yudhishthira’s army, like that made by a herd of elephants when its leader is attacked by a lion. On seeing that Drona was advancing to capture Yudhishthira, the brave Satyajit, with truth as his valour, attacked the preceptor. The preceptor and Panchala fought against each other. They agitated each other’s soldiers, like Indra and Virochana’s son.[29] The preceptor swiftly pierced Satyajit with ten sharp arrows that penetrated the inner organs and severed his bow and arrows. The powerful one quickly grasped another bow and struck Drona with twenty arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. On learning that Satyajit had been grasped by Drona in the battle, Vrika from Panchala oppressed Drona with hundreds of sharp arrows. O king! On seeing that Drona was enveloped by the maharatha in the battle, the Pandavas roared and waved their garments around. O king! Extremely enraged, the powerful Vrika pierced Drona between the breasts with sixty arrows and it was extraordinary. Maharatha Drona dilated his eyes in rage. Using great force, he powerfully shrouded them with showers of arrows. Having severed the bows of Satyajit and Vrika, Drona killed Vrika, his charioteer and his horses with six arrows. Satyajit took up another bow that was more powerful and pierced Drona, his horses, his charioteer and his standard with arrows. Drona could not tolerate this oppression by Panchala in that battle. He released arrows, so as to quickly destroy him. Drona shot thousands of showers of arrows to envelope his horses, his standards, the handle of his bow and his parshni charioteers. Despite his bow being repeatedly severed, Panchala, who knew about supreme weapons, continued to fight the one with the red horses.[30] On witnessing Satyajit’s increasing energy in that great battle, the great-souled one sliced off his head with an arrow that was in the shape of a crescent. When the mighty warrior, the Panchala who was a bull among rathas, was slain, Yudhishthira became frightened of Drona and fled on swift horses.

'"On seeing Drona, the Panchalas, Kekayas, Matsyas, Chedis, Karushas and Kosalas wished to protect Yudhishthira and cheerfully attacked. The preceptor, the destroyer of large numbers of the enemy, wished to capture Yudhishthira. He slew those soldiers, like a fire consuming large masses of cotton. On witnessing that Drona was repeatedly consuming the soldiers, Shatanika, the younger brother of Matsya, attacked him. He severely pierced Drona, his charioteer and his horses with six arrows that were like the rays of the sun and had been polished by artisans, and roared. While he was thus roaring, Drona swiftly sliced off his head, adorned with earrings, from his body with a kshurapra. At this, the Matsyas fled. Having defeated the Matsyas, Bharadvaja's son repeatedly vanquished the Chedis, Karushas, Kekayas, Panchalas, Srinjayas and Pandus. On beholding the angry one on the golden chariot, consuming the soldiers in his rage, like a fire in a forest, the Srinjayas trembled. The one who was swift in his deeds drew his bowstring and the excellent sound of the twang was heard in all the directions, as he slaughtered the enemy. The terrible arrows released from his hands mangled elephants, horses, infantry, charioteers and elephant-riders. He was like a roaring cloud at the end of winter, mingled with the wind, pouring down a shower of hailstones and the enemy was frightened. The great archer, powerful and brave, the one who protected his enemies from fear, roamed around in all the directions, causing agitation and fright. The infinitely energetic Drona's bow was decorated with gold and looked like lightning flashing in the clouds. It was seen in all the directions. Drona caused great carnage among the Pandava soldiers, like that caused by Vishnu, revered by gods and asuras, among the masses of daityas. He was brave and truthful in speech. He was wise and powerful. Truth was his valour. He was noble-minded. He created a terrible river, like the one at the time of destruction, terrifying to cowards. Armour was the waves. Standards were eddies. It flowed and carried away the mortals. Elephants and horses were the giant crocodiles. The swords were fish and it[31] was difficult to cross. The bones of brave ones were its terrible stones. Drums and tambourines were the turtles. Shields and armour were the terrible boats. The hair was moss and weeds. Masses of arrows and bows were the current. It was full of serpents in the form of arms.[32] It flowed fiercely through the field of battle and bore along the soldiers of the Kurus and the Srinjayas. The heads of men were the boulders. Javelins were the fish and clubs were rafts. The headdresses were the foam on the surface. The disemboweled entrails were the reptiles. It was fierce and bore brave ones away. The flesh and the blood was the mud. The elephants were the crocodiles. The standards were the trees.[33] Kshatriyas were submerged in it. It was terrible and congested with bodies. The riders were the sharks and it was difficult to cross. Drona created a river there and it flowed to the world of the dead. It was full of large numbers of carrion-eaters and had tens of thousands of dogs and jackals. In every direction, it was frequented by extremely fierce flesh-eaters.

'"On seeing that the great ratha was consuming the soldiers, like Death, they attacked Drona from all sides, with Kunti's son at the forefront. Those on your side, the kings and the princes, raised their weapons and surrounded the brave and great archer. Drona never deviated in his aim and was like an elephant with a shattered temple. He overcame that mass of chariots and brought down Dridhasena. He approached King Kshema, who was fighting fearlessly, and piercing him with nine arrows, slew and felled him from his chariot. He penetrated the midst of the soldiers and roaming around, repulsed them in every direction. He protected all the others. But he himself had no need for protection. He pierced Shikhandi with twelve and Uttamouja with twenty arrows. With a broad-headed arrow, he sent Vasudana to Yama's abode. He struck Kshatravarma with eighty arrows and Sudakshina with twenty-six. With a broad-headed arrow, he brought Kshatradeva down from the seat of his chariot. He pierced Yudhamanyu with sixty-four arrows and Satyaki with thirty. The one on the golden chariot then quickly approached Yudhishthira. The deceitful[34] Yudhishthira, supreme among kings, swiftly fled on fast horses. Panchala[35] attacked him. But Drona struck him, his bow, his horses and his charioteer. Slain, he fell down on the ground from his chariot, like a stellar body dropping down from the sky. When that illustrious prince of Panchala was killed, there was a great and tumultuous sound of 'Kill Drona! Kill Drona!' The Panchalas, Matsyas and Kekayas were filled with great rage. However, the powerful Drona crushed the Srinjayas and the Pandavas. Satyaki, Chekitana, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Vardhakshemi, Chitrasena, Senabindu, Suvarchas—these and many other kings from many different countries were all vanquished in that battle by Drona, who was surrounded by the Kurus. O great king! Those on your side obtained victory in that great battle. As the Pandavas fled in all directions, they were slaughtered in that battle, like the danavas being slaughtered by the great-souled Indra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Panchalas, Kekayas and Matsyas trembled."'

CHAPTER 998(21)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "When the Pandavas were routed by Bharadvaja's son in that great battle, did anyone among all the Panchalas advance against him? Was there no noble one who wished to earn fame, as befits a kshatriya, and set his mind on fighting? He should not have been served by cowards. He should have been served by bulls among men. It must have been a brave man and charioteer who returned from that rout. On seeing that Drona was stationed, was there no such man? He was like a tiger with a yawning mouth. He was like an elephant with a shattered temple. He was prepared to give up his life in battle. He was armoured and was wonderful in fighting. He was a great archer. He was a tiger among men. He increased fear among his enemies. He was grateful and devoted to the truth. He was engaged in Duryodhana's welfare. O Sanjaya! On seeing that Bharadvaja's brave son was stationed in that army, which brave ones advanced against him? Tell me."

'Sanjaya replied, "On seeing that the Panchalas, Pandavas, Matsyas, Srinjayas, Chedis and Kekayas were driven away from the battle by

Drona’s arrows, the Kouravas roared like lions and sounded many musical instruments. Large numbers of arrows were swiftly released from Drona’s bow and they[36] were like shattered boats tossed around on the giant waves of the ocean. They surrounded the chariots, elephants and men from all directions.[37] King Duryodhana was stationed in the midst of his soldiers, surrounded by his relatives. On seeing them, he laughed and spoke these words of joy to Karna. ‘O Radheya! Behold! The Panchalas have been shattered by Drona’s arrows. They have been terrified by the wielder of the firm bow, like wild deer by a lion. It is my view that they will never return to fight again. They have been broken by Drona, like giant trees by a tempest. They have been consumed by the gold-tufted arrows of the great-souled one. They are fleeing through multiple routes and seemed to be whirled around. They have been confined by the Kouravas and the great-souled Drona. They are like elephants huddled together, because of a fire. Because of Drona’s sharp arrows, they are like a cluster of bees. They are huddling together and are trying to run away. Bhima is firm in his anger. But he has been abandoned by the Pandavas and the Srinjayas. O Karna! Surrounded by those on my side, he seeks to threaten us. The evil-minded one now sees the entire world as if it is full of Drona. Pandava has now lost all hope of remaining alive and of regaining the kingdom.’

‘“Karna said, ‘As long as there is life left in him, this mighty-armed one will never give up the battle. O tiger among men! Nor will he tolerate these roars like lions. It is my view that the Pandavas have not been defeated in battle. They are brave and powerful. They are skilled in the use of weapons and are invincible in war. The Pandavas will remember the hardships from poisoning, arson, gambling and dwelling in the forest.[38] It is my view that they will not retreat from the battle. The mighty-armed and infinitely energetic Vrikodara has already returned. This Kounteya is supreme among the best and he will kill the best of our rathas. With a sword, bow, javelin, horses, elephants, men, chariots[39] and an iron staff, he will slay large numbers. Other rathas, Satyaki and the others, are also returning after him—the Panchalas, Kekayas and Matsyas, and particularly the Pandavas. Those maharathas are brave, powerful and valiant. They are enraged and are being specially urged by Bhima. The bulls among the Kurus[40] have surrounded Drona from all sides. Wishing to protect Vrikodara, they are like clouds around the sun. They are united in their purpose and will oppress the one who is rigid in his vows and is unprotected. They are like insects on the point of death, around a lamp. There is no doubt that they are skilled in the use of weapons and are capable of countering him. I think that the burden on Bharadvaja's son will be too much to bear. Let us quickly go to the spot where Drona is stationed. They are seeking to slay the one who is rigid in his vows, like wolves around a mighty elephant.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O king! On hearing Radheya's words, King Duryodhana left towards Drona's chariot, together with his brothers. A great uproar was created there by the Pandavas who had returned, wishing to kill Drona. They were on supreme horses with diverse hues."'

CHAPTER 999(22)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! Tell me about the signs on the chariots of those who angrily attacked Drona, with Bhima at the forefront."

'Sanjaya replied, "Vrikodara advanced into battle on horses that had the complexion of antelopes.[41] On seeing him, Shini's brave descendant[42] advanced on horses that were silvery. Nakula swiftly advanced against your army, borne on handsome horses from Kamboja that were decorated with the feathers of parrots. Sahadeva was borne on horses that were as dark as clouds. That tiger among men raised his weapons and advanced with great force, on horses that were as fleet as the wind. Yudhishthira advanced on horses that were as fleet as the wind and were caparisoned with the best of gold. All the other soldiers followed him. King Drupada of Panchala advanced after the king.[43] A golden umbrella was held aloft his head and he protected all his soldiers. The great archer Shantabhi advanced in the midst of all the kings. He was yoked to beautiful horses that were capable of withstanding every kind of noise in battle. Virata followed him, with all other brave maharathas. So did the Kekayas, Shikhandi and Dhrishtaketu, surrounded by their respective soldiers. All of them followed the king of Matsya.[44] Matsya, the slayer of enemies, was resplendent as he was borne by supreme horses, with the complexion of *patala* flowers.[45] The king of Virata's son[46] was swiftly borne on swift horses that were yellow in complexion and were garlanded with gold. The five brothers from Kekaya were on horses that had the hue of fireflies. All of them dazzled like pure gold and possessed red standards. All those brave ones had golden garlands and were skilled in fighting. They were seen to be armoured and showered[47] like clouds. Shikhandi, the infinitely energetic one from Panchala was yoked to controlled steeds that were coppery red, like unbaked earthen vessels. Of the twelve thousand maharathas from Panchala, six thousand followed Shikhandi. O venerable one! Shishupala's son, Dhrishtaketu, was a lion among men. He was borne on playful horses that had the complexion of deer. That bull among the Chedis was powerful. He was invincible and he advanced on horses from Kamboja that were dappled. Vrihatkshatra from Kekaya was borne on excellent and delicate horses that were swift and from Sindhu. They had the hue of smoking straw. Shikhandi's son, the brave Kshatradeva, was borne on horses that had eyes like jasmines. They had the complexion of lotuses, were adorned and were born in Bahlika. The young and delicate son of the king of Kashi was a maharatha. He was borne into battle on supreme horses that had the complexion of cranes. O king! The prince Prativindhya was borne on white horses with black necks that were as swift as thought and were obedient to the driver.[48] Partha obtained his son Sutasoma through Dhoumya.[49] Horses that had the complexion of *masha* flowers bore him into battle.[50] He possessed the radiance of one thousand moons. He was born in the city of the Kurus named Udayendu. Having been born thus, in the midst of those of the lunar lineage, he came to be known as Sutasoma.[51] Nakula's son, Shatanika, was borne on horses that had the complexion of shala flowers. He was worthy of praise and was like the rising sun in his radiance. Droupadi's son, Shrutakarma, tiger among men, was borne on horses that had complexions like the necks of peacocks and were caparisoned in gold. Droupadi's son, Shrutakirti, was an ocean of learning.[52] He was the equal of Partha in battle[53] and was on supreme horses. These horses possessed hues like those on the feathers of blue jays. Horses with a tawny hue bore the young Abhimanyu into battle. In his qualities of fighting, he was regarded as one-and-a-half times superior to Krishna and Partha. There was only a single one among the sons of Dhritarashtra who had sided with the Pandavas in battle and large and gigantic horses bore Yuyutsu into battle. The swift Vardhakhemi was carried into that dreadful battle on cheerful horses that were adorned and had the complexion of strands of straw. There were horses with black feet, armoured with golden plates and obedient to the driver. These bore the youthful Souchitti into battle. There were controlled horses with the complexion of red silk. Their backs were covered with golden plates and they were in golden harnesses. These bore Shrenimana. The praiseworthy and brave king of Kashi was borne on the best of horses. These possessed golden harnesses and the complexion of gold and were ornamented. Satyadhriti was skilled in weapons, the knowledge of fighting and in knowledge about the brahman. He was borne on red steeds. Dhrishtadyumna, the commander of the Panchalas, had been given Drona as his share.[54] He was borne on horses that had the complexion of pigeons. Satyadhriti and the invincible Souchitti followed him into battle and so did Shrenimana, Vasudana and Vibhu, the sons of the king of Kashi. They were yoked to supreme and swift horses from Kamboja, with golden harnesses. Each was equal to Yama or Vaishravana and could strike terror into enemy soldiers.[55] There were six thousand Prabhadrakas from Panchala, with raised weapons. They were on the best of horses, with many hues, and possessed golden and colourful standards on their chariots. They stretched their bows and released showers of arrows that confused the enemy. They were determined to die together and followed

Dhrishtadyumna. There were supreme horses that were resplendent with a complexion like that of silk and possessed excellent golden harnesses. They cheerfully bore Chekitana. Savyasachi's maternal uncle, Purujit Kuntibhoja, was on excellent and obedient horses.[56] They possessed the complexion of Indra's weapon.[57] King Rochamana was borne into that battle on horses that had the colour of the firmament, decorated with stars. Jarasandha's son, Sahadeva, was borne on the best of horses, with speckled complexions and black feet. They were adorned in nets of gold. Sudama was borne on swift horses that were coloured like hawks and had complexions like those of lotus stalks. Simhasena from Panchala, the son of Gopati, was borne on horses that had the complexion of red antelopes, with white streaks on their bodies. The tiger among the Panchalas was known by the name of Janamejaya.[58] He was on supreme horses that had the colour of mustard flowers. There were large and swift horses that possessed the colour of straw. They had golden harnesses. Their backs were like curd and their mouths were like the moon. These bore Panchala.[59] There were brave and gentle steeds that had the hue of reeds. These were as dazzling as the filaments of lotuses and they bore Dandadhara. There were horses that were resplendent in golden harnesses, with stomachs with the complexion of chakravaka birds. These bore Sukshatra, the son of the king of Kosala. There were giant, speckled and controlled horses, caparisoned in gold. These bore Satyadhriti, who was skilled in fighting. Shukla advanced, with everything of the same white colour—standard, armour, horses and bow. Samudrasena's son, Chandrasena, was terrible in his energy. He was borne on horses that were like the moon and had been bred along the coast of the ocean. Shaibya was wonderful in battle. He was borne on horses that possessed the complexion of blue lotuses. They were ornamented in gold and had colourful garlands. Rathasena was invincible in battle. He was borne on the best of horses, with a complexion like that of groundnut flowers, with white and red streaks on their bodies. The king who slew the Patacharas is known as the bravest among all men. He was borne on horses with the colour of parrots.

Chitrayudha was adorned in colourful garlands. He possessed colourful armour, weapons and standards. He was borne on the best of horses, with a complexion like that of kimshuka flowers. King Nila advanced, with everything in an identical blue colour—standard, armour, bow, chariot and horses. Chitra advanced, adorned with gems and with colourful guards for his chariot, standard and bow. His horses, standards and pennants were colourful. Hemavarna, Rochamana's son, was on the best of horses, with complexions like that of lotus leaves. Dandaketu was borne on gentle horses that were controlled by staffs that were like the stalks of reeds. They possessed the complexion of the white eggs of hens. Horses with the complexion of *atarusha*[60] flowers bore one hundred and forty thousand foremost rathas who followed Pandya. The brave Ghatotkacha was borne by horses with many different colours and forms. Their mouths were of different types and he had the wheel of a chariot on his standard.

'"Yudhishthira was knowledgeable about dharma and the best of horses surrounded that best of kings from every direction and followed him at the rear. They possessed golden complexions. There were Prabhadrakas on well-trained and divine horses, with many different kinds of colours. They possessed golden standards and made endeavours, together with Bhimasena. O Indra among kings! He was seen to be like Indra, with the residents of heaven. Dhrishtadyumna was delighted that all of them were advancing together. But Bharadvaja's son surpassed all those soldiers."'

CHAPTER 1000(23)

'Dhritarashtra said, "Those rathas who returned to the battle, with Vrikodara at the forefront, were capable of afflicting even the soldiers of the gods. A man is certainly driven by destiny. That is the reason why different outcomes result from all action. That is the reason Yudhishthira had to spend a long time in the forest, wearing matted hair and antelope skin, and also had to remain undetected to people. He has now assembled a mighty army in this battle. What can befall my sons, other than what is determined by destiny? It is certain that a man's fortune is determined by destiny. He is compelled to do what he does not himself desire. Yudhishthira suffered hardship because of his addiction to gambling. It is again because of fortune that he has now obtained allies. 'I have obtained half of the Kekayas,[61] the Kashis and the Kosalas. The Chedis, the Vangas and others have sought refuge with me. O father! The entire earth is on my side and not on that of the Parthas.' This is what my evil-minded son, Duryodhana, told me then. Drona was protected well, in the midst of the soldiers. If he has been killed by Parshata's son, what can this be other than destiny? The mighty-armed one was in the midst of the kings and has always delighted in battle. He was skilled in the use of all weapons. How could death have approached Drona? I am confronting distress and have been overcome by supreme senselessness. On hearing that Bhishma and Drona have been slain, I have no interest in remaining alive any more. O son![62] On beholding my affection for my son, Kshatta[63] had spoken to me. O suta! Duryodhana and I are now confronted with all of that. Had I abandoned Duryodhana, it would have been supremely cruel. But my remaining sons would not have faced hardship and death. If a man gives up dharma and is addicted to artha, he confronts decay in this world and falls prey to inferior sentiments. O Sanjaya! With the bow and hump[64] of this kingdom destroyed, it has lost all enterprise. I see that nothing will be left. Those two forgiving bulls among men were always our refuge. When they have been destroyed, how can anything be left? Tell me details about how that battle raged. Who were the ones who fought? Who were the ones who attacked? Which inferior ones fled out of fear? Tell me what Dhananjaya, bull among rathas, did. We are scared of him and especially of his brother.[65] O Sanjaya! When the Pandavas returned, there must have been an extremely terrible confrontation between them and my remaining soldiers. Which brave ones on my side countered them there?'"

CHAPTER 1001(24)[66]

‘Sanjaya said, “The Pandus returned and we were immersed in great terror. Drona was enveloped, like the sun by the clouds. They raised a terrible cloud of dust and covered your army. On seeing this and on our sight having been obstructed, we thought that Drona had been slain. Those brave and great archers desired to commit a cruel deed.[67] On seeing this, Duryodhana quickly urged all his soldiers. ‘O lords of men! Use the utmost of your strengths, the utmost of your enterprise, the utmost of your spirits. Engage yourselves according to your tasks and restrain the Pandava formations.’ Your son, Durmarshana, saw that Bhima was advancing. Wishing to save Drona’s life, he covered him with a shower of arrows. Like death in that battle, he angrily assailed him with arrows. Bhima also attacked him with arrows and a great and fierce battle raged between them. Wise, brave and armed warriors were instructed by their lords. Outwardly giving up all fear of death, they attacked the enemy. O lord of the earth! Wishing to save Drona, Kritavarma, the ornament of any assembly, repulsed Shini’s brave son.[68] As Shini’s descendant angrily advanced, he wrathfully showered him with arrows. Kritavarma acted against Shini’s descendant, like a mad elephant against another crazy one. Saindhava, fierce with the bow and a great archer, used a shower of arrows to fall upon Kshatradharma, when he endeavoured to attack Drona. Kshatradharma severed the standard and bow of the lord of Sindhu. He angrily used many iron arrows to pierce him in all his inner organs. Saindhava displayed the dexterity of his hands and grasped another bow. In that battle, he pierced Kshatradharma with arrows that were made completely out of iron. For the sake of the Pandavas, the brave maharatha Yuyutsu sought to attack Drona, but was countered by his brother, Subahu. Yuyutsu used two sharp and yellow arrows that were as sharp as razors to slice off the arms of his younger brother, Subahu. Those arms were like clubs and held a bow and arrows.[69] King Yudhishthira was the best of the Pandavas and had dharma in his soul. The king of Madra countered him, like the shoreline against a turbulent ocean. Dharmaraja pierced him with many arrows that could penetrate the inner organs and the lord of

Madra severely wounded him with sixty-four arrows and roared. But while he was still roaring, the best of the Pandavas sliced down his standard and bow with two razor-sharp arrows and all the people shouted in applause. King Bahlika, with his army, used arrows to counter King Drupada, with his army. Together with their soldiers, these two aged ones fought a terrible battle. This was like that between two gigantic leaders of herds of elephants, with shattered temples. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti countered Virata of Matsya, with his soldiers and his army, like Agni against Bali in ancient times.[70] That disorderly encounter between the Matsyas and the Kekayas was like that between the gods and the asuras. Horses, charioteers and elephants fought fearlessly.

'"In that battle, Bhutakarma, the lord of assemblies, used a net of arrows to prevent Nakula's son, Shatanika, from advancing against Drona. Nakula's heir used three extremely sharp and broad-headed arrows and in that battle, deprived Bhutakarma of his two arms and his head. The valiant Sutasoma was advancing towards Drona. But the brave Vivimshati repulsed him with a shower of arrows. However, Sutasoma was enraged and armoured. He pierced Vivimshati, his own paternal uncle, with straight-tufted arrows. Bhimaratha used six swift arrows that were completely made out of iron and dispatched Shalva, together with his horses and charioteer, to Yama's abode.[71] O great king! As your grandson, Shrutakarma, advanced on horses that looked like peacocks, Chitrasena's son countered him. Those two grandsons of yours were invincible and wished to kill each other to accomplish the objectives of their respective fathers and fought a supreme battle. On seeing that Prativindhya was stationed at the forefront of that battle, Drona's son desired to show honour to his father and obstructed him with arrows. Prativindhya was enraged at this and pierced the one who was stationed so as to protect his father, and bore the signs of a lion's tail on his standard,[72] with sharp arrows. O bull among men! Droupadi's son covered Drona's son with a shower of arrows, like seeds being scattered at the time of sowing. O king! Both the armies regarded the slayer of the

Patacharas as the best among brave ones and Lakshmana restrained him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But that radiant one blazed forth, showering a net of arrows on Lakshmana. Taking aim, he severed Lakshmana’s bow and arrow. As Shikhandi, Yajnasena’s youthful son, advanced into battle, the young and immensely wise Vikarna countered him. Yajnasena’s son enveloped him with a net of arrows. But your powerful son repulsed that net of arrows and looked resplendent. In that battle, as the brave Uttamouja advanced in Drona’s direction, Angada countered him with vatsadanta arrows. The encounter between those two lions among men was wonderful and it increased the delight of all the soldiers. As the brave Purujit Kuntibhoja advanced against Drona, the powerful and great archer Durmukha countered him. He struck Durmukha in the midst of his eyebrows with an iron arrow and his[73] face looked as beautiful as a lotus with a stalk.

‘“The five brothers from Kekaya possessed red standards. As they advanced towards Drona, Karna countered them with showers of arrows. Countered by that storm of arrows, they became extremely enraged and enveloped him with arrows, becoming repeatedly shrouded by nets of arrows in return. Enveloped by those arrows, Karna and the five brothers could not be seen. The respective arrows covered their horses, charioteers, standards and chariots. Your sons, Durjaya, Jaya and Vijaya, countered Nila, Kashi and Jaya. Three were against three. The terrible encounter between them gladdened the spectators, like that between a lion, tiger and wolf on one side and a buffalo and a bull on the other. As the warrior Satvata[74] advanced against Drona, the brothers Kshemadhurti and Brihanta countered him and wounded him with their sharp arrows. The battle between them was extraordinary, like that between a lion and a foremost elephant, with shattered temples, in the forest. King Ambashtha found delight in battle. As he advanced singly against Drona, the king of Chedi angrily restrained him with arrows. Ambashtha pierced him with a stake that penetrated right up to the bones and he[75] gave up his bow and arrows and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. Sharadvata Kripa repulsed Varshneya

Vardhakshemi with kshudraka arrows, as he angrily attacked Drona with arrows. Those who saw Kripa and Varshneya fight in that wonderful fashion became so engrossed in that encounter that they forgot about doing anything else. Somadatta's son wished to increase Drona's glory. As King Manimana vigilantly advanced, he countered him. Somadatta's son swiftly sliced down the string of his bow, the standard, the pennant, the charioteer and umbrella and made him fall down from his chariot. The one with the sacrificial stake on his standard, the destroyer of enemies,[76] then quickly descended from his chariot. He grasped a supreme sword and cut him down, together with his horses, charioteer, standard and chariot.[77] O king! He then climbed onto his own chariot again and grasping another bow and steering his horses himself,[78] began to slaughter the Pandava soldiers. Ghatotkacha wished to get at Drona and created terror among the soldiers. He used clubs, maces, chakras, catapults, battleaxes, dust, wind, fire, water, ashes, stones, grass and trees to strike and fight, showering these down and causing a rout. However, the rakshasa Alambusa became enraged and countered the other rakshasa with many different kinds of weapons and many diverse implements of war. The battle between the two foremost among the rakshasas was like that in ancient times, between Shambara and the king of the immortals.[79] O fortunate one! In this fashion, in that melee, there were hundreds of duels between rathas, elephants, horses and infantry, between those on your side and those of the enemy. A battle like this has not been witnessed earlier, nor heard of, like that between those who wished to assault Drona and those who sought to protect him. O lord! In different parts of the field, many such encounters were seen—terrible, wonderful and fierce."'

CHAPTER 1002(25)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "When they[80] had returned and engaged in different divisions, how did the spirited ones on the side of the Parthas, and on mine, fight? How did Arjuna act towards the army of the samshaptakas? O Sanjaya! What did the samshaptakas do to Arjuna?"

‘Sanjaya replied, “When they had returned and engaged themselves in different divisions, your son himself attacked Bhima with an army of elephants. It was like an elephant encountering an elephant, or a bull encountering a bull. He[81] was himself summoned and attacked by the king with that army of elephants. Partha was skilled in fighting and possessed the strength of his arms. O venerable one! He swiftly shattered that army of elephants. Those elephants were like mountains and exuded musth everywhere. They were mangled and forced to retreat by Bhimasena’s iron arrows. It was like winds driving away a mass of clouds in every direction. That maddened army was thus slaughtered by Pavana’s son. Bhima released arrows at those elephants and was as radiant as the rising sun in the sky, striking everything in the world with his rays. Hundreds of Bhima’s arrows wounded the elephants and they were as beautiful as masses of clouds in the sky, streaked with the rays of the sun.[82] The son of the wind thus afflicted the elephants. Duryodhana was enraged at this and pierced him with sharp arrows. Bhima’s eyes became red with rage and he wished to destroy the king in a short instant. So he pierced him with arrows. With arrows wounding all his limbs, he became angry and smilingly, pierced Pandava Bhimasena back with iron arrows that were as bright as the sun’s rays. The sign of a bejewelled elephant was on his[83] standard, embellished with gems. Pandava used broad-headed arrows to swiftly sever this, together with his bow. O venerable one! On seeing that Duryodhana was thus afflicted by Bhima, the lord of Anga arrived there on an elephant, wishing to attack him. On seeing that the elephant was advancing, with a roar like the rumbling of the clouds, Bhimasena used iron arrows to severely strike it between its two frontal lobes. It passed through the body and penetrated the ground. The elephant fell down, like a mountain struck by lightning. As the elephant fell, the lord of the mlecchas[84] also began to fall down. But the swift-acting Vrikodara sliced off his head with a broad-headed arrow. On seeing that the brave one had been brought down, his army fled. Horses, elephants and charioteers were terrified and crushed infantry as they fled.

'"As that army was scattered and routed in every direction, Pragjyotisha attacked Bhima, astride an elephant. It was like Maghavan astride an elephant, victorious against the daityas and the danavas. That supreme of elephants suddenly descended on Bhima. Its ears were drawn back. Its forelegs and trunk were contracted. Its eyes were dilated in rage and it seemed about to consume Pandava. O venerable one! All the soldiers let out a great roar. 'Alas! Bhima has been killed by the elephant.' O king! The Pandava soldiers were terrified by this roar and quickly ran away to the spot where Vrikodara was. King Yudhishthira thought that Vrikodara had been slain. With the Panchalas, he attacked and surrounded Bhagadatta. Having surrounded the best of rathas with chariots from every direction, he covered him with hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows. The lord of the mountains countered all these arrows with his goad and slaughtered the Pandus and Panchalas with his elephant. O lord of the earth! In that battle, we witnessed the aged Bhagadatta's extraordinary conduct, using his elephant. At this, the king of Dasharna attacked Pragjyotisha on a swift elephant that advanced from the flank. Both elephants were terrible in form and the battle between them was like that between two winged mountains in ancient times, both covered with trees.[85] Pragjyotisha's elephant circled around and struck the elephant of the king of Dasharna on the side, bringing it down. Bhagadatta used seven javelins that were as bright as the rays of the sun. As his enemy was dislodged from his seat on the falling elephant, he slew him.

'"Yudhishthira attacked King Bhagadatta and surrounded him from every direction with a great army of chariots. Astride his elephant and surrounded by all these rathas in every direction, he was resplendent, like a flaming fire on a mountain, in the midst of the forest. He was astride his elephant, inside a circle formed in every direction by fierce rathas who were archers and showered arrows at him from every side. The king of Pragjyotisha urged his bull among elephants and made it swiftly advance towards Yuyudhana's chariot. The mighty elephant grasped the chariot of Shini's grandson and used great force to fling it away. However, Yuyudhana escaped. The charioteer abandoned the large Saindhava horses that were yoked to the chariot and hurried to the spot where Satyaki was. The elephant swiftly emerged from that circle of chariots. Having emerged, it began to fling away all those kings. Those bulls among men were frightened at its speed. In that battle, the kings thought that a single elephant had multiplied into hundreds. At that time, Bhagadatta on his elephant crushed the Pandavas, like the king of the gods on Airavata, acting against the danavas. There was a terrible roar as the Panchalas fled. A great noise was made by the elephants and the horses. In that battle, Bhagadatta was like death before the Pandus. Bhima became angry and attacked Pragjyotisha again. The elephant sprinkled water from its trunk and frightened his horses, which then bore Partha away from the field. Kriti's son, Ruchiparva, swiftly attacked then. Stationed on his chariot, he showered arrows, like death personified. The lord of the mountains used a well-crafted arrow with drooping tufts to dispatch Ruchiparva to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. When that brave one fell, Subhadra's son, Droupadi's sons, Chekitana, Dhrishtaketu and Yuyutsu attacked the elephant. They wished to kill it. Roaring, they showered down arrows on it. The skilled rider urged the elephant with heels, toes and goad. It swiftly advanced, with its trunk extended and its eyes and ears immobile. It killed Yuyutsu's horses and charioteer with its feet. At this time, your son angrily rushed against the chariot of Subhadra's son. Astride his elephant, the king[86] showered arrows on his enemies. He was as dazzling as a sun that has arisen, scattering rays on the world. Arjuna's son pierced him with twelve arrows and Yuyutsu with ten. Each of Droupadi's sons pierced him with three arrows and so did Dhrishtaketu. Those well-released arrows stuck to the body and the elephant looked resplendent, like a large cloud streaked with the rays of the sun. It was afflicted by arrows released by the enemy.

'"But the elephant was controlled by the skill and enterprise of the rider. It began to fling away enemies, to the left and to the right. Like a herd of animals controlled in the forest by a cowherd with a staff, the soldiers were repeatedly afflicted by Bhagadatta. A grievous sound of lamentation arose among the fleeing Pandaveyas, like the cawing of crows when they are quickly attacked by a hawk. O king! When goaded by the hook, the king of elephants looked like a winged mountain in ancient times. It afflicted the enemy with great fear, like a group of traders at the sight of a turbulent ocean. As they ran away in fright, the elephants, charioteers, horses and kings made a terrible noise. O king! In that battle, it filled the earth, the directions and the sub-directions. The king was astride that supreme of elephants and severely oppressed the army of the enemy. This was like Virochana against the army of the gods in ancient times, when it was well-protected in battle by the gods. The friend of the fire[87] began to blow violently and created dust. This covered the sky and the soldiers in a short instant. The people thought that a single elephant had become hundreds of elephants and began to run away in every direction.”’

CHAPTER 1003(26)

‘Sanjaya said, “You have asked me about the deeds performed by Partha in that battle. O great king! Listen to what Partha accomplished in that battle. On seeing that a dust had arisen and on hearing the roar of the elephant, when Bhagadatta caused subjugation, Kounteya spoke to Krishna. ‘O Madhusudana! It is certain that this tumult has been caused by the elephant of the king of Pragjyotisha, when he has swiftly attacked. He is not inferior to Indra in battle. He is skilled in steering an elephant. In my view, on this earth, he is the first or the second.[88] He possesses the best of elephants and there is no elephant which can withstand it in battle. It can tolerate all the sounds of battle. It is accomplished in deeds and has conquered exhaustion. O unblemished one! It can tolerate the downpour of all weapons and can even bear the touch of fire. It is evident that it will destroy the Pandava army today. With the exception of the two of us, there is no one who is capable of countering it. Therefore, swiftly go to the spot where the lord of Pragjyotisha is. He is Shakra’s friend.[89] He is strong because of the elephant. He should be marvelled at, despite his age. I will dispatch him today, as a beloved guest, to the destroyer of Bala.’ As soon as

Savyasachi spoke these words, Krishna left and went to the spot where Bhagadatta was mauling the Pandava army. As he was going there, fourteen thousand maharatha samshaptakas summoned him from the back. O lord of men! Ten thousand of those were Trigartas and another four thousand were followers of Vasudeva.[90] O venerable one! On seeing that Bhagadatta was shattering the army and on also being challenged, he[91] was caught in two minds and thought, 'What is the best course of action for me? Should I return here, or should I go to Yudhishthira?' O extender of the Kuru lineage! Thus did Arjuna reflect in his mind and decided that he should kill the samshaptakas. The one with the foremost of monkeys on his banner suddenly returned. Vasava's son wished to single-handedly kill thousands of rathas in battle. This is what Duryodhana and Karna had also plotted, when the two of them had thought about means of killing Arjuna. That is the reason they had arranged for this divided feeling in Pandava's mind. But he foiled them by deciding to take on those foremost of rathas on his chariot.

'"O king! The maharatha samshaptakas shot hundreds and thousands of arrows with drooping tufts towards Arjuna. O king! Enveloped by those arrows, Partha, Kunti's son, Krishna Janardana, the horses and the chariot could not be seen. Janardana was deprived on his senses and began to sweat. At this, Partha used the vajra weapon and killed most of them. Hundreds of arms, still holding bowstrings and bows, were severed. Standards, horses, charioteers and rathas fell down on the ground. Slain by Partha's arrows and bereft of their riders, elephants fell down on the ground. They were like mountain summits with trees and looked like well-crafted rain clouds. Their seats and harnesses were shredded. Their temples were shattered and they were destroyed. Wounded by Partha's arrows, horses fell down, together with their riders. With their arms severed, but still holding on to swords, shields, scimitars like nails, clubs and battleaxes, men were brought down by Kiriti's broad-headed arrows. O venerable one! There were youthful and dazzling heads, as beautiful as the morning sun, the lotus, or the moon. These were severed by Arjuna's arrows. The enemy soldiers who were slaughtered by the enraged Phalguna, with arrows that fed on lives, seemed to blaze in many different forms. The soldiers were agitated, like lotuses by an elephant. Masses of beings applauded and worshipped Dhananjaya. On witnessing Partha's deeds there, like those of Vasava himself, Madhava was overcome by great wonder and applauded him with his hands. Having killed most of the samshaptakas who were stationed there, Partha urged Krishna to take him to Bhagadatta."'

CHAPTER 1004(27)

'Sanjaya said, "According to Partha's wishes, Krishna urged the horses, which were as swift as thought, white and caparisoned in gold, and drove them towards Drona's army. While that best of the Kurus departed to save those on his side who were tormented by Drona, Susharma and his brothers followed him from the rear, wishing to do battle. The unvanquished Jaya, possessor of the white horses, spoke to Krishna. 'O Achyuta! Susharma and his brothers are challenging me. O destroyer of enemies! Our soldiers are being shattered towards the north. Because of the samshaptakas, I am again caught in two minds now. Should I kill the samshaptakas or should I protect our soldiers who are afflicted by the enemy? Know that this is what I am thinking of. What is more beneficial for me?' Having been thus addressed, Dasharha reversed the chariot and took Pandava to the spot where the lord of Trigarta was challenging him. Arjuna pierced Susharma with seven swift arrows and brought down his standard and bow with a razor-sharp arrow. Partha then used six iron arrows to swiftly send the brother of the lord of Trigarta, his horses and his charioteer to Yama's abode. At this, Susharma grasped an iron javelin that was like a serpent and hurled this towards him, also throwing a spear at Vasudeva. Arjuna used three arrows to shatter the javelin and another three to fragment the spear. He then confounded Susharma with his storm of arrows and forced him to retreat. O king! Like Vasava pouring down rain, he showered down many fierce arrows on your soldiers and there was no one who could oppose him. Dhananjaya advanced, slaying all the maharatha Kouravas with his arrows, like a fire consuming dry wood. Like beings who cannot bear the touch of fire, no one was capable of withstanding the force of Kunti's intelligent son.

'"O king! Pandava showered down arrows on the assembled army, and like Suparna[92] swooping down, approached Pragjyotisha. Jishnu held the bow which was like the granter of boons to virtuous Bharatas and was the bringer of tears to enemies in battle. O king! Because of your son's deceit in gambling with the dice, Arjuna grasped the bow that would destroy kshatriyas. O great king! Thus it was that your army was agitated by Partha, like a boat that is shattered when it strikes a mountain. Ten thousand archers advanced. Those angry and brave ones had made up their minds to do battle, regardless of victory or defeat. Their hearts were devoid of fear. Headed towards calamity, they obstructed the ratha's path. Partha was capable of handling a grave burden and could withstand all burdens in battle. He was like an enraged elephant with rent temples that is sixty years of age and is let loose on a forest of lotuses, destroying it. In that fashion, Partha shattered your army. When the soldiers were thus being crushed, King Bhagadatta suddenly attacked Dhananjaya on that elephant. The tiger among men remained on his chariot and received him. A tumultuous encounter commenced between the chariot and the elephant, when the two brave ones, Bhagadatta and Dhananjaya, fought each other. The elephant was like a cloud and Lord Bhagadatta, who was like Indra, showered down arrows on Dhananjaya. Vasava's son repulsed that shower of arrows released by the valiant Bhagadatta with his own shower of arrows and sliced them down before they could reach him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! King Pragjyotisha also repulsed that shower of arrows and tried to kill the mighty-armed Partha and Krishna with his arrows. Those two were enveloped with a giant shower of arrows and he urged the elephant on, to kill Achyuta and Partha. On seeing that the elephant was descending, like angry Death, Janardana quickly wheeled the chariot, so that it[93] remained on the left. Dhananjaya thus got an opportunity to slay the mighty elephant and its rider. But remembering his dharma, he did not do this.[94] O venerable one! That elephant descended on elephants, chariots and horses and dispatched them to the world of the dead. At this, Dhananjaya was enraged.”’

CHAPTER 1005(28)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “Having been enraged, how did Pandava act against Bhagadatta? What did Pragjyotisha do to Partha? Tell me everything as it happened.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When Dasharha and Pandava were thus engaged with Pragjyotisha, all the beings thought that they had reached the jaws of death. O lord! Stationed on the neck of the elephant, Bhagadatta incessantly showered down arrows on the two Krishnas,[95] as they were stationed on the chariot. He stretched his bow back to its full extent and pierced Devaki’s son with black arrows that were completely made out of iron, gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. Released by Bhagadatta, they were sharp and their touch was like that of the fire. Those arrows pierced Devaki’s son and penetrated the ground. At this, Partha severed his bow and his quiver and began to fight with King Bhagadatta, as if he was sporting with him. He[96] hurled fourteen javelins at Savyasachi. They were sharp and were as bright as the rays of the sun. But he sliced each of them down into three fragments. Then the son of Paka’s destroyer[97] penetrated the elephant’s armour with his net of arrows and it looked like a king of mountains, covered with clouds. Pragjyotisha hurled a javelin towards Vasudeva. It had a golden handle and was made completely out of iron. Arjuna severed it into two fragments. Arjuna used his arrows to slice down the king’s umbrella and standard. He then smiled and swiftly pierced the lord of the mountains with ten arrows. He was thus pierced by Arjuna’s arrows, which had excellent tufts and the feathers of herons. Bhagadatta became angry at the great-souled Pandava. He hurled javelins towards his head and roared. In that battle, these dislodged Arjuna’s diadem. Phalguna adjusted the diadem back and spoke these words to the king. ‘Look upon this world with delight.’[98] Having been thus addressed, he grasped a radiant bow and angrily showered down arrows on Pandava and Govinda. Partha severed his bow and destroyed his quiver and quickly struck him with seventy-two arrows that afflicted all his inner organs.

'"Having been thus pierced and pained, he angrily resorted to the vaishnava weapon. He invoked the mantra on his goad and hurled it towards Pandava's chest.[99] That weapon was capable of slaying everything and was released by Bhagadatta. Covering Partha, Keshava received it on his own chest. On Keshava's chest, that weapon became the *vaijayanti* garland.[100] Distressed in his mind, Arjuna spoke to Keshava. 'O Janardana! You are not supposed to fight. You are only supposed to steer my horses. O Pundarikaksha! This is what you said. But you did not keep your promise. If I am in distress, or if I am incapable of countering, it is only then that you should act in this way. You should not act in this way if I am standing. With my arrows and with my bow, I am capable of conquering all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras and humans. This is known to you.' Having been thus addressed by Arjuna, Vasudeva replied in these words. 'O Partha! O unblemished one! Listen to this ancient and secret account. I am engaged in saving the worlds and have four forms. For the sake of the welfare of the worlds, I divide myself into different parts. One of my forms is based on earth and is engaged in austerities. Another form beholds the virtuous and evil deeds in the universe. Another form resorts to the world of men and performs deeds. The fourth and final form lies down and sleeps for a thousand years. This form of mine awakes at the end of a thousand years and at that time, grants the best of boons to those who are deserving of boons. On one such occasion, the earth got to know and, for the sake of Naraka,[101] asked a boon from me. Listen to this. "Having obtained the vaishnava weapon, let it be such that my son cannot be killed by gods and asuras. Grant me this boon." In ancient times, having heard of this boon, I gave the invincible vaishnava weapon to the earth's son and said, "O earth! Let this weapon be infallible in protecting Naraka. No one will be able to kill him. Protected by this weapon, your son will be able to crush the armies of all enemies. He will always be invincible in all the worlds." Having been thus addressed, the intelligent goddess departed, her wishes having been fulfilled. That is how Naraka, the scorcher of enemies, became invincible. O Partha! It was from him that Pragjyotisha obtained this weapon of mine.[102] O venerable one! There is no one in the worlds, not even Indra and Rudra, who cannot be killed by it. It is for your sake that I repulsed the weapon and violated my pledge. O Partha! The great asura has now lost his supreme weapon. Kill him, as I killed Naraka earlier, for the sake of welfare. The invincible Bhagadatta is your enemy in battle. He is an enemy of the gods.'[103] Thus addressed by the great-souled Keshava, Partha suddenly shrouded Bhagadatta with sharp arrows. Without any fear, the mighty-armed and high-minded Partha struck the elephant between its frontal lobes with an iron arrow. That arrow struck the elephant, like the vajra against a mountain. It penetrated right up to its tufts, like a snake entering a termite hill. With its limbs paralysed, it fell down and struck the ground with its tusks. The giant elephant roared in woe and gave up its life. Partha then used an arrow with a drooping tuft, with a head that was in the shape of the half-moon, and pierced King Bhagadatta in the heart with this. With his heart thus pierced by Kiriti, King Bhagadatta let go of his bow and arrows and lost his life. His head fell down and so did the beautiful goad, like a petal falling off a lotus, when the stalk of the lotus has been destroyed. Garlanded in gold, he fell down from the golden housing on the elephant that was like a mountain. He was like a blossoming karnikara,[104] dislodged from the summit of a mountain by the violent force of the wind. The king was like Indra in his valour. He was Indra's friend and was killed by Indra's son in the battle. Desiring victory, the men then began to shatter the ones on your side, like the strength of the wind unleashed on trees."'

CHAPTER 1006(29)

'Sanjaya said, "The infinitely energetic Pragjyotisha was Indra's beloved friend. Having killed him, Arjuna circumambulated him. The two sons of the king of Gandhara, the brothers Vrishaka and Achala, the conquerors of enemy cities, began to afflict Arjuna in the battle. Those two brave archers united and pierced Arjuna severely from the front and the back, using extremely swift and sharp arrows. In an instant, Partha used sharp arrows to pierce the horses, charioteer, bow, umbrella, chariot and standard of Vrishaka, Subala's son. Arjuna again used a storm of arrows and many other weapons. He oppressed the Gandhara soldiers, with Subala's son at the forefront. There were five hundred brave Gandhara warriors, with their weapons raised. The enraged Dhananjaya used arrows to send them to the world of the dead. With his horses slain, the mighty-armed one[105] quickly descended from his chariot and ascending onto his brother's chariot, grasped another bow. Those two brothers, Vrishaka and Achala, were stationed on the same chariot. They repeatedly pierced Bibhatsu with a shower of arrows. Those two great-souled kings, Vrishaka and Achala, your brothers-in-law, severely wounded Partha, like Indra against Vritra and Bala. Those two from Gandhara were themselves not injured, but successful in striking the target, again struck Pandava. It was like the months of summer and monsoon, afflicting the world with sweat and rain.[106] Those two kings, tigers among men, Vrishaka and Achala, were stationed on the same chariot. O king! They were stationed next to each other and Arjuna slew them with a single arrow. They were like lions, giant-armed and with red eyes. They were brothers and possessed similar features. Those two brave ones lost their lives and fell down from the chariot. Their bodies, loved by their relatives, fell down from the chariot onto the ground. They lay there, spreading their sacred fame in the ten directions. O lord of the earth! On seeing that their maternal uncles, who never retreated, had been slain in the battle, your sons fiercely showered down weapons.

'"Shakuni was skilled in a hundred different kinds of maya. On seeing that his brothers had been killed, he confused the two Krishnas with his maya. Sticks, iron balls, shataghnis, javelins, clubs, maces, swords, spears, bludgeons, spikes, kampanas, scimitars, nails, mallets, battleaxes, razors, kshurapras, hollow arrows,[107] vatsadantas, weapons with joints, chakras, tufted arrows, darts and many other weapons showered down on Arjuna from all the directions. Asses, camels, buffaloes, lions, tigers, small deer,[108] kites, bears, wolves, vultures, monkeys, reptiles and many other kinds of flesh-eaters[109] hungrily dashed towards Arjuna. Many diverse kinds of crows angrily rushed towards him. Kunti's son, the brave Dhananjaya, was skilled in the use of divine weapons. He suddenly unleashed a net of arrows and attacked them. The arrows released by the brave one were firm and excellent and they were slain by these. They let out a giant wail, as all of them were slain and destroyed. Darkness then appeared and enveloped Arjuna's chariot.[110] From within that darkness, a cruel voice censured Arjuna. But Arjuna destroyed this with the mighty weapon known as jyotisha.[111] When that was destroyed, a terrible flood of water appeared. For destroying this, Arjuna used the weapon named aditya. Thanks to this weapon, the water was almost completely dried up. Subala's son repeatedly resorted to many different kinds of maya. But Arjuna laughed and used the strength of his weapons to destroy them all. When his maya was destroyed, Shakuni was injured by Arjuna's arrows. He fled on his swift horses, like an ordinary man.

'"Arjuna was the best among those who were skilled in the use of weapons and he showed his nature to the enemy. He showered down a flood of arrows on the Kourava army. The army of your son was slaughtered by Partha. O great king! It became divided into two, like the Ganga when it confronts a mountain. O king! Some maharathas sought shelter with Drona. Others were afflicted by Kiriti and went to Duryodhana. Since they were covered by darkness, we could not see the soldiers or him then. I heard the twang of Gandiva on my south.[112] There was the sound of conch shells and drums and the noise of musical instruments. Gandiva's roar could be heard above all of these. A fight then again commenced towards the south, between wonderful warriors and Arjuna. However, I followed Drona. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, the many different divisions in your son's army were slaughtered by Arjuna, like the wind scattering clouds in the sky. Like Vasava raining down copiously, the great archer and tiger among men showered down a flood of arrows and no one could counter the fierce one. Those on your side were killed by Partha and were severely afflicted. As they fled hither and thither, they killed many on their own side. The arrows shot by Arjuna were tufted with the feathers of herons and were capable of penetrating the body. They descended like locusts that covered the ten directions. O venerable one! Horses, charioteers, elephants were pierced and the arrows then penetrated the ground, like snakes into a termite hill. He did not shoot a second arrow at any elephant, horse or man. Shot by a single arrow, they fell down, losing their lives. Men and horses were slain everywhere. Elephants were struck by arrows and brought down. At that time, dogs, jackals and wild crows howled and the field of battle looked wonderful. Oppressed by arrows, father abandoned son, well-wisher abandoned well-wisher and son abandoned father. Everyone sought to protect himself. Oppressed by Partha, they abandoned their mounts."'

CHAPTER 1007(30)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! When those divisions were shattered by Pandu's son and fled quickly, what was the state of your mind then? When divisions are shattered and do not see a place where they can make a stand, it is very difficult to counter this. O Sanjaya! Tell me everything about this."

'Sanjaya replied, "O lord of the earth! Despite this, there were those who wished to bring pleasure to your son. To preserve their fame in this world, those brave ones followed Drona. They raised their weapons and approached Yudhishthira. They performed noble and terrible deeds and were truly fearless. O lord! They detected a weakness in the infinitely energetic Bhimasena, the brave Satyaki and Dhrishtadyumna. The Panchalas cruelly urged, 'Drona! Drona!' However, your sons urged all the Kurus, 'Not Drona!' One side said, 'Drona! Drona!' The other side said, 'Not Drona!' The Kurus and the Pandavas seemed to be gambling over Drona. Wherever Drona sought to attack the chariots of the Panchalas, Panchala Dhrishtadyumna stationed himself at those spots. There was a terrible battle where one did not follow the respective divisions. Brave ones clashed against brave ones and roared against the enemy. The enemy was incapable of making the Pandavas tremble there. But because they remembered their own hardships, they made the enemy divisions waver. Though they were modest, they were overcome by anger and driven by their spirit. They were prepared to give up their lives and sought to kill Drona in that great battle. There was a tumultuous battle, in which, those infinitely energetic ones offered their lives as stake. It was as if iron was clashing against rock. Even the aged could not remember a battle like this. O great king! Such had not been witnessed earlier, nor heard of. When those brave ones were slaughtered, the earth trembled, oppressed by the great burden of those two oceans of soldiers. As the armies whirled around, the firmament seemed to roar and stand still. Ajatashatru angrily advanced against your son. Drona roamed around in that battle. He approached the Pandu army and shattered it with thousands of sharp arrows. They were routed by Drona's extraordinary deeds. Then the commander[113] himself engaged with Drona and there was an extraordinary battle between Drona and Panchala. It is my view that there has never been anything that is equal to this.

'"Like a fire, Nila burnt down the Kuru army. The arrows were the sparks and he was like a fire burning down dry wood. When he was burning down the soldiers, Drona's powerful son, who had wished to have an encounter with him from earlier times,[114] smilingly addressed him. 'O Nila! What will you gain by burning down these warriors with the rays of your arrows? Fight with me and angrily strike me with your swift arrows.' Nila's eyes were like the petals of lotuses. He pierced the one whose face was as beautiful as a blooming lotus and whose body was like a collection of lotuses.[115] On being thus suddenly pierced, Drona's son used three sharp and broad-headed arrows to slice down the bow, standard and umbrella of the enemy. Nila swiftly jumped down from his chariot and grasped a shield and a supreme sword, wishing to sever, like a bird,[116] the head of Drona's son from his body. O unblemished one! But Drona's son smiled. He used a broad-headed arrow to sever his head, with a beautiful nose and with earrings, from his body. The face was as radiant as the full moon. The eyes were like the petals of lotuses. The shoulders were elevated and he[117] was tall. He was slain and fell down on the ground. At this, the Pandava soldiers were distressed and became extremely anxious. Blazing in his energy, Nila was killed by the son of the preceptor. O venerable one! All the Pandava maharathas began to think, 'How will Vasava's son be able to save us from the enemy? The brave one is engaged in fighting with the soldiers in the southern direction, with the remaining soldiers in the samshaptaka and narayana army.'"'

CHAPTER 1008 (31)

'Sanjaya said, "Vrikodara could not tolerate the slaughter of the soldiers. He struck Bahlika with sixty and Karna with ten arrows. Drona wished to kill him and used sharp and iron arrows that were whetted at the tip and penetrated the inner organs to swiftly strike him, wishing to take away his life. Karna pierced him with twelve arrows, Ashvatthama with seven and King Duryodhana with six. But the immensely strong Bhimasena pierced all of them back in return. He struck Drona with fifty arrows, Karna with ten arrows, Duryodhana with twelve and Drona's son with eight swift arrows. Having engaged in that battle, he let out a loud roar. They fought, prepared to give up their lives, and death was easily achieved. Ajatashatru sent many warriors, instructing them to save Bhima. Those infinitely energetic ones approached near Bhimasena. There were Yuyudhana and the others and the two Pandavas who were Madri's sons. Those bulls among men were angry and united. They advanced, wishing to shatter Drona's army, which was protected by the supreme among great archers. Those immensely valorous ones, Bhima and the other rathas, advanced and were fiercely received by Drona and the best of rathas. Those brave and immensely strong atirathas were the ornaments of any battle. Outwardly giving up all fear of death, those on your side fought with the Pandavas. Riders killed riders and rathas killed rathas. The battle commenced, lances against lances, and with swords and battleaxes. There was a terrible clash with swords and it led to a cruel carnage. Because of the clash of elephants, the battle became extremely dreadful. Some fell down from elephants. Others fell down from horses, their heads hanging down. O venerable one! Other men fell down from chariots, pierced by arrows. Others were crushed in that encounter and fell down, shorn of their armour. Elephants attacked the chests and crushed the heads. In other places, elephants crushed men who had fallen down. Elephants struck the ground with their tusks and mangled many rathas. Other men were crushed by elephants that were pierced with weapons. Hundreds of elephants roamed around and crushed hundreds of men. There were men with bronze armour on their bodies and horses, chariots and elephants. They fell down and were crushed by elephants, as if they were thick reeds. Kings lay down to sleep on beds made out of the feathers of vultures.[118] They were modest. But having been ripened by time, they lay down on beds of great distress. Advancing on a chariot, the father killed the son. Out of confusion and disregarding all honour, the son killed the father. Wheels of chariots were shattered. Standards were torn. Umbrellas were shredded and brought down. Dragging broken yokes, horses ran away. Arms wielding swords were brought down. Heads sporting earrings were severed. Powerful elephants threw down chariots and crushed them down on the ground. Charioteers struck elephants with iron arrows and brought them down. Severely wounded by elephants, riders fell down from horses. A cruel and great battle raged and it was extremely terrible. ‘Alas, father! Alas, son! Friend, where are you? Stay! Where are you going? Strike! Capture! Kill!’ These and other words mixed with the roars and sounds of laughter and many other kinds of noise were spoken and heard. The blood of men, horses and elephants mingled together. The dust that arose from the ground was pacified.[119] Those who were cowards became distressed. They dragged each other by the hair. There were terrible fights with fists. Brave ones fought with nails and teeth, wishing to find refuge where no refuge could be found. Heroes raised swords in their arms, but those were severed. So were others holding bows, arrows or goads. Someone loudly challenged another. Someone else fled, running away. Others confronted others and severed the head from the body. Some attacked others with loud roars. Others were severely frightened at the sounds and fled. Some killed the enemy, or those on one's own side, with sharp arrows. Elephants that were like the peaks of mountains were brought down by iron arrows. They lay down, like islands in a river during the summer. There were elephants that exuded musth like mountainous streams. They crushed chariots down on the ground with their feet, together with the horses and the charioteers. There were brave ones who were skilled in the use of weapons. On seeing that they were covered with blood, but were still striking each other, those who were cowards and weak in heart lost their senses. Everyone was distressed and nothing could be distinguished. Despite the dust raised by the soldiers, the cruel battle raged on.

'"The commander[120] said, 'Make haste. This is the time.' He swiftly led the Pandavas, who were always full of enterprise. Having been thus instructed, the illustrious Pandaveyas advanced towards Drona's chariot, wishing to kill him, like swans descending on a lake. 'Seize! Do not flee! Do not be scared! Cut him down!' These and other sounds were heard in the vicinity of the invincible one's chariot. Drona, Kripa, Karna, Drona's son, King Jayadratha, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti and Shalya repulsed them. The Panchalas and the Pandavas were noble in their dharma. They were angry. They were difficult to counter and difficult to resist. Though oppressed by arrows, they did not withdraw from Drona. Drona became extremely enraged and released hundreds of arrows, causing a great carnage among the Chedis, Panchalas and Pandavas. O venerable one! The twang of his bowstring and the slapping of his palms were heard in all the directions. They were like the sound of thunder and caused fright among many of the Pandavas.

'"At this time, having slain the powerful samshaptakas, Jishnu arrived at the spot where Drona was crushing the Pandus. He had crossed many whirlpools made out of arrows and giant lakes made out of blood. Having crossed them and having killed the samshaptakas, Phalguna showed himself. He was the accomplisher of deeds. He was like the sun in his energy. The one with the monkey on his banner was seen to be radiant in his energy. He had dried up the ocean of the samshaptakas with the rays of his weapons. Pandava now scorched the Kurus, like the sun at the destruction of a yuga. All the Kurus were burnt by the energy of Arjuna's weapons, like a comet that has arisen and destroys all beings at the end of a yuga.[121] Elephants, horses, rathas and warriors were struck by the thousands of arrows released by him and oppressed by these arrows, discarded their weapons and fell down on the ground. Some wailed in lamentation. Still others roared. Slain by Partha's arrows, some fell down, deprived of their lives. Remembering the vow of warriors, Arjuna did not kill the warriors who had fallen down, or were falling down, or were retreating. Most of the Kurus were shattered and, devoid of their chariots, were in retreat. They called upon Karna for protection. On discerning the lamentation and the cries for refuge, Adhiratha's son assured them that they need not be frightened and advanced in Arjuna's direction. He was foremost among all the Bharata rathas and was the one who brought delight to all the Bharatas. He was supreme among those who knew about weapons and he invoked the agneya weapon. A mass of blazing arrows was released by the one who wielded a blazing bow. But Dhananjaya repulsed that mass of arrows with his net of arrows. Weapon was countered by weapon and these arrows preserved life.

'"Dhrishtadyumna, Bhima and maharatha Satyaki approached Karna and each pierced him with three swift arrows. Radheya countered Arjuna's weapon with his own shower of arrows. He then used three tufted arrows to sever the bows of those three. With their weapons gone, those brave ones were like snakes without venom. They hurled javelins from their chariots and roared like lions. Those javelins hurled from their arms were immensely forceful. Those mighty javelins were like snakes and blazed. They descended towards the chariot of Adhiratha's son. But Karna severed them with three swift arrows and powerfully shooting arrows at Partha, roared. Arjuna pierced Radheya with seven swift arrows. With three sharp arrows, he then killed Karna's younger brother. Partha killed Shatrunjaya with six arrows. As Vipatha stood on his chariot, he severed his head with a broad-headed arrow.[122] While the sons of Dhritarashtra looked on, Kiriti single-handedly killed the three, who were foremost among the brothers of the son of the suta. Bhima leapt down from his chariot, like Vinata's son.[123] With a supreme sword, he killed the fifteen who were guarding Karna's flank. He then again ascended his chariot and grasped another bow. He pierced Karna with ten arrows and his charioteer and horses with five. Dhrishtadyumna grasped a supreme sword and a lustrous shield. With these, he killed Chandravarma and Pourava Brihatkshatra. Panchala then ascended his chariot and grasped another bow. In that battle, he pierced Karna with seventy-three arrows and roared. Shini's descendant grasped another bow that was like Indra's weapon in its radiance. He pierced the suta's son with sixty-four arrows and roared like a lion. With two broad-headed arrows that were released well, he severed Karna's bow. He again pierced Karna in the arms and the chest with three arrows. Radheya was about to be submerged in the ocean that Satyaki represented. At this, Duryodhana, Drona and King Jayadratha rescued him. Dhrishtadyumna, Bhima, Subhadra's son, Arjuna himself, Nakula and Sahadeva began to protect Satyaki in that battle.

'"Thus the extremely terrible battle between those on your side and that of the enemy raged. It was destructive of all archers. They were prepared to give up their lives. Infantry, chariots, elephants and horses fought with elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. Chariots fought with elephants and infantry, chariots fought with infantry and chariots fought with elephants. Horses fought with horses, elephants with elephants and chariots with chariots. Infantry was seen to be engaged with infantry. Thus did that extremely fierce battle continue and it caused delight to flesh-eating creatures. Those great warriors were without fear and this extended Yama's kingdom. Many men, rathas, horses and elephants were killed there by elephants, rathas, horses and infantry. Elephants were killed by elephants, rathas by armed rathas, horses by horses and large numbers of infantry by infantry. Elephants were slain by rathas, giant horses by the best of elephants, men by horses and horses by the supreme of rathas. Tongues were lolling out. Teeth and eyes were gouged out. Armour and ornaments were shattered. Destroyed, they fell down on the ground. There were many others who were struck down by the best of warriors. They fell down on the ground with fearful visages. They were mangled and crushed by the feet of horses and elephants. They were severely hurt and wounded by the wheels of chariots and hooves. It brought delight to carnivorous beasts, birds and flesh-eaters. There was a terrible carnage of people there. Those extremely strong ones were angry. Using the utmost of their energy, they sought to kill each other. When the strength of both sides was severely diminished, they glanced towards each other, their bodies drenched with blood. The sun was stationed above the mountain on which it sets. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The armies retreated to their respective camps.'"

Section Sixty-Seven

Abhimanyu-Vadha Parva

This parva has 643 shlokas and twenty chapters.

Chapter 1009(32): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1010(33): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1011(34): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1012(35): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1013(36): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1014(37): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1015(38): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1016(39): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1017(40): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1018(41): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1019(42): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1020(43): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1021(44): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1022(45): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1023(46): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1024(47): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1025(48): 53 shlokas
Chapter 1026(49): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1027(50): 83 shlokas
Chapter 1028(51): 43 shlokas

This section is about the killing of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna and Subhadra. These are incidents that occur on the thirteenth day of the battle. Drona constructs the chakra vyuha[1] *and Abhimanyu alone knows how to penetrate it, Arjuna having been summoned away by the samshaptakas.*[2] *When Abhimanyu penetrates the vyuha, the others on the Pandava side are supposed to follow and protect him. However, they are restrained by Jayadratha, who has obtained a boon from Shiva. Abhimanyu kills the younger brothers of Shalya and Karna, Vasatiya, Shalya's son (Rukmaratha), one hundred princes, Duryodhana's son (Lakshmana), Kratha's son, Vrindaraka, Brihadbala (the king of Kosala), six of Karna's advisers, Ashvaketu (from Magadha), Martikavata (from Bhoja), Shatrunjaya, Chandraketu, Mahavega, Suvarcha, Suryabhasa, Kalakeya (Shakuni's brother) and rathas*[3] *from the Brahma-Vasatiyas and Kekayas. Abhimanyu is then killed by Duhshasana's son. On return, Arjuna takes an oath to kill Jayadratha on the next day.*

‘Sanjaya said, “We were first shattered by the infinitely energetic Arjuna. And because Yudhishthira was protected, Drona’s pledge was not fulfilled. All the warriors on your side had their armour splintered and were regarded as having been vanquished. They were covered with dust. They were terribly anxious and glanced in the ten directions. Having obtained the permission of Bharadvaja’s son,[4] they retreated. They were distressed on account of the enemy, which was successful in its objective. They were severely humiliated in that battle. As they proceeded, they heard all the beings praise Phalguna’s[5] qualities and Keshava’s[6] affection towards the illustrious Arjuna. They spent the night like those who had been cursed, reflecting on what had happened and resorting to silence.

‘“When it was morning, Duryodhana spoke to Drona. The words had affection and petulance in them, since the evil-minded one was overcome by the prosperity of the enemy. In everyone’s hearing, the one who was eloquent spoke these angry words. ‘O supreme among brahmanas! There is no doubt that you have singled us out as those who should be killed. Therefore, despite having approached Yudhishthira, you did not seize him. If you so wish, an enemy that you glance towards in battle is incapable of escaping, even if the Pandavas, together with the immortals, desire to protect him. You were pleased and granted me a boon. But later, you did not act in accordance with that. Those who are noble[7] never act so as to destroy the hopes of those who are devoted to them.’ Having been addressed in this unpleasant way, Bharadvaja’s son spoke to the king. ‘Knowing that I always seek to do what brings you pleasure, you should not regard me in this way. The worlds, with the gods, the *asuras*, the *gandharvas*,[8] the *yakshas*,[9] the serpents and the *rakshasas*, cannot defeat an army that is protected by Kiriti.[10] O lord! Where Govinda, the creator of the universe, and the commander Arjuna are stationed, other than Tryambaka,[11] where is the force that can overcome it? Today, I will bring down a supreme and brave *maharatha*.[12] Today, I am telling you truthfully that it cannot but be otherwise. Today, I will construct a vyuha that cannot be penetrated even by the residents of heaven. O king! But devise some means to take Arjuna away. There is nothing that is unknown to him. There is nothing that he cannot achieve in battle. He has obtained strength and knowledge about fighting from different places.' After Drona had spoken in this way, the masses of samshaptakas again challenged Arjuna to a battle in the southern direction. The battle that took place between Arjuna and the enemy was one the like of which had not been seen before, nor heard of ever. O king! And Drona created a resplendent vyuha that was incapable of being looked at. It was like the sun when it reaches midday in its course and scorches down on everything. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On the instruction of his father's eldest brother, Abhimanyu penetrated the impenetrable chakra vyuha in many different ways. He performed an extremely difficult deed and killed many thousands of brave ones. Then, six heroes attacked him together and he was finally slain by Duhshasana's son. All of us were supremely delighted and the Pandavas were oppressed by grief. O king! After Subhadra's son had been killed, our troops retreated."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! He was the son of a lion among men. He had just become a youth. On hearing that he has been slain in battle, my mind is severely shattered. The dharma of kshatriyas, as laid down by those who have set the principles of dharma, is terrible. Desiring a kingdom, brave ones shower down their weapons on a child. He was a child and was reared in happiness. But he roamed around fearlessly. O Gavalgana's son![13] Tell me how many, skilled in the use of weapons, slew him. O Sanjaya! Subhadra's son was infinitely energetic and sported around amidst that mass of chariots, wishing to penetrate. Tell me everything."

'Sanjaya replied, "O Indra among kings! You have asked me about the downfall of Subhadra's son and I will tell you everything in detail. O king! Listen attentively. The young one penetrated and sported around amidst that array. He was like a forest fire amidst the enemy, burning down large numbers of creepers, grass and trees. Those on your side were frightened of him, like the residents of a forest."'

CHAPTER 1010(33)

'Sanjaya said, "They are performers of terrible deeds in battle. Their deeds show they have conquered exhaustion. Together with Krishna, the five Pandavas are difficult to resist, even by the gods. There has never been, nor will there be, a man who possesses Krishna's qualities in righteousness, deeds, vigour, intelligence, nature, fame and prosperity. King Yudhishthira has always obtained heaven because of his truthfulness, devotion to dharma, generosity, worship of brahmanas and other qualities. O king! It has been said that three are equal in the field of battle—the Destroyer himself at the end of a *yuga*,[14] Jamadagni's valiant son[15] and Bhimasena. Partha, the wielder of the Gandiva, is always skilled in performing all his pledges in battle and I do not see his parallel on earth. Devotion towards superiors, maintaining secrecy of counsel, humility, self-control, beauty and bravery—these six are always present in Nakula. In knowledge of the sacred texts, gravity, sweetness, spirit, prowess and valour, the brave Sahadeva is the equal of the gods who are the Ashvins. All the great qualities in Krishna and all the qualities in the Pandavas, all those assembled qualities were to be seen in Abhimanyu. He was Yudhishthira's equal in patience, Krishna's in conduct, Bhimasena's in deeds and his equal in terrible feats, Dhananjaya's in beauty, valour and learning, and Nakula and Sahadeva's in humility."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O *suta*![16] I wish to hear everything about how the invincible Abhimanyu, Subhadra's son, was killed on the field of battle."

'Sanjaya replied, "O great king! The preceptor created the chakra vyuha. All the kings, who were Shakra's equal, were assembled in it. There was an assembly of princes there. All of them had taken their pledges and their standards were embellished with gold. All of them were attired in red garments and all of them had red ornaments. All of them had red pennants and all of them wore golden garlands. There were ten thousand such, firm in wielding the bow. Your handsome grandson Lakshmana[17] was at the forefront. They shared each other's misery and were like each other in bravery. They sought to rival each other and were devoted to each other's welfare. The king[18] was surrounded by maharatha Karna, Duhshasana and Kripa. With a white umbrella held aloft his head, he was like the king of the gods in his beauty. He was fanned with whisks and was as radiant as the rising sun. The leader, Drona, was stationed at the forefront of those soldiers. The king of Sindhu[19] was stationed there, handsome, and like Mount Meru. O great king! On the flank of the king of Sindhu were stationed thirty of your sons, resembling the gods, and with Ashvatthama at the forefront. The maharathas—the gambler who was the king of Gandhara,[20] Shalya and Bhurishrava—were stationed on the flank of the king of Sindhu.”'[21]

CHAPTER 1011(34)

'Sanjaya said, “That invincible army was protected by Bharadvaja's son. With Bhimaseana at the forefront, the Parthas advanced against it. Satyaki, Chekitana, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna,[22] the valiant Kuntibhoja, maharatha Drupada, Arjuna's son,[23] Kshatradharma, the brave Brihatkshatra, Dhrishtaketu the king of Chedi, the sons of Madri,[24] Ghatotkacha, the brave Yudhamanyu, the unvanquished Shikhandi, the unassailable Uttamouja, maharatha Virata, Droupadi's enraged sons, Shishupala's brave son,[25] the immensely valorous Kekayas, thousands of Srinjayas and many others, skilled in use of weapons and irresistible in battle, suddenly advanced, together with their followers, wishing to fight against Bharadvaja's son. However, Bharadvaja's valiant son was not agitated. As they approached, he repulsed all of them with a mighty shower of arrows. Like a large mass of water confronting an impenetrable hill, or like the shoreline driving back the ocean, they were driven back by Drona. O Indra among kings! They were oppressed by the arrows released from Drona's bow. The Pandavas were incapable of standing before Bharadvaja's son. The strength of Drona's arms was seen to be extraordinary, in that the Panchalas, together with the Srinjayas, could not advance before him. On seeing that Drona was advancing wrathfully, Yudhishthira thought about many ways whereby Drona could be countered. Having formed the view that Drona was incapable of being resisted by anyone else, Yudhishthira imposed that heavy and unbearable burden on Subhadra's son. He was not inferior to Vasudeva. His energy was superior to that of Phalguna. And he[26] spoke these words to Abhimanyu, the slayer of enemy heroes. 'O son![27] Act so that Arjuna does not censure us on return.[28] There is no one amongst us who knows how to penetrate the chakra vyuha. O mighty-armed one! With the exception of you, Arjuna, Krishna and Pradyumna,[29] there is no fifth person who can penetrate the chakra vyuha. O Abhimanyu! O son! I am asking this boon and you should grant it to me, for the sake of your fathers, your maternal uncles and all the soldiers. O son! Otherwise, on returning from the fight, Dhananjaya will censure us. Grasp your weapons and act so as to strike Drona's army.'

'"Abhimanyu replied, 'Desiring the victory of my fathers, I will soon enter and penetrate that firm and supreme array of warriors, created by Drona. My father instructed me about entering and penetrating an array like this. But if I confront a calamity there, I do not know how to emerge.'

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O foremost among warriors! O son! Penetrate the array and create an entry for us. All of us will follow the path you traverse. O son! You are the equal of Dhananjaya in battle. On seeing you enter, we will follow and protect you from all the directions.'

'"Bhima said, 'I will follow you and so will Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki, the Panchalas, the Kekayas, the Matsyas and all the Prabhadrakas. Once you have shattered the vyuha, we will repeatedly enter it and slaughter the best of the warriors who are inside it.'

'"Abhimanyu replied, 'Like an angry insect entering a flaming fire, I will penetrate Drona's unassailable array. Today, I will do what is good for both the lineages.[30] I will bring pleasure to my maternal uncle and my father. In the battle, a single child will be like death to masses of enemy soldiers and all the beings will witness my deeds today.’

‘“Yudhishthira said, ‘O Subhadra’s son! As you speak, may your strength increase. You are seeking to penetrate Drona’s impenetrable array. These tigers among men, great archers who are skilled in striking, will protect you. They are like the Sadhyas, the Rudras and the Maruts. They are like the Vasus, Agni and Aditya in valour.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “On hearing these words, he[31] instructed his charioteer, Sumitra, and in that battle, asked him to swiftly drive towards Drona’s array.”’

CHAPTER 1012(35)

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard the words of the intelligent Dharmaraja, Subhadra’s son urged his charioteer towards Drona’s array. The charioteer was urged with the words, ‘Go! Go!’ O king! He replied to Abhimanyu in these words. ‘O one with a long life! An extremely heavy burden has been imposed on you by the Pandavas. You should advance to the fight only after you have thought over whether you have the capacity to bear this. Drona, the preceptor, is skilled in the use of supreme weapons and has conquered exhaustion. You have been reared in extreme happiness and are not skilled in fighting.’ On hearing these words, Abhimanyu laughed and spoke to his charioteer. ‘O charioteer! Who is Drona? Who are these assembled kshatriyas? Even if Shakra on Airavata[32] advances in the forefront of the battle, with the masses of immortals, I will engage. Today, I am not bewildered at these kshatriyas. These enemy soldiers are not even a sixteenth part of me.[33] O son of a suta! Even if I were to confront my maternal uncle Vishnu,[34] the conqueror of the universe, or my father in battle, I would not be terrified.’ Abhimanyu disregarded the words of the charioteer and instructed him to swiftly drive towards Drona’s array. The charioteer was distressed in heart. But he urged the horses, which were three years old and decorated with golden harnesses. Thus goaded by Sumitra, the horses advanced towards Drona’s array. O king! Without any fear and with great force and valour, they advanced against Drona himself.

'"On seeing him attack, all the Kouravas, with Drona at the forefront, advanced to meet him and all the Pandavas followed him. His supreme standard bore the marks of a *karnikara*.[35] He was clad in golden armour. Arjuna's son was superior to Arjuna himself. He wished to fight with the maharathas, with Drona at the forefront. He was like a young lion attacking a herd of elephants. He sought to attack them and advanced twenty steps. In an instant, there was a melee, like when the whirl of the Ganga meets the ocean. The brave ones fought and killed each other. O king! An extremely tumultuous and terrible battle commenced. While that fearful battle raged, in Drona's sight, Arjuna's son shattered and penetrated the vyuha. The immensely strong one penetrated into the midst of the enemy and began to slaughter the foes. Warriors on elephants, horses and chariots, armed with weapons, descended on him and surrounded him. There was the sound of musical instruments. There were sounds of the slapping of arms and roars. There were roars like lions and shouts of 'Stay! Stay!' There were terrible and repeated exclamations of 'Do not go! Wait! Come to me! I am here! That is the enemy!' This mingled with the trumpeting of elephants, the tinkling of bells and ornaments, sounds of laughter and the sounds of hooves and chariot wheels. The earth resounded with these noises.

'"Those on your side descended before Arjuna's son. But the brave one was swift and firm. He was quick in using weapons that penetrated the inner organs and knew about the inner organs. He killed them. They were slaughtered by many different kinds of sharp arrows. They were like helpless insects descending into a fire. He swiftly covered the earth with their bodies and limbs severed from their bodies, like a priest covering an altar with *kusha* grass. There were arms with armguards and finger-guards, holding bows and arrows, swords and shields, goads, reins, lances and battleaxes, balls with iron spikes, spears, scimitars, spikes, javelins, catapults, clubs, the best of darts, *kampanas*,[36] whips, giant conch shells, spears,[37] *kachagrahas*,[38] maces, slings, nooses, heavy maces and stones. Those arms were decorated with armlets and bracelets and smeared with fragrances and unguents. Arjuna’s son severed the arms of those on your side in thousands. O great king! Covered with blood, they were strewn around on the ground and looked radiant. O venerable one! It was as if five-headed serpents had been slain by Garuda. There were many heads with beautiful noses, faces and hair, without the marks of wounds and adorned with beautiful earrings. Copious quantities of blood flowed from these and the teeth gnashed the lips in anger. They were adorned with beautiful garlands and headdresses, embellished with gems and jewels. They were like lotuses severed from the stalks and possessed the radiance of the sun or the moon. Once upon a time, they could speak many beneficial and pleasant words and were smeared with sacred fragrances. Phalguna’s son covered the earth with the heads of the enemy. There were many excellent chariots, with forms like the cities of the gandharvas. They possessed shafts in the front and curved staffs made out of bamboo poles. Their shafts, yokes and wheels were shattered. They were bereft of their axles and pins. They lost their wheels, standards and seats. The implements of war were scattered. The expensive cushions were also scattered and thousands of riders slain. Everything that could be seen was mangled with his arrows. He used sharp arrows, honed at the tip, to slice down the enemy riders on elephants, with their flags, goads and pennants, quivers, armour, seats, reins and blankets, the bells on the trunks and the tusks, and also those who guarded their steps from the rear. There were horses from Vanayu, Kamboja, Bahlika and the mountainous regions. They were well trained and swift and could keep their tails, ears and eyes immobile. The warriors who rode on them were accomplished and wielded spears, swords and lances. They were strewn around, deprived of cushions and whisks. Their tongues lolled out. The eyes were detached and the entrails and livers were plucked out. Their harnesses were torn and their riders were killed. This delighted large numbers of flesh-eaters. The mail and armour was sliced away and they were covered in urine and excrement. Thus bringing down the best of your horses, he was resplendent. He accomplished these difficult deeds alone, like the unfathomable Vishnu in earlier times. He crushed your giant army with the three kinds of forces.[39] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He also killed your foot soldiers. Using sharp arrows, Subhadra's son was seen to single-handedly destroy your soldiers, like Skanda[40] against the asura army. Those on your side and your sons glanced in the ten directions. Their mouths were dry. Their eyes were restless. They were covered with sweat and their body hair stood up. They lost all interest in vanquishing the enemy and made up their minds to flee. Wishing to remain alive, they cried and called out to each other by name and lineage. They abandoned wounded sons, fathers, well-wishers, relatives and kin. They urged their horses and elephants, so that they could run away quickly."'

CHAPTER 1013(36)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that the army was routed by Subhadra's infinitely energetic son, Duryodhana was angered and himself advanced against Subhadra's son. On seeing that the king had returned and was advancing in the battle against Subhadra's son, Drona spoke to all the warriors. 'Protect the king. While we look on, the valiant Abhimanyu is killing everything that he is targeting. Do not be afraid. Swiftly attack and protect Kourava.'[41] He[42] possessed powerful and grateful well-wishers, desiring victory. Though they were terrified, those brave ones surrounded your son—Drona, Drona's son, Kripa, Karna, Kritavarma, Soubala,[43] Brihadbala, the king of Madra, Bhuri, Bhurishrava, Shala, Pourava and Vrishasena.[44] They released sharp arrows and countered Subhadra's son with that great shower of arrows. They confounded him and freed Duryodhana. But Arjuna's son could not tolerate that something he had grasped should be taken away. With a great shower of arrows, he enveloped the horses and the charioteers of those maharathas. Having repulsed them, Subhadra's son roared like a lion. On hearing his roar, which was like that of a lion in search of flesh, the rathas, with Drona at the forefront, were extremely enraged. They could not tolerate it. O venerable one! They encircled him from all sides with a mass of chariots. They released a mass of many different kinds of arrows at him. But your grandson used sharp arrows to sever them in the sky and then pierced them back in turn. It was extraordinary. They were enraged by those arrows, which were like the virulent poison of snakes. Wishing to kill him, they surrounded Subhadra's son, who refused to run away. That ocean of your soldiers was like a sea. But Abhimanyu held it back, like the shoreline against the abode of *makaras*.[45] Those brave ones fought, wishing to kill each other. There was Abhimanyu on one side and the enemy on the other and no one wished to retreat. A terrible and fearful combat raged.

'"Duhsaha pierced Abhimanyu with nine arrows, Duhshasana with twelve, Sharadvata Kripa with three and Drona with seventeen arrows, each of which was like a venomous serpent. Vivimshati pierced him with twenty, Kritavarma with seven, Brihadbala with eight, Ashvatthama with seven, Bhurishrava with three arrows and the king of Madra with six arrows. Shakuni pierced him with two arrows and King Duryodhana with three. In turn, he pierced each of them back with three arrows. O great king! With the bow in his hand, the powerful Abhimanyu seemed to dance around. He was enraged because he was oppressed by your sons. He exhibited the great strength he had acquired through learning and practice. He was borne on well-trained horses, with speeds like those of Garuda or the wind. They bore him swiftly and he countered the heir of Ashmaka.[46] Asking him to wait, Abhimanyu used ten arrows to cut down his charioteer, his horses, his standard, his arms, his bow and his head. Having brought these down, he smiled. When the brave lord of Ashmaka was thus slain by Subhadra's son, all his soldiers wavered and began to run away. Karna, Kripa, Drona, Drona's son, the king of Gandhara, Shala, Shalya, Bhurishrava, Kratha, Somadatta, Vivimshati, Vrishasena, Sushena, Kundabhedi, Pratardana, Vrindaraka, Lalittha, Prabahu, Dirghalochana and the enraged Duryodhana showered down arrows on him. Those great archers pierced him with their arrows and Abhimanyu became angry. He shot arrows at Karna that were capable of penetrating the body. O king! They pierced his armour and his body and penetrated the earth, like a snake entering a termite hill. Having been thus wounded by him, Karna was pained and swooned. In that battle, he was like a mountain trembling because of an earthquake. With three other sharp arrows, the angry and powerful one slew Sushena, Dirghalochana and Kundabhedi. Having recovered, Karna pierced him with twenty-five iron arrows, Ashvatthama with twenty and Kritavarma with seven. With arrows piercing all his limbs, the son of Shakra's son[47] was seen to angrily roam around amidst the soldiers, like Yama with a noose in his hand. Shalya was near him and he repulsed him with a shower of arrows. The mighty-armed one roared and terrified your soldiers. O king! Pierced in his inner organs by the one who was skilled in the use of weapons, Shalya lost his senses and sat down on the floor of his chariot. While Bharadvaja's son looked on, on seeing that he had been thus pierced by Subhadra's illustrious son, all the soldiers began to run away. They saw that the mighty-armed one[48] was covered with gold-tufted arrows. Those on your side began to flee, like deer oppressed by a lion. He[49] was thus praised for his fighting and his fame by the ancestors, the gods, the *charanas*,[50] the *siddhas*[51] and the masses of yakshas and also by the large number of beings who were on earth. He was as resplendent as a fire into which oblations had been poured."'

CHAPTER 1014(37)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "When Arjuna's son, the great archer, caused a rout with his straight-flying arrows, who were the ones on my side who sought to counter him?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! Listen to how that young one sported around in that great battle, when he shattered the array of chariots protected by Bharadvaja's son. On seeing that the lord of Madra was crushed in that battle by the arrows of Subhadra's son, Shalya's younger brother angrily advanced and covered him with a shower of arrows. He pierced Arjuna's son, his horses and his charioteer, with ten arrows and roared loudly, asking him[52] to wait. However, Arjuna's son severed his head from his neck, his arms, his feet, his bow, his horses, his umbrella, his standard, his charioteer, the three poles on the chariot, his seat, his wheels, his yoke, his quiver, the floor of the chariot, his bows, his flag, those who protected his wheels and all his other implements. He was so swift in piercing them that no one could see him. That infinitely energetic one lost his life and fell down on the ground, pierced through his ornaments and garments, like a giant tree[53] shattered by the wind. His followers were terrified and fled in all the directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing the deeds of Arjuna's son, all the beings roared in applause in every direction. After Shalya's brother had been killed, many of his soldiers advanced against Arjuna's son, loudly proclaiming their lineages, their residences and their names. They angrily attacked him, with many different kinds of weapons in their hands. Intoxicated in their strength, they were on chariots, horses and elephants. There were others on foot. The great sound of arrows mingled with the sounds of hooves. There were roars and loud exclamations, sounds like that of roaring lions. Some slapped their palms and twanged their bowstrings, trying to scare Arjuna's son. They said, 'As long as we are alive, you will not escape with your life today.' On hearing and seeing them, Subhadra's son laughed. Having smiled, he used arrows to pierce those who had struck him first. He exhibited many wonderful weapons and his dexterity. In that encounter, Arjuna's brave son fought gently with them.[54] He had obtained weapons from Vasudeva and Dhananjaya. Krishna's son displayed them, just like the two Krishnas.[55] He strove again and again, flinging away the heavy burden that he had taken on. No gap could be seen between his taking up and shooting an arrow. The blazing circle of his outstretched bow could be seen in all the directions, like the flaming circle of the sun destroying all darkness. The twanging of his bowstring and the terrible slapping of his palms could be heard. It was like the roaring of the clouds when a great thunderclap is disgorged. Though he was intolerant, Subhadra's son was modest. The handsome one showed due reverence. Showing respect to the heroes, he fought with arrows and other weapons. O great king! He started gently and became fierce later, like the illustrious sun during the autumn, after the monsoon is over. His great shower of arrows was colourful. The arrows were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. He angrily released hundreds of them, like the rays of the sun in the sky. While Bharadvaja's son looked on, the immensely illustrious one shot *kshurapras*, *vatsadantas*, *vipathas*, *narachas*, half-narachas, *bhallas* and *anjalikas*[56] and covered that array of chariots. Oppressed by those arrows, those soldiers retreated."'

CHAPTER 1015(38)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! My mind is divided into two kinds of feelings, satisfaction and shame, on learning that Subhadra's son routed the soldiers of my son.[57] O son of Gavalgana! Tell me everything again in detail, about how the young one sported, like Skanda against the asuras."

'Sanjaya replied, "I will tell you about that extremely terrible encounter that took place between one and many. It was a tumultuous battle. Mounted on his chariot, Abhimanyu exerted himself. All the *rathas*[58] on your side were the scorchers of enemies and happily exerted themselves. There were Drona, Karna, Kripa, Shalya, Drona's son, Bhoja,[59] Brihadbala, Duryodhana, Somadatta's son,[60] the immensely strong Shakuni, many kings, many princes and many other soldiers. He roamed around like a circle of fire and pierced all of them with arrows. Subhadra's powerful son was the destroyer of enemies and skilled in supreme weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He exhibited his energy in all the directions. On witnessing the conduct of Subhadra's infinitely energetic son, your soldiers trembled repeatedly. Bharadvaja's powerful and immensely wise son dilated his eyes in delight. O venerable one! He quickly approached Kripa and addressed him, as if penetrating the inner organs of your son.[61] 'Abhimanyu, skilled in fighting, can be seen in the battle. Subhadra's youthful son has come here, ahead of all the Parthas. He has caused delight to his well-wishers, all the kings, Yudhishthira, Nakula, Sahadeva, Pandava Bhimasena, his relatives, his kin and all the other well-wishers who are neutral. I do not think there is any archer who is equal to him in battle. If he so wishes, he can kill all these soldiers. But for some reason, he does not desire that.’ On hearing Drona’s affectionate words, your son glanced smilingly at Drona. But he was enraged with Arjuna’s son.’

‘“Duryodhana spoke to Karna, Bahlika, Kripa, Duhshasana, the king of Madra and all the other maharathas. ‘The preceptor, knowledgeable about the brahman, is at the forefront of all of us. But because of affection and delusion, he does not wish to slay Arjuna’s son. In a battle, no assailant can escape from him, even if it were to be Death himself, not to speak of other mortals. I tell you this truthfully. He is protecting Arjuna’s son, as if he is his own student. Sons, students and the sons of students are always loved by those who follow dharma. Protected by Drona, he thinks himself to be brave. Though he is proud of himself, he is stupid. Let us swiftly crush him.’ Thus addressed by the king, while Bharadvaja’s son looked on, they rushed against Satvati’s son.[62] They were angry and wished to kill him. On hearing Duryodhana’s words, Duhshasana, tiger among the Kuru lineage, replied to Duryodhana in these words. ‘O great king! I tell you that I am going to kill him, while the sons of Pandu and the Panchalas look on. I will devour Subhadra’s son, like Rahu grasping the sun.’[63] He once again addressed the king of the Kurus in these loud words. ‘There is no doubt that, on hearing that Subhadra’s son has been devoured by me, the two Krishnas, who are extremely proud, will depart from the world of the living to the world of the dead. On hearing that they have died, the sons who have been born in Pandu’s field,[64] together with all their well-wishers, will become impotent and will give up their lives on a single day. Therefore, if this one is killed, all your enemies, who wish you ill, will be destroyed. O king! Wish me well and I will slay this enemy of yours.’ O king! Having spoken these words, your son, Duhshasana, was enraged and roared. He enveloped Subhadra’s son with a shower of arrows. Your son, the scorcher of enemies, descended on him. However, Abhimanyu pierced him with twenty-six sharp arrows. Duhshasana became wrathful, like an elephant with shattered temples. He fought with Abhimanyu, Subhadra’s son, in that battle. The chariots circled in wonderful ways, to the left and to the right. Those two warriors, skilled in the art of fighting with chariots, roamed around. Cymbals, drums, battle drums, *krikaras*,[65] tambourines, kettledrums and *jharjharas*[66] were sounded. This loud noise mingled with the roar of the men. It was like the roar of lions, mingling with din of the salty ocean.”’

CHAPTER 1016(39)

‘Sanjaya said, “The intelligent Abhimanyu’s body was mangled by the arrows. But he stationed himself before the enemy and smilingly spoke these words to Duhshasana. ‘It is through good fortune that I behold this insolent enemy in the battle today. He is cruel and has abandoned dharma. He is addicted to praising himself. In King Dhritarashtra’s hearing and in the assembly hall, you angered Dharmaraja Yudhishthira through your harsh words. Intoxicated with victory,[67] you addressed many maddening words towards Bhima. You stole the property of others. You were enraged. You were not pacified. You were avaricious. Your wisdom was destroyed. You were hateful and you caused injury. You robbed my fathers, fierce archers, of their kingdom. You acted in rage against those great-souled ones. Because of all that, you are facing the consequences. O evil-minded one! You will reap the fruits of terrible adharma. While all these soldiers look on, I will chastise you with my arrows today. Today, in the battle, I will free myself of the debt of anger I bear towards you. Krishna is intolerant towards you and this is what my fathers also desire. O Kouravya! In the battle, I will free myself of the debt I owe to Bhima. If you do not give up the battle, you will not escape with your life.’ Having spoken these words, the mighty armed one, the destroyer of enemy heroes, released an arrow towards Duhshasana. It was like death, like the fire at the time of destruction and like the wind in its energy. It swiftly approached and pierced him in his shoulder joint. He again pierced him with another twenty-five. O great king! Thus severely pierced and wounded, Duhshasana sat down on the floor of his chariot. He was overcome by a great swoon. His charioteer quickly carried away the unconscious Duhshasana, who was oppressed by the arrows of Subhadra's son, from the midst of that battle. On witnessing this, the Pandavas, Droupadi's sons, Virata, the Panchalas and the Kekayas roared like lions. The soldiers of the sons of Pandu were delighted and in all directions, played on many different kinds of musical instruments. On witnessing the feat accomplished by Subhadra's son, they laughed.

'"On seeing that the extremely hateful and insolent enemy had been vanquished, Droupadi's maharatha sons, who had images of Dharma, Marut, Shakra and the Ashvins on the tips of their standards,[68] Satyaki, Chekitana, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the Kekayas, Dhrishtaketu, the Matsyas, the Panchalas, the Srinjayas and the Pandavas, with Yudhishthira at the forefront, were filled with joy. Wishing to fragment Drona's array, they attacked together. An extremely great battle commenced between those on your side and the enemy. The brave ones were unwilling to retreat and desired victory. O great king! While that extremely fearful battle raged, Duryodhana spoke to Radheya. 'Behold! Duhshasana has been conquered by the brave Abhimanyu. He[69] is like the sun in his energy and was slaughtering the warriors in battle. The Pandavas are advancing towards Subhadra's son, with upraised weapons.' At this, Karna became enraged. Wishing to ensure the welfare of your son, he covered the unassailable Abhimanyu with sharp arrows. In the field of battle, he pierced his followers with sharp and supreme arrows and was contemptuous of Subhadra's brave son. O king! Abhimanyu swiftly pierced Radheya with seventy-three arrows that possessed iron heads. The great-minded one wished to confront Drona. In that battle, there was no one who could repulse his advance towards Drona. He oppressed the best of the rathas, like the one with the *vajra*[70] in his hand against the asuras. Karna was revered by all those who wielded the bow and desired victory. He exhibited his supreme weapons and pierced Subhadra's son with hundreds of arrows. The powerful one was Rama's[71] disciple and was supreme among those who possessed knowledge of weapons. In that battle, he oppressed Abhimanyu, whom enemies found invincible. He was afflicted by Radheya’s shower of weapons. But in that battle, Subhadra’s son did not waver. He was like an immortal. Arjuna’s son used sharp, broad-headed and straight-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone to sever the bows of the heroes and afflicted Karna. His standard and bow were severed and fell down on the ground. On seeing that Karna was confronting a hardship, Karna’s younger brother stretched his firm bow and quickly advanced against Subhadra’s son. The Parthas, and those who followed them, roared loudly. Satisfied with Subhadra’s son, they played on musical instruments.”’

CHAPTER 1017(40)

‘Sanjaya said, “He[72] repeatedly stretched the bow that he held in his hand and roared. He quickly placed himself between those two[73] great-souled rathas. As if smiling, he quickly pierced the unassailable Abhimanyu, his umbrella, his standard, his charioteer and his horses with ten arrows. Krishna’s son[74] had performed superhuman deeds, like his father and his grandfather. On seeing him afflicted by the arrows, those on your side were delighted. Abhimanyu smiled at this. He stretched his bow and used a single arrow to sever his head,[75] which fell down from the chariot onto the ground. It was like a karnikara tree uprooted from a mountain by the wind. O king! On seeing that his brother had been slain, Karna was overcome by grief. Having forced Karna to retreat, Subhadra’s son used arrows tufted with heron feathers to quickly rout the other great archers. He shattered that net of elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. The immensely illustrious Abhimanyu angrily routed them with his arrows. Karna was afflicted by Abhimanyu’s many arrows. He fled on swift horses and the array was shattered. O king! Abhimanyu’s arrows covered the sky, like locusts or like a shower, and nothing could be seen. The warriors on your side were slaughtered by those sharp arrows. O king! But for the king of Sindhu,[76] no one remained. Subhadra’s son, bull among men, blew on his conch shell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He swiftly descended on the army of the Bharatas. He quickly consumed the enemy, like a kindled fire on dry wood. Arjuna's son circled around, in the midst of the soldiers of the Bharatas. He used his sharp arrows to mangle the chariots, elephants, horses and men. The earth became impassable, because it was strewn with large numbers of headless torsos. Supreme arrows were released from the bow of Subhadra's son. Wishing to save their lives, they[77] fled, killing those on their own side in the process. There were broad and sharp vipatha arrows, terrible, and the performer of cruel deeds. They killed charioteers, elephants and horses and swiftly covered the ground. Severed arms were seen in that battle. They held weapons and were clad in finger guards. They held swords and were adorned with armlets. They were decorated in golden ornaments. They held bows and arrows. There were bodies and heads with earrings and garlands. There were thousands of these on the ground. It was impenetrable because of the decorations, seats, long poles, shattered axles and yokes, fragmented wheels and many chariots. There were javelins, swords and other weapons. Giant standards fell down. O lord of the earth! Kshatriyas, horses and elephants were slain. The earth became impassable and soon assumed an extremely terrible form. The princes were slain and lamented loudly. A great sound arose and it increased the fear of cowards. O best of the Bharata lineage! That sound filled all the directions. Subhadra's son attacked the soldiers and killed the horses, rathas and elephants. He roamed in all the directions and nothing could be seen because of the dust that arose. Since they were enveloped in dust, we could not see the soldiers then. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He killed the elephants, horses and men. We saw him the next instant, like the midday sun. O great king! Abhimanyu scorched the masses of the enemy. The son of Vasava's son was like Vasava in the battle. O great king! Abhimanyu roamed around in the midst of the soldiers."'

CHAPTER 1018(41)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “He was a mere child, reared in great happiness. He was noble and proud because of his strength. He was skilled in battle. He was brave. He was born in a noble lineage. He was ready to give up his own life. He immersed himself in that army, borne by well-trained horses that were three years old. Was there any ratha in Yudhishthira’s army who followed him?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Shikhandi, Satyaki, the twins, Dhrishtadyumna, Virata, Drupada and the Kekayas, Dhrishtaketu and the Matsyas angrily advanced in that battle. Those armed ones, arranged in battle formation, sought to protect him. On seeing those brave ones advance, all those on your side retreated. On seeing that the extremely large army of your son was retreating, your energetic son-in-law[78] sought to restrain them. O great king! Jayadratha, the son of the king of Sindhu, repulsed the Parthas, together with their soldiers, when they sought to protect their son.[79] That fierce and great archer, the son of Vriddhakshatra, invoked his divine weapons, like an elephant sporting on a sloping ground.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! I think that an extremely heavy burden was placed on Saindhava, since he had to single-handedly repulse the enraged Pandavas who desired to protect their son. I think that Saindhava’s strength and valour were extremely wonderful. Tell me about the valour and extreme deeds of the great-souled one. O suta! What donations did he make? What oblations did he offer? What austerities did he torment himself with? How could the king of Sindhu counter the enraged Parthas single-handed?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “At the time of Droupadi’s abduction, he was vanquished by Bhimasena.[80] The king was tormented by his dishonour and desiring a boon, performed extremely great austerities. He withdrew his sensual organs from all objects that brought them pleasure. He bore hunger, thirst and heat and became so thin that he seemed to be made out of veins. He chanted the name of the eternal brahman and worshipped the god Sharva.[81] The illustrious one, compassionate towards devotees, became merciful towards him. In a dream, Hara revealed himself to the son of the lord of Sindhu and said, 'O Jayadratha! I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon. What do you desire?' Thus addressed by Sharva, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, joined his hands in salutation, controlled his soul, bowed in obeisance before Rudra and replied, 'The Pandaveyas are terrible in battle because of their valour and prowess. I wish that I may alone be able to counter them in battle.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is what he asked for. Thus addressed, the lord of the gods spoke to Jayadratha in these words. 'O amiable one! I will grant you the boon, but with the exception of Partha Dhananjaya. In a battle, you will be able to withstand the other four sons of Pandu.' The king agreed to these words of the lord of the gods and awoke from his sleep. It is because of the boon that he obtained as a gift and because of the strength of his divine weapons, that he was able to repulse the army of the Pandavas single-handed. The twang of his bowstring and the slap of his palms overwhelmed the enemy kshatriyas with fear and also caused supreme delight among your soldiers. O king! The kshatriyas[82] saw that Saindhava took up the entire burden and roared and rushed to the spot where Yudhishthira's army was."'

CHAPTER 1019(42)

'Sanjaya said, "O Indra among kings! You have asked me about the valour of the king of Sindhu. I will tell you everything, in detail, about how he fought with the sons of Pandu. Listen. There were well-trained horses from the Sindhu region, controlled by the charioteer. They were large and as fleet as the wind. These bore him. His chariot, constructed in the appropriate way, was like a city of the gandharvas. It was radiant with a standard that bore the mark of a large and silver-coloured boar. There was a white umbrella and pennants, with fans and whisks. These were the marks of a king. And he was as resplendent as the lord of the stars[83] in the firmament. The bumper on his chariot was made out of iron and was decorated with pearls, diamonds, gems and gold. It was as dazzling as luminous bodies in the sky. He extended his great bow and released many arrows, filling up those parts that Arjuna’s son shattered.[84] He pierced Satyaki with three arrows and Vrikodara with eight, Dhrishtadyumna with sixty and Virata with ten arrows, Drupada with five sharp arrows and Shikhandi with ten, the Kekayas with twenty-five and Droupadi’s sons with three arrows each. He pierced Yudhishthira with seventy and mangled all others with a great net of arrows. It was extraordinary.

‘“The powerful king, Dharma’s son, smiled. He fixed a sharp and yellow broad-headed arrow and used this to slice down his bow.[85] But he took up another bow in the twinkling of an eye and pierced Partha[86] with ten arrows, piercing the others with three each. On realizing his dexterity, Bhima again used three broad-headed arrows and severed his bow, standard and umbrella, so that they were swiftly brought down on the ground. O venerable one! The powerful one strung another bow and brought down Bhima’s standard, bow and horses. With his horses slain and his bow severed, he descended from his chariot and climbed onto Satyaki’s chariot, like a lion jumping onto the summit of a mountain. On witnessing this honourable and supreme deed on the part of the king of Sindhu, those on your side were delighted and shouted repeatedly in appreciation. All the beings honoured this deed, whereby he countered the enraged Pandavas alone, through the energy of his weapons. Subhadra’s son had created a route earlier, by slaughtering many warriors and elephants. But Saindhava restrained the armoured Pandus from that path. The brave Matsyas, Panchalas and Kekayas made every endeavour. So did the Pandavas. But they could not withstand Saindhava. Everyone who tried to penetrate Drona’s array was checked by Saindhava, as a consequence of the boon that he had obtained from the god.”’

CHAPTER 1020(43)

‘Sanjaya said, “Desiring success, Saindhava checked the Pandus. There commenced an extremely terrible battle between those on your side and the enemy. Arjuna’s son, invincible and unwavering in his aim, penetrated the soldiers and agitated them, like a makara in the ocean. The foremost among them, supreme among the Kurus, advanced duly against Subhadra's son, the scorcher of enemies who was causing the agitation with his shower of arrows. That clash between him and them was extremely terrible and the infinitely energetic ones created showers of arrows. Arjuna's son was obstructed in every direction by chariots of the enemy and killed Vrishasena's charioteer and severed his bow. The powerful one then pierced his horses with arrows and those horses, which were as swift as the wind, bore his[87] chariot away from the field of battle. Using that opportunity, Abhimanyu's charioteer freed his chariot from that melee. On seeing the chariot emerge, there was delight and roars of applause. He[88] was like a lion and enraged, mangling the enemy with his arrows. Without any fear, Vasatiya swiftly advanced and attacked him. He restrained Abhimanyu with sixty gold-tufted arrows and said, 'As long as I am alive, you will not escape from this battle with your life.' He was clad in iron armour. But Subhadra's son used a swift arrow to pierce him in the heart. Losing his life, he fell down on the ground. On seeing that Vasatiya had been killed, the bulls among the kshatriyas were enraged. O king! They surrounded your grandson, wishing to kill him. They stretched their many different kinds of bows in many different kinds of ways. A terrible battle raged between Subhadra's son and the enemy. Phalguna's son was wrathful. He sliced down their arrows and bows and the heads from the bodies, decorated with earrings and garlands. Severed arms were seen, decorated with golden ornaments. They held swords and finger guards, lances and battleaxes. Garlands, ornaments, garments and giant standards fell down. There were armour and shields, necklaces, crowns, umbrellas and whisks. It became impassable because of decorations, seats and poles. There were shattered and fragmented axles, wheels and yokes in thousands. There were *anukarshas*.[89] And flags, charioteers, horses, broken chariots and slain elephants, strewn all over the ground. Many brave kshatriyas, the lords of many countries, who had surrounded him with a desire for victory, were killed. They were strewn on the ground and it looked terrible. The angry Abhimanyu was in the field of battle, roaming in all the directions and sub-directions, and his form could not be seen. His golden armour and ornaments could alone be seen and also his bow and arrows. No one was capable of glancing at him with his eyes. He killed the warriors with his arrows and was stationed like the sun in their midst.”’

CHAPTER 1021(44)

‘Sanjaya said, “Arjuna’s son robbed the brave ones of their lives and was like Death robbing all beings of their lives, when the time arrives. The powerful one was the son of Shakra’s son and was Shakra’s equal in valour. Agitating your army, Abhimanyu was seen to be extremely resplendent. O Indra among kings! That killer of the best of kshatriyas was like Death when he penetrated. He descended on Satyashrava, like a tiger descending on deer. When Satyashrava had been thus attacked, the other maharathas quickly grasped a large number of different weapons and rushed against Abhimanyu. ‘I will be the first. I will station myself in the forefront.’ Those bulls among kshatriyas rivalled each other and spoke thus. They attacked Arjuna’s son together, wishing to kill him. On seeing that army of kshatriyas advance against him, he received them, like a whale grasping small fish in the ocean. Like rivers do not return once they head towards the ocean, not a single one who approached wished to run away. That army was like a boat in the ocean, when it has been grasped by a mighty storm and is tossed around by the force of the wind. It was oppressed by fear, trembled and was destroyed.

‘“The powerful Rukmaratha was the son of the lord of Madra.[90] He wished to assure the frightened soldiers and fearlessly spoke these words. ‘O brave ones! You should not be terrified. As long as I am stationed here, he is nothing. There is no doubt that I will capture him alive.’ Having spoken thus, the valiant one advanced against Subhadra’s son. He was borne on a dazzling chariot that was constructed well and was well-stocked.[91] He pierced Abhimanyu in the chest with three arrows and roared. He pierced him in the right arm with three and in the left with three sharp arrows. However, Phalguna's son severed his bow, and his left arm and his right. He swiftly severed his head, with beautiful eyes and eyebrows, and made it fall down on the ground. Rukmaratha was Shalya's revered son. He had desired to capture alive, or destroy, Subhadra's illustrious son. O king! On seeing him killed, the friends of Shalya's son, armed princes who were unassailable in battle and had standards decorated in gold, surrounded Arjuna's son from every direction. The maharathas stretched bows that were as long as palm trees and showered down arrows on him. Subhadra's unvanquished son was brave and alone. In that battle, he was surrounded by these brave ones, who were skilled, powerful, youthful and extremely intolerant. They enveloped him with their storm of arrows. On seeing this, Duryodhana was delighted and thought that he would go to Vaivasvata's abode.[92] Those sons of kings used excellent gold-tufted arrows that were of many different kinds and forms and Arjuna's son disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. O venerable one! He, his charioteer, his horses, his standard and his chariot were seen by us to be covered with arrows, like locusts. He was severely pierced and wounded and became as angry as a goaded elephant. He affixed the gandharva weapon and its powers of maya. After tormenting himself with austerities, Arjuna had obtained it from gandharvas, Tumburu being the foremost. He[93] confounded them with this. O king! He was sometimes seen as one, or hundreds, or thousands. He was like a circle of fire in that battle, exhibiting the swiftness of his weapons. The scorcher of enemies confounded them with the skill with which his chariot was driven and with the maya of his weapons. O king! He pierced the bodies of the kings in a hundred places. O king! In that battle, his sharp arrows took out the breath of life away from living bodies and they attained the other world, their bodies falling down on the ground. Phalguna's son used his sharp and broad-headed arrows to sever their bows, horses, charioteers, standards, arms decorated with bracelets and heads. They were like five-year-old mango trees that were destroyed, though they were ready for yielding fruit. One hundred princes were killed by Subhadra's son. They were delicate and deserved happiness, but were slain by him alone, with angry and virulent serpents.[94] On seeing this, Duryodhana was terrified. Duryodhana saw that his chariots, elephants, horses and infantry were shattered and quickly rushed at him, in intolerance. The battle that commenced lasted only for a short instant. Your son was oppressed by hundreds of arrows and retreated."'

CHAPTER 1022(45)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O suta! You have told me about the battle between the one and the many. It was extremely terrible and the great-souled one triumphed. The valour of Subhadra's son was extraordinary and impossible to believe. But this wonderful deed is possible for those who resort to dharma. When the one hundred princes were slain, Duryodhana retreated. What did those on my side do to counter the influence of Subhadra's son?"

'Sanjaya replied, "Their faces were dry and their eyes lolled out. They perspired and their body hair stood up. They were interested in running away. They were no longer interested in defeating the enemy. They abandoned their slain brothers, fathers, well-wishers, relatives and those with whom they had matrimonial alliances. They swiftly urged their horses and elephants and fled. On beholding that they were shattered, Drona, Drona's son, Brihadbala, Kripa, Duryodhana, Karna, Kritavarma and Soubala angrily attacked Subhadra's unvanquished son. O king! Most of them were beaten back by your grandson. There was only one who had been reared in happiness. He was a child, but proud and fearless. Lakshmana[95] was extremely energetic and used his arrows and weapons to attack Arjuna's son. Out of anxiety and affection for the son, the father returned. Other maharathas also returned and followed Duryodhana. They drenched him with a cloud of arrows, like clouds pouring down rain on a mountain. But he countered them single-handed, like a dry wind driving away the clouds. Your grandson Lakshmana was invincible and handsome. The brave one was stationed near his father, the outstretched bow in his hand. He had been reared in great happiness and was like a son of the lord of riches.[96] Krishna's son encountered him in battle, like a crazy elephant clashing against another crazy elephant. Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, approached Lakshmana and was pierced on his arms and his chest by extremely sharp arrows that were released from the bow.[97] The mighty-armed one was enraged, like a serpent that has been struck with a staff. O great king! Your grandson spoke to your grandson.[98] 'Glance well at this world. You will soon go to the other world. In the sight of your relatives, I will convey you to Yama's abode.' Saying this, Subhadra's mighty-armed son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, used a broad-headed arrow. It looked like a snake that had just cast off its skin. It was released from his arms and severed Lakshmana's beautiful head, with an excellent nose, eyebrows and beautiful hair, and adorned with earrings. On seeing that Lakshmana had been slain, the people let out sounds of woe and lamentation. When his beloved son was brought down, Duryodhana was enraged. The bull among the kshatriyas loudly urged the kshatriyas to kill him. Six rathas surrounded him—Drona, Kripa, Karna, Drona's son, Brihadbala and Kritavarma, Hridika's son. But Arjuna's son pierced them with sharp arrows and drove them back. Angrily and forcefully, he then descended on Saindhava's large army. The armoured Kalingas, Nishadas, and Kratha's valiant son obstructed his path with an array of elephants. O lord of the earth! The engagement between them was extremely fierce. Arjuna's son crushed that army of elephants, like a wind courses in every direction in the sky and drives away hundreds of clouds. Kratha's son enveloped Arjuna's son with a storm of arrows. In addition, other rathas, with Drona at the forefront, also returned. They attacked Subhadra's son, using supreme and other weapons. Arjuna's son repulsed them with his arrows and swiftly afflicted Kratha's son with a continuous flood of arrows, wishing to kill him. He brought down his bow, arrows, armlets, arms, diademed head, umbrella, standard, charioteer and horses. He[99] was born in a noble lineage and possessed the strength of learning. He was the performer of deeds and possessed the strength of weapons.

When such a brave one was killed, most of the others fled from the field of battle.”’

CHAPTER 1023(46)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Subhadra’s unvanquished son was young. He performed deeds that befitted his lineage. He never fled from the field of battle. He was borne on three-year-old horses that were extremely strong and born from good lineages. They seemed to glide along the sky. When he penetrated there, which brave ones countered him?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Abhimanyu, the descendant of the Pandu lineage, penetrated your soldiers. He used his sharp arrows and made all the kings retreat. At this, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Drona’s son, Brihadbala and Kritavarma, Hridika’s son—these six rathas surrounded him. O great king! On seeing that Saindhava had assumed an extremely heavy burden, your soldiers attacked Yudhishthira.[100] There were those who stretched bows that were as long as palm trees. They showered down many arrows on Subhadra’s brave son. But Subhdra’s son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, used arrows in that battle to counter all those great archers, who were skilled in all forms of learning. He pierced Drona with fifty arrows and Brihadbala with twenty, Kritavarma with eighty and Kripa with sixty arrows. Arjuna’s son stretched his bow up to his ears and used ten extremely forceful and gold-tufted arrows to pierce Ashvatthama. In the midst of the enemy, Phalguna’s son used a yellow, sharp and tufted arrow to pierce Karna in his ear. He brought down Kripa’s horses and the two charioteers who guarded his flanks.[101] He then pierced him between the breasts with ten arrows. While your brave sons looked on, the powerful one then killed the valiant Vrindaraka, the extender of the fame of the Kuru lineage.[102] While he was thus fearlessly slaughtering the foremost among the enemy, Drona’s son pierced him with twenty-five small arrows. O venerable one! However, while all the sons of Dhritarashtra looked on, Arjuna’s son swiftly pierced Ashvatthama back with sharp arrows. But Drona’s son pierced him with sixty extremely energetic arrows that were terrible, fierce and sharp. However, though pierced, he was like Mount Mainaka and did not tremble. The immensely energetic and powerful one pierced Drona's son, who had caused him injury, with seventy-three gold-tufted and straight-flying arrows. Wishing to protect his son, Drona pierced him with one hundred arrows. Desiring to protect his father in the battle, Ashvatthama pierced him with sixty arrows. Karna pierced him with twenty-two broad-headed arrows, Kritavarma with fourteen, Brihadbala with fifty and Sharadvata Kripa with ten. He pierced them back with ten arrows each. Subhadra's son mangled all of them with sharp arrows. The lord of Kosala[103] pierced him in the chest with a barbed arrow. But he[104] brought his[105] arrows, standard, bow and charioteer down on the ground. Bereft of his chariot, the king of Kosala grasped a sword and a shield and wished to sever the head, decorated with earrings, of Phalguna's son from his body. But he pierced the lord of Kosala, Prince Brihadbala, in his heart with an arrow. With his heart shattered, he fell down. At this, ten thousand great-souled kings ran away, shouting words of abuse, though they wielded swords and bows.[106] Having slain Brihadbala, Subhadra's son roamed around in the field of battle. With a shower of arrows that were like rain, he paralysed the great archers and warriors on your side."'

CHAPTER 1024(47)

'Sanjaya said, "Phalguna's son once again pierced Karna in the ear with a barbed arrow. Angering him even more, he pierced him with fifty arrows. Radheya pierced the great warrior back in turn. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Covered with arrows all over his limbs, he[107] looked extremely radiant. Extremely enraged, he caused Karna to be covered in blood. Covered with arrows and streaming blood, the brave Karna was also resplendent. Both of them were beautiful with arrows on their bodies, and blood flowed from their wounds. Those great-souled ones looked like flowering *kimshuka* trees.[108] Subhadra's son destroyed six of Karna's advisers, who were brave and wonderful in the art of fighting, together with their horses, charioteers, standards and chariots.

Without showing them any honour, he pierced all the other great archers back with ten arrows each and this was extraordinary. He then slew and brought down Ashvaketu, the youthful son of the king of Magadha, with six arrows, together with his horses and his charioteer. He used a kshurapra arrow to kill Martikavata of Bhoja, who bore the sign of an elephant on his standard. Having done this, he roared and released more arrows. Duhshasana's son then pierced his four horses with four arrows, his charioteer with one and Arjuna's son himself with ten arrows. At this, Krishna's son pierced Duhshasana's son with seven swift arrows. His eyes red with rage, he loudly spoke these words. 'Like a coward, your father has fled from the field of battle. It is your good fortune that you know how to fight. But you will not be able to escape today.' Having spoken these words, he released an iron arrow that had been polished by an artisan. But Drona's son sliced this down with three arrows. Arjuna's son severed his standard and struck Shalya with three arrows. He pierced Shalya again with nine arrows that were tufted with the feathers of vultures. Arjuna's son severed his standard and killed the two charioteers who guarded his flanks.[109] He then pierced him with six iron arrows and he[110] climbed onto another chariot. He then killed five who were named Shatrunjaya, Chandraketu, Mahavega, Suvarcha and Suryabhasa and pierced Soubala.

'"Soubala pierced him back with three arrows and spoke to Duryodhana. 'Let us unite and grind him down. Otherwise, he will kill all of us single-handed.' Vrisha Vaikartana Karna then spoke to Drona.[111] 'Before he destroys all of us, tell us how we can swiftly kill him.' Drona, the great archer, told all of them, 'Have you been able to detect any weakness in this young one? He is roaming around in all the directions. You had better search out your forefathers now. Behold this son of Pandava. He is quick and is a lion among men. The path followed by his chariot and the circle of his bow can be seen. He affixes and releases arrows extremely swiftly. His arrows confound me and afflict my breath of life. But I am delighted with Subhadra's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes. When Subhadra's son roams around on the field of battle, I am extremely gratified. The angry maharathas cannot detect a weakness in him. He is dexterous in the use of his hands and releases great arrows in all the directions. In the battle, I do not see any difference between him and the wielder of Gandiva.[112] At this, oppressed by the arrows of Arjuna's son, Karna again spoke to Drona. 'I am oppressed by the extremely terrible and energetic arrows of the young Abhimanyu. Nevertheless, I remain stationed here. His arrows are terrible and possess the energy of the fire. They are sapping my heart now.' The preceptor smiled and spoke gently to Karna. 'His armour is impenetrable. He is young, swift and valiant. His father has been instructed by me on the art of donning armour. It is certain that this destroyer of enemy cities knows everything about that.[113] But with well-aimed arrows, you are capable of slicing down his bow, his bowstring, the reins of his horses and the two charioteers who guard his flanks.[114] O great archer! O Radheya! If you are capable, do this. Make him retreat and strike him subsequently. If he wields the bow, the gods and the asuras are incapable of vanquishing him. If you so wish, deprive him of his chariot and his bow.' Having heard the preceptor's words, Vaikartana Karna used his arrows to swiftly slice down the bow of the light-handed one. Bhoja[115] killed his horses and Goutama[116] the charioteers who guarded his flanks. Once his bow had been severed, the others enveloped him with a shower of arrows.

'"At that time, when he was bereft of his chariot, the six maharathas[117] quickly and ruthlessly showered him with arrows, while the child fought single-handed. His bow had been severed and he was without a chariot. However, he was engaged in following his own dharma. The handsome one grasped a sword and a shield and leapt up into the sky. Arjuna's son displayed his dexterity and strength and roamed around in the sky, like a terrible king of the birds. He showed *kaishika* and other motions.[118] The great archers pierced him in the battle, searching for a weakness, glancing upwards and wondering, 'He might descend on me with the sword in his hand.' Drona severed the sword, decorated with a bejewelled handle, from his hand. Radheya used sharp arrows to cut down his supreme shield. Deprived of his sword and shield, but still whole in his limbs, he again descended from the sky onto the ground. He picked up a chariot wheel and angrily rushed at Drona. His limbs blazed because of the dust raised by the wheels. He was radiant, with the chariot wheel raised high in his arms. In that battle, for a short while, Abhimanyu looked beautiful and seemed to replicate the deeds of Vasudeva.[119] Blood flowed from his body. His face was red. His eyebrows were wrinkled and he roared like a lion. In the midst of the best of kings, he looked exceedingly fierce."'

CHAPTER 1025(48)

'Sanjaya said, "He was the one who brought delight to Vishnu's sister.[120] He was adorned with Vishnu's weapon.[121] In the battle, the atiratha[122] looked as beautiful as Janardana. The tips of his hair waved around in the wind. His supreme weapons were upraised. The lords of the earth looked at his body, though even the gods found it difficult to glance at it. They were extremely anxious because of the chariot wheel he held and sliced it down into many fragments. Krishna's maharatha son then grasped a gigantic club. His enemies had deprived him of his bow and chariot, his sword and the chariot wheel. But with the club in his hand, Abhimanyu rushed against Ashvatthama. The upraised club was like a blazing thunderbolt. On beholding it, that bull among men[123] alighted from his chariot and took three steps backwards. Subhadra's son used the club to slay his horses and the two charioteers who guarded his flanks.[124] With arrows on all his limbs, he looked like a porcupine. He[125] then brought down Kalakeya, Subala's son, and killed seventy-seven of his followers from the land of Gandhara. He again killed ten rathas from the Brahma-Vasatiyas, seven rathas from the Kekayas and ten elephants.

'"He then advanced against the chariot of Duhshasana's son and used the club to slay his horses. O venerable one! At this, Duhshasana's son was enraged and raised his club. Asking Subhadra’s son to wait, he attacked him. Those two brave brothers wished to kill each other and raised their clubs against each other. They struck, like the destroyer Tryambaka[126] in earlier times. Having struck each other with the ends of their clubs, they both fell down on the ground. In the midst of that battle, those two scorchers of enemies were like Indra’s standards that had been uprooted. The ratha who was Duhshasana’s son, the extender of the deeds of the Kuru lineage, arose first and struck Subhadra’s son on the head with the club, as he was about to get up. Because of exhaustion and because of the great force of the club, Subhadra’s son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, lost his senses and fell down on the ground, unconscious.

‘“O king! Thus, in that battle, a single one was slain by many. He had agitated all the soldiers, like an elephant among lotuses. The brave one was as resplendent as a wild elephant killed by hunters. The brave one fell down and was surrounded by all those on your side. He looked like a fire during the summer, pacified by the onset of winter, or like a storm that has subsided after destroying the tops of trees. After scorching the army of the Bharatas, he was like a sun that has set, like the eclipsed moon, or the ocean with all its water dried up. His face was like the full moon. His eyelashes were as dark as the wings of crows. On seeing him lying down on the ground, all the maharathas on your side were supremely delighted. They roared repeatedly, like lions. O lord of the earth! Those on your side were overcome with great delight. But tears flowed down from the eyes of those on the other side. O lord of the earth! On seeing the brave one fallen down, like the moon dislodged from the firmament, beings were heard to speak in the firmament. ‘With Drona and Karna at the forefront, this single one has been slain by six maharathas from the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra. It is our view that this is not dharma.’ When that brave one was killed, the earth looked extremely beautiful, like the full moon in the sky, with a garland of *nakshatras*.[127] It was strewn with gold-tufted arrows and covered with blood. There were the beautiful heads of brave ones, adorned with earrings. It was strewn with cushions, flags, whisks, carpets, expensive and excellent garments, extremely dazzling ornaments on chariots, horses, men and elephants, sharp and yellow swords that looked like serpents, bows, shattered arrows, lances, scimitars, javelins, kampanas and many other kinds of weapons. Strewn with these, it looked extremely beautiful. There were dead and dying horses and their riders, covered with blood. They had been brought down by Subhadra's son and the earth was impassable. There were goads and the drivers of elephants, with armour, weapons and standards. The elephants had been mangled and pierced by arrows and looked like mountains. The earth was covered with these and horses, without their charioteers and warriors. Crushed by slain elephants, the best of chariots looked like lakes. There were large numbers of slain infantry, adorned with weapons and ornaments. The earth assumed a terrible form and generated terror among cowards. He was as resplendent as the sun and the moon. On seeing him fallen down on the ground, those on your side were supremely delighted. The Pandus were distressed. O king! Abhimanyu was still a child and had not yet attained youth. But he was killed.

'"While Dharmaraja looked on, all the soldiers fled.[128] When Subhadra's son was brought down, Ajatashatru saw that his army had been shattered and spoke these words to the brave ones on his side. 'The brave one did not retreat and has gone to heaven. Do not be frightened and remain here. We will yet vanquish the enemy in battle.' In distress, the extremely energetic and extremely radiant one spoke these words. Dharmaraja was the foremost among warriors and spoke thus, to alleviate their misery. 'He killed many enemy princes in this battle, those who were like venomous serpents. It was only after killing them in battle first that Arjuna's son gave up his life. He killed ten thousand and the maharatha from Kosala.[129] Krishna's son was like Krishna and Arjuna and has certainly gone to Shakra's abode. He killed thousands of rathas, horses, men and elephants. But he was still not content with what he had accomplished in battle. He is the performer of auspicious deeds. We should not grieve.'

'"Having killed the best of their warriors and afflicted by arrows, we returned to your camp in the evening, covered with blood. We glanced at the enemy warriors as we slowly departed. O great king! We were overcome with exhaustion and had lost our senses. That inauspicious time between day and night arrived. The inauspicious howls of jackals could be heard. The sun was pale red, like the filaments of lotuses. It stretched itself on the mountain behind which it sets.[130] It took away the radiance from our supreme swords, lances, scimitars, bumpers of chariots, shields and ornaments. The earth and the sky could not be differentiated. The sun assumed its beloved form of the fire.[131] There were many giant and immobile carcasses of elephants, like the summits of mountains that had been shattered by the thunderbolt. Their standards and goads were strewn around and riders brought down, like cattle without a cowherd. There were slain horses and shattered seats. Horses and charioteers were slain and flags and pennants brought down. O lord of men! The maharathas looked beautiful, deprived of their lives by the enemy. There were masses of chariots and horses, with their slain riders, killed together and separately. Vessels and ornaments were strewn around. Tongues lolled out. Teeth jutted out. Entrails and eyes bulged out. The earth seemed to be extremely terrible. There were men with expensive armour and ornaments and the best of weapons. They were destroyed, together with their elephants, horses and chariots. Though they always deserved expensive beds and covers, they were slain and lay down helpless on the ground. Dogs, jackals, crows, wild crows, birds,[132] wolves, hyenas, ravens, others who feed on blood, masses of rakshasas and large numbers of *pishachas*[133] were extremely delighted in that terrible field of battle. They penetrated the skin and fed on the fat, blood and marrow, also eating the flesh. As they tore at the bodies and dragged them away in large numbers, they laughed and sang. A terrible river of blood was created by the best of warriors. It was extremely fearful, like Vaitarani,[134] and was difficult to traverse. The currents were blood that flowed from the bodies. The chariots were like rafts and the elephants were like rocks. The heads of men were the stones and the flesh was the mud. It flowed along, carrying many weapons like garlands. That terrible river flowed in the midst of that field of battle, bearing those from the world of the living to the world of the dead. Large numbers of pishachas, horrible to look at, roared in terrible tones as they drank and ate there. They roared loudly, causing terror among those who were still alive. Dogs, jackals and birds also fed there. As night set in, the warriors glanced at that terrible sight, which was like the kingdom of the lord of the ancestors.[135] The men glanced at that which arose with its terrible banks, and then slowly walked away. The maharatha, who was like Shakra himself, was brought down. He lay there, adorned in extremely expensive ornaments. The men saw that Abhimanyu had been killed in the battle, like a sacrificial fire on an altar, into which oblations were no longer being offered."'

CHAPTER 1026(49)

'Sanjaya said, "When Subhadra's brave son, the leader of rathas, was slain, all of them[136] threw away their bows and freed themselves from their armour and their chariots. They seated themselves around King Yudhishthira. Their minds were on Subhadra's deceased son and they reflected in misery. Since the maharatha Abhimanyu, his brother's brave son, had been killed, King Yudhishthira was extremely overcome by grief and lamented. 'To ensure that which would bring me pleasure, he penetrated Drona's array. He shattered and penetrated the vyuha, like a lion in the midst of cattle. Brave and great archers from the other side encountered him in battle. They were skilled in the use of weapons and unassailable in battle. Yet, they were shattered and forced to retreat. He clashed against Duhshasana, our supreme enemy. But in the encounter, he used his arrows to swiftly render him unconscious and forced him to retreat. The brave one crossed the impassable great ocean that was Drona's army. Having encountered Duhshasana's son, Krishna's son departed for Vaivasvata's[137] eternal abode. When Subhadra's son has been killed, how will I cast my eyes on Kounteya Arjuna? How will I glance at the immensely fortunate Subhadra, without her beloved son?

What meaningless, disjointed and incoherent words will I speak to Hrishikesha and Dhananjaya? Addicted to my pleasure and desiring victory, I have performed this unpleasant deed for Subhadra, Keshava and Arjuna. An avaricious person does not understand his sins. Greed follows from delusion. Those who desire honey do not see the fall that confronts them and I am like that. He should have been honoured with food, vehicles, beds and ornaments. He was only a child. But we placed him at the forefront of the warriors. He was a child. He was young. He was not skilled in battle. What good could come from placing him in danger? He sacrificed himself like a well-trained horse. We will also lie down on the bare ground today, when we are scorched by Bibhatsu's blazing anger and the misery of his eyes. He is not greedy. He is intelligent. He is modest. He is forgiving. He is handsome. He is powerful. He possesses a beautiful body. He is brave. He is affectionate. He is devoted to the truth. Even the gods praise his terrible deeds. The valiant one slaughtered the *nivatakavachas* and the *kalakeyas*, the ones who were the enemies of the great Indra and resided in Hiranyapura. He killed the Poulamas and their followers in the twinkling of an eye.[138] The lord grants sanctuary even to enemies who seek refuge with him. He is such a person. And today, we were incapable of protecting his son from danger. The extremely powerful sons of Dhritarashtra have been overcome by a great fear now. Partha will be enraged at the slaughter of his son and will destroy the Kouravas. The mean-minded one[139] has mean-minded advisers. He will be distressed at seeing that his own side is exterminated. Duryodhana will grieve and will no longer remain alive. I do not find victory pleasant, nor the kingdom, or immortality or residence in the world of the gods, when I see that the son of the son of the supreme among the gods, with great valour and manliness, has been brought down.'""

CHAPTER 1027(50)

'Sanjaya said, "That terrible day, which had caused a destruction of beings, was over. The sun set and the beautiful twilight presented itself.

O bull among the Bharata lineage! Both sets of soldiers retired to their camps. Having slaughtered the samshaptakas with his divine weapons, Jishnu, the one with the ape on his banner,[140] left for his camp, astride his victorious chariot. As he proceeded, he asked Govinda in a voice that was choked with tears. ‘O Keshava! Why is my heart terrified? Why are my words getting stuck? O Achyuta![141] Evil portents are agitating me and my body is faltering. It is as if evil thoughts are overwhelming my heart. In every direction, the earth seems to be fierce and the omens are terrifying me. They are seen to be of many different forms and seem to foretell a disaster. I hope the king, my senior, and his advisers, are well.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘It is evident that all is well with your brother and his advisers. Do not sorrow. There may have been some other evil somewhere else.’

‘“Those two brave ones performed their evening worship, mounted their chariot and proceeded. They spoke about what had transpired during the day’s war, which had destroyed so many heroes. Having reached their own camp, and after having performed extremely difficult deeds, Vasudeva and Arjuna found it to be cheerless and full of distress. Bibhatsu, the destroyer of enemy heroes, noticed that the camp was in a state of disarray. He told Krishna with a disturbed heart, ‘O Janardana! The trumpets are not being blown with auspicious sounds. They do not mingle with the sounds of beaten kettledrums, conch shells and drums. The *veena*[142] is not being sounded, with the sound of the slapping of palms. Auspicious songs are not being sung or recited. The bards are not chanting beautiful words of praise amidst our soldiers. On seeing me, the warriors are turning away and are lowering their faces. As on earlier occasions, they are not telling me about the deeds that they have accomplished. O Madhava! I hope that everything has been well with my brothers today. On seeing that those on our side are distressed, I can find no peace of mind. O one who grants honours! O Achyuta! I hope all the warriors, together with the king of Panchala and Virata, are fine. Today, with his brothers, Subhadra’s son has not emerged to greet me happily, with a smile on his face, now that I have returned from the battle.’

Having conversed in this way, the two of them entered their own camp. They saw the distressed Pandavas there, bereft of their senses.

'"On seeing his brothers and his sons,[143] but on not seeing Subhadra's son, the one with the ape on his banner became cheerless and spoke these words. 'I notice that all your faces are pale and unhappy. I do not see Abhimanyu. Nor has he come forward to greet me. I heard that Drona constructed a chakra vyuha today. With the exception of Subhadra's son, not a single one amongst you knew how to penetrate it in the battle. However, I did not teach him about emerging from the array. Did you ask the child to penetrate that enemy array? Did Subhadra's son, the great archer and destroyer of enemy heroes, penetrate that array and fight with many among the enemy? Has he been slain and brought down? His eyes were red. He was mighty-armed. He was born[144] and was like a mountain lion. He was the equal of Indra's younger brother.[145] Tell me. Has he been slain in the battle? He was delicate. He was a great archer. He was the son of Vasava's son. He was always my beloved. Tell me. Has he been slain in the battle? He was the beloved of Varshneya.[146] He was brave. He was always reared by me. He was always loved by his mother. Urged by destiny, who could have killed him? He was the equal of the lion among the Vrishnis, the great-souled Keshava. He was valiant, learned and great. Which warrior could have killed him? He was always loved by Subhadra, Droupadi and Keshava. If I do not see my son, I will go to Yama's abode. The tips of his hair were delicate and curled. He was a child. His eyes were like that of a young deer. He was as valiant as a crazy elephant. He was as tall as a young *shala* tree. He smiled when he spoke. He was self-controlled. He was always obedient to the words of his seniors. Even though he was a child, his deeds were like those of one who wasn't a child. His words were pleasant and free of malice. He was great in his endeavour. He was mighty-armed. His eyes were long, like the petals of lotuses. He was compassionate towards those who were devoted to him. He was self-controlled. He did not follow that which was inferior. He was grateful. He possessed learning. He was skilled in the use of weapons. He did not retreat. He always rejoiced in battle and increased terror among the enemies. He was engaged in bringing pleasure to those on his own side. He desired the victory of his fathers. He never struck first in an encounter, violating codes of honour. If I do not see that son, I will go to Yama's abode. He possessed a beautiful forehead. The tips of his hair were excellent. His eyebrows, eyes, teeth and lips were beautiful. Without seeing that face, how can there be peace in my heart? His words were pleasant and cheerful, like the melody of a male cuckoo. Without hearing those words, how can there be peace in my heart? His beauty was unmatched and is extremely rare, even among the residents of heaven. Without seeing that brave one, how can there be peace in my heart? He was skilled in showing honour. He was devoted to the words of his fathers. Without seeing him today, how can there be peace in my heart? He was delicate. He was always brave. He deserved the most expensive of beds. That supreme one among those who have protectors is lying down on the bare ground, as if he has no protector. Earlier, when he lay down, the best of women tended to him. With his limbs pierced and drained out, he is lying down today, tended to by inauspicious jackals. Earlier, he was awoken from his slumbers by the chants of bards, minstrels and raconteurs. It is certain that he will be awoken today by the distorted tones of beasts of prey. His beautiful face deserved to be covered by the shades of an umbrella. It is certain that it will be soiled today by the dust that has arisen from the field of battle. Alas, my son! I have never been satisfied from looking at my son. I am unfortunate. Death has forcibly taken him away from me. Yama's abode has always been attained by those with virtuous deeds. It is certain that you have rendered that beautiful region even more beautiful because of your own radiance today. It is certain that you are the beloved guest of Vaivasvata, Varuna, Shatakratu and the lord of riches and that your valour has obtained honour from them.'[147] He lamented thus, in many different ways, like a merchant whose ship has been sunk.

'"Overcome with great misery, he then asked Yudhishthira. 'O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Did he cause great carnage among the enemy? Did that bull among men ascend to heaven after having fought well in the battle? Did he kill many bulls among men who fought against him? He was without an aide. There is no doubt that he thought of me when he sought help. When oppressed by arrows, my young son must have sought help from me. I think he must have lamented in this way when he was cruelly slain by the many. But he was my son and that of Madhava's sister. He was born from Subhadra. Perhaps he could not have spoken in this way. It is certain that my heart is extremely firm and is made out of the essence of the vajra. Despite not being able to see the red-eyed and long-armed one, it is not shattered. How could those cruel and great archers shoot arrows at a child that penetrated the inner organs? He was Vasudeva's sister's son and my son. How could they shoot arrows at him? With an unblemished soul, he always used to greet me when I returned. I have returned after killing the enemy. Why don't I see him today? It is certain that he has fallen down and is lying on the ground, covered in blood. He has made the earth beautiful with his body, like a sun that has fallen down. On hearing that he has been slain in battle, Subhadra will be miserable and will destroy herself. When she does not see Abhimanyu, what will she tell me? Overcome by grief, what will Droupadi tell me? What will I tell them? There is no doubt that my heart is made out of the essence of the vajra. On seeing my daughter-in-law weep, oppressed by sorrow, it is not shattering into a thousand fragments. I have heard the delighted sons of Dhritarashtra roar like lions. Krishna heard Yuyutsu censure those brave ones in the following words. "O maharathas! Unable to withstand Bibhatsu, you have killed a child. O ones who are against dharma! Why are you rejoicing? You will now witness Partha's prowess. In the battle, you have done what is disagreeable to Keshava and Arjuna. The time for sorrow has arrived, yet you are delightedly roaring like lions. The time will swiftly arrive for you to reap the fruits of this evil deed. You have performed extremely terrible adharma. How can you not reap the fruits soon?" Rebuking them in this way, the extremely intelligent son of the vaishya[148] cast his weapons away and departed, overcome by grief and anger. O Krishna! Why did you not tell me about this while the battle was going on? I would then have slaughtered all those cruel maharathas.’ Vasudeva consoled the one who was overcome with grief on account of his son.

‘“He was full of terrible misery and Krishna spoke to him in these words. ‘Do not grieve. This is the path followed by all the brave ones who do not retreat, and in particular kshatriyas, whose livelihood comes from war. This is the path for brave ones who fight and do not retreat. This has been sanctioned by the sacred texts and is the supreme goal for those who follow the objective. For brave ones who do not retreat, death is certain in battle. There is no doubt that Abhimanyu has gone to the worlds meant for those with meritorious deeds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is desired by all the brave ones. O one who shows honour! They wish to obtain death, without retreating from battle. The brave one killed many immensely strong princes in the battle. Without retreating from battle, he obtained the death desired by valiant ones. O tiger among men! Do not sorrow. Earlier, those who have laid down the eternal codes of dharma have decreed that death in battle is the dharma for kshatriyas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! All your brothers are distressed at seeing you immersed in grief, and so are these kings and well-wishers. O one who shows honour! Comfort them with words of assurance. This should be known and all this is known to you. You should not grieve.’ Having been thus consoled by Krishna, the performer of extraordinary deeds, Partha spoke these words to all his brothers. His voice choked, Partha said, ‘O lord of the earth![149] His arms were long. His eyes were as long as the petals of lotuses. I wish to hear the account of how Abhimanyu fought. You will see me slay my son’s enemies in the battle, with their elephants, chariots and horses, with their followers and kin. All of you are skilled in weapons and you held weapons in your hands. How could Subhadra’s son then have been slain, even if he had encountered the wielder of the vajra himself? Had I known that the Pandus and the Panchalas were incapable of protecting my son in battle, I would have protected him myself. All of you were stationed on your chariots and were shooting arrows. How could the enemy repulse you and kill Abhimanyu? You have no manliness. Nor do you possess any valour. While you looked on, Abhimanyu has been brought down in the battle. Perhaps I should censure myself, since I know that all of you are extremely weak. I went away, knowing that you are useless and cowards. Alas! Your armour, weapons and arms are only ornaments on your hands. Your words are only meant for assemblies. You could not protect my son.' Having spoken these words, he sat down, with the supreme bow and sword in his hands. No one was capable of looking at Bibhatsu then. He sighed repeatedly in anger and looked like the Destroyer himself. He was overcome with grief on account of his son and his face was bathed in tears. With the exception of Vasudeva and the eldest son of Pandu, no one amongst the well-wishers was capable of glancing at him, or speaking to him. Those two were always acceptable to Arjuna and he listened to them. They were extremely revered and dearly loved and could speak to him at such times. On account of his son, his mind was distressed and he was full of sorrow. The king spoke these words to the enraged one, whose eyes were like the petals of lotuses."'

CHAPTER 1028(51)

'"Yudhishthira said, 'O mighty-armed one! When you left to fight with the army of the samshaptakas, the preceptor made efforts to capture me. But in every way, we succeeded in countering Drona's battle formation. In the battle, we made efforts to arrange our army of chariots in a counter-formation. He was checked by the rathas and I was protected. Wishing to kill us swiftly, he oppressed us with sharp arrows. Thus afflicted by Drona, we were incapable of glancing at Drona's array and could not even think of penetrating it. All of us then spoke to Subhadra's son, who was your equal in valour. "O son! O lord! Penetrate the array." Thus urged by us, the valiant one was like a well-trained horse. He took that burden on himself, ignoring how difficult it was to bear. He was valiant and he was instructed by you in the use of weapons. Though a child, the powerful one penetrated, like Suparna entering the ocean. In that battle, we followed Satvati's brave son.[150] We wished to penetrate the army through the path that he had followed. O son![151] But because of a boon that he had obtained from Rudra, the vile Saindhava, King Jayadratha, repulsed all of us. Then Drona, Kripa, Karna, Drona's son, Brihadbala and Kritavarma—these six rathas surrounded Subhadra's son. All those warrior maharathas surrounded the child. Though he strove to his utmost, they were many and he was deprived of his chariot. When he had been deprived of his chariot, Duhshasana's son struck swiftly, though he had himself confronted great danger earlier. It was destiny that he[152] met his end. He slaughtered many thousands of the enemy earlier, elephants, horses, charioteers and riders, one hundred of the foremost among princes and many other unnamed and brave ones. He dispatched King Brihadbala to the world of heaven. Thus, through destiny, the supreme among those with dharma in their souls, attained his end. Everything that extends our grief took place in this way. Thus it was that the tiger among men attained the world of heaven.'

'Sanjaya said, "Arjuna heard the words that Dharmaraja had spoken. Lamenting, 'Alas, son!' he sighed in grief and fell down on the ground in his sorrow. With distressed faces, everyone surrounded Dhananjaya. They were overcome with misery and glanced at each other, without blinking their eyes. When he had recovered consciousness, Vasava's son became unconscious with rage. He seemed to tremble, as if in a fever, and sighed repeatedly. He squeezed one hand with another and sighed, eyes bathed in tears. His glances were like one who was mad. He spoke these words. 'Know this to be the truth. I will kill Jayadratha tomorrow. I will slay him, unless out of fear, he abandons the sons of Dhritarashtra, or seeks refuge with us, or seeks sanctuary with Purushottama Krishna, or with you. O great king! I will kill Jayadratha tomorrow. Engaged in doing what is pleasant to the sons of Dhritarashtra, he has forgotten his friendship with me. The evil one has been the reason behind the death of the child. I will kill Jayadratha tomorrow. Wishing to protect him, whoever fights with me, even if it is the brave Drona or Kripa, will be covered by me with arrows. O bulls among men! O brave and revered ones! If I do not achieve this in the battle, let me not attain the worlds meant for those with meritorious deeds. There are worlds meant for those who kill their mothers and those who kill their fathers, for those who have intercourse with the wives of their teachers and for those who are wicked, for those who hate virtuous ones and speak ill of others, for those who misappropriate wealth left in their custody and for those who violate trust and for those who speak ill of women they have enjoyed earlier. There are worlds for those who kill brahmanas and those who kill cattle. There are worlds for those who eat *payasa*,[153] food made of barley, herbs, dishes made of sesamum, cakes and meat without offering them to the gods first. If I do not kill Jayadratha, let those worlds be mine. There are worlds for those who disrespect the best of brahmanas who are devoted to studying the Vedas, others who deserve honour, the aged, the virtuous and seniors. There are worlds attained by those who touch brahmanas, cattle and fire with their feet and those who release phlegm, excreta and urine in water. If I do not kill Jayadratha, let those terrible ends be mine. There are ends obtained by those who bathe naked and those who do not serve guests. There are ends obtained by those who take bribes, those who are liars and those who are deceitful, those who harm their own souls and those who speak false praises. There are ends obtained by wretches who eat sweetmeats in the sight of servants, sons, wives and dependents, without offering them a share. If I do not kill Jayadratha, let those terrible ends be mine. There are ends obtained by those who abandon virtuous and obedient dependents and those evil-souled ones who censure those who have done them good deeds. There are ends for those who do not give deserving neighbours shares in *shraddha*[154] offerings, for those who give to the undeserving, for those who have alliances with women of low caste,[155] for those who are drunkards, for those who disrespect those who deserve honour, those who are ungrateful and those who speak ill of their brothers. If I do not kill Jayadratha, let those ends swiftly be mine. I have recounted the ends of those who do not follow dharma and there are others that I have not enumerated. If tomorrow’s night passes without my having killed Jayadratha, let those ends swiftly become mine. Listen to another pledge that I am taking. If tomorrow’s sun sets without my having killed the wretched one, I will enter the blazing fire at this spot. O asuras! O gods!

O men! O birds! O serpents! O ancestors! O those who wander in the night! O brahmanas! O mobile and immobile objects! O everyone else! You will be incapable of protecting my enemy. Even if he descends to the fierce nether regions, even if he goes to the city of the gods or the city of the daityas, I will strike him with a hundred arrows in the morning. I will slice off the head of my son's foe.' Having spoken thus, he stretched Gandiva with his left hand and his right. The sound of his touching the bow transcended his own words. When Arjuna took the pledge, Janardana blew on Panchajanya.[156] Enraged, Dhananjaya blew on Devadatta.[157] Filled completely with the wind from Achyuta's mouth, Panchajanya made a loud sound. The sound released from it made the lords of the universe, the nether regions and the directions tremble, like that at the destruction of a yuga. When the great-souled one had taken the oath, the sons of Pandu roared like lions. Musical instruments were sounded in every direction."'

Section Sixty-Eight

Pratijna Parva

This parva has 365 shlokas and nine chapters.

Chapter 1029(52): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1030(53): 56 shlokas
Chapter 1031(54): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1032(55): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1033(56): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1034(57): 81 shlokas
Chapter 1035(58): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1036(59): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1037(60): 34 shlokas

The word pratijna *means vow or promise and this section is named after Arjuna's vow to kill Jayadratha. There is no fighting in this section, the events transpiring between the night of the thirteenth day and the morning of the fourteenth. Arjuna obtains the pashupata weapon from Shiva.*

CHAPTER 1029(52)

'Sanjaya said, "The spies heard the loud noise the Pandus created on account of their son and reported it. Jayadratha arose. His heart was senseless with grief and he was oppressed by great misery. It seemed as if he was immersed in a giant and fathomless ocean of sorrow. Having thought a lot, Saindhava went to the assembly of kings and lamented in front of all those kings. He was frightened of Abhimanyu's father and was ashamed. He spoke these words. 'He was born in Pandu's field when Shakra was full of desire.[1] That evil-minded one wishes to send me to Yama's eternal abode. May all of you be fortunate. In an attempt to remain alive, I will now go back to my own house. O bulls among kshatriyas! Alternatively, resort to your strength to save me. Partha wishes to send me to the end meant for heroes. Grant me safety from that. Drona, Duryodhana, Kripa, Karna, the lord of Madra, Bahlika, Duhshasana and the others are capable of saving a person who is afflicted by Yama, not to speak of Phalguna alone desiring to injure my limbs. Why should all you assembled lords of the earth not be able to save me? Having heard the delighted sounds of the Pandaveyas, my fear is great. O lords of the earth! My limbs are overcome by lassitude, like one who is about to die. There is no doubt that the wielder of Gandiva has sworn my death. That is the reason the Pandavas are roaring in delight, though it is a time for them to sorrow. Even the gods, the gandharvas, the asuras, the serpents and the rakshasas are incapable of countering him, not to speak of lords of men. O fortunate ones! O bulls among men! Therefore, give me permission to depart. I wish to disappear, so that Pandava cannot see me.' Thus did he lament, his senses overcome by fear and anxiety.

'"King Duryodhana regarded his own task as superior to everything else and spoke these words. 'O tiger among men! Do not be frightened. O bull among men! When you are stationed in the midst of all these brave kshatriyas, who is going to seek an engagement with you in battle? Other than me, there are Vaikartana Karna, Chitrasena, Vivimshati, Bhurishrava, Shala, Shalya, the unassailable Vrishasena, Purumitra, Jaya, Bhaja, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Satyavrata, the mighty-armed Vikarna, Durmukha, Duhshasana, Subahu, the lord of Kalinga with upraised weapons, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Drona, Drona's son and Soubala. O immensely radiant one! You are yourself brave and the foremost among rathas. O Saindhava! How can you see any fear emanating from the Pandaveyas? Eleven of my *akshouhinis*[2] will be engaged in protecting you and will make endeavours to fight. O Saindhava! Therefore, do not be scared and banish this fear.' O king! Having been thus assured by your son, Saindhava, accompanied by Duryodhana, went to Drona that very night. O lord of the earth! He touched Drona's feet, showed obeisance and sat down. He then asked him the following. 'O illustrious one! In taking aim, striking from a distance, dexterity and firmness in striking, tell me the difference between me and Phalguna. O preceptor! I wish to know the exact difference in learning between me and Arjuna. O lord! Tell me truly and accurately.’

‘“Drona replied, ‘O son![3] You and Arjuna are equal in what you have learned from your teachers. But because of yoga and because of the miseries he has faced, Arjuna is superior to you. In the battle, you should never be terrified on Partha’s account. O son! You will be protected by me from fear. There is no doubt about that. Even the immortals have no influence over someone who is protected by my arms. I will create a vyuha and Partha will not be able to cross that vyuha. Therefore, follow your own dharma and fight without any fear. O lord of men! Follow the path traversed by your fathers and grandfathers. You have studied the Vedas, as is prescribed. You have offered excellent oblations into the fire. You have observed many rites and sacrifices. You should not be frightened because of death. It is[4] an extremely rare end and cannot be attained by wicked men. It is obtained by those who are immensely fortunate. Through the valour of one’s arms, one can win the celestial and supreme worlds. The Kurus, the Pandavas, the Vrishnis, other men, my son and I are all transient. Think of that. In due order and in due course, all of us will be slain by powerful time. We will go to the other world, carrying our respective deeds with us. Ascetics obtain worlds after tormenting themselves with austerities. Brave kshatriyas who follow the dharma of kshatriyas also attain those.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Having been thus assured by Bharadvaja’s son, Saindhava dismissed all fears of Partha from his heart and set his mind on the battle.”’

CHAPTER 1030(53)

‘Sanjaya said, “When Partha vowed to kill the king of Sindhu, the mighty-armed Vasudeva spoke to Dhananjaya. ‘You consulted your brothers and took the words of the pledge.[5] “I will slay Saindhava.” You performed an extremely rash act. Without consulting me, you have taken up an extremely heavy burden. How can we now avoid the ridicule of all the worlds? Spies have been sent by me to the camp of the sons of

Dhritarashtra. They returned swiftly and conveyed this information to me. After you took a pledge to kill the king of Sindhu, the sons of Dhritarashtra and Saindhava were frightened at the sounds they heard. They heard roars like lions, mingled with the great sound of musical instruments. They thought that these roars like lions must have a reason and waited. O mighty-armed one! A great sound arose among the Kouravas, among their elephants, horses and infantry and there was the roar of chariot wheels. "Having heard of Abhimanyu's death, it is certain that Dhananjaya will be enraged and will emerge in the night."[6] This was their view and they waited. O one who is devoted to the truth! O one with eyes like lotuses! While they prepared, they heard the truth about the pledge you had taken for the death of the king of Sindhu. All of them, Suyodhana's advisers and King Jayadratha, were distressed and frightened, like small deer. The lord of Sindhu and Souvira was extremely frightened.[7] He arose, and with his advisers, entered his own camp. At the appropriate time for consultation, they consulted each other about the best course of action. He then went to the assembly of the kings and spoke these words to Suyodhana. "Dhananjaya thinks that I am the one who has caused the death of his son. Therefore, in the midst of the soldiers, he has promised to kill me tomorrow. When Savyasachi takes a vow, the gods, the gandharvas, the asuras, the serpents and the rakshasas are incapable of countering it. Therefore, all of you should protect me in the battle and not allow Dhananjaya to place his foot on your heads and thereby accomplish his objective. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, make arrangements to protect me in the battle. O king! Otherwise, grant me permission so that I can return home." Having been thus addressed, Suyodhana was miserable and hung down his head. On hearing this and learning about the great fear, he silently began to think.

"''On seeing that the king was distressed, Saindhava gently spoke these words, with an eye on his own self-interest and on what would be good for him. "I do not see a brave archer here who is capable of countering Arjuna's weapons with his own weapons in the great battle. He wields the bow Gandiva and Vasudeva is his aide. Who can stand in front of Arjuna, even if it were to be Shatakratu himself? It has been heard that Partha, on foot, fought with the immensely energetic lord Maheshvara earlier, in the Himalaya mountains.[8] Urged by the king of the gods, on a single chariot, he killed a thousand *danava*s who resided in Hiranyapura. Kounteya is now united with the intelligent Vasudeva. It is my view that he is capable of destroying the three worlds, together with the immortals. I desire that you should give me permission to leave. Alternatively, if you so wish, the great-souled Drona and his brave son should protect me." O Arjuna! Thus addressed by the one who was terribly afflicted, the king himself spoke to the preceptor. "All the arrangements have been made and the chariots have been arrayed. Karna, Bhurishrava, Drona's son, the invincible Vrishasena, Kripa and the king of Madra—these six will be at the forefront. Drona will construct a vyuha at the rear. Half of this will be in the form of a cart[9] and half in the form of a lotus. There will be an array in the form of a needle in the midst of the pericarp of the lotus. Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu who is unassailable in battle, will be stationed there, protected by brave ones." O Partha! There is no doubt that those six rathas are impossible to withstand, in use of the bow, in weapons, in valour, in strength and in lineage. Without vanquishing them and their followers, one cannot reach Jayadratha. Think of the valour of each of those six, not to speak of them united together. O tiger among men! They cannot be defeated easily. We should think again about the best course of action for our welfare. We should consult with our advisers and well-wishers and then determine a successful course of action.'

'"Arjuna replied, 'You think that those six rathas on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra are superior to me in strength. But it is seen that their valour is equal to half of my own. O Madhusudana! I will sever all their weapons with my weapons. Desiring to kill Jayadratha, you will see me shatter them. In the sight of Drona and his lamenting followers, I will bring down the head of the king of Sindhu on the ground. O Madhusudana! This will be the case even if the Sadhyas, the Rudras, Vasus, the Ashvins, the Maruts with Indra, the Vishvadevas, the asuras, the ancestors, the gandharvas, the suparnas,[10] the oceans, the mountains, the firmament, heaven, earth, the directions, the lords of the directions, the villages, the forests and all mobile and immobile beings seek to protect the king of Sindhu. Even then, in the battle tomorrow, you will see him slain by my arrows. O Krishna! I swear this truthfully, as I touch my weapons.[11] Drona, the great archer, is the protector of that wicked and evil-minded one. O Keshava! I will engage him first. Suyodhana thinks that this gambling match is based on him.[12] Therefore, I will shatter him at the forefront of the army and then assail Saindhava. Tomorrow, you will see that great archer pierced by my fierce, energetic and iron arrows in battle, like the summit of a mountain shattered by a thunderbolt. Blood will flow from the bodies of men, elephants and horses. They will be brought down by sharp arrows that descend on them. The arrows released from Gandiva will be as swift as thought or the wind. They will rob the breath of life from the bodies of thousands of men, elephants and horses. In the battle, men will behold terrible weapons descend, those that have been obtained by me from Yama, Kubera, Varuna, Rudra and Indra. All those who wish to protect Saindhava will see their weapons routed in the battle by my *brahmana astra*.[13] O Keshava! In the battle tomorrow, you will see the earth strewn with the heads of kings, severed by forceful arrows that I release. I will gratify carnivorous beasts and drive away the enemy. I will delight my well-wishers and bring down Saindhava. He has performed great misdeeds. He has been a bad ally.[14] He has been born in an evil land. Having been killed by me, King Saindhava will cause sorrow among those on his own side. Saindhava has enjoyed the best of milk mixed with rice. But he has been evil in conduct. In the forefront of the battle, you will see him destroyed with my radiant arrows. O Krishna! In the morning, I will accomplish that which will make Suyodhana think that there is no archer in this world who is equal to me in battle. O bull among men! Gandiva is a divine bow and I am the warrior. O Hrishikesha! You are the charioteer. Who is incapable of being vanquished by me? Lakshmi is always present in the moon and water is always present in the ocean. O Janardana! Like that, know that my pledge is always true. Do not disrespect my weapons. Do not disrespect my firm bow. Do not disrespect my strength. Do not disrespect Dhananjaya's strength of arms. I will go to battle so that I am victorious and am not defeated. Know that because of my pledge, Jayadratha has already been slain in battle. It is certain that the brahman is truth. It is certain that there is humility in the virtuous. It is certain that there is prosperity in the wise. It is certain that there is victory in Narayana.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having spoken these words to Hrishikesha and having addressed them to his own self too, Vasava's son once again addressed the lord Keshava in a sonorous tone. 'When night is over and it is morning, please arrange for my chariot to be prepared. O Krishna! That is your task. The task that has to be undertaken is a grave one.'"'

CHAPTER 1031(54)

'Sanjaya said, "Both Vasudeva and Dhananjaya spent the night immersed in grief and sighed like serpents. They could not sleep, even for an instant. Knowing that Nara and Narayana[15] were enraged, the gods, together with Vasava, were distressed. They began to reflect about what would transpire. Extremely terrible and harsh winds began to blow, portending of fearful calamities. A headless torso and a club could be seen on the disc of the sun. Though there were no clouds in the sky, there were thunderstorms, tinged with lightning. The earth, with all its mountains and forests, began to tremble. O great king! The ocean, the habitation of makaras, was turbulent. Rivers flowed in an opposite direction, rather than towards the ocean. The lower and upper lips of rathas, horses, men and elephants trembled. Predatory beasts seemed to be delighted, since Yama's kingdom would be extended. Mounts wept and released excrement and urine. All these omens were terrible and made the body hair stand up. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On beholding these, all the soldiers on your side were distressed. They heard about the fierce vow that the extremely strong Savyasachi had taken.

'"The mighty-armed son of the chastiser of Paka[16] spoke to Krishna. 'Comfort your sister, Subhadra, together with her daughter-in-law.[17] O Madhava! Dispel the sorrow from the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law. O lord! Comfort them with truthful words and assure them with what you say.' Thus addressed, with a distressed mind, Vasudeva went to Arjuna's house. He comforted his distressed sister, who was overcome with grief on account of her son. 'O one born in the Varshneya lineage! Do not grieve, together with your daughter-in-law, for the sake of your son. O timid one! All beings have an end that is determined by destiny. This is especially true of kshatriyas who are born in brave lineages. Your son has attained a death like that. Do not sorrow. This was good fortune for the brave maharatha who was like his father in valour. He has attained the objective decreed for kshatriyas, one that brave ones desire. He has conquered many enemies and sent them to their death. He has gone to the eternal worlds that satisfy all desire, those obtained by those with meritorious deeds. These are obtained by those with austerities, *brahmacharya*, learning and wisdom. The virtuous go there and your son has obtained them. You are the mother of a hero. You are the wife of a hero. Your father-in-law is a hero and so are your kin. O fortunate one! Do not grieve over a son who has attained the supreme objective. The inferior Saindhava, the slayer of a child, together with his well-wishers, followers and relatives, will reap the fruits of his insolent deeds. O one with the beautiful hips! As soon as night has passed, he will suffer for his wicked acts. Even if he goes to Amaravati,[18] he will not be able to escape from Partha. Tomorrow, you will hear that Saindhava's head has been severed in the battle, in the vicinity of Samantapanchaka.[19] Dispel your sorrow and do not weep. Having placed the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront, the brave one has attained the virtuous end. We, all the others whose livelihood is based on arms, will also attain that. He was broad in his chest. He possessed mighty arms. He did not retreat from battle. He killed the best. O one with the beautiful hips! Your son has gone to heaven. Overcome your fever. The valiant one obeyed his fathers and those on his mother's side. Having killed a thousand enemies, the brave maharatha has been slain. O queen! O kshatriya lady! Comfort your daughter-in-law and do not sorrow grievously. O one who brings delight![20] You will hear extremely pleasant news tomorrow. Be free from sorrow. Partha accomplishes whatever he pledges. It cannot be otherwise. Whatever your husband wishes is never unsuccessful. Even if men, serpents, pishachas, wanderers of the night, birds, gods and asuras come to the aid of the king of Sindhu in the battle in the morning, he will no longer exist.'"'

CHAPTER 1032(55)

'Sanjaya said, "On hearing these words of the great-souled Keshava, Subhadra was extremely miserable and lamented, because of grief over her son. 'Alas, my son! I am unfortunate! You were equal to your father in valour. O son! Having gone forth to fight, how could you have been slain? Your face was as dark as a blue lotus.[21] It possessed beautiful teeth and beautiful eyes. O son! It is now seen to be covered with the dust raised by battle. You were brave and did not retreat from battle. You possessed an excellent head, neck and arms. Your chest was broad. Your stomach was flat. All your limbs were decorated with ornaments. You possessed excellent eyes. You are now mangled with wounds from weapons. On seeing you fall, there is no doubt that all the beings are glancing at you, as if at a rising moon. Earlier, your bed used to be covered with white and expensive sheets. You were used to happiness. Pierced by arrows, how can you sleep on the bare ground now? The brave and mighty-armed one used to be served by supreme women earlier. How can he now have been brought down on the field of battle, served by jackals? Earlier, you used to be delighted by bards, raconteurs and minstrels. You are now served by masses of carnivorous and fierce creatures that are howling. O lord! You had the Pandavas and the brave Vrishnis as your protectors. There were also the brave Panchalas. How could you have been slain, like one without a protector? O son! O unblemished one! I have not been satisfied from looking at you. I am wretched. It is evident that I will have to go to Yama's eternal abode now. You possessed large eyes. The tips of your hair were excellent. Your words were pleasant and fragrant. Your face was without any blemishes. O son! When will I see it again? Shame on Bhimasena. Shame on Partha, supreme among archers. Shame on the valour of the brave Vrishnis. Shame on the strength of the Panchalas. Shame on the Kekayas, the Chedis, the Matsyas and the Srinjayas. When you went to fight, they did not know how to prevent the fall of the brave one. Today, I see the earth to be empty, bereft of its beauty. Without being able to see Abhimanyu, my eyes are full of sorrow. You were the son of Vasudeva's sister and that of the wielder of Gandiva. O brave one! How can I see you bereft of your chariot, and brought down by others? Alas, brave one! You are like riches seen in a dream, which have been destroyed now. Man is transient, as temporary as a bubble in water. This is your young wife. She is overcome with grief on your account. How will I comfort her? I am myself like a cow that has lost her calf. O son! You have left me at a wrong time, when you were about to accomplish great things. You have departed without reaping the fruits. I am yearning to see you. There is no doubt that the ways of destiny are extremely difficult to fathom, even by those who are wise. You had Keshava as your protector. But in the battle, you were like one without a protector. There are those who perform sacrifices, donate and are of good conduct. There are brahmanas who control their souls. There are those who follow brahmacharya and bathe in sacred places of pilgrimage. There are those who are grateful and generous. There are those who serve their preceptors. There are those who give a thousand *dakshina*s. All these attain their ends. These ends are obtained by brave ones who fight without retreating. These ends are obtained by brave ones who are slain on the field of battle. May you attain those ends. There are ends obtained by those who donate a thousand cows or perform sacrifices with donations. There are ends for those who give away acceptable houses as gifts. May those ends be yours. Sages, rigid in their vows, attain ends through brahmacharya. There are ends for women with a single husband. O son! Go to those ends. Kings with good conduct attain eternal ends and those who purify and protect themselves and follow the four sacred *ashramas* in due order.[22] There are those who are always compassionate towards the miserable and divide everything equally.[23] They refrain from wicked tendencies. O son! May you attain those ends. There are those who follow good conduct and observe dharma. There are those who serve their seniors and do not leave their guests dissatisfied. O son! May you go to those ends. Intelligent ones have intercourse with their own wives at the right season. They do not serve the wives of others. O son! May you go to those ends. There are those who look on all beings peacefully. They are devoid of malice and attain ends. There are those who do not cause injury and forgive. They attain ends. There are those who abstain from liquor, meat, vanity and falsehood and those who do not cause pain to others. O son! May you attain those ends. There are those who are modest and learned in all the sacred texts. They are satisfied and have controlled their senses. There are ends obtained by those who are righteous. O son! May you attain those ends.' Distressed and overcome by sorrow, Subhadra lamented in this way.

'"At this time, Panchali and Virata's daughter arrived there.[24] They wept a lot and lamented in great misery. O king! They were mad with grief and fell down on the ground, bereft of their senses. Krishna was himself extremely miserable. But he sprinkled water on them and spoke these beneficial words, when they had regained their senses, but were still lamenting and weeping. Pundarikaksha[25] spoke these words to his sister. 'O Subhadra! Do not sorrow. O Panchali! Comfort Uttara. Abhimanyu, bull among the kshatriyas, has attained an objective that is extremely desired. O ones with beautiful faces! Let other virtuous ones from our lineage also attain that. All of us will go to the end that the illustrious Abhimanyu has achieved. All of us, with all our well-wishers, wish to accomplish the kind of deed that he has achieved. Your son, the maharatha, has accomplished this alone.' Having comforted his sister, Droupadi and Uttara in this way, the mighty-armed scorcher of enemies returned to Partha's side. O king! Krishna and the lord[26] took the permission of the kings and the relatives and retired to their inner quarters. The others also went to their own abodes."'

CHAPTER 1033(56)

'Sanjaya said, "The lord Pundarikaksha entered Arjuna's unmatched abode. He touched water and spread out an excellent bed on the plain and auspicious floor. It was made out of *darbha* grass, with the complexion of lapis lazuli. He duly adorned it with garlands, parched grain, fragrances and auspicious objects and surrounded the bed with supreme weapons. Partha also touched water. Humble servants produced sacrifices[27] offered every night to Tryambaka.[28] Partha delightedly adorned Madhava with fragrances and garlands and tendered the nightly offerings.[29] Govinda smiled and spoke to Phalguna. 'O Partha! O fortunate one! Lie down. For the sake of your welfare, I will leave.' He placed gatekeepers there and other well-armed men for the sake of protection. With Daruka[30] following him, the handsome one then went to his own camp. He laid himself down on his white bed and thought about the many things that needed to be done.

'"No one in the Pandava camp slept during that night. O lord of the earth! Everyone was awake. 'Because he was overcome by sorrow on account of his son, the great-souled wielder of Gandiva has suddenly taken an oath to slay the king of Sindhu. How will Vasava's mighty-armed son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, make his pledge successful? The pledge that the great-souled Pandava has taken is an extremely difficult one. He has taken this great vow because he was tormented by sorrow over his son. His[31] brothers are valiant and his forces are numerous. All of Dhritarashtra's sons will serve his[32] cause. May Dhananjaya return, after having killed Saindhava in battle. Let Arjuna accomplish his pledge and vanquish masses of the enemy. If he does not kill the king of Sindhu, he will enter the fire. Partha Dhananjaya will never do something that is false. If Arjuna is dead, what will be the state of the king who is Dharma's son? All his hopes of victory are based on

Pandava.[33] If we have performed any good deeds, if we have offered donations and oblations, because of all those great fruits, let Savyasachi be triumphant.' O lord! Thus did they converse, desiring victory. O king! That great and difficult night began to pass.

'"When it was the middle of the night, Janardana woke up. He remembered Partha's oath and spoke to Daruka. 'Because he was oppressed at the death of a relative, Arjuna has taken an oath. O Daruka! He has said that he will kill Jayadratha before tomorrow is over. Having heard this, Duryodhana will consult his advisers, so that Partha cannot kill Jayadratha in the battle. Several of his akshouhinis will protect Jayadratha. Drona and his son are skilled in the use of all weapons. If someone is protected by Drona, not even the brave thousand-eyed one,[34] the oppressor of daityas and danavas, ventures to kill him. Tomorrow, I will act so that Arjuna, Kunti's son, can kill Jayadratha before the sun has set. My wives, my friends, my relatives and my kin are not dearer to me than Arjuna, Kunti's son, is. O Daruka! Bereft of Arjuna, I will not be able to look at the world even for an instant. Therefore, it shall not be that way.[35] For Arjuna's sake, I will slay the standard-bearers of the enemy, with their horses, chariots and elephants, with Karna and Suyodhana. In the great battle tomorrow, let the three worlds witness my valour. O Daruka! For Dhananjaya's sake, I will show my valour in the battle. O Daruka! Tomorrow, I will rout thousands of kings and hundreds of princes, with their horses, elephants and chariots. Tomorrow, you will witness the army of kings shattered by my chakra. For the sake of Pandava, I will angrily bring them down in the battle. Tomorrow, the gods, the gandharvas, the pishachas, the serpents, the rakshasas and all the worlds will know me as Savyasachi's well-wisher. He who hates him, hates me too. He who follows him, follows me too. Use your intelligence to comprehend that Arjuna is half of my body. When night is over and morning has dawned, prepare and yoke my supreme chariot according to the rites decreed in the sacred texts. O suta! Place the divine club Koumodaki,[36] lances, the chakra, bow and arrows. Stock the chariot with all implements. Make room on the floor of the chariot for the standard and for Vinata's brave son,[37] the adornment of the chariot in battle. Place the golden umbrella and make the horses don divine armour created by Vishvakarma, as radiant as the sun and the fire. Yoke the supreme horses Balahaka, Meghapushpa, Sainya and Sugriva.[38] O Daruka! Armour and station yourself. You will swiftly come to me when you hear the loud and terrible sound of Panchajanya fill everything with the *bhairava* note.[39] O Daruka! I will alone angrily dispel all the reasons for misery that have afflicted my brother, the son of my paternal aunt.[40] While the sons of Dhritarashtra look on, I will make every effort so that Bibhatsu can kill Jayadratha in the battle. O charioteer! I assure you that his victory is certain.' Daruka replied, 'His victory is certain. How can he be defeated? O tiger among men! You have yourself agreed to be his charioteer. As for me, I will do what you have asked me to. This night will give way to an excellent morning that will bring Vijaya's[41] victory.'"'

CHAPTER 1034(57)

'Sanjaya said, "Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, whose valour was inconceivable, began to think about how he might accomplish his pledge. He thought of mantras[42] and was soon immersed in sleep. The one with the ape on his banner was tormented by sorrow. As he thought about the one with Garuda on his banner in all situations, Krishna appeared before Dhananjaya. Because of devotion and affection, the one with dharma in his soul, never failed to stand up, welcome Govinda and offer him a seat. But having given it to him, Bibhatsu did not think of taking a seat for himself. The immensely energetic Krishna knew about Partha's resolution. Having seated himself, he spoke these words to Kunti's son, who was standing. 'O Partha! Do not sorrow in your mind. Destiny is impossible to defeat. Destiny conveys all beings to the supreme end. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me. Why are you grieving? Learned ones do not grieve. Sorrow is the destroyer of all deeds. Sorrow delights enemies and afflicts relatives. Such a man confronts decay. Therefore, you should not sorrow.’ Vasudeva spoke these words to the unvanquished and learned Bibhatsu and he spoke these meaningful words in return. ‘I have taken a great vow of killing Jayadratha. O Keshava! Tomorrow, I will slay the evil-minded one who killed my son. O Achyuta! But the sons of Dhritarashtra will act so as to frustrate my pledge. They will place Saindhava at the rear and have him protected by all the maharathas. O Krishna! They possess eleven akshouhinis that are extremely difficult to vanquish. If my pledge is not satisfied, how can someone like me remain alive? O brave one! The misery of failure is circling around me. Let me tell you that the sun moves swiftly now.’[43] Hearing the reasons for Partha’s sorrow, Krishna, the one with the bird on his banner,[44] touched water and seated himself with his face towards the east.

‘“For the welfare of Pandu’s son, who was engaged in Saindhava’s death, the lotus-eyed and immensely energetic one spoke these words. ‘O Partha! There is a supreme and eternal weapon named pashupata. With this, the great god Maheshvara killed all the daityas in battle. Had you known about it today, you would have been able to kill Jayadratha tomorrow. So that you may obtain the knowledge, think about the god with the bull on his banner in your mind.[45] As his devotee and with his favours, you will obtain that great object.’ On hearing Krishna’s words, Dhananjaya touched water. He seated himself on the ground and single-mindedly fixed his mind on Bhava.[46] While he thus concentrated, the auspicious brahma moment arrived.[47] Arjuna perceived himself and Keshava to be travelling through the sky, full of stellar bodies and frequented by siddhas and charanas. With Keshava, Partha travelled through the sky with the speed of the wind and it seemed as if Keshava had grasped him by the right arm. They seemed to behold many extraordinary sights as they passed. The great-souled one saw Mount Shveta in a northern direction. He saw Kubera’s sporting ground and a lake adorned with lotuses. He saw the Ganga, supreme among rivers and full of water. There were trees always full of flowers and fruit. There were stones like crystal. Those parts were frequented by lions and tigers and inhabited by many kinds of deer. They were full of beautiful and sacred hermitages that were inhabited by beautiful birds. The region around Mandara resounded with the sounds of songs sung by *kinnara*s. There were gold and silver peaks, illuminated with many kinds of herbs. They were adorned with beautiful and blossoming *mandara* trees.[48] He reached Mount Kala, which was as lovely as a mass of collyrium. It was a bejewelled mountain, on the foothills of the sacred Himalayas. He reached Brahmatunga and many rivers and countries. He reached Sushringa, Shatashringa and the forest known as Sharyati,[49] the sacred spot known as Horse-Head and the spot known as Atharvan. He reached Vrishamdamsha, the king of mountains, and the great Mandara, which was full of apsaras and adorned by kinnaras. Together with Keshava, Partha roamed around that mountain and saw sacred springs, adorned with golden minerals. That spot on earth was as radiant as the rays of the moon and was garlanded with many cities. Travelling through the sky, the firmament and the earth with Krishna, he roamed and saw Vishnupada and wondered. He was then flung down, like an arrow. Partha then saw a flaming mountain. Its radiance was like that of the planets, the nakshatras, the moon, the sun and the fire.

'"Approaching that mountain, on the summit of the mountain, he saw the great-souled one who has the bull on his banner. He was always engaged in austerities. He blazed in his own energy, like a thousand suns. He held a trident and his white hair was matted. His attire was made out of bark and skin. The immensely energetic one's limbs were wonderful and he possessed a thousand eyes. The god was seated with Parvati and masses of radiant beings. His attendants sang and played on musical instruments. They laughed and danced and clapped their palms. They shouted and the place was full of fragrant perfume. Divine sages, who knew about the brahman, praised him with chants. He was the protector of all beings. He was the wielder of the bow. He was the one without decay. On seeing him, together with Partha, Vasudeva, the one with dharma in his soul, lowered his head down on the ground and praised the eternal brahman. He was the origin of the worlds. He was the origin of the universe. He was without beginning. He was Ishana,[50] the one without decay. He was the supreme origin of the mind. He was the reservoir for the sky, the wind and stellar bodies. He was the creator of torrents of rain. He was the lord of supreme and original nature. He was the one who was worshipped by gods, danavas, yakshas and humans. He was the supreme brahman, as manifested to *yogis*. He was the store of all knowledge about the brahman. He was the creator of everything mobile and immobile, and their great-souled and angry destroyer too, at the time of destruction. He was Shakra and Surya and the source of all qualities. Krishna bowed down before the source of words, thoughts, intelligence and deeds. Those who seek subtle spiritual knowledge see him. He is without origin and is the origin of all souls and he[51] sought refuge with Bhava. Arjuna also repeatedly worshipped him, knowing that he was the source of the past, present and the future and the origin of all beings. On seeing them, Sharva[52] smiled and said, 'O foremost among men! Welcome! Arise! Be free of exhaustion. O brave ones! What is the desire in your minds? O ones without decay! Tell me quickly. What is the reason for your coming here? I will accomplish your purpose. Tell me what will be beneficial for you and I will grant you everything.' On hearing his words, they stood up, hands joined in salutation.

'"The immensely intelligent Vasudeva and Arjuna satisfied Sharva with a hymn. 'O Bhava! O Sharva! We bow down before you. O Rudra! O one who grants boons! O one who is the lord of all beings! O one who is always fierce! O Kapardin![53] O Mahadeva! O Bhima! O Tryambaka! O Shambhava! O Ishana! O destroyer of Bhaga![54] We bow down before you. O destroyer of Andhaka![55] O father of Kumara![56] O one whose throat is always blue! O intelligent one! O one who is red! O one who has the colour of smoke! O one who is the hunter! O one who is unvanquished! O one whose locks are always blue! O one with the trident! O one with divine eyes! O one who is the officiating priest! O protector! O one with three eyes! O hunter! O one whose seed is the source of riches! O one who cannot be thought of! O husband of Ambika![57] O one who is worshipped by all the gods! O one with the bull on the standard! O tawny one! O matted one! O brahmachari! O one who performs austerities in water! O one devoted to the brahman! O undefeated one! O soul of the universe! O creator of the universe! O one who is stationed everywhere in the universe! We bow down before you. We show obeisance to you. O one who is worshipped by all beings! O one who is always powerful! O Brahmavaktra![58] O Sharva! O Shankara! O Shiva! We bow down before you. O lord of words! O lord of beings! We bow down before you. We worship you. O lord of the universe! O great lord! We bow down before you. O one with the thousand heads! We bow down before you. O one with the thousand arms! We honour you. O one with a thousand eyes and feet! We worship you. O one whose deeds are innumerable! We bow down before you. O one with the golden complexion! O one with the golden armour! O one who is always compassionate towards devotees! O lord! Make us successful through a boon.’ Having worshipped Mahadeva and gratified him, Vasudeva and Arjuna obtained the weapon. Partha was delighted and worshipped the one with the bull on his banner. With dilated eyes, he gazed at the one who was the receptacle of all energy. He always used to make offerings to Vasudeva every night and he beheld these, lying near Tryambaka. Pandava worshipped Krishna and Sharva in his mind and addressed Shankara, desiring the divine weapon.

‘“On learning Partha’s intention and the purport of the boon, the lord god smiled and spoke to Vasudeva and Arjuna. ‘O destroyers of enemies! Near this spot, there is a divine lake that is full of *amrita*. There, my divine bow and arrow have been secreted a long time ago. I used them to bring down all the enemies of the gods in battle. O Krishnas![59] Bring the supreme bow, with the arrow, here.’ Having been thus addressed, those two brave ones went there, with Sharva’s attendants. They went to the celestial lake, as indicated by the one with the bull on his banner, and which was surrounded by hundreds of divine wonders. It was sacred and was the granter of all objects. Without any fear, the rishis Nara and

Narayana went there. They went to the lake, which possessed the complexion of the solar disc. Arjuna and Achyuta saw a terrible serpent in the water. There was a second supreme serpent too, with a thousand heads. They saw it vomit giant flames, with radiance like that of the fire. Krishna and Partha touched water and joined their hands in salutation. They worshipped the one with the bull on his banner and approached those serpents. They were learned in the Vedas and chanted one hundred hymns in praise of the brahman and Rudra. They bowed before the immeasurable Bhava, who is in every soul. Because of this praise of the greatness of Rudra, those giant serpents gave up their serpent forms and assumed the form of a bow and arrow, the slayer of enemies. Delighted, they grasped the resplendent bow and arrow. Those great-souled ones took them and gave them to the great-minded one.[60] A brahmachari emerged from the side of the one with the bull on his banner. He was tawny-eyed and he was the resort of austerities. He was powerful and bluish-red. He grasped the best of bows and stood in that spot. He stretched the bow and fixed the arrow to the supreme bow. Pandava noticed how the bow was grasped with the hand and the position. He heard the mantras spoken by Bhava. The one whose valour was unthinkable[61] grasped everything. The immensely energetic lord[62] then released the arrow into the lake. The brave one again flung the bow into the lake. Arjuna, whose memory was good, knew that Bhava was gratified. He remembered the boon he had given him in the forest and how he had beheld Shankara.[63] In his mind, he wished that all this might come true.[64] Knowing what he desired, Bhava happily gave him the boon. He granted him the terrible pashupata and the fulfilment of his pledge. The body hair of the invincible one[65] stood up and he thought that his task had been accomplished. Arjuna and Keshava were delighted and praised Maheshvara, with their heads bowed. The brave ones took their leave of Bhava and instantly returned to their own camp. They were filled with great joy. They were as delighted as Indra and Vishnu, when they desired to kill Jambha.'"

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! While Krishna and Daruka were conversing in this way, the night ended. The king[66] arose. *Panisvanikas*, *magadhas*, *madhuparkikas*, *vaitalikas* and sutas chanted and satisfied that bull among men.[67] Dancers danced. Singers with sweet voices sang praises in honour of the Kuru lineage. There were the loud sounds of *mridangas*, jharjharas, *bheris*, *panavas*, *anakas*, *gomukhas*, *adamvaras*, *shankhas* and *dundubhis*.[68] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were many other musical instruments. Skilled and well-trained ones happily played on them. That loud noise, like the roar of the clouds, seemed to touch the sky and awoke the sleeping Yudhishthira, supreme among kings. He had slept on an extremely expensive and supreme bed and now arose. Having awoken, he went to the bathroom to perform the required acts. There were a hundred and eight young servants, dressed in white. They had themselves bathed and approached, with golden pots that were full. Wearing light garments, he seated himself on his splendid seat.[69] He was bathed in water in which sandalwood had been mixed and over which mantras had been recited. Well-trained ones rubbed his body with astringent and strong water.[70] He was washed with fragrant and perfumed water. The mighty armed one smeared his body with yellow sandalwood paste. He wore garlands and dressed himself in clean garments. He faced the east and seated himself, hands joined in salutation. Following the path of the virtuous, Kounteya meditated and chanted. He humbly entered the room where a blazing fire was kept.[71] He offered sacred kindling and oblations, over which mantras had been recited, into the fire. He then emerged from his house.

‘“The king, tiger among men, entered a second room and saw bulls among brahmanas there. Those brahmanas were learned in the Vedas. They were self-controlled and devoted to the Vedas. They had bathed and performed ablutions after the rites. There were one thousand who worshipped the sun and another eight thousand too. The mighty-armed one made them recite pleasant benedictions over him. He offered them the best kind of honey mixed with clarified butter and auspicious fruit. Pandava gave each of those brahmanas a golden *nishka*,[72] one hundred ornamented horses, expensive garments, desired dakshina and cows that yielded milk whenever they were touched. Pandu's son also gave them calves with horns decorated in gold and hooves decorated in silver. He then circumambulated them, the svastikas that increased fortune, the golden *nandyavartas*,[73] the garlands, the pots full of gold and the flaming fire. There were also vessels full of parched rice, beautiful *ruchakas*,[74] pure and ornamented maidens, curds, clarified butter, honey, water, auspicious birds and many other sacred objects. Having seen and touched them, Kounteya went to the outer chamber.

'"O mighty-armed one! The servants were waiting there. They brought an excellent seat that was completely made out of gold and was decorated with pearls and lapis lazuli. It was covered with a supreme carpet, over which an excellent cover had been spread. This supreme and divine seat had been constructed by Vishvakarma himself. When the great-minded Kounteya had seated himself, the servants brought him all his expensive and bright ornaments. O great king! His beauty was such that it increased the sorrow of his enemies. White whisks that possessed the radiance of the moon and had golden handles were used to fan him. He was as radiant as clouds tinged with lightning. He was praised by bards and eulogized by panegyrists. Gandharvas began to honour the descendant of the Kuru lineage. In an instant, the loud noise made by the panegyrists arose. The clatter of chariot wheels and the hooves of horses were heard. This mingled with the sounds of bells on elephants and the blare of conch shells. The earth trembled because of the footsteps of men. At that instant, one of those in charge of the gates entered. He was young and armoured. He wore earrings and his sword was girded. He knelt down on the ground and lowered his head in salutation to the one who had dharma in his soul. He told the great-minded one that Hrishikesha had arrived. The tiger among men replied, 'Let Madhava be welcome. Let a supreme *arghya*[75] and seat be kept ready for him.' Varshneya entered and seated himself on that supreme seat. Yudhishthira asked him about his welfare and honoured him with worship.”’

CHAPTER 1036(59)

‘“Yudhishthira asked, ‘O Madhusudana! Have you spent the night happily? O Achyuta! Are all your senses of wisdom keen?’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Having been thus addressed by Yudhishthira, Vasudeva also asked him similar questions. An ordinary gatekeeper entered and reported that others had also arrived and were waiting for the king’s permission to enter—Virata, Bhimasena, Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki, Shikhandi, the twins, Chekitana, the Kekayas, the Kouravya Yuyutsu, the Panchala Uttamouja and many other kshatriyas. They entered, approached the great-souled bull among kshatriyas and seated themselves. The brave, immensely radiant, immensely strong and great-souled Krishna and Yuyudhana seated themselves on a single seat. In their hearing, Yudhishthira spoke these sweet words. ‘O Madhusudana! O Pundarikaksha! You alone are our refuge, like the thousand-eyed one is of the immortals. We depend on you for victory in the battle and for eternal happiness. O Krishna! You know everything about the destruction of our kingdom, about our banishment by the enemy and about the many hardships we have had to bear. You are the lord of everything. You are everything to us. You are affectionate towards your devotees. O Madhusudana! Our happiness and our path are vested in you. O Varshneya! My mind is vested in you. Act accordingly. My wish is that Arjuna’s pledge should be true. Help us cross this great ocean of misery and intolerance. O Madhava! We wish to cross over. Be our boat. O Krishna! He is the equal of Kartavirya.[76] When he has you as his charioteer, there is nothing that ratha cannot accomplish in battle.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘In all the worlds, including that of the immortals, there is no wielder of the bow who is the equal of Partha Dhananjaya. He is valiant and skilled in weapons. He is powerful and immensely strong. He is terrible and wrathful in battle. He is energetic. He is supreme among men. He is young. He has the shoulders of a bull. He is long-armed. He is immensely strong. His gait is like that of a bull among lions. He is handsome. He will slay all your enemies. I will act so that Arjuna, Kunti's son, consumes the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra, like a fire that has arisen. Through Arjuna's arrows, the inferior and wicked one, the slayer of Subhadra's son, will today travel along a path from which no one returns. Vultures, hawks, wild crows, jackals and many other meat-eaters will devour his flesh today. Even if all the gods, together with Indra, seek to protect him today, he will be slain in the encounter and conveyed to Yama's capital. Having slain Saindhava, Jishnu will return to you today. O king! Be bereft of sorrow and devoid of fever. You will be bedecked with prosperity.'"'

CHAPTER 1037(60)

'Sanjaya said, "While they were thus conversing, Dhananjaya arrived. He wished to meet the king who was the foremost among the Bharata lineage, together with his well-wishers. He entered the auspicious chamber and having saluted him,[77] stood in front. The bull among the Pandavas[78] arose from his seat and affectionately embraced Arjuna with his arms, inhaling the fragrance of his head. Having pronounced his blessings, he smilingly said, 'O Arjuna! It is evident that you will certainly accomplish a great victory in the battle. Your countenance shows that Janardana is extremely pleased with you.' Jishnu recounted to him the great and supremely wonderful incident. 'O fortunate one! I witnessed it through Keshava's favours.' Dhananjaya told him everything that he had witnessed and about his encounter with Tryambaka, and thus assured his well-wishers. All of them were astounded and lowered their heads on the ground. Having shown obeisance to the one with the bull on his banner, they spoke words of praise. All the well-wishers then took their leave of Dharma's son. They swiftly armoured themselves and happily emerged to do battle.

'"Having shown their honours to King Yudhishthira, Yuyudhana, Achyuta and Arjuna also happily emerged from his abode. The invincible Yuyudhana and Janardana were on a single chariot and together, went to brave Arjuna’s abode. Having gone there, Hrishikesha prepared the chariot, like a charioteer. It was a supreme chariot and bore the signs of the bull among monkeys. It possessed a roar like that of the clouds. It possessed the complexion of molten gold. That supreme of chariots was prepared and was as resplendent as the morning sun. The tiger among men[79] prepared himself. Having prepared himself, he told Partha, who had finished his morning ablutions, that the chariot was ready. Kiriti, the supreme among men in this world, donned golden armour. With the bow and arrows in his hand, he circumabulated.[80] The learned and the aged, who were in control of their senses and had performed rites, pronounced benedictions for the maharatha’s victory. The supreme chariot had earlier been invoked with mantras that would bring about triumph in battle. Having been invoked with mantras, it dazzled like the rays of the morning sun. The foremost among rathas, clad in gold, ascended the golden chariot. He was as resplendent as the unblemished rays of the sun on Meru. After Partha had ascended, Yuyudhana and Janardana also climbed up,[81] like the Ashvins coming with Indra to Sharyati’s sacrifice.[82] Govinda, supreme among those who hold reins, grasped the reins, like Matali for Vasava,[83] when he departed to slay Vritra. Partha was with both of them, on that supreme chariot. He was like the moon, the dispeller of darkness, together with Budha and Shukra.[84] The destroyer of large numbers of the enemy departed, wishing to kill Saindhava. He was like Indra in Tarakamaya,[85] accompanied by the lord of the oceans[86] and Mitra. There was the sound of musical instruments and auspicious and sacred chants. Arjuna proceeded, praised by bards and minstrels. The auspicious chants of bards and minstrels wished for his victory. These mingled with the sound of musical instruments and became extremely pleasant. Auspicious winds began to blow from the rear, with fragrant scents. They delighted Partha and dried up his enemies. O venerable one! Many omens of victory manifested themselves in favour of the Pandavas and it was the reverse for those on your side.

'"On beholding these signs of victory, Arjuna spoke to the great archer, Yuyudhana, who was on his right. 'O Yuyudhana! I can see that victory is certain in the battle. O bull among the Shini lineage! These good portents can be seen. Let me go to the spot where King Saindhava is. He is waiting to witness my valour and to proceed to Yama's world. The slaying of Saindhava is the supreme task for me. It is also a great task to protect Dharmaraja. O mighty-armed one! You protect him today. You will protect him the way I would have protected him myself. I do not see anyone else I can depend on, with the exception of maharatha Pradyumna. O bull among men! Ignoring this,[87] I can then kill Saindhava. O Satvata! You should not entertain any anxiety on my account. Devote all your attention to the supreme task of protecting the king. Where the mighty-armed Vasudeva is stationed, and where I am, it is certain that there is no scope for danger there.' Thus addressed by Partha, Satyaki, the destroyer of enemy heroes, signified his assent to the words and went to the spot where King Yudhishthira was."'

Section Sixty-Nine

Jayadratha-Vadha Parva

This parva has 2914 shlokas and sixty-one chapters.

Chapter 1038(61): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1039(62): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1040(63): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1041(64): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1042(65): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1043(66): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1044(67): 71 shlokas
Chapter 1045(68): 66 shlokas
Chapter 1046(69): 75 shlokas
Chapter 1047(70): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1048(71): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1049(72): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1050(73): 53 shlokas
Chapter 1051(74): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1052(75): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1053(76): 42 shlokas
Chapter 1054(77): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1055(78): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1056(79): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1057(80): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1058(81): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1059(82): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1060(83): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1061(84): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1062(85): 101 shlokas
Chapter 1063(86): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1064(87): 75 shlokas
Chapter 1065(88): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1066(89): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1067(90): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1068(91): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1069(92): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1070(93): 35 shlokas

Chapter 1071(94): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1072(95): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1073(96): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1074(97): 55 shlokas
Chapter 1075(98): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1076(99): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1077(100): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1078(101): 74 shlokas
Chapter 1079(102): 105 shlokas
Chapter 1080(103): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1081(104): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1082(105): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1083(106): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1084(107): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1085(108): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1086(109): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1087(110): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1088(111): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1089(112): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1090(113): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1092(115): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1093(116): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1094(117): 62 shlokas
Chapter 1095(118): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1096(119): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1097(120): 89 shlokas
Chapter 1098(121): 49 shlokas

The word vadha means death or killing and this section is named after the death or killing of Jayadratha. The Kouravas make arrangements to protect Jayadratha. Though Arjuna fights with Drona and Kritavarma, he is really interested in Jayadratha. Shrutayudha of Kalinga is killed. Arjuna kills Sudakshina of Kamboja, Shrutayu, Achyutayu, Ayutayu, Dirghayu and another Shrutayu (from Ambashtha). Drona fastens invincible armour on Duryodhana. Arjuna kills Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti. Brihatkshatra (of Kekaya) kills Kshemadhurti, Dhrishtaketu kills Viradhanva (from the Trigartas), Sahadeva kills Niramitra (from the Trigartas), Satyaki kills Vyaghradatta (from Magadha), Shatanika (Nakula's son) kills Shala (Somadatta's son), Ghatotkacha kills Alambusa, Drona kills many on the Pandava side, Satyaki kills Jalasanda (of Magadha) and Sudarshana, Drona kills several Panchala princes, Brihatkshatra (from Kekaya), Shishupala's son Dhrishtaketu (from Chedi) and his son, Jarasandha's son, Kshatradharma (Dhrishtadyumna's son), Bhima kills several of Duryodhana's brothers, Satyaki kills Alambusa, Arjuna and Satyaki kill Bhurishrava. Finally, Arjuna kills Jayadratha.

CHAPTER 1038(61)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “After Abhimanyu had been killed, the next day arrived. They[1] were oppressed with sorrow and grief. What did they do? Who, from my side, fought with them? The Kurus knew about Savyasachi’s deeds. Knowing this, how could they, and those on my side, fearlessly perform this wicked deed? Tell me. The tiger among men[2] was tormented by sorrow on account of his son. He was enraged. He was like Death, the destroyer. When he advanced in that battle, how could they glance at him? In the battle, the one with the ape on his banner shook his giant bow, grieving on account of his son. On beholding him, what did those on my side do? O Sanjaya! What did Duryodhana confront in the course of the battle? A great sorrow has overtaken us today. I do not hear sounds of joy.[3] Those are sounds pleasant to the mind. They bring happiness to the ear. Today, all of those can no longer be heard in Saindhava’s abode. The praises I heard earlier in the camps of my sons, can no longer be heard today. There were masses of bards and minstrels and dancers everywhere. Earlier, those sounds used to strike my ears. But I no longer hear them today. They must be miserable today and I can no longer hear those sounds. O Sanjaya! O son![4] Earlier, seated in the abodes of Satyadhriti and Somadatta, I used to hear those supreme sounds, charming to the ears.[5] My merits have diminished today and I hear woes and lamentations from the abodes of my sons. I perceive that they have lost their enterprise. That is the reason I do not hear such sounds from Vivimshati, Durmukha, Chitrasena, Vikarna and my other sons. Drona’s son, the great archer, is devoted to my sons. Brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and disciples used to wait upon him. He found delight in debate, talk and conversation and in the playing of musical instruments. Day and night, he found pleasure in many kinds of songs. He was worshipped by many from the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Satvatas. O suta! In the house of Drona’s son, sounds cannot be heard today, as they used to be earlier. Drona’s son, the great archer, used to be worshipped by multitudes of dancers and singers. Those sounds cannot be heard there now. Every evening, a great sound arose from the camps of Vinda and Anuvinda. It cannot be heard today. Every day, from the houses of the Kekayas, great sounds of rhythmic singing and dancing could be heard, as they and their soldiers amused themselves. O son! Those sounds are non-existent today. Somadatta's son[6] is a store of learning. Officiating priests, learned in *saptatantu*[7] sacrifices, used to wait upon him. Those sounds cannot be heard. The twang of bowstrings, the praise of the brahman and the sounds of lances, swords and chariots could be incessantly heard from Drona's house. But they cannot be heard now. There were the sounds of singing from those from many different countries and the playing of musical instruments. Those great sounds cannot be heard today. Janardana Achyuta arrived in Upaplavya, compassionate towards all beings and desiring peace.[8] O suta! At that time, I told my wicked son, 'O son! Use Vasudeva as a place of pilgrimage and have peace with the Pandavas. O Duryodhana! I think that the time has come and do not cross me. Do not refuse Keshava, who has come to solicit peace. He has your welfare in mind. Otherwise, you will truly be defeated.' But he refused Dasharha, who is a bull among all archers, and who was entreating him. He brought calamity on himself. The evil-minded one was attracted by destiny and ignored my beneficial words. He accepted the views of Duhshasana and Karna. I did not desire the game with the dice. Nor did Vidura approve of it. Saindhava did not desire the gambling. Bhishma did not desire the gambling. O Sanjaya! Shalya, Bhurishrava, Purumitra, Jaya, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Drona did not desire the gambling either. If my son had acted in accordance with the views of these people, with his kin and his well-wishers, he would have had a long and peaceful life. 'The sons of Pandu are pleasant and sweet in speech.[9] In the midst of their kin, they speak pleasantly. They are born in noble lineages. They are revered and wise. They will obtain happiness. A man who is always on the side of dharma, obtains happiness everywhere. After death, he obtains welfare and favours. Based on their capacity, they deserve to enjoy half of the earth. Right up to the frontiers of the ocean, the earth is also theirs, from their fathers and grandfathers. Obtaining their stations, the Pandavas will remain devoted to dharma. O son! I have kin and the Pandavas will always listen to them—Shalya, Somadatta, the great-souled Bhishma, Drona, Vikarna, Bahlika, Kripa and other aged and great-souled ones among the Bharata lineage. O son! If they speak on your behalf, they will act in accordance with those words. Do you think that there is any among them[10] who will speak in a contrary way? Krishna will never give up dharma and all of them will follow him. Those brave ones will not act contrary to the words of dharma that I speak to them. The Pandavas have dharma in their soul.' O suta! Thus did I lament and speak many words to my son. But the stupid one did not listen. It seems to me that all this is because of destiny. Vrikodara and Arjuna are there and brave Satyaki from the Vrishni lineage. There are Uttamouja from Panchala, the invincible Yudhamanyu, the unassailable Dhrishtadyumna, the unvanquished Shikhandi, the Ashmakas, the Kekayas, Kshatradharma from the Somakas, Chekitana from Chedi, Abhibhu, the son of Kashi, the sons of Droupadi, Virata, maharatha Drupada and the twins, tigers among men. Madhusudana is the counsellor. Who in this world wishes to fight the likes of these and desires to live? Who will withstand my enemies when they exhibit their divine weapons? There are Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni Soubala and Duhshasana as the fourth. I do not see a fifth. They have Vishvaksena[11] stationed on the chariot, reins in his hand. The armoured Arjuna is the warrior. There cannot be defeat. Does Duryodhana not remember those lamentations of mine? You have told me that Bhishma and Drona, tigers among men, have been brought down. Those were the words spoken by Vidura, the far-sighted one. Beholding the fruits of those deeds, I think that my sons must be sorrowing. At the end of the winter, aided by a great wind, the fire consumes dry wood. Thus will Dhananjaya consume my soldiers. O Sanjaya! You are skilled in narrating. Tell me everything. O son! When Abhimanyu was slain and that wicked deed was done to Partha in the evening, what was the state of your minds? O son! Having performed that wicked deed, in battle, those on my side must have found it impossible to withstand the deeds of the wielder of Gandiva. What did Duryodhana do? What did Karna do and say? When they confronted this end, what about Duhshasana and Soubala? O Sanjaya! O son! Everything that befell my assembled sons in battle was because of wicked and intolerant deeds. The evil-minded one[12] was addicted to avarice. His mind was distorted because of anger. The stupid one coveted the kingdom. Hatred made him lose his senses. O Sanjaya! Tell me whether their actions were good or evil.”’

CHAPTER 1039(62)

‘Sanjaya said, “I will tell you everything, as I have seen it with my own eyes. Listen with patience. Your faults have been great. When waters have receded after a flood, the construction of an embankment is useless. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Lamentation is pointless. Do not sorrow. Know that the decrees of destiny are wonderful and cannot be transgressed. O best among the Bharata lineage! Do not grieve. This destiny is ancient. If, in earlier times, you had restrained Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, or your own sons from gambling with the dice, you would not have confronted this calamity. Yet again, when the time for battle arrived, had you restrained both the angry parties, you would not have confronted this calamity. If, in earlier times, you had instructed the Kurus to kill the disobedient Duryodhana, you would not have confronted this calamity. Then the Pandavas, the Panchalas, the Vrishnis and all the other great ones would never have blamed you for your lack of intelligence. Had you performed the duties of a father and directed your son to a righteous path, making him follow dharma, you would not have confronted this calamity. You are the wisest person in this world, but you abandoned eternal dharma, following the counsel of Duryodhana, Karna and Shakuni. O king! You are addicted to artha. And all these lamentations of yours that I hear seem to be like honey laced with poison. O king! In earlier times, Krishna did not revere the Pandava king,[13] Bhishma or Drona as much as he revered you. But when he knew that you had been dislodged from the dharma of kings, from that time, Krishna no longer regards you with high honour. When your sons addressed harsh words towards the Parthas, despite they being under your control, you remained indifferent, coveting the kingdom for them. O unblemished one! You obtained the kingdom from your fathers and grandfathers and it will be lost. And so will the entire earth that has been conquered by the Parthas.[14] The fame and the kingdom of the Kouravas are because of what the sons of Pandus won. The Pandavas followed dharma and added a lot to those. But having encountered you, those deeds of theirs became extremely fruitless. They were dislodged from their kingdom because of your avarice. O king! Now that the time for battle has arrived, you are censuring your sons. You have indicated the many faults that they possess. But this is not deserved. When kings fight in battle, they do not seek to protect their lives. The bulls among kshatriyas are fighting, penetrating the army of the Parthas. Who other than the Kouravas will seek to fight with an army of soldiers protected by Krishna, Arjuna, Satyaki and Vrikodara? Their warrior is Gudakesha[15] and their counsellor is Janardana. They are protected by Satyaki and they are protected by Vrikodara. Other than the Kouravas and those who are following them, which mortal archer would dare to fight against these? With the devoted kings, the brave Kouravas are doing whatever they are capable of, devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. Now listen to the supremely grievous battle between those tigers among men, the Kurus and the Pandavas. Listen exactly to everything that occurred.”’

CHAPTER 1040(63)

‘Sanjaya said, “After night had passed, Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, started to arrange all his arrays in the form of a vyuha. O king! The brave ones roared in anger and intolerance. As they sought to kill each other, many wonderful sounds were heard. They stretched their bows and touched the bowstrings with their palms. They sighed deeply and exclaimed, ‘Where is that Dhananjaya?’ Others unsheathed their sharp, yellow and well-tempered swords, which had decorated hilts and the complexion of the sky, and tossed them up. Thousands of brave ones were seen, their minds set on war. They were skilled and roamed around, performing the motions for swords and bows. Others raised clubs, decorated with bells, gold and diamonds and smeared with sandalwood paste, and asked about the Pandavas. Still others possessed arms like clubs and were intoxicated with their strength. They raised these[16] and obstructed the sky, as if with Indra's standards. Others wielded many weapons and were garlanded with colourful flowers. Those brave ones desired to do battle and were stationed there. 'Where is Arjuna? Where is Govinda? Where is the proud Vrikodara? Where are their well-wishers?' Thus did they summon them to battle then.

'"Drona blew on his conch shell and himself urged his horses to speed up. He swiftly roamed around here and there. All the arrays that delighted in battle were stationed. O great king! Bharadvaja's son then spoke to Jayadratha. 'You yourself, Somadatta's son, maharatha Karna, Ashvatthama, Shalya, Vrishasena and Kripa will be stationed three *govyutis*[17] behind me, with a hundred thousand horses, sixty thousand chariots, fourteen thousand elephants with rent temples and twenty-one thousand armoured infantry. There the gods, with Vasava, will not be able to attack you, not to speak of all the Pandavas. O Saindhava! Therefore, be assured.' Thus addressed, Jayadratha, king of Sindhu, was comforted. He went to the spot indicated, surrounded by maharathas from Gandhara. Armoured foot soldiers were stationed there, with lances in their hands. All of them had whisks decorated with gold. O Indra among kings! Jayadratha's horses were well trained. There were seventy-two thousand Saindhava horses. Wishing to fight, your son, Durmarshana, stationed himself at the forefront of all those soldiers. He was with fifteen hundred crazy and armoured elephants that were terrible in form and were the performers of fierce deeds. Those who were skilled in fighting with elephants were astride them. To accomplish the objectives of the king of Sindhu, your sons, Duhshasana and Vikarna, also stationed themselves ahead of the soldiers. The vyuha that Bharadvaja's son constructed was partly in the form of a chakra and partly in the form of a cart.[18] It was twelve govyutis long and extended for five at the rear. Many brave kings were stationed there. There were chariots, horses, elephants and infantry, stationed by Drona himself. At its rear, there was a core vyuha in the form of a lotus. It was extremely difficult to penetrate. In the midst of the lotus, he again created a deep vyuha in the form of a needle. Having created the great vyuha in this fashion, Drona stationed himself in the vyuha. The great archer, Kritavarma, was stationed at the mouth of the needle. O venerable one! Kamboja and Jalasandha were stationed next to him. And next to them was Duryodhana, with his advisers. There were hundreds and thousands of warriors who never retreated. All of them stationed themselves in the cart, intending to protect it for a long time. O king! King Jayadratha was behind them, to the side of the needle, and surrounded by a large force. O Indra among kings! Bharadvaja's son stationed himself at the mouth of the cart. Bhoja was behind him, so as to protect him. Drona was clad in white armour, garments and headdress. He was broad-chested and mighty-armed. He was stationed there and stretched his bow, as angry as Death. On beholding Drona's chariot, the Kurus were delighted. It possessed a standard and was yoked to red horses. The signs of an altar and black deerskin were on the standard. On seeing the vyuha constructed by Drona, which was like an agitating ocean, the siddhas and the charanas were filled with great wonder. All the beings thought that this vyuha would devour the entire earth, with the mountains, the oceans, the forests and the many countries. The king[19] was delighted on seeing the great cart, which would shatter the hearts of those who caused it ill. It had many chariots, men, horses, infantry and elephants. It was wonderful in form and its roar gave rise to fear."'

CHAPTER 1041(64)

'Sanjaya said, "O venerable one! When the battle formations had thus been arrayed and a great sound arose, drums and kettledrums were beaten. When the battle formations roared and musical instruments were sounded, conch shells were blown and the sound made the body hair stand up. The ground was slowly covered with those among the Bharata lineage who wished to fight. The *roudra muhurta*[20] arrived and Savyasachi was seen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many thousand wild crows and crows sported themselves in front of Savyasachi. Animals howled in terrible tones, and jackals, inauspicious to look at, howled and advanced on our right, as we proceeded. Flaming meteors roared and fell down in every direction. The entire earth trembled and a dreadful fear arose. Dry and harsh winds began to blow, attracting gravel. They manifested themselves when Kounteya arrived to do battle. Shatanika, Nakula's son, and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna—those two wise ones arrayed the Pandava soldiers into a vyuha. Your son, Durmarshana, stationed himself in front of all the soldiers, with one thousand chariots, one hundred elephants, three thousand horses and ten thousand foot soldiers. These covered terrain measuring fifteen hundred bows. He said, 'The wielder of Gandiva is unassailable in battle. He is a scorcher. But today, I will repulse him, like the shoreline against the abode of makaras. Let everyone witness the invincible and intolerant Dhananjaya clash against me in battle today, like a mass of stones against another mass of stones.' O great king! Having said, this, the great-souled and high-minded and great archer stationed himself there. O king! He was surrouned by great archers. He was as angry as the Destroyer and like Vasava with the vajra. Urged by destiny, he was like Death with a staff in his hand. He was as unagitated as the one with the trident,[21] or like Varuna with his noose. He was like the blazing fire that arrives at the end of a yuga to consume beings. The angry and intolerant Jaya,[22] the destroyer of the nivatakavachas, was established in victory and truth. He desired to accomplish his great vow. He was armoured. Kiriti wielded a sword that was embellished with gold. His armour and garments were white. He sported a sword and wore beautiful earrings. Nara, with Narayana, was stationed on a supreme chariot. Shaking Gandiva in battle, he was as resplendent as the rising sun. Dhananjaya stationed his prepared chariot at the forefront of the array, where the great shower of arrows would descend. The powerful one blew on his conch shell. O venerable one! Together with Partha, Krishna also fearlessly blew on Panchajanya, supreme among conch shells, with great energy. O lord of the earth! Because of the sound of the conch shells, your soldiers trembled. Their body hair stood up and they lost their senses. Like all beings are terrified at the sound of thunder, all your soldiers were frightened at the sound of the conch shells. All the mounts released urine and excrement. The entire army, with all the mounts, became anxious. O king! O venerable one! The men were distressed at the sound of the conch shells. Some of them lost their senses. O king! Some were terrified. Together with all the other beings who dwelt on the standard, the ape let out a mighty roar. To frighten your soldiers, it opened its mouth wide. At this, so as to delight your soldiers, conch shells, drums, kettledrums and tambourines were again sounded. This mixed with the sound of many musical instruments, with the roars and the slapping of arms. To the sound of musical instruments, the maharathas roared like lions and issued challenges. There was a tumultuous sound that increased the fear of cowards.

'"The son of the chastiser of Paka[23] was extremely delighted. He told Dasharha, 'O Hrishikesha! Urge the horses to the spot where Durmarshana is stationed. I will shatter the army of elephants and penetrate the enemy's force.' Having been thus addressed by Savyasachi, the mighty-armed Keshava urged the horses to the spot where Durmarshana was stationed. A tumultuous and extremely fierce clash commenced between one and many,[24] one that destroyed chariots, elephants and men. Partha showered down arrows on the enemy, like Parjanya[25] pouring down rain. He was like a cloud raining down on a mountain. All the rathas swiftly displayed their dexterity of hand. They enveloped Krishna and Dhananjaya with a net of arrows. When the foe fought against him, the mighty-armed and valiant Partha became enraged. With his arrows, he severed the heads of the rathas from their bodies. The earth was strewn with these, with handsome heads with eyes jutting out and frowning, with teeth biting the lips. They were adorned with earrings and helmets. In every direction, they were like lotuses that had been destroyed. The heads of the warriors were scattered around.

Colourful armour was spattered with blood. O king! They were seen there, like masses of clouds, tinged with lightning. O king! There was the sound of heads falling down on the surface of the earth, like palm fruit that has ripened in time and is falling down. Some torsos were stationed, with the hands still wielding bows. Some upraised arms were stationed with unsheathed swords. Those bulls among men did not even know when their heads were severed and fell down. They could not tolerate Kounteya and wished to defeat him in battle. The earth was strewn with the heads of horses, trunks of elephants and the arms and heads of brave ones. 'This is Partha. Where is Partha? This one is Partha!' O lord! Thus, your soldiers and warriors only thought about Partha. Deluded by destiny, they thought that the entire world was full of Partha alone. Thus, they struck and killed each other. Others struck their own selves. They destroyed themselves. They were covered in blood. They were bereft of their senses. Their bodies were in deep pain. Many brave ones lay down and called out to their well-wishers. The arms held slings, lances, spears, swords, battleaxes, helmets, scimitars, bows, arrows, javelins, darts, armour, ornaments, clubs and armlets in that battle. The arms were like clubs and giant snakes. Having been severed by those supreme arrows, they seemed to forcefully jump, twitch and jerk in every direction, as if in anger. Any man who wrathfully advanced against Partha in that battle was killed by his arrows, piercing the body. As he brandished his bow and danced around on the coursing chariot, no one could detect any weakness in Partha. He swiftly picked up arrows, affixed them and shot them. All the enemy soldiers marvelled at the dexterity of Pandu's son. Phalguna used his arrows to pierce elephants and elephant-riders, horses and horse-riders and rathas and their charioteers. There were many who whirled around and surrounded and fought with Pandava. There was not a single one who stood before him and was not killed. Like the sun arises in the sky and destroys great darkness, thus did Arjuna use arrows tufted with heron feathers to slay that army of elephants. Because of the shattered and fallen elephants and soldiers, the earth seemed to be strewn with mountains, as if it was the time of destruction. Beings are always incapable of looking at the midday sun. Like that, the angry Dhananjaya was incapable of being glanced at by the enemy warriors. O scorcher of enemies! Your son's soldiers were shattered and fled. They were routed and oppressed by those arrows. Like a mass of clouds scattered by a giant wind, those soldiers were slain and no one was capable of looking at him. Those on your side used goads, the tips of their bows, shouts, whips, lashes on the flanks and eloquent words to swiftly urge their well-controlled horses to run away. The riders, the charioteers and the foot soldiers were afflicted by Arjuna. Others used goads and their toes to urge the elephants on their flanks. Others were confounded by the arrows and fled in his direction. Your warriors lost their endeavour. They were confused and distracted in their minds."'

CHAPTER 1042(65)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "The forefront of my army was shattered and slain by Kiriti. In the battle, who were the brave ones who advanced against Dhananjaya? Or did they abandon their certain resolution and enter the shakata vyuha, seeking refuge with the fearless Drona, who was stationed like a wall?"

'Sanjaya replied, "Arjuna shattered your forces then. Brave ones were slain and lost their endeavour. They fled at that moment. They were slain by the supreme arrows and no one was capable of looking at the son of the chastiser of Paka. O king! Duhshasana, your son, saw the state that the soldiers were in and was filled with great rage. To fight, he advanced against Arjuna. He was covered in colourful armour made out of gold. The brave one was extremely valorous and his helmet was made out of god. O great king! Duhshasana surrounded Savyasachi with a giant army of elephants that seemed to devour the earth. Bells tinkled on the elephants. There was the sound of conch shells. There was the sound of bows being twanged and the roars of the tuskers. The sound enveloped the earth, the directions and the sky. That moment was seen to be extremely fierce and terrible. On seeing that these were angry and were swiftly descending on him, urged by goads, and with extended trunks, like winged mountains, Dhananjaya, lion among men, emitted a giant roar, like a lion. He started to afflict and pierce that army of elephants with his arrows. It was like a makara penetrating the great ocean, when it is agitated by mighty waves. Like that, Kiriti penetrated that army of elephants. He was like a scorching sun that rises at the time of the destruction of a yuga, transgressing the normal rules of time.[26] Partha, the destroyer of enemy cities, was seen in all the directions. There were sounds from the hooves of the horses and the wheels of chariots. Those who were fighting, roared. There was the twang of bowstrings. There was the sound of Devadatta[27] and the roar of Gandiva. Elephants lost their speed and were bereft of their senses. Savyasachi's arrows had the touch of virulent serpents and shattered them. Sharp arrows released from Gandiva pierced the elephants in that battle and there were many hundreds and thousands that afflicted all their limbs. They roared loudly and were killed by Kiriti. They incessantly fell down on the ground, like mountains with their wings lopped off. Some elephants were pierced with arrows in the roots of their tusks, their frontal lobes and their temples. They repeatedly shrieked like cranes. Using broad-headed arrows with straight tufts, Kiriti sliced down the heads of men who were seated on the shoulders of elephants. The heads were adorned with earrings and fell down on the ground. They looked like a mass of lotuses that Partha was rendering as an offering. Some elephants wandered around in that battle. They possessed harnesses, but were devoid of armour. They suffered from wounds and blood flowed from these. Men were seen to hang down from them. Sometimes two or three were pierced with a single arrow that had been released, and fell down on the ground. With broad-headed and straight-tufted arrows, he severed bowstrings, bows, standards, yokes and headdresses of the opposing rathas. No one could detect a gap between his picking up an arrow and affixing and releasing it. Partha seemed to be dancing around, with his bow stretched in a circle. They were pierced with iron arrows and vomited blood from their mouths. In an instant, the elephants were seen to fall down on the ground. Many headless torsos were seen to stand up in every direction. O great king! It was a dreadful carnage. Arms decorated with golden ornaments were seen to be severed in the battle, with bows, finger-guards, swords and armlets. There were many shattered seats, housings, headdresses, poles, chariot wheels, axles and yokes. Shields, bows and arrows were strewn around everywhere. Garlands, ornaments, garments and giant standards fell down. Elephants, horses and kshatriyas were killed and brought down. Because of these, the earth there was seen to be dreadful. Thus did Kiriti slaughter Duhshasana's army. O great king! They were afflicted and fled, together with their leader.[28] With his soldiers, Duhshasana was oppressed and terrified. Seeking a protector in Drona, he went to the shakata vyuha."'

CHAPTER 1043(66)

'Sanjaya said, "Having slaughtered Duhshasana's force, Savyasachi Dhananjaya wished to get at the king of Sindhu and attacked Drona's army. He approached Drona, who was stationed at the mouth of the vyuha. Instructed by Krishna, he joined his hands in salutation and spoke these words. 'O brahmana! Wish me well and pronounce benedictions over me. Through your favours, I wish to penetrate this impenetrable army. You are like my father. For me, you are the equal of Dharmaraja. You are the equal of Krishna. I tell you this truthfully. O father![29] O unblemished one! O supreme among brahmanas! Like Ashvatthama should be protected by you, like that, I should always be protected by you. O best of men! Through your favours, I wish to kill the king of Sindhu in this battle. O lord! Protect my pledge.' Having been thus addressed, the preceptor smiled and replied, 'O Bibhatsu! Without vanquishing me, you are incapable of defeating Jayadratha.' Having said this, Drona smiled and enveloped him, his charioteer, his chariot, his horses and his standard with a storm of sharp arrows.

'"At this, Arjuna used his own arrows to repulse Drona's storm of arrows. He attacked Drona and released more terrible and greater arrows. O lord of the earth! Having shown reverence to Drona, he pierced him in that battle. He resorted to the dharma of kshatriyas and pierced him again with nine arrows. Drona severed these arrows and pierced both Krishna and Pandava with his own arrows, which were like poison or the flaming fire. Pandava then thought of using his arrows to sever Drona's bow. But while the great-souled Phalguna was thus thinking, Drona acted vigorously. The valiant one used arrows to swiftly sever his[30] bowstring and pierced his horses, standard and charioteer. The brave one smiled and shrouded Arjuna with arrows. At this, Partha strung a great bow. He was supreme among those who were skilled in the use of all weapons and was better than the preceptor. He quickly released six hundred arrows, as if he had grasped one alone. He again shot seven hundred arrows, and another one thousand. These were impossible to repluse. He again shot another ten thousand arrows and killed many in Drona's army. He was truly powerful and wonderful in fighting. Men, elephants and horses were pierced by those and fell down, bereft of their lives. They fled from the field of battle, or fell down dead, their weapons severed. There were rathas on the best of chariots and horses and they were afflicted by the arrows. They were crushed, dispersed and burnt, as if by the vajra, the wind or the fire. Elephants that were like mountain peaks, clouds and large houses fell down. Wounded by Arjuna's arrows, thousands of horses fell down. They were like swans on the breast of the Himalayas, struck by a torrent of water. Wounded by Pandava's arrows, chariots, horses, elephants and infantry were like large masses of water, dried up by the sun at the end of a yuga. Pandava's net of arrows was like the rays of the sun. But Drona was like a cloud that forcefully showered down arrows, and that brave and foremost warrior among the Kurus enveloped him. This was like a cloud covering the rays of the sun. Drona then struck Dhananjaya in the chest with an iron arrow. It was released with great force and could drink up the enemy's blood. He[31] trembled in all his limbs, like a mountain during an earthquake. However, Bibhatsu resorted to fortitude and struck Drona with arrows. Drona used five arrows to strike Vasudeva, pierced Arjuna with seventy-three and pierced his standard with three. O king! The powerful Drona got the better of his disciple. In an instant, he made Arjuna disappear with his shower of arrows. As his bow was drawn in the form of a circle, we saw the arrows of Bharadvaja's son descend continuously and it was extraordinary. O king! In the battle, the large number of arrows released by Drona was shafted with the feathers of herons. They descended on Vasudeva and Dhananjaya. The likes of the battle between Drona and Pandava had never been seen.

'"The immensely intelligent Vasudeva started to think about what should be done. Vasudeva addressed Dhananjaya in these words. 'O Partha! O Partha! O mighty-armed one! We should not be wasting time. Abandon Drona and let us perform the greater task.' Partha told Krishna, 'O Keshava! It shall be as you wish.' The mighty-armed Bibhatsu circumambulated Drona and departed, glancing backwards and shooting arrows. Drona spoke to him. 'O Pandava! Where are you going? Is it not true that you do not retreat until you have vanquished the enemy in battle?' Arjuna replied, 'You are my preceptor. You are not my enemy. I am your disciple and am like your son. Nor is there any man in this world who can vanquish you in battle.' Having spoken these words, the mighty-armed Bibhatsu advanced against the soldiers, wishing to slay Jayadratha. His wheels were guarded by the Panchalas, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja. They followed the great-souled one, as he penetrated your army. O great king! Jaya, Satvata Kritavarma, the king of Kamboja[32] and Shrutayu countered Dhananjaya. They had ten thousand rathas as their followers—the Abhishahas, the Shurasenas, the Shibis, the Vasatis, the Machellakas, the Lalitthyas, the Kekayas, the Madrakas, the Narayanas, the Gopalas and masses of Kambojas. They were revered as brave ones and had earlier been vanquished by Karna. With Bharadvaja's son at the forefront, they rushed at Arjuna, ready to give up their lives. He was angry and consumed by grief on account of his son. He was like Death and the Destroyer. He was armoured and wonderful in fighting. He was ready to give up his life in that tumult. Like the leader of a herd of elephants, he was ready to devour those soldiers. He was a great archer and brave. He was a tiger among men and they sought to counter him. A tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. It was between the others who sought to fight and

Arjuna. The bull among men advanced, wishing to kill Jayadratha. They united and countered him, like medicines against a disease that has surfaced.”’

CHAPTER 1044(67)

‘Sanjaya said, “Partha, the immensely strong and valiant one, was checked by them. Drona, supreme among rathas, also quickly attacked him from the rear. But he showered rays of a large number of sharp arrows, like the rays of the sun. He tormented your soldiers, like a large number of diseases assailing the body. Horses were pierced. Standards were severed. Elephants and their riders were brought down. Umbrellas and bows were pierced. Chariots were deprived of their wheels. The soldiers were afflicted by arrows and were routed in every direction. This was the terrible battle and nothing could be distinguished. O king! In that battle, they fought each other with arrows and Arjuna made the standard-bearers tremble with his sharp arrows. He was always devoted to the truth. He was always truthful to his pledge. The one borne on white horses attacked the best of warriors, who was borne on red horses.[33] Drona, the preceptor, struck his disciple, the great archer, with twenty-five arrows that pierced the inner organs. Bibhatsu, supreme among those who wielded all weapons, quickly attacked him with arrows that could repluse the most forceful of arrows. The one whose soul was immeasurable[34] invoked the brahmastra.[35] He used broad-headed arrows to counter the straight-tufted and broad-headed arrows used by his opponent. We beheld the extraordinary fighting skills of Drona, the preceptor. Even though he was young and exerted himself, Arjuna could not pierce him back. The cloud that was Drona was like a mighty cloud that poured down thousands of torrents of rain in the form of a shower of arrows on the mountain that was Partha. O venerable one! Arjuna used the brahmastra to counter the shower of arrows. The spirited one countered all those arrows with his own arrows. Drona then struck the one on white horses with twenty-five arrows and struck Vasudeva on the chest and the arms with seventy swift arrows. The intelligent Partha laughed at this mass of arrows released by the preceptor. He released sharp arrows and countered him in battle. Those two,[36] supreme among rathas, were thus wounded by Drona. The unassailable one was like a sun that has arisen at the end of a yuga and they avoided him. They avoided the sharp arrows that were released from Drona's bow.

'"Kiriti Arjuna attacked the army of the Bhojas and stationed himself between Kritavarma and Sudakshina of Kamboja. He avoided the invincible Drona, who was like Mount Mainaka. The supreme among the Kuru lineage was unassailable and a tiger among men.[37] But quickly and forcefully, Bhoja[38] struck him with ten arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons. O king! Arjuna pierced him with sharp arrows and confounded Satvata[39] by striking him again with three arrows. But Bhoja laughed and pierced Partha and Madhava Vasudeva with twenty-five arrows each. At this, Arjuna severed his bow and pierced him with seventy-three arrows that were like crests of fire or like angry and venomous serpents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Maharatha Kritavarma took up another bow and swiftly struck him in the chest with five arrows. He again pierced Partha with five sharp arrows. Partha struck him between the breasts with nine arrows. On seeing that Kounteya was obstructed by the ratha Kritavarma, Varshneya thought that they should not waste time. At this, Krishna spoke to Partha. 'Do not show mercy towards Kritavarma. Forget the relationship with him and crush and kill him.'[40] Thereafter, Arjuna confounded Kritavarma with his arrows. He advanced on his swift horses against the army of the Kambojas. Hardikya[41] became angry at seeing that the one on white horses was thus penetrating. He picked up his bow and arrows and attacked the two Panchalas who were following Arjuna and guarding his chariot wheels. Kritavarma used his arrows to counter the two rathas. Bhoja used three arrows completely made out of iron to pierce Yudhamanyu and four for Uttamouja. They pierced him back with ten arrows each. They severed his standard and his bow. Hardikya became senseless with anger and picked up another bow. He enveloped the two brave ones with arrows and deprived them of their bows. They grasped and readied other bows and struck Bhoja. Meanwhile, Bibhatsu penetrated the enemy's army. But those two bulls among men endeavoured, they could not penetrate the formation of Dhritarashtra's son, since the entry was barred by Kritavarma.

'"In the battle, the one on the white horses spiritedly fought against the soldiers of the opposition. Though the slayer of enemies was within reach of Kritavarma, he did not kill him. On seeing that he was advancing, the brave King Shrutayudha angrily attacked him, brandishing a giant bow. He pierced Partha with three arrows and Janardana with seventy. He struck Partha's standard with an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow. At this, Arjuna was extremely enraged. He used ninety arrows with drooping tufts to strike him, like a giant elephant being struck with a goad. O king! But he could not tolerate Pandaveya's valour and struck him with seventy-seven iron arrows. At this, Arjuna severed his bow and deprived him of his quiver. He angrily struck him on the chest with seven arrows with drooping tufts. The king was senseless with rage and picked up another bow. He struck Vasava's son[42] in the arms and the chest with nine arrows. But Arjuna, the destroyer of enemies, smiled at Shrutayudha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He afflicted him with thousands of arrows. The maharatha swiftly killed his horses and his charioteer. The immensely strong one then pierced him with seventy iron arrows. With his horses slain, King Shrutayudha abandoned that chariot. The brave King Shrutayudha was the son of Varuna. His mother was the great river Parnasha,[43] with cool waters. In the battle, the brave one raised his club and rushed against Partha. For the sake of her son, his mother had spoken these words to Varuna. 'In this world, let my son be unslayable by enemies.' Pleased with her, Varuna had said, 'For the sake of his welfare, I will grant him this boon. Because of this divine weapon, it won't be possible for your son to be killed. But it is impossible for any human to be immortal. O supreme among rivers! Everyone who has been born must certainly be mortal. Because of the power of this weapon, the enemies will always find him to be unassailable in battle. Dispel this fever from your mind.’ Having spoken these words, Varuna gave him the club, with the relevant mantras. Having obtained this, Shrutayudha became invincible in all the worlds. But the illustrious lord of the ocean again spoke these words. ‘This should never be released on someone who is not fighting. If that is done, it will descend on you.’ He used that slayer of enemies to strike Janardana.[44] The valiant Krishna received it on his broad shoulders. Shouri did not tremble, like Mount Vindhya against the wind. This was like a badly performed act of magic that backfires. It returned and killed the brave and intolerant Shrutayudha, who was stationed there. Having slain the brave Shrutayudha, it fell down on the ground. Great sounds of lamentation arose among the assembled soldiers, when they saw that Shrutayudha, the scorcher of enemies, had been slain by his own weapon. O lord of men! This was because Keshava was a non-combatant and Shrutayudha had hurled the club at him. He was thus slain and destroyed, just as Varuna had said. All the archers saw him fall down on the ground. Thus was Parnasha’s beloved son brought down. He was as resplendent as a tree with many branches, shattered by a storm. On seeing that Shrutayudha, the scorcher of enemies, had been slain, all the soldiers and all the chiefs among the soldiers began to flee.

‘“At this, the brave Sudakshina, the son of the king of Kamboja, attacked Phalguna, the destroyer of enemies, on swift horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Partha shot seven arrows at him. These penetrated through the brave one’s body and entered the ground. In the battle, pierced by sharp arrows released from Gandiva, he pierced Arjuna back with ten arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. He again pierced Vasudeva with three and Partha with five. O venerable one! At this, Partha severed his bow and standard. Pandava pierced him with two extremely sharp broad-headed arrows. However, he pierced Partha with three and roared like a lion. The brave Sudakshina angrily hurled a javelin that was completely made out of iron at the wielder of Gandiva. This was terrible and was adorned with bells. It flamed like a giant meteor, emitting sparks, and descended on the maharatha. It pierced him and fell down on the surface of the ground. However, Partha's valour was unthinkable. He used fourteen arrows shafted with heron feathers to pierce him, his horses, his standard, his bow and his charioteer. He used many other arrows to shatter his chariot. Though Sudakshina of Kamboja was valiant, his resolution had been rendered unsuccessful. With a broad and sharp arrow, Pandava pierced his heart. With his armour shattered, he trembled in his limbs. His crown and his armlets were dislodged. The brave one fell downwards, like a standard released from an implement. He was like a handsome and well-established karnikara tree on a mountain peak in the spring in the Himalayas, shattered by the force of the wind. The handsome Sudakshina of Kamboja was slain and lay down on the ground, though he deserved an expensive bed. His eyes were coppery red and his ears were adorned. The son of the king of Kamboja was brought down by Partha. All the soldiers in your son's army ran away, on seeing that Shrutayudha and Sudakshina of Kamboja had been slain."'

CHAPTER 1045(68)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! When Sudakshina and the brave Shrutayudha were killed, all your soldiers became angry and swiftly attacked Partha. O king! The Abhishahas, the Shurasenas, the Shibis and the Vasatis started to pour down a shower of arrows on Dhananjaya. With his arrows, Pandava simultaneously killed six hundred of these. They were terrified and fled, like small animals before a tiger. Having returned again, they surrounded Partha from all sides. Wishing to defeat the enemy in battle, he was fighting with the foes and killing them. Arrows were quickly released from Gandiva and descended on them. Dhananjaya brought down heads and arms. Without any gaps, the earth was strewn with fallen heads. Crows, vultures and wild crows flew around and seemed to form a shadowy canopy over the field of battle. On seeing that they were being routed, Shrutayu and Achyutayu became intolerant with rage and began to fight against Dhananjaya. They were strong, proud and brave, born in noble lineages and strong-armed. O great king! Desiring great fame, they swiftly showered down arrows from the left and from the right. For the sake of your son, those two archers wished to kill Arjuna. They angrily covered Arjuna with thousands of arrows with drooping tufts, like clouds filling a lake. The angry Shrutayu struck Dhananjaya, best among rathas, with a yellow and sharp javelin. Powerfully pierced by the enemy, the destroyer of enemies was overcome by supreme lack of consciousness in the battle, confounding Keshava also. At that instant, maharatha Achyutayu severely struck Pandava with an extremely sharp spear. It was as if he was pouring a corrosive[45] into the great-souled Pandava's wound. Severely pierced, Partha held onto the pole of the standard. O lord of the earth! A great sound, like the roar of lions, arose from all your soldiers, because they thought that Dhananjaya was dead. On seeing Partha bereft of his senses, Krishna was also extremely tormented and as his well-wisher, he comforted Dhananjaya with words of assurance. Those two foremost rathas[46] were successful in striking the target and covered Dhananjaya and Varshneya Vasudeva with showers of arrows from every direction. In that battle, they made the wheels, the poles, the horses, the standards, the pennants and the entire chariot disappear and it was extraordinary.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bibhatsu slowly regained his senses, like one who has returned from the capital of the king of the dead. He saw that his chariot and Keshava were covered with a net of arrows and he also saw the two enemies stationed before him, like flaming fires. At this, maharatha Partha invoked the Shakra weapon.[47] From this, thousands of arrows with drooping tufts were released. Those arrows that were created struck those two great archers. Their arrows, which were traversing through the sky, were shattered by Partha's arrows. Through the force of his arrows, Pandava swiftly countered their arrows. He roamed around there, fighting with the maharathas. The arms and heads of those two were severed by Phalguna's arrows. They fell down on the ground, like two trees uprooted by the wind. On seeing that Shrutayu had been killed and that Achyutayu had also been killed, everyone in the world wondered. It was as if the waters in the ocean had dried up. Partha then slew five hundred rathas who had followed them and penetrated the army of the Bharatas, killing the best among them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Shrutayu and Achyutayu had been killed, their sons, Ayutayu and Dirghayu, the best among men, became very angry and attacked Kounteya. Oppressed on account of their fathers, they showered down many different kinds of arrows. But the extremely wrathful Arjuna used straight-tufted arrows to instantly despatch them to Yama's abode. He agitated those ranks, like an elephant amidst a pond full of lotuses. Those bulls among kshatriyas were incapable of resisting Partha.

'"O king! Thousands of angry elephant-riders and well-trained elephants from Anga surrounded Pandava. Those elephants were like mountains and were urged on by Duryodhana. There were kings from the east and the south, with Kalinga at the forefront. When they descended on him, he swiftly shot arrows from Gandiva and severed the heads and the arms of those who were at the front, together with the ornaments. Those heads and arms, together with the armlets, were strewn around on the ground. They were as dazzling as golden stones, encircled with snakes. Arms and heads were severed and fell down. They seemed to be like birds falling down from trees. Thousands of elephants were pierced by arrows and blood began to flow from them. They seemed to be like mountains, with haematite[48] flowing from them. Slain by Bibhatsu's sharp arrows, others were lying around. There were many *mlecchas*[49] on the backs of elephants, hideous in form. O king! They were attired in many different kinds of garments and wielded diverse kinds of weapons. They were slain by colourful arrows and looked resplendent, blood flowing from their limbs. Wounded by Partha's arrows, elephants vomited blood. Thousands of them had their bodies mangled, with their riders and with those who followed them on foot. They shrieked as they fell down. Others fled in different directions. Many were greatly terrified and as those elephants fled, they crushed their own ranks. There were other fighting elephants that were kept separately and they were as virulent as poison.[50] These went mad and behaved in the same way.

'"There were asuras skilled in the use of maya, terrible and with fierce eyes. There were Yavanas, Paradas, Shakas, Sunikas, Goyaniprabhas, mlecchas, armed Kalakalpas, Darvabhisaras, Daradas, Pundras and Bahlikas. There were hundreds and thousands of them and they formed a large force. They showered down weapons, but proved to be incapable. The arrows released by Dhananjaya enveloped all those soldiers, like a cloud of locusts in the sky. There were mlecchas with heads partly or completely shaved. Some had matted hair. Others were filthy in conduct, with malicious faces. Through the maya of his weapons, he killed hundreds of those assembled ones. Hundreds of those who lived in congregations were pierced by arrows.[51] Those who lived in mountainous caverns were frightened in that battle and fled. Hundreds of elephants, horses, infantry and mlecchas were brought down by the arrows. Wild crows, herons and wolves were delighted and drank the blood. He created a passage with destroyed foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants.[52] The showers of arrows were the terrible boats. The hair was the moss and weeds. Blood constituted its fearful current and the waves were terrible. The helmets were the small fish and it seemed to be like Death at the end of a yuga. The bodies of slain elephants choked the flow and that river of blood flowed towards the left.[53] There were bodies of princes, elephants, horses, rathas and foot soldiers and one could not distinguish high ground from the low, like when Vasava showers profusely.[54] Everywhere the earth flowed over with blood. The bull among kshatriyas sent six thousand brave and supreme ones and a thousand other supreme kshatriyas to the world of the dead. As if decreed by destiny, thousands of elephants were pierced by the arrows. They lay down on the ground, like mountains shattered by thunder. Thus did Arjuna roam around and kill horses, rathas and elephants. He was like an elephant with rent temples crushing a forest of reeds. He was like a fire, aided by the wind, consuming a forest, with its many trees, lantanas and creepers and heaps of dense and dry grass. Your soldiers were like a forest and Krishna was like the wind. The angry Pandava Dhananjaya, with his rays of arrows, was like the fire. He made the seats of chariots bereft of them and made them lie down on the ground. With the bow in his hand, Dhananjaya seemed to dance around in that melee. His arrows were like the touch of the vajra and he covered the ground with blood. The angry Dhananjaya penetrated the army of the Bharatas.

'"As he advanced, Shrutayu from Ambashtha[55] countered him. O venerable one! As he endeavoured, Arjuna swiftly used sharp arrows tufted with the feathers of herons to bring down his horses. Partha used other arrows to sever his bow. At this, Ambashtha's eyes became red with anger. He grasped a club and attacked Keshava and maharatha Partha in that battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave one laughed and raised his club. He obstructed the chariot with his club and struck Keshava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Keshava had been struck with the club, Arjuna, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became extremely angry with Ambashtha. In that battle, he used gold-tufted arrows to cover the supreme of rathas and his club, like clouds enveloping the rising sun. Partha then used other arrows to shatter the club of the great-souled one and it was extraordinary. On seeing that it had fallen down, he grasped another mighty club and used that to again repeatedly strike Arjuna and Vasudeva. Arjuna used two kshurapra arrows to slice down his arms, with the upraised club. He then used another arrow to slice down his head, which was like Indra's pole. O king! Thus slain, he roared and fell down on the ground. It was like Indra's standard, when it has been freed from the bonds that tie it to the implement. Partha was then surrounded on all sides by a dense array of chariots and hundreds of elephants and horses and disappeared, like the sun shrouded by clouds."'

CHAPTER 1046(69)

'Sanjaya said, "Wishing to kill the king of Sindhu, Kounteya penetrated. He shattered Drona's array and the irresistible array of Bhoja. O king! Sudakshina, the heir of Kamboja, was slain. The valiant Shrutayudha was also killed by Savyasachi. On seeing that the soldiers were scattered and routed in every direction and that his own army was destroyed, your son went to Drona. He swiftly approached Drona on a single chariot and said, ‘That tiger among men has shattered this giant army and has departed.[56] Use your intelligence to reflect on what should be done after this. Given this terrible slaughter of people, how do we kill Arjuna and ensure that the tiger among men does not kill Jayadratha? O fortunate one! You are our ultimate refuge. Act accordingly. This Dhananjaya is a fire and his anger is the wind that goads him. He is consuming the soldiers like kindling, like a raging fire against dry grass. O scorcher of enemies! O supreme among those who have knowledge of the brahman! Kounteya has shattered the soldiers and has proceeded. The lords of men who are stationed to protect Jayadratha are overcome by great anxiety. They thought that Dhananjaya would never be able to pass beyond Drona, not with his life. O immensely radiant one! But while you looked on, Partha has passed through your soldiers. All of them are extremely distressed. I think that I no longer have an army left. O immensely fortunate one! I know that you have always been engaged in the welfare of the Pandavas. O brahmana! I am confounded, thinking about what should be done. O brahmana! I have sought to please you to the best of my strength. To the best of my capacity, I have given you the best of livelihoods. But you do not recognize this. O infinitely valorous one! We have always been devoted to you. But you have always been affectionate towards the Pandavas and have been engaged in bringing injury to us. Though you have obtained your livelihood from us, you have been engaged in bringing injury to us. I did not know you earlier. You are like a razor dipped in honey. If you had not granted me the boon that you would afflict the Pandavas, I would not have restrained the lord of Sindhu from returning to his own home. I displayed weak intelligence in depending on your assurance and your weapons. Having stupidly assured the lord of Sindhu, I have given him death. Even if a man enters Yama’s mouth, he may escape. But once Jayadratha has come within Arjuna’s reach, there is no escape for him. O one with the red horses!

Act so that Jayadratha can be protected. Do not be angry at my distressed lamentations. Protect Saindhava.’

‘“Drona replied, ‘I have found no fault with your words. You are like Ashvatthama to me. O lord of the earth! I am telling you this truthfully and act accordingly. Krishna is a supreme charioteer. His horses are swift. They are supreme steeds. Even if a small space is created, Dhananjaya passes quickly through it. Have you not seen the innumerable arrows shot by Kiriti? As he swiftly advances, they descend one *krosha*[57] behind his chariot. I am old now and am incapable to travelling at such great speed. The force of the Parthas has presented itself at the mouth of our array. O mighty-armed one! I should now capture Yudhishthira. Before all the archers and in the midst of all the kshatriyas, this is the pledge that I made. Having been abandoned by Dhananjaya, he is stationed in front of me. I will not move from the front of this vyuha and go to Phalguna. He is your equal in birth and deeds. With your aides, you should go and fight with that solitary enemy. Do not be frightened. You are a lord of the earth. You are a king. You are brave, accomplished and skilled. You can uproot enemies like Pandava. O brave one! You should yourself swiftly go to the spot where Dhananjaya is.’

‘“Duryodhana said, ‘O preceptor! O supreme among those who wield all weapons! How can I cross Dhananjaya? He has countered you too. I am capable of vanquishing Purandara, the wielder of the vajra, in battle. But I cannot withstand Arjuna, the vanquisher of enemy cities, in battle. Through the power of his weapons, he has vanquished Bhoja Hardikya[58] and you, who are an equal of the gods. His arrows have killed Shrutayu, Sudakshina, King Shrutayudha, Shrutayu[59] and Achyutayu. Hundreds of mlecchas have been killed. He has consumed many enemies. How can I fight with Pandava? How can I fight with that invincible one? He is learned in the use of weapons. How do you think that I am fit to fight with him today? Instruct me. I am dependent on you and your servant. Preserve my fame.’

'"Drona replied, 'O Kouravya! You have spoken the truth. Dhananjaya is invincible. But I will act so that you are able to withstand him. Let all the archers in the world witness something extraordinary today. While Vasudeva looks on, you will repulse Kounteya. O king! I will fasten this golden armour on you and arrows and weapons will not be able to penetrate you in the battle, even if the gods, the asuras, the yakshas, the serpents, the rakshasas and the three worlds fight against you, together with all men. You have no reason to fear. Krishna, Kounteya, or anyone else who uses weapons in battle, will not be able to pierce this armour with arrows. Resorting to this armour today, go and fight with the angry Arjuna in the battle. Go yourself and go swiftly. He won't be able to withstand you.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having spoken these words, Drona, supreme among those who knew about the brahman, quickly touched water and fastened that radiant armour on him, in accordance with the proper rites. This was for the sake of your son's victory in battle. All the worlds were astounded at the knowledge of the one who knew about the brahman.

'"Drona said, 'Let Brahma give you benedictions. Let all the brahmanas give you benedictions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let the best of reptiles give you benedictions. Let Yayati, Nahusha, Dhundumara, Bhagiratha and all the best of *rajarshis*[60] always give you benedictions. May you have benedictions from those who have one foot[61] and those who have many feet. In this great battle, may you always have benedictions from those who possess no feet. May Svaha, Svadha and Shachi always act so that it is beneficial for you.[62] O unblemished one! May Lakshmi and Arundhati always act so that it is beneficial for you. O king! May Asita-Devala, Vishvamitra, Angiras, Vasishtha and Kashyapa act so that it is beneficial for you. Let Dhata, Vidhata, the lord of the worlds, the directions, the lords of the directions and the six-faced Kartikeya grant you benedictions today. Let the illustrious Vivasvat act in every way so that it is beneficial to you. O king! Let the four elephants of the four directions,[63] the earth, the firmament, the sky, the planets, the earth which always holds us up from below and Sesha, the chief of the serpents, give you their benedictions. O son of Gandhari! In earlier times, the daitya Vritra used his valour to defeat the best of the gods in battle. Thousands of them were mangled in their bodies. All of them were robbed of their energy and their strength. With Indra, those residents of heaven went to Brahma and sought refuge with him. They were frightened of the great asura, Vritra.’

‘“The gods said, ‘O supreme among gods! The gods are afflicted by Vritra. O chief among the gods! Be our refuge now. Protect us from this great fear.’

‘“Drona said, ‘He[64] addressed Vishnu, who was stationed by his side and also the best of the gods, Shakra and the others. He spoke these appropriate words to the best of the gods, who were distressed. “The gods, together with Indra and the brahmanas, should always be protected by me. Vritra has been created from Tvashtra’s extremely invincible energy.[65] In ancient times, Tvashtra performed austerities for a million years. O gods! Having obtained Maheshvara’s permission, he then created Vritra. It is through the favours of that god that this enemy of yours has become powerful and can strike you. Without going to Shankara’s abode, one cannot see the illustrious Hara. Having swiftly gone to Mandara and seen him, you will be able to destroy your enemy. The source of all austerities, the destroyer of Daksha’s sacrifice, resides there.[66] He is the wielder of Pinaka.[67] He is the lord of all beings. He is the one who uprooted Bhaga’s eyes.”[68] With Brahma, the gods went to Mandara. They saw that mass of energy, with the splendour of ten million suns. Having seen the gods, he welcomed them and asked, “Tell me. What can I do for you? The sight of me is never fruitless. Because of this, may your desires be satisfied.” Having been thus addressed, all those residents of heaven replied, “Vritra has robbed us of your energy. Be the refuge of the residents of heaven. O god! Behold our bodies. We are afflicted and oppressed because of his blows. We have sought refuge with you. O Maheshvara! Be our refuge.” Maheshvara replied, “O gods! You know that this immensely strong and fierce one has been created from Tvashtra’s energy. He cannot be resisted by those who haven’t controlled their souls. It is certainly my task to protect all the residents of heaven. O Shakra! Accept this radiant armour from my body. O lord of the gods! Fasten it on your body, after uttering these mantras in your mind." Having spoken these words, the granter of boons gave him the armour, together with the mantras. Protected by the armour, he[69] advanced against Vritra's army. In that great battle, many different kinds of weapons were hurled at him. But they were incapable of penetrating the armour that he had fastened. In the battle, the lord of the gods himself killed Vritra. He then gave the armour, whose joints were made out of mantras, to Angiras. Angiras gave it to his son Brihaspati, who knew about mantras. Brihaspati gave it to the intelligent Agniveshya. O supreme among kings! Agniveshya gave it to me and I have fastened the armour on you, so as to protect your body, together with the mantras.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having thus addressed your immensely radiant son, Drona, bull among preceptors, again gently spoke these words. 'O king! I have fastened this armour on you, using the strands of Brahma.[70] In ancient times, at the time of battle, Hiranyagarbha[71] himself fastened it on Vishnu. In the *tarakamaya* battle, Brahma himself fastened this divine armour on Shakra and I have fastened it on you.' Having fastened the armour with the use of mantras and in the decreed fashion, the great brahmana sent the king to the battle. The mighty-armed one was thus armoured by the great-souled preceptor. He had one thousand rathas from Trigarta, accomplished in striking. There were one thousand crazy tuskers that were valiant. There were ten thousand horses and other maharathas. Surrounded by these, the mighty-armed one advanced towards Arjuna's chariot. There were the sounds of many musical instruments and he advanced like Virochana's son.[72] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great sound arose among your soldiers, when they saw Kourava advance like a fathomless ocean."'

CHAPTER 1047(70)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Duryodhana advanced behind those bulls among men, Partha and Varshneya, who had already penetrated. The

Pandavas, together with the Somakas, emitted a mighty roar and swiftly rushed against Drona. The battle commenced between the Panchalas and the Kurus at the mouth of the vyuha and it was extraordinary. It was extremely terrible and tumultuous and made the body hair stand up. O king! The likes of that encounter had not been seen, nor heard of. O lord of the earth! The battle commenced when the sun was at the midpoint. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Parthas, who were skilled in striking, arranged themselves into a battle formation and enveloped all of Drona's soldiers with a shower of arrows. We had Drona, supreme among the wielders of all weapons, at the forefront and showered down arrows on the Parthas, with Parshata at the forefront. The heads of the two armies, adorned by chariots, were beautiful and dazzling. They looked like giant clouds at the end of the winter season, driven towards each other by opposing winds. Those two large armies encountered and clashed against each other with the greatest of forces. It was like the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, overflowing with water during the monsoon. Many different kinds of weapons were the winds. There were large numbers of elephants, horses and chariots. In that battle, great and fierce clouds were like giant clouds tinged with lightning. Thousands of currents of arrows were released from the wind that was Bharadvaja's son. They seemed to pour down and pacify the immensely fierce fire that was created by the Pandu soldiers. The supreme of brahmanas agitated the Pandava soldiers, like the ocean at the end of the summer, when it is agitated by a fierce and gigantic storm. They made every endeavour to advance against Drona. They were like a strong wind that seeks to shatter a large embankment. But they were restrained by Drona, like a mountain repulsing a torrent of water. In that battle, the Pandavas, the Panchalas and the Kekayas were enraged. There were other kings too, who surrounded them from all sides. In that battle, those immensely strong and brave ones countered the Panchalas.

'"In that battle, Parshata, tiger among men, together with the Pandavas, repeatedly struck Drona, wishing to penetrate the enemy forces. Drona showered arrows on Parshata and he brought down a shower in return. Dhrishtadyumna brought down a shower of arrows.

The swords were like winds at the forefront and there were lances, spears and scimitars. The bowstrings were like lightning and Dhrishtadyumna was like the slayer of Bala.[73] He showered down a torrent of arrows in all the directions. He killed the best of rathas and horses and enveloped the army. He prevented Drona from following the paths that the chariots of the Pandavas traversed. Parshata afflicted Drona with his arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona made every endeavour in the battle. Having encountered Dhrishtadyumna, his army was divided into three parts. One of these retreated towards Bhoja and another towards Jalasandha.[74] The last one was slaughtered by the Pandavas and went towards Drona. Drona, supreme among rathas, tried to unite his forces. But maharatha Dhrishtadyumna routed and separated them. Divided into three parts, the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was slaughtered by the Pandus and the Srinjayas. They were like unprotected animals[75] in the forest, when attacked by many predators. Confounded by Dhrishtadyumna, it was as if the warriors were devoured by Death. In that tumultuous battle, that is what people thought. The kingdom of a bad king is devastated by famine, disease and thieves. That is the way your army was shattered and routed by the Pandavas. Because of the rays of the sun on shattered weapons and armour and because of the dust raised by the soldiers, the eyes were afflicted. Divided into three, the soldiers were slaughtered by the Pandavas.

'"Drona became intolerant and killed the Panchalas with his arrows. While he crushed those arrays and killed them with arrows, Drona assumed the form of the blazing fire at the time of destruction. O lord of the earth! In that battle, with only a single arrow, the maharatha pierced chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, there was not a single one among the soldiers of the Pandavas who could withstand the sharp arrows that were released from Drona's bow. They were scorched by the sun and consumed by Drona's arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Parshata's soldiers began to wander around there. In that fashion, Parshata was like Death among your forces. He blazed everywhere, like a forest fire amidst dry wood. The soldiers were killed by the arrows of Drona and Parshata. But those soldiers were ready to give up their lives and fought to the best of their capacity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O great king! Whether in your army, or that of the enemy, there was not a single one who abandoned the fight out of fear.

'"The brothers Vivimshati, Chitrasena and maharatha Vikarna surrounded Kounteya Bhimasena from all sides. Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti and the valiant Kshemadhurti—these three followed your three sons.[76] The maharatha and energetic King Bahlika, born in a noble lineage, with his soldiers and his advisers, countered Droupadi's sons. Shaibya, the king of Govasana, with a thousand supreme warriors, countered the valiant son of Kashi. Ajatashatru Kounteya was like a flaming fire and King Shalya, the lord of Madra, repulsed the king.[77] The brave and intolerant Duhshasana, together with his own soldiers, advanced and fought against Satyaki, supreme among rathas. I armoured myself and with my soldiers and four hundred great archers, countered Chekitana.[78] Shakuni, with seven hundred warriors from Gandhara who were armed with bows, lances, arrows and swords, countered Madri's son.[79] The great archers, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, were prepared to give up their lives for the sake of their friend and raised their weapons in battle, countering Virata, the lord of Matysa. The valiant Bahlika made efforts to counter the unvanquished and powerful Shikhandi, the son of Yajnasena. Those from Avanti and Souvira, together with the cruel Prabhadrakas countered the angry Dhrishtadyumna from Panchala. The brave rakshasa Ghatotkacha was cruel and was advancing to fight. Swiftly and angrily, Alayudha rushed against him in the battle. Alambusa, the king of the rakshasas, adopted a fearsome form and was repulsed by maharatha Kuntibhoja, with a large body of soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Saindhava remained stationed behind all the soldiers. He was protected by the rathas who were supreme archers, Kripa and the others. O king! Saindhava's chariot wheels were protected by two great ones—Drona's son to the left and the son of the suta to the right. His rear was protected by Kripa, Vrishasena, Shala and the invincible Shalya, with Somadatta's son at the forefront. They knew about policy and were great archers. All of them were skilled in fighting. Having made arrangements to protect Saindhava, they[80] got ready to fight."'

CHAPTER 1048(71)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Listen. I will describe exactly the wonderful battle that commenced between the Kurus and the Pandavas. Bharadvaja's son was stationed at the mouth of the vyuha. In that battle, the Parthas approached and fought, seeking to penetrate Drona's force. Drona himself, and the soldiers, sought to protect the vyuha. They fought against the Parthas in that battle, desiring great fame. Desiring the welfare of your son, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti angrily struck Virata with ten arrows. O great king! While those two valiant ones and their followers were stationed in battle, Virata bravely advanced against them and fought with them. The battle between them was terrible and blood flowed like water. It was as if a lion and two foremost elephants with shattered temples had met in the forest. Bahlika prided himself in the battle and Yajnasena's immensely powerful son[81] struck him with sharp and terrible arrows that were capable of penetrating the inner organs. Bahlika became extremely angry and used nine gold-tufted arrows with drooping tufts, which had been sharpened on stone, to strike Yajnasena's son. The encounter between them was terrible and there was a profusion of arrows and lances. It generated fear among cowards and increased the delight of the brave. The arrows released by those two covered the sky and the directions and enveloped everything, so that nothing could be seen. In the battle, together with his soldiers, Shaibya from Govasana fought against the maharatha who was the son of Kashi. It was like one elephant against another elephant. In the battle, the enraged King Bahlika fought against Droupadi's maharatha sons and this was as beautiful as the mind battling against the five senses. They,[82] supreme among beings, fought fiercely and showered arrows in every direction, like the senses fighting for possession of the body. Your son, Duhshasana, struck Varshneya Satyaki with nine sharp arrows that had drooping tufts. Having been thus grievously struck by that great archer, the archer Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, quickly lost his senses somewhat. But having regained his composure, Varshneya swiftly pierced your maharatha son with ten arrows that were shafted with the feathers of herons. O king! They pierced each other firmly with arrows and the wounded in the battle, were dazzling, like blossoming kimshukas. The angry Alambusa was afflicted by Kuntibhoja's arrows, which found their mark. He was as beautiful as a flowering kimshuka. The rakshasa pierced Kuntibhoja with many iron arrows. At the forefront of your army, he then roared loudly. Those two brave ones fought against each other in that battle. To all the beings, they seemed to be like Shakra and Jambha in ancient times.[83] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons of Madri were angry and violent against Shakuni in the battle, since he had caused the enmity earlier. In the battle, they afflicted him with arrows.

'“O great king! That was the reason behind the destruction of men.[84] It was created by you, extended by Karna and maintained by your sons. O king! That fire of rage[85] has now arisen and is consuming the entire earth. Because of the arrows of the sons of Pandu,[86] Shakuni was forced to retreat. He was unable to exhibit his valour in battle and did not know what to do. On seeing that he was retreating, Madri's maharatha sons again showered down arrows on him, like clouds raining down on a large mountain. He was struck by many arrows with drooping tufts. Using his swift horses, Soubala fled towards Drona's array. Ghatotkacha rushed against the brave rakshasa Alayudha. But in that battle, he used only a medium violence and force.[87] O great king! The wonderful battle between the two was like the battle that had taken place in earlier times between Rama and Ravana. In the battle, King Yudhishthira pierced the king of Madra with five hundred arrows and again pierced him with another seven. O king! An extraordinary battle raged between them. It was like the great battle that had taken place in earlier times between

Shambara and the king of the immortals.[88] Your sons, Vivimshati, Chitrasena and Vikarna, were surrounded by a large army and fought against Bhimasena.”’

CHAPTER 1049(72)

‘Sanjaya said, “The battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. The Kouravas were divided into three and the Pandavas rushed against them. Bhimasena rushed against the mighty-armed Jalasandha and Yudhishthira and his soldiers attacked Kritavarma in the battle. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna showered down arrows that were as dazzling as the rays of the sun and attacked Drona in the battle. A battle commenced between all the spirited archers, between the Kurus and the Somakas, who were angry with each other. There was the destruction of beings and it gave rise to great terror. The soldiers were engaged in duels and fought without any fear. The powerful Drona fought with the powerful son of Panchala. He[89] showered down a torrent of arrows and it was extraordinary. In every direction, they caused destruction, like in a forest of lotuses.[90] Drona and Panchala severed the heads of many brave men from the arrays and they were strewn around everywhere. There were also garments, ornaments, arms, standards, armour and weapons. They were golden and colourful and were smeared with blood. Thus smeared, they looked like masses of clouds, tinged with lightning. The arrows brought down elephants, horses and men in that battle. The maharathas released these from bows that were as long as palm trees. In that clash between the brave and great-souled ones, swords, shields, bows, heads and armour were strewn around. O great king! In every direction, in that supreme carnage, many headless torsos were seen to arise. O venerable one! Vultures, herons, wild crows, hawks, crows, jackals and large numbers of many other carnivorous beasts were seen. O king! They fed on the flesh and drank the blood. They dragged them[91] by the hair and got at the marrow in many ways. They tugged at the bodies and the severed limbs. Large numbers of heads of men, horses and elephants were there. The men were skilled in the use of weapons.

They were trained in war and were accomplished. They wielded arrows and desired victory in that battle. They fought fiercely there. In that battle, many on your side displayed many beautiful motions of fighting with swords, scimitars, javelins, spikes, spears, lances and battleaxes. There were those who raised clubs, maces and other weapons in their arms. Men angrily fought and killed each other with their bare arms. Rathas fought against rathas, horse-riders against horse-riders, elephants against supreme elephants and infantry against infantry. Some were excited and crazily attacked each other, as if they were roaming around in an arena.[92] They shrieked and killed each other in the battle.

'"O lord of the earth! Thus did the battle rage, without any fear. Dhrishtadyumna's horses got mixed up with those of Drona's. Those horses were beautiful and well trained and possessed the speed of the wind. They possessed the complexion of pigeons and were red like blood.[93] O king! Those horses got mixed up in the battle and were as beautiful as clouds tinged with lightning. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave Dhrishtadyumna saw that Drona was near. He discarded his bow and grasped a sword and a shield. Parshata, the destroyer of enemy heroes, wished to perform an extremely difficult feat. With great strength, he approached Drona's chariot. He stationed himself on the middle of the yoke and sometimes on the joints of the yoke. He slew half of those horses and was honoured by the soldiers. With the sword in his hand, he roamed around amidst those red horses. Drona could not detect a weakness in him and it was extraordinary. He was like a hawk descending in the forest, in search of some flesh. Thus did he venture forth, wishing to kill Drona. Drona released a hundred arrows to cut off the shield, which was decorated with the mark of a hundred moons. He then severed the sword of Drupada's son with ten arrows. The powerful one used sixty-four arrows to kill his horses. With two broad-headed arrows, he severed his standard and his umbrella and killed the charioteers who guarded his flanks.[94] He stretched his bow back to his ears, like the wielder of the vajra releasing the vajra and swiftly affixed a supreme arrow that would have caused death. However, Satyaki severed that arrow with fourteen arrows. He rescued Dhrishtadyumna, as he was about to be devoured by the preceptor's mouth. O venerable one! The lion among men had grasped him, like a deer grasped by a lion. But the bull among the Shini lineage freed Panchala from Drona. On seeing that Satyaki had rescued Panchala in that great battle, Drona swiftly shot twenty-six arrows at him. While Drona was devouring the Srinjayas, Shini's grandson pierced him back in the chest with twenty-six sharp arrows. All the Panchala rathas were desirous of victory. They swiftly withdrew Dhristadyumna and resorted to Satvata, as he attacked Drona."'

CHAPTER 1050(73)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! After the arrows had been severed and Dhrishtadyumna had been freed by Yuyudhana,[95] foremost among the Vrishni lineage, what did the intolerant and great archer,[96] supreme among the wielders of all weapons, do? How did Drona fight against Shini's grandson, the tiger among men?"

'Sanjaya replied, "He was venomous in his rage. His extended bow was like a gaping mouth. The sharp and iron arrows were like his teeth. His eyes were coppery red with wrath. He sighed like a giant serpent. The brave one among men was delighted. He was borne on extremely fast and red steeds. In every direction, he seemed to leap up into the sky, or climb up mountains. He showered gold-tufted arrows and attacked Yuyudhana. He brought down a mighty shower of arrows and the roar of his chariot was like that of the slayer of Bala.[97] He stretched his bow and released many iron arrows that seemed to be tinged with lightning. His lances and swords were like those of the wielder of the vajra. They seemed to have been stirred by the force of his anger. Drona was like an unassailable cloud and his horses seemed to have been urged on by the wind. Shini's brave descendant, the destroyer of enemy cities, saw him descend. He was invincible in battle and laughingly told his charioteer, 'This brahmana is cruel. He has been dislodged from his own duties.[98] The preceptor is the refuge of the king who is Dhritarashtra's son, his relief from fearful grief. That prince is always insolent about his bravery. Swiftly and cheerfully, urge the horses to use their greatest speed and let us go and fight against him.' Madhava's[99] supreme horses were like silver in their complexion. They possessed the speed of the wind and they swiftly advanced towards Drona. Those two brave ones fought against each other and everything was covered with a net of arrows, so that it became intolerable to others. There was a fearful darkness, without any gaps. Both Drona and Satvata were skilled in using their weapons swiftly. Those two lions among men were seen to shower down arrows incessantly. As the torrent of arrows showered down and struck each other, the sound that was heard was like the sound when Shakra releases his vajra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were pierced by iron arrows and their forms looked like those of snakes which had been struck by venomous serpents. The extremely terrible sound of bowstrings and palms slapping was heard. It was like that of innumerable mountain tops shattered by thunder. The chariots, horses and charioteers of both looked beautiful. They were mangled by gold-tufted arrows and looked colourful. O lord of the earth! The iron arrows were bright and flew straight. As they descended, they looked as terrible as snakes that had shed their skins. Both their umbrellas were brought down. Both their standards were also brought down. The limbs of both flowed with blood. But they were both dazzling, as they wished for victory. With blood flowing from their limbs, they looked like exuding elephants. They struck each other with arrows that were fatal.

'"O great king! The sounds of delighted roars, mixed with the sound of conch shells and drums, ceased, because no one else made any sound. The soldiers in the arrays became silent and the warriors stopped the fighting. Everyone was curious to witness the duel between those two. Rathas, elephant-riders, horse-riders and infantry surrounded those two bulls among men, witnessing what was going on, with unblinking eyes. The arrays of elephants stood there, and so did the arrays of horses. There were divisions of chariots, stationed in counter-formation. They were colourful with pearls and coral. They were decorated with gems and gold. They were colourful with standards and ornaments and with golden armour. There were *vaijayanti* flags[100] and caparisons, seats and blankets. There were sparkling and sharp weapons on the horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The frontal lobes of the elephants were decorated with gold and silver and there were garlands around their tusks. They looked like a net of clouds at the end of the summer, bedecked with cranes and fireflies and decorated with lightning and flashes.[101] Those on our side and those on Yudhishthira's side were stationed. They wished to witness the battle between Yuyudhana and the great-souled Drona. The gods assembled on their celestial vehicles, with Brahma and Shakra at the forefront. There were masses of siddhas and charanas, *vidyadharas*[102] and giant serpents.

'"Those tigers among men displayed wonderful techniques of releasing, withdrawing and hurling weapons and all of them beheld these diverse motions with wonder. The immensely strong ones exhibited the dexterity of their hands in using weapons. Drona and Satyaki pierced each other with their arrows. In the battle, Dasharha[103] used swift and extremely firm arrows to sever Drona's arrows and then severed the immensely radiant one's bow too. But in the twinkling of an eye, Bharadvaja's son grasped another bow. However, as he strung it, Satyaki swiftly severed this too. Drona again grasped another bow and stood with it in his hand. As he repeatedly strung his bow, it was again severed with sharp arrows. O Indra among kings! In the battle, Drona witnessed Yuyudhana's superhuman deed and thought about this in his mind. 'This kind of strength of arms has been seen in Rama,[104] Kartavirya, Dhananjaya and Bhishma, the tiger among men. This is now seen in the supreme one among the Satvata lineage.' Having thought about this in his mind, Drona honoured his valour. The supreme among brahmanas beheld a dexterity that was like Vasava's. The foremost among those who was knowledgeable about weapons was gratified, and so were the gods, with Vasava. O lord of the earth! That kind of dexterity of hand and swiftness of action, as shown by Yuyudhana, had not been seen earlier by the gods, the gandharvas and the masses of siddhas and charanas, though they had known what Drona was capable of doing. Drona, the destroyer of kshatriyas, then picked up another bow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The foremost among those who knew about weapons released weapons in the battle. However, Satyaki repulsed them with the maya of his own weapons. He destroyed them with his sharp arrows and it was extraordinary. His superhuman deeds were witnessed in the battle and no one else was capable of these. This was the outcome of yoga. Those on your side, who were knowledgeable about yoga, honoured this. Whatever weapon Drona used, Satyaki used that as well. Therefore, the preceptor, the scorcher of enemies, fought carefully. O great king! The one who knew about the science of fighting became enraged. To slay Yuyudhana, he invoked a divine weapon. On seeing the extremely terrible agneya weapon, the destroyer of enemies, the great archer, released the divine varuna weapon. On beholding that both of them had resorted to the use of divine weapons, a great sound of lamentation arose. There were woes in the sky, from the beings who had taken to the sky. However, the varuna and agneya weapons were pacified when they confronted each other's arrows.

'"At that time, the sun began its downward course in the sky. King Yudhishthira, Pandava Bhimasena and Nakula and Sahadeva wished to protect Satyaki. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, Virata, the Kekayas, the Matsyas and the soldiers from the Shalveyas quickly advanced against Drona. With Duhshasana at the forefront, thousands of princes advanced towards Drona, who was surrounded by the enemy. O king! A battle started between them and your archers. The world was covered with dust and enveloped in that net of arrows. Everyone was anxious and nothing could be distinguished. The soldiers were covered in dust. But without any fear, the battle raged on."'

CHAPTER 1051(74)

'Sanjaya said, "When the sun was on a downward course, the force of the sun's rays became less and everything was covered in dust. Some soldiers relaxed their efforts. Some remained there. Others returned and fought again, hoping for victory. Where the soldiers were thus engaged, striving for victory, Arjuna and Vasudeva slowly advanced towards Saindhava. With his sharp arrows, Kounteya created a path that was just sufficient for the chariot. And in this way, Janardana followed along that path. O lord of the earth! Wherever the great-souled Pandava's chariot advanced, your soldiers were shattered and routed there. The valiant Dasharha displayed his skills in driving the chariot. He exhibited circular motions that were superior, medium and inferior.[105] The arrows were marked with his name and were yellow.[106] They flamed like the fire of destruction. They were tied with ligaments.[107] They had well-crafted joints, were broad and could travel long distances. Those arrows were made out of bamboo and iron. They were both similar and diverse. In that battle, together with the birds,[108] they drank the blood of beings. As he was stationed on his chariot, Arjuna shot his arrows at a distance of one krosha. Though the chariot advanced one krosha ahead, those arrows killed the enemy. Hrishikesha advanced and caused the entire universe to marvel. The well-trained horses possessed a speed like that of Tarkshya[109] or the wind. O lord of the earth! It advanced with a speed that the sun's chariot, or that of Indra, Rudra or Vaishravana, could not muster. O king! Never had anyone's chariot moved that fast in a battle, as that of Arjuna, as fast as mind or desire. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, Keshava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, urged the swift horses and penetrated into the midst of the soldiers.

'"Those supreme horses arrived in the midst of that mass of chariots. They were overcome with hunger, thirst and exhaustion and bore the chariot with great difficulty. The horses were wounded with many weapons released by many violent warriors. However, they[110] executed diverse circular motions, as they crossed over destroyed horses, elephants, chariots and men, lying down in thousands, like mountains. O king! Meanwhile, the two brave brothers from Avanti saw that Pandava's horses were tired and suddenly attacked him. They pierced Arjuna with sixty-four arrows, Janardana with seventy and the horses with one hundred and were delighted. O great king! In that battle, Arjuna became angry. He knew about the inner organs and used nine arrows with drooping tufts to strike them in the inner organs. At this, the two of them[111] became wrathful. They enveloped Bibhatsu and Keshava with a torrent of arrows and roared like lions. In the battle, the one with the white horses then used two broad-headed arrows to sever their colourful bows and swiftly sliced down their standards, which were bright as gold. O king! In that encounter, they then grasped other bows and, extremely angry, began to oppress Pandava with their arrows. At this, Dhananjaya, Pandu's son, became wrathful. He used a couple of arrows to quickly sever their bows again. He then swiftly used other arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. With these, he killed their horses, the two foot soldiers who guarded them and their parshni charioteers. With a kshurapra arrow, he severed the eldest one's[112] head from his body. Slain, he fell down on the ground, like a tree that has been destroyed by a storm. On seeing that Vinda had been killed, the powerful Anuvinda abandoned his chariot, with the horses having also been slain. The immensely strong one grasped a club. In the battle, remembering that his brother had been killed, he attacked. The maharatha was foremost among those who fought with the club and seemed to be dancing around with his club. The angry Anuvinda struck Madhusudana on the forehead with the club. But though he was thus struck, he did not tremble and was like Mount Mainaka. At this, Arjuna used six arrows to slice off his neck, his two legs, his two arms and his head. Thus severed, they fell down, like hills. O king! On seeing that those two had been killed, their followers were filled with rage and angrily attacked, releasing hundreds of arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But Arjuna quickly killed them with his arrows. He roamed around, like a consuming forest fire at the end of winter.

'"Dhananjaya passed over those soldiers with some difficulty. He was like a sun that has arisen, blazing through the clouds. On seeing him, the Kurus were frightened. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But they recovered and cheerfully attacked Partha from all directions. They knew that he was tired and they also knew that Saindhava was far away. They roared loudly like lions and surrounded him from all directions. On seeing that they were so enraged, Arjuna, bull among men, smiled. He softly spoke these words to Dasharha. ‘Our horses are oppressed by arrows and are exhausted. Saindhava is at a distance. What do you think is the best course of action now? What is your wish? O Krishna! Tell me exactly. You have always been the wisest. In this battle, with you as their eyes, the Pandavas will be victorious over the enemy. Let me tell you what I think we should do next. Listen to me. O Madhava! I think it is best to unyoke the horses. Remove their stakes.’ Having been thus addressed by Partha, Keshava replied, ‘O Partha! My view is identical to what you have expressed.’ Arjuna said, ‘O Keshava! I will repulse all the soldiers. You can properly perform the task that must be undertaken next.’ Dhananjaya got down from his chariot and stood there fearlessly. He held Gandiva bow and was stationed, as immobile as a mountain. The kshatriyas desired victory. On knowing that Dhananjaya was now stationed on the ground, they thought that this was a weakness. Roaring loudly, they attacked. They surrounded the solitary one with a large number of chariots. They stretched their bows and released arrows. They angrily displayed many different kinds of weapons. They covered Partha with arrows, like clouds enveloping the sun. The kshatriyas forcefully attacked that bull among the kshatriyas. He was a lion among rathas and those warriors attacked him, like crazy elephants attacking a lion. The great strength of Partha’s arms was then seen, since he angrily resisted a large number of soldiers surrounding him from every direction. The lord repulsed all the arms and weapons of the enemy. He quickly covered all of them with many arrows. O lord of the earth! The sky was dense with arrows. As a result of the friction, a giant fire with flames was ignited. The great archers sighed deeply and were covered with blood. Horses and elephants were shattered and roared in distress in all the directions. Desiring victory in the battle, those brave ones were angry and many of them wrathfully attacked the solitary one. The arrows were like waves.[113] The standards were the currents. The elephants were the crocodiles and it was impossible to traverse. The foot soldiers were the innumerable fish. There was the roar of conch shells and drums. There were many who crossed over to Yama and the dust was intolerable. The headdresses were strewn around like tortoises. The pennants were like garlands of foam. The chariots were like waves on the ocean. The limbs of elephants were like mountains. With his arrows, Partha repulsed it, like the shoreline.[114]

'"In the battle, the mighty-armed Janardana fearlessly addressed these words to his beloved Arjuna, supreme among men. 'O Arjuna! In this battle, there is no well for the horses to drink from. They desire water to drink, not to have a bath.' Having been thus addressed, Arjuna cheerfully replied, 'Here.' He struck the earth with a weapon and created a pure lake from which the horses could drink. Arrows were the bamboos there. Arrows were the pillars and it was covered with arrows. It was extraordinary. Partha created an abode made out of arrows and this extraordinary deed was like one of Tvashtra's.[115] At this, Govinda laughed and spoke words of praise. In that great battle, thus did Partha create a pavilion made out of arrows."'

CHAPTER 1052(75)

'Sanjaya said, "The great-souled Kounteya created the water. Having repulsed the enemy soldiers, he then created a pavilion made out of arrows. The immensely radiant Vasudeva quickly descended from the chariot. He freed the horses and removed the arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. On seeing a sight that had never been seen before, a giant roar, like that of lions, arose from the masses of siddhas and charanas and all the soldiers. Though Kounteya fought on foot, the bulls among men who fought against him could not counter him and it was wonderful. Large numbers of chariots and many elephants and horses descended on him. But Partha did not exhibit the slightest bit of fear towards these men. The kings released large numbers of arrows towards Pandava. But these did not afflict Vasava's son. He had dharma in his soul and was the destroyer of enemy heroes. The valiant Partha received those nets of arrows, clubs and lances, like the ocean receiving rivers. With the great force of his weapons and the strength of his arms, Partha countered the supreme arrows shot by all those Indras among kings. O great king! The Kouravas worshipped the supremely wonderful valour of Partha and Vasudeva. 'Has there ever been anything more wonderful in this world, or will there ever be, than the way in which Partha and Govinda freed their horses in this battle? Those supreme among men displayed great energy and great assurance in the forefront of the battle. They generated great fear in us.'[116] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hrishikesha began to smile, as if he was amidst women,[117] after Arjuna had crated a pavilion made out of arrows in that field of battle. O lord of the earth! While all the soldiers on your side looked on, the lotus-eyed one led the horses inside. Krishna was skilled in all acts connected with horses. He removed all their exhaustion, pain, trembling, nausea and wounds. He removed the stakes with his hands and rubbed the horses down. Having comforted them in due fashion, he made them drink the water. Having obtained water and having bathed, they were free of pain and exhaustion. He again cheerfully yoked them to that supreme of chariots. Shouri, supreme among those who wield all weapons, then mounted the chariot, together with the immensely energetic Arjuna, and they departed swiftly.

'"On seeing that the supreme of chariots had been yoked to horses that had obtained water, the best among the Kuru army again became distressed. O king! They sighed, like snakes that had been defanged. They separately said, 'Shame! Shame on us! While all the kshatriyas looked on, the armoured Partha and Krishna have passed us, on a single chariot. They have shattered our forces, like children playing with a toy. All the kings displayed their own valour. They shouted and made their best endeavours. But those scorchers of enemies have passed us, while we looked on.' On seeing that they had departed, other soldiers again said, 'O Kouravas! Let all of us make haste, so that we can kill Krishna and Kiriti. Dasharha has yoked his chariot while all the archers have looked on. Repulsing us in the battle, he is proceeding towards Jayadratha.' O king! There were some other lords of the earth who had seen a sight that had never before been seen in battle. On beholding that extraordinary wonder, they spoke to each other. ‘All these soldiers of King Dhritarashtra, the kshatriyas and the entire earth are in distress because of Duryodhana’s crime. They are confronting destruction. But the king[118] does not understand this.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the kshatriyas speak there. Others said, ‘The king of Sindhu has gone to Yama’s abode. Let Dhritarashtra’s weak-sighted son decide on what should be done now.’ Meanwhile, the one with the sharp rays was on a downward course and Pandava headed towards Saindhava with greater speed. The horses were cheerful, now that they had drunk water. As the mighty-armed one, supreme among the wielders of all weapons, proceeded angrily, like Death, none of the warriors were capable of resisting him. Pandava, the scorcher of enemies, drove away those soldiers, like a lion agitating a mass of deer, for the sake of Saindhava. Dasharha goaded the horses and swiftly penetrated the array. He blew on Panchajanya, which possessed the complexion of cranes. The arrows shot earlier by Kounteya began to fall behind him, so fast did those horses, with the speed of the wind, proceed. The chariot roared like the clouds and the standard fluttered in the wind. On seeing that terrible standard, with the monkey on it, the rathas were distressed. The sun was covered everywhere with dust. The warriors were severely afflicted with arrows in that battle and no one was capable of glancing at the two Krishnas.[119] Dhananjaya wished to kill Jayadratha. Many enraged kings and many other kshatriyas surrounded him. In that great battle, when Partha, bull among men, stopped to remove the arrows, Duryodhana swiftly followed him.”’

CHAPTER 1053(76)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! On seeing that Vasudeva and Dhananjaya had penetrated, the kings on your side were immersed in fear. All of those great-souled ones were both angry and ashamed and were immobile. But having been urged by their spirits, they proceeded towards Dhananjaya. However, those who were driven by anger and intolerance and went to fight with Pandava did not return, like rivers heading towards the ocean.

Those who were not virtuous fled, like atheists turning away from the Vedas. They committed sins and served the cause of hell. Those two bulls among men crossed over and freed themselves from that array of chariots and could be seen, like the sun and the moon freed from Rahu's mouth.[120] They were like fish that had broken through a large net and were now devoid of fever. Thus did the two Krishnas look, after having broken through that net of soldiers. They freed themselves from Drona's extremely impenetrable array, obstructed by weapons. Those great-souled ones were seen, like suns that had arisen at the end of a yuga. They were liberated from that obstruction of weapons and freed from that danger of weapons. Those great-souled ones could now be seen, creating obstructions for the enemy. It was as if they had been freed from the touch of a fire, or like fish freed from the mouth of a makara. Instead, those two agitated the soldiers, like a couple of makaras in the ocean. When they were stationed inside Drona's array, those on your side and your sons had held the view that they would not be able to cross beyond Drona. O great king! On seeing that those two immensely radiant ones had passed beyond Drona's array, they were no longer assured about the king of Sindhu remaining alive. O king! O lord! Earlier, your sons had possessed the strong hope that the two Krishnas would not be able to free themselves from Drona and Hardikya. O great king! But negating those hopes, those two scorchers of enemies passed beyond Drona's array and Bhoja's impenetrable array. Having crossed, they were seen to be like blazing fires. Everyone was driven to despair and was certain that the king of Sindhu would no longer remain alive.

'"Krishna and Dhananjaya began to fearlessly converse among themselves about Jayadratha's slaying, thus increasing the terror of the enemy. 'He has been placed in the midst of six maharathas from the side of Dhritarashtra. But once he is seen, Saindhava will not escape us. Even if he is protected in the battle by Shakra and the masses of gods, I will still kill him.' This is what he[121] told Krishna. Thus did the two mighty-armed Krishnas converse with each other, while looking for the king of Sindhu. Your sons heard this. They were like two thirsty elephants that had passed through a desert and were now assured after having drunk water. Those two scorchers of enemies seemed to have crossed over mountains infested by tigers, lions and elephants. Those mighty-armed ones seemed to have overcome death and disease. On seeing that those two had been freed, all those on your side shrieked and thought that the complexion on their faces[122] was terrible. They had been freed from Drona, who was like a virulent serpent, or as if from a blazing fire, and also from the other kings. They were as radiant as two suns. Those two scorchers of enemies had been freed from Drona's array, which was like an ocean. They were seen to be extremely delighted, like those who had crossed a sea. They had been freed from a great shower of weapons, protected by Drona and Hardikya. They were seen to be blazing in that battle, like Indra or Agni. Because of the sharp arrows of Bharadvaja's son, there was blood on the two Krishnas and they were as beautiful as mountains with karnikara trees. They had crossed over a lake in which Drona was the crocodile, lances were virulent serpents, iron arrows were makaras and kshatriyas were the deep water. They had been freed from the cloud that was Drona's weapons, where thunder was the twang of bowstrings and the slapping of palms and clubs and swords were the lightning. They were like the sun and the moon, freed of darkness. With their arms, they had swum across the six rivers that head to the ocean,[123] at the end of the summer, when the waters are overflowing and are also infested with giant crocodiles. The two Krishnas were great archers and their renown was famous in the world. But all the beings were astounded at their having withstood the strength of Drona's weapons.

'"Having approached, they looked around for Jayadratha, driven by the desire to kill. They looked like two tigers who wished to descend on *ruru* deer. O great king! Such was the complexion on their faces that all your warriors thought that Jayadratha had already been slain. The mighty-armed Krishna and Pandava were together and their eyes were coppery red. They were delighted on seeing the king of Sindhu and roared repeatedly. The resplendence of Shouri with the reins and Partha with the bow was like that of the sun or the fire. They were delighted at having been freed from Drona’s array and at having seen that Saindhava was nearby, like two hawks at the sight of meat. On seeing that Saindhava was present nearby, they were like two hawks at the sight of meat. They descended, swiftly, angrily and suddenly.

‘“Having seen that Hrishikesha and Dhananjaya had crossed,[124] your valiant son, King Duryodhana, wished to protect the king of Sindhu. O lord! He had the armour that Drona had fastened on him. He was skilled in handling horses and rushed on a single chariot. Your son overtook the great archers, Krishna and Partha.[125] O lord of men! Having gone on ahead, he turned and faced Pundarikaksha. At this, all the soldiers delightedly sounded musical instruments, since your son had overtaken Dhananjaya. There were roars like lions, mixed with sounds of conch shells and drums, on seeing that Duryodhana was stationed there, in front of the two Krishnas. O lord! There were also those, like fires, who had been assigned to protect the king of Sindhu. In that battle, they were also delighted to see your son. O king! On seeing that Duryodhana and his followers had crossed them, Krishna spoke these words, which were appropriate for the occasion, to Arjuna.”’

'"Vasudeva said, 'O Dhananjaya! Behold. Suyodhana has overtaken us. I think that this is marvellous and there is no ratha like him. The great archer can shoot up to a great distance. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is invincible in battle. He is firm in wielding weapons and is colourful in fighting. Dhritrarashtra's son is extremely strong. He has been reared in great happiness, but is honoured by the maharathas. O Partha! He has always been accomplished, but he has always hated the Pandavas. O unblemished one! Therefore, I think that the time has come for you to fight with him. Like the stake in a gambling match, on him rests victory, or its reverse. O Partha! Release the venom of your anger here, which you have bottled up for a long time. This maharatha is the main source of the injury to the Pandavas. He is now within striking distance. See that you are successful. This king desires the kingdom. That is why he has come to fight with you. It is through good fortune that he has now arrived within the reach of your arrows. O Dhananjaya! Act so that he is deprived of his life. He is intoxicated and deluded because of his prosperity. He has never suffered from unhappiness. O bull among men! Nor does he know your valour in battle. O Partha! There is no one in the three worlds, gods, asuras or men, who can withstand you and vanquish you in battle, not to speak of Suyodhana alone. O Partha! It is through good fortune that he has come near your chariot. O mighty-armed one! Kill him, like Purandara against Vritra. O unblemished one! This powerful one has always sought to cause you injury. Through deceit, he cheated Dharmaraja in the gambling match. O one who grants honours! He has performed many extremely cruel deeds towards him. Fight with this evil-minded one. You have never set your mind on evil. You have always been noble. This inferior man has been addicted to kama. O Partha! Set your mind on fighting nobly and without reflecting on it, kill him. O Pandava! He deceitfully robbed the kingdom and sent you on an exile to the forest. He caused oppression to Krishna.[126] Remember those in your heart and act valorously. It is through good fortune that he is circling around, within the range of your arrows. It is through good fortune that he is in front of you and is trying to act against you. He knows that it is through good fortune that he has to fight against you in the battle. O Partha! It is through good fortune that you will be successful in everything that is desired by you. O Partha! Therefore, in this battle, kill Dhritarashtra's son, the wretch of the lineage, just as in earlier times, in the battle between the gods and the asuras, Indra killed Jambha. If you kill him, the soldiers[127] will be without a protector and you can penetrate them. Sever the root of these evil-souled ones and let the *avabhritha* of this enmity be completed.'"[128]

'Sanjaya said, "Having been thus addressed, Partha replied, 'I will do everything accordingly. Ignore everything else and go to the spot where Suyodhana is. He has enjoyed the kingdom for a very long time, without any thorns. Exhibiting my valour in fighting, I will slice off his head in the battle. O Madhava! Though she did not deserve it, he caused oppression to Krishna. She was dragged by the hair. Will I now be successful in avenging this?' The two Krishnas talked to each other in this way. Borne on the best of white horses, they urged them in the battle, looking for the wicked one. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O venerable one! Having approached them, your son was not the least bit frightened, though there was reason for great fear. At this, all the kshatriyas on your side honoured him, because he advanced against Arjuna and Hrishikesha, desiring to repulse them. O lord of the earth! On seeing the king in that battle, a great sound arose from all the soldiers on your side. As that great and terrible sound arose, your son countered and checked them. Obstructed by your son, Kounteya became extremely angry and so did that scorcher of enemies.[129] On seeing that Duryodhana and Dhananjaya were angry with each other, all the kings, terrible in form, surrounded them from all sides. O venerable one! On seeing that Partha and Vasudeva were enraged, your son laughed and wishing to fight, challenged them. Dasharha was delighted at this and so was Pandava Dhananjaya. They let out loud roars and blew on their excellent conch shells.[130] On seeing that the two of them were so cheerful, all the Kouravas gave up any hope of your son remaining alive.

All the Kurus, and some among the enemy, began to sorrow. They thought that your son had already been offered as an oblation into the fire. The warriors saw that Krishna and Pandava were delighted. Afflicted with fear, they exclaimed, 'The king has been slain. The king has been slain.' On hearing the roars of the men, Duryodhana said, 'Dispel your fears. I will send the two Krishnas to the land of the dead.' Having spoken thus to all the soldiers, the king expected to be victorious. He angrily addressed Partha and spoke these words. 'O Partha! If you have actually been born from Pandu, quickly show me your weapons, divine and human. Show me your strength and your valour, and also that of Keshava. Act swiftly against me and show me your manliness. They have spoken about deeds you have done, but we have not seen them. They have been regarded as deeds of valour. Show them to me.'"'

CHAPTER 1055(78)

'Sanjaya said, "Having said this, the king pierced Arjuna with three arrows that penetrated the inner organs. With another four extremely forceful arrows, he pierced his four horses. He pierced Vasudeva between the breasts with ten arrows and with another broad-headed arrow, severed the whip, so that it fell down on the ground. Partha quickly struck him, without being distracted, with fourteen arrows that had been sharpened on stone and were colourfully tufted. But those were neutralized by the armour. On seeing that those were unsuccessful, he[131] again struck him with fourteen sharp arrows. But these were also neutralized by the armour. On seeing that twenty-eight of his arrows had become unsuccessful, Krishna, the destroyer of enemy heroes, spoke these words to Arjuna. 'I have never seen anything like this before. It is as if boulders have begun to move. O Partha! Arrows shot by you are bcoming unsuccessful. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Has Gandiva lost its life? Is the grasp of your fist and the strength of your arms not what it used to be earlier? Is this not the time for your final encounter with your enemy? Tell me. I am asking you. O Partha! In the battle, I am amazed at seeing that all your arrows are unsuccessful and are falling down in front of Duryodhana’s chariot. They are as terrible as the vajra or thunder. They penetrate the bodies of enemies. But those arrows are becoming unsuccessful. O Partha! What mockery is this now!’

‘“Arjuna replied, ‘O Krishna! It is my view that Dhritarashtra’s son has sought refuge with Drona and he has fastened this weapon, so that the weapons are unsuccessful. O Krishna! This armour possesses the essence of the three worlds. Drona alone knows this. And I have learnt it from that excellent one. My arrows are incapable of penetrating this armour. O Govinda! Maghavan himself cannot shatter it with his vajra. O Krishna! Knowing this, why are you trying to confuse me? O Keshava! You know everything that goes on in the three worlds. You know everything about what will happen in the future. O Madhusudana! No one else knows it as well as you do. O Krishna! This Duryodhana has been prepared by Drona and is stationed fearlessly in this battle, having donned the armour. O Madhava! But he does not know something about the appropriate course of action. He has only donned the armour like a woman. O Janardana! Witness the valour of my arms and my bow. I will defeat Kouravya, although he is protected by the armour. The lord of the gods gave this radiant armour to Angiras. The lord of the gods again gave me the armour, with the understanding that goes with it.[132] Even if this armour is divine and even if it has been created by Brahma himself, the evil-minded one will be pierced by my arrows today and will not be protected by it.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “Having said this, Arjuna invoked some arrows with mantras and fixed them. He affixed those arrows on the bow and stretched it. But Drona’s son cut them down with a weapon that was capable of destroying all weapons. The one with the white horses was astounded at the sight of the one who knew about the brahman[133] making those arrows unsuccessful from a distance. He told Keshava, ‘O Janardana! I am incapable of releasing this weapon a second time. If I do that, the weapon will kill those on our own side. But behold my power today.’ O king! Meanwhile, in that battle, Duryodhana pierced each of the two Krishnas with nine arrows that had drooping tufts and were like virulent serpents. In that encounter, he again showered down arrows on Krishna and Pandava. At this great shower of arrows, those on your side were delighted. They roared like lions and sounded their musical instruments. At this, Partha became enraged in that battle and licked the corners of his mouth. He did not see any part of the body that was not protected by the armour. He released some well-directed and sharp arrows that were like death. These killed his[134] horses and the two charioteers who guarded his flanks.[135] The valiant Savyasachi severed his colourful bow, the leather guards on his hands and shattered his chariot into fragments. With sharp arrows, he deprived Duryodhana of his chariot. Arjuna then pierced both his palms. On seeing that the supreme archer was in such great difficulty and was afflicted by Dhananjaya's arrows, many rushed there to save him.

'"There were many thousands of chariots and elephants and horses that had been readied. There were angry warriors on foot and they surrounded Dhananjaya. Arjuna, Govinda, or the chariot could no longer be seen. That mass of men surrounded them and brought down a giant shower of weapons. But Arjuna slew those troops with the valour of his weapons. Hundreds of rathas and elephants fell down, deprived of their limbs. They were killed, or were being killed, and could not reach that supreme chariot.[136] That chariot was stationed one krosha away in every direction.[137]

'"Quickly, the hero of the Vrishni lineage then spoke these words to Arjuna. 'Stretch Gandiva with force and I will blow on my conch shell.' Arjuna drew Gandiva with force and began to slaughter the enemy again. He brought down a mighty shower of arrows and there was a slapping sound from his palms. Keshava powerfully blew a loud note on Panchajanya, his eyelashes covered with dust and his face sweating profusely. At the roar of the conch shell and the sound of the bow, the men, whether they were spirited or dispirited, fell down on the ground. Arjuna's chariot was freed from the melee, like a cloud driven by the wind. Those who were protecting Jayadratha, and their followers, became disturbed. The ones who were protecting Saindhava suddenly saw Partha. They roared loudly, in many ways, and made the earth tremble. The sound of their arrows mixed with other fierce sounds and the blare of conch shells. Those great-souled ones roared like lions. On hearing the terrible noise raised by those on your side, Vasudeva and Dhananjaya blew on their conch shells. O lord of the earth! That great sound filled the earth, with its mountains, oceans, islands and the nether regions. O best of the Bharata lineage! That sound filled all the ten directions and echoed there, from the Kuru and Pandava forces. The rathas on your side saw Krishna and Dhananjaya and were frightened. But the maharathas quickly regained their spirits. Having seen the immensely fortunate Krishnas, those on your side armoured themselves and angrily attacked. It was wonderful."'

CHAPTER 1056(79)

'Sanjaya said, "Those on your side beheld the supreme ones from the Vrishni-Andhaka and Kuru lineages. Each one desired to be the first to kill them and Vijaya also rushed against the enemy. The giant chariots were colourful, decorated in gold and tiger skins. They thundered and blazed in all the directions, like flaming fires. O lord of the earth! The handles of the bows were inlaid with gold and were difficult to look at. The chariots rumbled deeply and the horses that drew them were angry. Bhurishrava, Shala, Karna, Vrishasena, Jayadratha, Kripa, the ruler of Madra and Drona's son, supreme among rathas—these eight maharathas seemed to devour the sky. They were armoured and angry. They blazed in the ten directions in chariots that roared like masses of clouds and were decorated with tiger skins and golden moons. From all directions, they enveloped Partha with sharp arrows. Colourful horses from good lineages bore those maharathas. They possessed great speed and illuminated the ten directions. These extremely swift and supreme horses came from many lineages and many countries. They were from mountainous and riverine regions and from Sindhu. O king! The best of warriors from among the Kurus wished to protect your son and swiftly dashed towards Dhananjaya's chariot from every direction. Those best of men grasped giant conch shells and blew on them. O king! They filled the sky, the earth and the oceans. Vasudeva and Dhananjaya, supreme among beings, also blew on their supreme conch shells, best among all the conch shells on earth. Kounteya's was Devadatta and Keshava's was Panchajanya. Sounded by Dhananjaya, there was a loud blast from Devadatta. It spread through the earth, the sky and the directions. Blown by Vasudeva, Panchajanya was also like that. It surpassed all sounds and filled heaven and earth.[138] There was thus a terrible and loud noise. It generated fear among cowards and increased the delight of those who were brave. O Indra among kings! Drums, tambourines, cymbals and other drums were sounded in large numbers. Those maharathas had been assembled for the sake of Duryodhana's welfare. Those supreme archers became angry and intolerant at this sound. There were kings from many countries, protected by their own soldiers. Those brave maharathas wished to answer Keshava and Arjuna's sound and intolerantly blew on their giant conch shells. Your soldiers were urged by the sound of those conch shells. O lord! The rathas, elephants and horses became anxious and seemed to be ill. Agitated by the sound of the conch shells blown by the brave ones, they became extremely anxious and were like the sky, agitated by a hurricane. O king! All the directions echoed with that great sound. It terrified the soldiers, as if the end of the yuga had arrived.

'"Duryodhana and the eight maharatha kings assigned to protect Jayadratha then surrounded Pandava.[139] Drona's son struck Vasudeva with seventy-three arrows, Arjuna with three broad-headed arrows and his standard and horses with five. Arjuna was extremely angry at Janardana having been struck and pierced Angiras's descendant back with a hundred arrows.[140] He pierced Karna with twelve arrows and Vrishasena with three. The valiant one then sliced down Shalya's bow and arrows from his hand. Having picked up another bow, Shalya pierced Pandava. Bhurishrava pierced him with three arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone, Karna with thirty-two and Vrishasena with five. Jayadratha pierced him with seventy-three arrows and Kripa with ten. In that battle, the lord of Madra pierced Phalguna with ten arrows. Drona’s son countered Partha with sixty arrows. Yet again, he pierced Vasudeva with seventy arrows and Partha with five. The tiger among men, the one with the white horses and with Krishna as his charioteer, laughed and pierced all of them back, displaying the dexterity of his hands. He pierced Karna with twelve arrows and Vrishasena with three. In that battle, he sliced down Shalya’s bow from his hand. He pierced Somadatta’s son with three arrows and Shalya with ten. He used eight arrows that were sharp and were like the flames of fires to pierce Drona’s son. He pierced Goutama with twenty-five and Saindhava with a hundred. He again struck Drona’s son with seventy arrows. Bhurishrava became angry and cut down Hari’s whip. He then struck Arjuna with seventy-three arrows. The one with the white horses became wrathful. He brought down hundreds of sharp arrows and struck them, like a mighty storm shredding clouds.”’

CHAPTER 1057(80)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! There were many resplendent standards of diverse forms, belonging to the Parthas and those on our side. Describe those to me.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Those great-souled ones possessed many different standards, of diverse forms. They had different forms, colours and names. Listen to me. The chariots of those foremost among rathas had many different kinds of standards. O Indra among kings! They were seen to blaze like fire. They were golden, decorated with gold, or garlanded with gold. They were like golden summits and like giant mountains made out of gold. Those standards were surrounded by pennants in every direction. These were of many different colours and hues and surrounded them everywhere. Those pennants were stirred by the wind. They were seen to be dancing around, like female dancers in an arena. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those pennants had the complexion of Indra’s weapon.[141] They stirred above the chariots and adorned the maharathas. There was a standard with the sign of an ape, as fierce as the face and tail of a lion.[142] This belonged to Dhananjaya and was seen to cause terror in battle. O king! The flag was adorned with the supreme of apes. Your soldiers were terrified by the standard of the wielder of Gandiva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, the top of the standard of Drona's son had the mark of a lion's tail and was seen to be as radiant as the rising sun. It was golden and fluttered in the wind. It was as resplendent as Shakra's standard. The standard of Drona's son arose high and delighted the Indras among the Kouravas. The standard of Adhiratha's son[143] had the mark of an elephant's housing that was fashioned in gold. O great king! It dazzled and in the battle, seemed to fill up the sky. In the battle, golden pennants and garlands were attached to Karna's standard. Stirred by the wind, they seemed to dance around on top of the chariot. The preceptor of the Pandus was the illustrious brahmana. Kripa, the son of Goutama, had a well-crafted bull on his.[144] O king! With the mark of the bull, the maharatha was resplendent, like the destroyer of Tripura is dazzling with the mark of the bull.[145] Vrishasena had a golden peacock, adorned with gems and jewels. Stationed there, it seemed to crow and adorn the front of the army. The great-souled one's chariot was dazzling with the peacock. O Indra among kings! It was like the resplendent Skanda aloft his peacock. Shalya, the king of Madra, possessed a beautiful golden image of a plough on the top of his standard and it was like the flame of a fire. O venerable one! The plough was luminescent on the top of his chariot. The plough was surrounded by prosperity, with every kind of seed sprouting from it. A silver boar adorned the top of the king of Sindhu's standard. It was decorated with golden nets and had the complexion of a bloodless crystal.[146] With that silver standard, Jayadratha looked beautiful, like Pusha was radiant in ancient times in the battle between the gods and the asuras.[147] Somadatta's intelligent son was devoted to sacrifices and his standard had the mark of a sacrificial stake and was seen to be as radiant as the sun or the moon. O king! Somadatta's son was dazzling with that golden sacrificial stake. It was like a sacrificial stake raised in *rajasuya*, the best of all sacrifices. O great king! Shala had a large silver elephant. The pennant was golden and colourful and was adorned with the sign of peacocks. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That pennant adorned your troops, like the giant white elephant adorns the army of the king of the gods.[148] There was a bejewelled elephant on the king's standard, which was decorated with gold.[149] It tinkled with the sound of one hundred bells and colourfully blazed on the supreme of chariots. O king! O lord of the earth! Your son, a bull among the Kurus, looked extremely resplendent with that large standard in the battle. These nine supreme standards arose in your army. They blazed amidst the forces, like the sun at the time of the destruction of a yuga.

'"The tenth standard was Arjuna's, marked with a giant ape. Arjuna blazed, like a fire on the Himalayas. The maharathas, scorchers of enemies, grasped colourful, bright and extremely large bows and swiftly advanced against Arjuna. Partha, the destroyer of enemies, also grasped the bow Gandiva, the performer of divine deeds. O king! All this happened because of your evil counsel. Because of your crimes, many men and many warriors were killed. They had been summoned from many directions, with horses, chariots and elephants. With Duryodhana at the forefront, there were these on one side and that bull among Pandus on the other. They roared at each other and the encounter began. Kounteya had Krishna as his charioteer and performed supreme and extraordinary deeds. Fearlessly, the single one advanced against the many. The mighty-armed one was resplendent when he stretched the bow Gandiva. The tiger among men wished to kill Jayadratha. O great king! Arjuna released thousands of arrows. That scorcher of enemies made the warriors on your side invisible. In that battle, all those maharathas, tigers among men, also showered down a cloud of arrows and made Partha invisible. On seeing that Arjuna, bull among the Kuru lineage, was thus covered through the hands of those lions among men, a great sound arose among the soldiers."'

CHAPTER 1058(81)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When Arjuna reached Saindhava and the Panchalas were enveloped by Bharadvaja’s son and clashed against the Kurus, what did they do?”

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! There was a battle in the afternoon and it made the body hair stand up. Drona was like the stake in the clash between the Panchalas and the Kurus. O venerable one! The Panchalas were cheerful in their minds and wished to kill Drona. They roared and showered down arrows. A tumultuous and terrible battle commenced between the Panchalas and the Kurus and it was like that between the gods and the asuras. With the Pandavas, all the Panchalas reached Drona’s chariot. Wishing to penetrate his array, they displayed great weapons. There were rathas stationed on their chariots and with medium speed,[150] they caused a tremor and reached up to Drona’s chariot. Brihatkshatra, the maharatha from the Kekayas, showered sharp arrows that were like the great Indra’s vajra and advanced. He was swiftly countered by the immensely illustrious Kshemadhurti, who showered hundreds and thousands of sharp arrows. Dhrishtaketu, bull among the Chedis and possessing great strength, quickly attacked Drona, like the great Indra against Shambara. On seeing him suddenly descend, like death with a gaping mouth, Viradhanva, the great archer, quickly countered him. O great king! Yudhishthira was stationed there, desiring victory, and he and his soldiers were repulsed by the valiant Drona. Nakula was skilled in battle and was valiant. O lord! As he advanced, your valorous son, Vikarna, countered him. Durmukha, the afflicter of enemies, repulsed the advancing Sahadeva with many thousand swift arrows. Vyaghradatta used extremely sharp and pointed arrows to repeatedly make Satyaki, tiger among men, tremble. Droupadi’s sons, tigers among men, angrily released supreme arrows. But those best of rathas were repulsed by Somadatta’s son. Bhimasena advanced wrathfully. But he was countered by Rishyashringa’s maharatha son, who was fierce and terrible of form.[151] O king! In the battle, the encounter that took place between the man and the rakshasa was like that between Rama and Ravana in ancient times.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yudhishthira, foremost among the Bharata lineage, struck Drona with ninety arrows with drooping tufts and these penetrated all the inner organs. At this, Drona became angry and struck the illustrious Kounteya, foremost among the Bharata lineage, between the breasts with twenty-five arrows. While all the archers looked on, Drona again struck him, his horses, his charioteer and his standard with twenty arrows. However, Pandava, with dharma in his soul, showed the dexterity of his hands and countered Drona's arrows with a shower of arrows of his own. The archer Drona became extremely enraged in that battle. He suddenly severed the bow of the great-souled Dharmaraja. Having severed the bow, the maharatha swiftly covered him everywhere with many thousands of arrows. All those there saw that King Yudhishthira had been rendered invisible because of the arrows of Bharadvaja's son and thought that he had been killed. Some others thought that he had run away. O Indra among kings! They said, 'The king has been slain by the illustrious brahmana.' Dharmaraja Yudhishthira thus confronted a great hardship. He cast aside the bow that had been severed by Bharadvaja's son in the battle and grasped another divine bow that was capable of bearing a great burden and was more forceful. In that encounter, the brave one sliced down all the thousands of arrows that had been released by Drona and it was extraordinary. Having severed the arrows, the king's eyes became red with rage. In that battle, he grasped a lance that was capable of shattering the mountains. It was extremely terrible and fierce. It possessed a golden handle and was decorated with eight bells. The extremely powerful one roared cheerfully and hurled it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the beings screamed in terror. On seeing the lance raised by Dharmaraja in that battle, all the beings suddenly exclaimed, 'May all be well with Drona.' Hurled from the king's arms, it was like a snake that had cast off its skin. It blazed in the sky and in the directions and the sub-directions. It was like a she-serpent with a flaming mouth and it was as if Drona confronted death. O lord of the earth! On seeing it suddenly descend, Drona, supreme among those who knew about weapons, released the brahmastra. That weapon reduced the terrible-looking lance to ashes and then quickly advanced towards the chariot of the illustrious Pandava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Drona's weapon advanced, the immensely wise King Yudhishthira used a brahmastra to pacify it. In that battle, he then pierced Drona with five arrows with drooping tufts and used a sharp kshurapra arrow to severe his great bow. O venerable one! Drona, the destroyer of kshatriyas, cast aside the severed bow and suddenly hurled a club at Dharma's son. On seeing that the club was powerfully descending, Yudhishthira, the scorcher of enemies, became angry and grasped a club. Those two clubs were powerfully hurled towards each other. They countered each other and emitted sparks because of the collision. They then fell down on the ground. O venerable one! Drona became extremely angry with Dharmaraja. He used four extremely sharp and supreme arrows to kill his horses. With another arrow, he severed his bow, which was like Indra's standard. He severed Pandava's standard and struck him with three arrows. With the horse slain, Yudhishthira quickly descended from the chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The king stood there, with his arms raised and without any weapons. O lord! On seeing that he was without a chariot, and specifically without any weapons, Drona confounded the enemy and all the soldiers. Displaying the dexterity of his hands, the one who was firm in his vows released large numbers of sharp arrows and advanced against the king, like an angry lion towards a deer.[152] On seeing that Drona, the destroyer of enemies, was advancing, sudden sounds of lamentation arose from the assembled Pandavas. O venerable one! 'The king has been slain. The king has been slain by Bharadvaja's son.' These and other loud noises arose from all the Pandu soldiers. But the king ascended Sahadeva's chariot. Those swift horses bore Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, away."'

CHAPTER 1059(82)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Kshemadhurti used his arrows to pierce Brihatkshatra of the Kekayas, firm in his valour, in the chest. King Brihatkshatra wished to penetrate Drona's array and swiftly struck him in that battle with ninety arrows with drooping tufts. Kshemadhurti became angry. He used a yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever the bow of the great-souled Kekaya. Having severed his bow, he then used an arrow with drooping tufts to quickly pierce that supreme of archers in the chest. Brihatkshatra laughed and took up another bow. He deprived maharatha Kshemadhurti of his horses, charioteer and standard. He then used another yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever the king's head, with its blazing earrings, from the body.[153] That head, with its curly hair and crown, was suddenly lopped off and fell down on the ground, as resplendent as a stellar body dislodged from the sky. On seeing that he had been slain in the battle, maharatha Brihatkshatra was delighted. For the sake of the Parthas, he descended powerfully on your soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great archer Viradhanva countered the powerful Dhrishtaketu, who was advancing against Drona. Those two spirited ones clashed against each other and seemed to possess arrows as their teeth. Wishing to kill each other, they struck each other with many thousand arrows. Those two tigers among men fought with each other, like two leaders of elephant herds, fierce and crazy, fighting with each other in a great forest. They were like angry tigers in a mountainous cavern. Wishing to kill each other, those immensely valorous ones fought. O lord of the earth! The battle was tumultuous and worth watching. Masses of siddhas and charanas witnessed the extraordinary wonder. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The angry Viradhanva laughed and used a broad-headed arrow to sever Dhrishtaketu's bow into two. The maharatha king of Chedi discarded the severed bow. He grasped a large iron spear that possessed a golden handle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The immensely valorous one suddenly hurled this towards Viradhanva's chariot. That spear was one that could kill heroes. Struck by it, he was severely hurt and with his heart shattered powerfully, fell down from the chariot onto the ground. O lord! When the brave maharatha from Trigarta was killed, the Pandaveyas shattered your army from every direction.

'"Durmukha shot sixty arrows at Sahadeva. He roared loudly with that great roar, challenged Pandava to do battle. Madri's son became angry and laughingly, pierced Durmukha with ten arrows. Brother fought against brother. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the immensely strong Sahadeva was fighting violently in the batte, Durmukha struck him with nine arrows. However, the immensely strong one[154] used a broad-headed arrow to sever Durmukha's standard and then used four sharp arrows to slay his four horses. He then used another yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever his charioteer's head, with blazing earrings, from his body. He used a sharp kshurapra arrow to slice down Kouravya's giant bow. Having severed it in the battle, Sahadeva then pierced him with five arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! With his horses slain, Durmukha was distressed. He abandoned his chariot and climbed onto Niramitra's chariot. In that great battle, in the midst of those soldiers, Sahadeva, the destroyer of enemy heroes, used a broad-headed arrow to angrily slay Niramitra. Niramitra, the lord of men and the son of the king of Trigarta, fell down from the seat of his chariot and this caused sorrow to your forces. Having killed him, mighty-armed Sahadeva roamed around, like Rama, Dasharatha's son, after having killed the immensely strong Khara.[155] O lord of men! On seeing that the immensely strong Prince Niramitra had been slain, great sounds of lamentation arose among the Trigartas.

'"O king! In that battle, in an instant, Nakula vanquished Vikarna, your son with the large eyes. It was extraordinary. Vyaghradatta struck Satyaki with arrows that had drooping tufts. In the midst of the soldiers, he rendered him, his horses, his charioteer and his standard invisible. But Shini's brave descendant showed the dexterity of his hands and countered those arrows. He used his arrows to bring down Vyaghradatta, his horses, his charioteer and his standard. O lord! On seeing that the prince, the son of Magadha, had been killed, all the Magadhas made efforts and attacked Yuyudhana from every direction. They released thousands of arrows and javelins, catapults, spikes, clubs and maces. In the encounter, the brave ones fought with Satvata, who was invincible in battle. Satyaki, powerful and invincible in battle, laughed and without any difficulty, repulsed all of them. The bull among men vanquished them. On seeing that the Magadhas had been routed, the few that were left ran away in every direction. O lord! Your army was afflicted with Yuyudhana’s arrows. The supreme of the Madhava lineage destroyed your soldiers in that battle. The greatly illustrious one, supreme among archers, brandished his bow and was resplendent. O king! The army was shattered by the great-souled Satvata. Terrified of the long-armed one, no one advanced against him in that battle. Drona became extremely angry and rolled his eyes in anger. He himself advanced against Satyaki, whose deeds were based on truth.”’

CHAPTER 1060(83)

‘Sanjaya said, “Somadatta’s immensely illustrious son pierced each of Droupadi’s sons, great archers, with five arrows each and then struck them again with seven arrows more. O lord! They were sorely afflicted by the force of that terrible warrior. In that battle, they were stupefied and for some time, did not know what they should do. Shatanika, Nakula’s son and the scorcher of enemies, used two arrows to pierce Somadatta’s son, bull among men, and roared in delight. In that battle, the others[156] also made efforts and struck Somadatta’s intolerant son with three arrows each. O great king! He shot five arrows at them and struck each of those immensely illustrious ones in the heart with an arrow. Those five great-souled brothers were struck by the arrows. They surrounded the brave ratha and pierced him severely with arrows. Arjuna’s son used four sharp arrows to angrily slay his horses and dispatched them to Yama’s abode. Bhimasena’s son severed the bow of Somadatta’s great-souled son. He roared powerfully and pierced him with sharp arrows. Yudhishthira’s son sliced his standard and brought it down on the ground. Nakula’s son brought down his charioteer from the seat on the chariot. O king! On ascertaining that he had been forced to retreat by his brothers, Sahadeva’s son used a kshurapra arrow to sever the great-minded one’s head.[157] That head, adorned with gold, fell down on the ground. It was resplendent on the field of battle, with a complexion like that of the rising sun. O king! On seeing that the head of Somadatta's great-souled son had been brought down, all those on your side were terrified and fled in different directions.

'"In that battle, Alambusa angrily fought against the immensely strong Bhimasena, like Lakshmana against Ravana's son.[158] All the beings were astounded and delighted at the battle between the man and the rakshasa. O king! Bhima laughed and pierced Rishyashringa's intolerant son, Indra among rakshasas, with nine sharp arrows. Pierced in the battle, the rakshasa let out a mighty roar and he and his followers attacked Bhima. He pierced Bhima with five arrows that had drooping tufts. In that battle, the scorcher of enemies quickly destroyed thirty rathas who were following Bhima. He slew four hundred more and pierced Bhima with arrows. Having been thus pierced by the immensely strong rakshasa, Bhima sat down on the floor of his chariot. He lost his senses. When he recovered his senses, the son of the wind god was overcome by great rage. He stretched his terrible and supreme bow, which was capable of bearing a great burden. He struck Alambusha all over the body with sharp arrows. O king! He was like a large mass of collyrium and pierced by these many arrows all over his body, looked as beautiful as a kimshuka. He was struck in the battle by those arrows that had been released from Bhima's bow and remembered how his brother had been killed by the great-souled Pandava. He assumed a terrible form and addressed Bhimasena. 'O Partha! Wait for a while in this battle and witness my valour today. O extremely evil one! The powerful Baka, supreme among rakshasas, was my brother. It is true that you killed him, but that happened when I did not see it.' Having thus spoken to Bhima, he disappeared and enveloped him with a great and severe shower of arrows. O king! When the rakshasa became invisible in that battle, Bhima covered the sky with his straight-tufted arrows. Thus struck by Bhima, he instantly returned to his chariot. He entered deep inside the earth and suddenly rose up into the sky. He adopted many different kinds of forms, some large and some small. From above, he showered down many different kinds of words in every direction. Many Pandava soldiers died.[159] O king! So did fighting elephants, many horses and foot soldiers. Because of those arrows, rathas were brought down in their chariots. A river of blood began to flow and the chariots were eddies. It was infested by crocodiles in the form of elephants. The umbrellas were the swans. It was full of mud.[160] The arms[161] were like serpents. That river began to flow and was populated by large numbers of rakshasas. O king! It flowed and bore along many Chedis, Panchalas and Srinjayas. O king! Thus did he fearlessly roam around in that battle. The Pandavas became extremely anxious at witnessing his valour. The hearts of your soldiers became full of joy. Musical instruments were sounded in fierce and extremely loud tones and this made the body hair stand up. On hearing the terrible sound emitted by your soldiers, the Pandavas could not tolerate it, just as a snake cannot bear the slapping of palms.

'"Bhimasena's eyes became coppery red in anger and they seemed to consume, like the fire. O venerable one! In the battle, he released the weapon known as *tvashtra*, as if it had been released by Tvashtra himself. From that, thousands of arrows were produced in every direction. Because of those arrows, your soldiers were severely routed. It destroyed the great maya created by the rakshasa and also afflicted the rakshasa. Thus, the rakshasa was struck in many parts of his body by Bhimasena. He abandoned that encounter with Bhima and fled towards Drona's array. O king! When that Indra among rakshasas was vanquished by the great-souled one, the Pandavas roared like lions and made all the directions resound. They delightedly honoured the wind god's immensely strong son, like the masses of Maruts worshipping Shakra after he had vanquished Prahlada in battle."'[162]

CHAPTER 1061(84)

'Sanjaya said, "Alambusa fearlessly roamed around in the field of battle.[163] Hidimba's son[164] attacked him and powerfully struck him with sharp arrows. The battle that commenced between those lions among rakshasas caused great terror. They invoked many different kinds of maya, like Shakra and Shambara. Alambusa was extremely angry and struck Ghatotkacha. Ghatotkacha pierced Alambusa between the breasts with twenty iron arrows and repeatedly roared like a lion. O king! In that way, Alambusa also repeatedly pierced Hidimba's son, who was invincible in battle and filled the sky with his roars. Those two immensely strong Indras among the rakshasas were extremely enraged. They fought and used maya against each other, but neither surpassed the other. They insolently created a hundred different kinds of maya and confounded each other. They were extremely skilled in fighting with maya and one's maya was countered by the other one's. O king! Whatever maya was used by Ghatotkacha in that battle, was destroyed by Alambusa's maya. O king! On seeing Alambusa, skilled in fighting with maya, fight in this way, the Pandavas were extremely enraged. O king! Having been thus greatly enraged, all those supreme rathas, Bhimasena and the others, attacked and surrounded him. O venerable one! They penned him in with a large number of chariots. They surrounded him with arrows from every direction, like torches against an elephant.[165] He countered their weapons with the maya of his own weapons. He freed himself from those roaming rathas, like an elephant from a forest fire. He stretched his terrible bow, which had a roar like that of Indra's vajra. He pierced the son of the wind god with twenty-five arrows and Bhimasena's son with five. He pierced Yudhishthira with three arrows, Sahadeva with seven and Nakula with seventy-three. O venerable one! He pierced each of Droupadi's five sons with five arrows and roared terribly. Bhimsena pierced the rakshasa back with nine arrows, Sahadeva with five, Yudhishthira with one hundred, Nakula with sixty-four and each of Droupadi's sons with three arrows. In that encounter, Hidimba's son pierced the rakshasa with five hundred arrows. The immensely strong one pierced him back with seventy and roared like a lion. Having been pierced from every direction by those maharathas, the great archer pierced each of them back with five arrows.

'"O foremost among the Bharata lineage! In that battle, the rakshasa who was Hidimba's son became enraged with the other wrathful rakshasa and pierced him with seventy arrows. Severely and powerfully pierced, the immensely strong Indra among the rakshasas swiftly showered arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. Those straight-tufted arrows penetrated the rakshasa,[166] like angry and immensely strong serpents penetrating a mountain top. O king! The Pandavas released sharp arrows from every direction. In that battle, Ghatotkacha, Hidimba's son, desired the victory of the Pandavas and became anxious. He[167] was like a burnt mountain summit, or like a broken mass of collyrium. He raised him up in his arms and whirled him around repeatedly.[168] He crused him powerfully down on the ground, like an earthen pot dashed against a rock. He[169] possessed strength and dexterity. He also possessed valour. In that battle, Bhimasena's enraged son terrified all the soldiers. All his[170] limbs were mangled. His bones and ornaments were shattered. He was slain by the brave Ghatotkacha, like the twisted wood of a shala tree. On seeing that the traveller of the night had been killed, the Parthas were delighted. They roared like lions and waved their garments around. O bull among Bharatas! On seeing that Alambusa, terrible in form and the immensely strong Indra among the rakshasas had been killed and shattered like a mountain, the soldiers on your side uttered sounds of lamentation. Curious people assembled to see the rakshasa's body, which was lying on the ground, like a lump of charcoal. Having killed the supremely strong one, the rakshasa Ghatotkacha roared loudly, like Vasava after slaying Bala. Having performed this extremely difficult deed, Ghatotkacha was honoured by his fathers and their relatives. He was delighted that the enemy Alambusa had been slain, like a ripe *alambusa* fruit.[171] A great sound arose.[172] There was the sound of many different kinds of conch shells and the noise of arrows. Having heard this, the Kouravas roared back in return and this fierce sound seemed to touch the entire earth."'

CHAPTER 1062(85)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! In that battle, tell me how Yuyudhana countered Bharadvaja's son. I am extremely curious to hear the details."

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! O immensely intelligent one! Listen. That encounter between Drona and the Pandavas, with Yuyudhana at the forefront, made the body hair stand up. O venerable one! On seeing that the army had been slaughtered by Yuyudhana, Drona himself advanced against Satyaki, for whom, truth was his valour. On seeing the maharatha who was Bharadvaja’s son suddenly descend, Satyaki pierced him with twenty-five *kshudraka* arrows. Drona was valorous in battle. Steadfastly and swiftly, he pierced Yuyudhana with five gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone. These drank up the blood of the enemy. O king! They penetrated the extremely firm armour and penetrated the earth, like sighing serpents. The long-armed one became angry, like an elephant urged with a goad. He pierced Drona with five hundred iron arrows that were like fire. In that battle, Bharadvaja’s son was thus quickly pierced by Yuyudhana. Taking care, he pierced Satyaki with many arrows. The immensely strong and great archer became enraged. He afflicted Satvata with one hundred arrows with drooping tufts. O lord of the battle! For a short while, thus pierced in that battle by Bharadvaja’s son, Satyaki did not know what he should do. O king! On seeing Bharadvaja’s son release sharp arrows in that battle, Yuyudhana’s face looked distressed.

‘“O lord of the earth! On seeing him in this state, your sons and the soldiers were delighted in their minds and repeatedly roared like lions. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this terrible roar and on seeing that Madhava was thus oppressed, Yudhishthira spoke to all the soldiers. ‘This brave Satyaki, the performer of truthful deeds, is supreme among the Vrishni lineage. He is being devoured in the battle by the brave one,[173] like the sun by Rahu. Go quickly to the spot where Satyaki is fighting.’ The lord of men spoke to Dhrishtadyumna from Panchala. ‘O Parshata! Attack Drona quickly. Why are you waiting? Can you not see the terrible danger that confronts us because of Drona? This Drona is a great archer. In the battle, he is playing with Yuyudhana, like a child with a bird that is tied to a string. Let the rathas go there, with Bhimasena at the forefront, and with all of you, towards Satyaki’s chariot. I will follow you, with my soldiers. Satyaki must be rescued now. He is within the jaws of death.’ Having spoken in this way, for Yuyudhana’s sake, the king and all the Pandava soldiers attacked Drona in that battle. O fortunate one! The Pandavas and all the Srinjayas raised a great roar there, as they fought with the single-handed Drona.

‘“Those tigers among men united against the maharatha who was Bharadvaja’s son. They showered down sharp arrows, tufted with the feathers of herons, peacocks and hawks. However, Drona smiled and received all those brave ones himself, like receiving guests who have arrived, with seats and water. O king! Bharadvaja’s archer son tormented them with arrows, as if offering hospitality to guests who have arrived in a house. O lord! None of them were capable of looking at Bharadvaja’s son. He was like the one with a thousand rays[174] when it is midday. Drona, supreme among those who wield weapons, scorched all those great archers with the storm of his arrows, like the sun with its rays. O king! The Pandavas and the Srinjayas were slaughtered in that battle and could see no protector, like an elephant that is immersed in mud. Drona was seen to release great arrows. They travelled in the sky and scorched all the directions, like the sun. Twenty-five Panchalas were killed by Drona. They were all famous as maharathas and had been honoured by Dhrishtadyumna. All the soldiers of the Pandus and the Panchalas saw Drona kill the best of brave warriors. O great king! Having killed one hundred Kekayas and routed them in all the directions, Drona was like Death with a gaping mouth. The mighty-armed Drona defeated hundreds and thousands of Panchalas, Srinjayas, Matsyas, Kekayas and Pandavas. They were pierced by Drona’s arrows and emitted a mighty sound, like the residents of a forest when the forest is consumed by a fire.[175] O king! The gods, the gandharvas and the ancestors said, ‘The Panchalas and the Pandavas are being driven away, with all their soldiers.’ When Drona thus slaughtered the Somakas in the encounter, no one dared to advance against him in the battle and no one could pierce him.

‘“While that terrible destruction of the best of brave ones was going on, Partha[176] suddenly heard the sound of Panchajanya being blown. Blown by Vasudeva, that king of conch shells emitted a terrible blare. As the brave ones who were protecting Saindhava fought and the sons of Dhritarashtra roared and advanced towards Vijaya's chariot,[177] the twang of Gandiva could not be heard in any direction. The Pandava king lost his senses and thought, 'There is no doubt that Partha is not well, since the king of conch shells is blaring. The Kouravas are repeatedly roaring in delight.' Having thought in this way, Ajatashatru became anxious. Kounteya repeatedly spoke to Satvata, as if he was bereft of his senses and in a voice choking with tears.

'"He thought about everything that should be done next and spoke to Shini's descendant, the bull of the Shini lineage. 'O Shini's descendant! There is an eternal dharma that has been indicated by the virtuous ones from ancient times and this is for well-wishers who are in distress. That time has now arrived. O bull among the Shini lineage! O Satyaki! Having considered all the warriors and having thought about it, I do not know of a greater well-wisher than you. You have always been affectionate towards us. You have always been devoted to us. It is my view that it is such a person who must be used in times of distress. Keshava has always been the refuge of the Pandavas. O Varshneya! You have also been like that and you are Krishna's equal in valour. I will impose this burden on you and you should not refuse me. You should never act contrary to my intentions. He[178] is your brother and your friend. He is your preceptor in battle.[179] O bull among men! Perform this hardship to help Arjuna. You are devoted to the truth. You are brave. You free your friends from fear. You are famous in the worlds. O brave one! You are the performer of deeds. You are truthful in speech. O Shini's descendant! One who gives up his body while fighting for his friends, is the equal of someone who has followed the proper rites and has donated the entire earth to brahmanas. We have heard of many kings who have ascended to heaven, after having followed the proper rites and having donated the entire earth to brahmanas. You have dharma in your soul. I am begging you, with my hands joined in salutation. O lord! Obtain fruits that are the equal of donating the earth, or something higher. There is one named Krishna who is always the dispeller of the fears of his friends and is ready to give up his life in battle.[180] O Satyaki! You are the second such. Desiring fame, it is only a brave one who can provide succour to a brave one in battle. O Madhava! In times of supreme hardship like this, it is only a brave one who can be an aide, not an ordinary person. There is no one other than you who can protect Vijaya in battle. Pandava has boasted about your hundreds of deeds and has talked about them repeatedly, creating delight in me. "He is dexterous in using weapons.[181] He is a colourful fighter. There is lightness in his valour. He is wise in all weapons. He is brave. He does not get confused in battle. He is broad in the shoulders. He is broad in the chest. He is mighty-armed. He wields a giant bow. He is immensely strong. He is immensely valorous. He is great-souled. He is a maharatha. He is my student. He is my friend. I love him and he loves me. Yuyudhana will be my aide and will crush the Kouravas. O Indra among kings! O great king! Even if Keshava, Rama,[182] Aniruddha,[183] maharatha Pradyumna, Gada,[184] Samba[185] and all the Vrishnis armour themselves for our sake and seek to help us in the forefront of the battle, I will appoint Shini's descendant, that tiger among men, for whom truth is his valour, as our aide. There is no one else who is his equal." O son![186] This is what Dhananjaya told me in Dvaitavana, when you were not present. He recounted your qualities in an assembly of noble ones. O Varshneya! You should not belie the expectations of Dhananjaya, Bhima, or me. While on the visit to the *tirthas*, I had gone to Dvaraka. There, I had witnessed your devotion to Arjuna. O Shini's descendant! While we were in Upaplavya, I did not witness in anyone else the affection of heart towards us that you possessed. You have been born in a noble lineage. You are devoted to us. You are your preceptor's friend. O Madhava! You are a well-wisher. You are brave. You have been born in a noble lineage! O mighty-armed one! You are truthful. Show compassion towards Partha. O great archer! You should act in a deserving way. Suyodhana was armoured by Drona and has suddenly gone towards Vijaya, where the Kourava maharathas had gone earlier. A great sound can be heard there. O Shini's descendant! O Madhava! You should swiftly go there. If

Drona advances against you, Bhimasena and we, and all our soldiers, will prepare ourselves and counter him. O Shini's descendant! Behold. The soldiers of the Bharatas are being routed in the battle and as they are running away in the encounter, are uttering sounds of woe. It is like the ocean on the night of the new or full moon, driven by the force of the great wind. O son! The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra is being scattered by Savyasachi. Chariots, men and horses are quickly running away. The dust raised by the soldiers is spreading everywhere. The brave Phalguna, the destroyer of enemy heroes, has been surrounded by the brave Sindhus and the Souviras, who are fighting with nails and lances, and is severely afflicted. Without countering these forces, it is impossible to kill Jayadratha. All of them are prepared to give up their lives for Saindhava's sake. There is a forest of arrows, spears and standards. There are large numbers of horses and elephants. Behold. The forces of the sons of Dhritarashtra are extremely difficult to assail. Hear the roar of the drums and the magnificent sound of conch shells. They are roaring like lions and there is the clatter of chariot wheels. Hear the sounds of the elephants and thousands of infantry. Listen. The earth is trembling because the riders are running. Saindhava's array is in front of him and Drona's array is at the rear. O tiger among men! There are so many that even Indra of the gods would be afflicted. He is immersed in an unlimited force and may lose his life. If he is killed in the battle, how can someone like me remain alive? Even if I were to obtain everything, life would be a hardship. Gudakesha is dark and young. Pandava is handsome. He possesses weapons. He is colourful in fighting. O son! The mighty-armed one has penetrated the army of the Bharatas at the time of sunrise. The day is almost over. O Varshneya! I do not know whether he is alive or not. This army of the Kurus is as large as an ocean. O son! The mighty-armed Bibhatsu has penetrated the army of the Bharatas alone and in a great battle, even the gods are incapable of resisting it. In today's battle, my mind does not know what to do. Drona is violent in the battle and is oppressing my forces. O mighty-armed one! You can see how that brahmana is roaming around. When several tasks present themselves, you are skilled in knowing which should be done. O

Madhava! You should do what is the most important. You have always known which among several tasks should be performed first. In this battle, it is my view that Arjuna's rescue is the immediate task. I do not sorrow over Dasharha. He is the protector and the lord of the universe. O son! O tiger among men! Even if the three worlds assemble together in battle, he is capable of withstanding them and defeating them, not to speak of this extremely weak force of the sons of Dhritarashtra. I tell you this truthfully. O Varshneya! But Arjuna is afflicted by many warriors. He may give up his life in the battle and that is the reason I am distressed. Therefore, follow in his footsteps. That is the way someone like you must tread at a time like this, especially when you are urged by someone like me. In a battle, among the foremost ones of the Vrishni lineage, two have been said to be atirathas. These are the mighty-armed Pradyumna and the illustrious Satvata.[187] You are equal to Narayana in weapons and equal to Samkarshana[188] in strength. O tiger among men! You are Dhananjaya's equal in valour. You surpass Bhishma and Drona and all those who are skilled in fighting. In this world, the virtuous ones have spoken of you as a tiger among men. O Madhava! It has been said that there is nothing in the world that Satyaki cannot perform. O immensely strong one! Therefore, do what I am asking you to do. You should do what all the worlds and both the Parthas[189] are asking you to do. O mighty-armed one! You should not act contrary to those wishes. Give up your beloved life in this battle and roam around like a brave one. O Shini's descendant! Those from the Dasharha lineage do not seek to protect their lives in battle. Staying in a battle without fighting and running away—those paths followed by cowards are not followed by those of the Dasharha lineage. O son! Arjuna is your preceptor. O bull among the Shini lineage! You have dharma in your soul. Vasudeva is your senior and so is the intelligent Partha. Knowing of both these reasons,[190] I am addressing these words to you. Do not disregard my words. I am senior to your seniors and this is approved of by both Vasudeva and Arjuna. I am telling you this truthfully. Go to the spot where Dhananjaya is. O one for whom truth is valour! Follow these words of mine. O son! Penetrate the forces of the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra. Having penetrated in the proper way, encounter those maharathas. O Satvata! In the battle, display the deeds that are worthy of your own self.’”’

CHAPTER 1063(86)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those words were full of affection. They were sweet as honey. They were appropriate to the occasion. They were colourful and were addressed by Dharmaraja himself. On hearing those words, Satyaki, bull among the Shini lineage, spoke to Yudhishthira, foremost among the Bharata lineage. ‘O unblemished one! I have heard all your words. They are just, colourful, for Phalguna’s benefit and conducive to fame. O Indra among kings! At times like this, it is appropriate for you to command someone like me, who is in front of you.[191] It is exactly as you have said. I am just like Partha to you. For Dhananjaya’s sake, I have never sought to preserve my own life. Instructed by you, what will I not do in this great battle? O Indra among men! If instructed by you, I will fight the three worlds, with all the gods, asuras and men, not to speak of this extremely weak force of Duryodhana’s. O king! In this battle today, I will fight with them in every direction and conquer them. I am telling you this truthfully. I will be safe and will also reach Dhananjaya, who is also safe. O king! After Jayadratha has been killed, I will return before you again. O lord of men! However, I must tell you all the words that were spoken by Vasudeva and the intelligent Phalguna. In the midst of all the soldiers and in Vasudeva’s hearing, Arjuna repeatedly and firmly instructed me. “O Madhava! Today, it is your task to protect the king earnestly. O noble one! Set your mind on fighting, until I have killed Jayadratha. O mighty-armed one! Having handed over the king to you and to maharatha Pradyumna, I am going undistractedly towards Jayadratha. You know that Drona is violent in battle and is regarded as the best. O Madhava! You also know about the pledge that he has taken in everyone’s hearing. Bharadvaja’s son has promised to capture Dharmaraja in battle. Drona is capable of afflicting Yudhishthira in the battle. Having entrused the task of protecting Dharmaraja, supreme among men, to you, I am going today to kill Saindhava. O Madhava! It is certain that I will return after killing Jayadratha. Ensure that Drona does not forcibly capture Dharmaraja in the battle. O Madhava! If the foremost among men is seized by Bharadvaja's son, I will obtain no delight from having slain Saindhava. If the truthful Pandava, foremost among men, is seized, it is evident that we will have to go to the forest again. If the angry Drona captures Yudhishthira in the battle, it is evident that my victory will obtain no success. O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! For the sake of doing that which will bring me pleasure, and for the sake of victory and fame, protect the king in the battle." You have been given to me as a trust by Savyasachi. O lord! You can see that there is always a fear because of Bharadvaja's son. O mighty-armed one! O lord! In this battle, with the exception of Rukmini's son,[192] I do not see anyone who is capable of withstanding him. In an encounter, I am regarded as a match for Bharadvaja's intelligent son. I cannot act against that reputation or against the words of my preceptor. I cannot leave you. O lord of the earth! The preceptor[193] is light in hand and is clad in impenetrable armour. If he approaches you in the battle, he will toy with you, like a child with a bird. Had Krishna's son[194] been here, with the makara on his banner and with the bow in his hand, I would have handed you over to him and he would have protected you, like Arjuna. Protect yourself. Who will protect you when I am gone? When I go to Pandava, who will advance against Drona in the battle? O king! You should not have any fear on Arjuna's account. The mighty-armed one does not suffer from any burden. There are warriors from the north, the Souviras, the Saindhavas and the Pouravas. There are other maharathas from the south, with Karna at the forefront. O king! They are famous as the best of rathas. But before an angry Arjuna, they do not amount to one of sixteen kalas.[195] O king! Even if the entire earth were to rise up against him, with all the gods, asuras, humans, masses of rakshasas, kinnaras,[196] giant serpents, together with all the mobile and immobile objects, they are incapable of withstanding Partha in battle. O great king! Knowing this, banish any fear on Dhananjaya's account. Where those two brave and great archers, the two Krishnas who have truth for their valour, exist, there is nothing that can stand against what they wish to do. They are divine. They are skilled in the use of weapons. They possess yoga. They are intolerant in battle. Think of the gratefulness and compassion of your brother. I will go towards Arjuna, as you have asked me to. O king! Drona is wonderful in the use of weapons in battle. Think about that. O king! The preceptor is extremely keen to capture you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have to protect my pledge. I have to protect my truth. Who will protect you when I am gone? O Partha! Without handing over your protection to someone, how can I go towards Phalguna? O great king! I cannot leave you unprotected in this great battle. O Kouravya! How can I do that? I am telling you this truthfully. O supreme among those who possess intelligence! Use your intelligence to reflect on this in many ways. Use your intelligence to determine what is most beneficial. O king! Then instruct me accordingly.'

'"Yudhishthira replied, 'O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! It is exactly as you say. O venerable one! But on account of the one with the white horses, my mind is not at rest. I will take the utmost care in protecting myself. Commanded by me, go to the spot where Dhananjaya is. Using my intelligence, I have reflected on both—protecting myself in this battle and going towards Arjuna. I think you should go. Therefore, prepare yourself to go where Dhananjaya has gone. The immensely strong Bhima will perform the task of protecting me. O son! There is no doubt that Droupadi's sons will also protect me. There are the five brothers from Kekaya and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, Virata, Drupada and maharatha Shikhandi. O venerable one! There are the powerful Dhrishtaketu and Kuntibhoja, Nakula, Sahadeva, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. O son! There is no doubt that all these assembled ones will protect me. Drona with his soldiers, or Kritavarma, will not be capable of oppressing me in this battle. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna, the scorcher of enemies, will display his valour and hold back the enraged Drona, like the shoreline against the abode of makaras.[197] When Parshata, the destroyer of enemy heroes, is stationed in the battle, Drona and his soldiers will never be able to assail us forcibly. He[198] has arisen from the fire for Drona's destruction, sporting armour, arrows, sword, bow and the best of ornaments. O Shini's descendant! Go without any anxiety. Do not be anxious on my account. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna will repulse the angry Drona.'"'

CHAPTER 1064(87)

'Sanjaya said, "On hearing these words of Dharmaraja, the bull among the Shini lineage was afraid that Partha[199] would censure him if he abandoned the king. But he especially thought that the worlds would speak of him as being a coward, if he did not go towards Phalguna. Having thought about this in many ways, Satyaki, unassailable in battle and bull among men, spoke these words to Dharmaraja. 'O lord of the earth! If you think that this will ensure your protection and make sure that you are safe, I will follow Bibhatsu and act in accordance with your words. O king! I tell you truthfully that there is nothing in the three worlds that is dearer to me than Pandava.[200] O one who provides honours! As you have instructed, I will follow in his footsteps. There is nothing that I will not do for your sake. O supreme among men! The words of my preceptor are special. But your words are even more special for me. O bull among kings! Know that your brothers, Krishna and Vasudeva, are always engaged in doing what brings you pleasure and base themselves on your welfare. O lord! For Arjuna's sake, I accept your words on my head. O supreme among men! I will penetrate these impenetrable soldiers. I will angrily pass through Drona's array, like a fish through the ocean. O king! I will go to the spot where King Jayadratha is. He is stationed in the assembly of soldiers there, frightened of Pandava. He is protected by the best of rathas there—Drona's son, Karna, Kripa and the others. O lord of the earth! I think that the spot where Partha is, prepared to slay Jayadratha, is three yojanas from here. But though he has advanced three yojanas, I will follow in his footsteps. O king! Firm in my resolution, I will remain there until he has killed Jayadratha. Instructed by his superiors, which man does not fight, not to speak of someone like me? O king! I have been commanded by you. O lord! I know the spot to which I have to go. This ocean of soldiers is full of iron rods, spears, clubs, lances, swords, shields, javelins, arrows and the best of weapons, but I will agitate it. You can see that there is an array of elephants, with one thousand of them. They have been born in the lineage known as Anjana[201] and are valorous. They are mounted by many mlecchas, who are armed and find delight in battle. O king! These elephants have the complexion of clouds and are exuding like clouds.[202] If they are urged by the elephant-riders, they never retreat. O king! They cannot be vanquished until they have been killed. O king! You can see the rathas. These maharathas are princes and have the name of Rukmarathas.[203] O lord of the earth! They are skilled in fighting on chariots and on elephants. They are supreme in knowledge of fighting and are skilled in fighting with their fists. They are accomplished in fighting with clubs and also skilled in fighting at close quarters.[204] They have swords as weapons and can attack with the sword and the shield. These brave ones are skilled in knowledge and seek to rival one another. O king! They always vanquish a large number of men in battle. O king! They were vanquished by Karna and follow Duhshasana. They were applauded by Vasudeva as supreme rathas. They always seek to do that which brings Karna pleasure and follow his instructions. O king! It is on his instructions that they retreated from their pursuit of the one with the white horses. They have no wounds and are not exhausted. They possess strong armour and bows. On the commands of Dhritarashtra’s son, they are certainly waiting for me. O Kourava! For the sake of bringing you pleasure, I will crush them in the battle. I will then follow Savyasachi’s footsteps. O king! There are seven hundred other elephants that you can see. They are armoured and are ridden by *kiratas*.[205] To protect his life, the king of the kiratas had earlier ornamented them and presented them to Savyasachi, together with many servants. O king! They have performed many hard deeds for you earlier. Behold the vagaries of time that they are now battling against you. These elephants are ridden by kiratas, who are invincible in battle. All of them are skilled in handling elephants and descended from Agni. Savyasachi defeated all of them in a battle earlier. They follow Duryodhana's instructions and are carefully waiting for me now. O king! These kiratas are invincible in battle, but I will shatter them with my arrows. I will follow Pandava, as he is engaged in Saindhava's death. These other extremely great elephants have been born in Anjana's lineage. They are both harsh and humble and their temples and mouths are exuding. Their armour is completely made out of gold and they are well ornamented. O king! In a battle, they succeed in accomplishing their objectives and are like Airavata. They hail from the northern mountains, and fierce *dasyus*[206] are astride them. They are harsh and supreme warriors and their armour is made out of black iron. There are also those who have been born from cows and those who have been born from monkeys. There are others who have been born from other species and those who have been born as humans. That army, which seems to have the complexion of smoke from a distance, consists of mlecchas who reside in fortresses in the Himalayas. They are the performers of evil deeds. Duryodhana obtained them and this large number of elephants, together with Kripa, Somadatta's son, Drona, supreme among rathas, the king of Sindhu and Karna. He disregards the Pandavas. Driven by destiny, he thinks himself to be successful. But those that I have named will be within the reach of my iron arrows. O Kounteya! They will not escape from me, even if they possess the speed of thought. He[207] has always drawn sustenance from the valour of others and honours them. But they will be afflicted by arrows, and destruction confronts them. O king! You can see the rathas with golden standards. They are difficult to resist and are famous by the name of Kambojas. They are brave and skilled in knowledge. They are devoted to the science of fighting. They desire each other's welfare and have assembled firmly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These angry ones constitute one akshouhini for Dhritarashtra's son. They are stationed for my sake and are protected by the brave ones among the Kurus. O great king! They are not distracted and have presented themselves before me. I will destroy them, like a fire against straw. O king! Therefore, let those who prepare chariots make my chariot ready and equip it with all the implements, as has been decreed by those who prepare chariots. Let all the different weapons used in war be placed. But compared to what the instructors have said, let five times the number be placed on the chariot. I will have to clash against and kill the Kambojas, who are as angry as venomous serpents. They possess many weapons and fight with many different kinds of weapons. I will have to clash against the kiratas, who are skilled in striking and like poison. They have always been nurtured by King Duryodhana and have his welfare in mind. I will have to clash against the Shakas, who are like Shakra in their valour. They are as unassailable as the fire and blaze like fires. There are many other warriors, who are as difficult to resist as time. O king! I will clash against many such invincible ones in the battle. Therefore, let the best of horses again be yoked to my chariot. Let them be without exhaustion. Let them bear auspicious marks. Let them be groomed and watered.'

'"The king arranged for all the equipment and all the implements to be placed on the chariot. There were many different kinds of weapons. Skilled men unyoked all the well-trained horses. They were given tasty water and fed. After this, they were fanned. When they had drank and bathed, they were adorned with golden garlands. Stakes were plucked out from the four horses. Those handsome and swift-coursing horses were dressed in golden harnesses. They were cheerful and well trained and were yoked to the chariot. The giant standard, with the mark of a lion with golden manes, was erected. Pennants decorated with gold, gems and colourful coral were fastened. There was an ornamented flag, with the complexion of a white cloud. There was an umbrella with a golden staff and there were many weapons. With many golden trappings, the horses were duly yoked to the chariot. Daruka's[208] younger brother was the charioteer and was also his[209] beloved friend. Like Matali to Vasava, he came and reported that the chariot had been yoked. Having bathed, Satyaki, supreme among handsome ones, purified himself. He performed the auspicious ceremonies and gave away one thousand nishkas of gold to *snatakas*.[210] They blessed him. He drank *madhuparka*[211] and *kailavata* liquor.[212] His eyes were red and his eyes were unsteady because of the intoxication. The brave one touched the brass and his joy increased.[213] His energy doubled and he blazed like a fire. The supreme of rathas slung the bow around his hips and picked up the arrows. He was armoured and ornamented and the brahmanas pronounced benedictions on him. Beautiful maidens honoured him by showering parched rice, fragrances and garlands on him. He joined his hands in salutation and touched Yudhishthira's feet. He[214] inhaled the fragrance of his head. He then ascended the giant chariot. The horses were cheerful and well fed and were as fleet as the wind. They were from the Sindhu region and bore him on that victorious chariot. Satyaki's limbs were full of cheer and he spoke to Bhima. 'O Bhima! Protect the king. That is your supreme duty. I will pierce through this army, which has been ripened by time. I will proceed and it is your supreme duty to protect the king. O destroyer of enemies! You know my valour and I know yours. O Bhima! Return and let me accomplish my desired objective.'[215] Having been thus addressed, he[216] replied, 'O Satyaki! Go and accomplish your objective. O supreme among men! I will perform the task of protecting the king.' Having been thus addressed, Madhava said to Bhimasena. 'O Partha! Go! Go swiftly. It is certain that victory will be mine, since you are obedient, affectionate and devoted to me today. O Bhima! That is what these auspicious portents are telling me. There is no doubt that the wicked Saindhava will be slain by the great-souled Pandava and that I will embrace the king who has dharma in his soul.' Having thus addressed Bhima, the great-minded one took his leave. He glanced towards your soldiers, like a tiger towards a mass of deer. O lord of men! On seeing his glances, your soldiers were extremely confounded and began to tremble. Thus did Satyaki suddenly descend on your soldiers. O king! On Dharmaraja's instructions, he wished to see Arjuna."'

CHAPTER 1065(88)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Wishing to fight, Yuyudhana advanced against your soldiers. Dharmaraja, surrounded by his own soldiers, advanced towards Drona’s chariot, wishing to follow Yuyudhana from the rear. The son of the king of Panchala[217] was indomitable in battle. In the midst of the army of the Pandavas, he and King Vasudana loudly shouted, ‘Come! Strike! Advance swiftly against the enemy, so that Satyaki, indomitable in battle, can pass through easily. Many maharathas will endeavour to vanquish him.’ Having said this, they descended forcefully on your army. ‘We will defeat those who advance against him.’[218] A great sound then arose from the direction of Yuyudhana’s chariot and this made your son’s forces tremble mightily. O great king! They were shattered into a hundred fragments by Satvata. Shini’s maharatha grandson shattered them and crushed seven brave and great archers who were stationed at the forefront of the army. They were terrified, crushed and routed by the long-armed one. On seeing that superhuman one, the brave ones fled from the field of battle. O venerable one! Chariots were shattered and seats on chariots broken. Wheels were shattered and umbrellas and standards brought down. O lord of the earth! There were flags, bumpers and golden helmets. There were arms smeared with sandalwood paste, with armlets. O supreme among men! The thighs of men were strewn around on the ground. They were like the trunks of elephants, or the tapering bodies of serpents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were handsome faces with earrings and eyes like bulls, with complexions like that of the moon. They fell down and made the earth look beautiful. There were many mangled elephants, lying down like mountains. They were wounded severely and were strewn around on the ground, like elephants. Their harnesses were made of gold and they were garlanded with strings of pearls. The colourful breast plates of the horses were beautiful. They were destroyed by the long-armed one and having lost their lives, fell down on the ground. Satvata slew diverse kinds of your soldiers. Having penetrated your soldiers, he violently drove that army away.

"He then wished to proceed along the path that Dhananjaya had followed. But as Satyaki proceeded, he was obstructed by Drona. O venerable one! Yuyudhana confronted Bharadvaja's son. But the angry one did not retreat, like the store of water on encountering the shoreline. In that battle, Drona repulsed maharatha Satyaki. He pierced him with five sharp arrows that penetrated the inner organs. O king! In that encounter, Satyaki pierced Drona with seven arrows that were gold-tufted, sharpened on stone and with the feathers of herons, peacocks and hawks. Drona struck his horses and the charioteer with six arrows. Maharatha Satyaki could not tolerate this on Drona's part. Satyaki roared like a lion and pierced Drona with ten other arrows and yet again with another fourteen. Yuyudhana again pierced Drona with ten arrows, his charioteer with one and his four horses with four arrows. O venerable one! In that battle, he pierced his standard with an arrow. Drona swiftly enveloped his horses, his charioteer, his chariot and his standard with swift arrows, like flying locusts. Yuyudhana also fearlessly covered Drona with many swift arrows. Drona said, 'Your preceptor[219] has abandoned the battle and departed like a coward. He was fighting me. But keeping me to the right, he has left. O Madhava! If you do not swiftly avoid me in this battle, like your preceptor did, and continue to fight with me, you will not escape with your life today.' Satyaki replied, 'I am following Dhananjaya's footsteps on Dharmaraja's instruction. O brahmana! Be fortunate. I am leaving. I do not wish to waste time.' O king! Having said this, Shini's descendant abandoned the preceptor and proceeded quickly. He told the charioteer, 'Drona will make every effort to restrain me. O charioteer! Take care in this battle. Listen to these supreme words of mine. Behold. There is the extremely resplendent army of the Avantis. Next to that, there is the extremely powerful army from the south. Next to that, there is the large army of the Bahlikas. Joined to the Bahlikas, there is the large force of Karna. O charioteer! These armies are different from one another, but are dependent on each other. They support each other and will not give up the field of battle. Cheerfully goad the horses into the space that is between them. O charioteer! Adopt a medium speed and take me there, where the

Bahlikas can be seen, with many weapons raised in their arms and there are many from the south, with the son of the suta at the forefront. His army of elephants, horses and chariots can be seen in an array. They have been raised from many countries and are stationed in the midst of the infantry.' He avoided the brahmana and spoke thus to his charioteer. 'Pass through the gap, towards Karna's extremely large and fierce army.' Drona became angry at this and followed him, releasing many arrows. But the mighty-armed Yuyudhana left and did not return.

'"Satyaki struck Karna's extremely large army with sharp arrows and penetrated into the limitless army of the Bharatas. When Yuyudhana penetrated and the soldiers began to run away, the intolerant Kritavarma repulsed Satyaki. As he was advancing, the valiant Satyaki quickly struck him with six arrows and killed his four horses with four arrows. Satyaki again used sixteen swift arrows with drooping tufts to pierce Kritavarma between the breasts. O great king! Having been thus afflicted by many arrows of great energy released by Satvata, Kritavarma could not tolerate this. O king! He affixed a vatsadanta arrow that was like a tongue of fire. He stretched his bow up to his ear and struck Satyaki in the chest. The gold-tufted arrow penetrated the armour on his body and passing through the body, penetrated the earth, drenched in blood. O king! Kritavarma knew about supreme weapons. He used many arrows to slice down his bow, with the arrows affixed to them. O king! In that battle, he pierced Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour. He angrily struck him between the breasts with ten sharp arrows. With his bow shattered, Satyaki, supreme among strong ones, picked up a javelin and used this to strike Kritavarma's right arm. The brave Satyaki then grasped another firm bow and quickly released hundreds and thousands of arrows. He enveloped Kritavarma and his chariot. With a broad-headed arrow, he sliced down the charioteer's head. Having been slain, Hardikya's charioteer fell down from the great chariot. When the charioteer was slain, the horses fled at great speed. Disturbed, Bhoja himself controlled the horses, with the bow in one hand. At this, the soldiers honoured him. In an instant, he urged those well-trained horses on. He did not suffer from any fear, but caused great terror among his enemies. However, Satyaki had gone on ahead and he[220] attacked Bhima.

'"O Indra among kings! Yuyudhana emerged from Drona's army and swiftly advanced towards the great army of the Kambojas. He was countered there by many brave maharathas. O king! Though truth was Satyaki's valour, he could not move at all. Having arranged his army, Drona entrusted the burden to Bhoja and followed Yuyudhana in the battle, wishing to fight with him. He followed Yuyudhana from the rear and the largest of the Pandu armies angrily began to resist him. Having encountered the chariot of Hardikya, who was supreme among rathas, the Panchalas, with Bhimasena at the forefront, lost their enterprise. O king! The brave Kritavarma repulsed them with his valour. Though they endeavoured, all of them lost their spirits. Fearlessly, Bhoja used his torrent of arrows to obstruct and afflict their mounts. In that battle, those brave ones were oppressed by Bhoja's army. But desiring great fame, they remained stationed, like noble ones."'

CHAPTER 1066(89)

'Dhritarashtra said, "Our army possesses many kinds of soldiers, who are supreme and have been tested. O Sanjaya! They are many and have been arrayed in the proper way. They have always been honoured by us and have always been devoted to us. They are mature[221] and are wonderful in form. The firmness and valour have been seen earlier. They are not aged, nor young. They are not thin, nor are they obese. They are agile and tall and all their limbs are free of disease. They are adorned with armour and have many kinds of weapons. They are accomplished in many kinds of knowledge connected with weapons. They know how to ascend on the shoulders,[222] advance and retreat. They are accomplished in striking, moving forward and back. They have been tested in many ways, on elephants, horses and chariots. They have been examined properly and have been paid their wages, not on account of lineage, favour or relationships.[223] They have not arrived without being summoned. Nor have soldiers in my army not been paid. They have been born in good lineages and are noble. They are contented, well fed and submissive. They have been rewarded well. They are illustrious and spirited. O son![224] They are sustained by the best of men, who are the equals of the guardians of the worlds. These are the foremost of advisers and many others who have performed the best of deeds. There are many kings who wish to do what is beneficial for us and protect them. They have voluntarily sided with us, with their forces and their followers. Our army is like a giant ocean, with flowing rivers merging into it from every direction. It possesses many chariots and horses. Though they are without wings, they are like birds. The large number of warriors constitutes the water. The fierce mounts are the waves. There are catapults, swords, maces, spears, lances, arrows and javelins that are like fish. There are standards and ornaments, decorated with bejewelled garments. The advancing mounts are like the force of the wind that agitates it.[225] Drona is the fathomless nether regions. Kritavarma is a giant lake. Jalasandha is a giant crocodile. Karna is the rising moon.[226] O Sanjaya! When that bull among the Pandavas[227] swiftly entered and penetrated my ocean of soldiers on a single chariot and Yuyudhana followed him, I do not see any remnant being left. O Sanjaya! After Savyasachi penetrated my soldiers, so did Satvata, supreme among rathas. On seeing those two valiant ones fearlessly and spiritedly advance and on seeing the king of Sindhu within the reach of Gandiva's arrows, what did the Kurus do, driven by destiny? When that terrible time arrived, what happened to them? O son! I think that the assembled Kouravas were devoured by death. Today, their valour in battle can no longer be seen. In the battle, Krishna and Pandava have penetrated, without being injured. O Sanjaya! There is no one who can resist them. There are many paid warriors and tested maharathas. Some have been paid due wages and others served with pleasant words. O son! There is no one among my soldiers who has not been served, without due cause. The devoted ones have all obtained due wages, in accordance with their deeds. O Sanjaya! There is no warrior in my army who has been paid less than what is his due. O son! There is no man who has not been paid.

To the best of my capacity, they have been honoured with gifts, honours and seats. O son! My sons, kith and kin have also acted in the same way. But when they confronted Savyasachi in the battle, they have been vanquished. They have been supremely crushed by Shini's descendant. Other than destiny, what can this be? O Sanjaya! Those who are the protectors and those who are being protected are following the same path, the protectors, as well as those who are protected. On seeing Arjuna stationed in the battle in front of Saindhava, what did my extremely foolish son do? On seeing Satyaki fearlessly penetrate in the battle, what course of action, appropriate to the occasion, did Duryodhana adopt? Those supreme rathas, who are beyond the reach of all weapons, penetrated the army. On witnessing this in the encounter, what did those on my side decide to do? On beholding Dasharha Krishna stationed for Arjuna's sake and on seeing the bull among the Shini lineage, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. On seeing that Satvata and Arjuna had passed through the soldiers and that the Kurus were running away, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. On seeing that the rathas were routed and had lost interest in subjugating the enemy and on seeing that they had set their minds on running away, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. The seats of the chariots were rendered empty by Satvata and Arjuna. On seeing that the warriors were slain, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. On seeing horses, elephants and chariots and thousands of brave ones anxiously running away from the field of battle, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. Horses were deprived of brave ones. Men were deprived of their chariots by Satyaki and Partha. I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. On seeing that all the masses of infantry had given up all hope of victory and were running away in every direction, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. On seeing that those two brave ones had instantly passed through Drona's array, without being defeated, I think that my sons must have been full of sorrow. O son! I am extremely benumbed on hearing that Krishna and Dhananjaya, the ones without decay, have penetrated my soldiers, together with Satvata. Shini's descendant, supreme among rathas, penetrated the army. After he had passed through Bhoja's array, what did the Kouravas do? O Sanjaya! Tell me everything about how Drona afflicted the Pandus in the battle and how that battle progressed there. Drona is brave and powerful. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is firm in his valour. How did the Panchalas fight against that great archer in the battle? Desiring Dharmaraja's victory, they are firm in their enmity towards Drona. Bharadvaja's maharatha son is also firm in his enmity towards them. Wishing to kill the king of Sindhu, what did Arjuna do? O Sanjaya! You are skilled in this. Tell me everything about what transpired."'

CHAPTER 1067(90)

'Sanjaya said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! This hardship is the result of your own transgressions. O brave one! You should not grieve like an ordinary person. O supreme among kings! Knowing your absence of qualities, your partiality towards your sons, your duplicity about dharma, your malice towards the Pandavas and your many piteous lamentations, Vasudeva, the one who knows about all the worlds and the lord and preceptor of all the worlds, caused the great war to arise among the Kurus. This great and pervasive destruction has arisen because of your own crimes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No good deeds by you can be seen at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end. That is the root of this defeat. Therefore, knowing the fate of this world, be patient and listen to how the battle raged, like the terrible one between the gods and the asuras.

'"Shini's descendant, with truth as his valour, penetrated amidst your soldiers. The Parthas, with Bhimasena at the forefront, advanced against your army. Maharatha Kritavarma alone resisted the Pandus in that battle, as they arrived in violence and anger, together with their followers. Just as the shoreline holds back the salty ocean, Hardikya repulsed the Pandu soldiers in that battle. Hardikya's valour was regarded as extraordinary. The united Parthas could not crush him in that battle. The mighty-armed Bhima pierced Kritavarma with three iron arrows and blew on his conch shell, delighting all the Pandavas.

Sahadeva pierced Hardikya with twenty arrows, Dharmaraja with five and Nakula with one hundred. Droupadi's sons pierced him with seventy-three, Ghatotkacha with seven and Dhrishtadyumna struck Kritavarma with three. Virata, Drupada and Yajnasena's son[228] pierced him with five each. Shikhandi pierced Hardikya with five swift arrows and laughing, again pierced him with twenty arrows. O king! Kritavarma pierced each of those maharathas with five arrows and piercing Bhima with seven, brought down his bow and his standard from his chariot. Once the bow was severed, the spirited maharatha angrily struck him in the chest with seventy arrows. Having been severely and powerfully struck by Hardikya's supreme arrows, he trembled on his chariot, like a mountain during an earthquake. On seeing Bhimasena in that state, they,[229] with Dharmaraja at the forefront, afflicted Kritavarma with the release of terrible arrows. O venerable one! They hemmed him in with a large number of chariots. To protect the son of the wind god in the battle, they cheerfully pierced him with arrows."

'"The immensely strong Bhimasena recovered his senses. In that encounter, he grasped an iron javelin with a golden handle. From his chariot, he swiftly hurled it towards Kritavarma's chariot. Released from Bhima's arms, it was like a snake that has cast off its skin. Flaming extremely fiercely, it headed towards Kritavarma. On seeing it suddenly descend towards him, with a hue like that of the fire at the time of the destruction of a yuga, Hardikya used two arrows to slice it into two. That javelin, decorated with gold, was severed and fell down on the ground. O king! It illuminated the directions, like a giant meteor that has been dislodged from the sky. On seeing that the javelin had been destroyed, Bhima was extremely enraged. He picked up another bow that was forceful and made a great sound. In that battle, Bhimasena angrily attacked Hardikya and struck him between the breasts with five arrows. O king! Bhima was terrible in his strength and all this was because of your evil policy. O venerable one! Bhimasena mangled Bhoja in all his limbs. In that field of battle, he was as beautiful as a red *ashoka* tree that was blooming. However, that great archer only laughed. In that battle, he angrily struck Bhimasena with three arrows and then firmly and carefully, pierced those maharathas back with three arrows each. They also pierced him back with seven arrows each.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, the maharatha laughed and wrathfully used a kshurapra arrow to sever Shikhandi's bow. On seeing that his bow had been severed, Shikhandi became angry. In that encounter, he grasped a sword and a brilliant shield that was marked with one hundred moons. He whirled that giant shield, which was decorated with gold and dispatched the sword towards Kritavarma's chariot. O king! In that encounter, the giant sword severed his bow and arrow and fell down on the ground, like a stellar body dislodged from the firmament. At the same time, in the battle, those maharathas quickly and severely pierced Kritavarma with arrows. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Hardikya, the destroyer of enemy heroes, discarded the giant bow, which had been shattered. In that encounter, he picked up another bow and pierced each of the Pandavas with three arrows. He pierced Shikhandi with three arrows, and then yet again with another five. The immensely illustrious Shikhandi picked up another bow and countered Hridika's son with arrows that had heads made out of the nails of tortoises. O king! In that battle, Hridika's son became angry and powerfully attacked Yajnasena's maharatha son, the one who was responsible for the death of the great-souled Bhishma in the battle. O king! The brave and powerful one attacked him, like a tiger against an elephant. Those two were like flaming fires, or two elephants in charge of the directions. Those destroyers of enemies clashed against each other with a torrent of arrows and released showers of arrows at each other from the best of bows. They released hundreds of arrows, like the rays of two suns in the sky. Those two maharathas tormented each other with their sharp arrows. Those two brave ones were as resplendent as suns at the end of a yuga. Kritavarma fiercely struck Yajnasena's maharatha son with seventy-three arrows and pierced him again with another seven. Severely pierced and wounded, he sat down on the floor of his chariot, letting go of his bow and arrows and becoming unconscious. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing him thus distressed in the battle, those on your side honoured Hardikya and waved their garments around in the air. On discerning that Shikhandi was thus afflicted by Hardikya's arrows, his charioteer swifly bore the maharatha away from the field of battle.

'"On seeing Shikhandi on the floor of the chariot in the battle, the Parthas quickly surrounded Kritavarma with chariots. Maharatha Kritavarma accomplished a supreme wonder there. In that battle, he single-handedly repulsed the Parthas and their followers. Having defeated the Parthas, maharatha Kritavarma vanquished the Chedis, the Panchalas, the Srinjayas and the Kekayas, all of whom were immensely valorous. In the battle, the Pandavas were slaughtered by Hardikya. In that encounter, they were unable to retain their spirits and fled in all directions, bereft of their senses. In the battle, Hardikya defeated the sons of Pandu, with Bhimasena at the forefront. He was stationed there, like a fire without smoke. Those maharathas were driven away by Hardikya in the battle. They were afflicted by his shower of arrows and were forced to retreat."'

CHAPTER 1068(91)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Listen attentively to what you have asked. Those soldiers were driven away by the great-souled Hardikya. They were overcome by shame and those on your side were delighted. The Pandus were immersed in fathomless waters, without a refuge, and sought refuge. O king! In that great battle, on hearing the fierce roars emitted by those on your side, Shini's descendant swiftly attacked Kritavarma.[230] Hardikya Kritavarma angrily covered Shini's descendant with sharp arrows and Satyaki also became enraged. In the encounter, Shini's descendant released an extremely sharp and broad-headed arrow at Kritavarma and shot another four arrows at him. These slew his horses and the broad-headed arrow severed his bow. Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, used sharp arrows to pierce his charioteer and those who guarded his rear and thus deprived him of his chariot. He then afflicted the soldiers with arrows with drooping tufts. Oppressed by the arrows of Shini’s descendant, the army scattered. Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, then swiftly departed. O king! Listen to what that valiant one did to your soldiers.

‘“O great king! He passed through the giant ocean that was Drona’s army. Delighted at having vanquished Kritavarma in the battle, the brave one spoke these words to his charioteer. ‘Proceed slowly and fearlessly.’ On seeing your forces, with a large number of chariots, horses, elephants and infantry, he again spoke to the charioteer. ‘The army on the left, which is like a cloud, is Drona’s. It has a large army of elephants and Rukmaratha is at the forefront.[231] O charioteer! There are many of them and they are unassailable in a battle. Instructed by Duryodhana, they are ready to give up their lives and are waiting for me. All these princes are great archers and are brave in fighting. These foremost of rathas come from Trigarta and their standards are embellished with gold. These brave ones are stationed there, desiring to fight with me. O charioteer! Urge the horses quickly and take me there. While Bharadvaja’s son looks on, I will fight with the Trigartas.’ The charioteer was obedient to Satvata’s instructions and slowly proceeded there, on a chariot that possessed the complexion of the sun and was radiant with flags. Supreme horses were harnessed to it and they were obedient to the charioteer. In a battle, they possessed the speed of the wind and their complexions were like the *kunda* flower,[232] the moon, or silver. The chariot bore him there, drawn by supreme horses that had the complexion of conch shells. In every direction, the brave ones surrounded him with an army of elephants. They showered many kinds of sharp arrows that could easily penetrate. Satvata also used sharp arrows to fight with that army of elephants. He was like a giant cloud that showers down on a mountain at the end of the summer. The arrows were like the vajra or thunder to the touch and slaughtered the elephants. They were driven away from the field of battle by Shini’s brave descendant. Their tusks were broken. They were covered in blood. Their temples and frontal lobes were shattered. Their ears, faces and trunks were lopped off. They were without riders and flags. Their armour and bells were fragmented. The giant standards were brought down. O king! The blankets were torn apart. With the riders slain, they roamed around in different directions. They shrieked and roared in many ways, like the thunder of the clouds. They were mangled by Satvata’s iron and vatsadanta arrows.

‘“When that army of elephants was routed, maharatha Jalasandha[233] urged the elephant that he was riding towards the chariot with the silvery horses. The brave one had a golden complexion and was adorned with armlets made of purified gold. He had earrings, a diadem and a conch shell and was smeared with red sandalwood paste. There was a flaming garland made out of gold around his head. There were golden and resplendent chains on his chest and around his neck. He was seated on the head of his elephant and stretched a golden bow. O great king! He was as radiant as a cloud tinged with lightning. On seeing Magadha suddenly descend on him on a supreme elephant, Satyaki countered him, like the shoreline driving back the ocean. The elephant was checked by the supreme arrows of Shini’s descendant. O king! On seeing this, the immensely strong Jalasandha became enraged in that battle. Angrily, the great archer Jalasandha pierced Shini’s grandson on his broad chest with arrows that were capable of bearing great loads. He then used another yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever the bow of the brave one from the Vrishni lineage, just as he was drawing it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once the bow had been severed, the brave one from Magadha laughed and pierced Satyaki with five sharp arrows. He was pierced by many arrows released by the valiant Jalasandha. But the mighty-armed one did not waver and it was extraordinary. Without any fear, the powerful one thought about the arrows he should use. He took up another bow. Asking Jalasandha to wait, Shini’s descendant laughed and severely struck him on his broad chest with sixty arrows. He then used a yellow kshurapra arrow to sever Jalasandha’s giant bow in his hand and pierced him with three arrows. Jalasandha cast aside the bow, which had an arrow still affixed to it. O venerable one! He swiftly hurled a lance towards Satyaki. In that great battle, this pierced Madhava’s left arm and penetrated the earth, like a giant and fierce serpent that was sighing. When his left arm had been pierced, Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, struck Jalasandha with thirty sharp arrows. The immensely strong Jalasandha picked up a sword and a giant shield that was made out of the hide of bulls and was marked with the signs of one hundred moons. He whirled the sword and hurled it at Satvata. Severing the bow of Shini's descendant, the sword fell down on the ground. When it fell down on the ground, it looked like a circle of fire. He[234] picked up another bow that was capable of shattering all bodies. It was as large as the trunk of a shala tree and its roar was like that of Indra's vajra. He angrily stretched that bow and pierced Jalasandha with an arrow. The supreme one of the Madhava lineage laughed and used two kshurapra arrows to sever Jalasandha's arms, with their ornaments and their armlets. Those arms were like clubs and fell down from that supreme of elephants. They fell down on the ground, like two five-headed serpents falling down from a mountain. With a third kshurapra arrow, Satyaki severed his head, possessing beautiful teeth and a handsome jaw and adorned with charming earrings. When the head and arms had been cut down, the torso looked fearful and sprinkled Jalasandha's elephant with his blood. O lord of the earth! Having swiftly slain Jalasandha, Satvata brought down the housing from the elephant's shoulder.[235] Jalasandha's elephant was covered with blood, all over its limbs. He was hanging upside down from that supreme seat. Afflicted by Satvata's arrows, the giant elephant fled, uttering terrible and piteous shrieks, and crushing its own soldiers.

'"O venerable one! On seeing that Jalasandha had been slain by the bull among the Vrishni lineage, a giant roar of lamentation arose among your soldiers. Your warriors retreated and fled in different directions. They were interested in running away and not in defeating the enemy. O king! At this time, Drona, supreme among those who wielded weapons, quickly approached maharatha Yuyudhana, borne on his swift horses. On seeing that Shini's descendant was rampaging, many bulls among the Kurus angrily surrounded Satyaki, together with Drona. A battle commenced between the Kurus, with Drona, and Satvata. O king! It was a terrible clash, like that between the gods and the asuras.”’

CHAPTER 1069(92)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! All of them swiftly fought with Yuyudhana. They were skilled in striking and made endeavours. They showered down a storm of arrows. He struck Drona with seventy-seven sharp arrows. Durmarshana struck him with twelve arrows, Duhsaha with ten. Vikarna struck him on his left side and between the breasts with thirty sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons. Durmukha struck him with ten arrows and Duhshasana with eight. O venerable one! Chitrasena pierced Shini’s descendant with two arrows. Duryodhana brought down a great shower of arrows on Madhava. O king! In that battle, other maharathas also afflicted him. Your maharatha sons countered him from all directions. However, Shini’s descendant pierced each of them back with separate arrows. He struck Bharadvaja’s son with three arrows, Duhsaha with nine, Vikarna with twenty-five, Chitrasena with seven, Durmarshana with twelve, Vivimshati with four, Satyavrata with nine and Vijaya with ten arrows. The maharatha struck Rukmangada’s bow and brandished his own bow. Satyaki then quickly advanced against your maharatha son.[236] While everyone looked on, he severely pierced the king, supreme among the wielders of all weapons, with his arrows and a battle commenced between the two. Both of them affixed and released sharp arrows. In that battle, those two maharathas rendered each other invisible. Pierced by Satyaki, the king of the Kurus looked extremely beautiful. A lot of blood flowed from his body, like the sap from a sandalwood tree. Satvata was also pierced by a mass of arrows released by your son. He was as beautiful as a golden sacrificial stake that had been erected. O king! In that battle, the Madhava archer suddenly severed the Kuru king’s bow with a kshurapra arrow and laughed. When the bow had been severed, he released many arrows and pierced the enemy with those swift-acting arrows. In the battle, the king could not tolerate these signs of victory on the part of his foe. He grasped another unassailable bow that possessed a golden back and quickly pierced Satyaki with a hundred arrows. He was severely and powerfully struck by your archer son. Overcome by sentiments of intolerance, he began to afflict your son. On seeing that the king was oppressed, your maharatha sons showered powerful arrows on Satvata and enveloped him. When he was shrouded by your maharatha sons in many ways, he pierced each of them with five arrows and pierced them again with seven each. He swiftly struck Duryodhana with eight arrows. Laughing, he severed his bow and frightened the enemy. With more arrows, he brought down his standard, which was decorated with a bejewelled elephant. He used four sharp arrows to slay his four horses. The immensely illustrious one then brought down the charioteer with a kshurapra arrow. The maharatha countered the king of the Kurus with many arrows that were capable of penetrating the inner organs and was delighted. O king! Having been thus struck in the battle by the supreme arrows released by Shini's descendant, your son, Duryodhana, suddenly fled. The archer king mounted Chitrasena's chariot and a great lamentation arose in the world on seeing that the king was about to be devoured by Satyaki, like the moon by Rahu.

'"On hearing this great uproar, maharatha Kritavarma suddenly advanced towards the spot where the illustrious Madhava was. He brandished his supreme bow and censured his charioteer, urging him to speedily goad the horses and head swiftly in that direction. O great king! On seeing that he was descending, like Death with a gaping mouth, Yuyudhana spoke to his charioteer. 'With his arrows, Kritavarma is quickly advancing towards me on his chariot. Drive your chariot and let us clash against this supreme of all archers.' The horses were prepared well and were fast and advanced in the battle against Bhoja, who was revered by archers. Those two tigers among men were extremely angry and were like blazing fires. They clashed against each other, like two spirited tigers. Kritavarma struck Shini's descendant with twenty-six sharp arrows and his charioteer with seven. He struck Satvata's four horses, which were from the Sindhu region and were well trained and well controlled, with four supreme arrows. His[237] standard was golden and he brandished his giant bow, with a golden back. His armlets were golden and his armour was golden. He countered him with gold-tufted arrows. Wishing to leave and see Dhananjaya, Shini’s descendant also quickly struck Kritavarma with sharp arrows. Struck by his powerful enemy, the unassailable scorcher of enemies[238] trembled, like a mountain during an earthquake. Satyaki then quickly pierced Kritavarma’s four horses with sixty-three sharp arrows and his charioteer with seven. Satyaki then affixed an arrow with golden tufts and released it. It blazed like a giant fire and was like an angry serpent. The arrow was like Yama’s staff and he released it at Kritavarma. It penetrated his armour, which shone like the sun and was decorated with colourful gold. Having drunk his blood, it fiercely penetrated the earth. Afflicted by Satvata, he was drenched in blood. He cast aside his bow and sank down on the floor of the supreme chariot. His teeth were like that of a lion and he was infinite in his valour. But afflicted by Satyaki’s arrows, the bull among men sank down on his knees on the floor of the chariot. Having countered Kritavarma, who was like the thousand-armed one[239] and like an ocean that cannot be agitated, Satyaki left. That place was full of swords, lances and bows and populated by elephants, horses and chariots. It looked terrible, because of the blood shed by the bulls among the kshatriyas. While all the soldiers looked on, the bull of the Shini lineage passed through it. He immersed himself in that army and penetrated it, like the slayer of Vritra through an army of asuras. Meanwhile, Hardikya grasped another giant bow and stationed there, began to powerfully resist and fight with the Pandavas.”’

CHAPTER 1070(93)

‘Sanjaya said, “At the time when the soldiers were scattered by Shini’s descendant, Bharadvaja’s son repulsed him with a great shower of arrows. While all the soldiers looked on, a tumultuous clash commenced between Drona and Satvata, like that between Bali and Vasava. Drona pierced Shini’s grandson in the forehead with three colourful arrows that were completely made out of iron and were like venomous snakes. O great king! Pierced in the forehead by those arrows, Yuyudhana was as beautiful as a mountain with three peaks. Bharadvaja's son was looking for an opportunity in the battle. He released many other arrows, with roars like those of Indra's vajra. While the arrows released from Drona's bow were descending, Dasharha, who was supreme in the knowledge of weapons, severed them with two arrows that had excellent tufts. O lord of the earth! On beholding this dexterity of hand, Drona smiled and suddenly struck the bull among the Shini lineage with twenty arrows. He surpassed Yuyudhana's lightness of hand with his own dexterity and pierced him with fifty arrows, and then yet again with one hundred. O king! They arose from Drona's chariot, like large and angry serpents from a termite hill, and penetrated his body. In that fashion, Yuyudhana released hundreds and thousands of arrows. Those arrows could drink up blood and enveloped Drona's chariot. O venerable one! No difference in dexterity could be seen between the foremost of brahmanas and Satyaki. Those bulls among men were equal. Extremely angry, Satyaki struck Drona with nine arrows with drooping tufts and also struck his standard with sharp arrows. While Bharadvaja's son looked on, he struck his charioteer with one hundred arrows. On witnessing Yuyudhana's dexterity, maharatha Drona pierced Satyaki with seventy arrows and each of the horses with three. With a single arrow, he pierced the standard that was stationed on Madhava's chariot. In that battle, he then used another broad-headed arrow with golden tufts to sever the great-souled Madhava's bow. At this, maharatha Satyaki became very angry. He discarded that bow. He grasped a giant club and hurled it at Bharadvaja's son. It was made completely out of iron and was bound with strips of cloth. It descended suddenly. However, Drona used many arrows of diverse kinds to counter it. Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, then grasped another bow. He pierced Bharadvaja's brave son with many arrows that had been sharpened on stone. He pierced Drona in the battle and roared like a lion. But Drona, supreme among the wielders of all weapons, could not tolerate this. He grasped an iron javelin with a golden handle and swiftly hurled it towards Madhava's chariot. That javelin was like death, but it did not reach Shini's descendant. It shattered his chariot and with a terrible noise, fiercely penetrated the ground. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Shini's grandson pierced Drona with arrows and struck him on his right arm. O king! In that battle, using an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, Drona severed Madhava's great bow and struck the charioteer of his chariot with a javelin. For an instant, he[240] sank down senseless on the floor of the chariot. O king! Satyaki then performed a superhuman deed there. He grasped the reins himself and fought with Drona. O lord of the earth! In that encounter, maharatha Yuyudhana pierced the brahmana with a hundred arrows and was delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona released five arrows at him. In the battle, they penetrated his armour and drank his blood. Pierced by those terrible arrows, Satyaki became extremely angry. The brave one released arrows towards the one with the golden chariot. With an arrow, he brought Drona's charioteer down on the ground. With the great-souled Drona's charioteer slain, the horses began to run away. O king! In that battle, the radiant chariot whirled around in a thousand circles, like the sun. 'Drona's horses are running away. Grab them.' These were the sounds that arose from all the princes and the kings. O king! The maharathas quickly abandoned the battle with Satyaki. All of them swiftly rushed to the spot where Drona was. On seeing that all of them were running away, afflicted by Satvata's arrows, your soldiers were again shattered and distressed. Drona went and again stationed himself at the mouth of the vyuha. He had been borne away by horses that were as fleet as the wind and had been afflicted by Vrishni's arrows. The valiant one[241] saw that the vyuha had been shattered by the Pandus and the Panchalas. Therefore, he devoted himself to protecting the vyuha and did not follow Shini's descendant. The fire that was Drona consumed and countered the Pandus and the Panchalas. The flame of his ire blazed, like the sun that arises at the end of a yuga."'

CHAPTER 1071(94)

‘Sanjaya said, “O foremost among the bulls of the Kuru lineage! Having vanquished Drona and other foremost men on your side, with Hardikya at the forefront, the brave one of the Shini lineage laughed and spoke these words to his charioteer. ‘O charioteer! We are only instruments today. They have been consumed by Keshava and Phalguna. We have slain those whom that bull among men, the son of the lord of the gods, has already killed.’ Having thus spoken in that great battle, the bull among the Shini lineage, fierce archer and the destroyer of enemies, swiftly showered powerful arrows in every direction, like a hawk in search of flesh. The foremost of brave ones was borne on horses that had the complexion of the moon, or conch shells. He immersed himself in the soldiers and though they surrounded him from all sides, no one was capable of withstanding him. That fierce man was like the rays of the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was valiant and his spirit was indomitable. Not a single one from those masses was capable of standing up to him. His prowess was like that of the one with a thousand eyes.[242] He was like the sun in the firmament, when the rainy season is over.

“‘There was a colourful warrior named Sudarshana and he was full of intolerance. He bore bow and arrows and sported golden armour. That supreme among kings advanced against Satyaki and sought to counter him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! An extremely terrible encounter took place between them and the warriors on your side, and the Somakas praised it. The large number of immortals compared it to that between Vritra and Indra. Sudarshana pierced the foremost one of the Satvata lineage with hundreds of extremely sharp arrows. But before those arrows could reach him, the bull among the Shini lineage struck them down with his own arrows. Sudarshana was stationed on his chariot. In similar fashion, when Satyaki, who was like Shakra, released arrows at him, Sudarshana severed those supreme arrows into two or three fragments. On seeing that his arrows were destroyed by the force of Satyaki’s arrows, Sudarshana, whose energy was fierce, became angry. He released golden and colourful arrows. He drew his bow completely back up to his ear and again released three sharp arrows that had excellent tufts and were like the fire. These pierced Satyaki's body armour and penetrated his body. Yet again, the son of the king affixed another four flaming arrows and struck the four horses that possessed the complexion of silver. Shini's grandson was like Indra in his valour. Thus afflicted, the spirited one quickly released a mass of extremely sharp arrows and killed Sudarshana's horses, roaring loudly. He released a broad-headed arrow that was like the vajra or thunder and sliced off the head of his[243] charioteer. The brave one from the Shini lineage then used a kshurapra arrow to sever Sudarshana's head. It sported earrings and was like the full moon. It possessed a radiant face and was severed from the body. O king! This was like the battle in ancient times, when the wielder of the vajra used extreme force to kill Bala. Having slain the son and the grandson of a king in the battle, the spirited and great-souled bull of the Yadu lineage was overcome by great delight. He was as resplendent as the king of the gods. He then followed the path that Arjuna had taken, repulsing your soldiers with his mass of arrows. The chariot was borne by well-trained horses and the brave one among men filled everyone with wonder. All the supreme warriors who were assembled there honoured him and wondered at his fierce deeds. With his arrows, he was like a blazing fire that consumed everything that came within the range of the arrows.'"

CHAPTER 1072(95)

‘Sanjaya said, “The great-souled and intelligent Satyaki, the bull of the Vrishni lineage, killed Sudarshana and spoke these words to his charioteer. ‘O son![244] We have passed through the impenetrable and great ocean that is Drona’s army. It is full of chariots, horses and elephants. The arrows and javelins are the garlands of waves. The swords are the fish and the clubs are the crocodiles. The weapons of the brave ones make a loud roar. This is terrible and is destructive of life. There is a terrible din created by musical instruments. Warriors find this pleasant to the touch. But it is unassailable to those who desire victory. There are the forces of Jalasandha, surrounded by flesh-eating ones. But I think that the remaining part of the army is like a small river. It only has a little bit of water. Therefore, fearlessly, urge the horses forward. I think that Savyasachi is only the distance of a hand away and we will reach him. In the battle, we have vanquished the intolerable Drona and his followers and Hardikya, supreme among warriors. I think that we have reached Dhananjaya. At the sight of innumerable soldiers, no fear is engendered in me. They are like dried grass during the summer, before a blazing fire. Behold. This is the ground along which Kiriti, the foremost of the Pandavas, has passed. It has been rendered uneven by large numbers of infantry, horses, chariots and elephants that have fallen. I think that we are close to the one with the white horses, with Krishna as the charioteer. The sound of the infinitely energetic Gandiva can be heard. From the omens that manifest themselves before me, Arjuna will kill Saindhava before the sun has set. Go slowly and preserve the strength of the horses. Proceed towards the army of the enemy. That is where the armoured ones are, with Suyodhana at the forefront. The Kambojas are indomitable in battle. They are armoured and are the performers of cruel deeds. There are armed Yavanas, wielding bows and arrows. There are Shakas, Kiratas, Daradas, Barbaras and Tamraliptakas. There are many other mlecchas, with diverse weapons in their hands. All of them are stationed with their faces towards me, wishing to fight. This is an extremely terrible fortress, with chariots, elephants and infantry.

But consider that we have already passed through this and have slain them.’

‘“The charioteer replied, ‘O Varshneya! O one who has truth as his valour! Know that I have no fear, even if the extremely enraged son of Jamadagni[245] were to be stationed before us now. O mighty-armed one! Even if it were to be Drona, best among rathas, or Kripa, or the lord of Madra, I have no fear as long as I am under your protection. O destroyer of enemies! You have already vanquished many of them in battle. I have never exhibited any fear in battle. O brave one! Why should I show it now, in this battle with a trifle?[246] O one with a long life! Which route shall I take to reach Dhananjaya? O Varshneya! Whom are you angry with? To whom has death presented itself? Who have made up their minds to go to Yama’s residence today? You are like death at the end of a yuga and exhibit your valour in battle. On witnessing this valour, which warriors will run away? O mighty-armed one! Who are the ones whom King Vaivasvata[247] has remembered today?’

‘“Satyaki said, ‘Like Vasava against the danavas, I will slay the ones with the shaved heads and fulfil my vow. Take me towards the Kambojas. Having caused carnage among them today, I will swiftly go to Pandava. The Kouravas, together with Suyodhana, will witness my valour today. O charioteer! I will afflict all the soldiers and kill the ones with the shaven heads. In the battle today, I will shatter the soldiers of the Kouravas. Having heard many kinds of lamentations, Suyodhana will be satisfied. Today, in the battle, I will show my preceptor, the great-souled one with the white horses, who is foremost among the Pandavas, the path that he has indicated to me. Thousands of foremost among warriors will be slain by my arrows today. On witnessing this, King Duryodhana will suffer from repentance. I will release supreme arrows today, using the dexterity of my hands. The Kouravas will behold my bow, like a circle of fire. My arrows will make copious quantities of blood flow from their limbs. On witnessing the slaughter of the soldiers, Suyodhana will suffer from repentance. In my angry form, I will slay the best of the best today. Today, Suyodhana will think that the world has two Arjunas. In the battle today, thousands of kings will be killed by me. On witnessing this, King Duryodhana will repent the great battle. Today, I will show my affection and devotion to the great-souled Pandavas. I will kill thousands of kings and show the king.'"[248]

'Sanjaya said, "Thus instructed, the charioteer urged Yuyudhana's supreme horses, which were trained and well skilled. Those horses had the complexion of the moon and he urged them to their greatest speed. They possessed the speed of the wind, or of thought, and seemed to devour the sky as they quickly sped to the spot where the Yavanas were. As he reached that army, without retreating, they exhibited the dexterity of their hands and enveloped Satyaki with many showers of arrows. O king! But before those arrows could reach him, Satyaki used his powerful arrows with drooping tufts to sever those arrows and other weapons. He then used extremely sharp arrows that were gold-tufted, with the feathers of vultures, to sever the heads and arms of the Yavanas. Some of those arrows penetrated the armour made out of steel and brass and passing through the bodies, penetrated the earth in every direction. In the battle, the mlecchas were slaughtered by the brave Satyaki. Hundreds of them lost their lives and fell down on the ground. The bow was drawn back to its full extent and an incessant stream of arrows was shot. He afflicted and oppressed them and killed five, six, seven and eight Yavana's with a single arrow. O lord of the earth! Thousands of Kambojas, Shakas, Shabaras, Kiratas and Barbaras fell down and the earth was full of mire made out of flesh and blood. Shini's descendant caused a great destruction among your forces. The earth was strewn everywhere with the helmets of bandits[249] and their severed and shaved heads, which looked like birds without feathers. The field of battle was resplendent, with blood and wounds on the limbs of torsos that were strewn in every direction, like the sky covered with coppery clouds. The arrows had excellent joints and were like the vajra or thunder to the touch. Horses and carts were destroyed and scattered around on the ground. The few that were left were scattered. They sought to protect their lives and were bereft of their senses. O great king!

In that battle, those armoured ones were vanquished by Yuyudhana. They used their whips to urge the parshnis and horses to adopt the greatest speed and run away in different directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, he drove away the invincible Kamboja soldiers, the soldiers of the Yavanas and the great army of Shakas. Thus did Satyaki, the tiger among men for whom truth was his valour, defeat those on your side. He was delighted and urged his charioteer to proceed. O lord of the earth! On seeing that he was advancing as the one who was protecting Arjuna's rear, the charanas were delighted, and together with those on your side, honoured him."'

CHAPTER 1073(96)

'Sanjaya said, "Having defeated the Yavanas and the Kambojas, Yuyudhana, supreme among rathas, passed through the midst of your soldiers and headed towards Arjuna. That tiger among men possessed arrows as his teeth. His colourful armour was like a picture. He was like a tiger slaying deer and terrified the soldiers. As he traversed along the path on his chariot, he fiercely brandished his bow. It was extremely powerful and had a golden back. It was decorated with golden moons. His armlets and helmet were golden and he was covered in golden armour. The brave one possessed a supreme golden standard that was as resplendent as Meru's summit. In the battle, the circle of his bow had energy like that of the sun with its rays. He was like the sun when it has arisen in the autumn and, among those men, was as resplendent as the sun. The bull among men had the shoulders of a bull. He was brave and had the eyes of a bull. He penetrated the midst of your soldiers, like a bull in the midst of cattle. He was like a maddened elephant, advancing against another maddened elephant. He was like an elephant with shattered temples, stationed in the midst of a herd. Those on your side advanced against him in the battle, as if they wished to be killed by a tiger. He passed through Drona's army and through the impenetrable army of Bhoja. He passed through the ocean that was Jalasandha and through the army of the Kambojas. He crossed through that ocean of soldiers and escaped from the makara that was Hardikya.

'"Satyaki was then surrounded by extremely enraged rathas from your side. There were Duryodhana, Chitrasena, Duhshasana, Vivimshati, Shakuni, Duhsaha, the youthful Durmarshana, Kratha and many other brave and invincible ones who were armed. As Satyaki proceeded, they angrily followed him from behind. O venerable one! A great uproar then arose amidst your soldiers. It was like the ocean agitated by the force of the wind during the night of the full moon or the new moon. The bull among the Shini lineage glanced at all those who were advancing against him. He laughed and addressed his charioteer, 'Advance slowly. This army of Dhritarashtra's son is advancing against me. It is swiftly headed in my direction, with elephants, horses and infantry. O charioteer! All the directions are resounding with the roar of chariots. The earth, the firmament and the ocean are trembling. O son! In this great battle, I will counter this ocean of soldiers, like the shoreline resisting the abode of the waters, when it swells at the time of the full moon. O charioteer! Behold my valour in this great battle, like that of Indra. I will pierce the soldiers of the enemy with sharp arrows. Behold. In the battle, I will slay the infantry, horses, rathas and elephants and pierce their bodies with thousands of my arrows that are like the fire.' While the infinitely energetic Satyaki was speaking in this way, the soldiers quickly approached him, wishing to fight. 'Kill. Attack. Stay. Watch. See.' These were the words those brave ones spoke. Satyaki killed three hundred horses and four hundred elephants with his sharp arrows. The encounter that ensued between him and those archers was tumultuous and led to the destruction of men, like the famous battle between the gods and the asuras. O venerable one! Your son's soldiers were like a mass of clouds. However, Shini's grandson received them with arrows that were like venomous serpents. O great king! Without any fear, in that battle, the valiant one shrouded them with a net of arrows and killed many on your side. O Indra among kings! The spectacle that I witnessed there was supremely wonderful. Not a single one of Satyaki's arrows was unsuccessful. That large ocean of soldiers was full of chariots, elephants and horses and also full of foot soldiers and was forced to stand still when it encountered Shini's descendant as the shoreline. The terrified men, elephants and steeds in your army advanced and were slain in every direction by the arrows. They roamed around there, like cattle afflicted by the winter. We did not see any infantry, chariots, elephants, riders and horses that were not pierced by Yuyudhana's arrows. O king! Not even Phalguna had caused such carnage amongst the army, as was caused by Satyaki. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Shini's grandson surpassed Arjuna in the battle.

'"King Duryodhana pierced Satvata with three arrows, pierced his charioteer and struck his four horses with four arrows. He then pierced Satyaki with three arrows and again struck him with another eight. Duhshasana pierced the bull among the Shini lineage with sixteen arrows, Shakuni with twenty-five, Chitrasena with five and Duhsaha pierced Satyaki in the chest with fifteen arrows. O great king! The tiger among the Vrishni lineage was thus struck by their arrows and pierced each of them back with three arrows. The supremely energetic one severely pierced them. Shini's descendant was dexterous and brave and roamed around in that battle, like a hawk. He severed Soubala's bow and his arm-guard. He pierced Duryodhana between the breasts with three arrows. The bull among the Shini lineage pierced Chitrasena with a hundred arrows, Duhsaha with ten and Duhshasana with twenty. O lord of the earth! Your brother-in-law[250] picked up another bow and pierced Satyaki with eight arrows, following this up with another five. O king! Duhshasana pireced Satyaki with ten arrows, Duhsaha with three and Durmukha with twelve. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Duryodhana pierced Madhava with seventy-three arrows and then used three sharp arrows to pierce his charioteer. All those brave maharathas made their efforts and Satyaki pierced them back with five arrows each. O lord! He used a broad-headed arrow to kill your son's charioteer[251] and bring him down on the ground from the chariot. O king! O lord of the earth! When the charioteer was killed, the horses that had the speed of the wind and the soldiers bore the chariot away from the field of battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king's chariot was running away, hundreds of your soldiers fled. Satyaki enveloped them with sharp arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. In every direction, he drove away all your soldiers. O king! Satyaki then advanced towards the chariot of the one with the white horses. He released arrows and protected himself and his charioteer and those on your side honoured him."'

CHAPTER 1074(97)

'Dhritarashtra said, "Shini's descendant proceeded towards Arjuna, crushing that large army. O Sanjaya! What did my shameless sons do? When they confronted death in that battle, how did they hold up their spirits? The conduct of Shini's descendant is like that of Savyasachi. In the midst of the soldiers, how could the kshatriyas bear to be defeated? How did the immensely illustrious Satyaki pass through them in that battle? O Sanjaya! As long as my sons were alive there, how could Shini's descendant progress in that battle? Tell me everything in detail. O son![252] What I have heard from you, about the clash between one and many, with maharathas on the side of the enemy, is extremely wonderful. I think that destiny must be against my sons and they suffer from ill fortune, since they are being slain in the battle by the great-souled Satvata. O Sanjaya! A single one is sufficient to counter my entire army. When Yuyudhana is angry, let all the Pandavas remain standing.[253] He has vanquished Drona, who is accomplished and unassailable in fighting, in the battle. Satyaki will kill my sons, like a lion against large numbers of deer. There were many brave warriors, Kritavarma and the others. But in the battle, they were incapable of fighting with that bull among men and he will kill them. Phalguna himself was incapable of fighting in the way that Shini's immensely illustrious grandson fought."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! All this has happened because of Duryodhana's evil counsel and deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen attentively to what I am telling you. On your son's instructions, the samshaptakas returned, having made up their minds to fight to their utmost. There were three thousand riders, with Duryodhana at the forefront—Shakas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, Yavanas, Paradas, Kunindas, Tanganas, Ambashthas, Pishachas and those from mountainous regions. They attacked Shini's descendant, like insects towards a flame. They were joined by rathas from the mountainous regions, those who fought with stones. O king! Five hundred such brave ones attacked Shini's descendant. There were one thousand rathas and a hundred maharathas. There were one thousand elephants and two thousand horses. Those maharathas showered many different kinds of arrows. In that battle, infantry attacked Shini's descendant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! Duhshasana urged all of them to surround Satyaki and kill him. We witnessed the great and marvellous conduct of Shini's descendant. Without any fear, he single-handedly fought against many. He slew that array of rathas, the army of elephants, all the riders and all those dasyus. He mangled and routed them with his supreme weapons. Many wheels were shattered and beautiful chariot poles were destroyed. Bumpers were fragmented and standards brought down. The earth was strewn with armour and whisks. O venerable one! There were garlands, ornaments, garments and yokes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth was littered with these, like the sky with planets. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The best of elephants, with the forms of mountains, were brought down. They were born in the lineages of Anjana, Vamana, Supratika, Mahapadma, Airavata and many other lineages.[254] O king! The best of tuskers were slain in large numbers and lay down there. O king! The best of horses, from Vanayu, mountainous regions, Kamboja and Bahlika breeds, were slain there by Satyaki. There were foot soldiers who had been raised in many different countries, born in many races. Hundreds and thousands of them were killed there by Shini's descendant.

'"When the soldiers confronted death in this way, Duhshasana spoke to the dasyus. 'Return. You are not those who are familiar with dharma.[255] Why are you running away without fighting?' On seeing that they did not listen, your son, Duhshasana, urged the brave ones from the mountainous regions, the ones who fought with stones. ‘You are skilled in fighting with stones and Satyaki is not familiar with this. You know about fighting with stones. Use that mode to kill the one who desires to fight. None of the Kurus are skilled in fighting with stones. Do not be frightened. Attack. Satyaki will not be able to approach you. Those mountain-dwellers raised boulders that were like elephant cubs, and desiring death, advanced against Yuyudhana. Others hurled those at him, wishing to kill Satvata. They were urged by your son and hemmed him in from all directions. On seeing them descend on him, desiring to fight with boulders, Satyaki fought against them and released three hundred arrows. Those from the mountainous regions rained down a tumultuous shower of boulders. However, the bull among the Shini lineage countered these with iron arrows that were like serpents. These shattered the boulders and the fragments shone like fireflies. O venerable one! Some of these slew the soldiers and sounds of lamentation arose. O king! There were five hundred brave ones with giant boulders raised. Their arms were severed and fell down on the ground. Other brave ones who fought with stones were stationed there. Many thousands of these were slain and it was extraordinary. The foremost among them again attacked, showering boulders from every direction. They held iron in their hands. There were Daradas with spears in their hands and Khasas and Tanganas. There were Ambashthas and Kunindas. They were enraged and Satyaki was also wrathful. The immensely strong one released iron arrows and countered them. With his sharp arrows, he shattered those boulders in the sky. O king! This produced a noise that made elephants, horses, rathas and infantry run away. Struck by shards from those boulders, powerful and armoured men were incapable of remaining there and roamed around. The remaining elephants[256] were covered with blood. Their heads and frontal globes were shattered. They ran away from Yuyudhana’s chariot. O venerable one! A great noise arose among your soldiers when they were afflicted by Madhava, like that of the fierce ocean.

‘“On hearing this tumultuous sound, Drona told his charioteer. ‘O charioteer! In this battle, maharatha Satvata is angry. As he roams around in the encounter, like Death, he is shattering the soldiers in many ways. O charioteer! Take the chariot to the spot where the tumultuous sound has arisen. There is no doubt that Yuyudhana is fighting with the mountain-dwellers. It is there that all the rathas are being destroyed and the horses are running away. The foot soldiers are bereft of their armour. They are wounded and are falling down. In that melee, the charioteers can no longer control their horses.’ Having been thus addressed by Bharadvaja’s intelligent son, the charioteer spoke to Drona, supreme among those who wielded weapons. ‘O one with a long life! The Kourava soldiers are running away, in every direction. Behold. The warriors have been shattered and are fleeing here and there. The brave Panchalas and Pandavas have united. They are attacking us from every direction, wishing to kill you. O destroyer of enemies! The time has come for you to decide what must be done. Should we remain here, or should we advance further, towards where Satyaki is proceeding?’ O venerable one! Thus did he speak to Bharadvaja’s son. At that time, Shini’s descendant was seen, killing many different kinds of rathas. In the encounter, those on your side were killed by Yuyudhana. They abandoned Yuyudhana’s chariot and fled towards Drona’s army. All of them were terrified and fled towards Drona’s chariot. With other rathas, Duhshasana had already retreated there earlier.”’

CHAPTER 1075(98)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Duhshasana’s chariot was stationed near his, Bharadvaja’s son spoke these words to Duhshasana. ‘O Duhshasana! Why are all these rathas running away? Is the king well and is Saindhava still alive? You are a prince and your brother is a maharatha. Why are you running away from the battle? Accept the status of heir apparent.[257] You have yourself brought on this great enmity with the Panchalas and Pandavas. In the battle, how can you be frightened of the single-handed Satyaki? In the gambling match in earlier times, when you grasped the dice, did you not know that they would become terrible arrows in the future, like venomous serpents? Your words towards the

Pandavas were especially hateful. You were the cause of the hardships that Droupadi faced in earlier times. Where is that insolence, pride and swagger about valour now? You enraged the Parthas, who are like venomous serpents. Why are you running away now? The army of the Bharatas is sorrowing now, as is King Suyodhana. He has a harsh brother, who is now intent on running away. O brave one! The army is shattered and is afflicted by terror. There is no doubt that you should resort to the strength of your arms and protect it now. But you are abandoning the fight in fright now and are delighting the enemy. O destroyer of enemies! You are the leader of your army and are fleeing. When the refuge is itself frightened, which other terrified person will remain stationed in the battle? O unblemished one! You are fighting with the single-handed Satvata now. Even then, your mind turns towards flying from the field of battle. O Kourava! What will you do when you behold the wielder of Gandiva, Bhimasena and the twins in the battle? In a battle, Phalguna's arrows are like the sun and the fire in their energy. Satyaki's arrows are equal to those and you are terrified and are running away from those. In that event, let there be peace and hand over the earth to Dharmaraja. Have peace with the Pandavas before Phalguna's iron arrows, which are like snakes that have cast off their skins, penetrate your body. Have peace with the Pandavas before the great-souled Parthas kill one hundred of your brothers in battle and fling them down on the ground.[258] Have peace with the Pandavas before King Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, and Krishna, who prides himself in battle, are enraged. Have peace with the Pandavas before the mighty-armed Bhima penetrates the large army and grasps your brothers. This is what Bhishma told your brother Suyodhana earlier. "O amiable one! The Pandavas cannot be vanquished in battle. Have peace with the Pandavas." But your wicked brother, Suyodhana, did not act accordingly. Therefore, resolve to fight and endeavour to battle with the Pandavas. Swiftly go on your chariot to the spot where Satyaki is stationed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without your presence, the army will be driven away. Truth is Satyaki's valour. For your own sake, fight with him in the battle.' Having been thus addressed, your son did not say anything in reply. He pretended not to have heard what had been said and went to the spot where Satyaki was.

'"He was accompanied by a large army of mlecchas who did not retreat. Having approached Yuyudhana in the battle, he sought to fight with him. Drona, foremost among rathas, angrily advanced against the Panchalas and the Pandavas, using a medium speed. In that battle, Drona penetrated the Panchala array. He drove away those warriors, in hundreds and thousands. O great king! Drona proclaimed his name in the battle and caused great carnage among the Pandus, Panchalas and Matsyas. The radiant Viraketu, the son of Panchala, attacked him. He pierced Drona with five arrows that had drooping tufts. He pierced his standard with one and his charioteer with another seven. O great king! What I witnessed in that encounter was extraordinary. Despite his violence, Drona could not approach Panchala in that battle. O venerable one! O king! On seeing that Drona had been checked in that battle, all the Panchalas[259] desired the victory of Dharma's son and surrounded him from all sides. O king! They enveloped Drona with arrows that were like fire, extremely thick javelins and many kinds of weapons. O king! But in every direction, Drona destroyed those masses of arrows, like a giant cloud in the sky, driven away by the wind. The destroyer of enemy heroes then released an extremely terrible arrow, which was like the sun and the fire, towards Viraketu's chariot. O king! That arrow penetrated the descendant of the Panchala lineage and quickly entered the earth, like a flaming and red mountain.[260] The descendant of the Panchala lineage swiftly fell down from the chariot, like a giant *champaka* tree that has been shattered by the wind and has fallen from a mountain top. When that prince, immensely strong and a great archer, was killed, the Panchalas quickly surrounded Drona from every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Chitraketu, Sudhanva, Chitravarma and Chitraratha were stricken with grief on account of their brother. They attacked and unitedly fought against Bharadvaja's son. They released showers of arrows, like clouds at the end of the summer. He was struck in many ways by these maharatha princes. Those princes were angry in the battle. But he deprived them of their horses, charioteers and chariots. The immensely illustrious one then used other extremely sharp and broad-headed arrows to sever and bring down their heads, as if he was plucking flowers. O extremely radiant king! Slain, they fell down on the ground from their chariots. They were like daityas and danavas, in the ancient battle between the gods and the asuras.

'"Those maharatha Panchalas were like the gods. On seeing that they had been killed, Dhrishtadyumna became extremely angry and tears flowed from his eyes. In that battle, he angrily advanced towards Drona's chariot. O king! In that battle, Drona was enveloped by Panchala's[261] arrows and on seeing this, great sounds of lamentation suddenly arose. But though he was enveloped in many ways by the great-souled Parshata, Drona was not distressed and smilingly, continued to fight. O great king! Panchala became senseless with rage and wrathfully struck Drona in the chest with ninety arrows with drooping tufts. Bharadvaja's powerful and immensely illustrious son was severely wounded. He lost his senses and sat down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing him in that state, the valiant Dhrishtadyumna cast aside his bow. The brave one quickly grasped a sword. O venerable one! The maharatha quickly descended from his chariot and swiftly ascended the chariot of Bharadvaja's son. His eyes were red with rage and he wished to sever his[262] head from his body. Meanwhile, the immensely strong Drona regained his senses and grasped a bow. O king! He pierced him with *vaitastika* arrows[263] that were meant to be used for fighting at close quarters. O king! In that battle, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna was struck by vaitastika arrows that are meant for fighting at close quarters. These were known to Drona and they weakened Dhrishtadyumna. Having been struck by many such arrows, the immensely strong one quickly descended from the chariot. The brave one's speed had been baffled. The brave one ascended his own chariot and grasped a giant bow. In that encounter, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna pierced Drona. O great king! The clash between them was marvellous and large numbers of beings applauded it, the kshatriyas, as well as other soldiers present there. O king! The Panchalas loudly exclaimed, ‘There is no doubt that, having engaged in this encounter, Drona will be subjugated by Dhrishtadyumna.’ In that battle, Drona quickly brought down the head of Dhrishtadyumna’s charioteer, like a ripe fruit from a tree. O king! The great-souled one’s horses ran away. When they had run away in the battle,[264] the powerful one drove away the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. Bharadvaja’s powerful son defeated the Pandus and the Panchalas. The scorcher of enemies re-established his vyuha and stationed himself there. O lord! The Pandavas evinced no interest in defeating him in the battle.”’

CHAPTER 1076(99)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Meanwhile, Duhshasana attacked Shini’s descendant. He showered thousands of arrows, like a cloud pouring down rain. He pierced Satyaki with sixty arrows, and yet again with sixteen. But in that battle, he could not make him tremble. He[265] was like Mount Mainaka. The brave one covered Duhshasana with a severe storm of arrows. It was as if a spider had got a mosquito[266] within its strands. On seeing that Duhshasana was afflicted by hundreds of arrows, the king[267] urged the Trigartas to advance towards Yuyudhana’s chariot. Those performers of evil deeds approached near Yuyudhana. There were three thousand Trigartas, skilled in fighting. They surrounded him with a large army of chariots. They had resolved to fight and had sworn to be samshaptakas.[268] They advanced in that battle and released showers of arrows. Five hundred foremost warriors were stationed at the forefront of that array. But the supreme one of the Shini lineage quickly uprooted, brought down and killed them with his arrows. They were like giant trees that had been shattered by the force of a violent wind. O lord of the earth! Many chariots and standards were shattered. Horses with golden harnesses fell down on the ground. O great king! The arrows released by Shini’s descendant made them flow with blood and they were as beautiful as flowering kimshukas. In that battle, those on your side were slaughtered by Yuyudhana. They could not find a protector, like elephants that have sunk into a swamp. All of them fled towards Drona's chariot. They were like giant serpents, penetrating a hole, because of fear of the king of the birds.[269] The brave one killed five hundred warriors with arrows that were like venomous serpents and then slowly advanced towards Dhananjaya's chariot.

'"As that best of men was advancing, your son, Duhshasana, quickly pierced him with nine arrows that had drooping tufts. The great archer[270] pierced him back with five sharp arrows that were gold-tufted and had the feathers of vultures. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Duhshasana laughed and pierced Satyaki with three arrows, and yet again with five. Shini's descendant pierced your son with five arrows. In that battle, he severed his bow and while smiling, proceeded towards Arjuna. Duhshasana became angry. As the brave one from the Vrishni lineage was proceeding, he wished to kill him and hurled a javelin that was entirely made out of iron at him. O king! Your son hurled that terrible javelin. But Satyaki used sharp arrows tufted with heron feathers to shatter it into a hundred fragments. O lord of men! Your son then grasped another bow. He pierced Satyaki with ten arrows and roared like a lion. In that encounter, Satyaki became enraged and confounded your son. He struck him between the breasts with arrows that were like the flames of fires. He again pierced him with ten sharp and pointed arrows that were completely made out of iron. Duhshasana pierced Satyaki back with twenty arrows. O great king! Satvata pierced him between the breasts with three arrows that were extremely powerful and had drooping tufts. The maharatha used some sharp arrows to kill his mounts and extremely angry, slew his charioteer with arrows with drooping tufts. He severed his bow with a broad-headed arrow and his arm-guard with another five. The one who was skilled in the use of supreme weapons then used a couple of broad-headed arrows to sever his standard and the pole of his chariot. He then used sharp arrows to bring down the two parshnis. His[271] bow was severed. He was without a chariot. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. The general of the Trigartas then picked him up on his own chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shini's descendant followed him for some time. But remembering Bhimasena's words, the mighty-armed one did not kill him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the assembly hall and in everyone's presence, Bhimasena had sworn to kill your sons in battle. O lord! O king! Thus did Satyaki vanquish Duhshasana in that encounter and quickly proceeded along Dhananjaya's route."'

CHAPTER 1077(100)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "Were there no maharathas among my soldiers who could kill or stop Satyaki on his journey? Truth is his valour. In that battle, he single-handedly accomplished deeds that were like those of the great Indra against the danavas. In a battle, he was Shakra's equal in strength. Or is it the case that Satyaki's route was empty? Single-handedly, the bull among men drove away many soldiers. How did Shini's great-souled descendant single-handedly overcome the many who attacked him and wished to fight with him? O Sanjaya! Tell me all this."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! The soldiers prepared themselves, with chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. Your soldiers were tremendous and it was like the end of a yuga. O one who gives honours! Your entire army was assembled. It is my view that an assemblage like this has never been seen in the world. O lord of the earth! The gods and the assembled charanas said, 'A vyuha like the one Drona has formed at the time of Jayadratha's death will never again be seen.' There was a terrible roar, like that of the oceans. In that battle, those large numbers of soldiers rushed against each other in waves. O supreme among men! There were many kings, hundreds and thousands, who had assembled on your side and that of the Pandavas. Those brave ones were angry. They were the performers of firm deeds in battle. A great and tumultuous sound arose and it made the body hair stand up. O venerable one! Bhimasena, Dhrishtadyumna, Nakula, Sahadeva and Pandava Dharmaraja exclaimed, 'Come. Strike. Attack with force. The brave Madhava and Pandava have penetrated into the forces of the enemy. Swiftly act, so that they can advance towards Jayadratha's death with ease.' Thus did they urge the soldiers. ‘If they are vanquished, the Kurus will have succeeded in their objective and we will have been been defeated. Unite and quickly agitate this ocean of soldiers, like extremely forceful winds against the ocean.’ O king! They were goaded by Bhimasena and Panchala.[272] In the battle, they killed the Kouravas, ready to give up their beloved lives. They were greatly energetic and desired death from weapons in that battle, for the sake of heaven and for the sake of their friends. They were not interested in protecting their lives. O king! In similar fashion, those on your side desired great fame. The noble ones desired to fight and remained stationed in the battle. A tumultuous battle commenced and it gave rise to great fear. Having killed all the soldiers, Satyaki proceeded towards Arjuna. In every direction in that battle, the colourful rays of the sun illuminated the armour and rebuffed the sight of the soldiers who sought to strike back. O great king! In similar fashion, without any fear, Duryodhana made efforts to immerse himself in the great army of the Pandaveyas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a fierce clash between them and him. There was a great destruction among all the soldiers.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O charioteer! When he advanced against those soldiers, he must himself have confronted great hardships. I hope he did not turn his back on the battle. It seems to me that the encounter between the one and the many must have been unequal, especially because the single one was a king.[273] Duryodhana has been reared in great happiness. He is also the lord of prosperity and of men. When he single-handedly confronted many, I hope he did not retreat.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the extraordinary battle that your son fought, one against many. Listen. I will describe it. In that battle, Duryodhana suddenly descended on the Pandava soldiers and agitated them like an elephant, as if he was an elephant among lotuses. O Kourava! On seeing that your son was acting in this way against the army, the Panchalas, with Bhimasena at the forefront, attacked. He[274] pierced Bhimasena with ten arrows, each of Madri’s sons with three, Virata and Drupada with six each and

Shikhandi with one hundred. He pierced Dhrishtadyumna with twenty, Dharma's son with seven, the Kekayas with ten and each of Droupadi's sons with three arrows. In that battle, like an angry Yama against beings, he used his fierce arrows to bring down hundreds of other warriors, elephants and rathas. As he affixed and released arrows, his bow was seen to be stretched into a continuous circle. He killed the enemy with the skill and strength of his weapons. He killed the foes with his giant bow that possessed a golden back. O venerable one! The eldest of the Pandavas[275] used a couple of broad-headed arrows to sever his bow into three fragments and pierced him with many sharp and excellent arrows. But having touched the armour, they shattered and penetrated the earth. The delighted Parthas surrounded Yudhishthira, like the rejoicing gods and maharshis around Shakra, when Vritra had been killed. At this, King Duryodhana picked up a firmer bow and asked the Pandava king to wait. When your maharatha son spoke and advanced against the king, the Panchalas, desiring victory, cheerfully counter-attacked. Wishing to protect him,[276] Drona received the warring Pandavas. He was like a mountain receiving rain from a cloud that has been stirred up by a violent wind. O king! There was a loud noise in that battle and it rose above everything else. It was as if Rudra was sporting, when he destroys all living beings."'

CHAPTER 1078(101)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! In the afternoon, there was again an encounter between Drona and the Somakas. It was accompanied by a sound that was like that of clouds thundering. The foremost among men[277] was stationed on a chariot with red horses. He attacked the Pandus in that battle, resorting to a medium speed. The immensely strong and great archer was engaged in what would bring you pleasure. He was born from a supreme pot.[278] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He used sharp arrows with colourful tufts and struck down the best of warriors. O king! Bharadvaja's powerful son seemed to be sporting in that battle.

'"Maharatha Brihatkshatra from Kekaya, the eldest of five brothers and brave and indomitable in battle, advanced against him. He released sharp arrows and severely shrouded the preceptor. He was like a mighty cloud that releases rain on Gandhamadana. O great king! At this, Drona became extremely angry. He released seventeen arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. Those terrible arrows were released from Drona's bow and were like venomous serpents. However, in the battle, he cheerfully sliced down each of them with ten of his own arrows. On beholding his dexterity, the best of the brahmanas laughed and dispatched eight arrows that had drooping tufts. On seeing these arrows released from Drona's bow swiftly descend on him, he severed those arrows with firm and sharp arrows of his own. O great king! Your soldiers were astounded at this. They beheld Brihatkshatra perform an extremely difficult deed. O great king! Drona also applauded Kekaya's special act. In that battle, the greatly ascetic one then invoked the divine and invincible brahmastra. O king! But in that battle, the mighty-armed Kekaya released his own brahmastra and countered it. Having destroyed the weapon of Bharadvaja's son in that encounter, he pierced the brahmana with sixty arrows with gold tufts that had been sharpened on stone. At this, Drona, best among men, released an iron arrow. O supreme among kings! This penetrated his armour and entered the ground, like a cobra penetrating a termite hill when it is released. In that battle, the arrow penetrated Kekaya and entered the earth. O great king! He was thus severely pierced by Drona, knowledgeable about weapons, and became overcome by great rage. He dilated his beautiful eyes and pierced Drona with seventy arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. With a broad-headed arrow, he struck the charioteer in the arms and the chest. O venerable one! Pierced by Brihatkshatra in many ways, Drona released many sharp arrows towards Kekaya's chariot. Drona made maharatha Brihatkshatra anxious. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! He released sharp arrows towards Kekaya and quickly struck him severely between the breasts. The heart of that tiger among men was shattered and he fell down from his chariot.

'"O king! On the death of the maharatha from Kekaya, Shishupala's son became extremely angry and spoke to his charioteer. 'O charioteer! Go to the spot where the armoured Drona is stationed and is slaughtering all the Kekayas and the Panchalas and their armies.' On hearing his words, the charioteer took the supreme of rathas to Drona, on swift horses that hailed from Kamboja. Dhrishtaketu, bull among the Chedi lineage was extremely proud of his strength and suddenly attacked Drona, like an insect towards a flame. Having attacked, he pierced Drona, his horses, his chariot and his standard with sixty arrows. He again used other sharp arrows, as if against a sleeping tiger. As the powerful king endeavoured in the battle, Drona used a sharp kshurapra arrow to sever his bow in the middle. Shishupala's maharatha son picked up another bow. He again pierced Drona with extremely sharp and firm arrows. The immensely strong Drona killed his horses and his charioteer and pierced him with twenty-five arrows. In that battle, the king of the Chedis was without a chariot and without his bow. He angrily hurled a club towards the chariot of Bharadvaja's son. It was terrible in form and fearsome. It was heavy, completely made out of stone and embellished with gold. On seeing it suddenly descend, Bharadvaja's son brought it down with many thousands of arrows. Bharadvaja's son used arrows to bring the club down onto the ground, like a star with a red garland of clouds falling down from the sky. On seeing that the club had been destroyed, the intolerant Dhrishtaketu quickly hurled a javelin and a spear that was as bright as gold. In that great battle, Drona used his arrows to shatter the javelin into three pieces. Using his lightness of hand, the immensely strong one also violently severed the spear. He[279] was trying to kill him. In that encounter, Bharadvaja's powerful son wished to kill him instead and released an extremely sharp arrow. The arrow penetrated the armour and the heart of the infinitely energetic one and then penetrated the ground, like a swan entering a pond full of lotuses. O king! Just as an insect is grasped by a hungry blue jay, in that great battle, the brave Drona devoured Dhrishtaketu. When the king of Chedi was killed, his son wished to take up his father's burden. The son was supreme in the knowledge of weapons and was overcome by intolerance. But Drona laughed at him and used his arrows to dispatch him to Yama's eternal abode. The powerful one was like a huge tiger in a large forest, against a young deer.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas were thus being decimated. Jarasandha's brave son himself attacked Drona. O great king! He enveloped Drona with his sharp arrows and swiftly made him invisible, like the sun by clouds. On seeing his dexterity, Drona, the destroyer of kshatriyas, quickly released hundreds and thousands of arrows. In that encounter, Drona, supreme among rathas, remained stationed on his chariot. While all the enemy archers looked on, he enveloped and killed Jarasandha's son.

'"Drona was like Death and devoured whoever dared to approach Drona. He was like death, which grasps all beings when the right time has come. Drona, the great archer, proclaimed his name in that battle. He released many thousands of arrows and stupefied the Pandaveyas. These arrows were gold-tufted, sharpened on stone and were marked with Drona's name. In that battle, in every direction, he slew men, elephants and horses. They were slaughtered by Drona, like Shakra against the great asuras. The Panchalas trembled, like cows afflicted by the cold. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When the soldiers were thus slaughtered by Drona, a terrible uproar arose among the Pandavas. In that encounter, they were confounded by the shower of arrows released by Bharadvaja's son. The maharatha Panchalas were like those whose thighs had been grasped by crocodiles. O great king! The Chedis, the Srinjayas and the Somakas sought to cheerfully fight against Bharadvaja's son and attacked, shouting, 'Drona has been slain. Drona has been slain.' Those tigers among men used their utmost strength against the immensely radiant one. In that encounter, they wished to dispatch Drona to Yama's abode. While those brave ones strove, Bharadvaja's son used arrows that had been sharpened on stone to send them, especially the foremost among the Chedis, to Yama. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing what had become to the foremost among the Chedis, the Panchalas trembled and were oppressed by Drona's arrows. O venerable one! On witnessing Drona's form and deeds, they loudly called out, in the direction of Bhimasena and Dhrishtadyumna's chariots, 'There is no doubt that this brahmana has performed austerities that are difficult to perform and his conduct is great. He is valiant in the battle and is consuming the bulls among the kshatriyas. Fighting is the dharma of kshatriyas and supreme austerities that of brahmanas. But an ascetic who is accomplished in learning can burn with his sight. Drona's weapons are like fire to the touch and are penetrating the bulls among the kshatriyas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![280] There are many who have approached this unassailable and terrible one and have been consumed. The immensely radiant one is using the utmost of his strength, the utmost of his endeavour and the utmost of his spirits. Drona is killing our soldiers and is confounding all the beings.' Kshatradharma was stationed there and heard these words.

'"He used an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon to sever Drona's bow, with an arrow affixed to it. Drona, the crusher of kshatriyas, became even more enraged. He grasped another radiant bow that was even more forceful. He affixed a sharp arrow to it, one that sparkled, was firm and was capable of destroying a great load. The powerful preceptor pulled the bow back up to his ear and released it. This killed Kshatradharma and penetrated the earth. His heart was shattered and he fell down from the chariot, onto the ground. On the death of Dhrishtadyumna's son, the other soldiers trembled.

'"Maharatha Chekitana then attacked Drona and pierced Drona between the breasts with ten arrows. He used four more to strike his charioteer and four arrows to strike the four horses. The preceptor then pierced his right arm with sixteen arrows, his standard with sixteen arrows and his charioteer with seven. When his charioteer was slain, the horses fled, dragging the chariot away, since in that encounter, they were covered with the arrows of Bharadvaja's son. O venerable one! On seeing that Chekitana's chariot had fled and that his charioteer had been slain, the Panchalas and the Pandavas were overcome by a great fear. O venerable one! In every direction of that battle, Drona drove away the assemblage of brave Chedis, Panchalas and Srinjayas and looked extremely beautiful. His grey hair descended up to his ears. He was dark.

He was more than eighty years old. But in that battle, the aged Drona roamed around like one who was only sixteen years old. O great king. As Drona, the destroyer of enemies, fearlessly roamed around in that battle, the enemy regarded him as the one with the vajra in his hand.[281]

'"O great king! O king! The intelligent Drupada spoke. 'This hunter is killing kshatriyas like a tiger against small animals. The evil-minded Duryodhana will obtain the world of the wicked and face hardships there. It is because of his avarice that the bulls among the kshatriyas are being killed in this battle. Hundreds of them are lying down on the ground, like wounded bulls. Their limbs are covered with blood and they have become food for dogs and jackals.' O great king! Having said this, Drupada, the leader of an akshouhini, attacked Drona in that battle, placing the Parthas in front of him."'

CHAPTER 1079(102)

'Sanjaya said, "The vyuha of the Pandavas was thus being agitated in every direction. The Parthas, the Panchalas and the Somakas retreated a great distance away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A terrible encounter commenced and it made the body hair stand up, like the fierce one that causes the destruction of the universe at the end of a yuga. The powerful Drona roared repeatedly in that battle. When the Panchalas and the Pandus were being slaughtered and decimated in that encounter, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira could not see what should be done. O Indra among kings! He began to think about what might transpire. He looked in all the directions, in the hope of seeing Savyasachi. But Yudhishthira could not see either Partha or Madhava. He could not see that tiger among men, the one with the bull among apes on his banner. Nor could he hear Gandiva's roar and his senses were overcome with dejection. Nor did he see Satyaki, the foremost of rathas among the Vrishnis. Because of these thoughts, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira's limbs became weak. Not being able to see those two bulls among men,[282] he could not find any peace. The immensely illustrious Dharmaraja was afraid that the world would censure him. The mighty-armed one began to think about the chariot of Shini's descendant. 'In the battle, I sent him to follow Phalguna's footsteps. Satyaki, Shini's descendant, is truly someone who dispels the fears of his friends. Earlier, I only had one reason for anxiety and now there are two. I should have news about both Satyaki and Pandava Dhananjaya. I sent Satyaki to follow Pandava's footsteps. In this battle, whom will I send to follow in Satvata's footsteps? If I make efforts to only obtain tidings of my brother and ignore Yuyudhana, the worlds will censure me and say that Dharmaraja Yudhishthira acted only to search for his brother and abandoned Varshneya Satyaki, for whom truth is valour. I am scared of the censure of the world. Therefore, I will send Partha Vrikodara in the footsteps of the great-souled Madhava. The love that I have for Arjuna, the destroyer of enemies, is the same as the one I bear towards Satvata, the brave one from the Vrishni lineage, who is invincible in battle. I have imposed an extremely heavy burden on Shini's descendant. Because of a friend's request, and to enhance his glory, the immensely strong one has penetrated the army of the Bharatas, like a makara in an ocean. I hear a loud noise from the brave ones, who have not retreated and have united to fight against the intelligent and brave one from the Vrishni lineage. It is certain that they are too many and too strong. It seems to me that the time has come for the archer, Pandava Bhimasena, to go to the spot where those two maharathas are. There is nothing on this earth that Bhima cannot withstand. In a battle, he can make efforts and stand up to all the archers on earth. Resorting to the strength of his own arms, he can stand up to all enemies. All of us have resorted to that great-souled one's strength of arms and have returned from the exile in the forest, without being vanquished in a battle. If Bhimasena goes towards Satvata and Pandava, both Satvata and Phalguna will find a protector in the battle. They have Vasudeva himself as a protector and are skilled in the use of weapons. However, I must be certain and dispel the anxiety. Therefore, I will appoint Bhimasena to follow in Satvata's footsteps. Having done this, I think that I will have made arrangements for Satyaki's protection.' O king! Having thus made up his mind, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, asked his charioteer to take him to Bhima.

'"On hearing Dharmaraja's words, the charioteer, who was skilled in the handling of horses, drove the chariot, which was decorated with gold, towards Bhima. Having reached Bhimasena, the king remembered the occasion and overcome by dejection, entreated him in many ways. 'He conquered the gods, the gandharvas and the daityas on a single chariot. O Bhimasena! But I do not see the standard of your younger brother.' Bhimasena spoke to Dharmaraja, who had arrived there. 'Never before have I seen, or heard, you overcome by such grief. In earlier times, when we were afflicted by dejection, you were the one who assured us. O Indra among king! Arise! Arise and instruct me about what should be done. O one who gives honours! There is no task that I cannot accomplish. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Command me and do not have this sorrow in your mind.' The king's face was cheerless.

'"He sighed like a cobra and spoke these words to Bhimasena, his voice choking with tears. 'The blare of the conch shell Panchajanya can be heard, as it is being sounded by an angry and illustrious Vasudeva. It is certain that Dhananjaya, your brother, has now been killed and is lying down. With him slain, it is certain that Janardana is fighting now. The Pandavas obtain their lives on his spirit and his valour.[283] When we are in fear, we turn towards him, like the immortals towards the one with the thousand eyes.[284] The brave one has gone in search of Saindhava and has penetrated the army of the Bharatas. O Bhima! We know about his going and he will not return. Gudakesha is dark and youthful. He is handsome and mighty-armed. He has a broad chest and giant shoulders. He is like a crazy elephant in his valour. His eyes are coppery, like those of a partridge,[285] and extend the fear of the enemies. O fortunate one! O destroyer of enemies! That is the reason for my sorrow. O mighty-armed one! It is because of Arjuna and because of Satvata that my anxiety increases, like a blazing fire into which oblations are repeatedly poured. I cannot see his standard and that is the reason I am afflicted by misery. Know maharatha Satvata to be a tiger among men. That maharatha has followed in the footsteps of your younger brother. O mighty-armed one! I cannot see him and that is the reason I am afflicted by misery. That is the reason Krishna, skilled in fighting, is certainly fighting in this encounter, because that brave one and the valiant Pandava, are no longer alive. O Kounteya! Therefore, if you think this to be your duty, go where Dhananjaya and the immensely valorous Satyaki have gone. O one who knows about dharma! These are my words and I am your elder brother. Know what should be known, that Satyaki is just like Arjuna to you. O Partha! To do that which will bring me pleasure, he has followed Savyasachi. Those tracks are difficult to traverse and terrible. They cannot be followed by those who have not cleansed their souls.'

'"Bhimasena replied, 'There is a chariot that bore Brahma, Ishana,[286] Indra and Varuna earlier. The two Krishnas have departed on that and they have no reason for fear. But I will bear your words on my head and go. Do not grieve. I will meet those tigers among men and give them your message.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having spoken those words, he prepared to depart. He repeatedly handed over Yudhishthira to Dhrishtadyumna and the other powerful well-wishers. The greatly powerful Bhimasena spoke to Dhrishtadyumna. 'O mighty-armed one! You know that maharatha Drona will use every means at his disposal to seize Dharmaraja. O Parshata! Once I am gone, there is no task as important to you, and to all of us, as that of protecting the king. Partha has spoken to me in this way and I cannot venture to contradict him. I will therefore go to the spot where Saindhava, who is about to face death, is stationed. It is my duty to unhesitatingly follow Dharmaraja's words. In the battle today, make every effort to protect Partha Yudhishthira. In the encounter, this is the most important of all your tasks.' O great king! Thus addressed by Vrikodara, Dhrishtadyumna replied, 'O Partha! I will do as you desire. Go without any hesitation. Without killing Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, Drona will not be able to seize Dharmaraja, regardless of what efforts he makes in the encounter.' Pandava thus handed over the king to Dhrishtadyumna. He showed his obeisance to his elder and his senior and went towards Phalguna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kounteya was embraced by Dharmaraja, who inhaled the fragrance of his head and pronounced sacred benedictions over him. The mighty-armed Bhimasena was attired in armour and beautiful earrings. The supreme of rathas had armlets and body-armour and arrows. The immensely intelligent one had armour that was made out of black iron and was decorated with gold. He was as beautiful as a cloud tinged with lightning, adorning a mountain. He was well decorated in garments that were yellow, red and white. There was armour around his neck. He was as beautiful as a cloud adorned with Indra's weapon.[287] O lord of the earth! As Bhimasena was about to set out, to fight with your soldiers, Panchajanya's terrible blare was heard again. On hearing that terrible roar, the three worlds were struck with great fear. Dharma's mighty-armed son again spoke to Bhima. 'The foremost one from the Vrishni lineage is blowing fiercely on his conch shell. The king of conch shells is resounding on earth and in heaven. There is no doubt that Savyasachi confronts a great hardship and the wielder of the chakra and the club[288] is fighting with all the Kurus. There is no doubt that the immensely noble Kunti, Droupadi and Subhadra, together with their relatives, are witnessing evil omens now. O Bhima! Swiftly go to the spot where Dhananjaya is. O Partha! I wish to see Dhananjaya and all the directions and the sub-directions are benumbed because of that, and on Satvata's account. Go. Leave!' Thus did he again address Bhimasena. Severely urged by the brother, the brother who always had the brother's welfare in mind,[289] caused battle drums to be sounded. Bhima blew on his conch shell. He roared like a lion and repeatedly stretched his bow. He displayed his terrible self and suddenly dashed against the enemy.

'"The supreme horses were obedient and fast. They were controlled by Vishoka[290] and possessed the speed of the mind and the wind. They bore him instantly. With his hands, Partha rubbed the string of his bow and stretched it. He crushed and agitated the head of that army. As the mighty-armed one advanced, the brave Panchalas and the Somakas followed him with their soldiers, like the immortals after Maghavan. O great king! The brothers Duhshala, Chitrasena, Kundabhedi, Vivimshati, Durmukha, Duhsaha, Vikarna, Shala, Vinda, Anuvinda,[291] Sumukha, Dirghabahu, Sudarshana, Vrindaraka, Suhasta, Sushena, Dirghalochana, Abhaya, Roudrakarma, Suvarma, Durvimochana and many foremost among rathas, with their soldiers and followers, united and attacked the brave Bhimasena in that battle. On seeing them, the powerful Kounteya Bhimasena forcefully advanced against them, like a lion against small animals. The brave ones there exhibited great and divine weapons and countered Bhima with their arrows, like clouds shrouding a sun that has arisen. But he forcefully passed through them and attacked Drona's array. He showered down arrows on the array of elephants that was in front of him. In a short while, the son of the wind god swiftly drove away that army of elephants in all the directions and pierced them. Terrified by those arrows, they roared, like deer in a forest. All the elephants fled, shrieking in fierce tones. He forcefully passed through them, and again attacked Drona's array.

'"The preceptor checked him, like the shoreline against an advancing ocean. He smiled and struck him on the forehead with an iron arrow. Pandava was resplendent there, like the sun when it casts its rays upwards. The preceptor thought that Bhima would show him reverence and worship him, as Phalguna had done earlier and spoke to Vrikodara. 'O Bhimasena! O immensely strong one! In the midst of the enemy, without vanquishing me in battle, you are incapable of penetrating into the hostile forces. With my permission, your younger brother and Krishna penetrated earlier. But you are incapable of penetrating into this array.' On hearing the words of his preceptor, Bhima was not scared and sighing, spoke to Drona, his eyes coppery red with anger. 'O blind brahmana! In this field of battle, it cannot be that Arjuna has penetrated with your permission. He is invincible, even against one of Shakra's special army. If he showed you supreme worship, that was only for the sake of honouring you. But I am not Arjuna. O Drona! I am the angry Bhimasena, your enemy. We look upon you as our father, our preceptor and our relative, and ourselves as your sons. Thinking in this way, all of us have always bowed down before you. But it is evident that you have uttered contrary words against us today. If you think of yourself as our enemy, let it be that way. If you are like an enemy, Bhima will perform the task that he has to do.' O king! Saying this, Bhima whirled a club that was like Yama's staff and hurled it towards Drona, who leapt down from his chariot. It uprooted Drona's horses, charioteer, standard and chariot and crushed many other warriors with its energy, like the wind among the trees. The supreme ratha was again surrounded by your sons. Drona, supreme among warriors, ascended another chariot. O great king! The powerful Bhimasena became angry and enveloped the array of chariots that was in front of him with a shower of arrows. Your maharatha sons were struck in that battle. Bhima, whose strength was terrible, fought with the warriors who were desirous of victory.

'"Wishing to kill the descendant of the Pandu lineage, Duhshasana angrily grasped a javelin and hurled it.[292] It was sharp and was completely made out of iron. Thus released by your son, that giant javelin descended. Bhima sliced it into two fragments and it was wonderful. The angry and powerful one then used three arrows to kill Kundabhedi, Sushena and Dirghanetra. Among your brave sons who were fighting, he again slew the valiant Vrindaraka, the extender of the deeds of the Kuru lineage. Bhima again killed three of your sons with three arrows, Abhaya, Roudrakarma and Durvimochana. O great king! Your sons were thus slaughtered by the powerful Bhima, supreme among strikers, and surrounded him from all sides. Kounteya laughed and used other arrows to send your sons, Vinda, Anuvinda and Survarmana to Yama's abode. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your valiant son, Sudarshana, was quickly pierced in that battle and fell down dead. Within a short period of time, the descendant of the Pandu lineage quickly shattered that army of chariots and drove it away in all the directions. O lord of the earth! They were like deer frightened at the roar of the chariot. Your sons were slaughtered in that battle. All those rathas were afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena and ran away. Kounteya followed that large army of your sons. O king! In that encounter, he pierced the Kouravas from every direction. O great king! Those on your side were killed by Bhimasena. They abandoned Bhima and urging their supreme horses, fled from the battle. The immensely strong Bhimasena vanquished them in that encounter. Pandava roared like a lion and slapped his arms. The immensely strong Bhima made a loud noise with his palms. He passed through those rathas and attacked Drona's array."'

CHAPTER 1080(103)

'Sanjaya said, "He passed through that array of rathas, like the sun through darkness. The preceptor poured down arrows on him and obstructed him with a shower of arrows. He seemed to drink up that torrent of arrows released from Drona's bow, as if through maya. He attacked the brothers[293] and confounded them with his strength. In that battle, those supreme archers were urged to adopt the greatest force by your sons and surrounded him from all sides. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus surrounded, Bhima laughed. He raised a terrible club, and roaring like a lion, hurled it at them. The powerful one released it with force and it crushed them. It was as if Indra's vajra had been hurled by Indra and struck them firmly. O king! Its loud noise seemed to fill up the earth. Its terrible and flaming energy frightened your sons. On seeing that it was descending with great force, covered in energy, all those on your side fled, roaring in lamentation. O venerable one! Its sound was impossible to tolerate. Many men fell down where they stood and so did rathas on chariots. Kounteya, unassailable to enemies, drove them away in that encounter. His force against that army was like that of Suparna,[294] the king of the birds. Such was the action of that leader of leaders of rathas.

'"O great king! Bharadvaja's son attacked Bhimasena. In that battle, Drona checked Bhima with his arrows and suddenly emitted a loud roar, terrifying the Pandus. O great king! An extremely terrible battle commenced between Drona and the great-souled Bhima, like that between the gods and the asuras. Sharp arrows were released from Drona's bow and in that encounter, these slew brave ones in hundreds and thousands. Pandava descended from his chariot with great force. O king! He closed his eyes and attacked Drona on foot, like a bull receiving rain with ease. Thus did Bhima, tiger among men, receive that shower of arrows. The immensely strong one grasped the pole[295] with his hands and hurled it. O king! Drona was quickly thrown down by Bhima in that battle. He mounted another chariot and stationed himself at the mouth of the vyuha. At that time, his charioteer quickly urged the horses. O Kouravya! Bhimasena's act was extraordinary. The immensely strong Bhimasena mounted his own chariot and powerfully attacked your son's army. He crushed the kshatriyas, like a gale uprooting trees. He advanced against the enemy soldiers like a mountain against the force of the waters. He encountered the army of the Bhojas, protected by Hardikya. O king! Bhimasena crushed it in many ways and advanced. O venerable one! He frightened the enemy soldiers by slapping his palms. He could not be defeated by any of those soldiers, like a tiger by a herd of bulls. He passed through the army of Bhojas and also through the army of Kambojas, large numbers of mlecchas and many others who were skilled in fighting.

'"He then saw Satyaki, the bull among men, fighting. On his chariot, Kounteya went there with great force. O great king! Bhimasena wished to see Dhananjaya. In that battle, the descendant of the Pandu lineage passed through all your warriors. He then saw Arjuna, bull among men, fighting there bravely. The valiant one was striving for Saindhava's death. Having seen Arjuna there, he let out a mighty roar. O Kouravya! That mighty roar was heard by Partha. Partha[296] also let out a mighty roar and so did Madhava. O great king! They attacked like bulls. Wishing to see Vrikodara and hearing the roar of the wind god's son, Vasudeva and Arjuna repeatedly roared. O great king! Having heard Bhimasena's roar and that of the archer Phalguna, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, rejoiced. On hearing those loud roars, the king's sorrow was dispelled. The lord became assured about Dhananjaya's victory in the battle. While Bhimasena, fierce in battle, was roaring, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, smiled.

'"In his heart and in his mind, the supreme among upholders of dharma said the following. 'O Bhima! You have sent me a message and have followed the words of your superior. O Pandava! Someone who is your enemy can never be victorious in a battle. It is through good fortune that Savyasachi Dhananjaya is alive in the battle. It is through good fortune that the brave Satyaki, for whom truth is his valour, is well. It is through good fortune that I have heard the roars of Vasudeva and Dhananjaya. It is through good fortune that Phalguna is alive in this battle, having slain the enemies. He defeated Shakra in an encounter and satisfied the fire god.[297] All of us are alive because of the strength of his arms. It is through good fortune that Phalguna has killed the enemy soldiers and is alive. On a single chariot, he vanquished the nivatakavachas, who were extremely difficult for the gods to defeat.[298] It is through good fortune that Partha is alive. When all the Kouravas assembled to seize the cattle in the capital of Matsya, he defeated them.[299] It is through good fortune that Partha is alive. Through the valour of his arms, he killed fourteen thousand kalakeyas in a great battle.[300] It is through good fortune that Partha is alive. When the powerful king of the gandharvas captured Duryodhana, he defeated him through the valour of his arms.[301] It is through good fortune that Partha is alive. He wears a diadem and garlands. He is powerful and possesses white horses. Krishna is his charioteer. He has always been dear to me. It is through good fortune that Phalguna is alive. Tormented by sorrow over his son, he wished to perform an extremely difficult deed. Wishing to kill Jayadratha, he undertook a pledge. Will Dhananjaya be able to kill Saindhava in the battle? Protected by Vasudeva, will he be able to fulfil his promise? Will I meet Arjuna before the sun has set? Saindhava has always been engaged in ensuring King Duryodhana's welfare. Will he be brought down by Phalguna and delight his enemies? Will King Duryodhana be brought down by Phalguna? Having seen Saindhava in the battle,[302] will his mind turn towards peace? Having seen his brothers killed by Bhimasena in the battle, will the wicked Duryodhana's mind turn towards peace? Having seen many other warriors brought down on the face of the earth, will the wicked Duryodhana suffer from repentance? Will we not obtain peace because of Bhishma alone? Will Suyodhana not have peace to preserve what is left?' O king! He thought about many such things. He was overcome by compassion. However, the terrible battle continued.”’

CHAPTER 1081(104)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “The immensely strong Bhimasena was roaring and the sound was like that of thundering clouds. Which brave ones surrounded him? O Sanjaya! I do not see anyone in the three worlds who is capable of standing before an enraged Bhimasena in battle. When he raises his club in a great battle, he is like Death. O son![303] I do not see anyone who can stay in the field of battle. Who will remain stationed in a battle, with the exception of Shatakratu? The wrathful Bhimasena wishes to kill my sons. They have united for Duryodhana’s welfare and are stationed in front of him. In front of the conflagaration that is Bhimasena, my sons are like grass. Which brave ones stationed themselves at the forefront of that battle? In that encounter, my sons must have looked upon him as Death. When he acted like Death against all the beings, who surrounded him? When the fire of Bhima raged and consumed my sons, who were the brave ones who attacked him? O Sanjaya! Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When maharatha Bhimasena was roaring, the powerful Karna emitted a tremendous sound and rushed against him. The powerful one became extremely intolerant and stretched his bow. The powerful Karna wished to exhibit his strength in battle. At the clash between Karna and Bhima, everyone’s limbs began to tremble. Both rathas and riders heard the slapping of the palms. In the field of the battle, they heard Bhimasena’s terrible roar. The bulls among the kshatriyas thought that the sky and the earth were covered with this sound. The great-souled Pandava roared fiercely again. In that battle, the bows of all the warriors fell down on the ground. O great king! The mounts were extremely distressed and in terror, repeatedly discharged urine and excrement. There were many terrible omens that could be seen. O king! There was a tumultuous clash between Bhima and Karna. Karna struck Bhima with twenty arrows and swiftly pierced his charioteer with five arrows. The immensely strong and swift Bhimasena laughed and pierced Karna back in that battle with sixty-four arrows. Karna, the great archer, shot four more arrows. O king! But before they could reach him Bhima displayed the dexterity of his hands and used arrows with drooping tufts to slice them down into many fragments. At this, Karna enveloped him with many torrents of arrows. The descendant of Pandu's lineage was shrouded by Karna in many ways. However, the maharatha severed Karna's bow in his hand and pierced him with many arrows with drooping tufts. The son of the suta picked up another bow and strung it. The maharatha, the performer of terrible deeds, pierced Bhima in that encounter. Bhima became extremely angry. He powerfully struck the son of the suta in the chest with three arrows with drooping tufts. With those arrows stuck to his breast, Karna looked beautiful. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He was like a mountain with three peaks. Pierced by those supreme arrows, blood began to flow from him, like minerals and red chalk flowing from the slope of a mountain. Severely struck, Karna wavered a little. O venerable one! He then fixed an arrow to his bow and pierced Bhima. He again shot hundreds and thousands of arrows. He was suddenly enveloped by Karna, the one with the firm bow. However, the descendant of the Pandu lineage smiled and quickly severed the string of his[304] bow. With a broad-headed arrow, he dispatched the charioteer to Yama's abode. In that battle, the maharatha deprived the four horses of their lives. O lord of the earth! With the horses slain, Karna descended from the chariot. The maharatha ascended Vrishasena's chariot. Having vanquished Karna in the battle, the powerful Bhimasena let out a mighty roar that was like the thunder of rain clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing this roar, Yudhishthira was delighted, since he deduced that Karna had been defeated by Bhimasena.

'"In every direction, the Pandu soldiers blew on their conch shells. On hearing the noises made by the enemy soldiers, those on your side also roared. Partha stretched Gandiva and Krishna blew on his conch shell. But surpassing all this noise, there were the roars emitted by Bhima. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the soldiers heard this. Then those two scorchers of enemies[305] struck each other separately with arrows. However, Radheya struck mildly and Pandava struck powerfully.”’[306]

CHAPTER 1082(105)

‘Sanjaya said, “When the soldiers had been routed and Arjuna, Satvata and Bhimasena had proceeded towards Saindhava, your son went to Drona. He went on a single chariot and thought about many things. That chariot of your son was fast and was speedily driven. It was as swift as thought and the wind and quickly reached Drona. With eyes that were red with anger, your son spoke these words. ‘Arjuna, Bhimasena, the unvanquished Satyaki and many other great maharathas have defeated the soldiers. Those destroyers of enemies are approaching near the king of Sindhu. None of them have been defeated and all of them are proceeding there. O one who gives honours! Even if maharatha Partha has passed by you in the battle, how could Satyaki and Bhima cross you? This is a miracle in this world, like that of the ocean drying up. O foremost among brahmanas! You have been vanquished by Satvata and Arjuna and by Bhimasena. The people are repeatedly talking about this. “How could Drona, skilled in knowledge of war, be defeated?” My ill fortune and destruction in this battle are certain. You, a tiger among men, have been passed by three rathas. This having happened, tell me about what should be done now. O one who gives honours! Think about what should be done about what is left. The time has come. What should we do about the king of Sindhu next? Tell me this and let what you decide be carried out properly and fast.’

‘“Drona replied, ‘O great king! I have thought a lot about what should be done. Listen to me. Only three Pandava maharathas have passed by us. We should be frightened of those who are at the rear, as well as those who are ahead, but I think it is greater at the place where Krishna and Dhananjaya are. The army of the Bharatas has been attacked both from the front and from the rear. I think that our most important task is to protect Saindhava. O son![307] He is terrified of Dhananjaya and our task should be to protect him. The brave Yuyudhana and Vrikodara have also gone after Saindhava. All of this is the outcome of the gambling match, the result of Shakuni's intelligence. In that assembly hall, there was no victory, nor was there a defeat.[308] O son! Now that we are immersed in this gambling match today, there will be victory, or there will be defeat. In the assembly of the Kurus, Shakuni indulged in a gambling match with the terrible dice. O son! But those were actually unassailable arrows and they have surrounded the Kurus in many ways now. O lord of the earth! Know the soldiers to be the players and the arrows to be the dice. O king! In this gambling match, Saindhava is certainly the stake. With Saindhava as the stake, you have embarked on a great gambling match with the enemy. O great king! All of us here are ready to give up our lives. In this battle, it should be our task to properly protect Saindhava. O son! In this gambling match, it is certain that there will be victory or defeat. That is the spot where the great archers are protecting Saindhava. Quickly go there yourself and protect the ones who are doing the protecting. I will remain here and send others there. I will restrain the assembled Panchalas, Pandus and Srinjayas.'"

'Sanjaya said, "On the instructions of the preceptor, Duryodhana quickly left with his followers, to accomplish an extremely difficult task.[309] The two Panchalas, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja, the protectors of the chariot wheels,[310] were passing through the periphery of the army and advancing towards Savyasachi. O great king! Those two had earlier been contained by Kritavarma. O king! They were in search of Arjuna, who had penetrated your army in a desire to fight. Duryodhana engaged in a supreme battle with those two. The powerful descendant of the Bharata lineage quickly engaged with those two spirited brothers. Those foremost of kshatriyas were known as maharathas. They raised their bows and attacked him. Yudhamanyu was extremely angry.[311] He quickly released arrows and pierced your son between the breasts with thirty arrows. O Indra among kings! Duryodhana killed the four horses of the infinitely energetic Panchala and also his two parshnis. With his horses and his charioteer slain in that battle, Yudhamanyu climbed onto his brother's chariot. When he had ascended his brother's chariot, he struck Duryodhana's horses with many arrows. They were killed and fell down on the ground. In that encounter, when the horses were killed, Yudhamanyu quickly used a supreme arrow to sever his[312] bow and arm-guard. When the horses and charioteer were slain, your maharatha son descended from the chariot. He grasped a club and attacked the Panchalas. On seeing that enraged destroyer of enemy cities descend, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja jumped down from the terrace of the chariot. That supreme chariot was decorated in gold. In that encounter, he[313] used the club to smash the chariot down onto the ground, with its horses, charioteer and standard. Though he killed them, your son's horses had also been killed. His charioteer had been slain. The scorcher of enemies swiftly ascended the chariot of the king of Madra. Those two immensely strong princes, the foremost among the Panchalas, also climbed onto another chariot and advanced towards Dhananjaya."'

CHAPTER 1083(106)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "How was the battle between Karna and Bhima, both of whom were immensely strong? In the vicinity of Arjuna's chariot, what was its nature? In the earlier encounter, Karna had been defeated by Bhimasena. How could maharatha Radheya progress against Bhima? In the battle, how did Bhima face the son of the suta, regarded as a maharatha and the foremost among all rathas on earth? Having surpassed Bhishma and Drona, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, did not fear anyone as much as he did the archer Karna. Thinking of the maharatha, he[314] always lay down in fear. How did Bhima fight with the son of the suta in battle? He never retreated in a battle. He was full of valour and devoted to brahmanas. How did Bhima fight with Karna, foremost among warriors, in the battle? In the encounter near Arjuna's chariot, how did the son of the suta and Vrikodara, fight with each other? Since the son of the suta had earlier been told about the fraternal relationship,[315] he was compassionate. Remembering the word that he had given to Kunti, how did he fight with Bhima?[316] Bhima must have remembered the earlier enmity caused by the suta's son? In the battle, how did the brave one fight with Karna? My son, Duryodhana, was always assured that Karna, the son of the suta, would defeat the united Pandavas in a battle. In the battle, for my wicked son, he was the hope for victory. How did he fight with Bhimasena, the performer of terrible deeds? Using him as a refuge, my sons engendered the enmity with those maharathas. O son! How did Bhima fight with that son of a suta? Having remembered the many hardships that the son of the suta had caused, how did Bhima fight with the son of the suta? The valiant son of a suta conquered the entire world on a single chariot. How did Bhima fight with him? He was born with earrings and armour. How did Bhima fight with that son of a suta in battle? Tell me in detail about the battle that raged between those two and which of the two was victorious. O Sanjaya! You are skilled in narrating."

'Sanjaya said, "Abandoning Radheya, supreme among rathas, Bhimasena attempted to go where the brave Krishna and Dhananjaya were. O great king! As he was leaving, Radheya attacked him and showered down arrows tufted with feathers of herons on him, like a cloud raining on a mountain. The face of Adhiratha's powerful son was as beautiful as a blooming lotus and he challenged the departing Bhima to do battle. Bhimasena could not tolerate Karna's summons to do battle. He did a semicircle[317] and began to fight with the son of the suta. Armoured for the duel, the supreme among all wielders of weapons sought to bring down a great shower of iron arrows that travelled straight. Wishing to kill Karna, he began to tire him out, thinking that this was a means for bringing the quarrel to an end. O venerable one! The angry and intolerant Pandava, scorcher of enemies, showered down many kinds of fierce arrows. His gait was like that of a mad elephant and he showered down those arrows. However, the suta's greatly illustrious son used the maya of his own weapons to devour them. Karna, the great archer, was greatly honoured because of his knowledge and began to roam around in that battle like a preceptor. As Bhimasena angrily fought, Radheya seemed to smile and taunt the furious and intolerant Vrikodara. In the battle, Kounteya could not tolerate Karna's smile, since all the brave ones were fighting and watching them in every direction. Having approached him, the powerful and angry Bhimasena pierced him between the breasts with vatsadanta arrows, like a giant elephant being goaded. He pierced the charioteer of the son of the suta with well-tufted and sharp arrows and then used seventy-three well-directed arrows to pierce his[318] colourful armour. The brave one enveloped the brave Karna's horses, which were as swift as the wind and were clad in golden harnesses, and pierced each of them with five arrows. O king! Karna released a net of arrows towards Bhimasena's chariot and in a short instant, made Pandava disappear, with his chariot, his standard and his charioteer. O great king! Karna completely covered them with arrows released from his bow. Then Karna used sixty-four arrows to firmly pierce his armour and angrily struck him in the sides with iron arrows that could penetrate the inner organs. But Vrikodara ignored the extremely forceful arrows released from Karna's bow and without any fear, struck the son of the suta. O great king! The arrows released from Karna's bow were like venomous serpents. Though Bhima bore them in that battle, he suffered from no pain. In that encounter, the powerful Bhimasena struck Karna with thirty-two sharp and broad-headed arrows that were extremely energetic. However, Karna paid no attention to them. The mighty-armed Bhimasena wished to kill Saindhava and he covered him[319] with arrows. Radheya fought mildly with Bhima. However, remembering the earlier enmity, Bhima, the conqueror of enemies, fought with anger and quickly released a shower of arrows. O king! The arrows released by Bhimasena in that battle descended all over him, like warbling birds.[320] O great king! The arrows released from Bhima's bow were gold-tufted. They dashed towards Radheya, like a wolf towards small deer. O king! Karna was foremost among rathas and in that encounter, released showers of fierce arrows that shrouded all the directions. He was the ornament of any battle and his arrows were like the vajra. However, before they could reach him, Vrikodara sliced them down with many broad-headed arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Vaikartana

Karna again enveloped maharatha Bhimasena with a shower of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, we saw Bhima covered with those arrows and his body looked like that of a porcupine, with its quills jutting out. Those arrows released from Karna's bow were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. In that encounter, the brave one bore them, like the sun withstanding its own rays. Bhimasena looked beautiful, with blood flowing from all his limbs. He was as golden as a flowering *palasha* tree in a grove. O great king! Bhima could not tolerate Karna's conduct in that encounter. The great archer dilated his eyes in rage and struck Karna with twenty-five iron arrows. Karna looked like a white mountain, with the foothills covered with poisonous snakes.[321] In that great battle, Bhima again pierced the son of the suta, who was as valorous as an immortal, with sixty-eight arrows in his inner organs. The powerful and enraged Bhimasena quickly severed Karna's bow and all his implements. He used swift arrows to slay the four horses and the charioteer. With iron arrows as radiant as the sun's rays, he struck Karna in the chest. O venerable one! After having pierced Karna, all of them penetrated the earth. O king! It was as if the sun's rays were penetrating the clouds. He[322] was proud of his manliness. But his bow had been severed and he was afflicted with arrows. He was overcome by great despondency and went to another chariot."'

CHAPTER 1084(107)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! The hopes of my sons being victorious have always been vested in him. On seeing him retreat in the battle, what did Duryodhana say? O son! In that encounter, what did Karna do after that?"

'Sanjaya replied, "On seeing Bhimasena in that battle, blazing like a fire, Karna resorted to another chariot that had been properly prepared and again attacked Pandava, like an ocean agitated by the wind. O lord of the earth! On seeing that Adhiratha's son was enraged, your sons thought that Bhimasena was like oblation being poured into the mouth of a fire. Radheya created a great sound with the twang of his bow and a fierce sound with the slapping of his palms. He advanced towards Bhimasena's chariot. O king! O lord of the earth! A great and extremely terrible sound arose again, in the conflict between the son of the suta and Bhima. The mighty-armed ones were wrathful and wished to kill each other. They glanced at each other and seemed to burn each other down with their eyes. The eyes of the maharathas were red with rage and they sighed. Both of them were scorchers of enemies and they attacked and mangled each other. They fought against each other like angry tigers, or swift hawks, or wrathful *sharabhas*.[323]

'"Bhima remembered the hardships due to the gambling match and in the forest. The scorcher of enemies thought of the difficulties in Virata's city. Their prosperous and bejewelled kingdom had been robbed by your sons. You and your sons have always caused them difficulties and tried to burn down the innocent Kunti and her sons. The evil-souled ones mistreated Krishna[324] in the assembly hall. 'Accept another husband, since your husbands no longer remain. All the Parthas have descended into hell, like sesamum seeds that have no kernel.'[325] O Kouravya! In your presence, these were the words the Kurus spoke then. Your sons wished to enjoy Krishna, as they would enjoy a servant maid. They were later banished, attired in black antelope skin. In your presence, in the assembly hall, Karna then spoke harsh words to them. Your son thought that the Parthas were no more than mere straws. They were in desperate straits and he, deluded of his senses, was insolent. The slayer of enemies[326] thought about these and other miseries suffered since childhood. Vrikodara, with dharma in his soul, no longer cared about remaining alive. He stretched his giant and invincible bow, with a golden back. Ready to give up his life, the tiger among the Bharata lineage attacked Karna. Bhima released a net of arrows, sharpened on stone, towards Karna's chariot and shrouded him and the rays of the sun. Adhiratha's son laughed at this. He swiftly used his own net of arrows, sharpened on stone, to counter these and pierce Bhimasena. Adhiratha's son was a maharatha. He was mighty-armed, immensely forceful and greatly strong. He pierced Bhima with nine sharp arrows. It was as if an elephant had been goaded. Vrikodara countered those arrows and without any fear, attacked the son of the suta. On seeing that the bull among the Pandava lineage was descending on him, with great ferocity and force, Karna countered him in that battle, like an elephant against a maddened elephant. He blew on his conch shell, with a sound that was like that of a hundred drums beating. Like a turbulent ocean, he agitated the army.[327] That army was full of chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. On beholding the extraordinary sight,[328] Bhima attacked Karna and covered him with arrows.

'"In that battle, Karna covered Pandava, and the horses and the men, with arrows. His supreme horses possessed the complexion of swans and he mixed these up with the horses of his opponent, which had the complexion of bears and were as swift as the wind or thought. On seeing that the horses had been mixed up, great lamentations issued from your sons. As swift as the wind, those horses were mixed up and looked extremely beautiful. O great king! They looked like black and white clouds that were mingled in the sky. Karna and Vrikodara were angry and their eyes were coppery red in rage. On seeing this, the maharathas on your side trembled in fright. The terrain where those warriors fought became as terrible as Yama's kingdom. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! It was dreadful to look at, like the capital of the king of the dead. The maharathas seemed to look at a painted assembly, where, in warding off each other, they could see neither destruction, nor victory. O king! O lord of the earth! They only saw the clash of mighty weapons being released, a consequence of the evil counsels of you and your son.

'"Wishing to kill the enemy, those two[329] shrouded each other with sharp arrows. They showered down arrows and covered the sky with nets of arrows. Those maharathas wished to kill each other and used sharp arrows. They were beautiful to see, like two clouds showering down rain. O lord! The scorchers of enemies released arrows decorated with gold and made the sky look radiant, as if with flaming meteors. They shot arrows tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks and these looked like arrays of excited cranes in the autumn sky.

'"On seeing that the son of the suta was engaged with Bhima, the scorcher of enemies, Krishna and Dhananjaya thought that an extremely heavy burden had been imposed on Bhima. However, firm in the use of their hands, Adhiratha's son and Bhima shot arrows at each other and brought down horses, men and elephants with those arrows. There were many that were falling and those that had fallen, devoid of their lives. O great king! There was a great destruction of men amongst your sons. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In a short instant, men, horses and elephants lost their lives and their lifeless bodies were strewn around on the ground."'

CHAPTER 1085(108)

'Dhritarashtra said, "I think Bhimasena's valour is extraordinary, since he fought with Karna, who is brave and dexterous, in that battle. In an encounter, Karna is capable of repulsing the gods, the yakshas, the asuras and men, even if they are united and armed with every kind of weapon. O son! O Sanjaya! Pandava is blazing in his prosperity. But how could he not be vanquished? Tell me that. How did the battle between them continue, in which, each of them wagered their lives? I think that either of them was capable of being victorious, or being defeated. O suta! Having obtained Karna in the battle, my son, Suyodhana, was confident of defeating the Parthas, with Govinda and the Satvatas. But having heard that Karna was repeatedly defeated in the battle by Bhimasena, terrible in his deeds, I have lost my senses. Because of the wicked policies of my son, I think that the Kouravas have already been destroyed. O Sanjaya! Karna will not be able to defeat those great archers, the Parthas. Whenever Karna has fought with the sons of Pandu, the Pandavas have always defeated him in the field of battle. O son! The Pandavas are incapable of being vanquished, even by the gods, with Vasava. My wicked son, Duryodhana, does not comprehend this. Partha[330] is like the lord of riches. Having robbed him of his riches, my son, whose intelligence is limited, is like a searcher of honey and does not know about the downfall.[331] He is wise about deceit and used deceit to rob the great-souled ones of their kingdom. He thinks that it[332] belongs to him and disregards the Pandavas. My soul is also unclean. I have been overcome by affection for my son and have maltreated the sons of Pandu, who are great-souled and have been established in dharma. Partha Yudhishthira is far-sighted and has always desired peace. But my sons thought that he was incapable and maltreated him. The mighty-armed Bhima bears all the assorted hardships and diverse ill-treatment in his heart and has fought with the son of the suta. O Sanjaya! Karna and Bhima are foremost among warriors and wished to kill each other. In that battle, tell me how they fought."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! Listen to the account of the battle between Karna and Bhima. They wished to kill each other and were like elephants in a forest. O king! Vaikartana was enraged and used his valour to pierce the brave and angry Bhima, the scorcher of enemies, with thirty arrows. These were extremely powerful, sharp at the tip and embellished with gold. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Bhima was struck by Vaikartana's arrows. However, while he was attacking, Bhima used three sharp arrows to sever his bow and used a broad-headed arrow to bring his charioteer down from the seat of the chariot onto the ground. Vaikartana Vrisha[333] wished to kill Bhimasena. He grasped a giant javelin, which was like a javelin used by Death. The shaft and handle of that javelin was colourfully decorated with gold and lapis lazuli. The immensely strong Radheya hurled it at Bhimasena and it was capable of robbing him of his life. Having released the javelin, like Purandara with his vajra, the powerful son of the suta emitted an extremely loud roar. On hearing that roar, your sons were delighted. That javelin was released from Karna's hands and was as radiant as the sun or the fire. However, while it was still traversing, Bhima severed it with seven arrows. O venerable one! Thus severed by Bhima as it was travelling through the air, the javelin looked like a snake that has cast off its skin. Wishing to rob the son of the suta of his life, he then angrily released many arrows shafted with the feathers of peacocks. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone and in that battle, each of them was like Yama’s staff. Karna took up another bow that possessed a golden back and was unassailable. The immensely energetic one drew it and shot many arrows. However, Pandu’s son severed these with nine arrows with drooping tufts. O king! Having severed those great arrows shot by Vasushena,[334] Bhima roared like a lion. O great king! Those two powerful ones roared like bulls desiring to find an opportunity, or like roaring tigers that attacked each other. They sought to strike each other and looked for each other’s weakness. They glanced towards each other, like giant bulls in a pen. They were like giant elephants, striking each other with their tusks. They drew their bows back to the full extent and struck each other with arrows. O great king! They scorched each other with showers of arrows. They glanced towards each other, with eyes dilated with rage. They laughed at each other and repeatedly censured each other. As they fought with each other, they blew on their conch shells. O venerable one! Bhima again severed the bow in his hand and with his arrows, dispatched his horses, which had the complexion of conch shells, to Yama’s abode.

‘“On seeing that Karna was confronting difficulties, King Duryodhana trembled with anger and instructed Durjaya,[335] ‘O Durjaya! Go to that spot in front, where Radheya is about to be devoured by Pandava. Quickly slay that eunuch and give Karna strength.’ Having been thus addressed there by your son, your son[336] agreed and attacking Bhimasena, covered him with arrows. He struck Bhima with nine arrows, his charioteer with six, his standard with three and struck him again with seven arrows. Bhimasena became extremely angry. With his arrows, he pierced Durjaya, his horses and his charioteer in the inner organs and dispatched them to Yama’s abode. His ornamented body lay down on the ground, mangled like a writhing snake. Karna wept and circumambulated your son. Having deprived him[337] of his chariot, he[338] laughed at the enemy and covered him with a mass of arrows, making him look like a *shataghni*[339] with spikes sticking out. Atiratha

Karna, scorcher of enemies, was pierced by those arrows. However, he did not avoid Bhima in that battle.”’

CHAPTER 1086(109)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna was without a chariot and was again defeated by Bhima. He ascended another chariot and again began to pierce Pandava. They were like giant elephants, goring each other with their tusks. They drew their bows back to the full extent and struck each other with arrows. Karna powerfully struck Bhima with a storm of arrows. He roared loudly and again struck him on the chest. Bhima pierced him back with ten arrows and again struck him with twenty arrows with drooping tufts. O king! Karna pierced Bhima between the breasts with nine arrows and pierced his standard with a sharp arrow. Partha pierced him back with sixty-three arrows, like a giant elephant struck by a goad or a horse with a whip. O great king! Having been thus pierced by the illustrious Pandava, he licked the corners of his mouth and his eyes became red with rage. O great king! He shot an arrow that was capable of penetrating all bodies towards Bhimasena, like Indra hurling his vajra towards Bala. That arrow had a colourful tuft and was sharpened on stone. Released from the bow of the suta’s son, it pierced Partha in that battle and penetrated the earth. The mighty-armed Bhima grasped a heavy club that was completely made out of iron. This had six sides and was decorated with gold. It was four *kishkus* long.[340] Without reflecting, he hurled this at the son of the suta. The wrathful descendant of the Bharata lineage hurled this club, like Indra with the vajra against the asuras. The horses of Adhiratha’s son were well trained and well controlled and it slew them. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He then used a couple of razor-sharp arrows to bring down the standard of Adhiratha’s son and kill his charioteer. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his horses and charioteer slain and his standard brought down, Karna was extremely distressed. But he drew his bow and we witnessed Radheya’s extraordinary valour. Though he was without a chariot, the foremost among rathas countered his enemy.

'"O king! On seeing that Adhiratha's son, the best of rathas, was without a chariot in that battle, Duryodhana addressed Durmukha.[341] 'O Durmukha! Radheya has been deprived of his chariot by Bhimasena. Provide a chariot to that maharatha, who is the best among men.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Duryodhana's words, Durmukha swiftly advanced towards Karna and enveloped Bhima with arrows. On beholding Durmukha in that battle, following in the footsteps of the son of the suta, Vayu's son was delighted and licked the corners of his mouth. O great king! Pandava repulsed Karna with arrows that had stone heads and quickly drove his chariot towards Durmukha. O great king! At that moment, Bhima used nine other arrows with drooping and excellent tufts to dispatch Durmukha to Yama's abode. O king! On seeing that Durmukha had been killed, Adhiratha's son mounted his[342] chariot and stationed there, was as radiant as the blazing sun. Durmukha's inner organs were shattered and he lay down, blood flowing from his wounds. On seeing this, Karna's eyes were full of tears and he paused for a while. The brave Karna circumambulated the one who had lost his life and left him there. His sighs were deep and warm and he did not know what to do. O king! Using that gap, Bhimasena shot fourteen iron arrows that were shafted with the feathers of vultures at the son of the suta. These were colourful, gold-tufted and extremely energetic and were the drinkers of blood. O great king! These illuminated the ten directions and penetrated his armour, drinking the blood of the son of the suta. O Indra among kings! Those arrows were like angry serpents, urged by destiny, as they penetrated the earth, after having passed through his body. They were like large and angry serpents, half-inserted into their holes.[343] Without any reflection, Radheya pierced him back with fourteen extremely sharp and iron arrows that were decorated with gold. Those arrows penetrated Bhimasena's left arm and penetrated the earth, like fierce curlews entering a tree. On having penetrated the ground, those iron arrows were resplendent. They were like the blazing rays of the sun, as it heads towards setting. In that battle, Bhima was mangled by those iron arrows that penetrated the inner organs. He shed a great deal of blood, like water flowing out of a mountain. In turn, Bhima pierced the son of the suta with three arrows and used another seven arrows, with the force of Suparna,[344] to pierce his charioteer. O great king! Afflicted by Bhima's strength, Karna was agitated. The immensely illustrious one gave up the battle and fled on his swift horses. Bhimasena stretched his bow, embellished in gold. In that battle, the atiratha was stationed like a blazing fire."'

CHAPTER 1087(110)

'Dhritarashtra said, "I think that destiny is supreme. Since Adhiratha's son strove and could not overcome Pandava in the battle, shame on manliness. Karna is capable of vanquishing the Parthas, with Govinda, in an encounter. The world has never seen a warrior who is Karna's equal. I have repeatedly heard Duryodhana speak in this vein. 'Karna is powerful and brave. He wields a firm bow and has conquered exhaustion. O king![345] If I have Vasushena as my aide, even the gods will not be able to withstand me in battle, not to speak of the sons of Pandu, who have lost their spirits and their endeavour.' On seeing this Karna defeated in the battle, like a snake that has lost its poison and has run away, what did Duryodhana say? Alas! Durmukha was not skilled in fighting. But he[346] sent him alone and he entered the fierce battle, like a deluded insect. O Sanjaya! There is no doubt that Ashvatthama, the king of Madra and Kripa, united with Karna, cannot stand before Bhima. He is extremely terrible and possesses the strength of ten thousand elephants. They know this and the cruelty and energy of Maruta's[347] son. Why did they anger the performer of cruel deeds, who is proud of his strength and valour and is like Yama at the end of a yuga, in the battle? It seems that Karna, the mighty-armed son of the suta, has depended on the strength of his arms alone and disregarding this,[348] has chosen to fight with Bhimasena in the battle. Pandu's son defeated Karna in the encounter, like Purandara against the asuras. Who is capable of vanquishing him in a fight? In his search for Dhananjaya, he shattered Drona and penetrated my army. Who is capable of approaching Bhima and remaining alive? O Sanjaya! He is like the great Indra, with the thunderous vajra raised against the danavas. Who has the enterprise to station himself in front of Bhima? Having reached the capital of the king of the dead, a man may return. But having approached Bhimasena, no one can ever return. Those with limited intelligence will enter and advance against the wrathful Bhimasena, like insects advancing towards a flame, bereft of their senses. In the assembly hall and in the hearing of the Kurus, Bhima took a pledge about killing my sons. Having seen Karna defeated, Duhshasana and his brothers must be thinking about that and, out of fear, must have retreated from attacking Bhima. O Sanjaya! That evil-minded son[349] of mine repeatedly said in the assembly, 'In the battle, Karna, Duhshasana and I will conquer the Pandavas.' O Sanjaya! On seeing Karna deprived of his chariot and defeated by Bhima, there is no doubt that he must be severely repenting his refusal of Krishna.[350] On seeing his armoured brothers killed in the battle by Bhimasena, there is no doubt that my son is greatly tormented by his own crimes. No one who wishes to live will advance against Pandava Bhima. His weapons are terrible and he is enraged. He is stationed like Death himself. A man can escape from the mouth and midst of the *vadava* fire.[351] But it is my view that no one can escape, having approached Bhima's mouth. When they are enraged in battle, the Pandavas, the Panchalas, Keshava and Satyaki, do not know how to protect their own lives."

'Sanjaya replied, "O Kourava! You are sorrowing because of the destruction of men that is occurring. But there is no doubt that you are the root behind this destruction of the earth. Devoted to the words of your sons, you are yourself the cause of this great enmity. Though you were urged, like a dying man, you did not accept the diet and the medicines. O great king! You have yourself drunk *kalakuta*, which is impossible to digest.[352] O supreme among men! You are now suffering the fruits of that action. The warriors on your side are fighting to the utmost of their strength, but you are censuring them. Let me describe to you the raging battle.

'"O venerable one! On seeing that Karna had been defeated by Bhimasena, five brothers who are your sons, Durmarshana, Duhsaha, Durmada, Durdhara and Jaya, could not tolerate this. Clad in colourful armour, they advanced against Pandava. They surrounded the mighty-armed Vrikodara from all directions and covered him with arrows that were like flying locusts. On seeing those princes, who were like the gods in their beauty, suddenly advance against him in that battle, Bhimasena smiled and received them. On seeing your sons approach Bhimasena, Radheya attacked the immensely strong Bhimasena. O king! He showered arrows that were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. However, Bhima attacked quickly and repulsed your sons. The Kurus surrounded Karna from all directions and countered Bhimasena with arrows with straight tufts. O king! But Bhima used his terrible bow to shoot twenty-five arrows and dispatched those bulls among men,[353] with their charioteers, to Yama's eternal abode. With their charioteers, they lost their lives and fell down from their chariots. They were like giant trees with colourful blossoms, uprooted by a storm. We witnessed Bhimasena's extraordinary valour. He countered Adhiratha's son and killed your sons with his arrows. O great king! In every direction, the son of the suta was checked by Bhima's sharp arrows and he could only look at Bhimasena. Bhimasena was angry and his eyes were red with rage. He repeatedly stretched his giant bow and glanced at Karna."'

CHAPTER 1088(111)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that your sons had fallen down, the powerful Karna was overcome by great rage and lost all hope of remaining alive. Adhiratha's son censured himself.[354] Without any fear, he angrily attacked Bhimasena. Radheya smiled and pierced Bhima with five arrows. He again pierced him with seventy arrows that were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. Partha Vrikodara laughed at them and intolerantly, pierced Radheya with a hundred arrows with drooping tufts. He again pierced him with five sharp and swift arrows. O venerable one! With a broad-headed arrow, he severed the bow of the son of the suta. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Karna was distressed and took up another bow. In every direction, he enveloped Bhimasena with arrows. However, Bhima smiled and killed his horses and his charioteer. Having done this, he laughed out loudly. O great king! The bull among men severed his bow,[355] with a golden back, with arrows and it fell down with a loud noise. At this, maharatha Karna descended from his chariot. In that battle, he grasped a club and hurled it at Bhimasena. O king! On seeing that club suddenly descend, Vrikodara countered it with his arrows, while all your soldiers looked on. Wishing to kill the son of the suta, the brave and spirited Pandava shot a thousand arrows at him. In that great battle, Karna countered these arrows with arrows of his own and with his arrows, brought down Bhimasena's armour. While all the beings looked on, he then struck him with twenty-five kshudraka arrows and it was extraordinary. O great king! O venerable one! Bhima became angry. In that battle, he dispatched nine sharp arrows with drooping tufts towards the son of the suta. They pierced his armour and his right arm and penetrated the ground, like snakes entering a termite hill. In that encounter, on seeing that Radheya was on foot and was agitated by Bhimasena, King Duryodhana said, 'All of you hasten towards Radheya's chariot.' O king! On hearing the words of their brother, your sons advanced against Pandava in the battle and shot sharp arrows. They were Chitra, Upachitra, Chitraksha, Charuchitra, Sharasana, Chitrayudha, Chitravarma and Chitrayodhina. O king! In that battle, these maharathas suddenly advanced against Bhima. In that encounter, he killed them and their horses, charioteers, standards and brought them down on the ground, like trees uprooted by a storm. O king! On beholding that your maharatha sons had been killed, Karna's eyes were filled with tears and his face was full of dejection. He again mounted a chariot that had been properly prepared. In that encounter, the brave one spiritedly attacked Pandava. They pierced each other with gold-tufted arrows that were sharpened on stone. O great king! They looked as beautiful as blossoming kimshukas. Pandava angrily struck the armour of the son of the suta with thirty six sharp and broad-headed arrows that were fierce in their energy. They had deep wounds on their bodies, caused by the arrows, and they smeared red sandalwood paste on these. They were covered with blood and were as resplendent as the sun that arises at the time of destruction. Blood flowed from the wounds on their bodies. Their armour was shattered by arrows. Bereft of armour, they were as beautiful as snakes that had cast off their skins. Like tigers attacking each other with their teeth, those tigers among men mangled each other with arrows that were like teeth. Those scorchers of enemies were resplendent in that arena, like clashing elephants. They were like crazy elephants in their valour and persecuted each other with sharp arrows. In that battle, they enveloped each other with nets of arrows. O great king! As they roamed around, their chariots roared in all the directions. Those chariots executed circular motions. Those great-souled ones roamed around like Vritra and the wielder of the vajra. As he stretched his bow with his arms, with arm-guards on them, Bhima roamed around in that battle like a cloud tinged with lightning. The twang of his bow was like thunder and there was a shower of arrows from that great cloud. O great king! The cloud that was Bhima rained down on the mountain that was Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Pandava shot a thousand arrows from his bow and shrouded Karna with that dense shower, like rain on a mountain. Your sons witnessed Bhimasena's valour there. He enveloped Karna with arrows that were well-tufted with the feathers of herons. As Bhima fought with Karna in that battle, he delighted Partha,[356] the illustrious Keshava, Satyaki and the two who guarded the chariot wheels.[357] O great king! Pandava knew about his own valour, strength of arms and fortitude. But your sons witnessed it."'

CHAPTER 1089(112)

'Sanjaya said, "On hearing the slap of Bhimasena's bowstring against his palms, Radheya could not tolerate it and advanced like a mad elephant against another elephant. He had moved away from the reach of Bhima's arrows for only an instant. Adhiratha's son saw that your sons had been brought down from their chariots and had been killed by Bhimasena. He was distressed and miserable. He sighed long and warm sighs and again attacked Pandava. His eyes were coppery red in anger and he sighed like a giant serpent. As he released his arrows, Karna was as resplendent as the sun with its rays. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Vrikodara was shrouded by the arrows released from Karna's bow, which were like the rays of the sun. The colourful arrows released from Karna's bow were tufted with the feathers of peacocks. They penetrated all over Partha, like birds entering a tree. The arrows released from Karna's bow descended incessantly. They were gold-tufted and looked like a continuous array of swans. O king! Such was the power of the arrows shot by Adhiratha's son that it seemed as if they were issuing not only from the bow, but also the standard, the seat, the umbrella, the yoke and the floor.[358] The arrows released by Adhiratha's son filled the sky with their great force and were tufted with the feathers of birds. They were colourful and decorated with gold. Vrikodara saw that they were descending towards him, like Death. He became ready to give up his life and angrily pierced him[359] with nine arrows. The brave Pandava saw the great force of Karna's storm of arrows, but did not waver. Pandava shot a net of arrows towards Adhiratha's son and again pierced Karna with another twenty sharp arrows. In that encounter, just as Partha enveloped the son of the suta with arrows, Karna also shrouded Pandava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing Bhimasena's valour in that fight, those on your side were delighted and praised him, as did the charanas. Ten of the foremost of rathas among the Kurus and the Pandavas—Bhurishrava, Kripa, Drona's son, the king of Madra, Jayadratha, Uttamouja, Yudhamanyu, Satyaki, Keshava and Arjuna—uttered words of praise and roared loudly, like lions. There was a tumultuous sound and it made the body hair stand up.

'"O king! Your son, Duryodhana, quickly spoke to the kings and the princes, and especially to his brothers. 'O fortunate ones! Advance towards Karna and save him from Vrikodara. Ahead of us, the arrows released by Bhima are striking Radheya. All of you great archers should make efforts to protect the son of the suta.' O venerable one! Having been instructed by Duryodhana, seven of his brothers angrily attacked Bhimasena and surrounded him from all sides. They approached Kounteya and covered him with showers of arrows. This was like the slayer of Bala showering down rain on a mountain. O king! Bhimasena was oppressed by those seven angry maharathas, like seven planets afflicting the moon at the time of destruction. O king! Pandava Kounteya drew the well-decorated and firm bow with his left hand and held it in his hand.[360] Knowing that they were only men,[361] the lord affixed and released seven arrows that were as bright as the rays of the sun. O great king! Bhimasena remembered the earlier enmity and took away the lives from the bodies of your sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhimasena shot arrows at those descendants of the Bharata lineage. These were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone and coursed through the sky. Those arrows were decorated with gold and pierced through their hearts. O great king! They were as resplendent as Suparna[362] travelling through the sky. O Indra among kings! They were fierce and decorated with gold and now had blood on their tips. They drank the blood of your sons. Those arrows penetrated their inner organs and brought them down from the chariots onto the ground. They were like giant trees on mountain tops, shattered by an elephant. Shatrunjaya, Shatrusaha, Chitra, Chitrayudha, Dridha, Chitrasena and Vikarna—these seven were brought down.

'"Having killed them, the mighty-armed one saw Radheya. The descendant of the Pandu lineage roared terribly, like the roar of a lion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave one's roar resounded in the sky and informed Dharmaraja about his victory in the battle. On hearing the great roar emitted by the archer Bhimasena in the battle, Dharmaraja was supremely delighted. O great king! In joy, musical instruments were played in loud tones. Having heard Bhimasena's roar, Partha[363] attacked Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, from every direction. On receiving the sign from Vrikodara, he was filled with great delight. O great king! On seeing that thirty-one of your maharatha sons had been killed, Duryodhana remembered the words of

Kshatta,[364] which had been spoken at the time of the gambling match to your evil-minded son, when Karna had spoken harsh words to Krishna[365] in the assembly hall. O lord of the earth! This was in your presence and in that of the sons of Pandu and in the presence of all the Kouravas and the preceptor. ‘O Krishna![366] The Pandavas have been destroyed and have gone to eternal hell. Accept someone else as a husband.’ Those harsh words spoken to Droupadi in the assembly hall are now bearing fruit. Thinking of this, the king[367] did not know what to do next. The Pandavas wield fierce bows and will kill your sons in their anger. O Kourava! The fire of Bhimasena’s anger has been restrained for thirteen years. It is now being released and will convey your sons towards destruction. Having lamented a lot, Kshatta failed to obtain peace from you. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! With your sons, enjoy the fruits of that now. O Indra among kings! Vikarna and the valiant Chitrasena, foremost among your sons, have been killed and so have other maharatha sons, all those who have come within the range of Bhima’s sight. O mighty-armed one! He swiftly slew your sons. It is only because of your deeds that I saw our arrays being scorched, as a result of the thousands of arrows released by Pandava and Vrisha.”’[368]

CHAPTER 1090(113)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O suta! O Sanjaya! Though I sorrow, I think that this great calamity that has now confronted us is especially because of what I did. But so far, I had the belief that what has happened, has happened. O Sanjaya! What should I do now? Tell me about the destruction of heroes that is going on. O Sanjaya! I have pacified myself. Tell me about it.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! Karna and Bhima were both valorous. In that great battle, they showered down arrows, like rain pouring down from clouds. There were gold-tufted arrows that were sharpened on stone and marked with Bhima’s name. These pierced Karna, as if penetrating his life. In that fashion, Bhima was struck in that battle by hundreds and thousands of arrows released by Karna and these were like venomous serpents. O great king! Those arrows descended in every direction and agitated the armies, which were like oceans. O scorcher of enemies! The arrows released from Bhima's bow were as terrible as virulent serpents and killed your soldiers in the midst of the army. O king! Elephants fell down and mixed with horses and men. They were seen to be strewn around on the ground, like trees shattered by a storm. In that battle, they were slain by the arrows released from Bhima's bow. Your warriors were driven away, exclaiming, 'What is this?' The great force of arrows released by Karna and Pandava made the soldiers from Sindhus, Souviras and Kouravas move a great distance away. Many horses, men and mounts were afflicted and slain by the arrows. They abandoned Karna and Bhima and fled in all the directions, saying, 'There is no doubt that, for the sake of the Parthas, the residents of heaven are confounding us, since the force of Karna and Bhima's arrows are killing our troops.' Having said this, the warriors on your side were afflicted by fear. They moved away from the range of the arrows and stationed themselves, wishing to see the encounter. In that great battle, a river, terrible in form, began to flow. It was beautiful and in particular, increased the fear of cowards. This was created from the blood of elephants, horses and men. It covered the bodies of men, elephants and horses, who had lost their lives. Housings, flags, elephants, horses and chariots were like ornaments. There were shattered chariots and fragmented wheels, axles and yokes. There were extremely expensive bows that were decorated with gold. There were gold-tufted arrows and thousands of iron arrows. These were released by Karna and Pandava and were like snakes that had cast off their skins. There were masses of lances, spears, swords, battleaxes, clubs, maces, spikes, vajras of different types, javelins, bludgeons and shataghnis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were decorated with gold and made the ground beautiful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were golden bracelets, armlets, sparkling and bejewelled earrings, body armour, palm-guards and golden necklaces. There were garments and umbrellas and shattered whisks and fans. There were elephants, horses and men who were mangled by weapons and ornaments from chariots. Shattered and broken, they were strewn around here and there on the ground, making it as beautiful as the sky with the planets. These superhuman deeds were extraordinary and could not be thought of. On beholding these, the charanas and the siddhas were overcome by wonder. A fire, when aided by the wind, burns down dry grass. Like that, aided by Bhima and engaging with him, Adhiratha's son fiercely brought down standards and chariots and slew horses, elephants and men. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As they engaged with each other in that battle, they were like a couple of elephants amidst a clump of reeds. As they clashed in that supreme battle, Karna and Bhima, caused carnage in that great army."'

CHAPTER 1091(114)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Karna pierced Bhima with three arrows. He released many showers of colourful arrows. O great king! Pandava was struck by the son of the suta. But Bhimasena was not distressed and was like a shattered mountain. O Indra among kings! In that battle, Bhimasena pierced Karna with a sharp, yellow and barbed arrow. O great king! He brought down Karna's great and golden earring on the ground, as if a flaming stellar body had been dislodged from the sky. The immensely strong Bhima seemed to be smiling. With another broad-headed arrow, he grievously struck the son of the suta between the breasts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Bhima again dispatched ten iron arrows. These were extremely forceful and were like Yama's staff. O venerable one! They struck the son of the suta on his forehead and thus released, penetrated like snakes entering a termite hill. With those arrows on his forehead, the son of the suta looked dazzling, as he had done earlier, when he had donned a garland of blue lotuses.[369] In that battle, Karna, the wielder of a firm bow, was afflicted and enraged. Wishing to kill Bhimasena, he advanced with great force and speed. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The intolerant and powerful Karna angrily dispatched one hundred arrows tufted with the feathers of vultures. However, in that encounter, the brave Pandava did not think about these. He ignored them and released a fierce shower of arrows. O great king! Karna, the scorcher of enemies, adopted a fierce form and angrily struck Pandava in the chest with sharp arrows. In that encounter, they showered down on each other, like clouds. They terrified each other with the slapping of their palms. In that encounter, they enveloped each other with diverse nets of arrows. In that battle, they wrathfully acted so as to counteract the other. The mighty-armed and great-souled Bhima severed Karna's bow with a kshurapra arrow and pierced him with arrows.

'"The great-minded son of the suta discarded the severed bow and picked up another bow that was more forceful and was capable of bearing a great load. The son of the suta saw that the destruction of the forces of the Kurus, Souviras and Saindhavas and that the earth was strewn with armour, standards and weapons that had fallen down. In every direction, he saw bodies of elephants, horses and men that had lost their lives. A great and blazing anger was generated in his body. He stretched his great bow, which was decorated with gold. O king! Radheya glanced at Bhima with fierce eyes. As he angrily released his arrows, the son of the suta was beautiful, like the rays of the autumn sun when it has attained midday. O king! Adhiratha's[370] body was covered with hundreds of fierce arrows and it looked like the body of the sun, with all its rays. He picked up arrows in his hand and affixed them. He stretched his bow and released them. In that battle, no gap could be seen between these. O great king! Karna shot arrows to the right and to the left and his bow was like a terrible circle of fire. The arrows released from Karna's bow were extremely sharp and gold-tufted. O great king! They shrouded the directions and the radiance of the sun. Those gold-tufted arrows with drooping tufts were released from the bow and were seen to traverse in the sky in many ways. O kings! The arrows released from the bow of Adhiratha's son were as beautiful as an array of cranes in the sky. They were tufted with the feathers of vultures. They were sharpened on stone. They were decorated with gold and were extremely forceful. Those arrows released by Adhiratha's son flamed at the tip.

They were decorated with gold and were released by the force of the bow. Many such arrows descended towards Partha's chariot. There were thousands of them in the sky, decorated with jewels. Those arrows shot by Karna were like a storm of locusts. As those arrows were continuously released from the bow of Adhiratha's son, they seemed to form a single long arrow in the sky. Like a cloud pouring down torrents of rain on a mountain, Karna angrily enveloped Bhima with a shower of arrows.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your sons, together with the Kurus, then witnessed Bhima's strength, valour and prowess. That shower of arrows created by Karna was like an ocean. But he disregarded it and angrily attacked him. O lord of the earth! Bhima had a large bow with a golden back. He stretched it in a circle and it looked like Shakra's bow. The arrows released from it covered up the sky. Bhima's arrows were gold-tufted, with drooping tufts. They were as beautiful as a golden garland that has been created in the sky. That net of arrows that was spread out in the sky[371] was struck and shattered by Bhimasena's arrows. In that battle, both Karna and Bhimasena created nets of straight-flying arrows that clashed against each other and produced sparks of fire. These were gold-tufted and covered the sky, as they traversed through it. Disregarding the valour of the great-minded one, the son of the suta used other arrows to envelope Bhima. O venerable one! Those nets of arrows created there seemed to be like two storms of wind clashing against each other. Wishing to kill him, Karna used sharp arrows that had been crafted by artisans and were decorated with gold and angrily shot these. But asking the son of the suta to wait, Bhima used his own arrows to sever each of these into three fragments in the sky. Once again, Pandava showered down fierce arrows. He was intolerant, powerful and angry. He was like a fire that destroys everything. However, Karna showed no fear and received all these weapons with his own. As he fought with Pandu's son, the son of the suta used the maya of his weapons and severed his quivers and his bowstring with arrows that had drooping tufts. Vaikartana Karna then severed the harnesses of the horses. He killed his horses and pierced his charioteer with three arrows. Descending, the charioteer swiftly fled towards Yuyudhana’s chariot. Radheya was angry and his radiance was like the fire at the time of destruction. He smiled and severed Bhima’s standard and brought down his flag.

‘“O great king! Without a bow, he grasped a spear and angrily hurled it towards Karna’s chariot.[372] As that spear, embellished with gold and like a giant meteor, descended towards him, Adhiratha’s son severed it with ten arrows. O king! Having been shattered into ten fragments by Karna’s arrows, it fell down. The son of the suta was wonderful in fighting and was acting for the sake of his friends. Kounteya then grasped a shield that was embellished with gold and a sword, wishing for either death or victory, and advanced suddenly. O great king! But Karna smiled and severed the shield. He was without a chariot and was senseless with anger. He hurled the sword towards Karna’s chariot. The extremely sharp sword severed the bow and the bowstring of the son of the suta and then fell down on the ground, like a snake that has fallen from the sky. Adhiratha’s son laughed and wrathfully took up another bow that was capable of killing enemies in battle and was more firm and more powerful. The angry Bhimasena was powerful and truth was his valour. He distressed Karna by leaping up into the sky. On witnessing the conduct on the part of the one who wished to be victorious in the battle, Radheya deceived Bhimasena by hiding. His senses were benumbed and he hid on the floor of his chariot. On seeing this, he grasped his flagpole and remained stationed on the ground.[373] All the Kurus and the charanas applauded this attempt of snatching Karna from his chariot, like Tarkshya[374] grabbing a serpent. His bow was severed and he was without a chariot. But he was devoted to following his own dharma. Turning his back towards his own chariot, he remained stationed on the field of battle.

‘“Wishing to kill him, Radheya again angrily attacked Pandava, who was waiting to fight in the battle. Those two immensely strong ones encountered each other and challenged each other in that great arena. They roared like clouds in the sky at the end of summer. Those two lions among men were excited and enraged. They were intolerant towards each other in the battle, like the gods and the danavas. Though his weapons were exhausted, Kounteya was attacked by Karna. He saw the elephants that had been slain by Arjuna and they were as large as a mountain. To create an obstruction in the path of the chariot,[375] he entered into their midst. He entered those elephants, which were difficult for a chariot to penetrate. Wishing to save his own life, Pandava did not strike Radheya. Instead, Partha, the destroyer of enemy cities, raised an elephant that had been killed by Dhananjaya's arrows and remained stationed there. However, Karna used his arrows to strike down that elephant. Pandava roared and hurled the limbs of the elephant towards Karna. He also hurled wheels, horses, mounts and anything else that he could see on the ground. Pandava grabbed these and angrily hurled them towards Karna. Karna used sharp arrows to sever everything that was repeatedly hurled at him. However, remembering Kunti's words, he did not kill him.[376] Instead, Karna approached him and touched him with the tip of his bow.

'"Radheya laughed and repeatedly spoke these words to Bhimasena. 'Eunuch! Idiot! Glutton! You have no skill in weapons, but wish to fight with me. You are only a child and become distressed in battle. O Pandava! You should be where there are many kinds of food and things to eat and drink. O evil-minded one! You should be there and should never fight. O Bhima! O extremely evil-minded one! You should become a hermit and live on fruit. O Kounteya! Go to the forest. You have no skills in fighting. You should subsist on fruits and roots and in tending to guests. O Vrikodara! I do not think that you are fit to raise weapons. You should collect flowers and live on roots and fruits and attend to vows and rites. O Bhima! You should be in the forest. You are not skilled in fighting. O son! You should not be in a battle. You should be exiled to the forest. O Vrikodara! In a household, you can only urge cooks, servants, men and slaves to hasten in their tasks and are capable of reproaching them for the sake of food.' O lord of the earth! In harsh words, he also reminded him about all the unpleasant things that were earlier done to him during his childhood. As he weakly stood there, he again touched him with his bow and laughed. Vrisha again spoke these words to Bhima. 'Fight with others. Do not fight with the likes of me. Those who fight with the likes of me have to face this and many other things. Go where the two Krishnas are and they will protect you in this battle. O Kounteya! Otherwise, go home. O child! Why do you wish to fight?' O king! Having deprived him of his chariot, Karna spoke these words to him, in the presence of the lion among the Vrishni lineage and the great-minded Partha.[377]

'"O king! The one with the ape on his banner was urged by Keshava and shot arrows that had been sharpened on stone at the son of the suta. Those arrows released by Partha were embellished with gold. They were shot from the force of Gandiva and penetrated Karna, like swans into Mount Krouncha. Those arrows released from Gandiva penetrated like snakes. Dhananjaya drove the son of the suta away from Bhimasena. His bow had been severed by Bhima and he was afflicted by Dhananjaya's arrows. Karna mounted his giant chariot and quickly fled from Bhima. Bhima, bull among men, mounted Satyaki's chariot and followed his brother, Pandava Savyasachi, in that battle. His eyes coppery red in anger, Dhananjaya swiftly dispatched an iron arrow towards Karna and it was like Destroyer urging Death. That iron arrow, released from Gandiva, swiftly sped towards Karna, like Garuda descending from the sky in search of a supreme serpent. Using his own arrow, Drona's son severed the iron arrow in the air. The maharatha wished to free Karna from his fear of Dhananjaya. O great king! Arjuna angrily pierced Drona's son with sixty-four arrows that were sharpened on stone. He asked him to wait and not run away. However, Drona's son was afflicted by Dhananjaya's arrows. He quickly penetrated an array that was full of crazy elephants and chariots. In the battle, the powerful Kounteya used the roar of Gandiva to drown the noises of all the other gold-backed bows. Dhananjaya followed Drona's son, who had only gone a short distance away, and terrified him with the strength of his arrows. He mangled the bodies of men, elephants and horses with his iron arrows, which were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. Arjuna crushed that army. O best of the Bharata lineage! Partha, the son of the chastiser of Paka, slaughtered that force, with its horses, elephants and men."'

CHAPTER 1092(115)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! From one day to another, my blazing fame is being destroyed. Many of my warriors have been killed and I think that this is because of destiny. The enraged Dhananjaya has penetrated into my army. It is protected by Drona and Karna and is incapable of being penetrated by the gods. Krishna and Bhima, the two with blazing energy, are with him and have increased his valour. There is also the bull among the Shini lineage. Ever since I have heard about his entry, my sorrow is consuming me, like a fire on dry grass. I can see all the lords of the earth, with Saindhava, being devoured. The king of Sindhu has done an extremely great injury to Kiriti and if he comes within his sight, how can he escape with his life? O Sanjaya! From the signs, I do not see Saindhava remaining alive. But I am asking you to tell me about how the battle raged. How did the angry one penetrate my large army single-handed and agitate and trouble it, like an elephant amidst lotuses? Tell me exactly about the battle that the brave one from the Vrishni lineage fought, for Dhananjaya's sake. O Sanjaya! You are skilled in narration."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! On seeing that Bhima, foremost among men, was oppressed by Vaikartana in the midst of those brave men, the foremost of the Shini lineage followed him on his chariot. He roared, like the wielder of the vajra at the end of summer. He blazed, like the sun at the end of the monsoon. With his firm bow, he killed the enemies and made the army of your son tremble. The brave one among men fought and roamed around, drawn on mounts that were silvery in complexion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No one among the rathas on your side was capable of countering the fierce Madhava. Alambusa, foremost among kings, became intolerant.[378] He was clad in golden armour, wielded a bow and arrow and never retreated from the field of battle. He attacked Satyaki, foremost among the Madhava lineage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The likes of the encounter between them has never been seen before. All the warriors, on your side and that of the enemy, became spectators in that clash between those two ornaments of battle. Alambusa, supreme among kings, shot ten arrows at him. However, the bull among the Shini lineage, struck those arrows down with his own arrows, before they could reach him. He[379] drew his bow back up to his ears and again struck him with three well-tufted and sharp arrows that were like the fire. These shattered Satyaki's armour and penetrated his body. Having pierced his body with those arrows that had the force of the fire and the wind, he again struck his four horses, with the complexion of silver, with four other arrows. Shini's grandson was as spirited and powerful as the wielder of the chakra himself.[380] Though he was struck, he used four forceful arrows to kill Alambusa's four horses. With a broad-headed arrow, he severed his charioteer's head and used other arrows that were like the fire of destruction to sever his too. It[381] was beautiful, with a face like the full moon, and was adorned with earrings. It was severed from the body. O king! Having killed that son and grandson of a king in that battle, the brave bull among the Madhu lineage tormented and countered your soldiers and went towards Arjuna. The supreme among the Vrishni lineage was seen to circle around in the midst of the enemy. As he proceeded, he repeatedly slaughtered the Kuru forces with his arrows, like the wind dispelling a mass of clouds. He was borne on well-trained and controlled horses from the Sindhu region. They were as white as cow's milk, the kunda flower, the moon or snow. They were well-trained horses and had harnesses that were golden in complexion. They bore the lion among men wherever he desired.

'"O Ajamidha![382] Your sons united with the other warriors on your side and swiftly attacked him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They made your son, Duhshasana, chief among warriors, their leader. In that battle, those leaders of battle formations surrounded Shini's descendant from all sides and struck him. The brave one, supreme among the Satvata lineage, countered them with his net of arrows. Shini's grandson, the slayer of enemies, used arrows that were like the fire and quickly countered them. O Ajamidha! He raised his bow and slew Duhshasana's mounts."'

CHAPTER 1093(116)

'Sanjaya said, "Desiring that Dhananjaya might obtain victory quickly, the mighty-armed one was swiftly advancing towards Duhshasana's chariot. The great archers from Trigarta, their standards decorated with gold, surrounded him from all sides and he was immersed in an ocean of soldiers. They surrounded him from all sides with an army of chariots. They angrily released a storm of arrows towards that supreme archer. But in that great battle, Satyaki, with truth as his valour, single-handedly defeated fifty enemy princes who had advanced against him. He penetrated the midst of the Bharata soldiers, which resounded with the noise of the slapping of palms. It was like an ocean, with the many swords, lances and clubs as boats. In that battle, we then witnessed the extraordinary conduct of Shini's descendant. We saw him in the western direction and then in the east. We beheld his dexterity. He seemed to extend in the north, the south, the east and the west. The brave one seemed to be dancing around, as if he was one hundred rathas alone. On witnessing the conduct of the one whose gait was like that of a brave lion, the Trigartas were tormented and retreated towards their own kin. The brave Shurasenas then strove to counter him in that battle. They released a storm of arrows on him, like a crazy elephant being urged with a goad. Satyaki took only a short instant to counter all of them and then began to fight with the Kalingas. His strength and valour were unthinkable. He passed that army of Kalingas, which was incapable of being crossed.

'"The mighty-armed one then reached Partha Dhananjaya. He was exhausted, like one who has swum through the waters and has reached land. On seeing that tiger among men, Yuyudhana was reassured. Having seen him approach, Keshava spoke to Arjuna. 'O Partha! Shini's descendant is arriving, following in your footsteps. O one who has truth as his valour! He is your disciple and your friend. The bull among men has conquered all the warriors, regarding them as grass. He has created terrible carnage among the Kourava warriors. O Kiriti! Satyaki is approaching and he is dearer to you than your own life. O Phalguna! Satyaki is approaching and he has used his arrows to crush Drona and Bhoja Kritavarma. He is devoted to ensuring Dharmaraja's welfare and has killed the supreme among the best of warriors. O Phalguna! Satyaki is approaching. He is brave and skilled in the use of weapons. The immensely strong one has performed extremely difficult deeds in the midst of the soldiers. O Pandava! Satyaki is approaching, wishing to see you. He has fought with many maharathas, with the preceptor at the forefront, on a single chariot. O Partha! Satyaki is arriving. Depending on the strength of his own arms, he has shattered the army. He has been sent by the son of Dharma. O Partha! Satyaki is approaching. Among the Kouravas, there is no warrior who is equal to him. O Kounteya! Satyaki, for whom truth is his valour, is arriving. He has been freed from the Kuru soldiers, like a lion from amidst cattle. He has killed many soldiers. O Partha! Satyaki is approaching. He has strewn the earth with the faces, as beautiful as lotuses, of a thousand kings. O Partha! Satyaki is swiftly approaching. He has defeated Duryodhana and his brothers in the battle and has killed Jalasandha. Satyaki is swiftly arriving. He has created a river of blood, with blood as the mud, and has regarded the Kouravyas as grass. Satyaki is arriving.' However, Kounteya was not happy and spoke these words to Keshava. 'O mighty-armed one! I do not find this arrival of Satyaki's to be pleasant. O Keshava! I do not know about the state Dharmaraja is in. Without Satvata, I do not know whether he is alive or not. O mighty-armed one! He should have protected the king. O Krishna! Why has he abandoned him and followed in my footsteps? The king has been left to Drona and Saindhava has not yet been brought down. In the battle, Bhurishrava is advancing against Shini's descendant. A greater burden than that of Saindhava has now been imposed on me. I should find out about the king and I should also protect Satyaki. I must also kill Jayadratha and the sun is low. The mighty-armed one[383] is exhausted and he has only a little bit of spirit left. O Madhava! His horses are tired and so is his charioteer. O Keshava! Bhurishrava is not tired and he has aides. How will Satyaki, for whom truth is his valour, be successful in this encounter? He has crossed an ocean. Will the immensely energetic bull of the Shini lineage now succumb before a trifle?[384] He will clash against the great-minded Bhurishrava, who is foremost among the Kurus and is skilled in the use of weapons. How will Satyaki be safe? O Keshava! I think that Dharmaraja committed an error. He should not have given up his fear of the preceptor and sent Satyaki. Drona has always sought to seize Dharmaraja, like a hawk in the sky, in search of meat. Will the king be safe?"'

CHAPTER 1094(117)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! On seeing that Satvata, invincible in battle, was descending, Bhurishrava became angry and suddenly attacked him. The mighty-armed Kouravya spoke to the bull among the Shini lineage. 'It is good fortune that you have arrived within my range of vision today. In this battle today, I will obtain what I have always desired. Unless you abandon the battle, you will not escape with your life. You have always been proud of your bravery and I will kill you in today's encounter. O Dasharha! I will delight Suyodhana, the king of the Kurus. You will be scorched by my arrows and fall down on the face of the earth today. All the brave ones in the battle will witness this, together with Keshava and Arjuna. Today, the king who is Dharma's son will hear that you have been killed by me. Having sent you, he will today be overcome with shame. Today, Partha Dhananjaya will get to know about my valour. He will see you slain, lying down on the ground and covered with blood. Today, you will clash with me and I have always desired this for a long time. In the ancient battle between the gods and the asuras, this will be like the one between Shakra and Bali. O Satvata! I will grant you an extremely terrible encounter today. You will get to know the true nature of my valour, strength and manliness. Having been killed by me in the battle, you will go to Yama's residence, just as Ravana's son[385] was slain by Lakshmana, Rama's younger brother. O Madhava! Today, Krishna, Partha and Dharmaraja will witness your death and there is no doubt that they will lose all enthusiasm and give up the battle. O Madhava! Today, I will cause your death with sharp arrows and delight the wives of those who have been killed by you in the battle. O Madhava! Now that you have come within the range of my vision, you will not escape, like a small deer that has approached a lion.' O king! Yuyudhana laughed and replied, 'O Kouraveya! I am never frightened in a battle. A person who disarms me is the only one who is capable of killing me in an encounter. He who kills me in battle today, will continue to kill for a long time to come.[386] What is the point of talking a lot? Do what you have spoken about. You are as fruitless as the roar of clouds during the autumn. O brave one! On hearing your roars, laughter is generated in me. O Kourava! In this world, you have desired this encounter for a long time. Let it commence. O father![387] In my heart, I also wish to fight with you and let us act swiftly. O wretch among men! I will not retreat without killing you today.' Those bulls among men castigated each other with those words. Each of them wished to kill the other and in that battle, struck each other in great anger. Those two tigers among men challenged each other and clashed against each other in the encounter, striking strongly. They were like crazy and angry elephants, fighting for the sake of a she-elephant.

'"Bhurishrava and Satyaki, scorchers of enemies, were like clouds and showered down terrible torrents of arrows on each other. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Having shrouded Shini's descendant with arrows, Somadatta's son wished to kill him and pierced him with sharp arrows. Somadatta's son pierced Satyaki with ten arrows and wishing to kill the bull of the Shini lineage, released many other sharp arrows at him. O lord of the earth! O lord! But before those sharp arrows could reach him, Satyaki used the maya of his weapons to slice them down in the air. Those two supreme and brave ones, born in noble lineages and the extenders of the fame of the Kurus and the Vrishnis, brought down separate showers of arrows on each other. They were like tigers fighting with their claws, or giant elephants with their tusks. They used spears[388] and arrows released from bows to mangle each other. They mangled each other’s bodies and made blood flow from the wounds. They confounded each other in a gambling match in which their lives were the stake. Those two, the extenders of the fame of the Kuru and Vrishni lineages, fought against each other in this way and performed supreme deeds. They were like the leaders of elephant herds. Placing the world of Brahma in front of them,[389] they fought for a long time there, seeking to defeat each other and kill each other. Satyaki and Somadatta’s son showered down arrows on each other. And these showers delighted the sons of Dhritarashtra, who were looking on. The people who were there also witnessed the fight between these two supreme warriors. They fought like elephants seeking a she-elephant in the herd.

‘“They slew each other’s horses and severed each other’s bows. Devoid of their chariots in the great battle, they clashed and fought with swords. They took up large, beautiful and colourful shields made out of the hides of bulls. They unsheathed their swords and roamed around in that encounter. They traversed various paths and executed circular motions. Those two scorchers of enemies were angry and repeatedly struck each other. They possessed swords and were clad in colourful armour. They had golden armlets and ornaments. O king! In the battle, they were intoxicated with the encounter and made thrusts at each other. O Indra among kings! In a short instant, they tired each other out. While all the soldiers looked on, those brave ones again regained their composure. They severed those large and beautiful shields with the swords. When those were severed, the tigers among men engaged in a bout of wrestling. They had broad chests and long arms. They were skilled in fighting at close quarters.[390] They attacked each other with arms that were like iron clubs. They struck each other with those arms, grabbed each other and seized each other. They had obtained strength through learning and delighted all the other warriors. O king! As those supreme men fought on in that battle, a terrible and loud sound arose, as if thunder was striking against a mountain. They were like elephants goring each other with the tips of their tusks, or giant bulls with their horns. Those great-souled ones, bulls among the Kuru and Satvata lineages, fought on.

'"While Satvata was fighting and his weapons were exhausted, Vasudeva spoke to Arjuna. 'Behold. The foremost among all those who wield the bow is fighting in this encounter, though he is without a chariot. O Pandava! Following you, he penetrated the army of the Bharatas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![391] The immensely brave one fought with all the Bharatas. The best of warriors is exhausted and has now confronted Bhuridakshina,[392] who is advancing with a desire to fight. O Arjuna! This is not fair. Bhurishrava is invincible in battle and is angry with Satyaki.' O king! Like maddened elephants, those two got ready to kill each other. O king! Those two foremost among warriors were enraged and rushed against each other in their chariots, while Keshava and Arjuna were spectators to the encounter. Krishna spoke to the mighty-armed Arjuna. 'Behold. The tiger of the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages has succumbed to Somadatta's son. Having performed an extremely difficult task, he is now lying down on the ground. O Arjuna! The brave one is tired and you should protect Satyaki. O supreme among those who slay enemies! Let him not succumb to the performer of sacrifices.[393] O tiger among men! O lord! Quickly do what must be done.' Having been thus addressed by Vasudeva, Dhananjaya cheerfully replied, 'Look. The brave one among the Vrishnis and the bull of the Kuru lineage are sporting. They are like giant and crazy elephants in the forest, playing with herds of lions.'

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! At that time, a giant lamentation arose among the soldiers. The mighty-armed one[394] struck and brought Satyaki down on the ground. Bhuridakshina, the best of the Kurus, dragged the foremost of the Satvata lineage, like a lion dragging an elephant and looked beautiful in the battle. In that encounter, Bhurishrava unsheathed his sword and grasping him by the hair, struck him in the chest with his foot. O king! On seeing that Satvata was thus being dragged in the battle, Vasudeva again spoke to Arjuna. 'Behold. The tiger among the Vrishnis and the Andhakas has succumbed to

Somadatta’s son. O mighty-armed one! He is your student and he is not inferior to you in archery. O Partha! Truth is Satyaki’s valour. But in this battle, Varshneya’s valour has been rendered false by Bhurishrava.’ Having been thus addressed by Vasudeva in the battle, the mighty-armed Pandava mentally worshipped Bhurishrava and said, ‘I am glad that the extender of the deeds of the Kuru lineage is only dragging the best of the Satvata lineage in this battle and sporting with him. He has not killed Satyaki, the foremost among the brave ones of the Vrishni lineage. He is dragging him, like the king of deer dragging a giant elephant in the forest.’ O king! Having thus worshipped Kourava in his mind, the mighty-armed Partha Arjuna replied to Vasudeva, ‘O Madhava! Since my sight was fixed on Saindhava, I did not see anything else. For the sake of the Yadava, I will perform an extremely difficult task.’ Having spoken these words to Vasudeva, Pandava used an arrow to sever the arm, which held the sword, of the one who was devoted to sacrifices.”’[395]

CHAPTER 1095(118)

‘Sanjaya said, “The arm, with the sword and with a beautiful armlet, fell down on the ground and this caused supreme grief in the world of living beings. Kiriti severed the arm while he was still unseen and it fell down on the ground with great force, like a five-headed serpent. Having seen that he had been rendered unsuccessful by Partha, Kourava let go of Satyaki and angrily censured Pandava. ‘O Kounteya! You have performed an extremely cruel deed. While unseen by me and without engaging with me, you have severed my arm. What will you tell King Yudhishthira, the son of dharma? “I killed Bhurishrava in the battle, though he was not fighting with me.” Is this what the great-minded Indra instructed you himself? O Partha! Are these the weapons you learnt from Rudra, Drona and Kripa? It is said that you know more about dharma than anyone else in this world. How did you strike someone who was not engaged with you in battle? Learned ones do not strike someone who is distracted, frightened and without a chariot, or someone who seeks mercy or confronts a hardship. This is inferior conduct and is practised by men who are wicked. O Partha! How did you then perpetrate this extremely difficult deed? O Dhananjaya! Noble ones can easily perform deeds that are noble. But on this earth, noble ones find it extremely difficult to perform an ignoble act. O Partha! Men quickly pick up the deeds and conduct of those they consort with. This can be seen in you. You have been born in a lineage of kings and in particular, you are a Kouraveya. You were good in conduct and observed good vows. How could you have transgressed the dharma of kshatriyas? You have performed this wicked deed for the sake of Varshneya.[396] This is no doubt because of Vasudeva's counsel, though this is not worthy of you. Other than someone who is Krishna's friend, which person can inflict such a hardship on someone who is distracted and is fighting with another person? The Vrishnis and the Andhakas are vile.[397] They are naturally addicted to deeds that should be censured. O Partha! Why have you accepted them as a model?' Having thus spoken, the mighty-armed and immensely illustrious one, who had a sacrificial altar on his banner, abandoned Satyaki in the battle. He decided to fast to death.[398] The one with auspicious signs spread a bed of arrows with his left hand. He wished to go to Brahma's world and offered his breath of life to the lord of the senses as an oblation. He fixed his eye on the sun and his mind on pure water. He meditated on the great Upanishad and united with yoga, became silent.

'"All the soldiers and all the men censured Krishna and Dhananjaya and applauded that bull among men. Though censured, the two Krishnas did not say anything unpleasant in reply. Though praised, the one with the sacrificial altar on his standard, was not pleased either. O king! Dhananjaya could not mentally tolerate that your sons should have uttered such words and spoke to them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His words were not angry, but he wished to remind them. Phalguna, Pandu's son, spoke these words. 'All the kings know about my great vow. No one who is within the range of my arrows will be able to kill anyone on our side. O one with the sacrificial altar on your banner! Knowing this, you should not censure me. Without knowing about the nature of dharma, one should not censure someone else. You possessed weapons and you were about to kill the brave one from the Vrishni lineage in the battle. If I have severed your arm then, that is not against dharma. O father![399] Which virtuous one will not condemn the slaughter of Abhimanyu, when he was without a weapon, without a chariot and without armour? He was only a child.' Thus addressed by Partha, he[400] touched the ground with his head. With his left arm, he offered his severed right arm. O great king! Having heard Partha's words, the immensely radiant one, with the sacrificial altar on his standard, remained silent and hung his head down. Arjuna said, 'O Shala's elder brother![401] The affection that I bear towards you is the same as the one I bear towards Dharmaraja, Bhima, Nakula, supreme among eloquent ones, and Sahadeva. Having taken my leave and also that of the great-souled Krishna, go to the sacred worlds, where Shibi, the son of Ushinara, is.'[402] Having been freed by Somadatta's son, Shini's descendant arose.

'"Desiring to sever the head of the great-souled one, he grasped his sword. Bhuridakshina, Shala's elder brother, had already been slain by Pandu's son and was distracted. Satyaki wished to kill such an unblemished one. He was seated with his arm lopped off, like an elephant with a severed trunk. All the soldiers censured the extremely evil-minded one loudly. He was restrained by Krishna, the great-souled Partha, Bhima, the two protectors of the chariot wheels,[403] Ashvatthama, Kripa, Karna, Vrishasena and Saindhava. The soldiers loudly asked him not to kill the one who was devoted to his vows. However, Satyaki severed the head of the Indra among the Kouravas with his sword, though his arm had been severed in the battle by Partha and he was fasting to death. The soldiers did not applaud Satyaki's deed. The extender of the Kuru lineage had already been slain by Arjuna. The siddhas, the charanas and men saw Bhurishrava, who was an equal of the thousand-eyed one, being killed in the battle, though he was fasting to death. Amazed at his deeds, the gods honoured him. The soldiers also took sides and debated in many ways. 'This is not Varshneya's crime.

This is destiny. Therefore, we should not fall prey to anger. Anger causes misery for men. It was destined that the brave one would be killed and it is not for us to debate this. The creator has ordained that in this battle, he will meet his death through Satyaki.'

'"Satyaki said, 'You tell me that one should not kill someone who should not be killed. You speak about dharma and seem to be established in dharma. You wear the garments of dharma. Subhadra's son was a child. He was bereft of weapons. When you slew him in the battle, where was your dharma then? At some time, I had insolently taken a pledge. While I was still alive, if someone flung me down in battle and kicked me with his feet in anger, I would slay that enemy, even if he were to adopt the vow of a sage. O ones with limited intelligence! I was struggling to counter him, with my arms and eyes intact. But you thought that I was already dead. O bulls among the Kurus! It is very proper that I should have countered him in this way. Out of affection towards me, Partha protected his pledge.[404] But having severed his arm with the sword, he has deprived me. That which is ordained will happen. Destiny works in this way. He has been killed while he was fighting. What adharma has been committed by me? In ancient times, Valmiki sung this shloka on earth. "Men must always act so as to cause pain to their enemies."'"

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! When he had spoken in this way, no one among the Kouravas and the Pandavas said anything. They worshipped him[405] in their minds. He was sanctified with mantras. He was great in granting boons. He was illustrious. He had given away thousands of donations. He was like a sage who had gone to the forest. No one was happy at his death. He had dark blue eyes. He was a benefactor. He was brave. His eyes were red, like those of a pigeon. His head was severed, like that of a horse at a sacrifice and was then placed at the spot for oblations. In the great battle, his energy sanctified the weapon that had severed his head. He was the granter of boons. He was the recipient of boons. Because of his supreme dharma, he filled heaven and earth[406] and ascended above."'

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “He was undefeated by Drona, Radheya, Vikarna and Kritavarma. Fulfilling his promise to Yudhishthira, the brave one passed through that ocean of soldiers. How was he checked and humiliated in the battle by Kouraveya Bhurishrava and forcibly thrown down by him on the ground?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Listen to the ancient account about the origin of Shini’s descendant and also that of Bhurishrava. O king! You are uncertain on that account. Atri had a son named Soma and Soma’s son was known as Budha. Budha had a single son named Pururava and his splendour was like that of the great Indra. Pururava’s son was Ayu and Ayu’s son was known as Nahusha. Nahusha’s son was Yayati, revered by the gods as a rajarshi. Through Devayani, Yayati had an eldest son named Yadu. A son named Devamidha was born in Yadu’s lineage. His son Shura was born in the Yadava lineage and was honoured in the three worlds. Shura’s descendant was the immensely illustrious Shouri[407] Vasudeva, foremost among men. Shura was a supreme archer and was equal to Kartavirya[408] in battle. In his lineage, and equal to him in valour, was born a king named Shini. O king! At this time, a *svayamvara* was organized for the great-minded Devaka’s daughter.[409] All the kshatriyas assembled there. Wishing to obtain her for Vasudeva, he[410] defeated all the kings there and placed the princess Devaki on his chariot. O king! On seeing Devaki on Shouri Shini’s chariot, the immensely energetic Somadatta, bull among men, could not tolerate this. O king! There was a wonderful and extraordinary battle between them and it lasted for half a day. Those two extremely strong ones engaged in a wrestling match, like that between Shakra and Prahlada. Somadatta was forcibly thrown down on the ground by Shini. He[411] raised his sword, grasped him by the hair and kicked him with the foot, in the midst of thousands of kings who looked on in every direction. Then, overcome by compassion, he let him go and said, ‘Live.’ O venerable one! Having been reduced to that state, Somadatta was overcome by intolerance and sought the favours of Mahadeva. The lord

Mahadeva, supreme among the granters of boons, was satisfied. He wished to gratify him with a boon and the king asked for the following boon. ‘O lord! I ask for a son who will strike down Shini’s descendant in the midst of thousands of kings and kick him with the foot in a battle.’ Having heard the words of King Somadatta, the god agreed that it would be this way and disappeared. It was because of the boon that he obtained Bhuridakshina, and Somadatta’s son brought down Shini’s descendant in the battle. O king! I have told you what you asked me. Satvata, bull among men, cannot be vanquished in an encounter.

‘“The Vrishnis are successful in attaining their objective in battle. They fight in diverse colourful ways. They can even defeat the gods, the danavas and the gandharvas. They obtain victory through their own valour and do not have to depend on the help of others. O lord! O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one equal to them in strength can be seen. There is no one like that. There has been no one like that. Nor will there be anyone like that. They do not disrespect their kin and are devoted to the commands of the elders. In a battle, the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the serpents and the rakshasas cannot vanquish the brave ones of the Vrishni lineage, not to speak of men. They do not covet the possessions of brahmanas, the possessions of their elders or the possessions of their kin. They never covet the possessions of those who have protected them in times of distress. Though prosperous, they are not excessively attached.[412] They are devoted to brahmanas and are truthful in speech. They regard even the strong as weak and save them. They are always devoted to the gods. They are self-controlled, generous and free from insolence. It is because of this that the foremost ones among the Vrishnis can never be thwarted. O king! One can bear Mount Meru or swim across the abode of makaras, but one cannot stand up in an encounter with the foremost among the Vrishnis. O lord! I have told you everything that you had doubts about. O king of the Kurus! O best of men! All this is because of your grave errors.”’

CHAPTER 1097(120)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! In that situation, after Kourava Bhurishrava had been killed, how did the battle proceed? Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After Bhurishrava had left for the world of the hereafter, mighty-armed Arjuna urged Vasudeva. ‘O Krishna! Urge the horses speedily to where King Jayadratha is. O mighty-armed one! The sun is hanging low, towards Mount Asta.[413] O tiger among men! An extremely great task has been undertaken by me. But he is protected by maharathas among the Kuru soldiers. O Krishna! Urge the horses so that I am able to kill Jayadratha before the sun sets and am able to make my words come true.’ At this, the mighty-armed Krishna, who was skilled about horses, goaded the horses, with complexions of silver, towards Jayadratha’s chariot. As they left, he[414] shot swift arrows that always found their mark. O great king! The foremost among the soldiers attacked swiftly—Duryodhana, Karna, Vrishasena, the king of Madra, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Saindhava himself. Having encountered and stationed himself before Saindhava, Bibhatsu glanced at him with eyes that blazed with rage and seemed to burn him down with his sight.

‘“On seeing Arjuna advance and glance towards Jayadratha’s chariot, King Duryodhana quickly spoke to Radheya. ‘O Vaikartana! This is the time for battle. O great-souled one! Exhibit your valour now. O Karna! Act so that Arjuna cannot kill Jayadratha in the battle. O brave one among men! There is only a little bit of the day left. Strike the enemy with torrents of arrows. O foremost among men! O Karna! Once the day is over, it is certain that victory will be ours. If Saindhava can be protected until the time when the sun sets, Kounteya’s pledge will be falsified and he will enter the fire. O one who grants honours! Without Arjuna on this earth, his brothers and their followers will have no interest in remaining alive, even for an instant. O Karna! When the Pandaveyas are destroyed, we will enjoy the entire earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, bereft of thorns. O one who grants honours! It seems that destiny is against Partha. Without knowing about what should be done and what should not be done, he has taken a pledge in this battle. O Karna! There is no doubt that Kiriti Pandava has taken this vow about killing Jayadratha for the sake of his own destruction. O Radheya! When an invincible one like you is alive, how will Phalguna be able to kill King Saindhava before the sun has set? He is protected by the king of Madra and the great-souled Kripa. How will Dhananjaya be able to kill Jayadratha in the forefront of the battle? He is protected by Drona's son, me and Duhshasana. Driven by destiny, how will Bibhatsu be able to approach Saindhava? There are many brave ones who are fighting and the sun is hanging low. O one who grants honours! There is no doubt that Partha will not be able to approach Jayadratha. O Karna! With me and the other brave maharathas, fight against Partha in the battle and carefully make supreme efforts.' O venerable one! Having been thus addressed by your son, Radheya spoke these words to Duryodhana, supreme among the Kuru lineage. 'The brave archer Bhimasena is firm in his aim. In the battle, he has wounded me grievously with many nets of arrows. O one who grants honours! I have nevertheless been stationed in this battle. There is not a single limb of mine that has not been tormented by arrows in the encounter. O king! I will however fight in this battle, to the utmost of my capacity, so that the foremost among the Pandavas cannot kill Saindhava. As long as I am fighting and am shooting my sharp arrows, the brave Savyasachi Dhananjaya will not be able to obtain Saindhava. O Kouravya! I will do everything that a strong person, always devoted to your welfare, can do. Victory depends on destiny. O best among the Kuru lineage! Today, all the beings will witness the terrible battle between me and Partha and it will make the body hair stand up.' While Karna and Kouraveya were thus conversing on the field of battle, Arjuna struck your army with sharp arrows.

'"With sharp arrows that were pointed at the tip, in that battle, he severed the arms of the brave ones who would not retreat. They[415] were like clubs and like the trunks of elephants. The mighty-armed one severed heads with his sharp arrows. The trunks of elephants, the necks of horses and the wheels of chariots were strewn around. Horse-riders, with lances and spears, were steeped in blood. Bibhatsu sliced them down into two and three pieces with his razor-sharp arrows. Thousands of supreme horses and elephants fell down. There were standards, umbrellas, bows, whisks and heads. He consumed your army, like a rising fire against dry wood. Partha soon caused the earth to be covered with blood. The mighty one killed many warriors in your army. The invincible one, with truth as his valour, approached Saindhava. Bibhatsu was protected by Bhimasena and Satvata. O best of the Bharata lineage! He was as resplendent as a blazing fire. On seeing Phalguna stationed there, those on your side who were great archers and honoured as brave ones, bulls among men, could not tolerate this.

'"Duryodhana, Karna, Vrishasena, the king of Madra, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Saindhava himself were enraged. For Saindhava's sake, they surrounded Kiriti from all sides. He seemed to be dancing around along the path of his chariot, with a roar from his bowstring and from the clapping of arms. But all of them were skilled in fighting and fearlessly surrounded Partha, who was skilled in war and was like Death with a gaping mouth. They placed Saindhava behind them and wished to kill Arjuna and Achyuta. The sun had a reddish tint and they desired that it might set fast. They stretched their bows with their arms and released hundreds of arrows, which were like serpents and the sun's rays, towards Phalguna. In that battle, Kiriti, invincible in battle, struck them and severed them[416] into two, three and eight fragments.

'"The one with the lion's tail on his standard[417] then displayed his own strength. O king! The son of Sharadvata's daughter countered Arjuna.[418] He pierced Partha with ten arrows and Vasudeva with seven. He remained stationed in the path of the chariot[419] and protected Saindhava. All the other maharathas, foremost among the Kouravas, surrounded him from every side with a great array of chariots. They stretched their bows and released arrows. On the instructions of your son, they sought to protect Saindhava. The strength of Partha's arms, the inexhaustible arrows[420] and the bow Gandiva were then seen. He repulsed all the arrows of Drona's son and Sharadvata's son[421] and struck all of them with nine arrows each. Drona's son pierced him with twenty-five arrows, Vrishasena with seven, Duryodhana with twenty and Karna and Shalya with three each. They roared and pierced him repeatedly. They brandished their bows and surrounded him from all sides. They quickly drew their chariots in a circle all around him. The maharathas desired that the sun might set fast. They roared and brandished their bows. They covered him with sharp arrows, like clouds pouring rain on the slope of a mountain. O king! Those brave ones, with arms like clubs, showed their great and divine weapons and released them on Dhananjaya's body. The powerful one killed many warriors in your army. The invincible one, with truth as his valour, approached Saindhava.

'"O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, while Bhimasena and Satvata looked on, Karna countered him with arrows. But in that encounter, while all the soldiers looked on, the mighty-armed Partha pierced the son of the suta back with ten arrows. O venerable one! Satvata pierced Karna with three arrows, Bhimasena with three and Partha again pierced him with seven arrows. Maharatha Karna pierced each of them back with sixty arrows. O king! That encounter between Karna and many was extraordinary. O venerable one! We witnessed the son of the suta's wonderful act, since he single-handedly and angrily countered three rathas. In that battle, the mighty-armed Phalguna struck Vaikartana Karna with one hundred arrows that penetrated all the inner organs. The powerful son of a suta had blood flowing from all his limbs. However, the brave one pierced Phalguna back with fifty arrows. On witnessing his dexterity in battle, Arjuna could not tolerate it. The brave Partha Dhananjaya severed his bow and quickly struck him between the breasts with nine arrows. It was a time when speed was of the essence. Wishing to kill him in the battle, Dhananjaya then quickly shot an arrow that was as radiant as the sun. But as that arrow descended forcefully, Drona's son severed it with a sharp arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon. Severed, it fell down on the ground. The powerful son of the suta then took up another bow. Wishing to kill his enemy and perform deeds that would counter his, Karna enveloped Phalguna with many thousands of arrows. Those maharathas, lions among men, roared like bulls. They covered the sky with straight-flying arrows. Wishing to strike each other, they became invisible because of that storm of arrows. 'I am Partha. Stay there. I am Partha. O Phalguna! Stay there.' They roared and tormented each other with these words as stakes. Those brave ones fought colourfully in that battle, showing dexterity and skill. All the warriors became spectators to this encounter. O great king! Wishing to kill each other in the battle, they fought on and were praised by the siddhas, the charanas and other applauders.

'"O king! Duryodhana addressed those on your side. 'Make efforts to protect Radheya. Vrisha Radheya has told me that he will not retreat without killing Arjuna in this battle.' O king! At this time, on witnessing Karna's valour, he[422] drew his bow back up to his ears and dispatched Karna's four horses to the land of the dead with four supreme arrows. With another broad-headed arrow, he brought down his charioteer from the seat of the chariot. While your son looked on, he covered him with arrows. In that encounter, he[423] was thus shrouded. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. Confounded by that net of arrows, he did not know what he should do. O great king! On seeing that he was without a chariot, Ashvatthama took him on his own chariot and continued to fight with Arjuna. The king of Madra pierced Kounteya with thirty arrows. Sharadvata's son struck Vasudeva with twenty and struck Dhananjaya with twelve arrows that had been sharpened on stone. O great king! The king of Sindhu struck Krishna and Partha separately with four arrows and Vrishasena struck them separately with seven. In that fashion, Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, pierced them back. He pierced Drona's son with sixty-four and the king of Madra with one hundred. He struck Saindhava with ten broad-headed arrows and Vrishasena with three arrows. Partha struck Sharadvata's son with twenty arrows and roared. Desiring to render Savyasachi's pledge unsuccessful, all those on your side united and quickly attacked Dhananjaya. At this, Arjuna used a weapon that was sharp on all sides and created terror among the sons of Dhritarashtra. The Kurus were on extremely expensive chariots. They advanced against Pandu's son and showered down torrents of arrows.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A tumultuous and extremely terrible encounter commenced and it caused confusion. But the prince,[424] with a diadem and a garland, did not lose his senses and continued to shoot arrows. Desiring the kingdom and remembering the twelve years of hardship suffered because of the Kurus, the great-souled and immeasurable Savyasachi released arrows from Gandiva and covered all the directions. The sky seemed to be covered with flaming meteors. Many crows descended on the dead bodies. The one with the diadem and the garland angrily killed his enemies, like the one with the tawny bowstring using Ajagava.[425] The great one with the diadem and the garland was immensely illustrious. With his bow and arrows, he was the conqueror of armies. With his arrows, he brought down the brave ones among the Kurus, astride their supreme horses and elephants. In that encounter, many kings picked up heavy clubs, iron bludgeons, swords and spears. They grasped those large weapons and assuming fierce forms, suddenly attacked Partha. But the great archer destroyed them, with their chariots, horses, elephants and masses of foot soldiers. In that encounter, the brave one deprived them of their weapons and their lives and extended Yama's kingdom."'

CHAPTER 1098(121)

'Sanjaya said, "Dhananjaya was seen to roam around in that battle and he seemed to be simultaneously everywhere. He exhibited his wonderful weapons. He was like the midday sun, scorching everything from the sky. None of the beings were capable of glancing at Pandava. A torrent of arrows issued from the great-souled one's Gandiva. In that battle, they seemed to be like an array of swans in the sky. He countered all those brave ones with his weapons. Through his fierce deeds, he exhibited his terrible self. O king! Arjuna passed all those rathas and confounded them with his iron arrows, wishing to kill Jayadratha. With his charioteer, Dhananjaya was seen to swiftly course around in that field of battle, releasing arrows in all the directions. Hundreds and thousands of arrows were shot by the brave and great-souled one and these torrents traversed the sky and made it invisible. The great archer picked up an arrow, affixed it and shot it. But we did not notice any gap between Kounteya Pandava doing these. O king! Having covered all the directions and having afflicted all the rathas in that battle, Kounteya attacked Jayadratha. He pierced him with sixty-four arrows with straight tufts. Saindhava was thus pierced by arrows shot by the wielder of Gandiva. He became extremely enraged, like an elephant struck by a goad, and could not tolerate this. The one with the boar on his banner[426] used arrows that were tufted with the feathers of vultures. They were like venomous serpents and had been prepared by artisans. In that battle, he released these sharp arrows towards Savyasachi. He pierced Gandiva with three arrows and struck Arjuna with six iron arrows. He pierced his horses with eight arrows and his standard with one. Arjuna countered the arrows shot by Saindhava with his own sharp arrows. Simultaneously, with a couple of arrows, he severed the head of Saindhava's charioteer from his body and brought down the well-ornamented standard. The king of Sindhu's standard was marked with the sign of a boar and was extremely large. Its pole was broken and it was shattered by those arrows. It fell down, like a fiery flame.

'"Meanwhile, the sun was descending quickly. Janardana hastily spoke to Pandava. 'O Dhananjaya! Cut off the head of the evil-souled Saindhava. The sun is about to set on Asta, the best of mountains. But listen to the words I have to say about killing Jayadratha. Saindhava's father, Vriddhakshatra, is famous in the world. He obtained Jayadratha Saindhava, the scorcher of enemies, as his son after a long period of time and an invisible voice, with a rumbling tone like that of the clouds, spoke to the king then. "O lord! In this world, your son will possess lineage, conduct and qualities that are equal to those of two lineages.[427] He will be foremost among kshatriyas in the world and will be revered by brave ones. But when he is fighting against an enemy in a battle, that enemy archer, famous on earth, will sever his head." Having heard this, the king of Sindhu, the scorcher of enemies, reflected for a long time. Afflicted by affection towards his son, he summoned all his relatives and told them, “The person who fights with my son in an encounter and brings his head down on the ground will bear a great burden. There is no doubt that his head will shatter into a hundred fragments.” Having said this, he established Jayadratha on the throne. Vriddhakshatra went to the forest and immersed himself in austerities. The energetic one is still tormenting himself with terrible and extremely difficult austerities. O one with the ape on your banner! He is just outside Samantapanchaka.[428] O slayer of enemies! Therefore, once you have severed Jayadratha’s head in this great battle, use your divine weapons that are terrible and perform wonderful deeds. O younger brother of the son of the wind god! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With its earrings, quickly convey the head of the king of Sindhu to Vriddhakshatra’s lap and bring it down there. If you bring his head down on the ground, there is no doubt about the consequence that your head will shatter into a hundred fragments. O best of the Kurus! Resort to your divine weapons and do this, so that the king,[429] the lord of the earth, does not know. O son of Vasava! There is no deed in the three worlds that you cannot perform.’ Having heard these words, he[430] licked the corners of his mouth.

‘“He used mantras to invoke a divine weapon that was like Indra’s vajra to the touch. He used an arrow that was capable of bearing a great load and had always been worshipped with fragrances and garlands. To bring about Jayadratha’s death, Arjuna quickly released it. Released from Gandiva, that arrow was as swift as a hawk snatching a bird from the top of a tree. It severed Saindhava’s head. With other arrows, Dhananjaya bore it up again,[431] thus causing grief to his ill-wishers and delight to his well-wishers. At that time, Pandava made the head look like a *kadamba* flower and used arrows to convey it to Samantapanchaka. O venerable one! The energetic King Vriddhakshatra, with whom you have a matrimonial alliance,[432] was engaged in his evening prayers then. He was seated. The head of the king of Sindhu, with dark hair and earrings, was thrown down on his lap. The head, with its beautiful earrings, was brought down on his lap. O scorcher of enemies! But King Vriddhakshatra did not notice it. When the intelligent Vriddhakshatra stood up, after having finished his meditation, the head was suddenly flung down on the ground. O scorcher of enemies! As soon as his son's head fell down on the ground, the king's head shattered into a hundred fragments. At this, all the beings were overcome by supreme wonder. All of them praised Vasudeva and maharatha Bibhatsu.

'"On seeing that Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, had been killed, your sons were miserable and their eyes filled with tears. So that Pandava[433] might know, in that battle, Bhimasena roared loudly like a lion and filled up heaven and earth.[434] On hearing that loud roar, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, understood that Saindhava had been killed by the great-souled Phalguna. He sounded musical instruments and delighted his warriors. Wishing to fight, he advanced in the battle against Bharadvaja's son. O king! After the sun had set, a battle commenced between Drona and the Somakas and it made the body hair stand up. O king! After Saindhava was slain, those maharathas made every effort to kill Bharadvaja's son. When Saindhava was slain, the Pandavas obtained victory. Intoxicated with victory, they fought with Drona. O great king! Having killed King Saindhava, in that encounter, Arjuna also fought with the supreme of rathas and warriors on your side. The one with the diadem and the garland was like the king of the gods, fighting with the enemies of the gods and slaughtered them, like the rising sun destroying darkness. The brave one fulfilled the pledge he had taken earlier."'

Section Seventy

Ghatotkacha-Vadha Parva

This parva has 1642 shlokas and thirty-three chapters.

Chapter 1099(122): 88 shlokas
Chapter 1100(123): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1101(124): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1102(125): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1103(126): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1104(127): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1105(128): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1106(129): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1107(130): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1108(131): 135 shlokas
Chapter 1109(132): 42 shlokas
Chapter 1110(133): 64 shlokas
Chapter 1111(134): 81 shlokas
Chapter 1112(135): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1113(136): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1114(137): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1115(138): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1116(139): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1117(140): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1118(141): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1119(142): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1120(143): 42 shlokas
Chapter 1121(144): 42 shlokas
Chapter 1122(145): 68 shlokas
Chapter 1123(146): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1124(147): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1125(148): 62 shlokas
Chapter 1126(149): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1127(150): 103 shlokas
Chapter 1128(151): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1129(152): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1130(153): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1131(154): 63 shlokas

This section is named after the death or killing of Ghatotkacha by Karna. When Jayadratha is killed on the fourteenth day of the war, the battle continues to rage through the night. Drona kills King Shibi of Kashi, Bhima kills the princes of Kalinga and some of Duryodhana's brothers, Ashvatthama kills Anjanaparva (Ghatotkacha's son) and several warriors on the Pandava side, Bhima kills Bahlika, Karna's brother and Shakuni's brothers, Ashvatthama kills many Panchalas, Satyaki kills Somadatta and Bhuri, Shalya kills Shatanika (Virata's brother), Dhrishtadyumna kills Drumasena, Ghatotkacha kills Alambala (Jatasura's son) and the rakshasa Alayudha and finally, Karna kills Ghatotkacha with the spear that he has saved for Arjuna.

CHAPTER 1099(122)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! After the brave Saindhava was killed by Savyasachi, what did those on my side do? Tell me that."

'Sanjaya replied, "O venerable one! On seeing that Saindhava had been killed in the battle by Partha, Kripa, Sharadvata's son, was overcome by great intolerance. He covered Pandava with a great shower of arrows. Drona's son also stationed himself on his chariot and attacked Partha Phalguna. Those two best of rathas were stationed on two chariots that were supreme among chariots. They showered down sharp arrows from both sides. The mighty-armed one, supreme among rathas, was afflicted by that great shower of arrows and felt extreme pain. But in that battle, he did not wish to slay his preceptor or his preceptor's son.[1] Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, then began to act like a preceptor there.[2] He countered the weapons of Drona's son and Sharadvata's son with his weapons. However, since he did not wish to kill them, he released arrows at them that were only mild in speed. But though he did not shoot them powerfully, the many arrows shot by Jaya caused supreme difficulties and they were overcome by those arrows. O king! Oppressed by Kounteya's arrows, Sharadvata's son sat down on the floor of his chariot and lost his consciousness. On seeing that his master was unconscious and was afflicted by arrows, his charioteer thought that he was dead and bore him away. O great king! After Kripa, Sharadvata's son, had been taken away from the field of battle, Ashvatthama also took to his chariot and fled from Pandaveya.

'"Seeing that Sharadvata's son was unconscious and afflicted by arrows, the great archer, Partha, lamented miserably on his chariot. 'The immensely wise Kshatta[3] had foreseen this and had spoken to the king, as soon as the wicked Suyodhana, the exterminator of his lineage, was born. “Let this destroyer of the lineage be conveyed to the world of the hereafter. Because of him, the foremost ones of the Kuru lineage will confront a great calamity.” Those words, spoken by the one who tells the truth, have come true. It is because of his deeds that I see Kripa lying on a bed of arrows. Shame on the dharma of kshatriyas! Shame on strength and manliness! Is there anyone like me, raising his weapons against a brahmana, especially one who is a preceptor? He is the son of a rishi. He is the beloved friend of my preceptor, Drona. He is lying down on the floor of his chariot, afflicted by my arrows. Though I did not desire it, my arrows have severely wounded him. He has sunk down on the floor of his chariot and this causes pain to my heart. Even though he afflicted me with arrows, I should only have looked at that immensely radiant one.[4] Struck by my numerous arrows, he has attained the state that everyone must duly obtain.[5] I am overcome by greater sorrow than from the death of my son. O Krishna! Behold the miserable state he has been reduced to on his chariot. Those bulls among men, who obtain knowledge from their preceptors, and then give them what they desire, attain divinity. But the worst of men, who obtain knowledge from their preceptors, and then strike them, are of evil conduct and go to hell. There is no doubt that my deed today will take me to hell, since my preceptor, Kripa, was on his chariot and I have covered him with arrows. When he had instructed me about weapons earlier, Kripa had said, “O Kouravya! Do not ever strike your preceptor.” I have not obeyed the words of my great-souled preceptor. I have struck him with a shower of arrows. I bow down and worship Goutama, who does not retreat. O Varshneya! Shame on me for having struck him.’ While Savyasachi was thus lamenting, Radheya saw that Saindhava had been killed and attacked him.

‘“On seeing that Radheya was advancing, maharatha Partha laughed and spoke these words to Devaki’s son.[6] ‘Adhiratha’s son is advancing towards Satyaki’s chariot. There is no doubt that he cannot tolerate

Bhurishrava’s death in the battle. O Janardana! Urge the horses towards the spot where he is going. Let not Vrisha make Satyaki follow in the footsteps of Somadatta’s son.’ Having been thus addressed by Savyasachi, the mighty-armed and immensely energetic Keshava spoke words that were appropriate to the occasion. ‘O Pandava! The mighty-armed one is alone enough for Karna. In addition, the bull among the Satvata lineage is with Droupadi’s sons. O Partha! It is not proper for you to fight with Karna now. O destroyer of enemy heroes! He possesses the blazing weapon that was given to him by Vasava.[7] It is like a giant meteor. He worships it and has preserved it for you. Therefore, let Karna proceed to the spot where Satvata is. O Kouravya! I know when the time will come for the evil-souled one.’”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Tell me about the clash between the brave Karna and Varshneya, which took place after Bhurishrava and Saindhava had been brought down. Satyaki was without a chariot. Which chariot did he mount? Also tell me about the two Panchalas[8] who protected the chariot wheels.”

‘Sanjaya said, “I will tell you everything that happened in that great battle. Listen patiently. All this is because of your own evil conduct. O lord! Mentally, Krishna had already known earlier that the brave Satyaki would be defeated by the one with the sacrificial altar on his standard.[9] O king! Janardana knows the past and the future. O king! Therefore, the immensely strong one had summoned his charioteer, Daruka, and had given him instructions. ‘Let my chariot be yoked for tomorrow.’[10] The gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the serpents, the rakshasas and men can never defeat the two Krishnas. The gods and the siddhas, with the grandfather[11] at the forefront, know about the infinite prowess of those two. Listen to the battle, as it happened. On seeing that Satyaki was without a chariot and Karna was attacking him with raised weapons, Madhava blew a rishabha note on his conch shell with great force.[12] From the sound of that conch shell, Daruka got the message. He took that chariot, with Suparna[13] decorating the standard. With Keshava’s permission, Daruka yoked the chariot, which was like the fire or the sun, and made Shini's grandson ascend it. It could go wherever one wished and it was drawn by Sainya, Sugriva, Meghapushpa and Balahaka.[14] It possessed a great speed and was decorated with gold. He ascended that chariot, which was like a celestial vehicle[15] and which had been yoked.

'"He attacked Radheya and showered down many arrows on him. The two protectors of the chariot wheels, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja, also abandoned Dhananjaya's chariot and attacked Radheya. O great king! Radheya also showered down arrows. In that battle, he angrily attacked Shini's undecaying grandson. The gods, the gandharvas, the asuras, the serpents and the rakshasas have not heard of such a battle having taken place in heaven or on earth earlier. O great king! On witnessing their deeds, the soldiers, the rathas, the horses, the men and the elephants were senseless with wonder and became spectators, witnessing those superhuman exploits. O king! They withdrew and also watched Daruka's skill as a charioteer. He moved forward and back, executed circular motions and retreated. The charioteer of that chariot, descended from Kashyapa's lineage, caused great wonder.[16] The gods, the gandharvas and the danavas assembled in the sky, to watch that encounter between Karna and Shini's descendant with great attention. For the sake of their friends, those two powerful ones vigorously challenged each other in that battle. O great king! Karna, who was like an immortal, and Yuyudhana Satyaki showered down arrows on each other. Unable to tolerate the death of Kouravya Jalasandha,[17] Karna ground Shini's descendant down with a shower of arrows. Overcome by anger, Karna sighed like a giant serpent. In that encounter, his angry glances seemed to burn up Shini's descendant. The scorcher of enemies repeatedly attacked him, with great force. On seeing that he was in great rage, Satyaki pierced him back with a great shower of arrows, like an elephant countering another elephant. Those two tigers among men clashed, as spirited as tigers. In that battle, unparalleled in valour, they wounded each other. Shini's grandson, the scorcher of enemies, repeatedly pierced Karna, all over his limbs, with arrows that were completely made out of iron. With a broad-headed arrow, he brought down his charioteer from his seat on the chariot. He killed the four white horses with sharp arrows. The bull among men shattered his standard into a hundred fragments with a hundred arrows. O king! On seeing that Karna was without a chariot, your sons and the bulls among men on your side were distressed.

'"Karna's son, Vrishasena, Shalya, the lord of Madra, and Drona's son surrounded Shini's descendant from all sides. There was a melee everywhere and nothing could be discerned. O king! Seeing that the brave son of the suta had been deprived of his chariot by Satyaki, a great lamentation arose from all the soldiers. O king! Having been oppressed by Satvata's arrows, Karna was also benumbed. O king! He ascended Duryodhana's chariot and sighed deeply. He remembered the respect he bore towards your son, the affection since childhood and the promise that he had made about returning the kingdom to him. O king! When Karna was deprived of his chariot, your brave sons, with Duhshasana at the forefront, succumbed to Satyaki. But he did not kill them, to protect the pledge that Bhimasena had taken earlier. He deprived them of their chariots and made them senseless, but did not take their lives away from them. Bhimasena had taken a pledge to kill your sons and at the time of the second gambling match, so had Partha[18] about killing Karna. With Karna at the forefront, though they made efforts to kill Satyaki, supreme among rathas, they did not succeed in killing him. With a single bow, he defeated Drona's son, Kritavarma, other maharathas and hundreds of bulls among the kshatriyas. Satyaki, the destroyer of enemies, possessed a valour that was like that of the two Krishnas and for the sake of attaining to the afterworld and to do that which would bring pleasure to Dharmaraja. O tiger among men! In this world, there are only three archers—Krishna, Partha and Shini's descendant. No fourth one can be seen."

'Dhritarashtra said, "Saytaki ascended Vasudeva's invincible chariot. The young one, who is Vasudeva's equal, deprived Karna of his chariot. He was proud because of the strength of his own arms and that chariot was yoked by Daruka. Did Satyaki then climb onto another chariot? I wish to hear this and you are skilled in recounting. O Sanjaya! Tell me that. I think that he is impossible to withstand.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Listen to what happened. Daruka’s immensely intelligent younger brother quickly brought another chariot that had been prepared in the proper fashion. The pole was of iron and gold and was tied with cloth. There was a lion on the standard, decorated with a thousand stars. The horses were as fast as the wind and possessed golden harnesses. They were as white as the moon. The chariot was firm and its speed was beyond that of sound. O lord of the earth! Those were the best of horses and they were colourful with gold. There was the sound of nets of bells and the lances and spears were like lightning. It was stocked with implements of war and many weapons and garments. That chariot rumbled like the roar of the clouds and it was prepared. Ascending this, Shini’s descendant attacked your soldiers. Following his desire, Daruka went to where Keshava was. O great king! The best of chariots was also brought for Karna. There were well-trained horses that had a great speed and they were as white as conch shells or milk. The harnesses were colourful and golden. The sides and standard were made out of gold and there were machines and flags. There were many weapons and garments and there was a good charioteer. Ascending this chariot, Karna rushed against the enemy again. This is the entire account, as you have asked me to recount it. Know about the great destruction that was brought about because of your bad policy. Thirty-one of your sons were brought down by Bhimasena. With Durmukha at the forefront, they were colourful in fighting.[19] O venerable one! Hundreds of brave ones were killed by Satvata and Arjuna, with Bhishma and Bhagadatta as the foremost. O king! This was the destruction that was brought about by your evil counsel.”’

CHAPTER 1100(123)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When this was the state of the brave ones on my side, what did Bhima do? O Sanjaya! Tell me everything about that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “After Bhimasena was rendered without a chariot and made to suffer the stakes that were Karna’s words, he was overcome by great intolerance and spoke these words to Phalguna. ‘O Dhananjaya! While you looked on, Karna repeatedly told me that I was a eunuch and stupid and that I was a glutton. He said that I did not possess skills with a weapon and that I should not fight. He said that I was a child who got distressed in battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Someone who speaks to me in this way will be killed by me. O mighty-armed one! You know the vows that you and I have taken together. O Kounteya! There is no doubt that what they mean to you, are also what they mean to me.[20] O best of men! Remembering my words, kill him. O Dhananjaya! Act so that your pledge comes true.’

‘“Having heard the words of the infinitely valorous Bhima, Arjuna advanced towards Karna in that battle and spoke to him. ‘O Karna! O Karna! O son of a suta! Your sight is useless. You praise yourself. O one whose intelligence is based on adharma! Listen to what I am going to tell you now. There are two outcomes brave ones face in a battle, victory or defeat. O Radheya! That is always the case, even if Vasava himself were to fight. You were rendered close to death by Yuyudhana. You were without a chariot and exposed. Through chance, you deprived Bhimasena of his chariot. O Radheya! But the words that you spoke to Bhima were adharma. The brave ones who know about the dharma of fighting protect, to the best of their capacity, those who are running away at the end of a battle. In the battle, when all the soldiers looked on and so did Keshava and I, there were several occasions when Bhimasena robbed you of a chariot. However, the descendant of the Pandu lineage did not utter a single harsh word to you. But you made Vrikodara hear many harsh words. And when he was not in my sight, you killed Subhadra’s son. You will reap the fruits of those offences today. O evil-minded one! It was for your own destruction that you severed his[21] bow then. O foolish one! You will be killed by me, with your servants, soldiers and mounts. Do everything that you wish to, because a great calamity confronts you. In your very sight, I will kill Vrishasena[22] in this battle. If any of these other kings are confused in their intelligence and advance against me, I will kill all of them. I swear this truthfully, on my weapons. You are stupid and devoid of wisdom. But you pride yourself in this battle. On seeing you brought down, the wicked Duryodhana will lament grievously.’ When Arjuna swore that he would kill Karna’s son, a great and tumultuous uproar arose among all the rathas. There was great fear in that fierce battle. The rays of the thousand-rayed one became dim as it approached the mountain.[23]

‘“O king! Hrishikesha was stationed at the head of the battle. He embraced Bibhatsu, who had accomplished his pledge, and said, ‘O Jishnu! It is through good fortune that your great vow has been accomplished. It is through good fortune that the wicked Vriddhakshatra has been slain, together with his son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Confronting the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra in battle, even the army of the gods would lose its senses. O Jishnu! One should not doubt this. O tiger among men! Even if I think about it, I do not see any other man in the worlds who is your equal, in terms of fighting with this army. There are many who are extremely powerful, your equals and superiors. These lords of the earth have assembled because of the son of Dhritarashtra. They are armoured. But they could not advance against your angry person in the battle. Your valour and strength are like that of Rudra and the Destroyer. There is no one else who could have exhibited such valour in battle. O unblemished one! O scorcher of enemies! There is no one like you and you accomplished this alone. Once the evil-minded Karna has been killed, with his followers, and you have defeated and slain that enemy, I will praise you even more.’ Arjuna replied, ‘O Madhava! It is through your favours that this vow of mine has been accomplished. It was one that even the gods would have found difficult to fulfil. O Madhava! This victory is not a surprise for those who have you as a protector. It is through your favours that Yudhishthira will obtain the entire earth. O Varshneya! O lord! This is because of your power. This victory is yours. O Madhusudana! Our prosperity has been brought by you.’ Having been thus addressed, Krishna smiled gently and urged the steeds slowly, showing Partha the field of battle, in all its cruelty.

'"Krishna said, 'Desiring victory in the battle and great fame, there are many brave kings who are lying down on the ground, struck by your arrows. Their weapons and ornaments are strewn around. Horses, chariots and elephants are in distress. Their armour has been shattered and they are faced with great grief. Some are still alive. Others have lost their lives. But even the kings who are dead seem to be alive because of the supreme radiance that they possess. Their arrows are gold-tufted and they have many sharp weapons. Look. The earth is covered with mounts and weapons. There are armour, shields, garlands and heads decorated with earrings. There are headdresses and crowns, garlands of flowers and jewels that are worn on crowns. There are strings around the neck and armlets, extremely radiant and made out of gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are many other colourful ornaments that make the earth beautiful. There are fans and whisks and colourful standards, horses, chariots and elephants. Many cushions from the horses are scattered around. There are different kinds of carpets and extremely expensive bumpers. Behold. The earth is littered with these and looks like a picture. Those who rode on elephants have been fallen down, along with the elephants. They look like lions that have been dislodged from mountain peaks by thunder. Look at the others. There are horse riders on the earth, together with the horses. There are large numbers of foot soldiers and infantry, their bodies covered with wounds.' Having shown Kiriti the field of battle, Krishna blew on Panchajanya, delighting those who had assembled on their side."'

CHAPTER 1101(124)

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! King Yudhishthira alighted from his chariot. With his eyes full of tears, he embraced the two Krishnas. His fair face had the complexion of a lotus. Wiping it, he spoke to Vasudeva and Pandava Dhananjaya. 'O maharathas! It is through good fortune that I see you after you have accomplished this burden in the battle. It is through good fortune that the wicked

Saindhava, worst of men, has been killed. O Krishna! It is through good fortune that you have brought me this great delight. It is through good fortune that large numbers of the enemy are immersed in an ocean of grief. There is nothing in the worlds that is impossible for you. O Madhusudana! You are the preceptor of all the worlds. You are the protector. O Govinda! It is through your favours that we will vanquish the enemy, just as in earlier times, the chastiser of Paka defeated the danavas through your favours. O Varshneya! O Madhava! Whether it is the conquest of the earth or whether it is the conquest of the three worlds, it is certain that those who satisfy you will be successful in that. O lord of the lord of the gods! Those who satisfy you do not obtain sin, nor are they defeated in battle. O Hrishikesha! It is through your favours that Shakra became the lord of the gods, obtained prosperity and succeeded in conquering the three worlds in the field of battle. O lord of the thirty gods! O Krishna! It is through your favours that the thirty gods obtained immortality and enjoyed the eternal worlds. O destroyer of enemies! It is because of valour originating from your favours that Shakra killed thousands of daityas and became the lord of the gods. O Hrishikesha! O brave one! It is through your favours that everything in this universe, mobile and immobile, is established in its own place and is engaged in meditation and the offering of oblations. In the beginning, everything was immersed in an ocean of water and there was darkness. O supreme among men! It is through your favours that the universe became manifest. O Achyuta! You are the creator of all the worlds and the supreme soul. Those who seek refuge in Hrishikesha are never confounded. You are without beginning and without death. You are the undecaying god who drives the worlds. O Hrishikesha! Those who are devoted to you can overcome every difficulty. You are supreme. You are ancient. You are the Being. You are ancient. You are supreme.[24] Those who attain such a supreme one, obtain supreme prosperity. You have been sung about in the four Vedas. The Vedas chant about you. O great-souled one! By seeking refuge in you, I will obtain supreme prosperity. You are Dhananjaya's friend. You are engaged in ensuring Dhananjaya's welfare. You are Dhananjaya's protector. He who attains you, obtains happiness.’ Having been thus addressed, the great-souled Keshava and Pandava cheerfully replied to the king, the lord of the earth. ‘The wicked King Jayadratha has been burnt in the fire of your anger. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra is extremely great. But in the battle, it is decaying. It has been struck, slain and destroyed. O destroyer of enemies! The Kouravas are being destroyed because of your anger. O brave one! The evil-minded Duryodhana has enraged you. With his friends and relatives, he will give up his life in this battle, destroyed by your sight. Earlier, because of your anger, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kurus and extremely difficult for even the gods to defeat, was struck and made to lie down on a bed of arrows. O destroyer of enemies! It will be extremely difficult for them to obtain victory in this battle. O Pandava! Because of your wrath, they have come under the clutches of death. O granter of honours! One who enrages you will soon have his kingdom, life, dear ones, sons and all kinds of happiness destroyed. O Yudhishthira! You have always been devoted to the dharma of kings. I think that the Kouravas, with their sons, animals and relatives, have been destroyed because of your anger.’[25]

‘“The mighty-armed Bhima and maharatha Satyaki, both of whom were mangled and wounded by arrows, saluted their senior and elder. Those great archers were stationed there, surrounded by the Panchalas. On seeing those two joyful ones, stationed before him, with their hands joined in salutation, Kounteya[26] congratulated Bhima and Satyaki. ‘O brave ones! It is through good fortune that I see that the two of you have been freed from that ocean of soldiers. Drona and Hardikya were like invincible crocodiles in that abode of makaras. It is through good fortune that you have defeated all the kings of the earth in the battle. It is through good fortune that I see you victorious in this battle. It is through good fortune that Drona and the immensely strong Hardikya have been defeated in the battle. O unblemished ones! It is through good fortune that I see that you have passed through that ocean of soldiers. O brave ones! You pride yourselves in battle and you do not run away from an encounter. You are as dear to me as my life. It is good fortune that I am seeing both of you.’ Having thus spoken to Yuyudhana and Vrikodara, tigers among men, King Pandava embraced them and shed tears of joy. O lord of the earth! Everyone in that army was delighted. Having witnessed victory, the Pandavas set their minds on fighting.”’

CHAPTER 1102(125)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! When Saindhava was killed, your son, Suyodhana, was distressed and lost all hope about defeating the enemy. His face was miserable and covered with tears. He thought that a warrior like Arjuna did not exist on earth. O venerable one! When he was enraged, Drona, Radheya, Ashvatthama and Kripa were incapable of standing before him. ‘Partha has vanquished all my maharathas in battle. He has killed Saindhava in the encounter and no one could counter him. This large army of the Kouravas has been completely destroyed by him. I do not see any protector, not even Purandara himself. In this battle, I depended on Karna. He raised his weapons in the encounter, but was defeated. Jayadratha has been slain. In the midst of the assembly hall, he spoke harsh words to the Pandavas. That Karna has been defeated in the battle and Saindhava has been brought down. I depended on his valour and regarding Achyuta as straw, refused him when he solicited peace. That Karna has been vanquished in the battle.’ O king! He was thus distressed in his mind and in search of recourse, glanced towards Drona. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your son, who had caused injury to all the worlds, went to him. He told him everything, about the great slaughter of the Kurus, about the victory of the enemy and about the straits the sons of Dhritarashtra were immersed in.

‘“Duryodhana said, ‘O preceptor! Behold the great destruction of those whose heads have been sprinkled.[27] I placed my grandfather, the brave Bhishma, at the forefront of the battle. Having slain him, the avaricious Shikhandi satisfied his old desire. With all the Panchalas, he is now afflicting the vanguard of the army. There is the other invincible one, your disciple Savyasachi. He has destroyed seven akshouhinis and has killed King Jayadratha. These well-wishers have sought to do what is agreeable to us and desiring our victory, have gone to Yama's abode. How will I repay that debt? For my sake, those lords of the earth are lying down on the ground. They have given up all the prosperity of the earth and are lying down on the ground. Having caused such a slaughter of my friends, I am a coward. I do not think that even one thousand horse sacrifices will purify me. I am avaricious and wicked. I have acted against dharma. They have made efforts to be victorious and have obtained Vaivasvata's[28] eternal abode. I am inferior in conduct and have been an enemy to my well-wishers. In the midst of these kings, why doesn't the earth provide me a hole?[29] In the midst of those kings, what will the grandfather tell me, his limbs covered with blood? With Bhishma killed in the battle, I do not have a protector and cannot sleep. What will he tell an ignoble man like me when he meets me? I am one who does not follow dharma and have caused strife among relatives. He has conquered the afterworld. Behold the great archer Jalasandha, killed by Satyaki. The brave maharatha raised his weapons for my sake and gave up his life. On seeing that Kamboja has been killed,[30] and Alambusa, and many other well-wishers, what is the point of my remaining alive now? Those brave ones strove and were killed for my sake. They did not retreat. For the sake of my welfare, they used the utmost of their capacity to obtain victory. O scorcher of enemies! Today, I will use my strength to repay my debt to those departed ones. With the waters of the Yamuna, I will then offer oblations to them. O supreme among wielders of all weapons! Know this to be the truth. I swear this on my good deeds, my valour and my sons. I will kill all the Panchalas and Pandavas in the battle and obtain peace. Or, in the battle, I will go to the world where they have gone.[31] On seeing that they are not protected well by us, our allies do not wish to support us and think that the Pandus are superior. O mighty-armed one! O one whose aim is unflinching! You have yourself determined our death in the battle. You have always been partial towards your excellent disciple, Dhananjaya. Thus, all those who desired our victory have been killed. I see Karna as the only one who is assured about our victory and desires it. One with evil intelligence does not examine the truth and doesn't know the nature of friendship. To accomplish an objective, such a person engages someone as a friend. O my well-wisher on this earth! I have performed an extremely terrible deed. I have been confused, avaricious and wicked. I have always been led by the tongue.[32] Jayadratha has been slain and so has Somadatta's valiant son, as have the Abhishahas, Shurasenas, Shibis and Vasatis. I will today go where those bulls among men have gone. For my sake, they have killed in the battle by the fighting Kiriti. O bull among men! O preceptor of the sons of Pandu! There is truly no purpose in my remaining alive. Grant me leave.'"'

CHAPTER 1103(126)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O son! After the king of Sindhu was killed in the battle by Savyasachi, and so was Bhurishrava, what was the state of your mind then? In the assembly of the Kurus, Duryodhana spoke in that fashion to Drona. O Sanjaya! What did he[33] say after that? Tell me all this."

'Sanjaya replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Saindhava and Bhurishrava had been killed, a loud and great lamentation arose among your soldiers. All of them censured the counsel of your son. Because of that policy, hundreds of bulls among kshatriyas had been slain. On hearing the words of your evil-minded son, Drona reflected for a short while. He was grievously hurt and said, 'O Duryodhana! Why are you striking me with words that are like arrows? I have always told you that Savyasachi cannot be defeated in battle. O Kourava! We know what Arjuna is capable of accomplishing in the battle. Protected by Kiriti, Shikhandi killed Bhishma in the battle. The one who could not be killed by gods and men was killed in the encounter. On seeing this, I knew that the army of the Bharatas would be destroyed. We regarded that man as the foremost among all brave ones in the three worlds. On that hero having been killed, who else can we depend on? O son![34] Shakuni played with dice in the assembly of the Kurus. However, those dice were not dice at all. They were sharp arrows capable of tormenting enemies. O son! Those arrows are now being released by Jaya and are killing us. In his lamentations, the great-souled Vidura described them thus and spoke grave and auspicious words for your benefit. But you did not listen. That is the reason for this terrible and great calamity. O Duryodhana! By ignoring his words, you have caused it. Krishna[35] was born in a noble lineage and in her conduct, followed all forms of dharma. She did not deserve it. But in our sight, you had her brought to the assembly hall. O son of Gandhari! You are reaping the fruits of that adharma now. This is nothing and greater evils will befall you in the world hereafter. This is because you used deceit to defeat the Pandavas in the gambling match and exiled them to the forest, dressed in the skin of ruru deer. They are like my sons and have always followed dharma. Tell me. In this world of men, is there any other brahmana other than me, who will injure them? In the assembly of the Kurus, with Shakuni and with Dhritrarashtra's sanction, you excited the wrath of the Pandavas. Duhshasana supported you and Karna increased it. Ignoring the words of Kshatta,[36] you yourself repeatedly increased it. All of you surrounded Arjuna and sought to protect the king of Sindhu. How was he killed in your midst? O Kouravya! How was Saindhava killed when you, Karna, Kripa, Shalya and Ashvatthama were alive? To protect the king of Sindhu, all the kings fought and used their fierce energy. How was he killed in their midst? O Duryodhana! In particular, the lord of the earth[37] sought assurance from you and me to save him from Arjuna. But he did not obtain that rescue and Phalguna killed him. I do not see any means for my remaining alive. I see that I will myself be immersed in the disease that is Dhrishtadyumna, until I kill the Panchala and Shikhandi. Since I am myself tormented, why are you striking me with these stakes of words? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have been incapable of rescuing the king of Sindhu. Bhishma was never exhausted in his deeds. He possessed a golden standard and was unwavering in his aim. Since you do not see him in the battle, how can you hope for victory? Saindhava has been killed in the midst of the maharathas and Bhurishrava has also been slain. What do you think the outcome will be? O king! Kripa is invincible and is still alive. I honour him for not having followed the king of Sindhu.[38] Bhishma was incapable of being killed in a battle, even by the gods, with Vasava. He was the performer of extremely difficult deeds. O king! When I saw that he was brought down, while you and younger brother, Duhshasana, looked on, I thought that the earth no longer belonged to you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O venerable one! The formations of the Pandavas and the Srinjayas are united and are attacking me now. Without killing all the Panchalas, I will not take off my armour. O son of Dhritarashtra! For your welfare, I will perform deeds in the battle. O king! Go and tell my son Ashvatthama that I have said that in this battle, he should protect his life and destroy the Somakas. "Follow the words and instructions of your father. Establish yourself in non-violence, self-control, truth and virtue. Observe dharma, artha and kama, but without transgressing dharma and artha. You must always perform deeds in which dharma is the most important. With the eye and the mind, brahmanas must be satisified and served to the best of one's capacity. Do not do anything to cause them displeasure. They are like the flames of the fire."[39] O king! I have been tormented by the stakes of your words and will wage a great battle. O destroyer of enemies! I will penetrate this battle formation.[40] O Duryodhana! If you can, go and protect your army. The angry Kurus and Srinjayas will fight, even during the night.' Having said this, Drona proceeded against the Pandavas and the Srinjayas. He wished to sap the energy of the kshatriyas, like the sun does to the stars."'

CHAPTER 1104(127)

'Sanjaya said, "Thus urged by Drona, King Duryodhana became overcome by intolerance and made up his mind to fight. Your son, Duryodhana, then spoke to Karna. 'The vyuha constructed by the preceptor is extremely impenetrable, even to the gods. Behold. With Krishna as his aide, Pandava Kiriti penetrated it, while you were looking and the great-souled Drona was struggling and so were the foremost among warriors. He brought down Saindhava. O Radheya! Look. Kings of the earth, foremost among warriors, have single-handedly been killed by Partha, like inferior animals by a lion. O destroyer of enemies! In this battle, this happened while I was looking on. Shakra's son has left only a little bit of my soldiers left. Despite Drona fighting and making the best of efforts in the battle, how could Phalguna accomplish his desire and penetrate the extremely impenetrable vyuha? The great-souled preceptor has always loved Phalguna. O destroyer of enemies! That is the reason he granted him entry, without fighting with him. Drona, scorcher of enemies, offered assurance to Saindhava. He then allowed Kiriti to enter. Behold my bad luck. Had I permitted the king of Sindhu to leave for his home earlier, there would not have been this destruction of men in the battle. In the hope of remaining alive, Jayadratha wished to go home. But having obtained assurance from Drona in the battle, I restrained him. My warrior brothers, Chitrasena and the others, have encountered Bhimasena and were destroyed by him, while we evil-souled ones looked on.'

'"Karna said, 'Do not censure the preceptor. The brahmana is fighting to the best of his ability. In the battle, I do not think that Pandava can be defeated by Drona, though he is skilled in the use of weapons. That is the reason the one with the white horses[41] has passed him and has penetrated. O Suyodhana! I think that anything determined by destiny can never be transgressed, even if we make endeavours and fight to the utmost of our strength. O king! With Saindhava killed in the battle, it seems that destiny is supreme. With you, we have made the utmost effort in the field of battle. All our manliness has been rendered futile by fate. We have always endeavoured, but our valour has been unsuccessful. Whenever a man performs an act, but is not favoured by destiny, fate destroys all his exertions. A man with perseverance must do whatever he has to do and must not have doubts about the act. Success depends on destiny. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Parthas were deprived through deceit and the use of poison.[42] They were burnt in the house of lac[43] and defeated in the gambling match. Using the principles of royal policy, they were exiled to the forest. Though all of this was undertaken with great care, it has been frustrated by destiny. Let us make efforts to fight and not turn our backs on death. You and they will make efforts and traverse the path determined by destiny. It does not seem that they have done anything good by using superior intelligence. O extender of the Kuru lineage! O brave one! Nor is it the case that we have performed bad deeds because of inferior intelligence. Destiny determines the outcome, of good deeds and inferior ones. Fate has its own action and is awake when everyone else is asleep. When the war commenced, you had many soldiers and many warriors. The sons of Pandu had fewer, but have destroyed many strikers on your side. I think that this destruction of our manliness is the work of fate.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of men! While they were talking a lot, the Pandava battle formations appeared in the battle. O king! Because of your evil cousel, an encounter commenced between those on your side and the others and chariots and elephants clashed against each other."'

CHAPTER 1105(128)

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of men! That army of yours had large numbers of horses and elephants. It fought everywhere, attacking the soldiers of the Pandus. The Panchalas and the Kurus fought against each other, having decided to go to the afterworld, the great kingdom of Yama. Brave ones clashed against brave ones and struck with arrows, lances and spears. They quickly sent each other to Yama's abode. Rathas fought against rathas and caused fierce flowing of blood. There was a great battle and they killed each other. O great king! Crazy and intoxicated elephants clashed against each other and gored each other with tusks. In that tumultuous battle, horse riders desired great fame and killed horse riders with javelins, spears and battleaxes. O mighty-armed one! There were hundreds of foot soldiers, with weapons in their hands. O king! They dashed against each other, always enterprising in their valour. O venerable one! The lineages, names and families of the Panchalas and the Kurus could only be deciphered through hearing.[44] In that battle, the warriors attacked each other with arrows, spears and battleaxes. Wishing to send others to the afterworld, they roamed around fearlessly. O king! They released thousands of arrows in the ten directions, which were no longer illuminated, because the sun had set. O great king! When the Pandaveyas were fearlessly fighting, Duryodhana penetrated into their army. Because of Saindhava's death, he was overcome by supreme grief. Thinking that life was mortal, he penetrated into the army of the enemy. Making the earth tremble with the roar of his chariot, your son attacked the Pandava army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That tumultuous clash between them and him caused a great destruction among all the soldiers. Just as the midday sun scorches with its rays, in their midst, your son tormented them with his shower of arrows. In that battle, the Pandavas were incapable of glancing at him. They were only interested in running away and lost all enthusiasm about defeating the enemy. Your great-souled and archer son used gold-tufted arrows that were dazzling at the tip. The Panchalas were slaughtered and fled. Afflicted by those arrows, the Pandu soldiers quickly began to fall down. O lord of the earth! In the battle, those on their side were incapable of performing deeds like those done by the king who was your son. In the encounter, the Pandava soldiers were crushed by your son, like lotuses by an elephant. They were like blooming lotuses destroyed by an elephant, ones that had lost their sheen because of the wind and the sun, once the water had dried up. Because of your son's energy, the Pandava soldiers were like that.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the Pandava soldiers were being killed by your son, the Panchalas attacked him, with Bhimasena at the forefront. He[45] pierced Bhimasena with ten arrows, each of Madri's sons with three arrows, Virata and Drupada with six each, Shikhandi with one hundred, Dhrishtadyumna with seventy, Dharma's son with seven and the Kekayas and the Chedis with many sharp arrows. He pierced Satvata with five, each of Droupadi's sons with three and also piercing Ghatotkacha in that battle, roared like a lion.

With arrows that were fierce at the tip, he brought down hundreds of other warriors, elephants, horses and chariots in that battle, like an angry Destroyer slaughtering beings. His large bow had a golden back. O venerable one! As he was striking down enemies with this, the eldest of the Pandavas[46] severed it into three fragments with two broad-headed arrows. He then pierced him with ten powerful and sharp arrows. These passed through all his inner organs and having mangled him, entered the ground. The warriors who were around Yudhishthira were delighted, like the gods surrounding Purandara after Vritra had been killed. O venerable one! Then, King Yudhishthira, who is supremely difficult to repulse, dispatched an arrow towards your son in that battle. Severely wounded by this, he sat down on his supreme chariot. O Indra among kings! At this, a great noise arose from the Panchala soldiers. 'The king has been killed,' they shouted in delight. O venerable one! The fierce sound of arrows was heard there. In that battle, Drona quickly showed himself. Cheerfully, Duryodhana grasped his bow firmly and asking the Pandava king to wait, attacked him. Wishing to seize the king,[47] the Panchalas swiftly attacked back. Wishing to save the supreme among the Kurus, Drona received them, like the one with the rays destroys clouds that have been raised by a violent wind. O king! A great battle commenced between those on your side and the enemy, as they clashed in their desire to fight, and it increased the carnage."'

CHAPTER 1106(129)

'Dhritarashtra said, "After speaking to Duryodhana, my son, who has always transgressed me, the preceptor was overcome by anger and penetrated the Pandavas. The brave one is extremely skilled in weapons. He entered and roamed around in the battle. How did the Pandavas counter the great archer, Drona? Who protected the right wheel of the great-souled preceptor? When he killed the enemies in the battle, who protected his left wheel? The one who is supreme among all wielders of weapons seemed to be dancing along the path of his chariot. He was as angry as a fire.[48] How did he come by his death?"

‘Sanjaya replied, “Having killed Saindhava in the evening, Partha met the king[49] and the great archer, Satyaki, and then attacked Drona. Yudhishthira and Pandava Bhimasena also quickly attacked Drona, each with a separate army. So did the intelligent Nakula and the invincible Sahadeva. Dhrishtadyumna, Shatanika,[50] Virata with the Kekayas, the Matsyas and the Shalveya soldiers also began to fight with Drona. O king! King Drupada, Dhrishtadyumna’s father, was protected by the Panchalas and advanced against Drona. The great archers, Droupadi’s sons, and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha also attacked the immensely illustrious Drona, with their soldiers. There were six thousand Prabhadrakas and Panchalas, skilled in striking. With Shikhandi at the forefront, they advanced against Drona. With other tigers among men, the maharatha Pandavas attacked Drona, bull among brahmanas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When those brave ones advanced to fight, it was already night. It was fierce and increased the fear of cowards. O king! At that inauspicious and terrible time, many warriors went to their destruction. It caused the death of elephants, horses and elephants. During that terrible night, jackals howled in all directions. They caused great fear, because their gaping mouths were blazing. Fierce owls could be seen and they caused great terror. In particular, they were perched on the standards of the Kouravas. O Indra among kings! A great roar arose among the soldiers. This mingled with the loud sound of battle drums and the blare of other drums, and with the trumpeting of elephants and the neighing of horses. There was the sound of hooves and a tumultuous noise spread everywhere. O great king! In that twilight hour, there was a fierce battle between Drona and all the Srinjayas. Darkness covered the earth and nothing could be seen. The dust raised by the soldiers covered everything. Men, horses and elephants were immersed in blood. The earth’s dust could no longer be seen and we were full of lassitude. During that night, a terrible slapping sound could be heard. It arose from the clashing of weapons and was like the noise of bamboos being burnt in a forest in the mountains. O king! Because everything was covered in darkness, one could not distinguish one’s own side from that of the enemy. At the beginning of that night, everyone seemed to be mad. O Indra among kings! The dust that arose from the earth settled down because of the blood. The darkness disappeared because of the golden radiance of armour and ornaments. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The army of the Bharatas was adorned with gems and gold and looked like the sky in the night, decorated with stars. Full of lances and standards, that place resounded with the noise of jackals and wild crows and fierce cries and roars made by those who were fighting. There was a great and tumultuous sound and it made the body hair stand up. All the directions were covered by the uproar, which was like the sound of the great Indra's vajra. O great king! In that night, the soldiers of the Bharatas could be seen, illuminated with armlets, golden earrings and the radiance of weapons. There were elephants and chariots, decorated in gold. During that night, they looked like clouds tinged with lightning. Swords, lances, clubs, arrows, maces, javelins and battleaxes were seen to descend, flaming like fires. Duryodhana was like the wind at the front. The chariots and elephants were like clouds. The sound of musical instruments was like thunder. The bows and standards were like lightning. Drona and the Pandavas were like clouds. The swords, javelins and clubs were like thunder. The shower of arrows was like a terrible wind, both hot and cold. It was fierce and caused extreme astonishment. It was destructive of life and there was no escape. Without any fear, the soldiers entered there, wishing to fight. At the beginning of that terrible night, there was a great roar that created fear among cowards and delighted heroes. An extremely terrible and fierce battle commenced in the night, as the Pandus and Srinjayas united and angrily attacked Drona. O king! But all those who advanced against the great-souled one were forced to retreat and some others were sent to Yama's eternal abode."'

CHAPTER 1107(130)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "The infinitely energetic and invincible one,[51] intolerant and angry, penetrated the Srinjayas. What was the state of your mind then? After the one with an immeasurable soul had spoken to my disobedient son and had penetrated, how did Partha counter him? When the brave Saindhava and Bhurishrava had been killed, the greatly energetic and unvanquished one attacked the Panchalas. When the invincible scorcher of enemies penetrated, what did he[52] think? What did Duryodhana think was the most appropriate task for the occasion? Who were the ones who followed that brave granter of boons, supreme among brahmanas? Who were the ones who remained behind the brave one and fought? Who fought in the front, as he killed the enemies in the battle? I think that all the Pandavas must have been afflicted with the arrows of Bharadvaja's son. O lord! They must have been like lean cows trembling in the cold. Having penetrated the Panchalas, how did the great archer, tiger among men and destroyer of enemies, come by his death? All the soldiers and maharathas united and clashed in the night. They were agitated and crushed by him separately. Who were the intelligent ones who were present then? You have said that the rathas on my side were killed, driven away, defeated and deprived of their chariots when they engaged in that encounter and that the Parthas did not run away. O Sanjaya! In the darkness of the night, how could you distinguish between them and the Kurus there?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! During that night, there was an extremely terrible battle. During that night, the Pandavas, together with their soldiers, attacked Drona. Using his swift arrows, Drona sent all the Kekayas and Dhrishtadyumna's sons to the world of the dead. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the maharathas who advanced against him were dispatched to the world of the hereafter. O king! When he crushed them, the powerful maharatha, King Shibi,[53] angrily attacked Bharadvaja's brave son. On seeing that maharatha from the Pandava side descend, Drona pierced him with ten arrows that were completely made out of iron. Shibi pierced him back with thirty sharp arrows. He brought his[54] charioteer down with a broad-headed arrow and smiled. At this, Drona killed his horses and the great-souled one's charioteer. He severed his[55] head from his body, with the helmet still on it.

'"Remembering that his father had earlier been killed by Bhimasena,[56] the son of Kalinga angrily attacked him, together with the soldiers from Kalinga. He pierced Bhima with five arrows and again pierced him with seven. O king! He struck Vishoka[57] with three arrows and his standard with one. Vrikodara became extremely angry with that wrathful and brave one from Kalinga. He leapt from his chariot onto his chariot and killed him with a blow of his fist. The powerful Pandava killed him with a blow of his fist and all his bones were separated and suddenly fell down on the ground. Karna and his maharatha brothers[58] could not tolerate this. They struck Bhimasena with iron arrows that were like venomous serpents. Abandoning his own chariot, Bhima went to Dhruva's chariot.[59] With a blow from his fist, he brought down Dhruva, who had incessantly been striking him. He was thus slain and brought down by the powerful son of Pandu. O great king! Having killed him, the immensely strong Bhimasena went to Jayarata's[60] chariot and repeatedly roared like a lion. Having seized Jayarata by the left hand, he roared. While Karna was stationed in front, he killed him with a slap of his palm. Karna hurled a golden javelin towards Pandava. However, Pandu's son laughed and seized it.[61] The invincible Vrikodara hurled it back towards Karna. While it was descending through the sky, Shakuni severed it with an arrow that had been soaked in oil.

'"O king! Your sons[62] advanced towards Bhima's chariot. They enveloped Vrikodara with a mighty shower of arrows. In that battle, Bhima laughed at Durmada and used his arrows to send his horses and charioteer to Yama's eternal abode. Durmada ascended Dushkarna's chariot. Those two brothers, the scorchers of enemies, were mounted on the same chariot. In the forefront of that battle, they rushed against Bhima. They were like the lord of the waters[63] and Mitra attacking Taraka, supreme among daityas. Your sons, Durmada and Dushkarna, were mounted on the same chariot and pierced Bhima with arrows.

While Karna, Drona’s son, Duryodhana, Kripa, Somadatta and Bahlika looked on, Pandava, the scorcher of enemies, kicked the chariot of the brave Durmada and Dushkarna and made it sink into the ground. Extremely angry, he struck and crushed those powerful and brave sons of yours, Dushkarna and Durmada, with his fists and foot. Cries of woe arose among the soldiers. On seeing Bhima, the kings said, ‘The one who has grasped the sons of Dhritarashtra is Rudra in the form of Bhima.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, all the kings fled. They lost their senses and urged their mounts, with no two of them running away together.

‘“At the commencement of the night, a great carnage was caused in the army. The immensely strong Vrikodara, whose eyes were like a blooming lotus, was worshipped by the bulls among the kings. The powerful one went to King Yudhishthira and honoured him. The twins, Drupada, Virata, Kekayas and Yudhishthira were supremely delighted. They showed great homage to Vrikodara, just as the gods did to Hara after Andhaka had been killed.[64] Your sons, who were like Varuna’s sons, were filled with rage. With their great-souled preceptor and with chariots, infantry and elephants, they violently surrounded Vrikodara from all sides, desiring to fight with him. Everything was covered in darkness, as dense as the clouds. At the commencement of the night, the great-souled and supreme kings began to fight an extraordinary and fierce battle that gave rise to great fear and caused delight to wild crows, wolves and vultures.”’

CHAPTER 1108(131)

‘Sanjaya said, “After his son[65] was killed by Satyaki, though he had decided to fast to death, Somadatta became extremely angry and spoke these words to Satyaki. ‘In earlier times, the gods have laid down norms of dharma for kshatriyas. O Satvata! You abandoned those. Why did you resort to the dharma of bandits?[66] In a battle, one who is wise and follows the dharma of kshatriyas should not strike someone who is running away, someone who is distressed, someone who is without weapons or someone who has sought refuge. O Satvata! It is indeed said that, among the Vrishnis, there are two mighty-armed warriors who are maharathas—Pradyumna and you. When his arm had been severed by Partha, he had decided to fast to death. Why did you act cruelly and bring him down then? O Satvata! O one who prides himself on bravery! I swear by my two beloved sons[67] and by all my good deeds, that as long as Partha Jishnu does not protect you, with your sons and your brothers, before this night is over, I will kill you. O wretch of the Vrishni lineage! If not, let me descend into a terrible hell.' Having said this, the immensely strong Somadatta angrily blew on his conch shell and roared loudly, like a lion. The immensely strong Satvata possessed teeth like a lion and eyes like the petals of lotuses. He became extremely angry and spoke these words to Somadatta. 'Your brave son, maharatha Bhurishrava, has been killed. O king! His brother, Shala, has also been afflicted by grief.[68] I will also kill you today, with your sons, animals and relatives. O Kourava! Make special efforts to remain stationed in this battle. O one with a drum on your banner! King Yudhishthira has always engaged in donations, self-control, purity, non-violence, modesty, fortitude and forgiveness. Because of that constancy, your energy has already been sapped. With Karna and Soubala, you will be destroyed in this battle. I swear on Krishna's feet and on all my good deeds, that I will angrily slay you and your sons in this battle. You will escape only if you decide to run away.' Having addressed each other in this way, those two supreme of men began to shoot arrows at each other, with eyes that were red with rage.

'"With a thousand elephants and ten thousand horses, Duryodhana surrounded Somadatta and stationed himself there. The angry Shakuni, supreme among wielders of all weapons, also surrounded him, with his sons, grandsons and brothers who were like Indra in valour. O mighty-armed one! Your brother-in-law was young and was capable of withstanding the vajra. The intelligent one had one hundred thousand horses ahead of him. He surrounded and protected the great archer, Somadatta, with these. Protected by these, the powerful one[69] enveloped Satyaki with arrows. On seeing that he was enveloped by arrows with straight tufts, Dhrishtadyumna became angry. He gathered a large army and advanced. O king! Those two armies clashed against each other, as if two oceans were agitated by turbulent storms. Somadatta pierced Satyaki with nine arrows and Satyaki struck the bull among the Kuru lineage with ten. Having been thus pierced in the battle by the powerful one with a firm bow, he[70] became senseless and sank down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing that he had lost consciousness, Somadatta's charioteer quickly bore the maharatha away from the field of battle. On seeing that he had lost his senses and was afflicted by Yuyudhana's arrows, Drona's son angrily attacked Satvata in the field of battle.

'"On seeing that he was descending towards the chariot of Shini's descendant, Bhimasena's son[71] angrily countered him. He was on an extremely large and terrible chariot that was made completely out of iron and covered with the skins of bears. It was drawn by mounts that looked like elephants. But those were neither horses, nor elephants. It had eight distorted wheels. A king of vultures was perched on the top of the standard. It dilated its eyes and shrieked. The flags were red and green and decorated with garlands of entrails. He was stationed on that large chariot with eight wheels. Riding this, he was surrounded by one akshouhini of rakshasas, possessing terrible forms. On seeing him advance with his great bow, the kings were agitated and distressed. He was like the Destroyer at the end of a yuga, like Yama with a staff in his hand. On seeing him, your son's army was agitated and afflicted by fear. They were like waves in the Ganga, agitated by the wind into whirlpools. Ghatotkacha roared like a lion and terrified by this, the elephants exuded urine. The men were extremely miserable. Once twilight has passed, the rakshasas become even more powerful on earth. In every direction, they brought down a shower of boulders. Iron wheels, catapults, lances, javelins, spears, shataghnis and battleaxes showered down incessantly. On seeing the fierce and terrible state in the field of battle, the kings, your sons and Karna were distressed and fled in different directions. However, Drona’s son was proud of his strength of weapons and he alone was not distressed. He used his arrows to destroy the maya that had been created by Ghatotkacha. When that maya was destroyed, Ghatotkacha became angry. Senseless with rage, he showered down terrible arrows. These were forceful and penetrated Ashvatthama, like snakes entering a termite hill. The arrows were covered with blood and penetrated Sharadvati’s son.[72] Those gold-tufted arrows, sharpened on stone, swiftly entered the ground. The powerful Ashvatthama, light in the use of his hands, became angry. He angrily pierced Ghatotkacha with ten arrows. Ghatotkacha was severely wounded in his inner organs by Drona’s son. He picked up a chakra with a hundred thousand spokes. Its edges were as sharp as a razor. It had the complexion of the rising sun and was decorated with gems and diamonds. Wishing to kill Ashvatthama, Bhimasena’s son hurled it. Though it descended with great force, Drona’s son used arrows to swiftly shatter it into fragments. It was foiled and fell down on the ground, like the wishes of an unfortunate person. On seeing that the chakra had been brought down, Ghatotkacha quickly enveloped Drona’s son with arrows, like Svarbhanu[73] covering the sun.

‘“Ghatotkacha’s son was handsome and was like a mass of collyrium. As Drona’s son advanced, he checked him, like a king of mountains against the wind. Anjanaparva, Bhimasena’s grandson, brought down a shower of arrows and he[74] looked like Mount Meru, with rain from a cloud pouring down on it. Ashvatthama was like Rudra, Upendra[75] and Indra in his valour and he was not frightened. He severed Anjanaparva’s standard with an arrow and cut down his two charioteers with two others. With three others, he severed the *trivenu*.[76] He severed his bow with one and struck his four horses with four. Deprived of his chariot, he[77] grasped a sword in his hand and it was decorated with golden dots. With an extremely sharp arrow, he[78] severed the sword into two fragments. O king! The son of Hidimba’s son quickly grasped a golden club and whirling it, hurled it. However, Drona’s son struck it with his arrows and made it fall down. At this, Anjanaparva rose up into the sky and began to roar like a dark cloud. He showered down trees from the sky. Ghatotkacha's son was versed in maya. But Drona's son used arrows to strike him in the sky, like the rays of the sun against clouds. He then descended and once again stationed himself on his chariot, decorated with gold. Anjanaparva was as beautiful as a lofty mountain. He was clad in iron armour. But Drona's son killed Anjanaparva, the son of Bhima's son, like Maheshvara against Andhaka.

'"On seeing that his immensely strong son had been killed by Ashvatthama, he[79] approached Drona's son, whose armlets seemed to be blazing with anger. Without any fear, he spoke these words to Sharadvati's son, who was then consuming the army of the Pandavas, like a fire that has arisen in the forest. 'O Drona's son! Stay. You will not escape from me with your life. I will kill you today, like Agni's son destroyed Krouncha.'[80] Ashvatthama replied, 'O child! Go and fight with others. O one who possesses the valour of an immortal! O Hidimba's son! It is not proper that a father should fight with a son.[81] O Hidimba's son! I have no desire to be angry with you. However, if anger is generated, one may end up killing one's own self.' Bhimasena's son was overcome with sorrow on account of his son. On hearing these words, his eyes became coppery red with rage. He approached Ashvatthama and said, 'O Drona's son! Do you think that I am an ordinary person, who will be distressed in this battle? I have been born from Bhima, in the noble lineage of the Kurus. I am a son of the Pandavas and they never retreat from a battle. I am a lord of the rakshasas and I am Dashagriva's[82] equal in strength. O son of Drona! Wait. Wait. You will not escape from me with your life. On the field of the battle today, I will destroy your love for fighting.' Having spoken these words, the extremely strong rakshasa, with eyes coppery red in rage, angrily attacked Drona's son, like a lion against a king of elephants. Ghatotkacha showered down wheels of chariots and arrows, like a cloud showering rain. These descended on Drona's son, bull among rathas. But before that shower of arrows could reach him, Drona's son countered them with his arrows. It seemed that a battle was raging in the sky between those two sets of arrows. Because of the friction from those weapons, sparks of flame were generated and at the commencement of the night, the sky seemed to be bright with fireflies. Drona's son, proud in battle, pacified and destroyed that maya. Seeing that his maya had been dispelled, Ghatotkacha disappeared again. He assumed the form of a lofty mountain, with trees crowding the summit. It had large fountains, from which, spears, javelins, swords and clubs flowed like water. Drona's son saw that mountain, which was like a mass of collyrium. Large numbers of weapons issued from it. Drona's son smiled and invoked the vajra weapon. Struck by that weapon, that king of mountains was quickly destroyed. He[83] then became a blue cloud in the firmament, decorated with Indra's weapon.[84] He brought down a shower of boulders and covered Drona's son in that battle. Drona's son, supreme among those who have knowledge of weapons, then affixed the *vayavya* weapon and struck the blue cloud that had arisen. Drona's son covered all the directions with his large numbers of arrows. The supreme of men killed a hundred thousand rathas. He then saw that Ghatotkacha was again fearlessly advancing towards him on a chariot, with his bow stretched, and surrounded by many rakshasas. They were like lions and tigers and like crazy elephants in their valour. They were on elephants and chariots and astride the backs of horses. Their mouths gaped. Their heads and necks were fierce. These were the followers of Hidimba's son. There were Poulastyas and Yatudhanas.[85] They were extremely terrible in their valour. Those brave ones wielded many kinds of weapons and were clad in many kinds of armour and ornaments. They were immensely strong and made a fierce noise. Their eyes were dilated with rage. Those rakshasas, invincible in battle, arrived to fight.

'"On seeing them, your son was distressed and Drona's son spoke to him. 'O Duryodhana! Wait. You should not feel any fear now. With your brothers, and with the kings who are like Indra in valour, remain here. I will slay your enemies, so that you do not suffer defeat. I tell you this truthfully. Assure your army.' Duryodhana replied, 'Since your mind is vast, I do not think that what you have said is wonderful. O descendant of the Goutama lineage! Your devotion to us is great.' Having spoken these words to Ashvatthama, he then spoke to Soubala. 'Dhananjaya is surrounded by a hundred thousand rathas, who are ornaments on the field of battle. Advance against Dhananjaya with sixty thousand elephants and Karna, Vrishasena, Kripa and Nila. The ones from the north, Kritavarma, Purumitra, Shrutaparna, Duhshasana, Nikumbha, Kundabhedi, Urukrama, Puranjaya, Dridharatha, Pataki, Hemapankaja, Shalya, Aruni, Indrasena, Sanjaya, Vijaya, Jaya, Kamalaksha, Puru, Krathi, Jayavarma and Sudarshana—these will follow you with sixty thousand foot soldiers. O maternal uncle! Slay Bhima, the twins and Dharmaraja, like Indra of the gods against the asuras. My hopes of victory are established in you. They have been severely struck by the arrows of Drona's son and have been wounded in the battle. O maternal uncle! Kill the Kounteyas, like the son of the fire[86] against the asuras.' O king! Having been thus addressed by your son, Soubala swiftly departed to destroy the Pandavas and delighted your son.

'"Meanwhile, during that night, there was an extremely terrible battle between Drona's son and the rakshasas, like that between Shakra and Prahlada. Extremely angry, Ghatotkacha struck Goutami's son in the chest with ten arrows that were as firm as poison or the fire. He was severely struck by those arrows shot by Bhima's son and wavered on his chariot, like a tree struck by the wind. Ghatotkacha then used an anjalika arrow that was extremely radiant to quickly sever the bow in the hand of Drona's son. Drona's son grasped another bow that was large and was capable of bearing a heavy burden. He showered down sharp arrows, like rain flowing down from a cloud. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sharadvati's son dispatched many gold-tufted arrows that were capable of killing the enemy, towards the sky and towards the one who was ranging in the sky.[87] Afflicted by the arrows of Drona's son, those large numbers of broad-chested rakshasas looked like crazy elephants that were tormented by lions. The lord consumed those rakshasas, with their horses, charioteers and chariots, with his arrows.

He was like the illustrious fire, consuming beings at the time of the destruction of a yuga. He severely consumed one akshouhini of *nairritas*[88] with his arrows, like the god Maheshvara burning down the city of Tripura in the sky.[89] He was like the powerful god[90] who burns all beings at the end of a yuga. Having consumed them for the sake of your welfare, Drona's son, foremost among victorious ones, was resplendent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No one among the thousands of kings and the Pandavas was capable of glancing towards Drona's son in that battle. The only exception was the brave Ghatotkacha, the immensely strong Indra among the rakshasas.

'"O foremost among the Bharata lineage! His eyes were red with rage. He slapped his palms against each other and bit his lower lips. He angrily addressed his own charioteer. 'Take me to the son of Drona.' He was borne on a chariot that was terrible in form and had a victorious flag fastened to it. The destroyer of enemies again engaged in a duel with Drona's son. The rakshasa angrily hurled an extremely terrible vajra, made by Rudra, towards Drona's son. It possessed eight wheels. Drona's son abandoned his chariot and bow and leapt down. He seized it,[91] hurled it back and again ascended his chariot. Immensely radiant, it consumed his[92] horses, charioteer, standard and mounts. Having done this, the extremely terrible vajra penetrated the earth. On witnessing that deed of Drona's son, where he had leapt down and seized the extremely terrible weapon made by Shankara, all the beings worshipped him. O king! Going to Dhrishtadyumna's chariot, Bhimasena's son again released sharp arrows towards the broad chest of Drona's son. Without any fear, Dhrishtadyumna also shot gold-tufted arrows that were like venomous serpents towards the chest of Drona's son. Drona's son shot thousands of iron arrows at them. However, those two lions among men used their own arrows, which were like flames of fire, to counter them. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That extremely fierce battle delighted all warriors. With a thousand chariots, three hundred elephants and six thousand horses, Bhima arrived at that spot.

'"Drona's son, the performer of unblemished deeds and with dharma in his soul, fought with the rakshasa who was Bhima's son and Dhrishtadyumna and his followers. Drona's son displayed his extraordinary valour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We think that no other being is capable of such deeds. While Bhimasena, Hidimba's son, Parshata, the twin warriors, Dharma's son, Vijaya and Achyuta looked on, within an instant, he used sharp arrows to destroy one akshouhini of rakshasas, with their horses, charioteers, chariots and elephants. Severely struck and afflicted by iron arrows, elephants sank and fell down on the ground, like mountains with two peaks.[93] The trunks of elephants were severed. Immobile elephants were strewn around on the ground. Others writhed, like serpents. O king! The earth was beautiful, with golden rods that were flung away and umbrellas. It looked like the firmament, at the time of the destruction of a yuga, studded with many moons, suns and planets. Standards were strewn around like frogs and drums were scattered like tortoises. The umbrellas were like arrays of swans. The garlands and whisks were like foam. Herons and vultures were giant crocodiles. The many weapons were the fish. Chariots that were hurled away were like giant banks. The beautiful flags were the trees. The extremely terrible arrows were the smaller fish. The lances and spears were the fierce lizards. The marrow and flesh constituted the large mire. Headless torsos were the rafts. The hair was the moss and it increased terror among those who were cowards. The horse riders were giant serpents and there was an inexhaustible flow of bodies. There was an immensely forceful river of blood that was created by Drona's son. Warriors lamented in loud tones. The wounds[94] were the waves. That extremely terrible river flowed towards the ocean that was Yama's eternal abode.

'"Having killed the rakshasas, Drona's son struck Hidimba's son with his arrows. Drona's immensely strong son was extremely angry. He again struck Vrikodara, the Parshatas and the other Parthas with large numbers of iron arrows. The lord killed Suratha, Drupada's son. In that battle, he again killed Shrutanjaya, Suratha's younger brother. O Indra among kings! Drona's son slew Balanika, Jayanika, Jaya and

Shrutaharya[95] and sent them to Yama's abode. With three other sharp arrows that were well tufted and garlanded with gold, he killed the powerful Shatrunjaya and sent him to Shakra's world. He killed Prishaghna and the insolent Chandradeva. He killed ten of Kuntibhoja's sons with ten arrows. Ashvatthama was extremely angry. He affixed a supreme arrow and drawing his bow back all the way up to his ear, released that supreme arrow, which was terrible and like Yama's staff. He quickly shot it towards Ghatotkacha. O lord of the earth! That great and well-tufted arrow pierced the rakshasa's heart and swiftly penetrated the earth. On seeing him fall, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna thought that he had been killed. O Indra among kings! He removed him from the presence of Drona's son and placed him on another chariot. O king! At this, Yudhishthira's chariots and soldiers retreated. They were defeated in that battle and Drona's brave son roared. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was worshipped by all the beings and by your sons. Bodies of rakshasas[96] were strewn around everywhere. Their bodies were mangled by hundreds of arrows and they were killed and brought down. Having been killed, they fell down on the ground, which seemed to be strewn with mountain peaks and was terrible and impassable. The siddhas, the gandharvas, masses of pishachas, serpents, birds, ancestors, winged animals,[97] large numbers of rakshasas, innumerable beings, apsaras and gods worshipped Drona's son."'

CHAPTER 1109(132)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that Drupada's sons, Kuntibhoja's sons and thousands of rakshasas had been killed by Drona's son, Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and Yuyudhana united and made up their minds to fight. On beholding Satyaki in that battle, Somadatta again became angry and enveloped him in every direction with a great shower of arrows. There was an extremely terrible battle between those on your side and the enemy and it increased fear. It was fierce and was fought by those who desired victory. For the sake of Satvata, Bhima pierced Kourava Somadatta with ten arrows and the brave one pierced him back with one hundred. The aged one[98] possessed all the qualities, like Yayati, the son of Nahusha. On account of his son, he was overcome with grief. Satvata angrily pierced him with ten sharp arrows that possessed the force of the vajra. Having struck him with great power, he again pierced him with seven arrows. For Satvata's sake, Bhimasena hurled a new, firm and terrible club towards Somadatta's head. In that battle, Satyaki angrily shot a supreme arrow towards Somadatta's chest. It was like the fire to the touch and was well tufted. The terrible club and the arrow simultaneously descended on the body of the ratha and maharatha Somadatta fell down. On seeing that his son[99] was unconscious, Bahlika attacked and released a shower of arrows, like a cloud that pours at the right time. For the sake of Satvata, in the forefront of that battle, Bhima afflicted and pierced the great-souled Bahlika with nine arrows. Pratipa's son was enraged. The mighty-armed one struck Bhima on the chest with a lance, like Purandara hurling the vajra. Having been struck by it, Bhima trembled and lost his senses. Having recovered his senses, the powerful one hurled an iron club. Thus struck by Pandava, Bahlika's head was severed. He was killed and fell down on the ground, like a king of mountains shattered by thunder.

'"On seeing that the brave Bahlika, bull among men, had been killed, ten of your sons, who were like Dasharatha's sons,[100] attacked Bhima. Bhima killed your sons with ten iron arrows. He then countered Karna's beloved son, Vrishasena. At this, Karna's famous brother, Vrisharatha, struck Bhima with iron arrows and was killed by that powerful one. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhima then used iron arrows to kill seven brave rathas and uprooted your brother-in-law, Shatachandra. Unable to tolerate the death of maharatha Shatachandra, Shakuni's brave brothers, Gajaksha, Sharabha and Vibhu, attacked Bhimasena and struck him with sharp arrows. They afflicted him and poured down a shower of powerful iron arrows. But he killed those five extremely powerful rathas with five arrows.[101] On seeing that those brave ones had been killed, the best of kings began to tremble.

'"O unblemished one! While the one who had been born in a pot[102] and your sons looked on, Yudhishthira angrily destroyed your soldiers. In that battle, Yudhishthira dispatched the Ambashthas, Malavas, brave Trigartas, Shibis and large numbers of others to the world of the dead. The king cut down the Abhishahas, Shurasenas, Bahlikas and Vasatikas and caused the earth to be covered with a mire of blood. O king! In that battle that involved many people, Yudhishthira used his arrows to send brave warriors from Madraka to the land of the dead. In the direction of Yudhishthira's chariot, a tumultuous sound arose. 'Kill. Seize. Capture. Pierce. Slice down.' On seeing that your soldiers were being driven away by Yudhishthira, Drona was urged by your son and countered him with his arrows. Drona was extremely angry and unleashed the vayavya weapon at the king. But he[103] destroyed that divine weapon with another weapon. When that weapon was destroyed by Yudhishthira, Bharadvaja's son hurled *varuna*, *yamya*, *agneya*, tvashtra and *savitra* weapons.[104] He was extremely enraged and wished to kill the descendant of the Pandu lineage. However, the mighty-armed one, who knew about dharma, was not frightened. He used his weapons to destroy all the weapons that had been hurled by the one who had been born in a pot. The one who had been born in a pot wished to fulfil the pledge that he had made.[105] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He released the *aindra* and *prajapatya* weapons.[106] He wished to kill the son of dharma and was devoted to ensuring your son's welfare. The lord of the Kurus[107] possessed the gait of an elephant and a lion. He was broad in the chest and his eyes were large and red. His energy was not inferior.[108] He invoked the *mahendra* weapon[109] and destroyed those weapons. On seeing that his weapons had been destroyed, Drona was overcome with anger. Wishing to destroy Yudhishthira, he unleashed the brahma weapon.[110] Everything was covered in darkness and we could see nothing. O lord of the earth! All the beings were full of great terror. O Indra among kings! On seeing that a brahmastra had been invoked, Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, used a brahmastra to counter it. At this, all the foremost of warriors praised those bulls among men. The great archers, Drona and Partha, were skilled in all forms of fighting.

'"Drona abandoned Kounteya and attacked Drupada's soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His eyes were coppery red in anger and he destroyed them with the vayavya weapon. Slaughtered by Drona, the Panchalas fled, while Bhimasena and the great-souled Partha[111] were looking. Kiriti and Bhima used their power to make them return. They attacked your army with two large arrays of chariots. Bibhatsu was on the right and Vrikodara was on the left flank. They showered down a great torrent of arrows on Bharadvaja's son. O great king! The Srinjayas, the immensely energetic Panchalas and the Matsyas and Satvatas followed them. The army of the Bharatas was then slaughtered by Kiriti. O great king! Drona and your own son[112] tried to counter them. But they were incapable of countering those warriors."'

CHAPTER 1110(133)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that the large army of the Pandavas had been stirred up and thinking that it could not be resisted, Duryodhana spoke to Karna. 'O one who is devoted to friends! The time for friends has arrived.[113] O Karna! In the battle, save all these extremely powerful warriors. The Panchalas, Matysas, Kekayas and the maharatha Pandavas have angrily surrounded them and are sighing like serpents. Desiring victory, these Pandavas are roaring in delight. There are many Panchalas on chariots and they are like Shakra in valour.'

'"Karna replied, 'Even if Purandara arrives as a saviour, I will quickly defeat and kill Pandava.[114] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I know this to be the truth. Be comforted. I will slay the son of Pandu and the assembled Panchalas. I know that there will be victory, like Pavaka's son giving it to Vasava.[115] O lord of the earth! I am alive to do that which brings you pleasure. Among all the Parthas, Phalguna is supreme in strength. I will hurl this invincible spear towards him, one that has been created by Shakra. O one who grants honours! Once that great archer has been slain, his brothers will come under your control and will again be exiled to the forest. O Kouravya! As long as I am alive, you should never sorrow. I will defeat all the Pandavas in the battle, together with the Panchalas, the Kekayas and the assembled Vrishnis. I will use torrents of arrows to make them porcupines and give the earth to you.'"

'Sanjaya said, "When Karna said this, the mighty-armed Kripa Sharadvata smiled and spoke these words to the son of the suta. 'O Karna! Wonderful. This is wonderful. The bull among the Kuru lineage has a protector. O Radheya! With you as a protector, if only words could bring success. O Karna! In Kouravya's presence, you speak a lot. But one rarely witnesses your valour or your strength. We have seen you in many encounters with the son of Pandu. O son of a suta! You have always been defeated by Pandava. O Karna! When the son of Dhritarashtra was being taken away by the gandharvas, all the soldiers fought. You were the sole exception and you ran away.[116] O Karna! In the city of Virata, all the united Kouravas were defeated by Partha in a battle and that included you and your younger brother.[117] In the field of battle, you are incapable of withstanding Phalguna alone. How can you have the enterprise to defeat all the Pandavas, together with Krishna? O Karna! O son of a suta! You have spoken a lot about fighting. Do not speak and show your valour now. That is the vow which virtuous men follow. O son of a suta! You are always thundering, like clouds in the autumn, which do not have any water. O Karna! You are seen to be without success. But the king does not understand this. O Radheya! You will roar as long as you do not see Partha. When you see Partha in front of you, your roars will become rare. You will roar as long as you are beyond the reach of Phalguna's arrows. Once you are pierced by Partha's arrows, your roars will be rare. Kshatriyas show their valour through their arms. Brahmanas show their valour through their eloquence with words. Phalguna's bravery is in his bow. Karna's bravery is in his fancies.'

'"When Sharadvata addressed these harsh words to him, Karna, supreme among strikers, spoke these words to Kripa. 'Brave ones always roar, like clouds that shower down rain. Once seeds have been sown in the soil, the fruits are soon obtained. I do not see any faults in brave ones who are in the vanguard of the battle and having taken up heavy burdens, indulge in boasting. When a man bears a burden, it is also established in his mind. It is certain that destiny also aids him then. In my mind, I have resolved to take up an extremely heavy and unmatched burden. O brahmana! If I decide to thunder then, how does it harm you in any way? Like clouds that are full of water, brave ones do not roar in vain. Knowing their own capacity, the Pandavas are roaring. I will make endeavours in the battle today, against the united Krishna and Pandava. O Goutama! I am thundering because of the initiative that has been generated. O brahmana! With your followers, behold the fruits of that roaring. I will kill the sons of Pandu, together with Krishna and the Satvatas. I will give Duryodhana the earth, bereft of all thorns.'

'"Kripa replied, 'O son of a suta! These fancies are delusions and I do not accept them. You have spoken about flinging away the two Krishnas and Pandava Dharmaraja. O Karna! Victory is certain for the side that has those two, skilled in fighting.[118] Even if gods, gandharvas, yakshas, men, serpents and rakshasas armour themselves, Krishna and Pandava cannot be conquered in a battle. Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, is devoted to brahmanas. He is truthful in speech and self-controlled. He worships his seniors and the gods. He is always devoted to dharma. In particular, he is skilled in the use of weapons. He is intelligent and grateful. His brothers are strong and have practised the use of all weapons. They are devoted to serving their superiors. They are wise, always devoted to dharma and illustrious. Their relatives have Indra's valour. They are skilled in striking and are devoted to them. Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Durmukha's son,[119] Janamejaya, Chandrasena, Bhadrasena, Kirtidharma, Dhruva, Dhara, Vasuchandra, Damachandra, Simhachandra, Suvedhana, Drupada's sons, Drupada, who knows about the use of great weapons, the king of Matsya and his followers, Shatanika, Sudashana, Shrutanika, Shrutadvaja, Balanika, Jayanika, Jayashva, Rathavahana, Chandrodaya, Kamaratha, Virata's handsome brothers, the twins, Droupadi's sons and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha are fighting for their sake. When these are on their side, they cannot be destroyed. If they so desire, the entire universe, with gods, asuras and men, with the yakshas, masses of rakshasas, beings, serpents and elephants can be destroyed through the valour of the weapons of Bhima and Phalguna. Yudhishthira can consume the earth with his sight. The armoured Shouri is engaged in their cause and his strength is immeasurable. O Karna! How can you contemplate vanquishing the enemy in a battle? O son of a suta! You have always been extremely stupid, since you are thinking of engaging with Shouri in the battle.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed, Radheya laughed. Karna spoke these words to the preceptor, Kripa Sharadvata. 'O brahmana! The words that you have spoken about the Pandavas are indeed true. That apart, there are many other qualities vested in Pandu's son. Partha cannot be vanquished in battle, even by the gods, with Vasava, and by the daityas, yakshas, gandharvas, pishachas, serpents and rakshasas. But even then, I can defeat Partha because of the spear that has been given to me by Vasava. O brahmana! The spear that Shakra has given me is incapable of being repulsed. In the battle, I will kill Savyasachi with this. Once Pandava has been killed, Krishna and his brothers will never be able to enjoy the earth, since Arjuna won't be there. All of them will be destroyed. O Goutama! Without making any efforts, the earth, with all its oceans, will come under Kourava's suzerainty. There is no doubt that good policies can ensure success in everything. O Goutama! I am roaring because I know all this. You are a brahmana and are aged. You are incapable in battle. You are deluded by affection towards Partha and are insulting me. O brahmana! O evil-minded one! If you again speak such injurious words to me, I will take out my sword and slice off your tongue. O brahmana! You wish to praise the Pandavas in this encounter, in order to frighten all the soldiers and the Kouravas. O brahmana! Listen to the words I have to say on this. Duryodhana, Drona, Shakuni, Durmukha, Jaya, Duhshasana, Vrishasena, the king of Madra, you, Somadatta, Bhuri,[120] Drona's son and Vivimshati have stationed themselves in this battle. All of them are skilled in fighting. They are brave and skilled in the use of weapons. They wish to attain heaven. They are knowledgeable about dharma. They are skilled in fighting. In a battle, they can kill even the gods. They are stationed in this battle, wishing to kill the Pandavas. These armoured ones wish for Kouraveya's victory. Even for extremely powerful ones, I think that victory depends on destiny, since the mighty-armed Bhishma is lying down, having been pierced by a hundred arrows. Vikarna, Chitrasena, Bahlika, Jayadratha, Bhurishrava, Jaya, Jalasandha, Sudakshina, Shala, best among rathas, the valiant Bhagadatta and many other brave kings, who were extremely difficult even for the gods to vanquish, have been killed in this battle, though they were stronger than the Pandavas. O worst of men! Do you not think that this is nothing but destiny? O brahmana! You have always sought to satisfy Duryodhana's enemies. Even among them, hundreds and thousands of brave ones have been killed. All the soldiers, of both the Kurus and the Pandavas, have been destroyed. I do not see any power on the part of the Pandavas. O worst of brahmana*s*! You have always thought them to be strong. I will fight against them in this battle, to the best of my capacity, for the sake of ensuring Duryodhana's welfare. Victory is determined by destiny.'"'

CHAPTER 1111(134)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that the son of the suta had addressed harsh words towards his maternal uncle,[121] Drona's son powerfully raised his sword and rushed against him. Ashvatthama said, 'O Karna! O extremely evil-minded one! O worst of men! O one with wicked intelligence! Behold. I will use this sword to sever your head from your body.' O great king! On seeing him forcefully attack, King Duryodhana himself and Kripa, foremost among men, restrained him. Karna said, 'O supreme among Kurus! This worst of brahmanas[122] is evil-minded. He brags about his bravery in battle. Set him free and let him have a taste of my valour.' Ashvatthama replied, 'O son of a suta! O extremely evil-minded one! This transgression of yours will be pardoned by us. But this increasing insolence of yours will be destroyed by Phalguna.' Duryodhana said, 'O Ashvatthama! O one who grants honours! Be pacified. You should pardon him. You should never be angry with the son of the suta. You, Karna, Kripa, Drona, the king of Madra and Soubala have to undertake a great task. O supreme among brahmanas! Be pacified. All the Pandavas are advancing in this direction, wishing to fight with Radheya. O brahmana! They are attacking in every direction.' The valiant Karna, foremost among rathas, raised the best of bows. He was surrounded by the foremost of the Kouravas, like Shakra by masses of gods. Resorting to the strength of his own arms, the energetic one remained stationed there.

'"O great king! A battle then commenced between Karna and the Pandavas. They angrily rushed at each other, roaring like lions. On seeing the mighty-armed Karna, in that great battle, they[123] let out a roar. 'There is Karna. Where is Karna stationed? Karna, wait. O evil-souled one! O worst of men! Fight with us.' Others saw Karna and their eyes became red with anger. They said, 'This son of a suta is limited in his intelligence. He deserves to be killed by all these lions among kings. No purpose is served by his remaining alive. He shows extreme enmity towards the Parthas. This man has always been wicked. He bases himself on Duryodhana's advice and is the root of all injury. Let us kill him.' Thus conversing, the kshatriyas attacked. Goaded by the Pandaveyas, to kill the son of the suta, the maharathas enveloped him with a great shower of arrows. On seeing all those maharathas advancing towards him, the son of the suta was not distressed. He was not overcome by fear. He saw that advancing ocean of soldiers, like a city. He was powerful and undefeated in battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! For the sake of your sons, the extremely powerful one, swift in the use of his hands, released a shower of arrows and countered those soldiers in every direction. The kings also showered down arrows on him. They brandished hundreds and thousands of bows. They fought against Radheya, like masses of daityas against Shakra. In every direction, the lord Karna used his great shower of arrows to counter the shower of arrows that were released by the kings. As they sought to counter each other's deeds, it was extraordinary, like Shakra against the danavas, in the battle between the gods and the asuras. We witnessed the extraordinary dexterity shown by the son of the suta then. Though they strove in the battle, the enemy could not strike him. He repulsed the storm of arrows released by the maharatha kings. With sharp arrows that were marked with his own name, Radheya pierced yokes, umbrellas, standards and horses. Oppressed by Karna, the kings became anxious. At that time, they were like cows afflicted by the cold. Horses, elephants and rathas were slain. We saw that large numbers of them were brought down by Karna. O king! Heads and arms were strewn around in every direction. The earth was strewn with brave ones who did not retreat. They were killed and were being killed. There were lamentations everywhere. With all those fierce warriors, the place looked like Vaivasvata's[124] city.

'"On witnessing Karna's valour, King Duryodhana approached Ashvatthama and spoke these words. 'In this battle, the armoured Karna is fighting with all the kings. Behold. Afflicted by Karna's arrows, the soldiers are running away. They are like an army of the asuras, being driven away by Kartikeya. In this encounter, the soldiers can be seen to have been defeated by the intelligent Karna. Look. Bibhatsu is advancing, wishing to kill the son of the suta. Therefore, take appropriate steps, so that the maharatha son of a suta is not killed by Pandava in the battle.' At this, Drona's son, Kripa, Shalya and maharatha Hardikya advanced against Partha, with a view to rescuing the son of a suta. On seeing that they were advancing, Kounteya advanced against Karna, like the gods and the powerful Shakra against Vritra."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O suta! On seeing the angry Phalguna advance, like Death, what did Vaikartana Karna do next? The maharatha has always sought to rival Partha. In an encounter, he was confident that he would defeat the extremely fierce Bibhatsu. He now suddenly obtained someone towards whom he has always borne extreme enmity. O suta! What did Vaikartana Karna do next?"

'Sanjaya replied, "Pandava was advancing, like an elephant against another elephant. On seeing this, Karna fearlessly advanced against Dhananjaya. When Vaikartana's arrows descended with force, the energetic Pandava, the scorcher of enemies, countered them. O venerable one! Karna enveloped him with a net of arrows. Extremely angry, he pierced him with his arrows. The immensely strong Partha could not tolerate his dexterity. The scorcher of enemies released thirty arrows towards the son of a suta. These arrows were sharp, pointed at the tip, and sharpened on stone. Extremely enraged, the powerful and valiant one pierced him on the forefront of his left arm with another arrow and seemed to be laughing. Having been pierced with great force, the bow fell down from his hand. But in an instant, the immensely strong one[125] picked up another bow and displaying the lightness of his hands, shrouded Phalguna with a storm of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The son of a suta released a shower of arrows. Dhananjaya smiled and countered that shower of arrows. O king! They showered down arrows at each other. Those great archers enveloped each other, wishing to outdo each other's deeds. In that battle, there was a wonderful encounter between Karna and Pandava. They were angry, like wild elephants driven by desire.[126] On beholding Karna's prowess, Partha, the great archer, quickly severed the bow from his hand. With four broad-headed arrows, he dispatched his horses to Yama's abode. The scorcher of enemies severed his charioteer's head from his body. His bow was severed. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. Partha, Pandu's descendant, pierced him with four arrows. With his horses slain, that bull among men swiftly got down from his chariot. Afflicted by those arrows, he quickly climbed onto Kripa's chariot.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Radheya had been defeated and afflicted by Dhananjaya's arrows, those on your side fled in the ten directions. O king! On seeing that they were running away, King Duryodhana restrained them and spoke these words to them. 'O brave ones! Do not run away. O bulls among the kshatriyas! Stay here. To kill Partha in this battle, I will myself advance. I will kill Partha, together with the Panchalas and the Somakas. Today, I will fight with the wielder of Gandiva. Partha will witness my valour, which is like Death at the end of a yuga. I will release thousands of nets of arrows. The warriors will see them in the battle, descending like locusts. I will shower down arrows from my bow, like from clouds at the end of summer. The warriors and the soldiers will see them. With my straight-tufted arrows, I will vanquish Partha in the battle today. O brave ones! Stay in this battle and give up your fear of Phalguna. Phalguna will not be able to withstand my valour today. I will be like the shoreline, holding back the ocean that is the abode of makaras.' Having said this, surrounded by a large army of soldiers, the king advanced towards the invincible Phalguna. His eyes were red with rage.

'"On seeing that the mighty-armed one was advancing, Sharadvata approached Ashvatthama and spoke these words to him. 'This mighty-armed king is intolerant and has lost his senses because of his rage. Following the conduct of insects,[127] he wishes to fight with Phalguna. While we look on, he will give up his life before Partha. As long as he is not within the reach of Phalguna's arrows, the Kourava king will be alive. O brave one! Quickly restrain him. Partha's terrible arrows are like snakes that have cast off their skins. Restrain him in this battle, before the king is reduced to ashes. O granter of honours! While we are here and are looking on, he should not engage himself. As long as his aides are here, the king should not fight with Partha himself. If Kouravya fights with Partha Kiriti, I think it will be difficult for him to remain alive, like an elephant against a tiger.' Having been addressed by his maternal uncle, Drona's son, supreme among the wielders of weapons, quickly went to Duryodhana and spoke these words. 'O Gandhari's son! As long as I am live, you should not fight. O Kouravya! I have always desired your welfare and you are disregarding me. You should not have any anxiety about defeating Partha. O Suyodhana! I will restrain him. You stay here.'

'"Duryodhana replied, 'The preceptor[128] protects the sons of Pandu, like his own sons. O supreme among brahmanas! You have also always been partial towards them. It is my misfortune that your valour in battle has always been mild. Perhaps it is because of your affection towards Dharmaraja or Droupadi. I do not know. I am ashamed because of my own avarice. All the relatives deserved happiness. But they confronted supreme unhappiness and have been defeated. You are foremost among wielders of weapons. You are Maheshvara’s equal in battle. O son of Goutami! Had you so wished, you were capable of destroying my enemies. O Ashvatthama! Show me your favours. Destroy those who are causing me injury. O unblemished one! Even the gods are incapable of remaining within reach of your weapons. O Drona’s son! Kill the Panchalas and the Somakas, with their followers, in the battle. Protected by you, we will kill the ones who remain. O brahmana! These Somakas and illustrious Panchalas are angrily roaming around amidst my soldiers, like a conflagaration. O mighty-armed one! O supreme among men! Restrain them and the Kekayas. Otherwise, protected by Kiriti, they will destroy us before that. O venerable one! This is your task, regardless of whether you do it now or later. O mighty-armed one! You have been born for the destruction of the Panchalas. O one without decay! You will make the world empty of all the Panchalas. The sages who obtained success spoke about the future in this way. The gods, together with Vasava, are incapable of remaining within reach of your weapons, not to speak of the Parthas and the Panchalas. I am telling you this truthfully.’”’

CHAPTER 1112(135)

‘Sanjaya said, “Drona’s son was invincible in a battle. Thus addressed by Duryodhana, the mighty-armed one replied, ‘O Kourava! What you have said is true. The Pandavas have always been dear to me and my father. And we are also dear to them. O extender of the Kuru lineage! But that does not apply to a battle. O son![129] We will fight to the best of our capacity and without any fear, are prepared to give up our lives in battle. O supreme among kings! In an instant, Karna, Shalya, Kripa, Hardikya and I are capable of destroying the Pandava army. O extender of the Kuru lineage! If we were not present in this battle, the mighty-armed one[130] is also capable of destroying the army of the Kouravas in an instant. We are fighting with the Pandavas to the best of our capacity. In a similar way, they are fighting with us. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Energy has clashed against energy and is being pacified. As long as Pandu's son[131] is alive, the Pandava army is incapable of being quickly defeated. I tell you this truthfully. The sons of Pandu are capable and are fighting for their own interests. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Why should they not be able to slaughter your soldiers? O king! You are extremely avaricious. O Kourava! You have resorted to deceit. You are insolent and are suspicious of everything. That is the reason you suspect those on your own side. For your sake, I am making the best of efforts and am prepared to give up my own life. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! For your sake, I will advance to fight. I will fight against the enemy and defeat the best of the best. O destroyer of enemies! To bring you pleasure in this battle, I will fight with the Panchalas, Somakas, Kekayas and Pandaveyas. The Panchalas and Somakas will be consumed by my arrows. They will be like cattle afflicted by a lion and will run away in different directions. The king who is Dharma's son will witness my valour today. Against the Somakas, the world will be full of Ashvatthama, and Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, will be severely distressed. In the battle, he will see that the Panchalas and the Somakas have been killed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will kill whoever advances to do battle with me. O brave one! Having encountered me, no one will be able to escape with his life.' Having spoken thus to your son, Duryodhana, the mighty-armed one advanced to fight and to drive away all the archers. The supreme of all beings wished to do that which would bring pleasure to your sons.

'"Goutami's son then spoke to the Kekayas and the Panchalas. 'O maharathas! All of you strike at my body. Remain stationed in this battle and show me the dexterity of your weapons.' O great king! Thus addressed, all of them showered down weapons towards Drona's son, like water pouring down from the clouds. Having destroyed those arrows, Drona's son brought down eight heroes, in front of the sons of Pandu and the lord Dhrishtadyumna. In that battle, the Panchalas and Srinjayas were killed and abandoning the fight with Drona's son, fled in the ten directions.

'"O great king! On seeing that the brave Panchalas and Somakas were running away in that battle, Dhrishtadyumna attacked Drona's son. He was surrounded by one hundred brave rathas who did not retreat. They were on golden and colourful chariots that roared, like clouds full of rain. On seeing that warriors had been brought down, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna, the son of the king of Panchala, spoke these words to Drona's son. 'O son of the preceptor! O evil-minded one! Why are you killing these? If you are brave in a battle, fight against me. If you are stationed in front of me, I will kill you.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! The powerful Dhrishtadyumna pierced the son of the preceptor with sharp arrows that penetrated the inner organs. Drona's son was struck by a continuous line of swift arrows. They were gold-tufted, pointed at the tip, fierce and capable of piercing all bodies. He looked like a flowering tree, with bees in search of honey hovering around it. Thus pierced, he became extremely angry, like a snake that has been struck with a foot. Drona's proud son was not frightened. With the bow in his hand, he spoke these words. 'O Dhrishtadyumna! Wait for an instant, without going away. I will shoot sharp arrows and send you to Yama's abode.' Saying this, Drona's son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, showed the dexterity of his hands and enveloped Parshata in every direction with a torrent of arrows. The one who was invincible in battle was thus shrouded in that encounter by Drona's son. The eloquent son of Panchala roared and spoke to Drona's son. 'O brahmana! You do not know about my origin or my vow. O extremely evil-minded one! I will not kill you, without killing Drona first. In this battle today, I will kill your father, and then you. I will convey you to the world of the dead. That is my resolution. You have hatred towards the Parthas and are devoted to the Kouravas. As long as I see you stationed before me, you will not escape with your life. As for that brahmana,[132] he has abandoned the conduct of brahmanas and is devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. That wicked of men should be slain by all the worlds, just as you should be.' Having been thus harshly addressed by Parshata, the supreme among brahmanas was overcome by great rage and asked him to wait. He glanced at Parshata and seemed to burn him down with his eyes.

'"He sighed like a serpent and showered him with arrows. O supreme among kings! In that battle, he was enveloped by Drona's son, though that supreme among rathas was surrounded by all the Panchala soldiers. However, the mighty-armed one did not tremble and resorting to his own fortitude, shot many kinds of arrows at Ashvatthama. In that battle, they countered each other, as if they were in a gambling match in which their lives were the stakes. They could not tolerate each other and countered those torrents of arrows. The great archers created showers of arrows in every direction. The clash between Drona's son and Parshata was terrible in form and fierce. On beholding this, the siddhas and charanas worshipped them. The torrents of arrows filled the sky and the directions and as they fought, they created a great darkness with those arrows, so that they could not be seen. They seemed to be dancing around in that encounter, with the bows drawn in circles. They sought to kill each other and wished to defeat each other. Those mighty-armed ones fought wonderfully, showing their dexterity and skills. In that encounter, thousands of foremost among warriors applauded them. They were seen to fight in that battle, like wild elephants in the forest. Both the armies were filled with great delight. O venerable one! Roars like lions' were heard and conch shells were blown. The fierce battle increased the terror of cowards. For a short instant, that tumultuous battle seemed to be equal. O great king! Then Drona's son severed the standard, bow, the umbrella, the two parshni charioteers, the charioteer and the four horses of great-souled Parshata. He killed them in the battle and brought them down on the ground. The one with an immeasurable soul then used straight-tufted arrows to drive away hundreds and thousands of Panchalas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Pandava soldiers were distressed on seeing the great deeds, which were like those of Vasava, of Drona's son in the battle. He killed a hundred maharatha Panchalas with a hundred arrows. With three sharp arrows, Drona's son killed three other maharathas, while Drupada's son[133] and Phalguna looked on. He killed many Panchalas who were stationed before him. In that encounter, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas were slaughtered. Their chariots and standards were strewn around. They dared not approach

Drona’s son and abandoned him. Thus did Drona’s maharatha son defeat the enemies in that battle. He let out a mighty roar, like clouds at the end of summer. Having killed many brave ones, Ashvatthama was resplendent. He was like the fire that consumes all beings at the end of a yuga. Having defeated thousands of enemies in the battle, he was honoured by the Kouraveyas. Drona’s powerful son was resplendent, like Indra of the gods, after having killed large numbers of the enemy.”’

CHAPTER 1113(136)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Then Yudhishthira and Pandava Bhimasena surrounded Drona’s son from every direction. King Duryodhana and Bharadvaja’s son attacked the Pandavas in that encounter and a battle commenced. O great king! It was terrible in form and increased the terror of cowards. Yudhishthira was angry and dispatched large numbers of Ambashthas, Malavas, Vangas, Shibis and Trigartas to the world of the dead. Bhima was indomitable in battle. He killed Abhisahas, Shurasenas and other kshatriyas and filled the earth with the mire of blood. O king! In that battle, Kiriti used sharp arrows to send large numbers of Youdheyas, those from the mountainous regions and Madrakas to the world of the dead. They were severely afflicted with iron arrows. Tuskers fell down on the ground, like mountains with two peaks.[134] The trunks of elephants were severed and rolled around, here and there. The earth was strewn with these and looked beautiful, as if with serpents that moved around. O king! The earth was resplendent, because golden and colourful umbrellas were flung away. It was as if the sky was resplendent with the sun, moon and planets at the time of the destruction of a yuga. ‘Kill. Strike without any fear. Pierce. Slice down.’ These and other fierce sounds were heard in the vicinity of the chariot of the one with the red horses.[135] Drona became extremely angry and used the vayavya weapon in the battle. He was unapproachable and killed them, like a turbulent wind driving away clouds. While Bhimasena and the great-souled Partha looked on, the Panchalas were slaughtered by Drona and fled. But Kiriti and Bhima forcefully restrained them. They attacked your army with a large number of chariots. Bibhatsu was on the right flank and Vrikodara on the left. They showered down great torrents of arrows on Bharadvaja's son. O great king! Maharatha Srinjayas, Panchalas, Matsyas and Somakas followed them. There were the best of rathas in the army of your son, skilled in striking. With a large army, they approached Drona's chariot. That large army of the Bharatas was slaughtered by Kiriti. On top of this, they were afflicted by darkness and sleep. O great king! Though Drona himself and your son tried to restrain them, they were incapable of restraining the warriors. That large army was shattered by the arrows of Pandu's son. With the world covered in darkness, they fled in all the directions. Some kings abandoned hundreds of their mounts. O great king! They were overcome by fear and ran away in different directions."'

CHAPTER 1114(137)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing Somadatta stretch his large bow, Satyaki addressed his charioteer. ‘Take me towards Somadatta. Without killing the enemy, Bahlika’s son and the worst of the Kouravas, in the battle today, I will not return from the encounter. O suta! I tell you this truthfully.’ Thus addressed, the charioteer urged those extremely fast horses from the Saindhava region. They possessed the complexion of conch shells and were capable of withstanding all sounds in the battle. They were as fast as thought or the wind and bore Yuyudhana. O king! They were like Indra’s tawny steeds in earlier times, when he ventured to kill the daityas. On seeing that Satvata was powerfully descending in the encounter, the mighty-armed Somadatta was not frightened and attacked him. He released showers of arrows, like clouds showering down rain. He shrouded Shini’s descendant, like clouds covering the sun. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Satyaki was also not frightened in that battle. In every direction, he enveloped the bull among the Kuru lineage with a torrent of arrows. Somadatta pierced Madhava in the chest with sixty arrows. O king! Satyaki pierced him back with sharp arrows. Wounded by each other’s arrows, those bulls among men looked resplendent. They were like blossoming kimshuka trees with beautiful blossoms at the time of flowering. The limbs of the illustrious ones from the Kuru and Vrishni lineages were covered with blood. They glanced at each other and seemed to burn each other down with their sight. Those scorchers of enemies roamed around in chariots that traversed circular paths. They were terrible in form and were like clouds that showered down rain. O Indra among kings! With arrows mangling their bodies everywhere and wounded by those arrows, they looked like porcupines. Those arrows were well tufted and struck by these, they were beautiful. O king! They looked like trees during the monsoon, covered by fireflies. The limbs of the maharathas blazed with those arrows. In that battle, they looked like angry elephants, covered with flaming torches.

‘“O great king! In that encounter, maharatha Somadatta used an arrow in the shape of a half-moon to slice down Madhava’s great bow. He then swiftly struck him with twenty five arrows. At a time when speed was of the essence, he again struck him with ten arrows. Satyaki took up another bow that was more powerful. He quickly pierced Somadatta with five arrows. O king! In that encounter, Satyaki seemed to smile. He used another broad-headed arrow to cut down the golden standard of Bahlika's son. On seeing that his standard had been brought down, Somadatta wasn't scared. He struck Shini's descendant with twenty-five arrows. Satvata became enraged in that battle. In that encounter, he used a sharp kshurapra arrow to slice down the archer Somadatta's bow. O king! He[136] was like an elephant with its tusks shattered and he struck him in many ways with a hundred gold-tufted arrows that flew straight. Maharatha Somadatta took up another bow. The immensely strong one enveloped Satyaki with a shower of arrows. Extremely wrathful, Satyaki pierced Somadatta in that battle. Somadatta also afflicted Satyaki with his net of arrows.

'"For Satvata's sake, Bhima struck Bahlika's son with ten arrows. However, without any fear, Somadatta struck Shini's descendant with arrows. For Satvata's sake, Bhimasena took up a new, firm and terrible club and hurled it towards Somadatta's chest. On seeing that the club, terrible in form, was descending towards him in the battle, Kourava laughed and sliced it down into two fragments. That large and iron club was seen to be shattered into two fragments and fell down, like the giant summit of a mountain that has been shattered by thunder. O king! In that encounter, Satyaki used a broad-headed arrow to slice down Somadatta's bow and used five more to cut down his arm-guards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He quickly struck his four supreme horses with four arrows and sent them to the king of the dead. With a broad-headed arrow with drooping tufts, he severed the charioteer's head from his body. The tiger among rathas, the bull among the Shini lineage, laughed. O king! Satvata then released an extremely terrible arrow that flamed like the fire. It was gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. With great force, Shini's descendant shot that supreme of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That terrible arrow quickly struck the lord and brought him down. Severely wounded by the powerful maharatha Satvata, the mighty-armed Somadatta fell down and died.

'"On seeing that Somadatta had been killed, the maharathas attacked Yuyudhana and brought down a great shower of arrows on him. They attacked him with a large army and with Drona's battle formation. The immensely strong ones on your side were angry. While Bharadvaja's son looked on, Yudhishthira drove them away with arrows. On seeing that the soldiers were being driven away by Yudhishthira, Drona attacked with great force. His eyes were red with rage. He pierced Partha with seven extremely sharp arrows. Having pierced him, the mighty-armed one licked the corners of his mouth and severed Yudhishthira's standard and bow. In that encounter, with his bow severed, and at a time when speed was of the essence, the supreme among kings swiftly took up another firm bow. The king pierced Drona with a thousand arrows and his horses, charioteer, standard and chariot too. It was wonderful. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! For a short while, Drona was distressed and oppressed by that storm of arrows. He sank down on the floor of his chariot. However, in a short while, the supreme of brahmanas regained his senses. He was overcome by great rage and invoked the vayavya weapon. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, the valiant Partha was not frightened in the battle and stretched his bow, repulsing that weapon with a weapon of his own.

'"Vasudeva spoke to Yudhishthira, Kunti's son. 'O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! Listen to what I tell you. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Give up this battle with Drona. Drona has always desired to seize you in the battle. I do not think that you should fight with him in this way. The one who has been created to kill him[137] will kill him tomorrow. Abandon the preceptor and go to the spot where King Suyodhana is. Bhima, tiger among rathas, is fighting with the Kouravas there.' Having heard Vasudeva's words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira thought for an instant. He then went to the spot where Bhima, the destroyer of enemies, was stationed and was fighting a fierce battle. He was slaying your warriors, like Death with a gaping mouth.

Pandava[138] made the earth resound with the great clatter of his chariot. It was as if a cloud was roaring in the ten directions, at the end of the summer. To kill the enemy, he positioned himself along Bhima's flank. At the commencement of the night, Drona also began to kill the Pandus and the Panchalas."'

CHAPTER 1115(138)

'Sanjaya said, "The terrible and fierce battle continued. O lord of the earth! The world was covered in darkness and dust. As they were stationed in that encounter, the warriors could not see each other. The great battle continued on the basis of guessing and signs. Men, elephants and horses encountered supreme destruction and it made the body hair stand up. O supreme among kings! The brave Drona, Karna and Kripa and Bhima, Parshata and Satyaki, agitated each other's soldiers. In every direction, the maharathas slaughtered the soldiers. Because of the darkness and the dust, the elephants fled in different directions. The warriors were terrified and bereft of their senses. They also fled in different directions. O great king! They were killed and fled in that encounter. Thousands of maharathas killed each other in that battle. They were blind and confounded by the darkness and this was due to your stupid son's policy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the soldiers, and the protectors of the soldiers, were confused in that battle. Everything was covered in darkness."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "They were agitated by the Pandavas and their energy was sapped. Those on my side were blinded and shattered by the darkness. What was the state of your minds then? O Sanjaya! When the world was covered in darkness, how did their soldiers and those on my side again become visible?"

'Sanjaya replied, "There were soldiers who had not been killed.[139] Instructed by their leaders, they again arranged themselves in the form of a vyuha. Drona was in the front and Shalya at the rear. O king! Drona and Soubala were along the flanks. During that night, the king himself[140] protected all the soldiers. O king! Duryodhana spoke to the large numbers of infantry and comforted them. ‘Abandon your supreme weapons. Take up flaming lamps in your hands.’ Thus instructed by the supreme of kings, they were cheered and took up lamps. Divided through different standards, during that night, the army was beautiful because of the radiance of the fire. They were adorned in extremely expensive ornaments. They possessed divine weapons. These blazed as they were hurled. In a short while, properly arranged, those lamps lit up the entire army. The foot soldiers held lamps with oil in their hands and this made all the soldiers look radiant. They looked like clouds in the night sky, illuminated by lightning. When the soldiers were illuminated in this way, Drona, who was like the fire, scorched all the directions. O Indra among kings! In his golden armour, he was like the midday sun with its rays. As the light was reflected from golden ornaments, sparkling swords and bows and yellow weapons, it was beautiful. There were bright clubs and dazzling bludgeons. There were lances and spears. O Ajamidha! As they were repeatedly lit, the rays of the lamps reflected from these. O king! There were umbrellas, new whisks and other accompaniments and they flamed like giant meteors. There were golden garlands that were whirled around. They looked brilliant. Because of the reflection from the weapons and the illumination from the lamps, your army then looked dazzling. O king! There was the radiance from the reflection on ornaments and it was extremely beautiful. There were yellow weapons that were well crafted, used for mangling bodies. They were whirled by the brave ones and created a flaming radiance there, like the lightning in the sky at the end of summer. These were brought down with great force to kill the enemy and the faces of the men trembled as they did this, like large clouds driven by the wind. It was as if a raging conflagaration blazes like the sun and destroys a large forest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The army blazed in that light and looked fierce in form, generating great fear.

‘“On seeing that our army was thus illuminated, the Parthas quickly instructed all their soldiers and the large numbers of foot soldiers to also light lamps. Seven lamps were placed on each elephant. Ten lamps were placed on each chariot. There were two lamps on the back of each horse.

There were other lamps on the flanks, the standards and the rear. There were others along the flanks of all the soldiers, at the rear and in the front, in every direction. Other men roamed around in the midst of the two armies, with flaming torches in their hands. All the soldiers and the masses of infantry got mixed up with the elephants, the chariots and the large numbers of horses. The army of the sons of Pandu was illuminated with others who were in the midst and held flaming torches in their hands. It was as if a fire was rendered more powerful because of an additional blaze and those two armies assumed greater strength. It was like the sun making the planets more radiant, or the sun fiercely illuminating the flames of a fire. That radiance spread on the earth and into the sky and spreading over all the directions, seemed to increase. The splendour was extremely fierce and made your soldiers, and theirs, visible. O king! As that radiance spread up towards the sky, the masses of gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the asuras and large numbers of siddhas were awakened and assembled, with all the apsaras. The place was full of gods, gandharvas, yakshas, leaders among the asuras, masses of apsaras and brave warriors who had been killed and had ascended to heaven. The field of battle looked like heaven itself. There were chariots, horses, elephants, all illuminated with lamps. Angry warriors roamed around and so did wounded horses. Those large armies of chariots, horses and elephants were arrayed in battle formation and were as resplendent as the gods and the asuras, arranged in vyuhas. The force of spears was like a turbulent wind. The large chariots were like clouds. There was the roar of chariots and horses. Weapons showered down, like clouds raining blood. As night commenced, there was a battle between the men who were like gods. The great-souled one[141] was like a giant fire. He tormented the foremost among the Pandavas. O Indra among men! He was like the sun that has reached the midpoint of the sky at the end of the monsoon.'"

CHAPTER 1116(139)

‘Sanjaya said, “The world, covered in dust and darkness, was thus illuminated. Wishing to kill each other, the brave ones attacked. O king! They clashed in that battle, with weapons, lances and swords in their hands. Overcome with rage, they glanced at each other. There were thousands of blazing lamps in every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The ground was beautiful, like the firmament decorated with planets. The field of battle was dazzling, as if with hundreds of flaming torches. The earth looked as if the worlds were about to be consumed.[142] All the directions were illuminated with lamps in every direction. They were as beautiful as trees with fireflies during a monsoon evening. Brave ones separately clashed against brave ones, elephants clashed with elephants, horses with horses and chariots clashed against chariots. At the commencement of the night, on the instructions of your son, they were all cheerful. O great king! Arjuna started to swiftly destroy the Kourava soldiers and weaken all the kings.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “When the invincible and intolerant one angrily penetrated into the army of my son, what was the state of your minds then? When that scorcher of enemies penetrated, what did the soldiers think? Given the occasion, what did Duryodhana think should be done? In that battle, who were the scorchers of enemies who advanced against that brave one? Who protected Drona’s right wheel and who was on the left? As the brave one fought, which valiant ones protected his rear? Who advanced in front, killing the enemies in the battle? That unvanquished one, great archer, penetrated the Panchalas.[143] The valiant tiger among men seemed to be dancing around in the path of his chariot. Advancing on his chariot, Drona consumed the Panchalas with his arrows. He was as angry as a fire.[144] How did he come about his death? You always speak of the enemy as undisturbed and unvanquished. But in the battle, you have always said that those on my side were killed, distressed and routed and that the rathas were deprived of their chariots.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! During that night, Drona desired to fight. Discerning his mind, Duryodhana spoke to his obedient brothers—

Vikarna, Chitrasena, the Kourava Mahabahu, Durdharsha, Dirghabahu and their followers.[145] 'O brave ones! Go and endeavour to protect Drona's rear. Hardikya will be near the right wheel and Shalya on the left.' Saying this, your son addressed the remaining brave maharathas from Trigarta. 'The preceptor is extremely controlled. The Pandavas are making great efforts. As he kills the enemy in the battle, protect the one who is so controlled. Drona is powerful in battle. He is dexterous in the use of hands and valiant. He can defeat the thirty gods in an encounter, not to speak of the Parthas and Somakas. O maharathas! All of you unite and make the best of efforts. Protect Drona from the Panchala maharatha Dhrishtadyumna. O kings! With the exception of Dhrishtadyumna, I do not see any warrior among the Pandaveya soldiers who can defeat Drona in a battle. Therefore, I think that all our efforts should be to protect Bharadvaja's son. Thus protected, he will slay the Somakas and the Srinjayas and the kings. With the Srinjayas slain at the forefront of the array, there is no doubt that Drona's son will kill Dhrishtadyumna in the battle. In that fashion, maharatha Karna will defeat Arjuna in the battle. Armouring myself, I will defeat Bhimasena in the battle. It is evident that we will be victorious for a very long time. O maharathas! Therefore, protect Drona in this battle.' O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Having thus spoken, your son, Duryodhana, instructed the soldiers in that terrible darkness.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! A battle commenced in the night. Both the armies were fierce and desired victory. Arjuna attacked the Kourava soldiers and the Kouravas attacked Arjuna. They used many different kinds of weapons and afflicted each other. Drona's son attacked the king of Panchala[146] and Bharadvaja's son attacked the Srinjayas. In that battle, they enveloped them with straight-tufted arrows. O venerable one! As the Pandu, Panchala and Kourava soldiers slaughtered each other, a terrible uproar arose. We, or our forefathers, had not seen or heard of anything like this earlier. The battle that commenced in the night engendered great fear."'

CHAPTER 1117(140)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! That terrible battle that took place during the night led to the destruction of all beings. At that time, Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, spoke to the Pandavas, Panchalas and Somakas. ‘Advance only against Drona, desiring to kill him.’ O king! On hearing the king’s words, the Panchalas and the Somakas advanced against Drona, roaring fiercely. Those on our side roared back in return and counter-attacked with intolerance. In that encounter, they used the best of their capacity, the best of their enterprise and the best of their spirit.

‘“Yudhishthira was advancing towards Drona, desiring to kill him, like a crazy elephant against another crazy one, and Hardikya Kritavarma attacked him. O king! In the forefront of that battle, the Kourava Bhuri[147] released a shower of arrows, from every direction, on Shini’s descendant. O king! Maharatha Sahadeva wished to advance against Drona and Vaikartana Karna countered the Pandava. Bhimasena advanced, like Death with a gaping mouth. In that encounter, Duryodhana himself countered the obstinate one, who was advancing like Death. O king! Nakula was foremost among warriors and was skilled in all forms of fighting. Shakuni Soubala quickly countered him. O king! Shikhandi, supreme among rathas, advanced on his chariot and Sharadvata Kripa countered him in that battle. O great king! Prativindhya[148] advanced on horses that had the complexion of peacocks and Duhshasana made endeavours to counter him. Bhimasena’s son,[149] skilled in a hundred different kinds of maya, advanced, and wishing to protect his father’s honour, Ashvatthama checked him. In that battle, maharatha Drupada wished to advance against Drona and Vrishasena checked him, together with his soldiers and his followers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Virata quickly advanced, wishing to kill Drona, and the king of Madra angrily checked him. Wishing to kill Drona, Nakula’s son, Shatanika, proudly advanced in that battle. Chitrasena quickly countered him with his arrows. Maharatha Arjuna, foremost among warriors, advanced, driving everyone away. O great king! Alambusa, Indra among rakshasas, checked him.[150] The great archer, Drona, slaughtered enemies in the battle. However, Panchala Dhrishtadyumna cheerfully countered him. O king! There were other maharatha sons of Pandu who also advanced and the rathas on your side countered them, with all their energy. In that great battle, elephant riders swiftly clashed with other elephant riders. Hundreds and thousands were seen to fight with each other. O king! During that night, horses advanced against each other with great force and seemed to be like mountains with wings. O great king! Horse riders clashed against horse riders with spears, lances and swords in their hands and roared separately. There were many men there, clashing against each other. They used large numbers of clubs, bludgeons and many other kinds of weapons.

'"Hardikya Kritavarma angrily countered Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, like the shoreline holds back the ocean. Yudhishthira pierced Hardikya with five swift arrows. Asking him to wait, he again pierced him with twenty arrows. O venerable one! Kritavarma became extremely angry with Dharma's son. He severed his bow with a broad-headed arrow and pierced him with seven arrows. Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, then picked up another bow. He pierced Hardikya in the arms and the chest with ten arrows. O venerable one! Having been thus pierced in the battle by Dharma's son, Madhava[151] trembled with rage and afflicted him with seven arrows. However, Partha severed his bow and his arm-guard. The king released five sharp arrows that had been sharpened on stone. They pierced his armour, which was decorated with gold and was extremely expensive. They then penetrated the earth, like angry snakes entering a termite hill. In the twinkling of an eye, he[152] picked up another bow and pierced Pandava with sixty arrows and his charioteer with nine. Pandava's soul was immeasurable. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He laid down his giant bow on his chariot and hurled a lance that was like a serpent. It was large and decorated with gold. Having been thus released by Pandava, it penetrated his right arm and entered the ground. At that time, Partha again picked up his bow. He enveloped Hardikya with straight-tufted arrows. In that battle, in an instant, the foremost of brave rathas among the Vrishni lineage[153] made Yudhishthira devoid of his horses, charioteer and chariot. The eldest of the Pandavas then grasped a sword and a shield. But in that battle, Madhava sliced these down with his sharp arrows. Yudhishthira then picked up a spear with a golden handle. It was difficult to resist and in that battle, he quickly hurled it towards Hardikya. It was released from Dharmaraja's hands and descended suddenly. However, dexterous in the use of his hands, Hardikya severed it into two fragments and laughed. He then shrouded Dharma's son with hundreds of arrows. He angrily cut down his armour with sharp arrows. The great-souled one's armour was severed by Hardikya. O king! It fell down in that battle, like a stellar cluster dislodged from the firmament. His bow was severed. He was without a chariot. He was without armour. He was afflicted by arrows. Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, quickly withdrew himself from that battle. Kritavarma defeated Yudhishthira, Dharma's son. The immensely strong one again began to protect Drona's wheel."'

CHAPTER 1118(141)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! In that battle, Bhuri descended on Shini's descendant, who was supreme among rathas and was advancing like an elephant towards water. Satyaki became angry. He used five sharp arrows to quickly pierce him in the heart and blood began to flow. Shini's descendant was indomitable in battle. But in that fashion, in that encounter, Kourava pierced him between the arms with ten sharp arrows. O great king! They wounded each other with terrible arrows. Their eyes were red with rage and they stretched their bows in anger. O great king! An extremely terrible shower of arrows rained down. Both of them were as angry as Death and released them from their bows. O king! They stationed themselves in that battle and shrouded each other with arrows. For a short while, the battle between the two seemed to be equal. O great king! However, extremely wrathful, Shini's descendant laughed in that battle and severed the bow of the great-souled Kourava. Once the bow had been severed, he asked him to wait and quickly pierced him in the heart with nine sharp arrows. The scorcher of enemies was thus pierced by his powerful enemy. He grasped another bow and pierced Satvata back. O lord of the earth! Having pierced Satvata with three arrows, he used an extremely sharp broad-headed arrow to sever his bow and seemed to be smiling. O great king! With his bow severed, Satyaki became senseless with rage. He hurled an extremely forceful spear towards his chest. His limbs were shattered by that spear and he fell down from his supreme chariot. His limbs were red, like the one with the blazing rays in the sky.[154]

'"On seeing that the brave one had been killed in that encounter, maharatha Ashvatthama forcefully advanced towards Shini's descendant. He brought down a torrent of arrows, like clouds showering down rain on Meru. O king! On seeing that he was angrily advancing towards the chariot of Shini's descendant, maharatha Ghatotkacha let out a roar and spoke these words. 'O Drona's son! Wait. You will not escape from me with your life. I will kill you today, like King Skanda killed Mahisha.[155] In the forefront of this battle, I will kill you today and destroy the love you bear towards fighting.' Having spoken thus, the rakshasa, the destroyer of enemy heroes, angrily attacked Drona's son, like a lion against a king of elephants. His eyes were coppery red with rage. Ghatotkacha showered down arrows that were as long as a chariot's axle. Like clouds pouring down rain, he shrouded Drona's son, bull among rathas. But, in that battle, Drona's son quickly used his own arrows to counter those arrows, which were like venomous serpents, before they could reach him. He then used hundreds of sharp and swift arrows that were capable of penetrating the inner organs against Ghatotkacha, the scorcher of enemies and an Indra among rakshasas. O great king! Pierced by those arrows, the rakshasa looked beautiful in the forefront of the battle, like a porcupine with its quills erect. Bhimasena's powerful son was overcome with rage. He showered down fierce arrows on Drona's son and they had the sound of the vajra and thunder. There were kshurapras and those that were in the shape of a half-moon. There were those with iron heads. Some had tufts like a boar's ear. Others were hollow and sharp. Still others had barbed tufts. That tumultuous shower of arrows made a sound like the vajra and thunder. They were angrily released and descended on him. However, the senses of Drona's son were not numbed. That torrent of arrows was extremely difficult to withstand. However, the immensely energetic one invoked a divine weapon with a mantra and drove them away, like the wind dispelling large clouds. The arrows seemed to be fighting with each other in the sky. O great king! They were terrible in form and this increased the joy of the warriors. Because of the friction among the weapons, sparks were generated in every direction. At the commencement of the night, the sky seemed to be covered with fireflies. Drona's son covered all the directions with his arrows. To ensure the welfare of your sons, he countered the rakshasa.

'"In the battle, there was a duel between Drona's son and the rakshasa. In the midst of that dark night, it was like that between Shakra and Prahlada. In that battle, Ghatotkacha was filled with extreme rage. He struck Drona's son in the chest with ten arrows that were like the fire of destruction. Having been pierced in that battle by the rakshasa, Drona's immensely strong son wavered, like a tree struck by a storm. He lost his senses and grasped the pole of his standard. O lord of men! Sounds of lamentation arose among all your soldiers. O lord of the earth! All those on your side thought that he had been killed. In that battle, on seeing that Ashvatthama was in that state, the Panchalas and Srinjayas roared like lions. Having regained his senses, the immensely strong Ashvatthama, the scorcher of enemies, drew his bow with his left hand. He drew the bow back up to his ear and quickly aimed a terrible and supreme arrow towards Ghatotkacha. It was like Yama's staff. O lord of the earth! That supreme and fierce arrow, with excellent tufts, pierced the rakshasa's heart and then entered the ground. O great king! Thus pierced by Drona's son, who prided himself in battle, the Indra among rakshasas, who was extremely strong, sank down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing that Hidimba's son was senseless in that field of battle, his charioteer was terrified and quickly bore him away from Drona's son. Having thus pierced Ghatotkacha, Indra among rakshasas, in the battle, Drona's immensely strong son let out a mighty roar. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was honoured by your sons and by all the warriors. His body blazed, like the sun at midday.

'"Bhimasena was fighting in the vicinity of the chariot of Bharadvaja's son. King Duryodhana himself pierced him back with sharp arrows. O venerable one! Bhimasena pierced him with nine arrows. Duryodhana pierced him back with twenty arrows. Shrouded by arrows in the forefront of that battle, they looked like the moon and the sun in the sky, when they are covered by a net of clouds. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Asking Bhima to wait, King Duryodhana pierced him with five arrows. Bhima severed his bow and his standard with nine arrows. He pierced the best of the Kouravas with ninety arrows with straight tufts. O venerable one! Duryodhana became angry with Bhimasena. O king! While all the archers looked on, he shot arrows.[156] Bhima repulsed all the arrows that were released from Duryodhana's bow. He struck Kourava with twenty-five small arrows. O venerable one! Duryodhana became angry with Bhimasena. He severed his bow with a kshurapra arrow and pierced him back with ten arrows. The immensely strong Bhimasena picked up another bow. He swiftly pierced the king with seven sharp arrows. Showing the dexterity of his hands, he[157] severed his bow quickly and then a second, a third, a fourth and a fifth. O great king! Full of himself, he severed all the bows Bhima picked up. O great king! Your son was insolent about his prowess and wished for victory. On seeing that the bows were repeatedly severed, in that battle, he[158] then hurled a sparkling lance that was made completely out of iron. But before that lance could reach him, Kourava severed it into three fragments, while all the worlds and the great-souled Bhima looked on. O great king! At this, Bhima grasped a heavy club that was extremely radiant. Powerfully, he hurled it towards Duryodhana's chariot. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, the heavy club forcefully crushed your son's horses and charioteer. O Indra among kings! It also destroyed your son's chariot, decorated with gold. He quickly descended from his chariot and ascended that of the great-souled Nandaka.[159]

'"Bhima thought that your maharatha son[160] had been killed. He roared loudly like a lion and challenged the Kouravas. Your soldiers also thought that the king had been killed. In every direction, sounds of lamentation arose. On hearing those lamentations, all the warriors were frightened. O king! On hearing Bhimasena's roar, the great-souled King Yudhishthira thought that Suyodhana had been killed. He speedily rushed to the spot where Partha Vrikodara was. O lord of the earth! Wishing to fight with Drona, the Panchalas, Kekayas, Matsyas and Srinjayas made their efforts and speedily advanced against him. A great battle commenced between Drona and the enemy. Everything was immersed in fierce darkness and they started to kill each other."'

CHAPTER 1119(142)

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of the earth! Sahadeva wished to advance against Drona. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Vaikartana Karna countered him. Sahadeva pierced Radheya with nine swift arrows. He again pierced him with ten sharp arrows with straight tufts. Karna pierced him back with one hundred arrows with straight tufts. Displaying the lightness of his hands, he quickly severed his bow. Madri's powerful son picked up another bow. He pierced Karna with twenty arrows and it was extraordinary. Karna killed his horses with arrows with straight tufts. With a broad-headed arrow, he swiftly conveyed his charioteer to Yama's eternal abode. Deprived of his chariot, Sahadeva grasped a sword and a shield. But Karna struck these down with his arrows and laughed. He[161] then grasped an extremely terrible and extremely large club that was heavy and decorated with gold. In that battle, he hurled it towards Vaikartana's chariot. It was violently released by Sahadeva and descended. Karna shattered it with his arrows and made it fall down on the ground. On seeing that the club had been destroyed, Sahadeva swiftly hurled a lance towards Karna. But it was struck down by the arrows. O great king! On seeing that Karna was stationed before him, Sahadeva was filled with rage and descended from his chariot. He picked up the wheel of a chariot and hurled it towards

Adhiratha's son. It descended powerfully, like an upraised wheel of time. The son of a suta shattered it with thousands of arrows. Having rendered the wheel unsuccessful, the great-souled Sahadeva was restrained with arrows and left the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! For a short while, Radheya followed him. O lord of the earth! He laughed and spoke these words to Sahadeva. 'O brave one! In a battle, do not fight with rathas who are superior. O son of Madri! Fight with those who are your equals. Do not entertain any doubt about my words.' He then touched him with the tip of his bow and again spoke these words. 'In the battle there, Arjuna is endeavouring to fight with the Kurus. O son of Madri! Go there. Or if you wish, go home.' Having spoken those words, Karna, supreme among rathas, laughed. On his chariot, he proceeded towards the Panchala and Pandu soldiers. O king! The maharatha was devoted to the truth and remembered the words that he had given to Kunti.[162] Though the destroyer of enemies could have killed Madri's son in the battle, he did not slay him. O king! Sahadeva was miserable and afflicted by the arrows. Tormented by the stakes of Karna's words, he no longer wished to remain alive. In that battle, he swiftly ascended the chariot of the great-souled Janamejaya from Panchala.

'"Virata advanced against Drona, powerfully and swiftly. But the king of Madra shrouded the archer with a torrent of arrows. In the battle, both of them were firm archers and a duel commenced between them. O king! It was like that between Jambha[163] and Vasava in ancient times. O great king! Virata was the leader of an army and the king of Madra quickly struck him with a hundred sharp arrows with straight tufts. The king[164] pierced him back with nine sharp arrows. He then struck him again with seventy-three arrows and yet again with one hundred. The king of Madra slew the four horses that were yoked to his chariot. In that encounter, he brought down his charioteer and his standard from his chariot. With his horses slain, the maharatha swiftly descended from his chariot. He stretched his bow and released sharp arrows. While the entire world looked on, Shatanika[165] saw that his brother's mounts had been slain and swiftly approached him on his chariot. In that great battle, the king of Madra saw that Shatanika was approaching. He pierced him with many arrows and conveyed him to Yama's eternal abode. When the brave one had been killed, Virata swiftly ascended his supreme chariot. That chariot was decorated with standards and garlands. His eyes were dilated with rage and his valour was doubled. He quickly enveloped the king of Madra's chariot with arrows. The king of Madra became angry. He used a hundred arrows with straight tufts to firmly strike Virata, the leader of an army, in the chest. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus severely struck, Virata sank down on the floor of his chariot. He was gravely struck and lost his senses. He was wounded by the arrows and his charioteer bore him away from the field of battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the night, that great army fled. Shalya, the adornment of a battle, slaughtered them with hundreds of arrows.

'"O Indra among kings! On seeing that the soldiers were running away, Vasudeva and Dhananjaya quickly arrived at the spot where Shalya was stationed. O king! Alambusa, Indra among rakshasas, advanced against them. He was on a supreme chariot that possessed eight wheels. Pishachas, terrible in visage, were yoked to it and had the faces of horses. The flags were red and yellow and it was decorated with red garlands. It was made out of black iron and was covered with fierce and large bear skins. A fierce king of vultures was perched on the standard. Its wings were spotted and it dilated its eyes as it shrieked. It had an elongated beak. O king! That rakshasa was as beautiful as an unbroken mass of collyrium. He advanced against Arjuna, like a hurricane against a king of mountains. O king! He showered down hundreds of storms of arrows towards Arjuna's head. In that battle, there was an extremely fierce encounter between the man and the rakshasa. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On witnessing it, everyone was filled with delight. Arjuna struck him with one hundred arrows. He severed his standard and his umbrella with nine sharp arrows. He pierced his charioteer with three arrows and his trivenu with another three. He severed his bow with one arrow and killed his four horses with four arrows. Deprived of his chariot, he[166] raised a sword, but that was shattered into two pieces with arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Partha then struck the Indra among rakshasas with four sharp arrows and he fled in fear. Having defeated him, Arjuna quickly advanced in Drona's direction. O king! He showered large numbers of arrows as he proceeded, towards men, elephants and horses. O great king! They were slaughtered by the illustrious Pandava. The soldiers were brought down, like trees uprooted by a storm. They were thus shattered by the great-souled Phalguna. O lord of the earth! The entire army of your sons was routed and fled."'

CHAPTER 1120(143)

'Sanjaya said, "Shatanika[167] quickly consumed your soldiers with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your son, Chitrasena, countered him. Nakula's son severely struck Chitrasena with an iron arrow and he pierced him back with ten sharp arrows. O great king! In that battle, Chitrasena again struck Shatanika between the breasts with nine sharp arrows. Nakula's son used straight-tufted arrows to sever his[168] armour from his body and it was wonderful. O king! O Indra among kings! Divested of his armour, your son looked extremely beautiful, like a snake that has cast off its skin at the right season. O great king! Nakula's son then made efforts and severed his standard and his bow with sharp arrows. In that encounter, the maharatha's bow was severed and he was deprived of his armour. O great king! He picked up another bow that was capable of shattering the enemy. Chitrasena swiftly struck Nakula's son with nine arrows. In that encounter, the maharatha among the Bharata lineage angrily struck him. O venerable one! Shatanika, supreme among men, was extremely angry and killed Chitrasena's four horses and his charioteer. Maharatha Chitrasena jumped down from his supreme chariot. The powerful one struck Nakula's son with twenty-five arrows. In that battle, Nakula's son performed a deed. With an arrow in the shape of a half-moon, he severed his bow, which was adorned with gems. His[169] bow was severed. He was without a chariot. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. He swiftly climbed onto the chariot of the great-souled Hardikya.

'"Maharatha Drupada, with his army, was advancing towards Drona. Vrishasena swiftly showered hundreds of arrows on him. O unblemished one! In that encounter, Yajnasena[170] pierced Karna's maharatha son, in the arms and in the chest, with sixty arrows. Yajnasena was stationed on his chariot. Vrishasena angrily struck him, between the breasts, with many sharp arrows. O great king! In that battle, their limbs were wounded with arrows. The arrows were like thorns. They were as beautiful as porcupines with erect quills. Those arrows were gold-tufted and sharp at the tip. Their armour was shattered by those arrows. In that great battle, they were covered with blood and looked extremely beautiful. They were as radiant and colourful as beautiful *kalpavrikshas*.[171] In the forefront of the battle, they were as dazzling as flowering kimshukas. O king! Vrishasena struck Drupada with nine arrows and again pierced him with seventy arrows. He again pierced him with three other arrows. O great king! Karna's son shot thousands of arrows and was as resplendent as a cloud that was showering down. The armour of Drupada's soldiers was shattered with arrows. O king! In the battle which took place in the night, they[172] assumed a fierce form and drove them away. The lamps that had been lit were abandoned everywhere. O king! The earth was as beautiful as a cloudless sky, adorned with planets. The earth was beautiful because of the armlets that had fallen down. O great king! It was like clouds during the monsoon, tinged with lightning. The Somakas were frightened and were driven away by Karna's son. It was like the danavas, terrified of Indra at the time of the tarakamaya battle. The Somakas were afflicted and driven away in that battle. O great king! They were illuminated in that battle and looked beautiful. Having defeated them in the encounter, Karna's son was resplendent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was like the sun when it has attained midday. Among the thousands of kings on your side and those of the enemy, there was a single one who blazed there and it was the powerful Vrishasena. He defeated the brave maharatha Somakas in that encounter. He then swiftly proceeded to the spot where King Yudhishthira was.

'"Prativindhya angrily consumed enemies in that battle. Your maharatha son, Duhshasana, advanced against him. O king! The clash between them was wonderful in form. It was like a conjunction between Budha and Bhargava in a cloudless sky.[173] Prativindhya was the performer of extremely difficult deeds and in that encounter, Duhshasana pierced him in the forehead with three arrows. Thus pierced by your powerful archer son, the mighty-armed one looked beautiful, like a mountain with peaks. In that encounter, maharatha Prativindhya pierced Duhshasana with nine arrows and pierced him again with seven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your son then performed an extremely difficult deed. With fierce arrows, he brought down Prativindhya's horses. He used a broad-headed arrow to bring down his charioteer and also his standard. O king! The archer shattered the chariot into one hundred fragments. The lord angrily used straight-tufted arrows to shatter into tiny fragments the flag, the quiver, the harness and the yoke. Deprived of his chariot, the great-souled one[174] stood with the bow in his hand and fought with your son, showering many hundreds of arrows. He[175] showed the dexterity of his hands and severed the bow with a kshurapra arrow. Once the bow had been severed, he struck him[176] with ten broad-headed arrows. On seeing that he was without a chariot there, his maharatha brothers[177] impetuously arrived with a large army. O great king! He ascended Sutasoma's[178] radiant chariot and taking up a bow, pierced your son. Then, all those on your side surrounded your son. In that battle, they advanced forcefully, with a large army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A battle commenced between those on your side and the others at that terrible time of the night and it extended Yama's kingdom."'

CHAPTER 1121(144)

‘Sanjaya said, “In that battle, Nakula was impetuously slaughtering your soldiers. Enraged, Soubala advanced against him, asking him to wait. Those two brave ones were firm in their enmity and wished to kill each other. They drew their bows completely back and struck each other with arrows. O king! Just as Soubala swiftly released showers of arrows, Nakula also exhibited his skills in fighting. O great king! In that battle, those two brave ones were covered with the thorns of arrows and were as beautiful as *shalmali* trees with thorns. O king! They dilated their eyes and glanced obliquely at each other. Their eyes were red with rage and they consumed each other with their sight. Your brother-in-law was extremely angry and laughing at Madri’s son, pierced him in the heart with a sharp and barbed arrow. Having been severely wounded by your archer brother-in-law, Nakula sank down on the floor of his chariot and lost his senses. O king! Beholding that his ultimate and insolent enemy, firm in his enmity, was in that state, Shakuni roared like a cloud at the end of summer. Having regained his senses, Nakula, Pandu’s son, rushed against Soubala again, like Death with a gaping mouth. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Enraged, he pierced Shakuni with sixty arrows. He again struck him between the breasts with one hundred iron arrows. He then severed the bow in his[179] hand, with an arrow still affixed to it. He swiftly severed his standard and brought it down from the chariot onto the ground. O great king! O unblemished one! Having been severely wounded, your brother-in-law sank down on the floor of his chariot and in the forefront of that army, on seeing that he had fallen down and had lost his senses, his charioteer quickly bore him away on his chariot. The Parthas and their followers roared loudly. Having vanquished the enemy in the encounter, Nakula, the scorcher of enemies, angrily told his charioteer, ‘Take me to Drona’s battle formation.’ O king! On hearing the words of Madri’s intelligent son, in the battle, his charioteer took him to the spot where Drona was fighting.

‘“O lord of the earth! In that encounter, Shikandi wished to get at Drona. With great speed, Sharadvata Kripa sought to check him. Goutama swiftly advanced in Drona’s vicinity. Shikhandi, the scorcher of enemies, seemed to be laughing, and pierced him with nine broad-headed arrows. O great king! The preceptor[180] wished to do that which would ensure the welfare of your sons. He struck him[181] with five swift arrows and again pierced him with twenty. O lord of the earth! The great battle that took place between them was terrible in form, like the encounter between Shambara and the king of the immortals in the battle between the gods and the asuras.[182] The two maharathas covered the sky with nets of arrows. O foremost among the Bharatas! The night was naturally fierce in form and was rendered even more terrible by those two warriors, who were skilled in fighting. It was terrible in form and engendered fear. It was like a night of destruction.[183] O great king! With an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, Shikandi sliced down Goutama's giant bow and shot many arrows at him. O king! Kripa became angry at this and hurled a fierce javelin. The shaft was golden and it was sharp at the tip, having been polished by artisans. As it descended, Shikhandi struck it down with many arrows. It flamed as it fell down on the ground, dazzling and immensely radiant. O great king! Goutama, supreme among rathas, picked up another bow and shrouded Shikhandi with sharp arrows. Shikhandi, supreme among rathas, was enveloped in that encounter by the illustrious Goutama and losing his senses, sank down on the floor of his chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Beholding that he had become unconscious in the battle, Sharadvata Kripa wished to kill him and struck him with many arrows. Seeing that Yajnasena's maharatha son could no longer fight in the encounter, the Panchalas and the Somakas surrounded him from all sides. Similarly, your sons also surrounded that best of brahmanas[184] with a large army and the battle resumed again.

'"O king! In that encounter, rathas rushed against others. There was a tremendous sound, like that of clouds thundering. O lord of the earth! Horse riders and elephants were driven away. O king! They attacked each other and the field of battle became cruel. O great king! As the foot soldiers rushed, the earth trembled with their footsteps, like a lady trembling with fear. Rathas attacked even more powerfully, astride their chariots. O king! They were like crows, grabbing many locusts[185] in the air. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were elephants with shattered temples, rushing against other giant elephants with shattered temples and trampling them with their feet. Horse riders clashed against horse riders and infantry against infantry. In that encounter, they angrily rushed against each other. The soldiers advanced, retreated and returned again to the encounter. In the process, in the night, they raised an extremely loud uproar. There were blazing lamps on the chariots, elephants and horses. O great king! They seemed to be like giant meteors that had been dislodged from the sky. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! O king! The field of battle was illuminated by those lamps and it seemed to be like day. It was like a spreading sun that destroys the darkness in the world. In that fashion, that terrible darkness was dispelled by the light of those blazing lamps. All the weapons, the armour and the gems of the great-souled ones were overshadowed by the light from those blazing lamps. At the commencement of the night, there was a melee in the battle. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, the son killed the father and the father killed the son. The friend killed the friend, the relative killed the relative and the maternal uncle killed his sister's son. They were confused. In that battle, they killed those on their own side, as well as on that of the enemy. They fought fearlessly during that terrible night and this engendered fear."'

CHAPTER 1122(145)

'Sanjaya said, "That tumultuous battle raged on, giving rise to great fear. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna advanced against Drona. He repeatedly tugged on the string of his supreme bow. He advanced towards Drona's chariot, which was decorated with gold. O great king! As Dhrishtadyumna advanced, wishing to get at Drona, the Panchalas and the Pandavas surrounded him. On seeing that Drona, supreme among preceptors, had been surrounded, your son made efforts to protect Drona in that battle. During that night, the two clashing armies looked like oceans. They were like fierce oceans that had been stirred and agitated by a storm, with all the beings in them disturbed.”

‘“O great king! Panchala[186] quickly pierced Drona in the chest with five arrows and roared like a lion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, Drona pierced him with twenty-five arrows and with another broad-headed arrow, severed his immensely radiant bow. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus pierced by Drona, Dhrishtadyumna swiftly abandoned that bow and bit his lower lip in rage. O great king! Having become wrathful, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna picked up another excellent bow, wishing to bring about Drona’s destruction. The destroyer of enemy heroes drew the colourful bow back up to his ear. He released a fierce arrow that was capable of taking Drona’s life. In the great battle, the powerful one released that terrible arrow. It illuminated all the soldiers, as if the sun had arisen. O king! On seeing that terrible arrow, the gods, the gandharvas and men spoke these words. ‘May Drona be safe in this encounter.’ O king! But before that arrow could reach the preceptor’s chariot, Karna displayed the lightness of his hands and shattered it into twelve fragments. O king! O venerable one! It was thus shattered into many fragments by the son of a suta. Quickly rendered unsuccessful by Karna’s arrows, that arrow fell down. Having severed the arrow in the battle with his straight-tufted arrows, in that encounter, Karna pierced Dhrishtadyumna with ten arrows. Drona’s son pierced him with five, Drona himself with seven, Shalya with nine arrows and Duhshasana with three. Duryodhana pierced him with twenty and Shakuni with five. All the maharathas quickly pierced Panchala. For Drona’s sake, he was thus pierced by seven heroes in that battle.[187] O king! But without showing any fear, he pierced each of them back with three arrows. He pierced Drona, Drona’s son, Karna and your son. Thus pierced by that archer, those supreme among rathas again quickly pierced Dhrishtadyumna in that battle, with five arrows each.

‘“O king! Drumasena[188] angrily pierced him with arrows. Asking him to wait, he again swiftly struck him with three other arrows. He pierced him back with three fast and sharp arrows. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. They could rob warriors of their lives. He again used a broad-headed arrow to sever the valiant Drumasena's head, with golden and blazing earrings, from his body. The teeth still bit the lower lips in anger. But in that battle, the head fell down on the ground. It was like a ripe palm fruit, which had been brought down by the force of a strong wind."

'"The brave one again struck those brave ones with extremely sharp arrows. Colourful in fighting, he severed Radheya's bow with a broad-headed arrow. Karna could not tolerate the severing of his bow, like a fierce lion whose tail has been severed. His eyes became red with rage and he sighed. He picked up another bow. He showered down a storm of arrows on the immensely strong Dhrishtadyumna. On seeing that Karna was enraged, those brave ones, the six bulls among men,[189] quickly surrounded Panchala's son, wishing to kill him. On seeing that he was in front of those supreme warriors, all those on your side thought that Dhrishtadyumna was already within the jaws of death. At that time, Dasharha Satyaki showered arrows and advanced to the spot where the valorous Dhrishtadyumna was. Satyaki was a great archer and indomitable in battle. On seeing that he was advancing, Radheya pierced him back with ten swift arrows. O great king! While all those brave ones looked on, Satyaki asked him to wait and not run away, and then pierced him with ten arrows. The encounter between the powerful Satyaki and the great-souled Karna was terrible, like that between Bali and Vasava. With the slapping of his palms, Satyaki, bull among the kshatriyas, frightened all the kshatriyas and pierced the lotus-eyed Karna back. O great king! Making the earth tremble with the roar of his bow, the powerful son of a suta fought against Satyaki. Karna pierced Shini's descendant back with hundreds of arrows—vipatha, *karni*, naracha, *vatsadanta* and *kshurapra*.[190] In that way, Yuyudhana, foremost of rathas among the Vrishni lineage, showered down arrows on Karna. The encounter between him and those on your side was wonderful and seemed to be equal. O great king! Karna's armoured son[191] quickly pierced Satyaki from every direction with sharp arrows. The lord Satyaki used his weapons to counter all their weapons and those of Karna. He angrily pierced Vrishasena between the breasts. O lord of the earth! Pierced by that arrow, the valiant Vrishasena lost his senses. He discarded his bow and fell down on his chariot. Karna thought that maharatha Vrishasena had been slain. He was tormented by sorrow on account of his son and afflicted Satyaki. Maharatha Yuyudhana was oppressed by Karna. But he repeatedly struck Karna back with many arrows and with force. He pierced Karna with ten arrows and Vrishasena with seven. Satvata severed the bows and arm-guards of both. They[192] strung other bows that were capable of terrifying the enemy and pierced Yuyudhana from every direction with sharp arrows. That battle raged on and it was destructive of heroes.

'"O king! Surpassing all sounds, the great roar of Gandiva was heard. O king! On hearing the clatter of the chariot and the roar of Gandiva, the son of a suta spoke these words to Duryodhana. 'The great archer has killed all the Shibis, the foremost of bulls among men and the Pouravas.[193] Gandiva is roaring loudly. The clatter of the chariot can be heard and Vasava's son is roaring. It is evident that Pandava has accomplished deeds that only he himself is capable of. O king! He will shatter this army of the Bharatas in many ways. The soldiers are being routed and no one wishes to remain. It is as if a net of clouds is being dispelled by the wind. Approaching Savyasachi, those on our side are being broken, like a boat on the ocean. Because of the arrows released from Gandiva, the foremost of the warriors are fleeing. O king! As they are being routed in a hundred ways, a large uproar can be heard. O tiger among kings! In this night, it is echoing in the sky. There are the sounds of lamentations and roars like lions'. Musical instruments and many other sounds can be heard in the vicinity of Arjuna's chariot. However, Satyaki, worst of the Satvata lineage, is stationed in our midst. If we can attain this objective of ours,[194] all our enemies will be defeated. This son of the king of Panchala[195] is engaged with Drona. O king! He is surrounded on all sides by warriors who are supreme among men. O great king! If we kill Satyaki and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, there is no doubt about the certainty that victory will be ours. Let us surround these two brave maharathas, as we did Subhadra's son.[196] O great king! Let us endeavour to kill those of the Vrishni and Parshata lineages. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Savyasachi is in front of us, advancing towards Drona's divison. He knows that Satyaki is engaged with many bulls among the Kurus. Let many foremost ones, supreme among rathas, go there, so that Partha does not know that Satyaki has been surrounded by many. Let the brave ones quickly release fierce arrows, so that Madhava can quickly go to the world of the hereafter.' O king! Knowing this to be Karna's view, your son spoke to Soubala in that encounter, like Indra speaking to the illustrious Vishnu. 'Surrounded by tens of thousands of elephants that do not retreat and surrounded by ten thousand chariots, go to where Dhananjaya is. Duhshasana, Durvishaha, Subahu and Dushpradharshana will follow you, surrounded by many foot soldiers. O mighty-armed one! O maternal uncle! O descendant of the Bharata lineage![197] Kill the two Krishnas, Dharmaraja, Nakula, Sahadeva and Bhimasena. My hopes of victory depend on you, like those of the gods on Indra of the gods. O maternal uncle! Slay the Kounteyas, like Pavaka's son[198] against the asuras.' O lord! Having been thus addressed by your son, Soubala went to where the Parthas were, with a large army and with your sons. For the welfare of your sons, he wished to consume the sons of Pandu.

'"When Soubala departed towards the army of the Pandavas, a battle commenced between those on your side and the enemy. With a large army, the son of a suta advanced against Satvata. He advanced rapidly in that battle and showered many arrows. All those on the Pandava side surrounded Satyaki. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! During that night, the great-souled Drona fought a great battle against the brave Dhrishtadyumna and the Panchalas."'

CHAPTER 1123(146)

‘Sanjaya said, “All of them were indomitable in battle and swiftly attacked. They were angry and intolerant and advanced towards Yuyudhana’s chariot. O king! They were on well-constructed chariots that were decorated with gold and jewels. With horses and elephants, they surrounded Satvata. Those maharathas penned him in from all directions. They roared like lions and challenged Satyaki. They showered down many sharp arrows on Satyaki, for whom, truth was his valour. Those spirited and immensely valorous ones desired to kill Madhava. On seeing them swiftly advance, Shini’s mighty-armed descendant, the destroyer of enemy heroes, received them and shot many swift arrows. Satyaki was a brave and great archer and invincible in battle. He severed heads with his fierce arrows that had straight tufts. With his kshurapra arrows, Madhava severed the trunks of elephants, the necks of horses and the arms of many on your side, still holding on to weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whisks and white umbrellas fell down. O lord! The earth was beautiful, like the firmament full of stars. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As they fought in that battle with Yuyudhana, there was a tremendous uproar, like that of dead spirits wailing. The earth became full of that great sound. The night assumed a terrible form, giving rise to great fear. Your army was shattered and afflicted by Yuyudhana’s arrows. In the night, there was a tremendous roar and it made the body hair stand up.

‘“O king! On seeing this, your son, supreme among rathas, repeatedly spoke to his charioteer and urged him. ‘Goad these supreme horses towards that spot.’ The charioteer drove towards Yuyudhana’s chariot. Duryodhana was angry. He was firm in wielding the bow and had conquered exhaustion. He was swift in the use of his hands and was a colourful fighter. He attacked Yuyudhana. Madhava drew his bow all the way back and pierced Duryodhana with twelve arrows that drank up blood. Despite being first afflicted by the arrows of Shini’s descendant, Duryodhana intolerantly pierced him back with ten arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The battle between the Panchalas and all the Bharatas became tumultuous and fierce. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shini’s descendant became angry in that battle. He pierced your maharatha son in the chest with eighty arrows. In that encounter, he used other arrows to convey his mounts to Yama's eternal abode. Using his arrows, he quickly brought down the charioteer from his chariot. O lord of the earth! With his horses slain, your son remained stationed on the chariot. He released many sharp arrows in the direction of the chariot of Shini's descendant. O king! In that encounter, Shini's descendant showed the dexterity of his hands. He sliced down the five hundred arrows that had been released by your son. O venerable one! Violent in that battle, he used a broad-headed arrow to sever your son's giant bow from his hand. Without a chariot and without a bow, the lord and master of all worlds quickly climbed onto Kritavarma's radiant chariot. O lord of the earth! In the middle of the night, when Duryodhana had retreated, Shini's descendant used his arrows to drive away your army.

'"O king! Meanwhile, Shakuni surrounded Arjuna from every direction. There were thousands of chariots and thousands of elephants. There were thousands of horses and these created a tumult. They released large and divine weapons towards Arjuna. Driven by destiny, those kshatriyas fought against Arjuna. Arjuna countered thousands of chariots, elephants and horses and caused a great destruction. In that battle, the brave Shakuni Soubala pierced Arjuna with sharp arrows and seemed to be smiling. He again shot one hundred arrows and checked the maharatha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Arjuna pierced him with twenty arrows. He then pierced each of those great archers with three arrows. O king! In the encounter, Dhananjaya repulsed them with his innumerable arrows. He killed many warriors on your side, like the one with the vajra in his hand against the asuras. O great king! Arms and thousands of bodies were mangled. They were scattered around and the earth looked beautiful, as if strewn with flowers. He severely pierced Shakuni with five arrows with drooping tufts. He then struck both him and Uluka with three large and iron arrows each.[199] Urged by Vasudeva, he pierced Uluka and roared loudly, filling the earth. Resorting to speed, Arjuna severed Shakuni's bow. He killed his four horses and sent them to Yama's abode. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! Soubala descended from his chariot and quickly climbed onto Uluka's chariot. The maharatha father and son were astride the same chariot. They showered arrows on Partha, like two clouds raining down on a mountain. O great king! Pandava then pierced them with his sharp arrows. He drove away your army, striking them with hundreds of arrows. It was like clouds being scattered by the wind in every direction. O king! O lord of the earth! That army was shattered. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Your army was slaughtered in the night. They fled in all the directions, glancing everywhere out of fear. Some abandoned their mounts in the battle. Others urged them.[200] They were terrified and fled in that terrible darkness. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The warriors on your side were defeated in that encounter. Delighted, Vasudeva and Dhananjaya blew on their conch shells.

'"O great king! Dhrishtadyumna pierced Drona with three arrows. With a sharp arrow, he quickly severed the string of his bow. Drona, the brave crusher of kshatriyas, flung that bow down on the ground and picked up another bow what was more powerful and more substantial. Drona pierced Dhrishtadyumna with seven swift arrows. O king! In that encounter, he pierced his charioteer with five arrows. Maharatha Dhrishtadyumna swiftly countered him with his arrows and killed the Kourava soldiers in hundreds and thousands. O venerable one! Your son's army was slaughtered at that time. A terrible river, with waves made out of blood, began to flow between the two armies and men, horses and elephants flowed in it. O king! It was like the river Vaitarani[201] that flows towards the capital of Yama's kingdom. The powerful Dhrishtadyumna drove away your soldiers and was resplendent, like the energetic Shakra amidst the masses of gods. Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi blew on their giant conch shells and so did the twins, Yuyudhana and Pandava Vrikodara. They defeated thousands of rathas and maharathas on your side. O lord of the earth! Hoping for victory, the Pandavas roared like lions, in the sight of your son and those of Karna, who was insolent of his valour, the brave Drona and Drona's son."'

CHAPTER 1124(147)

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of the earth! On seeing that his own army was being slaughtered by those great-souled ones, your son was overcome by great rage. He swiftly went to Karna and Drona, supreme among victorious ones. Overcome by feelings of intolerance, the one who was eloquent with words spoke these words. 'Incited by your anger, the two of you started this battle,[202] on seeing that Saindhava had been killed by Savyasachi in the battle. My army is being slaughtered by the Pandus. Though you are capable of obtaining victory, you are looking on, as if you are incapable. If you are going to abandon me today, you should not have spoken to me in that way earlier. "We will defeat the sons of Pandu in the battle." O those who grant honours! On hearing your words, I allowed this to happen. Otherwise, I would not have provoked an enmity with the Pandavas, so destructive of warriors. O bulls among men! O ones who are great in valour! If I should not be abandoned by the two of you, then fight in accordance with the valour you possess.' Thus goaded by the words of your son, those two brave ones returned again to the battle, like snakes that have been driven with sticks. They were the foremost among rathas. They were the best archers in all the worlds. In that battle, they advanced against the Parthas, with Shini's descendant at the forefront. The Parthas also united, surrounded by their own soldiers and advanced against those two brave ones, who were roaring repeatedly.

'"The great archer Drona, supreme among those who wielded all weapons, angrily and spiritedly pierced the bull among the Shini lineage with ten arrows. Karna pierced him with ten arrows and your son with seven, Vrishasena with ten and Soubala with seven. A mass of Kouravas surrounded Shini's descendant. On seeing that Drona was slaughtering the Pandava army in the battle, the Somakas quickly pierced him from every side and showered arrows on him. O lord of the earth! O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona began to rob the kshatriyas of their lives, like the sun destroys darkness with its rays. O lord of the earth! The Panchalas were slaughtered by Drona and we heard a tremendous uproar as they called out to each other. Some abandoned their sons, others their fathers, others their brothers and maternal uncles, others their sisters' sons, friends and kin, as they quickly ran away, seeking to save their lives. Others were confused and because of delusion, ran towards him.[203] In the battle, other Pandava warriors were sent to the world of the hereafter. Thus the Pandava soldiers were killed by the great-souled ones.[204] O king! They fled in the night, throwing away thousands of blazing torches, while the warriors Bhimasena, Vijaya,[205] Achyuta, the twins, Dharma's son and Parshata looked on. With the world covered in darkness, nothing could be seen. But because of the light that existed among the Kouravas, it could be seen that the enemy was running away. O king! As the soldiers ran away, maharatha Drona and Karna followed them from the rear and showered many arrows.

'"On seeing that the Panchalas were shattered and routed in every way, Janardana was distressed and addressed Phalguna. 'Parshata and Satyaki, together with the Panchalas, advanced against the great archers, Drona and Karna, and are being killed through fierce arrows. Those maharathas have shattered them with their shower of arrows. O Kounteya! The army should be restrained. It is still capable of taking a stand. Let us array all the soldiers in a battle formation and rallying them, let us raise our weapons and advance against Drona and the son of a suta. They are powerful and brave. They are skilled in the use of weapons and desire to obtain victory. They are angrily casting aside our army and destroying it in the night.' O king! On seeing that Vrikodara was advancing, Janardana again spoke to Pandava, as if to cheer him. 'With the fierce Bhima advancing in front, the soldiers are returning again. This Bhima prides himself in battle and is surrounded by the Somakas and the Pandavas. They are angry and are powerfully advancing against the immensely strong Drona and Karna. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! For the sake of assuring all the soldiers, fight against them, together with the maharatha Panchalas.' Those tigers among men, Madhava and Pandava, then approached Drona and Karna and stationed themselves at the forefront of the battle.

'"Yudhishthira's large army returned again and went to the spot where Drona and Karna were crushing the enemy in the battle. In the night, there was a great and tumultuous encounter. O king! It was like that of two rising oceans, when the moon has arisen. Your soldiers threw away the lamps from their hands and fought with the Pandavas, as if they were maddened at the destruction. There was an extremely terrible darkness, with dust. Desiring victory, they fought on the basis of names and family names.[206] The names uttered by the kings were heard. O great king! That hour of the battle was like a svayamvara.[207] There was sudden silence for a while and then a great uproar arose again, from the angry warriors who were victorious and those who were defeated. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Like insects, the brave ones were drawn to the spots where there were lamps. O Indra among kings! As all the Pandavas and the Kouravas fought, the great darkness of the night gathered around them."'

CHAPTER 1125(148)

'Sanjaya said, "Karna, the destroyer of enemy heroes, was delighted at seeing Parshata in the battle. He struck him in the chest with ten arrows that were capable of penetrating the inner organs. O venerable one! Dhrishtadyumna swiftly pierced him back with five arrows, cheerfully asking him to wait. In that encounter, those great maharathas used other arrows to envelop each other and drawing their bows all the way back, pierced each other. In that battle, Karna used his arrows to pierce the charioteer and the four horses of Dhrishtadyumna, foremost among the Panchalas. He severed his supreme bow with sharp arrows and used a broad-headed arrow to bring down his charioteer from the seat on the chariot. Dhrishtadyumna was without a chariot. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. He grasped a terrible club and crushed Karna's horses. He[208] was severely wounded by many arrows that were like venomous serpents. O venerable one! He advanced towards Yudhishthira's army on foot and climbed onto Sahadeva's chariot. The charioteer yoked other horses to Karna's chariot. They possessed the complexion of conch shells and were extremely fast. They were from the Saindhava region and were controlled well.[209] Successful in attaining his objective, Radheya afflicted the maharatha Panchalas with his arrows, like clouds raining down on a mountain. The large army of the Panchalas was afflicted by Karna. They fled in fright, like deer assailed by a lion. Horses and elephants fell down on the ground. Here and there, men were seen to swiftly fall down from their chariots. In the great battle, Karna killed the fleeing warriors with his kshurapra arrows and severed arms and heads, still adorned with earrings. O lord of the earth! O venerable one! The thighs of those who were astride elephants, those who were on the backs of horses and those who were on the ground, were severed. But as they fled in the battle, many maharathas did not feel that their limbs or their mounts were severed by arrows. Slaughtered in the battle, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas thought that even the stirring of a blade of grass was the son of the suta. As they were frightened and fled in the battle, the warriors were deprived of their senses and took those on their own side to be Karna and fled in fright. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the shattered army fled, Karna quickly pursued it from the rear, showering arrows. They glanced at each other, unconscious and bereft of their senses. They were incapable of standing before the great-souled one, who was like Death. O king! The Panchalas were struck by Karna's supreme arrows. Others glanced towards Drona and fled in all the directions.

'"King Yudhishthira saw that his own army was running away. Thinking that retreat was preferable, he spoke these words to Phalguna. 'Behold. The great archer, Karna, is stationed with a bow in his hand. Though it is a dreadful night, he is scorching like the sun. The whizzing sounds of Karna's arrows are being incessantly heard. O Partha! Your relatives seem to be without a protector. He is swiftly affixing and releasing arrows. It is certain that he will destroy us and I see that the valiant one's victory is certain. The time has come. Adopt the course of action that you think to be appropriate next. O Dhananjaya! Do what needs to be done to kill Karna.' Having been thus addressed, the mighty-armed Partha spoke to Krishna. 'The king is frightened of the supreme valour of Radheya, the son of Kunti. Karna's army is repeatedly acting and the time has come. Our army is running away and we must quickly decide on a course of action. O Madhusudana! They are being mangled by Drona's arrows. They are frightened of Karna and are unable to take a stand. Behold. Karna is fearlessly roaming around there. He is showering sharp arrows and driving away the best of rathas. O tiger among the Vrishni lineage! Like a snake that has been stepped on with a foot, I cannot bear to see him wander around thus on the field of battle and remain oblivious. Therefore, swiftly go to the spot where maharatha Karna is. O Madhusudana! I will kill him. Or let him kill me.' Vasudeva replied, 'O Kounteya! I have seen Karna roaming around in the battle, like the king of the gods. He is a tiger among men and superhuman in his valour. O Dhananjaya! O tiger among men! With the exception of you and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, there is no one else who can counter him in battle. O unblemished one! O mighty-armed one! I do not think that the time has come for you to confront the son of a suta in battle. He possesses a blazing spear that he obtained from Vasava. O mighty-armed one! It is terrible in form and he has retained it for you. Let the immensely strong Ghatotkacha advance against Radheya. He has been born from the powerful Bhima and is like the gods in valour. He possesses divine weapons and also those of the rakshasas and asuras. Ghatotkacha has always been devoted to you and has your welfare in mind. It is my view that there is no doubt about his defeating Karna in the battle.' Having thus spoken to Partha, the mighty-armed and lotus-eyed one summoned the rakshasa.

'"O lord of the earth! He arrived before them, with armour, arrows, sword and bow. He paid his respects to Krishna and Pandava Dhananjaya. He cheerfully addressed them, 'Command me.' He was like a cloud. He was radiant and was adorned with blazing earrings.

Dasharha smiled and spoke to Hidimba's son. 'O Ghatotkacha! O child! Listen to what I tell you. The time has come for you, and no one else, to show valour. Be a raft to your relatives, who are submerging. You possess many kinds of weapons and the maya of rakshasas. O Hidimba's son! Behold. The Pandava army is being driven away by Karna in the field of battle, like cattle by a herdsman. It is my view that this great archer, Karna, is firm in his valour. The bull among kshatriyas is slaughtering the Pandava soldiers. The one with the firm bow is releasing a great shower of arrows. Oppressed by the rays of his arrows, no one is capable of standing before him. In this night, the son of a suta is afflicting them with his shower of arrows. The Panchalas are being driven away, like frightened deer before a lion. O one who is terrible in valour! With your exception, there is no one else who can be seen, capable of countering the son of a suta, when he is thus engaged in battle. O mighty-armed one! Perform the deeds that only you are capable of. You possess the energies of your maternal uncle[210] and fathers and have the strength of your weapons. O Hidimba's son! It is for reasons like this that men desire sons, to save them in times of difficulty. Therefore, save your relatives. The strength of your weapons is fierce. Your maya is difficult to withstand. O son of Bhima! You have always fought in a battle. The Pandavas have been routed by Karna's sharp arrows. O scorcher of enemies! They are sinking in the ocean of the sons of Dhritarashtra and cannot reach the shore. During the night, the rakshasas become invested with extreme valour, power and bravery. They roam around valiantly and are invincible. Using maya in the battle, slay the great archer, Karna, during the night. The Parthas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, will kill Drona.' O Kouravya! On hearing the words of Keshava, Bibhatsu, the scorcher of enemies, also spoke to the rakshasa Ghatotkacha. 'O Ghatotkacha! In my view, you, the mighty-armed Satyaki and Pandava Bhimasena are the best among all our soldiers. In the night, go and engage in a duel with Karna. Maharatha Satyaki will protect your rear. Aided by Satvata, slay the brave Karna in the battle, just as Indra, aided by Skanda, struck Taraka in ancient times.’[211] Ghatotkacha replied, ‘I am a match for Karna, the supreme Drona and all the other kshatriyas who are skilled in the use of weapons. In this night, I will present the son of the suta with a battle. People will speak about it as long as this earth lasts. I will not save brave ones, or those who are frightened and join their hands in salutation. I will resort to the dharma of rakshasas and kill everyone.’ Having spoken thus, Hidimba’s mighty-armed son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, violently advanced against Karna, frightening your soldiers.

‘“On seeing that he was angrily descending, like an insect towards a flame, the son of a suta, the supreme archer, received him. At night, a battle commenced between Karna and the rakshasa. O tiger among kings! They roared at each other, like Shakra and Prahlada.”’

CHAPTER 1126(149)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Ghatotkacha spiritedly advanced towards the chariot of the son of a suta, desiring to kill Karna in the battle. On seeing this, your son[212] spoke these words to Duhshasana. ‘On witnessing Karna’s valour in the battle, this rakshasa is swiftly advancing. Advance quickly and prevent this maharatha from reaching Karna. Surround yourself with a large army and go to the spot where the immensely strong Karna is stationed. Vaikartana is fighting with the rakshasa in this battle. O one who grants honours! Surrounded by the soldiers, make an effort to protect Karna in the battle.’ O king! At this time, Jatasura’s powerful son approached Duryodhana. He was supreme among strikers and spoke. ‘O Duryodhana! Your enemies are famous and invincible in battle. But with your permission, I wish to kill the Pandavas and their followers. In earlier times, my father, Jatasura, was the foremost among rakshasas. Performing a deed that could kill rakshasas, the inferior Parthas brought him down.[213] O lord! I wish to satisfy the one who has departed[214] and you should grant me permission.’ Having been thus addressed, the king was delighted and repeatedly said, ‘Aided by Drona, Karna and the others, I am capable of slaying the enemy. But with my permission, go. Slay Ghatotkacha in the battle.’ Having been thus addressed, the one with a gigantic form challenged Ghatotkacha.

‘“Jatasura’s son countered Bhimasena’s son with diverse kinds of weapons. However, Hidimba’s son crushed Alambala,[215] Karna and the unassailable Kuru soldiers, like a giant wind driving away clouds. On seeing that the ratha Ghatotkacha was using maya, Alambala quickly shot many different kinds of arrows at him. Alambala pierced Bhimasena’s son with many arrows. He drove away the Pandava soldiers with his storm of arrows. O venerable one! The Pandava soldiers were thus driven away in the night, like clouds dispelled by the wind. O king! Similarly, the Kuru soldiers were mangled by Ghatotkacha’s arrows and fled in the night, throwing away thousands of flaming torches. Alambala became angry in that great battle. He struck Bhimasena’s son with many arrows, like a giant elephant being goaded. Ghatotkacha shattered into tiny fragments his[216] chariot, his charioteer and all the fierce weapons, capable of destroying life, that were hurled at him. Like clouds raining down on Mount Meru, he showered down thousands of storms of arrows on Karna, the other Kurus and Alambala. Afflicted by the rakshasa, the Kuru soldiers were agitated. The four kinds of forces[217] began to crush each other down repeatedly. O great king! Jatasura’s son was without a chariot. His charioteer was slain. In that battle, he angrily struck Ghatotkacha with a firm blow of the fist. Having been struck by the fist, Ghatotkacha wavered, like a mountain, with its large number of trees and creepers, as if during an earthquake. He then raised his arms, which were like clubs and capable of slaying the enemy. Bhimasena’s son severely struck Jatasura’s son with his fist. Hidimba’s son angrily crushed him and swiftly hurled him down. He seized him with arms that were like Indra’s standard and forced him down on the ground. Alambala also seized the rakshasa Ghatotkacha in the encounter and wrathfully seizing him, forced him down on the ground. There was a duel between those gigantic ones, Ghatotkacha and Alambala. As they roared, it was tumultuous and made the body hair stand up. In particular, they were well versed in maya and resorted to maya to overpower each other. Those immensely valiant ones fought, like Indra and Virochana’s son.[218] They became fire and the ocean[219] and Garuda and Takshaka.[220] They again became a cloud and a giant wind, or thunder and a giant mountain. They then became an elephant and a tiger and again became Svarbhanu[221] and the sun. In this way, wishing to kill each each other, they created a hundred different kinds of maya. Alambala and Ghatotkacha fought wonderfully well. They struck each other with clubs, maces, lances, bludgeons, battleaxes, mallets and the summits of mountains. The foremost among rakshasa warriors resorted to great powers of maya and fought as horses, elephants, infantry and chariots. O king! Wishing to kill Alambala, Ghatotkacha descended violently, like a hawk. The Indra among rakshasas seized Alambala, whose form was gigantic. He raised him and pressed him down in the battle, like Vishnu against Maya.[222] Ghatotkacha grasped a sword that was extraordinary to look at. He severed the terrible head from the body and it was dreadful to see.

‘“The rakshasa grasped the head by the hair, with the blood dripping from it. Ghatotkacha then swiftly advanced towards Duryodhana’s chariot. The mighty-armed rakshasa approached and smiling, flung the head, with a distorted face and dreadful hair, onto the chariot. He then roared loudly, like a cloud during the monsoon. O king! He spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘Witness the valour of your friend. He has been killed. You will now witness Karna’s destruction and that of your own self.’ O lord of men! Having said this, he departed in Karna’s direction. He shot hundreds of sharp arrows towards Karna’s head. O great king! A duel commenced between the man and the rakshasa in that battle and it was terrible in form. It gave rise to great fear and was wonderful.”’

CHAPTER 1127(150)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “Vaikartana Karna and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha clashed against each other in the night. Tell me about that wonderful event. What kind of terrible fight did the rakshasa resort to? What kind of chariot did he create with his maya and what were his weapons?

What were the sizes of his horses, chariot, standard and bow? What was his armour like and the guard around his neck? O Sanjaya! You are skilled in narrating. I am asking you. Tell me all this.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “His eyes were red. His form was gigantic. He had the complexion of copper. His stomach hung low. His body hair stood up. His hair was green. His eyes were like cones. His jaw was large. His gaping jaw was wide, extending from one ear to another. His teeth were pointed and looked deadly. His tongue and lips were extremely long, with the hue of copper. His eyebrows were long. His nose was thick. His body was blue. His neck was red. He was as tall as a mountain and was a terrible sight. His form was gigantic. He was mighty-armed, with a large head, and immensely strong. His body was harsh to the touch. The hair was tied into a fierce bun on his head. His hips were broad. His navel was deep. But though he was gigantic, his waist was thin. The ornaments on his arms were also appropriate. He wore armlets and possessed great powers of maya. He wore a breastplate that was like a garland of fire on a mountain. A dazzling crown adorned his head. It was as large as a gate. It was golden and colourful and it had many beautiful segments. His earrings were like the rising sun. His golden garland sparkled. His gigantic body was bedecked in extremely radiant armour made of brass. The giant chariot, which was as large as a *nalva*,[223] roared with a hundred bells. It was covered with bear skins. The standard and flags were red. It possessed a standard and garlands and was stocked with all the supreme weapons. It possessed eight wheels and rumbled deeply, like a cloud. It was borne by powerful horses. They were fierce, with red eyes, and looked like elephants. They were swift and adopted whatever complexion one wished. The rakshasa Virupaksha was the charioteer and he was resplendent, with earrings. The reins were like the rays of the sun and he grasped these and controlled the horses in battle. He arrived with him, like the sun god with Varuna. A giant standard was raised aloft the chariot. It looked like a giant mountain, encircled by giant clouds. It seemed to stretch up into the sky. An extremely fierce and carnivorous vulture was perched on it and its head was red. The chariot roared like Vasava’s vajra. The bejewelled bow could slay the enemy and was twelve kishkus long.[224] The bowstring was firm when stretched. The arrows were as long as a chariot's axle and he enveloped all the directions with these. In the night that was destructive of brave ones, he advanced towards Karna. He was stationed on that chariot and stretched his bow. The roar of the bow, when stretched, was heard to be like the sound of thunder. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This terrified your soldiers. All of them trembled, like giant waves on the ocean.

'"On seeing the fierce one with the malformed eyes advance, Radheya seemed to smile and quickly countered him. Karna approached the smiling one[225] and struck him from a close distance. He was like an elephant against another elephant, like the bull who leads a herd against another bull. O lord of the earth! O king! There was a tumultuous clash between Karna and the rakshasa, like that between Indra and Shambara. They grasped immensely powerful bows that made a fierce noise. They enveloped and struck each other with giant arrows. They drew their bows all the way back and released straight-tufted arrows. They countered each other and pierced the brass armour. They were like tigers fighting with their claws, or giant elephants with their tusks. They flung spears[226] at each other and wounded each other with their arrows. They mangled each other's limbs and struck each other with arrows. They scorched each other with storms of arrows and it was impossible to look at either of them. They were wounded all over their limbs and they were covered with streams of blood. They looked beautiful, like mountains covered with red ore, with streams flowing down them. Their limbs were pierced with the tips of arrows and they mangled each other. But though those immensely radiant ones struggled, neither could make the other tremble. O king! For a long time, that duel in the night seemed to be equal. Karna and the rakshasa gambled in that battle, with their lives as stakes. They affixed sharp arrows and shot them. They terrified those on their own side, and on the side of the enemy, with the roars of their bows. O king! Karna could not get the better of Ghatotkacha.

'"The supreme among those who have knowledge of weapons then invoked a divine weapon. On seeing that Karna had invoked a divine weapon, the rakshasa Ghatotkacha, the descendant of the Pandu lineage, created a great maya. He was surrounded by a large army of rakshasas, fierce in visage. They wielded spears and clubs and held mountains and trees in their hands. On seeing that he[227] had raised his great bow, all the kings were distressed. He advanced like the destroyer of all beings, like Yama wielding a staff. Ghatotkacha emitted terrible roars like a lion. The elephants passed urine and the men were severely distressed. A large and fierce shower of stones rained down in every direction. It was midnight and the powerful rakshasas released these with their enhanced strength. Iron chakras, catapults, lances, javelins, spears, shataghnis and battleaxes rained down incessantly. The kings saw that the battle had become extremely fierce and terrible. Your sons and the warriors were distressed and fled. There was only a single proud one who was not distressed. This was Karna, who prided himself on the strength of his weapons. Using his arrows, he destroyed the maya that had been created by Ghatotkacha. When that maya was dispelled, Ghatokacha became intolerant. He released a terrible shower of deadly arrows towards the son of the suta. In the great battle, these arrows penetrated Karna and covered with blood, entered the ground, like angry snakes. The powerful son of the suta was enraged and using the dexterity of his hands, surpassed Ghatotkacha and pierced him with ten arrows. Ghatotkacha was pierced in his inner organs by the son of the suta. Severely wounded, he picked up a divine chakra with one thousand spokes. The edges were as sharp as a razor and it was decorated with gems and jewels. Its complexion was like that of the rising sun. Wishing to kill him, Bhimasena's son angrily hurled this towards Adhiratha's son. It was hurled with great force. However, Karna struck it with his arrows and rendered it unsuccessful, like the wishes of an unfortunate person. It fell down on the ground. On seeing that the chakra had been brought down, Ghatotkacha became extremely angry. He shrouded Karna with arrows, like Svarbhanu eclipsing the sun. The son of the suta possessed the valour of Indra and Upendra[228] and was not frightened. He swiftly enveloped Ghatotkacha's chariot with arrows. Enraged, Ghatotkacha grasped a club decorated with gold and hurled it. While it was still traversing, Karna shattered it with his arrows and made it fall down.

'"Bhimasena's son, gigantic in form, rose up into the sky. He roared like a dark cloud. He brought down a shower of trees from the sky, using his powers of maya. Karna pierced him with his arrows, like the rays of the sun passing through a mass of clouds. Karna killed all his horses and shattered his chariot into a hundred fragments. He showered down arrows, like a cloud pouring down rain. There wasn't a stretch of two fingers on his[229] body that was not pierced. In a short while, he seemed to be like a porcupine with its quills erect. In that encounter, he was enveloped with a storm of arrows and we could not see his horses, his chariot, his standard, or even Ghatotkacha. He then used his own weapons to destroy Karna's divine weapon. The one who knew about maya resorted to fighting with maya in the battle with the son of the suta. Showing his dexterity, he used maya to fight with Karna. Invisible in the sky, he brought down a net of arrows. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Bhimasena's son was great in the use of maya and resorted to maya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Using his great maya, he caused confusion. Using maya, he assumed many inauspicious faces with distorted mouths and these devoured the divine weapons of the son of the suta. In that battle, the one with the gigantic form again seemed to be shattered into a hundred fragments. He was seen to lie down, deprived of his life and deprived of his endeavour. On thinking that he had been slain, the bulls among the Kurus roared in delight. However, he was then seen in all the directions, assuming new bodies. He again assumed a giant form, with one hundred heads and one hundred stomachs. The mighty-armed one looked like Mount Mainaka. However, the rakshasa again assumed a form that was as small as a finger. He rose up, like the waves of the ocean. He executed diagonal motions. He seemed to shatter the earth and immerse himself in the waters. He became invisible and was then seen in a different place. He descended from his chariot, decorated in gold, and again ascended it. Covered in maya, the armoured one was seen on earth, in the sky and in all the directions.

'"O lord of the earth! He fearlessly approached Karna's chariot, earrings adorning his face and waving around, and spoke these words to the son of the suta. 'O son of a suta! Wait. With your life, you will not be able to go away from me. On this field of battle today, I will destroy all the affection that you have for fighting.' Having spoken these words, the rakshasa, whose eyes were coppery red with anger and whose valour was cruel, rose up into the sky and laughed loudly. He struck Karna, like a lion striking a king of elephants. He showered down arrows on Karna, bull among rathas, like a cloud pouring down rain. These arrows were as long as a chariot's axle, and Ghatotkacha showered them down. But Karna destroyed this from a distance. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that his maya had been destroyed by Karna, Ghatotkacha used his maya and disappeared again. He became a lofty mountain with many peaks full of trees. From that, a large stream of lances, spears, swords and clubs issued forth like water. On seeing that mountain, which was like a mass of collyrium and from which many kinds of fierce weapons showered down, Karna was not agitated. He seemed to smile as he invoked a divine weapon. Because of that weapon, that large mountain was flung away and destroyed. He[230] became a blue cloud in the sky, with Indra's weapon[231] in it. He showered down fierce stones on the son of a suta. However, Karna Vaikartana Vrisha,[232] supreme among those who have knowledge of all weapons, affixed a vayavya weapon and destroyed that dark cloud. Using a large number of arrows, Karna scattered it in all the directions. O great king! He destroyed the weapon that had been used by Ghatotkacha. In that battle, Bhimasena's immensely strong son laughed. He used his great maya against maharatha Karna. Ghatotkacha, supreme among rathas, again advanced towards him on a chariot. He was not frightened and was surrounded by many rakshasas. They were like lions and tigers and like crazy elephants in their valour. Some were astride elephants, others were astride chariots. And there were others who were on the backs of horses. They wielded many kinds of terrible weapons. They were adorned with diverse armour and ornaments. Those cruel ones surrounded Ghatotkacha, like the Maruts around Vasava.

'"On seeing this, Karna, the great archer, began to fight with the rakshasa. Ghatotkacha pierced Karna with five swift arrows. He roared loudly and terrified all the kings. Ghatotkacha again used an anjalika arrow and quickly severed the bow in Karna's hand, with many large arrows still affixed to it. Karna picked up another firm and large bow, capable of bearing a burden. It was as large as Indra's weapon[233] and he drew it back powerfully. O great king! Karna shot gold-tufted arrows that were capable of killing the enemy towards the rakshasas who were in the sky. The rakshasas were broad in the chest and those arrows shattered their herd. It was as if a herd of wild elephants were being oppressed by a lion. The rakshasas were destroyed by those arrows of the lord, together with their horses, charioteers and elephants. The illustrious one consumed them, like the fire consumes all beings at the time of the destruction of a yuga. Having killed the rakshasa soldiers, the son of a suta was resplendent. It was like the city of Tripura, being burnt in earlier times in the sky, by the god Maheshvara.

'"O venerable one! O king! Among the thousands of kings on the side of the Pandaveyas, there was not a single one who was capable of glancing at him. O king! The sole exception was the immensely strong Ghatotkacha, Indra among the rakshasas. He possessed terrible valour and strength. Enraged, he looked like Vaivasvata.[234] Fire was generated from his angry eyes. O king! They were like flaming drops of oil in giant torches. He struck one palm with another palm. He gnashed his lower lips. He ascended his chariot, generated again through maya. It was yoked to mounts that were actually asses. But they looked like elephants and had the faces of pishachas. He angrily instructed his charioteer, 'Take me to the son of a suta.' The supreme of rathas advanced on a chariot that was terrible in form. O lord of the earth! There was again a duel with the son of a suta. The rakshasa was again enraged. He hurled a vajra towards the son of a suta. That vajra was extremely terrible and possessed eight wheels. It had been constructed by Rudra. As it descended, Karna placed his bow on his chariot and seized it. He hurled it back. But he[235] descended from his chariot. That immensely radiant weapon reduced his[236] chariot to ashes, with his horses, charioteer and standard. It then shattered the earth and entered, astounding the gods who were there. Karna had descended and had seized the great vajra, which had been created by a god. All the beings and gods applauded this. Having performed this deed in the battle, Karna again ascended his chariot. The son of a suta, the scorcher of enemies, released iron arrows. O granter of honours! I do not think that there is anyone among all the beings who can perform the terrible deed accomplished by Karna in the battle there. He[237] was struck by those iron arrows, which were like rain pouring down on a mountain. He possessed the form of a city of the gandharvas and disappeared again. He was a scorcher of enemies and was great in the use of maya. Using his maya and his dexterity, he destroyed all those divine weapons. The weapons were destroyed by the maya of the rakshasa. However, without any fear, Karna continued to fight with the rakshasa.

'"O great king! Bhimasena's immensely strong son became angry. He divided himself into many different forms and frightened the kings. Lions, tigers and hyenas arrived on the field of battle. There were snakes with fire in their tongues. There were birds with iron beaks. He[238] was himself struck with the sharp arrows released by Karna. As large as a king of mountains, he disappeared from the spot. The rakshasas, pishachas, yatudhanas, leopards and wolves advanced from all the directions, wishing to devour Karna. They uttered fierce howls, so as to terrify him. They wielded many terrible weapons. Karna pierced each of them with swift arrows that drank up their blood. He used a divine weapon to destroy the maya of the rakshasa. He killed his horses with straight-tufted arrows. While the rakshasa looked on, they were shattered and their limbs were mangled. Their backs were broken by the arrows and they fell down on the ground. When the maya was destroyed, Hidimba's son told Karna Vaikartana, 'I will bring about your death soon.' Having said this, he disappeared."'

CHAPTER 1128(151)

'Sanjaya said, "When that battle between Karna and the rakshasa was going on, the valiant Alayudha, Indra among the rakshasas, advanced. With a large army, he approached Suyodhana. He was surrounded by thousands of rakshasas with distorted forms. They had many different forms. The brave one remembered his earlier enmity. Baka, his valiant relative who ate brahmanas, had been killed. So had the immensely energetic Kirmira, and his friend, Hidimba. He had waited for a long time, remembering this earlier enmity. Knowing that a fight was raging in the night, he wished to kill Bhima.[239] He was as crazy as an elephant and as angry as a serpent. Desiring to fight, he spoke these words to Duryodhana. 'O great king! Know that the rakshasas Hidimba, Baka and Kirmira were killed by Bhima. They were my relatives. He touched the maiden Hidimba in earlier times, disregarding us and all the other rakshasas. O king! I am here to kill him and his followers, with the horses, chariots and elephants. I have arrived so that I can myself kill Hidimba's son and all his advisers. I will kill all the sons of Kunti, with Vasudeva at the forefront, and devour them, with all their followers. Restrain all your soldiers. We will fight with the Pandavas.' On hearing his words, Duryodhana was delighted. Surrounded by his brothers, he showed him honours and spoke these words. 'We will fight with the enemy, with you and your followers at the forefront. With the enmity in their minds, my soldiers cannot remain neutral.' The bull among the rakshasas told the king that this was acceptable.

'"With those eaters of human flesh, he advanced against Bhima. His body blazed and he was on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun. O Indra among kings! It was like that of Ghatotkacha.[240] It possessed a roar that was its equal and it was decorated with many gates. That giant chariot was as broad as a nalva and it was covered with bear skins. The horses were as swift as his.[241] They had the forms of elephants and the voices of asses. Their sizes were gigantic and one hundred of them were yoked. They fed on flesh and blood. The roar of the chariot was like his[242] and it was like the rumbling of a giant cloud. The giant bow was like his. It was firm and more powerful. The arrows were like his, as long as axles. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. The mighty-armed one was just as brave as Ghatotkacha. The blazing standard was like his, like the fire and the sun, and was protected by jackals and wild crows. In form, he was more handsome than Ghatotkacha and his anxious face was brilliant. His armlets blazed. His crown and garlands also blazed. He had a headdress and had girded his sword. He had clubs, catapults, maces, ploughs and bows and arrows. His skin was like that of an elephant. The chariot was as radiant as the fire, as he drove away the army of the Pandavas. He was resplendent in that battle and whirled around, like a cloud tinged with lightning in the sky. There were the foremost of kings, brave warriors among the Pandavas. They were immensely strong and possessed armour and shields. O king! When he arrived, they cheerfully fought with him in every direction.”’

CHAPTER 1129(152)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that the performer of terrible deeds had arrived to fight, all the Kurus were filled with delight. Your sons, with Duryodhana at the forefront, were like those who did not have rafts and desired to cross the ocean, but had now obtained rafts. The kings thought that they had been born again. They welcomed and worshipped Alayudha, Indra among the rakshasas. While the battle between humans raged on, there was a fearful battle between Karna and the rakshasa.[243] It was terrible to watch. The Panchalas and the kings smiled as they watched it. O king! In that fashion, those on your side wandered around here and there. On witnessing the feats of Hidimba’s son in the field of battle, they were frightened. Drona, Drona’s son, Kripa and the others uttered wails of lamentation. All of them were routed and everyone there became senseless. O great king! Your soldiers gave up all hope of

Karna remaining alive. On seeing that Karna was confronting the ultimate calamity, Duryodhana summoned Alayudha, Indra among the rakshasas, and spoke these words to him. 'Vaikartana Karna is engaged with Hidimba's son. He is performing great deeds in the battle, deserving of someone like him. But behold. Those brave kings are being killed by Bhimasena's son. They are being struck by many weapons and are like trees struck by a tusker. In the midst of the kings, let this be your share in the battle.[244] O brave one! You have my permission to exhibit your valour and destroy him. O destroyer of enemies! Earlier, this wicked Ghatotkacha used his powers of maya and afflicted Vaikartana Karna.' Having been thus addressed by the king, the rakshasa, whose valour was fierce, agreed and attacked the mighty-armed Ghatotkacha.

'"O lord! Bhimasena's son abandoned Karna. As his enemy[245] advanced, he crushed him with arrows. There was a battle between those two enraged Indras among the rakshasas. They were like two crazy elephants fighting in the forest, desiring the same she-elephant. Having been freed from the rakshasa, Karna, supreme among rathas, attacked Bhimasena on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun. On seeing that Ghatotkacha was being consumed in the battle with Alayudha, like the leader of a herd of cattle when engaged with a lion, Bhima, supreme among strikers, disregarded the advancing one.[246]

'"O lord! On seeing that he was advancing, Alayudha abandoned Ghatotkacha and challenged Bhimasena. O lord! Bhima, the destroyer of rakshasas, advanced impetuously and countered the Indra among rakshasas and his followers with a shower of arrows. O king! Alayudha, the scorcher of enemies, repeatedly showered down swift arrows that had been sharpened on stone on Kounteya. All the other rakshasas also attacked Bhimasena. Wishing to ensure the victory of your sons, they wielded many terrible weapons. The immensely strong Bhimasena was afflicted by those strong ones. He pierced each of them with five sharp arrows. Those rakshasas, born from the wombs of asses, were slaughtered by Bhima. They wailed loudly in lamentation and fled in the ten directions. On seeing that his followers had been terrorized by

Bhima, the immensely strong rakshasa attacked with great force and covered him with arrows. In that encounter, Bhimsena used sharp arrows that were pointed at the tip against the rakshasa. Alayudha severed some of the arrows that were shot by Bhima in the battle. In the encounter, he quickly received some of the others.[247] On seeing this, Bhima, whose valour was terrible, powerfully hurled a club at the Indra among the rakshasas. Its descent was like that of the thunder. The club descended powerfully, like a flaming fire. Having struck the club down with a club, he[248] advanced towards Bhima. Kounteya countered the Indra among rakshasas with a shower of arrows. Using his own sharp arrows, the rakshasa rendered all of them unsuccessful. Instructed by the Indra among the rakshasas, all the rakshasa soldiers, terrible in form, returned and began to kill the rathas and the elephants. Severely afflicted by the rakshasas, the Panchalas, the Srinjayas, the horses and the supreme elephants could not find any peace there.

'"On seeing that this extremely terrible encounter was going on in the great battle, the best of men[249] spoke these words to Dhananjaya. 'Behold. The mighty-armed Bhima has come under the grasp of the Indra among the rakshasas. O Pandava! Do not reflect. Follow in his footsteps. The maharathas Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja and Droupadi's sons will go and fight with Karna. O Pandava! On your instructions, let Nakula, Sahadeva and the valiant Yuyudhana kill all the other rakshasas. O mighty-armed one! As for you, counter this army of Drona's that is in front of us. O tiger among men! Counter the grave danger that has arisen before us now.' Having been addressed by Krishna, those maharathas followed the instructions and advanced against Vaikartana Karna and the other rakshasas in the battle.

'"The powerful Indra among the rakshasas drew his bow all the way back and released arrows that were like venomous serpents, using these to sever Bhima's bow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While Bhimasena looked on, in that encounter, the immensely strong one used sharp arrows to kill his horses and charioteer. With his horses slain and with his charioteer killed, he descended from his chariot. He roared and hurled a terrible and heavy club towards him.[250] The mighty club descended with a terrible noise. However, the rakshasa roared and destroyed it with his own terrible club. On seeing that terrible and fearful deed performed by the Indra among the rakshasas, Bhimasena was delighted. He quickly seized another supreme club. There was a tumultuous battle between the man and the rakshasa. As the clubs descended, the earth trembled severely with that force. They cast aside their clubs and again clashed against each other. They struck each other with their fists, with a sound like that of the thunder. Extremely intolerant, they struck each other with the wheels of chariots, yokes, axles, bumpers and seats. They clashed against each other and blood flowed from their wounds. They repeatedly attacked each other, like crazy and giant elephants. Hrishikesha was engaged in the welfare of the Pandavas. On seeing this, he instructed Hidimba's son to protect Bhimasena."'

CHAPTER 1130(153)

'Sanjaya said, "In that battle, on seeing that Bhima was within the grasp of the rakshasa, Vasudeva spoke these words to Ghatotkacha. 'O mighty-armed one! O immensely radiant one! Behold. Bhima is being devoured by the rakshasa, while all the soldiers are looking on. Abandon Karna. O mighty-armed one! Quickly kill Alayaudha, Indra among the rakshasas. Kill Karna later.' Hearing Varshneya's words, the valiant one abandoned Karna. Ghatotkacha started to fight with the Indra among rakhasas, Baka's brother. In the night, there was an extremely tumultuous battle between the rakshasas. Alayudha's warriors were rakshasas, terrible in form. Those brave ones grasped their bows and arrows and descended with force. As they advanced with their weapons, maharatha Yuyudhana, Nakula and Sahadeva cut them down with sharp arrows. O king! In that encounter, Kiriti Bibhatsu shot arrows in all directions and uprooted all the bulls among the kshatriyas. O king! In that encounter, Karna drove away many kings—Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and other Panchala maharathas. On seeing that they were being killed, Bhima, terrible in valour, quickly advanced against Karna in that battle, showering arrows. Having killed the rakshasas, Nakula, Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki also went to the spot where the son of a suta was. They fought with Karna, and the Panchalas with Drona.

'"Alayudha struck Ghatotkacha, the scorcher of enemies, on the head with a large club. Having been thus struck, Bhimasena's immensely strong son seemed to lose his senses somewhat. Having regained his senses, in that battle, the valiant one hurled a club that was like the flaming fire. It was decorated with a hundred bells. It was decorated with gold. Released with great force by the one whose deeds were terrible, it crushed the horses, charioteer and chariot [251] that made a large noise. Resorting to maya, the rakshasa quickly leapt down from the chariot, whose horses, charioteer, axle and yoke had been destroyed and shattered, not to speak of the chariot itself. He used maya and showered down copious quantities of blood. The sky seemed to be covered with dark clouds that were tinged with lightning. There was the sound of thunder and lightning. In that great battle, there were loud sounds of slapping and this caused fright. On seeing the maya created by the rakshasa, the rakshasa who was Hidimba's son rose up and destroyed the maya with his own maya. On seeing that the maya was destroyed by maya, the one who used maya showered down an extremely heavy downpour of stones on Ghatotkacha. The valiant one[252] dispelled that terrible shower of stones with a shower of arrows in all the directions and it was wonderful. They showered down many weapons on each other—iron clubs, spears, maces, bludgeons, mallets, tridents, swords, spikes, javelins, kampanas, iron arrows, sharp broad-headed arrows, arrows, chakras, battleaxes, slabs of stone,[253] catapults, the horns of cattle and *ulukhalas*.[254] They uprooted the large branches of many kinds of trees and struck each other with these—*shami, pilu, karira, shamyaki, ingudi, badari*, flowering *kovidara*, palasha, *arimeda, plaksha, nyogradha* and *pippala*.[255] They used many kinds of mountain peaks, decorated with diverse kinds of minerals. There was a mighty sound, like the clapping of thunder. O king! The terrible battle between Bhima's son and

Alayudha was like that between Hari and Indra and like that between Vali and Sugriva in ancient times. O king! They fought with many different kinds of terrible weapons, such as arrows. They grasped sharp swords and struck each other with these. Those extremely strong ones advanced and seized each other by the hair. O lord of men! Their bodies were wounded and began to excrete sweat. Blood trickled down from the giant forms and it was as if it was raining down on mountains. Hidimba's son advanced with great force. He picked up the rakshasa and flung him down with great strength, severing the large head. That head, decorated with earrings, was severed. The extremely strong one let out a mighty roar.

'"On seeing that Baka's relative, the scorcher of enemies with a giant body, had been slain, the Panchalas and the Pandavas roared like lions. Thousands of battle drums and tens of thousands of conch shells were sounded by the Pandaveyas, signifying that the rakshasa had been brought down. That night, with signs of their victory, became extremely resplendent. The garlands of lamps were as beautiful as lightning. Bhimasena's immensely strong son took Alayudha's head and flung it down before Duryodhana, who was bereft of his senses. King Duryodhana saw that Alayudha had been killed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with his soldiers, he became extremely anxious. Remembering his earlier enmity, he[256] had come to him on his own, promising to fight and kill Bhimasena in the battle. The king had thought that his[257] death was certain and that he and his brothers would live for a long time. Having seen that he[258] had been killed by Bhimasena's son, he thought that Bhimasena's pledge[259] had already been fulfilled."'

CHAPTER 1131(154)

'Sanjaya said, "Having killed Alayudha, the rakshasa Ghatokacha was delighted. He stood at the forefront of the army and roared in many ways. On hearing those tumultuous sounds, the elephants trembled. O great king! Those on your side were overcome by terrible fear. On seeing that Bhimasena’s immensely strong son was engaged with Alayudha, the mighty-armed Karna had attacked the Panchalas. He drew his firm bow all the way back and releasing arrows with drooping tufts, pierced Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi with ten arrows each. The supreme among rathas used other iron arrows and made Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja and Satyaki tremble. O lord of men! Both on the left and on the right, all their bows could be seen, drawn into circles as they fought. There was the twang of bowstrings, the slapping of palms and the clatter of chariot wheels. During the night, these sounds were tumultuous, like that of clouds at the end of the summer. O king! The battle was beautiful, as if between clouds. The twang of bowstrings and the clatter of wheels were the roar. The bows were drawn into circles. The standards were like peaks. The torrent of arrows was like rain. Vaikartana was like a mountain that did not tremble. He had the essence of a large mountain. O Indra among men! In that battle, the scorcher of a large number of enemies repulsed that hail of arrows and it was wonderful. His sharp arrows were gold-tufted and colourful. They possessed the force of thunder. In that encounter, the great-souled one struck the enemy. Vaikartana was engaged in ensuring the welfare of your sons. The standards of some were brought down. The bodies of others were mangled by the arrows. Some lost their charioteers. Others lost their horses. Achieving this quickly, Vaikartana was resplendent. In that battle, many were severely afflicted and went and joined Yudhishthira’s army.

‘“On seeing that they were shattered and routed, Ghatotkacha became angry. He ascended a supreme chariot that was decorated with gold and gems and roared like a lion. Approaching Vaikartana Karna, he pierced him with arrows that were like the vajra. They covered the sky with showers of hollow arrows, iron arrows, arrows sharpened on stone, hollow arrows, arrows with long shafts, vatsadantas, arrows with heads like the ears of boars or the horns of bulls and kshurapras and roared. That storm of arrows covered the sky in the battle and traversing diagonally, made it look beautiful. They were gold-tufted and flamed like the fire. It was as if the sky was covered with diverse flowers. Their power was equal and they struck each other with supreme weapons. In that battle, no one could discern that either of those brave ones was superior to the other. That encounter between the sons of the sun god and Bhima was wonderful in form. Many terrible weapons were showered down. It was as if Rahu was tormenting the sun in the sky. O king! Ghatotkacha saw that he could not get the better of Karna. The supreme among those who have knowledge of weapons then invoked a terrible weapon. With that weapon, the rakshasa first killed Karna's horses and then the charioteer. Next, Hidimba's son quickly disappeared."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "When the rakshasa, who fought in devious ways, disappeared, what did those on my side think? O Sanjaya! Tell me this."

'Sanjaya replied, "On seeing that the rakshasa had disappeared, all the Kurus loudly exclaimed, 'The rakshasa fights in devious ways. He will show himself and kill Karna in the battle.' Karna was a wonderfully dexterous warrior. He covered all the directions with his net of arrows. The sky became dark because of those arrows and all the creatures were rendered invisible. The son of a suta exhibited his dexterity and no one could discern when he affixed an arrow, when he aimed it, when he released it and when he touched the quiver with his fingers. The entire sky was covered by those arrows. From the sky, the rakshasa resorted to a terrible and fierce maya. We saw what looked like red clouds in the sky. They blazed, like the fierce flames of a fire. O Indra among Kouravas! Lightning issued from these and so did blazing meteors. Loud and fierce roars issued forth, like the sound of a thousand drums being beaten. Gold-tufted arrows rained down. There were javelins, spears, clubs, other weapons, battleaxes, swords washed in oil, axes that blazed at the edges, spikes, sparkling clubs that were girded with iron, colourful bludgeons, lances that were sharp at the tip, heavy maces decorated with gold and bound in cloth and shataghnis. They showered down in every direction. Thousands of giant boulders fell down there, with thunder and lightning. There were hundreds of razor-sharp chakras. They manifested themselves, blazing like the fire. There were spears, rocks, battleaxes, javelins, vajras and extremely terrible bolts of thunder. That large and blazing shower descended. With his storm of arrows, Karna could not destroy these. Horses were struck by the arrows and fell down. Elephants were struck by the vajras and fell down. Maharathas were struck by the rocks and fell down, shrieking loudly. Using that extremely terrible shower of weapons in every direction, Ghatotkacha caused destruction. Duryodhana's army was distressed and could be seen to roam around. As they wandered around, there were sounds of lamentation. They were being destroyed and were miserable. Because they were noble, the foremost among the brave ones did not run away.[260] Nor were they distressed. However, that shower created by the rakshasa was extremely fierce and terrible. The large weapons descended. On seeing that the large army was being destroyed, a great fear arose in the hearts of your sons. Hundreds of jackals howled in extremely fierce tones. Their tongues seemed to blaze with fire. O Indra among kings! On seeing that the large numbers of rakshasas were yelling, the warriors were extremely pained. Their[261] tongues and faces flamed. Their teeth were sharp. They were fierce. Their bodies were like mountains. They were in the sky, with lances in their hands. They looked like clouds that showered down rain. They[262] were killed by the arrows, lances, spears, fierce clubs, flaming maces, vajras, tridents, thunder, chakras and shataghnis. They were crushed and fell down. On the soldiers of your son, they[263] showered down long shafts, catapults, boulders, shataghnis and pillars made out of black iron and tied in cloth. It was terrible and they[264] were overcome by lassitude. Their weapons were flung away. Their heads were severed. Their limbs were mangled and the brave ones began to fall down. The horses, elephants and horses[265] were shattered and routed. The chariots were shattered by the boulders. Terrible in form, the *yatudhanas*[266] released a great shower and they were created by Ghatotkacha, through the use of maya. Those who sought refuge and those who were frightened were not spared. That terrible destruction was caused by destiny and the brave ones among the

Kurus were crushed. The kshatriyas were destroyed. They were shattered and violently driven away. All the Kouravas wailed. As they fled, the Kurus exclaimed, ‘For the sake of the Pandavas, Indra and the gods are killing us.’ The Bharatas were thus submerged and none of them could find a refuge. During that tumult and the carnage and destruction of the Kuru soldiers, it was impossible to distinguish between the different divisions and differentiate between who was a Kuru and who was not. That cruel destruction was terrible. All the directions seemed to be empty. O king! We could only see Karna there, submerged in that shower of weapons.

‘“He covered the sky with his arrows and sought to counter the divine maya with which the rakshasa fought. He was modest and accomplished extremely difficult and noble deeds. The son of a suta was not confounded in that battle. O king! All the frightened Saindhavas and Bahlikas looked towards Karna. He was not confounded in that battle and they worshipped him, while witnessing the rakshasa’s victory. He[267] created a shataghni with wheels and hurling it, killed his[268] four horses at the same time. They lost their lives and sank down on their knees. They lost their teeth, eyes and tongues. With the horses killed, he[269] leapt down from the chariot and saw that the Kurus were being driven away. His divine weapon had been destroyed by the maya. He began to think about what should be the appropriate course of action. All the Kurus saw Karna and the terrible maya. They said, ‘O Karna! Quickly kill the rakshasa now with your spear.[270] The Kurus and the sons of Dhritarashtra are being destroyed. What can Bhima and Arjuna possibly do to us? Kill the rakshasa who is destroying us in the night. We will be able to fight with the Parthas in the battle only if we escape from this terrible encounter. Therefore, kill the rakshasa, terrible in form, with the spear that Vasava has given you. O Karna! All the Kouravas are like Indra. Let these warriors not be destroyed in the night.’ O king! He saw that the army was being destroyed by the rakshasa in the night. He heard the loud lamentations of the Kouravas.

'"Karna made up his mind to use the spear. Unable to bear the assaults made in the battle, he was like an angry and intolerant lion. That supreme spear was always victorious and he decided to use it to kill him.[271] O king! He had preserved it for many years, worshipping it for the sake of Phalguna. Shakra had given that supreme spear to Karna in exchange for the earrings. That spear was resplendent and flaming. It was tied with ropes and in the night, looked like Death. Flaming like a meteor, it was like Death's sister. Vaikartana released it towards the rakshasa. That flaming weapon was released from the arm of the son of a suta. It was supreme and was capable of destroying the body of every enemy. O king! On seeing it, the rakshasa was frightened. He fled, assuming a body that was as large as the foothills of the Vindhya mountains. O Indra among kings! On seeing that spear in Karna's hands, all the beings in the sky roared loudly. O king! Turbulent winds began to blow. Bolts of thunder began to strike. Blazing away, it reduced the rakshasa's maya to ashes and severely penetrated his heart. Then it blazed and ascended up in the night, entering among the nakshatras.

'"The brave rakshasa had fought in many colourful ways, using the weapons of gods, humans and rakshasas. His life was robbed by Shakra's spear and uttering many fierce yells, he fell down. This was yet another wonderful and extraordinary deed that he performed for the destruction of the enemy. At that time, his heart was shattered by the spear. O king! He was as beautiful as a mountain or a cloud. The Indra among rakshasas fell down from the sky, devoid of life. With his body shattered, he fell down on the ground. As he fell down dead, Ghatotkacha made his body assume a gigantic form. With that fierce form, Bhimasena's son, the performer of terrible deeds, performed another terrible deed. He fell down on one part of your army and fiercely crushed the Kouravas. A loud uproar arose, mixed with the sounds of drums, conch shells, kettledrums and cymbals, and roars like lions'. With the maya destroyed and the rakshasa killed, the Kouraveyas were delighted and roared in joy. Karna was honoured by the Kurus, just as Shakra was by the Maruts, after the slaying of Vritra. He[272] ascended your son's chariot and cheerfully entered the army."'

Section Seventy-One

Drona-Vadha Parva

This parva has 692 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 1132(155): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1133(156): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1134(157): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1135(158): 62 shlokas
Chapter 1136(159): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1137(160): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1138(161): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1139(162): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1140(163): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1141(164): 159 shlokas
Chapter 1142(165): 125 shlokas

This section is named after the death or killing of Drona. The fight continues in the night and day dawns on the fifteenth day of the war. Drona kills three of Drupada's grandsons and Drupada and Virata. He causes great destruction. Bhima kills an elephant named Ashvatthama and Bhima and Yudhishthira tell Drona that Ashvatthama has been killed. When Drona casts aside his weapons, he is killed by Dhrishtadyumna and Ashvatthama is told the news.

CHAPTER 1132(155)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that Hidimba's son had been killed, like a shattered mountain, all the Pandavas were distressed in their minds and their eyes were full of tears. However, Vasudeva was overcome with great delight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He roared like a lion and this pained them. He roared loudly and embraced Phalguna. Roaring loudly, he tied the horses. He danced in joy, like a tree stirred by the wind. Having embraced Partha yet again, he slapped his arms against his breast. Achyuta climbed onto the chariot and let out a fierce yell. O king! On discerning that the immensely strong Vasudeva was in a delighted frame of mind, Arjuna was miserable and spoke to him. ‘O Madhusudana! At this time of death today, you are extremely happy. The death of Hidimba’s son is a time for great sorrow. On seeing that Ghatotkacha has been killed, the soldiers are retreating. Since Hidimba’s son has been brought down, we are also extremely anxious. O Janardana! There must be a grave reason behind your delight now. O supreme among the ones who are truthful! I am asking you. Tell me the truth. O scorcher of enemies! If it is not a secret, you should tell me. O Madhusudana! Tell me why your calm has been disturbed so much today. This is like the ocean drying up, or Mount Meru moving. O Janardana! I think that this act of yours shows levity.’

‘“Vasudeva replied, ‘O Dhananjaya! I am overcome by great delight. Listen to me. I will tell you what will bring supreme satisfaction to your mind. O immensely radiant one! Because of Ghatotkacha, the spear has been used up. O Dhananjaya! Therefore, know that Karna has already been slain. Had Karna possessed the spear in his hand, no man in the world would have been able to stand before him. He would have been stationed like Kartikeya in the battle. It is through good fortune that his armour has gone. It is through good fortune that his earrings have been robbed. It is through good fortune that the invincible spear has been used up on Ghatotkacha. Had he possessed the armour and had he possessed the earrings, the powerful Karna would have been able to defeat everyone in the three worlds, even the immortals. Vasava, Kubera, Varuna, lord of the waters, and Yama would not have ventured against Karna in an encounter. Had that bull among men possessed those, you with your Gandiva and I with my *sudarshana chakra* would not have had the capacity to defeat him in a battle. It is for your welfare that Shakra used delusion to rob him of his earrings. The conqueror of enemy cities was also robbed of his armour. It is because he sliced off the armour and the sparkling earrings and gave them to Shakra that Karna came to be known as Vaikartana.[1] Karna is now like an angry snake, whose energy has been sapped through mantras. Therefore, Karna is now like a fire whose flames have been pacified. O mighty-armed one! Karna obtained a spear from the great-souled Vasava, the one that has now been used against Ghatotkacha. This was obtained in exchange for the earrings and the celestial armour. Since the time he obtained it, Vrisha has always thought that you have been killed in the battle. O unblemished one! O tiger among men! However, though that spear has now gone, I swear to you truthfully that he is incapable of being killed by anyone other than you. He is devoted to brahmanas. He is truthful. He has engaged in austerities. He is devoted to his vows. He is compassionate towards his enemies. It is for these reasons that Karna is known as Vrisha.[2] He is terrible in battle. He is mighty-armed. His bow is always raised. He is like a lion in the forest, crushing the leaders of crazy herds of elephants. In the field of battle, he crushes tigers among the rathas. He is like the sun when it has attained midday and no one is capable of looking at him. O tiger among men! He has fought with all the foremost and great-souled ones on your side. His nets of arrows are like the thousand rays of the autumn sun. His incessant shower of arrows is like rain from the clouds, at the end of summer. Karna is like a cloud with divine weapons, showering down rain. However, having been deprived today of what was given to him by Shakra, he has become human. There is now an opportunity to kill him, one that the insolent one has brought about through his own insolence. He will face a hardship when the wheel of his chariot sinks. That is the time to kill him and I will signal the moment to you in advance. Jarasandha, the great-souled king of Chedi, the immensely strong Ekalavya from Nishadha—all of these have been killed through my yoga, for your sake.[3] Later, other Indras among rakshasas have been killed—Hidimba, Kirmira, Baka, the foremost among them, Alayudha, the destroyer of enemy soldiers, and the spirited Ghatotkacha, the performer of fierce deeds.’”’

CHAPTER 1133(156)

‘“Arjuna asked, ‘O Janardana! What objective of ours was served and what yoga did you use? How were Jarasandha and the other lords of the earth killed?’

'"Vasudeva replied, 'If Jarasandha, the king of Chedi and the immensely strong Nishadha[4] had not been killed earlier, they would have become terrible now. There is no doubt that Suyodhana would have chosen those supreme among rathas.[5] They have always harboured wicked intentions towards us and would have gone to the side of the Kouravas. All of those great-souled ones were brave, skilled in the use of weapons and firm warriors. They would have protected the army of the son of Dhritarashtra like the immortals. Resorting to the son of a suta, Jarasandha, the king of Chedi and the son of Nishadha, Suyodhana would have been able to conquer the entire earth. O Dhananjaya! They were killed by me through yoga. Listen to it. Without using yoga, they could not have been defeated in a battle, not even by the gods. O Partha! Each of them was separately capable of countering the army of the gods in a battle, even if it were to be protected by the guardians of the world. Jarasandha was angered, incited by Rohini's son.[6] To kill us, he hurled a club that was red at the tip. It was as resplendent as the fire and it divided the sky, like a parting.[7] It was seen to descend, like the vajra released by Shakra. On seeing that the club was descending, Rohini's son wished to counter it and released the weapon known as *sthunakarna*.[8] Countered by the force of that weapon, the club fell down on the ground. It shattered the goddess earth and made the mountains tremble. There was a terrible *rakshasi*[9] named Jara and she possessed great valour. O scorcher of enemies! She united the infant and it came to be known as Jarasandha. Two separate parts were born from the bodies of two separate mothers. Since she united them, he came to be known as Jarasandha. O Partha! That rakshasi was slain by the club and the weapon known as sthunakarna and entered the earth, together with her son and kin. O Dhananjaya! Jarasandha was deprived of the club in the great battle and while you watched, was killed by Bhimasena. O supreme among men! If the powerful Jarasandha had possessed that club in his hand, the gods, together with Indra, would not have been able to kill him in an encounter. O one for whom truth is valour! It is also for your sake that Drona adopted the disguise of a preceptor and severed

Nishadha's thumb.[10] With his finger guards, the son of the Nishadha was firm in his valour. He was as resplendent as a second Rama in the forest. O Partha! Had Ekalavya possessed his thumb, the gods and the danavas, with the rakshasas and the serpents, would never have been able to defeat him in a battle. His fist was firm and he could continuously shoot, throughout the day and night. How could a mere human have looked at him? It is for your sake that I killed him in the field of battle. I killed the powerful king of Chedi in your presence. He was capable of conquering all the gods and the asuras in a battle. O tiger among men! I have been born to slay him and also all the others who hate the gods, with your help, and desiring the welfare of the worlds. Hidimba, Baka and Kirmira have been brought down by Bhimasena. They were the equals of Ravana and destroyed the sacrifices of brahmanas. Similarly, Alayudha, who used maya, was slain by Hidimba's son. And I thought of means to get Hidimba's son killed by Karna's spear. Had he not been killed by Karna's spear in the great battle, I would have had to kill Ghatotkacha, Bhimasena's son, in the future. I did not kill him earlier, because I wanted to ensure your pleasure. This rakshasa hated brahmanas and hated sacrifices. Because he caused the destruction of dharma and because he was evil in his soul, he would have had to be brought down. O unblemished one! I thought of a means through what had been given by Shakra. O Pandava! Those who are the destroyers of dharma, deserve to be killed by me. I have taken a pledge that I will establish dharma. I am always present wherever the brahman, truthfulness, self-control, purity, dharma, humility, prosperity, fortitude and forgiveness exist. You should not have any anxiety about Karna Vaikartana. I will tell you the means so that you can destroy him. In the battle, Suyodhana will also be killed by Vrikodara. O Pandava! I will tell you about the means whereby that death can be ensured. There is a tumultuous uproar that has arisen in the direction of the enemy's army. Your soldiers are fleeing in the ten directions. Having attained their objective, the Kouravas are destroying your army. Drona, supreme among strikers, is scorching our soldiers.'"'

‘Dhritarashtra said, “The son of the suta possessed a spear that could only be used to kill one person. Why did he not forget everyone else and hurl it at Partha? Had he been slain, all the Pandavas and Srinjayas would have been killed too. Had that brave one alone been killed, why should victory in the battle not have been ours? He is great in his vows and does not retreat when he is challenged. The son of the suta should have challenged Phalguna himself. O Sanjaya! Tell me. Why did Vrisha not challenge Phalguna to a duel and kill him with what he had obtained from Shakra? There is no doubt that my son lacks both intelligence and advisers. How can he obtain victory if he is frustrated by the enemy in every way? That spear was a supreme weapon and our victory depended on it. Vasudeva has ensured that the spear was wasted on Ghatotkacha. This is like a powerful person snatching a *bilva* fruit from the hands of someone with a withered arm. In that fashion, because of Ghatotkacha, that infallible spear has been rendered fallible. In a fight between a boar and a dog, when either one dies, the hunter gains.[11] O learned one! Like that, I think that Vasudeva has gained from the battle between Karna and Hidimba’s son. Had Ghatokacha slain Karna, it would have been a supreme gain for the Pandavas. And had Vaikartana slain him, it would still have been a gain, because the spear would have been rendered useless. The wisest among wise ones thought in this way about the encounter between Ghatotkacha and the son of a suta. Though Vasudeva, lion among men, is not fighting in this battle, he is engaged in ensuring the welfare of the Pandavas.”

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The slayer of Madhu knew what Karna desired to do. The immensely intelligent Janardana instructed the immensely valorous Ghatotkacha, lord of the rakshasas, to engage in that duel. The intention was to make the infallible weapon useless. O king! All this happened because of your evil policy. O extender of the Kuru lineage! We would certainly have been successful, had not Krishna protected Partha from maharatha Karna. O Dhritarashtra! In the battle, with his horses, standard and chariot, Partha would have fallen down on the ground, but for Janardana, the lord and master of all yoga. O king! He has been protected in many different ways. Protected by Krishna, Partha has advanced against the enemy and obtained victory. It was indeed Krishna who protected Partha from that infallible weapon. Kounteya would have been swiftly destroyed by the spear, like a tree by thunder."

'Dhritarashtra said, "My son is proud of his wisdom. But he quarrels and has evil advisers. He has thus overlooked the means for killing Jaya.[12] O son of Gavalgana! Why did you also forget that objective? O immensely intelligent one! Why did you not remind him about it?"

'Sanjaya replied, "Night after night, this used to be the topic of discussion between Duryodhana, Shakuni, Duhshasana and me. 'O Karna! Tomorrow, abandon all the other soldiers and kill Dhananjaya. We will then enjoy the Pandus and the Panchalas, as if they are our slaves. Or, after Partha has been killed, if Varshneya appoints one of the other sons of Pandu as the warrior, we will bring down Krishna. Krishna is the root of the sons of Pandu. Partha is the trunk. The Parthas[13] are the branches. The Panchalas can be thought of as leaves. Krishna is the refuge of the Pandavas. Krishna is the strength. Krishna is the protector. They are devoted to Krishna, like the stellar bodies to the moon. O son of a suta! Therefore, forget the leaves, branches and trunk. Bring down Krishna, who has always been the root of the Pandava in every way.'[14] O king! Had Dasharha Krishna, the descendant of the Yadava lineage, been slain, there is no doubt that this entire earth would have come under your control. O Indra among kings! Had the great-souled one, loved by the Yadu and Pandava lineages, been killed and made to lie down on the ground, there is no doubt that the earth, with its mountains, oceans and forests, would have come under your control. Every morning, we arose with that resolution about the lord of the thirty gods, the immeasurable Hrishikesha. But at the time of the battle, we forgot about it. Keshava has always protected Kounteya Arjuna. In the battle, that is the reason he didn't allow him to be stationed before the son of the suta. Achyuta stationed other supreme rathas there. O lord! He acted so that the infallible spear might become fallible. The mighty-armed Satyaki, tiger among rathas, for whom truth was his valour, had asked Krishna about maharatha Karna. ‘This has been the infinitely valorous Karna’s resolution. Why did the son of a suta not use the spear against Phalguna?’

‘“Vasudeva replied, ‘Duhshasana, Karna, Shakuni and Saindhava always conversed about this, with Duryodhana at the forefront. “O Karna! O Karna! O great archer! O one who is infinitely valiant in battle! O supreme among victorious ones! This spear should not be used against anyone else, with the exception of maharatha Partha Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son. Among them,[15] he is the most illustrious, like Vasava among the gods. If he is killed, all the other Pandavas, together with the Srinjayas, will lose their selves, like the gods without fire.”[16] O bull among the Shini lineage! Accordingly, Karna gave his pledge. The thought of killing the wielder of Gandiva was always in Karna’s heart. O foremost among warriors! But I confused Radheya. That is the reason he did not release the spear at Pandava, the one with the white horses. O Yuyutsu! It would have brought about Phalguna’s death. O supreme among warriors! I could not sleep and there was no happiness in my mind. O bull among the Shini lineage! Then I saw that it had been rendered unsuccessful by Ghatotkacha. Today, I see that Dhananjaya has been rescued from the jaws of death. In a battle, the protection of my father, my mother, you, my brothers and my life is not as important as that of Bibhatsu. O Satvata! If there is anything that is more precious than the kingdom of the three worlds, I do not desire it without Partha Dhananjaya. O Yuyudhana! I am extremely delighted today. I can see that Partha Dhananjaya has returned from the dead. It is because of this that I sent the rakshasa to fight with Karna. No one else was capable of countering Karna during this battle in the night.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “This is what Devaki’s son told Satyaki then. He has always been engaged in Dhananjaya’s welfare and doing that which brings him pleasure.”’

CHAPTER 1135(158)

‘Dhritarashtra said “O son![17] What Karna, Duryodhana and the others, Shakuni Soubala and especially you have done, is greatly injurious. You have always known that the spear could only kill a single person in the battle. It was incapable of being countered even by the gods, with Vasava. Why did Karna not use it in the battle earlier? O Sanjaya! Why did he not release it at Devaki’s son or Phalguna?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O lord of the earth! O best of those in the Kuru lineage! Returning from the battle, all of us used to converse about this in the night. We always said, ‘O Karna! O Karna! When it is morning tomorrow, hurl the spear at Keshava or Arjuna.’ O king! This was destiny. When it became morning, the intelligence of Karna and the other warriors was destroyed. I think that destiny is supreme. Though he had it in his hands, in the battle, Karna did not use it to kill Partha or Krishna, the son of Devaki. That spear was in his hand, arising like the night of destruction. However, his intelligence was destroyed by destiny and Karna did not release it. O lord! He was confounded by the delusion of destiny and did not use it to kill Krishna, the son of Devaki, or Partha, the equal of Shakra.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “You have been slain through destiny and through Keshava’s intelligence. What was given by Vasava has gone, wasted on Ghatotkacha, who was like a blade of grass. Because of this undesirable act, Karna, my sons and all the other kings have been conveyed to Vaivasvata’s eternal abode. Tell me about how the battle continued thereafter between the Kurus and the Pandavas, after Hidimba’s son had been killed. How did those strikers attack Drona’s battle formation? What did the Srinjayas and the Panchalas do in the battle? After the death of Somadatta’s son and Saindhava, Drona must have become intolerant and prepared to give up his own life. He must have immersed himself in the army. He must have been like a yawning tiger or Death with a gaping mouth. As Drona advanced, how did the Pandus and Srinjayas counter him? O son! What did Drona’s son, Karna and Kripa do in that battle? With Duryodhana at the forefront, how did they protect the preceptor? Savyasachi and Vrikodara wished to kill Bharadvaja’s son in that battle. How did those on my side envelop them with arrows? O

Sanjaya! Tell me that. After the death of the king of Sindhu and after the death of Ghatotkacha, they must have been intolerant and extremely angry. How did the battle rage during the night?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! When the rakshasa Ghatokacha was killed by Karna in the night, the warriors on your side were delighted and roared. They descended with great force and began to slaughter the soldiers.[18] The night was dark and the king[19] was overcome by supreme misery. The mighty-armed one, the scorcher of enemies, spoke to Bhimasena. ‘O mighty-armed one! Check the army of Dhritarashtra’s son. With the death of Hidimba’s son, I have become overcome by great confusion.’ Having been instructed, Bhima sat down on his own chariot. The king’s face was full of tears and he sighed repeatedly. On witnessing Karna’s valour, he was overcome by great lassitude. On seeing that he was distressed, Krishna spoke these words to him. ‘O Kounteya! Do not be miserable. This is not deserving of you. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Like an ordinary man, you should not yield to impotence. O king! Arise and fight. O lord! Bear the heavy burden. If you yield to impotence, there will be an uncertainty about victory.’

‘“On hearing Krishna’s words, Dharmaraja Yudhisthira wiped his eyes with his hands and spoke these words to Krishna. ‘O mighty-armed one! You know that dharma is the supreme objective. The fruits of killing a brahmana devolve on those who do not acknowledge a service. O Janardana! When we were in the forest, Hidimba’s great-souled son, though he was but a child, performed many services for us. O Krishna! On learning that Pandava, the one with the white horses, had left in search of weapons, the great archer[20] had come to me in Kamyaka. He lived with us, until Dhananjaya returned. When we journeyed to Gandhamadana, he saved us from many hardships. When Panchali was exhausted, the great-souled one carried her on his back.[21] O lord! For my sake, the great-souled one performed diverse difficult deeds in the battle. O Janardana! I bear a natural affection towards Sahadeva. But my affection towards Ghatotkacha, Indra among the rakshasas, is twice that. O mighty-armed one! He was devoted to me. I loved him and he loved me. O Varshneya! Because of that, I am tormented by sorrow and overcome with lassitude. O Varshneya! Behold. The soldiers are being driven away by the Kouravas. Behold! Maharatha Drona and Karna are making great efforts in the battle. Behold! In the night, the Pandava soldiers are being crushed. It is as if two crazy elephants are demolishing a large forest of reeds. O Madhava! The Kouravas are showing no regard for the strength of Bhimasena's arms, or the colourful weapons and valour that Partha possesses. On seeing that the rakshasa has been killed in the encounter, Drona, Karna and King Suyodhana are roaring with delight in the battle. O Janardana! When we are alive, and so are you, how could Hidimba's son have encountered his death in the clash with the son of a suta? O Krishna! While all of us looked on, and so did Savyasachi, he[22] blunted us and killed Bhimasena's son, the immensely strong rakshasa. O Krishna! When Abhimanyu was killed in the battle by the evil-souled sons of Dhritarashtra, maharatha Savyasachi wasn't present there. The evil-souled Saindhava barred all of us. Drona and his son became the instruments of that act. The preceptor himself told Karna about the means whereby he[23] might be killed. When he was fighting with the sword, it was he[24] who severed that sword into two. When he was fighting, Kritavarma cruelly and violently killed his horses and his two parshni charioteers. The other great archers brought down Subhadra's son in the battle. O Krishna! O best of the Yadava lineage! It was only for a small reason that the wielder of Gandiva killed Saindhava.[25] This did not bring me pleasure. If Pandava wished to kill the enemy in accordance with what was fair, in my view, he should have killed Drona and Karna first. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those two are the source of our hardships. Having resorted to those two, Suyodhana has been confident against the enemy in the battle. When Drona and the son of a suta, with his followers, should have been killed, the mighty-armed one killed Saindhava, whose connection was distant. It is certainly my task to chastise the son of a suta. O brave one! Therefore, I will myself kill Karna now. The mighty-armed Bhimasena is engaged with Drona's formation.' Having said this, Yudhishthira advanced, quickly and violently. He stretched his great bow and blew fiercely on his conch shell.

'"Shikhandi quickly followed the king from the rear. He was surrounded by one thousand chariots, three hundred elephants, five thousand horses and three thousand Prabhadrakas. Drums were beaten and the armoured ones blew on their conch shells. The Panchalas and Pandavas advanced, with Yudhishthira at the forefront. The mighty-armed Vasudeva spoke to Dhananjaya. 'Yudhishthira is overcome with anger and is swiftly advancing. He wishes to kill the son of a suta. One should not depend on him for this.' Having said this, Hrishikesha swiftly urged the steeds. The king was already far ahead and Janardana followed him. He[26] was advancing swiftly, wishing to kill the son of a suta. His resolution was determined by sorrow and he was tormented, as if by a fire. On seeing that Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, was advancing, Vyasa approached and said, 'Though he has clashed against Karna in the battle, it is through good fortune that Phalguna is still alive. He preserved the spear, wishing to kill Savyasachi. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is good fortune that Jishnu did not engage in a duel with him. Rivalling each other, they would have released all their divine weapons. O Yudhishtira! When his weapons were destroyed in the battle, the son of a suta would certainly have used the spear given by Vasava. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That would have led to a terrible calamity. O one who grants honours! It is good fortune that the rakshasa has been killed in the battle by the son of a suta. The rakshasa was killed by destiny. What was given by Vasava was only an instrument. O best of the Bharata lineage! Do not be angry. You should not have any sorrow in your mind. O son![27] It is for your sake that the rakshasa has been killed in the battle. O Yudhishthira! This is the end of all beings. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With your brothers and with all the great-souled kings, fight against the Kouravas in the battle. On the fifth day from now, the earth will be yours.[28] O tiger among men! Always think of dharma. O Pandava! Always practise non-violence, austerities, generosity, forgiveness and truth with supreme cheerfulness. Where there is dharma, victory exists there.' Having said this to Pandava, Vyasa disappeared from the spot."'

CHAPTER 1136(159)

'Sanjaya said, "When Ghatotkacha was killed by the son of a suta in the night, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, was overcome by sorrow and intolerance. On seeing that your large army had been checked by Bhima, he spoke to Dhrishtadyumna. 'Check the one who was born in a pot.[29] O scorcher of enemies! For Drona's destruction, you have arisen from the fire, with bows and arrows, armour and sword. You should not be frightened. In the battle, attack cheerfully. Let Janamejaya, Shikhandi and Durmukha's son,[30] Yashodhana, happily surround the one who has been born in a pot from all sides. Let Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupadi's sons, the Prabhadrakas, Drupada and Virata, with their sons and brothers, Satyaki, the Kekayas and Dhananjaya powerfully attack Bharadvaja's son, wishing to kill him. Let all the rathas, all the elephants we have and the foot soldiers advance against maharatha Drona.' Having been thus instructed by the great-souled Pandava, all of them forcefully advanced against the one who had been born in a pot, wishing to fight with him. Drona was supreme among the wielders of weapons. When the Pandavas violently advanced, making every effort in the battle, he received them. When the Pandavas angrily attacked, King Duryodhana wished to ensure that Drona remained alive and made efforts to counter them. Though the mounts and the soldiers were exhausted, a battle commenced between the Pandavas and the Kurus, and they roared at each other.

'"O great king! The maharathas were blind with sleep. They were exhausted from fighting and did not know what efforts they should make in the battle. The *triyama* night was terrible and generated fear.[31] It was destructive of lives and seemed equal to one thousand *yamas*.[32] In particular, those on their side were killed and wounded. Especially when it was midnight, they were blind with sleep. All the kshatriyas lost their enterprise and were distressed in their hearts. Your soldiers, and those of the enemy, no longer possessed any more weapons or arrows. Because they were modest, they passed the time there, following their own dharma. They did not abandon their own divisions. But other people were blind with sleep. They discarded their weapons and lay down. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some lay down on the backs of elephants, others on chariots, still others on the backs of horses. Some kings were blind with sleep and lost all sense of movement. In that battle, other warriors seized the chance to send them to Yama's eternal abode. In their sleep and dreaming and unconscious, others killed those on their own side, as well as the enemy. In that great battle, they were blind with sleep and uttered many sounds. They fought in that battle, though their eyes were heavy with sleep. Some moved in that battle, and though blind with sleep, killed each other. O king! In the course of fighting in that terrible darkness, some brave ones killed many on their own side, as well as those on the enemy's side. Because they were overcome by severe sleep in that battle, they could not distinguish.

'"O bull among men! On discerning that this was the state of affairs, Bibhatsu spoke loudly. 'All you, and the mounts, are exhausted and blind with sleep. The soldiers are covered in darkness and a lot of dust. If you so think, let the soldiers desist from fighting. In the field of battle, let them close their eyes for a while. Let them sleep and rest until the moon rises. Then, for the sake of heaven, let the Kurus and Pandavas fight again.' Having heard the words of the one who observed dharma, the soldiers who knew about dharma found this acceptable and loudly spoke to each other.[33] 'O Karna! O Karna! O King Duryodhana! The Pandus have stopped attacking the army. Let us desist.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Phalguna's words, the Pandus ceased to attack your army. The gods, the rishis and even the inferior soldiers were overjoyed and applauded the great-souled one's words. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those benevolent words were applauded by all the soldiers. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on our side, and on the side of the enemy, began to rest for some time. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having obtained some rest and sleep, your soldiers also honoured the brave Arjuna and said, 'The Vedas and all weapons are vested in you. You possess intelligence and valour. O mighty-armed one! O unblemished one! You have dharma and compassion for beings. O Partha! Since we have obtained assurance from you, may you be prosperous. O brave one! May you swiftly obtain all those things that are dear to your heart.’ In this way, maharathas praised that tiger among men. O lord of the earth! They swiftly went to sleep and there was silence. Some were on the backs of horses. Others were on the seats of chariots. Some lay down on the backs of elephants. Others lay down on the ground. The men slept separately, with their weapons, their clubs, their swords, their battleaxes, their lances, their armour and their horses. The elephants possessed trunks like serpents, decorated with dust. They were blind with sleep and cooled the earth with their inhalation and exhalation. As the elephants breathed on the ground, it was beautiful. They looked like scattered mountains, on which, large serpents were breathing. There were horses with golden harnesses, their manes intertwined with their reins. They stamped the level ground with their hooves and made it uneven. O Indra among kings! Everyone there slept, with his mount. Without speaking, the armies slept there and it looked like a wonderful picture drawn by a skilled painter. The kshatriyas were young and adorned in earrings. They had injured each other’s limbs through arrows. They slept against the temporal lobes of elephants, as if against the breasts of beautiful women.

‘“The moon, the lord of lotuses that bloom in the night,[34] arose and its complexion was as fair as the cheeks of a maiden. It was a delight to the eyes and decorated the direction presided over by the great Indra.[35] In a short while, the illustrious one with the mark of a hare[36] showed his red light. The lord outshone the light of the stellar bodies. The red light yielded to the complexion of gold. Slowly, the great moon’s net of rays spread everywhere. The radiance of the moon’s rays dispelled the darkness. They slowly covered all the directions, the sky and the earth. In a short while, the world became illuminated. The darkness that could not be described quickly vanished. The world was illuminated by the moon, as if it was day. O king! Some creatures that travel in the night continued to roam, while others ceased. O king! The soldiers were awakened by the rays of the moon. They awoke like a grove of lotuses,[37] when the great day dawns. When the moon arose, it was as if the ocean was agitated. When the moon arose, the armies became like oceans. O lord of the earth! The battle commenced again. Desiring to attain worlds and destroying the world,[38] the people began to kill the enemy.”’

CHAPTER 1137(160)

‘Sanjaya said, “At that time, Duryodhana was overcome by intolerance. He approached Drona, and wishing to inject joy and energy into him, said, ‘In the battle, one should not have shown mercy to the exhausted ones, while they were resting, especially because they are successful in their objective. The enemy was distressed in mind. We showed them mercy only because we wished to bring you pleasure. The Pandavas have now rested and have become stronger. But we are losing energy and strength in every way. They are protected by you and are prospering. You, in particular, possess all the divine weapons and the brahmastras and all of them are vested in you. I tell you truthfully that the Pandavas, or we, or no other archers in the world, are your equals in fighting. O supreme among brahmanas! You are knowledgeable about all weapons. There is no doubt that, with your divine weapons, you can destroy all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras and the gandharvas. They are especially frightened of you. But you are not angry with them, perhaps because you remember that they were your students. Or perhaps it is my misfortune.’ Having been thus incited by your son, Drona became angry.

‘“O king! He wrathfully spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘O Duryodhana! Though I am old, in this battle, I am fighting to the utmost of my capacity. All of them do not know about these weapons. But desiring victory, I cannot perform an inferior deed and kill those who are unacquainted with weapons. O Kouravya! But I give you my word and it will not be otherwise. I will do whatever is in your mind, be it good or bad. O king! I tell you truthfully that I will exhibit my valour and take off my armour and weapons only after I have killed all the Panchalas. You think that Kounteya Arjuna was exhausted in the battle. O mighty-armed one! O Kourava! Listen to what I truthfully have to say about his valour. When Savyasachi is enraged in a battle, the gods, the gandharvas, the yakshas and the rakshasas cannot stand before him. In Khandava, he countered the illustrious lord of the gods himself.[39] The great-souled one countered him with a shower of arrows. There were many other yakshas, serpents and daityas, intoxicated of their strength. The Indra among men killed them and all this is known to you. At the time of the expedition with the cattle, the gandharvas, Chitrasena and the others, were vanquished by him.[40] The wielder of the firm bow freed you from bondage. The nivatakavachas were the enemies of the gods and could not be killed by the gods in battle. They were defeated by that brave one. There were thousands of danavas who lived in the city of Hiranyapura. That tiger among men vanquished them.[41] How can humans withstand him? O lord of the earth! You have yourself seen how your entire army made every effort, but was destroyed by the son of Pandu.' O king! While he was thus praising Arjuna, your son was enraged.

'"He again spoke these words to Drona. 'I, Duhshasana, Karna and my maternal uncle, Shakuni, will kill Arjuna in the battle. We will divide the army of the Bharatas into two parts.'[42] Hearing this, Bharadvaja's son laughed, but agreed to what the king had proposed and said, 'My blessings are with you. What kshatriya can slay that undecaying bull among kshatriyas? He is the wielder of Gandiva and blazes in energy. The lord of riches,[43] Indra, Yama, the lord of the waters,[44] the asuras, the serpents and the rakshasas, with their weapons, cannot kill him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Such words are only spoken by fools like you. After having encountered Arjuna in a battle, who can safely return home? You yourself are suspicious of everybody. You are cruel. Your resolution is wicked. You censure even those who speak for your own welfare. Without any delay, for your own sake, advance against Kounteya. You are the one who desires the fight. You have been born in a noble lineage. You are a kshatriya. All these kings have caused no offence. Why are you getting them killed? You are the root of the enmity. Therefore, advance against Arjuna. This maternal uncle of yours is wise and is devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. O Gandhari's son! He is addicted to deceitful gambling. Let him advance against Arjuna in the battle. He is skilled in playing with the dice. He is crooked, deceitful in gambling and a cheat. Skilled in deceitful gambling, he has often said that he will defeat the Pandavas. Because of your stupidity and delusion, together with Karna, you have often cheerfully said in Dhritarashtra's presence, "O father! I, Karna and my brother, Duhshasana—these three will unite and kill the sons of Pandu in the battle." This was what you boasted, in the hearing of the assemblage in the assembly hall. Accomplish that pledge now and make your words come true. This Pandava, your worst enemy, is stationed in front of you. Follow the dharma of a kshatriya. Death at Jaya's hands would also be praiseworthy. You have given donations. You have pleasured. You have studied. You have obtained the prosperity that you desired. You have been successful. You do not have any debts. You should not be frightened of Pandava.' Having spoken these words in the battle, Drona desisted from fighting the enemy. With the soldiers divided into two, the battle commenced."'

CHAPTER 1138(161)

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of the earth! When three-fourths of the night had passed, the battle again commenced between the delighted Kurus and Pandavas. Dispelling the rays of the moon, the sun was in the front and Aruna became manifest.[45] The sky became coppery red. The soldiers[46] were divided into two. Drona, with Duryodhana at the forefront, advanced against the Vatsas[47] and the Panchalas. On seeing that the Kurus were divided into two, Madhava was delighted and spoke to Arjuna. 'Place this division of the army on your left and the other one on the right.'[48] Dhananjaya acted in accordance with Madhava's words. He placed himself to the left of the great archers, Drona and Karna.[49]

Discerning Krishna’s intention and on seeing that he[50] was stationed at the front, the destroyer of enemy cities, Bhimasena, approached and spoke these words.

‘“Bhimasena said, ‘O Arjuna! O Bibhatsu! O Arjuna! Listen to the words that I am telling you. The time for which kshatriya ladies bear sons has now arrived. At this time, you must strive for what is best. If you do not act accordingly, you will perform a cruel deed. You must resort to your valour and pay the debts to truth, prosperity, dharma and fame. O best of warriors! Penetrate this division and keep that one to your left.’”[51]

‘Sanjaya said, “Thus urged by Bhima and Keshava, Savyasachi passed over Karna and Drona and attacked the army from all sides. Bulls among kshatriyas placed themselves at the forefront and were scorched. Those bulls among kshatriyas were brave. They resorted to their valour. But none of them were capable of resisting that raging conflagration. Duryodhana, Karna and Shakuni Soubala showered down storms of arrows on Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son. O Indra among kings! However, he was supreme among those who possessed knowledge of weapons. With his shower of arrows, he countered them and rendered all their weapons unsuccessful. Displaying the dexterity of his hands, Dhananjaya countered all those weapons with his own weapons. He pierced each of them with ten sharp arrows. A dust arose and the shower of arrows was like rain. In that darkness, a great and tumultuous sound arose. The sky, the earth and the directions could no longer be distinguished. Covered in darkness, the soldiers were confused and all of them seemed to be blind. O king! We could no longer distinguish each other, friend or foe. The kings continued to fight, on the basis of guessing. O king! As they clashed against each other, rathas lost their chariots. They were submerged in a mass of hair, armour and arms. Horses were slain. Charioteers were killed. The rathas lost all enterprise. When they were alive, they were seen to be afflicted by fear. Deprived of their lives, horses and their riders were seen to lie down against slain elephants that were like mountains.

‘“Drona abandoned that field of battle and moved towards the northern direction. He was stationed in that battle, like a fire without smoke. O lord of the earth! On seeing him stationed there, in the forefront of the battle, the Pandava soldiers lost their peace of mind and trembled. He dazzled in his resplendence, flaming in his energy. O venerable one! On seeing Drona, they abandoned their weapons and were rendered immobile. He challenged the enemy soldiers, like an elephant with a shattered temple. They lost hope of defeating him, like the danavas against Vasava. Some lost all their initiative. Other spirited ones became angry. Others were astounded. And still others were filled with intolerance. Some kings rubbed one hand against the other. Others lost their senses because of anger and bit their lower lips. Some whirled their weapons. Others slapped their arms. There were others who possessed great energy and were ready to give up their lives. They attacked Drona. In particular, the Panchalas were afflicted by Drona’s arrows. O Indra among kings! Though they were in severe pain, they continued to try in that battle. In that encounter, Virata and Drupada advanced against Drona, as the one who was invincible in battle was roaming around in the field of battle. O lord of the earth! Three of Drupada’s grandsons and the great archers among the Chedis advanced to fight against Drona. With three sharp arrows, Drona robbed the three of Drupada’s grandsons of their lives. Slain, they fell down on the ground. In that encounter, Drona then defeated the Chedis, the Kekayas, the Srinjayas and the Matsyas. Bharadvaja’s maharatha son defeated all of them. O great king! In that battle, Drupada became angry and countered Drona with a shower of arrows and so did Virata. However, Drona, the scorcher of enemies, used a couple of yellow-hued and broad-headed arrows. With these, he dispatched Drupada and Virata to Vaisvasvata’s[52] eternal abode. Virata and Drupada were slain and so were the Kekayas, the Chedis, the Matsyas and the Panchalas. Three of Drupada’s brave grandsons were also killed.

‘“On witnessing Drona’s deeds, the great-minded Dhrishtadyumna took a pledge in the midst of those rathas, having become overcome with anger and sorrow. ‘Let the fruits of my sacrifices and all my kshatriya and brahmana qualities be destroyed, if Drona escapes from me today, as long as Drona does not retreat from the battle.' He thus took an oath in the midst of all the archers. With his soldiers, Panchala, the destroyer of enemy heroes, advanced against Drona. The Panchalas attacked Drona from one side and the Pandavas from the other. Duryodhana, Karna, Shakuni Soubala and the other foremost brothers[53] protected Drona in the battle. When Drona was thus protected by those great-souled ones in the battle, the Panchalas made efforts, but were incapable of glancing at him. O venerable one! At this, Bhimasena became angry with Dhrishtadyumna. O bull among men! The eloquent one wounded him with these fierce words. 'You have been born in the lineage of Drupada. You are supreme among those who have knowledge of all weapons. You are honoured as a kshatriya. How can such a person merely look on, when his enemy is stationed before him? Having seen his father killed, what man leaves the task unfinished, especially when he has taken a pledge in the midst of the assembly of kings? With his bow and arrows as kindling, Drona is like a fire, which is growing because of his energy. He is consuming the kshatriyas with his energy. He will soon destroy all the Pandava soldiers. All of you remain here as spectators and behold my deeds, as I myself advance against Drona.' Having said this, Vrikodara angrily penetrated Drona's army. He firmly drew his bow back all the way and routed your army. Panchala Dhrishtadyumna also penetrated that large army. A battle commenced with Drona and a great and tumultuous sound arose. A battle like that has not been seen earlier, nor heard of. O king! When the sun arose, the great battle commenced. O venerable one! Large numbers of chariots were seen to be engaged. Living beings were slain and their bodies were strewn around. Others wished to go elsewhere, but were attacked along the way. There were those who fled and were struck on their backs. Others were struck on their sides. That extremely terrible engagement and fight continued. In a short while, it became morning and the sun arose."'

CHAPTER 1139(162)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! It was morning and with its one thousand rays, the sun arose. The one with the thousand rays arose and its complexion was like that of molten gold. In the forefront of the battle, the armoured ones worshipped it and as the world became illuminated, the battle commenced again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who were engaged with each other earlier, continued to fight with each other after the sun arose. Rathas fought with horse riders, horse riders with elephant riders, infantry with elephants, horses clashed with horses and foot soldiers with foot soldiers. In that battle, the warriors attacked, sometimes together and sometimes separately. They were exhausted because of the deeds they had performed during the night. The sun’s energy made them hungry and thirsty. Many of them lost all sensation in their limbs. There was the sound of conch shells, drums and battle drums, together with the trumpeting of elephants. There was the sound of bows being stretched and drawn. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The sound that was generated seemed to touch the sky.

‘“The foot soldiers fled and weapons descended. The horses neighed and the chariots rattled. There were angry roars and there was a great and tumultuous sound. That loud and fierce noise spread and reached up into the sky. As warriors were brought down, there were woes of lamentation. That great and piteous wail could be heard all over the ground. Foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants fell down, or were falling down. All the battle formations clashed against each other and there was a general melee. Some killed those on their own side, as well as that of the enemy. Some engaged with their own side. Others engaged with the enemy. Swords could be seen, hurled from the brave arms of warriors, or from the backs of elephants. They looked like garments amassed for washing. As they were raised up in the arms of brave warriors, the swords made a sound like that of garments being beaten at the time of washing. There were daggers,[54] swords, lances and battleaxes. They were used in that clash and there was a great and fearful sound. The brave ones created a river out of the blood of elephants and horses and the bodies of men flowed along. It was full of fish in the form of weapons. The flesh and blood was the mire. The lamentations were the roar and the flags and garments were the foam. It flowed along to the world of the hereafter. They were afflicted by arrows and spears. They were exhausted from the night. They were confused and senseless. All their limbs were motionless. The elephants and horses were weak. The faces of the brave ones were dry, though their heads were decorated with beautiful earrings. Here and there, diverse implements of war could be seen. The place was full of carnivorous beings and those who were dead and dying. There was no space for the chariots or the warriors to pass. The wheels of chariots got stuck and the horses which bore them depended on their spirits. But some of them were extremely tired. The horses trembled and were afflicted by the arrows, though they were spirited and born in noble lineages, possessing strength and sizes like those of elephants. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, everyone was distracted and agitated. With the exception of Drona and Arjuna, both armies were overtaken by fright. These two became the refuges of the distressed ones on their respective sides. Others[55] encountered them and departed for Vaivasvata’s eternal abode. The entire large army of the Kouravas was shattered. The Panchalas gathered together and one could not distinguish one from the other. That fierce carnage increased the fear of those who were cowards. O king! There was a great destruction and the earth was like a cremation ground. Karna, Drona, Arjuna, Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, the twins, Panchala, Satyaki, Duhshasana, Drona’s son, Duryodhana, Soubala, Kripa, the king of Madra, Kritavarma, the others, one’s own self, the earth or the directions, could not be seen there. O king! When the soldiers clashed, everything was covered in dust. A fierce and terrible cloud of dust arose. We thought that a second night had arrived there. One could not distinguish the Kouraveyas from the Panchalas and the Pandavas. The directions, the sky, heaven and earth and plain and uneven terrain could not be distinguished. In that battle, desiring victory, men brought down others through the touch of the hand, without differentiating the enemy from those on one’s own side. However, a wind arose and dispelled the dust, which was also pacified through the sprinkling of blood. The dust that arose from the earth was pacified and was soon driven away by the wind. With blood flowing from their wounded limbs, the elephants, horses, warriors, rathas and foot soldiers there looked as beautiful as a grove of *parijata*[56] blossoms.

'"Duryodhana, Karna, Drona and Duhshasana—these four rathas clashed against four on the Pandava side. Duryodhana and his brother clashed against the twins, Vrikodara against Radheya and Bharadvaja's son against Arjuna. Everyone else looked on at that great and terrible wonder. It was a fierce and superhuman encounter between those bulls among rathas. Their chariots traversed wonderful paths. The chariots executed diverse motions. Those warriors were colourful in fighting and all the warriors witnessed that wonderful battle. They[57] were brave and made endeavours to vanquish each other. They showered down arrows, like a cloud at the end of summer. Those bulls among men were stationed on chariots that were as radiant as the sun. They were as beautiful as a mass of clouds during autumn. The great archers challenged each other. They made efforts in wielding their bows. They attacked each other, like crazy bull elephants.

'"It is true that one does not discard one's body until the time has come, since those maharathas were not simultaneously killed in that battle. Arms and feet were severed and so were heads with beautiful earrings.[58] There were hollow arrows and razor-sharp arrows, iron arrows, nails, lances and javelins and many other kinds of sharp and supreme weapons. There was diverse and colourful armour for the body. Many chariots were shattered. Many elephants and horses were slain. With the standards brought down, the chariots looked like empty cities. Bereft of men, the frightened horses dragged the chariots here and there, with a speed like that of the wind. There were brave warriors with ornaments, whisks, mail and standards. They were brought down. There were umbrellas, ornaments, garments and fragrant garlands. There were necklaces, crowns, diadems, headdresses and large numbers of bells. There were gems on the breasts and jewels worn on golden headgear. With these beautiful objects scattered around, the place looked like the sky, adorned by a large number of stars.

'"Duryodhana was intolerant and angry. He clashed against Nakula, who was also intolerant and angry. Madri's son cheerfully struck your son on his right side with a large number of arrows and a loud roar broke out. In that battle, he was struck on his right flank by his cousin brother[59] and became intolerant. Thus angered, he also struck back on the right flank. Having been thus attacked by your son from the right flank, the energetic Nakula executed wonderful circles and countered him. However, he[60] repulsed all these and afflicted him with his net of arrows. Having forced Nakula to retreat, he was honoured by the soldiers. However, Nakula asked your son to wait, remembering all the hardships that had been caused by your evil counsel."'

CHAPTER 1140(163)

'Sanjaya said, "Duhshasana angrily attacked Sahadeva. The terrible force of his chariot made the earth tremble. However, on seeing him advance, Madri's son, the destroyer of enemies, swiftly severed the helmeted head of his charioteer. Sahadeva performed this act with such great speed that Duhshasana and none of the soldiers noticed that the charioteer's head had been cut off. Without the reins being controlled by anyone, the horses ran around as they willed. At this, Duhshasana got to know that the charioteer had been killed. He[61] was skilled in the handling of horses and grasping the reins of the horses himself, fought colourfully, with dexterity and skill. He was foremost among rathas and in that encounter, this deed of his was applauded, by those on his own side, as well as by the enemy. With the charioteer slain, he was still astride the chariot and roamed around without any fear. Sahadeva pierced those horses with sharp arrows and afflicted by those arrows, they swiftly ran away in different directions. To grasp the reins, he[62] had to cast aside his bow. Then he took up the bow to use it, casting aside the reins. Seizing the opportunity, Madri's son covered him with arrows.

'"To protect your son, Karna rushed there. At this, Vrikodara drew his bow back up to his ears and carefully piercing Karna in the arms and in the chest with three broad-headed arrows, roared. Karna stopped,[63] like a snake that has been struck by a staff. A tumultuous encounter commenced between Bhima and Radheya there. They were as angry as bulls and dilated their eyes in rage. They struck each other with great force and attacked in rage. They found great delight in fighting and were very close to each other. They were so close to each other that they could not shoot showers of arrows. The duel continued with clubs. O king! Bhimasena used his club to swiftly shatter the pole of Karna's chariot and it was extraordinary. The valiant Radheya picked up a club and hurled it towards Bhima's chariot, but he[64] shattered the club with his own club. Bhima again picked up a heavy club and hurled it towards Adhiratha's son. Exercising great care, Karna used ten gold-tufted arrows to strike it. He struck it with more arrows and sped it back towards Bhima. It descended and brought down Bhima's giant standard. Struck by that club, his charioteer also lost his senses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He[65] was senseless with anger and shot eight arrows at Karna, striking his standard, his bow and his quiver. Radheya used his arrows to swiftly kill his horses, with complexions like those of bears, and his two parshni charioteers. When his chariot faced this difficulty, Bhima climbed onto Nakula's chariot. That scorcher of enemies was like a lion leaping onto the peak of a mountain.

'"Meanwhile, maharatha Drona and Arjuna fought in wonderful ways. O Indra among kings! They were preceptor and student and warriors who were skilled in the use of weapons. They were dexterous and firm in aim and in that encounter, their chariots roamed around. They confounded the eyes and the minds of men. All the warriors, on our side and on theirs, desisted, to watch the encounter between the preceptor and the student, the likes of which had not been seen earlier. In the midst of those soldiers, those two brave ones executed wonderful motions of the chariot, wishing to place each other on the right.[66] The warriors witnessed their prowess and were struck with supreme wonder. There was a great battle between Drona and Pandava. O great king! It was like that between two hawks in the sky, fighting over a piece of meat. Whenever Drona tried to do something to defeat Kunti's son, he was swiftly nullified by the striving Pandava. Drona could not establish his superiority over Pandava in any way. The one who was skilled about the motions of weapons then invoked special weapons—aindra, *pashupata,* tvashtra, vayavya and varuna.[67] However, as soon as these were released from Drona's bow, Dhananjaya destroyed them. When his weapons were duly destroyed by Pandava's weapons, Drona released supreme and divine weapons towards Partha. However, every weapon that was invoked with a desire to vanquish Partha, was duly destroyed by Arjuna with another weapon. When those weapons, including the divine ones, were duly destroyed by Arjuna, Drona honoured Arjuna in his mind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Since, in the midst of everyone, his student had countered him, he considered himself to be better than all those who knew about weapons on earth. Partha repulsed him in the midst of those great-souled ones. Pleased at Arjuna's enterprise, he countered him in turn. There were gods, thousands of gandharvas, rishis and masses of siddhas in the sky, assembled as spectators. There were also many apsaras, yakshas and rakshasas. The sky was beautiful, as if with a mass of clouds. An invisible voice was repeatedly heard in the firmament. It praised Drona and great-souled Partha. 'The ten directions seem to be flaming, because of the weapons that have been released. It is evident that this is not a battle involving a man, an asura, a rakshasa, a god or a gandharva. There is no doubt this is one with the qualities of the brahman. This is wonderful and extraordinary. We have not seen, or heard of, something like this. The preceptor seems to prevail over Pandava. Then Pandava seems to prevail over Drona. No one is capable of distinguishing between the weapons they are using. If Rudra divides himself into two and those two parts fight with each other, one may be able to find a parallel, not otherwise. The preceptor possesses knowledge. Pandava possesses knowledge and yoga. The preceptor possesses valour. Pandava possesses strength and valour. No enemy is capable of withstanding either of these great archers in battle. If they so wish, they can destroy the entire world, with the immortals.' O great king! On beholding those bulls among men, all the visible and invisible beings spoke such words.

‘“The immensely intelligent Drona invoked brahmastra. It scorched Partha and all the invisible beings. The earth, with all its mountains and trees, began to tremble. Turbulent winds began to blow and the oceans were agitated. When the great-souled one invoked that weapon, there was terror among the Kuru and Pandava soldiers and all the beings and a great uproar arose. O Indra among kings! However, Partha was not frightened. He countered that weapon with his own brahmastra and everything became peaceful again. Neither of them could establish his superiority over the other. The general battle continued, causing anxiety. O lord of the earth! While the tumultuous engagement between Drona and Pandava was going on in the course of the battle, nothing could again be seen. The sky was covered with nets of arrows, as if with nets of clouds. Creatures which travelled through the air could not find a passage.”’

CHAPTER 1141(164)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! While that destruction of men, horses and elephants was going on, Duhshasana fought with Dhrishtadyumna, who was astride a golden chariot. Afflicted by Duhshasana’s arrows, he became angry and pierced your son’s horses with arrows. O great king! Covered by Parshata’s arrows, in a short while, his chariot, his standard and his charioteer could no longer be seen. O Indra among kings! Oppressed by that net of arrows, Duhshasana was incapable of remaining before the great-souled Panchala. Having used his arrows to force Duhshasana to retreat, Parshata attacked Drona in the battle and showered down thousands of arrows. At that time, Hardikya Kritavarma arrived with three of his brothers and surrounded him.[68] However, the twins, bulls among men, protected his rear as he advanced towards Drona, blazing like a fire. All those seven[69] maharathas began to strike. They were angry and spirited and had set upon death as an objective. O king! They were pure in soul and pure in conduct and had heaven as an objective. Wishing to kill each other, they performed noble deeds in the battle. Those lords of men were stainless in their deeds. They were intelligent. They fought in accordance with the dharma of engagement, with a view to attaining the supreme objective. The weapons that were used for the battle there were in accordance with dharma. There were no barbed arrows, or hollow ones. They were not smeared or injected.[70] They were not needle-sharp at the tip, nor reddish brown.[71] They were not made out of the bones of cattle, or the bones of elephants. The arrows used were not blended together.[72] Nor did they possess foul smells or curved paths. All of them used weapons that were straight and pure. Desiring virtuous worlds in the hereafter and fame, they fought fairly. There was a tumultuous battle between the four warriors on your side and the three on the Pandava side. But it was devoid of all taints.

'"O king! Dhrishtadyumna saw that the bulls among rathas on your side had been checked by the twins. He swiftly used his weapons to advance against Drona. Checked by those two lions among men, the four brave ones on your side surrounded them, like winds around mountains. Each of the twins, a bull among rathas, was engaged with two rathas. Meanwhile, Dhrishtadyumna advanced and clashed against Drona. Panchala, indomitable in battle, was advancing against Drona and the twins were engaged with those on your side.

'"O great king! On seeing this, Duryodhana went to the spot, showering arrows that drank up blood. At this, Satyaki swiftly attacked him. Those two, of the Kuru and Madhava lineages, approached and clashed against each other. As they clashed, those tigers among men were not frightened. They smiled. They remembered all their childhood deeds and felt affectionate towards each other. They glanced at each other and smiled repeatedly. Then King Duryodhana censured his own self and addressed Satyaki, who had always been his beloved friend. 'O friend! Shame on anger. Shame on avarice. Shame on delusion. Shame on intolerance. Shame on the conduct of kshatriyas! Shame on the strength in my heart. O bull among the Shini lineage! You are aiming towards me and I am aiming towards you. You have always been dearer to me than my own life. I remember all those childhood deeds of ours. With us facing each other in this field of battle, all those have been destroyed. O Satvata! Because of anger and greed, I am fighting with you today.' O king! Having been thus addressed, Satyaki, who was supreme in the knowledge of weapons, laughed and picked up some sharp arrows. He replied, 'O prince! O king! This is not an assembly hall, nor the abode of our preceptor,[73] where we used to gather together and play earlier.' Duryodhana said, 'O bull among the Shini lineage! Where has that childhood playing of ours gone? Why does this battle face us? Destiny is difficult to cross. We desire riches. All of us have assembled to fight, because of our greed for wealth. What will we accomplish with that wealth?' Having been thus addressed by the king, Madhava said, 'This has always been the conduct of kshatriyas. They have to fight, even with their preceptors. O king! If I am dear to you, kill me without any delay. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Through your deed, I will then go to worlds meant for those with virtuous deeds. Swiftly show me your strength and prowess. I do not wish to witness this great calamity that confronts my friends.' O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed and given his reply, Satyaki quickly advanced, eager and indifferent.[74]

'"On seeing that he was advancing, your son received him. O king! Your son countered Shini's descendant with arrows. A battle commenced between the lions of the Kuru and Madhava lineages. They were enraged with each other and that terrible encounter was like that between an elephant and a lion. Duryodhana drew his bow all the way back and pierced back Satvata, indomitable in battle, with ten sharp arrows. Satyaki pierced him back with ten arrows and pierced him again with fifty arrows, then with thirty, and again with ten. Satyaki swiftly showered him with arrows and severed his[75] bow, with an arrow still affixed to it. O great king! Duryodhana was afflicted by Dasharha's arrows. He was severely wounded and pained and sought refuge on another chariot. Having regained his composure, your son attacked Satyaki again. He showered a net of arrows in the direction of Yuyudhana's chariot. O king! At this, Satyaki shot arrows towards Duryodhana's chariot and because those arrows were shot and descended on all sides, the place became violent. A great sound arose, like that of a fire burning a great forest.

'"On seeing that Madhava, supreme among rathas, was proving to be superior, Karna desired to protect your son and quickly advanced. However, the immensely strong Bhimasena could not tolerate this. He swiftly advanced against Karna and released many arrows. Karna severed those sharp arrows and laughed. He used his arrows to sever his[76] bow and arrows and killed his charioteer. Pandava Bhimasena angrily grasped a club and in that battle, used it to crush the standard, bow and charioteer of his enemy. Karna could not tolerate this and continued to fight with Bhimasena. In that battle, he used diverse nets of arrows and many kinds of weapons.

'"When that fierce encounter was going on, the king who was Dharma's son spoke these words to the bulls among men, the tigers among men from the Panchalas and the Matsyas. 'They are our lives. They are our heads. They are immensely strong warriors. Those bulls among men are engaged with the sons of Dhritarasthra. Why are all of you stationed here, like foolish people who are bereft of their senses? Go there, where the rathas on my side are fighting. All of you should place the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront. Get rid of your fever.[77] Whether you are victorious, or whether you are slain, you will go towards the supreme objective. If you win, you will perform many sacrifices and offer large quantities of donations at these sacrifices. If you are slain, you will be united with the gods and attain sacred worlds.' Having been thus urged by the king, those brave maharathas started to fight. They divided themselves into four formations and quickly advanced against Drona. The Panchalas advanced from one side and struck Drona with many arrows. With Bhimasena at the forefront, others surrounded him from another side. The sons of Pandu had three cunning maharathas—the twins and Bhimasena. They loudly addressed Dhananjaya. 'O Arjuna! Quickly attack the Kurus who are following Drona. If the protectors are killed, Panchala[78] will kill him.' At this, Partha violently attacked the Kouraveyas and Drona attacked the Panchalas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront.

'"Then Drona caused a great carnage among the Panchalas. He was like an enraged Shakra causing destruction among the danavas in earlier times. O great king! The enemy warriors were slaughtered by Drona's weapons. However, because those maharathas were spirited, they were not frightened of Drona in the battle. O great king! Though they were slaughtered and confounded, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas fought against maharatha Drona. The Panchalas surrounded him from all directions and roared loudly, as they were killed by his arrows and lances. On seeing that the great-souled Panchalas were being killed in the battle and shattered because of Drona's weapons, the Pandavas were overcome by fear. O great king! There was a great destruction of large numbers of horses and men in that battle. On seeing this, the Pandaveyas lost all hope of victory. 'Drona knows about supreme weapons. He will probably destroy all of us. He is like a raging fire amidst dry kindling, when winter is over. In this battle, there is no one who is even capable of glancing at him.'[79]

'"On seeing that the sons of Kunti were frightened and afflicted by Drona's arrows, the intelligent Keshava, who wished to ensure their welfare, spoke these words to Arjuna. 'He is incapable of being defeated in an encounter, even if the slayer of Vritra advances to do battle, at the head of a large number of chariots. O Pandava! Therefore, to ensure victory, abandon dharma and resort to yoga.[80] The one with the golden horses will kill all of us in this battle. It is my view that if Ashvatthama is killed, he will not fight. Let some virtuous man tell him that he[81] has been killed in the battle.' O king! But this idea did not please Dhananjaya, Kunti's son. However, the others accepted it. And so did Yudhishthira, after some reluctance. O king! There was a gigantic elephant in his army and it was named Ashvatthama. With his club, the mighty-armed Bhima killed it. In the battle, Bhimasena then approached Drona, as if ashamed. He began to loudly exclaim, 'Ashvatthama has been killed.' The elephant known by the name of Ashvatthama had been killed. Knowing this in his mind, Bhima uttered a falsehood. On hearing these extremely unpleasant words from Bhima, Drona thought about this. His limbs swooned, like sand in water. But knowing about the valour of his son, he doubted that this was the truth. On hearing about the death, he did not lose his fortitude, or tremble. Having recovered his senses in a short while, Drona was comforted. He remembered that his son was incapable of being routed by enemies.

'"He attacked Parshata, wishing to kill the one who was destined to kill him. He enveloped him with thousands of sharp arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. Twenty thousand bulls among men from the Panchalas covered him with arrows from every direction, as he roamed around in that battle. Drona, the scorcher of enemies, invoked a brahmastra in great anger, for the sake of killing those brave ones. Drona roamed around, killing all the Somakas. In that great battle, he brought down the heads of the Panchalas. He severed their arms, which were like clubs and were adorned with golden ornaments. In that encounter, the kings were killed by Bharadvaja's son. They were strewn around on the ground, like trees brought down by a storm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Elephants and large numbers of horses were brought down. The earth became impassable because of the mire resulting from the flesh and blood. Having killed twenty thousand Panchalas, Drona roamed around on his chariot. He was stationed in that battle, flaming like a fire without smoke. Again enraged, Bharadvaja's powerful son used a broad-headed arrow to sever Vasudana's head from his body.[82] He next killed five hundred Matsyas, six thousand Srinjayas, ten thousand elephants and ten thousand horses. Drona was stationed in the battle, for the sake of the destruction of the kshatriyas. On seeing this, the rishis—Vishvamitra, Jamadagni, Bharadvaja, Goutama, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Atri, others who lived in Brahma's world, the Sikatas, the Prishnis, Garga, the Balakhilyas,[83] the Marichis, the Bhrigus, the Angirases and other maharshis with subtle forms—quickly arrived, led by the god of fire. All of them spoke to Drona, the adornment of a battle. 'You are fighting a battle characterized by adharma. The time for your death has arrived. O Drona! Look at all of us assembled here and cast aside your weapons in this battle. You should not perform cruel deeds like these yet again. You know about the Vedas and the Vedangas.[84] You are devoted to the dharma of truth. In particular, you are a brahmana. You should not perform such acts. Cast aside this veil of ignorance and base yourself on the eternal. The time that you were to spend in the world of men is now over.' Having heard their words and also the words of Bhimasena, he became distressed in that battle and looked towards Dhrishtadyumna.

'"He was tormented and pained and asked Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, whether his son had indeed been killed or not. Drona was firm in his mind that Partha[85] would not utter a falsehood, even for the sake of all the prosperity in the three worlds. It is for this reason that he asked him and no one else. Since the days of childhood, he had always hoped to hear the truth from Pandava. Knowing that Drona, the lord of a battle, was capable of emptying the earth of the Pandavas, Govinda was pained and spoke to Dharmaraja. 'If Drona is enraged and fights for even half a day, I tell you truthfully that your army will be annihilated. Save us from Drona. In this situation, falsehood is superior to truth. If one utters a lie for the sake of saving lives, one is not touched by the taint of falsehood.' When they were conversing, Bhimasena said, 'O great king! As soon as I heard about the means for killing the great-souled one, I immersed myself in the Malava soldiers of Indravarma. There was an elephant named Ashvatthama and it was like Shakra's elephant. Exhibiting my valour, I killed it in the battle and told Drona that it had been killed. "O brahmana! Ashvatthama has been killed. Stop fighting." O bull among men! He did not believe that I had spoken the truth. Desiring victory, pay attention to Govinda's words. O king! Tell Drona that Sharadvati's[86] son has been killed. O king! If those words come from you, the bull among brahmanas will not fight any more. O lord of men! In the world of men, you are renowned as one who speaks the truth.' O great king! Hearing his words and urged by Krishna's words, he decided to say what he had been asked to speak. Yudhishthira feared a lie, but was also immersed in the prospect of victory. O king! He said that he had been killed, but added the words elephant indistinctly.[87] Before this, his chariot used to be borne four fingers above the ground. However, after he uttered that falsehood, his chariot started to touch the earth. On hearing Yudhishthira's words, maharatha Drona was tormented by sorrow on account of his son. He no longer wished to live. He thought that he had caused injury to the great-souled Pandavas. In his mind, he thought about the words of the rishis and about what he had heard about his son's death. He lost his senses and was supremely anxious.

'"O king! The scorcher of enemies glanced towards Dhrishtadyumna and was no longer capable of fighting as he had done earlier. On seeing that he was extremely anxious and that he had lost his senses because of sorrow, Dhrishtadyumna, the son of the king of Panchala, attacked him. Drupada, Indra among kings, had performed a great sacrifice and had obtained him for Drona's destruction, from the bearer of sacrificial oblations.[88] He now picked up a terrible bow that rumbled like the clouds. The bowstring was firm and he affixed a divine arrow that was like a venomous serpent. Wishing to kill Drona, Panchala affixed the arrow, which was like a venomous serpent, on the bow. The form of the arrow, fixed on the circle of the bow, was like that of an immensely radiant fire. The bow looked like the sun in the sky, when summer is over. Parshata stretched that flaming bow. The soldiers saw this and thought that the time of destruction had come. On seeing it aimed towards him, Bharadvaja's powerful son thought that the end of his bodily life had arrived. O Indra among kings! The preceptor made efforts to counter it, but the great-souled one's weapons no longer manifested themselves.[89] Though he had used them for four days and a night, they had not been exhausted. However, with one-third of the day[90] having passed, the arrows were exhausted. His arrows were exhausted and he was overcome by grief on account of his son. The diverse divine weapons no longer appeared before him. Therefore, he decided to cast aside his weapons, as the sages had asked him to. But he still possessed energy and could fight like a superman. He picked up a divine bow given to him by Angirasa. With arrows that were like a brahmana’s curse, he continued to fight with Dhrishtadyumna. Angry and intolerant, he enveloped Dhrishtadyumna with a great shower of arrows. Using his sharp arrows, Drona severed his arrows into a hundred fragments and brought down his standard, bow and charioteer. Dhrishtadyumna laughed and picked up another bow. Using sharp arrows, he pierced him back between the breasts. Having been severely pierced, the great archer was frightened in that encounter. However, with a broad-headed arrow that was sharp at the edges, he sliced down that great bow.[91] O lord of the earth! He severed his bow and arrows and everything that the invincible one possessed, with the exception of a club and a sword. Extremely angry, the scorcher of enemies assumed a wrathful form and pierced Dhrishtadyumna with nine sharp arrows that were capable of robbing lives. Maharatha Dhrishtadyumna, immeasurable in his soul, mixed up his horses and his chariot with the horses and chariot of his adversary and then invoked a brahmastra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The horses were as fleet as the wind and those with the complexion of pigeons were mixed with those that were red.[92] It was beautiful. They were like clouds tinged with lightning, roaring at the advent of the monsoon. O great king! They were thus mingled in the field of battle and looked beautiful. The brahmana, immeasurable in his soul, sliced down the joints of Dhrishtadyumna’s arrows, wheels and chariot. His bow was severed. He was without a chariot. His horses were killed. His charioteer was slain. Facing a grave difficulty, the brave one grasped a supreme club. As it was being hurled towards him, the angry maharatha Drona, for whom truth was his valour, used his sharp arrows to strike it down.

‘“On seeing that Drona, tiger among men, had destroyed it with his arrows, he grasped a sparkling sword that was as radiant as the sun and was decorated with the signs of one hundred moons. The virtuous ones thought that there was no doubt that the time had come for the great-souled Panchala to kill the foremost among preceptors. Maharatha

Dhrishtadyumna attacked with the sword that was as radiant as the sun and was decorated with the signs of one hundred moons. He stood on the seat of his chariot and on the other chariot.[93] He wished to perform an extremely difficult task and shattered the breast of Bharadvaja's son in the battle. He stationed himself on the pole of the chariot and on the yoke. He killed half of those red horses and was applauded by the soldiers. Since he was stationed under those red horses, Drona could not find an opportunity to strike him and it was extraordinary. He roamed around swiftly, like a hawk desiring meat. That is how he sought to strike Drona in that encounter. Angry, the valiant Drona used iron javelins to slay, one by one, all the horses with the complexions of pigeons that were yoked to the chariot.[94] Having been slain, Dhrishtadyumna's horses fell down on the ground. O lord of the earth! The red horses were freed from that mingling of chariots. On seeing that the horses had been killed by the foremost of brahmanas, maharatha Parshata, Yajnasena's son and foremost among warriors, could not tolerate this. He was without a chariot. The supreme among wielders of the sword grasped a sword. O king! He descended on Drona, like Vinata's son[95] swooping down on a serpent. O king! Wishing to kill Bharadvaja's son, his appearance was beautiful. It was like Vishnu's supreme form when he killed Hiranyakashipu.[96] He traversed diverse paths and exhibited twenty-one techniques.[97] He whirled and leapt up. He struck and sprung forward. He lunged forward and retreated. With the sword and the shield, he circled and turned the other way. In excitement, Parshata descended and exhibited these.

'"The brahmana shot one thousand arrows and struck down Dhrishtadyumna's sword and the shield decorated with one hundred moons. Those arrows were called vaitastikas[98] and were used for fighting at close quarters. Drona used such arrows. Other than him, only Sharadvata, Partha, Drona's son, Vaikartana, Pradyumna, Yuyudhana and Abhimanyu possessed such arrows. The preceptor wished to kill his student,[99] who was like his own son, and carefully affixed a firm and supreme arrow. However, while your son and the great-souled Karna looked on, the descendant of the Shini lineage sliced it down with ten sharp arrows and rescued Dhrishtadyumna, who was about to be devoured by the preceptor's mouth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, roamed around in the paths of the chariots and was within the reach of Drona, Karna and Kripa. On seeing this, the great-souled Vishvaksena[100] and Dhananjaya honoured Varshneya[101] and applauded him, since the undecaying one had repulsed the divine weapons of all the warriors. Vishvaksena and Dhananjaya descended on the soldiers. Dhananjaya told Krishna, 'O Keshava! Behold. Satyaki, for whom truth is his valour, and who is the extender of the Madhu lineage, is sporting around before the preceptor. This gives me great delight and also to Madri's two sons, Bhima and King Yudhishthira. Satyaki is roaming around in this battle, with skills acquired through learning. The extender of the deeds of the Vrishni lineage seems to be toying with those maharathas. The siddhas and the soldiers are astounded. On seeing that Satvata is invincible in battle, they are honouring him and applauding him. All the warriors on both sides are honouring his deeds.'"'

CHAPTER 1142(165)[102]

'Sanjaya said, "As those kings clashed, that field of battle became cruel. It was as if an enraged Rudra was killing animals. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arms, heads, bows, shattered bows and whisks were strewn around in the battle. There were shattered wheels and chariots. Giant standards were brought down. Brave riders were killed and scattered around on the ground. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Warriors were mangled by descending arrows. In that great battle, they were seen to make many different kinds of attempts to move. The terrible battle that raged was like that between the gods and the asuras. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira spoke to the kshatriyas there. 'O maharathas! Control yourselves and attack the one who was born in a pot. The brave Parshata has engaged with Bharadvaja's son. To the best of his strength, he is trying to kill Bharadvaja’s son. From what we can see of his form in the great battle today, in this encounter, the angry Parshata will bring down Drona. Unite and protect him from the one who was born in a pot.’ Thus commanded by Yudhishthira, the maharatha Srinjayas wished to kill Bharadvaja’s son and attacked in unison. On seeing that all of them were descending, the maharatha who was Bharadvaja’s son powerfully attacked them, knowing that he was mortal. As he advanced, unwavering in his aim, the earth trembled. Turbulent winds began to blow, inspiring fear in the soldiers. Giant meteors seemed to issue from the sun and fell down. They were blazing in their heat and seemed to indicate great fear. O venerable one! The weapons of Bharadvaja’s son blazed. Chariots rattled loudly. Horses shed tears. The maharatha who was Bharadvaja’s son seemed to have been robbed of his energy. The rishis, knowledgeable about the brahman, had spoken to him about ascending to heaven. He decided to give up his life by fighting a fair battle. Drupada’s soldiers surrounded him from all four directions. But Drona roamed around in that battle, consuming the kshatriyas. The scorcher of enemies killed twenty thousand kshatriyas. With his sharp, pointed and fierce arrows, he killed another one hundred thousand. He was stationed in that battle, like a fire without smoke. To destroy the kshatriyas, he based himself on his brahmana qualities.

‘“Bhima saw that Panchala was without a chariot. He was without his weapons and powerless. The great-souled one was distressed. Therefore, the scorcher of enemies swiftly advanced and took Panchala up on his own chariot. Glancing towards Drona, he said, ‘With your exception, there is no other man who can venture to fight with the preceptor. Kill him quickly. The burden of his death has been placed on you.’ Thus addressed, the mighty-armed one swiftly picked up a new, firm and supreme weapon[103] that was capable of bearing all loads. In that encounter, he angrily shot arrows towards the irresistible Drona. Wishing to counter the preceptor, he enveloped him with a shower of arrows. Those angry and foremost ones, ornaments of a battle, countered each other. They released brahmastras and many other divine weapons. O great king! Parshata covered Drona with great weapons in that battle and destroyed all the weapons of Bharadvaja's son. The undecaying one began to kill the Vasatis, Shibis, Bahlikas and Kouravas, who were protecting Drona in the battle. O king! At that time, Dhrishtadyumna covered all the directions with his nets of arrows. He was as resplendent as the sun in the sky, with all its rays. Drona severed his bow and pierced him with arrows sharpened on stone. Pierced severely in his inner organs, he felt supreme pain.

'"O Indra among kings! In great anger, Bhima grasped Drona's chariot and slowly spoke these words to him. 'There are those who are brahmanas only in name.[104] They are not satisfied with their own indicated duties. They are skilled. But had they not fought, this destruction of kshatriyas would not have occurred. It is known that non-violence towards all beings is supreme dharma. Brahmanas are the source of this. You are supreme among all those who know about the brahman. However, you have killed large numbers of *shvapaka*s,[105] mlecchas and many others. O brahmana! You are ignorant and stupid. You have done this for your son and your wife and because you desire riches. For the sake of a single person, you have killed many. Though you know about dharma, you have done this for your son. They have been engaged in their own indicated duties. But you have acted against your own indicated duties. Why are you not ashamed? He[106] has been brought down and is lying down, behind your back, and you do not know. Dharmaraja told you about this and you should not doubt his words.' Having been thus addressed by Bhimasena, Drona cast aside his bow. Wishing to cast aside all his weapons, the one with dharma in his soul loudly said, 'O Karna! O Karna! O great archer! O Kripa! O Duryodhana! Make careful efforts in this battle. I am saying this repeatedly. May you be safe from the Pandavas. I am going to cast aside my weapons.' O great king! Having said this, he loudly began to call out to Drona's son. In that battle, he abandoned his weapons and sank down on the floor of his chariot. He gave assurance to all beings and resorted to yoga.

'"On detecting that opportunity, Dhrishtadyumna arose. He leapt down from his chariot, grasped a sword and violently attacked Drona. A great lamentation arose among all beings, humans and inferior species, when they saw that Drona had come under Dhrishtadyumna's control. They loudly lamented and also uttered words of shame. Having abandoned his weapons, Drona was established in supreme tranquility. Having spoken those words, the immensely ascetic one resorted to yoga and was a mass of brightness. The preceptor ascended to heaven, which is so difficult for even virtuous ones to attain. As he ascended, it seemed to us that there were two suns in the sky. The entire sky seemed to be full of one mass of brightness and it seemed to be night when Bharadvaja's son disappeared. In an instant, that mass of energy vanished. Confused sounds of delight were heard from the residents of heaven. Drona ascended to Brahma's world and Dhrishtadyumna was confused.[107] There were only five of us, born in the wombs of humans, who saw the great-souled one, united with yoga, attain that supreme objective. They were I, Partha Dhananjaya, the brahmana Kripa Sharadvata, Varshneya Vasudeva and Dharmaraja Pandava. O great king! None of the others could see Bharadvaja's intelligent son. They did not know that the great one had departed, united with yoga. All the other men did not know that he had attained the supreme objective. None of them saw that he had left, in the company of the bulls among the rishis. The preceptor, the scorcher of enemies, resorted to yoga and went to Brahma's world.

'"His limbs were mangled with hundreds of arrows and he had cast aside his weapons. All the beings were supremely pained and censured Parshata. Though they spoke to him in this way, he grasped the body, which was bereft of life, by the hair and dragged it. With the sword, he severed the head from the body. Since Bharadvaja's son had been brought down, he was filled with great delight. In that battle, he roared like a lion and whirled his sword. His[108] grey hair hung down, up to his ears. He was dark. He was eighty-five years in age. But he had roamed around on the field of battle like one who was sixteen years old. The mighty-armed Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, said, 'O Drupada's son! Let the preceptor remain alive. Do not kill him. He should not be killed.’[109] The soldiers had also said that he should not be killed. Arjuna, overcome with compassion, had said this repeatedly. Arjuna was overcome with compassion and so were all the kings. But disregarding them, Dhrishtadyumna killed Drona, bull among men, on the floor of his chariot. Covered with blood, that scorcher of enemies then jumped down from the chariot. His limbs were red, he was as difficult to look at as the sun, and the soldiers and others saw that he had been killed in the battle.[110] O king! Before those on your side, Dhrishtadyumna, the great archer, flung down Bharadvaja’s son’s large head. O king! On seeing the head of Bharadvaja’s son, those on your side lost all enterprise. Making up their minds to run away, they fled in all the directions. Drona followed the path of the stars and ascended to heaven. O king! I witnessed the nature of Drona’s death, because of the favours of the rishi Krishna, Satyavati’s son.[111] He ascended like a flaming and smokeless meteor. I saw the immensely radiant one ascend to heaven.

‘“When Drona was killed, the Kurus, the Pandavas and the Srinjayas were distressed. They ran away at great speed and the soldiers were dispersed. In that battle, many horses were killed with sharp arrows. When Drona was killed, those on your side lost their spirits. They were defeated and suffered from great fear about what would happen next. They lost control over their selves and thought that they had lost both.[112] The kings searched for the severed body of Bharadvaja’s son. O king! But because the field was covered with headless torsos, they could not find it. Having obtained victory, the Pandavas thought about the great fame that would follow. They made loud sounds with their arrows and roared like lions. O king! In the midst of the soldiers, Bhimasena and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna were seen to embrace each other. Bhima spoke to Parshata, the scorcher of enemies. ‘O Parshata! I will embrace you again, as the victorious one, when the wicked son of a suta and Dhritarashtra’s evil son have been killed in the battle.’ Having said this, Bhima was filled with great joy. Pandava made the earth tremble with the slapping of his arms. Terrified by that sound, those on your side fled from the battle. They abandoned the dharma of kshatriyas and devoted themselves to running away. O lord of the earth! Having obtained victory, the Pandavas were delighted. Because their enemies were destroyed in the battle, they were overjoyed. O king! When Drona was killed, the Kurus were afflicted with arrows. With their leader slain, they were shattered. They were overcome with supreme sorrow. They lost their senses and lost their enterprise. With their energy destroyed, they were full of lassitude.

'"They lamented loudly and surrounded your son. They were covered with dust. They trembled and glanced in the ten directions. Their voices were choked with tears, like the daityas after Hiranyaksha's city was destroyed.[113] They surrounded the king, like small animals that were terrified. Your son was unable to remain amidst them and moved away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your warriors were overcome by hunger and thirst and were exhausted. They were severely scorched by the sun and were cheerless in their hearts. They were enraged on seeing the fall of Bharadvaja's son, which was like the sun falling down or the ocean drying up, or Meru moving or Vasava being defeated. O king! The Kouravas were frightened and began to run away. On seeing that the one on the golden chariot had been killed, Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, fled with the other frightened rathas, but faster than the others. The son of a suta also fled with his large army and the army ran away with great force, with its standards. Shalya, the lord of Madra, glanced here and there and fled out of fear, with an army that had chariots, elephants and horses stationed in front. While many of the foremost ones had been slain, Sharadvata fled with the many elephants and foot soldiers that remained, saying that this was a great calamity. O king! Kritavarma fled on swift horses, surrounded by the remnants from the divisions of the Bhojas, the Kalingas, the Arattas and the Bahlikas. O king! On seeing that Drona had been brought down, Uluka was terrified and fled with large numbers of frightened infantry. Duhshasana was handsome and young. He possessed valour and all the good signs. However, he was also extremely anxious and fled, surrounded by elephants. O great king! Maharatha Duryodhana fled, surrounded by elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. The remnants of the army were routed and ran away, astride elephants, chariots and dark horses. The men lost their enterprise and their energy and thought that the army had been destroyed. O lord! Abandoning their armour, those on your side ran away. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The soldiers loudly called out to each other, 'Stay. Remain.' But they themselves did not remain there. They abandoned their chariots and their ornamented charioteers. Other warriors climbed onto their horses, or swiftly fled on foot. The soldiers were frightened and lost all their energy. They were terrified.

'"Drona's son was the only one who advanced against the enemy, like a crocodile against a current. Indomitable in battle, he killed many kinds of Pandu soldiers. He was like a crazy elephant in his valour and freed himself from many difficult situations. When he saw that the soldiers were running away, having made up their minds to flee, Drona's son approached Duryodhana and spoke to him. 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Why are the soldiers running away and why are they frightened? O Indra among kings! They are running away in the battle. Why are you not restraining them? O lord of men! You do not seem to be your natural self either. Karna and the other kings are also not stationed here. In no other encounter have the soldiers run away in this fashion. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Why have your soldiers been reduced to this state? O king! Has a lion among rathas in your army been killed? O Kourava! Tell me everything about why this state has come to pass.' Having heard what Drona's son said, Duryodhana, the bull among kings, was incapable of telling him the terrible and unpleasant news. Your son was immersed in an ocean of grief, like a shattered boat. On seeing Drona's son stationed on his chariot, his voice choked with tears. The king shame-facedly told Sharadvata, 'O fortunate one! Before all the others, you explain why all the soldiers are running away.' The king went to Sharadvata and repeatedly entreated him that he should tell Drona's son about how Drona had been brought down.

'"Kripa said, 'We placed Drona, supreme among rathas on earth, ahead of us and began to fight with only the Panchalas. A battle with a melee of the Kurus and the Somakas then commenced. They roared at each other and brought down weapons on each other's bodies. Drona, bull among men, released the brahmastra and killed hundreds and thousands of enemies with his broad-headed arrows. In particular, goaded by destiny, Pandavas, Kekayas, Matsyas and Panchalas approached Drona's chariot in that battle and were destroyed. With his brahmastra, Drona consumed and sent one thousand lions among rathas and two thousand elephants to the land of the dead. His grey hair hung down up to his ears. He was dark. He was eighty-five years old. However, in that encounter, the aged Drona roamed around like one who was sixteen years old. He destroyed the soldiers and killed the kings. Though the Panchalas were angered, they were made to retreat. Part of the forces was shattered and retreated. The conqueror of enemies[114] invoked a divine weapon that was as resplendent as a sun that has arisen. The powerful one reached amidst the Pandus, with his arrows as rays. Your father was like the midday sun and was difficult to look at. They were scorched by Drona, as if by the blazing sun. Their valour was scorched. They lost their enterprise. They were bereft of their senses. On seeing that they were afflicted by Drona's arrows, Madhusudana, who wished for the victory of the sons of Pandu, spoke these words. "He is supreme among the wielders of weapons. He is like the leader of a herd of leaders. He is incapable of being vanquished by the enemy in battle, even if it were to be the slayer of Vritra himself. O Pandavas! Therefore, abandon dharma and seek to ensure victory. Otherwise, the one on the golden chariot will kill all of you in the battle. It is my view that he will not fight if Ashvatthama has been killed. Therefore, let someone utter a falsehood and tell him that he[115] has been killed in the battle." Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, did not approve of these words. But all the others approved, Yudhishthira with great difficulty. Bhimasena shamefacedly told your father that Ashvatthama had been killed, but your father did not believe him. Suspecting that this was a lie, your father, who was devoted to his son, asked Dharmaraja whether you had actually been killed or not. Yudhishthira was scared of speaking a lie, but was addicted to the prospect of victory. He said that Ashvatthama had been killed and indistinctly added that it was an elephant. This belonged to Indravarma from Malava and was as large as a mountain. It was killed by Bhima. He[116] approached Drona and spoke these words. “You are wielding weapons for Ashvatthama’s sake. You live for the sake of beholding him. He has always been your beloved son. But he has been brought down.” On hearing this extremely unpleasant news, the preceptor was distressed. He gave up his divine weapons and no longer fought, as he had earlier. He was extremely anxious and his senses were numb with grief. On seeing this, the son of the king of Panchala, the performer of cruel deeds, attacked. The one who knew about the nature of the worlds[117] saw the one who was destined to be the cause of his death. In the battle, he abandoned his divine weapons and decided to die.[118] Parshata grasped his hair with his left hand. Ignoring the loud words spoken by the brave ones, he severed his head. Everyone said, “Do not kill the one who should not be killed.” Arjuna jumped down from his chariot and quickly ran, with his arms raised. He repeatedly exclaimed, “O one who knows about dharma! Let the preceptor remain alive. Do not kill him.” O bull among men! But though he was restrained by the Kouravas and by Arjuna, he cruelly killed your father. That is the reason all the soldiers are running away, afflicted by fear. O unblemished one! With your father slain, we have also lost all initiative.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “On hearing of his father’s death in the battle, Drona’s son was overcome by fierce rage, like a snake that has been stepped on, by the foot.”’

Section Seventy-Two

Narayana Astra Moksha Parva

This parva has 538 shlokas and eight chapters.

Chapter 1143(166): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1144(167): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1145(168): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1146(169): 62 shlokas
Chapter 1147(170): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1148(171): 69 shlokas
Chapter 1159(172): 94 shlokas
Chapter 1150(173): 103 shlokas

This section is named after the release (moksha) from the divine narayana weapon. Angry at Drona's death, Ashvatthama invokes the naryana astra, which was obtained from Narayana. This weapon cannot be countered by fighting and Krishna advises the Pandavas to lay down their weapons. Ashvatthama then kills Pourava Vriddhakshatra, Sudarshana from Malava and the prince of Chedi. Asvatthama's divine weapons are countered by Krishna and Arjuna. The section ends with the praise of Shiva. This section also ends Drona Parva and the fifteenth day of the war.

CHAPTER 1143(166)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! On hearing that his aged brahmana father had been killed by Dhrishtadyumna through adharma, what did Ashvatthama say? Human, varuna, agneya, brahma, aindra and narayana weapons were always vested in the valiant one.[1] O Sanjaya! He was always devoted to dharma. On hearing that the preceptor had been killed by Dhrishtadyumna through the use of adharma, what did Ashvatthama say? The great-souled one obtained his knowledge of Dhanurveda from Rama.[2] Wishing to be like a preceptor towards his son, he gave him all these divine weapons. There is only one person in the world whom men desire to possess qualities that are superior to those in their own selves. That is the son. There is no one else. All great-souled preceptors pass on the secrets to their sons and to their devoted students. O Sanjaya! He especially obtained all those skills. In a battle, Sharadvati's brave son has become like a second Drona. He is like Rama in knowledge of the sacred texts and like Purandara in battle. He is Kartavirya's equal in valour and Brihaspati's equal in intelligence.[3] The young one is like a mountain in his fortitude and like the fire in his energy. He is like the ocean in gravity and like a serpent's venom in his anger. He is firm in wielding the bow and has conquered exhaustion. He is the foremost among rathas in the world. He is as swift as the wind in speed. He roams around like an enraged Yama. When he is stationed in battle, the earth itself seems to suffer. Truth is his valour and the brave one is not distressed in battle. He has learnt the Vedas. He knows about sacrifices. He is skilled in Dhanurveda. Like the great ocean and like Rama, Dasharatha's son, he is not agitated. In the battle, a person who followed dharma was killed by Dhrishtadyumna through the use of adharma. On hearing about the preceptor's death, what did Ashvatthama say? The great-souled one was created for Dhrishtadyumna's death, just as Panchala, Yajnasena's son, was generated for Drona's destruction. He[4] was killed violently by a cruel and wicked one who did not possess foresight. On hearing about the preceptor's death, what did Ashvatthama say?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O bull among men! On hearing that his father had been killed through deception by the wicked one, Drona's son's eyes filled with tears and he was angry. O Indra among kings! Because of the rage, his body seemed divine. It was like that of the Destroyer, wishing to consume beings at the end of a yuga. He repeatedly wiped his eyes, which were full of tears. He sighed in anger and spoke these words to Duryodhana. 'My father was brought down by inferior ones after he had cast aside his weapons. A wicked act has been committed by those who should have upheld the standard of dharma. Dharma's son acted ignobly and cruelly. I have heard everything about all that now. If one is engaged in a battle, there will either be victory, or there will be defeat.

O king! Of the two, death is always praised. If death results in a battle where the fight is according to norms of fairness, there should not be sorrow. This is what brahmanas have said. There is no doubt that my father has gone to the world reserved for heroes. I should not sorrow for that tiger among men because he has been slain. However, though he was engaged in dharma, his hair was seized while all the soldiers looked one. That is tearing out my vitals. Because of desire, anger, ignorance, insolence and folly, acts of adharma are performed to subdue others. In that way, Parshata has performed this great act of adharma. The evil-souled one has acted cruelly and has certainly disregarded me. Dhrishtadyumna will witness the extremely terrible consequences of that. He has performed an extremely ignoble deed and so has the liar Pandava. They resorted to deception against the preceptor, when he had cast aside his weapons. That is the reason the earth will drink Dharmaraja's blood today. I will use every means to kill Panchala. I will kill Dhrishtadyumna, the perpetrator of a wicked deed, in the battle, whether the task be a gentle or a violent one. O Kourava! Having killed Panchala, I will obtain peace. O tiger among men! This is the reason men desire sons, so that they may be saved from great calamities in this world and the next. My father was reduced to a miserable state, as if he had no relatives, and this was while I, his son and his student, was still alive, like a mountain. Shame on my divine weapons. Shame on my arms. Shame on my valour. Though he possessed a son, Drona's hair was seized. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I will act so that I am freed of the debt I owe to my father, who has now gone to the world hereafter. Noble ones never praise themselves. However, because I am angry at my father's death, I am now speaking about my manliness. The Pandavas, with Janardana, will witness my valour today. I will crush all the soldiers, as if it is the end of a yuga. O bull among men! While I am stationed on my chariot, gods, gandharvas, asuras and rakshasas will be incapable of defeating me in the battle today. In the world, there is no one superior to me and Arjuna in use of weapons. I will blaze amidst the soldiers, like the rays of the sun, and use weapons created by the gods. In the battle today, I will use them against the son of the one with the lean horses.[5] I will exhibit my valour and crush the Pandavas. O king! Today, all the directions will be enveloped with showers of my sharp arrows and those on our side will see this. I will shroud everything with nets of arrows that make a fearful noise. I will bring down the enemy, like trees uprooted by a violent storm. O Kouravya! Bibhatsu, Janardana, Bhimasena, the twins, King Yudhishthira, the evil-souled Parshata, Shikhandi and Satyaki do not know the weapons that I possess, or techniques for releasing and withdrawing them. In earlier times, Narayana appeared before my father in the form of a brahmana, who worshipped him in accordance with the proper rites and tendered him offerings. Having received them himself, the illustrious one offered to grant him a boon. My father asked for the supreme narayana weapon. O king! The illustrious one, supreme among the gods, told him,[6] "There will never be another man who will be as great a warrior as you. O brahmana! However, you must never use this suddenly. This weapon never returns without killing the enemy at whom it has been aimed. O lord! But it is impossible to know whom it will not kill. It might even slay those who should not be killed. Therefore, it should not be used.[7] O scorcher of enemies! In a battle, this great weapon must not be used to kill those who are running away, those who have cast aside their weapons, enemies who have yielded and those who have sought refuge. In a battle, if it is used to kill those who should not be slain, it will always oppress the user himself." My father received it. The lord also told me, "In a battle, with this weapon, your energy will blaze and you will be able to shower down many divine weapons." Having said this, the illustrious lord went to heaven. That is how my relative[8] obtained the narayana weapon. With it, I will drive away the Pandavas, Panchalas, Matysas and Kekayas in the encounter, like Sachi's consort[9] against the asuras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With this, my arrows will be showered wherever I wish and destroy the valour of the enemy. I will be stationed in the battle and bring down innumerable showers of stones and use arrows with iron heads to drive away the maharathas. There is no doubt that I will bring down many different kinds of battleaxes. O scorcher of enemies! With the great *narayanastra*, I will destroy the enemy and repulse the Pandavas. The wicked Panchala hates his friends, brahmanas and his preceptor. He has performed an extremely despised deed and will not escape from me with his life.' Having heard Drona's son, the army returned.

'"Those supreme among men blew on giant conch shells. Cheerfully, they sounded drums and thousands of smaller drums. The earth roared with the sound of hooves and wheels. That tremendous sound echoed on earth, the sky and heaven. The Pandavas heard that sound, which was like the thunder of clouds. Those best of rathas united and consulted each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having spoken those words, Drona's son touched water and invoked the divine narayana weapon."'

CHAPTER 1144(167)

'Sanjaya said, "When the narayana weapon was invoked, violent winds mixed with rain began to blow, though there were no clouds in the sky. The earth trembled and the great oceans were agitated. Instead of flowing towards the ocean, the rivers flowed in an opposite direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The summits of mountains were shattered. Small animals kept the sons of Pandu to the right.[10] There was darkness and the sun became dim. Different kinds of carnivorous beings cheerfully descended there. O lord of the earth! The gods, danavas and gandharvas were terrified. On seeing ferocity, all the kings became extremely anxious. They were pained and lost their senses on witnessing the terrible and fearful form of the weapon used by Drona's son."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Sanjaya! In that battle, Drona's son was angry because his father had been killed. He was tormented by severe sorrow and made the soldiers[11] rally again. On seeing that the Kurus were attacking, what consultations did the Pandavas hold, so that Dhrishtadyumna might be protected? Tell me everything."

‘Sanjaya replied, “Earlier, Yudhishthira had seen that the sons of Dhritarashtra were running away. Now he heard them make a tremendous noise and spoke to Arjuna. ‘The preceptor, Drona, has been killed by Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, like the great asura, Vritra, slain by the one with the vajra in his hand. O Dhananjaya! The Kurus lost all hope of being victorious in the battle. They were miserable in their minds. They fled, making up their minds to protect themselves. With their parshnis and charioteers slain, some swiftly fled on their chariots. The kings were without flags, standards and umbrellas and the poles of their chariots were shattered. The seats of the chariots were broken. Some lost their senses and climbed onto horses. Some were frightened and themselves urged the horses of their chariots with their feet. With the yokes, wheels and axles broken, some were distressed and quickly fled. Others were dislodged from the backs of elephants and pinned there by iron arrows. Elephants were killed by the storms of arrows and driven away in the ten directions. Others lost their weapons and armour and their mounts took to the ground. Others were crushed by broken wheels and horses and elephants. As they fled from the enemy in fear, they loudly called out to fathers and sons. They lost their energy and were overcome by depression. They could no longer recognize each other. Some removed the armour from the severely wounded bodies of sons, fathers, friends and brothers and washed them with water. After Drona was killed, the army was quickly reduced to such a state. How has it returned again? If you know this, tell me. There are the sounds of horses neighing and elephants trumpeting. This is mingling with the loud sound from the roaring of chariot wheels. This great and fierce sound has arisen in the ocean of the Kurus. It is repeatedly arising and is making those on my side tremble. It is my view that this will swallow up the three worlds, together with Indra. I think that this fierce and loud roar is being made by the wielder of the vajra himself. On Drona being killed, Vasava is appearing on the side of the Kouravas. Our body hair is standing erect and the rathas and elephants are anxious. O Dhananjaya! What is this extremely fierce uproar that can be heard there? The Kouravas were in a shattered state. Which maharatha, like the lord of the gods, has rallied them for the sake of fighting in this battle?’

‘“Arjuna said, ‘They are ready to perform fierce deeds, basing themselves on patience. The Kouravas are making a noise and blowing on conch shells, depending on the valour of a person. After the preceptor cast aside his weapons and was slain, there should be no doubts about who that person is. The sons of Dhritarashtra have resorted to him and are roaring. The mighty-armed one is modest. He is like a crazy elephant in his gait. His face is glossy and he is the performer of fierce deeds. He has freed the Kurus from their fear. When he was born, Drona gave the wealth of one thousand cows to brahmanas. That Ashvatthama is roaring. As soon as he was born, the brave one neighed like Uchchaihshrava and the earth and the three worlds trembled because of this. On hearing this, an invisible voice named him Ashvatthama then.[12] O Pandava! That brave one is roaring now. There was the one[13] who was killed by Parshata, as if he was without a protector. It was an extremely cruel deed and his protector is now stationed there. Panchala grievously seized my preceptor’s hair. Because of that, and because of his own manliness, Drona’s son will not forgive him. Because of the kingdom, you have also spoken a falsehood to the preceptor. Though you know about dharma and are known as a virtuous person, you have performed an extremely grave deed of adharma. “Pandava knows about all forms of dharma. He is also my student. He will not utter a lie.” Thinking this, he[14] believed what you said. You spoke a lie, though you garbed it in the guise of truth when you spoke to the preceptor, since you said that an elephant had been killed. At this, he discarded his weapons and became indifferent. O king! He was bereft of his senses and became distracted. O lord! You saw what happened. Affectionate towards his son, he was unwilling to fight and was full of sorrow. Abandoning eternal dharma, the preceptor was killed by the student.[15] Though he had cast aside his weapons, your preceptor was killed and this was adharma. If you can, protect Parshata with all your advisers. With his relative slain, he will now be devoured by the preceptor’s angry son. Even if all of us try, we will not be able to protect Parshata today.

He[16] is extremely affectionate towards all beings. On hearing that his father was seized by the hair, he will destroy us in the battle today. I loudly exclaimed that the preceptor should be protected. However, transgressing his own dharma, the student slew the preceptor. We have already spent most of our lives and only a little bit is left. But now, even that little bit has been tainted by this great act of adharma. He[17] was always like a father in his affection. According to dharma, he was also our father.[18] To obtain the kingdom for a brief period, we have killed our preceptor. O lord of the earth! Dhritarashtra gave the entire earth to Bhishma and Drona and his sons, who were even more valuable. Having obtained such a livelihood from him, he always treated the others[19] well. The preceptor always loved us, even more than his son. He was not subjugated by us in the battle. He was killed by your words, when he cast aside his weapons. Had he fought, even Shatakratu[20] would not have been able to kill him. The preceptor was aged. He always did what was good for us. But we injured him. We have performed an ignoble deed for the sake of the kingdom and because of our limited intelligence. My preceptor had always known that I, Vasava's son, would have given up everything out of affection for him—sons, brothers, fathers, wives, and even life itself. But because of desire for the kingdom, I ignored him when he was being killed. O king! O lord! Because of that, I am covered with shame and have attained hell. He was a brahmana. He was an aged preceptor. He had cast aside his weapons. He was like a sage. We have killed him today, for the sake of the kingdom. It is better for us to be dead than to remain alive.'"'

CHAPTER 1145(168)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! On hearing Arjuna's words, the maharathas there did not say anything to Dhananjaya, pleasant or unpleasant. O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, mighty-armed Bhimasena was angry and spoke these words, censuring Kounteya Arjuna. 'O Partha! You speak words full of dharma, like a hermit who has retired to the forest, or like a brahmana rigid in his vows raising his staff. Saving others from injury, protecting one's own life from injury and exhibiting forgiveness towards women and the virtuous—with these qualities, a kshatriya swiftly obtains the earth and attains dharma, fame and prosperity. O extender of the lineage! You are vested with all the qualities of kshatriyas. It is not proper that you should now speak like one who is ignorant. O Kounteya! Your valour is like that of Shakra, Shachi's consort. Like the ocean does not cross the shoreline, you do not transgress dharma. Which person amongst us will not applaud you? Serving dharma, you pushed back your rage for thirteen years. O son![21] It is through good fortune that your mind has turned towards your own dharma today. O one without decay! It is through good fortune that your mind has turned towards non-violence today. With the kingdom deprived through adharma, you have turned towards dharma. Droupadi was supremely afflicted when she was brought into the assembly hall by the enemy. We were exiled to the forest, with bark and deerskin as garments. We did not deserve this, but we were made to endure it for thirteen years by the enemy. O unblemished one! These are reasons for anger, but you have abandoned your rage. Yet, you say that you are devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas in every way. "Remembering all those acts of adharma, I have united with you today. I will kill the inferior ones who have robbed us of the kingdom, together with their followers." This is what you said earlier, when we assembled to do battle. "I will strive to the utmost of my capacity." But you are censuring us now. You have said that you wish to abide by your own dharma, but you are falsifying those words now. We are afflicted by fear and your words are striking us in our inner organs. O destroyer of enemies! You are pouring a corrosive onto the sores of those who are wounded. My heart has been shattered, afflicted by the stakes of your words. You are great in your adharma. You do not know what it means to follow dharma. You have not praised us, though we have been praiseworthy. You have praised one who is not even one-sixteenth part of you.[22] You have spoken about your own self, but not about those who are vested with all the qualities. In my anger, I can rend the earth and shatter the mountains. I can hurl the terrible and heavy club that is garlanded with gold, and with it I can shatter trees that are as large as mountains and uproot them like the wind. O bull among men! You should know that your brother is such a person. O one with infinite valour! You should not be frightened of Drona's son. O Bibhatsu! Otherwise, stay here, with all the bulls among men. With the club in my hand, I will defeat him in this great battle.'

'"Then the son of the king of Panchala spoke to Partha, like Hiranyakashipu speaking to an angry and roaring Hari.[23] 'O Bibhatsu! The learned ones have laid down certain tasks for brahmanas—officiating at sacrifices, teaching, donations, performance of sacrifices, receiving gifts and sixth, studying. O Partha! You have reproached me. To which of these was Drona, who has been slain by me, devoted? He transgressed his own dharma and devoted himself to the dharma of kshatriyas. The performer of inferior deeds killed us through the use of superhuman weapons. He said that he was a brahmana, but resorted to the use of maya. O Partha! He has himself been slain through the use of maya today. So what? If Drona has been punished by me and his son roars loudly and fiercely in anger, how do I suffer because of that? I do not think it is extraordinary that Drona's son should only roar in this way. He is incapable of protecting the Kouravas and will cause their death. You say that you are devoted to dharma and have described me as my preceptor's killer. But it was for that reason that I was born from the fire, as the son of Panchala. O Dhananjaya! How can you describe him as a brahmana or a kshatriya? When he fought in the battle, he thought good and evil acts were the same. Overcome by anger, he used the brahmastra to even kill those who were unacquainted with the use of weapons. O supreme among men! Why should we not use any means to kill him? Those who know about dharma say that those who are for adharma are like poison. O Arjuna! You know about dharma and artha. Why are you censuring me? He was violent and I brought him down from his chariot. O Bibhatsu! Why are you reproaching me? You should congratulate me. O Partha! In the battle, I have severed the terrible

Drona’s head. He was like the blazing sun and like poison. I should be praised, but you are not praising me. In the battle, he slew my relatives and not those of anyone else. Having only severed his head, my fever[24] has not been assuaged. My heart is still suffering, because I did not hurl his head, like Jayadratha’s head, into the land of the nishadas.[25] O Arjuna! It has been instructed that not killing one’s enemy is tantamount to adharma. Yet again, the dharma of kshatriyas is to kill, or be killed. O Pandava! In accordance with dharma, I have killed my enemy in the battle. This is just as you killed the brave Bhagadatta, your father’s friend.[26] Having struck your grandfather[27] in the battle, you thought that you were acting in accordance with dharma. When I killed my wicked enemy, why do you not think that it is dharma? O Arjuna! The eldest Pandava is not a liar. Nor have I acted in accordance with adharma. The wicked one slew his disciples. Fight and victory will be yours.’”’

CHAPTER 1146(169)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “The great-souled one had studied the Vedas and their branches in the proper way. The complete mastery of Dhanurveda and humility were vested in him. The wicked, violent and evil-souled one, the slayer of his preceptor, injured such a Drona, the son of a maharshi. In that battle, it was through his favours that those bulls among men performed superhuman deeds, difficult for the gods and the asuras.[28] The evil-acting one injured Drona while they looked on. Were there no kshatriyas who were enraged? Did they not shame him because of this wrath? All the Parthas were there and all the kings of the earth who were archers. O Sanjaya! On hearing this, what did they tell Panchala? Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O lord of the earth! On hearing the words of the evil-acting son of Drupada, all the kings of the earth were silent. They glanced at Arjuna and censured Parshata with their sight. With tears and sighs, they said, ‘Shame! Shame!’ Yudhishthira, Bhima, the twins, Krishna and the others were shame-faced. O king! But Satyaki spoke. ‘Is there no man here who will quickly kill this wicked man, the worst of men? He is speaking unpleasant words. How are his tongue and head not shattering into a hundred fragments? When the inferior one committed the act of adharma by injuring his preceptor, why was he not brought down? Having performed this evil deed, he deserves the censure of the Parthas and all the Andhakas and Vrishnis. But he is praising himself in this assembly of men. Having performed a deed that should not have been performed, you are again showing hatred towards your preceptor. Because of that, you should be killed by us. You should not remain alive for a single instant. Who other than this wretch among men would kill a virtuous preceptor, who had dharma in his soul, and then seize him by the hair? O defiler of the lineage! You have degraded seven generations of your ancestors and seven generations of your descendants and deprived them of all their fame. You have spoken to Partha, bull among men, about Bhishma, but that great-souled one himself decided the means of his death. It was your evil-acting brother[29] who killed him. There is no one on earth who is as wicked as these two sons of Panchala. Your father truly created Shikhandi for Bhishma's destruction and the great-souled one only protected him from his death.[30] The Panchalas are inferior and have deviated from dharma. They hate their friends and their preceptors. You and your brother have only obtained censure from virtuous people. If you again speak such words in my presence, I will bring down your head with this club, which is like the vajra.' Thus addressed by Satvata Satyaki, Parshata became angry.

'"He laughed and addressed the enraged one in these harsh words. 'O Madhava! I have heard you. I have heard you. But I forgive you. You are yourself ignoble and evil, but are censuring men who are righteous. In this world, forgiveness is praised. But the wicked should not be forgiven. Evil-souled ones think that forgiving people are powerless. You are inferior in conduct. You are inferior in your soul. You are wicked in your resolution, from the tips of your hair to your toes. You wish to censure others. But Bhurishrava's arm had been severed and he was fasting to death. You were restrained from striking him. What can be more evil than that? In the battle, Drona used his divine weapons and cornered me in a vyuha. I killed him when he had cast aside his weapons. O cruel one! What was wicked about that deed? He[31] was not fighting. He had cast aside his weapons and was fasting to death, like a sage. O Satyaki! His arm was severed and he was killed by someone else.[32] What about that? The valiant one exhibited his prowess and forced you down on the ground then. Why did you not kill that supreme among men then? The noble one had already been vanquished by Partha. You then killed Somadatta's powerful and valiant son. Wherever Drona scattered the Pandu soldiers, those were the places I ventured to and shot thousands of arrows. However, you yourself performed an act that is worthy of a chandala.[33] You should be reproached. Why are you censuring me with these harsh words? O worst of the Vrishni lineage! You are the one who has performed a terrible deed, not I. You are the abode of wicked deeds. Do not speak to me again. Hold your tongue. You should not speak to me after this. This is what I am telling you with my lips. If you again speak to me foolishly in harsh words, I will fight against you and dispatch you to Vaivasvata's eternal abode with arrows. O foolish one! One cannot triumph only with dharma. Listen to the acts of adharma they[34] have performed. They have earlier deprived Pandava Yudhishthira through adharma. O Satyaki! They have oppressed Droupadi through adharma. They have exiled all the Pandavas, with Krishna,[35] to the forest. O foolish one! All their possessions were robbed through adharma. It was through adharma that the enemy deprived us of the king of Madra.[36] On this side, Bhishma, the grandfather of the Kuru lineage, was brought down through adharma. O one acquainted with dharma! Bhurishrava was slain by you through adharma. O Satvata! This is the way the enemy and the Pandaveyas have conducted themselves in this battle. Though they are brave and knowledgeable about dharma, they wished to ensure victory. Supreme dharma is difficult to discern. In that way, adharma is extremely difficult to determine. Fight with the Kouravas. Do not return to your father's abode.’ Having heard these harsh and cruel words, the handsome Satyaki seemed to tremble. When he heard these words, Satyaki’s eyes became coppery red with anger. He grasped his club and sighed like a serpent.

‘“He laid his bow down on his chariot and advanced towards Panchala. In great anger he said, ‘I will not speak harsh words to you. You deserve to be killed and I will slay you.’ The immensely strong one descended violently, in rage, on Panchala. His wrath was like that of an enraged Yama. Urged by Vasudeva, the immensely strong Bhimasena leapt down from his chariot and quickly seized him by the arms. The angry and powerful Satyaki was advancing and dragged the powerful Pandava with him, as he tried to hold him back. Bhima, supreme among strong ones, planted his feet firmly on the ground and used force to stop the bull among the Shini lineage at the sixth step. O lord of the earth! As he was seized by the strong one,[37] Sahadeva descended from his chariot and spoke these gentle words. ‘O tiger among men! O Madhava! Among our friends, there are none who are superior to the Andhakas, Vrishnis and Panchalas. The Andhakas and the Vrishnis, especially you and Krishna, do not have any friends who are superior to us. O Varshneya! Even if they look till the frontiers of the ocean, the Panchalas will not find any friends who are superior to the Pandavas and the Vrishnis. He[38] cannot think of a friend who is like you and you of someone like him. You are to us, as we are to you. You know everything about dharma. Remember the dharma that one must show towards friends. O bull among the Shini lineage! Control your anger towards Panchala and be pacified. You should forgive Parshata and let Parshata forgive you. We will also practise forgiveness. There is nothing superior to forgiveness.’ O venerable one! Shini’s descendant was pacified by Sahadeva. The son of the king of Panchala laughed and spoke these words. ‘O Bhima! Release Shini’s grandson. Free him. He prides himself in fighting. Let him advance against me, like the wind against mountains. I will destroy his pride with my sharp arrows. O Kounteya! In the encounter, I will rob him of his love for fighting and of his life.

The Kouravas are advancing. I am alone capable of performing the grave task that has arisen, one that the sons of Pandu have taken up. Else, let Phalguna counter all of them in battle and I use my arrows to bring down his[39] head. He thinks that I am like the armless Bhurishrava in the battle. Release him. Let him kill me, or let me kill him.' On hearing Panchala's words, the powerful Satyaki sighed like a serpent and trembled, seized by Bhima's arms. O venerable one! Vasudeva and Dharmaraja swiftly made great efforts to restrain those two brave ones. Though their eyes were red with rage, they were restrained by those two great archers. Wishing to fight, those bulls among kshatriyas then advanced against the enemy in the battle."'

CHAPTER 1147(170)

'Sanjaya said, "Drona's son caused a great carnage among the enemy. He was like the Destroyer, created by destiny to destroy all beings at the end of a yuga. He killed the enemy with his broad-headed arrows. The standards were like trees. The weapons were like mountain peaks. The slain elephants were like giant mountains. The horses were strewn around like *kimpurushas*.[40] The bows were like clumps of reeds. There were spears and the roars of carnivorous creatures. The place was full of large numbers of demons and yakshas. He created a mountain of corpses. The bull among men then roared powerfully and loudly and again made your son hear his oath. 'Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, disguised himself in the cloak of dharma. While the preceptor was fighting, he made him cast aside his weapons. Therefore, while he looks on, I will drive away his soldiers. I tell you truthfully that I will rout them and kill the wicked Panchala. I will kill all of them, if they fight against me in the battle. Know this to be the truth. Therefore, make your soldiers return.' On hearing these words, your son made his soldiers return, dispelling their great fear with a loud roar, like that of a lion. O king! The Kuru and Pandava soldiers clashed again. There was a fierce encounter, like that between two swelling oceans. Drona's son incited and rallied the Kouravas. At Drona's death, the Pandus and the

Panchalas also became fierce. Both sides were extremely cheerful and saw themselves as victorious. They were enraged, and with great force, advanced on that field of battle. O Indra among kings! It was like a mountain clashing against a mountain, or an ocean against another ocean. That was the way the Kurus and the Pandavas rushed against each other. The Kuru and Pandava soldiers were delighted and blew on thousands of conch shells and sounded tens of thousands of drums. The great roar that arose from the soldiers was like the roar of the ocean when it is churned. It was extraordinary.

'"Then, Drona's son invoked the narayana weapon. He aimed it at the Pandu and Panchala armies. Thousands of arrows, flaming at the tips, appeared in the sky and devoured the Pandavas, like serpents with flaming mouths. O king! In that great battle, the directions, the sky and the soldiers were enveloped in an instant, like the world being engulfed by the blazing rays of the sun. O lord of the earth! After this, iron balls appeared, like blazing stellar bodies in the clear sky. The four directions were covered by wonderful shataghnis that were like the fire. They possessed wheels and were sharp as razors. They formed circles and blazed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The sky was densely covered with these weapons. On seeing this, the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas became anxious. O lord of men! Wherever the maharatha Pandavas fought, in those spots, that weapon increased in power. They were slain by that narayana weapon. All of them were consumed, as if by a fire, and became frightened in that battle. O lord! At the end of the winter, a conflagration burns down dry wood. Like that, that weapon consumed the Pandu soldiers. On every side, the soldiers were destroyed by that weapon. On seeing this, the lord Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, was overcome by supreme terror. He saw that his soldiers were running away and in the midst, the Parthas were bereft of their senses.

'"Dharma's son spoke these words. 'O Dhrishtadyumna! Run away with the Panchala soldiers. O Satyaki! Run away home, surrounded by the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Vasudeva, with dharma in his soul, will himself think of means of saving himself. He is capable of instructing the entire world. How can I say anything to him? We should no longer fight.

I am saying this to all the soldiers. With my brothers, I will enter the fire. In this battle, we have crossed the fierce oceans that are Bhishma and Drona, extremely difficult for cowards to cross. With all our soldiers, we are now being submerged in this trifle that is Drona's son.[41] Since the preceptor, who was beneficial towards us, was brought down by me in the battle, let Bibhatsu's wishes towards me swiftly come true.[42] The child who was Subhadra's son was unskilled in fighting. He was slain by many skilled and cruel ones and was not protected by him.[43] When she was brought into the assembly hall and sought to be made a slave girl, Krishna[44] asked him a question. But he,[45] together with his son, ignored her. When everyone was exhausted, he[46] gave Dhritarashtra's son armour so that he might kill Phalguna and protect Saindhava. He possessed knowledge about brahmastra and used it against the Panchalas, headed by Satyajit.[47] They were making endeavours for your sake and were completely destroyed. We were exiled and robbed of our kingdom through adharma. Though those devoted to us sought to restrain him, he[48] asked us to leave. Our supreme well-wisher, who has performed many beneficial deeds for us, has been killed.[49] Since he has been slain, with all my relatives, I will advance towards my death.' When Kounteya had spoken in this way, Dasharha waved his arms and quickly restrained the soldiers from running away.

'"He spoke these words. 'Swiftly lay down your weapons and descend from your mounts and your horses. This is the method of countering, decreed by the great-souled one.[50] All of you descend from the elephants, the horses and the chariots onto the ground. If you are on the ground and without weapons, this weapon will not kill you. Wherever warriors fight against the strength of this weapon, in those spots, the Kouravas will become stronger. But those men who fling away their weapons and descend from their mounts, will not be slain by this weapon in the battle. But all those who seek to counter it, even in their minds, will be killed, even if they descend to the nether regions.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing Vasudeva's words, all of them flung away their weapons and cast aside any thought of fighting, even in their minds.

'"O king! On seeing that they wished to cast aside their weapons, Pandava Bhimasena cheerfully spoke these words. 'No one should, under any circumstances, cast aside weapons. I will use my arrows to quickly counter the weapon of Drona's son. My heavy club is decorated with gold. In this battle, I will roam around like Death and use it to destroy the weapon of Drona's son. There is no man who is my equal in valour, just as there is no stellar body that is equal to the sun. Behold my firm arms. They are like the trunk of a king of elephants. These are capable of bringing down a mountain, with its summit. I am the only man who has the might of ten thousand elephants. I am without a peer, just as the renowned Shakra is amidst the gods in heaven. Let them behold the strength of my arms and my broad chest in the battle, as I repulse the flaming and blazing weapon of Drona's son. While the Kurus and the Pandus look on, if there is no one else who is capable of countering the narayana weapon, I will repulse it today.' Having thus spoken, Bhima, the scorcher of enemies, advanced against Drona's son on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun and roared like the clouds. Kunti's son was dexterous, swift and valiant and in a short instant, enveloped him[51] with a net of arrows. Drona's son laughed at this and addressed him.[52] He invoked mantras and shrouded him with arrows that flamed at the tips. In that battle, Partha was enveloped with these. They were like blazing serpents, with flames emerging from their mouths. They were like golden sparks. O king! In that encounter, Bhimasena's form was like that of a mountain when the day is done, covered with fireflies. O great king! That weapon of Drona's son was aimed and increased in its influence, like a fire fanned by the wind. On seeing that the weapon, terrible in its power, was increasing in its influence, all the Pandu soldiers were overcome by great fear, with the exception of Bhima. All of them laid down their weapons on the ground. All of them alighted from their chariots, elephants and horses. When they had thrown down their weapons and descended from their mounts, the great power of that weapon descended on Bhima’s head. All beings, especially the Pandavas, uttered sounds of lamentation, when they saw that Bhimasena was covered by the energy of that weapon.”’

CHAPTER 1148(171)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Bhimasena was shrouded by that weapon, Dhananjaya released the varuna weapon to counter its energy. However, because of Arjuna’s dexterity and because he was covered by energy, no one noticed that he had been covered by the varuna weapon.[53] Bhima, with his horses, charioteer and chariot, was covered by the weapon of Drona’s son. He was like a blazing fire in the midst of another fire and it was extremely difficult to look at him. O king! Just as all stellar bodies head towards Mount Asta[54] when night is over, all those arrows descended towards Bhimasena’s chariot. O venerable one! Bhima, his chariot, his horses and his charioteer seemed to be in the midst of a fire created by Drona’s son. It was as if the entire universe, with its mobile and immobile objects, was consumed by a fire at the appointed time,[55] which then entered the mouth of the Creator. Thus did that weapon enter Bhima. It was like the sun entering the fire, or like the fire entering the sun. Such was the energy with which it penetrated that no one could see anything. The power of that weapon extended in the direction of Bhima’s chariot. And in that battle, the power of Drona’s son increased and there was no one to counter him. All the soldiers of the Pandus had laid down their weapons and were bereft of their senses. All the maharathas, with Yudhishthira at the forefront, had turned their faces away.

‘“On seeing all this, the brave and immensely radiant Arjuna and Vasudeva quickly descended from their chariot and dashed towards Bhima. There was an energy created from the strength of the weapon of Drona’s son. Those two immensely strong ones resorted to their power of maya and immersed themselves in it. Because they had cast aside their weapons, because of the use of the varuna weapon and because of their own energy, those two Krishnas were not burnt by the fire of that weapon. To pacify the narayana weapon, Nara and Narayana[56] forcefully dragged Bhima away, together with all his weapons. While he was being dragged away, maharatha Kounteya[57] continued to roar loudly and this fanned the extremely invincible and fierce weapon of Drona's son. Vasudeva said, 'O son of Pandu! O Kounteya! Though you have been restrained, why are you not retreating from this battle? If the descendants of the Kourava lineage could have been defeated through fighting, then we, and all these bulls among men, would have fought. All those on your side have descended from their chariots. O Kounteya! Therefore, descend from your chariot too.' Having thus addressed him, Krishna brought him[58] down from his chariot, though he sighed like a serpent and his eyes were red with rage. When he was brought down from the chariot onto the ground and forced to cast aside his weapons, the narayana weapon, the scorcher of enemies, was pacified. The energy, which was difficult to withstand, became pacified. All the directions and the sub-directions became clear. Auspicious winds began to blow and the animals and birds were calmed. O lord of men! The mounts and the warriors became cheerful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When its[59] fierce energy was dispelled, the intelligent Bhima looked resplendent, like the sun that arises at the end of the night. On seeing that the supreme weapon was pacified, the remnants of the Pandava army stationed themselves, wishing to kill your sons.

'"O great king! When the weapon was countered and the soldiers were stationed thus, Duryodhana spoke to Drona's son. 'O Ashvatthama! Quickly use that weapon again. The Panchalas are stationed again, desiring victory.' O venerable one! Having been thus addressed by your son, Ashvatthama sighed in great distress and spoke to the king. 'O king! This weapon cannot be brought back.[60] It cannot be used a second time. If brought back, there is no doubt that it will kill the person who uses it. O lord of men! Vasudeva devised the means for repulsing the weapon. Otherwise, it would have slain the enemy in the battle. There can be defeat or death. But death is superior to defeat. Having been defeated and forced to cast aside their[61] weapons, they are as good as dead.' Duryodhana replied, 'O son of the preceptor! O one who is supreme in the knowledge of weapons! If that weapon cannot be invoked a second time, let the slayers of the preceptor be killed with some other weapon. All the divine weapons are vested in you, just as weapons are vested in Tryambaka.[62] If you so wish, even an enraged Purandara cannot escape from you.'"

'Dhritarashtra asked, "When Drona was killed in that inferior way, that weapon was countered and Duryodhana spoke those words, what did Drona's son do next? He saw that the Parthas were stationed for battle and were roaming around at the head of the army, having been freed from the narayana weapon."

'Sanjaya replied, "Knowing the manner in which his father had been killed, the one with the tail of the lion on his banner[63] was extremely angry. He cast aside all fear and attacked Parshata. That bull among men struck that bull among men[64] with twenty kshudraka arrows and then powerfully pierced him with another five. O king! Dhrishtadyumna was like a powerful fire. O king! He pierced Drona's son with sixty-three arrows. He used twenty gold-tufted arrows sharpened on stone to pierce his charioteer and pierced his four horses with four sharp arrows. Having been pierced and pierced again, Drona's son made the earth tremble with his roars, as if he was going to rob all beings of their lives in that great battle. O king! Parshata was powerful, skilled in the use of weapons and firm in his resolution. Deciding on death rather than retreat, he attacked Drona's son. Panchala, supreme among rathas and possessing an immeasurable soul, showered down arrows on the head of Drona's son. Enraged in that battle, Drona's son enveloped him with arrows. Remembering the death of his father, he pierced him with ten arrows. He used a couple of well-aimed and razor-sharp arrows to sever his standard and his bow. Then, Drona's son struck the prince of Panchala with other arrows. In that great battle, Drona's son deprived him of his horses, charioteer and chariot. He angrily shrouded all his followers with arrows. O lord of the earth! At this, the Panchala soldiers began to flee. They were frightened, distressed and wounded by those arrows.

'"On seeing that the warriors were retreating and that Dhrishtadyumna was afflicted, Shini's descendant quickly urged his chariot towards the chariot of Drona's son. He struck Ashvatthama with eight sharp arrows. He again struck him violently with twenty arrows that had many different forms. He pierced his charioteer and struck his four horses with four arrows. The great archer was thus violently struck by arrows of many different forms. However, Drona's son laughed and spoke these words to Yuyudhana. 'O Shini's descendant! I know your preference for the slayer of the preceptor.[65] But when he has been grasped by me, you will not be able to save him.' Having spoken these words, Drona's son released a supreme arrow with excellent tufts. It was as radiant as the sun and it was just as Hari had released his vajra towards Vritra.[66] That arrow pierced his armour and having passed through it, penetrated the ground, like a hissing snake entering a hole. With his armour shattered, the brave one was like an elephant struck by a goad. Copious quantities of blood flowed from his wounds and he let go of his bow and arrows. He was senseless and covered with blood. He sank down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing this, his charioteer swiftly bore him away, away from the chariot of Drona's son.

'"With another well-tufted arrow with drooping tufts, the scorcher of enemies[67] struck Dhrishtadyumna between the eyebrows. He had already been struck and was severely pierced again. Panchala was weak and grabbed the pole of his standard. O king! He was like a crazy elephant, assailed by a lion. On seeing this, five brave Pandava rathas quickly advanced—Kiriti, Bhimasena, the Pourava Vriddhakshatra,[68] the prince of the Chedis and Sudarshana from Malava. Each of the five simultaneously struck him with five arrows. However, Drona's son shot twenty-five arrows and simultaneously severed the five arrows, which were like venomous serpents, that each of the five had released. Drona's son struck Pourava with seven sharp arrows, Malava with three, Partha[69] with one and Vrikodara with six. O king! All of those maharathas pierced Drona’s son. Together, and separately, they used gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone. The prince pierced Drona’s son with twenty arrows, Partha with eight and each of the others with three arrows. Drona’s son struck Arjuna with six arrows, Vasudeva with ten and Bhima with ten. He struck the prince with four arrows and used two more to sever his bow and his standard. Piercing Partha again with a shower of arrows, Drona’s son roared fiercely, like a lion. Drona’s son used extremely sharp and yellow arrows in torrents and covered the front and the rear. The earth, the sky, the firmament, the directions and the sub-directions were covered with these arrows, which were terrible in form. He was fierce in his energy. He was like Indra in his valour. With three arrows that were released at the same time, he severed the head and the two arms, which were like Indra’s standard, of Sudarshana, who was stationed on his own chariot. He killed Pourava with a spear[70] and used his arrows to shatter his chariot into fragments. With broad-headed arrows, he severed his[71] arms, which were smeared with excellent sandalwood paste, and his head from his body. The youthful and beloved prince of Chedi was like the blue lotus[72] in complexion. Using supreme arrows that were like blazing flames of fire, he[73] laughed and pierced him, dispatching him, with his horses and his charioteer, towards death. Having slain those two brave warriors in the battle, the lord who was Drona’s son remained unvanquished and delightedly blew on his large conch shell. All the Panchalas and Pandava Bhimasena were frightened. They abandoned Dhrishtadyumna’s chariot and fled in different directions. When they were running away in this way, Drona’s son pursued them and showered down arrows from the rear. He attacked them with great force and was like Death amidst the Pandu soldiers. In that battle, those kshatriyas were slaughtered by Drona’s son. O king! Terrified of Drona’s son, they fled in all the directions.’”

CHAPTER 1149(172)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that the army was routed, Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, immeasurable in his soul, advanced against Drona’s son, wishing to kill him. O king! Rallied because of the efforts of Govinda and Arjuna, those soldiers remained stationed there. It was Vibhatsu alone, supported by the Somakas, the Matsyas and some others, who returned against the advancing Kouravas. Savyasachi quickly approached the great archer, who bore the mark of the lion’s tail on his banner. He spoke to Ashvatthama. ‘Show me your strength, your valour, your knowledge, your manliness, the affection that you bear towards the sons of Dhritarashtra, the hatred you bear towards us and the great and supreme energy you possess. Parshata, Drona’s killer, will shatter your insolence today. He is like the fire of destruction and slaughters his enemies in a battle. Clash against him, or against me and Keshava.’”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! The preceptor’s son deserves honour and is powerful. He bears affection towards Dhananjaya and Vasava’s son[74] bears affection towards him. Bibhatsu has never used such harsh words earlier. Why did Kounteya use such harsh words towards his friend?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When the prince,[75] Pourava Vriddhakshatra and Sudarshana from Malava, who were duly skilled in the use of weapons, were killed, and Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki and Bhima were defeated, the lord Bibhatsu suffered from great grief, the likes of which he had not felt before. He also remembered the heart-rending words Yudhishthira had addressed towards him and their hardships and felt miserable in his mind. It was because of this internal fire that he used indecent and unpleasant words towards Drona’s son. The preceptor’s son deserved honour and should not have been addressed in such harsh words, deserving of a coward. O king! Having been thus addressed by Partha in harsh words that struck at the inner chords, the supreme of great archers sighed in rage. Drona’s son became angry with Partha, and especially with Krishna.

‘“Stationed on his chariot, the valiant one touched the wind.[76] He invoked the agneya weapon, which is extremely difficult for even the gods to resist. The preceptor's son directed this at the masses of enemies, whether they were visible or invisible. He used mantras to invoke that weapon on a flaming arrow that was like a fire without smoke. The destroyer of enemy heroes was overcome with rage and released it in all the directions. At this, a tumultuous shower of arrows was generated from the sky. Cold winds began to blow and the sun ceased to radiate heat. Vultures shrieked hideously in all the directions. With a great roar, blood showered down from the sky. Birds, animals, cattle and even sages who were rigid in their vows and supremely careful in controlling their souls, lost all sense of peace. All the great elements were agitated and the sun was dislodged from its course. The three worlds were tormented, feverish and distressed. Tormented by the energy of that arrow, elephants lay down on the ground. Desiring to free themselves from that fierce energy, they sighed deeply. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The waterbodies were scorched and beings that lived in the water were burnt and could find no peace. Arrows showered down from the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. They descended on the high and the low, with the force of Garuda or that of the wind. The enemies were burnt and fell down, like trees scorched by a fire. Giant elephants were burnt and fell down in every direction, shrieking in woe. Their loud lamentation was like the thunder of the clouds. Other giant elephants were burnt and fled. There were others that were terrified, as if when a forest is burnt and enveloped by a fierce fire. O venerable one! O lord! Large numbers of horses and large numbers of chariots were seen to be burnt and looked like the tops of trees consumed in a conflagration. Large numbers of chariots fell down here and there, in thousands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, it was as if those soldiers were being burnt by the illustrious Agni. It was like the fire of destruction[77] that destroys all beings at the end of a yuga. O king! On seeing that the Pandava soldiers were being consumed in that great battle, those on your side were delighted and roared like lions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those on your side wished for victory and were cheerful. They quickly sounded thousands of trumpets of many different kinds. O king! In that great battle, everything was covered in darkness and nothing could be seen, the entire akshouhinis or Pandava Savyasachi. O king! We have not seen, or heard of, the likes of the weapon that Drona's son angrily released.

'"O great king! At this, Arjuna invoked brahmastra. The one who was born from a lotus[78] has decreed that this is capable of repulsing all weapons. That darkness was dispelled in an instant. Auspicious winds began to blow and the directions became clear. We then beheld an extraordinary sight. An entire akshouhini had been killed, burnt by the maya of that weapon and their forms could not be distinguished.[79] Freed from the darkness, the brave and great archers, Keshava and Arjuna, were seen together, as if in the sky.[80] They were freed and were stationed on a chariot that was terrible to those on your side. With their flags, standard, horses and supreme weapons, they were uninjured and resplendent. Immediately, there were sounds of delight among the Pandavas. There were slapping sounds and those of conch shells and drums. Both the armies had formed the view that they had been killed and now saw that they had been freed. On seeing that they were uninjured, those on the side of the Parthas were delighted and cheerfully blew on supreme conch shells. Those on your side were distressed. On seeing that those great-souled ones had been freed, Drona's son was extremely miserable. O venerable one! He reflected for a short while about what should be done. O Indra among kings! Having thought for some time, he was overcome with sorrow. He released deep and warm sighs and was distracted. Drona's son cast aside his bow and descended violently from his chariot. He said, 'Shame on everything. It is all false.' Saying this, he ran away.

'"As he ran away, he encountered the gentle and unblemished Vedavyasa, with the complexion of a cloud. He saw Vyasa, the abode of Sarasvati.[81] Drona's son saw the extender of the Kuru lineage[82] stationed in front of him. His voice choked with tears and he was extremely miserable. He honoured him and spoke these words. 'O honoured one! Is this maya? Is this a wish?[83] I do not know what has happened. Why have my weapons become fruitless? What have I contravened? This is completely unnatural and is like a defeat of the worlds by the two Krishnas, who remain alive. It is impossible to cross destiny. This weapon that has been used by me cannot be countered by asuras, gandharvas, pishachas, rakshasas, serpents, yakshas, birds and men. But having killed only one akshouhini, this flaming weapon used by me has been calmed. Keshava and Arjuna are mortal. Why have they not been killed by it? O illustrious one! I am asking you. Give me the complete answer.'

'"Vyasa replied, 'You have asked me a question in wonder and the answer is extremely deep. I will tell you everything. Listen with an attentive mind. The one who is known as Narayana is older than the ancient ones. To accomplish the objective of the universe, he was born as Dharma's son.[84] Stationing himself on Mount Mainaka, he performed severe austerities. The immensely energetic one stood there, with his arms upraised. He blazed like the sun. He was there for sixty-six thousand years. The lotus-eyed one dried his body and subsisted only on air. He then tormented himself with other great austerities for twice that period. The space between heaven and earth was filled with his energy. O son![85] Because of those austerities, he became like Brahma. He then saw the lord of the world and the universe, the lord who is the creator of the universe. He is supremely difficult to look at and is the lord of all the gods. He is smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. This is the wise and supreme Rudra, bull among the gods. He is mobile and immobile. He is stationed in the hearts of all beings. He is difficult to resist. He is difficult to look at. His anger is fierce. He is the great-souled one. He is the one who destroys everything. But he is the one who is generous. He wields a celestial bow and quivers. His armour is golden and his valour is infinite. He holds the Pinaka,[86] the vajra, a flaming trident, a battleaxe, a club and a large sword. His brows are excellent. His hair is matted. He wears the circular moon on his head. He is clad in tiger skin. He has a mace and a staff in his hand. His armlets sparkle. His sacred thread is made up of snakes. He is surrounded by large numbers of *ganas* from the universe and innumerable *bhutas*.[87] He is the single one. He is the recipient of austerities. He is worshipped well by aged and eloquent ones. He is water, heaven, sky, the earth, the moon, the sun, wind and fire. He is the measure of the universe. He is the one who has not been born. Those who deviate from their vows cannot see him. Nor can those who hate brahmanas or kill them. He is the source of immortality. Brahmanas, those who are virtuous in their vows, those who have been cleansed of sin and those who have banished sorrow can see him in their minds. Because he was established in austerities and because his dharma did not decay, he[88] could see the one with the universal form. Having beheld the lord of the gods, he was delighted in his speech, his mind, his intelligence and his body. Having beheld the origin of the universe, Narayana worshipped the one who wore a garland of berries[89] and was the recipient of supreme radiance. The pervasive lord was the granter of boons and was with the fair-limbed Parvati. He was Ishana and had not been born. He was without decay. He was the supreme cause. He did not fade. He worshipped Rudra, the slayer of Andhaka.[90] With great reverence, the lotus-eyed one[91] worshipped Virupaksha.[92]

““““O one who should be worshipped![93] All the beings originate in you. You are the protector of the universe. You are first among all the gods. You are the one who created the earth in earlier times and protected it. You have penetrated it now. The gods are your creation. Gods, asuras, serpents, rakshasas, pishachas, men, birds, gandharvas, yakshas and other masses of beings and the entire universe—have all been created from you. We know this. All the deeds done for Indra, Yama, Varuna, the lord of riches, Mitra, Tvashtra and Soma are actually being offered to you.[94] Form, light, sound, the sky, wind, touch, taste, water, scent, desire, Brahma, the brahman, the brahmanas, everything that is immobile and everything that is mobile originate in you. Vapour rises from bodies of water and becomes separate raindrops. At the time of destruction, they unite and become one again. Those who are learned know the separate and united nature of water and beings. Through your divine mind, you have created two birds[95] and a pippala tree with words as branches and seven guardians.[96] There are ten others that hold up the city.[97] They have been created by you. But you are distinct from them. The past, the present and the future cannot be tampered with. However, they have originated from you and so have this earth and this universe. I am devoted to you. Favour the one who is worshipping you. Do not harm me through that which is pleasant or that which is unpleasant. You are the soul of all souls. You are beyond comprehension. Learned ones who know you as the seed attain the brahman. I wish to satisfy you through my worship. O one who is worshipped by the gods! I desire to think about you. Grant me the boons that I desire, even if they are extremely difficult to obtain. I am worshipping you. Do not hide yourself from me."'

'"Vyasa said, 'Nilakantha,[98] the wielder of Pinaka, the one whose soul cannot be thought of, granted the boons that the foremost among the gods,[99] who deserved them, desired. Nilakantha said, "O Naryana! Through my favours, your strength and soul will be immeasurable, among men, gods and gandharvas. Gods, asuras, giant serpents, pishachas, gandharvas, men, rakshasas, birds, snakes and other beings born in this universe will not be able to withstand you. The gods will not be able to defeat you in a battle. Through my favours, no one will ever be able to cause you injury through weapons, the vajra, fire, wind, an object that is wet or dry, or an object that is mobile or immobile. Even if you advance in battle against me, you will be superior." In ancient times, these were the boons that were obtained by Shouri. It is that god who is roaming around now,[100] confounding the earth with his maya. It is through his austerities that the great sage named Nara was born. He is equal to that god and always know him to be Arjuna. Those two supreme rishis are said to be older than the gods. To accomplish the objectives of the world, they are born from one yuga to another. O immensely intelligent one! You have also performed all the great deeds and austerities. Know that your energy and anger have also been born from Rudra. You were as wise as a god. Knowing that the universe is pervaded by Bhava,[101] you yourself emaciated yourself so as to please him. O one who grants honours! You created a new and pure idol of that great being and worshipped him with homage, offerings and meditation. Having been thus worshipped by you in earlier times, the god was satisfied. He granted you many splendid boons that you desired in your heart. Like them, from one yuga to another, you worshipped that god in the form of a *linga*[102] and the splendid outcome is your birth, deeds, austerities and yoga. Knowing all the forms of Bhava, one who worships the lord in the form of a linga, obtains eternal knowledge about his own self and about the sacred texts. This is the way the siddhas and the supreme rishis have worshipped him, desiring a supreme and eternal station in the world hereafter. Keshava is devoted to Rudra and has been generated from Rudra. The eternal Krishna should be worshipped in all sacrifices. He who knows Bhava to be the origin of all beings and worships the lord in the form of a linga, he is the one who pleases the one with the bull on his banner the most.'"

'Sanjaya said, "On hearing these words, Drona's maharatha son bowed in obeisance before Rudra and came to show Keshava the greatest reverence. With his soul under control and with his body hair standing up, he showed his respects to the maharshi. He glanced towards the soldiers and asked them to withdraw.[103] O lord of the earth! When Drona had been brought down in the battle, the Kouravas were distressed and withdrew. So did the Pandavas. O king! Having fought for five days and having killed many soldiers, the brahmana, learned in the Vedas, went to Brahma's world."'

CHAPTER 1150(173)

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! When the atiratha Drona was killed there, what did those on my side and the Pandavas do next?"

'Sanjaya replied, "When atiratha Drona was killed by Parshata and the Kouravas were routed, Dhananjaya, Kunti's son, saw a great wonder that signified his victory. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He went to

Vyasa, who had come there, and asked him about this. ‘O great sage! In the battle, while I was slaying the enemy with my bright arrows, I saw a man advancing in front of me. His complexion was like that of the fire. In whatever direction he advanced, with a blazing and upraised spear, in that direction, the enemy was seen to be shattered. His feet did not touch the earth and he did not hurl his spear. But because of his energy, thousands of spears were released from that spear. He is the one who routed the entire enemy, though people think I routed them. From the rear, I only pursued the soldiers whom he had scorched. O illustrious one! O great Krishna![104] Who was that supreme being? Tell me. He had a spear in his hand and his energy was like that of the sun.’

‘“Vyasa replied, ‘That being is the first among the Prajapatis. He is the lord of all energy. He is the god of the earth, the sky and heaven. He is the lord and god of all the worlds. O Partha! You have seen Shankara, Ishana, who is the granter of boons. Seek refuge with the god who is the origin of everything. He is the lord of the universe. He is Mahadeva. He is great-souled. He is Ishana. He is the matted Shiva. He is the three-eyed one. He is the mighty-armed Rudra. He is the one with the tuft on his head. He is the one who is attired in rags. He is the one who is generous towards his devotees. Boons are obtained through his favours. The lord’s companions are divine and have many different forms. There are dwarfs, those with braided hair, those whose heads are shaved, those who are short in the neck and large in the stomach. Others are giant in form, great in endeavour and some with large ears. O Partha! Their faces and feet are distorted and their garments are strange. These are the ones who worship Mahadeva Maheshvara. O son![105] He is Shiva. He is the energetic one. O Partha! In that fierce battle, when the body hair stood up, it is he who preceded you through his favours. That army was protected by great archers and strikers like Drona, Karna and Kripa. O Partha! Who other than that great archer and god could think of countering it, even in the mind? When Maheshvara strides around in that form, who can venture to stand in front of him? He was the one who was stationed in front of you. There is no being in the three worlds who is his equal. When he is enraged in a battle, even his scent causes the enemy to lose its senses, tremble and fall down, slain in large numbers. The gods who are stationed in heaven bow down before him. So do other men in this world and men who wish to attain heaven. The god grants boons to his devotees. He is Rudra and Shiva, the consort of Uma. Through him, one can obtain happiness in this world and attain the supreme objective in the hereafter. O Kounteya! Bow down before him. He is eternal peace. He is Rudra. He is the one with the dark blue throat. He is the most subtle. He is extremely radiant. He is the one with knotted hair. He is fierce. His eyes are tawny. He is the one who grants boons. He is the one who is towards the south. He is not manifest. He is the one with the hair. He is the one with virtuous conduct. He is Shankara. He is the object of desire. He is tawny-eyed. He is the being known as Sthanu. His hair is tawny. He is shaven. He is lean. He is broad. He is the one who gives light. He is an excellent place of pilgrimage. He is the lord of the gods. He is impetuous. He has many forms. He is Sharva. He is beloved. He wears excellent garments. He wears a headdress. He has a handsome face. He has a thousand eyes. He is gentle. He dwells in the mountains. He is peace. He is the guardian. He is attired in bark. His arms are golden. He is fierce. He is the lord of the directions. He is the lord of rain. He is the lord of beings. Bow down before him. He is the lord of trees. He is also the lord of waters. His form is covered in trees. He is in the midst of the soldiers. He is the one who bears oblations to the gods. He is the archer. He is Bhargava.[106] He has many forms. He is the lord of the universe. He is attired in rags. He has a thousand heads. He has a thousand faces. He has a thousand arms. He has a thousand feet. O Kounteya! Seek refuge with him. He is the granter of boons. He is the lord of the universe. He is the consort of Uma.

“‘‘He is Virupaksha. He is the one who destroyed Daksha’s sacrifice. He is the lord of subjects. He is terrible. He is the lord of beings. He is without decay. His locks are matted. He moves like a bull. His navel is like that of a bull. He has a bull on his banner. He is as proud as a bull. He is the lord of bulls. He is horned like a bull. He is a bull among bulls. He bears the signs of a bull. He is as generous as a bull. He is a bull. His eyes are like those of a bull. A bull is his weapon. His arrows are a bull. Bulls were created from him. He is Maheshvara. He possesses a giant stomach. He possesses a gigantic form. He is seated on the skin of a leopard. He is the lord of the worlds. He is generous. His head is shaven. He is the brahman. He is devoted to brahmanas. He has a trident in his hand. He is the granter of boons. The lord wields a sword and a shield. He wields the Pinaka and a broken battleaxe.[107] He is the protector and the lord of the worlds. I seek refuge with that god. I seek refuge with the one who is attired in skins. I bow down before the lord of the gods, who is the friend of Vaishravana.[108] I bow down before the one who is well attired, whose vows are excellent and who is a great archer. He is the one who bears oblations to the gods with his hands. He is the one who cheerfully wields a bow. He is the archer. He is the arrow. He is the bow. He is the preceptor in using the bow. He is the archer. He is the god who is fierce in his weapons. I bow down before the supreme among the gods. I salute the one with many forms. I salute the one who has many bows. I bow to Sthanu, to the one who always has excellent vows, to the excellent archer. I bow to the one who destroyed Tripura. I bow to the one who struck Bhaga.[109] I bow to the lord of trees and the lord of men. I bow to the one who is always the lord of waters and the lord of sacrifices. He is the one who uprooted Pusha's teeth.[110] He is three-eyed. He is the granter of boons. He is Nilakantha. I bow before the one who is tawny and whose hair is golden. The intelligent Mahadeva's deeds are divine. I will recount them, as I know them and as I have heard them. When he is enraged, the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas and the rakshasas in the world can find no happiness, even if they hide in caverns. Bhava destroyed the sacrifice[111] in his wrath and later granted them freedom from fear. He released an arrow from his bow and roared loudly. At that time, the prosperous gods could find no peace. In his violent rage, Maheshvara destroyed the sacrifice. All the worlds were anxious when his bowstring thundered against his palms. O Partha! The gods and the asuras succumbed and fell down. The waters were agitated and the entire earth trembled. The mountains were shattered and the elephants in charge of the directions were confused. The world was blind because of darkness and the light could not be seen. The radiance of the sun and all the stellar bodies was destroyed. The rishis were frightened and sought peace and happiness for themselves, as well as for all beings. They performed auspicious rites. Shankara laughed and advancing towards Pusha, who was then eating the sacrificial cake, he uprooted his teeth. At this, the gods trembled and fled. They bowed down before him. He again affixed and aimed a flaming arrow towards the gods and they decided that they would assign a special share for Rudra in sacrifices. O king! In fright, the thirty gods sought refuge with him. Once his anger had been pacified, he restored the sacrifice again. Because of that, the gods are afraid of him, even now. In ancient times, the brave asuras had three cities in the sky. They were large and splendid. One was made out of iron, another out of silver, and the last out of gold. The iron one belonged to Tarakaksha, the silver to Kamalaksha and the splendid golden one to Vidyunmali. With all his weapons, Maghavan was incapable of penetrating them. Oppressed, all the immortals then went to Rudra and sought refuge with him. All those great-souled gods, together with Vasava, said, "O Rudra! The animals fiercely slaughtered in all the rites will belong to you. O lord of the universe! Therefore, bring down these asuras." Having been thus addressed and with the welfare of the gods in mind, he remained immobile for a thousand years.[112] When the three cities came together in the sky, he shattered them with an arrow that had three barbs and three joints. The danavas in the cities were incapable of glancing at the arrow. It was made out of the fire of destruction and the essences of Vishnu and Soma.

"''Uma had a child on her lap and he had five tufts of hair on his head.[113] She asked the gods, "Who is this?" The lord paralysed the arms of the angry Shakra, with the vajra in his hand.[114] This is the illustrious god. He is the lord and master of all the worlds. With Prajapati,[115] all the gods then went to the god who is the lord of the universe. He was like the rising sun in his splendour. Brahma approached Maheshvara. On seeing him and on knowing that he was supreme, the grandfather worshipped him. The gods gratified Uma and Rudra. The arm of the wielder of the vajra regained its natural state. With his wife, the illustrious one, with the mark of the bull on his banner, the destroyer of Daksha's sacrifice, the foremost among the gods, was pleased with the gods. He is Rudra. He is Shiva. He is Agni. He is Sharva. He is everything. He is Indra. He is Vayu. He is the Ashvins. He is lightning. He is Bhava. He is Parjanya. He is Mahadeva. He is the unblemished one. He is the moon. He is Ishana. He is the sun. He is Varuna. He is Time. He is the Destroyer. He is Death. He is Yama. He is day. He is night. He is the month. He is the fortnight. He is the season. He is the twilight. He is the year. He is the Creator. He is the Ordainer. He is the soul of the universe. He is the one who performs all deeds in the universe. Though he has no form, he is the one who has the forms of all the gods. The god is praised by all the gods. He is one and he is many. He is in hundreds. He is in thousands. He is in hundreds of thousands. Such is Mahadeva. He is the illustrious one who has not been born. I am incapable of reciting all the qualities of the illustrious one. Those who are grasped by all the planets,[116] those who are full of all kinds of sin, if they seek refuge with the one who is the recourse, will be freed by the one who is easily gratified. He grants life, health, prosperity, wealth and splendid objects of desire to men, and takes them away again. He pervades the world, engaged in good and bad for mankind. He is known as the lord who grants objects of desire and prosperity. He is Maheshvara. He is the supreme lord for all beings. He pervades the universe in many diverse kinds of forms. He is established in the ocean as the mouth of the gods.[117] This god always resides in cremation grounds. This lord is worshipped in places where only brave ones go.[118] His many forms are flaming and terrible. In this world, men speak about them and worship them. In this world, he possesses many names, signifying grave importance. They are based on his greatness, his power and his deeds. In the Vedas, the great-souled and infinite Rudra has been praised in the supreme *shatarudiya* hymn.[119] The god is the lord of all desire, whether they are divine or human. The illustrious one is the lord of all the gods.

He pervades the universe in his greatness. Brahmanas and sages praise him as the first among beings. He is the first among the gods. The wind was created from his mouth. He always protects all animals and sports with them. Because he is their lord, he is known as Pashupati.[120] He is always stationed in the linga, engaged in brahmacharya. Because he brings greatness to the world, he is known as Maheshvara.[121] The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras worship his linga, which is stationed in an upwards direction. Because of this worship, Maheshvara is gratified. He is happy and gratified. Shankara is delighted. He has many forms, in the past, the present and the future, in the mobile and the immobile. That is the reason he is known as Bahurupa.[122] One of his eyes blazes and he seems to have eyes in all directions. He consumes all the worlds in his anger. That is the reason he is known as Sarva.[123] Because he adopts the form of smoke, he is known as Dhurjati.[124] Because he is the god of the universe, he is known as Vishvarupa.[125] The three goddesses, the sky, the water and the earth, worship him as the lord of the universe. He is known as Tryambaka.[126] He is always engaged in everything that is beneficial and every kind of deed, desiring the welfare of men. That is the reason he is known as Shiva.[127] He possesses a thousand eyes. He possesses an infinite number of eyes. His eyes are in every direction. Because his greatness is in the universe, he is known as Mahadeva.[128] He is stationed in his linga form, flaming at the top. He is always the source of life and its preservation. That is the reason he is known as Sthanu.[129] He is in the bodies of beings, whether they are sound or unsound. He is stationed in the wind and as the *prana* and *apana* breath of life in beings.[130] He who worships the image of the linga, always obtains great prosperity, having worshipped the linga. Below his thighs, the lower half of his body is fiery. The upper half is cool and auspicious.[131] Half of his body is said to be Agni and half is said to be Soma. His auspicious and great form blazes most in energy, among all the gods. Among men, his resplendent and fierce form is known as Agni. He practises brahmacharya in that auspicious form. With his other terrible form, he is the lord who destroys everything. He is the consumer. He is fierce. He is the powerful Agni, the consumer of flesh, blood and marrow. That is the reason he is known as Rudra.[132]

““‘O Partha! This was the god Mahadeva who was stationed in front of you. You saw the wielder of Pinaka in the battle, destroying the enemy. In the battle, this was the illustrious god who advanced in front of you. He is the one who gave you the weapons with which you destroyed the danavas.[133] O Partha! The sacred shatarudiya in the Vedas praises the god of the gods. It is excellent, famous and brings life and all that is auspicious. It accomplishes all desire. It is sacred and destroys all sin. It destroys all wickedness and dispels all kinds of misery. The hymn is always heard by men in four different forms.[134] They triumph over all their enemies and attain the great world of Rudra. The great-souled, auspicious and divine one acted thus in battles. He who reads the shatarudiya, or hears it, is always uplifted. The god is the lord of the universe. A man who is always devoted to him, obtains the boon of getting all the objects of desire. Such a man pleases Tryambaka. O Kounteya! Advance towards the battle. You will not confront defeat. Janardana, your adviser and your protector, is by your side.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O destroyer of enemies! O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Having addressed Arjuna in the battle, Parashara’s son[135] went away to the spot he had arrived from.”’

This concludes Drona Parva.

Karna Parva

Karna Parva continues with the account of the war. After Drona’s death, Karna is instated as the commander of the Kourava army. Karna is the commander for two days, days sixteen and seventeen. In the 18–parva classification, Karna Parva is the eighth. In the 100–parva classification, Karna Parva constitutes Section 73. Karna Parva has sixty-nine chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Karna Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Karna Parva.

SECTION SEVENTY-THREE

KARNA-VADHA PARVA

This parva has 3,870 shlokas and sixty-nine chapters.

Chapter 1151(1): 49 shlokas

Chapter 1152(2): 20 shlokas

Chapter 1153(3): 14 shlokas

Chapter 1154(4): 108 shlokas

Chapter 1155(5): 110 shlokas

Chapter 1156(6): 46 shlokas

Chapter 1157(7): 42 shlokas

Chapter 1158(8): 45 shlokas

Chapter 1159(9): 35 shlokas

Chapter 1160(10): 36 shlokas

Chapter 1161(11): 41 shlokas

Chapter 1162(12): 71 shlokas

Chapter 1163(13): 25 shlokas

Chapter 1164(14): 64 shlokas

Chapter 1165(15): 43 shlokas

Chapter 1166(16): 38 shlokas

Chapter 1167(17): 120 shlokas

Chapter 1168(18): 76 shlokas

Chapter 1169(19): 75 shlokas

Chapter 1170(20): 32 shlokas

Chapter 1171(21): 42 shlokas

Chapter 1172(22): 61 shlokas

Chapter 1173(23): 54 shlokas

Chapter 1174(24): 161 shlokas

Chapter 1175(25): 11 shlokas

Chapter 1176(26): 74 shlokas

Chapter 1177(27): 105 shlokas

Chapter 1178(28): 66 shlokas

Chapter 1179(29): 40 shlokas

Chapter 1180(30): 88 shlokas

Chapter 1181(31): 68 shlokas

Chapter 1182(32): 84 shlokas

Chapter 1183(33): 70 shlokas

Chapter 1184(34): 42 shlokas

Chapter 1185(35): 60 shlokas

Chapter 1186(36): 40 shlokas

Chapter 1187(37): 38 shlokas

Chapter 1188(38): 42 shlokas

Chapter 1189(39): 38 shlokas

Chapter 1190(40): 130 shlokas

Chapter 1191(41): 7 shlokas

Chapter 1192(42): 57 shlokas

Chapter 1193(43): 78 shlokas

Chapter 1194(44): 55 shlokas

Chapter 1195(45): 73 shlokas

Chapter 1196(46): 48 shlokas

Chapter 1197(47): 14 shlokas

Chapter 1198(48): 15 shlokas

Chapter 1199(49): 115 shlokas

Chapter 1200(50): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1201(51): 110 shlokas

Chapter 1202(52): 33 shlokas

Chapter 1203(53): 14 shlokas

Chapter 1204(54): 29 shlokas

Chapter 1205(55): 73 shlokas

Chapter 1206(56): 58 shlokas

Chapter 1207(57): 69 shlokas

Chapter 1208(58): 28 shlokas

Chapter 1209(59): 45 shlokas

Chapter 1210(60): 33 shlokas

Chapter 1211(61): 17 shlokas

Chapter 1212(62): 62 shlokas

Chapter 1213(63): 83 shlokas

Chapter 1214(64): 32 shlokas

Chapter 1215(65): 45 shlokas

Chapter 1216(66): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1217(67): 37 shlokas

Chapter 1218(68): 63 shlokas

Chapter 1219(69): 43 shlokas

> Vadha *means killing and the section is named after the killing of Karna. It is also simply known as Karna Parva. After Drona's death, Karna is made the overall commander. Bhima kills Kshemadhurti (the king of Kuluta), Satyaki kills Vinda and Anuvinda from Kekaya, Droupadi's sons kill Chitrasena and Chitra from Abhisara, Arjuna kills Dandadhara and Danda from Magadha, Ashvatthama kills Pandya, and Arjuna kills large numbers of the*

enemy (primarily the samshaptakas[1] *). On the seventeenth day, on Karna's request, Duryodhana asks Shalya to be Karna's charioteer. Bhima kills Karna's son, Satyasena and some of Duryodhana's brothers, Kripa kills Suketu from Panchala, and Arjuna, Bhima and Karna kill many of the enemy. Uttamouja kills Sushena, Karna's son. Karna kills many warriors on the Pandava side and, in an inconsistent statement, Satyaki kills Sushena, Karna's son. Bhima kills some of Duryodhana's brothers. In a major highlight of the war, Bhima kills Duhshasana and drinks his blood. Arjuna kills Vrishasena, Karna's son. Finally, Arjuna kills Karna.*

Chapter 1151(1)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! After Drona had been killed, the kings, with Duryodhana at the forefront, were extremely anxious in their minds. They went to Drona’s son. They sorrowed and were dispirited because the infinitely energetic Drona had been killed. In their grief, they surrounded the son of Sharadvati.[2] For some time, they comforted him by recounting the reasons given in the sacred texts. However, once night arrived, those lords of the earth went to their own camps. But, in particular, the son of the *suta*,[3] King Suyodhana, Duhshasana and Shakuni could not sleep. In their camps, the Kouravyas and the lords of the earth found no cheer. They thought of that terrible destruction and could not sleep. Together,[4] they spent the night in Duryodhana’s camp and thought about the extremely fierce enmity that they had unleashed on the great-souled Pandavas. They had oppressed Krishna[5] at the time of gambling with the dice and had brought her to the assembly hall. They thought of that and repented. They became extremely anxious. They thought of the hardships the Parthas had confronted on account of the gambling match. O king! As they thought about these difficulties, the moment seemed to last for a hundred years. Then, the clear morning dawned and they went through the prescribed rites. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them performed these necessary tasks and having performed these necessary tasks, they were somewhat reassured. When the sun arose, they instructed that the soldiers should be yoked and departed. Karna was made the overall commander and the auspicious ceremonies were performed. The foremost among brahmanas were praised and given vessels full of curds, clarified butter, parched rice, golden coins, cattle, gold and extremely expensive garments. Bards, raconteurs and minstrels prayed that their victory and prosperity might increase. O king! In similar fashion, the Pandavas also performed all the morning rites. O king! Making up their minds to fight, they emerged from their camps. As the Kurus and the Pandavas wished to kill each other, a tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. O king! When Karna was the overall commander, the battle between the Kuru and Pandava soldiers lasted for two days. It was wonderful to see. After having caused a great slaughter of the enemy in the battle, Vrisha[6] was brought down by Phalguna, while all the sons of Dhritarashtra looked on. Sanjaya then went to the city of Nagasahvya[7] and told Dhritarashtra everything that had transpired in Kurujangala.'[8]

Janamejaya said, 'Having heard that Drona had been killed by the enemy in the battle, the aged king, Ambika's son,[9] had been overcome by supreme grief. O supreme among brahmanas! On hearing that Karna, Duryodhana's well-wisher, had been slain, he must have been miserable. How could he sustain his life? The king's hopes for the victory of his sons had been based on him. On hearing that he had been killed, how could Kouravya sustain his life? Even when there is a hardship, I think that it is very difficult for men to die, since, despite hearing that Karna had been slain, the king did not give up his life. O brahmana! That was also true of Shantanu's aged son,[10] Bahlika, Drona, Somadatta and Bhurishrava. Many other well-wishers, sons and grandsons were also brought down. O brahmana! On hearing this, I think that it must have been very difficult for the king to remain alive. O one rich in austerities! Tell me everything about this in detail. I am not satisfied with hearing about the great conduct of my ancestors.'

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! When Karna was slain, with a distressed mind, Gavalgana's son[11] set out in the night for Nagapura,[12] on horses that were as fleet as the wind. He reached Hastinapura with great anxiety in his mind. He went to Dhritarashtra's place, where, the number of well-wishers had declined.[13] He saw the king, who was overcome by lassitude and was devoid of energy. Joining his hands in salutation, he bowed his head at the king's feet. He worshipped Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, in accordance with the prescribed rites. He then spoke these words. "Alas! I am Sanjaya. O lord of the earth! Are you happy? You have confronted this state because of your own sins. I hope you are not confounded now. You did not follow the beneficial advice of

Vidura, Drona, Gangeya[14] and Keshava. Are you distressed when you remember that? In the assembly hall, Rama, Narada and Kanva spoke beneficial words to you, but you did not accept them.[15] Are you distressed when you remember that? Remembering that the well-wishers who were engaged in your welfare, with Bhishma and Drona as the foremost, have been killed by the enemy in the battle, are you distressed?" Having been thus addressed, the king joined his hands in salutation before the son of the suta.[16] He sighed deeply. Oppressed by sorrow he spoke these words. "O Sanjaya! The brave Gangeya, who was well versed in the use of divine weapons, has been brought down. So has the great archer, Drona, and my mind is severely distressed. The energetic one[17] was born from the Vasus. The armoured one slaughtered ten thousand *ratha*s. He has been killed by Yajnasena's son, Shikhandi, who was protected by the Pandaveyas. My mind is severely distressed. Bhargava gave supreme weapons to the great-souled one and when he was a child, Rama himself taught him Dhanurveda.[18] It is through his favours that the immensely strong Kounteya princes and many other lords of the earth became *maharatha*s. Drona was a great archer and unwavering in his aim. On hearing that he has been killed by Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, my mind is severely distressed. In the three worlds, there was no man who was his equal in the sacred texts.[19] On hearing that Drona had been killed, what did those on my side do? Using his valour, the great-souled Pandava Dhananjaya dispatched the army of the samshaptakas to Yama's abode. The *narayana* weapon used by Drona's intelligent son was repulsed.[20] After this, and when the remainder of the army was slain and driven away, what did those on my side do? I think that they must have been immersed in an ocean of grief. When Drona was killed, they must have been like people on an ocean whose boat had been shattered. O Sanjaya! What were the facial complexions of Duryodhana, Karna, Bhoja Kritavarma, Shalya, the king of Madra, Drona's son, Kripa, my remaining sons and the others when the soldiers fled? Tell me that. O son of Gavalgana! Tell me everything, exactly as it happened in the battle. Tell me everything about the Pandaveyas and those on my side." Sanjaya replied, "O venerable one! On hearing what transpired between the Pandaveyas and the Kouraveyas, you should not be distressed. This is destiny and your mind should not be full of grief. Sometimes, what should not happen, happens to a man. And sometimes, what should happen, does not. Therefore, learned ones do not grieve over that which has not been obtained, or what has been obtained.” Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! On hearing this, my mind is not distressed. I think this is because of what destiny has ordained earlier. Tell me what you wish to.” ’

Chapter 1152(2)

‘Sanjaya said, “When Drona, the great archer, was killed, your maharatha sons became pale in their faces. They grieved and were bereft of their senses. O lord of the earth! All of them held weapons in their hands, but were silent. They were oppressed by grief and did not look at each other, or speak to each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that they were so distressed, your soldiers were also miserable and glanced upwards, extremely terrified. O Indra among kings! The weapons of those who remained were smeared in blood. On seeing that Drona had been brought down, these dropped from their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! But some[21] still hung down from their hands and were seen to be like stars in the firmament. O great king! They were stationed there, dispirited and bereft of enterprise. On seeing his own army in that state, King Duryodhana spoke these words. ‘I am fighting on the basis of the valour in your arms. Depending on this, I have challenged the Pandaveyas to this battle. With Drona having been killed in the battle, I discern that you are distressed. All the warriors who are fighting in the battle are being killed. When fighting in a battle, there may be victory, or there may be death. What is strange about this? Face all the directions and fight. Behold the great-souled warrior Karna Vaikartana in the battle. The immensely strong and great archer is roaming around, possessing divine weapons. Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, is frightened of fighting with him. He always retreats before that wrathful one, like small animals before a lion. The immensely strong Bhimasena possesses the strength of ten thousand elephants. But in a human battle, he was reduced to a miserable state.[22] The brave Ghatotkacha knew the use of maya. Using the divine weapon, the invincible spear, in the battle, he killed him and roared loudly.[23]

The intelligent one’s valour is difficult to cross. He is unwavering in his aim. You will witness the inexhaustible strength in his arms in the battle today. You will behold both the great-souled Radheya and Drona’s son act against the Pandu and Panchala soldiers. All of you are brave, wise and born in noble lineages. You will witness each other’s good conduct and skill in the use of weapons today.’ O great king! When the king had spoken in this way, the immensely strong Vaikartana Karna roared like a lion. As all of them looked on, he fought with the Srinjayas, Panchalas, Kekayas and Videhas and caused great destruction, releasing hundreds of showers of arrows from his bow. They seemed to be linked head to tail, like a flock of bees. The spirited one afflicted the Panchalas and Pandavas. He killed thousands of warriors and was brought down by Arjuna.” ’

Chapter 1153(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! On hearing this, Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, was seen to be overcome by great grief. He thought that Suyodhana had already been killed. He lost his senses and fell down on the ground, like an elephant that had lost its consciousness. That supreme among kings was senseless and fell down on the ground. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! A great lamentation arose among the women. That sound filled the earth, everywhere. The Bharata women were immersed in a great and terrible ocean of grief. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Gandhari approached the king. All those from the inner quarters[24] lost their senses and fell down on the ground. O king! At this, Sanjaya comforted those distressed ones. Miserable, copious quantities of tears flowed from their eyes. He repeatedly assured the trembling women. In every direction, they were like plantain trees that had been whirled by a storm. Vidura sprinkled the Kourava king, the lord who had wisdom for his sight,[25] with water and comforted him. O king! He slowly regained his senses and saw the ladies. O lord of the earth! The king seemed to be mad and stood there, silently. He reflected for a long time and sighed repeatedly. He censured his sons in many ways and applauded the Pandavas. He censured his own intelligence and that of Shakuni Soubala. He thought for a long time and trembled repeatedly. The king then used his mind to restrain himself. Resorting to patience, he asked Sanjaya, the suta who was the son of Gavalgana. "O Sanjaya! I have heard the words that you have spoken to me. O suta! Has my son, Duryodhana, already gone to Yama's abode? O Sanjaya! Tell me everything accurately, even if you have told it to me earlier." O Janamejaya! Having been thus addressed by the king, the suta replied, "O king! The great archer, Vaikartana, was killed, with his maharatha sons and brothers and so were the sons of other sutas.[26] In the battle, Duhshasana was killed by the illustrious and angry Pandava Bhimasena, who drank his blood.” ’

Chapter 1154(4)

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! On hearing these words, Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, became anxious. His senses were overcome with grief. He spoke to the suta, Sanjaya. "O son![27] All this is the result of my evil policy. My mind and my soul are overcome. On hearing that Vaikartana has been killed, the sorrow is tearing out my inner organs. He was skilled in the use of supreme weapons. This is like a stake and I wish to cross the ocean of grief. Among the Kurus and the Srinjayas, who are the ones who remain alive and who are dead?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! Shantanu's son[28] was brought down. He was unassailable and powerful. He killed ten thousand Pandava warriors for each of ten days. The great archer, Drona, was invincible. The one with the golden chariot roamed around amidst the Panchala rathas and killed warriors. Thereafter, he was slain. Having slain half the soldiers[29] who remained after the slaughter by the great-souled Bhishma and Drona, Vaikartana Karna was killed. O great king! The immensely strong, Prince Vivimshati, killed hundreds of warriors from the Anarta region. He was then killed in the battle. Remembering the duty of kshatriyas, your brave son, Vikarna, stood stationed, facing the enemy, though he was without mounts and without weapons. Bhimasena remembered the diverse and extremely terrible hardships caused by Duryodhana and his own pledge and brought him down.[30] Having performed extremely difficult deeds, the immensely strong princes from Avanti, Vinda and Anuvinda, went to Vaivasvata's abode.[31] O king! The immensely valorous Jayadratha was the foremost among those from the Sindhu kingdom. The brave one controlled ten kingdoms and he was always obedient to your instructions. Having vanquished eleven *akshouhini*s with his sharp arrows, Arjuna killed him.[32] Duryodhana's son was spirited and invincible in battle.

He followed his father's instructions and was brought down by Subhadra's son.[33] Duhshasana's son was brave and possessed strength of arms. He prided himself in battle and was dispatched to Yama's abode by Droupadi's sons.[34] Bhagadatta was the lord of the *kiratas*[35] and those who dwelt along the shores of the ocean. He had dharma in his soul and was the revered and beloved friend of the king of the gods. That lord of the earth was always devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. Through Dhananjaya's valour, he went to Yama's abode.[36] O king! The immensely illustrious and brave Bhurishrava, son of the Kourava Somadatta, was killed by Satyaki in the battle.[37] Shrutayu from Ambashtha was a foremost archer among the kshatriyas. He fearlessly roamed around in the battle and was killed by Savyasachi.[38] O great king! Your son, Duhshasana, was skilled in the use of weapons and was invincible in battle. He was brought down by Bhimasena.[39] O king! Sudakshina possessed many thousands of wonderful armies of elephants. Savyasachi slew him in the battle.[40] The lord of Kosala killed many hundreds of the enemy and through the valour of Subhadra's son, was sent to Yama's abode.[41] Having fought with many warriors and Bhimasena, Chitrasena, your maharatha son, was brought down by Bhimasena.[42] The handsome and brave son of the king of Madra increased the terror of his enemies. He wielded a sword and a shield and was brought down by Subhadra's son.[43] The immensely energetic Vrishasena was Karna's equal in battle. He was swift in the use of weapons and did not deviate from his aim. Dhananjaya remembered Abhimanyu's death and the pledge that he had made and while Karna looked on, used his valour to send him to Yama's abode.[44] Shrutayu, lord of the earth, was firm in his enmity towards the Pandavas. Reminding him of that enmity, Partha brought him down.[45] O venerable one! O king! Rukmaratha, Shalya's son, was brave. He was the son of Sahadeva's maternal uncle, but was nevertheless killed by his brother in the battle.[46] The aged King Bhagiratha and Brihatkshatra of Kekaya were brave and powerful, but despite their supreme valour, they were killed.[47] O king! Bhagadatta's son was immensely strong and wise. He was brought down by Nakula, who roamed in the battle like a hawk. Your grandfather Bahlika, with all the others from Bahlika, was sent to Yama's abode through Bhimasena's valour.[48] O king! Jayatsena was Jarasandha's immensely strong son. That descendant of Magadha was slain by Subhadra's great-souled son in the battle.[49] O king! Your sons, Durmukha and maharatha Duhsaha, prided themselves on their valour. Bhimasena killed them with his club.[50] Having performed excellent deeds, maharatha Durmarshana, Durvishaha and Durjaya went to Yama's eternal abode. The suta Vrishavarma was your adviser and was extremely valorous. Because of Bhimasena's valour, he went to Yama's abode. The king possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants and had a large army of ten thousand elephants. With his followers, he was killed by Pandu's son, Savyasachi.[51] O great king! There were two thousand Vasatis, skilled in striking and the brave Shurasenas. All these warriors were killed. The Abhishahas were armoured. They could strike and were mad with insolence. They were slain, together with the best of rathas from among the Shibis and the Kalingas. There were those who were reared in Gokula. They were extremely well versed in fighting. Many thousands of them arrayed themselves as masses of samshaptakas. All of them approached Partha and went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode.[52] O great king! The kings Vrishaka and Achala were your brothers-in-law and those brave ones fought in your cause. They were killed by Savyasachi.[53] O great king! King Shalva was famous because of his terrible deeds and his acts as a great archer. He was brought down by Bhimasena.[54] O great king! Together with Brihanta, Oghavan was valiant in the battle, for the sake of their friends. They have gone to Vaivasvata's eternal world.[55] O lord of the earth! In that fashion, Kshemadhurti was the best among rathas. O king! In the battle, he was killed through Bhimasena's club.[56] King Jalasandha was immensely strong and a great archer. He performed extremely great deeds in the battle and was killed by Satyaki.[57] Alayudha, Indra among the *rakshasa*s, possessed charming asses as his mounts. Through Ghatotkacha's valour, he went to Yama's abode.[58] The ones descended from Radheya,[59] the son of the suta, and all his maharatha brothers and all the Kekayas were killed by Savyasachi. The Malavas, Madraka and Dravidas were terrible in their valour. O venerable one! There were the Mavellakas, the Tundikeras, the Savitriputrakas, the Anchalas, those from the east, north, west and the south. Large numbers of infantry and tens of thousands of horses were slain. When the horses and best of elephants were killed, chariots wandered around. There were those who were reared in noble lineages and made the best of efforts at the right time. They had standards, weapons, every kind of garment and ornament and were brave. O king! Partha, never exhausted in his deeds, killed them in the battle. There were others who were infinitely strong, wishing to kill each other.[60] In the battle, there were many other kings, with their followers. O king! They were killed in thousands. I will now tell you what you have asked me. Such was the carnage when Karna and Arjuna clashed against each other. It was like the great Indra against Vritra,[61] or Rama against Ravana. It was like Mura being brought down and slain by Krishna in a battle, or the brave Kartavirya, indomitable in battle, being killed by Bhargava Rama in an encounter, together with his kin and relatives, after an extremely great and terrible fight that is famous in the three worlds.[62] O king! In that fashion, in a duel, Karna, supreme among strikers and indomitable in battle, was killed by Arjuna, together with his advisers and relatives. He was the main cause behind the enmity and he was the one on whom the sons of Dhritarashtra depended for their victory. O king! The Pandavas have accomplished what they could not have contemplated earlier. O great king! However, your relatives who were your well-wishers had told you about this. That is the reason this great catastrophe has arisen now. O king! Your sons desired the kingdom and you concurred with their wishes. Ill action was practised and the fruits of that have arrived.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O son![63] You have so far recounted the names of those on my side who have been killed by the Pandavas.[64] O Sanjaya! Tell me about the Pandaveyas who have been killed by those on my side.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “The sons of Kunti were valiant in the battle. They possessed great spirits and immense strength. Bhishma brought down their warriors, with their relatives and their advisers. In a battle, Satyajit possessed valour and strength that was Kiriti’s equal. He was unwavering in his aim and he was killed by Drona in the encounter.[65] Virata and Drupada were aged and fought valiantly, for the sake of their friends. With their sons, those kings were killed in the battle by Drona. Though a child, he was revered in battle and the lord was as unassailable as Savyasachi, Keshava or Baladeva. He was skilled in fighting and performed great deeds. Though he was alone, he was surrounded by six enemies who were rathas. They were incapable of withstanding Bibhatsu, but brought down Abhimanyu.[66] Though he was deprived of his chariot, the brave one remained established in the dharma of kshatriyas. O great king! Subhadra's son was killed by Duhshasana's son in the battle. Brihanta, the great archer, was skilled in the use of weapons and indomitable in battle. Through Duhshasana's valour, he went to Yama's abode. The kings Maniman and Dandadhara were unassailable in battle and fought valiantly for the sake of their friends. They were brought down by Drona. King Anshuman of Bhoja was a maharatha. Because of the valour of Bharadvaja's son, with his soldiers, he went to Yama's abode. Chitrayudha was wonderful in fighting and performed great deeds. He exhibited his valour in wonderful modes and was killed by Karna in the battle. The Kekaya warriors were firm in fighting and were Vrikodara's equals. Brother brought down brother and they were slain through the valour of the Kekayas.[67] Janamejaya fought with a club. That powerful one hailed from the mountainous regions. O great king! He was brought down by your son, Durmukha. The Rochamanas[68] were tigers among men and were like blazing planets. O king! Drona shot arrows into the sky and killed them simultaneously. O lord of the earth! There were kings who fought back valiantly. They performed extremely great deeds and went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. Purujit Kuntibhoja was Savyasachi's maternal uncle.[69] In the battle, he won many worlds for himself and was killed by Drona's arrows. Abhibhu, the king of Kashi, was surrounded by many from Kashi. Vasudana's son made him give up his body in the battle. The valiant Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja were infinitely energetic. In the battle, those brave ones killed hundreds and were then themselves slain. O venerable one! Kshatradharma and Kshatravarma from Panchala were supreme archers. Drona made them go to Yama's abode. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kshatradeva, Shikhandi's son, was chief among warriors and was killed in the battle by your grandson, Lakshmana.[70] Suchitra and Chitradharma were father and son and were maharathas. They roamed around with great valour and were killed by Drona in the battle. O great king! O great king! Vardhakshemi performed great deeds in the battle. O great king! He was brought down by the Kourava Bahlika. O great king! Dhrishtaketu was a foremost ratha among the Chedis. Having performed great deeds, he went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. O father![71] In that fashion, Satyadhriti performed great deeds. He fought valiantly for the sake of the Pandavas and went to Yama's abode. Suketu, lord of the earth, was Shishupala's son. The warrior killed many enemies in the battle and was then slain by Drona. The brave Satyadhriti,[72] the valiant Madirashva and the valorous Suryadatta were killed by Drona's arrows. O great king! Shrenimana fought valiantly and having performed great deeds, went to Vaivasvata's eternal abode. O king! Magadha,[73] the destroyer of enemy heroes, fought valiantly and powerfully and was killed in the battle by Bhishma. Vasudana performed extremely great deeds in the battle. Because of the valour of Bharadvaja's son, he went to Yama's abode. There were many other maharathas on the side of the Pandavas. They were slain through Drona's valour. This is what you had asked me."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O supreme among eloquent ones! The foremost of soldiers on my side have been killed. O suta! I think the remnants will also be destroyed. What is the point of remaining alive? You have told me about the names of the ones who have been killed. I think that the ones who are still alive will also ascend to heaven. That is my view."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! Drona's son is still alive. He is a brave maharatha who is skilled and swift in the use of his arms. He is firm in wielding weapons and his fists are also firm. He is valiant and spirited. Drona, supreme among brahmanas, gave him many valuable weapons that are wonderful, sparkling and of four different types.[74] This includes divine weapons. He is still stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. Bhoja Kritavarma is skilled in the use of weapons. He resides in the Anarta region and is the son of Hridika.[75] He is a maharatha and is foremost among the Satvatas. He is still stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. O king! Sharadvata Goutama[76] is immensely strong and can fight in many wonderful ways. He possesses a wonderful bow that is capable of withstanding a great burden. He has grasped it and is stationed, desiring to fight. Artayani[77] does not tremble in the battle and is the first among the soldiers who are on your side. He has abandoned the Pandaveyas, who are the sons of his sister. The spirited one wishes to make his pledge come true, that he will sap the energy of the son of the suta in the battle. This is the promise that he made to Ajatashatru earlier. Shalya is unassailable and is Shakra's equal in valour. He is stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. The king of Gandhara[78] is united with his own army, which comes from Sindhu, Kamboja, Vanayu, Bahlika and other mountainous and unnamed regions. He is stationed, desiring to fight for your sake. O Indra among kings! Your son Kurumitra is also stationed. He is foremost among the Kurus and is on his chariot, with a blazing complexion that is like that of the sun or the fire. He is as dazzling and resplendent as the sun. Duryodhana is immensely valiant and is with the best of soldiers. He is in the midst of an army of elephants. His chariot is decorated with gold and he is stationed in the battle, desiring to fight. In the midst of the kings, Chitravarma is blazing in gold.[79] He is brave among men and is resplendent. His complexion is like that of a lotus, or a flame that is without smoke. He is shining, like the sun emerging from clouds. Your sons, the brave Satyasena and Sushena, have swords and shields in their hands. They are cheerfully stationed in the battle, together with Chitrasena, and wish to fight. The princes of the Bharata lineage, Chitrayudha, Shrutakarma, Jaya, Shala, Satyavrata and Duhshala are modest. However, they are powerful and are stationed, wishing to fight. The lord of Kaitavya is proud of his valour.[80] From one battle to another, that prince kills his enemies. He is advancing with infantry, horses, elephants and chariots. He is stationed in the battle, desiring to fight for your sake. The brave Shrutayu and Shrutayudha[81] and the valiant Chitrangada and Chitravarma, foremost among men, are stationed. They are proud strikers, who are unwavering in their aim. Karna's son, the great-souled Satyasena, is stationed in the battle, wishing to fight. O Indra among kings! Karna has two other supreme sons who are dexterous in the use of their hands. They are stationed. They desire to fight for your sake and are at the heads of two large armies that are impatient. O king! These and others are the foremost warriors. They are infinite in their power. For the sake of victory, the king of the Kurus is stationed in the midst of an army of elephants, like the great Indra.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “You have accurately described to me those who are still alive, on our side and that of the enemy. From this, I can understand what is obvious, about which side will triumph.” ’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, realized that the foremost among the warriors on his side had been killed and that only a little bit of his army remained. Having heard this and having spoken thus, he was overcome by confusion and sorrow and his senses were benumbed. He became unconscious for a while and then said, “O Sanjaya! Wait. O son! Having heard this extremely unpleasant news, my mind is anxious.” The lord of the earth lost his senses and fell down.’

Chapter 1155(5)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! On hearing that Karna had been killed in that battle and that his sons had run away, how was that Indra among kings assured and what did he say? Because of the great disaster that confronted his sons, he suffered from supreme grief. What did he say at that time? I am asking you. Tell me.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘He heard of Karna’s death, which was unbelievable and extraordinary. It was so terrible that it paralysed all beings, as if Mount Meru had moved. It was as if the senses of the immensely wise Bhargava[82] had got confused, or that Indra, the performer of terrible deeds, had been defeated and shattered by his enemies. It was as if the immensely radiant sun had fallen down from the sky onto the earth, or the unthinkable drying up of the waters from the ocean. It was as extraordinary as the earth, the sky and all the directions being destroyed. It was as if both good and evil deeds had become fruitless. Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, used his intelligence to skilfully think about this. With Karna killed, he thought that his side had been destroyed and came around to the view that all the other beings would similarly be destroyed. He was scorched by the flames of sorrow and his heart could find no solace. His soul was shattered and he sighed in distress. He was extremely miserable and lamented. O great king! Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, lamented in woe.

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! Adhiratha’s son was brave. He was like a lion or an elephant in his valour. His shoulders were like that of a bull. His eyes, gait and voice were like those of a bull. He was a bull and like a bull. He was young and was capable of withstanding the *vajra*. He did not retreat from a battle, even if the adversary were to be the great Indra. Because of his bowstring twanging against his palms and because of the shower of his arrows, chariots, horses, men and elephants could not stand before him in a battle. He was mighty-armed and without decay. He was the slayer of large numbers of the enemy. Depending on him, Duryodhana ventured to provoke an enmity with the immensely strong sons of Pandu. How could Karna, best of rathas, have been brought down by Partha in the battle? He was capable of withstanding valour that is impossible to counter. How could that tiger among men have been killed? Depending on the strength of his own arms, he never showed any reverence towards Achyuta,[83] Dhananjaya or the Vrishnis. 'The wielders of the Sharnga and Gandiva bows[84] are undefeated. When they are together, on their divine chariot, I will alone bring them down in the battle.' He always spoke these words to the wicked and evil Duryodhana, who was afflicted by desire for the kingdom and was confused because of his greed for what was undesirable. He is the one who defeated powerful enemies who were extremely difficult to vanquish—the Gandharas, the Madrakas, the Matsyas, the Trigartas, the Tanganas, the Shakas, the Panchalas, the Videhas, the Kunindas, the Kashis, the Kosalas, the Suhmas, the Angas, the Pundras, the Nishadas, the Vangas, the Kichakas, the Vatsas, the Kalingas, the Taralas, the Ashmakas and the Rishikas. In earlier times, using his strength, the brave one defeated all of these in battles. Just as Uchchaihshrava[85] is supreme among horses, Vaishravana[86] is supreme among *yakshas*[87] and the great Indra is supreme among gods, Karna was supreme among those who could strike. Having obtained and pacified him through riches and honours, the king of Magadha wished to fight with all the kshatriyas on earth, with the exception of the Kouravas and the Yadavas.[88] On hearing of Karna's death in the duel with Savyasachi, I am immersed in an ocean of grief. It is as if I am on an ocean without a boat. I think that my heart cannot be shattered and must be harder than the vajra. I have heard about the defeat of my kin, matrimonial allies and friends. O suta! Other than an unfortunate one like me, which other man in the world would not have given up his life? I wish for poison, or fire. I desire to fall down from the summit of a mountain. O Sanjaya! I am incapable of bearing this misery and hardship."

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! In prosperity, lineage, fame, austerities and learning, the virtuous ones regard you to be the equal of Yayati, Nahusha's son. You are like a maharshi in your learning and are accomplished in your deeds. Find solace inside your own self. Do not give way to this sorrow in your mind."

‘Dhritarashtra said, “I think that destiny is supreme. Shame on manliness, it is futile. Karna was the equal of Rama[89] and has been killed in this battle. He killed Yudhishthira’s soldiers and the Panchalas who roamed around in their chariots. With his showers of arrows, the maharatha scorched all the directions. In the battle, he confounded the Parthas, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. How can he have been killed? How can he lie down, like a tree that has been shattered by the storm? I do not see an end to my sorrows and seem to be in an endless ocean. My anxiety is increasing. It is terrible. The desire to die is increasing. I have heard about Karna’s death and Phalguna’s[90] victory. But I do not think that Karna’s death is believable. It is certain that my heart has the essence of the vajra. It is extremely firm. On hearing about the death of Karna, tiger among men, it has not been shattered. It is certain that, from earlier times, destiny has ordained an extremely long life for me. I am extremely miserable. But despite hearing about Karna’s death, I am still alive. O Sanjaya! I am without well-wishers now and shame on this life. O Sanjaya! I have been reduced to this reprehensible state today. I am wicked in my understanding. Everyone will grieve over my miserable state. Earlier, I used to be honoured by the entire world. O suta! Having been defeated, how can I bear to remain alive? O Sanjaya! I have faced hardships and have moved from pain to greater pain. There was Bhishma’s death and then that of the great-souled Drona. With the son of the suta having been killed in the battle, I do not see any remnants left. O Sanjaya! It was he who would have enabled my sons to tide over this great enmity. The brave one released many arrows and has been slain in the battle. When that bull among men has been killed, what is the point of my remaining alive? There is no doubt that the *atiratha*[91] was afflicted by arrows and fell down from his chariot. It was like the summit of a mountain, shattered by the vajra. There is no doubt that he is lying down, adorning the earth, blood flowing from his wounds. He is like a crazy elephant, brought down by another elephant. He was the strength of the sons of Dhritarashtra and fear for the Pandavas. Karna was revered by all archers and has been slain by Arjuna. The brave and great archer granted my sons freedom from fear. The brave one has been killed and is lying down, like Bala by Shakra.[92] Duryodhana’s wishes are now like a lame one desiring to walk, the wishes of a poor man being satisfied, or a thirsty man without drops of water. We thought of one thing when performing our deeds, but it has turned out to be something else. Destiny is powerful and time is extremely difficult to transgress.

‘ “O suta! What about my son, Duhshasana? When he was killed, was he running away? Was he weak, distressed in his soul and devoid of manliness? O son! Did he display inferior conduct in the battle? Was the brave one killed like other kshatriyas on our side have been slain? Yudhishthira’s words have always been against war. They were like diet and medicine, but the foolish Duryodhana did not accept them. Bhishma was lying down on a bed of arrows and desired a drink. The extremely great-souled Partha pierced the surface of the earth. O son! On seeing the fountain of water that was created by the Pandava, the mighty-armed one spoke about peace with the Pandavas. ‘Be pacified. Let there be peace and let the hostilities of the war end. With fraternal feelings, enjoy the earth with the sons of Pandu.’[93] My son did not act in accordance with those words and is no doubt sorrowing now. What the far-sighted one stated in his words has now transpired. O Sanjaya! My advisers have been killed and my sons have been slain. I have been reduced to this state because of the gambling match, like a bird without wings. O Sanjaya! Boys cheerfully grasp birds in sport and having severed their wings, let them go. But because their wings have been severed, they cannot fly away. I have been reduced to that state, like a bird without wings. I am destitute and weak in every way. I am without relatives and kin. I am miserable and have come under the subjugation of my enemies. Which direction will I turn to? For the sake of Duryodhana’s prosperity, the lord[94] conquered the earth. He was valorous, but has been vanquished by the capable and brave Pandavas. When the great archer, Karna, was killed in the battle by Kiriti, which brave ones surrounded him? O Sanjaya! Tell me that. When he was slain by Pandava in the battle, I hope he was not abandoned and alone. O brave one! Earlier, you have told me how the valiant ones were brought down. Bhishma, supreme among wielders of all weapons, did not fight back and was brought down in the battle by Shikhandi’s supreme arrows. Similarly, Drona, the great archer, cast aside his weapons in the battle and immersed himself in yoga. O Sanjaya! He was already pierced with many arrows and Dhrishtadyumna, Drupada’s son, raised his sword and slew him. Both of them were killed through a weakness, especially through deceit. That is what I have heard about the way Bhishma and Drona were brought down. Even the wielder of the vajra himself would not have been able to kill Bhishma and Drona in a battle, provided the fight took place through fair means. I tell you this truthfully.

‘ “Karna must have unleashed many divine weapons. The brave one was Indra’s equal. How could death have touched him in the battle? He possessed a divine spear that was as radiant as lightning. It was decorated with gold and was capable of killing the enemy. Purandara gave him that in exchange for the earrings.[95] Among the arrows in his quiver, there was a divine arrow, decorated with gold. It was lying there and was smeared with sandalwood paste. It had a serpent in its mouth and the slayer of enemies did not use it.[96] The brave one ignored maharathas like Bhishma and Drona and learnt the extremely terrible *brahmastra* from Jamadagni’s son.[97] When the mighty-armed one saw that Drona and the others were afflicted by the arrows released by Subhadra’s son, he used his arrows to sever his[98] bow. Bhimasena possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants and the speed of the wind. But the one without decay deprived him of his chariot and laughed at his brother.[99] He conquered Sahadeva with straight-tufted arrows. But having deprived him of his chariot, he took compassion on him and knowing about dharma, did not kill him.[100] Ghatotkacha, Indra among the rakshasas, used a thousand different kinds of maya and was crazy in the battle. But he destroyed all those and killed him with the spear that he had obtained from Shakra. For all these days, Dhananjaya has been frightened of fighting a duel with him. The brave one was like an elephant. How could he have been killed in the battle? His chariot must have been shattered. His bow must have been fragmented. His weapons must have been exhausted. Otherwise, how could he have been killed by the enemy? When Karna brandished his gigantic bow, who was capable of standing against him in the battle? In the battle, he released terrible arrows and divine weapons. Who could defeat that tiger among men? He was like a tiger in his force. It is certain that his bow must have been shattered. His chariot must have got stuck in the ground. Else, his weapons must have got exhausted, since you have told me that he has been killed. Without these being destroyed, I can see no other reason for his death. ‘Until I have killed Arjuna, I will not wash my feet.’ This is the extremely terrible vow that the great-souled one took. In the forest, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was always terrified of him. The bull among men could not sleep for thirteen years.[101]

‘ “When my son forcibly brought the wife of the Pandus to the assembly hall, he depended on the valour and bravery of the great-souled one. While the Pandavas looked on, in the midst of that assembly hall, in the assembly of the Kurus, he[102] had spoken to Panchali. ‘You are the wife of slaves. You think that arrows released from Gandiva have the touch of the fire. O Krishna! They are no longer your husbands.’ He said this while Partha looked on. O Sanjaya! Depending on the strength of his own arms, not for a single moment was he frightened of the Parthas, their sons, or of Janardana. O son! I do not think that he could have been killed even by the gods, with Vasava,[103] even if they had angrily rushed against him, not to speak of the Pandavas. When he touched the bowstring with his finger-guards, which man was capable of standing before Adhiratha’s son?[104] It is possible for the earth to be deprived of the blazing rays of the sun or the moon. However, that Indra among men did not retreat from a battle and his death is impossible. The wicked one, evil in his intelligence,[105] obtained him as an aide and with his brother, Duhshasana, rejected Vasudeva’s desirable proposal.[106]

‘ “On seeing that Karna, with the shoulders of a bull, has been brought down and on seeing that Duhshasana has been killed, I think that my son must be grieving. On hearing that Vaikartana has been killed in a duel with Savyasachi and on witnessing the victory of the Pandavas, what did Duryodhana say? He heard that Durmarshana and Vrishasena[107] had been killed in the battle. He saw the army was shattered and was being slaughtered by the maharathas. The kings were unwilling to fight and were running away. On seeing that the rathas were routed, I think that my son must be grieving. He is extremely insolent and wrathful because of his childish intelligence. On seeing that the army had lost its enterprise, what did Duryodhana say? On seeing that Bhimasena had killed his brother in the battle and had drunk his blood, what did Duryodhana say? With the king of Gandhara,[108] he had proclaimed in the assembly hall, ‘Karna will kill Arjuna in the encounter.’ On seeing him slain, what did he say?

Earlier, having deceived the Pandavas in the gambling match, Shakuni Soubala had rejoiced. O son! On seeing Karna killed, what did he say? On seeing that Karna had been slain, what did the great archer, Hardikya Kritavarma, the maharatha of the Satvata lineage, say? Drona’s son is intelligent. Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas worship him, for the sake of learning about *dhanurveda*. He is young, handsome, qualified, beautiful and immensely illustrious. O Sanjaya! On learning that Karna had been killed, what did Ashvatthama say? O son! Sharadvata Kripa is the preceptor in dhanurveda and possesses supreme knowledge.[109] When Karna was killed, what did he say? Shalya, the great archer and the king of Madra, is the adornment of any assembly. It is destiny that he did everything so that Karna might be brought down. There were kings of the earth who had come to fight. O Sanjaya! On seeing that Vaikartana had been killed, what did they say? O Sanjaya! At the time when the brave Karna, tiger among rathas and bull among men, was killed, who were the leaders of the main divisions of the army? O Sanjaya! How did Shalya, supreme among rathas and king of Madra, come to be engaged as Vaikartana’s charioteer. Tell me about that. In the battle, who protected the right wheel of the son of the suta? Who protected the left wheel? Who protected the brave one from the rear? Which were the brave ones who did not abandon Karna and who were the inferior ones who ran away? When all those on our side were united, how was maharatha Karna killed? How did the brave ones among the Pandavas advance against the maharatha, creating a shower of arrows, like clouds showering down rain? There was a great and divine arrow, with a serpent at the mouth. O Sanjaya! How was it rendered unsuccessful? Tell me that. O Sanjaya! When the best of soldiers on our side have been killed, I do not see any refuge for the dispirited ones who are left. Those two brave and great archers were supreme among those on the Kuru side. On hearing of the death of Bhishma and Drona, what is the point of my remaining alive? I cannot tolerate the thought of Radheya, the ornament of a battle, being slain. The strength of his arms was equal to that of ten thousand elephants. O Sanjaya! When Drona was killed, tell me everything that took place between those brave ones among men, between the Kouravas and the enemy and how the Kounteyas prepared themselves for fighting with Karna. In the battle, how was the one without decay killed by his foes and how did he find peace?” ’

Chapter 1156(6)

'Sanjaya said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! When Drona, the great archer was killed on that day, and the resolution of Drona's maharatha son countered,[110] the Kourava forces were driven away there. Together with his brothers, Partha[111] arranged the soldiers on their side into a *vyuha*.[112] O bull among the Bharata lineage! On discerning that he was stationed in that fashion and on seeing that his own forces were running away, your son[113] used his manliness to restrain them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having stationed his own troops, he used the strength of his arms to fight with the Pandaveyas for a long time. The enemy had attained its objective and was cheerful, after having struggled for a very long time. However, since it was evening, the armies withdrew. The soldiers were withdrawn and entered their own respective camps. Having done this, the Kurus consulted with each other. They were on expensive beds, with supreme cushions and supreme beds. They were on supreme seats and comfortably lying down, were like the immortals. King Duryodhana spoke to them in conciliatory and supremely restrained tones. He addressed those great archers in words that were appropriate to the occasion. 'O best among intelligent ones! All of you, quickly tell me what your counsel is. O kings! What should be done now? What is the supreme task?' Having been thus addressed by that Indra among men, those lions among men, who were seated on their thrones, used different kinds of signs to indicate that they wished to fight. They were ready to offer their lives as oblations into the sacrifice of war. The king's face was also as radiant as the rising sun. On seeing this, the preceptor's son, who was intelligent and eloquent in words, spoke these words. 'Passion, engagement, skill and policy—these are the means to accomplish objectives. That is what the learned ones have said. However, everything depends on destiny. We had foremost among men, maharathas, on our side. They were the equals of the gods. They had good policy and were devoted, skilled and faithful. But they have been killed. However, despite this, we should not lose hope about our victory. If we use good policies, destiny will become favourable in accomplishing all our objectives. Among all these foremost men, we should make Karna the overall commander. He is endowed with all the qualities. We will then crush our enemy.' On hearing these pleasant words, Duryodhana was delighted. He thought that these auspicious and beneficial words were full of affection towards him.

' "O great king! Reassuring his mind because of the strength of his arms,[114] King Duryodhana spoke these words to Radheya. 'O Karna! I know your valour and that you are my supreme well-wisher. O mighty-armed one! But nevertheless, I will address some beneficial words towards you. O brave one! Having heard them, do what pleases you. You have always been the wisest. You are my supreme refuge. Bhishma and Drona, both atirathas, were my commanders and they have been killed. You are superior to them. Become my commander. Those great archers were aged and were partial towards Dhananjaya. O Radheya! I revered those brave ones because of your words. O son![115] In the great battle, for ten days, you saw that Bhishma, the grandfather, protected the sons of Pandu. Having laid his weapons aside in the great battle, Bhishma, the grandfather, was killed by Phalguna, who placed Shikhandi at the forefront. That immensely fortunate one was brought down and is lying down on a bed of arrows. O tiger among men! It was because of your words that Drona was placed in our forefront.[116] But because they were his students, he also protected the Parthas in the battle. Then, the aged one was swiftly killed by Dhrishtadyumna. Thinking about it, I do not see any other warrior who is your equal, because of your infinite valour, even if I include those two foremost ones who have been killed. There is no doubt that you will be able to ensure victory. You know everything about what has happened, earlier, in the middle, and later. You should be our leader in this battle. You should be the leader in this enterprise. Consecrate your own self in all these soldiers, like Skanda, the undecaying lord, is the general of the gods. Like that, become the protector of the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Slay all the large numbers of the enemy, like the great Indra against the *danava*s. Knowing that you are stationed in the battle, the maharatha Pandavas, together with the Panchalas, will run away, like the danavas on seeing Vishnu. O tiger among men! Therefore, become the leader of this large army. When you station yourself and make endeavours, the Pandavas, with their advisers, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas, will be bereft of their senses. You will be like a rising sun that scorches with its energy and dispels the terrible darkness. Like that, you will drive away our enemy.' Karna replied, 'O son of Gandhari! In your presence, I have spoken these words before. O king! I will defeat the Pandavas, with their sons and with Janardana. There is no doubt that I will be your commander. O great king! Be assured. Know that I will defeat the Pandavas.' Having been thus addressed, the immensely energetic King Duryodhana arose, together with the kings, like the gods with Shatakratu.[117]

' "He instated Karna as the commander, like the immortals did to Skanda. Desirous of victory, King Duryodhana and the other kings swiftly sprinkled water, according to the prescribed rites.[118] Golden and earthen pots were filled and mantras pronounced over them. The tusks of elephants and the horns of large bulls were filled with water. There were others[119] that were decorated with gems and jewels and with fragrant perfumes and herbs. He seated himself on a seat made out of the fig tree,[120] covered with a piece of silk. He was consecrated, in accordance with the rites in the sacred texts. 'In the great battle, may you defeat Partha and Govinda, together with their followers.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! These were the benedictions pronounced by bards and brahmanas. 'Be like the rising sun, the destroyer of darkness through its fierce rays. May they, together with Keshava, not be able to look at your arrows. May those ungrateful ones look on them as the blazing rays of the sun. May the Parthas and the Panchalas not be able to stand before you. In a battle, you possess the knowledge of weapons and will be like the great Indra against the danavas.' Thus was the infinitely radiant Radheya consecrated. In his resplendent form, he looked like another sun. Radheya was instated as the commander by your son and goaded by destiny, he thought that his task had been accomplished. O king! Having become the commander, Karna, the destroyer of enemies, instructed that the soldiers should be yoked and should wait for the sun to rise. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Surrounded by your sons, Karna looked dazzling there. He was like Skanda surrounded by the gods, in the *tarakamaya* battle." '[121]

Chapter 1157(7)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! Vaikartana Karna obtained the generalship and was addressed by the king himself,[122] in those gentle and fraternal words. He instructed the soldiers to be yoked and for the sun to rise. O immensely wise one! What did he do next? Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having ascertained Karna’s views, your son instructed that the soldiers should be yoked and that musical instruments should be sounded. O venerable one! When that long night was over, a great sound of ‘Array, yoke,’ suddenly arose. In the army, elephants and chariots were prepared. O lord of the earth! Infantry and cavalry were readied. The spirited warriors shouted at each other. There was a large and tumultuous noise that seemed to touch heaven. Karna, the great archer and supreme among rathas, was seen stationed on his chariot. His flags were white and his steeds possessed the complexion of the rising sun. His bow had a golden back and his standard bore the mark of an elephant’s housing. The army had quivers full of arrows and armlets. They wielded *shataghni*s,[123] bells, lances, spears, clubs and bows. In his chariot and flags, the son of the suta was seen, sparkling like a clear sun. O father![124] He blew on his conch shell, which was decorated in nets of gold. He stretched his giant bow, which was embellished with gold. O venerable one! On seeing Karna, the great archer and supreme among rathas, stationed on his chariot, like a rising sun that drives away thousands of clumps of darkness, the Kouravas, tigers among men, no longer thought about Bhishma and Drona’s death. O venerable one! Urging the warriors with sounds from his conch shell, Karna made the Kourava army march out. Wishing to defeat the Pandava, Karna, the great archer and scorcher of enemies, arranged a vyuha in the form of a *makara*.[125] O king! Karna stationed himself at the makara’s mouth. The brave Shakuni and maharatha Uluka were at the eyes. Drona’s son was at the head. In the midst of his brothers and surrounded by a large army, King Duryodhana was at the neck. O Indra among kings! Kritavarma stationed himself along the left leg, with the narayana and *gopala* forces who were indomitable in battle.[126] O king! Goutama, for whom truth was valour, was at the right leg, surrounded by great archers from the Trigarta and southern regions. Shalya was stationed at the rear left leg, with a large army that had been raised from the Madra region. O great king! Sushena, unwavering in his resolution, was on the right, surrounded by a thousand chariots and a hundred tuskers.[127] The brave brothers and kings, Chitrasena and Chitra, were at the tail, surrounded by a large army. O Indra among kings! Thus did the supreme among the best of men emerge.

‘ “On seeing this, Dharmaraja glanced towards Dhananjaya and said, ‘O Partha! In the battle, behold the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. They have been arrayed by Karna and are protected by brave maharathas. The remnants of the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra are bereft of brave ones. O mighty-armed one! It is my view that the remnants are feeble and like grass. There is only one great archer who is stationed there and that is the son of the suta. That supreme among rathas cannot be vanquished by the gods, the *asuras*, the *gandharvas*, the *kinnaras*, the giant serpents and all the mobile and immobile creatures in the three worlds. O mighty-armed one! O Phalguna! If you kill him today, you will be victorious. The stake that has been in my heart for twelve years will be uprooted. O mighty-armed one! Knowing this, construct the vyuha that you desire.’ On hearing his brother’s words, the Pandava with the white horses arranged the soldiers in a counter-vyuha that was in the shape of a half-moon. O king! Bhimasena stationed himself on the left flank and the immensely strong and great archer, Dhrishtadyumna, was on the right. Pandava himself was at the centre of the vyuha, with Krishna as his charioteer. With Dharmaraja, Nakula and Sahadeva were at the rear. Protected by Kiriti, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja from Panchala protected Arjuna’s wheels and did not desert him in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The remaining brave kings armoured and stationed themselves in the vyuha, according to each one’s position, enterprise and spirit. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did the Pandavas arrange themselves into a great vyuha.

‘ “The great archers on your side made up their minds to fight. On seeing the army in the battle, arranged into a vyuha by the son of the suta, your son and all the others on our side thought that the Pandavas had already been killed. O lord of men! In similar fashion, on seeing the Pandava soldiers arranged into a vyuha, Yudhishthira thought that the sons of Dhritarashtra and Karna had already been killed. Conch shells, kettledrums, drums, cymbals and other musical instruments were loudly sounded and the noise spread in every direction. O king! There was a loud noise in both the armies. Desiring victory, the brave ones roared like lions. There were sounds of the neighing of horses and the trumpeting of elephants. O lord of men! There were fierce sounds from the wheels of chariots. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing the great archer, Karna, stationed at the front of the vyuha, no one[128] thought of Drona’s loss. On both sides, the soldiers were full of great spirits and the men and elephants were cheerful. O king! Wishing to kill each other quickly, they remained stationed in the battle. O Indra among kings! Karna and Pandava were resplendent in the midst of their soldiers and were extremely angry on seeing each other stationed thus. As they advanced towards each other, the two armies seemed to be dancing around. Wishing to fight, they emerged from the flanks and smaller segments. O great king! A battle commenced between men, elephants, horses and chariots and they firmly wished to kill each other.” ’

Chapter 1158(8)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those two armies clashed against each other, with cheerful horses, men and elephants. That great encounter was like that between the armies of gods and asuras. In that great battle, elephants, chariots, horses and infantry struck at each other, mangling bodies and destroying lives. The heads of men who were like lions were strewn around on the ground and the faces of those lions among men who were killed were like full moon, the sun, or lotuses in splendour. The heads of the warriors were severed with broad-headed and razor-sharp arrows in the shape of the half-moon, swords, lances and battleaxes. They possessed thick and long arms and these were severed by others with thick and long arms. Those thick arms were severed and fell down, with weapons and armlets still on the hands. With those red fingers and palms, the earth looked resplendent. It was as if five-headed serpents had been fiercely killed by Garuda. Horses, chariots, elephants and brave warriors were destroyed by the enemy and fell down. It was as if residents of heaven had been dislodged from their celestial vehicles,[129] after their sacred merits had been exhausted. In that battle, hundreds of brave and braver ones were uprooted through thick and heavy clubs, maces and bludgeons. Rathas were killed by rathas and mad elephants by other mad elephants. As they clashed in that supreme encounter, horses were brought down by horses. Rathas were destroyed by supreme rathas, elephants by horse riders and foot soldiers. Horse riders and foot soldiers were killed and lay down on that field of battle. Chariots, horses, foot soldiers and elephants were destroyed by chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers. Chariots, foot soldiers, elephants and horses were destroyed by men, horses, chariots and elephants. Chariots, horses and men fought against men, horses and chariots and caused a great carnage, fighting with hands, feet, weapons and chariots.

‘ “While those brave soldiers were being slaughtered and killed, the Parthas, with Vrikodara at the forefront, advanced against us. They were with Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas, Satyaki, Chekitana and the Dravida soldiers. They were surrounded by a large army from the Pandyas, the Cholas and the Keralas. They were broad in the chest and long in the arms. They were tall and handsome. They were ornamented and possessed red teeth. They were like crazy elephants in their valour. They were adorned in garments of many colours and were smeared with fragrant scents. They had girded swords and nooses in their hands. They were capable of countering elephants. O king! Prepared to die, they were stationed against each other in that army. There were quivers and bows in their hands and their hair was long. They were pleasant in speech. The foot soldiers from Andhra were terrible in form and valiant and were led by Satyaki. There were other brave ones from Chedi, Panchala, Kekaya, Karusha, Kosala, Kashi and Magadha and they dashed forward. There were many kinds of chariots, elephants, supreme horses and infantry amidst them and they could be seen to be dancing and laughing. Surrounded by supreme ones from the enemy, Vrikodara was in the midst of that large army. He was seated astride an elephant. That supreme among elephants was fierce and having been properly prepared, looked dazzling. It was like a palace atop Mount Udaya, illuminated at the peak by the rising sun.[130] His[131] supreme armour was made out of iron and he was adorned with the best of gems. He sparkled like the autumn sky, studded with stars. There was a fierce spear in his hand and it was beautifully adorned at the tip. Like the midday sun in autumn, he began to burn up the enemy.

‘ “Seeing that elephant from a distance, Kshemadhurti arrived, seated on another elephant.[132] He was cheerful and attacked and challenged someone who was more cheerful than he was. There was a clash between those two elephants, both of which were fierce in form. They clashed as they wished, like two mountains with trees at the top. Astride the clashing elephants, those two brave ones struck each other with their spears. The powerful ones were as dazzling as the rays of the sun and striking each other, roared. They then retreated and circled on their elephants. Both of them picked up bows and struck each other. They slapped their arms and in every direction, there was the sound of arrows. As they roared like lions, they delighted all the men. Those immensely strong lords were on elephants that raised up their trunks. As they fought, the flags whirled around in the wind. Having severed each other's bows, they roared. They showered down lances and spears, like clouds pouring down rain during the monsoon. Kshemadhurti used great force to strike Bhima between the breasts with a spear and striking him again with another six, roared. Because of those spears, Bhimasena was resplendent in the field of battle. In that encounter, his body blazed with anger, like seven suns seven times.[133] Bhima carefully hurled a spear towards his enemy. It was made out of iron and possessed the complexion of the sun. It flew straight. The lord of Kuluta affixed ten arrows to his bow and shattered the spear. He then pierced Pandava with sixty more. Pandava picked up a bow that roared like a giant cloud and afflicting his enemy's elephants with his arrows, roared. Having been afflicted by the arrows of Bhimasena in the battle, the elephant did not remain there any longer, though one tried to restrain it. It was like a cloud dispelled by the wind. Bhimasena's elephant, the king of elephants, pursued it, like a cloud driven by a strong wind follows a cloud blown away by the wind. Having endeavoured to restrain his elephant, Kshemadhurti attacked Bhimasena and his elephant and pierced them with arrows. The bull among men used a razor-sharp arrow that was released well to sever his enemy's bow and oppressed his enemy's elephant. As if striking Bhima with a rod, Kshemadhurti used iron arrows to pierce the elephant everywhere in its inner organs. Before the elephant could fall down, Bhimasena descended and stationed himself on the ground. He struck down the enemy's elephant with a club. When that elephant was brought down, Kshemadhurti advanced with an upraised weapon. But Vrikodara killed him with his club. He was killed, with the sword in his hand, and having been brought down, lay down next to the elephant. He was like a lion killed by the vajra, alongside a mountain shattered by the vajra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the illustrious king of Kuluta had been killed, your soldiers were distressed and fled." '

Chapter 1159(9)

'Sanjaya said, "In the battle, the great archer, Karna, killed the Pandava soldiers with his straight-tufted arrows. O king! In that fashion, in Karna's presence, the maharatha Pandavas angrily killed your son's soldiers. O king! The mighty-armed Karna killed the Pandava soldiers with iron arrows that had been polished by artisans and were like the rays of the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The elephants were afflicted by Karna's iron arrows. They roared loudly and were weakened. They lost their senses and fled in the ten directions. O venerable one! While the army was thus being slaughtered by the son of the suta, Nakula swiftly attacked the son of the suta in that great battle. Bhimasena advanced against Drona's son, who was performing extremely difficult deeds. Satyaki countered Vinda and Anuvinda from Kekaya.[134] Chitrasena, lord of the earth, advanced against Shrutakarma.[135] With a colourful standard and a colourful bow, Chitra advanced against Prativindhya. Duryodhana attacked King Yudhishthira, Dharma's son. Dhananjaya angrily attacked the large numbers of samshaptakas. When the brave ones were being killed, Dhrishtadyumna rushed against Kripa. Shikhandi attacked the undecaying Kritavarma. Shrutakirti [136] attacked Shalya. O great king! Madri's son, the powerful Sahadeva, attacked your son, Duhshasana.

' "In the encounter with Satyaki, the Kekayas showered down radiant arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satyaki also enveloped the two from Kekaya. In the great battle, those two brothers severely struck the brave one in the chest and it was like two elephants striking another elephant with their tusks. With their armour pierced by arrows, the brothers were resplendent in the battle. O king! But they pierced Satyaki, who was truthful in his deeds, with arrows. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, Satyaki countered them and laughed. He shrouded them in every direction with a shower of arrows. Having been repulsed by the shower of arrows released by Shini's descendant, they quickly enveloped the chariot of Shini's descendant with arrows. In that great battle, Shouri severed their colourful bows.[137] In that encounter, he repulsed them with sharp arrows that were difficult to withstand. They then grasped other bows and giant arrows in their fists and roaming around with skill and dexterity, covered Satyaki. They shot giant arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks and were decorated. They were embellished with gold and illuminated all the directions. O king! Because of the arrows released, there was darkness in the great battle there. Those maharathas severed each other's bows. O great king! Satvata, indomitable in battle, became enraged. In that encounter, he picked up and strung another bow. With an extremely sharp *kshurapra* arrow, he severed Anuvinda's head. O king! That large head, with earrings, fell down on the ground, like Shambara's head when he was killed in the great battle.[138] On seeing that he swiftly fell down on the ground, all the Kekayas grieved. On seeing that his brave brother had been killed, the maharatha[139] strung another bow and countered Shini's descendant. He pierced Satyaki with gold-tufted spears that had been sharpened on stone.[140] The maharatha from Kekaya roared loudly and powerfully and asking Satyaki to wait, struck him in the arms and in the chest with arrows that were like the flames of fires. The wise and spirited Satvata was wounded in all his limbs by these arrows. O king! He was resplendent in that battle, like a *kimshuka*[141] with leaves. Having been pierced by the great-souled Kekaya in the battle, Satyaki laughed and pierced Kekaya with twenty-five arrows. In their excellent arms, they grasped shields that were marked with the signs of one hundred moons. Wielding the best of swords, they roamed around in that great arena. It was like the immensely strong Jambha and Shakra in the battle between the gods and the asuras.[142] In the great battle, they roamed around in circles and swiftly attacked each other, wishing to kill each other in the encounter. Satvata severed Kekaya's shield into two fragments and in that way, the king also shattered Satyaki's shield. Having severed the shield that was marked with the signs of hundreds of stars, Kekaya whirled around in circles, advancing and retreating. Wielding the best of swords, Shini's descendant also roamed around in that great arena and striking sideways, severed Kekaya’s head. O king! Still wearing his armour, in that great battle, the great archer from Kekaya was severed into two parts and fell down, like a mountain shattered by thunder. Having killed him in the battle, Shini’s brave descendant, supreme among rathas and scorcher of enemies, quickly climbed onto Yudhamanyu’s chariot. He then again ascended a different chariot that had been prepared properly. Using his arrows, Satyaki began to slaughter the large army of the Kekayas. The large army of the Kekayas was slaughtered in that battle. It abandoned the enemy in the encounter and fled in the ten directions.” ’

Chapter 1160(10)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! In the encounter, Shrutakarma angrily struck Chitrasena, lord of the earth, with fifty arrows that had been sharpened on stone. The king of Abhisara[143] struck Shrutakarma with nine straight-tufted arrows and pierced his charioteer with five. In the forefront of the army, Shrutakarma became enraged. He struck Chitrasena in his inner organs with extremely sharp iron arrows. Using the opportunity,[144] the immensely illustrious Shrutakirti shrouded the lord of the earth with ninety arrows. Having recovered his senses, maharatha Chitrasena severed his[145] bow with a broad-headed arrow and pierced him with seven arrows. He grasped another bow that was decorated with gold and could strike hard. Piercing Chitrasena with arrows, he made him look colourful. The youthful king was adorned with colourful garlands and was made colorful by the arrows. He looked like an ornamented youth in an assembly. In that encounter, angrily asking Shrutakarma to wait, he pierced him between the breasts with iron arrows. In the battle, Shrutakarma was pierced by those iron arrows and began to shed copious quantities of blood, like a mountain exuding red minerals. His limbs were covered in blood and he was like a picture drawn in blood. O king! In that battle, he was as resplendent as a blossoming kimshuka. O king! Having been thus struck by the enemy, Shrutakarma angrily countered the foe and severed his bow into two. O best of the Bharata lineage! Having severed his bow, the immensely illustrious Shrutakarma pierced him with three hundred iron arrows. Swiftly, he severely struck him with another sharp and broad-headed arrow and severed the great-souled one’s helmeted head. Chitravarma’s[146] extremely large head fell down on the ground, as if the moon was wilfully dislodged from heaven and fell down on the surface of the ground. O venerable one! On seeing that the king of Abhisara had been killed, Chitrasena’s soldiers attacked with force. However, Shrutakarma, the great archer, angrily used his arrows to drive away those soldiers, like the wrathful lord of the dead[147] at the time of the destruction of all beings. Having driven them away, he roamed around there.

‘ “Prativindhya pierced Chitra with five swift arrows and having pierced his charioteer with three, brought down his standard with a single arrow. Chitra struck him in the chest and the arms with nine broad-headed arrows that were gold-tufted, sharpened on stone and shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Prativindhya used his arrows to sever his bow and then struck that ratha with five sharp arrows. O great king! He hurled a spear towards your son.[148] It possessed a golden handle and was difficult to resist. It was terrible and was like the flame of a fire. As it descended, Prativindhya severed it with his sharp arrows. It was like the vajra frightening all beings at the end of a yuga and on seeing that this spear had been destroyed, Chitra grasped a large club. It was decorated with nets of gold and he hurled it towards Prativindhya. In that great battle, it slew his horses and his charioteer. It struck his chariot with great force and crushed it down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this time, he ascended another chariot and hurled a spear that was decorated with golden bells towards Chitra. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As it descended, the great-souled Chitra seized it and flung it back towards Prativindhya. In the battle, the immensely radiant spear struck the brave Prativindhya. It pierced his right arm and fell down on the surface of the earth. Having fallen down, because of its radiance, like lightning, it lit up the spot where it had fallen down. O king! Prativindhya grasped a javelin that was decorated with gold. Wishing to kill Chitra, he angrily hurled it towards him. It pierced the armour on his body and his heart. It then swiftly penetrated the ground, like a snake entering its hole. The king was struck by that javelin and was brought down, extending his large and thick arms that were like clubs. On seeing that Chitra, the ornament of a battle, was killed, all those on your side powerfully attacked Prativindhya from all directions. They released many kinds of arrows and shataghnis with bells. They quickly enveloped him, like the sun by a mass of clouds. But in that encounter, the mighty-armed one struck them with a net of arrows and drove away those soldiers, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. O king! In the battle, those on your side were slaughtered by the Pandavas. They were violently dispersed, like the clouds by the wind. The army was slaughtered and scattered in all the directions. Drona’s son alone quickly attacked the immensely strong Bhimasena. A terrible and violent clash ensued between them. It was like that between Vritra and Vasava in the battle between the gods and the asuras.” ’

Chapter 1161(11)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Drona’s son possessed supreme speed. He displayed his dexterity with weapons and struck Bhimasena with an arrow. He then again struck him with another ninety sharp arrows in his inner organs. He was light in the use of his hands and had seen and was knowledgeable about where the weak spots were. O king! Having been struck by the sharp arrows shot by Drona’s son, Bhimasena was resplendent in that battle, like the sun with its rays. Pandava shot one thousand well-aimed arrows and enveloping Drona’s son, emitted a roar like a lion. O king! In the encounter, Drona’s son countered Pandava with one hundred arrows and smiling, struck him in the forehead with an iron arrow. O king! Bearing that arrow on his forehead, Pandava looked like a proud and horned rhinoceros in the forest. While Drona’s son was making his efforts in the battle, the valiant Bhima also seemed to smile and struck him in the forehead with three iron arrows. With those arrows stuck to his forehead, the brahmana was resplendent. He looked like a supreme mountain with three peaks, drenched during the rains. Drona’s son struck Pandava with one hundred arrows, but could not make him tremble, like the wind against a mountain. Drona’s son used hundreds of other sharp arrows in the battle. However, he could not make the cheerful Pandava tremble, like the wind against a mountain. The maharathas shrouded each other with many other showers of arrows. They were proud in the battle and roaming around on their chariots, the brave ones were resplendent. They blazed like a couple of suns that had arisen for destroying beings. Their supreme arrows were like rays and they scorched each other with these. In that great battle, they acted and counteracted each other. Without any fear, they made efforts to act and counteract. The maharathas roamed around in that battle, like tigers. The invincible arrows were like the teeth and the terrible bows were like the mouths. With nets of arrows on all sides, they became invisible. It was as if the sun or the moon in the sky was enveloped by a net of clouds. But in a short instant, those two scorchers of enemies became visible again, like the moon and the sun in the sky, freed from the net of clouds.

‘ “Drona’s son placed Vrikodara on his right and showered down hundreds of sharp arrows, like rain pouring down on a mountain. However, Bhima was not ready to tolerate signs of his enemy being victorious. O king! Remaining on the right, Pandava began to execute circular motions, advancing and retreating. In that great battle, there was a tumultuous encounter between them. In that spot, they traversed along various circular paths. They drew their bows back to the full extent and struck each other with arrows. The maharathas made the best efforts to kill each other. In that battle, they used their arrows to try and deprive each other of their chariots. Drona’s maharatha son released many great weapons and in that encounter, Pandava destroyed them with his own weapons. O great king! There was an extremely fierce battle with those weapons. It was as if there was a tremendous clash between the planets, for the sake of destroying beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those arrows were swiftly released and clashed against each other. They illuminated all the directions and the soldiers on every side. Because of the large numbers of arrows, the sky looked terrible. O king! It was as if meteors were descending to destroy beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the torrents of arrows clashed against each other, sparks of fire were generated and those blazing flames consumed both the armies. O great king! The *siddha*s[149] descended there and said, ‘This encounter is superior to all other encounters. All other battles do not amount to one-sixteenth of this.[150] Such an encounter has not happened earlier, nor will it happen again. These two lords are knowledgeable and terrible in their valour. Bhima is terrible in his valour and the other one is skilled in the use of weapons. They represent the essence of valour and great is their skill. They are stationed in the battle like two Destroyers. They are like two Rudras or like two suns. In this battle, those two tigers among men have terrible forms, like two Yamas.’ At that time, we repeatedly heard these words spoken by the siddhas. Among the assembled denizens of heaven, there were roars like lions, on witnessing the extraordinary and unthinkable deeds performed by them in that battle. O king! Having injured each other in that encounter, those two brave ones glanced towards each other, their eyes dilated with rage. Their eyes were red with anger. Their lips trembled in rage. They gnashed their teeth in wrath. They bit their lips in ire. The maharathas enveloped each other with showers of arrows. In that encounter, the arrows were like rain pouring from clouds. The weapons were like lightning. The maharathas pierced each other's standards and charioteers. They pierced each other's horses and struck each other. O great king! In that great encounter, they picked up two arrows and swiftly released them towards each other, wishing to kill each other. O great king! At the heads of the two armies, those two arrows blazed and struck each other, with an irresistible force that was like that of the vajra. They severely wounded each other through the force of those arrows. Those two, who were extremely valiant, sank down on the floors of their chariots. O king! While all the kshatriyas looked on, knowing that Drona's son had become unconscious, his charioteer bore him away from the field of battle. O king! In similar fashion, Pandava, the scorcher of enemies, repeatedly lost his senses and his charioteer bore him away on the chariot." '

Chapter 1162(12)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Describe the battle between Arjuna and the samshaptakas and also tell me about the one between the others on my side and the Pandavas.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Listen. I will describe the battle exactly as it happened. The brave ones fought with the enemy and this destroyed bodies and lives. Partha penetrated the mass of samshaptakas, which was like an ocean.[151] The destroyer of enemies was like a giant storm that agitated the ocean. Dhananjaya used his sharp and broad-headed arrows to slice off the heads of the brave ones. The faces were like full moons, with excellent eyes, eyebrows and teeth. He[152] quickly scattered these around on the ground, like lotuses devoid of their stalks. The faces were well formed and large and were smeared with sandalwood paste and perfumes. With weapons and armour on their bodies, they looked like five-headed serpents. In that encounter, Arjuna severed the arms of his enemies with razor-sharp arrows. With his broad-headed arrows, Pandava severed the best of charioteers, standards, bows and hands decorated with gems. O king! Arjuna shot thousands of arrows in that battle and dispatched elephants, horses and chariots, with their riders, to Yama’s eternal abode. The foremost of brave ones roared like angry bulls that desired intercourse. They roared and attacked. As they were being killed, they struck him with their arrows, like bulls goring with their horns. The battle between them and him was wonderful and it made the body hair stand up. It was like one between the wielder of the vajra and the *daitya*s, for the conquest of the three worlds. With his weapons, Arjuna countered all the weapons of his enemies on every side. He swiftly pierced them with many arrows and robbed them of their lives. He shattered the poles,[153] wheels and axles and killed warriors, horses and charioteers. He shattered the weapons and quivers and brought down the standards. The yokes, harnesses, poles and bumpers of chariots were fragmented. The place became impassable because of the shattered yokes and the heaps of weapons. The chariots were scattered, like giant clouds by the wind. Everyone was astounded on seeing this and this, increased the terror of the enemy. Arjuna rivalled the deeds of one thousand maharathas acting together. Masses of siddhas, *devarshi*s[154] and *charana*s[155] were satisfied. The drums of the gods were sounded and flowers were showered down on Keshava and Arjuna's heads. An invisible voice was heard. 'Keshava and Arjuna possess the beauty of the moon, the sun, the wind and the fire. They blaze in strength and are resplendent. Those two brave lords always dazzle. When those two brave ones are stationed on the same chariot, they are as invincible as Brahma and Ishana.[156] Those two brave lords are foremost among all beings and are Nara and Narayana.'[157] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing this great wonder and on hearing these words, Ashvatthama controlled himself and rushed against the two Krishnas in the battle.[158]

' "He advanced against Pandava and attacked him with arrows that were like the destroyer Yama. Drona's son laughed on his chariot. In his hand, he held up an arrow and said, 'O brave one! A guest has arrived before you. If you think me to be deserving, with all your heart, grant the guest the opportunity of fighting with you.' Having been thus challenged by the preceptor's son, who wished to fight, Arjuna thought that he had been greatly honoured and spoke to Janardana. 'The samshaptakas should be killed by me, but Drona's son is challenging me. O great-armed one! Instruct me about which one I should do first.' Having been thus addressed, Krishna drove Partha, like Vayu taking Indra to a sacrifice, towards Drona's son, who had issued a challenge in the appropriate manner. Drona's son was single-minded in his intentions and Keshava spoke to him. 'O Ashvatthama! Be patient. Strike and bear the counter-strike. The time has come for those who live off others to repay the food they have received from their masters.[159] Brahmanas are subtle in settling disputes. Kshatriyas are coarser, resulting in victory or defeat. Because of your folly, you have asked for excellent and divine hospitality from Partha. Now be patient and receive what you have asked for from Pandava.' When Vasudeva had spoken thus, the supreme among brahmanas agreed. He pierced Keshava with sixty iron arrows and Arjuna with three. Arjuna became extremely angry at this and used three broad-headed arrows to slice down his bow. Drona’s son then picked up a bow that was more terrible. He strung it in an instant and pierced Arjuna and Keshava, with three arrows for Vasudeva and one thousand for Pandava. Carefully, Drona’s son shot a thousand arrows, then another one million and then ten million. He confounded Arjuna in the battle. O venerable one! He was knowledgeable about the brahman and arrows issued from his quiver, his bow, his bowstring, his fingers, his arms, his hands, his chest, his face, his nose, his eyes, his ears, his head, his limbs, his pores, his chariot and his standard. He pierced Keshava and Pandava with a great net of arrows. Drona’s son roared in joy, like the rumbling of a large cloud. On hearing the roar, Pandava spoke to Achyuta.[160] ‘O Madhava! Behold Drona’s son’s wickedness towards me. He thinks that since we have entered this chamber of arrows, we are about to be slain. But with my training and my strength, I will destroy his resolution.’ The foremost among the Bharata lineage shattered each of Ashvatthama’s arrows into three fragments. It was like the wind dispelling a mist.

‘ “Then Pandava used his fierce arrows to pierce the samshaptakas and their horses, charioteers, chariots, elephants, standards and large numbers of infantry. Everyone who was a spectator there, in whatever form, thought himself to have been covered by those arrows. Arrrows of many different types were shot from Gandiva. In that battle, they killed elephants, horses and men who were within a distance of a *krosha*.[161] Broad-headed arrows severed and brought down the trunks of elephants that were mad with musth. They were sliced down, like trees in the autumn by an axe. After this, the elephants themselves, like mountains, were brought down, with their riders. It was as if the mountains were being shattered by the wielder of the vajra with his vajra. There were chariots that had been properly prepared and were like the cities of gandharvas. Well-trained and swift horses, indomitable in battle, were yoked to them. Dhananjaya showered down arrows on these enemies, ornamented horse riders, foot soldiers and horses. In that great ocean of the samshaptakas, Dhananjaya was like the sun that arises at the end of a yuga. They were difficult to dry up.[162] But with his fierce arrows that were like rays, he dried them up.

‘ “Drona’s son was like a gigantic mountain and swiftly, he again pierced him with extremely forceful iron arrows that were as energetic as the sun, like the wielder of the vajra against a mountain. At this, the preceptor’s son became wrathful and wished to fight. He advanced towards Partha, wishing to strike his horses and his charioteer with his swift arrows. But these were struck down. He[163] next released a multitude of arrows towards Ashvatthama, who was like a guest whohad arrived in a house. Abandoning the samshaptakas, Pandava attacked Drona’s son, like a giver abandons the undesirable in favour of the desirable.[164] There was a clash like that between Shukra and the radiant Angirasa.[165] It was as if Shukra and Angirasa were clashing in the sky to enter the same *nakshatra*.[166] Their flaming arrows traversed the sky and scorched each other. They terrified the worlds with those rays, like planets that had been dislodged from their positions. With an iron arrow, Arjuna severely struck Drona’s son in the midst of his eyebrows and he looked as resplendent as the sun, with its rays extending upwards. The two Krishnas were also severely wounded by the hundreds of arrows shot by Ashvatthama. They looked like two suns that dazzled with their rays at the end of a yuga. Protected by Vasudeva, Arjuna released a weapon that was sharp on every side. He struck Drona’s son with arrows that were like the vajra, the fire, or Vaivasvata’s[167] staff. The performer of terrible deeds pierced the extremely energetic Keshava and Arjuna in the inner organs. These were arrows that were released well and were extremely fierce and forceful. Struck by these, even Death would have been pained. But Arjuna countered the arrows of Drona’s son and covered him with twice that number of well-tufted arrows.

‘ “Having enveloped that solitary and brave one and his horses, charioteer and standard, he struck the samshaptakas again. Partha shot arrows and severed the bows, arrows, quivers, bowstrings, hands, arms, weapons held in the hands, umbrellas, standards, horses, garments, garlands, ornaments, shields, armour, wishes and all the beautiful heads of his enemies, as they were stationed there and did not retreat.[168] Those brave ones made every endeavour, stationed on well-prepared chariots, horses and elephants. But they were restrained by the large numbers of Partha’s arrows and the foremost among men fell down. The heads of men were like lotuses, the sun and the full moon. They were adorned with diadems, garlands and crowns. They were severed by broad-headed and razor-sharp arrows and arrows that were in the shape of a half-moon. They incessantly fell down on the ground. Brave ones from Kalinga, Vanga, Anga and Nishada wished to kill Pandava and rushed against him. They were astride elephants that looked like the elephant of the king of the gods. They were angry and insolent, as insolent as the enemies of the gods. Partha sliced down those elephants, their trunks and their armour and mangled their inner organs. He brought down the standards and flags, as if the one with the vajra in his hand was bringing down the peaks of mountains.

' "When they were routed, Kiriti enveloped his preceptor's son with arrows that possessed the complexion of the rising sun. It was as if a rising sun was dispelling a large net of clouds created by the wind. Countering Arjuna's arrows with his own arrows, Drona's son covered Arjuna and Vasudeva with his arrows, as if the moon and the sun were being covered in the sky by a thundering cloud at the end of the summer. Afflicted by these arrows, Arjuna directed his weapons towards those on your side and suddenly made everything dark with his arrows. He pierced all of them with his well-tufted arrows. In that encounter, no one could discern when Savyasachi picked up an arrow, affixed it and released it. One could only see that horses, elephants, foot soldiers and rathas were slain and their bodies fell down. Swiftly, Drona's son affixed ten iron arrows. He released them so quickly that they seemed to be a single arrow. They were released well and Arjuna was pierced by five and Achyuta by another five. Having been thus wounded, those two foremost of men, who were like the lord of riches[169] and Indra, began to exude blood. They were afflicted by the one who had completed his learning.[170] Some thought that they had been killed. The lord of Dasharha spoke to Arjuna. 'Why are you hesitating? Kill this warrior. If you commit the error of ignoring him, he will cause great hardship, like a disease that spreads.' Having been thus addressed by Achyuta, he was no longer distracted and sought to wound Drona's son with his arrows. He severed the harnesses of the horses and pierced the steeds, which then bore him[171] a long distance away. The intelligent one did not return again to fight with Partha. The one with self-control knew that the victory of the brave one from the Vrishni lineage and

Dhananjaya, the best of the Angirasa lineage,[172] was certain. Reversing, Ashvatthama withdrew his horses from the field of battle, like a disease is treated through mantras, herbs and remedies and withdraws from the body. Keshava and Arjuna headed in the direction of the samshaptakas. Flags were stirred by the wind and fluttered atop their chariot, which rumbled like the clouds.” ’

Chapter 1163(13)

‘Sanjaya said, “At this time, a loud uproar arose towards the northern side of the Pandu soldiers. The rathas, elephants, horses and foot soldiers were being slaughtered by Dandadhara. Keshava reversed the direction of the chariot, but did not stop the swift horses, which were as fast as Garuda or the wind. He told Arjuna, ‘Magadha is extremely powerful and is on an elephant that can crush. He is like Bhagadatta in training and strength. Having killed him, you will then slay the samshaptakas again.’ Having completed these words, he bore Partha towards Dandadhara.[173] The foremost among Magadhas was foremost in wielding the goad, just as the brilliant planet is foremost among planets.[174] He was fiercely destroying the enemy soldiers, like a brilliant planet destroying the earth.[175] His elephant was the crusher of enemy soldiers and was like an elephant of the danavas. It had been prepared well and it roared like a giant cloud. He killed thousands of rathas, horses and large numbers of elephants with his arrows. The elephant also stood on chariots and quickly crushed horses, charioteers, rathas and foot soldiers. With its front legs and its trunk, it killed elephants, like a wheel of death. Men with armour made out of steel[176] and adorned in ornaments were brought down, with their horses and foot soldiers. As those supreme ones were crushed and killed, a sound arose, like that of reeds being crushed by the wind. There were the sounds of drums, kettledrums and many conch shells at the spot, mixed with the noise of bowstrings slapping against palms. There were the roars of thousands of men, horses and elephants.

‘ “On his supreme chariot, Arjuna advanced against that supreme of elephants. Dandadhara struck Arjuna with twelve supreme arrows, Janardana with sixteen and each of the horses with three. He then roared and laughed. At this, Partha used broad-headed arrows to slice off his bow, with the bowstring and arrows attached, and brought down his ornamented standard. He next struck those who were protecting his feet and this enraged the lord of Girivraja.[177] His tusker's temples were shattered and it was as dark as a mass of clouds. But it was also as swift as the wind and he wished to crush Arjuna with this. He shot arrows and hurled spears at Janardana and Dhananjaya. Pandava simultaneously shot three razor-sharp arrows and severed his two arms, which were like the trunks of elephants, and his head, which had the complexion of the full moon. He then struck the elephant with one hundred arrows. Partha's arrows were decorated with gold. They struck the elephant, which was clad in golden armour. It looked like a mountain in the night, when herbs and trees burn because of a fire. Afflicted with pain, it roared like a cloud. It roamed aimlessly and then, with trembling steps, it tottered as it tried to run away. It was weakened and fell down, together with the driver. It was as if a mountain had been shattered by thunder and had fallen down.

' "When his brother was killed in the battle, Danda advanced, wishing to kill Indra's younger brother[178] and Dhananjaya. He was astride a tusker that possessed the complexion of snow and was garlanded in gold. It looked like a summit of the Himalayas.[179] He hurled three lances that were as bright as the rays of the sun towards Janardana and five towards Arjuna. Having struck them, he roared. Pandava severed his arms with extremely fierce kshurapra arrows, while they still held lances, were adorned with armlets and were smeared with sandalwood paste. They simultaneously fell down from the elephant's back and looked as beautiful as two serpents that had fallen off a mountain's peak. With an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, Kiriti severed Danda's head and it fell down from the elephant onto the ground. It was covered with blood and looked beautiful as it fell down, like the sun setting in the western direction. The supreme elephant possessed a white complexion and Partha pierced it with supreme arrows that blazed like the rays of the sun. It shrieked as it fell down, as if the summit of a mountain had been struck down by thunder. There were other supreme elephants that were their equals[180] and wished to obtain victory. Like those two elephants, Savyasachi carefully brought them down and that extremely large army of elephants was routed. Elephants, chariots, horses and large numbers of men dashed against each other and fell down in that battle. They were wounded and struck each other. They anxiously lamented and were killed. Arjuna was then surrounded by his own soldiers, like Purandara by the masses of gods. They said, ‘O brave one! We were frightened of the enemy, who seemed to us to be like Death before beings. It is good fortune that you have killed him. We were immersed in terror and had you not rescued us, we would have been afflicted by the forces of the enemy. The enemy would have rejoiced. You have killed the enemy and we are now rejoicing.’ Hearing these and many other conciliatory words spoken by his well-wishers, Arjuna was delighted in his mind. He then honoured the men, in accordance with what they deserved, and again headed towards the mass of samshaptakas.” ’

Chapter 1164(14)

‘Sanjaya said, “Jishnu again returned, like the planet Angaraka[181] in its forward and retrograde motions, to kill large numbers of samshaptakas. O king! O venerable one! Men, horses, rathas and elephants were killed by Partha’s arrows. They wavered, wandered around, shrieked, fell down and died. Large numbers of charioteers and chariots were flung away. There were hands, with weapons still in the hands, and arms and heads. Pandava severed them with broad-headed and razor-sharp arrows, arrows that were in the shape of a half-moon and arrows that had heads like a calf’s tooth, as those enemy heroes fought against him in that battle. They fought, like a bull that desires intercourse fighting against another bull. Hundreds and thousands of brave ones descended on Arjuna. The encounter between them and him was extraordinary and it made the body hair stand up. It was as if the daityas were fighting with the wielder of the vajra for the conquest of the three worlds. Ugrayudha pierced him with three arrows that were like malignant snakes,[182] but he severed his[183] head from his body. All of them[184] became extremely angry and showered down many weapons on Arjuna, like clouds urged by the Maruts surrounding the Himalayas at the end of summer. With his own weapons, Arjuna countered all the weapons of his enemies. He used many well-directed arrows to kill all those who meant to injure him. The trivenus were shattered around their thighs. The *parshni*[185] charioteers were killed. The harnesses were torn and the poles, axles, joints and yokes of chariots were shattered. Using his arrows, Arjuna swiftly destroyed all their equipment. There were large numbers of chariots there, fragmented into pieces. They looked like the palaces of the rich, destroyed by the fire, the wind and the rain. Arrows that were like the vajra mangled the inner organs of the elephants and they fell down, resembling mansions on mountains destroyed by thunder, storm and fire. Persecuted by Arjuna, large numbers of horses and riders fell down on the ground. Their tongues lolled out. Their entrails were plucked out. They were weak. They were covered in blood. They looked terrible. Savyasachi’s iron arrows struck men, horses and elephants. O venerable one! They tottered, shrieked, fell down and died. Like the great Indra against the danavas, Partha killed the inferior ones with arrows that were sharpened on stone and were like the vajra or like virulent poison. There were brave ones, with extremely expensive armour and ornaments. They possessed diverse kinds of garments and weapons. With their chariots and their standards, they were slain by Partha and forced to lie down. They were the performers of pious deeds. They were distinguished and famous. Nevertheless, they were vanquished and died. They conquered heaven because of their deeds, but their bodies lay down on the ground. The brave ones on your side attacked Arjuna’s chariot. They were the leaders of many different countries and they, and their followers, were full of rage. They were on chariots and horses and the foot soldiers also desired to kill him. They quickly rushed against him, with many different kinds of weapons. Those warriors angrily showered down a large number of weapons, as if from a giant cloud. However, like the wind, Arjuna swiftly dispelled them with his sharp arrows. Using his own weapons as a bridge, Partha violently crossed that large and boatless ocean of weapons, horses, infantry, elephants and chariots.

‘ “Vasudeva spoke to him. ‘O Partha! O unblemished one! Why are you toying with them? Crush the samshaptakas and make haste towards Karna’s death.’ Having been thus addressed, Arjuna swiftly struck the remaining samshaptakas. He powerfully unleashed his weapons and killed them, like Indra against the daityas. In that battle, no one could distinguish when Arjuna took out an arrow, affixed it and released it. He was that swift. As he goaded his horses, Govinda himself said that it was extraordinary. As they penetrated the soldiers, his arrows were like white and swift swans diving into a lake. The field of battle was full of the destruction of men. On seeing this, Govinda spoke to Savyasachi. ‘O Partha! A great and extremely terrible destruction of the Bharatas, the earth and the kings is going on. This is because of Duryodhana’s extremely evil deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Behold the bows, with golden backs, of the archers. The large armour and quivers have been dislodged. The arrows have drooping tufts and the tufts are made out of gold. The iron arrows have been washed in oil and are like snakes that have cast off their skins. The place is strewn with colourful lances and bows that are decorated in gold. The swords have handles of ivory and are embellished in gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The armour and sheaths for the bows possess golden backs. The lances and spears are embellished with gold and are also decorated in gold. The giant clubs are tied in garments that are decorated with gold. The handles of the swords are made out of gold and the battleaxes are also embellished in gold. The handles of the scattered battleaxes are ornamented in gold. Lances made of iron and heavy bludgeons have fallen down. Behold the colourful shataghnis and the large maces. There are many chakras[186] and clubs that have been scattered around in this battle. There are many kinds of weapons that were grasped by the ones who desired victory. Their bodies have been crushed by clubs and bludgeons and their heads have been smashed. Behold the thousands of elephants, horses, chariots and warriors who have been destroyed. Men, elephants and horses have been struck with arrows, lances, swords, spears, scimitars, javelins, spikes, nails and bludgeons. Their bodies have been mangled in many ways and they are covered in blood. O destroyer of enemies! They have lost their lives and are strewn around in this field of battle. Their arms are smeared with sandalwood paste and adorned with armlets and sparkling ornaments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth is resplendent with arm-guards and bracelets. The ornamented tips of the hands, with finger-guards, are scattered around.[187] The supreme heads sport gems on the headdresses and wear earrings. Those with eyes like bulls have been brought down and the earth looks dazzling. There are headless torsos covered in blood, since the heads have been severed from the bodies. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! They are scattered on the ground and it is as if the fiery flames of the fire have been pacified. Many kinds of chariots, with sparkling golden bells, have been shattered. Behold the many horses, covered in blood. The place is strewn with the white and giant conch shells of the warriors. As they lie down like mountains, the tongues of the elephants are lolling out. Sporting colourful flags of victory, warriors who fought on horses and elephants have been slain. There are excellent cushions, covers and blankets from the elephants. They are diverse and have been uprooted. So have the colourful and varied housings. Many bells have been broken, crushed by the feet of the elephants. Staffs and goads decorated with lapis lazuli have fallen down on the ground. Harnesses were decorated with gold and so were the tips of the standards that the riders possessed. They were colourful with many kinds of gems and were polished in gold. From the horses, cushions and covers made out of the skin of *ranku* deer have fallen down on the ground. The lords among men had gems on their headdresses and golden garlands. Umbrellas are scattered around and so are fans and whisks. The faces of the kshatriyas have beautiful earrings and are as beautiful as the moon or nakshatras. The brave ones are ornamented and their beards have been clipped. Behold. Their heads are scattered around on the ground, in the mire created by blood. Behold. The men who are still alive are lamenting in every direction. O lord of the earth! There are many who are honouring you and others have been killed by your weapons. With their relatives, they are repeatedly lamenting there. Though they have been routed, there are some spirited warriors with angry faces. Driven by anger and desiring victory, they wish to advance and fight again. However, there are other proud ones who are fleeing from the spot. Their relatives have fallen down and desire water from those brave ones. O Arjuna! Some have gone in search of water and there are many who have lost their lives. It can be seen that those brave ones have lost their senses and are retreating. Having seen water, they are rushing to the spot, shouting at each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Behold the ones who have expired after drinking water and the others who are drinking. Others have abandoned their beloved ones, their beloved relatives, kith and kin. In the great battle, they can be seen to be running around, here and there. O foremost among men! Behold the others. They are repeatedly gnashing their teeth and biting their lips. O Arjuna! In the great battle today, these are the deeds that you have performed. The deeds performed by you in the battle are like those of the king of the gods, or those who live in heaven.’ In this way, Krishna showed Kiriti the field of battle.

‘ “As they were returning, they heard a loud noise from Duryodhana’s army. It was mixed with the blaring of conch shells and the beating of drums and kettledrums and mingled with the fierce sound of weapons and roars of chariots, horses and elephants. Borne by horses that were as fast as the wind, Krishna penetrated that army and was surprised to see that your army was being crushed by Pandya. That foremost among warriors was using many different kinds of arrows. He was slaying the enemy, like Yama among those whose life has run out. The foremost among strikers was mangling the bodies of elephants, horses and men with his sharp arrows and was robbing them of their bodies. With many weapons and arrows, he was piercing heroes among the enemy. Pandya was killing the enemy, like Shakra against the asuras.” ’

Chapter 1165(15)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! You have earlier spoken about that great hero, famous in the worlds. But you have not recounted his deeds in the battle. Now, in detail, recount to me that hero’s valour, learning, power, bravery, expanse and pride.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Drona, Bhishma, Kripa, Drona’s son, Karna, Arjuna and Janardana completed their learning of archery and you think that they are the foremost among warriors. But he thinks himself to be an equal of Karna and Bhishma and does not wish to be regarded as inferior to Vasudeva and Arjuna. Such was Pandya, foremost among kings and supreme among all wielders of weapons. He was like Yama and overcame and killed Karna’s soldiers. Stationed in the midst of that army of chariots, horses, foot soldiers and elephants, Pandya crushed them. He whirled them around like a potter’s wheel. Pandya’s arrows dispelled them, like the wind amidst a mass of clouds. The horses, charioteers, standards, rathas and warriors of the enemy were struck. Elephants were killed. Flags, standards and weapons were uprooted. The destroyer of enemies killed the elephants, together with those who guarded their feet. He killed horse riders, armed with spears, javelins and quivers. The Pulindas, Khashas, Bahlikas, Nishadas, Andhrakas, Tanganas, those from the south and the Bhojas were fierce and did not retreat from a battle. However, Pandya used his arrows to deprive them of their weapons and armour and robbed them of their lives. In that battle, Pandya used his arrows to slaughter the four divisions of the army.[188] He showed no fear. On seeing this, Drona’s son fearlessly advanced towards him.

‘ “As he seemed to be dancing around, he,[189] best among strikers, fearlessly challenged him and spoke to him in sweet words. ‘O king! O one with eyes like the petals of a lotus! You are foremost among those who are borne into a battle. You are known as someone who can withstand the vajra and you are foremost in strength and manliness. You have weapons in your hands and you are using your arms to stretch your giant bow. As you extend it with your arms, you seem to be like a large cloud. With great force, you are showering down torrents of arrows on the enemy. In this battle, with my exception, I do not see anyone who is your match in bravery. You have single-handedly crushed many chariots, elephants, foot soldiers and horses, like an extremely fierce and powerful lion kills large numbers of deer. The sky and the earth resound with the great noise of your chariot. O king! At the end of the monsoon, you are filling the earth and its crops.[190] You are taking out sharp arrows from your quiver and they are like venomous serpents. You should fight with me alone, like Andhaka fighting with Tryambaka.'[191] Having been thus addressed, he[192] agreed.

' "Asking him to strike, Drona's son struck him and Malayadhvaja struck him back with a barbed arrow. Drona's son, supreme among preceptors, smiled and struck Pandya with fierce arrows that were like the flames of fire and could penetrate the inner organs. Ashvatthama then released nine other sharp and iron arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and covered the ten directions. Pandya severed five of these with five sharp arrows. However, four swiftly struck his horses and robbed them of their lives.[193] Pandya, who was as radiant as the sun, severed the bowstring of Drona's son with sharp arrows. However, Drona's son, the destroyer of enemies, fixed another string to his bow and shot thousands of arrows at Pandya. He enveloped the sky and all the directions with his torrents of arrows. Pandya, the great-souled bull among men, knew that the arrows shot by Drona's son were inexhaustible. However, he made efforts to cut down the arrows of Drona's son and then used sharp arrows to rob the ones who were protecting his chariot wheels of their lives. On seeing his dexterity, Drona's son stretched his bow into a circle and showered down arrows, like rain pouring from a cloud. O venerable one! That encounter lasted for an eighth part of a day.[194] Nevertheless, Drona's son shot as many weapons as could be carried on eight carts, drawn by eight bullocks. He was like an angry Destroyer, or like the Destroyer of the Destroyer. Almost every one who saw him there lost his senses. The preceptor's son showered down arrows like rain on the soldiers, like rain pouring on the earth, with its mountains and trees, at the end of summer. That shower of arrows released by Drona's son, who was like a cloud, was extremely difficult to withstand. Pandya swiftly countered it with a *vayavya* weapon[195] and roared like a gale. His standard was smeared with sandalwood paste and aloe and he looked like Mount Malaya. As he was roaring, Drona's son severed his standard and killed his four horses. He then killed his charioteer with another arrow. With an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, he severed the bow that thundered like a giant cloud and shattered the chariot into small fragments. Having countered his weapons with his own weapons and having cut down all his weapons, Drona's son found the opportunity to kill him in the battle. There was a supreme tusker that had been prepared well and its rider had been killed. As it was swiftly advancing towards him, as if against a rival, the powerful one[196] climbed onto it, roaring like a lion. Stationed on it, the lord of Malaya looked like a mountain with two peaks.[197] He swiftly urged the elephant forward. He picked up a spear that was as radiant as the rays of the sun and hurled that weapon with supreme force, care and anger. The lord of the mountains hurled this towards the preceptor's son and roared. The head of Drona's son was decorated with a diadem. It was decorated with supreme gems, jewels and diamonds and adorned with excellent cloth, garlands and pearls. It was as dazzling as the sun, the moon, the planets and the fire. Being severely struck,[198] it was shattered into fragments and fell down, like a large forest when it is struck by the great Indra's vajra, or when the summit of a mountain falls down on the ground. At this, he[199] blazed with great rage, like a king of the serpents that has been struck by the foot. He picked up fourteen arrows that were capable of killing the enemy and each of these was like Yama's staff. With five, he served the feet and trunk of the elephant and with three, the king's arms and head. With six, he killed the six splendid maharathas who were following the king of Pandya. The king's arms were long and smeared with the best of sandalwood paste. They were adorned with gold, pearls, gems and diamonds. Those arms of the king fell down on the ground and writhed around like serpents that had been killed by Tarkshya.[200] His head possessed a face with the complexion of the full moon. His eyes were coppery red with rage and his nose was excellent. With its earrings, the head fell down on the ground and was as resplendent as the moon between two Vishakhas.[201] The preceptor's son was accomplished in learning and when he completed this task, your son, the king, was delighted and surrounded by his well-wishers, honoured him, like the lord of the immortals honouring Vishnu after he had vanquished Bali." '[202]

Chapter 1166(16)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When Pandya was killed, what did Arjuna do in the battle, especially when the brave Karna was single-handedly driving away the enemy? Pandava is brave and accomplished in learning. He is powerful. The great-souled Shankara made all beings subservient to him.[203] That is the reason my greatest fear is from Dhananjaya, the slayer of enemies. O Sanjaya! Tell me everything that Partha did there.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When Pandya was killed, Krishna quickly spoke these beneficial words to him. ‘Without looking towards the king,[204] the Pandavas are retreating. To accomplish Ashvatthama’s resolution, Karna is killing the Srinjayas. He is creating a great carnage there, amidst the horses, men and elephants.’ The extremely unassailable Vasudeva spoke these words to Kiriti. On hearing this and on seeing that his brother was facing a great and terrible calamity, Pandava asked Hrishikesha to quickly urge the horses. Hrishikesha advanced on that chariot against those warriors.

‘ “O supreme among kings! Yet again, there was a terrible encounter and clash between Karna and the Pandavas and it extended Yama’s kingdom. Wishing to kill each other, they swiftly grasped bows, arrows, clubs, swords, lances, spikes, maces, catapults, spears, scimitars, battleaxes, bludgeons, javelins, cutlasses, darts, slings and large hooks and descended. The whizzing of arrows and the sound of palms against bowstrings extended into the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. As they attacked, they roared and the earth resounded with the thunder of chariot wheels. Those great sounds of battle cheered them. Brave ones fought extremely terrible battles with brave ones, wishing to bring an end to the hostility. There were sounds from bowstrings, palm-guards and bows and the trumpeting of elephants. They were attacked and as they fell down, roared loudly. There were many sounds generated by the arrows and by the roars of brave ones. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

On hearing this terrible sound, some were frightened, turned pale and fell down. There were many among them who roared and showered down arrows. In the battle, Atiratha Karna crushed many of them with his arrows. With his arrows, Karna conveyed five heroes from Panchala, ten rathas and five others, with their horses, charioteers and standards, to Yama's eternal abode. Many foremost and immensely valorous warriors from the Pandus swiftly attacked Karna in that battle and surrounding him from all sides, covered the sky with their weapons. Karna agitated the enemy soldiers with his shower of arrows. He was like the leader of a herd[205] plunging into a lake full of birds and lotuses. Radheya penetrated into the midst of the enemy. He brandished his supreme bow and using his sharp arrows, began to bring down their heads. The shields and armour were shattered and the bodies were deprived of life. There was no one among them who needed the touch of a second arrow.[206] The arrows that were released from the bow crushed armour and bodies. The bowstrings and palm-guards were shattered, like horses lashed with a whip. Whenever Pandus, Srinjayas and Panchalas came within the reach of his arrows, Karna quickly struck them in the inner organs, like a lion among large numbers of deer.

' "O venerable one! The son of Panchala,[207] Droupadi's sons, the twins and Yuyudhana united and advanced against Karna. When the Kurus were severly engaged with the Pandavas and the Srinjayas, warriors advanced against each other, prepared to give up their lives in the battle. They were armoured well, with coats of mail, helmets and ornaments. The maharathas used clubs, maces and other kinds of bludgeons. They advanced fiercely, like the god wielding his staff.[208] O venerable one! They roared loudly and challenged each other. They struck each other. Struck by the others, they fell down. They vomited blood and lost their limbs, heads and eyes in the battle. Complete with teeth, but laced with blood, the faces looked like pomegranates. Though they had been brought down by weapons, they seemed to be alive. They struck each other with spears, swords, lances, catapults, nails, javelins and spikes. They were crushed and cut down by others. They also crushed and cut others down. They angrily killed and struck each other. They were brought down and killed by others. Losing their lives, they were covered with blood. They seemed to exude their own natural red juice, like sandalwood trees. Rathas were killed by rathas, elephants by elephants, men by the best of men and thousands of horses were brought down by horses. Standards, heads, umbrellas, the trunks of elephants and the arms of men were severed by razor-sharp and broad-headed arrows, arrows in the shape of a half-moon and other weapons. In that battle, men, elephants, chariots and horses were brought down. Horse riders slew brave warriors. The trunks of tuskers were severed. Flags and standards were shattered and brought down, strewn around like mountains. Foot soldiers destroyed elephants and chariots. Struck and killed, they fell down in every direction. Horse riders clashed against foot soldiers and were swiftly killed by them. In the battle, large numbers of foot soldiers were killed by horse riders and lay down. O greatly intelligent one! The faces and limbs of those who were killed looked like crushed lotuses and faded garlands. O king! The beautiful forms of elephants, horses and men looked like garments that had been sullied and therefore, became supremely hideous to see." '

Chapter 1167(17)

‘Sanjaya said, “There were many excellent elephants that were urged on by your son. Wishing to kill Dhrishtadyumna, they angrily advanced against Parshata. These were among the best who fought on elephants, from the east, the south, Anga, Vanga, Pundra, Magadha, Tamraliptaka, Mekala, Kosala, Madra, Dasharna and Nishadha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were skilled in fighing with elephants and united with those from Kalinga. Arrows, spears and iron arrows showered down like rain from clouds and in that battle, all of them sprinkled Panchala, who was like a mountain. Those elephants were violently urged on against the enemy with goads and with toes prodding the flanks. As they advanced towards Parshata, he showered down iron arrows on them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Each of those angry elephants was like a mountain and he pierced each with ten, six or eight arrows. He was enveloped by those elephants, like clouds covering the sun. On seeing this, the Pandus and Panchalas roared. They raised sharp weapons and attacked those elephants, the arrows making music on the bowstrings. Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas, Satyaki, Shikhandi and the valiant Chekitana advanced. The elephants were driven by *mlecchas*[209] and used their trunks to pick up men, horses and chariots and crush them with their feet. They pierced others with the tips of their tusks, picked them up and flung them down. Others were stuck to the tips of the tusks and looked terrible. Vanga’s[210] elephant was stationed in front of him. Satyaki powerfully struck it with a fierce iron arrow. Pierced in its inner organs, it fell down. Abandoning that elephant, he[211] was about to descend from the elephant. However, Satyaki struck him on the breast with an iron arrow and made him fall down on the ground. Pundra’s elephant was descending like a mobile mountain. Sahadeva carefully killed it with three iron arrows. It was deprived of its flag, its rider, its armour, its standard and its life. Having brought that elephant down, Sahadeva advanced against Anga.[212] However, Nakula asked Sahadeva to desist and himself attacked Anga. He struck him with three iron arrows that were like Yama's staff and struck the elephant with one hundred. Anga hurled eight hundred spears that were as bright as the rays of the sun. However, Nakula sliced each of these down into three fragments. Pandava then severed his head with an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon. Having been killed, the mleccha fell down, together with the tusker. The son of their preceptor was skilled in the technique of managing elephants.[213] When he was killed, the excellent ones from Anga attacked Nakula on elephants. The best of flags fluttered and the sides[214] were decorated in gold. They looked like mountains on fire and wished to swiftly destroy the enemy. There were those from Mekala, Utkala, Kalinga, Nishadha and Tamraliptaka. Wishing to kill him, they showered down arrows and spears. They enveloped Nakula, like the sun shrouded by clouds. At this, the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Somakas were enraged. A battle commenced between those rathas and the elephants. Showers of arrows and thousands of spears were released. These shattered the temples of the elephants and penetrated their inner organs in many ways. The tusks were pierced by iron arrows and seemed to be ornamented. Sahadeva quickly killed eight giant elephants with sixty-four extremely energetic arrows and brought them down, together with their riders. Nakula, the descendant of the Kuru lineage, carefully drew his supreme bow and used many straight-flying iron arrows to kill many elephants. Shini's descendant, Panchala, Droupadi's sons, the Prabhadrakas and Shikhandi brought down many showers of arrows on the mighty elephants. The warriors on the Pandu side were like clouds full of rain and the elephants of the enemy were like mountains. Slain by those showers of arrows, they fell down, like mountains shattered by a storm of thunder. Your elephants were thus killed by the Pandus, who were like elephants among men. The soldiers[215] were soon seen like a river with shattered banks. Having thus agitated the soldiers,[216] the soldiers of the sons of Pandu glanced towards them and again advanced towards Karna.

' "O great king! While Sahadeva was angrily scorching your army, Duhshasana advanced against him and it was brother against brother. The kings who were there, witnessed a great battle between them and roaring like lions, waved their garments around. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your archer son was angry and pierced Pandu’s powerful son in the chest with three arrows. O king! Sahadeva pierced your son with an iron arrow and again pierced him with seventy, striking his charioteer with three. O king! In that great battle, Duhshasana severed his bow and struck Sahadeva in the arms and the chest with seventy-three arrows. Sahadeva became wrathful and in that great encounter, grasped a sword. The foremost among warriors whirled and hurled it towards your handsome son. That great sword severed his bow, with an arrow still affixed to it. It then fell down on the ground, like a serpent that has been dislodged from the sky. The powerful Sahadeva picked up another bow and shot an arrow that was like death towards Duhshasana. That arrow was as bright as Yama’s staff and descended. However, Kourava severed it into two parts with a sword that was sharp at the edges. As that sword suddenly descended in the battle, Sahadeva cut it down with sharp arrows and seemed to be laughing.[217] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that great battle, your son swiftly shot sixty-four arrows towards Sahadeva’s chariot. O king! In that encounter, many arrows descended with force. However, Sahadeva sliced down these with five arrows each. Having countered the great arrows that were shot by your son, Madri’s son released a large number of arrows. O great king! The powerful Sahadeva became angry and affixed an extremely fierce arrow that was like the Destroyer and like Death. He drew his bow back with force and shot it towards your son. O king! It penetrated his armour and his body with great force and penetrated the earth, like a snake entering a termite hill. O king! Your maharatha son lost his senses. On seeing that he had lost his consciousness, his charioteer, who was frightened and himself severely wounded with sharp arrows, quickly bore him away on the chariot. O Pandu’s elder brother! O king! Having defeated him in the battle, Pandava cheerfully began to crush Duryodhana’s army in every direction, like an extremely angry man crushing a large number of ants. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus did he wrathfully crush the Kourava soldiers.

‘ “O king! While Nakula was violently destroying the soldiers in the battle, Vaikartana Karna repulsed him. Nakula laughed and spoke to Karna. ‘After a long time, because of the kindness of destiny, you have seen me. O wicked one!

And in this battle, you have surfaced before my sight. You are the root cause of the evil, the enmity and the quarrel. It is because of your sins that those of the Kuru lineage are clashing against each other and are being destroyed. I will kill you in the battle today and become successful, devoid of fever.'[218] Having been thus addressed, the son of the suta, who was himself like a prince and also an archer, replied to Nakula. 'O child! Strike me in this battle. Let me see your manliness. O brave one! One should boast only after having performed deeds in a battle. O son![219] Those who do not speak in an encounter, but fight to the best of their strength, are known as brave. Fight with me, to the utmost of your strength and I will destroy your pride today.' Having spoken thus, the son of the suta swiftly struck Pandu's son. In that battle, he pierced him with seventy-three arrows that had been sharpened on stone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus pierced by the son of the suta, Nakula pierced the son of the suta back with eighty arrows that were like venomous serpents. Karna severed his bow with gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone. The supreme archer then struck Pandava with thirty arrows. Those pierced his armour and drank his blood in the battle. They were like venomous serpents that drink water after entering the earth. O great king! Nakula, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became angry at this. He picked up another bow with a back that was embellished with gold. It was extremely difficult to resist. He pierced Karna with twenty arrows and his charioteer with three. With an extremely sharp arrow that was like a razor at the tip, he severed Karna's bow. Having severed the bow, the brave one, who was regarded as a maharatha by the entire world, laughed and struck him with three hundred arrows. O venerable one! On seeing that Karna was thus afflicted by Pandu's son, all the rathas and all the gods were struck by supreme wonder. Vaikartana Karna picked up another bow and struck Nakula between the shoulder joints with five arrows. With those arrows sticking to his chest, Madri's son looked resplendent on the chariot, as if the sun was using its rays to shower radiance on the earth. O venerable one! Nakula pierced Karna with seven iron arrows and again severed the ends of his bow. In that encounter, he[220] picked up another bow that was even more powerful and enveloped Nakula and all the directions with his arrows. When the maharatha was suddenly covered with arrows released from Karna’s bow, he swiftly used his own arrows to slice down those arrows. The sky was seen to be shrouded with a net of arrows and it was as if the firmament was covered with a large number of fireflies that were flitting around. Hundreds of arrows were released and covered the sky and it was as if it was full of a swarm of locusts that had been stirred up by the wind. Arrows decorated in gold descended repeatedly in an array and were as beautiful as an array of swans. When the sky was covered by the arrows, the sun was shrouded. O lord of the earth! No beings could descend and nothing could be seen.[221] In every direction, those large numbers of arrows obstructed their paths. Those two immensely fortunate ones were as resplendent as two young suns that had just arisen. The arrows released from Karna’s bow slaughtered the Somakas. O Indra among kings! They were severely afflicted and pained by the arrows and lost their lives. In a similar way, Nakula’s arrows killed your soldiers. O king! They were driven away in all the directions, like clouds dispelled by the wind. Those two sets of soldiers were slaughtered by their large and divine arrows and withdrew from that rain of arrows, remaining only as spectators. When the men there were driven away by Karna and Pandava’s arrows, those two great-souled ones started to pierce each other with their showers of arrows. In that field of battle, they displayed their divine weapons. Wishing to kill each other, they violently enveloped each other. The arrows released by Nakula were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They seemed to remain stationed there, after having enveloped Karna. O king! Both of them seemed to be in a chamber created by arrows and could not be seen. They were like the moon and the sun, enveloped during the monsoon.

‘ “Karna became wrathful in that battle and assumed a fiercer form. In every direction, he shrouded Pandava with showers of arrows. O king! In that encounter, Pandava was enveloped by the son of the suta. However, like the sun covered by clouds, he felt no pain. O venerable one! At this, Adhiratha’s son laughed in the battle and shot hundreds and thousands of nets of arrows. The arrows of the great-souled one seemed to cover everything in a canopy of shade. Those supreme arrows were like clouds that were descending. O great king! The great-souled Karna severed his bow. He laughingly brought his charioteer down from the seat on the chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With four sharp arrows, he killed his four horses and quickly dispatched them to Yama’s abode. O venerable one! Using his arrows, he swiftly shattered his chariot into tiny fragments and also destroyed his flags, the ones who protected his wheels, his standard, his sword, his shield that was decorated with the signs of one hundred moons and all his implements. O lord of the earth! His horses were slain. He was without a chariot. He was devoid of his armour. He quickly descended from his chariot and stood there, with a club. O king! That extremely terrible club was raised. However, using hundreds and thousands of arrows, the son of the suta shattered it into fragments. On seeing that he was without any weapons, Karna struck with many arrows with drooping tufts, but made sure that he did not hurt him grievously. O king! Nakula was defeated in that battle by someone who was powerful and was skilled in the use of weapons. With his senses afflicted, he suddenly fled. Radheya followed him, laughing repeatedly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! He placed the string of his bow around the neck of the one who was running away.[222] Pulled by the string of the great bow around his neck, he was as resplendent as the moon in the sky, surrounded by white clouds and decorated with Shakra’s bow.[223] Karna spoke these words to him. ‘The words that were spoken by you have been rendered futile. You have been repeatedly struck by me. Can you cheerfully utter them again? O Pandava! Do not fight again with those who are your superior in strength. O son! O Pandava! Fight with those who are your equals. Do not be ashamed at this. O son of Madri! Go home, or go where Krishna and Phalguna are.’ O great king! Having spoken these words, he released him. O king! Though he could have been killed, the son of the suta did not kill him. O king! He remembered Kunti’s words and abandoned him. O king! Having been released by the archer son of the suta, Pandava was ashamed and went towards Yudhishthira’s chariot. Having been tormented by the son of the suta, he ascended that chariot and sighed, scorched by grief, like angry snakes inside a pot.

‘ “Having abandoned him in the battle, Karna swiftly advanced against the Panchalas. He was on a chariot with dazzling flags and drawn by horses with the complexion of the moon. O lord of the earth! When they saw the commander[224] advancing against the Panchalas on his chariot, a great uproar arose among the Pandavas. O great king! The son of the suta caused carnage there. As the sun reached its midday spot, the lord roamed and wheeled around. The wheels of chariots were shattered. The standards and flags of others were torn. O venerable one! The son of the suta killed charioteers and shattered the wheels. We saw the dispirited Panchalas fleeing on their chariots. Crazy elephants were terrified and roamed here and there, as if their limbs had been burnt by a conflagration in a great forest. The temples of elephants were shattered and they exuded blood. Their trunks were severed. O venerable one! Their bodies and armour were mangled, their tails were sliced down. They were like dispelled clouds, destroyed by that great-souled one. There were other elephants that were frightened because of the iron arrows and hundreds of spears. They advanced towards him, like insects towards a fire. We saw other giant elephants destroying each other. Blood flowed from their bodies, like water from the slopes of mountains. Horses lost their breastplates, the dressings on their tails and their silver, bronze and golden ornaments. Their coverings were destroyed and they lost their bridles. Whisks, spreads and quivers fell down. Brave riders, the ornaments of a battle, were killed. In that battle there, we saw supreme horses wandering around. O lord of men! We saw the best of warriors who fought on horses, with lances, swords and scimitars. They wore armour and headdresses. They were destroyed. There were chariots embellished with gold, yoked to swift horses. With the rathas swiftly slain, we saw them roaming around.[225] O venerable one! Wheels and poles were destroyed for some, wheels were shattered for others. There were others without flags and standards, or with their yokes destroyed. O lord of the earth! Deprived of everything, we saw rathas wandering around in every direction, scorched by the arrows and weapons of Surya's son.[226] There were those without weapons. And there were many with weapons, but they had been killed. We saw many foot soldiers from their side running around in every direction. They were adorned with colourful flags of many different hues, decorated with bells. There were other warriors with severed head, arms and thighs. We saw the arrows released from Karna's bow sever them. We beheld those warriors confront a terrible and great calamity. They were killed by Karna's sharp arrows. In that battle, the Srinjayas were slaughtered by the son of the suta, as they advanced towards him, like insects towards a flame. In every spot there, he consumed those arrays of maharathas and the kshatriyas avoided him, taking him to be the fire that comes at the time of the destruction of a yuga. The remnants of the brave Panchala maharathas were routed and retreated. Karna pursued them from the rear, showering arrows. They were devoid of armour and standards, but the spirited one pursued them. The maharatha son of the suta tormented them with his arrows. It was like the destroyer of darkness[227] scorching beings when it has attained midday.” ’

Chapter 1168(18)

‘Sanjaya said, “Your son, Yuyutsu, was driving away that large army.[228] Uluka asked him to wait and quickly attacked him. O king! At this, Yuyutsu used an arrow that was extremely sharp at the edges to strike Uluka, like Indra striking a mountain with his vajra. In that encounter, Uluka became angry with your son and slicing his bow down with a kshurapra arrow,[229] struck him with a barbed arrow. When his bow was severed, Yuyutsu picked up another large bow that was more forceful. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His eyes red with rage, he pierced Shakuni’s son with sixty arrows. Striking his charioteer with three arrows, he pierced him[230] again. Uluka now became wrathful in the battle and piercing him with twenty arrows that were adorned with gold, severed his golden standard. With the pole shattered, that extremely large and lofty standard fell down. O king! Blazing in gold, it fell down in front of Yuyutsu. On seeing that his standard had been uprooted, Yuyutsu became senseless with rage. He struck Uluka between the breasts with five arrows. O venerable one! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! With a broad-headed arrow that had been washed in oil, Uluka violently severed his charioteer’s head. He then killed his four horses and pierced him with five arrows. Having been severely struck by that powerful one, he[231] departed on his chariot. O king! Having defeated him, Uluka swiftly advanced towards the Panchalas and the Srinjayas and began to slay them with sharp arrows.

‘ “O great king! Fearlessly, and in the twinkling of an eye, your son, Shrutakarma, advanced against Shatanika and deprived him of his horses, his charioteer and his chariot.[232] O venerable one! Though his horses were slain, the immensely powerful Shatanika remained stationed on his chariot and extremely angry, flung a club towards your son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having reduced the chariot, together with its horses and charioteer, to ashes, it fell down with great force and shattered the earth. Those two brave ones, the extenders of the fame of the Kuru lineage, were both without chariots. They glared angrily at each other and withdrew from the battle. Frightened, your son ascended Vivitsu's chariot.[233] Shatanika quickly advanced towards Prativindhya's chariot.[234]

' "Angrily, Sutasoma[235] pierced Shakuni with sharp arrows, but could not make him tremble, like a wind against a mountain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing his father's supreme enemy, Sutasoma enveloped him with thousands of arrows. However, Shakuni was dexterous and colourful in fighting and wished to be victorious in that encounter. He severed those arrows with other arrows. In that battle, having countered those arrows with his sharp arrows, he angrily struck Sutasoma with three arrows. Your immensely valorous brother-in-law used his arrows to bring down his horses and his charioteer and shattered his standard into fragments. At this, all the people roared in applause. O venerable one! His horses were slain. He was without a chariot. His bow was severed. However, the archer[236] descended from the chariot, stood on the ground and picked up a supreme bow. He released gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone and enveloped your brother-in-law's chariot. The shower of arrows released by the maharatha was like a torrent of insects. But on seeing this, Soubala was not distressed and remained stationed on his chariot. The immensely illustrious one countered those arrows with a storm of his arrows. On witnessing Sutasoma's extraordinary deed of fighting on foot, while the king was on his chariot, all the warriors, and all the siddhas who were assembled in the firmament, were satisfied and honoured him. The king[237] then used sharp and extremely forceful broad-headed arrows that possessed drooping tufts to sever his bow and all his quivers. When his bow was severed in the encounter, he picked up a sword and roared. It possessed the complexion of lapis lazuli or a lotus and had an ivory handle. It was as radiant as the clear sky, and the intelligent Sutasoma whirled it around. It seemed as if he was Death himself. O great king! He had the strength and learning of fourteen techniques[238] and roamed around, violently whirling his sword in thousands of circular motions. The valiant Soubala shot arrows at him. But as they descended, he quickly severed them with his supreme sword.

O great king! Soubala, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became enraged at this and shot arrows that were like venomous serpents towards Sutasoma. However, displaying his learning, strength and dexterity, the immensely radiant one, with valour like that of Tarkshya,[239] used his sword to slice them down in that battle. O king! As he was roaming around and executing circular motions, he[240] used an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow to sever that resplendent sword. Thus sliced down, the large sword fell down violently on the ground. When the sword was severed, maharatha Sutasoma retreated six steps and hurled that part of the sword that was still in his fist. That fragment was decorated with gold and diamonds. In that encounter, it quickly severed the great-souled one's[241] bow and bowstring and fell down on the ground. After this, Sutasoma went to Shrutakirti's giant chariot. Soubala picked up another terrible bow that was extremely difficult to withstand. Using this, he attacked the Pandava soldiers and killed large numbers of the enemy. O lord of the earth! On seeing Soubala fearlessly striding around in the battle, a loud uproar arose amongst the Pandavas, when they saw that large, proud and armed soldiers were driven away by the great-minded Soubala. O king! It was like the army of the daityas being crushed by the king of the gods. In that fashion, the Pandava soldiers were destroyed by Soubala.

' "O king! Kripa countered Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, like a *sharabha*[242] in a forest, advancing and fighting against a proud elephant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Parshata was checked by the powerful Goutama and could not advance a single step. On witnessing Goutama's form advancing towards Dhrishtadyumna's chariot, all the beings were terrified and thought that he[243] was confronting destruction. The rathas and riders were distressed in their minds and said, 'The immensely energetic Sharadvata, supreme among men, is certainly extremely enraged at Drona's killing. He is intelligent and skilled in the use of divine weapons. Will Dhrishtadyumna be safe today from Goutama? Will this entire army be freed from this great danger? The brahmana will kill all of us together. His severe form is seen to be like that of the Destroyer. In this encounter, he will follow the footsteps of Bharadvaja's son. The preceptor[244] is light in the use of his hands and is always victorious in battle. He possesses the valour of weapons and is angry as well. It can be seen that

Parshata is now extremely reluctant to fight.’ These and other words were spoken by those on your side and on the side of the enemy. O king! Kripa Sharadvata breathed angrily and enveloped Parshata, who was immobile, in all his inner organs. In that encounter, he was struck by the great-souled Goutama. He was supremely confounded in that battle and did not know what he should do. His charioteer said, ‘O Parshata! Are you fine? I have never seen you face such a difficulty in a battle. These arrows shot by that foremost among brahmanas are capable of penetrating the inner organs and are directed at your inner organs. It is sheer fortune that you have escaped. I will withdraw the chariot from the spot, like the force of a river driven back by the ocean. Your valour has been destroyed by this brahmana and I think that he cannot be killed.’ O king! At this, Dhrishtadyumna gently spoke these words. ‘O son![245] My mind has gone numb and there is sweat on my body. Behold! My body is overcome by lassitude and my body hair is standing up. O charioteer! Abandon the brahmana in the battle and slowly go to the spot where Achyuta, Arjuna and Bhimasena are, so that I may obtain safety in the battle. In my view, that is what we should do.’ O great king! At this, the charioteer urged the horses towards the spot where the great archer, Bhima, was fighting with your soldiers. O venerable one! On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna’s chariot was going away, Goutama followed it and showered hundreds of arrows. The scorcher of enemies repeatedly blew on his conch shell. He drove away Parshata, like the great Indra against Shambara.

‘ “The invincible Shikhandi was responsible for Bhishma’s death. In the battle, Hardikya[246] smiled repeatedly and repulsed him. Shikhandi advanced against the maharatha from the Hridika lineage and struck him between the shoulder joints with five sharp and iron arrows. Kritavarma became angry and struck him with sixty swift arrows. O king! The maharatha smiled and severed his[247] bow with a single arrow. Drupada’s powerful son then grasped another bow and enraged, asked Hardikya to wait. O Indra among kings! He shot ninety arrows that were gold-tufted and extremely forceful. But they were repulsed by his[248] armour. On seeing that they were repulsed and fell down on the ground, the powerful one used an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow to sever his bow. When the bow had been severed, he[249] was like a bull with shattered horns and he[250] angrily struck him in the arms and the chest with eighty arrows. Though he was angry, Kritavarma was mangled by these arrows. The lord picked up another stringed bow and affixing arrows, struck Shikhandi in the shoulder with those supreme arrows. With those arrows sticking to his shoulders, Shikhandi looked beautiful. He was like a giant tree, with sparkling branches and sub-branches. Having severely pierced each other, they were both covered with blood. They were as resplendent as bulls that had wounded each other with their horns. Those two maharathas made supreme efforts to kill each other. They roamed around on their chariots, executing a thousand circular motions. O great king! In that battle, Kritavarma pierced Parshata with seventy arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. In that encounter, Bhoja, supreme among strikers, quickly released a terrible arrow that was capable of robbing life. O king! Severely struck by this, he[251] quickly lost his consciousness. He suddenly lost his senses and grasped the pole of his standard. His charioteer took the supreme of rathas away from the battle. Tormented by Hardikya's arrows, he sighed repeatedly. O lord! Drupada's brave son was defeated. At this, the Pandava soldiers were slaughtered and fled in all directions." '

Chapter 1169(19)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! The one on the white horses[252] killed your soldiers, like the wind scattering a mass of cotton in every direction. The Trigartas, Shibis, Kouravas, Shalvas, samshaptakas and the army of narayanas combined and attacked him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Satyasena, Satyakirti, Mitradeva, Shrutanjaya, Soushruti, Chitrasena and Mitravarma. In that battle, the king of Trigarta was surrounded by his brothers and sons. They were great archers and wielded many kinds of weapons while fighting. In that battle against Arjuna, they released a storm of arrows. They attacked in that encounter, like waves agitated by the wind in the ocean. Hundreds and thousands of warriors attacked Arjuna, but all of them encountered their destruction, like serpents at the sight of Tarkshya.[253] O king! But though they were killed in that battle, they did not abandon Pandava. They were scorched, like insects in a fire.

‘ “In that battle, Satyasena pierced Pandava with three arrows, Mitradeva with sixty-three, Chandradeva with seven, Mitravarma with seventy-three, Soushruti with five, Shatrunjaya with twenty and Susharma with nine arrows. He[254] killed King Shatrunjaya with arrows sharpened on stone. He severed Soushruti’s helmeted head from his body. He swiftly used arrows to convey Chandradeva to Yama’s eternal abode. O great king! When the other maharathas endeavoured against him, he struck them with five arrows each. Satyasena became angry in that battle. He roared like a lion and hurled a giant spear towards Krishna. It was extremely terrible and was made completely out of iron. It pierced the great-souled Madhava’s left arm and penetrated the ground. O lord of the earth! Madhava was thus pierced by the spear in that great battle, and the whip and the reins fell down from his hand. However, the immensely illustrious one picked up the whip and the reins again and drove the horses towards Satyasena's chariot. On seeing that Vishvaksena[255] had been pierced, the immensely strong Partha Dhananjaya struck Satyasena with sharp arrows. In the forefront of that army, with extremely sharp arrows, he severed the king's large head, adorned with earrings, from his body. O venerable one! He then struck and killed Chitravarma with sharp arrows and used a sharp *vatsadanta* arrow to kill his charioteer. He angrily brought down hundreds and thousands from that mass of samshaptakas with hundreds of arrows. With a kshurapra arrow that was silver-tufted, the great-souled and immensely illustrious one severed King Mitradeva's head. In wrath, he struck Susharma between his shoulder joints. At this, all the samshaptakas surrounded Dhananjaya. They angrily showered him with weapons and roared in the ten directions. Jishnu, who was like Shakra in his valour, was oppressed by them. The maharatha, whose soul was immeasurable, released the *aindra*[256] weapon. O lord of the earth! Thousands of arrows were released from this. In that encounter, standards, bows, chariots and their flags, quivers with their arrows, axles, yokes, wheels, harnesses, seatings, bumpers and whips were shattered. In that battle, rocks rained down, with a shower of lances. There were clubs, maces, lances and spears. O venerable one! Shataghnis with wheels and arms and thighs fell down, with necklaces, armlets and bracelets. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were golden necklaces and body armour, with umbrellas, whisks and heads adorned with crowns. O lord of the earth! A great sound could be heard there. There were heads ornamented with earrings, with faces like the full moon. They could be seen lying there, like stars in the firmament. The slain bodies could be seen on the ground. They had excellent garlands and excellent garments and were smeared with sandalwood paste. At that time, the fierce field of battle looked like a city of the gandharvas. Immensely strong princes and kshatriyas were killed. Elephants and swift horses were brought down on the ground. In that battle, they were heaped around like mountains and it became difficult to pass. As the great-souled Pandava slew a large number of the enemy and elephants with his broad-headed arrows, there was no path for him. As he roamed around in that battle, in that red-coloured mud, it was as if the wheels of his own chariot were sinking in distress. But though the wheels seemed to sink, his horses possessed great energy and had the speed of the mind and the wind. They exerted a great effort and dragged along Pandu’s archer son, as he killed those soldiers. None of them could remain stationed in the battle and most of them retreated. In that battle, Jishnu defeated large numbers of samshaptakas. O great king! He was resplendent, like a blazing fire without any smoke.

‘ “O great king! Yudhishthira shot a large number of arrows and King Duryodhana fearlessly received him himself. On seeing that your immensely strong son was violently descending, Dharmaraja asked him to wait and pierced him. He[257] pierced him back with nine sharp arrows and, extremely angry, struck his charioteer with a broad-headed arrow. At this, King Yudhishthira shot thirteen arrows at Duryodhana. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone and possessed stone heads. The maharatha[258] killed his four horses with four arrows and with a fifth, severed his charioteer’s head from his body. With a sixth, he brought down the king’s standard; with a seventh, his bow; and with an eighth, his sword, on the ground. With five more arrows, Dharmaraja severely struck the king. With the horses slain, your son descended from his chariot. He was stationed on the ground and was in supreme danger. On seeing that he was overcome by this calamity, Karna, Drona’s son, Kripa and the others collectively rushed there, wishing to save the king. O king! At this, all the sons of Pandu surrounded Yudhishthira in the battle and an encounter commenced.

‘ “In that great battle, thousands of trumpets were sounded. O lord of the earth! As the Panchalas clashed against the Kouravas, a tumultuous sound arose. Men clashed against men and elephants against supreme elephants. Rathas clashed against rathas and horses against horse riders. O great king! Duels could be witnessed in that encounter. As supreme weapons were used, the sight was wonderful and unthinkable. They wished to kill each other and fought with great force, killing each other in that battle and following the vow of warriors. In that encounter, for a short while, no one attacked from the rear and it was beautiful to see. O king! But it soon became crazy and no one followed codes of honour. As they roamed around in the field of battle, rathas attacked elephants and dispatched them to Yama, using straight-tufted arrows. Elephants attacked horses and brought down large numbers of them there, fiercely driving them away. O king! Having driven away large numbers of horses, the elephants were intoxicated with their strength and gored them with their tusks or severely crushed them. In that battle, they pierced horse riders and horses with their tusks. Others picked them up powerfully and flung them down with great force. In every direction, there were elephants that were struck by foot soldiers in their weak spots. They uttered fierce woes of lamentation and fled in the ten directions. In that great battle, foot soldiers were violently driven away. In the field of battle, there were many who quickly discarded their ornaments. Having determined that this was a sign, the giant elephants picked up those expensive ornaments and pierced them.[259] Other elephants were severely wounded in their temples and the bases of their tusks by lances and spears. Others were sorely and fiercely struck along their sides with clubs hurled by rathas and horse riders. They were shattered and fell down on the ground. There were other giant elephants that powerfully brought charioteers and horse riders down on the ground, with their armour and their flags. O venerable one! In that great battle, some elephants assumed terrible forms. They approached rathas and picking them up, hurled them down violently. Giant elephants were killed by iron arrows and brought down. They lay down on the ground, like mountain peaks shattered by thunder. In the battle, warriors encountered warriors and struck each other with their fists. They dragged and seized each other by the hair. Others sought to use their arms and flung the foe down on the ground. They placed their feet on their chests and cheerfully severed their heads. O great king! With their feet, some kicked those that were already dead. Others used weapons to sever the bodies of those who were alive but dying. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that spot, warriors fought great fights with their fists. They fiercely seized each other by the hair and there were others who only wrestled. In that battle, there were many who were killed with weapons while they were fighting with another and were therefore ignorant.[260] The warriors were thus engaged in that frightful encounter. Hundreds and thousands of headless torsos stood there. The weapons and armour were red. And in that great arena, so were the garments. Thus did that great and fierce battle rage on and filled the universe with a sound like that of violent waves. O king! Oppressed by arrows, they could not distinguish those on one’s own side from that of the enemy. O great king! Desiring victory, the kings fought as they should and killed those who advanced against them, whether they were from their own side or from the side of the enemy. As they advanced, the warriors on both sides were anxious. O great king! The chariots were shattered and the elephants were brought down. The horses were brought down and the men fell. The earth was covered with flesh, blood and mud and became impassable. O great king! In a short instant, there were currents of blood. Karna killed the Panchalas and Dhananjaya killed the Trigartas. O king! Bhimasena killed the Kurus and their entire army of elephants. O great king! In this way, there was carnage among the soldiers of the Kurus and the Pandavas, as they clashed in the afternoon, desiring a great victory.” ’

Chapter 1170(20)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! I have heard from you about many fierce and terrible sorrows that are difficult to tolerate and about the destruction of my sons. O suta! From what you have told me and from the way the war is going on, it is my firm view that the Kouravas don’t exist any more. In that great battle, Duryodhana was deprived of his chariot. What did Dharma’s son do then and what did the king[261] do in return? How did the battle that makes the body hair stand up rage in the afternoon? O Sanjaya! You are skilled. Tell me all this in detail.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “The soldiers fought in accordance with their different divisions. O lord of the earth! Your son resorted to another chariot. He was overcome by great rage, like a venomous snake. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, Duryodhana quickly told his charioteer, ‘O charioteer! Drive and swiftly take me to the spot where Pandava is. The king is resplendent in his armour there and an umbrella is held aloft his head.’ Having been thus instructed by the king, in that encounter, the charioteer drove that supreme chariot towards King Yudhishthira. Yudhisthira was also angry and maddened, like an excellent bull. He instructed his charioteer to go to the spot where Suyodhana was. The best of rathas, those two brave brothers who were immensely valorous, clashed against each other, armoured and invincible in battle. In the battle, those two great archers mangled each other with their arrows. O venerable one! In that encounter, with a broad-headed arrow that was sharpened on stone, King Duryodhana severed the bow of the one who observed dharma in his conduct. Yudhishthira could not tolerate this conduct and became enraged. In front of the army, Dharma’s son cast aside that severed bow and, his eyes red with rage, picked up another bow and severed Duryodhana’s standard and bow. He[262] picked up another bow and pierced Pandava back. Extremely angry, they showered down arrows on each other.

They wished to defeat each other and were as enraged as lions. They struck each other and roared like bulls. The maharathas roamed around, glancing at each other. O great king! They drew their bows back to the complete extent and wounded each other. They were as resplendent as flowering kimshukas. O king! They roared repeatedly at each other, like lions. In that great battle, they made sounds with the slapping of their palms and the twangs of their bows. O great king! Those best of rathas blew on their conch shells and severely wounded each other. King Yudhishthira angrily struck your son in the chest with three arrows that were irresistible and had the force of the vajra. Your son quickly pierced the king back, using five sharp arrows that were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! King Duryodhana hurled a lance. It was sharp, made completely out of iron and like a giant meteor. On seeing it descend violently, Dharmaraja used sharp arrows to powerfully shatter it into three fragments and then pierced him with seven arrows. That extremely expensive lance fell down, with its golden handle, blazing like a giant meteor with trails of fire. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the lance had been destroyed, your son struck Yudhishthira with nine sharp and broad-headed arrows. The foremost among scorcher of enemies[263] was powerfully and severely struck and quickly affixed an arrow in Duryodhana's direction. The immensely strong and valiant king affixed the arrow on his fierce bow and angrily released it at the king.[264] That arrow struck your maharatha son. Having robbed the king of his senses, it penetrated the ground. Duryodhana became angry at this and forcefully raised a club. He advanced against Pandava, wishing to bring an end to the feud.[265] With that upraised club, he was like Yama with a staff in his hand. On seeing this, Dharmaraja hurled a giant spear towards your son. It blazed and was immensely powerful, flaming like a giant meteor. As he[266] was stationed on his chariot, it pierced his armour in the great battle. Severely wounded and struck in the chest, he lost his senses and fell down.

' "Kritavarma swiftly approached your son, as the king was immersed in an ocean of hardship. Bhima also grasped a giant club that was decorated with gold and in that battle, powerfully advanced against Kritavarma. Thus the battle raged between those on your side and the enemy." '

Chapter 1171(21)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those on your side placed Karna at the forefront. They were invincible in battle and the encounter commenced again, like that between the gods and the asuras. There was the sound of elephants, chariots, men, horses and conch shells and that of many weapons descending. Elephants, rathas and foot soldiers, with their leaders, were cheered by this and descended and struck each other. The riders used arrows, battleaxes, supreme swords, spikes and many different kinds of arrows. In that great battle, there were elephants, chariots, horses, the best of men and the vehicles of the men. The ground was beautiful, strewn with the heads of men. The faces possessed the complexion of the lotus, the sun or the moon. The teeth were white. The mouths, eyes and noses were excellent. They were adorned with beautiful crowns and earrings. Thousands of elephants, men and horses were killed with hundreds of clubs, maces, spears, javelins, nails, catapults and bludgeons. A river of blood began to flow. The slain and wounded men, rathas, horses and elephants were terrible to look at. Because that large army was destroyed in the cause, it was like the kingdom of the lord of the ancestors[267] when there is a destruction of beings.

‘ “O god among men! Your soldiers and your sons looked like the sons of the gods, when, in the forefront of the battle, those bulls among the Kurus advanced against Shini’s descendant.[268] That army was extremely beautiful and was fierce in its sentiments. It was full of the best of men, horses, chariots and elephants. It was like the soldiers of the immortals or the asuras and made a sound like the salty ocean. The son of the sun[269] was like the lord of the gods in his valour. As a warrior, he was equal to the best among the thirty gods. He attacked the foremost among the Shini lineage with arrows that blazed like the rays of the sun. In that encounter, the bull among the Shini lineage quickly used many kinds of arrows, which were as resplendent as venomous snakes, and enveloped the supreme among men,[270] with his chariot, his horses and his charioteer. Vasusena[271] was oppressed because of the arrows of the bull among the Shinis, and the atirathas and well-wishers on your side quickly advanced towards that bull among rathas,[272] together with their elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers. That force was as large as the ocean. But it was quickly driven away by the enemy, the friends of Drupada's son,[273] and there was a great destruction of men, rathas, horses and elephants.

' "The best of men, Arjuna and Keshava, performed their religious ceremonies and worshipped Lord Bhava[274] in accordance with the proper rites. They set their minds on killing the enemy and swiftly rushed against your army. The chariot roared like a cloud and the flags and standard fluttered in the wind. It was drawn by white horses. On seeing it advance towards them, like Death, they[275] were distressed in their minds. Arjuna stretched Gandiva and seemed to dance around in the battle. He showered arrows and covered the sky, the directions and the sub-directions. There were chariots that were like celestial vehicles, equipped with machines, weapons and standards. Using his arrows, he destroyed these, together with their charioteers, like a wind driving away clouds. There were elephants with triumphant standards and weapons and those who controlled these elephants. There were horse riders, horses and foot soldiers. Using his arrows, he conveyed them to Yama's eternal abode. The maharatha was angry and unassailable, like Yama. Duryodhana advanced against him alone and struck him with his arrows. However, Arjuna used seven arrows to strike his bow, his charioteer, his standard and his horses.[276] With another arrow, he then brought down his umbrella. He then affixed a ninth arrow, with the desire of killing Duryodhana. However, Drona's son shattered that supreme arrow into seven fragments. Pandava then used supreme arrows to destroy the bow of Drona's son and also killed his horses. He then severed Kripa's fierce bow. Having severed Hardikya's bow and standard and killed his horses, he cut down Duhshasana's supreme bow and attacked Radheya. At this, Karna abandoned Satyaki and struck Arjuna with three arrows. He then pierced Krishna with twenty arrows and struck Partha with three more. However, Satyaki advanced against Karna and pierced him with sharp arrows, first with ninety-nine fierce arrows and yet again with one hundred. All the foremost among the Pandus oppressed Karna—Yudhamanyu, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons, the Prabhadrakas, Uttamouja, Yuyutsu, the twins and Parshata.[277] The Chedis, Karushas, Matsyas, Kekayas and their armies, the powerful Chekitana and Dharmaraja, excellent in his vows—these rathas, horses, elephants and foot soldiers who were fierce in their valour—surrounded Karna in that battle and released many kinds of weapons. All of them devoted themselves to killing Karna and addressed him in fierce and eloquent words. Karna used his sharp arrows to cut down those numerous showers of weapons. He destroyed all of them, like a wind breaks down trees. One saw Karna angrily use his storm of arrows to destroy rathas, elephants and their riders, horses and their riders. The Pandu forces were slaughtered by Karna’s energy. Most of them lost their weapons and their bodies were wounded. They retreated. Then, Arjuna himself countered Karna’s weapons with his own weapons. He enveloped the directions, the sky and the earth with his showers of arrows. Those arrows descended like clubs and bludgeons. Some were like shataghnis and others were as fierce as the vajra. The soldiers, the foot soldiers, horses, rathas and elephants, were destroyed. They closed their eyes, uttered woes of lamentation and fled distractedly in different directions. In that battle, horses, men and elephants were destroyed. The soldiers were killed by the arrows and terrified, fled.

‘ “Thus did they engage in battle, desiring victory. The sun approached Mount Asta.[278] O great king! In particular, there was darkness and dust. We could not see anything, favourable or unfavourable. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great archers were frightened of fighting in the night. With all their horses, they therefore withdrew.[279] O king! When the Kouravas departed at the end of the day, the Parthas were delighted in their minds at having obtained victory and also left for their own camps. They showed contempt for the enemy by sounding many kinds of musical instruments, roaring like lions, dancing and praising Achyuta and Arjuna. When the brave ones and all the soldiers retreated, all the lords of men pronounced benedictions on the Pandaveyas. Having retreated, the Kurus and the Pandavas were cheerful. The lords of men went to their camps in the night and rested.

Large numbers of yakshas, *raksha*s, *pishacha*s and carnivorous beasts went to that terrible field of battle, which was like Rudra’s dancing arena.” ’

Chapter 1172(22)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Arjuna killed all of us easily, as he wished. I don’t think Yama would have escaped, had he attacked him in a battle. O fortunate one! Partha robbed single-handed. Single-handed, he satisfied Agni.[280] He vanquished the earth single-handed and made all the powerful kings offer tribute.[281] Single-handedly, using his divine bow, he killed the *nivatakavacha*s.[282] He fought single-handedly with Sharva, who was in the form of a hunter.[283] He protected the Bharatas single-handed and satisfied Bhava.[284] Fierce in his energy, he single-handedly defeated all those on my side. They[285] should not be censured. Tell me what they did next.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “They were killed, wounded and shattered. They were deprived of their armour and the vehicles that bore them in war. Their voices were distressed. Those insolent ones grieved and were defeated by the enemy. The Kouravas went to their camps and sought counsel and advice from each other. They were like serpents that had been defanged and had lost their poison, having then been trod on by the foot. Karna angrily spoke to them, sighing like a snake. He rubbed one hand against another hand and glanced towards your son.[286] ‘Arjuna is always firm, skilled and persevering. He understands and when the time is right, Adhokshaja[287] instructs him. We were deceived by him today, because of that sudden shower of weapons. O lord of the earth! But tomorrow, I will destroy all his intentions.’[288] Thus addressed by him, the supreme among kings gave his assent. Having cheerfully spent the night, they emerged to do battle. They saw that Dharmaraja had constructed an invincible vyuha, which the foremost among the Kurus had constructed according to the injunctions of Brihaspati and Ushanas.[289] At this, Duryodhana remembered Karna, whose shoulders were like that of a bull. He was in control of his soul and could counteract the deeds of others. He was Purandara's equal in a battle and as strong as the masses of Maruts. Karna was like Kartyavirya[290] in his valour and the king's mind turned towards him. The son of a suta was a great archer, and in a hardship, one turns towards a relative.

'Dhritarashtra said, "In that miserable situation, your minds turned towards Vaikartana Karna. Did you look towards him, like those afflicted with cold glance towards the sun? After the retreat was over, the battle commenced again. O Sanjaya! How did Vaikartana Karna fight then? How did all the Pandavas fight there, with the son of a suta? The mighty-armed Karna could single-handedly kill the Parthas and the Somakas. It is my view that the valour of Karna's arms is equal to that of Shakra and Vishnu. The great-souled one's weapons and valour are extremely terrible. He saw that Duryodhana was severely afflicted by the Pandavas and he also saw that the sons of Pandu were extremely powerful in that great battle. Yet again, in the battle, the proud Duryodhana had relied on Karna to defeat the Parthas, their sons and Keshava. It is a great sorrow that the powerful Karna could not overcome the sons of Pandu in the encounter. There is no doubt that destiny is supreme. The consequences of that terrible gambling match have arrived now. Alas! These terrible miseries are the result of what Duryodhana did. O Sanjaya! I am bearing all these extremely fierce stakes. O son![291] Soubala[292] was revered as one who knew about policy. O Sanjaya! Though this is named a battle, it is a gambling match that is going on. I am always hearing about my sons being killed and defeated. There is no one who is capable of countering the Pandavas in battle and they are immersing themselves, as if in the midst of a crowd of women. Destiny is certainly most powerful."

'Sanjaya said, "Those deeds have been done and you are thinking about them now. Those deeds should not have been done. But thinking about them brings destruction. The deeds that you did are long distant from memory. You did what should not have been done, and you did not think then about what would be obtained, and what would not be obtained, from those deeds. O king! You have been told several times not to fight with the Pandavas. O lord of the earth! But because of your delusion, you did not accept that advice about the Pandavas. You performed many terrible deeds against the sons of Pandu. It is because of what you did that this terrible destruction of kings is taking place. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But all that has transpired. Do not sorrow about it. O one without decay! Listen to a detailed account of the terrible destruction that happened.

' "When night was over and it was morning, Karna went to the king. Meeting Duryodhana, the mighty-armed one said, 'O king! I will clash against Pandu's illustrious son today. Either I will kill that brave one, or he will kill me. O lord of the earth! O king! Because of the many things that Partha and I have done, this clash between me and Arjuna has not taken place earlier. O lord of the earth! I am speaking these words in accordance with my wisdom. Listen to them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will not return without having killed Partha in battle. The foremost of our soldiers have been killed and I am the one who will be stationed in battle. Partha will attack me, now that I am without Shakra's spear.[293] O lord of men! Therefore, listen to what is beneficial. The valour of my weapons is equal to the energy of Arjuna's. Savyasachi is not my equal in fighting against great warriors, dexterity, shooting from a distance, skill and the use of weapons. My bow, Vijaya, is supreme among all weapons. Vishvakarma[294] constructed it for Indra's sake. It was with this that Shatakratu vanquished large numbers of daityas. In the ten directions, the daityas were confounded because of its roar. Shakra gave that revered weapon to Bhargava and Bhargava gave that divine and supreme bow to me.[295] With this, I will fight against the mighty-armed Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, like Indra fighting in a battle against all the assembled daityas. Rama[296] gave me this terrible bow and it is superior to Gandiva. It was with this bow that he[297] conquered the earth twenty-one times. Bhargava told me about this bow's divine deeds and Rama gave it to me. I will use it to fight against Pandava. O Duryodhana! I will delight you and your relatives today. I will kill the brave Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, in the battle. O king! The entire earth, with its mountains, forests, islands and oceans, will be yours, for your sons and your grandsons to be established in, without any opposition. There is nothing that I cannot accomplish today, especially if it is something that brings you pleasure, just as one who has controlled his soul and follows dharma is certain to obtain success. Like a tree against fire, he will not be able to stand against me in the battle. But I must certainly tell you how I am inferior to Phalguna. His bowstring is divine and his large quivers are inexhaustible. He possesses a celestial and supreme bow and Gandiva is invincible in battle. I also possess a supreme, great and divine bow known as Vijaya. O king! Therefore, in the matter of bows, I am superior to Partha. Listen to how that brave Pandava is superior to me. His reins are held by Dasharha, who is revered by all the worlds. His divine chariot is decorated with gold and was given to him by Agni. O brave one! It is impenetrable in every way and his horses are as swift as thought. His standard is divine and, with the resplendent ape atop it, causes wonder. Krishna, the creator of the universe, protects that chariot. Though I am inferior to him in these respects, I still wish to fight with Pandava. But this brave Shalya, the ornament of assemblies, is his[298] equal. If he acts as my charioteer, there will certainly be victory. Shalya is incapable of being resisted by the enemy. Therefore, let him be my charioteer. Let a large number of carts bear iron arrows that are shafted with the feathers of vultures. O Indra among kings! Let supreme horses be yoked to the best of chariots. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let these always follow me from the rear. Through these, my qualities will be superior to those of Partha. Shalya knows more about horses than Krishna, and I am superior to Arjuna. Just as Dasharha, the destroyer of enemy heroes, knows about the minds of horses, maharatha Shalya also knows about horses. There is no one who is equal to the king of Madra in the strength of his arms. Just as there is no archer who is equal to me in weapons, there is no one who is equal to Shalya in knowledge of horses. In this fashion, my chariot will become superior to that of Partha's. O great king! O scorcher of enemies! I have told you what I desire. Please do this. Let all these wishes of mine be satisfied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You will then see what I accomplish in this battle. In every way, I will vanquish all the Pandavas, when they advance against me.' Duryodhana replied, 'O Karna! I will do everything that you have thought of. O son of a suta! Chariots, with implements and horses, will follow you. There will be many carts, bearing iron arrows tufted with the feathers of vultures. O Karna! We, and all these kings, will follow you.' O great king! Having spoken thus, your powerful son went to the king of Madra and spoke these words to him." '

Chapter 1173(23)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Your son spoke these words to the king of Madra. He went humbly to him and spoke these affectionate words to him. ‘O one who observes truthful vows! O immensely fortunate one! O one who increases the hardship of enemies! O lord of Madra! O one who is brave in battle! O one who is terrible to enemy soldiers! O supreme among eloquent ones! You have heard Karna’s words. I am seeking you out among all these lions among kings. This is for Partha’s destruction and for my welfare. O best of rathas! O one with an excellent mind! You should accept the task of being a charioteer. There is no one in the worlds who is your equal in holding the reins. Protect Karna in every way, like Brahma protects Shankara. Krishna is Partha’s adviser and he is supreme in holding the reins. In that fashion, always protect Radheya. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, you, the valiant Bhoja, Shakuni Soubala, Drona’s son and I are our strength. O leader of an army! In that fashion, we were divided into nine divisions. The divisions of the great-souled Bhishma and Drona no longer exist. They slew my enemy, more than the two parts that were allotted to them.[299] But those two tigers among men were old and were killed through deceit. O unblemished one! Having performed extremely difficult deeds for us, they have gone to heaven. In that way, in this battle, many other tigers among men have been slain by the enemy. In that way, in this encounter, there are many on our side who have ascended to heaven, giving up their lives, striving to the best of their capacity and performing good rites. The mighty-armed Karna alone remains, engaged in our welfare. O tiger among men! And you are there, a maharatha in all the worlds. O lord of Madra! That is the reason my hopes of victory are still great. Krishna is foremost among those who hold Partha’s reins in battle. O king! In the battle, he is engaged in protecting Partha. You have witnessed the deeds that he has performed. Earlier, in an encounter, Arjuna has never killed enemies in this fashion.[300] O lord of Madra! But you have seen how he has killed and driven away in this battle. O immensely radiant one! Yours and Karna's divisions are left. In the battle, unite with Karna and bear that share. O venerable one! Surya and Aruna are seen to destroy the darkness.[301] In that way, destroy the Kounteyas, with the Panchalas and the Srinjayas. Karna is foremost among rathas. You are foremost among men. When there is a clash, there is no one in the worlds who is your equal. Varshneya protects the Pandavas in every situation. In that way, in this battle, protect Vaikartana Karna. O lord of the earth! If you are the charioteer of the horses, he will be unassailable in a battle by Shakra and all the gods, not to speak of the Pandaveyas. Do not doubt these words of mine.'

' "Hearing these words of Duryodhana, Shalya was filled with anger. His brows furrowed into three lines. He repeatedly whirled his hands around. His large eyes were red with rage. The mighty-armed Shalya was proud of his lineage, prosperity, knowledge and strength. He spoke these words. 'O son of Gandhari! You are insulting me and it is certain that you suspect me. Without any hesitation, you have asked me to act as a charioteer. You regard Karna to be superior to us and have honoured and praised him. But I have never regarded Radheya as my equal in battle. O lord of the earth! Instruct me to assume a burden that is greater than my share. Having defeated them in battle, I will return to the place I have come from. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I will fight single-handedly with them. As I consume the enemies in the battle, behold my valour today. O Kouravya! It is not proper for a man to advance with an injury in his heart. Do not doubt me and do not enjoin me in this way. You should not act so as to insult me in the battle. Behold my thick arms. They are capable of withstanding the vajra. Behold my colourful bow and these arrows, which are like venomous serpents. Behold my chariot. Well-trained horses that are as swift as the wind have been yoked to it. O son of Gandhari! Behold my club. It has been decorated with strips of golden garments. If I am angry, I can split the earth and shatter the mountains. O lord of the earth! I can dry up the oceans with my energy. O king! Knowing that I am capable of oppressing the enemy in this way, why are you instructing me to be the charioteer of Adhiratha's inferior son in the battle? O Indra among kings! You should not employ me on such a lowly task. Since I am superior, I have no interest in following the commands of that wicked person. A superior person has arrived with affection and obedience. If one makes such a person subject to the commands of an inferior one, one commits the crime of confusing the inferior with the superior. Brahma created brahmanas from his mouth and kshatriyas from his chest. He created vaishyas from his thighs and shudras from his feet. That is what has been heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of mixture among the varnas, those who are other than the four varnas, *pratiloma* and *anuloma*, have been generated.[302] It has been said in the sacred texts that kshatriyas are protectors. They accumulate wealth and distribute it. Pure brahmanas act as officiating priests, study and receive.[303] Brahmanas have been established on earth for the sake of gratifying people. Agriculture, animal husbandry and donations are always the tasks of vaishyas. It has been decreed that shudras are the servants of brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. It has been decreed that sutas are the servants of brahmanas and kshatriyas. They are not the servants of shudras.[304] O unblemished one! Therefore, listen to my words. I am one whose head has been consecrated.[305] I have been born in a lineage of *rajarshi*s. I am famous as a maharatha and should be served by bards and minstrels. O destroyer of enemy forces! Since I am such a person, I have no interest in being the charioteer of the son of the suta in battle. Having been thus humiliated, I will never fight. O son of Gandhari! I am seeking your permission now, because I wish to return to the place that I have come from.' Having spoken these words, Shalya, tiger among men and the ornament of an assembly, was angry and quickly stood up in the midst of those kings.

' "However, your son restrained him, with affection and great respect. He spoke sweet and conciliatory words that were capable of achieving every object. 'O Shalya! There is no doubt that it is exactly as you have said. O lord of men! But I have an objective. Please listen to it. O king! Karna is not superior to you and I have never doubted you. The king who is the lord of Madra will never do something that is false. Your ancestors, the best of men, always spoke the truth. It is my view that this is the reason you are known as Artayani.[306] O one who deserves honours. That is the reason, on this earth, you are like a stake to enemies.[307] O lord of the earth! That is the reason you are known by the name of Shalya. You have given away a large quantity of donations earlier. O one who knows about dharma! Therefore, for my sake, do what you have promised to do earlier. Radheya and I are not more valiant than you, that I am asking you to be the charioteer of those foremost of horses in the battle. Just as the world thinks that Karna is superior to Dhananjaya in qualities, the world thinks that Shalya is superior to Vasudeva. O bull among men! Karna is superior to Partha in weapons. And you are superior to Krishna in the knowledge of horses and in strength. The great-minded Vasudeva knows about the heart of horses. O king of Madra! But there is no doubt that you are twice as knowledgeable as him." Shalya replied, "O son of Gandhari! O Kourava! Since, in the midst of the soldiers, you have said that I am superior to Devaki's son, I am pleased with you. Therefore, I will be the charioteer of the illustrious Radheya, while he fights with the foremost of the Pandavas. O brave one! It shall be as you wish. O brave one! But let this be clear to Vaikartana, what when the time is right, I will be free to speak disrespectful words to him." O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Together with Karna, your son told the king of Madra that it would be this way.'

Chapter 1174(24)

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘O lord of Madra! Listen once more to what I am about to tell you. O lord! This is an account of the ancient battle that took place between the gods and the *asura*s. The great rishi, Markandeya, told my father about this. O supreme among rajarshis! I will recount it, without leaving anything out. You should listen to it, without doubting its veracity.

‘ “‘The gods and the asuras engaged with each other in a mighty battle. O king! At first, there was the encounter known as Tarakamaya.[308] It has been heard by us that the daityas were then defeated by the gods. O king! When the daityas were defeated, Taraka’s three sons, Taraksha,[309] Kamalaksha and Vidyunmali, resorted to fierce austerities and established themselves in supreme control. O scorcher of enemies! They oppressed their bodies with austerities. O king! Because of their control, austerities and rules, the grandfather[310] was pleased with them and offered them supreme boons. O king! They were united in asking for the boon that all beings would always be unable to kill them. They wanted this from the grandfather of all the worlds. The god who is the lord and master of all the worlds told them, “O asuras! There is nothing like immortality and not being killed by anyone. Ask for any other boon that pleases you.” At this, they consulted among themselves for a long time and then, bowing down before the lord who is the master of the worlds, spoke these words, “O god! O grandfather! Please grant us this boon. With your favours, we will dwell in three cities above the earth and roam around in this world. O unblemished one! Once, every one thousand years, those cities will merge with one another and become one. O illustrious one! When they have merged, if a supreme among gods slays us with a single arrow, let that be the means of our death.” Having agreed to this, the god[311] left for heaven.

‘ “‘Having obtained the boon, they were pleased and consulted each other about constructing the three cities. They asked the great asura Maya, who was accomplished in everything. He was without decay and was worshipped by the daityas and the danavas.[312] Using his own austerities, the intelligent Maya created those three cities, one of gold, another of silver and another of black iron. O lord of the earth! The one that was of gold was resplendent in heaven, the one of silver in the firmament and the one of iron on earth. They were such that they circled. Each was a hundred *yojana*s in length and breadth and possessed houses, mansions and many walls and gates.[313] The roads had many qualities and they were also spacious. There were many kinds of palaces, adorned with gates. O king! Each of those cities had a different king. The great-souled Tarakaksha possessed the expensive city of gold, Kamalaksha the silver one and Vidyunmali the iron one. Those three daitya kings swiftly attacked the three worlds with their energy. They spoke these words. “Who is the one who is known as Prajapati?”[314] There were no heroes to rival them and the foremost among danavas went and united with them, in tens of millions. They sought refuge in those three inaccessible cities, desiring great wealth. When they were thus united, Maya gave them everything they wanted. Resorting to him, all of them lived there, without any fear. If any resident of the three cities desired anything in his mind, using his powers of illusion, Maya immediately satisfied that wish. Tarakaksha had an immensely strong son named Hari. He went through supreme austerities and satisfied the grandfather. Having satisfied the god, he asked for a boon. “Let there be a lake in our city. When those killed with weapons are flung into it, let them emerge with life and greater strength.” Having obtained the boon, Tarakaksha’s brave son, Hari, constructed a lake there. O lord! It was capable of reviving the dead. In whatever form and in whatever attire a daitya was slain, once he was thrown there, he became alive in that form. Having obtained them back, those in Tripura[315] began to oppress all the worlds. They obtained success through their great austerities and extended the fear of the gods. O king! They never suffered from destruction in a battle. At this, they were overcome by avarice and delusion and were bereft of their senses. They shamelessly uprooted everything that had been established. Everywhere, they drove away the gods and their companions. They roamed around at will, insolent because of the boon they had obtained, through all the celestial forests and other regions loved by the residents of heaven and the sacred and revered hermitages of rishis. The evil-acting danavas did not show respect towards anyone.

‘ “‘O scorcher of enemies! All the gods united and went to the grandfather, to tell him about the depredations caused by those who were not *sura*s.[316] They bowed their heads in obeisance before him and told him everything. They asked the illustrious grandfather about a means for their destruction.[317] On hearing this, the illustrious god told the gods, “The asuras are evil-souled and hate the gods. Those who commit crimes against you, also oppress me. There is no doubt that I am neutral among beings. But those who are against dharma must be killed. I am firmly telling you this. You elect Sthanu Ishana Jishnu, the performer of undecaying deeds.[318] O Adityas! He will save you and kill the ones who are not suras.” Having heard his words, with Shakra at the forefront, the gods placed Brahma ahead of them and sought refuge with the one who bears the mark of a bull. They performed supreme austerities and praised the eternal *brahman*. With the rishis, the ones who knew about dharma gave up all their souls to Bhava.[319] With eloquent words, they praised the one who grants freedom from fear in all situations that cause fear. He is the great-souled one who is the soul of everything. He pervades everything with his soul. They[320] knew special austerities and many kinds of yoga to control the soul. They knew about the techniques of *sankhya*, so that the soul could always be controlled.[321] They then beheld Ishana, the consort of Uma, in his mass of energy. He has no equal in the worlds. He is devoted to vows and is without blemish. He is the single illustrious one, though they had thought of him in many different forms. On seeing the form of the great-souled one, whom they had thought of in many different forms in their own souls, all of them were astounded and glanced at each other in great wonder. He is the lord who is in all beings. He is the one without origin and is the lord of the universe. On seeing him, all the gods and brahmarshis bowed their heads down on the ground. Shankara welcomed them with words of benediction over them and asked them to arise. The illustrious one smiled and said, “Tell me why you have come.” Having obtained permission from Tryambaka,[322] their hearts were assured. They told Bhava, “O lord! We bow down. We bow down before you. We bow down before the one who is the god of all the gods. You are the archer. You are the one who is supremely angry. You are the one who destroyed the sacrifice of Prajapati.[323] You are the one who is worshipped by all Prajapatis. We bow down before you. We praise you. We praise the one who is praised by those who are about to die. You are the one who is red. You are Rudra. You are the one with the blue throat. You are the one with the trident. You are the one who cannot be repulsed. You are the one with the eyes of a deer. You are the one who fights with the best of weapons. You are unassailable. You are the seed. You are the brahman. You are a brahmachari. You are Ishana. You are the one who cannot be measured. You are the one who controls. You are dressed in skin. You are always engaged in austerities. You are tawny. You are the one who observes vows. You are the one who is attired in skin. You are the father of Kumara. You are three-eyed. You wield the best of weapons. You destroy the afflictions of those who seek refuge. You destroy masses of those who hate brahmanas. You are the lord of trees. You are the lord of men. We bow down before you. You are the lord of cattle. You are always the lord of sacrifices. We bow down before you. We bow down before you. O Tryambaka! Fierce in your energy, you are in front of all the soldiers. O god! We worship you, in our thoughts and our deeds. Be pacified.” At this, the illustrious one was gratified and welcomed and honoured them. He asked, “Let the reason for your fright be dispelled. Tell me what I should do for you.” The great-souled one granted a boon to the masses of ancestors, gods and rishis. Brahma honoured Shankara and spoke these words for the welfare of the worlds. “O lord of the gods! Through your favours, I have obtained the status of Prajapati. Having been thus established, I have granted a great boon to the danavas. Because of that, they are transgressing all norms of respect. You are the lord of the past, the present and the future. Other than you, there is no one who can destroy those wicked ones. Show your favours to the gods and grant this to the residents of heaven. O lord of the gods! O wielder of the trident! Show your favours and kill the danavas.”

‘ “‘The illustrious one replied, “All your enemies should be killed. That is my view. But I cannot kill them alone. Those who hate the gods are capable.

Therefore, all of you should unite. Use the energy of my weapons to fight against the enemy in battle. Unity offers great strength.”

‘ “‘The gods said, “We think that their energy and strength is double that of ours. We think that we have already witnessed their energy and their strength.”

‘ “‘The illustrious one replied, “Those who have committed crimes against you and are wicked must always be killed. Accept half of my energy and strength and kill all those enemies.”

‘ “‘The gods said, “O Maheshvara! We will not be able to bear half of your energy. But with half of our united strength, you can kill the enemies.” ’

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘O supreme among kings! The gods accepted what the lord of the gods had said.[324] All of them gave him half of their energy and he became superior. The god became the strongest among all the strong ones. From that time, Shankara came to be known as Mahadeva.[325] Mahadeva said, “Armed with the bow and the arrow, I will station myself on my chariot and kill the enemies of the residents of heaven. Therefore, all of you attend to my chariot and my bow and arrows. Behold, as I bring them down on the surface of the earth.”

‘ “‘The gods said, “Let all forms be gathered from everywhere in the three worlds. O lord of the gods! Using that, we will construct an immensely energetic and resplendent chariot for you, which will be fashioned by Vishvakarma with his intelligence.”

‘ “‘The tigers among the gods then constructed the chariot.[326] The goddess earth, garlanded with large cities and with mountains, forests, islands and all the beings, became the seat for the charioteer. Mandara[327] was the axle and Mahanadi[328] became the flank. The directions and the sub-directions became the entourage around the chariot. The flaming planets were the *anukarsha*[329] and the stars were the bumpers. Dharma, artha and kama united to become the *trivenu*.[330] Many kinds of herbs and many trees, with flowers and fruit, became the seat for the charioteer. The sun and the moon became wheels of that supreme chariot. Day and night were the auspicious flanks, ahead and to the rear. The ten lords of the nagas, with Dhritarashtra[331] as the foremost, constituted the shaft. The sky was the yoke and Samvartaka and Balahaka were the leather coverings for the yoke.[332] Fortitude, understanding, permanence and humility were the staffs. The planets, nakshatras, stars and the colourful firmament were the leather coverings. The guardians of the world, the lords of the gods, the water, the dead and wealth,[333] were made the horses. Sinivali, Anumati, Kuhu and Raka, all excellent in their vows, were made the yokes and harnesses around the necks of the mounts, for use by the rider.[334] Action, truth, austerities and prosperity were made the reins. The mind became the base and Sarasvati[335] the track for the chariot. Many beautiful and colourful flags were whirled around by the wind. With lightning and Indra's bow fastened to the chariot, it blazed in radiance. O great king! Thus was the supreme of chariots prepared there. O tiger among men! The gods prepared it, for crushing those who hated them. Shankara placed the best of his weapons on the chariot. Having made the firmament the flagstaff for his chariot, he placed the mark of the bull there. Brahma's staff, Yama's staff, Rudra's staff and Fever became the protectors of the chariot and faced all the directions. The great-souled Atharvan and Angirasa became the protectors of the chariot wheels.[336] Rig Veda, Sama Veda and the Puranas were in the front. Itihasa[337] and the Yajur Veda protected the rear. Divine words and learning surrounded it from all sides. O Indra among kings! *Vashatkara*[338] was the goad there. O king! The syllable *Om* was at the forefront and made it look radiant. He[339] made the year, with its six seasons, his bow. He made the night that destroys men the undecaying bowstring. Vishnu, Agni and Soma were the arrows. Agni and Soma constitute the entire universe and it is said that Vishnu is the universe. Vishnu is the illustrious one's soul and Bhava's infinite energy. That is the reason they[340] could not bear the touch of Hara's bowstring. On that arrow, the lord released his fierce and virulent fire of anger, generated from the intolerable wrath of Bhrigu and Angirasa. Nilalohita, Dhumra and Krittivasa looked terrible.[341] He blazed like ten thousand suns, amidst a mass of flaming energy. Hara is the vanquisher of those who can be defeated with difficulty. He is the slayer of those who hate Brahma. He is always the protector and the destroyer. He is the refuge of dharma and adharma. He was surrounded by large numbers of terrible and fierce beings who were horrible in form.

Surrounded by large numbers of these, the illustrious Sthanu was resplendent. O king! The entire world and universe is established in his limbs and all mobile and immobile objects were beautiful. It was a wonderful sight. On seeing that the chariot was ready, he donned divine armour and picked up his bow and arrow. He grasped the celestial arrows that were generated through Soma, Vishnu and Agni. O king! O supreme among kings! The gods instructed the lord of the wind to blow sacred fragrances. Mahadeva ascended the chariot and terrified the gods. When he ascended, the earth and heaven trembled. The granter of boons was beautiful, with his sword, arrows and bow.

' "'He smiled and asked the masses of gods, "Who will be my charioteer?" The gods replied, "O lord of the gods! There is no doubt that whoever you employ, will be your charioteer." He told the gods again, "You decide who is superior to me. Decide this yourselves and make him the charioteer." Having heard the words of the great-souled one, the gods went to the grandfather and having obtained his reassurance, spoke these words. "O god! We have done everything that you asked us to, for destroying the enemies of the thirty gods. The one with the bull on his banner is completely pleased with us. We have constructed a chariot and equipped it with many wonderful weapons. But we do not know who should be the charioteer of that supreme chariot. Therefore, let the best of the gods be appointed as the charioteer. O god! O lord! You should ensure that the words that you spoke become successful. O illustrious one! You told us earlier that you would do that which would be beneficial for us. You should act in accordance with that. The supreme of chariots has parts from all the gods. It is irresistible and will drive away the enemy. The one with the Pinaka in his hand is the warrior. He is ready and will strike terror among the danavas. The four Vedas have become the best of steeds. With all the mountains, the earth is the great-souled one's chariot. The nakshatras have obediently become the ornaments. But we do not see a charioteer for that warrior. O god! O grandfather! When such are the chariot, the horses and the warrior, the charioteer must be someone who is special in every way, just as the armour, the weapons and the bow are. But except you, we do not see someone who can be a charioteer. O lord! You are the one who is superior to the gods in all the qualities. Ascend swiftly as a charioteer and control those supreme horses." It has been heard, that in this fashion, the gods bowed down their heads before the grandfather who is the lord of the three worlds and sought his favours, so that he might become the charioteer. Brahma said, “O residents of heaven! There is nothing false in everything that you have said. I will control the horses when Kapardin[342] fights.” The illustrious god, the grandfather who was the creator of the worlds, was appointed by the gods as the charioteer of the great-souled Ishana. When he swiftly ascended the chariot, worshipped by the worlds, the horses, which possessed the speed of the wind, quickly lowered their heads and sank down on their knees on the ground. Maheshvara also ascended. The great grandfather of the three worlds successfully grasped the reins and urged those horses, which possessed the speed of thought and the wind. When the granter of boons[343] ascended and left in the direction of the asuras, the lord of the universe[344] smiled and said, “Excellent! Wonderful! O god! Go to the spot of the daityas. Urge the horses diligently. Behold the strength of my my arms today. I will slay the enemies in the battle.” At this, he[345] urged the horses, which were as fleet as the wind. O king! He went towards the city that was protected by the daityas and the danavas.

‘ “‘Sharva[346] strung the bow and affixed the arrow. He affixed the *pashupata* weapon and thought of Tripura. O king! Having stationed himself there, he angrily stretched his bow. At that point, the cities united and became one. The three cities united and became one and a tumultuous sound of delight arose among the great-souled gods. All the masses of gods, siddhas and supreme rishis became full of joy and uttered words of praise, signifying victory. Tripura manifested itself before the one who wanted to slay the asuras, the god whose form was indescribable and fierce and whose energy was intolerable. The illustrious one, the lord of the worlds, drew his celestial bow. The one who is the essence of the three worlds released the arrow towards Tripura. He consumed the large numbers of asuras and flung them into the western ocean. Thus, Tripura was burnt and the remaining danavas scorched by the angry Maheshvara for the welfare of the three worlds. The one with three eyes then pacified the flames that resulted from his wrath and said, “Do not reduce the world to ashes.” At this, nature, the gods, the worlds and the rishis returned to their natural states and satisfied the infinitely energetic Sthanu with eloquent words of grave import. On receiving the permission of the illustrious one, all of them returned to where they had come from. Having accomplished their objective, the gods, with Prajapati at the forefront, were satisfied. Thus did the illustrious Brahma, the grandfather who is the controller of the worlds, control the horses, and you should do the same for the great-souled Radheya. O tiger among kings! There is no need to debate whether you are especially superior to Krishna, Karna and Phalguna. O unblemished one! He[347] is like Rudra in a battle and you are like Brahma. Like the asuras, if the two of you are united, you can vanquish my enemies. O Shalya! Act so that Karna can swiftly oppress and slay Kounteya, the one with the white horses, with Krishna as his charioteer. Karna, the kingdom and our foundation is based on you.

' "'There is another account I will tell you about. Listen to it. A brahmana who knew about dharma recounted it in my father's presence. Hear these wonderful words, full of reasons, deeds and objectives. O Shalya! Do what must be done and do not reflect. The immensely energetic Jamadagni was born in the lineage of the Bhargavas. He had a famous son named Rama,[348] with energy and all the qualities. So that he might be able to please Bhava and obtain weapons, he performed terrible austerities. He was cheerful in his soul, controlled and restrained his senses. At this, Mahadeva was satisfied and pleased by his devotion. Shankara knew what was in his mind and showed himself. The god said, "O Rama! I am satisfied with you. O fortunate one! I know what you wish for. If you purify your soul, you will get everything that you want. When you become pure, I will give you all the weapons. O Bhargava! Those weapons burn down a person who is incapable and undeserving." Having been thus addressed by the god of the gods who wields a trident, Jamadagni's great-souled son bowed his head in obeisance and told the lord, "O lord of the gods! If you think that I am a person who is capable of bearing those weapons, you should give me those weapons, since I have always served you." He performed austerities and resorted to control and discipline. He worshipped, offered gifts and sacrifices and honoured him with oblations and mantras. He worshipped Sharva for a large number of years. Mahadeva was satisfied with the great-souled Bhargava. In the presence of the gods, he spoke about his[349] many qualities. "Rama is firm in his vows and is always devoted to me.” The lord, the destroyer of enemies, was pleased and spoke about his qualities in many different ways, in the presence of the gods and the ancestors. At this time, the daityas became extremely powerful. Because of their insolence and delusion, they afflicted the residents of heaven. At this, all the gods united and made up their minds to kill them. They made every effort to kill the enemy, but were incapable of vanquishing them. The gods then went and spoke to Maheshvara. They pleased him with their devotion and asked him to kill the large numbers of the enemy. Having obtained a promise from the god that the enemies would be destroyed, the gods summoned Bhargava Rama. Shankara told him, “O Bhargava! For the sake of the welfare of the worlds and to please me, kill the enemies of the assembled gods.” Rama replied, “O lord of the gods! O Maheshvara! Without the weapons, what strength do I possess, that I should kill the danavas? All of them are accomplished in the use of weapons and are indomitable in battle.” The god said, “On my instructions, go. You will kill the danavas. Having vanquished the enemy, you will obtain many qualities.” Having heard these words, he agreed wholeheartedly. Rama offered benedictions and left in the direction of the danavas. He killed the enemies of the gods, who were proud, insolent and powerful. Bhargava struck them with the touch of the vajra. The danavas inflicted wounds on the body of Jamadagni’s son, supreme among the brahmanas. However, at Sthanu’s touch, all those wounds disappeared. The illustrious god was pleased at his deed and granted boons to the great-souled Bhargava, who was knowledgable about the brahman. The god of the gods, the wielder of the trident, was pleased and said, “From the descent of the weapons, there are wounds on your body. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! These prove the superhuman deed you have achieved. As you desired, accept these divine weapons from me.” He obtained the weapons and all the boons that he wished for. Having obtained these diverse objects, Rama lowered his head before Shiva. The immensely ascetic one took the permission of the lord of the gods and departed. This is the ancient account that was told by the rishi.

‘ “‘Bhargava imparted all his knowledge of dhanurveda to the great-souled Karna, tiger among men, having been extremely pleased with him. O king! Had Karna not been a deserving person, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage would not have given him those celestial weapons. I therefore think that Karna cannot have been born in the lineage of a suta. I think that he is the son of a god, born in the lineage of kshatriyas. The maharatha is long in his arms and possessed earrings and armour. How can a doe give birth to such a tiger? Behold his thick arms, which are like the trunk of a king of elephants. Behold his thick chest, capable of withstanding all enemies.'" '

Chapter 1175(25)

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘Thus did the illustrious god, the grandfather of all the worlds, become the charioteer, when Rudra was the ratha. It is a duty for the charioteer of a chariot to be braver than the ratha. O tiger among men! Therefore, you should control the horses in the battle.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “At this, Shalya, the lord of Madra, was delighted and embraced your son. He spoke these words to Duryodhana, the slayer of enemies. ‘O king! O son of Gandhari! O handsome one! If this is what you think, I will do everything that brings pleasure to you. O best of the Bharatas! I will perform whatever task I am thought to be fit for. With my entire heart, I will bear the burden of any task. For the sake of what is beneficial, I may speak words to Karna, pleasant and unpleasant. You and Karna should pardon all of them.’ Karna replied, ‘O king of Madra! Like Brahma for Ishana and like Keshava for Partha, may you always serve us for our benefit.’ Shalya said, ‘There are four kinds of conduct not followed by those who are *arya*s—self-censure, self-glorification, speaking ill of others and adulation of others. O learned one! I will speak words for your own good. They may be full of self-praise. But listen to them attentively. O lord! In knowledge, skills of medication, controlling and avoiding distractions,[350] I am like Matali, fit to be Shakra’s charioteer. O unblemished one! O son of a suta! When you are engaged in warring with Partha in the battle, I will guide your horses. Do not be anxious on that account.’” ’

Chapter 1176(26)

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘O Karna! This king of Madra will act as your charioteer. He is superior to Krishna and is like Matali, the charioteer of the king of the gods. Just as Matali controls the horses yoked to Hari’s[351] chariot, Shalya will control the ones that are yoked to yours. With you as the warrior on that chariot and with the king of Madra as the charioteer, it is certain that this foremost of chariots will vanquish Partha in the battle.’ ”

‘Sanjaya said, “Duryodhana then spoke again to the spirited king of Madra. ‘O king! Control these supreme horses in the battle. Protected by you, Radheya will defeat Dhananjaya.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, he[352] agreed and ascended the chariot. When Shalya approached, Karna was delighted in his mind and spoke to the charioteer. ‘O charioteer! Swiftly prepare my chariot and equip it.’ That supreme and victorious chariot was like a city of the gandharvas. Having prepared it, the lord[353] brought it and said, ‘May you be victorious.’ Karna, foremost among rathas, worshipped the chariot in accordance with the prescribed rites. It had earlier been sanctified by a priest who was knowledgeable about the brahman. He circumambulated it carefully and prayed to the sun. The king of Madra was nearby and he asked him to climb onto it first. That great and supreme chariot of Karna’s was unassailable. The immensely energetic Shalya ascended, like a lion atop a mountain. O king! On seeing that Shalya was stationed, Karna ascended his supreme chariot, like the sun atop clouds tinged with lightning. Ascended on the same chariot, they were like Aditya and Agni together.[354] They were as resplendent as clouds in the firmament, tinged with Surya and Agni together. Those two brave ones, supreme among resplendent ones, were praised. They were like Indra and Agni, praised by priests and assisting priests at a sacrifice. Shalya controlled the horses. Karna stood on the chariot and extended his terrible bow, like the sun in its halo. On the best of chariots, Karna, tiger among men, with his arrows like rays, looked like the sun on Mandara.

‘ “The infinitely energetic and immensely brave Radheya was on the chariot and ready to leave. Duryodhana spoke these words. ‘O brave one! O Adhiratha’s son! Drona and Bhishma were incapable of accomplishing this extremely difficult task in the battle, while all the archers looked on. Accomplish it. I have always been convinced in my mind that maharatha Bhishma and Drona would kill Arjuna and Bhimasena. O brave one! They were unable to accomplish that valiant deed in this great battle. O Radheya! Like the one with the vajra in his hand, accomplish that task. O Radheya! Seize Dharmaraja, or kill Dhananjaya, Bhimasena and the twins who are the sons of Madri. O fortunate one! May you be victorious. O bull among men! Depart. Reduce all the soldiers of the sons of Pandu to ashes.’ Thousands of trumpets and tens of thousands of drums were sounded. The sound of those musical instruments was like the sound of clouds in the sky.

‘ “Accepting those words and stationed on the chariot, the supreme of rathas, Radheya, addressed Shalya, who was skilled in fighting. ‘O mighty-armed one! Urge the horses, so that I can kill Dhananjaya, Bhimasena, the twins and King Yudhishthira.[355] O Shalya! Let Dhananjaya behold the strength of my arms today, when I shoot hundreds and thousands of arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. O Shalya! I will unleash supremely energetic arrows today, for the destruction of the Pandavas and for Duryodhana’s victory.’ Shalya replied, ‘O son of a suta! Why do you disrespect the Pandavas? All of them are great archers and know about all the weapons. All of them are maharathas. They do not retreat, are immensely fortunate. They cannot be vanquished and truth is their valour. They are capable of generating fear in Shatakratu himself. O Radheya! When you hear the twang of Gandiva in battle, like the tumultuous sound of thunder, you will no longer speak in this way.’ O lord of men! Disregarding the words spoken by the king of Madra, Karna glanced towards Shalya and asked him to proceed.

‘ “O scorcher of enemies! On seeing that the great archer, Karna, was stationed and ready to fight, all the Kouravas were filled with delight and let out a roar. There was the sound of drums and kettledrums. There was the sound of arrows and the roars uttered by those spirited ones. Those on your side emerged to do battle, resolved to die, rather than retreat. As Karna advanced, the warriors were delighted. O king! The earth trembled and let out a mighty roar. The seven great planets and the sun seemed to be moving. Showers of meteors could be seen and the directions seemed to be blazing. Thunder descended and fierce winds began to blow. Large numbers of animals and birds kept your army to the right, signifying great fear.[356] When Karna advanced, his horses fell down on the ground. Bones showered down from the sky, portending fear. The weapons seemed to be blazing and the standards trembled. O lord of the earth! The mounts released tears. O venerable one! These, and many other ominous signs, were seen there. They signified the extremely terrible destruction of the Kouravas. However, because they were confounded by destiny, none of them paid any attention to these. On seeing the son of the suta advance, all the men on earth cried out for his victory. The Kouravas thought that the Pandavas had already been vanquished.

‘ “Vaikartana Vrisha, elephant among rathas and the slayer of enemy heroes, was stationed on his chariot. He thought of the deaths of the brave Bhishma and Drona and blazed like a fire. On seeing Partha’s unequalled deeds, he was consumed by pride and insolence. He blazed in anger and sighing deeply, spoke these words to Shalya. ‘When I am stationed on my chariot with my bow and enraged, I will not be frightened of the great Indra, with the vajra in his hand. On seeing that Bhishma and the best of others are lying down, do not be anxious. They[357] were like the great Indra and Vishnu. They were unmatched and unblemished. They were the ones who crushed the best of chariots, horses and elephants. It was as if they could not be slain, but they were killed by the enemy. Nevertheless, I am not alarmed in this battle. The preceptor was a bull among brahmanas and was knowledgeable about great weapons. On seeing the extremely powerful kings, with their men, horses, elephants and chariots, slain by arrows, why did he not kill all of them in the battle? O Kurus! Remembering Drona in the great battle, I am telling you this truthfully. Listen to me. Other than me, there is no one who is capable of withstanding Arjuna, when he advances in the battle, in the form of a fierce Death. Drona possessed learning, serenity, strength, fortitude, great weapons and good policy. When that great-souled one had to succumb to death, I think that all the others are distressed now. When I think about it, there is nothing in this world that is certain. Everything is always the outcome of action. When the preceptor has been brought down, who can proudly say with certainty that he will be alive till today's sunrise?[358] There is no doubt that weapons, strength, valour, deeds, good policy and supreme weapons cannot ensure human happiness, since the preceptor has been slain by the enemy in battle. His energy was like that of the sun or the fire. He was equal to Vishnu and Purandara in valour. He was always like Brihaspati and Ushanas[359] in policy. He was extremely difficult to withstand, but weapons could not save him. Our women and children are weeping. The manliness of the sons of Dhritarashtra has been defeated. O Shalya! Know that I have to accomplish the task. Therefore, advance towards the soldiers of the enemy, where the Pandava king who is unwavering in his aim and Bhimasena and Arjuna are stationed. There are Vasudeva, the Srinjayas, Satyaki and the twins. Who, other than me, can withstand them? O lord of Madra! Therefore, advance swiftly in the battle, towards the Panchalas, Pandavas and Srinjayas. I think that I will kill those assembled ones in the battle, or follow Drona's lead.[360] O Shalya! Do not think that I will not advance into the midst of those brave ones. I cannot tolerate this dissension among friends.[361] I will give up my life and follow Drona. Whether wise or foolish, when one's lifespan is over, one cannot escape with one's life and advances into Yama's mouth. O learned one! Therefore, I will advance against Partha. I cannot negate my destiny. O king! The son of Vichitravirya's son[362] has always been kind towards me. To accomplish his objective and attain his end, I will give up my beloved pleasures and my life, which is so difficult to abandon. This expensive chariot is covered with the skins of tigers. Its axles don't make a sound. The three frames are golden and the trivenu is made out of silver. It is yoked to excellent horses. Rama[363] gave it to me. O Shalya! Behold the colourful bows, standard, clubs, arrows with fierce forms, flaming sword, supreme weapons and the white conch shell that has a fierce sound. It[364] has flags and clatters like the sound of the thunder. It is yoked to white horses and is adorned with superb quivers. Stationed on this chariot, I will use my force to slay Arjuna, bull among rathas, in the battle. Even if Death, the destroyer of everything, diligently protects the son of Pandu in the encounter, I will engage with him and kill him in the encounter, or follow the path to Yama, along which, Bhishma has led. Even if Yama, Varuna, Kubera, Vasava, together with all their followers, unite to protect Pandava in this battle, I will defeat him. What is the need to speak more?’

‘ “On hearing the words of the one who was delighted at the prospect of battle and was bragging, the valiant king of Madra showed him disrespect and laughed at him. To restrain him, he gave him the following reply. ‘O Karna! Desist. Refrain from such bragging. You are delighted and are saying that which should not be said. Where is Dhananjaya, supreme among men? And where are you, an extremely stupid person? The abode of the Yadus was protected by Upendra.[365] It was like heaven, protected by the king of the immortals. Who other than Arjuna, supreme among men, could have violently abducted that beautiful lady, while he looked on?[366] He has a power and valour like that of the king of the gods. Where is the man, other than Arjuna, who at the time of the slaughter of the animal, could have challenged Bhava, the lord of all lords and the creator of the three worlds, to a battle?[367] To honour Agni, Jaya[368] vanquished asuras, gods, giant serpents, men, birds, pishachas, yakshas and rakshasas with his arrows and gave him the oblations he desired.[369] Do you remember how Dhritarashtra’s son was seized by the enemy and was freed by that supreme among men, using arrows that were as bright as the rays of the sun? In that wilderness, he killed large numbers of the enemy. You were the first to run away then. Do you remember how Dhritarashtra’s quarrelsome son was freed and the Pandava defeated large numbers of those who travel through the skies?[370] At the time of the seizure of the cattle, all of them, though they possessed large numbers of forces and mounts, were vanquished by that supreme of men. The preceptor, the preceptor’s son and Bhishma were also there. Why did you not defeat Arjuna then?[371] This supreme and excellent encounter has presented itself now, for the sake of your destruction. O son of a suta! If you do not run away, because of fear of the enemy, you will be slain today, when you advance to fight.’ The lord of Madra spoke many such harsh words cheerfully, praising your enemy. Vrisha, the leader of the Kuru forces, became supremely enraged and spoke these words to the lord of Madra. ‘Let it be that way. Even if it is that way, why are you praising him, when a battle is about to commence between him and me? If he defeats me in this great battle, will it be said that the words uttered by you have been spoken well?’ The lord of Madra agreed with this and did not say anything in reply. Wishing to fight, Karna asked the lord of Madra to depart. The ratha left in the direction of the enemy with the white horses, with Shalya as his charioteer. He killed enemies in the battle, like the sun destroying darkness. Karna was on a chariot yoked to white horses, covered with the skins of tigers. He left cheerfully. He saw the standards of the Pandavas and quickly asked about where Dhananjaya was.” ’

Chapter 1177(27)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna left, delighting your army. He told every Pandava soldier that he saw, ‘Today, I will grant the one who points out to me the great-souled one on the white horses, whatever boon he desires for. If he thinks that is not enough, I will again give a cart full of jewels to the one who tells me about Dhananjaya. If the man who shows Arjuna to me thinks that is not enough, I will again give him six carts full of gold, drawn by bulls that are like elephants. I will again give him one hundred ornamented women. They will be virgins,[372] with necklaces of gold, and skilled in singing and dancing. If the man who shows me Arjuna thinks that this is not enough, I will give him another boon of five hundred white horses. They will have golden harnesses and be decorated with bejewelled ornaments. I will give him another eight hundred well-trained horses. I will give the person who tells me about Dhananjaya a golden and sparkling chariot that is yoked to supreme horses from the Kamboja region. I will give him another boon of six hundred elephants that have golden harnesses and are adorned with golden necklaces. They have been born in the frontier regions and have been trained well by those who are skilled in elephants. If the man who shows me Arjuna thinks that this is not enough, I will give him another boon that he will desire himself. I possess sons, wives and riches. If he desires these, I will again give them to him. I will give the person who shows me Keshava and Arjuna all their riches, after having killed the two Krishnas.’ In the battle, having spoken these and many other words, Karna blew on his supreme conch shell. It had been generated from the ocean and produced a wonderful sound. O great king! Having heard these words of the son of the suta, which were appropriate to his character, Duryodhana and all his followers were delighted. At this, drums and kettledrums were sounded in every direction. Together with the musical instruments, there were roars like lions and the trumpeting of elephants. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! These sounds arose among the soldiers. The sounds made by the delighted warriors mingled with these.

‘ “The soldiers were delighted and Radheya, the afflicter of enemies, was about to plunge himself into the ocean of battle. The king of Madra laughed and addressed him in these words. ‘O son of a suta! When a man shows you Dhananjaya, do not, in your insolence, give him six golden bulls that are like elephants. Like a child, you are giving away riches as if you are Vaishravana.[373] O Radheya! Even if you do not make an effort, you will see Dhananjaya today. Like an extremely foolish person, you are unnecessarily giving them away. Because of your delusion, you do not realize the sins of giving to the undeserving. With the many riches that you propose to give away, you are capable of performing many sacrifices. O suta! Perform sacrifices. Because of your delusion and your intolerance, you desire to kill the two Krishnas. But we have not heard of two lions being brought down by a jackal. You desire what should not be desired. Clearly, you have no well-wishers, since they are not restraining you from swiftly falling into a fire. You do not know what should be done when. There is no doubt that you have been ripened by time.[374] A man who desires to be alive should not speak such words that should not be listened to. You are like someone wishing to cross an ocean with his arms, with a stone tied around his neck. Or you are like someone who wishes to fall down from the peak of a mountain. If you wish to ensure your own welfare, fight with Dhananjaya from the midst of this battle formation, with all the warriors, and well protected. I am saying this for the welfare of Dhritarashtra’s son and not from malice towards you. If you wish to remain alive, pay attention to the words spoken by me.’

‘ “Karna replied, ‘I wish to encounter Arjuna in the battle on the basis of my own valour and not by relying on others. You are an enemy in the disguise of a friend and are trying to frighten me. No one is capable of restraining me from my resolution today, not even Indra himself, with an upraised vajra. What can a mortal seek to do?’ ”

‘Sanjaya said, “When Karna had finished speaking, Shalya, the lord of Madra, wished to provoke Karna further and again spoke these words to him. ‘Forceful arrows will be released from Phalguna’s arms and unleashed from his bowstring. They will descend on you, sharp at the tip and shafted with the feathers of herons. It is then that you will regret advancing against Arjuna. Partha will grasp his celestial bow. Savyasachi will scorch the soldiers and oppress you with his sharp arrows. O son of a suta! You will regret it then. You are like a child supine on a mother's lap, who wishes to touch the one who removes water.[375] Because of your delusion, you wish to vanquish the resplendent Arjuna today, who is stationed on his chariot. It is as if you are rubbing the extremely sharp edges of a trident against all your limbs. O Karna! Today, you are wishing to fight with Arjuna, whose deeds are extremely sharp. This is like the childish folly of a spirited but small deer, who wishes to challenge a large and maned lion. O son of a suta! Your challenge to Arjuna now is like that challenge. O son of a suta! Do not challenge that prince, who is extremely valorous and is like a lion. You should be like a fox in the forest, satisfied with some meat. Do not challenge Partha today and be destroyed. O Karna! Your challenging Partha in a battle will be like a rabbit challenging a mighty elephant with tusks like ploughs and with a shattered temple. You will be like a child, striking a cobra, with great poison and full sacs, in a hole with a stick. Your desire to fight with Partha is like that. O Karna! Pandava is a lion among men. Like a stupid jackal, you are shouting at a maned and angry lion. For the sake of its own downfall, a small bird challenges the spirited Suparna, Vinata's son, supreme among birds.[376] O Karna! You are like that against Partha Dhananjaya. You wish to cross the terrible ocean, the abode of all the waters, on a raft, at a time when the moon is rising and its waves are turbulent and full of thousands of fish. He is a bull with sharp horns. His neck is as thick as a drum. He is a striker. O Karna! Like a small calf, you are challenging that Partha Dhananjaya to a fight. A large cloud makes a mighty noise and pours down desired rain on the world. Arjuna is like a cloud among men and you are croaking back at him, like a frog. From its own house, a dog barks at a tiger that is roaming in the forest. O Karna! Like that, you are barking at Dhananjaya, tiger among men. O Karna! Dwelling in a forest and surrounded by rabbits, a jackal thinks itself to be a lion, until it actually sees a lion. O Radheya! Like that, you think yourself to be a lion. But you do not see Dhananjaya, tiger among men, the crusher of enemies. You think yourself to be a tiger until you see the two Krishnas on a single chariot, like the sun and the moon. O Karna! Until you hear the roar of Gandiva in the great battle, till then, you are capable of speaking as you wish. You will hear that tiger[377] roar and make the ten directions resound with the clatter of his chariot and the twang of his bow. You will then become a jackal. You have always been a jackal and Dhananjaya has always been a lion. O foolish one! Because of your hatred towards those who are valiant, you have always seemed to be a jackal. Because of your own deeds and your strengths and weaknesses, you and Partha are known to be like a rat to a cat, a dog to a tiger, a fox to a lion and a rabbit to an elephant.'

' "Thus rebuked by the infinitely energetic Shalya, whose words were like darts to him,[378] Radheya became extremely angry and spoke to Shalya. 'O Shalya! Qualities, and the absence of qualities, are known to those with qualities, not to those without qualities. You have always been devoid of qualities. How will you know the difference between qualities and the lack of qualities? O Shalya! I know about Arjuna's great weapons, anger, valour, bow and arrows. You do not know their true nature. In that way, I know my valour and Pandava's valour. O Shalya! Knowing that, I have challenged him to a battle. I am not like an insect that heads towards a fire. O Shalya! I possess this arrow. It is well tufted and will drink blood. It has been washed excellently in oil and has been decorated well. It is lying alone in this quiver. It is lying down in sandalwood powder and has been worshipped by me for many years. This is extremely poisonous and is a serpent.[379] It is capable of slaying large numbers of men, horses and elephants. It is powerful and extremely terrible and is capable of shattering body armour and bones. In my wrath, I can use this to shatter the giant Mount Meru. Listen to me. I am saying this truthfully. I will never release this at anyone other than Phalguna and Krishna, the son of Devaki. O Shalya! I will use this arrow against Vasudeva and Dhananjaya. I will be extremely angry and fight with them. That will be an act that is worthy of me. Among all those of Vasudeva's lineage, Lakshmi[380] is vested in Krishna. Among all the sons of Pandu, victory is vested in Partha. When those two advance, how can one retreat? Those two tigers among men are united and stationed on a chariot, and will advance against me, who is single-handed. O Shalya! Behold my good lineage then. They are unvanquished cousins, one the son of a maternal uncle and the other one the son of a father's sister.[381] You will see them killed by me, like two gems on a single thread. Arjuna's Gandiva, Krishna's chakra and Tarkshya and the ape on the standards[382] only generate fear among cowards. O Shalya! They generate delight in me. You are evil in nature. You are stupid. You do not know about great battles. You are overcome with terror and have spoken a lot of words because of your fright. I do not know why you are praising them, perhaps because you have been born in a wicked country. Having killed them in the battle, I will slay you, with your relatives. You have been born in a wicked country and are evil in intelligence. You are inferior and the worst among kshatriyas. If you are a well-wisher, why are you frightening me about the two Krishnas, like an enemy? Today, I will be stationed in battle and either I will kill them, or they will kill me. I am not scared of the two Krishnas. I know my own strength. I will single-handedly slay one thousand Vasudevas and one hundred Phalgunas. O one who is born in a wicked country! Do not speak. Women, children, aged ones and those who have completed their studies often say something about the evil-souled ones from Madraka[383] and it has become a universal saying. O Shalya! I will tell you that saying. Listen. In the assemblies of the kings, this is what the brahmanas also recounted earlier. O foolish one! Listen attentively to this and then forgive me, or render a reply. A Madraka is always one who hates those who are his friends. One who always hates, is a Madraka. There are no good feelings in a Madraka. He is inferior in words and is the worst among men. A Madraka is always inferior in his soul. He always lies and is never straight. We have heard it said that wickedness exists among Madrakas. Fathers, mothers, sons, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, maternal uncles, sons-in-law, daughters, brothers, grandsons, kin, friends, others who have arrived, male servants and female servants mingle together. Noble women, according to their own wishes, mingle with men, known and unknown. In their homes, even the better ones always eat coarse grain and other undesirable food. They drink liquor,[384] eat the flesh of cows and dance and laugh. The songs don't have proper rhymes. They indulge in satisfying desire. They speak to each other, incoherent in desire. How can there be dharma there? Among those who have been ruined, the Madrakas are known as the performers of wicked deeds. It is said that one should have neither enmity, nor friendship, with Madrakas. One should not mix with Madrakas, because Madrakas are always fickle. Contact with Madrakas is futile, like purity among those from Gandhara, just as oblations proffered at a sacrifice are destroyed if the king is himself both the sacrificer and the priest. A brahmana who performs ceremonies[385] for shudras confronts destruction. Like that, one who hates brahmanas always confronts destruction. One who mixes with Madrakas is also destroyed, as if from the poison of a scorpion. I have pacified everything with mantras from the Atharva Veda. Wise ones who have been stung by a scorpion and have been afflicted by different types of poison, resort to medicines in this way.[386] This is seen to be the truth. O learned one! Keep quiet and listen to more of my words. Women who are intoxicated by liquor cast off their clothes and dance around. They do not follow restraints and indulge in sexual intercourse, following the dictates of desire. O Madraka! You are the son of one such. How can you talk about dharma? There are inferior women who urinate like camels and buffaloes. They are devoid of shame, and shamelessly do this everywhere. You are the son of one such person. How can you talk about dharma? If asked for collyrium, a Madraka woman scratches her buttocks and unwilling to give it, speaks these terrible words. “No. I will not give any collyrium. I would rather give my beloved instead. On every occasion, I will give up my son. But I will not give the collyrium.” Madraka women are ignoble. They are large. They are without modesty and are hairy. They eat a lot and are without any purity. That is what is generally heard. I, and others, are capable of recounting many such things about them, from the ends of their hair to the tips of their toes. How can the Madrakas and the Sindhu-Souviras know about dharma? They have been born in a wicked country. They are mlecchas. They do not know anything about dharma. The most important dharma for a kshatriya is that he should be slain and should lie down on the ground, honoured by the virtuous. That is what we have heard. It is my prime wish that, in this release and clash of weapons, I should be killed and should go to heaven. I am also the beloved friend of Dhritarashtra’s intelligent son. My life and the riches that I posssess are for him. O one who has been born in a wicked country! It is evident that you have been bought by the Pandavas. That explains your action towards us, always like that of an enemy. Like a person who is knowledgeable about dharma cannot be dissuaded by an atheist, I am headed towards this battle and cannot be dissuaded by hundreds of people like you. Like a deer that is sweating, you are welcome to lament or thirst. But I am established in the conduct of kshatriyas and you are incapable of frightening me. My preceptor, Rama,[387] had earlier told me about the ends obtained by the lions among men who gave up their lives and did not retreat from battle. I remember that. I am ready to save those on our side and kill the enemy. Know that I am established in this conduct, like the supreme Pururava. O Madraka! I do not see anyone in the three worlds who is capable of dissuading me from that objective. That is my view. Knowing this, why have you spoken such a lot, trying to terrify me? O worst of the Madrakas! I will not slay you now and give your body to predatory creatures. O Shalya! That is because of my friendship with Dhritarashtra's son, to avoid censure and because I am patient. Those are the three reasons that you are still alive. O king of Madra! But if you speak such words yet again, I will bring down your head with this club, which is like a vajra. O one who has been born in a wicked country! Today, people will hear and see either that Karna has killed the two Krishnas, or that Karna has been slain by them.' O lord of the earth! Having spoken these words, Radheya again fearlessly addressed the king of Madra, asking him to proceed." '

Chapter 1178(28)

'Sanjaya said, "O venerable one! On hearing the words of Adhiratha's son, who delighted himself in battle, Shalya again spoke to Karna, citing an example. 'You seem to be like one who is intoxicated with liquor. But whether you are like that or not, and irrespective of your intoxication, as a well-wisher, I will try to cure you. O Karna! I will tell you about the story of the crow. Listen to me. O wicked one! O worst of the lineage! On hearing this, do what you wish. O Karna! O mighty-armed one! I do not recollect a single taint in me, as a result of which you wish to kill an unblemished one like me. Had you known what was good for you, you would certainly have listened to my words, especially because I am your charioteer and the king's[388] well-wisher. The even and uneven terrain, the strengths and weaknesses of the chariot, the fatigue and perspiration of the horses and the charioteer, the knowledge of the weapons, the cries of animals and birds, what is burdensome and what is extremely burdensome,[389] antidotes to wounds from weapons, the use of different weapons in battle and knowledge of portents—all of these are known to me. And I am familiar with this chariot. O Karna! Therefore, let me recount the example to you once more. On the other side of the ocean, there lived a vaishya and he possessed a lot of riches and foodgrains. He performed sacrifices, was generous and quiet and established in the deeds he ought to perform.[390] He was pure. He had many sons whom he loved and he was compassionate towards all beings. Without any fear, he dwelt in the kingdom of a king who observed dharma. His illustrious sons were young. There was a crow that lived there and it subsisted on many kinds of leftover food. The young sons of the vaishya always gave it meat, curds, milk, *payasam*,[391] honey and butter. The crow subsisted on the leftovers that were given by the young sons of the vaishya. It became insolent and showed no respect to birds that were its equal or superior. Once, it so happened that swans descended on the other side of the ocean. They were cheerful in their hearts and could go anywhere at will. Their speed was like that of Garuda. On seeing the swans, the young boys spoke to the crow. "O bird! You are superior to all the winged birds." The one who was born from an egg was thus addressed by those who were of limited intelligence. Because of his stupidity and insolence, he regarded those words to be true. He asked those who could travel long distances[392] who among them was the swiftest in speed. The swans could travel long distances. But because of insolence and evil intelligence, the crow that fed on leftovers challenged that bird to a test of flight. On hearing these words of the crow, the swans that had assembled there, powerful and supreme birds, began to laugh. Those birds, which could go anywhere at will, spoke these words to the crow. "We are swans that roam the earth. We live in Lake Manasa. Among birds, we are always revered as those that can travel long distances. A swan is powerful. Its limbs are like a vajra. It can travel a great distance. O evil-minded one! You are a crow. How can you issue such a challenge? O crow! How will you fly with us?" They laughed and told him that. Because of the limited intelligence of its species, the stupid crow repeatedly questioned the words of the swans. Eventually, it replied, "There is no doubt that I will fly in one hundred and one different kinds of ways. I will fly each span of a hundred yojanas in a beautiful and varied way. I will rise up and swoop down. I will circle and fly straight. I will fly slowly and I will fly fast. I will fly diagonally. I will traverse slowly. I will whirl around. I will move gently and fast. I will then fly extremely fast and even faster than that. I will swoop down and rise up again. Forward, backwards and sideways, I will show many techniques of flight. I will show all these to you. Behold my strength." Having been thus addressed by the crow, one of the swans laughed. The swan spoke these words to the crow. "Listen to me. O crow! There is no doubt that you will fly in one hundred and one different kinds of ways. I will however fly in the only way that all the birds know. O crow! That is the way I will fly, because I do not know any other. O red-eyed one! You fly in whichever way you think appropriate." At this, the crows who had assembled there began to laugh. "How will the swan fly in only one kind of way and defeat flight in one hundred different ways?" They began to fly, one in one technique, and the other used one hundred and one flying techniques. Powerful and swift in strength, the swan and the crow flew. The swan and the crow flew, rivalling each other. The one that could fly anywhere[393] flew. The crow also flew. Each flew so as to cause wonder in the rival and praised his own deeds. The crow flew in a myriad and colourful ways. On seeing this, the assembled crows were delighted and started to caw loudly. The swans laughed at them and uttered many unpleasant words. From one instant to another, they[394] repeatedly rose up and swooped down. Descending and ascending, they were on the tops of trees and on the ground. They uttered many kinds of noises, signifying their victory. O venerable one! With that single and gentle motion, the valiant swan continued to fly and for an instant, it seemed as if it had been defeated by the crow. Slighting the swans, the crows spoke these words. "The swan that rose up into the sky is clearly being defeated." On hearing these words, the swan flew in a westward direction. It increased its speed and flew over the ocean, Varuna's abode. At this, fear penetrated the crow and it lost its senses. It did not see any islands or trees, where it could descend and rest, when it was tired. "When I am tired, where will I descend in this ocean of water? This ocean is the abode of a large number of beings and is intolerable. There are many large beings that reside here and it is superior to the sky."[395] O worst of your lineage! The ocean is superior to everything in depth. O Karna! It is as limitless as the sky. The ocean is impossible to conquer. O Karna! Given its extremely long distance, what could a crow do? In a short while, the swan travelled a long distance. It could not leave the crow behind and glanced back at it. Having overtaken the crow, the one that could travel anywhere at will glanced back at it.[396] Seeing that it was exhausted, the swan wished to rescue the one who was sinking and remembered the vows observed by righteous people. It said, "You repeatedly spoke about many different kinds of flight. You should not speak about these techniques of flight. They are a mystery to us. O crow! What is the name of this pattern of flight that you are now being forced to fly? Your wings and your beak are repeatedly touching the water. You are touching the waters of the ocean with your wings and your beak. O crow! You are extremely exhausted and you will suddenly fall down."

‘ “‘The swan said, “O crow! You spoke about one hundred and one different techniques of flight. Earlier, you spoke about many techniques. All of those have come to nought now.”

‘ “‘The crow replied, “O swan! Having fed on leftovers, I became insolent. I thought myself to be the equal of Suparna.[397] I showed disrespect to many other crows and all birds. I seek my life back from you. Take me to the shores of an island. O swan! Let me obtain assurance and let me return to my country again. I will never show disrespect to anyone again. Save me.”

‘ “‘It was distressed and spoke in this way.[398] Devoid of its senses, it lamented. Submerged in the great ocean, it cawed. The crow was drenched in water and faced a great hardship. The swan picked it up with its feet and gently raised it onto its[399] back. O Karna! The swan made the crow, bereft of its senses, climb astride its back. They again quickly flew to the island where the match had started. Having placed the bird down there, it comforted it.[400] The swan, as swift as thought, then flew away to the country it wished to. This is what happened to the crow that fed on leftovers from a vaishya household. There is no doubt that you have subsisted on leftovers from the sons of Dhritarashtra. O Karna! That is the reason you show disrespect to all those who are your equal and superior. You were protected by Drona, Drona’s son, Kripa, Bhishma and the other Kouravas in Virata’s city. Partha was single-handed. Why didn’t you kill him then?[401] All of you were distressed and vanquished by Kiriti, like jackals defeated by a lion. Where was your valour then? When you saw that your brother was defeated and killed by Savyasachi, while all the brave ones among the Kurus looked on, you were the first to run away.[402] O Karna! Like that, when you were attacked by the gandharvas in Dvaitavana,[403] you abandoned all the Kurus and were the first to run away. Partha killed and defeated the gandharvas, with Chitrasena at the forefront, in battle. O Karna! He freed Duryodhana and his wife. Then again, in earlier times, in the assembly of the kings, Rama[404] himself spoke about the power of Partha and Keshava. In the presence of the kings, Bhishma and Drona have always said that the two Krishnas cannot be killed. You have heard that. I have only told you a little bit about how Dhananjaya is superior to you in various ways, like a brahmana is superior to all other beings. You will soon see that expensive chariot and Vasudeva's son and Pandava Dhananjaya stationed on it. Those two bulls among men are famous among gods, asuras and humans. They are renowned among men because of their radiance and you are like a firefly. O son of a suta! Know this to be your state. Those two lions among men, Achyuta and Arjuna, will destroy you. Do not indulge in self-praise.'" '

Chapter 1179(29)

‘Sanjaya said, “Adhiratha’s son heard these unpleasant words spoken by the lord of Madra. But he was not pacified and spoke to Shalya. ‘Everything about Arjuna and Vasudeva is known to me. Shouri’s skill in driving Arjuna’s chariot, Pandava’s strength and great weapons are just as you have said and are known to me. O Shalya! But you have not directly seen this.[405] They are invincible and foremost among the wielders of weapons. However, without being overcome with fear, I will fight with the two Krishnas. I am suffering from greater torment because of Rama. That supreme brahmana has cursed me. In earlier times, wishing to obtain a divine weapon from Rama, I lived with him, in the disguise of a brahmana. O Shalya! For the sake of Phalguna’s welfare, the king of the gods caused an obstruction there.[406] He penetrated my thigh and entered my body in the distorted form of an insect. Because of fear of my preceptor, I did not move.[407] On waking up, the brahmana saw this. The maharshi asked me who I was and on learning that I was a suta, he cursed me.[408] “O suta! You have obtained this weapon through a deception. Therefore, when it is time to perform a task, it will not manifest itself before you.[409] When it is the time for your death, it will go elsewhere.” The brahman can certainly not be present in a person who is not a brahmana. “O father![410] In this fierce and tumultuous battle today, I have forgotten that powerful weapon. The powerful and unfathomable lord of the waters dashes forward, to submerge many beings. The ocean is like a mighty mountain. But the shoreline repulses that immeasurable object. In this world, Kunti’s son is the foremost among those who stretch bowstrings. He will release a mass of arrows that can’t be resisted. They will be shafted and will penetrate the inner organs, slaying heroes. However, I will counter him in the battle. He is supremely strong amongst those who are strong. He possesses great weapons. He will shoot from an extremely long distance and will be like the fierce ocean. The kings will be submerged in his waves of arrows. But, like the shoreline, I will withstand Partha's arrows. I think that he has no equal among men who wield the bow. But I will fight with him in the battle today, though he is capable of vanquishing the gods and the asuras in a battle. Behold my extremely terrible battle with him today. Pandava is extremely proud and desires to fight. He will advance against me with his superhuman and great weapons. In the battle, I will counter his weapons with my own weapons. I will bring down Partha with my supreme arrows. I will scorch like the rays of the sun. I will blaze like the illustrious one's rays. Like clouds gather around the dispeller of the darkness, I will envelop Dhananjaya with my arrows. A flaming fire has trails of smoke. Its energy scorches all the worlds. But like clouds pacify that fire, I will quench Partha with my arrows in the battle. The fierce wind god is powerful and destroys with a storm. The angry and intolerant Dhananjaya is like that. But, in the battle, I will withstand him like the immobile Himalayas. He is skilled and knows about the circular motions of a chariot. He is always foremost among those who are borne in a battle. He is supreme among all archers in the world. However, I will withstand that Dhananjaya in the battle. I think that there is no archer who is equal to him among men. I know that he has withstood the entire earth. But today, I will encounter him in the battle. Savyasachi vanquished all the beings, together with the gods, in the region known as Khandava. Which other man, with me being an exception, can fight with him and seek to protect his own life? I will cheerfully speak about Pandava's manliness in an assembly of kshatriyas. O stupid one! O one who has lost his senses! Why are you telling me about Arjuna's manliness? Those who are forgiving always forgive an inferior and cruel person who speaks harsh and unpleasant words. I can kill one hundred who are like you. However, because I am forgiving and bearing the appropriate time in mind, I am forgiving you. For Pandava's sake, you have spoken unpleasant words. You have censured me, like a stupid person who performs evil deeds. I did not deserve it. Yet, you have used your tongue to lash me. You are one who hates friends. One with whom one walks seven paces is a friend.[411] The present time is full of death and is extremely terrible. Duryodhana has chosen this to advance in battle. I desire that his objectives are accomplished. But you act as if to counter them, as if you are one who doesn't love him. A friend delights a friend, and always does that which brings him pleasure. He frees him, honours him and shares in his delight. This is what the brahmanas have said earlier. Towards Duryodhana, I tell you that all these traits exist in me. An enemy always chastises and sharpens his weapons. He causes injury, makes us sigh and distresses us. These many harmful qualities are seen in an enemy and almost all of these exist in you. You are showing them towards me. For the sake of accomplishing Duryodhana's objective and for bringing him pleasure, for the sake of bringing glory to myself and for the sake of accomplishing what the gods want,[412] I will endeavour to fight with Pandava and Vasudeva. Behold my deeds today. Behold my supreme weapons today, brahmastra and other divine and human weapons. I will cushion the one whose valour is fierce, like a supreme elephant killing another crazy elephant. For the sake of victory, I will use my mental powers to hurl the brahmastra at Partha. It is unrivalled and is victorious. In the battle, he will not be able to escape from it, unless my wheels get stuck in uneven terrain. O Shalya! Know that I will not be frightened, even if Vaivasvata[413] with his staff, Varuna with his noose, the lord of riches[414] with his club, Vasava with his vajra, or any other assassin advances against me. Therefore, I have no fear of Partha or Janardana. Today, there will be a clash between me and those two enemies. However, a brahmana told me, "Your miserable wheel will be stuck in the ground and you will confront great fear in your heart, when you are fighting in a battle." Since then, I have greatly suffered from fright at the brahmana's words. O Shalya! The brahmana was a store of austerities and I had unconsciously used my arrows to kill the calf that had been born from his *homa* cow,[415] while it was roaming around amongst people. I gave that foremost among brahmanas seven hundred tusked elephants and hundreds of servants and servant-maids. But he was not satisfied with me. To obtain the favours of that supreme among brahmanas, I brought fourteen thousand black cows, each with a white calf. I offered him a beautiful house, with every object of desire, and all the riches I possessed. I honoured him with all this, but he did not wish to receive them. I had committed a crime and begged him, so that I might remedy it. However, he told me, "O suta! What I have uttered will certainly happen. It cannot be falsified. If I utter a falsehood, beings will be killed and I will commit a sin. Therefore, to protect dharma, I have no interest in speaking a falsehood. You must perform atonement for causing violence towards what provides a brahmana sustenance. There is no one in this world who can make my words false and you should accept them.” Though you have censured me, because I am a well-wisher, I have told you this. I know that you are the one who is censuring me. But be quiet and listen to what I will tell you next.’” ’

Chapter 1180(30)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Radheya again addressed the king of Madra, the scorcher of enemies. He restrained him and spoke these words. ‘O Shalya! You have spoken to me about instances. However, your words are incapable of terrifying me in this battle. Even if all the gods, together with Vasava, fight against me, even then, I will not be frightened, not to speak of Partha and Keshava. I am incapable of being frightened by words alone. Know that the person you are capable of terrifying in a battle is someone else. O evil-minded one! You have spoken a lot of harsh words to me. That is the strength of inferior people. You are incapable of comprehending my qualities. O venerable one! Karna was not born so as to be frightened. I have been born for valour and for fame. O lord of Madra! Listen attentively to what I had heard in Dhritarashtra’s presence. Honouring Dhritarashtra, brahmanas recounted the ancient and wonderful accounts of many kingdoms and many kings. An aged one, foremost among brahmanas, recounted ancient tales and spoke these words of ill repute about those from the lands of Bahlika and Madra. “They are cast out from the region of the Himalayas and are despised in the region of the Ganga. That is also true of those who live in the central regions, around the Sarasvati, the Yamuna and Kurukshetra, the five rivers[416] and with Sindhu as the sixth. It is one’s dharma to avoid the impure Bahlikas, who are outside these regions. From the days of my youth, I remember that the kings of their lineage had a fig tree named Govardhana and a quadrangular spot named Subhanda near the gate.[417] Because of some secret work, I had to live with the Bahlikas then. Because I dwelt among them, their conduct is known to me. There is a city named Shakala, a river named Apaga that flows downwards and a lineage of the Bahlikas named Jartika.[418] Their conduct is severely censured. They drink liquor made from grain and molasses. They eat the flesh of cows, laced with garlic. They eat bread mixed with meat and fried barley that has not been sowed.[419] They are devoid of good conduct. Intoxicated, the women throw away their garments and laugh, sing and dance in the cities, and outside the walls, without garlands and unguents. Intoxicated, they sing many songs, in voices that are like those of asses and camels. They freely summon others.[420] When their husbands and lords are killed, they call out their names in intoxication and say, 'Alas! Alas!' However, those wicked ones do not observe sacred occasions and continue to scream and dance. A chief among the Bahlikas lived among those women who made such uproar, and then dwelt for some time in Kurujangala. Cheerless in his mind, he said, 'She is large and fair.[421] She is attired in a thin blanket. When it is time for lying down, she must be thinking about the Bahlika who now lives among the Kurus. When will I cross the river Shatadru and the beautiful Iravati and go to my own country, where I will see those handsome women with large bodies? Those fair women have circles of red arsenic on their limbs and black collyrium on their heads.[422] Those beautiful ones are attired only in skins and are sporting. When will I obtain happiness among those intoxicated ones, who have the sounds of asses, camels and mules? There will be the sounds of drums, kettledrums and conch shells. There is joy in the forest paths there, full of *shami*, *pilu* and *karira* trees. I will live amongst those who eat cakes ground with wheat and coarse meal. When will I be prosperous and strong along those paths, which echo to the many sounds of our oppression and banditry?'[423] The evil-souled Bahlikas are inferior and outcasts in this way. Which man would like to and dwell amidst them, even for an instant?" Thus did the brahmana describe the Bahlikas, whose conduct is vile. Whether it is their good qualities or bad, you possess one-sixth of those. Having said this, the virtuous brahmana began to speak again. This is what he said about the ill-mannered Bahlikas. Listen. "In the large city of Shakala, a rakshasa lady always used to sing every night, on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight,[424] to the sound of drums. When will those songs be announced and when will I sing in Shakala again?[425] When will I satiate myself with the flesh of cows and drink the great liquor made from molasses? Having drunk the liquor made from molasses, I will be with the large and ornamented women. I will wash my mouth after eating copious quantities of the meat of sheep, laced with onions, and also the flesh of boars, fowl, cows, asses and camels. Those who do not eat the flesh of sheep, are born in vain.” Drunk with liquor, thus do the residents of Shakala, young and old, cry out. How can there be good conduct among them? O Shalya! Know this and be surprised. I will tell you more. This is what another brahmana told us in the assembly of the Kurus. “There is a forest of pilu trees in the spot where the five rivers flow—Shatadru, Vipasha, Iravati as the third, Chandrabhaga and Vitasta. As the sixth, Sindhu flows outside that region. There is a country named Aratta[426] there, where dharma has been destroyed. One should not go there. The gods, the ancestors and the brahmanas do not receive offerings from those who are outcasts, those born from servants and those from the land of Videha,[427] who do not sacrifice. It has been heard that those from Bahlika have destroyed all dharma.” The learned brahmana also said this in the assembly of the virtuous. “Bahlikas eat from vessels made out of wood and clay, in which, coarse meal has been ground and which have been licked by dogs. They have no revulsion at this. They drink the milk of sheep, camels and asses. They drink and eat preparations made from these. Inter-caste sons are born there and those contemptible ones drink every kind of milk and eat everything. The learned say that the Bahlikas known as Aratta must always be avoided.” O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. In the gathering of the Kurus, in the assembly hall, another brahmana said the following. “Having drunk milk in the spot known as Yugandhara, how can one go to the place without decay? Having bathed in Bhutilaya, how can one go to heaven? That is the spot where five rivers issue from the mountains and flow. A noble person should not dwell among the Aratta-Bahlikas for even two days. In Vipasha, there are two pishachas named Bahi and Hlika. They were not created by Prajapati, and the Bahlikas are their offspring. One must avoid those without dharma—Karashkaras, Mahishakas, Kalingas, Kikatas, Atavis, Karkotakas and Virakas.” He had gone on a *tirtha* and had spent a single night under a shami tree.[428] He was addressed by a *rakshasi*, whose hips were as broad as a mortar. “Those from the land known as Aratta, the people known as Bahlika and those who reside in the Sindhu-Souvira region are generally reviled.”[429] O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. Listen with an attentive mind to everything that is spoken by me. On an earlier occasion, a skilled brahmana came to our house as a guest. Witnessing our conduct, the skilled one was delighted and said, "I have lived for a long time on a single peak of the Himalayas. I have seen many different countries, where diverse kinds of dharma are followed. But I have never seen a country where all the subjects act against dharma. All of them professed dharma to be what those learned in the Vedas have proclaimed it to be. I have always travelled in many countries, where different kinds of dharma are followed. O great king! However, having gone to the Bahlikas, I learnt the following. There, one first becomes a brahmana and then becomes a kshatriya. Thereafter, one becomes a vaishya, a shudra, a Bahlika, and finally a barber. Having become a barber, one once again becomes a brahmana. Having become a brahmana there, one is once again born as a slave. In every family, there is only one virtuous brahmana. Everyone else follows one's desires. The Gandharas, the Madrakas and the Bahlikas possess limited intelligence. That is what I heard there, about the admixture of dharma. Having travelled throughout the entire earth, I heard about this catastrophe among Bahlikas." O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. These were the censorious words that another one spoke to me about the Bahlikas. In earlier times, a virtuous lady was abducted by some bandits from Aratta. They displayed adharma towards her. Consequently, she cursed them. "I am young. I have relatives. But against dharma, you have had intercourse with me.[430] Therefore, all the women in your lineages will be ignoble. O worst among men! You will not be able to escape from the consequences of your terrible act." The Kurus, the Panchalas, the Shalvas, the Matsyas, the Naimishas, the Kosalas, the ones from Kashi, the Angas, the Kalingas, the Magadhas and the immensely fortunate Chedis know about eternal dharma. In many countries, even those who have outwardly deviated know about virtue. Among the Matsyas, those from the lands of Kuru and Panchala and especially those from Naimisha and Chedi, the virtuous ones lived according to ancient dharma. But this is not true of the Madras from the land of the five rivers. They are false in their tongues. O king! Knowing all this about dharma, be quiet. O Shalya! Be like those who cannot speak. You are the protector and the king of those people. Therefore, you have one-sixth share in their good and evil deeds. Or else, since you do not protect them, you only have a share in their evil deeds. A king who protects the good deeds of his subjects obtains a share in those good deeds. In earlier times, the eternal dharma was revered in all countries. But on seeing the dharma practised in the land of the five rivers, the grandfather[431] cried, "Shame!" They are outcasts. They are born from servants. They are the performers of wicked deeds. That is the reason the grandfather condemned the dharma in the land of the five rivers. Though they followed their own dharma and that of their varna, he did not honour it.[432] O Shalya! You are certain to know this. But I will tell you more. A rakshasa named Kalmashapada[433] was about to be submerged in a pond and said, "Begging is filth for a kshatriya. Falsehood is filth for a brahmana. Bahlikas are the filth of the earth. The women of Madra are the filth among women." When the traveller of the night[434] was being submerged in the pond, a king saved him. Listen to what he[435] said when he was asked. "Mlecchas are filth among men. Boxers are filth among mlecchas. Eunuchs are filth among boxers. Kings who act as officiating priests are the filth among eunuchs. Among kings who act as officiating priests, the Madrakas are filth. If you do not save me, all of that filth will be yours." The rakshasa spoke those supreme words as antidote, when a person's valour has been destroyed by the poison of a rakshasa. The Panchalas follow the brahman. The Kouraveyas follow their own dharma. The Matsyas observe truth and the Shurasenas perform sacrifices. Those from the eastern regions are like slaves and those from the southern regions are contemptible. The Bahlikas are thieves and those from Surashtra are of mixed breed. Shame on those from Aratta and the land of the five rivers. They are ungrateful and steal the property of others. They are addicted to drinking liquor and have intercourse with the wives of their preceptors. Those from Panchala, Kuru, Naimisha and Matsya know about dharma. The aged ones from Kalinga, Anga and Magadha follow the virtuous path of dharma. With the fire god at the forefront, the gods reside in the eastern direction. The south is protected by the ancestors and Yama, the perfomer of auspicious deeds. The west is protected by Varuna, who takes care of other powerful gods there. The illustrious Soma is in the north, along with Brahma and the brahmanas. The rakshasas and pishachas are there in the Himalayas and the guhyakas in Gandhamadana. It is certain that Vishnu Janardana protects all the beings in the world.[436] The Magadhas understand signs, the Kosalas from what they see. The Kurus and Panchalas understand even if the speech is partly uttered, the Shalvas understand only when everything is spoken. Those who live in mountainous and hilly regions are coarse. O king! The Yavanas know everything, the Shuras especially so. The mlecchas follow their own signs. Other inferior people understand nothing. The Bahlikas, and not just the Madrakas, are against anything that has been undertaken. O Shalya! You are like that and you should not venture to give me a reply. Knowing this, keep quiet. You should not try to contradict me. Do not make me kill Keshava and Arjuna after I have killed you first.'

' "Shalya said, 'O Karna! Abandoning of the distressed and the sale of wives and sons is prevalent among those from Anga. You are the lord of that region. Bhishma enumerated the list of rathas and atirathas.[437] At that time, he recounted your vices and you were angry. Do not be angry. Brahmanas can be found everywhere. Kshatriyas can also be found everywhere. O Karna! So can vaishyas and shudras, and women who are virtuous and good in their vows. Men always sport with other men and laugh at them, trying to hurt each other. In every country, there are those who are addicted to intercourse. Everyone is always skilled in detecting another one's faults. No one knows his own faults, or knowing them, is confounded.' "

'Sanjaya said, "Karna did not say anything in reply and Shalya faced the direction of the enemy. Radheya smiled again and urged him to drive." '

Chapter 1181(31)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna saw the unmatched vyuha of the enemy Parthas, protected by Dhrishtadyumna. It was capable of resisting the arrays of foes. He advanced, roaring like a lion and making his chariot clatter. The earth trembled from the sound of musical instruments. That scorcher of enemies, irresistible in battle, seemed to be trembling in rage. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The immensely energetic one constructed a counter vyuha. He began to kill the Pandava soldiers, like Maghavan against the asuras. Placing Yudhishthira on his right, he advanced towards him.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did Radheya construct a counter vyuha against the Pandavas? The brave Dhrishtadyumna was at the forefront and they were protected by Bhimasena. O Sanjaya! Who were stationed at the flanks and the extreme flanks of my army? How were the others divided and where were they stationed? How did the sons of Pandu construct a counter vyuha against us? How did that extremely extensive and extremely terrible battle commence? When Karna advanced against Yudhishthira, where was Bibhatsu then? In Arjuna’s presence, who is capable of attacking Yudhishthira? In earlier times, he single-handedly vanquished all the beings in Khandava. Wishing to remain alive, who other than Radheya is capable of fighting with him?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Listen to the construction of the vyuha and how Arjuna arrived there. The kings on both sides arrayed themselves and fought the battle there. O king! Sharadvata Kripa, the spirited Magadhas and Satvata Kritavarma were stationed on the right flank. On their extreme flank were Shakuni and maharatha Uluka. Those soldiers were protected by fearless horse riders from Gandhara, armed with sparkling lances, and invincible ones from the mountainous regions. They were like a storm of locusts and as fierce-looking as pishachas. There were thirty-four thousand samshaptaka rathas who did not retreat. They were fierce in battle and protected the left flank. Your sons assembled together, wishing to kill Krishna and Arjuna. The Kambojas, Shakas and Yavanas were on their extreme flank. On the instructions of the son of the suta, they were there, with their chariots, horses and infantry, and challenged Arjuna and the immensely strong Keshava. Karna armoured and stationed himself at the head of the vanguard. His armour and armlets were colourful. He was garlanded and protected the front of the army. He was protected by his extremely wrathful sons, supreme among all the wielders of weapons. As he drew his bow at the head of the army, the brave one[438] was resplendent. Ready to fight, the mighty-armed Duhshasana was surrounded by soldiers and stationed himself at the rear of the vyuha. He was as resplendent as the sun and the fire. He was handsome and his eyes were tawny. He was astride a mighty elephant. O great king! King Duryodhana was himself behind him. He was protected by his brothers, Chitrashva and Chitrasena.[439] He was also protected by the immensely valorous Madras and Kekayas. O great king! He was as resplendent as Shatakratu, with the gods. Ashvatthama, the foremost maharathas among the Kurus, elephants that were always crazy and brave mlecchas stationed themselves behind that army of chariots and followed it. They looked like clouds that poured. There were standards that signified victory and supreme and blazing weapons. Stationed on horses, the riders were as beautiful as mountains covered with trees. Thousands of foot soldiers guarded the feet of the elephants. Those brave ones were armed with lances and swords and did not retreat. There were ornamented riders, chariots and elephants. That vyuha was as resplendent as one of the gods or the asuras. The learned leader arrayed it well, according to the norms of Brihaspati. That mighty vyuha seemed to dance, causing fear in the hearts of the enemy. Wishing to fight, foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants issued forth from the flanks and extreme flanks, like clouds during the monsoon.

‘ “On seeing Karna stationed at the forefront of the army, King Yudhishthira spoke to Dhananjaya, the single brave one who was capable of killing all enemies. ‘O Arjuna! Behold the mighty vyuha that Karna has constructed for this battle. The arrays of soldiers are blazing along its flanks and extreme flanks. On seeing this large army of the enemy, adopt such measures as are decreed by policy, so that we are not overcome.’ O king! Thus addressed by the king, Arjuna joined his hands in salutation and replied, ‘Everything will be done as you wish. It shall not be otherwise. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will act so that they can be killed. I will act so as to destroy and kill the foremost among them.’

‘ “Yudhishthira said, ‘With that objective, you advance against Radheya, Bhimsena against Suyodhana, Nakula against Vrishasena, Sahadeva against Soubala, Shatanika against Duhshasana, the bull among the Shini lineage against Hardikya,[440] Dhrishtadyumna against Drona’s son and I myself against Kripa. Let Droupadi’s sons[441] and Shikhandi advance against the remaining sons of Dhritarashtra. Let the others on our side kill the enemy.’ ”

‘Sanjaya said, “Thus addressed by Dharmaraja, Dhananjaya agreed. He instructed his own soldiers and himself advanced to the front of the army. As that chariot advanced, it was extremely wonderful to behold. Yet again, Shalya spoke to Adhiratha’s son, invincible in battle. ‘The chariot with the white horses is advancing, with Krishna as the charioteer. Kounteya is advancing, slaying the enemy. He is the one about whom you had asked. The great and tumultuous sound of the axles of the chariot can be heard. A dust is arising and has covered the sky. O Karna! The earth is trembling because of the axles of the chariot. A large and violent wind seems to be blowing on both sides of your army. Predatory beasts are howling and small animals are emitting a terrible sound. O Karna! Behold. This is extremely horrible and gives rise to fear. The body hair stands up. A headless torso that is like a cloud has enveloped the sun. Behold. Herds of many different kinds of animals are howling in all the directions. Powerful and proud tigers are glancing in the direction of the sun. Behold. Thousands of herons and vultures have assembled together. They are seated, fiercely facing each other, as if they are engaged in a conversation. O Karna! The white horses yoked to your giant chariot have turned pale. The arrows are blazing and the standard is trembling. Behold. The horses are extremely large and possess great speed. But they are quivering, though they are as handsome as flowing Garudas in the sky. From these portents, it is evident that the earth will be covered with kings. O Karna! They will be slain and will lie down, in hundreds and thousands. The tumultuous sound of conch shells can be heard and it makes the body hair stand up. O Radheya! There are sounds of drums and double-drums in every direction.

There are the whizzing sounds of many kinds of arrows and the roars of men, horses and chariots. O Karna! Listen to the sound produced from the bowstrings and palms of those great-souled ones. O Karna! Behold Arjuna's chariot. It has been constructed by an aristan and is decorated with golden flags that have many hues. As they are stirred by the wind, they are resplendent. The flags are decorated with golden moons, stars and suns and are adorned with bells. They are like flashes of lightning in a cloud. There are other golden penants that are being stirred by the wind. Those flags are on the chariots of the great-souled Panchalas. They are slaying elephants, horses, rathas, infantry and warriors on your side. The tips of their standards can be seen. The twang of their bowstrings can be heard. Today, you will see the brave one with the white horses, with Krishna as his charioteer. He will slay the enemy in the battle. He is the one about whom you had asked. O Karna! Today, you will see Vasudeva and Arjuna stationed on a single chariot. Those two tigers among men are red-eyed and are the scorchers of foes. Varshneya is his charioteer and Gandiva is his bow. O Radheya! If you are successful in killing him, you will be our king. He has been challenged by the samshaptakas and has departed in their direction. In the battle, that powerful one is creating a great carnage among the enemy.' When Karna was thus addressed by the lord of Madra, he became extremely angry and said, 'Look. The angry samshaptakas have attacked him from every direction. Partha cannot be seen and is shrouded, like the sun by the clouds. O Shalya! Immersed in that ocean of grief, Arjuna will perish.'

' "Shalya replied, 'Who can slay Varuna with water or the fire with kindling? Who can grasp the wind, or drink up the great ocean? I think that causing hardship to Partha in a battle is equally tough. No one is capable of vanquishing Arjuna, not even Indra, with the gods and the asuras. Be satisified with your words and be cheerful in your mind. No matter what your wishes are, you cannot be victorious in this encounter. There may be someone who can raise the earth with his two arms, or consume all the beings with his anger. That person may bring down the gods from heaven. No one other than him can defeat Arjuna in a battle. Behold Kunti's brave son. Bhima is unsullied in his deeds. The mighty-armed one is radiant and is stationed like Mount Meru. He is perpetually angry, remembering the enmity that has endured for a long time. The valiant Bhima is stationed in the battle, desiring victory. Dharmaraja

Yudhishthira is foremost among those who uphold dharma. The conqueror of enemy cities, the performer of good deeds, is stationed against the enemy in the battle. Nakula and Sahadeva, the brothers who are tigers among men, have been born from the Ashvins. They are stationed in the battle and are extremely difficult to defeat. Behold the five sons of Krishna,[442] who are like five mountains. They are stationed, wishing to fight and all of them are Arjuna's equal in a battle. These are the sons of Drupada, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. Those brave ones are stationed and are supremely energetic. Satyajit is the youngest among them.'[443]

' "While those two lions among men were conversing in this way, the armies clashed against each other, like the fierce waters of the Ganga and the Yamuna." '[444]

Chapter 1182(32)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When the arrayed armies clashed against each other, how did Partha advance against the samshaptakas and Karna against the Pandavas? You are skilled in narrating. Please tell me everything about the battle. I am never satisfied with hearing about the valour of the brave ones in battle.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Because of the evil policies of your son, Arjuna created a vyuha as a counter vyuha, having seen that the large army of the enemy had been stationed. That large army[445] was full of horse riders, elephants, foot soldiers and chariots. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, its formation was magnificient. Parshata’s horses had the complexion of pigeons and he was as resplendent as the moon and the sun. With his bow, he was like Death personified. Droupadi’s sons were stationed next to Parshata, wishing to fight. With terrible bodies, they followed him, like large numbers of stars after the moon.

‘ “In the battle, on seeing that the samshaptakas were arranged in a formation, Arjuna angrily attacked them, stretching the bow named Gandiva. Wishing to kill him, the samshaptakas also attacked Partha. They were firm in their resolution of obtaining victory and preferred death to retreat. Those brave ones advanced against Arjuna and they possessed large numbers of horses, crazy elephants and chariots. The clash between them and Kiriti was tumultuous. We have heard about his encounter with the nivatakavachas[446] and it was like that. Partha sliced down the heads of thousands of the enemy and brought down chariots, horses, standards, elephants, foot soldiers, the leaders of rathas, arrows, bows, swords, chakras and battleaxes, in addition to arms with upraised weapons and other weapons that had not yet been raised. He was submerged in that large whirlpool of soldiers, like an eddy that swirls in the nether regions. The samshaptakas were delighted that his chariot was thus submerged and roared. But Bibhatsu slaughtered the ones who were in front of him, those that were further away, those that were to the rear, those that were to the right and those that were to the left. He was like an angry Rudra amidst animals.

‘ “O venerable one! The battle that commenced between the Panchalas, the Chedis and the Srinjayas and those who were on your side was extremely terrible. Kripa, Kritavarma and Shakuni Soubala were with soldiers who were cheerful, but extremely enraged. They were strikers who could bring down arrays of chariots. Those bravest of the brave were irresistible in battle and fought with the Kosalas, the Kashis, the Matsyas, the Karushas, the Kekayas and the Shurasenas. That fierce battle destroyed bodies and sins. Those brave shudras, vaishyas and kshatriyas obtained dharma, heaven and fame. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With his brothers, Duryodhana protected the foremost among the Kurus and the maharathas from Madra. In that battle, the Pandavas, the Panchalas and Satyaki fought with Karna, who was protected by the brave ones among the Kurus. Karna used his sharp arrows to slaughter that large army and crushed the best of chariots. He then afflicted Yudhishthira. He[447] severed the arrows, weapons and bodies of thousands of the enemy, thus ensuring heaven and fame for them and greatly delighting those on his side.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! How did Karna penetrate the army of the Parthas, create that destruction of men and afflict the king? Tell me everything about this. Who were the foremost among the Parthas who fought against Karna and resisted him? Whom did Adhiratha’s son have to crush before afflicting Yudhishthira?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “On seeing that the Parthas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, were stationed, Karna, the destroyer of enemies, spiritedly attacked the Panchalas. O great king! Like swans heading towards the giant ocean, desiring victory, the Panchalas also quickly rushed against him. There was the blare of thousands of conch shells, piercing the heart. From either side, there was the fierce sound of drums. There were the sounds of many musical instruments and the noise emitted by elephants, horses and chariots. The brave ones roared like lions and it became terrible. It was as if the earth, with its mountains, trees and oceans, the sky, with clouds tossed around by the wind, and the firmament, with its moon, planets and nakshatras, seemed to be whirled around because of that sound. All the beings thought that the sound was distressing. Those that possessed limited spirit died and fell down. Karna was extremely enraged and swiftly released his weapons. He slaughtered the Pandava soldiers, like Maghavan against the asuras. He quickly penetrated the Pandava chariots and shot his arrows, killing seventy-seven of the foremost among the Prabhadrakas. The best of rathas next used twenty-five sharp arrows that were well tufted to kill twenty-five Panchala rathas. He used gold-tufted iron arrows that were capable of penetrating bodies to slaughter hundreds and thousands of Chedis. He performed superhuman deeds in that encounter. O great king! The Panchalas advanced on their chariots and surrounded him from all sides. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Affixing five arrows that were extremely difficult to withstand, Vaikartana Vrisha Karna killed five Panchalas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that encounter, he killed the Panchalas Bhanudeva, Chitrasena, Senavindu, Tapana and Shurasena. In that great battle, while the brave Panchalas were being slaughtered by the arrows, great lamentations arose among the Panchalas. Those lamentations covered all the directions and Karna swiftly killed them with his arrows. O venerable one! The protectors of Karna’s chariot wheels were his invincible sons, Sushena and Satyasena, who were ready to give up their lives in the fight. Karna’s eldest son, maharatha Vrishasena, himself protected him from the rear and guarded Karna’s back. Wishing to kill Radheya, the strikers, Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki, Droupadi’s sons, Vrikodara, Janamejaya, Shikhandi, the brave ones among the Prabhadrakas, the Chedis, the Panchalas and the armoured Matsyas attacked him. They showered down many kinds of arrows and weapons. They showered down and oppressed him, like clouds pouring down on a mountain during the rainy season. O king! Wishing to save their father, the strikers who were Karna’s sons and other brave ones on your side, repulsed those valiant ones.

‘ “Sushena severed Bhimasena’s bow with a broad-headed arrow. He then pierced Bhima in the chest with seven iron arrows and roared. Having picked up another bow that was firmer, Vrikodara, who was terrible in his valour, strung it and severed Sushena’s bow. He angrily pierced him with nine arrows and seemed to be dancing around. He swiftly pierced Karna with seventy-three sharp arrows. While all his well-wishers looked on, he struck Karna’s son, Satyasena, with ten arrows and brought him down, together with his horses, charioteer, standard and weapons. His beautiful face was like the full moon. The head was struck down with a kshurapra arrow and was like a lotus severed from its stalk. Having killed Karna's son, Bhima again afflicted those on your side. He severed the bows of Kripa and Hardikya and oppressed them. He pierced Duhshasana with three iron arrows and Shakuni with six. The lord deprived Uluka and Patatri of their chariots.[448] He next picked up an arrow and said, 'O Sushena! You have been killed.' However, Karna severed this and struck him[449] with three arrows. At this, Bhima picked up another arrow that was well shafted and extremely energetic. He released this at Sushena, but Vrisha severed that too. Wishing to save his son and cruelly desiring to kill the cruel one,[450] Karna again struck Bhimasena with seventy-three arrows. Sushena picked up another supreme bow that was capable of bearing a greater load. He struck Nakula, in the arms and in the chest, with five arrows. Nakula pierced him back with twenty firm arrows that were capable of bearing a great load and roared powerfully, causing fright to Karna. O great king! At this, maharatha Sushena pierced him with ten swift arrows and used a kshurapra arrow to quickly sever his bow. Nakula became senseless with anger and picked up another bow. In that encounter, he repulsed Sushena with many arrows. O king! That slayer of enemy heroes enveloped all the directions with his arrows. Having killed Sushena's charioteer, he pierced him with three arrows. Using three broad-headed arrows, he shattered his firm bow into three fragments. Sushena became senseless with rage and picked up another bow. He pierced Nakula with sixty arrows and Sahadeva with seven. That extremely wonderful and fierce battle was like that between the gods and the asuras. Wishing to kill each other, they quickly struck each other with arrows. Satyaki killed Vrishasena's charioteer with three arrows. With a broad-headed arrow, he severed his bow and struck his horses with seven. He shattered his standard with an arrow and struck him in the chest with three. Thus struck, he[451] became senseless on his chariot, but raised himself in a short while. Wishing to slay Shini's descendant, he rushed against him with a sword and a shield. Satyaki also swiftly rushed against Vrishasena and used ten arrows, with heads like the ears of a boar, to strike his sword and shield. Duhshasana saw that he[452] was without a chariot and devoid of weapons. He quickly picked him up on his own chariot and then made him ascend another chariot. Thus, maharatha Vrishasena stationed himself on another chariot. The invincible one fought for Karna's sake and again protected his rear. Shini's descendant struck Duhshasana with ninety-nine swift arrows. Having deprived him of his charioteer, horses and chariot, he struck him in the forehead with three arrows. At this, he[453] ascended another chariot that had been duly prepared earlier, and stationing himself within Karna's army, began to fight with the Pandus. Dhrishtadyumna pierced Karna with ten arrows. Droupadi's sons pierced him with seventy-three and Yuyudhana with seven. Bhimasena pierced him with sixty-four arrows and Sahadeva with five. Nakula pierced him with three hundred arrows, Shatanika with seven, the brave Shikhandi with ten and Dharmaraja with one hundred. O Indra among kings! These, and many other, brave ones desired victory.

' "In the great battle, they struck the son of the suta, the great archer. The son of the suta pierced each of them back with ten arrows. The brave one, the destroyer of enemies, roamed around on his beautiful chariot and struck them back. O great king! We witnessed the valour of the weapons and the dexterity of the great-souled Karna. It was extraordinary. One did not witness a gap between the maharatha's picking up an arrow, affixing it and releasing it. The sky, the firmament, the earth and the directions were quickly enveloped by his arrows. It was as if the sky was covered with beautiful red clouds. With the bow in his hand, the powerful Radheya seemed to be dancing around. Everyone who struck him was pierced back with three times the number of arrows. Yet again, he pierced each of them, with their horses, charioteers, standards and umbrellas, with ten arrows each and roared. They had to yield and let him pass. The great archer Radheya, the afflicter of enemies, drove them away with his showers of arrows and without any hindrance, penetrated the king's[454] division. He slaughtered three hundred Chedi rathas who refused to retreat. Radheya then used sharp arrows to strike Yudhishthira. O king! The Pandavas, Shikandi and Satyaki wished to save the king from Radheya and surrounded him. And all the soldiers on your side surrounded Karna, the great archer who was irresistible in battle, in every direction. O lord of the earth! The roar of many kinds of musical instruments arose. The brave and unretreating ones roared like lions. Without any fear, the Kurus and the Pandavas clashed again. Yudhishthira was at the forefront of the Parthas and the son of the suta was at our head.” ’

Chapter 1183(33)

‘Sanjaya said, “Karna penetrated the soldiers and attacked Dharmaraja. He was surrounded by thousands of chariots, elephants, horses and infantry. The enemy hurled thousands of diverse weapons at Vrisha. But without any fear, he used hundreds of fierce arrows to strike these down. He cut down their heads, arms and thighs. In every direction, they were killed and fell down on the ground. The others were shattered and fled. The Dravidas, the Andhakas and the Nishadas were again rallied by Satyaki. In that battle, wishing to kill him, they attacked Karna with their infantry. Struck by Karna’s arrows, they lost their arms and helmets. They fell down simultaneously on the ground, like a forest of *shala* trees that had been struck down. In this way, hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of warriors lost their lives. Their bodies fell down on the ground and they filled the directions with their fame. In that battle, Vaikartana Karna was like Yama. The Pandus and Panchalas tried to counter him, like a disease with mantras and herbs. He repulsed them and again attacked Yudhishthira, like an irresistible disease that cannot be countered by mantras and herbs. However, though he wished to advance against the king, he was held back by the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Kekayas. It was like death not being able to conquer those who know about the brahman.

‘ “Yudhishthira, the slayer of enemy heroes, was some distance away from Karna, who had been checked. His eyes red with rage, he said, ‘O Karna! O Karna! Your eyesight is in vain. O son of a suta! Listen to my words. You have always sought to rival the illustrious Phalguna in battle. You have always devoted yourself to the views of Dhritarashtra’s son and have opposed us. Today, exhibit the strength, the valour and the enmity towards the Pandus. Based on your great manliness, display all of those today. In this great battle today, I will destroy the love you bear towards fighting.’ O great king! Having thus addressed Karna, Pandu’s son smiled and used ten sharp and gold-tufted arrows to pierce him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The son of the suta, scorcher of enemies and great archer, pierced him back with nine vatsadanta arrows[455] and laughed. In the battle, the brave and great-souled one then used two razor-sharp and straight-tufted arrows to slay the two Panchalas who were protecting his chariot wheels.[456] Those two brave ones had been resplendent along Dharmaraja's flanks. Along his chariot, they had been like Punarvasu by the side of the moon.[457] However, Yudhishthira again pierced Karna with thirty arrows and struck both Sushena and Satyasena with three arrows each.[458] He pierced Shalya with ninety arrows and the son of the suta with seventy-three arrows. He struck each of the ones who were protecting his horses with three arrows each. At this, Adhiratha's son laughed and brandished his bow. He pierced the king with a broad-headed arrow, pierced him again with another sixty arrows and laughed. Then, the brave ones among the Pandus rushed towards Yudhishthira. Wishing to save him from the son of the suta, they struck Karna with arrows. Among these were Satyaki, Chekitana, Yuyutsu, Pandya, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Droupadi's sons, the Prabhadrakas, the twins, Bhimasena, Shishupala's son, the Karushas, the remaining Matsyas, the Kekayas and those from Kashi and Kosala. These spirited and brave ones countered Vasushena. Janamejaya from Panchala pierced Karna with sharp arrows—*varahakarna*s, *naracha*s, *nalika*s, vatsadantas, *vipatha*s, kshurapras and *atakamukha*s.[459] Wielding many fierce weapons, chariots, elephants, horses and riders surrounded and attacked Karna from every direction, wishing to kill him.

' "He was attacked from every direction by the best among the Pandavas. At this, he invoked brahmastra and enveloped the directions with his arrows. The fire that was Karna had valour and anger and his arrows flamed greatly. Consuming the Pandavas, who were like a forest, he resplendently roamed around in that battle. The great-souled and wonderful archer repulsed all those great weapons. He laughed and used his arrows to sever the bow of that Indra among men.[460] In that battle, in the twinkling of an eye, he affixed ninety sharp arrows with drooping tufts and penetrated the king's armour. That armour was decorated with gold. As it fell down, it looked dazzling, like clouds tinged with lightning and tossed around by the wind, when penetrated by the sun. Having fallen off the limbs of that Indra among men, the armour looked beautiful, like celestial clouds in the night sky, ornamented with gems.[461] Devoid of armour and wounded by arrows, Partha was covered with blood. He angrily hurled a lance that was completely made out of iron towards Adhiratha's son. While it blazed through the sky, he[462] cut it down with seven arrows. It was severed by the great archer's arrows and fell down on the ground. At this, Yudhishthira struck Karna in the arms, the forehead and the chest with four javelins and roared delightedly. With blood flowing from his body, Karna was enraged and sighed like a snake. He struck down Pandava's standard with a broad-headed arrow and pierced him with three more. He struck down his quivers and shattered his chariot into tiny fragments. With his parshni charioteers slain, Partha retreated. He was incapable of remaining in front of the evil-minded Karna. Radheya pursued him and touched him on the shoulder with his hand. O king! He laughed at him and spoke disparaging words to Pandava. 'You have been born in a famous lineage and are established in the dharma of kshatriyas. How is it that you are seeking to protect your life in this great battle and are abandoning this encounter with the enemy? I don't think you know the dharma of kshatriyas well. That is my view. You possess the strength of the brahman and are devoted to studying and the task of performing sacrifices. O Kounteya! Do not fight again and do not advance against brave ones. Do not speak unpleasant words towards them. Do not advance towards a great battle.' Having said this, the immensely strong one released Partha. He began to slaughter the Pandava soldiers, like the wielder of the vajra against the asuras. O king! That lord of men fled in shame. On seeing that the king was departing, the Chedis, the Pandavas, the Panchalas, maharatha Satyaki, Droupadi's brave sons and the Pandavas who were the sons of Madri followed the undecaying one. On seeing that Yudhishthira's army was unwilling to fight, Karna pursued them from the rear, together with the brave Kurus. There was the sound of conch shells and drums and the twang of bows. The sons of Dhritarashtra roared like lions.

' "O Kouravya! Yudhishthira swiftly climbed onto Shrutakirti's chariot.[463] Dharmaraja Yudhishthira saw that his[464] strength was like that of Death and that he was slaying thousands of warriors. At this, he[465] became angry.

Instructed by the king, all the maharatha Pandavas, with Bhimasena at the forefront, attacked your sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The warriors raised a tumultuous sound there. Here and there, there were elephants, horses, chariots, foot soldiers and weapons. ‘Arise. Strike. Advance towards death.’ As they killed each other in that field of battle, these were the words the warriors spoke to each other. Because of the shower of arrows, it was as if the sky was covered by the shadow of clouds. The best of men clashed against each other and killed each other. In that battle, penants, standards and umbrellas were brought down. Horses, charioteers and warriors were destroyed. Those lords were slain. They lost their limbs and their bodies and fell down shattered on the ground. Supreme elephants looked like the lofty summits of mountains. Their riders were slain and they fell down, like mountains shattered by the thunder. Armour, ornaments and bodies were mangled, shattered and dispersed. In thousands, horses fell down, with their brave riders. The limbs of warriors were scattered. Elephants, horses and rathas were slain. Thousands of arrays of foot soldiers were crushed by enemy heroes. Everywhere, the earth was strewn with the heads of fierce warriors. Their eyes were copper coloured and dilated. Their faces were like the lotus and the moon. As on earth, a sound could be heard in the sky. There were large numbers of apsaras on celestial vehicles and they sounded musical instruments. They welcomed the thousands of brave ones who were headed in their direction, after having been killed by the valiant enemy. The masses of apsaras made them ascend the celestial vehicles and bore them away. On beholding this great and extraordinary marvel in person, the brave ones were delighted in their minds. They desired to obtain heaven and angrily struck each other. In that battle, rathas fought a wonderful battle with rathas. Infantry fought with infantry, elephants with elephants and horses with horses. Thus did the battle continue, causing carnage among elephants, horses and men. The dust raised by the soldiers covered everything. Those on the same side slew each other. And those on the enemy’s side slew each other. In the battle, they pulled each other by the hair. They fought with teeth and with nails. They fought with fists in an encounter that destroyed bodies and sins. Thus did the battle continue, destructive of elephants, horses and men. A river of blood was created from the bodies of men, horses and elephants. It carried away many fallen bodies of men, horses and elephants. There were the bodies of men, horses and elephants and there were men, horse riders and elephant riders. That extremely terrible river had currents of blood and its mud was red. It bore along the bodies of men, horses and elephants and increased the fear of those who were cowards. Desiring victory, some went over to the other side.[466] There were others who were submerged in it and sank and swam. All their limbs were covered with blood. Their armour, weapons and garments became red. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Some bathed in it. Others drank the water and lost their senses. There were chariots, horses, men, elephants, weapons, ornaments, garments and armour of those who were slain, or were being slain. The earth, the sky, the firmament and the directions were generally seen to be red. Smell, touch and taste became red in form. Above this, there were the sounds raised by those who were engaged. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In general, the soldiers were overcome by great distress.

‘ “The soldiers, with Bhimasena at the forefront, and brave rathas with Satyaki at the forefront, again attacked your soldiers, who had already been routed. The great-souled ones descended with such great force that it was irresistible. O king! The large army of your sons retreated. The chariots, horses and men were scattered. Their armour and mail were in disarray. Their weapons and bows were dislodged. Your soldiers were agitated and driven away in different directions. They were like a herd of elephants, afflicted by lions in a great forest.” ’

Chapter 1184(34)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! On seeing that your soldiers were being driven away by the Pandavas, your son loudly tried to rally them. In that battle, the flanks, the distant flanks, the even more distant flanks and the right wings of the the Kurus raised their weapons and attacked Bhima. O great king! On seeing that the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was running away, Karna asked Shalya, the adornment of a battle, to drive towards Vrikodara, on the foremost of horses that possessed the complexion of swans. Those horses reached Bhimasena’s chariot and engaged. On seeing that Karna had approached, Bhima was full of anger. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He made up his mind to destroy Karna. He told brave Satyaki and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, ‘Protect King Yudhishthira, who has dharma in his soul. In my sight, he escaped from a great calamity. In front of me, for the sake of Duryodhana’s pleasure, the evil-minded Radheya deprived the king of all his garments.[467] O Parshata! Today, I will bring an end to that misery. In the battle, I will kill Karna, or he will kill me. Either will happen in this extremely terrible battle. I am telling you this truthfully. Today, I am handing over the king in trust to you. Do not be anxious. But protect him in every way.’ Having said this, the mighty-armed one headed in the direction of the chariot of Adhiratha’s son. He roared loudly like a lion and this made all the directions resound.

‘ “On seeing that Bhima, who delighted in a battle, was swiftly advancing, the lord who was the king of Madra spoke to the son of the suta. ‘O Karna! Behold the enraged and mighty-armed descendant of the Pandava lineage. He has conquered his wrath for a long time and certainly wishes to release it towards you. O Karna! I have never seen him in such a form earlier, not even when Abhimanyu and rakshasa Ghatotkacha were killed. In his ire, he is capable of resisting the three worlds. The form that he has assumed is like the resplendent fire of destruction.’ O king! While the lord of Madra was speaking these words to Radheya, Vrikodara, flaming in his anger, attacked Karna. On seeing that Bhima, who delighted in fighting, had thus arrived, Radheya laughed and spoke these words to Shalya. ‘O lord of Madra! O lord! There is no doubt that the words that you have spoken to me now about Bhimasena are true. Vrikodara is brave, valiant and angry. He is indifferent towards protecting his body and his life and is superior in strength. When he lived in disguise in the city of Virata, for the sake of bringing pleasure to Droupadi, resorting only to his arms, he secretly killed Kichaka and his followers.[468] He is senseless with anger and armoured now. He is stationed in the forefront of this battle. He is roaming around in this battle, like Death with a staff, and wishes to do something. I have also harboured a desire for a long time, that either I will kill Arjuna in a battle, or Dhananjaya will kill me. Now that Bhima has advanced against me, perhaps that wish may come true today. If I kill Bhimasena or deprive him of his chariot, and Partha advances against me, that will be fortunate. Please do whatever needs to done, quickly.’ On hearing the words of the great-souled Radheya, Shalya spoke these words to the son of the suta. ‘O mighty-armed one! Advance against the immensely strong Bhimasena. If you restrain Bhimasena, you may be able to reach Phalguna. O Karna! The desire that you have harboured in your heart for a long time, may well be accomplished. I am telling you this truthfully.’ Having been thus addressed, Karna again spoke to Shalya. ‘Arjuna will kill me in the battle, or I will kill Dhananjaya. Fix your mind on the battle. Drive. Drive there.’ O lord of the earth! Having been thus instructed, Shalya swiftly drove the chariot to the spot where Bhima, the great archer, was driving away the army. At this, there was the extremely loud noise of trumpets and drums. O Indra among kings! This arose as Karna and Bhima clashed.

‘ “The powerful Bhimasena was extremely angry. He was invincible and drove your soldiers away in different directions, using sharp and sparkling iron arrows. O lord of the earth! O great king! That fierce battle between Karna and Pandava was tumultuous and terrible in form. O Indra among kings! In an instant, Pandava attacked Karna. On seeing that he was descending, Karna Vaikartana Vrisha angrily struck him between the breasts with an iron arrow. The one who was immeasurable in his soul again covered him with a shower of arrows. Having been thus pierced, he enveloped the son of the suta with arrows. He pierced Karna with nine sharp arrows with drooping tufts. Karna used his arrows to sever his bow into two fragments from the middle. When he was deprived of his bow, he struck him between the breasts with extremely sharp iron arrows that were capable of penetrating all armour. O king! Vrikodara picked up another bow and struck the son of the suta with extremely sharp arrows that were capable of penetrating the inner organs. He roared powerfully and made heaven and earth tremble. Karna struck him with twenty-five iron arrows, like a maddened and proud elephant attacked in the forest with flaming torches. With his limbs mangled by the arrows, Pandava became senseless with rage. His eyes were coppery red with anger and intolerance and he wished to kill the son of the suta. His bow was extremely powerful and supreme and capable of bearing a great load. He affixed an arrow that was capable of shattering mountains. The son of the wind god[469] powerfully stretched the bow back, all the way up to his ears. Wishing to kill Karna, the great archer angrily released the arrow. Having been thus released by the powerful one, the arrow, with a sound like that of the vajra or thunder, struck Karna in that battle, with a force like that of the vajra against a mountain. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Thus struck by Bhimasena, the son of the suta, the leader of an army, lost his senses and sank down on the floor of his chariot. On seeing that the son of the suta had lost his senses, the lord of Madra bore Karna, the adornment of a battle, away on the chariot. When Karna was defeated, the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was driven away by Bhimasena, like an army of the danavas by Indra.” ’

Chapter 1185(35)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! This deed performed by Bhima was extremely difficult to accomplish. He brought down the mighty-armed Karna from the seat of his chariot. There is only one person who can kill the Srinjayas and the Pandavas in the battle and that is Karna. O suta! That is what Duryodhana has repeatedly told me. On seeing that Radheya had been defeated by Bhima in the battle, what did my son, Duryodhana, do next?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! On seeing that Radheya, the son of the suta, was beaten back in that great battle, he[470] addressed the large army of his brothers. ‘O fortunate ones! Swiftly go and protect Radheya. He confronts a hardship and has been submerged in the fathomless ocean that is Bhimasena.’ Having been thus instructed by the king, they wished to kill Bhimasena and attacked him in great anger, like insects heading towards a flame. Shrutayudha, Durdhara, Kratha, Vivitsu, Vikata, Soma, Nishangi, Kavachi, Pashi, Nanda, Upanandaka, Dushpradharsha, Subahu, Vatavega, Suvarchasa, Dhanurgraha, Durmada, Satva and Soma[471] —these were valiant and extremely powerful. They attacked Bhimasena with chariots and surrounded him from every direction. They released a storm of arrows, of many different forms, from every direction. O lord of men! Your sons quickly descended on the immensely strong Bhimasena and attacked him. He killed five hundred rathas and fifty other rathas who advanced against him. He angrily severed Vivitsu’s head with a broad-headed arrow. It had earrings and a helmet and was like the full moon. O great king! Severed by Bhima, it fell down on the ground. O lord! On seeing that their brave brother had been killed, in that battle, all of them attacked Bhima, who was terrible in his valour, from all directions. In that great battle, Bhima, terrible in his valour, used other broad-headed arrows to rob the lives of two more of your sons in the encounter. O king! They fell down on the ground, like trees that had been uprooted by a tempest. They were

Vikata and Soma, who were like ones born from the wombs of the gods. Swiftly, Bhima used an extremely sharp iron arrow to convey Kratha to Yama’s eternal abode. Slain, he fell down on the ground. O lord of men! Fierce sounds of lamentation arose there. O king! Your archer sons were being slain there. Agitating your soldiers in the battle, the immensely strong Bhimasena conveyed Nanda and Upananda[472] to Yama’s abode. Your sons were terrified and lost their senses. On seeing Bhimsena in that battle, like Yama the Destroyer, they fled.

‘ “On seeing that your sons had been killed, the great-minded son of the suta again went to the spot where Pandava was, on horses that possessed the complexion of swans. O great king! The king of Madra swiftly drove those horses towards Bhimasena’s chariot and powerfully engaged with him. O lord of men! O great king! The clash that ensued between Karna and Pandava was fierce. It was tumultuous and terrible in form. O great king! On seeing those two maharathas clash against each other, my mind was certainly anxious to know what would transpire today. O Indra among kings! However, Karna laughed and didn’t have to make a great effort. In a short instant, he deprived Bhima, whose deeds were terrible, of his chariot. O best of the Bharatas! Despite being deprived of his chariot, the one who was like the wind god, laughed. The mighty-armed one descended from his supreme chariot, with a club in his hand. O king! Bhima, the striker and scorcher of enemies, assumed a terrible form and violently killed seven hundred elephants. He knew about the inner organs and struck them at the base of their tusks, their eyes, their temples and their loins. Having severely struck them in their inner organs and killed them, he roared. They fled in fear, but were again rallied back by the riders. They surrounded him, like clouds around the sun. However, using his club, he killed and brought down seven hundred elephants on the ground, with their riders, weapons and flags, like a mass of clouds driven away by the wind. There were extremely strong elephants that belonged to Subala’s son.[473] In the battle, Kounteya again brought down five hundred and two of these. He fiercely crushed one hundred chariots and a hundred foot soldiers that belonged to the enemy. They were killed by Pandava in the battle, while your army looked on. They were scorched by the sun and by the great-souled Bhima. Your soldiers began to shrink, like a strip of leather held above a fire. O bull among the

Bharata lineage! Those on your side were terrified because of their fear of Bhima. In that encounter, they were driven away by Bhima in the ten directions. There were five hundred other rathas. With shields and armour, they cheerfully and swiftly attacked Bhima, showering him with arrows from every direction. With his club, Bhima brought down all those rathas and charioteers, with their flags, standards and weapons, like Vishnu against the asuras. On Shakuni's instructions, three thousand riders who prided themselves on their bravery, advanced against Bhima, with lances, swords and spears in their hands. He was the destroyer of enemy heroes and spiritedly counter-attacked those horse riders. He roamed around in diverse motions and killed and brought them down. When they were thus oppressed by him, a great and tumultuous sound arose in every direction. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was as if a clump of reeds was being severed with a sword. Having slain three thousand supreme horses that belonged to Subala's son, he ascended a chariot and angrily attacked Radheya.

' "O king! In that battle, Karna enveloped Dharma's son, the scorcher of enemies, with arrows and brought down his charioteer. On seeing that he[474] was fleeing from the encounter on his chariot, the maharatha pursued him and released swift arrows that were shafted with the feathers of herons. When the fleeing king was thus enveloped with arrows, the son of the wind god angrily covered heaven and earth with his net of arrows. Radheya, the destroyer of enemies, swiftly repulsed him. In every direction, he enveloped Bhima with sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Karna was in front of Bhimasena's chariot. Satyaki, whose soul was immeasurable, placed himself at the side and attacked Karna, severely afflicting him with arrows. Those two bulls among archers[475] clashed against each other and spiritedly released colourful and dazzling arrows. O Indra among kings! Those terrible nets of arrows released by them could be seen to fiercely stretch out in the sky, like the red backs of cranes. Because of the thousands of arrows released by them, we could not see the radiance of the sun, the sky, the directions, or the sub-directions. O king! It was midday and the great radiance of the sun was scorching. But all that seemed to be dispelled by the storm of arrows that Karna and Madhava[476] shot.

‘ “On seeing that Soubala, Kritavarma, Drona’s son, Adhiratha’s son and Kripa were engaged with the Pandavas, the Kurus returned again. O lord of the earth! When they descended, a fierce sound arose. It was like the terrible sound made by oceans during the rainy season. On beholding each other in that great battle, both armies were anxious. But they were also extremely delighted at having engaged with each other. When the sun attained its midpoint, the battle commenced. Nothing like this has been seen earlier, nor heard of. A large army violently clashed against another large army in that battle. It was as if a large store of water was heading powerfully towards the ocean. There was an extremely loud roar as those two armies clashed against each other. It was as if the waters in the ocean were roaring loudly. Thus, those two armies powerfully clashed against each other. They became one, like two rivers meeting each other. O lord of the earth! A battle that was fierce in form commenced. The Kurus and the Pandavas engaged, desiring extremely great fame. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Kurus roared out loudly to each other there and many different kinds of noises were heard. In that encounter, the warriors were heard to revile the fathers, the mothers, the deeds and the conduct of their adversaries. In the battle, they were seen to censure each other. O king! I formed the view that their lifespans had run out. On seeing the angry forms of those immensely energetic ones, I was overcome by a great fear about what would transpire. O king! The Pandava and Kourava maharathas began to wound and kill each other with sharp arrows.” ’

Chapter 1186(36)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! The kshatriyas wished to kill each other. They bore feelings of enmity towards each other and slew each other in the battle. O great king! Large numbers of chariots, throngs of horses, masses of men and numerous elephants clashed against each other in every direction. There were clubs, maces, *kanapa*s,[477] lances, catapults; and *bhushundi*s[478] were seen to move everywhere. They descended in that extremely fierce battle. In every direction, showers of arrows descended like locusts. In the encounter, elephants clashed against elephants and killed each other. Horses clashed against horses, chariots against chariots, infantry against large numbers of infantry and large numbers of horses against horses. O king! In that encounter, foot soldiers, chariots, elephants, rathas, elephants, horses and elephants were seen to swiftly crush the other three kinds of forces.[479] The brave foot soldiers roared at each other. That terrible encounter was like a sacrificial spot for animals. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Covered in blood, the earth was beautiful. It was as if the earth was covered by large numbers of *shakragopa* insects during the monsoon.[480] The earth was as beautiful as a young lady[481] dressed in a white garment that had been dyed with saffron.[482] With the colourful flesh and blood, it seemed to be decorated in gold. Heads, arms and thighs were severed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Earrings and ornaments were dislodged. Golden necklaces and armour were dislodged from the bodies of the archers. With large numbers of flags, they fell down on the ground. Elephants engaged with elephants and gored each other with the tips of their tusk. Wounded by the tusks, the elephants looked beautiful. Their limbs were covered with blood and they looked like mobile mountains full of minerals, with red chalk flowing down their sides. The elephants destroyed many lances hurled by their opponents, including those that were still held horizontally in the hands. With their armour destroyed by iron arrows, those supreme elephants looked dazzling. O great king! They were like mountains deprived of clouds at the onset of winter. The best of elephants were pierced with gold-tufted arrows. O venerable one! They looked like beautiful mountain tops, lit with torches. Some elephants, as large as mountains, were struck by other elephants and fell down on the ground. They fell down in that battle, like mountains with wings.[483] Other elephants were struck by arrows and oppressed by their wounds. These fled. With their temples and frontal globes shattered, they shrieked and fell down in that great battle. There were others that emitted terrible roars like lions. O king! There were others that shrieked and ran hither and thither. Horses with golden harnesses and trappings were killed by the arrows and weakened. They screamed and ran in the ten directions. Others that were afflicted and rendered unconscious, fell down on the ground. Oppressed by the arrows and javelins, they screamed in many different kinds of ways. O venerable one! Men were slain there. They screamed and fell down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Others saw their relatives, fathers, grandfathers and others running away from the enemy. On seeing this, they called out the names of their lineages and their own names and summoned each other. O great king! Bedecked with golden ornaments, their arms were severed and having fallen, or while falling down, were immobile or writhed. Thousands of these fell down on the ground and quivered. In that battle, they quivered powerfully, like serpents. O lord of the earth! Those arms were like the bodies of serpents, smeared with sandalwood. Drenched with blood, they were as beautiful as golden standards. A fierce encounter ensued in every direction. Without recognizing,[484] they fought and killed each other. Because of that descent of weapons, the earth was covered with dust. O king! Since everything was covered in darkness, one could not differentiate those on one's own side from that of the enemy. A terrible and large river with currents of blood, fierce in form, was created there and began to flow. The severed heads were like rocks. The hair constituted weeds and moss. It was full of the best of bows and arrows and large numbers of bones. Flesh constituted the mud and mire. There were extremely terrible currents of blood. The river that was created there extended Yama's kingdom. That river was fearsome in form and conveyed them to Yama's abode. It generated fear in the minds of the kshatriyas who submerged and immersed themselves in it. O tiger among men! Carnivorous beasts roared in various places there. That horrible field of battle looked like the city of the lord of the dead.[485] In every direction, large numbers of headless torsos were seen to rise up. Satisified with the flesh and the blood, large numbers of demons danced around. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They drank the blood there. They drank the marrow. Satiated with the fat and the marrow, crows, vultures and smaller crows were seen to run around. O king! In that battle, the brave ones cast aside all fear, though it is difficult to give that up. They resorted to the vow of warriors and performed their tasks without any fear. There were large numbers of arrows and lances on the field of battle and it was infested with innumerable predatory beasts. The brave ones roamed around there, displaying their manliness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They made each other listen to their names and lineages. In the encounter, they recounted the names of their fathers and their families. O lord of the earth! In diverse ways there, the warriors made others listen to these. They attacked each other, with spears, javelins and battleaxes. An extremely terrible battle commenced, fearsome in form. The Kourava army was weakened, like a shattered boat on the ocean.” ’

Chapter 1187(37)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! O king! While the kshatriyas immersed themselves in that battle, the tremendous roar of Gandiva was heard in that encounter, when Pandava was engaged in creating carnage among the samshaptakas, the Kosalas and the narayana army.[486] In that encounter, the samshaptakas were intolerant and desired victory. From every direction, they showered down arrows on Partha’s head. O king! However, the lord spiritedly withstood that violent shower. Plunging into the battle, Partha slaughtered the best of rathas. He assaulted that army of chariots with arrows that had been sharpened on stone and were tufted with the feathers of herons. In that battle, Partha approached maharatha Susharma.[487] The foremost of rathas brought down a shower of arrows on him and the samshaptakas did the same to Partha, who was stationed in the battle. Susharma pierced Partha with nine swift arrows and Janardana in the right arm with three arrows. O venerable one! O king! With another broad-headed arrow, he pierced the large standard that had been fashioned by Vishvakarma, with the best of apes astride it. At this, the ape let out a large and fierce roar. On hearing this, your army was terrified. O king! That beautiful army became immobile. It was like Chitraratha’s grove, full of many flowers.[488] O best of the Kuru lineage! Having regained their senses, the warriors drenched Arjuna with their arrows, like clouds on a mountain. All of them surrounded maharatha Pandava. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Swiftly and powerfully, they attacked his horses, his chariot wheels and his chariot and roared like lions. O great king! Some of them seized Keshava by his mighty arms, while others seized Partha, as he was cheerfully stationed on his chariot. In the field of battle, Keshava flung his arms around and brought all of them down, like an elephant against a wicked elephant. In the encounter, on seeing that Keshava had been oppressed on the chariot, Partha became angry. He attacked and brought down many maharathas and innumerable foot soldiers who had climbed onto the chariot. He covered all the warriors who were nearby with arrows that were meant for fighting at close quarters.

‘ “In that battle, he then spoke to Keshava. ‘O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Behold. Those large numbers of samshaptakas wished to perform an extremely terrible deed against me and have been slaughtered in thousands. O bull among the Yadu lineage! With my exception, there is no man on earth who is capable of withstanding such a terrible attack, at close quarters, on the chariot.’ Having spoken thus, Bibhatsu blew on Devadatta.[489] Krishna blew on Panchajanya, filling heaven and earth. O great king! On hearing the blare of those conch shells, the army of the samshaptakas wavered. They were extremely terrified. Pandava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, repeatedly invoked the naga weapon and tied down their feet.[490] Partha tied down their feet in the battle. O king! With their feet tied down by the great-souled Pandava, they became immobile, as if they were made out of stone. The descendant of the Pandu lineage then slaughtered those immobile warriors, just as in ancient times, Indra had killed the daityas in the battle with Taraka.[491] Slaughtered in the battle, they abandoned the best of chariots and threw away all their weapons. O Indra among kings! On seeing that the army had thus been tied down, maharatha Susharma quickly invoked the Suparna weapon.[492] Suparna birds descended and devoured the serpents. O king! On seeing the birds, the serpents fled. O lord of the earth! Having been freed from the thongs on the feet, the army looked as beautiful as the sun, which warms all beings, when it has been freed from a mass of clouds. O venerable one! Having been freed, the warriors released large numbers of arrows and large numbers of weapons towards Phalguna’s chariot. Having used his own shower of great weapons to sever that shower of arrows, Vasava’s son, the destroyer of enemy heroes, remained stationed on his chariot in the field of battle. O king! Susharma used arrows with drooping tufts to pierce Arjuna in the chest and pierced him again with three other arrows. Having been severely wounded and pained, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. When he regained his senses, the one with the white horses, immeasurable in his soul and with Krishna as his charioteer, quickly invoked the aindra weapon.[493] O venerable one! Thousands of arrows were created from it and were seen to destroy men and elephants in every direction of the battle, in addition to horses, chariots and hundreds and thousands of weapons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the soldiers were slaughtered, the large numbers of samshaptakas and gopalas were overcome with great fear. There was no man there who could fight back against Arjuna. While those brave ones looked on, that large army was slaughtered. Despite witnessing the slaughter and despite their valour, they remained immobile. In the battle there, Pandu's son killed ten thousand warriors. O king! He was resplendent in that battle, like a flaming fire without any smoke. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He killed fourteen thousand foot soldiers, ten thousand rathas and three thousand tuskers. At this, the samshaptakas again surrounded Dhananjaya. They refused to retreat, and had determined to set their minds on death or victory. O lord of the earth! There was a great battle there between those on your side and the brave and powerful Pandava Kiriti." '

Chapter 1188(38)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! Kritavarma, Kripa, Drona’s son, the son of the suta, Uluka, Soubala and the king[494] and his brothers saw that the army was afflicted because of the fear of Pandu’s son. It was submerged with great force, like a shattered boat in an ocean. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, in a short while, a battle commenced. It generated fear among cowards and increased the delight of brave ones. In the battle, Kripa released showers of arrows that moved like locusts and shrouded the Srinjayas. Shikandi was angry and quickly advanced against Goutama.[495] From every direction, he showered down a large number of arrows on the best of brahmanas. Kripa was knowledgeable about great weapons and destroyed that shower of arrows. In the encounter, he angrily pierced Shikhandi with ten arrows. Shikhandi became enraged in that battle. He severely pierced Kripa with swift arrows that were shafted with the feathers of herons. Having been severely pierced, maharatha Kripa, supreme among brahmanas, deprived Parshata[496] of his horses, charioteer and chariot. With his horses slain, the maharatha[497] descended from his chariot and grasping a sword and a shield, quickly advanced against the brahmana. On seeing him violently attack in the battle, he enveloped him with straight-tufted arrows and it was wonderful. What we witnessed was extraordinary, as if there was a torrent of rocks. O king! Shikhandi remained immobile in that encounter. O supreme among kings! On seeing that Shikhandi had been shrouded by Kripa, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna quickly counter-attacked Kripa. On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna was advancing towards Sharadvata’s chariot, maharatha Kritavarma powerfully repulsed him. On seeing that Yudhishthira was advancing towards Sharadvata’s chariot, together with his sons and soldiers, Drona’s son countered him. Your son received the spirited maharathas Nakula and Sahadeva and countered them with showers of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, Karna Vaikartana countered Bhimasena, the Karushas, the Kekayas and the Srinjayas. O venerable one! Meanwhile, in the encounter, Sharadvata Kripa swiftly dispatched arrows towards Shikhandi, as if wishing to burn him down. However, with his sword, he[498] repeatedly sliced down all the arrows that were embellished with gold and were shot at him from all directions, while they were still in mid-air. At this, Goutama quickly shattered Parshata's shield, which was decorated with the marks of one hundred moons, with his arrows. The men roared loudly. O great king! Deprived of his shield, he attacked with the sword in his hand. But he had come under Kripa's control, like a diseased person in the mouth of death. The immensely strong one was afflicted by Sharadvata's fierce arrows. On seeing this, Suketu,[499] Chitraketu's son, spiritedly advanced. In the battle, he showered the brahmana with many sharp arrows. The one whose soul was immeasurable, dashed towards Goutama's chariot. O supreme among kings! On seeing that the brahmana, devoted to his vows, was engaged in a fight with someone else, Shikhandi quickly withdrew. O king! Suketu struck Goutama with nine arrows, pierced him again with seventy, and struck him yet again with three arrows. O venerable one! He next severed his[500] bow, with an arrow affixed to it. With another arrow, he severely struck his charioteer in the inner organs. Goutama became angry at this and picked up another new bow that was firm. He struck Suketu in all his inner organs with thirty arrows. All his limbs were weakened and he wavered on that supreme chariot. He was like a tree, trembling and moving during an earthquake. His head was adorned with flaming earrings. It had a headdress and a helmet. While he was moving, he[501] brought it down with a kshurapra arrow. That head fell down on the ground, like a piece of meat being carried by a hawk. Thereafter, the head was dislodged and fell down on the ground. O great king! When he was slain, those who followed him were frightened. They abandoned the fight with Goutama and fled in the ten directions.

' "Kritavarma repeatedly asked Parshata to wait.[502] In the battle, there was a tumultuous encounter between those from the Vrishni and Parshata lineages.[503] O king! It was like a fight between a hawk and a vulture over a piece of meat. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna angrily struck Hardikya, Hridika's son, in the chest with nine arrows and afflicted him. In the encounter, Kritavarma was firmly struck by Parshata. In turn, he shrouded Parshata, his chariot and his horses, with arrows. O king! With his chariot enveloped by arrows, Dhrishtadyumna could no longer be seen. It was like the sun enveloped by clouds at the onset of the rains. Those large numbers of arrows were decorated with gold. O king! But having repulsed them with his arrows, though he was covered with wounds, Dhrishtadyumna looked resplendent in the battle. Parshata, the leader of an army, became angry and unleashed an extremely terrible shower of arrows towards Kritavarma. On seeing that violent and incessant shower of arrows descend in the encounter, Hardikya destroyed them with thousands of arrows. On seeing that the extremely irresistible shower of arrows had been countered in the battle by Kritavarma, Parshata advanced and repulsed him. He used a broad-headed arrow, sharp at the edges, to swiftly dispatch his charioteer to Yama's abode. Slain, he fell down from the chariot. Dhrishtadyumna vanquished his powerful maharatha enemy. In the battle, he then quickly countered the Kouravas with arrows. At this, the warriors on your side attacked Dhrishtadyumna. They roared like lions and a battle commenced." '

Chapter 1189(39)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Yudhishthira was protected by Shini’s descendant and by the brave sons of Droupadi, Drona’s son cheerfully attacked him. He showered large numbers of gold-tufted and fierce arrows that had been sharpened on stone. He displayed many different kinds of motion, his learning and the dexterity of his hands. The one who was learned in the use of weapons invoked his arrows with the mantras of divine weapons and surrounded Yudhishthira in the battle. Everything was shrouded by the arrows of Drona’s son and nothing could be seen. It was as if the heads of all the warriors were covered by arrows. The firmament was covered by a net of arrows and seemed to be shrouded by a golden net. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was beautiful, as if it had been covered with a canopy. O king! In that battle, enveloped by that radiant net of arrows, the sky seemed to be obstructed by arrows, as if by the shadow of clouds. Because of the arrows, the sight that we beheld there was extraordinary. As a result of the valour of Drona’s son, nothing could be seen to descend on earth.[504] O great king! On beholding the dexterity of Drona’s son, the maharathas there were astounded and were incapable of glancing at him. It was as if all the kings were being scorched by the sun.

‘ “Though Satyaki, Dharmaraja Pandava and the other soldiers made efforts, they could not withstand his valour. When the soldiers were being slaughtered, Droupadi’s maharatha sons, Satyaki, Dharmaraja and the Panchalas united, abandoning their fear of death and fiercely attacked Drona’s son. Satyaki pierced Drona’s son with twenty-five arrows with stone heads. He again pierced him with seven iron arrows that were decorated with gold. Yudhishthira struck him with seventy-three, Prativindhya with seven, Shrutakarma with three arrows, Shrutakirti with seven arrows, Sutasoma with nine and Shatanika with nine.[505] Many other brave ones pierced him from all directions. O king! He became angry at this and sighed like a venomous serpent. He pierced Satyaki back with twenty-five arrows that had been sharpened on stone, Shrutakirti with nine, Sutasoma with five, Shrutakarma with eight and Prativindhya with three arrows. He struck Shatanika with nine arrows and Dharma's son[506] with seven. He struck each of the other brave ones with two arrows each. With sharp arrows, he severed Shrutakirti's bow. At this, maharatha Shrutakirti picked up another bow and pierced Drona's son with three arrows, following this up by striking him with many other sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona's son showered down arrows and covered the soldiers and the kings from every direction with arrows. Drona's son, immeasurable in his soul, again severed Dharmaraja's bow with three sharp arrows and laughed. O king! At this, Dharma's son picked up another giant bow and struck Drona's son in the arms and the chest with seventy arrows. In the battle, Satyaki angrily struck Drona's son and used an extremely sharp arrow that was in the form of a half-moon to sever his bow. Having done this, he roared loudly. With his bow severed, Drona's son, supreme among strong ones, hurled a lance and swiftly brought down the charioteer of Shini's descendant from his chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona's powerful son then picked up another bow and enveloped Shini's descendant with a shower of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his[507] charioteer brought down in the encounter, his horses were seen to run around here and there. With Yudhishthira at the forefront, they[508] powerfully attacked Drona's son, supreme among the wielders of weapons, and showered down sharp arrows. In that great battle, on seeing that they were rushing to the attack and adopting fierce forms, Drona's son, scorcher of enemies, laughed and received them. In that battle, Drona's maharatha son used hundreds of flaming arrows to consume the flanks of the soldiers, like a fire burning dead wood in the forest. O foremost among the Bharatas! The army of Pandu's son was afflicted by Drona's son, like the mouth of a river by a whale. O great king! On witnessing the valour of Drona's son, everyone thought that the Pandus had already been slain by Drona's son.

' "Spiritedly approaching Drona's maharatha son, Yudhishthira spoke to Drona's son, anger and intolerance flooding his mind. 'O tiger among men!

Since you wish to kill me today, your name is not affection, nor is your name gratitude. A brahmana's task is austerities, donations and studying and a bow should be stretched by a kshatriya. You say that you are a brahmana. O mighty-armed one! While you look on, I will vanquish the Kouravas in the battle.' O great king! Having been thus addressed, Drona's son smiled. He thought about what was proper and did not say anything in reply. Without saying anything, he showered arrows on Pandava and enveloped him in the battle, like an angry Yama against beings. O venerable one! Having been thus shrouded by Drona's son, Partha abandoned that large army and swiftly departed from the spot. O king! Dharma's son, Yudhishthira, departed. However, Drona's great-minded son still remained stationed in that region. Thus, King Yudhishthira abandoned Drona's son in the great battle and advanced against your soldiers, having decided to perform cruel deeds." '

Chapter 1190(40)

'Sanjaya said, "Vaikartana himself countered and restrained Bhimasena, supported by the Panchalas, Chedis and Kekayas, with his arrows. While Bhimasena looked on, Karna angrily killed many Chedi, Karusha and Srinjaya maharathas. Bhimasena avoided Karna, supreme among rathas, and advanced against the Kourava soldiers, like a blazing fire amidst dead wood. The son of a suta, the great archer, slaughtered thousands of Panchalas, Kekayas and Srinjayas in the battle. The maharathas caused great carnage—Partha against the samshaptakas, Vrikodara against the Kouravas and Karna against the Panchalas. O king! Because of your evil counsel, those three were like fires and consumed and destroyed the kshatriyas in the encounter.

' "O foremost amongst the Bharata lineage! Meanwhile, Duryodhana was angry and struck Nakula with nine arrows, also piercing his four horses. O lord of men! Your son, immeasurable in his soul, again severed Sahadeva's golden standard with a razor-sharp arrow. O king! Nakula became enraged and struck your son with seventy-three arrows in the battle. Sahadeva pierced him with five. Those two were the best amongst the Bharata lineage and the best among all archers. But he[509] angrily struck each of them with five arrows. O king! With other broad-headed arrows, he severed the bows of the twins and laughed, piercing them with seven arrows. Those two brave ones were resplendent in the battle, equals of the sons of the gods. They picked up other supreme bows that were as beautiful as Shakra's bow. O king! In that encounter, the two brothers proudly fought against a brother. They showered down arrows on him, like two giant clouds on a mountain. O great king! Your maharatha son became enraged and repulsed Pandu's sons, great archers, with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the encounter, the circle of his bow could be seen. In every direction, arrows could be seen to whiz around. The two Pandavas were enveloped by his arrows and looked beautiful, like the sun and the moon in the sky, when covered by clouds and robbed of their radiance. O great king! Those arrows were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. Like the rays of the sun, they covered all the directions. The firmament was covered by those arrows. The forms of the twins were like that of Yama, at the time of the destruction of an era. On witnessing your son’s valour, the maharathas thought that the sons of Madri had attained the presence of death. O king! At this, the great-souled commander-in-chief of the Pandavas, Parshata, went to the spot where King Suyodhana was.

‘ “Abandoning the valiant and maharatha sons of Madri, your son oppressed Dhrishtadyumna with arrows. O bull among men! Your son, immeasurable in his soul, was intolerant, and piercing Panchala with twenty-five arrows, laughed. O lord of the earth! Your son, immeasurable in his soul, again pierced Panchala with sixty-five arrows and roared. O venerable one! In the battle, the king used extremely sharp kshurapra arrows to sever his bow, with an arrow affixed to it, and his arm-guards. Discarding his severed bow, Panchala, the destroyer of enemies, quickly picked up a new bow that was capable of bearing a great load. The great archer, Dhrishtadyumna, was covered with wounds. But he blazed violently because of his anger, with eyes that were red as blood. He looked beautiful. Dhrishtadyumna sighed like a serpent and wishing to kill the foremost among the Bharata lineage, shot fifteen iron arrows that had been sharpened on stone. Those forceful arrows were shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They penetrated the king’s gold-decorated armour and entered the ground. O great king! Having been severely struck, your son looked dazzling, like a blossoming kimshuka dotted with flowers during the spring. His armour was shattered by the iron arrows. He was exhausted because of the blows. However, he angrily severed Dhrishtadyumna’s bow with a broad-headed arrow. O king! Having severed the bow, the lord of the earth swiftly struck him between the eyebrows with ten arrows. These arrows had been polished by artisans and with these, his[510] face looked beautiful, like a flowering *champaka* tree visited by bees desiring honey.[511] The great-minded Dhrishtadyumna abandoned the severed bow and quickly picking up another bow, struck Duryodhana with sixteen broad-headed arrows, slaying his horses and charioteer with five arrows. With a broad-headed arrow that was embellished with gold, he sliced down his bow. With nine broad-headed arrows, Parshata severed your son’s chariot, his seat, his umbrella, his lance, his sword, his club, his standard and his colourful and golden armlet, sparkling with gems and the sign of an elephant.[512] All the kings saw that the standard of the lord of the Kurus had been brought down. In the battle, Duryodhana was without a chariot and deprived of his weapons. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His brother, Dandadhara, sought to rescue his brother. O king! While Dhrishtadyumna looked on, he raised the frightened king onto a chariot and bore him away.

‘ “Having defeated Satyaki, the immensely strong Karna wished to save the king. In the battle, he advanced against Drona’s fierce slayer.[513] Shini’s descendant quickly pursued him from the rear, showering down arrows, like an elephant goring another elephant from the rear with its tusks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great-souled warriors fought extremely fierce and great battle in the space between Karna and Parshata. The Pandava warriors, nor those on our side, desired to retreat. On seeing this, Karna swiftly advanced against the Panchalas. O best among men! At that time, there was a destruction of elephants, horses and men. When the sun attained midday, this gave rise to great fear. O great king! The Panchalas desired victory and quickly attacked Karna from all sides, like birds flocking to a tree. Adhiratha’s son was spirited and sought to angrily repulse them. With fierce arrows, he clashed against those who were at the forefront—Vyaghraketu, Susharma, Shanku, the fierce Dhananjaya,[514] Shukla, Rochamana, Simhasena and Durjaya. Those valiant ones advanced forcefully on their chariots and surrounded the best of men. They angrily released many arrows towards Karna, the ornament of a battle. Those brave and powerful kings of men fought there. But Radheya killed all eight of them with sharp arrows. O great king! O king! In that encounter, the powerful son of a suta, skilled in fighting, then angrily slew many thousands of other warriors—Vishnu, Vishnukarma, Devapi, Bhadra, Danda, Chitra, Chitrayudha, Hari, Simhaketu, Rochamana,[515] maharatha Shalabha and many other maharathas amongst the Chedis. While he was slaughtering them, the body of Adhiratha’s son was smeared in blood in all his limbs and he looked like the great Rudra himself. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many elephants were afflicted by Karna’s arrows. Terrified, they fled in all the directions, causing greater destruction. Afflicted by Karna's arrows, they shrieked and fell down in the encounter, roaring in many different ways, as if mountains had been shattered by the thunder. In every direction, elephants, horses and men fell down and the earth became impassable because of the large numbers of chariots and horses. No other person on your side had performed such a deed in the battle—not Bhishma, nor Drona. O tiger among men! The son of a suta created a great destruction of elephants, chariots, horses and men. He was seen to fearlessly roam around, like a lion amidst deer. In that fashion, Karna fearlessly roamed around amidst the Panchalas. Just as large numbers of deer are driven away in diverse directions by a lion, in that way, the array of Panchala chariots was routed by Karna. On approaching a lion, a deer does not remain alive. In that way, on approaching Karna, the maharathas did not remain alive. People are usually burnt if they approach a blazing fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, in that battle, the Srinjayas were consumed by the fire that was Karna. O descendant of the Bharata linege! Proclaiming his name, Karna single-handedly killed many amongst the Chedis and the Panchalas who prided themselves on their bravery. O Indra among men! On witnessing Karna's valour, I thought that not a single one among the Panchalas would escape from Adhiratha's son in the battle.

' "O venerable one! Having slain the Panchalas in the battle, the powerful son of a suta angrily rushed against Yudhishthira, Dharma's son. Dhrishtadyumna and Droupadi's sons surrounded the king. The destroyer of enemies[516] was surrounded by hundreds of others—Shikhandi, Sahadeva, Nakula, Nakula's son, Janamejaya, Shini's grandson and many Prabhadrakas. In that encounter, they placed Dhrishtadyumna at their forefront. Those infinitely energetic ones looked beautiful, as they attacked Adhiratha's son with weapons. In that battle, Adhiratha's son single-handedly descended on those Chedis, Panchalas and Pandavas, like Garuda on numerous serpents.

' "In that battle, Bhimsena, the great and angry archer, single-handedly attacked the Kurus, Madras and Kekayas and looked extremely resplendent in the encounter. Elephants were struck in their inner organs by Bhima's iron arrows. With their riders slain, they fell down, making the earth tremble. Horses and their riders were slain and foot soldiers lost their lives. They were mangled and lay down on the ground, vomiting copious quantities of blood.

Thousands of rathas fell down, their weapons dislodged. Those that were not wounded lost their lives because of their fear of Bhima. The earth was strewn with chariots, horses, charioteers, foot soldiers and elephants that were destroyed by Bhimasena's arrows. O king! Duryodhana's army was afflicted because of Bhimasena's strength and though it remained there, it was dispirited and covered with wounds. In that great and tumultuous battle, it was seen to be immobile and cheerless. O king! It looked like an ocean when the waters are still. Your son's army had possessed the best of anger, valour and strength. But because of the arrows, it lost all that strength. It was covered in waves of blood and was drenched in blood. In the battle, the son of a suta angrily attacked the Pandava soldiers and the resplendent Bhimasena drove away the Kurus. There was a fierce battle there and it was extraordinary to behold.

' "In the midst of the army, having slain large numbers of samshaptakas, Arjuna, best among victorious ones, spoke to Vasudeva. 'O Janardana! This army, which was fighting, has been shattered. The samshaptaka maharathas are running away, together with their followers. They cannot bear my arrows, like deer cannot stand the sound of a lion. In the great battle, the large army of the Srinjayas has also been shattered. O Krishna! The intelligent Karna's standard, with the mark of an elephant's housing, can be repeatedly seen, resplendent in the midst of the king's soldiers. In a battle, I don't think those maharathas are capable of defeating Karna. You know about Karna's bravery and valour. Go to the spot where Karna is driving away our army. Abandon the battle here and advance against the maharatha son of a suta. O Krishna! Unless you are exhausted, do that, or whatever else you desire.' O great king! Having been thus addressed, Govinda laughed. He told Arjuna, 'O Pandava! Slay the Kouravas swiftly.' Urged by Govinda, those horses, with the complexion of swans, penetrated that large army, bearing along Krishna and Pandava. The horses were controlled by Keshava. They were white, with golden harnesses. They penetrated your army and drove it away in the four directions. When Keshava and Arjuna entered, that large army was shattered. Those two greatly resplendent ones were angry and dazzling. Their eyes were red with rage. They took delight in fighting and in that field of battle, were challenged by the enemy. They looked like the gods, the two Ashvins, summoned to a sacrifice by the officiating priests in the proper way. Since they were enraged, the speed of those tigers among men increased. In that great battle, they were like elephants enraged by the sound of slapping palms.[517] Phalguna roamed around the arrays of chariots and the numerous horses. In the midst of those formations, he was like Yama with a noose in his hand. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On witnessing his valour in the battle, your son again urged the large numbers of samshaptakas. At this, one thousand chariots, three hundred elephants, fourteen thousand horses and two hundred thousand foot soldiers and archers attacked him in the great battle. They were known for their bravery. They were skilled. Those maharathas attacked and enveloped those two brave ones.[518] Having been thus shrouded in the battle by arrows, the destroyer of enemy forces displayed his fierce self, like Yama with a noose in his hand. Partha slaughtered the samshaptakas and became a sight worth beholding. His arrows, decorated with gold, dazzled like lightning. Kiriti incessantly covered the sky with these. Mighty arrows were released from Kiriti's arms and descended. They covered everything, with the radiance of Kadru's offspring.[519] They were gold-tufted and fierce at the tip. They were arrows with drooping tufts. Pandava, immeasurable in his soul, was seen to shoot them in all the directions. The maharatha killed ten thousand kings. Kounteya then swiftly attacked the extreme flank of the samshaptakas. Having approached the extreme flank, protected by the Kambojas, Partha crushed it with the force of his arrows, like Vasava against the danavas. Using broad-headed arrows, he swiftly servered the arms, with the hands still holding on to weapons, and the heads of those among the enemy who wished to slay him. Limbs and bodies were sliced down. Deprived of weapons, they fell down on the ground. They were shattered, like trees with many branches broken by a storm. The storm that was Arjuna destroyed elephants, horses, chariots and infantry. Sudakshina's younger brother showered down a hail of arrows on him.[520] His arms were like clubs. However, with two arrows in the shape of a half-moon, he[521] sliced off those arms. His face was like the full moon. However, with a kshurapra arrow, he severed that head. He fell down from his vehicle, exuding blood, like the summit of a mountain, when it is struck by the thunder and exudes red arsenic. Sudakshina's younger brother, from Kamboja, was seen to be slain. He was tall. His eyes were like the petals of lotuses. He was extremely handsome. He was like a golden pillar, or a golden mountain, and was shattered. Thereafter, the battle continued and it was fierce and wonderful to behold. In many different ways, the warriors fought there. The Kambojas, the Yavanas and the Shakas abandoned their horses. O lord of the earth! All of them were covered with blood and everything seemed red. Chariots lost their rathas, horses and charioteers. The riders of horses were slain. The riders of elephants were killed. The drivers of elephants were slain. O great king! They fought with each other and created a great destruction of men.

‘ “The great-souled Arjuna, foremost among victorious ones, destroyed the flank and the extreme flank.[522] Drona’s son brandished his great bow, decorated with gold, and swiftly advanced against him. He released many terrible arrows that were like the rays of the sun. O great king! The arrows released by Drona’s son descended in all the directions. They enveloped Krishna and Dhananjaya, who were stationed on the chariot. Bharadvaja’s powerful descendant released hundreds of sharp arrows and in that battle, immobilized Madhava and Pandava. On seeing that the protectors of the mobile and the immobile were thus shrouded by arrows, lamentations arose everywhere, amidst the mobile and the immobile. Large numbers of siddhas and charanas assembled there from every direction and began to reflect about the welfare of the worlds. O king! I have not witnessed valour like this earlier, as Drona’s son enveloped the two Krishnas with his arrows. The twang of the bow of Drona’s son generated great terror in the battle. O king! It was repeatedly heard, like the roaring of a lion. He roamed around in that battle, to the left and to the right. His bowstring was as beautiful as a cloud tinged with lightning. Pandava was swift in acting and his hand was firm. However, on seeing Drona’s son, he seemed to be overcome with great stupefaction. He thought that his own valour had been surpassed by the great-souled one. O king! In that battle, his[523] form was impossible to behold. O Indra among kings! In that great battle between Drona’s son and Pandava, the great strength of Drona’s son was seen to increase. On seeing that Kounteya was waning, Krishna was overcome with rage. O king! He sighed repeatedly with rage and glanced towards Drona’s son and Phalguna in that encounter, as if burning them down with his eyes. Krishna angrily spoke to Partha, though with affection. ‘O Partha! On seeing you in this encounter, I find it to be extraordinary. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s son is surpassing you today. O Arjuna! Is Gandiva not in your hand? Or are you not stationed on your chariot? Are your arms well? Is your valour still there?’ Having been thus addressed by Krishna, he[524] was enraged. At a time when speed was of the essence, he quickly used fourteen broad-headed arrows to destroy the bow and chariot of Drona’s son and also his standard, umbrella, flags, chariot, javelin and club. With vatsadanta arrows, he struck him severely in the shoulder joints. Having become completely unconscious, he[525] grasped the pole of his standard. To protect him from Dhananjaya, his charioteer bore him away from the field of battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, Vijaya, the scorcher of enemies, destroyed hundreds and thousands of your soldiers, while your brave son looked on. Thus, as they engaged with the enemy, there was the destruction of your soldiers. O king! That cruel and terrible destruction was because of your evil counsel. In that battle, Kounteya completely destroyed the samshaptakas, Vrikodara the Kurus and Vasushena the Panchalas.” ’

Chapter 1191(41)

‘Sanjaya said, “Krishna was advancing quickly and again spoke softly to Partha. ‘O Kouravya! Behold. The kings are advancing towards Pandava.[526] Behold Karna in this great arena, blazing like a fire. This Bhima is a great archer and has returned to fight again. With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the others have also returned and are following him—with the Panchalas, the Srinjayas and the Pandavas leading the way. The large army of the enemy is being shattered by the returning Parthas. O Arjuna! The Kouravas who were running away have been held together by Karna. His force is like that of Yama and his valour is Shakra’s equal. O Kouravya! Drona’s son, supreme among the wielders of weapons, is advancing there. In the battle, maharatha Dhrishtadyumna is advancing against him.’ In this way, the invincible Vasudeva described it to Kiriti. O king! Then, an extremely great and extremely fierce battle commenced. As the clash started, roars like lions’ were heard. O king! Both sets of soldiers preferred death to retreat.” ’

Chapter 1192(42)

‘Sanjaya said, “Without any fear, the Kurus and the Srinjayas started to fight again. The Parthas had Yudhishthira at the forefront and we had Vaikartana at the forefront. There was a fierce battle between Karna and the Pandavas and it extended Yama’s kingdom and made the body hair stand up. That tumultuous battle created waves of blood. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Only a few of the samshaptakas remained. O great king! With Dhrishtadyumna and all the kings, the maharatha Pandavas rushed against Karna. They were cheerful and attacked in that battle, desiring victory. Alone in that battle, Karna received them, like a mountain receives a flood of water. Having clashed against Karna, those maharathas were shattered and beaten back in all the directions, like a flood of water against a mountain. O great king! The battle that commenced made the body hair stand up. Dhristhadyumna angrily asked Radheya to wait and struck him with an arrow with drooping tufts. The maharatha[527] brandished Vijaya, foremost among bows, and severed Parshata’s bow with arrows that were like venomous serpents. He angrily struck Parshata with nine arrows. O unblemished one! The great-souled one shattered his gold-decorated armour and, covered with blood, they[528] looked as beautiful as shakragopa insects. Maharatha Dhrishtadyumna discarded his severed bow and picked up another bow. With seven straight-tufted arrows that were like venomous serpents, he pierced Karna. O king! In that fashion, Karna, the great archer, pierced Parshata, the scorcher of enemies and Drona’s enemy,[529] with sharp arrows. O great king! Karna angrily dispatched a gold-decorated arrow that was like Yama’s staff. O lord of the earth! O king! On seeing it suddenly descend, terrible in form, Shini’s descendant displayed the lightness of his hand and shattered it into seven fragments. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the arrow had been repulsed by arrows, Karna showered arrows from every direction on Satyaki. In that encounter, he pierced him with seven iron arrows and Shini's descendant pierced him back with arrows that were decorated with gold. The battle that raged was fearful to those who saw and heard. O king! Though it was fearful in every direction, it was wonderful to see. O king! On witnessing the deeds of Karna and Shini's descendant in the battle, the body hair of all the beings there stood up.

' "Drona's son was extremely strong. At that time, he rushed against Parshata, the destroyer of enemies who could rob the valour of the foe. Dhananjaya was still at a distance and Drona's son angrily addressed him.[530] 'O slayer of a brahmana! Stay. Stay. You will not escape from me with your life.' Having spoken thus, the brave one swiftly struck Parshata and enveloped him with sharp arrows that were terrible in form and extremely energetic. The maharatha[531] strove to the best of his capacity. O venerable one! In the encounter, Drona's son glanced towards Parshata and in that encounter, Parshata, the slayer of enemy heroes, also glanced towards Drona's son. In the battle, Drona's son was delighted to see Parshata, the slayer of enemy heroes. But he was not greatly delighted, thinking that his own death might be before him.[532] O Indra among kings! On seeing Dhrishtadyumna stationed in the battle, Drona's brave son sighed with anger and attacked Parshata. On seeing each other, they were overcome with supreme rage. O great king! O lord of the earth! Drona's powerful son swiftly approached Dhrishtadyumna and said, 'O worst of the Panchala lineage! I will send you to death. On an earlier occasion, you committed an evil deed by killing Drona. O stupid one! You will regret that today and no longer remain hale, as long as you are stationed in the battle and not protected by Partha. I am telling you this truthfully.' Having been thus addressed, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna replied. 'I will reply to your words with my sword, which also answered your father when he endeavoured in the battle. You are a brahmana only in name. If Drona could be slain by me, why should I not use my valour and kill you in the battle?' O great king! Having spoken thus, the intolerant Parshata, the commander-in-chief, pierced Drona's son with sharp arrows. O king! In that encounter, Drona's son became wrathful and enveloped Dhrishtadyumna from every direction with straight-tufted arrows. O great king! Shrouded by thousands of arrows everywhere, the sky, the directions and the warriors could not be seen. O king! In that fashion, while the son of a suta looked on, Parshata enveloped Drona’s son, the ornament of a battle, with arrows. O great king! Meanwhile, while everyone looked on from every direction, Radheya single-handedly countered the Panchalas, the Pandavas, Droupadi’s sons, Yudhamanyu and maharatha Satyaki. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna severed the bow of Drona’s son. Abandoning that bow in the battle, he picked up another bow that was powerful and terrible. O Indra among kings! Using arrows that were like venomous serpents, he sliced down Parshata’s bow, javelin, club and standard and in an instant, used his arrows to destroy his horses, charioteer and chariot. His bow was severed. He was without a chariot. His horses were slain. His charioteer was killed. He grasped a giant sword and a shield that blazed like the sun and was marked with the sign of one hundred moons. O Indra among kings! However, Drona’s maharatha son was brave. He was firm in using weapons and light in use of his hands. Before he[533] could descend from his chariot, he swiftly severed these with his broad-headed arrows and it was extraordinary. Dhrishtadyumna was without a chariot. His horses had been slain and his bow had been severed. O best of the Bharata lineage! The maharatha[534] tried his best. But though he tried his best, pierced him with many arrows and shattered his weapons, he could not kill him. O king! When Drona’s son could not kill him with his arrows, the brave one cast aside his bow and quickly advanced towards Parshata. O king! The great-souled one attacked and descended powerfully, like Garuda descending to pick up the best of serpents.

‘ “At this moment, Madhava spoke to Arjuna. ‘O Partha! Behold. Drona’s son is making great efforts for Parshata’s destruction and there is no doubt that he will kill him. O mighty-armed one! Free Parshata, the scorcher of enemies. He has reached the mouth of Drona’s son, as if he is within the mouth of death.’ O great king! Having said this, the powerful Vasudeva swiftly urged the horses towards the spot where Drona’s son was. Those horses possessed the complexion of the moon and were urged by Keshava. As they advanced towards the chariot of Drona’s son, they seemed to drink up the sky. O king! On seeing that the immensely valorous and radiant Krishna and Dhananjaya were advancing, the immensely strong one[535] made great efforts to kill

Dhrishtadyumna. O lord of men! On seeing that Dhrishtadyumna was being dragged,[536] the immensely strong Partha shot arrows towards Drona’s son. Those arrows were decorated with gold and dispatched from Gandiva. They severely struck Drona’s son and penetrated, like serpents entering a termite hill. Drona’s powerful son was devastated by those fierce arrows. Afflicted by Dhananjaya’s arrows, the brave one climbed onto his chariot. He picked up his supreme bow and pierced Partha with arrows. O lord of men! At this time, the brave Sahadeva picked up Parshata, the scorcher of enemies, on his chariot and bore him away. O great king! Arjuna pierced Drona’s son with arrows and Drona’s son angrily struck him on the arms and the chest. Becoming enraged in that battle, Partha used an iron arrow that was like death. It was like Yama’s staff and he released it towards Drona’s son. Immensely radiant, it descended on the brahmana’s shoulder. O great king! In that battle, because of the force of that arrow, he lost his senses. Overcome by supreme lassitude, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. O great king! On seeing Arjuna engaged in the battle, Karna repeatedly brandished his Vijaya bow. In the great battle, he desired to have a duel with Partha. On seeing that the brave one[537] had lost his senses, his charioteer used his chariot to swiftly bear the destroyer of enemies away from the field of battle. O great king! On seeing that Parshata had been freed and Drona’s son afflicted, the Panchalas were delighted and became hopeful of victory. Thousands of divine musical instruments were sounded. On witnessing such terrible and extremely wonderful deeds, they roared like lions. Having done this, Partha Dhananjaya spoke to Vasudeva. ‘O Krishna! Proceed towards the samshaptakas. That should be my next task.’ On hearing the words spoken by Pandava, Dasharha departed on the chariot that had many banners and possessed the speed of the wind or thoughts.” ’

Chapter 1193(43)

‘Sanjaya said, “At this time, Krishna spoke these words to Partha, pointing out to Kounteya, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. ‘O Partha! Pandava, your brother, is being swiftly pursued by the immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra. They are great archers and wish to kill him. The angry Panchalas, invincible in battle, are also following at great speed, wishing to save the great-souled Yudhishthira. O Partha! Duryodhana is the king of all the worlds. He is armoured and is following the king with an array of chariots. With his brothers, the powerful one desires to kill that tiger among men. Their touch is like that of venomous serpents and they are skilled in all manner of fighting. Wishing to kill him, these elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers are also advancing. The sons of Dhritarashtra are after Yudhishthira, like those after a supreme jewel. Behold. They have been checked by Satvata and the lord Bhima. They are like daityas desiring amrita, but held in check by Shakra and Agni. However, many of them are again swiftly advancing towards Pandava. Those maharathas are like waters made turbulent by the wind, rushing towards the ocean during the monsoon season. They are roaring like lions, or like clouds at the end of the summer. The powerful and great archers are brandishing their bows. I think that Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, has entered the jaws of death. The fortunate one has come under Duryodhana’s subjugation and is like an oblation poured into the fire. O Pandava! The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra has been prepared properly. Even Shakra will not be able to escape, if he comes within the range of their arrows. Duryodhana, Drona’s son and Sharadvata are brave. The force of Karna’s arrows can shatter mountains. Duryodhana is valiant and shoots a storm of arrows quickly. When he is angry, he is like Yama. Who is capable of withstanding his force in battle? The king, the scorcher of enemies, has already been forced to retreat by Karna, who is powerful, dexterous and accomplished, and skilled in fighting. Radheya is capable of oppressing the best of the Pandavas in the battle. In addition, the brave one is with the great-souled sons of Dhritarashtra. He[538] is controlled in his soul. When he fought with them in the battle, other maharathas robbed Partha of his armour. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The king is severely emaciated because of his fasts. He is established in the strength of the brahman, but he does not possess a great deal of strength of the kshatriya variety. O Partha! I do not think that Yudhishthira, the great king, will remain alive, even though Bhimasena is with him and is roaring intolerantly, like a lion. O scorcher of enemies! The sons of Dhritarashtra are roaring repeatedly. Desiring victory in the battle, they are blowing on their giant conch shells. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Pandaveya Yudhishthira will be killed. Karna will urge the immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra towards Partha. He will shroud the king with *sthunakarna*, *indrajala* and pashupata and the maharathas will follow him.[539] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that the king must be in distress. At a time when speed is of the essence, the Panchalas and the Pandavas, supreme among all wielders of weapons, are following him. They are like powerful ones dashing to save someone who has been submerged in the nether regions. O Partha! The king's flags cannot be seen. They may have been brought down by Karna's arrows, while the twins, Satyaki, Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Bhima, the lord Shatanika and all the Panchalas and Chedis looked on. O Partha! In this battle, Karna is destroying the Pandava soldiers with his arrows, like an elephant among lotuses. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! The rathas on your side are being driven away. O Partha! Look at how the maharathas are retreating. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, the elephants have been struck by Karna. They are shrieking and are running away in the ten directions. O Partha! Behold. Arrays of chariots are fleeing in different directions. They have been routed in the battle by Karna, the destroyer of enemies. In the battle, behold the chariot of the son of the suta roaming around here and there. He is stationed on it. He has the best of standards and it is marked with the sign of an elephant's housing. Radheya is advancing towards Bhimasena's chariot. He is showering down hundreds of arrows and slaughtering your army. Behold the Panchalas being driven away by the great-souled one. He is like Shakra destroying the daityas in a great battle. This Karna has defeated the Panchalas, Pandus and Srinjayas.

He is now searching around in all the directions for you. That is my view. O Partha! Behold. He looks beautiful, as he is stretching the best of bows. Having defeated the enemy, he is like Shakra, surrounded by large numbers of gods. On witnessing Karna's valour, the Kouravas are roaring. Thousands of Parthas and Srinjayas have been frightened in the battle. In this great battle, he has wholeheartedly terrified the Pandus. O one who grants honours! Radheya is addressing all the soldiers. "O Kouravas! Attack them quickly. Advance and drive them away, so that no one among the Srinjayas can escape from this encounter with his life. Act united in this way and we will follow you." Having said this, he is advancing behind them, showering arrows. O Partha! Behold Karna in the battle. He is under a white umbrella and is as radiant as the sun behind Mount Asta. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A white umbrella that is like the full moon and possesses a hundred spokes is held aloft his head in the battle. O lord of the earth! Karna is casting his glances around, looking for you. He will certainly make the best of efforts in this battle. O mighty-armed one! Behold him brandishing his giant bow. The immensely strong one is releasing arrows that are like venomous serpents. O one with the ape on the banner! Radheya can be seen to be headed in this direction. He is advancing for his own destruction, like an insect towards a lamp. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Karna is alone, Dhritarashtra's son has turned his array of chariots towards him, controlling them so as to protect him. If you desire fame, the kingdom and supreme happiness, make efforts to kill him, with all the evil-souled ones who are with him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have controlled your soul. Glance towards your own self. Radheya is firm in his hatred for the great-souled Yudhishthira. Accomplish the end that Radheya has set for himself. O noble one! Set your mind on fighting and repel that leader of rathas. O supreme among rathas! Five foremost rathas are powerfully advancing towards you,[540] with hundreds of others. They are strong and fierce in their energy. There are five thousand elephants and twice that number of horses. O Kounteya! Ten thousand foot soldiers are also advancing. O brave one! Protecting each other, that army is advancing towards you. Reveal your own self to the son of a suta, the great archer. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Make the best of efforts and repulse them. This Karna is extremely angry and is attacking the Panchalas. Behold his flag in the direction of Dhrishtadyumna’s chariot. O scorcher of enemies! I think that he will uproot the Panchalas. O Partha! O bull among the Bharata lineage! But I will tell you something that will please you. Kouravya King Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, is alive. The mighty-armed Bhima has returned and is stationed at the head of the army. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is surrounded by the Srinjaya soldiers and by Satyaki. O Kounteya! In this encounter, Bhimasena and the great-souled Panchalas are slaying the Kouravas with sharp arrows. The soldiers of Dhritarashtra’s son are retreating and running away from the field of battle. Slain by Bhima’s forceful arrows, they are being routed. With blood flowing from their wounds, they look like the earth after a crop has been harvested. O best of the Bharatas! The army of the Bharatas[541] presents a miserable sight. O Kounteya! Behold. They have been forced to retreat. Bhimasena, the lord of warriors, who is like a venomous serpent, has angrily driven away the army. O Arjuna! Yellow, red, black and white flags, with the signs of stars, the moon and the sun, and many umbrellas are strewn around. There are golden and silver standards and those that are made of other metals. They have been brought down and are scattered around, and so are elephants and horses. Deprived of their lives, rathas have fallen down from their chariots. They have been slain by many-hued arrows released by the Panchalas, who are not running away. O Dhananjaya! The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra is without men, elephants, horses and chariots, and the Panchalas are spiritedly driving it away. O scorcher of enemies! The enemy’s army was unassailable. But ready to give up their lives and seeking refuge with Bhimasena, they[542] are driving it away. The Panchalas are roaring, like clouds at the end of the summer. They are driving away the enemy in the battle and slaying them with arrows. O scorcher of enemies! Behold the greatness of heaven before the Panchalas.[543] They are angrily slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra, like lions against elephants. Every part of the large army of the sons of Dhritarashtra has been attacked. The force of the Panchalas is like that of swans that leave Manasa[544] for the Ganga. Kripa, Karna and other brave ones are severely trying to counter the valorous Panchalas, like bulls against bulls. However, the maharathas among the sons of Dhritarashtra are deeply submerged in Bhima’s weapons. On seeing that the rathas in the great army of the sons of Dhritarashtra are distressed, the brave ones, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, are slaying the enemy in thousands. Behold. The elephants have been shattered by Bhima's iron arrows and are falling down. They are like summits that have fallen down on the ground, after being struck by the vajra of the wielder of the vajra. Mighty elephants have been struck by Bhimasena's straight-tufted arrows. As they are running away, they are slaying their own soldiers. Do you not know Bhima's unbearable leonine roar? O Arjuna! Desiring victory in the battle, the brave one is roaring. Astride a supreme elephant, the Nishada[545] is advancing against Pandava. He is angrily attacking him with javelins, like Yama with a staff in his hand. Bhima is roaring and breaking down those javelins with his bare hands. He has then used ten sharp iron arrows, which are like the flames of the fire, to slay him. Behold. Having slain him, the striker has again attacked other elephants that are like blue clouds and are driven by skilled drivers. Vrikodara has slain those elephants, seven at a time, with spears and javelins and has brought down their victorious standards. They have been slain and mangled with sharp arrows by Partha's elder brother. Each of ten elephants has been slain by ten sharp arrows. The roars of the sons of Dhritarashtra can no longer be heard now. They have been forced to retreat by the angry bull among the Bharata lineage,[546] who is Purandara's equal. Three akshouhinis from the sons of Dhritarashtra united against him. However, Bhimasena, lion among men, angrily countered them.' On seeing that Bhimasena had accomplished that extremely difficult deed, Arjuna slaughtered the remaining ones with his sharp arrows. O lord! Large numbers of samshaptakas were slaughtered in that battle. Bereft of sorrow and filled with delight, they became Shakra's guests. With straight-tufted arrows, Partha, tiger among men, destroyed the fourfold[547] army of the sons of Dhritarashtra." '

Chapter 1194(44)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “When Bhimasena and Pandava Yudhishthira returned and my army was slaughtered by the Pandus and the Srinjayas, when my army that was like an ocean was repeatedly distressed, what was done by the Kurus? O Sanjaya! Tell me that in detail.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! On seeing the mighty-armed Bhima, the eyes of the powerful son of a suta became red with rage. He attacked Bhimasena. O king! On seeing that your army had retreated before Bhimasena, the powerful one made great efforts to rally it. Having rallied your son’s army, the mighty-armed Karna advanced against the Pandavas, who were indomitable in battle. Radheya counter-attacked the maharatha Pandavas. He brandished his bow and showered down arrows on Bhimasena, Shini’s grandson, Shikhandi, Janamejaya, the powerful Dhrishtadyumna and all the Prabhadrakas. The Panchalas, tigers among men, angrily attacked your army from all sides in that battle, desiring victory. O king! In that fashion, the maharathas on your side wished to kill them and impetuously attacked the Pandava army. O tiger among men! The place was beautiful with chariots, elephants, horses, foot soldiers and standards and the armies were wonderful to see. O great king! Shikhandi advanced against Karna and Dhrishtadyumna against your son, Duhshasana, who was surrounded by a large army. Nakula advanced against Vrishasena and Yudhishthira against Chitrasena.[548] O king! In the encounter, Sahadeva attacked Uluka, Satyaki attacked Shakuni and Bhimasena the Kouravas. In the battle, Drona’s maharatha son made endeavours against Arjuna. In the battle, Goutama attacked the great archer, Yudhamanyu, and Kritavarma advanced against the powerful Uttamouja. O venerable one! Single-handedly, the mighty-armed Bhimasena countered all your sons, the Kurus, together with their soldiers.

‘ “O great king! Shikhandi, the slayer of Bhishma, roamed around fearlessly and countered Karna with his arrows. Countered, Karna’s lips quivered in rage. He struck Shikhandi between his eyebrows with three arrows. With those arrows stuck there, Shikhandi looked exceedingly beautiful. He was like a silver mountain with three peaks. In the battle, having been thus grievously struck by the son of a suta in the encounter, he pierced Karna with ninety sharp arrows. Karna slew his horses and charioteer with three arrows. The maharatha then brought down his standard with a kshurapra arrow. With his horses slain, the maharatha, the scorcher of enemies,[549] jumped down from his chariot and angrily flung a javelin towards Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, Karna cut that down with his arrows and then mangled Shikhandi with nine sharp arrows. Shikhandi, supreme among men and supreme among victorious ones, avoided the arrows released from Karna’s bow and retreated quickly.

‘ “O great king! Karna then scattered the Pandu soldiers, like a mass of cotton by the speed of a mighty wind. O great king! Dhrishtadyumna was afflicted by your son and struck Duhshasana between the breasts with three arrows. O venerable one! Duhshasana pierced his left arm with a sharp, gold-tufted and broad-headed arrow with drooping tufts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus pierced, Dhrishtadyumna became fierce in his wrath and angrily dispatched an arrow towards Duhshasana. O lord of the earth! The arrow released by Dhrishtadyuma descended with great force, but your son sliced it down with three arrows. He then used another seventeen broad-headed and gold-decorated arrows to strike Dhrishtadyumna in the arms and in the chest. O venerable one! Becoming angry, Parshata severed his bow with an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow and people roared in applause. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your son picked up another bow and showered a storm of arrows from every direction on Dhrishtadyumna. On witnessing the valour of your great-souled son, the warrior, in the battle, the large numbers of siddhas and apsaras smiled.

‘ “O scorcher of enemies! Thus the battle raged between those on your side and that of the enemy. It was fierce, as terrible in form as the destruction of all beings at the end of a yuga. Vrishasena pierced Nakula with five iron arrows and stationing himself near his father,[550] pierced him again with three arrows.

Nakula became angry and laughed at Vrishasena. He then pierced him firmly in the chest with an extremely sharp iron arrow. Having been severely struck by the powerful enemy, the destroyer of foes struck his adversary with twenty arrows and was pierced back with five. Those two bulls among men shot thousands of arrows at each other and, supported by their respective soldiers, enveloped each other. O lord of the earth! On seeing that the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra were fleeing, the son of a suta followed them and powerfully checked them. O venerable one! When Karna had withdrawn, Nakula advanced against the Kouravas. In the battle, Karna's son also abandoned Nakula and swiftly went to the spot where Radheya was.

' "In the battle, the angry Uluka was checked by Sahadeva. The powerful Sahadeva slew his four horses and conveyed his charioteer towards Yama's abode. O lord of the earth! At this, Uluka, loved by his father, descended from his vehicle and swiftly joined the army of the Trigartas.

' "Satyaki pierced Shakuni with twenty sharp arrows and severing Soubala's standard with a broad-headed arrow, laughed. O king! The powerful Soubala became enraged in that battle. Having shattered Satyaki's armour, he again brought down his golden standard and pierced him back with sharp arrows. O great king! He[551] brought down his charioteer with three arrows and swiftly used other arrows to convey his mounts to Yama's eternal abode. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Maharatha Shakuni suddenly alighted from his chariot and swiftly ascended that of Uluka. He was quicky borne away from Satyaki, who was skilled in fighting. O king! In that battle, Satyaki attacked your soldiers with great force and shattered the formation. O lord of the earth! Your soldiers were enveloped by arrows shot by Shini's descendant and were quickly scattered in the ten directions. They lost their lives and fell down.

' "Your son[552] countered Bhimasena in the battle. But in an instant, Bhima deprived that lord of men of his horses, charioteer, chariot and standard. This satisfied the charanas. At this, he withdrew from Bhimasena's presence. Wishing to kill the single-handed Bhimasena, all the Kuru soldiers let out a mighty roar and attacked him.

' "Yudhamanyu attacked Kripa and quickly severed his bow. Kripa, supreme among the wielders of weapons, picked up another bow. He brought down Yudhamanyu's standard, charioteer, umbrella and bow on the ground.

Maharatha Yudhamanyu withdrew on another chariot. Hardikya was terrible in his valour and Uttamouja suddenly shrouded him with arrows, like clouds raining down on a mountain. O scorcher of enemies! O lord of the earth! The encounter between them was extremely great and terrible. I have not seen anything like that earlier. O king! In that battle, Kritavarma pierced Uttamouja in the chest and he sank down on the floor of his chariot. His charioteer bore the best of rathas away on his chariot. O king! The Pandu soldiers were then quickly routed.” ’

Chapter 1195(45)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Surrounded by a large array of chariots, Drona’s son swiftly descended on the spot where the king[553] was. On seeing him violently descend, the brave Partha,[554] with Shouri as his aide, violently checked him, like the shoreline against the abode of makaras. O great king! At this, Drona’s powerful son became enraged and enveloped Arjuna and Vasudeva with arrows. The maharathas saw that the two Krishnas were afflicted. The Kurus saw this and were overcome by great wonder. Arjuna seemed to smile and invoked a divine weapon. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, the brahmana countered it. Wishing to kill, whichever weapon Pandava used in the battle was baffled by Drona’s son, the great archer, in the encounter. O king! A terrible clash with weapons ensued. We saw Drona’s son in that encounter, like Death with a gaping mouth. Having enveloped the directions and the sub-directions with his arrows, he struck Vasudeva in the right arm with three arrows. Arjuna slew all the horses of the great-souled one and in the encounter, made the earth flow with a river of blood. Arrows released from Partha’s bow killed rathas and brought them down. Freed from their yokes, horses were seen to run around here and there. On witnessing the deeds performed by Partha, Drona’s son, the ornament of a battle, countered Krishna[555] in that encounter and covered him from every direction with sharp arrows. O great king! In the battle, Drona’s son used another arrow to strike Arjuna in the chest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been severely struck in the battle by Drona’s son, he picked up a terrible club and hurled it towards Drona’s son. That club was decorated with gold and descended. However, Drona’s son suddenly shattered it and people applauded. O king! Shattered into many fragments by the arrows of Bharadvaja’s son, it fell down on the ground, like a mountain that has been shattered by the wind god. In the encounter, Arjuna pierced Drona’s son with ten arrows and used a broad-headed arrow to bring down his charioteer from his seat on the chariot. Drona’s son, swift in his valour, controlled the mounts himself and swiftly enveloped the two Krishnas with arrows. We beheld that wonderful sight. He controlled and drove the horses and fought with Phalguna. O king! In the battle, all the warriors applauded this feat. When Drona’s son advanced before Phalguna in the encounter, Jaya[556] used a kshurapra arrow to slice down the harnesses that yoked the horses to the chariot. Driven by the force of the arrows, the horses fled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A loud uproar arose amidst your troops. Having obtained victory, the Pandavas drove away your soldiers. Desiring victory, they released sharp arrows from every direction. O great king! The large army of the sons of Dhritarasthra was repeatedly routed by the brave ones, who were urged on by the prospect of victory.

‘ “O great king! Your sons, colourful in fighting, Shakuni Soubala and the great-souled Karna looked on. O lord of men! But they were unable to rally the large army of your sons. Afflicted in every way, they no longer remained in the battle. O great king! The warriors fled here and there. On seeing this, the large army of your sons was terrified and, extremely anxious, ran away. The son of a suta repeatedly asked them to remain. However, slain by the great-souled ones, the soldiers did not stay there. O great king! Desiring victory, the Pandavas roared repeatedly, having seen that the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra was running away in various directions. At this, Duryodhana spoke these affectionate words to Karna. ‘O Karna! Behold. The soldiers have been severely oppressed by the Pandavas. Though you are here, they are frightened and are running away in every direction. O mighty-armed one! O destroyer of enemies! Knowing this, do what must be done. O bull among men! O brave one! Driven away by the Pandavas in the battle, thousands of warriors are calling out to you alone.’ Hearing these important words spoken by Duryodhana, Radheya, the descendant of the suta lineage, spoke these words to the lord of Madra. ‘O lord of men! Behold the valour of my arms and my weapons. In the battle today, I will kill all the Panchalas, together with the Pandus. O tiger among men! O lord of men! Drive the horses well.’ Having spoken these words, the powerful and brave son of a suta, picked up Vijaya, his ancient and excellent bow. O great king! Having strung it, he repeatedly rubbed the string. He asked the warriors to return.

‘ “The immensely strong one with an immeasurable soul took a pledge of truth and invoked the *bhargava* weapon.[557] O king! In the great battle, thousands, millions, billions and crores of extremely sharp arrows issued from it. They were extremely terrible and blazed, shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. The Pandava soldiers were mangled and nothing could be seen. O lord of the earth! Great sounds of lamentation arose among the Panchalas. In the encounter, they were afflicted by the power of the bhargava weapon. O king! Elephants and men were brought down in thousands. O tiger among men! Chariots and horses were strewn around in every direction. O king! The slain were strewn around here and there and the earth trembled. The entire large army of the Pandavas was agitated. Karna alone was the foremost among warriors. He was like a fire without smoke. O tiger among men! That scorcher of enemies consumed the enemy and was resplendent. Having been slain by Karna, the Panchalas and the Chedis became unconscious. They were like elephants in a forest conflagration. O tiger among men! Those best among men lamented loudly. In the field of battle, loud woes of the terrified ones could be heard. O king! Terrified, they fled in different directions. There was the great sound of lamentation there, like that made by beings at the time of a flood. O venerable one! They were seen to be slaughtered there by the son of a suta. All the beings, including those belonging to an inferior species,[558] were frightened. The Srinjayas were slaughtered in the battle by the son of a suta and repeatedly cried out to Arjuna and Vasudeva. They were unconscious, like those in the city of the king of the dead, calling out to the king of the dead.[559]

‘ “At this, Kunti’s son, Dhananjaya, spoke to Vasudeva. ‘Behold the extremely terrible bhargava weapon. O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Behold the valour of the bhargava weapon. There is no means of countering that weapon in a battle. O Krishna! Behold the angry son of a suta in the great battle. The brave one is like Yama and has performed a terrible deed. He is repeatedly casting extremely terrible glances towards me. I do not see any means of running away from Karna in this battle. If a man remains alive in a battle, there may be victory, or there may be defeat. O Hrishikesha! For the sake of victory, how can one be victorious if one is dead?' O venerable one! Janardana wished to leave to see Yudhishthira and thought that Karna would be overcome with exhaustion in the battle.[560] Krishna told Arjuna, 'The king[561] has been severely wounded. O best among the Kuru lineage! Let us reassure him first and you will kill Karna after that.' Dhananjaya also wished to see the king who had been afflicted with arrows. On Keshava's instructions, he abandoned the battle and quickly departed on his chariot. Kounteya left, because he wished to see Dharmaraja. Though he looked at all the soldiers, he could not see his elder brother anywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having fought with Drona's son and having defeated the descendant of Bhrigu lineage,[562] whom even the wielder of the vajra found difficult to withstand in battle, he departed. He defeated Drona's son, the wielder of a fierce bow. He thus accomplished an extremely difficult deed.

' "Dhananjaya, irresistible to enemies, then glanced towards his own soldiers. The bravest of the brave, who were battling at the forefronts of their divisions, were delighted to see Savyasachi. They were famous because of their earlier deeds and he instructed the rathas to be stationed with their divisions. However, the garlanded Kiriti did not see the eldest of the warriors, his brother Ajamidha.[563] He quickly approached Bhima and asked, 'How is the king? Where is the king?' Bhima replied, 'King Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, has retreated. His limbs have been mangled by Karna's arrows. I doubt that he is alive.' Arjuna said, 'Therefore, you should quickly go and find out about the king, supreme among the Kurus. Having been severely pierced by Karna's arrows, there is no doubt that the king has gone to his camp. When it was night,[564] though he was severely and grievously struck by Drona, the spirited one remained, desiring victory, and waited until Drona had been killed. In the battle today, the generous eldest among the Pandavas, has faced a disaster because of Karna. O Bhima! Quickly go and find out about him. I will remain here and restrain the large numbers of the enemy.' Bhima replied, 'O magnaminous one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! You go and find out how the king is. O Arjuna! If I go there, these brave ones[565] will say that I am frightened.' At this, Arjuna told Bhimasena, 'The samshaptakas are arranged in a counter-formation against me. Without killing them, it is not possible for me to abandon these large numbers of the enemy.’ Bhimasena told Arjuna, ‘O brave one amongst the Kuru lineage! In this encounter, I will rely on my valour and fight against all the samshaptakas. O Dhananjaya! Go.’ In the midst of the enemy, he[566] heard these extremely difficult words of assurance given by Bhimasena, his brother. Wishing to leave and see the best of the Kuru lineage,[567] he then spoke these words to the best of the Vrishni lineage. ‘O Hrishikesha! Drive the horses and let us leave this ocean of chariots. O Keshava! I wish to see King Ajatashatru.’ Before urging the horses, the foremost among the Dasharha lineage spoke these words to Bhima. ‘O brave one! For you, the task to be accomplished now is not at all wonderful. O Bhima! I am leaving. Slay these masses of the enemy.’ O king! O Indra among kings! Hrishikesha then went to the spot where King Yudhishthira was, urging the steeds that were Garuda’s equal to a greater and greater speed, having stationed Bhimsena, the scorcher of enemies, in the counter-formation and having given Vrikodara instructions about the fight. Those two, the best of men, approached the king, who was lying down alone. They descended from the chariot and bowed in obeisance at Dharmaraja’s feet.[568] On seeing that the bull among men was well, those two bulls among men, the two Krishnas, were filled with delight, like the two Ashvins on seeing Vasava. The king honoured them, like the fire god, the Ashvins, or the preceptor greeting Shakra and Vishnu when the great asura Jambha was killed.[569] Thinking that Karna had been killed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was delighted and addressed those two scorchers of enemies in a voice that was choking with joy.” ’

Chapter 1196(46)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing the great-spirited Keshava and Arjuna arrive together, he thought that Adhiratha’s son had been killed in the battle by the wielder of Gandiva. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Kounteya, the destroyer of enemies, greeted them in extremely affectionate words and, honouring them, smiled.

‘ “Yudhishthira said, ‘O Devaki’s son! Welcome. O Dhananjaya! Welcome. I am extremely delighted to see Achyuta and Arjuna together. Since neither of you is injured, how was your battle with the maharatha?[570] He is like virulent poison in a battle and is skilled in the use of all weapons. He is the leader of all the sons of Dhritarashtra and is their armour and their mail. He was protected by the archers Vrishasena and Sushena. The invincible and immensely valorous one had learnt weapons from Rama[571] himself. He was the protector of the sons of Dhritarashtra and advanced at the forefront of their army. He was the one who killed enemy soldiers. He is the one who crushed large numbers of the enemy. He was engaged in Duryodhana’s welfare and was always ready to rise up against us. In a great battle, he could not be assailed even by the gods, together with Vasava. In his energy and his strength, he was like the wind and the fire. He was as deep as the nether regions and brought joy to his well-wishers. By killing Karna in the great battle, you have brought an end to my enemies. It is through good fortune that you have come to me, like two immortals after killing an asura. O Achyuta! O Arjuna! I fearlessly fought a battle with him today. He was like an enraged Yama, wishing to slay all beings. He brought down my standard and slew my parshni charioteers. While Yuyudhana looked on, I was rendered without a chariot and without horses. Dhrishtadyumna, the brave twins, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons and all the Panchalas looked on. O mighty-armed one![572] Having defeated large numbers of the enemy, the immensely valorous Karna vanquished me in the great battle, though I strove to my utmost. He pursued me in the battle and spoke many harsh words. There is no doubt that he defeated the best among the warriors. O Dhananjaya! It is because of Bhimasena’s powers that I am still alive. There is no need to speak a lot. That humiliation was overwhelming. O Dhananjaya! I have been frightened about him for thirteen years. I was not able to sleep at night. Nor could I be happy during the day. O Dhananjaya! Because of my enmity towards him, it was as if I was burning. I was like a rhinoceros or an elephant, knowing that it was going to die.[573] O lord! I continuously thought about the time when he would go to Yama. How would I bring about Karna’s destruction in the battle? O Kounteya! Whether I was awake or sleeping, Karna was always in front of me. I saw him everywhere. The entire universe was full of Karna. O Dhananjaya! Wherever I went, I was frightened of Karna. And wherever I went, I saw him stationed in front of me. I was forced to run away from that brave one in the battle. O Partha! I was defeated, with my horses and my chariot and he let me escape with my life. What is the point of remaining alive? What again is the point of the kingdom? I have been shamed by Karna, the ornament of a battle. What was not obtained by me earlier in the battle with Bhishma, Kripa and Drona, has been obtained by me in the encounter with the maharatha son of a suta. O Kounteya! That is the reason I am asking you about your welfare now. Tell me everything about how Karna has been slain by you. His valour in a battle is like that of Shakra. His bravery is like that of Yama. He is like Rama[574] in weapons. How was he killed? He is famous as a maharatha. He is skilled in every method of fighting. Among all the wielders of the bow, he is the only man who is the foremost. O lord of the earth! He was always honoured by Dhritarashtra and his sons for your sake.[575] How was Radheya killed by you? O Arjuna! Among all the warriors, Dhritarashtra always used to regard Karna, bull among men, as the cause of your death in battle. O tiger among men! How was he killed by you in the encounter? O Bibhatsu! Tell me everything about how Karna has been killed by you. O tiger among men! In the sight of his comrades and well-wishers, did you sever his head, like a tiger against a *ruru* deer? In the battle, the son of a suta was searching for you and looked in every region and every direction. In the battle, Karna wished to give a bull-elephant to anyone who pointed you out. Has he been brought down by your extremely sharp arrows shafted with the feathers of herons? Having been killed by you in the battle, is the evil-souled son of a suta lying down on the surface of the earth? Perhaps you have brought me supreme delight today, by killing the son of a suta in the battle. Intoxicated with his pride, the son of a suta looked everywhere for you. He prided himself on his valour. Having clashed against you in the battle today, has he been killed by you? For your sake, he was prepared to give others a golden chariot and the best of elephants yoked to that chariot.[576] He always sought to challenge you in an encounter. O son![577] Has that wicked one indeed been killed by you in the battle? He was always crazy with insolence about his bravery and he spoke about it in the assembly of the Kouravas. He was always dear to Suyodhana. Has that evil one been killed by you today? When he clashed against you, were red arrows released from your bow, like birds? That wicked one's body has been mangled and he is lying down today. Has the arm of Dhritrarashtra's son been broken? Full of insolence, he always prided himself in the midst of the kings, delighting Duryodhana. Because of his delusion, he said, "I will slay Phalguna." Has that ratha been killed by you? The one with limited intelligence said that he would not wash his feet as long as Partha was alive.[578] He always observed that vow. O Shakra's son! Has Karna been killed by you today? In the assembly hall, in the midst of the brave Kurus, the evil-minded Karna spoke to Krishna[579] and said, "O Krishna! Why don't you abandon the Pandavas? They have fallen and are extremely feeble. They have been deprived of their spirits." For your sake, Karna took a pledge that he would not return without having slain Krishna and Partha. Is the one with wicked intelligence lying down, his body mangled with arrows? The clash between the Srinjayas and the Kouravas and the state I was reduced to then are known to you. Having clashed against you, has he been slain by you today? Have you released flaming arrows from Gandiva towards that extremely evil-minded one? He possessed earrings on his head, given to him by the sun god.[580] Has Savyasachi really severed that head in the battle? O brave one! When he released arrows in my direction, I thought about Karna's death. Have you today accomplished what I thought about, by bringing down Karna? Protected by Karna, Suyodhana was full of insolence and looked down on us. Having clashed against you today, has Suyodhana's valour been destroyed? In earlier times, in the assembly hall and in the presence of the kings, he called us sterile sesamum seeds earlier.[581] Has the evil-minded and intolerant son of a suta encountered you in the battle and been killed by you? In earlier times, when Yajnaseni was won by Soubala,[582] the evil-souled son of a suta laughed at us and, laughing at her, said that she should be brought. Has he been killed by you today? When the grandfather, the best wielder of weapons on earth, classified him as only half a ratha, the one with limited intelligence censured him.[583] Has Adhiratha's evil-souled son been killed by you? The fire of intolerance has always blazed in my heart and has been fanned by the breeze of humiliation. Having clashed against the wicked one, have you quenched it today? O Phalguna! Tell me and pacify me.'" '

Chapter 1197(47)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having heard the angry words spoken about Adhiratha’s great-souled son by the king who followed dharma, the unassailable Jishnu, whose valour was infinite and whose spirit was never depressed, spoke these words to Yudhishthira. ‘O king! When I fought with the samshaptakas today, Drona’s son suddenly stationed himself in front of me and at the forefront of the Kuru soldiers. He released arrows that were like venomous serpents. On seeing my chariot, which was like a cloud, the soldiers from Ambashtha were ready to die. O foremost among kings! I killed five hundred of those and advanced against Drona’s son. He stretched his bow back all the way up to his ears and aimed many arrows. He possessed the strength of learning and weapons and showered down, like a dark cloud. In the battle, I could not distinguish between his affixing an arrow and releasing it. Drona’s son circled around in that battle, sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right. Drona’s son pierced me with five sharp arrows and Vasudeva with another five. In an instant, and without any gap, I struck him with thirty arrows that were like the vajra. Blood began to flow from all over his body. Those soldiers had been overcome by me and their bodies were overflowing with blood. On seeing this, he[584] entered the array of chariots that belonged to the son of a suta. The warriors were overcome and the soldiers were devastated. Warriors, horses and elephants were running away. On seeing this, Karna swiftly dispatched fifty supreme rathas against me. After having killed them and avoided Karna, I have quickly come here to see you. On seeing Karna, all the Panchalas are filled with fright and are like cattle driven away by a lion. The Prabhadrakas are being driven away by Karna, as if they have entered the mouth of a large fish. O king! Having clashed against Karna, the Prabhadrakas are like those who have entered Death’s gaping mouth. Come and see me and the son of a suta fight, striving for victory. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Desiring heaven and the worlds,[585] six thousand princes and rathas have immersed themselves. O foremost among kings! I will engage with the son of a suta in battle, like the wielder of the vajra against Vritra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you wish to see it, there will be a fierce battle today between me and the son of a suta. O king! I will engage in a battle with Karna and kill him today, together with his relatives. O lion among men! There are ends meant for those who make a pledge and do not keep it. If I fail, let that end be mine. I am inviting you. Tell me that victory in the battle will be mine. In front of us, the sons of Dhritarashtra are about to devour Bhima. O lion among kings! I will slay the son of a suta today, together with all the large numbers of enemy soldiers.'" '

Chapter 1198(48)

‘Sanjaya said, “On hearing that the immensely valorous Karna was still alive, the infinitely energetic Partha[586] became angry with Phalguna. Tormented by Karna’s arrows, Yudhishthira spoke these words to Dhananjaya. ‘In Dvaitavana, you should have said, “O king! I am not interested in fighting with Karna.” O Partha! Had you said that, at the right time, we would have thought of other arrangements. O brave one! But you promised me that you would kill that powerful one. You have brought us into the midst of enemies and then you have shattered us by flinging us down on the ground. O Arjuna! We showered down many blessings on you and we expected many things that would be beneficial for us. O prince! All of that has been rendered unsuccessful, like an upper garment expecting fruits, but obtaining flowers instead.[587] Like a fish hook covered with flesh, or like impure food covered with pure food, I can only see worthless things in you. We desired the kingdom. But we are faced with destruction in the form of the kingdom. O evil-minded one! On the seventh day after you were born, an invisible voice spoke to Pritha[588] from the sky. “The son that has been born to you will be like Vasava in his valour. He will triumph over all the brave enemies. He will be infinitely energetic and will defeat large numbers of gods and all the beings in Khandava. He will vanquish the Madras, the Kalingas and the Kekayas and in the midst of the kings, kill the Kurus. There will be no archer who will be superior to him. No being will be born who will be able to defeat him. This noble one will bring all the beings under his subjugation and will accomplish all kinds of learning. He will be as handsome as the moon and as swift as the wind. He will be like Meru in fortitude and like the earth in forgiveness. He will possess the radiance of the sun and the prosperity of the lord of riches.[589] He will be like Shakra in his valour and like Vishnu in his strength. This great-souled son that has been born to Kunti will be like Aditi’s son Vishnu,[590] the slayer of all enemies. He will bring victory to his own and slay the enemy. He will be famous and infinitely energetic and will be the originator of a lineage.” This was heard from the sky, on the slopes of the Shatashringa mountains.[591] The ascetics heard the words that were spoken. This is what was spoken about you. But it has not come to pass. The gods have certainly uttered a falsehood. I heard words of praise spoken about you by the supreme of rishis and have always honoured you. I did not know that you were affectionate towards Suyodhana. Nor did I know that you feared Adhiratha’s son. You are borne on a vehicle that has been created by Tvashtra.[592] Its axles rattle. The ape sits astride your auspicious standard. You have girded a sword that is decorated with gold. Gandiva bow is as long as a palm tree. O Partha! Keshava drives you. How have you withdrawn as a result of your fear of Karna? O evil-souled one! Had you given the bow to Keshava and become his charioteer in the battle, then Keshava would have slain the fierce Karna, like the lord of the Maruts[593] bringing down Vritra with his vajra. It would have been better had you not been born in Pritha’s womb, but had been aborted in the fifth month itself. O prince! O evil-souled one! That would have been better than withdrawing from the field of battle.’” ’

Chapter 1199(49)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having been thus addressed by Yudhishthira, Kounteya, borne on the white horses, angrily grasped his sword, wishing to kill the bull among the Bharata lineage. On witnessing his wrath, Keshava, who knew about thoughts, spoke. ‘O Partha! Why have you grasped your sword in this way? O Dhananjaya! I do not see anyone here with whom you need to fight. All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been devastated by the intelligent Bhima. O Kounteya! You withdrew to seek the king. King Yudhishthira is cheerful and well. You have seen that tiger among men, whose valour is like that of a tiger. This is a time for rejoicing. Why are you overcome by anger? O Kounteya! I do not see anyone here who should be killed by you. Why have you quickly taken up this large sword? O Kounteya! I am asking you about this. What do you wish to do? O one who is extraordinary in valour! You have angrily grasped this supreme sword.’ Having been thus addressed by Krishna, Arjuna glanced towards Yudhishthira. He sighed like a serpent and told Govinda, ‘If anyone asks me to hand over Gandiva to someone else, I will slice off his head. That has been my secret vow. O infinitely valorous one! You have heard what the king with the miserable soul told me in your presence. O Govinda! I have no interest in pardoning him. Therefore, I will kill the king who is always scared about deviating from dharma. I will kill that supreme among men and protect my pledge. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! That is the reason I have picked up the sword. I will kill Yudhishthira and repay my debt to the cause of truth. O Janardana! In that way, I will be without sorrow and without fever. Now that such an occasion has arisen, what do you think? O father![594] You know everything about the universe, its past and its future. I will do whatever you ask me to.’

‘ “Krishna replied, ‘O Partha! I now know that you have never attended to those who are old. O tiger among men! You have fallen prey to wrath at the wrong time. O Dhananjaya! No one who knows about the gradations of dharma acts in this way. Thinking something to be a duty, you are engaging in a task that is not a duty. O Partha! It is the worst of men who performs tasks that should not be performed. You should follow the dharma that wise ones have resorted to. They certainly spoke about this in detail to those who approached them.[595] O Partha! The man who does not know about these decrees and about the determination of what should be done and what should not be done, is certainly confounded. You are acting in that foolish way. It is always difficult to clearly know what should be done and what should not be done. Everything can be known through the sacred texts, but you are not acquainted with them. Based on your ignorance, you think that you are following dharma and that you are acting in accordance with dharma. O Partha! You say that you are for dharma. But you do not understand that the killing of a living being is a sin. O son![596] Not killing living beings is the best course of action. That is my view. One can utter a falsehood, but one should never indulge in violence. The king, your eldest brother, is knowledgeable about dharma. How can you, like an ordinary man, kill that best of men? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It has been said that one must not kill someone who is not fighting, someone who is without weapons, someone who is reluctant to fight, someone who is running away, someone who has sought sanctuary and someone who has joined his hands in salutation. The learned do not approve of killing such people. O Partha! In earlier times, you took that vow of yours when you were a child. Because of that, you now wish to undertake an act that is full of adharma. O Partha! How can you rush to kill your superior? Remember dharma. The course of dharma needs to be reflected about. It is subtle and difficult to follow. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about the mysteries of dharma. Bhishma told you about this and so did Yudhishthira, who knows about dharma, kshatta Vidura and the illustrious Kunti. O Dhananjaya! I will tell you about the details. Listen. One who speaks the truth is virtuous. There is nothing superior to truth. However, it is extremely difficult to understand how one should base oneself on truth. Sometimes, truth should not be spoken. And sometimes, a lie should be spoken. When all one’s possessions are being robbed, one should utter a lie. One should also utter a lie when one’s life is in danger, or at the time of a marriage. Those are the times when falsehood becomes truth and truth becomes falsehood. A person who is always based on truth is but a child. A person who can differentiate between truth and falsehood can alone follow dharma. Isn't it wonderful that a man can become wise even after performing an extremely terrible deed? Like Balaka, he can obtain great merits, even though he has killed a blind being. And even though one strives for great virtue, one may commit a great sin, like Koushika, who lived along rivers.'

' "Arjuna said, 'O illustrious one! So that I may gain knowledge, tell me about these accounts, about Balaka and his connection with a blind being, and about Koushika, who lived near rivers.'

' "Krishna replied, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Balaka was a person who hunted animals. He went to kill animals for his son and his wife, not to satisfy any desire. He looked after his blind mother and father and other dependents. He was always devoted to his own dharma. He was always truthful and not malicious. One day, though he made a lot of effort to search for animals, he could find none. Finally, he saw a carnivorous beast drinking water, using smell for its sight.[597] Though he had not seen such an animal before, he killed it. Immediately, a shower of flowers fell down from the sky. Apsaras began to sing and charming musical instruments were sounded. Celestial vehicles descended from heaven, to take that hunter of animals away. O Arjuna! Because of its austerities, that animal had been granted a boon by the self-creating one[598] that it would be able to kill all beings, but would be blind. He killed the beast that had made up its mind to kill all beings. That is the reason Balaka went to heaven. The dharma of the gods is extremely difficult to comprehend. There was a brahmana named Koushika. He was an ascetic and extremely learned. He lived at a confluence of rivers, far away from villages. He had taken a vow that he would always speak the truth. O Dhananjaya! Because he always spoke the truth, he became famous. At that time, scared of robbers, some people entered the forest. The cruel robbers made every effort to follow in their footsteps. They approached Koushika, who always spoke the truth, and asked, "O illustrious one! There were many people. What path have they taken? You are being asked in the name of truth. If you know, tell us." Having been asked, Koushika spoke to them truthfully. "This forest has many trees, creepers and lantanas and they have entered it." Those cruel men sought them out and killed them. So it has been heard. Koushika committed great adharma by speaking what should not have been said. He suffered great hardships in hell, because he did not know about the subtleties of dharma. He was just like a foolish person who does not possess a great deal of learning and does not ask the elders about the divisions of dharma, so that his great confusion can be resolved. Such indeed are the signs and indications. Supreme knowledge is extremely difficult and some try to obtain it through arguments. There are many other people who hold that dharma is only what is in the sacred texts. I will not contradict this, but everything is not laid down there. The words of dharma have been laid down for the propagation of beings. Dharma is so called because it holds everything up.[599] Dharma upholds beings. Whatever has this property of holding up is certainly dharma. There are those who wish that it should be otherwise. For those who desire otherwise, free yourself from them, without speaking a lot. There is no need to speak to them. If you have to speak to them, or if they are suspicious if you do not speak to them, it is better to utter a falsehood. That will be like speaking the truth. When life is in danger, at the time of marriage, when the entire lineage or all the riches are about to be destroyed and at the time of amusements, it is better to utter a lie. Those who know about the true nature of dharma do not see any adharma there. When one takes an oath to free oneself from an association with robbers, it is better to utter a lie. That is like speaking the truth. If one can, one should never give up one's riches to them. If one gives riches to the wicked, it is the giver that is afflicted. Therefore, a falsehood uttered for the sake of dharma does not amount to speaking a lie. These are the signs and indications and I have instructed you about them properly. O Partha! Having heard this, tell me if Yudhishthira should be killed.'

' "Arjuna said, 'You have spoken like an immensely wise one! You have spoken like an immensely intelligent one. Your words are those that will ensure our welfare. You are like our mother. You are like our father. O Krishna! You are our supreme refuge and these words have been spoken by you. There is nothing in the three worlds that is not known to you. You also know everything about supreme dharma. I think that Pandava Dharmaraja Yudhishthira cannot be killed. At this point in time, please tell me what I should do. Listen also to something else that is going on in my mind. O Dasharha! O Keshava! My vow is known to you. If there is any man who tells me, "O Partha!

Give your Gandiva to someone else who is superior to you in weapons,” I must kill him. Bhima also said he would kill anyone who called him an eunuch. O lion among the Vrishni lineage! In your presence, the king has asked me to hand over my bow. O Keshava! If I kill him, I will not be able to remain in the world of the living even for a short instant. O best among those in the world! O best among those who uphold dharma! O Krishna! Tell me how my pledge remains true and yet, Pandava remains alive. Provide me with the appropriate counsel.’

‘ “Vasudeva replied, ‘The king was exhausted. In particular, in the battle, he was wounded by the large numbers of sharp arrows that Karna shot at him. O Partha! That is the reason he spoke harsh words to you. Karna is the stake in the battle today.[600] If he is slain, the Kurus will be vanquished. That is what the king, Dharma’s son, thought. When a person suffers great shame, it is said, that though alive, such a person is dead. You have always honoured the king, together with Bhima and the twins, and so have the foremost and aged men in this world. You should offer him a trifling insult. O Partha! Address the king as “*tvam*”.[601] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, a senior will be as good as dead. O Kounteya! Act in this way towards Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Adopt this path of adharma. This supreme learning has been laid down in the sacred texts of Atharva and Angiras.[602] Men must always follow this superior course, without thinking about it. O Pandava! Having been addressed by you as “tvam”, Dharmaraja will think that he has been killed. You can later worship his feet and speak soft and conciliatory words to Partha.[603] The Pandaveya king, your brother, is wise and will never be angered. O Partha! You will be freed from uttering a falsehood and will not have to kill your brother. You can then cheerfully slay Karna, the son of a suta.’ ”

‘Sanjaya said, “Having been thus addressed by Janardana, Partha applauded what his well-wisher had told him. And Arjuna used harsh words towards Dharmaraja, the likes of which he had never spoken earlier. ‘O king! You[604] should not censure me about having withdrawn, since you have yourself been stationed more than one krosha away from the battle. You should not censure Bhima either. He is fighting with the foremost of the warriors. At this time, he has been afflicted by the enemies in the battle and has slain brave kings. He has killed more than one thousand elephants, emitting fierce roars like a lion. The brave one has performed an extremely difficult deed. You[605] have never done anything like this. He has jumped down from his chariot. With a supreme club, he has slaughtered horses, men and elephants in the battle. Using his supreme sword and broken parts of chariots and his bow, he destroyed horses, chariots, steeds[606] and elephants belonging to the enemy. Then again, intolerant and brave, he struck and killed with his feet and his hands. He is immensely strong and like Vaishravana[607] and Yama. He slew the enemy, as only he can. That Bhimasena has the right to censure me, but not you, who have always been protected by your well-wishers. Bhima is single-handedly agitating the sons of Dhritarashtra, their maharathas, elephants and the best of horses. That scorcher of enemies has the right to reprimand me. He is killing large numbers of the enemy, Kalingas, Vangas, Angas, Nishadas, Magadhas and is always as angry as a dark-blue cloud. He is like an elephant and has the right to speak to me. At the right time, he is riding on his chariot and brandishing his bow, with his fists full of arrows. The brave one is releasing a shower of arrows in the great battle, like a torrent of rain from a cloud. The learned say that speech is the strength of the best of brahmanas and strength of arms that of kshatriyas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are cruel and your strength is in speech. You think that I am also like you. I have always sought to act for your benefit, with my wives, sons and with my own life and soul. And you have struck a person like me with the arrows of your words. Therefore, we will never be able to obtain any happiness from you. I have killed maharathas for your sake. But you lie down on Droupadi’s bed and slight me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are suspicious and cruel. Therefore, we will never be able to know any happiness through you. O lord among men! He[608] was always devoted to the truth and in the battle, for the sake of your welfare, himself told you about the means of his death. Protected by me, Drupada’s great-souled and brave son, Shikhandi, killed him. Since you are addicted to the vice of gambling, I am not delighted at the prospect of your winning back the kingdom. There are many sins associated with gambling and it is against dharma. You heard Sahadeva recount them.[609] But you have always been addicted to that practice of wicked ones and that is the reason all of us have been reduced to this hardship. O Indra among kings! It was because of your gambling that the kingdom was lost and our difficulties are due to you. O king! O unfortunate one! Therefore, do not anger us by using these cruel words against us again.’ Savyasachi, who was firm in his wisdom, made him listen to these harsh words. But the son of the king of the gods repented this and sighed repeatedly, unsheathing his sword.

‘ “On seeing this, Krishna asked, ‘Why have you unsheathed your sword, which sparkles like the sky, again? Tell me truthfully and I will give you an answer. I will tell you how you can accomplish your objective.’ Having been thus asked by the supreme of men, he was extremely distressed and spoke these words to Keshava. ‘I will kill myself, because I have acted in a wicked way.’[610] In an attempt to pacify Partha, the best among the upholders of dharma spoke these words to Dhananjaya. ‘O Partha! Tell him about your own qualities now. Thereby, you will kill yourself today.’[611] Dhananjaya, Shakra’s son, approved of Krishna’s words and, lowering his bow, spoke these words to Yudhishthira, supreme among those who uphold dharma. ‘O king! O god among men! Listen. There is no other archer who is my equal, except the god who wields Pinaka.[612] I am revered even by that great-souled one. In an instant, I can destroy the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects. O king! It is I who vanquished all the directions and the kings there and brought them under your subjugation. The *rajasuya* sacrifice that you completed, with donations, and the divine assembly hall that you obtained, were because of my infinite energy.[613] The arrows have left marks on my palms, when I affixed arrows to the bow in battle. The soles of my feet bear the marks of arrows and a standard.[614] That is the reason someone like me cannot be defeated in a battle. I have slain those from the north. I have killed those from the west. I have restrained those from the east. I have destroyed those from the south. There are only a few of the samshaptakas who remain. I have destroyed half of the entire army. O king! The soldiers of the Bharatas, with an army like that of the gods, have been slain by me and are lying down. I will use weapons to kill only those who know about weapons. That is the reason I have not reduced the world to ashes.’ Having said this, Partha again spoke to Yudhishthira, supreme among the upholders of dharma. 'O king! Know this. Today, Radha[615] will lose her son, or Kunti will lose me. O king! Be pacified and pardon the the words that I have spoken. In due course, you will understand what I have told you.'[616] The foremost one pacified the king, who was capable of withstanding all enemies. He stood there, and then again spoke these words. 'I will wholeheartedly try to kill the son of a suta and extricate Bhima from the battle. O king! My life is devoted to ensuring your pleasure. Know that this is the truth.' Having said this, Kiriti, blazing in his energy, touched his feet and then stood up and said, 'All this will come to pass very quickly and I will then return to you.'

' "On hearing the harsh words of his brother, Phalguna, Dharmaraja Pandava raised himself[617] and with his heart filled with misery, spoke these words to Partha. 'O Partha! I have not acted in a way that virtuous ones do. That is the reason we are confronted with this extremely terrible calamity. Therefore, sever my head today. I am the worst of men and the exterminator of my lineage. I am wicked and addicted to evil. I am stupid in my intelligence. I am lazy and a coward. I am a man who disrespects those who are superior. What is the point of following a harsh one like me for a long time? I am wicked and I will retire to the forest today. Without an inferior one like me, let all of you be happy. The great-souled Bhimasena is fit to be a king. What will a eunuch like me do with a kingdom? I am incapable of again listening to such harsh words, spoken by you in anger. Let Bhima be the king. O brave one! Having been insulted, what is the purpose of my remaining alive?' Having said this, the king suddenly arose from his bed and prepared to leave for the forest. Vasudeva bowed down to him and said, 'O king! You know that the wielder of Gandiva is devoted to the truth and is famous for Gandiva. Any man in the world who asks him to give Gandiva to another, will be slain by him and lose his body. You spoke such words to him. O lord of the earth! Wishing to preserve the truth of Partha's pledge, I asked him to show disrespect towards you. It is said that disrespect towards one's seniors is equivalent to death. O mighty-armed one! O king! I asked him to cross you and you should pardon both Partha and me. O great king! Both of us are seeking refuge with you. O king! We are bowing in obeisance before you and you should pardon us.

Today, the earth will drink the blood of the wicked Radheya. I know this to be the truth. Today, the son of a suta will be slain. Today, the one whose death you desire will pass beyond his span of life.’ Having heard Krishna’s words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira respectfully raised Hrishikesha and joining his hands in salutation, affectionately spoke these words. ‘It is exactly as you have said. I have been guilty of a transgression. O Govinda! I have been taught by you. O Madhava! I have been saved by you. O Achyuta! Today, we have been saved by you from a terrible calamity and fear. We were immersed in an ocean of hardship and you have been our protector. We were confused by our terrible ignorance today and have crossed it. Both[618] of us were submerged in an ocean of grief and sorrow and your intelligence has been the raft. O Achyuta! We have an adviser. We have a protector and we have crossed it.’” ’

Chapter 1200(50)

'Sanjaya said, "Having heard the words spoken by Krishna to the noble Yudhishthira, Partha became cheerless in his mind, since he had committed a wicked deed. Vasudeva laughed and spoke to him. 'O Partha! How would you have felt had you, established in dharma, used you sharp sword to slay Dharma's son? You have only spoken to the king and are overcome by this lassitude. O Partha! Had you killed the king, what would you have done next? It is extremely difficult to know dharma, especially by those who are stupid in their understanding. You are scared of dharma and there is no doubt that you would have suffered greater misery. Had you killed your elder brother, you would have gone to a terrible hell. The king is foremost among those who uphold dharma. He is devoted to dharma. Pacify the best of the Kurus now. That is my view. Once you pacify him devotedly, King Yudhishthira will be pleased. We can then swiftly advance towards the chariot of the son of a suta to fight. Karna is extremely difficult to defeat. But he will be killed by your sharp arrows. O one who grants honours! Dharma's son will be filled with great delight. O mighty-armed one! It is my view that the time has come for this. Having accomplished this task, your objective will be attained.' O great king! O unblemished one! At this, filled with shame, Arjuna touched Dharmaraja's feet with his head. He repeatedly said, 'O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Forgive me. O king! Pardon what I have spoken because of my fear about dharma.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira saw that Dhananjaya, the destroyer of enemies, was prone at his feet and was weeping.

' "King Dharmaraja raised his brother, Dhananjaya. Having embraced him with affection, the lord of the earth wept. Those two immensely radiant brothers wept for a long time. Having overcome their sorrow, those two tigers among men became cheerful again. He affectionately inhaled the fragrance of Pandava's head.[619] Filled with great delight, he smiled and spoke to Jaya.[620]

‘O mighty-armed one! O great archer! Though I made every effort in the battle, while all the soldiers looked on, Karna used his arrows to deprive me of my armour, my standard, my bow, my javelin, my horses and my club. O Phalguna! Having known and seen his deeds in the battle, I have been overcome with great grief and am no longer fond of remaining alive. O brave one! If you do not kill the son of a suta today, I will give up my life. What is the point of my remaining alive?’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, Vijaya replied, ‘O king! O best of men! O lord of the earth! Through your favours, I swear on you, Bhima and the twins that I will slay Karna in the battle today, or be killed by him. I swear on my weapons that I will bring him down on the ground.’ Having spoken these words to the king, he spoke these words to Madhava. ‘O Krishna! There is no doubt that I will slay Karna in the battle today. O fortunate one! With your blessings, the death of that evil-souled one is certain.’ O supreme among kings! Having been thus addressed, Keshava spoke to Partha. ‘O foremost among the Bharata lineage! You are capable of doing this. O maharatha! This has always been my desire. I have always thought about the means whereby you can kill Karna in the battle.’ The intelligent Madhava again spoke to Dharma’s son. ‘O Yudhishthira! You should console Bibhatsu. With your permission, he will kill the evil-souled Karna today. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! On hearing that you were afflicted by Karna’s arrows, we returned here to ascertain your welfare. O king! It is through good fortune that you are well and have not been seized. O unblemished one! For the sake of Bibhatsu’s victory, console him.’ Yudhishthira replied, ‘O Partha! O Bibhatsu! O Pandava! Come and embrace me. You spoke beneficial words to me. You have been forgiven by me. O Dhananjaya! I give you permission to go and kill Karna. O Partha! Do not be angry at the terrible words that I have spoken to you.’ O king! O venerable one! At this, Dhananjaya bowed his head down before his elder brother and grasped his feet with his hands. The king raised the sorrowing one and embraced him.

‘ “He inhaled the fragrance of his head and again spoke these words. ‘O Dhananjaya! O mighty-armed one! I have been greatly honoured by you. May you again attain victory and eternal greatness.’ Arjuna replied, ‘Radheya is evil in his deeds and insolent about his strength. I will approach him in the battle and slay him, and his relatives, with arrows. He stretched a firm bow and afflicted you with arrows. Karna will reap the terrible consequence of that deed today. O lord of the earth! Having slain Karna today, I will return to you. I will give you the good news and follow you. I tell you this truthfully. Without killing Karna today, I will not return I am touching your feet and telling you this truthfully.’ Having pacified Dharmaraja, Partha was cheerful in his mind. Prepared to kill the son of a suta, Partha spoke to Govinda. ‘Prepare the chariot again and yoke the best of horses. Let the great chariot be equipped with all the weapons. Get horse riders to cover the well-trained horses. Let all kinds of equipment quickly be arranged on the chariot.’ O great king! Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Phalguna, Krishna told Daruka,[621] ‘Do everything that Arjuna, foremost among the Bharatas and best among all archers, has asked to be done.’ O supreme among kings! Having been instructed by Krishna, Daruka yoked and covered the chariot, which scorched the enemy, with the skins of tigers. The chariot was yoked by the great-souled Daruka. He[622] sought Dharmaraja’s leave and the blessings of the brahmanas. With auspicious rites and benedictions, he ascended that supreme chariot. The immensely wise King Dharmaraja Yudhishthira blessed him, supremely delighted at the prospect of Karna’s death.

‘ “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the great archer depart, all the beings thought that Karna had already been slain by the great-souled Pandava. O king! On every side, all the directions sparkled. O lord of men! At that time, blue jays, *shatapatra*s[623] and curlews circumambulated the descendant of the Pandu lineage. There were many other sacred and auspicious male birds.[624] They were cheerful in form and seemed to urge Arjuna to hurry to the field of battle. O lord of the earth! Herons, vultures, crows and wild crows advanced in front of him, wishing to devour,[625] and signified an ominous portent. The signs were good and auspicious for Partha. They signified the destruction and death of Karna’s soldiers. As Partha advanced, he perspired copiously. He was extremely anxious about how he would accomplish his objective.

‘ “On seeing that Partha was overcome with anxiety as he proceeded, Madhusudana spoke to the wielder of Gandiva. ‘O wielder of Gandiva! With this bow, you have defeated those in battle, whom no other man is capable of vanquishing. We have seen many brave ones, equal to Shakra in their valour. Having encountered you in a battle, those brave ones have attained the supreme objective. O venerable one! Whether it is Drona, Bhishma, Bhagadatta, Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti, Sudakshina from Kamboja, Shrutayusha and the immensely valorous Achyutayusha, none of them have been able to do anything against you. There is no one who can withstand you. You possess celestial weapons. You are dexterous and strong. O Arjuna! You aim, strike and hit the target with yoga. You are not confused in a battle and know about what must be done. You are capable of killing all the gods and asuras, together with everything mobile and immobile. O Partha! There is no warrior or man on this earth who is equal to you in a battle. There are kshatriyas who pick up bows and are invincible in battle. But I have not seen, or heard of, anyone like you among them, or among the supreme gods. Brahma, the creator of all beings, constructed the extremely wonderful Gandiva.[626] O Partha! This is what you use to fight and that is the reason there is no one who is your equal. O Pandava! However, I must speak words that are beneficial for you. O mighty-armed one! Do not think lightly of Karna. He is the ornament of a battle. Karna is strong and insolent. He is skilled in weapons and a maharatha. He is accomplished and colourful in fighting. He knows about time and place.[627] He is like the fire in his energy. He is like the wind in his speed. He is like Yama in his anger. The powerful one is capable of withstanding a lion. The mighty-armed one’s chest is one *aratni* in breadth.[628] He is extremely difficult to defeat. He is very proud and brave. He is extremely valiant and handsome. He has all the qualities of a warrior and is terrible to his enemies. He has always hated the Pandavas and has been engaged in the welfare of the sons of Dhritarashtra. Radheya cannot be killed by any enemy, even the gods, including Vasava. In my view, you are the only exception. Today, slay the son of a suta. All the warriors made out of flesh and blood, and even the gods, are incapable of defeating him in a battle, even if they were to unite. The evil-souled one is wicked in intelligence. He is cruel. His evil intelligence has always been used to bring injury to the Pandaveyas. He has opposed the Pandaveyas. Kill Karna today and accomplish your objective. He thinks himself to be brave, as does the wicked Suyodhana. He is the root of all wickedness. O Dhananjaya! Defeat the son of a suta.’” ’

Chapter 1201(51)

‘Sanjaya said, “Keshava, immeasurable in his soul, again spoke these words to Arjuna, who, in every way, had firmed up his resolution to kill Karna. ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Today is the seventeenth day[629] of this extremely terrible destruction of men, elephants and horses. Those on your side possessed an extremely large army and so did the enemy. O lord of the earth! Having clashed against each other in the battle, only remnants are left on both sides. O Partha! The Kouravas possessed innumerable elephants and horses. Having encountered you as an enemy, they have been destroyed in the field of battle. All these Panchalas, the Srinjayas and the others are unassailable. They united and stationed themselves with the Pandavas. O slayer of enemies! Protected by you, the Panchalas, the Pandavas, the Matsyas, the Karushas, the Chedis and the Kekayas caused a great destruction of the enemy. O son![630] In a battle, who is capable of vanquishing the assembled Kouravas, other than the maharatha Pandavas, who are protected by you in the encounter? You are capable of defeating the gods, asuras and men in a battle, even if the three worlds rise up against you, not to speak of the army of the Kouravas. O tiger among men! Who other than you was capable of vanquishing King Bhagadatta, who was Vasava’s equal? O Partha! O unblemished one! This large army has been protected by you and all the kings are incapable of even glancing at it. O Partha! It is because they have always been protected by you that Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi could bring down Bhishma and Drona in the battle. O Partha! Otherwise, in the battle, how could those two maharatha Panchalas have defeated Bhishma and Drona in an encounter? They were like Shakra in their valour. In a battle, who could have withstood Shantanu’s son,[631] Drona, Vaikartana, Kripa, Drona’s son, Somadatta’s son,[632] Kritavarma, Saindhava,[633] the king of Madra and King Suyodhana? They were brave and skilled in the use of weapons in a battle. None of them retreated. They were the leaders of akshouhinis. They were fierce, angry and unassailable in a battle. Many arrays have been destroyed. Horses, chariots and elephants have been exhausted. There were fierce and intolerant kshatriyas from many kingdoms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Govasas, Dasamiyas, Vasatis, Vratyas, Vatadhanas and the proud Bhojas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That large army was destroyed in Brahmakshetra.[634] Having clashed against you, they advanced towards death, with their horses, chariots and elephants. There were Tukharas, Yavanas, Khashas, Darvabhisaras, Daradas, Shakas, Ramathas, Tanganas, Andhrakas, Pulindas, Kiratas who are terrible in their valour, mlecchas, those from the mountainous regions and those who live on the boundaries of the ocean. They were fierce and the performers of terrible deeds. They were insolent, delighted in battle and were strong, with firm fists. For Suyodhana’s sake, they angrily sided with the Kurus. O scorcher of enemies! Other than you, no one else was capable of defeating them in a battle. We saw the immensely strong formations of the sons of Dhritarashtra being destroyed. Without you as a protector, which man could have advanced against that? That army, covered with dust, looked like a swollen ocean. O lord! Protected by you, the angry Pandavas shattered and destroyed it. Jayatsena, the lord of Magadha, was immensely strong. Since he was killed in the battle by Abhimanyu, seven days have passed.[635] There were ten thousand elephants, terrible in their deeds, which followed the king.[636] Bhima killed them with his club. Using his great force, he destroyed hundreds of other elephants and chariots. O son![637] Thus did the extremely fearful battle continue. O Pandava! Having encountered Bhimasena and you, with their horses, chariots and elephants, the Kouravas went to the world of the dead. O Partha! The vanguard of the army was destroyed by the Pandavas. O venerable one! Bhishma showered down fierce arrows. He was skilled in the use of harsh weapons and enveloped and killed the Chedis, the Kashis, the Panchalas, the Karushas, the Matsyas and the Kekayas with his arrows. Arrows issued from his bow and mangled the bodies of the enemy. Those gold-tufted arrows covered the entire sky. Having followed the tenth direction, they slew horses, rathas and elephants.[638] Those arrows were released so that they avoided those nine undesirable directions. Bhishma slaughtered your troops for ten days. He emptied the seats of chariots and killed horses, elephants and steeds.[639] He showed a form in battle that was like that of Rudra or Upendra.[640] He afflicted the Pandava soldiers and caused great destruction. He slaughtered kings from Panchala, Chedi and Kekaya. He destroyed the Pandava army, which teemed with men, horses and elephants. It was as if he was rescuing the wicked Suyodhana, who was submerged in an ocean without a raft. He roamed around in the battle, scorching like the sun. The Srinjayas and the other kings were incapable of glancing towards him. Desiring victory, he roamed around in the battle. However, the Pandavas made every effort and attacked him violently. He single-handedly drove the Pandavas and the Srinjayas away in the encounter and came to be regarded as the only one who was brave. Shikhandi was protected by you and killed the maharatha, tiger among men, with his sharp and straight-tufted arrows. The grandfather was brought down in that way and is lying down on a bed of arrows. O tiger among men! Having encountered you, he was like a crow clashing against a vulture. Drona fought fiercely for five days, destroying the army of the enemy. He constructed a vyuha in the great battle and brought down maharathas. The maharatha protected Jayadratha in the battle. When fighting took place during the night,[641] he was as fierce as Yama and consumed beings. Bharadvaja’s powerful and brave son clashed against Dhrishtadyumna and attained the supreme objective. Today is the second day after that. On that day’s battle, had you not checked the enemy in the encounter, the son of a suta and the other rathas, Drona would not have been killed. You restrained the entire army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. O Dhananjaya! That is how Parshata killed Drona in the battle. Which other kshatriya would have been able to accomplish this in the battle? O Partha! That is also the way you accomplished the death of Jayadratha. You countered the large army and killed the brave kings. King Saindhava was killed through the strength of your weapons and your energy. The kings know that the death of the king of Sindhu was extraordinary. O Partha! But since you know that you are a maharatha, it wasn’t that wonderful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If all these kshatriyas clash against you, I think they will be tormented by you and killed on a single day. That is my view.

O Partha! With the likes of Bhishma and Drona killed, this extremely fierce army of the sons of Dhritarashtra can be regarded as having lost all its brave warriors in the battle. The best of warriors have been destroyed. Horses, men and elephants have been killed. The army of the Bharatas is like the sky without radiance, devoid of the sun, the moon and the stars. O Partha! Because of Bhima's valour, the army has been devastated in the battle, like the army of the asuras through Shakra's valour in ancient times.

' "'Other than those who have been slain, only five maharathas remain—Ashvatthama, Kritavarma, Karna, the lord of Madra and Kripa. O tiger among men! If you kill those five maharathas today, you will destroy the enemies and give the kingdom, with its islands and cities, to the king. Let Partha,[642] whose energy and prosperity are infinite, obtain the earth, with its sky, waters, the nether regions, mountains and large forests. Just as Vishnu killed daityas and danavas in earlier times, you will give the earth to the king, like Hari[643] to Shakra. With the enemies slain by you today, the Panchalas will rejoice, like the gods when the danavas were slain by Vishnu. Do not honour your preceptor Drona, foremost among men, and show compassion towards Ashvatthama, or show mercy towards Kripa because of the honour due to a preceptor, or show excessive respect towards your relatives and honour your brothers,[644] or encounter Kritavarma and don't convey him to Yama's abode, or clash against your mother's brother, Shalya, the lord of Madra,[645] and not strike him down and kill him because of compassion. Karna is evil-minded and extremely injurious towards the Pandavas. O best of men! Kill him today with your sharp arrows. This is your supreme task and there is nothing wrong in it. We applaud this and there is no sin attached to it. O unblemished one! O Arjuna! Whether it was the attempt to burn down your mother with her sons in the night,[646] or whatever Suyodhana attempted towards you in the course of the gambling match, the evil-souled Karna was the root of all that. Suyodhana always thought that he would be saved by Karna and angrily tried to seize me too.[647] O one who grants honours! It is the firm belief of that Indra among men, Dhritarashtra's son, that Karna will certainly defeat all the Parthas in battle. O Kounteya! Though Dhritarashtra's son knew about your strength, he found pleasure in a conflict with you because he depended on Karna. Karna has always said, “I will defeat the assembled Parthas, Vasudeva and the kings in the great battle.” The evil-minded one has encouraged Dhritarashtra’s evil-souled son and roared in the assembly hall. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kill Karna today. In all the evil acts that Dhritarashtra’s son has done towards you, in all of these, the evil-souled and extremely wicked Karna has been present. Subhadra’s brave son had the eyes of a bull. We saw him killed by six cruel maharathas on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra.[648] The brave maharatha made Drona, Drona’s son and Kripa tremble. The maharatha made elephants and chariots bereft of men. His shoulders were like that of a bull and he brought fame to the Kuru and Vrishni lineages. He deprived steeds of horse riders and foot soldiers of weapons and lives. He destroyed the soldiers and maharathas. He conveyed large numbers of men, horses and elephants to Yama’s eternal abode. Subhadra’s son advanced, scorching the army with his arrows. O friend! O lord! I tell you truthfully that my limbs burn at the thought that even then, the evil-souled Karna attacked him. In that battle, he was unable to remain in front of Abhimanyu. He was mangled by the arrows of Subhadra’s son. He was unconscious and blood flowed from his body. He blazed and sighed in rage. However, afflicted by the arrows, he retreated. He retreated and lost all enterprise. He gave up all hope of remaining alive. He was supremely unconscious in that battle and exhausted because of the blows. Hearing the appropriate, but cruel, words of Drona in the battle then, Karna severed his bow. When he was devoid of weapons in that battle, five maharathas, skilled in deceit, killed him with their showers of arrows. In front of the Pandaveyas and the Kurus, Karna spoke harsh and cruel words to Krishna[649] in the assembly hall. “O Krishna! The Pandavas have been destroyed and have gone to eternal hell. O wide-hipped one! O one who is sweet in speech! Choose another one as a husband. Enter Dhritarashtra’s abode as a servant-maid. O one with long eyelashes! Your husbands are no longer there.” He does not know about dharma and is extremely evil-minded. Those were the words that he spoke then. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Karna spoke those wicked and sinful words in your hearing. Those were the evil one’s words. Arrows decorated with gold, sharpened on stone and capable of taking away life, released by you, will pacify those words and other wicked deeds that the evil-souled one has done towards you. Let your arrows rob him of his life and pacify those and other things today. Let his limbs be touched by terrible arrows shot from Gandiva. Let the evil-souled Karna remember the words of Bhishma and Drona. Let gold-tufted iron arrows, capable of killing the enemy and with the radiance of lightning, be shot by you. Let them pierce his inner organs and drink his blood. O Arjuna! Let fierce, immensely forceful and sharp arrows be shot by you and let them penetrate his inner organs. Strike Karna with great force and convey him to Yama's eternal abode. Let all the lords of the earth see Karna brought down from his chariot, oppressed by your arrows. Let them utter woes of lamentation and let them be miserable and distressed. Let all his well-wishers see Karna prostrate, deprived of his weapons. Let them be cheerless on seeing him shattered, drenched in his own blood and lying down on the ground. The standard of Adhiratha's son is large and is marked with the sign of an elephant's harness. Let it shudder and fall down on the ground, uprooted by you with a broad-headed arrow. When the gold-decorated chariot is shattered with hundreds of your arrows, with its warrior slain, let the terrified Shalya abandon it and run away. O Dhananjaya! Let Suyodhana see that Adhiratha's son has been killed by you and give up all hope of the kingdom, or of remaining alive. The Panchalas are being slaughtered and driven away by Karna's sharp arrows. O best of the Bharata lineage! But wishing to serve the Pandavas, the Panchalas, Droupadi's sons, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna's sons, Nakula's son Shatanika, Nakula, Sahadeva, Durmukha, Janamejaya, Sudharma and Satyaki are succumbing to Karna. Karna is attacking the Panchalas in the great battle. O scorcher of enemies! Uttered by your relatives, a terrible roar can be heard. The Panchalas are not frightened. Nor are they unwilling to fight. Those maharathas, great archers, are not concerned about death in this battle. Single-handedly, Bhishma surrounded the Pandava soldiers with his torrents of arrows. But even then, the Panchalas clashed against him and did not retreat. The preceptor, Drona, was energetic and his blazing weapons were like the fire. He scorched all the archers in battle and was unassailable. Those scorchers of enemies[650] always tried to cheerfully defeat that foe in the encounter. The Panchalas will never be terrified and retreat before Adhiratha's son. The brave Panchalas spiritedly advanced against him and Karna is destroying them with his arrows, like insects before a fire. For the sake of their friends, those brave ones are advancing, ready to give up their lives. However, in the battle, Radheya is bringing destruction to hundreds of Panchalas. Karna obtained a weapon from Bhargava Rama, supreme among rishis in earlier times, and it has exhibited its extremely terrible and calamitous form. Its form is fierce and extremely terrible and it is scorching all the soldiers. Blazing in its energy, it has surrounded the large army.[651] The arrows released from Karna's bow are traversing in the field of battle. They are tormenting those on your side, like a storm of bees. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having encountered Karna's irresistible weapon in the battle, the weak-spirited among the Panchalas are seen to run away in all the directions. O Partha! Bhima is firm in his anger and, surrounded by the Srinjayas on all sides, is fighting with Karna. However, he is oppressed by his sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas, Srinjayas and Panchalas, will be slain by Karna, like a body destroyed by a disease that has been neglected. Amongst all the warriors in Yudhishthira's army, with your exception, I do not see a single one who can clash against Radheya and return safely home. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Slay him with your sharp arrows today. O Partha! Act according to the oath you had taken earlier and obtain fame. O foremost among warriors! You are the one who is capable of defeating Karna and the Kouravas in battle, and no other warrior. I am telling you this truthfully. Perform the great deed of killing maharatha Karna. O Partha! O supreme among men! Be successful in your objective and be happy.'" '

Chapter 1202(52)

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words spoken by Keshava, Bibhatsu cast off his sorrow and in a short instant, became cheerful. He quickly touched the bowstring and stretched Gandiva bow for the sake of Karna’s destruction. He spoke to Keshava. ‘O Govinda! Protected by you, my victory is certain. You are the lord of the past, the present and the future and you are pleased with me. O Krishna! With you as my aide, I can kill the three worlds and attain the supreme world in a battle, not to speak of Karna. O Janardana! I can see that the army of the Panchalas is being driven away. I can see Karna roaming around fearlessly in the encounter. I can see Bhargava’s weapon coursing in every direction. O Varshneya! It has been released by Karna, like the great vajra by Shakra. O Krishna! But as long as the earth exists, beings will talk about what will be done by me in the battle. O Krishna! Today, my arrows without barbs will convey Karna to the land of the dead. They will be released and shot from Gandiva and dispatched by my arms. Today, King Dhritarashtra will curse his intelligence, as a result of which, he instated Duryodhana in the kingdom, though he did not deserve the kingdom. O mighty-armed one! Today, Dhritarashtra will be deprived of his kingdom, his happiness, his prosperity, his kingdom, his city and his sons. Today, King Duryodhana will lose all hope of remaining alive. O Krishna! Karna will be slain. I am telling you this truthfully. On seeing Karna mangled by my arrows, the lord of men[652] will remember the words that you had spoken about peace. O Krishna! Today let Soubala know that my arrows are dice, Gandiva is the box used to throw them and my chariot the spread on which the game is played. In a battle, the son of a suta thinks that there is no other man who is equal to him on earth. Let the earth drink his blood today. Released from Gandiva, they[653] will grant Karna the supreme objective. Today, Radheya will repent the words that he spoke to Panchali. In the midst of the assembly hall, he spoke cruel words and cast aspersions on the Pandavas. They were described as sterile sesamum seeds then,[654] but will turn out to be sesamum today, when Vaikartana Karna, the evil-souled son of a suta, has been killed. He said, “I will save you[655] from fear about the sons of Pandu.” My sharp arrows will render his words false. He said, “I will kill all the Pandavas and their sons.” While all the archers look on, I will kill that Karna today. Resorting to his valour, the great-minded[656] son of Dhritarashtra, evil-souled and evil in his intelligence, always disregarded us. O Madhusudana! I will kill that Radheya Karna today. O Krishna! When Karna has been killed today, the sons of Dhritarashtra and the kings will be terrified and run away in different directions, like deer frightened of a lion. King Duryodhana will see the earth, with Karna killed by me in the battle today, with his sons and his well-wishers. O Krishna! On seeing that Karna has been killed, Dhritarashtra’s intolerant son will know me to be the foremost among all archers in a battle. O Krishna! Today, I will repay the debt I owe to all wielders of the bow, to my anger, to the Kurus, to my arrows and to Gandiva. Today, I will free myself of the sorrow I have borne for thirteen years. O Krishna! I will kill Karna in the battle, like Maghavan against Shambara.[657] Today, when Karna has been slain in the battle, the Somaka maharathas, who wish to serve their friends in the battle, will think that their task has been accomplished. O Madhava! I do not know whether Shini’s descendant will be more delighted at Karna having been killed, or at the prospect of victory. In the battle, I will kill Karna and his maharatha son and bring delight to Bhima, the twins and Satyaki. O Madhava! Having slain Karna in the great battle today, I will free myself of the debt I owe to Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and the Panchalas. The wrathful Dhananjaya will be seen in the battle today, fighting with the Kouravas in the encounter and bringing down the son of a suta. In your presence, let me again indulge in self-praise. In the world, there is no one who is my equal in knowledge of dhanurveda. Where is the person who is my equal in valour? Is there anyone else who is as forgiving as me? There is no one else who is my equal in anger. With the bow in my hand and resorting to the strength of my arms, I can defeat the gods, the asuras and all the beings united together. Know that my manliness is supreme among the best. With the arrows from Gandiva, which are like rays, I alone will consume all the Kurus, Bahlikas and Kashis, with large numbers of their followers, like the fire burning dead wood at the end of winter. The arrows have left marks on my palms. An arrow is affixed to the left of the bow. The soles of my feet have the marks of a chariot and a standard. When someone like me advances into a battle, he cannot be vanquished.'" '

Chapter 1203(53)

‘Sanjaya said, “Their soldiers possessed large standards and advanced, swelling in numbers. Trumpets and other musical instruments blared in the vanguard, like large masses of clouds roaring at the end of summer. The mighty elephants were like clouds. There were the sounds of musical instruments, axles and the slapping of palms. The colourful weapons, decorated with gold, were like lightning. The giant chariots raised a mighty sound. Currents of blood began to flow with a great force.[658] It was full of swords and bore along the lives of kshatriyas. There was carnage of beings, cruel, like a shower at the wrong time that brings destruction. Chariots, charioteers, horses and elephants and all the other enemies were made to die by Partha’s storm of arrows. He killed horses with their riders and large numbers of foot soldiers. Kripa and Shikhandi clashed against each other in the battle and Satyaki attacked Duryodhana. Shrutashrava fought with Drona’s son and Yudhamanyu with Chitrasena. Uttamouja from the Srinjayas clashed against Karna’s son, the ratha Sushena. Sahadeva rushed against the king of Gandhara, like a hungry lion attacking a giant bull. The young Shatanika, Nakula’s son, attacked Karna’s son, the young Vrishasena, with a storm of arrows. Karna’s brave son struck the Panchala with many showers of arrows.[659] Madri’s son, Nakula, colourful in fighting and a bull among rathas, attacked Kritavarma. Yajnasena’s son, the lord of Panchala,[660] attacked Karna, the overall commander, and his soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With the army of the Bharatas, extended by the arrays of the samshaptakas, Duhshasana attacked Bhima, supreme among wielders of weapons and unassailable because of his force, in the battle. The brave Uttamouja attacked Karna’s son and severed his head, which fell down on the ground. He then roared loudly and that sound echoed in the sky. On seeing that Sushena’s head had fallen down on the ground, Karna adopted a fearful form. He used extremely sharp arrows to sever his[661] horses, chariot and standard. Uttamouja used sharp arrows to strike Kripa and used a radiant sword to slay his horses and parshni charioteers. He then ascended Shikhandi's chariot. Shikhandi was stationed on his own chariot. On seeing that Kripa was without a chariot, Shikhandi wished to strike him with arrows. However, Drona's son repulsed him with his chariot. He saved Kripa, who was submerged, like a cow in mud. Meanwhile, Bhima was clad in golden armour and used his sharp arrows to torment the soldiers of your son. He was like the sun, at the auspicious time when it is midday." '

Chapter 1204(54)

‘Sanjaya said, “While that tumultuous engagement was going on, Bhima was fighting alone and countering the army of the sons of Dhritarashtra. He was surrounded by large numbers of the enemy. In that situation of great fear, he told his charioteer, ‘O charioteer! Bear me swiftly on these horses. I will send all the sons of Dhritarashtra to Yama.’ Having been thus addressed by Bhimasena, the charioteer advanced with a fierce speed against the army of your son, that is, towards the army that Bhima wished to advance against. A large number of Kurus advanced against him from every direction and the enemy possessed elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers. With innumerable arrows, they powerfully struck the best of horses from every side. The great-souled one severed those descending arrows with his gold-tufted arrows. Those gold-tufted arrows were severed into two and three fragments by the arrows released by Bhima and fell down.[662] O king! In the midst of the kings on your side, elephants, rathas, horses and foot soldiers were slain by Bhima and roared loudly. O Indra among men! They were like mountains shattered by the thunder. The foremost among kings were shattered by Bhimasena, who was single-handed. In that encounter, they rushed against Bhima from every side, like birds in search of flowers heading towards a tree. When they attacked him, in the midst of your soldiers, he[663] exhibited a force that was greater than the greatest. He was like the Destroyer at the time of destruction. He was the like the one who exterminates all beings, with a staff in his hand.[664] In that battle, his speed was greater than that of the greatest. Those on your side could not withstand it. It was as if the one who destroys all beings, when the time of destruction has arrived, had descended with a gaping mouth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that battle, the great-souled one scorched the army of the Bharatas. They were frightened of Bhima and fled in different directions, like large masses of clouds driven away by a great wind.

‘ “The intelligent and powerful Bhimasena then spoke cheerfully to his charioteer again. ‘O suta! Chariots and standards have assembled and are advancing towards us. Find out whether they belong to the enemy or to us. Since I am engaged in fighting, I cannot make out. I should not envelop our own soldiers with arrows. O Vishoka![665] I see the enemy on all sides and I am extremely anxious that the king[666] should not be suffering. Kiriti has not yet returned. O suta! That is the reason I am overcome by great sorrow. O charioteer! I am grieving that Dharmaraja has abandoned me in the midst of the enemy and has departed. I do not know whether he and Bibhatsu are alive or dead. That is the reason I am overcome with grief. However, I will assume a terrible form and drive away these soldiers. Once they have been destroyed, I shall rejoice. Stationed in the midst of the enemy, I will slay the assembled ones. Then, I will rejoice with you. Count all the quivers and arrows and tell me. How many arrows are still left on my chariot? What kinds are there and what is their length? O suta! Determine this and tell me.’ Vishoka replied, ‘O brave one! There are sixty thousand arrows, ten thousand kshurapra arrows and the same number of broad-headed arrows. O brave one! There are two thousand iron arrows. O Partha! There are three thousand *pradara*s.[667] O Pandaveya! The weapons that still remain cannot be carried on six carts pulled by bullocks. Release these and others in thousands. You possess clubs, swords, your arms and other stores.’ Bhima said, ‘O suta! Behold. In this awful engagement today, I will shatter all the kings with my speed and force. In the encounter, my fierce arrows will be terrible in form. The sun will disappear and it will be like the world of the dead. O suta! The kings will know this today, and so will their sons, that Bhima has been submerged in this battle and has single-handedly vanquished the Kurus in the encounter. All the Kurus will be destroyed in the battle, or let the worlds know about my deeds since childhood.[668] Single-handedly, I will bring all of them down or let all of them crush Bhimasena. There are those who pronounce benedictions on virtuous deeds. Let those gods bless me. Let Arjuna, the slayer of enemies, come here, like Shakra swiftly summoned to a sacrifice. Behold. The army of the Bharatas has been shattered. Why are those Indras among men running away? It is evident that the intelligent Savyasachi, foremost among men, has shrouded the soldiers with his swift arrows. O Vishoka! Behold. The standards are being routed in the battle, and so are the large numbers of elephants, horses and infantry. The chariots are being shattered, afflicted by arrows and javelins, and so are the rathas. O suta! Behold. The Kourava soldiers are being severely slaughtered and destroyed. Dhananjaya's force is like that of the vajra, and his golden arrows, tufted with the feathers of peacocks and hawks, are devouring them. The chariots, horses and elephants are being driven away. Large numbers of foot soldiers are being crushed. All the Kouravas are confounded. The terrified elephants are running away, as if from a conflagration. O Vishoka! Sounds of lamentation are arising in the battle. Kings among elephants are emitting loud shrieks.' Vishoka replied, 'O Pandava! All your desires have come true. In the midst of the elephant arrays, the standard with the ape can be seen. Behold. Like lightning flashing amidst blue clouds, the bow is being extended there. Astride the top of Dhananjaya's standard, the ape can be seen from every direction. The celestial gem on the diadem is as radiant as the rays of the sun.[669] Alongside, behold the terrible and extremely loud blare of Devadatta, pale in complexion.[670] Janardana has the reins in his hand. He is driving through the army of the enemy. Behold. Next to Janardana is his chakra, increasing Keshava's fame. It is sharp at the edges and is like the sun in complexion. Its handle is like the vajra. It is always worshipped by the Yadus. O brave one! Behold.' Bhima said, 'O charioteer! Because you have pleased me greatly and given me good news, I will give you fourteen supreme villages, one hundred maidservants and twenty chariots. O Vishoka! You have given me news about Arjuna.'" '

Chapter 1205(55)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the battle, hearing the clatter of chariots and roars of lions, Arjuna asked Govinda to drive the horses quickly. On hearing Arjuna’s words, Govinda told Arjuna, ‘I am proceeding extremely swiftly to the spot where Bhima is stationed.’ The horses that were as white as snow, or conch shells, advanced. The harnesses were decorated with golds, pearls and jewels. It was as if the lord of the gods was advancing in great anger, grasping the vajra, desiring victory and wishing to kill Jambha.[671] There was a large number of chariots, horses, elephants and foot soldiers, accompanied by the whizzing sound of arrows and the clatter of hooves. The earth and the directions echoed with the sound. Angrily, they advanced against Jaya, lion among men. There was a great clash between them and Partha. That great encounter brought destruction to bodies and lives. It was like that between the asuras and the god Vishnu, supreme among victorious ones, fighting over the lordship of the three worlds. The diademed and garlanded one was alone. But he severed all their superior and inferior weapons. With sharp arrows that were like the razor and in the shape of a half-moon, he severed many of their heads and arms and also their umbrellas, whisks, fans and standards. Large numbers of horses, rathas, foot soldiers and elephants shrieked and fell down in diverse ways, assuming mutilated forms. They were like a forest shattered by a storm. There were giant elephants decorated with golden nets. They had been prepared for war, with standards signifying victory. They were mangled by gold-tufted arrows and looked like blazing mountains. With supreme arrows that were like Vasava’s vajra, he shattered elephants, chariots and horses. He then advanced swiftly, wishing to kill Karna, just as in ancient times, the lord of the Maruts had advanced to shatter Bala.[672] O scorcher of enemies! That mighty-armed tiger among men penetrated the army of the son of a suta, like a makara entering the ocean. O king! On seeing this, those on your side attacked

Pandava, with chariots and foot soldiers and a large number of elephant riders and horse riders. As they advanced against Partha, they created an extremely loud noise, like the sound made by the waters of a turbulent ocean. In the battle, those maharathas were like tigers. Ready to give up their lives and abandoning fear, they attacked that tiger among men. They descended there, showering down arrows. However, Arjuna scattered those soldiers, like clouds dispelled by a strong storm. Those large numbers of rathas were great archers and strikers. They advanced against Arjuna and pierced him with sharp arrows. However, using his arrows, Arjuna dispatched thousands of rathas, elephants and horses towards Yama's abode. In that battle, they were slaughtered by arrows released from Partha's bow. As fear was generated in the maharathas, they started to melt away. Using his sharp arrows, Arjuna conveyed four hundred brave maharathas, who were endeavouring, to Yama's abode. In the battle, they were slain by arrows of many different forms. In their fear, they abandoned Arjuna and fled in different directions. As they fled, a great uproar arose in the vanguard of the army. O fortunate one! It was like that made by the giant ocean when it dashes against a mountain. That army was severely routed and driven away by Arjuna's arrows. O venerable one! Partha then advanced in the direction of the army of the son of a suta. There was a great noise when he advanced against the enemy. It was like that made in ancient times, when Garuda descended in search of serpents.

' "On hearing that sound, the immensely strong Bhimasena was extremely delighted, because he desired to catch sight of Partha. O great king! On hearing that Partha was advancing, the powerful Bhimasena became ready to give up his life and crushed your soldiers. He was like the force of the wind. He was like the force of the wind in speed. Bhima, the powerful son of the wind god, roamed around like the wind. O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! Your soldiers were afflicted. O great king! They were whirled around, like a shattered boat on the ocean. Bhima showed those soldiers the dexterity of his hands. He released sharp arrows and conveyed them to Yama's eternal abode. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle there, the warriors witnessed Bhima's superhuman strength. He was like the Destroyer at the time of the destruction of a yuga. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were afflicted by Bhimasena's terrible strength. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing this, King Duryodhana spoke these words, addressing the soldiers, the great archers and the warriors. ‘All of you unite in this battle and kill Bhima. Once he has been slain, I think that all the remaining soldiers will have been killed.’ Accepting the instructions of your son, the kings enveloped Bhima with a shower of arrows from every direction. O king! There were many elephants and men, desiring victory. O Indra among kings! There were also chariots and horses that surrounded Vrikodara. O king! O foremost among Bharatas! Having been thus surrounded by valiant ones from every direction, the brave one was as beautiful as the moon surrounded by stars. O great king! That supreme of men looked radiant and handsome in the battle, in particular, as beautiful as Vijaya was. All those kings released showers of arrows at him. They were cruel and their eyes were red in anger. They wished to kill Vrikodara. In that battle, Bhima drove away that large army with straight-tufted arrows and emerged, like a fish in the water coming out of a net. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He killed ten thousand elephants that refused to retreat, two hundred thousand and two hundred men, five thousand horses and one hundred rathas. Having killed them, Bhima created a river made out of blood and mire. Blood constituted the water and chariots were the eddies. It was full of crocodiles in the form of elephants. The men were the fish and horses were the sharks. Hair constituted the moss and the weeds. The trunks of the best of elephants were severed and many jewels were borne along. Thighs were alligators. The fat was the mud. It was full of many heads that were the rocks. The bows and arrows were like rafts. Clubs and maces were the flags. In the battle, a current of warriors were borne along to Yama’s abode. In an instant, the tiger among men created a river that flowed downwards.[673] It was like the fierce Vaitarani, difficult for those who have not perfected their souls to cross. Wherever the spot where Pandaveya, supreme among rathas, advanced, in that spot he brought down hundreds and thousands of warriors.

‘ “O great king! Having seen the deeds performed by Bhimasena in the battle, Duryodhana spoke these words to Shakuni. ‘O maternal uncle! Defeat the immensely strong Bhimasena in the encounter. If the immensely strong Pandaveya is vanquished, I think that our victory is ensured.’ O great king! At this, the powerful Soubala advanced, surrounded by his brothers, to engage in that great battle. In the battle, he rushed against Bhimasena, whose valour was terrible. He countered the brave one, like the shoreline against the abode of makaras. Though he was restrained by sharp arrows, Bhima did not retreat. O Indra among kings! Shakuni struck him on the left flank and between the breasts with iron arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. O great king! Those golden arrows, tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks, penetrated the great-souled one's armour and sank in. In the battle, Bhima was severely pierced by those gold-decorated arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He violently shot an arrow towards Soubala. O king! As the terrible arrow arrived, the immensely strong Shakuni, the scorcher of enemies, displayed the dexterity of his hands and shattered it into one hundred fragments. O lord of the earth! When it fell down on the ground, Bhima was enraged. He laughed and severed Soubala's bow with a broad-headed arrow. The powerful Soubala cast aside that severed bow and picked up another bow and sixteen broad-headed arrows. O great king! With four of those broad-headed and straight-tufted arrows, he struck Bhima's horses and his charioteer with a fifth. O lord of the earth! He severed his standard with one and his umbrella with two. With four more, Subala's son struck his four horses.[674] O great king! At this, the powerful Bhimasena became wrathful. In that battle, he hurled a javelin that was completely made out of iron, but had a golden handle. Released from Bhima's arm, it was like the flickering tongue of a serpent. It swiftly descended on the great-souled Soubala's chariot. O lord of the earth! The javelin had been hurled by the enraged Bhimasena and was decorated with gold. But he[675] seized it and hurled it back and it penetrated the great-souled Pandava's left arm. It then fell down on the ground, like lightning descending from the sky. O great king! In every direction, the sons of Dhritarashtra let out a loud cry. However, Bhima was not prepared to tolerate those spirited roars, like those of lions. In haste, the maharatha grasped a bow and strung it. O Indra among kings! In a short while, in that battle, the immensely strong one enveloped Soubala's soldiers, who were prepared to give up their lives, with arrows. O lord of the earth! He killed his[676] four horses and his charioteer. The valiant one swiftly severed his standard with a broad-headed arrow. With the horses slain, the supreme among men abandoned his chariot. His eyes were red with rage and he stretched his bow, sighing deeply. O king! He covered Bhima from every direction with many arrows. However, the powerful Bhimasena countered him with force. He angrily severed his bow and pierced him with sharp arrows. O lord of men! Powerfully and extremely severely pierced by the enemy, the afflicter of enemies fell down on the ground, with only a little bit of life left in him. O lord of the earth! On discerning that he had lost his senses, your son bore him away on his own chariot, while Bhimasena looked on. On seeing that the tiger among men was taken away on the chariot, the sons of Dhritarashtra retreated. They suffered from great fear on account of Bhima and, terrified, fled in different directions. O king! When the archer Bhimasena had defeated Soubala, your son, Duryodhana, was shattered by great fear. Thinking about his maternal uncle, he fled on swift horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king had retreated, the troops withdrew, abandoning the duels that were going on in different directions. On seeing this, all the atirathas among the sons of Dhritarashtra also retreated. Bhima quickly rushed at them, showering down many hundreds of arrows. Slaughtered by Bhima, the sons of Dhritarashtra withdrew.

‘ “O king! From every direction, they sought refuge with Karna, who was stationed in the battle. That greatly valiant and immensely strong one became like an island to them. O king! O tiger among men! It was as if mariners who suffered from a calamity and had a shattered boat found comfort on reaching an island. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In that way, those on your side sought refuge with Karna. O king! Having stationed themselves there, they cheered each other. They advanced to fight again, preferring to die rather than retreat.” ’

Chapter 1206(56)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! When the soldiers were shattered by Bhimasena in the battle, what did Duryodhana and Soubala say? What about Karna, foremost among victorious warriors, Kripa, Kritavarma, Drona’s son, Duhshasana and other warriors on my side? I think that Pandaveya’s valour was extremely wonderful. Did Radheya Karna, the destroyer of enemies, act towards all the Kuru warriors in accordance with his vow? O Sanjaya! On seeing that the army had been routed by the infinitely energetic Kounteya, Radheya, Adhiratha’s son, remained the prosperity, the armour, the base and the hope of remaining alive. What did the warrior Karna do? What about my sons and the invincible maharatha kings? O Sanjaya! You are skilled in narrating. Tell me everything about all this.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! In the afternoon, while Bhimasena looked on, the powerful son of a suta began to strike all the Somakas. The extremely strong Bhima also began to uproot all the soldiers of the sons of Dhritarashtra. On seeing that the intelligent Bhimasena was driving away the army, Karna asked his charioteer to drive him towards the Panchalas. The immensely strong king of Madra, Shalya, drove the white horses, which were extremely swift, towards the Chedis, the Panchalas and the Karushas. Shalya, the destroyer of enemy troops, penetrated those soldiers. He cheerfully drove the horses to the spot where that foremost one[677] wanted him to go. The chariot was like a cloud and was covered in tiger skins. O lord of the earth! On seeing it, the Pandus and the Panchalas were terrified. The loud roar of the chariot could be heard in the great battle. Its roar was like that of a cloud, or of a mountain being shattered.

‘ “Karna drew his bow all the way back to his ear and slew hundreds and thousands of Pandava soldiers with hundreds of sharp arrows. While he was performing that superhuman deed in the encounter, the great archers, the

Pandava maharathas, surrounded him. Shikhandi, Bhima, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Nakula, Sahadeva, Droupadi’s sons and Satyaki surrounded him and showered down arrows, wishing to kill Radheya. In the battle, the brave Satyaki, supreme among men, pierced Karna with twenty sharp arrows in his shoulder joints. Shikhandi pierced Karna with twenty-five arrows, Dhrishtadyumna with five, Droupadi’s sons with sixty-four, Sahadeva with seven and Nakula with one hundred. In that encounter, the immensely strong and angry Bhimasena pierced him in the shoulder joints with ninety arrows with drooping tufts. Adhiratha’s immensely strong son laughed. He drew back his supreme bow and released sharp arrows, afflicting them. Radheya pierced each of them back with five arrows each. The bull among men severed Satyaki’s bow and standard and struck him between the breasts with nine arrows. The scorcher of enemies wrathfully pierced Bhimasena with thirty arrows and struck his charioteer with three arrows. In the twinkling of an eye, the bull among men deprived Droupadi’s sons of their chariots and it was extraordinary. With straight-tufted arrows, he made all of them retreat. He killed the brave maharathas from Panchala and Chedi. O lord of the earth! In that battle, the Chedis and the Matysas were slaughtered. They rushed against Karna, who was single-handed, and struck him with torrents of arrows. The maharatha son of a suta struck those down with his sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I witnessed this extraordinary deed performed by Karna. In the battle, the brave and powerful son of a suta was single-handed. O great king! However, despite those enemy warriors striving to their utmost in the encounter, he restrained the Pandaveyas with his arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the gods, siddhas and supreme rishis were satisfied at the dexterity shown by the great-souled Karna. The great archers, the sons of Dhritarashtra, applauded that best of men. Karna was best among supreme rathas. He was foremost among all archers. O great king! Karna consumed the army of the enemy, just as a large and flaming fire burns down dead wood during the summer. Thus slaughtered by Karna and witnessing Karna’s great strength, the Pandaveyas were terrified in the battle and fled here and there. In the great encounter, loud lamentations arose among the Panchalas, since they were slaughtered by the sharp arrows that were released from Karna’s bow. The large army of the Pandavas was frightened at the sound. In the battle there, the enemies thought that Karna was the only warrior. Thus Radheya, the afflicter of enemies, accomplished that supremely wonderful deed. He single-handedly countered all the Pandavas and no one was capable of glancing towards him. They were like a large mass of water that dashes against a supreme mountain and is driven back. In that way, the Pandava soldiers clashed against Karna and were shattered. O king! In the battle, Karna blazed like a fire without smoke. The mighty-armed one burnt down the large army of the Pandavas. O great king! With great agility and his light arrows, the brave Karna severed the heads, with earrings, and the arms of the valiant ones. There were swords with handles of ivory. There were standards, javelins, horses and elephants. There were the parts of chariots and many kinds of flags and whisks. There were axles, yokes, harnesses and many kinds of wheels. Karna observed his vow of a warrior and shattered these into hundreds of fragments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Elephants and horses were slain by Karna. Because of the flesh, blood and mire, the earth assumed an impassable form. With destroyed horses, foot soldiers, chariots and elephants, one could no longer distinguish uneven terrain from plain ground. Nor could the warriors distinguish those on their own side from that of the enemy. The arrows generated from Karna's weapon created a terrible darkness. The arrows released from Radheya's bow were decorated in gold. O great king! In the battle, the Pandaveya maharathas repeatedly endeavoured, but were shrouded by Karna. O great king! The maharathas endeavoured and were submerged. They were like a herd of deer, driven away by an angry lion in the forest. The warriors who fought against Karna in the battle were greatly illustrious. But those soldiers were slaughtered, like a large number of smaller animals by a wolf.

' "Seeing that the Pandava soldiers were retreating, the great archers, the sons of Dhritarashtra, pursued them, emitting fierce roars. O Indra among kings! Duryodhana was filled with great delight. He joyfully instructed that many musical instruments should be sounded in every direction. The great archers among the Panchalas, supreme among men, were shattered. But though shattered, those brave ones returned, preferring death over retreat. O great king! The brave Radheya, scorcher of enemies and bull among men, countered and repelled them in many different kinds of ways. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Twenty rathas among the Panchalas were slain there by Karna and so were one hundred angry enemy riders from among the Chedis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He emptied the seats of chariots and the backs of horses. He brought down men from the necks of elephants. He drove away the infantry. The scorcher of enemies was like the sun at midday and was impossible to look at. The son of a suta assumed as cruel a form as Yama and roamed around. O great king! In this fashion, the great archer Karna, the destroyer of large numbers of the enemy, killed men, horses, rathas and elephants and was stationed there. The immensely strong one was stationed there like the Destroyer after slaying large numbers of beings. The single-handed maharatha was stationed there, after having slain the Somakas. However, we beheld the wonderful valour of the Panchalas. Though they were slaughtered by Karna, they did not forsake the field of battle. The king,[678] Duhshasana, Sharadvata Kripa, Ashvatthama, Kritavarma and Shakuni Soubala slew the Pandava soldiers in hundreds and thousands. O Indra among kings! The brothers who were Karna's sons were also true in their valour. Those powerful ones easily fought with the Panchalas, here and there. They created a cruel and great destruction among the horses there. Despite this, the brave Pandavas, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and Droupadi's sons were enraged and attacked those on your side. In this fashion, there was destruction among the Pandavas there and also amongst those on your side, when they clashed against the immensely strong Bhima in the battle." '

Chapter 1207(57)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Meanwhile, in that great battle, Arjuna divided up the enemy and glanced at the enraged son of a suta. He generated a large river of blood that bore along flesh, marrow and bones. The bull among men spoke these words to Vasudeva. ‘O Krishna! The standard of the son of a suta can be seen there. Bhimasena and the other maharathas are fighting there. O Janardana! Terrified of Karna, the Panchalas are being driven away. The radiant and white umbrella of King Duryodhana is there. Karna looks extremely beautiful as he is routing the Panchalas. Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona’s immensely strong son are protecting the king and are protected by the son of a suta. Those on our side are unable to kill them, but they are slaying the Somakas. Shalya is stationed on his chariot, skilled in handling the reins. O Krishna! He looks extremely beautiful as he guides the horses of the chariot of the son of a suta. My wish is that you should drive my chariot to that maharatha. Without killing Karna in the battle, I will not retreat. O Janardana! Otherwise, while we look on in this battle, Radheya will exterminate the maharatha Parthas and Srinjayas.’ Having been thus instructed, Keshava quickly drove the chariot towards your army, so that there might be a duel between Karna, the great archer, and Savyasachi. On Pandava’s instructions, the mighty-armed Hari departed, thus providing assurance to the Pandava soldiers in every direction. O venerable one! There was the loud clatter of Pandaveya’s chariot in the battle. It was like the sound of Vasava’s vajra or a giant flood. There was a great roar from the chariot of Pandava, who was unwavering in his valour. Vijaya, immeasurable in his soul, advanced against your army.

‘ “On seeing the white horses advance, with Krishna as the charioteer, the king of Madra spoke to Karna. ‘Behold the standard of the great-souled one. The chariot is coming here, with white horses and with Krishna as the charioteer. O Karna! He is slaying the enemies in the battle. He is the one about whom you had enquired. Kounteya is stationed there, touching Gandiva bow. If you can kill him today, that will be greatly beneficial for us. The army of the sons of Dhritarashtra is being routed in every direction. It is terrified of Arjuna, who is swiftly slaying large numbers of the enemy. Abandoning all the soldiers, Dhananjaya is hastening here. His body swelling with anger, I think he is coming for your sake. I do not think Partha is interested in fighting with anyone else other than you. He is blazing with anger because you have worsted Vrikodara. He has seen that you deprived Dharmaraja of his chariot and severely wounded him. Shikhandi, Satyaki, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi’s sons, Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja and the two brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva, are looking on. O scorcher of enemies! Partha is advancing violently, alone on a chariot. His eyes are red with anger. In his rage, he wishes to kill all the archers. There is no doubt that he has abandoned all the other soldiers and is spiritedly advancing towards us. O Karna! Advance and repulse him. There is no other archer who can. I do not see any other archer in this world who is like you and can counter the angry Arjuna in a battle, like a shoreline. I do not see anyone protecting him, at the rear, or along the flanks. Behold. He is advancing alone towards you, with thoughts of success in his mind. In the battle, you are the only one who can withstand the two Krishnas in an encounter. O Radheya! It is your burden that you must fight against Dhananjaya. You are as accomplished as Bhishma, Drona, Drona’s son and Kripa. Drive your chariot against Savyasachi and counter Pandava. He is like a snake with a flickering tongue. He is roaring like a bull. O Karna! He is bent on destruction, like a tiger. Slay Dhananjaya. The maharatha sons of Dhritarashtra have been driven away in the battle. In their fear of Arjuna, the kings are quickly glancing at him. There is no man other than you who can dispel the fear of the warriors who are running away in terror. O descendant of the suta lineage! There is no one other than you. In this battle, you are an island of refuge to all the Kurus. O tiger among men! They are stationed here, desiring assurance from you. You have advanced against and defeated in battle those who are invincible, those from Videha, Ambashtha, Kamboja, Nagnajit and Gandhara. O Radheya! Exert yourself now and counter Pandava and Varshneya Vasudeva, loved by Kiriti.’

‘ “Karna replied, ‘O Shalya! You seem to be in your natural state now and amicable towards me. O mighty-armed one! It is evident that you are frightened of Dhananjaya. Behold the strength of my arms today. Behold my learning. I will single-handedly slay the large army of the Pandavas and the two Krishnas, tigers among men. I tell you this truthfully. Without killing those two brave warriors, I will not retreat. Or I will be slain by them and will lie down. Victory in a battle is uncertain. But I will be successful in my objective, whether I kill them, or whether I am killed. It is said that no one like him has been born in this world. He is supreme among rathas. That is what we have heard. I will fight against the Partha who is like that. Behold my manliness in the great battle. The foremost among rathas is advancing on his chariot. The Kourava prince is borne on swift horses. Perhaps he will convey me towards a calamity today and perhaps with Karna’s death, all of this will end. This prince’s hands do not sweat. They are thick and large and marks have been created on them.[679] He is firm and accomplished in the use of weapons. He is light in the use of his hands. There is no warrior who is Pandaveya’s equal. He grasps many arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. He shoots them as if they were but one. They descend at the distance of one krosha and do not deviate from their aim. Where is the warrior on earth who is his equal? With Krishna as his second, the spirited atiratha Pandaveya satisfied the fire.[680] The great-souled Krishna obtained the chakra there and Pandava Savyasachi the bow Gandiva. The mighty-armed one, whose spirit does not wane, also obtained the chariot, with a fierce and loud roar. It is yoked to white horses. He obtained giant quivers that are divine in form and are inexhaustible. The bearer of oblations[681] also gave him celestial weapons. He slew the daityas in Indra’s world and destroyed all the *kalakeya*s in a battle.[682] He obtained the conch shell Devadatta there. Who possesses greater fame than him on earth? He faced the immensely generous Mahadeva himself in a battle and satisfied him.[683] He thus obtained the extremely terrible pashupata, the great weapon that can destroy the three worlds. The various guardians of the world assembled and gave him weapons that have no measure. The lion among men swiftly slew in battle the assembled *kalakhanja* asuras. In Virata’s city, alone on a chariot, he defeated all of us who were assembled there. He retrieved the wealth of cattle from us and robbed the maharathas of their garments. He possesses these qualities of a valiant one and the revered Krishna is his second in the battle. Keshava is infinite in his valour. He is Narayana himself in disguise and protects him. Even if all the worlds assembled together and tried for ten thousand years, they would be incapable of describing his[684] qualities. The great-souled one possesses a conch shell, a chakra and a sword in his hands. He is Vishnu and Jishnu and the son of Vasudeva.[685] On seeing the two Krishnas together on a single chariot, both fear and valour are generated in my heart. Both of them are brave and accomplished, firm in the use of weapons. They are maharathas who can withstand anything. Phalguna and Vasudeva are like this. O Shalya! Which other person is capable of advancing against them? I will bring them down in the battle, or the two Krishnas will kill me today.'"

'Sanjaya said, "Having spoken these words to Shalya, Karna, the slayer of enemies, roared like a cloud in that battle. He approached your son and honoured him. He then spoke these words to the foremost among the Kurus who had assembled—the mighty-armed Kripa and the lord from Bhoja,[686] the king of Gandhara and his son, the son of the preceptor,[687] his younger brothers, the foot soldiers and the other horse riders and elephant riders. 'Swiftly advance against Achyuta and Arjuna from every direction and restrain them, so that they are exhausted. O kings! Then those two lords will be severely wounded and I will be able to kill them cheerfully today.' Those spirited ones agreed. Wishing to kill Arjuna, the best of the brave ones attacked, like rivers and streams full of water dashing towards the great ocean. Arjuna received them there in the battle. The enemies could not discern when he affixed supreme arrows and released them. They were oppressed by Dhananjaya's arrows. Men, horses and elephants were slain and fell down. He was as radiant as the energetic sun that arises at the end of a yuga. Gandiva was like a circular disc and the arrows were like rays. The Kouravas were incapable of glancing towards Jaya. He was like a sun that hurts the eyes of people. Kripa, Bhoja and your son himself attacked him and shot arrows. They wished to kill him and were skilled. They shot supreme arrows in that great battle, making the best of efforts. Pandava swiftly severed those arrows and pierced each of his foes in the chest with three arrows each. Arjuna drew

Gandiva back to a full circle and scorched them like the radiant sun. The arrows were like fierce rays and he was like the solar disc when it is midway between Shuchi and Shukra.[688]

‘ “Drona’s son pierced Dhananjaya with ten supreme arrows and then struck Achyuta with three. He struck the four horses with four and released many supreme arrows at the ape.[689] While he was extending his bow to its complete extent, Dhananjaya used three arrows to sever it and sliced down his charioteer’s head with a kshurapra arrow. Dhananjaya struck the four horses of Drona’s son with four arrows, his standard with three and brought him down from his chariot. He[690] became angry and picked up another bow that was ornamented with diamonds and other precious stones. It had excellent joints and was as radiant as the great and supreme serpent Takshaka, resting on a mountain. The great personage placed his other weapons on the ground and strung the bow himself. Drona’s son then afflicted those unvanquished and supreme men[691] with supreme arrows and pierced them from a close distance. Kripa, Bhoja and your son showered down torrents of arrows on the one who was like a sun.[692] Partha used his arrows to sever Kripa’s bow, with an arrow fixed to it, and struck his horses, standard and charioteer with arrows. He enveloped your son with arrows and severing his bow and standard, roared. The powerful one slew Kritavarma’s horses and severed his sparkling standard. He also slaughtered horses and charioteers, and destroyed supreme elephants, horses, chariots and their standards. Your large army was shattered, like an embankment devastated by water. Dhananjaya then swiftly advanced, like Shatakratu for Vritra’s death. He was followed by other chariots that raised their standards again, prepared well and ready to fight with the enemy. Maharathas Shikhandi, Shini’s descendant and the twins followed Dhananjaya’s chariot, countering the enemy with sharp arrows, shattering them and roaring fiercely. The brave Kurus and Srinjayas killed each other in great rage, shooting extremely energetic arrows. They were like supreme gods and asuras[693] in ancient times. They desired victory or heaven. O scorcher of enemies! Elephants, horses and chariots fell down. They roared loudly and struck each other separately with arrows that were released well. In the great battle, the supreme warriors fought with each other. The great-souled ones created darkness because of the arrows. O king! The ten directions and the sky could not be discerned. The sun’s radiance was covered in darkness.” ’

Chapter 1208(58)

‘Sanjaya said, “Dhananjaya saw that the foremost among the Kurus had attacked Bhimasena with great force and that he was submerged. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wishing to save him, he struck the soldiers of the son of a suta with arrows. Dhananjaya conveyed brave ones amongst the enemy to the world of the dead. Some of his nets of arrows covered the sky. Others were invisible, but killed your soldiers. He filled the sky with arrows and they seemed to be like a flock of birds. O great king! Dhananjaya was like a destroyer of the Kurus. Partha used broad-headed arrows, kshurapras and sparkling iron arrows to mangle the bodies and sever the heads. Severed bodies, dislodged armour and heads were strewn around everywhere. Foot soldiers fell down and warriors were spread around. O king! Destroyed by Dhananjaya’s arrows, chariots, horses, men and elephants were on the field of battle and made it look like a giant Vaitarani river. As they fought, wheels of chariots were shattered, sometimes without horses and sometimes yoked to horses. With charioteers slain, or with charioteers, chariots were scattered around on the ground. The warriors wore golden armour and golden ornaments. They were on well-trained elephants that were also armoured. The wrathful drivers angered them by urging them on towards Arjuna. Kiriti slew and brought down four hundred of these through his showers of arrows. They were like the summits of large mountains, with living beings still atop them. Struck by Dhananjaya’s arrows, the elephants were strewn around on the ground. Arjuna’s chariot passed through them, like the sun penetrating a mass of clouds. Elephants, men and horses were slain and many chariots were fragmented. With their armour dislodged by arrows, warriors who were fierce in battle lost their lives. Phalguna crossed over that path of battle, which was strewn around in this fashion. He stretched Gandiva and it let out a great and terrible twang. The sound was as awful as that of thunder, resounding amidst dark clouds. Struck by Dhananjaya’s arrows, the army was routed. It was as if a large boat was tossed around on the ocean by a great tempest. Arrows and weapons of many forms issued out of Gandiva. They flamed like meteors and lightning and scorched your soldiers. It was like a grove of bamboos burning on a giant mountain in the night. That was how your large army seemed to blaze, oppressed by the arrows. Yours soldiers were crushed, burnt and destroyed by Kiriti. They were killed and wounded by the arrows and fled in all the directions. It was as if a herd of deer was being devoured by a conflagration in a large forest. When they were consumed by Savyasachi, such was the state of the Kurus.

‘ “In the battle, they abandoned the mighty-armed Bhimasena. The army of the Kurus was anxious and all of them desired to retreat. Thus, the Kurus were defeated by Bibhatsu and routed. Having clashed against Bhimasena, they were made to withdraw in a short while. Phalguna approached Bhima and consulted with him. He told him that Yudhishthira’s wounds had been attended to. Having obtained Bhimsena’s permission, Dhananjaya departed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth and the sky resounded with the clatter of his chariot. Ten of your terrible sons, bulls among the enemy, and all born after Duhshasana, surrounded Dhananjaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those cruel ones seemed to dance around and attacked him with their arrows, like an elephant with flaming torches.[694] Madhusudana guided the chariot so that they were on the right side. On seeing that Arjuna was advancing towards them, those brave ones retreated. Partha swiftly used iron arrows and arrows in the shape of a half-moon to destroy their standards, chariots and bows and bring them down. He then used ten other broad-headed arrows to sever their heads.[695] The eyes were red with rage. The teeth bit the lips. Fallen down on the ground, those faces looked like stars that had been dislodged from the firmament. Ten immensely forceful, gold-tufted and broad-headed arrows brought down ten Kouravas who possessed golden clubs. When they had been pierced, the slayer of enemies departed.” ’

Chapter 1209(59)

‘Sanjaya said, “The one with the supreme ape on his standard advanced at great speed. Ninety brave Kuru rathas wished to fight with him and attacked him. In the battle, those tigers among men surrounded Arjuna, tiger among men. However, the white horses were extremely swift and were decorated in gold. They were decorated with nets of pearls and Krishna drove it towards Karna’s chariot. As Dhananjaya, the slayer of enemies, advanced towards Karna’s chariot, the chariots of the samshaptakas[696] also followed him, showering down arrows with a desire to kill. The brave Arjuna used his sharp arrows to swiftly kill all ninety of them, with their charioteers, bows and standards. Slain by Kiriti’s many different kinds of arrows, they fell down, like siddhas and their celestial vehicles from heaven, when their stores of meritorious deeds have been exhausted. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! O foremost among Bharatas! At this, the fearless Kurus attacked Phalguna, with their chariots, elephants and horses. They released weapons. Supreme and mighty elephants that belonged to your son’s large army obstructed Dhananjaya in the battle. The great archers, the Kurus, used lances, swords, spears, javelins, clubs, scimitars and arrows to envelop the descendant of the Kuru lineage.[697] The Kurus showered down weapons. However, Pandava used arrows that were like the rays of the sun to strike them down. At this, on the instructions of your son, mlecchas who were astride thirteen hundred crazy elephants struck Partha from the side. They used barbed arrows, hollow arrows, iron arrows, spears, javelins, spikes, *kampana*s and catapults to afflict Partha’s chariot. Having been struck by the shower of weapons released by the *yavana*s[698] on elephants, Phalguna smiled and severed those with his sharp broad-headed arrows and arrows in the form of a half-moon. All those elephants were struck by large arrows of many different forms. With their flags and riders, they were brought down, like mountains shattered by thunder. Those gold-tufted arrows afflicted and killed the giant elephants that had golden harnesses. They fell down, like mountains that were on fire. O lord of the earth! In that great roar, Gandiva's twang could be heard. Men, elephants and horses shrieked and lamented. O king! The elephants were killed and fled in different directions. With their riders slain, the horses ran away in the ten directions. O great king! Chariots were without their rathas and so were the steeds. Thousands of them were seen, like the cities of the gandharvas. O great king! Horse riders ran hither and thither. They were seen there, brought down by Partha's arrows. At that time, Pandava showed the strength of his arms. Single-handedly, he defeated the riders, the elephants and the chariots in the battle.

' "O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Bhimasena saw that Kiriti was surrounded by a large army consisting of three kinds of forces.[699] O king! He abandonded the few remaining rathas who were left on your side and swiftly advanced towards Dhananjaya's chariot. On seeing that Bhima was advancing towards his brother Arjuna, the soldiers who had not been killed were distressed and fled. There were some extremely fast horses that had not been killed by Arjuna. In the great battle, with the club in his hand, Bhima slaughtered them. It[700] was as fierce as the night of destruction and fed on men, elephants and horses. It was extremely terrible and could shatter walls, mansions and the gates of cities. Bhima used that club against the men, elephants and horses who were around. O venerable one! He slew many horses and horse riders. Pandava crushed men and horses plated in bronze armour and terrified them. He uprooted them with the club. Slain, they fell down with a great noise. He then ascended his chariot again and followed Arjuna from the rear. The army of the enemy was slain or devoid of spirit and retreated. Those soldiers were immobile and distracted. On seeing this, Arjuna shrouded them with arrows that robbed lives. As they clung to each other, there were severe woes of lamentation. At that time, your soldiers whirled around like a circle of fire. With the armour shattered by arrows, the soldiers blazed. Overflowing with blood, they looked like a flowering grove of *ashoka* trees. On seeing Savyasachi's valour there, all the Kurus there lost all hope of Karna remaining alive. In the battle, they could not withstand the downpour of Partha's arrows. Having been defeated by the wielder of Gandiva, the Kurus retreated.

Slaughtered by Partha's arrows, they abandoned the battle. They were terrified and fled in different directions, calling out to the son of a suta. Partha followed them, showering down many hundreds of arrows. The Pandava warriors, with Bhimasena at the forefront, were delighted.

' "O great king! Your sons advanced towards Karna's chariot. They were submerged in fathomless waters and Karna was like an island to them. O great king! The Kurus were like defanged serpents. Because of their fear of the wielder of Gandiva, they sought shelter with Karna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was just as all beings, fearing death and because of their deeds, seek shelter with dharma. O lord of men! Karna, the great archer, was like that to your sons. Terrified of the great-souled Pandava, they sought refuge with him. They were overflowing with blood and severely distressed on account of the arrows, and Karna told them, 'Do not be frightened. Come to me.' He saw that your army had been destroyed because of Partha's strength. Wishing to kill the enemy, Karna stretched his bow and while Savyasachi looked on, attacked the Panchalas again. The lords of the earth possessed eyes that were as red as wounds. In a short while, Karna showered down torrents of arrows on them, like clouds pouring down on a large mountain. O venerable one! Thousands of arrows were shot by Karna. The supreme among all living beings robbed many Panchalas of their lives. O lord of the earth! In that battle, great sounds of lamentation arose among the Panchalas. To ensure the welfare of his friend,[701] the son of a suta, the slayer of enemies, slaughtered them." '

Chapter 1210(60)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The Kurus[702] were driven away by Karna, whose chariot possessed white horses. Using great arrows, the son of a suta slew the sons of the Panchalas, like a storm dispelling large masses of clouds. With an *anjalika* arrow, he brought down Janamejaya’s charioteer from his chariot and killed his horses. He enveloped Shatanika and Sutasoma with broad-headed arrows and severed their bows. In the battle, he pierced Dhrishtadyumna with six arrows and slew the horses that were on his right flank. The son of a suta next killed Satyaki’s horses and also slew Vishoka, the son of Kekaya. When that prince was killed, Ugradhanva, the general of the Kekayas, attacked him. He used many arrows that were fierce and forceful and severely struck Karna’s son, Sushena.[703] Karna laughed. Using three arrows that were in the shape of a half-moon, he severed his[704] arms and head. Having lost his life, he fell down from his chariot, like a decaying shala tree that is struck down with an axe. The horses of the foremost among the Shinis[705] had been slain. Sushena, the grandson of a suta, enveloped him with sharp arrows and seemed to be dancing around. However, he was struck by the arrows of Shini’s descendant and fell down. When his son was killed, Karna became senseless with rage and wished to kill Shini’s descendant, bull among men. He said, ‘O descendant of Shini’s lineage! You have been killed.’ He released an arrow that was capable of killing all enemies. Shikhandi severed it with three arrows and struck Karna with three more. Using large arrows, he[706] severed Shikhandi’s bow and standard and then pierced Shikhandi with six fierce arrows. He next severed the head of Dhrishtadyumna’s son. Adhiratha’s great-souled son then mangled Sutasoma with an extremely sharp arrow.

‘ “O lion among men! While that tumultuous battle was going on and Dhrishtadyumna’s son had been killed, Krishna said, ‘O Partha! He is eliminating the Panchalas. Go and kill Karna.’ Thus addressed, that foremost of men laughed and advanced swiftly on his chariot towards the chariot of Adhiratha’s son. The one with excellent arms wished to save those who were frightened and were being killed[707] by that leader of rathas. He stretched Gandiva with a twang that was loud and terrible. He rubbed the bowstring fiercely. He suddenly created darkness with his arrows and destroyed elephants, horses, chariots and men. Bhimasena, the brave one among the Pandavas, followed him on his chariot and protected his rear. Those two princes quickly advanced on their chariots towards Karna, releasing arrows at the enemy.

‘ “During that time, the son of a suta fought mightily, crushing the Somakas in the battle. He destroyed large numbers of chariots, horses and elephants and enveloped the directions with his arrows. Uttamouja, Janamejaya, the enraged Yudhamanyu and Shikhandi united with Parshata.[708] They roared loudly and mangled Karna with many arrows. Those five Panchala rathas attacked Vaikartana Karna extremely well, but were incapable of dislodging him from his chariot, just as the senses cannot overpower a patient and self-controlled person. Karna severed their bows, standards, horses, charioteers, quivers and flags with his arrows and struck each of the five with arrows. He then roared like a lion. As he struck them and there were the sounds of his bowstring, arrows, palms and the bow, all beings were distressed. They thought that the earth, with its mountains and trees, was being shattered. His bow was like Shakra’s bow. Using that, Adhiratha’s son shot fierce arrows. He was resplendent in the battle, like the blazing solar disc, surrounded by a garland of rays. He pierced Shikhandi with twelve sharp arrows and the ratha Uttamouja with six. He pierced Yudhamanyu with three sharp arrows and the sons of Somaka and Prishata each with three arrows.[709] O venerable one! In the great battle, those five maharathas were defeated by the son of a suta. They were rendered immobile by that scorcher of enemies, just as the senses are vanquished by one with a controlled soul. They were submerged in the ocean that was Karna, like distressed merchants on an ocean. Droupadi’s son rescued their maternal uncles[710] with well-prepared chariots, like providing boats on an ocean.

‘ “The bull among the Shini lineage used his sharp arrows to slice down the many arrows that Karna shot. He struck Karna with sharp and iron arrows and pierced his eldest son[711] with eight arrows. Kripa, Bhoja,[712] your sons and Karna struck him back with sharp arrows. However, the supreme one amongst the Yadu lineage fought with them, like the guardians of the directions fighting with the lords of the daityas. His bow roared continuously and he showered down extremely fierce arrows. Satyaki became invincible, like the midday sun in the autumn sky. Those rathas[713] armoured themselves well and again attacked, desiring to protect the foremost one from the Shini lineage. The rathas from Panchala united in that great battle, like large numbers of Marut surrounding Shakra, when he was afflicting the enemy. An extremely terrible encounter commenced between them and those on your side who were engaged in your welfare. It was like an ancient one between gods and asuras and destroyed chariots, horses and elephants. Afflicted by many types of weapons, chariots, elephants, horses and foot soldiers wandered around. They struck each other and wavered. They uttered loud wails of lamentation and fell down, deprived of their lives.

‘ “At that time, without any fear, your son, the younger brother of the king,[714] showered arrows and advanced against Bhima. Vrikodara spiritedly encountered him, like a lion leaping on a large ruru deer. The battle between them was superhuman and was like a gambling match, with lives as stakes. They attacked each other fiercely and angrily, like Shakra and Shambara in earlier times. They severely struck each other with extremely energetic arrows that were capable of ending lives. They mangled each other, like two mighty elephants that are overcome with sexual desire and seek to indulge in intercourse.[715] With two kshurapra arrows, Vrikodara severed the bow and the standard of your son. He struck him in the forehead with an arrow and severed his charioteer’s head from his body. The prince picked up another bow and struck Vrikodara with twelve arrows. He controlled the reins of the horses himself and again rained down arrows on Bhima.” ’

Chapter 1211(61)

‘Sanjaya said, “Prince Duhshasana accomplished an extremely difficult task in that tumultuous battle. He severed Bhima’s bow with a razor-sharp arrow and pierced his charioteer with six arrows. In an instant, the great-souled one then struck Bhimasena with many excellent arrows. Bhimasena hurled a fierce club towards him. It struck Duhshasana and flung him a distance of ten bow-lengths away, rendering him like a wounded elephant with shattered temples. He was struck and fell down, trembling. O Indra among kings! It[716] slew his horses and charioteer and having crushed the horses and the chariot, fell down. His armour, ornaments and garments were destroyed and, completely immobile, he shrieked in pain. The spirited Bhimasena remembered all the acts of enmity that had been performed by your sons. He jumped down from the chariot onto the ground and eagerly looked at him. He grasped an extremely sharp sword and placed it against the throat of the trembling one. He tore apart the breast of the one who had fallen down on the ground and drank the warm blood. He repeatedly savoured the taste. Then, excessively angry, he glanced at him and spoke these words. ‘This is superior to mother’s milk, honey, clarified butter, well-prepared liquor, celestial water and skimmed and churned milk. It is my view today, that the blood of my enemies is tastier than all of these.’ He again repeated these cheerful and eloquent words. Whoever saw Bhimasena in that state then, fell down in distress and in fear. When the men fell down there, the weapons also fell down from their hands. Others were terrified and glanced at him with half-open eyes, uttering loud lamentations of woe. All those who saw Bhima drink Duhshasana’s blood were terrified and miserable and ran away in different directions. They said, ‘This one is not human.’ In the hearing of the brave ones in the world, he[717] spoke these words. ‘O worst of men! I am drinking the blood from your throat. In great rage, you repeatedly called us cattle.[718] When I was asleep in Pramanakoti, you fed me poison and made me suffer the hardship of being bitten by serpents.[719] You burnt us down in the house of lac. You robbed our kingdom through a gambling match and made us dwell in the woods. We were robbed of the happiness in our homes and suffered from weapons in battle. There were many other hardships and we have never known any joy. Dhritarashtra and his son have always acted maliciously towards us.' O king! O great king! Having spoken these words, Vrikodara, who had obtained victory, again spoke these words to Keshava and Arjuna. 'O brave ones! I had taken a vow about Duhshasana in the battle.[720] I have accomplished that today. I will accomplish the second vow now too, that of killing Duryodhana like a sacrificial animal. In the presence of the Kouravas, I will press down the evil-souled one's head with my foot and obtain peace.' Having spoken these words, he cheerfully roared, blood streaming from his body. The extremely powerful and great-souled one danced, like the one with one thousand eyes[721] after Vritra's death." '

Chapter 1212(62)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Ten of your sons were brave and maharathas. They did not run away from the field of battle. When Duhshasana was slain, those immensely valiant ones were overcome with great rage and showered Bhima with arrows. Kavachi, Nishangi, Pashi, Dandadhara, Dhanurdhara, Alolupa, Shala, Sangha, Vatavega and Suvarchasa united and attacked together, overcome with grief on account of their brother. They enveloped the mighty-armed Bhimasena with arrows. He was restrained in every direction by the arrows of those maharathas. Bhima’s eyes became red with rage and he looked like the wrathful Destroyer himself. Using ten immensely forceful broad-headed and sharp arrows that were gold-tufted and decorated with gold, Partha conveyed those ten to Yama’s eternal abode. When those brave ones were killed, your soldiers ran away, afflicted by fear of the Pandavas, while the son of a suta looked on.

‘ “O great king! On witnessing Bhima’s valour, like Yama amongst beings, Karna entered the great battle. O destroyer of enemies! On discerning what was going on in his mind, Shalya, the ornament of an assembly, realized that the time was right and spoke these words to Karna. ‘O Radheya! Do not be distressed. This is not deserving of you. These kings are being driven away, afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena. Overcome with misery and grief on account of his brother, Duryodhana is numb. The great-souled one has drunk Duhshasana’s blood. His mind is full of sorrow, and grief has robbed him of his senses. O Karna! Kripa and the others and the remaining brothers are tending to Duryodhana and have surrounded him from all directions. The brave Pandavas are unwavering in their aim. With Dhananjaya at the forefront, they are advancing towards you, stationing themselves in the battle. O tiger among men! Base yourself on your great manliness. Devoting yourself to the dharma of kshatriyas, fight against Dhananjaya. Dhritarashtra’s son has placed the entire burden on you. O mighty-armed one! Shoulder it, to the best of your capacity and the best of your strength. If you are victorious, you will obtain great fame. If you are defeated, heaven is certain. O Radheya! The wrathful Vrishasena is your son. Since you are confused, he is advancing towards the Pandavas.' Hearing the words of the infinitely energetic Shalya, he came to the human conclusion that there was nothing to do but to base oneself well in the battle.

' "The angry Vrishasena was stationed on his chariot and wishing to slay the enemy, advanced against Vrikodara, who was like Yama with a staff in his hand, and with a club in his hand, was uprooting those on your side. Nakula, foremost among brave ones, was full of anger and attacked this enemy with arrows. He cheerfully attacked Karna's son in the battle, like Jishnu and Maghavan wishing to kill Jambha.[722] Using a razor-sharp arrow, the brave Nakula severed his standard, which had the complexion of a conch shell and sparkled like crystal. Karna's son possessed a colourful bow that was adorned with golden cloth. He severed this with a broad-headed arrow. Extremely quickly, Karna's son picked up another bow and pierced Pandava. Wishing to show his respect to Duhshasana, who had lost his life, the one who knew about great weapons, then struck Nakula with divine and great weapons. The great-souled Nakula was enraged and pierced him back with arrows that were like giant meteors. Karna's son was skilled in the use of weapons and pierced Nakula back with celestial weapons. O king! Karna's son slew all of Nakula's horses with supreme weapons. They were swift, delicate and pure, ornamented with gold, and were of the *vanayu* breed. When the horses were slain, he descended from his chariot and picked up a beautiful shield that was marked with the signs of eight moons. He also picked up a sword that sparkled like the sky. With these, he leapt up and roamed around, like a bird. He executed many wonderful motions in the air and sliced down the best of men, horses and elephants. They were struck by that sword and fell down on the ground, like animals at an *ashvamedha* sacrifice, struck by the executioner. There were two thousand warriors who found delight in battle. They were well trained and came from many different countries. They never missed their objective. The upper parts of their bodies were smeared with sandalwood paste. Quickly and single-handedly, Nakula brought them down. While they were falling down, he[723] attacked Nakula and pierced him from every direction with arrows. Nakula was thus struck by those arrows and angrily pierced the brave one back in turn. Single-handedly, Karna's son struck men, horses, elephants and chariots. He pierced the brave one who seemed to be sporting[724] with eighteen arrows and was angrily pierced back in return. Wishing to kill him, Pandu's son, foremost among men, attacked Karna's son in that battle. In the great battle, Karna's son sliced down the shield, which was decorated with one thousand stars, with his arrows. The sword was extremely sharp, keen at the edges. It had been unsheathed and was capable of bearing a great load. It was extremely terrible and was being whirled around, used to sever the bodies of the enemy. It was as fierce in form as a serpent. With six sharp and extremely pointed arrows, he[725] shattered his enemy's sword. He then struck him again between the breasts with sharp and yellow arrows and pierced him grievously. Madri's son was tormented by Karna's son. His horses were slain. He jumped onto Bhimasena's chariot, like a lion leaping onto the summit of a mountain, while Dhananjaya looked on.

' "Nakula's bow and arrows had been severed. He was without a chariot and afflicted by arrows. He had been mangled by the weapons of Karna's son. On discerning this, the five foremost sons of Drupada, Shini's descendant as the sixth, and the five sons of Drupada's daughter, all destroyers of enemies, swiftly advanced against those on your side and devastated the elephants, chariots, men and horses. Those supreme men were cheerful and were on swift chariots drawn by speedy steeds. Their flags fluttered in the wind. They used hundreds of arrows and other weapons that resembled the lords of serpents. The foremost of rathas on your side, Hridika's son,[726] Kripa, Drona's son, Duryodhana, Shakuni, Shuka, Vrika, Kratha and Devavridha speedily countered them. They wielded bows and were on chariots that roared like elephants and clouds. Those best of men countered the eleven brave ones[727] and used supreme and fierce arrows to strike and repel them.

' "Those on your side were in turn countered by Kunindas who were on elephants that were fierce in force and were like the summits of mountains, with complexions like that of newly formed clouds. They[728] had been prepared well, were crazy and were from the Himalaya regions. Accomplished riders who desired to fight were astride them. The elephants were beautifully covered with nets of gold and looked like clouds tinged with lightning. Using ten arrows that were completely made out of iron, the son of Kuninda[729] severely struck Kripa and his charioteer. However, slain by the arrows of Sharadvata's son, he fell down on the ground, together with his elephant. The younger brother of the son of Kuninda then struck, using javelins that were completely made out of iron and were as radiant as the sun's rays. He hurled these at his[730] chariot and roared loudly. But the lord of Gandhara[731] severed his head, while he was still roaring. When the Kunindas were slain, the maharathas on your side were delighted. They loudly blew on conch shells obtained from the ocean and with bows and arrows in their hands, attacked the enemy. An extremely terrible battle commenced again between the Kurus and the Pandus and Srinjayas. Arrows, swords, javelins, scimitars, clubs and battleaxes were fiercely used and men, horses and elephants destroyed. As they attacked and wounded each other, chariots, horses, elephants and foot soldiers fell down here and there. It was as if clouds tinged with lightining were stationed in the sky and were dispelled with fierce winds. Bhoja struck Shatanika, the mighty elephants, the chariots and the infantry on their side. Using his weapons, Kritavarma brought down the horses and the elephants. At that time, three elephants belonging to the enemy were struck by the arrows of Drona's son. All of them were ridden by warriors and sported flags. They lost their lives, shrieked and fell down, like large mountains shattered by the thunder. The third son of the king of Kuninda struck your son[732] between the breasts with excellent arrows. Your son pierced his body and that of his elephant with sharp arrows. With the son of the king, that king of elephants fell down, with copious quantities of blood issuing forth. It was as if, at the onset of the moon, water mixed with red chalk was exuding from a mountain, when it had been struck by the vajra of Shachi's consort.[733] However, though struck, the son of Kuninda ascended another elephant and brought down Shuka, with his charioteer, horses and chariot. The lord Kratha[734] was afflicted by the arrows and fell down, like a mountain shattered by thunder. Seated astride an elephant, the invincible ratha from the mountainous regions[735] slew and brought down the lord of Kratha with arrows. He was brought down with his horses, charioteer and bow, like a giant tree struck by a mighty storm. Vrika used twelve arrows to severely strike the one who resided in the mountainous regions and was astride his elephant. However, using great speed in the battle, he brought down Vrika, with his four horses and chariot. But that king of elephants was severely struck and brought down by Babhru's son, together with its driver. Devavridha's son was also struck, slain and brought down by Sahadeva's son. The elephant of the son of Kuninda was capable of slaying the enemy with its tusks and body. It impetuously rushed towards Shakuni, wishing to kill him. The lord of Gandhara severed its head. Mighty elephants, horses, rathas and large numbers of infantry on your side were slain by Shatanika. They fell down on the ground, crushed and immobile, like trees devastated through a storm raised by Suparna.[736] The son of Kuninda smiled and shot many sharp arrows at Nakula's son.[737] At this, Nakula's son used a razor-sharp arrow to sever his head, which was like a lotus, from his body.

' "Karna's son pierced Shatanika with three swift arrows and Arjuna with three more. He pierced Bhima with three arrows, Nakula with seven and Janardana with twelve. On witnessing that superhuman deed, all the Kurus were delighted and applauded him. But they also knew about Dhananjaya's valour and thought that he[738] was like an oblation that had been poured into the fire. Kiriti, the slayer of enemy heroes, saw that the best of men[739] was without his horses, which had been slain. In the battle, he attacked Vrishasena, who was stationed in front of the son of a suta. In that great battle, he descended, with thousands of arrows. On seeing him advance, Karna's maharatha son, fierce and foremost among men, also attacked, like Namuchi against Indra in ancient times.[740] The son of the son of a suta then pierced Partha with many wonderful arrows. The illustrious one roared loudly, like Namuchi in ancient times, after having pierced Shakra. Vrishasena used fierce arrows to again pierce Partha in his armpits. He struck Krishna with nine arrows and again struck Partha with ten sharp and fierce arrows. Kiriti became enraged in that field of battle and his forehead furrowed into three lines. The great-souled one shot arrows in the battle, designed to kill the son of a suta in the battle.[741] Kiriti pierced him violently in the inner organs with ten arrows. With four razor-sharp arrows, he severed his bow, his arms and his head. He was struck by Partha's arrows and fell down from the chariot onto the ground, deprived of his arms and head. He was like an extremely large and flowering shala tree, with a lot of leaves, which had been struck by a storm and brought down from the summit of a mountain. The son of a suta saw that his son had been struck by arrows and had fallen down from his chariot. He was tormented because his son had been slain. Powerfully and violently, he advanced on his chariot towards the ratha Kiriti." '

Chapter 1213(63)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Vrishasena had been killed, Karna was overcome by anger and rage. Sudden tears of sorrow flowed down from Vrisha’s eyes. On his chariot, he spiritedly advanced towards the enemy. His eyes were coppery red with rage and he challenged Dhananjaya to a fight. Those two chariots were as radiant as the sun and were covered with tiger skins. When they encountered each other, it was as if two suns had clashed against each other. Those two men, scorchers of enemies, were like suns and were borne by white horses. Those two great-souled ones were as radiant as the sun and the moon in the sky. O venerable one! On seeing them, all the beings were astounded. They looked like Indra and Virochana’s son,[742] embarking on a conquest of the three worlds. There was the clatter of chariots, the twang of bowstrings, the slapping of palms, the whizzing of arrows and the blare of conch shells. As they advanced on their chariots, all the lords of the earth looked on. As they clashed against each other, the standards generated great wonder. Karna’s had the housing of an elephant and Kiriti’s the ape. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the two chariots clashed against each other, the kings looked on. They emitted roars like lions and voiced loud words of applause. On hearing about the duel between them, the warriors gathered around there. They slapped their arms powerfully and forcefully waved their garments around. The Kurus assembled there. Wishing to cheer Karna, they blew loudly on their conch shells and instructed that musical instruments should be played. All the Pandavas also cheered Dhananjaya. They caused trumpets and conch shells to be sounded in all the directions. The roars generated a tumultuous sound everywhere. As Karna and Arjuna clashed, the brave ones slapped their arms. They saw that those two tigers among men, supreme among rathas, were stationed on their chariots. They grasped their giant bows, arrows, javelins, clubs and other weapons. They were armoured and had girded their swords. They were borne on white horses that were as beautiful as conch shells. Both of them possessed the best of quivers and were handsome. They were smeared with red sandalwood paste on their limbs and were as crazy as bulls. They were like venomous serpents and like Yama, the Destroyer, in their rage. They were as wrathful as Indra and Vritra and as resplendent as the sun and the moon. They were as cruel as mighty planets that clash at the end of a yuga. They were born from gods. They were the equals of the gods. They were like the gods in their beauty. Those two tigers among men, Karna and Dhananjaya, clashed and it was a sight worth seeing. Both of them possessed the best of weapons and both of them were exhausted from fighting. Both of them made the sky resound with the slapping of their arms. Both of them were famous for their deeds, their manliness and their strength. In a battle, both of them were the equals of Shambara and the king of the immortals. In an encounter, both of them were the equals of Kartavirya[743] and Dasharatha's son. Both of them possessed valour that was like Vishnu's bravery and both were Bhava's[744] equal in a fight. O king! Both were borne on white horses and on supreme chariots. The charioteers of those immensely strong ones were the best. O great king! On seeing those two blazing maharathas, there was great amazement among the large numbers of siddhas and charanas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The sons of Dhritarashtra quickly surrounded Karna, the ornament of a battle, with their army. In similar fashion, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Pandavas joyfully surrounded the great-souled Partha, who was unmatched in a battle. O lord of the earth! For those on your side, Karna became the stake in the battle. In that way, for the Pandaveyas, Partha became the stake in the battle. The troops on both sides, and those who had assembled, were eager to witness the encounter. The stakes were determined and it was certain that there would be victory, or there would be defeat. Stationed on the field of battle, the gambling match between us and the Pandavas commenced, with the objective of victory, or its reverse. O great king! Those two, who were skilled in fighting, were stationed in the encounter. They were extremely angry towards each other and wished to defeat each other. Like Indra and Vritra, they wished to kill each other. They assumed fearful forms, like planets trailing a lot of smoke.

‘ “O bull among the Bharata lineage! As they took sides between Karna and Arjuna, there were differences, debates, dissension and arguments among those in the sky and among all beings. O venerable one! The directions and all the worlds also adopted different sides. When Karna and Arjuna clashed, the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the pishachas, the serpents and the rakshasas adopted different sides. O lord of the earth! The sky and the nakshatras became anxious on Karna’s account.[745] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The extensive earth was anxious on Partha’s account, like a mother for her son.[746] O supreme among men! The rivers, the oceans, the mountains, the trees and the herbs took Kiriti’s side. O scorcher of enemies! The asuras, the *yatudhana*s, the *guhyaka*s, crows and others who travelled through the sky were on Karna’s side. The stores of all gems, the Vedas and accounts as the fifth,[747] the minor Vedas, the Upanishads, with collections of their commentaries, Vasuki, Chitrasena, Takshaka, Upatakshaka, all the mountains, Kadru’s offspring and immensely wrathful and virulent serpents were on Arjuna’s side.[748] Airavata’s offspring, the offspring of Surabhi and Vaishali and the serpents were on Arjuna’s side.[749] The smaller snakes were on Karna’s side. O king! The wolves, jackals and all the auspicious animals and birds were on Partha’s side, wishing for his victory. The Vasus, the Maruts, the Sadhyas, the Rudras, the Vishvas,[750] the Ashvins, Agni, Indra, the moon god, the wind god and the ten directions were on Dhananjaya’s side, while the Adityas were on Karna’s side.[751] The gods, together with the large number of ancestors, were on Arjuna’s side. Yama, Vaishravana[752] and Varuna were also with Arjuna. The gods, the brahmanas, the kings and the large number of rishis were with Pandava. O king! The gandharvas, with Tumburu at the head, were with Arjuna. The descendants of Prava and Muni, the large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras,[753] wolves, predatory beasts, animals, birds, large numbers of chariots, different forms of clouds and winds, and sages assembled there to witness the clash between Karna and Arjuna. O great king! The gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the nagas, the yakshas, birds, maharshis learned in the Vedas, the ancestors who thrive on *svadha* oblations,[754] austerities, learning and the herbs, in many different forms and attires, took up their places in the firmament and this created a great noise. Brahma, with the *brahmarshi*s and the Prajapatis[755] and Bhava,[756] on his celestial chariot, also arrived at the spot.

' "On seeing that Prajapati,[757] the self-creating one, had arrived, the gods spoke to him. 'O god! Let this struggle for victory between these two lions among men be pacified.' Hearing this, Maghavan[758] prostrated himself before the grandfather and said, 'Let the entire universe not be destroyed because of Karna and Arjuna. O self-creating one! You had earlier said that Vijaya and the other one[759] are identical. O illustrious one! I am bowing down before you. Be pacified and let that be true.' Brahma and Ishana[760] spoke these words to the lord of the thirty gods. 'The victory of the great-souled Vijaya is certain. He is spirited, powerful and brave. He is skilled in the use of weapons and is rich in austerities. Great energy is manifested in him, especially in dhanurveda. Through his greatness, he is capable of overcoming destiny. He is capable of controlling and overcoming the worlds. When the two Krishnas are angered, no one is capable of standing before them. Those two bulls among men are truly the creators of the universe. They are the ancient and supreme rishis Nara and Narayana.[761] Those two scorchers of enemies control everything and cannot be controlled by anyone. Karna, foremost in the worlds, is a bull among men. Vaikartana is brave and valiant. But let the two Krishnas be victorious. With Drona and Bhishma, let him[762] obtain the great world of heaven and the worlds of the Vasus and the Maruts.' Having heard the words spoken by those two gods of the gods and abiding by the instructions of Brahma and Ishana, the one with the one thousand eyes spoke these words to all the beings. 'You have heard what the two illustrious ones have said for the welfare of the universe. It must happen that way and cannot be countered. Therefore, do not be anxious.' O venerable one! O king! Having heard Indra's words, all the beings were astounded and honoured him. The gods showered down many kinds of fragrant flowers from the sky and sounded divine trumpets. To witness the unmatched duel between those two lions among men, all the gods, danavas and gandharvas waited.

' "The two chariots were yoked to white horses. They possessed standards and made a loud noise. The brave ones from the world assembled and separately blew on their conch shells. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! So did the brave Vasudeva and Arjuna and Karna and Shalya. The battle that generated terror among cowards commenced. They rivalled each other in their valour, like Shakra and Shambara. The two clear and radiant standards were fixed to the chariots. As they angrily prepared to fight each other, they[763] were thick. Karna's resplendent one was marked with an elephant's housing. It was bejewelled and firm, like Purandara's bow, and like a venomous serpent. The best of apes opened its terrible and gaping mouth on Partha's. It was extremely fierce and difficult to look at, like the sun. Stationed on the standard of the wielder of Gandiva, it desired a fight. It roared loudly and flung itself on Karna's standard. Having descended with great force, the ape used its nails and its teeth to destroy the elephant's housing, like Garuda against serpents. The elephant's housing was well decorated with bells. It was like Yama's noose and was hard as iron. It angrily attacked the giant ape. As those two excellent ones challenged each other to a duel, the standards began to fight each other, wishing to destroy each other.

' "Pundarikaksha pierced Shalya with the arrows of his sight and he also glanced back at Pundarikaksha in a similar way. Using the arrows of his sight, Vasudeva defeated Shalya. Kunti's son, Dhananjaya, also glanced at Karna with his sight and vanquished him. At this, the son of a suta smiled and told Shalya, 'O friend! If through some means, Partha slays me in the battle today, what will you do after that? Tell me truthfully.' Shalya replied, 'O Karna! If the one with the white horses kills you in the battle today, I will slay both Madhava and Pandava.' In that way, Arjuna also asked Govinda. However, Krishna laughed and spoke these supreme words to Partha. 'The sun may fall down from its place. The earth may shatter into many fragments. The fire may become cold. But Karna will not be able to kill Dhananjaya. However, if this does happen, the world will be destroyed. Using my arms in the battle, I will kill Karna and Shalya.' Having heard Krishna's words, the one with the ape on his banner laughed. Arjuna told Krishna, the performer of undecaying deeds, 'O Janardana! Karna and Shalya together are not sufficient for me. In the battle today, you will see Karna severed into many fragments with my arrows, with Karna's flags and standard, with Shalya, the chariot and the horses, with his umbrella and armour, and with his javelins, arrows and bow. In earlier times, he laughed at Krishna.[764] Today, you will see Karna uprooted by me, like a flowering tree brought down by a maddened elephant. O Madhusudana! After that, you will hear pleasant words today. Today, you will be able to comfort Abhimanyu’s mother and repay her debt. O Janardana! Kunti, your father’s sister, will be delighted. O Madhava! The tears on Krishna’s[765] face will be comforted today. You will be able to speak immortal words to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira.’” ’

Chapter 1214(64)

‘Sanjaya said, “With nagas, asuras, large numbers of siddhas, gandharvas, yakshas, large numbers of apsaras, brahmarshis, rajarshis and groups of birds, the sky was beautiful in form. There were pleasant sounds of musical instruments. There were sounds of praise. There was singing and dancing. All those in the sky, and men, were spectators. The sky assumed a beautiful form. Cheerfully, the warriors on the Kuru and Pandava sides made the earth and the directions resound with their musical instruments, the sounds of arrows and weapons and leonine roars. With that sound, they began to slaughter their enemies. The field of battle had many horses, elephants and chariots and it was extremely difficult to withstand, because of the descent of supreme swords, javelins and scimitars. As they attacked, bodies were slain and it was red and beautiful because of the blood. As the battle commenced, Dhananjaya and Adhiratha’s son, supreme among wielders of weapons, used their sharp and swift arrows against the soldiers in all directions. They were armoured and showered these towards each other.[766] Because of the darkness that was created by the arrows, those on one’s own side could not be distinguished from that of the enemy. Since they[767] were terrified, they sought refuge with those two rathas, who were like the extending rays of the sun at the end of darkness. Those two countered each other’s weapons with their own, like the east wind clashing against the west wind. They were as radiant as two suns, dispelling the thick darkness after the sun has arisen. Each encouraged those on his side to take a stand against the enemy. The two maharathas were surrounded in every direction, like the gods and the asuras around Vasava and Shambara. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drums, smaller drums and battle drums were sounded. There was the blare of conch shells. This mingled with roars like lions. Those two supreme among men were dazzling, like the sun and the moon amidst a thick mass of clouds. Both of them possessed large bows drawn into circles, like radiant solar discs, with thousands of arrows as the rays. They were extremely unassailable in battle and were like two suns that had arisen at the end of a yuga to destroy all mobile and immobile objects in the universe. They were both invincible and capable of destroying ill-wishers. They were accomplished and wished to kill each other. In the great battle, Karna and Pandava, supreme among brave ones, clashed, like Indra and Jambha. Those two great archers released great weapons and terrible arrows. As they sought to kill each other with supreme arrows, they slaughtered large numbers of men, horses and elephants. Terrified and afflicted again by those arrows, the Kurus and Pandavas sought refuge with those two supreme among men. Elephants, foot soldiers, horses and chariots fled in various directions, like residents of a forest out of fear for a lion.

' "Duryodhana, Bhoja, Soubala, Kripa and Sharadvata's son— these five maharathas attacked Dhananjaya and Achyuta with arrows that could destroy the body. Dhananjaya used his arrows to destroy their bows, arrows, horses, standards, chariots and charioteers. Having countered and defeated them, he struck the son of a suta with twelve supreme arrows. At this, one hundred chariots, one hundred elephants, riders from Shakas, Tukharas and Yavanas and the best of Kambojas attacked Arjuna, desiring to kill him. However, Dhananjaya used razor-sharp arrows to swiftly sever the supreme weapons in their hands, heads, horses, elephants and chariots of the large numbers of the enemy who were fighting against him. The assembled gods in the sky were delighted and applauded by sounding their trumpets. Showers of beautiful and fragrant flowers were rained down. Auspicious winds began to blow. O king! Gods, men and beings who witnessed that wonderful sight were amazed. However, your son and the son of a suta certainly felt neither pain, nor wonder. Drona's son grasped your son's hand in his own hand and comforted him. He said, 'O Duryodhana! Be pacified. Make peace with the Pandavas. There is no need for dissension. Shame on war. Your preceptor[768] was Brahma's equal and knew about great weapons. He has been killed and so have bulls among men, with Bhishma as the foremost. I cannot be killed and neither can my maternal uncle.[769] Together with the Pandavas, enjoy the kingdom for a long time. Restrained by me, Dhananjaya will withdraw. Janardana does not desire a conflict either. Yudhishthira is always engaged in the welfare of beings.

Vrikodara is obedient to him and so are the twins. If there is peace between you and Partha,[770] all the subjects will be fortunate and that seems to be your desire too. Let the remaining kings return to their own cities. Let the soldiers refrain from hostilities. O lord of men! If you do not listen to my words, you are certain to be slain by the enemies in the battle and will repent. This universe, and you, has seen what the one with the diadem and the garland[771] has single-handedly accomplished. This has not been accomplished by the destroyer of Bala,[772] Yama, the illustrious Prachetas[773] and the king of the yakshas.[774] There are many other qualities that Dhananjaya possesses. He will not transgress my words. He will act so as to follow you. O king! For the benefit of the world, be pacified. You have always shown me great honour and I have reciprocated. I am your great well-wisher and that is the reason I am speaking these words. If you are inclined towards affection, I will restrain Karna too. Those who are learned say that there are four kinds of friends—those who are natural friends, those who are made such through conciliation, those who are earned through riches and those who are subjugated through power. Towards you, the Pandavas are all four. O brave one! They are naturally your relatives. Make them that through conciliation. O Indra among kings! If they are pacified and become friends towards you, it is certain that you should also act in that way.' Having heard the beneficial words spoken by his well-wisher, he[775] thought for some time. He sighed and, distressed in his mind, replied, 'O friend! It is as you have said. However, listen to the words that I will tell you. Vrikodara is evil-minded. He slew Duhshasana like a tiger, and laughing, spoke many words. Those are still lodged in my heart. They were uttered in your presence. How can there be peace? O son of my preceptor! O unblemished one! You should not speak to Karna and try to restrain him. Phalguna is overcome by great exhaustion. Karna will kill him in a short while.' Humbly and respectfully, your son repeatedly spoke these words and instructed his soldiers, 'Attack and kill those who seek to injure us. Why is the sound of arrows not heard and why is everything quiet?'" '

Chapter 1215(65)

‘Sanjaya said, “The blare of conch shells and the beating of drums became loud. Those two best among men, Vaikartana, the son of a suta, and Arjuna, borne on white horses, clashed against each other. O king! This was because of the evil counsels of your son. They were like two elephants with shattered temples from the Himalayas, attacking each other with their tusks in a desire for intercourse.[776] The brave Dhananjaya and Adhiratha’s son rushed against each other with fierce force, as they willed. It was like a cloud dashing against another cloud, or a mountain against another mountain. The twang of bowstrings and the sound of palms could be heard. The wheels of the chariots rattled. They clashed and showered down arrows. They were like large mountain tops, covered with trees and herbs and populated by many kinds of dwellers of mountains, dashing against each other. As they struck each other with great weapons, those two immensely strong ones were like mountains that had been dislodged. The clash between those two great ones was like that between the lord of the gods and Virochana’s son[777] in ancient times. Arrows mangled their bodies and those of their charioteers and horses. This was impossible for others to withstand. Blood began to flow like water. It was as if there were two large ponds filled with lotuses, lilies, fish and turtles and resounding with the calls of a large number of birds. It was as if they were being gently stirred by the wind. Those two chariots, with standards, were like that and they approached each other. Each of them possessed a valour that was like that of the great Indra. Those two maharathas were as resplendent as the great Indra. Their arrows were like the vajra of the great Indra. They attacked each other, like the great Indra and Vritra. Both armies possessed elephants, foot soldiers, horses and chariots. There were diverse colourful ornaments and garments. Everyone, including those in the sky, trembled and was astounded at the clash between Karna and Arjuna. The spectators raised their arms, with diamonds on their fingers. They were delighted and roared like lions. Adhiratha's son attacked Arjuna, wishing to kill him, like a crazy elephant against another elephant. The Somakas roared and urged Partha on. 'O Arjuna! Speed up. Pierce Karna. Sever his sparkling head without any delay. This is because of the greed that Dhritarashtra's son has for the kingdom.' In similar fashion, many warriors from our side exclaimed, 'O Karna! Proceed. Advance. O Karna! Slay Arjuna without any delay. Let the Parthas again be banished to the forest for a long time.'

' "With ten great arrows, Karna struck Partha first. Extremely angry, Arjuna pierced him back in the flanks with ten sharp and fierce arrows. The son of a suta and Arjuna struck and wounded each other with extremely sharp arrows. So as to crush each other, they sought for a weakness in the adversary. Cheerfully, but fiercely, they attacked each other in the great conflict. In the great conflict, the great-souled Bhimasena became wrathful and intolerant. He squeezed his hands and bit his lips with his teeth. Dancing around like a musician, he asked, 'O Kiriti! How was it that the son of a suta was able to pierce you first with ten great arrows? Do you remember the fortitude with which you defeated all beings and satisfied Agni in Khandava? Use that fortitude and kill the son of a suta. Otherwise, let me bring him down with a club.' On seeing that Partha's arrows were being repulsed, Vasudeva spoke to him. 'O Kiriti! How is it that in every way, your weapons today are being countered by Karna's weapons? O brave one! Why do you look like someone who is confused? The Kurus are cheerfully roaring. All of them are honouring Karna, knowing that all your weapons have been destroyed by his. In yuga after yuga, you have used fortitude to destroy the weapons of darkness and terrible rakshasas. You slew Dambhodbhava and other asuras in encounters.[778] Use that fortitude and slay the son of a suta. Or use this *sudarshana* chakra now and slice off his head. It is sharp at the edges and even the immortals cannot withstand it. It has been used by me earlier, like Shakra using the vajra to strike Namuchi. The illustrious one, in the form of a hunter, was pleased by your greatness and fortitude.[779] Resort to that fortitude again and slay the son of a suta, together with his relatives. Give this earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean, prosperous with its towns and villages, to the king.[780] O Partha!

Having slain large numbers of the enemy, obtain unlimited fame.’ Having been thus urged by both Bhima and Janardana, he glanced towards his own self and remembered his spirit.

‘ “The great-souled one knew the reason for his birth and spoke to Keshava. ‘I will release a great and fierce weapon for the welfare of the worlds and for the death of the son of a suta. Let me have your permission, that of the gods, Brahma, Bhava and all the ones who are knowledgeable about the brahman.’ Having said this, he invoked the invincible brahmastra in his mind, in accordance with the prescribed rites. All the directions and sub-directions were covered by extremely energetic arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Many hundreds of swift arrows were released from it. In the midst of this, Vaikartana also created many thousands of arrows. These descended on Pandava with a large roar, like showers of rain released from a cloud. He performed a superhuman deed and pierced Bhimasena, Janardana and Kiriti with three arrows each. Terrible in his strength, he then emitted a loud and fierce roar. Kiriti saw that Bhima and Janardana had also been struck by Karna’s arrows. He became intolerant and shot eighteen arrows again. He pierced Sushena with one arrow, Shalya with four and Karna with three. He then shot ten excellent arrows and killed Sabhapati,[781] who was clad in golden armour. The head and the arms of that prince were severed. He was without his charioteer, bow and standard. He was mangled and fell down from the chariot, like a shala tree sliced down with an axe. He again pierced Karna with three, eight, two and fourteen arrows. He slew four hundred elephants, stocked with weapons, eight hundred rathas, one thousand horses and riders and eight thousand valiant foot soldiers. Karna and Partha fought on. They were the best of the brave and the slayers of enemies. The spectators, who were assembled in the sky and on earth, controlled their mounts and watched what was going on in the battle.

‘ “Pandava’s bowstring was being drawn with great force and snapped, with a loud noise. At that moment, the son of a suta struck Partha with one hundred *kshudraka* arrows. He pierced Vasudeva with sixty sharp iron arrows that were washed in oil and were tufted with the feathers of birds. They were like snakes that had cast off their skins. At this, the Somakas ran away. Partha became extremely angry. His body was mangled by Karna’s arrows. He stretched his bowstring and swiftly countered the arrows of Adhiratha's son. He made the Somakas return. The sky was darkened because of this release of weapons and birds were unable to fly. Partha pierced Shalya's body armour with ten arrows and laughed. He pierced Karna with twelve well-aimed arrows and pierced him again with another seven. He was firmly struck by Partha's forceful arrows. Those arrows were fierce in their power. His body was mangled and his limbs were wounded. Karna looked as beautiful as Rudra at the time of destruction. Dhananjaya was the equal of the lord of the gods. However, Adhiratha's son struck him with three arrows. Wishing to slay Achyuta, he next shot five arrows that were like flaming serpents. They were decorated with gold and were aimed well. They pierced Purushottama's armour with great force and passing through, entered the earth. Having bathed there, they returned to Karna. Quickly, with well-aimed and broad-headed arrows, Dhananjaya sliced each of them into three fragments and they fell down on the ground. They were mighty serpents that were on the side of Takshaka's son.[782] The one with the diadem and the garland flamed in rage, like a fire that burns down dead wood. He drew his bow all the way back to his ears and shot many flaming arrows that were capable of bringing an end to the body. They pierced him[783] in the inner organs and made him waver. However, he was extremely patient and used that fortitude to withstand the grief. O king! Dhananjaya angrily covered Karna's chariot, all the directions and the sub-directions with his torrents of arrows. These shrouded the radiance of the sun. The sky also seemed to disappear, as if it was covered in snow. On the instructions of Duryodhana, there were those who were guarding the chariot wheels, the feet, the front and the rear.[784] These were excellent rathas and the best. In the battle, Savyasachi slew all of them. He killed two thousand of the foremost Kurus, bulls among the Kuru lineage. O king! In a short instant, the brave one single-handedly destroyed all of them, with their chariots, horses and charioteers. They fled, abandoning Karna. And so did your son and the Kurus who were left. They abandoned those who were slain and wounded by the arrows, including lamenting sons and fathers. All the directions were emptied and devoid of Kurus, because they were afflicted by fear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, on seeing this, Karna wasn't distressed. Cheerfully, he attacked Arjuna." '

Chapter 1216(66)

‘Sanjaya said, “They fled because of that descent of arrows. The soldiers of the Kurus were routed. However, they waited at a distance and glanced back, gazing at Dhananjaya’s weapons, which were descending like lightning in all directions. In that great battle, the angry Partha quickly unleashed a weapon to slay Karna. However, while Arjuna’s weapon was still travelling and roaring through the air, the brave one destroyed it with a great weapon that he had obtained from Atharvan Rama[785] and which was capable of destroying enemies. Having destroyed Arjuna’s weapon, he struck Partha with innumerable sharp arrows. O king! The clash between Arjuna and Adhiratha’s son assumed a great and dreadful form. They struck each other with arrows, like two fierce elephants goring each other with their tusks. Karna affixed an extremely sharp and flaming arrow that was capable of slaying the enemy. This had a serpent in its mouth.[786] That terrible arrow had been carefully preserved and washed well, protected well for Partha’s destruction. It had been worshipped and laid down on a bed of sandalwood paste. That immensely virulent weapon was lying down in a golden quiver. It was generated from the lineage of Airavata[787] and flamed. Wishing to kill Phalguna in the battle, he aimed at his head. On seeing that Vaikartana had affixed that arrow, the great-souled king of Madra said, ‘O Karna! This arrow will not be able to reach his neck. Fix and aim another arrow that can sever his head.’ With eyes that were red with rage, Karna affixed that arrow and told Shalya, ‘O Shalya! Karna will not affix a second arrow. Someone like me does not engage in deceit.’ Having said this, he released that arrow, the serpent which he had worshipped for many years. He said, ‘O Phalguna! You have been slain,’ and swiftly shot the arrow. On seeing that Karna had affixed the serpent, Madhava, supreme among strong ones, used his strength to press down on the chariot with his feet. The chariot sank down on the ground and the horses sank down on their knees.

‘ “The arrow struck down the intelligent one’s diadem. The ornament that adorned Arjuna’s head was famous throughout the earth, heaven and the waters. In his anger and through the strength of his weapon, the son of a suta used the arrow to bring it down from his head. It possessed the flaming radiance of the sun, the moon and the planets. It was decorated with nets of gold, pearls and gems. Using his austerities and efforts, this had been crafted for Purandara by the earth’s son himself.[788] It was extremely expensive in form and generated terror amongst the enemy. It was fragrant and brought happiness to the one who wore it. When he killed the enemies of the gods,[789] the lord of the gods was delighted and himself gave it to Kiriti. It could not be destroyed by Hara, the lord of the waters or the protector of riches,[790] and by the *pinaka*, *pasha* or vajra[791] and the best of arrows. The supreme gods were incapable of withstanding it. However, using the serpent, Vrisha now destroyed it. The flame of the poison uprooted it from his head and brought the beloved crown, with flaming rays, down on the ground. Partha’s supreme diadem fell down, like the blazing sun setting over Mount Asta. The crown was decorated with many gems. The serpent forcefully tore it down from Arjuna’s head. It was as if an excellent mountain top, with shoots and blossoming trees, was struck down by the great Indra’s vajra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth, the sky, heaven and the waters seemed to be whirled around by a tempest. Such a noise arose on earth then. Though they tried to control themselves, people were distressed and trembled. But Arjuna was not distressed. He tied the hair on his head with a white garment. The serpent released from Karna’s arms was extremely radiant, like the rays of the sun. That giant serpent was firm in its enmity of Arjuna. It struck the diadem and fell down. It told him,[792] ‘Know who I am. I am firm in my enmity of the two Krishnas, because they slew my mother.’[793] In the battle, Krishna then spoke to Partha. ‘The giant serpent is firm in its enmity. Slay it.’ Having been thus addressed by Madhusudana, the wielder of Gandiva, fierce in using the bow and arrow against enemies, asked, ‘Who is the serpent who is advancing against me of his own accord, as if into Garuda’s gaping mouth?’ Krishna replied, ‘In Khandava, you satisfied the blazing one[794] with the bow in your hand. You killed his mother, taking her to be a single snake. However, though her body was destroyed by the arrows, he was in the sky, covered by her.’ The serpent was falling down from the sky. Jishnu severed the serpent with six sharp arrows. Mangled in its body, it fell down on the ground.

‘ “At the time, Karna, foremost among brave men, glanced sideways at Dhananjaya and pierced him with ten arrows that had been sharpened on stone and were tufted with the feathers of peacocks. Arjuna drew his bow all the way back up to his ears and struck him with twelve sharp arrows. Those iron arrows were like venomous serpents in their force. He drew his bow all the way back up to his ears and shot them. They were released well. They shattered his supreme and colourful armour, as if they were robbing him of his life. Having drunk Karna’s blood, they penetrated the ground, with the tufts smeared with blood. Vrisha became extremely angry at being struck by the arrows, like a giant serpent that has been beaten with a staff. He swiftly shot supreme arrows that were like giant serpents with excellent poison. He struck Janardana with twelve arrows and Arjuna with ninety-nine. Karna again pierced Pandava with terrible arrows and roared loudly. Pandava could not tolerate this joy. He was like Indra in his valour. He shot supreme arrows, like Indra energetically striking Bala. Arjuna shot ninety arrows at Karna and each of them was like Yama’s staff. Those arrows severely mangled his body, like a mountain shattered by thunder. The crown on his head was decorated with gems and diamonds and he wore excellent earrings. These were severed by Dhananjaya’s arrows and fell down. His radiant and excellent armour was carefully crafted by the best of craftsmen over a long period of time. It was extremely expensive. In an instant, Pandava shattered this into many fragments with his arrows. Having deprived him of his armour with those excellent arrows, he then angrily struck him with four arrows. Distressed and struck by his enemy, he was like a diseased person, suffering from bile, phlegm, wind and wounds. Arjuna spiritedly shot sharp arrows from the great circle of his bow. He made great efforts and struck with strength. Karna was struck by many supreme arrows and they penetrated his inner organs. Karna was struck by many of Partha’s sharp arrows. He was severely wounded by those arrows that were fierce and forceful. He looked as beautiful as a mountain with red chalk, from which, streams of red water were flowing down the slopes. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! Kiriti struck Karna and his horses and his chariot with vatsadanta arrows. Making every effort, he used gold-tufted arrows to envelope the directions. When he was struck in his broad chest by those vatsadanta arrows, Adhiratha's son looked resplendent. He looked like a blossoming ashoka, *palasha* or *shalmali* tree, or like a trembling mountain with many sandalwood trees. O lord of the earth! With those many arrows stuck to his body, Karna looked beautiful in the battle. He looked like a valley in a mountain, covered with many large trees, or like a giant mountain, with sparkling *karnikara* trees.

' "Karna also shot a large number of arrows from his bow. With those nets of arrows as rays, he looked dazzling. He was like the sun advancing towards sunset, red and with a crimson solar disc. Those arrows were released from the arms of Adhiratha's son and blazed like giant serpents in the sky. In all the directions, they clashed with the sharp and fierce arrows released from Arjuna's arms and destroyed them. At that time, the earth trembled and the son of a suta became confused in the battle. Because of the brahmana's curse, the chariot was whirled around in the encounter.[795] Because of Rama's curse, the weapons no longer manifested themselves. Unable to tolerate this, he whirled his garments and his arms around and lamented, 'Those who know about dharma have always held that that dharma protects those who place dharma at the forefront. But instead of protecting one who is devoted, it is now bringing me down. I think that dharma does not always protect.' While he was speaking in this way, his horses and chariot were dislodged and he began to waver because of the downpour of Arjuna's weapons. He was struck in his inner organs and was incapable of acting. He repeatedly censured dharma. In the battle, having been struck by three fierce arrows in the arm, Karna then pierced Partha with seven. Arjuna struck him back with seventeen straight-flying and energetic arrows. They were as terrible as Indra's vajra and like fire to the touch. They pierced him with great force and then fell down on the surface of the earth.

' "Karna trembled. However, he exhibited great capacity. Using his strength, he invoked brahmastra. On seeing this, Arjuna invoked mantras and released *aindrastra*. Dhananjaya also invoked mantras on the bowstring of Gandiva and the arrows. He released showers of arrows, like Purandara pouring down rain.

Those energetic arrows issued from the immensely valorous Partha's chariot and were about to destroy Karna's chariot. However, when they arrived in front of him, maharatha Karna repulsed all of them. When that weapon was destroyed, the brave one from the Vrishni lineage said, 'O Partha! Radheya is destroying your arrows. Release supreme weapons.' Using mantras, Arjuna released brahmastra. With those radiant arrows, Arjuna shrouded Karna. But Karna used extremely energetic arrows to angrily sever his bowstring. Fixing another bowstring, Pandava enveloped Karna with thousands of fiery arrows. In that battle, when Karna severed his bowstring, he fixed another one so quickly that no one could make this out. It was wonderful. Using his weapons, Radheya countered all of Savyasachi's weapons. At that time, his valour seemed to be greater than that of Partha. Krishna saw that Arjuna was afflicted because of Karna's weapons. He said, 'O Partha! Go closer and strike him with the best weapons.' Dhananjaya invoked an arrow with divine mantras. It was like a fire and the poison of a serpent. It was made completely out of iron. Kiriti united this with *roudrastra* and wished to shoot it. But, in that great battle, the earth swallowed up one of the wheels of Radheya's chariot.

' "Radheya wept in rage. He told Arjuna, 'O Pandava! Wait for an instant. You can see that because of destiny, my central wheel[796] has got submerged. O Partha! Abandon the thought[797] that only befits a coward. O Arjuna! One should not shoot a weapon at one with dishevelled hair, at one who doesn't wish to fight, at a brahmana, at someone who has joined his hands in salutation, at one who has sought refuge, at one who has cast aside his weapons, at someone who faces a calamity, at someone who doesn't have arrows, at a person whose armour has been destroyed, or at a person whose weapons have been shattered and broken. Brave ones do not strike at such people, nor do kings and lords of the earth. O Kounteya! You are brave. Wait for a short while. O Dhananjaya! Let me extricate the wheel from the ground. You are stationed on your chariot. You should not kill me when I am on the ground. O Pandaveya! You and Vasudeva are not frightened of me. You are a kshatriya and you are the extender of a great lineage. O Pandava! Remember the instructions of dharma and wait for a short while.'" '

Chapter 1217(67)

‘Sanjaya said, “Vasudeva was stationed on his chariot. He said, ‘O Radheya! It is fortunate that you remember dharma. Quite often, when they are immersed in hardships, inferior ones censure destiny, but not their evil deeds. O Karna! When you, Suyodhana, Duhshasana and Shakuni Soubala brought Droupadi to the assembly hall in a single garment, did dharma not show itself to you? When, in the assembly hall, Yudhishthira, who was not skilled at dice, was defeated by Shakuni, who was skilled at dice, where did dharma go then? O Karna! During her season, Krishna[798] was under Duhshasana’s subjugation in the assembly hall and you laughed at her. Where did dharma go then? O Karna! Resorting to the king of Gandhara and coveting the kingdom, you challenged the Pandavas.[799] Where did dharma go then?’ When Vasudeva addressed Radheya in this way, Pandava Dhananjaya remembered all this and was overcome by great rage. Energetic flames of anger seemed to issue out from all the pores on his body and it was extraordinary.

‘ “On seeing this, Karna again invoked brahmastra against Dhananjaya. He showered down arrows and tried to extricate his chariot. Pandava countered those weapons with his own weapons. Kounteya then released another weapon, beloved of the fire god, towards Karna. It blazed fiercely. Karna pacified the fire through a varuna weapon. He covered all the directions with clouds and it was as dark as a rainy day. Pandaveya was not frightened. While Radheya looked on, the valiant one used the vayavya weapon and dispelled all the clouds. The supreme one’s standard had the marks of an elephant’s housing. It was decorated with gold, pearls, jewels and diamonds. It had been crafted by excellent artisans over a long period of time. It was expensive and beautiful in form. It always inspired your soldiers and terrified and frightened the enemy. It was renowned in the world and blazed like the sun and the moon. Kiriti used a razor-sharp arrow that was gold-tufted and pointed. With that, he brought down the handsome and blazing standard of the great-souled maharatha, Adhiratha's son. O venerable one! When that standard was uprooted, fame, dharma, victory and everything that was dear to the hearts of the Kurus also fell down. Great sounds of lamentation arose.

' "To ensure Karna's death, Pandava took out an anjalika arrow. It was like the great Indra's vajra, or like a rod that was made out of fire. It blazed in its rays, like the one with one thousand rays.[800] It was capable of penetrating the inner organs and smearing itself with blood and flesh. It was extremely expensive and was like the fire and the sun. It could destroy men, horses and elephants and was three cubits long, with six tufts.[801] It travelled straight and possessed a great force. In its energy, it was like the vajra of the one with one thousand eyes. It was as difficult to withstand as predatory beasts. It was like the pinaka and Narayana's chakra. It was fearful and destructive of living beings. He invoked mantras and affixed that supreme and great weapon to Gandiva. He loudly said, 'I am grasping this great weapon, which is in the form of an arrow. It is extremely difficult to withstand and is capable of destroying the body. If I have tormented myself through austerities and have satisfied my seniors, if I have listened to what my well-wishers have told me, through that truth, let this arrow slay my armoured enemy, Karna, and bring me victory.' Having said this, for the sake of Karna's death, Dhananjaya released that terrible arrow. It was as fierce as rites performed by Atharvan and Angiras. It blazed and was impossible to be endured in a battle, even by Death itself. Kiriti cheerfully said, 'Let this arrow bring me victory.' Wishing to slay Karna, bring about his end and convey him to Yama, he released the arrow, which was as radiant as the sun and the moon. Cheerfully, so that he could be conveyed towards victory, the one with the diadem and the garland shot the arrow. It was as radiant as the sun and the moon. He harboured feelings of enmity and wished to slay his enemy. That weapon, blazing like the sun, was shot. Like the sun, it lit up the earth with its radiance. The head of the commander of the army was severed. Like the sun, with a red disc, it seemed to set. The body of the one who performed generous deeds was always reared in happiness. Like a person who is reluctant to leave a house filled with great riches, the head parted from the body with great difficulty. Without the armour, the body was mangled by arrows and lost its life. Karna's body was severed and fell down. Blood oozed from the wounds, like red chalk flowing from the slopes of a mountain, when the summit has been struck by thunder. When Karna's body fell down, a flaming mass of energy arose and rose up into the sky. O king! When Karna was slain, all the men and warriors witnessed this great wonder.

' "On seeing that he had been slain and was lying down, with their soldiers, the Somakas roared in delight. They joyfully blew on their trumpets and waved their garments and hands around. Other troops danced around. They embraced each other, roaring in delight. They saw that Karna had been destroyed and was lying down on the ground. The ratha had been slain and mangled by the arrows. It was as if the untainted and extinguished fire was lying down in the expansive sky, after the end of a sacrifice. All his limbs were mangled by arrows and torrents of blood flowed from them. Karna's body was beautiful, like the rays of the sun in the firmament. He had tormented the soldiers of the enemy with flaming arrows that were like the sun's rays. The powerful Karna was like the setting sun, conveyed to death by Arjuna. When the sun sets, all its radiance also departs. Like that, the arrow took away Karna's life. O venerable one! It was the late part of the afternoon then. Severed by the anjalika in the battle, the head and the body of the son of a suta fell down. While the soldiers of the enemy looked on, it swiftly severed Karna's head and body.

' "The brave Karna fell down on the ground. Mangled by arrows, blood flowed out from his body. On seeing that he was lying down on the ground and seeing that the standard had been severed, the king of Madra withdrew on the chariot. When Karna was slain, the Kurus fled. They were severely struck in the battle and were afflicted with fear. They repeatedly glanced at Arjuna's great standard, blazing in form. He[802] had performed deeds like those of the one with one thousand eyes. His face was as beautiful as one with one thousand petals.[803] He was like the one with one thousand rays, at the end of the day. Thus did his head fall down on the ground." '

Chapter 1218(68)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the course of the encounter between Karna and Arjuna, the soldiers had been mangled with arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing this, Shalya went to Duryodhana, who was glancing at the field of battle. Duryodhana saw that his army, with its chariots, horses and elephants, had been destroyed and the son of a suta had been killed. His eyes filled with tears and in great distress, he sighed repeatedly. The brave Karna had fallen down on the ground. His body had been mangled by arrows and blood flowed from it. It was as if the sun had fallen down from the sky. To see this, everyone came there and surrounded the body. There were those who belonged to your side and others who belonged to the enemy. Some were cheerful. Others were frightened. Some were distressed. Others were amazed. There were others who were completely overcome by grief. According to their natural traits, they looked towards each other. Karna had possessed armour, ornaments, garments and weapons. On seeing that he had been brought down by Dhananjaya and deprived of his energy, the Kurus fled. They were like a distressed herd of cattle, when the bull has been killed. By slaying Karna, like an elephant by a lion, Arjuna had struck them severely.

‘ “On seeing that he was lying down on the ground, the king of Madra was terrified. He swiftly withdrew on his chariot. The lord of Madra was stupefied. He quickly departed on the chariot that was without a standard. He swiftly went to Duryodhana’s side and spoke these sorrowful words. ‘The elephants, horses and best of rathas in your army have been destroyed. It looks like Yama’s kingdom. The large armies with men, horses and elephants that are like mountain tops have clashed against each other and have been killed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There has never been a battle like that fought between Karna and Arjuna today. Karna clashed against the two Krishnas and others who are your enemies and has been devoured. Destiny flows according to its own rules. That is the reason it is protecting the Pandavas and weakening us. All the brave ones sought to accomplish your objectives. They have been slain by the enemy. Those brave ones were the equals of Kubera, Vaivasvata and the lord of the waters in power. They possessed valour, bravery and strength. They possessed large stores of qualities. Those lords of men were unslayable. They sought to accomplish your objectives, fought against the Pandaveyas and have been slain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do not grieve. This is destiny. There is no substitute for success. However, success cannot always be obtained.’ Hearing the words of the lord of Madra, Duryodhana was miserable in his mind. He thought of his own evil deeds and looked within his heart. He was bereft of his senses. In great grief, he repeatedly sighed.

‘ “He reflected and was silent. He was extremely distressed. Artayani[804] spoke these words to him. ‘O brave one! Behold this fierce field of battle. It is strewn around with slain men, horses and elephants. Giant elephants have fallen down, like giant mountains. They have been sliced down. Their inner organs have been pierced with arrows. They are unconscious and anxious. Some have lost their lives. The warriors have dislodged their body armour and their weapons. They are like fragmented mountains, with rocks, animals, trees and herbs, which have been shattered by Indra’s vajra. The bells, goads, javelins and standards have been destroyed. They possessed golden harnesses, which are streaming with copious quantities of blood. Mangled by arrows, horses have fallen down. Some of them are finding it difficult to breathe and are vomiting blood. Some are shrieking loudly, with dilated eyes. Some are biting the ground with their teeth and neighing in distress. Warriors on horses and elephants have been struck. Some have a little bit of life left and others have lost their lives. Men, horses, elephants and chariots have been crushed. Like the great Vaitarani, the earth is difficult to behold. Elephants have had their trunks severed by the enemy. They are shrieking, trembling and falling down on the ground. There were illustrious elephants, chariots, horses, warriors and foot soldiers. Advancing against the enemy, they have been slain. Armour, ornaments, garments and weapons are strewn around. It is as if the earth is covered with many fires that have been extinguished. One can see that the mighty armies have been struck by the force of the arrows and soldiers have fallen down in thousands. They have lost their senses and are trying to regain their breath again. The earth is beautiful, as if with fires that have been extinguished. Flaming and sparkling planets seem to have fallen down from the sky. The arrows, released from the arms of Karna and Arjuna, have shattered the bodies of elephants, horses and men. The weapons have quickly deprived them of their lives and have entered the ground, like giant serpents looking for an abode. In the battle, men, horses and elephants have been killed. Chariots have been shattered by the arrows. The earth has become impassable because of the bodies of elephants that have been killed by the arrows of Dhananjaya and Adhiratha's son. The best of rathas and warriors have been uprooted by the arrows. Chariots, horses, the best of weapons and standards are strewn around. It is impassable because of shattered and destroyed weapons. Wheels, axles, yokes and trivenus have been shattered. The chariots are without charioteers, who have been killed. It is impassable because some are without yokes, while others have had their yokes broken. The seats were decorated with gold and jewels and have been shattered. They are strewn around on the ground, like clouds in the autumn sky. The swift and ornamented horses were yoked to excellent chariots and with riders slain, are dragging them around. Large numbers of men, elephants, chariots and horses are seen to speedily run away. They have been routed in many ways. Clubs tied in golden cloth, battleaxes, swords,[805] bludgeons, spears, sparkling and unsheathed scimitars, and maces tied up in golden pieces of cloth have fallen down. There are bows, golden armlets, ornaments, arrows with colourful tufts made out of gold, yellow and spotless swords that have been unsheathed, javelins and scimitars with golden complexions. There are umbrellas, fans, whisks, conch shells and garlands of flowers, embellished with gold. There are housings, flags and garments. There are radiant crowns, garlands and diadems. The housings are scattered and strewn around. There are necklaces decorated with pearls from the waters. There are guards, armlets and excellent bracelets. There are golden collars and golden threads for the necks. There are the best of gems, diamonds, gold, pearls and other jewels. There are auspicious signs, good and not that good, on the bodies, which have been reared in great happiness. The faces on the heads are like the full moon. The bodies have given up pleasure and garments, objects desired by the heart and happiness. They have resorted to their own dharma and obtained great merits. They have ascended to the worlds that bring fame.' Shalya spoke these words to Duryodhana and stopped.

' "His[806] mind was overcome with great grief. Bereft of his senses, he lamented, 'Alas! Karna! Alas! Karna!' His eyes overflowed with tears. All the kings, with Drona's son at the forefront, comforted him and departed.[807] They repeatedly glanced at Arjuna's great standard, which seemed to be blazing because of his glory. The bodies of men, horses and elephants were covered with blood. The earth was covered with blood. It looked like a woman attired in crimson and golden garments and garlands, who would go to everyone.[808] O king! Their terrible forms were covered with blood and could not be recognized. The Kurus were unable to look at all those who had departed for the world of the gods and could not stand there. Because Karna had been slain, they were extremely miserable. They lamented, 'Alas! Karna! Alas! Karna!' On seeing that the sun had assumed a reddish tinge, they rapidly left for their camps.

' "Gold-tufted and sharp arrows were released from Gandiva. Their tufts were smeared with blood. With those arrows on his limbs, Karna looked beautiful on the ground. Though slain, he looked like the sun, with its rays. Karna's body was covered with blood. It was as if the illustrious sun was showing compassion towards its devotee[809] and having touched the crimson form with its red hand, was proceeding beyond the ocean to have a bath. That is what the large numbers of gods and rishis thought. They returned to their respective abodes. The other beings also thought in the same way and left as they wished, to heaven or on earth. The foremost of brave ones among the Kurus had witnessed the terrible encounter between Dhananjaya and Adhiratha's son, destructive of lives. They were amazed. Now that it was over, they praised it and departed. The brave one's armour had been shattered by arrows. He had been slain in the battle. Radheya had lost his life. But his beauty[810] did not desert him. O king! He was adorned in many ornaments and his armlets were made out of gold. Vaikartana had been slain and was lying down, like a tree with branches and sprouts. He had the complexion of pure gold and blazed like a fire. With his son, the tiger among men was pacified by Partha's energy. O king! With his weapons and energy, he scorched the

Pandavas and the Panchalas. Whenever he was asked to give, he always did and never said that he had nothing to give. The virtuous always regarded him as righteous. This Vrisha was killed in the duel. The great-souled one gave everything that he possessed to brahmanas. There was nothing, not even his own life, which he would not give away to brahmanas. He was always loved by men. He was generous. He loved giving. He went to heaven. He took away with him the hopes your sons cherished for victory and their comfort and armour. When Karna was killed, the rivers stopped flowing. The sun was tainted and set. The blazing planets coursed in a diagonal direction. O king! Yama's son arose.[811] The sky seemed to divide into two parts. The earth seemed to shriek. Extremely harsh and forceful winds began to blow. The directions seemed to blaze fiercely, with a lot of smoke. The giant oceans were agitated and roared loudly. O venerable one! The groves, mountains and large numbers of beings were distressed and trembled. Brihaspati afflicted Rohini[812] and assumed the complexion of the moon and the sun. When Karna was killed, the directions were covered in darkness and could not be distinguished. The firmament and the earth seemed to move. Flaming meteors showered down. Those who travel during the night[813] were seen to be delighted. Karna's head was as beautiful as the full moon and Arjuna brought it down with a razor-sharp arrow. Loud sounds of lamentation were heard among beings in heaven, in the sky and on the ground. In the battle, Arjuna killed his enemy, Karna, who was revered by the gods, the gandharvas and men.

' "Partha was resplendent in his supreme energy, like the one with the one thousand eyes, after Vritra had been killed. That chariot roared like a large mass of clouds. Its radiance was like the midday sun in the autumn sky. With its standard and flags, it clattered loudly. It was as radiant as snow, the moon, a conch shell or a crystal. It was ornamented with gold, pearls, jewels, diamonds and coral. It possessed the speed of thought. Those two supreme among men, Pandava and the slayer of Keshi[814] were as resplendent as the fire and the sun in that field of battle. They roamed around, without any fear. Astride the same chariot, they were like Vishnu and Vasava. The one with the ape on his banner created a tumult with the twang of his bowstring, the slapping of his palms and the clatter of his wheels. He destroyed and killed the enemy with his power.

With the one with a bird on his banner[815] with him, he showered torrents of arrows on the Kurus. They held their conch shells, as white as snow, in their hands. These emitted a loud roar and were decorated with golden nets. Their minds filled with delight, they blew loudly on these conch shells. Placing those best of conch shells against their lips, those best of men, simultaneously blew on them with the best of mouths. Panchajanya and Devadatta[816] roared. That sound filled up the earth, the sky and heaven. At the sound of those conch shells, the forest, the mountains, the rivers and the directions were terrified, as were the soldiers of your son. However, those two brave ones delighted Yudhishthira. As soon as they heard the loud blare of those conch shells, the Kurus speedily departed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They abandoned the lord of Madra and Duryodhana, the lord of the Bharatas. In the great battle, a large number of beings assembled around the radiant Dhananjaya. They joyfully congratulated him and Janardana, each dazzling like a sun. In the battle, having been struck by Karna’s arrows, those two scorchers of enemies, Achyuta and Arjuna, looked beautiful. They were like the sparkling moon and sun, garlanded with rays, arising after darkness has been destroyed. Taking out those large numbers of arrows, those valiant lords entered their own camps, surrounded by well-wishers. They were like Vasava and Achyuta,[817] invoked by officiating priests. When Karna was slain in that supreme battle, the gods, the gandharvas, men, charanas, maharshis, yakshas and giant serpents honoured them greatly and hoped that their victories might continue.” ’

Chapter 1219(69)

‘Sanjaya said, “When Karna was brought down, your soldiers fled. Dasharha joyfully embraced Partha and said, ‘O Dhananjaya! Through your strength, Karna, who was like Vritra, has been killed. Men will talk about the deaths of Karna and Vritra. The infinitely energetic one[818] used the vajra to slay Vritra in a battle. You have slain Karna with your bow’s sharp arrows. Your fame will be renowned in this world and will bring you glory. O Kounteya! Go and tell this to the intelligent Dharmaraja. For a long time, this death of Karna in the battle has been desired. You should go and tell this to Dharmaraja and free yourself of the debt.’ Having been thus addressed by Keshava, bull among the Yadu lineage, Partha agreed. The foremost chariot of the foremost among rathas was turned back. Govinda spoke these words to Dhrishtadyumna, Yudhamanyu, Madri’s sons, Vrikodara and Yuyudhana, ‘Remain here and carefully confront the enemy, until we have returned, after informing the king that Karna has been killed by Arjuna.’ Having taken their leave of those brave ones, they departed for the king’s abode.

‘ “With Partha, Govinda saw Yudhishthira. The tiger among kings was lying down on an excellent golden bed. Joyfully, they touched the king’s feet. On discerning their joy and the superhuman marks of wounds, Yudhishthira deduced that Radheya must have been killed and arose. Vasudeva, the descendant of the Yadu lineage, pleasant in speech, told him everything about Karna’s death. Joining his hands in salutation, Achyuta Krishna smiled a little and told Yudhishthira that his enemy had been killed. ‘O king! It is through good fortune that the wielder of Gandiva, Pandava Vrikodara, you and the Pandavas who are the sons of Madri are safe. You have been freed from the battle that led to a destruction of heroes and made the body hair stand up. O king! Quickly undertake whatever tasks must be done next. The cruel and immensely strong Vaikartana, son of a suta, has been slain. O Indra among kings! It is through good fortune that you have obtained victory. O Pandava! You are prospering through good fortune. The worst among men laughed at Krishna[819] when she had been won in the gambling match. The earth is now drinking the blood of that son of a suta. O bull among the Kuru lineage! With arrows mangling his limbs, that enemy of yours is now lying down. O tiger among men! Look at him. He has been shattered by many arrows.' Delighted, Yudhishthira honoured Dasharha back in return. O Indra among kings! He joyfully said, 'This is good fortune. It is fortunate. O mighty-armed one! O Devaki's son! This is all because of you. With you as a charioteer, Partha was able to exhibit this manliness today.' The best of the Kuru lineage grasped his[820] right hand, adorned with a bracelet, and addressed both Partha Arjuna, the upholder of dharma, and Keshava. 'Narada had said that you were the gods Nara and Narayana. You are the ancient and supreme men, united in establishing dharma. The revered and intelligent Krishna Dvaipayana also told me this. O mighty-armed ones! The lord told me about that divine account. O Krishna! It is because of your powers that Dhananjaya confronted his enemies with Gandiva and defeated them, not retreating before any of them. Our victory is certain and their defeat is certain. After all, when Partha fights in the battle, you have agreed to be his charioteer.' O great king! Having spoken these words, the maharatha ascended his gold-decorated chariot, which was yoked to horses with the complexion of ivory and with black tails. The tiger among men was surrounded by his own soldiers. The brave Krishna and Arjuna cheerfully followed him. Surrounded by many and conversing pleasantly with the brave and resplendent Madhava and Phalguna, he went to see the field of battle.

' "He saw Karna, bull among men, lying down in the battle. Arrows released from Gandiva had splintered all over his body. King Yudhishthira saw that Karna had been slain, together with his son. He praised those two tigers among men, Madhava and Pandava, and said, 'O Govinda! Today, with my brothers, I have become the king of the earth. This is because you are our protector and we are sheltered by your bravery and your learning. On seeing that the proud Radheya, tiger among men, has been slain, Dhritarashtra's evil-souled son will lose all hope today, both about remaining alive and about the kingdom. Maharatha Karna has been killed. O bull among men! It is because of your favours that we are successful. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! You have ensured that the wielder of Gandiva is victorious. O Govinda! It is through good fortune that you have been victorious. It is through good fortune that Karna has been brought down.’ O Indra among kings! Delighted, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira praised Janardana, and also Arjuna, in many ways. The joy of the kings and the maharathas also increased. O great king! When the descendant of the suta lineage was killed, Nakula, Sahadeva, Pandava Vrikodara, Satyaki, the foremost rathas among the Vrishnis, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the Pandus, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas honoured Kounteya.[821] They increased the desire of King Yudhishthira, Pandu’s son, for victory. Those strikers delighted in fighting and wished to accomplish their objective. With eloquent words, they praised and honoured the two Krishnas, the scorchers of enemies. Then, filled with great delight, the maharathas left for their respective camps. In this way, there was a great destruction and it made the body hair stand up. O king! All of this was the consequence of your evil counsel. Why are you grieving?” ’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! On hearing the unpleasant news, Dhritarashtra, the lord of the earth, fell down unconscious on the ground. Kouravya was overcome by supreme distress. Queen Gandhari, who was devoted to the truth and knew about dharma, also fell down. Vidura and Sanjaya raised the king and comforted the monarch. The women of the king’s household raised Gandhari. Comforted by them, the king regained his senses, but was silent.’

This ends Karna Parva.

Shalya Parva

Shalya Parva continues with the account of the war. After Karna’s death, Shalya is instated as the commander of the Kourava army. Shalya is the commander for a single day, day eighteen. In the 18-parva classification, Shalya Parva is the nineth. In the 100-parva classification, this parva constitutes Sections 74 to 77. Shalya Parva has sixty-four chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in this parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Shalya Parva.

SECTION SEVENTY-FOUR

SHALYA-VADHA PARVA

This parva has 844 shlokas and sixteen chapters.

Chapter 1220(1): 52 shlokas

Chapter 1221(2): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1222(3): 50 shlokas

Chapter 1223(4): 50 shlokas

Chapter 1224(5): 27 shlokas

Chapter 1225(6): 41 shlokas

Chapter 1126(7): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1227(8): 46 shlokas

Chapter 1228(9): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1229(10): 56 shlokas

Chapter 1230(11): 63 shlokas

Chapter 1231(12): 45 shlokas

Chapter 1232(13): 45 shlokas

Chapter 1233(14): 41 shlokas

Chapter 1234(15): 67 shlokas

Chapter 1235(16): 87 shlokas

> *Vadha means killing and the section is named after the killing of Shalya. Shalya is appointed the supreme commander of the Kourava army. Nakula kills Karna's sons. Duryodhana kills Chekitana, the prince of Chedi. Ashvatthama kills Suratha of Panchala. Yudhishthira kills Shalya and Shalya's younger brother.*

Chapter 1220(1)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! In the battle, Karna was brought down by Savyasachi. What did the few Kurus who were left do then? The army of the Pandavas was swelling. On seeing this, what did Kourava, King Duryodhana, do? O supreme among brahmanas! I wish to hear all this in detail. I am not satisfied with listening to the great deeds of my ancestors.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! When Karna was slain, Dhritarashtra’s son, Suyodhana, was immersed in an ocean of great grief. In every possible way, he lost all hope. He repeatedly grieved, “Alas! Karna! Alas! Karna!” With a great deal of difficulty, he went to his own camp, together with the remaining kings. Remembering the death of the son of a suta, the king could find no peace of mind and was comforted by them, with citations from reasons given in the sacred texts. The king eventually decided that destiny was supremely powerful. He made up his mind to fight and again emerged for the battle. The bull among kings made Shalya the commander, in accordance with the decreed rites. With the kings who had not been slain, the king emerged to do battle. An extremely tumultuous battle commenced between the soldiers of the Kurus and the Pandavas. O best of the Bharata lineage! It was like that between the gods and the asuras. O great king! In the battle, Shalya created carnage among the Pandu soldiers and was slain by Dharmaraja at midday. In the field of battle, all of King Duryodhana’s relatives were slain. Terrified of his enemies, he fled and entered into a terrible lake. During the later part of the afternoon, he was surrounded by maharathas. He was summoned from the lake and brought down by Bhimasena, who used yoga. When that great archer was killed, three rathas remained alive.[1] O Indra among kings! Overcome by rage, they slaughtered the Panchala soldiers in the night. Next morning, Sanjaya left the camp and entered the city,[2] distressed and overcome with grief. He swiftly entered the city, raising his hands in sorrow. Trembling, he entered the king’s abode. O tiger among men! In sorrow, he wept and said, “O king! Alas! The great-souled one has been killed and all of us are agitated. Although it was not yet time, the extremely powerful one has attained the supreme objective. All the kings on our side were like Shakra in strength and they have been killed.” O king! On seeing Sanjaya in the city, all the people were extremely anxious and wept in loud voices, saying, “O king! Alas!” O tiger among men! On hearing that the king had been killed, even the children surrounded the city from all sides and lamented loudly. We saw three bulls among men running around there.[3] They were deprived of their senses. They were mad with grief. They were severely afflicted.

‘Entering, the distracted suta saw the king, who was without decay. He saw the lord, best among kings, who had wisdom as his sight.[4] He saw that the unblemished one, foremost among the Bharata lineage, was seated, surrounded by his daughters-in-law, Gandhari, Vidura and other well-wishers, relatives and friends. He was thinking about Karna’s death. O Janamejaya! In a voice that was choking with tears, and distressed in his mind, the suta spoke these words to the king, weeping amidst the words. “O tiger among men! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am Sanjaya. Shalya, the lord of Madra, and Shakuni Soubala have been slain. O tiger among men! So has Uluka, firm in his valour and the son of the one who played with dice.[5] All the samshaptakas have been slain, together with the Kambojas and the Shakas. The mlecchas, the ones from the mountainous regions and the Yavanas have been brought down. O great king! All those from the east and the south have been slain. O lord of men! All those from the north and the west have been killed. O king! All the kings and the princes have been killed. O king! Pandava has killed Duryodhana, as he had said he would. O great king! With his thigh broken, he is lying down in the dust, covered with blood. O king! Dhrishtadyumna has been killed and also the unvanquished Shikhandi, Uttamouja and Yudhamanyu. O king! The Prabhadrakas, the Panchalas and the Chedis, tigers among men, are dead. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your sons, all of Droupadi’s sons, have been slain. The immensely strong and brave Vrishasena, Karna’s son, has been killed. All the men have been killed and the elephants have been brought down. O tiger among men! Rathas and horses have been slain in the battle. O lord!

There are only a few who remain in your camp. Those brave ones and the Pandavas clashed against each other. They were confounded by destiny and only women are left in this world. There are seven left on the side of the Pandavas and three on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra. There are the five brothers and Vasudeva and Satyaki. And there are Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona's son, supreme among victorious ones. O great king! O supreme among kings! Those are the only rathas who are left. O lord of men! O great king! Out of the akshouhinis that assembled, these are the only ones who are left. Everyone else has been killed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The entire world has been slain by destiny. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Duryodhana at the forefront, this was the result of the enmity."

'O great king! Having heard these cruel words, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, lost his senses and fell down on the ground. O great king! When he fell down on the ground, the immensely illustrious Vidura was touched by the king's grief and also fell down. O best of kings! On hearing those cruel words, Gandhari and all the Kuru women also suddenly fell down on the ground. All the servant-maids in the king's circle also lost their senses and fell down on the ground. They were overcome by a great delirium, as if they were figures on a painting. King Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, was overcome by a great hardship. He was afflicted by hardship on account of his sons and slowly regained his senses. Having regained his senses, the king trembled in great grief. He glanced in all the directions and spoke these words to Kshatta.[6] "O learned Kshatta! O immensely wise one! O bull among the Bharata lineage![7] You are the refuge. I am in a grievous state, without a protector. I am without all my sons." Having said this, he lost his senses again and fell down. On seeing him fall down in this way, his relatives sprinkled cold water on him. They fanned him with fans. After a long time, the lord of the earth was comforted. Oppressed by grief on account of his sons, the lord of the earth remained silent. O lord of the earth! He sighed, like a snake that has been flung into a pot. On seeing that the king was so distressed, Sanjaya also wept. For a long time, so did all the women and the illustrious Gandhari. After repeatedly losing his senses, Dhritarashtra, tiger among men, spoke these words to Vidura. "Let all the women, and the illustrious Gandhari, depart, and all these well-wishers. My mind is greatly distracted." O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having heard these words, Vidura trembled repeatedly and gently asked the women to leave. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king was distressed, all the women and all the well-wishers departed. O scorcher of enemies! The king regained his senses and wept in great grief. The distressed Sanjaya looked at him. The lord of men was sighing repeatedly. Kshatta joined his hands in salutation and comforted him with gentle words.’

Chapter 1221(2)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! When the women had been sent away, Dhritarashtra, Ambika’s son, lamented again, plunged into an even greater grief. His sighs seemed to be mixed with smoke and he repeatedly waved his arms around. O great king! Having reflected, he spoke these words. “O suta! Alas! What I have heard from you is a reason for great unhappiness. In the battle, the Pandavas are safe and have not suffered. It is certain that my heart is extremely firm, with an essence that is as tough as a diamond. Despite hearing that my sons have been killed, it has not shattered into a thousand fragments. O Sanjaya! I am thinking about their words and the sports they indulged in when they were children. Today, having heard that they have been killed, my mind is severely shattered. Because I was blind, I was never able to see their beauty. However, because of affection towards one’s sons, I have always borne great love towards them. O unblemished one! They passed from childhood to youth and then attained middle age. On hearing this, I was delighted. Today, I have heard that they have been killed, deprived of their prosperity and robbed of their energy. Because of the calamity that has overtaken my sons, I cannot find any peace. O son! O Indra among kings![8] Come to me. I am without a protector now. O mighty-armed one! Without you, what will be my state now? O great king! You were the refuge of your relatives and your well-wishers. O brave one! I am old and blind. Abandoning me, where have you gone? O king! Where is your compassion, your affection and your honour? You were invincible in a battle. How could the Parthas have killed you? O son! Why have you abandoned all the assembled kings? Slain, you are now lying down on the ground, like an ordinary person, or a wicked king. When I arose at the appointed time, you always addressed me in such respectful words. ‘O father! O father! O protector of the world!’ You clasped my neck with moistened eyes and affectionately said, ‘O Kouravya! Instruct me.’ Address me in those excellent words. O son! I have heard these wonderful words from you. ‘This extensive earth is mine, as much as it is of Partha. O supreme among kings! O lord! Bhagadatta, Kripa, Shalya, the two from Avanti,[9] Jayadratha, Bhurishrava, Somadatta, the great king Bahlika, Ashvatthama, Bhoja, the immensely strong Magadha, Brihadbala, the lord of Kashi, Shakuni Soubala, the many thousands of mlecchas, Shakas and Yavanas, Sudakshina of Kamboja, the lord of Trigarta,[10] grandfather Bhishma, Bharadvaja’s son, Goutama, Shrutayu, Achyutayu, the valorous Shatayu, Jalasandha, Rishyashringa’s son,[11] the rakshasa Alayudha, the mighty-armed Alambusa, maharatha Subahu—these and many other kings have taken up weapons for my sake. All of them are ready to give up their lives in the battle. I will be stationed amidst them in the battle, surrounded by my brothers. O tiger among kings! I will fight against all the Parthas, Panchalas, Chedis and Droupadi’s sons in the battle and with Satyaki, Kuntibhoja and rakshasa Ghatotkacha. O great king! In the battle, even a single one amongst these is capable of angrily countering the rush of the advancing Pandaveyas. Need one say anything about these brave ones when they are united, firm in their enmity against the Pandavas? O Indra among kings! All of them will fight with the Pandavas and their followers in the battle and slay them. With me, Karna will single-handedly kill the Pandavas. All these brave kings will then be under my subjugation. Their adviser is the immensely strong Vasudeva. O king! But he has given me word that he will not don armour for their sake.’ O suta! Thus did he often speak in my presence and believing this, I thought that the Pandavas would be killed in the battle. However, though they were stationed in their midst and strove in the battle, my sons have been killed. What can this be, other than destiny? The powerful Bhishma was the protector of the world and having clashed against Shikhandi, was slain, like a king of deer[12] by a jackal. The brahmana Drona was skilled in the use of all weapons.[13] He has been slain by the Pandavas in the battle. What can this be, other than destiny? Bhurishrava has been killed in the battle, and so have Somadatta and the great king, Bahlika. What can this be, other than destiny? Sudakshina has been killed, and Kourava Jalasandha and Shrutayu and Achyutayu. What can this be, other than destiny? Brihadbala has been slain and the immensely strong Magadha. The two from Avanti have been killed, the lord of Trigarta and many samshaptakas. What can this be, other than destiny? O king![14] Alambusa, the rakshasa Alayudha and Rishyashringa's son have been killed. What can this be, other than destiny? The narayanas, the gopalas, invincible in battle, and many thousands of mlecchas have been killed. What can this be, other than destiny? The brave and immensely strong Shakuni Soubala, skilled with the dice, has been slain, along with his soldiers. What can this be, other than destiny? Many brave kings and princes, with arms like clubs, have been slain. What can this be, other than destiny? O Sanjaya! Kshatriyas assembled there from many countries. All of them have been killed in the battle. What can this be, other than destiny? My sons have been killed and my immensely strong grandsons. So have my friends and brothers. What can this be, other than destiny? There is no doubt that a man is born with his destiny. The man who has a good destiny is fortunate. O Sanjaya! I do not have a good destiny. Hence, I have been deprived of my sons. Therefore, in my aged state, I have now come under the subjugation of my enemies. O lord! I think that the best thing for me now is to resort to the forest. I am without relatives and my kin have been destroyed. I will go to the forest. O Sanjaya! For a person like me, who has been reduced to this state and whose wings have been clipped, there is nothing superior to retiring to the forest. Duryodhana has been slain. Shalya has been killed in the battle. So have Duhshasana, Vishasta and the immensely strong Vikarna. How can I bear to hear Bhimasena's supreme roars? In the battle, he has single-handedly killed one hundred of my sons. He will repeatedly speak about Duryodhana's death in my presence and tormented by grief and sorrow, I will not be able to bear those harsh words." The king's relatives had been slain and he was tormented by grief. He repeatedly lost his senses, overcome by sorrow on account of his sons.

'Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, lamented for a long time. His sighs were warm and long and he thought about the defeat. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The king was tormented by great misery. Then he again asked the suta, Gavalgana's son,[15] to tell him exactly what had transpired. "After Bhishma and Drona had been killed, and on hearing that the son of a suta had also been brought down, who did those on my side appoint as a commander? In the battle, whoever is appointed as a commander by those on my side, is slain in a short while by the Pandavas. In the forefront of the battle, while all of you

looked on, Bhishma was killed by Kiriti. Drona was also killed in that way, while all of you looked on. In that fashion, Karna, the powerful son of a suta, was also killed by Kiriti, while all of you, and all the kings, looked on. This is exactly what the great-souled Vidura had told me earlier. Because of Duryodhana’s crimes, the subjects would be annihilated. There are some who see well. But there are others who are so stupid that they cannot see what is in front of them. I was stupid and treated those words accordingly. The far-sighted Vidura has dharma in his soul and spoke to me. He spoke the truth and his words have now come to pass. Deluded by destiny, I paid no attention to them earlier. The fruits have now manifested themselves. O Gavalgana’s son! Tell me again. When Karna was brought down, who became the leader of our soldiers? Which ratha advanced against Arjuna and Vasudeva? In the battle, who guarded the right wheel of the king of Madra? When he wished to fight, who was on his left? Who protected the brave one’s rear? O Sanjaya! When all of you were assembled, how were the immensely strong king of Madra and my son killed by the Pandavas in the encounter? Tell me everything about the great destruction of the Bharatas in detail. How was my son, Duryodhana, slain in the battle? How were all the Panchalas, along with all their followers, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and Droupadi’s five sons killed? How did the Pandavas, the two Satvata warriors,[16] Kripa, Kritavarma and the son of Bharadvaja’s son[17] escape? I wish to hear about the battle exactly as it occurred. O Sanjaya! I wish to hear everything. You are skilled in recounting.”
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Chapter 1222(3)

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Listen to the great destruction of the Kurus and the Pandavas that ensued when they clashed against each other. The son of a suta was slain by the great-souled Pandava. Your soldiers were repeatedly rallied and routed. The senses of your son were overcome by great sorrow and he retreated. On witnessing Partha's valour, the soldiers were extremely anxious. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Confronted by that misery, the soldiers reflected about what should be done next. The troops were being crushed. Loud wails could be heard. In the battle, the kings were in disarray. The great-souled ones had fallen down from their seats on the chariots and from the chariots. O venerable one! In the battle, the elephants and the foot soldiers were being destroyed. An extremely terrible battle was going on, as if Rudra was sporting. Hundreds and thousands of kings confronted an inglorious death.

' "O king! On discerning all this, Kripa, aged and virtuous in conduct, was overcome with compassion. The energetic one approached King Duryodhana. Overcome with anger, the eloquent one spoke these words. 'O Duryodhana! O Kourava! Listen to the words that I am speaking to you. O great king! O unblemished one! Having heard me, act in accordance with those words, if you find them acceptable. O Indra among kings! There is no path that is superior to the dharma of fighting. O bull among kshatriyas! That is the reason kshatriyas resort to fighting. One who lives the life of a kshatriya fights with sons, brothers, fathers, sister's sons, maternal uncles, matrimonial allies and relatives. There is supreme dharma in being killed and adharma in retreat. That is the reason, if one wishes to remain alive, this kind of livelihood is terrible. However, I wish to tell you some beneficial words. O unblemished one! After the deaths of Bhishma, Drona, maharatha Karna and Jayadratha, and the death of your brothers and your son, Lakshmana, what is there left for us to do? They were the ones on whom we resolved to impose the burden of the kingdom. Those brave ones have given up their bodies and gone to the destination reserved for those who know about the brahman. Those maharathas possessed many qualities and we are deprived of them now. We have brought down many kings and are reduced to a miserable state. Even when all of them were alive, Bibhatsu remained unvanquished. Krishna is his eyes and the mighty-armed is extremely difficult to defeat, even by the gods. The ape sits astride his standard, which is like Indra's standard and Indra's bow, with the resplendence of the vajra. The large army trembles at this. Bhima's leonine roars, Panchajanya's blare and Gandiva's twang bring distress to our hearts. Gandiva's brilliance dazzles our eyes. As it is brandished, it is like a circle of fire and is seen to move around, like a giant flash of lightning. Colourful and decorated with gold, that giant bow is brandished around. It is seen in all the directions, like a mass of clouds tinged with lightning. O king! Arjuna is supreme among those who are skilled in weapons. Wielded by Krishna,[18] your troops are driven away, like clouds dispelled by the wind. He is like the great Indra in his radiance and is scorching your soldiers, like a fire that has arisen to burn down the dead wood in a forest during the winter. We have beheld Dhananjaya agitate your soldiers and terrify the kings, like an elephant with four tusks. We have beheld Dhananjaya, like an elephant amidst lotuses. The warriors have been terrified by the twang of Pandava's bow. We have repeatedly seen him, like a lion amidst herds of deer. Those two Krishnas are great archers in all the worlds. They are bulls among all archers. Clad in their armour, they are resplendent amidst all the people. O descendant of the Bharata lienage! This is the seventeenth day of the battle and warriors have been slaughtered in this extremely terrible battle. Your soldiers have been routed and scattered in all the directions, like the wind dispelling masses of clouds during the autumn. O great king! Your troops are trembling because of Savyasachi. They are like an overturned boat, being whirled around on the giant ocean. When we saw that Jayadratha was within the range of his arrows,[19] where were the ones on your side—the son of a suta, Drona and his followers, I, you, Hardikya, your brother Duhshasana, and his brothers? O king! While all the worlds looked on, he used his valour to cross all your relatives, brothers, aides and maternal uncles and placing his feet on their heads,[20] slew Jayadratha. What is left for us to do? Where is the man who can defeat Pandava? The great-souled one possesses many divine weapons. He robs our valour with the twang of Gandiva. With their leaders slain, the soldiers are like the night without the moon, or like a dried up river, with the trees along the banks destroyed by elephants. The mighty-armed one on the white horses is roaming around amidst the soldiers at will, consuming them like fire amidst dead wood. Both Satyaki and Bhimasena have a force that can shatter mountains and dry up all the oceans. O lord of the earth! Bhima uttered words in the midst of the assembly hall. He has accomplished them and will accomplish them again.[21] When Karna was fighting in the forefront, the army of the Pandavas, protected by the wielder of Gandiva, was so strongly protected that it was difficult to assail. You have performed many evil acts against those virtuous ones. Those deeds were unwarranted and the fruits have arrived. For your own sake, you carefully assembled all these people. O son![22] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Both they and you face a danger. O Duryodhana! Protect your own self, because your own self is the reservoir of everything. O son! If that reservoir is destroyed, everything in it is scattered in different directions. A weakened person should try to obtain peace through conciliation. War is meant for someone who is prospering. That is Brihaspati's[23] policy. In terms of the strength of our forces, we are now inferior to the sons of Pandu. O lord! Pardon me, but I think that peace with the Pandavas is indicated now. He who does not know what is beneficial for him, or disregards the beneficial, is quickly dislodged from his kingdom and does not obtain anything superior. O king! If you are able to obtain the kingdom by bowing down before the king,[24] that would be superior to heading towards the folly of defeat. Yudhishthira is compassionate. On the instructions of Vichitravirya's son[25] and on Govinda's words, he will allow you to retain the kingdom. There is no doubt that the unvanquished king, Arjuna, Bhimasena and all of them will do what Hrishikesha asks them to. I think that Krishna will not be able to ignore the words of Kourava Dhritarashtra and the Pandavas will not cross Krishna. I think that a cessation of hostilities with the Parthas is for your own good. I am not saying this out of weakness, or because I wish to save my own life. O king! I am offering you medication and you will remember this later.’[26] The aged Kripa Sharadvata lamented in these words. His sighs were deep and warm and, in sorrow, he lost his senses.” ’

Chapter 1223(4)

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of the earth! Having been thus addressed by the illustrious Goutama, the king let out deep and warm sighs and was silent. Dhritarashtra's great-minded son thought for an instant. The scorcher of enemies then spoke these words to Kripa Sharadvata. 'You have spoken like a well-wisher and I have heard all those words. In the course of fighting, you were ready to give up your life and did everything. You have immersed yourself in the immensely energetic array of Pandava maharathas and fought with them. The worlds have seen this. Like a well-wisher, you have made me listen to your words. But they do not appeal to me, like medicine to a person who is about to die. Those supreme words are beneficial and full of reason. O mighty-armed one! O foremost among brahmanas! However, they do not appeal to me. Having been deprived of his kingdom earlier, why will he[27] trust us now? The king was defeated by us in the great contest of gambling with the dice earlier. Why will he repose any trust in my words now? Engaged in the welfare of the Parthas, Krishna arrived as a messenger.[28] Because of our greed, we acted contrary to Hrishikesha's intent. O brahmana! Why will he pay heed to my words now? When Krishna[29] was summoned to the assembly hall, she lamented. Krishna will not forgive that, or the deprivation of the kingdom. O lord! We had earlier heard that the two Krishnas were united with each other and we have also seen it now. On hearing of the death of his sister's son,[30] Keshava slept in sorrow. We have injured him. Why will he forgive us now? When Abhimanyu died, Arjuna could obtain no peace. Even if he is requested, why will he endeavour for my good? The immensely strong Bhimasena, the second Pandava, is fierce. He has taken a terrible pledge. He will break, rather than bow down. The brave twins are like Yama. They have girded their swords and are clad in armour. They are firm in their enmity. Dhrishtadyumna and

Shikhandi are firm in their enmity towards me. O supreme among brahmanas! Why will they endeavour for my good? Krishna[31] was in her season and was clad in a single garment. While all the worlds looked on, she was oppressed by Duhshasana in the midst of the assembly hall. The Pandavas remember the distress of the naked one. No one is capable of restraining those scorchers of enemies from fighting. To accomplish the objective of her husbands and ensure my destruction, the miserable Droupadi Krishna has tormented herself through severe austerities. Until the hostilities are over, Krishna always sleeps on the bare ground. Vasudeva’s sister has cast aside her pride and her honour and always serves Krishna.[32] Thus, everything has flared up and can never be quenched. Because of Abhimanyu’s death, how can there be peace with me? I have enjoyed the earth, right up to the frontiers on the ocean. How can I be satisfied with the pleasures of a small kingdom, obtained through the favours of the Pandavas? Like a sun, I have blazed above all the kings. How can I follow Yudhishthira, like a servant? I have myself enjoyed all the pleasures and have donated generously. How can I lead a miserable life, together with other miserable people? The words that you have spoken are gentle and beneficial and I do not hate them. But I do not think that the time has arrived for peace. O scorcher of enemies! I see good policy as one that involves fighting well. This is not the time to be a eunuch. This is the time to fight. I have performed many rites and sacrifices. I have given a lot of donations to brahmanas. In due order, I have listened to all the Vedas. I have placed myself on the heads of my enemies. O father![33] I have nurtured my servants well and also distressed ones who have resorted to me. I have gone to the kingdoms of enemies. I have ruled my own kingdom. I have enjoyed many kinds of objects of pleasure. Large numbers of women have served me. I have paid my debts to my ancestors and to the dharma of kshatriyas. It is certain that there is no happiness on earth. What is the kingdom? What is fame? Fame can only be obtained through battle and there is no other way. If a kshatriya dies at home, that is reprehensible. Death in one’s home is great adharma. If a man gives up his body in a forest, or in a battle, he performs a great sacrifice and attains great glory. There are those who lament in distress and misery, overcome by age. They die among their weeping relatives and are not men. I will abandon various objects of pleasure and attain the supreme objective. I will engage in a good battle and go to the worlds of the virtuous. Brave ones, noble in conduct, do not retreat from the field of battle. They are wise and unwavering in their aim. All of them perform sacrifices that involve rites with weapons. It is certain that they reside in heaven. It is certain that large numbers of pure apsaras glance delightedly at them. It is certain that the ancestors see them honoured in Shakra's assembly. They find joy in heaven, surrounded by apsaras. That is the path followed by the immortals and by brave ones who do not retreat. We will now ascend along that virtuous path, followed by the aged grandfather, the intelligent preceptor, Jayadratha, Karna and Duhshasana. There are brave kings who strove for my sake and have been killed. They were mangled by arrows and lay down on the ground, their limbs covered with blood. They were brave and supreme in the knowledge of weapons. They performed the decreed sacrifices. They gave up their lives for another and now reside in Indra's home. They have constructed the path. It will be difficult to travel along, because there are large numbers who are travelling along it with great speed, advancing towards the virtuous end. I remember the brave ones who have been killed in my cause. I wish to repay my debt to them. I am not interested in the kingdom. When my friends, brothers and grandfathers have been brought down, it is certain that the worlds will censure me if I protect my life. In the absence of my relatives, friends and well-wishers, and bowing down to Pandava, what kind of a kingdom will I have? Someone like me has brought the entire earth under his subjugation. I will now attain heaven through a good fight. There is no other way.' When Duryodhana spoke in this way, everyone applauded these words. The kshatriyas praised the king.

' "They ceased to grieve over their defeat and set their minds on bravery. All of them made up their minds to place fighting at the forefront of their hearts. All of them were delighted at the prospect of battle and comforted their mounts. The Kouravas went to a spot that was two yojanas away. This was a sacred and auspicious spot on the slopes of the Himalayas, without any trees. The waters of the Sarasvati were red there and they bathed in it and drank it. Inspired by your son, they rallied. O king! Having again reassured themselves and each other, all the kshatriyas were driven by destiny and waited." '

Chapter 1224(5)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! All those warriors were delighted at the prospect of battle and gathered together on the slopes of the Himalayas. Shalya, Chitrasena, maharatha Shakuni, Ashvatthama, Kripa, Satvata Kritavarma, Sushena, Arishtasena, the valiant Dhritasena, Jayatsena and the kings spent the night there. When the brave Karna was killed in the battle, though your sons desired victory, they were terrified and could find no peace, other than on the slopes of the Himalayas. O king! Having resolved to make every effort in the battle, in the presence of the soldiers, they honoured the king[34] in the prescribed way and, united, said, ‘You should fight with the enemy after having decided on a commander. All the well-wishers will then be protected by him and obtain victory.’ Stationed on his chariot, Duryodhana went to the supreme among rathas,[35] who knew about all the kinds of warfare and was unmatched in a battle. He was pleasant in speech and his neck was like that of a conch shell. He possessed a sword and his head was covered. His face was like a blooming lotus. His mouth was like that of a tiger and he had the majesty of Meru. His shoulders, eyes, gait and voice was like that of Sthanu’s[36] bull. His arms were thick and long, with excellent joints. His chest was extremely broad and well formed. In his speed and strength, he was like Aruna’s younger brother.[37] He was like the sun in his splendour and like Ushanas[38] in his intelligence. He was like the moon in three respects—the beauty of his form, his face and his prosperity. The joints on his body seemed to be made out of golden lotuses. His thighs, waist and feet were formed well, and so were his fingers and nails. He was created by the creator with great care, after remembering all the qualities that should be remembered. He possessed all the auspicious marks. He was skilled and an ocean of learning. He was capable of winning speedily, but was incapable of being defeated by the forces of the enemy. He possessed knowledge about the science of fighting, with its four parts and ten divisions.[39] He knew the four Vedas and their *anga*s, with accounts as the fifth.[40] Drona was not born in a womb. The immensely energetic one observed fierce and careful austerities, worshipping Tryambaka and obtained him through someone who was also not born in a womb.[41] His deeds and beauty were unmatched on earth. He was accomplished in all the forms of learning. He was unblemished and an ocean of qualities. He was immeasurable in his soul. Having approached this Ashvatthama, he said, 'O preceptor's son! For all of us, you are the supreme refuge. Whom should I appoint as a commander now? You should tell me. With him at the forefront, we will fight with the Pandavas and defeat them.'

' "Drona's son replied, 'Let Shalya be the commander of our army. He possesses lineage, bravery, energy, fame, prosperity and all the qualities. He has abandoned his sister's sons[42] and has gratefully come to our side. He possesses a large army and is mighty-armed. He is like Mahasena[43] to the enemy. O supreme among kings! Make that king the commander. We will then be able to obtain victory, like the triumphant gods after appointing Skanda.'

' "When Drona's son said this, all the lords of the earth surrounded Shalya and stationed themselves around him, proclaiming his victory.[44] They set their minds on fighting and were filled with supreme delight. From his chariot, Duryodhana alighted on the ground. He joined his hands in salutation and told Shalya, who was like Rama[45] and Bhishma in battle, 'O one who is devoted to friends! The time has come for friendship. At such times, learned ones can differentiate between a friend and an enemy. You are brave. Station yourself at the forefront of our army. When you advance in the battle, the evil-minded Pandavas, with their advisers and the Panchalas, will lose enterprise.' Shalya replied, 'O king! O king of the Kurus! I will accomplish the task you have thought for me. Everything that I possess, my life, my kingdom and my riches, is for your pleasure.' Duryodhana said, 'O unmatched maternal uncle![46] I instate you as the commander. O foremost among warriors! Save us in this encounter, like Skanda saved the gods in battle. O Indra among kings! I consecrate you, like the gods did to Pavaki.[47] O brave one! Slay the enemies in the battle, like the great Indra against the danavas.'" '

Chapter 1225(6)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! On hearing the king’s words, the powerful king of Madra spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘O Duryodhana! O mighty-armed one! O supreme among eloquent ones! Listen to my words. You think that the two Krishnas, stationed on their chariot, are supreme among rathas. However, though united, they are not my equal in strength of arms. Even if the entire earth were to arise, with gods, asuras and men, I will angrily fight with them in the forefront of the battle, not to speak of the Pandavas. In the battle, I will vanquish the assembled Parthas and Somakas. There is no doubt that I will protect your soldiers. I will construct a vyuha that the enemy will not be able to cross. O Duryodhana! I am telling you this truthfully. Entertain no doubt on this score.’ O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! The king was thus addressed by the lord of Madra and delightedly, in the midst of the soldiers, sanctified him with water, in accordance with the rites laid down in the sacred texts. When he was consecrated, a loud noise arose among the soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They roared like lions and musical instruments were sounded. The maharatha Madraka warriors were delighted. All the kings praised Shalya, the ornament of a battle. ‘O king! May you be victorious. May you live for a long time. Slay the assembled enemy. The immensely strong son of Dhritarashtra has obtained the strength of your arms. Let him slaughter the enemy and rule over the entire earth. You are capable of defeating the gods, the asuras and humans in a battle, not to speak of the Somakas and the Srinjayas, who must follow the dharma of mortals.’ The powerful lord of the Madras was praised in this way. The brave one was filled with great joy, the likes of which cannot be obtained by those who have not controlled their souls. Shalya said, ‘O Indra among kings! In the battle today, I will slay all the Panchalas and the Pandavas, or be slain and go to heaven. The worlds will see me roam around fearlessly today. Let all the sons of Pandu, Vasudeva, Satyaki, the Panchalas, the Chedis, all the sons of Droupadi, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and all the Prabhadrakas behold my valour and the great strength of my bow, in addition to the dexterity and valour of my weapons and the strength of my arms in the encounter. Let the Parthas, the siddhas and the charanas behold me today, with the strength of my arms and the wealth of my weapons. The maharatha Pandavas will witness my valour today. Let the enemy try out different means of countering me. Today, I will drive away the Pandu soldiers in every direction. O Kourava! For the sake of bringing you pleasure, I will roam around and fight in the battle today, surpassing Drona, Bhishma and the son of a suta.' O one who grants honours! Amidst your soldiers, Shalya was thus consecrated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No one felt any sorrow on account of Karna. The soldiers were happy and cheerful in their minds. They thought that the Parthas had already been killed and had come under the subjugation of the king of Madra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your soldiers were filled with great joy. They were assured and slept happily during the night.

' "On hearing the sounds made by your soldiers, while all the kshatriyas heard, King Yudhishthira spoke these words to Varshneya. 'O Madhava! Honoured by all the soldiers, Dhritarashtra's son has made the great archer, Shalya, the king of Madra, the commander. O Madhava! Having heard this, do what is beneficial. You are our leader and our protector. Do what must be done next.' O great king! Vasudeva told the king, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I know everything about Artayani.[48] He is brave and immensely energetic. In particular, he is great-souled. He is accomplished and colourful in fighting. He also possesses dexterity. In an encounter, he is like Bhishma, Drona and Karna. The king of Madra may even be superior to them. That is my view. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of men! On thinking about it, I cannot find a warrior on your side who is his equal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, he possesses a strength that is superior to Shikhandi, Arjuna, Bhima, Satvata[49] and Dhrishtadyumna. O great king! The king of Madra is like a lion and an elephant in valour. He will roam around fearlessly, like a wrathful Destroyer among beings, when the time for destruction has arrived. O tiger among men! In the battle today, with the exception of you, I do not see any warrior who can fight against him. He is like a tiger in his bravery. Barring you, there is no other man in all of heaven or earth. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In a battle, there is no one else who can kill the angry king of Madra. He has fought from one day to another, agitating your troops. Therefore, kill Shalya in the battle, like Maghavan against Shambara. The brave one is revered by Dhritarashtra's son. When the lord of Madra is killed in the battle, thereafter, victory will be certain. When he is slain, the large army of the son of Dhritarashtra will also be completely destroyed. O great king! O Partha! In the battle, having heard my words, advance against the large army of the king of Madra. O mighty-armed one! Slay him, like Vasava against Namuchi.[50] You should not think of him as your maternal uncle and show any compassion. With the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront, kill the lord of Madra. The ocean of Bhishma and Drona and the nether region of Karna have been crossed. Having encountered the trifle[51] of Shalya, do not get submerged, with your followers. You possess austerities and valour and the strength of kshatriyas. Exhibit all of those in the battle. Kill the maharatha.' Having spoken these words, Keshava, the slayer of enemy heroes, was honoured by the Pandavas. In the evening, he went to his own camp. When Keshava had left, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira dismissed all his brothers and the Panchalas and the Somakas. He slept happily in the night, like an elephant from which stakes have been removed. All the Panchalas and the Pandavas, great archers, were delighted that Karna had been killed, and slept well during the night. The great archers were cured of their fever. The maharathas had reached a bank.[52] The Pandaveya soldiers rejoiced during the night. O venerable one! With the son of a suta slain, they had obtained victory." '

Chapter 1226(7)

‘Sanjaya said, “When night was over, King Duryodhana asked all the maharathas on your side to arm themselves. On hearing the king’s command, the army armoured itself. Some quickly yoked the chariots. Others rushed here and there. The elephants were prepared. The foot soldiers were armoured. Thousands of others spread out coverlets on the horses. O lord of the earth! Musical instruments were sounded and a large roar arose. This was meant to enthuse the warriors and the soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the soldiers were seen to be properly arrayed in the army. They made up their minds to die, rather than retreat. The maharathas made Shalya, the king of Madra, their commander. They divided the army into divisions and stationed themselves. The time having arrived, all the soldiers, with Kripa, Kritavarma, Drona’s son, Shalya and Soubala, approached your son, together with the kings who were still alive. They resolved, ‘One who fights alone with the Pandavas, or one who abandons a co-warrior who is fighting single-handedly with the Pandaveyas, will commit a sin equal to the five great sins and all the minor sins.[53] We will protect each other and fight in a united way.’ The time having arrived, all the maharathas adopted such a resolution. With the king of Madra at the forefront, they quickly advanced against the enemy. O king! In that fashion, in the great battle, the Pandavas also arranged their soldiers in a vyuha. Wishing to fight, all of them advanced against the Kouravas from every side. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! That army[54] made a sound like that of the agitated ocean. With the chariots and the elephants, it assumed a form like that of turbulent waves on an ocean.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “I have heard about the downfall of Drona, Bhishma and Radheya. Tell me now about the downfall of Shalya and my son. O Sanjaya! How was Shalya slain by Dharmaraja in the battle? And how was my mighty-armed son, Duryodhana, brought down by Bhima?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “There was a destruction of the bodies of men, horses, elephants and chariots. O king! Be patient and listen. I will describe the battle that ensued to you. O king! At that time, hope became powerful among your sons. O venerable one! This was despite Bhishma, Drona and the son of a suta having been brought down. They thought that Shalya would kill all the Parthas in the battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Resorting to this hope in their hearts, they were comforted. In the battle, they sought refuge with the maharatha king of Madra. Your son thought that he had found himself a protector. O king! When Karna was slain, the Parthas roared like lions. At that time, a great fear had overtaken the sons of Dhritarashtra. However, they now sought refuge with the powerful king of Madra. O great king! Having constructed a vyuha that was auspicious in every way,[55] the powerful king of Madra attacked the Parthas in the battle. He brandished his colourful bow, which was extremely forceful and capable of withstanding a great burden. The maharatha was on an excellent chariot, yoked to horses from the Sindhu region. O great king! The furrows created by the ratha’s chariot were beautiful to behold. The brave one, afflicter of enemies, was surrounded by brave rathas. O great king! The valiant one dispelled the fears of your sons. Armoured and stationed at the head of the vyuha, the king of Madra advanced. He was accompanied by the brave Madrakas and Karna’s invincible sons. Kritavarma, surrounded by the Trigartas, was on the left flank. With the Shakas and the Yavanas, Goutama[56] was on the right flank. Surrounded by the Kambojas, Ashvatthama was at the rear. Protected by the bulls among the Kurus, Duryodhana was in the middle. Soubala was surrounded by a large army of horses. The gambler’s maharatha son advanced with all the soldiers.[57] The Pandavas, great archers and scorchers of enemies, also arranged their soldiers into a vyuha. O great king! They divided themselves into three[58] and attacked your soldiers. In the battle, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi and maharatha Satyaki quickly rushed against Shalya’s army. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Wishing to kill, King Yudhishthira surrounded himself by his own troops and attacked Shalya. The great archer Arjuna, the slayer of enemy hordes, powerfully rushed against Hardikya and large numbers of samshaptakas. O Indra among kings! Wishing to kill the enemy in the battle, Bhimasena and the maharatha Somakas attacked Goutama. In the battle, maharatha Shakuni and Uluka were stationed with their forces, and Madri's two sons attacked them, with their soldiers. In that way, tens of thousands of your warriors angrily attacked the Pandavas in the battle, with many different kinds of weapons in their hands."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "O Sanjaya! The great archers and maharathas, Bhishma, Drona and Karna, were killed. In the battle, among the Kurus and the Pandavas, there were only a few left. The powerful Parthas again became enraged in the battle. What were the remaining forces on my side, and on the side of the enemy?"

'Sanjaya replied, "O king! The remaining forces on our side, and on that of the enemy, were stationed for battle again. Listen to who were left in the encounter. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Your side had eleven thousand rathas, ten thousand and seven hundred elephants and a complete complement of two hundred thousand horses. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were also three crores of men. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The forces of the Pandavas consisted of six thousand rathas, six thousand elephants, ten thousand horses and one crore of foot soldiers.[59] This is what was left to them in the battle. O bull among the Bharata lineage! These were the ones who attacked each other. O Indra among kings! We followed the instructions of the king of Madra and divided ourselves. Desiring victory, we advanced against the Pandavas. In that way, the brave Pandavas also wished for victory in the battle. With the illustrious Panchalas, those tigers among men attacked. O lord! When it was dawn, thus did those tigers among men rush against each other, wishing to kill each other and rushing forward in strong waves. A fierce battle commenced and it was terrible in form. Those on your side, and the enemy, wished to kill each other." '

Chapter 1227(8)

'Sanjaya said, "O Indra among kings! The terrible battle between the Kurus and the Srinjayas commenced. It was like that between the gods and the asuras and increased one's fear. Men, chariots, crowds of elephants, thousands of riders and horses powerfully clashed against each other. Elephants that were terrible in form rushed forward, and a great noise was heard, like clouds roaring in the sky during the rains. Some rathas were struck by the elephants and fell down from their chariots. In the battle, those brave ones were routed and driven away by those crazy ones.[60] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Large numbers of well-trained horses were stationed there, to guard the feet of the rathas. Because of the arrows, they were dispatched to the world of the hereafter. O king! Trained horse riders surrounded the maharathas and, roaming around in the battle, slew them with spears, javelins and swords. Some men used bows to repulse the maharathas. Many attacked one and dispatched him to Yama's eternal abode. Maharathas surrounded elephants and the best of chariots. They severed the heads of the warriors and drove them away, with a great roar. The rathas were enraged and shot many arrows. O great king! In every direction, they surrounded and slew the elephants. In the battle, elephants attacked elephants and rathas attacked rathas. Using spears, javelins and iron arrows, they killed each other. In the field of battle, foot soldiers, chariots, elephants and horses were seen to be driven away, creating a great tumult. Horses adorned with whisks were routed and drank up the earth[61] and were like swans on the slopes of the Himalayas. O lord of the earth! The earth was marked with the hooves of the horses and was as beautiful as a woman with the marks of nails on her body.[62] There were sounds from the hooves of the horses and the wheels of chariots. There were the sounds of foot soldiers and the trumpeting of elephants. Musical instruments were sounded and conch shells blared. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The earth resounded, as if it had been struck by a storm. There was the twang of bows. Swords blazed and the armour was radiant. Nothing could be seen. Many arms were severed and were like the trunks of kings of elephants. They writhed fearfully with great force, or were immobile. O great king! Heads fell down on the surface of the earth and a sound was heard, like that when ripe palm fruit falls down. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of the heads that fell down, the earth was red with blood and looked beautiful, as if adorned with golden lotuses in the right season. O great king! With lives lost, the eyes were dilated. With all those wounds, it looked beautiful, as if covered with lotuses. O Indra among kings! Severed hands fell down on the ground, smeared with sandalwood paste and adorned with extremely expensive armlets. They were as dazzling as Shakra's standard. In the great battle, the thighs of the kings were severed. They adorned the field of battle, like the trunks of elephants. Hundreds of headless torsos were strewn around, and umbrellas and fans. That forest of soldiers was as beautiful as a blooming forest. O great king! The warriors roamed around fearlessly. With blood flowing from their limbs, they were seen to be like flowering kimshukas. Elephants were seen there, afflicted by arrows and spears. They fell down in the battle, like dispersed clouds. O great king! The great-souled ones slaughtered divisions of elephants. They drove them away in all the directions, like clouds dispelled by the wind. Those elephants were like clouds. In every direction, they shrieked and fell down. They were like mountains shattered by thunder, at the time of the destruction of a yuga. Horses fell down on the ground, together with their riders. With their harnesses, those heaps were seen to be like mountains. A river was created on the field of battle and it flowed towards the world hereafter. The water was made out of blood and the chariots were the eddies. The standards were like trees and the bones were the rocks. The arms were the crocodiles. The bows were the current. The elephants were the boulders. The horses were the stones. Fat and marrow constituted the mire. The umbrellas were the swans. The clubs were rafts. Armour and headdresses were scattered around. The flags were like beautiful trees. There were a large number of wheels, trivenus and poles. This delighted brave ones and generated terror among cowards. That terrible river, full of Kurus and Srinjayas, flowed along. That extremely horrible river flowed along to the world of the ancestors. Those brave ones possessed arms like clubs and used their mounts as boats to cross it. O lord of the earth! That cruel battle raged on. It was fierce and led to the destruction of the four kinds of forces,[63] like that in earlier times between the gods and the asuras. O scorcher of enemies! Relatives called out to each other. Other terrified ones returned, after being summoned by their relatives. That battle was cruel and fierce.

‘ “Arjuna and Bhimasena confounded the enemy. O lord of men! They slaughtered your large army. Your soldiers were confounded by Bhimasena and Dhananjaya. They lost their senses, like a woman under the influence of alcohol. They[64] blew on their conch shells and roared like lions. On hearing that loud noise, with Dharmaraja at the forefront, Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi attacked the king of Madra. O lord of the earth! It was terrible in form and we witnessed something that was extraordinary. Those brave ones, who were fighting in different segments, united and attacked Shalya. Madri’s sons were proud, skilled in the use of weapons and invincible in battle. Wishing to slay your soldiers, they attacked spiritedly. O bull among the Bharata lineage! At this, your forces retreated. The Pandavas, desiring victory, used arrows to mangle them in many ways. While your sons looked on, the army was slaughtered. O great king! Afflicted by the ones who wielded firm bows, they were routed in different directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great sound of lamentation arose among your warriors. There were some other great-souled kshatriyas who still desired victory in the battle,[65] and they asked them to wait. However, your soldiers were shattered and routed by the Pandavas. In the battle, they abandoned their beloved sons, brothers, grandfathers, maternal uncles, sisters’ sons, kin and relatives. Urging the horses and elephants to speed up, the warriors fled in different directions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were only interested in saving themselves.” ’

Chapter 1228(9)

'Sanjaya said, "On seeing that the army was shattered, the powerful king of Madra urged his charioteer, 'Quickly drive these extremely swift horses towards the spot where King Yudhishthira, Pandu's son, is stationed. He is resplendent, with a white umbrella held aloft his head. O charioteer! Take me there swiftly and behold my might. The Parthas are incapable of remaining stationed before me in the battle today.' Having been thus addressed, the charioteer of the king of Madra departed for the spot where Dharmaraja King Yudhishthira, unwavering in his aim, was. In the battle, Shalya violently descended on the large army of the Pandavas, like the shoreline holding back the rolling waves of the ocean. O venerable one! The Pandava troops clashed against Shalya and stationed themselves in that battle, like a mountain against a flood of water. On seeing that the king of Madra was stationed in the battle, the Kurus returned, preferring death over retreat. O king! They returned and positioned themselves in different arrays. An extremely terrible battle commenced and blood flowed like water.

' "Nakula, invincible in battle, clashed against Chitrasena.[66] Wielding colourful bows, those two clashed against each other. They were like two clouds that had arisen to the south and the north, and showered down. In the battle, they rained down arrows on each other. I could not differentiate between Pandava and his adversary. Both of them were strong and skilled in the use of weapons. They were knowledgeable about the conduct of rathas. They endeavoured to kill each other and tried to seek out each other's weaknesses. O great king! Using a yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow, Chitrasena severed Nakula's bow in his hand. Having severed his bow, he then used three gold-tufted arrows that had been sharpened on stone to fearlessly strike him on the forehead. He used sharp arrows to dispatch his horses to the land of the dead and then brought down his standard and charioteer with three arrows each. O king! The three arrows released from his enemy’s arm were affixed to his forehead and Nakula looked as beautiful as a mountain with three peaks. His bow was severed and he was without a chariot. The brave one grasped a sword and a shield and jumped down from his chariot, like a lion from the summit of a mountain. As he advanced on foot, arrows were showered down on him. However, Nakula was fierce in his spirit and dexterous in his valour. He received them on his shield. He was colourful in fighting and conquered his exhaustion. While all the soldiers looked on, the mighty-armed one approached Chitrasena’s chariot and climbed up. Pandava severed Chitrasena’s head, with its earrings and crown, excellent nose and large eyes, from his head. Resplendent as the sun, he fell down from his chariot. On seeing that Chitrasena had been killed, all the maharathas there roared loudly like lions and uttered words of praise.

‘ “On seeing that their brother had been killed, Karna’s maharatha sons, Sushena and Satyasena, released sharp arrows.[67] They swiftly attacked Pandava, supreme among rathas. O king! They wished to kill him, like two tigers against an elephant in the large forest. Both of them attacked the maharatha with sharp arrows. They flooded him with arrows, like clouds showering down rain. Though he was pierced with arrows all over, Pandava was cheerful. The valiant one grasped another bow and ascended his chariot. The brave one was stationed in the battle, like an enraged Yama. O king! O lord of the earth! Those two brothers used straight-tufted arrows to shatter his chariot. However, in the battle, Nakula laughed. He used four sharp and pointed arrows to slay Satyasena’s four horses. O Indra among kings! Pandava affixed a gold-tufted iron arrow that had been sharpened on stone to sever Satyasena’s bow. Satyasena grasped another bow and ascended another chariot. He and Sushena attacked Pandava. O great king! In the forefront of the battle, without any fear, Madri’s powerful son pierced each of them with two arrows. Maharatha Sushena became enraged. He laughed in the battle and used a kshurapra arrow to sever Pandava’s large bow. Nakula became senseless with rage and picked up another bow. He pierced Sushena with five arrows and severed his standard with another one. O venerable one! In the encounter, he spiritedly severed Satyasena’s bow and arm-guard. At this, the people roared. He grasped another bow that was forceful and capable of bearing a great load.

From every direction, he enveloped Pandu’s descendant with arrows. Nakula, the slayer of enemy heroes, repulsed those arrows and pierced both Satyasena and Sushena with two arrows each. O Indra among kings! Each of them separately pierced him back with arrows. They next pierced his charioteer with sharp arrows. The powerful Satyasena displayed the dexterity of his hands. Using separate arrows, he severed Nakula’s chariot and bow. However, the atiratha[68] remained stationed on his chariot. He picked up a spear[69] that possessed a golden handle and was sharp at the tip. It was washed in oil and was extremely bright. It was as radiant as the flickering tongue of an immensely poisonous serpent maiden. In the battle, having grasped it, he hurled it towards Satyasena. O king! In the encounter, it pierced his heart and shattered it into one hundred fragments. Deprived of his life and bereft of his senses, he fell down from the chariot onto the ground. On seeing that his brother had been slain, Sushena became senseless with rage. He swiftly showered down arrows on Pandu’s descendant, who was fighting on foot. On seeing that Nakula was without a chariot, Droupadi’s immensely strong son, Sutasoma, wished to save his father[70] in the battle and attacked. Nakula climbed onto Sutasoma’s chariot. The foremost among the Bharata lineage looked as beautiful as a lion on a mountain. He picked up another bow and started to fight with Sushena. They showered down arrows on each other and looked dazzling. Those two supreme maharathas made great efforts to slay each other. Sushena angrily struck Pandava with three arrows and pierced Sutasoma in the arms and the chest with twenty arrows. O great king! Nakula, the destroyer of enemy heroes, became angry at this. The valiant one covered all the directions with his arrows. In the battle, he grasped an extremely energetic arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon and was pointed at the tip. With great force, he shot it towards Karna’s son. O supreme among kings! While all the soldiers looked on, it severed his head from his body and it was extraordinary. O king! He was slain by the great-souled Nakula and fell down, like a large tree on a bank that is destroyed by the force of a river. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Karna’s son had been killed and on beholding Nakula’s valour, your soldiers were frightened and fled.

‘ “O great king! The powerful king of Madra saw that the soldiers were running away in the battle. The brave one, the commander who was a scorcher of enemies, sought to restrain the terrified troops. O great king! He roared loudly like a lion and fiercely twanged his bow. O king! The one with the firm bow protected those on your side in the battle. The ones who were running around in different directions returned. From every direction, they surrounded the king of Madra, the great archer. O king! The large army was stationed there, wishing to fight on every side. Satyaki, Bhimasena and the Pandavas who were Madri's sons placed the modest Yudhishthira, the scorcher of enemies, at their head. Those brave ones surrounded him in the battle and roared like lions. There was the fierce sound of arrows whizzing. They let out many kinds of roars. In that way, all those on your side angrily surrounded the lord of Madra, desiring to fight again. A battle commenced and it increased the terror of cowards. Those on your side, and that of the enemy, preferred death to retreat and were without fear. O lord of the earth! It was like that between the gods and the asuras in earlier times. It extended Yama's kingdom.

' "O king! Having killed the samshaptakas in the battle, the descendant of the Pandu lineage, with the ape on his banner, attacked the Kourava soldiers. The remaining Pandavas, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, attacked those soldiers and shot sharp arrows. They[71] were overwhelmed and confused by the Pandavas and could not distinguish the directions and the sub-directions. The Pandavas covered them with sharp arrows. In every direction, the foremost ones among the Kourava army were slaughtered and they were routed by the maharatha sons of Pandu. O king! In that way, in the battle, hundreds and thousands of Pandava soldiers were killed by your sons, who shot arrows from every direction. Those two armies slaughtered each other and were tormented. They were anxious and agitated, like rivers during the monsoon. O Indra among kings! In the great battle, those on your side were overcome by a sharp and great fear and so were the Pandavas." '

Chapter 1229(10)

‘Sanjaya said, “The soldiers slaughtered each other and were agitated. The warriors were driven away and the tuskers shrieked. In the great battle, the foot soldiers lamented loudly. O great king! The horses ran away in many directions. For all living beings, there was terrible destruction and carnage. Many weapons descended and chariots and elephants were mangled. Those who found joy in battle were delighted. The fear of cowards increased. Wishing to kill each other, the warriors immersed themselves in this. They gave up their lives in that extremely terrible gambling match. The fierce battle extended Yama’s kingdom. The Pandavas slaughtered your soldiers with sharp arrows. In that way, your warriors killed the Pandava soldiers. The battle continued and terrified cowards. It was the morning, after the sun had arisen. Unwavering in their aim, the great-souled Pandavas protected the king[72] and killed the enemy. They were powerful and proud strikers and did not miss their objective. They fought against your soldiers, preferring death to retreat. O Kouravya! Your forces weakened, like deer when there is a fire.

‘ “The army was weakened, like a cow submerged in mud. On seeing this, Shalya wished to rescue it and advanced towards the Pandu army. The king of Madra was angry and picked up a supreme bow. In the battle, he rushed against the Pandava assassins. O great king! The Pandavas desired victory in the encounter. They attacked the king of Madra and pierced him with sharp arrows. While Dharmaraja looked on, the immensely strong king of Madra afflicted those soldiers with hundreds of sharp arrows. O king! At that time, many different kinds of portents manifested themselves. The earth, with its mountains, moved and made a noise. From the solar disc in the firmament, meteors descended on the earth in every direction. They were fierce at the tip, like spears with handles. O lord of the earth! O king! Many deer, buffaloes and birds kept your soldiers to the right.[73] O lord of men! As large numbers descended on each other and attacked with all their divisions, there was a fierce encounter. The Kouravas attacked the Pandava divisions.

‘ “Spirited in his soul, Shalya attacked Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, showering down arrows, like the one with one thousand eyes[74] pouring down rain. The immensely strong one used gold-tufted arrows that were sharpened on stone to pierce Bhimasena, all of Droupadi’s sons, the two Pandavas who were Madri’s sons, Dhrishtadyumna, Shini’s descendant and Shikhandi, striking each of them with ten arrows. He rained down arrows, like Maghavan showering rain at the end of summer. O king! Because of Shalya’s arrows, thousands of Prabhadrakas and Somakas were seen to fall down, or falling down. They were like flights of bees or locusts, driven by the wind. Shalya’s arrows descended, like lightning from clouds. Elephants, horses, foot soldiers and rathas were distressed. Because of Shalya’s arrows, they fell down, or wandered around, shrieking. They were afflicted by the lord of Madra’s anger and manliness. In the battle, he enveloped the enemy, like Yama bestirred by destiny. The immensely strong lord of Madra roared, like lightning in the clouds. The Pandava soldiers were slaughtered by Shalya, with his dexterity and his sharp arrows, and ran towards Kounteya, Ajatashatru Yudhishthira. In the battle, they were oppressed by that great shower of arrows and sought refuge with Yudhishthira. On seeing that he[75] was angrily descending with foot soldiers and horses, King Yudhishthira countered him with sharp arrows, like a crazy elephant checked with a goad. Shalya released a terrible arrow that was like a venomous serpent. It pierced the great-souled one with force and fell down on the ground. At this, Vrikodara wrathfully pierced him with seven arrows, Sahadeva with five and Nakula with ten arrows. Droupadi’s sons showered down arrows on Artayani, the immensely fortunate slayer of enemies, like clouds pouring down on a mountain. On seeing that Shalya was assailed from every side by the Parthas, Kritavarma and Kripa attacked angrily. Uluka attacked like a bird[76] and so did Shakuni Soubala. Maharatha Ashvatthama smiled gently. All your sons protected Shalya in the battle.

‘ “Kritavarma used three arrows with iron heads to pierce Bhimasena. Assuming an angry form, he repulsed him with a great shower of arrows. Kripa angrily afflicted Dhrishtadyumna with a shower of arrows. Shakuni attacked Droupadi's son and Drona's son attacked the twins. Duryodhana, best of warriors, was fierce in his energy and strong. In the battle, he advanced against Keshava and Arjuna and attacked them with arrows. There were hundreds of duels between those on your side and the enemy at various spots. O lord of the earth! It was fierce in form and wonderful. In the battle, Bhoja slew Bhima's brown horses. When the horses were slain, Pandu's descendant descended from his chariot and fought with a club in his hand, like Yama with an upraised staff. In his sight, the king of Madra slew Sahadeva's horses. At this, Sahadeva killed Shalya's son with his sword. The preceptor, Goutama, again fought with Dhrishtadyumna. Both of them were fearless and made efforts against each other. The preceptor's son[77] wasn't very angry. He smiled and pierced each of Droupadi's brave sons with ten arrows. O king! Shalya angrily slaughtered the Somakas and the Pandavas. He again afflicted Yudhishthira with sharp arrows.

' "The valiant Bhima was angry in the battle and bit his lower lips in rage. To destroy him,[78] he hurled a club. It was like Yama's staff and was raised, like the night of destruction. It was capable of destroying the lives of elephants, horses and men. It was bound in golden cloth and blazed like a meteor. It was like the vajra to the touch and was completely made out of iron. It was as fierce as a she-serpent and was slung in a noose. It was smeared with sandalwood paste and unguents, like a desired woman. It was smeared with fat and marrow and it was like Yama's tongue. There were bells attached to it and it was like Vasava's vajra. It was smeared with the fat of elephants and it was like a snake that had cast off its skin. It frightened the enemy soldiers and delighted the soldiers on one's own side. It was famous in the world of men and was capable of shattering the summit of a mountain. It was one with which powerful Kounteya had challenged the lord of Alaka, Maheshvara's friend, in his abode in Kailasa.[79] For the sake of the *mandara* flower, the immensely strong one had proudly killed many guhyakas, who used their powers of maya, in the abode of the lord of the riches. To ensure Droupadi's pleasure, he had countered many. It[80] was famous as the vajra and possessing eight sides, it was embellished with diamonds, gems and jewels. Raising it, the mighty-armed one attacked Shalya in the battle. He was skilled in fighting and grasped that fearful club. He brought down Shalya’s four horses, which were extremely fast. At this, Shalya became angry in the battle. He hurled a javelin towards his broad chest and roared. It pierced the brave one’s armour and penetrated. However, Vrikodara wasn’t frightened. He plucked the javelin out and pierced the king of Madra’s charioteer in the heart with it. With the armour penetrated, he was distressed in his mind and began to vomit blood. He fell downwards and the king of Madra looked on, in sorrow. On seeing that his own deed had been countered, Shalya wondered in his mind. Serene in his soul, he grasped a club and glanced towards his opponent. On beholding his deed in the battle, the Parthas were delighted in their minds and honoured Bhimasena, the performer of terrible and unblemished deeds.” ’

Chapter 1230(11)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Shalya saw that his charioteer had been killed. He quickly picked up a club that was completely made out of iron and stood immobile, like a mountain. He was like the blazing fire of destruction, or like Yama with a noose in his hand. He was like the summit of Kailasa, or Vasava with the vajra. He was like the tawny-eyed one[81] with a trident, or like a crazy elephant in the forest. Bhima grasped a mighty club and swiftly dashed towards him. At that time, thousands of conch shells and trumpets blared. The brave ones roared like lions and this increased one’s delight. All the warriors saw them fight against each other, like giant elephants. Those on your side, and on the side of the enemy, uttered words of praise. With the exception of the lord of Madra, Rama[82] and the descendant of the Yadu lineage, who else was capable of withstanding Bhimasena’s force in an encounter? With the exception of the great-souled lord of Madra and the force of his club, which other warrior was capable of fighting against Vrikodara? They roared like bulls and circled each other. With clubs in their hands, the king of Madra and Vrikodara wheeled around each other. In the circles that they executed, or in the way they roamed around with the clubs, there was nothing to differentiate those two lions among men in the encounter. Shalya’s club was made of gold. It was radiant and sparkling and increased one’s terror. It was tied in cloth that looked like a net of fire. The great-souled Bhima roamed around in circles with a radiant club that looked like clouds tinged with lightning. O king! The king of Madra struck Bhima’s club with his club and this generated blazing sparks of fire. In that way, Bhima struck Shalya’s club with his club and this released a shower of flames. It was extraordinary. They were like giant elephants with tusks, or gigantic bulls with horns. They struck each other with the tips of their clubs, wishing to kill each other. Struck by the clubs, in a short while, blood began to flow from their bodies. They were beautiful to behold, like two flowering kimshukas. Bhimsena was struck on the right and the left by the king of Madra’s club. However, the mighty-armed one was immobile, like a mountain. O king! In that fashion, Shalya was repeatedly struck by the force of Bhima’s club. But he did not waver, like a mountain struck by a tusker. The sounds generated by those two lions among men could be heard in all the directions. The clubs descended and struck, with a sound like that of the vajra. Those two immensely valorous ones stopped for a while and then again attacked with their clubs. They again roamed around, executing circular motions. Raising those iron staffs, they advanced eight steps forward and struck each other, performing a superhuman deed. They roamed around, executing circular motions and seeking to strike each other. Those accomplished ones exhibited great deeds. They raised those terrible clubs, which were like the summits of mountains. They struck each other, like mountains at the time of an earthquake. They were severely struck from the force of each other’s clubs. Both of those brave ones simultaneously fell down, like Indra’s standards. Sounds of lamenation arose from the brave ones in both armies. They were severely struck in their inner organs and lost their senses. Shalya, bull among the Madras, was severely struck by the club and Kripa used his chariot to swiftly bear him away from the field of battle. Bhimasena was also weakened and senseless. However, he raised himself in an instant. With the club in his hand, he challenged the king of Madra.

‘ “The brave ones on your side raised many kinds of weapons. To the sound of diverse kinds of musical instruments, they fought with the Pandu soldiers. They held weapons in their hands and made a great noise. O great king! With Duryodhana at the forefront, they attacked. On seeing those soldiers, the sons of Pandu roared like lions and advanced, wishing to kill Duryodhana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that they were swiftly descending, your son severely pierced Chekitana[83] in the heart with a javelin. Struck thus by your son, he fell down from his chariot. With blood flowing from his body, he was submerged in great darkness. On seeing that Chekitana had been killed, the maharatha Pandavas engaged and showered down arrows on the different divisions. O great king! The Pandavas could be seen to roam around and attacked your soldiers from every direction, desiring victory. With the king of Madra at the forefront, Kripa, Kritavarma and the immensely strong Soubala fought with Dharmaraja. O great king! Duryodhana fought with Dhrishtadyumna, who was the slayer of Bharadvaja's son and great in his valour and bravery. O king! Goaded by your son, with Drona's son at their head, three thousand rathas on your side fought Vijaya.

' "O king! Setting their minds on victory and ready to give up their lives, those on your side penetrated, like swans into a large lake. As they sought to kill each other, an extremely terrible battle raged on. They wished to kill each other and were delighted at being able to strike each other. O king! The battle that led to the destruction of the best among brave ones continued. The earth was covered with a terrible dust that arose in the air. We could ascertain who the Pandavas were, only when they called out to each other. We fought fearlessly. O tiger among men! That dust was pacified by the blood. When the dust was pacified, the directions could clearly be seen. The fearful battle, terrible in form, continued between those on your side and the enemy. No one wished to retreat. With Brahma's world as the supreme objective, they wished for victory in the battle. Wishing to go to heaven, those brave men fought an excellent war. Setting their minds on the tasks of their masters, they wished to repay the debts of their masters. With their minds set on heaven, they fought and clashed against each other. The maharathas released many different kinds of weapons. They roared at each other and struck each other. 'Strike. Pierce. Seize. Hit. Sever.' These were the words that were heard amongst the armies on your side and that of the enemy.

' "O great king! Wishing to kill maharatha Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, Shalya pierced him with sharp arrows. O great king! However, Partha knew about the inner organs. He smiled and struck him in the inner organs with fourteen iron arrows. The immensely illustrious one wished to kill Pandava and repulsed him with arrows. In the battle, he angrily pierced him with many arrows tufted with the feathers of herons. O great king! While all the soldiers looked on, he again struck Yudhishthira with an arrow with a drooping tuft. Dharmaraja became extremely angry. The immensely illustrious one pierced the king of Madra with sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. The maharatha then struck Chandrasena with seventy arrows, his charioteer with nine and Drumasena with sixty-four.[84] O king! When the protectors of his chariot wheels were slain by the great-minded Pandava, Shalya killed twenty-five Chedis. He pierced Satyaki with twenty-five sharp arrows, Bhimasena with five and Madri’s two sons with one hundred. O supreme among kings! While he was thus roaming around in the battle, Partha shot sharp arrows at him and these were like venomous serpents. In the battle, with a broad-headed arrow, Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, brought down the tip of his adversary’s standard from his chariot, while he looked on. Severed by the great-souled son of Pandu, the standard was seen to fall down, like the summit of a mountain. On seeing that his standard had been brought down and on seeing Pandava stationed, the king of Madra angrily showered down arrows. Shalya showered down arrows, like Parjanya pouring down rain. The bull among the kshatriya lineage, immeasurable in his soul, showered down arrows on the kshatriyas—Satyaki, Bhimasena and the two Pandavas who were the sons of Madri. He pierced each of them with five arrows and afflicted Yudhishthira. O great king! We saw a net of arrows spread over Pandava’s chest, like a mass of clouds that had risen. In the battle, maharatha Shalya angrily used straight-tufted arrows to envelop the directions and the sub-directions. King Yudhishthira was afflicted by that net of arrows. He seemed to have been deprived of his valour, like Jambha by the slayer of Vritra.” ’[85]

Chapter 1231(12)

‘Sanjaya said, “O venerable one! When Dharmaraja was thus afflicted by the king of Madra, Satyaki, Bhimasena and the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons surrounded Shalya with chariots and oppressed him in the battle. On seeing that the single-handed one was afflicted by the maharathas, great sounds of praise arose from the delighted siddhas.[86] The assembled sages also said that it was extraordinary. Shalya was like a dart in his valour[87] and in the battle, Bhimsena pierced him with an arrow. He then pierced him again with seven. Satyaki wished to rescue Dharma’s son. He covered the lord of Madra with hundreds of arrows and roared like a lion. Nakula pierced him with five arrows. Sahadeva pierced him with seven and then swiftly pierced him again with another seven. While he endeavoured in the battle, the brave one was afflicted by those maharathas. He brandished his terrible bow, which was extremely forceful and capable of bearing a great load. O venerable one! Shalya pierced Satyaki with twenty-five arrows, Bhimasena with seventy-three and Nakula with seven. In the battle, he used broad-headed arrows to sever the archer Sahadeva’s bow, with an arrow affixed to it, and pierced him with seventy-three arrows. Sahadeva strung another bow. In the encounter, he struck his greatly radiant maternal uncle with five arrows that were like virulent serpents and blazed like the fire. In the battle, extremely enraged, he struck his charioteer with arrows with drooping tufts and pierced him[88] again with three arrows. Bhimasena struck Shalya in his body with seventy-three arrows, Satyaki with nine and Dharmaraja with sixty. O great king! Shalya was pierced by those maharathas. Blood began to flow from his body, like red chalk from a mountain. O king! He spiritedly struck those great archers with five arrows each and it was wonderful. O venerable one! He then used another broad-headed arrow to sever the bow of Dharma’s son in the battle. At this, Dharma’s maharatha son picked up and strung another bow and shrouded Shalya, his horses, his charioteer, his standard and his chariot with arrows. He was thus enveloped in the encounter by the arrows of Dharma's son. He pierced Yudhishthira with ten sharp arrows. Satyaki was angry that Dharma's son was thus afflicted by arrows. He enveloped the brave lord of Madra with torrents of arrows. In Bhimasena's presence, he then used a kshurapra arrow to slice down Satyaki's large bow and struck him with three arrows. O great king! Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, became wrathful. He hurled an extremely expensive spear with a golden handle. Bhimasena shot an iron arrow that was like a flaming serpent. In the battle, Nakula hurled a javelin and Sahadeva a sparkling club. Dharmaraja used a shataghni. All of them wished to kill Shalya in the battle.

' "They were swiftly released from the arms of those five.[89] Shalya severed the spear Satyaki had hurled with a broad-headed arrow. Bhima had shot an arrow decorated with gold. In the battle, the powerful one displayed the dexterity of his hands and severed it into two fragments. Nakula had hurled a fearful javelin with a golden handle and Sahadeva a club. He countered these with torrents of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While the sons of Pandu looked on, he used a couple of arrows to sever the king's shataghni and roared like a lion. Shini's descendant could not tolerate that the enemy should be victorious in the battle. Senseless with rage, Satyaki picked up another bow. With two arrows, he pierced the lord of Madra and used another three to pierce his charioteer. O great king! Shalya became extremely angry. He severely pierced each of them with ten arrows, like a giant elephant being struck with a goad. In the encounter, those maharathas were repulsed by the king of Madra. Those slayers of enemies were incapable of remaining before him. King Duryodhana witnessed Shalya's valour and thought that the Pandavas, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas had been killed. O king! The mighty-armed and powerful Bhimasena made up his mind to give up his life and fought with the lord of Madra. Nakula, Sahadeva and maharatha Satyaki surrounded Shalya and showered down arrows on him. The powerful king of Madra was surrounded by those four Pandava maharathas and great archers. However, he fought with them. O king! In the great battle, Dharmaraja used a kshurapra arrow to swiftly slay the one who was guarding the chariot wheel of the king of Madra.[90] The king of Madra was extremely strong and enveloped the soldiers with arrows. O king! On seeing that the soldiers were enveloped in that battle, Dharmaraja Yudhisthira began to think. ‘The great words that were spoken by Madhava have really come true. I hope that the king will not angrily destroy my army in the battle.’ O Pandu’s elder brother! With their chariots, elephants and horses, the Pandavas approached the lord of Madra and afflicted him from every direction. They used many diverse kinds of weapons. A shower of arrows arose. O king! In the battle, he drove these away, like clouds dispelled by the wind. Shalya poured down gold-tufted arrows. We beheld that shower of arrows, like locusts descending. The king of Madra released those arrows in the field of battle. We saw them descend, like a flight of locusts. Gold-decorated arrows were shot from the king of Madra’s bow. O lord of men! They did not leave a single bit of space in the sky. Nothing could be discerned there, the Pandavas, nor those on our side. He created a great darkness because of those arrows and there was great fear. The powerful king of Madra used his dexterity to shower down arrows. The Pandava army was seen to be agitated there, like the ocean. The gods, the gandharvas and the danavas were overcome by great wonder. O venerable one! Everyone who strove against him was afflicted by those arrows. He enveloped Dharmaraja and roared repeatedly, like a lion. The Pandava maharathas were shrouded by him in that battle. In the encounter, no one was capable of standing up to the maharatha and fighting against him. But those that had Dharmaraja at their head or the rathas who had Bhimasena at the forefront, did not retreat in the battle before the brave Shalya, the ornament of a battle.” ’

Chapter 1232(13)

‘Sanjaya said, “In the battle, Drona’s son pierced Arjuna with many iron arrows and so did his followers, the brave maharathas from Trigarta. In the encounter, he pierced Drona’s son with three arrows sharpened on stone. Dhananjaya pierced the other great archers with two arrows each. The mighty-armed one showered down arrows again. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those on your side were impaled with arrows, like thorns. But though they were slaughtered by those sharp arrows, they did not abandon Partha in that battle. With Drona’s son at the forefront, in the battle, the maharathas surrounded Arjuna with an array of chariots and fought against him. O king! They shot arrows decorated with gold. They swiftly covered the seat of Arjuna’s chariot. The two Krishnas were bulls among all archers. They were great archers. On seeing that their limbs were covered with arrows, the ones who found delight in battle rejoiced.[91] O lord! The pole, wheels, staff, harnesses and yoke of the chariot were completely covered with arrows and looked beautiful. O king! The likes of what those on your side did to Partha had not been seen earlier, nor heard of. Covered by those sharp arrows with colourful tufts, the chariot was dazzling. It was as if a celestial vehicle had come down on earth and was blazing because of a hundred torches. O great king! Arjuna used arrows with straight tufts to repel those soldiers, like a cloud pouring down rain on a mountain. In the battle, they were slaughtered by Partha’s arrows, which were marked with his name. They thought that the entire field was full of many Parthas. Partha was like a fire. The arrows were flames. The great twang of the bow was the wind that fanned it. The soldiers on your side were the kindling. It was extraordinary. Wheels and yokes fell down on the ground, together with quivers, flags, standards and chariots. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were arrows, housings, trivenus, wheels, yokes and goads in every direction. Heads fell down, wearing earrings and headdresses. O great king! Arms and shoulders were strewn around everywhere. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Along the path of Partha’s chariot, umbrellas, whisks, crowns and reins could be seen. Because of the mire created by flesh and blood, the earth became impassable. O best of the Bharata lineage! It looked like Rudra’s sporting ground. This generated fear among cowards and increased the delight of brave ones. O scorcher of enemies! Partha destroyed two thousand chariots in that encounter, together with their bumpers. He was like a flame without smoke. O king! Maharatha Partha was seen there, like the smokeless and illustrious Agni, consuming all mobile and immobile objects.

‘ “On witnessing Pandava’s valour in the battle, Drona’s son countered Pandava, on a chariot with many flags. Those two tigers among men were the best of archers and were borne on white horses. They swiftly clashed against each other, wishing to kill each other. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The extremely terrible shower of arrows was like rain pouring down from clouds. They rivalled each other with their straight-tufted arrows. Like two bulls with horns, they mangled each other in that encounter. O great king! The battle between them lasted for a long time. There was a great and terrible clash of weapons there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Drona’s son pierced Arjuna with twelve gold-tufted arrows that were extremely energetic and Vasudeva with ten. In the great battle, Bibhatsu showed respect towards his preceptor’s son for a short while. Then he laughed and stretched his Gandiva bow. Maharatha Savyasachi deprived him of his horses, charioteer and chariot and gently pierced him with three arrows. Though his horses had been slain, Drona’s son remained stationed on that chariot. He smiled and hurled a club that was like a bludgeon towards Pandu’s son. It was bound in golden cloth and descended with great violence. But the brave Partha, the destroyer of enemies, shattered it into seven fragments. On seeing that the club had been shattered, Drona’s son became supremely angry. He picked up a terrible bludgeon that was like the summit of a king of mountains. Drona’s son was skilled in fighting and hurled this towards Partha. Pandava saw that the bludgeon had been angrily flung towards him. Arjuna used five supreme arrows to swiftly slice it down. In the great battle, shattered by Partha’s arrows, it fell down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That sound shattered the minds of the kings. Pandava then pierced Drona’s son with three supreme weapons. The extremely strong one was severely and powerfully struck by Partha. However, Drona’s son resorted to his manliness and wasn’t frightened.

‘ “O king! While all the kshatriyas looked on, Bharadvaja’s maharatha son covered Sudharma with a storm of arrows. At this, the Panchala maharatha Suratha attacked Drona’s son on his chariot, making a sound like the roaring of clouds. He brandished his supreme bow, which was firm and was capable of bearing all loads. He shot flaming arrows that were like venomous serpents. In the battle, when maharatha Suratha angrily descended, Drona’s son became wrathful, like a snake that has been struck with a staff. His brows furrowed into three lines and he licked the corners of his mouth. He glanced at Suratha in rage and rubbed his bowstring. He shot a sharp iron arrow that was like Yama’s staff. It powerfully pierced and shattered his heart and then penetrated the ground, like Shakra’s unleashed vajra. Slain by the iron arrow, he fell down on the ground. It was as if an extremely large mountain top had been shattered by thunder. When that brave one was killed, Drona’s powerful son, supreme among rathas, swiftly climbed onto his chariot.[92] O great king! Drona’s son was invincible in battle. Equipped and supported by the samshaptakas in the encounter, he fought with Arjuna. There was a great battle between Arjuna and the enemy. It extended Yama’s kingdom. The sun reached midday. The valour that they exhibited was wonderful to see. Arjuna single-handedly fought with many enemies at the same time. The great clash between Arjuna and the enemy was like that in earlier times, between Shatakratu and the daitya soldiers.” ’

Chapter 1233(14)

'Sanjaya said, "O great king! Duryodhana and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna fought a great battle, with innumerable arrows and javelins. O great king! They shot thousands of torrents of arrows. It was like rain pouring down from clouds during the monsoon. The king pierced Parshata with five arrows that were made out of iron. He then again pierced the fierce one who had killed Drona with seven arrows. In the encounter, Dhrishtadyumna was powerful and firm in his valour. He struck Duryodhana with seventy arrows. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the king was afflicted, his brothers surrounded Parshata with a large army. O king! Severely surrounded by those brave atirathas from all sides, he roamed around in the battle, exhibiting the dexterity of his hands. Shikhandi, supported by the Prabhadrakas, fought with the maharatha archers, Kritavarma and Goutama. O lord of the earth! There was a great battle there, fierce in form. They were ready to give up their lives in the battle and offered their lives as stakes in the gambling match.

' "Shalya showered down arrows in every direction. He afflicted the Pandavas, including Satyaki and Vrikodara. O Indra among kings! Using his valour and strength, he also fought in that encounter with the twins, who were like Yama in their prowess. When the Pandavas were afflicted by Shalya's arrows in the great battle, those maharathas could not find a protector. On seeing that Dharmaraja was oppressed, the brave Nakula, Madri's son, powerfully attacked his maternal uncle. Nakula, the destroyer of enemy heroes, enveloped Shalya in that battle. He smiled and struck him between the breasts with ten arrows. These arrows were completely made out of iron and had been polished by artisans. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. They were propelled from the implement of the bow. Shalya was struck by his sister's great-souled son and pierced Nakula with straight-flying arrows. At this, King Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Satyaki and Madri's son, Sahadeva, attacked the king of Madra. They descended swiftly and the directions and the sub-directions resounded with the roar of their chariots. The earth trembled. The conqueror of enemies, the commander, received them in the battle. He pierced Yudhishthira with three arrows, Bhimasena with seven, Satyaki with one hundred and Sahadeva with three arrows. O venerable one! The lord of Madra used a kshurapra arrow to slice down the great-souled Nakula's bow, with an arrow affixed to it. When his bow was shattered and destroyed by Shalya's arrows, Madri's maharatha son quickly picked up another bow and covered the king of Madra's chariot with arrows. O venerable one! Both Yudhishthira and Sahadeva pierced the lord of Madra in the chest with ten arrows each. Bhimasena attacked the king of Madra and struck him with sixty arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. Satyaki did the same with nine arrows. The king of Madra angrily struck Satyaki with nine arrows and pierced him again with seventy arrows with drooping tufts. O venerable one! He struck down the bow in his[93] hand, with an arrow affixed to it and, in the battle, dispatched his four horses to the land of the dead. Satyaki was deprived of his chariot by the immensely strong king of Madra, who struck him with one hundred arrows from every direction. O Kouravya! He then pierced Madri's angry sons, Pandava Bhimasena and Yudhishthira with ten arrows each. We witnessed the king of Madra's extraordinary manliness. Even though they were together, the Parthas could not counter him in the battle.

' "Satyaki, for whom truth was his valour, climbed onto another chariot. He saw that the Pandavas were afflicted and had come under the king of Madra's subjugation. The powerful one attacked the lord of Madra with force. On seeing that he was descending on his chariot, Shalya, the ornament of an assembly, countered him on his chariot, like a crazy elephant against another crazy elephant. The clash that ensued was tumultuous and wonderful to behold. The brave Satyaki and the lord of Madra fought, like the ancient battle between Shambara and the kind of the immortals. On seeing that the king of Madra was stationed in the battle, Satyaki asked him to wait and pierced him with ten arrows. The king of Madra was grievously pierced by the great-souled one. He pierced Satyaki back with sharp arrows that were colourfully tufted. The Parthas, great archers, saw that the king was assailed by Satvata. Wishing to kill their maternal uncle, they quickly attacked him on their chariots. In that supreme and tumultuous encounter, blood flowed like water. The brave ones fought and roared like lions. O great king! They mangled each other. In the encounter, they shot arrows and roared like lions. The earth was covered with thousands of torrents of arrows. The firmament was also suddenly covered with arrows. In every direction, those arrows created a great darkness. The arrows shot by the great-souled ones created a shadow, like that of clouds. O king! The arrows released there were like snakes that had cast off their skins. They were gold-tufted and made the directions blaze. Shalya, the destroyer of enemies, was supreme and wonderful. In the battle, he single-handedly fought against many brave ones. Arrows, shafted with the feathers of herons and peacocks, were released from the king of Madra’s arms. That terrible torrent of arrows descended and covered the earth. O king! Shalya’s chariot roamed around in the great battle there. We saw him, like Shakra in earlier times, when the asuras were being destroyed.” ’

Chapter 1234(15)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord! Your soldiers placed the king of Madra at their head. In that great battle, they again powerfully attacked the Parthas. Though they were afflicted, all those on your side were intoxicated at the prospect of war. In a short while, they agitated the Parthas in many ways. While Krishna and Partha looked on, the Pandavas were slaughtered by the Kurus and were incapable of remaining stationed there, though they were restrained by Bhima. Dhananjaya became angry at this. He covered Kripa and his followers and Kritavarma with a storm of arrows. Sahadeva countered Shakuni and his soldiers. Stationed on a flank, Nakula glanced at the king of Madra. Droupadi’s sons repeatedly repulsed many kings. Panchala Shikhandi countered Drona’s son. With the club in his hand, Bhimasena held back the kings. Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, countered Shalya and his soldiers. As those on your side and the enemy engaged, refusing to retreat from the battle, duels commenced here and there.

‘ “In the great battle, we witnessed Shalya’s supreme deed. He single-handedly fought against all the soldiers on the Pandava side. We saw Shalya stationed near Yudhishthira in the battle, like the planet Saturn near the moon. He afflicted the king with arrows that were like venomous serpents. He again attacked Bhima and covered him with showers of arrows. On witnessing the lightness of his hands and his skill in the use of weapons, the soldiers on your side and those on the side of the enemy, applauded him. The Pandavas were severely oppressed and wounded by Shalya. Ignoring Yudhishthira’s cries, they abandoned the field of battle. The Pandava soldiers were slaughtered by the king of Madra. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was overcome with intolerance. He resorted to his manliness and oppressed the king of Madra. The maharatha made up his mind to win or be killed. He summoned all his brothers and Krishna Madhava and said, ‘Bhishma, Drona, Karna and all the other brave kings fought in the battle for the sake of the Kouravas and went to their death.

All of you have resorted to your manliness and used your enterprise to take care of your shares.[94] There is a single share that is left. Maharatha Shalya is mine. I wish to fight against the lord of Madra and defeat him today. I will tell all of you what is in my mind now. Madravati's[95] brave sons will guard my chariot wheels. They are revered as brave ones in battle and cannot be vanquished by Vasava. They will place the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront and virtuously fight against their maternal uncle. They deserve honour and are devoted to the truth. They will fight back, for my sake. O fortunate ones! Either Shalya will be killed by me in the battle, or I will be killed by him. O brave ones in the world! Listen to my words. I am telling you truthfully. O kings! I will resort to the dharma of kshatriyas and fight against my maternal uncle today. I have determined that I will be victorious, or be defeated. Therefore, equip me with a larger store of weapons and all the implements. Let the chariot be quickly equipped for the battle, in accordance with the decrees of the sacred texts. Let Shini's descendant guard my right wheel and Dhrishtadyumna the left. Let Partha Dhananjaya protect my rear today. Let Bhima, supreme among wielders of weapons, advance in front of me today. In the great battle, I will then be superior to Shalaya and will drive him away.' Having been thus addressed by the king, all the well-wishers did as they had been asked to. O king! The soldiers were again filled with delight. This was especially true of the Panchalas, the Somakas and the Matsyas. Having taken the pledge, Dharmaraja set out to accomplish it in the battle.

' "Hundreds of conch shells, trumpets and drums were sounded by the Panchalas and they roared like lions. Spiritedly and angrily, they rushed towards the king of Madra. The bulls among the Kurus were also filled with great delight and roared. There was the noise of bells on elephants and the blare of conch shells. The earth resounded with the great sounds of trumpets. Your son and the valiant king of Madra received them. They were like large mountains, receiving rain pouring down from giant clouds. Shalya prided himself in battle and showered down arrows on Dharmaraja, the scorcher of enemies, like Maghavan pouring down rain. The great-minded king of the Kurus also grasped a beautiful bow and displayed the diverse kinds of learning that he had been taught by Drona. He showered down arrows, colourful, dexterous and skilled. As he roamed around in the battle, no weakness could be discerned in him. They wounded each other with many kinds of arrows. In the battle, those valorous ones were like tigers fighting over a piece of meat. Bhima clashed against your son, who found delight in a battle. In every direction, Shakuni and the other brave ones received Panchala,[96] Satyaki and the Pandavas who were the sons of Madri. They desired victory and fought tumultuously again. O king! The enemy and those on your side fought because of your evil policy.

‘ “In the battle, Duryodhana used an arrow with a drooping tuft to sever Bhima’s gold-decorated standard. It was large and beautiful to see, adorned with nets of bells. Having brought Bhimasena’s standard down, he roared like a lion. With a razor-sharp arrow, pointed at the tip, the lord of men then severed his[97] colourful bow, which was like the trunk of a king of elephants. When his bow was severed, the spirited one resorted to his prowess and hurled a javelin[98] towards your son. It pierced his chest and made him sink down on his chariot. When he was bereft of his senses, Vrikodara again used a kshurapra arrow to sever his charioteer’s head from his body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When the charioteer was slain, the horses dragged the chariot away in different directions and loud sounds of lamentation arose. For the sake of rescuing your son, Drona’s maharatha son, Kripa and Kritavarma followed. The soldiers were agitated and the followers were terrified. The wielder of Gandiva used his bow and arrows to slaughter them.

‘ “Yudhishthira intolerantly attacked the lord of Madra. He himself controlled his horses, which were as swift as thought and as white as ivory. When we saw Kunti’s son, Yudhishthira, it was extraordinary. He was mild and controlled earlier, but assumed a fearful form. Kounteya dilated his eyes in rage and trembled in anger. He mangled hundreds and thousands of warriors with his arrows. Wherever the soldiers fought back, the eldest Pandava was there. O king! He brought them down with his arrows, like the best of mountains shattered by thunder. Many horses, charioteers, standards, chariots and rathas were brought down. He sported with them, like a violent wind toying with clouds. In the battle, he angrily brought down thousands of horse riders, horses and foot soldiers, like an enraged Rudra among animals. With showers of arrows shot in every direction, he emptied the field of battle of warriors. He attacked Shalya, the lord of Madra, and asked him to wait. On witnessing him roam around in the battle, terrible in his deeds, all those on your side were terrified. However, Shalya countered him. Extremely enraged, those two blew on their conch shells. They challenged each other and censured each other. Shalya countered Yudhishthira with a shower of arrows. Kounteya also countered the king of Madra with a shower of arrows. O king! In that battle, those two brave ones, the king of Madra and Yudhishthira, were seen to be covered with blood, because of the arrows shafted with the feathers of herons. They were as beautiful as flowering shalmali or kimshuka trees in the forest. Those great-souled ones blazed. They were ready to give up their lives and were unassailable in battle. On seeing them, none of the soldiers knew which one would be victorious, whether Partha would kill the lord of Madra and enjoy the earth today, or whether Shalya would kill Pandava and give the earth to Duryodhana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The warriors there could not make up their minds on this. As he fought, Dharmaraja kept all of them to his right.[99] Shalya swiftly shot one hundred arrows towards Yudhishthira. He severed his bow with an arrow that was sharp at the tip. He picked up another bow and piercing Shalya with three hundred arrows, severed his bow with a razor-sharp arrow. He then slew his four horses with arrows with drooping tufts. With two arrows that were sharp at the tips, he killed the two parshni charioteers. Stationed in front of him, he used a blazing, yellow, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever his standard. O scorcher of enemies! At this, that army of Duryodhana's scattered. Drona's son rushed towards the king of Madra and picking him up on his chariot, swiftly fled. After they had travelled a short distance, they heard Yudhishthira roar. The lord of Madra stopped and ascended another chariot. It sparkled and had been duly prepared. It roared like the clouds. It had been equipped with all the implements and made the body hair of enemies stand up." '

Chapter 1235(16)

‘Sanjaya said, “The lord of Madra picked up another bow that was more powerful and capable of bearing a greater load. He pierced Yudhishthira and roared like a lion. He showered down arrows, like Parjanya pouring down rain. The bull among the kshatriyas, immeasurable in his soul, showered arrows on the kshatriyas. He pierced Satyaki with ten arrows and Bhimasena with three. He pierced Sahadeva with three and afflicted Yudhishthira. He afflicted all the other great archers, with their horses, chariots and elephants. The supreme among rathas destroyed elephants and elephant riders, horses and horse riders and chariots and rathas. He severed arms, weapons and flags. He scattered the earth with warriors, like a sacrificial altar strewn with *kusha* grass. He slaughtered the soldiers, like Death, the Destroyer. The Pandus, Panchalas and Somakas angrily surrounded him. Bhimasena, Shini’s grandson and Madri’s sons, foremost among men, challenged him and clashed against him in turn, while he was fighting with the king, terrible in his strength. Those brave Indras among men, supreme among warriors, reached the lord of Madra. In the battle, those brave ones among men struck him with arrows that were fierce and powerful. The king was protected by Bhimasena, Madri’s sons and Madhava. Dharma’s son struck the lord of Madra between the breasts with fierce and powerful arrows. Those on your side saw that the lord of Madra was afflicted by arrows in the battle. On the instructions of Duryodhana, those supreme ones surrounded him with an array of chariots from all sides. In the encounter, the lord of Madra speedily pierced Yudhishthira with seven arrows. O king! In the tumultuous battle, the great-souled Partha pierced him with nine arrows. Those two maharathas, the lord of Madra and Yudhishthira, drew their bows back up to their ears and covered each other with arrows that had been washed in oil. The two maharathas swiftly glanced towards each other in the battle. Those two supreme among kings were immensely strong. They attacked the enemy and severely pierced each other. A great sound arose because of the twanging of bows and the slapping of palms. It was like the roar of the great Indra's vajra. Those two brave and great-souled ones, the lord of Madra and Pandu, showered down large numbers of arrows on each other. They circled around, like young tigers in a great forest in search of meat. They insolently gored each other, like the best of elephants using their tusks. The great-souled lord of Madra struck the brave Yudhishthira, whose valour was terrible, in the chest with a powerful arrow that was like the sun or the fire in its splendour. O king! Yudhishthira, the bull among the Kuru lineage, was grievously struck by that well-aimed arrow. He struck the great-souled lord of Madra back and was delighted. In a short instant, the Indra among kings regained his senses. His eyes were red with rage. He was like the one with one thousand eyes[100] in his prowess. He swiftly struck Partha with one hundred arrows. Dharma's great-souled son wrathfully struck Shalya with nine arrows. These pierced his golden armour and he struck him again with another six arrows. The lord of Madra was delighted at this. He stretched his bow and released two razor-sharp arrows towards the king, severing the bow of the bull among the Kuru lineage. The great-souled king picked up another bow in that encounter, one that was more terrible. From every direction, he pierced Shalya with sharp arrows that were pointed at the tip, like the great Indra against Namuchi. Shalya used nine arrows to sever the golden armour of Bhima and King Yudhishthira and then struck the great-souled ones in their arms. He then used another razor-sharp and flaming arrow, as resplendent as the sun, to sever the king's bow.

' "At this, Kripa used six arrows to slay his[101] charioteer, who fell down in front of him. The lord of Madra used his arrows to slay Yudhishthira's four horses. Having slain the horses, the great-souled one began to destroy the warriors who were on the side of the king, Dharma's son. When the king was reduced to this state, the great-souled Bhimasena quickly attacked the king of Madra and severed his bow with a powerful arrow. He then severely pierced that Indra among men with two arrows. With another arrow, he severed the head of his charioteer from his armoured body. Extremely enraged, Bhimasena swiftly killed his four horses. The foremost among all archers[102] was single-handedly roaming around in that field of battle, with great force.

Bhima enveloped him with one hundred arrows and so did Madri's son, Sahadeva. On seeing that he was confounded by these arrows, Bhima severed Shalya's armour with his arrows. When his armour was severed by Bhimasena, the lord of Madra picked up a shield that was marked with the signs of one thousand stars. The great-souled one jumped down from his chariot. Grasping a sword, he dashed towards Kunti's son. Terrible in his strength, he destroyed Nakula's chariot and advanced towards Yudhishthira. He angrily descended on the king, like an advancing Yama. Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi's sons, Shikhandi and Shini's descendant swiftly advanced to the rescue. The great-souled Bhima used ten arrows to sever his unmatched shield. He used a broad-headed arrow to sever the sword in his hand and roared in the midst of the soldiers. On witnessing Bhima's deed, the foremost of the rathas on the Pandava side were delighted. They roared in applause and blew on conch shells that were as white as the moon. At that terrible sound, the soldiers on your side were tormented and distressed. They were covered in sweat and their limbs were covered in blood. They were miserable and lost all sense of enterprise.

' "However, the lord of Madra violently attacked the foremost of Pandava warriors, with Bhima at their head. He swiftly advanced against Yudhishthira, like a lion advancing in search of deer. Dharmaraja's horses and charioteer had been slain. He blazed in anger, like the fire. On seeing the lord of Madra advance swiftly, he also rushed forward with great force. He swiftly thought of Govinda's words and made up his mind to destroy Shalya. Though his horses and charioteer had been slain, Dharmaraja remained stationed on his chariot and wished to pick up a javelin. The great-souled one thought about Shalya's deeds and the remaining share that had been allotted to him. Remembering this, he set his heart on killing Shalya, just as Indra's younger brother[103] had asked him to.

' "Dharmaraja picked up a javelin that was golden in complexion. It was bejewelled and possessed a golden handle. His eyes blazed and were dilated. With an angry heart, he glanced towards the lord of Madra. The king was a god among men. He was pure in his soul and all his sins had been cleansed. O king! Though he glanced at the lord of Madra, he was not reduced to ashes.[104] This was extraordinary. That javelin possessed a beautiful tip and handle. With coral and gems, it flamed and dazzled. The great-souled one flung it with great force towards the lord of Madra, foremost among the Kurus. It blazed as it was flung with great force. It descended violently, emitting sparks. While all the assembled Kurus looked on, it was like a giant meteor at the time of the destruction of a yuga. It was like the night of destruction and like Yama with a noose in his hand. It was fierce in form, like the midwife of destruction. It was like Brahma's staff and was invincible. Dharmaraja had preserved it carefully for the battle. The sons of Pandu had taken great care to worship it with the best of fragrances, garlands and seats, food and drink. It flamed like the fire of destruction. It was as fierce as rites performed by Atharvan and Angirasa. Tvashtra had created it for Ishana's use.[105] It was capable of consuming the lives and bodies of enemies. Through it, Isha[106] was capable of destroying all beings on earth, the firmament and bodies of water. It was adorned with bells, flags, jewels and diamonds. It was decorated with lapis lazuli and had a golden handle. Tvashtra had constructed it with great care, after controlling himself and observing rites. It was invincible and could destroy all those who hated brahmanas. He[107] hurled it with great force, strength and care, after having chanted terrible mantras over it. For the sake of destroying the lord of Madra, he dispatched it towards the enemy along the best of paths. Dharmaraja seemed to be dancing around in anger. He extended his firm arm, with the excellent hand. He loudly exclaimed, 'O wretched one! You are dead.' It was like Rudra shooting an arrow. That javelin was hurled by Yudishthira with force. Shalya roared loudly and used all his strength to try to seize and repulse it. It was as if a fire was leaping up to catch clarified butter over it. It pierced through his inner organs, his broad chest and his sparkling armour. It then penetrated the earth, as if it was slicing through water. The king's[108] great fame was taken away. Blood began to flow from his wounds and covered his nose, eyes, ears and mouth. His limbs were covered with blood. He was like the giant mountain Krouncha, when it had been shattered by Skanda.[109] He stretched out his arms and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. His armour was shattered by the descendant of the Kuru lineage. The great-souled one was like the great Indra's mount. But he was like the summit of a mountain that had been shattered by thunder. The king of Madra extended his arms in Dharmaraja's direction. He then fell down on the ground, like Indra's standard. All his limbs were mangled and covered with blood. The bull among men fell down affectionately on the ground, like a beloved wife who falls down on the chest of her dear husband. The lord had enjoyed the earth for a long time, like a beloved wife. He seemed to go to sleep now, clasping her with all his limbs. The one with dharma in his soul had fought in accordance with dharma and was killed by Dharma's son. He was like a fire that had been pacified on a sacrificial altar. The javelin shattered his heart and he was deprived of his weapons and standard. Though he had been pacified, prosperity[110] did not desert the lord of Madra.

' "Yudhishthira picked up his bow, which was as dazzling as Indra's bow. In the battle, he began to slaughter the enemy, like the king of birds against serpents. In a short instant, he used sharp and broad-headed arrows to deprive the bodies of the enemies of their lives. Your soldiers were completely covered by Partha's arrows. With their eyes closed and distressed, they began to strike each other in fear. The armour was displaced from their bodies and they lost their weapons and their lives. The younger brother of the king of Madra was youthful. He was his brother's equal in all the qualities. When Shalya was brought down, the ratha attacked Pandava. He swiftly pierced that best of men with many iron arrows. He was invincible in battle and wished to observe the last rites of his brother. Dharmaraja quickly pierced him back with six swift arrows. With a couple of razor-sharp arrows, he severed his bow and his standard. While he was stationed in front of him, he used a blazing, extremely firm, sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever his head. With the earrings, the head was seen to fall down from the chariot. This was like a resident of heaven falling down, after the store of good deeds has been exhausted. With the head severed, the torso fell down from the chariot. The limbs were covered with blood. On seeing this, the soldiers[111] ran away. The younger brother of the king of Madra was clad in colourful armour. On seeing that he had been slain, sounds of lamentation arose among the Kurus and they fled swiftly. On seeing that Shalya's younger brother had been killed, those on your side gave up all hope of remaining alive. They were terrified because of their fear of the Pandavas and, covered with dust, ran away.

' "O bull among the Bharata lineage! While the terrified Kouravas were running away, Satyaki, Shini's grandson, pursued them and shot arrows. He was a great archer and extremely difficult to withstand. O king! However, Hardikya received him fearlessly and spiritedly. Those two great-souled and unvanquished ones from the Vrishni lineage,[112] Hardikya and Satyaki, clashed against each other. They were like maddened lions. They showered down sparkling arrows, which were like the rays of the sun, on each other. Both of them were like the sun in their radiance. Those lions among the Vrishni lineage shot powerful arrows from the circles of their bows and they seemed to be like swift insects in the sky. Hardikya used ten arrows with drooping tufts to pierce Satyaki and struck his horses with three. He then severed his bow with a single arrow. The bull among the Shini lineage cast aside the best of bows that had been severed. He picked up another powerful weapon[113] that was even more forceful. Picking up the best of bows, the supreme among all archers pierced Hardikya back between the breasts with ten arrows. He used well-aimed broad-headed arrows to shatter his chariot and his yoke. He then swiftly slew his horses and his two parshni charioteers. O king! When the king of Madra was slain and Kritavarma deprived of his chariot, all of Duryodhana's soldiers again retreated from the battle. Because they were covered in dust, the soldiers could no longer distinguish the enemy. The troops who were still alive retreated from the battle. A dust had arisen from the earth. O bull among men! But in a short while, it was seen that this was pacified because of the several streams of blood that flowed.

' "From a close distance, Duryodhana saw that his troops had been shattered. He advanced with great speed and single-handedly countered all the Parthas. He saw the Pandavas on their chariots and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna and the invincible one from Anarta.[114] He countered them with his sharp arrows. At that time, the enemy did not attack him, like mortal beings avoiding death. Hardikya ascended another chariot and returned. Maharatha King Yudhishthira swiftly slew Kritavarma's four horses with four arrows. He pierced Goutama with six broad-headed arrows that were extremely energetic. Ashvatthama saw that Hardikya had been deprived of his chariot by the king and that his horses had been slain. He bore him away on his own chariot, away from Yudhishthira. Sharadvata pierced Yudhishthira back with eight arrows and also pierced his horses with eight other sharp arrows that had been sharpened on stone. O great king! At this time, the remnants of the battle raged on. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All this happened because of your evil policy, together with that of your sons. When Shalya, supreme among great archers, was slain in the midst of the battle by the bull among the Kuru lineage, all the assembled Parthas saw this and were greatly delighted. In a short while, they blew on their conch shells. They praised Yudhishthira, just as in ancient times, the gods had praised Indra after Vritra had been killed. They roared and sounded many kinds of musical instruments. This resounded, from every side of the earth.” ’

SECTION SEVENTY-FIVE

HRADA-PRAVESHA PARVA

This parva has 664 shlokas and twelve chapters.

Chapter 1236(17): 39 shlokas

Chapter 1237(18): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1238(19): 26 shlokas

Chapter 1239(20): 36 shlokas

Chapter 1240(21): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1241(22): 88 shlokas

Chapter 1242(23): 64 shlokas

Chapter 1243(24): 56 shlokas

Chapter 1244(25): 37 shlokas

Chapter 1245(26): 54 shlokas

Chapter 1246(27): 63 shlokas

Chapter 1247(28): 92 shlokas

> *Satyaki kills Shalva, the king of the mlechhas, and Kshemadhurti. Bhima kills Duryodhana's remaining brothers. Arjuna kills warriors from Trigarta, including Susharma, the king of Trigarta. Sahadeva kills Shakuni and his son, Uluka. Duryodhana enters (*pravesha*) a lake (*hrada*) and hides there, the section being named after this. The survivors, including the women, flee to Hastinapura.*

Chapter 1236(17)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! When Shalya was killed, seven hundred brave rathas, followers of the king of Madra, advanced in a large army. Duryodhana was astride an elephant that was like a mountain. An umbrella was held aloft his head and he was fanned with whisks. He restrained the ones from Madra, ‘Do not go. Do not advance.’ Duryodhana repeatedly tried to restrain those brave ones. However, wishing to kill Yudhishthira, they penetrated the Pandu army. O great king! Those brave warriors had made up their minds to fight. They loudly twanged their bows and fought with the Pandavas. On hearing that Shalya had been killed, they afflicted Dharma’s son. Those maharathas from Madra were devoted to ensuring the welfare of the king of Madra. Partha advanced there, stretching the bow Gandiva. The maharatha again filled the directions with the clatter of his chariot. Arjuna, Bhima, the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons, Satyaki, tiger among men, all of Droupadi’s sons, Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, the Panchalas and the Somakas desired to protect Yudhishthira and surrounded him from every direction. Surrounding him, the bulls among the Pandavas agitated that army, like makaras in an ocean. It was as if the great river Ganga was agitated by a mighty wind. O king! But those maharathas were ready to give up their lives and again agitated the great army of the Pandus and their standards. Those on your side made it tremble, like trees by a giant storm. They loudly exclaimed, ‘Where is King Yudhishthira? Why are his brave brothers not seen? Where are the immensely valorous Panchalas, maharatha Shikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna, Shini’s descendant and all the sons of Droupadi?’ While they were roaring in this way, Droupadi’s brave and maharatha sons and Yuyudhana attacked the followers of the king of Madra. Some of them were crushed by the wheels. Others were mangled and the giant standards destroyed. In the battle, those on your side were seen to be slain by the enemy. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though they were restrained by your son, on seeing the Pandavas in the battle, those warriors powerfully rushed against them from every side. Duryodhana tried to restrain and calm those brave ones. But not a single one of those maharathas would listen to him.

‘ “O great king! Shakuni, the son of the king of Gandhara, capable of speaking eloquently, spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘The army of the Madras is being slaughtered. Why are we looking on? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While you are stationed in the battle, this is not proper. At that time, we took a decision that we would fight together. O king! The enemy is slaughtering us. Why are you tolerating this?’ Duryodhana replied, ‘I tried to restrain them earlier. But they did not listen to my words. Having penetrated the Pandu army, this is the reason they are being killed.’ Shakuni said, ‘When they are enraged in a battle, valiant ones do not listen to their master. You should not be angry with them. This is not the time to ignore this. All of us should advance with our horses, chariots and elephants and rescue the great archers who are the followers of the king of Madra. O king! We will take great care and protect each other. Let all of us think along those lines and ask the soldiers to advance.’ Having been thus addressed, the king surrounded himself with a large army. He roared like a lion, made the earth tremble and advanced. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among your soldiers, there were tumultuous sounds like, ‘Slay. Pierce. Seize. Strike. Sever.’ In the battle, the Pandavas beheld the followers of the king of Madra. They advanced, uniting in a moderate formation.[1] O lord of the earth! In a short instant, those brave ones engaged in hand-to-hand combat in the battle and the followers of the king of Madra were seen to be killed. While we were advancing, we saw that the enemy had spiritedly killed their foes and were cheerfully uttering roars of delight. In every direction, headless torsos were seen to rise up and fall down, like giant meteors from the solar disc at midday. The chariots and yokes were shattered. The maharathas were slain. Horses fell down. The earth was strewn with these. O great king! Steeds that were as fleet as the wind were still yoked. In the battle, they were seen to drag the warriors around. In the encounter, some horses dragged around chariots with shattered wheels. Some others fled in the ten directions, dragging along halves of chariots. Here and there, yokes were seen to be attached to the horses. O supreme among men! Rathas were seen to fall down. They were like siddhas dislodged from the sky, after their store of good deeds had been exhausted. The brave followers of the king of Madra were slaughtered.

‘ “The maharatha Parthas saw that we were advancing towards them.[2] Wielding weapons and desiring victory, they attacked powerfully. They created a whizzing sound with their arrows and this mixed with the blare of conch shells. Unwavering in their aim, those strikers again clashed against us. They brandished their bows and arrows and roared like lions. On seeing that the large army of the king of Madra had been slain and that the brave king of Madra had been brought down in the battle, all of Duryodhana’s soldiers again retreated. O great king! They were slaughtered by the Pandavas, firm archers, who desired victory. Frightened and terrified, they fled in different directions.” ’

Chapter 1237(18)

‘Sanjaya said, “The unassailable maharatha, the king of Madra, was brought down in the battle. Those on your side, and your sons, generally retreated. They were like merchants whose boats had been shattered, so that they were without a raft on the fathomless ocean. O great king! When the brave king of Madra was slain by the great-souled one,[3] they wished to find a shore, but could not reach one. They were frightened and mangled by arrows. They desired a protector, but were without a protector. They were like deer afflicted by a lion. They were like bulls with broken horns, or elephants with shattered tusks. They were defeated by Dharma’s son and tormented at midday. O king! There was no one who could rally the soldiers, nor any valour among them. When Shalya was killed, there was no warrior who could resort to his own intelligence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of the earth! When Bhishma, Drona and the son of a suta were killed, the warriors on your side suffered from sorrow and fear. That grief and terror manifested itself again. When maharatha Shalya was killed, all hope of victory was given up. The foremost of brave ones were slain and destroyed, mangled by sharp arrows. O king! When the king of Madra was slain, the warriors fled. Some of the maharathas resorted to horses, others to elephants, and still others to chariots. They speedily ascended on these, or fled on foot. There were two thousand elephants, accomplished in striking. They were like mountains. When Shalya was killed, goaded by goads and toes, they ran away. O best among the Bharata lineage! In the encounter, those on your side fled in different directions. They were seen to run away. They sighed and were afflicted by the arrows. On seeing that they were shattered and running away, vanquished and bereft of enthusiasm, the Panchalas and Pandavas attacked them, desiring victory. They created a whizzing sound with their arrows and roared loudly, like lions. The brave ones blew fiercely on their conch shells.

‘ “On seeing that the Kourava soldiers were terrified and were running away, the Panchalas and the Pandavas spoke to each other. ‘King Yudhishthira is firm in his devotion to the truth and has vanquished the enemy today. King Duryodhana has been destroyed today and has lost his glory and prosperity. On hearing that his sons have been killed, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, will fall down senseless on the ground and grieve. He will realize today, how capable Kounteya is, among all archers. The evil-minded one will today censure his evil deeds. Today, he will remember the truthful and beneficial words that were spoken by Kshatta earlier. Let him serve the Parthas today, with different kinds of objects. Let the king know the sorrow that the sons of Pandu had felt. Let the lord of the earth learn about Krishna’s greatness today. Today, let him realize how terrible the twang of Arjuna’s bow is in battle. Today, let him know the terrible strength of the great-souled Bhima, who possesses the strength of all weapons and the strength of his arms in battle. Duryodhana will be slain in the battle, like the asura Maya by Shakra.[4] There is no one else in the world who could have performed the task that the immensely strong Bhima has. Bhimasena slew Duhshasana. Today, on hearing about the death of the king of Madra, who was extremely difficult for even the gods to withstand, let him know about the eldest Pandava’s valour. In the encounter today, he will know about the great strength of the two sons of Madri, when the brave Soubala and all those from Gandara are killed. Why should victory not be on the side of those who have a warrior like Dhananjaya, or Satyaki, Bhimasena, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Droupadi’s five sons, the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons, the great archer, Shikhandi, and King Yudhishthira? Why should victory not be on the side of those who have Krishna Janardana, the protector of the universe, as their protector, and who have resorted to dharma? There were Bhishma, Drona, Karna, the king of Madra and hundreds and thousands of other brave kings. Who other than Partha Yudhishthira was capable of vanquishing them in battle? Hrishikesha, the store of dharma and fame, has always been his protector.’ In great delight, these were the words they spoke to each other. O king! Those on your side were routed and the Srinjayas followed them from the rear. The brave Dhananjaya attacked the army of chariots[5] and Madri’s sons and maharatha Satyaki attacked Shakuni.

‘ “On seeing that all of them were running away, afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena, Duryodhana smiled and spoke to his charioteer. ‘Partha, stationed with the bow in his hand, will not be able to cross me. He is slaying all the soldiers. Take my horses to him. I will fight and kill Kounteya, or Dhananjaya will kill me. He will not be able to cross me, like the great ocean against the shoreline. O charioteer! Behold that large army, attacked by the Pandavas. Behold. In every direction, a dust has arisen because of the soldiers. Listen to the many leonine roars. They are terrible and fearful. O charioteer! Advance slowly there and protect the rear. If I station myself in battle and counter the Pandus, my energetic army will swiftly return again.’ On hearing the words of your son, spoken like the best of brave ones, the charioteer gently goaded the horses, tied to golden harnesses. There were twenty-one thousand foot soldiers who were ready to lay down their lives, though they were without elephants, horses and charioteers. They stationed themselves for the battle. They had come from diverse countries and were attired in garments of many colours. Desiring great fame, those warriors stationed themselves there. In great delight, they clashed against each other. There was an extremely great encounter. It was fierce in form and terrible. O king! Those four kinds of troops, who had come from many countries, countered Bhimasena and Parshata Dhrishtadyumna.[6] In the battle, other foot soldiers attacked Bhima. Desiring to ascend to the world of the brave, they roared cheerfully and slapped their armpits. Invincible in the battle, they angrily attacked Bhimasena. Those on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra did not speak to each other. But they roared. They surrounded Bhima in the battle and struck him from all sides. O great king! When he was surrounded by that large number of foot soldiers in the battle, maharatha Pandava did not waver. He remained immobile on his chariot, like Mount Mainaka. He slaughtered them and they angrily attacked him, countering the other warriors who tried to repulse them. Thus attacked, Bhima became enraged in that battle. He quickly descended from his chariot and stood on the ground. He grasped a giant club that was decorated with gold. With this, like Yama with a staff in his hand, he began to slay those warriors. With his club, the powerful Bhima brought down twenty-one thousand foot soldiers, who were without chariots, horses or elephants. Bhima, for whom truth was his valour, slew that army of men. He was soon seen, with

Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront. The slain foot soldiers lay down on the ground, their bodies covered with blood. They were like flowering karnikara trees shattered by a storm. They were adorned with garlands made out of different kinds of flowers. They wore many kinds of earrings. They were of different races and had assembled from different countries. That large army of foot soldiers was killed there. Flags and standards were scattered around. They were destroyed and it was beautiful, but fearful and terrible in form.

‘ “With Yudhishthira at the forefront, all the soldiers and maharathas attacked your great-souled son, Duryodhana. All the great archers on your side retreated. On seeing this, they attacked. But they could not cross your son, like the abode of makaras against the shoreline. We witnessed your son’s extraordinary manliness. Though he was single-handed, all the united Parthas were incapable of withstanding him. Duryodhana spoke to his own soldiers, who were mangled with arrows. Though they had made up their minds to run away, they had not gone far. ‘I do not see a country or mountain on earth, where the Pandavas will not follow and kill you. What is the point of running away? They have only a little bit of their army left and the two Krishnas have been severely wounded. If all of us take a stand, it is certain that there will be victory. If you run away, the Pandavas will destroy all of us. They will pursue and kill us. It is better to be stationed in battle. O kshatriyas! All of you listen to me, those who are still assembled here. Yama slays both cowards and brave ones. Which man calls himself a kshatriya and is stupid enough not to fight? It is better to be stationed before the angry Bhimasena. If we resort to the dharma of kshatriyas and fight, there will be happiness, even if there is death in the battle. If we win, we will obtain happiness. If we are slain, we will obtain great fruits in the world hereafter. O Kouravas! There is no greater path towards heaven than by resorting to the dharma of fighting. If we are killed in battle, we will soon obtain all those revered worlds.’ On hearing these words, the kings applauded them. They returned and attacked the Pandava assassins. On seeing that they were swiftly attacking, the Parthas, who were strikers, arrayed themselves in battle formation. Desiring victory, those strikers counter-attacked. The valiant Partha attacked on his chariot. He brandished Gandiva bow, famous in the three worlds. Madri’s sons and the immensely strong

Satyaki attacked Shakuni. Cheerfully and quickly, they endeavoured to attack your army.” ’

Chapter 1238(19)

‘Sanjaya said, “When that large army had returned, Shalva, the lord of large numbers of mlecchas, became extremely angry and attacked the large army of the Pandus. He was astride an extremely large elephant. It possessed shattered temples and was like a mountain. It was as proud as Airavata[7] and was capable of crushing large numbers of the enemy. It had been born in an extremely noble lineage and had always been worshipped, extremely well, by Dhritarashtra’s son. O king! It was equipped well and had been well trained for fighting, by those who knew about war. The supreme among kings was resplendent astride it. He was like a rising sun, at the end of summer. O king! On that supreme elephant, he advanced against the sons of Pandu. From every direction, he enveloped them with sharp arrows that were extremely terrible, like the great Indra’s vajra. O king! In the great battle, he shot arrows and conveyed warriors to Yama. No one, on his side or that of the enemy, could discern any weakness in him, like the daityas in ancient times, against the wielder of the vajra. The Pandavas, Somakas and Srinjayas seemed to see that elephant in every direction, as if the single elephant was roaming around and was actually one thousand. It was like the great Indra’s elephant. The enemy’s army was driven away. Failing to find protection, they ran away in different directions. They were incapable of remaining in the battle. Severely afflicted by fear, they crushed each other. That large army of the Pandavas was violently routed by that lord of men. Unable to withstand the force of that king of elephants, they swiftly fled in the four directions. On seeing that they were powerfully routed, all the warriors and supreme fighters on your side honoured that lord of men. They blew on conch shells that were as white as the moon. The delighted roars emitted by the Kouravas mingled with the blare of conch shells. On hearing this, the commander of the Pandavas and the Srinjayas[8] could not tolerate this and became angry. Desiring to obtain a quick victory, the great-souled one advanced against the elephant. He was like Jambha advancing against Airavata, the king of elephants and Indra’s mount, during the clash with Shakra. O king! On seeing that the king of Panchala, Drupada’s son, was violently attacking, the lion among men goaded the elephant, so as to kill him. The elephant attacked powerfully. He pierced it with three sharp iron arrows that were like the fire to the touch. They had been washed by artisans and were fierce and powerful. The great-souled one then used five other sharp and iron arrows to strike it on its frontal lobe. Having been severely pierced in the battle, that supreme elephant retreated and fled. While that king among elephants was speedily running away, Shalva restrained it. He swiftly used his goad to propel it towards the chariot of the king of Panchala. On seeing that the elephant was violently advancing, the brave Dhrishtadyumna quickly descended from his chariot. He swiftly grasped a club and stood on the ground, his limbs benumbed with fear. That giant elephant used its trunk to pick up his gold-decorated chariot, with the horses and the charioteer, and violently crushed it down on the ground. The charioteer of the king of Panchala was thus destroyed by that supreme elephant. On seeing this, Bhima, Shikhandi and Shini’s grandson hastily rushed towards it. While they advanced against the elephant, he[9] afflicted them with powerful and forceful arrows. In the battle, those rathas restrained the elephant and it began to waver. The king continued to shower down arrows from every direction, like the sun with its net of rays. Struck by those arrows, a large number of rathas fled in every direction. O king! On beholding Shalva’s deed in the battle, loud sounds of lamentation arose among all the Panchalas, Matsyas and Srinjayas. But those best of archers surrounded the elephant from all sides. The brave king of Panchala spiritedly grasped a club that was like a mountain top. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without any fear and with great speed, that brave slayer of enemies struck the elephant. The elephant was like a cloud and it was exuding musth. It fell down on the ground. The spirited son of the Panchala king struck it severely with the club. Its temples were violently shattered and it began to vomit blood from its mouth. The elephant fell down on the ground, like a mountain dislodged during an earthquake. When that king of elephants fell down, lamentations arose among your son’s soldiers. The foremost among the Shini lineage then used a sharp and broad-headed arrow to sever King

Shalva’s head. The head was severed by Satvata in the battle and fell down on the ground, together with the king of elephants. It was as if a giant mountain peak had been shattered by the vajra, unleashed by the lord of the gods.” ’

Chapter 1239(20)

‘Sanjaya said, “When the brave Shalva, the ornament of an assembly, was killed, that army was agitated, like a giant tree struck by a forceful storm. On seeing that the army was routed, the immensely strong and valiant maharatha Kritavarma resisted the soldiers of the enemy in the battle. O king! The descendant of the Satvata lineage[10] was stationed in the battle and was enveloped with arrows. On seeing this, the brave ones[11] returned and a battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas commenced. O great king! They did not retreat and preferred death over retreat. There was a wonderful battle between Satvata and the enemy. Single-handedly, he countered the Pandu soldiers, who were difficult to resist. On witnessing this, other well-wishers performed extremely difficult deeds. They cheerfully roared like lions and that great sound rose up to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Panchalas were frightened by that noise. However, Shini’s grandson, the mighty-armed Satyaki, attacked. He advanced against the immensely strong Kshemadhurti, and using seven sharp arrows, conveyed him to Yama’s abode. The mighty-armed descendant of the Shini lineage tormented with sharp arrows. As he attacked, Hardikya rushed against him, terrible and fierce. Those two archers, best among rathas, roared like lions. They rushed against each other, wielding the best of weapons. The Pandavas, the Panchalas, other warriors and the best of kings became spectators to that clash between those two lions among men. The maharathas from the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages used vatsadantas and iron arrows. Like cheerful elephants, they tried to kill each other. Hardikya and the bull among the Shini lineage roamed around in diverse motions. They repeatedly struck each other with showers of arrows. Those lions from the Vrishni lineage stretched their bows with force and strength and shot arrows. We saw these in the sky, travelling fast, like insects. Hridika’s son approached the one who was the performer of truthful deeds[12] and used four sharp arrows to pierce his four horses. The long-armed one became angry, like an elephant struck with a goad. He used eight supreme arrows to pierce Kritavarma. Kritavarma stretched his bow back all the way up to his ears. Piercing Satyaki with three arrows, he severed his bow with another one. When that best of bows was severed, the bull among the Shini lineage picked up another bow with an arrow affixed to it. Shini's descendant, best among all archers, picked up that best of bows with great speed. The immensely valorous, immensely intelligent and immensely strong one was unable to tolerate the fact that his bow had been severed by Kritavarma. Enraged, the atiratha speedily attacked Kritavarma. Using ten extremely sharp arrows, the bull among the Shini lineage struck Kritavarma's charioteer, horses and standard. His gold-decorated chariot, horses and charioteer were destroyed. O king! O venerable one! On seeing this, the great archer, maharatha Kritavarma, was overcome by great rage and picked up a javelin. With the force of his arms, he hurled this towards the bull among the Shini lineage, wishing to kill him. But Satvata shattered the javelin with his sharp arrows. Shattered, it fell down, and Madhava[13] was confused. His horses had been slain. His charioteer had been killed. In the encounter, Yuyudhana,[14] skilled in the use of weapons, used a broad-headed arrow to strike him in the chest. Kritavarma fell down on the ground. In the duel, the brave one was deprived of his chariot by Satyaki. At this, all the soldiers[15] were overcome by great fear and your sons were miserable, because Kritavarma had been deprived of his chariot and his horses and charioteer had been slain. The horses of that scorcher of enemies had been killed. His charioteer had been slain. O king! On seeing this, Kripa attacked the bull among the Shini lineage, wishing to kill him. While all the archers looked on, the mighty-armed one swiftly picked him up on his own chariot and bore him away from the field of battle. O king! Kritavarma had been deprived of his chariot and Shini's descendant remained stationed there. All of Duryodhana's soldiers again became reluctant to fight. Because they were covered in dust, the soldiers could no longer discern the enemy. O king! With the exception of King Duryodhana, those on your side ran away. Duryodhana was nearby and saw that his own army had been routed. O venerable one! Angered, he quickly attacked all the Pandus, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Droupadi’s sons, the large numbers of Panchalas, the Kekayas, the Somakas and the Panchalas[16] and countered them. He was fearless and unassailable and repulsed them with sharp weapons. Your immensely strong son endeavoured and remained stationed in the battle. He was as resplendent as the great fire on a sacrificial altar, invoked with mantras. In the battle, the enemy was incapable of approaching him, like mortal beings against Death. Hardikya ascended another chariot and attacked.” ’

Chapter 1240(21)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Your son, supreme among rathas, was stationed on his chariot in the battle. He was resplendent and difficult to resist, like the powerful Rudra. The earth was covered with thousands of his arrows. He showered the enemy with arrows, like rain pouring down on a mountain. In the great battle, there wasn’t a man among the Pandavas, or a horse, elephant or a ratha, who was not wounded by his arrows. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whichever warrior I saw in the encounter was struck by your son with his arrows. The soldiers in the army[17] were covered by dust and were seen to be mangled by the great-souled one’s arrows. O lord of the earth! The earth seemed to be made out of arrows that were released by the archer Duryodhana, swift in the use of his hands. Among the thousands of warriors on your side, or that of the enemy, it seemed to me that Duryodhana was the only man. We beheld your son’s wonderful valour. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was single-handed. But the united Parthas could not advance against him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He pierced Yudhishthira with one hundred arrows, Bhimasena with seventy, Sahadeva with seven, Nakula with sixty-four, Dhrishtadyumna with five, Droupadi’s sons with seven each and pierced Satyaki with three. O venerable one! He severed Sahadeva’s bow with a broad-headed arrow. Casting aside the severed bow, Madri’s powerful son picked up another great bow and attacked the king. In the battle, he pierced Duryodhana with ten arrows. The brave and great archer, Nakula, pierced the king with nine arrows and roared, assuming a terrible form. Satyaki struck the king with an arrow with drooping tufts. Droupadi’s sons struck him with seveny-three and Dharmaraja with seven. Bhimasena struck the king with eighty arrows. He was afflicted from every direction by storms of arrows shot by those great-souled ones. O great king! However, while all the soldiers looked on, he did not waver. All the beings and all the men witnessed the dexterity, skill and prowess of the great-souled one. O Indra among kings! Some sons of Dhritarashtra had only fled a short distance away. On seeing the king, those armoured ones surrounded him. When they attacked, they created a tumultuous sound. It was like a turbulent ocean on a monsoon night. In the battle, those great archers approached the unvanquished king and counter-attacked the Pandava assassins.

‘ “In the encounter, Drona’s son repulsed the enraged Bhimasena. O great king! Arrows were released in all the directions. The brave ones could not be distinguished in the battle, nor the directions or the sub-directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Both of those resplendent ones[18] were the performers of cruel deeds and were extremely difficult to resist. They assumed fearful forms and fought, acting and neutralizing each other. The entire universe was terrified because of the twangs of their bows and their words. In the battle, the brave Shakuni attacked Yudhishthira. Subala’s powerful son slew the four horses that belonged to the lord and roared. This made all the soldiers tremble. At that time, the powerful Sahadeva bore the brave and unvanquished king[19] away from the field of battle on his chariot. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira ascended another chariot. He pierced Shakuni with nine arrows and pierced him again with five. The best among all archers then roared loudly. O venerable one! The battle was wonderful and fearful in form. It generated delight among the spectators and was applauded by the siddhas and the charanas. Uluka, immeasurable in his soul, attacked the great archer, Nakula, invincible in battle, and showered him with arrows from every direction. In that way, the brave Nakula repulsed Soubala’s son in the encounter and repulsed him with a great shower of arrows. They were brave maharathas, born in noble lineages. They were seen to fight with each other, enraged with each other. O king! In that way, Kritavarma fought against Shini’s descendant, the tormentor of enemies, and was resplendent, like Shakra in an encounter against Bala. In the battle, Duryodhana severed Dhrishtadyumna’s bow. When his bow had been severed, he pierced him with sharp arrows. While all the archers looked on, in that encounter, Dhrishtadyumna grasped a supreme weapon and fought against the king. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The clash between those two was exceedingly great. They were like two supreme and crazy elephants, with shattered temples, exuding musth. In the battle, the brave Goutama became angry and pierced Droupadi's immensely strong sons with many arrows with drooping tufts. That clash between them and him was like that between a being and the senses.[20] It assumed a fierce and terrible form and neither side was inclined to show mercy. They afflicted him, like senses oppressing a stupid person. He angrily fought against them in that battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus the colourful battle between them and him raged on. O lord! It was like the one that always takes place between a being and the senses.

' "Men fought with men. Tuskers fought with tuskers. Horses clashed against horses and rathas against rathas. O lord of the earth! The battle became tumultuous and fearful in form. O lord! It was wonderful in one spot and terrible and fierce in another. O great king! There were many terrible clashes. Those scorchers of enemies clashed against each other in the encounter. They pierced, struck and killed each other in the great encounter. Because of the weapons, a terrible dust was seen to rise. O king! As they ran away, it was also created by the horses and the horse riders and was fanned by the wind. The dust was created by the chariots and the breaths of the tuskers. It was like a tawny cloud in the evening and obstructed the path of the sun. The sun was covered by the dust and lost its brilliance. The earth and the brave maharathas were shrouded. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! But in a short while, the earth was sprinkled with the blood of the brave ones and, in every direction, became free of the dust. That terrible dust, fierce in form, was pacified. O great king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those extremely fearful duels could again be seen, as the best and the eldest fought against each other at midday. O Indra among kings! The armour was seen to blaze in resplendent brilliance. As arrows descended in that battle, a tumultuous sound was raised. It was as if a large forest of bamboos was being burnt in every direction." '

Chapter 1241(22)

‘Sanjaya said, “That fierce battle continued, terrible in form. The army of your sons was shattered by the Pandavas. The maharathas made great efforts to restrain them and your sons fought against the Pandava soldiers. Wishing to ensure your son’s pleasure, the warriors on your side suddenly returned. When they returned, the battle again assumed a fearful form. Those on your side and the enemy fought against each other in the battle, like the gods and the asuras. The soldiers on your side, and that of the enemy, were unwilling to retreat. They fought against each other through guessing and by means of signs.[21] As they fought against each other, there was a great destruction.

‘ “King Yudhishthira was overcome by great rage. In the battle, he wished to vanquish the sons of Dhritarashtra and the kings. He pierced Sharadvata with three arrows that were gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone. He slew Kritavarma’s four horses with injurious arrows. Ashvatthama bore the illustrious Hardikya away. Sharadvata pierced Yudhishthira back with eight arrows. In the battle, King Duryodhana dispatched seven hundred chariots towards the spot where King Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, was. Those chariots possessed the speed of thought or the wind and rathas rode them. In the encounter, they rushed against Kounteya’s chariot. O great king! They surrounded Yudhishthira from all sides. With their arrows, they made him disappear, like clouds against the sun. Rathas, with Shikhandi at the forefront, were unwilling to tolerate this and became angry. They attacked with the best of swift chariots, decorated with nets of bells. They advanced to protect Yudhishthira, Kunti’s sons. A terrible battle ensued between the Pandavas and the Kurus. Blood flowed like water and it extended Yama’s kingdom. Having slain the seven hundred rathas that belonged to the Kuru assassins, the Pandavas and the Panchalas again countered them. A great battle was fought between your son and the Pandavas. Nothing like this had been seen earlier, nor heard of. That merciless battle continued in every direction. Warriors, on your side and that of the others, were slain. The warriors roared and blew on their conch shells. The archers roared like lions and shouted. O venerable one! As that battle extended, the inner organs were mangled. In search of victory, the warriors dashed in every direction. Every species on earth seemed to be destroyed and this generated sorrow. As the battle extended, the best of women were deprived of their partings in the encounter.[22] That merciless and extremely fearful battle continued. There was a sound, like that of the earth, with all its mountains and forests, during an earthquake. O king! Torches with handles fell down in every direction. From the solar disc, meteors descended from the firmament onto the ground. Harsh winds blew from every side and showered down stones underneath. The elephants shed tears and trembled severely. Disregarding these ominous portents, the extremely fearful battle raged on. Consulting each other, the kshatriyas weren't distressed and fought again on that beautiful and sacred region of Kurukshetra, desiring to go to heaven.

' "Shakuni, the son of the king of Gandhara, said, 'Station yourselves in the forefront of the battle. I will slay the Pandavas from the rear.' At this, the spirited warriors from Madra cheerfully advanced, uttering many sounds of delight and so did the enemy. Those invincible ones, unwavering in their aim, attacked us again. They brandished their bows and arrows and showered down arrows. The soldiers of the king of Madra were slain by the army there. On seeing this, Duryodhana's soldiers again retreated. The powerful king of Gandhara again spoke these words. 'O wicked ones! O ones who are ignoring dharma! Return and fight. Why are you running away?' O bull among the Bharata lineage! The king of Gandhara possessed an army of ten thousand horses, with warriors with sparkling lances. He used this army and his valour and there was a destruction of men. He attacked the Pandava soldiers from the rear and killed them with his sharp arrows. O great king! In every direction, the extremely large army of the Pandus was destroyed and driven away, like clouds by the wind. From a close distance, Yudhishthira saw that his own army was being routed. The immensely strong Sahadeva was in front of him and he urged him. 'Subala's armoured son is afflicting our rear. O Pandava! Behold. The evil-minded one is slaying our soldiers. Advance with the sons of

Droupadi and kill Shakuni Soubala. O unblemished one! Protect yourself with an army of Panchala chariots. Let all the elephants and horses go with you, and three thousand foot soldiers. Kill Shakuni Soubala.' At this, seven hundred elephants, with bows in the hands of the riders, five thousand horses, the valiant Sahadeva, three thousand foot soldiers and the sons of Droupadi combined and attacked Shakuni, invincible in a battle, in the encounter. O king! However, the powerful Soubala, desiring victory, overcame the Pandavas and slaughtered the soldiers from the rear. The spirited Pandava horse riders were angry. They penetrated Soubala's army and overcame his rathas. Those brave riders stationed themselves amidst elephants and enveloped Soubala's large army with showers of arrows. The brave men used clubs and javelins. O king! Because of your evil counsel, a great battle raged. As the rathas watched, the twang of bowstrings was no longer heard, because one could not distinguish those on one's own side from that of the enemy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Javelins were hurled from the arms of the brave ones among the Kurus and the Pandavas and one could see them descend like stellar bodies. O lord of the earth! Sparkling swords were seen to descend there and covered the sky, rendering it exceedingly beautiful. O king! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Beautiful javelins descended in every direction and were like locusts in the sky. The limbs of horses were covered with blood and because they were wounded, fell down in hundreds and thousands. They fell against each other and crowded together. Wounded, they were seen to vomit blood from their mouths. There was a terrible darkness and the soldiers were covered in dust. With wet eyes, those scorchers of enemies retreated from the spot. O king! Horses and men were covered with dust. Some fell down on the ground. Others vomited copious quantities of blood. The hair of some men got entangled with the hair of others and they could not move. The immensely strong ones dragged each other from the backs of their horses and, clashing like wrestlers, slew each other. Many lost their lives and were dragged away by the horses. There were many others who fell down on the ground, desiring victory. Those men, proud of their prowess, were seen here and there. Blood flowed from their wounds. Their arms were severed. Their hair was shorn. The earth was seen to be strewn with hundreds and thousands of them. Those who tried to use their horses could not travel a great distance away. Horse riders were slain and the earth was covered with horses. Armour was smeared with blood. And there were those who were armed with many terrible kinds of weapons, seeking to kill each other. They clashed against each other in the battle and many soldiers were killed. O lord of the earth! Soubala fought in that battle for a short while. He then retreated with the six thousand horses that still remained.

‘ “The horse riders on the Pandu side were also covered with blood. They engaged well in that battle, ready to give up their lives. They also retreated with the six thousand horses that still remained. They said, ‘One can no longer use chariots or mighty elephants to fight here. Let chariots advance against chariots and elephants against elephants. Shakuni has now retreated and has stationed himself inside his formation. King Soubala will not advance in the battle again.’ Droupadi’s sons and those crazy elephants then went to the spot where maharatha Panchala Dhrishtadyumna was. O Kouravya! When that mighty cloud of dust arose, Sahadeva alone went to the spot where King Yudhishthira was. When they had departed, Shakuni Soubala again became enraged and attacked Dhrishtadyumna’s army from the side. There was a dreadful battle again and they were ready to give up their lives. Those on your side, and that of the enemy, attacked each other, wishing to kill each other. O king! In that clash of brave warriors, they first glanced at each other, and then attacked, in hundreds and thousands. In that destruction of men, heads were severed with swords and fell down with a great noise, like palm fruit. Devoid of armour, bodies were mangled and fell down on the ground. O lord of the earth! Arms and thighs were severed with weapons. There were loud noises and the body hair stood up. With sharp weapons, brothers, sons and friends were killed. The warriors descended, like birds in search of meat. Extremely enraged, they attacked each other. ‘I will be the first. I am the first.’ Saying this, thousands were killed. Because of that clash, horse riders lost their lives and were dislodged from their seats. Horses fell down in hundreds and thousands. O lord of the earth! There was the neighing of swift horses. There were the roars of armoured men. A tumultuous sound was created by javelins and swords. O king! Because of your evil policy, they pierced each other’s inner organs. The wrathful ones were overcome by exhaustion. The mounts were exhausted and thirsty. Wounded by sharp weapons, those on your side retreated. Many became crazy because of the scent of blood and lost their senses. They killed whomever they could approach, regardless of whether it was friend or foe. Many kshatriyas, desiring victory, lost their lives. O king! They were covered with showers of arrows and fell down on the ground. Wolves, vultures and jackals emitted fierce sounds of delight. While your son looked on, your army met with a terrible destruction. O lord of the earth! The earth was covered with the bodies of men and horses. It was colourful with flow of blood and increased the fear of cowards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those on your side, as well as that of the Pandavas, were repeatedly struck by swords, javelins and spears and stopped attacking. As long as they had lives, they struck to the best of their capacity. The warriors then fell down, vomiting blood from their wounds. Headless torsos could be seen, grasping the hair[23] and raising sharp swords smeared with blood. O lord of men! Many such headless torsos rose up. Because of that scent of blood, the warriors were overcome by weakness.

‘ “When the sound became less, Soubala attacked the large army of the Pandavas with the few remaining horses. The Pandavas desired victory and spiritedly attacked back. The foot soldiers, elephant riders and horse riders raised their weapons. They protected themselves in every direction, by arranging themselves into an array. They struck him with many kinds of weapons, wishing to bring an end to the hostilities. On seeing this attack, those on your side rushed against the Pandavas, with horses, infantry, elephants and chariots. There were some foot soldiers who no longer possessed weapons. In the battle, those brave ones attacked and brought down each other with feet and fists. Rathas fell down from their chariots and elephant riders from their elephants. They were like siddhas falling down from celestial vehicles, after their store of good deeds has been exhausted. In the great battle, thus did the warriors kill each other, fathers, brothers, friends, sons and others. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Thus did that fearful battle continue. It was extremely terrible and spears, swords and arrows were used.” ’

Chapter 1242(23)

‘Sanjaya said, “When the sound became less and the Pandavas had slain some of that army, Soubala advanced with seven hundred well-trained horses that still remained. He swiftly approached the army[24] and said, ‘O warriors! Make haste. Fight cheerfully.’ The scorcher of enemies repeatedly said this. He asked the kshatriyas there, ‘Where is the maharatha king?’[25] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Hearing Shakuni’s words, they replied, ‘The maharatha Kouravya is stationed in the midst of the battle. He is at the spot where the great umbrella is, as radiant as the full moon. That is where the armoured rathas are, with their arm-guards. A tumultuous sound can be heard there, like the roar of clouds. O king! Go there swiftly and you will be able to see Kouravya.’ O lord of men! Having been thus addressed by those brave ones, Shakuni Soubala went to the spot where your son was. He was surrounded on all sides by valiant ones who were unwilling to retreat from the battle. Duryodhana was stationed there, in the midst of an array of chariots. O lord of the earth! Having seen him, Shakuni cheerfully spoke these words to Duryodhana, gladdening all the rathas on your side. He spoke to the king, as if he thought that his objective had already been achieved. ‘O king! Slay this array of rathas.[26] All their horses have already been defeated by me. Yudhishthira is incapable of being defeated in the battle, unless one is prepared to give up one’s own life. Slay this array of rathas, protected by Pandava. We will then kill these elephants, foot soldiers and horses.’ On hearing these words, those on your side were cheered. Wishing for victory, they swiftly attacked the Pandava soldiers. They fixed their quivers and grasped their bows. They brandished their bows and roared like lions. O lord of the earth! The noise of twang of bowstrings and the slapping of palms was again heard. They shot extremely terrible arrows.

‘ “On seeing that they were joyfully and swiftly advancing, with upraised bows, Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, spoke these words to Devaki’s son. ‘Goad these horses without any fear and penetrate this ocean of soldiers. Using sharp arrows, I will bring an end to these enemies. O Janardana! This is the eighteenth day of the battle and we have engaged against each other in this great clash. The standard-bearers, the great-souled ones, were almost infinite. Behold. They have been destroyed in the battle, by destiny. O Madhava! The army of Dhritarashtra’s son was like an ocean. O Achyuta! Having clashed against us, it has now become like a trifle.[27] O Madhava! It would have been well had there been peace after Bhishma was killed. But Dhritarashtra’s stupid and extremely foolish son did not act accordingly. O Madhava! Bhishma spoke beneficial words that were like medicine. However, Suyodhana was beyond reason and did not listen to it. After Bhishma was dislodged and brought down on the surface of the ground, I do not know the reason why the battle had to continue. I think that, in every way, Dhritarashtra’s son is stupid and extremely foolish. They continued to fight even after Shantanu’s son was brought down. After that, Drona, supreme among those who know about the brahman, was killed, and so were Radheya and Vikarna. But even then, there was no peace. When only a few of the soldiers were left and the son of a suta, tiger among men, was brought down with his sons, even then, there was no peace. When the brave Shrutayusha was killed, and Pourava Jalasandha, and King Shrutayudha, even then, there was no peace. O Janardana! Bhurishrava, Shalya, Shalva and the brave ones from Avanti[28] were killed. Even then, there was no peace. Jayadratha, the rakshasa Alayudha, Bahlika and Somadatta were slain. Even then, there was no peace. The brave Bhagadatta, Sudakshina from Kamboja and Duhshasana were killed. Even then, there was no peace. O Krishna! There were many brave kings, lords of their separate dominions. Even when those powerful ones were killed in the battle, there was no peace. Even when he[29] saw that an entire akshouhini was brought down by Bhimasena, either because of his delusion or because of his avarice, there still was no peace. Other than Kourava Suyodhana, who else would have been born in a noble lineage and generated this large and pointless enmity? Knowing that we were superior in qualities, strength and valour, which sensible person would attempt to fight, other than a foolish one unable to differentiate good from evil? He could not make up his mind that he should listen to your beneficial words and make peace with the Pandavas. Instead, he listened to the advice of another. Shantanu’s son, Bhishma, Drona and Vidura spoke in favour of peace, but were disregarded. What medicine will he resort to today? O Janardana! Because of his stupidity, he rejected his aged father and mother’s beneficial words, when they spoke about what was good for him. How can he accept good advice? O Janardana! It is evident that he was born to bring an end to his lineage. O lord of the earth! That is the direction his policy has followed. O Achyuta! It is my view that he will still not give us the kingdom. O father![30] On several occasions, the great-souled Vidura has told me that Dhritarashtra’s son, as long as he is alive, will never give us a share. O venerable one! He also said, “As long as Dhritarashtra’s son is alive, that wicked one will continue to act in evil ways towards you. You will not be able to defeat him, without engaging with him in battle.” O Madhava! Vidura, who sees the truth, always spoke to me in this way. I now see that the evil-souled one’s deeds have been exactly in accordance with the words of the great-souled Vidura. He also heard the beneficial and appropriate words spoken by Jamadagni’s son.[31] But the evil-minded one disregarded them and set himself along a path of certain destruction. As soon as Suyodhana was born, many siddhas had said that this evil-souled one would bring about the destruction of kshatriyas. O Janardana! Those words have now been realized. Because of Duryodhana’s deeds, the kings are headed towards fearful destruction. O Madhava! I will kill all the warriors in the battle today. When the kshatriyas have been speedily killed and their camps emptied, for the sake of his own destruction, Duryodhana will desire to fight with us. O Madhava! I think that will bring an end to the enmity. O Varshneya! Using my intelligence, on due reflection, I think this will be the end, borne out by Vidura’s words and the evil-souled one’s efforts. O brave one! Take me to the Bharata army, so that I can use my sharp arrows to slay the evil-souled Duryodhana’s soldiers in the battle. O Madhava! Today, I will accomplish what Dharmaraja wants. While Dhritarashtra’s son looks on, I will destroy this weakened army.’ Thus addressed by Savyasachi, Krishna, with the reins in his hand, fearlessly penetrated the large army of the enemy in the battle.

‘ “The spot was terrible with the best of bows and arrows, and the javelins were like thorns.[32] Clubs and maces were the paths and chariots and elephants were the large trees. The immensely illustrious ones immersed themselves in horses and foot soldiers. Govinda roamed around there, on a chariot with several flags. O king! Those white horses bore Arjuna in the battle. Controlled by Dasharha, they were seen in every direction. Savyasachi, the scorcher of enemies, advanced on his chariot. He showered down hundreds of sharp arrows, like torrents of rain pouring down on a mountain. In the battle, Savyasachi shot and enveloped everything with arrows with drooping tufts, which made a loud noise. Torrents of arrows penetrated armour and fell down on the ground. Shot from Gandiva, those arrows were like Indra’s vajra to the touch. O lord of the earth! Men, elephants and horses were struck. The arrows whizzed like insects and brought them down in the battle. Everything was covered by arrows shot from Gandiva. In the encounter, the directions and the sub-directions could not be distinguished. Everything was covered by arrows marked with Partha’s name. They were gold-tufted, washed in oil and polished by artisans. They were consumed by Partha, like elephants by a fire. The Kouravas were afflicted and slaughtered by those sharp arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Wielding the bow and arrows, Partha blazed. In the battle, he consumed the warriors, like a flaming fire among dead wood. He was like a fire with black trails kindled on the outskirts of a forest by the residents of the forest, roaring loudly and consuming dead wood. Many trees and heaps of dry creepers seemed to be burnt by the blazing and powerful one. The innumerable iron arrows of the powerful one were like extremely energetic flames. The spirited one burnt all the soldiers of your son, swiftly and intolerantly. His gold-tufted arrows were shot well and could not be countered by armour. They robbed lives. He did not have to shoot a second arrow at a man, a horse, or a supreme elephant. The arrows were of many different kinds of forms and penetrated the arrays of the maharathas. He single-handedly killed the soldiers of your son, like the wielder of the vajra against the daityas.” ’

Chapter 1243(24)

‘Sanjaya said, “Those brave ones were unwilling to retreat and made efforts. Their resolution was firm. But Dhananjaya’s Gandiva was invincible. The touch of the immensely energetic one’s arrows was like that of Indra’s vajra. They were seen to be shot, like a torrent of rain released on a mountain. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Those soldiers were slaughtered by Kiriti. While your son looked on, they fled from the battle. Some lost the yokes of their chariots. For others, the charioteers were slain. O lord of the earth! For some others, the poles and wheels of the chariots were shattered. Some no longer possessed any arrows. Others were afflicted by arrows. Some were not unwounded. Nevertheless, they collectively fled, afflicted by fear. With their mounts slain, some tried to rescue their sons. Others loudly called out to their fathers, or to others, for help. O tiger among men! O lord of the earth! Here and there, some fled, abandoning their relatives, brothers and allies. Many maharathas were severely wounded and benumbed. Men were seen to be immobile, struck by Partha’s arrows. Others ascended their chariots and assured themselves for a short while. Having rested and quenched their thirst, they advanced towards the fight again. Some were invincible in battle. Acting in accordance with your son’s instructions, they abandoned the wounded and set out to fight again. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Others drank water and tended to their mounts. Having donned armour, they battled again. Others comforted their brothers, sons and fathers and conveyed them to the camps. Having done this, they desired to fight again. The brave ones were resplendent, decorated with nets of gold. They were like the daityas and the danavas, in pursuit of the conquest of the three worlds. Some violently advanced on chariots that were decorated with gold. They fought with the Pandava soldiers and with Dhrishtadyumna. Panchala Dhrishtadyumna, maharatha Shikhandi and Nakula’s son, Shatanika, fought against that division of rathas.

‘ “The angry Panchala was surrounded by a large army. He wrathfully rushed against those on your side, wishing to kill them. O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When he attacked, your son affixed and shot many arrows at him. O king! Dhrishtadyumna swiftly struck your archer son in the arms and the chest with many iron arrows. Severely pierced, the great archer was like an elephant struck by a goad. He used arrows to convey his[33] four horses to the land of the dead. With a broad-headed arrow, he severed his charioteer’s head from his body. Having been deprived of his chariot, King Duryodhana ascended onto the back of a horse. The scorcher of enemies retreated a short distance away. O great king! On seeing that his immensely strong and valiant army had been destroyed, your son went to where Soubala was.

‘ “When the rathas were routed, three thousand giant elephants surrounded and attacked the five Pandava rathas[34] from all directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, those five were surrounded by an army of elephants. Those tigers among men looked radiant, like planets surrounded by clouds. O great king! Arjuna was unwavering in his aim and mighty-armed. With Krishna as his charioteer, he advanced on a chariot drawn by white horses. Surrounded by elephants that were like mountains, he used sharp, sparkling and iron arrows to bring down that army of elephants. We saw each of those giant elephants killed by a single arrow. Mangled by Savyasachi, they fell down, or were falling down. On seeing those elephants, Bhimasena became like a crazy elephant. The powerful one grasped a giant club in his hand and swiftly descended from his chariot onto the ground, like Yama with a staff in his hand. On seeing the Pandava maharatha attack with his club, the soldiers on your side were frightened and excreted urine and excrement. On seeing Vrikodara with the club, the entire army was agitated. The elephants were as large as mountains and we saw them run away. Their frontal lobes were shattered by Bhimasena with the club, and blood began to flow. Struck by Bhimasena’s club, the elephants fled, uttering shrieks of pain, like mountains with their wings lopped off.[35] There were many elephants that fled, with their frontal lobes shattered. On seeing that they were falling down, your soldiers were terrified. Yudhishthira and the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons were enraged. They used sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of vultures to kill the warriors on elephants.

‘ “When the king, your son, had been defeated by Dhrishtadyumna in the battle, he retreated on the back of a horse. O great king! On seeing that all the Pandavas had been surrounded by elephants, Dhrishtadyumna, accompanied by all the Prabhadrakas, attacked. Your son climbed onto another elephant, wishing to kill the king of Panchala. On not seeing Duryodhana, scorcher of enemies, in the midst of that array of chariots, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma asked the kshatriyas there, ‘Where has Duryodhana gone?’ On not seeing the king in that destruction of men, the maharathas thought that your son had been killed. Therefore, with distress written on their faces, they asked about your son. Some people told them that your son had gone to the spot where Soubala was. Other kshatriyas, who were severely wounded, said, ‘What is the need to ask about Duryodhana and see if he is still alive? Fight unitedly. What can the king do?’ Those kshatriyas were wounded in their limbs. Many of their mounts had been slain and they were afflicted with arrows. They softly said, ‘Let us kill the army with which we have been surrounded. After having slain all the elephants, the Pandavas are advancing here.’ On hearing their words, the immensely strong Ashvatthama penetrated that irresistible army of the king of Panchala. With Kripa and Kritavarma, they went to the spot where Soubala was. Those brave ones, firm archers, abandoned that array of chariots.[36]

‘ “O king! When they had left, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Pandavas attacked and slaughtered those on your side. The maharathas descended cheerfully, powerful and brave. On seeing this, the faces of those in your army turned pale and they gave up all hope of remaining alive. They had few weapons left and they saw that they were surrounded. O king! Surrounded by those two kinds of forces, I abandoned all hope of remaining alive. With the five on our side, I fought with the Panchala soldiers. I stationed myself at the spot where Sharadvata was.[37] The five on our side were severely afflicted by Kiriti’s arrows. However, we fought a great battle with Dhrishtadyumna’s large army. When all of us were defeated, we retreated from the field of battle. We saw maharatha Satyaki advancing against us. With four hundred chariots, the brave one pursued me in the battle. With difficulty, I freed myself from Dhrishtadyumna, whose mounts were exhausted. But I now found myself in the midst of Madhava’s army, like an evildoer who has descended into hell. For a short while, there was a fierce and extremely terrible battle. The mighty-armed Satyaki sliced off my armour. He seized me alive and I fell down on the ground, senseless. In a short instant, that army of elephants was slaughtered by Arjuna’s iron arrows and Bhimasena’s club. In every direction, those mangled and giant elephants fell down, like mountains. Consequently, the Pandavas found that their path was obstructed. O great king! The immensely strong Bhimasena dragged away those giant elephants and created a path for the Pandava chariots. On not seeing Duryodhana, the scorcher of enemies, in that army of chariots, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma tried to search for the king, your maharatha son. They abandoned Panchala and went to the spot where Soubala was. In that destruction of men, they were anxious to see the king.” ’

Chapter 1244(25)

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When that army of elephants was slain by Pandu’s son[38] and when that army was slaughtered in the battle by Bhimasena, Bhimasena, the scorcher of enemies, was seen to be wandering around there. He was enraged as Yama with a staff in his hand, destroying all beings. O king! In the encounter, he clashed against and killed your remaining sons, while your son, Kouravya Duryodhana, could not be seen. Those and other brothers united and attacked Bhimasena. O great king! They were Durmarshana, Jaitra, Bhuribala and Ravi. These sons of yours united and attacked from every direction. They obstructed Bhimasena from all the directions. O great king! At this, Bhima again ascended his chariot. He shot sharp arrows towards the inner organs of your sons. In the great battle, your sons were afflicted by Bhima and tried to drag Bhimasena away, like an unwilling elephant. In the encounter, the wrathful Bhimsena swiftly used a kshurapra arrow to sever Durmarshana’s head and it fell down on the ground. With another broad-headed arrow that was capable of penetrating all armour, Bhima slew your maharatha son, Shrutanta. The scorcher of enemies seemed to smile. He pierced Kouravya Jayatsena with an iron arrow and brought him down from his seat on the chariot. O king! He was quickly killed and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. O venerable one! At this, Shrutarva angrily pierced Bhima with one hundred arrows with drooping tufts that were shafted with feathers of vultures. In the encounter, Bhima angrily pierced Jaitra, Bhuribala and Ravi. Those three were struck with three arrows that were like the poison or the fire. Having been slain, those maharathas fell down from their chariots onto the ground. They were like blossoming kimshuka trees during the spring that had been struck down. With another sharp and iron arrow, the scorcher of enemies struck Durvimochana and sent him to the world of the dead. Having been slain, that supreme of rathas fell down from his chariot onto the ground. He was like a tree on a mountain top that had been struck down by a storm. In that battle, in the forefront of that army, he then struck two of your sons, Dushpradharsha and Sujata, with two arrows each. Those arrows had stone heads. Their limbs were struck by these and the supreme of rathas fell down. Bhima saw that Durvisaha, another of your sons, was impetuously advancing in the battle. He pierced him with a broad-headed arrow. While all the archers looked on, he was slain and fell down from his mount. On seeing that many of his brothers had been single-handedly killed in the battle, Shrutarva became intolerant and attacked Bhima. He brandished his giant bow, decorated with gold. He shot many arrows that were like poison and the fire. O king! In the battle, he severed Pandava's bow and when the bow was severed, struck him with twenty arrows. However, maharatha Bhimasena picked up another bow. Enveloping your son with arrows, he asked him to wait. The great duel that took place between the two of them was wonderful and fearful. Such a duel had earlier occurred between Jambha and Vasava. They shot sparkling arrows that were like Yama's staff and shrouded the entire earth, the sky and all the directions. O king! In the battle, Shrutarva angrily picked up his bow and struck Bhimasena in the arms and the chest with arrows. O great king! Thus severely pierced by your archer son, Bhima was angry and agitated, like the ocean during the new or the full moon. O venerable one! Overcome by anger, Bhima used his arrows to convey your son's charioteer and his four horses to Yama's eternal abode. On seeing that he was without a chariot, the one with an immeasurable soul showed the dexterity of his hands and covered him with tufted arrows. O king! Devoid of his chariot, Shrutarva picked up a sword and a shield. The sword was as radiant as the sun and was marked with the signs of one hundred moons. However, Pandava used a kshurapra arrow to sever his head from his body. The great-souled one severed his head with a kshurapra arrow and the headless torso fell down from the chariot onto the ground, making a loud noise.

' "When that brave one fell down, those on your side were overcome by fear. Despite this, they advanced against Bhimasena in the battle, wishing to fight with him. Those were the only ones left from the army that was like an ocean. When they speedily attacked, the armoured and powerful Bhimasena received them. They attacked him, surrounding him from all sides. Bhima enveloped those on your side with sharp arrows. He afflicted all of them, like the one with the one thousand eyes[39] against the asuras. He destroyed five hundred maharathas and destroyed the bumpers of their chariots. In the battle, he again slaughtered an army of seven hundred elephants. With supreme arrows, he slew ten thousand foot soldiers and eight hundred horses. Pandava was radiant. O lord! Having slain your sons in the battle, Bhimasena Kounteya thought that his task and the purpose of his birth had been accomplished. He slew all those on your side who battled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No one among your soldiers was capable of glancing towards him. All the Kurus were driven away and their followers slain. He then made a loud noise by slapping his armpits and terrified the giant elephants. O lord of the earth! There were many warriors in your army who were killed. O great king! The few who were left were overcome by distress.” ’

Chapter 1245(26)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! In the battle, there were only two of your sons who had not been killed, Duryodhana and Sudarsha. They were stationed in the midst of the horses. On seeing that Duryodhana was stationed in the midst of the horses, Devaki’s son spoke to Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son. ‘Many enemies, and relatives protected by them, have been killed. The bull among the Shini lineage is returning, having captured Sanjaya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having fought in the battle against the wicked sons of Dhritarashtra and their followers, Nakula and Sahadeva are exhausted. Those three, Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona’s maharatha son, have abandoned Suyodhana and stationed themselves elsewhere. Having slain Duryodhana’s soldiers, the Panchalas, together with all the Prabhadrakas, are stationed here, supreme in their prosperity. O Partha! Duryodhana is stationed there, in the midst of the horses. The umbrella is held aloft his head and he is repeatedly glancing here and there. He has arrayed his entire army in the form of a counter-vyuha and is stationed in the midst of the battle. If you kill him with your sharp arrows, you will be successful in your objective. O scorcher of enemies! Having seen that the army of elephants has been killed, they are not approaching you. While they are still running away, kill Suyodhana. Let someone else go to Panchala and ask him to quickly come here. O son![40] The army is exhausted and the wicked one will not be able to escape. Having destroyed a large army in the battle, Dhritarashtra’s son thinks that the sons of Pandu have been defeated and has assumed an insolent form. Having seen that his own army has been destroyed by the Pandavas, he is distressed. It is certain that the king will advance in the battle and ensure his own destruction.’ Having been thus addressed, Phalguna spoke these words to Krishna. ‘O one who grants honours! O Krishna! All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed by Bhima and the two who are alive will also be killed today. Bhishma has been killed.

Drona has been killed. Karna Vaikartana has been killed. Shalya, the king of Madra, has been killed. O Krishna! Jayadratha has been killed. O Janardana! Only five hundred horses remain from Shakuni Soubala's army and two hundred chariots. There are one hundred fierce tuskers and three thousand foot soldiers. O Madhava! Ashvatthama, Kripa, the lord of Trigarta, Uluka, Shakuni and Satvata Kritavarma—these are the ones who are left in Dhritarashtra's army. It is certain that no one on earth can ever escape from death. Behold. Though the soldiers have been killed, Duryodhana is still stationed there. However, all the enemies of the king[41] will be slain today. I think that no one amongst the enemy will be able to escape. O Krishna! Even if they are crazy in the battle and are superhuman, as long as they do not run away, I will slay all of them in the battle today. I will angrily bring down Gandhara with sharp arrows in the battle today. The king has not slept for a long time. I will win back the riches the evil-acting Soubala deceitfully won from us, when he again challenged us to a gambling match in the assembly hall. On hearing that their husbands and sons have been killed in the battle by the Pandavas, all the women of Nagapura[42] will weep today. O Krishna! All our tasks will be completed today. Today, Duryodhana will abandon his blazing prosperity and his life. O Krishna! O Varshneya! You can regard Dhritarashtra's stupid son as having been killed by me in the battle today, as long as he does not flee because of fear. O scorcher of enemies! Those horses cannot endure the twang of my bow and the slapping of my palms. Take me there.' O king! Thus addressed by the illustrious Pandava, Dasharha drove the horses towards Duryodhana's army.

' "O venerable one! On seeing that army, three maharathas—Bhimasena, Arjuna and Sahadeva—prepared themselves. They roared like lions and advanced, wishing to kill Duryodhana. All three united and raised their bows. In the battle, on seeing this, Soubala advanced against the Pandava assassins. Your son, Sudarshana, advanced against Bhimasena.[43] Susharma and Shakuni fought against Kiriti. Your son[44] was on the back of a horse and attacked Sahadeva. O lord of men! With care and speed, your son severely struck Sahadeva's head with a javelin. Struck by your son, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. His limbs were covered with blood and he sighed like a venomous serpent. O lord of the earth! Having regained his senses, Sahadeva angrily countered Duryodhana with sharp arrows. Partha Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, fought valiantly and severed the heads of many warriors who were seated on horses. Partha slaughtered that army with many arrows. Having brought down all the horses, he advanced against the chariots of the Trigartas. The maharathas from Trigarata united and covered Arjuna and Vasudeva with showers of arrows. Pandu’s immensely illustrious son struck Satyakarma with a kshurapra arrow and shattered the yoke of his chariot. O lord! With a kshurapra arrow that had been sharpened on stone, the immensely illustrious one then laughingly severed his adversary’s head, adorned with earrings made out of molten gold. O king! While all the warriors looked on, he then attacked Satyeshu, like a hungry lion in the forest going after deer. Having killed him, Partha pierced Susharma with three arrows and destroyed all the chariots that were decorated with gold. Partha then forcefully advanced against the lord of Prasthala,[45] harbouring an enmity nurtured over many years and angrily shooting arrows that were like poison. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Arjuna first enveloped him with one hundred arrows and then slew all the horses that belonged to that archer. Partha then afflixed a sharp arrow that was like Yama’s staff and smilingly, shot it towards Susharma. That arrow was shot by an archer who flamed with rage. In the battle, it struck and pierced Susharma’s heart. O great king! Having lost his life, he fell down on the ground. All the Pandavas roared and those on your side were distressed. When Susharma had been killed in the battle, he used sharp arrows to dispatch forty-three of his[46] maharatha sons to Yama’s eternal abode. He then used sharp arrows to kill all his followers. The maharatha then attacked the remaining soldiers in the Bharata army.

‘ “O lord of men! In the battle, Bhima was wrathful. He laughed and made your son, Sudarshana, invisible with arrows. Angry, but smiling, he severed his head from his body with an extremely sharp kshurapra arrow. Slain, he fell down on the ground. When that brave one was killed, his followers surrounded Bhima in the battle and covered him with sharp arrows. However, Vrikodara used sharp arrows that were like Indra’s vajra to the touch to envelop that army in every direction. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In a short while, they were slaughtered by Bhima. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they were thus being slaughtered by that immensely strong one, many of those soldiers advanced against Bhimasena and fought with him. However, Pandava countered all of them with fierce arrows. O king! In that fashion, those on your side brought down a great shower of arrows on the Pandaveya maharathas from every side. All the Pandavas, and the enemy, became anxious. Those on your side, and that of the Pandaveyas, fought in that battle. The warriors struck each other and fell down. O king! Both armies sorrowed over their relatives.” ’

Chapter 1246(27)

‘Sanjaya said, “That battle, destructive of men, horses and elephants, continued. O king! Shakuni Soubala attacked Sahadeva. As he swiftly attacked, the powerful Sahadeva shot a torrent of arrows that were like swift insects. In the encounter, Uluka pierced Bhima with ten arrows. O great king! Shakuni pierced Bhima with three arrows and enveloped Sahadeva with ninety. O king! In the battle, those brave ones clashed against each other and pierced each other with sharp arrows that were tufted with the feathers of herons and peacocks. They were gold-tufted and sharpened on stone. O lord of the earth! Those showers of arrows were released from the bows in their hands. They covered the ten directions, like rain pouring down from clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the battle, the enraged and extremely powerful Bhima and Sahadeva roamed around in the encounter and created great carnage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those two shrouded your army with hundreds of arrows. Here and there, the sky became covered with darkness. O lord of the earth! Mangled by the arrows, the horses fled in a reverse direction and dragged around many slain ones in their paths. Horses and horse riders were killed. O venerable one! Armour was shattered and javelins were destroyed. The earth seemed to be strewn with coloured flowers. O great king! The warriors there clashed against each other. They angrily roamed around in the battle, slaying each other. The earth was strewn with beautiful heads that had the complexion of lotus filaments. The eyes were turned up and the lower lips were bit in anger. They were adorned with earrings. O great king! Arms that were like the trunks of kings of elephants were severed. They were adorned with armlets and arm-guards and still wielded swords, javelins and battleaxes. Other bleeding and headless torsos seemed to rise up and dance around on the field of battle. O lord! The earth was frequented by a large number of carnivorous beasts and it was terrible. In the great battle, only a few of the

Kouraveya soldiers were left. Having conveyed them to Yama’s abode, the Pandavas were delighted.

‘ “At that time, the brave and powerful Soubala severely struck Sahadeva on the head with a javelin. O great king! Losing his senses, he sank down on the floor of his chariot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Sahadeva in that state, the powerful Bhimasena angrily restrained all the soldiers. He pierced hundreds and thousands with his iron arrows. Having pierced them, the scorcher of enemies roared like a lion. At that sound, all of Shakuni’s followers were terrified and quickly fled in fear, together with their horses and elephants. On seeing that they had been routed, King Duryodhana said, ‘O wicked ones! O those who do not know about dharma! Why are you running away from the battle? Deeds performed in this world by brave ones who give up their lives in the battle and do not show their backs, earn worlds in the hereafter.’ Having been thus addressed, King Soubala’s followers attacked the Pandavas, preferring death over retreat. O Indra among kings! As they advanced, they created an extremely terrible noise. All of them were agitated, like a turbulent ocean. O great king! On seeing that Soubala’s followers were attacking, in their pursuit of victory, the Pandavas counter-attacked.

‘ “O lord of the earth! Having regained his assurance, the invincible Sahadeva pierced Shakuni with ten arrows and his horses with three. He seemed to smile as he severed Soubala’s bow with his arrows. Shakuni, unassailable in battle, picked up another bow. He pierced Nakula with sixty arrows and Bhimasena with seven. O great king! Uluka also pierced Bhima with seven arrows. Wishing to save his father in the battle, he pierced Sahadeva with seventy. In the encounter, Bhimasena pierced Shakuni with sixty-four sharp arrows and those who were along the flanks with three arrows each. In the battle, having been struck by Bhima with arrows washed in oil, he[47] angrily covered Sahadeva with a shower of arrows. It was like clouds tinged with lightning pouring down rain on a mountain. O great king! The brave and powerful Sahadeva used a broad-headed arrow to sever and bring down Uluka’s head. He was slain by Sahadeva and fell down from his chariot onto the ground. His limbs were covered with blood and the Pandava warriors were delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that his son had been killed there, Shakuni’s voice choked with tears. He remembered Kshatta’s words and sighed. Having thought for some time, with his eyes full of tears, he sighed and, approaching Sahadeva, he pierced him with three arrows. O great king! Countering the large number of arrows with his own arrows, the powerful Sahadeva severed his bow in the battle. O Indra among kings! When his bow was severed, Shakuni Soubala grasped a large sword and hurled it towards Sahadeva. O lord of the earth! It descended violently, terrible in form. But smilingly, he[48] severed Soubala's sword into two fragments in the encounter. When the sword was shattered into two fragments, he grasped a mighty club and hurled it towards Sahadeva. Though invincible, it too fell down on the ground. The angry Soubala then hurled an extremely terrible javelin towards Pandava. It was like the night of destruction. It descended violently in the encounter. However, Sahadeva seemed to smile. He used gold-decorated arrows to slice it into three fragments. Shattered into three fragments and decorated with gold, it fell down on the ground. It was as if blazing thunder had fallen from the sky, with flashes of lightning. On seing that the javelin had been destroyed, Soubala was overcome with fear. Because of their fright, all those on your side fled, and this included Soubala. The Pandavas, hoping for victory, roared loudly in delight. Almost all those on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra retreated. On seeing that they were distressed, Madri's powerful son[49] restrained them with thousands of arrows in the battle.

' "Sahadeva approached Soubala from the rear. He was still hoping for victory, though he was running away from the battle and was protected by those from Gandhara. O king! He remembered that Shakuni, his share, was still left.[50] Sahadeva pursued him on a chariot that was decorated with gold. He strung his large bow and repeatedly twanged it. He pursued Soubala and struck him with arrows that had been sharpened on stone and shafted with feathers of vultures. In rage, he struck him severely, like a mighty elephant being struck with a goad. Having struck him, the intelligent one addressed him, as if reminding him. 'Resort to the dharma of kshatriyas. Be a man and fight. O stupid one! You rejoiced a lot in the assembly hall. O evil-minded one! You will receive the fruits of that action now. All the evil-souled ones who disrespected us in earlier times have been killed. Duryodhana, who brings ill fame to his lineage, is the only one that is left, and his maternal uncle.[51] I will slay you and slice off your head with a razor-sharp arrow today. It will be like plucking fruit from a tree with a stick.’ O great king! O tiger among men! Having said this, the immensely strong Sahadeva attacked him with great force. The invincible Sahadeva, the lord of warriors, attacked him. He seemed to be smiling, as he stretched his bow with great force and rage. He pierced Shakuni with ten arrows and his horses with four. He severed his umbrella, standard and bow and roared like a lion. Soubala’s standard, bow and umbrella were severed by Sahadeva and he was pierced in all his inner organs by many arrows. O great king! Then, the powerful Sahadeva again shot a shower of invincible arrows towards Shakuni. Angrily, Subala’s son rushed towards Madri’s son, Sahadeva. He wished to kill him with a javelin that was decorated with gold. In the forefront of that battle, as he rushed swiftly ahead, Madri’s son severed the upraised javelin and the two well-rounded arms with three broad-headed arrows. Having spiritedly severed them, he roared. Acting swiftly, he then used a broad-headed arrow that was gold-tufted and was capable of penetrating all armour. It was firm and was made out of iron. Aiming this well and with force, he severed his head from his body. That arrow was decorated with gold. It was extremely sharp and was as radiant as the sun. In the battle, Pandava used that to sever the head of Subala’s son and he fell down on the ground. The arrow was gold-tufted and had been sharpened on stone and Pandu’s enraged son powerfully severed the head with this. He[52] was the root of all the bad conduct of the Kurus. With the head severed, Shakuni was seen to lie down on the ground. His body was wet with blood.

‘ “The warriors on your side were dispirited and terrified. Still wielding weapons, they fled in different directions. Their mouths were dry and they ran away, bereft of their senses. They were afflicted by the twang of Gandiva. They were oppressed by fear. Together with the son of Dhritarashtra, the chariots, horses and elephants were routed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Shakuni was brought down, the Pandaveyas were delighted. In the battle, they cheerfully blew on their conch shells. Together with Keshava, the soldiers rejoiced. All of them honoured the energetic Sahadeva and joyfully said, ‘O brave one! It is through good fortune that the evil-souled gambler and his son have been killed by you in the battle.’” ’

Chapter 1247(28)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Soubala’s followers were enraged. Ready to give up their lives, they repulsed the Pandavas. Wishing to support Sahadeva in his victory, Arjuna and the spirited Bhimasena, who looked like an angry and virulent serpent, received them. They wished to kill Sahadeva, with javelins, swords and spears in their hands. But with Gandiva, Dhananjaya rendered their resolution unsuccessful. With weapons in their hands, those warriors attacked. However, with broad-headed arrows, Bibhatsu severed their heads and their horses. They were slain and lay down on the ground, deprived of their lives. Spiritedly, Savyasachi struck those brave men of the world. King Duryodhana saw that his own army was being destroyed. O lord! He angrily rallied the one hundred chariots that still remained. O scorcher of enemies! He spoke these words to all the assembled army of the son of Dhritarashtra, the elephants, the horses and the foot soldiers. ‘In the battle, attack all the Pandavas and their well-wishers, with Panchala and his army. Return after swiftly slaying them.’ Unassailable in battle, they accepted those instructions. On your son’s command, they attacked the Parthas back in that encounter. In the great battle, those who were left attacked swiftly. But the Pandavas countered them with arrows that were like venomous serpents. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! In a short instant, those great-souled ones slaughtered those soldiers in the battle and they could not find a protector. Though armoured and stationed, they were full of fear. The horses fled in a reverse direction and the soldiers were covered in dust. In the battle, the directions and the sub-directions could not be distinguished. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a short while, in that battle, many men emerged from the army of the Pandavas and slaughtered those on your side. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your soldiers were annihilated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord! Eleven akshouhinis had been mustered by your son and they were slaughtered in the battle by the

Pandus and the Srinjayas. O king! Among the thousands of great-souled kings on your side, only Duryodhana remained and he was seen to be severely wounded. He glanced in all the directions and saw that the earth had been emptied. He was bereft of all warriors and glanced at the Pandavas in the battle, who were delighted that all their objectives had been accomplished. They roared in every direction. O great king! Hearing the whizzing of arrows shot by those great-souled ones, Duryodhana was overcome by depression. Devoid of soldiers and men, he resolved to retreat.”

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O suta! When my soldiers and my camps were annihilated, what was the army that still remained with the Pandavas? I am asking you. O Sanjaya! You are skilled in recounting. Tell me. What did my unfortunate son, Duryodhana, the lord of the earth, do, when he saw that his army had been destroyed and he was the only one left?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Two thousand chariots, seven hundred elephants, five thousand horses and ten thousand foot soldiers—this is what was left from the large army of the Pandavas. Dhrishtadyumna gathered them and remained stationed in the battle. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! King Duryodhana was alone. In the battle, he could not see any supreme ratha as his aide. He saw that his own army had been destroyed and that the enemy was roaring. He abandoned his horse, which had been slain. Out of fear, he retreated and fled in an eastern direction. Your son, Duryodhana, had been the lord of eleven hundred army divisions. With a club in his hand, the spirited one advanced on foot towards a lake. He had advanced on foot only for a short distance, when the lord of men remembered the words that the intelligent Kshatta, devoted to dharma, had spoken. ‘The immensely wise Vidura had certainly foreseen all of this earlier. Our great destruction and that of the kshatriyas would occur in the battle.’ Thinking in this way, the king entered the lake. O king! Having seen the destruction of his army, his heart was consumed with grief. O great king! With Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, the Pandavas angrily attacked your soldiers. O king! They[53] wielded javelins, swords and spears in their hands and roared powerfully. With Gandiva, Dhananjaya rendered their resolutions unsuccessful. He slaughtered them with his sharp arrows, with their advisers and their relatives. Stationed on a chariot drawn by white horses, Arjuna was extremely radiant. Subala and his son were killed, with their horses, chariots and elephants. Your army was like a large forest that had been destroyed. There had been hundreds and thousands in Duryodhana's army. O king! But not a single maharatha was seen to remain alive. O king! The only exceptions were Drona's son, the brave Kritavarma, Goutama Kripa and the king, your son.

' "On seeing me, Dhrishtadyumna laughed. He spoke to Satyaki. 'What is the point of capturing this one? Nothing will be gained by keeping him alive.' On hearing Dhrishtadyumna's words, Shini's maharatha grandson raised his sharp sword, so as to kill me then. At that time, the immensely wise Krishna Dvaipayana arrived and said, 'Free Sanjaya alive. Under no circumstances should he be killed.' Hearing Dvaipayana's words, Shini's grandson joined his hands in salutation. Freeing me, he said, 'O Sanjaya! Depart in peace.' Obtaining his permission, I cast aside my armour. I was without weapons. In the evening, I set out for the city,[54] my limbs covered in blood. O king! When I had travelled one krosha,[55] I saw the solitary Duryodhana, with the club in his hand. He was severely wounded. His eyes were full of tears and he did not see me. Miserable, I stood before him. Though he saw me, he ignored me. On seeing him alone thus, alone after the battle, I was overcome with great grief and could not speak for a while. Then I told him everything about my capture in the battle and my release, alive, through the favours of Dvaipayana. Having thought for some time, he regained his senses. He asked me about his brothers and all the soldiers. I told him everything that I had directly witnessed, that all his brothers had been killed and the soldiers brought down. 'O lord of men! Only three rathas remain among those on your side. This is what Krishna Dvaipayana told me when I was about to leave.'[56] He sighed and glanced repeatedly at me. Then, touching me with his hands, your son replied, 'O Sanjaya! With your exception, no one else has been left alive in this battle. I do not see a second one, though the Pandavas have their aides. O Sanjaya! Tell the lord, the king, who has wisdom for his sight.[57] Tell him, your son, Duryodhana, has entered the lake. He is without well-wishers, without direction and without sons and brothers. When the Pandavas have obtained the kingdom, what is the point of someone like me remaining alive? Tell him everything and tell him that I have escaped from the great battle. I am alive, but am severely wounded. I will rest in this lake.’ O great king! Having said this, the king entered the lake. Through his maya, that lord of men created a passage in the water.

‘ “When he had entered that lake, I was alone and saw that the three rathas arrived at the spot, with their exhausted mounts. They were Sharadvata Kripa, Drona’s son, supreme among rathas, and Kritavarma, from the Bhoja lineage. They were wounded with arrows. All of them glanced towards me and swiftly urged their horses. Having approached me, they said, ‘O Sanjaya! It is through good fortune that you are alive.’ All of them asked me about your son, the lord of men. ‘O Sanjaya! Where is King Duryodhana? Is he alive?’ I told them that the king was well. I told them everything that Duryodhana had told me. I also showed them the lake that the king had entered. O king! Having heard my words, Ashvatthama glanced towards the large lake. He lamented in grief and said, ‘Alas! The king does not know that we are still alive. With him, we are sufficient to fight with the enemy.’ For a long time, those maharathas lamented there. Then, on seeing the sons of Pandu in the battle, those best of rathas fled.[58] Kripa took me up on his well-prepared chariot. Those three rathas, all that was left of our army, departed for the camp. The sun had set. On hearing that all your sons had been killed, those who guarded the outposts lamented.

‘ “O great king! They were aged men who had been employed to take care of the women. With the wives of the king, they set out for the city. All of them lamented and wept loudly. On hearing about the destruction of your army, great sounds of woe arose. O king! The women wept repeatedly. They made the earth resound with that noise, like female ospreys. They scratched their bodies with their nails. They struck their heads with their hands. They tore out their hair. The wept loudly. They beat on their breasts with loud sounds of lamentation. O lord of the earth! With those sounds of lamentation, they wept loudly. Duryodhana’s advisers were extremely miserable and their voices choked with tears. Taking the king’s wives with them, they left for the city. O lord of the earth! With staffs in their hands, those who were in charge of the gates and those who guarded the gates also swiftly fled towards the city. They took with them beautiful beds that were spread with expensive covers. Other men placed their wives on carts that were drawn by mules and left towards the city. O great king! Those noble women had earlier lived in palaces and were not seen, even by the sun. As they departed for the city, they were seen by ordinary men. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Those women were delicate and noble. With their kin and relatives slain, they swiftly departed for the city. The cowherds and other herdsmen also fled towards the city. The men were terrified, afflicted by their fear of Bhimasena. They were overcome by an extremely terrible fear of the Parthas too. As they fled towards the city, they glanced at each other. There was an extremely terrible exodus that took place.

‘ “At that time, Yuyutsu was senseless because of his grief. Nevertheless, he thought about what should be done at the time. ‘Duryodhana has been defeated in the battle by the terrible valour of the Pandavas. He was the lord of eleven army divisions. His brothers have been slain. All the Kurus, with Bhishma and Drona as the foremost, have been killed. Through the wishes of destiny, I am the only one who has been spared. In every direction, all of them are running away from the camps. There are only a few who are left from among Duryodhana’s advisers. Taking the king’s wives with them, they have run away towards the city. O lord![59] I think that the time has come for me to also enter with them, after having taken Yudhishthira and Bhima’s permission.’[60] For this purpose, the mighty-armed one presented himself before them. The king, who was always compassionate, was pleased. The mighty-armed one[61] embraced the son of a vaishya[62] and granted him leave. Ascending his chariot, he swiftly urged the horses and also tended to the task of conveying the wives of the king to the city. With them, he entered Hastinapura, his voice choking with tears and his eyes full of tears. The sun was swiftly setting. He saw the immensely wise Vidura, who also had tears in his eyes. His senses overcome with grief, he had come away from the king.[63] He bowed down before him and stood before him. The one who upheld the truth spoke to him.[64] ‘O son! It is through good fortune that you are alive amidst this destruction of the Kurus. Why have you entered and come here without the king?[65] Tell me, in detail, the reason for this.’ Yuyutsu replied, ‘O father![66] Shakuni has been slain, with his kin and his relatives. When his relatives had been killed, King Duryodhana abandoned his horse. He retreated and fled in an eastern direction. When the king had run away, all those in the camps and abodes were terrified and anxious and fled towards the city. The guards in charge also fled, having placed the wives of the king and his brothers on the mounts. At this, I took the permission of the king and Keshava[67] and entered Hastinapura, wishing to protect the people who were running away.' Having heard the words spoken by the son of a vaishya, Vidura, knowledgeable about all forms of dharma, thought that the right decision had been taken at the time. The one who was eloquent with words, immeasurable in his soul, applauded Yuyutsu. 'When all those of the Bharata lineage were being destroyed, you acted in accordance with what should have been done at the time. You should rest now. Tomorrow, you can return to Yudhishthira.' Having heard the words of Vidura, knowledgeable about all forms of dharma, Yuyutsu took his permission and entered, after the destruction of the king had taken place. Yuyutsu spent the night in his own house." '

SECTION SEVENTY-SIX

TIRTHA YATRA PARVA

This parva has 1261 shlokas and twenty-five chapters.

Chapter 1248(29): 66 shlokas

Chapter 1249(30): 68 shlokas

Chapter 1250(31): 60 shlokas

Chapter 1251(32): 52 shlokas

Chapter 1252(33): 18 shlokas

Chapter 1253(34): 81 shlokas

Chapter 1254(35): 53 shlokas

Chapter 1255(36): 63 shlokas

Chapter 1256(37): 50 shlokas

Chapter 1257(38): 33 shlokas

Chapter 1258(39): 32 shlokas

Chapter 1259(40): 35 shlokas

Chapter 1260(41): 39 shlokas

Chapter 1261(42): 41 shlokas

Chapter 1262(43): 52 shlokas

Chapter 1263(44): 110 shlokas

Chapter 1264(45): 95 shlokas

Chapter 1265(46): 29 shlokas

Chapter 1266(47): 61 shlokas

Chapter 1267(48): 23 shlokas

Chapter 1268(49): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1269(50): 51 shlokas

Chapter 1270(51): 26 shlokas

Chapter 1271(52): 21 shlokas

Chapter 1272(53): 37 shlokas

> *It is discovered that Duryodhana is hiding in Lake Dvaipayana. Bhima and Duryodhana prepare to fight. Balarama returns from his pilgrimage to witness the encounter. This parva has a description of places of pilgrimage (tirtha).* Yatra *means travel or journey and this section is accordingly named after a journey to places of pilgrimage.*

Chapter 1248(29)

‘Dhritarasthra asked, “O Sanjaya! When all the soldiers had been killed by the sons of Pandu in the field of battle, what did my remaining soldiers do? What about Kritavarma, Kripa and Drona’s valiant son? What did evil-souled King Duryodhana do then?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “When the wives of those great-souled kshatriyas had fled and the camp was empty, those three rathas were extremely anxious. They heard the sounds made by the victorious Pandavas. In the evening, they saw that the camp was empty. They no longer wished to stay there and wishing to save the king, went towards the lake. O king! Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, and his brothers were delighted in the battle. They roamed around, wishing to kill Duryodhana. Desiring victory, they angrily sought to follow him. But though they endeavoured to search for him, they could not see that king of men. With the club in his hand, he had run away with great speed and with his maya, had entered the lake and had made the waters solid.[1] The mounts of all the Pandavas became extremely tired. They returned to their camp and with their soldiers, rested there.

‘ “After the Parthas had left, Kripa, Drona’s son and Satvata Kritavarma slowly went to the lake. They approached the lake where the lord of men was lying down. They addressed the invincible king who was sleeping in the waters. ‘O king! Arise! With us, fight against Yudhishthira. Triumph and enjoy the earth, or be slain and enjoy heaven. O Duryodhana! All their soldiers have also been slain by you. O lord of the earth! The soldiers who are left will also not be able to withstand your impetuosity. You will also be protected by us. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, arise.’ Duryodhana replied, ‘O bulls among men! This clash between the Pandus and the Kouravas has been destructive for men. It is through good fortune that I see that you have escaped with your lives. We will defeat all of them, but after we have got rid of our tiredness and our exhaustion. You are also exhausted and we are severely wounded. Their army is prospering. Therefore, I do not think we should fight now. O brave ones! Since your hearts are large, the words that you have spoken are not surprising. You are also supremely devoted to us. However, this is not the time for valour. I will rest for one night. Then, in the battle tomorrow, I will fight with you against the enemy. There can be no doubt about that.' Having been thus addressed, Drona's son spoke to the king, who was unassailable in battle. 'O king! O fortunate one! Arise. We will defeat the enemy in the battle. O king! I swear on my religious rites, my donations, my truthfulness and my meditation that I will slay the Somakas today. Virtuous people obtain delight from performing sacrifices. If I do not slay the enemy in the battle before the night is over, let me not obtain that delight. O lord! Without slaying all the Panchalas, I will not take off my armour. I am telling you this truthfully. O lord of men! Listen to me.' While they were conversing in this way, some hunters came to the spot.

' "They were exhausted from carrying their burden of meat and wished to drink some water. O great king! O lord! Every day, with supreme devotion, those hunters used to carry a load of meat to Bhimasena. While they were concealed there, they heard all the words that were exchanged between them and Duryodhana. On finding that Kourava was unwilling to fight, those great archers, who wished to fight, made great efforts to persuade him. They[2] saw the Kourava maharathas there. Situated in the water, the king was unwilling to fight. O Indra among kings! On hearing the conversation between them and the king, who was in the waters, the concealed hunters realized that it was Suyodhana who was inside the water. Some time earlier, while searching for the king, Pandu's son[3] had arrived there and had asked them about your son. O king! On remembering the words of Pandu's son, those hunters of deer softly spoke to each other. 'If we tell Pandava about Duryodhana, he will give us riches. It is evident that King Duryodhana is inside this lake. Therefore, let all of us go to the spot where King Yudhishthira is. We will tell him that the intolerant Duryodhana is sleeping in the waters. Let us tell the intelligent Bhimasena, the wielder of the bow, everything about Dhritarashtra's son sleeping in the waters. He will be extremely pleased with us and will give us a lot of riches. Why should we exhaust ourselves with this dried out meat?'

Having said this, the hunters were delighted. Desiring wealth, they abandoned that burden of meat and headed towards the camp.

‘ “O great king! The Pandavas, strikers, had accomplished their objectives. But they did not see Duryodhana in the battle. Desiring to ascertain the final destination of that wicked and deceitful one, they had dispatched spies in every direction of the field of the battle. But all those soldiers had returned and told Dharmaraja that King Duryodhana could not be found. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words of the messengers, the king was anxious and breathed heavily. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Pandus were thus distressed. O lord! At that time, the hunters swiftly arrived at the camp, delighted because they had seen King Duryodhana. Though they were restrained,[4] while Bhimasena looked on, they entered. They approached the immensely strong Pandava Bhimasena and told him everything that they had seen and heard. O king! At this, Vrikodara gave them a lot of riches. The scorcher of enemies went and told Dharmaraja everything. ‘O king! Duryodhana has been discovered by my hunters. You have been tormented because of him. He is sleeping in the waters and has turned them into stone.’ O lord of the earth! On hearing Bhimasena’s pleasant words, Kounteya Ajatashatrua, together with his brothers, was delighted. On hearing that the great archer had entered the waters of a lake, with Janardana at the forefront, he[5] swiftly went there. O lord of the earth! Loud sounds of joy arose among all the Pandavas and the Panchalas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They roared loudly, like lions. O king! All the kshatriyas swiftly rushed towards Lake Dvaipayana. In every direction, the cheerful Somakas roared, ‘Dhritarashtra’s wicked son withdrew from the battle and has been found out.’ O lord of the earth! Speedily and swiftly, the chariots proceeded there and the tumultuous sound that they made reached heaven. Yudhishthira wished to seek out Duryodhana and wherever he went, the kings spiritedly followed him, although their mounts were exhausted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were Arjuna, Bhimasena, the two Pandavas who were Madri’s sons, Panchala Dhrishtadyumna, the unvanquished Shikhandi, Uttamouja, Yudhamanyu, the unvanquished Satyaki, the remaining Panchalas and Droupadi’s sons. There were all the horses and elephants and hundreds of foot soldiers. O great king! All of them went with Dharma’s son.

‘ “Yudhishthira reached the lake known as Dvaipayana, where Duryodhana was. The waters were clear, cool and pleasant to the heart and it was as large as the ocean. Through his maya, your son had solidified the waters and was inside them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This was a wonderful act and could only be performed with divine powers. The lord of men was lying down inside the waters and was extremely difficult to see. O Indra among men! The lord of men still held the club in his hand. King Duryodhana was residing inside the water and heard a tumultuous sound, like the roar of a cloud. O Indra among kings! O great king! It was made by Yudhishthira and his brothers, when they arrived to kill Duryodhana. There was the great roar of conch shells and the wheels of chariots. A great cloud of dust arose and the earth trembled. O hearing the noise made by Yudhishthira’s soldiers, maharathas Kritavarma, Kripa and Drona’s son rushed towards the king and said, ‘Desiring victory, the cheerful Pandavas are advancing here on their horses. Therefore, you should know that we are withdrawing ourselves from this spot.’ On hearing the words of those illustrious ones, the lord agreed, from inside the waters that he had turned solid with his maya. O great king! Having obtained the king’s permission, Kripa and the other rathas, severely oppressed by grief, went some distance away. O venerable one! Having travelled some distance, they saw a banyan tree. They were extremely tired and rested under it, thinking about the king. ‘Dhritarashtra’s immensely strong son is sleeping inside the waters, having solidified them. Desiring to fight, the Pandavas will reach that spot. How will the fight take place? What will happen to the king? How will the Pandavas discover the Kourava king?’ Thinking about these and other things, they unyoked their horses from their chariots. O king! Kripa and the other rathas prepared to rest there.” ’

Chapter 1249(30)

‘Sanjaya said, “When those three rathas had withdrawn, the Pandavas arrived at the lake where Duryodhana was. O best of the Kuru lineage! They reached Lake Dvaipayana. They saw that the abode of the waters had been turned to stone by Dhritarashtra’s son. The descendant of the Kuru lineage[6] spoke these words to Vasudeva. ‘Behold. Dhritarashtra’s son has used his powers of maya on the water. He has turned the waters to stone and is lying down, without any fear from humans. He has used divine powers of maya and is inside the water now. He is skilful in deceit and has used deceit. However, he will not escape from me with his life. O Madhava! Even if the wielder of the vajra himself helps him in the fight, the worlds will see that he is slain in the battle today.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘He is skilled in the use of maya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Slay his maya with maya. O Yudhishthira! Maya must be destroyed with maya. That is the truth. Use many different deeds and means to apply maya to these waters. O best among the Kuru lineage! Slay Suyodhana, who is evil in his soul. It is through different deeds and means that Indra slew the daityas and the danavas. It is through many different deeds and means that Bali was bound down by the great-souled one.[7] It is through deeds and means that the great asura Hiranyaksha was slain in earlier times and deeds were also used to slay Hiranyakashipu.[8] O king! There is no doubt that Vritra was slain through deeds. O king! Poulastya’s son, the rakshasa named Ravana, was slain by Rama, together with his relatives and followers.[9] Resort to deeds and yoga and show your valour. O king! In ancient times, I used deeds and means to slay the great daityas Taraka and the valiant Viprachitti.[10] O lord! It is through deeds that Vatapi, Ilvala, Trishira and the asuras Sunda and Upasunda were killed.[11] O lord! Indra enjoys the three worlds through deeds and means. O King Yudhishthira! Deeds are powerful. There is nothing else. Daityas, danavas, rakshasas and kings have been killed through deeds and means. Therefore, resort to deeds.’ Pandava, rigid in his vows, was thus addressed by Vasudeva.

‘ “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kounteya laughed and addressed your immensely strong son, who was inside the water. ‘O Suyodhana! O lord of the earth! After having caused the destruction of all the kshatriyas and your own lineage, why have you entered the water? Today, you have entered the water, wishing to save your own life. O king! O Suyodhana! Arise and fight with us. O best of men! O king! Where have your insolence and your sense of pride gone now, since you are terrified and are inside the waters, having turned them to stone? In assemblies, everyone has spoken of you as a hero. I think all of that is in vain, since your prowess is now lying down inside the water. O king! Arise and fight. You have been born in a kshatriya lineage. In particular, remember that you have been born in the lineage of Kouraveyas. How can you praise your birth in the lineage of Kouravas? You have run away from the battle and have entered and stationed yourself inside these waters. Stationing oneself away from a battle is not eternal dharma. O king! It is not like an arya to run away from a battle. That does not lead to heaven. How is it that you wish to remain alive, without having seen the end of this war? You have seen your sons, brothers, fathers, matrimonial allies, friends, maternal uncles and relatives brought down. O son![12] Having caused their destruction, how can you station yourself inside this lake? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though you have spoken of yourself as brave, you are not brave. O evil-minded one! In everyone’s hearing, you have said that you are brave. On seeing enemies, brave ones do not run away. O brave one! Tell us about the fortitude that has led you to run away from the encounter. Arise and fight and abandon the fear in you. O Suyodhana! You have caused the destruction of all the soldiers and your brothers. You should not turn your mind to the dharma of remaining alive now. O Suyodhana! This is not indicated for someone who has resorted to the dharma of kshatriyas. You depended on Karna and Shakuni Soubala and in your delusion, thought yourself to be immortal. You were not intelligent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having performed that extremely evil deed, fight back now. In your confusion, how can something like flight appeal to someone like you? O Suyodhana! Where have your manliness and your pride gone now? Where have your valour and your extremely swollen insolence gone now? Where has your skill with weapons gone? Why have you resorted to this store of water? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Following the dharma of kshatriyas, arise and fight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Defeat us and rule over the entire earth, or be killed by us and lie down on the ground. That is the foremost dharma, ordained by the great-souled creator. O maharatha! Act in accordance with that and be a king.'

' "Duryodhana replied, 'O great king! It is not surprising that fear should enter all living beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But I have not retreated because I am frightened for my life. I was without a chariot and without quivers. The parshni charioteers were killed. I was without a single follower in the battle and wished to retreat. O lord of the earth! I did not enter these waters because I was frightened of being killed or because I was grieving, but because I was exhausted. O Kounteya! With those that follow you, rest for some time. I will arise and fight with all of you in this battle.'

' "Yudhisthira said, 'All of us are sufficiently rested. We have been looking for you for a long time. O Suyodhana! Arise and fight with us now. Kill the Parthas in the battle and obtain this prosperous kingdom, or be killed in the battle and obtain the worlds of heroes.'

' "Duryodhana replied, 'O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O lord of men! Those among the Kurus for whose sake I desired the kingdom, all my brothers, are dead. Those bulls among kshatriyas have been killed and the earth is devoid of her jewels. I am not interested in enjoying her. She is like a widowed lady. O Yudhishthira! O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, I still wish to defeat and subjugate you and am interested in breaking the Panchalas and the Pandus. But I do not think there is any need for battle when Drona and Karna have been pacified and the grandfather has been slain. O king! This bare earth is now only for you. Which king wishes to rule over a kingdom without any aides? Well-wishers have been killed by me and so have sons, brothers and fathers. When the kingdom has been robbed, who like me would wish to remain alive? I will clad myself in deerskin and leave for the forest. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With those on my side slain, I have no desire for the kingdom. Many relatives have been killed. Horses have been killed. Elephants have been killed. O king! Devoid of fever, enjoy this kingdom. I will clad myself in deerskin and go to the forest. O lord! Now that I have been vanquished, I have no desire to remain alive any more. O Indra among kings! Go and enjoy the earth, which is devoid of kings, destitute of warriors, robbed of riches and bereft of fortifications, as you please.'

' "Yudhishthira said, 'O son! Do not utter such woes of lamentation from inside the water. O king! In my mind, there is no desire like that of a bird.[13] O Suyodhana! You may be capable of giving it to me, but I do not wish to rule over something that has been given by you. If you give this earth to me, its acceptance will be adharma. O king! The learned texts say that it is not dharma for a kshatriya to receive gifts. I do not desire this entire earth, when it has been given by you. I will enjoy this earth after having defeated you in battle. Why do you want to give an earth that has no kings? O king! Why do you want to give an earth that is not yours to give? We asked for it in accordance with dharma, for the sake of peace and for the sake of our lineage. O king! You first refused the immensely strong Varshneya. Why do you want to give it now? What is this delusion in your mind? When he is accused, which king wishes to give away the earth? O descendant of the Kourava lineage! You are not the lord of this earth that you can give it away. O king! Why do you wish to give something that you have no powers over? Defeat me in the battle and rule over the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, you were not prepared to give me even that much which could be held up on the point of a needle. O lord of the earth! Why do you then wish to gift me the entire earth? If you were earlier not prepared to give up that much which could be held up on the point of a needle, why do you want to give up the earth now? This earth is prosperous and you have ruled over it. Which foolish person will be prepared to give this earth to enemies? You are not only stupid and foolish, you possess no intelligence. Though you wish to give up the earth, you will not escape with your life. Defeat us and rule over the earth, or be killed by us and roam in the supreme worlds. O king! If, between the two of us, both of us remain alive, all beings will be uncertain about who has emerged victorious. You are of limited intelligence and your life now depends on me. If I wish, I can grant you life. But you are not capable of remaining alive. In particular, you had made efforts to burn us. You tried to kill us by drowning us and making us consume virulent poison.[14] Deceived by you, we were deprived of the kingdom. Because of these and other evil deeds, you should not remain alive. Arise. Arise. Fight. That will be beneficial for you.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of men! Those brave and victorious ones spoke these and many other words there." '

Chapter 1250(31)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “Thus, my son, the lord of the earth, was censured. The scorcher of enemies is naturally intolerant. What did he do? He has never heard reprimands like these earlier. He has been revered by all the worlds with the respect that is due to a king. O Sanjaya! You have seen how the entire earth, with mlecchas and those who live in mountainous regions, depended on him for favours. Such a person was censured, especially by the sons of Pandu. He was alone and without servants, in a secluded spot. On hearing the words repeatedly spoken by the victorious ones, what did he tell the Pandaveyas? O Sanjaya! Tell me everything about that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! O Indra among kings! Your son was thus censured by Yudhishthira and his brothers. The lord of men heard those words, which were like poison. Inside the water, he repeatedly let out long and hot sighs. Inside the water, the king repeatedly wrung his hands. Then, having made up his mind to fight, he replied to the king.[15] ‘O Parthas! All of you are served by well-wishers. You possess chariots and mounts. I am alone and miserable. I have been deprived of a chariot. My mounts have been slain. I am without weapons and am surrounded by many rathas. Without weapons, even if I wish to fight, how can I single-handedly fight on foot? O Yudhishthira! Fight with me one at a time. It is not appropriate that one should single-handedly fight with many warriors simultaneously, especially when one is without armour, exhausted and miserable. I am severely wounded in my limbs. My soldiers and mounts are exhausted. O king! I am not frightened of you, or Partha Vrikodara, or Phalguna, or Vasudeva, or the Panchalas, or the twins, or Yuyudhana, or of any of the other soldiers. Single-handedly and wrathfully, I am interested in fighting against all of you. O lord! The deeds of all virtuous men have a source in dharma. Fame follows dharma and I will observe this. I am telling you that I will arise and fight against all of you in the battle. Like a year encounters all the seasons, I will encounter all of you in due course. This is despite you possessing chariots and weapons and me not possessing weapons and a chariot. When night is over, the sun destroys the radiance of all the nakshatras. O Pandavas! Wait. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Today, I will free myself of the debt I owe to the illustrious kshatriyas[16] —Bahlika, Drona, Bhishma, the great-souled Karna, the brave Jayadratha and Bhagadatta, Shalya, the king of Madra, Bhurishrava, my sons, Shakuni Soubala, my friends, well-wishers and kin. I will kill you and your brothers and free myself of that debt today.' Having said this, the lord of men stopped.

' "Yudhisthira said, 'O Suyodhana! It is through good fortune that you have learnt about the dharma of kshatriyas. O great-armed one! It is through good fortune that your mind has turned towards fighting. O Kouravya! It is good fortune that you are brave and it is good fortune that you know about fighting, since you have single-handedly decided to engage all of us in an encounter. Fight with us one at a time, with whatever weapon you wish. While you fight thus, all the others will remain as spectators. O brave one! I am also granting your desire. If you kill any one of us, the kingdom will be yours. Otherwise, be slain and obtain heaven.'

' "Duryodhana replied, 'If you are granting me the boon of fighting one at a time, as a weapon, I am choosing the club that I am wielding. Let any one of the brothers come forward, whoever thinks he is capable of fighting me with a club on foot. Let him fight with me. There are many wonderful battles that are fought through circular motions of chariots. This wonderful and great duel on foot, with clubs, will be the only one of its kind. As a fight progresses, men often wish to change weapons. But with your permission, let that not be the case.[17] O mighty-armed one! With a club, I will defeat you and your younger brothers, the Panchalas, the Srinjayas and your other soldiers.'

' "Yudhisthira said, 'O Gandhari's son! O Suyodhana! Arise! Arise and fight with me. O powerful one! With the club, fight with us one at a time. O Gandhari's son! Be a man and fight well. Even if you are as fast as thought, you will not remain alive today.' "

'Sanjaya said, "Your son, tiger among men, could not tolerate this. From inside the waters, he sighed like an immense serpent. He was repeatedly urged by the goad of the words. He could not tolerate those words, like an intelligent horse cannot bear a whip. The valiant one agitated the waters and forcefully grasped the club, which was heavy, with the essence of stone and decorated with gold. He arose from inside the waters, like an Indra of serpents that was sighing. He penetrated the waters that had been converted to stone, with the iron club on his shoulder. Your son arose, like the sun scorching with its rays. The club was heavy and made out of iron. It was decorated with molten gold. Dhritarashtra's immensely strong son grasped it. With the club in his hand, he looked like a mountain with a peak. He was like the enraged wielder of the trident,[18] stationed among subjects. With the club in his hand, the descendant of the Bharata lineage was as resplendent as the scorching sun. The mighty-armed scorcher of enemies arose, with the club in his hand. All the beings thought that he was Yama, with a staff in his hand. He was like Shakra with the vajra in his hand, or like Hara with the trident in his hand. O lord of men! All the Panchalas saw your son. When they saw him arise, all the Panchalas and Pandaveyas were delighted and grasped each other's palms. Your son, Duryodhana, thought that this was a mark of disrespect. He dilated his eyes in rage and glanced towards the Pandavas. There were three lines on his forehead and he bit his lower lip. He addressed the Pandavas and Keshava. 'O Pandavas! I will reply to your taunts today. With the Panchalas, I will soon slay you and convey you to Yama's eternal abode.' Having arisen from the water, your son, Duryodhana, stood there, with the club in his hand and with blood flowing from his body. He was drenched in blood and water and his body was as beautiful as an exuding mountain.[19] When the brave one arose with the club, the Pandavas thought that he was an enraged Vaivasvata, with Kimkara in his hand.[20] His voice thundered like the clouds, or like the bellows of a delighted bull. With the club, the valiant one challenged the Parthas to battle.

' "Duryodhana said, 'O Yudhishthira! You will fight with me one at a time. O brave one! It is not appropriate that one should single-handedly fight with many warriors, especially when one is devoid of armour, exhausted, covered with water, severely wounded in the limbs and without mounts and soldiers.'

' "Yudhishthira replied, 'O Suyodhana! Where did this wisdom of yours disappear, when many maharathas united and slew Abhimanyu in the battle? O brave one! Don armour and tie your hair. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

Take everything else that you need. O brave one! I will grant you another of your wishes. If you can kill any of the five Pandavas with whom you wish to fight, you will be king. Otherwise, be slain and obtain heaven. O brave one! With the exception of your life in battle, what else do you desire?'"

'Sanjaya said, "O king! Your son then picked up golden armour and a colourful helmet that was decorated with gold. He fastened the helmet and the sparkling and golden armour. O king! Your son dazzled like a golden mountain. O king! In the field of battle, he was armoured and wielded the club. Your son, Duryodhana, spoke to all the Pandavas. 'Among all the brothers, let anyone fight with me with a club. O bull among the Bharata lineage![21] I am willing to fight with Sahadeva, Bhima, Nakula, Phalguna, or with you. Having obtained an opportunity to fight, I will be victorious in the field of battle. Today, I will accomplish the extremely difficult task of bringing an end to the hostilities. O tiger among men! I will use my club, tied in golden cloth. I think that there is no one who is equal to me in fighting with a club. With the club, I will kill all those who advance against me. Let the one who wishes to fight against me, pick up a club.'" '

Chapter 1251(32)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! Duryodhana roared repeatedly. Vasudeva angrily spoke these words to Yudhishthira. ‘O Yudhishthira! In this encounter, if he had named you, Arjuna, Nakula or Sahadeva, what would have happened? O king! How could you show rashness like this? “If you can kill any one of us, you will be king!” O king! With the desire of killing Bhimasena, for thirteen years he has practised against a man made out of iron.[22] O bull among the Bharata lineage! How will our task be accomplished? O supreme among kings! Because of compassion, you have committed an act of rashness. With the exception of Vrikodara, I do not see anyone who can fight against him in the encounter and Partha has not made a great deal of effort.[23] O lord of the earth! It is almost as if the ancient and unequal gambling match between you and Shakuni is being enacted again. Bhima is powerful and capable, but King Suyodhana is accomplished. O king! When there is a contest between strength and skill, skill is always superior. O king! You have placed such an enemy on an even path. You have also placed us in an extremely difficult and hazardous state. Having vanquished all the enemies and with only a single foe remaining, who desires to give that up in a single act of gambling? I do not see the man in this world who can fight, with a club in his hand in an encounter, against Duryodhana, supreme among men, especially because he is skilled. With a club in the hand in a battle, I do not think Phalguna, Madri’s sons or you are capable. How did you tell the enemy to fight with a club? “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you kill any one of us, you will be the king!” Even if Vrikodara fights against him, our victory is not certain, especially not in a fair encounter. He is extremely strong and skilled.’ Bhima said, ‘O Madhusudana! O descendant of the Yadu lineage! Do not grieve. Even if it is extremely difficult, I will bring an end to this enmity today. There is no doubt that I will kill Suyodhana in the battle. O Krishna! It is evident that Dharmaraja’s victory is certain. In qualities, this club of mine is one-and-a-half times heavier than that of Dhritarashtra's son. O Madhava! Do not be distressed. I can cheerfully fight with the three worlds, including the immortals, even if they are armed with many weapons, not to speak of Suyodhana.' When Vrikodara spoke these words, Vasudeva joyfully honoured him and spoke these words. 'O mighty-armed one! Depending on you, there is no doubt that Dharmaraja Yudhishthira will slay his enemies and obtain his blazing prosperity. All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed by you in the battle. You have brought down kings, princes and elephants. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Kalingas, Magadhas, those from the east, Gandharas and Kurus have clashed against you in the great battle and have been slain. O Kounteya! Having also slain Duryodhana, bestow the earth, with all its oceans, to Dharmaraja, like Vishnu to Shachi's lord.[24] Having obtained you in the battle, Dhritarashtra's wicked son will be destroyed. Having shattered the bones of his thigh, you will accomplish your pledge.[25] O Partha! However, you must always fight carefully with Dhritarashtra's son. He is skilled and strong and always revels in a fight.' O king! At this, Satyaki honoured Pandava. The eloquent Madhava[26] honoured him in various ways. With Dharmaraja at the forefront, all the Panchalas and the Pandaveyas applauded Bhimasena's words.

' "Bhima, terrible in his strength, spoke these words to Yudhishthira, who was stationed amidst the Srinjayas, like the scorching sun. 'I am interested in establishing you and fighting this one in the battle. This worst of men is not capable of defeating me in the encounter. Today, I will free myself of the terrible anger that is lodged in my heart against Suyodhana, Dhritarashtra's son. I will be like Arjuna, offering Khandava to Agni. O Pandava! Today, I will uproot the stake that is lodged in your heart. O king! Today, I will kill this wicked one with my club. Be happy. O unblemished one! Today, I will regain your garland of fame. Today, Suyodhana will be freed of his life, his prosperity and his kingdom. Today, King Dhritarashtra will hear that his son has been killed by me and remember all the evil deeds he did because of Shakuni's advice.' Having spoken thus, the valiant and best of the Bharata lineage raised his club up and stationed himself for battle, like Shakra challenging Vritra. Dhritarashtra's immensely strong son advanced alone to the clash, like an elephant that has been separated from the herd. At this, the Pandavas were delighted. They saw him raise his club, like the summit of Kailasa.

‘ “O king! Bhimasena spoke these words to Duryodhana. ‘Remember all the evil deeds that King Dhritarashtra and you have done towards us and what happened in Varanavata.[27] Droupadi was in her season and was oppressed in the midst of the assembly hall. Through Shakuni’s advice, the king was vanquished in the gambling match. O evil-souled one! You have performed many other wicked deeds towards the innocent Parthas. Behold the grave consequences of that. It is because of your deeds that Gangeya, best of the Bharata lineage and a grandfather to all of us, has been brought down and is lying down on a bed of arrows. Drona has been slain. Karna has been slain, and so has the powerful Shalya. Shakuni, the creator of the enmity, has also been killed in the battle. Your brave brothers and sons have been killed, together with the soldiers. Brave kings, who did not retreat from the battle, have been slain. Many other bulls among kshatriyas have been killed. The wicked Pratikami, who seized Droupadi by the hair, has been slain.[28] You alone are left, destroyer of your lineage and worst among men. There is no doubt that I will slay you with the club today. O king! I will destroy all your insolence in the encounter today and your hopes of the kingdom. O king! I will repay the grave misdeeds towards the Pandavas.’ Duryodhana replied, ‘What is the need to speak a lot? Fight with me now. O Vrikodara! I will today destroy your love for fighting. O wicked one! Do you not see me, stationed for the encounter with a club? I have grasped a gigantic club that is like a summit of the Himalayas. O wicked one! When I wield the club today, where is the enemy who wishes to slay me? If it is a fair fight, not even the god Purandara can do that. O Kounteya! Do not roar in vain, like a cloud without water, during the autumn. Show me your strength in the battle today, everything that you possess.’ On hearing his words, all the Panchalas and the Srinjayas honoured his words, desiring victory. O king! The men were like crazy elephants and clapped their hands repeatedly, delighting King Duryodhana. The elephants there trumpeted and the horses neighed. Desiring victory, the weapons of the Pandavas seemed to blaze.” ’

Chapter 1252(33)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! That extremely terrible battle was about to commence. All the great-souled Pandavas were seated. O king! On hearing about the clash between his disciples, Rama,[29] with the mark of the palm tree on his banner and with the plough as his weapon, arrived at the spot where the encounter was to take place.[30] On seeing him, the lords among men were extremely delighted and honoured him. They said, ‘O Rama! Behold the skill of your disciples in the encounter.’ On beholding Krishna and Pandava[31] and Kouravya Duryodhana, stationed with the club in his hand, Rama said, ‘Since I departed, forty-two days have elapsed. I left at the time of Pushya and have returned at the time of Shravana.[32] O Madhava![33] I wish to witness this duel with the clubs between my two disciples.’ King Yudhishthira embraced the one who has a plough as his weapon, welcomed him and in proper fashion, asked about his welfare. The illustrious and great archers, the two Krishnas, were delighted. They joyfully honoured and embraced him. O king! Madri’s sons and Droupadi’s five brave sons also honoured Rohini’s immensely strong son[34] and stood there. O lord of men! The powerful Bhimasena and your son raised their clubs and honoured the powerful one. The kings repeatedly welcomed and worshipped Rohini’s great-souled son and told Rama, ‘O mighty-armed one! Witness this encounter.’ The infinitely energetic Rama embraced the Pandavas and the Srinjayas and asked all the Pandavas about their welfare. He also greeted and asked all the others about their welfare. The great-minded one, who wields the plough, honoured all the kshatriyas back. In accordance with age, he asked each of them about their welfare. He affectionately embraced Janardana and Satyaki. Inhaling the fragrance of their heads, he asked about their welfare. O king! In accordance with the prescribed rites, those two honoured their superior. They were delighted, like Indra, lord of the gods, and Upendra, honouring Brahma.

‘ “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharma’s son spoke to Rohini’s son, the scorcher of enemies. ‘O Rama! Witness this great battle between the two brothers.’ Keshava’s mighty-armed elder brother was resplendent. Honoured by the maharathas, he was supremely delighted and seated himself among them. Amidst those kings, he was clad in blue garments and, with a fair complexion, looked dazzling. He was like the moon in the firmament, surrounded by a large number of stars. O king! That tumultuous battle between your two sons commenced and it made the body hair stand up. It would bring an end to the enmity.” ’

Chapter 1253(34)

‘Janamejaya said, ‘Before the war started, with Keshava’s permission, the lord Rama had left with the Vrishnis, saying, “O Keshava! I will not help the sons of Dhritarashtra, or the sons of Pandu. I will go where I wish.” Having spoken those words, Rama, the destroyer of enemies, had departed. O brahmana! You should again tell me everything about his return. Tell me in detail about Rama’s arrival. How did he witness the battle? You are a supremely skilled narrator.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O mighty-armed one! The great-souled Pandavas set themselves up in Upaplavya and sent Madhusudana to Dhritarashtra, for the sake of peace and for the welfare of all beings.[35] He went to Hastinapura and met Dhritarashtra. In particular, he spoke truthful and beneficial words to him. As you have already been told, the king did not pay any attention to these words. O lord of men! Unable to obtain peace, the mighty-armed Krishna Purushottama returned to Upaplavya. O tiger among men! Dismissed by Dhritarashtra’s son, Krishna returned unsuccessful and spoke to the Pandavas. “Goaded by destiny, the Kurus have not acted in accordance with my words. O Pandaveyas! With me, set out under the nakshatra Pushya.” Armies were being arrayed on both sides. Rohini’s great-minded son, supreme among strong ones, spoke to his brother, Krishna. “O mighty-armed one! O Madhusudana! Let us help them.”[36] However, Krishna did not act in accordance with these words. At this, the immensely illustrious descendant of the Yadu lineage, the wielder of the plough, was overcome by supreme rage and set out on a pilgrimage towards the Sarasvati. With all the Yadavas, he set out when the conjunction of nakshatras known as Maitra[37] occurred. Bhoja, scorcher of enemies,[38] was on Duryodhana’s side. With Yuyudhana, Vasudeva was on the side of the Pandavas. When Rohini’s brave son set out under Pushya, Madhusudana placed the Pandaveyas at the forefront and advanced towards the Kurus.

'While setting out on his route, Rama instructed his servants, "Bring all the objects and equipment that will be needed for a pilgrimage. Bring the fire from Dvaraka[39] and the priests. Bring gold, silver, cows, garments, horses, elephants, chariots, mules, camels and carts. Swiftly bring all the garments that are required for a pilgrimage. Let us quickly go towards the flow of the Sarasvati. Bring officiating priests and hundreds of bulls among brahmanas." O king! Having given these instructions to his servants, the immensely strong Baladeva set out on a pilgrimage at a time when the Kurus confronted a calamity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Along the flows of the Sarasvati, he proceeded towards the ocean, with officiating priests, well-wishers, supreme among brahmanas, chariots, elephants, horses and servants. He was surrounded by many carts that were drawn by cattle, mules and camels. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In many countries along the path, large donations were given to the weary, tired of limb, children, the hungry and those who were distressed and waited for alms in different ways. O king! In all those places, brahmanas were instantly given food and whatever objects they desired. O king! On the instructions of Rohini's son, men were stationed, with large quantities of food and drink. To brahmanas who desired happiness, extremely expensive garments, beds, covers and objects of worship were given. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whenever a brahmana or a kshatriya wanted anything, it was seen that the object was unhesitatingly given. All those who advanced, or stayed, were happy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Vehicles were given to those who wished to travel, drinks to those who were thirsty and tasty food to those who were hungry. The men there obtained garments and ornaments. O king! The path along which they advanced was happy in every possible way. O brave one! The men who travelled seemed to be in heaven. They were always happy and tasty and good food was always available. There were shops and stalls with merchandise, frequented by hundreds of men. There were many kinds of trees and beings, decorated with many kinds of jewels. The great-souled one was unwavering in his soul and observed rites. O king! The foremost among the Yadu lineage, the wielder of the plough, gave riches and sacrificial donations to brahmanas at sacred places of pilgrimage. He also gave away one thousand cows that yielded milk. They were covered in excellent garments and their horns were encased in gold. There were diverse horses that had been born in many countries. These, and servant-maids, were given to the brahmanas. There were gems, pearls, jewels, diamonds and the best of sparkling gold and silver. Rama gave the best of brahmanas iron and copper vessels. In this way, in the best of tirthas along the Sarasvati, the great-souled one gave away a large quantity of riches. His deeds and power were unlimited. Eventually, he cheerfully returned to Kurukshetra.'

Janamejaya asked, 'O best among men! Tell me about the qualities and origins of tirthas along the Sarasvati, their fruits and the deeds that must be done when one is there. O illustrious one! Tell me about these tirthas in due order. O brahmana! O supreme among those who know about the brahman! My curiosity is great.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! The qualities and origins of all the tirthas will be extensive. O Indra among kings! However, I will tell you about these sacred spots in entirety. Listen. O great king! With the officiating priests, well-wishers and large numbers of brahmanas, the foremost among the Yadu lineage first went to the sacred Prabhasa. O Indra among men! The lord of the stars[40] was afflicted by tuberculosis and was freed of his curse there. Having regained his energy, he lights up the entire universe. This is the foremost tirtha on earth. Because he obtained his radiance there, it is known as Prabhasa.'[41]

Janamejaya asked, 'Why was the illustrious Soma afflicted by tuberculosis? How did Chandra[42] bathe in that supreme of tirthas? Having bathed there, how did Shashi regain his energy? O great sage! Tell me everything about this in detail.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O lord of the earth! Daksha had twenty-seven maidens as daughters and Daksha gave them to Soma.[43] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are always united with the nakshatras and are used for computing time. O Indra among kings! Those auspicious ones became the wives of Soma. All of them were large-eyed and were unmatched on earth in terms of their beauty. But in the richness of her beauty, Rohini was superior.[44] Therefore, the illustrious moon god was especially affectionate towards her. She was in his heart and he always enjoyed her alone. O Indra among kings! In those ancient times, Soma dwelt with Rohini for a long time. At this, the other nakshatras became angry with the great-souled one. They quickly went to their father, Prajapati,[45] and said,“Soma does not dwell with us. He always resides with Rohini. O lord of beings! Therefore, all of us will live with you. We will live here, be restrained in our diet and perform supreme austerities.” On hearing their words, Daksha told Soma, “Treat all your wives equally, so that a great adharma does not touch you.” Daksha told all of them, “Go to Soma. On my instructions, Chandra will treat all of you equally.” Dismissed by him, all of them went to Shitamshu’s abode.[46] O lord of the earth! However, as earlier, the illustrious Soma repeatedly dwelt only with Rohini and pleased her alone. The others united and again went and told their father, “We will serve you and dwell under your refuge. Soma does not dwell with us and has not acted in accordance with your words.” On hearing their words, Daksha told Soma, “O Virochana![47] Treat all your wives equally, so that I do not have to curse you.” However, the illustrious Shashi paid no attention to Daksha’s words. He continued to live with Rohini. The others were enraged and went to their father. They lowered their heads in salutation and said, “Soma does not dwell with us. Grant us refuge. The illustrious Chandra always dwells with Rohini. Therefore, save us, so that Soma accepts all of us.” O lord of the earth! On hearing these words, the illustrious one became angry. In his rage, he inflicted tuberculosis on Soma and the lord of the stars became afflicted. Overcome by tuberculosis, Shashi decayed from one day to another. O king! He made many efforts to free himself from the tuberculosis. O great king! The moon performed many different kinds of sacrifices. However, he could not free himself of the curse and was immersed in decay. As Soma began to decay, herbs ceased to grow. All of them were tasteless and without juices. All of them lost their energy. When the herbs decayed, the destruction of beings started. When the moon decayed, all the subjects became emaciated. O lord of the earth! At this, all the gods assembled and went to Soma. They asked, “Why is your form like this, without any radiance? Tell us everything about the reason behind this great fear. Having heard your words, we will think of a means.” Having been thus addressed, the one with the mark of a hare[48] replied to all of them. He told them about the reason behind the curse and about his own tuberculosis. Having heard his words, the gods went to Daksha and said, “O illustrious one! Be pacified. Take away your curse from Soma. Chandra has decayed and only a little bit of him can be seen. O lord of the gods! Because of his decay, all the subjects have been overcome by decay. Many different kinds of creepers, herbs and seeds are wasting. O preceptor of the worlds! You should be pacified.” Having been thus addressed, Prajapati thought and spoke these words. “My words cannot be transgressed. It cannot be otherwise. O immensely fortunate ones! However, there is a means whereby this can be withdrawn. Let Shashi always treat all of his wives equally. Let the one with the mark of the hare bathe in the supreme tirtha along the Sarasvati. The god will then wax again. These words of mine are true. For one half of the month, Soma will always wane. But for another half of the month, Soma will always wax. These words of mine are true.” On the instructions of the rishi,[49] Soma went to the Sarasvati. Along the Sarasvati, he went to the supreme tirtha of Prabhasa. The immensely energetic and immensely radiant one bathed there on the day of the new moon. He obtained his cool rays back and radiated the world again. O Indra among kings! All the gods also went to Prabhasa. With Soma, they presented themselves before Daksha. Prajapati gave all the gods permission to leave. Pleased with Soma, the illustrious one again spoke these words to him. “O son! Never disregard women. Never disregard brahmanas. Depart and always follow my instructions.” O great king! Having taken his leave, he again returned to his own abode.[50] All the subjects were delighted and lived as they had earlier. This is the entire account about how the moon was cursed. This is how the tirtha of Prabhasa came to be the foremost among all tirthas. O great king! The one with the mark of the hare always bathes there on the day of the new moon. Having bathed in the supreme tirtha of Prabhasa, he obtains his handsomeness back. O lord of the earth! That spot is known as Prabhasa, because bathing there, Chandra obtained his supreme radiance back.

‘After this, the undecaying and powerful one[51] went to Chamasodbheda. People know that spot as Chamasodbheda. The one with the plough as his weapon gave away many precious donations there. He spent a night there and bathed in accordance with the prescribed rituals. Keshava’s elder brother then quickly went to Udapana. Great fruits are obtained from observing rites there.

O Janamejaya! The herbs and the earth are cool there. O Indra among kings! Though the Sarasvati has been destroyed there,[52] the siddhas know this.’

Chapter 1254(35)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O great king! The one with the plough as his weapon then went to Udapana, associated with the illustrious Trita. He gave away a lot of objects and honoured the brahmanas. The one with the club as his weapon bathed there and was delighted. The extremely great ascetic Trita, devoted to supreme dharma, had lived there. The great-souled one had dwelt in a pit and had drunk *soma* juice. His two brothers had abandoned him there and had returned home. At this, Trita, supreme among brahmanas, had cursed them.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! How did the extremely great ascetic fall down in Udapana? Why did his brothers abandon that supreme among brahmanas? Why did the brothers leave him in the pit and return home? O brahmana! If you think that this can be heard, please tell me all this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! In an earlier yuga, there were three brothers who were sages. They were Ekata, Dvita and Trita[53] and they were as radiant as the sun. All of them were like Prajapati and they had offspring. All of them were ascetics who knew about the brahman and they had attained Brahma’s world. Their father, Goutama, was always devoted to dharma. Because of their austerities, rituals and self-control, they always pleased him. After having been pleased by them for a long time, the illustrious one went to the regions that were appropriate for him.[54] There were kings for whom the great-souled one had been an officiating priest. After he had gone to heaven, all of them continued to honour his sons. Trita was the best among them and was just like his father. All the immensely fortunate and auspicious sages worshipped the immensely fortunate one, as they had the learned one[55] before him. O king! Once, the brothers Ekata and Dvita thought of performing a sacrifice and in particular, were concerned about the wealth required for this. O scorcher of enemies! They thought that they would take Trita and go to the houses of those who performed sacrifices.[56] They would collect the required animals. They would cheerfully drink soma juice and obtain the great merits of a sacrifice. O king! The three brothers did as they had deciced. They visited all the *yajamana*s to collect the animals. From the yajamanas, they received a large number of animals for the sacrifice. For performing the act of sacrifice, they also obtained all the decreed gifts. The great-souled maharshis then went towards an eastern direction. O great king! Trita was cheerfully walking in front and Ekata and Dvita were following him from the rear, herding the animals. On seeing that large number of animals, they began to think about how they could appropriate all the cattle, without giving a share to Trita. O lord of men! Listen to what the cunning and wicked Ekata and Dvita said to each other, as they conversed. "Trita is skilled in performing sacrifices. Trita is established in the Vedas. Trita is capable of obtaining many other cattle. Let us go away, taking these cattle with us. Let Trita go wherever he wishes. We do not have to be with him." As they proceeded along the path, it became night and they saw a wolf before them. Not very far from the spot, there was a pit along the banks of the great Sarasvati. Trita was in the front. On seeing the wolf along the path, he ran in fear and fell down into the pit. It was extremely deep and extremely terrible and was the cause of great fright to all beings. The immensely fortunate Trita, supreme among sages, began to scream from inside the pit. From this, the brothers realized that the sage had fallen into the pit, but they were frightened of the wolf. They were frightened of the wolf and also driven by avarice. They abandoned him and went on. O great king! The brothers were greedy for the animals and abandoned the great ascetic in Udapana,[57] in a spot that was full of dust and without any water. Trita found that he was inside a pit, covered with creepers and herbs. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He thought that he was submerged, like a wicked person in hell. However, the wise one was scared of dying, since he had not yet drunk soma juice. He began to think about how he might be able to drink soma juice there. That is what the immensely ascetic one thought about in the pit. He then saw that a creeper was hanging down there. Though the pit was covered with dust, the sage imagined that there was water there. He also thought of a fire there and thought of himself as the officiating priest. The immensely ascetic one thought of the creeper as soma. In his mind, the sage thought of the mantras of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas. O king! He imagined the pebbles to be grains of sugar. He thought the water to be clarified butter and allotted shares to the residents of heaven. Having drunk the soma,[58] he created a tumultuous noise. O king! Those sounds created by Trita rose up into heaven. The sacrifice had been performed in accordance with the norms laid down by those who know about the brahman. While the extremely great-souled Trita performed the sacrifice, heaven was agitated. But no one knew the reason. Brihaspati heard the tumultuous sound. On hearing this, the priest of the gods spoke to all the gods. "O gods! Trita is performing a sacrifice and all of us must go there. If he is enraged, the great ascetic is capable of creating other gods."[59] Hearing his words, all the gods were frightened. Together, they went to the spot where Trita was performing his sacrifice. The gods went to the pit where Trita was. They saw the great-souled one, consecrated in the task of performing the sacrifice. They saw the great-souled one, supreme in his resplendence. They told the immensely fortunate one, "We have come for our shares." On seeing the gods, the rishi replied, "O residents of heaven! Look at me. I am submerged in this fearful pit and am devoid of my senses." O great king! However, Trita gave them their shares, in accordance with the decreed rites, uttering the mantras. They accepted these and were delighted. The residents of heaven obtained their shares, in accordance with the decreed rites. Pleased with him, they gave him the boons that he desired. He asked the gods for the boon that he should be freed from his distressful state. He also said, "Let a person who bathes in this pit obtain the same end as one who drinks soma." With her waves, Sarasvati then descended into the pit. Trita was raised up by the waters and worshipped by the thirty gods. O kings! The gods agreed to what he had said and returned to where they had come from. Trita cheerfully returned to his own house. He met his brothers, the rishis, and angrily spoke harsh words to them. The immensely ascetic one cursed them. "Because of your greed for the animals, you abandoned me and ran away. You will therefore adopt their forms[60] and roam around, with sharp teeth. Because of your wicked deeds, this is how you will be cursed by me. The offspring that you have will be leopards, bears and apes." O lord of the earth! As soon as he spoke these words, because his words were always truthful, they were seen to assume these forms. The one with the plough as his weapon touched the waters there. He gave away many kinds of donations and honoured the brahmanas. Having seen Udapana, he praised it repeatedly. The one whose soul was never distressed then went to Vinashana, which was also on the river.’

Chapter 1255(36)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The one with the plough as his weapon then went to Vinashana. The Sarasvati became invisible there, because of her hatred for the shudras and the *abhira*s.[61] O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Because the Sarasvati disappeared there, as a consequence of her hatred, the rishis speak of that place as Vinashana. Having touched the waters of the Sarasvati there, the immensely strong Bala[62] went to Subhumika, also located on the supreme banks of the Sarasvati. Pure apsaras are always engaged in sporting there. Their faces are fair and the innocent ones sport there. O lord of men! Every month, the gods and the gandharvas go there. That sacred tirtha is frequented by the brahmanas. Gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras can be seen there. O king! They unite happily in that spot. Amidst the creepers there, the gods and the ancestors find delight. Divine and sacred flowers repeatedly shower down there. O king! That is the sporting ground of the beautiful apsaras. Along the supreme banks of the Sarasvati, Subhumika is famous. Madhava[63] bathed there and donated riches to the brahmanas. He heard the songs and the sounds of celestial musical instruments. He saw a large number of shadows of gods, gandharvas and rakshasas. Rohini’s son then went to the tirtha of the gandharvas. With Vishvavasu at their head, the gandharvas are engaged in austerities there. They are engaged in beautiful dancing, singing and the playing of musical instruments. The wielder of the plough gave away many riches to brahmanas there and also goats, cattle, mules, camels, gold and silver. He fed the brahmanas and satisfied them with extremely expensive gifts that they desired. Praised by the brahmanas, Madhava then departed with them. The mighty-armed one, the scorcher of enemies, adorned with a single earring, left the tirtha of the gandharvas. He went to the extremely great tirtha of Gargasrota. The aged Garga, cleansed in his soul, performed austerities there. O Janamejaya! He got to know about the reckoning of time, the movements of stellar bodies and about favourable and unfavourable portents.[64] The auspicious tirtha along the Sarasvati is known by the name of the great-souled one. That is the reason that tirtha is known by the name of Gargasrota. O king! Wishing to know about the reckoning of time, the immensely fortunate rishis, rigid in their vows, always worshipped the lord Garga there. O great king! Bala, smeared with white sandalwood paste, went there and, in accordance with the rites, gave away riches to the sages who were cleansed in their souls. He gave away many kinds of rich foodstuff to the brahmanas who were there. Attired in blue garments, the immensely illustrious one then went to the tirtha known as Shankha. He saw Mahashanka[65] there. It was as large as Meru and was like a white mountain. It was frequented by large numbers of rishis. The powerful one, with the palm tree on his banner, saw it rise on the banks of the Sarasvati. Yakshas, *vidyadhara*s, immensely strong pishachas, thousands of siddhas—all of them were seen there, giving up the fruits of that tree. They only enjoyed those at the right time, observing vows and rituals. They obtained those after following rules and wandered around separately. O bull among men! They roamed around, invisible to men. O lord of men! That tree is famous in this world. It is the source of the sacred tirtha of the Sarasvati, renowned in the world. The illustrious tiger of the Yadu lineage donated copper and iron vessels and many garments at that tirtha. He worshipped the brahmanas and was honoured back by those stores of austerities. O king! The one with the plough as his weapon then went to the sacred Dvaitavana. Having gone there, Bala saw sages attired in many different kinds of garments. He worshipped the brahmanas and bathed in those waters. He donated all the objects of pleasure to the brahmanas. O king! Bala then went to the region south of the Sarasvati. The mighty-armed and greatly illustrious one, with dharma in his soul, went only a short distance away. The one without decay went to the tirtha of Nagadhanva. That was the abode of Vasuki, king of the serpents. O great king! There, the immensely radiant one[66] was surrounded by many serpents. There were fourteen thousand rishis and siddhas there. The gods went there and instated Vasuki, supreme among serpents, as the king of all the serpents, in accordance with the proper rites. O Kourava! There is no fear from serpents there. According to the decrees, he gave away many stores of jewels to the brahmanas there. O king! Radiant in his own energy, he then set out in an eastern direction. Joyfully, the one with the plough bathed in many tirthas. He donated riches to the brahmanas and met the ascetics. The one with the plough as his weapon honoured large numbers of rishis there. Rama then went to the tirtha that was frequented by a large number of rishis, at the spot where the Sarasvati returns in an eastern direction. The great-souled one wished to see Naimisharanya of the rishis. The one with the plough saw the great river retrace course there. O king! Bala, smeared with white sandalwood paste, was astounded.'

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! Why did Sarasvati retrace course in an eastern direction? O supreme among all officiating priests! I wish to hear this recounted. For what reason was the descendant of the Yadu lineage astounded? O supreme among brahmanas! Why did the best of rivers retrace course?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! In an earlier era, in *krita yuga*, the large number of ascetics in Naimisha performed an extremely large sacrifice that went on for twelve years. O king! Many rishis came to that sacrifice. The immensely fortunate ones performed that sacrifice, in accordance with the prescribed rites. After the sacrifice had been performed for twelve years, they returned. The rishis went to visit the large number of tirthas that were there. O lord of the earth! Because of the large number of rishis, the tirthas along the southern banks of the Sarasvati seemed to look like cities. O tiger among men! Because of their love for tirthas, the supreme among brahmanas resided along the banks of the river, all the way up to Samantapanchaka. The sages, cleansed in their souls, offered oblations there and the loud sounds of incantations filled the directions. The great-souled ones offered oblations in *agnihotra* sacrifices there. In every direction, the best of rivers was beautiful and radiant. O great king! Valakhilyas, Ashmakutta ascetics, Dantolukhalinas and others, Samprakshalas[67] and others, those who lived on air, those who lived on water, those who lived on leaves, many others who observed diverse kinds of rituals and those who used the bare earth as their beds—all these sages came there, near the Sarasvati. The best of rivers was radiant, like Ganga frequented by the residents of heaven.[68] After this, the rishis, wishing to perform sacrifices and rigid in their vows, could not find a bare spot in Kurukshetra. They measured out small tirthas with their sacrificial threads and offered oblations to agnihotras and other kinds of sacrifices. O Indra among kings! Sarasvati saw that the large number of rishis was finding the situation hopeless and began to think about a means for their sake. O Janamejaya! The supreme of rivers retraced her course and created many abodes for herself, for the sake of the rishis and the pious ascetics. The supreme of rivers again flowed in a western direction. “I must go there, so that their[69] arrival is not rendered futile.” O king! The great river performed this great and wonderful deed there. O Indra among kings! Those abodes of hers are famous as Naimisha. O best of the Kuru lineage! You must perform great rites in Kurukshetra. When the river retraced her course, she created many abodes for herself. On seeing these there, the great-souled Rama was overcome by great wonder. In accordance with the rites, the descendant of the Yadu lineage bathed there. He gave away gifts and diverse vessels to the brahmanas. He also gave the brahmanas many kinds of food and drink. O king! Worshipped by the brahmanas, Bala then went to the supreme of tirthas on the Sarasvati, frequented by tens of thousands of many kinds of birds. There are *badari*, *inguda*, *kashmarya*, *plaksha*, *ashvattha*, *vibhitaka*, *panasa*, *palasha*, *karira*, *pilu* and other kinds of trees there.[70] They bind down the banks of the Sarasvati and make it look like a chariot. It is adorned with groves of *parusha*s, *bilva*s, *amrataka*s, *atimukta*s, *kashanda*s and *parijata*s.[71] There are also beautiful groves of plantains, beautiful and charming. There were those who lived on air, those who lived on water, those who lived on fruit and those who lived on leaves. The Dantolukhalinas were there too, as were the Ashmakuttas, Vaneyas[72] and many other kinds of sages. There were the sounds of chanting and the place teemed with herds of animals. It was a place frequented by those who were without malice and devoted to dharma. The one with the plough as his weapon went to the tirtha of Sapta-Sarasvata. The great sage, Mankanaka, had performed austerities there and attained success.’

Chapter 1256(37)

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why is it called Sapta-Sarasvata? Who was the sage Mankanaka? How did that illustrious one observe rituals and become successful? O supreme among brahmanas! What lineage was he born in and what did he study? O supreme among brahmanas! In accordance with the proper way, I wish to hear all this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! The seven Sarasvatis cover this entire universe. Wherever she was powerfully summoned, Sarasvati manifested herself there—Suprabha, Kanchanakshi, Vishala, Manashrada, Sarasvati, Oghavati, Suvenu and Vimalodaka.[73] The grandfather[74] performed a great sacrifice on the surface of the earth and all the brahmanas assembled there. Sacred incantations from the unblemished Vedas resounded there. At that great sacrifice, performed in accordance with the indicated rites, the gods were also agitated.[75] O great king! The great grandfather consecrated himself at that sacrifice. That sacrifice yielded every object of desire, everything that one could mentally think of. It yielded the objectives of dharma and artha. O Indra among kings! All of these manifested themselves before the brahmanas who were there. The gandharvas went there and large numbers of apsaras danced. Divine musical instruments were played upon. At the richness of the sacrifice, even the gods were satisfied, not to speak of the supreme wonder that arose among those who were human. In the grandfather’s presence, the sacrifice was held in Pushkara. O king! However, the rishis said, “This sacrifice will not lead to great fruits. The best of rivers, Sarasvati, cannot be seen here.” On hearing this, the illustrious one cheerfully summoned Sarasvati. O Indra among kings! Summoned by the grandfather to the sacrifice in Pushkara, Sarasvati came there as Suprabha. On seeing the swift flows of the Sarasvati, the sages were satisfied and showed a great deal of respect to the grandfather’s sacrifice.

Thus, for the sake of the grandfather and to satisfy the learned ones, Sarasvati, supreme among rivers, manifested herself in Pushkara.

'O king! The sages assembled in Naimisha. O lord of men! They conversed colourfully amongst themselves. In diverse ways, the sages there talked about the study of the Vedas. The sages who were assembled there remembered Sarasvati. O great king! The rishis, who wanted to perform a sacrifice, thought of her. O Indra among kings! To aid the assembled great-souled ones, the immensely fortunate and sacred Sarasvati arrived there in Naimisha, as Kanchanakshi, for the sake of the sages who wished to perform a sacrifice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The best of rivers arrived there and was worshipped.

'Gaya performed a great sacrifice in Gaya. Sarasvati, the best of rivers, was summoned to Gaya's sacrifice. In Gaya, the rishis, rigid in their vows, named her Vishala.

'The river originates from the flanks of the Himalayas and is swift in flow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Ouddalaka performed a sacrifice there. From every direction, a large number of sages assembled there. O king! This was a sacred spot towards the north of the region of Kosala. Before the great-souled Ouddalaka had performed his sacrifice there, he had thought of Sarasvati. For the sake of that rishi, the best of rivers had arrived at that spot. She was honoured by the large number of sages, clad in bark and deerskin. Because she had been summoned mentally, she came to be known as Manashrada.[76]

'There is a sacred region known as Suvenurishabha, frequented by rajarshis. There, the great-souled Kuru performed a sacrifice in Kurukshetra. The immensely fortunate Sarasvati, best among rivers, arrived there. O Indra among kings! Sarasvati, with divine waters, was summoned to Kurukshetra as Oghavati by the great-souled Vasishtha.

'Daksha performed a sacrifice in Gangadvara.[77]

'Brahma again performed a sacrifice on the sacred slopes of the Himalaya mountains. The illustrious one was summoned there as Vimaloda.[78]

'All of these come together as one flow at the tirtha of Sapta-Sarasvata. That tirtha is famous on earth. These are the seven names of Sarasvati that are recounted. The tirtha of Sapta-Sarasvata is sacred and famous. Now hear about the young Mankanaka, who observed *brahmacharya*. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While he was bathing, he saw a woman sporting a lot in the waters, as she pleased. She was also bathing and was beautiful in her limbs. She was unblemished and was naked. O great king! At this, his semen fell into the waters of the Sarasvati. The great ascetic picked it up and placed it in a pot. Collected in the pot, it became divided into seven parts. Seven rishis were born from these and gave birth to the large number of Maruts.[79] Vayuvega, Vayubala, Vayuha, Vayumandala, Vayujvala, Vayureta and the valiant Vayuchakra—these were the ones who gave birth to the Maruts.

‘O Indra among kings! Other than this, listen to another wonderful account on earth. This is about the conduct of the maharshi, famous in the three worlds. O king! It has been heard that, in earlier times, after Mankanaka obtained success, his hand was wounded by a blade of kusha grass. The juice of vegetables began to flow from this. On seeing the flow of vegetable juice, he was delighted and began to dance around. O brave one! He was overwhelmed by his own energy and began to dance. On seeing him dance, all mobile and immobile objects also began to dance. O king! Brahma and the other gods and the rishis, rich in their austerities, went to Mahadeva and told him about the rishi. O lord of men! They said, “O god! You should do something to prevent him from dancing.” On seeing that the sage was extremely delighted, for the sake of the welfare of the gods, the god Mahadeva spoke to him. “O brahmana! You know about dharma. Why are you dancing around in this way? O supreme among sages! What is the reason for your delight? Tell me. O supreme among brahmanas! You are an ascetic and should be stationed on the path of dharma.” The rishi replied, “O brahmana![80] Can you not see that vegetable juice is flowing from this wound in my hand? O lord! On seeing this, I am overcome with great delight and am dancing.” The god laughed at the sage who was overcome by such emotion and said, “O brahmana! I am not astounded at all. Look at me.” O Indra among kings! Having spoken thus to the best of sages, the intelligent Mahadeva pierced his thumb with one of his fingernails. O king! Ashes, white as snow, began to flow from that wound. O king! On seeing this, the sage was ashamed and fell down at his feet. The rishi said, “I think that you are no other than the god Rudra, great and supreme. O wielder of the trident!

You are the refuge of the universe, the gods and the asuras. The learned ones say that the universe has been created by you. At the time of the destruction of a yuga, everything enters into you again. Even the gods are incapable of comprehending you. How can I? O unblemished one! Everything, Brahma and the other gods, are seen in you. You are all the gods. You are the actor and the one who causes action. It is through your favours that the gods enjoy happiness, free from fear.” Thus did the rishi prostrate himself and worship Mahadeva. He said, “O illustrious one! Through your favours, let there be no decline in my store of austerities.” The god was pleased and spoke again to the rishi. “O brahmana! Through my favours, your austerities will multiply a thousandfold. I will always dwell with you in this hermitage. If a man worships me in Sapta-Sarasvata, there is nothing that cannot be attained by him, in this world or in the next. There is no doubt that he will go to the world known as Sarasvata.”[81] Such was the infinitely energetic conduct of Mankanaka. He was the son of Sajanya, born from the wind god.’

Chapter 1257(38)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Rama spent a night there and was worshipped by the residents of the hermitage. The pious one, with the plough as his weapon, showed his affection for Manakanka. He gave gifts to the brahmanas and spent a night there. The one with the plough was worshipped by a large number of sages and arose in the morning. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He touched the waters and took his leave of all the sages. For the sake of tirthas, the immensely strong Rama departed quickly. The one with the plough as his weapon went to the tirtha known as Oushanasa. O king! This is also known as Kapalamochana, where the great sage, Mahodara, was freed from the large head that stuck to his thigh. O great king! In earlier times, Rama hurled a rakshasa’s head a great distance. Before this, the extremely great-souled Kavya[82] had tormented himself through austerities there. It was there that the great-souled one thought about all kinds of policies. It was there that he thought about the conflict of the daityas and the danavas.[83] O king! Bala reached that supreme of tirthas. In due form, he donated riches to the great-souled brahmanas.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! Why is it known as Kapalamochana? How was the great sage freed from the head? Why did it stick to him?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O tiger among kings! Earlier, the great-souled Raghava dwelt in Dandakaranya, to bring an end to the rakshasas who lived there. In Janasthana, with a razor-sharp arrow that was sharp at the edges, he severed the head of an evil-souled rakshasa. This fell down in a great forest. O king! Mahodara was roaming around in the forest at will. It fell down, pierced his bones and stuck to his thigh. Because it was stuck to his thigh, the immensely wise brahmana could not go to any of the other tirthas. The great sage was in pain and pus exuded from the wound. It has been heard that he went to all the tirthas on earth. The immensely ascetic one went to all the rivers and the oceans. He spoke to all the rishis who had cleansed their souls. He bathed in all the tirthas, but was not freed. The Indra among brahmanas then heard the great words of the sages about the famous and supreme tirtha on the Sarasvati. It could free from all sins and was the supreme spot for obtaining success. The brahmana went to that tirtha of Oushanasa. He touched the waters of Oushanasa tirtha. The head was freed from his leg and fell down into the water there. O king! The one with the pure soul was freed from the taint. Having been successful, Mahodara delightedly went to his hermitage. The great ascetic brahmana became pure and was freed from his exhaustion. He told all the rishis, who had cleansed their souls, about this. O one who grants honours! On hearing his words, all the assembled ones named that tirtha Kapalamochana.[84] Madhava honoured the brahmanas there and gave them many gifts.

'The foremost among the Vrishni lineage then went to the hermitage of Rishangu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Arshtishena had tormented himself through terrible austerities there. The great sage Vishvamitra was able to become a brahmana there.[85] O Indra among kings! The handsome wielder of the plough was surrounded by brahmanas there and departed from the spot known as Rishangu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rishangu was an aged brahmana who was always engaged in austerities. Having made up his mind to cast aside his body, he thought a lot. Rishangu summoned all his immensely ascetic sons and told them to take him to a spot where there was a lot of water. Knowing about Rishangu's age, those great ascetics took that store of austerities to a tirtha on the Sarasvati. Those intelligent sons took him to the Sarasvati, where there were hundreds of tirthas, frequented by large numbers of brahmanas. O king! The immensely ascetic one bathed there, in accordance with the prescribed rites. O tiger among men! The supreme among rishis knew about the qualities of tirthas and delightedly told all his sons, who were worshipping him, "The northern bank of the Sarasvati has a lot of water. He who makes up his mind to cast aside his body there and engages in meditation and austerities, will never suffer from death." The one with the plough as his weapon, with dharma in his soul, touched the water there and bathed. He was devoted to brahmanas and gave a lot of gifts to brahmanas.

'O Kouravya! He then went to Lokaloka, created by the illustrious grandfather. Arshtishena, rigid in his vows and supreme among rishis, had performed great austerities there and become a brahmana. O king! Rajarshi Sindhudvipa, the great ascetic Devapi and the great sage Vishvamitra had also become brahmanas there. They were illustrious and great ascetics. They were fierce in their energy and great in their austerities. The strong and powerful Balabhadra[86] went there.’

Chapter 1258(39)

Janamejaya asked, 'Why did the illustrious Arshtishena torment himself through great austerities? How did Sindhudvipa become a brahmana? How did Devapi and the supreme Vishvamitra become brahmanas? O illustrious one! Tell me all this. I am supremely curious.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! Earlier, in krita yuga, there was a supreme among brahmanas, known as Arshtishena. He always resided in the house of his preceptor and was always engaged in studying. O king! He always lived in the house of his preceptor. O lord of the earth! But his learning of the Vedas never became complete. O king! Depressed, the great ascetic tormented himself through austerities. Because of his austerities, he obtained the supreme Vedas.[87] The supreme among rishis obtained learning of the Vedas and attained success. The immensely great ascetic granted three boons to that tirtha. "From today, a man who bathes in the tirtha on this great river,[88] will obtain all the fruits of a horse sacrifice. From today, there will be no fear here from predatory beasts.[89] From a little bit of effort, all the fruits will be obtained." Having spoken thus, the immensely energetic sage went to heaven. Thus did the illustrious and powerful Arshtishena attain success. O great king! In that tirtha, the powerful Sindhudvipa and Devapi obtained the exalted status of being a brahmana.

'O son![90] In that way, Koushika controlled his senses and always engaged in austerities. Severely tormenting himself through austerities, he attained the status of a brahmana. There was a great kshatriya, famous everywhere on earth by the name of Gadhi. O king! His son was the powerful Vishvamitra. O son! King Koushika performed a great sacrifice[91] and obtained the immensely ascetic Vishvamitra as his son. Having decided to cast aside his body, he decided to instate his son. The subjects bowed down and said, "O immensely wise one! Do not go. Save us from a great fear.” Having been thus addressed, Gadhi replied to the subjects, “My son will be the protector of the entire universe.” O king! Saying this and instating Vishvamitra, Gadhi went to heaven. Vishvamitra became the king. However, despite making efforts, he could not protect the earth. The king heard that there was a great fear from the rakshasas. With four kinds of forces, he went out of the city. Having gone a long distance, he reached Vasishtha’s hermitage. O king! His soldiers created a lot of nuisance there. When the illustrious brahmana Vasishtha returned to his hermitage, he saw that the entire large forest was being destroyed. O great king! Vasishtha, supreme among sages, became angry at this. He instructed his cow to create a large number of terrible mountainous hunters. Thus instructed, the cow created men who were terrible in form. From every direction, they clashed against those soldiers and caused carnage. On seeing that the soldiers were driven away, Gadhi’s son, Vishvamitra, made up his mind that austerities were supreme. O king! He meditated in that supreme tirtha along the Sarasvati. He observed vows and fasted. He emaciated his own body. He lived on water. He lived on air. He lived on leaves. He slept on the bare ground and observed many other separate rules. The gods made many attempts to dislodge him from his vows. But the great-souled one’s mind never deviated from those rules. He made supreme efforts and tormented himself through many kinds of austerities. In his energy, Gadhi’s son became as radiant as the sun. When Vishvamitra was thus engaged in austerities, the grandfather, the granter of boons, thought that he would grant the immensely ascetic one a boon. O king! He asked for the boon that he might become a brahmana. Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, agreed. The immensely illustrious one thus became a brahmana through his fierce austerities. Successful in his objective, he roamed around the entire earth, like a god. O king! In that supreme tirtha, Rama cheerfully gave away many riches, milk-yielding cows, carts, beds, garments, ornaments and the best of food and drink to the best of brahmanas, after having worshipped them. O king! Rama then went to the hermitage of Baka, which was not that far away. It has been heard that Dalbhya Baka tormented himself through fierce austerities there.’

Chapter 1259(40)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The descendant of the Yadu lineage then went to see the spot where Dalbhya Baka, the extremely great ascetic, offered the kingdom of Dhritarashtra, Vichitravirya’s son, as an oblation. The place was full of brahmanas. Deciding to torment his body, he performed austerities that were extremely terrible in form. The powerful one, with dharma in his soul, was overcome by great rage. In earlier times, those who lived in Naimisha performed a sacrifice for twelve years. When the sacrifice named Vishvajita was completed, the rishis set out for Panchala. The learned ones asked for a *dakshina*[92] from the lord there.[93] They wanted twenty-one strong and healthy calves. The aged Baka told them, “Divide these animals among you.[94] I am giving up these animals and will ask for some more from the best of kings.” O king! Having told all the rishis this, the powerful one, supreme among brahmanas, went to Dhritarashtra’s abode. Having approached King Dhritarashtra, Dalbhya begged him for some animals. The best of kings saw that some of his cattle had died and angrily told him, “O one who is united with the brahman! If you want, take these animals.” The rishi knew about dharma and hearing these words, he thought, “The words that have been spoken to me in this assembly are cruel. Having thought for an instant, the best of brahmanas was overcome with rage. He made up his mind to ensure King Dhritarashtra’s destruction. The best of brahmanas sliced off flesh from the dead animals. He went to the tirtha on the banks of the Sarasvati and lit a fire there. Into that, in those ancient times, he offered King Dhritarashtra’s kingdom as an oblation.[95] O great king! Dalbhya Baka was supremely devoted to rituals. The immensely ascetic one used the flesh to offer the kingdom as an oblation. In accordance with the rituals, that extremely terrible sacrifice started. At this, King Dhritarashtra’s kingdom began to decay. O lord! It was as if a large forest was being sliced down with an axe. On seeing that the kingdom was thus afflicted, losing its vitality and afflicted by a hardship, the lord of men was distressed. O king! The lord began to think. In those earlier times, to free himself, the king made endeavours with brahmanas. O king! The king asked those brahmanas. O king! However, he was incapable of freeing his kingdom. O Janamejaya! He asked his advisers and those advisers said, “A wicked deed has been committed by you concerning those animals. In the form of flesh, the sage Baka is offering your kingdom as an oblation. It is because of those oblations that the kingdom is facing this great decay. It is because of his austere deeds that this great calamity has come about. O king! There is a grove with water along the Sarasvati. Go and seek his favours there.” The king went to the Sarasvati and spoke to Baka. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He lowered his head down on the ground and joined his hands in salutation. “O illustrious one. Grant me your favours. Pardon my offence. I am distressed and greedy. I am stupid and devoid of intelligence. You are my refuge. You are my protector. You should show me your favours.” He lamented in this way, senseless with grief. On seeing this, the rishi felt compassion and freed his kingdom. He was pleased and abandoned his wrath. To free the kingdom, he again offered oblations into the fire. Having freed the kingdom, he received many animals in return. Delighted, he again went to Naimisharanya. The great-minded Dhritarashtra, with dharma in his soul, was also relieved. The king returned to his greatly prosperous city.

‘O great king! In that tirtha, the immensely intelligent Brihaspati offered oblations of flesh for the decay of the asuras and the prosperity of the denizens of heaven. At this, the asuras began to decay. The gods desired victory and shattered them in a battle. In accordance with the prescribed rites, the immensely illustrious one[96] gave brahmanas horses, elephants, vehicles with horses and mules yoked to them, extremely expensive jewels, riches and grain. O lord of the earth! The mighty-armed one then went to the tirtha known as Yayata. O great king! The great-souled Yayati, Nahusha’s son, performed a sacrifice there and Sarasvati produced milk and clarified butter.[97] Having performed the sacrifice, King Yayati, tiger among men, cheerfully ascended upwards and obtained all the worlds. O king! Because Yayati performed the sacrifice there, Sarasvati flowed and gave all the objects of desire to the great-souled brahmanas. In whatever spot the brahmanas desired whichever object of desire, in those spots, the best of rivers flowed and gave those in abundance. The gods and the gandharvas were pleased at this prosperous sacrifice. On beholding the prosperity at the sacrifice, men were astounded. The great-souled one, cleansed in his soul,[98] always gave away a lot of gifts. He possessed a palm tree on his banner and was the source of great dharma. He had fortitude and had conquered his soul. He then went to Vasishthapavaha, which had a great and terrible current.’

Chapter 1260(41)

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why does Vasishthapavaha have a great and terrible current? Why did the best of rivers bear the rishi away?[99] O lord! What was the reason for the enmity between them?[100] O immensely wise one! I am asking you. Please tell me. I am not satisfied from hearing these stories.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was an extremely terrible enmity between the rishis Vishvamitra and Vasishtha. This was because they greatly rivalled each other in austerities. Vasishtha’s great hermitage was in the tirtha known as Sthanu. This was on the east and the intelligent Vishvamitra’s was on the west.[101] O great king! Sthanu had performed great austerities there.[102] Learned ones speak about the terrible deeds he performed there. O lord! Having performed a sacrifice there and having worshipped Sarasvati, the illustrious Sthanu established a tirtha there, known as Sthanu-tirtha. O lord of men! All the gods had instated Skanda, the destroyer of the enemies of the gods, as the great general of their army there. Through his fierce austerities, the great sage, Vishvamitra, brought Vasishtha to that tirtha on the Sarasvati. Listen to that account. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vishvamitra and Vasishtha, rich in austerities, rivalled and challenged each other through the fierce austerities that they performed. Vishvamitra, the great sage, saw that Vasishtha was superior to him in energy. He was tormented by this and began to think. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sage formed a resolution. “This Sarasvati will swiftly and forcefully bring Vasishtha, store of austerities and supreme among those who meditate, to my presence. Once he is here, there is no doubt that I will kill that foremost of brahmanas.” Having decided this, Vishvamitra, the great sage, remembered the best of rivers, his eyes red with rage. When she was thus thought of, the beautiful one anxiously went to the sage, who was great in energy and great in wrath. Sarasvati trembled and was pale. She joined her hands in salutation and presented herself before Vishvamitra, supreme among sages. She was extremely miserable and was like a lady whose husband had been killed. She asked that supreme of sages, “What do I have to do? Tell me.” The sage angrily replied, “Quickly bring Vasishtha here, so that I can kill him today.” On hearing this, the river was distressed. The one with eyes like a lotus joined her hands in salutation. She trembled, like a climbing creeper shaken by the wind. Vishvamitra saw that she had arrived and that she was trembling, joining her hands in salutation. Extremely angry, he said, “Quickly bring Vasishtha here.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Terrified, the best of rivers began to think. She was frightened that either one would curse her and did not know what to do.

‘Realizing the purport of the words, the best of rivers went to Vasishtha and told him what the intelligent Vishvamitra had said. She was scared that either one would curse her and trembled repeatedly. She was grievously frightened that the rishis would impose a grave curse on her. O king! Vasishtha was supreme among men and had dharma in his soul. He saw that she was wan and pale and was worried. He said, “O best of rivers! Save yourself. O fast-flowing one! Bear me there. Otherwise, Vishamitra will curse you. Do not think unnecessarily.” The river heard the words of the compassionate one. O Kouravya! She began to think about the best course of action for herself. She thought and arrived at the conclusion, “Vasishtha has always shown compassion for me. What he has asked me to do will be beneficial for me.” O king! She saw that the supreme of rishis was meditating along her banks. She saw that Koushika[103] was also offering oblations. Sarasvati, supreme among rivers, decided that this was her opportunity. With great force, the river washed away one of her banks. When the bank was broken, Maitra Varuni’s son was also borne away.[104] O king! As he was borne away, he was satisfied and praised Sarasvati. “O Sarasvati! You are a river that has arisen from the grandfather.[105] This entire universe is pervaded by your wonderful waters. O goddess! You flow through the sky and pass on your waters to the clouds. All the waters are yours and it is through you that we obtain our learning.[106] You are nourishment, radiance, fame, success, expansion and splendour.[107] You are speech and *svaha* .[108] You pervade the entire universe. It is through you that the four kinds of beings find life."[109] O king! Sarasvati was praised thus by the maharshi. With great force, she bore the brahmana along towards Vishvamitra's hermitage and told the sage Vishvamitra that he had been brought. On seeing that Vasishtha had been brought by Sarasvati, he[110] was overcome by rage and looked for a weapon so that he might be slain. On seeing that he was angry, the river was scared that a brahmana might be killed. Without any delay, she swiftly bore Vasishtha away to the eastern bank again. She acted in accordance with both their words, but deceived Gadhi's son. On seeing that Vasishtha, supreme among rishis, had been borne away, Vishvamitra was overcome by intolerance and wrathfully told her, "O supreme among rivers! You have gone away again and have deceived me. O fortunate one! Your waters will change to blood, acceptable only to the foremost among rakshasas." Sarasvati was thus cursed by the intelligent Vishvamitra. For an entire year, Sarasvati flowed, with blood instead of water. The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras were extremely miserable to see the Sarasvati in that state. O lord of men! That is the reason that spot is famous in this world as Vasishthapavaha. However, the supreme among rivers again returned to her original course.'

Chapter 1261(42)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The intelligent and enraged Vishvamitra cursed her. In that supreme tirtha, the auspicious one’s flows were made out of blood. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rakshasas went there. In delight, all of them drank that blood. They were extremely satisfied, delighted and devoid of anxiety. They danced and laughed, as if they had won heaven for themselves. O lord of the earth! After some time had passed, rishis, rich in austerities, went on a visit of tirthas to the Sarasvati. Those bulls among sages went and bathed in all the tirthas. Those accomplished ones were supremely delighted and wished to obtain greater austerities. O king! They went to the other tirthas. Those immensely fortunate ones went to the terrible tirtha.[111] O supreme among kings! They saw that the waters of the Sarasvati were covered in blood and that these were being drunk by a large number of rakshasas. O king! On seeing this, the sages, rigid in their vows, made supreme efforts to save Sarasvati from the rakshasas. Those immensely fortunate ones, great in their vows, assembled and jointly summoned the river with these best of words. “O fortunate one! Tell us the reason why this lake of yours has been reduced to this plight.[112] We have heard the reason behind your state of hardship. We will try to rescue you.” Having been addressed, she looked at them. Trembling and miserable, she told them what had transpired. Those stores of austerities said, “O unblemished one! We have heard about the reason. We know why you have been cursed. All of us, rich in austerities, will make the best of efforts.” Having thus spoken to the best of rivers, they consulted among themselves. “All of us will free Sarasvati from the curse.” O king! They gave their word that Sarasvati would be returned to her natural state and indeed, the waters became clean, as they had been earlier. Freed, the best of rivers became as resplendent as she had been earlier.

‘O king! Seeing what the sages had done to the waters of the Sarasvati, the rakshasas were overcome by hunger. They joined their hands in salutation and repeatedly requested all the sages for compassion. “All of us are hungry. We have been dislodged from our eternal dharma.[113] It is not of our own desire that we are the performers of wicked deeds. It is because you do not show us favours that we perform these wicked deeds. Those among us who are especially bad become brahma-rakshasas.[114] In a similar way, those among vaishyas, shudras and kshatriyas, who hate brahmanas, also become rakshasas. Those beings who disrespect preceptors, officiating priests, elders and the aged, also become rakshasas. Wickedness increases through the sexual transgressions of women.[115] O supreme among brahmanas! You should therefore act so as to show us compassion. You are capable of saving all the worlds.” On hearing these words, the sages praised the great river. They controlled their minds. To save the rakshasas, they said, “Food in which there are insects and worms, food that has been mixed with leftovers, food that is mixed with hair, food that is mixed with grain that has not been broken and food that has been touched by dogs—these will constitute the share of rakshasas. Knowing this, the learned will always avoid such kinds of food. Those who partake of such food will eat food that is meant for rakshasas.” Thus did those stores of austerities purify that tirtha. They instructed the river to save those rakshasas. O bull among men! Knowing the views of the maharshis, that supreme of rivers thought of a new form in her body, known as Aruna. Bathing there, the rakshasas gave up their bodies and went to heaven. O great king! He who bathes in Aruna is saved from the crime of killing a brahmana. Knowing the purport of all this, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, bathed in that best of tirthas and was freed from a great sin.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘How did the illustrious Shakra commit the offence of killing a brahmana? How was he freed from his sin by bathing in that tirtha?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O lord of men! Listen to that account, exactly as it happened. In ancient times, Vasava broke his treaty of peace with Namuchi. Because of his fear of Vasava, Namuchi hid inside one of the sun’s rays. Indra entered into a pledge of friendship with him and told him, “O best of asuras! O friend! I will not kill you with anything that is wet, or with anything that is dry, nor during the day or during the night. I swear this to you truthfully." Having thus entered into an agreement, the lord created a mist. O king! Vasava severed his head with the foam of water.[116] Namuchi's severed head pursued Shakra from the rear and said, "O friend! You have committed a crime." He was repeatedly spoken to by the head. In torment, he went to the grandfather and told him what had happened. The preceptor of the worlds said, "O Indra of the gods! You have committed the crime of killing a brahmana.[117] Perform a sacrifice in accordance with the decreed rites and bathe in Aruna." O Janamejaya! Having been thus addressed, the slayer of Bala performed a sacrifice in the grove of Sarasvati and bathed in Aruna. He was freed from the crime of killing a brahmana. Cheerfully, the lord of the thirty gods returned to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O supreme among kings! Namuchi's head was submerged in those waters and he[118] obtained many eternal worlds that grant every object of desire.

'The great-souled Bala bathed there and gave away many different kinds of gifts. Devoted to dharma and the performer of supreme and noble deeds, he then went to the great tirtha of Soma. O Indra among kings! In earlier times, in accordance with the prescribed rites, Soma had himself performed a royal sacrifice there. In that best of sacrifices, the intelligent and great-souled Atri was chief among the officiating priests. When it was over, there was a great clash between the danavas, daityas and rakshasas on one side and the gods on the other. That extremely terrible battle is known as Taraka and in this, Skanda killed Taraka. Mahasena,[119] the destroyer of the daityas, became the commander of the gods there. Kartikeya himself lives at that spot. Kumara always dwells there and there is a king of plaksha trees there.'

Chapter 1262(43)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! You have told me about the powers of Sarasvati. O brahmana! You should tell me about Kumara’s consecration. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me about the time and the place where it happened. O illustrious one! How was the lord consecrated according to the proper rites? How did Skanda create great carnage among the daityas? Tell me everything about this. I have great curiosity.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Your curiosity is characteristic of someone belonging to the Kuru lineage. O Janamejaya! My words will generate delight in you. O lord of men! I will tell you about that wonderful account, about the great-souled Kumara’s consecration and powers. Listen. In earlier times, Maheshvara’s seed fell down into fire.[120] The illustrious one who devours everything[121] was incapable of destroying that eternal seed. Instead, because he was bearing that energetic seed, the one who bears oblations became energetic and radiant. On Lord Brahma’s instructions, he went to the Ganga and flung that divine seed, as energetic as the sun, there. However, Ganga was also not capable of bearing that seed and flung it on the beautiful slopes of the Himalayas, worshipped by the immortals. Agni’s son[122] began to grow there, pervading the worlds. The Krittikas saw the blazing womb there.[123] The lord, the great-souled son of the fire god, was lying down in a clump of reeds. Desiring a son, all of them exclaimed, “This is mine.” Discerning the sentiments of the mothers, the illustrious lord assumed six mouths and drank milk from all their breasts. Seeing the powers of the child, the divine goddesses, the Krittikas, celestial in their forms, were filled with great wonder. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Since Ganga had cast the illustrious one on the peak of the mountain, that mountain is beautiful and golden everywhere. The child began to grow and made the earth beautiful. It is because of this that all the mountains began to yield gold. The immensely valorous Kumara is known by the name of Kartikeya.[124] Before this, with his great powers of yoga, he had been known by the name of Gangeya. The god possessed prowess and austerities. O Indra among kings! He began to grow and was as handsome as the moon. Surrounded by prosperity, he lay down on that divine and golden clump of reeds. As he lay down there, he was praised by the gandharvas and the sages. Thousands of celestial maidens danced around him. They were beautiful and skilled in dancing. They played on divine musical instruments and praised him. The celestial river Ganga, supreme among rivers, also worshipped him. The earth, assuming the most beautiful of forms, bore him. Brihaspati performed the rites, including those connected with birth. The four Vedas presented themselves before him, hands joined in salutation. The four branches of dhanurveda and collections of weapons, not just arrows, presented themselves before him.

'The immensely valorous one saw that Uma's consort, the lord of the gods, was seated, surrounded by a large number of *bhuta*s.[125] The daughter of the mountains was with him.[126] Those large numbers of bhutas were without bodies and were extremely wonderful to behold. They were hideous, with distorted bodies. Their ornaments and standards were ugly. Their faces were like tigers, lions and bears. Some of them had faces like cats and makaras. There were those with faces like cats.[127] There were others with faces like elephants and camels. Some had faces like owls. Others looked like vultures and jackals. Others had faces like curlews, pigeons and herons. Others had bodies like those of dogs, porcupines, lizards and mules. They assumed all these kinds of forms. Some were like mountains, others were like oceans. Some held chakras, maces and other weapons. Some looked like large masses of collyrium. Others possessed the complexion of white mountains. O lord of the earth! The seven *matrika*s and their followers were also there.[128] So were the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Maruts, the Vasus and the ancestors. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Siddhas, the serpents, the danavas, the birds, the illustrious and self-creating Brahma and his sons,[129] Vishnu and Shakra went there, desiring to see the supreme and undecaying Kumara. There were the best of gods and gandharvas, with Narada at their head. There were the devarshis and the Siddhas, with Brihaspati at their head. There were the lords of creation, supreme among the gods. Aryama[130] and all the worlds went there. Though he was yet a child, the illustrious one possessed great powers of yoga. He advanced towards the lord of the gods,[131] who wielded the trident and pinaka in his hands. On seeing him advance, Shiva, the daughter of the mountain, Ganga and Agni simultaneously wondered, "Whom will the child approach and show honours to first? He will come to me."[132] All of them thought in this way. Discerning their thoughts, he simultaneously divided himself into four bodies. The illustrious lord assumed these four bodies in an instant—Skanda, Shakha, Vishakha and Naigamesha as the last. Thus did the illustrious lord divide himself into four parts. Skanda, extraordinary in form, went to where Rudra was. Vishakha went to the goddess who was the daughter of the mountain. Shakha, the illustrious one's form as the wind, went to Vibhavasu.[133] Naigamesha, Kumara's form that was as radiant as the fire, went to Ganga. All the four blazing bodies were similar in appearance. They advanced forward and it was wonderful. On beholding this great and wonderful sight, which made the body hair stand up, great sounds of lamentation arose among the gods, the danavas and the rakshasas. Rudra, the goddess,[134] Agni and Ganga—all of them bowed down before the grandfather, the lord of the worlds. O bull among kings! O king! Having bowed down in different ways and to ensure Kartikeya's welfare, they said, "O illustrious one! O lord of the gods! For the sake of our pleasure, grant this child some kind of sovereignty that is appropriate for him." The illustrious and wise one, grandfather of all the worlds, thought about this. What could be given to him? All the riches had already been given away to the gods, the gandharvas, the rakshasas, the bhutas, the yakshas, the birds, the serpents and great-souled ones without any bodies. The immensely intelligent one thought about what prosperity might be bestowed on him. With the welfare of the gods in mind, he thought for an instant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He then made him the general of all the beings. The grandfather of all the beings instructed all the gods, and the lords among them, to serve him. Together with Kumara, all the gods, led by Brahma, went to the king of the mountains, so as to consecrate him there. That sacred spot was on the slopes of the Himalayas, where the goddess Sarasvati, best among rivers, flowed. It is famous in the three worlds by the name of Samantapanchaka. That sacred bank of the Sarasvati possesses all the qualities. Cheerful in their minds, all the gods and the gandharvas seated themselves there.’

Chapter 1263(44)

Vaishampayana said, ‘In accordance with the sacred texts, they collected everything that was required for a consecration. In accordance with the decreed rites, Brihaspati kindled a fire and offered oblations. The Himalayas provided a celestial, golden and supreme seat, decorated with the best of jewels and divine gems. All the auspicious objects were brought by the masses of gods, objects required for the consecration. The required mantras were chanted. The immensely valorous Indra, Vishnu, the sun god, the moon god, Dhata, Vidhata, the wind god, the fire god, Pusha, Bhaga, Aryama, Amsha, Vivasvat,[135] the immensely wise Rudra, Mitra, Varuna, the Rudras, the Vasus and the Adityas surrounded the handsome lord. With the ancestors, there were the Vishvadevas, the Maruts and the Sadhyas. There were gandharvas, apsaras, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents and large numbers of devarshis and brahmarshis. There were Vaikhanasas,[136] Valakhilyas, those that lived on air and those that lived on the rays of the sun. There were great-souled sages descended from Bhrigu and Angiras. There were all the Vidyadharas,[137] surrounded by Siddhas with sacred powers of yoga. O lord of the earth! The grandfather was there and Pulastya, the immensely ascetic Pulaha, Angiras, Kashyapa, Atri, Marichi, Bhrigu, Kratu, Hara, Prachetas, Manu, Daksha, the seasons, the planets and the stellar bodies. O lord of men! In personified form, the rivers were there and the eternal Vedas, the oceans, the lakes, the many kinds of tirthas, the earth, the firmament, the directions and all the trees. Aditi, the mother of the gods, Hri, Shri, Svaha, Sarasvati, Uma, Shachi, Sinivali, Anumati, Kuhu, Raka, Dhishana and all the wives of the residents of heaven were there.[138] The Himalayas, the Vindhyas, Meru and many other mountains were there. O king! Airavata and his followers were there and Kala, Kashtha,[139] the fortnights, the months, the seasons, night and day. Ucchaihshrava, best among horses, was there and

Vamana, king among elephants. They were with Aruna, Garuda, the trees and the herbs. The illustrious god Dharma came there, with Destiny, Yama, Death and Yama's followers. There were many others from the large numbers of gods that I have not named. They arrived there, for the purpose of Kumara's consecration. O king! All the residents of heaven came there. They carried many auspicious vessels for the consecration. O king! There were golden pots filled with divine objects. They came to the divine and sacred waters of the Sarasvati. The residents of heaven were delighted that the great-souled Kumara, a terror to the asuras, would be consecrated as the general. O great king! In that ancient age, the illustrious Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, consecrated him by pouring Varuna, the lord of the waters, over him. So did the immensely ascetic Kashyapa and the others who have been named.

'The lord Brahma was delighted and gave him great companions who were powerful and as swift as the wind. They were successful and possessed valour that could be increased at will. They were Nandisena, Lohitaksha and Ghantakarna. The fourth companion was known by the name of Kumudamali. Sthanu gave him a great companion by the name of Kratu. He was immensely forceful and could summon a hundred different kinds of maya at will. He possessed valour and strength that could be increased at will. O Indra among kings! He was the destroyer of the enemies of the gods and he gave him to Skanda. In the battle between the gods and the asuras, he[140] angrily killed fourteen million terrible daityas with his bare hands alone. The god also gave him soldiers that were full of demons.[141] They destroyed and defeated the enemies of the gods and possessed all kinds of earthy forms. With Vasava, all the gods uttered roars of victory. So did the gandharvas, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the sages and the ancestors. Yama gave him two companions who were like Death and Destiny. They were Unmatha and Pramatha. They were immensely valorous and greatly radiant. Surya cheerfully gave the powerful Kartikeya two companions who were Surya's followers. They were Subhraja and Bhaskara. Soma gave him companions named Mani and Sumani. They were like peaks of Kailasa. They wore white garlands and were smeared with white unguents. Hutashana[142] gave him two brave companions named Jvalajihva and Jyoti. They were ones who crushed enemy soldiers. Amsha gave the intelligent Skanda five companions—Parigha, Vata, the immensely strong Bhima, Dahati and Dahana. They were fearsome and full of valour. Vasava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, gave Agni's son two companions named Utkrosha and Pankaja. They were armed with the vajra and a staff. In battle, they had killed many enemies of the great Indra. The immensely famous Vishnu gave Skanda three companions named Chakra, Vikrama and Samkrama. They were immensely strong. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Ashvins cheerfully gave Skanda companions named Vardhana and Nandana. They were skilled in all the arts. The immensely illustrious Dhata gave the great-souled one companions named Kundana, Kusuma, Kumuda, Dambara and Adambara. Tvastha gave Skanda supreme companions named Vakra and Anuvakra. They were strong, proud of their valour and had mouths like those of sheep. They had great powers of maya. The lord Mitra gave the great-souled Kumara two great-souled companions, Suvrata and Satyasandha. They possessed austerities and learning. Vidhata gave Kartikeya two handsome companions who were famous in the three worlds. They were Suprabha and the great-souled Shubhakarma. They were the granters of boons and the performers of auspicious deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Pusha gave Kartikeya two companions, Palitaka and Kalika. They possessed great powers of maya. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Vayu gave Kartikeya Bala and Atibala. They were immensely powerful and possessed large mouths. Varuna, devoted to the truth, gave Kartikeya Ghasa and Atighasa. They had faces like whales and were immensely strong. O king! The Himalayas gave Hutashana's son the great-souled Suvarchasa and Ativarchasa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Meru gave Agni's son two companions—the great-souled Kanchana and Meghamali. Meru also gave Agni's great-souled son two others—Sthira and Atisthira. They were immensely strong and powerful. The Vindhyas gave Agni's son two companions named Ucchrita and Atishringa. They fought with large boulders. The ocean gave Agni's son two great companions, Samgraha and Vigraha. They were the wielders of clubs. The beautiful Parvati gave Agni's son Unmada, Pushpadanta and Shankukarna. O tiger among men! Vasuki, the lord of serpents, gave the son of the fire two serpents named Jaya and Mahajaya.

‘In that way, the Sadhyas, the Rudras, the Vasus, the ancestors, the oceans, the rivers and the immensely strong mountains gave him the leaders of soldiers, armed with spears and battleaxes. They wielded divine weapons and were attired in many kinds of garments. Listen to the names of the other soldiers that Skanda obtained. They were armed with many kinds of weapons and attired in colourful ornaments and armour. O king! O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were[143] Shankukarna, Nikumbha, Padma, Kumuda, Ananta, Dvadashabhuja, Krishna, Upakrishna, Dronashrava, Kapskandha, Kanchanaksha, Jalamdhama, Akshasamtarjana, Kunadika, Tamobhrakrit, Ekaksha, Dvadashaksha, the lord Ekajata, Sahasrabahu, Vikata, Vyaghraksha, Kshitikampana, Punyanama, Sunama, Suvaktra, Priyadarshana, Parishruta, Kokanada, Priyamalyanulepana, Ajodira, Gajashira, Skandhaksha, Shatalochana, Jvalajihva, Karala, Sitakesha, Jati, Hari, Chaturdamshtra, Ashtajihva, Meghanada, Prithushrava, Vidyutaksha, Dhanurvaktra, Jathara, Marutashana, Udaraksha, Jhashaksha, Vajranama, Vasuprabha, Samudravega, Shailakampi, Putramesha, Pravaha, Nanda, Upanandaka, Dhumra, Shveta, Kalinga, Siddhartha, Varada, Priyaka, Nanda, the powerful Gonanda, Ananda, Pramoda, Svastika, Dhruvaka, Kshemavapa, Sujata, Siddha, Govraja, Kanakapida, the lord of great companions, Gayana, Hasana, Bana, the valiant Khadga, Vaitali, Atitali, Katika, Vatika, Hamsaja, Pankadigdhanga, Samudronmada, Ranotkata, Prahasa, Shvetashirsha, Nandaka, Kalakantha, Prabhasa, Kumbhabhandaka, Kalakaksha, Sita, Bhutalonmatha, Yajnavaha, Pravaha, Devayaji, Somapa, Sajala, Mahateja, Krathakratha, Tuhana, Tuhana,[144] the valiant Chitradeva, Madhura, Suprasada, the immensely strong Kiriti, Vasana, Madhuvarna, Kalashodara, Ghamanta, Manmathakara, the valiant Suchivakrta, Shvetavaktra, Suvaktra, Charuvaktra, Pandura, Dandabahu, Subahu, Raja, Kokila, Achala, Kanakaksha, the lord Balanamayika, Samcharaka, Kokanada, Gridhravaktra, Jambuka, Lohashvavaktra, Jathara, Kumbhavaktra, Kundaka, Madgugriva, Krishnouja, Hamsavaktra, Chandrabha, Panikurma, Shambuka, Shakavaktra and Kundaka. There were other great-souled ones who possessed powers of yoga and were always devoted to brahmanas. O Janamejaya! These great companions were given to him by the great-souled grandfather and they were children, youths and the aged. Thousands of companions presented themselves before Kumara.

‘O Janamejaya! They had many different kinds of faces. Listen to this. Some had faces like tortoises and cocks, others mouths like hares and owls. Some had faces like asses and camels, others faces like boars. Some had mouths like men and sheep, others faces like jackals. Some had terrible faces like makaras, others mouths like alligators.[145] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some had faces like cats and rabbits, others had long faces. Some had faces like mongooses and owls, others faces like dogs. Some had mouths like rats, others faces like peacocks. Others had faces like fish and sheep, while still others had faces like goats and buffaloes. Some had faces like bears and tigers, others faces like leopards and tigers. Some had terrible faces like elephants, others mouths like crocodiles. Some had faces like Garuda, others mouths like rhinoceros, wolves and crows. Others had mouths like cows and mules, still others mouths like cats.[146] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some had large stomachs and feet, with eyes like stars. Others had mouths like pigeons, and still others mouths like bulls. There were those with faces like cuckoos and others with faces like hawks and partridges. Some had mouths like partridges,[147] others were dressed in white garments. Some had faces like serpents, others mouths like porcupines. Some had terrible mouths, others one hundred faces. Some were attired in snakeskin. Others wore snakes as garments. There were large stomachs and thin bodies, as there were thin stomachs and large bodies. There were short necks and large ears, dressed in many kinds of snakeskin. Some wore garments made out of elephant skin, others were attired in black deerskin. O great king! Some had mouths on their shoulders, others had mouths on their stomachs. Some had mouths on their backs. Some had mouths on their cheeks. Some had mouths on their thighs. Many had faces on their flanks and others had mouths all over the body. There were other lords of *ganas*[148] who looked like worms and insects. There were those with mouths like carnivorous beasts. They had many arms and many heads. Some had arms like trees. Others had heads around their waists. Some had faces like the bodies of snakes, others dwelt on many creepers. Some covered their bodies with deerskin, others attired themselves in bark. There were many different kinds of garments, including those made of hides. There were headdresses and crowns. They had necks like conch shells and were extremely radiant. Some were diademed. Some had five tufts of hair on their heads. Some had stiff hair. There were those with three, two or seven tufts of hair on their heads. Some had tufts, others wore crowns. Some were shaved, others had matted hair. Some were adorned in colourful garments. Some others had hair on their faces. Some donned divine garlands and garments and always loved the prospect of fighting. Some were dark, with no flesh on their faces. Some had long backs, without stomachs. Some had long backs, others had short backs. Some had elongated stomachs. Some were long-armed, others were short-armed. Some were short in stature and were dwarfs. Some were hunchbacked. There were those with long thighs and ears and heads like those of elephants. There were noses like elephants and noses like tortoises. Others had noses like wolves. Some had long lips and long tongues. Others had terrible visages and their faces looked downwards. There were long teeth and short teeth. Some only had four teeth. O king! There were thousands who were as terrible as the kings of elephants. Some had proportionate bodies that blazed and were ornamented. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were those with tawny eyes, with conical ears and bent noses. There were broad teeth, large teeth, stout lips and tawny hair. There were many kinds of feet, lips and teeth. There were many kinds of hands and heads. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were many kinds of armour and many kinds of speech. Those lords were skilled in the languages of different countries and spoke to each other. Those great companions were seen to cheerfully descend there. They were long in the neck, long in the nails and long in the feet, heads and arms. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were tawny-eyed, blue in the throat and long in the ear. Some had stomachs like wolves. Others were like masses of collyrium. Others had white limbs, red necks and tawny eyes. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Many were dappled in colourful hues. There were ornaments that were like whisks, white, red and silver. These were of many different colours. Some were golden, or had the complexion of peacocks.

‘Let me recount the weapons that were grasped and wielded by the companions who came last. Listen. Some wielded nooses in their hands. Others had faces like asses, with gaping mouths. Some had large eyes, blue throats and arms like clubs. They had shataghnis and chakras in their hands. Others had clubs in their hands. There were bludgeons and catapults in their hands. Some had spears in their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While some had spears and swords in their hands, others held staffs in their hands. Those great-souled ones possessed many kinds of terrible weapons. They were swift in speed. They were immensely strong and immensely forceful. Such were the great companions who were seen at Kumara's consecration. They were cheerful and loved to fight. Nets of bells were fastened to their bodies and they were immensely energetic. O king! There were many other great companions like these. They presented themselves before the great-souled and illustrious Kartikeya. They were from heaven, the firmament and earth and some were like the wind. Instructed by the gods, those brave ones became the companions of Skanda. There were many others like them, in thousands, millions and tens of millions. They surrounded the great-souled one at his consecration.'

Chapter 1264(45)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Listen to the large number of matrikas who became Kumara’s followers. O brave one! I will recount the names of the ones who slay large numbers of the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the names of those illustrious matrikas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! O king! O Kouravya! Those fortunate ones pervade the three worlds and everything that is mobile and immobile[149] — Prabhavati, Vishalakshi, Palita, Gonasi, Shrimati, Bahula, Bahuputrika, Apsujata, Gopali, Brihadambalika, Jayavati, Malatika, Dhruvaratna, Bhayankari, Vasudama, Sudama, Vishoka, Nandini, Ekachuda, Mahachuda, Chakranemi, Uttejani, Jayatsena, Kamalakshya, Shobhana, Shatrunjaya, Krodhana, Shalabhi, Khari, Madhavi, Shubhravaktra, Tirthanemi, Gitapriya, Kalyani, Kadrula, Amitashana, Meghasvana, Bhogavati, Subhru, Kanakavati, Alatakshi, Viryavati, Vidyutjihva, Padmavati, Sunakshatra, Kandara, Bahuyojana, Santanika, Bahudama, Suprabha, Yashasvini, Nrityapriya, Shatolukhalamekhala, Shataghanta, Shatananda, Bhagananda, Bhamini, Vapushmati, Chandrashita, Bhadrakali, Samkarika, Nishkutika, Bhrama, Chatvaravasini, Sumangala, Svastimati, Vriddhikama, Jayapriya, Dhanada, Suprasada, Bhavada, Jaleshvari, Edi, Bhedi, Samedi, Vetalajanani, Kanduti, Kalika, Devamitra, Lambasi, Ketaki, Chitrasena, Bala, Kukkutika, Shankhanika, Jarjarika, Kundarika, Kokalika, Kandara, Shatodari, Utkrathini, Jarena, Mahavega, Kankana, Manojava, Kantakini, Praghasa, Putana, Khashaya, Churvyutirvama, Kroshanatha, Taditprabha, Mandodari, Tunda, Kotara, Meghavasini, Subhaga, Lambini, Lamba, Vasuchuda, Vikatthini, Urddhvavenidhara, Pingakshi, Lohamekhala, Prithuvaktra, Madhurika, Madhukumbha, Pakshalika, Manthanika, Jarayu, Jarjaranana, Khyata, Dahadaha, Dhamadhama, Khandakhanda, Pushana, Manikundala, Amocha, Lambopayodhara, Venuvinadhara, Pingakshi, Lohamekhala, Shasholukamukhi, Krishna, Kharajhangha, Mahajava, Shishumaramukhi, Shveta, Lohitakshi, Vibhishana, Jatalika, Kamachari, Dirghajihva, Balotkata, Kaledika, Vamanika, Mukuta, Lohitakshi, Mahakaya, Haripindi, Ekakshara, Sukusuma, Krishnakarni, Kshurakarni, Chatushkarni, Karnapravarana, Chatushpathaniketa, Gokarni, Mahishanana, Kharakarni, Mahakarni, Bherisvanamahasvana, Shankhakumbhasvana, Bhangada, Mahabala, Gana, Sugana, Bhiti, Kamada, Chatushpatharata, Bhutitirtha, Anyagochara, Pashuda, Vittada, Sukhada, Mahayasha, Poyada, Gomahishada, Suvishana, Pratishtha, Supratishtha, Rochamana, Surochana, Gokarni, Sukarni, Sasira, Stherika, Ekachakra, Megharava, Meghamala, Virochana. O king! O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were these and many other matrikas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Thousands of them followed Kartikeya, in many different forms. They had long nails and long teeth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their mouths were long. They were simple, sweet, youthful and ornamented. They were full of greatness and could assume any form at will. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some didn’t have any flesh on their bodies. Some were fair. Others possessed the complexion of gold. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Some were like dark clouds. Others were like smoke. Some immensely fortunate ones were red in hue, long in the hair and dressed in white garments. Some were in braids that were held up. Others were tawny-eyed and were attired in long girdles. Some had long stomachs and long ears. Others possessed drooping breasts. There were others who were coppery-eyed and green-eyed, with complexions like copper. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were the ones who granted boons. They could travel anywhere at will and were always cheerful. O scorcher of enemies! O bull among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some assumed the traits of Yama, Rudra, Soma, the immensely strong Kubera, Varuna, the great Indra, Agni, Vayu, Kumara and Brahma. They were like apsaras in their beauty and like the wind in speed. They were like cuckoos in their voice and like the lord of riches in prosperity. They were like Shakra in their valour and like the fire in their resplendence. They lived on trees and open plains. Others made their abodes at crossroads. Some lived in caves and cremation grounds. Others made their abodes in mountains and springs. They wore many kinds of ornaments. They were attired in diverse kinds of garlands and garments. They were dressed in many kinds of clothing. They spoke many different kinds of languages. There were large numbers of others, terrifying to enemies. On the instructions of Indra of the gods, they followed the great-souled one.

'O tiger among kings! The illustrious chastiser of Paka[150] gave Guha[151] a javelin, for the destruction of the enemies of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It possessed large bells and made a loud noise. It blazed and was sparkling in complexion. He also gave him a flag, with the complexion of the rising sun. Pashupati gave him a large army consisting of all kinds of beings who were fierce and wielded many kinds of weapons. They possessed austerities, valour and strength. Vishnu gave him a garland that ensured victory and increased one's powers. Uma gave him two garments that were as resplendent as the sun. Ganga gave him a supreme and celestial water pot that was created from amrita. In delight, Brihaspati gave Kumara a staff. Garuda gave him his beloved son, a peacock with colourful feathers. Aruna gave him a red-crested cock, which used its feet as weapons. King Varuna gave him a noose that possessed strength and valour. The lord Brahma gave him, devoted as he was to brahmanas, a black antelope skin. The creator of the worlds also granted him victory in battles. Having become the general of the large numbers of gods, Skanda blazed in radiance. He was like the rays of a second fire god. He was accompanied by the companions and the matrikas and the terrible army of the nairrtas.[152] The flags were decorated with bells. There were penants and weapons. There were drums, conch shells and larger drums. The army looked like the autumn sky, decorated with stars. That army of the gods and army of the bhutas advanced. They fiercely played on their musical instruments, the drums and the conch shells. A large sound was created by the tambourines, *jharjhara*s,[153] *krakacha*s,[154] trumpets made of cow horn, trumpets,[155] *gomukha*s[156] and smaller drums.[157] All the gods, together with Vasava, praised Kumara. The gods and gandharvas sang and large numbers of apsaras danced.

'Delighted, Mahasena[158] granted a boon to the gods. "In the battle, I will kill the enemies who desire to slay you." Having obtained this boon from that god, all the gods were delighted. The great-souled ones thought that their enemies had already been killed. All the large numbers of bhutas raised a roar of delight. Once they had been granted this boon by the great-souled one, this roar filled the three worlds. Mahasena advanced, surrounded by a large army, for the sake of the protection of the gods and the destruction of the daityas. O lord of men! Resolution, Victory, dharma, Success, Prosperity, Fortitude and Learning[159] advanced ahead of Mahasena's terrible army, who were armed with spears, clubs, maces, bludgeons, iron arrows, javelins and spikes in their hands. They roared like proud lions. The god Guha advanced.

'On seeing him, all the daityas, rakshasas and danavas became anxious and frightened. They fled in all the directions. With diverse weapons in their hands, the gods pursued them. On seeing this, Skanda, energetic and powerful, became enraged. The illustrious one repeatedly used the javelin as a weapon.[160] He displayed his energy, like a fire into which oblations have been poured. The infinintely energetic Skanda repeatedly used the javelin as a weapon. O great king! Like a blazing meteor, it fell down on the ground. Lightning and thunder also descended on the earth. O king! Everything was terrible, like at the time of destruction. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Whenever, Agni's son hurled the extremely terrible javelin, crores of javelins issued from it. The Indra among the daityas was named Taraka. He was extremely strong and brave. The illustrious lord used the weapon of the javelin to slay him[161] in the battle and also another ten thousand brave and powerful daityas who were around him. In the battle, he slew Mahisha and eight *padma*s who surrounded him.[162] He slew Tripada and ten million who surrounded him. The lord then killed Hradodara and ten billion who surrounded him. He also slew his followers, who had diverse weapons in their hands. O king! As they slaughtered the enemy, Kumara's followers roared loudly and filled the ten directions. O Indra among kings! The weapon of the javelin generated flames in every direction and consumed thousands of daityas. Others were killed because of Skanda's roars. Some enemies of the gods were killed by the flags. Some were frightened by the bells and fell down on the ground. Some were mangled by the weapons and fell down, deprived of their lives. There were many such who hated the gods, powerful assassins. The immensely strong and valiant Kartikeya slaughtered them in the encounter.

‘Bali’s son was the immensely strong daitya named Bana. He resorted to Mount Krouncha and fought against the large numbers of the gods. The intelligent Mahasena advanced against that enemy of the gods. Terrified of Kartikeya, he hid inside Krouncha. The illustrious Kartikeya was overcome by great rage. He shattered Krouncha with the javelin that had been given to him by Agni and because of the shriek, it was called Krouncha.[163] The mountain had shala and *sarala*[164] trees and the apes and elephants that lived on it were terrified. The birds rose up in terror and the serpents fell down. Large numbers of monkeys[165] and bears shrieked in fear and fled. The place echoed with the sounds of antelopes running away. When the mountain was shattered and fell down, *sharabhas*[166] and lions were overtaken by a calamity and suddenly ran away. But it was very beautiful. Vidyadharas who dwelt on the peak rose up into the air. The kinnaras were anxious, because they were struck by the descent of the javelin. Hundreds and thousands of daityas were crushed. They emerged from that blazing mountain, attired in excellent and colourful ornaments and garlands. Kumara’s followers proved to be superior and killed them in the battle. Pavaka’s son,[167] the destroyer of enemy heroes, shattered Krouncha with the javelin. The great-souled one divided himself into one, and also many forms. In the encounter, he repeatedly hurled the javelin from his hands. Thus, did Pavaka’s son repeatedly show his powers. He shattered Krouncha and killed hundreds of daityas.

‘Thus did the illustrious god slaughter the enemies of the gods. The gods were supremely delighted. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They sounded drums and blew on conch shells. The wives of the gods showered down excellent flowers. An auspicious breeze, mixed with celestial fragrances, began to blow. Some describe the lord as the eldest of all of Brahma’s sons, Sanatkumara.[168] Some describe him as the son of Maheshvara, others as the son of Vibhavasu. Others speak of him as the son of Uma, the Krittikas or Ganga. The immensely strong one is in one form, or two forms, or four forms. The god, who is the lord of yoga, is in hundreds and thousands of forms.

‘O king! I have thus told you about Kartikeya’s consecration. Now listen to the most sacred of tirthas along the Sarasvati. O great king! After the enemies of the gods had been killed by Kumara, it became foremost among the tirthas and was like heaven itself. Pavaka’s son gave the foremost of nairrtas separate dominions and riches in different parts of the three worlds. O great king! The illustrious destroyer of the lineage of the daityas was consecrated by the gods as the general of the celestials in that tirtha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Earlier, large number of gods had consecrated Varuna as the lord of the waters in that tirtha and it had been known by the name of Oujasa. Having bathed in that tirtha and having worshipped Skanda, the wielder of the plough donated gold, garments and ornaments to the brahmanas. Madhava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, spent a night there. The wielder of the plough worshipped that supreme of tirthas and touched the waters there. The best of the Madhava lineage was cheerful and delighted. I have told you everything that you had asked me, about how the illustrious Skanda was consecrated by the assembled gods.’

Chapter 1265(46)

Janamejaya said, ‘O brahmana! What I have heard from you is exceedingly wonderful. You have told me in detail about how Kumara was duly consecrated. O one rich in austerities! After hearing this, I know that I have been purified. My body hair has stood up and my mind is delighted. After hearing about Kumara’s consecration and the slaughter of the daityas, I am supremely happy. However, I am still curious. How was the lord of the waters consecrated by the gods and the asuras? O immensely wise one! O supreme one! You are skilled in narrating. Tell me about this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! Listen to this wonderful account, exactly as it happened in another kalpa.[169] During that original krita yuga, all the gods assembled, went to Varuna in the proper fashion and said, “Just as Shakra, lord of the gods, always protects us from fear, in that way, you become the lord of all the rivers. O god! Always dwell in the ocean, the abode of makaras. May the ocean, the lord of the rivers, be under your control. Together with Soma,[170] you will also wax and wane.” Varuna spoke to the gods, signifying his acceptance. All of them assembled and made Varuna, whose abode was the ocean, the lord of the waters, in accordance with the decreed rites. Having consecrated Varuna as the lord of the waters, the gods worshipped the lord of the waters and returned to their respective abodes. The immensely illustrious Varuna was thus consecrated by the gods. In accordance with what was required, he protected flowing water, oceans, rivers and lakes, like Shatakratu protects the gods. The immensely wise destroyer of Pralamba[171] touched the waters there and gave away many riches. He then went to Agnitirtha. The fire god was destroyed there and became invisible inside shami. O unblemished one! When the lord and light-giver of the worlds disappeared in this way, the great-souled gods presented themselves before the grandfather of all the worlds and said, “The illustrious Agni has disappeared and we do not know the reason. Let all the worlds not be destroyed. Please create fire again.” ’

Janamejaya asked, ‘Why was the illustrious Agni, the creator of all the worlds, destroyed? How did the gods discover him again? Please tell me everything about this.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘The powerful fire god was extremely frightened because of Bhrigu’s curse.[172] The illustrious one sought refuge inside a shami tree and could no longer be seen. When the fire god disappeared, all the gods, together with Vasava, were extremely unhappy. They searched for the fire that had vanished. Having reached Agnitirtha, they found Agni inside a shami tree. They found the fire god dwelling there. O tiger among men! With Brihaspati at the forefront, and with Vasava, all the gods were delighted at having found the fire god. They returned to the places that they had come from and he became the devourer of everything. O lord of the earth! Bhrigu was knowledgeable about the brahman and this happened because of his curse. Having bathed there, the intelligent one[173] went to Brahmayoni. In earlier times, the illustrious lord Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, had bathed there, with the gods, in accordance with the rites that are laid down for the gods. Having bathed there, he[174] gave away many riches. He then went to the tirtha named Koubera. O king! The lord Ailabila tormented himself through great austerities there and became the lord of riches. O king! O best of men! At that spot, many stores of riches manifested themselves before him.[175] The one with the plough presented himself at that tirtha. Having gone and bathed there, in the prescribed way, he gave away riches to the brahmanas. He saw the place known as Koubera, with the best of groves. In earlier times, the extremely great-souled King Kubera tormented himself through great austerities there and obtained a large number of boons. He became the lord of riches and became a friend of the infinitely energetic Rudra. He became a god and a guardian of the world there. He also obtained a son named Nalakubara. O mighty-armed one! The lord of riches swiftly obtained all these things there. Large numbers of Maruts assembled there and consecrated him. He also obtained a vehicle there, yoked to beautiful horses. This was the celestial vimana Pushpaka. He also got the riches of the gods. O king! Having bathed there, Bala gave away many kinds of gifts. Smearing himself with white sandalwood paste, Rama quickly went to the tirtha known as Badarapachana. It was inhabited by all kinds of living beings. Auspicious flowers and fruit are always found in the groves there.’

Chapter 1266(47)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Rama then went to the supreme tirtha of Badarapachana. Many ascetics and Siddhas roamed around there. Bharadvaja’s daughter was unmatched on earth in beauty. The maiden was firm in her vows. O lord! Her name was Sruchavati and the maiden observed brahmacharya. O king! She performed severe austerities and observed many rules. The beautiful one had made up her mind to obtain the king of the gods as her husband. O extender of the Kuru lineage! A long period of time passed. She continued to observe those terrible rituals, which are extremely difficult for women to observe. O lord of the earth! The illustrious chastiser of Paka was supremely delighted because of her conduct, austerities and devotion. The lord, the king of the thirty gods, arrived at the hermitage, assuming the form of the great-souled brahmana rishi, Vasishtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Vasishtha, supreme among ascetics and the performer of fierce austerities, she worshipped him. The fortunate one, knowledgeable about rules and sweet in speech said, “O illustrious one! O tiger among sages! O lord! What is your command? O one who is excellent in vows! I will give you everything, in accordance with my capacity. However, because I am devoted to Shakra, I will not be able to give you my hand. O one who is rich in austerities! My vows, rules and austerities are an attempt to satisfy Shakra, the lord of the three worlds.” Having been thus addressed, the illustrious god smiled and glanced at her. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He assured the one who knew about rules and said, “O one good in vows! I know that you are performing fierce austerities. O fortunate one! O one with a beautiful face! All the objectives that you have in your heart will be obtained. Everything can be obtained through austerities. Everything is established in austerities. O one with an auspicious face! All the celestial states of the gods can be obtained through austerities. Austerities are the source of great happiness. Those men, who perform great austerities and cast aside their bodies on earth, obtain the status of gods. O fortunate one! Listen to these words of mine! O immensely fortunate one! O one who is auspicious in vows. Cook these berries."[176] Having asked her to boil them, the illustrious slayer of Bala went away. Having asked the fortunate one, he went to an excellent spot that was not far from that hermitage, so as to chant and meditate there. O great king! This is famous in the three worlds as Indratirtha.

'The illustrious chastiser of Paka wished to test her. Hence, the lord of the gods asked her to boil those berries. O king! Cleansed of sin, the humble one tried to do this. She purified herself and offered kindling into a fire. O tiger among kings! The one who was great in her vows began to boil those berries. O bull among men! As she boiled them, a long period of time passed. The berries were not boiled and the day was over. The wood that she had stored was consumed by the fire. On seeing that the fire no longer had any wood, she began to burn her body. At first, the beautiful one thrust her feet into the fire. As her feet were repeatedly burnt, the unblemished one paid no attention to this. The unblemished one did not think about her feet being burnt. So as to please the maharshi, the lotus-eyed one bore this misery. Her face was cheerful. On witnessing her deed, the lord of the three worlds was pleased. He displayed his own self to the maiden. The best of the gods spoke these words to the maiden, who was extremely firm in her vows. "O fortunate one! I am pleased with your devotion, austerities and rituals. O beautiful one! Everything that you wish for will be obtained. O immensely fortunate one! You will cast aside this body and live with me in heaven. This supreme tirtha will be established in this world. O one with the beautiful brows! It will clean all sins and be known by the name of Badarapachana. It will be famous in the three worlds and will be praised by brahmarshis. O immensely fortunate one! O beautiful one! In ancient times, in this supreme tirtha, the *saptarshi*s had left Arundhati[177] and gone to the Himalayas. Those immensely fortunate ones, rigid in their vows, went there to collect fruits and roots for their sustenance. For the sake of their sustenance, they dwelt in the forests of the Himalayas and there was a drought that lasted for twelve years. Having constructed a hermitage for themselves, the ascetics dwelt there. The fortunate Arundhati always performed austerities. On seeing that Arundhati was observing fierce rituals, the three-eyed one, the granter of boons, the immensely illustrious Mahadeva, was extremely pleased. Assuming the form of a brahmana, he arrived there. The god approached her and said, ‘O fortunate one! I am looking for alms.’ The beautiful one replied to the brahmana, ‘O brahmana! Our store of food has been exhausted. Eat these berries.’ Mahadeva said, ‘O one who is good in vows! Cook these berries.’ Having been thus addressed, wishing to please the brahmana, she began to cook those berries. The illustrious one offered kindling in the fire and placed the berries on that. She listened to divine, beautiful and sacred accounts.[178] Those twelve years of terrible drought passed. She was without food and was cooking, listening to those auspicious accounts. That extremely terrible period passed, as if it was a single day. Having obtained fruits, the sages returned from the mountain. The illustrious one[179] was pleased with Arundhati and spoke to her. ‘O one who knows about dharma! Approach the rishis, as you used to do earlier. O one who knows about dharma! I am pleased with your austerities and your rituals.’ The illustrious Hara then showed himself in his own form. He spoke to them[180] about the greatness of her conduct. ‘You have earned merit from the austerities you have performed on the slopes of the Himalayas. O brahmanas! But it is my view that what she has earned through her austerities is equal to that. This ascetic has tormented herself through extremely difficult austerities. While fasting, she has spent twelve years in cooking.’ The illustrious one then spoke to Arundhati again. ‘O fortunate one! Ask for the boon that is in your heart.’ In the presence of the saptarshis, the one with the large and coppery eyes addressed the god. ‘O illustrious one! If you are pleased with me, let this spot become an excellent tirtha. Let it be loved by the siddhas and the devarshis and let it be known by the name of Badarapachana. O god! O lord of the gods! If a person purifies himself[181] and fasts here for three days, let him obtain the fruits that are obtained from fasting for twelve years.’ Hara agreed to this and returned to heaven. On seeing this, and on seeing the virtuous Arundhati, who was capable of withstanding hunger and thirst and was yet not exhausted or pale, the rishis were astounded. Thus did the pure Arundhati attain supreme success. O immensely fortunate one! O one who is good in vows! You have done the same for my sake. O fortunate one! Your vows have been dedicated to me. Therefore, pleased with your observance of rules, I will grant you this special boon today. O fortunate one! Ask for a special and supreme boon, which is superior to the boon granted to Arundhati by the great-souled one. Through his favours and because of your energy, in accordance with the prescribed rites, I will grant you another boon. Whoever controls himself[182] and spends a night in this tirtha and bathes here, will, after casting aside his body, obtain worlds that are extremely difficult to get.” Having spoken to Sruchavati, the thousand-eyed god, the illustrious and powerful one, returned again to heaven. O king! O foremost among the Bharata lienage! When the wielder of the vajra had left, celestial flowers, with divine fragrances, showered down there. In every direction, drums sounded with a loud roar. O lord of the earth! A breeze, laced with auspicious scents, began to blow. Having cast aside her body, the sacred one became Indra’s wife. She obtained him through her fierce austerities and pleasured with the undecaying one.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘Who was the illustrious mother of that beautiful one? How was she reared? O brahmana! I wish to hear this. My curiousity is supreme.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘On seeing the large-eyed apsara Gritachi, the seed of the great-souled brahmana rishi, Bharadvaja, fell. The one who was supreme among those who meditate, picked that seed up in his hand. It was kept in a cup made of leaves and the beautiful one was born from this.[183] All her birth rites were performed by the one who was rich in austerities. The great sage, Bharadvaja, also named her. In the presence of a large number of rishis, the great-souled one gave her the name of Sruchavati. Leaving her in that hermitage, he returned to the slopes of the Himalayas. The immensely generous one[184] bathed there and gave away riches to the great brahmanas. Extremely controlled in his soul, the foremost of the Vrishni lineage then went to Shakra’s tritha.’

Chapter 1267(48)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The strong and foremost one among the Yadu lineage then went to Indratirtha. In accordance with the prescribed rites, having given riches and jewels to the brahmanas, he bathed there. The king of the immortals had performed a hundred horse sacrifices there. The lord of the gods had also given a large quantity of riches to Brihaspati. As instructed by those who are learned about the Vedas, he had incessantly performed sacrifices there and given away all the indicated gifts. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! The immensely radiant one had performed one hundred sacrifices. Having performed them in the prescribed way, he had become famous as Shatakratu.[185] That sacred, auspicious and eternal tirtha is named after him. It is famous as Indratirtha and cleanses from all sins. The one with the club as his weapon bathed there, in accordance with the prescribed rites. He honoured the brahmanas and gave them food, drink and garments.

‘He then went to the auspicious and supreme tirtha known as Ramatirtha. The immensely fortunate Bhargava Rama,[186] the extremely great ascetic, subjugated the earth, slaying all the bulls among the kshatriyas. With his preceptor Kashyapa, supreme among sages, at the forefront, he performed a *vajapeya*[187] and one hundred horse sacrifices there. As a gift, he gave him[188] the entire earth, with all its oceans. O Janamejaya! Rama[189] gave riches to the brahmanas there. He bathed there and duly honoured the brahmanas. In that sacred tirtha in that auspicious land, the fair-complexioned one gave away riches and honoured the sages.

‘He then went to Yamunatirtha. O lord of the earth! Fair in his complexion, the immensely fortunate Varuna, Aditi’s son, had performed a rajasuya sacrifice there. Varuna, the slayer of enemy heroes, had performed that supreme sacrifice there, after defeating men and the gods in a battle. While that supreme sacrifice was going on, a battle commenced between the gods and the danavas and this led to destruction in the three worlds. O Janamejaya! After that excellent rajasuya sacrifice was over, there was a great and terrible clash among the kshatriyas. Madhava Rama, with the plough as his weapon, bathed in that supreme tirtha and gave away riches to the brahmanas. The delighted brahmanas praised Vanamali.[190]

'The lotus-eyed one then went to Adityatirtha. O supreme among kings! The illustrious and radiant sun god performed a sacrifice there and obtained power and lordship over the stellar bodies. O lord of the earth! All the gods, together with Vasava, the Vishvadevas and the Maruts, the gandharvas and the apsaras, Dvaipayana, Shuka, Madhusudana Krishna, the yakshas, the rakshasas and the pishachas are always there, on the banks of that river. O scorcher of enemies! That apart, many thousands of others who are successful in yoga are always present, in the sacred and auspicious tirtha on the Sarasvati. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, having slain the asuras Madhu and Kaitabha, Vishnu had bathed in that supreme and excellent tirtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dvaipayana, with dharma in his soul, had also bathed there and had obtained supreme success in yoga, accomplishing the ultimate objective. The great ascetics, rishis powerful in yoga, Asita and Devala, had resorted to supreme yoga there.'

Chapter 1268(49)

Vaishampayana said, ‘In earlier times, Asita-Devala dwelt there.[191] He was a store of austerities and had dharma in his souls. He resorted to the dharma of a householder. He was pure and controlled and always devoted to dharma. The great ascetic never punished anyone. He treated all beings equally, in his deeds, thoughts and speech. O great king! He never resorted to anger and treated the pleasant and the unpleasant as equal. The great ascetic treated gold and stones equally. He honoured gods, guests and brahmanas. He was always devoted to brahmacharya and always devoted to dharma. O great king! Once, while that intelligent sage was controlled and engaged in *yoga* in that tirtha, a mendicant named Jaigishavya came to him. O king! The immensely radiant one began to dwell in Devala’s hermitage. O great king! Always devoted to yoga, the great ascetic[192] attained success there. While the great sage Jaigishavya dwelt there, Devala always looked towards his needs and never deviated from dharma. O great king! They spent a long period of time in this way. There was an occasion when Devala did not see the sage Jaigishavya. O Janamejaya! However, when it was time to take food, the intelligent mendicant, learned in dharma, presented himself before Devala. On seeing the great sage appear in the form of a mendicant, he honoured him greatly and was full of great delight. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Devala honoured him to the best of his capacity, controlling himself in many ways and following the rites indicated by the rishis. O king! However, on one occasion, on seeing the immensely radiant sage, a grave thought arose in the mind of the great-souled Devala. “I have spent a long time, honouring him in many ways. However, this idle mendicant never speaks to me.” Having thought this, Devala travelled through the sky and went to the great ocean, carrying a handsome pot with him. The one with dharma in his soul went to the ocean, the lord of the rivers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having gone there, he found that Jaigishavya had reached before him. Seeing this, the lord Asita was supremely astounded. He thought, “How could the mendicant have arrived at the ocean and bathed here?”[193] Maharshi Asita thought in this way. Having bathed in the ocean in accordance with the rites and purifying himself, he chanted. O Janamejaya! The handsome one chanted, performed the daily rituals and returned to the hermitage, filling the pot with water. As the sage entered his hermitage, he saw Jaigishavya seated in the hermitage. Jaigishavya never spoke a word. The immensely ascetic one lived in that hermitage, as if he was a piece of wood. He was like an ocean. He[194] had seen him bathe in the waters of the ocean and now saw him enter the hermitage before him. O king! On seeing the powers of the ascetic Jaigishavya, immersed in yoga, the intelligent Asita-Devala began to think. O Indra among kings! The supreme among sages reflected. “How could I see him in the ocean and again in the hermitage?” O lord of the earth! The sage, learned in the use of mantras, thought in this way and then rose up into the sky from his hermitage. Devala wished to find out who the mendicant Jaigishavya was.

‘As he travelled through the sky, he saw many controlled siddhas. He saw that those siddhas were worshipping Jaigishavya. Asita made efforts to be firm in his vows and was enraged at this. Devala next saw Jaigishavya ascend to heaven. He next saw him roaming around in the world of the ancestors. From the world of the ancestors, he saw him travel to Yama’s world. From Yama’s world, he rose to Soma’s world. He saw the great sage Jaigishavya travel around in this way, ascending to the sacred worlds of those who perform special sacrifices. He next arose to the world of those who perform agnihotra sacrifices and worlds of ascetics who perform *darsha* and *pournamasa* sacrifices.[195] The intelligent one saw him in the worlds meant for those who sacrifice with animals and roaming around in the unblemished worlds revered by the gods. He went to the regions meant for ascetics who perform many *chaturmasya* sacrifices,[196] those who perform *agnishtoma* sacrifices and also ascetics who perform *agnishtuta* sacrifices. Devala saw him reach all those regions. He saw him in the worlds meant for the immensely wise ones who perform vajapeya, the best of sacrifices, and give away a lot of gold. Devala also saw Jaigishavya in the worlds meant for the performers of *pundarika* and rajasuya sacrifices. He saw him in the worlds meant for the best of men who perform the best of sacrifices, ashvamedha and *naramedha*.[197] Devala saw Jaigishavya in the worlds meant for those who sacrifice everything that is difficult to obtain and for those who perform *soutramani* sacrifices.[198] O king! There are those who perform *dvadashaha*[199] and diverse other sacrifices. Devala saw Jaigishavya in the worlds meant for them. Asita next saw him attain the worlds of Mitra, Varuna, Adityas, the Rudras, the Vasus and Brihaspati's region. Asita saw him transcend all these worlds and go to Goloka[200] and the world meant for those who know about the brahman. Asita saw Jaigishavya go to all these worlds. Through his energy, he rose up, beyond the three worlds and was seen to travel to the worlds meant for those who are devoted to their husbands. O scorcher of enemies! However, then Asita could no longer see Jaigishavya, the supreme sage. Using his powers of yoga, he disappeared.

'The immensely fortunate Devala began to think about Jaigishavya's powers, the discipline of his vows and his unmatched success in the use of yoga. Asita controlled himself. He joined his hands in salutation and asked the supreme ones who were in the worlds of the siddhas and the revered ones who knew about the brahman. "I do not see Jaigishavya, the greatly energetic one. I wish to hear about him. My curiousity is great." The siddhas replied, "O Devala! O one who is firm in vows! Listen to the truth. Jaigishavya has gone to the eternal and undecaying world of the brahman. On hearing the words of the siddhas, who are knowledgeable about the brahman, Asita-Devala also tried to rise up, but swiftly fell down. At this, the siddhas again spoke to Devala. "O Devala! You cannot go where the one who is rich in austerities has gone. The brahmana Jaigishavya has attained the abode of the brahman." On hearing the words of the siddhas, Devala descended from those worlds, one after the other. Like an insect, he descended to his own sacred hermitage. As he entered, Devala saw Jaigishavya there. Devala, devoted to dharma, comprehended the powers of Jaigishavya, who was immersed in yoga.

'Having understood, Devala spoke to the great-souled Jaigishavya. O king! Bowing in humility, he approached the great sage. "O illustrious one! I wish to resort to the dharma that brings *moksha*."[201] On hearing these words, he[202] instructed him about the rites of supreme yoga and about what the sacred texts say about what should be done and what should not be done. On seeing that he[203] had made up his mind about *sannyasa*,[204] the great ascetic told him about all the rites and the ordained tasks. On seeing that he had made up his mind about sannyasa, all the beings and the ancestors started to lament. “Who will henceforth feed us?” Having made up his mind to seek moksha, Devala heard the piteous lamentations of the beings in the ten directions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, the sacred fruits and roots and the flowers and the herbs began to lament, in their thousands. “The evil-minded and inferior Devala will sever us again. He has offered to save all the beings, but does not know what he is doing.”[205] The supreme among sages used his intelligence to reflect on this again. “Which is superior, moksha or the dharma of a householder?” O supreme among kings! Having thought about this, Devala made up his mind. He abandonded the dharma of a householder and adopted the dharma of moksha. Having thought in this way, Devala made up his mind. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Resorting to supreme yoga, he obtained supreme success. With Brihaspati at the forefront, the gods approached Jaigishavya and praised the ascetic’s austerities. Narada, supreme among rishis, addressed the gods then. “Since he has astounded Asita, there are no austerities left in Jaigishavya.”[206] The residents of heaven replied to the resolute one.[207] “Do not speak about the great sage Jaigishavya in this way.” The great-souled wielder of the plough bathed there and gave away riches to the brahmanas. Having performed that supreme act of dharma, he then went to Soma’s great tirtha.’

Chapter 1269(50)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The lord of the stars performed a rajasuya sacrifice there. This was after the great Tarakamaya battle[208] had been fought. Having bathed there, the controlled Bala gave away gifts. The one with dharma in his soul then went to the tirtha of the sage Sarasvata. In ancient times, when a drought had lasted for twelve years, the sage Sarasvata, had taught the Vedas to many supreme brahmanas.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘In ancient times, during the twelve years of drought, why did the sage Sarasvata, rich in austerities, teach the Vedas?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O great king! In earlier times, there was an intelligent sage who was a great ascetic. He was known by the name of Dadhicha. He was a *brahmachari* and had control over his senses. Because of his austerities, the lord Shakra was always frightened.[209] But he could not tempt him by offering him many kinds of fruits.[210] To tempt him, the chastiser of Paka sent a celestial, sacred and beautiful apsara named Alambusa. O great king! The great-souled one was worshipping the gods on the banks of the Sarasvati and the beautiful one approached him there. Though the rishi was controlled in his senses, on seeing her beautiful form, his seed fell down into the Sarasvati and the river held it. O bull among men! On seeing the seed, the great river held it inside her, hoping that a son might be born in her womb. When it was time, the best of rivers gave birth to a son. O lord! With the son, she went to the rishi. The river saw that the supreme sage was in an assemblage of rishis. O Indra among kings! Handing over the son, she said, “O brahmarshi! This is your son. Out of my devotion towards you, I have borne him. When you saw Alambusa, your seed fell down into the water. O brahmarshi! Out of my devotion towards you, I bore it inside me. I had decided that your energy should not be destroyed. I am giving you this unblemished son. Accept him.” Having been thus addressed, he was supremely delighted and accepted him. Uttering mantras, the supreme among brahmanas inhaled the fragrance of his head. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! He embraced him for a long time. Delighted, the great sage granted Sarasvati a boon. “O immensely fortunate one! When your waters are offered as oblations, the Vishvadevas, the ancestors and large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras will be satisfied.” Having said this, he praised the great river in these words. He was happy and supremely delighted. O king! Listen to this. “O immensely fortunate one! In earlier times, you have arisen from Brahma’s lake. O best of rivers! Sages, rigid in their vows, know about you. O one who is beautiful to behold! You have always done that which brings me pleasure. O one with a beautiful complexion! This great son of yours will be known by the name of Sarasvata. This son of yours will be known by that name and will be the creator of worlds. He will be known by the name of Sarasvata and will be a great ascetic. O immensely fortunate one! When there is a drought for twelve years, he will teach the Vedas to bulls among the brahmanas. O beautiful one! Your waters will always be sacred. You will be the most sacred one. O immensely fortunate one! O Sarasvati! This is what you will obtain through my favours.” The great river was thus praised and obtained that boon. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Taking the son with her, she cheerfully went away.

‘At this time, there was a conflict between the gods and the danavas. In search of weapons, Shakra travelled around the three worlds. The illustrious Shakra could not find a weapon through which he could slay the enemies of the gods. Shakra told the gods, “I am incapable of slaying the great asuras who are the enemies of the thirty gods, without the bones of Dadhicha.” The supreme gods then went to the best of rishis and said, “O Dadhicha! Give us the bones in your body, so that we can slay our enemies.” Having been asked by the gods, the best of rishis did not hesitate. He carefully gave up his body and gave them the bones. Having performed an act that was beneficial to the gods, he obtained the eternal worlds. Shakra was delighted. He fashioned many celestial weapons with those bones—vajras, chakras, clubs and large staffs. Prajapati’s son was Bhrigu, the creator of worlds, and that supreme rishi had obtained him[211] through his fierce austerities. He was large and energetic and had been created with the essence of the worlds. The lord[212] was famous and was as tall as the

Himalayas, the greatest of mountains. The chastiser of Paka had always been anxious on account of his energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The vajra was fashioned from that illustrious one[213] and invoked with mantras. It was created with great anger and possessed the energy of the brahman. With this, he[214] slaughtered ninety-nine brave ones among the daityas and the danavas.

‘A long and fearful period passed since that time. O king! There was a drought that lasted for twelve years.[215] O king! Because of the twelve years of drought, the maharshis could not sustain themselves. Hungry, they fled in all the directions. On seeing that they were running away in different directions, the sage Sarasvata also made up his mind to leave. However, Sarasvati spoke to him. “O son! You need not go away. I will always give you food. I will always give you large fish. Stay here.” O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, he remained there and offered oblations to the ancestors and the gods. He always sustained himself through this food and sustained the Vedas. When the period of drought was over, the maharshis wished to study again and asked each other. When they were afflicted by hunger, the proper knowledge of the Vedas had been destroyed. O Indra among kings! There was not a single one among them who could understand them. Some of those rishis came upon Sarasvata, supreme among rishis, when he had controlled his soul and was engaged in studying. They went to the others and told them about the unmatched Sarasvata, who was like an immortal. Alone in a solitary spot, he was studying. O king! All the maharshis arrived at that spot. The assembled ones spoke to Sarasvata, best among sages. They said, “Teach us.” The sage replied, “Become my disciples in the ordained way.” At this, the large number of rishis said, “O son! You are only a child.” He replied to the sages, “I must act so that my dharma is not diminished. Those who teach without following dharma and those who learn without following dharma are quickly destroyed and come to hate each other. Rishis cannot claim to follow dharma on the basis of grey hair, riches or the number of relatives. One who can teach is alone great.” Having heard his words, the sages duly[216] learnt the Vedas from him and began to practise dharma again. Sixty thousand sages became his disciples. Those brahmana rishis desired to study under Sarasvata. Though he was yet a child, each of those brahmana rishis brought a fistful of *darbha* grass to him,[217] offered him a seat and obeyed him. Rohini's immensely strong son, Keshava's elder brother, gave away riches there. Joyfully, and in due order, he then went to another great and famous tirtha, where an aged maiden had once lived.'

Chapter 1270(51)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O illustrious one! In earlier times, why did the maiden dwell there, engaging in austerities? Why did she torment herself through austerities? What was her vow? O brahmana! I have heard supreme accounts of difficult deeds from you. Tell me everything. Why was she engaged in austerities?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘There was an immensely illustrious rishi. He was immensely energetic and his name was Kuni-Gargya. O king! His austerities were great and in austerities, he was supreme among ascetics. Through the powers of his mind, the lord generated a fair-browed daughter. On seeing her, the immensely illustrious Kuni-Gargya was extremely happy. O king! He gave up his body and went to heaven. The fortunate and fair-browed one had eyes like a lotus. The unblemished one undertook great hardships and performed fierce austerities. She fasted and worshipped and satisfied the ancestors and the gods. O king! While she was engaged in these terrible austerities, a long period of time elapsed. Her father had desired that she should be given away to a husband. However, she could not see a husband who was equal to her own self. She oppressed her mind and her body through those fierce austerities. In that deserted forest, she was devoted to worshipping the ancestors and the gods. O Indra among kings! Though she afflicted herself through austerities and was also overcome by old age, she did not regard herself to be exhausted. Finally, she was no longer capable of taking even a single step on her own. Therefore, she resolved to depart to the world hereafter.

‘On seeing that she wished to free herself of her body, Narada told her, “O unblemished one! Which worlds can a maiden who has not been married go to? O one who is great in vows! This is what we have heard in the world of the gods. Though you have performed supreme austerities, you have not obtained any worlds for yourself.” On hearing his words, she spoke in an assembly of rishis. “O supreme ones! I will give half of my austerities to anyone who accepts my hand.” Hearing this, a rishi named Sringavan, Galava’s son, accepted her hand. He proposed a pledge and told her, “O beautiful one! I will accept your hand with this pledge. You will live with me for only one night.” Accepting this pledge, she gave him her hand. Galava’s son accepted her hand and married her. O king! That night, she became young and as beautiful as a goddess. She was adorned in celestial ornaments and garments and adorned with divine garlands and unguents. On seeing her blazing beauty, Galava’s son was delighted. He spent a night with her. In the morning, she told him, “O brahmana! O supreme among ascetics! The pledge that I had taken with you is over. O fortunate one! Since that has been accomplished, may you be at peace. I will leave.” Obtaining his permission, she again said, “Anyone who controls himself and spends a night at this tirtha, offering oblations to the gods, will obtain the fruits that are obtained from observing brahmacharya for sixty-four years.” Having said this, the virtuous one gave up her body and went to heaven. The rishi was distressed and thought of her beauty. Because of the agreement, though he found it difficult, he accepted half of her austerities. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! He was miserable because of the power of her beauty. He cast off his own body and followed her. This is the great account about the conduct of the aged maiden. While the one with the plough as his weapon was there, he heard about Shalya’s death. O scorcher of enemies! He gave away gifts to the brahmanas there. He sorrowed that Shalya had been killed by the Pandavas in the battle. Madhava Rama then emerged through the gates of Samantapanchaka and asked the large number of rishis about what had transpired in Kurukshetra. O lord! Asked by the lion among the Yadu lineage, those great-souled ones told him everyting that had transpired in Kurukshetra, exactly as it had occurred.’

Chapter 1271(52)

‘The rishis said, “O Rama! Samantapanchaka has been spoken of as Prajapati’s eternal northern altar. In earlier times, the residents of heaven, the granters of great boons, performed a great sacrifice there. The intelligent and great-souled Kuru, best among royal sages and infinite in his energy, cheerfully cultivated this field. That is the reason this is known as Kurukshetra.”[218]

‘Rama asked, “Why did the great-souled Kuru cultivate this field? O stores of austerities! I wish to hear this. Tell me.”

‘The rishis replied, “O Rama! In earlier times, Kuru was always engaged in tilling this. On seeing this, Shakra came from heaven and asked him the reason. ‘O king! Why are you making this supreme effort? O rajarshi! What is the reason for you to till this field?’ Kuru said, ‘O Shatakratu! Men who die in this field will go to the worlds reserved for those with meritorious deeds. They will be cleansed of their sins.’ Laughing at this, the lord Shakra returned to heaven. The rajarshi was not distressed and continued to plough the earth. Shatakratu repeatedly came to him and repeatedly received the same reply. Disgusted, he repeatedly went away. The king continued to till the earth with great perseverance. Shakra told the other gods what the rajarshi was up to. On hearing this, the gods spoke these words to the one with one thousand eyes. ‘O Shakra! If you can, grant the rajarshi a boon and stop him. If men can die here and go to heaven, without dutifully giving us a share in the sacrifices, we will have no existence left.’ Shakra came to the rajarshi and told him, ‘Do not make any more efforts. Listen to my words. O king! Men who fast here and give up their bodies, with all their senses intact, or those who are killed in battle, will certainly go to heaven. O Indra among kings! O immensely intelligent one! They will enjoy heaven.’ King Kuru agreed to the words that Shakra had spoken. Having taken his leave and delighted in his mind, the slayer of Bala swiftly returned to heaven. O best among the Yadu lineage! In ancient times, this was thus ploughed by the rajarshi. Shakra promised great merits to those who give up their lives here. Shakra, the lord of the gods, himself composed a song about Kurukshetra and sang it. O one with the plough as his weapon! Listen to this. 'The dust of Kurukshetra, when blown away by the wind, will convey even those who perform wicked deeds to the supreme objective.' Bulls among the gods, supreme among the brahmanas, Nriga[219] and the best among kings, lions among men, have performed extremely expensive sacrifices here. They have given up their bodies and attained excellent ends. The region between Tarantuka and Arantuka, between Rama's lakes and Machakruka, is Kurukshetra Samantapanchaka.[220] It is known as Prajapati's northern altar. It is sacred, extremely auspicious and is revered by the residents of heaven. It possesses all the qualities of heaven. Therefore, all the lords of the earth who are slain here obtain the ends earmarked for great-souled ones." '

Chapter 1272(53)

Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! Having seen Kurukshetrra and having given away gifts, Satvata went to an extremely great and divine hermitage. It had groves of *madhuka* and mango trees and also plakshas and *nyagrodha*s. It had sacred *bilva*s, jackfruit and *arjuna*s.[221] On seeing that supreme place, marked with all the auspicious signs, the foremost among the Yadava lineage asked all the rishis whom that excellent hermitage belonged to. O king! All those great-souled ones told the one with the plough as his weapon, "O Rama! Listen to whom this hermitage belonged to in earlier times. In earlier times, the god Vishnu observed supreme austerities here. It is here that he performed all the eternal sacrifices, according to the prescribed rites. It was here that the brahmana lady observed brahmacharya from her youth and was immersed in yoga. Having attained success through her austerities, the ascetic lady went to heaven. O king! The great-souled Shandilya obtained a beautiful daughter. She was virtuous and firm in her vows. She always followed brahmacharya. Having achieved supreme yoga, she went to the excellent place of heaven. In this hermitage, the auspicious one obtained the fruits that can be got through the performance of a horse sacrifice. The immensely fortunate one was controlled in her soul. She was revered and went to heaven." The bull among the Yadu lineage went to the sacred hermitage and saw it. Having greeted the rishis who dwelt along the slopes of the Himalayas, Achyuta began to climb that mountain.

'The powerful one, with the palm tree on his banner, had only advanced a short distance along that mountain. He then saw a supreme and sacred tirtha and was overcome by great wonder. Bala saw the powers of the Sarasvati at Plakshaprasravana. He reached the supreme and excellent tirtha of Karapachana. The immensely strong wielder of the plough gave away gifts there. He bathed in the cool waters and, extremely happy, went to the hermitage of Mitra and Varuna. This was the region of Karapachana, along the Yamuna. It was the place where Indra, Agni and Aryama had obtained great happiness. The one with dharma in his soul went and bathed there. He obtained supreme satisfaction. The immensely strong bull among the Yadu lineage seated himself with the rishis and the siddhas and listened to their sacred accounts.

‘While Rama was seated among them at that spot, the illustrious rishi Narada arrived there. He had matted hair. The great ascetic was attired in garments with a golden complexion. O king! He had a golden staff and a water pot in his hands. The lute, the melodious veena that made a pleasant noise, was in his hands.[222] He was skilled in dancing and singing and was worshipped by the gods and the brahmanas. However, he was also one who provoked quarrels and always loved dissension.[223] He came to the spot where the handsome Rama was. All of them stood up and honoured the one who was careful in his vows. He[224] asked the devarshi about what had happened to the Kurus. O king! Narada knew about all forms of dharma and told him everything as it had occurred and about the destruction of the Kurus. Rohini’s son was distressed and asked Narada, “How are the kshatriyas? How are the kings? O one who is rich in austerities! I have heard everything about this earlier. But I wish to hear it in detail. I am curious.”

‘Narada replied, “Bhishma, Drona and the lord of Sindhu have been killed earlier. Vaikartana Karna and his maharatha sons have been slain. O Rohini’s son! So have Bhurishrava and the valiant king of Madra. So have many other extremely strong ones. For the sake of pleasing the Kouravas, they have given up their lives. The kings and princes refused to retreat in the battle. O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! Listen to the ones who have not been killed. Dhritarashtra’s powerful son, Kripa, the valiant Bhoja and the brave Ashvatthama are left. But with the soldiers routed, they have fled in different directions. When the soldiers were slain and Kripa and the others ran away, Duryodhana was overcome by great grief and has entered the lake Dvaipayana. Dhritarashtra’s son is lying down there, having turned the waters to stone. O Rama! The Pandavas and Krishna approached and, from every direction, have tormented the powerful one with harsh and eloquent words. The brave one has arisen and has grasped a mighty club. O Rama! The extremely terrible encounter with Bhima is about to commence and will take place today. O Madhava! If you are curious, go there without any delay. If you so desire, witness that extremely terrible encounter between your two disciples." '

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing Narada's words, he[225] honoured the bulls among the brahmanas and took their leave. He asked all those who had come with him to leave. He requested his attendants to return to Dvaraka. He descended from the best of mountains and from the sacred Plakshaprasravana. Having heard about the great fruits that could be obtained from that tirtha, Rama was delighted. In the presence of the brahmanas, Achyuta also sang a shloka. "Where can one obtain delight like the one obtained from dwelling along the Sarasvati? Where can one obtain qualities like those obtained from dwelling along the Sarasvati? Having approached Sarasvati, people go to heaven. The river Sarasvati should always be remembered. Sarasvati is the most sacred of rivers. Sarasvati always bestows happiness on the worlds. Even those who have performed extremely wicked deeds approach Sarasvati and do not have to sorrow, in this world or in the next." In delight, he repeatedly glanced towards Sarasvati. The scorcher of enemies then ascended an excellent chariot to which horses had been yoked. The bull among the Yadu lineage ascended the chariot that could travel fast. He wished to witness the encounter that was going to take place between his two disciples.'

SECTION SEVENTY-SEVEN

GADA YUDDHA PARVA

This parva has 546 shlokas and eleven chapters.

Chapter 1273(54): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1274(55): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1275(56): 67 shlokas

Chapter 1276(57): 59 shlokas

Chapter 1277(58): 24 shlokas

Chapter 1278(59): 44 shlokas

Chapter 1279(60): 65 shlokas

Chapter 1280(61): 40 shlokas

Chapter 1281(62): 73 shlokas

Chapter 1282(63): 43 shlokas

Chapter 1283(64): 43 shlokas

> Gada *means a club and* yuddha *means a fight or encounter. This section is named after Bhima and Duryodhana's encounter with the clubs, where, Bhima strikes Duryodhana unfairly and brings him down. Krishna goes to Hastinapura and pacifies Dhritarashtra and Gandhari.*

Chapter 1273(54)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Thus did that terrible encounter take place. In misery, King Dhritarashtra spoke these words. “Rama[1] reached the spot where the duel with the clubs was to take place. O Sanjaya! On seeing this, how did my son fight back against Bhima?”

‘Sanjaya said, “Seeing that Rama was present, your son, the mighty-armed and valiant Duryodhana, who desired to fight, was delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing the wielder of the plough, the king[2] stood up, filled with great delight. He[3] told Yudhishthira, ‘O lord of the earth! I will swiftly go to Samantapanchaka. In the world of the gods, it is known as Prajapati’s northern sacrificial altar. It is eternal and the most sacred spot in the three worlds. It is certain that someone who is killed there will attain heaven.’[4] O great king! Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, agreed to these words. The brave lord[5] advanced in the direction of Samantapanchaka. At this, King Duryodhana also picked up a gigantic club. The immensely radiant and intolerant one advanced on foot, with the Pandavas. As he advanced on foot, armoured and mailed, and with the club in his hand, the gods in the firmament uttered words of praise and honoured him. On seeing this, the men who were bards were also filled with joy. Surrounded by the Pandavas, the king of the Kurus, your son, advanced—adopting the gait of a crazy king of elephants. Conch shells sounded and there was the great roar of drums. The brave ones roared like lions and filled all the directions. With your son, they went to the western direction that had been appointed. Having gone there, they spread themselves out in all the directions. This was a supreme tirtha on the southern banks of the Sarasvati. At that spot, the ground was not sandy and they chose this for the encounter.

‘ “Bhima was armoured and grasped an extremely thick club. O great king! In that resplendent form, he looked like Garuda. O king! For the encounter, your son fixed a helmet and was clad in golden armour. He was as dazzling as a golden mountain. The brave Bhima and Duryodhana were both attired in armour. In that encounter, they were as resplendent as angry elephants. Those two brothers, bulls among men, were stationed in that field of battle. O great king! They were as beautiful as the rising moon and the sun. They glanced towards each other, like two angry and giant elephants. O king! Wishing to kill each other, they burnt each other down with their eyes. O king! Delighted, Kourava[6] grasped the club. O king! His eyes were red with anger. He sighed and licked the corners of his mouth. The valiant King Duryodhana also grasped a club. He glanced towards Bhimasena, like an elephant towards another elephant. The valiant Bhima also picked up one[7] that possessed the essence of stone and challenged the king, like a lion against another lion in the forest. Duryodhana and Vrikodara raised the clubs in their hands. In that encounter, they looked like mountains with peaks. Both of them were extremely angry and were terrible in their valour. In battling with clubs, both of them were the disciples of Rohini’s intelligent son. They were the equals of each other in their deeds, like Yama and Vasava. In their deeds, they were the equals of the immensely strong Varuna. O great king! As warriors, they were the equals of Madhu and Kaitabha.[8] In their deeds in a battle, they were the equals of Sunda and Upansunda.[9] Those scorchers of enemies were like Destiny and like Death. They rushed towards each other, like two crazy and giant elephants, as if they were proud and maddened in the autumn season, desiring to have intercourse.[10] O bull among the Bharata lineage! They were like crazy elephants that wished to defeat each other. Like blazing serpents, they seemed to vomit out the poison of wrath towards each other. Those scorchers of enemies angrily glanced towards each other. Both those tigers of the Bharata lineage were full of valour. In fighting with clubs, those two destroyers of enemies were as unassailable as lions. Those two brave warriors were difficult to withstand, like tigers armed with claws and teeth. They were like two agitated oceans, impossible to cross, that were about to destroy beings. The angry maharathas scorched, like the one with the red limbs and rays.[11]

The great-souled and immensely strong ones blazed. The best ones among the Kuru lineage were like two suns that had arisen at the time of destruction. They were as angry as tigers and roared like monsoon clouds. The mighty-armed ones were as cheerful as lions with manes. They were as angry as elephants and flamed like the fire. The great-souled ones were seen to be like mountains with peaks. Their lips were swollen in rage and they glanced towards each other. With clubs in their hands, those best of men clashed against each other. Both of them were extremely delighted and also revered each other.[12] They seemed to neigh like well-trained horses and trumpet like elephants. Duryodhana and Vrikodara bellowed like bulls. Those two best of men were as strong as daityas.

‘ “O king! Duryodhana spoke to Yudhishthira, who was stationed with the Srinjayas, like a scorching sun. ‘O best of kings! Be seated and witness this encounter that will take place between me and Bhima.’ At this, that large circle of kings sat down. They were seen to be as beautiful as a collection of gods in the firmament. O great king! Honoured by them from every direction, Keshava’s mighty-armed and handsome elder brother seated himself in their midst. The fair-complexioned one with the blue garments was beautiful in the midst of the kings, like the full moon in the night, surrounded by the stars. O great king! With clubs in their hands, they[13] were unassailable. They were stationed there and censured each other with fierce words. Having spoken those unpleasant words towards each other, those two brave bulls of the Kuru lineage glanced towards each other, like Vritra and Shakra in a battle.” ’

Chapter 1274(55)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! There was a terrible battle of words between them. Miserable, King Dhritarashtra spoke these words. “Shame on a man—since he is reduced to such a state. O lord! My son was the master of eleven armies.[14] All the kings followed his commands and he enjoyed the earth. With a club and on foot, he now has to advance forcefully in an encounter. Having been the protector of the earth, my son is now without a protector. Since he has to advance with a club, what can this be, other than destiny? O Sanjaya! My son must have suffered from great misery.” Having said this, the grieving king stopped.

‘Sanjaya replied, “The valiant one[15] was cheerful. He roared like a cloud and bellowed like a bull. The warrior challenged Partha in that battle. When the great-souled king of the Kurus challenged Bhima, many extremely terrible portents of different types manifested themselves. Fierce winds began to blow and showers of dust fell down. All the directions were enveloped in darkness. Tumultuous thunder descended with a loud roar and the body hair stood up. Hundreds of meteors fell down, roaring in the sky. O lord of the earth! Though it was not the right time, Rahu devoured the sun.[16] The earth, with all its forests and trees, trembled, as if in a giant quake. Harsh winds began to blow, showering stones and dragging them along the ground. The summits of mountains fell down on the ground. Many kinds of animals were seen to run away in the ten directions. Extremely terrible jackals howled in fierce tones, their mouths blazing. Extremely fearful and strong sounds were heard and it made the body hair stand up. O Indra among kings! The directions blazed and animals uttered inauspicious noises. In every direction, the water in wells increased. O king! At that time, invisible and loud sounds were heard.

‘ “On seeing these evil portents, Vrikodara spoke to his elder brother, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. ‘The evil-souled Suyodhana is incapable of defeating me in this battle. Today, I will free myself of the anger that has been lodged deep in my heart for a long time. Suyodhana, Indra among Kouravas, will be like Khandava before the fire god. O Pandava! Today, I will uproot the stake that has been lodged in your heart. I will slay the wicked one, the worst of the Kuru lineage, with the club. Today, I will free you and place a garland of fame around you. In the field of battle, I will kill the performer of evil deeds with my club. With the club, I will shatter his body into a hundred fragments. He will not enter the city of Varanasahvya[17] again. He released snakes while I was sleeping and mixed poison in my food in Pramanakoti. He tried to burn us down in the house of lac. He robbed us of everything and disrespected us in the assembly hall. O unblemished one! He exiled us in the forest, with one year of concealment. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I will bring an end to all those hardships today. I will kill him and, in a single day, free ourselves of those debts. O best among the Bharata lineage! Today, this evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra, whose soul is not clean, will come to an end. He will not see his mother and father again. This Kuru king is the worst of Shantanu’s lineage. He will abandon his life and his kingdom today and lie down on the ground. King Dhritarashtra will hear that his son has been slain by me and remember the wicked deeds that were performed because of Shakuni’s advice.’ O tiger among kings! Having said this, the valiant one grasped his club. He stationed himself in the battle, like Shakra challenging Vritra.

‘ “Duryodhana also raised his club, like Kailasa with its summit. On seeing this, Bhimasena again angrily spoke to Duryodhana. ‘Remember the extremely wicked deeds and conduct that you and King Dhritarashtra exhibited towards us in Varanavata.[18] Droupadi was in her season and was oppressed in the assembly hall. In the gambling match, the king was deceived by you and Soubala. Because of your deeds, we confronted a great hardship in the forest and also in the city of Virata, as if we had entered into another womb.[19] I will pay back all that today. O evil-minded one! It is through good fortune that I have met you. It is because of your deeds that powerful Gangeya, best among rathas, was brought by Yajnasena’s son[20] and brought down, is lying down on a bed of arrows. Drona, Karna and the powerful Shalya have been slain. Shakuni Soubala, the source of this fire of enmity, has been killed. The wicked Pratikami, who seized Droupadi by the hair, and all your brave brothers, valiant warriors, have been slain.[21] There are many other kings who have been killed because of your deeds. There is no doubt that I will kill you with this club today.' O Indra among kings! Having been thus addressed by Vrikodara, your son was not frightened. O king! Truth was his valour and he replied, 'O Vrikodara! Why speak a lot? Fight. O worst of your lineage! Today, I will kill you and destroy your love for fighting. Know that Duryodhana is not inferior and is not like an ordinary man. He is incapable of being frightened by someone like you. For a long time, I have harboured a desire in my heart that I will engage in a duel with clubs with you. Through good fortune and the favours of the thirty gods, the opportunity has presented itself. O evil-minded one! What is the point of speaking a lot? Do what you have promised in your words. Do not delay.' On hearing these words, everyone applauded him, the kings, the Somakas and all the others who were assembled there. Having been thus honoured by all of them, his body hair stood up in joy. The steadfast descendant of the Kuru lineage made up his mind to fight. As if they were cheering a crazy elephant, the kings slapped their palms and delighted the intolerant Duryodhana. The great-souled Pandava raised his club and rushed at the great-souled one. Vrikodara forcefully attacked Dhritarashtra's son. The elephants present there trumpeted and the horses neighed. The Pandavas desired victory and their weapons blazed." '

Chapter 1275(56)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that Bhimasena had approached, Duryodhana was not distressed in his soul. He roared loudly and attacked him with force. Like horned bulls, they clashed against each other. As they struck each other, there were great and thunderous sounds. That tumultuous battle commenced and it made the body hair stand up. Wishing to triumph, they fought each other in that battle, like Indra and Prahlada.[22] The spirited ones fought with clubs and blood covered all their limbs. The great-souled ones looked like flowering kimshukas. That great and extremely terrible battle raged on. As they roamed around, the sky was beautiful, as if covered with swarms of fireflies.[23] That fierce and tumultuous clash raged on for some time. As they fought, both scorchers of enemies were exhausted. Having rested for a short while, those scorchers of enemies again grasped their sparkling clubs and attacked each other. Those immensely valorous bulls among men looked like strong elephants, intolerant with pride and wishing to indulge in intercourse. With clubs in their hands, those infinitely valorous ones glanced towards each other. The gods, the gandharvas and the danavas were overcome by supreme wonder. On seeing Duryodhana and Vrikodara wield those clubs, all the beings were uncertain about who would be victorious. The brothers, supreme among strong ones, attacked each other again. They circled around each other, seeking to detect a weakness in each other. O king! The spectators saw that they raised those heavy and terrible clubs, which were like Yama’s staff or Indra’s vajra.

‘ “In that encounter, when Bhimasena struck with his club, in an instant, it produced a terrible and fierce sound. Dhritarashtra’s son saw that Pandava was striking dexterously and powerfully with his club and was astounded. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! As the brave Vrikodara roamed around, executing many different kinds of motions, he looked resplendent. They protected themselves and attacked each other. They repeatedly wounded each other, like hungry cats over food. Bhimasena moved around in many different kinds of motions. He executed circular motions in different spots, wonderful zigzag movements, advancing and retreating. He countered strikes, struck, avoided and chased. He adopted positions that were meant for attack. He defended, restrained himself, leapt up and leapt down. Both of them were skilled in fighting with clubs and wielded them, high and low. The best among the Kuru lineage roamed around in this way, striking each other and avoiding each other. The extremely strong ones sported, executing circular motions. With clubs in their hands, those powerful ones whirled around. O king! Dhritarashtra's son struck from the right side. Bhimasena struck from the left side. O great king! As Bhima strode around in that field of battle, Duryodhana struck him on his flank. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Bhima was thus struck by your son, he whirled his heavy club, thinking about how he should strike. O great king! Bhimasena's upraised and terrible club was seen to be like Indra's vajra or like Yama's staff. On seeing that Bhimasena was whirling his club around, your son, the scorcher of enemies, raised his terrible club and struck him again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your son's club descended with the violence of a storm. A tumultuous sound was raised and sparks were generated. Suyodhana was energetic and radiant. As he roamed around and executed many kinds of circular motions, he again got the better of Bhima. When Bhima used his gigantic club to strike with great force, smoke and sparks of fire were generated and there was also a loud and terrible sound. On seeing that Bhimasena was whirling his club, the radiant Suyodhana whirled his heavy club, which possessed the essence of stone. The great-souled one's club had the violence of a storm. Beholding this, all the Pandus and the Somakas were terrified. They were seen in that encounter, as if they were sporting in the field of battle. Those two scorchers of enemies violently struck each other with their clubs. They were like elephants, goring each other with their tusks. O great king! With blood flowing down, they were beautiful. Thus did the battle, terrible in form, rage on. At the end of the day, it was cruel, like that between Vritra and Vasava.

' "On seeing that Bhima was stationed, your immensely strong son executed wonderful and colourful motions and attacked Kounteya. Bhima became angry. With great force, he struck that gold-decorated club.[24] O great king! Sparks began to fly and there was a clap, as if lightning was mixed with thunder. O great king! Hurled powerfully by Bhimasena, the club descended and made the earth tremble. Kouravya could not tolerate that his club should be countered in the clash. He was like a crazy elephant, angered at the sight of another elephant. O king! Enraged and having made up his mind, from the left, he powerfully struck Kounteya on the head with the club. O great king! Struck in this way by your son, Pandava Bhima did not tremble and it was extraordinary. O king! It was wonderful and all the soldiers honoured him. Despite being struck by the club, Bhima did not waver and did not retreat a step. Bhima, terrible in his valour, picked up a flaming club, decorated with gold, which was heavier and hurled this towards Duryodhana.[25] However, displaying his dexterity, the immensely strong Duryodhana freed himself from that thrust and it was extremely wonderful. O king! The club hurled by Bhima was baffled and fell down with the loud noise of a storm and made the earth tremble. Repeatedly resorting to the *koushika*[26] technique of jumping up and circling, he[27] discerned when Bhimasena would strike down with the club and deceived him. Having thus deceived Bhima, the immensely strong one, supreme among the Kuru lineage, angrily struck him in the chest with the club. Struck by the club in that great encounter, Bhima was stupefied. Having been struck by your son, he did not know what he should do. O king! At that time, the Somakas and the Pandavas were severely distressed and miserable in their minds. Having been struck, he[28] became as enraged as an elephant and attacked your son, like an elephant against another elephant. The proud Bhima attacked your son with the club. He rushed forward with force, like a lion against a wild elephant. O king! He was skilled in releasing the club. Approaching the king, he used the club to strike in your son’s direction. Duryodhana was struck in the flank by Bhimasena. He was stupefied by this blow and sank down on his knees on the ground. O lord of the earth! At this, the Srinjayas let out a loud roar. O best of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the roar of the Srinjayas, your son, bull among men, became angry. The mighty-armed one raised himself, like an angry serpent that was sighing. He glanced towards Bhimasena and burnt him down with his sight. With the club in his hand, the great-souled one, best among the Bharata lineage, attacked and, in that clash, struck the great-souled

Bhimasena on his head. Bhima was terrible in his valour. Though he was struck on his head, he did not waver, like a mountain. O king! Struck by the club in that encounter, blood began to flow from Partha and he was as beautiful as an elephant with a shattered temple.

‘ “Dhananjaya’s brave elder brother then picked up a club that was made out of iron and was capable of slaying heroes. It made a sound like that of the vajra. The destroyer of enemies struck powerfully with this. Struck in this way by Bhimasena, your son fell down, with his body trembling. He was like a blossoming shala tree in a large forest, whirled around by the force of a storm. On seeing that your son had fallen down on the ground, the Pandavas roared in delight. Your son recovered his senses and rose, like an elephant from a lake. The king was always intolerant. He skilfully circled around and struck Pandava, who was stationed before him, making him lose control over his limbs and fall down on the ground. In that encounter, on seeing that the infinitely energetic Bhima had fallen down on the ground, Kourava roared like a lion. Though he[29] was like the thunder in his energy, the descent of the club shattered his body armour. At this, a loud roar was heard in the firmament, made by the residents of heaven and the apsaras. The immortals showered down many kinds of excellent flowers. On seeing that the supreme among men had fallen down on the ground, great fear entered the hearts of the enemies. Because of the force of Kourava’s blow, the firm armour had been shattered. However, he[30] recovered his senses in a short while and wiped away the blood from his face. Resorting to his fortitude and recovering his strength, Vrikodara dilated his eyes and steadied himself.” ’

Chapter 1276(57)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing the clash between the two foremost ones of the Kuru lineage, Arjuna spoke to the illustrious Vasudeva. ‘Between those two brave ones who are fighting, who do you think is superior? O Janardana! Who possesses the greater qualities? Tell me.’

‘ “Vasudeva replied, ‘They are equal in what they have learnt, but Bhima is stronger. However, Dhritarashtra’s son is superior to Vrikodara because of the efforts that he has undertaken. Using dharma, Bhimasena will not be able to win this encounter. He will be able to kill Suyodhana only if he fights through unfair means. It has been heard that the gods defeated the asuras through the use of maya. The slayer of Bala robbed Vritra of his energy through maya. O Dhananjaya! At the time of gambling with the dice, Bhima took a pledge that in the encounter, he would shatter Suyodhana’s thighs with a club. This destroyer of enemies needs to accomplish that pledge. The king uses maya[31] and has to be brought down through maya. If he uses his strength and fights through fair means, King Yudhishthira will face a hardship. O Pandava! I am saying this again. Listen to me. It is because of Dharmaraja’s transgression that this fear has again confronted us. Having performed the great deed of slaying the Kurus, with Bhishma as the leader, he had obtained victory and fame and an end to the enmity with the adversary. However, having obtained the victory, he has once again placed himself in a situation of uncertainty. O Pandava! This has been great stupidity on Dharmaraja’s part. He has staked the entire victory on the outcome of a single encounter. Suyodhana is accomplished and brave. He is firm in his resolution. There is an ancient song by Ushanas[32] and we have heard it. I will recite the shloka, with its deep meaning. Listen. “Those who have been routed, wishing to protect their lives, but rally and return, must be feared. They will be single-minded in their resolution.” Suyodhana was routed. With his soldiers slain, he had immersed himself in a lake. He had been defeated. Hopeless about obtaining the kingdom, he had wished to go to the forest. Which wise one would challenge such a person to a duel again? Suyodhana may now obtain the kingdom that we had won. Having made up his mind, he has practised with the club for thirteen years. Wishing to kill Bhimasena, he leaps up and moves diagonally. If the mighty-armed one does not slay him through unfair means, Kourava, Dhritarashtra's son, will be the king.'

' "Hearing Keshava's words, the great-souled Dhananjaya glanced in Bhimasena's direction and slapped his thigh with his hand.[33] Understanding the sign, Bhima roamed around with his club in the battle. He executed wonderful circular motions and doubled back. He circled to the right and the left and alternated between the two. O king! Pandava roamed around confounding the enemy. In that fashion, your son was also skilled in executing motions with the club. Wishing to kill Bhimasena, he roamed around, executing dexterous and wonderful motions. They whirled terrible clubs that had been smeared with sandalwood paste and unguents. They were like two angry Yamas, wishing to bring an end to the hostility. Those foremost ones, bulls among men, wished to kill each other. They fought like two Garudas who were after the same serpent. O king! Both of them executed wonderful circular motions. Because of the descent of the clubs, sparks of fire were generated there. In the encounter, those brave and powerful ones struck each other equally. O king! They were like two oceans agitated by storms. Like crazy elephants, they struck each other equally. Thunderous sounds were generated from the blows of the clubs. That fierce and terrible clash continued. As they fought, both scorchers of enemies were exhausted. Having rested for some time, those scorchers of enemies again angrily grasped their giant clubs and attacked. O Indra among kings! They fought a terrible battle with the descending clubs and severely wounded each other. With eyes like bulls, they spiritedly rushed towards each other. Those brave ones fiercely struck each other, like buffaloes stuck in mud. All their limbs were mangled and they were covered with blood. They looked like two flowering kimshukas on the Himalayas.

' "Partha showed Duryodhana a weakness and smiling, he suddenly extended himself forwards.[34] Vrikodara was learned about fighting. On seeing the advance, the strong one powerfully hurled the club. O lord of the earth! Seeing that the club had been hurled, your son moved from the spot and baffled, it fell down on the ground. Having respectfully warded off that blow, your son, supreme among the Kuru lineage, struck Bhimasena with the club. Struck severely by that blow and with blood flowing down, the infinitely energetic one was stupefied. However, in that encounter, Duryodhana did not realize that Pandava was afflicted. Though his body suffered great pain, Bhima bore himself. He[35] thought that he was still steady and ready to strike back in the encounter. That is the reason your son did not strike him again. O king! Having rested for a while, the powerful Bhimasena attacked Duryodhana, who was stationed before him, with force. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that the angry and infinitely energetic one was attacking, he wished to save himself from the blow. Your great-minded son made up his mind to take a stand. O king! He leapt up, wishing to deceive Vrikodara. However, Bhimasena understood what the king wished to do. He dashed forward, roaring like a lion. O king! As the king leapt up to avoid the blow, Pandava powerfully struck him on the thighs with the club. He was terrible in his deeds and struck with a force like that of the vajra. Duryodhana’s handsome thighs were fractured. The tiger among men fell down, making the earth resound. O lord of the earth! Your son’s thighs were fractured by Bhimasena.

‘ “Fierce winds began to blow and showers of dust fell down. The earth, with its trees, shrubs and mountains, began to tremble. The brave one was the lord of all the kings on earth. When he fell down, a great sound was heard and there were blazing and fearful winds. When the lord of the earth fell down, giant meteors descended. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were showers of blood and showers of dust. When your son was brought down, Maghavan[36] showered these down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Large roars were heard in the firmament, made by the yakshas, the rakshasas and the pishachas. Because of that terrible roar, animals and birds emitted many more terrible sounds in all the directions. When your son was brought down, the remaining horses, elephants and men emitted loud roars. When your son was brought down, there were the loud sounds of drums, conch shells and cymbals and a sound seemed to emerge from inside the ground. O king! In all directions, headless torsos, fearful in form, with many feet and many legs, were seen to dance around, generating fear. O king! When your son was brought down, those who held standards, weapons and arms trembled. O supreme among kings! Lakes and wells vomited blood. Extremely swift-flowing rivers began to flow in a reverse direction. Men looked like women and women looked like men. O king! This is what happened when your son, Duryodhana, was brought down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing these evil portents, all the Panchalas and the Pandavas were anxious in their minds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras went away, wherever they wished to go, after that wonderful encounter between your sons was over. O Indra among kings! So did the siddhas, the bards and the charanas. Having praised those two lions among men, the brahmanas went away, to wherever they had come from.” ’

Chapter 1277(58)

‘Sanjaya said, “On seeing that he had fallen down, like a giant shala tree uprooted by the wind, all the Pandavas present there were delighted. He was like a crazy elephant that had been brought down by a lion. On seeing this, the body hair of the Somakas stood up and they were joyful. Having struck and brought down Duryodhana, the powerful Bhimasena approached the Indra among the Kouravas and said, ‘O wicked one! In earlier times, when Droupadi was in a single garment, you addressed us as cattle.[37] O evil-minded one! When we were in the assembly hall, you laughed at us. Suffer the consequences of that disrespect now.’ Having said this, he kicked his head with his left foot. He struck the head of that lion among kings with his foot. Bhima was the destroyer of enemy forces and his eyes were red with rage. O lord of men! He again spoke these words. Listen to them. ‘In earlier times, there were those who danced around and repeatedly called us cattle. We will dance back at them now and repeatedly address them as cattle. There is no guile, no fire[38] and no deception in gambling with the dice in us. We resort to the strength of our own arms and counter our enemies.’ Having attained the other shore of the enmity, Vrikodara laughed and softly spoke these words to Yudhishthira, Keshava, the Srinjayas, Dhananjaya and Madri’s two sons. ‘Droupadi was in her season and they disrespected her. They deprived her of her garment there. Behold. Through Yajnaseni’s[39] austerities, in the battle, the sons of Dhritarashtra have been slain by the Pandavas. In earlier times, King Dhritarashtra’s wicked sons called us sterile sesamum seeds. They have been slain by us, with their followers and their relatives. We are indifferent as to whether we go to heaven or to hell.’ He again raised the club that was on his shoulder. Glancing towards the deceitful King Duryodhana, who had fallen down on the ground, he kicked his head with his left foot and spoke these words. The foremost among the

Somakas had dharma in their souls. O king! On seeing that Bhimasena, inferior in his soul, was kicking the Kuru king on the head with his foot, they did not approve.

‘ “Having brought down your son, Vrikodara was bragging. As he danced around in different ways, Dharmaraja spoke to him. ‘O Bhima! Do not crush his head with your foot. Do not greatly transgress dharma. He is a king and your relative. He has been brought down. O unblemished one! This conduct is not proper. He has been destroyed. His advisers have been slain. His brothers have been slain. His subjects have been slain. His funeral cakes have been destroyed.[40] He is our brother. This conduct of yours is inappropriate. In earlier times, people used to say that Bhimasena followed dharma. How can Bhimasena then disrespect the king in this way?’ Having spoken these words, the king who was Kunti’s son approached and saw Duryodhana. With his eyes full of tears, he spoke these words. ‘It is certain that destiny, ordained by the great-souled Creator, is powerful. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Otherwise, why should you harbour violence towards us and we towards you? It is because of your own misdeeds that you have faced this great calamity. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have reaped it because of your avarice, insolence and folly. You have slain your friends, your brothers and your fathers. The sons, grandsons and preceptors have also been slain. It is because of your crimes that your maharatha brothers and other relatives have been killed. I think that destiny is irresistible. Dhritarashtra’s daughters-in-law and grand-daughters-in-law are miserable. Oppressed by grief, those widows will certainly censure us.’ Having spoken in this way, the king was extremely miserable and sighed. Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, lamented for a long time.” ’

Chapter 1278(59)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O suta! On seeing that the king had been brought down through adharma, what did the immensely strong Baladeva, the best of the Madhava lineage, say? He knew about the rules of fighting with clubs. He was skilled in fighting with clubs. O Sanjaya! What did Rohini’s son do?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “On seeing that Bhimasena had kicked your son in the head, Rama, supreme among strikers and strongest among the strong, became angry. In the midst of those kings, the one with the plough as his weapon raised up his arms. In terrible words of lamentation, he spoke words of shame. ‘Shame that one should exhibit the valour of a shudra and strike below the navel. In a duel with clubs, the likes of what Vrikodara has done have never been seen. It is certain that the sacred texts have said that one should not strike below the navel. But he is stupid and ignorant of the sacred texts. He has easily done what he wanted.’ While speaking in this way, he was overcome by great rage. The powerful one raised his plough and advanced towards Bhima. As he raised his arms, the form of the great-souled one was like that of the great mountain Shveta, coloured with many minerals. However, as he descended, Keshava humbly seized him. The powerful one grasped the powerful one in his thick arms. The fair and the dark one,[41] best among the Yadu lineage, looked even more radiant. O king! They were like the sun and the moon in the sky, at the end of the day. To pacify the angry one, Keshava said, ‘One can have six kinds of prosperity— one’s own prosperity, the prosperity of friends, the decay of enemies, the decay of the friends of enemies, the decay of the friends of friends of enemies and the prosperity of the enemies of enemies.[42] When there are reversals to one’s own self or that of friends, the learned know that one should quickly strive for peace. The Pandavas are pure men and are our natural friends. They are the sons of our father’s sister.[43] They have been severely oppressed by the enemy. The accomplishment of a vow is the dharma of kshatriyas. Earlier, in the assembly hall, Bhima had taken the pledge that in a great battle, he would shatter Suyodhana's thighs with a club. O scorcher of enemies! Earlier, maharshi Maitreya had cursed him that his thighs would be shattered by Bhima with a club.[44] O slayer of Pralamba![45] Therefore, I do not see a transgression. Do not be angry. Our alliance with the Pandavas is based on birth and bonds of affection. Their prosperity is our prosperity. O bull among men! Therefore, do not be angry.'

' "Rama said, 'Dharma is followed by the virtuous. But dharma is also followed for two reasons—artha, for those who are addicted to artha, and kama, for those who are addicted to it. Those who obtain great happiness follow dharma, artha and kama, without oppressing dharma and artha, or dharma and kama, or kama and artha.[46] Bhimasena has not followed all of them and has oppressed dharma. O Govinda! This is despite what you have told me.'

' "Vasudeva replied, 'In this world, you have always been spoken of as one without rage, one with dharma in your soul and one who is devoted to dharma. Therefore, be pacified and do not yield to anger. Know that kali yuga has almost arrived and also remember Pandava's pledge. Pandava has paid his debts to the enmity and accomplished his pledge.' "

'Sanjaya said, "O lord of the earth! Hearing this deceptive exposition of dharma on Keshava's part, Rama was not happy and spoke these words in the assembly. 'King Suyodhana had dharma in his soul and was slain through adharma. Pandava will be known in this world as someone who fought deceitfully. Duryodhana, with dharma in his soul, will obtain the eternal end. Dhritarashtra's son, king among men, fought fairly and has been slain. He consecrated himself for the encounter and entered the sacrifice that was the duel. He offered himself as an oblation into the fire and has obtained fame.' Speaking these words, Rohini's powerful son, who was like the crest of a white cloud, ascended his chariot and left towards Dvaraka. O lord of the earth! When Rama left for Dvaravati, the Panchalas, the Varshneyas and the Pandavas were cheerless.

' "Yudhishthira was miserable and with his head hanging down, was immersed in thought. Immersed in grief, he thought about what should be done.

Vasudeva told him, ‘O Dharmaraja! Why did you permit such an act of adharma? His relatives had been killed. He had been brought down, bereft of his senses. Yet, Bhima struck Duryodhana’s head with his foot. O one who knows about dharma! O lord of men! Why did you ignore this?’ Yudhishthira replied, ‘O Krishna! I did not like what Vrikodara did to the king. Because of anger, he kicked his head with his foot and I am not happy at this extermination of my lineage. Dhritarashtra’s sons have always deceived us and acted fraudulently. They have spoken many harsh words towards us and exiled us to the forest. That has led to great unhappiness in Bhimasena’s heart. O Varshneya! Thinking about all this, I ignored it. He slew the deceitful and avaricious one who was always overcome by his passion. Pandava has accomplished his desire. How does it matter whether it was dharma or adharma?’ Having been thus addressed by Dharmaraja, Vasudeva, the extender of the Yadu lineage, agreed with a considerable amount of difficulty. With Bhima’s welfare in mind, Vasudeva spoke, approving of everything Bhima had done in the battle.

‘ “The intolerant Bhimasena brought down your son. He stood there cheerfully, his hands joined in salutation. The immensely energetic one spoke to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. O lord of the earth! He[47] had wished for victory and his eyes were dilated with joy. ‘O king! The pacified earth is now yours, without any thorns. O great king! Rule over it and follow your own dharma. O lord of the earth! He was the source of the enmity. He was fraudulent and loved deceit. He has been brought down and is lying down on the ground. All the enemies, Duhshasana, Radheya, Shakuni and the others, harsh in words, have been slain. The earth, with its many jewels, forests and mountains, is yours again now. O great king! The enemies have been killed.’ Yudhishthira replied, ‘With King Suyodhana brought down, the enmity is over. We have conquered the earth because of Krishna’s advice. It is through good fortune that you have paid off your debts to your mother and to your anger. O invincible one! It is through good fortune that you have triumphed. It is through good fortune that your enemy has been brought down.’” ’

Chapter 1279(60)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! On seeing that Duryodhana had been brought down by Bhimasena in the encounter what did the Pandavas and the Srinjayas do?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O great king! On seeing that Duryodhana had been brought down by Bhimasena in the encounter, like a crazy and wild elephant brought down by a lion in the forest, Krishna and the Pandavas were delighted. When the descendant of the Kuru lineage was brought down, the Panchalas and the Srinjayas waved their upper garments around and roared like lions. It was as if the earth was no longer able to bear those cheerful ones. Some brandished their bows. Others drew on their bowstrings. Others blew on their giant conch shells and sounded drums. Some sported. Other enemies of yours laughed. The brave ones spoke these words to Bhimasena. ‘You have performed an extremely difficult and great task in the battle today. You have brought down the Indra among Kouravas in the encounter, one who had undertaken great exertions with the club. This is like Indra killing Vritra in a supreme encounter. These people think that your deed of slaying the enemy is like that. You have roamed around in different ways and have executed all the circular motions. Who other than Vrikodara could have brought down a brave one like Duryodhana? You have reached the end of the hostilities, something so difficult that no one but you could have achieved that. No one else could have done that. O brave one! In the field of battle, you were like a crazy elephant. It is through good fortune that you have kicked Duryodhana’s head with your foot. O unblemished one! It is through good fortune that you have performed the wonderful task of drinking Duhshasana’s blood, like a lion against a buffalo. It is through good fortune and your deeds that you have placed your foot on the heads of those who injured King Yudhishthira, one with dharma in his soul. O Bhima! It is through good fortune that you have triumphed over the enemies and brought down Suyodhana. Your great fame will spread throughout the earth. Bards praised Shakra’s slaying of Vritra. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, we are praising your slaying of the enemy. Since Duryodhana has been brought down, our body hair is standing up and we are delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that our joy has not diminished.’[48] The assembled bards spoke in this way to Bhimasena.

‘ “The Panchalas and the Pandavas, tigers among men, were delighted and also spoke in a similar way. Madhusudana spoke to them. ‘O lords of men! It is not proper to again kill an enemy who has been brought down. This evil-minded one has already been killed. One should not address fierce words towards him. This wicked one has been slain by destiny. Destiny has afflicted the shameless one. He was avaricious and had wicked aides. He followed the advice of those well-wishers. Several times, Vidura, Drona, Kripa, Gangeya and the Srinjayas asked him to give the Pandus their paternal share. But he did not give it. The worst of men does not deserve to be called a friend or a foe now. One should not waste words on someone who has become a piece of wood. O lords of the earth! Ascend your chariots and let us leave swiftly. It is through good fortune that this evil-souled one has been brought down, with his advisers, kin and allies.’

‘ “O lord of the earth! Hearing Krishna’s censorious words, King Duryodhana was overcome by intolerance and tried to rise. He used his two arms to support himself on the ground. He frowned and glanced towards Vasudeva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his body half raised, the king’s form was like that of an angry and virulent serpent, with a severed tail. He paid no attention to the terrible pain that was about to take away his life. Duryodhana spoke these harsh words to Vasudeva. ‘You are the son of Kamsa’s slave and you have no shame.[49] In this encounter with the clubs, I have been brought down through adharma. Bhima falsified the injunctions of the sacred texts and shattered my thighs. Do you think I do not know what you told Arjuna? You have slaughtered thousands of kings through unfair means. You have used many crooked means. But you suffer no shame or abhorrence on account of that. From one day to another, you have caused a great carnage of brave ones. Placing Shikhandi at the forefront, you brought down the grandfather. O evil-minded one! You caused an elephant named Ashvatthama to be killed and made the preceptor lay down his weapons. Do you think that this is not known to me? When that valiant one was cruelly brought down by Dhrishtadyumna, you witnessed it. But you did not restrain him. A javelin was obtained[50] for the destruction of Pandu’s son. You wasted it on Ghatotkacha. Is there anyone more wicked than you? The powerful Bhurishrava’s arms were severed and he was ready to give up his life. When Shini’s evil-souled descendant[51] killed him, you were behind that act. Karna performed the excellent deed of triumphing over Partha. But you caused Ashvasena, the son of the king of the serpents, to be countered. In the battle, Karna’s wheel was submerged in the ground. He was defeated and overtaken by a hardship. That foremost among men was trying to extricate it and you had him killed. Had you fought me, Karna, Bhishma and Drona through fair means, it is certain that you would not have been victorious. However, you adopted ignoble and deceitful methods. There were many kings who followed their own dharma. But you caused them to follow you and thus to be killed.’

‘ “Vasudeva replied, ‘O Gandhari’s son! You have been brought down, with your brothers, sons, relatives, followers and well-wishers. That is because you resorted to a wicked path. It is because of your evil deeds that the brave Bhishma and Drona have been brought down. It is because he followed your conduct that Karna has been slain in the battle. O stupid one! Though I asked you, you did not give the Pandavas half of your kingdom, their paternal share. This is because of your avarice and Shakuni’s advice. You gave poison to Bhimasena. O evil-minded one! You tried to burn down all the Pandavas, and their mother, in the house of lac. Yajnaseni was in her season. Despite this, at the time of the gambling match, she was oppressed in the assembly hall. O shameless one! That is the reason someone like you should be killed. The one who follows dharma[52] was unskilled and Soubala was knowledgeable about the heart of dice. He was defeated through deceit. For that reason, you should be slain in the battle. The wicked Jayadratha afflicted Krishna[53] in the forest, in Trinabindu’s hermitage, when they[54] had gone out on a hunt. Abhimanyu was a child and though he was single-handed, many fought him in the battle. O evil one! He was killed because of your deeds. For that reason, you should be slain in this battle.’

‘ “Duryodhana said, ‘I have studied and given the ordained gifts. I have ruled the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. I have placed my foot on the heads of enemies. Who is as fortunate as I am? It is through good fortune that I have seen my kshatriya relatives established in their own dharma. Even if I am slain, who can be more fortunate than I am? There are human objects of pleasure that gods deserve. These are difficult for kings to obtain. But I have obtained that supreme prosperity. Who can be more fortunate than I am? O unblemished one! I will go to heaven, with my well-wishers and my relatives. Your objectives are yet unaccomplished. You will sorrow here.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the king of the Kurus concluded these words, a large shower of flowers, with auspicious fragrances, rained down. Gandharvas and large numbers of apsaras played on musical instruments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Siddhas uttered words of praise. Fragrant, delicate and pleasant winds began to blow, mixed with sacred scents. The sky became beautiful and clear, with the complexion of lapis lazuli. On seeing these wonderful sights, they,[55] with Vasudeva at the forefront, were ashamed and honoured Duryodhana. On hearing that Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Bhurishrava had been slain through adharma, they grieved and wept in sorrow. The Pandavas were distressed and immersed in thought. On seeing this, Krishna spoke these words, in a voice that rumbled like clouds and drums. ‘All of them were swift in the use of weapons and were maharathas. In a fair fight, even if we fought bravely, we were incapable of defeating them in the battle. That is the reason I thought of means to slay those lords of men. Otherwise, the Pandaveyas would never have obtained victory. Those four great-souled ones were atirathas on earth.[56] Following dharma, even the guardians of the world themselves would not have been able to kill them. Even when he is exhausted, Dhritarashtra’s son, with the club in his hand, is incapable of being killed through the means of dharma, even by Yama with a staff in his hand. You should not sorrow that the king has been slain in this way. When enemies are many and numerous, they have to be killed through falsehood and other means. Earlier, this was the path followed by the gods, when they killed the asuras. That good route that they followed is one which everyone can follow. We have accomplished our objective. It is evening. We should go to our abodes. Let all the kings, the horses, the elephants and the chariots, rest.’ On hearing Vasudeva’s words, the Pandavas and the Panchalas became extremely cheerful and roared like a pride of lions. They blew on their conch shells and Madhava blew on Panchajanya. On seeing that Duryodhana had been brought down, the bulls among men were delighted.” ’

Chapter 1280(61)

‘Sanjaya said, “All those kings left for their abodes. With arms that were like clubs, they cheerfully blew on their conch shells. O lord of the earth! The Pandavas proceeded towards our camp. The great archer, Yuyutsu Satyaki, followed them. Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, all of Droupadi’s sons and all the other great archers also proceeded towards our camp. The Parthas entered Duryodhana’s camp, bereft of its radiance and with its lord slain. It looked like an arena devoid of men. It looked like a city deprived of life and like a lake without elephants. There were only a large number of women, eunuchs and aged advisers. O king! Earlier, with clean garments dyed in ochre, Duryodhana and the others used to wait on them,[57] with hands joined in salutation. The Pandavas reached the camp of the king of the Kurus. O great king! Those supreme of rathas descended from their chariots.

‘ “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Keshava was always engaged in bringing pleasure to the wielder of Gandiva and spoke to him. ‘Take down Gandiva and the two great and inexhaustible quivers. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I will get down after you have dismounted. O unblemished one! Descend. It is for your own good.’ Dhananjaya, Pandu’s brave son, did as he had been asked. Thereafter, the intelligent Krishna discarded the reins of the horses and got down from the chariot that belonged to the wielder of Gandiva. The extremely great-souled one, the lord of all beings, descended. The celestial ape, stationed on the standard of the wielder of Gandiva, disappeared. Earlier, it[58] had been burnt by the divine weapons of the maharathas, Drona and Karna. O lord of the earth! It blazed amidst a fire and was swiftly burnt. The chariot of the wielder of Gandiva was burnt, with its yokes, its harnesses, its horses and its lovely joints. O lord! On seeing that it had been reduced to ashes, Pandu’s sons were astounded. O king! Arjuna joined his hands in salutation and bowing down affectionately, asked, ‘O Govinda! O illustrious one! Why has the chariot been burnt down by the fire? O descendant of the Yadu lineage! What is this extremely wonderful thing that has occurred? O mighty-armed one! If you think that I deserve to hear it, tell me.’ Vasudeva replied, ‘O Arjuna! This has earlier been burnt by many different kinds of weapons. O scorcher of enemies! It is because I was seated that it was not destroyed in the battle. It has now been destroyed, consumed by the energy of brahmastra. O Kounteya! Now that you have accomplished your objective, I have abandoned it.’ The illustrious Keshava, the destroyer of enemies, smiled a little, in pride.

‘ “He embraced King Yudhishthira and said, ‘O Kounteya! It is through good fortune that you have become victorious. It is through good fortune that you have defeated your enemies. O king! It is through good fortune that the wielder of Gandiva, Pandava Bhimasena, you and the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons are hale. You have slain your enemies and have escaped from a battle that has been destructive of heroes. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Swiftly do the tasks that must be done next. When I earlier arrived in Upaplavya, with the wielder of Gandiva, you approached me and greeted me with *madhuparka*.[59] You spoke these words to me. “O Krishna! Dhananjaya is your brother and friend too. O mighty-armed one! O lord! You must therefore protect him from all dangers.” When you spoke those words to me, I replied in words of assent. O lord of men! Savyasachi has been protected and you have become victorious. O Indra among kings! He is brave and truth is his valour. With his brothers, he has escaped from this battle that led to the destruction of brave ones and made the body hair stand up.’ O great king! Having been thus addressed by Krishna, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira replied to Janardana, with his body hair standing up. ‘O crusher of enemies! Who other than you, and Purandara, the wielder of the vajra himself, could have escaped from the brahmastras of Drona and Karna? It is through your many favours that we have triumphed in this battle and Partha never had to retreat, even from the greatest of battles. O mighty-armed one! In that fashion, it is through your favours and instructions that I have performed many deeds and attained objectives with auspicious energy. In Upaplavya, maharshi Krishna Dvaipayana told me, “Where there is dharma, Krishna is there. Where there is Krishna, victory is there.” ’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These were the words the brave ones spoke in your camp.

‘ “They then entered and obtained the treasure chests, with many kinds of riches and gems—silver, gold, jewels, pearls, the best of ornaments, blankets, hides—many female and male slaves and other objects required for kingship. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Indra among men! Having obtained access to your inexhaustible riches, those great archers roared in delight, having defeated their enemies. Those brave ones approached their mounts and unyoked them. All the Pandavas, with Satyaki, remained there for some time. O great king! The immensely illustrious Vasudeva then said, ‘To ensure that everything is auspicious, we should dwell outside this camp.’ All the Pandavas and Satyaki agreed to this. For the sake of ensuring the auspicious, with Vasudeva, they went outside. O king! They approached the sacred river Oghavati.[60] Having slain their enemies, the Pandavas spent the night there. When the sun arose, they[61] quickly sent the powerful Vasudeva to Nagasahvya. Daruka[62] ascended the chariot. The king who was Ambika’s son[63] was there. When he was about to leave, with Sainya and Sugriva[64] yoked, they told him, ‘Comfort the illustrious Gandhari, whose sons have been slain.’ Thus spoken to by the Pandavas, the best of the Satvata lineage set out for that city. He quickly approached Gandhari, whose sons had been killed.” ’

Chapter 1281(62)

Janamejaya asked, 'Why did Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, tiger among kings, send Vasudeva, the scorcher of enemies, to Gandhari? Krishna had earlier gone to the Kouravas, seeking peace. He was not successful and the battle followed. The warriors were slain and Duryodhana was also brought down. In the battle, the Pandaveyas eliminated their rivals from the earth. The camp[65] was emptied and everyone fled. They obtained supreme fame. O brahmana! Why did Krishna go again? O brahmana! It seems to me that the reason must have been a grave one, since Janardana, immeasurable in his soul, himself went. O supreme among officiating priests! Tell me everything about this. O brahmana! What was the reason behind deciding on such a course of action?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! The question that you have asked me is one that is deserving of you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you everything, exactly as it occurred. O king! Dhritarashtra's immensely strong son was brought down in the battle by Bhimasena, in contravention of the rules. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the duel with the clubs, he was brought down by unfair means. O great king! On seeing this, Yudhishthira was overcome by a great fear. He thought of the immensely fortunate and ascetic Gandhari. Because of her terrible austerities, she was capable of burning down the three worlds. Thinking about this, he arrived at this conclusion. "The flame of Gandhari's anger must first be pacified. Otherwise, on hearing about her son being killed by the enemies in this way, she can use the fire of her mind to angrily reduce us to ashes. How will Gandhari tolerate such fierce misery? She will hear that her son has been brought down through deceit and fraudulent means." Thinking about this in many ways, he was overcome by fear and sorrow. Therefore, Dharmaraja spoke these words to Vasudeva. "O Govinda! Through your favours, the kingdom has been deprived of its thorns. O Achyuta! We have obtained that which our minds thought was unattainable. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Yadava lineage! In the battle that made the body hair stand up, I have witnessed the extremely great blows that you have had to bear. In earlier times, you rendered your help in slaying the enemies of the gods. O mighty-armed one! O Achyuta! You have aided us in that way. O Varshneya! By agreeing to be our charioteer, you have supported us. If you had not been Phalguna's protector in the great battle, how would we have been capable of defeating this ocean of soldiers in the encounter? For the sake of our welfare, you have borne great blows with the club, strikes with bludgeons, spears, catapults, javelins, battleaxes and harsh words. O Achyuta! Now that Duryodhana has been brought down, all of that has become fruitful. O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! But you know about Gandhari's anger. The immensely fortunate one has always tormented herself through fierce austerities. On hearing about the slaughter of her sons and grandsons, there is no doubt that she will consume us. She will be oppressed with grief on account of her sons and her eyes will blaze in anger. O brave one! I think the time has come to seek your favours. O Purushottama! Which man, other than you, is capable of glancing at her? O Madhava! I think it is a good idea for you to go there, so that you can pacify the anger of Gandhari's wrath. O scorcher of enemies! You are the creator, the agent and the pervading power in the worlds. You will use words full of reason, appropriate for the occasion. O immensely wise one! Pacify Gandhari quickly. Krishna, the illustrious grandfather, will be there.[66] O mighty-armed one! O best of the Satvata lineage! For the sake of the welfare of the Pandavas, it is your duty to destroy Gandhari's rage in every possible way." On hearing Dharmaraja's words, the extender of the Yadu lineage sent for Daruka and asked him to prepare the chariot in the proper way. Hearing Keshava's words, Daruka quickly prepared the chariot and came and told the great-souled Keshava that it was ready. The scorcher of enemies, best of the Yadava lineage, ascended the chariot. The lord Keshava swiftly left for Hastinapura. O great king! The illustrious ratha, Madhava, departed. The valiant one approached and entered Nagasahvya.

'The brave one's chariot wheels clattered as he entered the city. Having sent word to Dhritarashtra, he alighted from that supreme chariot. Distressed in his mind, he entered Dhritarashtra's abode. He saw that the supreme among rishis[67] had arrived there before him. Janardana embraced Krishna's[68] feet and the king's. Keshava showed his honours to Gandhari, who was before him. Adhokshaja,[69] best among the Yadava lineage, held King Dhritarashtra by the hand and wept in a melodious voice. For some time, overcome by sorrow, he shed warm tears. Following the proper rites, he then washed his eyes with water. The scorcher of enemies then spoke these flowing words to Dhritarashtra. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nothing is unknown to you, about what has happened and what will happen. O lord! You know everything about the passage of time extremely well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because their hearts are devoted to you, all the Pandavas sought to prevent the destruction of the lineage and that of the kshatriyas. They are peaceful and devoted to dharma. Having contracted an agreement with their brothers, after being deceitfully defeated in the gambling match, they bore the hardship of dwelling in the forest. Attiring themselves in different garments, they spent the period of concealment. They always bore many other hardships, as if they were incapable. When the time for war presented itself, I myself arrived and in everyone's presence, asked for five villages.[70] Driven by destiny and because of your avarice, you did not accept this. O king! It is because of your crimes that all the kshatriyas have confronted destruction. Bhishma, Somadatta, Bahlika, Kripa, Drona and his son and the intelligent Vidura have always asked for peace. But you did not act accordingly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was as if everyone was confounded by destiny. In so far as this is concerned, you also acted foolishly. What can this be, other than the dictate of destiny? Destiny is supreme. O great king! Do not ascribe any fault to the Pandavas. O scorcher of enemies! The great-souled Pandavas did not commit a trifling transgression, in dharma, fairness and affection. You know everything about this and about the fruits of your own deeds. Therefore, you should not harbour any malice towards the sons of Pandu. For both you and Gandhari, the family, the lineage, funeral oblations and the fruits obtained from begetting sons now vest on the Pandavas. Think about all this and about your own transgressions. Think peacefully about the Pandavas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I salute you. O mighty-armed one! O tiger among the Bharata lineage! You know about Dharmaraja's natural devotion and affection towards you. Having caused this carnage amongst the enemy, even though they injured him, day and night, he is tormented and cannot find any peace. O best of the Bharata lineage! The tiger among men sorrows for you and the illustrious Gandhari and can find no peace. Knowing that you are tormented by sorrow on account of your sons and that your intelligence and senses are agitated, he is overcome by supreme shame and has not come before you." O great king! The supreme among the Yadu lineage spoke these words to Dhritarashtra.

'He then spoke these supreme words to Gandhari, who was afflicted by sorrow. "O Subala's daughter! O one who is excellent in vows! Listen to the words that I tell you. O beautiful one! There is no woman[71] like you in this world now. O queen! You know the words that you spoke in the assembly hall in my presence. Those words, full of dharma and artha, were for the benefit of both sides. O fortunate one! You spoke those words, but your sons did not listen. Duryodhana desired victory and you spoke harsh words to him. 'O foolish one! Listen to my words. Victory exists where there is dharma.' O daughter of a king! Those words of yours have now come to pass. O fortunate one! Knowing all this, do not harbour any sorrow in your mind. Do not think about the destruction of the Pandavas. O immensely fortunate one! Through the blazing anger in your eyes and through the strength of your austerities, you are capable of burning down the earth, with everything that is mobile and immobile." On hearing Vasudeva's words, Gandhari spoke these words. "O mighty-armed one! O Keshava! It is exactly as you have described it. My heart is burning and my mind is agitated. O Janardana! But after hearing your words, I have steadied myself. O Keshava! The king is aged and blind and his sons have been slain. You are his refuge, with the brave Pandavas, best among men." Having spoken these words, Gandhari was tormented by sorrow on account of her sons. She covered her face with her garment and wept. The lord, the mighty-armed Keshava, comforted the one who was afflicted by sorrow, speaking words that were full of reason.

'Having comforted Gandhari and Dhritarashtra, Keshava got to know[72] what Drona's son was planning. O Indra among kings! He swiftly arose. He bowed down before Dvaipayana and touched his feet with his head. He then told Kourava, "O best among the Kuru lineage! I must take your leave. Do not sorrow in your mind. Drona's son has a wicked intention. That is the reason I have suddenly got up. He has decided to kill the Pandavas in the night." On hearing these words, Dhritarashtra and Gandhari spoke to Keshava, the slayer of Keshi.[73] “O mighty-armed one! Go quickly and protect the Pandavas. O Janardana! Let us meet again, soon.” With Daruka, Achyuta left swiftly. O king! When Vasudeva had departed, Dhritarashtra, the lord of men, was comforted by Vyasa, revered by the world and immeasurable in his soul. O king! Having been successful, Vasudeva, with dharma in his soul, departed from Hastinapura, wishing to see the Pandavas in their camp. Having arrived in the camp in the night, he met the Pandavas and seated with them, told them everything that had happened.’

Chapter 1282(63)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! My son’s head was kicked with the foot and his thighs were shattered. He was lying down on the ground. He was extremely proud. What did he say? The king was extremely wrathful and firm in his enmity towards the Pandus. In that great battle, when that great calamity overtook him, what did he say?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! Listen. O lord of men! I will tell you exactly what happened and what the king spoke, when he was shattered and he was overtaken by that calamity. O king! The king’s thighs were shattered and he was covered with dust. He gathered his flowing locks and glanced in the ten directions. Having carefully collected his locks, he sighed like a serpent. He was angry. With tears flowing from his eyes, he glanced towards me. For a short while, like a crazy elephant, he struck the earth with his hands. Then he shook his locks and gnashed his teeth. He censured the eldest Pandava and sighing, spoke these words.[74] ‘As my protector, I had Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, Karna, supreme among the wielders of weapons, Goutama, Shakuni, Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons, Ashvatthama, the brave Shalya and Kritavarma. However, I have been reduced to this state. Destiny is difficult to cross. I was the lord of eleven armies.[75] But I have been reduced to this state. O mighty-armed one! When the time comes, no one can cross it. Those on my side who are still alive should be informed about how I have been brought down by Bhimasena, violating rules of fairness. The Pandavas have indeed performed many cruel deeds—Bhurishrava, Karna, Bhishma and the prosperous Drona. This is yet another infamous and cruel deed that the Pandavas have perpetrated. On this account, it is my view that they will be reprimanded by virtuous ones. If victory is obtained unfairly, what pleasure can virtuous men obtain from that? Which learned one will approve this violation of rules? Having obtained victory through adharma, learned ones do not rejoice in the way that the wicked Vrikodara, Pandu’s son, is delighted. My thighs have been shattered. What can be more extraordinary than the angry Bhimasena kicking my head with his foot? O Sanjaya! If a man acts in such a way towards a powerful and prosperous person who still has relatives, will he be honoured? My mother, my father and I are not ignorant about the dharma of kshatriyas. O Sanjaya! They will be miserable. Tell them my words. I have performed sacrifices. I have sustained servants. I have ruled the earth, up to the oceans. When my enemies were alive, I placed my feet on their heads. I have given gifts, to the best of my capacity. I have done pleasant deeds towards my friends. I have countered all my enemies. Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have advanced against the kingdoms of enemies and have subjugated those kings, like slaves. I have truly acted well towards virtuous ones. Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have honoured all my relatives and have been honoured and revered by men. I have served the three objectives.[76] Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have commanded the foremost among kings. I have obtained honour that is extremely difficult to get. I have gone to my place of birth. Who can be more fortunate than I am? I have studied and donated, in accordance with the prescribed rites. I have lived a long and healthy life. Based on my own dharma, I have conquered the worlds. Who can be more fortunate than I am? It is through good fortune that I have not been defeated in the battle and made to serve my enemies. It is through good fortune that my great prosperity goes to another one only after my death. Based on their own dharma, my kshatriya relatives attained their desired objective. That same death has been obtained by me. Who can be more fortunate than I am? An ordinary person is subjugated in the course of an enmity. It is through good fortune that I have not been subjugated by the enemy in that way. It is through good fortune that I have not been vanquished after performing a despicable act—like killing one who is asleep, one who is mad, or killing someone through the use of poison. I have been slain through adharma, through the contravention of fair rules. The immensely fortunate Ashvatthama, Satvata Kritavarma and Kripa Sharadvata should be told these words of mine. “The Pandavas have engaged in many acts of adharma. You should not trust them. They violate the rules.” ’

‘ “The king, your son, for whom truth was his valour, then addressed the bards. ‘In the encounter, I have been brought down by Bhimasena through the use of adharma. I will now go to heaven, like Drona, Shalya, Karna, the immensely valorous Vrishasena, Shakuni Soubala, the immensely valorous Jalasandha, King Bhagadatta, the great archer who was Somadatta's son,[77] Saindhava Jayadratha, my brothers who were my equal, with Duhshasana as the foremost, Duhshasana's valiant son and my son, Lakshmana. There were many thousand of others on my side. They followed me from the rear. But I am now like a traveller without any riches. On hearing about the death of her brothers and her husband, how will my sister, Duhshala,[78] be? She will weep in sorrow. When they are overcome by sorrow, what will become of my father, the aged king, and Gandhari, and their daughters-in-law and granddaughters-in-law? There is no doubt that with her son and her husband slain, Lakshmana's mother,[79] fortunate and large-eyed, will swiftly die. The immensely fortunate mendicant, Charvaka, is eloquent in the use of words. If he learns about this, he will certainly exact vengeance on my account.[80] The sacred Samantapanchaka is famous in the three worlds. By dying here today, I will obtain the eternal worlds.' O venerable one! On hearing the lamentations of the king, thousands of men fled in the ten directions, their eyes full of tears. The earth, with its oceans and forests, and mobile and immobile objects, trembled violently and made a loud noise. The directions were clouded.

' "They[81] went to Drona's son and told him how the king had been brought down in the duel with the clubs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When they had reported the account to Drona's son, all of them remained immersed in thought for a long time. Then, sorrowfully, they[82] went to wherever they had come from." '

Chapter 1283(64)

‘Sanjaya said, “O king! The remaining Kourava maharathas heard from the bards that Duryodhana had been brought down. They were mangled with sharp arrows, clubs, spears and javelins. Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma ascended swift steeds and quickly arrived at the field of the encounter. There, they saw Dhritarashtra’s great-souled son, who had been brought down. He was like a giant shala tree in the forest, shattered by the force of a storm. He was like a giant elephant in the forest, slain by a hunter. He was writhing and was covered by copious quantities of blood. It was as if the solar disc had been brought down. It was as if a giant tempest had arisen and had dried up the ocean. It was as if the disc of the full moon in the sky had been covered by mist. He was mighty-armed and like an elephant in valour, but was covered in dust. He was surrounded by a large number of fierce demons and predatory beasts in every direction, as if they were servants greedy for riches, surrounding the best of kings. There was a frown on his face and his eyes were dilated in rage. That tiger among men was like a tiger that had been brought down. They saw the great archer, the king, lying down on the ground. Kripa and the other rathas were extremely stupefied. They descended from their chariots and rushed towards the king. They saw Duryodhana and sat down on the ground, around him.

‘ “O great king! Drona’s son’s eyes were full of tears and he sighed. He spoke to the best of the Bharata lineage, the lord of all the kings on earth. ‘There is no doubt that there is nothing that is permanent in the world of men. O tiger among men! You are lying down thus, covered in dust. O king! You had earlier commanded the earth. O Indra among kings! How is it that you are alone in this deserted forest now? I do not see Duhshasana, or maharatha Karna. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All your well-wishers aren’t here either. It is a great sorrow that the ways of Yama can never be known. You possessed all the worlds. Yet you are lying down, covered in dust. This scorcher of enemies was foremost among those whose heads had been consecrated.[83] Behold the course of destiny. He is covered with grass and dust now. O king! Where is your sparkling umbrella and whisk now? O supreme among kings! Where has your large army gone? It is indeed impossible to fathom the course and cause and effect, since you, who were the preceptor of all the worlds, have now been reduced to this state. Everything on earth is temporary. It is seen that only prosperity and beauty are permanent.[84] You used to rival Shakra and we now see you reduced to this terrible state.' O king! On hearing his words, which were especially full of sorrow, you son spoke these words, appropriate to the occasion. He shed tears of sorrow and wiped them away from his eyes with his hands. The lord of men spoke to those brave ones, Kripa and the others. 'It has been said that the creator has ordained such a dharma for those who are mortal. In the course of time, death confronts all beings. In the presence of all of you, it now confronts me. I have ruled over the earth and have now been reduced to this state. It is through good fortune that I have not been defeated by the enemy in battle. It is through good fortune that I have been brought down, especially through wickedness and deception. It is through good fortune that, while engaged in fighting, I have always exhibited enterprise. After my relatives and allies have been slain in the battle, it is through good fortune that I have been brought down. It is through good fortune that I see that you have escaped from this destruction of men, and are well and hale. This is great delight for me. Because you are my well-wishers, do not torment yourself at my death. If the Vedas are proof, I have obtained eternal worlds. I know about the powers of the infinitely energetic Krishna. He has ensured that I did not deviate from following the dharma of kshatriyas. I have obtained him. Therefore, I have nothing to sorrow about. You have done what those like you should have done. You have always sought to ensure my victory. But destiny is impossible to cross.' O Indra among kings! Having spoken these words, with tears in his eyes, the king became silent. He was severely agitated by agony.

' "Drona's son blazed up in anger, like the fire at the time of the destruction of the universe. Overcome by rage, he pressed one hand with the other hand. His voice choking with tears, he spoke these words to the king. 'My father was slain by those inferior ones, through an extremely cruel deed. O king! But that did not torment me as much as I am suffering now. O lord! Listen to these words. I am swearing this truthfully, on the sacrifices I have performed, the donations, the dharma and the good deeds. While Vasudeva looks on, I will use every means possible to convey all the Panchalas to the abode of the lord of the dead today. O great king! You should grant me the permission.' Having heard the words of Drona's son, which brought pleasure to his mind, Kourava spoke these words to Kripa. 'O preceptor! Quickly bring a pot full of water.' On hearing the king's words, the supreme among brahmanas followed his instructions. He brought a pot full of water and approached the king. O great king! O lord of the earth! Your son spoke these words. 'O foremost among brahmanas! On my instructions, let Drona's fortunate son be consecrated as the commander, if you wish to do that which brings me pleasure. On the instructions of a king, even a brahmana can fight, especially one who follows the dharma of kshatriyas. That is what those who are learned about dharma say.' On hearing the king's words and following the king's instructions, Kripa Sharadvata consecrated Drona's son as the commander. O great king! Having been thus consecrated, he embraced the best of kings. Roaring like a lion and making the directions resound, he departed. O Indra among kings! Duryodhana was covered with blood. He passed the night, which was dreadful to all beings. O king! Those warriors quickly left. Their minds were overcome with grief and they were immersed in their thoughts." '

This ends Shalya Parva.

Section Seventy-Eight

Souptika Parva

Souptika Parva refers to incidents that take place during the night. The word *supta* is used both as a noun and an adjective and, in this context, means events that take place when people are asleep. The parva is named accordingly. In the 18-parva classification, Souptika Parva is the tenth. In the 100-parva classification, Souptika Parva constitutes Sections 78 to 79. Souptika Parva is a short parva and only has eighteen chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Souptika Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Souptika Parva.

This parva has 515 shlokas and nine chapters.

Chapter 1284(1): 66 shlokas
Chapter 1285(2): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1286(3): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1287(4): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1288(5): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1289(6): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1290(7): 66 shlokas
Chapter 1291(8): 151 shlokas
Chapter 1292(9): 59 shlokas

> *In the night, Ashvatthama sees an owl kill sleeping crows and decides that the Pandavas and Panchalas should be killed in the night, while they are asleep. Kripa and Kritavarma try to dissuade Ashvatthama, but fail. Ashvatthama worships Shiva and Shiva enters his body. Ashvatthama kills Dhrishtadyumna, Shikhandi, Uttamouja, Yudhamanyu, other Panchalas and Droupadi's sons. This information is conveyed to Duryodhana and Duryodhana dies.*

Chapter 1284(1)

‘Sanjaya said, “Together, those brave ones[1] then headed in a southern direction. At a time when the sun was about to set, they reached the camp.[2] They unyoked their mounts and were terrified. They went to a deserted region and entered it. They were not very far away from where the soldiers were encamped. They were mangled, all over their bodies, with sharp weapons. They let out long and warm sighs and thought of the Pandavas. They heard the fierce roars emitted by the Pandavas, who were desirous of victory. Fearing that they would be pursued, they again fled in an eastern direction. However, after travelling for some time, they were thirsty and their mounts were exhausted. Those great archers could not tolerate what had happened and were overcome by anger and vindictiveness. They were tormented that the king[3] had been killed and rested for some time.”

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O Sanjaya! The task that Bhima performed is deserving of honour. He brought down my son, who possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants. He was young and could withstand the *vajra*. All beings were incapable of slaying him. O son of Gavalgana![4] Men cannot overcome destiny. In the battle, the Parthas clashed against my son and brought him down. O Sanjaya! It is certain that my heart is made out of stone. Despite having heard about the death of one hundred of my sons, it has not shattered into one thousand fragments. When their sons have been slain, what will become of this aged couple?[5] I am not interested in dwelling in the dominion of the Pandaveyas. O Sanjaya! How can I? I have myself been a king. I have been the father of a king. How can I be a servant who follows Pandaveya’s commands? O Sanjaya! I have commanded the entire earth and have placed my feet on its head. How can I be reduced to this difficult state of being a servant? O Sanjaya! How can I bear to hear Bhima’s words? He has single-handedly killed one hundred of my sons. The words that the great-souled Vidura spoke have come to be true. O Sanjaya! My son did not act in accordance with those words. O son![6] My son, Duryodhana, has been slain through *adharma*.[7] O Sanjaya! What did Kritavarma, Kripa and Drona’s son do?”

‘Sanjaya replied, “O king! After those on your side had travelled a short distance, they saw a fierce forest. It was full of many trees and creepers. They rested there for some time and those supreme horses obtained water. At the time when the sun was setting, they entered that great forest. It was full of large numbers of many kinds of animals and many birds. There were diverse trees and creepers and it was full of many kinds of predatory beasts. There were many beautiful ponds, full of water. These were covered with hundreds of lotuses and blue lotuses. Having entered that terrible forest, they glanced around in different directions. They saw a banyan tree[8] there, with many thousands of branches. O king! Approaching that banyan tree, those *maharatha*s, best among men, saw that it was the best among trees. They descended from their chariots there and unyoked the horses. O lord! As is decreed, they washed themselves and performed the evening rites. At that time, the sun had reached Mount Asta,[9] the best of mountains. Night, the creator of the entire universe,[10] manifested itself. In every direction, the sky was beautiful to behold. It was ornamented with planets, *nakshatra*s and stars.[11] Beings which are powerful and roam during the night began to howl. Beings that roam during the day were overcome by sleep. Because of the shrieks of beings that roam in the night, it became extremely fearful. Predatory beasts were delighted and the night became terrible. Kritavarma, Kripa and Drona’s son sat down together. It was the beginning of that terrible night and they were overcome by grief and sorrow. They sat down under the banyan tree and sorrowed about the destruction that had encompassed the Kurus and the Pandaveyas. Their limbs were overtaken by sleep and they lay down on the surface of the ground. They were greatly exhausted and wounded by many arrows. Maharatha Kripa and Bhoja[12] succumbed to sleep. They deserved happiness and did not deserve this misery. However, they slept on the surface of the ground. O great king! They slept, overcome by exhaustion and sorrow.

‘“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But Drona’s son was flooded with wrath and intolerance. He could not sleep and sighed like a snake. He could not obtain any sleep and was tormented by anger. The mighty-armed one glanced at the forest, which was terrible to behold. He glanced towards the forest, inhabited by many beings. The mighty-armed one saw the banyan tree, inhabited by tens of thousands of crows.[13] Thousands of crows spent the night there. O Kouravya! Resorting to separate perches, they slept happily. In every direction, those crows were at ease and slept. He[14] saw that an owl, terrible in appearance, suddenly arrived. Its shriek was horrible and it was gigantic in form. Its eyes were tawny and its plumage was reddish brown. Its nose and talons were extremely long. It possessed the speed of Suparna.[15] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Making only the slightest bit of noise, that bird approached the branches of the banyan tree. The bird descended on the branch of the banyan tree and having descended, killed an extremely large number of crows. It tore away the wings of some and severed the heads of others. With the talons on its feet, it broke the legs of others. It was powerful and in a short while, destroyed the ones it could see. O lord of the earth! Every side of that banyan tree was strewn with limbs and bodies. Having slain the crows, the owl was delighted. It was the destroyer of its enemies and had acted against its enemies as it willed.

'"On witnessing the deceitful act perpetrated by the owl in the night, Drona's son began to think and arrived at a conclusion. 'For the battle, this bird has given me an instruction. I wish to destroy the enemy and it is my view that the time has come. The victorious Pandavas are incapable of being slain by me. They are powerful and full of enterprise. They are strikers who accomplish their objectives. But, in the king's[16] presence, I pledged to kill them. I will destroy myself, like an insect engaged in entering a fire. If I fight through fair means, there is no doubt that I will lose my life. However, there will be success through deceit and great destruction of the enemy. People who are skilled about sacred texts also abundantly praise certain methods over those that are uncertain. There will be words of censure and reprimand from the worlds. But a man who has embarked on the dharma of kshatriyas must bear them. The Pandavas, firm in their enmity, have committed acts of deceit at every step, even though they have been censured and reprimanded by everyone. On this, those who have thought about dharma have sung a song earlier and it has been heard. They knew about what was right and proper and recounted these shlokas. "The forces of the enemy must be struck, whether they are exhausted, shattered, eating, retreating or entering.[17] Whether they are sleeping in the middle of the night, whether their paths of progress have been destroyed, whether their warriors have been slain and whether the forces are hesitant or not, one must act in the same way.”’ Thinking in this way, Drona’s powerful son resolved to slay the Pandu and Panchala warriors while they slept.

‘“Having arrived at this cruel decision and thinking about it repeatedly, he awoke Bhoja and his maternal uncle,[18] who were asleep and told them. They were overcome with shame and did not reply. Having thought for some time, in a voice that was distracted and choking with tears, he[19] said, ‘King Duryodhana was immensely strong and the only brave one. He has been killed. It is for his sake that we were engaged in this enmity with the Pandavas. He was the lord of eleven armies.[20] He fought single-handedly with many wicked ones and was brought down by Bhimasena, who acted with the valour of a shudra. Vrikodara also performed an inferior and extremely cruel deed. He kicked the head of one who had been consecrated with his feet. The Panchalas are roaring, singing and laughing at this. In their joy, they are blowing on hundreds of conch shells and beating on their drums. That tumultuous sound of musical instruments is mixing with the blare of conch shells. Those fierce sounds are borne by the wind and are filling the directions. The horses are neighing and the elephants are trumpeting. The brave ones are roaring like lions and that great sound can be heard. From the eastern direction,[21] those fierce sounds of rejoicing can be heard. The clatter of chariot wheels can be heard and it makes the body hair stand up. The Pandavas created great carnage among the sons of Dhritarashtra and the three of us are the only ones who have survived. Some of them possessed the life force of one hundred elephants. Some of them were skilled in the use of all kinds of weapons. But they have been killed by the Pandaveyas. I think that this is destiny. There is no doubt that deeds lead to such an end. Even if one performs extremely difficult deeds, this is the outcome of that. If your wisdom has not been clouded by your confusion, given this great calamity, decide and tell us about the best course of action.’”’

Chapter 1285(2)

'"Kripa said, 'O lord! Your words are full of reason and we have heard everything that you have said. O mighty-armed one! But listen to some words I am about to tell you. All men are tied down by two things, restrictions[22] and deeds. There is nothing superior to destiny and human action. O supreme one! Success does not come from destiny, to the exclusion of deeds. Nor do deeds alone succeed. Success comes from the union of the two. Everything, whether it is superior or inferior, is tied down by these two. Whether it is engagement, or whether it is withdrawal, everything is seen to depend on these.[23] What fruits are obtained when rain showers down on a mountain? What fruits are obtained when rain showers down on a ploughed field? Both exertion with an unfavourable destiny and a favourable destiny without exertion are always unsuccessful. What I have said earlier is correct. If the destiny of rain showers down on a field that has been properly tilled, seedlings of great qualities result. Human success is like that. Sometimes, having made up its mind, destiny follows its own course. However, according to their capacity, the wise resort to manliness. O bull among men! All human objectives are accomplished by those two.[24] Engagement and withdrawal are seen to be the result of this. One can resort to manliness, but success depends on destiny. One undertakes tasks based on that and consequent fruits follow. In this world, it is seen that the enterprise of skilled humans, if unaccompanied by destiny, are completely unsuccessful. That is the reason why lazy and ignorant men disapprove of enterprise. But this does not appeal to those who are wise. On earth, deeds are often seen to be unsuccessful. However, the lack of action is also seen to lead to the great fruit of misery. No one can be seen to obtain what he desires without action, nor is there one who obtains nothing after exertion. An industrious person is capable of sustaining life. A lazy person never obtains happiness. In this mortal world, it is often seen that industrious people want to ensure their own welfare. If an industrious person undertakes action and fails to obtain the fruits, he is not reprimanded in the slightest possible way. However, if one does not undertake action and yet obtains fruits, he is usually censured and hated. A person who disregards this and acts in a contrary way, injures himself. That is what intelligent people say. Enterprise does not give rise to fruits because of two reasons, either because manliness is lacking, or because destiny is deficient. If there is a lack of enterprise, no task ever becomes successful. If an industrious and skilled person acts, after bowing down to destiny, the accomplishment of objectives is never baffled. This is also true of those who serve the elders and after asking them, act in accordance with their beneficial words. If, after asking those who are revered by the aged, one resorts to enterprise, one always obtains supreme success. It is said that this is the root of success. If one listens to the words of elders and then engages in tasks, one soon obtains all the fruits. However, a man who seeks to obtain his objective because of passion, anger, fear and avarice has no control and is soon dislodged from his prosperity. This Duryodhana sought to obtain his objective because of his greed. He was not far-sighted. He began a task that was not approved of. He was foolish and did not think. He disregarded the beneficial words of the intelligent and sought the counsel of those who were wicked. Though he was dissuaded, he engaged in an enmity with the Pandavas, who were superior to him in qualities. Right from the beginning, he was evil in conduct and could not control his meanness. He did not follow the advice of his friends and has been tormented through this catastrophe. We also followed that wicked man. That is the reason we have confronted this great and terrible calamity. This great calamity has overtaken me now. Even if I use my intelligence, I cannot fathom what is good for us. A man who is confused should ask his learned well-wishers. Having asked them, he should act in accordance with their words. Therefore, let us unite and go to Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and the immensely intelligent Vidura. Let us ask them. Asked by us, they will tell us what is beneficial for us next. We should then act according to what they say. That is my firm view. One should never embark on a task that will lead to disaster. If one resorts to enterprise and that task is unsuccessful, one should certainly deduce that the task is not favoured by destiny.’”’

Chapter 1286(3)

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! On hearing Kripa’s auspicious words, which were full of dharma and artha, Ashvatthama was overcome with sorrow and grief. He burnt with misery, like a blazing fire. He formed a cruel resolution in his mind and replied to both of them. ‘The quality of intelligence varies from man to man. But depending on his own wisdom, each one is satisfied with what he has. In this world, everyone thinks his own intelligence to be supreme. Each person reveres his own understanding and praises it a lot. Each person bases himself on praising his own wisdom. Everyone criticizes the intelligence of others and always honours and praises his own. To accomplish an objective, if they hold similar views, they are then satisfied with each other and show each other great honour. But when, because of destiny, those same men face a hardship, they oppose each other’s understanding. This is especially the case because human intelligence is affected by lack of thought. Since the wisdom is clouded, their understanding differs. A skilled physician diagnoses the disease properly and then applies a medicine to correctly cure it. In the same way, men use their intelligence to accomplish their objective. Even if they use their own wisdom, they may be censured by other men. On this earth, when one is young, one’s intelligence is often clouded. It is different in middle age. And in old age, a different kind of intelligence is agreeable. O Bhoja![25] When one confronts great calamity or when prosperity is equally great, it is seen that a man’s intelligence is confounded. In the same person, depending on the state of intelligence then, what is once regarded as wisdom at one time is regarded as the reverse at another. Having used one’s wisdom and intelligence to determine what is virtuous, one should then try to accomplish the objective. O Bhoja! All men determine what is virtuous and then cheerfully act accordingly, even if that action leads to death. Having determined their own reasoning and wisdom, all men act in different kinds of ways, thinking these to be beneficial. As a result of the calamity, I have arrived at a resolution today and I will tell both of you about this. It will dispel my sorrow. Having created beings, Prajapati[26] ordained tasks for them. He assigned different qualities for each of the varnas —supreme self-control to brahmanas, great energy to kshatriyas, skill to vaishyas and servitude of all varnas to shudras. A brahmana without self-control is not virtuous. A kshatriya without energy is the worst. An unskilled vaishya is censured, as is a shudra who is not devoted. I have been born in a brahmana lineage that is greatly revered. However, because of misfortune, I am engaged in the dharma of kshatriyas. Knowing the dharma of kshatriyas, if I now resort to the conduct of brahmanas and perform an extremely great deed, that will not be virtuous for me. I have wielded a divine bow and celestial weapons in the battle. Having seen my father slain, how will I speak in any assembly? Today, I will follow my desires. I will resort to the dharma of kshatriyas and follow in the footsteps of the king[27] and my immensely radiant father. The Panchalas desired victory and will sleep comfortably tonight. They will cast aside their armour and will be full of delight. They will think that they have defeated us and will be tired and exhausted. While they are comfortably sleeping in their respective positions in their camps, I will perform the extremely difficult task of attacking their camp. I will attack their camp when they are senseless, as if dead. I will slaughter them with my valour, like Maghavan[28] against the *danava*s. Today, I will use my valour and slaughter all of them together, with Dhrishtadyumna at the forefront, like a blazing fire amidst kindling. O supreme ones! Having slain the Panchalas, I will obtain peace. While roaming around amidst the Panchalas and slaughtering the Panchalas, I will be like the enraged Rudra, the wielder of the Pinaka,[29] acting against beings. Having severed and slain all the Panchalas today, I will then wrathfully take the battle to the sons of Pandu and afflict them. Today, I will strew the earth with the bodies of all the Panchalas. I will strike them down, one by one, and free myself of my debt to my father. The footsteps of Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma and Saindhava are difficult to follow, but the Panchalas will tread along those. Tonight, before the night is over, I will use my strength to grind down the head of Dhrishtadyumna, king of the Panchalas, treating him like an animal. O Goutama![30] While the sons of the Panchalas and the Pandus are sleeping tonight, I will use my sharp sword to crush them. O immensely intelligent one![31] When the Panchala soldiers are sleeping tonight, I will slaughter them. Having succeeded in my task, I will be happy.’”’

Chapter 1287(4)

'"Kripa said, 'O one without decay! It is through good fortune that you have decided to take revenge. Even the wielder of the vajra himself is incapable of restraining you. When it is morning, both of us will follow and accompany you. However, cast aside your armour and standard and rest tonight. When you advance against the enemy, I and Satvata Kritavarma will armour ourselves and follow you on our chariots. O best among *ratha*s! United with us, you will use your valour to slaughter the enemy, the Panchalas and their followers, in the encounter. You are capable of doing this through your prowess. But rest during the night. O son![32] You have not slept for a long time. Sleep during this night. O one who grants honours! You are exhausted and without sleep. Rest, and then clash against the enemy in the battle. There is no doubt that you will slay them. You are the best among rathas! When you grasp your supreme weapons, no one is capable of defeating you, not even the gods, with Agni's son.[33] When you advance angrily in the battle, with Kripa and Kritavarma, which warrior is capable of fighting against Drona's son. Not even the king of the gods. Let us overcome our exhaustion and lack of sleep. Let us get over our anxiety. When the night is over and it is morning, we will kill the enemy. There is no doubt that you possess divine weapons. So do I. Satvata is a great archer and is always skilled in fighting. O son! We will unite and advance against the enemy. We will strike and kill them in the battle and obtain complete happiness. However, you should rest first. Sleep happily during the night. O supreme among men! When you advance, Kritavarma and I will unite and follow you. We are archers and can scorch the enemy. When you advance swiftly on your chariot, we will armour ourselves and station ourselves on our chariots. You will go to the camp[34] and proclaim your name in the battle. You will fight against the enemy and cause great carnage. When it is morning and the day is clear, you will create that carnage. You will roam around, like Shakra destroying the great asuras. You are capable of destroying the Panchala formations in the battle. You will be like the enraged slayer of all the danavas,[35] against the army of the *daitya*s. When you are united with me in the battle and are protected by Kritavarma, the lord who is the wielder of the vajra is himself incapable of withstanding you. O son! Neither I, nor Kritavarma, will ever retreat from an encounter without having defeated the Pandus in the battle. We will kill all the inferior and united Panchalas and Pandus in the battle and return. Or we will be killed by them and go to heaven. When it is morning, we will aid you through every possible means. O mighty-armed one! O unblemished one! I am telling you this truthfully.'

'"The maternal uncle of Drona's son thus spoke these beneficial words to him.[36] O king! But having been thus addressed by his maternal uncle, his eyes became red with rage. He replied, 'If a man is afflicted and intolerant, how can he sleep? This is also true of someone who is thinking about artha and kama. Behold. I confront all these four reasons today. Even one of these four can destroy my sleep in the night, not to speak of the grief of someone like me who remembers the slaughter of his father. My heart is tormented now and I can find no peace during the day or at night. In particular, all of you have witnessed the wicked way in which my father was killed and this is tearing at my vitals. On this earth, how can someone like me remain alive even for an instant, after hearing the words the Panchalas spoke to me when Drona was killed? Without killing Dhrishtadyumna, I am not interested in remaining alive. Since he and the united Panchalas killed my father, they deserve to be slain by me. On hearing the lamentations of the king with shattered thighs,[37] is there anyone who is so cruel that his heart will not be tormented? On hearing the piteous words of the king with the shattered thighs, whose eyes will not overflow with tears? While I am alive, the side of my allies has been defeated. This increases my sorrow, like a torrent of water flowing into an ocean. I am single-mindedly focused on this now. How can I sleep happily? They are protected by Vasudeva and Arjuna. O maternal uncle! I think that even the great Indra cannot withstand them. I am incapable of restraining myself from this course of action. Nor do I see anyone in this world who can restrain me from this course of action. The messengers have told me about the defeat of my friends and the victory of the

Pandavas. My heart is tormented. While the enemies are sleeping, I will cause carnage among them today. Then, bereft of fever, I will rest and sleep.’”’

Chapter 1288(5)

'"Kripa replied, 'Men who are not in control of their senses indeed find it difficult to understand everything about dharma and artha, even if they serve these. That is my view. In that way, it is certain that an intelligent person who has not studied humility understands nothing about dharma and artha. A person, who exercises self-control and serves,[38] without countering what is accepted by everyone, learns all the sacred texts and is intelligent. But there may also be an insolent, evil-souled and wicked man. He disregards destiny and what is beneficial and performs many wicked deeds. A well-wisher is a protector and seeks to dissuade from committing sin. One who is dissuaded obtains prosperity. However, one who is not dissuaded faces ill fortune. Just as a person whose intelligence is confused can be restrained through good and bad words, a well-wisher is capable of restraining a person and preventing him from facing a hardship. If an intelligent well-wisher[39] is about to perform a wicked deed, wise ones must use all their capacity to repeatedly restrain him. Therefore, set your mind on what is beneficial and control yourself. O son![40] Act in accordance with my words, so that you do not have to repent later. Following dharma, in this world, the slaughter of those who are sleeping is not applauded. This is also true of those who have cast aside their weapons and have abandoned their chariots and horses, those who say, "I am yours,"[41] those who seek refuge, those who have loosened their hair[42] and those whose mounts have been killed. O lord! The Panchalas have cast aside their armour. All of them will sleep peacefully in the night, unconscious, like those who are dead. If a wicked person acts hostilely against them in that state, it is evident that he will be immersed in a large and fathomless hell, without a boat to aid him. In this world, you are famous as the best among those who know all about weapons. Since you have been born on earth, you have not committed the slightest transgression. When the sun rises tomorrow and illuminates all beings, you will again be like a sun and defeat the enemies in the battle. This reprehensible deed is impossible in someone like you. It will be like a red spot on a white sheet. That is my view.’

‘“Ashvatthama said, ‘O maternal uncle! It is exactly as you have instructed me now. However, they have earlier shattered that bridge[43] into a hundred fragments. In your presence, the lords of the earth have witnessed it. When he had cast aside his weapons, my father was brought down by Dhrishtadyumna. Karna was supreme among rathas. When the wheel of his chariot was submerged and he faced a great difficulty, he was slain by the wielder of Gandiva. In that way, Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, had cast aside his weapons and was without arms. Placing Shikhandi in front of him, the wielder of Gandiva slew him. In that way, Bhurishrava, the great archer, had decided to cast aside his life in the battle. Disregarding the cries of the lords of the earth, Yuyudhana[44] brought him down. In the encounter, Duryodhana clashed against Bhima with the club. While all the lords of the earth looked on, he was brought down through adharma. He was alone there, and was surrounded by many maharathas. That tiger among men was brought down by Bhimasena through adharma. The messengers have recounted the lamentations of the king with shattered thighs. I have heard them and it tore at my vitals. In similar fashion, the wicked Panchalas have also resorted to adharma and have broken the bridge.[45] Why don’t you reprimand those who have broken all the rules? They slew my father. I wish to kill the Panchalas, while they sleep in the night. I do not care whether I am born as a worm or an insect. I will now swiftly do what appeals to me. I will quickly hasten towards that. Otherwise, how can there be sleep? How can there be happiness? I have made up my mind to kill them. The man who can dissuade me has not been born, nor will he be born.’”

‘Sanjaya said, “O great king! Having spoken these words, Drona’s powerful son yoked his horses alone and set out in the direction of the enemy. The lords, the great-minded Bhoja and Sharadvata, spoke to him. ‘Why are you yoking them to your chariot? What do you wish to do? O bull among men! We will accompany you tomorrow. We are with you, in joy and in sorrow. You should not doubt us.’ However, Ashvatthama remembered the slaughter of his father and was enraged. He told them everything about what he desired to do. ‘My father slew hundreds of thousands of warriors with his sharp arrows. When he had cast aside his weapons, he was brought down by Dhrishtadyumna. I will kill him in that situation today, when he has cast aside his armour. A wicked deed will be committed against the wicked son of Panchala. Like an animal, the wicked Panchala will be slain by me today. He will not attain the worlds obtained by those who are killed with weapons. That is my view. Swiftly fasten your armour and seize your swords and bows. O best among rathas! O scorcher of enemies! Wait here for me.' Having spoken these words, he ascended his chariot and left in the direction of the enemy. O king! Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma followed him. Those three advanced in the direction of the enemy. They blazed like fire with kindling in a sacrifice. O lord! They went to the camp, where all the people were sleeping. On his supreme chariot, Drona's son reached the vicinity of the gate."'

Chapter 1289(6)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Sanjaya! On seeing Drona’s son in the vicinity of the gate, what did Bhoja and Kripa do? Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Summoning Kritavarma and maharatha Kripa, Drona’s son approached the gate of the camp, overcome with rage. He saw a gigantic being there, as resplendent as the sun and the moon. He saw him stationed there, guarding the gate, and the sight made the body hair stand up. He was clad in attire made out of tiger skin and copious quantities of blood flowed from it. The upper garment was made out of black antelope skin and a serpent was the sacred thread. The arms were thick and large and wielded many kinds of weapons. A giant snake was like an armlet. His face was like a blazing garland. His gaping and fearsome mouth possessed terrible fangs. He possessed thousands of eyes and was wonderfully ornamented. It is impossible to describe his form or his attire. In every way, the mountains would be shattered if they looked at him. Large flames issued everywhere, from his mouth, his nose, his ears and his thousands of eyes. From those energetic flames, hundreds and thousands of Hrishikeshas[46] emerged, holding conch shells, *chakra*s and clubs. For all the worlds, that extraordinary being was terrifying. On seeing him, Drona’s son was not distressed, but showered him with divine weapons. But the gigantic being devoured all the arrows that were shot by Drona’s son, like the mare-headed fire[47] devouring the agitated waters. On seeing that his torrents of arrows had been rendered unsuccessful, Ashvatthama hurled a blazing javelin that was like the flames of a fire. The javelin blazed at the tip. But striking him, it was shattered. It was like a giant meteor, striking against the sun at the time of the destruction of a *yuga* and falling down from the firmament. Ashvatthama swiftly unsheathed a shining sword. It possessed a golden handle and was as radiant as the sky. It was like a flaming serpent emerging from a hole. The intelligent one then hurled that supreme sword at the being. On striking against the being, it disappeared like a puff of air. Drona’s son became angry. He hurled a flaming club that was like Indra’s standard. However, the being devoured this too. When all the weapons were destroyed in this way, Ashvatthama looked around and saw that the sky was covered with many Janardanas. Devoid of all weapons, Drona’s son beheld this extraordinary sight. He remembered Kripa’s words and repenting, said, ‘He who does not listen to the pleasant and beneficial words of well-wishers, has to sorrow later, when he is overtaken by a calamity. I did not listen to their words. A person who is driven by violence and seeks to kill, violating the injunctions of the sacred texts, is dislodged from the path of dharma and treads along crooked paths. One should not release weapons at cattle, brahmanas, the wives of kings, friends, a mother, a preceptor, an aged one, a child, one suffering from disease, one who is blind, one who is sleeping, one who is frightened, one who has just awoken, one who is intoxicated, one who is a lunatic and one who is distracted. In earlier times, the preceptors have always instructed men in this way. But I have transgressed the eternal path indicated in the sacred texts. I have begun to tread along a path that should not be followed and have faced this terrible calamity. The learned ones have said that there is no calamity greater than retreating from a great task out of fear, once one has embarked upon it. Using my strength and prowess, I am unable to accomplish the task I wished to. It is said that human tasks are not superior to destiny. A man may perform a task. However, if destiny does not render it successful, it is said that he is dislodged from the path of dharma and confronts a calamity. When one begins a task, but withdraws from it because of fear, learned ones say that this is known as defeat. Because my attempt was evil, this great fear has come upon me. Otherwise, Drona’s son would never have retreated from an encounter. This extremely great being has arisen like the staff of destiny. Even though I think about it in every way, I do not understand who he is. It is certain that my wicked intelligence has made me embark on a course of adharma. As a consequence, he is seen to counter me in this way. Therefore, it has been ordained by destiny that I should retreat from this encounter. There is nothing that can be undertaken unless destiny is favourable. Hence, I will now seek refuge with the lord Mahadeva. I will seek refuge with Kapardin,[48] the lord of the gods and Uma’s consort. He will save me from this terrible staff of destiny that is destroying me. He is adorned in a garland of skulls. He is Rudra Hara, who plucked out Bhaga's eyes.[49] That god surpasses all the gods in austerities and in valour. I will therefore seek refuge with Girisha, the wielder of the trident.'"'

Chapter 1290(7)

‘Sanjaya said, “O lord of the earth! Having thought in this way, Drona’s son descended from the seat of his chariot and bowed down in obeisance.

‘“Drona’s son said, ‘I seek refuge with Ugra,[50] Sthanu,[51] Rudra, Sharva, Ishana, Ishvara, Girisha,[52] the god Varada,[53] Bhava,[54] the undecaying Bhavana,[55] Shitikantha,[56] Aja,[57] Shakra, Kratha, Kratuhara,[58] Hara, Vishvarupa,[59] Virupaksha,[60] Bahurupa,[61] Umapati,[62] Shmashanavasina,[63] Dripta, the lord who is Mahaganapati,[64] Khattangadharina,[65] Munda,[66] Jatila[67] and Brahmachari. He is the one who has to be carefully thought of in the mind. He is the one who those of limited intelligence find extremely difficult to attain. In the sacrifice, I offer myself as a gift to the destroyer of Tripura.[68] He is the one who has been praised. He is the one who deserves to be praised. I am praising the irresistible one, who has hides as his garment. O Vilohita![69] O Nilakantha![70] O Aprikta![71] O Durnivara![72] O Shukra![73] O Vishvasrija![74] O brahman! O brahmachari! You are the one who follows vows. You are always engaged in austerities. You are infinite. You are the objective of austerities. You have many forms. You are the lord of ganas. You are three-eyed. You are the one who loves your attendants. You are the one towards whom the lord of the ganas always looks.[75] You are the lord of Gouri’s heart.[76] You are the father of Kumara. You are tawny. You have a bull as your mount. Your body is like your garment. You are extremely fierce. You are eager to adorn Uma. You are greater than everything. You are supreme. There is nothing that is greater than you. You are the lord of all arrows and weapons. You are the southern horizon. You are clad in golden armour. You are the god who is adorned with the moon on his head. O god! I meditate supremely on you. I am facing this great calamity now, one that is extremely difficult to counter. You are the purest of the pure. I am offering all the elements in my body as a gift to you in this sacrifice.’ On realizing that this was the great-souled one’s intention and that he had made up his mind to give himself up, a golden altar appeared before him.[77]

'"O king! A wonderful fire manifested itself on the altar. The flames enveloped the directions, the sub-directions and the firmament. Many beings also manifested themselves there. They possessed flaming mouths and eyes. They had many feet, heads and arms. They were like elephants and mountains, with giant faces. There were forms like dogs, boars and camels. There were mouths like horses, jackals and cows. There were faces like bears and cats and mouths like tigers and leopards. There were faces like crows, mouths like apes and faces like parrots. Some possessed mouths like giant snakes. Others had mouths that were white in complexion and like those of swans. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some possessed mouths like woodpeckers and faces like blue jays. There were mouths like tortoises and alligators, mouths like porpoises. Some had mouths like giant sharks.[78] Others had mouths like whales. Some had mouths like lions, or faces like curlews. Others possessed mouths like doves or pigeons. Others had mouths like snakes. Some had ears on their hands. Others had thousands of eyes and hundreds of stomachs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were those without flesh, with mouths like wolves[79] and mouths like hawks. Some had no heads. O king! Some had terrible mouths like bears. Eyes and tongues blazed. There were others with flaming mouths. O king! There were others with faces like sheep and mouths like goats. There were those with the complexion of conch shells, with mouths like conch shells and ears like conch shells. Some wore garlands of conch shells. Others had voices like conch shells. Some had matted hair, five tufts, or were shaven. Others had lean stomachs. There were four teeth and four tongues. Some had conical ears, or were diademed. O Indra among kings! Some wore grass on their bodies. Others had curly hair. Some wore headdresses and crowns. Others had beautiful mouths and were ornamented. Some wore lotuses and white lotuses, others were decorated with lilies. They were full of greatness and there were hundreds and thousands of them. Some had *shataghnis*[80] and chakras in their hands. Others had clubs in their hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were those with catapults and nooses in their hands, others with bludgeons in their hands. Some girded quivers on their backs, full of colourful arrows. They were indomitable in battle. They were with standards, pennants, bells and battleaxes. Some raised giant nooses in their hands. Others had maces in their hands. Some had pillars in their hands. Others had swords in their hands. There were those with snakes around their crowns. Others had giant snakes as their armlets and were adorned in colourful ornaments. Some were covered with dust. Others were covered with mud. All of them were attired in white garments and garlands. Some had blue limbs. Others possessed orange limbs. Some had faces that were shaven. With complexions like gold, those cheerful companions played on musical instruments like drums, conch shells, smaller drums, *jharjhara*s,[81] other drums and trumpets. Some sang. Others danced. Those immensely strong ones jumped, leapt and whirled around. They ran swiftly and fiercely, the hair raised up by the wind. They were like crazy and giant elephants and roared repeatedly. They were extremely terrible, fearsome in form. They had spears and swords in their hands. Their garments were of many different colours. They were adorned with colourful garlands and unguents. They wore beautiful armlets decorated with jewels and their arms were raised up. They were brave and the slayers of enemies. They could withstand. But it was impossible to withstand them. They drank blood and ate fat and marrow. They sustained themselves on flesh and entrails. Some had hair that was tied up in tufts. Some had earrings. Some were thin. Others had thick stomachs. Some were extremely short. Others were extremely tall. Some were strong and extremely terrible. Some were terrible to look at. Others had drooping lips. Some possessed long penises. Others had knotted bones. Some wore extremely expensive crowns. Others were matted or shaven. They were capable of bringing down the sun, the moon, the planets and the nakshatras on the ground. If they so desired, they were capable of slaughtering the four types of beings.[82] They were always without fear and were capable of tolerating Hara’s frowns. They were successful in doing whatever they wanted. They were the lords of the lords of the three worlds. They were always engaged in sporting. They were the lords of speech. They were always devoid of malice. Having obtained the eight kinds of prosperity,[83] they were no longer overcome by wonder. However, the illustrious Hara was always amazed at their deeds. He was always devotedly worshipped by them in thought, words and deeds. In thought, words and deeds, he devotedly protected them like sons. There are other angry ones who always drank the blood and fat of haters of the brahman. They always drank *soma*, which has four kinds of taste.[84] They worshipped the wielder of the trident through learning, brahmacharya, austerities and control and obtained Bhava’s presence. The illustrious Maheshvara, with Parvati, oversees the past, the present and the future. With the large number of demons, the illustrious lord enjoys the past, the present and the future.

‘“They laughed in many kinds of ways. They slapped their arms and roared loudly. They played musical instruments. All this made the universe resound. Those extremely radiant ones praised Mahadeva and approached Drona’s great-souled son, increasing his glory. They wished to test his energy and witness the carnage in the night. They had terrible and fierce clubs, tridents and swords in their hands. Those large numbers of demons were terrible in form and approached from every direction. On seeing them, fear was generated in the three worlds. However, on seeing them, the immensely strong one wasn’t distressed. Drona’s son had a bow in his hand. There were guards made from the skins of lizards on his fingers. He offered himself as a sacrifice to the one to whom sacrifices were offered.[85] Bows and arrows were the sacred kindling there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that act of sacrifice, his own self was the oblation. Drona’s powerful son used mantras of pacification. In great anger, he offered himself as a sacrifice to the one to whom sacrifices are offered. The undecaying Rudra is the performer of terrible deeds. Having performed this terrible deed, he joined his hands in salutation. Worshipping the great-souled one, he said, ‘I have been born in the lineage of Angirasa. I am offering myself as a sacrifice. O illustrious one! I am offering myself as an oblation into the fire. Please accept me as a sacrifice. O Mahadeva! Devotedly, I am offering myself to you, as supreme kindling. With you in front of me, I am doing this in this time of difficulty. You are the soul of the universe. All beings are in you and you are in all beings. All the chief qualities are combined and vested in you. O lord! You are the refuge of all beings. I am offering myself as an oblation to you. O god! Accept me, since I am unable to defeat the enemy.’ Having spoken these words, Drona’s son ascended the altar, into the blazing fire. Overcome by anger, he controlled his soul and entered the one with the black trails.[86] He presented himself as an oblation, with his arms raised up.

'"On seeing him immobile, the illustrious Mahadeva himself smiled and said, 'Krishna, who is unblemished in his deeds, has worshipped me through truth, purity, sincerity, yoga, austerities, rituals, endurance, devotion, fortitude, intelligence and speech. Because of this, there is no one who is dearer to me than Krishna. I have tested you so as to show him honour. I have protected the Panchalas and exhibited many different kinds of maya. I have protected the Panchalas and have shown him honour. However, they have been overtaken by destiny and can no longer remain alive now.' Having spoken these words to the great archer, the illustrious one entered his body.[87] Before entering, he gave him a supreme and sparkling sword. Penetrated by that illustrious one, he again blazed in energy. Because of the energy created by the divinity, his body became powerful. As he attacked and advanced towards the camp of the enemy, many invisible beings protected him. He was like the lord of the gods[88] himself."'

Chapter 1291(8)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “When Drona’s maharatha son headed towards the camp, were Kripa and Bhoja frightened? Did they retreat? Were they restrained by the inferior guards and did they run away? Did those maharathas think that they[89] were irresistible and refrain? Or did they crush the camp and kill the Somakas and the Pandavas? Did they follow Duryodhana’s supreme footsteps in the encounter? Were they slain by the Panchalas and did they lie down on the ground? What tasks did those two accomplish? O Sanjaya! Tell me that.”

‘Sanjaya replied, “Drona’s great-souled son headed towards the camp and Kripa and Kritavarma stationed themselves at the gate of the camp. O king! On seeing that those two maharathas were ready to make efforts, Ashvatthama was delighted and softly spoke these words. ‘If the two of you try, you are sufficient to destroy all the kshatriyas, not to speak of the remaining warriors, especially when they are asleep. I will penetrate the camp and roam around like Death, so that not a single man escapes from me with his life.’ Having said this, Drona’s son penetrated the large camp of the Parthas. Casting aside all fear, he entered through a spot where there was no gate. The mighty-armed one knew the spot and entered. He quietly approached Dhrishtadyumna’s abode. Having performed great deeds in the battle, they[90] were extremely exhausted and slept at ease, surrounded by their own soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He entered Dhrishtadyumna’s abode. Drona’s son saw that Panchala[91] was lying down, as if he was dead. He was on a large and excellent bed, covered by an expensive and silken sheet. This was covered with excellent garlands and was fragrant with the aroma of incense. The great-souled one was calmly sleeping, devoid of any fear. O lord of the earth! He awoke the sleeping one with a kick of his foot. With the touch of the foot, the one who was indomitable in battle awoke. The one with an immeasurable soul recognized Drona’s maharatha son. As he was rising from his bed, the immensely strong

Ashvatthama seized him by his hair and pressed him down on the ground with his hands. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was crushed down with great force. Because of consternation and sleep, Panchala was unable to resist then. O king! He pressed him down on his throat and his chest with both his feet. Though he roared and writhed, he[92] was about to kill him like an animal. He tore at Drona's son with his nails and gently said, 'O son of the preceptor! Slay me with your weapon. Do not delay. O best among men! By doing this, let me go the worlds of the virtuous.' Having heard the words that he had spoken, Drona's son replied, 'O worst of your lineage! There is no world for those who slay their preceptor. O evil-minded one! You do not deserve to be killed by any weapon.' Having spoken thus, like a lion against an elephant, he angrily struck the brave one in his inner organs with extremely fierce kicks of his feet. O great king! As he was being killed in that abode, the brave one's cries woke up the women and the guards. They saw that his body was being crushed by someone with superhuman valour and took that being to be a demon. Therefore, out of fear, they did not raise an alarm. Having dispatched him to Yama's eternal abode, the energetic one approached his extremely handsome chariot and ascended it. O king! He emerged from that abode and made the directions resound. The powerful one left for other parts of the camp on the chariot, wishing to kill the enemy.

'"When Drona's maharatha son had left, all the women and the guards let out cries of lamentation. On seeing that the king, Dhrishtadyumna, had been killed, they were overcome with great sorrow. On hearing their shrieks, all the kshatriyas awoke. The bulls among kshatriyas swiftly approached and asked, 'What has happened? Tell us.' O king! The women had been terrified at the sight of Bharadvaja's descendant.[93] In distressed voices that choked with tears, they said, 'Swiftly follow him. We do not know whether it was a *rakshasa* or a human. He has killed the king of Panchala and is now stationed on his chariot.' At this, the foremost among warriors violently surrounded him. On seeing that they were descending on him, he uprooted all of them with *rudrastra*.[94] Having slain Dhrishtadyumna and all his followers, he saw that Uttamouja was sleeping nearby, on his bed. He attacked him and forcefully pressed down on his throat and his chest with his feet. He thus killed that scorcher of enemies, while he was shrieking. Thinking that he had been killed by a rakshasa, Yudhamanyu approached. He raised a club and powerfully struck Drona's son in the chest. However, he[95] rushed towards him, and seizing him, flung him down on the ground. As he writhed, he slew him like an animal. Having slain that brave one, he attacked the others. O Indra among kings! Wherever those maharathas slept, quivered, trembled and strove, he killed them like animals at a sacrifice. He grasped his sword and separately killed many others. Skilled in fighting with the sword, he roamed along different paths in various parts of the camp. He saw army divisions and killed those who were sleeping in the midst of those divisions. They were exhausted and had cast aside their weapons. He uprooted all of them in a short instant. With that supreme sword, he brought down warriors, horses and elephants. All his limbs were covered with blood and he was like Death, created by Destiny. Drona's son raised his sword and made them tremble. He struck them with three different motions of the sword[96] and was covered in blood. He was covered in red and fought with that blazing sword. His form was superhuman and he was resplendent and extremely terrible. O Kouravya! Those who were awakened were confused by the noise. On seeing Drona's son, they were distressed and glanced towards each other. On beholding his form, the kshatriyas, the destroyers of enemies, thought that he was a rakshasa and closed their eyes. Assuming a terrible form like Yama, he roamed around in that camp.

'"He saw Droupadi's sons and the remaining Somakas. O lord of the earth! Frightened by the noise and hearing that Dhrishtadyumna had been killed, Droupadi's maharatha sons grasped bows in their hands. Without any fear, they countered Bharadvaja's son with storms of arrows. The Prabhadrakas awoke. With loud roars, they and Shikhandi struck Drona's son with arrows that possessed stone heads. On seeing that they were raining down showers of arrows, Bharadvaja's descendant roared powerfully and wished to kill the ones who were extremely difficult to defeat. Remembering the death of his father, he became extremely angry. He swiftly descended from his chariot and rushed against them. In that encounter, he picked up a giant shield that had the marks of one thousand moons and also a large and shining sword that was decorated with gold. With that sword, the powerful one roamed around and attacked Droupadi's sons. O king! In that encounter, the tiger among men struck Prativindhya[97] in the abdomen and killed him. Slain, he fell down on the ground. The powerful Sutasoma[98] struck Drona’s son with a javelin and again attacked Drona’s son with a sword. However, the bull among men severed Sutasoma’s arm, with the sword in it. He struck him again in the side and with his heart shattered, he fell down. Nakula’s valiant son, Shatanika, picked up a chariot wheel. Using both his hands, he flung it with great force and struck him[99] in the chest. However, after the wheel had been flung, the brahmana attacked Shatanika. He lost his senses and fell down on the ground and he severed his head.[100] Shrutakarma[101] picked up a club and attacked him. He attacked Drona’s son and severely struck him on the left side of his head. However, with that supreme sword, he struck Shrutakarma on his face. Slain and bereft of his senses, he fell down on the ground, with his face disfigured. At this sound, the brave Shrutakirti[102] seized a giant bow. He attacked Ashvatthama and countered him with a shower of arrows. However, he countered that shower of arrows with his shield. O king! He then severed his head, with the earrings, from his body. The slayer of Bhishma,[103] together with all the Prabhadrakas, armed themselves with many weapons and attacked the brave and powerful one from all sides. He[104] used his bow to strike him between the eyebrows with an arrow with a stone head. At this, Drona’s extremely powerful son was filled with great rage. He attacked Shikhandi and cut him down into two pieces with his sword. Having killed Shikhandi, the scorcher of enemies was enraged and powerfully attacked all the large numbers of Prabhadrakas. He also attacked the remaining troops in Virata’s army. Wherever the immensely strong one saw the sons, grandsons and well-wishers of Drupada, he created a terrible carnage. He attacked many other men and killed them, one after the other. Drona’s son was skilled in executing motions with the sword and struck them down with his sword.

‘“They saw Kali,[105] with red eyes and a red mouth, adorned in red garlands and smeared with crimson paste. She was attired in a single red garment and had a noose in her hand. She had a tuft on her head. They saw that dark night stationed before them, as if she was smiling. She seemed to have tied up men, horses and elephants in a terrible bond. She seemed to tie up many dead bodies with nooses in their hair and bear them away. O venerable one! The foremost among warriors were sleeping and in their dreams saw them borne away by the night, as they were constantly struck by Drona’s son. Since the battle between the Kuru and the Pandava soldiers had commenced, they had always seen that female deity and Drona’s son in their dreams. They had already been slain by destiny and later, they were brought down by Drona’s son. He roared frightfully and terrified all the beings. Those brave ones remembered the Kali that they had seen earlier. As they were oppressed by destiny, that is what they thought. Because of those roars, hundreds and thousands of archers in the camp of the Pandaveyas woke up. Like Death created by Destiny, he severed the feet of some and the thighs of others. He shattered the flanks of others. As they were crushed severely, they emitted piteous sounds of lamentation. O lord! The earth was covered by them and there were others who were crushed by elephants and horses. Some exclaimed, ‘What is this? Who is this? What is this noise? Who has done this?’ As they wailed thus, Drona’s son became their destroyer. He angrily destroyed the Pandus and the Srinjayas, who were without weapons and armour. Drona’s son, supreme among strikers, dispatched them to the world of the dead. They were without weapons and awoke, overcome by fear. Some were blind with sleep and bereft of their senses. They seemed to vanish there.[106] Some were paralysed in their thighs. Others were full of lassitude and lost their energy. They lamented in great fright and began to kill each other. Drona’s son once again ascended his chariot, the one that made a thunderous noise. With the bow in his hand, he used arrows to dispatch many others to Yama’s eternal abode. Other best among men sought to approach him again. But while they were still at a distance, those brave ones were offered up to that terrible night. He crushed many with that fierce chariot. He showered the enemy with many diverse kinds of arrows. Yet again, he grasped that extremely wonderful shield marked with the signs of one hundred moons[107] and the sword that possessed the complexion of the sky, and roamed around. In that encounter in the camp, Drona’s son was indomitable. O Indra among kings! He agitated them, like an elephant in a large lake. O king! Many warriors were awoken by the noise, still somewhat unconscious. They were afflicted by sleep. They were afflicted by fear. They ran around, here and there. There were those who couldn’t find a voice and others who shrieked. There were those who screamed a lot and those who screamed little. Some could not find their weapons and their garments. Others had dishevelled hair and could not recognize each other. There were others who awoke and were terrified. Some wandered around aimlessly. Some released excrement. Others released urine. O Indra among kings! The horses and the elephants tore off their bonds. Others clung to each other and crated a great melee. Some men were frightened and lay down on the ground. As they fell down there, the elephants and the horses crushed them.

'"O bull among men! While this was going on, the rakshasas were satisfied and screamed in delight. O best among the Bharata lineage! O king! The large number of delighted demons emitted roars and filled all the directions and the sky with that loud noise. On hearing the woes of lamentation, the elephants and horses were frightened. O king! They freed themselves and as they fled, they crushed the men in the camp. As they ran here and there, a dust arose from their feet and this doubled the darkness of the night in the camp. Because of the darkness that was created, all the people were confounded. They could no longer recognize their fathers and their sons. Nor did brothers recognize their brothers. Elephants attacked elephants that were without riders and horses attacked horses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They attacked, broke and crushed each other there. As they were mangled and fell down, they killed each other. As they fell down, they brought down others and crushed them. The men were unconscious, sleepy and covered in darkness. Driven by destiny there, they killed those on their own side. Those in charge of gates abandoned the gates. Those in charge of divisions abandoned the divisions. To the best of their capacity, they fled. They were unconscious and no longer knew the directions. O lord! Without knowing, they destroyed each other. Their senses robbed by destiny, they cried out for their fathers and their sons. As they fled in various directions, they abandoned those on their own side and their relatives. Other men screamed and called out to each other by the names of their lineages. There were others who lamented as they fell down on the ground. Drona's son was crazy in that encounter. Recognizing them, he brought them down.

'"There were others who were repeatedly struck and lost their senses. Those kshatriyas were afflicted by fear and tried to run away from the camp. Terrified and seeking to preserve their lives, they emerged from the camp. In the vicinity of the gate, they were killed by Kritavarma and Kripa. They were devoid of weapons, implements and armour. Their hair was dishevelled and they joined their hands in salutation. They trembled on the ground and were terrified. They begged to be set free. O great king! But those who emerged outside the camp were not set free by the evil-minded Kripa and Hardikya. They also wanted to do that which would please Drona’s son. Therefore, in three places, they set fire to the camp. O great king! When the camp was thus lit, Ashvatthama, the one who delighted his father, roamed around with the sword, exhibiting the dexterity of his hands. Some brave ones attacked, others ran away. The best of brahmanas used his sword to rob all those men of their lives. The valiant one severed some warriors in the middle with his sword. Drona’s son angrily brought them down, as if they were stalks of sesamum. Men, horses and the best of elephants shrieked in grievous tones. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They fell down and were strewn all over the ground. Thousands of men were slain and fell down. There were many headless torsos which were seen to rise and then fall down again. Arms with weapons and armlets, and heads, were severed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were thighs that were like the trunks of elephants, and arms and feet. The backs of some were mangled, and the heads of others. The flanks of others were mangled. Drona’s son attacked them all, while some retreated. He severed the bodies of some men at the middle and sliced off the ears of others. He struck others on the shoulders and pressed down the heads of some into their bodies. While he roamed around, slaughtering many men, the terrible night was covered in darkness and seemed to become even more fearful. Some still had some life left. Other men were slain in thousands. There were innumerable elephants and horses on the ground and it looked terrible. It was full of *yaksha*s[108] and rakshasas. It was terrible because of the chariots, the horses and the elephants. As Drona’s son angrily severed them, they fell down on the ground. Some screamed for their mothers, others for their fathers, and still others for their brothers.

‘“Some exclaimed, ‘The angry sons of Dhritarashtra could not accomplish this in the battle. While we were sleeping, the evil-acting rakshasas have done this.[109] As long as he is protected by Janardana, Kounteya is incapable of being vanquished by gods, asuras, *gandharva*s,[110] yakshas and rakshasas. He is devoted to brahmanas. He is truthful in speech. He is controlled. He is compassionate towards all beings. Partha Dhananjaya does not kill one who is sleeping, one who is distracted, one who has cast aside his weapons, one who has joined his hands in salutation, one who is running away, or one whose hair is dishevelled. These rakshasas, evil in their deeds, are perpetrating these terrible acts on us.' Lamenting in this way, many men lay down. The lamentations of men and the shrieks of others died down in a short while. That great and tumultuous sound was pacified. O lord of the earth! The earth was sprinkled with blood and because of that, the large and fierce dust swiftly disappeared. Thousands of men were bereft of enterprise and writhed around in agony. As they fell down, those men were angrily killed, like Pashupati[111] amidst animals. There were some who clung to each other as they lay down. There were others who ran away. Some tried to hide, while others tried to fight. However, Drona's son brought all of them down. They were burnt by the flames and slaughtered by him. O Indra among kings! Before half of the night was over, that large army of the Pandavas was conveyed by Drona's son to Yama's abode. That night increased the delight of creatures that roam around in the night, though it caused a terrible carnage among men, elephants and horses. Many different kinds of rakshasas and *pishacha*s were seen there. They fed on the flesh of men and drank the blood. They were fierce, tawny and terrible. They had teeth like stone and were covered with blood. Their hair was matted and their thighs were long. They had five feet and large stomachs. There were those with five fingers, harsh and malformed, with terrible roars. Some had knees that were like jars. Others were short in stature, blue in the throat and fierce. They were extremely cruel and hideous. They were abominable and came with their sons and wives. Rakshasas of many different kinds of forms were seen there. They cheerfully drank the blood. Others danced around in large numbers. They exclaimed, 'This is great. This is pure. This is tasty.' There were also carnivorous creatures that subsisted on flesh. They fed on the fat, marrow, bones, blood, oily substances and other parts of the body that they regarded as excellent meat. Other demons[112] drank the fat that flowed and danced around. There were terrible and fierce carnivorous creatures that fed on flesh, with many kinds of mouths. They came there, in tens of thousands, millions and tens of millions. There were gigantic rakshasas terrible in form, the performers of cruel deeds. They were delighted and satisfied at this destruction. O lord of men! Many such demons assembled.

'"When it was morning, Drona's son desired to leave the camp. His body was covered in human blood and the sword was still in his grasp. O lord! It was as if the sword had become one with his hand. Having destroyed the men, he was resplendent in that carnage of men. He was like a fire that consumes all beings, when the destruction of a yuga is near. O lord! Drona's son accomplished the task that he swore to undertake, but walked along an undesirable path. He followed an extremely difficult path and forgot the fever on account of his father. The camp was asleep, when he had entered in the night and killed. In a similar silence, the bull among men emerged. With the other two,[113] the valiant one emerged from the camp. O lord! He joyfully told them what he had accomplished and delighted them. They also told him about the pleasant deeds that they had undertaken and about how they had destroyed thousands of Panchalas and Srinjayas. They roared in delight and slapped their palms. In this way, that night caused a great destruction of men among the Somakas. While they were asleep and unconscious, this terrible and fearful destruction took place. There is no doubt that the course of destiny cannot be crossed. Those who caused a great carnage of men amongst us were thus slain."

'Dhritarashtra asked, "Why did Drona's maharatha son not accomplish such a great deed earlier? He did not achieve such a feat, though he was firm in ensuring the victory of my son. Why did he perform this task after my son had been killed? After all, Drona's son is a great archer. You should tell me this."

'Sanjaya replied, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! This was certainly because of terror and fright. Drona's son could accomplish this deed because the Parthas, the intelligent Keshava and Satyaki were not present.[114] In their presence, even the lord of the Maruts[115] would have been unable to kill them. O king! O lord! And this kind of conduct was possible because the men were asleep. Having caused that extremely great carnage of men among the Pandavas, those maharathas[116] met each other and exclaimed, 'This was fortunate. It was good fortune.' Those two congratulated Drona's son and embraced him. In great delight, he[117] spoke these supreme words. 'All the Panchalas have been slain and all of Droupadi's sons. The Somakas and all the remaining Matsyas have been slain by me. Having accomplished this deed, let us immediately go to the spot where the king[118] is. If he is still alive, we will give him this pleasant news.’”’

Chapter 1292(9)

‘Sanjaya said, “Having killed all the Panchalas and all the sons of Droupadi, they together went to the spot where Duryodhana had been struck down. Having gone there, they saw that there was still some life left in the king. Having descended from their chariots, they surrounded your son. O Indra among kings! His thighs had been shattered. He was unconscious and was alive with great difficulty. They saw him lying down on the ground, vomiting blood through his mouth. He was surrounded by a large number of carnivorous beasts and their forms were terrible. There were a large number of jackals nearby, wishing to devour him.[119] He was restraining those carnivorous beasts, which wished to feed on him, with a great deal of difficulty. He was writhing on the ground and was suffering from severe pain. The great-souled one was lying down on the ground, covered in his own blood. In great grief, the three remaining heroes, Ashvatthama, Kripa and Satvata Kritavarma, surrounded him. Those three maharathas were also covered in blood and sighed. Surrounded by them, the king looked like a sacrificial altar surrounded by three fires. They saw the king lying down there, in a state that he did not deserve. Those three were overcome by great sorrow and wept. They wiped the blood from his face with their hands. On seeing the king lying down in the encounter, they wept in compassion.

‘“Kripa said, ‘Since he is covered in blood, there is nothing that is too difficult for destiny. Duryodhana was the lord of eleven armies.[120] He has been struck and is lying down. Behold. He loved the club and that club has fallen down on the ground, near him. Its complexion is like that of gold and it is adorned with gold. From one battle to another, this club never abandoned the brave one. Even now, when the illustrious one is about to go to heaven, it has not abandoned him. Behold. Decorated with molten gold, it is lying down near the brave one, like a wife lying down near her beloved, in accordance with dharma. This scorcher of enemies used to be ahead of all those whose heads had been consecrated.[121] Behold the progress of time. He has been brought down and is now devoured by dust. Earlier, he slew many enemies and made them lie down on the ground. That king of the Kurus has now been brought down by the enemy and is lying down on the ground. Hundreds of kings used to bow down before him in fear. He is now lying down on a bed meant for brave ones, surrounded by predatory beasts. For the sake of wealth, this lord used to be worshipped by the kings earlier. Shame. He has been struck and is lying down. Behold the progress of time.'"

'Sanjaya said, "O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On seeing the best of kings lying down, Ashvatthama wept piteously. 'O tiger among kings! You were spoken of as the foremost among all archers. You were Samkarshana's[122] disciple and in a battle, you were the equal of the lord of riches.[123] O unblemished one! How did Bhimasena find a weakness in you? O king! You were always powerful and skilled and he was evil in his soul. O great king! There is no doubt that time is the most powerful on this earth. We see that you have been brought down by Bhimasena in the encounter. How did that happen? You have known about all forms of dharma. Vrikodara is inferior and wicked. There is no doubt that the wicked one slew you through deceit. Time is impossible to cross. He summoned you to a duel in accordance with dharma. However, Bhimasena used adharma to shatter your thighs with a club. Having brought you down through adharma, he kicked your head with his foot. Shame on Yudhishthira, since he ignored the act of that wicked one. There is no doubt that all warriors will censure Vrikodara's act in the encounter, as long as living beings continue to exist. He brought you down through deceit. O king! The valiant Rama, descendant of the Yadu lineage, always used to say that there was no one who was equal to Duryodhana in fighting with the club. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Varshneya[124] used to take pride in you. The lord used to say, "In fighting with the club, Kouravya is my worthy disciple." You have obtained the end that supreme rishis applaud as the objective of a kshatriya. You have been slain and are headed towards that objective. O Duryodhana! O bull among men! I do not grieve on your account. I grieve because Gandhari and your father have lost their son. They will sorrow and roam around the entire earth as beggars. Shame on Varshneya Krishna and the evil-minded Arjuna. They pride themselves on their knowledge of dharma and ignored it when you were brought down. What will all the Pandavas tell the kings? How was Duryodhana slain in this shameless way? O Gandhari’s son! You are blessed that you have been brought down in an encounter. O bull among men! In accordance with dharma, you were advancing towards the enemy. Gandhari’s sons have been slain. Her kin and relatives have been killed. What will be her plight and that of the invincible one who possesses the sight of wisdom?[125] Shame on Kritavarma, maharatha Kripa and me. Placing the king ahead of us, we should have also gone to heaven. You have been generous in granting all the objects of desire. You have been a protector engaged in the welfare of the subjects. Shame on us, worst among men, since we have not followed you. O tiger among men! It is because of your valour that Kripa’s house, and mine and that of my father, have always been full of jewels and servants. It is through your favours that we, with our friends and our relatives, have performed the best of sacrifices and given away copious quantities of gifts. With you at their head, all the kings have departed now. These riches are like stones now. Where will those like us go? O king! The three of us are not headed towards the supreme objective. We are not following you. We are deprived of heaven. We are deprived of riches and we are remembering your good deeds. Since we are not going with you, what will we do now? O best among the Kurus! There is no doubt that we will roam the earth in our sorrow. O king! Without you, how can there be peace? How can there be happiness? O great king! You will leave this place and meet the maharathas.[126] You will honour them, according to excellence and according to seniority. You will honour the preceptor,[127] the one with the best standard among all archers. O lord of men! In the course of the conversation, tell him these words of mine, that I have killed Dhrishtadyumna today. Embrace King Bahlika, the great maharatha, and Saindhava, Somadatta and Bhurishrava, and also the best of kings, who have gone to heaven before you. Tell them these words. Embrace them and ask about their welfare.’ These were the words that he spoke to the king, who was unconscious and whose thighs were shattered. Ashvatthama then glanced at him and again spoke these words. ‘O Duryodhana! If you are still alive, listen to this welcome news. There are seven Pandavas left and three on the side of the sons of Dhritarashtra. There are the five brothers and Vasudeva and Satyaki. Other than me, there are Kritavarma and Sharadvata Kripa. All the sons of Droupadi have been killed and also Dhrishtadyumna's sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the Panchalas have been killed and the remaining Matsyas. Behold the revenge that has followed their deed. The sons of the Pandavas have been killed. While they were sleeping in their camp, the men and the mounts have been killed. O lord of the earth! I penetrated the camp in the night and killed Dhrishtadyumna, the one with the wicked deeds, as one would slay an animal.' Hearing those pleasant words, Duryodhana found composure in his mind.

'"Having regained his senses, he spoke these words in reply. 'I have not been able to achieve this, or Gangeya, or Karna, or your father. Engaged in my welfare, you have done this today, together with Kripa and Bhoja. You have slain the inferior commander,[128] together with Shikhandi. Because of this, I honour you, as an equal of Maghavan.[129]O fortunate one! May you be prosperous. We will meet again in heaven.' Having spoken these words, the great-minded king of the Kurus became silent. The brave one abandoned sorrow on account of his well-wishers and gave up his life. They embraced the king and were embraced by him. They repeatedly glanced towards him and then ascended their own chariots. Having heard the piteous lamentations of your son, when it was morning, overcome by grief, I left for the city.[130] O unblemished one! When your son went to heaven, I was overcome with sorrow. The divine sight that the rishi had given me was instantly destroyed."'[131]

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard about the death of his son and his kin, the king[132] let out long and warm sighs and became immersed in deep thoughts.'

Section Seventy-nine

AISHIKA PARVA

This parva has 257 shlokas and nine chapters.

Chapter 1293(10): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1294(11): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1295(12): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1296(13): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1297(14): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1298(15): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1299(16): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1300(17): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1301(18): 26 shlokas

> *Aishika is a reed, or blade of grass and this parva is named after Ashvatthama invoking a divine weapon on a reed. Bhima pursues Ashvatthama, to exact vengeance. Ashvatthama and Arjuna invoke their* brahmashira *weapons, which threaten to destroy the worlds. Arjuna withdraws his and Ashvatthama's is diverted towards the wombs of the Pandava women. Ashvatthama's weapon destroys Uttara's foetus (Parikshit), but Parikshit will be revived by Krishna. Ashvatthama gives up his gem.*

Chapter 1293(10)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When night had passed, Dhrishtadyumna’s charioteer went to Dharmaraja and told him about the carnage that had taken place when everyone was asleep. “O great king! They were sleeping in their own camps in the night, assured and unattentive. Droupadi’s sons, and those of Drupada, have been killed in the camp by the wicked Ashvatthama in the night, together with the cruel Kritavarma and Goutama Kripa. In that way, thousands of men, elephants and horses have been destroyed, with lances, javelins and battleaxes. Nothing is left of your army. It was like a giant forest severed with a battleaxe. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I heard the great uproar raised by your troops. O lord of the earth! From among those soldiers, I am the only one who is left. O one with dharma in his soul! I somehow managed to escape from Kritavarma, when he did not notice.” On hearing those inauspicious words, the invincible Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, was overcome with sorrow on account of his sons and fell down, senseless. As he was falling down, Satyaki advanced and grasped him, as did Bhimasena, Arjuna and the Pandavas who were Madri’s sons.

‘Having regained his senses, Kounteya was overcome with great sorrow. “Having defeated the enemy, a conqueror is thereafter brought to distress by destiny.[1] Even those with divine sight, find it difficult to fathom the course of prosperity. Those who were defeated have triumphed. And we, who were victorious, have been conquered. Having slain our brothers, friends, fathers, sons, well-wishers, relatives, advisers and grandsons, we were triumphant. But we have now been defeated. Adversity is like prosperity. And prosperity is seen to be like adversity. Our victory may have the form of a triumph, but our victory is actually a defeat. Having won, I later have to lament, like an evil-minded person. How can I think of this as a victory? I have been defeated by the enemy. Shame on a victory that has resulted from the death of well-wishers. We were unmindful and have been conquered. There were those for whom we committed wicked deeds and they have been conquered by those who were in search of victory.[2] In the encounter, they escaped from the fangs of barbed and hollow arrows and the tongues of swords, from terrible bows and the slapping of bowstrings against palms. Karna was an angry lion among men, one who never retreated from battle. They escaped from him and have been slain while they were distracted. The chariots were like lakes. The showers of arrows were like waves. The ornaments[3] were like gems. The mounts were like furrows.[4] The javelins and swords were like fish. The standards and elephants were like crocodiles. The bows were the whirlpools. The giant arrows were the foam. The encounter was like the strong swell of the tide when the moon rises. Drona was like an ocean. The twang of his bowstring against his palm was like the clatter of an axle. They overcame all that, using their weapons as boats. While distracted, those princes have now been killed. In this world of the living, there is nothing that causes the death of men as much as mindlessness. When a man is distracted, prosperity abandons him from every direction and he is immersed in adversity. Bhishma was like a giant conflagration. His white standard was like a fire at the tip. The arrows were like flames, fanned by the great wind of his anger. The twang of his giant bowstring against his palm was like the clatter of an axle. The many kinds of armour and weapons were like oblations being offered. In the great battle, the large army was like dead wood before him. Having withstood the force of those weapons, the princes have now been slain through mindlessness. If a man is distracted, he cannot obtain learning, austerities, prosperity and great fame. Behold. The great Indra enjoyed all the happiness and sacrifices after slaying the enemy attentively. The kings, sons and grandsons were like Indra. Behold. They have been slain, especially because they were distracted. They were like prosperous merchants who had crossed an ocean, but were destroyed because they were careless over an inferior stream. While sleeping, they were killed by those intolerant ones. There is no doubt that they are in heaven now. I sorrow for Krishna.[5] How will that virtuous one handle the ocean of grief that she will be submerged in now? On hearing that her brothers, sons and her aged father, the king of Panchala,[6] have been killed, it is certain that she will be distressed and fall down on the ground, unconscious. Her body emaciated with grief, she will lie down. How will she be able to tolerate that grief and sorrow? She is one who deserved happiness. On hearing about the destruction of her sons and the slaughter of her brothers, she will be scorched, as if by a fire.” The king of the Kurus lamented in this way.

‘He then spoke these words to Nakula. “Go and bring the unfortunate princess here, with all her maternal relations.” The king was like Dharma and Nakula accepted the words that had been spoken to him, in accordance with dharma. He swiftly went on a chariot to the queen’s residence, where the wives of the king of Panchala also were. Having sent Madri’s son, Ajamidha,[7] together with his well-wishers, was overcome by distress and grief. Weeping, he left for the spot where his sons had fought, a place that was still frequented by a large number of demons. Having entered that inauspicious and terrible place, he saw his sons, well-wishers and friends. They were lying down on the ground, their bodies wet with blood. Their bodies were mangled and their heads had been severed. On witnessing that extremely hideous sight, Yudhishthira, foremost among those who uphold dharma, wept loudly. Along with a large number of his followers, the foremost among the Kouravas lost his senses and fell down.’

Chapter 1294(11)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! On seeing that his sons, brothers and friends had been slain in the encounter, his[8] soul was immersed in great grief. The great-souled one was overcome by deep sorrow. He remembered his sons, grandsons, brothers and relatives. His eyes were full of tears. He trembled and was senseless. The well-wishers became extremely anxious and comforted him.

‘At that time, when it was morning, Nakula brought Krishna[9] there, on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun. She was extremely distressed and he brought her with him. She had gone to Upaplavya and had heard the extremely unpleasant news there, that all her sons had been destroyed. She was miserable. She trembled like a plantain tree stirred by the wind. Having approached the king, Krishna was afflicted by grief and fell down on the ground. Her face, with eyes like full-blown lotuses, was afflicted by misery, as if the sun had been covered by darkness. On seeing that she was falling down, the angry Vrikodara, for whom truth was his valour, approached her and grasped her in his arms. The beautiful one was comforted by Bhimasena. Krishna wept and addressed Pandava, together with his brothers. “O king! It is through good fortune that you will now enjoy the entire earth. Following the dharma of kshatriyas, you have offered your sons to Yama. O Partha! It is through good fortune that you have obtained the entire earth and do not remember Subhadra’s son,[10] who was skilled and whose gait was like that of a maddened elephant. While residing in Upaplavya, I heard that my brave sons had been brought down, in accordance with dharma. It is good fortune that you do not remember this with me. I have heard that they were slain while they were sleeping, by Drona’s son, who acted wickedly. O Partha! That sorrow is tormenting me, as if I am in the midst of a fire. Drona’s son acted in a wicked way. O Pandavas! Listen to me. If, in an encounter today, you do not exhibit your valour and destroy him and his followers, and he remains alive in the encounter, I will resort to *praya*[11] here. Drona's son must be made to reap the fruits of his wicked deed." Having spoken these words to Pandava Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, the illustrious Krishna sat down there.

'On seeing that his beloved queen had sat down there, *rajarshi* Pandava, with dharma in his soul, replied to the beautiful Droupadi. "O beautiful one! O one who knows about dharma! Your sons and your brothers have followed dharma and have attained their ends in accordance with dharma. You should not grieve. O fortunate one! Drona's son has gone to a forest that is far away. O beautiful one! How do you think that he can then be brought down in a battle?" Droupadi replied, "I have heard that Drona's son possesses a natural jewel on his head. I wish to see that jewel brought to me, after the wicked one has been slain in an encounter. O king! I have formed a resolution that I will live only if that is placed on your head." Having spoken these words to the Pandava king, the beautiful Krishna angrily approached Bhimasena and spoke these words. "O Bhima! You should remember the dharma of kshatriyas and save me. Slay the one whose deeds are wicked, like Maghavan against Shambara.[12] There is no other man who is equal in valour to you. All the worlds have heard that when the Parthas confronted a great calamity in the city of Varanavata, you were the refuge.[13] When we saw Hidimba, you were the refuge again.[14] In the city of Virata, I was severely oppressed by Kichaka. You saved me from that calamity, like Maghavan saved Poulami.[15] O Partha! You have performed many other great deeds earlier. O destroyer of enemies! Slay Drona's son now and be happy." In this way, she lamented a lot, in misery and grief. The immensely strong Kounteya Bhimasena could not tolerate this. He climbed onto his great chariot, which was wonderfully decorated with gold. He grasped his colourful and wonderful bow, bowstring and arrows. Having appointed Nakula the charioteer, he embarked on the task of killing Drona's son. He brandished his bow and arrows and swiftly goaded the horses. O tiger among kings! Those horses were as swift as the wind. Thus urged, they proceeded swiftly. The one without decay spiritedly left the camp on his chariot. The valiant one quickly followed the footsteps that Drona's son had taken and the route that his chariot had taken.'

Chapter 1295(12)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the invincible one had departed, Pundarikaksha, bull among the Yadu lineage, spoke these words to Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son. “O Pandava! Your brother is overcome with sorrow on account of his sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The descendant of the Bharata lineage has left alone, wishing to kill Drona’s son. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Among all your brothers, Bhima is the one you love most. He is headed towards a calamity. Why are you not doing something about it? Drona, the destroyer of enemy cities, instructed his son about a weapon named brahmashira. It is capable of burning down the earth. That great-souled and immensely fortunate one possessed a standard that was foremost among that of all archers. The preceptor gave it[16] to his beloved Dhananjaya. His son was unable to tolerate this.[17] The great-souled one knew that his son was reckless. The preceptor knew about all forms of dharma and gave it to his son with reluctance. He spoke to his son and imposed this restriction on his son. ‘O son! Even if you confront the greatest of catastrophes in a battle, this weapon should never be used, especially against humans.’ The preceptor, Drona, spoke these words to his son. Later, he again added, ‘O bull among men! You will not stay along the path of the righteous.’ On hearing the unpleasant words of his father, the evil-souled one gave up hope of obtaining all kinds of fortune. Tormented by sorrow, he began to roam around the earth. O best among Kurus! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, you were in the forest. He came to Dvaraka and was supremely honoured by the Vrishnis. While he dwelt in Dvaravati,[18] he once came to me, while I was alone along the shores of the ocean. He smiled and told me, ‘O Krishna! My father, the preceptor of the Bharatas, has given the weapon named brahmashira to me. It was obtained by Agastya, for whom truth was his valour, after performing the fiercest of austerities. It is worshipped by the gods and the gandharvas. O Dasharha! It is with me now, as it used to be with my father. O supreme among the Yadu lineage! I will give that divine weapon to you, if you give me the chakra weapon in return, one that is capable of destroying enemies in battle.’ O king! He affectionately joined his hands in salutation and addressed these words to me. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He carefully sought that weapon from me. ‘Gods, danavas, gandharvas, men, birds and serpents together are not equal to one-hundredth part of my valour.[19] I possess this bow, this spear, this chakra and this club. I will give you whichever of these weapons you cherish. Whichever one you wish, whichever you can raise and use in battle, take that from me, without giving me any weapon in return.’ The mighty-armed one wished to rival me and told me that he wanted the chakra. It possessed an excellent nave and one thousand spokes. It possessed the essence of the vajra and was made out of iron. At this, I asked him to take the chakra. He violently seized the chakra with his left hand. O one without decay! However, he was incapable of moving it from its spot. He then attempted to seize it with his right hand. He made every kind of effort and tried every means to grasp it. But though he used all his strength, he was incapable of raising it or moving it. Drona’s evil-minded son made the supreme of efforts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Exhausted, he then desisted. When he gave up all such intentions, I spoke these gentle words to the insensible Ashvatthama. ‘He is regarded as the supreme one among gods and humans. He is the wielder of Gandiva, the one with the white horses. The supreme of apes sits astride his standard. He is Jishnu. He defeated and satisfied Shankara, the one with the blue throat and Uma’s consort, the god who is the lord of the gods, himself in a duel.[20] There is no other man on earth whom I love as much. There is nothing that I cannot give him, even my wives and sons. O brahmana! He is unblemished in his deeds. Even such a well-wisher like Partha has never spoken such words to me earlier, the likes of which you have spoken.[21] I observed extremely terrible brahmacharya for twelve years, on the slopes of the Himalayas. I worshipped through austerities. Rukmini[22] observed similar vows and gave birth to my son named Pradyumna, who is as energetic as Sanatkumara.[23] He is like me. But even he has never asked for this great and divine chakra. You have sought it like a foolish person. The extremely strong Rama[24] has never spoken such words to me. Nor have Gada and Samba asked for what you have asked.[25] Nor have the other Vrishni and Andhaka maharathas who dwell in Dvaraka earlier asked for what you have asked. The son of the preceptor of the Bharatas is revered by all the Yadavas. O best among rathas! O son![26] Who, will you fight with this chakra?' Having been thus addressed by me, Drona's son spoke these words in reply. 'O Krishna! O great one! After worshipping you, it was my intention to fight with you. That is the reason I desired the chakra, worshipped by gods and danavas. O lord! Had I obtained it, I would have become invincible. I tell you this truthfully. O Keshava! That is the truth. I have not obtained that extremely rare object of desire. O Govinda! I am about to depart. Speak auspicious words to me now. You are a bull among the Vrishnis and you wield this chakra, with the excellent nave. There is no one on earth who can receive this chakra.' Having spoken these words, Drona's son received a couple of horses and riches from me. The child also took many kinds of jewels. He is angry and evil in his soul. He is fickle and cruel too. He knows about the weapon brahmashira. Therefore, Vrikodara needs to be protected from him."'

Chapter 1296(13)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having spoken these words, the foremost of warriors, the one who delighted all the Yadavas, mounted his giant chariot, which was stocked with every kind of weapon. It was yoked to two excellent horses from Kamboja and they had golden harnesses. The shaft of that excellent chariot had the complexion of the rising sun. Sainya was yoked on the right and Sugriva was yoked on the left. Meghapushpa and Balahaka were yoked on the flanks.[27] This divine chariot had been constructed by Vishvakarma[28] and was decorated with many jewels. A flagpole with powers of maya was raised up and Vinata’s son[29] was resplendently stationed there, like rays radiating from the solar disc. The enemy of the snakes was seen on that flag, like truth personified. Hrishikesha, with a standard that was the best among those of all archers, ascended the chariot and so did Arjuna, the performer of truthful deeds, and the Kuru king, Yudhishthira.[30] On either side of Dasharha, those great-souled ones dazzled. The wielder of the Sharnga[31] bow was like Vasava on that chariot, with the two Ashvins on either side. Having ascended the chariot that was honoured by the worlds, Dasharha goaded those excellent horses to pick up speed. Urged by the bull among the Yadus, and with the two Pandaveyas on it, those horses swiftly bore that excellent chariot along. The horses of the one who wielded the Sharnga bow were extremely fast. As they sped, there was a great sound, like that of birds descending in the sky.

‘Bhimasena, the great archer, was travelling fast. O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, in a short while, those tigers among men caught up with him. Kounteya[32] blazed in anger and he rushed towards the enemy. Though those maharathas caught up with him, they could not restrain him. While those handsome and firm archers looked on, using his extremely fast and tawny steeds, he headed towards the banks of the Bhagirathi.[33] He had heard that Drona’s great-souled son, the slayer of his sons, would be there. He saw the cheerful, illustrious and great-souled Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa there, seated with rishis. He also saw Drona’s son seated near them, with dust covering the tips of his hair. The perpetrator of evil deeds was covered in clarified butter and was dressed in a garment made of *kusha* grass. Kounteya grasped his bow and an arrow and rushed towards him. The mighty-armed Bhimasena exclaimed, “Wait. Wait.” Drona’s son saw the one with the terrible bow dashing towards him, with a bow and an arrow. He saw his two brothers and Janardana stationed behind him. He was distressed and thought that he had met his end. However, since his soul was never distressed, he thought of the divine and supreme weapon. Drona’s son grasped a reed in his left hand and invoked that celestial weapon on it.[34] In the presence of those brave ones, who also possessed divine weapons, the intolerant one released it, uttering the terrible words, “To bring an end to the Pandavas”. O tiger among kings! For the sake of confounding all the worlds, Drona’s powerful son spoke these words and released that weapon. A fire was generated in that reed and it seemed to consume the three worlds, like Yama at the end of time.’

Chapter 1297(14)

Vaishampayana said, ‘From the signs, Dasharha had understood what Drona’s son intended. The mighty-armed one spoke to Arjuna. “O Arjuna! O Pandava! O Arjuna! In your mind, you have the knowledge of the divine weapon that was instructed to you by Drona. The time to use it has arrived. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is needed to save yourself and your brothers. You should release it, since it is capable of countering all weapons.” Having been thus addressed by Keshava, Pandava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, swiftly descended from the chariot and grasped his bow and an arrow. The scorcher of enemies spoke words of welfare, addressed to his preceptor’s son, then to himself and all his brothers. He bowed to the gods and all his preceptors. Meditating and pronouncing auspicious words, he released that weapon, so as to pacify the other weapon. That weapon was violently released by the wielder of Gandiva. It blazed with great flames, like the fire that arises at the end of a yuga. In a similar way, the weapon released by Drona’s son was fierce in its energy. It blazed in great flames, surrounded by a disc of energy. There were many peals of thunder and thousands of meteors fell down. A great fear was generated in all the beings. The firmament was enveloped in that great noise and seemed to be covered in a terrible garland of fire. The entire earth, with its mountains, forests and trees, trembled. That weapon was stationed there, scorching the worlds with its energy. The two *maharshi*s, Narada, with dharma in his soul, and the grandfather of the Bharatas,[35] showed themselves then. They sought to pacify the two brave ones, Bharadvaja’s descendant and Dhananjaya. Those two sages were learned in all forms of dharma and had the welfare of all beings in mind. Those two supremely energetic ones stationed themselves between those two flaming weapons. Those two illustrious and supreme rishis were incapable of being assailed by anything and were like two blazing fires themselves. They could not be touched by any living being and they were revered by the gods and the danavas. For the sake of the welfare of the worlds, they pacified the energies of the weapons.

'The two rishis said, "The maharathas who have fallen down earlier were knowledgeable about many weapons. These weapons should never be used against humans. Why have you invoked them?"'

Chapter 1298(15)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O tiger among men! On seeing those two energetic ones,[36] who were like fires, Dhananjaya quickly withdrew his divine arrow. He joined his hands in salutation and spoke to the best of rishis. “This weapon was used by me to pacify the other weapon. Once I withdraw this supreme weapon, all of us will be destroyed. It is certain that Drona’s son, the perpetrator of wicked deeds, will consume us with the energy of his weapon. The two of you are like gods. You should think of a means so that we, and all the worlds, are saved.” Having spoken these words, Dhananjaya again withdrew his weapon. In an encounter, it is difficult for even the gods to do this.[37] With the exception of Shatakratu himself, no one other than Pandava was capable of withdrawing a supreme weapon, once it had been released in a battle. Once invoked, it was full of Brahma’s energy. With the exception of someone with a cleansed soul and someone who was a brahmachari, no one else was capable of withdrawing it. If a person is not a brahmachari, and having released the weapon, wishes to withdraw it, the weapon will sever his head, with that of his descendants. Arjuna had followed the vows of a brahmachari. He had obtained a weapon that was difficult to get. However, he had never invoked it, not even in a time of great calamity. Pandava followed the vows of truth. He was brave and a brahmachari. He was obedient to his superiors. It was because of this that Arjuna was capable of withdrawing that weapon again.

‘Drona’s son saw that the two rishis were stationed in front of him. However, in the encounter, he was incapable of again withdrawing that terrible weapon. In the encounter, he was incapable of restraining that supreme weapon. O king! Distressed in his mind, Drona’s son addressed Dvaipayana. “I was distressed because I confronted a great calamity. I was scared of saving my life. I released the weapon out of fear. I was scared of Bhimasena. In attempting to kill Dhritarashtra’s son, he acted in accordance with adharma. O illustrious one!

Bhimasena resorted to falsehood in the battle. O brahmana! Though I have not cleansed my soul, this is the reason I invoked this weapon. I do not have any interest in withdrawing it, even now. Once this celestial weapon has been released by me, it is invincible. O sage! I have invoked it with the energy of the fire and with mantras, 'To bring an end to the Pandavas'. Therefore, it has been created for the destruction of the Pandaveyas. It will now destroy all the sons of Pandu who are alive. O brahmana! With my senses destroyed by anger, I have committed a wicked deed. Created by me in this encounter, this weapon will slaughter the Parthas."

'Vyasa replied, "O son![38] Partha Dhananjaya knew about the weapon brahmashira. However, he did not release it out of rage, or to slay you in this encounter. In the encounter, he wished to pacify the weapon that had been released by you. Arjuna released it, and withdrew it again. He obtained instruction in the use of *brahmastra* from your father.[39] However, the mighty-armed Dhananjaya was compassionate and did not deviate from the dharma of kshatriyas. He possesses fortitude and is virtuous. He has knowledge of all the weapons and is righteous. Why do you wish to kill such a person and his brothers? In a spot where the weapon named brahmashira is countered through the use of another supreme weapon, in such a kingdom, it does not rain for twelve years. The mighty-armed Pandava is capable. However, because he had the welfare of all subjects in his mind, he did not counter your weapon with his. You, the Pandavas, you, and the kingdom must always be protected. O mighty-armed one! That is the reason you should withdraw that divine weapon. Get rid of this rage and let the Pandavas always be without disease. Rajarshi Pandava[40] does not wish to win through the use of adharma. You possess a gem on your forehead. Give that to me. Once you have given that, the Pandavas will grant you your life in return."

'Drona's son said, "The Pandaveyas possess jewels and there are riches obtained by the Kouravas. However, this gem that belongs to me is superior to both of those. When this is worn, there is never any fear from weapons, disease, hunger, lack of protection, gods, danavas and serpents. Nor is there fear from large numbers of rakshasas, or fear from thieves. This is the kind of energy that is vested in this gem and I should never give it up. O illustrious one! Take it. However, what should be done next? Here is the gem. But the reed invoked by me is invincible and it will descend on the wombs of the Pandaveyas.”[41]

‘Vyasa replied, “Do this and do not turn your mind to any other task. Release this towards the wombs of the Pandaveyas and desist.”’[42]

Vaishampayana said, ‘Ashvatthama was severely afflicted. At this, on hearing Dvaipayana’s words, he released that supreme weapon in the direction of the wombs.’

Chapter 1299(16)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The perpetrator of wicked deeds acted accordingly and released it. On discerning this, Hrishikesha cheerfully spoke these words to Drona’s son. “In earlier times, Virata’s daughter, the daughter-in-law of the wielder of Gandiva,[43] had gone to Upaplavya. A brahmana who followed vows had seen her there and had said, ‘When the Kurus are destroyed, a son will be born to you. That is the reason the one in your womb will be known by the name of Parikshit.’[44] The words of that virtuous one will be true. When everyone is destroyed, there will again be a victorious son.” On hearing the words of Govinda, supreme among the Satvata lineage, Drona’s son became greatly angry and replied in these words. “O Keshava! You are saying this because of your partiality and this shall not be true. O Pundarikaksha! My words will never be false. O Krishna! The weapon that has been invoked by me will descend on the womb of Virata’s daughter, the one that you wish to protect.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “This supreme weapon is invincible and will indeed descend. The foetus will be born dead. However, it will revive and live till a long age. All the learned ones know that you are wicked and a coward. You have always been engaged in evil and wicked deeds. You survive by killing those who are children. That is the reason you will reap the fruits of your wicked deeds. You will roam around the earth for three thousand years. You will never have a companion and will never be able to converse with anyone. You will be alone and have no aides. You will roam through diverse countries. O wicked one! You will never find a station amidst men. You will have the stench of pus and blood. You will dwell in desolate regions and in wildernesses. O evil one! You will roam around, ridden with every kind of disease. Parikshit will come of age and obtain the Vedas and the vows. The brave one will obtain knowledge of all the weapons from Kripa Sharadvata. He will know about all the supreme weapons and base himself on the dharma of kshatriyas. He will have dharma in his soul and protect the earth for sixty years. On top of this, the mighty-armed one will be the king of the Kurus. O extremely evil-minded one! That king will be known by the name of Parikshit. O worst of men! You will look on. Behold the power of my austerities, energy and truth.”

‘Vyasa said, “You disregarded us and perpetrated this terrible deed. This has been your conduct, though you were a virtuous brahmana.[45] That is the reason there is no doubt that the excellent words spoken by Devaki’s son will come true. You have resorted to the path of inferior deeds.”

‘Ashvatthama replied, “O brahmana! Together with you, I will dwell among men.[46] O illustrious one! Let Purushottama’s[47] words come true.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Drona’s son gave the gem to the great-souled Pandavas. While all of them looked on, with an unhappy state of mind, he left for the forest. Having destroyed their enemies, the Pandavas placed Govinda, Krishna Dvaipayana and the great sage, Narada, ahead of them. Obtaining the natural gem that Drona’s son possessed, they swiftly rushed towards Droupadi, the spirited one having made up her mind on praya. Those tigers among men used well-trained horses that were as fleet as the wind. With Dasharha, they again returned to their camp. The maharathas quickly descended from their chariots. They saw Krishna[48] Droupadi, afflicted by great misery. She was overcome by sorrow and grief and was cheerless. With Keshava, the Pandavas approached her and stood around her. Having been instructed by the king, the immensely strong Bhimasena gave her the celestial gem and spoke these words. “O fortunate one! This is your gem. The slayer of your sons has been vanquished. Arise. Give up this sorrow and remember the dharma of kshatriyas. O dark-eyed one! O timid one! When Vasudeva left on his mission of peace and had yoked his mounts,[49] you had spoken these words to Madhu’s slayer.[50] ‘I do not have husbands. I do not have sons. I do not have brothers. O Govinda! You are also not there. The king wishes for peace.’ Those were the firm words you spoke to Purushottama. You should now remember those words, which were in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas. The wicked Duryodhana, who stood in the way of the kingdom, has been slain. I have drunk the blood of the trembling Duhshasana. We have repaid our debts to the enemy.

There is no one to wound us with words. We have defeated and released Drona’s son, so as to honour brahmanas. O queen! His fame has been destroyed. Only his body remains. He has been separated from his gem. He no longer possesses any weapons on earth.”

‘Droupadi replied, “I only wished to repay my debts. The son of the preceptor is my senior too. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Let the king fasten the gem on his head.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king acted accordingly and followed Droupadi’s words. He received it and fastened it on his head, regarding it as something that had been left for him by his preceptor. The lord bore that divine and supreme gem on his head. The great king was radiant, like a mountain, with the moon on top. The spirited Krishna,[51] afflicted by sorrow on account of her sons, arose. Dharmaraja asked the mighty-armed Krishna.’

Chapter 1300(17)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When all the soldiers were asleep and were destroyed by the three rathas, King Yudhishthira grieved and spoke these words to Dasharha. “O Krishna! All my sons were maharathas. Drona’s son was wicked, inferior and blemished in his deeds. How could they be slain by him? In a similar way, Drupada’s sons were accomplished in the use of weapons. They were brave. They could fight with hundreds and thousands. How could they have been brought down by Drona’s son? Dhrishtadyumna was the best among rathas. In the forefront of the battle, Drona, the great archer, could not stand before him. How could he have been slain? O bull among men! What act had the preceptor’s son accomplished, that he could single-handedly slay all of them in the camp?”

‘Vasudeva replied, “There is no doubt that Drona’s son had sought refuge with the god of the gods, the lord without decay, the lord of everything. That is the reason he could slay many, though he was single-handed. If Mahadeva is pleased, he can even grant immortality. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I know about Mahadeva’s true nature and about the many deeds that he performed in ancient times. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is the beginning, the middle and the end of beings. Everything in this entire universe moves because of his deeds. The lord, the grandfather, wished to create beings and saw him first. He told him, ‘Without any delay, create beings.’ Having been thus addressed, the one with the tawny locks[52] saw that beings would have defects. For a very long time, the immensely ascetic one submerged himself in water and tormented himself through austerities. The grandfather waited for a very long period of time. So as to generate beings, he then created another being through his mental powers. On seeing that Girisha was submerged in the water, this being told his father,[53] ‘I will generate beings only if no other being has been born before me.’ His father told him, ‘There is no other being who has been born before you. Sthanu is submerged in the water. You can confidently do what you have to do.’ That being then created seven Prajapatis, Daksha and the others.[54] All of them created the four kinds of beings.[55] Having been created, all the beings were hungry. O king! They violently rushed towards the Prajapatis, wishing to devour them. As they were about to be devoured, in search of succour, they fled to the grandfather. ‘O illustrious one! Please save us from these. Decree some means for their sustenance.’ He then assigned them the forests, the herbs and all immobile objects. Among mobile beings, the strong could feed on the weak. Having been assigned a means of sustenance, all the beings were satisfied and went away to wherever they had come from. O king! They cheerfully multiplied themselves, within their own species. When the beings prospered, the preceptor of the worlds[56] was pleased. However, the eldest one arose from the waters and saw all these beings. He saw many different kinds of beings, who were extending through their own energies. The illustrious Rudra angrily planted his *linga*, so that it penetrated the earth and remained stationed there. Brahma wished to pacify him and spoke these words to him. ‘O Sharva! Why did you remain inside the water for such a long period of time? Why have you made your linga penetrate inside the earth?’ Thus addressed, he angrily replied to the preceptor of the worlds, ‘Someone else has created these beings. What will I do with this?[57] O grandfather! Through my austerities, I have created food for the beings. The herbs will always multiply and so will the beings.’ Having angrily spoken in this way, Bhava was cheerless and went away. The immensely ascetic one tormented himself through austerities on the foothills of Mount Munjavat.”’[58]

Chapter 1301(18)

‘Vasudeva said, “When the yuga of the gods was over,[59] the gods resolved to perform a sacrifice in accordance with the dictates of the Vedas. They made all the due preparations. The foremost among the gods thought of an appropriate place where the sacrifice could be performed. Amongst themselves, the gods apportioned out the shares of the objects offered at the sacrifice. O lord of men! Despite knowing about Rudra and about his true nature, the gods did not determine a share for Sthanu. On knowing that the immortals had not thought of a share for him at the sacrifice, Krittivasa[60] quickly determined to obtain a share and created a bow. There are sacrifices for the worlds, sacrifices with rituals, sacrifices performed in households and eternal sacrifices that involve the five elements.[61] Sacrifices performed by men are the fifth kind. Kapardi[62] constructed a bow for the sake of a sacrifice that was a sacrifice for the worlds. He created a bow from the elements and it was five cubits long. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! *Vashatkara*[63]constituted the bowstring. He wished to destroy the four limbs of the sacrifice.[64] Therefore, Mahadeva angrily grasped his bow. He went to the spot where the gods had assembled. On seeing the undecaying brahmachari arrive there with the bow, the goddess earth was distressed. The mountains began to tremble. Winds did not blow. Though offered kindling, fires would not blaze. The nakshatras, in their circle in the sky, were anxious and roamed aimlessly. The resplendent sun and the moon lost the radiance in their discs. The entire sky was enveloped in great darkness. The gods were distressed and confused. The top of the sacrificial altar could no longer be seen. Rudra used his arrow to pierce the sacrifice in the heart. Thus attacked, the sacrifice assumed the form of a deer and fled, together with the fire. O Yudhishthira! In that form, it roamed around in the sky. However, Rudra pursued it in the firmament. When the sacrifice was attacked in this fashion, the gods lost their senses. Having lost their senses, the gods could not distinguish anything. Using the curved end of the bow, Tryambaka[65] then angrily tore out Savita's arms, plucked out Bhaga's eyes and gouged out Pushana's teeth. The gods, and all the parts of the sacrifice, fled. Some whirled around, as if they had lost their lives. Having driven all of them away, Shitikantha[66] laughed. He used the extremities of his bow to paralyse and obstruct the gods. When the immortals shrieked, the bowstring broke. O king! When the bowstring was severed, he violently brandished his bow. The best of the gods was without a bow and the gods, together with the sacrifice, approached him and sought refuge with him. They sought the lord's favours. The illustrious one was pleased and cast his anger aside into a body of water. O lord! That is the fire in the water, which always dries it up. O Pandava! He returned Bhaga's eyes, Savita's arms and Pushana's teeth and the sacrifice was also restored. Everything was well, exactly as it had been earlier. The gods thought of all the oblations as his share. O lord! When Bhava[67] was enraged, the entire universe was in disarray. When he was satisfied, everything was hale again. He[68] was gratified with the valiant one.[69] That is the reason all your maharatha sons have been killed, and so have many other brave Panchalas and their followers. In your mind, you should not think that this has been done by Drona's son. This was because of Mahadeva's favours. Now do whatever task must be done next."'

This ends Souptika Parva.

Section Eighty

VISHOKA PARVA

Stri Parva

Stri Parva is a parva concerning women. This parva is so named because it is about the grief of the women and the funeral ceremonies performed by the women and the survivors. In the 18-parva classification, Stri Parva is the eleventh. In the 100-parva classification, Stri Parva constitutes Sections 80 to 83. Stri Parva has twenty-seven chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Stri Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within the parva.

This parva has 194 shlokas and eight chapters.

Chapter 1302(1): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1303(2): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1304(3): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1305(4): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1306(5): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1307(6): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1308(7): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1309(8): 48 shlokas

> *Vishoka means the end of sorrow, or to be freed from sorrow. This parva is named after Vidura's attempt to dispel Dhritarashtra's sorrow.*

Chapter 1302(1)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O sage! When the great king Dhritarashtra heard that Duryodhana and all the soldiers had been killed, what did he do? What did the great-minded Kourava king, Dharma’s son,[1] and the other three, Kripa and the others,[2] do? I have heard about Ashvatthama’s deed and the curses that were imposed on each other.[3] Tell me what happened next and what Sanjaya said.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘When his one hundred sons had been killed, Dhritarashtra, the lord of the earth, was miserable and tormented by sorrow on account of his sons. He was like a tree deprived of its branches. He was deep in reflection and overcome by his thoughts. The immensely wise Sanjaya went to him and spoke these words. “O great king! Why are you grieving? Sorrowing does not help. O lord of the earth! Eighteen akshouhinis have been destroyed. The earth has been rendered bare and is almost empty. The lords of men had assembled from many directions and many countries. With your sons, all of them have confronted their death. It is necessary to perform the funeral rites of the fathers, the sons, the grandsons, kin, well-wishers and preceptors, in the due order.” On hearing those piteous words, the invincible one[4] was afflicted because of the death of his sons and grandsons and fell down on the ground, like a tree struck by a storm.

‘Dhritarashtra said, “My sons have been killed. My advisers have been killed. All my well-wishers have been killed. It is certain that I will roam around the earth in grief. Bereft of my relatives, how will I now live this life? I am like a decayed and aged bird whose wings have been clipped. I have lost my kingdom. My well-wishers have been slain. I am blind too. O immensely wise one! I am like the one with rays,[5] when it is dim and does not shine. I did not listen to the words of the well-wishers, or the advice of Jamadagni’s son,[6] devarshi Narada, or Krishna Dvaipayana. In the midst of the assembly hall, Krishna spoke beneficial words to me. ‘O king! There has been enough of enmity. Restrain your sons.’ Because I was evil-minded, I disregarded those words and it torments me severely. I did not listen to the words, full of dharma, that Bhishma spoke. On hearing about Duryodhana’s death, when he was roaring like a bull, and of Duhshasana’s slaughter, Karna’s catastrophe and the setting of the sun that was Drona, my heart has been shattered. O Sanjaya! I am suffering like a fool. I do not recall any evil deeds that I have performed, which could lead to these fruits now. It is certain that I have committed sins in my earlier lives. Because of that, the creator has acted so as to give me this share of grief. This consequence of the destruction of my friends and all my relatives, the destruction of my well-wishers and allies, has been brought about by destiny. Where is another man on this earth who is as miserable as I am? Therefore, the Pandavas will now see me, rigid in my vows, following the long road that extends towards Brahma’s world.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus did he lament, thinking about his many sorrows. To dispel the king’s sorrows, Sanjaya spoke these words. “O king! O best among kings! Abandon your grief. You have heard about the certainty of the Vedas and the sacred texts from many seniors and about what the sages told Srinjaya in ancient times, when he was tormented by grief on account of his son.[7] O king! When your son was young and insolent, you disregarded the words that were spoken to you by your well-wishers. You were avaricious and desired the fruits and did not act in accordance with what was good for you. Your advisers were Duhshasana, the evil-souled Radheya,[8] the evil-souled Shakuni and the evil-minded Chitrasena.[9] They were thorns and they made the entire world full of thorns for themselves.[10] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Your son did not act in accordance with the words of Bhishma, eldest among the Kurus, or Gandhari, or Vidura. He did not act virtuously, in accordance with dharma. Instead, he always spoke of war. He took all the kshatriyas to their destruction and increased the fame of the enemies. You were in the midst as a neutral and did not say anything that should have been said. You were the main beast of burden, but you did not bear your proportionate load. Right from the beginning, a man should adopt the appropriate course of action. One should not strive for something earlier, which one has to repent later. O king! Because of your affection towards your son, you were only interested in pleasing him. You have subsequently arrived at a state of repentance and you should not sorrow. There are those who only see the honey and not the fall. Like you, they sorrow when their greed for honey dislodges them.[11] One who searches for gain obtains sorrow. One who sorrows does not obtain happiness. One who sorrows does not obtain prosperity. One who sorrows does not obtain the supreme objective. A man who starts a fire and then covers it up in a garment, sorrows when he is scorched. Such a person is not regarded as learned. The Parthas were a fire. You and your sons fanned it with the wind of your words. You sprinkled the flames with the clarified butter of your greed. When it was kindled, your sons fell into it like insects. They were scorched by Keshava's flames. You should not sorrow. O king! Tears are flowing down from your face. This is not in accordance with the sacred texts and the learned ones do not praise it. It is said that they are like sparks and scorch men. Therefore, use your intelligence to conquer your anger. Get a grip on yourself." O scorcher of enemies! When the great-souled Sanjaya had consoled him in this way, Vidura showed his earlier intelligence and again spoke to him.'

Chapter 1303(2)

Vaishampayana said, 'With words that were like *amrita*, Vidura dispelled the sorrow of Vichitravirya's son, the bull among men. Listen to what he said.

'Vidura said, "O king! Arise. Why are you lying there? Get a grip on yourself. This is the final outcome[12] of everything that is mortal—mobile and immobile. Everything that is stored is dissipated. Everything that rises falls down again. Everything that is united is separated again. Death is the end of life. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O bull among kshatriyas! Since Yama attracts both those who are brave and those who are cowards, why should these kshatriyas not fight? A man who does not fight—dies. A man who fights—lives. O great king! When one's time has come, no one can transgress it. O king! You should not grieve over those who have been killed in the battle. If the sacred texts are proof, they have attained the supreme objective. All of them studied. All of them observed the vows. All of them were destroyed when they were headed forwards.[13] What is there to sorrow over? They were generated from beyond your sight.[14] They have again gone beyond your sight. They were not yours. You are not theirs. What is there to sorrow over? A person who is killed obtains heaven. A person who kills obtains fame. Both of these possess many qualities. There is no failure in battle. Indra will create worlds that will satisfy their desires. O bull among men! They will become Indra's guests. Mortals do not go to heaven through sacrifices that are rich in donations, austerities or learning. Brave ones go there by being slain in battle. Beings go through thousands of mothers and fathers and hundreds of wives and sons.[15] Whom do they belong to? Whom do we belong to? From one day to another, those who are stupid face thousands of reasons for sorrow and hundreds of reasons for fear, but not those who are learned. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! There is no one who is loved by time, nor anyone time hates. Time looks upon everyone neutrally and everyone is dragged away by time.

Life, beauty, youth and stores of riches are temporary and this is also true of good health and consorting with those one loves. A learned person is not interested in these. One should not sorrow over something that affects the entire country and not a single person alone.[16] If something no longer exists, it will have no return. If one sees some powerful antidote to sorrow, one can act. But if there is no medicine against sorrow, one should not think about it. It does not abandon someone who is thinking. Instead, it only becomes stronger. Because they confront something they do not like and because they are separated from something they like, men of limited intelligence are united with mental grief. There is no artha, dharma or happiness that will result from your sorrowing. As long as one has tasks to accomplish, one should not deviate from those objectives.[17] In particular, men who achieve one kind of prosperity and then another, and continue to be dissatisfied, are confused. The learned are satisfied. Mental sorrow is dispelled through wisdom and physical suffering through medicines. That is the capacity of knowledge. One should not become the equal of a child. When a man lies down, his earlier deeds lie down next to him. When he stands, they stand next to him. When he runs, they run with him. In whichever state one performs a deed, good or bad, in exactly that state the fruits of that deed are obtained."’[18]

Chapter 1304(3)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O immensely wise one! Because of what you have spoken well, my sorrow has been dispelled. But I again wish to hear the true purport of your words. How do learned ones free themselves from their mental grief, when they come in contact with something that is injurious, or when they are separated from something that is good?”

‘Vidura replied, “Whenever the mind is free from unhappiness and happiness—that is when a learned one obtains peace and attains a good objective. O bull among men! Whatever we think of is not permanent. The world is like a plantain tree. It has no essence.[19] Learned ones say that the bodies of mortal beings are like houses. They are destroyed by time. But the single being that is inside[20] is beautiful. Men cast aside clothes, whether they are old or new, and wear other clothes that they like. Bodies occupied by souls are like that. O Vichitravirya’s son! Beings obtain a life of unhappiness or one of happiness, depending on the deeds they have themselves undertaken. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Depending on their deeds, they obtain heaven, happiness and unhappiness. Whether he can control it or not, he bears his own load. An earthen pot may be shattered once it has mounted on the wheel,[21] once some work has been done on it, once work on it has been completed, once it has been taken down but is still wet, once it is dry, once it has been fired, or once it has been taken down and is being used. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The bodies of souls are used like that. Some are destroyed in the womb, some after being born, some when they are a day old, some when they are half a month old, some when they are a month old, some when they are a year old, some when they are two years old, some in youth, some in middle age and some in old age. Depending on their earlier deeds, beings come into being and cease to be. This is the way of the world. What is the reason to sorrow? O king! O lord of men! It is like beings sporting in the water. Some leap up and others are submerged. In that way, in this unfathomable earth, some leap up and others are submerged. One is tied down and has to enjoy the fruits of one’s deeds. Only those of limited intelligence suffer on this account. Those who are wise remain established in the truth and search for what comes at the end of this life. They understand why beings come together and attain the supreme objective.”’

Chapter 1305(4)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O supreme among eloquent ones! Life is unfathomable. But how does one understand it? I wish to hear about it. Tell me truthfully. I am asking you.”

‘Vidura replied, “O lord! Listen to everything about beings, about their birth and other deeds. On earth, for some time, a being dwells as an embryo.[22] When the fifth month is over, flesh is formed. Within the womb, all the limbs are then formed within a month. The being dwells in the midst of all this, smeared with flesh and blood. Because of the force of the wind, the feet are upwards and the head is downwards. It faces great difficulties as it approaches the gate of the vagina. Accompanied by earlier deeds, it is afflicted by the contraction of the vagina. Having been freed from this,[23] he sees the other calamities in this world. Evil demons grab him, like dogs after a piece of meat.[24] If he is still alive, in a subsequent phase, he is grasped by diseases. He is tied down by his own deeds. He is bound down in the noose of senses and afflicted by the succulent addiction to them. O lord among men! He confronts various temptations. He is repeatedly tied down by these and is never satisfied. He does not realize when he arrives in Yama’s world. In the course of time, he dies and Yama’s messengers drag him around. Those who are inarticulate in speech utter good and bad words through their mouths. Like that, the atman ties down the atman and fails to comprehend this.[25] Thus, people are destroyed and are overcome by avarice. They become crazy because of greed, anger and pride. They do not understand their own atman. He finds pleasure in having been born in a good lineage and censures those who have been born in an inferior lineage. He is vain in the pride of prosperity and censures those who are poor. He reprimands others as stupid, but does not look at his own self. He inflicts teaching on others, but does not teach himself. This world of mortals is not permanent. Since the time of birth, whoever follows dharma in all his activities, attains the supreme objective. O lord of men! He who understands all this and acts accordingly, follows the path of liberation and obtains it."'

Chapter 1306(5)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “If the unfathomable path of dharma is difficult to understand, tell me everything in detail about the path of intelligence.”

‘Vidura replied, “After bowing to the one who created himself,[26] I will tell you this. This is what the supreme rishis said about the unfathomable mysteries of life. There was a brahmana in this great world. He reached an impenetrable forest that was full of large and carnivorous beasts. Terrible, large and hungry beasts were scattered in every direction, in the form of lions, tigers and elephants. They led to a fear that was like that of death. On seeing them, his heart began to beat faster. O scorcher of enemies! His body hair stood up and he didn’t know what to do. He swiftly ran around that forest, here and there. He glanced in all the directions, wondering where he could find refuge. Afflicted by fear, he searched for an opening through which he might run away. The brahmana could not go very far and could not disassociate himself.[27] He saw that the terrible forest was surrounded by a net on every side and that an extremely terrible-looking woman was embracing it with her arms. Five-headed serpents rose up, like mountains. The giant forest was covered by large trees that touched the sky. In the midst of that forest, there was a well that was covered. It was strewn with creepers and the mouth was hidden under a covering of grass. The brahmana fell into that hidden store of water. He was entwined in that net of creepers and hung there. He was like a giant jackfruit, hanging from its stalk. He hung there, with his feet facing upwards and his head facing downwards. At that time, he faced another difficulty there. He saw a giant elephant at the edge of the well. It possessed six faces and moved on twelve feet. It was dark and speckled. It was gradually advancing, through those creepers and trees. As he hung from the branches of the tree, the branches were also covered by many kinds of bees. They were terrible in form and fearful. They had collected honey earlier and were returning to their hive. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They repeatedly went out to collect honey. Beings find it tasty. However, a fool is not satisfied with it. Many streams of honey always flowed there. The man who was hanging there, continuously drank from these flows. But though he was in this difficulty and though he drank, his thirst was not satisfied. He kept desiring it and repeatedly satisfied himself by drinking it. O king! His hopes of remaining alive were ignited. Black and white rats gnawed through the tree, on which, the hopes of the man remaining alive were based. That desolate forest was full of carnivorous beasts and an extremely terrible woman. There were serpents at the bottom of the well and an elephant at the edge. Because of the rats, there was the fifth fear of falling from the tree.[28] Because of his greed for the honey, the bees represented the sixth great fear. Thus did he dwell, having been flung into this ocean of life. Without approaching knowledge, he did not abandon his hope of remaining alive.”’

Chapter 1307(6)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “Indeed, that was a great sorrow, to dwell in such difficult circumstances. How could he have found pleasure there? O supreme among eloquent ones! How could he have been satisfied there? How can one dwell in a place where one faces a contravention of dharma?[29] How can that man escape from this great fear? Tell me everything about this and I will try to do what is right. Great compassion is generated in me and I wish to save him from that state.”

‘Vidura replied, “O king! That was only a metaphor, cited by those who know about salvation. Using it, a man can enjoy a good end in the world of the hereafter. That desolate forest is the unfathomable cycle of life. The carnivorous beasts that were mentioned are diseases. A woman, giant in form, was established there. The wise speak of her as old age, destructive of complexion and beauty. O king! The well is the body that souls occupy. The giant serpent which dwells there is time. He is the destroyer of all beings and takes away everything from the body. In the midst of that well there was a creeper there and the man hung onto it. That is the hope for remaining alive, which all those with bodies possess. O king! The elephant with six faces is said to be the year. Its faces are said to be the seasons and its feet are the months. Those who think about beings say that the rats which are always gnawing at the tree are days and nights.[30] The bees there are said to be desire. From it, there are many flows that stream down as honey. Humans submerge themselves in those juices of desire. Those who are learned say that the wheel of life circles in this way. That is the reason wise ones sever the noose that ties them to the wheel of life.”’

Chapter 1308(7)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O one who can see about the true nature of things! You have told me about an appropriate account. I wish to be again delighted by listening to your words, which are like amrita.”

‘Vidura replied, “Listen. I will again tell you about that path in detail. On listening to this, accomplished ones are freed from the cycle of life. O king! A man who is on a long journey is exhausted and dwells somewhere for some time. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In that way, those who are limited in their intelligence pass through this cycle of life and dwell in many wombs.[31] However, those who are learned are freed. That is the reason those who are learned in the sacred texts speak of this[32] as the journey. The learned describe this unfathomable life as a forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who are mortal have to return to this world, whether they are mobile or immobile. But one who is learned is not enamoured of this. The learned speak of the physical and mental diseases of mortals, whether they are direct or indirect, as carnivorous beasts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those with limited intelligence are not disturbed by the large carnivorous beasts of their own deeds, even though they are always afflicted and attacked by them. O king! Even if a man escapes from these diseases, he is subsequently enveloped by old age, destructive of beauty. Without any support in any direction, he is submerged in the great mire of many kinds of sound, forms, tastes, touch and scent. Years, seasons, months, fortnights, days, nights and *sandhyas*[33] progressively take away beauty and vitality. These are the different manifestations of time, but those with limited intelligence do not know about them. It is said that all beings here have their deeds written on them.[34] The body of a being is like a chariot. The soul is said to be the charioteer. The senses are said to be the horses. Deeds and intelligence are the harnesses. He who dashes behind those swift horses is whirled around on a wheel on this cycle of life.

However, a charioteer who controls them with his intelligence does not return.[35] It is said that the chariot which confounds those with limited intelligence belongs to Yama. O king! O lord of men! It gives what you yourself have obtained—destruction of the kingdom, destruction of well-wishers and the destruction of sons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This subsequent craving[36] only leads to sorrow. In the course of a supreme sorrow, a righteous person should look upon the grief as medicine. One who is firm in controlling his soul can escape from that sorrow in a way that valour, prosperity, friends and well-wishers cannot. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who resorts to friendship and good conduct has three horses to depend on—self-control, renunciation and lack of distraction. A man who is stationed on that mental chariot and controls the reins of good conduct, discards all fear of death. O king! He goes to Brahma's world."'

Chapter 1309(8)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the supreme among the Kuru lineage heard the words that Vidura had spoken, he was tormented by grief on account of his sons. He lost his senses and fell down on the ground. His relatives, Krishna Dvaipayana and Kshatta Vidura, saw that he had fallen down on the ground, unconscious. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sanjaya, other well-wishers and trusted gate keepers sprinkled him with cold and pleasant water and fanned him with palm leaves. They carefully rubbed his body with their hands. Dhritarashtra remained in this state for a very long period of time. After a long period of time, the lord of the earth regained his senses. Overcome by thoughts of his sons, he lamented for a very long period of time. “Indeed, shame on being a man and on everything that man receives. The roots of perennial unhappiness result from this. O lord! This great misery that one obtains from the destruction of one’s sons and from the destruction of prosperity, kin and relatives is like poison, or the fire. It is scorching my limbs and destroying my wisdom. O supreme among brahmanas! Overcome by this, a man thinks that death is superior. Confronted by this calamity and faced with this misfortune, this is what I will do now.”[37] Having spoken these words to his great-souled father, supreme among those who know about the brahman, Dhritarashtra was overcome by great grief and was stupefied. O lord of the earth! The king was silent and was immersed in thought.

‘On hearing his words, the lord Krishna Dvaipayana, spoke these words to his son, who was tormented by misery on account of his sons. “O Dhritarashtra! O mighty-armed one! Listen to what I am telling you. You are learned. You are intelligent. You are skilled about dharma and artha. O scorcher of enemies! There is nothing that should be known that is not known to you. There is no doubt that you know that everything mortal is temporary. Everything in the world of the living is temporary and there is no state that is eternal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Since life ends in death, why are you grieving? O Indra among kings! You were a witness to the creation of this enmity. Your son was the cause, but the working of destiny made him act in that way. O king! It is certain that the destruction of the Kurus was destined. Why are you sorrowing over brave ones who have headed towards the ultimate objective? O mighty-armed one! The great-souled Vidura knew about this. O lord of men! That is the reason he made every effort towards peace. But it is my view that even if one tries for a long period of time, no being is capable of deviating from a path that destiny has laid down. I have myself heard what the gods wanted done. I will tell you about this. How will you regain your composure?[38] In the past, I had swiftly gone to Indra's assembly hall. Having recovered from exhaustion, I saw the assembled residents of heaven there. The foremost of devarshis, with Narada at their head, were there. O lord of the earth! I saw the Earth there too. She had gone before the gods because she wanted a task to be accomplished. Having approached the assembled gods, the Earth said, 'In Brahma's abode, you had promised to accomplish a task for me.[39] O immensely fortunate ones! You should quickly act accordingly.' On hearing her words, Vishnu, revered by the worlds, laughed and in that assembly of the gods, spoke these words to the Earth. 'The eldest of Dhritarashtra's one hundred sons is known by the name of Duryodhana. He will accomplish your task. Once he becomes the king, your task will be done. Because of him, all the lords of the earth will assemble in Kurukshetra. Wielding firm weapons, those strikers will kill each other. O goddess! Your burden will be destroyed in that clash. O beautiful one! Swiftly go to your own place and bear up the world.' O king! This was your son, born in Gandhari's womb as a part of *kali*,[40] to become the cause of the destruction of the worlds. He was intolerant, fickle, wrathful and difficult to control. Because of the work of destiny, his brothers were created and they were similar. His maternal uncle, Shakuni, his beloved friend, Karna, and all the kings who allied with him were also generated on earth to ensure destruction. O mighty-armed one! Narada knew the true reason behind all this. O lord of the earth! Your sons were destroyed because of their own crimes. O Indra among kings! You should not sorrow. There is no reason to grieve. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Pandavas have not committed the smallest of crimes. Your evil-minded sons brought injury to earth. O fortunate one! There is no doubt that Narada recounted all this earlier, in Yudhishthira's assembly at the time of the rajasuya sacrifice.[41] 'The Pandavas and the Kouravas will clash against each other. O Kounteya! Since that will happen, do what you must.'[42] On hearing Narada's words then, the Pandavas sorrowed. This is the entire truth and eternal mystery about the gods. O lord! How can your sorrow be dispelled? How can you be compassionate towards your own life?[43] Knowing what has been ordained by fate, you should be affectionate towards the sons of Pandu. O mighty-armed one! This is what I had heard earlier. It was recounted at Dharmaraja's rajasuya, supreme among sacrifices. When I told Dharma's son this secret, he tried to avoid the battle with the Kouravas. However, destiny was stronger. O king! Destiny can never be crossed and no being, mobile or stationary, can cross Yama. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are devoted to tasks and possess the best of intelligence. You know that beings come and go. Nevertheless, you are confounded. You are tormented by grief and are repeatedly losing your senses. If King Yudhishthira knows about this, he will cast aside his life. The brave one is always compassionate, even towards inferior species. O Indra among kings! How will he not feel compassionate towards you? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Retain your life out of compassion towards the Pandavas. I am instructing you to refrain from your proposed course of action. If you act in this way, you will attain fame in this world. O son! The dharma that you will gain will be like what can be got by tormenting with austerities for a long time. Because of sorrow on account of your sons, the flames are blazing. O great king! Every time they do so, use the water of your wisdom to quench them." Hearing these words of the infinitely energetic Vyasa, Dhritarashtra thought for some time.

'He then replied, "O supreme among brahmanas! I am overcome by a great net of grief. I no longer know myself and am repeatedly losing my senses. Having heard your words about this being ordained by destiny, I will retain my life and no longer sorrow." O Indra among kings! On hearing Dhritarashtra's words, Vyasa, Satyavati's son, instantly disappeared.'

Section Eighty-one

STRI PARVA

This parva has 468 shlokas and seventeen chapters.

Chapter 1310(9): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1311(10): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1312(11): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1313(12): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1314(13): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1315(14): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1316(15): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1317(16): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1318(17): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1319(18): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1320(19): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1321(20): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1322(21): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1323(22): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1324(23): 42 shlokas
Chapter 1325(24): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1326(25): 46 shlokas

> *This section is named after the women. When the Pandavas meet Dhritarashtra and Gandhari, Dhritarashtra wants to crush Bhima to death, but is offered an iron image instead by Krishna. Vedavyasa dissuades Gandhari from cursing the Pandavas. Gandhari's glance distorts Yudhishthira's nails. Slain warriors and funeral rites are described. Gandhari curses Krishna.*

Chapter 1310(9)

Janamejaya asked, ‘After the illustrious Vyasa had departed, what did King Dhritarashtra do? O brahmana rishi! You should tell me that in detail.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O best among men! After he[1] heard this, for a long time, he was conscious and thought. He then asked Sanjaya to yoke[2] and told Vidura, “Quickly bring Gandhari and all the women of the Bharata lineage here. Bring my sister-in-law, Kunti, and all the other women here.” Thus did the one with dharma in his soul speak to Vidura, who was knowledgeable about dharma. With his intelligence clouded by sorrow, he[3] climbed onto the chariot.

‘Gandhari was stricken by grief, but was goaded by the words of her husband.[4] With Kunti and the other women, she rushed to where the king was. Approaching the king, they were overcome with great sorrow. They greeted each other and cried grievously. Kshatta,[5] who was himself suffering even more, comforted them. The voices of the women were choking with tears. He made them ascend their vehicles and left the city. In all the houses of the Kurus, loud lamentations were heard. The entire city, including the children, was afflicted by grief. Those women had earlier not been seen, not even by the large numbers of the gods. With their lords slain, they were now seen by ordinary men. Their beautiful hair was dishevelled and they cast aside their ornaments. Clad in single garments, those women ran around hither and thither, without protectors. The houses were as beautiful as white mountains and they emerged from these. They were like those leaving homes in mountains, when leaders of the herds had been slain. Large numbers of women emerged. O king! They ran around in sorrow, like young girls in an arena. They held onto each other’s arms and wept, lamenting their sons, brothers and fathers. They were seen there, as if the world was being destroyed at the end of a yuga. They lamented and wept and ran around here and there. They were senseless because of sorrow and did not know what they should do. Earlier, the women used to be bashful, even before their friends. They were shameless now and appeared in single garments before their mothers-in-law. Earlier, they used to console each other in times of grief, even if it was of a mild kind. O king! Distracted by sorrow now, they ignored each other.

‘The king was surrounded by thousands of such lamenting ones. He left the city in distress and quickly headed towards the field of battle. With the king at their head, artisans, traders, vaishyas and those who earned a living from all kinds of work emerged outside the city. At the destruction of the Kurus, the women cried and lamented in piteous tones. A loud noise arose and oppressed the world. It was as if beings were being scorched when the time for the end of a yuga has arrived. The beings thought that they were being destroyed. At the destruction of the Kurus, all the citizens became extremely anxious. O great king! They were devoted to them and cried in severe grief.’

Chapter 1311(10)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When they had only gone a distance of one *krosha*,[6] they saw the maharathas—Sharadvata Kripa, Drona’s son and Kritavarma. They saw the king, the lord who possessed the sight of wisdom. With voices choking with tears, sighing and weeping, they said, “O great king! Your son has performed an extremely difficult deed. O king! With his followers, the lord of the earth has gone to Shakra’s world. Out of Duryodhana’s army, the three of us are the only rathas who have escaped. O bull among the Bharata lineage! All the other soldiers have perished.” Having addressed the king in this way, Kripa Sharadvata spoke these words to Gandhari, who was afflicted by sorrow on account of her son. “He fought without any fear. He slew large numbers of the enemy. Your son has been killed after performing heroic deeds. It is certain that they have obtained the worlds that can be conquered through sparkling weapons. They are roaming around with radiant bodies there, like immortals. Not a single one of them retreated from fighting with the brave ones. They never joined their hands in salutation. They were slain through weapons. This is said to be the ancient and supreme objective of kshatriyas. Since they have been slain through weapons in a battle, you should not sorrow. O queen! Their enemies, the Pandavas, have nothing to be delighted about. With Ashvatthama at the forefront, listen to what we have done. We heard that Bhimasena had killed your son through the use of adharma. We entered the camp of the sleeping Pandus and created a great carnage. With Dhrishtadyumna at their head, all the Panchalas have been killed. Drupada’s sons and Droupadi’s sons have been brought down. We massacred large numbers of your son’s enemies. Then the three of us fled from the battle, because we were incapable of remaining there. The Pandavas are great archers and will come here quickly.[7] They will be full of intolerance and enmity and will seek to exact vengeance. On hearing that their sons were killed while they were distracted, those illustrious and brave bulls among men will swiftly search out our footsteps. Since we have acted injuriously against them, we are not interested in remaining here. O queen! We seek your permission. Do not sorrow unnecessarily. O king! We seek your permission. Resort to supreme fortitude. You must ensure that the dharma of kshatriyas alone remains established." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, Kripa, Kritavarma and Drona's son circumambulated the king. They glanced towards the intelligent king Dhritarashtra. Those great-souled ones swiftly urged their horses towards the Ganga.

'O king! All those maharathas took each other's leave and anxiously left in three different directions. Kripa Sharadvata went to Hastinapura. Hardikya went to his own kingdom and Drona's son went to Vyasa's hermitage. Those brave ones departed, glancing towards each other. Those great-souled ones were frightened at having injured the sons of Pandu. O great king! Having met the king before the sun had risen, those brave ones, the scorchers of enemies, departed in different directions, as they willed.'

Chapter 1312(11)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When all the soldiers had been slain, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira heard that his aged father had left from Gajasahvya.[8] O great king! With his brothers, he sorrowed and was afflicted by grief on account of his sons. He went to the one who was overwhelmed with grief on account of his sons. He was followed by the brave and great-souled Dasharha,[9] Yuyudhana[10] and Yuyutsu.[11] They were followed by the extremely grief-stricken Droupadi, who was oppressed by sorrow, and also the frightened Panchala women who had assembled there. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Along the banks of the Ganga, he[12] saw large numbers of women shrieking and lamenting, like female ospreys. Thousands of them wept and surrounded the king. They raised their arms in lamentation and uttered pleasant and unpleasant words. “How can a king who knows about dharma commit such an act of violence now? He has slain his fathers, brothers, preceptors, sons and friends. O mighty-armed one! What was in your mind when you killed Drona and your grandfather, Bhishma, and when you slew Jayadratha? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! What is the use of the kingdom when you cannot see your fathers and brothers, the invincible Abhimanyu and Droupadi’s sons?” The mighty-armed one went past the ones who were shrieking like female ospreys.

‘Dharmaraja Yudhishthira showed homage to his eldest father.[13] In that way, those destroyers of enemies[14] also honoured their father, in accordance with dharma. All the Pandavas announced their names to him. However, the father was afflicted because his sons had been killed. Oppressed by grief, he embraced Pandava[15] reluctantly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He embraced Dharmaraja and comforted him. Like a fire that wished to burn, he then looked for the evil-souled Bhimasena. The fire of his anger was fanned by the wind of his sorrow. He wished to burn down the forest that was Bhimasena with his sight. However, Hari[16] realized that he[17] harboured ill intentions towards Bhima. He pushed Bhima aside with his arms and presented an iron Bhima. Through signs, the immensely intelligent Hari had understood his intentions in advance. The immensely wise Janardana had therefore thought of a contrivance. The strong king grasped the iron Bhimasena with his arms, thinking it to be Vrikodara. The king possessed the strength and force of ten thousand elephants. When he grasped the iron Bhima and shattered it, his own chest was mangled and blood began to flow from his mouth. Covered with blood, he fell down on the ground, like a *parijata* tree,[18] with blossoms at the ends of its branches. The learned *suta*, Gavalgana's son,[19] seized him and asked him not to act in this way. He spoke words to pacify and comfort him. The great-minded one abandoned his anger and overcame his rage. Full of sorrow, he repeatedly exclaimed, "Alas, Bhima! Alas!" On knowing that he had overcome his rage and was full of sorrow because Bhimasena had been killed, Vasudeva, supreme among men, spoke these words to him. "O Dhritarashtra! Do not grieve. Bhima has not been killed by you. O king! It was an iron image that has been brought down by you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I knew that you were overcome by rage. So I dragged Kounteya away, when he was in the jaws of death. O tiger among kings! There is no one who is as strong as you. O mighty-armed one! Where is the man who can withstand being crushed by your arms? When someone has been crushed by your arms, he cannot escape alive, just as one cannot escape alive when one has confronted Death. O Kouravya! Therefore, I got your son to construct this iron image of Bhima and offered it to you.[20] Because you were tormented by sorrow over your sons, your mind had deviated from dharma. O Indra among kings! That is the reason you wished to kill Bhimasena. O king! However, it would not have been proper for you to kill Vrikodara. O great king! Your sons will never become alive again. Therefore, you should condone everything that we have done and approve of it. Do not unnecessarily have this sorrow in your mind."'

Chapter 1313(12)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The attendants then arrived, so as to clean him.[21] Once he had been cleaned, Madhusudana again spoke to him. “O king! You have studied the Vedas and many sacred texts. You are learned in the Puranas and the dharma of kings. O immensely wise one! Though learned, you did not follow their injunctions. O Kourava! You knew that the Pandavas were superior in strength and valour. A king is firm in his wisdom only if he detects crimes himself and obtains what is most beneficial, depending on the time and the place. A person who is told about what is beneficial, but does not accept the good and reject the bad, confronts a calamity and has to repent later. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Consider the course of action that you followed. O king! You did not control yourself and were under Duryodhana’s control. This is because of your own crimes. Why did you wish to kill Bhima? Therefore, control your anger and remember your own evil deeds. In his insolence, the inferior one[22] had Panchali[23] brought to the assembly hall. Bhimasena killed him to avenge that enmity. Look towards your own transgressions and those of your evil-souled son. O scorcher of enemies! The blameless Pandus were abandoned by you.” O lord of men! Thus did Krishna recount the entire truth.

‘Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, replied to Devaki’s son. “O mighty-armed one! O Madhava! It is as you have described it. O one who has dharma in his soul! The affection towards my son made me deviate from my patience. That tiger among men[24] is powerful and has truth as his valour. O Krishna! It is fortunate that Bhima was protected by you and did not come between my arms. I am no longer distracted. My anger has gone. My fever has been dispelled. O Keshava! I wish to embrace the brave middle Pandava.[25] Those Indras among kings have been slain. My sons have been killed. My refuge and my pleasure are now vested with the sons of Pandu.” He wept and embraced Bhima, Dhananjaya and Madri’s two sons, the brave men. He touched their limbs, comforted them and gave them his blessings.’

Chapter 1314(13)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Dhritarashtra granted them leave. All the brothers, bulls among the Kurus, together with Keshava, went to Gandhari. The unblemished Gandhari was oppressed by grief on account of her sons. When she recognized Dharmaraja Yudhishthira,[26] who had slain his enemies, she wished to curse him. However, the rishi who was Satyavati’s son[27] got to know in advance about her wicked intentions towards the Pandavas. He touched the fragrant and pure waters of the Ganga. With the speed of thought, the supreme rishi then arrived at the spot. With his divine sight, he could see and understand what was in the minds of all living beings. The immensely ascetic one blessed his daughter-in-law and told her that this was not the time for cursing. It was the time for peace. “O Gandhari! You should not have anger towards the Pandavas. Obtain peace and control your passion. Listen to my words. Desiring victory, your son spoke to you eighteen days ago. ‘O mother! I am going to fight with the enemy. Pronounce auspicious blessings on me.’ Desiring victory, he repeatedly beseeched you. O Gandhari! You said, ‘Where there is dharma, there is victory.’ O Gandhari! Earlier, I cannot remember your words ever having come false. You are prudent. O spirited one! Remember those words of dharma that you uttered earlier. O one who always speaks the truth! Control your anger and do not behave in this way.”

‘Gandhari replied, “O illustrious one! I do not hate them. Nor do I desire that they should be destroyed. But the sorrow on account of my sons is powerful and I am distracted. I must protect the Kounteyas now, just as Kunti does, and just as Dhritarashtra will protect them. This destruction of the Kurus has come about because of the crimes of Duryodhana, Shakuni Soubala, Karna and Duhshasana. Bibhatsu[28] has committed no crime, nor have Partha Vrikodara, Nakula and Sahadeva, and certainly not Yudhishthira. Wishing to fight, the Kouravyas destroyed each other. They fought with each other and killed each other. However, what I find unpleasant is the deed Bhima undertook while Vasudeva looked on. The great-minded one challenged Duryodhana to a duel with the clubs. As they roamed around in many ways in the encounter, he realized that he was superior in skills.[29] He struck him below the navel and my anger increases because of that. The great-souled ones were knowledgeable about dharma and have been instructed about dharma. To save their lives, how could those brave ones have abandoned it in the encounter?"'

Chapter 1315(14)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing her words, Bhimasena was frightened. Entreating Gandhari, he spoke these words to her. “Whether I acted in accordance with dharma or in accordance with adharma there, it was because of fear and with a desire to save myself. Therefore, you should forgive me. If I fought in accordance with dharma, there was no way I could have stood up to your immensely strong son. Hence, I acted in an unfair way. The valiant one was the only one left from among the soldiers and having killed me in the encounter with the clubs, would have obtained the kingdom. That is the reason I did what should not have been done. The princess Panchali was in her season and was in a single garment. You know everything about what your son told her then. Without taking care of Suyodhana, we would not have been able to enjoy the earth, with its oceans, unfettered. That is the reason I did what should not have been done. Your son caused us injury, when he exposed his left thigh to Droupadi in the assembly hall.[30] O mother! Your son acted in a wicked way and that is the reason he had to be killed by us. At that time, we abided by the instructions of Dharmaraja. O queen! It was your son who generated that great enmity. We are the ones who always suffered in the forest. That is the reason I did what I did. Having seen the end of that enmity and having killed Duryodhana in the battle, Yudhishthira has obtained the kingdom and we have overcome our rage.”

‘Gandhari said, “O son! You have praised my son and this is not about your killing him. He did everything that you have recounted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Vrishasena killed Nakula’s horses in the battle, you drank the blood from Duhshasana’s body.[31] This was a terrible deed, befitting those who are not *arya*s, and condemned by those who are virtuous. You performed a cruel deed. O Vrikodara! How could you have done it?”

‘Bhimasena replied, “One should not drink the blood of someone else, not to speak of one’s own. There is no difference between one’s own self and one’s brother. O mother! Do not sorrow. His blood did not pass beyond my teeth and my lips. Vaivasvata[32] knows this. My hands were smeared with his blood. I cheered my brothers, who were terrified on seeing that Nakula’s horses had been slain by Vrishasena in the battle. At the time of gambling with the dice, he had seized Droupadi by the hair. I had spoken words in anger then and those were in my mind.[33] O queen! Had I not accomplished my pledge, I would have been dislodged from the dharma of kshatriyas till eternity. That is the reason I did what I should not have done. O Gandhari! You should not believe that this was a crime and censure me. In earlier times, when your sons injured us, you did not restrain them.”

‘Gandhari said, “You were not defeated and you killed one hundred of this aged one’s sons. Why did you not spare one, one who had committed the least crimes? O son! We are aged and have lost our kingdom. He would have been our successor.[34] For these blind and aged ones, why could you not have saved a single one? O son! Had you left one, I would not have felt this sorrow at your having slain our sons, as long as you acted in accordance with dharma.”’

Chapter 1316(15)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Gandhari was angry. She was afflicted at the slaughter of her sons and grandsons. Having said this, she asked, “Where is King Yudhishthira?” Trembling and with his hands joined in salutation, Yudhishthira, Indra among kings, approached and spoke these gentle words to her. “O queen! I am Yudhishthira, the violent slayer of your sons. I deserve to be cursed. I am the reason behind this destruction on earth. Curse me. After slaughtering my well-wishers in this way, there is no purpose to my life, or in this kingdom and these riches. I am foolish and a slayer of my well-wishers.” Having spoken these words, he was frightened and approached close. Gandhari said nothing, but sighed, long and deep. Yudhishthira lowered his body down and fell at her feet. She was knowledgeable about dharma and could see dharma. Through the band of cloth, the queen could see the tips of the king’s fingers.[35] The king’s nails had been handsome, but now became malformed. On seeing this, Arjuna hid behind Vasudeva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They[36] were restless and moved around. However, Gandhari’s rage was gone and she comforted them, like a mother.

‘Those broad-chested ones took her leave and together, went to see their mother Pritha,[37] the mother of brave ones. Having not seen her sons for a long time, she had been anxious about her sons. The queen covered her face with a piece of cloth and wept. Thus, with her sons, Pritha shed tears. She saw that they had been wounded from the blows of many weapons. In many ways, she repeatedly touched her sons. She sorrowed for the grief-stricken Droupadi, who had lost her sons. She saw that Droupadi had fallen down on the ground and was weeping. Droupadi said, “O noble lady! Where have all your grandsons, together with Subhadara’s son,[38] gone? You are an ascetic and they have not seen you for a long time. They have not come to you now. Without my sons, what good will the kingdom be to me now?” The large-eyed Pritha comforted her. She raised Yajnaseni,[39] who was weeping and was afflicted by grief. With her, and with her sons following her, Pritha, who was suffering herself, went to Gandhari, who was suffering even more. With her sister-in-law, Gandhari spoke to the illustrious one.[40] "O daughter! Do not grieve. Behold. I am also miserable. I think that this destruction of the worlds has been goaded by destiny. It came about inevitably and naturally, and made the body hair stand up. When Krishna was unsuccessful in his entreaties,[41] the immensely intelligent Vidura had spoken some great words and those have come to pass. One should not sorrow over something that is inevitable, especially something that has already occurred. One should not sorrow over those who have been killed in a battle. I am in the same state as you are. Who will comfort me? It is because of my crimes that the best of our lineage have been destroyed."'

Chapter 1317(16)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having said this about the destruction of the Kurus, with her divine eyesight Gandhari saw everything there. She was immensely fortunate and was devoted to her husband. She was his equal in observing vows. She was always engaged in fierce austerities and was truthful. Maharshi Krishna,[42] the performer of auspicious deeds, had granted her many different kinds of boons, including the strength of divine knowledge. The intelligent one[43] could see things that were far away and not near, such as the bravest of men lying down in the field of battle. This made the body hair stand up. It was strewn with bones and hair and there were torrents of blood. Many thousands of bodies were scattered around in every direction. There were elephants, horses, chariots and warriors, completely covered in blood. There were bodies without heads and a large number of heads without bodies. It was strewn with elephants, horses and the bravest of men, deprived of their lives. The place was populated by jackals, wild crows, ravens, herons and crows. It was full of rakshasas, maneaters and delighted ospreys. Inauspicious jackals howled and it was populated by vultures.

‘Dhritarashtra, lord of the earth, obtained Vyasa’s permission. With all the sons of Pandu, with Yudhishthira at their head, with Vasudeva and the king who had lost his relatives[44] leading the way, and assembling all the Kuru women, he[45] went to the field of battle. The women, who had lost their lords, approached Kurukshetra. They saw their slain sons, brothers, fathers and husbands there. They were being devoured by predatory beasts there, by jackals, wild crows, crows, demons, pishachas, rakshasas and many kinds of beings that roam around in the night. The women saw that place, which was like Rudra’s sporting ground. As they descended from their extremely expensive vehicles, they screamed. The women of the Bharata lineage were miserable and saw a sight that they had not seen earlier. Some roamed around amidst the bodies. Others fell down on the ground. They were exhausted and without their protectors. Some lost their senses. The women of the Panchala and Kuru lineages were extremely miserable. Their minds were numb because of the sorrow, and in every direction, they screamed.

'Subala's daughter[46] was knowledgeable about dharma. She looked at that terrible field of battle. Having seen the destruction of the Kurus, she approached Pundarikaksha Purushottama and spoke these sorrowful words. "O Pundarikaksha! Look at these daughters-in-law, whose lords have been slain. O Madhava! Their hair is dishevelled and they are shrieking like female ospreys. They arrived together, remembering the bulls among the Bharata lineage. They are running around separately now, after their sons, brothers, fathers and husbands. O mighty-armed one! These are the mothers of heroes and their sons have been killed. Some are the wives of heroes and the brave ones have been killed. The place is beautiful with those tigers among men, Bhishma, Karna, Abhimanyu, Drona, Drupada and Shalya. They were like blazing fires. The great-souled ones wore golden armour, decorated with molten gold and gems. They wore armlets and bracelets on their arms. They were ornamented with garlands. Spears, clubs, sparkling and sharp swords, arrows and bows were released from the arms of the brave ones. Large numbers of delighted carnivorous beasts have assembled in some places. In some places, they are sporting. In others, they are lying down. O lord! O brave one! Behold. That is how the field of battle looks. O Janardana! As I look at it, I am tormented by grief. O Madhusudana! The Panchalas and the Kurus were like the five elements.[47] I never thought that they would be destroyed, or that they would be killed. Thousands of eagles and vultures are tearing apart the best of armour, and dragging and devouring the mangled bodies. Who could have thought of the destruction of Jayadratha, Karna, Drona, Bhishma and Abhimanyu? O Madhusudana! They were regarded as those who could not be killed. I see them slain now. They are being devoured by vultures, herons, wild crows, hawks, dogs and jackals. Those wrathful ones were stationed under Duryodhana's command. Behold those tigers among men now. They are like fires that have been pacified. All of them deserved to lie down on soft and clean beds. They have been destroyed now and are lying down on the bare ground. At the appropriate time, they were always praised by bards. They are now hearing the many horrible and inauspicious howls of jackals. Those illustrious and brave ones used to lie down on beds earlier. Their limbs used to be smeared with the paste of sandalwood and aloe. They are now lying down in dust. Vultures, jackals and crows are tearing away their ornaments. They are repeatedly emitting inauspicious and hideous howls. There are bows, arrows, yellow swords and sparkling clubs. They were cheerful and prided themselves on fighting. They are radiant, as if they are still alive. There were many who were extremely handsome, but have been torn apart by carnivorous beasts now. Some possessed eyes like bulls and are lying down, wearing golden garlands. Others, with arms like bludgeons, are still holding their clubs. The brave ones are lying down facing them, like women along their beloveds.[48] Others have dazzling armour and sparkling weapons. O Janardana! Thinking that they are still alive, the predatory beasts are not oppressing them. Other great-souled ones have been dragged away by the predatory beasts. Golden garlands have been scattered around in every direction. Those fierce jackals have attacked the illustrious ones who have been slain. Thousands of necklaces have been flung away from their necks. All of them would be praised by bards in the second half of the night.[49] In the other half, accomplished minstrels would praise them with many offerings. These excellent women are miserable with grief and are lamenting them now. O tiger among the Vrishni lineage! They are severely afflicted by sorrow and are despondent. O Keshava! The faces of these excellent women are like red lotuses. They are handsome and beautiful, but have dried up now. Some others are no longer crying. They are grief-stricken and reflecting. Miserable, the women of the Kuru lineage are rushing here and there. The women of the Kuru lineage possess golden complexions, like that of the sun. But because of the anger and the tears, the faces now have the hue of copper. Having lamented a lot, some have become quiet. The women no longer know what another one is lamenting. Some have lamented and shrieked for a long time. Those brave ones are now trembling with sorrow and are casting aside their lives. On seeing the many bodies, they are shrieking and lamenting. Others, with delicate hands, are beating on their heads with their hands. The earth is beautiful, strewn here and there with fallen heads and hands and heaps of other kinds of limbs that have been severed. There are horrible heads without bodies and bodies without heads, a sight that arya women should not see. On seeing this, they are delighted and confused at the same time. Affixing a body to a head, they are glancing at it senselessly. Miserably, they are saying, “This is not he. He is somewhere else.” There are hands, thighs, feet and other parts that have been cut down by arrows. Joining them, they are overcome by misery and are repeatedly losing their senses. There are other bodies without heads, devoured by animals and birds. On seeing these, some of the Bharata women are not recognizing that these are their husbands. O Madhusudana! Others are seeing their brothers, fathers, sons and husbands, killed by the enemy, and are beating their heads with their hands. There are arms holding swords and heads wearing earrings. The earth is impassable because of the mire that the flesh and the blood have created. These unblemished women do not deserve unhappiness and have not been touched by misery earlier. The earth is scattered with their brothers, fathers and sons. O Janardana! Look at the large numbers of Dhritarashtra’s daughters-in-law. Those young women, with excellent hair, are like a herd. O Keshava! What greater misery can manifest itself before me, than that all these women should appear in this form and act in this way? O Keshava! It is certain that I have performed wicked deeds in my earlier lives, since I see my sons, grandsons and brothers killed.” Lamenting in this way, she saw her slain son.’

Chapter 1318(17)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Oppressed by grief, Gandhari then saw Duryodhana. She suddenly fell down on the ground, like a severed plantain tree in a forest. Having regained her senses, she repeatedly lamented again. On seeing Duryodhana lying down, covered in blood, Gandhari embraced him and lamented piteously. “Alas! Alas, son!” She was afflicted by grief and lamented, her senses overwhelmed. His extremely broad collar bones were decorated with a golden necklace. Oppressed by grief, she sprinkled him with tears flowing from her eyes. Hrishikesha was near her and she spoke these words to him. “O lord! This war, which would lead to the destruction of relatives, presented itself. O Varshneya! At that time, this best of kings joined his hands in salutation and spoke to me. ‘O mother! In this clash that has arisen between relatives, you must pronounce words of victory over me.’ O tiger among men! Knowing everything about the catastrophe that he had brought on himself, I told him, ‘Where there is dharma, victory exists there. O son! O lord! Since you are fighting without any confusion, you are certain to obtain the worlds that can be conquered through weapons.’ O lord! Having spoken this earlier, I am not mourning him. I am sorrowing over the miserable Dhritarashtra, whose relatives have been killed. O Madhava! Look at my son. He was intolerant and the best among warriors. He was skilled in the use of weapons and was indomitable in battle. He is lying down on a bed meant for heroes. Those whose heads were consecrated[50] would advance ahead of this scorcher of enemies. He is lying down in the dust now. Behold the progress of time. It is certain that the brave Duryodhana has attained an end that is not very easy to obtain. He is lying down forwards,[51] on a bed loved by heroes. The lords of the earth used to honour and delight him earlier. Earlier, the best of women used to fan him with the best of whisks. He is now being fanned by the best of birds, with their wings. The strong and mighty-armed one is lying down here.

Truth was his valour. He was brought down by Bhimasena in the encounter, like an elephant by a lion. O Krishna! Look at Duryodhana lying down, his body covered with blood. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![52] He has been slain by Bhimasena, with an upraised club. O Keshava! Earlier, the mighty-armed one brought eleven akshouhinis into the battle. He has now been conveyed to his destruction. This Duryodhana was a maharatha and a great archer. He is lying down. He has been brought down by Bhimasena, like a tiger by a lion. He was foolish and disrespected Vidura and his father. He was stupid and wicked and disrespected the aged. That is the reason he has fallen prey to death. He was stationed on this earth for thirteen years, without any rivals. My son was the lord of the earth. He has been slain and is lying down on the ground. O Krishna! I will not see the earth ruled by Dhritarashtra's son. O Varshneya! It used to be full of elephants, cattle and horses. But this did not last for a long time. O mighty-armed one! I will now see it ruled by others. O Madhava! There will no longer be elephants, cattle and horses. How can I remain alive? Behold. There is a greater hardship for me than the slaying of my son. With the brave ones killed in the battle, these women are around me. O Krishna! Look at Lakshmana's mother.[53] She possesses beautiful hips, but her hair is dishevelled. She is lying down in Duryodhana's arms and is like a golden altar. When the mighty-armed one was alive earlier, it is certain that this spirited child would nestle herself in his excellent arms and pleasure herself in those arms. How is it that my heart is not shattering into a hundred fragments? I have seen my son, together with his son, slain in the battle. The unblemished one is inhaling the fragrance on the head of her blood-stained son.[54] The one with the beautiful thighs is caressing Duryodhana with her hand. How can that spirited one not sorrow over her husband and her son? She is sometimes looking at her son and sometimes at him.[55] The long-eyed one is beating her head with her hands. O Madhava! She is falling down on the breast of the brave king of the Kurus. Her complexion is like that of a white lotus. Since the ascetic one had earlier wiped the faces of her son and her husband, she seems to be between two white lotuses too.[56] If the sacred texts and what we have heard is true, then it is certain that the king has obtained the worlds that can be conquered through the strength of arms."'

Chapter 1319(18)

‘Gandhari said, “O Madhava! Look at my one hundred sons. They were never exhausted in a battle. In the battle, most of them were killed by Bhimasena’s club. But there is something that is causing a greater grief to me now. With their sons slain, my young daughters-in-law are running around with dishevelled hair. Their ornamented feet used to roam around on the terraces of palaces earlier and must touch the ground, wet with blood, now. As they are whirling and roaming around, crazy and tormented by grief, they are scattering vultures, jackals and crows. There is another one there, unblemished in her limbs. Her waist can be encircled by the hands. On seeing this terrible sight, she is miserable and has fallen down. O mighty-armed one! My mind can no longer find peace after I have seen the princess, Lakshmana’s mother, the daughter of a king. Some see their brothers, others see their husbands and sons slain, lying down on the ground. On seeing that they have fallen down, they are grasping their arms with their own beautiful arms. O unvanquished one! There are middle-aged women and aged ones. With their relatives killed in the terrible clash, they are weeping. Listen. O immensely strong one! Exhausted and confused, they are clinging onto the seats of chariots and the slain bodies of elephants and horses. O Krishna! Behold. There is another one who has picked up the head of her relative, severed from his body. It is beautiful, has an excellent nose and is decorated with earrings. O unblemished one! I think that their crimes in their earlier lives must have been severe. And I, possessing limited intelligence, must have done the same as well. O Janardana! That is the reason we are being repaid by Dharmaraja.[57] O Varshneya! Good and evil deeds can never be destroyed. O Krishna! Look at them. They are in the best of ages. They possess beautiful breasts and stomachs. They have been born in noble lineages. They are modest. Their eyelashes, eyes and hair are dark. Confused by sorrow and grief, they are gaggling like a gaggle of geese. O

Madhava! They are shrieking like cranes and are falling down. O Pundarikaksha! The faces of these women are like blooming lotuses. Their faces are perfect and the sun's sharp rays are hurting them. O Vasudeva! My sons were as proud as crazy elephants, and jealous. Ordinary men are now looking at the women from the inner quarters.[58] The shields are marked with the signs of one hundred moons. The standards have the complexion of the sun. The armour is golden. The breast-plates are made out of gold. O Govinda! Behold the blazing helmets of my sons as they lie down on the ground. They are like fires into which oblations have been offered. Duhshasana is lying down here, brought down by the brave Bhimasena, the slayer of enemies, with a club that killed heroes. His limbs are drenched with the blood that has been drunk. O Madhava! At the time when Droupadi was afflicted by the gambling, she had urged him on and he[59] remembered that.[60] O Janardana! To please his brother and Karna, when Panchali was won over by the dice in the assembly hall, he[61] had spoken harsh words to her and to Sahadeva, Nakula and Arjuna. 'O Panchali! You are our servant and our wife. Quickly enter our house.' O Krishna! At that time, I had spoken to King Duryodhana. 'O son! Shakuni has been grasped by the noose of death. Abandon him. O extremely stupid one! Understand that your maternal uncle loves a conflict. O son! Swiftly abandon him and make peace with the Pandavas. O extremely stupid one! You do not comprehend. Bhimasena is intolerant. The sharp words that you have spoken are like inflicting iron arrows and flaming torches on an elephant.' However, he[62] was cruel and proud and struck with words that were like stakes. He released his poison, like a snake towards bulls. Duhshasana is lying down here, stretching out his arms. He has been killed by Bhimasena, like a giant bull by a lion. Bhimasena was extremely intolerant and did something that was extremely gruesome. In the battle, he angrily drank Duhshasana's blood."'

Chapter 1320(19)

‘Gandhari said, “O Madhava! This son of mine, Vikarna, was revered as being wise. He was slain and is lying down on the ground. Bhima did this one hundred times. O Madhusudana! Vikarna is lying down in the midst of some elephants. He looks like the sun in the autumn sky, surrounded by dark-blue clouds. His hands bore the marks from wielding a giant bow and are encased in finger-guards. Why are they being mangled by vultures now? O Madhava! His ascetic wife is trying to ward off the vultures that are after meat. But though she is continually trying, the child is incapable of warding them off. O bull among men! Vikarna was brave and young and a leader of troops. He was used to happiness. He deserved happiness. O Madhava! He is lying down in the dust. In the encounter, his inner organs have been mangled by barbed arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows. However, Lakshmi has still not abandoned this best of the Bharata lineage. Durmukha did not retreat and is lying down slain, after killing large numbers of the enemy in the battle. He has been killed by the brave one[63] in the encounter, by one who accomplished his pledge. O Krishna! Half of his face has been eaten up by carnivorous beasts. O son! But you are shining more brightly, like the moon on the seventh lunar day. O Krishna! With a face like this, how could this brave one be brought down in the battle? How could my son be slain by the enemy and made to bite the dust? O amiable one! No one was capable of standing before Durmukha. He had conquered the world of the gods. How could he have been slain by the enemy? O Madhusudana! Chitrasena has been slain and is lying down on the ground. Look at this son of Dhritarashtra’s. He was the best of archers. He is still adorned in colourful garlands and ornaments. Grief-stricken young women are weeping and are seated around him, together with large numbers of predatory beasts. The sound of the weeping of women mixes with the roars of carnivorous beasts. O Krishna! This seems to be an extraordinary and wonderful sight to me. The young Vivimshati was a leader of troops and was always served by the best of women. O Madhava! He is lying down in the mud and the dust now. The brave one was slaughtered in the encounter and his armour was shattered by arrows. More than twenty vultures have surrounded Vivimshati now. In the encounter, the brave one penetrated the Pandava formation. Having penetrated, he is now lying down, like a virtuous man. O Krishna! Look at Vivimshati. His face has a smile. He possesses an excellent nose and excellent eyebrows. He is like the lord of the stars.[64] Vasava's women have surrounded that prosperous one.[65] He seems to be sporting with gandharvas and thousands of celestial maidens. Duhsaha was brave and the ornament of assemblies. He was the one who slew brave soldiers. He was the one who destroyed the enemy. What about him? Duhsaha's body is completely covered by arrows. He looks like the slope of a mountain, covered by blossoming *karnikara* trees. His radiant garlands are golden. His armour is blazing. Though he is dead, Duhsaha looks like Mount Shveta, when it is ablaze."'

Chapter 1321(20)

‘Gandhari said, “O Madhava! O Dasharha! He was as proud and haughty as a lion.[66] He was said to possess one-and-a-half times the qualities, strength and valour of his father and you. He single-handedly penetrated the extremely impenetrable battle formation of my son. He was the one who caused death to others, but has himself come under the subjugation of death. O Krishna! He was Krishna’s[67] son and was infinitely energetic. I see that though Abhimanyu has been slain, his radiance has not diminished. This daughter of Virata’s[68] is the daughter-in-law of the wielder of Gandiva. This distressed child is sorrowing over her brave husband. The unblemished one is grieving. O Krishna! With her husband dead, the wife, Virata’s daughter, has approached him and is wiping his face with her hands. The neck of Subhadra’s son has three lines[69] and the face above it is like a blooming lotus. The illustrious one[70] is inhaling its fragrance. The beautiful one is desirable in her beauty and is embracing him. She used to be bashful earlier. But she has now lost her senses, as if she has drunk *madhvika* liquor. O Krishna! She has removed the golden armour and is glancing at his body, covered with wounds. O Krishna! The child is glancing at him and speaking to you. ‘O Pundarikaksha! This one had eyes like yours and has been brought down. O unblemished one! He was your equal in strength, valour and energy. He was your equal in beauty. But he has been brought down and is lying down on the ground. He was extremely delicate and was used to lying down on the skins of *ranku* deer. His body is on the ground now. Does it not cause torment? With armlets, his hands are like the trunks of elephants, hardened from bowstrings. As he is lying down, with golden bracelets, those large arms are outstretched. He is certainly sleeping happily, tired out through many kinds of exertion. As I am lamenting in grief, he is not speaking to me at all. Where has the noble one gone, abandoning the noble Subhadra, his fathers, who are like the gods, and the grief-stricken me?’

She has placed his head on her lap, as if he is still alive, and is removing the blood-smeared hair with her hands. She is asking, ‘You are Vasudeva’s sister’s son. You are the son of the wielder of Gandiva. In the midst of the battle, how could those maharathas slay you? Shame on the perpetrators of that cruel deed—Kripa, Karna, Jayadratha, Drona and Dronayani.[71] They have caused this hardship. Did all those bulls among rathas not possess hearts? They surrounded a child and killed him and brought me this sorrow. The Pandavas and the Panchalas were looking. Though he possessed protectors, how was that brave one killed, as if he had no protectors? On seeing that he was killed by many, as if he had no protector, how is the brave Pandava,[72] tiger among men, still alive? Without the lotus-eyed one, how will the Parthas obtain any delight from getting this large kingdom or from the defeat of their enemies? You have earned worlds through your weapons, your dharma and your self-control. Let me swiftly follow you there and protect me there. It is always extremely difficult to die before one’s time has come. I am extremely unfortunate. Despite seeing you slain in the battle, I am still alive. O tiger among men! You have gone to the world of the ancestors. In a gentle and smiling voice, which beautiful one will you greet there, as if she were I? In heaven, there is no doubt that you will crush the hearts of the apsaras, with your great beauty and your smiling words. O Subhadra’s son! When you attain those auspicious worlds and meet the apsaras and spend time in pleasure with them, remember the good deeds that I did. O brave one! You were destined to spend only six months of your life with me.[73] In the seventh month, you have confronted your death.’ As she is speaking these miserable and pointless words, the women of the Matsya king’s[74] lineage are pulling Uttara away. Having pulled the grief-stricken Uttara away, they are themselves overcome with sorrow, on seeing that Virata has been killed. They are weeping and lamenting. He is lying down, covered with blood, mangled by Drona’s arrows. Virata is being torn apart by vultures, jackals and crows. Those dark-eyed ones are helpless and distressed and are incapable of restraining those birds from tearing Virata apart. Those women have been scorched by the sun and are exhausted from their endeavours. They are pale and their bodies have lost their beauty. Look at the children who have been killed—Uttara,[75] Abhimanyu, Sudakshina from Kamboja[76] and the handsome Lakshmana. O Madhava! Behold. They are lying down in the forefront of the warriors.”’

Chapter 1322(21)

‘Gandhari said, “This Vaikartana was a maharatha and great archer. He is lying down in the battle, as if a blazing fire has been pacified through Partha’s energy. Behold Vaikartana Karna. He was one who slew many *atiratha*s. However, he has been brought down and is lying down on the ground, his limbs covered with blood. The great archer and maharatha harboured an enmity for a long time and was intolerant. The brave one has been slain in the battle by the wielder of Gandiva and is lying down. When my maharatha sons fought with the Pandavas and terrified them, they placed him at their head, like elephants with a leader of the herd. He was like a tiger in the battle, against the lion Savyasachi. He has been brought down, like an elephant by a crazy elephant. O tiger among men! When that brave one has been killed in the battle, his wives have assembled and have surrounded him, with their hair dishevelled. They are weeping. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was always anxious about him. Because of his worry, he could not sleep for thirteen years. The enemy could not assail him in a battle, like foes against Maghavan. His heat was like that of the fire at the time of the destruction of a yuga. He was as steady as the Himalayas. O Madhava! The brave one was the refuge for Dhritarashtra’s son. He has been slain and is lying down on the ground, like a tree shattered by a storm. Behold Karna’s wife, Vrishasena’s mother. She has fallen down on the ground and is lamenting and weeping in piteous tones. ‘It is certain that the preceptor’s curse followed you.[77] That is the reason the earth swallowed up the wheel of your chariot. Then, in the midst of the enemy in the battle, Dhananjaya’s arrow severed your head.’ Alas! Shame! When Sushena’s mother[78] has seen the mighty-armed Karna, with gold-decorated armour plates and who was never dispirited, she has fallen down, senseless. She is extremely miserable and is weeping. There is little left of the great-souled one. The predatory beasts have devoured his body. It is not a pleasant sight and is inauspicious, like the moon on the fourteenth day of *krishnapaksha*. She is writhing on the ground, where she has fallen. She is distressed and has arisen again. She is inhaling the fragrance of Karna’s face. Tormented because her sons have been killed, she is weeping.”’

Chapter 1323(22)

‘Gandhari said, “The one from Avanti was brought down by Bhimasena.[79] Though he had many relatives, he is like one without relatives, and is being devoured by vultures and jackals. O Madhusudana! Look at him. He created great carnage among the enemy. Covered with blood, he is lying down on a bed meant for heroes. Behold the progress of time. Jackals, herons and carnivorous beasts are separately tugging at him. The brave one advanced in the battle and is lying down on a bed meant for heroes. The women from Avanti have surrounded him and are weeping.

‘“Pratipa’s son, the great archer, Bahlika, has been slain by a broad-headed arrow. O Krishna! Look at the spirited one. He is like a sleeping tiger. Though he has been slain, the complexion of his face is extremely radiant. It is like the full moon that has arisen on the night of the full moon.

‘“Vriddhakshatra’s son was brought down in the battle by the son of the chastiser of Paka.[80] He was tormented by sorrow on account of his son and was accomplishing the pledge that he had made,[81] ensuring that it came true. Look at Jayadratha, who has been slain. Though he was protected, the great-souled one defeated eleven armies.[82] The spirited one was full of insolence and was the lord of Sindhu and Souvira. O Janardana! Jackals and vultures are devouring Jayadratha. They are howling and are dragging him into deep hollows. The women from Sindhu, Souvira, Gandhara, Kamboja and *yavana*s[83] have surrounded the mighty-armed one and are trying to save him. O Janardana! Jayadratha should have been killed by the Pandus when he seized Krishna[84] and ran away, together with the Kekayas. Out of respect for Duhshala,[85] they released Jayadratha then. O Krishna! In that case, why did they not show her respect again? She is my young daughter and is lamenting in great grief. She is trying to kill herself and is censuring the Pandavas. O Krishna! What can be a great misery for me than this? My young daughter has become a widow and the husbands of my daughters-in-law have been killed. Alas! Shame! Look at Duhshala. She seems to be without sorrow and fear. Searching for her husband's head, she is running hither and thither. He restrained all the Pandavas, when they looked for their son.[86] He slew a large number of soldiers and has himself come under the subjugation of death. The brave one was extremely difficult to defeat and was like a crazy elephant. The women, with faces like the moon, have surrounded him and are weeping."'

Chapter 1324(23)

‘Gandhari said, “O son![87] This Shalya has been slain and he is lying down. He was Nakula’s maternal uncle. In the battle, he was killed by Dharmaraja, who is knowledgeable about dharma. O bull among men! He always tried to rival you, everywhere. That maharatha king of Madra has been slain and is lying down. O son! He controlled the chariot of Adhiratha’s son in the battle. For the sake of the victory of the sons of Pandu, he deprived him of his energy.[88] Alas! Shame! Shalya’s face is as beautiful as the full moon, but wild crows have pecked at it and wounded it. His eyes are like the petals of lotuses. O Krishna! His complexion is like that of molten gold and the tongue that is sticking out of his mouth is golden. But it is being devoured by the birds. Shalya, the adornment of an assembly, has been slain by Yudhishthira. The women from the lineage of the king of Madra have surrounded him and are weeping. These kshatriya women are clad in extremely fine[89] garments and approaching that bull among kshatriyas and bull among men, the king of Madra, are shrieking. With Shalya having been brought down, those women are stationed around him. They are like cows that desire a bull that has got mired in the mud. Look at Shalya, supreme among rathas. He was one who provided refuge to others. Mangled by arrows, he is lying down on a bed meant for heroes.

‘“This powerful King Bhagadatta resided in a mountainous region. He was foremost among those who wielded goads on elephants. Having been brought down, he is lying down on the ground. A golden garland decorated his head and though he is being devoured by carnivorous beasts, it is still radiant on his hair. The battle between him and Partha was certainly terrible. It was fierce and made the body hair stand up, like that between Shakra and Bali. The mighty-armed one challenged Partha Dhananjaya and fought with him. Having advanced towards that calamity, he was brought down by Kunti’s son.

‘“There was no one on earth who was equal to Bhishma in valour and prowess. Bhishma has been struck and is lying down. O Krishna! Look at Shantanu’s son lying down, like the sun in his radiance. He has been brought down by destiny, like the sun from the sky at the end of a yuga. In the battle, this valiant one scorched the enemy with the energy of his weapons. O Keshava! This sun among men has set, like the sun sets. The brave one is lying down on a bed of arrows. He was Devapi’s equal in dharma.[90] Look at him. He is lying down on a bed meant for heroes, one that is liked by brave ones. This supreme bed is strewn with barbed arrows, hollow arrows and iron arrows. He is lying down, like the illustrious Skanda entering and lying down on a clump of reeds.[91] Gangeya’s excellent pillow is not stuffed with cotton. It was given to him by the wielder of Gandiva and is made out of three arrows. The immensely illustrious one protected his father’s injunction and held up his seed.[92] O Madhava! Shantanu’s son, the unmatched warrior, is lying down. O son! He had dharma in his soul. He knew about dharma, as it has been laid down in continuous tradition.[93] He was mortal, yet immortal.[94] He still has life in him. In battle, there was no one else as accomplished, learned and valorous as him. Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, has been brought down by the enemy and is lying down now. The brave one always spoke the truth. He was learned about dharma. When he was asked by the Pandavas, he himself told them about his means of death in the battle. When the lineage of the Kurus was destroyed, he again resurrected it.[95] Together with the Kurus, the immensely intelligent one has been defeated and has departed. O Madhava! Now that Devavrata,[96] bull among men and an equal of the gods, has gone to heaven, whom will the Kurus ask about dharma?

‘“He was Arjuna’s teacher and preceptor, and Satyaki’s too. Look at the one who has been brought down—Drona, the supreme preceptor of the Kurus. His knowledge of the four types of weapons[97] was like that of the lord of the gods. O Madhava! Drona was as immensely valorous as Bhargava.[98] It is because of his favours that Bibhatsu Pandava could perform an extremely difficult deed.[99] All his weapons could not protect him and he has been slain and is lying down. With him at the forefront, the Kurus challenged the Pandavas. He was foremost among the wielders of weapons. However, Drona himself has been severed by weapons. He scorched the soldiers, like a moving fire. But he has been slain and is lying down on the ground, like a fire whose flames have been pacified. O Madhava! The bow in his hands is still intact and so are his arm-guards. Though he has been slain, Drona seems to be alive. O Keshava! As with Prajapati at the beginning of everything, the four Vedas and all the weapons never abandoned the brave one. His auspicious feet deserved to be honoured and were honoured by bards and worshipped by hundreds of disciples. But they are now being dragged by jackals. O Madhusudana! Drona was slain by Drupada's son.[100] Kripi[101] is full of misery and the sorrow has made her lose her senses. Look at her. She is weeping in distress. Her hair is loose and her face is cast downwards. She is tending to her dead husband, Drona, supreme among the wielders of weapons. O Keshava! Dhrishtadyumna shattered his body armour with his arrows in the battle. Her hair is matted and she is a brahmachari. She is tending to Drona. Overcome with grief, Kripi is performing the funeral rites. The delicate and illustrious one's husband has been slain in the battle. Fires have been lit, in the proper way, on every side of the funeral pyre. Drona was placed on this and those who were learned about *sama*s chanted the three samas.[102] O Madhava! Brahmacharis with matted hair[103] are hurling bows, javelins and the seats of chariots into the funeral pyre. Many other weapons will also burn with these. Having placed the infinitely energetic Drona on it, they are praising him and weeping. There are others who are quietly mouthing the three kinds of samas. Like a fire being offered into a fire, Drona is being offered as an oblation into the fire. Drona's brahmana disciples have circumambulated the pyre, keeping it to the left. With Kripi in front, they are now headed towards the Ganga."'

Chapter 1325(24)

‘Gandhari said, “Look at Somadatta’s son, brought down by Yuyudhana.[104] O Madhava! From a close distance, many birds are tugging away at him. O Janardana! On account of his son, Somadatta is tormented by sorrow and is seen to be censuring Yuyudhana, the great archer. Bhurishrava’s mother is overcome by grief. The unblemished one is comforting her husband, Somadatta.[105] ‘O great king! It is through good fortune that you have not seen this terrible destruction of the Bharatas. This fearful carnage of the Kurus was like that at the end of a yuga. Your brave son had a sacrificial altar on his standard and donated a lot. He performed many rites and sacrifices. It is through good fortune that you have not seen him slain now. Your daughters-in-law are fearfully lamenting a lot, like female cranes near an ocean. O great king! It is through good fortune that you do not hear them. They are clad in single garments and the dark hair on their heads is dishevelled. With their sons slain, with their lord slain, the daughters-in-law are running around. That tiger among men is being devoured by carnivorous beasts. His arm was severed and brought down by Arjuna. It is good fortune that you are not seeing this. Together with Bhurishrava, Shala was brought down in the battle.[106] It is through good fortune that you do not see all your widowed daughters-in-law now. Somadatta’s great-souled son possessed a golden umbrella and a sacrificial altar on his standard. They were shattered on the terrace of his chariot. It is good fortune that you have not seen this.’ With Bhurishrava slain by Satyaki, his dark-eyed wives have surrounded their husband. They are grieving. They are lamenting a lot, afflicted by grief on account of their husband. O Keshava! They are falling downwards towards the ground. Alas! This is terrible. How could Bibhatsu have performed such a fearful deed? The brave one performed sacrifices and while he was distracted, he severed his arm.[107] Satyaki perpetrated a deed that was more wicked. He[108] was attacked when he had controlled his soul and was ready to give up his life. O Madhava! ‘You followed dharma. You are alone. But you were finally slain by two who followed adharma.’ This is what the wives of the one with the sacrificial altar on his standard are screaming. The wife of the one who had a sacrificial altar on his standard has a waist that can be circled by two hands.[109] She has placed her husband’s arm on her lap and is lamenting piteously. This arm used to untie her girdle. It used to crush her thick breasts. That arm used to caress her navel, her thighs and her loins and remove her lower garment. Partha is the performer of unblemished deeds. In Vasudeva’s presence, while he[110] was fighting with another one in the battle and was distracted, he was brought down. That beautiful one may be silent, but is censuring you. ‘O Janardana! When you are in an assembly, what will you say and tell them? Will you yourself say that Arjuna performed a great deed, or will the one with the diadem say so?’ The co-wives are sorrowing over their husband and her in the same way, as if they are her daughters-in-law.[111]

‘“Shakuni, the king of Gandhara, was powerful. Truth was his valour. He was slain by Sahadeva, a maternal uncle by a sister’s son.[112] He was earlier fanned with two whisks that had golden handles. He is now lying down and is being fanned by the wings of birds. He used to perform many hundreds and thousands of different kinds of maya. However, his maya has been consumed by the energy of the Pandavas. He was wise about deceit and vanquished Yudhishthira through the use of maya in the assembly hall.[113] He won the extensive kingdom and has won the right to be reborn. O Krishna! Birds have surrounded Shakuni on every side. The deceitful one became accomplished for the sake of bringing about the destruction of my sons. He is the one who was addicted to this great enmity with the Pandavas. He has brought about the death of my sons, his own self and that of his followers. O lord! My sons have conquered worlds through their weapons. In that way, this evil-minded one has also won worlds through weapons. O Madhusudana! Even there, because of his evil intelligence, he will create dissension between my sons and the brothers.”’

Chapter 1326(25)

‘Gandhari said, “Look at the invincible Kamboja, who was like a covering for Kamboja.[114] O Madhava! He possessed shoulders like a bull. He has been slain and is lying down in the dust. His arms used to be smeared with sandalwood paste and are covered with blood now. When his miserable wife saw them, she lamented in grief. ‘These arms were as thick as clubs. They possessed auspicious palms and fingers. When I was in their embrace, I used to be full of desire. O lord of men! Without you, what will be my end now?’ Her relatives are far away and she is without a protector. Her voice is exceedingly melodious. Even when they are scorched by heat, the beauty of many kinds of garlands does not vanish. In that way, though these women are exhausted, beauty has not abandoned their bodies.

‘“O Madhusudana! The brave king of Kalinga is lying down. Look at his immensely large arms, encased in blazing armlets.

‘“O Janardana! Jayatsena was the lord of Magadha. Look at him. He is surrounded by the weeping women from Magadha. O Janardana! They possess long eyes and excellent voices. Their lamentations are pleasant to hear and are confounding my mind. They have thrown away all their ornaments. They are weeping, oppressed by grief. Each of the women from Magadha possessed her own bed. But they are lying down on the ground.

‘“Brihadbala was the prince and lord of Kosala. He has been separately surrounded by these women, who are weeping over their husband. The arrows of Krishna’s son were struck with the strength of his arms and they are plucking them out from his body.[115] As they are doing this, they are miserable and are repeatedly losing their senses. O Madhava! All of them are overcome by the heat and the exhaustion. Their faces are as beautiful as wilting lotuses.

‘“All the five brave brothers from Kekaya were slain by Drona. They are lying down, wearing beautiful armlets. They were headed towards Drona.

Their armour was made out of molten gold. Their standards, chariots and garlands were coppery in hue. They are illuminating the ground, like blazing and radiant fires.

'"O Madhava! Look. Drupada was brought down by Drona in the battle. He was like a giant elephant, slain in the forest by a giant lion. O Pundarikaksha! The king of Panchala's umbrella is large and pale. It is shining, like the sun in the autumn sky. The wives and daughters-in-law of the aged Drupada are miserable. Having burnt the king of Panchala, they are circumambulating him, keeping him to the right.

'"The great archer, Dhrishtaketu, was a bull among the Chedis. The brave one was killed by Drona. Bereft of their senses, the women have moved him. O Madhusudana! Having countered Drona's weapons, the great archer was crushed. He has been slain and is lying down, like a tree brought down by a river. The brave maharatha, Dhrishtaketu, was the lord of Chedi. Having slain thousands of enemy in the battle, he has been slain and is lying down. The birds are tugging at him and his wives are tending to him. O Hrishikesha! The king of Chedi has been slain, with his forces and his relatives. Truth was his valour and the brave son of the daughter of Dasharha is lying down.[116] The beautiful women have placed the king of Chedi on their laps and are weeping. O Hrishikesha! His son has an excellent face and beautiful earrings. Look at him. He has been mangled by Drona with many arrows in the battle. As long as his father was fighting with the enemy, it is certain that he did not abandon him. O Madhusudana! He has never moved from that brave one's rear. O mighty-armed one! In that way, my son's son, Lakshmana, the destroyer of enemy heroes, followed his father.

'"O Madhava! Look at Vinda and Anuvinda from Avanti. They have fallen down. They are like flowering shala trees, destroyed by a storm at the end of winter. Their armlets and armour are golden. They wield arrows, swords and bows. Their eyes are like those of bulls. They are lying down, with unblemished garlands.

'"All the Pandavas, together with you, cannot be killed. They were freed from Drona, Bhishma, Vaikartana Kripa, Duryodhana, Drona's son, maharatha Saindhava, Somadatta, Vikarna and the brave Kritavarma. Those bulls among men could have slain even the gods with the force of their weapons. However, they have been killed in the battle. Behold the progress of time. O Madhava! It is certain that there is no burden that is too heavy for destiny, since these brave ones, bulls among kshatriyas, have been slain by kshatriyas. O Krishna! When you came to Upaplavya and returned unsuccessfully again, my spirited sons were already killed.[117] That is what Shantanu's son and the wise Vidura told me then. 'Do not show any affection towards your sons.' O son! What they saw, was certain to have come true. O Janardana! In a short while, my sons were consumed and became ashes."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having said this, Gandhari was oppressed by grief and fell down on the ground. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Her senses were distracted by her grief and she abandoned her fortitude. Because she was overcome by sorrow on account of her sons, her body was overcome by rage. With her senses distressed, Gandhari ascribed the blame to Shouri.[118]

'Gandhari said, "O Krishna! The Pandavas and the sons of Dhritarashtra were malicious towards each other. O Janardana! Why was their destruction ignored by you? You were capable. You had many servants and were stationed with a large army. Both sides were capable of listening to your words. O Madhusudana! You wilfully ignored the destruction of the Kurus. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, you will have to reap the fruits of what you have done. O wielder of the chakra and the club! I have earned something through my austerities and through serving my husband. You may be difficult to fathom. But through that, I am cursing you. The relatives, the Kurus and the Pandavas, slaughtered each other. O Govinda! Since you ignored this, you will slay your own relatives. O Madhusudana! When thirty-six years have elapsed, your relatives will be killed, your advisers will be killed and your sons will be killed. You will wander around in the forest. You will confront a horrible death. With the sons slain, with the kin and relatives killed, your wives will be tormented, as the women of the Bharata lineage are now."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard these terrible words, the great-minded Vasudeva smiled a little and replied to Queen Gandhari. "O beautiful one! No one other than me can destroy the circle of the Vrishnis. O kshatriya lady! I know what has already been decided. You have acted in accordance with what has been ordained. The Yadavas cannot be killed by any other men, or by gods and danavas. They will confront their destruction at each other's hands." When

Dasharha said this, the Pandavas lost their senses. They became extremely anxious and no longer wished to remain alive.’

Section Eighty-two

SHRADDHA PARVA

This parva has forty-four shlokas and only one chapter.

Chapter 1327(26): 44 shlokas

> *Shraddha is a funeral ceremony for dead relatives and this parva is named after that. The dead warriors are cremated and their funeral rites performed.*

Chapter 1327(26)

'Vasudeva said, "Get up! O Gandhari! Arise! Do not sorrow unnecessarily. The Kurus have confronted destruction because of your crimes. Your evil-souled son was jealous and extremely insolent. You honoured Duryodhana and thought that his evil deeds were virtuous. But they were cruel, full of enmity and harsh. They transgressed the commands of seniors. You committed the sin yourself. Why are you trying to blame it on me? If one sorrows over someone who is dead, something that has been destroyed, or something that has already happened, one imposes sorrow on a sorrow and thereby, causes a double calamity. A brahmana lady gives birth for austerities, a cow for a draught animal, a mare for running, a shudra for a servant and a vaishya for animal husbandry. However, a princess like you gives birth for slaughter."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On again hearing Vasudeva's unpleasant words, Gandhari became silent. Her eyes were anxious and full of tears. Rajarshi Dhritarashtra had dharma in his soul and dispelled the darkness caused by limited intelligence. He asked Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, "O Pandava! You know the number of soldiers who are alive. If you know the number of those who have been slain, tell me." Yudhishthira replied, "One billion,[1] twenty thousand and sixty-six crore—that is the number slain in this battle of kings.[2] O Indra among kings! In addition, twenty-four thousand, one hundred and sixty-five brave ones are missing." Dhritarashtra asked, "O Yudhishthira! Where have those best of men gone? Tell me. O mighty-armed one! It is my view that you know everything." Yudhishthira replied, "They cheerfully offered their bodies as oblations in the supreme battle. Truth was their valour and they have gone to worlds that are like that of the king of the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who were cheerful in their minds, thinking that everyone is mortal, were slain in the battle and have encountered the gandharvas. Those who were unwillingly stationed in the battle and wished to be spared have been slain with weapons and have gone towards the *guhyaka*s.[3] However, there were great-souled ones who were weakened and deprived of weapons. They were abandoned by others and severely afflicted. Even then, they attacked the enemy. Though they were severed by sharp weapons, they were devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. Those extremely radiant and brave ones were slain and went to Brahma's abode. O king! There were some who were slain in the field of battle without doing anything remarkable. They have obtained the region of Uttarakuru."[4] Dhritarashtra asked, "O son! What is this strength of knowledge, through which you can perceive like a *siddha*?[5] O mighty-armed one! If it can be heard by me, tell me about it." Yudhishthira replied, "Because of your instructions, I roamed around in the forest earlier. In that connection, I visited the *tirtha*s and obtained this blessing.[6] At that time, I saw devarshi Lomasha and acquired this knowledge. Earlier, through the yoga of knowledge, I had obtained divine sight."

'Dhritarashtra said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are people who have relatives and those who do not have relatives. Let the bodies of all those be burnt in accordance with the proper rites. Some have no one to perform the rites and fires have not been lit for some. O son! For whom can we perform the rites? There are many rites to be performed. O Yudhishthira! There are those who have obtained the worlds through their deeds, but are being dragged here and there by birds and vultures."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, the immensely wise Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, instructed Sudharma,[7] Dhoumya,[8] the suta Sanjaya, the immensely intelligent Vidura, Kouravya Yuyutsu and all the servants and charioteers, with Indrasena[9] at their head. "Perform the funeral rites for everyone. Let the bodies of those who have no one to look after them not be destroyed." Having heard Dharmaraja's command, Kshatta,[10] suta Sanjaya, Sudharma, Dhoumya, Indrasena and the others brought sandalwood, aloe, yellow fragrant wood, clarified butter, oil, fragrances and cotton garments. They made piles of woods and these expensive objects. They added the shattered chariots and other implements. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having carefully prepared the pyres and observed the prescribed rites, they burnt the foremost among the kings, following the due order—King Duryodhana and his one hundred brothers, Shalya, King Shala, Bhurishrava, King Jayadratha, Abhimanyu, Duhshasana’s son, Lakshmana,[11] King Dhrishtaketu, Brihanta, Somadatta, more than one hundred Srinjayas, King Kshemadhanva,[12] Virata, Drupada, Panchala Shikhandi, Parshata Dhrishtadyumna, valiant Yudhamanyu, Uttamouja, the king of Kosala, Droupadi’s sons, Shakuni Soubala, Achala, Vrishaka,[13] King Bhagadatta, the intolerant Karna Vaikartana and his sons, the great archers from Kekaya, the maharathas from Trigarta, Ghatotkacha, Indra among rakshasas, Baka’s brother,[14] King Alambusa, King Jalasandha and hundreds and thousands of other kings. O king! Flows of clarified butter were poured and the blazing fires burnt them. For some of those great-souled ones, sacrifices meant for the ancestors were performed. Some chanted sama hymns. Others sorrowed over the ones who were dead. The sounds of women weeping mixed with the sama chants. During that night, a lassitude overcame all beings. The blazing fires flamed, without any smoke. They were seen to be like planets surrounded by clouds in the firmament. There were those who had come from many countries and had no one to tend to them. On Dharmaraja’s instructions, Vidura brought all of them together and piled them in thousands of heaps. Pyres were lit with wood, sprinkled with oil and they were attentively burnt. Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, performed the rites for them. After this, with Dhritarashtra at the forefront, he went towards the Ganga.’

Section Eighty-three

JALA-PRADANIKA PARVA

This parva has twenty-four shlokas and only one chapter.

Chapter 1328(27): 24 shlokas

> *Jala is water and pradana is to give. After the cremation, this parva is named after the observation of water-rites and the offering of water to the dead warriors. Kunti also tells the Pandavas that Karna was their elder brother.*

Chapter 1328(27)

Vaishampayana said, ‘They reached the auspicious Ganga, desired by pious people. It had large lakes and beautiful banks, with large wetlands and large forests. They took off their ornaments and upper garments and offered oblations to fathers, grandsons, brothers and relatives. The noble women of the Kuru lineage offered water to their sons and all the others. They wept in great sorrow. Those who knew about dharma performed the rite of offering water for their well-wishers. The wives of heroes offered water for heroes. The Ganga had excellent passages to the water and seemed to extend out even more. The banks of the Ganga were beautiful, full of these wives of heroes. It was like a giant expanse of water. But it was not at all pleasant.

‘O great king! Kunti was suddenly overcome by grief. She wept. In a soft voice, she spoke these words to her sons. “There was a brave and great archer. He was a leader of leaders of rathas. He was marked with the auspicious signs of a hero and was killed by Arjuna in the battle. O Pandavas! You thought of him as the son of a suta and as Radheya.[1] In the midst of the formations, the lord was as radiant as the sun. Staying at the front, he fought against all of you and your followers. He roamed around, gathering all of Duryodhana’s troops behind him. There was no one on earth who was his equal in valour. He was devoted to the truth. He was brave. He did not retreat from a battle. The one with unblemished deeds was your brother. Perform the water-rites for him. He was your eldest brother, born from the sun god. He possessed earrings and armour.[2] He was brave. He was like the sun in his radiance.” All the Pandavas heard these unpleasant words spoken by their mother. They sorrowed over Karna and became even more distressed.

‘Sighing like a serpent, the brave Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, spoke to his mother. “No one but Dhananjaya could withstand his shower of arrows. How did he earlier become your son, born from a god? All of us were tormented by the strength of his arms. He was like a fire inside a garment. How did you hide him? The strength of his arms was fierce and the sons of Dhritarashtra worshipped him. No one but Kunti's son, ratha among rathas,[3] could have taken that away from Karna. He was supreme among all the wielders of weapons. He was our eldest brother! How did you, earlier, give birth to someone with such extraordinary valour? Alas! By keeping this a secret, you have killed us now. We had been afflicted on account of our relatives and Karna's death has added to that. Abhimanyu was destroyed. Droupadi's sons were killed. The Panchalas were destroyed and the Kurus were brought down. But this sorrow, that touches us now, is a hundred times greater than that. Sorrowing over Karna, it is as if I am being consumed by a fire. There is nothing that we could not have obtained, not even something that is in heaven. This fierce destruction that has enveloped the Kurus would not have occurred." In this way, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira lamented a lot. O king! Having lamented, loudly and softly, the lord performed the water-rites. All the men and women there, on both his sides, cried violently as he performed the water-rites. Out of affection for his brother, Yudhishthira, the wise lord of the Kurus, had Karna's wives, attired in their garments, brought there. Then, with them, the one with dharma in his soul performed the funeral rites. Having done this, with his senses in a whirl, he emerged from the waters of the Ganga.'

This ends Stri Parva.

Section Eighty-four

RAJA DHARMA PARVA

Shanti Parva

Shanti Parva is the twelfth in the 18-parva classification and is the longest parva of the Mahabharata. In the 100-parva classification, Shanti Parva constitutes Sections 84 to 86. This parva has 353 chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Shanti Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Shanti Parva.

This parva has 4,509 shlokas and 128 chapters.

Chapter 1329(1): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1330(2): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1331(3): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1332(4): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1333(5): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1334(6): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1335(7): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1336(8): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1337(9): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1338(10): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1339(11): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1340(12): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1341(13): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1342(14): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1343(15): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1344(16): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1345(17): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1346(18): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1347(19): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1348(20): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1349(21): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1350(22): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1351(23): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1352(24): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1353(25): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1354(26): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1355(27): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1356(28): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1357(29): 141 shlokas
Chapter 1358(30): 42 shlokas

Chapter 1359(31): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1360(32): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1361(33): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1362(34): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1363(35): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1364(36): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1365(37): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1366(38): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1367(39): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1368(40): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1369(41): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1370(42): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1371(43): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1372(44): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1373(45): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1374(46): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1375(47): 72 shlokas
Chapter 1376(48): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1377(49): 80 shlokas
Chapter 1378(50): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1379(51): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1380(52): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1381(53): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1382(54): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1383(55): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1384(56): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1385(57): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1386(58): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1387(59): 141 shlokas
Chapter 1388(60): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1389(61): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1390(62): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1391(63): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1392(64): 29 shlokas

Chapter 1393(65): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1394(66): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1395(67): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1396(68): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1397(69): 71 shlokas
Chapter 1398(70): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1399(71): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1400(72): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1401(73): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1402(74): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1403(75): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1404(76): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1405(77): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1406(78): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1407(79): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1408(80): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1409(81): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1410(82): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1411(83): 67 shlokas
Chapter 1412(84): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1413(85): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1414(86): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1415(87): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1416(88): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1417(89): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1418(90): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1419(91): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1420(92): 56 shlokas
Chapter 1421(93): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1422(94): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1423(95): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1424(96): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1425(97): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1426(98): 31 shlokas

Chapter 1427(99): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1428(100): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1429(101): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1430(102): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1431(103): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1432(104): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1433(105): 53 shlokas
Chapter 1434(106): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1435(107): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1436(108): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1437(109): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1438(110): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1439(111): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1440(112): 86 shlokas
Chapter 1441(113): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1442(114): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1443(115): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1444(116): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1445(117): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1446(118): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1447(119): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1448(120): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1449(121): 57 shlokas
Chapter 1450(122): 55 shlokas
Chapter 1451(123): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1452(124): 69 shlokas
Chapter 1453(125): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1454(126): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1455(127): 10 shlokas
Chapter 1456(128): 49 shlokas

Raja is king and raja dharma is the dharma of kings. Knowing that Karna was Kunti's son, Yudhishthira sorrows over him and Narada recounts the story of Karna being cursed and his exploits. Yudhishthira wishes to leave for the forest, but is dissuaded. He is asked to learn about dharma from Bhishma and enters Hastinapura. Yudhishthira is crowned. Bhishma *teaches Yudhishthira about raja dharma, the dharma of the four varnas and the four ashramas.*

Chapter 1329(1)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having offered water to all the well-wishers, the descendants of the Pandu lineage, Vidura, Dhritarashtra and all the women of the Bharata lineage, dwelt there. The great-souled sons of the Kuru lineage wished to spend a month of mourning outside the city.[1] When King Dhritarashtra, with dharma in his soul, had performed the water-rites, the great-souled siddhas, supreme brahmarshis, Dvaipayana, Narada, the great rishi Devala, Devsthana and Kanva, with their supreme disciples, and many other brahmanas who were accomplished in wisdom and learned in the Vedas and all the *snatakas*[2] in the householder stage, came to see the supreme among the Kuru lineage. When they came, the great-souled one[3] worshipped them, in accordance with the prescribed rites. The maharshis seated themselves on extremely expensive seats. They accepted the honours that were appropriate for the occasion.[4] In due order, they seated themselves around Yudhishthira. The king was on the sacred banks of the Bhagirathi and his senses were overcome with grief. Hundreds and thousands of brahmanas consoled him.

‘At that time, Narada consulted the sages and spoke words that were appropriate for the occasion to Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul. “O Yudhishthira! Through the valour of your arms and the favours of Madhava, you have resorted to dharma and have conquered the entire earth. It is through good fortune that you have escaped from this battle, which was fearful for the worlds. O Pandava! It is perhaps because you are devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas that you have not rejoiced. O king! Once you have slain your enemies, will you not please your well-wishers? Having obtained this prosperity, I hope that grief is not standing in the way.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “Resorting to the strength of Krishna’s arms, the favours of the brahmanas and the strength of Bhima and Arjuna, I have conquered the entire earth. But this great grief is always circulating in my heart. Because of my avarice, I have caused a great carnage of my relatives. I have caused the death of Subhadra's son and Droupadi's beloved sons. O illustrious one! To me, this victory seems to be a defeat. What will my sister-in-law, Varshneyi,[5] tell me? When Hari Madhusudana returns, what will the residents of Dvaraka tell Krishna? With her sons slain and her relatives killed, Droupadi is distressed. She has always been engaged in our welfare. This is grieving me exceedingly. O illustrious one! O Narada! Let me tell you about something else. Kunti kept this as a secret and this is also a reason for my sorrow. He possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants and on this earth, was an atiratha in battle. His gait was like that of a sporting lion. He was wise and compassionate. He was generous and endeavoured about his vows. He was the refuge of the sons of Dhritarashtra. He was proud and fierce in his valour. He was intolerant and always arrogant. From one encounter to another, he flung us away. He was swift in the use of weapons and colourful in fighting. He was accomplished and extraordinary in his prowess. He was secretly born from Kunti's womb. He was our brother, from the same womb. When the water-rites were performed, Kunti said that he was the son of the sun god. He possessed all the qualities, and in earlier times, was cast into the water. The world thought of him as Radheya, the son of a suta. But he was Kunti's eldest son and our brother from the same mother. Greedy for the kingdom, I have ignorantly caused him to be killed in the battle. This is consuming my limbs, like a mass of cotton in a fire. Partha, the one with the white horses, did not know that he was a brother. Nor did Bhima and the twins know this. However, the one who was excellent in his vows knew this. We have heard that Pritha went to him earlier.[6] She wished to ensure our welfare and told him, 'You are my son.' But that great-souled one did not listen to Pritha's wishes. Much later, we have heard that he spoke these words to his mother. 'I am incapable of abandoning King Duryodhana in the battle. If I do that, I will be ignoble, cruel and an ingrate. If I act according to your wishes and conclude an alliance with Yudhishthira, people will say that I am frightened of the one with the white steeds in a battle. Having defeated Vijaya[7] and Keshava in the battle, I will then conclude an agreement of peace with Dharma's son.' This is what we heard. Pritha again spoke to the one with the broad chest. 'Then fight with Phalguna, but grant me safety for my other four sons.' The intelligent one joined his hands in salutation and told his trembling mother, ‘Even if the other four sons come under my control, I will not kill them. O mother! Whether Partha is slain by Karna, or whether I am slain by Arjuna, it is certain that you will continue to have five sons.’ Out of great affection for her sons, the mother told the son, ‘As you desire their safety, ensure the safety of your brothers.’ Having said this, Pritha took his leave and returned home. Our brave brother has been slain by Arjuna, a brother by a brother. O sage. Neither Pritha, nor he, ever divulged the secret. The brave and great archer was brought down by Partha. O supreme among brahmanas! I only got to know later that he was our brother. O lord! Pritha told us that Karna was our eldest brother. I have caused my brother to be slain and this is greatly paining my heart. Had Karna and Arjuna both been my aides, I would have been able to defeat even Vasudeva. When I was oppressed by the evil-souled sons of Dhritarashtra in the assembly hall, my anger was suddenly pacified on seeing Karna. This is despite the harsh and bitter words we heard from him in the assembly hall at the time of the gambling match, spoken for the sake of bringing Duryodhana pleasure. When I glanced at his feet, my wrath was destroyed. It seemed to me that Karna’s feet were like those of Kunti’s. I wished to determine the reason for this similarity between Pritha and him. But in spite of thinking about this, I did not understand. During the battle, why did the earth swallow up the wheel of his chariot? Why was my brother cursed? You should tell me this. O illustrious one! I wish to hear everything, exactly as it happened. You know everything that is to be known in this world, that which has happened, and that which will occur.”’

Chapter 1330(2)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed, the sage Narada, supreme among eloquent ones, recounted everything about how the son of a suta had been cursed.

‘“O mighty-armed one![8] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you have said. There is nothing that could have stood against Karna and Arjuna in a battle. O king! What I am about to tell you is unknown to even the gods. O great king! O lord! Therefore, listen to what happened in earlier times, about how the kshatriyas would be cleansed by weapons and would go to heaven. To engender that dissension, he was created in a virgin womb. He was energetic as a child and came to be known as the son of a suta. He went to the best of the Angirasa lineage, your preceptor,[9] to learn about the science of war.[10] O Indra among kings! He thought of Bhima’s strength, Phalguna’s dexterity, your intelligence, the humility of the twins, the friendship that the wielder of Gandiva has had with Vasudeva since childhood and the devotion of the subjects and was tormented. From childhood, he formed a friendship with King Duryodhana. This is because of the enmity he always bore towards you and natural destiny. He saw that Dhananjaya was superior to everyone in learning about dhanurveda. Karna secretly went to Drona and spoke these words. ‘I wish to know about brahmastra and the secrets of releasing and withdrawing it. It is my view that I should become Arjuna’s equal in battle. It is certain that the affection you bear towards your disciples is equal to what you bear towards your son. Because of your favours, make me accomplished and skilled in the use of weapons.’ Drona was partial towards Phalguna. He also knew about Karna’s wickedness. Having been thus addressed by Karna, he replied, ‘The brahmastra can only be known by a brahmana who is observant of the vows, or by a kshatriya who has performed austerities, and by no one else.’ Having been thus addressed by the best of the Angirasa lineage, he honoured him and took his leave. He then quickly went to Rama[11] on Mount Mahendra. Having approached Rama, he lowered his head in obeisance before him and said, 'O Bhargava! I am a brahmana.' This earned him respect. Rama welcomed him and asked him everything about his *gotra*.[12] He was extremely delighted at this warm welcome. Karna resided on Mahendra, supreme among mountains, and met gandharvas, rakshasas, yakshas and gods there. There, in the proper way, he obtained all the weapons from the best of the Bhrigu lineage. Because of this, he was loved by the gods, the gandharvas and the rakshasas.

'"Once, near that hermitage, he was roaming around on the shores of the ocean. The son of the suta was wandering around alone, with a sword and a bow in his hand. O Partha! There was a person who was knowledgeable about the *brahman* and who performed the *aghnihotra* sacrifice every day. Unwittingly, he killed his *homadhenu*.[13] Having unwittingly performed this deed, Karna went and repeatedly told the brahmana, so that he might be pacified, 'O illustrious one! I have unwittingly killed your cow. Please show me your favours.' However, the brahmana censured him and angrily spoke these words, 'O wicked one! O evil-minded one! You should be killed. Therefore, reap this fruit. You have always sought to rival someone[14] and you have been striving against him every day. Because of this crime, when you are fighting with him, the earth will swallow up the wheel of your chariot. O worst of men! When you clash against your foe and are distracted because the wheel of your chariot has been devoured by the earth, he will exhibit his valour and sever your head. O stupid one! Leave this place. Just as you were distracted when you acted against me, another person will sever and bring down your head while you are distracted.' He again tried to secure the favours of that supreme among brahmanas. He gave him cattle, riches and jewels. However, he[15] again said, 'Nothing in all the worlds will be able to falsify the words spoken by me. You can go, or stay, or do whatever else you wish to.' Having been thus addressed by the brahmana, Karna was distressed and hung his head down. Terrified, he returned to Rama and thought about this in his mind."'

Chapter 1331(3)

‘Narada said, “The tiger among the Bhrigu lineage[16] was pleased with the strength of Karna’s arms, affection, self-control and the service he showed towards his preceptor. He was also excellent in austerities. Therefore, in the proper way, that supreme of ascetics[17] taught him everything about brahmastra, about its release and means of withdrawal. Having obtained this knowledge, Karna was delighted and dwelt in the hermitage of the one descended from the Bhrigu lineage. His valour was extraordinary and he strove to learn dhanurveda.’

‘“One day, the intelligent Rama was wandering around near the hermitage, with Karna. He was afflicted because of the fasting and was also confident of Karna’s affection. Therefore, Jamadagani’s descendant went to sleep with his head on his lap. While the tired preceptor was sleeping, a terrible worm approached Karna. It fed on phlegm, fat, flesh and blood and was terrible to the touch. With blood-stained teeth, it penetrated his thigh. Because of fear on account of his preceptor,[18] he was unable to kill it, or fling it away. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His thigh was pierced by that worm. But scared that his preceptor would wake up, the son of a suta ignored it. Karna bore that pain with fortitude and ignored it. He did not tremble and continued to bear Bhargava. Eventually, the blood from the limbs touched the extender of the Bhrigu lineage. The energetic one awoke and in torment, spoke these words. ‘Alas! I have become impure. What have you done? Cast aside your fear and tell me the truth about what has happened.’ Karna then told him how the worm had bitten him. Rama also saw that the worm looked like a pig. It had eight feet and sharp teeth and was covered with bristles that were like needles. It was known as Alarka and it shrivelled.[19] As soon as Rama looked at it, the worm gave up its breath of life. It shrunk in the blood that it had drunk and it was extraordinary.

'"At that time, a rakshasa was seen in the sky. It was gigantic in form and was terrible in visage. Its neck was red, its limbs were dark and it was riding on the clouds. Its wishes having been satisfied, it joined its hands in salutation and addressed Rama. 'O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! May you be well. I will go where I had come from. O supreme among sages! You have saved me from this hell.' Jamadagni's mighty-armed and powerful son replied, 'Who are you? How did you descend into hell? Tell me about it.' He said, 'Earlier, in the yuga of the gods,[20] I was a great asura named Praggritsa. O father![21] I was of the same age as Bhrigu. I forcefully abducted Bhrigu's beloved wife. Because of the maharshi's curse, I became a worm and fell down on earth. Your great grandfather[22] angrily spoke these words to me. "You will subsist on urine and phlegm. O wicked one! You will live a life that is like hell." I asked him, "O brahmana! When will this curse come to an end?" At this, Bhrigu told me, "There will be Rama, born of the Bhrigu lineage, and he will free you." It is because of this that I attained such a wicked end. O virtuous one! But having met you, I have been freed from that evil birth.' Having said this, the giant asura bowed before Rama and departed.

'"Rama angrily spoke these words to Karna. 'O foolish one! No one who has been born as a brahmana can endure such great suffering. Your patience is like that of a kshatriya. I wish to hear the truth.' Karna was frightened of being cursed. He sought his favours and said, 'O Bhargava! Know me to be between a brahmana and a kshatriya, born as a suta.[23] People on earth speak of me as Radheya Karna. O brahmana! O Bhargava! Pardon me. I was greedy for the weapons. A father isn't just the biological one. The lord, who is a preceptor and gives one the Vedas and learning, is also one such. That is the reason why, in your presence, I described myself as a Bhargava.' The foremost among the Bhrigu lineage was incensed at this and he[24] had fallen down on the ground, trembling, distressed and hands joined in salutation. However, he[25] smiled and said, 'You acted in this false way because of your greed for weapons. O stupid one! In a different place, when the time for your death has come, you will be engaged in a fight with someone who is your equal and the brahmastra will not manifest itself before you. The qualities of a brahmana will never remain with someone who is not a brahmana. Leave this place, since this is not meant for an untruthful one like you. There will be no kshatriya on earth who will be your equal in battle.’ Having been thus addressed by Rama, he took his leave and departed. He went to Duryodhana and said, ‘I have become accomplished in the use of weapons.’”’

Chapter 1332(4)

‘Narada said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having thus obtained weapons from the descendant of the Bhargava lineage, together with Duryodhana, Karna amused himself. On one occasion, many kings assembled at a *svayamvara* ceremony organized by Chitrangada, the king of Kalinga. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There was a prosperous city named Rajapura there. For the sake of the maiden, hundreds of kings assembled there. On hearing that all the kings had gathered there, Duryodhana also went there on his golden chariot, accompanied by Karna. At that svayamvara, a great festival was organized. O supreme among kings! Many kings came there for the sake of the maiden. O great king! Shishupala, Jarasandha, Bhishmaka, Vakra, Kapotaroma, Nila, Rukmi, firm in his valour, Srigala, who ruled over a kingdom of women, Ashoka, Shatadhanva and the valiant Bhoja were among them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were many others who resided in the southern directions, preceptors from among the *mlecchas*[26] and kings from the east and the north. All of them were adorned in golden armlets and were decorated in garlands made out of molten gold. All of them possessed radiant bodies and were crazy in their pride, like tigers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When all those kings had seated themselves, the maiden entered the arena with her nurse, guarded by eunuchs. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! While the names of the kings were being recounted, the beautiful maiden passed by the son of Dhritarashtra.[27] Kouravya Duryodhana could not tolerate that he had been passed by. Ignoring all the kings, he asked the maiden to stop. Protected by Bhishma and Drona, he was intoxicated by his valour. He lifted the maiden up onto his chariot and challenged the kings. O bull among men! Karna wielded a sword and had donned arm-guards and finger-guards. Riding on a chariot, the best among all wielders of weapons guarded him[28] from the rear. O Yudhishthira. There was a tumult and a loud sound arose among the kings, as body armour was donned, chariots were yoked and they angrily attacked Karna and Duryodhana. They released showers of arrows, like clouds on a mountain. With razor-sharp arrows, Karna brought each of their bows, with arrows affixed to them, down on the ground. Deprived of their bows, some advanced, raising other bows. Some attacked with arrows. Others grasped javelins and clubs. Karna was supreme among strikers and oppressed them with his dexterity. He slew many charioteers and defeated the kings. At this, they themselves picked up the reins of their mounts and said, 'Go away.' Devastated in their hearts, the kings abandoned the battle. Protected by Karna, Duryodhana was assured. Bringing the maiden with them, they cheerfully returned to the city of Nagasahvya."'

Chapter 1333(5)

‘Narada said, “Having learnt about Karna’s strength, King Jarasandha, the lord of Magadha, challenged him to a duel. Both of them knew about the use of divine weapons and a battle commenced between them. In the encounter, they showered down many kinds of weapons on each other. Their arrows were exhausted. They were without bows. Their swords were shattered. The powerful ones descended on the ground and started to wrestle with each other with bare arms. While fighting with him in that terrible duel with bare arms, Karna was about to sever the two parts of the body that had been brought together by Jara.[29] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that his body was about to face this hardship, the king cast aside all enmity and spoke these affectionate words to Karna. ‘I am pleased.’ He gave Karna the city of Malini. O tiger among men! Before this, the one who had defeated his enemies had ruled over Anga. But now, Karna, the afflicter of enemy forces, also began to rule Champa, after having obtained Duryodhana’s permission. You know about all this. Thus, through the power of his weapons, he became famous on earth. For the sake of your welfare, the king of the gods begged his divine and natural armour and earrings from him.[30] The extremely revered one was confounded by the maya of the god and gave away his natural earrings and armour. Deprived of his earrings and natural armour, while Vasudeva looked on, he was slain by Vijaya. There was the brahmana’s curse and that of the great-souled Rama. There was the boon that he had granted Kunti and Shatakratu’s maya. Bhishma disrespected him and described him as only half a ratha.[31] Shalya sapped his energy. There was Vasudeva’s policy. In a battle, the wielder of Gandiva obtained the divine weapons of Rudra, the king of the gods, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, Drona and the great-souled Kripa. That is the reason Vaikartana Karna was slain, though he was as radiant as the sun. This is the way your brother was cursed and deprived by many. However, since he has met his end in a battle, you should not sorrow over that tiger among men.”’

Chapter 1334(6)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having spoken these words, devarshi Narada stopped. However, rajarshi Yudhisthira was overcome by sorrow and continued to think. The brave one was distressed in his mind and his head hung down in sorrow. He sighed like a serpent and his eyes were full of tears. Kunti’s limbs were also overcome with sorrow and grief had robbed her of her senses. However, she spoke these sweet and important words that were suitable to the occasion. “O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! You should not grieve. O immensely wise one! Conquer your sorrow and listen to my words. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Earlier, I tried so that he might let you know that he was your brother and so did the sun god, his father. In front of me, the sun revealed himself in a dream to him and told him words that a well-wisher who desired his benefit and prosperity would say.[32] But despite our entreaties and our affection, I or the sun god did not succeed. We could not persuade him. Nor could we persuade him to unite with you. He was under the subjugation of destiny and was engaged in fanning the enmity with you. He was engaged in causing you injury. So he was ignored by me.” When his mother said this, Dharmaraja’s eyes filled with tears. With his senses clouded by tears, the one with dharma in his soul spoke these words. “I am extremely distressed because you kept this a secret.” Tormented by extreme grief, the immensely energetic one cursed all the women of the world, “Henceforth, they will not be able to keep a secret.” The king remembered his sons, grandsons, relatives and well-wishers and his heart became extremely anxious. He lost control over his senses. Because he was overcome by sorrow, he was like a fire with smoke. Tormented and oppressed, the king yielded to despair.’

Chapter 1335(7)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, was anxious and unconscious because of his sorrow. He remembered maharatha Karna and tormented by grief, sorrowed over him. Overcome by grief and sorrow, he sighed repeatedly.

‘He was oppressed by grief and on seeing Arjuna, spoke these words. “Had we survived by begging in the city of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, we would not have confronted this catastrophe and would not have deprived our relatives of all their menfolk. Our enemies have been successful in their objectives and the Kurus have obtained what they tried for. We have ourselves slain those who are our own. What fruits of dharma will we obtain? Shame on the conduct of kshatriyas and shame on the strength that chests hold. Shame on the intolerance that has taken us to this calamity. Forgiveness, self-control, purity, lack of enmity, lack of selfishness, non-violence and truthfulness in words are to be praised. Those who dwell in the forest practise these. But because of our greed and our delusion, we have resorted to arrogance and insolence. We have been brought to this state because of our hunger for a trifling kingdom. Even sovereignty over the three worlds will not delight us now, since we can see that those of our relatives who desired the flesh of the earth[33] have been slain. They did not deserve to be killed and were like the earth. But they have been slain for the earth. Having given them up, deprived of prosperity and with our relatives killed, we remain alive. We are not dogs. But like dogs, we fought over meat. That flesh has now been destroyed and so have those who would have eaten the meat. We shouldn’t have abandoned those who have been killed for the sake of the entire earth, heaps of gold or for all the cattle and horses. They were full of desire and passion. They were overcome by wrath and intolerance. They climbed onto the road to death and have gone to Vaivasvata’s[34] eternal abode. For the sake of their sons, fathers seek a lot of welfare on earth. They observe austerities and brahmacharya, chant and practise renunciation. In a similar way, mothers conceive after fasts, sacrifices, vows and auspicious ceremonies and bear them for ten months. ‘If they are born safely and remain alive after they are born, if they are full of strength, they may give us happiness in this world and the next.’ In pursuit of fruits, this is what those pitiable ones hope for. Those young sons, decorated with earrings, have been killed. At a wrong time, those hopes have become unsuccessful and have been abandoned. They have not enjoyed the pleasures of the earth. They have not repaid their debts to the ancestors and the gods. They have gone to Vaivasvata’s eternal abode. When they were born, the parents had wishes for them. But those kings have been slain when they became full of strength and beauty. They were full of desire and intolerance and experienced anger and delight. None of them enjoyed any of the fruits of birth. Because of our deeds, the Panchalas and Kurus who have been killed, and those of us who have not been slain, will obtain the worst of worlds. We will be known as the ones who caused the destruction of the world, even though we were deceived by Dhritarashtra’s son. He was skilled in deceit. He was full of enmity and subsisted through the use of maya. Though we had never caused him injury, he always used falsehood towards us. We have not succeeded in vanquishing them, nor have they defeated us. They have not enjoyed the earth, nor women, singing and music. They paid no attention to their advisers, nor did they listen to those who knew about the sacred texts. They could not enjoy the jewels, the earth or the wealth they had obtained. When he[35] saw our prosperity, he turned pale, ashen and lean. This was reported to King Dhritarashtra by Soubala.[36] Because of his affection, the father remained established in the ways of the son. He disregarded his father, Gangeya and Vidura. There is no doubt that Dhritrashtra is in the same state as I am. He did not control his inauspicious and greedy son who was overcome by desire. With his brothers, Suyodhana has fallen from his blazing fame. He has hurled these two aged ones[37] into the flames of grief. The evil-minded one was always full of enmity towards us. Which other relative, born into a noble lineage, would speak to well-wishers they way he did? In the presence of the one from the Vrishni lineage, the inferior one, wishing to fight, used such words.[38] We have also been destroyed for an eternal period because of our own sins. Like the sun, we have scorched all the directions with our energy.

That man, full of enmity towards us, came under the clutches of an evil planet that gave bad advice.[39] Because of Duryodhana's deeds, our lineage has been brought down. Having slain those who should not be slain, we will earn censure in this world. King Dhritarashtra made that evil-minded one the lord of the kingdom. He was wicked in his deeds and the exterminator of the lineage. Therefore, he[40] is grieving now. The brave ones have been slain. The wicked deed has been done. The prosperity has been destroyed. Having slain them, our anger has been overcome. This sorrow is restraining me now. O Dhananjaya! A wicked deed can be countered through a beneficial one. The sacred texts say that someone who has renounced does not perform a wicked deed again. The sacred texts say that someone who has renounced does not have to go through birth and death. Having attained perfection, that person, firm in his resolution, unites with the brahman. O Dhananjaya! He attains the knowledge of the sages and is without any sense of opposites.[41] O scorcher of enemies! I will take my leave from all of you and go to the forest. O destroyer of enemies! The sacred texts say that someone with possessions is not capable of attaining the best forms of dharma. I can see that. Because I desired possessions, I committed wicked acts and the sacred texts say that this can cause birth and death.[42] I will give up my possessions and the entire kingdom. I will depart, completely free, bereft of sorrow and devoid of fever. With the thorns having been removed, you rule over this pacified earth. O best of the Kuru lineage! This kingdom and the pleasures are not for me." Having spoken these words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira stopped and the youngest Partha[43] replied.'

Chapter 1336(8)

Vaishampayana said ‘Arjuna spoke, like a reviled person who is not ready to forgive. He was firm in his speech and valour and spoke these proud words. Indra’s son was terrible in his valour and revealed his fierce aspect. The immensely energetic one laughed and repeatedly licked the corners of his mouth. “Alas! What misery! What a great calamity! This is supreme frailty. Having performed a superhuman deed, you now wish to abandon this supreme prosperity. The enemies have been slain and the earth has been obtained by practising one’s own dharma. Having killed one’s foes, but for foolishness, why should one give everything up? When has a eunuch or one who procrastinates ever obtained a kingdom? Overcome with rage, why did you kill all the lords of the earth? A person desiring to live through begging can never use his deeds to enjoy anything. Even if he tries to be powerful, his fortune is destroyed and he is never renowned in the world as someone who possesses sons and animals. O king! If you resort to this wicked means of subsistence through mendicancy and abandon this prosperous kingdom, what will people say? O lord! Why do you wish to abandon all enterprise, giving up all your fortune? Like an ordinary person, why do you wish to roam around as a beggar? You have been born in this lineage of kings and have conquered the entire earth. Yet, because of your confusion, you wish to give up dharma and artha and want to go to the forest. When you have gone, if wicked people destroy the sacrificial offerings, the consequence of that sin will devolve on you. Nahusha[44] said, ‘It is not desirable to possess nothing. Without riches, cruel deeds are perpetrated. Shame on poverty.’ You know that the practice of rishis is not to keep anything for tomorrow. But that which is known as dharma is established on the basis of riches. When someone’s riches are stolen, his dharma is also stolen. O king! Who amongst us will pardon an act of our riches being robbed? If a poor person stands next to one’s own self, that poor person is abused. Poverty causes degradation in this world and you should not praise it. O king! One who is degraded sorrows. One who is poor sorrows. I cannot see any difference between one who is degraded and one who is poor. Here and there, all the rites are extended and accumulated through wealth, like streams flowing down mountains. O lord of men! Dharma, kama and heaven result from artha. Without artha, the world will not be able to sustain its life. Like an inferior river[45] during the summer, all the rites of a person with limited intelligence are destroyed in the absence of wealth. One who possesses riches possesses friends. One who possesses riches possesses relatives. One who possesses riches is a man in this world. One who possesses riches is learned. A person who doesn't possess riches is incapable of obtaining riches only by desiring it. Riches follow riches, like elephants follow mighty elephants.[46] O lord of men! Dharma, kama, heaven, delight, anger, learning, self-control—all of these result from artha. The lineage is extended because of artha. Dharma is spread because of riches. O supreme among men! A person without riches does not possess either this world, or the next. One without riches cannot perform the acts of dharma. Dharma flows from riches, like mountainous streams from mountains. O king! A person is not called lean when his body is lean. He is lean when he is lean in horses, lean in cattle, lean in servants and lean in guests. Consider this according to the right principles. Look at the gods and the asuras. O king! The gods prosper after having slain their own relatives.[47] If one does not take away the riches of others, how can one observe dharma? The wise ones have determined this in the Vedas. The learned ones have said that one must study the three kinds of knowledge[48] and always make efforts to accumulate wealth and perform sacrifices. It is through violence and enmity that all the gods have obtained their stations in heaven. This is what the gods resorted to, and these are the eternal words of the Vedas. One must study, one must perform austerities, one must perform sacrifices and one must officiate at the sacrifices of others. But all these become better when one takes objects away from others. Nowhere do we see any wealth that has not been taken away from others. This is the way in which kings conquered the earth. Having conquered, they say that the wealth is theirs, just as sons say that the wealth of their fathers is their own. The rajarshis who have obtained heaven have proclaimed this to be dharma. In the overflowing ocean, water spreads out in the ten directions. In that way, wealth that emanates from a royal lineage spreads throughout the earth. Earlier, the earth belonged to Dilipa, Nriga, Nahusha, Ambarisha and Mandhata.[49] It belongs to you now. O king! A prosperous sacrifice, with all the donations given, now awaits you. If you do not perform that sacrifice, you will cause offence to the gods. If a king performs a horse sacrifice and offers donations, everyone becomes purified because of that. Vishvarupa[50] Mahadeva performed a great sacrifice at which everything was offered. He offered all the beings as oblations and then offered himself. That is the eternal path of prosperity and we have heard that there is no other end that is possible. This is the great path known as *dasharatha*.[51] O king! Do not follow any other route.”’

Chapter 1337(9)

‘Yudhishthira said, “Listen attentively for an instant. Cast your mind and your hearing towards your own inner self. If you listen to my words in that way, you will find them to be acceptable. You will not be able to take me back to the path travelled by the prosperous again. I will leave. I will abandon the path of ordinary pleasures and depart. I will travel alone along that path of tranquility. If you ask me what that is, I will tell you. Even if you don’t wish to ask me, I will tell you. Listen. I will discard the pursuit of ordinary pleasures and torment myself through great austerities. I will dwell in the forest, sustaining myself on fruits and roots, and roam around with animals. I will pour oblations into the fire at the right time and perform ablutions at the right time. I will emaciate myself by eating little. I will cover myself with skins and rags and wear matted hair. I will endure cold, wind, heat and bear hunger, thirst and exhaustion. I will grind down my body through the prescribed austerities. In the forest, I will cheerfully listen to the pleasant notes, high and low, of the animals and birds that live there. They are pleasant to the mind and the ear. I will inhale the delicate fragrance of blossoming trees and creepers. I will observe the many beautiful forms of those who live in the forest. I will not offend the sight of those who have resorted to *vanaprastha*[52] and dwell there with their families. I will act so that I do not cause anything unpleasant to them, not to speak of those who live in villages. I will live alone and pass my time in contemplation, eating that which is ripe and that which is unripe.[53] I will satisfy the ancestors and the gods with wild fruits, water and eloquent words. I will follow the fiercest of rites prescribed for those who dwell in the forest. Serving in this way, I will await the end of my physical existence. Or, I will dwell alone and spend my night under different trees. I will shave my head and beg for a living, destroying my body. I will be covered with dust and seek shelter in empty houses. I will find an abode near the root of a tree and abandon everything that is pleasant and unpleasant. Sorrow and delight, praise and censure, will be equal for me. I will have no desire and be free of any sense of possessiveness. Opposites will mean the same and I will have nothing to receive. I will find pleasure in my own atman. I will find serenity in my own atman. I will be like one who is dumb, blind and deaf. There will be no occasion for me to have conversations with anyone else. I will not injure any of the four kinds of beings,[54] mobile and immobile, as they are engaged in their own dharma. I will behave equally towards all those who have life. I will not laugh at anything, nor will I frown at anything. My face will always be cheerful and all my senses will be well controlled. I will not ask anyone about the route. I will travel along any path and not wish to go to any special country or direction. I will advance impartially and not glance back. I will be upright and cautious, so that I avoid and do not frighten anyone along the path. Nature is most important and food and drink will take care of themselves. I will not think about all the opposite sentiments[55] that stand against this. If even a little bit of succulent food is not available at first, I will roam around and seek to find it in seven houses.[56] But I will go at the time when there is no smoke, when the pestles have been put away, when the coal in the fire has died down, when food has been eaten, when the handling of the pots is over and when all the mendicants have gone. At one time, I will roam around and beg from two to five houses.[57] I will roam around the earth, freeing myself from the noose of desire. I will be like one who does not wish to live. I will act like one who is about to die. I will not find delight or sorrow in either life or death. If someone severs one of my arms and another person smears the other with sandalwood paste, I will not think of doing good things to the latter and harming the former. There are acts that are done to improve the state of one’s life. I will abandon all of them. Blinking my eyes, I will give up attachment to all of them and abandon all the acts that are connected to the senses. When I have abandoned all resolution, I will purify myself well. I will have freed myself from all attachment and will have passed beyond all bonds. I will not be under the subjugation of anything and will follow the dharma of the wind.[58] I will roam around without any attachment and will obtain eternal satisfaction. It was because of my greed and ignorance that I performed extremely wicked deeds. There are men who perform good and wicked deeds because they are tied down, through cause and effect, to their relatives.[59] When the lifespan is over, the body is almost completely decayed. They then receive the fruits of those wicked deeds, but no one except the doer obtains the consequence.[60] The wheel of life goes on in this way, like the turning wheel of a chariot. This collection of beings meet each other. This collection of beings acts. Birth, death, old age, disease and pain are without any substance and transient. On this earth, one who can discard them is happy. The gods fall down from heaven and so do the maharshis from their appointed spots. Which person, if he desires to know about the reason and truth behind existence, would then desire to exist?[61] A king may perform many kinds of deeds, in accordance with the rites and auspicious signs. But that king will be bound down by the slightest bit of action. For a long time, this amrita of wisdom has presented itself before me. Therefore, I desire it and want the eternal and certain state, from which one does not decay. I will conduct myself in this virtuous way and roam around, without any connection to the material world. I will fearlessly place my body on that path."'

Chapter 1338(10)

‘Bhima said, “O king! Your understanding has become clouded, just like a scholar of the Vedas who has limited intelligence and recites passages from the Vedas, without realizing their true purport. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If you had made up your mind to be lazy and censure the dharma of kings, then what has been gained from this destruction of the sons of Dhritarashtra? Forgiveness, compassion, pity and non-violence—with the exception of you, there is no one who treads the path of kshatriyas who is tied down by these. Had we got to know that your intentions would be of this type, we would never have picked up our weapons and killed anyone. We would have roamed around and sustained ourselves through begging, until it was time to free ourselves from our bodies. This terrible battle between the kings would not have taken place. The wise ones have said that everything is meant to sustain life. Everything, mobile and immobile, is food to sustain life. Therefore, anyone who stands in the way of obtaining the kingdom must be slain. Those who are wise and learned about the dharma of kshatriyas have said this. Those killed by us were wicked. They stood in the way of the kingdom. O Yudhishthira! Having slain them, we should follow dharma and enjoy the earth. We are like a man digging a well, who stops in his task before having reached the water, and is therefore only covered in mud. We are acting like someone who climbs a tall tree for honey, but falls down and dies before he has been able to obtain it. We are acting like a man who sets out on a great journey with high hopes, but who despairs and returns. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! We are acting like a man who slays his enemies and then kills himself. We are acting like someone who is hungry, but having obtained food, does not eat it because he does not feel like it. We are acting like someone who is driven by desire, but having obtained a beautiful woman, does not perform the act. However, we are the ones who should be censured. We are the ones who are limited in our intelligence. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have followed you, merely because you are the eldest. We possess the strength of arms. We are accomplished in our learning. We are spirited. But because we follow the words of a eunuch, we are like ones who are incapacitated. We are the refuge of those who do not have a refuge. However, our prosperity will be destroyed and our objectives will be unsuccessful. When people see us in this way, what will they think of us? It has been instructed that renunciation should be resorted to in times of distress, by someone who has been overtaken by old age, or by someone who has been defeated by his enemies. Those who are accomplished in wisdom do not recommend renunciation in a situation like this. Those who are subtle in discernment think that this is a transgression of dharma. Therefore, how can you resort to a state that is not recommended for you? You should censure it too, and not faithfully accept it.[62] Men who are without prosperity and riches, those who are atheists, have propounded this view about the learning in the Vedas. This is falsehood in the garb of truth. If a man who is capable resorts to this state of shaving his head, he is deluding himself. He is resorting to false dharma. Though he subsists, he does not live. Then again, though he is capable of sustaining sons, grandsons, gods, rishis, guests and ancestors, he decides to lead a solitary life of happiness in the forest. Even animals, boars and birds cannot obtain heaven in this way. People do not say that this is an auspicious way of life. O king! If one could obtain success only through sannyasa, then mountains and trees would have swiftly obtained success. They are always seen not to cause injury towards others and are based on sannyasa. They have no possessions and always live on their own. If success can be obtained through one's own fortune[63] and not that of others, one should undertake action. There can be no success without action. Aquatic creatures have no one but themselves to sustain. If that is the criterion, they would obtain success. Notice that everyone in this universe is preoccupied with his own tasks. Therefore, one should act. There can be no success without action."'

Chapter 1339(11)

‘Arjuna said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! On this, an ancient history is recounted, the conversation between the ascetics and Shakra. Some brahmanas abandoned their homes and went to the forest. They had still not developed beards.[64] Though they were born in good lineages, they were stupid and followed the wrong path. They thought that they were following dharma and decided to observe brahmacharya. They abandoned their homes and their fathers. Indra took pity on them. Adopting the form of a golden bird, the illustrious one came to them and said, ‘Men who eat leftover food perform an extremely difficult task. The lives of those who perform such meritorious acts should be praised. They are foremost among those who follow dharma and obtain the best of success and objectives.’[65]

‘“The rishis replied, ‘Aha! This bird is praising those who eat leftover food. It must be praising us, since we subsist on leftover food.’

‘“The bird said, ‘I am not praising you. You are covered in mud and dust. You are wicked ones who eat impure food. You are not the ones who eat leftover food.’

‘“The rishis replied, ‘We think that the path that we are following is the best. O bird! Tell us what is beneficial. We have great faith in you.’

‘“The bird said, ‘If you do not doubt me and do not cause a division in your own selves,[66] then I will speak words that are truly beneficial.’

‘“The rishis replied, ‘O father![67] We will listen to your words. You know about different paths. O one with dharma in your soul! Instruct us. We wish to be taught by you.’

‘“The bird said, ‘The cow is the best among quadrupeds and gold the best among metals. Mantras are the best among words and brahmanas the best among bipeds. Mantras determine the sacraments for a brahmana as long as he lives, from the time of birth to the time when he dies and is at the cremation ground. The rites of the Vedas are the supreme path towards heaven. All deeds are said to become successful through mantras. In this world, the firm words of the Vedas signify success, depending on the months, half-months, seasons, the sun, the moon and the stars.[68] In this life, all beings are attached to action in accordance with this. This[69] is sacred and the greatest stage of life and is the field for success. What path is followed by men who censure action? They are stupid, evil and are deprived of artha. Those foolish ones subsist, but have abandoned the eternal path followed by the lineage of the gods, the lineage of the ancestors and the lineage of Brahma.[70] They traverse a path not approved by the sacred texts. O ascetics! Therefore, this is the asceticism you should endeavour to follow. The offering of shares to the eternal lineages of the gods, the ancestors and Brahma and servitude to preceptors are said to be the most difficult of tasks. Having performed such difficult tasks, the gods obtained supreme prosperity. That is the reason I am telling you that the burden of a householder is an extremely difficult one to take up. There is no doubt that this is the best form of austerity for beings. It forms the base. Everything is established on the rules prescribed for a family. O brahmanas! Those who are not selfish and those who have gone beyond opposite sentiments say that this is the best form of asceticism. People say that going to the forest is a middling kind of asceticism. Those who live on leftovers and following the rites, morning and evening, divide up the food among relatives, attain an end that is extremely difficult to obtain. They first give to guests, gods, ancestors and relatives. They then eat the remnants and are said to be those who live on leftovers. They are established in their own dharma. They are excellent in their vows and are truthful. They become the preceptors of the worlds and are revered by everyone. They do not suffer from envy. They attain the world of heaven, Shakra's heaven. Those people perform extremely difficult deeds and dwell there for an eternal number of years.'

'"On hearing his words, which were full of dharma and artha, they abandoned the path of non-believers[71] and resorted to the dharma of householders.[72] O one who cannot be assailed! Therefore, you should also resort to eternal patience. O supreme among men! With all the enemies slain, rule over the entire earth."'

Chapter 1340(12)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Arjuna’s words, Nakula glanced towards the king, who was supreme among those who upheld all forms of dharma. The immensely wise one was broad in the chest and mighty-armed.[73] His eyes were coppery red and he was temperate in speech. The scorcher of enemies spoke these words to his brother. “The gods established their fires in Vishakhayupa.[74] O great king! Know that the gods decided to base themselves on action. O king! The ancestors gave life to both believers and non-believers. However, consider that they performed deeds in accordance with the prescribed rites. Know that those who censure the Vedas[75] have been dislodged and are extreme non-believers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who abandons what is stated in the Vedas, despite all his action, does not attain the path of the gods and the vault of heaven. O lord of men! There are brahmanas who are learned and have carefully determined everything stated in the Vedas. Listen. They say that this[76] is the best stage of life. Wealth must be acquired in accordance with dharma and must be given away in the best of sacrifices. O great king! A man who thus perfects his soul is said to be one who truly renounces. However, a person who ignores this source of happiness is established on a higher plane, in the sense that he abandons his own self.[77] O great king! O lord! That is a *tamasa* kind of renouncing.[78] There may be a sage who does not have an abode. He roams around and finds refuge at the root of a tree. He does not cook and is always engaged in yoga. O Partha! He is one who renounces, but is a mendicant.[79] O lord of the earth! There may be a brahmana who disregards anger and delight and does not indulge in passions. He studies the Vedas. But such a person who renounces only serves his preceptor.[80] O king! The learned ones have considered all the ashramas[81] on a scale and have said that three of them on one side are equal to the stage of being a householder on the other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having considered, the maharshis, who know about the objectives of the worlds, determined that this was the path towards artha, kama and heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Someone who acts in accordance with these sentiments is one who truly renounces. Like a foolish person, he does not abandon his house and head for the forest. There are also those false ones, who are like bird-catchers trying to catch dharma. But because they cannot get rid of desire, the king of death[82] binds them around the neck with the noose of death. It is said that action done through pride does not lead to fruits. Tranquility, self-control, austerities, generosity, truthfulness, cleanliness, honesty, sacrifices, fortitude and dharma are always spoken of as the rites followed by rishis. Acts undertaken for the sake of gods, ancestors and guests are praised. O great king! In this mode of life, the three fruits are obtained.[83] One who follows this, observed by the brahmanas, and does not deviate, is one who renounces and never confronts catastrophe in anything. O king! The unblemished Prajapati[84] created beings. The one who is tranquil in his soul thought that they would worship him with sacrifices and perform sacrifices, with many kinds of gifts. Creepers, trees, herbs, animals fit to be sacrificed and oblations and other objects required for sacrifices were also created for the sake of sacrifices. The task of performing a sacrifice constrains those who are in the householder stage.[85] That is the reason the status of being a householder is a difficult task to perform and is not easy to obtain. O great king! There are householders who possess animals and grain, but do not sacrifice. Eternal sin awaits them. Some rishis say that studying is a sacrifice, others that knowledge is a sacrifice. There are others who perform great sacrifices in their minds. O king! There are brahmanas who become one with the brahman by adhering to the path that involves the act of giving. The residents of heaven envy them. O lord of men! There are many kinds of jewels that have been collected. By not giving them away in a sacrifice, you are thinking like a non-believer. For someone who has a family, I do not see any renouncement except through *ashvamedha*, rajasuya or *sarvamedha*.[86] O father![87] There are also other sacrifices revered by brahmanas. O great king! Perform those, like Shakra, the lord of the gods. When a king commits the sin of being distracted, bandits plunder. When the subjects have no refuge, the king is said to be overcome by kali.[88] O lord of the earth! If we do not give away horses, cattle, servant maids, adorned she-elephants, villages, countries, fields and houses to brahmanas, our consciousness will be destroyed by selfishness and we will be like kings overcome by kali. Kings who do not give and do not offer refuge obtain their share of sin. They enjoy unhappiness, never happiness. If you do not perform a great sacrifice, if you do not sacrifice to the ancestors, if you do not bathe in the waters of tirthas and instead depart, to roam around, you will face destruction, like a cloud that is dispersed and blown away by the wind. You will be dislodged from both the worlds[89] and be stationed between them. One who casts aside all attachment in his mind, internal and external, is one who truly renounces, not one who simply goes away. O great king! A brahmana who follows these rites prescribed for brahmanas is never dislodged.[90] The prosperous enemies have been swiftly slain in the battle, like the army of the daityas against Shakra. O Partha! Devoted to your own dharma, why should you grieve? O king! This is what has earlier been recommended in the sacred texts and practised by the righteous. You have conquered the earth through the valour and dharma of kshatriyas. O Indra among men! You know about mantras! Give it away and you will ascend the vault of heaven. O Partha! You should not sorrow now.”’

Chapter 1341(13)

‘Sahadeva said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One does not obtain success by casting aside external objects. Even if one casts aside physical parts of the body, success may or may not occur.[91] There are those who cast aside external objects, but still desire them from inside the body.[92] Let the happiness that results from that kind of dharma devolve on those who hate us, not on us. There are those who cast aside both objects and the physical body. Let the happiness that results from that kind of dharma devolve on our well-wishers, but not on us. There are two *akshara*s in death and three aksharas in the eternal brahman. ‘*Mama*’ is death and ‘*na mama*’ is eternal.[93] O king! The brahman and death both dwell inside one’s own self. They are invisible inside beings and there is no doubt that they cause them to struggle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If it is certain that the soul cannot be destroyed, then, by destroying the bodies of beings, one does not cause any violence. On the other hand, if the soul is generated with the body and is also destroyed with the body, then the path of all these rites is completely futile. Therefore, a virtuous man should renounce internally and intelligently follow the path that has been followed by his ancestors earlier.[94] If a king obtains the entire earth, with all its mobile and immobile objects, and yet does not enjoy it, his life is certainly fruitless. O king! There may be a man who lives in the forest and survives on wild fare. However, if he still has attachment towards objects, he lives within the jaws of death. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Consider the brahman that is naturally within all beings. A person who can see that characteristic is freed from great fear. You are my father. You are my mother. You are my brother. You are my preceptor. Therefore, you should pardon me for this distressed lamentation that is the consequence of sorrow. O protector of the earth! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! What I have spoken may be true or false. But know that it results from devotion towards you.”’

Chapter 1342(14)

Vaishampayana said, 'Kunti's son, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, did not speak, while his brothers spoke many things about what the Vedas had said. Droupadi, supreme among women, was beautiful. She had large eyes and was descended from an extremely noble family. She addressed the Indra among kings. The king was seated like a bull, surrounded by his brothers. They were like lions and tigers and he was like the leader of a herd of elephants. She knew about dharma and could discern the nature of dharma. Though she was always cherished by the king, she was always somewhat haughty, especially towards Yudhishthira. Having been invited, the wide-hipped and extremely beautiful one glanced towards her husband[95] and spoke these gentle words. "O Partha! These brothers of yours are as parched as *stoka* birds.[96] They are stationed here and are warbling, but you do not pay them any attention. O great king! They are like crazy and large elephants. Gladden them with appropriate words. They have always suffered from sorrows. O king! Earlier, you were with your brothers in Dvaitavana and they were oppressed by the cold, the wind and the heat. Why did you speak such words to them? 'Desiring victory in the encounter, we will slay Duryodhana in the battle and enjoy the entire earth, which is capable of granting every object of desire. O scorchers of enemies! We will deprive the rathas of their chariots and kill the mighty elephants. We will strew the field of battle with chariots. We will perform many grand sacrifices, at which a lot of gifts will be given away. Our sorrow of dwelling in the forest will become happiness.' O supreme among those who uphold dharma! These were the words you yourself spoke then. O brave one! How can you then shatter their minds now? A eunuch cannot enjoy the earth. A eunuch cannot obtain wealth. There cannot be sons in a eunuch's house, just as fish cannot exist in mud.[97] A kshatriya without the staff of punishment does not shine. There is no prosperity without the staff of punishment. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without the staff of punishment, a king's subjects do not obtain happiness. O supreme among kings! Friendship towards all beings, donations, studying and austerities are dharma for a brahmana, not for a king. The wicked must be countered. The virtuous must be protected. Together with not running away from a battle, this is the supreme dharma for kings. A person who possesses both forgiveness and anger, who gives and also takes, who frightens and also grants freedom from fear and who chastises and also rewards—such a person is said to know dharma. You have not obtained the earth through learning, donations, conciliation, sacrifices or bribery.[98] The forces of the enemy had brave ones who were ready to strike, with elephants, horses and chariots. It was larger in three parts.[99] It was protected by Drona, Karna, Ashvatthama and Kripa. O brave one! It has been destroyed by you. Therefore, enjoy the earth. O great king! O tiger among men! O lord! You used a rod to crush Jambudvipa, with its many countries.[100] O lord of men! You also used a rod to crush Krounchadvipa, equal to Jambudvipa and to the west of the great Meru. O lord of men! You used a rod to crush Shakadvipa, equal to Krounchadvipa and to the east of the great Meru. O tiger among men! To the north of the great Meru is Bhadrashva, equal to Shakadvipa. You crushed it with your rod. There were many countries between one dvipa and another dvipa. O brave one! You immersed yourself in the ocean and crushed them with your rod. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These were the immeasurable deeds that were performed by you. O great king! The brahmanas honoured you. But despite that, you are not pleased. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Look at your brothers and delight them. They are like proud bulls and proud kings of elephants. All of you are like the immortals. All of you are scorchers of enemies and are capable of withstanding enemies. It is my view that even a single one of you would have been enough to bring me happiness, not to speak of when all of you tigers and men and bulls among men are my husbands, like the senses enervating the body.[101] My mother-in-law knows everything and can see everything. Her words cannot be false. She told me, 'O Panchali! O excellent one! Yudhishthira will maintain you in happiness, after he has killed many thousands of kings through his valour.' O lord of men! Now, because of your confusion, I see that you will make this futile. O Indra among kings! If the eldest brother is mad, all the others follow him. Because you are mad, all the Pandavas will become mad. O lord of men! If these brothers of yours were not mad, they should have bound you up with the non-believers and ruled the earth. A person who acts stupidly does not obtain anything that is superior. A person who is on the path towards madness should be treated with incense, collyrium, treatment through the nose,[102] medicines and medical remedies. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I am the worst of all women in the world. Though I have been oppressed by the enemy, I still wish to remain alive. They[103] have struggled and have obtained this prosperity. But after having obtained the entire earth, you are acting so as to bring a disaster on yourself. O king! The kings Mandhata and Ambarisha were supreme among kings and were honoured by all the kings on earth. Be as radiant as them. In accordance with dharma, rule the goddess earth, with its mountains, forests and islands, and protect the subjects. O king! Do not be distressed in your mind. Perform many sacrifices and offer oblations into the fire. O supreme among kings! Give the brahmanas cities, objects of pleasure and garments.”’

Chapter 1343(15)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Yajnaseni’s words, Arjuna again spoke, showing honour to the mighty-armed lord who was his eldest brother. “The rod punishes all subjects. The rod protects them. When everything is asleep, the rod is awake. The learned say that the rod is dharma. O lord of men! The rod protects both dharma and artha. The rod protects kama. Is it said that the rod protects the three objectives.[104] Grain is protected through the rod. Wealth is protected through the rod. You know this and you should accept it. Consider the natural way of the world. Some evil ones do not perform wicked deeds because of their fear for the king’s rod, others because of their fear for Yama’s rod and others because of their fear of the life hereafter. There are other evil ones who do not perform wicked deeds because of their fear for each other. In this world that has come about, everything is based on the rod. It is because of their fear of the rod that some do not eat each other. Had the rod not protected, they would have been submerged in blind darkness. It controls those who are not disciplined. It punishes those who are wicked. It is because it controls and punishes that the learned know of it as *danda*.[105] Words are the danda for brahmanas, arms that for kshatriyas. Donations are said to be the rod for vaishyas. But it is said that there is no rod for shudras.[106] O lord of the earth! To ensure that there was no confusion among mortals, to protect riches and to establish boundaries in this world, danda was thought of. When danda strides around, dark and red-eyed,[107] there is exultation and subjects are not confused.

The wicked are not to be seen there. Men who are brahmacharis, householders, in the vanaprastha stage and mendicants remain stationed on their paths because of their fear of danda. O king! If one is not frightened, one does not sacrifice. If one is not frightened, one does not donate. A man who is not frightened does not wish to adhere to agreements. Without severing the inner organs, without performing terrible deeds and without killing like a fisherman, one does not obtain great prosperity. Without killing, there is no fame on earth, nor riches or subjects. Indra became the great Indra after slaying Vritra. The gods who have killed are worshipped much more by the worlds. Rudra, Skanda, Shakra, Agni, Varuna and Yama are killers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Time is a killer and so are Vayu, Death, Vaishravana,[108] Ravi,[109] the Vasus, the Maruts, the Sadhyas and the Vishvadevas. It is because of their powers that people bow down before them, but never before Brahma, Dhata or Pushan. These[110] are neutral vis-à-vis all beings, self-controlled and prone to peace. But only a few men, who are peaceful in all their deeds, worship them. I do not see anyone alive in this world who does not act violently. Living beings sustain themselves through other living beings, the stronger live off the weaker. O king! The mongoose eats the rat. The cat eats the mongoose. The dog eats the cat. The carnivorous beast eats the dog. A man eats them all. Behold. That is the way of dharma. Everything, mobile and immobile, is food for living beings. Those are the principles laid down by the gods and a learned person is not confused by this. O Indra among kings! You should become the person you were born to be. Those who are stupid[111] control anger and delight and resort to the forest. Without killing, the ascetics cannot sustain their lives. There are many beings in water, in the earth and in fruits. It is not true that they are not killed. What can be more important than sustaining life? There are many beings so subtle that their existence can be determined only through inference.

Their bodies can be destroyed through a mere blinking of the eyelids. Men leave the village. They give up anger and pride. But in the forest, they are seen to be confused and live the life of householders with families.[112] They till the ground and destroy herbs and trees. They kill birds and animals. Such men perform sacrifices and obtain heaven. O Kounteya! In my mind, there is no doubt that when the rod is properly applied, the endeavours of all beings become successful. If danda did not exist on this earth, all these beings would be destroyed. Like fish on a stake, the strong will cook the weak. Brahma himself spoke these truthful words earlier. ‘When applied rightly, danda protects beings. Look at the fire, once it has been pacified and is not frightened. Scared of the danda, it blazes up again.’ If danda did not exist in this world, there would be no difference between the virtuous and the wicked. Everything would be blind darkness and it would be impossible to distinguish anything. There are non-believers and criticizers of the Vedas, those who do not observe the boundaries. But stricken by the rod, even they can be made to follow rules. In this world, everyone is ruled by the rod. The pure man is extremely rare. It is because of fear of the rod that people can be made to follow rules. The rod was thought of by the creator, for the sake of protecting dharma and artha, so that the four varnas could be controlled and did not become confused. If they were not scared of danda, birds and carnivorous animals would have eaten up all the animals and men and all the oblations kept for sacrifices. Had the rod not protected, no brahmachari would have studied, no wonderful cow would have yielded milk and no maiden would have married.[113] There would be an end to the universe and all the boundaries would be broken down. Had the rod not protected, beings would not have recognized property. Had the rod not protected, people would not have been scared and would not have performed sacrifices throughout the year, giving away many kinds of donations, in accordance with the proper rites. Had the rod not protected, people would not have followed the dharma and dictates of the stages of life, nor would anyone have obtained learning. Had the rod not protected, camels, bullocks, horses, mules and asses would not have drawn vehicles, even after they had been yoked. Had the rod not protected, servants would not have listened to their instructions, nor would children have abided by what their fathers described as dharma. All beings are established on the basis of fear of the rod. That is what the learned say. Heaven and the world of men are established on the rod. Where the rod that destroys enemies is applied well, crookedness, sin and deceit are not seen there. When the rod is not raised, dogs are seen to lick oblations. If the rod does not protect, the crow steals the sacrificial cake. Be it through dharma, or be it through adharma, the kingdom has now been obtained. Our duty is not to sorrow, but to enjoy it and perform sacrifices. There are fortunate ones who dwell with their beloved wives. They roam around, attired in pure garments, and happily follow dharma. They eat the best of food. There is no doubt that all efforts depend on artha and that itself is based on danda. Behold the glory of danda. Dharma was declared so that the world could be sustained. There is non-violence and there is violence for righteous reasons. Of these, that which leads to dharma is superior.[114] There is nothing that possesses all the qualities, nor is there anything without any qualities. In all acts, something that is good and something that is evil are seen. Animals are castrated. Their horns are broken off. They are afflicted and made to carry many loads. They are tied down and chastised. This is the way the world goes on. It is on a crooked and decayed path. O great king! Therefore, you should observe the dharma that has been followed from ancient times. Perform sacrifices. Donate. Protect the subjects. Follow dharma. O Kounteya! Slay enemies and protect your friends. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should not sorrow because you have slain the enemy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! No sin has attached to you because of that. Someone who kills an assassin advancing to kill him does not suffer the sin attached to killing a foetus,[115] because that anger provokes the anger.[116] There is no doubt that the inner souls of all beings are incapable of being killed. If the soul cannot be killed, then how can it be killed by someone else? Just as a man enters a new house, in that way, beings successively enter new bodies. The old bodies are discarded and the new ones are acquired. People who know about the truth say that the face of death is nothing but this."'

Chapter 1344(16)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Arjuna’s words, the intolerant and energetic Bhimasena resorted to his patience and spoke to his eldest brother. “O king! You know about dharma. There is nothing on earth that is not known to you. We always wish to learn from your conduct, but are unable to do so. In my mind, I kept saying, ‘I will not speak. I will not speak.’ O lord of men! However, I am speaking out of great grief. Listen. Because of your confusion, everything is now uncertain. We have become perplexed and weak. This is the king of the world. He is accomplished in all the sacred texts. How can he be overcome by confusion and cheerlessness now, like an inferior man? You know about the coming and going of the world. O lord! There is nothing that has happened, or will happen, that is not known to you. O great king! O lord of men! This being the case, I will advance an argument about you ruling the kingdom. Listen with undivided attention. There are two kinds of diseases, physical and mental. Each one is generated from the other and they are not seen to exist independently. There is no doubt that a physical disease causes a mental one. It is also certain that a mental disease results in a physical one. Someone who sorrows over a physical or mental grief that has already occurred imposes a sorrow on a sorrow and doubles it. The three qualities of a body are cold, heat and wind.[117] When there is harmony between these qualities, that is said to be a sign of health. If one predominates over the others, remedies have been prescribed. Cold is checked through heat and heat is checked through cold. There are three qualities in the mind—*sattva*, *rajas* and tamas. Sorrow is checked through joy and joy is checked through sorrow. Some are in a present state of happiness and remember past sorrows. Others are in a present state of sorrow and remember past unhappiness. But you were not sorrowful in the midst of woes, nor joyful in the midst of happiness. Nor should you remember sorrow in the midst of happiness, or happiness in the midst of sorrows. O

Kouravya! Destiny is most powerful. O king! Or, perhaps it is your nature that is afflicting you. In her season, Krishna[118] was in a single garment and was brought into the assembly hall, while the sons of Pandu looked on. Having seen it, why don't you remember that? We were exiled from our residence in the city in deerskins and took up abode in the great forest. Should you not remember that? Jatasura afflicted us, there was a battle with Chitrasena and Saindhava afflicted us.[119] How is it that you have forgotten that? Then again, while we lived in concealment, Kichaka kicked the noble lady with his foot.[120] O scorcher of enemies! You fought a battle with Drona and Bhishma. But you now have to fight this terrible battle in your mind. Arrows will serve no purpose here, nor friends or relatives. In this battle that has presented itself, you will have to fight internally. If you are defeated in this battle and give up your life, you will take up another body and have to fight again. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, you should fight this battle now. O great king! If you win in this, you will become successful. Having determined the nature of beings coming and going,[121] make up your mind. Follow the conduct of your father and grandfathers and rule the kingdom, as is appropriate. It is fortunate that the wicked Duryodhana and his followers were killed in the battle. It is fortunate that you have followed the course of Droupadi's hair.[122] Perform a horse sacrifice in the proper way and give away donations. O Partha! We are your servants and so is the valiant Vasudeva."'

Chapter 1345(17)

‘Yudhishthira said, “Discontent, confusion, intoxication, passion, agitation, strength, delusion, pride and anxiety—you are overcome by all these sins and desire the kingdom. Do not be addicted. Be free, calm and extremely happy. The king who rules over this entire earth alone possesses only one stomach. Why are you then praising this course?[123] O bull among men! Desire cannot be satisfied in a day or a month. A desire incapable of being satisfied cannot be gratified in a lifespan. When it is fed, a fire blazes and when there is no kindling, it is pacified. Pacify the fire that has arisen in your stomach with a little bit of food. Conquer your stomach. This vanquished earth will then be conquered for the greater good. You have praised human desire, pleasures and prosperity. But those who do not enjoy objects of pleasure and are weak attain the supreme state. The kingdom’s acquisition and preservation, and both dharma and adharma, are based on you. Free yourself from that great burden and resort to renunciation. The tiger, for the sake of a single stomach, creates a great carnage. Other slow-moving animals sustain themselves on that.[124] An ascetic withdraws from material objects and resorts to sannyasa. However, a king is never satisfied. Behold the difference in their intelligence. Those who subsist on leaves, *ashmakutta*s,[125] *dantolukhala*s,[126] those who subsist on water and those who subsist on air are capable of conquering hell. Between a king who rules over every part of this entire earth and one who regards stone and gold as equal, the latter is the successful one, not the king. Do not act because of any intentions. Do not cherish hopes. Do not have a sense of ownership. Resort to the state that is without sorrow in this world and without decay in the next. Those who have no desire do not sorrow. Why are you grieving over desire? If you give up all desire, you will also be freed from these futile words.[127] The paths of *pitriyana* and *devayana*[128] are renowned. Those who sacrifice follow pitriyana, those who wish to be freed follow devayana.

Through austerities, brahmacharya and studying, those purified ones are radiant after they free themselves from their bodies and go beyond the grasp of death. Worldly desire is a bond. Freed from the bonds of both desire and action, one attains the supreme objective. It is said that there is a chant sung by Janaka.[129] He was beyond opposite sentiments. He was free and could perceive complete liberation. 'Though I possess nothing, my riches are infinite. If Mithila blazes up, nothing that is mine will be burnt.' Just as a person who ascends a palace on a mountain looks down at the people on the world below, the wise person looks down at evil-minded ones who sorrow about what one should not grieve about. The intelligent person who looks and sees what should be seen, has sight. The person who knows what is not normally known is said to be intelligent. There are those who have cleansed their souls, are learned and have attained the brahman. A person who understands their words is greatly revered. When one sees all the different beings to be one and realizes that they are the extension of the brahman, one attains that exalted state, not those who are ignorant, of limited intelligence, without understanding and without austerities. Everything is based on understanding."'

Chapter 1346(18)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king became silent. Arjuna was tormented and overcome by sorrow and grief because of the stakes of the king’s words. He spoke again. “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! People speak about the ancient account of the history of a conversation between the king of Videha and his wife.[130] The lord of men made up his mind to abandon his kingdom and resort to a life of begging. The queen of the king of Videha was full of sorrow and addressed him. Janaka gave up riches, offspring, friends, the many jewels and the path of fire[131] and became one who shaved off his head. His beloved wife saw him resort to this life of begging, possessing nothing. He only had a fistful of grain. He was indifferent and without selfishness. He was without any fear. In an isolated spot, the angry and spirited wife approached her husband and spoke words that were full of reason. ‘Why have you abandoned your kingdom? It was full of riches and grain. You have adopted a life of mendicancy and are wandering around with a fistful of grain in your hand. O king! Your resolution is of one kind, but your acts are of a different kind. O king! You have abandoned this great kingdom and are satisfied with only a little. O king! In this way, you will now be unable to support gods, guests, devarshis and ancestors. Therefore, your efforts are futile. O king! You have been abandoned by all the gods, guests and ancestors and are wandering around as a mendicant, without any action. You earlier supported thousands of aged brahmanas who knew about the three forms of knowledge.[132] You supported the world and now wish to be supported by others. Having abandoned the blazing prosperity, you are glancing around, like a dog. Your mother is without a son now and the daughter of Kosala is without a husband.[133] For the sake of dharma and kama, eighty kshatriya women served you.[134] Those pitiable ones hoped for the fruits of their actions. Having rendered them unsuccessful, what worlds will you go to? O king! Those bodies depended on you and their salvation is in doubt. Since you are the performer of wicked deeds, you have no superior world, in this world or in the next. Having abandoned the one who is your wife under dharma, you wish to live. Why have you abandoned garlands, fragrances, ornaments and many kinds of garments, living like a mendicant, without any action? You were like a pool[135] for all beings. You were their great cleanser. Having been a tall tree, you now serve others. When an elephant dies, many carnivorous beasts feed on it and so do many worms. But what purpose do you serve? How would you feel if someone broke this water pot, stole this *trivishtabdha*[136]and robbed you of your garment? You have abandoned everything and have accepted this fistful of grain. Even if this is equal to all gifts, what will you give me?[137] If this fistful of grain is all your riches, your pledge will be falsified.[138] Who am I to you? Who are you to me? What favours will you show me now? O king! Rule the kingdom and show me the favours of a place, bed, vehicle, garments and ornaments. There are those who have no hope of prosperity. They were without riches. They have no friends. They can renounce. But you have friends, servants and other riches. How can you renounce? There are those who receive a lot and there are those who always give. You know the difference between these two. Who is said to be superior? If one donates to a person who is always asking, even if that person is virtuous and without pride, those gifts are like oblations poured into a forest conflagration.[139] O king! A fire is not pacified until it has consumed everything. In that way, a brahmana who always asks is never satisfied. The Vedas and food are the natural sustenance of virtuous ones in this world. If one who is supposed to give does not give, where will those who desire salvation go?[140] In this world, householders result from food and those who beg result from them.[141] Life results from food. One who gives food, gives life. They[142] emerge from the state of being a householder, but have to resort to householders. Those self-controlled ones criticize the base of their powers.[143] A person cannot be said to be one who has renounced only because he is a mendicant, has shaved his head, or begs. Know that an upright person who happily gives up his wealth is one who renounces.[144] He is unattached, even if he roams around, as if attached. He is alone and has shed all bonds. O lord of the earth! He treats friend and foe equally and is truly free. There are those who roam around in search of alms. They have shaved off their heads and wear ochre robes. But they are tied down by many kinds of bonds and are always thinking about unsatisfied desire. They cast aside the three types of learning,[145] their names, their livelihoods and their sons. They accept the trivishtabdha and garments, but do not have understanding. Know that the ochre robe is not without desire for gain. Those with shaved heads wave the banner of dharma, but it is for the purpose of sustenance. That is my view. O great king! Conquer the world by conquering your senses and support those with ochre robes, those clad in skins, those clad in tatters, those who are naked, those who have shaved heads and those who sport matted hair. Who is superior to the one who maintains the sacred fire, performs sacrifices and gives away animals and other donations? From one day to another, incessantly give, as earlier. There is no dharma superior to that.' King Janaka knew the truth and the world sang about him. He was overcome by confusion. But you should not be confused. This is the dharma that is always followed by benevolent men. Without desire and anger, one should resort to the quality of non-violence. We should protect the subjects and base ourselves on donating. By being truthful in speech and honouring the brahmanas, we will obtain the worlds that we desire."'

Chapter 1347(19)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O son![146] I know about the sacred texts and about this world and the next. The words of the Vedas ask one to act and also ask one to renounce action. Though the sacred texts give reasons, they cause confusion. I know what has been certainly prescribed, following the rites. You are only skilled in the use of weapons and base yourself on the conduct of heroes. You are incapable of comprehending the true meaning of the sacred texts. Those who are learned can determine the certainty of dharma. Those who know subtleties can appreciate the true purport of the sacred texts. If you had actually seen the nature of dharma, you would not have spoken those words to me. But those words were spoken by you out of fraternal affection towards a brother. O Kounteya! O Arjuna! Your words are full of reason and I am pleased with you. In the three worlds, there is no one who is your equal amongst those who know the dharma of fighting and are accomplished in all those acts. But the words that I am speaking about the subtlety of dharma will be difficult for you to understand. O Dhananjaya! You should not doubt my intelligence. You know about the science of fighting, but you have not served the elders. You do not know about the conclusions of learned ones who have considered these in their entirety. O son![147] Austerities, renunciation and ritual action—those intelligent ones who have determined the way to the supreme objective have said that each of these is superior to the preceding one.[148] O Partha! You are wrong when you think that there is nothing superior to wealth. I will explain to you why it is not the most important. People who follow dharma are seen to follow austerities and practice studying. The rishis who attain eternal worlds observe austerities. There are those who have not grown beards and other wise ones who dwell in the forest. Though they are without riches, because of their studies, they go to the infinite heaven. There are aryas who abandon the darkness that comes from lack of intelligence and disassociate themselves from objects. They follow the northern path[149] and go to the worlds meant for those who renounce. You see that the southern path[150] is radiant. This is the world of those who follow action, but is a cremation ground. The path seen by those who desire salvation cannot be described. That is the reason renunciation is the most important, though it can only be explained with difficulty. Wise ones have followed the sacred texts, wishing to determine what is real and what is unreal, what is here and what is there. They have gone through the words of the Vedas and the sacred texts that are the *Aranyaka*s. They have dissected them like the trunk of a plantain tree, but have not been able to see the essence. Some have attentively rejected and have decided that the atman, in thisbody with the five elements, has the attributes of desire and aversion.[151] It[152] cannot be seen by the eye. It cannot be expressed through words. Being driven by karma, it circulates in beings.[153] After having realized what is most beneficial, withdrawing all thirst from the mind and casting aside all forms of action, one becomes independent and happy. This is the subtle path traversed by virtuous ones. O Arjuna! This being the case, why are you praising wealth, which is harmful? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In earlier times, there were people who could see and were learned in the sacred texts. They were always devoted to constant action, donations, sacrifice and deeds. They were learned and provided reasons and it was difficult to dissuade them. But there are foolish ones who rigidly adhere to those earlier texts. They say that it does not exist.[154] Those eloquent ones disregard what is immortal. They roam around the entire earth and speak in assemblies. Though they are extremely learned, they talk a lot. If we do not recognize them, who else will? But there are extremely wise and intelligent and virtuous ones, wise in the store of the sacred texts. They have great intelligence and perform great austerities. O Kounteya! They follow dharma and always obtain happiness through renunciation.”’

Chapter 1348(20)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When there was a break in the conversation, the immensely ascetic and eloquent Devasthana spoke appropriate words in reply to Yudhishthira. “Phalguna spoke words to the effect that there is nothing superior to wealth. Listen attentively as I explain this to you. O Ajatashatru! You have conquered the entire earth through dharma. O king! Having won it, you should not give it up without reason. There are four steps on the ladder, established on action.[155] O mighty-armed one! O king! You should ascend it by stages. O Partha! Therefore, perform great sacrifices, with many donations. Rishis perform the sacrifice of austerities and others observe the sacrifice of knowledge. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must understand that those who are devoted to austerities also base themselves on action. O Indra among kings! We have heard the words of the *vaikhanasa*s.[156] ‘One who does not strive for riches is superior to one who does. There are many sins associated with the pursuit of wealth and they only increase. For the sake of riches, people collect objects with a great deal of difficulty. One who thirsts after wealth is stupid and does not understand that a foetus is being killed.’[157] One may give to the undeserving and not give to the deserving. The dharma of distinguishing the undeserving from the deserving is extremely difficult. The creator created riches for sacrifices and man for protecting them[158] and performing sacrifices. Therefore, all riches should be used for performing sacrifices. Kama follows from that.[159] The immensely energetic Indra surpassed all the gods by performing many sacrifices that were full of food. He became the radiant Indra because of that. Therefore, all riches should be used for performing sacrifices. The great-souled Mahadeva offered himself in a sarvamedha sacrifice and became the exalted god of the gods. He surpassed all the beings in the universe with his deeds. He is the radiant Krittivasa and illuminates them.[160] Avikshit’s son, King Marutta, was mortal. But because of his sacrifice, he surpassed the king of the gods. All the vessels used were made out of gold and Shri[161] herself came to the sacrifice. You have heard about Harishchandra, Indra among kings. He performed sacrifices, earned merits and overcame his sorrow. Though he was human, he surpassed Shakra[162] with his prosperity. Therefore, everything must be used to perform sacrifices.”’

Chapter 1349(21)

‘Devasthana said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is about what Brihaspati[163] said, when he was asked by Indra. ‘Contentment is the best heaven. Contentment is supreme happiness. There is nothing superior to contentment, since a person is well established in that. When one withdraws from desire, just as a tortoise draws in its limbs, then the radiance of the atman clearly manifests the atman itself. When one is not frightened and does not frighten anyone else, then one triumphs over desire and aversion and sees the atman. Whether in deeds, thought or words, when one is not angry towards anyone and does not injure anyone, then one attains the brahman.’[164] O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, beings look at this and that, and follow this dharma and that. Understand this.[165] Some praise tranquility, others praise exertion. Some recommend one or the other, others praise both. Some praise sacrifice, other people sannyasa. One praises giving, another receiving. Some say that everything must be renounced and one must be seated in silent meditation. Some praise the kingdom and the protection of everyone, through killing, cutting and piercing.[166] Others prefer solitude. Having examined all this, the wise have determined that the virtuous should have the view that dharma lies in not injuring any being and in non-injury, truthfulness in speech, sharing, fortitude, forgiveness, procreation on one’s own wife, gentleness, modesty and steadfastness. Svayambhuva Manu[167] said that riches constituted the most important component of dharma. O Kounteya! Therefore, you should make efforts to protect. A kshatriya who is established in a kingdom must be self-controlled and look on pleasant and unpleasant things equally. He must know the truth about what the sacred texts prescribe for kings and he must subsist on the remnants of sacrifices. He must be engaged in chastising the wicked and supporting the virtuous. He must establish the subjects on the path of dharma and must himself follow dharma. Having passed on the riches to his son, he can retire to the forest and sustain himself on forest fare, in accordance with what is prescribed for hermits, being attentive until his time comes.[168] Such a king acts in accordance with the dharma of kings. O king! Therefore, he is successful in this world and the next. It is my view that *nirvana*[169] is extremely difficult to attain. There are many obstacles along the path. Therefore, those who follow this dharma, are devoted to truth, generosity and austerities, have the quality of not causing injury, are devoid of desire and anger, are engaged in the task of protecting the subjects, are based on supreme self-control and fight for the sake of cattle and brahmanas, obtain the supreme objective. O scorcher of enemies! The Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas, the Sadhyas and large numbers of rajarshis adopted this dharma. They were not distracted. Through their meritorious deeds, they obtained heaven."'

Chapter 1350(22)

Vaishampayana said, ‘During a break in this conversation, Arjuna again spoke. He spoke these words to the lord who was his eldest brother, whose mind was cheerless. “O one who is knowledgeable about dharma! You have obtained this supreme kingdom through the dharma of kshatriyas. O best among men! Having conquered it, why are you so severely tormented? O great king! It has been said that being slain in a battle is better for kshatriyas than many sacrifices. Remember the dharma of kshatriyas. It has been said that for brahmanas, austerities and renunciation are the best prescribed dharma for the state beyond death. O lord! Being slain in battle is recommended for kshatriyas. It has been said that the dharma of kshatriyas is extremely terrible, since weapons are always involved. O best among the Bharata lineage! At the right time, they should be slain by weapons in a battle. O king! Even when a brahmana bases himself on the dharma of kshatriyas, his life is praised in this world, because kshatriyas are based on brahmanas. O lord of men! Renunciation, begging, austerities and living off others are not recommended for kshatriyas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You know about all forms of dharma! You know about everything. You are an intelligent and accomplished king. You can distinguish the bad from the good. Abandon this torment and sorrow and armour yourself for action. In particular, the hearts of kshatriyas are as hard as the vajra. Having vanquished the enemy through the dharma of kshatriyas, you have obtained this kingdom, without any thorns. O Indra among men! Conquer your soul now and devote yourself to sacrifices and donations. Indra was the son of a brahmana, but he became a kshatriya through his deeds.[170] He killed his own wicked relatives eight hundred and ten times.[171] O lord of the earth! Those deeds of his should be honoured and praised. It has been said that this was how he became Indra among the gods. O great king! O Indra among men! When your fever eventually goes, perform sacrifices with many donations, just as Indra sacrificed. O bull among the kshatriyas! You should not sorrow at all about what has already happened. Following the dharma of kshatriyas, they have been purified by weapons and have attained the supreme end. O bull among the Bharatas! What has happened was going to occur. It was ordained. O tiger among kings! No one is capable of thwarting destiny.”’

Chapter 1351(23)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by Gudakesha,[172] Kouravya Kounteya did not say anything in reply. Dvaipayana said, “O Yudhishthira! Bibhatsu’s[173] words are completely true. It has been said in the sacred texts that supreme dharma is vested in the status of a householder. O one who knows about dharma! In accordance with the sacred texts and following the stipulations, follow your own dharma. It is not recommended that you should give up the status of a householder and go to the forest. The gods, the ancestors, the rishis and the servants always sustain themselves on the householder. O lord of the earth! Support them. Birds, animals and other beings also owe their sustenance to householders. O lord of the earth! Therefore, garhasthya is the best of the ashramas. Among the four ashramas, it is the most difficult one to follow. O Partha! Those who are weak in their senses find it difficult to follow. Since you are not distracted, follow it. You possess all the knowledge of the Vedas. You have performed great austerities. You should therefore bear the burden of the kingdom of your father and grandfathers. O great king! Austerities, sacrifices, learning, begging, deprivation of the senses, meditation, solitude in conduct, contentment and donations—in a desire to be successful, these should be followed by brahmanas, to the best of their ability. Though it is already known to you, I will now tell you what it is for kshatriyas: sacrifices, learning, exertion, lack of contentment about one’s prosperity, wielding the fierce rod of chastisement, protecting subjects, knowledge of the Vedas, performing all the austerities, good conduct, the earning of many material objects and giving them to the deserving. O lord of the earth! These are the duties for kings. We have heard that, when performed well, they bring success in this world and in that world.[174] O Kounteya! Among these, wielding the rod of chastisement is said to be the best. There is always strength in the kshatriya and the rod is based on that strength. O king! These endeavours bring success for kshatriyas. On this, there is a chant sung by Brihaspati. 'Like a snake swallowing up animals in their holes, the earth swallows up peaceful kings and brahmanas who do not leave their homes.' It has been heard that rajarshi Sudyumna wielded the rod and obtained supreme success, like Daksha, the son of Prachetasa."'[175]

Chapter 1352(24)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O illustrious one! Through what deeds did Sudyumna, the lord of the earth, obtain supreme success? I wish to hear about that king.”

‘Vyasa replied, “An ancient history is recounted about this. There were two brothers, Shankha and Likhita, and they were controlled in their vows. They had separate and beautiful abodes on the banks of the Bahuda river and these were always lovely with trees that had flowers and fruit. On one occasion, Likhita went to Shankha’s hermitage. At that time, following his own wishes, Shankha had gone out of his hermitage. Likhita arrived at the hermitage of his brother, Shankha. He knocked down some ripe fruit. Having got them, without thinking about it, the brahmana ate them. While he was eating them, Shankha returned to his hermitage. On seeing him eating them, Shankha asked his brother, ‘Where did you get the fruit and why are you eating them?’ Embracing his elder brother and greeting him, he smiled and said, ‘I got them here.’ Shankha was overcome by great anger and replied, ‘By taking these fruits yourself, you have committed an act of theft. Go to the king and tell him what you have done. Say, “O best of kings! I have taken something that was not given to me. Know me to be a thief. Follow your own dharma. O lord of men! As a thief, quickly punish me.”’ O mighty-armed one! Having been addressed in these words, Likhita, rigid in his vows, went to King Sudyumna.

‘“Sudyumna heard from his guards that Likhita had arrived. With his advisers, the lord of men advanced on foot to greet him. Having approached the one who knew about the brahman, the king asked, ‘O illustrious one! Tell me the reason why you have come. It will be done.’ Having been thus addressed, the brahmana rishi replied to Sudyumna, ‘You have promised that you will do what has to be done. Now listen and act. O bull among men! I ate fruit that my elder had not authorized. O king! I ate those. Therefore, punish me immediately.’ Sudyumna replied, ‘O bull among brahmanas! If you think that the king has the authority to wield the rod, then he also has the power to pardon. O performer of auspicious deeds! O observer of great vows! You have been pardoned. Tell me what else you desire. I will certainly act in accordance with your words.' The brahmana rishi was delighted with the great-souled king. But he wished for no other boon from the king than the boon of being punished. At this, the great-souled lord of the earth severed Likhita's two hands.

'"Having been punished, he[176] went to his brother, Shankha, and said in great distress, 'I have been punished for my stupid intelligence. O illustrious one! You should now pardon me.' Shankha replied, 'O one who knows about dharma! I am not angry with you. Nor have you caused me any injury. You violated dharma and that is the reason you have been punished. Now quickly go to the Bahuda and according to the rites, offer oblations to the gods, the ancestors and the rishis. Do not set your mind on adharma again.' On hearing Shankha's words, Likhita performed his ablutions in the sacred river and also performed the water-rites. Instantly, his hands reappeared, like two lotuses. Astounded, he went to his brother and showed him his hands. Shankha said, 'Do not doubt that this has happened because of my ascetic powers and because it has been ordained.' Likhita asked, 'O immensely radiant one! Why did you not purify me earlier? O supreme among brahmanas! Afterall, the strength of your austerities is like this.' Shankha responded, 'I had to act in this way because I was not the one who wielded the rod of chastisement. Other than you, the king and all his ancestors have also been purified.' O best among Pandavas! Through his deeds, that king became supreme. He obtained supreme success, like Daksha, the son of Prachetasa. This is the dharma of kshatriyas, the protection of subjects. Anything else is a wrong path. O great king! Do not unnecessarily sorrow in your mind. O supreme among those who know about dharma! Listen to the beneficial words of your brothers. O Indra among kings! The dharma of kshatriyas is the rod, not the shaved head."'

Chapter 1353(25)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Maharshi Krishna Dvaipayana again spoke these words, deep in purport, to Ajatashatru Kounteya. “O son![177] O great king! O Yudhishthira! These brothers of yours dwelt in the forest like ascetics. Their desires that they cherished then must be satisfied. O best of the Bharata lineage! Let these maharathas get what they want. O Partha! Rule the earth, like Yayati, the son of Nahusha. You dwelt in the forest like ascetics and were full of sorrow. But that misery is over and these tigers among men must obtain happiness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With your brothers, enjoy dharma, artha and kama. O lord of the earth! After having experienced that, do what you wish to do. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! You must first free yourself of the debts to guests, ancestors and gods. Only then will you go to heaven. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Perform the sarvamedha and ashvamedha sacrifices. O great king! After that, you will go towards the supreme objective. Engage your brothers in all the sacrifices, with abundant donations. O Pandaveya! After that, you will obtain unsurpassed fame. O tiger among men! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! We know what you will say. But listen to my words about how a king acts, so as not to deviate from dharma. O Yudhishthira! O lord of men! Those who know about dharma have determined that a person who takes away someone else’s property should be fined exactly the same amount. A king who follows the sacred texts, resorts to intelligence and, considering the time and the place, punishes bandits in this way, is right. A king who levies a tax of one-sixth, but does not protect the kingdom, obtains one-fourth of the kingdom’s sins. Listen to how a king does not deviate from dharma. If he punishes in accordance with the dharma laid down in the sacred texts, if he does not fall prey to desire and anger, if he treats everyone equally, like a father, he has no reason to be scared. O immensely radiant one! When it is the time for undertaking a task, if a king is afflicted by destiny and distracted, not undertaking the task, this is not regarded as a transgression. However, enemies must be punished, either immediately, or after proper reflection. There must be no alliances with the wicked, nor must the kingdom be sold.[178] O Yudhishthira! Brave ones, aryas and those who are learned must be treated well. In particular, those who possess cattle and those who possess riches must be protected. Those who are extremely learned must be employed in all tasks connected with dharma. An accomplished one[179] does not repose his faith on any single individual, no matter how many qualities he possesses. A king who does not protect, is insolent, proud and arrogant, and is also envious, is said to be one who is uncontrolled. When a king is struck by destiny and all the unprotected subjects are robbed by bandits, this is a sin devolving on the king. O Yudhishthira! If a task is performed with good advice, is based on good policy and is undertaken with enterprise, in accordance with the prescribed rites, that is not adharma. When something is undertaken, depending on destiny, it may, or may not, succeed. However, if there is enterprise, no sin touches the king.

'"O tiger among kings! A story is recounted about this. O king! This is an ancient account about rajarshi Hayagriva. He was brave and unblemished in his deeds. O Yudhishthira! Having killed many enemies in a battle, he was himself slain. The brave one was without any aides and was defeated. Having done all that could be done to restrain the enemy and having protected men, he resorted to the best of yoga. Having performed deeds in that excellent battle, he obtained fame. Vajigriva[180] now finds delight in the world of the gods. In the battle, he was mangled by assassins armed with weapons and attacked by bandits. But he was ready to give himself up. The great-souled Ashvagriva was devoted to his duties. He perfected his soul and finds delight in the world of the gods. The bow was his sacrificial stake. The bowstring was the rope. The arrow was the smaller ladle. The sword was the larger ladle. Blood was the clarified butter. The chariot, which could go anywhere at will, was the sacrificial altar. The battle was the fire. The best of horses were the four officiating priests. Having offered his enemies and himself as oblations into that sacrificial fire, the spirited lion among kings became free from all sins. Like taking a bath at the end of a sacrifice, he offered his life in the battle. Vajigriva finds delight in the world of the gods. Earlier, he protected the kingdom with intelligence and policy. The great-souled one performed sacrifices and then gave himself up. The spirited one pervaded all the worlds with his fame. Vajigriva finds delight in the world of the gods. He obtained divine and human success. He used the rod and protected the earth, resorting to yoga. That is the reason the great-souled king Hayagriva, who followed dharma in his conduct, finds delight in the world of heaven. He was learned. He renounced. He was faithful. He was grateful. Having performed deeds, he gave up the world of men. There are worlds for those who are intelligent, learned and revered. Having given up his body, the king obtained those. He acquired the Vedas well. He studied. The great-souled one protected the kingdom well. He established the four varnas in their own dharma. Vajigriva finds delight in the world of the gods. Having been victorious in battles, having protected the subjects, having drunk soma, having satisfied the best of brahmanas, having sustained the subjects with the use of the rod and having been destroyed in the battle, he delights in the world of the gods. His conduct was praiseworthy. Virtuous and learned men, themselves deserving honour, show him reverence. He conquered heaven and went to the world meant for heroes. The great-souled one, the performer of auspicious deeds, obtained success.”’

Chapter 1354(26)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Dvaipayana’s words and on seeing that Dhananjaya was angry, Kounteya Yudhishthira took Vyasa’s permission and replied in these words. “Ruling over this kingdom and its many separate objects of desire do not please my mind now. The sorrow is making me tremble. O sage! On hearing the lamentations of the women who have lost their brave husbands and sons, I can find no peace.” Having been thus addressed, Vyasa, supreme among those who know about yoga and knew about dharma, accomplished in the Vedas, spoke the following words in reply to the immensely wise Yudhishthira.

‘“A man does not obtain anything through deeds or thought, or by giving anything.[181] Everything that a man obtains progressively in the course of time has been ordained by the creator in successive arrangements. If it is not time, man is incapable of obtaining anything in particular, even by studying learned texts. Even a fool is capable of obtaining riches. Time determines the success of acts. When it is a time of adversity, crafts, mantras and herbs yield no fruits. When the right time arrives and it is a time for prosperity, it is these which ensure success. It is because of time that winds blow swiftly. It is because of time that rain is generated in the clouds. It is because of time that waterbodies have lotuses in them. It is because of time that trees flourish in the forest. It is because of time that the night is dark and cool. It is because of time that the disc of the moon becomes full. When it is not time, there are no flowers or fruits in trees. When it is not time, rivers do not flow with force. When it is not time, birds, serpents, small animals, elephants and large predatory beasts on mountains do not become crazy.[182] When it is not time, women do not conceive. When it is not time, winter, summer and the monsoons do not arrive. When it is not time, one does not die, nor is one born. When it is not time, a child does not begin to speak. When it is not time, youth does not arrive. When it is not time, seeds do not sprout. When it is not time, the sun does not appear. When it is not time, it does not set behind Mount Asta. When it is not time, the moon does not wax and wane, nor do the large waves of the ocean ebb and rise.

'"O Yudhishthira! On this, there is an ancient history that is recounted. In great grief, King Senajit sang a song.[183] All mortals are touched by this extremely difficult revolution. All men are ripened by time and die. O king! Some men kill others, and in turn, those men are slain by others. O king! This is the understanding of the worlds. But no one is killed and no one kills. Some think there are killers. Others think that there are no killers. The creation and destruction of beings is determined by their nature. When prosperity is destroyed and one's wife, son or father dies, one cries out in grief. One reflects on this sorrow and acts accordingly. O stupid one! Why do you sorrow? Why do you grieve, since you will also be grieved over? Consider the sorrow amidst all the sorrows and the fear amidst all fears. This body is not mine. Nothing in the earth is mine. He who realizes that what is mine also belongs to others is not confounded. There are thousands of reasons for sorrow and hundreds of reasons for joy. From one day to another, the foolish are submerged in this, but not the one who is learned. In the course of time, there are separate reasons for affection and aversion and beings are whirled around in unhappiness and in happiness. There is only unhappiness and no happiness. This is sometimes perceived. However, unhappiness results from desire and happiness results from unhappiness. There is unhappiness at the end of happiness and happiness at the end of unhappiness. One cannot obtain unhappiness all the time. Nor can one obtain happiness all the time. There is unhappiness at the end of happiness. There is happiness at the end of unhappiness. Therefore, anyone who desires eternal happiness should discard these opposite sentiments. When there is sorrow or torment, when one is senseless with grief, one must abandon the root of that grief, like severing a limb of the body. Whether it is happiness or unhappiness, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, the one who is unvanquished in his heart will regard this as something that was bound to happen. If you do something that is only a little unpleasant towards your wives or your sons, you will know who, whose, why and how.[184] Those who are the greatest fools in this world and those who have obtained supreme intelligence are the ones who are in the midst of happiness. Suffering is for those who are in the middle. O Yudhishthira! This is what the immensely wise Senajit said. He knew about cause and effect in this world, about dharma and about happiness and unhappiness. He who delights in the sorrow of someone else will never be happy. There is no end to sorrows, since there is a succession of them. Happiness and unhappiness, existence and non-existence, gain and loss and death and life touch everyone on this earth in turn. One with fortitude is not delighted or angry at this. For a king, it is said that fighting and protection are like the consecration at a sacrifice, appropriate use of the rod is yoga, the renunciation of wealth is the dakshina in a sacrifice and complete knowledge is the purification. By governing the kingdom with intelligence and policy, by controlling selfishness in the soul, by performing sacrifices and by roaming through all the worlds as someone immersed in dharma, after casting aside a body, a great-souled one[185] finds delight in the world of the gods. Being victorious in battle, protecting the kingdom, drinking soma, making the subjects prosper, upholding subjects with the rod of chastisement and dying in a battle, he finds delight in the world of the gods. Having studied all the Vedas and the sacred texts, having protected the kingdom well and having established the four varnas in their own dharma, the king purifies his soul and finds delight in the world of the gods. When a king has ascended to heaven, if men, inhabitants of the city and the country and advisers bow down before his conduct, he is the best of kings.”’

Chapter 1355(27)

‘Yudhishthira said, “Abhimanyu was a child and was killed. So were the sons of Droupadi, Dhrishtadyumna and the two lords of the earth, Virata and Drupada. In the battle, so were Vasushena,[186] knowledgeable about dharma, King Dhrishtaketu and other kings who had come from many countries. I am unable to free myself from the sorrow of having caused the slaughter of my relatives. I am tormented. Because of my fierce greed for the kingdom, I have brought about the destruction of my own lineage. I played on Gangeya’s[187] lap and rolled around there. Because of my greed for the kingdom, I have brought him down. I saw him whirled around by Partha’s[188] arrows, trembling as if he had been struck by thunder, but glancing only towards Shikhandi. The tall grandfather, lion among men, was like an aged lion. When I saw him covered by sharp arrows, my mind was distressed. Because of the arrows, he fell down from his chariot. He sat down, facing the east, whirled around like a mountain. At that time, I was overcome by dejection. With a bow and arrows in his hand, Kouravya fought for many days with Bhargava, in a great battle in Kurukshetra.[189] For the sake of the maidens, in Varanasi, the brave son of the river had single-handedly fought a battle against the assembled kshatriya kings.[190] With the power of his weapons, he had scorched the unassailable king and emperor, Ugrayudha.[191] He has been brought down by me in the battle. He could himself decide on his time of death. Using his arrows, he did not bring down Panchala Shikhandi, but was brought down by Arjuna. O supreme among sages![192] When I saw him lying down on the ground, covered in blood, a terrible fever overcame me. As children, we were protected and reared by him. I was wicked and greedy for the kingdom. I have slain my senior. For the sake of a temporary kingdom, I have foolishly killed him.

‘“The great archer, the preceptor, was worshipped by all the kings. I advanced against him in the battle and wickedly lied to him about his son.[193]

My limbs burn because the preceptor told me, ‘O king! Tell me truthfully whether my son is alive.’ Expecting that I would speak the truth, the brahmana asked me. I lied, by hiding the fact that it was an elephant. Because of my extreme avarice for the kingdom, I was evil and caused the death of my preceptor. In the battle, I put a cloak on the truth. I told my preceptor, ‘Ashvatthama has been killed,’ though it was an elephant that had been brought down. Having perpetrated such a terrible deed, what worlds will I go to now?

‘“Karna did not retreat from the battle and I caused him to be killed. He was my fierce elder brother. Who is more evil-acting than me?

‘“Abhimanyu was a child. He was like a lion born in the mountains. In my greed, I made him penetrate the formation that was protected by Drona. I have been as guilty as one who kills a foetus. Since then, I have not been able to glance at Bibhatsu or Pundarikaksha Krishna. I feel extremely sorry for Droupadi. Her five sons have been killed. She is oppressed by grief and is like the earth when it has lost five mountains. I have my share in the sins. I am the destroyer of the earth. Seated here, I will dry up my body. Know that I am the slayer of my seniors. I will fast to death here, so that I am not reborn as a destroyer of the lineage.[194] I will not eat or drink anything. O one who is rich in austerities! Right here, I will dry up my beloved breath of life. Go wherever you wish and grant me this permission. I seek everyone’s leave, so that I can cast aside this body.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Partha was distracted because of sorrow on account of his relatives. Vyasa, supreme among sages, restrained him and said, “O great king! You should not indulge in this excessive sorrow. O lord! I am telling you again that all this was destiny. The union and separation of living beings is certain. They are like bubbles in the water, which are there, and then are not there. Everything ends in destruction. They rise, accumulate and then fall. Union ends in dissolution. Death is the end of life. Laziness brings temporary happiness, but ends in sorrow. Industry may seem to lead to sorrow, but gives rise to happiness. Affluence, prosperity, modesty, fortitude and success are based on industriousness. Well-wishers do not ensure happiness. Ill-wishers do not ensure sorrow. Wisdom does not ensure artha. Nor is happiness ensured by wealth. O Kounteya! You have been created by the creator for tasks. Undertake them. O king! Success results from that. Otherwise, you will not have control over your atman.”’

Chapter 1356(28)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Vyasa dispelled the grief of the eldest son of Pandu, who was tormented by grief on account of his kin and wished to give up his life.

‘Vyasa said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. O tiger among men! O Yudhisthira! This is known as Ashma’s song. Listen to it. King Janaka of Videha was overcome by sorrow, misery and doubt and asked a wise brahmana named Ashma.

‘“Janaka asked, ‘When relatives and riches come and go, how should a man who desires his own welfare behave?’

‘“Ashma replied, ‘As soon as the atman arises inside a man’s body, all unhappiness and happiness are attached to it. Both of these are possible. But whichever of these he serves, overtakes his consciousness, just as the wind drives away clouds. “I have been born in a noble lineage. I am successful. I am not an ordinary man.” His consciousness becomes sprinkled with these three kinds of sentiments. He becomes addicted to pleasures and gives up the wealth accumulated by his ancestors. When this is destroyed, he thinks that even stealing the property of others is good. He transgresses codes of honour and seizes what has not been given. Kings counter such greedy ones like animals with arrows. O king! Such men live for twenty years, or thirty years. They never attain one hundred years.[195] They are full of great misery. Using one’s intelligence, one must glance here and there, at the conduct of all beings, and determine a medicine for them.[196] All mental sorrow is because of delusion of consciousness or the onset of a catastrophe. There is no third reason. The various kinds of sorrow a man faces is because of the external or the internal.[197] Old age and death are like two wolves that devour all beings, whether they are strong or weak, short or tall. There is no man who can escape from old age and death, even if it is someone who has conquered the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. Whether a being is confronted with happiness or unhappiness, all of it must be accepted and cannot be avoided. O lord of men! They must be faced in young age, middle age, or old age and cannot be avoided. But that which is wished for[198] never arrives. There is separation from that which is pleasant and association with that which is unpleasant. Following destiny, there is prosperity, adversity, happiness and unhappiness. The birth of beings, the giving up of their bodies, and gain and loss, have all been ordained. Smell, colour, taste and touch are naturally determined. Like that, happiness and unhappiness have been ordained. Depending on time, all beings observe sitting, lying down, going, getting up, drinking and eating. Physicians fall ill. The strong become extremely weak. They have women, or become eunuchs. Such is the wonderful progress of time. Birth in a noble lineage, valour, recovery from disease, patience, good fortune and pleasure—all of these are the result of destiny. Even if they do not wish to, the poor have many sons. Even if they wish for many and also try, the rich may have none. Disease, fire, water, weapons, hunger, predatory beasts, poison, rope and fall from height—these can be the reasons for a being's death. One's departure is determined by destiny and one follows that reason. No one has been seen to cross it. Nor will anyone cross it. O lord of men! It is seen that a prosperous man may die when he is young, and though he is in misery, a poor person may live for one hundred years. A man who has nothing is seen to live for a long time. However, a person who has been born in a noble lineage is destroyed like an insect. O lord of men! In this world, it is often the case that a prosperous person does not have the capacity to eat anything. But a poor person is capable of digesting wood. Driven by destiny, an evil-acting person or one who is not content, convinces his soul that what he is doing is good and thinks, "I am the doer." Women, gambling with the dice, hunting, drinking and acts that are condemned by the wise—many extremely learned ones are seen to be addicted to various such vices. Because of the progress of time, whether they are desired or not desired, many things are seen to touch all beings. However, the cause is not comprehended. Wind, the sky, fire, the moon, the sun, day, night, the stars, the rivers, the mountains—who has created them and who supports them? O bull among men! Cold, heat and rain are brought about by the circling of time and happiness and unhappiness in men is like that. Herbs, learned texts, oblations and meditations cannot save a man who faces death or old age. Just as a log of wood touches another log of wood in the great ocean, beings approach one another, touch and then drift away. Some men are in the company of women, with singing and the playing of musical instruments. Others are without protectors and depend on others for food. Time acts equally towards both. In this cycle of life,[199] beings may have thousands of mothers and fathers and hundreds of sons and wives. But whom do they belong to? Whom do we belong to? No one belongs to a person. Nor does a person ever belong to anyone. Along the path, one meets large numbers of wives, relatives and well-wishers. Where was I? Where am I? Where am I going? Who am I? Why am I here? Who am I grieving for? Thinking in this way, one can pacify one's mind. One revolves in this cycle of life, and the association with the ones one loves is temporary. The world hereafter has not been seen. Nor can it be seen. Learned ones know about it. One should not doubt the sacred texts, but be full of devotion. One must follow dharma in acts towards the ancestors and the gods. In accordance with the prescribed rites, the learned must perform sacrifices and follow the three goals.[200] This entire universe is submerged in the deep ocean of time. Old age and death are the giant sharks.[201] But there are few who understand this. There are many physicians who have studied ayurveda[202] and nothing else. Even they are seen to be afflicted by disease. They drink bitter and oily potions. However, they cannot cross death, like the giant ocean against the shoreline. There are chemists who are extremely accomplished in chemistry. They are seen to be shattered by old age, like trees shattered by great elephants. There are those who torment themselves through austerities, are engaged in studying, give generously and perform sacrifices. But even they cannot overcome old age and death. Once beings have been born, days, months, years, fortnights and nights cannot be rolled back. Man is powerless and his existence is uncertain. He must tread this extensive and certain path of time, followed by all beings. Irrespective of whether the soul exists independent of life or whether life exists independent of the soul,[203] we meet our wives and other relatives along the path. There never is any permanent association with anyone. There is none with one's own body. How can there be with anyone else? O king! Where is your father now? Where is your grandfather? They can't see you now. Nor can you see them. There is no man who can see heaven or hell. O king! The sacred texts are the eyes of the virtuous. Act accordingly. Act like a brahmachari. Then procreate and perform sacrifices. Without any malice, repay the debt to ancestors, gods and maharshis. He[204] must perform sacrifices. He must procreate and generate offspring, after having practised brahmacharya first. He must divide himself into two.[205] He must worship heaven and this world. In this way, his heart will be freed from that which is false. The king who practises dharma and acquires objects in the proper way extends his fame in all the worlds, mobile and immobile, and keeps the wheel turning.'"

'Vyasa said, "The king of Videha understood all these words, which were full of reason. Having heard this, his intelligence became completely refined. He took Ashma's leave and, with his sorrow pacified, went towards his own house. O one without decay! In that way, free yourself from this grief. You are like Shakra. Arise in delight. You have won the earth through the dharma of kshatriyas. O son of Kunti! Enjoy and do not grieve."'

Chapter 1357(29)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kounteya Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, did not say anything. Pandava Gudakesha[206] addressed Hrishikesha. “Dharmaraja, the scorcher of enemies, is tormented by grief on account of his kin. O Madhava! He is immersed in an ocean of sorrow. Comfort him. O Janardana! All of us are now again faced with an uncertainty. O mighty-armed one! You should dispel this grief.” Having been thus addressed by the great-souled Vijaya, the lotus-eyed Govinda Achyuta circumambulated the king. Since he was a child, Dharmaraja could never cross Keshava. He loved Govinda more than Arjuna. The mighty-armed one’s[207] arms were smeared with sandalwood paste and were like stone pillars. Shouri seized them and delighted him with these words. His[208] face was beautiful and possessed excellent teeth, with lovely eyes. It was like a full-blown lotus when the sun had arisen. “O tiger among men! Do not indulge in this sorrow that dries up the body. Those who have been slain in the field of battle will not come back. They are like objects one sees in a dream. Once one awakes, they disappear. These kshatriyas have died in the great battle between kings. They did not turn their faces away from the battle. These ornaments of the battle were brave and have died. They did not turn their backs. Nor were they slain while running away. All of those brave ones fought and gave up their lives in the great battle. They were purified through weapons and have attained heaven. You should not sorrow about them.

‘“An ancient history is recounted about this.[209] Srinjaya was overcome by sorrow on account of his son and Narada spoke to him. ‘O Srinjaya! I, you, and all the subjects, have to face happiness and unhappiness. We have to roam around and can’t be free from this. What is there to sorrow about? I will tell you about the deeds of supreme and immensely fortunate kings. Listen. O king! Your sorrow will be dispelled. Hear about these immensely fortunate kings who died. Listen, as I tell you about them in detail. On hearing, your sorrow will be dispelled.

'"'O Srinjaya![210] Hear about Marutta, the son of Avikshit. He died. The gods, with Indra and Varuna, with Brihaspati at the forefront, came to the sacrifice where the great-souled king offered everything. He wished to rival Shakra Shatakratu, the king of the gods. Wishing to ensure pleasure to Shakra, the learned Brihaspati refused to be the officiating priest at his[211] sacrifice. However, for the sake of spiting Brihaspati, Samvarta[212] agreed. O supreme among kings! When that virtuous king ruled, the earth yielded grain, even when it had not been ploughed and was radiant with garlands of holy sanctuaries.[213] At the sacrifice of Avikshit's son, the Vishvadevas were the courtiers, the Maruts were the attendants and the great-souled Sadhyas were also present. Large numbers of Maruts drank Marutta's soma. The gifts made surpassed those of gods, men and gandharvas.[214] O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Suhotra, the son of Vitithi. Maghavan[215] showered gold on him for an entire year. Having obtained him as a lord of men, Vasumati's name became appropriate.[216] When he was the lord of the countries, the rivers flowed with gold. When he was honoured by the worlds, Maghavan showered down tortoises, crabs, crocodiles, makaras and dolphins into the rivers. When he saw hundreds and thousands of fish, makaras and tortoises raining down, Vitithi's son was astounded. He collected the gold that was strewn around and, performing a sacrifice in Kurujangala, gave it all away to brahmanas at the sacrifice. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son, who did not give anything away, nor perform sacrifices? Be pacified and do not grieve.

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Vrihadratha of Anga. He died, after giving away a million white horses. In the sacrifice that he performed, as donations, he gave away a million maidens with golden ornaments. As donations, he also gave away a million bulls with golden harnesses, followed by thousands of cows. When the king of Anga performed his sacrifice on Mount Vishnupada, Indra was intoxicated with soma and the brahmanas with the gifts. The Indra among kings performed hundreds of other sacrifices too. The gifts given surpassed that of gods, men and gandharvas. No other man has been born, or will be born, who has given away as much of wealth in the seven soma sacrifices.[217] O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

‘“‘O Srinjaya! We have heard about Shibi, the son of Ushinara. Like a skin, he covered the entire earth. The earth resounded with the mighty roar of his chariot. On a single chariot, he brought the entire earth under a single umbrella.[218] At his sacrifice, Shibi, the son of Ushinara, gave away all the cattle, horses and wild animals that he possessed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![219] Prajapati thought that amongst all the kings, from the past and from the future, there would be no one else who would be able to bear such a burden, other than rajarshi Shibi, the son of Ushinara. He surpassed Indra is his valour. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son, who did not give anything away, nor perform sacrifices? Be pacified and do not grieve.

‘“‘O Srinjaya! We have heard about Bharata, the son of Duhshanta and Shakuntala. He died. He was a great archer and possessed abundant riches and energy. Along the banks of the Yamuna, he tied thirty horses for the gods, twenty along the Sarasvati and fourteen along the banks of the Ganga. He performed one thousand horse sacrifices and one hundred royal sacrifices. Duhshanta’s immensely energetic son, Bharata, performed these in earlier times. Among all the kings on earth, no one else could replicate Bharata’s great deed, just as mortals cannot fly with the use of their arms. He tied down more than one thousand horses at sacrificial altars. Bharata gave away many treasures to Kanva.[220] O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

‘“‘O Srinjaya! We have heard about Rama, Dasharatha’s son. He too died. He was always compassionate towards the subjects, as if they were his own sons. In his kingdom, there were no widows, nor those without protectors. When he ruled over the kingdom, he was like a father to everyone. Rain showered down at the right time and the crops were succulent. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, there was always plenty of food. Beings did not drown in the water. Nor did fires burn unnecessarily. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, there was no fear from predatory beasts. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, the subjects lived for thousands of years and had thousands of sons. They were without disease and were successful in all their objectives. The women did not quarrel with each other, not to speak of men. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, the subjects always followed dharma. Without any calamity, the trees always bore flowers and fruit. When Rama ruled over the kingdom, each cow yielded a bucket of milk. The immensely ascetic one roamed around in the forest for fourteen years. He then performed ten horse sacrifices, at which a lot of gifts were given, with no bars on entry. He was dark and handsome, with red eyes. He was like a mad elephant in his valour. Rama ruled over the kingdom for ten thousand years. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about King Bhagiratha. He died. At his sacrifice, Indra drank soma and became extremely intoxicated. The illustrious chastiser of Paka, supreme among the gods, was invincible in the strength of his arms and defeated many thousands of asuras. In his sacrifice, he[221] gave away a million maidens, with ornaments of gold. Each maiden was on a chariot and each chariot was drawn by four horses. With each chariot, there were one hundred excellent elephants with golden harnesses. A thousand horses followed each elephant from the rear. A thousand cows followed each horse and there were one thousand goats and sheep behind each cow. When he dwelt in the mountainous regions earlier, Ganga Bhagirathi was seated on his lap and came to be known as Urvashi.[222] Bhagiratha, descended from the Ikshvaku lineage, performed sacrifices at which a lot of donations were given. Ganga, with three flows,[223] agreed to become his daughter. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard of Dilipa, the son of Ilavila. He died. The brahmanas recount his numerous deeds. In a great sacrifice, the lord of the earth willingly gave away the earth, with all its riches, to brahmanas. In each sacrifice that he performed, the officiating priest received one thousand golden elephants as a gift. For his sacrifices, there was a great and radiant sacrificial stake made out of gold. With Shakra as the foremost, the gods performed their tasks and sought refuge with him. The ring on top of the sacrificial stake was also made out of gold and six thousand divine gandharvas danced around it. In their midst, Vishvavasu[224] himself played the seven notes of the veena and every being there thought, "He is playing for me." No other king could replicate King Dilipa in this. Ornamented in gold, intoxicated women lay down on the road.[225] King Dilipa was truthful and fierce in wielding the bow. Any man who saw the great-souled one went to heaven. There were three sounds that never flagged in Dilipa's residence— the chant of studying, the twang of the bowstring and the words, "I give". O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Mandhata, Yuvanashva's son. He also died. The gods, the Maruts, extracted the foetus from his father's flank.[226] The great-souled one developed in Yuvanashva's stomach, having earlier been generated from the water. The handsome king would later conquer the three worlds. On seeing him lying down on his father's lap, with the form of a god, the gods asked each other, "Who will suckle him?" Indra approached and said, "He will be suckled by me." Thus, Shatakratu gave him the name of Mandhata.[227] For the sake of sustaining the great-souled one, a stream of milk issued forth from Indra's hand, into the mouth of Yuvanashva's son. O king! He drunk from Indra's hand and grew and in twelve days, was like one who was twelve years old. In a single day, the entire earth came under the subjugation of that great-souled one. He had dharma in his soul and, in battle, was as brave as Indra. In battle, Mandhata defeated King Angara, Marutta, Asita, Gaya and Brihadratha from Anga. When Yuvanashva's son fought against Angara in the battle, the gods thought that the stretching of his bow was shattering the firmament. From where the sun rises to where it sets, all of that was said to be the field of Mandhata, Yuvanashva's son. He performed one hundred horse sacrifices and one hundred royal sacrifices. The lord of the earth gave brahmanas *rohita* fish made out of gold and each of these was ten yojanas long and one yojana wide.[228] What was left over was shared out among people who were not brahmanas. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Yayati, the son of Nahusha. He also died. He conquered the entire earth, with its oceans. O king! He travelled through the earth, throwing a *shami* stick[229] and performing a sacred sacrifice wherever the stick landed, thus dotting it with sacrificial altars. He performed one thousand sacrifices and one hundred horse sacrifices. He satisfied Indra of the gods with three mountains of gold. In the battle between the gods and the asuras, Yayati, son of Nahusha, slew daityas and danavas and divided up the entire earth. He abandoned his other sons, with Yadu and Druhyu as the foremost, and instated Puru in the kingdom.[230] With his wives, he then left for the forest. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Ambarisha, the son of Nabagha. He died. O supreme among kings! The subjects chose him as their sacred protector. He attentively performed sacrifices and gave brahmanas a million kings who had themselves performed sacrifices. No one had ever performed a task like this earlier, nor will anyone do so in future. Thus did Ambarisha, the son of Nabagha, delight them with dakshina. A hundred thousand kings and another ten thousand kings followed him in his horse sacrifices and went along the southern path.[231] O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Shashabindu, the son of Chitrasena. He died. The great-souled one had one hundred thousand wives. Shashabindu had a million sons who were excellent archers. All of them were clad in golden armour. Each of those princes married one hundred maidens, who followed him. One hundred elephants followed each maiden and one hundred chariots followed each elephant. One hundred horses, born in the country and adorned with golden harnesses, followed each chariot. One hundred cows followed each horse and one hundred sheep and goats followed each cow. O great king! In a great horse sacrifice, Shashabindu instructed that all these riches should be given away to brahmanas. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas. He died. For one hundred years, that king subsisted on what was left over from oblations. Agni wished to give him a boon. Gaya said, "O bearer of oblations! Through your favours, grant me the boons that even when I give, my riches are inexhaustible, my faith in dharma grows and my mind delights in the truth." We have heard that he obtained all these wishes from the fire god. Whenever it was the new moon, whenever it was the full moon and at each interval of four months, the immensely energetic one repeatedly performed sacrifices and this continued for one thousand years. For a thousand years, when he awoke in the morning, he gave away a hundred thousand cows and ten thousand horses. The bull among men satisfied the gods with soma, the brahmanas with riches, the ancestors with *svadha*[232]and his wives with sensual pleasures. He covered a part of the earth with gold. This was ten cubits wide and twenty cubits long, and in a great horse sacrifice the king gave this away as dakshina. O king! O bull among men! Gaya, the son of Amurtarayas, gave away as many cows as there are grains of sand in the Ganga. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

'"'O Srinjaya! We have heard about Rantideva, the son of Sankriti. He died. The immensely illustrious one satisfied Shakra properly and obtained a boon from him. "Let us have an abundance of food and guests. Let my faith never diminish and let me never have to ask anything from anyone."[233] The illustrious Rantideva was extremely rigid in his vows and of their own accord, domestic and wild animals presented themselves before the great-souled one, so as to be sacrificed. Because of the discharge from this mass of hides, a great river was created and this great river became famous as Charmanvati.[234] When the king singled out brahmanas and proceeded to give them one golden coin each, they protested. So he gave each brahmana one thousand. There were vessels and implements used in the intelligent Rantideva's sacrifices—pots, plates, frying pans, bowls and cups. There was not a single one that was not made out of gold. Whenever someone spent a night in the house of Rantideva, the son of Sankriti, twenty thousand and one hundred cows were sacrificed. But even then, adorned in bejewelled and excellent earrings, the cooks exclaimed, “There is plenty of broth. Take as much as you want. But now, there is no longer as much meat as there used to be earlier.”[235] O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

‘“‘O Srinjaya! We have heard about the great-souled Sagara. He died. The tiger among men was descended from the Ikshvaku lineage and was superhuman in his valour. Sixty thousand sons followed him at the rear. They were like a large number of stellar bodies in a sky without clouds and at the end of the rain, surrounding the lord of the stars.[236] In earlier times, the earth bowed down before him and was under a single umbrella.[237] He satisfied the gods with one thousand horse sacrifices. He gave deserving brahmanas palaces that were completely made out of gold, with golden pillars. They were full of beds and women with eyes like lotuses. The brahmanas got whatever they desired, superior and inferior, and on his instructions, divided this up among themselves. Because of his anger, the earth was dug out and came to be marked with the ocean.[238] It is after his name that the ocean came to be known as Saagara. O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son?

‘“‘O Srinjaya! We have heard about King Prithu, the son of Vena.[239] He died. The maharshis consecrated him in the great forest. He was known as Prithu because he would extend the world. Someone who saves from injuries is said to be a kshatriya.[240] On seeing Prithu, the son of Vena, the subjects said, “We are attached to him.” Because of that affection, he came to known as a raja.[241] The earth yielded crops without being ploughed. There was honey in every hole.[242] When Vena’s son ruled, all the cows yielded a bucket of milk. All the men were without disease, were successful in all their objectives and were free from fear. As they wished, they dwelt in their fields or their homes. On his instructions, the waters of the ocean were solidified.[243] The rivers did not swell up and obstruct the advance of his standard. In a great horse sacrifice, the king gave brahmanas twenty-one mountains of gold and each of these was three *nala*s high.[244] O Srinjaya! He was four times as fortunate as you and more meritorious than your son. When he died, why are you grieving about your son? O Srinjaya! Why are you reflecting in silence? O king! You have not listened to my words. If you have not listened, my discourse, though spoken well, has been in vain, like medicine to someone who is about to die.'

'"Srinjaya replied, 'O Narada! I have listened to your words. They are wonderful in their purport, like a fragrant garland. Those rajarshis were great-souled and meritorious in their deeds. Their deeds are enough to dispel my grief. O maharshi! Your discourse has not been in vain. O Narada! Your sight alone has been sufficient to drive away my sorrow. O one who speaks about the brahman! I have listened to your words. However, like one drinking amrita, I am not satisfied. O one whose sight never fails! O lord! I am tormented on account of my son. Through your favours, let the dead one come back to life. Through your favours, let me be united with my son.'

'"Narada replied, 'Your beloved son, Svarnashthivi, was given to you by Parvata[245] and has departed. But I will give your son back to you. Hiranyanabha[246] will live for one thousand years.'"'

Chapter 1358(30)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “How did Srinjaya’s son become Kanchanashthivi?[247] Why did Parvata give him? How did he die? At that time, men used to live for one thousand years. Why did Srinjaya’s son die while he was still a child? Was he Suvarnashthivi only in name? I wish to know the truth about Kanchanashthivi.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O lord of men! I will tell you the details about what actually happened. The rishis Narada and Parvata were worshipped by the worlds. They were maternal uncle and nephew.[248] Once they came down from the world of the gods. The lords, the maternal uncle Narada and the nephew Parvata, cheerfully roamed around in the world of men in those ancient times, discarding food in the form of sacrificial oblations and the food of the gods. Though they possessed powers of asceticism, they wandered around on the surface of the earth. They roamed around here and there, eating the food of humans. They were cheerful and had an agreement. ‘Whatever resolution either one of us has, good or bad, will be revealed to the other. If either one fails to do this and falsifies the agreement, he will be cursed.’ The maharshis, worshipped in the worlds, pledged this. They went to King Srinjaya, the son of Shvitya, and said, ‘O child! For the sake of your welfare, we will dwell with you for some time. O protector of the earth! Attend to our needs.’ The king acted accordingly and honoured them with hospitality. After some time, in great delight, the king told the great-souled ones who had arrived, ‘This is my beautiful daughter and I have only one. She will tend to your needs. Her limbs are lovely and she is virtuous in her conduct. This maiden is known as Sukumari and her complexion is like the filament of a lotus.’ Thus addressed, they agreed and the king instructed his daughter. ‘Tend to these brahmanas as if they are gods, or your father.’ The maiden followed dharma and, instructed by her father, agreed. As instructed by the king, she served them well.

‘“While she served them in this way, because of her unmatched beauty, there was a swift and violent urge of desire in Narada. That desire increased in the great-souled one’s heart, just as the moon slowly waxes during the bright lunar fortnight. Though he knew about dharma, he was greatly ashamed of his desire and did not tell his great-souled nephew, Parvata. Because of his ascetic powers and through signs, Parvata got to know. Enraged, he severely cursed Narada, who was overcome by desire. ‘You voluntarily had an agreement with me. Should there be any resolution in our hearts, good or bad, that would be disclosed to the other. You have falsified that. O brahmana! Those were your words and you are bound by them. Earlier, you did not tell me that you had this desire for the maiden Sukumari. Because of that sin, I will curse you. You are knowledgeable about the brahman. You are my senior. You are an ascetic. You are a brahmana. Despite that, you have falsified the agreement you made with me. In great rage, I am cursing you. Listen to my words. There is no doubt that Sukumari will be your wife. O lord! However, from the time you marry, your own form will be distorted. The maiden, and all other men, will see you as an ape.’ As soon as Narada got to know the words spoken by Parvata, he became enraged. The maternal uncle cursed the nephew, ‘You possess asceticism. You are a brahmachari. You possess truth and self-control. You are always united with dharma. Despite this, you will not dwell in heaven.’ Extremely enraged, those two rishis severely cursed each other. They rushed towards each other, like two angry and excellent elephants.

‘“The great sage, Parvata, roamed around the entire earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was honoured because of his energy. Narada, supreme among those who followed dharma, obtained the unblemished Sukumari, Srinjaya’s daughter, in accordance with the rites of dharma. Because of the curse, as soon as the mantras connected with receiving her hand were pronounced, the maiden beheld that Narada had assumed the form of an ape. Despite the devarshi having assumed the form of an ape, Sukumari did not disrespect him. She treated him affectionately. She presented herself to her husband and did not go to anyone else, not even in her mind. Faithful to her husband, she did not wish that a god, another sage or a yaksha should be her husband.

‘“After some time, the illustrious Parvata was roaming around in the forest and saw Narada there. Greeting Narada, Parvata said, ‘O lord! Show me your favours and let me go to heaven.’ Narada saw that Parvata was standing miserably before him, hands joined in salutation. But he was even more distressed and said, ‘You are the one who cursed me first and said that I would be an ape. When you spoke to me in this way, I later cursed you in revenge, to the effect that henceforth, you would never dwell in heaven. Since you were like my son, you should not have acted in that way.’ The sages then withdrew their curses from each other.

‘“Sukumari saw Narada in his prosperity, in a form that was like that of a god. Taking him to be someone else’s husband, she fled. On seeing that the unblemished one was running away, Parvata spoke to her. ‘This is your husband. You should not doubt that. This is the illustrious lord and rishi Narada, with supreme dharma in his soul. There is no doubt that his heart is completely yours.’ The great-souled Parvata entreated her in many ways. When she heard that her husband had been tainted because of the curse, she regained her natural state. Parvata went to heaven and Narada went home. The great rishi, Narada, was a witness to all this himself. O supreme among men! Ask him and he will tell you exactly what happened.”’

Chapter 1359(31)

Vaishampayana said, ‘At this, the king, Pandu’s son, addressed Narada. “O illustrious one! I wish to hear how Suvarnashthivi was born.” Having been thus addressed by Dharmaraja, the sage Narada told him the exact truth about Suvarnashthivi. “O great king! It was just as Keshava told you. Since you have asked me, I will tell you about the part that remains. I and the great sage Parvata, my sister’s son, went to Srinjaya, supreme among victorious ones, wishing to dwell with him. He honoured us with all the indicated rites. With all our wishes well tended to, we lived in his house. After many years had passed, it was time for us to leave. At that time, Parvata spoke these words to me and they were of grave import. ‘We have lived in the house of this Indra among men and have been greatly honoured. O brahmana! Now that the time of residing here is over, we should think about what is appropriate.’ O king! At this, I spoke to the handsome Parvata. ‘O lord! O nephew! In every respect, this is worthy of you. The king should be delighted with boons and let him obtain what he desires. If you so think fit, let him obtain success through our austerities.’ At this, Parvata, bull among sages, summoned the handsome Srinjaya and told him what we had decided. ‘O king! We are delighted with the great hospitality you have sincerely offered us. O best among men! With our permission, think of a boon that you desire. However, let it not cause injury to the gods or destruction to men. O great king! It is our view that you are worthy of respect and accept this from us.’ Srinjaya replied, ‘If you are pleased with me, that is sufficient for me. That is a great fruit and it has been my supreme gain.’ When the king repeated this again, Parvata said, ‘O king! Ask for a desire that has been in your heart for a long time.’ Srinjaya answered, ‘I desire a brave son, one who is full of valour and is firm in his vows. He should be immensely fortunate and have a long life. He should be like the king of the gods in his resplendence.’ Parvata said, ‘This desire of yours will come true.

However, he will not live for a long time, since there is a desire in your heart that he should surpass the prosperity of the king of the gods. He will be Suvarnashthivi, since his excreta will be golden. He will be like the king of the gods in his radiance. But protect him from the king of the gods."

'"Narada said, 'On hearing the great-souled Parvata's words, Srinjaya said, 'Through your favours, let it not be that way. O sage! Through your powers of austerities, let my son have a long life.' However, because of his partiality for Indra, Parvata said nothing. The king was miserable and I spoke to him again. 'O great king! When it is time to remember me, think of me and I will show myself to you. When your beloved son has come under the subjugation of the king of the dead, I will give him back to you. O lord of the earth! Do not sorrow. I will again give him back to you in that form.'[249] Having addressed the king thus, we departed, as we desired. As he wished, Srinjaya also entered his own palace.

'"After some time had passed, rajarshi Srinjaya had a son born to him. He was immensely valorous and blazed in his energy. As time passed, he grew, like a giant lotus in a pond. He became Kanchanashthivi, and not just in name.[250] O supreme among the Kuru lineage! This extraordinary fact came to be known throughout the world. Indra of the gods got to know this was because of the boon granted by the great-souled ones.[251] The slayer of Bala and Vritra was frightened[252] and, listening to the counsel of Brihaspati, sought a weakness in the child. He instructed his divine weapon vajra, which appeared in a personified form. 'O lord! Become a tiger. Go and slay the prince. O vajra! Parvata gave Srinjaya his son and if he grows up, he may surpass me in valour.' Having been thus addressed by Shakra, the vajra, the vanquisher of enemy cities, was always near the child, looking for a weakness. Having obtained a son who was the equal of the king of the gods in radiance, Srinjaya was delighted. The king, and all the women belonging to his inner quarters, began to reside in the forest. One day, on the banks of the Bhagirathi, the child was running around near that mountainous stream.[253] His nurse was the only other person with him. Though the child was only five years old, he was like a king of elephants in his valour. The immensely strong one suddenly ran into the tiger. The king's son trembled as he was crushed. He lost his life and fell down on the ground. The nurse screamed. As soon as the prince had been killed, through the maya of the king of the gods, the tiger instantly disappeared.

'"Hearing the screams and weeping of the extremely distressed nurse, the king himself rushed to the spot. He saw the child lying down dead, covered in blood, and was distressed. It was as if the moon had been dislodged. He raised the mangled torso of his son, covered in blood, on his lap and wept in great grief. His mothers[254] also rushed to the spot where King Srinjaya was. Afflicted by grief, they also wept. At that time, with an attentive mind, the king remembered me.[255] Knowing that he had thought of me, I went and showed myself to him. He was stricken with grief. O lord of the earth! Therefore, I made him hear the words that the brave one from the Yadu lineage has told you about.[256] With Vasava's permission, he was revived by me. It was destiny and it could not have been otherwise. After this, the child, the immensely famous Svarnashthivi, arose. The valiant one delighted the hearts of his father and his mother. When his father went to heaven, the lord ruled the kingdom for one thousand and one hundred years. He was terrible in his valour. He performed many great sacrifices at which large quantities of donations were given. The immensely radiant one satisfied the gods and the ancestors. He generated many sons who were the extenders of the lineage. O king! After a long period, he succumbed to the dharma of time.[257] O Indra among kings! Just as Keshava and the immensely ascetic Vyasa have told you, you must stem this sorrow that has been generated in you. Bear the burden of the kingdom that belonged to your father and grandfather. Perform great and auspicious sacrifices and obtain the worlds that are desired."'

Chapter 1360(32)

Vaishampayana said, ‘King Yudhishthira was still silent and immersed in grief. The ascetic Krishna Dvaipayana, who knew about the true nature of dharma, spoke to him. “O one with eyes like a blue lotus! The dharma of kings is to protect subjects. Dharma is the standard used to measure people. One must always follow dharma. O king! Follow in the footsteps of your father and grandfather. The eternal dharma of brahmanas has been determined in the Vedas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! That has been the eternal measuring rod, and the dharma of kshatriyas is to protect all this and any man who acts against this must be punished with the use of arms, since this is against the path indicated for the worlds.[258] In one’s confusion, one should not take the measuring rod to be something that is not the measuring rod. Whether it is a servant, a son or an ascetic—all those who act in a wicked way must be punished, even killed. If a king does not act in this way, he will commit a sin, since one who does not prevent dharma from being destroyed is guilty of slaying dharma. They[259] were the slayers of dharma and you have killed them and their followers. O Pandava! You were stationed in your own dharma. Why are you sorrowing? According to dharma, the king must kill such people, donate and protect the subjects.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O one rich in austerities! I do not doubt your words. O one who is supreme among all those who uphold dharma! Dharma is always in front of you. For the sake of the kingdom, I have slain many who should not have been killed. O brahmana! Those deeds are burning and tormenting me.”

‘Vyasa replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The doer may be the Lord, or it may be man. Or, as the learned texts say, the fruits in this world may be the consequence of past deeds. O king! If man performs good and evil deeds because he has been so appointed by the Lord, then the fruits also accrue to the Lord. If a man uses an axe to cut down a tree in the forest, the cause can never be the axe, nor does sin accrue to it. The implement cannot take over the fruits of that action. There is no sin if a man uses a weapon to inflict punishment. O Kounteya! One cannot reap the fruits of something that has been done by others.[260] Therefore, vest it on the Lord. Or perhaps it is the case that a man is the doer of both good and bad deeds. In that case, there is nothing like the hereafter. In that case, perform a good deed.[261] O king! There is no one who can act against destiny. There is no sin if a man uses a weapon to inflict punishment. O king! If you think that the world is established on past deeds, then there cannot have been an inauspicious deed, nor will there be. In this world, if it is necessary to assign good and bad deeds, then the king's upraised rod of punishment is the determining factor in this world.[262] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is my view that in this world, people are whirled around, performing good and bad deeds and reaping the fruits. This is the truth and I am instructing you to perform good deeds because the fruits from deeds are certain. O tiger among kings! Therefore, abandon this fruitless sorrow in your heart. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Resort to your own dharma, even if that brings censure. O king! This abandoning of your soul is not proper. O Kounteya! There are rites of atonement that have been laid down.[263] One must perform them while one has this body. Without the body, one will not succeed.[264] O king! Therefore, while you are still alive, perform those rites of atonement. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you do not perform rites of atonement, you will be tormented after death."'

Chapter 1361(33)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Because of my greed for the kingdom, sons, grandsons, brothers, fathers, fathers-in-law, preceptors, maternal uncles, grandfathers, great-souled kshatriyas, kin, well-wishers, friends, relatives and many kings who had assembled from many countries have been slain. O grandfather! They have been killed by me alone. O one rich in austerities! Those lords of the earth were always established in dharma. They performed good deeds and drank soma. Having caused such people to be killed, what will I obtain? Thinking repeatedly about this, I am incessantly being burnt. Those kings were prosperous and like lions. The earth is without them now. O grandfather! On seeing this terrible slaughter of relatives, the slaying of hundreds of the enemy and other men in crores, I am being tormented. What will be the plight of those beautiful women? They have been deprived of their sons, husbands and brothers. They are wan and distressed and are falling down on the surface of the ground. They are censuring us, the Pandavas and the Vrishnis, as the perpetrators of terrible deeds. On seeing their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons, all those women are ready to give up their beloved lives and go to Yama’s eternal abode. O best among brahmanas! They are driven by affection. I have no doubt about this. It is evident that because of the subtlety of dharma, we will become the slayers of women. We committed an eternal sin by killing our well-wishers. We will be cast into hell, with our heads hanging downwards. O supreme one! We will perform terrible austerities and free ourselves of our bodies. O grandfather! In particular, tell me about the state of life I should resort to now.”’

Chapter 1362(34)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Yudhishthira’s words, the intelligent and accomplished rishi, Dvaipayana, thought for some time and then spoke to Pandava. “O king! Remember the dharma of kshatriyas and do not sorrow pointlessly. O bull among the kshatriya lineage! While following their own dharma, those kshatriyas were slain. They desired complete prosperity and great fame on earth. They followed the rules of death and, following time, were killed. They were not killed by you, Bhima, Arjuna, or the twins. Following the dharma of time, those living beings gave up their lives. Time has no mother or father, nor is it partial towards anyone. It is a witness to the deeds committed by people. O bull among men! This[265] is an instrument of time. In its form as lord, it uses beings to slay other beings. Know that time is the essence of deeds and is witness to the good and the bad. Time leads to happiness and unhappiness. Time is the one that yields the fruits. O mighty-armed one! Think of the deeds they[266] performed. Those led to their destruction and they have come under the subjugation of time. Know your own self and the rules and vows that you observe, and also that these deeds have been ordained by fate. An implement constructed by an artisan is under the control of the one who handles it. In that way, the universe is driven by deeds that are controlled by time. On seeing that the birth and destruction of men have no evident cause, sorrow and delight are both pointless. O king! However, your heart has been ensnared by that which is unreal. Because of that, perform deeds of atonement. O Partha! It has been heard that, in ancient times, the gods and the asuras fought with each other. The asuras were elder brothers and the gods were younger.[267] Because of rivalry over prosperity, they fought a great battle that lasted for thirty-two thousand years. The earth became a large ocean of blood. At that time, the gods killed the daityas and obtained possession of heaven. The brahmanas, knowledgeable about the Vedas, obtained the earth.

However, because they were confounded by insolence, they began to help the danavas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They were known in the three worlds as shalavrikas.[268] There were eighty-eight thousand of them and they were killed by the gods. Those who destroy dharma, and those who seek the spread of adharma, should be killed, just as the evil-souled daityas were killed by the gods. If by killing a single person the rest of the lineage becomes virtuous and healthy, or if by killing a family the kingdom is saved, then that must be done. O lord of men! Sometimes, dharma has the appearance of adharma. Learned people should know that dharma may assume the form of adharma. O Pandava! Therefore, control yourself. You are learned. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have followed a path that has been travelled by the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! People like these do not go to hell. O scorcher of enemies! Assure your brothers and well-wishers. A person who begins wicked acts and does not think about it, and, despite continuing to act in this way, does not feel any shame, then it has been said that all the sins accrue to him. There is no atonement for him. Nor are his wicked deeds ever diminished. You have been born in a pure lineage. Your deeds have been caused by someone else’s crimes. You performed those tasks unwillingly. Having performed them, you are repenting. As atonement, a great horse sacrifice is indicated. O great king! Perform that and you will be cleansed of your sin. Having defeated his enemies with the help of the Maruts, Maghavan, the chastiser of Paka, performed one hundred sacrifices one by one and came to be known as Shatakratu.[269] He purified himself and won heaven. He obtained worlds that yield happiness. Surrounded by large numbers of the Maruts, Shakra was radiant and illuminated the directions. Shachi’s consort is glorified in heaven by the apsaras. The lord of the gods is worshipped by the rishis and the gods. You have conquered this earth through your valour. O unblemished one! The kings have been defeated through your valour. O king! Surrounded by your well-wishers, go to their cities and kingdoms[270] and instate their brothers, sons and grandsons in their respective kingdoms. Assure the children who are still in the wombs. Delight all the citizens and rule the earth. Where there is no male child, instate a maiden. As a class, women are addicted to desire and will laugh away their sorrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, assure all the kingdoms. Perform a horse sacrifice, just as the victorious Indra did in ancient times. O bull among the kshatriyas! You should not sorrow about those great-souled kshatriyas. Their destruction has been brought on by their own deeds and they have been confounded by the power of death. You have practised the dharma of kshatriyas and have obtained a kingdom that is free from taint. O Kounteya! Follow dharma and after death, you will obtain the best.”’

Chapter 1363(35)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “After what action does a man need to perform rites of atonement? O grandfather! What must be done to free oneself? Tell me that.”

‘Vyasa replied, “Having not done deeds that must be performed, having done what is forbidden and having acted in a false way, a man must perform rites of atonement. O Kounteya! A brahmachari who is asleep when the sun rises, one who goes to sleep before the sun sets, one with malformed nails, one with discoloured teeth, one whose younger brother gets married first, one who marries before his elder brother, one who maligns the brahman, one who is guilty of slander, one who is the husband of a *didhishu*, one whose first wife is a didhishu,[271] one who has violated his vow of chastity, one who kills a brahmana, one who teaches the brahman to an undeserving person, one who does not teach the brahman to a deserving person, one who performs a sacrifice for ordinary people, one who sells the king,[272] one who slays a shudra or a woman, one whose ancestors were contemptible, one who slays an animal without a good reason,[273] one who sets fire to a forest, one who subsists through deceit, one who goes against his preceptor, one who abandons the sacred fire, one who sells the brahman[274] and one who violates an agreement—all of these are sinners.[275] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen attentively as I tell you about deeds that must not be done. Abandoning one’s own dharma, following the dharma of another, officiating at the sacrifice of someone who is not entitled to sacrifice, eating something that should not be eaten, abandoning those who have sought refuge, not supporting servants, selling liquor,[276] the killing of inferior species,[277] not performing tasks that one is capable of undertaking, not giving the gifts that must be given every day, not giving dakshina to brahmanas and humiliating them—those who know about dharma say that these are deeds that must not be done. A son who quarrels with his father, one who has intercourse with his preceptor’s wife and one who does not procreate according to dharma—these are people who follow adharma. These are deeds that should not be done and men must perform atonement for them. However, even when men perform these deeds, there are some situations when they are not tainted. If a brahmana who knows about the Vedas picks up a weapon and attacks you in a battle, wishing to kill you, then you are allowed to kill him. O Kounteya! On this, there is a mantra in the Vedas. This is dharma, as proved by the Vedas, and I am telling you this. 'If a brahmana has deviated from his conduct and attacks like an assassin, killing him does not amount to the sin of killing a brahmana. This is said to be rage countering rage.' If a person drinks liquor in ignorance, or because he has been instructed that this will save his life,[278] he should thereafter be brought back to dharma through purification. O Kounteya! I have also told you everything about what should be eaten and what should not be eaten. For all this, purification through rites of atonement is prescribed.

'"A man incurs no sin if intercourse with the preceptor's wife is for the sake of the preceptor. Through a disciple, Uddalaka had Shvetaketu as a son.[279] If one steals for the sake of imparting prosperity to one's preceptor, one is not bound down. That happens if one steals a lot because of desire, or if it is for one's own sake. If one takes from those who are not brahmanas, there is no sin and one is not touched by the crime, as long as it is not for one's own self. Lying is allowed provided it is for the sake of saving one's own life or that of someone else, for the sake of one's preceptor, when it is among women and in connection with a marriage. A vow is not broken if semen is released through a wet dream. Offering oblations into a blazing fire are prescribed as atonement. If the elder brother has become an outcast or has renounced the world, there is no sin from marrying before him. When someone else's wife solicits you, there is no taint or adharma from indulging her. One should never kill an animal without good reason or cause such an act to be done. Animals deserve kindness and a violation requires due purification. If one gives to an undeserving brahmana in ignorance, there is no sin, nor if one gives to an undeserving person or does not give to a deserving person, provided there is a reason for this. There is no crime in casting off a wife who is of bad conduct.[280] If such a woman is purified, the husband is not to be blamed. There is no crime in selling soma if one knows the truth about it.[281] If an incompetent servant is discarded, there is no crime. There is no crime if a forest is burnt for the sake of cattle.[282] I have told you about deeds that do not lead to sin when they are done. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you in detail about rites of atonement.”’

Chapter 1364(36)[283]

‘Vyasa said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through austerities, deeds and donations, a man is purified, as long as he does not commit wicked deeds again. A person who has killed a brahmana can free himself of the crime of killing a brahmana by eating once a day, roaming around for alms, performing all his tasks himself, holding a skull in one hand and a bedpost in the other,[284] following brahmacharya, by always being enterprising, showing no malice, sleeping on the bare ground and disclosing his deed to the worlds. He has to do this for a full twelve years. If he lives on a diet of hardship, a man who kills a brahmana can be purified in six years.[285] If he eats from one month to another, he is freed in three years. If he eats only once a month, there is no doubt that he is freed in one year. O king! If one does not eat at all, one is freed very soon. There is no doubt that one is purified through a horse sacrifice. In this way, there are men who have bathed after a horse sacrifice. There are supreme learned texts which say that all their souls have been cleansed. If one is killed in a battle for the sake of a brahmana, one is freed from the sin of killing a brahmana. If the slayer of a brahmana gives one hundred thousand cows to deserving recipients, he is freed from all sin. If one gives away twenty-five thousand milk-yielding brown cows, one is freed from all sin. At the time of death, if one gives one thousand milk-yielding cows with calves to virtuous and poor people, one is freed from sin. O protector of the earth! If one gives away one hundred horses from Kamboja to self-restrained brahmanas, one is freed from sin. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If someone gives something that another person wishes for and does not brag about his generosity, he is freed from sin.

‘“When a brahmana has drunk liquor, if he drinks that liquor when it is as hot as fire, he purifies himself in this world and the next. Or he can fling himself down from Mount Meru, or enter a fire, or embark on the great journey.[286] He will then be freed from all sin. However, a brahmana who has drunk liquor can again be admitted into an assembly of brahmanas, provided he follows the injunctions of Brihaspati laid down in texts concerning brahmanas. O king! If a man who has drunk liquor casts off envy and gives away land, without indulging in that act again, he is cleansed and purified.

'"If one has had intercourse with a preceptor's wife, one should lie down on a heated slab of stone. Alternatively, one should cast one's eyes upwards and roam around, holding one's penis in one's hand.

'"By giving up the body, one is freed from all wicked deeds. If women endeavour to be restrained for a year, they are freed from such deeds. If one observes a great vow, gives away everything that he owns, or is slain in a battle for the sake of a preceptor, one is freed from all wicked deeds. If one acts falsely towards a preceptor or opposes him, one is freed from that crime by giving him something agreeable.[287] If one has deviated from a vow of chastity, one should follow the atonement vows prescribed for a killer of a brahmana. Alternatively, one can wear the hide of a donkey for six months. One will then be freed from that crime. A person who has abducted another person's wife or stolen another person's possessions must observe a vow for one year to be freed from that sin. If a person has stolen the property of another, he must use every means possible to return riches that are of an equal measure. He will then be freed from that sin. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A younger brother who has married before the elder brother, or an elder brother whose younger brother has married before him, are both naturally freed by eating the hardship diet for twelve nights, or at least for ten. But, to save the ancestors, he[288] must get married. The wife[289] is not tainted by this and no blemish attaches to her. Those who know about dharma say that, after giving birth and after a period, women are cleansed and purified through a *chaturmasya* vow. When there is suspicion about a woman's wicked conduct, it is known that there should be no sexual intercourse with her. However, she is purified through her menstrual flow, like a vessel with ashes.

'"The four parts of dharma are decreed for brahmanas. For kings, it has been ordained that dharma will be reduced by one quarter. The vaishya's will be a quarter less than that and the shudra's a quarter less than that too. In this way, one determines the seriousness or lightness of the crime and the atonement.

'"If a person kills a bird or an animal, or cuts down a large number of trees, that man should only subsist on air for three nights and proclaim his crime. O king! If a person has intercourse with someone he should not have intercourse with, the atonement has been laid down. For six months, he should sleep in wet clothes and lie down on ashes. These are the decrees laid down in the brahmana texts,[290] explaining all the deeds, the forms of atonement and the detailed reasons. If one recites the *savitri* mantra[291] in a secluded place, while eating little, abjuring violence and hate and speaking little, one is freed from all sin. During the day, one must be under the open sky and during the night, one must also sleep there. Thrice during the day and thrice during the night, one must immerse oneself in the water, wearing one's garments. A brahmana who is observing this vow must not speak to women, shudras and those who have become outcasts because of deviation in their conduct. He will then be freed from any sins that he may have committed in ignorance.

'"The witness to a being[292] obtains good and bad fruits after death. Depending on which of the two[293] is more, the doer reaps the consequences. Donations, austerities and deeds lead to auspicious fruits. In that way, they increase and become greater than wicked deeds. If wicked deeds have been performed, that is a reason to perform auspicious ones. By constantly giving away riches, one is freed from sin. The rites of atonement are in proportion to the wicked deed. However, no atonement is recommended for a *mahapataka*.[294] O king! Eating what should not be eaten and speaking what should not be spoken—for these, atonement depends on whether these are done knowingly or unknowingly. Crimes that are knowingly committed are said to be grievous. Those that are unknowingly committed are light and there is atonement for both. The methods and rites described are capable of cleansing the sin. But those recommendations are for the believers and the faithful. Those rites are never seen to be for men who are non-believers, and unfaithful and those who are prone to insolence and wickedness. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Good conduct is the dharma of the virtuous. O tiger among men! For the sake of happiness after death, they must serve this. O king! Because of the motives behind your earlier crimes, you will be freed. You wished to save by killing them. Alternatively, you were following the duty of kings. However, if you abhor what you did, follow the path of atonement. Like those who are not aryas, you will then not confront destruction because of your deeds."'

Chapter 1365(37)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed by the illustrious one, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira thought for some time. He then asked that store of austerities, “What should be eaten and what should not be eaten? What is said to be a praiseworthy gift? Who is a deserving person and who is an undeserving one? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Vyasa replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation that took place between the Siddhas and Prajapati Manu. The Siddhas were engaged in supreme austerities and vows. In ancient times, they approached the brave lord and Prajapati while he was seated, and asked him about dharma. ‘What food should be eaten? What gifts should be given? How should we study? What austerities will we observe? What should be done and what should not be done? O Prajapati! Tell us everything about this.’ Having been thus addressed, the illustrious Svayambhuva Manu spoke.

‘“‘Listen to me as I expound the true nature of dharma, briefly and in detail.[295] The signs of dharma are: not taking what has not been given, donations, studying, austerities, non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger and forgiveness. However, if practised in the wrong place and at the wrong time, dharma may become adharma. It has been said that in some situations, not giving, lying and violence are dharma. Those who are learned know that there are two aspects to both dharma and adharma. People who are learned know that there can be both action and withdrawal from action. Inaction leads to immortality and the fruits of action are mortality.[296] One knows that evil acts lead to evil and good acts to the good. This determines whether acts are good or bad, whether they lead to heaven, whether they lead to one’s union with heaven, whether they lead to life, or whether they lead to death. However, even if one did not think about it before committing the act, there may be good consequences from an evil act. On considering the consequences, they may have led to uplifting life on earth. But if an act is undertaken without thinking about it, atonement is recommended. If acts are undertaken in anger or out of delusion, without considering the consequences or the reasons, if they lead to torment of the body, or cause pleasant and unpleasant sensations in the mind, then they must be pacified through atonement, like using herbs and mantras. One must also entirely ignore dharma that concerns *jati*, [297] *shreni*, [298] *adhivasa* [299] and family. These are not dharma, because there is no real dharma in them. [300] There may be doubts about what constitutes dharma. In such cases, whatever ten people who know about the sacred Vedas, or three people who read about dharma, describe as acts that should be done, constitute dharma.

'"'Red earth, red ants, the *shleshmataka*[301] and poison must not be consumed by brahmanas. Brahmanas must also not eat fish that are without scales, frogs and four-footed aquatic animals, with the exception of turtles. Vultures, swans, eagles, *chakravaka*s,[302] herons, ducks, curlews, diver-birds, vultures,[303] crows, owls, all predatory birds, all quadrupeds with horns and all quadrupeds that have two teeth or four teeth must not be eaten by brahmanas. Nor must they drink the milk of sheep, mares, she-donkeys, she-camels, cows that have just calved, women and deer. Food offered to a dead man, food cooked by a woman who has just given birth within the last ten days and food cooked by someone unknown must not be eaten. Until ten days have passed, the milk of a cow that has just given birth must not be drunk. One must not eat food given by a carpenter, a person who strips off animal skins, a whore, a washerman, a physician and a guard. Nor should one eat food given by a person who has been thrown out of the village assembly, one who earns a living through dancing girls, a man whose younger brother has married before him, a eunuch, a professional bard and a skilled gambler. One must avoid food given to a prisoner, putrid and stale food, that which has been laced with alcohol, that which has been partly eaten by others and leftover food. Cakes stuffed with meat, sugar cane and vegetables, rice cooked with milk and sugar[304] when it has gone bad, coarsely ground meal, grain and food that has been kept for a long time should not be eaten. Rice cooked with milk and sugar, dishes made of sesamum and grain[305] and meat and cakes that have been prepared unnecessarily[306] should not be eaten. They should not be eaten by brahmanas who are in the householder stage. A householder must eat after worshipping the gods, the ancestors, men, sages and other household gods. A brahmana who dwells in his own household is like a mendicant who is wandering around. If he conducts himself in this way, with his beloved wife, he will obtain the benefits of dharma.

'"'One must not donate for the sake of praise. Or give out of fear, or as a mark of favour to the recipient. One who follows dharma does not give to a person who earns a living through singing and dancing, a jester, a person who is intoxicated or mad, a thief, a physician, one who cannot speak, one who has a pale complexion, one who doesn't have a limb, a dwarf, a wicked person, one born in an inferior lineage and one who has not followed the sacraments. Giving to a brahmana who does not know about the Vedas, or does not know about the brahman, is a dead gift. An inappropriate gift and an inappropriate recipient bring bad consequences to both the giver and the recipient. A man who tries to cross the ocean with the support of a branch of a *khadira* tree[307] or a stone sinks. The giver and the recipient sink in that way. When wood is wet, it does not blaze. An inferior recipient, without austerities, studies and character, is like that. Water in a skull and milk in the bladder of a dog become unclean because of the receptacle. To a man without good conduct, learning is like that. One without mantras, one without vows and one without knowledge of the sacred texts, may be without malice and distressed. One may give to him out of compassion. But even out of compassion, one should give to a distressed person who causes injury. There are brahmanas who have deviated from dharma. One should not give to them, thinking that this is dharma, or that their behaviour is good. This is fruitless. The receptacle is tainted and there is no need to reflect on this. A brahmana who has not studied, an elephant made out wood and a deer made out of skin are similar. All three have nothing but their names. A eunuch has no fruit with a woman. A cow has no fruit with another cow. A brahmana without mantras is like that and is like a bird without wings. Giving to him is futile, since he is like a village that has no granary, like a well that has no water and like oblations made where there is no fire. He destroys offerings and oblations made to the gods and the ancestors. He is like a stupid enemy who robs one of one's riches. He does not deserve to obtain any worlds.'

‘“O Yudhishthira![308] This is the exact truth and it has been recounted to you, as it was said. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is a great and extensive discourse and deserves to be heard.”’

Chapter 1366(38)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O illustrious one! O great sage! O best among brahmanas! I wish to hear in detail about the dharma of kings and everything about that for the four varnas. What is the policy decreed for a king in times of distress? While resorting to the path of dharma, how can one conquer the earth? This discourse about atonement and about what should be eaten and what should not be eaten has satisfied my curiosity and has engendered great delight in me. Following dharma and ruling the kingdom are always opposed to each other. That is the reason I am confused and am thinking about it all the time.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The immensely energetic Vyasa, supreme among eloquent ones, who knew everything that was ancient, glanced towards Narada and spoke to him.[309] “O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! If you wish to hear everything about dharma, go to Bhishma, the aged grandfather of the Kurus. He will dispel all the doubts that you have about the secrets. He is Bhagirathi’s[310] son and knows everything, everything about all forms of dharma. The river which has three flows, the celestial goddess, gave birth to him. He has seen all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, in person. O king! The lord has honoured the devarshis, with Brihaspati at the forefront, and having satisfied them, has studied policy.[311] Ushanas,[312] the brahmana who was the preceptor of the gods and the asuras, knew the sacred texts. All those, with their commentaries, were obtained by that supreme one among the Kuru lineage. In addition, the immensely intelligent one received the large corpus of the Vedangas from Bhargava Chyavana and Vasishtha, who was careful in his vows. In ancient times, he studied the truth about transcendental paths from Kumara, the eldest son of the grandfather, who blazed in his energy.[313] He obtained everything about the dharma followed by ascetics from the mouth of Markandeya himself. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He obtained weapons from Rama[314] and Shakra. Though he has been born as a man, the time of his death depends on his own wishes. Though the virtuous one has no offspring, it has been heard that he will obtain the sacred worlds in heaven. The sacred brahmarshis are always his courtiers. There is no knowledge that deserves to be known that is unknown to him. He is learned about dharma and the true subtleties of dharma and artha. He will tell you. Before the one who knows about dharma gives up his life, go to him." The immensely radiant one, Vyasa, far-sighted in his wisdom, spoke these words.

'Kounteya spoke these words to Satyavati's son, supreme among eloquent ones. "I have created a great carnage among kin and it makes the body hair stand up. I have caused injury to everyone and I am the cause behind the destruction of the earth. He fought fairly and I brought him down through deceit. Therefore, what grounds do I have to question him?" Desiring the welfare of the four varnas, the mighty-armed and immensely radiant one, foremost among the Yadu lineage,[315] again spoke to the best of kings. "It is not appropriate that you should be tied down so much through grief now. O supreme among kings! Act in accordance with what the illustrious Vyasa has said. O mighty-armed one! These brahmanas and your immensely energetic brothers are waiting before you, like those afflicted by the summer season wait for the rains. O great king! All the kings who remain and the four varnas from your kingdom of Kurujangala have assembled here. O scorcher of enemies! O slayer of enemies! For the sake of bringing pleasure to the great-souled brahmanas, instructed by the infinitely energetic Vyasa, your senior, for the sake of the distressed well-wishers, us and Droupadi, do what brings us pleasure. Do what ensures the welfare of the worlds." Having been thus addressed by Krishna, the king, with eyes like blue lotuses, arose for the sake of the welfare of the immensely ascetic ones in the world. The tiger among men had been requested by Vishtarashrava[316] himself, Dvaipayana, Devasthana[317] and Jishnu. There were many others who had also entreated him. The great-minded Yudhishthira abandoned the distress in his mind and the torment. He was accomplished in learning and knowing what should be learnt. He was learned in his words and a store of learning. The descendant of the Pandu lineage obtained peace in his mind.

'The king was surrounded by them, like the moon by the nakshatras. With Dhritarashtra at the forefront, he proceeded to enter his own city. Having decided this, the one who knew about dharma, Kunti's son Yudhishthira, worshipped the gods and thousands of brahmanas. He ascended a new and sparkling chariot that was covered with blankets and hides. It was yoked to sixteen white bullocks that were marked with auspicious signs. The maharshis praised and honoured him with sacred mantras. It was as if the moon god had ascended his immortal chariot. Kounteya Bhima, terrible in his valour, grasped the reins. Arjuna held aloft a radiant and white umbrella. As that white umbrella was held aloft his head, it looked like a white cloud in the sky and was as resplendent as the king of the stars.[318] Madri's brave sons grasped two whisks to fan him with and these were white, like the rays of the moon. Ornamented, the five brothers ascended the chariot. O king! They looked as if the five elements had gathered together. O king! Yuyutsu followed the eldest of the Pandavas at the rear. He was on a white chariot, yoked to extremely swift horses. With Satyaki, Krishna followed the Kurus. He was on a golden and sparkling chariot, to which, Sainya and Sugriva were yoked.[319] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Gandhari, Partha's eldest father[320] advanced ahead of Dharmaraja, on a palanquin borne by men. With Vidura at the forefront, all the Kuru women, with Kunti and Krishna Droupadi advanced on various vehicles, superior and inferior. There were many chariots, ornamented elephants, foot soldiers and those on horses who followed them at the rear. As the king advanced towards the city of Nagasahvya,[321] he was praised with sweet chants by bards, minstrels and raconteurs. The advance of that mighty-armed one was unmatched on earth. There were delighted and healthy people, who created a tumult of rejoicing. As Partha advanced, the men, the residents of the city, decorated the city and the royal road appropriately. There were white garlands, flags and banners. The royal road was made fragrant with incense. The king's palace was full of fragrant powders, scents, many flowers, *priyangu* creepers and garlands. New and firm pots filled with water were placed at the gates of the city. Here and there, there were beautiful maidens and goats. In this way, with his well-wishers, the descendant of the Pandu lineage entered the city through the decorated gate. He was praised through auspicious words.'

Chapter 1367(39)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When the Parthas entered, the people, the residents of the city, wished to see them and assembled in many thousands. The royal road and the squares were decorated and beautiful. O king! It was like the giant ocean swelling when the moon rises. The large houses along the royal road were bejewelled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Full of women, they seemed to tremble at the weight. Because they were bashful, they softly praised Yudhishthira, Bhimasena, Arjuna and the two Pandavas who were Madri’s sons. “O Panchali! You are blessed and fortunate, since you serve those best among men, like Goutami tending to the maharshis.[322] O beautiful one! You have followed your vows and your deeds have not been fruitless.” O great king! At that time, the women praised Krishna[323] thus. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Because of the delighted sounds of these words of praise, the city resounded. Having been thus addressed, Yudhishthira passed through the royal road and arrived at the ornamented and radiant royal palace. All the ordinary people, the residents of the city and of the countryside, came there from different sides and spoke words that were pleasant to the ear. “O Indra among kings! O destroyer of enemies! It is through good fortune that you have defeated the enemy. It is through good fortune that you have regained the kingdom, through dharma and strength. O great king! May you rule over the kingdom for one hundred autumns. O king! Protect the subjects through dharma, as Indra does over the thirty gods.” At the gates of the royal residence, he was worshipped in this auspicious way. In every direction, he received benedictions from the affectionate brahmanas. The king entered the palace, which was like the residence of the king of the gods. Hearing those victorious sounds, he descended from his chariot.

‘Entering inside, he approached the prosperous gods[324] and worshipped all of them with jewels and fragrant garlands. The prosperous and immensely illustrious one again emerged. He saw the handsome brahmanas who presented themselves. He was surrounded by those brahmanas, who wished to pronounce benedictions over him. He was as resplendent as the sparkling moon, surrounded by a large number of stars. In the prescribed fashion, Kounteya honoured the brahmanas. O Indra among kings! With the preceptor Dhoumya[325] and his eldest father[326] at the forefront, he cheerfully worshipped them with sweets, jewels, large quantities of gold, cattle, garments and many other objects that they desired. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Auspicious sounds arose and reached up to the sky. These auspicious sounds were pleasant to hear and generated delight among the well-wishers. O king! The brahmanas were learned in the Vedas and their chants resounded like the noise made by swans. It was as if Bharati could be heard there, with meanings, lines and syllables.[327] There was the roar of drums and the beautiful sound of conch shells. O king! Those sounds were heard and proclaimed the news of victory.

‘When the brahmanas there became quiet again, the rakshasa Charvaka, disguising himself as a brahmana, spoke to the king.[328] He was a friend of Duryodhana’s and was in the form of a mendicant. He was a *samkhya*.[329] He had a tuft of hair on his head. He held triple staff in his hand.[330] He was proud and without any fear. He was surrounded by all those brahmanas, who wished to pronounce their benedictions. O Indra among kings! There were thousands of others who had immersed themselves in austerities and rituals. Without taking their permission, the evil and wicked one censured the great-souled Pandavas and spoke to the king. “All these brahmanas have asked me to speak on their behalf. O wicked king! Shame on you. You have slain your kin. O Kounteya! Having caused the destruction of kin, what will you gain from the kingdom? Having slain your elders, it is better to be dead than to be alive.” On hearing the terrible words of the rakshasa, the brahmanas were distressed. Afflicted by those words, they roared. O lord of the earth! Together with King Yudhishthira, all the brahmanas were ashamed and greatly anxious and then fell silent. Yudhishthira replied, “I am bowing down before you. Show me your favours. You should not reprimand me. I have just recovered from a catastrophe.” O king! O lord of the earth! All the brahmanas shouted, “O king! These are not our words. May you be prosperous.” Those brahmanas were learned in the Vedas and had cleansed themselves through austerities. Through the sight of their wisdom, they recognized him.[331] The brahmanas said, “This is Duryodhana’s friend and a rakshasa named Charvaka. In the form of a mendicant, he is trying to ensure his welfare.[332] O one with dharma in your soul! We have not spoken in that way. Do not have any fear on that account. Let good fortune wait on you and your brothers.” Senseless with anger, all the brahmanas shouted.[333] They were pure and by censuring the wicked rakshasa, killed him. He was burnt and brought down by the energy of the ones who knew about the brahman. It was like the shoots of a tree charred by the great Indra’s vajra. Having been honoured, the brahmanas congratulated the king and departed. With his well-wishers, the Pandava king was delighted.

‘Vasudeva said, “O father![334] In this world, brahmanas have always been revered by me. They are like gods roaming around on earth. They have poison in their speech, but are also easy to please. O father! In ancient times, in krita yuga, there was a rakshasa named Charvaka. O mighty-armed one! For many years, he tormented himself through austerities in Badari.[335] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Brahma repeatedly offered him boons and he opted for the boon that he should have nothing to fear from all beings. The lord of the universe granted him the supreme boon of fearlessness from all beings, as long as he did not disrespect brahmanas. Having obtained the boon, the rakshasa, immensely strong, terrible in his deeds and infinitely valorous, began to oppress the gods. The gods united and told Brahma, ‘His strength is unnatural. Ensure the rakshasa’s death.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He told the gods, ‘I have already thought of a means, so that he confronts his death soon. O king![336] He will be a friend to a king named Duryodhana. Because he will be bound down by affection towards him,[337] he will insult brahmanas. The brahmanas will be incensed at the injury he causes brahmanas. Through the strength of their speech, they will destroy the wicked one and he will perish.’ The rakshasa has been killed by the curse of brahmanas and is lying down. O best among kings! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Do not sorrow over Charvaka. O king! Know that all of them have been slain because of the dharma of kshatriyas. Those bulls among kshatriyas were brave and great-souled and have gone to heaven. O one without decay! You must now do what is good. You should not show weakness. Kill the enemy. Protect the subjects. Sustain the brahmanas.”’

Chapter 1368(40)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king who was Kunti’s son was freed from his fever. Cheerfully, he sat down on a supreme and golden seat, facing the east. Satyaki and Vasudeva, the scorchers of enemies, were seated on a seat facing him and it was strewn with expensive coverings. With the king between them, the great-souled Bhima and Arjuna were seated on soft seats decorated with gems. Pritha, with Nakula and Sahadeva, was seated on a sparkling seat that was made out of ivory and decorated with gold. Sudharma,[338] Vidura, Dhoumya and Kourava Dhritarashtra were seated on separate seats and seemed to blaze. Yuyutsu, Sanjaya and the illustrious Gandhari sat down where King Dhritarashtra was seated.

‘Seated there, with dharma in his soul, the king[339] cheerfully touched the white flowers, the *svastika* signs, the unhusked grain, the ground, gold, silver and jewels. With the priest at the forefront,[340] all the ordinary people came to see Dharmaraja. They brought many auspicious objects with them—earth, gold, many kinds of gems and all the other vessels and equipment required for the consecration. There were full pots that were made out of clay, gold, copper and silver. They were filled with water, parched grain, sacrificial grass and milk. There was kindling of shami, *palasha* and *pumnaga*.[341] There was honey and clarified butter. There were ladles made out of *udumbara*[342] and gold-embellished conch shells. With Dasharha’s[343] permission, the priest Dhoumya marked out an auspicious altar that sloped towards the north and the east. The great-souled one and Krishna, Drupada’s daughter, were made to sit on a soft *sarvatobhadra*[344] seat with sturdy legs, covered with the skins of tigers. It was as radiant as the fire. The intelligent one[345] poured oblations into the fire. Pronouncing mantras, he sprinkled water on Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, instating him as the lord of the earth. So did rajarshi Dhritarashtra and all the ordinary people. Cymbals, small drums and kettledrums were sounded.

Following dharma, Dharmaraja received all this. He then honoured the brahmanas, who pronounced benedictions on him, in the proper way and gave away large quantities of donations and one thousand golden coins. These brahmanas were accomplished in studying the Vedas and of good conduct. They were delighted and wished the king well. Making sounds like those of swans, they praised Yudhishthira. “O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! O Pandava! It is through good fortune that you have been victorious. O immensely radiant one! It is good fortune that you have obtained this through your own dharma and valour. O king! It is through good fortune that the wielder of Gandiva, Pandava Bhimasena, you and the Pandavas who are Madri’s sons are well. You have slain the enemy and have escaped from a battle that has been destructive of heroes. O Pandava! Swiftly do the tasks that must be undertaken next.” Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was thus honoured by those virtuous ones. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With his well-wishers, he received that large kingdom.’

Chapter 1369(41)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard the words of the subjects, appropriate to the time and the place, King Yudhishthira replied to them. “The sons of Pandu are fortunate in this world. The assembled bulls among brahmanas have praised their qualities, whether they possess them or not. It is my view that you have certainly shown us a favour. Without any selfishness, you have spoken about the qualities that we possess. However, the great king, Dhritarashtra, is our father and our supreme god. If you wish to ensure what brings me pleasure, ensure his pleasure and remain under his rule. Having caused a great destruction of the kin, I live for him alone. Constantly and attentively, my duty is to serve him. O well-wishers! If you wish to show your favours towards me, then you should behave towards Dhritarashtra as you used to do earlier. He is the lord of the universe and mine too. The entire earth belongs to him and so do all the Pandavas. In your minds, you should always remember these words I have spoken. Taking the permission of the king, go wherever you wish to.” The residents of the city and the countryside took their leave of the descendant of the Kuru lineage.[346]

‘Kouravya instated Bhimasena as the heir apparent. He cheerfully instructed that the intelligent Vidura should be the adviser for the six kinds of policy.[347] Sanjaya, who possessed many qualities and could think about what had been done and what should be done, was put in charge of finances and wealth. The king instructed Nakula to supervise the size of the army, make sure salaries were being paid and also take care of the workers. Yudhishthira, the great king, instructed that Phalguna should act against the circles of enemies and punish those who were unruly. The scorcher of enemies instructed that Dhoumya, best among priests, should take care of all the rites laid down in the Vedas and duties connected with the brahmanas. O lord of the earth! Sahadeva was instructed to always remain nearby, so as to protect the king. The lord of the earth joyfully appointed each one to a separate task, depending on what was suitable. The destroyer of enemy heroes, always devoted to dharma and with dharma in his soul, told Vidura, Sanjaya and the immensely intelligent Yuyutsu, “Arise! Get up and accomplish every task for the king who is my father.[348] Perform all the appropriate tasks so that everyone is well. Always act for the residents of the city and the countryside. Having taken the king’s[349] permission, follow dharma and perform all those tasks.”’

Chapter 1370(42)

Vaishampayana said, ‘King Yudhishthira, greatly generous, then had the funeral rites separately performed for all the kin who had been slain in the battle.[350] For the funeral rites of his sons, the immensely illustrious King Dhritarashtra gave away all the objects of desire, full of qualities, cattle, riches, many kinds of jewels and other extremely expensive objects. In a similar way, with Droupadi, Yudhishthira donated for Karna, the great-souled Drona, Dhrishtadyumna, Abhimanyu, the rakshasa who was Hidimba’s son,[351] Virata and the other well-wishers who had done good deeds for him, Drupada and Droupadi’s sons. He instructed that thousands of brahmanas should separately be given grain, garments, gems and cattle. There were other kings who had no relatives and the king instructed that their funeral rites should also be performed. To perform the funeral rites of the well-wishers, Pandava had many halls, reservoirs of water and lakes constructed. He repaid his debts and ensured that the worlds would not censure him. Having done this, the king followed dharma and protected the subjects. He honoured Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Vidura, all the Kourava advisers and servants, as he used to do earlier. There were some women whose brave husbands and sons had been slain. Compassionately, the Kourava king honoured and protected all of them. The lord, the king, was full of compassion and non-violence and showed his favours to the distressed, the blind and the miserable with houses, garments and food. Having conquered the entire earth and having repaid his debts to his foes, the king was happy and without any rivals. Yudhishthira enjoyed himself.’

Chapter 1371(43)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having obtained the kingdom, the immensely wise Yudhishthira was consecrated. The pure one[352] joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Dasharha Pundarikaksha. “O Krishna! O tiger among the Yadu lineage! It is through your favours, your strength, your intelligence and your valour that this kingdom of my father and grandfather has again been conveyed to me. O Pundarikaksha! O scorcher of enemies! I repeatedly bow down before you. You have been spoken of as the only man. You are the lord of the Satvatas.[353] I bow down before you. The supreme rishis have praised you under many names[354]—(1) Vishvakarma;[355] (2) Vishvatma;[356] (3) Vishvasambhava;[357] (4) Vishnu; (5) Jishnu; (6) Hari; (7) Krishna; (8) Vaikuntha; (9) Purushottama; (10) Aditya, since in ancient times, you were in her womb for seven nights;[358] (11) Prishnigarbha, one who is spoken of as having been born in different forms in the three yugas;[359] (12) Shuchishrava;[360] (13) Hrishikesha;[361] (14) Ghritarchi[362] is a name you are addressed by; (15) Trichakshu;[363] (16) Shambhu, the single one; (17) Vibhu;[364] (18) Damodara; (19) Varaha;[365] (20) Agni; (21) Brihadbhanu;[366] (22) Vrishana;[367] (23) Tarkshyalakshana;[368] (24) Anikasaha;[369] (25) Purusha; (26) Shipivishta;[370] (27) Urukrama;[371] (28) Vachishtha;[372]

(29) Ugra; (30) Senani; (31) Satya; (32) Vajasanirguha;[373] (33) Achyuta; (34) Yavana-arinam;[374] (35) Samkriti; (36) Vikriti; (37) Vrisha; (38) Kritavartma;[375] (39) Vrishagarbha; (40) Vrishakapi; (41) Sindhukshidurmi;[376] (42) Trikaku;[377] (43) Tridhama;[378] (44) Trivid-achyuta;[379] (45) Samrat;[380] (46) Virat;[381] (47) Svarat;[382] (48) Surarat;[383] (49) Dharmada; (50) Bhava; (51) Bhu;[384] (52) Abhibhu;[385] (53) Krishna; (54) Krishavartma;[386] (55) Svishta;[387] (56) Kridbhishagavarta;[388] (57) Kapila; (58) Vamana; (59) Yajna; (60) Dhruva; (61) Patanga;[389] (62) Jayatsena;[390] (63) Shikhandi;[391] (64) Nahusha; (65)

Babhru;[392] (66) Divaspriktva;[393] (67) Punarvasu;[394] (68) Subabhru;[395] (69) Ruksha;[396] (70) Rukma; (71) Sushena; (72) Dundubhi; (73) Gabhastinemi;[397] (74) Shripadma; (75) Pushkara; (76) Pushpadharana; (77) Ribhu; (78) Vibhu; (79) Sarvasukshma;[398] (80) Savitra; (81) Ambhanidhi;[399] (82) Brahma; (83) Pavitra; (84) Dhama;[400] (85) Dhanva;[401] (86) Hiranyagarbha; (87) Svadha; (88) Svaha; (89) Keshava; (90) Yoni;[402] (91) Pralaya;[403] (92) Krishna; (93) Vishvamagra, the foremost creator of everything in the universe; (94) Vishvajoni, who controls everything in the universe; (95) Sharnga-chakra-asi-pani.[404] I bow down before you." Having been thus praised in the midst of the assembly hall by the eldest Pandava, the eloquent Krishna Pundarikaksha, foremost among the Yadavas, spoke words to delight the descendant of the Bharata lineage.'

Chapter 1372(44)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king dismissed all the subjects and instructed them to return to their own homes. King Yudhishthira then spoke to Bhima, terrible in his valour, the intelligent Arjuna and the twins and pacified them. “In the great battle, your bodies have been mangled by the enemy with many kinds of weapons. You are exhausted and extremely tormented by sorrow and intolerance. O best of men! You have suffered hardships in the forest because of me. You have endured that, like inferior men. Now enjoy this victory in happiness, as you wish. After having rested and recovered your sense, meet me again in the morning.” Duryodhana’s house was as beautiful as a palace. It was strewn with many gems and full of male and female servants. With Dhritarashtra’s permission, it had been given to Vrikodara by his brother.[405] The mighty-armed one received it and entered, like Maghavan. Just like Duryodhana’s house, Duhshasana’s house was also adorned with the garlands of many palaces and was decorated with golden gates. It was stocked with male and female servants and had a lot of riches and grain. On the instructions of the king, the mighty-armed Arjuna received this. Durmarshana’s supreme abode was even better than Duhshasana’s house. It was like Kubera’s residence and was decorated with jewels and gold. Nakula had suffered in the great forest and deserved this. O great king! Dharmaraja Yudhishthira happily gave him this. Durmukha’s foremost residence was prosperous and decorated with gold. It had many beds and was full of women who had eyes that were like the petals of lotuses. Sahadeva always did what brought him pleasure and he[406] gave it to him. Having obtained it, he[407] delighted himself, like the lord of riches[408] on Kailasa. Yuyutsu, Vidura, the immensely radiant Sanjaya, Sudharma and Dhoumya[409]went to their own houses. With Satyaki, Shouri,[410] tiger among men, went to Arjuna’s residence and entered it, like a tiger entering a cave in the mountains. Those places were stocked with food and drink. They spent the night happily there. Having cheerfully awoken in the morning, they presented themselves before King Yudhishthira.’

Chapter 1373(45)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! After having obtained the kingdom, what did the immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishthira do next? You should tell me that. O rishi! What did the illustrious Hrishikesha, the supreme preceptor of the three worlds, do? You should tell me that in detail.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O Indra among kings! Listen. O unblemished one! I will recount that in detail, about what the Pandavas did, with Vasudeva at the forefront. Having obtained the kingdom, the immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishthira instructed the four varnas to be engaged in their own dharma. He announced that one thousand great-souled snataka[411] brahmanas would be given one thousand golden coins each. He arranged sustenance for the servants and the guests who sought refuge and gratified their desires, even the distressed ones who were prone to debating.[412] He gave tens of thousands of cows to the priest, Dhoumya, and also riches, gold, silver and many kinds of garments. O great king! He behaved towards Kripa as one would towards a preceptor. With dharma in his soul, he was careful in his vows and honoured Vidura. The supreme among generous ones gave food, drink, many kinds of garments, beds and seats and satisfied all those who resorted to him. O supreme among kings! Having obtained peace, the immensely illustrious king honoured Yuyutsu, Dhritarashtra’s son. King Yudhishthira offered the kingdom to Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Vidura and informed them that the kingdom was safe. O Janamejaya! He satisfied everyone in the city in this way.

‘With hands joined in salutation, he then went to the great-souled Vasudeva. He saw Krishna seated on an expensive couch, decorated with jewels and gold. He looked like a blue rain cloud atop Mount Meru. Decorated with divine ornaments, his form blazed. He was attired in yellow silk garments and was like a jewel set in golden jewellery. The *koustubha* jewel was on his chest, radiant amidst other gems. He looked like Mount Udaya,[413] with the sun blazing its crown. There was no one like him in the three worlds. He approached the great-souled Vishnu, an idol in human form. Smiling first, he addressed him in gentle words. “O supreme among intelligent ones! Have you spent the night in comfort? O Achyuta! I hope all your senses are at ease. O supreme among intelligent ones! We sought refuge with you and the goddess of your intelligence. That is how we obtained our kingdom back and the earth is under our subjugation. O illustrious one! Through your valour, you covered the three worlds in three steps[414] and you have shown us your favours. Hence, we obtained victory and the best of fame. Nor have we deviated from dharma.” Dharmaraja Yudhishthira spoke to him in this way. However, the illustrious one was meditating. He remained silent and did not say anything in reply.’

Chapter 1374(46)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O infinitely valorous one! It is wonderful that you should be meditating thus. O refuge of the worlds! I hope the three worlds will be safe. O Purushottama! You have resorted to the fourth stage of meditation.[415] O god! You have withdrawn and my mind is surprised. You have stilled the five winds that perform action in the body.[416] You have established all the senses in your mind. You have restrained your senses and your mind in your intelligence.[417] O god! All those groups have been immersed in your soul.[418] Your body hair is still and so are your intelligence and your mind. O Madhava! You don’t seem to be here and are like a pillar, a wall or a rock. O Achyuta! You are as still as the blazing flame of a lamp where there is no wind. O illustrious one! O god! Firm in your resolution, you are as immobile as that. O god! If I deserve to hear it and if it is not a secret, show me your favours and dispel my doubts. You are the creator and the transformer.[419] You are the one who decays and you are the own who does not decay. You are without a beginning and without an end. O Purushottama! You are the one who is here now. I am bowing down my head before you. With devotion, I am seeking refuge with you. O supreme among upholders of dharma! Tell me the truth about this meditation.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘The illustrious one, Vasava’s younger brother, then brought his mind, his intelligence and his senses to their usual state. Smiling first, he said, “Bhishma is lying down on a bed of arrows, like a fire that has been pacified. The tiger among men was thinking of me and my mind was concentrated on him. The sound of his bowstring against his palm was like thunder with lightning. Even the king of the gods could not tolerate that. My mind had gone out to him. In earlier times, when he swiftly attacked the assembled circle of kings and abducted the three maidens,[420] my mind had gone out to him. When he fought for twenty-three nights with Bhargava

Rama[421] without being overpowered, my mind had gone out to him. In the proper way, Ganga had carried the king in her womb. O father![422] He was Vasishtha’s student. O king! My mind had gone out to him. The extremely energetic and intelligent one wielded divine weapons and knew the four Vedas and the Vedangas. My mind had gone out to him. O Pandava! He was the beloved disciple of Rama,[423] Jamadagni’s son. He was the store of all kinds of knowledge. My mind had gone out to him. He united his senses, controlled his mind and his intelligence and sought refuge with me. My mind had gone out to him. O bull among men! He knew the past, the present and the future and upheld the best forms of dharma. My mind had gone out to him. O Partha! When that tiger among men has ascended to heaven because of his own deeds, the earth will be like a night when there is no moon. O Yudhishthira! Gangeya Bhishma is terrible in his valour. Go to him and carefully ask him about what is in your mind. O lord of the earth! Ask him about the four Vedas, the four rites of sacrifice,[424] the four stages of life and the dharma of the four varnas. Bhishma, has borne the great burden of the Kouravas, and with him, all that knowledge is about to set. That is the reason I am asking you to approach him.” When he heard Vasudeva’s excellent words, which were full of purport, the one who knew about dharma[425] addressed Janardana in a voice that was choking with tears. “O Madhava! O one who shows honours! There is not the slightest bit of doubt in my mind about the truth of what you have said about Bhishma’s powers. I have heard the great-souled brahmanas talk about the immensely fortunate and great-souled Bhishma’s powers. O destroyer of enemies! You are the lord of the worlds and there cannot be any doubt about what you have said. O Madhava! If your mind is so inclined towards showing me your favours, then, with you at the forefront, let us go and see Bhishma. When the illustrious sun god has turned around,[426] he will leave for those worlds. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, Kourava should also see you. You are the origin of the gods. You are the one who is destroyed and you are also the one who is not destroyed. You are the storehouse of the brahman. Therfore, seeing you is a true gain.” On hearing Dharmaraja’s words, Madhusudana instructed Satyaki, who was next to him, that his chariot should be yoked.

‘Satyaki departed from Krishna’s presence and went and told Daruka that Krishna’s chariot should be yoked. The different parts of that supreme chariot were decorated with gold. Its parts were adorned with sapphires and crystals. The wheels were encrusted with gold. It was swift and possessed the complexion of the sun’s rays. It was decorated with many kinds of gems and jewels. It blazed like the rising sun. The wonderful standard had Tarkshya[427] atop it. It was as swift as thought and its different parts were embellished with gold. Sugriva, Sainya and the best of horses were yoked to it. On hearing Satyaki’s instructions, Daruka quickly yoked it properly. O lion among kings! Hands joined in salutation, he then went and informed that it had been readied.’

Chapter 1375(47)

Janamejaya asked, ‘The grandfather of the Bharatas was lying down on a bed of arrows. How did he give up his body? What kind of yoga did he resort to?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! O tiger of the Kuru lineage! Purify yourself and listen attentively to how the great-souled Bhishma gave up his body. Pierced by hundreds of arrows, Bhishma was stretched out, like the sun with its rays. As soon as the sun turned towards uttarayana, he controlled himself and immersed himself in his atman. In his supreme prosperity, he was surrounded by the best of brahmanas—Vyasa, known for his learning in the Vedas, Narada, the rishi of the gods, Devasthana, Vatsya, Ashmaka and Sumantu. These, and large numbers of other immensely fortunate and great-souled sages surrounded him. With faith and self-control, they surrounded him, like the moon by the planets. Bhishma was a tiger among men, in his deeds, thoughts and words.

‘Lying down on that bed of arrows, he joined his hands in salutation and worshipped Krishna. In a loud voice, he praised Madhusudana, the lord of yoga, Padmanabha,[428] Vishnu, Jishnu, the lord of the universe. He joined his hands in salutation and purified himself. Bhishma was supreme among eloquent ones and had great dharma in his soul. He praised the lord Vasudeva. “O Krishna! I wish to worship you. O Purushottama! May you be pleased with my words, which will be both brief and extensive. You are pure. You are the essence of purity. You are the swan.[429] You are supreme. You are the supreme creator. You are in all atmans and you are the lord of beings. You enter and are established in all beings in the universe. You are the qualities in beings. You are the lord of qualities, like a string which holds gems together. Your limbs constitute the universe. You perform deeds in the universe. Everything in the universe is strung together in you, like a garland strung together by a firm thread. You are Hari. You are the one with one thousand heads. You are the one with one thousand feet and one thousand eyes. You are known as the god Narayana. You are the refuge of the universe. You are finer than the finest. You are larger than the largest. You are heavier than the heaviest. You are better than the best. In the *vaka*s, the *anuvaka*s, the *nishad*s and the Upanishads, you are the one who is praised as the performer of truthful deeds.[430] You are truth. You are in the truth of the samas. There are four parts to your atman.[431] You are in all understanding and you are the lord of the Satvatas. Your supreme and secret names are worshipped by the celestial gods. You are the god who was born to the goddess Devaki and Vasudeva, for the sake of protecting brahmanas on earth and they were like two sticks rubbed together to kindle a blazing fire. When one cleanses oneself, controls and withdraws from all desire, desiring the infinite, one sees the unblemished atman of Govinda in one's own atman. In the Puranas, you have been spoken of as Purusha. At the beginning of a yuga, you are Brahma. When the time for destruction has arrived, you are known by the name of Samkarshana. I am worshipping the one who should be worshipped. Your deeds surpass those of Vayu and Agni. You surpass the sun and the fire in your energy.

Your atman is beyond the reach of intelligence and the senses. I am seeking refuge with that Prajapati. You are the creator of the universe. You are the lord of everything in the universe. That is how the universe speaks of you. You are the supervisor. You are without decay. You are the supreme state. Your complexion is like that of gold. Though you are one, for the sake of destroying the daityas, Aditi bore twelve different parts in her womb.[432] I am bowing down to the one whose atman is the sun. I bow down before the one whose atman is the moon. He is the king of the brahmanas and gratifies the gods in shuklapaksha and the ancestors in krishnapaksha.[433] You are the blazing and resplendent being who is beyond the great darkness. Knowing you, one goes beyond death. I am bowing down to the one who is everything that there is to be known. In the great ukthas,[434] the large number of brahmanas chants of you as the great one and as the fire in the great sacrifice. You are the soul of the Vedas and I bow down before you. Your abode is in the Rig, Yajur and Sama hymns. You are the five kinds of oblations.[435] You are the seven strands.[436] You are the soul of a sacrifice and I bow down before you. You are the bird named Yajur. The metres are your limbs and the three forms of chanting[437] constitute your head. The *brihat* and *rathamtara*[438] are the eyes. You are the hymns and I bow down before you. When the creators performed a sacrifice with one thousand flows,[439] you were the rishi who appeared. You are the bird with a golden complexion. Your atman is the swan and I bow down before you. I bow down to the one whose atman is speech. He is said to be the eternal akshara.[440]

The words[441] are his limbs. The joints are *sandhi*.[442] The vowels and the consonants are the manifestations. For the sake of the virtuous, you build a bridge from the false to the truth. Your limbs are the use of dharma and artha. I bow down to the one who is the truth. There are those who follow different dharmas. They desire fruits through the pursuit of these different kinds of dharma. They worship you through these different kinds of dharma. I bow down to the one who has dharma in his soul. The maharshis think of you as the unmanifest within the manifest. You are the kshetrajna in the *kshetra*.[443] I bow down to the one who has his atman in the kshetra. I bow down to the one who is the atman of samkhya, who is spoken of in samkhya as the seventeenth and who, firm with the atman in the self, is surrounded by the sixteen qualities.[444] Without sleep, controlling the breath, established in the self and restraining the senses, those who are engaged in yoga see a light. You are the atman of that and I bow down before you. Without any fear of rebirth, peaceful sannyasis obtain the supreme you, beyond the good and the bad. You are the atman of salvation and I bow down before you. At the end of one thousand yugas, you are the blazing flames of fire and devour all beings. You are the atman of the terrible and I bow down before you. Having consumed all beings and having rendered the entire universe into a single ocean, you sleep alone, like a child. You are the atman of maya and I bow down before you. You are the thousand-headed being and your atman is infinite. I bow down before the one who is the atman of this yoga of sleep, in each of the four oceans in turn.[445] You are the lotus in the navel of the one who has not been born. The entire universe is established in you. You are Pushkara and Pushkaraksha. I bow down before the one who is the atman of the lotus. The clouds are your hair. The rivers flow through all the joints of your body. The four oceans are in your stomach. I bow down before the one who is the atman of water. You flow through the yugas in the form of days, seasons, *ayana*s[446] and years. You are the cause of creation and destruction. I bow down before the one who is the atman of time. The brahmanas are your mouth, the kshatriyas are your arms, the vaishyas are your thighs and stomach and the shudras find refuge in your feet. I bow down before the one who is the atman of the varnas. The fire is your face. The firmament is the crown of your head. The sky is your navel and the earth constitutes your feet. Your eyes are the sun. The directions are your ears. I bow down before the one whose atman is in the worlds. You are present in objects in the form of *vaisheshika* qualities.[447] You are spoken of as the protector of objects. I bow down before the one whose atman is in all protection. You are the one who sustains beings through food, drink and riches and extends their juice and breaths of life. I bow down before the one whose atman is in the breath of life. You are beyond time. You are beyond sacrifices. You are beyond notions of truth and falsehood. You have no beginning. You are the origin of the universe. I bow down before the one whose atman is in the universe. He is the one who confounds beings through the bonds of affection and hatred. This is for the sake of preserving creation. I bow down before the one whose atman is in confusion. Knowledge about the atman is knowledge one can obtain while still remaining established in the five.[448] Those who obtain that knowledge go to him. I bow down before the one whose atman is in knowledge. His body cannot be measured. His infinite eyes see everything. He is infinite and cannot be measured. I bow down before the one whose atman is in thought. He is matted and always carries a staff.

His body has an elongated stomach. The water pot is his quiver.[449] I bow down before the one whose atman is in Brahma. He wields a trident and is the lord of the gods. He is great-souled and three-eyed. His body is smeared in ashes and his linga is turned up.[450] I bow down before the one whose atman is in Rudra. He is the embodiment of the five elements. He is the creator and destroyer of all beings. He is without anger, without malice and without confusion. I bow down before the one whose atman is in peace. Everything is in him. He is in everything. He is everything. Everything comes from him. He is always made up of everything. I bow down before the one whose atman is in everything. I bow down before the one whose deeds are the universe. You are the soul of the universe. The universe originates in you. Etablished beyond the five,[451] you are the fulfilment of all beings. In the three worlds, I bow down before you. I bow down before you in everything that is beyond those three. I bow down before you in all the directions. You are the refuge of everything. I bow down before the illustrious Vishnu, the origin of the worlds. O Hrishikesha! You are the unvanquished creator and destroyer. I see your divine form in the three paths.[452] I can see the truth about your eternal form. The heaven is pervaded with your head and the goddess earth with your feet. You are the eternal being whose valour is in the three worlds. Your complexion is like the *atasi* flower.[453] You are Achyuta in your yellow garments. Those who bow down before Govinda have no fear. Just as truth is full of Vishnu, oblations are full of Vishnu. Since everything is full of Vishnu, the wicked deeds that I have done will be destroyed. Faithfully, I am seeking refuge with you. I wish to attain the best objective. O Pundarikaksha! O supreme among gods! You will think of what is best. You are the source of learning and austerities. You are Vishnu, who has no origin. I have worshipped the god with my words. May Janardana be pleased with me." With devotion in his mind, Bhishma spoke these words. Having said this, he bowed down before Krishna.

'Through his powers of yoga, Madhava got to know about Bhishma's devotion and went there.[454] Hari gave him divine knowledge and sight about the three kinds of time.[455] When the immensely wise Bhishma's words ended, those who were knowledgeable about the brahman applauded him loudly, their voices choking with tears. The foremost among brahmanas praised Keshava Purushottama. Then, in gentle words, all of them again praised Bhishma. On discerning Bhishma's yoga of devotion, Purushottma was joyful. He suddenly arose and ascended his vehicle. Keshava and Satyaki advanced on a single chariot. The great-souled Yudhishthira and Dhananjaya were on another one. Bhima and the two twins were on a single chariot. Kripa, Yuyutsu and the suta Sanjaya went on another chariot. Those bulls among men went on chariots that were like cities. These made the earth tremble with the roar of their axles. As he[456] advanced along the road, the best of men was extremely joyful on hearing the words of praise spoken by the brahmanas. There were other men who bowed down before him, hands joined in salutation. The slayer of Keshi[457] was delighted and greeted them.'

Chapter 1376(48)

Vaishampayana said, 'Hrishikesha, King Yudhishthira, Kripa and the others and the four Pandavas rode on chariots that were like cities, adorned with standards and flags. On horses that were swift, they quickly went to Kurukshetra. They got down in Kurukshetra, full of hair, marrow and bones. That was where the great-souled kshatriyas had given up their bodies. The bodies and bones of elephants and horses were piled up in heaps, like mountains. The heads and skulls of men were strewn around like conch shells. Thousands of funeral pyres had been lit, with armour and weapons piled on. It looked like a drinking ground that had been used by Death and had just been abandoned. Large numbers of demons wandered around and large numbers of rakshasas frequented it. The maharathas quickly went and saw Kurukshetra.

'While they were going there, the mighty-armed one, the delight of all the Yadavas, spoke to Yudhishthira about the valour of Jamadagni's son. "O Partha! There, in the distance, you can see the five lakes created by Rama.[458] Earlier, he used the blood of kshatriyas to offer oblations to his ancestors. On twenty-one occasions, the lord emptied the earth of kshatriyas. It is only now that Rama has refrained from that task." Yudhishthira replied, "You have told me that Rama emptied the world of kshatriyas twenty-one times. I have a great doubt about this. O bull among the Yadu lineage! O infinitely valorous one! If the seed of the kshatriyas was burnt, how were the kshatriyas generated again? O bull among the Yadu lineage! How were the kshatriyas exterminated by the illustrious and great-souled Rama? How did they prosper again? O supreme among eloquent ones! In the Mahabharata war, crores of kshatriyas have been slain. The earth is strewn with kshatriyas. O Varshneya! O one with Tarkshya[459] on your standard! Sever my doubt. O Vasava's younger brother! O Krishna! Our supreme knowledge comes from you." As they proceeded, the lord who was Gada's elder brother [460] told the infinitely energetic

Yudhishthira the complete truth about that account and about how the earth again became full of kshatriyas.’

Chapter 1377(49)

‘Vasudeva said, “O Kounteya! Listen to what I heard when the maharshis were talking about Rama’s birth and the reasons behind why Jamadagni’s son killed crores of kshatriyas. Those who were born in royal lineages in Bharata[461] were again slain. Jahnu’s son was Ajahnu and his son was Ballava. King Kushika, knowledgeable about dharma, was his son. He was an equal of the one with the thousand eyes[462] on earth and performed fierce austerities. He wished to obtain a son who would not be defeated and would be the lord of the three worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing him engaged in those terrible austerities, the thousand-eyed Purandara knew that he was capable of giving birth to a son who would be his[463] equal. O king! Therefore, having gone there, the chastiser of Paka, the lord of all mobile and immobile objects, himself became Kushika’s son, by the name of Gadhi. O king! O lord! His daughter was the maiden named Satyavati. The lord Gadhi gave her to Richika, the son of a wise sage.[464] O Kounteya! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Bhargava[465] was pleased at this. For the sake of a son for himself and for Gadhi, he cooked some *charu*.[466] Bhargava Richika summoned his wife and said, ‘This charu is for you and that one is for your mother. She will give birth to a blazing bull among the kshatriyas. He will be invincible before all the kshatriyas on this earth. He will destroy the bulls among the kshatriyas. O fortunate one! Your son will be steadfast and full of austerities. He will be peaceful in his soul. This charu will make him foremost among the brahmanas.’ Having spoken these words to his wife, the intelligent Richika, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, went away to the forest to engage in austerities.

‘“At that time, King Gadhi had decided to visit the tirthas. With his wife, he arrived in Richika’s hermitage. O king! Satyavati picked up the two charus and cheerfully gave them to her mother, forgetting in her haste, her husband’s words. O Kounteya! The mother gave her own charu to her daughter and ignorantly, consumed her[467] charu herself. The destroyer of kshatriyas was conceived in Satyavati's womb. His form blazed and he was terrible to look at. While he was engaged in the yoga of meditation, Richika saw this. O tiger among kings! He told his beautiful wife, 'O fortunate one! The charu has been exchanged and your mother has deceived you.[468] You will give birth to an extremely powerful son who will be the performer of cruel deeds. Your brother will be born as a store of austerities, immersed in the brahman. Through my austerities, I have given him the universal brahman.' Having been thus addressed by her husband, the immensely fortunate Satyavati trembled. She lowered her head at his feet and said, 'O illustrious one! O great sage! You should not speak such words to me now. "You will have a son who will be the worst among brahmanas."' Richika replied, 'O fortunate one! This is not what I had envisaged for you. You will have a son who is terrible in his deeds. The charu and your mother are the reason for that.' Satyavati said, 'O sage! If you wish, you can create the worlds. But what about me? O supreme among those who meditate! I desire a son who is peaceful and upright.' Richika replied, 'O fortunate one! I have never wilfully uttered a falsehood. Why will I do it after igniting a fire and pronouncing mantras for the charu?' Satyavati said, 'O supreme among those who meditate! Let our grandson be like that. But let our son be like you. I desire a son who is peaceful and upright.' Richika replied, 'O one with a beautiful complexion! I see no difference between a son and a grandson. O fortunate one! It will be according to your words.' Satyavati gave birth to Bhargava Jamadagni. He was peaceful and engaged in austerities. He was peaceful in his soul. Gadhi, the descendant of Kushika, obtained Vishvamitra as a heir. He was united with the universal brahman and was a brahmarshi.

'"Jamadagni, Richika's son, had the extremely terrible Rama as a son. He was foremost among those who knew all forms of learning. He was accomplished in dhanurveda. He was the slayer of kshatriyas and like a blazing fire. At that time, Kritavirya had a powerful son. He was an energetic kshatriya in the Haihaya lineage and his name was Arjuna. He scorched the entire earth with its seven continents[469] and cities, using the strength of his own arms and weapons, but also using supreme dharma. O Kouravya! Chitrabhanu[470] was thirsty and approached him for alms. The powerful and thousand-armed one[471] gave Agni the alms. Chitrabhanu blazed from the valiant one’s arrows and burnt down villages, fortifications, hamlets and cities. Because of the powers of that Indra among men, Kartavirya, the one with the great heat burnt down mountains and forests. Aided by the wind and with Haihaya, Chitrabhanu consumed and emptied the hermitage of Varuna’s son.[472] O unblemished one! O great king! When his hermitage was burnt down, Apava[473] angrily cursed Kartavirya Arjuna. ‘Because of your delusion, you did not spare my forest. O Arjuna! Therefore, in a battle, Rama will burn down and sever your arms.’ O great king! After this, the powerful Arjuna always turned to peace. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He became the generous granter of refuge to brahmanas and brave ones. His extremely powerful sons caused him to be slain through the curse. Those powerful ones were always cruel and became the cause. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In their intolerance, they seized Jamadagni’s calf, though the intelligent Haihaya Kartavirya did not know about this. O Indra among kings! At this, the lord[474] used his manliness to sever Arjuna’s arms and brought the weeping calf back to Jamadagni’s hermitage, back from where it was wandering around in the inner quarters.[475] Arjuna’s sons lost their minds because of this. Foolishly, they went to the great-souled Jamadagni’s hermitage. O lord of men! With broad-headed arrows, sharp at the tip, they severed and brought down his head from his body. This happened when the great-souled Rama had gone out in search of kindling and kusha grass. Rama was overcome with great rage and anger at his father’s death. He grasped his weapons and pledged to empty the earth of kshatriyas. The tiger among the Bhrigu lineage used his valour to quickly kill all the sons and grandsons of the valiant Kartavirya. Overcome by great anger, he killed thousands of Haihayas. O king! Bhargava covered the earth with the mud of blood. Thus, the extremely energetic one emptied the earth of kshatriyas. Having done this, he was overcome by great compassion and retired to the forest.

‘“Thousands of years passed. The lord was naturally angry and confronted a fierce agitation. O great king! Paravasu was a great ascetic and was the son of Raibhya and the grandson of Vishvamitra. He angrily addressed him[476] in an assembly of men. ‘O Rama! When Yayati fell down,[477] virtuous ones assembled at a sacrifice. There were Pratardana and others. Were they not kshatriyas? O Rama! Your pledge has been false. Why do you boast in the assemblies of men? Because of your fear of these brave kshatriyas, you have sought refuge in the mountains.'[478] On hearing Paravasu's words, Bhargava again picked up his weapons and, overcome by rage, again covered the earth with hundreds of kshatriyas. O king! However, there were hundreds of kshatriyas who remained alive. Those immensely valorous ones prospered and became lords of the earth. O lord of men! He quickly slew them again, including the children and those who were in the wombs. The earth was again covered. As soon as babies were born from wombs, he killed them again. However, some kshatriya women managed to protect their sons. On twenty-one occasions, the lord emptied the earth of kshatriyas. In a horse sacrifice, he then gave it[479] to Kashyapa as *dakshina*. O king! Wishing to save the remaining kshatriyas, Kashyapa held the sacrificial ladle[480] in his hand and spoke these beneficial words. 'O great sage! Go to the shores of the southern ocean. O Rama! You should not dwell within my dominion.' Because of its fright of Jamadagni's son, the ocean created the country known as Shurparaka, on the other side of the earth. O great king! Kashyapa received the earth. Having made arrangements for the brahmanas to dwell there, he entered the great forest.

'"O bull among the Bharata lineage! The shudras and the vaishyas acted as they wished. They descended on the wives of the foremost among the brahmanas. When there is no king in the world of the living, the strong oppress the weak. There are no restraints and no one is the lord of his own possessions. At that time, the earth entered *rasatala*.[481] At that time, she was not protected in the proper way by kshatriyas, who should be protecting in accordance with dharma. O king! As the earth was submerging, Kashyapa held her on his thigh. That is the reason the earth is known as Urvi.[482] The goddess earth sought Kashyapa's favours and asked that she should be protected by kshatriyas who possessed strength in their arms. 'O brahmana! I have protected some virtuous men who are bulls among kshatriyas. O sage! They have been born in the lineage of the Haihayas. Let them protect me. There is a lord who is a descendant of the Pourava lineage. He is Viduratha's son. O brahmana! The bears have reared him on Mount Riksha.[483] There is another one who is the son of Sudasa. Because of compassion, Parashara's infinitely energetic son has protected him and has performed sacrifices for him. Like a shudra, he performs all the tasks for that rishi and is known by the name of Sarvakarma.[484] Let that king protect me. Shibi's immensely energetic son is known by the name of Gopati. The cows have protected him in the forest.[485] O sage! Let him protect me. Pratardana's son is the immensely illustrious Vatsa. The calves have reared him in a pen.[486] Let that king protect me. There is Dadhivahana's grandson, the son of Diviratha. He is Anga and he was protected on the banks of the Ganga by Goutama. The mighty-armed Brihadratha is foremost on the earth because of his prosperity. The immensely fortunate one was protected on Gridhrakuta by *golangula*s.[487] There are three kshatriyas in the lineage of Marutta. They have been protected by the ocean and are like the Maruts in their valour. Here and there, these sons of kshatriyas have been heard of. Protected by them, I will no longer move. For my sake, Rama, unblemished in his deeds, killed their fathers and their grandfathers in a battle. There is no doubt that it is my duty to honour them.[488] I do not desire to be protected by someone who always lacks valour.' Kashyapa brought together the ones whom the earth had indicated. He consecrated those valorous kshatriyas as the lords of the earth. The present lineages are based on their sons and grandsons. O Pandava! This is the ancient account that you have asked me about."'

Vaishampayana said, 'The foremost among the Yadu lineage spoke thus to Yudhishthira, supreme among those who uphold dharma. He then swiftly departed on his chariot, like the illustrious sun god penetrating the three worlds with its rays.'[489]

Chapter 1378(50)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having heard of Rama’s deeds, King Yudhishthira was filled with great wonder and replied to Janardana. “O Varshneya! The great-souled Rama is like Shakra. Through his valour and anger, he emptied the earth of kshatriyas. The extenders of the kshatriya lineage were frightened because of Rama and were protected by cattle, the oceans, golangulas, bears and apes. O Achyuta! It is amazing. Men on earth are fortunate that such an act of dharma was performed by the brahmana.” O son![490] That is the way Achyuta and Yudhishthira proceeded together. They went to the spot where the lord Gangeya was lying down on a bed of arrows. They saw Bhishma lying down on that bed of arrows. He was like the evening sun or the fire, surrounded by a net of his own rays. That spot, on the banks of the river Oghavati, was extremely auspicious. The sages surrounded and honoured him, like the gods around Shatakratu. From a distance, Krishna, the king who was Dharmaraja, the four Pandavas and Sharadvata and the others saw him. They descended from their vehicles and controlled their agitated minds. They concentrated their senses and approached the great sages. Govinda, Satyaki and the Kouravas greeted Vyasa and the other rishis and then presented themselves before Gangeya. Gangeya was rich in austerities. All the Yadus and the Kouravas, bulls among men, asked about his welfare and then sat down around him.

‘Gangeya was fading, like a fire that had been pacified. Somewhat distressed in his mind, Keshava told Bhishma, “O king! I hope your knowledge is as clear at it used to be. O supreme among eloquent ones! I hope anxiety has not affected your intelligence. I hope the wounds from these arrows are not causing great pain to your limbs. Mental pain makes the physical one stronger. O lord! Your father Shantanu, devoted to dharma, granted you the boon that you could choose when to die. But that does not reduce the pain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The slightest of stakes generates pain in the body, not to speak of this storm of arrows. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you so wish, you can instruct the gods on the origins, the prosperity and the destruction of all living beings. O bull among men! You are revered for your age and wisdom. It is as if the past, the present and the future are inscribed on the palm of your hand. O immensely wise one! For beings, you know about the fruits of dharma and the cycle of death and rebirth. You are a store that is full of the brahman. You were established in this prosperous kingdom and your limbs were without disease. You were surrounded by thousands of women. However, we have seen you hold up your seed. O king! With the exception of Shantanu's son, Bhishma, there is no one in the three worlds who is as devoted to the truth, as immensely valorous, as brave and as conscious of dharma. O father![491] You are about to die and we have not heard of anyone else who, lying down on strewn arrows, is so full of natural power. In truth, austerities, generosity, performing of sacrifices, dhanurveda, the Vedas, non-violence, purity, self-control and engagement in the welfare of all beings, we have not heard of any other maharatha like you. There is no doubt that you are capable of vanquishing the gods, the gandharvas, the *sura*s,[492] the asuras and the rakshasas on a single chariot. You are the mighty-armed Bhishma, like a Vasava among the Vasus. The brahmanas always refer to you as the ninth, but you are not the ninth in qualities.[493] O supreme among men! I know who you are. Because of your own capacity and great strength, you are renowned among the thirty gods. O Indra among men! Among men, there is no man on earth who is your equal in qualities, none that has been seen or heard of. O king! In all the qualities, you surpass even the gods. Through your austerities, you are capable of creating worlds, with mobile and immobile objects. The eldest son of Pandu is tormented because of the destruction of his kin. O Bhishma! Dispel his sorrow. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You know everything about what is said to be the dharma of the four varnas and the four ashramas.[494] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is said to be the eternal dharma, spoken about in the four Vedas, followed by the four officiating priests[495] and stated in samkhya yoga.[496] O Gangeya! There is one single dharma followed, and not contravened, by any of the four varnas and that is also known to you.[497] You know all the *itihasa*[498] and the Puranas. All the

Dharmashastras[499] are always established in your mind. O bull among men! With the exception of you, there is no one else in this world who can dispel any doubt that may arise about their meanings. O Indra among men! Using your intelligence, dispel the sorrow that has arisen in Pandaveya's mind. You possess many kinds of extensive intelligence and you should assure the people who are confused."'

Chapter 1379(51)

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing the words of the intelligent Vasudeva, Bhishma joined his hands in salutation and raising his head a bit, spoke the following words. "O illustrious Vishnu! I bow down before you. You are the origin of the worlds. O Hrishikesha! You are the unvanquished creator and destroyer. I bow down before the one who is the doer in the universe, who is the soul of the universe and who is the creator of the universe. You are the objective and you are beyond the five elements. I bow down before the three worlds. I bow down before the one who is beyond the three worlds. I bow down before the one who is the lord of yoga. You are the final refuge of everything. O Purushottama! I have sought refuge in your words and am able to see your divine form in the three paths.[500] I can also see your true and eternal form. Your infinite energy bears up the wind along seven paths.[501] Your head extends up to the firmament and your feet are on the goddess earth. The directions are your arms. Your eyes are the sun and Shakra is established in your valour. In our mind's eye, we see your undecaying form. It has the complexion of the atasi flower. It is attired in yellow garments. It is like a cloud tinged with lightning. With a desire to attain the best objective, I have faithfully sought refuge with you. O Pundarikaksha! O supreme among gods! Think of my welfare."

'Vasudeva replied, "O bull among men! O king! Since you have supreme devotion in me, I have shown you my divine form. O Indra among kings! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I do not show this self to one without devotion, one with false devotion, or one without self-control. You have always been my devotee and you have always been devoted to the truth and have resorted to control, austerities, truth, generosity and attachment to purity. O Bhishma! O king! It is because of your own austerities that you have been able to see me. The worlds from which there is no return[502] are there for you. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Fifty-six days still remain in your life. O

Bhishma! After that, you will cast aside your body and obtain the auspicious fruits of your deeds. These gods, the Vasus, are astride their celestial vehicles and all of them are like blazing fires. Though they are invisible, they are protecting you until it is the northern solstice. O illustrious one! O foremost among men! As soon as the sun turns in the northward direction with the progress of time, you will go to the worlds obtained by those with knowledge, and from where there is no return. O Bhishma! O brave one! When you go to that world, all the knowledge you possess will be destroyed. That is the reason all of these have assembled before you, for an analysis of dharma. Yudhishthira's knowledge has been affected by sorrow over his kin, though he is firmly based on truth. Tell him about the union of dharma and artha. Speak meaningful words that will dispel his sorrow."'

Chapter 1380(52)

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Krishna’s words, full of dharma and artha, Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, joined his hands in salutation and spoke these words to him. “O lord of the worlds! O mighty-armed one! O Shiva! O Narayana! O Achyuta! Having heard your words, I am flooded with delight. You are the lord of speech. What can I say in your presence? Everything that can be said exists in your words. O god! Whatever has been done in this world, what should be done, and what is being done, all emanate from you. The worlds are pervaded by your intelligence. In the presence of the king of the gods, who can speak about the world of the gods? Before you, only such a person can talk about dharma, kama and artha in the sacred texts. O Madhusudana! My mind is suffering from the wounds of these arrows. My limbs are weak and my intelligence is unclear. I lack the capacity to talk about anything. O Govinda! These arrows are like poison and the fire and are oppressing me. My great strength is leaving. My breath of life is ebbing away. My inner organs are scorched. My consciousness is distracted. The weakness is affecting my words. How can I be interested in speaking? O virtuous one! O descendant of the Dasharha lineage! Show me your favours. O mighty-armed one! Pardon me. O Achyuta! I will not say anything. In your presence, even Vachaspati[503] would refrain from speaking. I cannot distinguish the directions, nor the sky or the earth. O Madhusudana! It is only because of your valour that I am still here. O lord! You should yourself quickly tell Dharmaraja about what is beneficial. You are the learning that is there in all the sacred texts. You are the eternal doer in the worlds. When you are present in the world, how can someone like me speak? That will be like a disciple before a preceptor.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O one who has borne the great burden of the Kouravas! These words are worthy of you. You are immensely valorous and are established in great spirits. You can see the purpose behind everything. O

Gangeya! You have spoken to me about the pain from the wounds of these storms of arrows. O Bhishma! O lord! Through my favours, accept a boon from me. O Gangeya! You will not be affected by debility, unconsciousness, fever, pain, hunger and thirst. O unblemished one! All knowledge will manifest itself before you. Your intelligence will be clear and will not be distracted. O Bhishma! There will always be spirit in your mind. You will like the king of the stars,[504] free of the clouds and without dusk and darkness. Whenever you think about dharma and artha, your intelligence will back this up first. O tiger among kings! O infinitely valorous one! By resorting to your divine sight, you will be able to see the four kinds of beings[505] that have been created. O Bhishma! Through the sight of knowledge, you will be able to see the truth about the four kinds of beings, like a fish in clear water.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘With Vyasa, all the maharshis worshipped Krishna with hymns and words from the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda. In every direction, a divine shower of flowers rained down from the sky and fell down at the spot where Varshneya, Gangeya and the Pandavas were. Celestial instruments were sounded and large numbers of apsaras arrived there. Nothing unpleasant was seen anywhere there. An auspicious and pleasant wind began to blow and it carried all the fragrant and sacred scents. The directions were calm and the animals and the birds also became calm. In an instant, the illustrious sun god, with the one thousand rays, was seen in the west, like a fire burning the extremity of a forest. All the maharshis arose and honoured Janardana, Bhishma and King Yudhishthira. Keshava bowed before them, and so did the Pandavas, Satyaki, Sanjaya and Kripa Sharadvata. When those who were always devoted to dharma[506]were honoured in the proper way, they said, “We will return tomorrow,” and quickly left, as they wished. Keshava and the Pandavas took their leave of Gangeya. They circumambulated him and ascended their sparkling chariots. The poles of those chariots were decorated with gold and ivory. There were crazy tuskers that looked like mountains. There were horses that were as swift as eagles. There were foot soldiers with bows and arrows. Extremely fast, that army advanced in front and to the rear of those chariots. In front and to the rear, it was like the great river Narmada, separated into two by Mount Rikshavat.[507] In the east, the illustrious moon arose, delighting the army. The sun had drunk up the juice from the herbs and it again restored their original qualities. The bulls among the Yadus and the Pandavas entered the city,[508] which was as radiant as a city of the gods. They were exhausted and entered those supreme and appropriate abodes, like the lord of deer[509] returning to a cave.’

Chapter 1381(53)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Madhusudana entered his residence and slept. He awoke when one *yama* was left of the night.[510] Madhava engaged in meditating on all forms of knowledge. After that, he thought of the eternal brahman. There were those who were learned in the sacred texts and the Puranas, possessing melodious voices. They praised Prajapati Vasudeva, the creator of the universe. They recited, clapped their hands and sang songs. Thousands of conch shells, drums and tambourines were sounded. There were the beautiful sounds of veenas, cymbals and flutes. Like a drawn-out laugh, they were heard to emanate from his residence. Loud and pleasant words, with auspicious sounds, were also heard for King Yudhishthira, mixed with songs and the sound of musical instruments. Dasharha Achyuta arose. He bathed. Joining his hands in salutation, the mighty-armed one lit a fire. Standing before it, he meditated on a secret mantra. There were thousands of brahmanas who were learned about the four Vedas. Madhava promised each of them one thousand cows. Having touched an auspicious object, Krishna then looked at himself in a spotless mirror and told Satyaki, “O descendant of the Shini lineage! Go to the king’s residence and ascertain if the immensely energetic Yudhishthira has prepared himself for visiting Bhishma.” At Krishna’s words, Satyaki quickly went to King Yudhishthira and told him, “O king! The intelligent Vasudeva’s supreme chariot is yoked. Janardana is ready to leave for the son of the river. O Dharmaraja! O immensely radiant one! Krishna is waiting for you. You should now do what must immediately be done.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O Phalguna! O infinitely radiant one! Let the supreme chariot be yoked. There is no need for the soldiers to go. We will go alone. Let us not afflict Bhishma, supreme among those who uphold dharma. O Dhananjaya! Let the advance guard also refrain. From today, Gangeya will speak about supreme secrets. O Kounteya! I do not desire that ordinary people should assemble there.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Dhananjaya, Kunti’s son, paid heed to these words. As instructed, the bull among men had that supreme chariot prepared and informed him. King Yudhishthira, the twins, Bhima and Arjuna went to Krishna’s residence, like the five elements assembled together. As the great-souled Pandavas arrived, together with Shini’s descendant, the intelligent Krishna went out and ascended his chariot. Astride their chariots, they asked each other whether they had spent the night in happiness. Then the maharathas left on those supreme chariots, with a roar like that of the clouds. Daruka goaded Vasudeva’s horses, Meghapushpa, Balaha, Sainya and Sugriva. O king! Goaded by Daruka, Vasudeva’s horses tore up the ground with their hooves. Those immensely strong ones departed with great force, seeming to devour the sky. They passed over all of Kurukshetra, the field that was full of dharma. They went to the spot where the lord Bhishma was lying down on his bed of arrows. He was in the midst of brahmarshis, like Brahma amidst a large number of gods. Govinda and Yudhishthira descended from their chariots and so did Bhima, the wielder of Gandiva, the twins and Satyaki. They raised their right hands and honoured the rishis. They then surrounded the king, like the nakshatras around the moon. They approached Gangeya, like Vasava towards Brahma. He was lying down on a bed of arrows, as if the sun had fallen down. On seeing this, the mighty-armed one[511] was struck with fear and timidity.’

Chapter 1382(54)

Janamejaya asked, 'He had dharma in his soul. He was great in spirits and did not waver from the truth. He had conquered his soul. He was immensely fortunate and without decay. Devavrata was lying down on that bed of arrows. Bhishma, Shantanu's son, was lying down on a bed meant for heroes. The Pandavas presented themselves before Gangeya, tiger among men. What conversation took place at that gathering of heroes, after all the soldiers had been killed? O great sage! Tell me that.'

Vaishampayana said, 'Bhishma, who bore the great burden of the Kouravas, was lying down on the bed of arrows. O king! The rishis and siddhas, with Narada at their head, arrived there. There were also the kings who had not been slain, with Yudhishthira at their head, Dhritarashtra, Krishna, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins. They approached the great-souled grandfather of the Bharatas. They sorrowed over Gangeya, who was like the sun when it has fallen down. Narada, who looked like a god, thought for a short while. Then he spoke to the Pandavas and all the remaining kings. "The time has come for Bhishma to be asked. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![512] Like the sun, Gangeya is about to set. Before he gives up his breath of life, everyone should question him. He knows everything about the diverse kinds of dharma followed by the four varnas. He is aged and has already obtained worlds, for the time when he gives up his body. Quickly ask him about any doubts that you might have." Having been thus addressed by Narada, the kings approached Bhishma. But they were unable to ask him and glanced towards each other.

'Yudhishthira, Pandu's son, then spoke to Hrishikesha. "No one other than Devaki's son is capable of questioning the grandfather. O invincible one! O Madhusudana! You ask first. O son![513] Among all of us, you are the one who knows about the supreme forms of all kinds of dharma." Having been thus addressed by Pandava, the illustrious Keshava approached the unassailable one.[514] Achyuta spoke to him. Vasudeva said, “O supreme among kings! Have you spent the night in happiness? Is your intelligence present and clear? O unblemished one! Is your entire knowledge shining? Is your heart without pain? Is your mind without anxiety?” Bhishma replied, “O Govinda! O unblemished one! Because of your favours, subjugation, confusion, exhaustion, fatigue, languor and agony have just disappeared. O supremely radiant one! Like a fruit in my hand, I can see everything in the past, the present and the future. O Achyuta! Because of the boon you have granted me, I can see everything about the dharma laid down in the Vedas and uttered in Vedanta.[515] The dharma cited for virtuous ones is circling around in my heart. O Janardana! I know the dharma for countries, clans[516] and families. The dharma of the four types of ashramas is established in my heart. O Keshava! I understand everything about the dharma of kings. O Janardana! I will state everything that needs to be said. Through your favours, an auspicious intelligence has penetrated my mind. I have been strengthened by meditating on you and seem to be young again. O Janardana! Through your favours, I am able to speak about what is beneficial. Why don’t you yourself tell Pandava about what is beneficial? O Madhava! Quickly tell me why you are not doing this.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O Kourava! Know me to be the source of fame and everything that is beneficial. All sentiments, good and bad, originate in my soul. Who in the world will wonder if it is said that the moon’s rays are cool? In that way, who will wonder that I am full of fame? O immensely radiant one! However, I desire that your fame should be kindled. O Bhishma! That is the reason my greatness has pervaded your intelligence. O protector of the earth! As long as the earth exists, it is certain that your undecaying deeds will circulate throughout the world. O Bhishma! On being asked by Pandava, whatever you say will be established on the surface of the earth, like the declarations of the Vedas. Anyone who himself follows what you have adduced as proof will, after death, reap the fruits of all meritorious deeds. O Bhishma! That is the reason I have granted you divine intelligence. I have granted you a fame that will spread. How can it be extended further? It is certain that as long as a man’s fame is spoken of among people on this earth, so long does he possess an undecaying state. O king! The kings who have not been slain are seated around you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They wish to ask you about dharma. Tell them. You are aged and senior. You possess learning and good conduct. You are accomplished about the past and future dharma of kings. Since you were born, no one has seen any transgression in you. All the kings know you as someone who is conversant with the dharma of Manu.[517] O king! Address them, like a father to his sons, and tell them about supreme policy. You have always worshipped the rishis and the gods. As I see it, you should speak to them without leaving anything out. These virtuous ones have repeatedly asked you and wish to learn about dharma. The wise say that when a learned one is asked about dharma, he must speak. O lord! If one does not answer, one suffers from a sin. Your sons and grandsons have asked you about eternal dharma. They desire learning. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, you should speak to them.”’

Chapter 1383(55)

Vaishampayana said, 'The greatly energetic descendant of the Kourava lineage then spoke these words. "In that case, I will speak about dharma. My speech and my mind are firm because of your favours. O Govinda! You are the eternal soul of all beings. O unblemished one! However, King Yudhishthira must ask me about dharma. In that case, I will be pleased and will speak about dharma. When that rajarshi was born, all the great-souled rishis, with dharma in their souls, were delighted. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. All the Kurus follow dharma and are blazing in their fame. But among them, there is no one who is his equal. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. Fortitude, restraint, brahmacharya, forgiveness, power and energy are always found in him. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. Truthfulness, generosity, austerities, purity, peace, mental vigour and honour—all of these are in him. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He does not act in accordance with adharma, for the sake of desire, intolerance, fear or prosperity. He has dharma in his soul. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He welcomes and treats equally relatives, guests, servants and those who seek refuge. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He is always truthtful. He is always forgiving. He is always learned. He is devoted to guests. He always donates to the righteous. Therefore, let Pandava ask me. He always observes rites and studies. He always follows dharma. He is peaceful and knows the secrets of the sacred texts. Therefore, let Pandava ask me."

'Vasudeva replied, "Yudhishthira has dharma in his soul and is overcome with great shame. Because he is frightened of a curse, he is not approaching you. O lord of the earth! This protector of the worlds has caused carnage of the worlds. Because he is frightened of a curse, he is not approaching you. There were those who should be worshipped. There were those who were devoted. There were preceptors, allies and relatives. They deserved to be honoured. But having slain them with arrows, he is not approaching you."

‘Bhishma said, “O Krishna! The dharma of brahmanas is donations, studying and austerities. Like that, the dharma of kshatriyas is to give up the body in battle. Fathers, grandfathers, sons, preceptors, allies and relatives advanced against him on a false cause. He followed dharma and killed them in a battle. O Keshava! There may be wicked seniors who are avaricious and abandon agreements. If a kshatriya kills them in a battle, he is following dharma. If kshatriya relatives challenge one to a battle, one must always fight. Manu has said that fighting is dharma. It leads to heaven and the worlds.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Bhishma spoke in this way, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira approached humbly and stood in front, so that he could be seen. He grasped Bhishma’s feet and honoured him. He[518] inhaled the fragrance of his[519] head and asked him to be seated. Gangeya, bull among all archers, said, “O son![520] Ask me what you wish. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Do not be scared.”’

Chapter 1384(56)

Vaishampayana said, 'Yudhishthira bowed down before Hrishikesha and the grandfather. He took the permission of all the seniors and asked, "Those who are learned about dharma say that ruling the kingdom is supreme dharma. O king! I think that it is a great burden. Tell me about this. O grandfather! In particular, tell me about rajadharma.[521] All the beings in the world find a refuge in rajadharma. O Kourava! The three *varga*s[522] are dependent on rajadharma. All the forms of mokshadharma[523] are also clearly based on it. It is like the harness for a horse, or the goad for an elephant. It has been said that the dharma of kings restrains the world in that way. The rajarshis served that dharma earlier. It is becoming confused now, the world will no longer be established and everyone will become anxious. When the sun rises, it dispels the demonic darkness. In that way, rajadharma casts away everything that is inauspicious in this world. O grandfather! O best of the Bharata lineage! O supreme among intelligent ones! Therefore, tell me about the true nature of rajadharma first. O scorcher of enemies! We obtain the truth about all kinds of learning from you. Vasudeva thinks that you are supreme among intelligent ones."

'Bhishma replied, "I bow down before the supreme dharma. I bow down before the supreme Krishna. I honour the brahmanas. I will now speak about eternal dharma. O Yudhishthira! Hear from me a complete account of rajadharma. Listen attentively to everything else that you wish to hear. O best of the Kuru lineage! In the beginning, a king who desires pleasure must worship the gods and the brahmanas in the proper way. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Once one has worshipped the gods and the brahmanas, one is freed of the debts of dharma and is revered by the worlds. O son! O Yudhishthira! You must always strive to uplift yourself. Without the exertion, fortune never makes a king's objectives successful. In general, there are two aspects—destiny and enterprise. But I certainly think it has been said that enterprise is superior to destiny. Even if a task begun does not go well, it is pointless to rue that. O son! If a king is led astray, he must make greater efforts. With the exception of truth, there is nothing that contributes to the success of kings. If a king is devoted to the truth, he finds delight here, and in the hereafter. O Indra among kings! Truth is the supreme wealth for rishis too. Like that, nothing inspires as much confidence in kings as adherence to supreme truth. If one possesses qualities and good conduct, is self-controlled and mild, is devoted to dharma and has conquered the senses, if one is extremely handsome and has a broad objective[524]—then one never deviates from prosperity. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! One must resort to uprightness in all tasks. One must reconsider policy and conceal the three.[525] If a king is mild, everyone always disregards him. But if a king is fierce, everyone is troubled. Therefore, act so that you are both. O supreme among generous ones! Brahmanas must never be punished. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who are brahmanas are named as supreme beings in this world. O Indra among kings! The great-souled Manu sung two shlokas about this. O Kouravya! This was about one's own dharma and you should bear this in your heart. 'Fire emerged from water. Kshatriyas emerged from brahmanas. Iron emerged from stone. The energy of each of these is pacified by the source.[526] When iron confronts stone, fire faces water and kshatriyas hate brahmanas, then each of these three is destroyed.' O great king! Knowing this, you must bow down before brahmanas. The best of brahmanas are full of peace and represent the brahman on earth. O tiger among kings! However, you must always use your arms to restrain those who seem to be like that, but actually destroy the edifice of the world.[527] O son! Maharshi Ushanas sang two shlokas in earlier times. O immensely wise one! O king! Listen to them attentively. 'A lord of men, who is following his own dharma, should consider dharma and raise his weapons to even counter someone who knows the Vedas in battle, if that person attacks him. If dharma is being destroyed, the one who protects it is the one who is following dharma. If one counters anger with anger, the sin of killing a foetus does not result.'[528] O best of men! The brahmanas must be protected in this way. If they commit a crime, they must be exiled to the extremities of the kingdom. O lord of men! But there must be compassion for those who are accused, even those who kill a brahmana, violate the preceptor's bed, or kill a foetus. A brahmana who hates the king must be banished outside the kingdom and it is never recommended that there should be corporal punishment. O supreme among men! You must always be affectionate towards men. For a king, there is no treasure as supreme as the store of men.

'"O great king! There are six kinds of forts that are indicated in the sacred texts.[529] Among all these, it is held that the one protected by men is the most difficult to breach. Therefore, a learned king must act so as to be compassionate towards the four varnas. If a king has dharma in his soul and speaks the truth, he delights the subjects. O supreme among men! However, you should not be indulgent all the time. A mild king follows adharma. He is like a forgiving elephant. In the sacred texts of Brihaspati, a shloka was laid down in earlier times. O great king! It has a bearing on this. I am reciting it. Listen attentively. 'A forgiving king is always subjugated by the inferior, who are like elephant riders who mount the head of an elephant and wound it. Therefore, a king must not be gentle all the time. He must also be harsh. He should be like the sun in the summer, not too cold and not too hot.' O great king! You must always examine friend and foe through direction, examination, inference, analogies and instructions.[530] O one who donates a lot! You must give up all the vices. Even if one indulges in them, one must give up addiction. In the world, people who indulge in vices are always overcome. If a king does not love his subjects, he generates anxiety. The king must always treat them the way a wife treats her embryo. O great king! Listen to the reasons why this is desirable. For the welfare of the embryo, a pregnant woman ceases to follow everything that brings pleasure to her mind alone. The king must certainly be like that. O best among the Kuru lineage! He must always follow dharma. For the welfare of the world, he must abandon everything that he likes. O Pandava! However, you must never abandon truth and fortitude. The commands of someone who is patient and firm in meting out punishment are not contravened.

'"O supreme among eloquent ones! You must always avoid cracking jokes with the servants. O tiger among kings! Listen to the reasons why it is wrong to do that. If one involves the servants in pleasure, they disregard the master. They no longer remain in their appointed places and disobey his words. Sent on a task, they think about it and disclose the secret. They ask what they should not ask for. They eat what they should not eat. They become angry and flare up. They lie down on his bed. They resort to deceit, accept bribes and hamper the undertaking of tasks. They indulge in forgeries and cause the prosperity to decay. They dress like the female guards and consort with them. In his[531] presence, they pass wind and spit. O tiger among men! They become shameless and laugh at his words. When the king is cheerful and mild, they mount the king’s beloved horse, tusker and chariot. ‘O king! It will be difficult for you to do this. You should not have attempted this.’ The courtiers, known as well-wishers, speak in this way. They laugh when he is angry. They are not delighted when they are honoured. For various reasons, they always begin to fight with each other. They divulge secrets and cover up their wicked deeds. They treat his commands with mockery and disdain, such as about ornaments, food, bathing and unguents. O tiger among men! They are comfortable with ignoring them, even when they listen to him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They censure their own stations and abandon them. They are not satisfied with their salaries and appropriate what belongs to the king. They toy with him as they will, like with a bird tied to a string. They tell people, ‘The king is devoted to us.’ O Yudhishthira! When the king is mild and cheerful, these and many other sins manifest themselves.”’

Chapter 1385(57)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! The king must always exert himself. Without exertion, a king fades away, like a woman. O lord of the earth! The illustrious Ushanas has a shloka on this. O king! As I recite it, listen attentively to me. ‘Like a snake that swallows animals who live in burrows, there are two things that are swallowed up by the earth—a king who does not oppose and a brahmana who does not leave his home.’[532] O tiger among men! Therefore, you must bear this in your heart. You must ally with those one should have alliances with. You must resist those who should be resisted. The kingdom has seven limbs.[533] Anyone who acts against these must be slain, even if he happens to be a preceptor or a friend. O Indra among kings! King Marutta sang an ancient shloka about governing a kingdom, in conformity with Brihaspati’s ancient views. ‘It is recommended that a preceptor must be abandoned, if he is haughty, cannot distinguish between what should be done and what should not be done, and is inclined to take the wrong path.’ To ensure the welfare of the citizens, the intelligent King Sagara, Bahu’s son, exiled his eldest son Asamanja.[534] O king! Asamanja had earlier drowned the children of the citizens in the Sarayu. His father censured him and exiled him. The great ascetic Shvetaketu was the beloved son of rishi Uddalaka. But because he falsely made brahmanas follow him, he was abandoned.

‘“The eternal duty of kings is ensuring the pleasure of the subjects, protecting the truth and uprightness in conduct. He must not cause harm to the possessions of others. At the right time, he must give what should be given. A king who is brave, truthful in his speech and forgiving, does not deviate from the path to be trodden. His counsels are secret. He conquers anger. He is firm in determining the purport of the sacred texts. He is always devoted to dharma, artha, kama and moksha. The king must always cover weaknesses in the three.[535] There is nothing as important for kings as the control of the wicked.

The lords of the earth must protect the dharma of the four varnas. The eternal dharma of kings is to prevent a mixing of dharma.[536] The king must not trust and must not trust too much. Using his own intelligence, he must always examine the good and the bad in the six aspects.[537] A king who can detect weaknesses in the enemy is always praised. So is one who knows the truth of the three objectives[538] and uses the strategy of employing spies. Like Yama and Vaishravana,[539] he must add to the treasury. He should know about the increase and decrease in the status of the ten.[540] He should support those who have no one to support them. However, he must also have an eye towards those who possess support. A king must have an excellent face and must smile before he speaks. He must revere those who are aged and conquer excessive lassitude. He should consider the conduct of the righteous and set his mind on the conduct of the righteous. He must never take away riches from the hands of the righteous. Instead, he must take it away from those who are wicked and give it to those who are righteous. He is himself the one who gives and takes away. Therefore, his soul must be under control and so must those who serve him. He will be pure in his conduct. At the right time, he will give and enjoy. Men who are born in noble lineages, are without disease and are brave and faithful must be employed as advisers. They must be good in conduct. They must not be disrespectful towards relatives[541] and must not be proud. They must possess learning and be conversant with this world. However, they must also be able to look at the world hereafter. They must be virtuous and devoted to dharma. They must be as immobile as mountains. The king must always reward these aides and they should be his equal in the objects of pleasure that they enjoy. In addition, the king will only possess his umbrella. The king’s behaviour towards them, directly and indirectly, will be the same.[542] If he acts in this way, an Indra among kings will never repent. A king who is suspicious of everything, a king who takes everything away and a king who is addicted to wickedness is quickly restrained by his own subjects. However, a lord of the earth who is pure and is engaged in attracting the hearts of the subjects is not devoured by the enemy when he falls. Even when he falls, he rises again. A king who is without anger, not addicted to vices, a king who wields a mild rod of punishment and has conquered his senses, is trusted by beings, as if he was the Himalayas. He is wise. He possesses all the qualities and is engaged in detecting the weaknesses of the enemy. He is extremely handsome. He considers the truth about what is good and bad for the four varnas. He is swift to act. He has conquered his anger. He is high-minded and is extremely easy to please. He is naturally free from disease. He acts and does not boast. He endeavours to complete all the tasks that have been begun.

'"When such a king is seen, that king is supreme among kings. Men in his kingdom roam around fearlessly, like sons in the house of a father. That king is supreme among kings. Citizens who reside in his kingdom know about good policy and bad and do not need to hide their riches. Such a king is supreme among kings. Men who reside in his kingdom are engaged in their own tasks. They do not quarrel and are generous. They are properly protected. They are docile, obedient and humble. They are not inclined to fight. In a kingdom where men find pleasure in donating, he is indeed a king. There is no fraud and deceit. There is no maya. There is no malice. In the kingdom of such a king, there is eternal dharma. He shows proper respect to learning. He is engaged in good policies that bring benefits to citizens. He follows the dharma of the righteous and is ready to renounce. He is indeed a king in the kingdom. He uses spies. However, his counsels, what he will do, and what he will not do, is never known to enemies. He is indeed a king in the kingdom. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is an ancient shloka that the great-souled Bhargava had sung, which was recited to the king when he was told about Rama's conduct.[543] 'First, get a king.[544] Get a wife after that. After that, obtain riches. If there is no kingdom in this world, how can there be a wife? How can there be riches?' O lion among kings! Therefore, this is the eternal dharma of kings and nothing else. One must clearly protect. The world is sustained on that protection. O Indra among kings! Manu, the son of Prachetasa, recited these two shlokas about rajadharma.[545] Listen attentively to this. 'There are six men who must be avoided, like a broken boat on an ocean—a preceptor who does not speak, an officiating priest who has not studied, a king who does not protect, a wife who does not speak sweetly, a cowherd who wishes to be in a village and a barber who desires to go to the forest."'[546]

Chapter 1386(58)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! In rajadharma, this is like freshly churned butter. The illustrious Brihaspati praises this and no other dharma. The large-eyed and illustrious Kavya, the great ascetic,[547] the thousand-eyed and great Indra, Manu, the son of Prachetasa, the illustrious Bharadvaja and the sage Gourashira were devoted to Brahma and learned about the brahman. They composed sacred texts about what kings should do. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! They praised the dharma of protection. O one with eyes like blue lotuses tinged with coppery red! O Yudhishthira! Listen to the means of accomplishing this—spies, the act of spying, donations, lack of jealousy, receiving things properly[548] and not receiving improperly, selecting the virtuous,[549] bravery, skill, truth, the welfare of subjects, using fair and foul means to create discord and enmity within the ranks of the enemy, not abandoning righteous people, supporting those born in noble lineages, storing things that should be stored, serving those who are intelligent, finding delight in strength, always glancing towards the welfare of subjects, lack of lethargy in tasks, extending the treasury, protecting the city, distrust, breaking up quarrels between citizens, paying attention to houses that are decayed or falling down, depending on the context, using both kinds of punishment,[550] paying attention to friends, foes and neutrals, weaning away servants who are inclined to move from one’s side to that of the enemy, distrust of those on one’s own side, assurance towards the enemy, following the policy of dharma, constant readiness for action, not disregarding the enemy and the abandoning of those who are wicked.

‘“There are shlokas where Brihaspati has spoken about the rise of kings and the roots of rajadharma. Listen to these. ‘Amrita was obtained through enterprise. The asuras were slain through enterprise. It is through enterprise that the great Indra obtained superiority in heaven. It is because of enterprise that a courageous person is superior to one who is eloquent. Those who are clever with words gratify and worship the ones who are courageous in enterprise.[551] Even if he has intelligence, if a king lacks enterprise, he is always oppressed by the enemy, like a snake without any poison.' Even if one is stronger, one must not ignore a weaker enemy. A small fire can also burn. A little bit of poison can kill. If an enemy is inside a fortification and only possesses horses, he is capable of afflicting, here and there, a king with a prosperous kingdom. The secret words of a king, the amassing of troops for victory, the deceit in his heart, tasks that are done for specific purposes and the crooked acts that he undertakes—must be sustained by rectitude.[552] Even for the sake of deceiving the people, he must act in accordance with dharma. Sustaining a kingdom is extremely difficult. A person who has not cleansed his soul cannot bear the burden. One has to sustain grievous assaults and the mild cannot tolerate this. A kingdom is like a piece of meat. It must always be supported by rectitude. O Yudhishthira! You must always support it in a mixed way.[553] Even if one confronts a calamity when protecting the subjects, lords of the earth who act in this way accumulate great dharma. I have told you a little bit about rajadharma. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me about the doubts that still remain."'

Vaishampayana said, 'At this, the illustrious Vyasa, Devasthana, Ashma, Vasudeva, Kripa, Satyaki and Sanjaya, uttered words of praise. They were delighted and their faces were like blooming flowers. They honoured Bhishma, tiger among men and supreme among those who uphold dharma. With a distressed mind, the supreme among the Kuru lineage[554] gently touched Bhishma's feet, his eyes completely overflowing with tears. He said, "O grandfather! I will ask you about my doubts tomorrow. The sun has drunk the juice of the earth and is setting." Keshava, Kripa, Yudhishthira and the others honoured the brahmanas. Having circumambulated the son of the great river, they happily ascended their chariots. They were good in their vows and bathed in the Dhrishadvati. Having performed ablutions in the water, they observed the auspicious rites. As was appropriate, those scorchers of enemies observed the evening rites. They then entered the city of Gajasahvya.'[555]

Chapter 1387(59)

Vaishampayana said, ‘At the right time, the Pandavas and the Yadavas arose and performed their morning ablutions. They set out on chariots that looked like cities. They went to Kurukshetra and approached the unblemished Bhishma. They asked if Gangeya, supreme among rathas, had spent the night in happiness. They paid their respects to Vyasa and all the other rishis. Then, in every direction, they seated themselves around Bhishma. The king, the immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, joined his hands in salutation. He paid his respects to Bhishma and asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The word raja, raja keeps circulating around. O grandfather! What is its origin? Tell me. A man possesses hands, head and neck that are similar to those of others. His understanding, senses and soul are similar. His sense of unhappiness and happiness are similar. His back, arms and stomach are similar. His semen, bones and marrow are similar. His flesh and blood are similar. His inhalation and exhalation are similar. His breath of life and body are similar. His birth and death are similar. All his human qualities are similar. Among all those with bravery and intelligence, why does a single one stand out as superior? The entire earth is full of brave, valiant and noble people. Why does one alone protect it and why do all the people wish to please him? If a single one is pleased, all the people are pleased. When he is troubled, it is certainly the case that everyone is troubled. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear the entire truth about this. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me the exact truth about this. O lord of the earth! It cannot be a trifling reason that the entire world worships a single person like a god.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O best among men! Listen attentively to everything, about how, in the beginning, royalty was created in krita yuga. At that time, there was no sovereignty and no king. There was no punishment and no one to chastise. In accordance with dharma, all the subjects protected each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In accordance with dharma, all the men sustained each other. However, they became extremely exhausted and confusion pervaded them. O bull among men! When people were overcome by confusion, this confusion affected their perception and dharma was destroyed. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! All of them were overcome by avarice. The men then hankered after what was not theirs. O lord! Then the vice named desire took over. When they came under the subjugation of desire, passion touched them. O Yudhishthira! O Indra among kings! Because of that passion, they were no longer aware of what should be done and what should not be done, whom one should have intercourse with and whom not with, what should be said and what should not be said, what should be eaten and what should not be eaten, and what was good and what was bad. They accepted what should be discarded. When this world was in disorder, the brahman was destroyed.[556] O king! When the brahman was destroyed, dharma was also destroyed. When the brahman and dharma were destroyed, the gods were frightened. O tiger among men! In their terror, they sought refuge with Brahma. The gods approached the illustrious grandfather of the worlds. They were afflicted by sorrow, grief and fright. All of them joined their hands in salutation and said, 'O illustrious one! The eternal brahman that was present in the world of men has been destroyed. There are sentiments like avarice and confusion there. We are overcome by terror. O original lord! With the brahman having been destroyed, dharma has also been destroyed. O lord of the three worlds! We have become the same as mortals. They poured oblations upwards. We showered downwards on earth.[557] Now that those supreme rites have stopped, we are faced with an uncertainty. O grandfather! Determine what will be beneficial for us. Your power results from our power and that is being destroyed.' Having been thus addressed by all the gods, the illustrious Svayambhu[558] replied, 'O bulls among the gods! I will think about your welfare. Do not be frightened.' Using his own intelligence, he composed one hundred thousand chapters that described dharma, artha and kama. Svayambhu designated these categories *trivarga*.[559] The fourth one of moksha was a separate objective and a separate category. Within moksha, three categories of sattva, rajas and tamas were spoken of.[560]

'"Preservation, increase and destruction were three categories that were the consequence of chastisement. The self, place, time, means, tasks, aides and causes were said to be the six ingredients of policy.[561] O bull among the Bharata lineage! In this extensive corpus of learning, the three,[562] analysis, livelihood and the policy of punishment are laid down. The means of protecting oneself against aides, protecting oneself against princes, the use of spies and other methods and the use of secret agents are separately indicated.[563] O Pandava! All the techniques of sama, *dana*, danda, *bheda* and the fifth one of *upeksha* are completely laid down.[564] All the secret methods of creating dissension have been described, and also when these secret methods fail. The consequences of success and failure are given. The various kinds of alliances —inferior, middling and superior—based respectively on creating fear, showering honour and offering riches, have been completely described. There is an account of the four kinds of time for departure[565] and a complete description of the three kinds of victory—victory for reasons of dharma, victory for reasons of artha and objectives, and victory that is asura in nature.[566] The three kinds of characteristics associated with the five categories have also been described.[567] Direct and indirect kinds of punishment have been recounted. Indirect punishment is of many different kinds. O Pandava! There are eight that are direct—chariots, elephants, horses, foot soldiers, compulsory service, boats, spies and guides for the road[568] as the eighth. O Kouravya! These are the eight direct manifestations of an army. The use and administration of many types of poison and mixtures in mobile and immobile objects has also been described, such as through objects one touches and objects one uses. Enemies, friends and neutral ones have been recounted. There are qualities of roads, qualities of the ground, the technique of protecting, the technique of providing assurance and keeping a lookout for spies. There are different methods for arranging men, elephants, chariots and horses in diverse *vyuha*s and many wonderful techniques of fighting. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is also information about portents, accidents, fighting well, retreating well and knowledge about making the weapons drink.[569] O Pandava! How is an army freed from a calamity? How is the army's delight increased? What are the times for attacking and destroying? When should one take fright? Techniques of laying trenches and other methods have been described. How does one afflict the kingdom of an enemy through the use of thieves, mountain-dwelling bandits and fierce soldiers? How does one use arsonists, poisoners and spies in disguise? How are foremost members of guilds weaned away?[570] How are the plants uprooted? How are his elephants corrupted? How are his subjects terrified? How are those loyal to him dissuaded? How does one control the roads? The waxing and waning of the seven parts of the kingdom[571] are described and the extension of the prosperity of the kingdom through the use of emissaries. The development of enemies, neutrals and allies is completely enumerated. How does one grind down and counter stronger enemies? What are the extremely subtle methods used for uprooting thorns? How does one pacify oneself? What are the methods of exercise? How does one use yoga and accumulate objects? Those who are not servants must be sustained and servants must be taken care of. Riches must be given at the right time and one must be free from vices. There are the qualities of a king and the qualities of a commander. There are reasons and tasks and their good and bad aspects. There are signs to discern if someone is wicked and is ensuring livelihoods for those who are dependents. One must be suspicious of everything and avoid being negligent. One must seek to obtain what one does not possess and extend it. In the proper way, this increase must be given away to deserving people. Wealth must be expended for reasons of dharma, artha and kama. The fourth aspect of avoiding vices has also been described there. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! The ten kinds of vices have been described, the most important arising from anger or from desire. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The preceptors say, following Svayambhu, that hunting, gambling with dice, drinking and women are the ones that are born from desire. Harshness in speech, violence, harshness in punishment, inflicting pain on one’s own self, suicide and the destruction of one’s own riches are mentioned.[572] There is a description of many kinds of machines and their action. How does one counter those of the enemy? How does one shatter his houses? How does one destroy his sanctuaries, trees and boundaries and destroy the tasks he is engaged in? The techniques of spreading out, advancing and stationing have been described. O supreme among warriors! There are the six aspects of cymbals, drums, conch shells, battle drums, the obtaining of supplies and the weak spots of the enemy.

‘“What has been obtained[573] must be pacified and the virtuous ones honoured. One must become friendly with these learned ones and learn the methods used to offer oblations in the mornings. What are the auspicious signs followed for the body? What are the food habits and what the rites always followed by believers? One must single-mindedly determine this, using truth and pleasant words. What are the festivals observed by society and what kind of rituals do those residents follow? O tiger among the Bharata lineage! One must always keep an eye on all the rights and livelihoods—direct, as well as indirect. The non-punishment of brahmanas, the use of punishment against the wicked, the protection of the good qualities of followers and relatives, the protection of citizens and the extension of the kingdom has been described. O king! There are thoughts about a circle of twelve kings. Depending on country, race and family, Svayambhu spoke about the seventy-two aspects of dharma.[574] Dharma, artha, kama and moksha were described there. There were many methods to satisfy the desire for riches and the giving away of large quantities of donations. The fundamental tasks and rites and maya and yoga were described. The techniques for poisoning flowing and stagnant waters were described. There were all the methods so that people did not deviate from the noble path. O tiger among kings! All these aspects of policy were laid down in that sacred text.

'"Having composed this auspicious text, the illustrious lord cheerfully addressed all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront. 'This is for the welfare of the worlds and is established in the three objectives.[575] This is full of intelligence and is like newly churned butter that has emerged from the Sarasvati.[576] With the use of the rod, this will protect the worlds. It will reward and punish and roam around the world. It will be known as *dandaniti*[577] and the three worlds will follow it. Great-souled ones will place it at the forefront, representing the essence of the six qualities.[578] The greatness of punishment will be evident in all aspects of policy.' O Yudhishthira! Everything has been described here—the extensive corpus of good policy, the learned texts and the Puranas, the origin of the maharshis, the list of tirthas, the list of nakshatras, everything about the four ashramas and the four kinds of oblations,[579] descriptions of the four varnas and the four Vedas, all the descriptions about itihasa, the minor Vedas[580] and good policy, austerities, knowledge, non-violence, the best policy about the true and the false, the serving of seniors, donations, purity, enterprise and compassion towards all beings. All of this has been described here. O Pandava! There is no doubt that everything that exists on earth in the form of speech has been assembled in this sacred text by the grandfather. Everything has been pronounced about dharma, artha, kama and moksha.

'"The illustrious Shankara Shiva Sthanu, the many-formed and large-eyed consort of Uma, received this policy first. The illustrious Shiva knew that the lifespan decreases from one yuga to another.[581] He therefore abridged the text, full of great import, prepared by Brahma. The immensely asectic one then gave this text, known as Vaishalaksha[582] to Indra, who was extremely devoted to Brahma. It had ten thousand chapters. O son![583] The illustrious Indra abridged it to a text with five thousand and this was known as Bahudantaka. The intelligent lord Brihaspati abridged it to three thousand and this is known as Barhaspatya.[584] The immensely wise and great ascetic Kavya,[585] the preceptor of yoga, reduced it to one thousand and recounted it. O Pandava! Thus, knowing that the lifespan of mortals was becoming reduced, at the request of the worlds, the maharshis abridged the text.

'"Once, the gods went to Prajapati Vishnu and said, 'Tell us about one person who deserves to be superior to other mortals.' The illustrious lord, god Narayana, thought about this. Through his mental powers, he created an energetic son named Virajas. O immensely fortunate one! O Pandava! However, Virajas did not wish to rule over earth. His mind was on renunciation. He had a son named Kirtiman, but he too was interested in what was beyond the five.[586] He had a son named Kardama, who tormented himself through great austerities. Kardama Prajapati had a son named Ananga. This virtuous one was accomplished in dandaniti[587] and protected the subjects. Ananga's son, Atibala, obtained knowledge of policy. However, having become the king of the earth, he was overcome by addiction to the senses. O king! Through his mental powers, Mrityu[588] had a daughter named Sunitha. She was famous in the three worlds and gave birth to Vena. But he became a prey to passion and hatred and used adharma against the subjects. The rishis, knowledgeable about the brahman, purified and invoked blades of kusha grass with mantras and killed him with this. The rishis then used mantras to churn his right thigh.[589] At this, a malformed man was created on the ground and he was a dwarf. His eyes were red. His hair was black and he looked like a post that had been burnt. The rishis, knowledgeable about the brahman, asked him to sit down. That is how the cruel Nishadas were created[590] and they dwelt in mountains and forests. Hundreds and thousands of other mlecchas were also created and they made their abode in the Vindhya mountains. The maharshis then churned his right hand. A man was created and his form was like that of Indra himself. He was armoured and his sword was girded. He held a bow and arrows. He was accomplished in the Vedas, the Vedangas and dhanurveda. O supreme among kings! That king possessed the splendour of all of dandaniti. Vainya[591] joined his hands in salutation and spoke to the maharshis. 'An excellent and subtle intelligence that tells me about dharma and artha has arisen in me. What is my task? Tell me the truth about this and instruct me. Tell me about tasks that are full of objectives. Without thinking about it, I will do whatever you ask me to.' The gods and the supreme rishis told him, 'Restrain yourself. Without any doubt, follow dharma. Treat all living beings alike, irrespective of whom you like and whom you don't like. Abandon desire, anger, avarice and price and cast these off far away. Always have your eye on dharma and use your arms to punish all the men in the world who deviate from dharma. In thoughts, deeds and speech, take this pledge. "I will honour and protect the brahman on earth. I will never resort to my own inclinations. Instead, without any doubt, I will follow the policy of dharma and use dandaniti." O scorcher of enemies! Also take a pledge to never punish brahmanas and protect the entire earth against the creation of hybrid varnas.' Vainya replied to the gods, with the rishis at the forefront. 'O bulls among the gods! If the brahmanas and the gods aid me, I will do this.' Those who knew about the brahman agreed with Vainya's words. Shukra, who was a store of the brahman, became his priest. The Valakhilyas became his advisers and the Sarasvatyas followed him. The illustrious maharshi Garga became the reckoner of time.[592]

'"There is a supreme saying among men. 'He is himself the eighth.'[593] Those who chanted praises were created, bards and minstrels[594] being the foremost. He[595] levelled the earth and made it plain. We have heard that earlier, the earth was uneven. Vishnu, the god Shakra, the other gods, the rishis and Brahma consecrated him to rule over the subjects. O Pandava! The earth herself presented him with jewels. So did the ocean, the lord of the rivers, and the supreme mountains, the Himalayas. O Yudhishthira! Shakra gave him inexhaustible riches. The golden mount, the great Meru, himself gave him gold. The illustrious Naravahana,[596] the lord of yakshas and rakshasas, gave him riches so that he would be capable of following dharma, artha and kama. O Pandava! As soon as Vainya thought of them, horses, chariots, elephants and crores of men manifested themselves. There was no old age, famine, hardship or disease. Because of the protection offered by the king, there was no fear from reptiles and thieves. He milked the earth for the seventeen kinds of grain.[597] Yakshas, rakshasas and serpents, each obtained whatever they wished for. Thus did the great-souled one ensure supreme dharma in the world. He pleased all the subjects and everyone came to call him raja.[598] The word kshatriya is used because he saved the brahmanas from injury.[599] Virtuous ones have said that the earth is famous for being strewn with riches.[600] O king! The eternal Vishnu himself established the rule that no one would ever be able to transgress the king. Through his austerities, the illustrious Vishnu penetrated the king. O king! That is the reason the world bowed down to and honoured this god among human gods.[601]

'"O lord of men! You must always protect through the use of dandaniti. You must see to it so that it is never afflicted by anyone and use spies for this. The king is equal to everyone else. With the exception that divine qualities exist inside him, there is no reason for everyone in the world to honour him. A golden lotus was generated from Vishnu's forehead. This was the goddess Shri[602] and she became the wife of the intelligent Dharma. O Pandava! Through Shri, Artha was born to Dharma. Therefore, prosperity, dharma and artha are always established in the kingdom. O son![603] When good deeds are exhausted, a person is dislodged from the world of heaven and is born on earth as a king, to follow dandaniti. Such a man on earth is united with the greatness of Vishnu. He is united with intelligence and attains greatness. No one transgresses what has been established by the gods. That is the reason everyone remains under the subjugation of one man. O Indra among kings! Though he is equal to the others in the world, because his good deeds lead to good consequences, everyone follows his words. Whoever glances at his peaceful face comes under his control. He sees someone who is extremely fortunate, prosperous and handsome. O Indra among kings! O lord of the earth! That is the reason the learned pronounce that on earth, gods and human gods are similar. This is the entire account about the greatness of kings. O best among the Bharata lineage! I have said everything. What should we do now?"'

Chapter 1388(60)

Vaishampayana said, 'Yudhishthira again saluted his grandfather, Gangeya. He joined his hands in salutation, composed himself and asked, "What is dharma for all the varnas? What is it for each of the varnas separately? What are the views on the four ashramas and for rajadharma? Why does a kingdom prosper? Why does a king prosper? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Why do citizens and servants prosper? What kind of treasury, punishment, forts, aides, advisers, officiating priests, priests[604] and preceptors should a king avoid? When there is a hardship, whom should a king trust? Whom should a king firmly protect himself against? O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "I bow down to the great dharma. I bow down to Krishna, the origin. Having bowed down to the brahmanas, I will speak about eternal dharma. There are nine aspects that are applicable to all varnas—lack of anger, truthfulness in speech, sharing properly, forgiveness, procreation on one's wife, purification, non-injury, rectitude and supporting the servants.

'"I will now tell you about the dharma that only applies to brahmanas. O great king! It is said that self-control is the ancient dharma. There are also tasks like studying and teaching that must be completed. All other acts are a consequence of these two acts. If a man is calm and content with wisdom, he should not do anything improper. He should marry, have offspring, practise donations and perform sacrifices. It is said that riches that bring enjoyment must be shared amongst the virtuous. If a brahmana studies, he has accomplished his greatest task. Whether he performs any other task or does not perform any other task, such a brahmana is spoken of as a Maitra.[605]

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the dharma of kshatriyas. The king must give and not beg. He must perform sacrifices, but not officiate at the sacrifices of others. He should not teach, but can study. He must protect the subjects. He must always show enterprise in killing bandits. He must act valiantly in a battle. Kings who perform sacrifices, are learned and are victorious in battle conquer supreme worlds. Those who are learned about the ancient accounts do not praise the deeds of a kshatriya who retreats from battle without any wounds on his body. The chief task of a kshatriya has been said to kill. There is no task as important for him as the slaying of bandits. Donations, studying, performing sacrifices, acquisition of goods and their preservation are recommended. However, specifically, a king who desires dharma must fight. The lord of the earth must ensure that all the subjects are established in their own dharma. All their tasks must be properly accomplished, in accordance with dharma. Through protection, the king accomplishes his most important task. Whether he performs other tasks or does not perform other tasks, such a king is spoken of as Aindra.[606]

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the dharma of vaishyas—donations, studying, the performance of sacrifices, purity and the accumulation of wealth. Like a father, a vaishya must protect all animals. Any other task that he undertakes will be regarded as a wrong task for him. By protecting in this way, he will obtain great happiness. After creating animals, Prajapati gave them to vaishyas. He gave all the subjects to brahmanas and the king. I will tell you about their[607] means of sustenance and livelihood. Out of six cows, he can take the milk from one. Out of a hundred cattle, he can take a cow and a bull. When a cow is dead, he can have one-seventh of the body and horns as his share and one-sixteenth of the hooves.[608] In all the seeds of grain crops, his share is one-seventh.[609] This is his annual maintenance. A vaishya should never have the desire of not tending to animals. If a vaishya is willing, no one else should ever take care of them.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the dharma of shudras. Prajapati thought of shudras as a varna marked for servitude. Serving is recommended for the shudra varna. Their great happiness results from serving others. Without any hatred, shudras should serve the other three varnas. A person who has been born as a shudra should never amass anything. If such a wicked person accumulates riches, he will make his superiors subordinate to him. However, with a king's permission, an exception is permitted, or if he[610] wishes to pursue dharma. I will tell you about his means of sustenance and livelihood. It is said that the other varnas must certainly support the shudra. When umbrellas, headdresses, beds, sandals and fans are worn out, they should be given to shudras who are servants. Garments that are torn should not be worn by the three other varnas. Those are meant for shudras and, under dharma, those are their riches. People who are learned in dharma say that when a shudra wishes to serve and comes to any of the other three varnas, work must be found for him. If such a person is weak and aged and doesn't have any offspring, his master must arrange his funeral cake[611] for him. If there is hardship, the shudra must never abandon the master. If the master's possessions are destroyed, he must support the master with anything extra that he has. For a shudra, nothing belongs to him. His riches are his master's. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The three types of sacrifice[612] have been recommended for the other three varnas. *Svaha* and uttering *nama*s are the mantras recommended for shudras.[613] Using these two, the shudra can himself perform rites and observe *pakayajna*. The dakshina for a pakayajna is said to be a *purnapatra*.[614] We have heard of a shudra named Paijavana, who followed the rules laid down by Indra and Agni and gave away one hundred thousand as dakshina.[615]

'"Sacrifices with devotion are recommended for all the varnas. Great devotion is divine and purifies all those who sacrifice. Brahmanas worship the supreme divinity, individually and collectively. They have their own desires, but perform eternal sacrifices.[616] The other three varnas were created from brahmanas. They are like the gods of the gods. What they utter is supreme. Therefore, all the sacrifices performed by the varnas have the same end, even if they result from individual desires. A brahmana who knows Rig, Sama and Yajur must be worshipped like a god. One who does not know Rig, Sama and Yajur is a misfortune for Prajapati. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Depending on their wishes, all the varnas sacrifice. The gods do not serve the needs of inferior people who are against sacrifices. Therefore, sacrifices with devotion are recommended for all the varnas. The brahmanas always worship their own gods. But they also performed sacrifices for the other varnas. The other three varnas saw that the brahmanas were created for this and this extremely great dharma should be respected by us. Because of this natural dharma, the varnas remain upright. They were created and matured in this way. The Sama was one. The Yajur was one. The Rig was one. But it is certainly seen that the brahmanas are also but one.[617] O Indra among kings! Those who know about the ancient accounts recount a song that was sung about this at a sacrifice, when the Vaikhanasa sages wished to perform a sacrifice. ‘When the sun has risen, or just before it has risen, one must be full of devotion and conquer one’s senses. One must then follow dharma, light a fire and pour oblations into it. Devotion is the greatest cause. What was earlier spilt was subsequently not spilt.[618] There are many different kinds of sacrifices and many different kinds of fruits arise from these deeds. A person who knows about all of these is certainly someone whose knowledge is firm. Such a man, who is a brahmana and is full of devotion, can officiate at a sacrifice. It is said that a thief, a wicked person and one who is supremely wicked among the wicked, becomes virtuous if he wishes to perform a sacrifice and performs it. There is no doubt that the rishis praise him as righteous. Certainly, all the varnas must always perform sacrifices. There is nothing in the three worlds that is equal to a sacrifice.’[619] Therefore, it has been said that a man must perform sacrifices without any malice. He must resort to purification and devotion. He must endeavour to the best of his capacity.”’

Chapter 1389(61)

‘Bhisma said, “O mighty-armed one! O one whose valour is truth! O Yudhishthira! Listen to the four ashramas and the tasks to be performed by the four varnas. It is said that the conduct of brahmanas is vanaprastha, *bhaiksha*,[620] the great ashrama of garhasthya and the fourth ashrama of brahmacharya. A person belonging to the first three varnas[621] will perform the *samskara*[622] of getting one’s hair matted. He will then perform deeds connected with the sacrificial fire[623] and studying the Vedas. He will then control himself and control his senses. Having performed the tasks required of a householder, he will then leave for vanaprastha, with his wife, or without his wife. He will study the sacred texts known as the Aranyakas and will become learned about dharma. Having already had offspring, he will hold up his seed and advance towards the end where his soul becomes one with the brahman. O king! Sages hold up their seed. A learned brahmana may observe these signs and duties right from the beginning.[624] O lord of the earth! After completing brahmacharya, if a brahmana seeks moksha, his rights to resorting to bhaiksha on this earth are praised. When the sun sets, he will sleep wherever he is. He will have no home and no fire in it. He will subsist on whatever is available. He will be a controlled sage who has conquered his senses. He will be without any desires and will look upon everything as equal. He will be without pleasures and will be indifferent towards everything. Such a brahmana, who has reached a state of tranquility, will advance towards the end where his soul becomes one with the brahman.

‘“He will study the Vedas and do everything that he is supposed to do.[625] He will have offspring and enjoy all the objects that bring happiness. He will control himself and observe the dharma of garhasthya, which is perceived to be more difficult than the dharma of ascetics. He will be satisfied with his own wife and approach her when it is her season. However, he will accept the system of *niyoga*[626] and will not be deceitful or cunning. He will not eat a lot. He will be devoted to the gods and grateful. He will be truthful, gentle, non-violent and forgiving. He will be self-controlled and not be distracted in offering oblations to the gods and the ancestors. He will always give food to the brahmanas. He will not be jealous and will give to everyone, regardless of the marks they bear.[627] The master of the household must always be devoted to performing sacrifices. O son! In this connection, the extremely great maharshis talk about a song that was sung by Narayana. It is full of great purport and full of austerities. I will recount this to you. Listen attentively. 'It is my view that truthfulness, uprightness, the honouring of guests, dharma, artha and sex with one's wife are pleasures to be pursued for happiness, in this world and in the next.' The supreme rishis say that the best ashrama for the virtuous is the maintenance of sons and wives and devotion to the Vedas. If a brahmana is devoted to performing sacrifices and studies properly in the garhasthya stage, he will be completely cleansed of any taint that results from his having been a householder. He will reap pure fruits in heaven. When he casts aside his body, it is said that his desires become endless. They eternally surround him in every direction, with eyes, heads and mouths.[628]

'"O Yudhishthira! One should eat alone.[629] One should meditate alone. One should wander around alone. One should have a single preceptor and serve him, even if he is smeared with mud and dirt. One must always follow the rites of a brahmachari. One must always hold that one's initiation[630] is supreme. One must not question the Vedas and one must always complete one's tasks. One must always serve one's preceptor and bow down before him. One must not withdraw from the six tasks.[631] However, in every way, one must not be addicted to them either. One must not take any task to be an entitlement. One must not serve the enemy. O son! This is described to be the ashrama for brahmacharis."'

Chapter 1390(62)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Tell me about what is auspicious, brings great happiness, is without violence and is revered by the worlds. What can bring dharma and happiness and also lead to happiness for those like me?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord! Those four ashramas have been laid down for brahmanas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The other three varnas also follow them. O king! There are many tasks that have been indicated for kings who wish to attain heaven. But what has been indicated in the sacred texts is not a mere list of examples. It is recommended that all kshatriyas should follow this. A brahmana who follows the conduct of kshatriyas, vaishyas or shudras is regarded as evil in intelligence and censured in this world. He goes to hell in the next world. O Pandava! People give a brahmana who is engaged in wrong tasks names identified with slaves, dogs, wolves and animals. A brahmana who is engaged in the six tasks, follows all the dharmas in the four ashramas, is controlled and has cleansed his soul, is pure and engaged in austerities and is without desire—is spoken of as having obtained the eternal worlds. Whatever tasks a person performs, in whatever form and in whichever place, the qualities that he obtains are exactly proportionate to that. O Indra among kings! You should know that the prosperity associated with studying is reckoned to be greater than that obtained through agriculture, trade and animal husbandry. Destiny is driven by time. Everything is determined by the progress of destiny. Under its subjugation, superior, middling and inferior tasks are performed. Some earlier beneficial deeds come to an end.[632] In every direction in the world, it is the brahman who is always engaged in its work.”’

Chapter 1391(63)

'Bhisma said, "A brahmana's supreme tasks are to draw the bowstring, the destruction of enemies, agriculture, trade, animal husbandry and tending to others. But he must never do these for reasons of artha.[633] As long as he is in garhasthya, a brahmana must perform the six tasks. When these tasks have been accomplished, a brahmana's residence in the forest is applauded. However, he must avoid serving a king, wealth obtained through agriculture, sustaining himself through trade, deceit, intercourse with unchaste women and usury. O king! A wicked brahmana of evil conduct who deviates from dharma becomes a shudra. Becoming the husband of a shudra woman, being slanderous and treacherous, becoming a dancer and becoming a servant in a village are wicked acts. O king! Whether he meditates and studies the Vedas or not, he is equal to a shudra and a slave and should be seated with them at the time of eating. O king! All of them are equal to shudras and should be avoided in all duties that are for the gods. They are like barbarians who are cruel in their conduct and deserve no honour. By abandoning their own dharma, they cause injury to their own selves. O king! Giving them oblations meant for the gods and the ancestors is tantamount to not giving these at all. O king! Dharma has thus been recommended for brahmanas as well as self-control, purity and truthfulness. O king! In earlier times, Brahma decreed that all the ashramas were recommended for brahmanas. One who is self-controlled, drinks soma, is noble in conduct, is compassionate, tolerates everything, is without desires and upright, and is mild, non-violent and forgiving is a brahmana. One who performs wicked deeds is not that. O king! All those in the world who desire dharma resort to shudras, vaishyas and princes. O son of Pandu! Therefore, Vishnu is not affectionate towards those who do not follow the dharma of their jati and varna. In such a world, there will not be the four varnas among all the people, or talk about the Vedas, or all the different sacrifices, or all the rites amongst people and no one will follow the ashramas.

'"O Pandava! If the three varnas[634] wish to follow the ashramas and act according to what should be done in those ashramas, listen to the dharma that they must follow. O lord of the earth! A shudra must perform acts of servitude, have offspring and follow the instructions of the king. All the ashramas are recommended for him. However, even if he has a little bit of life left or follows *dashadharma*, he must not give up desire.[635] O Indra among kings! For one who follows this kind of dharma, subsistence through begging is not talked about. Nor is it for a vaishya or a prince. A vaishya may have completed all the appointed tasks and may have attained an advanced age. He may have laboured hard. In that case, with the permission of the king, he may pass through the circle of ashramas.[636] O unblemished one! O supreme among eloquent ones! O Pandava! O bull among kshatriyas! There may be a kshatriya who has studied the Vedas, ruled in accordance with the policy for kings, produced offspring and performed similar deeds, drunk soma, protected all the subjects in accordance with dharma, performed royal sacrifices, horse sacrifices and other recommended sacrifices, got brahmanas to recite the texts and given them dakshina, obtained victory in battle, whether few or many, and established his son (or someone else from a different lineage who is permitted) in the kingdom, to rule over the subjects, worshipped the ancestors properly in accordance with the sacrifices recommended for ancestors, worshipped the gods with sacrifices and made efforts to honour the rishis with the Vedas. When his death is near, he may wish to enter the next ashrama. O king! Having been passed through the ashramas in due order, he may obtain success. O Indra among kings! Having gone beyond the dharma of a householder, he may become a rajarshi and adopt a life of begging, wandering around as long as he wishes to live. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O tiger among kings! For these three, dwelling in this fourth ashrama is not said to an essential task.[637]

'"Among men, the best dharma to be observed is that followed by kshatriyas. All the dharma and the minor bits of dharma for the other three[638] follow from the dharma of kings. I have heard this in the Vedas. O king! Just as all footprints are lost in that of an elephant, it is said that all the tasks dissolve in this.[639] Listen. All the dharmas can be seen to be based on rajadharma. Men who know about dharma say every other kind of dharma offers little refuge and few fruits. The noble ones say that the dharma of kshatriyas is the great refuge and has many beneficial forms. There is no other. Of all the dharmas, rajadharma is the most important and it protects all the other dharmas. O king! Every kind of renunciation is there in rajadharma and renunciation is said to be ancient and the foremost kind of dharma. If dandaniti is destroyed, the three[640] will be submerged and all the dharmas will be resisted. If kshatriyas abandon the ancient rajadharma, all the dharma of the ashramas will disappear. All kinds of renunciation are seen in rajadharma. All kinds of diksha are said to be in rajadharma. All kinds of yoga are said to be in rajadharma. All the worlds are based on rajadharma. Beings are naturally slaughtered. This causes affliction to those who resort to dharma.[641] In that way, if dharma is delinked from rajadharma, one’s own dharma will not be followed in any situation.”’

Chapter 1392(64)

‘Bhishma said, “O Pandava! The dharma of the four ashramas, the dharma of tribes[642] and that of the rulers of the worlds are based on the dharma of kshatriyas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! All the other dharmas are also in that of kshatriyas. In this world of the living, those who have no desires also base themselves on the dharma of kshatriyas. The eternal sacred texts say that the dharma of those who dwell in the different ashramas have many forms and parts. It is as if there are many gates and it is also not obvious. There are people who profess to speak auspicious words, as if they are certain. However, there are others who do not believe in the certainty of dharma and give instances to the contrary. They say that everything that is for the welfare of the worlds is established in the dharma of kshatriyas. It directly leads to repeated happiness and can be directly experienced by a person. O Yudhishthira! The dharma of brahmanas who have withdrawn from the ashramas,[643] and that of the other three varnas, has been recounted in the ancient and sacred texts. In this world, there is no other good conduct that is equal to rajadharma. O Indra among kings! I told you earlier how, in ancient times, many brave kings went to the immensely energetic Vishnu, the god who is the lord of all beings, the lord Narayana. They wanted to know about dandaniti. Before this, in their own respective ashramas, they had performed tasks and thought these to be equal. The kings had followed the words that set out instances as benchmarks and stood around.[644] The gods were the Sadhyas, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Rudras, the Vishvas,[645] large numbers of Maruts and the Siddhas. They were the first gods, created in ancient times, and they were established in the dharma of kshatriyas. I will now state what determines dharma and artha. In earlier times, the danavas created dishonour and reduced everything to one.[646] O Indra among kings! At that time, there was a valiant king named Mandhata. In ancient times, that lord of the earth performed a sacrifice. He wished to see the god Narayana, without an origin, without a middle and without an end. O tiger among kings! In that sacrifice, King Mandhata placed the two feet of the great-souled Parameshthi[647] Vishnu on his own head. Vishnu adoped the form of Vasava and showed himself and surrounded by kings, he[648] worshipped that lord. O immensely radiant one! A great conversation then took place between that large mass of kings and the great-souled one,[649] about the nature of Vishnu.

'"Indra asked, 'O foremost among those who uphold dharma! Why do you wish to see the one who cannot be measured? Narayana is the ancient and first god. His maya is infinite. His spirit and valour are unlimited. The universe is his form. I am incapable of seeing that god in person. Not even Brahma can. O king! I will grant you whatever other desire exists in your heart. After all, you are a king among mortals. You are based in truth and follow supreme dharma. You have conquered your senses. You are firm in your valour and are engaged in bringing pleasure to the gods. You possess intelligence, devotion and supreme faith. That is the reason I will grant you whatever boon you desire.'

'"Mandhata replied, 'I bow my head down before you. But there is no doubt that I wish to see the illustrious one, the first among the gods. Desiring dharma, I will give up all objects of pleasure and go to the forest. I will follow that virtuous path, practised by the worlds. The dharma of kshatriyas is extensive. Established in that, I have obtained immeasurable worlds and my own fame. However, there is a dharma that the first among gods is engaged in. That is foremost in the worlds and I do not know how to follow it.'

'"Indra said, 'If you did not possess soldiers, you would have followed supreme adharma. However, if you are not distracted, you will attain the supreme objective. The first god was engaged in the dharma of kshatriyas. It was only later that he resorted to other forms of dharma. The others were created later and have limits. However, the dharma of kshatriyas is special. It is extremely well established and is without limits. All the other dharmas are immersed in this dharma. That is the reason this dharma is said to be the best. In ancient times, Vishnu used the dharma of kshatriyas to crush the enemy[650] and protect all the gods and the infinitely energetic rishis. The illustrious, immeasurable and prosperous one slew those enemies first. Had he not done that, there would have been no brahmanas, no original creator of the worlds,[651] no virtuous dharma and no original dharma. If, in the past, that foremost among gods had not conquered this entire earth, the four varnas and the dharma of the four ashramas would all have ceased to exist, because the brahman would have been destroyed. The hundreds of flows of eternal dharma were seen to be created from the dharma of kshatriyas. The original dharma flows from one yuga to another yuga. However, the dharma of kshatriyas is said to be the foremost in the worlds. Giving up one's one self,[652] compassion towards all beings, knowledge of the worlds, saving, protecting, rescuing the wretched and the distressed—these are to be found in the dharma of kshatriyas, as practised by kings. Those who do not honour, driven by desire and anger, are frightened of the king and do not perform wicked deeds. There are others who are virtuous and follow all forms of dharma. They are righteous in conduct and follow virtuous dharma.[653] There is no doubt that as all the beings roam around in this world, the king must follow dharma, observe the signs and protect them like sons. The eternal dharma of kshatriyas is supreme among all forms of dharma and is foremost in the worlds. It is the eternal akshara, it extends up to the akshara.[654] It faces every direction.'"'

Chapter 1393(65)

'"Indra said, 'It is energetic in this way and all the dharmas are secured by it. The dharma of kshatriyas is best among all kinds of dharma. In this world, it must be observed by those like you, who are broad and are like lions. Otherwise, the subjects may be destroyed. The king who is engaged in the yoga of samskara[655] must know that the foremost components of royal dharma are improvement of the earth,[656] not living by alms, protecting the subjects, compassion towards all beings and giving up one's life in battle. The sages say that renunciation is the best and a person who gives up his body is the foremost among all. In rajadharma, everything is always being given up. It is evident how the kings gave it up.[657] It is said that a kshatriya always observes dharma through a lot of learning, serving the seniors, slaying the enemy and brahmacharya. One who desires dharma follows that single ashrama.[658] In conduct towards ordinary people, he must make endeavours to discard his own likes and dislikes.[659] He must establish and protect the four varnas and engage them in their tasks and rituals. It is said that out of all endeavours and ashramas, the dharma of kshatriyas is the best, because all the dharmas result from it. If all the varnas are not engaged in their own dharmas, one cannot say that dharma is being followed. Men who are cruel and are always engaged in the destruction of their prosperity are said to be like animals.[660] Because the dharma of kshatriyas advances from greed for riches to policy, it is said to be the best of ashramas. The three kinds of learning[661] are said to the objective for brahmanas and this is said to be the ashrama for brahmanas. This is said to be the foremost task for brahmanas. One who acts contrary to this should be killed with a weapon, like a shudra. O king! A brahmana must follow the dharma of the four ashramas and the dharma of the Vedas. Know that there is nothing else for him. If he acts contrary to this, no livelihood has been planned for him. Dharma is evident in one's tasks and without this, he[662] is like a dog.

If a brahmana bases himself in perverse deeds, he does not deserve respect. The learned say that someone who is not engaged in his own tasks is not to be trusted. This is the dharma of all the varnas and it is uplifted through the valour in the dharma of kshatriyas. Therefore, rajadharma is the foremost and no other. I think that this dharma of valiant ones is foremost in its enterprise.'

'"Mandhata asked, 'What dharma should be followed by Yavanas, Kiratas, Gandharas, Chinas, Shabaras, Barbaras, Shakas, Tusharas, Kahvas, Pahlavas, Andhras, Madrakas, Odras, Pulindas, Ramathas, Kachas, all the mlecchas, those who are a mix of brahmanas and kshatriyas, vaishyas and men who are shudras, when they reside within the kingdom? How can those like me establish all those who earn a living by being bandits? O illustrious one! I wish to hear all this. Tell me. O lord of the gods! You are a friend to us kshatriyas.'

'"Indra replied, 'All those who are bandits must serve their mothers and fathers. They must serve their teachers and seniors and all those who live in hermitages. All those who are bandits have a duty to serve the king. Their dharma is said to be the rites of dharma laid down in the Vedas. They must perform sacrifices for the ancestors and, at the right time, must dig wells, create places for drinking water and shelters for sleeping, and donate to brahmanas. Non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger, living off and protecting what has been inherited, sustaining wives and children, purity and lack of enmity are also recommended. Those who desire prosperity must grant dakshina at all the sacrifices. For all those who are bandits, it is a duty to observe extremely expensive pakayajnas. O unblemished one! These and other techniques were laid down in ancient times. O king! These are the tasks and duties for all the people.'

'"Mandhata said, 'In the world of men, it is seen that bandits exist among all the varnas. Though they disguise themselves, they are present in all the four ashramas.'

'"Indra replied, 'O king! When dandaniti is destroyed and rajadharma is neglected, kingship is demeaned and all the beings are confounded. There will be innumerable mendicants of different types. When this krita yuga is over, alternative kinds of ashramas will be thought of. They will pay no heed to the foremost objective and the ancient dharma. Overcome by desire and anger, they will follow perverse paths. When great-souled ones use dandaniti, wickedness is restrained and the supreme and eternal dharma is established and made to circulate. The king is said to be the supreme preceptor of the world. If a person disrespects him, his donations, oblations and funeral rites never yield any fruits. The eternal king of men originated with the gods. Even the gods exhibit a lot of reverence towards a king who desires dharma. The illustrious Prajapati created everything in the universe. He desired that kshatriyas should follow the dharma of commencement and restraint.[663] I revere and worship the established kshatriya who remembers that objective and uses his intelligence to encourage dharma.'"

'Bhishma said, "Surrounded by large numbers of the Maruts, the illustrious lord spoke in this way. He then went to his own undecaying and supreme state and residence, that of Vishnu.[664] O unblemished one! In this way, dharma was observed and followed well in ancient times. How can anyone who possesses great learning disrespect kshatriyas? There are those who have engaged and those who have withdrawn.[665] Internally, they face destruction, like those without eyes on a road.[666] In the beginning, a wheel was established and in the beginning, they followed it. O tiger among men! O unblemished one! I have told you about that conduct."'

Chapter 1394(66)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have heard about the four kinds of ashramas followed by men earlier. O grandfather! I am asking you to explain them in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! Everything about dharma, as revered by the virtuous, is known to you, as it is to me. O Yudhishthira! However, you have asked me about differences in practice. O lord of men! O best among those who uphold dharma! Hear about dharma. O Kounteya! O bull among men! All of these are found in those who are of virtuous conduct and engaged in the duties of the four ashramas. O Yudhishthira! If one follows dandaniti without being attached to desire or anger and regards all beings as equal, he is in the ashrama of a mendicant.[667] He knows about acquisition and giving away, about encouraging and restraining and about the appropriate conduct for valiant ones. He is then established in the ashrama of conferring prosperity.[668] O Yudhishthira! When his kin, allies and friends confront a disaster and he rescues and sustains them, he is established in the ashrama of consecration. O Partha! If he performs rites[669] and sacrifices for beings, ancestors and men, then he is established in the broad ashrama of vanaprastha. If a king protects all beings and protects his own kingdom, he is effectively consecrated in many ways and established in the ashrama of vanaprastha. If he always studies the Vedas, is forgiving, worships his teachers and serves his preceptors, then he is established in the ashrama of brahmacharya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If he always follows a path that is upright and without deceit and treats all beings in this way, he is established in the ashrama of brahmacharya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are brahmanas who know about the three kinds of learning and are in vanaprastha. If he gives them large quantities of riches, he is established in the ashrama of vanaprastha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If he does not cause injury to any being and practises non-violence, he is established in a state that has all the stages. O Kouravya! O Yudhishthira! If he is compassionate towards all, young or old, he is established in a state that has all the stages. O extender of the Kuru lineage! O Kouravya! If he acts and uses his force to save beings and save those who have sought refuge, he resides in the stage of garhasthya. If he protects all beings and mobile and immobile objects and always worships them in accordance with what they deserve, he resides in the stage of garhasthya. O Partha! If he encourages and restrains elder and younger wives, brothers, sons and grandsons, his austerities are like those of garhasthya. O tiger among men! If he protects and worships virtuous ones who look on all subjects as their own selves, he is established in the ashrama of garhasthya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Yudhishthira! When those in different ashramas are welcomed in his house and offered food, he is in the state of garhasthya. A man who is appropriately established in the dharma promulgated by the Creator obtains the supreme fruits of all the ashramas. O Kounteya! O Yudhishthira! It is said that a man whose qualities are never destroyed is the best of men, whatever be the ashrama he is established in. O Yudhishthira! If he acts so as to make everyone dwell and honours according to age and lineage, he is established in all the ashramas. O Kounteya! O tiger among men! A king who protects the dharma of the country and the dharma of families is established in all the ashramas. O tiger among men! At the right time, if he offers riches and gifts to those who should be honoured, he dwells in the ashrama of the virtuous. O Kounteya! Even if he is in the dharma of the tenth decade,[670] if a king glances towards the dharma of all the people, he is said to dwell in an ashrama. When people who are accomplished in dharma and virtuous ones who act in accordance with dharma are protected within the kingdom, the king receives one-fourth.[671] O tiger among men! When kings do not protect those who take delight in dharma and others who follow dharma, they take away their sins.[672] O Yudhishthira! O unblemished one! Those who aid kings in the task of protection also obtain a share in all the dharma obtained by others. O tiger among men! It has been determined that, among all the ashramas, garhasthya is the blazing one. We regard it as the one that purifies. If a man regards all beings as his own self and conquers anger when wielding the rod of chastisement, he obtains happiness after death. This is like a boat that is raised up through dharma and is full of spirit and valour. Its ropes are the bridge of dharma. It is swift, driven by the wind of renunciation, and it will enable you to cross. When the desire in the heart has withdrawn from every object, one is established in the universal essence and attains the brahman. O lord of men! Use yoga to become extremely content. O tiger among men! When you are engaged in protection, you will obtain dharma. There are brahmanas who are engaged in studying the Vedas and the performance of virtuous deeds. O unblemished one! Make efforts to protect them and all the people. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharma is obtained through the ashrama of vanaprastha. However, through protecting, a king can obtain a hundred times the qualities of that dharma. O foremost among Pandavas! The different kinds of dharma have been recounted and you should follow this eternal path, witnessed in earlier times. O Pandava! O tiger among men! If you single-mindedly engage yourself in protecting, you will obtain the dharma of the four ashramas and the four varnas.”’

Chapter 1395(67)

‘Yudhishthira said, “You have spoken about the four ashramas and also about the four varnas. O grandfather! Tell me about the tasks a kingdom should perform.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The most important task for a kingdom is the consecration of a king. A kingdom without an Indra is weak and is overwhelmed by bandits. There is no dharma in a kingdom that does not have a king. Everyone devours each other. In every way, shame on a state without a king! The learned texts say that Indra is crowned in the form of a king. Those who desire prosperity should revere the king, like Indra. The Vedas say that one should not dwell in a kingdom without a king. In a kingdom without a king, oblations are not carried by the fire. If a more powerful person desires the kingdom and attacks the kingdom without a king, or if the king has been slain, it is good advice to welcome and honour the invader. There is nothing more evil than to be without a king. If a powerful one is enraged, everything will be destroyed. However, if he looks on everything equally, all will be well. A cow that is difficult to milk confronts hardship repeatedly. However, one that is easy to milk never faces a difficulty. If one bends down, one is not scorched and tormented. A tree that bends down on its own is not afflicted. Because of these analogies, those who are patient bow down before stronger ones. Bowing down before a stronger person is like bowing down before Indra. Those who desire prosperity must always get a king. If there is no king, there is nothing to be gained from possessing riches and nothing to be gained from possessing wives. If there is no king, a wicked person cheerfully steals the property of others. However, when others steal what belongs to him, he wishes for a king. Even the wicked can never obtain peace then. Two steal what belongs to one and many others steal what belongs to two. One who is not a slave is made to become a slave. Women are forcibly abducted. It is because of these reasons that the gods arranged for the protection of subjects. Without a king in this world, no one would wield the rod of chastisement on earth. Like fish on a stake, the stronger would oppress the weaker side. We have heard that subjects without a king have been destroyed in the past. They will devour each other, like fish in the water, preying on weaker ones. We have heard that people got together and arrived at an agreement. 'There are men who are harsh in speech. They wield rods. They abduct the wives of others. They take what belongs to others and act in similar ways. We must discard these.' In particular, they wished to assure all the varnas and treat all of them equally. But having arrived at this agreement, they did not abide by it. Afflicted by misery, all of them assembled and went to the grandfather then. 'O illustrious one! Without a lord, we are being destroyed. Appoint a lord for us. He will be one who will protect us and all of us will honour him.' He appointed Manu, but Manu did not delight them.

'"Manu said, 'I am scared of performing cruel deeds and ruling a kingdom is an exceedingly difficult task. In particular, men are always engaged in false conduct.'"

'Bhishma said, "The subjects replied, 'Do not be frightened. Those deeds will go away.[673] We will give you one-fiftieth of our animals and gold and one-tenth of our grain and thereby increase your treasury. The men who are foremost in wielding weapons and arrows will follow you as their chief, like the gods behind the great Indra. O king! Strength will be engendered in you and you will become unassailable and powerful. You will then happily support all of us, like Kubera did the *nairitta*s.[674] The subjects will be protected well by the king and follow their own dharma. One-fourth of that dharma will belong to you. You will easily obtain power through this great dharma. O king! In every way, we promise this to you, like the gods to Shatakratu. Swiftly depart for victory and scorch like the one with the rays.[675] Dispel the pride of our enemies. Dharma always triumphs.' Surrounded by a large army, that greatly energetic one advanced. He was born in an extremely great lineage and seemed to blaze in his energy. On beholding his greatness, like the gods before the great Indra, everyone was filled with fright. They made up their minds to stick to their own dharma. He roamed the earth, like Parjanya showering down rain. He pacified all the wicked ones and employed them in their own tasks. In this way, men on earth who desire prosperity must first arrange for a king. This is for the sake of the welfare of the subjects. They must always bow down before him with devotion, like disciples before a preceptor. In the presence of the king, the subjects must be like the gods before the one with a thousand eyes.[676] When a person is revered by his own people, the enemy also respects him a lot. When a person is disrespected by his own people, the enemy disregards him. When a king is vanquished by the enemy, this brings unhappiness to everyone. That is the reason a king is given umbrellas, conveyances, garments, ornaments, food, drinks, houses, seats, beds and all the required implements. He must protect his own self and become unassailable. He must smile before speaking. When he is addressed by men, he must reply in pleasant tones. He must be grateful and firm in his devotion. He must be prepared to share things. He must conquer his senses. When glanced at, he must be mild, direct and attractive in looking back.”’

Chapter 1396(68)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Why do the brahmanas speak of the king as a divinity? O grandfather! He is only the lord of men. Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In connection with this, an ancient account of what Vasumana asked Brihaspati is spoken of. A supreme among intelligent ones was named Vasumana and he was the king of Kosala. He was accomplished in his wisdom and he questioned maharshi Brihaspati. He knew about the requirements of humility and he observed all the humble modes towards Brihaspati. As is decreed, he kept him on the right and bowed down before him.[677] He was engaged in ensuring the welfare of all beings in the kingdom and asked in the proper way. O lord of the earth! Basing himself on dharma, he wished to know about the welfare of subjects. ‘What makes beings prosper and when do they advance towards destruction? O immensely wise one! Whom should they worship, so as to obtain extreme happiness?’ Having been asked by the infinitely energetic one, the great king of Kosala, Brihaspati attentively praised the reverence that should be shown to kings.

‘“‘O great king![678] In this world, the king is seen to be the root of all dharma. It is because they are frightened of the king that subjects do not devour each other. The king pacifies this entire agitated and anxious world. Having pacified it through dharma, he rules it. O king! If the sun and the moon did not rise, all the beings would be blind and submerged in darkness and be unable to see each other. Like fish in the absence of water and birds in the absence of perches, they would repeatedly roam around according to their desires and attack each other. They would crush and intolerantly cross each other. There is no doubt that they would soon confront destruction. In that way, without a king, these subjects will be destroyed. They will be blind and submerged in darkness, like animals without a herdsman. If a king does not protect, the strong will abduct the possessions of the weak and kill them when they resist. If a king does not protect, the wicked will violently seize many kinds of vehicles, garments, ornaments and jewels. If a king does not protect in this world, everyone will say, “This is mine,” and there will be no property. There will be destruction of the universe. If the king does not protect, wicked ones will oppress and kill their own mothers, fathers, elders, teachers, guests and preceptors. If the king does not protect, many kinds of weapons will descend on those who follow dharma, while those who follow adharma will be accepted. If the king does not protect, those with riches will always be killed, bound and oppressed, and there will be no sense of ownership. If the king does not protect, the sky will be the end.[679] This world will be full of bandits and everyone will descend into a terrible hell. If the king does not protect, seed and grain will not grow. There will be no agriculture and no paths for traders. Dharma and the three types of learning will be submerged. If the king does not protect, there will be no sacrifices and no decreed dakshina. There will be no marriage and no society. If the king does not protect, bulls will not work and there will be no churning of milk in pots. The pens of cattle will be destroyed. If the king does not protect, hearts will be anxious and frightened and the senses will be overcome with lamentations. Everything will be destroyed in an instant. If the king does not protect, one will not be able to stand without fear. There won’t be sacrifices throughout the year, with the decreed dakshina being given. If the king does not protect, brahmanas will not engage in asceticism and study the four Vedas. They will not bathe after studying and they will not bathe after austerities. If the king does not protect, all barriers will be demolished and one hand will steal from the other hand. Everyone will run away in fright. If the king does not protect, no one will be touched by dharma. People who are struck will strike back and their own senses will govern them. If the king does not protect, there will be wrong policies and a mixing of varnas. The kingdom will be ravaged by famine. It is because they are protected by the king that men are without fear. They sleep anywhere, as they wish, and leave the doors of their houses open. If men have a king who is devoted to dharma as their protector, no one has to suffer verbal abuse or blows from the hands. If the lord of the earth protects, women, even when unaccompanied by men, can wander fearlessly on the roads, wearing all their ornaments. If the lord of the earth protects, dharma is followed and there is no violence towards each other. Instead, favours are done to each other. When the lord of the earth protects, the three varnas separately perform great sacrifices and attentively study the sacred texts. When the lord of the earth protects, everything is well and the world is productively supported by the three.[680] When the king bears that excellent burden and bears the subjects with a great deal of strength, the world is pleased. In every direction, all the beings always exist because he exists. Had he not existed, they would not have existed. Who will not honour such a person? A king who bears a burden for the happiness of all the people and is engaged in their pleasure and benefit conquers both worlds.[681] If a man harbours evil thoughts towards such a person in his mind, there is no doubt that he will suffer hardships in this life and will be cast into hell after death. No one should disregard a lord of the earth as a mere man. He is a great divinity established in the form of a man. Depending on the occasion, he always adopts five different forms—Agni, Aditya, Mrityu, Vaishravana and Yama.[682] When the king has been deceived through falsehood and burns wicked ones down with his fierce energy, he is then Pavaka.[683] When the lord of the earth uses spies to look at everyone and then travels after providing safety, he is then Bhaskara.[684] When he is angry and destroys hundreds of impure men, with their sons, grandsons and relatives, he is then Antaka.[685] When he strikes all those who follow adharma with the fierce rod of chastisement and shows favours to those who follow dharma, he is Yama. He gives streams of wealth to those who are his benefactors and takes away jewels and many other objects from those who injure him. O king! In this world, when he gives prosperity to some and takes it away from others, the lord of the earth is Vaishravana. Someone who is skilful and is capable of working incessantly, or desires dharma and is not envious of what has been obtained by his lord, should never speak ill of him.[686] One who acts contrary to the king will never obtain happiness, even if it happens to be a son, a brother, a friend, or someone who is like his own self. A fire trailing black smoke, and with the wind as its charioteer, leaves a residue. But when one is seized by a king, there is nothing that is left. One must keep everything protected by him at a long distance, as if it is death. A man must not steal a king's possessions. One will be destroyed if one touches those, like a deer touching a trap. An intelligent person must protect a king's possessions like his own. Those stupid ones who steal the king's possessions descend for a long time into a great, terrible and fathomless hell. He is praised with words like "Raja, Bhoja, Virat, Samrat, Kshatriya, Bhupati and Nripa".[687] Who will not worship such a person? Therefore, an intelligent and accomplished person who is controlled, who has conquered his soul and restrained his senses, who possesses a good memory and wishes to be prosperous, should seek refuge with a lord of the earth. As a minister, the king must honour someone who is grateful, wise, not inferior, firm in his devotion, restrained in his senses, always devoted to dharma and unwavering from his status. Even a forbidden person may be given refuge if he is firm in his devotion, accomplished in wisdom, knowledgeable about dharma, controlled over his senses, brave and superior in his deeds. A king makes a person confident. A king makes a small man great. Where is happiness for someone the king has seized? The king makes someone who approaches him happy. The king becomes great in the hearts of the subjects. He is their objective, their base and their supreme happiness. When men resort to this Indra among men, they conquer this world and the next properly. The lord of men who has ruled the earth with control, truth and affection and, who has worshipped through great sacrifices, obtains great fame and, because of his good deeds, obtains a place in heaven.'

'"The supreme king of Kosala was thus addressed by his preceptor.[688] The brave one made efforts to carefully protect his subjects."'

Chapter 1397(69)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What are the specific duties a king must undertake? How should the countryside be protected? How should he protect against enemies? How should he employ spies? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How does he obtain the confidence of the varnas, the servants, the wives and the sons?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! Listen attentively to the complete account of the conduct of kings—the tasks that a king who is naturally a king must first do. The king must always conquer his soul and then he must conquer his enemies. If a lord of men has not conquered his own soul, how can he defeat the enemy? Victory over one’s own self means restraint of the aggregate of the five.[689] Having conquered the senses, a lord of men is then capable of countering the enemy.

‘“O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O tiger among men! He must place platoons in forts, boundaries, the groves of cities, all the parks of the towns and the cities, in the midst and in the abode of the king. As spies, he must employ men who have been tested and found to be wise, those who can withstand hunger, thirst and heat. They should seem to be dumb, blind and deaf. O great king! Having reflected about it, he must employ spies against all his advisers, the three types of friends,[690] his sons, in cities and in the countryside, and amongst kings who are vassals. The spies should be such that they do not know about each other. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He must know about the spies the enemy has employed in shops, pleasure grounds, assemblies, among beggars, in groves and gardens, amidst assemblies of learned men, brothels, crossroads, assembly halls and dwelling houses. O Pandava! A wise one must counter the spies of the enemy in this way. If one knows everything about the spies, they are as good as destroyed.

‘“When the king examines himself and knows himself to be weak, he must seek the counsel of his advisers and have a treaty with the one who is stronger.

Even if he knows that he is not weak, an intelligent king swiftly concludes a treaty with the enemy, if he desires to obtain some advantage out of this. A king who protects the kingdom in accordance with dharma appoints those who possess qualities, are great in their enthusiasm, knowledgeable about dharma and virtuous. If an immensely wise king realizes that he is being resisted, he must kill all the people who have injured him in the past and, in every way, counter those who are injurious. A lord of the earth should have nothing to do with someone who can neither help nor hurt him, nor with those who are incapable of saving him from hardships. An intelligent person will march out undetected against someone who has no allies and friends, someone who is preoccupied,[691] someone who is negligent and someone who is weak. A brave one will give the instruction for advancing when the army is strong, nourished and happy. However, before the advance, he must make arrangements for the city. Even if the other one is valiant, a king must never accept subjugation. Even if he is weak in strength and valour, he must try to afflict the enemy. He must oppress the kingdom with weapons, fire and poison and overwhelm it. He must try to cause strife amidst his[692] advisers and servants. Even if he desires a kingdom, an intelligent person will always seek to avoid war. Brihaspati has said that there are three means of obtaining prosperity—conciliation, gifts and dissension. A learned lord of men will be satisfied with whatever prosperity can be obtained through these.

'"O descendant of the Kuru lineage! For protecting the subjects, an infinitely wise king will take one-sixth of their income as tax. However, even for the sake of protecting the citizens, he must not violently take whatever those in the tenth decade possess, be it a lot or little. There is no doubt that he should look upon the citizens as his sons. In adjudicating disputes, it is his duty not to be partial because of affection. For the task of adjudication, a king must appoint a wise son who can consider all the aspects. A kingdom is always based on proper dispute resolution. The king must appoint his advisers and skilful men who do not cause injury as supervisors over mines, salt, taxes, ferries and elephant corps. A king who always wields the rod of chastisement well will obtain dharma. In the dharma of kings, the rod is always praised. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king must always be learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, wise, a great ascetic and always devoted to donations and the performance of sacrifices. All these qualities must always be collectively established in a king. If a king does not observe the rites, how will he obtain heaven and how will he obtain fame?

'"If a king is oppressed by a stronger king, he must resort to the three kinds of allies and friends[693] and determine what must be done. Those in pens must be set on the roads[694] and villages must be removed. All of them must be made to enter the outskirts of the city. The wealthy and the leaders of the army must repeatedly be assured. The lord of men must himself ensure that the grain is brought in.[695] If it cannot be brought in, it must be completely burnt by fire. The grain that is still in the fields can be used to wean away the enemy's men, or one's own forces can be used to completely destroy it. The bridges over rivers and the roads must always be demolished. All the stored water must be released. If it cannot be released, it must be poisoned. When such a situation of present and future conflict is at hand, one can ignore policy and decide that it is time to have friendships with anyone who is capable of countering the enemy.[696] The king must cut down the roots of all the small trees that are near forts. However, *chaitya* trees must be spared.[697] The branches of all the old trees must be pruned. However, one must always avoid cutting down the leaves of chaityas. He must erect high walls and casements.[698] The moats must be filled with stakes, crocodiles and fish. There must be doors of straw so that people inside the city can breathe freely. One must act so that these doors are also protected in every way. Machines must be placed atop the heavier gates. He must act so that shataghnis are placed there and are under his control. Timber must be collected and wells must be dug. For the sake of water, wells that have been dug earlier must be purified. Houses thatched with grass must be plastered with mud. Because of the fear of fire, in the month of Chaitra,[699] all straw must be removed from the city. The lord of men must allow food to be cooked only during the night. With the exception of agnihotras, the burning of fires in houses during the day will be avoided. Special care must be taken of fires ignited by artisans and in places where women give birth. It is recommended that fires lit in houses must be covered well. For the sake of the protection of the city, it must be announced that those who light fires during the day will be severely punished. O best of men! Beggars, wagoners, drunkards, lunatics and actors should be driven out. Otherwise, evil may result. The king must act so as to appoint spies from appropriate varnas at crossroads, tirthas, assembly halls and dwelling houses. The lord of men must construct broad royal roads. He must instruct that stores of drinking water and shops are constructed at appropriate places. There must also be stores for riches, stores for weapons and stores for grain everywhere and stables for horses and stables for elephants, with barracks for the soldiers. O Kouravya! O Yudhishthira! There must be moats, highways and narrower roads. No one must be able to detect what is secret. A king who is afflicted by the forces of the enemy must accumulate stores of all kinds of oil, honey, clarified butter and medicines. He must arrange for stores of charcoal, kusha grass, munja grass, red lac, arrows, trees, fodder, kindling and poisoned arrows. The lord of men must arrange for stores of all kinds of weapons—lances, swords, spears and armour. In particular, he must arrange for the collection of all kinds of medicinal herbs, roots and fruits and the four kinds of physicians.[700] Actors, dancers, wrestlers and those skilled in the use of maya should adorn the best of cities and amuse people everywhere. If there is any suspicion attached to servants, ministers, citizens or even kings,[701] he must endeavour to bring them under his control. O Indra among kings! When a task has been accomplished, the doer must be honoured with stores of riches. Honour and various words of appreciation must be appropriate to the person. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When an enemy has been countered or slain, the king pays off the debts that are indicated for him in the sacred texts.

'"O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Listen to me. The king must protect seven things—his own person, his advisers, his treasury, his army, his allies, his country and his city. The kingdom consists of these seven and they must be protected carefully. O tiger among men! He who knows about the collection of the six, the first three categories and the further three categories, enjoys the earth. O Yudhishthira! Listen to the collection of six that have been mentioned—being seated after concluding a treaty, ensuring a treaty after marching out, being seated after declaring war, seizing[702] after marching out, creating a division in the enemy and seeking asylum with the enemy. Listen attentively to what is said to be the three categories—decay, maintenance of the status quo and increase. The further three categories are the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama at the appropriate time. It is through dharma that a lord of the earth protects the earth for a long period of time. In this connection, Angiras's son[703] himself has sung two shlokas. O son of a Yadavi![704] O fortunate one! You should listen to them. 'Having performed all the tasks well, having protected the earth and having protected the citizens in this way, one enjoys happiness in the hereafter. If all the subjects are unprotected and dharma is disregarded, what will austerities do for a king like that? What will his sacrifices achieve?'"'

Chapter 1398(70)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “There is dandaniti and there is the king. O grandfather! Tell me. Are these two equal? And whose success is it going to be?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to me and I will tell you exactly, with words and reasons, about the great fortune that the success of dandaniti brings. Dandaniti binds down the four varnas to their own dharma. When applied by the lord, it ensures that they do not proceed towards adharma. When the four varnas respect their own dharma and there is no mixing, because of the use of dandaniti, there is peace and the subjects are free from fear. In the proper way, the three varnas will make efforts to perform soma rites. Know that the happiness of gods and men is accumulated from these. You should not entertain any doubt about whether the age results in the king, or the king results in the age. The king causes the age. When the king implements all of dandaniti properly, the best of ages, known as krita yuga, ensues. When it is krita yuga, dharma prevails. There never is any adharma. None of the varnas finds any delight in adharma. There is no doubt that subjects obtain what they wish and preserve what they have.[705] The rites of the Vedas are performed, without any reduction in qualities. All the seasons bring happiness and are free from disease. Sounds, colours and thoughts please men. There are no diseases then and men with short lifespans are not seen. There are no widows and cruel people are not born. The earth yields crops without being ploughed and the herbs are also like that. There is vigour in barks, leaves, fruits and roots. There is no adharma there. There is only dharma. O Yudhishthira! Know these to be the qualities of krita yuga.

‘“When the king abandons one-fourth of dandaniti and follows only three-fourths, treta yuga results. The three-fourths are followed by one-fourth that is inauspicious. The earth yields crops only when ploughed and the herbs are also like that. When the king abandons half of policy and dharma, the age known as dvapara is the result. Half that is inauspicious follows half that is good. The earth yields crops when ploughed, but only a little. When the lord of the earth abandons dandaniti entirely and oppresses his subjects in various ways, then kali enters. Adharma is generally prevalent in kali, but dharma is sometimes seen. The minds of all the varnas turn away from their own dharma. Shudras earn a living through mendicancy and brahmanas through servitude. Yoga and *kshema* are destroyed and there is a mixing of varnas. The rites of the Vedas are without any qualities. All the seasons are devoid of happiness and are full of ill health. Sounds, colour and thoughts of people decay. There are diseases then and one dies before one's span of life is over. There are widows and cruel people are born. It only rains sometimes and crops also grow sometimes. When the lord of the earth no longer wishes to protect the subjects, using dandaniti properly and well, all the juices head towards destruction. The king is the creator of krita yuga, treta and dvapara. The king is the reason behind the fourth yuga too. For creating krita, the king obtains endless heaven. For creating treta, the king obtains heaven, but it is not endless. For giving rise to dvapara, the king obtains the portion that is his share. However, for giving rise to kali, the king obtains eternal evil. Such an evil-acting person dwells in hell for an eternal period. Having submerged himself in the sins of his subjects, he reaps the sin of bad deeds.

'"A kshatriya must always know and place dandaniti at the forefront, so that he can obtain what he desires and protect what he possesses. Dandaniti, when administered well, sets boundaries for people and is like a mother or a father, demarcating honour for the welfare of the world. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Know that beings thrive on this. This is supreme dharma and the king must follow dandaniti. O Kouravya! Therefore, protect the subjects in accordance with dharma and policy. Having acted in this way and having protected the subjects, you will conquer the heaven that is extremely difficult to vanquish."'

Chapter 1399(71)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O one who knows about conduct! What kind of conduct must a lord of the earth follow? In this life and in the hereafter, how can he easily obtain objects that give rise to happiness?”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are thirty-six qualities, united with another thirty-six qualities. If he possesses qualities and acts according to those qualities, then he will obtain excellence. (1)[706] He must follow dharma without any acerbity. (2) He must shower affection. (3) He must not be a non-believer.[707] (4) He must pursue riches, but without violence. (5) He must pursue kama, but must not be bound down by it. (6) Without any hesitation, he must speak pleasantly. (7) He must be brave, but should not boast about it. (8) He must be generous, but should not give to those who are undeserving. (9) He must be bold, but must not be cruel. (10) He must not have alliances with ignoble people. (11) He must not wage war against his relatives. (12) He must not employ spies who are inappropriate. (13) He must not undertake tasks because he has been forced. (14) Before the wicked, he must not speak about his objectives. (15) He must not speak about his own qualities. (16) He must not take away from those who are virtuous. (17) He must not trust those who are wicked. (18) He must not inflict punishment without examination. (19) He must not disclose his counsel. (20) He must not give to those who are covetous. (21) He must not trust those who have caused injury. (22) He must protect his wife, but without jealousy. (23) The king must be pure, but not compulsively so. (24) He must not be excessively addicted to women. (25) He must not eat sweets that are not healthy. (26) He must humbly honour those who deserve respect. (27) He must be sincere in serving his seniors. (28) Without any pride, he must worship the gods. (29) He must desire prosperity, but not in ways that give rise to censure. (30) He must serve, even if he does not feel affection. (31) He must be accomplished, but must also know the proper time. (32) He must comfort, but not because he wants to use people. (33) He must not show favours and then fling a person away. (34) He must not strike ignorantly. (35) He must slay all the enemies that remain. (36) He must not display sudden anger. (37) He must be mild with those who cause him injury. If you desire welfare, this is the way you should govern the kingdom. The lord of the earth who acts contrary to this confronts supreme hardship. I have stated all the qualities to you. Whoever follows these obtains great fortune in this life and greatness in heaven after death.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing these words of Shantanu’s son, King Yudhishthira, surrounded by the foremost among the Pandavas, honoured the grandfather. The intelligent one acted in accordance with what he had been told.’

Chapter 1400(72)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! How should the king employ himself in the protection of the subjects so that he does not cause an offence to dharma? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son![708] I will tell you briefly about what has been determined to be dharma. If I were to describe dharma in detail, I would never reach the end. There will be qualified brahmanas who are learned, devoted to dharma and immersed in the Vedas and rites. Make them dwell in your house and act as officiating priests. When you get up in the morning, greet your priest by clasping his feet. Make him perform all the rites. When the tasks of dharma have been completed and the auspicious pronouncements have been made, make brahmanas pronounce benedictions for prosperity, success and victory. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must possess uprightness, fortitude and intelligence. You must seek to obtain artha, but must give up desire and anger. A foolish king who strives for artha while placing desire and anger at the forefront, obtains neither dharma, nor artha. For matters connected with kama and artha, do not employ those who are avaricious and stupid. In all tasks, those who are intelligent and not greedy should be employed. If a fool is given a position of authority in matters concerning artha, or if an unskilled person is put in charge of a task, or if he is overcome by desire and hatred, he will oppress the subjects with wrong policies.

‘“The desire for revenue and riches will come through one-sixth of income collected as taxes, monetary penalties levied on wrongdoers and other levies sanctioned by the sacred texts. The tax imposed on the kingdom must always be in accordance with dharma and in accordance with what has been decreed. The king must be attentive in ensuring unlimited yoga and kshema. If he is like a herdsman and is generous, always attentive towards dharma and without desire and hatred, then men will always be devoted to him and find delight in him. Do not desire to obtain an inflow of riches or gain through adharma. If one deviates from the sacred, one's dharma and artha will both be uncertain. A king who deviates from the sacred texts cannot advance towards accumulation. All that he obtains is destroyed on inappropriate things.[709] If artha alone is the foundation, he harms his own self. In his confusion, he oppresses the subjects by imposing taxes that are not sanctioned by the sacred texts. For the sake of milk, if one slices off the udders of a cow, one does not obtain any milk. In that way, a kingdom oppressed through bad policy does not prosper. A person who is caring towards a milk-yielding cow always obtains milk. In that way, a person who cares for the kingdom enjoys the fruits. O Yudhishthira! If the kingdom is administered and enjoyed while protecting it well, it always leads to an unsurpassed increase in the treasury. When the earth is protected well, it provides grain, gold and offspring to the king, just as a satisfied mother always provides milk to her own and those of others. O king! Be like one who makes garlands. Do not be like one who makes charcoal.[710] If you act in this way and protect, you will be able to enjoy the kingdom for a long time.

'"If the riches are exhausted because of invasion by an enemy, in a desire to collect riches, one can use conciliation and take it from non-brahmanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even when you confront extreme distress, do not let your mind be disturbed when you see wealthy brahmanas, not to speak of when you are prosperous. You must give them riches, according to your capacity and according to what they deserve. If you comfort them and protect them, you will obtain the heaven that is extremely difficult to get. In this way, protect the subjects according to the conduct of dharma. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You will then obtain eternal and auspicious fame. O Pandava! Protect the subjects through virtuous conduct. O Yudhisthira! Acting in this way, you will not suffer any anxiety. This is the supreme dharma, the protection of subjects by a king. Protecting subjects in their observance of dharma is the supreme form of compassion. Those who are learned about dharma think that this is supreme dharma. A king who is engaged in protecting beings performs an act of compassion. If a king fails to protect the subjects from fear for a single day, then it takes one thousand years for him to get out of that sin. If the king performs the auspicious task of following dharma and protecting the subjects for a single day, then he enjoys the fruits in heaven for ten thousand years. There are worlds won through sacrifices, studying and great austerities. By protecting the subjects in accordance with dharma, all those are obtained in an instant. O Kounteya! Endeavour to protect dharma in this way. You will obtain auspicious fruits in this world and have no reason for anxiety. O Pandava! You will obtain great prosperity in the world of heaven. In places where there are no kings, it is impossible to obtain this dharma. Therefore, it is the king, and no one else, who can obtain these great fruits. Use dharma to protect this prosperous kingdom that you have obtained. Satisfy Indra through soma and meet the desires of the ones who are your well-wishers.”’

Chapter 1401(73)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! It is the king’s duty to appoint as a royal priest someone who can protect the virtuous and punish the wicked. On this, the ancient account of the conversation between Aila Pururava and Matarishvana is recounted.[711]

‘“Aila asked, ‘Where have brahmanas been born from and where have the other three varnas come from? Which of the two is superior? Tell me that.’

‘“Vayu replied, ‘O supreme among kings! The brahmana was created from Brahma’s mouth. It is said that the kshatriya was created from his arms and the vaishya from his thighs. O bull among men! The fourth varna, the shudra, was created later from the feet, for the sake of serving the three varnas. The brahmana was born immediately after the earth was born. For the sake of protecting the store of dharma, he is the lord of all beings. The second varna, the kshatriya, was then made the wielder of the rod for the sake of protecting the earth and protecting beings. The vaishya was created to support the three varnas with wealth and grain and the shudra should serve them. These were Brahma’s instructions.’

‘“Aila asked, ‘O Vayu! According to dharma, tell me whom the earth belongs to. Is it the brahmana, or is it properly the kshatriya, because of his wealth?’

‘“Vayu replied, ‘Everything that exists in the universe belongs to the brahmana. Those who are learned say that this is because he is the firstborn and because he is accomplished in dharma. The brahmana enjoys only what is his, wears what is his and gives away what is his. The brahmana is the preceptor of all the varnas. He is the eldest and the best. In the absence of the husband, the woman makes his younger brother her husband. In that way, because he is the immediate next, the earth makes the kshatriya her husband.[712] If you desire to obtain a supreme status in heaven and wish to follow the path of dharma, this is the first rule for you, though there is an exception for times of distress. Whoever conquers the earth should offer it to a brahmana who is learned, of good conduct, knowledgeable about dharma, an ascetic, who is satisified with his own dharma and not desirous of the riches of others. Conversant with everything, he will intelligently advise the king about policy. A brahmana born in a noble lineage, accomplished in wisdom, humble in speech and wonderful in his choice of words, will tell the king about the best policy. If a king observes the dharma indicated by the brahmana, listens and is not egoistic and adheres to the dharma and vows of kshatriyas, he will be firm in his wisdom and will be established in fame for a long period. The royal priest has a share in all this dharma. As long as all the subjects seek refuge with the king and follow their own dharma properly, they have nothing to fear. When a king protects virtuously, out of all the dharma that is practised within the kingdom, the king enjoys a fourth share of that dharma. Gods, humans, ancestors, gandharvas, serpents and rakshasas survive on what is offered in sacrifices. However, when there is no king, there is nothing. In this way, gods and ancestors survive on what is given to them. And the yoga and kshema of dharma is established in kingship. When it is hot, one seeks happiness in shade, water or breeze. When it is cold, one seeks happiness in fire, the sun or inside a house. The mind is delighted with sound, touch, taste, form and smell. But in all these objects of pleasure, happiness is obtained by a person who is not frightened. One who grants freedom from fear obtains great fruits. In the three worlds, there is no gift that is equal to granting life. The king is Indra. The king is Yama. The king is Dharma. The king has different forms. The king upholds everything.’”’

Chapter 1402(74)

‘Bhishma said, “The king must consider both dharma and artha and their differences, which are often unfathomable, and then appoint a priest who is extremely learned in the sacred texts. When the king has a royal priest who has dharma in his soul and is learned in dharma, and the king also possesses similar qualities, everything is well. Those two make subjects, the earlier and the later gods and the ancestors prosper. They should be similarly established in dharma, devoted and extremely austere. They should have fraternal feelings towards each other, revere each other and be similar in temperament. When the brahmana and the kshatriya revere each other, the subjects obtain happiness. When they show each other disrespect, the subjects are destroyed. It is said that the brahmana and the kshatriya are the root of all dharma. On this, an ancient history is recited. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this conversation between Aila and Kashyapa.

‘“Aila asked, ‘When the brahmana abandons the kshatriya and the kshatriya abandons the brahmana, which among the two should be revered? In such a situation, who should not be revered?’

‘“Kashyapa replied, ‘In the kingdom of a kshatriya where the brahmana and the kshatriya fight with each other, there is no one to revere and bandits are worshipped. Virtuous ones think that there is no one in control there. Bulls do not thrive, nor do cows. There is no churning in the pots and no sacrifices. When the brahmanas abandon the kshatriyas, the sons do not study the Vedas. The bulls that are born in those houses do not prosper. The subjects do not study, nor do they sacrifice. When the brahmanas abandon the kshatriyas, they[713] degenerate and become like bandits. The two are always connected and support each other. The kshatriya was born from the brahmana’s womb. The brahmana was born from the kshatriya’s womb. Both of them always depend on each other. Supporting each other, they obtain great prosperity. If that ancient alliance is destroyed, everything becomes confounded. It is like someone who no longer has a boat trying to reach the other shore. Or like a boat tossed around on the giant ocean. The four varnas are then confounded and all the subjects confront a state of destruction. When the tree that represents brahmanas is protected, honey and gold shower down. When it is always unprotected, tears and sin shower down. When a brahmana is not a brahmachari, deviates from studying, but nonetheless seeks protection in Brahma,[714] the gods shower down in strange ways. Terrible misery penetrates there. A person may commit the sin of killing a woman or a brahmana, but is not reprimanded in assembly halls there and is not frightened to approach the king. Then, there is fear for the kshatriya. Extremely wicked persons pile up sin on sin and the god Rudra arises then. The piling up of sin on sin leads to the birth of Rudra. He then kills everyone, the virtuous and the wicked alike.'

'"Aila asked, 'Where does Rudra come from? What is Rudra's form? It is beings who are seen to kill other beings. O Kashyapa! Tell me all this. Where is the god Rudra born from?'

'"Kashyapa replied, 'The soul of Rudra is in the hearts of men. He kills his own body and also the bodies of others. It is said that Rudra is like the stormy wind. His form is like a forest conflagration or the cloud.'

'"Aila said, 'No one can control the wind. Nor do clouds shower down and forest conflagrations are not seen within people.[715] Men are set free and also slain because of desire and hatred.'

'"Kashyapa replied, 'The fire may be lit in one house. But it swiftly burns down an entire village. In that way, the god causes confusion and touches everything, the good and the wicked.'

'"Aila asked, 'If chastisement touches everyone, the good and the wicked, especially because of the sins committed by the wicked, what is the reason to perform good deeds? What is the reason not to perform wicked deeds?'

'"Kashyapa replied, 'Similar chastisement touches those who have not performed wicked deeds, because their sentiments are mixed. They have not abandoned those who perform wicked deeds. Because of mixed sentiments, wet wood is burnt along with the dry. There should never be any mingling with the performers of wicked deeds.'

‘“Aila said, ‘The earth supports both the virtuous and the wicked. The sun heats both the virtuous and the wicked. The wind blows on both the virtuous and the wicked. The water bears along both the virtuous and the wicked.’

‘“Kashyapa replied, ‘That is the way of the world. O prince! But it is not like that there.[716] After death, there is a specific difference between those who perform good deeds and those who are wicked. The world of virtuous ones is full of honey and radiant with golden rays into which clarified butter has been poured. It is the navel of immortality. After death, the brahmachari finds delight there. There is no death there. Nor is there old age or unhappiness. The world of the wicked is hell, without any light. There is eternal unhappiness and a lot of sorrow. There, the self sorrows over one’s wicked deeds. He descends for many years and cannot find a place to rest. When there is dissension between brahmanas and kshatriyas, the subjects are submerged in intolerable grief. Knowing this, it is the king’s duty to make a learned person, one who is not knowledgeable about just one subject, the priest. He is the one who should be consecrated. That is what dharma decrees. According to dharma, the brahmana is said to be the foremost among everyone. Those who are learned about dharma say that brahmanas were created first. Because he is honoured as the first, everything that came later belongs to him. Therefore, the brahmana must be revered and worshipped and he enjoys the best of everything. According to dharma, everything that is best and distinguished must be offered to him. This is a mandatory duty for a king, even if he is powerful. The brahmana makes the kshatriya prosper. The kshatriya makes the brahmana prosper.’”’

Chapter 1403(75)

'Bhishma said, "The yoga and kshema of a kingdom is said to depend on the king. The yoga and kshema of the king depend on the priest. When the invisible fears of the subjects are pacified by the brahmana and the visible ones by the arms of the king, there is indeed happiness in the kingdom. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. That was a conversation between King Muchukunda and Vaishravana.[717] Having conquered this earth, King Muchukunda wished to test the strength of his own army and attacked the lord of Alaka.[718] King Vaishravana created and released rakshasas on him and that army of nairittas crushed and drove away his forces. When King Muchukunda, the scorcher of enemies, saw that his own soldiers were being slaughtered, he censured his learned priest. Vasishtha, supreme in knowledge about the brahman, performed terrible austerities and drove the rakshasas there away, thereby creating a path. At this, King Vaishravana showed himself before Muchukunda. On the soldiers being slaughtered, he spoke these words. 'Earlier, there were kings who were more powerful than you and they also had priests. However, none of them acted the way you are acting. It is not as if those lords of the earth were limited in strength or in their accomplishment with weapons. They approached and worshipped me, as the lord of happiness and unhappiness. If you possess strength in your arms, you should exhibit it. Why are you depending to such a great degree on the strength of a brahmana?' At this, Muchukunda became angry and replied to the lord of riches. Though he was initially enraged, he reverentially spoke these justified words. 'Svayambhu[719] created the brahmana and the kshatriya from the same womb. Separate powers have been ordained for them and they protect the world. The brahmana is always established in the strength of austerities and mantras. The kshatriya is always established in the strength of weapons and his arms. Together, their task is to protect the subjects. O lord of Alaka! Though you have reprimanded me, this is the way I have acted.’ Vaishravana then spoke to the king and his priest. ‘Unless it has been ordained, I do not bestow a kingdom on anyone. O king! Know that unless it has been ordained, I do not take it away either. O brave one! I have given you this entire earth. Rule it.’ Muchukunda replied, ‘O king! I do not wish to enjoy a kingdom that has been given to me by you. I wish to enjoy the prosperity of a kingdom that has been won by my arms and valour.’ King Vaishravana was overcome by supreme wonder. On seeing that Muchukunda was established in the dharma of kshatriyas, he honoured this. King Muchukunda followed the dharma and vows of kshatriyas well and ruled over the earth that he had conquered through the valour of his arms. Like that, if a king knows the brahman well and gives precedence to brahmanas, he conquers what has not been conquered earlier and obtains great fame. The brahmana must always have water[720] and the kshatriya must always have weapons. Everything that is there in the universe is under their control.”’

Chapter 1404(76)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “To ensure the prosperity of men, what kind of a conduct should a lord of the earth follow? How does he conquer the auspicious worlds? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king must donate and must perform sacrifices. He must fast, perform austerities and be engaged in protecting the subjects. Following dharma, the king must always protect all the subjects. Without being distracted, he must arise and worship all those who follow dharma. When the king honours dharma, everyone also honours it in every way. When the king acts in this way, the subjects are delighted. He must always hold his rod aloft and must be like death to his enemies. He must slay all the bandits and must not wilfully ignore anyone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a king protects the subjects extremely well, out of whatever dharma is observed by them, one-fourth of that dharma is the king’s share. If he protects the subjects in accordance with dharma, the king enjoys one-fourth of their studying, sacrifices, donations and worship. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the king does not protect the subjects in any way and if there is something wrong with the kingdom, one-fourth of that sin is enjoyed by the king. It has been said that he gets all of it. Some have determined that he gets half. However, there may be a lord of the earth who is cruel in his deeds and false in his speech. Listen to how that king can be freed from his kingdom and his own treasury. If he cannot restore all of it, he should restore whatever he can, keeping just enough for his own subsistence. All the varnas must protect brahmanas and the property of brahmanas. One who causes injury to brahmanas should not be allowed to remain in the kingdom. If the property of brahmanas is protected, everything is protected. If their favours are ensured, then the king will have accomplished his objective. Beings depend on Parjanya and birds on a large tree. Like that, men depend on the king for accomplishing all their objectives. If a king has desire in his soul, is always fraudulent in his mind, or is violent and extremely avaricious, he will be incapable of protecting the subjects.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have not sought pleasure in the kingdom. Even for an instant, I have not desired the kingdom. I agreed to the kingdom for the sake of dharma, but there does not seem to be any dharma in it. Since there is no dharma in it, I have had enough of the kingdom. Therefore, for the sake of dharma, I will go to the forest. I will conquer my senses and cast aside my rod. I will worship dharma in the sacred forest and, like a hermit, live on roots and fruits.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I know your mind and about your qualities of non-violence. However, only through non-violence, you will not be able to accomplish anything great. You are mild, self-controlled, extremely noble and greatly devoted to dharma. However, people do not show you great regard, taking you to be an eunuch, driven by compassion over dharma. Look towards rajadharma, which was appropriate for your father and grandfathers. What you wish to resort to is not the conduct of kings. You have established yourself in non-violence and have thereby created the impotence you should not follow. There are fruits of dharma that can be obtained from protecting the subjects. O son![721] What you wish to follow, through your wisdom and your intelligence, is not the blessing that Pandu and Kunti desired for you. Your father always spoke about valour, strength and spirit for you. Kunti desired greatness, strength and generosity for you. In the worlds of men and gods, ancestors and gods always want offerings of svaha and svadha from their sons.[722] You have been born to practise donations, study, perform sacrifices and protect the subjects and can either follow dharma or adharma. O Kounteya! Destiny has imposed a burden and a heavier load has been imposed on that. Even if you are fatigued, your fame will not be destroyed. If a person controls himself in every way and bears it without losing his footing, he is without any taint in his deeds, words and success, because of his deeds alone. If someone knows about dharma and stumbles, that is a calamity, regardless of whether he is a householder, a king or a brahmachari. It is better to do a small, generous and virtuous act than to do nothing at all. There is nothing more wicked than not doing. O king! When a person born in a noble lineage knows about dharma and obtains great prosperity, yoga and kshema exist and welfare can be thought of. When a person who knows about dharma obtains a kingdom, he should seize it in every direction—winning over some through donations, others through force, and still others with extremely pleasant words. There are learned ones born in noble lineages, who are afflicted by fear because they may not have a means of sustenance. When they obtain that[723] and are satisfied about their states, what can be a greater dharma than that?"

'Yudhishthira asked, "What is greater than heaven? What is greater happiness than that? What is supreme prosperity? If there is anything that you can think of, tell me about it."

'Bhishma replied, "If complete kshema can be obtained from someone being established,[724] then among all of us, he is the one who has obtained the best of heavens in an instant. I am telling you this truthfully. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! You are the delight of all the Kurus. Be the king. Conquer heaven. Protect the righteous and slay the wicked. O son! Let your well-wishers and the virtuous live and follow you. Be like Parjanya to beings and like a succulent tree to birds. Be dignified, brave, capable of striking, non-violent, victorious over your senses, affectionate and ready to share. Let people live and follow you."'

Chapter 1405(77)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Some brahmanas are engaged in their own tasks, while others are engaged in tasks they should not do. Tell me the difference between them.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are those who have the signs of learning. In considering anything, they look to the sacred texts. O king! These brahmanas are celebrated as being equal to the brahman. There are those who are accomplished as officiating priests and preceptors and are engaged in their own tasks. O king! These brahmanas are regarded as the equals of the gods. There are those who are officiating priests, priests, ministers, ambassadors and supervisors of the treasury. O king! These brahmanas are regarded as the equivalent of kshatriyas. There are those who ride horses, ride elephants or chariots, and are also foot soldiers. O king! These brahmanas are regarded as the equivalent of vaishyas. There are also reprehensible ones who are brahmanas only in name. They have abandoned the deeds they should have undertaken by virtue of birth. O king! These brahmanas are said to be the equals of shudras. There are brahmanas who have not studied the sacred texts. Nor have they consecrated the sacred fire. All of these do not follow dharma. The king should make them pay taxes and force them to undertake manual labour. There are those who are employed as ordinary messengers, work as priests in temples, study the nakshatras, work as officiating priests for ordinary people and fifthly, undertake great journeys.[725] These brahmanas are chandalas. If the treasury suffers from a shortage, the lord of the earth should exact taxes from these,[726] with the exception of those who are equals of the brahman and the equals of the gods. The Vedas say that the king is the lord of the riches of those who are not brahmanas and also of brahmanas who perform wrong deeds. The king must never ignore wrong deeds. If he wishes to follow dharma, he must control and divide them.[727] If a brahmana becomes a thief in a king’s kingdom, learned people think that this is the king’s crime. O king! If a brahmana who knows the Vedas and is a snataka is forced to become a thief because of lack of means of sustenance, those who are learned about dharma say that it is the king’s duty to support him. O scorcher of enemies! If he does not change himself after he has obtained a means of subsistence, then, with his relatives, he should be exiled from the country.”’

Chapter 1406(78)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O grandfather! What kind of a conduct should the king follow, so as to ensure power and prosperity? Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The Vedas say that the king is the lord of the riches of those who are not brahmanas and also of those brahmanas who do the wrong kind of work. The king must never ignore brahmanas who do the wrong kind of work. The virtuous ones say that this was the ancient practice followed by kings. O king! If a brahmana is a thief in the kingdom of a king, that king is regarded as the criminal. Since they hold themselves to be responsible for the deed, all rajarshis have protected brahmanas. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. The king of Kekaya sung this when he was abducted by a rakshasa. O king! When the king of Kekaya was studying in the forest, rigid in his vows, a terrible rakshasa seized him.

‘“The king said, ‘There is no thief in my country. Nor is there a wicked person or a drunkard. There is no one who has not consecrated the sacred fire. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? In my dominion, there is no brahmana who is not learned, without vows. Nor is there one who does not drink soma. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? In my kingdom, there is no one who performs sacrifices without offering dakshina to the officiating priests. There is no one who studies without following the vows. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? They[728] are established in six tasks—studying, teaching, performing sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices, donating and receiving. They are honoured with their proper shares. They are mild and truthful in speech. In my dominion, the brahmanas are engaged in their own tasks. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? They[729] do not beg. They give. They are accomplished in true dharma. They study, but do not teach. They perform sacrifices, but do not work as officiating priests. They protect brahmanas and do not run away from battle. The kshatriyas are engaged in their own tasks. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? They[730] earn a living from agriculture, protecting cattle and trade and do not resort to deception. They are not distracted and perform their tasks. They are good in their vows and truthful in speech. They are ready to share, self-controlled, pure and fraternal in their dealings. My vaishyas are engaged in their own tasks. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? My shudras are engaged in their own tasks. Without any resentment, they serve the three varnas. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? All the women who are in distress, without protectors, weak and afflicted are given their shares. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? I have not destroyed the dharma of specific families or regions. All these have been followed in the proper way. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? In my kingdom, ascetics have been honoured and protected. They have been received well and given their proper share. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? I do not consume anything without sharing. I do not have intercourse with the wives of others. I never sport when I am alone. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? There is no brahmachari who is not a beggar. There is no beggar who is not a brahmachari. No oblations are offered without an officiating priest. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? I have not shown disrespect to the aged, the learned and ascetics. When the kingdom sleeps, I am awake. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? My priest is skilled in studying the Vedas. He is an ascetic and knows about all forms of dharma. He is prosperous and is the lord of the entire kingdom. I desire the celestial worlds through donations, truthfulness, protecting the brahmanas and serving the seniors. I should not have any fear from rakshasas. There are no widows in my kingdom, nor those who are brahmanas in name alone. There are no brahmanas who are miserable or thieves. There is no one who has intercourse with someone else's wife. There is no one who is evil in deeds. I should not have any fear from rakshasas. There is no part of my body, not even the space of two fingers, which has not been mangled by weapons, when I have fought for the sake of dharma. Why have you then been able to penetrate me? The people in my kingdom have always sought benedictions for me in the form of cattle, brahmanas and sacrifices. Why have you then been able to penetrate me?'

'"The rakshasa replied, 'Whatever be the circumstance, you always look towards dharma. O Kekaya! Therefore, return to your home in safety. I am leaving. O Kekaya! He who protects cattle and brahmanas and protects his subjects has no reason to fear rakshasas, not to speak of men. Those who have brahmanas at their head, those who are fortified by the strength of the brahman and those who love their guests and wives, are men who have conquered heaven."

'Bhishma said, "You must therefore protect brahmanas. Protected by you, they will protect you. The desire of kings should be that the kingdom should prosper well. Therefore, in particular, brahmanas who perform perverse tasks must be restrained. For the welfare of the subjects, they must be treated separately. The king who acts in this way towards residents of the city and the countryside experiences fortune and obtains the world of Indra."'

Chapter 1407(79)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It has been said that in times of distress, brahmanas may live by adopting the dharma of kshatriyas. Can they also live by adopting the dharma of vaishyas?”

‘Bhishma replied, “When he is incapable of following the dharma of kshatriyas, he can follow the dharma of vaishyas. When the means of subsistence is destroyed because of some hardship, agriculture and tending to cattle is permissible.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! When a brahmana follows the dharma of vaishyas, what commodities can he sell, without being deprived of the world of heaven?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Under every circumstance, a brahmana must always avoid liquor, salt, sesamum seeds, animals with manes, bulls, honey, meat and cooked food. O son! If a brahmana sells these, he goes to hell. A goat is Agni. A sheep is Varuna. A horse is Surya. The earth is large.[731] A cow is a soma sacrifice. These must never be sold. The virtuous do not praise the exchange of uncooked food for cooked food. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, for the sake of eating, cooked food can be obtained in exchange for uncooked food. ‘We will eat this when it has been cooked. Please cook this for us.’ If one considers uncooked food with this objective in mind, there is no adharma. On this, there is the ancient conduct of dharma, followed by those who adhered to custom. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this. ‘I will give you this. You must give me that in return.’ This voluntary agreement is dharma, because there is no force involved. Ancient transactions occurred in this way, accepted by rishis and others. There is no doubt that this is virtuous.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O father![732] When all the subjects abandon their own dharma and take up weapons, the strength of the kshatriya dwindles. How will the king then become the protector and refuge of the worlds? I have a doubt about this. O grandfather! Tell me this in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “As the foremost among the varnas, brahmanas should seek the comfort of their own selves through donations, austerities, performance of sacrifices, lack of injury and self-control. Those among them who possess the strength of the Vedas must arise in every way and increase the king’s strength, like the gods do to the great Indra. When the king is weak, it is said that the arms of the brahmanas become his refuge. Therefore, if he knows, he should seek to uplift himself through the strength of brahmanas. When the king is victorious and ensures welfare in the kingdom, all the varnas are immersed in their own dharma and perform their own tasks. O Yudhishthira! However, when bandits are engaged in causing confusion, there is mixing[733] and all the varnas must take up weapons and there is no sin in this.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “If all the kshatriyas act injuriously towards the brahmanas, who will then save the brahmanas? What will be the supreme dharma then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In particular, the aged brahmanas must restrain and pacify the kshatriyas through austerities, brahmacharya, weapons, physical strength, deceit and lack of deceit. Brahmanas can do the restraining, because kshatriyas were created from brahmanas. Fire was created from water, kshatriyas from brahmanas and iron from stone. Therefore, the energy of each category is pacified by its own womb. When iron encounters stone, fire comes in contact with water and kshatriyas are injurious towards brahmanas, all three are pacified. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, kshatriyas are pacified by brahmanas, even if they are great and irresistible in energy and strength. When the vigour of brahmanas is mild and the vigour of kshatriyas is extremely weak, all the varnas always act in a wicked way towards the brahmanas. Those who fight then, ready to give up their lives for the sake of protecting brahmanas, are those who have dharma in their souls. All those spirited ones who are enraged and wish to take up weapons for the sake of brahmanas obtain sacred worlds. Those worlds are beyond those meant for the extremely virtuous ones who study, and the ascetics. Those brave ones go to supreme worlds that are beyond those meant for those who fast and destroy their lives in the fire. For learned ones, there is no other dharma than giving up their lives in the cause.[734] One should bow down before those fortunate ones who offer their lives. May we obtain the worlds obtained by those who seek to restrain the enemies of brahmanas. Manu has said that those brave ones conquer heaven and Brahma’s world. People are purified when they bathe after a horse sacrifice. That is what happens to the evil and good deeds of those who are killed by weapons in a battle. Because of the time and the place, adharma can become dharma and dharma can become adharma. That is the nature of time and place. Friends can perform cruel deeds and conquer supreme heaven. The virtuous can perform wicked deeds and attain the supreme objective. There are three occasions when the taking up of weapons by a brahmana is not reprehensible—to save himself, to prevent the mixing of the varnas and to restrain the unassailable.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O supreme among kings! When the strength of bandits increases, for the sake of preventing injury, when the varnas are mixed and the varnas are confused, should someone else who is stronger, a brahmana, a vaishya or a shudra, take up the task?[735] Should he protect the subjects against bandits by wielding the rod of dharma? Should he perform that task or is he restrained from doing that? I think that weapons should not be wielded by anyone who is not born a kshatriya.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If he is a means of crossing over to a shore when none exists, if he is a boat when no boats exist, whether he is a shudra or someone else, he must always be revered. O king! When people are afflicted by bandits, he protects those who have no protectors. Men seek refuge with him and he conveys them to a state of happiness. Therefore, he must be affectionately worshipped, as if he is a relative. O Kouravya! He deserves honour and should be looked upon as a performer of great deeds. What use is a bull that does not bear a load? What use is a cow that does not yield milk? What use is a barren wife? What use is a king who does not protect? What use is an elephant made of wood? What use is a deer made of leather? What use is a cart without a drive and a path? What use is a degraded field? A brahmana who does not study and a king who does not protect are always useless in this way, like a cloud that does not rain. The one who always protects the virtuous and chastises the wicked performs the duties of a king and should always be upheld and instated in this way.”’

Chapter 1408(80)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! What should be the conduct of those who are officiating priests and how should they endeavour? O Indra among kings! O supreme among eloquent ones! What kind of people should they be?”

‘Bhishma replied, “From ancient times, the tasks and conduct of officiating priests have been laid down. They must first be knowledgeable about sacred hymns[736] and the learning of brahmanas. They must always be patient and firm in this one task.[737] They must not be unpleasant in speech. They must be affectionate towards each other.[738] They must be revered and must look on everyone equally. They must possess attributes of non-injury, truthfulness, non-violence, austerities, uprightness, lack of hatred, lack of ego, modesty, forbearance, self-control and tranquility. A person who is modest, truthful, patient, self-controlled, non-injurious towards beings, without desire and harted, possessing the three sparkling qualities,[739] non-violent and content with knowledge alone—is said to be worthy of Brahma’s seat. O son! These are great officiating priests and all of these must be honoured in the proper way.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “The words of the Vedas stipulate the giving of dakshina. They say that it must be given. But nothing is said about when that giving is enough. Nor do the sacred texts say enough about riches, for example, what is in accordance with the sacred texts in times of distress.[740] The commands of the sacred texts are terrible, because they do not look towards the capacity of the giver.[741] The ordinances of the Vedas only say that one must faithfully perform sacrifices. However, what will devotion achieve when the sacrifice is performed falsely?”[742]

‘Bhishma replied, “One cannot obtain greatness by disrespecting the Vedas, deceit or fraud. You should not think in this way. O son! Dakshina is a part of sacrifice and extend the Vedas. Devoid of dakshina, mantras can never render salvation. However, the capacity to give one full vessel should also be honoured. O son! Therefore, all the three varnas must perform sacrifices in the proper way. The ordinances of the Vedas say that for brahmanas, the king is like soma. One should not try to sell it, since such a means of earning a living is fruitless.[743] If the sacrifice is performed in this way, it will be as if dharma has been sold. The rishis who are learned about dharma have spoken about dharma in this way. The person, the sacrifice and soma must be in accordance with what is proper. A man who has improper conduct is of no use to himself or to others. We have heard it in the sacred texts that the body constitutes the vessels of the sacrifice. For that reason, conducted properly, only great-souled brahmanas must be engaged. The supreme among the learned texts decrees that austerities are superior to sacrifices. O learned one! Therefore, I will tell you about austerities. Listen to me. Non-violence, truthfulness, lack of injury, self-control and compassion—the learned and the patient know that these are austerities, not the drying up of the body. Not accepting the proof of the Vedas, transgressing the sacred texts and chaos everywhere—these destroy the soul. O Partha! Listen to what has been said about oblations in sacrifices that last for ten days. Consciousness is the ladle. Thoughts are clarified butter. Supreme knowledge is the *pavitra*.[744] All kinds of deceit represent death. All kinds of uprightness represent the objective of the brahman. All this is actually in the realm of the unknown. What purpose will words accomplish?"'

Chapter 1409(81)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! For a man who is alone and unaided, even the slightest task is extremely difficult to accomplish, not to speak of running a kingdom. For the sake of prosperity, what should be the conduct of a king’s adviser? How should he behave? Whom should the king trust and whom should he not trust?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! The king has four kinds of friends—those who have the same objective, those who are devoted, those who are natural and those who are artificial.[745] There is a fifth kind of friend, one with dharma in his soul, who serves a single person and not two. He is on the side that has dharma, though he may also be neutral. Wishing to conquer, a king uses both dharma and adharma. However, to such a person, one should never disclose objectives that would not please him.[746] Out of the four, the two in the middle are the best.[747] The others should always be suspected. However, if a king has to undertake a task himself, all of these should be suspected. It is the king’s duty to be never careless in protecting his friends. A king who is careless is overwhelmed by people. A wicked person can become virtuous, a virtuous person can become terrible, an enemy can become a friend and a friend can cause injury. Since a man’s mind is uncertain, how can he be trusted? Therefore, the king must ensure that the important tasks are undertaken in his presence. Blind trust can completely destroy dharma and artha. However, not trusting anyone is also worse than death. Trusting amounts to premature death. Trust leads to catastrophe. If one trusts someone, life depends on the person one has trusted. Therefore, the king must trust some people and mistrust others. O son! This is the eternal policy for prosperity. There may be someone who brings riches as soon as one thinks about it. The learned ones say that such a person is an enemy and must always be distrusted. When water flows from one person’s field into another person’s field, as long as the first one wants the water to flow, he doesn't demolish all the embankments. But when he is worried about too much of water flowing down, he wishes to demolish the embankments. One can discern this through signs and the signs must be used to determine the enemy. When someone is not satisfied with the king's prosperity and is distressed at his decay, it is said that this is the sign of a best friend. If there is someone about whom one can think, 'My destruction is the same as his death,' that person can be trusted, as if he was one's own father. You should try to increase such a person's prosperity in every way and always prevent injury to him, since he is engaged in tasks of dharma. If someone is scared of injury to the king, know that this is a sign that he is the best friend. Those who wish to cause him injury are said to be enemies. There may be someone who is always frightened of injury to the king and satisfied with the king's prosperity.[748] A friend who is like this is said to be one's equal. A person who is close to you must be handsome, with a good complexion and good voice. He must be patient and without malice. He must be born in a noble lineage and possess good conduct. Intelligence, a good memory, skill, natural compassion and a capacity to never malign, irrespective of whether one is honoured or dishonoured—these are the attributes of an officiating priest, a preceptor and a friend. Such people must dwell in your house and must be supremely honoured. He can know about secret counsel and also about the objectives of dharma and artha. One can trust such a person, the way one would trust a father. Each task should always be given to one person. Otherwise, there will be dissension. A person for whom duties and fame are the most important, who always sticks to a pledge he has made, who does not hate capable people, who enables others, who does not abandon dharma for the sake of desire, fear, avarice or anger, one who is accomplished and competent in speech—such a person must always be next to you. Brave, noble, learned, powerful, accomplished, born in good lineages, possessing good conduct, patient, without malice—it is your duty to appoint these as advisers and employ them in all the tasks. They must be honoured, given their shares, given good aides and established in their own tasks. Completely immersed in great and important tasks, they ensure great prosperity. They always seek to rival each other and perform these tasks. They consult each other and accomplish the objectives. You must always be frightened of your kin, as if they are death. A kin is like a minor king and can never tolerate the king's prosperity. O mighty-armed one! It is only a kin who is delighted at the destruction of someone who is upright, mild, generous, modest and truthful in speech. However, there is no happiness in not having kin. There is nothing that is worse than that. A man without kin is overwhelmed by the enemy. If a man has been treated badly by others, kin offer refuge. Kin never tolerate the prospect of kin being maltreated by others. Even if that injury is caused by friends, it is regarded as one to one's own self. There are good qualities in them,[749] but the absence of qualities can also be discerned. He who is not kin, does not do any favours. But he who is not kin, does not use poisoned arrows. In the world of kin, both can be seen—virtuous and wicked. One must always honour them in words and deeds. He must act towards them in a pleasant way and never act in unpleasant ways. He must always act as if he trusts them, even if he actually mistrusts them. It is seen that good and bad qualities are both mixed in them. When a man conducts himself in this way and is not distracted, his enemies are disarmed and become his friends. This is the way he prospers in the circle of kin and relatives. For a very long period of time, he obtains fame and mastery over his friends and enemies."'

Chapter 1410(82)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “If the circle of kin and relatives cannot be dealt with in this way, friends may become enemies. What should be one’s sentiments then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation between Vasudeva and Narada, the celestial rishi.

‘“Vasudeva said, ‘O Narada! A person who is not a well-wisher should not get to know the supremely secret counsel, nor should a well-wisher who is not learned, or a learned person who is not in control of his soul. O Narada! Because you have affectionate feelings towards me, I will tell you something. O one who can go to heaven! Having considered my entire intelligence, I will also ask you something. I do not act so as to become a slave to my kin, by talking to them about their riches. I enjoy half the objects of pleasure[750] and forgive harsh words spoken to me, which crush my heart, like two kindling sticks rubbed together in a desire for fire. O rishi of the gods! The words that are spoken harshly always torment me. Samkarshana[751] always possesses strength and Gada[752] is again delicate. O Narada! Pradyumna[753] surpasses me in beauty, but I have no aides. O Narada! The others of the Andhaka and Vrishni lineages are extremely fortunate. They are powerful and difficult to assail. They are always full of enterprise. Whether they are on your side, or whether they are not on your side, there is hardship. What can be a greater misery than to have Akrura and Ahuka on the same side?[754] Both of them have always solicited me, but I have not opted for either of them. However, what can be a greater misery than not to have those two on your side? O great sage! I am like the mother of two[755] who are engaged in a gambling match. If I wish for the victory of one, it is like defeat for the other. O Narada! These two always afflict me in this way. You should tell me what is beneficial for my kin and for my own self.’

'"Narada replied, 'O Krishna! Disasters are of two kinds—the external and the internal. O Varshneya! They result from one's own deeds, or those of others. This difficulty is internal and is because of your own deeds. Because of Akrura's power, for the sake of riches, because of desire or because they are frightened by words or deeds, the Bhojas are on his side. You obtained the prosperity for yourself, but gave it away to another.[756] You provided the foundation and he[757] is now applauded in words and possesses aides. Like food that has been vomited out, you are incapable of taking it back. O Krishna! You can never take the kingdom back from Babhru[758] and Ugrasena, especially because that will lead to conflict within the clan. That will only be possible after trying hard and performing an extremely difficult task. There will be a great slaughter and perhaps complete destruction. Therefore, use a weapon that is not made of steel, one that is mild, but is capable of piercing hearts. Sharpen that blade and use it to remove their tongues.'

'"Vasudeva asked, 'O sage! How will I know what is the weapon that is not made of steel and is mild? What will I sharpen and use to remove their tongues?'

'"Narada replied, 'Always give as much of food as you are capable of. Be patient, self-controlled and upright. Honour those who must be revered. This is the weapon that is not made of steel. Use words to pacify the hearts, the speech and the minds of the relatives who desire to speak bitter and slighting words. Someone who is not a great man, someone who has not cleansed his soul and someone who is without aides cannot bear a great burden.[759] Raise it aloft on your shoulders. Every one is capable of bearing a great burden on level terrain. Only an excellent bull can bear a load that is extremely heavy over uneven terrain. An aggregation is destroyed if there is conflict within its ranks. O Keshava! You are the foremost of the aggregation. When it has obtained you, act so that the aggregation is not destroyed. Nothing other than prosperity, renunciation and generosity are established in a person who is wise. Ensuring the prosperity of one's own side is fortunate and glorious and ensures a long life. O Krishna! Act so that there is no destruction of your relatives. O lord! Whether it is about the six aspects[760] of policy or marching out on an expedition, you are in control of everything and everything is known to you. O mighty-armed one! The Madhavas, the Kukuras, the Bhojas, the Andhakas and the Vrishnis are dependent on you, just as the worlds and the lords of the worlds are. O Madhava! Even the rishis worship your intelligence. You are the preceptor of all beings. You know what has gone and what will come. O foremost among the Yadu lineage! Resorting to you, your relatives enjoy happiness.’”’

Chapter 1411(83)

‘Bhishma said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the first element of conduct. Listen to the second. The king must always protect the man who extends prosperity. O Yudhishthira! Whether a person is paid or is not paid, if he comes and tells you that the royal treasury is being destroyed and depleted by a minister, you must hear him in secret and protect him from ministers. Ministers tend to kill such informants. All those who destroy the treasury work collectively against the one who protects the treasury and unless protected, he will be destroyed. On this, an ancient history is recounted, about what the sage Kalakavrikshiya told the lord of Kosala. We have heard that the sage Kalakavrikshiya went to Kshemadarshina after he had become the lord of Kosala. Wishing to ascertain what was happening in Kshemadarshina’s kingdom, he repeatedly travelled around, with a crow tied in a cage. ‘I study the knowledge of crows. Crows tell me what has happened, what will happen, and what is going on right now.’ Saying this, with a large number of men, he began to observe the wicked deeds of all those employed by the king, throughout the kingdom. He knew about everything that was going on in the kingdom. He knew everything about the wicked deeds of those employed by the king, here and there. With the crow, the one who was rigid in his vows went to see the king and said, ‘I know everything.’ He went up to an ornamented adviser of the king of Kosala and, on the basis of what the crow said, told him these words. ‘I know what you did on such-and-such an occasion. I know that you stole from the royal treasury. This is what the crow has told me. Swiftly admit or contradict it.’ In this way, he spoke to others who had also stolen from the royal treasury. No one heard him speak of anything that was not actually true. O extender of the Kuru lineage! When he was sleeping in the night, all those accused royal employees killed the crow in the night.

'"Next morning, on seeing the crow pierced with an arrow inside the cage, the brahmana went to Kshemadarshina and spoke these words. 'O king! O lord! You are the lord of lives and riches and I seek sanctuary with you. With your permission, I will tell you something that is for the welfare of your city. I have come to you with wholehearted devotion, tormented on account of a friend.[761] Because of the injury caused, I have spoken about your riches being robbed. Like a charioteer with a well-trained horse, I am trying to awake a friend. Because I am intent on ensuring your welfare, I am overcome by great rage. A person who knows and wishes to ensure his own prosperity should always tolerate such advances on the part of a well-wisher.' The king replied to him and said, 'I always desire my own prosperity. Therefore, why will I not forgive what you tell me? O brahmana! If you so wish, tell me what you know. O brahmana! I will act in accordance with the words you tell me.'

'"The sage said, 'I have come to you out of my devotion, to report to you what I know about your policies, your dangers and the threats you are facing from your servants. Learned ones who were preceptors and served kings declared this a long time ago. Only those who have no other means of sustenance should serve the king. Association with kings is like virulent poison. Kings have many friends and also have many enemies. It has been said that those who serve kings face dangers from all of these. O king! Therefore, all the time, they have to be scared of all these. One is incapable of not being single-minded and being distracted when serving a lord of the earth. One who desires prosperity should never be careless. Such carelessness can lead to a king stumbling and if there is such a stumbling, there is no prospect of remaining alive. A learned person must approach the king as if he is a blazing fire. He is the lord of lives and riches and if he is angry, that lord is like virulent poison. While always making the best of efforts, the man must think, "I am already dead." He must be scared of having said something wrong, having done something wrong, having stood in the wrong way, having sat in the wrong way and having walked in the wrong way. He must watch out for such signs and indications. If the king is pleased, like a god, he can grant every object of desire. However, if he is wrathful, like the fire, he can burn down, from the roots. O king! This is what Maya[762] had said and that is the way it is. I will now repeatedly act so as to extend your prosperity. At times of hardship, an aide like me helps with his intelligence. O king! My crow has been slain, but I am not reprimanding you on account of this. They[763] wish you injury. You should use your intelligence to test for those who wish you well and those who wish you injury. Do not reveal your thoughts. There are those who dwell in your own residence, they do not wish the prosperity of the subjects. It is the likes of those who are hostile towards me. After you have been destroyed, they desire your kingdom. O king! However, they will only succeed if they ally with those who are close to you, not otherwise. O king! Because of fear from them, I will depart and go to a hermitage. O lord! It is they who allied and brought my crow down with an arrow. They sent my crow to Yama's abode as a signal to me. O king! I have seen this through sight gained by a long period of austerities. I used the crow as a hook and crossed this river that is infested with many crocodiles, fish, alligators and a large number of whales.[764] Your kingdom was full of stumps of trees, rocks and thorny scrubs, and infested by tigers, lions and elephants. It was difficult to access and difficult to penetrate, like a cave in the Himalayas. The learned say that a fire should be used to cross a place that is difficult to cross because it is dark, a boat should be used to cross the water. However, the learned also say that there is no means to cross the difficult terrain a king faces. Your kingdom is impenetrable and is enveloped in darkness. Even you are incapable of finding comfort here. How can I? This is not an auspicious place to live in, since the virtuous and the wicked are equal here. There is no doubt that one will be killed here, whether one is good or wicked. One is slain for performing good deeds and one who performs wicked deeds is not slain. One should not remain here for a long time. The learned should depart swiftly. O king! There is a river named Sita, where even boats sink. I think that this trap, which kills everyone, is like that. You are like the fall that confronts those who collect honey, or like a meal laced with poison. Your sentiments are like those of the wicked and you do not follow the conduct of the virtuous. O king! You are like a well that is surrounded by poisonous snakes. You are like a passage to a large river that has sweet water to drink. However, the banks are covered with *kariras*[765] and reeds and it is difficult to reach. O king! You are like that. O king! You are like a swan amidst dogs, vultures and jackals. A creeper attaches itself to a giant tree and, winding around the trunk, increases its abundant growth. It envelopes and surpasses the tree's growth. When there is a terrible conflagration, it burns down both the tree and the creeper. O king! Your advisers fit that image. Cleanse them. O king! You are the one who has nurtured and protected them. Ignoring you, they are seeking to kill someone who loves you. I have dwelt here in fear and have been protected only because they have been careless. It was like living in a house with a snake inside it, or dwelling in a house with a hero's wife.[766] I wished to test the conduct of the king, who was like a fellow resident. Has the king controlled his senses? Has he conquered his inner impulses? Do the subjects love the king and does the king love them? O supreme among kings! Asking these questions, I came to you. O king! I find delight in you, like a hungry person before food. I do not like your ministers. They are like water before someone who is not thirsty. Because I wish to ensure your prosperity, they have found fault with me. There is no doubt that there is no other reason. I do not harbour any enmity towards them. I only wish to point out their faults. However, like a snake that has only wounded its back, one must always be careful about a wicked enemy.'

'"The king replied, 'I will honour you with a lot of expensive objects. I will show you a lot of reverence. O foremost among brahmanas! I will worship you a lot. Reside in my house for a long time. O brahmana! Those who do not like you will no longer reside in my house. But you should tell me about what should be done next. Ensure that the rod is wielded against those who are wicked and the ones who are virtuous are treated well. O illustrious one! Look towards that and guide me about what is beneficial.'

'"The sage said, 'Ignore this sin[767] and weaken them, one by one. Ascertaining their motives, slay one man after another man. When many are guilty of the same crime, they can unite and blunt a thorn. O king! I am telling you this, because of my fear that your secret counsel might be disclosed. We are brahmanas. Our punishments are mild and we are prone to compassion. I desire your welfare, that of your enemies and of my own self. O king! Because I desire your welfare, I am declaring myself to be like your relative. I am the sage Kalakavrikshiya. I am devoted to the truth. Know from the signs that your father revered me as his friend. O king! The kingdom that you obtained from your father confronts a hardship now. At that time, I gave up all objects of desire and tormented myself through austerities. I am telling you this out of affection, so that you do not remain confused any longer. O king! Having obtained the kingdom, depending on your wishes, you can glance both towards its happiness and its misery. O king! How can you be so careless as to have such advisers in the kingdom?'"

'Bhishma said, "At this, great delight was again generated in the royal lineage. The bull among the brahmana lineage was consecrated as the royal priest. The illustrious lord of Kosala brought the earth under a single umbrella.[768] The sage Kalakavrikshiya offered oblations at the best of sacrifices. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having heard his beneficial words, the king of Kosala governed the kingdom in accordance with those auspicious words."'

Chapter 1412(84)

‘Bhishma said, “There are virtuous ones who are constrained by a sense of shame. They are full of truthfulness and uprightness. They are capable of saying what is proper. Such people should be members of the assembly.[769] O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For all tasks, choose as aides those who are extremely wealthy, extremely brave, extremely learned brahmanas, those who are extremely satisfied with you and capable of great enterprise. In every difficulty, you should try for people like these. Those who are born in noble lineages and are honoured will never hide their capabilities. Such a person will never abandon you, whether you are happy or troubled, whether you are afflicted or well, and you must sustain such an individual. Your retinue must consist of those born in noble lineages, born within the kingdom, wise, handsome, extremely learned and those who are bold, but are devoted to you. O son! Those born in inferior lineages, avaricious, violent and shameless will serve you as long as their hands are wet.[770] There are those who are loved and share in your prosperity, who are rewarded with superior and inferior objects, those who seek your prosperity and participate in your happiness, those who are learned and whose conduct does not vary, those who are virtuous and follow vows, those who always wish that you are wealthy, are not inferior and speak the truth. Engage them. However, there are ignoble and evil-minded ones who do not know about agreements. Knowing that they deviate from pledges, you must be careful about them. When there are many to choose from, one should not choose one, ignoring the many. However, if one is superior to the many, the many can be ignored, depending on one’s inclination. These are the signs one sees in the superior person—valour, emphasis on deeds, adherence to agreements, honour shown to capable people, no attempts to rival those who are not rivals, lack of deviation from dharma on account of desire, fear, anger and avarice, lack of arrogance, capability to speak the truth, control over the self and respect for the worthy. Having been examined in every way, such a person should be the adviser in any counsel. He should be born in a noble family, truthful, patient, accomplished, in control over the soul, brave, grateful and upright. O Partha! These are the marks of an excellent person. When these are present, one gets to know such a man. His enemies are disarmed and become his friends. A king who controls his soul, is accomplished in wisdom and desires his own prosperity, should examine the good and bad qualities of his senior ministers and combine men who are wise, born in noble families and born within the country, who are faithful and incapable of being corrupted, and who have been extremely well tested in every possible way. There should be warriors, those who are learned, those whose ancestors have served and others who are not that superior. These men must be adorned with a sense of duty and a desire for prosperity. They must possess morality, natural intelligence, energy, patience, forgiveness, purity, loyalty, firmness and fortitude. After testing their qualities, a king who desires his prosperity must appoint senior advisers who are capable of bearing a heavy load. They must have passed the five tests.[771] He must appoint those who are adequate in speech, brave, skilled in raising resources, born in noble lineages, truthful, knowledgeable about the interpretation of signs and free from cruelty. They must know about the requirements of time and place and seek to ensure the tasks of the master. For the sake of prosperity, these are the kinds of ministers the king must always have.

'"One who is weak in energy and enterprise will never be decisive. He will certainly generate uncertainty in all tasks. A minister who is not learned, even if he is born in a good family and knows about dharma, artha and kama, is not capable of examining a policy. In that way, one who is not born in a good family, even if he is as learned as one desires, is like a blind man without a leader and is confused in all tasks requiring intelligence. Even if a man is intelligent and knows about the means of implementation, if his resolution wavers, he cannot persevere with the task for a long time. A man who is evil in his intelligence and lacks learning may again simply be engaged in carrying out a task, but is incapable of any special kind of reflection. One should never trust a minister who is not devoted. One should never reveal one's counsel to someone who is not devoted. A fraudulent one will conspire with other ministers and cause hardship to the king, like a fire penetrates a tree through holes created by the battering of the wind. The lord may sometimes be enraged and dislodge someone from his position. He may fling words of anger towards him and later reinstate him. No one except a person who is devoted is capable of tolerating this. Ministers can also be enraged, like lightning mixed with thunder. Wishing for the welfare of the lord, if a person restrains this, considering happiness and unhappiness equally, that is the man who should be sought for the sake of prosperity. If a man is not upright, even if he is devoted, wise and possesses all the superior qualities, he should not learn about the king's plans. When a person allies with enemies and pays no regard to the many citizens, that kind of well-wisher should not learn about the king's plans. If a person is not learned, is impure, stubborn and boastful, serves the enemy and is angry and avaricious, that kind of well-wisher should not learn about the king's plans. If a person is a stranger, even if he is devoted and is as learned as one wants, even if he is honoured and given a share, that person should not learn about the king's plans. If a person has been accused of even a small crime, even if he is honoured well and is appointed again because of his good qualities, that person should not hear about the king's plans.

'"A person who is accomplished in wisdom, intelligent, learned, born within the country, pure and upright in all his deeds, that person deserves to hear the plans. If a person possesses external and internal knowledge[772] and knows his own nature and the souls of others, he is like the king's well-wisher and deserves to hear the plans. If a person is truthful in speech, possesses good conduct, is grave, modest and mild, if he is a father and a grandfather, he deserves to hear the plans. If a person is content, revered, truthful and liberal, if he hates evildoers, if he is brave and understands what needs to be done at different time, he deserves to hear the plans. If a person is capable of looking at all the people equally and can bring them under subjugation through conciliation, then a king who wields the rod should tell him about his plans. A warrior who is learned in policy, whom the citizens and the residents of the countryside trust because he follows dharma, deserves to hear the plans. Therefore, those who possess all the qualities should be honoured well. There should be at least three ministers who know about nature and who aspire for greatness. They should be employed in detecting one's natural weaknesses and that of the enemy. When the foundation is the advice of these ministers, the king and the kingdom prosper. The enemy should not be able to detect one's weaknesses, but one should discern the weaknesses of the enemy. Like a turtle draws in its limbs, one must protect one's own weaknesses. Learned ministers provide policy for the kingdom. The king implements the policy. Other people are like the limbs of that policy. It is said that the essence and root of a kingdom's policy is based on spying.

'"Ministers seek a living on this earth and follow their lord. Having controlled restraints, arrogance, anger, pride and jealousy, the king must always consult ministers who have passed the five kinds of tests. The king must focus his mind and understand the different kinds of advice those three[773] have. After the period of consultation is over, he must tell them his own views and the ultimate decision. If there is a serious matter, he must ask a supreme brahmana who knows about the purport of dharma, artha and kama. He must approach him with devotion and affectionately follow the path indicated by him. Those who know about the process of consultation have always determined and said that this is the process that should be followed in seeking advice. Therfore, counsel should always be implemented in this way and this is capable of ensuring the support of the subjects. There must not be dwarves, hunchbacks, weak people, lame ones, blind people, idiots, women and eunuchs there.[774] No one should move there, in front, at the rear, above, below and diagonally.[775] One should climb up onto a deserted balcony, where the ground can be clearly seen and there is no grass or reeds nearby. Avoiding all the errors associated with speech and gestures, the consultations must be held with the ministers at the right time."'

Chapter 1413(85)

‘Bhishma said, ‘O Yudhishthira! In this connection an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation between Brihaspati and Shakra.

‘“Shakra asked, ‘O brahmana! What single step can a man take well, so that he becomes pre-eminent among all beings and obtains great glory?’

‘“Brihaspati replied, ‘O Shakra! Pleasant speech is the single good step through which a man becomes pre-eminent among all beings and obtains great glory. O Shakra! This is the single step that brings happiness to all beings and by observing this one always becomes the beloved of all beings. If a person never speaks, if he always has a frown on his face and if his speech is not pleasant, he becomes an object of hatred for all beings. A person who glances first, a person who speaks first, a person who smiles before speaking, he is the person whom people favour. Everywhere, even if gifts are given, but without pleasant speech, that is like food without seasoning and does not please people. O Shakra! Even if a person does not give anything, but speaks to people in sweet words, he is capable of bringing all the people under his subjugation. Therefore, it is the duty of anyone who wields the rod to be pleasant in speech. That generates results and people do not hate him. Pleasant speech that is soft and sweet and is delivered well is like a good deed and there is nothing that equals it.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the priest,[776] Shakra acted entirely in this way. O Kounteya! You should also properly follow this.”’

Chapter 1414(86)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O Indra among kings! How does a king succeed in ruling over the subjects, with a specific eye towards dharma, so that he obtains eternal fame?”

‘Bhishma replied, “He must be pure in his conduct. He must devote himself to protecting the subjects. He must be cleansed. He will then attain dharma and fame in both the worlds.”[777]

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What kind of conduct should a king follow and whom should he use? O immensely wise one! I am asking you this and you should tell me. You have earlier spoken about the qualities in a man. But it is my view that all of those cannot be found in a single man.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely wise one! O intelligent one! It is exactly as you have stated. The man who possesses all these different qualities is extremely rare. But in brief, if one makes the effort, it is not difficult to find good conduct. I will now tell you about appropriate advisers and act according to this. There must be four brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and are bold, virtuous and pure. There must be three humble shudras who have been pure in their earlier work.[778] There must be a fifty-year-old suta[779]who is bold and without malice. He will recount the ancient stories and must possess the eight qualities. He must have understanding about the smriti texts and must be humble and impartial. When there is a dispute because of greed for riches, he must be capable of knowing what must be done.[780] When decisions have to be taken about a crime, the king must consult in the midst of those eight[781] ministers and they must be devoid of the seven extremely terrible vices.[782] For the sake of the kingdom, the outcome must be publicized in the kingdom. Through such conduct, one must always look towards the subjects. One must not keep the proceedings a secret, because secrecy runs counter to the task. If the proceeding suffers, that adharma will also afflict you. The kingdom will then be scattered, like birds before a hawk. It will always remain adrift, like a shattered boat on an ocean. When the lord of the earth does not protect his subjects well and uses adharma, fear is generated in his heart and heaven is closed to him. O bull among men! This is also true of a king's adviser or a king's son who follows adharma, because a person who has been appointed to a seat of dharma[783] is the foundation of dharma. When appointed to tasks, if the followers of the king do not act properly, they themselves head downwards first,[784] taking the kings with them. The king must always be the protector of the men who have no protectors. If distressed ones are forcefully oppressed by the powerful, there will be a lot of resentment. When there is a dispute between two parties, it is best to decide on the basis of the strength of witnesses. There must be special scrutiny for those who have no witnesses and are without protectors. The punishment that descends on the wicked must be proportionate to the crime. There must be monetary fines for the wealthy and death and imprisonment for the poor. The king must use decency and blows to control those who are wicked in conduct. The virtuous must be protected through pleasant words and gifts. If a person desires to kill the king, he must be executed through colourful means.[785] This is also recommended for those who make a living out of thievery and those who cause a mingling of the varnas.[786] O lord of the earth! When a lord of the earth applies the rod of punishment well, there is no adharma in this. Instead, this represents eternal dharma. However, if a king uses punishment in an inexperienced way and uses it according to his whims, he does not obtain fame in this world. After death, he goes to hell. He should not impose punishment on another, merely on the basis of hearsay from others. Following the injunctions of the sacred texts, a person should be imprisoned or set free. Even if there is an emergency, the king must never slay a messenger. If he kills a messenger, together with his advisers, he goes to hell. A messenger merely states what he has been asked to. If a king who follows the dharma of kshatriyas kills such a person, this is tantamount to his ancestors being tainted with sin of killing a foetus. It is said that a messenger must possess seven qualities—he must be born in a good family, he must be good in his conduct, he must be eloquent, he must be skilled, he must be pleasant in speech, he must say what he has been asked to and he must have a good memory. The person who protects the gate must have similar qualities and the one who protects his head[787] must also have such qualities. The adviser who is knowledgeable about dharma, artha and the sacred texts, who knows about peace and war, who is intelligent, patient, wise and capable of keeping a secret, who is born in a noble family and is truthful and capable—such a person is praised. The commander must also have such qualities. He must know about battle formations, implements of war and warriors and possess valour. He must be capable of tolerating rain, cold, heat and wind and know about the weaknesses of the enemy. He should be able to engineer trust in the enemy, but must never trust anyone. O Indra among kings! It is not recommended that he should even trust his own son. O unblemished one! I have now recounted to you the truth and the purport of the secret texts. I have also told you about the supreme secret—the lords of men should never trust anyone."'

Chapter 1415(87)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What should be the kind of city within which the king should himself dwell? Is it one that already exists, or should he get one constructed? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Kounteya! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The place where he will reside with his sons, brothers and relatives must be properly checked, to ensure that it is protected and there is a means of sustenance. In particular, I will tell you about what must be done about fortifications. Having heard about this, you must make efforts to follow the injunctions. The cities must be constructed with the six kinds of forts in mind, so that there is sufficient prosperity and an abundance of every required object. The six forts are—those in the desert, those on the ground, those in mountains, those with men, those in the water and those in forests.[788] The city must have forts and must be stocked with grain and weapons. There must be firm walls and moats and it must be full of elephants, horses and chariots. There must be learned artisans there and there must be stores of every kind of requirement. It must be populated by excellent and accomplished people who follow dharma. There must be energetic men, elephants and horses and it must be adorned with crossroads and shops. There must be established rules of conduct, so that people are peaceful and without fear. It must be radiant, with the sound of activity.[789] There must be extremely spacious houses. It must be full of brave and wealthy people and must resound with chants of the brahman. There must be congregations and festivals at which the gods are always worshipped. With his faithful advisers and soldiers, the king must himself reside within that city, conducting himself so that his treasury, forces and friends increase. He must restrain all the sins in the city and the countryside. He must make efforts to increase his stores of goods and his stores of weapons. He must increase all the collections of stores, machines, clubs, medicines, firewood, iron, grain chaff,[790] charcoal, timber, horn, bones, bamboo, marrow, oil, fat, honey, medicines, flax, resins from the shala tree, grain, weapons, arrows, leather, sinews, cane, munja grass, *balbaja* grass[791] and bows. The king must always control access to tanks and wells that contain a great deal of excellent water and also to giant trees that are full of juice.[792] He must make efforts to treat preceptors, officiating priests and priests with a great deal of honour. There must be similar treatment for great archers, architects and astrologers. Those who are wise, intelligent, self-controlled, accomplished, brave, extremely learned, born in good lineages and full of enterprise must be appointed for all the tasks. The king must revere those who follow dharma and restrain those who follow adharma. He must make efforts to engage all the varnas in their own tasks. Spies must be engaged within and outside. Having thus got to know, he must employ the people of the city and the countryside in different tasks. In particular, the king must himself attend to spies, the treasury and policy, because everything is established on this. Using spies as his eyes, he must know everything that the people in the city and the countryside wish to do, whether they are neutrals, enemies or friends. He must thus arrange everything, without being careless about anything. He must always honour those who are devoted and punish those who seek to cause injury. He must always perform rites and sacrifices and donate without any hesitation. It is his task to protect the subjects and not undertaking this task is to be censured. He must always think of a means of sustenance and arrange yoga and kshema for those who are miserable, those who have no protectors, those who are aged and those women who are widows. At the right time, the king must honour those who are in hermitages and treat them well with garments, vessels and food. He must always make efforts to stand before an ascetic and tell him about himself, all his tasks and his kingdom. When he sees a person who has given up everything, has been born in a noble lineage and is extremely learned, he must honour him with beds, seats and food. The king can trust him, even in an emergency. Even bandits trust an ascetic. The king will offer his possessions to him and obtain wisdom in return. However, he must not serve them all the time, or honour them excessively.[793] He must seek out one[794] from within his own kingdom, another from the kingdom of the enemy, another who resides in the forests and another who lives in the cities of the vassals. These must be honoured well and a means of sustenance arranged for them, irrespective of whether they reside in the kingdom of the enemy, in the forest, or within one's own dominion. The ascetics are rigid in their vows. And if the king should ever desire to seek refuge with them in a time of hardship, they will offer this refuge. I have now briefly recounted to you the characteristics of the region and the city the king must himself reside in."'

Chapter 1416(88)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O king! How can a kingdom be protected? How can a kingdom be won over? O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to understand this well. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will tell you everything about how a kingdom should be protected and about how a kingdom can be won over. Listen with single-minded attention. One must appoint a headman for every village, then one for ten villages, one for twenty, one for one hundred and one for one thousand. The headman protects the village, ascertains any problems the village faces and reports everything about the villagers to the supervisor of ten, who reports to the supervisor of twenty. The supervisor of twenty reports everything about the conduct of the people who live in the countryside to the supervisor of one hundred villages. The village headman will sustain himself on whatever food is produced within the village and this will also be used to sustain the supervisor of ten and twenty. O best of the Bharata lineage! The supervisor of one hundred villages deserves to be honoured well and will be sustained by giving him a large village that is prosperous and well-populated village. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king possesses many such. The supervisor of one thousand has the right to choose the best suburb.[795] He is entitled to enjoy the grain and gold that the countryside produces.[796] Whatever needs to be done in a village must be undertaken by the villagers themselves. However, an adviser who knows about dharma must attentively supervise this. In every town, there must be a supervisor who thinks about its welfare from every aspect. He must have the terrible form of a planet located above the nakshatras and himself circulate everywhere. He[797] must check the sales, purchases, expenses, shops and routes of traders, impose taxes and act so that their yoga and kshema are ensured. He must glance towards the production and expenses of artisans, to ensure that they have a good living and the craft flourishes. The taxes must be commensurate.

'"O Yudhishthira! Earlier, kings levied high taxes and low ones. The lord of the earth must act so that there is no deprivation anywhere. He must glance towards the outcome of a task and then determine taxes. It should never be such that there is no incentive for the work and the outcome.[798] The king must always glance towards this and impose taxes so that both the king and the producer have a share in the outcome of the work. Because of his greed, he should not destroy his own foundation and that of others. The king must be benevolent and restrict his inclination to be avaricious. A king who consumes excessively is known for being hated. If one is hated, how can there be any benefit? One who is loved obtains happiness. An intelligent king will milk the kingdom like a calf that sucks milk. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the calf is nurtured, it becomes strong and can sustain hardships. O Yudhishthira! If a calf has drunk too much of milk, it[799] cannot work. A kingdom that has been milked too much is incapable of achieving anything great. A king who tends to the kingdom himself and receives only that which can sustain him obtains great fruits.

'"In this world, kings then accumulate enough for times of hardship. The kingdom becomes the treasury and the treasury becomes his residence.[800] As long as he can, he should show compassion to all those who are close to him and the residents of the city and the countryside who are dependent on him and seek refuge with him. He must first crush the external ones and then enjoy happiness from those who are in between.[801] Thus, people have a share in the happiness and the unhappiness and are not enraged. He must announce the taxes in advance and then repeatedly show himself throughout the kingdom, instilling fear. 'This is the adversity that confronts us. This is the great fear from the circle of enemies. Like a bamboo that has yielded fruit,[802] one cannot contemplate that the danger will disappear. The enemy has arisen and there are many bandits with him. They wish to invade the kingdom and seize me. We are faced with this terrible and fearful danger. I need your riches to save ourselves from this. When the danger is over, I will return all of this to you. However, the enemy will not return anything that it has seized by force. You may have desired this store of riches for the sake of your sons and wives. But they will kill your wives and your own selves. I am delighted at your prosperity, but am appealing to you, like to my own sons. Without afflicting the kingdom, I will show you as much of favour as I can. This is a time of disaster and like good bulls, you must bear the burden. In this time of hardship, you should not act so as to be so enamoured of riches.' A king who knows about the appropriate time should use such sweet, gentle and civil words. He should grasp the reins himself.

'"For those who live on animal husbandry, he must ascertain the size of their pastures, the expenses of their servants, the dangers they face and their yoga and kshema. For those who live on animal husbandry, taxes must be imposed after that. If they are ignored, those who live on animal husbandry will be destroyed and begin to dwell in the forests.[803] Therefore, having thought about this in advance, one must behave mildly towards them. O Partha! After glancing towards their requirements, it is a duty to show conciliation, protection, benevolence, stability, a share in prosperity and good behaviour towards those who live on animal husbandry. There are many fruits that are always yielded by those who live on animal husbandry. They make the kingdom, trade and agriculture prosper. Therefore, one who is perceptive will make efforts to act pleasantly towards those who live on animal husbandry. One should be compassionate and careful and impose taxes that are mild. O son! For those who live on animal husbandry, the generation of wealth is always extremely easy. O Yudhishthira! There is no other wealth that is its equal."'

Chapter 1417(89)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O immensely wise one! O grandfather! If a king is capable and wishes to extend his treasury, how should he behave? Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A king who desires dharma should rule so that he is engaged in the welfare of his subjects and consider the time, the place and the strength. Since he thinks of welfare for them and for his own self, the king should ensure that dharma prevails in the kingdom in every way. He must milk the kingdom like a bee sucks honey and flies away.[804] He must milk the cow bearing the calf in mind, without causing damage to the udders. The lord of men must drink mildly from the kingdom, like a leech. He must treat it the way a tigress carries her cub, not letting it fall, but not biting it. As the kingdom prospers, the taxes can progressively become less and less. Or, if he so desires, he can make them increase progressively. The burden on a young bull is gradually increased. The initial efforts are mild and the halter comes later. If the halter is imposed after good treatment, it does not become intractable. If one makes efforts with care, one is then able to enjoy. It is extremely difficult to behave in the same way towards all men. Having comforted the ones who are the foremost, one can then make the inferior one subservient. Dissension must be engineered among those who are likely to support each other. Having comforted them, he can cheerfully make efforts to use them. Taxes must not be imposed on them at the wrong place, or at the wrong time. Having comforted them in advance, these must be at the right time and follow the proper norms. I have told you about legitimate means. I don’t wish to talk about techniques of deceit.

‘“Drinking houses, prostitutes, pimps, actors, gamblers and others who are like them must all be controlled.[805] They can cause injury to the kingdom. If they are situated within the kingdom, they hamper gentle subjects. Unless there is a disaster, no one should ever beg. Manu had earlier laid down this dictum for all beings. If no one did any work, nothing would be able to survive. There is no doubt that the three worlds would then be destroyed. The lord and king who does not restrain these people[806] reaps one-fourth of their sins. That is what the sacred texts say. He also obtains one-fourth of all dharma they observe. If one frequents these places,[807] one's prosperity is destroyed. A man who is addicted to desire is incapable of giving up undesirable acts. However, if there is a disaster, one can beg from others. Compassionate people who wish to show pity can then follow dharma and give. But in general, there should not be beggars in the kingdom. Nor should there be bandits. They seize what is good and do not think of anyone's prosperity. Those who favour beings and encourage the prosperity of the subjects, those are the ones who should remain in the kingdom, not those who do not think about prosperity. O great king! Those who take excessive riches must be punished. Those who charge usurious rates must be forced to repay, through fines and taxes. Men must be employed, with many workers, to take care of agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and everything else that is like that. If a man who is engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry or trade suffers even the slightest bit of hardship, the king is to blame. The wealthy must always be honoured with vehicles, garments and food and be told, 'Accept these honours and also accept me.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The wealthy are referred to as a great limb of the kingdom. There is no doubt that those who are wealthy are foremost among all people. The intelligent person[808] must protect the wise, the brave, the rich, the powerful, those who follow dharma, the ascetics and the truthful. O king! Therefore, be pleasant towards everyone. Protect them through truth, rectitude, lack of anger and non-violence. You will then obtain the army, the treasury, the friends and the earth. Truth and uprightness are supreme. O king! You will then obtain friends and a treasury."'

Chapter 1418(90)

‘Bhishma said, “In your kingdom, trees that bear edible fruit should not be cut down. The learned ones have said that according to dharma, roots and fruits belong to brahmanas. If something is left over by brahmanas, other people can consume that. Causing injury to a brahmana, no one must ever take anything away. If a brahmana prepares to leave, saying that he is afflicted and cannot find a means of sustenance, the lord of men must think of a means of sustenance for him and his wife. If he does not refrain, he should be addressed in an assembly of brahmanas in these words. ‘Which person will now be able to set limits for him?’[809] There is no doubt that he will then desist. O Kounteya! If he does not, he should be told, ‘It is your duty to forget what has happened in the past. This is my command.’ Though I do not hold that view, there are those who hold that a brahmana should only be entitled to a means of sustenance. If he does not accept the invitation for only a means of sustenance, one should give him other objects of pleasure. In this world, agriculture, animal husbandry and trade provide a means of living for people. Above this, the three kinds of learning[810] ensure prosperity. Those who act contrary to these efforts are bandits. Brahma created kshatriyas so that they could be slain. O king! Slay the enemies. Protect the subjects. Perform rites and sacrifices. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! Be brave and fight in battles. A king who protects those who should be protected is supreme among kings. Those who do not protect them, never obtain any success. O Yudhishthira! The king must always know about all the people. It is for this reason that a man uses other men.[811] Protect those inside from those outside and those outside from those inside. Protect those outside from those outside and those inside from those inside.[812] Always protect everyone. The king must always protect himself and protect the earth. Those who are learned say that one’s own self is the foundation for everything. ‘What is my weakness? Who are my associates?[813]

What hardships can bring me down? What are my sins?’ He must always think along these lines. He must appoint secret spies to travel throughout the earth. ‘Let them find out if my policy is sound and whether my conduct is praised. Do they like me in the countryside and what is my reputation in the kingdom?’ Be knowledgeable about dharma, possess fortitude, do not run away in a battle, live for the kingdom, and live for those who follow the king, for all the advisers and all those who are neutral and also those who praise and censure you. O Yudhishthira! Ensure that all action is implemented well. O son! It is not possible that everyone should only be delighted with you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among all the people, there will be friends and enemies, and those who are neutral. There are those who are equal in the strength of arms and also in the qualities that they possess. How is it that some are superior and succeed in ruling other men? They do this because those who are mobile devour those who are immobile, those with teeth devour those without teeth and angry and poisonous snakes devour other snakes. O Yudhishthira! You must always make efforts to be careful and act like them. If you are careless, they will descend on you like a *bharunda* bird.[814] I hope the merchants in your kingdom are not afflicted by taxes and that those who tirelessly make efforts in desolate regions are able to buy a lot after spending a little. I hope that those who live on agriculture in the kingdom are not going away because they are oppressed. Those who bear burdens for the king also sustain others. What is given in this world sustains gods and the large number of ancestors and also men, serpents, rakshasas, birds and animals. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is how the kingdom sustains itself and this is how it should be protected. O Pandava! I will again tell you about what this prosperity is based on.”’

Chapter 1419(91)

‘Bhishma said, “Utathya, the son of Angiras, was supreme among those who knew about the brahman.[815] He affectionately told Mandhata, the son of Yuvanashva, about the dharma of kshatriyas. O Yudhishthira! I will tell you completely and in entirety about what Utathya, supreme among those who knew about the brahman, instructed.

‘“Utathya said, ‘The king exists for the sake of dharma, not for the sake of engaging in kama. O Mandhata! Know that the king is the protector of the world. If the king acts in accordance with dharma, he advances towards a state of divinity.[816] If he follows adharma, he goes to hell. Beings are based on dharma. Dharma is based on the king. A king who administers this properly is a king who is the lord of the earth. It is said that a king who has supreme dharma in his soul and is also prosperous, but happens to be wicked, leads to the gods being despised. It is said that there is no dharma then. When those who follow adharma are seen to be successful in their pursuit of artha, all the people think that this is auspicious and begin to follow them. When the wicked are not restrained, dharma is uprooted, great adharma is followed and it is said that there is fear both during the day and the night. The brahmanas do not follow the Vedas and the vows. When the wicked are not restrained, the brahmanas do not perform sacrifices. O great king! When the wicked are not restrained in this world, the minds of all men are confused, like those who are about to be slain. Having looked at both the worlds,[817] the rishis themselves created the king as an extremely great being, so that there should be dharma.[818] One in whom dharma shines is known as a king.[819] If dharma disappears in someone, the gods know that person to be a *vrishala*. O illustrious one! Dharma is a bull and the gods know one who does away with it as vrishala.[820] Therefore, dharma should not be destroyed. When dharma prospers, all the beings always prosper and when it decays, they decay. Therefore, make dharma prosper. There is no doubt that dharma flows from the acquisition and preservation of wealth. O Indra among men! It has been said that one should lay down the boundaries of what should not be done. Svayambhu[821] created dharma for the power of beings. Therefore, to show favours to subjects, propagate dharma. O tiger among kings! That is the reason the sacred texts have said that dharma is the best. The bull among men who rules his subjects virtuously is a king. One should abandon desire and anger and follow dharma. O supreme among the Bharata lineage![822] Dharma is the best task to be followed by a king. The brahmanas are dharma's womb and must always be revered. O Mandhata! Without any resentment, their desires must always be fulfilled. If one does not act so as to satisfy their wishes, the king confronts fear. The friends do not increase and become his enemies. Bali, Virochana's son, exhibited resentment towards brahmanas.[823] Because of this, Shri[824] was enraged with him and no longer dwelt with him, going instead to the chastiser of Paka.[825] O lord! He[826] was tormented when he saw Shri with Purandara, but this was the consequence of his resentment and insolence. O Mandhata! Therefore, know that you should not enrage prosperity. The sacred texts say that adharma leads to the birth of Shri's son named Darpa.[827] O king! It has led to the subjugation of the gods and the asuras many times. O king! Many rajarshis did not understand this either. Having conquered it, one becomes a king. One who is defeated becomes a slave. Do not serve insolence and adharma. O Mandhata! If you wish to be established for a long time, follow this. In particular, do not associate with those who are intoxicated,[828] careless, infantile and mad. Do not indulge in conduct that is harmful. In particular, always take efforts to be careful of advisers who have been punished, women, mountains, uneven terrain, forts, elephants, horses and reptiles. Do not wander around in the night. Abandon excessive pride, insolence and anger. The king should not indulge in intercourse with unknown women, eunuchs, promiscuous women, the wives of others and girls.[829] If there is a mixing of varnas, wicked rakshasas are born in the family—eunuchs, those without limbs, those with thick tongues and idiots. When the king is careless, these and others are born. Therefore, for the sake of the welfare of the subjects, the king must take special care. When a kshatriya is careless, great sins result. Adharma is followed and this leads to a mixing of the subjects.[830] It is cold during the summer and it is not cold during the winter. There is no rain, or there is too much of rain. The subjects are penetrated by disease. Terrible nakshatras and planets are seen to rise. Many omens are seen, signifying the king's destruction. When the king does not protect his subjects, he is himself not protected. The subjects decay and he is also destroyed. Two seize the possessions of one and many others seize the possessions of two. Virgins are corrupted. These are said to be the sins of the king. Not a single man can say, "This belongs to me." This is what happens when the king is careless and abandons dharma.'"'

Chapter 1420(92)

‘“Utathya said, ‘When the king follows dharma, Parjanya showers down at the right time. There is prosperity and the subjects rejoice in happiness. He[831] is like a washerman who does not know how to wash dirty clothes, or washes away the dye in the process. It is the same with brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras who are no longer established in the various tasks of the four varnas. Labour is for shudras, agriculture for vaishyas and dandaniti for kings. Brahmacharya, austerities, mantras and truth are for brahmanas. The kshatriya who knows good conduct and about how to restrain bad conduct is like a father and a lord of beings. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Krita, treta, dvapara and kali are all dependent on the conduct of kings. It is said that the king makes the yuga. When the king is careless, the four varnas and the four Vedas and ashramas are all confused. The king is the one who makes beings. The king is their destroyer. The one with dharma in his soul is a maker. The one with adharma in his soul is a destroyer. When the king is careless, the king’s wives, sons, relatives and well-wishers all sorrow together. O king! When the king follows adharma, all the elephants, horses, cattle, camels, mules and asses suffer. O Mandhata! It is said that the creator created strength for the sake of the weak.[832] The foundation of everything is immensely weak. O king! When the king bases himself on adharma, the beings who depend on the king and others who depend on those beings, all suffer. I think that the glances of one who is weak, that of a sage and that of a virulent snake cannot be tolerated. Therefore, do not oppress the weak. O son![833] Know that the weak should never be thought of as those who should be disregarded. Otherwise, the glances of the weak will burn you down, together with your relatives. If a family is burnt down by the weak, it is burnt down to the roots and nothing grows there. Therefore, do not oppress the weak. Weakness is superior to strength, since greater strength is superior to strength. When the strong is burnt down by the weak, there is nothing left. If a humiliated and struck person cries out for succour and fails to find a man to help him, the consequent punishment slays the king. O son! When you base yourself on strength, do not oppress the weak. Otherwise, the glances of the weak will burn you down, like a fire that consumes its foundation. The tears shed by those who weep because they have been falsely accused slay the sons and animals of those who have made those false accusations. If not on one's own self, it descends on the son. If not on the son, it descends on the son's son or the daughter's son. Like a cow, the fruits of an evil deed are not immediately reaped.[834] When a weak person is slain and cannot find a protector, the gods have arranged that a great and terrible punishment should descend.[835] Though they should not beg, when the residents of the countryside are forced to beg like brahmanas, that sin of begging slays the king. When the many royal officers employed by the king in the countryside are engaged in wrong deeds, a great sin devolves on the king. When those employed for good policy are overcome by reasons of desire and greed from riches and extract from those who are distressed and pleading, that is a great sin on the part of the king.

'"'A large tree sprouts and then grows. It offers refuge to beings. When it is severed or burnt down, those who have sought refuge in it are also rendered homeless.[836] When those in the kingdom practise the foremost kinds of dharma and follow good conduct, the qualities of the king are spoken about. When they practise adharma and are confused about dharma, his good deeds swiftly turn to bad deeds. When the wicked are known to roam around among the virtuous, the king suffers from kali[837] there. O lord of the earth! When the king punishes those who should not be punished, the kingdom does not prosper. When advisers are honoured in accordance with what they deserve and are engaged by the king for policy and war, the kingdom of that king prospers. He enjoys the entire earth for a long period of time. The king who looks towards good deeds and honours them with pleasant words obtains supreme dharma. When the king enjoys his own share and does not disregard others and slays those who are strong and insolent, that king is said to follow dharma. When the king saves everyone in speech, body and deeds and does not pardon his own son, that king is said to follow dharma. When the king protects those who seek refuge, like his own sons, and does not deviate from any agreements, that king is said to follow dharma. When the king performs rites and sacrifices and faithfully gives away dakshina, disregarding his own desire and hatred, that king is said to follow dharma. When he wipes away the tears of the distressed, those without protectors and the weak, and generates delight among men, that king is said to follow dharma. When his friends prosper and his enemies are brought down, when he honours the virtuous, that king is said to follow dharma. When he protects the truth and always gives away land, honouring guests and servants, that king is said to follow dharma. When favours and chastisement are both established in him, that king obtains fruits in this world and in the next. O Mandhata! The king is Yama. He is the supreme lord of those who follow dharma. When he restrains himself, he supports life. When he does not restrain himself, he is wicked. When he receives officiating priests, priests and preceptors well, honouring them and not insulting them, that king is said to follow dharma. Yama controls all beings, without differentiating between them. It is the king's task to duly control the subjects in this way. O bull among men! In every way, the king is like the thousand-eyed one.[838] What he sees as dharma is dharma. You must be careful, learned, forgiving, intelligent, patient and wise, always questioning the spirit of people and separating the good from the evil. You must assuage all the people through gifts and pleasant words. You must protect the residents of the city and the countryside as if they are your own sons. O son! A king who is not accomplished is incapable of protecting the subjects. O son! What is known as the kingdom is an extremely great and difficult burden to bear. Wielding the rod, only a wise and brave one is capable of protecting it. One who is a eunuch and devoid of intelligence cannot wield the rod.

'"'There must be handsome ones born in noble lineages.[839] They must be accomplished, faithful and extremely learned. You must examine the intelligence of all of these and also that of ascetics who live in hermitages. In this way, you will know the supreme dharma of all beings and your dharma will not be destroyed, in your country, or in the lands of others. Among dharma, artha and kama, dharma is the best. The one who knows dharma enjoys happiness in this world and in the next. When men are honoured well, they abandon their chief wives. People should be cultivated through gifts and pleasant words. O son! Great purity follows from care and purity. O Mandhata!

Always pay attention to these. The king must be careful and look for weaknesses in his own self and that of the enemy. The enemy should not be able to see his weaknesses. But he must strike at the weak spots of the enemy. This was the conduct followed by Vasava, Yama, Varuna and all the rajarshis. Follow that. O great king! Act in accordance with this conduct, followed by the rajarshis. O bull among the Bharata lineage![840] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Follow this divine path. In this world and the next, the devarshis, ancestors and gandharvas praise the conduct of infinitely energetic kings who act in accordance with dharma.'"

'Bhishma said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Mandhata was thus addressed by Utathya. Without any hesitation, he acted accordingly and obtained the earth for his own. You should also act well, like King Mandhata. Observe dharma, protect the earth and obtain a place in heaven."'

Chapter 1421(93)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “How should a king who is devoted to dharma, and who wishes to establish himself in dharma, behave? O best among the Kuru lineage! O grandfather! I am asking you. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. The intelligent Vamadeva saw the exact truth about this and sang it. There was a king named Vasumana from Kosala. He was powerful and pure. He asked the illustrious maharishi Vamadeva. ‘O illustrious one! Instruct me with words that are full of dharma and artha, so that I conduct myself in accordance with them, I remain established and do not deviate from my own dharma.’ The supreme among those who meditated, the ascetic Vamadeva, replied to him, as he[841] was seated there, golden in complexion, like Yayati, the son of Nahusha. ‘Follow dharma alone. There is nothing that is superior to dharma. Basing themselves on dharma, kings conquered the entire earth. The king who thinks that dharma is superior to success in the matter of artha, and who makes his intelligence truthful, is radiant with dharma. If a king looks towards adharma and acts on the basis of force alone, he is swiftly dislodged from both the first and the second.[842] Because his advisers are wicked and evil, he is a slayer of dharma and deserves to be killed by the people, together with his relatives. He will swiftly perish. If he does not seek artha and is addicted to kama, and if he is boastful, even if he obtains the entire earth, he will swiftly perish. However, if a king concentrates on what is beneficial, is devoid of malice, conquers his senses and is intelligent, he flourishes, like an ocean into which rivers flow. For dharma, artha and kama, he must always think that he is not yet full.[843] The progress of the worlds is based on all these. If he listens to this, he will obtain fame, glory, prosperity and subjects. A person who is proud about dharma, who thinks about dharma and artha, who undertakes action only after thinking about artha, is certain to obtain greatness. If the king is not generous, is not extremely affectionate, if he always wields the rod over his subjects and if he is naturally violent, he will swiftly perish. The stupid one does not use his intelligence to see that he has committed a wicked deed. He is covered in ill fame and, after death, attains hell. If he shows honour, is generous, pure and discriminating about good taste, men seek to destroy any hardships that he confronts, as if those are their own. If he does not have a preceptor to tell him about dharma, if he does not ask others, if he only concentrates on happiness and obtaining riches, his greatness does not last long. If he shows importance to his preceptor in matters connected with dharma, if he himself glances towards the objectives, if he places dharma at the forefront when dealing with people, his greatness lasts for a long time.’”’

Chapter 1422(94)

‘“Vamadeva said, ‘When someone who is strong imposes adharma on those who are weak, those who earn a living from him[844] also follow that kind of conduct. They follow the king, who implemented the wicked practices. With those insolent men, that kingdom is swiftly destroyed. When men naturally earn a living from such evil conduct, when he[845] faces a difficulty, even his relatives are prepared to tolerate this.[846] When the king is naturally violent, when he acts without any basis, when he does not follow the indications of the sacred texts, he is swiftly destroyed. The kshatriya who does not follow the conduct that has been followed for a long time, meant both for those who win and those who lose, deviates from the dharma of kshatriyas. A king who is successful in his attempt to seize an enemy in battle, and who does not then show respect to the enemy, deviates from the dharma of kshatriyas. The king must be gracious. If he can, he must show compassion at a time of distress. He will then be loved by the people and not be dislodged from his prosperity. If someone has done an injury, he should repay with something that is more pleasant. If he acts in this pleasant way, a person who is not liked will soon be loved. He must avoid false words. He must do what is pleasant, even if he has not been asked. For the sake of desire, anger or hatred, he should not abandon dharma. He should not avoid answering questions, nor should he be careless in speaking words. He should not be hasty or malicious. That is how enemies are overcome. He should not be unduly delighted at an act of kindness, nor should he suffer at something disagreeable. Remembering the welfare of subjects, he should not be confused if he encounters a difficulty in the pursuit of artha. The lord of the earth who possesses qualities to always do what is pleasant obtains success in his deeds and prosperity does not desert him. The king must always favour those who have stopped acting against him and are now favourably disposed, as he must those who are devoted. That is the conduct of the virtuous.

'"'There are those who are not careless, but attentive. They are wise, extremely devoted and pure. They are capable and faithful. Such people must be employed for important tasks. There are those who may possess good qualities, but do not find delight in the lord of the earth. They are resentful of the master's prosperity. Such people should not be employed for tasks. There are those who are stupid and addicted to their senses. They are greedy, ignoble in their conduct and fraudulent. They have failed the tests and are cruel. They are evil in intelligence and do not possess a great deal of learning. They have squandered away their possessions in drinking, gambling, women and hunting. If the king employs these in great tasks, prosperity does not stay with him. If the king protects himself and protects those whom he is supposed to protect, the subjects prosper and it is certain that he attains greatness. One must use well-wishers who are not recognized to keep an eye on the acts of all the other kings. By this means, the king is not harmed. When one has injured a strong person, one should not be comforted because that person lives a long distance away. Following the conduct of hawks, such people swoop down when one is careless. If one is firm in one's foundation, if one is not evil in one's soul and if one knows about one's strengths, one can attack a weaker person, but not one who is stronger. Having conquered the earth through valour, having protected the subjects through dharma, having been devoted to dharma, a king can be killed in battle. Everything ends in death. There is nothing without disease. Therefore, the king must be established in dharma and must protect the subjects in accordance with dharma. In the course of time, the earth prospers with five things—arrangements for protection, battle, ruling according to dharma, thinking about counsel and happiness. The king who protects these is supreme among kings. If a king is always engaged in these, he enjoys the earth. No single person is capable of paying attention to all of these together. That is the reason the king must engage these[847] and enjoy the earth for a long period of time. When a person is generous, ready to share, mild, upright and pure, and does not abandon people, people do good things to him. When one knows what is best and acts in accordance with that knowledge, when he gives up his own views, people follow him. When he does not tolerate words about artha and kama because they are contrary, when he is distracted and listens to contrary views only for a limited period of time, when he does not comprehend the intelligence of foremost ones who are in front of him, regardless of whether they have been defeated or not been defeated, he deviates from the dharma of kshatriyas. If he abandons his foremost advisers and makes inferior ones his beloved, he confronts disaster. When he is distressed, he doesn’t find succour. When he disrespects relatives with good qualities because of his hatred, when his soul is not firm, when his anger is firm, his prosperity doesn’t remain close to him and give him delight. When he acts pleasantly so as to bring those with good qualities under his control, even though they are not close to his heart, his fame is established for a long time. He must not try to accomplish his objectives at the wrong time. The unpleasant must not trouble him. He should not be greatly delighted at something pleasant. He must be engaged in tasks that are healthy. “Which men are devoted to the king? Which seek refuge because of fear? Who among them has the taint of actually being neutral?” Always think of these things. If one is strong, one should never trust those who are weak. If one is careless, they will descend like bharunda birds. If someone is wicked in his soul, he will censure a master who has all the qualities and is pleasant in speech. Therefore, one should be scared of such people. Yayati, the son of Nahusha, declared this teaching for kings. “If one is engaged in conquering men, one can slay a supreme enemy.”’”’

Chapter 1423(95)

'"Vamadeva said, 'The lord of the earth should prosper through victories without battle. O lord of men! It is said that victory through a war is the worst. If his foundations are not firm, he should not desire to obtain something. If the foundations are weak, a king's pursuit of gains is not recommended. If the countryside is prosperous and wealthy, if the king is loved, if the advisers are satisfied and well nourished, then the king's foundations are firm. When the warriors are well satisfied, content and well entrenched, then the lord of the earth can conquer the earth with the slightest exertion of force. If the residents of the city and the countryside are devoted to him, if they are honoured well, if they possess riches and grain, then the king has a firm foundation. When he thinks that at that time his own power is superior, that is the time when an intelligent one desires the land and the riches of another. When he ignores objects of pleasure, when he is compassionate towards beings, when he protects his kingdom and his own self, he swiftly prospers. When those on his side act well, but he behaves falsely towards them, he then injures his own self, like a forest severed with an axe. If a king is always engaged in killing, there is no end to those who hate him. But if he knows how to control his anger, those who hate him cannot be seen. The knowledgeable person does not engage in tasks that noble people hate. He engages himself in tasks that are beneficial. Then, even if a king indulges in acts of happiness though tasks are incomplete, his own self is not tormented and others do not think ill of him. A lord of the earth who acts in this way towards men conquers both the worlds and is established in victory.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been addressed in this way by Vamadeva, the king followed everything in his deeds. If you act in this way, there is no doubt that you will conquer both the worlds."'

Chapter 1424(96)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “If a kshatriya wishes to defeat another kshatriya in battle, in that victory, how can one follow dharma? I am asking you this. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When a lord of the earth has arrived in a kingdom, whether he is with aides or without aides, he must say, ‘I am your king. I will always protect you. Following dharma, pay me the taxes. Do you accept my power?’ If they accept the one who has come, all will be well. There may be virtuous ones who oppose him, though they are not kshatriyas. O lord of men! They are committing a perverse act[848] and must be restrained in every way possible. There may be others who take up weapons because they think that the kshatriyas are incapable.[849] Or they may be extremely proud and think that he[850] is incapable of saving himself.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “How should a kshatriya king conduct himself against another kshatriya who advances against him in battle? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In a battle, one must not fight against a kshatriya who is not armoured and not clad in mail. A single one must speak to another single one, ‘Release. I am hurling mine.’[851] If the one who advances is armoured, one must armour oneself. If the one who advances possesses soldiers, one must collect soldiers. If the one who is fighting uses deceit, one must fight back using deceit. If he fights with adharma, one must counter him with adharma. Horses must not be used against chariots. Chariots must advance against chariots. If the adversary is distressed, whether it is to frighten him or for the sake of victory, he must not be struck. There must not be smeared[852] or barbed arrows. These are the weapons of wicked people. One must fight for the sake of victory, not because of anger, or a desire to kill. When two virtuous people are fighting with each other, one of them may face a hardship. One who is wounded or one without offspring must never be struck. His weapons may be shattered. His forces may face a difficulty. His bowstring may have been severed. His mounts may have been slain. A wounded person must be treated in your territory, or he may be sent back to his own home. One who is not wounded must be released. That is the eternal dharma. Svayambhuva Manu said that one must fight in accordance with dharma. Against the virtuous, the virtuous always resort to dharma and this is never destroyed. The kshatriya, who wishes his prosperity and wins through the use of adharma, himself kills his own self. He is wicked and leads an inferior life. It is a duty that the virtuous should defeat the wicked through the use of virtuous means. It is better to use dharma and be killed than to triumph through evil deeds. O king! If one follows adharma, like a cow,[853] the fruits are not immediate. But it follows you and burns down the roots and the branches. If one obtains prosperity through wicked deeds, one becomes addicted to evil. Such a person thinks that there is no dharma and laughs at purity. He is without devotion and advances towards destruction. Though he thinks he is immortal, he is bound by Varuna's noose. Like a large and inflated leather bag, his own deeds make him expand. However, he is then destroyed from the roots, like a tree on the banks of a river. He is shattered, like a clay pot on stone, and there is rejoicing at this. Therefore, a lord of the earth should desire to earn victory through the use of dharma."'

Chapter 1425(97)

‘Bhishma said, “A lord of the earth should not desire to conquer the earth through the use of adharma. Even if a lord of the earth has obtained victory through the use of adharma, who will endorse this? A victory that is full of adharma is not permanent and it does not lead to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It weakens the king and the earth. There may be an adversary whose armour has been shattered. He speaks and says, ‘I am yours.’ He joins his hands in supplication. He casts aside his weapons. Such a person should be seized, but not injured. If a person has been conquered through the use of force, a lord of the earth should not fight against him. He should be affectionately made to stay for a year[854] and it will be as if he has been born again. A maiden who has been abducted through the use of valour should not be touched for a year. This is also true of all the riches that have been violently seized. However, the riches should not be sterile. The brahmanas should drink the milk of the cows and everything should be pardoned and restored to what it was.[855] A king must fight with a king. That is what dharma decrees. One who is not a king should never fight against a king. If a brahmana wishes to ensure peace and advances between the two armies that have engaged, one should then refrain from fighting. One should not contravene an eternal agreement that one should not injure a brahmana. If someone who calls himself a kshatriya breaks this agreement, he is not praised. Thereafter, he is not received in assemblies. A lord of the earth who desires victory should not follow a conduct that leads to the destruction of dharma and the violation of an agreement. There is no gain greater than a victory that has been obtained through the use of dharma.

‘“When the people have been forced to bow down,[856] they must be quickly placated. They must be comforted through gifts of objects of pleasure. This is the supreme policy for the king. If they are forced to bend down and confront oppression in their own country, they will serve the enemies and wait for a calamity to descend.[857] When there is a calamity, they will quickly resort to the enemy. O king! They will be ill-disposed in every way and will desire that the king should face a disaster. One should not abuse the enemy, or struck severely in any way. If struck severely, the man's life may be over.[858] If one possesses only a little, one should be satisfied that a great crime has not been committed. Thus one repeatedly thinks that life alone is left.[859]

'"When the countryside is prosperous and wealthy, when the king is loved, when the servants and advisers are satisfied, the king has a firm foundation. When the officiating priests, priests, preceptors and those with learning are honoured, when those who deserve worship are worshipped, he is said to be a conqueror of the worlds. Having followed this kind of conduct, the supreme among the gods obtained the earth. Following Indra's triumph, other kings desired victory. In ancient times, King Pratardana[860] defeated the king in a battle and conquered the city, leaving the countryside alone. He took away their immortal herbs and grain. However, Divodasa seized the agnihotra sacrifices, the remnants of the fire, the oblations and the vessels and suffered.[861] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Nabhaga gave away the kingdoms and the kings as dakshina, with the exception of what belonged to learned brahmanas and ascetics. O Yudhishthira! They knew about dharma, but behaved both in superior and inferior ways. I find delight in the ancient accounts of all those kings. The lord of the earth who wishes for his own prosperity should seek to obtain victory by acting in accordance with every kind of learning and not use deceit or fraud."'

Chapter 1426(98)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is no dharma that is more evil than the dharma of kshatriyas. The king mounts a campaign, wages a battle and kills a large number of people. What are the deeds through which a lord of the earth can conquer the worlds? O learned one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am asking you. Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “By chastising the wicked, by cherishing the virtuous, by performing sacrifices and by giving gifts, kings are purified and cleansed. When kings pursue victory, they cause impediments to people. However, having obtained victory, they make the subjects prosper again. They counter their sins through donations, sacrifices and the strength of austerities. By showing favours to people, they increase their good deeds. One who cuts the crops in a field seems to destroy the dry grass and grain at the same time, but he doesn’t actually destroy the grain. In that way, kings release their weapons and seem to slay everyone at the same time. However, they are saved from all sins because they make beings flourish again. He protects the wealth of people and protects them from slaughter and hardship at the hand of bandits. He is the granter of life, riches and happiness and is Virat. The king performs all the sacrifices and gives fearlessness as a dakshina. Having experienced fortune, he attains Indra’s world. When he advances to fight for the cause of brahmanas, he offers his own self as the sacrificial post and his sacrifice has an infinite amount of dakshina. He is fearless and scatters the enemy, receiving their arrows. That is the reason the thirty gods do not see anyone superior to him on earth. As long as his limbs continue to be mangled by weapons in battle, he continues to enjoy all the eternal worlds that yield every object of desire. As he moves around,[862] blood flows from his body and that blood cleanses him of all his sins. The pain that he has to bear from those wounds is superior to austerities. This is what is said by those who are learned about dharma. Those who are frightened and display their backs in a battle are the worst of men. They wish to seek refuge with the brave one, like one seeks Parjanya for life. If a brave person comforts them and protects them from fear, people should create his image. However, it doesn't happen like that. If they always honour him, recognizing him for what he has done, that would be proper. But they do not act in accordance with that. People are seen to be the same, but there are great differences between them. When there is a battle, there are those who advance into the tumult of army formations. Brave ones advance against enemy soldiers, but cowards run away, abandoning their companions, and this is not an act that leads to heaven. O son! Do not give birth to those who are like these worst of men, those who abandon their companions in a battle and go to the comfort of their own homes. The gods, with Indra at the forefront, cause discomfort for those who abandon their comrades and wish to save their own lives. They kill them with sticks and stones and burn them up in mats of straw.[863] Kshatriyas who behave in this way are slain like animals. It is adharma for a kshatriya to die when he is lying down on his bed, releasing bile and phlegm and lamenting piteously. Those who are learned about ancient accounts do not praise the deed of a kshatriya who heads towards his destruction without any injuries on his body. O son! A kshatriya's death at home is not praised. It is adharma for those who are haughty to be distressed, like those who are not proud. 'Alas, this is misery! This is unhappiness! This is wicked. This is a sin.' With an emaciated face and with a putrid body, he laments a lot.[864] He envies those who are healthy and desires an instant death. Surrounded by his kin, he should create carnage in a battle. He should be severely wounded by sharp weapons. That is the kind of death a kshatriya deserves. A brave one is based on truth and is intolerant. He penetrates the devastation of a battle. When his body is mangled by the enemy, he does not notice it. Having been killed in a battle, he is praised and honoured by the people. He obtains greatness through his own dharma and goes to Shakra's world. Ready to give up their lives, all warriors perform this supreme act of renunciation. A brave one does not show his back and will be with Indra in his world."'

Chapter 1427(99)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! There are brave ones who fight and do not retreat. When they die, what worlds do they obtain? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. O Yudhishthira! This was a conversation between Ambarisha and Indra. Ambarisha, the son of Nabhaga, went to heaven, which is extremely difficult to obtain. In the world of the gods, he saw one of his advisers with Shakra. The lord was his own commander, situated on a supreme and divine *vimana* that was full of energy everywhere and was progressively advancing upwards. He saw that his own commander Sudeva, was progressively ascending upwards in great prosperity. Astounded, he asked Vasava, ‘In accordance with what is ordained, I have ruled the entire earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean. Desiring dharma, I have engaged the four varnas in what the sacred texts prescribe. I have observed terrible brahmacharya and served the family of my preceptor. Following dharma, I have studied the Vedas and all the sacred texts meant for kings. I have served food and drink to guests and offered oblations to the ancestors. I have studied under the rishis and have been initiated. I have served the gods through supreme sacrifices. Following the sacred texts and the recommended principles, I have established myself in the dharma of kshatriyas. O Vasava! I have glanced at armies and have been victorious in battle. O king of the gods! In earlier times, Sudeva used to be my commander. He was a warrior with a calm soul. But how has he surpassed me? He has not performed the best of sacrifices. Nor has he served the brahmanas. He has not satisfied them in accordance with the prescribed rites. O Shakra! How has he surpassed me?’

‘“Indra said, ‘O son![865] This Sudeva performed the extremely great sacrifice of a battle and so do other men who fight. All armoured warriors who are at the front of an army are consecrated. They thus have the right to observe the sacrifice of a battle. This has been determined.’

‘“Ambarisha asked, ‘What are the oblations in that sacrifice? What is the clarified butter and what is the dakshina? Who are the officiating priests? O Shatakratu! Tell me this.’

‘“Indra said, ‘The elephants are the *ritvija*s. The horses are the adhvaryus.[866] The flesh of the enemy constitutes the oblations. The blood is the clarified butter. Jackals, vultures and crows are the *sadasya*s at the sacrifice. They drink the remnants of the clarified butter and eat the remnants of the oblations. Large numbers of spears, javelins, swords, spikes and battleaxes, flaming, extremely sharp and yellow, are the ladles at the sacrifice. There are straight, extremely sharp and yellow arrows, keenly released with force from bows, terrible when they penetrate the bodies of the enemy. These are the larger ladles. There are swords sheathed in scabbards made out of tiger skin. The handles are made out of ivory and, in the battle, they are wielded by arms that are like the trunks of elephants. These are the wooden sticks used to stir. There are blazing, sharp and yellow javelins, spears and battleaxes. They are sharp and made out of steel and the blows from these are the riches. In the battle, blood flows down on the ground. This is the complete oblation. This is a great and prosperous sacrifice and all the desires are satisfied. “Slice. Pierce.” These are the sounds that are heard at the vanguard of the army. These are like sama hymns sung by reciters of the sama in Yama’s abode. The vanguard of the enemy’s forces is said to be the vessel for storing oblations. The large number of armoured elephants and horses are decreed to be the *shyenachit*[867] fire for the sacrifice. Among the thousands who have been slain, the headless torso of a brave one stands up. This is said to be the octagonal khadira[868] post used in the sacrifice. When the elephants are goaded by hooks and shriek, those are the sounds made when *ida* oblations[869] are offered. O lord of the earth! When palms are slapped against palms, this is the sound of vashatkara.[870] In the battle, the sound of the large drum is said to be the three samas chanted by the udgatar. In a battle, if someone is prepared to cast aside his beloved body because a brahmana’s possessions are being robbed, his own self is like a sacrificial post and this is a sacrifice with an infinite amount of dakshina. For the sake of his master, if a brave person exhibits valour in the front of the army and does not retreat because of fear, a world like mine is meant for him. There are blue swords that are shaped like the crescent moon. They are wielded by arms that are like clubs. A person who strews the sacrificial altar with these obtains a world that is like mine. If a person is focused on obtaining victory and does not glance to see if he has aides or not, immersing himself in the midst of the army, he obtains a world that is like mine. In the heap of javelins, the drums are like frogs and tortoises.[871] The bones of the brave ones are stones. It is impenetrable because of the mire of flesh and blood. The swords and shields are like boats on the river. The hair is the moss and weed. The shattered horses, elephants and chariots are passages. The banners and flags are the reed on the banks.[872] The blood from the slain mounts and armies are the overflowing torrents in the river and it is impossible even for accomplished men to cross. In this inauspicious river, the slain elephants are the giant crocodiles that are borne along to the world of the dead. The swords, cutlasses and flags are like ornaments. The vultures, herons and wild crows are like rafts. It is frequented by those who live on human flesh and it causes terror to cowards. This river is said to be the bath a warrior takes at the end of a great sacrifice. If a person strews the sacrificial altar with the heads of his enemies and heaps of horses and heaps of elephants, his world will be like that of mine. The learned say that if a person regards the vanguard of the enemy's army as his wife's chamber, his own army as the store of oblations, the soldiers to the south as sadasyas, the soldiers to the north as the priest who kindle the fire and the soldiers of the enemy as his wife, he obtains all the worlds. When there are two vyuhas and a space between them, that is always said to be the altar for the sacrifice and the three Vedas are like fires. When a warrior retreats in fear and is slain by the enemy, there is no doubt that he goes to a fathomless hell. If he covers himself with blood from the force of that river, which is full of hair, flesh and bones, he goes to the supreme objective. If someone slays a commander and climbs onto his chariot, he treads with the valour of Vishnu and performs a sacrifice like Brihaspati. He who captures alive a leader[873] or someone who is regarded as his equal, he obtains a world that is like mine. One should never sorrow over a brave one who has been killed in battle. One should not sorrow over a brave one who has been slain, because he obtains greatness in the world of heaven. One should not wish to offer oblations to such a slain one, or bathe, or perform an act of purification.[874] Listen to the worlds obtained by him. If a brave warrior is slain in a battle, thousands of supreme apsaras quickly rush towards him and say, “Be my husband.” This sacred austerity is eternal dharma and like the four ashramas for a person who does not run away from the field of battle. One should not kill the aged, children,[875] women, brahmanas, someone with a blade of grass in his mouth[876] and a person who says, “I am yours.”[877] I became the lord of the gods after killing in battle Vritra, Bala, Paka, Virochana, with his one hundred kinds of maya, Namuchi, who was difficult to counter, Shambara, who had many different kinds of maya, the daitya Viprachitti, all of Danu’s sons[878] and Prahrada.’”

‘Bhishma said, “On hearing Shakra’s words, Ambarisha accepted them and himself obtained success as a warrior.”’

Chapter 1428(100)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about when Pratardana[879] and the king of Mithila fought a battle. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this. Janaka of Mithila was invested with the sacred thread of performing a sacrifice through a battle and delighted his warriors. King Janaka of Mithila was great in his soul and knew the truth about everything. He portrayed both heaven and hell before his warriors. ‘Behold those radiant worlds, meant for people who are not frightened. They are eternal, full of gandharva maidens, and yield every object of desire. Hell presents itself to those who run away. They immediately descend there and obtain eternal ill fame. Having seen those, having made up your minds to give yourselves up, be victorious. Do not be subjugated in a hell that has no foundation. For brave people, giving themselves up is the foundation for the supreme gate of heaven.’ O conqueror of enemy cities! This is what the king told his warriors. They defeated the enemy in the battle and brought delight to that lord of men. Therefore, he[880] must always establish himself in the forefront of the battle. Chariots must be in the middle of the elephants. Horse riders must be to the rear of the chariots. Armoured foot soldiers must be beyond the horse riders. The king who arranges a vyuha in this way is always victorious over the enemy. O Yudhishthira! It has been decreed that it must always be this way. All those who wish to act well and desire to fight well must agitate the army, like makaras in an ocean. They must stand next to each other, delighting those who are distressed. He[881] must protect the land that has been won and not unduly pursue those who have been routed. O king! Those who have given up hope of remaining alive and return to fight again represent a force that is not easy to counter. Therefore, one should not pursue too much. Nor should brave ones wish to strike those who are afraid and are running away. Because they are running away, one should not pursue them. The immobile are devoured by the mobile. Those without teeth are devoured by the ones with teeth. Those without hands are devoured by those with hands. Cowards are devoured by the brave. Though their backs, stomachs, hands and feet are equal, cowards follow the brave. Those who are distressed and scared repeatedly seek refuge with the ones who are brave, joining their hands in supplication. This world hangs from the hands of brave ones, like a young son. That is the reason a brave person deserves respect in every possible situation. There is nothing in the three worlds that is superior to bravery. The brave person protects everything. Everything is established in the brave person.”’

Chapter 1429(101)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! If one desires victory, how should the soldiers be led, even if one violates dharma a bit? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Some dharma is based on truth, some more on reason. Some is based on virtuous conduct, some more on implementation.[882] I will tell you about the different techniques of dharma, so that the objectives of obtaining dharma and artha become successful. Bandits, who show no respect, stand in the way of everything. For the sake of countering them, I will tell you what is laid down in the sacred texts. Listen to the different tasks that can be undertaken, so that one is successful in one’s objectives. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must know about two kinds of wisdom—the straight and the crooked. Knowing about crooked ways, one should not use these, except to counter a danger that has arisen, such as when enemies use dissenstion to strike at a king. Knowing about crooked means, the king can then use these to counter the enemy.

‘“Leather from the flanks of elephants, bulls and boa constrictors, stakes, thorns and iron—these are recommended for body armour. Sharp and yellow weapons, red and yellow mail, flags and banners of many dyes and hues, cutlasses, spears, swords, sharp battleaxes and leather for shields—these must be planned for in abundance. The weapons must be ready and the warriors must have practised with them. It is recommended that the soldiers should march in the months of Chaitra and Margashirsha.[883] The crops on the ground ripen then and there is no lack of water. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At that time, it is neither too cold, nor too hot. Therefore, one should engage then. However, if the enemy is facing a hardship, for the sake of restraining the enemy, the employment of soldiers is recommended then. An advance along an even road that has water and grass is recommended. Spies who are accomplished in roaming around in the woods must be employed to check these out. Like a herd of deer, the army should not be made to march through newly cleared ways in the forest. Kings who desire victory employ all their soldiers in this way. Camps and fortifications that have plenty of water are recommended. These must be clear and there must be obstacles to an enemy creeping up. A clearing near a forest is thought to be the best in qualities. People who are skilled in warfare think that it possesses many qualities. Foot soldiers who have retreated can regroup, there are hiding places, one can strike at the enemy and there are refuges for times of distress. The army should be like a mountain and fight with the constellation *saptarshi* at the rear.[884] O king! Through this means, one can conquer those who are difficult to defeat. Where there is the wind, where there is the sun, where there is Shukra[885]—victory is there. O Yudhishthira! The wind is superior to the sun, the sun is superior to Shukra, but a conjunction is the best.[886] People who are skilled in warfare praise an even terrain without mud, water and stones for horses. A clear and level terrain without water is recommended for chariots. A terrain with small trees, large bushes and water is recommended for those who fight on elephants. Ground with many fortifications, large trees, clumps of bamboo and cane and hills and woods is recommended for foot soldiers. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! An army with a large number of foot soldiers is solid. When the day is fine, an army with a large number of chariots is praised. During the monsoon, large numbers of foot soldiers and elephants are praised. One must engage after considering all these qualities that have been mentioned and the time and the place. If one employs the soldiers well and advances after thinking about this, honouring the *tithi* and the nakshatra, one always obtains victory.[887]

'"Those who are asleep, thirsty and exhausted and those who have been routed must not be struck, nor those who are striving for moksha,[888] running away, trembling or drinking and eating. Those who have been severely wounded, those who have been somewhat wounded, those who have been routed, those who are emaciated, those who are completely at ease,[889] those who are engaged in some other task, those who have withdrawn, those who have gone out,[890] those who have withdrawn, though they may have pledged to return, those who are camp followers, those who follow tradition and guard the gates,[891] those who are followers,[892] those who supervise the gatekeepers and those who are shaking must not be struck.

'"The soldiers who cause a breach[893] and those who stem a breach[894] should have the same food and drink as you and it is a duty to pay them double the wages. For these, it is a duty to make the leaders of ten the leaders of one hundred. The brave one who is always attentive should be made the leader of one thousand. Having collected the foremost among them together, one should say, 'Let us take a pledge for the sake of victory in battle. We will not abandon each other. If there is anyone who is frightened, let him retreat right now. Otherwise, after the tumultuous engagement has begun, they will slay and rout us. If one runs away in the battle, one slays one's own self and one's own side. If one runs away, there is destruction of wealth, death, ill fame and a bad reputation. A man who runs away hears harsh and unpleasant words. His lips tremble. His teeth chatter. He throws aside all his weapons. When the lives of his companions are in danger, he abandons them and runs away. His intelligence favours the enemy. Let the enemy face such a state. A person who is reluctant to fight is the worst among men. They can only propagate their own species. But they have nothing in this world, or after death.'[895] The enemy will be delighted in his mind and welcome one who runs away. O son! He will greet him with honour and auspicious sounds, as if he is a victorious well-wisher. O king! When the enemy is delighted at your hardship, I think that this is a more severe sorrow than death. Know that Shri is the foundation for dharma and all happiness. She advances towards the enemies of cowards, but goes to those who are brave. 'We desire heaven and are ready to give up our lives in the battle.[896] Whether we are victorious or whether we are slain, we deserve to obtain the end of virtuous men.' Having taken this oath and ready to give up their lives, the brave ones are not frightened and immerse themselves in the army of the enemy.

'"One should have men armed with swords and shields at the front. The array of carts should be at the rear and the wives should be in the middle. For the sake of countering the enemy, the foot soldiers must be hidden. Those who are at the front must be eager to strike the enemy. Those who are in the front must be reputed, courageous and spirited. They should advance in the front and other people should follow them. One should make efforts to inspire those who are cowards. They should be made to stand close, so that the numbers are seen to be larger. As one desires, a few warriors may be made to fight together, or many may be spread out. When a small number fights with many, the array is called *suchimukha*.[897] When the engagement has started, he[898] should seize the men by the arms and shout, regardless of whether it is true or false, ‘The enemy has been routed. The army of our friends has arrived. Strike them without any fear.’ Men should create a terrible noise and roar and rush after him. They should slap their arms, create a tumult and sound conch shells, *krakacha*s[899] and horns. Kettledrums, drums, cymbals and other musical instruments must be sounded and elephants made to trumpet.”’

Chapter 1430(102)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When men advance into a battle, what should be their conduct? How should they uplift themselves? What should be their form? How should they armour themselves? What should be their weapons?”

‘Bhishma replied, “It is recommended that weapons and vehicles should be those they are used to. A man’s conduct should be in conformity with practice. Gandharas, Sindhus and Souviras fight with nails and javelins. The Abhiras are extremely strong and their army is skilled in every way. The Ushinaras are spirited and are accomplished in the use of all weapons. Those from the eastern regions are skilled in fighting with elephants and are warriors who fight with deceit. The Yavanas, the Kambojas and those who live around Mathura are accomplished in fighting with bare arms. The southerners use swords and shields. Brave ones who are extremely spirited and extremely strong are born everywhere. I have told you about general indications. Listen to the specifics. Their voices and eyes are like lions and tigers. Their gait is like that of lions and tigers. The eyes of all the brave ones who are strikers are like those of pigeons and sparrows. There are others with voices like deer, glances like leopards and eyes like bulls. Some utter cries that are extremely terrible. When enraged, others have voices like *kinnari*s. With wrathful faces, some thunder like clouds. Some have sounds like young elephants.[900] Some possess crooked noses and legs, but they can travel far and strike from a long distance. Some have bodies that are curved like a cat. Some are thin. Others are fair in hair and complexion. These brave ones are restless and difficult to assail. Some have eyes like lizards. Others are mild in nature. Some accomplished men possess the gait and sounds of horses. Some possess robust frames, others are old. Some possess broad chests and symmetrical frames. They are delighted and dance when there is a fight and musical instruments are sounded. Some possess grave eyes. Others have bulging and tawny eyes. They have frowns on their faces. Some have eyes like mongooses. However, all of them are brave ones who are ready to give up their lives. Some have crooked eyes and broad foreheads. Others possess very little flesh. Some have crooked arms and fingers. Some are thin and seem to be made out of veins alone. When the enemy presents itself, they advance with great force. They are difficult to withstand and are like crazy elephants. For some, the tips of the hair seem to blaze in radiance. Others possess stout flanks, jaws and faces. Some have peaked noses, thick necks, fearful forms and thick calves. Others possess excellent necks that can be raised up or lowered, like those of birds. Some possess round heads and faces like snakes. Others have faces like those of cats. When they are wrathful, some make terrible sounds. They roar and rush into battle. They are insolent and terrible and know nothing about dharma. They exhibit how horrible they are. All of them are ready to give up their lives. They dwell in the frontier regions and do not retreat. They place themselves ahead of the soldiers and kill or are killed. They do not follow dharma and have different codes of conduct. They regard virtue as defeat. They act in this wrathful way towards their king too.”’

Chapter 1431(103)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among men! What are the acclaimed signs that signify the army’s victory? I wish to know about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among men! I will tell you everything about the acclaimed signs that signify the army’s victory. Destiny determines this in advance and men are goaded by time. Those who are far-sighted because of their wisdom can see and understand this. Those who are learned about the means of atonement perform meditation and offer oblations. They observe auspicious acts to pacify the ill portents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If the warriors and mounts are uplifted in their spirits, it is said that it is certain that the army will obtain victory. Winds blow from the rear and there are rainbows. Clouds shower from the rear and so do the sun’s rays. All the jackals, wild crows and vultures become favourably disposed towards it. When they act towards the army in this way, it obtains supreme success. The flames of the fire[901] are clear and the rays rise straight up. There is no smoke and the flames bend towards the south. The oblations emit an auspicious scent. It is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When conch shells and drums make a loud noise that is deep in tone and those who wish to fight are inspired, it is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When animals are to the rear or the left of those who are marching or are about to march, that is auspicious. When they are about to kill, if they are to the right, that is said to signify success. However, if they are in front, that is an obstruction. When birds call out in auspicious tones, swans, curlews, woodpeckers and blue jays, the warriors become cheerful and spirited and it is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When the weapons, shafts, armour and flags are extremely radiant, and so is the sheen and complexion on the faces of the warriors, they become impossible to look at and the army will overcome the enemy. When the warriors are obedient and not insolent, bearing fraternal feelings towards each other, and are always based on purity, it is said that this is an indication that there will be victory. When sounds, touch and the scent that wafts around brings pleasure to the mind and the warriors are full of fortitude, this is the face of victory. For someone who has already penetrated, the left side is auspicious. However, for someone who is about to penetrate, it is the right. Things at the rear facilitate success and those in front constrain it.

'"O Yudhishthira! After collecting a large army with the four limbs,[902] you must first try for conciliation. You should endeavour to fight only after that. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A victory that is obtained through war is to be abhorred. If one thinks about it, victory in a battle depends on the wishes of destiny. Like a great flood of water or a herd of deer that has been terrified, if a large army has been routed, it is extremely difficult to reverse the flight. They begin to flee and even the learned do not know the reason for this.[903] Even if the hearts are firm, a large army is like a mass of *ruru* deer. If they depend on each other, if they are cheerful and ready to give up their lives and if they are extremely firm in their determination, even fifty brave ones can drive away the enemy's army. Or even five, six and seven noble and revered ones, fighting together, and firm in their deterimination, can completely defeat the enemy. You should never advance towards a clash, if it can be prevented. It is said that war should be adopted only after conciliation, dissension and gifts have been tried out. Those who are cowards are scared of soldiers[904] creeping up to attack, looking on it like a bolt of lightning and unsure about where it will descend next. When a body of soldiers gets to know about the intended attack and advances, the bodies of the warriors tremble, and so does the kingdom. O king! The entire kingdom, with its mobile and immobile objects, trembles. Tormented by the heat of the weapons, the marrow in the bodies begins to melt. Therefore, together with severity, conciliation must repeatedly be tried. If the enemy is oppressed too much, it will always attack. One should employ spies to seed internal dissension within the enemy. If the enemy king is superior, a truce is recommended. This is because one will not be able to combine with his foes and act so as to counter him from every side. Forgiveness is the maya of the virtuous. Those who are virtuous are always forgiving. O Partha! Depending on the need, know how to use forgiveness and also when not to forgive. If a king conquers through forgiveness, his fame increases. Even enemies who have committed great crimes begin to trust him. Shambara said, ‘Once one has subjugated, one should think about forgiving. However, a piece of wood that has not been completely burnt returns again to its natural state.’ But preceptors do not praise this as a virtuous practice. Control must be effortless and without destruction, the way one treats one’s own sons. O Yudhishthira! A king who is fierce is hated by the people. However, they also disregard him if he is mild. Therefore, both must be practised. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if one has to strike, one should speak pleasant words before striking. After striking, one should show compassion and sorrow and weep a little. In front of them, one should say, ‘I am not pleased that he[905] has been killed. I repeatedly told him that he had not acted in accordance with my words. Alas! I wished that he had remained alive. He did not deserve to be slain in this way. Such excellent men who do not run away from the field of battle are extremely difficult to get. Whoever has killed him in the battle has performed a task that is not agreeable to me.’ Having spoken words like this before the ones who survive on the side of the one who has been slain and seizing their hands so as to bring them over to his own side, he must secretly honour the ones who have committed the crime.[906] In this way, in every situation, he must act in accordance with conciliation. An intrepid king who acts in this way knows about dharma and is loved by the people. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He obtains the trust of all the people. With that trust, as desire presents itself, he will be capable of enjoyment. Therefore, the king must obtain the trust of all people, without resorting to deceit. He who wishes to enjoy the earth should protect it in every way.”’

Chapter 1432(104)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “How should a king behave towards an enemy who is mild, one who is fierce and one who has a large army? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the conversation between Brihaspati and Indra. The lord of the gods joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Brihaspati. Vasava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, approached and asked him, ‘O brahmana! How should I be attentive and act towards those who injure me? How can I use techniques to control them, without destroying them? In general, victory is obtained through a clash between armies. But what can I do so that the powerful and blazing Shri does not abandon me?’ The radiant one[907] was accomplished about dharma, artha and kama and knew about the precepts of rajadharma. He replied to Purandara, ‘When seeking to control those who cause injury, one should not use conflict. That is for those who are intolerant and cannot forgive, it is practised by children. If one desires to kill an enemy, one should not disclose this. Rage, power and intolerance should be controlled and kept within one’s own self. Even if there is distrust, one must serve the enemy, as if one trusts him. One must always speak pleasantly. One must never act in an unpleasant way. One should refrain from pointless hostility and abandon any voicing of it. A fowler wanting to catch birds imitates the tones of the birds. A king wishing to subjugate should act in that way. O Purandara! One brings the enemies under one’s subjugation and then kills them. O Vasava! Having conquered the enemy, one should never sleep happily. Like a crackling fire, the evil-souled one can arise again. But in general, a clash is not the recommended task for victory. O lord! Having conquered an enemy by winning his trust, one should let him be. However, having consulted with his advisers and great-souled and learned ministers, an enemy may not be defeated in his heart. He may ignore it,[908] or choose to strike back. He may wait for a time to strike, when one is distracted in one's state. He may use trusted men to corrupt the army.[909] He[910] must consider the beginning, the middle and the end and everything that is hidden.[911] Obtaining knowledge and proof, one must corrupt the forces.[912] One should use dissension, blandishments and herbs.[913] However, one should never mix one's clothes with that of the enemy.[914] After having waited for a long time, one can then slay the enemy. One should spend the time in waiting, looking for an opportunity. Large numbers of the enemy should not be immediately killed. If one waits, the victory will be without anxiety. One should not impale a stake that creates a fresh wound. When the right time has come for striking, that is when one should attack again. O Indra of the gods! This is what is indicated for a man who wishes to kill the enemy. However, a man who is waiting for the right time should not let that moment pass. This is the dharma of time. For one who desires this, it is extremely rare for that moment to come back again. Those who are virtuous honour the technique of defeating the enemy's energy. Time always brings success. If something has not been obtained, one should not press. O Purandara! Give up desire, anger and ego. Engage yourself in detecting the weaknesses of those who seek to injure. O supreme among the gods! O Shakra! Mildness, chastisement,[915] laziness and carelessness and different kinds of deceit can destroy the success of those who are not discriminating. These four must be destroyed and deceit countered. Without any hesitation, one will then be able to strike at the enemy. If this is capable of being secretly undertaken with just one person, this is what should be done. Many advisers can divulge secrets and falsely pass on the responsibility to each other. If it is impossible to do this,[916] one can then have consultations with others. The four limbs should be used against those who are seen and *brahmadanda* against those who are not seen.[917] Dissension should first be used and silence[918] and force thereafter. Depending on the right time, the king must employ these. At a time when the enemy is stronger, one must bow down. However, one must be attentive in seeking for a weakness when he is careless, so that one can kill him. One must bow down, use gifts and speak pleasant words. One must serve the enemy, so that he has no grounds for suspicion. One must carefully avoid all the postures that give rise to suspicion. One should not trust those who have been defeated.

Those who have been injured are always awake. O supreme among the gods! O lord of the immortals! There is no task that is as supremely difficult as ensuring prosperity for those who have varied means of subsistence. That is the reason he[919] is spoken of as the generator of different kinds of conduct. One must be engaged in this, restraining both friends and foes. People disrespect one who is mild and hate one who is fierce. Do not be mild. Do not be fierce. Be both mild and fierce. A raging torrent overcomes the riverbank and floods everything with water. If one is careless, the embankments of the kingdom break down in that way. One should not engage against many enemies at the same time. O Purandara! Use sama, dana, bheda and danda. One should use these one at a time. Even if one is skilled, one does not act against all the wicked at the same time. A king who is intelligent knows he is not capable of countering everyone at the same time. When there is a large army of horses, elephants and chariots and there are foot soldiers and many implements of war and that six-fold army[920] is devoted, when one uses one's intelligence to deduce that one is superior in many ways, then, without any hesitation, one can directly strike against bandits. The sacred texts do not recommend conciliation, but punishment.[921] Instead of mildness, one must always advance against the enemy. However, one must avoid the destruction of crops, acts of mixing[922] and excessive destruction of nature. One can use deceit to infuse dissension among people and allow wicked and reprehensible deeds by trusted men, employed against the cities in the kingdom. The lord of the earth will pursue him[923] into the city and conquer all the objects of pleasure inside the city. O destroyer of Bala and Vritra! He must implement the recommended policy for the cities, as is necessary. He will secretly give them[924] riches, while taking away their own possessions. He will cite the sins of those wicked ones and employ them in the cities and the kingdom. There are others who are learned about the texts of love[925] and are adorned with the foresight of knowing the ordinances of the sacred texts. There are extremely skilled ones, accomplished in recounting tales. For bringing down the enemy, these should be considered.'

'"Indra asked, 'O supreme among brahmanas! What are the signs of wicked people? How does one know evil ones? I am asking you. Tell me.'

'"Brihaspati replied, 'He dislikes your good qualities and proclaims your bad qualities behind your back. When others praise you, he is silent and reluctant. Even if there is no obvious reason, one can discern from this silence. Though he seems trustworthy, he bites his lips and shakes his head. He is gracious in public and ungracious in private. When someone is absent, he acts against him. But when that person is present, he says nothing. He eats alone and says, "Today, it is not as it should be."[926] In particular, these signs can be seen in his sitting, sleeping and walking around. If someone sorrows when you are unhappy, that is the sign of a friend. The opposite of this is the sign of an enemy. From anything that is contrary, one can determine the characteristics of an enemy. O lord of the thirty gods! Know from these and the others that I have spoken about, to detect wicked men, since nature is always superior. O supreme among the gods! I have described the knowledge of evil ones. O lord of the immortals! Know the truth of what has been stated in the sacred texts.'"

'Bhishma said, "Hearing the words spoken then by Brihaspati, Purandara, engaged in the destruction of the enemy, acted in accordance with this. At the right time, the slayer of enemies became victorious and brought the enemy under his subjugation."'

Chapter 1433(105)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “A king may be devoted to dharma, but may be obstructed by his advisers. If he desires happiness, how should he act when he doesn’t possess riches and has been deprived of his treasury and his army?”

‘Bhishma replied, “On this, the history of Kshemadarshi is sung. O Yudhishthira! I will tell you this. Listen to it. Kshemadarshi was the son of a king and in ancient times, his strength had decayed. We have heard that he went to the sage Kalakavrikshiya and asked him, ‘My prosperity has disappeared and I am immersed in this hardship. I am a man who should have his share of riches and I have tried repeatedly. However, I have been unable to obtain the kingdom. O brahmana! What should I do? O supreme one! There is nothing other than death, theft, seeking refuge or other inferior forms of conduct. Tell me. You are accomplished in your wisdom. Someone afflicted with disease, mental or otherwise, should seek refuge with someone who is as extremely learned as you are. A man who has broken free and has controlled his desires obtains bliss. He abandons joy and sorrow and obtains wealth that has nothing to do with happiness. I sorrow for those who seek happiness in riches. My large quantity of riches has been destroyed, as if they had appeared in a dream. It is an extremely great and difficult task to abandon riches, even for virtuous ones. We are incapable of giving up what no longer exists.[927] I have been dislodged from my prosperity and have attained this state, where I am miserable and distressed. O brahmana! Instruct me about the other kind of bliss that exists.’

‘“Having been addressed by the intelligent prince of Kosala, the immensely radiant sage Kalakavrikshiya replied, ‘You already know, because that intelligence has presented itself before you. Act accordingly. Know that everything, I and what is mine, is temporary. Everything that you think of as existing, know that it is non-existent. That is the reason a wise person is not distressed, even when he faces a difficulty and a hardship. Know that whatever had happened and whatever has happened are certainly things that have no existence.[928] Knowing what should be known, you will be able to free yourself from adharma. There was an accumulation of things earlier and there are those that came after that. All of those no longer exist. Knowing this, who will be anxious? Having existed, something no longer exists. Having not existed, something exists. One should not have the capacity to grieve. Why should a man sorrow? O king! Where is your father now? Where is your grandfather now? You cannot see them now, nor can they see you. Beholding your own self to be impermanent, why do you sorrow over them? Use your intelligence to comprehend this. It is certain that you will not exist. O king! I, you, your enemies and your well-wishers will cease to be. Everything will cease to exist. Whether they are twenty years old or whether they are thirty years old, all the men who are here will die before one hundred years have passed. If a man is freed from his great prosperity, if he wishes to ensure his own welfare, he should think that it wasn't his. He should not regard what will come as his either. What has passed should also not be regarded as his. Those who think that destiny is superior are learned and it is said that those are the virtuous ones. It is possible to survive without riches and rule the kingdom. People who are your equal or superior in intelligence and manliness have done that. They have not sorrowed like you. Therefore, you should also not grieve. Why are you not their equal, or superior, in intelligence and manliness?'

'"The prince replied, 'I think that my obtaining the kingdom was also destiny. O brahmana! Everything that was there has been taken away by the greatness of time. O one who is rich in austerities! It has been taken away, as if by a flow of water. I can see the fruits. I must live on whatever I can obtain.'

'"The sage said, 'O one from Kosala! You have arrived at the right conclusion about what will come and what is past. That is the reason you are not sorrowing. Behave in that way about everything. Never desire objectives that cannot be attained, only those that can be attained. Experience what has presented itself and do not sorrow over what has not come. O one from Kosala! You will then find delight in the objectives that have been attained. Now that your sentiments have been cleansed, perhaps you will not grieve over Shri having left. When an evil-minded person confronts misfortune and is deprived of what he possessed earlier, he always censures the creator and is not satisfied with what he now possesses. He thinks that people who are prosperous do not deserve it. That is the reason he is repeatedly immersed in grief. O king! Such a man is proud and is overcome by excessive jealousy. O lord of Kosala! O wise one! In that way, you should not suffer from envy. Though you do not possess prosperity, tolerate that of others. Accomplished people enjoy Lakhsmi, even if she is with someone else. Shri goes to the virtuous and abandons those who hate. Brave men who follow dharma and know about dharma give up Shri and their sons and grandsons. They even give up their own selves. They see that even when they have satisfied their desires, there is a lot that crumbles away. There are others who renounce, thinking that the objectives are extremely difficult to obtain.[929] But though you are wise by nature, you are tormented in your misery. You desire things that should not be desired, noticing that those riches are with others. Use your intelligence to question and abandon the pursuit. Something that is not desirable presents itself in the form of artha. Something that is not artha presents itself in the form of something that is desirable. For some, the destruction of riches is desirable. There are those who look towards prosperity and think that it will bring infinite happiness. There are those who find pleasure in prosperity, disregarding what is superior. In his pursuit of prosperity, all his enterprise is destroyed. O one from Kosala! When something desired has been obtained with a great deal of difficulty and then disappears, the man who was pursuing riches is completely shattered. Men who know about welfare desire dharma alone. They desire happiness beyond death and are indifferent towards what happens in this world. In their greed for wealth, some men are ready to give up their lives. When they are unable to obtain riches, such men think that there is no point in remaining alive. Behold their misery. Behold their stupidity. Because of their confusion, they thirst for riches and live for what is temporary. All these stores are destroyed. Life ends in death. Why should one turn one's mind towards acquiring something that will be separated? O king! Wealth abandons a man, or a man abandons wealth. Knowing that this is certainly inevitable, why should one be anxious over it? The well-wishers and riches of others are also destroyed. O king! Use your intelligence to judge the calamities that you, and other men, face. Restrain, control and focus your senses, mind and words. There are injurious ends, extremely difficult to obtain, that may not be available. These are despicable by nature, or perhaps it is impossible to obtain them. Be content in your wisdom. Be valiant and know. Do not sorrow. Desire a little. Do not be fickle. Be mild, generous and controlled. If you resort to brahmacharya, someone like you will not be confounded. Someone like you should not resort to the contemptible means of begging for subsistence.[930] That is cruel, wicked and unhappy conduct, meant for cowards. You can subsist on roots and fruits and enjoy yourself in the great forest. Control your soul by being restrained in speech. Show compassion towards all beings. One who finds pleasure in dwelling alone in the forest, is satisfied with a little and enjoys companionship with aged tuskers is like a learned person. The atman will be like a large lake that was once agitated, but is now tranquil. If someone treads this path, I can only see happiness for him. O king! When prosperity is impossible, when one is devoid of advisers, by seeking recourse with destiny, can you think of anything that will be superior?’”’

Chapter 1434(106)

‘“The sage said, ‘O kshatriya! If instead, you see that there is some manliness left in you, I will tell you about a policy whereby you can get your kingdom back. If you can undertake this, you will perform an everlasting deed. I will tell you everything. Listen to it in detail. If you act in accordance with this, you will obtain great prosperity, the kingdom, control over the kingdom and get the greatness of Shri back again. O king! If this appeals to you, tell me. I will tell you what must be done.’

‘“The king replied, ‘O illustrious one! O lord! I have sought refuge with you. Tell me about the policy. Now that I have met you, this meeting cannot but be successful.’

‘“The sage said, ‘Renounce arrogance, pride, anger, joy and fear. Join your hands in salutation, bow down before the enemy and serve him.[931] The lord of Videha is devoted to the truth. Because of your supreme purity, deeds and appeasement, he is certain to grant you a means of subsistence. You will obtain his favours and become preeminent among all the people. You will also obtain aides who are enterprising, without vices and pure. If a person is engaged in his own tasks, restrains his soul and conquers his senses, he uplifts himself and pleases people. He is intelligent and prosperous and will honour you. Having obtained great favours from him, you will become preeminent among all people. You will obtain well-wishers and ministers who will give you good advice. Then create internal dissension, like smashing a *bilva* fruit[932] with another bilva fruit. Conclude agreements with his enemies and destroy his forces. Make his mind turn to objects that are not easily attainable—women, garments, beds, seats, vehicles, extremely expensive houses, birds, different kinds of animals, juices, perfumes and fruit. Becoming addicted to these, he will then ruin himself. If you are countered, you should not ignore that. However, if you wish to control the enemy, you should not do anything openly.

The wise ones say that one should dwell with one’s supreme enemy in his kingdom and by getting him addicted to unusual objects, ensuring the enemy’s hardship. One must get him to work on tasks that are great and extremely difficult, such as constructing dams on rivers. Ensure that powerful ones counter him. Let the treasury be frittered away on extremely expensive gardens, beds, seats and other objects of pleasure and happiness. Praise sacrifices and gifts and describe these in the presence of brahmanas, so that they are kind towards you and pursue him like wolves. “There is no doubt that one who is pure in his conduct attains the supreme objective. Such a king obtains the most sacred of spots in heaven.”[933] O one from Kosala! When his treasury is destroyed, he will come under the subjugation of the enemy. Whether he is addicted to dharma or adharma,[934] his enemies will take delight in whatever severs the root of his strength and riches. When a man confronts disaster, he blames destiny. When he is swiftly destroyed, there is no doubt that he will think that destiny is supreme. Make him perform the *vishvajita* sacrifice,[935] so that he is deprived of all his possessions. When his objectives are not accomplished and when he is afflicted, he will want to go to an eminent person. Suggest someone from an inferior varna, someone with a shaved head, knowledgeable in the dharma of renunciation. Desiring his own welfare, perhaps he will then resort to renunciation. Employ drugs that are known to have efficacy and are capable of destroying all enemies. Use these vile concoctions to destroy his elephants, horses and men. There are these and many other techniques of deceit that have been determined. O son of a king! If one is not a eunuch, one is capable of using these to conquer.’”’

Chapter 1435(107)

'"The prince said, 'O brahmana! I do not wish to live through fraud and deceit. I do not desire great riches, if they are not obtained through the use of dharma. O illustrious one! I said at the beginning that these should be avoided. I do not want anyone to doubt me and I desire my complete welfare. In this world, I desire to live through a dharma that does not cause injury. I am incapable of doing all this. It is not appropriate for me.'

'"The sage replied, 'O kshatriya! What you have spoken is deserving of you. O one who is wonderful in outlook! You are naturally intelligent. I will endeavour so that both of you attain your objectives. I will bring about an eternal alliance between the two of you. You have been born in a lineage like his. You are non-violent and extremely learned. You are accomplished in ensuring the welfare of a kingdom. Who will not make someone like you an adviser? You have confronted a supreme hardship and have abandoned your kingdom. O kshatriya! However, you wish to live through non-violent conduct. O son![936] The king of Videha is devoted to the truth and will come to my house. There is no doubt that he will do what I ask him to.'"

'Bhishma said, "The sage summoned the king of Videha and spoke these words to him. 'This one has been born in a lineage of kings and I know what is inside his mind. His soul is as pure as a mirror or the autumn moon. I have tested him in every way and do not see anything crooked in him. You should have an alliance with him. Trust him the way you trust me. O slayer of enemies! Without an adviser, you are incapable of ruling the kingdom. The adviser must be brave and full of intelligence. Both of these[937] cause fear for a king. Look towards the ruling of the kingdom. In this world, a person with dharma in his soul is rare and there is no one like him. This prince is accomplished in his soul. He is established in the path of the virtuous. With dharma at the forefront, you will do well to have him on your side. He will serve you and seize large numbers of the enemy. If he wishes to fight back against you, he will resort to his own dharma of being a kshatriya and try to win back the kingdom of his father and grandfathers in a battle. If you are engaged in your vow of conquest, you will fight back against him. O lord of Videha! However, if you do not fight, he will follow my instructions and remain under your control. Glance towards dharma and cast aside the inappropriate adharma. For the sake of desire or hatred, you should not abandon your own dharma. O son![938] Victory is not permanent. Nor is defeat permanent. One must give food and objects of pleasure to an enemy who has been defeated. Think yourself to be like him, confronting victory and defeat. O son! Those who seek to exterminate all danger end up exterminating their own selves.' He was thus addressed by that bull among brahmanas and replied in the following words, after having honoured and treated him well and taking the permission of the one who deserved worship. 'O immensely wise one! It is exactly as you have said. O immensely learned one! It is exactly as you have said. As you have said, people desire what brings the most benefit. What you have said is the best for both of us. I will follow your words and act exactly in accordance with them. This is supremely beneficial. I do not need to reflect about this.' The king of Videha summoned the one from Kosala and spoke these words to him. 'I have defeated you through the use of dharma, policy and strength. O supreme among kings! However, you have conquered me through your qualities. Though you have been defeated, do not have a low opinion of yourself. I do not disrespect your intelligence. I do not disrespect your manliness. Though you have been defeated, do not think of yourself as having been defeated. O king! Come to my house. You will be honoured and then go to your own house.' Having honoured the brahmana, the two of them trustingly went to the house. The lord of Videha made the lord of Kosala enter his house and honoured him with water for washing the feet, a gift and a mixture of honey.[939] He was honoured back in return and gave him his own daughter, with many kinds of gems. This is the supreme dharma for kings. Both victory and defeat must be endured."'

Chapter 1436(108)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O scorcher of enemies! You have described the dharma, the conduct, the subsistence, the means of subsistence and the fruits for brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras, the conduct of kings, the treasury, the means of making the treasury great, the means of increasing the qualities of the advisers, the prosperity of ordinary people, the six qualities[940] one must think of, the policy concerning the army, the means of knowing the wicked, the characteristics of the virtuous, the signs of those who are equal, inferior and superior, the means to satisfy neutral ones so that prosperity can be enhanced, the recommended means for sustaining those who have limited resources and about the method indicated in the texts against countries that are weaker. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have also described the conduct of someone who desires victory. O supreme among intelligent ones! I now wish to hear about the conduct towards ganas.[941] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How do ganas prosper? How can they be prevented from breaking up? How do they conquer the enemy and obtain well-wishers? What is the cause of dissension in ganas and how do they confront destruction? It is my view that their sorrow results from the fact that there are many and it is difficult to keep counsel a secret. O scorcher of enemies! I wish to hear everything about this in entirety. O king! Tell me everything about how they can be prevented from breaking up.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O lord of men! Greed and intolerance ignite enmity within ganas, families and royal lineages. Avarice begins to consume and intolerance comes after that. These two unite and reinforce each other, until everything is destroyed. They[942] use spies, secret counsel, force, seizure, conciliation, gifts and dissension and other techniques of decay, destruction and fear to weaken each other. Large numbers of ganas that work together are broken apart through gifts. Having been broken, all of them are distressed in their minds and, because of their fear, are quickly subjugated. The ganas are destroyed because of their divisions and, having been shattered, have to bow down before the enemy. Therefore, the ganas must always try to work together. If they are united, their strength and manliness increases and so does their prosperity. When they act together in this way, outsiders seek their friendship. Those who are learned and aged praise a situation where they serve each other. Having not retreated from that object of unity, they obtain happiness in every way. The best of the ganas follow dharma in conduct, establish themselves in their sacred texts and, following these, become prosperous. They are always engaged in good policy and do not hesitate to punish sons and brothers. The best among ganas prosper because they accept those who are humble. O mighty-armed one! In every way, these ganas are always engaged in ensuring prosperity through spies, secret plans, following ordinances and enhancing the treasury. O king! The ganas are prosperous when they always revere the wise, the brave, those who are great archers and those who base themselves on manliness in all their tasks. When ganas face difficulties and are confused—those who are wealthy, those who are brave, those who are knowledgeable about weapons and those who are accomplished in the sacred texts save them. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Anger, dissension, fear, punishment, affliction, imprisonment and death immediately lead to ganas becoming subjugated. O king! That is the reason the foremost members of the gana must be given importance. The progress of other people depends mostly on them. O afflicter of enemies! Secret counsels and information about spies must be restricted to the foremost members. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The entire gana should not get to hear about secret plans. The foremost members of the gana must work together for the welfare of the gana. When members of a gana act separately, have differing views or are divided in some other way, its prosperity suffers and it faces a disaster. When they have broken away from each other and base themselves on individual strengths alone, it is the task of the learned and foremost ones to swiftly restrain them. O king! If there is a conflict within the family and the aged ones in the family ignore this, this ensures that the gotras[943] break away from the gana. One must protect against internal dangers. External dangers are easier to handle. If an internal danger is generated, it severs the roots. If there are sentiments of sudden rage, avarice and natural confusion, and they do not speak to each other, this is a sign of defeat. They[944] are similar in birth. All of them are equally noble in lineage. But they are not equal in valour, intelligence, beauty and prosperity. If ganas suffer from the confusion of being disunited, they bow down before the enemy. That is the reason it is said that unity is the great refuge of ganas."'

Chapter 1437(109)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Great policy and the path of dharma have many branches. Is it your view that one element of dharma must be pursued the most? In your view, which is the task of dharma that is the most important, so that a man can obtain dharma in this world and after death?”

‘Bhishma replied, “It is my view that worship of the mother, the father and the preceptor is the most important. If a man is engaged in this, he obtains great fame and the worlds. O son! O Yudhishthira! If they recognize any task, irrespective of whether it is for dharma or against dharma, it is your duty to honour and implement it. Without their permission, one must not think of something else as dharma. It has been prescribed that their suggestions amount to dharma. They are the three worlds. They are the three ashramas.[945] They are the three Vedas. They are the three fires. The father is said to be the *garhapatya* fire and the mother is the dakshina fire. The preceptor is the *ahavaniya* fire.[946] These three fires are the most important. If you pay attention to these three, you will conquer the three worlds. By always serving the father one can cross this world, by serving the mother, the world beyond this, and by serving the preceptor, Brahma’s world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O fortunate one! If you conduct yourself well in the three worlds, you will obtain fame and dharma with extremely great fruits. One should not cross their policies. One should not eat before them. One should not censure them. One should always serve them. That is the supreme good deed. O lord of men! Through this, you will earn fame, merits, glory and the worlds. One who honours them is honoured in the three worlds. However, one who dishonours them is dishonoured and all his tasks become fruitless. O scorcher of enemies! A person who always disrespects these three seniors obtains neither this world nor the one hereafter. His fame is not radiant in the world hereafter. After that, nor does he obtain any great benefit. If I give everything away to them, it comes back to me, one hundred times and one thousand times more. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, the three worlds blaze before me. It is said that one good *acharya*[947]is superior to ten learned brahmanas, one *upadhyaya* is superior to ten acharyas and the father is superior to ten upadhyayas. However, a mother is superior to ten fathers and even to the entire earth. In her importance, there is no preceptor who is equal to a mother. However, it is my view that a preceptor is superior to a father and a mother.[948] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Both the mother and the father unite to give birth, but the father and the mother create the body alone. The birth that is instructed by the acharya is divine. It is without old age and without death. Even if they have caused an injury, the mother and the father must never be killed.[949] If you act in this way, you will not be censured. Nor will they reprimand you. The gods and the rishis know about those who try to follow dharma. One who imparts comprehension, one who speaks about the truth in one's ears and one who grants immortality[950] should be thought of as a father and a mother. Knowing this, one should not act injuriously towards him. When a person has heard about knowledge from a preceptor but does not honour him in thought and deeds even when he is present, he must be corrected by other preceptors and those preceptors also deserve to be respected. Therefore, one who desires for the ancient dharma must make efforts to worship and honour all these seniors, giving them their shares. A person who pleases his father also pleases his grandfather. If he is affectionate towards his mother, he reveres the entire earth. If he is affectionate towards his upadhyaya, he worships Brahma. Therefore, if he worships his mother, his father and his preceptor, he pleases the rishis and the gods, together with the ancestors. In one's conduct, one should never disrespect the preceptor, nor the mother and the father, because they are like the preceptor. They should not be censured and they will not reprimand you. The gods, together with the rishis, know that preceptors must be treated well. In thoughts and in deeds, one should not injure the upadhyaya, the father and the mother. A wicked person who does that commits a sin that is worse than killing a foetus. There is no one in the world as wicked as he. We have not heard of any salvation for four—one who harms a friend, one who is an ingrate, one who kills a woman and one who is slanderous. For the acts of men in this world, all this has been created as great instruction. This is most beneficial and there is nothing that is superior to this. Following all kinds of dharma, I have told you this.”’

Chapter 1438(110)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a man wishes to base himself on dharma, how should he conduct himself? O learned one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to know. Tell me. Both truth and falsehood pervade the world. O king! Therefore, if a man is determined to follow dharma, how should he act vis-à-vis these two? What is truth? What is falsehood? What is eternal dharma? When should one speak the truth? When should one utter a lie?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Truthful speech is virtuous. There is nothing superior to truth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this world, this is an extremely difficult thing to understand and I will tell you the truth about this. When falsehood is truth and when truth is falsehood, one should not speak the truth and one should utter a lie. A juvenile person is confused about truth that is injurious. One who can discriminate between truth and falsehood knows about dharma. There may be an extremely terrible man who is ignoble and unaccomplished in his wisdom. However, even he can obtain extremely great merits, such as Balaka did when he killed a blind being.[951] What is extraordinary in this? But there can be a person who desires dharma, but acts like one who does not know dharma. On the banks of the Ganga, Koushika perpetrated a great sin. What you have asked me is complicated when it becomes extremely difficult to state what dharma is. It is extremely difficult to enumerate it, even if one resorts to reasoning. The words of dharma were created for the prosperity of beings. It is certain that anything that does not cause injury is dharma. It is said that dharma is anything that holds up.[952] Beings are held up through dharma. It is certain that anything that serves to hold up is dharma. There are some who say that dharma is that which is laid down in the *shruti* texts, but there are other people who do not agree. I cannot find fault with this, since everything is not laid down there. If someone asks, desiring the riches of others, one should not answer.[953] It is certain that not telling them would have been dharma. If one can escape without speaking, one should not speak. However, if not speaking gives rise to suspicion, one must certainly speak. Having thought about it, in that situation, when one consorts with wicked people, uttering a lie is superior to speaking the truth, even if one has taken an oath. If it is possible, one must never give riches to the likes of those. If riches are given to wicked people, this makes the giver suffer. Even if this involves an injury to one's body, it is better not to give them what they wish. However, there may be witnesses who have to speak to ascertain the nature of the truth. If they do not speak what must be spoken, they are liars.[954] If life is at stake and at the time of a marriage, one should lie. So should one for the sake of preserving riches or for the sake of ensuring dharma for others. However, if he does this out of a desire to share in the dharma of others, he is begging for dharma and is inferior. If someone has promised to pay and later deviates from his duty, he must be compelled by force. If a person deviates from a pledge that has been taken in accordance with dharma, then he establishes himself in adharma. A deceitful person may deviate from his own dharma, but still pretend to live in accordance with it. He is evil and fraudulent in his life and must be restrained in every possible way. All the wicked people in the world are certain to strive for riches. If one tolerates them or if one eats with them, one is wicked in conduct and is certain to fall down. Such a person will be dislodged from gods and men and it will be as if he is dead already. He will be miserable because his riches will be taken away and his remaining alive becomes pointless. One must make efforts to tell him, 'This is the dharma that you should find agreeable.' It is certain that there is no dharma for those who are wicked. If one kills a person who has reached such a state, one does not suffer from any sin. That person has already been slain because of his deeds and is only killing someone who has already been slain. Anyone who concludes an agreement with such a person, whose intelligence has been destroyed and whose life is wicked, behaves like a crow or a vulture.[955] When they are freed from their bodies and rise upwards, they are reborn in those wombs. Whichever is the way in which a man behaves towards one's own self, that is the conduct one should show towards him and this is dharma. Deceit should be used against those who are deceitful. Those who are virtuous must be repaid with virtuous conduct.”’

Chapter 1439(111)

‘Yudhishthira said, “Here and there, beings can be tormented by different kinds of sentiments. How can they tide over difficulties? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The cited ashramas for brahmanas have already been recounted. If they follow these with controlled souls, they will be able to tide over difficulties. Those who are without deceit, those who meditate, those who remain within the confines of prescribed conduct and those who restrain material desires are able to tide over difficulties. Those who always offer their dwellings to guests, those who are always without malice and those who are always engaged in studying are able to tide over difficulties. Those who follow the conduct of their mother and father, those who know about dharma and those who do not sleep during the day are able to tide over difficulties. Those who have intercourse with their own virtuous wives, at the right season and not outside the season, and those righteous ones who observe agnihotra are able to tide over all difficulties. Kings who give up excessive desire for riches, who are full of the rajas quality and who protect the kingdom are able to tide over all difficulties. Brave ones who give up the fear of death in battles and desire to triumph in accordance with dharma are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who do not commit sins in deeds, thought and speech and impose the rod of chastisement on beings are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who speak the truth, even if life is at stake, and those who set an example to all beings are able to tide over all difficulties. Brahmanas who do not study what should not be studied and are always engaged in asceticism and good austerities are able to tide over all difficulties. Those whose acts do not have fraudulent objectives, those whose words are extremely truthful and those who obtain riches through virtuous means are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who torment themselves through austerities, those who observe brahmacharya in their youth and those who have cleansed through their learning of the Vedas and vows are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who have controlled rajas, those who have controlled tamas and those great-souled ones who are based on truth are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who cause no fear, those who are never frightened and those who look on all people as their own selves are able to tide over all difficulties. Those bulls among men who are not tormented by the prosperity of others and those who refrain from common norms of behaviour are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who worship all the gods, those who listen to all kinds of dharma and those who are faithful and controlled are able to tide over all the difficulties. Those who do not desire respect but respect others instead, and those who pay no attention to any honours they obtain, are able to tide over all difficulties. Desiring offspring, those who perform shraddha ceremonies from one tithi to another and those who are extremely pure in their minds are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who are not enraged, those who pacify the anger of others and those who are not enraged at the servants are able to tide over all difficulties. Those men who have always avoided, since birth, *madhu*, flesh and liquor are able to tide over all difficulties.[956] Those who only eat to remain alive, those who have intercourse only for the sake of having children and those who speak only to state the truth are able to tide over all difficulties. Those who are devoted to Narayana, the lord of all beings, the creator and the destroyer of the universe, are able to tide over all difficulties. His eyes are like red lotuses. He is attired in yellow garments. He is mighty-armed. He is Achyuta. He is your well-wisher, brother, friend and ally.[957] Like a strip of leather, all these worlds are wrapped around his person. He is the lord of riches. His soul cannot be thought of. He is Govinda Purushottama. O bull among men! He is engaged in ensuring Jishnu's[958] welfare. O king! You cannot withstand him. He is Vaikuntha[959] Purushottama. A person who faithfully seeks refuge with Narayana Hari is able to tide over difficulties. There is no need for me to even think about this. A person who reads or hears about this account of tiding over difficulties and a person who has it read out to brahmanas is able to tide over difficulties. O unblemished one! I have instructed you about what must be done, so that a man can tide over difficulties, in this world and in the next."'

Chapter 1440(112)

‘Yudhishthira said, “There are those who are not tranquil, but seem tranquil in form. There are those who are tranquil, but have an appearance that is not tranquil. O father! How can we differentiate between such men?”

‘Bhishma replied, “On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a tiger and a jackal. O Yudhishthira! Listen to it. In ancient times, there was a city named Purika. It was prosperous and the king was Pourika. He was cruel and the worst among men, with an inclination to cause injury to others. When his lifespan was over, he obtained an end that is not desired. Because of his wicked earlier deeds, he became a jackal. However, he remembered his earlier life and developed a supreme indifference. He did not eat flesh, even when it had been brought to him by others. He was non-violent towards all beings. He was truthful in speech and firm in his vows. He acted according to his wishes and his food became fruit that had fallen down. The jackal lived in a cremation ground and he liked this. He liked it because he had been born there and no other dwelling place appealed to him. All the others of his species could not tolerate his purity. Though they addressed him respectfully, they tried to make him budge from his intentions. ‘You dwell in this terrible grove of our ancestors, yet you desire to be pure. Since you are a flesh-eater, this is a perversity. Be like us. All of us will give you food. This is your food. Therefore, enjoy it and give up this purity.’ Having heard their words, he controlled himself. He used gentle and respectful words that were not harsh, but were full of reason, to reply. ‘Birth is not important for me. Lineage is created by conduct. I desire for those deeds that will extend my fame. Even though I dwell in a cremation ground, I am seeking to make myself tranquil through meditation. The atman leads to deeds. The ashrama is not an indicator of dharma. While dwelling in a hermitage, one can kill a brahmana. Someone who does not dwell in a hermitage can donate a cow. Is the first not a sin and is the act of donation going to be fruitless? Because of greed, all of you are always engaged in eating. You do not see that you are confused and that you are bound down by these sins. I do not believe in this conduct. This is wicked and reprehensible and takes a person away from the objective. It leads to evil in this world and the next. Therefore, I do not like this conduct.'

'"There was a tiger that was famous for its valour. He formed the view that he[960] was pure and learned. He showed him honour like the ones he himself received and thought that he would appoint him as his own adviser. 'O tranquil one! I know the kind of person you are. Come and spend your life with me. Enjoy the objects of pleasure you desire and do not touch the ones you dislike. We are famous as being fierce. If it is known that you are with us, we will be known as gentle killers and that will be a desirable objective.'

'"He was honoured by the great-souled lord of the deer in these words. Exhibiting a little humility, the jackal replied in these modest words. 'O king of the animals! The words that you have spoken to me are worthy of you. You are searching for advisers who are pure and are accomplished in dharma and artha. O brave one! You are incapable of ruling this great dominion without an adviser, with a wicked adviser, or with one who seeks to physically injure you. You should get advisers who are devoted to you, those who are not attached to anything else, those who do not shout at each other, those who desire victory, those who are not covetous, those who are beyond deceit, those who are wise, those who are engaged in ensuring welfare and those who are spirited. You should worship these immensely fortunate ones like your preceptors and ancestors. O lord of animals! There is nothing that pleases me more than my present satisfaction. I do not desire happiness, objects of pleasure, prosperity and your refuge. My conduct will not gel with your earlier servants. They will find unhappiness in my conduct and cause dissension between you and me. You are a refuge that is praiseworthy and I respect your radiance. You have cleansed your soul and are extremely fortunate. You are not cruel even towards the wicked. You are far-sighted and great in endeavour. You are broad in your objectives and immensely strong. You are accomplished and all your acts are successful. Your thoughts serve to adorn you. However, someone like me is extremely content and serving another will mean misery. I am inexperienced in serving another and roam around in the woods as I please. For all those who dwell in a refuge with the king, their faults face his rage. A person who lives in the forest is alone. He is without fear and without any ties. If one is summoned by a king, there can be fear in the heart. But for someone who is satisfied in the forest, subsisting on roots and fruit, there is nothing like that. Food and drink are easily procured. On the other side, there is fear. Looking at these, I certainly think that happiness comes from withdrawal. Some servants are punished by kings because of their crimes. But many more virtuous servants are harmed because of false accusations and head towards destruction. Therefore, if the king of the animals thinks that I should perform this task, I wish for an agreement about how I am going to be treated. You must honour what I say and you must listen to my beneficial words. You must remain firmly established in the conduct that you have thought of for me. I will never think of having consultations with any of your other advisers. Those others are politically wise and, wishing to protect themselves, will speak false words about me. I will meet you alone and will privately tell you what is good for you. For any tasks that concern your kin, you will not ask me what is good or bad. Having consulted me, you will not subsequently exhibit any violence towards your advisers. If you are enraged with my kin, you will not bring them down by exercising the rod of punishment.' Thus addressed, the king of animals agreed and honoured him. The jackal became an adviser in the tiger's abode.

'"On seeing that he was so well honoured and engaged in his tasks, the former servants hated him and repeatedly conspired together. They placated the jackal through signs of friendship and made him enter.[961] They were evil in their intelligence and desired to make him a part of the wicked group. They had earlier got used to abducting the property of others. However, now that they were controlled by the jackal, they were incapable of obtaining any of these possessions. They wished to tempt him with accounts of upliftment. They sought to seduce his intelligence with great riches. However, that immensely wise one did not deviate from his patience. Those others decided to bring about his destruction and agreed on a plan. The king of animals desired meat that had been prepared well. They stole it themselves and placed it in his[962] house. He[963] knew everything about who had stolen it, the nature of the plan and the reasons behind it. However, he remained tolerant because of the agreement he had made at the time of agreeing to become an adviser. ‘O king! If you desire my friendship, you will not pay heed to a false accusation.’ At the time of the meal, the stolen meat could not be seen. The king of animals instructed that the thief should be found. The deceitful ones described this to the king of the animals. ‘Your adviser is learned and prides himself on his wisdom. He has stolen the meat.’ When he heard about the jackal’s fickleness, the tiger was enraged. The intolerant king desired to have him killed. On detecting the opportunity, the former ministers said, ‘He is trying to shatter the means of subsistence for all of us. However, these deeds of his are protected because he has your affection. O lord! But he is not the kind of person that you were told he was. His words suggest that he follows dharma. However, he is naturally cruel. This wicked one wears the deceit of dharma, but is actually false in his conduct. For the sake of furthering his objectives and for the sake of his food, he has deceitfully followed these vows.’ On learning that the meat had been stolen and on hearing their words, the tiger instructed that the jackal should be killed.

‘“On hearing the tiger’s words, the tiger’s mother arrived there. She wished to speak some beneficial words and make the king of animals understand. ‘O son! You should not accept this. It seems to be full of fraud and deceit. An honest person is being falsely accused by those who are dishonest. Those wicked ones have suffered from the friction caused by his work. Those desiring to cause injury cannot tolerate any beneficial act. They seek to impute taints to a pure person and bring him down. The greedy hate the pure and the weak hate the spirited. Stupid people hate learned ones and poor people hate those who are extremely wealthy. Those who follow adharma hate those who follow dharma and those who are ugly hate those who are handsome. Many learned people are greedy and all of them earn a living through deceit. Wicked ones accuse an innocent person, even if he possesses Brihaspati’s intelligence. When the meat was stolen, your house was empty. That virtuous one did not wish to touch it even when it was given to him. Falsehood has the appearance of truth. Truth can seem to be like falsehood. Many kinds of things can be seen, but they need to be examined. The sky seems to be flat. The firefly looks like a spark of fire. But the sky is not flat, nor does the firefly have any fire. Therefore, unless there is a direct witness, everything must be examined. If one does not determine the truth through examination, one is tormented subsequently. O son! This is not a difficult thing to do, for a lord to get someone else killed. In this world, forgiveness is praised and brings prosperity. O son! He was appointed by you and has become famous among the ministers. A capable person is obtained with difficulty and a well-wisher should be supported. If a person is otherwise pure, and is tainted because one accepts the accusations of others, one taints oneself, as well as the minister, and is swiftly destroyed.' At this, a person from the mass of the jackal's enemies presented himself. He had dharma in his soul and told him about the deceit that had been committed.

'"Once his character was known, he[964] was honoured well and freed. The king of animals repeatedly embraced him affectionately. The jackal was exteremely learned about the sacred texts. He was tormented because of the intolerance and, taking the permission of the king of the animals, wished to fast himself to death.[965] However, with tears of affection flowing down from his eyes, the tiger restrained the jackal, who was devoted to dharma. He honoured him and was honoured back in return. The jackal looked at the tiger, who was overcome with affection. In a voice that was choking with tears, he bowed down and spoke these respectful words. 'I was first honoured by you and then later subjected to humiliation. You made an enemy out of me and I should not reside with you any longer. All these only serve to further the cause of the enemy—those who are themselves dissatisfied, those who have been dislodged from their positions, those who have been deprived of their honours, those servants who have themselves brought about their downfall, those who have been brought down by others, those who are weak, those who are greedy, those who are cruel, those who have been flung into prison, those who are proud and have lost their possessions, those who are extremely spirited, but have lost the means, those who are tormented, those who have decayed because of a flood of vices, those who are in hiding and those whose possessions have been seized. You have humiliated me and subsequently wish to instate me. How can you trust me? How can I trust you again? You took me to be capable. You instated me after examining me. You broke the pledge we had made and humiliated me. In the assembly, you spoke about me as a person with virtuous conduct. Had you protected the pledge, you would not have spoken about my bad qualities.

Since I have been disrespected, how can you have confidence in me? I will also suffer from anxiety about you and not trust you. You will suspect me. I will be frightened and the enemy will see this as a weakness. Those who are not content are very difficult to satisfy. This task will provide a lot of scope for deceit. Those who have come together suffer when they are separated.[966] Those who have come together can also be separated with difficulty. When those who are separated are brought together, there is neither love, nor affection. Sometimes, they are seen to be frightened of each other. While thoughts may focus on the work, gentleness is extremely rare. It is extremely difficult to know about the minds of men, since they are both stable and unstable. Among one hundred, one can find only one who is capable and strong. Suddenly, there is something that makes a man rise to an eminent position. He acts with greatness, intelligence and dexterity, regardless of whether the situation is good or bad.' In this way, the jackal addressed the king with many words that were full of dharma and artha, comforting and delighting him. The intelligent jackal then took his leave of the king of animals. He seated himself in praya, gave up his body and went to heaven."'

Chapter 1441(113)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What must a king do? What acts bring him happiness? O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Tell me everything about this in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will certainly tell you this. Listen to what has been determined about tasks. These are the duties of a king and having performed these, he will be happy. However, we have heard an extremely great account about a camel and he should not act in that way. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this. In the age of Prajapati, there was a great camel who could recall his earlier existences. He engaged in great austerities in a forest and was rigid in his vows. At the end of those austerities, the lord was delighted and the grandfather[967] delighted him by graning him a boon.

‘“The camel said, ‘O illustrious one! Through your favours, let my neck become extremely long. O lord! Let me be able to graze one hundred yojanas in front of me.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, the great-souled one, the granter of boons, agreed. Having obtained that supreme boon, the camel went to his own forest. Since he had obtained the boon, the evil-minded one became lazy. Confounded by destiny, the evil-souled one no longer wished to go out to graze. There was an occasion when he had stretched out his neck one hundred yojanas to graze, without any exhaustion in his mind. A great storm arrived. The one with the soul of an animal placed his head and neck inside a cave, where they got stuck. Monsoon arrived and a great flood submerged the world. There was a hungry jackal who was shivering from the cold. Afflicted by the water, he and his wife quickly entered the cave. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The flesh-eater was suffering greatly from hunger. On seeing the camel’s neck, he began to eat it. The animal[968] realized that he was being eaten. Extremely miserable, he tried to contract himself. The animal flung his neck around, upwards and downwards. However, the jackal and his wife continued to eat him. The jackal killed and ate the camel. When the rains were over, he emerged through the mouth of the cave. Thus, the evil-minded camel was led to his destruction. Behold the great sin that progressively comes about because of laziness. You must abandon such conduct. Resort to yoga and control your senses. Manu has said that the foundation of victory is intelligence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Tasks performed with intelligence are the best, those performed with arms are middling and those performed with thighs are the worst, because they are meant to bear loads. O unblemished one! If a person is accomplished and controls his senses, if he listens to secret counsel and if he has excellent aides, then his kingdom lasts. O Yudhishthira! Those who examine the objectives are established in this world. With the help of their aides, they are capable of ruling over the entire earth. Virtuous ones, who know about the ordinances, have spoken about this earlier. You are like the great Indra in your influence. I have also spoken to you about the foresight of the sacred texts. O king! Conduct yourself in accordance with that.”’

Chapter 1442(114)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained a kingdom, how can a weak king, without any resources, station himself against a stronger one?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between the ocean and the rivers. The eternal ocean, the lord of the rivers and the residence of the enemies of the gods,[969] himself had a doubt about this and asked all the rivers. ‘I see trees lying down, with their roots and their branches. When you overflow, you bring these down. Though I see others[970] there, I never see any reeds. The reeds that grow along your banks are thin in body and slight of essence. Do you ignore them? Are you incapable? Or have they done you a good turn? I desire to hear all your views on this. When you overflow the banks, why are they not shattered? Why do they not come under your control?’ At this, the river Ganga replied in supreme words that were full of meaning. She told the reason to the ocean, the lord of the rivers. ‘A tree remains in a single spot. It does not move from that place. Because it foolishly tries to resist us, it is forced to give up that spot. However, when it sees the flood approaching, a reed bends down. The flood passes over it and it remains rooted to its spot. It knows the time and the place and bows down. A tree does not. Because a reed is pliable and does not try to resist, it is not carried away. Herbs, trees and creepers that do not bow down before the force of the wind and the water are overcome.’ If a person does not tolerate the powerful onslaught of an enemy who is stronger, he is swiftly destroyed. One who knows the superiority and inferiority in the strength of one’s own self and that of the enemy is wise and knows how to conduct himself. He is not overcome. In this way, when a learned one thinks that the enemy is extremely strong, he resorts to the conduct of reeds. That is a sign of wisdom.”’

Chapter 1443(115)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O scorcher of enemies! How should a learned and mild man behave, when he is abused in an assembly by someone who is stupid, voluble and harsh?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O protector of the earth! Listen to what has been sung about this objective. An intelligent person must always tolerate a stupid man with limited intelligence. If he is not angered, he obtains the good deeds of the person who is wrathful.[971] If he is not angered, he passes on his own evil deeds to the intolerant and wrathful one. That other one is afflicted and is quaking like a *tittibha*.[972] He should be ignored. He will be hated by people and will be unsuccessful. A person who is wicked in his deeds will always boast and say, ‘In an assembly of people, I have said this about a revered person. He is ashamed and withered. He is standing there, as if he is dead.’ A shameless person will thus boast about a task that should not be boasted about. A person who is controlled should ignore such a person, who is worst among men. If someone with limited intelligence says something, it must always be tolerated. Whether that inferior person is praising or censuring, what can he possibly do? He will be as unsuccessful as a foolish crow cawing in the forest. If evil-acting people could achieve something through the use of eloquent words, there would be some purpose in those words. However, those who seek to injure achieve nothing. Those who are engaged in such conduct only establish that they are born from perverse ejaculation.[973] He is like a peacock, exhibiting its genitals while it is dancing. One should never converse with a person who acts in this way. He is impure and finds good conduct difficult. One should not speak to him. A man who speaks of a person’s good qualities in his presence and criticizes him behind his back is like a dog in this world and loses all the worlds hereafter. Whatever he gives to one hundred people and whatever oblations he offers are destroyed in an instant, if he criticizes someone behind his back. Therefore, a wise person avoids such an evil-minded one, like a virtuous person avoids the flesh of a dog. When an evil-souled person abuses a good-souled person, he exhibits all his own faults, like a snake extending its hood. If a person is engaged in his own tasks and a second person acts against him in those tasks, that second person's intelligence is like that of an ass that has got submerged in a pile of ashes and dust. You must stay away from men who are like angry wolves, always engaged in abusing people, or those who are like crazy and trumpeting elephants, or those who are like extremely fierce dogs. Such a man treads along the path of the fickle, lacking in control and humility and full of wickedness. Behaving like an enemy, he always wishes to injure you. Shame on such an evil-minded man! If such a person answers you back, do not assume a pained expression. Be at peace. Those who are firm in their intelligence do not approve of the superior consorting with the inferior. If he is enraged, he may slap you with his palm.[974] Or he may fling dust and chaff at you. He may frighten you by baring his teeth. It has been proven that stupid people are violent when they are enraged. Avoid extremely evil-souled and wicked men and tolerate them in assemblies. If a person always reads this illustration, he never suffers from any unpleasantness that is the result of speech."'

Chapter 1444(116)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! I have a great doubt about policy. You must dispel it. You are one who has advanced our lineage. O father! You have spoken and educated me about evil-souled ones of wicked conduct and the words that they speak. What is beneficial for royal policy? What brings happiness to the family? Now, and in the future, what ensures acquisition and preservation? What is good for the sons and grandsons and what brings prosperity to the kingdom? In terms of food and drink, what is good for the body? Tell me that. When a king is instated in the kingdom and is surrounded by friends, how does he delight the subjects? What happens if he encounters ill-wishers? The forces of love and affection may lead to his being seized by the wicked. Though he should adorn the righteous, he may become subject to his senses. Even if all of his servants have been born in good lineages, they may exhibit bad qualities. The king may not realize the fruits from the appointment of good servants. These are the kinds of doubts I have about the extremely difficult end of rajadharma. You are like Brihaspati in your intelligence and you should instruct me. O tiger among men! You are engaged in the welfare of the lineage. Instruct us. Kshatta[975] is accomplished and wise and instructs us about these things all the time. I will hear beneficial words about the welfare of the family and the welfare of the kingdom. This is like undecaying amrita. Having heard this, I will sleep happily. What kind of servants should one have? What are their attributes and qualities? What are the recommendations about the families of those one entrusts with tasks? Without servants, the king cannot carry out the task of protection alone. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All those born in good lineages blame the kingdom and one is incapable of ruling the kingdom alone. O father! Without aides, no objectives can be attained. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained them, one must always protect them.”

‘Bhishma replied, “If all the servants are learned about jnana and vijnana, if they seek welfare, if they are born in good lineages and if they are gentle, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If the ministers are born in good lineages, cannot be corrupted and dwell with him, if they are learned about the science of relationships, if they offer advice to the king, if they know about what will happen in the future and can act accordingly, if they are skilled in their knowledge of time and if they do not sorrow over what is already past, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If the aides are truthful in deeds, looking upon happiness and unhappiness equally and if they are devoted to thinking about prosperity, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If citizens of the country are never afflicted and never suffer, if they are superior and devote themselves to righteous paths, then that kingdom obtains the fruits. If people in charge of maintaining accounts are always learned and satisfied, if they are engaged in extending the treasury, then that king is a supreme one. If the stores are maintained by learned aides who are engaged in accumulation, if these officers are not avaricious and are protected because of their qualities, if the judicial proceedings in the city give rise to good fruits, if the practices of Shankha and Likhita[976] are observed, then a share in the fruits of dharma is obtained. A king who knows about rajadharma will collect such men and ensure the six aspects of policy. He obtains a share in the fruits of dharma.”’

Chapter 1445(117)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. Among people, this has always been cited as an instance of good conduct and this illustrates the point. I heard it in the hermitage of Rama, Jamadagni’s son, when it was recounted by that supreme among rishis. There was a great forest, inhabited by no other men. There was only a self-controlled rishi who had restrained his senses and subsisted on roots and fruit. He had initiated himself into the task of supreme control. He was tranquil, pure and devoted to great studies. He had cleansed himself through fasting and was always established in the path of the virtuous. The intelligent and righteous one was seated there, looking upon all beings as equal. All the residents of the forest approached him—lions, tigers, *sharabha*s, large and crazy elephants, leopards, rhinos, bears and others that were terrible to behold. All these predatory beasts would ask him about his welfare. They were like the rishi’s disciples and did what was agreeable to him. All of them would ask about his welfare and then depart.

‘“But there was a village animal that would never leave the great sage and this was a dog. It was faithfully devoted to him and was weak and thin because of the constant fasting. It ate fruits and roots, was calm and acted in virtuous ways. When the rishi was seated, it would be near the great sage’s feet. It was severely bound to him by ties of affection and its behaviour was like that of a human. Once, an immensely valorous and carnivorous leopard arrived there. It was cruel, like Death, and the wicked one came there for the sake of the dog. It was thirsty and licked its lips. It lashed its tail around. Since it was hungry, it was in search of some flesh and its mouth gaped. O lord of men! O immensely intelligent one! Listen. On seeing that cruel one advance, to save its life, the dog went to the sage and said, ‘O illustrious one! A leopard, the enemy of dogs, wishes to kill me. O great sage! Through your favours, ensure that I face no fear from it.’ The sage replied, ‘O son! Do not be frightened. You will never face death from a leopard. You will give up your form of a dog and become a leopard.’ The dog became a leopard and its complexion became golden. Its limbs were spotted and its teeth were large. It dwelt fearlessly in the forest. However, an extremely terrible tiger arrived there. It was hungry and its mouth gaped open. It desired some blood and approached the leopard, licking the corners of its mouth. On seeing the hungry tiger with a gaping mouth arrive in the forest, the leopard wished to save its life and sought refuge with the rishi. Since they used to live together, the rishi acted affectionately towards it, as he had always done. He changed the leopard into a tiger that was stronger than its enemy. O lord of the earth! On seeing this, the tiger no longer attacked it. Having become a strong tiger that lived on flesh, the dog no longer had any desire to touch and enjoy roots and fruit. A lord of deer always desires residents of the forest. O great king! This tiger also acted in this way. Once, having killed a deer and satisfied itself on this, the tiger was asleep at the foot of a tree. A crazy elephant, which looked like a newly arisen cloud, arrived there. It was huge and its temples were shattered. It was excellent[977] and possessed a broad head. It had superb tusks and was gigantic in form. Its roar was like the rumbling of the thunder. On seeing that mad elephant advance, insolent and crazy, the tiger was terrified of the elephant and sought refuge with the rishi. The supreme among rishis turned the tiger into an elephant. On seeing its form, which was like that of a giant cloud, the other elephant was frightened. It[978] was delighted and roamed around amidst clusters of lotuses and frankincense thickets, adorning its body with pollen from lotuses. The handsome elephant roamed around near the rishi’s cottage and time passed. After several nights, a maned lion arrived at that spot and its mane was tawny. The lion was terrible and hailed from mountainous regions, having slain families of elephants. On seeing the lion advance, the elephant was terrified on account of the lion. It was afflicted and, trembling out of fear, sought refuge with the rishi. The sage then turned that king of elephants into a lion and the wild lion ignored the elephant, taking it to belong to the same species. On seeing a more powerful one, the wild lion was terrified and disappeared. The lion dwelt happily in that forest hermitage. However, the other smaller animals that dwelt in the hermitage were terrified to be seen there and were always frightened for their lives. But it so happened with the progress of time that a sharabha arrived in the sage’s residence, desiring to kill the lion. It was powerful, carnivorous and sought to kill all beings. All beings found it to be fearful. It dwelt in the forest and it possessed eight legs that extended upwards. O scorcher of enemies! The sage turned it[979] into an extremely strong sharabha. The wild sharabha saw the sage’s sharabha in front of him and on seeing that it was strong and fierce, quickly fled out of fear.

‘“Once the sage had reduced it to the state of a sharabha, the sharabha was full of happiness and always dwelt by the side of the sage. The large numbers of animals in the forest were all terrified of the sharabha. O king! Desiring to save their lives, they fled in all the directions. Always engaged in the killing of animals, the sharabha was extremely satifisied. It was a flesh-eater and no longer desired to be peaceful and subsist on fruits and roots. Desiring blood, the powerful sharabha, born in the womb of a dog, was ungrateful and wished to kill the sage. Through the strength of his austerities and the sight of knowledge, the immensely wise sage divined this and spoke to the dog. ‘You became a leopard from a dog and from a leopard you became a tiger. From a tiger you became an elephant with musth and from an elephant you became a lion. From an immensely strong lion you again became a sharabha. Because I was overcome with affection, I had forgotten about your lineage. O wicked one! You desire to act violently towards me, though I have caused you no harm. Therefore, you will go back to your own species. Become a dog.’ The stupid one, evil in his soul, became a dog because it hated the sage and people. Because of the rishi’s curse, the sharabha again assumed the form of a dog.”’

Chapter 1446(118)

‘Bhishma said, “Having assumed the nature of a dog, it was overcome by supreme misery. The rishi said ‘hum’[980] and expelled the wicked one from the hermitage. In this way, an intelligent king must know about goodness of conduct and purity and about uprightness, nature, spiritedness, lineage, conduct, learning, self-control, compassion, strength, valour, sentiments, tranquility and forgiveness. It is only then that extremely well-trained and skilled servants must be appointed. Without examination, the lord of the earth must not appoint servants. A king who is surrounded by those who have been born in inferior lineages will not obtain happiness. If a person who has naturally been born in a good lineage is reprimanded by the king through no fault of his own, because of the nobility of the lineage, his intelligence will not turn towards wicked deeds. Because of a shortage of virtuous people, if a person born in an inferior lineage is appointed, even if he thereby obtains extremely rare prosperity, once he is censured, he will turn towards enmity. O king! Born in a noble lineage, learned, wise, accomplished in jnana and vijnana, knowledgeable about the purport of all the sacred texts, tolerant, born within the country, grateful, strong, forgiving, self-controlled, with control over the senses, not avaricious, satisfied with one’s lot, friendly towards the master and friends, an adviser who knows about the time and the place and is engaged in drawing people to him, one who shows honour, firm in his mind, a constant seeker of welfare, with good conduct in his own areas, knowledgeable about peace and war, knowledgeable about the three objectives,[981] loved by the residents of the city and the countryside, knowledgeable about vyuhas for defence and attack, knowledgeable about how one can cheer the forces, knowledgeable about signs and expressions, skilled about marching and vehicles, learned about the training of elephants, devoid of ego, eloquent, courteous, self-controlled, powerful, reasonable in objectives, upright, one who associates with upright people, well dressed, good-looking, a leader, skilled about policy, possessing the six qualities, flexible, modest, capable, mild in speech, patient, gentle, extremely wealthy, capable of taking measures according to the time and the place—such people should not be ignored and should be made advisers. The kingdom will then extend, like moonlight from the lord of the planets.[982]

'"The king must also possess these qualities and must be skilled in the sacred texts. His desire must be supreme dharma and he must be devoted to ruling the subjects. He must be patient, tolerant, pure, swift, exhibiting manliness at the appropriate time, ready to serve, learned, ready to listen, accomplished in reasoning, intelligent, firm in his mind, ready to implement what is fair, self-controlled, always pleasant in speech, forgiving when there is a catastrophe, ceaseless in generosity, ready to act on his own, possessing excellent gates,[983] pleasant to behold, ready to extend a hand to those who are distressed, always engaged in policy indicated by the learned, without ego, without opposite sentiments, without a tendency to act on everything, unwavering in pursuing a task that has been undertaken, a master who is loved by the servants, ready to bring people together, not rigid, always possessing a pleasant demeanour, generous, attentive towards the servants, without anger, extremely broad-minded, ready to use the rod of chastisement, not failing to use the rod of chastisement, a ruler who ensures acts of dharma, one who uses spies as his eyes, attentive towards enemies and always accomplished in dharma and artha. Such a king will possess a hundred qualities and you should be like that. O Indra among men! In sustaining the kingdom, you must search for warriors and excellent men as aides, those who possess all the qualities. The king who desires prosperity should not disrespect them. The warriors must be insolent in battle, grateful and accomplished in the use of weapons. They must know about the sacred texts of dharma and must possess foot soldiers. If they are accomplished in the use of chariots and skilled in the use of arrows and weapons, the king will extend his prosperity and win the earth. The king who is always engaged in attracting people to himself, who is engaged in enterprise and who is firm in friendship is supreme among kings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If one can collect one thousand men who are valiant horse riders, one is capable of conquering the entire earth."'

Chapter 1447(119)

‘Bhishma said, “If a king acts so as to engage and employ servants who are unlike the dog, then he obtains the fruits of the kingdom. When the dog transgressed its own state and measure, it was no longer treated well. The dog should have remained in its own place. It transgressed it and became something else. It is a duty for a learned person to appoint servants appropriate to their families and lineages, so that they are engaged in their appropriate tasks. Inappropriate positions are condemned. If servants are engaged in the appropriate tasks, then because of the qualities of those servants, the king obtains fruits. A sharabha should be in a sharabha’s place, a lion in a lion’s. A tiger should be in a tiger’s place, a leopard in a leopard’s. As is proper, appoint servants in the appropriate tasks. If one desires the fruits of one’s actions, servants should not be appointed in perverse positions. A king who transgresses the norms and appoints servants in perverse positions is foolish and does not delight the subjects. If the king desires his welfare, he should not have stupid, inferior and men born from bad lineages by his side, those who are unable to control their senses. Those who are at the side must be men who are virtuous, accomplished, brave, learned, without malice, without meanness, pure and skilled. Those who are appointed outside[984] by the king must be engaged in the welfare of beings, forgiving, accomplished, naturally pure and satisfied with their own states. A person who is like a lion should always be by the side of a lion. If a person who is not a lion is with a lion, the lion does not obtain any fruits. If a lion is engaged in obtaining the fruits of its deeds, but that lion is surrounded by dogs, because that lion is attended by dogs, it is incapable of enjoying any of the fruits. O Indra among men! In this way, with brave, wise and extremely learned people, who are born in noble lineages, one is capable of conquering the entire earth. O supreme among those who employ servants! A lord of the earth must not collect servants who are without learning, without uprightness, without knowledge and without great riches by his side. The king must be attentive towards the servants he has appointed and assure them. These people will then be engaged in the tasks of their master and advance like arrows that have been released. Kings must always endeavour to protect their treasuries. The treasury is the foundation for kings. Ensure the foundation of the treasury. The stores must always be full and stocked with grain. Good people must be employed to take care of them. Have stores of riches and grain. Always engage servants who are skilled in fighting. Skill in the use of horses is also desired. Look towards kin and relatives. Be surrounded by friends and allies. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! Be engaged in tasks that ensure the welfare of the city. I have spoken to you about the desired intelligence and wisdom. O son! The dog is an example before you. What else do you wish to hear?"'

Chapter 1448(120)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You have said many things about the conduct of kings, about what has been indicated in the past by those who knew about rajadharma. You have recounted in detail the views of those virtuous ones who thought about these earlier. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I am requesting you to again tell me about rajadharma.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The protection of all beings is the supreme objective for kshatriyas. O lord of the earth! Listen to how this protection can be brought about. A peacock, the devourer of snakes, exhibits colourful plumage. Like that, a king who follows dharma and desires happiness should adopt many kinds of forms—fierceness, deceit, incapability of being controlled, truthfulness and uprightness. He should spiritedly stand amidst all of these. Whatever ensures welfare for a certain objective, that is the colour and form he should adopt. When a king can assume many different forms, even the subtlest of his objectives does not suffer. He must always hide his counsel and be dumb, like a peacock during the autumn. He must speak gently and his body must be smooth and handsome. He should be skilled in the sacred texts. He must make endeavours to guard the gates through which dangers penetrate, like waterfalls, and also be a refuge for brahmanas and virtuous people, when there is a shower of hail and rain.[985] Desiring prosperity, like the crest of a peacock, the king must hold aloft the flag of dharma. He must always wield the rod of chastisement and act attentively, paying attention to the income and expenditure of people, flying from one tree to another.[986] He must fling away insects from the flock with the feet.[987] When his own wings have grown, he should flutter them and cleanse himself. He must identify his enemy’s faults and cause agitation to his[988] wings. He must behave the way a peacock acts towards flowers in the forest.[989] He must seek refuge with lofty and prosperous kings who are like mountains, seeking shade and refuge in secret, while one is undetected.[990] Like a peacock submerging itself during the monsoon, undetected and alone in the night, he must go to his wives, following the qualities of the peacock. He must not take off his body armour and must always protect himself. He must not advance into snares and must avoid the nooses. Having destroyed the ground,[991] he must penetrate the dense forest again. Just as the peacock angrily kills the others who are poisonous[992] and does not allow them to reside with him, he[993] must kill the powerful[994] and deceitful ones who seek to injure him.

However, unlike the peacock, he must not always be addicted to desire. He must always collect wise people around him, like insects in the deep forest.[995] In this way, like a peacock, the king must protect his own kingdom. If he is skilled, he will adopt a policy that will enhance his own prosperity. He will use his intelligence to control himself and counter the enemy's intelligence. The sacred texts give illustrations to indicate that one's qualities are developed through intelligence. Considering one's own strength, the enemy must be assured through conciliation. The intelligence must be used to reflect, since the intelligence provides counsel to one's own self. One must be calm, devoted to yoga, intelligent and wise, thinking about what must be done and what must not be done. A learned one will keep his counsel hidden and speak only what should be spoken. If he is wise and as intelligent as Brihaspati, he will avoid inferior speech. His nature will be like molten steel, when it has been immersed in water.[996] The lord of the earth will follow the injunctions of the sacred texts to ensure that he himself, and everyone else, is engaged in the appropriate tasks. The inferior, the cruel, the wise, the brave, those who are skilled with money and others who are good with words must all be engaged in their respective tasks. Others who cannot be seen[997] must also be similarly appointed in tasks. They must all be made to follow their appropriate tasks, like notes on the taut strings of a musical instrument. One who acts in an affectionate way towards all beings, without acting against dharma, is as immobile as a mountain and everyone thinks of him as, 'He is my king.' He must look towards dharma and treat everything, pleasant or unpleasant, as equal, like the sun casting its rays and thus dispense judgement. He must appoint those who know about dharma, are middle-aged, without taints, in control of their senses and mild in speech, bearing in mind their lineage, nature and country of origin. They must not be avaricious and must be learned. They must be controlled and devoted to dharma.

A king who wishes to protect dharma and artha must appoint these for all the tasks. In this way, he acts so as to become the refuge of those who have no refuge. In this way, he is impartially established and having used spies, is content. He must himself consider and act so that his anger and delight are not in vain. If he is firm in his own convictions, his treasury and the earth become full of riches. When the reasons behind his favours and his punishment are transparent, when he is protected and when his kingdom is protected, then that king is a king who knows about dharma. Like the sun rises over cows,[998] he must always look towards the kingdom. He must use his intelligence to know about mobile and immobile objects and will not suffer from any anxiety. The king's accumulation of riches must be appropriate to the time. When he milks the earth every day, he will be like an intelligent person who milks a cow without killing it. A six-legged one[999] gradually collects honey from flowers. In that fashion, the king must collect objects to build up his treasury. Anything that is in excess of the required store should be spent on dharma and kama. A king who knows about dharma must accumulate and also spend. He must never think that any wealth is a trifle. He must never disregard an enemy. He must use his intelligence to know himself and he must not trust those who are limited in intelligence. Perseverance, skill, self-control, great intelligence, patience, valour, knowledge about time and place and attentiveness, whether these are a little or a lot, are the eight kindling logs that lead to an increase in prosperity. When a fire is small but is sprinkled with clarified butter, it becomes larger. A single seed can become many thousand. Even if he hears that his income and expenditure are great, a learned one will not think that anything is too little. Whether the enemy is a child or an adult, or even if he is extremely old, he is capable of slaying a careless man. In the course of time, he can sever the root. Therefore, someone who knows about time is the best among kings. Whether the enemy is weak or strong, if he is driven by malice, he can take away deeds, become an obstruction in the path of dharma and, for a long period of time, take away one's valour.

Therefore, a self-controlled person does not ignore the enemy. The enemy must be weakened and one's own stores must be protected. Together with these objectives, dharma, artha and kama exist. An intelligent person does things that are beyond these. Thus, a king resorts to a person who is intelligent. Blazing intelligence destroys the powerful and protected by intelligence, strength increases.[1000] Through intelligence, a prosperous enemy can be made to decline. When one uses one's intelligence and then undertakes a task, this is praised. One who pursues all one's objects of desire is wise. If one possesses only a little bit of enterprise, one is weak in the body. Since he desires prosperity for his own self, he must fill the vessel, even if only a little is available. Therefore, a king who has been seized by the enemy must seek to obtain the foundation of prosperity from everywhere. Even if he has been afflicted for a long period of time, like a momentary flash of lightning, he will obtain honour. Learning, austerities, a great deal of riches—all of these are capable of being obtained with enterprise. The brahman dwells in the bodies of those who are enterprising. Thus, one should know that enterprise is the most important. The intelligent and spirited Shakra, Vishnu and Sarasvati always reside in all beings and, therefore, one must never disregard the body. An avaricious person must be slain with generosity. An avaricious person is always dissatisfied with the prosperity of others. All those who are avaricious may enjoy the qualities of deeds,[1001] but because they abandon dharma and kama, they eventually lose artha too. All those who are avaricious desire the riches, objects of pleasure, sons, wives and prosperity of others. All the sins exist in avaricious people. Therefore, the king must not accept avaricious people.[1002] A person born in an inferior lineage, if he is virtuous and wise, can be used to ascertain the undertakings and all the objectives of those who wish to cause injury. O Pandava! A minister must be known to follow dharma and must be capable of keeping a secret. O king! He must be learned, born in a noble lineage and capable of extending the kingdom. O god among men! I have recounted the ordinances of dharma. Use your intelligence to know and follow them. The king who uses his intelligence to follow these is a king who is capable of protecting the earth. Wrong policy that is against the ordinances, or many kinds of deceitful policy, can be seen to produce happiness. But that kind of king has no ultimate end. Nor is there supreme happiness in the kingdom. A king who allies with the virtuous is seen to soon slay enemies who are superior in wealth, intelligence, conduct, honour, endowments of good qualities, evident valour in battle and visible qualities.[1003] One must think of different ways of treading along the path of action and not turn one's mind to obstructions. A man who only looks at the sins[1004] does not obtain prosperity, superiority, great fame and riches. There may be two well-wishers who have been drawn together by bonds of affection, but have later drifted apart. A wise person must know that the two have drifted apart and treat with great gentleness the friend who bears the greater load.[1005] I have recounted rajadharma to you. Using this and your intelligence, protect men. You will obtain auspicious fruits and happiness. Everything in the world is based on the supreme foundation of dharma."'

Chapter 1449(121)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! You have recounted this eternal rajadharma. This is the lord’s[1006] great rod of chastisement and everything is established on this rod of chastisement—in particular, the gods, the rishis, the great-souled ancestors, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the pishachas and the mortals. In a fierce way, it resides in all the beings in this world. O lord! It pervades everything, is extremely energetic and is the best. You have said that everything that is seen in the worlds—gods, asuras and men, mobile and immobile objects—is touched by the rod of chastisement. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, I wish to know the entire truth about this. What is this rod? What is the rod like? What is its form? What is its nature? What is its soul like? How was it created? What is its image? How did it become a rod? When does the rod of chastisement, which causes injury to beings, awake? To protect, how does it remain awake, before and after?[1007] How was it known earlier? What are the signs of the rod later? Where is the rod based? What is its trajectory?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Kouravya! Hear about the rod of chastisement and about why it amounts to judgement. In this earth, the rod is the only object through which everything is controlled. O great king! That is the reason judgement is also known by the name of dharma. If it is destroyed, how will beings, who wish to cause injury, be destroyed? That is the reason judgement is known as *vyavahara*.[1008] O king! In ancient times, right at the beginning, this was stated by Manu. ‘If the rod is applied well, treating the loved and the disliked equally, then he who protects the subjects in this way is alone like dharma himself.’ These words were spoken by Manu in ancient times.

‘“But even before that, at the time of creation, there were Brahma’s great words, mentioned by Vasishtha. These words were spoken before those other words were uttered, so the learned say that these were the earliest words.[1009]

‘In this world, judgement is spoken of as vyavahara. If the rod is applied well, the three objectives[1010] always flow from it.’ The supreme rod is divine in form, with trails like fire. He is as dark as the petals of a blue lotus. He has four teeth, four arms, eight feet and many eyes. The ears are conical and the hair stands upright. He is matted and possesses two tongues. His eyes are coppery and he is clad in the skin of the king of animals.[1011] The rod always sports this fierce and frightful appearance and is impossible to withstand. The sword, the club, the bow, the spear, the trident, the bludgeon, the arrow, the mallet, the battleaxe, the chakra, the spike, the staff, the cutlass, the javelin and whatever weapons exist in this world—the rod roams around and assumes their forms. The rod roams around, slaying and striking, piercing, severing, smashing, slicing, mangling and uprooting. O Yudhishthira! These names of the rod are recounted—Asi,[1012] Vishasana,[1013] Dharma, Tikshnavartma,[1014] Durasada,[1015] Shrigarbha,[1016] Vijaya,[1017] Shasta,[1018] Vyavahara, Prajagara,[1019] Shastra,[1020] Brahmana, Mantra, Shasta,[1021] Pragyavachana-gata,[1022] Dharmapala,[1023] Akshaya,[1024] Deva,[1025] Satyaga,[1026] Nityaga,[1027] Graha,[1028] Asanga,[1029] Rudratanaya,[1030] Manujyeshtha[1031] and Shivamkara.[1032] The lord is the illustrious Vishnu and his sacrifice, the lord Narayana, whose great form is eternal and who is known as the great being. It is said to be Brahma’s daughters—Lakshmi, Niti[1033] and Sarasvati. Dandaniti is Jagaddhatri.[1034] O descendant of the Bharata lienage! The rod has many different kinds of forms—good and bad, happy and unhappy, dharma and adharma, strong and weak, good fortune and ill fortune, auspicious and inauspicious, with qualities and without qualities, with desire and without desire, season, month, night, day, moment, without favours and with favours, delight, anger, pacification, self-control, destiny, human endeavour, with salvation and without salvation, with fear and without fear, with violence and without violence, austerities, sacrifices, self-restraint, with poison and without poison, the end, the beginning, the middle, evil sorcery, deceit, intoxication, carelessness, pride, insolence, patience, good policy and bad policy, lack of strength and strength, respect and disrespect, change and status quo, humility, renunciation, the right time and the wrong time. O Kouravya! The rod has many different forms in the world—falsehood, knowing and not knowing, truth, faith and lack of faith, impotence, conduct, gain and loss, victory and defeat, sharpness and mildness, death, getting and not getting, disagreement and agreement, tasks that should be done and tasks that should not be done, strength and weakness, malice and lack of malice, dharma and adharma, shame and lack of shame, success and failure, energy, deeds, learning, strength of speech and intelligence.

'"Had the rod not existed, people would have crushed each other. O Yudhishthira! It is out of fear of the rod that they do not kill each other. O king! It is through the rod that the subjects are constantly protected. Therefore, a king who resorts to the rod obtains prosperity. O lord of men! It swiftly establishes good conduct in the world. Dharma, which is based on the truth, finds a foundation in brahmanas. Brahmanas are full of dharma and the best among them base themselves on the Vedas. Sacrifices result from the Vedas and sacrifices please the gods. If the gods are pleased, they always give it to Indra.[1035] If Shakra is pleased with the subjects, he gives them food. The lives of all beings always find a basis in food. Thus, subjects obtain a foundation and the rod watches over them. Because of these reasons, the rod manifests itself in kshatriyas. It remains awake and, always and eternally, protects subjects well. It is spoken of in eight names—Ishvara, Purusha, Prana, Sattva,[1036] Vitta,[1037] Prajapati, Bhutatma[1038] and Jiva.[1039] This rod certainly gives him[1040] prosperity. When strength is united with policy, five ingredients result—lineage, strength, wealth, advisers and wisdom. These are said to be the strengths. O Yudhishthira! There is another kind of strength that can be obtained from eight objects—elephants, horses, chariots, infantry, boats, workers, guides and spies. These are said to be the eight kinds of strength. When that eight-limbed army advances, it is united with elephants, elephant riders, horse riders, foot soldiers, ministers, physicians, mendicants, principal investigators, astrologers, readers of omens, treasuries, allies, foodgrains and all kinds of implements. The learned say that it is a body with seven ingredients and eight limbs.[1041] The rod is a limb of the kingdom and the rod provides the power. The lord made efforts so that kshatriyas could bear it. The rod is applied equally to everyone and the rod is the eternal soul. It shows the way towards dharma and there is nothing that kings should revere more. For the protection of the worlds and to establish people in their own dharma, the creator[1042] engendered this.

'"Judgement comes after this and is seen to be united with it. It is also a characteristic that has been engendered by the creator. Judgement is said to be the soul of the Vedas and obtains its sanction from the Vedas. O tiger among men! While this is the foundation, there is another kind that originates with the ordinances of the sacred texts.[1043] The rod is said to exhibit the characteristics of the lord's[1044] custom. It is known to be based on the customs through which the lord of men exercises the rod. What is seen to be the custom behind the exercise of the rod is said to be the soul of judgement. What is said to be judgement is also the soul of the subject matter of the Vedas. Whatever flows from the soul of the Vedas is said to exhibit the qualities of dharma. When something results from the dharma of customary practice, those with cleansed souls also regard that as dharma. O Yudhishthira! On Brahma's instructions, judgement protects the subjects. It has truth as its soul, it upholds the three worlds and it extends prosperity. Where the rod cannot be seen, eternal judgement doesn't exist either. We have heard that whatever is seen in the judicial process is dharma. Where the Vedas are, dharma exists there. Where dharma exists, the path of virtue is there. Brahma Prajapati was the first. He was the grandfather of all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras and the rakshasas, and with men and the serpents. He is the creator of everything that came into existence. Thus, this judgement flows from the characteristics of custom followed by the lord. That is how we have spoken about this example of the judicial process. If they are not established in their own dharma, the mother, the father, the brother, the wife and the preceptor are not beyond the exercise of the king's rod."'

Chapter 1450(122)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. There was a radiant king from Anga and he was famous by the name of Vasuhoma. The king was always engaged in virtuous acts of dharma and great austerities, together with his wife. He went to Munjaprishtha, revered by large numbers of devarshis. The peak of Meru was in the golden mountains of the Himalayas. At Munjavata, Rama had instructed that the matted locks should be seized.[1045] Since then, the rishis, rigid in their vows, have referred to the region as Munjaprishtha and it is frequented by Rudra. He dwelt there, always with much learning and qualities, and was respected by the brahmanas. He became like a devarshi.

‘“King Mandhata was an afflicter of enemies and Shakra’s esteemed friend. In a cheerful frame of mind, he once arrived there. As Mandhata approached King Vasuhoma, he saw that having performed excellent austerities, the latter stood humbly before him. Vasuhoma gave the king a cow and arghya and asked him if everything was well in his eight-limbed kingdom. Vasuhoma asked the king, who followed the codes of good conduct that had been laid down from ancient times, ‘What can I do for you?’ O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Mandhata, supreme among kings, was greatly delighted. Having taken a seat, he spoke to the immensely wise Vasuhoma. ‘O king! You have studied all of Brihaspati’s doctrines. O lord of men! The sacred texts of Ushanas are also known to you. I wish to hear from you about how the rod of chastisement was created. How did it first arise? Why is it said to be supreme? How did the rod come to be firmly established amidst kshatriyas? O immensely wise one! Tell me and I will give you the fees that should be given to a preceptor.’

‘“Vasuhoma replied, ‘O king! Listen to how the rod was created for the protection of the world and for maintaining and protecting subjects. It is the eternal essence of dharma. We have heard that the illustrious Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, wished to perform a sacrifice and could not find an officiating priest who was his equal. The god then conceived a foetus and carried it within his head for many long years. After it had been borne for a full one thousand years, when he sneezed, the foetus fell out. O scorcher of enemies! Thus the Prajapati named Kshupa was created. O king! That great-souled one became the officiating priest at the sacrifice. O bull among kings! Thus Brahma's sacrifice started. However, because of the cheerful form he had to adopt, the rod disappeared.[1046] When it vanished, the subjects were mixed up. There was no difference between what should be done and what should not be done and between what should be eaten and what should not be eaten. There was no difference between what should be drunk and what should not be drunk. How could there be success? They injured each other. There was no distinction between whom one should go to and whom one should not go to.[1047] One's own property and that of others became the same. They snatched from each other, like dogs after meat. The weak were killed by the strong and no one exhibited any respect. At this, the grandfather worshipped the illustrious and eternal Vishnu, the god who grants boons, and spoke to the great god. "You must certainly show compassion towards these virtuous ones. Arrange it so that there is no mixing up here." At this, the illustrious one meditated for a long time, holding a trident and wearing matted hair. From his own self, that supreme among gods created the rod. And from that was created the policy for observing dharma, the goddess Sarasvati. She was created and is famous in the three worlds as dandaniti. The illustrious one again meditated for a long time, with the trident, supreme among weapons. He made one person a lord over his respective dominion. The god with the thousand eyes became the lord of the gods. Vaivasvata Yama was made the lord of the ancestors. Kubera became the lord of riches and the rakshasas. Meru became the lord of mountains and the great ocean that of rivers. He decreed that Varuna should be the lord over the divine kingdom of the waters.[1048] Death became the lord of living beings and the fire of energy. The lord announced that Ishana[1049] would be the protector of the Rudras. Vasishtha became the lord of brahmanas, the fire[1050] of the Vasus, the sun of energy,[1051] the moon of nakshatras and Amshuman[1052] of herbs. The supreme lord instructed that Skanda Kumara, the one with twelve arms, would be the king of the spirits.[1053] Time became the one who pacifies, destroys and humbles everything and the lord of the four divisions of death[1054] and happiness and unhappiness. The lord of riches, the king of the yakshas, became the lord of all beings. It has been heard that the one with the trident in his hand[1055] became the lord of all the Rudras. There was that single son named Kshupa, who had been born from Brahma's mental powers. He was given the supreme lordship over all subjects and made the upholder of all kinds of dharma. When the sacrifice started, according to the proper rites, Mahadeva[1056] honoured Vishnu and gave the rod, the protector of dharma, to him. Vishnu gave it to Angiras. Angiras, supreme among sages, gave it to Indra and Marichi. Marichi gave it to Bhrigu. Bhrigu gave that rod, full of dharma, to the rishis. The rishis gave it to the guardians of the worlds and the guardians of the worlds gave it to Kshupa. Ksupa gave it to Manu, the son of the sun god. For the sake of preserving the subtleties of dharma and artha and to protect his own self, Manu, the son of the sun and the god of funeral ceremonies, gave it to his sons. It should be one's duty to apply the rod differentially, according to dharma, and not wilfully, using harsh words of censure, imprisonment, extracting bonds, fines of gold and expulsion. However, physical dismemberment and execution should not be used for trifling reasons, nor should physical punishment, corporal punishment and exile. Right from the beginning, the rod has been awake and has protected subjects. The illustrious Indra remains awake and after him it is Agni, the fire god.[1057] After Agni has remained awake, it is Varuna. After Varuna, it is Prajapati. After Prajapati, Dharma, who humbles souls, remains awake. After Dharma, it is eternal Vyavasaya,[1058] Brahma's son. After Vyavasaya, Tejas[1059] remains awake, for the cause of protection. The medicinal plants and herbs come after Tejas and the mountains after the plants and herbs. After the mountains, the juices and the qualities of the juices remain awake. After that, the goddess Nirriti[1060] remains awake and after Nirriti, it is the stellar bodies. The Vedas are established in the stellar bodies. After that, it is the lord Hayashira.[1061] After him, the undecaying Brahma, the grandfather, remains awake. After the grandfather, the illustrious Mahadeva Shiva remains awake. The Vishvadevas come after Shiva and the rishis after the Vishvadevas. The illustrious Soma[1062] comes after the rishis and the eternal gods after Soma. In this world, the brahmanas remain awake and take it up after the gods. After the brahmanas, kings follow dharma and protect the worlds. After the kshatriyas, it is the eternal mobile and immobile objects. The subjects remain awake in this world and the rod remains awake among them. The rod is the one who destroys everything and is a lord who is the grandfather's equal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the beginning, in the middle and at the end, time remains awake. Mahadeva Prajapati is the lord of all the worlds. The lord Shiva Sharva is the god of the gods and always remains awake. He is Kapardi, Shankara, Rudra, Bhava, Sthanu and Umapati. Thus, the beginning, the middle and the end of the rod have been recounted. A lord of the earth who knows about dharma must follow the proper conduct and policy.'"

'Bhishma said, "The man who listens to these views of Vasuhoma and having heard, acts properly in accordance with it, is a king who obtains all his desires. O bull among men! You have been told everything about the rod. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It controls all the people who transgress dharma."'

Chapter 1451(123)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I wish to hear what has been determined about dharma, artha and kama. All the advancements in the world are based on these three. What are the foundations of dharma, artha and kama and what is their power? They are sometimes connected with each other and sometimes, they exist separately.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When people are cheerful in their minds, having determined to pursue their objectives, these three originate in time and are united with each other. The foundation of the body is dharma, and artha is based on dharma. Kama is said to be the fruit of artha. Resolution is the foundation of everything and resolution is based on material objects. All the material objects find success in their being procured. These form the basis for the three objectives.[1063] Withdrawal is said to be moksha. Dharma protects the body and artha is desired for the sake of dharma. Kama leads to sexual pleasure. But all of these are nothing but dust.[1064] One should pursue whichever of these is nearby and not discard them in one’s mind. These begin with dharma and end with kama[1065] and one should renounce them only when one has freed oneself from the tamas quality. A man who is superior in his intelligence can obtain as much of these three objectives in an instant as a person of inferior intelligence can in an entire day. Dharma is stained by jealousy. Artha is stained by secrecy. Kama is stained by excessive addiction. Each quality can be excessively pursued. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Kamanda and Angarishtha. King Angarishtha greeted the rishi Kamanda when he was seated. Having observed the prescribed norms, Angarishtha asked him, ‘A king may be confounded by the force of kama and act sinfully. O rishi! When he repents those, how can the sins be destroyed? In ignorance, one may follow adharma, taking it to be dharma. How can a king restrain that which is practised among men?’

'"Kamanda said, 'A man who disregards dharma and artha and follows kama destroys his own wisdom, because he has abandoned dharma and artha. The confusion that destroys wisdom also destroys dharma and artha. From this is created bad conduct and the trait of not believing.[1066] When the king does not restrain wicked people of bad conduct, people think that this is as if a snake has entered the house.[1067] The subjects do not follow him. Nor do brahmanas and virtuous people. He confronts danger and may even be killed. When one is disrespected, even if one remains alive, the misery is like being dead. Remaining alive with dishonour is pure death. On this, the preceptors have talked about means of destroying sin. He must serve the three forms of knowledge[1068] and treat brahmanas well. He must be great-minded and follow dharma. He must marry into a great lineage. He must serve brahmanas who are spiritied and forgiving. Having performed ablutions with water, he must meditate. He must be cheerful and not act in a contrary way. He must seek the companionship of those who follow dharma and avoid association with those who perform wicked deeds. He must placate them[1069] with sweet words and deeds and tell them, "I belong to you." He must recount the good qualities of others. If his conduct is devoid of sin, he will quickly obtain great respect. There is no doubt that he will be able to negate all the wicked deeds that he has committed. What is stated by the seniors is supreme dharma. Act as they say. If you obtain the favours of the seniors, you will obtain the best and supreme objective.'"'

Chapter 1452(124)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O best of men! These people on earth always praise the good conduct that flows from dharma. However, I have a great doubt about this. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! If I am capable of understanding this, I wish to hear everything about this, exactly as it is comprehended. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How can good conduct be ensured? I wish to hear this. What are its signs? O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O one who grants honours! O great king! In earlier times, Duryodhana was tormented at the sight of your prosperity, when he went to Indraprastha with his brothers. He was laughed at in the assembly hall.[1070] He told Dhritarashtra about this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the account. Having witnessed your supreme prosperity in the assembly hall, Duryodhana seated himself and told his father everything. On hearing Duryodhana’s words, Dhritarashtra spoke these words to Duryodhana, who was with Karna. ‘O son! Why are you tormented? I wish to hear the truth about this. O destroyer of enemy cities! On hearing this, if it is proper, I will instruct you, so that you can also obtain great prosperity, with your servants, your brothers, all your friends and your kin. You cover yourself in excellent garments. You eat food mixed with meat. You are borne on good horses. O son! Why are you grieving?’

‘“Duryodhana said, ‘In Yudhishthira’s abode, ten thousand great-souled snatakas ate from golden vessels. His divine assembly hall is full of celestial flowers and fruit. There are speckled horses of the *tittira* breed. There are many kinds of gems. I saw all that. I saw the dazzling prosperity of the Pandaveyas, my enemies, and it was like that of Indra. O one who grants honours! On seeing this, I am grieving greatly.’

'"Dhritarashtra replied, 'O son! O tiger among men! If you desire prosperity that is like Yudhishthira's, or superior to it, you must follow good conduct. O son! There is no doubt that the three worlds can be conquered through good conduct. For people who possess good conduct, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. Mandhata obtained the earth in a single night, Janamejaya in three days and Nabhaga in seven nights. All these kings possessed good conduct and self-control. Bought by their good qualities, the earth presented herself of her own accord. On this, an ancient history is recounted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In ancient times, Narada spoke about good conduct. Prahrada robbed the great-souled Indra's kingdom. By resorting to good conduct, the daitya subjugated the three worlds. Shakra joined his hands in salutation and presented himself before Brihaspati. He said, "O immensely wise one! I wish to know about what is beneficial." At this, Brihaspati gave him the knowledge that is best and supreme. O extender of the Kuru lineage! The illustrious one spoke about this to Indra of the gods. Brihaspati told him about what was best. However, Indra again asked him about what was superior to that.

'"'Brihaspati said, "O son![1071] There is something that is greater than this. O fortunate one! O Purandara! Go to the great-souled Bhargava[1072] and he will tell you."'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'The immensely famous one found out from Bhargava what was best for him. He was delighted at having obtained this knowledge and regained his supreme radiance. Having taken the permission of the great-souled Bhargava, Shatakratu again repeatedly asked Shukra about whether there was anything better. Bhargava, knowledgeable about dharma, told him that the great-souled Prahrada possessed that superior knowledge. Delighted at this, the chastiser of Paka[1073] assumed the form of a brahmana and went to Prahrada. The intelligent one said, "I wish to hear what is best for me." Prahrada told the brahmana, "O bull among brahmanas! I do not have the time. I am engaged in ruling the three worlds and cannot instruct you." The brahmana spoke these words. "When will there be time? When there is a break in your work, I wish to be instructed." At this, King Prahrada, knowledgeable about the brahman, was delighted and agreed. At an auspicious time, he gave him that true knowledge. As is proper, the brahmana observed the supreme conduct towards the preceptor. In every kind of way, he did all that he[1074] desired in his mind. He often asked him, “O scorcher of enemies! How did you obtain all these things? O one who knows about dharma! How did you obtain the kingdom of the three worlds? Tell me the reason.” Prahrada replied, “O best among brahmanas! I never show any malice. I never say that I am the king. O son![1075] I control myself and implement what Kavya[1076] says. Anything said by the tranquil ones is always implemented by me. Without any malice, I am devoted to serving at Kavya’s feet. I possess dharma in my soul. I have conquered anger. I have controlled myself and have restrained my senses. I have collected the teachings of those who know about the sacred texts, like bees collecting *kshoudra* honey.[1077] I have licked the juices that have oozed out from the tongues of those eloquent ones. I have established myself amidst my species, like the moon amidst nakshatras. What has been stated by Kavya, when it flows from the mouths of brahmanas, is supreme sight and is like amrita on this earth. I have implemented what I have heard.” Prahrada told the one who was knowledgeable about the brahman that this was the best. Having been pleased with the servitude, the Indra among daityas spoke these words. “O supreme among brahmanas! I am pleased with your conduct towards your preceptor. O fortunate one! Ask for a boon. There is no doubt that I will give it to you.” The brahmana told the Indra among the daityas that he had already obtained one.[1078] Prahrada was delighted at this and asked him to take another boon. The brahmana replied, “O king! If you are pleased with me and wish to ensure my welfare, I wish to have the good conduct that you possess. Let me obtain this boon.” Though the Indra among the daityas was pleased at this, he also suffered from great fear. Since this was the boon the brahmana had asked for, he couldn’t be one with insignificant energy. Though Prahrada was astounded at this, he agreed to grant what had been asked for.

‘“‘When the boon had been granted and the brahmana had left, he was miserable. With the boon having been granted and with the brahmana having departed, he began to think a lot. O great king! However, he could not arrive at any conclusion. O son! While he was thinking in this way, an immensely radiant light emerged from his body. This shadow assumed a form made out of energy and left the body. Prahrada asked the immensely gigantic form, “Who are you?” It replied, “I am your good conduct. Since you have abandoned me, I will leave you. O king! I will go to that supreme among brahmanas, the unblemished one who was here as your disciple and was always devoted." O lord! Having said this, it disappeared and penetrated Shakra. After that energy had gone, another image emerged from his body. "Who are you?" he asked. It replied, "O Prahrada! Know me to be dharma. I will go to that supreme among brahmanas. O Indra among daityas! Since good conduct has already gone there, so will I." O great king! After this, more blazing energy emerged from the great-souled Prahrada's body. "Who are you?" he asked. The immensely radiant one replied, "O Indra of the asuras! I am truth and I will follow dharma." After this being had followed dharma, another being emerged. When this was questioned by the great-souled one, it replied, "O Prahrada! Know me to be behaviour. I will be where truth exists." When it had gone, a giant and white form emerged from his body. Asked, it said, "Know me to be strength. I will be where behaviour exists." O lord of men! Having said this, it went where behaviour had gone. A radiant goddess then emerged from the body. Asked by the Indra among the daityas, she replied, "I am Shri. O brave one! Because of your truth and valour, I dwelt happily with you. But I have been abandoned by you now and will go where strength is." At this, the great-souled Prahrada was terrified. He asked her again, "O one who resides in a lotus! Where are you going? You are a goddess who is always devoted to the truth. You are the supreme goddess of the worlds. Who was that best among brahmanas? I wish to know the truth." Shri replied, "That was Shakra, in the form of a brahmachari. He is the one who has been instructed by you. O lord! He has now robbed you of the prosperity of the three worlds. O one who knows about dharma! You conquered all the worlds through your good conduct. O lord! Knowing this, the great Indra has robbed you of your good conduct. O immensely wise one! Dharma, truth, behaviour, strength and I myself—there is no doubt that all of us find our foundations in good conduct."' O Yudhishthira! Having said this, Shri and all the others departed. Duryodhana again spoke to his father and uttered these words. "O descendant of the Kourava lineage! I wish to know the true nature of good conduct. Tell me the means whereby I can acquire good conduct."

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'The means have earlier been instructed by the great-souled Prahrada. O lord of men! Listen briefly to how good conduct can be obtained. There must be non-violence towards all beings, in deeds, thoughts and words. Compassion and generosity are praised as elements of good conduct. For one's own sake, one must not commit a harsh act that causes injury to another. Nor should one ever do something that one is ashamed of. One should undertake those tasks that warrant praise in assemblies. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! This is said to be the accumulation of good conduct. Even if a king who does not have good conduct possesses Shri, he will not enjoy her for a long time. The roots will fall down. O son! Know this to be the true nature of good conduct. O son! If you desire prosperity that is superior to that of Yudhishthira, this is what you should do.'"

'Bhishma said, "O lord of men! This is what Dhritarashtra told his son. O Kounteya! If you act in this way, you will obtain the fruits."'

Chapter 1453(125)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! You have said that good conduct is the most important thing for a man. How does hope arise and what is its nature? Tell me this. O grandfather! This great doubt has arisen in me. O destroyer of enemy cities! There is no one other than you who knows the truth and can dispel this. O grandfather! I had a great deal of hope about Suyodhana. O lord! When war was near, I thought that he would act as he had been asked to. A great hope is generated in a man and it becomes everything. When that is destroyed, there is no doubt that he suffers a misery that is like death. The evil-minded and evil-souled son of Dhritarashtra destroyed all my hopes. O Indra among kings! I think that I have been foolish. I think that hope is greater than a mountain with all its trees. O king! Or perhaps it is as immeasurable as the sky. O best among the Kuru lineage! It is extremely difficult to understand it[1079] and it is extremely difficult to obtain. I can see that it is extremely difficult to obtain. Is there anything that is more difficult to obtain than that?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! In this connection, listen to what happened. This is the history of what transpired between Sumitra and Rishabha. Among the Haihayas, there was a rajarshi named Sumitra and he went out on a hunt. Having pursued a deer, he pierced it with an arrow with drooping tufts. The deer was infinite in its valour. Despite being struck by the arrow, it continued to flee and the powerful king swiftly dashed after the deer. O Indra among kings! The deer quickly fled through a hollow and in an instant, began to run through flat terrain again. The king was young, enterprising and strong. With arrows, a bow and a sword, he pursued it, like a swan. He plunged through male and female rivers, lakes and woods. Having crossed through places that were difficult to cross, he chased it into a forest. As it desired, the deer sometimes showed itself to the king and sometimes hid itself from the king. It would then speed on, acquiring greater speed. He struck the resident of the forest with many arrows. O Indra among kings! But it seemed to be playing with him and would again approach near. The leader of a herd of deer would then again speed up, resorting to a greater speed. O Indra among kings! It would forge ahead and then again appear nearby. Sumitra, the destroyer of enemies, affixed a foremost and fierce arrow that was capable of penetrating the inner organs and released it from his bow. However, the leader of a herd of deer advanced far ahead, by a distance that was more than one *govyuti*,[1080] beyond the reach of the arrow. It then stood there, seeming to laugh at the king. The blazing arrow fell down on the ground.

'"The deer entered a great forest and the king pursued it there. Having entered the great forest, the king approached a hermitage of ascetics. He was tired and seated himself. The assembled rishis saw him there, with the bow in his hand, exhausted, afflicted and hungry. Following the prescribed rites, they honoured him. The rishis asked that tiger among kings what he wanted. 'O fortunate one! What is the reason behind your coming to this hermitage? O lord of men! Though you are on foot, you have girded your sword and have a bow and arrows. O one who grants honours! We wish to know why you have come here. What lineage have you been born in? Tell us what your name is.' O bull among men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, the king told the brahmanas everything and also about the pursuit. 'I have been born in the lineage of the Haihayas. I am Sumitra, the son of Mitra. I was roaming around, slaying herds of deer with thousands of arrows. I am protected by a large army and the advisers and women are with me. I pierced a deer with my arrow. But though pierced by my arrow, it ran away. While running after it as I desired, I arrived in this forest and near you. My prosperity has been destroyed. My hopes have been destroyed. My enterprise has also been destroyed. O ones who are rich in austerities! Having to abandon the signs of the kingship or giving up the city does not cause me as fierce a misery as the dashing of my hopes. The Himalayas, giant among mountains, the ocean, the great store of water are regarded as vast and so is the space between heaven and earth. O ones who are best in austerities! But I cannot see any boundaries to hope. O ones rich in austerities! Everything is known to you. You know everything. O immensely fortunate ones! I am therefore presenting you with the doubt I have. Which seems to be greater in this world, the hope of a man, or the sky? I wish to hear the truth about this. Which is more difficult to obtain? O ones who are always engaged in austerities! If this is not a secret, tell me, without any delay. O bulls among brahmanas! If you do not regard this to be a secret, I wish to hear. However, if this causes a distraction in your austerities, I will desist. I do not wish my question to lead to a long discussion. These are the reasons I wish to hear the truth about this, in detail. You are always engaged in austerities and are extremely controlled. You should tell me.’”’

Chapter 1454(126)

‘Bhishma said, “Then, among those assembled rishis, a brahmana rishi named Rishabha, supreme among rishis, smiled and spoke. ‘O tiger among kings! O lord! In earlier times, I visited all the tirthas and arrived at the divine hermitage of Nara and Narayana. There is the *badari*[1081] tree there and the beautiful lake in the sky.[1082] O king! Ashvashira[1083] recites the eternal Vedas there. In those ancient times, I first rendered the recommended offerings to the ancestors and the gods in that lake. I next went to the hermitage. The rishis Nara and Narayana always find delight there. To find an abode, I went a little distance away from the hermitage. There, I saw an extremely emaciated rishi come towards me. He was dressed in rags and hides and he was extremely tall. He was a store of austerities and his name was Tanu. O mighty-armed one! O rajarshi! Many other men have the eight qualities his form possessed.[1084] But I have never seen anyone as lean as him. O Indra among kings! His body was as thin as a little finger. His neck, arms, feet and hair were extraordinary to see. His head was as large as his body and so were his ears and his eyes. O supreme among kings! His speech and movement were feeble. On seeing this extremely emaciated brahmana, I was scared and very distressed. I touched his feet and joining my hands in salutation, stood before him. O bull among men! I told him my name, my gotra and my father’s name. Then I slowly sat down on the seat he showed me. O great king! In the midst of those rishis, that supreme upholder of dharma recounted stories that were full of dharma and artha. While he was talking, a king arrived on swift horses, with his army and his women. His eyes were like blue lotuses and he was extremely distressed, thinking about his son, who had got lost in the forest. He was the father of Bhuridyumna[1085] and he was intelligent and immensely illustrious, born in Raghu’s lineage. The king said, “I will see my son here. It is here that I will see him.” In those ancient times, the king was roaming around, driven thus by hope. However, he also said, “It is also extremely unlikely that I will ever see the one who is supreme in dharma.[1086] I only have one son and he has perished in the forest. It is extremely unlikely that I will see him, but hopes run high. There is no doubt that I will die and cast aside my body.” Hearing these words, the illustrious Tanu, supreme among sages, lowered his head. For some time, he immersed himself in meditation. On seeing him meditating, the king was greatly distressed. Cheerless in his mind, he gently spoke these words. “O brahmana rishi! What is difficult to get and rarer than hope? O illustrious one! If it is not a secret, please tell me this.” In the past, because of his misfortune and stupid intelligence, the illustrious maharshi had been insulted.[1087] O king! The brahmana rishi had asked for some riches, a golden pot and some bark for clothing, but his hopes were belied and he was distressed. O supreme among men! Having spoken to the rishi, revered in the worlds, the one with dharma in his soul[1088] worshipped him. But he felt exhausted and sat down. The great rishi offered him arghya, water for washing the feet and showed the king all the due honours, as is recommended for someone dwelling in the forest.

‘“‘All the sages surrounded that bull among men.[1089] They honoured him and sat down, like the saptarshis around Dhruva.[1090] They asked the unvanquished king about the entire reasons behind his coming to the hermitage. The king said, “I am a king famous in all the directions by the name of Viradyumna. I have come to the forest to look for my son Bhuridyumna, who has got lost. O foremost among brahmanas! O unblemished ones! He is my only son. I have not seen him in the forest and am roaming around here.” Having been thus addressed by the king, the sage[1091] remained with his head lowered. He was silent and did not reply to the king. O Indra among kings! In the past, insolent because of his prosperity, the king had insulted the brahmana. With his hopes belied, he[1092] had engaged in austerities for a long time. He had resolved, “I will never accept anything from a king, or from any of the other varnas.” He had taken this pledge and had abided by it. “Hope agitates men who are foolish. I will fling it away.” The king said, “Can hope be made to wear thin? Is there anything else on earth that is more difficult to get? O illustrious one! You have seen the nature of dharma and artha. Please tell me.” Remembering everything, the illustrious Tanu, emaciated in his body, reminded the king of the incident and said, “O king! There is nothing that is as emaciated as hope. O king! I have asked many kings and have found that nothing is as difficult to obtain." The king said, "O brahmana! I have understood the purport of your words, about it being emaciated and also not emaciated[1093] and also about the difficulty of obtaining. O brahmana! Your words are the words of the Vedas. O immensely wise one! However, a doubt has arisen in my heart. O supreme one! I am asking you and you should tell me the truth about this. O illustrious one! Tell me, if it is not a secret, is there anyone more emaciated than you? O brahmana! In this world, is there anything that is more difficult to get?"[1094] Krishatanu[1095] replied, "It is rarer to find a petitioner who is satisfied with what he has got.[1096] O son![1097] It is rarer to find a person who does not disrespect a petitioner. There are those who promise to help, but later, do not do so, to the best of their capacities, or do not help those who should be aided. However, even then, the hope that still remains in beings is thinner than I am. There may be a father with a single son who is lost, or absent from home. When one doesn't know what has happened to him, the hope that still remains is thinner than I am. There are aged women who give birth. They, and rich people too, desire sons. O Indra among men! The hope that is in them is thinner than I am." O king! Having heard this, the king and his women prostrated themselves and touched the feet of that bull among brahmanas. The king said, "O illustrious one! Through your favours, I desire to meet my son. O brahmana! If you so wish, follow the rites and please grant me this boon." The king, with eyes like blue lotuses, spoke these words. "O brahmana! What you have said is true. There is nothing false in those words." The illustrious Tanu, supreme among the upholders of dharma, laughed. Through his austerities and his learning, he instantly brought the son there. Having brought the son there, he reprimanded the king.[1098] He was supreme among the upholders of dharma and showed himself to be none other than Dharma. He exhibited his own self and it was divine and marvellous to behold. He was devoid of sin and devoid of anger and left for the nearby forest. O king! I saw this and I heard those words. Quickly drive away your hope, which is thinner than what he was.'"

'Bhishma said, "O great king! Thus addressed by the great-souled Rishabha, Sumitra swiftly flung away his hope, which was extremely thin. O Kounteya! You have also heard these words from me. O king! Be as firm as the

Himalayas, supreme among mountains. You will see and hear those who are distressed because they pursue objectives. O great king! Listen to me. You should not be tormented."'

Chapter 1455(127)

‘Yudhishthira said, “As you have spoken, I have not obtained enough of this amrita. O grandfather! Therefore, speak to me again about dharma.”

‘Bhishma replied, “On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Goutama and the great-souled Yama. Goutama’s great hermitage was on Mount Pariyatra and Goutama dwelt there for some time. Listen to this. Goutama tormented himself through austerities for sixty thousand years. The cleansed and ascetic sage performed severe austerities. O tiger among men! Yama, the guardian of the world, went to him there. As sage Goutama performed those excellent austerities, he looked at the rishi. Because of his energy, the brahmana rishi realized that Yama had arrived. The one who was rich in austerities joined his hands in salutation and advanced towards him. Dharmaraja[1099] looked towards that bull among men and bowed down before him. Dharma asked him, ‘What can I do for you?’ Goutama asked, ‘How can one free oneself of the debts due to the mother and the father? How can a man quickly obtain the auspicious worlds, which are so difficult to obtain?’ Yama replied, ‘Austerities, purity, constant devotion to truth and dharma, constant worship of the mother and the father are the tasks one should be attached to. One must perform many horse sacrifices, with dakshina for the officiating priests. A man will then obtain worlds that are extraordinary to behold.’”’

Chapter 1456(128)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There may be a king whose friends have abandoned him and who has many enemies. His treasury may have become depleted and his army may have been weakened. What happens to him? His advisers and aides may be wicked. All his secret counsel may have been divulged. His kingdom may gradually be weaned away and he cannot see any course of action. He is weak and may be attacked by a circle of stronger enemies. His kingdom may be in disarray. He may be ignorant about the time and the place. He is unable to use conciliation. And because he is afflicted, he cannot use dissension either. His life may seem to be without purpose. What is a good course of action then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have asked me about secret kinds of dharma.[1100] I did not wish to speak about this kind of dharma until I had been asked. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Dharma is more subtle than words and intelligence. If one has served those who have good conduct, and learnt from them, one can perhaps become virtuous. Using one’s intelligence to reflect on a task before undertaking it, one may, or may not, become prosperous. In that way, with respect to what you have asked, use your own intelligence to decide what must be done. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Using the instruments of dharma, there are many ways to advance towards the objective. Listen. If one considers dharma, I do not consider these kinds of action to be dharma.[1101] Prosperous people may bring hardships on themselves and subsequently, it may be held that this was inappropriate.[1102] One can be certain about the outcome of a course of action only after everything has been completed. Whenever a man always looks towards the sacred texts and obtains learning from them, that learning pleases him. If a man is not learned, a course of action may seem wrong. But it seems wrong because of lack of knowledge and that course of action can lead to prosperity. Without any doubt in your mind, listen to the words that I will speak. If the king's treasury is exhausted, his army will decline. The king must try to build the treasury, like a person conserves water in a place where there is no water. This is dharma then, and when it is time, he can show compassion.[1103] These are the instruments of dharma that were followed by people in earlier times. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is one kind of dharma for those who are capable and another for those in distress. It is said that a treasury ensures dharma and intelligence is superior to dharma.[1104] One who is weak cannot find a means of sustenance by following dharma alone. However, since the acquisition of wealth does not occur in isolation,[1105] it has been heard that, in times of hardship, adharma may acquire the characteristics of dharma. But those who are learned and wise say that adharma results and subsequently,[1106] a kshatriya must act to heal this. Dharma must not be made to decline, but nor should one come under the subjugation of the enemy. Nor, because of the action undertaken, should one allow one's own self to be destroyed. If one is destroyed, one can perform no act of dharma, either for one's own sake, or for the sake of someone else. It is certain that one must use every means possible to preserve oneself. O son! This has been determined by those who are knowledgeable about dharma and skilled about the means of dharma. The sacred texts say that because of the valour in their arms, enterprise is the life of a kshatriya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a kshatriya's means of sustenance have gone, why should he not take from everyone, with the exception of ascetics and brahmanas? It is like a brahmana in hardship officiating at the sacrifice of someone who should not be performing a sacrifice. There is no doubt that in such situations, food that should not be eaten can also be eaten. If someone is distressed, why should gates and paths be barred? If someone is distressed, he can escape through something that is not a door. However, even for a person whose treasury and army have been destroyed and who has been defeated by the entire world, a life of begging is not recommended, nor the livelihood of a vaishya or a shudra. One should first try for one's own dharma, before adopting the livelihood of someone else. At first, one should think of that kind of livelihood to sustain life. However, if there is a disaster, one can then resort to the dharma and livelihood of others. When their means of livelihood have been destroyed, even brahmanas are seen to do this. Why should there be any doubt about a kshatriya? This has already been decided. He should take from whoever possesses more and never allow himself to be destroyed. The kshatriya is known to be the slayer and protector of subjects. Therefore, to protect him, it is the duty of the relatives of the kshatriya to appropriate. O king! There is no livelihood that exists without violence. Even a solitary sage, active and roaming in the forest, cannot manage to do that. Nor can one remain alive by following the conduct of Shankha and Likhita. O best among the Kurus! If one desires to protect the subjects, this is especially the case. In times of distress, the king and the kingdom must protect each other. This must always be done and this is eternal dharma. In times of distress, the king protects the kingdom by flooding it with material objects. In a time of distress, the kingdom must also protect the king. When the kingdom suffers from hunger, the king must not hide his treasury, his army, his rod, his friends and anything else that he may have stored. Those who are learned about dharma say that seeds must be saved from one's own food.

'"Shambara, who was great in his knowledge of maya, spoke about this. 'When a kingdom goes into a decline, the life of that king is one of shame. If he knows about the words of Shibi,[1107] why should people be without a means of sustenance?' A king's foundations are his treasury and his army. The treasury is again the foundation of the army. It is the foundation of all dharma and dharma is again the foundation of the subjects. There cannot be a treasury without oppression and without it, how is it possible to have an army? Therefore, one does not deserve to be tainted because of oppression. If a task is undertaken for the sake of a sacrifice, or if rites are followed in the course of a sacrifice, then, because of these reasons, the king does not deserve to be tainted. There are acts pursued for the sake of artha and there are contrary acts pursued for the sake of what is not artha. Those which are for the sake of artha and those which are not for the sake of artha may all seem to have the signs of artha. An intelligent person will use his intelligence to consider all this and then determine the course of action. Some objects are of use in a sacrifice, others are of no direct use in the sacrifice and still others may be of use in obtaining the purpose of the sacrifice. But all these are ingredients in conducting the sacrifice. I will tell you about examples, to illuminate the true nature of dharma. A sacrificial post must be severed for the sake of the sacrifice and there are some other trees that stand in the way and obstruct it. It is certain that these must also be cut down. When these fall down, they bring down other trees too. O scorcher of enemies! In that way, there are men who stand in the way of building up a large treasury and without killing them, I see no means of success. Both the worlds can be conquered with riches, this one and the next. What is said about dharma is true—it does not exist where there are no riches. To meet the requirements of sacrifices, every method of obtaining riches must be used. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sins from doing the right thing and not doing the right thing are not equal.[1108] O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How can one follow neither of these two? I do not see people who extend their riches in the forest.[1109] A man desires whatever riches he can see in this world and hopes that it might belong to him. O scorcher of enemies! There is no dharma that is equal to the ruling of a kingdom. There is another kind of dharma that is recommended for kings who confront a hardship. Some acquire stores of riches through gifts and deeds, others are ascetics and do this through austerities, and still others choose intelligence and skills. It is said that one without riches is weak and one with riches is strong. One with riches can obtain everything. One with a treasury can overcome everything. The treasury provides dharma and kama, and this world and the next."'

Section Eighty-five

APAD DHARMA PARVA

This parva has 1,560 shlokas and thirty-nine chapters.

Chapter 1457(129): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1458(130): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1459(131): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1460(132): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1461(133): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1462(134): 10 shlokas
Chapter 1463(135): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1464(136): 211 shlokas
Chapter 1465(137): 109 shlokas
Chapter 1466(138): 70 shlokas
Chapter 1467(139): 94 shlokas
Chapter 1468(140): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1469(141): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1470(142): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1471(143): 10 shlokas
Chapter 1472(144): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1473(145): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1474(146): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1475(147): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1476(148): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1477(149): 117 shlokas
Chapter 1478(150): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1479(151): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1480(152): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1481(153): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1482(154): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1483(155): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1484(156): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1485(157): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1486(158): 13 shlokas

Chapter 1487(159): 72 shlokas
Chapter 1488(160): 87 shlokas
Chapter 1489(161): 48 shlokas
Chapter 1490(162): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1491(163): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1492(164): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1493(165): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1494(166): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1495(167): 24 shlokas

Apad *means a misfortune or a calamity. In such situations, the nature of dharma to be followed is different and Bhishma instructs Yudhishthira about this.*

Chapter 1457(129)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He[1] may be weak. He may be a procrastinator. He may be excessively affectionate towards his relatives. The citizens of the city and the countryside may be disenchanted. He may be without supplies of stores. He may suspect the foremost people.[2] His secret counsel may be divulged. He may be assailed by the enemy. All his advisers may be divided. Despite being weak, he may have to advance against a stronger enemy. When his senses are agitated, tell me what else he can do.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The external one who seeks to conquer him may be pure and may be accomplished in dharma and artha. He should swiftly conclude an agreement and try to free those parts that have already been conquered. Even if the other person wishes to conquer through adharma, is more powerful and is wicked in his intentions, there should be an attempt to conclude a pact, even if this leads to restrictions on himself.[3] Alternatively, he can abandon the capital and use other means to avoid the calamity. Though that situation[4] continues, as long as he is alive, he can accumulate objects again. There are some calamities that can only be handled by giving up everything. However, no one who knows about artha and dharma should give up the more expensive possession of one’s own life.[5] One must protect oneself against being taken captive. How can one find compassion amidst the enemy’s riches? If it is possible, one must never give oneself up.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “Those inside may be enraged and those outside may cause oppression. The treasury may be exhausted. The secret counsel may be divulged. What remains to be done then?”

‘Bhishma replied, “One should be swift in concluding a pact, or one must be swift in exhibiting one’s fierce valour. Or one can swiftly retreat and protect oneself. O lord of the earth! A king can conquer the entire earth with a few soldiers, if they are devoted, nourished and cheerful. If he is slain, he will ascend to heaven. If he is victorious, he will gain the earth. If he gives up his life in the battle, he will obtain Shakra's world. When he has conquered all the people, he must tread gently. If he cannot inspire trust in them through his humility, he should use his shoes.[6] He should retreat only when he wishes to. Should he desire to use conciliation, he should remove all signs from his own self and advance with a friend."'[7]

Chapter 1458(130)

‘Yudhishthira said, “The supreme forms of dharma may not be available and people of diverse kinds may transgress it. Every means of sustenance on earth may have been taken over by bandits. O grandfather! When that worst of times arrives, how will a brahmana survive, assuming that out of affection, he does not abandon his sons and grandsons?”

‘Bhishma replied, “When such a time arrives, he should survive through the strength of his ability to differentiate.[8] Everything is for the virtuous. There is nothing for the wicked. If someone takes from the wicked and gives it to those who are virtuous, he is knowledgeable about all forms of dharma and ensures a passage for himself. O king! He can seize things that have not been given, thinking, ‘These riches are mine and I will give them away,’ as long as he does not do this wrathfully and does not cause outrage in the kingdom. If a person uses vijnana to purify his strength, even if he should be censured, he will not be censured, because he is patient and his conduct is based on vijnana. Those whose conduct depends on the exercise of strength find no other means appealing. O Yudhishthira! Their strength is enhanced through the use of energy. Medium people serve the dictates of the ordinary sacred texts, without any discrimination.[9] However, those who are intelligent adopt something that is beyond this. Officiating priests, priests, preceptors and brahmanas must always be treated well and worshipped. Acting contrary to this is a sin.[10] These are the norms of the world and the eternal foresight. This is the standard in which one must be submerged to determine if one is virtuous or wicked. Many who live in villages will angrily say things about each other. A king should not pay attention to these words and act on that basis.[11] Slander must never be spoken, nor heard. The ears must be covered, or one should go somewhere else. The conduct of virtuous people does not encompass slander and calumny. O Yudhishthira! Those who are virtuous only speak about the qualities of righteous people. Two well-trained draught animals, tamed and both capable of bearing an equal load, are good at bearing a burden. The king should be like that. He is the one who really bears the burden, aides come after that. Some think that conduct is the most important indication of dharma. Others do not like this and prefer Shankha and Likhita instead.[12] They do not speak such words out of malice or greed. There are rishis who have held that the perpetrators of wrong deeds must be exiled.[13] However, if someone is like a rishi, there are no norms for this. Perhaps the gods should punish these worst among men, who perpetrate perverse acts. If something is obtained through deceit, dharma suffers. Those who are virtuous must be honoured in every way, because they are the reason for prosperity. This must be accepted in one's heart and it establishes dharma. He who knows about the four qualities that establish dharma is one who truly knows about dharma.[14] Like following a snake, it is extremely difficult to determine the path of dharma. When a deer is pierced, a hunter of deer follows in its footsteps by tracking drops of blood in the grass. That is the way one must follow the path of dharma. O one without decay! O Yudhishthira! You must follow the path of the virtuous with humility. Follow the conduct observed by the rajarshis."'

Chapter 1459(131)

‘Bhishma said, “The king must generate his treasury from his own kingdom or the kingdoms of others. O Kounteya! Dharma results from the treasury and establishes the foundation of the kingdom. Therefore, the treasury must be generated and once it has been accumulated, it must be protected. Having protected, he must show compassion. This is the eternal dharma. The treasury cannot be generated through virtue and purity only, or through violence alone. To accumulate a treasury, one must follow a middle path. How can there be a treasury for someone who has no army? How can there be an army for someone who has no treasury? How can there be a kingdom for someone who has no army? How can there be Shri for someone who has no kingdom? For someone of superior conduct, the destruction of Shri is like death. Therefore, the king must increase the treasury, the army and friends. Men disrespect a king whose treasury has been destroyed. They are dissatisfied with little and are not interested in the work.[15] It is because of Shri that a king receives the greatest regard. It hides his sins, like garments hide the private parts of women. Men he has earlier injured follow him because of his wealth. They are like dogs,[16] finding delight in an opportunity to kill him. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! How can a king like this be happy?[17] The king must always show enterprise and not be languid. There is manliness in exertion. He must break at the joints, rather than bow down before anyone. He can resort to the forest and roam around with large numbers of bandits. However, he must not roam around with bandits who are against all restraints. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among the bandits, one can easily obtain soldiers who are fierce in their deeds. Everyone certainly trembles before a person who does not follow any restraints. Even bandits, who are without compassion, tremble before such a person. He must establish restraints and gladden the minds of people. Even a little bit of restraint is respected by the people. There are some people who have decided that this world and the world hereafter do not exist. One should not trust such a nastika. He is driven by doubt and fear. Bandits regard non-violence the same way as righteous people regard taking from others.[18] However, even among bandits, people find delight in agreements. The slaying of someone who is not a combatant, the ravishing of wives,[19] ingratitude, the seizure of the possessions of brahmanas, the complete destruction of everything and the abduction and confining of women—these are censured even among bandits. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Since they avoid these, if one has a pact with them, one should not exterminate them completely. That has been determined. Instead of completely exterminating them, they should be brought under one's subjugation. Because one is stronger, one should act violently towards them. O son! Those who exterminate them see their own extermination in every direction. Those who exterminate always have to suffer a fear because of that act of extermination."'[20]

Chapter 1460(132)

‘Bhishma said, “On this kind of deed, those who are knowledgeable about ancient accounts recite definitive words. For a kshatriya who knows, dharma and artha are immediately evident and one cannot separate them. But some working of dharma is indirect. ‘This is adharma.’ ‘That is dharma.’ Such statements are like the footprints of a wolf.[21] The fruits of dharma and adharma can never be seen. A strong person can use his strength to bring everything under his subjugation and prosper. A strong person obtains Shri, an army and advisers. One without wealth falls and is like a little bit of leftover food. However, even for a strong person, there are many inauspicious things and these ensure that he is not saved from fear. It is only those two[22] true foundations that save him from great fear. I think that strength is superior to dharma. Dharma results from strength. Dharma is established on strength, like mobile objects on the surface of the earth. Just as smoke is controlled by the wind, dharma follows strength. Just as a creeper depends on a tree, dharma provides strength to a weak person. Dharma is under the control of those who are strong, just as happiness is enjoyed by those who possess objects of pleasure. There is nothing that a strong person is not successful at. For the strong, everything is pure.[23] If a wicked person is weak in strength, his stature is reduced. Therefore, everyone is alarmed at him, as if he is a wolf. He is censured and dishonoured and lives a life of unhappiness. A life of humiliation is just like death. When people say that he has been cast aside because of his wicked character, he is severely tormented and is wounded by words that are like stakes. On this, preceptors have spoken about ways of freeing oneself from sins. He must serve the three kinds of learning[24] and tend to brahmanas. He must seek their favours through sweet words and deeds. He must be great-minded and marry into a noble family. He must recount the good qualities of others and say that he will be like them. He must meditate, perform the water-rites, be gentle and not talk a lot. Having performed many extremely difficult deeds, he should penetrate the ranks of brahmana and kshatriyas.[25] Even if many people reprimand him because of this, he should not pay any attention to it. If he does not commit wicked acts, through such conduct he will quickly become greatly respected. He will enjoy happiness and riches and must protect himself through his conduct. He will obtain worship in this world and great fruits in the hereafter.”’

Chapter 1461(133)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. A bandit who followed restraints was not destroyed after his death. There was a ruler of the nishadas by the name of Kapavya. He was brave, intelligent and a striker. He was learned and was not violent. He protected dharma against any decline and worshipped brahmanas and seniors. His father was a kshatriya and his mother was a nishada. He protected the dharma of kshatriyas. Though he was a bandit, he obtained success. In the morning and in the evening, he would agitate herds of animals in the forest. He knew about different kinds of animals and about where they came to drink. He knew about all the different groves and regions and roamed around Mount Pariyatra. He knew about the dharma for all beings. His weapons were firm and he never missed his aim. He could single-handedly defeat hundreds of soldiers. In that great forest, he worshipped his aged and blind parents. He honoured them well and gave them food in the form of honey, meat, roots, fruit and grain that was superior and inferior. He tended to them. He protected the brahmanas who resided in the forest and passed through it. In that great forest, he brought them animals that he had killed. There were some who had doubts about receiving food from a bandit. For these, at the right time, he would leave it outside their houses and leave. There were thousands of dishonourable bandits who were pitiless. They desired to make him their leader.

‘“The bandits said, ‘You are wise and know about the time and the place. You have good conduct and wield firm weapons. You are respected by all of us. Be our leader and our chief. We will do whatever you ask us to. According to proper policy, protect us, like a mother and a father.’ Kapavya replied, ‘Do not kill women, those who are frightened, those who are children and those who are ascetics. Do not slay those who are not fighting. Do not forcibly abduct women. Under no circumstances should a spirited warrior slay a woman. Cattle and women should not be harmed and war must not be waged on their account. Grain must not be destroyed and one should not pointlessly create obstructions in ploughing, or in the worship of gods, ancestors and guests. Among all the beings, brahmanas deserve to be freed.[26] One must compensate them, even if one has to give up all of one's property. If they are extremely enraged and chant their mantras, there is no one in the three worlds who will be saved and will not be defeated. A person who speaks ill of brahmanas or wishes for their destruction will be destroyed. This is as certain as the rising of the sun. Dwell here and receive the fruits. Those who do not give according to their capacity will be attacked by our soldiers. The rod has been intended for the sake of ensuring virtue. It is certain that it is not meant to inflict death. However, it has been said that if a person obstructs virtuous people, it is dharma to kill him. There are some who obtain a living by causing injury to the kingdom. They are compared to worms inside a carcass. However, even if someone is a bandit, if he conducts himself in accordance with the sacred texts of dharma, despite being a bandit, he will swiftly obtain success.' All of them honoured Kapavya's instructions. All of them obtained a livelihood and abandoned their wicked ways. Because of his deeds, Kapavya obtained great success. He acted so as to ensure safety for the virtuous and restrained the bandits from wicked deeds. If someone regularly recounts this conduct of Kapavya, he will never be afflicted by any fear from residents of the forest, or from beings. There will never be any fear from mortals or immortals, from the virtuous or the wicked. O king! He will be like a leader in the forest."'

Chapter 1462(134)

‘Bhishma said, “Those who are learned about the ancient accounts chant a verse that was sung by Brahma himself. This is a path through which a king can generate his treasury. ‘The wealth of those who perform sacrifices, have good conduct and are noble should not be taken, as it belongs to the gods.[27] A kshatriya should take from bandits and from those who do not perform rites.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These subjects are for kshatriyas, who must protect them and also receive from them. The wealth belongs to kshatriyas and not to anyone else. The wealth must be used for the sake of the army, or for the purpose of performing sacrifices. Herbs that are inedible are severed and used to cook stuff that is edible.[28] People who are learned in the Vedas say that wealth that is not used as offerings for the gods, the ancestors and mortals comes to no useful end. O king! A lord of the earth who follows dharma should take these riches away. O king! When it is like that,[29] it does not please the worlds and is not treasure. It must be taken away from the wicked and given to the virtuous. If someone makes himself into a bridge between the two, I think that person knows dharma. Some people say that here and there, herbs and animals may originate from injurious sources, but can nevertheless be used for sacrifices. Those who do not perform the rites of sacrifices are like flies that bite and like aggressive ants. That is what dharma pronounces. Dust and *ulapa* grass[30] can rise from the ground. Dharma is like that, subtle and subtler.”’

Chapter 1463(135)

‘Bhishma said, “On this, listen to this supreme and foremost account. This is about procrastination in deciding what should be done and what should not be done. In a pond that wasn’t very deep, there were three *shakula* fishes who were friends. O Kounteya! Among the many other fishes that were there, these became companions. Out of these three that dwelt in the water, one knew when the right time had come, the second one was far-sighted and the third was a procrastinator. On one occasion, fishermen assembled around the pond. Using various outlets, they started to drain out the water to lower spots. On discerning that the water level was declining, the far-sighted fish told his two friends that a danger had arrived. ‘There is a disaster for all of us who dwell in the water. Let us quickly go somewhere else, before the path is destroyed. Those who follow good policy counter a danger before it has arrived. There is no doubt about this. We should decide to quickly go.’ The procrastinator replied, ‘What you have said is true. But it is my certain view that there is no need for us to hurry.’ The one with the right understanding spoke to the far-sighted one, ‘When it is the right time, I will not avoid doing anything that needs to be done.’ Having been thus addressed, the far-sighted and immensely intelligent one emerged through the single stream that still remained and went into a deeper body of water. When they saw that the water had been drained out from the pond, the fishermen, who earned a living off fish, used different methods to catch the fish. They fluttered around in the pond, which was without any water. Together with the others, the fish that was a procrastinator was captured. When he saw that the fish were being strung together on a rope, the one with the right understanding penetrated into the midst of the ones that had already been strung and seized the rope in its mouth, as if it had already been captured. They[31] thought that all the fish had been captured. They took the fish to a clean bit of water to clean them. The one with the right understanding let go of the rope and swiftly escaped. The procrastinator, evil-souled and inferior in intelligence and consciousness was stupid. It died because it was insensible.

'"In that way, if someone is confused in intelligence and does not realize when the right time has come, he is swiftly destroyed, like the procrastinating fish. If a man thinks himself to be accomplished and does not do at the beginning what is beneficial, he faces a danger, like the fish with the right understanding. If a man acts so as to pacify a danger that has not yet come, he attains the best objective, like the far-sighted fish. The earth is said to be the place. *Kala, kashtha, muhurta, dina, nadya, kshana, lava, paksha, masa*, *ritu*s that are equal, *vatsara*[32]—despite these, time cannot be seen. To obtain success, it is true that there must be good policy too.[33] This is what the rishis have taught in the sacred texts of dharma and artha and the sacred texts of moksha. They also determine the rules for the practice of kama among men. One must examine these properly before embarking on action. If one also considers the time and the place, one obtains the fruits from them."'

Chapter 1464(136)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have talked about the best kind of intelligence, understanding what has happened and what will happen, and about the destruction that procrastination brings. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about supreme intelligence for a king, who is confounded because he is surrounded by enemies. You are accomplished in dharma and artha. You are wise. You are skilled in all the sacred texts. O best among the Kuru lineage! I am asking you this. You should explain it to me. What should a king who is encompassed by many enemies do? In accordance with the rules, I wish to hear everything about this. When a king confronts a disaster in the midst of an enemy, there will be many who will range against one and seek to injure him, because of what they have suffered earlier. There will be immensely strong ones acting against him and he will be alone, without allies. How will he be able to take a stand? O bull among the Bharata lineage! How will he know the difference between a friend and an enemy? How will he act against those who are neither friend, nor foe? How will he use his wisdom to discern signs that an enemy has become a friend? How will such a man act and how will he obtain happiness? Who should he fight with? With whom should he try for a pact? What should be the conduct of a weak person who is in the midst of the enemy? O scorcher of enemies! This is supreme among all the tasks that must be undertaken. Rare is the person who can speak about such things, with the exception of Shantanu’s son, Bhishma, who has conquered his senses and does not waver from the truth. A listener is also extremely difficult to get. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, you should tell me everything about all this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! This question is worthy of someone who possesses your qualities. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen completely to the secrets about a time of adversity. By employing the capabilities of different people in different tasks, an enemy can become a friend and a friend may find himself to be censured. There is always a change in objectives. One must know about the time and the place, determine what should be done and what should not be done, and then decide whom to trust and whom to fight. A wise person always seeks to have peace with those who wish him well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But, for the sake of protecting one's life, there can be an alliance with the enemy. A man who is always against alliances is not learned. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He does not obtain the objectives, or the fruits. If a person uses his reasoning to look towards the objectives and has an alliance with an enemy or counters a friend, he obtains extremely great fruits. On this, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between a cat and a rat in a banyan tree.

'"In a great forest, there was an extremely large banyan tree. It was covered with nets of creepers and was frequented by large numbers of diverse birds. Its trunks were like clouds and it offered cool and pleasant shade. Many predatory animals lived there, with enmity towards each other. There was a hole with one hundred mouths at the root of the tree and an immensely wise rat named Palita lived there. Earlier, a cat named Lomasha had happily dwelt in the branches, destroying the lives of the birds. Every day, when the sun had gone down, a *chandala* arrived there, having turned his mind towards enmity. He would spread out nets made of sinews there. Having done this, he would return cheerfully to his home and sleep, waiting for night to be over and for it to be morning. Every night, a large number of animals were always killed there. On one occasion, the cat was careless and got trapped there. At that time, the immensely wise Palita got to know that the enemy, who was always trying to kill it, had got trapped. It wandered around, without any fear at all. As it roamed around in that forest, assured in its roaming, it looked for some food and saw the meat.[34] It climbed up there and began to devour the meat. It laughed mentally, as it stood above the enemy who had got trapped. While it was engaged with the meat, it happened to look up and saw that another enemy had arrived, terrible in appearance. It used to lie down in a giant hole and was like Sharaprasuna.[35] This was an agile mongoose named Harika and its eyes were coppery red. Having smelt the rat, it had swiftly arrived there. It stood on the ground and raised its face upwards, licking its lips at the prospect of a meal. It[36] saw another enemy on a branch, one that lived in a hole in the trunk. This was an owl named Chandraka. Its beak was sharp and it roamed around during the night. It was within the reach of both the mongoose and the owl.

'"In that situation, confronted with that great danger, it began to think. 'Death has presented itself and this is a catastrophe and a great difficulty. There is danger from every side. What should I do to ensure my welfare? I am obstructed in every direction and every direction seems to be the same. Tormented by this fear, I will obtain the ultimate end. There are many difficulties and there is one chance in one hundred of my remaining alive. There is no doubt that disaster confronts me from every direction. If I descend on the ground, the mongoose will violently seize me. If I remain here, the owl will get me, or the cat, after it has severed the noose. However, a person who is wise should not be confused. As long as I breathe, I must try to remain alive. Those who are intelligent and wise and are accomplished in the sacred texts of good policy, are not scared when they face a danger or a great destruction of prosperity. At the moment, I do not see any means of attaining the objective other than the cat. That animal confronts a disaster and I can do him great service. How else can I remain alive now? There are three enemies who are after me. Therefore, I must resort to my enemy, the cat. I will use the knowledge of kshatriyas[37] and try to ensure its welfare. I have already made up my mind about how I am going to deceive these enemies. The worst of my enemies now faces this worst of hardships. If it is possible, perhaps this fool can be made to understand where his best interests lie. Given this difficulty, perhaps it may be made to have an alliance with me. If one is beset by enemies and if one wishes to save one's life in the midst of a hardship, the preceptors have said that one must have an alliance with a stronger person. A learned enemy is superior to a stupid friend. The prospect of my remaining alive is based on my enemy, the cat. Let me explain to it the means whereby it can save itself. Perhaps this enemy of mine is intelligent.' The rat knew about the time for fighting and the time for an alliance. It knew about artha and objectives.

'"It spoke these conciliatory words to the cat. 'O cat! Are you still alive? I am speaking these fraternal words to you. I wish that you should remain alive. That is best for both of us. O amiable one! You will remain alive, as you used to do earlier. I will save you and even give up my life for your sake. A way to save ourselves completely has presented itself before me. Through that, I am capable of saving you and also ensuring the best for me. Use your intelligence to reflect about the means I will suggest. This is good for you, good for me, and best for both of us. The mongoose and the owl are wicked in their intelligence. O cat! As long as they do not attack me, I am fine. But the shrieking one[38] and the owl with the darting eyes are both glancing towards me. As I am clinging to the branch of this tree, I am becoming extremely anxious. If one treads seven steps together, virtuous people become friends. You are learned. We have lived together. I will act so that you have no fear from death. O cat! Without me, you are incapable of severing this noose. If you do not injure me, I will sever this noose. You live at the top of the tree and I dwell at the root. Both of us have lived in this tree for a long time. All this is known to you. Someone who does not trust anyone and someone who trusts a person who should not be trusted—the learned say that these two are always anxious in their minds and should not be praised. Let the friendship between us increase and let this be an agreement between two virtuous ones. The learned do not praise something that is done after the time for it is over. Know that this is full of purpose and reason and this is the right time for it. I desire that you should remain alive. You desire that I should remain alive. If someone wishes to cross a deep and great river with a piece of wood, the wood takes him across, and he takes the wood across too. If we act together in this way, our safety will be certain. I will save you and you will save me.’ Palita spoke these words, which were full of purpose and beneficial for both of them. Having said this, it was impatient because time was being lost and looked on, hoping that the reasoning would be accepted. Having heard these excellent words, the cat, the learned enemy, replied in words that were full of reasoning and purpose and deserved to be accepted. It was intelligent and could speak well. Looking towards its own situation, it honoured the rat back in conciliatory words and applauded its speech. Its teeth and claws were sharp and its eyes were like lapis lazuli. Lomasha, the cat, gently looked towards the rat and said, ‘O amiable one! O fortunate one! I am delighted that you desire I should remain alive. If you know what is desirable, do it without any reflection. I am gravely afflicted, but you are in a situation that is direr still. Since both of us face difficulties, let us have an alliance. There is no need to think. The time has come. Let us act so that we can ensure our success. If you free me from this difficulty, I will not forget what you have done. I have cast aside my pride and have become devoted to you. I am like a disciple and will work for your welfare. I will follow your instructions. I have sought refuge with you.' When the cat said this and offered to be controlled, Palita again spoke some words that were beneficial and provided arguments and counter-arguments about policy. 'The generous words that you have spoken are not unusual for someone in your situation. You know my ways. Listen to my words, which are for your benefit. The mongoose is giving me great fear and I will crouch under your body. Save me and do not kill me. I am capable of saving you. Also save me from the owl. That inferior one is also seeking to get at me. O friend! I will sever your noose. I am swearing this truthfully.' As Palita came close, Lomasha heard these words, which were full of reason and purpose, and glancing towards it, cheerfully welcomed it with honour.

'"Having thus honoured Palita, the cat, tied to it by a bond of friendship, thought about it patiently. Happily and quickly, it said, 'O fortunate one! Come swiftly. You are a friend whom I love like my own life. O wise one! Through your favours, I will quickly get my life back. I will do whatever I can for you. Make it known to me. I will do whatever you order me to. O friend! We must have an alliance. Once I have been freed from this danger, with my large number of friends and relatives, I will do all the deeds that are for your benefit and bring you pleasure. O amiable one! Once I have been freed from this hardship, I will become yours. I will do whatever brings you pleasure. I am capable of paying you back.' Having persuaded the cat that this was in its own interests, the rat was reassured that the objective could indeed be achieved and entered. Having been reassured by the intelligent cat, the rat fearlessly crouched under the cat's chest, as if it was in the lap of a father or a mother. The rat was curled up under the cat's body. On seeing this, the mongoose and the owl lost all hope and returned to their homes. Palita, knowledgeable about time and place, was curled up there.

'"O king! Waiting for the right time, it slowly began to gnaw through the noose. Afflicted because it was tied up in those bonds, the cat glanced towards the rat. It asked it to sever the noose faster and faster. Palita was severing the noose slowly. The cat continued to urge the rat on. 'O amiable one! Why are you not doing it faster? Do you not wish to accomplish the objective? O destroyer of enemies! Sever the noose before the *shvapacha*[39] arrives here.' Having been thus urged to speed up, the intelligent Palita, accomplished in wisdom, spoke these beneficial words to the cat which was under its control. 'O amiable one! Be quiet. There is no need to speed up for you, or to be frightened. We know about time and one should not laugh at time. If a task is started, or completed, at the wrong time, it does not accomplish the objective. If a task is started at the right time, it accomplishes great objectives. If you are freed at the wrong time, you will become a great danger to me. O friend! Therefore, we must wait for the right time. Why do you wish to rush? When I see the chandala coming, with a weapon in his hand, I will sever the noose then, since both of us will suffer from fear. At that time, you will be freed and will climb up the tree. There will be nothing except a desire to save your life then. O Lomasha! When you are trying to save yourself and are frightened and terrified, climbing up to your branch, I will enter my hole.' Desiring its own welfare, the rat spoke these words to the cat. However, Lomasha was immensely eloquent and knew about the use of words. It desired its own life. Having itself acted swiftly and well, it spoke these words to the rat, which was not hurrying up. 'This is not the way virtuous and affectionate people accomplish the tasks of their friends. When you faced a hardship, you were quickly freed by me. In that way, you should also swiftly do the task that ensures my welfare. O immensely wise one! Make efforts so that both of us are safe. Is it the case that you are remembering my earlier period of enmity towards you? Behold. That has indeed been a wicked act on my part. It is evident that it has led to a reduction in my lifespan. Earlier, in my ignorance, I may have acted in unpleasant ways towards you. You should not harbour that in your mind. I seek your forgiveness. Show me your favours.' The rat was wise and was honoured because it was knowledgeable about the sacred texts. It spoke these excellent words to the cat. 'O cat! I have heard the words that you have spoken to protect your own interests. You should also know about the preservation of my interests. If there is a friendship that results from fear, or if there is a friendship that is full of fear, then one must make great efforts to preserve it. It is like placing one's hand near a snake's mouth. If a person has an agreement with a stronger person and does not protect himself, he will find it causes him injury, like eating something that is unwholesome. There is no one who is truly an enemy. There is no one who is truly a well-wisher. Interests are bound to interests, like an elephant to a wild elephant.[40] When a task has been completed, no one looks to see who did it. That is the reason all tasks should be left with a little bit still undone. At that time,[41] your task will be determined by fear. You will be focused on running away and won't be able to seize me. Most of the strands have been severed. There is only one that is still left. O Lomasha! Restrain yourself. I will swiftly sever this.' They conversed in this way, both overcome by fear.

'"When the night was over, Lomasha was overcome by terror. It became morning and the chandala named Parigha could be seen, with a weapon in his hand. He was malformed and dark brown. His hips were broad. His head was shaven. He was rough and was surrounded by a circle of dogs. His ears were pointed and his mouth was large. He was aged and terrible in appearance. On seeing him, who looked like one of Yama's messengers, the cat was terrified out of its wits. Frightened, it addressed Palita. 'What will you do now?' On seeing that terrible person, the mongoose and the owl were instantly scared and were filled with hopelessness. The two intelligent and strong ones had contracted an agreement and because of that good policy, could no longer be struck with force.[42] They saw that the cat and the rat had concluded an agreement for the sake of accomplishing their objectives. Therefore, the owl and the mongoose swiftly returned to their own homes. The rat severed the cat's strand. As soon as it had been freed, the cat rushed up the tree. Not only was its terrible enemy freed, Palita was also freed from its fear and entered its hole. Lomasha went up the tree. The chandala looked in every direction and gathered up his snare. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His hopes having been destroyed, in a short instant, the chandala left the spot and returned to his own home.

'"Lomasha was freed from the fear and obtained life, something that is very difficult to obtain. From the top of the tree, it spoke to Palita, in the hole. 'Without having had a conversation with me, you suddenly ran away. I am grateful because you did something good for me. I hope you do not suspect me. You inspired trust in me and you gave me my life. When it is time to enjoy yourself with a friend, why are you avoiding me? If an evil-minded person has an agreement with a friend and does not follow it up later, then, when he faces difficulties, he will not find a friend. O friend! You made me a friend because of my capacity. Having made me a friend, you should now enjoy that friendship. All my friends and all my relatives will show you honour, like a disciple towards a beloved preceptor. I will also worship you, with my large number of friends and relatives. Why will a grateful person not honour someone who has given him life? You are the lord of my body and my home. All the riches that I possess are at your command. O wise one! Be my adviser. Instruct me, like a father. I swear on my life that you need have no fear of me. We may possess strength, but you are like Ushanas[43] himself in your intelligence. If your counsel is united with that strength, victory will be assured.'

'"Having been addressed in these conciliatory words by the cat, the rat, who knew about supreme objectives, wished to ensure its own welfare and spoke these gentle words. 'O Lomasha! I have heard everything that you have said. Now listen to the way I see it. Friends must be examined. Enemies must also be examined. In this world, this is seen in extremely subtle ways and is revered as wisdom. There are well-wishers in the form of enemies. There are enemies in the form of friends. Those who have been won through conciliation do not comprehend this, because they are subservient to affection and greed. No one is born as an enemy. No one is born as a friend. Because of their different capacities, they become friends and enemies. If it is seen that there is a selfish objective of someone being alive because another person is alive, then that other person is a friend, but only as long as there is no other catastrophe. There is no friendship that is permanent. There is no enmity that is permanent. Friendship and enmity result from a specific objective. In the course of time, a friend may become an enemy. An enemy may also become a friend. Self-interest is the most important. If a person does not know about the objective and trusts friends and never trusts enemies, his life becomes unstable. If a person does not know about the objective and turns his mind towards good conduct, regardless of whether it is a friend or an enemy, his intelligence is unstable. One should not trust someone who should not be trusted. One should not even trust someone who should be trusted. The dangers that arise from trust sever the roots. Relationships like father, mother, son, maternal uncle, nephew, matrimonial allies, relatives—all these are based on a purpose. A mother and a father abandon a beloved son who has fallen.[44] People protect their own selves. Behold the essence of selfishness. I think that you are deceitful in your wisdom. Immediately after being freed, you seek to ensure the happiness and safety of someone you should hunt. You descended from the banyan tree to this spot. Earlier, because of your fickleness, you did not realize that there was a snare here. Someone who is fickle cannot do something for his own self, forget others. There is no doubt that a fickle person destroys all tasks. You have spoken pleasant words and have said that I am loved by you. All of that is false. Listen in detail to the reasons. One becomes a beloved because of some reason. Enmity is also because of a reason. In this world of the living, everything is for a purpose. There is no one who is always loved by another. Friendship between two brothers born from the same womb, the affection of a husband and wife towards each other—I know of no affection in this world that is without a reason. If a brother or a wife is enraged, after the immediate reason is over, they naturally become affectionate again.[45] However, other people do not turn affectionate in this way. Some become beloved because of gifts. Others become beloved because of words, and still others because of mantras and offerings. People are loved to accomplish some task. Affection results from a reason. When the reason is absent, it is no longer there. When the reason ceases to exist, the affection also withdraws itself. What reason can I think of, so that I might be your beloved? We should know that there is no connection beyond my being your food. Time changes the reason and self-interest is followed. I am wise. I know about self-interest and accept that people follow it. You should not speak such words to someone who is learned and knows about self-interest. This is the wrong time. There is no longer a catastrophe. You must therefore have reasons of self-interest. I am driven by self-interest and know that war and peace are both fickle. From one moment to another, they change their forms, like clouds. You were my enemy. Later, you became my friend. You have again become my enemy. Behold the fickleness of objective. As long as there was a reason, there was friendship. The reason has now gone and we have gone back to earlier times. With the progress of time, the reason has also gone. You are my ultimate enemy and circumstances made you my friend. With that task having been accomplished, we have returned to our natural enmity. I know the truth about what the sacred texts have laid down. How can I then enter the snare that you have set for me? I have been freed through your valour and you have been freed through my valour. We have favoured each other through our conducts and there is no further association between us. O amiable one! You have accomplished your objective. My purpose has also been met. You have no other purpose with me, other than eating me. I am the food and you are the feeder. I am weak and you are strong. When we are unequal in strength, there can be no alliance between us. I honour your wisdom. Immediately after being freed, you wish to assure me of happiness and safety and wish to hunt and devour me. You were caught because you were in search of food. Having been freed, you have ventured out for food. I know about the sacred texts. You are seeking an alliance with me because you certainly wish to eat me. I know that you are hungry and that it is the time for you to eat. You are seeking an alliance with me, because you wish to hunt and eat me. O friend! You have sons and wives and are looking towards me. You say that you wish to act so as to serve me. But I don't find that appealing. If your beloved wife and sons see me with you, will they be cheerful at this affection? Will they not eat me up? I will not associate with you. The reason for our association is over. If you remember the good deed I did for you, think of what will be auspicious for me now. Will a wise person venture out of his territory when a natural enemy is afflicted and hungry and is hunting for food? May you be safe. I will go far away from you. O Lomasha! Retreat. I will not associate with you. Proximity with someone who is powerful is never praised. O wise one! I must always be terrified of stronger ones, even if they are peaceful. If there is anything else that I can do for you, tell me what I should do for you. I will give everything that you desire, but I will never give up my own self. To protect one's own self, offspring, a kingdom, jewels and prosperity can be given up. For the sake of protecting one's own self, everything should be given up. We have heard that it has been seen that prosperity, wealth and gems, even if they are presently with enemies, return if one acts so as to remain alive. It is said that riches and jewels can be given up, but not one's own self. The self must always be protected, even at the cost of wives and riches. If men act so as to protect the foundations of their lives, having examined the reasons properly, they do not confront any catastrophes that result from their own sins. If the weak know the stronger enemy well and have made up their minds to protect themselves, they cannot be dislodged from that resolution.' Thus did Palita speak these words of censure.

'"The cat was ashamed and spoke these words to the rat. 'I honour your wisdom and the fact that you are devoted to my welfare. You have spoken words that are full of reason, though my views have been different. O virtuous one! But you should not take me to be other than what I am. You have truly granted me my life and my affection results from that. I know about dharma. I know about the qualities. In particular, I am grateful. I am affectionate towards my friends, especially those who are like you. O virtuous one! Given these reasons, you should not avoid me. If you avoid me, I, and all my relatives, will give up our lives. I am spirited and the wise have said that words of censure are enough to instruct people like me. You know about the nature of dharma. You should not suspect that I might be the cause of your death.' Having been thus praised by the cat, the rat thought and spoke these grave and purposeful words to the cat. 'You are virtuous and I have heard the words of reason you have spoken to me. Though I am pleased, I do not trust you. By praising me, or by offering me riches, you won't be able to get me to associate with you. O friend! The wise do not subjugate themselves to the enemy. On this, there was a verse sung by Ushanas. Listen to it. "If one has had an agreement with a more powerful enemy to achieve a common end, one must act in a controlled way. Once the task has been accomplished, one should not trust. In every situation, one must protect one's own life. All one's possessions and offspring exist only as long as one is alive. In brief, the supreme view of all the texts about policy is that one should not trust. Therefore, if one desires the welfare of one's own self, one must completely distrust men.[46] Those who are weak, but do not trust, are not killed by their enemies. But if they trust, even the relatively strong are quickly slain by the weak." O cat! Thus, I must always protect my own self from someone like you. You must also protect yourself from the chandala, whose anger has been generated.' As it was speaking in this way, terror arose in the cat and it swiftly entered its hole. Palita knew about the true purport of the sacred texts and was full of intelligence and capacity. It was wise. Having said all this, it went to another hole. Palita was wise and intelligent, though weak. Because of this, though alone, it was able to overcome many other immensely strong enemies. A learned person must have an alliance with a capable enemy, just as the rat and the cat resorted to each other and escaped.

'"I have instructed you about the path to be followed in the dharma of kshatriyas. O lord of the earth! I have recounted it in detail. Listen to it briefly again. Those two were firm in their enmity towards each other, but acted with supreme affection. They then turned their minds towards subjugating each other. However, by resorting to the strength of its intelligence, the wiser one subjugated the other one. But if care is not exercised, a wiser person can be subjugated, even by someone who is not learned. A person who is scared must act as if he is not scared. Even if he does not trust, he must act as if he trusts. One must be careful and not be fickle. If one is fickle, one is destroyed. There is a time for allying with enemies. There is a time for fighting with friends. O Yudhishthira! Those who know about the truth have said that one must always act in this way. O great king! Having thought about this, having understood the purport of the sacred texts and having engaged oneself with care, one must act fearfully, before the cause for fright presents itself. One must determine one's action as if one is frightened and decide on counters. Intelligence results from fear, provided that one engages oneself with care. O king! There is no fear for a person who is frightened of fear that hasn't materialized. However, a great fear is generated for a person who is not frightened, but is careless. One must never offer the counsel, 'Do not be scared.' That leads to ignorance. If one knows, one can go to those who know about a means to get out of the hardship. A person who is scared must therefore act as if he is not scared. Even if he does not trust, he must act as if he trusts. Having comprehended the gravity of the task, he must not indulge in any falsehood. O Yudhishthira! In this way, I have recounted the history to you. O son! Having heard in the midst of these well-wishers, act accordingly. Use your intelligence to first know the difference between an enemy and a friend, the time for war and peace and means of escaping from a difficulty. For a common objective, one must have an alliance with a stronger enemy. One must associate and act in accordance with the agreement. However, having accomplished the objective, one must not trust. O Yudhishthira! This policy is not against the three objectives.[47] Having been instructed and heard, delight the subjects again. O Pandava! Along your path, advance with the brahmanas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage!

Brahmanas bring the greatest benefit, in this world and in heaven. O lord! They know about dharma and are always grateful. O lord of men! They are auspicious in their deeds and if revered first, ensure victory. O king! The kingdom is the supreme goal. After that, as is proper, in due course, you will obtain fame, deeds and offspring in the lineage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a king knows about these excellent words about war and peace, full of specific intelligence, he should always looks towards them and practise them, when that king is encircled by enemies.”’

Chapter 1465(137)

'Yudhishthira said, "O mighty-armed one! You have counselled to the effect that the enemy must never be trusted. But if he trusts nobody, how will the king conduct himself? O king! If he trusts, there is a great danger to the king. O king! But if he does not trust, how will a king triumph over his enemies? I have a doubt about this. O grandfather! Dispel this confusion in my mind, which has arisen after you have told me the account about distrust."

'Bhishma replied, "O Kounteya! O king! Listen to the account of the conversation that took place in Brahmadatta's abode between Brahmadatta and Pujani. In the inner quarters of Brahmadatta's palace in Kampilya, a bird named Pujani dwelt for a long time. Like the *jivajivaka* bird, she knew about the cries of all beings.[48] She knew everything. Even though she had been born in an inferior species, she knew about all forms of dharma. There, she gave birth to an immensely radiant son. At the same time, through the queen, the king had a son. Every day, she[49] would go to the shores of the ocean and bring back two fruits to nourish her son and the prince. She would give one fruit to her son and the other to the prince. The fruits tasted like amrita and increased strength and energy. Having eaten the fruit, the prince grew very fast. Once, he got away from the hands of the nurse and began to play with the bird. O Indra among kings! Having taken the bird,[50] which had been born at the same time, to a deserted place, he killed it and returned to his nurse's arms. After having returned from collecting fruit, the bird saw her dead son lying down on the ground, killed by the child. She was distressed on seeing her slain son and her face became full of tears. Pujani was tormented by grief and spoke these words. 'There is no affection or friendship in association with kshatriyas. They serve you for a purpose. Having accomplished the objective, they abandon you. Kshatriyas should never be trusted. They injure everyone. Having caused the injury, they always seek to pointlessly placate. I will now act in the same way and exact vengeance. He is ungrateful. He is violent. He has destroyed my trust. He has committed a triple sin by killing someone who was born and reared with him, someone who ate with him and someone who sought refuge with him.' Having said this, she used her talons to tear out the eyes of the king's son. Once she had torn these out, Pujani was comforted and again spoke these words. 'If a sin is perpetrated voluntarily, it immediately devolves on the doer. However, if a deed is done in reaction to another deed, it doesn't destroy good or bad merit. Even if such a wicked deed is perpetrated, it doesn't descend on the doer. Instead, it descends on the sons, the sons' sons and the daughters' sons.'

'"Brahmadatta said, 'We committed an injury against you and you have taken a counteraction. Both of us are now equal. O Pujani! Stay with me and do not go.'

'"Pujani replied, 'When one has injured someone else, the learned do not praise remaining there. It is better to withdraw from there. O king! Even if there are words of conciliation, one cannot trust someone with whom there has been an act of enmity. A foolish person will soon comprehend that enmity is never pacified. Once there is enmity towards each other, sons and grandsons are dragged into it. Once the sons and grandsons are destroyed, it carries over to the world after death. Under every circumstance, distrust of those towards whom there is enmity brings happiness. One must never act so as to trust such a person. Otherwise, trust itself will be destroyed. One should not trust someone who should not be trusted. One should not even trust someone who should be trusted. If you so desire, you can make others trust you. But you must not trust others. The mother and the father are the best among relatives. The wife is wear and tear[51] and the son is nothing but a seed. The brother is an enemy and the friend possesses a moist hand.[52] One's atman alone knows happiness and unhappiness. If there has been enmity towards each other, an alliance is not possible. The purpose behind my staying here has been transgressed. If a person who was earlier terrified by strength has committed an injury, and is now worshipped with riches and honour, he will always be distrustful. A spirited person who was earlier respected and is now dishonoured should no longer dwell in a place where he was first respected and subsequently dishonoured. For a long time, I dwelt in your abode without suffering any injury. But an enmity has arisen now. May you be happy. I will go elsewhere.’

‘“Brahmadatta said, ‘If one acts as a reaction to an act that has been committed, that is not reckoned as a crime. You have freed yourself of a debt. O Pujani! Stay with me and do not go.’

‘“Pujani replied, ‘An alliance can never again be forged between someone who has been injured and someone who has caused the injury. The hearts of the one who has been injured and the one who has done the injury know this.’

‘“Brahmadatta said, ‘There can again be friendship between someone who has been injured and someone who has caused the injury. It has been seen that the enmity has been pacified and there has been no further wicked act.’

‘“Pujani replied, ‘Enmity can never be overcome. One must not be assured because there has been conciliation. It is childish to believe in trust. Therefore, it is better that I should not be seen. There are those who cannot quickly be seized through extremely sharp weapons, but are captured through conciliation, like elephants with other elephants.’

‘“Brahmadatta said, ‘Dwelling together leads to affection, even towards someone who may cause one’s death. They trust each other, like the shvapacha and the dog. Even among those who have been enemies, dwelling together leads to gentleness. Like water on the leaf of a lotus, that enmity does not linger.’

‘“Pujani replied, ‘The learned ones know that enmity arises from five causes—resulting from women, resulting from dwelling places, resulting from words, resulting from rivalries and resulting from injuries. In particular, the kshatriya must kill a person who causes any of these. Considering the place, the strength and other such things, he does this covertly or overtly. Therefore, one must never trust someone against whom an injury has been committed, even if he used to be a well-wisher. The enmity will remain concealed, like fire hidden inside wood. O king! Like Ourva’s fire in the ocean,[53] the fire of an enmity is never pacified, be it through riches, punishment, conciliation or teaching. O king! Once the fire of enmity has been ignited and there has been an act of injury, it is not pacified without burning down one of the two parties. If a person has earlier committed an injurious act, even if he is worshipped with riches and honour, he will not find peace or trust. His act gives force to his fear. I have never committed an injurious act towards you, nor you towards me. The trust was earlier unblemished. I no longer have that trust.'

'"Brahmadatta said, 'Every act is done by time and so are all the different kinds of action. Since everything is undertaken by time, who has injured whom? Birth and death occur in the same way. All deeds are undertaken by time and the one who is alive is only an instrument. Some are killed at the same time, others one after another. Time consumes beings, like a fire that has received kindling. O beautiful one! In what we do towards each other, I, nor you, are the principal agents. Time always determines the happiness and unhappiness of living beings. Following time, dwell here with affection. You will not be injured. O Pujani! I have forgiven what you have done. Pardon me.'

'"Pujani replied, 'If time is the principal agent, then there would never have been any enmity. When a relative has been killed, why do other relatives seek vengeance? In earlier times, why did the gods and the asuras strike each other? If time determines happiness and unhappiness, existence and non-existence, then, when someone is ill, why do physicians use medicines? If time does the healing, what is the need for medication? If one is senseless with great sorrow, why does one lament? If time is the principal agent, why does dharma accrue to a doer? Your son slew my son and was injured by me. O lord of the earth! After that, I deserve to be captured by you. Because of sorrow over my son, I committed a sin towards your son. Listen to the truth from me. I deserve to be struck by you. Men seek out birds to kill or to sport. There is no third association, other than killing and capture. Because of fear of being slain or being captured, there are those who try to escape. Those who are learned about dharma say that there is unhappiness in death and calamity. Everyone loves his life. Everyone loves his sons. Everyone wishes to avoid misery and calamity. Everyone desires happiness. O Brahmadatta! Old age is misery. The destruction of riches is misery. Misery is dwelling with someone who is injurious. Misery is separation from something one wants. There is misery in enmity and captivity, or in violence and acts caused by women. People are always whirled around between unhappiness and happiness. Some foolish people say that there is no misery in another person's sorrow. But there will be such speculation only among gentlemen who have experienced no grief. How can someone who has sorrowed and has been afflicted with grief speak in this way? A person who knows about the essence of all misery knows that one’s own self is no different from another person. O king! O scorcher of enemies! What I have done towards you and what you have done towards me are incapable of being expiated over one hundred years. Because of what we have done towards each other, there cannot be an alliance. Whenever you repeatedly remember your son, there will be a new enmity. Having performed an injurious act, if someone wishes to act affectionately, there can be no alliance with him. It is like an earthen pot that has been shattered. Those who know the purport of the sacred texts have determined that distrust leads to the rise of happiness. In earlier times, Ushanas chanted two verses to Prahrada. “He who trusts the words, true or false, of an enemy, is slain, like those who believe in honey are snared by dry grass.[54] The enmity in a family is not pacified for ten yugas. Even if one man remains in the family, this is spoken about.” Kings may hide their enmity and resort to conciliation. But later, they crush the enemy, like a full pot against a rock.[55] O king! One must never trust a person against whom one has committed an evil act. Having injured the other person, one only reaps misery from the trust.’

‘“Brahmadatta said, ‘Without trusting others, one can never accomplish the objectives. If one is always terrified, it is like being dead.’

‘“Pujani replied, ‘When there are wounds in the feet, one can only creep along on those feet. Even if those feet are guarded well, one cannot run on them, even for a brief moment. If a person has sore eyes and looks at the wind, it is certain that his eyes will be wounded even more by the wind. If, because of confusion, a person has resorted to a bad path and does not know his own strength, his life will come to an end. If a man ploughs the field without knowing about the rain, his endeavour will be inferior and no crops will be reaped. If a person always eats food that is beneficial, regardless of whether it is bitter, astringent, tasty or devoid of taste, he will be like one who is immortal. If a man does not know the consequences and ignoring wholesome food greedily eats something else, that is the end of his life. Destiny and human endeavour exist and depend on each other. Deeds are resorted to by the enterprising and destiny by the impotent. One must do deeds that are good for one’s own self, regardless of whether they are harsh or mild. He who is not devoted to action will always be devoured by some disaster. Therefore, whenever there is doubt over an act, one must exhibit one’s valour. Men must give up everything and perform acts that are good for their own selves. Those who are learned say that knowledge, bravery, skill, strength and patience are five natural friends and make things happen in this world. It is said that men can obtain residences, metals,[56] fields, wives and well-wishers everywhere. A wise person is always delighted and is always radiant. He does not frighten anyone. Even when there is an attempt to terrify him, he is not scared. If a person is intelligent, his wealth always increases, bit by bit. He bases himself in self-control and undertakes his tasks through skill. Men of limited intelligence are tied to their houses by bonds of affection. They have bad wives who devour their flesh, like female crabs and young crabs.[57] Other men are deficient in intelligence and think of homes, fields, friends and their own country as belonging to them. But one must flee from a country that is afflicted, or is plagued by disease and famine. One must always go and dwell elsewhere and live there, always respected. Therefore, I will go elsewhere. I do not wish to dwell with you. O king! What has been done by your son cannot be accepted. One must keep a bad wife, a bad son, a bad king, a bad relative and a bad country a great distance away. There is no trust in a bad friend. How can there be pleasure in a bad wife? There can be no growth in a bad kingdom. There can be no livelihood in a bad country. There can be no association with a bad friend, because that friendship will always be fickle. When there is a monetary disaster, a bad relative becomes disrespectful. One who speaks pleasantly is truly a wife. One who provides growth is truly a son. If there is trust, one is truly a friend. If there is a livelihood, that is truly a country. Though the king is fierce in his rule, there is no exercise of force. He[58] cherishes the poor and does not avoid an association with them. The wife, the country, friends, sons, allies and relatives—all these possess qualities, and the king has the eye of dharma. A king who is careful and rules is the foundation of the three objectives.[59] The subjects who do not know about dharma are restrained and head towards their destruction. A tax can be imposed and one-sixth can be collected as tax. However, a king who does not protect the subjects well is nothing but a thief. If a king himself grants assurance but does not act according to that norm, he is wicked. He will collect the adharma of all the people and go to hell. If a king grants assurance and acts according to that norm, he is known as one who protects the subjects according to dharma and grants every kind of happiness. Prajapati Manu said that a king possesses seven attributes—father, mother, preceptor, protector, Agni, Vaishravana[60] and Yama. By exhibiting compassion towards the subjects, the king is the father of the kingdom. A man who behaves falsely towards him is reborn as inferior species. By nourishing those who are distressed, he is like a mother. Like Agni, he consumes wicked ones. By controlling, he is like Yama. By releasing objects of desire, he is like Kubera, the one who grants wishes. Like a preceptor, he instructs about dharma. He protects like a protector. When the king delights the residents of the city and the countryside with his qualities, he protects with his attributes and with dharma and is not dislodged from his kingdom. He himself knows about the rites followed in the city and the countryside. That king enjoys happiness, in this world and in the next. If the subjects are always anxious and oppressed by the burden of taxes, or overcome by various calamities, then he[61] will head towards destruction. When his subjects prosper, like large lotuses in a pond, he attains greatness in the worlds and enjoys a share in the fruits of all sacrifices. O king! Strife with a strong person is not praised. If one is seized by a stronger person, how can there be a kingdom? How can there be happiness?'"

'Bhishma said, "The bird spoke these words to King Brahmadatta. With the king's permission, she then headed for her desired direction. This was the conversation between Brahmadatta and Pujani. O best among the Bharata lineage! I have recounted it to you. What else do you wish to hear?"'

Chapter 1466(138)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O grandfather! When the yugas progress and dharma decays, when the world is afflicted by bandits, how should one establish oneself?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about the policy for times of calamity. At such a time, the lord of the earth should conduct himself by abandoning compassion. On this, there is the example of an ancient history. There was a conversation between Bharadvaja and King Shatruntapa. King Shatruntapa was a maharatha from Souvira. He approached Kaninka[62] and asked him about his notion of artha. How can one obtain something that has not been got? Having obtained it, how can it be increased? When it has increased, how can it be protected? When it has been protected, how can it be used? The brahmana had determined the nature of artha.

‘“When he was asked about his determination of artha, he spoke these words, full of reason, in reply. ‘He[63] must always raise the rod of chastisement. He must always exhibit his manliness. He must not have any weaknesses. He must look towards the weaknesses of others, searching for openings. On seeing that the rod is always raised, people will be extremely frightened. Therefore, all beings must be restrained with the rod. This is praised by learned people who have seen the truth. Out of the four, the rod is said to be the most important.[64] When the foundation has been severed, all those who earn a living from it are also killed. When the root of a tree has been severed, how can the branches remain? A learned person first strikes down the root of the enemy’s side. After this, he makes all the aides and the allies[65] follow him. At a time of difficulty, without thinking about it, he must follow good counsel, show great valour, fight well and retreat well. He must be humble only in his words. His heart must be like a razor. He must first speak mildly, abandoning desire and anger. To accomplish an objective, he can have an alliance with a rival, but must not trust him. Having accomplished the objective, a clear-sighted person will quickly withdraw from the alliance. Assuming the guise of a friend, the enemy must be assured through conciliation. But one must always be careful about the enemy, since he is like a snake which has entered the house. If the intelligence of the other person can be overwhelmed, he must be conciliated with what has already happened. If the other person is not wise, he can be conciliated with the future. And a learned person can be conciliated with the present. If he[66] desires prosperity, he must join his hands in supplication, take pledges, resort to conciliation, bow down his head at the time of speaking and even shed tears. As long as the time of calamity continues, the enemy can be borne on the shoulder. But when the right time arrives, he[67] must be smashed, like an earthen pot against a rock. O Indra among kings! It is better to blaze for a short period of time like ebony, than to burn without smoke for a long period of time, like chaff of grain. If one knows about the nature of artha, it is futile to associate with an ungrateful person. Such a person only enjoys the riches and is disrespectful when the task has been accomplished. Therefore, in all tasks, something must be left incomplete.[68] To ensure the best for himself, he must act like a cuckoo, a boar, Mount Meru, an empty house, a predatory beast and an actor.[69] He must always be ready to rise up and go to the house of the enemy. Even if the enemy is not well, he must ask him about his welfare. Those who are lazy, those who are impotent, those who are proud, those who are scared of the disapprobation of people and those who are perennially waiting, never accomplish their objectives. The enemy must not know about his weaknesses. But he must know about the weaknesses of the enemy. He must protect his own weaknesses, like a turtle hiding its limbs. Like a crane, he must think of accomplishing his objective.[70] Like a lion, he must show his valour. He must be like a wolf in attacking. In running away, he must be like a rabbit. Drinking, gambling with the dice, women, hunting, singing and musical instruments can be indulged in, but any addiction is sinful. The bow can be made to resemble a blade of grass and he can sleep like a deer.[71] He should be blind when it is best to be blind and he can even resort to being deaf. A discerning person resorts to valour when it is the right time and the right place. If valour does not pay heed to time and place, it is unsuccessful. He must think about the right time and the wrong time, about his strengths and his weaknesses. He must engage himself only after he has discerned the relative strengths. Having made an enemy bow down through the use of the rod, if a king does not restrain him, he is clinging to death, like a pregnant she-mule.[72] A tree with many flowers may bear no fruit. A tree with fruit may be difficult to climb. Sometimes, a mango may seem to be unripe, or cannot be shaken down. The hope should be appropriate to the time and one must not engage oneself if there is an obstacle. The obstacle is due to a cause and he must speak about the reasons that are behind those causes. As long as the reason for the fear has not presented itself, he must seem to be frightened and seek to counter it. Once the fear is seen to have presented itself, he must fearlessly strike against it. A man will not see anything fortunate as long as he does not surmount an uncertainty. If he surmounts the uncertainty, if he remains alive, he will see the fortune. He must know about what has not yet come. He must sever the danger that has presented itself. However, having pacified it, he must act so as to control it, in case it does not decay, but grows again. When the time for happiness has presented itself, those who are intelligent do not think it is good policy to shun it, in the hope of future happiness. A person may have an alliance with an enemy and sleep, happily and trustfully. He is like a person who sleeps atop a tree and awakens only when he falls down. As long as one is capable, whether the task is mild or terrible, one must uplift oneself and act in accordance with dharma. He must tend to all the rivals of his rivals. He must know his own spies and those engaged by the enemy. Spies must be well-appointed in their tasks, in his country and in that of the enemy. Wicked men and ascetics must be made to enter the enemy's kingdom. They act against dharma, are wicked in their conduct and are like thorns to people.[73] They frequent gardens, pleasure grounds, watering places, dwelling houses for travellers, drinking houses, brothels, places of pilgrimage and assemblies. Knowing that they have come, he must control and pacify them. He must not trust a person who should not be trusted. He must not even trust someone who should be trusted. Danger results from trust. One must not trust without examination. Having generated the enemy's trust through assertions of truth and reason, at the right time, when his[74] position is somewhat unstable, one must strike back. He must suspect even those who should not be suspected. He must always suspect someone who should be suspected. There can be danger from someone who should be suspected and its root must be severed. Having generated the enemy’s confidence by not striking him, silence, ochre robes, matted hair and garments of hides, he must then leap on him, like a wolf. For the sake of increasing prosperity, those who created obstructions in the way of wealth must be slain—even if it is a son, a brother, a father, or a well-wisher. If there is an arrogant preceptor who does not know the difference between what should be done and what should not be done, and has thus deviated off the path, the rod must be used to chastise him. He must give his enemy gifts. But then, like a bird with a sharp beak, he must rise against him and destroy all his riches. Without having pierced the inner organs, without having performed terrible deeds and without having killed like a fisherman, one does not obtain supreme prosperity. No one is born as an enemy. No one is born as a friend. Depending on capacity and circumstances, one becomes a friend or an enemy. An enemy must not be freed, even if he is lamenting piteously. One should not grieve after having killed someone who has caused an earlier injury. However, he must always act without malice and endeavour to accumulate and show favours. In a desire for prosperity, he must also endeavour to punish. Before striking, he must speak pleasantly. After striking, it should be even more pleasant. If the head has to be struck down, he must weep and sorrow. If he desires prosperity, he must placate the enemy, comfort him, show him honour and patience and give him reasons for hope. One should not create enmity over minor matters. One should not try to cross a river using one’s arms. The eating of a cow’s horn is a pointless exercise. One’s teeth are ground down and no juices are obtained. The three objectives have three evils and three bonds.[75] Knowing the bonds that can tie one down, one must avoid the evils. A debt that is not repaid, a fire that has not gone out and an enemy who is not eliminated, repeatedly keep on growing. Therefore, even a trifle becomes difficult to resist. A debt that keeps on increasing and an enemy who has been defeated can lead to terrible calamity, like a disease that is ignored. One must always be careful and complete the task well. When a thorn is not properly cut out, it can create pain for a long time. The enemy’s kingdom must be destroyed by killing the men, devastating the roads and destroying the mines. The king must not be anxious and must be as far-sighted about the future as the vulture, as active as the dog, as valorous as the lion, as sceptical as the crow and have a movement like that of the snake. He must seed dissension among the foremost members of the groups and placate those who love him. He must protect the advisers and ensure that they do not create dissension and opposition. He will be disrespected if he is mild. He will be hated if he is fierce. He must be fierce at a time when fierceness is required and mild at a time when mildness is required. Mildness can be used to kill those who are mild. Mildness can also be used to kill those who are terrible. There is nothing that cannot be obtained through mildness. Therefore, mildness is superior to fierceness. He must be mild at times and terrible at other times. In this way, his tasks become successful and he becomes superior to the enemy. When a learned man is against him, he must not be reassured simply because that person is a long distance away. An intelligent person has long arms and can be injurious, if he has been harmed. He must not cross when the other shore cannot be reached. He must not take what can be seized back again.

Chapter 1467(139)

‘Yudhishthira said, “When the supreme forms of dharma decay and are transgressed by all the people, adharma transforms into dharma and dharma goes into adharma. Boundaries are broken down and the determination to follow dharma is agitated. O lord of the earth! The world is oppressed by kings and thieves. All the ashramas are confused and the duties are destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Fear is seen from desire, confusion and avarice. O king! Everyone is always distrustful and frightened. They use fraud to kill and deceive each other. The country is ablaze and brahmanas are afflicted. The rains do not shower down. Dissension and strife arise. All the means of sustenance on earth are taken over by bandits. When that terrible time arrives, how does a brahmana survive? O lord of men! Because of extreme compassion, he may be unwilling to give up his sons and grandsons.[77] O grandfather! How will he conduct himself? Tell me that. How will the king conduct himself when the world has been rendered impure? O scorcher of enemies! How can artha and dharma be prevented from decaying?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! The king is the foundation for the people to obtain yoga, kshema, good rains and lack of fear from disease and death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have no doubt that the king is the foundation of everything in krita, treta, dvapara and kali. When a time that causes confusion among subjects arrives, one must live on the basis of the strength of discernment. On this, an ancient history is recounted. It concerns a conversation between Vishvamitra and a chandala in the hut of the chandala. O king! In ancient times, in the intervening period[78] between treta and dvapara, it was ordained by destiny that there should be a terrible drought for twelve years. At the end of the yuga, subjects became extremely aged. As treta gave away and dvapara took hold, the thousand-eyed one[79] did not rain. Jupiter[80] moved in a retrograde direction. The moon abandoned its characteristics and moved along a southern path. There was no dew at the end of the night. There were no collections of clouds. The flow of water in the rivers became less and in some places, it disappeared. Because of destiny, the natural condition and beauty of lakes, rivers, wells and springs were destroyed. The water in waterbodies dried up and water was no longer distributed.[81] There were no sacrifices and recitations of svadha. All the auspicious sounds of vashatkara also ceased. Agriculture and animal husbandry were destroyed. Shops and markets disappeared. There were no assemblies of people and all the great festivals vanished. Bones and skeletons were strewn around. The place was frequented by large numbers of demons. Most of the cities were emptied. Villages and habitations were burnt up. Sometimes, this was because of thieves. Sometimes, this was because of weapons. Sometimes, this was because of oppressive kings. They were afraid of each other and the desolate spots were also generally empty. No resolutions were made to the gods. The old and the young were abandoned. Cows, goats and buffaloes fought against each other[82] and perished. Brahmanas were killed. There was an end to protection. The stores of herbs were destroyed. The men and the earth turned almost brown then. O Yudhishthira! At that fearful time, dharma was in decay. All the mortals were hungry and ate each other. The rishis abandoned their rituals. They abandoned the sacrificial fire and the gods. They abandoned their hermitages and ran around, here and there.

'"The illustrious maharshi Vishvamitra was without a house.[83] The intelligent one was afflicted by hunger and wandered around in every direction. On one occasion, in the forest, he came upon the houses of violent shvapachas, who killed animals and ate their flesh. The place was strewn with broken pots and the hides of dogs. There were heaps of shattered bones from boars and asses. There were pots made of skulls. It was strewn with garments of the dead and ornamented with used garlands.[84] The huts were decorated with garlands made from the cast-off skins of snakes. The temples bore flags made out of the feathers of owls. There were iron bells and the place was surrounded by packs of dogs. Afflicted by hunger, the great rishi, Gadhi's son, entered there. He made great efforts to search for some food there. Though he was begging for alms, Koushika could find nothing there.[85] There was no meat, rice, roots or fruit, or anything else. Koushika thought, 'Alas! A great hardship has come upon me.’ Because of his weakness, in that hamlet of the chandalas, he fell down on the ground. O supreme among kings! The sage thought, ‘Do I have any good merits left? How can I avoid a pointless death?’ O king! The sage then saw some dog meat hung out from a rope in the chandala’s house, from an animal that had just been killed by a weapon. He thought, ‘I must steal this now. Other than this, there is no other means for me to remain alive. In a time of catastrophe, it has been determined that even an especially distinguished person can steal. It has been determined that this must be in succession, from an earlier category to the next. One must first take from someone who is inferior and then from someone who is equal. If these are impossible, one can take from an eminent person, even if he follows dharma. I will therefore take it from those who live on the outside fringes. I do not see any sin in this theft. I will steal the meat.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having used his intelligence to determine this, Vishvamitra, the great sage, began to sleep at the spot where he had fallen down. When he saw that it was night and everyone in the chandala hamlet was asleep, the illustrious one arose and gently entered the hut.

‘“The chandala was asleep. His eyes were covered with mucus. His voice was broken and harsh and he was unpleasant to look at. He asked, ‘When the hamlet of the chandalas is asleep, who is stirring the rope? I am awake. I am not asleep. I am terrible and I will kill you.’ At these sudden and forceful words and anxious at the prospect of his actually doing this, he replied, ‘I am Vishvamitra.’ The chandala heard these words from the maharshi who had perfected his soul and was terrified. He leapt up from his supine position. Tears flowed from his eyes.

‘“He joined his hands in salutation, showed a great deal of honour and told Koushika, ‘O, brahmana! What do you wish to do here in the night?’ Vishvamitra assured Matanga[86] and replied, ‘I am hungry and have almost lost my life. I will steal the dog’s haunch. The breath of my life is ebbing away. The hunger is destroying my memory. Though I know my own dharma, I will steal the dog’s haunch. Despite begging everywhere, I could find no food until I saw some in your house. Then I turned my mind to sin. I will steal the dog’s haunch. A thirsty person will drink dirty water. There is no shame for someone who is looking for food. Hunger destroys dharma. I will steal the dog’s haunch. Agni is the priest and the mouth of the gods and the illustrious one's footsteps are clean. Just as the one who devours everything still remains a brahmana, know that so will I, according to dharma.' The chandala said, 'O maharshi! Listen to my words. Having heard me, act accordingly, so that dharma is not made to decay. The learned say that dogs are the worst among animals. The worst part of the body is said to be the thighs and the haunches. O maharshi! You did not act properly when you decided to commit this perverse deed. You should not steal from a chandala, in particular, food that you should not eat. Look towards some other means so that you may be successful in remaining alive. O great sage! Do not destroy your austerities because of this greed for meat. You know that this is a forbidden path. You should not act so as to mix up dharma.[87] O supreme among those who know about dharma! You should not abandon dharma.' O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been thus addressed, the great sage, Vishvamitra, afflicted by hunger, again replied in these words. 'I have been running around for a very long time, without any food. There is no other means for me to remain alive. If one faces a hardship, one should do whatever is possible to remain alive, and if possible, act in accordance with dharma. Indra's dharma is from kshatriyas and Agni's for brahmanas. The brahmana Agni is my strength and I will eat at the time when I am hungry. One should unhesitatingly act so as to remain alive. It is better to be alive than dead. One can follow dharma only if one remains alive. In my desire to remain alive, I will also eat what should not be eaten. I have used my intelligence to determine this earlier. Grant me permission. I am following the dharma of remaining alive and will cleanse all the impurities through my knowledge and austerities, like stellar bodies dispelling great darkness.' The shvapacha said, 'If you eat this, I do not think that you will obtain your breath of life, a long lifespan, or the satisfaction of amrita. Beg for something else. Do not set your mind on begging for, and eating, dogs. Dogs should not be eaten by brahmanas.' Vishvamitra replied, 'O shvapacha! At a time of famine, no other meat is easily available, or rice. Nor do I possess riches. I am afflicted by hunger and have lost all hope of even being able to move. I think that dog meat will provide the six different kinds of flavours.'[88] The shvapacha said, 'O brahmana! Brahmanas and kshatriyas should only eat five animals that have five claws.[89] If you accept the proofs of the sacred texts, do not pointlessly have a desire to eat what should not be eaten.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘When he was hungry, Agastya ate the asura Vatapi.[90] I am afflicted and agitated by hunger. I will eat the dog’s haunch.’ The shvapacha said, ‘Beg for something else. You should not act like this. You should certainly not act in this way. However, since you so wish, take the dog’s haunch.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘The virtuous act in accordance with dharma and I will follow their conduct.[91] I think that eating this dog’s haunch is better than eating food obtained from sacrifices.’ The shvapacha said, ‘If someone has followed an unrighteous path, this does not become eternal dharma. You should not vainly engage in wicked conduct on the basis of deceitful and false reasons.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘Since I am a rishi, I will not do anything wicked, or anything that should not be done. I think that a dog and a deer are the same. Therefore, I will eat the dog’s haunch.’ The shvapacha said, ‘The rishi’s[92] right to eat and the act that he did was for the sake of brahmanas. Dharma is that which is not wicked and it must be protected, by whatever means that are possible.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘I am a brahmana and this body is my friend. In this world, it is worshipped as the most loved. Since I desire to maintain it, I will take this. I am not frightened of any violence that may result from this.’ The shvapacha said, ‘Do as you wish. There are men who act so as to give up their lives, instead of eating what should not be eaten. They obtain all their desires. O learned one! Since you are afflicted by hunger, do what appeals to you.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘There is an uncertainty about what will happen to me after death. Perhaps all my deeds will be destroyed. If I protect the foundation by eating what should not be eaten, I may still return with a cleansed soul.[93] In my knowledge, I am satisfied that the two[94] are distinct, like the skin and sight, and thinking that they are the same is confusion. I am certain that if I act in this way, I will not become someone like you.’[95] The shvapacha said, ‘My view is that this downfall is misery. It is because of this that I am committing the evil act of censuring a virtuous brahmana.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘Even when frogs croak, cows drink. You have no right to dharma. Do not praise yourself greatly.’ The shvapacha said, ‘O brahmana! I entreated you as a well-wisher. I felt compassion for you. Therefore, accept what is best. Because of greed, do not eat the dog.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘If you are my well-wisher and desire my happiness, then save me from this distress. I know what dharma is. Give me the dog’s haunch.’

The shvapacha said, ‘I am not interested in giving you this. Nor can I ignore my own food being taken away. O brahmana! Both of us will be stained by sins —I, because I am the giver, and you, because you are receiving it.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘After perpetrating this wicked act today, if I am still alive and roam around, I will act so as to greatly cleanse myself. Having purified myself, I will obtain dharma. Of these two,[96] tell me which is better.’ The shvapacha said, ‘The atman is the witness to everything that is done in this world. You yourself know what is wicked here. I think that anyone who is prepared to eat dog meat will not be ready to abstain from anything.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘There is no sin in taking it, or eating it. It is always good policy to allow for exceptions. There has been no violence. No false words have been spoken. This can therefore be eaten and there will be no grave sin.’ The shvapacha said, ‘If this is the reason behind your eating it, it has no rationale from the Vedas, or from dharma. O Indra among brahmanas! Therefore, as you have said, I do not see any sin attached to food that should not be eaten, or from your eating it.’ Vishvamitra replied, ‘It is not seen that there is a great sin from eating this. If one drinks liquor, one is bound to fall down—these are only words used in this world. This is also true of many other similar deeds. Such deeds do not bring about the slightest bit of downfall.’ The shvapacha said, ‘If a person is learned, his good conduct restrains him from going to where he should not, from becoming inferior and from being censured. But because of desire, if he nevertheless goes to such a place, he will have to bear the punishment.’ Having told Koushika this, Matanga desisted.

‘“Having made up his mind, Vishvamitra took the dog’s haunch. In a desire to remain alive, the great sage seized those five limbs.[97] The great sage went to the forest, to gratify his wife with this. At that time, Vasava began to rain down. All the subjects were revived and the herbs were generated. The illustrious Vishvamitra performed austerities and burnt his sins. In the course of time, he obtained great and extraordinary success. If a learned person confronts a calamity and desires to remain alive, as long as he is not miserable in his heart and knows of different means, he must cheerfully use every method to save himself. One must thus always resort to one’s intelligence and remain alive. If a man remains alive, he obtains what is sacred and sees fortune. O Kounteya! Therefore, resort to the intelligence used by learned people in determining dharma and adharma. Make efforts and conduct yourself in this world accordingly.”’

Chapter 1468(140)

‘Yudhishthira said, “You have instructed me about a terrible thing that is false and lacks devotion. This is the kind of restraint followed by bandits and I avoid it. I am confused and distressed. My bonds of dharma have become weak. I do not have any initiative in following this. How can I even think about it?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In instructing you about dharma, I have not depended on the sacred texts alone. This is wisdom and experience and it is the honey that wise people have collected. A wise king will have many means of prevention, from here and there. Progress on the journey does not take place along a single branch of dharma. O Kouravya! When kings ignite their intelligence to follow dharma, they are always victorious. Therefore, understand my words. Kings who desire victory and regard intelligence as the best, are always triumphant. Here and there, using his intelligence, a king thinks of means that are in conformity with dharma. The dharma for kings was not determined as a dharma that only has a single branch. Why has the dharma for weak ones not been described earlier?[98] If an ignorant person sees a fork in the road, he will be confused. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should have already realized that intelligence can also offer a dilemma.[99] The wisdom is by one’s side, but it flows everywhere, like a river. One must know that the dharma followed by people can have a course and also the opposite course. Some know this properly. There are others who possess an understanding that is false. Understanding the truth of all this, one acquires knowledge from the virtuous. Those who steal[100] from the sacred texts are against dharma. They understand their purport unevenly and vainly seek to explain them. They desire fame in every way and wish to earn a living off this learning. All of them are the worst among men and are against dharma. They are stupid and their views are not ripe. They do not know the true purport. In every way, their final objective is never to be accomplished in the sacred texts. They steal from the sacred texts and point to what is wrong in the sacred texts. They do not act well when they proclaim their own knowledge. In an attempt to establish their own learning, they criticize the knowledge of others. They use words as their weapons and words as their knives. Their milking of knowledge is fruitless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know them to be the traders of knowledge, like rakshasas. They laugh at dharma and believe that all of it is deceitful. 'We have not heard of any words of dharma in their words, or any intelligence.' When speaking of Brihaspati's knowledge, Maghavan himself said this.[101] There are no words that are spoken in this world without a reason and some are versed in the sacred texts. But others do not act in accordance with them. There are learned ones who have said that dharma is only what people follow in this world. Even if a person is learned, virtuous and instructed about dharma, he cannot understand it on his own. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He can be intolerant about the sacred texts, or confused in his learning. Even when wise men speak about the sacred texts collectively, insight may be missing. What is praised is intelligent words that are derived from the sacred texts. Even if an ignorant person speaks words that are full of knowledge and reason, that is thought of as virtuous. In ancient times, to dispel the doubts of daityas, Ushanas said, 'Know that if the sacred texts do not possess meaning, they are abhorrent. Knowledge that cannot be defined is non-existent.'[102] Why do you wish to be satisfied with something that has a severed root? Do not resort to words that are false and injurious. You have been created for fierce deeds, but you are paying no attention to what you should do. O king! Look towards my own limbs, decorated with the effects of good policy.[103] Others escaped and are delighted because of this. Brahma created the goat, the horse and the kshatriya for similar reasons.[104] Therefore, some[105] are successful in their journey by glancing towards other beings. The sacred texts say that the sin from killing someone who should not be killed is the same as the sin from not killing someone who should be killed. This is certainly a rule which they[106] shun. If the king does not establish them in their own dharma, the subjects face extreme decay. They roam around and devour each other, like wolves. If there is a kingdom where bandits roam around and steal the possessions of others, like egrets snatching fish from the water, that person is the worst among kshatriyas. Choose noble advisers who possess the learning of the Vedas. O king! Rule the earth. Follow dharma and protect the subjects. If a lord of the earth appoints inferior people to tasks and seizes, without knowing the difference between the two,[107] he is a eunuch among kshatriyas. According to dharma, fierceness is not praised. But nor is lack of fierceness. One should not transgress either. Having been fierce, become mild. The dharma of kshatriyas is difficult to follow and there is plenty of affection in you. But you were created for fierce deeds. Rule the kingdom accordingly. Always chastise the wicked and protect the virtuous. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The intelligent Shakra said that this was what should be done in a time of distress."

'Yudhishthira asked, "Do you think that there is a rule followed by bandits that should never be violated? O best among righteous ones! O grandfather! I am asking you this. Tell me."

'Bhishma replied, "One must always serve learned and aged brahmanas and ascetics and also those who are firm and pure in their learning, character and conduct. This is the supreme objective. The conduct towards brahmanas must always be like that towards the gods. O king! If brahmanas are enraged, they can perform many acts. The best fame arises from their affection and their disaffection leads to calamity. When pleased, brahmanas are like amrita. When wrathful, they are like poison."'

Chapter 1469(141)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who is accomplished in all the sacred texts! Tell me about the dharma that should be followed by someone who is protecting a person who has sought refuge.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! There is great dharma in protecting someone who has sought refuge. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That you have asked such a question is deserving of you. O king! After they protected those who came and sought refuge, Nriga and the other kings obtained supreme success. O great king! It has been heard that a pigeon honoured its enemy when he sought refuge. As is proper, it honoured him and offered him its own flesh.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “In ancient times, how did an enemy come and seek refuge with a pigeon? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! What objective did it attain after offering him its own flesh?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! Listen to this divine account, which destroys all sins. This was recounted by Bhargava[108] to King Muchukunda. O Partha! O bull among the Bharata lineage! In ancient times, King Muchukunda bowed down and asked Bhargava about this. At this, Bhargava recounted the story to the one who wished to listen. O lord of men! He told him about how the pigeon attained success. This account is certainly full of dharma and of kama and artha too. O king! O mighty-armed one! Listen as I tell you this.”

‘“There used to be a wicked and terrible hunter of birds. Inferior in conduct, he roamed around the earth. He was regarded as death on earth. His limbs were as dark as a raven. He was harsh and full of wickedness. His middle was like barley.[109] His neck was thin. His feet were small. His jaws were large. He did not have any well-wishers. Nor did he have any allies or relatives. Because of his terrible deeds, all of them abandoned him. Grasping a net,[110] he would always kill birds in the forest. O lord of men! He would then sell those birds.

This is the way that evil-minded one found a means of survival. Without understanding that this was adharma, he followed this for a very long period of time. For a long period, he pleasured with his wife. He was confounded by destiny and no other means of livelihood appealed to him. On one occasion, he was in the forest. A great storm arose and whirled around and brought down the trees. Clouds gathered in the sky and they were tinged with flashes of lightning. In a short period of time, it was as if the ocean was covered with many boats.[111] Delighted, Shatakratu poured down torrents of rain. In a short while, he flooded the earth with water. Because of that torrential downpour in the world, he[112] was terrified and lost his senses. In that forest, he was afflicted with cold. His mind was greatly anxious. The bird-killer could not see any low ground anywhere.[113] The path in the forest was covered in a flood of water. Birds were killed by the force of the wind and vanished. Deer, lions and boars resorted to bits of land and stayed there. All the residents of the forest were terrified because of the strong wind and the rain. They were oppressed by fear. They were afflicted by hunger. Together, they wandered around in the forest. His[114] body was afflicted by the cold. Instead of stopping, he wandered around and in a thicket in the forest, he saw a tree that was as blue as the clouds. Against the background of stars in the clear sky, it looked like a lotus. Lubdhaka[115] was afflicted by the cold and saw that the sky was clear of clouds. O lord! The evil-souled one looked towards the directions and thought that his home in the village was a long distance away from the spot. He therefore made up his mind to spend the night there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Joining his hands in salutation, he spoke these words to the tree. ‘I seek refuge from whatever gods reside here.’ He spread out some leaves on the ground and laid his head down on a stone. In great misery, the slayer of birds slept there.”’

Chapter 1470(142)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! With its well-wishers, a bird lived on the branches of that tree. Its plumage was colourful and it had lived on the tree for a long time. Its wife had gone out in the morning to roam around and had not returned.[116] On seeing that it was night, the bird lamented. ‘There was a great storm and my beloved has not returned. What can be the reason for her not returning yet? I hope my beloved is safe in the forest. Without her, this home of mine is empty now. Her eyes were tinged with red. Her plumage was colourful. Her voice was sweet. Since my wife is not here, there is no purpose in my remaining alive. Her dharma was in devotion to her husband. She was virtuous. She was more important than my life. That ascetic one was devoted to my welfare when she knew that I was exhausted or hungry. She was devoted to her husband. On earth, a man who has a wife like that is fortunate. It has been read that a wife is a man’s supreme protector and that in this world, a man who does not have her as a companion along the journey, is helpless. For someone who has been overwhelmed by disease, for someone who has faced a hardship and for someone who is afflicted, there is no medication that is equal to a wife. There is no relative who is equal to a wife. There is no objective who is equal to a wife. In accomplishing dharma in this world, there is no aide who is equal to a wife.’ Distressed, the bird lamented in this way there.

‘“The wife had been seized by the slayer of birds and heard these words. Since her husband was miserable, she was also distressed by grief and thought, ‘Someone whose husband is not satisfied does not deserve to be called a wife. With the fire as a witness,[117] a husband becomes a wife’s refuge.’ The she-pigeon, captured by Lubdhaka, carefully spoke these words. ‘I will tell you what is indeed beneficial for you. Having heard, act accordingly. O beloved one! In particular, one must always provide succour to someone who seeks refuge. This fowler has resorted to your residence and is lying down. He is afflicted by cold. He is afflicted by hunger. It is necessary to honour him. If someone who seeks refuge is allowed to perish, the sin is equal to that from killing a brahmana or a cow, who is the mother of the worlds. Following the dharma of different species, that of pigeons has been ordained for us.[118] A knowledgeable person like you must always practise what is proper. If a householder follows dharma to the best of his capacity, when he dies, we have heard that he obtains the undecaying worlds. O bird! You have obtained offspring. You have sons. Therefore, follow dharma and artha and give up all love for your body. Engage in honouring him, so that his mind is cheered.' The ascetic she-bird was imprisoned inside the cage. Extremely miserable, it glanced towards its husband and spoke these words. When it[119] heard its wife's words, which were full of dharma and reason, its eyes overflowed with tears and it was filled with great joy. It glanced towards the fowler, who earned a living from birds. The bird carefully honoured him, following the ordained rites. It said, 'Welcome. What can I do for you? Since this is like your own house, you should not suffer from any misery. Therefore, tell me quickly what I should do. What do you desire? You have sought refuge with me and I am speaking affectionately towards you. If a guest comes and seeks refuge, one must tend to him carefully. This is particularly true of a householder who is engaged in the five sacrifices.[120] If a person who is a householder is confused and does not observe these five sacrifices, then, according to dharma, he possesses neither this world, nor the next. Therefore, without any hesitation, tell me. Speak to me carefully and I will do everything. Do not unnecessarily sorrow in your mind.'

'"Hearing these words, Lubdhaka spoke to the bird. 'The cold is constraining me. You should free me from the cold.' Having been thus addressed, the bird carefully covered the ground with dry leaves. The bird then quickly departed to fetch fire. It went to a place where charcoal was burnt and having obtained some fire, brought it back. It kindled a fire in those dry leaves. Having created a great fire, it told the one who had sought refuge, 'Be assured and without fear. Heat your limbs.' Having been thus addressed, Lubdhaka agreed and warmed his limbs. His life having been restored by the fire, he spoke to the bird. 'The hunger is killing me. I desire that you should give me some food.' On hearing this, the bird spoke these words. 'I do not possess any riches with which I can destroy your hunger. We, residents of the forest, survive on what grows here. Like the sages in a forest, we do not possess any stores.’ Having spoken thus, its face turned pale. O best among the Bharata lineage! It began to think about what should be done next and condemned its own mode of existence.[121] Having thought for an instant, the bird regained its senses and spoke to the slayer of birds. ‘Wait for a while. I will satisfy you.’ Having said this, it kindled a fire with dry leaves. Filled with great delight, the pigeon spoke again. ‘From great-souled gods, sages and ancestors, I have earlier heard about the great dharma that comes from honouring guests. Show me your favours.[122] I am telling you this truthfully. My mind has certainly been made up on honouring a guest.’ Having taken this pledge, the bird seemed to be smiling. O lord of the earth! It circumambulated the fire three times and entered. When Lubdhaka saw that the bird had entered in the midst of the fire, he began to think in his mind, ‘What have I done? Alas. Shame on my reprehensible and violent deeds. There is no doubt that I have committed great and terrible adharma.’ In this fashion, Lubdhaka repeatedly lamented in many ways. On seeing that the bird had gone, he condemned his own deeds.”’

Chapter 1471(143)

‘Bhishma said, “On seeing that the pigeon had descended into the fire, Lubdhaka was overcome with compassion and again spoke these words. ‘In my stupidity, I have committed a violent deed like this. As long as I am alive, this sin will always be lodged in my heart.’ Condemning himself, he repeatedly kept speaking in this way. ‘Shame on my great stupidity and the deceitful conduct I have always engaged in. Having abandoned auspicious deeds, I have sought to capture birds. I have resorted to violence. There is no doubt that, by offering me its own flesh, the great-souled pigeon has instructed me. I will abandon my sons and wife and give up my own beloved life. The pigeon, extremely devoted to dharma, has instructed me about dharma. I will offer up my own body and avoid all objects of pleasure. I will shrivel it up, like a little bit of water during the summer. I will endure the torment of hunger and thirst. I will become lean, as if I am made up of veins. To ensure the worlds hereafter, I will observe many different kinds of fasting. Alas! By giving up its own body, it has shown me how guests must be treated. Therefore, I will follow dharma. Dharma is the supreme objective. O supreme among birds![123] Dharma is seen to be that which has been followed by that foremost practitioner of dharma.’ Having spoken this, Lubdhaka, the performer of evil deeds, became rigid in his vows and resolved to depart on *mahaprasthana*.[124] He discarded his staff, his pointed stick,[125] his net and his cage. He also freed the imprisoned pigeons[126] and departed.”’

Chapter 1472(144)

‘Bhishma said, “When the fowler had left, the miserable she-pigeon remembered its husband. It became senseless with grief and wept. It lamented in sorrow. ‘O beloved! I cannot remember a single instance of your having acted in an unpleasant way. O bird! Even when a spirited woman possesses many sons, when she becomes a widow and is bereft of her husband, her relatives grieve for her. I have always been loved by you and have been comforted and greatly revered by sweet, pleasant and agreeable words. We have sported in valleys, mountains, rivers and springs. O beloved one! We have pleasured in the delightful tops of trees. I have found delight with you, happily roaming through the sky. O beloved one! I have sported with you. Where has all that gone now? What a father gives is limited. What a mother gives is limited. What a son gives is limited. What a husband gives is unlimited and who will not worship him. There is no protector like a husband. There is no happiness like a husband. Abandoning all riches, husbands are the refuges of women. O lord! Without you, there is no point to remaining alive. Which virtuous woman will be interested in remaining alive, if she is without her husband?’ Extremely miserable, it lamented piteously in many ways. Devoted to its husband, it entered the blazing fire. And there it saw its husband, attired in colourful garments, astride a celestial vehicle and honoured by great-souled ones who had performed good deeds. It was adorned in colourful garlands and garments and was decorated with every kind of ornament. It was surrounded by the performers of auspicious deeds, astride hundreds of crores of celestial vehicles. The bird had gone to heaven and was joined by its wife. It was worshipped because of its deeds and found pleasure there with its wife.”’

Chapter 1473(145)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! The fowler saw them in that celestial vehicle. On seeing the couple, he grieved, thinking about attaining a good end. ‘Through what kind of austerities can I attain the supreme goal?’ Having thought about this, he decided to set about his journey. Lubdhaka, who earned a living from birds, embarked on mahaprasthana. He gave up all efforts, subsisted on air and gave up all sense of ownership, desiring to attain heaven. He then saw an extremely large lake, adorned with lotus flowers. The lake was full of cool and sparkling water and was frequented by a large number of birds. He was afflicted by thirst and on seeing this, had no doubt that he would be able to satisfy himself. O king! Because of the fasting, Lubdhaka was extremely thin. In the forest frequented by predatory beasts, he cheerfully crept along. Having summoned up great resolution, Lubdhaka entered the forest and was grasped by some thorns. His limbs were mangled by those thorns and he was covered with red blood. He roamed around in that desolate spot, frequented by many kinds of animals. As the large trees in the forest rubbed against each other, a great fire was ignited and fanned by the wind. That forest was full of trees and covered with shrubs and creepers. The fire angrily consumed them, as radiant as the fire at the end of a yuga. It blazed with sparks that were fanned by the wind. It fiercely burnt the forest, which teemed with animals and birds. Lubdhaka was delighted in his mind. Desiring to free himself of his body, he rushed towards the raging fire. Burnt by the fire, Lubdhaka’s sins were destroyed. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! He then attained supreme success. Devoid of all anxiety, he saw himself in heaven. Like Indra, he was radiant in the midst of yakshas, gandharvas and siddhas. In this way, because of their auspicious deeds, the male pigeon and the female pigeon which was devoted to its husband indeed went to heaven, accompanied by Lubdhaka. In this way, like the she-pigeon, a woman who is devoted to her husband is quickly established in heaven and becomes radiant there. This is the ancient account of the great-souled Lubdhaka and the pigeon. Because of their auspicious deeds, they attained the objective of those who follow dharma. A person who always hears this, or a person who recounts this, will never confront anything inauspicious, even if he is confused in his mind. O Yudhishthira! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! This great dharma provides salvation to even the perpetrators of wicked deeds, such as those who kill cows. But there is no salvation for someone who allows a person who seeks refuge to perish.”’

Chapter 1474(146)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! If a person commits a sin out of ignorance, how can he be freed from it? Tell me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is described. This is what the brahmana Indrota, the son of Shunaka, told Janamejaya. There was an extremely valorous king named Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit.[127] In his ignorance, that lord of the earth committed the sin of killing a brahmana. All the brahmanas and the priests abandoned him. Tormented day and night, the king went to the forest. Abandoned by his subjects, he acted so that he might obtain great welfare. He was tormented by repentance and performed extreme austerities. I will tell you about that history, about how he accumulated dharma. Janamejaya was tormented because of the sin he had committed and departed. He went to Indrota, the son of Shunaka, who was rigid in his vows. Having approached him, he seized his feet and embraced them. At this, the immensely wise one was alarmed and severely reprimanded him. ‘You have committed a great sin, like one who has killed a foetus. Why have you come here? What do you wish to do to me? Under no circumstances, should you touch me. Go. Go from this spot. It is certain that your presence does not give me pleasure. There is a smell of blood in you. You look like a corpse. It is inauspicious for you to be near auspicious things. Though you seem to be alive, you are actually dead. You are dead within and your soul is impure. You are only thinking about wickedness. You are awake, but you are actually asleep. You are roaming around, unhappy.[128] O king! Your being alive is futile. You will live in misery. You have been created for wicked and ignoble deeds. In this world, fathers desire sons who will bring great welfare. They perform austerities, offer sacrifices to the gods, worship the gods and are patient. Behold. Because of your deeds, this lineage of your forefathers has gone to hell. All their hopes have been rendered futile and so has their dependence on you. Those who worship brahmanas enjoy heaven, long lives, fame and happiness. But your constant hatred towards them has rendered this futile. Having been freed from this world, because of your wicked deed, you will fall head downwards for many years, though not for eternity. You will be devoured by vultures and peacocks with iron beaks. Once this has happened, you will return again and advance towards a wicked birth. O king! If you think that this world is nothing, not to speak of the one hereafter, in Yama's eternal abode, Yama's messengers will remind you about this.'"'

Chapter 1475(147)

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, Janamejaya replied to the sage. ‘You are censuring someone who deserves to be censured. You are condemning someone who deserves to be condemned. You are shaming someone who deserves to be shamed. Nevertheless, show me your favours. All this has come about because of what I have myself done. I am being burnt, as if I am in the midst of a fire. It is not as if my mind is delighted at being associated with my deeds. I certainly suffer because of my terrible fear of Vaivasvata.[129] Without uprooting that stake, how can I possibly remain alive? O Shounaka![130] Suppress all your anger towards me and instruct me. There used to be a great kitchen for brahmanas[131] and I will accomplish that objective again. There must be a remnant to this lineage. This lineage cannot be destroyed. But if we are cursed by brahmanas, if we do not have access to the sacred texts and if we are not conscious of what has been determined in the Vedas, there will be no remnant left. I am in great despair. I am telling you again about what confronts me. Those who are without dharma and without meditation are repeatedly not acknowledged.[132] In the hereafter, their foundation is like that of the Pulindas and the Shabaras.[133] Those who do not perform sacrifices do not obtain any worlds. O extremely learned one! I am ignorant. Impart wisdom to me, like that to a child, like a father to his son. O brahmana! O Shounaka! Be gratified with me.’

‘“Shounaka said, ‘There is nothing surprising in a wise person performing many appropriate acts. A learned person is not concerned with what has happened or what will happen.[134] Having obtained the favours of wisdom, he does not grieve about what other people sorrow over. As if he is stationed on the top of a mountain, he looks on the entire universe with wisdom. Someone who is fickle, someone who is degraded in his soul and someone who is shamed by all the virtuous people and hides himself, does not see the course of action. Knowing that there is freedom from fear, vigour and greatness in the Vedas and the sacred texts, perform a great rite of pacification. The brahmanas are your refuge. If the brahmanas are no longer enraged with you, this will ensure your welfare in the hereafter. This is on the assumption that you are repenting your wicked deed and are looking towards dharma.'

'"Janamejaya replied, 'I am repenting my wicked deed and I will never follow adharma again. O Shounaka! I am looking for someone who will be affectionate and desire my welfare.'

'"Shounaka said, 'O king! Since you have given up your arrogance and pride, I desire to be affectionate towards you. Remain established in the welfare of all beings and remember dharma. I am not summoning you[135] because of fear, weakness or avarice. The gods and the brahmanas will hear the truthful words I speak to you. I do not desire anything from anyone. I am summoning you to a rite of dharma, even though all the beings are uttering words of shame towards you. They will say that I am ignorant about dharma and people who are not well-wishers will speak in this way. If I hear such words from a well-wisher, I will be extremely anxious. There will be some immensely wise ones who will recognize that this is the right course of action.[136] O son![137] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that I am doing this for the sake of brahmanas. For my sake, act so that they may obtain peace. O lord of men! Pledge that you will not show hatred towards brahmanas.'

'"Janamejaya replied, 'O brahmana! I touch your feet and pledge that I will never again injure brahmanas, in words, thoughts and deeds.'"'

Chapter 1476(148)

'"Shounaka said, 'Therefore, since your senses have been agitated, I will speak to you about dharma. You are prosperous, immensely strong and content and are looking towards dharma. Having been terrible earlier, you have now become extremely distinguished. O king! Favour all beings through your own conduct. In this world, there is good and bad in everything. You were like that earlier. But you are now looking towards dharma. O Janamejaya! You gave up extremely wonderful food and objects of pleasure and resorted to austerities. These things seem extraordinary to beings. There is nothing extraordinary in a weak person becoming generous, or in a miserable person resorting to the store of austerities. It is said that this conduct is close to their state of being. This wretchedness[138] has not been considered properly. Therefore, one must examine it properly. Only then will one appreciate its qualities. O lord of the earth! Sacrifices, donations, compassion, the Vedas and truth—these are the five things that purify. Extremely severe austerities constitute the sixth. O Janamejaya! This is the supreme form of purification for kings. If you accept this completely, you will obtain supreme dharma. Visiting auspicious spots is said to be the supreme purifier. On this, the song sung by Yayati is recounted. "A mortal can obtain a long life, or even live again, by attentively performing sacrifices alone. Thereafter, having renounced, he should observe austerities." Kurukshetra is said to be an auspicious region and Prithudaka,[139] on the banks of the Sarasvati. If a person bathes or drinks there, he need not be tormented about premature death.[140] You must go to the great lakes, Pushkara, Prabhasa and Manasa, to the north. Having gone to Kaloda,[141] one obtains one's breath of life again. You should go to the confluence of the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati. You must study and observe good conduct in all these places, touching the waters there. He[142] said that renunciation and sannyasa is sacred and supreme dharma. On this, a song composed by Satyavat is recited. "Be as truthful as a child, without any auspicious or wicked deeds. Then, since there will be no unhappiness for all the beings in this world, how can there be happiness?[143] This is the natural state of all beings. In general, this is characteristic of the lives of those who give up all kinds of association and abandon both good and wicked deeds." I will now tell you about the tasks that are best for a king. Use your strength and generosity to again conquer heaven. A man who possesses strength and energy becomes the lord of dharma. For the sake of the happiness of brahmanas, roam around this earth. Since you disrespected them earlier, placate them now. This is despite being condemned and abandoned by many of them. O learned one! Have knowledge of your own self. Do not be enraged and injure them. Be engaged in your own tasks and work towards supreme welfare. A king can be as cold as ice, or as fiery as the fire. O scorcher of enemies! Others can be like a plough or thunder.[144] Do not think that there will be no remnants,[145] or that treatment is not possible. Thinking that there is nothing left of your existence, do not associate with those who are wicked. If one repents one's wicked deed, one is freed from one-fourth of the sin. If one decides that one will not act in this way again, one is freed from a second one-fourth. If one resolves to follow dharma, one is freed from a third one-fourth. A man who desires prosperity should only think about welfare. Those who smell good fragrances also smell like that. Those who smell foul smells also smell like that. A person who devotes himself to austerities is immediately freed from his sins. A person who has been accused is freed if he worships the fire for a year. A person guilty of feticide is freed if he worships the fire for three years. If a person guilty of killing foetuses, saves as many living beings as would naturally have been killed,[146] he is freed. Manu has said that if one immerses oneself in the water and chants Aghamarshana three times,[147] one obtains the benefits equal to those from the final bath after a horse sacrifice. One is swiftly freed from sins and obtains great reverence. Beings seek his favours, as if they are dumb and mute. O king! Once, all the gods and the asuras assembled and asked Brihaspati, the preceptor of the gods. "O maharshi! You know about the fruits that result from dharma and also about those that lead to hell, the world of the wicked. When a person has performed both of these well, which of these triumphs over the other? O maharshi! Tell us about the fruits of deeds. How does a person with auspicious conduct dispel evil?”

‘“‘Brihaspati replied, “Having ignorantly performed wicked deeds earlier, if a person deliberately performs auspicious deeds, his auspicious conduct dispels that evil, just as a dirty garment is cleansed with a caustic substance. A man who has committed a wicked deed should not think that he has been destroyed. Without any malice and with devotion, he should desire to ensure welfare, just as a hole in a garment can be covered with a good piece. Even after having performed a wicked deed, a man can obtain welfare, just as the sun arises again and drives away all the darkness. If one acts so as to ensure welfare, all sins can be driven away.”’”

‘Bhishma said, “Indrota spoke in this way to King Janamejaya. Having said this, following the prescribed rites, Shounaka performed a horse sacrifice. After this, the king’s sin was cleansed. He was full of prosperity and his form was like that of a blazing fire. The destroyer of enemies entered his own kingdom, like the full moon rising in the sky.”’

Chapter 1477(149)

‘Bhishma said, “O Partha! Listen to this account of an ancient history. This is an account of an ancient conversation that took place between a vulture and a jackal in Vidisha. There were some people who were miserable. There was a child who had not yet become a youth. He died and he was the only possession the family had. They wept and were distracted by grief. They picked up the dead child and advanced in the direction of the cremation ground. They sat down on the ground there. They passed the child from one lap to another and wept. On hearing the sounds of their weeping, a vulture approached and spoke these words. ‘He is just one person in this world. Abandon him and quickly go away. Time has brought thousands of men and thousands of women to this place. Did they not have relatives? Behold. The entire universe is full of joy and misery. In due course, there is union and separation. There are those who pick up the dead and come here and there are those who follow them. However, once their lifespans are over, these people also depart. You have spent sufficient time in this cremation ground, frequented by vultures and jackals. It is full of terrible skeletons and is fearful to all beings. Someone who has followed the dharma of time will never become alive again. Whether it is someone who is loved or whether it is someone who is hated, all beings attain this kind of end. Everyone who is born in the world of mortals will indeed die. This is a path that has been ordained by the Destroyer. How can someone who is dead become alive again? People have finished their tasks[148] and the sun is about to set. Return to your own residences and abandon this affection for the son.’ O king! On hearing the words of the vulture, they lamented. Abandoning their son on the ground, the relatives departed. They determined that they should abandon their son. They had no hope of his becoming alive. They arose and took to the road.

'"At this time, a jackal emerged from its hole. Its complexion was like that of a crow or a cloud. As they advanced, it told them, 'It is evident that humans have no compassion. O stupid people! The sun is still there. Do not be frightened and show some affection. This moment has many forms and perhaps he may come back to life. You have abandoned all affection for your son and have flung him away on the ground. Without any compassion, how can you forsake your son on the cremation ground and go away? This child was sweet in speech and you have no affection for your son. He spoke to please you and you are about to go away. You do not see the affection animals and birds have towards their sons. This is despite their obtaining no fruits from this nurturing.[149] Quadrupeds, birds and insects are beings that are only driven by affection. They will obtain their places in the world hereafter, like sages who perform sacrifices. They take delight in their sons, though this brings nothing in this world, or in the next. We do not see any qualities these beings obtain from this act of nurturing. Yet, when they do not see their beloved sons, they are full of sorrow. After growing up, the mother and the father are never sustained. Do humans have affection? So how can there be grief? This son was the extender of the lineage. Abandoning him, you are going away. For a long time, release your tears. For a long time, gaze on him affectionately. In particular, it must be extremely difficult to abandon something that one loves. When one faces decay, when one has been accused and when one advances towards a cremation ground, it is relatives who stay with that person, and not others. Everyone loves life. Everyone obtains affection. Behold the kind of affection that can be seen in those from inferior species.[150] This one has large eyes, like the petals of a lotus. How can you abandon him and go away? He has been bathed and decorated with garlands, like one who has just been married.'"

'Bhishma said, "Hearing these piteous laments of the jackal, all those men returned, for the sake of the corpse.

'"The vulture said, 'Alas! O ones limited in intelligence! Shame on you. This jackal is cruel, inferior and limited in spirit. Are these men returning because of what it has said? Why are you grieving over something that has given up the five elements and is like an empty piece of wood? It is immobile. Why are you not sorrowing over your own selves? Perform terrible austerities and cleanse yourself from sin. Everything can be obtained through austerities.

What will lamentations achieve? Know that those with bodies must suffer from ill fortune. Everyone must leave this world, giving rise to endless sorrow. Austerities are the foundation for riches, cattle, gold, gems and jewels. These are obtained through the yoga of austerities. Depending on what they have done,[151] beings obtain happiness and unhappiness. Accepting this unhappiness and happiness, beings are born. The son does not get the father's karma. The father does not get the son's karma. Tied down by their good and wicked deeds, they advance along different paths. Carefully follow dharma and retreat from what is adharma. At the right time, act appropriately towards gods and brahmanas. Give up your sorrow and misery and withdraw from affection towards your son. Whether one has performed auspicious deeds, or whether one has perpetrated extremely terrible ones of adharma, the results will be reaped. What role is there for relatives? When relatives leave their beloved relatives here, they do not linger. With eyes full of tears, they abandon their affection and depart. Whether one is wise or stupid, whether one is rich or poor, whether one is auspicious or inauspicious, everyone comes under the subjugation of time. What will you accomplish through grief? Why are you sorrowing over the dead? Time is the lord of everyone and following dharma, he looks on everyone equally. Everyone faces death—youth, children, the aged and even foetuses. This is the way of the universe.'

'"The jackal said, 'You were extremely sorrowful, overcome by affection on account of your son. Alas! The vulture with limited intelligence has diluted that affection. His words were appropriate, chosen well and respectful. That is the reason you have abandoned your affection, which is so difficult to let go, and are going towards the pond.[152] Alas! Separation from a dead son leaves one empty. One laments in severe misery, like a cow without a calf. I now know the sorrow that men face on this earth. On seeing the pity associated with affection, I am also shedding tears. One must always seek to strive, though success is determined by destiny. Destiny and manliness combine with earlier deeds. One must always be hopeful. How can there be happiness from despair? Success is obtained through endeavour. How can you leave in this cruel way? He has resulted from your own flesh. His form has been generated from half of your body.[153] He was the extender of the lineage of your fathers. After abandoning him in the forest, where will you go? Stay here until the sun has set and evening has presented itself. Perhaps you will stay here with your son, or take him away.’[154]

‘“The vulture said, ‘O men! It is now one thousand years since I have been born. I have never seen a dead woman or man come back to life again. Some who died in the womb are born. Some die the moment they are born. Others died after they have attained youth and exhibit valour.[155] The fortune of quadrupeds and birds is temporary. The lifespan of mobile and immobile objects has been determined earlier. There are those who are separated from their beloved wives and those who sorrow over their sons. Tormented by grief, they always go home. Abandoning thousands who were not liked and hundreds who were loved, relatives are extremely miserable and depart. Abandon the one who is without energy. He is like an empty piece of wood. His life is wandering around in vapour. Therefore, abandon him and go. This affection is futile. This concern for him is futile. He cannot see you with his eyes. He cannot hear you with his ears. Therefore, swiftly abandon him and return to your own homes. I have used the dharma of moksha.[156] Though they seem to be cruel, I have spoken words that are full of reason. As I have said, quickly go away to your own respective homes. You have heard words that are full of the knowledge of wisdom. They will give you intelligence and consciousness, though they are harsh. O men! Return.’

‘“The jackal said, ‘He has the complexion of gold and he is adorned with ornaments. On hearing the words of the vulture, how can you abandon your son? He has the complexion of gold and is adorned with ornaments. He is the one who will offer funeral cakes to the ancestors. There is nothing that prevents affection, lamentation and weeping. But if you abandon the one who has died, it is certain that you will suffer. It has been heard that Rama, truthful in his valour, killed the shudra Shambuka, resorted to dharma, and brought a brahmana child back to life.[157] In that way, rajarshi Shveta’s child met his destiny. But since he[158] always followed dharma, the very next day, he could again bring the dead back to life. In that fashion, while you are lamenting, perhaps a siddha, a sage or a god can perform an act of compassion.’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, afflicted by grief and devoted to their son, they returned. Placing his head on their laps, they wept for a long period of time.”

‘The vulture said, “He has been bathed with your tears. You have kneaded him with the touch of your hands. However, ordained by Dharmaraja,[159] he has entered a long period of sleep. A person who has engaged in austerities is also not spared by destiny. This is the end of all affection. This is the residence of the dead. Thousands of the young and the aged are always abandoned by their relatives on the ground, after they have spent days and nights in misery. Refrain from grief. There has been enough of this bond. It cannot be believed that he will come back to life again. He will not become alive again because of the words of the jackal. Someone who is dead, and has discarded his body, does not get that body back again. Even if hundreds of jackals give up their bodies, this will not happen. In hundreds of years, this child is incapable of becoming alive again. The child can only come back to life if Rudra, Kumara, Brahma or Vishnu grants a boon. However, he will not become alive again because of the shedding of tears, because of any assurances, or because of a long period of lamentation. I, the jackal, you and the relatives are all of us travelling in that direction too, accepting our share of dharma and adharma. A wise person should keep unpleasantness, harshness, hatred towards others, desire for the wives of others, adharma and falsehood a long distance away. He must carefully follow the path of truth, dharma, purity, fairness, great compassion towards beings, lack of deceit and lack of fraudulence. While they are alive, those who do not look towards their mothers, fathers, relatives and well-wishers—suffer destruction of dharma. He cannot see with his two eyes. His limbs will never move. His period of being here has come to an end. What will weeping achieve?’”

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, they were overcome by grief and abandoned their son on the ground. They were tormented by affection for their son. The relatives left for home.

‘“The jackal said, ‘The world of mortals is terrible. All living beings are destroyed. We live for a short time and are separated from our beloved kin. There is a lot of pretension, fraud, arguing and unpleasant speech. Considering this, coming back here again will only increase sorrow and misery. Even for an instant, the world of humans does not appeal to me. Alas! Shame on the men who are retreating because of the words of the vulture. You are blazing from sorrow on account of your son. Yet, you behave like those who are ignorant. If you have any affection, how can you discard the affection towards your son and go away? On hearing the words of the vulture, you have made up your minds to do that which is wicked. Unhappiness comes at the end of happiness. Happiness comes at the end of unhappiness. There is happiness and unhappiness in this world and there is nothing that does not come to an end. You have laid this handsome child down on the surface of the ground. He has caused grief to your lineage. O stupid ones! After abandoning your son, where will you go? There is no doubt that I can see him alive in my mind, full of beauty and youth, blazing in his prosperity. His destruction was not deserved. O men! You will obtain happiness again. The fire that is tormenting you because of the sorrow over your son's death will be pacified. Once you have suffered from sorrow, you will be able to ensure your own happiness. How can you ensure that if you abandon him in this foolish way and go away now?'"

'Bhishma said, "They thus faced a conflict over dharma and paid heed to these pleasant, but false, words. The resident of the cremation ground waited for the night and for his food.[160] In their midst, he brought them supreme words that were like amrita. For his own objectives, the jackal made those relatives stay.

'"The vulture said, 'This place is full of the spirits of the dead and is frequented by yakshas and rakshasas. It is a terrible and desolate spot and echoes with the screeches of owls. It is fierce and extremely horrible, with a complexion like that of dark and blue clouds. Abandon the corpse and decide to perform the funeral rites. As long as the sun has not set and as long as the directions are clear, abandon him and decide to perform the funeral rites. Hawks are shrieking in harsh tones. Jackals are screaming in fierce tones. Lions are roaring and the sun is about to set. The blue smoke from funeral pyres is imparting a hue to the trees. Hungry beings are finding delight in this cremation ground. In this extremely terrible spot, all of them are brave and energetic. They are malformed and subsist on flesh. They will attack you. Go far away from this spot in the forest. There is fear here. He is like a piece of wood and must be abandoned. Tolerate the jackal's words. If you deviate from knowledge and listen to the futile and false words of the jackal, all of you will be destroyed.'

'"The jackal said, 'Remain here. As long as the sun is shining, there is nothing to be scared about. Driven by affection for your son, as long as you have hope, remain here. Without any fear, confidently weep over him. Confidently, look at him with affection. As long as the sun is here, remain here. What is the point to the words of that predator?[161] If you accept the fierce and wild words of the vulture, you will delude your own selves and your son will indeed have no future.'"

'Bhishma said, "The vulture said the sun had set. The jackal said that it had not set. They were both hungry and addressed the relatives of the dead person. O king! Both the vulture and the jackal were accomplished in attaining their own objectives. They were hungry, thirsty and exhausted and spoke, seeking support in the sacred texts. Both the jackal and the bird were knowledgeable and learned. Their words were like amrita. They[162] stood up and left. Then they were overcome by sorrow and misery and wept and remained. They[163] were skilled in attaining their own objective. They were accomplished in speaking respectfully. Both of them spoke about knowledge and learning. The relatives were confused and remained there. At that time, Shankara approached. The wielder of the trident spoke these words to the men. 'I am the one who grants boons.' Having been thus addressed, those miserable ones bowed down and remained standing there. They said, 'All of us have been deprived of our single son. We desire his life. You should grant us life by granting that our son becomes alive.' Having been thus addressed, the illustrious one filled his hand with water and granted the child a lifespan of one hundred years. The illustrious one, the wielder of *pinaka* who was engaged in the welfare of all beings, also granted the jackal and the vulture the boon that they should no longer suffer from hunger. They were full of joy at this great benefit and bowed down to the god. O lord! They were delighted and happy that their objectives had been accomplished and stood there. Through a long period of faith and certain and firm devotion, and through the grace of the god of the gods, fruits are swiftly obtained. Behold the god's decision and the determination of the relatives. The tears of the miserable and weeping ones were wiped away. Behold. Certain in their pursuit and through the favours of Shankara, the miserable ones obtained happiness in a short period of time. At their son coming to life again, they were amazed and delighted. O best among the Bharata lineage! All of this was possible because of Shankara's favours. O king! They heard from Bhava[164] about how sorrow can be countered. Taking their son with them, they were filled with joy and entered their city. This is the intelligence that has been indicated for the four varnas. This is the auspicious history, full of dharma, artha and moksha. If a man hears this, he obtains delight in this world and in the next."'

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‘Bhishma said, “On this, an ancient history is recounted. O best among the Bharata lineage! This is a conversation between a *shalmali* tree[165] and the wind. There was a gigantic tree on the slopes of the Himalayas. It had grown for many years and possessed a trunk, branches and foliage. O mighty-armed one! Crazy elephants, afflicted by heat and oppressed by exhaustion, would rest there. So would other kinds of animals. The tree was dense with foliage and was a *nalva*[166] in circumference. It was covered with fruits and flowers and frequented by parrots and *sharika* birds. This was beautiful and supreme among trees. Merchants in search of riches, ascetics, residents of the forest and travellers along the path would rest under it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Narada saw the large trunk and the branches that extended in every direction. He approached and said, ‘You are beautiful. You are handsome. O shalmali! O best among trees! You always please us. O son![167] Birds, animals and elephants have always cheerfully resided under your delicate shade. Your branches, larger branches and trunk are gigantic. Under no circumstance do I see any of these being shattered by the wind. O son! Is the wind your affectionate well-wisher? It is certain that the wind always protects you in this forest. The wind uproots large and small trees from their places. Its force dislodges the peaks of mountains. With its fragrant and sacred scent, the wind even dries up the nether regions and also the lakes, the rivers and the oceans. There is no doubt that the wind protects you as a friend. That is the reason you have these many branches, leaves and flowers. O tree! O son! It is seen to be beautiful that these birds sport and find pleasure in you. Their delicate voices can be separately heard. When it is the time for flowering, one can hear these extremely beautiful sounds. The elephants, the adornments of their herds, also take delight. O shalmali! They are afflicted by the heat and find joy on seeking refuge with you. In that way, other kinds of animals are also radiant near you. Those who are in search of riches seek refuge. O tree! You are as resplendent as Mount Meru. There are brahmanas, successful ascetics, hermits and mendicants. I think that your shelter is like heaven. The wind goes everywhere and is fierce. O shalmali! There is no doubt that it protects you because you are a relative or a friend. O shalmali! When the wind approaches you, perhaps you bow down supremely and say, "I belong to you." That is the reason the wind always protects you. I have not seen a tree or a firm mountain that has not been shattered by the wind. It is my view that there is nothing like this on earth. O shalmali! But then again, for some reason, you and your family are always protected by the wind. That is the reason you stand, free from fear.'

'"The shalmali replied, 'O brahmana! The wind is not my friend, my relative, or my well-wisher. Nor is the wind my supreme lord that it should protect me. O Narada! My energy and strength are more terrible than that of the wind. The wind cannot even attain one-eighteenth of my force of life. When the strong wind arrives and destroys trees, mountains and everything else, I resist it with my force. The wind does the shattering,[168] but has been shattered by me many times. O devarshi! That is the reason I am not terrified of even an enraged wind.'

'"Narada said, 'O shalmali! There is no doubt that you look at this in a contrary way. There is nothing anywhere that has a strength that is equal to the wind's strength. Indra, Yama, Vaishravana[169] and Varuna, the lord of the waters, are not the wind's equal, not to speak of a tree. O shalmali! When any living being moves on this earth, everywhere, it is the illustrious wind, the lord, who makes the breath of life move. When it exerts itself properly, it reassures all living beings. When it is not properly exerted, men move in perverse ways. This is the nature of the wind and it is the supreme upholder of all life. You do not worship someone who should be worshipped. What can this be, other than lack of intelligence? You have no substance. You are evil in your intelligence. You only speak a lot. O shalmali! Since you have spoken in this false way, I am enraged with you. My anger has been roused at what you have said. I will myself tell the wind about the many wicked words you have spoken. There are other trees that are stronger still—sandalwood, *spandana*,[170] shala,[171] *sarala*,[172] *devadaru*,[173] cane and reeds. They are cleansed in their souls and do not evil-mindedly speak about the wind in this way. They know their own strengths and that of the wind. That is the reason those supreme trees bow down before the wind. You are deluded and do not know about the wind’s infinite strength.’”’

Chapter 1479(151)

‘Bhishma said, “O Indra among kings! Having spoken in this way, Narada, knowledgeable about the brahman, went and told the wind everything that the shalmali had said. ‘There is a shalmali tree and its followers on the slopes of the Himalayas. It has a gigantic trunk and many branches. O wind! It shows you disrespect. It spoke many words of irreverence towards you. O wind! O lord! It is not appropriate that I should repeat those words before you. O wind! I know that you are the supreme upholder of all living beings. You are best and the greatest. In your rage, you are like Vaivasvata.’[174] Having heard these words of Narada, the wind went to the shalmali and angrily spoke these words. ‘O shalmali! You have spoken disrespectful words before Narada. I am the wind. I will show you my influence and my own strength. I know who you are. O tree! You are known to me. The lord, the grandfather,[175] ended his act of creation with you. Because he ended with you, he showed you favours. O evil-minded one! O worst among trees! That is what has protected you against my valour. Since you have disrespected me as any other natural force, I will show myself to you, so that you know who I am.’ Having been thus addressed, the shalmali tree seemed to smile when it replied. ‘O wind! Go to the woods and show your enraged self to your own self. Release your anger towards me. What will you do in your rage? O wind! I would not have been frightened of you, even if you had been the lord of beings.’ Having been thus addressed, the wind said that it would exhibit its energy the next day.

‘“It was night and the shalmali thought about what should be done. It saw that it was not the equal of the wind. ‘I spoke inappropriate words about the wind to Narada. I cannot match the wind in strength. It is stronger than me. Narada was right when he said that the wind is always strong. There is no doubt that I am weaker than other trees. However, I do not think there is any other tree that is my equal in intelligence. By resorting to that intelligence, I can free myself from the fear that comes from the wind. There is no doubt that if the trees in the forest used their intelligence, they would always be able to save themselves from any injury on account of the enraged wind. But they are foolish and do not know the wind. Unlike me, they do not know how the angry wind blows.' Having made up its mind, the shalmali began to shake itself. It itself cast off its trunk, branches and smaller branches. It cast off its branches, leaves and flowers. Having done this, the tree waited for morning and for the approach of the wind. The wind blew and angrily brought down large trees. It came to the spot where the shalmali was standing. It was without leaves and the tips of the branches had fallen down. The flowers had fallen down. The wind glanced at it and smiling, cheerfully spoke these words to the shalmali tree, which was without any branches. 'O shalmali! In my anger, I would have done exactly this to you and brought down all your branches. You have done this yourself. You are without flowers and the tips of your branches. Your buds and foliage have been destroyed. Through your own evil intelligence, you have come under the subjugation of my valour.' Addressed in these words by the wind, the shalmali tree was ashamed. It remembered the words that Narada had spoken to it and was tormented.

'"O tiger among kings! In this way, if a weak person engages in hostilities with someone who is stronger, he is foolish and will be tormented like the shalmali tree. Therefore, a weak person should have enmity with someone who is superior in strength. If he engages in such enmity, he will sorrow, like the shalmali tree. Even against those who cause grievous injury, great-souled ones do not display their enmity. O great king! Instead, they exhibit their strength gradually and gently. A man without intelligence should not act in enmity towards someone who lives by his intelligence. An intelligent person's intelligence is like a fire raging through dry grass. O king! Among men, there is nothing that is equal to intelligence. O Indra among kings! One might think that there is nothing that is equal to strength. O Indra among kings! O slayer of enemies! You have thus seen that one must tolerate the foolish, the dumb, the deaf and those who are superior in strength. O immensely radiant one! O king! The eleven and seven akshouhinis[176] were not equal in strength to the great-souled Arjuna. The illustrious Pandava, the son of the chastiser of Paka, roamed around and slew and shattered them in the battle. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! You have been told about rajadharma and apad dharma in detail. O great king! What shall I tell you about next?”’

Chapter 1480(152)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about the true nature of evil’s foundation and about how sin propagates.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of men! Hear about the foundation of evil. Greed alone is the great grasper. Evil is propagated by greed. It is from this that evil, adharma and supreme misery flow. This is the foundation for misdeeds and makes people commit sin. Anger results from greed. Desire results from greed. Confusion and delusion result from greed and so do pride, arrogance, malice and lack of forgiveness. Modesty is abandoned. Prosperity is destroyed and dharma decays. Anxiety and lack of wisdom—all of these result from greed. There are also lack of fairness, lack of reflection and the performance of perverse deeds. One becomes learned in deceit and is proud of one’s beauty and prosperity. One is distrustful of all beings. One is crooked towards all beings. One acts injuriously towards all beings. One behaves inappropriately towards all beings. One steals the property of others. One ravishes other people’s wives. There is violence in words and thought. There is violence in criticizing. There is turbulence in one’s groin and belly. There is the terrible turbulence that is associated with death. There is the violence of envy. The strong impulse to lie is extremely difficult to give up. It is difficult to withstand the impulse of passions. It is impossible to withstand the impulse to hear bad words and boasting. One is malicious, wicked and perpetrates evil deeds. One is rash in every kind of deed and action. At birth, childhood and youth, a man cannot give up the consequences of the deeds that he has done. Though he decays, these do not decay. O extender of the Kuru lineage! One is incapable of satisfying greed through acquisitions. It is always like an ocean, incapable of being filled by deep-flowing rivers. Greed is not satisfied. Nor is desire satiated. O king! Its true nature is not known by the gods, the gandharvas, the asuras, the great serpents and all the large numbers of other beings. One who conquers greed and delusion conquers his soul. O Kouravya! Insolence, hatred, criticism, maligning and malice—these are found in greedy people who have not perfected their souls. There are those who are extremely learned, the repositories of the extremely great sacred texts. They can sever doubt. But on this, even they can have limited intelligence and are afflicted. They become addicted to hatred and anger and are cast out by those who are good in conduct. Though they are harsh inside, their words may be sweet. They are like pits that have been covered with grass. Though they hold up the flag,[177] they are inferior and against dharma. They steal from the universe. They resort to the strength of arguments and follow many different kinds of paths. But because they base themselves on greed and ignorance, they destroy every kind of path. If evil-souled ones, driven primarily by greed, take over dharma, they deform it. But that practice tends to be established. O Kouravya! Arrogance, anger, pride, laziness, delight, sorrow, extreme vanity—these are seen among the greedy and the ignorant. Know that they have not been instructed. They are always full of greed. Ask those who have been instructed. I will tell you about the ones who are auspicious in their vows. They do not have any fear about their conduct. Nor do they fear the world hereafter. They find no delight in flesh, nor are they addicted to the agreeable and the disagreeable. Good conduct is agreeable to them. Self-control is established in them. They are beyond happiness and unhappiness. They are devoted to the truth and the ultimate. Though they are compassionate, they are neither givers, nor receivers. They are always devoted to the ancestors, the gods and guests. They always exert, in every kind of way. They follow every kind of dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are engaged in the welfare of all beings. They are prepared to give up everything. Having reached the ultimate shore of dharma, they are incapable of being dislodged and moved from their conduct, which was fashioned by virtuous people in ancient times. They are based on the path of virtue and are not frightened, fickle or fierce. They are beyond desire and anger. They are without a sense of ownership and without a sense of the ego. They are good in their vows and firm in their honour. O Yudhishthira! You should worship them and ask them. They do not seek cattle or fame, only dharma. They do perform the functions of the body, because that is necessary. But they do not know fear, anger, fickleness and sorrow. They do not fly the flag of dharma and there is nothing that is secret among them. They do not suffer from greed and delusion. They are upright and devoted to the truth. O Kounteya! You should find delight in them. Their minds are attentive. They find no delight in acquisitions. Nor do they grieve if there are no acquisitions. They are without sense of ownership and without sense of ego. They are based on the truth and look on everything equally. O son! Gain and lack of gain, happiness and unhappiness, pleasant and unpleasant, death and life—these are the same to them, because they are firm in their valour. They are full of intelligence and base themselves on the truth. They are extremely powerful. Attentively and according to your capacity, you should do what brings them happiness and is agreeable. Words used in conversation may be good or bad. Like that, through the working of destiny, all beings may have qualities.”’[178]

Chapter 1481(153)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! You have said that greed is the foundation of everything that is injurious. O father![179] I wish to hear about the true nature of ignorance."

'Bhishma replied, "If a person commits a wicked deed as a result of ignorance, he does not know what is good for him. He hates people who observe good conduct and people talk about him.[180] Because of ignorance, he goes to hell. Because of ignorance, he comes to an evil end. Because of ignorance, he suffers misery and is submerged in disaster."

'Yudhishthira said, "I desire to hear about wickedness—its inclination, status, growth, increase and decrease, the source, its working, progress, periodicity, reasons and causes. O king! I wish to hear exactly and completely, about the consequence of ignorance, since unhappiness in this earth has it as its origin."

'Bhishma replied, "Attachment, hatred, confusion, delight, sorrow, arrogance, desire, anger, pride, procrastination, laziness, wishing, aversion, torment, suffering from the prosperity of others—these wicked acts are indicated as ignorance. You have asked about their working, their increase and other things. O mighty-armed one! O lord of the earth! Therefore, listen to this in detail. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! Know that both ignorance and excessive greed are equal in consequences and equal in wickedness. They are the same. The influence of greed is again increased if ignorance increases. If one is constant, so is the other. If one decays, so does the other. Each one has many courses. The source of greed is the great influence of destiny. Even if one has severed greed in every way, the source that is based on destiny remains. Thus, greed comes from ignorance and ignorance comes from greed. Greed is the source of all sins. Therefore, one should avoid greed. Janaka, Yuvanashva, Vrishadarbhi, Prasenjit and other lords of the earth attained heaven because they destroyed their greed. O foremost among the Kurus! In this world, it is evident that you must cast aside greed from your soul. Having abandoned greed, you will follow the path of happiness in this world and the next.”’

Chapter 1482(154)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! O one with dharma in his soul! In this world, what is said to be the best thing for a brahmana who desires dharma and makes the effort to study? Many things are seen as best in this world. O grandfather! Tell me what you think to be best in this world and the next. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The path of dharma is great and it has many branches. Which are the elements of dharma that are held to be the best? O king! In truth, dharma is great and has many branches. O father! Tell me carefully about all this and about what is the supreme foundation.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will indeed tell you about how you may obtain the ultimate benefit. O wise one! You will drink this, which is like amrita, and be satisfied with the knowledge. Each of the maharshis has depended on his knowledge and has talked about a separate aspect of dharma. Self-control is the ultimate among them. The ancients were certain in their foresight when they said that self-control is the supreme quality. In particular, for a brahmana, self-control is eternal dharma. If one is not self-controlled, the success of deeds is not properly obtained. Self-control and generosity surpass sacrifices and studying. Self-control increases energy and self-control is the supreme purifier. A man who is without sin and possesses energy obtains greatness. We have not heard of any dharma that is equal to self-control in any world. Those who follow complete dharma praise self-control as supreme in this world. O Indra among men! Even in the world hereafter, one obtains supreme happiness. Being united with self-control, one obtains great dharma. A self-controlled person sleeps happily. He wakes in happiness. He moves through the world in happiness and his mind is cheerful. A person who is not self-controlled obtains hardship and decay. Because of his own sins, he creates many calamities. Among the four ashramas, this is said to be the supreme vow. I will tell you about the signs that give rise to self-control. Forgiveness, fortitude, non-violence, impartiality, truthfulness, uprightness, conquest of the senses, skill, mildness, modesty, steadfastness, generosity, lack of anger, satisfaction, pleasantness in speech, lack of an acquisitive tendency and lack of malice—these unite and give rise to self-control. O Kouravya! One must also worship the seniors, show compassion towards all beings, be free of slander and tendency to gossip, not indulge in futile conversation and avoid both praise and censure. A self-controlled man does not indulge in desire, anger, greed, pride, insolence, boasting, confusion, jealousy and disrespect of others. He is not censured and is free of desire. He desires little and is not resentful. Such a man is like the ocean and is never filled.[181] 'I am yours. You are mine. They are mine. I am theirs.' The self-controlled person does not say such things about his former relatives.[182] Whatever be the conduct of people in the village or in the forest, such a person does not speak words of censure or praise. He is friendly and good in conduct. He is supremely devoted to his aides. He is free from many kinds of attachment and obtains great fruits in the world hereafter. He is excellent in conduct. He is good in conduct. He is cheerful in his soul and knows about his soul. He obtains reverence in this world and a good end thereafter. There are auspicious deeds in this world. These are practised by the virtuous. He possesses knowledge about these and does not diminish the dharma of sages. He departs and resorts to the forest. He is united with knowledge and conquers his senses. He roams around, waiting for the time.[183] He is capable of attaining the brahman. He has no fear from beings. Beings have no fear from him. He has no fear on account of being separated from his body. He has exhausted his good deeds and has none to accumulate. He acts equally towards all beings and behaves affectionately towards them. He is like a bird in the sky or like an aquatic creature in the water. There is no doubt that his progress cannot be seen.[184] O king! He abandons his home and attains moksha. He obtains the worlds of energy for an eternal period of time. He renounces all deeds. He renounces all the recommended austerities. He renounces the different kinds of learning. He renounces everything. He does not return to desire. He is cheerful and pure in his soul. He obtains great reverence in this world and heaven thereafter. This is the place of the grandfather[185] and Brahma's essence arises from there. This is always concealed in secret, but can be obtained through self-control. A person who takes comfort in wisdom and possesses intelligence and who does not indulge in hostility towards any being has no fear of returning again.[186] What fear can he have of the world hereafter? There is one sin associated with self-control and a second one does not exist. Because he is forgiving, people think that he is incapable. O immensely wise one! But there is an extremely good quality associated with this taint. Because forgiveness is great, the patient person easily obtains the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A self-controlled person doesn't need the forest. A person without self-control also finds nothing there. Wherever a self-controlled person resides, that is his forest and his hermitage."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing these words of Bhishma, King Yudhishthira was cheerful and extremely satisfied, as if he had savoured amrita. He again asked Bhishma, supreme among the upholders of dharma. O extender of the Kuru lineage![187] He told him everything about austerities.'

Chapter 1483(155)

‘Bhishma said, “The wise have said that austerities are the foundation of everything. A stupid person who has not been tormented through austerities does not obtain the fruits of his deeds. The lord Prajapati created everything here through austerities. The rishis acquired the Vedas through austerities. The siddhas perform austerities in the due order and subsist on fruits, roots and the wind. Extremely controlled, they can see the three worlds through their austerities. Herbs and other medications and the three types of learning[188] are perfected and made successful through austerities. Austerities are the foundation of all endeavour. Everything that is difficult to obtain, difficult to name, difficult to assail and difficult to withstand—all this can be made possible through austerities. There is nothing that can surpass austerities. A sinful man who drinks liquor, seizes objects of others without permission, kills foetuses and violates the bed of his preceptor—can be freed if he torments himself well through austerities. Austerities have many forms and many gates through which they flow. Among the austerities that involve restraint, abstention from food is the best. O great king! Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, donations, restraint of the senses—abstention from food is superior to these austerities too. There is nothing more difficult than giving and no ashrama that surpasses the mother. There is nothing that is superior to the three kinds of learning. Renunciation is the supreme austerity. In this world, the senses protect riches and grain. But in this protection of dharma, artha and austerities, there is nothing superior to abstention from food. The rishis, the ancestors, the gods, humans, the best of animals and all other beings, mobile and immobile—all of them are devoted to austerities. They become successful through austerities. It is through austerities that the gods attained greatness. They always obtained their desirable shares and fruits through austerities. It has been determined that through austerities, one can even attain divinity.”’

Chapter 1484(156)

‘Yudhishthira said, “The brahmana rishis, ancestors and gods all praise the dharma of truth. O grandfather! I wish to hear about the truth. Tell me about it. O king! What are the signs of the truth? How can it be obtained? Having obtained truth, what does one become? How is all this spoken of?”

‘Bhishma replied, “The mixing of the dharma of the four varnas is not praised. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Without any distortion, truth exists in all the varnas. For the virtuous, truth is always dharma. Truth is the eternal dharma. It is truth that one should bow down to. Truth is the supreme objective. Truth is dharma, austerities and yoga. Truth is the eternal brahman. Truth is said to be the supreme sacrifice. Everything is established in the truth. In this world, truly and in proper order, I will tell you about the conduct associated with truth. In proper order, I will tell you about the characteristics associated with truth. You should hear about how truth can truly be acquired. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In all the worlds, there are thirteen kinds of truth. There is no doubt that truth is impartiality and self-control. There is also lack of malice, forgiveness, modesty, patience, lack of envy, renunciation, meditation, wisdom, fortitude, constant adherence and non-violence. O Indra among kings! These are the thirteen forms of the truth. The truth is described as immutable. It never undergoes a transformation. It is not against any kind of dharma and it can be obtained through yoga. There must be impartiality towards the desirable and the undesirable, towards one’s own self and towards the enemy. When preference and aversion are destroyed, desire and anger are also destroyed. Self-control means one doesn’t desire the possessions of others. There is always patience and gravity. There is fearlessness and the pacification of anger. All of these are obtained through knowledge. The learned say that lack of malice manifests itself in generosity and control in the practice of dharma. Those who always base themselves on the truth do not suffer from malice. The virtuous person forgives everyone—those who should be forgiven and those who should not be forgiven, those who are liked and those who are not liked. The virtuous obtain the truth. They do good in secret ways. The modest person never boasts. The dharma of modesty can always be obtained through restraint in speech. The form of forgiveness that is indulged in for the sake of dharma or artha is said to be endurance. This is for the propagation of the worlds and is obtained through patience. If a person renounces affection, if a person renounces objects and if a person gives up love and hatred, he becomes one who renounces—not otherwise. If a person makes efforts to undertake good deeds, without making it obvious and without any attachment, that is said to be nobility among beings. There is fortitude when one does not perform perverse deeds, whether it is in a situation of happiness or unhappiness. A wise person who desires his own prosperity must always pursue this. One must always have sentiments of being forgiving. One must be devoted to the truth. Devoid of delight, fear and anger, a learned person obtains fortitude. Lack of hatred towards all beings, in deeds, thought and words, kindness and generosity—these are the eternal dharma of the virtuous. These are the thirteen separate characteristics of the truth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These forms of truth are worshipped and extended. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is impossible to speak about the infinite qualities of the truth. That is the reason truth is praised by the brahmanas, the ancestors and the gods. There is no dharma superior to the truth. There is no sin that is worse than falsehood. Truth is the foundation of dharma. That is the reason truth must not be destroyed. The giving of gifts, sacrifices with dakshina, vows, agnihotra sacrifices, the Vedas and other manifestations of dharma result from the truth. One thousand horse sacrifices and truth were held up on a weighing scale and truth surpassed the one thousand horse sacrifices.”’

Chapter 1485(157)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O immensely wise one! Tell me accurately about the origin of anger, desire, sorrow, confusion, scepticism, lassitude, intoxication, avarice, jealousy, contempt, slander, intolerance and pity. Tell me about all these.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Amongst beings, these thirteen are said to be extremely strong enemies. O great king! In this world, all of them unite and serve a man. They distract a man and distracted, he takes delight. They jump like wolves, when they see other men approach.[189] Misery flows from these. Sin flows from these. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Mortal men must always realize this. O supreme among men! I will indeed tell you about the origin, status and destruction of these. Listen attentively. Anger results from greed and is stimulated by the sins of others. O king! It remains dormant through forgiveness. A prosperous person must refrain from it.[190] Desire flows from resolution and grows when one serves it. When a wise person uses his knowledge to discern its true nature, it can no longer be seen and withers away. Scepticism is against the sacred texts and is seen to originate among those who are limited in intelligence. If one possesses true knowledge, it withdraws. Among beings, sorrow results from affection and separation.[191] If one knows that this is futile, it is immediately destroyed. Lassitude results from the practice of anger and avarice. Indifference and kindness towards all beings makes it withdraw. Dispirited people serve malice and that which is injurious. O son! If virtuous people are served, these are destroyed. There are beings who are proud of their lineage, their knowledge and their prosperity. When they discern the reason behind this pride, it is immediately destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Envy flows from desire and rivalry. Among those who are mortals, wisdom destroys these. O king! Slander is generated from spiteful words of misguided people, those who are not on one’s side. The act of ignoring pacifies this. There may be a powerful person who causes injury and one may be incapable of countering him. Fierce resentment is generated. But compassion makes it withdraw. It is seen that pity[192] always generates pity. If one knows about being devoted to dharma, that pity is pacified. These are said to be the ways whereby these thirteen can be conquered and pacified. All these thirteen sins were there among the sons of Dhritarashtra. You always conquered them in your soul. That is the reason you triumphed over them.”’[193]

Chapter 1486(158)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I know what non-violence is. I have always seen it among the virtuous. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, I do not comprehend violent men and their deeds. Like men avoid thorns, pits and fire, a man must avoid a man who performs violent deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A violent person is always the worst, in this world and in the next. O Kouravya! Therefore, tell me what dharma has determined about such a person.”

‘Bhishma replied, “His intentions may be hidden. But his deeds are known. He slanders others, but is censured. He binds others, but is himself tied down. He boasts about his acts of generosity. But he is unfair, inferior, fraudulent and deceitful. He does not share his pleasures. He is insolent. He and his companions are boastful. Such a man suspects everyone. He is foolish and miserly. He always praises his own group and creates enmity in the ashramas, mixing them up. He always indulges in violence and has no particular good qualities or bad ones. He is extremely boastful and spirited. He is extremely greedy and is the perpetrator of violent deeds. If there is a person of good conduct who is devoted to dharma and possesses the qualities, he regards such a person as wicked. Judging on the basis of his own character, he does not trust anyone. Even if the taints of others are hidden, he divulges them. Even if his faults and conduct are similar, he does not talk about them. He thinks that a person who does him good has been cleverly deceived. Even if he gives away riches at the right time to someone who has helped him, he repents this. While others watch, he eats food, licks and enjoys such good food. If a person eats in this way, the learned know him as violent. If there is a person who first gives food to brahmanas and then eats, together with his well-wishers, such a person obtains the infinite in this world and heaven after death. O foremost among the

Bharata lineage! The nature of a violent person has been recounted. A man who desires benefit must always avoid such a person.”’

Chapter 1487(159)

‘Bhishma said, “He who has accomplished his objective, he who is about to perform a sacrifice, he who knows all the Vedas, he who is discharging obligations to a preceptor, a father, or a wife, he who is pursuing the objective of studying—such a brahmana is virtuous and is begging for the sake of dharma. In accordance with their learning, one must give to them, since they have nothing of their own. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! To the others, only dakshina is to be given. There are others for whom it is recommended that uncooked food must be given, but away from the sacrificial altar. In accordance with what they deserve, the king must give every kind of jewel. Brahmanas at a sacrifice must be given food and dakshina. A person who has enough to sustain his dependents and servants for three years or more deserves to drink soma.[194] A sacrifice may suffer because some single ingredient is missing at the sacrifice. Especially if it is a brahmana’s sacrifice, a king who follows dharma may take that ingredient away[195] from the household of a vaishya who has many animals, but does not perform sacrifices or drink soma. For the purpose of the sacrifice, the king may take that object away from his household. In his household, a shudra possesses nothing that he actually owns. Therefore, from a shudra’s household, he[196] can take away any object that he desires. If there is someone with one hundred cattle who does not have the sacrificial fire, or if there is someone with one thousand cows who does not perform sacrifices, he can seize from those households too, without thinking about it. O lord! Having explained the reason, the king can always take from those who do not donate. The dharma of a king who acts in this way will not suffer.

‘“There may be a person who has not eaten six meals. And there may be another person who does not care for tomorrow and does not perform deeds. For the seventh meal, one should take away from such a person.[197] This can be taken from the place for husking, the field, the store, or from anywhere. However, this must be told to the king, irrespective of whether he asks or does not ask. The king who knows about dharma will not follow dharma and punish him. Brahmanas suffer from hunger because of the folly of kshatriyas. Having ascertained about the conduct of a learned person, he must think of a means of sustenance.[198] He must protect him, the way a father protects a son born from his loins. At the end of every year, he[199] must always perform the sacrifice to the fire.[200] In ancient times, there was no alternative to dharma. What was spoken about in dharma was sufficient. However, because they were scared of death in times of catastrophe, the vishvadevas, the sadhyas, the brahmanas and the maharshis allowed for many kinds of substitution. But an evil-minded person who does not follow the primary course and follows the secondary course instead, does not obtain any fruits in the world hereafter. A man must not tell the king about brahmanas.[201] When he is told, he should know that he has no energy, compared to their learning and excellent energy. Their energy is superior. That is the reason the king can never withstand the energy of those who know about the brahman. As a creator, ruler and ordainer, a brahmana is said to be god. Therefore, nothing harmful should be spoken to them. Nor must dry words be spoken. A kshatriya tides over his difficulties through the valour of his arms. A vaishya and a shudra use riches. A brahmana uses mantras and offerings. Mantras are not for maidens, young women, or stupid people. Stupid people cannot serve at agnihotra sacrifices. Nor can those who have not been cleansed. If such a person offers oblations there, he is flung into hell. Those who know about dharma say that if an officiating priest who ignites the sacrificial fire at a *prajapatya* sacrifice is not given a horse as dakshina, it is as if the sacrificial fire has not been ignited at all. There are others who perform auspicious deeds. They are faithful and have conquered their senses. However, they can never perform sacrifices without offering dakshina at those sacrifices. If dakshina is not offered at a sacrifice, this destroys the offspring, the animals and heaven for the performer and diminishes his senses, fame, deeds and span of life.

'"All these follow the dharma of shudras—those who cohabit with menstruating women, those who are without the sacrificial fire and those whose families lack knowledge of the Vedas. There may be a village with its supply of water coming from a well.[202] A brahmana may be the husband of a shudra woman and dwell there for twelve years. In that case, he has become a shudra through his deeds. A brahmana who is married, but sleeps with a woman who is not an arya and whom he has not married, is not thought of as a brahmana. He must sit on grass and at the rear.[203] O king! Hear my words about how he may be purified. If he performs that sin for a single night, the brahmana assumes a black complexion.[204] He can pacify his own sin by observing the vow of standing during the day and sitting during the night for a period of three years. O king! It is said that five kinds of lies are not sin—words of jest that cause no harm, those spoken to women, those at the time of marriage, those for the sake of one’s preceptor and those for the sake of protecting one’s own life. One who is faithful can obtain sacred learning even from someone who is inferior. It has been determined that gold can be picked up, even from a filthy place. If a woman is a gem, she may be taken from an inferior lineage. This is like drinking amrita from poison. According to dharma, women, gems and water are not tainted. For the welfare of cattle and brahmanas and to protect himself, when there is a mixing of varnas, a vaishya can take up the bow. The drinking of liquor, the killing of a brahmana and the violation of the preceptor’s bed—it is thought that these cannot be atoned for, as long as one bears life. The stealing of gold, the theft of a brahmana’s property, living a life of pleasure, the drinking of liquor[205] and sexual intercourse with women one should not have intercourse with are sins. O great king! If one associates with those who have fallen, even if they have been born as brahmanas, one soon becomes like them. If one associates with those who have fallen, acts as an officiating priest for them, teaches them, travels with them, sits with them or eats with them, one also falls within a year. For these and other things, atonement has been determined. By following the rites of atonement, one is freed from the calamity within a period of time, as long as one does not indulge in them again. At the funeral rites of someone who has committed the afore-mentioned three, unlike the funeral rites of those who have not fallen down, one need not bother about whether the funeral oblations are offered sideways.[206] A person who follows dharma should abandon advisers and preceptors if they follow adharma. If they do not perform rites of atonement, he must not even speak to them. A person who performs adharma can destroy the sin by following dharma and performing austerities. If one addresses a 'thief', one incurs a sin. However, if one addresses a person who is not a thief as a 'thief', one incurs double that sin.

'"A maiden who allows herself to be spoilt acquires three-fourths of the sin of killing a brahmana. The one who does the spoiling acquires the remainder of the sin. Abusing a brahmana is a sin that removes one's status for one hundred years. Touching[207] is even more serious. For killing him, one dwells in hell for one thousand years. Therefore, one must not abuse him and never kill him. O king! As many particles of dust are needed to soak up a brahmana's wound, for that number of years one is whirled around in hell. If a person kills a foetus, he is purified if he is slain through a weapon in the midst of a battle. Or one must offer oneself as kindling into a blazing fire and thereby purify oneself. If one drinks liquor, one is freed from that sin by drinking hot *varuni* liquor.[208] That act burns him. Once he dies, he is purified after death. A brahmana then obtains the worlds. Indeed, there is no other way that he can obtain them. A person who violates his preceptor's bed is evil in his soul and wicked in his intelligence. He must embrace a blazing *surmi*[209] and death will purify him. Or he may himself sever his penis and testicles and holding them in his hands, walk straight in the southwest direction,[210] until he dies and falls down. If he[211] gives up his life for the sake of a brahmana, he will be purified. Or he may perform a horse sacrifice, a cow sacrifice or an agnishtoma sacrifice well and be purified in this world and in the next. A person who has killed a brahmana can hold a skull in his hand for twelve years. He begs and lives as a brahmachari hermit, loudly proclaiming his deed. In this way, the slayer of a brahmana retires to the forest and performs austerities. Not knowing whether she is pregnant or not, one may have intercourse with and kill an *atreyi* woman.[212] Killing an atreyi is double the sin of killing a brahmana. A person who drinks liquor must be restrained in his food and observe brahmacharya. He must sleep on the ground for three years and perform an agnishtoma sacrifice. Finally, when he has given away one thousand cows and a bull, he will obtain purification. Someone who has killed a vaishya must live in that way for two years and then give away one hundred cows and a bull. Someone who has killed a shudra must live in that way for one year and then give away ten cows and a bull. If one has killed a dog, a barbarian[213] or a donkey, one must observe the same vow as for a shudra. This is also true of a cat, a blue jay, a frog, a crow, a vulture, or a rat. O king! For killing any other living being, the same dharma as for killing an animal must be observed.

'"In due order, I will now tell you about the other kinds of atonement. If one violates another person's bed or indulges in theft, one must live separately for one year. This is said to be three years for the wife of a brahmana who is learned in the Vedas and two years for someone else's wife.[214] A person who makes the sacred fire impure must follow the vow of a brahmachari and only eat during the fourth quarter of the day. He must stand during the day and remain seated at night. For three days, he must arise and not sip any water. O Kouravya! If someone abandons his father or his mother without a valid reason, he becomes fallen. That is the determination of dharma. It has been determined that only food and garments need to be given to wives who are guilty of adultery, especially those who have been imprisoned. Vows imposed on men who violate other men's wives must also be imposed on them. If a woman abandons the bed of someone superior and desires that of someone wicked, the king must feed her to the dogs in a place that is frequented by many people. A wise person[215] binds down such a man on an iron bed that has been heated. Wood must be kindled underneath and the perpetrator of wicked deeds burnt there. O great king! This is also the punishment for women who transgress their husbands. If a wicked person is accused for one year,[216] the sin is doubled. If someone associates with such a person for two, three or four years, he must lead a difficult existence for five years. He must beg and observe the vow of a hermit. A man whose younger brother marries though he is yet unmarried, a man who marries before his elder brother has married, the woman who marries the younger brother and the one who conducts the marriage—under dharma, all of them are said to have fallen. All of them must observe the vow meant for someone who kills a hero.[217] Or they may observe *chandrayana*[218] or some other kind of fasting and thereby cleanse their sin. The younger brother who has married must offer his wife to his elder brother, who has not married, as a daughter-in-law. Having obtained the permission of the elder, he then takes her back again. Following dharma, this is the way she is freed and so are the other two.

‘“If one has inhuman intercourse,[219] provided it is not a cow, one is not stained, as long as one has not ejaculated.[220] It is known that man is the lord of animals and their eater. However, one must don a hide with the hair on the outside. One must take an earthen bowl in one’s hand. With this, one must beg at seven houses, recounting one’s deed. If he eats what he has thus obtained, he is purified in twelve days. If he performs the vow without displaying the signs,[221] he must observe it for one year. Even for men,[222] this is the supreme form of atonement. For all those who are addicted to giving and receiving, that[223] is recommended. Among non-believers, it is said that giving a cow is like giving up a breath of life. If one has eaten the meat of dogs, boars, men, cocks or donkeys, or has drunk urine or eaten excrement, one must perform the atonement of being cleansed again. If a brahmana who drinks soma inhales the breath of someone who has drunk liquor, he can drink hot water for three days, or drink hot milk for three days. He can also drink hot ghee for three days or only subsist on air for three days. These are the eternal modes of atonement that have been indicated. This is especially true for brahmanas and has originated from those who possess true knowledge.”’

Chapter 1488(160)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Nakula was accomplished in fighting with the sword. During a break in the conversation, he spoke to the grandfather, who was lying down on a bed of arrows. “O grandfather! It is said that the bow is the best weapon. O one who knows about dharma! But it is my view that a well-fashioned sword is the best. O king! When the bow has been severed and when the horses have been killed in a battle, a person is capable of successfully protecting himself with a sword. A brave person wielding a sword is single-handedly capable of warding off those who wield bows and those who wield clubs and spears. I have a doubt and curiosity about this. O king! What is the best weapon for battles? How did a sword arise? Who fashioned it and why? O grandfather![224] Tell me about the first person who instructed about the use of the sword.” He heard the words of Madri’s intelligent son. He knew about all the techniques. He spoke auspicious words that were subtle, colourful and full of purport. He replied to him in words that had vowels and accents. The great-souled Nakula, Drona’s son, was skilled in learning and policy. Bhishma was accomplished in dhanurveda and was knowledgeable about all forms of dharma.

‘Lying down on the bed of arrows, he said, “O Madri’s son! Concerning what you have asked me, listen to the truth. I look like a mountain with minerals flowing from it[225] and you have stirred me. O son![226] In ancient times, everything was in an ocean of water. There was no sky and the surface of the earth could not be discerned. It was enveloped in darkness. It was enveloped in darkness and it was extremely deep to look at. There was no sound. It was immeasurable. The grandfather[227] was born there. He created wind and fire and the energetic sun. He created the sky above and below it, the earth and the nether regions. He created the sky, with the moon, the stars, the nakshatras and the planets, the year, day and night, the seasons, lava and kshana.

The grandfather established his body in the worlds. The illustrious one generated supreme and energetic sons—the rishis Marichi, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Angiras and the lord god Rudra. There was Daksha Prachetasa, who gave birth to sixty daughters. All the brahmarshis accepted them for the sake of offspring. All the beings in the universe resulted from them—the gods, the large numbers of ancestors, the gandharvas, the apsaras, the many kinds of rakshasas, the birds, the animals, the fish, the apes, the giant serpents and many others that had different forms and strengths, travelling in the water or on the land. O son! There were plants, those born from sweat, those born from eggs and those born from wombs. Everything in the universe was born, mobile and immobile. The grandfather of all the worlds created all these categories of beings. He then again united them to the eternal dharma that is laid down in the Vedas. The gods, with their preceptors and their priests, remained within the fold of dharma—the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, the Maruts and the Ashvins. So did Bhrigu, Atri, Angiras, the Siddhas, Kashyapa, rich in austerities, Vasishtha, Goutama, Agastya, Narada, Parvata, the Valakhilya rishis, the Prabhasas, the Sikatas, the Ghritachas, the Somavayavyas, the Vaikhanasas, the Marichipas, the Akrishtas, the Hamsas, the rishis who were born from the fire, the Vanaprasthas and the Prishnis. All of them based themselves on Brahma's instructions.

'"However, the lords of the danavas transgressed the grandfather's instructions.[228] They were full of anger and avarice and diminished dharma. Hiranyakashipu, Hiranyaksha, Virochana, Shambara, Viprachitti, Prahrada, Namuchi, Bali—these and many other large numbers of daityas and danavas crossed the boundaries set by dharma and enjoyed themselves, having determined to follow adharma. 'All of us are their equals. We are just like the gods are.' Having reasoned in this way, they challenged the gods and the rishis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They showed no favour or compassion to any of the beings. They disregarded the three methods and punished the subjects with danda.[229] Because of their insolence, those supreme among the asuras entered into an agreement with them.[230] At this, the brahmarshis presented themselves before the illustrious Brahma. At that time, he was on the beautiful slopes of the Himalayas, in Padmataraka.[231] It was one hundred yojanas in area and was decorated with jewels and pearls. O son! In that supreme mountain, there were groves with blossoming trees. Brahma, the best of the gods, was there, engaged in the success and welfare of the worlds. At the end of one thousand years, the lord made arrangements for a grand sacrifice there, following the rites instructed in the *kalpa*s.[232] Rishis who were accomplished in performing sacrifices were there. As required, they were capable of undertaking all the acts. The Maruts covered the place and there were blazing fires. The place was radiant and seemed to be decorated with the golden sacrificial vessels. The circle of the sacrifice was resplendent, because it was surrounded by gods.

'"I have heard that the rishis suffered something terrible there. The sparkling moon arises in the sky and surpasses the stars. Like that, it has been heard that a being broke through the fire and arose there. Its complexion was like that of a blue lotus. It possessed sharp teeth and a lean stomach. It was tall and difficult to behold because of its great energy. When it arose, the earth began to tremble. Large waves and whirlpools agitated the great ocean. Meteors showered down and there were grave portents. Branches fell down from the trees. All the directions were disturbed. Inauspicious winds began to blow. All the beings were continuously frightened and afflicted. On witnessing the tumult and the being that had arisen, the grandfather told the maharshis, the gods and the gandharvas, 'This valiant being is known as a sword and I have thought of it. This is for the protection of the worlds and for slaying those who hate the gods.' The sword then abandoned that form and became sharp-edged. It sparkled and was sharp at the edges. It was as if the Destroyer had arisen. Brahma gave the blazing sword to Shitikantha[233] Rudra, the one with the bull on his banner. This was for the purpose of countering adharma. At this, the illustrious Rudra was worshipped by the large number of brahmarshis. The one who was immeasurable in his soul accepted the sword and assumed another form. He was four-armed. Though he stood on the ground, he touched the firmament with his head. Mahalinga[234] glanced upwards and released flames from his mouth. He assumed many different complexions—blue, pale and red. His garment was made out of black antelope skin and was decorated with stars made out of the best gold. There was a giant eye on his forehead and it was like the sun. He was beautiful with two other sparkling eyes and they were dark brown. The god Mahadeva wielded the trident in his hand and he was the one who plucked out Bhaga's eyes.[235] He grasped the sword, which was like the Destroyer, the sun, or the fire. He grasped a shield that was embossed in three places and it looked like a cloud tinged with lightning. The immensely strong and valorous one roamed around in many different kinds of paths. He waved the sword around in the sky, wishing to bring an end to the danavas.

'"He released a roar and laughed loudly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rudra's fearful form was resplendent then. On seeing Rudra's form, all the danavas, wishing to perform terrible deeds, attacked him. They showered down rocks and blazing torches. There were many other terrible weapons, razor-sharp and tipped with iron. That army of the danavas had never wavered earlier. However, because of the force that was generated from Rudra's sword, it trembled and was confused. With the sword in his hand, he moved around, in even faster and colourful ways. All the asuras thought that the solitary person was actually one thousand. He severed, pierced, struck, sliced, shattered and mangled. Rudra roamed around amidst that mass of daityas, like a fire amidst deadwood. The rakshasas were devastated by the force of the sword and their arms, thighs and breasts were severed. Their heads were completely cut down and the great asuras fell down on the ground. There were other danavas who were shattered and afflicted by Rudra's force. They screamed at each other and fled in different directions. Some entered the ground. Others entered mountains. There were others who rose up into the sky. Still others submerged themselves in the water. A great and extremely terrible encounter took place. The earth was then covered with the mud of blood and looked horrible. O mighty-armed one! It was strewn with the large bodies of danavas, wounded and bloodied. They were like mountains, covered with *kimshuka* trees. The earth was covered with blood and looked beautiful then. She was like a dark woman, intoxicated with liquor and attired in a red and wet garment.

'"When he had killed the danavas and established supreme dharma in the universe, Rudra swiftly abandoned his terrible form and took up his auspicious form of Shiva. All the maharshis and all the large numbers of gods worshipped the god of the gods because of the wonderful nature of his victory. The sword, the protector of dharma, was still wet with the blood of danavas. Respectfully, the illustrious Rudra gave it to Vishnu. Vishnu gave it to Marichi and the illustrious Marichi gave it to the maharshis. The rishis gave the sword to Vasava. O son! The great Indra gave it to the guardians of the world and the guardians of the world gave the extremely large sword to Manu, Surya's son.[236] They told the first man, 'You are the lord. This sword has dharma in its womb. Use it to protect the subjects. Those who transgress the boundaries of dharma, because of subtle or gross reasons, must be punished and protected by the rod, not as one wills, but following dharma. Harsh words are also punishment and chastisement can also take the form of fining a large quantity of gold. For trifling reasons, a limb of the body must not be severed. Nor should there be execution. Harsh words of censure are indicated as a form of the sword. The sword has different measures[237] and there are also exceptions to these measures.' Having created his own son, Kshupa, Manu, the lord of subjects, gave him the sword, for the protection of the subjects. On earth, Ikshvaku accepted the sword from Kshupa and Pururava from Ikshvaku.[238] Ayu obtained it from him and Nahusha from him. Yayati got it from Nahusha and Puru obtained it from him. Amurtarayasa got it from him and King Bhumishaya from him. O king! Bharata, the son of Duhshanta, obtained the sword from Bhumishaya and Aidabida, knowledgeable about dharma, obtained it from him. From Aidabida, Dhundhumara, lord of men, obtained it. Kamboja got it from Dhundhumara and Muchukunda from him. Marutta got it from Muchukunda and Raivata from Marutta. Yuvanashva got it from Raivata and Raghu from Yuvanashva. The powerful Harinashva, descended from the lineage of Ikshvaku, got it from him. Shunaka got the sword from Harinashva and Ushinara, with dharma in his soul, from Shunaka. The Bhojas and the Yadavas got it from him. Shibi obtained it from the Yadus and Pratardana from Shibi. Ashtaka got it from Pratardana and Rushadashva from Ashtaka. Bharadvaja got it from Rushadashva, Drona from him, and Kripa from him. You and all your brothers obtained the supreme sword from him.

'"The Krittikas are the nakshatra for the sword.[239] The fire is its god. Rohini is its gotra. Rudra is its supreme preceptor. O Pandaveya! Listen to the eight secret names of the sword. Recounting these, one can always obtain victory in the world—Asi, Vishasana, Khadga, Tikshnavartma, Durasada, Shrigarbha, Vijaya and Dharmapala.[240] O son of Madravati![241] The sword is the foremost among weapons. The ancient tales have certainly stated that it was first wielded by Maheshvara. O destroyer of enemies! Prithu created the first bow and with this, Vena’s son[242] protected the world earlier. O son of Madri! You must also follow the standard set by the rishis. The sword must always be worshipped by those who are accomplished in war. This is the first principle and this has been explained to you in great detail. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have told you about the sword’s origin and association. If a person listens to the supreme and complete account about how the sword was fashioned, that man obtains fame in this world and eternity in the world hereafter.”’

Chapter 1489(161)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Bhishma said this and became silent, Yudhishthira left his presence and asked his brothers, with Vidura as the fifth, “The conduct of people is based on dharma, artha[243] and kama. Which of these is the most important? Which is medium and which is the least important? If one wishes to conquer all three categories together, which of these must one control? O wise ones! You should speak truthful words and satisfy me.”

‘Vidura was foremost among those who knew the truth about the progress of artha. He possessed qualities. Remembering the texts of dharma, he spoke these words. “A great deal of learning, austerities, renunciation, faith, the performance of sacrifices, forgiveness, the purification of sentiments, compassion, truthfulness, restraint and richness of the soul—these must be cultivated and the mind must not waver. These are the foundations of dharma and artha and can be subsumed in the single word of ‘welfare’. The rishis crossed over through dharma. The worlds are established in dharma. The gods obtained heaven through dharma. Artha is submerged in dharma. O king! Dharma is the supreme in qualities. Artha is said to be medium. The learned ones say that kama is the worst. Therefore, a person must control his soul and make dharma the most important.”

‘When he stopped, the attentive Partha, who knew the true words about artha, spoke. “O king! This world is the arena of action and such conduct is praised—agriculture, trade, animal husbandry and many kinds of artisanship. Among all these tasks, there is nothing that transcends the need for artha. The sacred texts have said that without artha, dharma and kama cannot occur. A victorious person obtains artha and can pursue supreme dharma. He is capable of following kama, which is difficult for those with unclean souls to pursue. The sacred texts say that dharma and kama take the form of artha. These two can be attained through the successful acquisition of artha. Those who have been born in superior lineages surround the man who possesses artha, just as the beings always worship Brahma. Those who have matted hair, are clad in deerskin, are controlled and have smeared themselves with mud, those who have conquered their senses, have shaven heads, have no offspring and dwell separately—even they hanker after artha. There are others who are bearded and attired in ochre garments, covering themselves with humility. They are learned and tranquil. They are free and have given up all their possessions. Even among them, some seek heaven and others strive for artha. Some follow the practices of their lineages and are established in their own individual paths. There are believers and non-believers, completely engaged in supreme restraint. Lack of wisdom is submerged in darkness and wisdom provides the radiance.[244] A person who possesses artha can maintain his servants in pleasure and exert the rod against his enemies. O best among intelligent ones! That is the reason my view is accurate. Now listen to the words of these two. Their voices are choking with words."

'Madri's sons, Nakula and Sahadeva, accomplished in dharma and artha, spoke these supreme words next. "Whether one is seated, lying down, roaming around or standing, through the pursuit of superior and inferior means, one must always attempt to firmly pursue the acquisition of artha. This is extremely difficult to obtain and is supremely loved. In this world, once one has obtained this, there is no doubt that one can obtain kama. Artha is united with dharma and dharma is united with artha. This is the way amrita is united with honey. Therefore, our view is the following. There can be no kama without artha. How can there be dharma without artha? Thus, people are scared of those who are outside the pale of dharma and artha. Therefore, even if a person thinks that dharma is the most important, he must control his soul and seek to accomplish artha. If people trust a person, he can accomplish everything. One must first pursue dharma and then artha that is in conformity with dharma. Kama should be pursued later. These are the fruits of the successful pursuit of artha." Having spoken these words, the sons of the two Ashvins ceased.

'Bhimasena then spoke these words. "A person without kama does not desire artha. A person without kama does not desire dharma. A person without kama cannot follow the path of desire. Therefore, kama is the best. It is because they are united with kama that the rishis are controlled in their austerities. They eat leaves, fruits and roots. They subsist on air and are greatly restrained. There are others who are engaged in chanting the Vedas, they are devoted to studying. They perform funeral rites and sacrifices and receive donations. Merchants, farmers, herdsmen, craftsmen and artisans are engaged in the tasks of the gods. But it is kama that drives the action. Driven by kama, men enter the ocean. Kama has many different forms. Everything is driven by kama. There is nothing, there was nothing and there will be nothing that is beyond the simple fact of kama. O great king! This is the essence and dharma and artha are dependent on it. Kama is to dharma and artha what butter is to curds. Oil is better than what is left of oilseeds after the extraction of oil. Ghee is better than what is left of milk after churning. Good fruit is better than wood. Kama is superior to dharma and artha. Just as honey comes from the juice of flowers, like that, happiness comes from kama. O king! Serve kama. Pleasure yourself with women who are attired in extremely beautiful garments and are ornamented, mad with intoxication and pleasant in speech. Kama will come to you swiftly. In this group, this is my view. O Dharma's son! You should not reflect about this for a long time. If virtuous people paid heed to these beneficial words, which are not shallow in import, there would be the greatest kindness. One must serve dharma, artha and kama in equal measure. If a man serves only one of these, he is the worst. A person who is accomplished in two is said to be medium. The superior person is engaged in all three categories. He is wise. His well-wishers smear him with sandalwood paste. He is adorned in colourful garlands and ornaments." Having spoken these words, briefly and in detail, Bhima, the younger brother, stopped.

'For an instant, Dharmaraja thought well about the words that had been spoken to him. Extremely learned and supreme among the upholders of dharma, he smiled and spoke these truthful words. "There is no doubt that all your determinations are based on the sacred texts of dharma and that you are acquainted with the proof. You have carefully spoken these words to me and I have got to know about kama. You have said that it is essential in this world. However, single-mindedly, listen to the sentiments in my words. A man who is engaged in neither good deeds nor evil ones, and not engaged in artha, dharma or kama, is freed from all sins and looks on gold and stones in the same way. He is successful in freeing himself from unhappiness and happiness. Beings are born and they die. They face old age and decay. There have been repeated instructions on moksha and it has been praised. But we do not know this. The illustrious Svayambhu[245] has said that one who is not bound down by affection does not suffer these.[246] The learned ones have said that nirvana[247] is supreme. Therefore, one should not act in accordance with what is pleasant and what is unpleasant. However, a person who follows kama does not attach importance to this. I act wherever I have been appointed. All the beings have been appointed by destiny. Know that destiny is powerful in everything. One cannot attain the objective by performing deeds. Know that whatever is going to happen will happen. Even if a person is devoid of the three modes, he can attain this objective.[248] Thus, this is the secret for the welfare of the worlds." These foremost words were pleasant to the mind and full of reason. They heard them and were delighted. They joined their hands in salutation to the foremost one among the Kuru lineage. Those words were extremely beautiful and adorned with letters, syllables and words. They were pleasant to hear and devoid of thorns. O king! On hearing the words spoken by Partha,[249] those Indras among men applauded those words. The one who had never been dispirited[250] again questioned the son of the river[251] about supreme dharma.'

Chapter 1490(162)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O extender of the deeds of the Kuru lineage! I will ask you a question. You should explain this to me completely. What kind of men are amiable and who are the ones towards whom one can have great affection? Tell me who can be depended upon, in the present and in the future. It is my view that a growing store of wealth, kin and relatives cannot occupy the space that well-wishers do. A well-wisher who listens is extremely difficult to get. A well-wisher who does good is extremely difficult to get. O best among those who uphold dharma! You should explain all this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O Yudhishthira! I will tell you everything in detail. Listen to me about the true nature of men one should have alliances with, and those with whom one should not. O bull among men! O lord of men! Greedy, cruel, one who has forsaken dharma, deceitful, fraudulent, inferior, one who is wicked in conduct, one who is suspicious of everyone, lazy, one who is a procrastinator, one who is not upright, a sufferer, one who has molested his preceptor’s wife, one who abandons you at the time of a calamity, an evil-souled person, one who is without shame, one who sees wickedness everywhere, a non-believer, one who criticizes the Vedas, one who cannot control his senses in this world, one who incessantly follows kama, a liar, one who hates people, one who does not adhere to agreements, a person who slanders, one who does not possess wisdom, one who is envious, a person who has made up his mind about doing evil, one who is evil in behaviour, one who has not cleansed his soul, a person who is violent, a gambler, one who causes injury to friends, one who always desires the wealth that belongs to others, an evil-minded person who is not satisfied even if someone gives him a lot and to the best of giver’s capacity, one who always behaves with friends as if they are enemies, one who is enraged for the wrong reasons, one who suddenly loses interest, one who is wicked and swiftly abandons his well-wishers for a benefit, one who behaves foolishly when a trifling and involuntary injury has been done to him, one whose friendship is for an ulterior motive, one who pretends to be a friend but is actually an enemy, one who is confused and is blind to his own good, one who does not find delight in what is beneficial—such a man must be avoided. If a man drinks liquor, is hateful, cruel, devoid of compassion, harsh, takes delight in the sufferings of others, injures friends, is engaged in the killing of beings, is ungrateful and wicked—you must never have an alliance with him. You should never have an alliance with someone who is looking for your weakness.

'"Now listen to me about the ones you should have an alliance with—one who is noble, eloquent in speech, accomplished in jnana and vijnana, devoted to friends, grateful, knowledgeable about everything, devoid of sorrow, possessing the quality of pleasantness, devoted to the truth, one who has conquered his senses, one who is always devoted to physical exercise, one who comes from a noble lineage and has servants and sons, one who is handsome, possesses the qualities, one who is not greedy, one who has conquered exhaustion, one who is bereft of taints and one who is famous. These are the ones a king should accept. O lord! There are also those who act to the best of their abilities, are virtuous and content, are not angered for the wrong reasons, do not suddenly change their inclinations, are not angered when opposed, are mentally accomplished about artha, are devoted to the tasks of well-wishers even if this causes a suffering to themselves, in the manner of a red garment, find delight in their friends,[252] do not suffer from the vices of greed and delusion and pursue riches and young women, do not show such paths to well-wishers, trust and are devoted to their friends, regard gold and rock to be equal in value, do not have fraudulent tendencies towards their well-wishers, are modest in their conduct, are not interested in acquiring riches and ornaments, collect their followers and are always supremely interested in ensuring the prosperity of their master. These kinds of men are the best and a king must have an alliance with them. That is the means for extending the kingdom, like moonlight emanating from the lord of the planets. You must always have alliances with the best of men—those who are always based on the sacred texts, those who have conquered their anger, those who have power, those who take delight in war, those who are forgiving and those who possess the qualities of good conduct. O unblemished one! O king! Among the wicked men that I have mentioned, the worst are those who are ungrateful and kill their friends. Under all circumstances, it is certain that such a person, evil in conduct, must be cast aside.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! I wish to hear in detail about the reason for not allying with those who kill their enemies and are ungrateful, as stated by you. Please tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Indeed, on this, there is an ancient history that occurred. O lord of men! It happened in the northern direction, where the mlecchas dwell. There was a brahmana from the central regions. He was dark in limbs and had abandoned the brahman. He saw a village that was full of people and entered there, desiring to beg for alms. A rich bandit lived there and he knew specifically about all the varnas. He was devoted to brahmanas, devoted to the truth and always engaged in donations. He[253] went to his house and begged for alms. He begged for a place where he could reside and alms that would last him for a year. He gave the brahmana all this and also a garment that seemed to be new.[254] He also gave him a mature woman who had then lost her husband. Having obtained all this from the bandit, the brahmana was delighted in his mind. O king! In that supreme house, Goutama[255] found pleasure with her. He aided in the household work of the bandit who had helped him. He lived in Shabara’s[256] prosperous house throughout the monsoon. Goutama made supreme efforts to learn archery. O king! Like the large number of bandits, in every direction, Goutama could always kill the cranes that came within the range of his arrows. He lost all compassion and became addicted to violence. He was always engaged in slaying beings. Because of his association with them, Goutama became just like the bandits. In this way, he resided happily in that village of the bandits. Many months passed and he slew many birds.

‘“On one occasion, another brahmana arrived at that spot. He had matted hair and was dressed in rags and hides. He was extremely pure and devoted to studying. He was humble and controlled in his food. He was devoted to the brahman and accomplished in the Vedas. The brahmachari, who hailed from the same country[257] as his beloved friend, came to that village of the bandits. Since he avoided food cooked by shudras, he looked for the home of a brahmana. In the village, which was inhabited by a large number of bandits, he roamed around in every direction. That supreme among brahmanas then entered Goutama’s house. When Goutama returned, they met each other. When he returned, he had a load of cranes in his hand and wielded a bow in his hand. His limbs were covered in blood and he appeared at the door of the house. On seeing this flesh-eater, who had deviated and fallen, he still recognized him as the brahmana and in shame, spoke these words. ‘Why are you acting in this stupid way? You were born in the lineage of a brahmana. You were known in the central regions. How have you come to act like a bandit? Remember the first and foremost among the brahmanas, renowned for their knowledge of the Vedas. You were born in that lineage! The way you are now, you are the worst of your lineage. Awake and realize your own self of truthfulness, good conduct, learning and self-control. O brahmana! Remember your compassion and give up this attire.’ O king! He was thus addressed by his well-wisher, who had his welfare in mind. Having decided, he miserably replied, ‘O best among brahmanas! I possess no riches. I am not learned in the Vedas. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that I have come to this state in search of a means of subsistence. O brahmana rishi! On seeing you, I know that I will be successful. We will leave together in the morning. Dwell here during the night.’”’

Chapter 1491(163)

‘Bhishma said, “When night was over, that supreme among brahmanas departed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Goutama also left and headed in the direction of the ocean. Along the road, he saw some traders advancing towards the ocean. In the company of their caravan, he went towards the ocean. O great king! However, in a mountainous cavern, that caravan was attacked by a crazy elephant and most of them were killed. In some way, the brahmana managed to escape. Not knowing the directions but wishing to save his life, he fled in the northern direction. He lost everything—the caravan, the directions, the riches. He fled alone through the forest, like a *kimpurusha*. He eventually managed to reach a road that led in the direction of the ocean and then reached a beautiful forest that was full of large blossoming trees. There were beautiful and flowering mango trees in every direction. That spot was like Nandana[258] and was inhabited by yakshas and kinnaras. There were groves of shala, *tala*, *dhava*, *ashvattha* and sandalwood trees. The best among trees were full of flowers. The beautiful valley in the mountains was extremely fragrant with auspicious scents. Excellent birds warbled and chirped in every direction. There were the famous bharunda birds,[259] with faces like that of men. In every direction, there were *bhulinga*s[260] and other birds that frequented the ocean. Listening to the extremely melodious and pleasant sounds of the birds, the brahmana, Goutama, moved along.

‘“He then saw a lovely region that was spread with golden sand. It was wonderful and the region had a complexion like that of heaven. There was a giant and handsome banyan tree and it was rounded. It was adorned with beautiful branches and was like an umbrella. Its root was sprinkled extremely well with water mixed with the best of sandalwood. Covered with divine flowers, it was as handsome as the grandfather’s[261] throne. It was supreme and loved by the sages. On seeing it, Goutama was delighted. Surrounded by flowering trees, it looked like the house of a god. He joyfully approached it and seated himself under its branches. O Kouravya! As Goutama was seated there, a pleasant and auspicious breeze began to blow. O king! That sacred breeze touched all the flowers and removed all the exhaustion from Goutama’s heart and limbs. The brahmana was touched by the auspicious breeze. He slept happily and the sun set. When the sun set, twilight manifested. The king of cranes was known by the name of Nadijangha. He was supreme among birds and was Brahma’s beloved friend. The immensely wise one was descended from Kashyapa. He returned to his abode. Unsurpassed on earth, he was also known by the name of Rajadharma. He was the son of a celestial maiden. He was handsome and learned and was like the lord of the gods in his complexion. He was covered in golden plumage and his ornaments were like the sun. Blazing in prosperity, he was adorned all over his body. He was descended from the gods. On seeing the bird arrive, Goutama was astounded. He was overcome by hunger and thirst and glanced at it, desirous of causing injury.[262]

‘“Rajadharma said, ‘O brahmana! Welcome. It is through good fortune that you have come to my house. The sun has set and twilight has presented itself. You have come to my residence as a beloved and unblemished guest. In accordance with the prescribed rites, you will be worshipped. Leave in the morning.’”’

Chapter 1492(164)

‘Bhishma said, “Hearing these sweet words, Goutama was astounded. O king! He was curious and looked at Rajadharma.

‘“Rajadharma said, ‘I am the son of Kashyapa and Dakshayani is my mother.[263] O bull among brahmanas! You are a guest and possess all the qualities. Welcome.’”

‘Bhishma said, “In accordance with the prescribed rites, he gave him all the honours. He fashioned a celestial seat that was covered with shala flowers. That region around the Ganga was traversed by Bhagiratha’s chariot and was inhabited by a large number of fishes. Kashyapa[264] properly lit a blazing fire and cooked some extremely large fish, offering them to Goutama, the guest. The brahmana fed on these and was delighted. The great-minded one then fanned him with his wings, so that his exhaustion might become less. When he was seated and rested, he asked him about his gotra. He said, ‘I am Goutama, a brahmana.’ He did not say anything else. He gave him a celestial bed covered with fragrant leaves and adorned with divine flowers. Goutama happily lay down on it. Once he had lain down on the bed, the eloquent Kashyapa, the king of the cranes, asked him, ‘What is the reason behind your coming here?’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, Goutama replied, ‘O immensely intelligent one! I am poor. I have come to the ocean with the object of acquiring some riches.’ Kashyapa cheerfully replied, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! You should not be anxious. You will be successful. You will return to your home with riches. O lord! It is Brihaspati’s view that there are four means of obtaining riches—inheritance, fate, deeds and friends. I have appeared before you as a friend and you are also my well-wisher. I will try on your account, so that you can truly obtain riches.’ When it was morning, he asked him[265] whether he was comfortable and said, ‘O amiable one! Advance along this path and you will be successful. Once you have travelled three yojanas, there will be a great lord of the rakshasas. He is immensely strong and is known by the name of Virupaksha. He is my friend. O best among brahmanas! Go to him. Because of my telling him, there is no doubt that he will give you as much of riches as you desire.' O king! Having been thus addressed, Goutama was no longer exhausted and departed.

'"O great king! Along the way, as much as he wished, he ate fruit that was like amrita and progressed quickly. There were excellent forests of sandalwood, aloe and cinnamon. He reached a city named Meruvraja, with stone walls. There were ramparts made out of stone and a mechanical gate made out of stone. O king! It was announced to the intelligent Indra among rakshasas that a beloved well-wisher had sent a beloved guest to him. O Yudhishthira! At this, the Indra among rakshasas told his messengers, 'Goutama has arrived at the gates of the city. Quickly go and bring him here.' Men attired in white garments emerged from that supreme city. O great king! The messengers of the lord of the rakshasas went to the city gates and told the brahmana, 'O Goutama! Make haste and come quickly. The king wishes to see you. The brave lord of the rakshasas is Virupaksha and you have heard of him. He wishes to see you swiftly. Therefore, you must make haste.' Because of his amazement, the brahmana's exhaustion vanished and he hurried. Goutama saw the prosperity of the city and marvelled greatly. With the servants, he quickly arrived at the king's residence. At that time, the brahmana wished to see the Indra among the rakshasas."'

Chapter 1493(165)

‘Bhishma said, “Announced to the king, he entered that supreme house. He was honoured by the Indra among rakshasas and seated himself on an excellent seat. He was asked about his gotra, his code of behaviour, his studies and the nature of his brahmacharya. However, the brahmana told him nothing, other than his gotra. He no longer observed brahmacharya and had stopped studying. The king only got to know about his gotra and asked him where he lived. ‘O fortunate one! Where do you dwell? What is the gotra of your brahmana wife? Tell me everything. Do not be frightened. You should happily rest.’ Goutama replied, ‘I have been born in the central regions. I dwell in Shabara’s house. My wife is a shudra who has married again. I am telling you this truthfully.’ At this, the king thought, ‘How is this possible? What should I do now? How can I obtain merit?’ He used his intelligence to think about this. ‘This one has been born as a brahmana. He was sent here to me by my great-souled well-wisher, Kashyapa. Since he has always sought refuge with him, I must do what pleases him. He is my brother and relative.[266] He is also a friend who is dear to my heart. This is full moon in the month of Kartika[267] and one thousand excellent brahmanas will eat in my house. He will also eat here and I will give him some of my riches.’ One thousand learned and ornamented brahmanas arrived there. They had bathed and prepared themselves. They were attired in long linen garments. O lord of the earth! Those best among brahmanas came to Virupaksha from many directions. He received them as they deserved, following the prescribed rites.

‘“On the instructions of the Indra among the rakshasas, blankets were spread out on the ground. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The servants spread out cushions on these. Seated there, the best among brahmanas were worshipped by the king. O great king! They were as radiant as the lord of the nakshatras.[268] There were sparkling, pure and golden vessels, decorated with diamonds. These were filled with excellent rice, flowing with honey and ghee, and offered to the brahmanas. Many brahmanas always received this, in the months of Ashadha and Magha.[269] Honoured well, they always received the excellent food that they desired. But it has been heard that the full moon in Kartika, after autumn is over, was special and brahmanas were given jewels—gold, silver, gems, pearls, extremely expensive diamonds, lapis lazuli, skins of black antelope and skins of ranku deer. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The immensely illustrious Virupaksha threw away a large pile of jewels as dakshina and told the foremost among the brahmanas, 'Take these jewels, as much as you can, and as much as you wish. O best among brahmanas! Whatever be the vessels you have eaten from, take those too, and go to your own homes.' When addressed by the great-souled Indra among rakshasas in these words, the bulls among brahmanas accepted a sufficient quantity of jewels. All of them were worshipped with those sparkling and extremely expensive jewels. Attired in excellent garments, the brahmanas were delighted. O king! The Indra among rakshasas restrained the rakshasas and again spoke to the brahmanas, who had arrived from many directions. 'O brahmanas! This is one day when you need have no fear from the rakshasas. Amuse yourselves, as you like, and leave quickly.' At this, all the large numbers of brahmanas fled in different directions.

'"Goutama also swiftly grasped a load of gold. O brave one! He bore this with difficulty and approached the banyan tree. He was exhausted and sat down. He was tired and hungry. O king! At that time, Rajadharma, supreme among birds, who was devoted to his friend, arrived and welcomed Goutama. The bird fanned him with his wings and removed his exhaustion. He honoured him and made arrangements for his food. Having eaten and having rested well, Goutama began to think. 'Because of both my greed and my confusion, I have seized this extremely large burden of gold. I have a long distance to travel. There will be no food on the way, whereby I can stay alive. How will I be able to sustain my life?' He thought in this way. He could not see any food that would be available along the route. O tiger among men! The ingrate thought in his mind, 'This lord of the cranes is by my side and he is a heap of flesh. I will kill him and take him with me. I will then swiftly depart.'"'

Chapter 1494(166)

‘Bhishma said, “For the sake of protection, the Indra among the birds had kindled a great and blazing fire there and the wind was its charioteer. Having done this, the king of the cranes trustfully went to sleep by the side. Wishing to kill him, the evil-souled ingrate remained awake. With a blazing brand, he killed that trustful one. Having killed him, he was delighted, not seeing the consequences this would lead to. He removed the wings and the feathers and cooked the rest over the fire. Then, taking this and the gold, the brahmana left speedily.

‘“After another day passed, Virupaksha told his son, ‘O son! Today, I have not seen Rajadharma, supreme among birds. Every evening, he always goes to show his obeisance to Brahma. After this, the bird never goes home without having seen me first. It is now two evenings and two nights since he came to my residence. Therefore, I am disturbed and must find out about my well-wisher. That worst among brahmanas was disunited from studying and the radiance of the brahman wasn’t there in him. He has gone there and it is my fear that he might have killed him. I noticed that his conduct was wicked and from signs, could make out that he was evil-minded. He did not perform rites and was terrible in form. He was dark, like the worst among bandits. Goutama has gone there. That is the reason my mind is anxious. O son! Swiftly go to Rajadharma’s abode. Immediately find out if the one who is pure in his soul is still alive.’ Having been thus addressed, he quickly went to the banyan tree with some rakshasas and saw Rajadharma’s skeleton there. Weeping, the intelligent son of the Indra among the rakshasas speedily rushed, to the best of his capacity, to seize Goutama. A short distance away, the rakshasas seized Goutama. They also obtained Rajadharma’s body, bereft of the wings, the bones and the feet. Having taken this, the rakshasas hastened to Meruvraja.

'"They showed Rajadharma's body and the ungrateful man, Goutama, wicked in his senses, to the king. The king, with his advisers and priests, lamented on seeing him. Great sounds of lamentation arose in the residence. The city, with the women and the children, were distracted. The king told his son, 'Slay this wretch. As you wish, all of you merrily feast on his flesh. He is wicked in his conduct. He is evil in his deeds. He is dastardly in his soul. His determination is sinful. It is my view that the rakshasas should kill him.' Having been addressed by the Indra among the rakshasas, the rakshasas, terrible in their valour, did not wish to eat him and said, 'He is wicked in his deeds. It is proper that this worst among men should be given to the bandits.' O great king! The travellers of the night addressed the Indra among the rakshasas in this way. Before the lord of the large number of rakshasas, they bowed their heads down on the ground and said, 'You should not give him to us to eat. He is evil.' Having been thus addressed by the travellers of the night, the Indra among rakshasas instructed the rakshasas that he should be given to the bandits. Thus instructed, the servants picked up tridents and clubs in their hands. They chopped the wicked one up into pieces and gave him to the bandits. However, even the bandits did not desire to eat the evil-acting one. O Indra among kings! Predatory creatures did not eat the ingrate either.

'"If someone kills a brahmana, if someone is a drunkard, if someone is a thief, if someone has broken his vows—there are indicated means of atonement. O king! But there is no salvation for someone who is ungrateful. Someone who injures his friends, someone who is violent and someone who is ungrateful is the worst among men. Predatory creatures, worms and other such beings will not devour someone like this."'

Chapter 1495(167)

‘Bhishma said, “The rakshasa[270] had a funeral pyre constructed for the king of the cranes. It was decorated with gems, fragrances and garments. O king! The Indra among the rakshasas then followed the prescribed ordinances and performed the funeral rites for the powerful king of the cranes. At that time, the auspicious and illustrious goddess, Dakshayani Surabhi,[271] appeared overhead. O unblemished one! Froth and milk flowed from her mouth and streamed onto Rajadharma’s funeral pyre. O unblemished one! The king of the cranes was revived at this. The lord of the cranes arose and approached Virupaksha. At that time, the king of the gods came to Virupaksha’s city and told Virupaksha, ‘It is good fortune that he has come alive.’ Indra told Virupaksha about an ancient curse that had, in earlier times, been imposed by Brahma on Rajadharma. ‘O king! When the lord of the cranes did not worship Brahma, the grandfather was enraged and spoke to the Indra among the cranes. “This worst among cranes has foolishly not presented himself before me. Therefore, this evil-souled one will shortly be killed.” Because of those words, he was slain by Goutama. Having been sprinkled with amrita, the crane has again been brought back to life.’ When this was spoken, Rajadharma bowed down before Purandara and said, ‘O Purandara! If your mind is inclined towards showing me favours, let my extremely beloved friend, Goutama, come back to life.’ O bull among men! Vasava agreed to these words. He revived Goutama and handed him over to his friend. O king! The lord of the cranes was supremely delighted and embraced his friend, who was still carrying the burden.[272] Then, Rajadharma, the lord of the cranes, took his leave of the evil-acting one and his riches and entered his own residence. The crane went to Brahma’s assembly, as he should have. And Brahma honoured the great-souled one as a guest.

'"Goutama again reached Shabara's abode. Through the shudra woman, he had many sons who were the perpetrators of wicked deeds. The large number of gods then imposed an extremely severe curse on him. O lord! Over a long period of time, having given birth through his remarried wife,[273] the immensely ungrateful one would go to hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Narada told me all this earlier. O bull among men! I remembered and told you the great account. Everything happened exactly as I have recounted it. How can an ungrateful person obtain fame? What is his status? Where is his happiness? An ingrate is never respected. There is no salvation for an ungrateful person. A man must, especially, never injure his friends. A person who injures his friends obtains a terrible and infinite hell. O unblemished one! One must always have sentiments of gratitude and affection towards friends. Truth comes from friends. Strength comes from friends. The discerning person honours his friends well. The learned avoid a person who is wicked, ungrateful, shameless, injurious towards friends, the worst of his lineage, sinful in his deeds and the worst among men. O best among those who uphold dharma! I have thus spoken to you about the wicked person who was ungrateful and injured his friend. What do you again wish to hear?"'

Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! On hearing these words spoken by the great-souled Bhishma, Yudhishthira was delighted.'

This concludes Apad Dharma Parva.

Section Eighty-six

MOKSHA DHARMA PARVA

This parva has 6,935 shlokas and 186 chapters.

Chapter 1496(168): 53 shlokas
Chapter 1497(169): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1498(170): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1499(171): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1500(172): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1501(173): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1502(174): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1503(175): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1504(176): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1505(177): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1506(178): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1507(179): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1508(180): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1509(181): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1510(182): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1511(183): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1512(184): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1513(185): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1514(186): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1515(187): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1516(188): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1517(189): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1518(190): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1519(191): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1520(192): 127 shlokas
Chapter 1521(193): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1522(194): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1523(195): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1524(196): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1525(197): 20 shlokas

Chapter 1526(198): 18 shlokas

Chapter 1527(199): 32 shlokas

Moksha means liberation, as opposed to the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama.

Chapter 1496(168)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! You have spoken about how one can resort to the sacred rajadharma. O king! You should tell me about the best dharma for those who are in the ashramas.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There are many doors to dharma and the rites are never unsuccessful. Everywhere, dharma, the path to heaven, truthfulness and the fruits of austerities have been indicated. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Whatever rules one has thought of, and has determined to observe, is understood to be the only one—there being no other. Whenever one meditates, there is no doubt that detachment is generated and this world becomes like a fabric. O Yudhishthira! When the world is full of deception and many taints, an intelligent man must try to accomplish the objective of moksha for his soul.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! When riches are destroyed and a wife, a son or a father dies, how can one use one’s intelligence to dispel that sorrow? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When riches are destroyed and a wife, a son or a father dies, one laments in grief. However, one must act so as to dispel that sorrow through meditation. On this, an ancient history is recounted about the words that were spoken by a brahmana to Senajit, when the king was tormented by grief on account of his son and was distracted with misery. On seeing that his face was sorrowful, the brahmana spoke these words. ‘You are as stupid as a millstone. Why are you sorrowing? What are you grieving about? There are those who will sorrow over you and those mourners will also advance to the same end. O king! You, I, and all the others who worship you, all of us will go to the spot where we have come from.’ Senajit asked, ‘O brahmana! O one who is rich in austerities! What intelligence, austerities, meditation, wisdom and learning can be obtained, so that one does not grieve?’

'"The brahmana replied, 'Behold. All the beings are tied down in misery. For me, my atman is not mine. But the entire earth is mine. What is mine also belongs to others. Because of this intelligence, I am not distressed. Having obtained this intelligence, I am neither delighted, nor distressed. Just as a piece of wood approaches another piece of wood in the great ocean, comes together and drifts apart, that is the way beings meet each other. Sons, grandsons, kin and relatives are like that. One should not be attached to them, since separation from them is certain. He[1] came from what cannot be seen. He has gone to what cannot be seen. He did not know you. You did not know him. Who are you? Who are you sorrowing over? Misery is an affliction created by desire. Happiness results when that affliction of sorrow becomes less. Then again, misery is repeatedly generated by joy. Unhappiness comes after happiness. Happiness comes after unhappiness. Unhappiness is not permanently obtained. Nor is happiness permanently obtained. Friends are truly not the reason for happiness. Enemies are truly not the reason for unhappiness. One cannot obtain riches through wisdom. Nor indeed can riches bring about happiness. One cannot obtain riches through intelligence. Nor is stupidity the reason for penury. It is only a wise person, and no one else, who understands the progress of the world. The intelligent, the stupid, the brave, the coward, the foolish, the wise, the weak, the powerful—all of them enjoy happiness because of destiny. The cow simultaneously belongs to the calf, the cowherd, the master and the thief. But it is certain that the cow actually belongs to the person who drinks her milk.[2] Those who are the most foolish in the world and those who have attained supreme intelligence—only these men can enjoy happiness. People who are in between are miserable. The wise find delight in the two extremes, not in the ones that are in the middle.[3] It is said that happiness is associated with the two extremes and unhappiness with the ones that are intermediate. Those who have obtained happiness through their intelligence and those who are free from opposite sentiments,[4] devoid of jealousy—are never distressed by prosperity or adversity. However, there are also foolish people who have not obtained that intelligence. They have not been able to go beyond excessive delight and extreme misery. There are foolish ones who are bereft of consciousness. They are haughty because of their strength and are given to incessant delight, as if they are like the large numbers of gods in heaven.

However, because of their laziness, such happiness terminates in unhappiness. And because of skill, unhappiness can give rise to happiness. Riches and prosperity dwell with those who are accomplished, not with those who are lazy. Whether it is happiness or unhappiness, whether it is unpleasant or pleasant—whatever has been obtained must be enjoyed with an unvanquished heart. From one day to another, there are a thousand reasons for misery and a hundred reasons for joy. Stupid people are submerged in these, but not those who are learned. If a man is intelligent, accomplished in his wisdom, given to servitude[5] and lack of envy, and is self-controlled, having conquered his senses—sorrow cannot touch him. The wise person resorts to this intelligence and guards his consciousness. Sorrow cannot touch a person who knows the origin and the end of everything.[6] The reasons behind sorrow, fright, unhappiness and exertion must be severed from the roots, like casting aside one of the limbs in the body. If objects of desire are cast aside, this fills one with happiness. A man who follows desire is destroyed by that desire. The happiness obtained from the pursuit of desire in this world or the great bliss obtained in heaven is not even one-sixteenth of the happiness obtained from the extinction of desire. The deeds committed in an earlier body, good or bad, and the consequences of those deeds are felt by the wise, the foolish and the brave. In this way, the pleasant and the unpleasant, unhappiness and happiness, incessantly circulate among living beings. Knowing this and resorting to this intelligence, a person with qualities lives in joy. He disregards all desire and turns his back on all attachment. The wise regard this kind of approach of the heart as equivalent to mental death. A tortoise draws in all its limbs. Like that, such a person contracts desire and with a shining atman, is pleased with his atman. Even if there is the slightest sense of ownership left, that will give rise to repentance and pervade everything. He is not frightened of anything. No one is frightened of him. He has no desire and no hate. He is then immersed in the brahman. He gives up truth and falsehood, sorrow and joy, fear and freedom from fear, pleasant and unpleasant. Having abandoned these, he is tranquil in his soul. That resolute person does not do anything wicked towards any being, in deeds, thoughts and words. He is then immersed in the brahman. He abandons the thirst[7] that is so difficult for the evil-minded to give up, a fear that does not diminish with age and is like a disease that brings an end to life. Having done this, he obtains happiness. O king! On this, a verse sung by Pingala has been heard. This is about how she obtained eternal dharma at a time of hardship. A prostitute named Pingala went to the place meant for the rendezvous, but was rejected by her lover. Despite facing that calamity, by resorting to her intelligence, she found peace.

'"'Pingala said, "I have been crazy for a long time. In my madness, I have dwelt with my beloved. Because my beloved was nearby, I did not pursue the path of virtue earlier. This pillar has nine gates and I will cover it.[8] Even when he[9] approaches, which woman in this world regards him as a beloved? I have been thwarted in my desire. But, in the form of desire, those crafty ones[10] are like hell. They will not deceive me again. I know now and have woken up. Depending on destiny and earlier deeds, failure gives rise to success. I have now conquered my senses and have obtained the realization that I am without form. I am without any hope and am happy. There is great happiness when there is nothing to hope. Having destroyed hope, Pingala sleeps in happiness."'"

'Bhishma said, "The learned brahmana mentioned these and other reasons. King Senajit was comforted and found joy and happiness."'

Chapter 1497(169)

‘Yudhishthira said, “This time, which brings about the destruction of all beings, moves on. O grandfather! What is the supreme benefit one should try for? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation between a father and a son. O Yudhishthira! Listen to it. O Partha! There was a certain brahmana who was devoted to studying. He had an intelligent son named Medhavin.[11] The son was accomplished in the objective of moksha dharma and was also conversant with the true nature of the world. He spoke to his father, who was engaged in the act of studying. ‘O father! Since the lifespan of beings passes so quickly and men are destroyed, what should a wise person do? O father! Tell me about proper yoga and about the progressive way one should follow dharma.’

‘“The father replied, ‘O son! In brahmacharya, one must study the Vedas. Then, one must desire sons, so that the ancestors can be saved. Next, one must accept the sacrificial fire and perform sacrifices, in accordance with the prescribed rites. Finally, one must enter the forest and strive as a hermit.’

‘“The son asked, ‘The world is surrounded from all sides and is afflicted. A fall is certain. How can you speak with such patience?’

‘“The father replied, ‘How is the world afflicted? By what is it surrounded? Why is fall certain? Why are you scaring me?’

‘“The son said, ‘The world is afflicted by death. It is surrounded by old age. Day and night, there is downfall. How can you not comprehend this? I know that death does not wait for anyone.[12] How can I wait for it, with my feet tied in that net? As one night follows another night, the lifespan is decreased. Being like a fish in shallow water, how can one then be happy? The learned person knows that every day is fruitless. Before all desires are satisfied, a man encounters death. It is as if a ram is inattentive and is roaming around, feeding on young grass, when a she-wolf grabs him and conveys him to death. Do what is best today, lest you are overtaken by death. Death attracts, even if tasks are left incomplete. Tomorrow's task should be done today, the afternoon's in the forenoon. Death does not wait, to see if a task has been done or is yet undone. Who knows that he will not be approached by death today itself? When one is young, one must accept the pursuit of dharma as the only reason for remaining alive.[13] Observing dharma, one obtains deeds in this world and happiness after death. Overcome by confusion, one strives for the sake of sons and wives. In an attempt to sustain them, one performs desirable and undesirable acts. A man thinks in his mind that sons and animals are important and is devoted to this. While he is thus asleep, death grasps him, like an extremely powerful tiger. He has still not been satisfied by obtaining the objects of desire. Nevertheless, like a tiger grabbing an animal, death takes him away and goes. He is still thinking about the tasks that have been done, those which have been done and those which have partly been done. While he is attached to happiness in this death, he comes under the subjugation of death. This happens even before he has obtained the fruits of the deeds that have been completed. He is attached to the field, the shop and the home and attached to the fruits of deeds, but death takes him and goes away. There is death, old age and disease—and many other reasons for misery. All of them dwell in the body. How can you then remain, as if you are healthy? From the moment a being is born, death and old age pursue him, to bring about his end. Everything, mobile and immobile, is afflicted by these two. The learned texts have said that the pleasure[14] from attachment to dwelling in homes in villages and habitations is just like death. However, this can be contained in the forest. The attachment to villages and habitations binds one down with ropes. The performer of good deeds can sever these. But the performer of evil deeds cannot sever these. A person who does not unnecessarily injure beings through thoughts, words and deeds, is not destroyed by those who seek to take away life and wealth. He is not tied down by his action. When the soldiers of death advance, nothing can withstand them, with the exception of truth and the abandonment of falsehood. There is amrita in truth. Therefore, one must follow the vow of truth and be devoted to the yoga of truth. There is delight, peace and tranquility in truth. It is through truth that one triumphs over death. Both immortality and death exist in the body.

Through confusion, one obtains death. Through truth, one obtains immortality. That is the reason I am non-violent and pursuing the truth. I have cast aside desire and anger. I am impartial towards happiness and unhappiness. I am tranquil and look on death, as if I am immortal. I will be a hermit who will be devoted to sacrifices for peace, sacrifices for the brahman, sacrifices through words and sacrifices through deeds, thereby making myself awaken. How can one perform such violent sacrifices that involve the slaughter of animals? How can a wise person acts like a flesh-eater, injure himself internally, and observe the sacrifices of kshatriyas? If a person is single-minded in his words, thoughts, austerities, renunciation and yoga and follows these well, he obtains everything. There is no sight that is equal to knowledge. There is no strength that is equal to knowledge. There is no misery that is like that of attachment. There is no joy that is equal to renunciation. My atman has been generated from the atman.[15] Though I have no offspring, I will base myself on the atman.[16] My salvation will come from the atman, not from offspring. There are no riches for a brahmana that are equal to solitude and truth. Basing himself on good conduct, not chastising anyone, resorting to uprightness—he performs the supreme rites. Where are your riches? Where are your relatives? Where are your wives? O brahmana! They will all die. Your atman is hidden inside a cave. Where have your grandfather and your father gone?'"[17]

'Bhishma said, "O king! Hearing the words of the son, the father acted accordingly. You should also conduct yourself in that way, observing the dharma of truth."'

Chapter 1498(170)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! The rich and the poor observe their own rites. How, and from where, do they face happiness and unhappiness?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. Shamyaka, who was liberated and had obtained peace, sung a song. In ancient times, a brahmana who had renounced told me this. He was afflicted because of a bad wife, whose conduct was bad. He was also suffering from hunger. ‘Since the time he is born on earth, many different kinds of joy and sorrow afflict a man. If he is conveyed along either of these paths,[18] he will not be delighted on obtaining joy, or be anxious on obtaining sorrow. On this earth, you are not following what is best for yourself. Even though you have no desire, you are bearing a heavy burden. If you roam around, thinking all this to be insignificant, you will obtain happiness. A person with nothing sleeps, and awakes, in happiness. Not possessing anything is the medication for happiness in the world. This is healthy and auspicious. This path is extremely difficult, even for those who have no enemies.[19] But it is easily obtained by those who are virtuous. Glancing at the three worlds, I do not find anyone with possessions who is equal to a virtuous person who is without possessions. I weighed the lack of possessions and a kingdom on a balance and found that the lack of possessions surpassed the kingdom in qualities. Specifically, there is a great difference between the lack of possessions and a kingdom. A prosperous person is always anxious, as if he is in the jaws of death. A fire, the sun, death and bandits have no power over a person who has freed himself from riches and is without hopes. Depending on his wishes, he lies down on the bare ground, using his arms as a pillow. He has obtained tranquility and is praised by the residents of heaven. A wealthy person is afflicted by both anger and avarice and loses his senses. He is wicked, casts sideways glances, has a frown on his face and his mouth is dry. He bites his lower lips with his teeth. He is enraged and terrible in speech. Even if he desires to give the earth away, who will wish to look at him? Dwelling in continuous prosperity confuses a person who is not very discerning. It robs him of his senses, like the wind bearing away autumn clouds. He takes delight in, “I am handsome. I am wealthy. I am noble. I am successful. I am not an ordinary man.” His consciousness is sprinkled with these three reasons.[20] Thus sprinkled and attached to objects of pleasure, he is deprived of the riches his ancestors accumulated. When these have decayed, he thinks it is virtuous to appropriate the property of others. He transgresses boundaries and seizes from every direction. The kings then restrain the greedy person, like deer with arrows. These are the many different kinds of sorrows that then touch the man’s body. Afflicted by these supreme hardships, he realizes that he needs medication. He abandons the dharma of the world,[21] with everything that is temporary and permanent. Without renunciation, one cannot enjoy supreme happiness. Without renunciation, one can neither sleep, nor be happy in every way.’[22] This is what the brahmana told me in earlier times in Hastinapura, about what had been said by Shamyaka. Therefore, it is my view that renunciation is supreme.”’

Chapter 1499(171)

‘Yudhishthira said, “If a person undertakes sacrifices and does not possess riches,[23] and the thirst for riches overcomes him, what can he possibly do to obtain happiness?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A person who looks on everything equally, a person who doesn’t make an effort,[24] a person who is truthful in speech, a person who disregards worldly objects, a person who pursues knowledge—such a man is indeed happy. The ancient ones have said that these five are the steps towards tranquility. These are heaven. These are dharma. These are happiness. These are supreme virtue. On this, an ancient history is recounted, about what Manki, who had freed himself from worldly possessions, had sung. O Yudhishthira! Listen to it.

‘“Manki was repeatedly frustrated in his pursuit of riches. Finally, with some riches that were left, he bought two bulls and a yoke. Once, he bound them to the yoke and took them out, so as to control them.[25] A camel was lying down in the middle and they suddenly rushed towards it. They approached and fell down on the camel’s neck. The enraged camel arose. It ran at great speed, dragging the two bulls with it. Dragged along by the camel, the two bulls were tormented. On seeing that they were about to die, Manki spoke these words. ‘If it has not been ordained, even an accomplished person is incapable of obtaining wealth, despite his making every effort, faithfully and well. Earlier, I have tried many ways of obtaining riches. But behold the calamity that destiny has inflicted me with. My two bulls have been raised up and are being dragged over uneven terrain. They are being raised up and flung down, as if a crow is tearing at palm fruit or rose apples.[26] My beloved calves are dangling from the camel’s neck, like jewels. This is certainly because of destiny and I know that manliness does not exist. Even if there exists something by the name of manliness, if one examines this, one will find that this too is based on destiny.

Therefore, someone who wishes to advance towards happiness must be indifferent. A person who shuns all hope of obtaining riches sleeps happily. When Shuka freed himself from everything and went to the great forest from his father's residence, he spoke well.[27] "Between a person who satisfies all his desires and a person who only renounces, the one who renounces is superior to the one who obtains all the objects of desire."[28] There is no end to all desires and one can never attain a state where they are extinguished. As long as he is alive, a foolish person's thirst increases. Refrain from desire. Let tranquility pervade me. Having been deceived by what should not be pursued, it should no longer pervade my body. You desire riches.[29] If I am not going to be destroyed and if you wish to take delight in me, then do not engage me in this futile path of greed. You have repeatedly accumulated riches and they have repeatedly been destroyed. O stupid one! O one who is addicted to riches! When will you free yourself from this desire for wealth? Shame on my folly. This has led me to becoming a puppet in your hands. It is in this way that men who are born become the slaves of others. No person born earlier has ever obtained an end to desire. Nor will any person who is born later. Having abandoned all efforts, I now know and am awake. O desire! It is certain that your heart is as firm as a diamond. That is the reason why, though it is afflicted by one hundred calamities, it does not shatter into one hundred fragments. O desire! I will abandon you and everything that is agreeable to you. Severing what you find to be agreeable, I will obtain happiness. O desire! I know your foundation. You certainly result from resolutions. If I do not have any resolutions, you will not have any foundations. Wealth does not yield happiness on earth. If obtained, it leads to a lot of anxiety. If it is destroyed after having been obtained, that seems like death. Nor does one know whether it can be obtained or not. There is nothing that is a greater misery than its going away after it has been obtained. One is not satisfied when it has been obtained. Instead, one looks for paths to enhance it. Riches are like the tasty waters of the Ganga, since one keeps hankering for more. This is also the reason for my lamentation. I now know and will abandon it. It[30] has sought refuge in the natural elements of my body. As it wishes, let it dwell here, or wherever else it finds happiness.[31] I have no affection for any of you[32] who follow desire and avarice. Therefore, I am abandoning all of you. I will seek refuge with truth alone. My atman will behold all the elements in the body and my mind. I will base myself in yoga, intelligence, learning and spirit and uphold the brahman in my mind. I will happily roam the worlds, without any attachment and without any disease, so that you can no longer try to immerse me in misery again.[33] I have been agitated by you and there is no other path left to me. O desire! Thirst, sorrow and exhaustion have always been manifestations of your powers. I think that the sorrow which results from the destruction of riches is the greatest of all miseries. Relatives and friends disrespect the person who has been separated from his wealth. Other than disrespect, in the absence of riches, there are one thousand other taints that are more severe. However, even though riches provide a little bit of happiness, it is mingled with a great deal of unhappiness. In everyone's sight, bandits slay the person who possesses riches. They torment him with many kinds of punishment and always terrify him. After a long period of time, I have realized the stupidity and misery that greed leads to. O desire! You make me follow whatever you get addicted to. You do not know the truth. You are foolish. You are difficult to satisfy. You are never satiated. You are like a fire. You do not consider whether something is easy to obtain, or difficult to obtain. You are as difficult to fill as the nether regions. You wish to fling me into misery. O desire! From today, I am incapable of dwelling with you again. I am free from possessions now. As they will, let the objects be destroyed. I have obtained supreme renunciation now. I no longer think about desire. Because of you, I suffered greatly earlier. I now know myself to be intelligent. Because of the destruction of the riches, I have been deceived. But I can lie down now, without any fever in any of my limbs. O desire! I am casting you away and abandoning all my mental inclinations towards you. O desire! You will not associate with me or find pleasure in me again. I will forgive even those who should not be forgiven. I will not injure, even though I am injured against. I will speak pleasantly to those who hate me and ignore their disagreeable words. I will be satisfied and my senses will be at ease. I will always sustain myself on what has been obtained. You are an enemy of my atman and I will not satisfy your wishes. Know that lack of possessions, lack of desire, satisfaction, tranquility, truth, self-control, forgiveness and compassion towards all beings have now sought refuge with me. Therefore, desire, avarice, thirst and miserliness have been cast away. I have based myself on my spirit. I have abandoned desire, avarice, anger and harshness. I will no longer come under the subjugation of greed and subject myself to misery. Whoever casts aside desire is filled with happiness. Someone who is under the subjugation of desire is always confronted with misery. When a man casts aside the passions that result from desire, he abandons the rajas quality. Sorrow and other hardships always result from desire and anger. I have now immersed myself in the brahman, like entering a cool lake during the summer. I have calmed myself. I have withdrawn myself. I only enjoy happiness. The happiness one obtains in the worlds from the satisfaction of desire and the great happiness one enjoys in heaven are less than one-sixteenth of the happiness one obtains from the extinguishing of thirst. I have slain supreme enemies of the atman, desire being the seventh.[34] I have attained Brahma's indestructible city. I will be happy there, like a king.' Resorting to his own intelligence, Manki became free from all possessions. He abandoned all desire and obtained great bliss with Brahma. Because the bulls had been destroyed, Manki obtained immortality. Having severed the foundation of desire, he obtained great happiness.

'"In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a song sung by Janaka, the king of Videha, who obtained tranquility. 'Though I possess nothing, my wealth is infinite. Even if Mithila[35] is set ablaze, nothing that belongs to me will be consumed.' In this connection, about lack of possessions, there is also what Bodhya, who attained the supreme objective, said. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this. The self-controlled rishi Bodhya was asked by King Nahusha. 'You are without possessions. You have obtained tranquility. You are at peace. You are full of wisdom. O immensely wise one! Instruct me about how one can obtain tranquility. What intelligence should one resort to, so that one can withdraw and roam around in peace?' Bodhya replied, 'I follow the instructions of others, but never instruct anyone. I will tell you about the signs. You can then yourself reflect on those. My six preceptors are Pingala, the osprey, the snake, the bee that is searching in the forest, the one who makes arrows and the maiden.'"'[36]

Chapter 1500(172)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O one who knows about conduct! What is the conduct through which one can roam around on earth, free from sorrow? What should a man do in this world, so as to attain the supreme objective?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation between Prahrada and the sage Ajagara. O king! There was a brahmana who was intelligent and revered by the wise. His consciousness was unblemished. While he was roaming around, he was asked by Prahrada. ‘You are at ease, capable, mild, self-controlled, without any desire, free from malice, extremely eloquent, extremely revered in the world and wise. You roam around like a child. There is nothing that you seek to obtain. You do not grieve over anything that has not been obtained. O brahmana! It is as if you are always content. There is nothing that you think about. The beings are distracted, as they are borne along on currents of deeds connected with dharma, kama and artha. But to you, these seem to be illusory. You do not follow dharma or artha, nor are you engaged in kama. You ignore the objectives of the senses. You roam around free, like a witness. O sage! What is your wisdom? What is your learning? What is your conduct? How did you become like this? O sage! O brahmana! If you think that is beneficial for me, please tell me this immediately.’ The intelligent one, who knew about dharma and the conduct of the worlds, was asked in this way.

‘“Asked by Prahrada, he gently spoke these words, which were full of import. ‘O Prahrada! Behold. The origin, decay, increase and destruction of beings have no evident reason. That is the reason I am not delighted, nor distressed. They are seen to be engaged in their own natural conduct. Everyone is engaged in natural conduct and there is nothing to be tormented about. O Prahrada! Behold. Every kind of union is subject to separation. All stores eventually end in destruction. Hence, my mind has never turned to acquisition.

In front of us, every being that possesses qualities comes to an end. If one knows about origin and destruction, what tasks remain to be undertaken? In due course, it is seen that every aquatic creature in this great ocean, be its form gigantic or subtle, confronts destruction. O lord of asuras! I see it as evident that death comes to all beings on earth, and all mobile and immobile objects. O supreme among danavas! When the time comes, all the birds which rise up and roam around in the sky come under the power of death. When the time is right, all the stellar bodies that roam around in the firmament, whether they are small or large, are seen to fall down. Thus, all beings are seen to be attracted by death. Knowing that everything has this general nature, I sleep happily, doing nothing, since there is nothing to be done. If, without trying for it, I obtain a great deal of food, I eat it. There are again many days when I lie down, without having had anything to eat. There are many who give me many different kinds of food, with many different qualities. However, sometimes I get little, with few qualities, or nothing at all. There are times when I eat minute grains, and food from which the oil has been squeezed out. There are also times when I eat the best food, rice mixed with meat. There are times when I sleep on beds and times when I sleep on the bare ground. There are also times when I get a bed inside a palace. I am sometimes attired in rags, hemp, linen and hides. There are also times when I am clad in extremely expensive garments. As I wish, I do not reject objects of pleasure that are in conformity with dharma. but I do not strive for things that are difficult to obtain. I follow the pure vow that is known as *ajagara*.[37] I do not waver from this and have no possessions. This is auspicious and bereft of sorrow. This is infinitely sacred and I have immersed myself in this intelligence of the learned. Foolish ones do not follow it and show it disrespect. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. My mind does not deviate from it. I have not been dislodged from my own dharma. I am restrained in everything and know everything about cause and effect. I am devoid of fear, stupidity, greed and confusion. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. This has no rules about consequences, what should be eaten, what should be enjoyed and what should be drunk. Since everything depends on destiny, nothing is determined in accordance with the time and the place. This contributes to the happiness of my heart and those who are mean do not follow this. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. Because of their thirst, people pursue many kinds of riches. When they don't get them, they grieve. I have used my accomplished intelligence to discern the truth. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. To obtain riches, I have seen distressed people seek refuge with both noble and ignoble men. However, I am relieved of this and have found peace in my soul. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I know the truth—everything is ordained by destiny. I look on happiness and unhappiness, the acquisition of riches and the loss of riches, love and hatred and death and life equally. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I have overcome fear, attachment, confusion and insolence. I have fortitude, wisdom, intelligence and tranquility. I am content with enjoying the fruit that presents itself before me.[38] I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I have no restrictions on where I should sleep and what I should eat. I am naturally united with self-control, restraint, vows, truth and purity. I have transcended the need to store any fruits. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. I have always controlled the thirst in my mind. Based on my atman, I look towards everything with my intelligence. I have transcended the sorrows that come from the pursuit of riches and the lack of riches. I follow the pure vow that is known as ajagara. The heart and the mind strive for the agreeable and the pleasant. But these are difficult to obtain and are transient and I have realized both these aspects. Therefore, I have overcome these. There are learned and intelligent men who have spoken about this in many ways. Those wise ones have sought to establish their own views. They have spoken about this and that and have censured the views of others. But this is beyond debate. I have seen that there are many men who are confused and have been led in separate directions. However, I dwell in the infinite that is beyond all these taints. Having controlled anger and thirst, I roam around among men.' If there is a great-souled man who follows the vow of ajagara in this world, having controlled attachment and having overcome fear, anger, avarice and confusion, he will certainly he happy. He will find delight in this pleasure."'

Chapter 1501(173)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! Relatives, deeds, riches and wisdom—which of these actually establishes a man? I am asking you. Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Wisdom is the foundation for beings. It is held that wisdom is the greatest of gains. Wisdom is the most beneficial in the world. The virtuous are of the view that wisdom leads to the attainment of heaven. When their riches were destroyed, it is through wisdom that Bali, Prahrada, Namuchi and Manki attained their objectives. What can be greater than that? On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Indra and Kashyapa. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this.

‘“O son! There was a rishi named Kashyapa who was rigid in his vows. There was a prosperous vaishya. Because of his insolence, he brought the ascetic down through his chariot. He fell down and was distressed and was about to give up his life. He angrily said, ‘I will die. There is no point to a person without riches remaining alive.’ He was seated thus, about to die, and lamented, bereft of his senses. His thoughts were enraged. At that time, Indra appeared before him in the form of a jackal and said, ‘All the beings always desire to be born as humans. Among all humans, the status of a brahmana is always praised. O Kashyapa! You are a human and a learned brahmana. This is extremely difficult to obtain. You should not commit this sin.[39] The learned texts have truthfully said that all acquisitions give rise to insolence. You are the form of contentment. But what you are thinking of is full of greed. The virtuous ones who possess hands accomplish their objectives. We desire hands, just as you desire riches. There is no gain that is superior to the obtaining of hands. O brahmana! Without hands, I cannot take out the thorn that is paining my body. For those who possess hands, the gods have given them ten fingers. They can use these to uproot the insects that are biting their limbs. They can act so as to save themselves from the cold, the rains and the heat.[40] They can cheerfully obtain food and enjoy these in beds that are safe from the wind. In this world, they enjoy cattle and employ them to carry burdens. They employ many other means to bring them under their subjugation. Those without hands and those who cannot grind with their tongues[41] do not live for a long time. They have to tolerate many hardships. O sage! It is good fortune that you are not like them. It is good fortune that you are not a jackal, a worm, a rat, a snake, a frog, or some other being born in an inferior species. O Kashyapa! You should be content with this gain. Then again, among all living beings, you are a supreme brahmana. These worms are biting me. Look at my state. Because I lack hands, I am incapable of saving myself from them. Despite being unsuccessful in this, I do not wish to give up my life. If I performed this wicked deed, I would descend into an even more inferior species.[42] I am in the state of a jackal and this is about medium among those of wicked species. There are many others who belong to even more wicked species and are greater in evil. Through birth, some are happy and virtuous and others are extremely miserable. However, I do not see anyone who is entirely happy. Having gained prosperity, humans next want a kingdom. Having obtained kingdoms, they wish to become gods. Having become gods, they desire to become Indra. Even if you obtain riches, you will never become a king or a god.[43] Even if you become a god, you will not be satisfied without becoming Indra. You will not be content after obtaining what you desire. The thirst will not be slaked. This is like a fire that is again ignited through the offering of kindling. There is sorrow in you. But there is also delight in you. Since there is both sorrow and joy, why should you grieve? Like birds imprisoned in a cage, restrain the foundations of your senses and confine all your desires and your deeds. If a person does not experience something, there can be no desire on account of that, since it[44] is generated from touch, sight and hearing. You do not remember varuni or the bird known as *latvaka*.[45] There is no food or drink that is superior to these two. O Kashyapa! There are many other distant objects of food and drink. Since you have not experienced these earlier, you do not remember them. Not to eat, not to touch, not to see—I think that this is certainly the supreme rule for a man. There is no doubt that those with hands obtain riches and are powerful. Men use these to reduce other men to a state of servitude. They repeatedly use these to torment, slay, bind and afflict others.

They take pleasure in deceit, sport and are happy. Accomplished in their learning, those spirited ones control others through the strength of their arms. They adopt reprehensible and extremely miserable conduct and follow wicked means of subsistence. They become interested in influencing the conduct followed by others. They are bound by their own deeds and this is the working of destiny. Even *pulkasa*s and chandalas do not wish to give up their own lives.[46] Behold the maya and consider others, since you are dissatisfied with your own birth. Look towards the men who have withered arms. There are those who are not healthy. O Kashyapa! Looking towards the others, since you are complete in your limbs, you should think that you have gained. O brahmana! You are well and without fear in this body. You possess all your limbs and are not shamed amongst people. O brahmana rishi! Even if you were to be censured because of a true reason and even if you deviated from dharma, you should not give up your own life. O brahmana! If you listen to my words and act accordingly, you will obtain the best of fruits, as stated in the dharma laid down in the Vedas. Study and, without any distractions, maintain the sacrificial fire. Follow truth, self-control and generosity. Never seek to rival another. Those who study, sacrifice and perform sacrifices for others, how can there be any sorrow in them? They are ornaments among officiating priests. They roam around as they please and obtain great happiness. They are born under auspicious nakshatras, on auspicious lunar days and at extremely energetic muhurtas. But there are also those who are born under extremely inauspicious nakshatras, bad lunar days and extremely weak muhurtas. They descend into the wombs of asuras and their birth deprives them of sacrifices. I used to be learned.[47] I sought reasons and criticized the Vedas. My inclinations were argumentative and I was addicted to pointless debating. I was an exponent of arguments and reasons and spoke about subtle differences. I spoke disparagingly about the sacrifices of brahmanas and brahmanas. I was a non-believer and was suspicious of everything. I was foolish and insolent about my learning. O brahmana! Because of that, I have reaped the fruits of being born as a jackal. I have been born as a jackal and after hundreds of days and nights, may again be born as a human. I will then be satisfied and without being distracted, will perform sacrifices and give donations. I will then know what should be known. I will then cast away what should be cast away.’ He spoke in this way and the sage Kashyapa arose and said, ‘O son! You are accomplished in your intelligence and I marvel at this.’ Because of his knowledge, the brahmana was far-sighted. He looked and realized that it was actually Indra of the gods, the god who was Shachi’s consort. At this, Kashyapa worshipped the one with the tawny horses.[48] He took his permission and went to his own hermitage.”’

Chapter 1502(174)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! Tell me about donations, sacrifices, tormenting oneself through austerities and the serving of seniors."

'Bhishma replied, "If one's soul turns towards what is not beneficial, if the mind is immersed in sin, then one performs wicked deeds and has to suffer from great hardships. Those perpetrators of wicked deeds are born poor. They starve in the midst of famine. They face difficulties amidst hardships. They are terrified in the midst of fear. They become dead in the midst of death. The performers of auspicious deeds are wealthy. They are festive amidst festivities. They obtain heaven in celestial regions. They obtain bliss in the midst of happiness. They are devoted and self-controlled. Non-believers are bound by their hands and dispatched to desolate spots frequented by predatory beasts and elephants, full of fear from snakes and thieves. What else should one say about them? However, there are those who speak agreeably towards gods and guests. They are affectionate towards virtuous people. The tranquility of their souls takes them along paths that are travelled by those who are correct.[49] Those who do not find reasons in dharma are like shrivelled grain among grains, termites[50] among birds and the worst among men. Ordained destiny follows and swiftly pursues a person, sleeping when he sleeps and accompanying him in everything that he does. It stands when he stands. It walks when he walks. It acts whenever he acts and follows him like a shadow. Whatever acts a man may have done earlier, it has been apportioned that he must enjoy the consequences. Destiny protects the fruits of his own deeds and flings him into these. From every direction, time naturally attracts all beings. At the right time, without being goaded, flowers and fruits blossom on their own. Like that, the consequences of earlier deeds cannot be withdrawn. Repeatedly, destiny determines honour and disrespect, gain and loss, decay and growth, until those have been exhausted. One has oneself determined one's unhappiness. One has oneself determined one’s happiness. From the moment one lies down in the womb, one enjoys the outcome of earlier bodies. Whether it is in childhood, youth or old age, whatever auspicious and inauspicious deeds are performed by a person, in exactly that way, he will enjoy this, from one birth to another. A calf seeks out its mother, even in the midst of one thousand cows. In that way, deeds performed earlier follow the doer. A piece of cloth is drenched in water.[51] Like that, subsequent purification through fasting, austerities and repentance can lead to a long period of infinite happiness. One can dwell in a hermitage and perform austerities for a long time. One can wash away sins through dharma and be successful in attaining one’s wishes. Like birds in the sky and like fish in the water, the footsteps of a person who is wise in his learning cannot be discerned. There is no need to talk about any other acts of transgression. One must delicately perform the tasks that will ensure one’s own welfare.”’

Chapter 1503(175)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “From where was this universe created? When there is destruction, where does the world, with all its mobile and immobile objects, go? O grandfather! Tell me this. Who is the one who constructed this world, with its oceans, sky, mountains, clouds, earth, fire and wind? How were the beings created and how were they divided into varnas? What about their purity and impurity? Where did dharma and adharma originate? How do living beings live? Where do they go when they die? Tell me everything about this world and that other world.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the great words Bhrigu spoke, when he was asked by Bharadvaja. Bharadvaja saw maharshi Bhrigu seated on the peak of Kailasa, blazing in his energy. He asked, ‘Who created this world, with its oceans, sky, mountains, clouds, earth, fire and wind? How were beings created and how were they divided into varnas? What about their purity and impurity? Where did dharma and adharma originate? How do living beings live? Where do they go when they die? You should tell me everything about this world and the world hereafter.’ Bharadvaja asked the illustrious maharshi, who was like Brahma himself, about his doubts.

‘“He told him everything. ‘The maharshis have earlier heard about the famous one named Manasa.[52] He is without beginning and without end. That god cannot be penetrated. He is without old age and without death. He is known as Avyakta.[53] He is eternal. He is without decay. He is immutable. He is the one who created all the beings that are born and die. He first created a great god named Mahanta.[54] That lord and upholder of all beings created Akasha.[55] Water was created from space. The fire and the wind were created from water. The earth was created from the combination of the fire and the wind. Svayambhu[56] then created a celestial lotus that was full of energy. From that lotus arose Brahma, the store of the essence of the Vedas. He is famous as

Ahamkara.[57] All the beings were born from him and he is the creator of all beings. These five elements are the greatly energetic Brahma. The mountains were generated from his bones. The earth is his flesh and fat. The oceans are his blood. The sky is his stomach. The wind is his breath. The fire is his energy. The rivers are his veins. Agni and Soma, the sun and the moon, are known as his eyes. The firmament that is above is his head. His feet are the ground. The directions are his arms. There is no doubt that he is infinite and is impossible to comprehend, even by those who are successful. The illustrious one is known as the infinite Vishnu. He is inside all living beings. However, those whose souls are not cleansed cannot comprehend him. He is the one who created ego. He is the one who thought of all beings. The entire universe was generated from him. He is the one you asked me about.' Bharadvaja asked, 'What are the dimensions of the sky, the directions, the earth and the wind? Tell me the truth about these and resolve my doubts.' Bhrigu replied, 'The sky is infinite and is frequented by siddhas and *charana*s. It is beautiful and has many habitations. It is impossible to decipher its ends. As one ascends, there are regions the moon and the sun cannot see. The stellar bodies[58] are radiant in their own resplendence there, as radiant as the fire. O one who is famous for his energy! Where these end, the sky cannot be seen. O one who shows honours! Know that those regions are difficult to reach and infinite. High above and higher still, there are bodies that blaze in their own radiance. Those are the limits of the sky. But they cannot be measured, not even by the gods. The oceans are at the extremities of the earth. It is said that there is darkness where the oceans end. It is said that when darkness ends, there is water. Where water ends, there is fire. There is water at the end of the nether regions.[59] And where this water ends, there is the lord of the serpents. Where this ends, there is the sky again. At the end of this sky, there is water again. In this way, the boundaries of the illustrious one end in water. The fire and the wind are difficult to fathom, even by the gods. The nature of fire, wind, water and the surface of the ground are like that of space. Because one lacks the sight, the differences cannot be understood. The sages read many kinds of sacred texts that have determined the measures of the three worlds and the oceans. But these cannot be seen and one cannot go there. Who can speak about their measure? The siddhas and gods are restricted in where they can go. But even those minor regions seem to be infinite, not to speak of the regions that are actually known as infinite. Its form is like its name, infinite. It is the great-souled Manasa. His divine form sometimes waxes and sometimes wanes. Which other person is capable of knowing him, unless that other person is his equal? The omniscient lord Brahma was created and manifested himself earlier from the lotus. He is the essence of dharma. He is the supreme Prajapati.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘If he was created from the lotus, the lotus should be regarded as the elder. Why should Brahma be regarded as the first? Remove this doubt of mine.’ Bhrigu replied, ‘It is the earth that is known as the lotus. Manasa manifested himself in the form of Brahma and needed a seat. Mount Meru extended up to the sky and became the stalk of that lotus. Situated inside it, the lord created the universe and all the worlds.’”’

Chapter 1504(176)

'"Bharadvaja said, 'O supreme among brahmanas! Situated in the midst of Meru, how did the lord Brahma create the different categories of beings? Tell me this.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'Manasa created many different categories of subjects through the powers of his mind. To protect the subjects, he first created water, since it is the life of all beings and it is through it that all the subjects grow. If it did not exist, everything would be destroyed. Everything is pervaded by it. The earth, the mountains, the clouds and everything else that has form is known to be water. They are its solidified form.'

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'How was water created? What about fire and the wind? How was the earth created? I have great doubts about this.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'O brahmana! In ancient times, in the period that is known as Brahma's era, the great-souled brahmana rishis assembled and had a doubt about how the worlds were created. They remained silent and immobile, resorting to meditation. Those brahmanas gave up food and subsisted on air for one hundred celestial years. After that, they all heard words that were full of dharma. This celestial and divine voice was heard in the firmament. "Earlier, there was only silent space. It was motionless and immobile. Without the moon, sun and wind, it seemed to be asleep. Then water was created, like darkness emerging from darkness. When that water stirred, the wind was created. An empty vessel without a hole is seen to be silent. But when it has been filled with water, the wind creates a noise inside it. Like that, the infinite space was filled with water. After that, the wind penetrated the water and created a loud noise. Generated from the stirring of the water, the wind whirled around in this way. It reached up into the sky, but was still not pacified. As a result of the friction between the wind and the water, the immensely powerful fire arose, blazing in energy. It rose upwards and removed the darkness that covered the firmament. The wind fanned the fire and brought the sky and the water together. As a result of uniting with the wind, fire became dense. As it descended from the sky, the friction caused its liquid part to solidify and created the earth. The juices, different kinds of fragrances, liquids, beings—the earth is known to be the womb that gave rise to all these things.”’”’

Chapter 1505(177)

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'There are five elements[60] that Brahma created first. They pervade this world and are known as the great elements. The immensely intelligent one created thousands of beings. Therefore, why are these five known as the elements?'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'Only those infinite beings that were created with a loud noise are addressed by the appellation "great element". The wind is exertion. The sound is the sky and space. The fire is solidified water. The earth resulted from their friction. The body consists of the five elements. Everything, mobile and immobile, is made out of these five elements and the five senses—hearing, smell, taste, touch and sight, result from them.'[61]

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'If all mobile and immobile objects are constituted from these five elements, why are these five elements not seen in the bodies of immobile objects? Trees do not have any heat. They do not move. Their essence is dense. The five elements are not seen in their bodies. They do not hear. They do not see. They do not know smell and taste. They do not know touch either. How can they be made out of the five elements? They do not have any liquid in them, or fire, or earth, or wind, or space. In any measure of the trees, the elements don't exist.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'Though trees are dense, there is no doubt that space exists in them. Manifestations of flowers and fruits are always noticed in them. It is because of the heat in them that leaves, bark, fruits and flowers are seen to decay. They decay and dry and this shows that they possess touch. Crushed by the wind and thunder, fruits and flowers wither away. That sound is received by the ears. Therefore, trees can hear. A creeper winds around a tree and envelopes it from every side. Someone without sight cannot advance along a path. Therefore, trees can see. When trees are healthy, there are flowers and many kinds of auspicious and inauspicious scents and fragrances. Therefore, trees can smell. They drink water with their roots. It is seen that they suffer from disease. Those diseases can also be cured. Therefore, trees possess taste. One can raise water and drink it up through the bent stalk of a lotus. Like that, aided by the wind, trees drink water through their roots. They experience happiness and unhappiness. When severed, they grow again. I see trees as living. They are not without consciousness. The water that has been ingested is digested with the fire and the wind. Depending on the amount of food it has taken, the tree grows and is cool. The five elements exist in the bodies of all mobile objects, though the extent differs from one to the other. It is because of these that the bodies move. The skin, the flesh, the bones, the marrow and veins as the fifth—these things that exist in the body are enumerated as made out of earth. Energy, anger, the eyes, the internal fire and the fire of digestion—these five things in the body are made out of fire. The ears, the nose, the mouth, the heart and the stomach—these five elements in the bodies of living beings are made out of space. Phlegm, bile, sweat, fat and blood —these are the five kinds of water that are always in the bodies of living beings. Prana makes a living being move, vyana provides the impulse to act.[62] Apana advances towards the tongue. Samana resides in the heart. Udana is the state of not breathing and when it penetrates, one can speak. These are the five kinds of wind that enable bodies to move. The quality of the earth enables smell. Taste is the water in the body. The eyes see because of the fire. One experiences touch because of the wind. Of these, I will recount the qualities of scent in detail. *Ishta, anishta, madhura, katu, nirhari, samhata, snigdha, ruksha, vishada*—these are the nine types of scent that are known to be extensions of the earth.[63] Sound, touch, sight and taste are said to be the qualities of water. I will tell you about the knowledge of taste. Listen to me attentively. The gods, famous for their souls, have spoken about many kinds of taste. They are sweet, salty, bitter, astringent, sour and pungent. These six kinds of taste are said to be extensions of the water. Sound, touch and form are said to be the three qualities of fire. It is said that the fire sees and makes one see many different kinds of form. Short, tall, thick, quadrangular, triangular, circular, white, black, dark red, blue, yellow, light red—these twelve kinds of form are said to represent the extensive qualities of the fire. Sound and touch are known as the two qualities of the wind. Touch represents the quality of the wind. There are said to be many different kinds of touch—hard, smooth, soft, slippery, mild, terrible, warm, cold, pleasant, disagreeable, delicate and clear. These twelve are said to be the extensive qualities of the wind. It is said that space has only one quality, that of sound. I will now tell you in detail about the many different kinds of sound. Know them to be *shadaja*, *rishabha*, *gandhara*, *madhyama*, *panchama*, *dhaivata* and *nishadaka*.[64] These are said to be the seven types of qualities and signs of space. Though it may exist in drums and other musical instruments, sound is everywhere. It is said that sound is characteristic of space and mingles with the qualities of the air, because it cannot be heard when different kinds of touch are not used. The elements are always mixed with other elements. Water, fire and air are always awake in the bodies of living beings.'"'

Chapter 1506(178)

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'How do qualities of the earth resort to the body and create fire? How does the wind find a place for itself and flow?'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'O unblemished one! O brahmana! I will recount to you the flow of the air. In the bodies of all living beings, the powerful wind leads to endeavour. There is fire in the head and this protects the body. Prana is the fire in the head and this causes exertion. This is the living being. This is in all living beings. This is the eternal being. This is the mind, intelligence and ego of all living beings. It is also the object of the senses. Everything is sustained in every way by prana. Because of samana at the rear, each of them[65] follows its own course of action. There is a fire at the root of the genital organs and the anus. This is apana. It circulates and bears along urine and excrement. In each of these three,[66] there is a single force that makes all the efforts at action. Learned people refer to it as udana. There is a fire that resides in all the joints of human bodies. This is said to be vyana. The qualities of the fire are circulated by samana. This part of the element circulates in the liquids and the diseases. There is a fire that resides in its own spot between apana and prana. It works with prana and apana and enables the digestion of food. There is a channel that is from the mouth to the anus and ends at the anus. All the other channels in living bodies emerge from this main channel. The different kinds of breaths of life flow and mingle together. The fire that leads to the digestion of food in bodies is *ushma*. Prana bears the force of the fire down to the anus and then sends that fire upwards again. What has been digested resides below the intestine. What has not been digested resides above the navel. All the life in the body is sustained in the midst of the navel. All of them flow out from the heart, diagonally, upwards and downwards. Goaded by prana, these ten[67] convey the juices along the veins. This is the path[68] followed by yogis who go towards the supreme objective. They conquer fatigue. They are patient. They drive the atman up to the head. These are the different kinds of prana and apana in the bodies of living beings. That fire always burns inside, just as if it had been placed on a plate.’”’

Chapter 1507(179)

'"Bharadvaja said, 'If it is the wind that sustains life, if it is the wind that makes us move, if it makes us breathe and speak, then remaining alive is futile.[69] If heat is the quality of fire and the fire cooks food, if the fire ensures digestion, then remaining alive is futile. When an animal dies, the breath of life is not noticed. The wind departs and the heat is destroyed. If life is equivalent to the wind, if it depended only on the wind, then, it should have been seen to leave into the circle of air and mingle with the wind. If life depended on the wind, then, when it is destroyed, it should have mingled outside, like waters released into the great ocean. If water is flung into a well, or if a lamp is hurled into the fire, then, both of them are instantly destroyed,[70] as soon as they are flung away. How can a living body be constituted out of the five general elements? If one of them does not exist, the aggregate of the other four does not exist either. Water is destroyed if there is no food. The wind is destroyed if breathing is restrained. If one doesn't pass excrement, space doesn't exist. If one doesn't take food, fire is destroyed. Disease, wounds and other hardships make the earth decay. When these five elements are separated,[71] where does life go? What does life know? What does it hear? What does it speak? It is said that a cow will save me in the next world.[72] But after having been given away, that animal dies? Whom will that cow save? The receiver of the cow and the giver are both equal; in this world, they both meet with destruction. Where will they meet again? If a person has been eaten up by birds, if he has fallen down from the summit of a mountain, if he has been consumed by the fire, how will he take life again? If the root of a tree has been severed, it does not grow again. Other seeds can sprout. How can someone who is dead revive? In earlier times, only seeds were created and everything circulated from those. Those who die, are destroyed by death. Seeds can only circulate from seeds.'"'

Chapter 1508(180)

'"Bhrigu replied, 'The living being, what has been given and what has been done, are not destroyed. The being goes into another body. It is the body alone that is destroyed. Though the being has resorted to the body, when it is destroyed, the being is not destroyed. It is like the fire not being destroyed when the kindling has been consumed.'

'"Bharadvaja said, 'If it is like the fire and faces no destruction, then it is also the case that when there is no kindling, the fire cannot be seen. When there is no kindling, I know that the fire has been pacified and destroyed. If there is no movement and no existence can be discerned, that is proof enough.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'When there is no kindling, it is true that the fire can no longer be seen. It goes up into space, because there is no longer any refuge it can adhere to. In that way, after the body has been discarded, the being is located in space. There is no doubt that, like the fire, it cannot be discerned because it is subtle. It is fire that sustains prana and that holds up the living being. The fire holds up the breath of life and is destroyed when breathing is restrained. Therefore, when the fire in the body is extinguished, the body loses its consciousness. It falls down on the ground and the earth is the destination. This is true of all mobile and immobile objects. The wind goes up into space and the fire follows them. Those three are united and two of them[73] exist on the ground. The wind exists where there is space. The fire exists where there is wind. They are known to have no form. Water and the earth have form.'

'"Bharadvaja said, 'O unblemished one! If fire, wind, earth, space and water exist in all bodies, then what are the signs of a living being? Tell me that. I wish to know about life in the bodies of living beings, since those five come together,[74] one is engaged in the five acts[75] and one is united with the five kinds of discernment.[76] The body is a mixture of flesh and blood, a store of fat, sinews and bones. When that is destroyed, the living being can no longer be discerned. The body of a living being consists of the five elements. When that is not there, who experiences pain and physical and mental sorrow? How can a living being hear, if there are no ears to hear with, or if his mind is elsewhere? O maharshi! Therefore, life is futile. Sight can see everything when the mind is united with the eyes. If the mind is anxious, though the eyes see, they do not really see. Then again, when one is asleep, one does not see, or speak, or hear, or smell. Nor does one experience touch and taste. Who feels joy? Who is angered? Who grieves? Who suffers? Who is the one who desires, meditates, hates and speaks?'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'Just as the five general elements become one in the body, it is like that in the inner atman too. That is the one who knows scent, taste, sound, touch, form and the other qualities. These five come together and become one and are everywhere in the body. The inner atman follows and witnesses these five qualities. It knows unhappiness and happiness. When it is separated from the body, it no longer experiences these. When there is no form, no touch and no heat in the fire, the fire in the body is pacified. But though it gives up the body, it is not destroyed. Everything is made out of water. Water manifests itself in bodies. Brahma, the creator of all beings and the worlds, is in the mind and in the atman. Know the atman, which intends the welfare of all the worlds. It is the one which seeks refuge in the body, like a drop of water in a lotus. Always know the kshetrajna,[77] who intends the welfare of all the worlds. Know that tamas, rajas and sattva are the qualities of living beings. Consciousness is said to be the quality of a living being. It[78] strives and makes everything else strive. Those who know about kshetras say that the supreme one has created the seven worlds.[79] When the body is destroyed, the living being is not destroyed. Those who are foolish falsely state that it dies. The living being goes to another body. Death is only the destruction of the body.[80] This is the way it is with all living beings, moving in subtle and unnoticed ways. Using their attentive intelligence, those who know about the subtle truth can see this. Having eaten and having purified his soul, through mediation, every night, before and after sleep, a wise person can see his atman within himself. With a cheerful consciousness, abandoning all auspicious and inauspicious acts, basing oneself on one's joyous atman, one can obtain infinite happiness. Inside the body, there is a fire in the mind and this is known as the living being. Prajapati created this. This is the determination of those who have examined living beings and the atman.’”’

Chapter 1509(181)

'"Bhrigu said, 'Brahma Prajapati first created some brahmanas.[81] They were created from his energy and were like the sun and the fire in their resplendence. The lord Brahma then created eternal truth, dharma, austerities, good conduct and purity, so that one could go to heaven. O supreme among brahmanas! Without any sense of ownership, he then created the gods, the danavas, the gandharvas, the daityas, the asuras, the giant serpents, the yakshas, the rakshasas, the serpents, the pishachas, men who were brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras and masses and masses of other beings. The complexion of brahmanas was white, while that of kshatriyas was red. The complexion of vaishyas was yellow, while that of shudras was black.'[82]

'"Bharadvaja said, 'If the distinction between the four varnas is only on the basis of complexion and that is how the varnas are to be differentiated, then it is evident and can be seen that among the varnas, there has been a mixture of varnas. Desire, anger, fear, avarice, sorrow, anxiety, hunger and exhaustion influence everyone. How can varnas be differentiated on the basis of this? Sweat, urine, excrement, phlegm, bile and blood flow in the bodies of everyone. How can varnas be differentiated on the basis of this? There are an infinite number of mobile objects and so are the categories of the immobile. They have many different complexions. How can one determine their varna?'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'There is no special difference between the varnas. Everything in this universe first consisted of brahmanas. Brahma created all of them earlier and they attained varnas because of their deeds. There were brahmanas who loved desire and objects of pleasure. They were fierce and angry and loved courage. They abandoned their own dharma and having turned red in their limbs, became kshatriyas. There were brahmanas who earned a living from animal husbandry and subsisted on agriculture. They did not follow their own dharma, turned yellow and became vaishyas. There were brahmanas who loved violence and falsehood. They were avaricious and turned to all kinds of deeds to earn a living. They were dislodged from purity, turned black and became shudras. In this way, depending on their deeds, brahmanas became other varnas. Dharma, sacrifices and rites are never forbidden to them.[83] In this way, following the instructions of Brahma, all the four varnas were created as brahmanas originally. But in their ignorance, some of them became prone to avarice. Brahmanas who are devoted to sacred texts on dharma and austerities are never destroyed. They always uphold the brahman and observe vows and rituals. There are some who do not know about what Brahma created in ancient times. Among them, there are many kinds of other species—pishachas, rakshasas, ghost and diverse kinds of mlecchas. Their jnana and vijnana has been destroyed. They try to act as they wish. There were subjects who were created as brahmanas and determined to observe their own dharma. Through their own austerities, these rishis then created others. However, their original creation was from that first god and had the eternal Brahma as the foundation. That creation is known as mental and they were devoted to the strands of dharma.’”’[84]

Chapter 1510(182)

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'O supreme among brahmanas! How does one become a brahmana? What about a kshatriya? O brahmana rishi! O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me about vaishyas and shudras.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'A brahmana is said to be someone who has been cleansed and purified by jatakarma and other samskaras,[85] is devoted to studying the Vedas, is engaged in the six tasks,[86] is always devoted to the vows and is devoted to the truth. Truthfulness, donations, self-control, non-violence, lack of injury, forgiveness, withdrawal from improper acts, austerities—where these are seen, that person is said to be a brahmana. A person devoted to the tasks of kshatriyas,[87] devoted to studying the Vedas, one who donates and seizes[88]—such a person is said to be a kshatriya. A person engaged in animal husbandry, agriculture and trade, always immersed in purity and devoted to the study of the Vedas—such a person has the signs of a vaishya. If a person is always addicted to devouring every kind of food, performs all tasks and is impure, if he abandons the conduct prescribed in the Vedas—such a person is said to be a shudra. If the signs are not seen in a shudra, then that shudra is not a shudra. If they are not seen in a brahmana, then that brahmana is not a brahmana. One must use every means to control avarice and anger. Know that these are impure and that the atman must be controlled. For welfare, one must always restrain anger, lack of austerities and jealousy. Knowledge and honour must be protected from disrespect. The atman must not be distracted. A person who undertakes everything without any hope and without any bonds, a person who renounces everything as an oblation, such an intelligent person is known as a true renouncer. One must be non-violent towards all beings and act as if everyone is a friend. There is no need to disclose it. One should uphold one's atman in secrecy. One must forsake all gifts. An intelligent person must control his senses. One should base oneself of lack of sorrow and freedom from fear, both here and there.[89] The sages are always in control of their souls, self-restrained and always engaged in the observance of austerities. One must conquer desire, which is difficult to vanquish. Even in the midst of attachments, one must cultivate sentiments of not being attached. Everything that can be grasped by the senses has an existence that is manifest. But one must attentively seek to know what is not manifest and grasp the linga.[90] One must grasp prana in the mind and uphold the brahman in prana. If one can free oneself from attachments, there is no need to think of any other kind of attachment. In this way, a brahmana can obtain bliss in the brahman. Constant purity, devotion to good conduct and compassion towards all beings—these are the signs of a brahmana.’”’

Chapter 1511(183)

'"Bhrigu said, 'Brahma is truth. Austerities are truth. Subjects are created through truth. The world is sustained through truth. It is through truth that one goes to heaven. Falsehood is the form of darkness. Darkness takes one downwards. When one is grasped by darkness, one cannot see the light, because one is enveloped in darkness. It is said that heaven is light and hell is darkness. Those who roam around in this universe can obtain both truth and falsehood. In this world, different kinds of conduct can lead to truth and falsehood, dharma and adharma, light and darkness, joy and misery. That which is truth is dharma. What is dharma is light. What is light is joy. That which is false is adharma. What is adharma is darkness. What is darkness is misery. It is said—those who are discerning see that this created world is full of physical and mental misery and that joy also ends in misery. They are not confused. The discerning person seeks to free himself from misery. For living beings, joy is temporary, in this world and in the next.[91] When Rahu devours the moon, the moonlight is no longer radiant. In that way, darkness overcomes beings and the joy of beings is destroyed. It is indeed said that there are two types of joy, physical and mental. In this world and in the next, every kind of conduct is prescribed for the sake of happiness. There is nothing superior to the fruits of the three objectives. These are the specific qualities of dharma, artha and kama. All acts are undertaken with the specific purpose of obtaining happiness.'

'"Bharadvaja said, 'You have said that happiness is the supreme objective behind these three. But I don't accept this. The great rishis do not base themselves on these qualities. Nor do they desire these. It has been heard that the illustrious lord Brahma, the creator of the three worlds, is established as a brahmachari. He does not want the happiness of kama for himself. The illustrious lord, the consort of Uma, overcame kama and pacified Ananga.[92]

Therefore, great-souled ones do not want this. This is evidently not a specific quality that the illustrious ones want. O illustrious one! I cannot accept what you have said, that happiness is the supreme objective behind those three. In this world, it is said that there are two kinds of fruits—happiness from good deeds and unhappiness from bad deeds. This is what is commonly said.’

‘“Bhrigu said, ‘Indeed, darkness results from falsehood. Those who are devoured by darkness follow adharma, not dharma. Those who are enveloped by anger, avarice, confusion and falsehood do not obtain happiness in this world, or in the next. It is said that they suffer from many kinds of disease and hardships. They are oppressed by death, imprisonment and disease. They are tormented by hunger, thirst and other kinds of exhaustion. They suffer from turbulent winds, burning heat, extreme cold and fear and are tormented by many kinds of physical grief. They are also overcome by many kinds of mental grief—the destruction of relatives and wealth and separation from these. There are also old age and death. A person who is not touched by physical and mental grief experiences happiness. None of these blemishes is experienced in heaven. Instead, there are extremely pleasant breezes and extremely fragrant scents in heaven. There is no hunger, thirst or exhaustion. There is no old age and no sin. There is only happiness in heaven. In this world, there are both happiness and unhappiness. It is said that there is only unhappiness in hell. Therefore, that[93] is the supreme objective. The earth is the womb of all beings and women represent the earth. Man is like Prajapati. Know that semen is full of energy. This is the way Brahma created the worlds in ancient times and determined their conduct. Subjects wander around, engaged in their own respective tasks.”’

Chapter 1512(184)

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'What are said to be the fruits of donations? What about dharma and conduct? What about austerities, extremely severe austerities, studying and oblations?'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'Sins are pacified through oblations. Studying leads to supreme peace. It is said that one obtains objects of pleasure through donations. Everything is obtained through austerities. It is said that donations are for two purposes, for the sake of the next world and for this one. Out of whatever is given to the virtuous, something accrues in the next world. Whatever one gives to those who are not virtuous leads to objects of pleasure in this world. One obtains fruits in accordance with the donations one has given.'

'"Bharadvaja asked, 'In the conduct of dharma, who should follow what? What are the signs of dharma? How many kinds of dharma are there? You should tell me this.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'Those who are engaged in following their own dharma are learned. They obtain the fruits of dharma. If one doesn't act in this way, one is deluded.'

'"Bharadvaja said, 'O brahmana rishi! Four kinds of ashramas were ordained in earlier times. You should tell me about the conduct that is prescribed for each of these.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'In ancient times, the illustrious one[94] laid down four ashramas for the sake of protecting dharma and for the welfare of the worlds. Of these, residing in the household of the preceptor is said to be the first ashrama.[95] He must cleanse himself properly. He must be humble and follow the prescribed rituals. He must be modest in his soul. He must worship the two twilights[96], the sun, the fire and the gods. He must give up excessive sleep and laziness. He must worship the preceptor. He must study the Vedas and listen to them. He must purify his soul. He must perform ablutions thrice.[97] He must follow brahmacharya. He must tend to the fire. He must always serve his preceptor. He must always subsist on begging and single-mindedly give him[98] everything that has been obtained. He must receive all the instructions the preceptor favourably bestows on him.[99] He must attentively meditate on whatever has been obtained through the preceptor's favours. On this, there is a shloka. "A brahmana who obtains the Vedas by serving his preceptor obtains the fruits of heaven and is successful in his desires." Indeed, garhasthya is said to be the second ashrama. I will tell you in detail about all the conduct and signs for this. It is recommended that those who have returned[100] follow the ashrama of the householder. With a view to attaining fruits, such a person should marry and observe the conduct of dharma with her. All the three objectives of dharma, artha and kama can be obtained through this mode. One must look towards these and obtain riches through beneficial deeds. The householder should follow garhasthya and obtain riches from the mountains and the oceans. These will be obtained if he studies well and serves the cause of the brahmana rishis. He must offer oblations and practise rituals. Through the favours of the gods, riches will then be obtained. This is said to be the foundation of all the ashramas. There are those who dwell in the residences of their preceptors. There are others who are mendicants. There are also those who have resolved to follow the vows and rituals of dharma. All these enjoy sustenance through shares in alms and sacrifices.[101] Those in vanaprastha must renounce and not store objects. These righteous and virtuous people generally look for medication in being devoted to studying, visiting the tirthas for the purpose of seeing different countries and in roaming around the earth. Without any malice, one must stand up and greet them with pleasant words and gifts, depending on one's capacity. One must give them the best of seats and beds. This must be one's conduct and action. On this, there is a shloka. "If a guest returns from a house with his wishes unsatisfied, he takes away all the good deeds[102] and leaves him with his bad deeds." Therefore, sacrifices must be performed.[103] The gods must be pleased and the ancestors must be satisfied. One must study the Vedas, listen to them and tend to the rishis. For the sake of Prajapati, one must have offspring. On this, there are two shlokas. "One must be affectionate towards all beings, with pleasant words that are agreeable to hear. Censure, the inflicting of hardships and harshness are reprehensible.

Disrespect, pride and insolence are condemned. There must be non-violence, truthfulness, lack of anger and austerities, recommended for all the ashramas.” A person in the householder stage must always observe the qualities of the three objectives. Wearing garlands, ornaments and garlands, the smearing of the body with unguents, taking pleasure from singing, dancing and musical instruments, pleasant and cheerful objects that bring delight to hearing and sight, the enjoyment of food and drink that is swallowed, licked, drunk and sucked, satisfaction with many kinds of desirable objects and the gratification of sexual desire with one’s own wife are allowed. Such a person enjoys happiness and obtains the objective of the virtuous. There may be a householder who follows his own dharma, but observes *unchhavritti*.[104] He gives up all exertion that is for the pursuit of desire and happiness. The attainment of heaven is not at all difficult for him.’”’

Chapter 1513(185)

'"Bhrigu said, 'Those who are in vanaprastha follow the dharma of rishis. They go to sacred tirthas, rivers and streams and deserted and desolate forests frequented by deer, buffaloes, boars, *srimara*s[105] and elephants. They practise austerities. They abandon ordinary garments and objects of food. They are controlled, limited and wonderful in their diet and subsist on wild herbs, roots, fruits and leaves. They sit and lie down on the bare ground, rocks, gravel, pebbles, sand and ashes. They cover their limbs with *kasha,* kusha,[106] hides and bark. They do not cut their hair, beards or nails. They perform their ablutions at the right time. They offer food, oblations and sacrifices at the right time. They do not rest until they have collected the required kusha, flowers and other ingredients required for oblations to the fire. Their skin is cracked everywhere, because of the cold, the heat, the wind and the rain. They observe different kinds of vows and yoga recommended by dharma. Because of these observances, they are nothing but flesh, blood, skin and bones. They are full of fortitude and spirited in their yoga. They bear their bodies in this way. If a person observes these rituals and conduct, recommended by the brahmana rishis, his sins are burnt, as if by a fire. He conquers worlds that are difficult to win. The conduct of a mendicant[107] is the following. He frees himself from attachment to the fire, riches, wives and family. He casts aside the bond of affection and wanders around. Stone, iron and gold are the same to him. He is not interested in pursuing the three objectives. His intelligence frees him from these attachments. Towards enemies, friends and neutrals, his conduct is the same. In words, deeds and thoughts, he does not injure immobile objects, those born from wombs, those born from eggs, those born from sweat and beings that are in the nature of herbs and plants. He has no abode. He roams around mountains, islands, the roots of trees and temples. He may go to a city or a village for residence. But he will not dwell in a city for more than five nights and in a village for more than one night. For the sake of sustaining life,[108] he will only present himself at the houses of brahmanas who are generous in their deeds. He should not ask for alms that are more than what has been placed in his vessel. He will restrain anger, insolence, delusion, avarice, miserliness, pride, slander, vanity and violence. In this connection, there is a shloka. "If a sage roams around, without causing fear to any being, he never faces fear from any being." He performs the agnihotra sacrifice with his own body. The body is the fire that offers oblations into his mouth. That fire is fed oblations that are obtained through begging. Because of this fire, he transcends the world. As stated, he observes the ashrama of moksha. His resolution and intelligence are properly turned towards purification. He is as tranquil as a blazing body that has no kindling. Such a brahmana obtains Brahma's world.'

'"Bharadvaja said, 'There is a world beyond this world. I have heard about it, but have not seen it. I wish to know about it. You should tell me.'

'"Bhrigu replied, 'There is a sacred spot towards the north, on the slopes of the Himalayas. It has all the qualities. It is said that this is a supreme world—sacred, tranquil and desirable. The men there have abandoned greed and delusion and do not suffer from any difficulties. They do not perform wicked deeds. They are pure and extremely clean. It is said that this region has such auspicious qualities that it is like heaven. Death comes at the right time and disease does not touch them. Men are devoted to their own wives and do not desire the wives of others. It is amazing that they do not kill each other and do not desire each other's possessions. Since dharma is clearly followed, there is no scope for any doubt. The fruits of all acts are directly obtained there. They possess beds, vehicles, seats, palaces and mansions that have all the objects of desire. Some are adorned in golden ornaments. However, there are also some who only eat enough to remain alive. So as to remain alive, some perform great exertions. In this world, some men are devoted to dharma, while others practise deceit. Some are happy, while others are unhappy. Some are poor, while others are rich. In this world, exertion, fear, delusion and hunger are fierce. There is greed for riches among men and this confuses even those who are learned. There are many kinds of thoughts in this world, about deeds of dharma and adharma. A wise person knows the difference between the two and sin does not touch him. There is fraud, deceit, theft, slander, jealousy, injury towards others, violence, verbal abuse and falsehood. If someone practises these, then his austerities are diminished. However, if a person knows this and acts righteously, his austerities are enhanced. This world is the arena for action. In this world, auspicious and inauspicious deeds can be performed. Good deeds lead to good gains. If one performs inauspicious deeds, the opposite occurs. In ancient times, in this world, Prajapati[109] and the gods, along with masses of rishis, performed sacrifices and austerities, thus attaining Brahma's world. The northern part of the earth is the most sacred and auspicious. People who perform auspicious deeds in this world are born there. There are others who perform wicked deeds and are born as inferior species. There are others who have short lifespans and are destroyed on the surface of the earth. They are addicted to devouring each other and are full of avarice and confusion. They circle around here and do not go to the northern direction. If a person serves his preceptor, is controlled and follows brahmacharya, the learned know that he follows the path indicated for all the worlds. I have briefly told you about the dharma that has been ordained by Brahma. A person who knows about dharma and adharma in this world is intelligent.'"

'Bhishma said, "O king! Thus did Bhrigu speak to the powerful Bharadvaja. The one with supreme dharma in his soul[110] was astounded and worshipped Bhrigu back. O king! Thus, everything about the creation of the universe has been recounted to you. O immensely wise one! What do you wish to hear again?"'

Chapter 1514(186)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O unblemished one! O one who knows about dharma! It is my view that you know everything. O father! I desire that you should tell me about the recommendations on good conduct.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Those with bad conduct, bad efforts and bad wisdom, characterized by rashness, are known as the wicked. The virtuous have signs of good conduct. Auspicious men are those who do not pass urine and excrement along royal roads, amidst cattle and in the midst of fields of paddy. After doing this,[111] it is said to be dharma for men to purify oneself by performing ablutions along the banks of a river and offering water to the gods. The sun must always be worshipped. One must not sleep after the sun has arisen. In the morning and the evening, one must perform the sandhya meditation by facing the east and subsequently, the west.[112] After having washed the five limbs,[113] one must eat silently, facing the east. One must not censure the food one is eating, regardless of whether the food is tasty, or is not tasty. One must wash the hands and then arise. In the night, one must not go to sleep with wet feet. Devarshi Narada has said that these are signs of good conduct. With a desire to purify one’s mind and limbs, every day, one must circumambulate a bull, a god, a cow pen, a place where four roads meet and a brahmana who follows dharma. In matters of food, a man who generally does not differentiate between all the guests, attendants, relatives and servants is praised. The gods have ordained that men must eat twice, in the morning and in the evening. In between, it has not been said that one should eat. One should fast instead. At the right time, oblations must be offered. When it is her season, a wise person will go to his wife. He will behave like a brahmachari towards the wives of others. Leftover food from a brahmana is like amrita. It is like milk from a mother’s breast. These are truly worshipped by people. The virtuous truly worship them. If a person has abstained from meat,[114] he must refrain from eating meat, even if it has been sanctified by reciting from the Yajur Veda. One must not eat useless flesh.[115] One must also avoid meat from the back. Whether one is in one’s own country, or whether one is in some other country, a guest must never be made to fast. Having obtained the desired fruits of action, one must offer them to the seniors. It is a duty to offer one’s seat to seniors and respectfully greet them. By worshipping one’s seniors, one is united with long life, fame and prosperity. One must not look towards the rising sun. When she is naked, nor should one look towards another man’s wife. Sexual intercourse that is in conformity with dharma must be practised, but in secret. The heart is a tirtha among all tirthas. The heart is the purest of the pure. All acts done by a noble person are pure, including the touching of hair. Every time one meets another person, one must ask him questions about his welfare. It has been instructed that, in the morning and in the evening, brahmanas must be worshipped. The right hand must be used in an assembly of gods, amidst cows, in performing rites among brahmanas, in studying and in eating. Through this, the stores of a merchant and the crops of an agriculturist increase manifold. Grain, beasts of burden and cattle also multiply. When one has finished eating, one must perform *tarpana* with the hand.[116] One must always say that the payasa and krisara have been cooked well.[117] After shaving, spitting, bathing, eating and recovering from a disease, one must greet everyone with, ‘May you have a long life.’ While facing the sun, one must not pass urine. One must not look at one’s own excrement. One must not sleep with a woman who is a suta. One must also avoid eating with her. One must avoid addressing elders by name or by using ‘*tvam*’.[118] There is no sin in addressing either juniors or equals in this way. If there is wickedness in the heart, this shows up in deeds. If wicked people conceal their wrong deeds, performed knowingly, from good people, they are nevertheless destroyed. Wicked deeds performed knowingly may be hidden from extremely learned people. Men may not see them. But they are seen by the residents of heaven. A sin committed by a wicked person leads to a further sin. An act of dharma performed by someone who observes dharma follows the doer. A foolish person does not remember the sins that he has committed. However, they circle around the doer. Just as Rahu approaches the moon, those wicked deeds approach that ignorant person. Objects stored with the hope of something are not enjoyed at the right time. The learned do not praise this, because death does not wait for anyone. The learned have said that for all beings, dharma exists in the mind. Therefore, all beings must observe purity in their minds. Dharma must be practised singly. There is no aide in dharma. One should only resort to the ordinances. What will an aide do? Men are born from the gods. The gods have amrita in heaven. If one observes dharma, after death, one enjoys extreme happiness."'

Chapter 1515(187)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! A man should think about *adhyatma*.[119] Tell me about adhyatma.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Partha! You have asked me about adhyatma. O son! It is supremely beneficial and brings happiness and I will tell you about it. Knowing this, men in this world have obtained affection, happiness, immediate fruits and gains and even the welfare of all beings. Earth, air, space, water, and fire as the fifth—these are the great elements and the origins of creation and destruction of all beings. They originate with him[120] and it is to him that these great elements in the beings repeatedly return, like the waves in an ocean. It is like a tortoise extending its limbs and retracting them again. In that way, the creator of beings creates beings and withdraws them again. To create beings, he places the five great elements in all beings, changing the proportions. But the being does not see this. Sound, hearing and the holes[121]—these three originate in space. Skin, touch, exertion and speech—these four have to do with the wind. Form, eye and digestion—these three are said to be of the fire. Taste, liquid secretions and tongue—these three are said to be the qualities of water. Scent, nose and body—these three are the qualities of the earth. There are five great elements and the mind[122] is said to be the sixth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The senses and the mind are the source of discernment. Intelligence[123] is said to be the seventh and the kshetrajna is the eighth. The eyes and the others are for seeing. But the mind doubts. Exerting intelligence, the kshetrajna is stationed like a witness. Everything that is above the feet, to the rear and to the front, is seen by it. Know that it[124] pervades everything, without there being a gap anywhere. Men must know this and all the senses. Know that the qualities of tamas, rajas and sattva depend on them. A man must use his intelligence to know the coming and going of all beings. If he looks at it in this way, he will obtain tranquility and supreme benefit. The qualities[125] influence intelligence and intelligence influences the senses. The mind is the sixth in all this intelligence. Where will the qualities come from?[126] Everything, mobile and immobile, is pervaded by this. It has been instructed that all destruction and creation results from this. That which sees is the eye. That which hears is said to be the ear. The one which is used to smell is the nose. The tongue tastes. The skin touches and these influence and distort intelligence. If there is a resolution to accomplish something, that is done by the mind. For different objectives, intelligence is established in five separate things. These are said to be the five senses and the invisible entity[127] rests on them. Depending on intelligence, a man can have three kinds of sentiments.[128] Sometimes he is delighted, and sometimes he grieves. Sometimes, there is neither happiness, nor unhappiness. In this way, there are three kinds of sentiments in the minds of men. However, sometimes, one can surpass these three kinds of sentiments, like the ocean, the lord of the rivers, uses its waves to cross the great shoreline. That pure kind of intelligence only exists in the mind.[129] But sometimes, following the rajas quality, it is impelled to act. All the senses then manifest themselves. There is joy in sattva. There is sorrow in rajas. There is confusion in tamas. These are the three. All the sentiments one sees in the world are based on these three. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have thus told you everything about the nature of intelligence. An intelligent person must conquer all the senses. Sattva, rajas and tamas always attach themselves to living beings. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That is the reason three different kinds of pain, sattva, rajas and tamas, are seen in all living beings. A touch of happiness is the quality of sattva. A touch of sorrow is the quality of rajas. When these are combined with the quality of tamas, confusion is the result. If there is anything joyous in the body or in the mind, that is seen to be the consequence of the sattva quality. Unhappiness is not desired by anyone. This is due to the rajas quality and one should not think about this with fear.[130] There is a state where one is confused and does not know what should be known and what should be done. This is the outcome of tamas. Delight, satisfaction, bliss, happiness, tranquility in thought—when these are seen, that is the quality of sattva. Dissatisfaction, repentance, sorrow, greed, lack of forgiveness—when these signs are seen, those are ascribed to rajas.

Insolence, confusion, distraction, excessive sleep, lack of care—when many such traits are evident, that is the quality of tamas.

'"A person may be doubtful about what he has obtained. He will be able to go far, in many different directions. If he is able to control his mind, he will obtain happiness, in this world and in the next. Notice the subtle difference inside between intelligence and the kshetrajna. One of these[131] creates many qualities. The other one[132] creates no qualities at all. It is like a mosquito and a fig being united to each other. They are with each other, but they are also separated from each other. Although they are naturally separate, they are always united. This is like a fish and water being united. The atman possesses no qualities. It only perceives all the qualities. It looks at all the qualities and thinks that it has created them. The senses are inactive and do not know. It[133] uses the seventh, intelligence, to light up the paramatman, like a lamp. The kshetrajna sees the qualities that are created by the intelligence. This is certainly the connection between the intelligence and the kshetrajna. There is never any refuge for the intelligence or the kshetrajna. The mind creates intelligence, but never its qualities. When the mind controls the reins[134] well, then the atman becomes visible, like a lamp concealed inside a pot. If a sage discards ordinary acts and always controls his atman, then he may be able to see himself in all beings and attain the supreme objective. A bird roaming in the waters is touched, but is yet not touched. That is the way a person who has obtained wisdom wanders around beings. Using his intelligence, a man must naturally roam around in this way. He should neither grieve, nor be delighted. He should roam around, without any malice. If he is naturally successful in this way, he is always successful in creating the qualities. With that knowledge, he creates the qualities, like a spider creating strands. Some say the qualities[135] are destroyed. Others say that they are destroyed and become invisible. Whether they are manifest, or not manifest, cannot be established on the basis of guesses. Some, basing themselves on their studies, say they remain. Others say that they are destroyed. Considering both views, one must use one's intelligence to decide. One must use one's intelligence to firmly sever these strands in the heart. Having freed oneself, there is no doubt that one will obtain happiness and not sorrow. By bathing in a full river, men cleanse themselves. Know that in this way, filthy people can also purify themselves in knowledge and become extremely learned. A person who is accomplished is not tormented on seeing the further shore of a great river. In that way, a person who knows about adhyatma is only driven by supreme knowledge. A man who has comprehended the ultimate end and origin of all beings looks at it in this way and slowly obtains supreme, using his intelligence. If a person knows about the three objectives, he is freed from what stands before the light. He searches with his mind. He is not interested in anything other than seeing the truth. Because of the different senses, one is incapable of seeing the atman. They distract in different directions and are difficult for someone who has not controlled his soul to restrain. A person who knows this is intelligent. What else can be the characteristics of a learned person? Obtaining this knowledge, learned people regard themselves as having become successful. Things which cause great fear to those who are not learned do not cause any fear to those who are learned. There is no other end that is greater than this. But the learned say that the qualities attained are not comparable.[136] If a person acts without attachment, he destroys the effects of his earlier deeds. There is nothing that is disagreeable. If someone tries for the agreeable, his birth on earth will always happen. In this world, people censure those who are afflicted.[137] Behold. They sorrow in many ways. Also, behold. Those who are accomplished do not sorrow. A person who knows about both[138] always accomplishes the objective.”’

Chapter 1516(188)

‘Bhishma said, “O Partha! I will now tell you about the four kinds of meditation in yoga.[139] The supreme rishis who know this, advance towards eternal success in this world. *Yogi*s engage themselves in this kind of meditation. These are maharshis who are satisfied with their knowledge and have set their minds on emancipation. O Partha! They are freed from the taints of this world and do not return again. The sins associated with their births are destroyed and they become established in their natural states. They are free of opposite sentiments and are always based in their selves. They are always based in freedom. They are without attachments. They do not debate. They seek to bring about tranquility in their minds. They are single-mindedly devoted to studying and hold up their atmans. Such a sage is seated like a piece of wood, crushing his senses. He does not hear any sound through his ears. His skin does not know anything through touch. His eyes do not know any form and his tongue does not know any tastes. He smells nothing. Immersed in the yoga of meditation, he experiences nothing. The valiant one does not desire anything that ignites the five categories.[140] The accomplished person withdraws the five categories into his mind. He uses the five senses to control his wavering mind. Since they no longer have a support, they do not wander. The five gates[141] are mobile, but are rendered immobile. Inside, the patient person first controls his mind to the path of meditation. He uses his mind to crush the senses. I have described this path of meditation to you first. Having controlled these first, the sixth one, the mind,[142] is then restrained. It is as fickle as lightning flashing around in the clouds. A drop of water on a leaf is unstable and always moves around. In the process of meditation, the consciousness is first like that. However, after one has meditated for some time, it becomes controlled. However, if the mind again strays into the path of the wind,[143] it becomes like the wind. But a person who knows is not disturbed by this. He strives single-mindedly, without malice. He restrains his consciousness in meditation again, engaged in the yoga of meditation. Engaged in meditation, the sage first accomplishes discrimination, reasoning and judgement.[144] At first, in the process of meditation, the sage first fixes his mind. Disturbed by it, he controls it. A sage must not engage in despair, but must seek to ensure benefit for his atman. Heaps of dust and ashes from burnt cow dung do not become wet when they are sprinkled with water. Even if they become slightly wet, that dust still seems to be dry. They must be continuously and slowly sprinkled before they become wet. The senses must be slowly controlled, in that way. In this way, the senses are gradually controlled. They are gradually restrained and finally pacified. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! By incessantly pacifying the mind through yoga, one first engages the mind and the five categories in the path of meditation. The happiness obtained through manliness or destiny is nothing compared to what is obtained through the control of the atman. United with such bliss, he remains engaged in the task of meditation. Without any disturbance, the yogi then advances towards emancipation."'

Chapter 1517(189)

‘Yudhishthira said, “You have spoken about the four ashramas and about rajadharma. You have separately spoken about many different kinds of history. O immensely intelligent one! I have also heard many true accounts connected with dharma. However, I still have a doubt and you should remove it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about the fruits obtained by *japaka*s.[145] What fruits are obtained by the japakas who recite in this way? O unblemished one! You should tell me about all the norms that have been laid down for *japa*. What are the different rules and procedures that have been laid down for japakas in sankhya and yoga?[146] What are the ordinances for sacrifices? What is recommended for japa? Tell me all this. It is my view that you know everything.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about what transpired in ancient times between Yama, Time and a brahmana. Vedanta has said that renunciation is meditation. The words of the Vedas are about withdrawal, tranquility and resort to the brahman. The paths[147] can be resorted to, or not resorted to. O king! I will tell you about the reasons for resorting to it.[148] It has been said that the mind must be controlled and the senses must be conquered. One must be truthful and tend to the fire. One must immerse oneself in reflection, with meditation, austerities, self-control, forgiveness, lack of jealousy, restraint in food, withdrawal from material objects, frugality in speech and tranquility. This is the way dharma flows. Listen to the mode of abstention now. Those who follow the path of the brahman perform japa and withdraw from rituals. As I have said, all these must be completely renounced. There are three paths one can resort to, external, internal and without any.[149] He must seat himself on kusha grass. He will hold kusha in his hand and tie kusha around his hair. He must surround himself with tattered rags and in its midst, attire himself in kusha. He must bow down before material objects and after that, no longer think of material objects. He must be tranquil in his mind and fix his mind on his mind. With his intelligence, he must meditate on the brahman and engage in japa for his benefit. He must then withdraw from even this and immerse himself in samadhi.[150] Having resorted to meditation, he must use his concentrated powers. Through austerities and self-control, he will purify his atman. He will withdraw from all hatred and desire. He will be without attachment and confusion. He will not sorrow. Nor will he be delighted. He does not think of himself as the doer, nor as the one who enjoys from this action. Nor does he suffer from the action. In yoga, the mind has no sense of ego. Nor does he seek to establish anything. He is not engaged in receiving anything for himself. But he does not ignore this.[151] Nor does he not perform acts. He is engaged in the task of meditation. He is engaged in meditation, having set his mind on meditation. Through the meditation, he obtains samadhi and then gradually gives it up.[152] In that state, he obtains the bliss that is obtained by renouncing everything. He is not interested in this world. He has renounced everything. He gives up his life and merges with the body of the brahman. Or perhaps he does not desire to merge into the body of the brahman then. He follows the path upwards, never to be born again. He resorts to knowledge about the brahman. He is tranquil and without disease. He is immortal and free from all passions. He obtains the purity of his atman.”’

Chapter 1518(190)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “You have spoken about the supreme ends that japakas obtain. Is this the only end, or is there any other possibility?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! O lord! Listen attentively to the end attained by japakas. O bull among men! They may also descend into many kinds of hell.[153] If there is a japaka who does not initially follow what has already been stated, or if he cannot complete those rites, he goes to hell. If there is a japaka who shows disrespect, is not satisfied and grieves, there is no doubt that such a person goes to hell. All those who suffer from ego go to hell. A man who insults others will also go to hell. Those who are confused and perform japa with the objective of obtaining fruits, are also those who desire hell. Those japakas who conduct themselves in the pursuit of riches[154] are also destined for hell and there is no emancipation for them. Those who are confused and perform japa because of attachments descend into a state where they obtain those attachments.[155] If a person is evil-minded and his mind is not stable in wisdom, then his end is also unstable and he goes to hell. There may be a japaka who is foolish and is not accomplished in his wisdom. In his delusion, he goes to hell and having gone there, he has to sorrow. If there is a japaka who performs japa with a firm mind, but fails to complete it, he too goes to hell.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “If a japaka has no specific objective and bases himself on the supreme and unmanifest brahman, why does he have to take birth in a body?”

‘Bhishma replied, “It is because of the lack of wisdom that one has to go to many different kinds of hell. Japakas are praised. But they have taints in their atmans.”’

Chapter 1519(191)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What kind of a hell does a japaka go to? Describe it to me. A great curiosity has arisen in me. You should tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “You have been born from Dharma.[156] You are naturally devoted to dharma. O unblemished one! Listen attentively to these words, which have dharma as their foundation. There are regions for the gods with supreme souls. These regions are of many colours, many forms and many fruits. They are divine and have celestial vehicles and assembly halls that can go anywhere at will. O king! There are many kinds of arenas, with lotuses and sparkling water. The residents of heaven, the four guardians of the world, Shukra, Brihaspati, the Maruts, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas, the Ashvins, the Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus and others are there. O son! But in comparison with the region of the paramatman, these are also hells. This spot has no fear or no objective and is not enveloped in any kind of hardship whatsoever. It is free from both.[157] It is free from the three.[158] It is free from the eight.[159] It is free from the three.[160] It is free of the four characteristics and devoid of the four reasons.[161] It has neither unhappiness nor happiness, nor sorrow or exhaustion. Time is cooked there[162] and time is not the lord there. O king! That region is the lord of time and is also the lord of heaven. The atman alone is obtained there. Having gone there, one does not grieve. This is the supreme region. Hell is not like this. I have accurately detailed all the hells to you. That is the supreme region. Everything else has characteristics of hell.”’

Chapter 1520(192)

'Yudhishthira said, "Earlier, you mentioned to me the dispute between Time, Death, Yama and the virtuous brahmana. You should tell me about this."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This transpired between a brahmana and Ikshvaku, Surya's son. It also involved Time and Death. Listen to the account of the conversation that took place at that spot. There was an immensely illustrious japaka brahmana who was devoted to dharma. He was descended from Kushika and was Pippalada's son. He was immensely wise and knew about the six Angas.[163] He knew about the six Angas and about the one who is not manifest.[164] He was accomplished in the Vedas and dwelt on the slopes of the Himalayas. He performed other austerities for attaining the brahman. He controlled himself and performed japa. He observed such rituals for one thousand years. The goddess manifested herself before him and said, 'I am pleased.'[165] Because he was silent in the midst of his japa, he did not say anything in reply. The goddess was pleased and felt compassion for him. The mother of the Vedas[166] honoured his japa. When the japa was over, he arose and bowed his head down at her feet. Having prostrated himself before the goddess, the one with dharma in his soul spoke the following words. 'O goddess! It is good fortune that you are pleased with me, have appeared before me and have shown yourself to me. If you are pleased with me, may my mind always find delight in japa.'

'"Savitri said, 'O brahmana rishi! What do you desire? What shall I do for you? O supreme among those who perform japa! Tell me. Everything will be as you wish.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed by the goddess, the brahmana who was devoted to dharma replied, 'Let my desire for japa repeatedly increase. O auspicious one! Day and night, let my inclination towards the dharma of samadhi increase.' In a sweet tone, the goddess replied that it would be this way. Wishing to do what would bring him pleasure, the goddess again said, 'You will not go to the hell where other bulls among brahmanas go. You will go to the unblemished region of the brahman, which has not been created by anyone. I will depart now. But what you have wished for will become successful. Single-mindedly, perform japa. Dharma will present himself before you. Time, Death and Yama will also present themselves before you. There will be a dispute between them and you on dharma.' Having said this, the illustrious one returned to her own abode. The brahmana continued to perform japa for one hundred celestial years. The intelligent brahmana remained there, completing his rituals. Pleased at this, Dharma presented himself before that brahmana.

'"Dharma said, 'O brahmana! Look at me. I am Dharma. I have come here to see you. Listen to me. You have obtained the fruits that result from japa. You have obtained all the worlds, the divine and the human. You will be successful in passing through all the hells that are inhabited by the gods. O sage! Give up your life and go to the worlds that you desire. If you cast aside your own body, you will obtain those worlds.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O Dharma! I have obtained all the worlds here. Go to whatever spot brings you pleasure. O lord! Though this body suffers from a lot of joy and misery, I will not give it up.'

'"Dharma said, 'O bull among sages! This body should certainly be cast aside. O brahmana! Go to heaven. O unblemished one! What is it that pleases you?'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O lord! Without this body, I will find no delight in residing in heaven. O Dharma! Go away. Without my body, I am not interested in going to heaven.'

'"Dharma said, 'There has been enough of this body. Make up your mind to give up this body and be happy. Go to the world where there is no rajas. Having gone there, you will not sorrow.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O immensely fortunate one! I take pleasure in japa and have obtained all the eternal worlds. O lord! I wish to go to heaven in my body, or not at all.'

'"Dharma said, 'O brahmana! Behold. If you do not wish to cast aside your body, Time, Death and Yama will present themselves before you.'"

‘Bhishma said, “O lord! There were those three—Vaivasvata,[167] Time and Death. They approached the immensely fortunate brahmana and spoke to him. Yama said, ‘I am Yama. You have tormented yourself well with austerities and your conduct is good. I am telling you that you will obtain the best of fruits.’ Time said, ‘I am Time and I have come before you. Because of your recitations and japa, you have obtained supreme fruits. The time has come for you to ascend to heaven.’ Death said, ‘O one who knows about dharma! Know me to be death. I have shown my own form to you. O brahmana! I have been urged by Time and have come to take you away.’ The brahmana replied, ‘Welcome to Surya’s son,[168] great-souled Time, Death and Dharma. What can I do for you?’ To those who had come, he offered padya and arghya.[169] Extremely delighted, he asked, ‘According to my capacity, what can I do for you?’ At that time, Ikshvaku was on a visit to the tirthas and arrived at the spot where those lords were assembled together.

‘“The rajarshi affectionately honoured all of them. The supreme among kings asked them questions about their welfare. The brahmana offered him a seat and padya and arghya too. Having asked him questions about his welfare, he said, ‘O great king! Welcome. Tell me what you desire. According to my capacity, please tell me what I can do for you.’ The king replied, ‘I am a king. You are a brahmana engaged in the six tasks.[170] I wish to give you some riches. Tell me how much you want.’ The brahmana said, ‘O king! There are two kinds of brahmanas and dharma is said to be of two kinds. There is attachment and withdrawal. I have accepted the path of withdrawal. O lord of men! Donate gifts to those who are on the path of attachment. I will not accept anything. What can I give you for your welfare instead? O best among kings! Tell me. I will ensure its success through my austerities.’ The king replied, ‘I am a kshatriya. I do not know the words, “Please give.” O best among brahmanas! The only thing we ask for is, “Give us battle.”’ The brahmana said, ‘O king! You are content in your own dharma and in a similar way, so am I with mine. There is no difference between us. Therefore, act as you wish.’ The king replied, ‘You are the one who first said that you would give according to your capacity. O brahmana! I am asking you. Give me the fruits that you have obtained through japa.’ The brahmana said, ‘In your words, you boasted that you always asked for battle. Why don’t you then ask that I should fight with you?' The king replied, 'It has been said that brahmanas have the power of speech and kshatriyas live through the strength of their arms. O brahmana! That is the reason there has been this fierce duel with words between you and me.' The brahmana said, 'Even now, that is my resolution. According to my capacity, what will I give you? O Indra among kings! I possess wealth. Tell me immediately. What shall I give you?' The king replied, 'You have performed japa for a full hundred years. If you wish to give me something, give me the fruits of that japa.' The brahmana said, 'Take the supreme fruits that I have obtained through japa. Without reflecting, take half of those fruits. Or, take all the fruits of the japa from me. O king! If you so wish, take them entirely.' The king replied, 'O fortunate one! Though I asked for all the fruits of japa, I don't want them. May you be fortunate. I am leaving you. But tell me what those fruits are.' The brahmana said, 'I don't know what fruits have been given to me because of the japa. However, Dharma, Time, Yama and Death are witnesses.'[171] The king replied, 'If you do not even know what the fruits of this dharma are, what will I do with them? O brahmana! Since there are doubts about what they are, I do not desire them.'

'"The brahmana said, 'I will not accept any other words for you. I have already given you my fruits. O rajarshi! Let both your words and mine be true. Earlier, I have never performed japa with any specific objective in mind. O tiger among kings! How will I then know the fruits from japa? You said, "give" and I said "take". Let those words not be falsified. We must be steady and protect the truth. O king! If you do not keep the words that you spoke to me,[172] then, because of the falsehood, a great adharma will descend on you. O scorcher of enemies! The words that you have spoken should not be tainted with falsehood. In that way, I am also incapable of falsifying my words. Without any hesitation, I have earlier pledged to give it to you. Therefore, if you wish to adhere to the truth, you should accept it without any reflection. O king! You came here and asked me for the fruits of the japa. Therefore, adhere to the truth and accept what has been given to you. O king! There are no worlds for those who are supremely addicted to falsehood. Their past, or their future, cannot be saved. Sacrifices, studying, donations and rituals are incapable of saving them. O bull among men! In this world and in the next, there is nothing as supreme as the truth. Truth is superior to all the austerities you have performed and all the austerities you will undergo for hundreds and thousands of years. Truth is the single syllable of the brahman. Truth is the single syllable of austerities. Truth is the single syllable of sacrifices. Truth is the single syllable of learning. The Vedas remain awake in truth. The learned texts have said that truth brings the supreme fruits. Truth is dharma and self-control. Everything is established in truth. The Vedas and the Vedangas are truth. The sacrifices and rituals are in truth. Vows and good conduct are truth. Om is truth. The birth of beings is based on truth. Truth is their offspring. The wind blows because of truth. The sun heats because of truth. The fire burns because of truth. Heaven is established in truth. Truth is sacrifices, austerities, the Vedas, hymns, mantras and Sarasvati. We have heard that dharma and truth were weighed on a pair of scales and when they were weighed together, truth was heavier. Where there is dharma, truth is there. Everything is enhanced through truth. O king! Why do you wish to perform an act of falsehood? O king! Fix your sentiments on truth and not futilely on falsehood. Why do you wish to inauspiciously falsify the word "give" that you spoke? O king! I have given you the fruits of my japa. If you refuse to accept them, you will roam around the world, dislodged from your own dharma. Having pledged, if one does not give, and if one does not accept, both are tainted by falsehood. Therefore, you should not act in a false way.'

'"The king said, 'O brahmana! The dharma of kshatriyas is to fight and protect. It is said that kshatriyas are givers. How can I accept from you?'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O king! I did not go to your house and insist. You came here and asked from me. How can you then not accept?'

'"Dharma said, 'Let there be an end to this excessive dispute between you. Know that I am Dharma. Let the brahmana obtain the fruits of giving. Let the king obtain the fruits of adhering to the truth.'

'"Heaven said, 'O Indra among kings! Know that I am Heaven and have myself appeared before you. Let there be an end to this excessive dispute. Both of you are equal in obtaining the fruits.'

'"The king replied, 'I have performed tasks that will ensure heaven for me. O Heaven! Go wherever you want. If the brahmana so desires, I will give him the riches that I have obtained.'

'"The brahmana said, 'In my words, I may have ignorantly stretched out my hand.[173] I now follow the dharma that has the characteristics of not being attached and I am engaged in japa. O king! I have been engaged in withdrawal for a long time. Why do you wish to tempt me? I will perform my own acts. O king! I do not desire your fruits. I am engaged in austerities, studying and good conduct and have accepted the path of withdrawal.'

'"The king replied, 'O brahmana! If you wish to give me the supreme fruits of your japa, then accept some of my fruits and let us divide them. Brahmanas are engaged in accepting. Those born in royal lineages are engaged in giving. O brahmana! If you are learned about dharma, let our fruits be equal. Or if you do not wish to share equally, take all the fruits from me. If you wish to show me your favours, accept what I have earned through dharma.'"

'Bhishma said, "At that time, two malformed men arrived there. They were dressed badly and each of them had his hand on the other one's shoulder. They said, 'You don't owe me anything. It is I who owe you. We are debating in this way and here is a king who is a ruler. I am telling you truthfully. You don't owe me anything. You are speaking falsely, when you say that you owe me something.' Engaged in this furious debate, they approached the king and said, 'Examine the case, so that neither one of us is censured.' Virupa said, 'O tiger among men! I owe Vikrita the fruits of giving away a cow.[174] O lord of the earth! I wish to return this to him. But Vikrita refuses to accept it.' Vikrita said, 'O lord of men! Virupa does not owe me anything. O lord of men! He is lying to you. This is false.' The king asked, 'O Virupa! Tell me. What do you owe him? It is my view that, having heard, I will do what needs to be done.' Virupa replied, 'O king! Listen attentively to what happened and how I owe a debt to Vikrita. O rajarshi! O bull among men! I will tell you everything. O unblemished one! O rajarshi! For the sake of obtaining riches, in earlier times, he had given away an auspicious cow to a brahmana who was of good conduct and was engaged in austerities and studying. O king! I went to him and asked for the fruits of that act. Pure in his soul, he gave me the fruits of what he had done. Thereafter, after purifying myself, I performed some good deeds. I bought two brown cows[175] with calves and they yielded a lot of milk. O king! O lord! There was a brahmana who was devoted to the conduct of unchhavritti. Faithfully, and following the prescribed rites, I donated these to him. Having received earlier, I now wished to give him twice the fruits.[176] O tiger among men! This being the background, who among us is pure? Who is sinful? O king! We have debated this among us and have come before you. Decide on dharma and adharma and we will accept it with all humility. O lord! If he does not wish to accept the gift that he had bestowed on me earlier, then you must determine the right course for both of us to take.' The king asked, 'Why are you not accepting, when your debt is being repaid now? Grant your permission and receive it quickly.' Vikrita replied, 'He says that he owes me. But what I gave was given away. Therefore, he does not owe me anything. Let him go wherever he wishes.' The king said, 'He is willing to give, but you do not accept. To me, this does not seem fair. In my view, there is no doubt that you should be punished on this account.' Vikrita replied, 'O rajarshi! I gave him a gift. How can I take it back again? O lord! If it is your view that I am guilty, then please punish me.' Virupa retorted, 'I am willing to give, but you are unwilling to accept. The king is the protector of dharma and must restrain you.' Vikrita replied, 'I myself gave what he asked for. How can I take that back now? I am giving you. Having accepted it, you have my permission to go away.' The brahmana said, 'O king! You have heard what these two have said. Without any reflection, take what I have pledged to give you.' The king replied, 'An extremely grave task confronts us, like a bottomless pit. The japaka is firm in his resolution. How will this end? If I do not accept what has been earned by the brahmana, how will I avoid being tainted with a great sin?' The rajarshi told those two, 'You have accomplished your objectives. Depart now. Rajadharma is vested in me and I must ensure that it is not rendered futile. It has been determined that kings must protect their own dharma. It is extremely unfortunate that the dharma of brahmanas[177] has presented itself before me.' The brahmana said, 'Accept what I owe you. I have heard you ask for it. O king! If you refuse to accept it, it is certain that I will curse you.' The king replied, 'Shame on rajadharma, since it has been determined that I must do this. I must accept what you are giving, so that the two are rendered equal.[178] My hand is stretched out. Earlier, it used to be stretched out only for giving. O brahmana! Give me whatever you owe me.' The brahmana said, 'Whatever qualities I have obtained through the performance of japa and whatever is vested in me, accept all of those.' The king replied, 'O supreme among brahmanas! These drops of water have fallen on my hands. Accept those from me, so that we are equal.' Virupa said, 'Know that we are Desire and Anger and we have goaded you to act in this way. As you have said, the two of you are equal and will be equal in all the worlds. He[179] does not owe me anything. We questioned you for your own sake. Time, Dharma and Death, and the two of us, Desire and Anger, have examined everything about you, in your presence. As you desired, go to the worlds that you have won through your deeds.' I have recounted to you the fruits obtained by japakas and the end, status and worlds conquered by japakas.

'"A person who studies goes to the supreme abode of Brahma, or goes to Agni and enters into Surya. If he is attached, he imbibes that energy. Confounded by attachment, he imbibes those qualities.[180] This is also the case if his body is with Soma, Vayu, the earth or space. If there is attachment, he dwells and acts in accordance with those qualities. However, if he is detached, he is doubtful even if he goes there. He desires for the supreme and eventually penetrates that. He obtains the amrita of all amritas. He is tranquil and it is as if he has no atman. He becomes part of the brahman and is freed from opposite sentiments. He is happy, peaceful and without disease. He obtains the abode of the brahman, from which, there is no return. This is characterized by the single akshara alone. There is no misery. There is no decay. He obtains that region of tranquility. He is devoid of the four characteristics and the six and the sixteen.[181] He passes over Purusha and is immersed in space.[182] However, if he still has attachment in his soul and does not desire all this, he obtains everything that his mind desires. Or he looks upon all the worlds that have earlier been called hells. If he does not desire anything, he is free and finds delight in bliss. O great king! This is the end obtained by japakas. I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear?"'

Chapter 1521(193)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! What answer was given then by the brahmana or the king? Tell me this. In accordance with what you have described, what were their ends? What was the conversation between them? What transpired and what did they do there?”

‘Bhishma replied, “He[183] accepted the agreement and worshipped Dharma, Yama, Time, Death and Heaven, as they deserved to be honoured. He worshipped all the other bulls among brahmanas who had assembled there. He bowed his head down and honoured all of them. He then spoke to the king in these words. ‘O rajarshi! United with the fruits, go to the sacred regions. With your permission, I will devote myself to japa once again. O immensely strong one! O lord of the earth! The goddess[184] granted me a boon earlier—that my devotion to japa would always remain.’ The king replied, ‘O brahmana! If you are devoted to japa and if your success has been rendered futile, then go with my half and let the fruits of japa remain with you.’[185] The brahmana said, ‘In the presence of all these people, you have made great efforts.[186] Therefore, let us be equal and go wherever our ends take us.’

‘“Knowing what they had decided, the lord of the thirty gods came there, with all those who had forms of gods, the guardians of the worlds, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Maruts, the large stellar bodies, the rivers, the mountains, the oceans, the many tirthas, the austerities, the various rites of the Vedas, the hymns, Sarasvati, Narada, Parvata, Vishvavasu, the Hahas, the Huhus,[187] the gandharva Chitrasena with a large number of his family members, the serpents, the successful sages, Prajapati, the god of the gods and the unfathomable and thousand-headed Vishnu. Musical instruments like drums and trumpets were sounded in the sky. Celestial flowers were showered down on those great-souled ones. Large numbers of apsaras danced around in every direction.

'"Heaven appeared there in personified form and spoke these words. 'O brahmana! You are immensely fortunate and have become successful. O king! You have also become successful.' O king! Having done what was proper towards each other, those two[188] prepared to withdraw themselves from all material objects. They established prana, apana, udana, samana and vyana in their minds and turned their minds towards prana and apana. They concentrated these at the tips of their noses and below their eyebrows. Using their minds, they gently held them there. They rendered their bodies immobile and were fixed and controlled in their looks. Having seated and controlled themselves in that way, they sent their atmans upwards. A great and blazing mass of energy penetrated the crown of the great-souled brahmana's head and went up to heaven. Great sounds of lamentation arose in all the directions. Worshipped by everyone, that energy entered the brahman. O lord of the earth! The grandfather advanced and welcomed that mass of energy, which was as tall as a man. He again spoke these supreme and sweet words. 'There is no doubt that japakas obtain the same fruits as yogis. The fruits of yoga are directly evident. However, japakas are superior, because I advance to welcome them. Dwell with me.' Having said this, he again imparted consciousness[189] and without any anxiety, the brahmana entered into his[190] mouth. Like that tiger among brahmanas, the king, following the prescribed rites, also entered into the illustrious grandfather.

'"The gods worshipped Svayambhu and spoke these words. 'We have made exertions to come to accomplish the objectives of the japaka. You have made them[191] equal in honour and equal in obtaining the fruits. We have witnessed the great fruits obtained by yogis and japakas. They can go wherever they wish, passing over all the worlds.' Brahma replied, 'If a person follows the rites and reads the great sacred texts, or the auspicious ones that follow the sacred texts, he also goes to my world.[192] If someone follows yoga in accordance with the prescribed rites, there is no doubt that, after death, he will obtain my worlds. I will now go. To accomplish your objectives, all of you also return to your places.' Having said this, the god disappeared. Having taken his leave earlier, all the gods also returned to their own abodes. O king! All those great-souled ones honoured Dharma and, delighted in their minds, followed him at the rear. These are said to be the fruits and ends obtained by japakas. O great king! This is what I have heard. What else do you wish to hear?"'

Chapter 1522(194)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What are the fruits obtained through the yoga of knowledge, the Vedas and rituals? How can the atman in beings be known? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. This is a conversation between Prajapati Manu and maharshi Brihaspati. Prajapati was supreme on earth and maharshi Brihaspati was foremost amongst the large number of devarshis. In ancient times, the student bowed down before the preceptor[193] and asked him a question. ‘What is the cause?[194] Where have mantras and ordinances come from? What are the fruits that brahmanas say are attached to knowledge? O illustrious one! Tell me accurately, what are the things that mantras and sounds are not able to reveal? There are those who know about artha, the sacred texts, the subsequent sacred texts[195] and mantras. They perform many supreme sacrifices, at which, they give away cows. What are the great fruits that flow from these? Where are they found? From where have the earth, those on earth, the wind, the sky, aquatic creatures, water, heaven and the residents of heaven originated? O illustrious one! Tell me this ancient account. Men desire and exert for knowledge and their inclination turns towards what they know. But I have no knowledge of that supreme and ancient one.[196] Therefore, how can I avoid being false in my inclinations? I have studied the large material of the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, prosody, the paths of the nakshatras, *nirukta*,[197] grammar, *samkalpa*[198]and *shiksha*.[199] But I still do not know about the element that is in all nature. You should tell me everything, about the fruits that follow from knowledge and deeds and about how an embodied being gives up a body and again enters another body.’

‘“Manu said, ‘Anything that is agreeable is said to represent happiness. Similarly, anything disagreeable is said to represent unhappiness. I will obtain happiness from this and not from that—one performs all rites and rituals because of such sentiments. However, those who are engaged in the pursuit of knowledge serve neither happiness, nor unhappiness. Prosody and the yoga of action are because of this desire in the soul. However, if someone is freed from this, he attains the supreme. In the pursuit of happiness, a man engages in many things along the path of action. But he does not go towards the supreme. By freeing oneself from acts, one obtains the supreme. He is without desire and certainly obtains the supreme brahman. Subjects have been created through the mind and through deeds. These are the two virtuous paths, revered by everyone. Acts are seen to have outcomes that are both eternal and temporary. To obtain the eternal, there is no method other than renouncing any desire in the mind. When the night is over and the atman is no longer enveloped in darkness, the eye can lead the atman. Similarly, when a person has the qualities of jnana and vijnana, he can see which inauspicious deeds need to be avoided. When men know, they avoid snakes, the pointed ends of kusha and wells. In their folly, stupid people fall down there. In that way, behold the superior fruits of knowledge. The complete utterance of mantras, sacrifices performed according to the prescribed ordinances, the giving of dakshina, the donation of food and contemplation in the mind—these five are said to be the fruits the atman obtains through action. The Vedas say that deeds have qualities in them.[200] Mantras form the foundations of deeds and mantras also possess these. It is evident that rituals must also have them. Fruits originate in the mind and the embodied being enjoys them. In the world of action, auspicious and sacred sounds, forms, taste, touch and scent can be successfully obtained as fruits. When acts are performed through the body, they are also enjoyed through the body. The body is the frame for happiness. The body is also the frame for unhappiness. However, if any tasks are performed through words, all of them are also enjoyed through words. Whatever acts are performed through the mind, it is the mind alone that enjoys them. Whatever quality and category of action a person desires and acts accordingly, the fruits of his action are also like that. Those qualities become attached and he enjoys the fruits of those auspicious and inauspicious deeds. Like a fish that swims against the tide, one has to confront the deeds one has committed earlier. The embodied being is satisfied because of his good deeds and is not satisfied because of his bad deeds. I will now tell you about the supreme one. Listen to me. He is the one from whom everything in the universe has originated. It is through knowing him that one can overcome everything. He cannot be expressed through mantras and words. He is distinct from the many kinds of tastes and scent and sound, touch and form. He is incapable of being understood by the senses. He is the one who is not manifest. He is without complexion. He is the single one. He has created the five kinds of beings.[201] He is not female, male, or neuter. He does not exist. But nor does he not exist. Men who know about the brahman can behold him. Know that he is Akshara, without decay.’”’

Chapter 1523(195)

'"Manu said, 'Wind originated in Akshara. Energy originated in wind. Water originated in energy. The universe originated in water. Everything in the universe originated from the universe. All these bodies eventually enter into the water first.[202] From the water, they then progressively go to energy, wind and space. The enlightened ones who obtain the supreme do not have to return from space. There is no heat, cold, mildness, sharpness, sourness, astringency, sweetness, bitterness, sound, scent or form in that supreme state. One does not feel touch. The tongue does not feel taste. The nose does not feel scent. The ears do not hear sound. In that supreme state, the eyes do not see form. Men who are learned about adhyatma accept that state. The tongue withdraws from taste, the nose from scent, the ears from hearing, the skin from touch and the eyes from the qualities of form. In that supreme state, such a person beholds his own natural state. It has been said that the doer, the act, the facilitators for an act, the inclination, the reasons behind the act and the methods are the soul.[203] But the true doer is the one who pervades everything in the world, just as the mantras have stated. He is the reason behind everything. He is behind the supreme objective. He is the cause. Everything else is an effect. Because of the good and bad deeds performed, a man obtains the good and the bad, sometimes in contradiction to each other. Because of his own deeds, the good and the bad reside in the body, and knowledge is also bound down there.[204] When a lamp is lit, the lamp illuminates everything that is in front. The senses are like lamps on trees. When ignited with knowledge, they illuminate everything. The many advisers of a king cite different reasons, but also come together. Those five in the body[205] are also subservient to supreme knowledge. The flames of the fire, the force of the wind, the rays of the sun and the water in the rivers repeatedly come and go. Like that, embodied beings repeatedly come and go in different bodies. When a person grasps an axe and cuts wood, he sees neither smoke nor fire inside it. Like that, by severing the body, the stomach, the hands and the feet, one cannot see the other one. When wood is rubbed against another piece of wood, one can see both smoke and fire. Like that, a person with excellent intelligence and wisdom, can control his senses to see the supreme in his own natural state. When one is dreaming, one can see one's own body lying down on the ground, as if it is separate from one's own self. Like that, a person with hearing and the others senses, excellent in his mind and in his intelligence, sees himself going from one body into another body. The supreme in the body[206] is not subject to birth, growth, decay and destruction. Unseen, it goes through a process of transition and passes from one body into another body. The eye cannot behold the form of the atman. It cannot be felt by anyone through touch. It does not perform any acts. No one can see it. But it sees them. When a lamp is lit, it assumes a form because of the fire and the heat. That which is inside is also seen to assume form and qualities from the body. Unseen, a man gives up his body and enters another body. He casts aside the body formed of the great elements, but still resorts to a form constituted by them. He enters the body of wind, fire, water, space and earth in every way. Depending on their action, hearing and the other senses resort to the five different qualities. The ear is for space, smell is for the earth and sight is for energy and fire. Sweat and taste are said to resort to water. The quality of touch has the property of wind. The objects of the senses, and the five senses themselves, dwell in the five great elements. All of them follow the mind. The mind follows intelligence and the mind follows one's nature. Whatever good and bad deeds may have been performed are received in one's own body. They follow the lead of the mind, just as aquatic creatures follow a favourable current. When a moving object comes into the range of vision, even if it is extremely small, it seems to assume a large form. In the path of intelligence, one can see one's supreme form in one's own form.'"'

Chapter 1524(196)

‘“Manu said, ‘When the senses are collected together and obtain their qualities, they remember what has been done a long time ago. When the senses are collected together later, through the use of the intelligence, one comprehends one’s supreme nature. When all the objects of the senses are simultaneously controlled and, over time, one uses one’s strength to prevent them from wandering around, the intelligent person understands himself to be the single supreme embodied being.[207] One passes through the three—rajas, tamas and sattva—and the three qualities and forms of knowledge. In that way, the embodied being penetrates the senses, like wind entering a kindled fire. The eyes cannot see the form of the atman. Touch cannot comprehend it. It is beyond the senses to fathom it. The ears cannot comprehend the soul through hearing. Whichever sense comprehends it is destroyed.[208] Hearing and the other senses cannot fathom the atman on their own. The kshetrajna knows everything, sees everything and witnesses. No man has seen the other side of the Himalayas, or the dark side of the moon. But this doesn’t mean that they don’t exist. In that way, the atman exists in a subtle way in all beings and is based in knowledge. Something that has not been seen earlier and something that has not been heard of earlier is not necessarily non-existent. Even if one looks, one doesn’t always see the universe in the moon. It is like that for those who are not fixed on the final objective. The learned see that form is created and form is also destroyed. Through their intelligence, they can understand the motion of the sun.[209] With the lamp of intelligence, the extremely learned see what is far away. Through their intelligence, they can immediately investigate what should be known. Indeed, nothing can be accomplished without the use of means. Fishermen kill fish by using nets that are made out of strings. Deer are used to capture other deer, birds for other birds and elephants for other elephants. In that way, what needs to be known can be seen through knowledge.

As an example, only a snake can see a snake’s legs. Through knowledge, inside the body, one can see what is based in the body and deserves to be known. One will not be able to comprehend the senses through the use of the senses. In that way, what is beyond intelligence cannot be understood through the use of supreme intelligence. On the fifteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, even a subtle form of the moon cannot be seen. That does not mean that it has been destroyed. Know that the embodied being is like that. On the fifteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, the faint form of the moon is not evident in the sky. In that way, when it is separated from its body, its own body cannot comprehend the soul. Having attained another position, the moon begins to shine again. In that way, having obtained another body, the soul is resplendent again. The birth, growth and decay of the moon can immediately be seen. But the soul is not like that. The birth, growth and decay of the body should also be accepted like that. Even in its dark state, the moon possesses a form. One does not see darkness seize the moon and release it. In that way, the release and entering of the soul cannot be seen.[210] Darkness is seen when it approaches the moon and the sun.[211] In that way, the soul can be understood as separate from the body. When the moon and the sun have been freed, Rahu can no longer be seen.[212] In that way, when it has been separated from the body, the soul can no longer be comprehended. Even on the fifteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, the nakshatras are still united with the moon. In that way, though it has been separated from the body, the fruits of acts performed are still united with it.’”’

Chapter 1525(197)

'"Manu said, 'When the manifest body is asleep, consciousness roams around in his dreams. Like that, consciousness is separated from knowledge and the senses after death. There are both existence and non-existence.[213] When the water is clear, the eyes can see the image in it. In that way, when the senses are clear, knowledge can be used to see what should be known. When the water is agitated, the image cannot be seen. In that way, when the senses are agitated, knowledge cannot be used to see what should be known. Lack of intelligence leads to lack of wisdom. Lack of intelligence taints the mind. When the mind is tainted, the five which are based in the mind[214] are also tainted. If one is immersed in material objects, one is ignorant and not satisfied. One does not see. Though the atman is pure, not being able to see, it circles around in material objects. Because of the sins, a man's thirst is never satisfied. The thirst is conquered only when one has destroyed the sins. The attachment to material objects has a tendency to perpetuate. The mind hankers for what one should not desire, and the supreme is not obtained. To obtain knowledge, a man must destroy his wicked deeds. When the sight is clear, one sees the atman in one's own self. If the senses are not controlled, one is miserable. When they are restrained, one is happy. Therefore, one must use one's atman to sever that attachment one has for objects of the senses. The mind is above the senses and the intelligence is above that. Knowledge is above intelligence and the supreme[215] is above knowledge. The soul originates in what is not manifest. Knowledge comes from the soul. Intelligence comes from knowledge. The mind comes from intelligence. The virtuous see that the mind is united with hearing and the other senses and sounds and the like. He who casts aside sounds and the like and everything that is manifest is freed from everything that is natural and ordinary. Having been freed, he enjoys immortality. When the sun rises, it creates a circle of rays. When it sets, it withdraws what it had itself created. In that way, the atman enters the body and spreads the rays of the senses, obtaining the qualities of the five senses. But when it sets, it restrains them. A person is repeatedly conveyed along the path of action. Though there is dharma in the soul, he grows old, having obtained the fruits of these deeds. If a person withdraws, material objects also withdraw from him. If a person has beheld the supreme, he abandons objects of desire and desire also leaves him. When the intelligence has rid itself of qualities associated with action and has immersed itself in the mind, there is destruction[216] and one obtains the brahman. This is not something that can be touched, heard, tasted, seen or smelt. This is beyond debate. It is only the spirit that can penetrate that supreme being. Everything created by the mind can be drawn back into it. The mind can be withdrawn into intelligence. Intelligence can be withdrawn into knowledge. Knowledge can be withdrawn into the supreme. The senses cannot ensure the mind's success. The mind cannot understand intelligence. Intelligence cannot comprehend what is not manifest. The subtle soul can alone see.'"'

Chapter 1526(198)

'"Manu said, 'That which should be known exists in the midst of that knowledge. Know that the mind is only a quality of knowledge. When it is united with the faculties of wisdom, then intelligence is the result. When intelligence is freed from the qualities of action and is immersed in the mind, then wisdom is the result. One is engaged in the yoga of meditation and knows the brahman. If intelligence still possesses those qualities,[217] it circles around because of those qualities and flows down like a stream from the summit of a mountain, heading in different directions. But if one disengages from the qualities and the mind is first immersed in meditation, then one knows the brahman, like gold through a touchstone. The mind pursues the objects of the senses and clouds intelligence. Because it is obsessed with those qualities, it is incapable of seeing what is without qualities. One must close all the doors[218] and base oneself in the mind. Having fixed one's mind, one can then obtain the supreme. When the qualities are extinguished, the great elements are withdrawn. In that way, when the senses are withdrawn, the intelligence circles around in the mind. When intelligence is based in the mind and circles around inside, there are no longer any qualities that the mind is engaged with. When the mind is engaged in the qualities of meditation, it can cast aside its qualities. Devoid of all the qualities, it can know what is without qualities.[219] There is no vijnana that is capable of proving the existence of what is not manifest. There are no arrangements of words that can express it. How can it be understood through material objects? A person who has cleansed his atman inside can seek to approach the supreme brahman through austerities, inferences and the qualities prescribed in the sacred texts. Freeing oneself from the qualities, one can also follow him in the external path.[220] Because there are no natural attributes, the one who should be known cannot be known through debate. When one withdraws from the qualities, one obtains the brahman, who is devoid of qualities. The intelligence is such that it reaches towards the qualities, like a fire towards kindling. When the five senses are freed from their respective actions, the supreme brahman is also freed and transcends nature. All embodied beings are naturally influenced.[221] When they withdraw, they are freed, and some go to heaven. Man, nature, intelligence, senses in particular, ego and pride are created in beings. Their first creation emanated from that foremost one. The second creation resulted from sexual intercourse and is restrained by rules.[222] Benefit is obtained by observing dharma. The practice of adharma leads to injury. Attachment leads to the normal course.[223] Detachment leads to knowledge.'"'

Chapter 1527(199)

'"Manu said, 'When the five attributes and the five[224] are separated from the mind, one can see the brahman, like a gem that is strung on a thread. That thread may be made out of gold, pearls, coral, clay or silver. This is because, as a consequence of its own acts, the atman is attracted and may dwell in cows, humans, elephants, other animals, insects and worms. The body depends on the acts one has performed. In that kind of body, one must enjoy the fruits. Though the earth is sprinkled with the same juices, it follows its nature and yields different kinds of herbs. In that way, intelligence follows the atman and the consequences of earlier deeds. Desire originally comes from knowledge. Resolution first comes from desire. Action flows from resolution. Action is foundation for the fruits. Fruits thus result from action. Knowledge results in action and the atman leads to knowledge. There is knowledge that enables one to know what should be known. This knowledge is virtuous and involves the destruction of ignorance. The destruction of knowledge,[225] fruits, understanding and action leads to divine fruits and knowledge of what should be known. Yogis behold that great and supreme being. Those who are ignorant and only perceive the qualities in themselves do not see it. The form of water is greater than the form of the earth. Energy is greater than water. The wind is greater than energy. Space is greater than the wind. In that way, the supreme is greater than the mind. Intelligence is greater than the mind. It is said that time is greater than intelligence. The illustrious Vishnu, to whom this entire universe belongs, is greater than time. That god has no beginning, no middle and no end. He is without beginning, without middle and without an end. He is without decay. He is beyond all misery, because it is said that misery has an end. He is said to be the supreme Brahma. He is said to be the supreme refuge. Going to him, there are those who are freed from time and material objects and obtain emancipation. Everything is seen to possess qualities. However, the supreme is without qualities. The signs of withdrawal are thought of as eternal dharma. The hymns of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas have a base in the body and flow from the tip of the tongue. But these require effort for success and are also subject to destruction. The brahman cannot be obtained in this way, by relying on things that are dependent on the body. The brahman is without beginning, without middle and without end and cannot be obtained through exertion. The hymns of the Rig, Sama and Yajur Vedas are said to have a beginning. Everything with a beginning has an end. But the brahman is said to be without a beginning. Because there is no beginning and no end, it is infinite and without decay. It is without decay and is without opposite sentiments. It is beyond opposite pairs of sentiments. Mortals do not succeed in seeing or going to the supreme because of their ill fortune, the lack of methods, lack of resolution and because of their deeds. They do not attain the supreme because they are addicted to material objects, because they wish to see something else, or because their minds desire something else. There are other people who see qualities in this world. They desire those qualities and do not desire the supreme, which is without qualities. They are devoted to inferior qualities. How will they know something that has superior qualities? It is beyond qualities and form and one can attain it on the basis of inference. One can know it through the subtleties of the mind and one is incapable of describing it in words. The mind is attracted by the mind. Sight is attracted by sight. It is intelligence that cleans knowledge and knowledge cleans the mind. Through the mind, and by fixing the senses, one obtains the infinite. Accepting intelligence, the mind is enriched. A person may not be interested in the qualities. Like the wind that keeps fire apart from kindling, if he is not driven by greed, he obtains the supreme in this world. When one is disinterested in obtaining all the qualities, the mind always attains what is superior to intelligence. If one is engaged in this mode and disassociates from all the qualities, one merges into the body of the brahman. The atman of a man is not manifest. It becomes manifest through his deeds. While he is destroyed, it becomes unmanifest again. The soul does not act. It is extended by the senses and there is joy and misery. Action is performed. It obtains a body and is united with the senses and finds a refuge in the five elements. However, unless it is goaded by the supreme and undecaying one, it is incapable of performing any action. No man on earth will see its end, but knows that there will be an end. He is agitated and is conveyed to the supreme, like a boat whirled by winds on the ocean. The sun obtains its qualities by spreading its circle of rays. But when it withdraws them, it is without qualities. In that way, in this world, a sage can give up all attachments and enter into the undecaying brahman, devoid of all qualities. It is without beginning. It is the supreme refuge for virtuous people. This is the undecaying Svayambhu. Everything originates in him and everything ends in him. He is eternal and the immortal and undecaying objective. A person who reflects on this obtains tranquility and immortality.'"'

Section 86 will conclude in Volume 9.

Shanti Parva

Shanti Parva is a parva that is about peace, shanti meaning peace. In the 18-parva classification, Shanti Parva is the twelfth and is the longest parva of the Mahabharata. In the 100-parva classification, Shanti Parva constitutes sections 84 to 86. Shanti Parva has 353 chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Shanti Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Shanti Parva.

Section Eighty-Six

Moksha Dharma Parva

This parva has 6,935 shlokas and 186 chapters.

Chapter 1496(168): 53 shlokas
Chapter 1497(169): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1498(170): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1499(171): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1500(172): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1501(173): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1502(174): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1503(175): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1504(176): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1505(177): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1506(178): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1507(179): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1508(180): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1509(181): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1510(182): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1511(183): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1512(184): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1513(185): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1514(186): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1515(187): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1516(188): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1517(189): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1518(190): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1519(191): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1520(192): 127 shlokas
Chapter 1521(193): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1522(194): 24 shlokas

Chapter 1523(195): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1524(196): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1525(197): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1526(198): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1527(199): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1528(200): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1529(201): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1530(202): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1531(203): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1532(204): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1533(205): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1534(206): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1535(207): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1536(208): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1537(209): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1538(210): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1539(211): 48 shlokas
Chapter 1540(212): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1541(213): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1542(214): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1543(215): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1544(216): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1545(217): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1546(218): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1547(219): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1548(220): 118 shlokas
Chapter 1549(221): 94 shlokas
Chapter 1550(222): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1551(223): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1552(224): 75 shlokas
Chapter 1553(225): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1554(226): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1555(227): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1556(228): 38 shlokas

Chapter 1557(229): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1558(230): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1559(231): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1560(232): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1561(233): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1562(234): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1563(235): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1564(236): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1565(237): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1566(238): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1567(239): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1568(240): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1569(241): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1570(242): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1571(243): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1572(244): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1573(245): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1574(246): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1575(247): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1576(248): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1577(249): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1578(250): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1579(251): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1580(252): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1581(253): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1582(254): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1583(255): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1584(256): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1585(257): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1586(258): 75 shlokas
Chapter 1587(259): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1588(260): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1589(261): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1590(262): 45 shlokas

Chapter 1591(263): 55 shlokas
Chapter 1592(264): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1593(265): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1594(266): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1595(267): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1596(268): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1597(269): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1598(270): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1599(271): 69 shlokas
Chapter 1600(272): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1601(273): 63 shlokas
Chapter 1602(274): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1603(275): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1604(276): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1605(277): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1606(278): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1607(279): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1608(280): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1609(281): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1610(282): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1611(283): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1612(284): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1613(285): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1614(286): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1615(287): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1616(288): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1617(289): 62 shlokas
Chapter 1618(290): 110 shlokas
Chapter 1619(291): 48 shlokas
Chapter 1620(292): 48 shlokas
Chapter 1621(293): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1622(294): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1623(295): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1624(296): 50 shlokas

Chapter 1625(297): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1626(298): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1627(299): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1628(300): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1629(301): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1630(302): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1631(303): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1632(304): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1633(305): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1634(306): 108 shlokas
Chapter 1635(307): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1636(308): 191 shlokas
Chapter 1637(309): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1638(310): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1639(311): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1640(312): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1641(313): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1642(314): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1643(315): 57 shlokas
Chapter 1644(316): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1645(317): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1646(318): 63 shlokas
Chapter 1647(319): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1648(320): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1649(321): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1650(322): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1651(323): 57 shlokas
Chapter 1652(324): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1653(325): 4 shlokas
Chapter 1654(326): 124 shlokas
Chapter 1655(327): 107 shlokas
Chapter 1656(328): 53 shlokas
Chapter 1657(329): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1658(330):71 shlokas

Chapter 1659(331): 52 shlokas
Chapter 1660(332): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1661(333): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1662(334): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1663(335): 89 shlokas
Chapter 1664(336): 82 shlokas
Chapter 1665(337): 69 shlokas
Chapter 1666(338): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1667(339): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1668(340): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1669(341): 9 shlokas
Chapter 1670(342): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1671(343): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1672(344): 10 shlokas
Chapter 1673(345): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1674(346): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1675(347): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1676(348): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1677(349): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1678(350): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1679(351): 6 shlokas
Chapter 1680(352): 10 shlokas
Chapter 1681(353): 9 shlokas

Moksha means liberation, as opposed to the pursuit of dharma, artha and kama.

Chapter 1528(200)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O best among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear the truth about Pundarikaksha, Achyuta, the creator who himself has not been created, Vishnu, from whom all beings originate and into whom they all return, Narayana, Hrishikesha, the unvanquished Govinda, Keshava.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I have heard the truth about this from Jamadagni’s son, Rama,[1] when he spoke about it, from *devarshi* Narada and from Krishna Dvaipayana.[2] O son! Asita-Devala,[3] the immensely ascetic Valmiki and Markandeya have spoken about the extraordinarily great Govinda. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Keshava is the illustrious almighty lord. He is Purusha and pervades everything. The lord is heard of in many ways. O mightyarmed one! O Yudhishthira! He is the wielder of the *sharnga* bow.[4] Learned brahmanas in the world have spoken about his greatness. Listen to this. O Indra among men! People who know about the ancient accounts speak about this. Govinda’s qualities are infinite and I will recount them to you. He is the great being. He is in all beings. Purushottama is great in his soul. He created wind, energy, water, space and the earth. The lord, the god of all beings, looked at the earth. The great-souled Purushottama proceeded to lie down on the water. The first among all the beings was full of energy and lay down on that supreme bed and created attraction.[5] We have heard that the soul of all beings created this refuge of all beings through his mental powers and this sustains both the past and the future. O mighty-armed one! After that had been created, a celestial lotus sprouted from the great-souled one’s navel and it had the radiance of the sun. O son! The illustrious god Brahma, the grandfather of all beings, was created from that lotus and the directions shone with his radiance. O mighty-armed one! When that great-souled one manifested himself, there was a great asura named Madhu, who had earlier been born from darkness. He was fierce. He was fierce in his deeds and his resolution was fierce.[6] To ensure Brahma’s welfare, Purushottama slew him. O son! Because of this act of slaying, all the gods, *danava*s and humans came to call that bull among all the Satvatas by the name of Madhusudana.[7]

'"Through his mental powers, Brahma created seven sons, Daksha and the others—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu.[8] O son! Through his mental powers, Marichi created his first son, Kashyapa. He was like Brahma in his energy. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Even before Marichi had been created, from his toe, Brahma created the Prajapati named Daksha.[9] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thirteen daughters were first born to him. The eldest of Prajapati's daughters was Diti. O son! Marichi's son, Kashyapa, knew about all forms of dharma, was immensely illustrious and auspicious in his deeds. He became a husband to all of them. Daksha Prajapati, the immensely fortunate one, who knew about dharma, then had ten other daughters and gave them to Dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Dharma's sons were the Vasus, the infinitely energetic Rudras, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas and the Maruts. He[10] then had twenty-seven younger daughters. The immensely fortunate Soma[11] became a husband to all of them. The others[12] gave birth to *gandharva*s,[13] horses, birds, cattle, *kimpurusha*s,[14] fish, plants and trees. Aditi gave birth to the Adityas, the immensely strong ones who were foremost among the gods. The lord Vishnu, also known as Govinda, was born among them as a dwarf.[15] Through his valour, the prosperity of the gods increased and the danavas were vanquished. Diti's offspring were the *asura*s.[16] Danu gave birth to danavas and Viprachitti was foremost among them. Diti gave birth to all the great-spirited asuras.

'"Madhusudana also created day and night, the proper reckoning of time, forenoon and afternoon. Using his intelligence, he created clouds from the water and mobile and immobile objects. The immensely energetic one created the earth and its directions. O Yudhishthira! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The mighty-armed lord Krishna, Keshava, then again created one hundred brahmanas from his mouth, one hundred kshatriyas from his arms, one hundred vaishyas from his thighs and one hundred shudras from his feet. The immensely illustrious one thus created the four varnas. The lord made Dhata the supervisor of all beings.[17] In those days, men could live for as long as they wished to and there was no fear on account of Yama. O bull among the Bharata lineage! At that time, offspring were generated from resolution alone and there was no need to resort to the dharma of sexual intercourse. O lord of men! During the period of *treta yuga* too, offspring resulted from resolution and there was no need for the dharma of sexual intercourse.[18] O king! During dvapara, offspring were generated through the dharma of sexual intercourse. O king! In kali yuga, people began to live in pairs. O son! I have told you about the lord of all beings, the one who rules himself. O Kounteya! I will now tell you about the ones who cannot be controlled—all those who are born in the southern regions, the Talavaras, the Andhrakas, the Utsas, the Pulindas, the Shabaras, the Chuchupas and the Mandapas. I will also recount to you those born in the northern regions, the Younas, the Kambojas, the Gandharas, the Kiratas and the Barbaras. O son! These are the performers of wicked deeds and roam around on earth. O lord of men! They follow the dharma of dogs, crows, ravens and vultures. O son! They did not roam around on earth during krita yuga. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such people originated during treta yuga. When that extremely terrible intervening period that comes at the end of a yuga arrived,[19] the kings approached each other and began to fight. O best of the Kuru lineage! In this way, the great-souled one created everything. Devarshi Narada has spoken about the god as the creator of all the worlds. O lord of men! O mighty-armed one! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Narada thinks that Krishna is supreme and eternal. This is the nature of Keshava, for whom, truth is his valour. Pundarikaksha is not only a man. He is inconceivable.”’

Chapter 1529(201)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Who were the first Prajapatis? Who are the immensely fortunate rishis and what directions do they preside over?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O best among the Bharata lineage! I will tell you about what you have asked. Listen to the Prajapatis and the directions that each of them was said to preside over. There was the single, illustrious, original and eternal Svayambhu Brahma. The great-souled Svayambhu Brahma had seven sons—Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and the immensely illustrious Vasishtha, who was like Svayambhu himself. The Puranas refer to them as the seven brahmanas. These were the first. I will now tell you about all the other Prajapatis. In Atri's lineage was born the illustrious, eternal and ancient Barhi, descended from Brahma himself. The ten Prachetas were descended from him and those ten only had a single son—the Prajapati named Daksha. In this world, Daksha is known by both the names. Marichi's son, Kashyapa, is also known by two names. Some learned ones know him as Arishtanemi.[20] The handsome and valiant Bhouma was born to Angiras. He performed worship for one thousand divine yugas. O lord! The illustrious Aryama and others were his sons. They are famous as ones who laid down ordinances and created beings. O one without decay! Shashabindu[21] had ten thousand wives. Through each of them, he had one thousand sons. In this way, the great-souled one had one million sons. These sons did not allow anyone else to be a Prajapati. The ancient brahmanas addressed Shashabindu's offspring by this name and from that great lineage of Prajapatis originated the Vrishni lineage. I have told you about the illustrious Prajapatis.

'"I will now tell you about the gods who are the rulers of the three worlds—Bhaga, Amsha, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Savita, Dhata, the immensely strong Vivasvat, Pusha, Tvashta, Indra and Vishnu is said to be the twelfth. These twelve Adityas were descended from Kashyapa. Nasatya and Dasra are known as the two Ashvins. They were the sons of Martanda, the eighth of the Prajapatis.[22] Tvashta had handsome and immensely illustrious sons—Vishvarupa, Aja-Ekapada, Ahi, Budha, Virupaksha, Raivata, Hara, Bahurupa, Tryambaka as the lord of the gods, Savitra, Jayanta and the unvanquished Pinaki.The immensely illustrious eight Vasus have already been mentioned earlier. At the time of Prajapati Manu, these were the different kinds of gods. At first, they were known as both gods and ancestors. Among the Siddhas and the Sadhyas, depending on conduct and beauty, there were different types. The Ribhus and Maruts are categories of gods. In this way, the Vishvadevas and the Ashvins are revered. The Adityas are kshatriyas and the Maruts are vaishyas. The Ashvins are held to be shudras and performed fierce austerities. The gods descended from Angiras have certainly been determined to be brahmanas. I have thus recounted the four varnas among all the gods. If a person gets up in the morning and recites the names of the gods, he is freed from all sins, regardless of whether they have been committed by him or by others.[23] Yavakriti, Raibhya, Arvavasu, Paravasu, Oushija, Kakshivat and Bala were the sons of Angiras. O son! These, Kanva, the son of rishi Medhatithi, Barhishada and the *saptarshi*s[24] who created the three worlds are in the east. Unmucha, Vimucha, the valiant Svastyatreya, Pramucha, Idhmavaha, the illustrious Dridavrata and Agastya, the son of Mitra-Varuna—these brahmana rishis always resort to the southern direction. Rushadgu, Kavasha, Dhoumya, the valiant Parivyadha, the *maharshi*s known as Ekata, Dvita and Trita and Atri's son, the illustrious lord Sarasvata—these nine great-souled ones resort to the western direction. Atreya, Vasishtha, the great rishi Kashyapa, Goutama, Bharadvaja, Koushika Vishvamitra and Jamadagni, the great-souled and illustrious son of Richika—these seven resort to the northern direction. I have recounted to you the fiercely engertic ones in all the directions. These great-souled ones are the creators of beings and are witnesses. In this way, these great-souled ones are established in each of the directions. If one recites their names, one is freed from all sins. If a person seeks refuge in a direction that they preside over, he is freed from all sins and safely returns home."'

Chapter 1530(202)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who has the valour of truth in battle! I wish to hear everything about lord Krishna, who is without decay. He has performed extremely great and energetic deeds in ancient times. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Accurately tell me everything about them. Why did Hari assume the form of an inferior species? What tasks did he accomplish? O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "Earlier, I went out on a hunt and went to Markandeya's hermitage. There I saw many hermits seated, in their thousands. They honoured me by offering me *madhuparka*.[25] Accepting that, I worshipped and honoured the rishis back in return. What I will recount was stated by maharshi Kashyapa there. It is divine and delights the mind. Listen attentively. In ancient times, the foremost danavas were full of anger and avarice. There were also hundreds of giant asuras, intoxicated by their strength, Naraka and the others. There were many other danavas too, invincible in battle. They could not tolerate the supreme prosperity of the gods. The gods and devarshis were oppressed by the danavas. O king! They could not find any peace and fled in different directions. The residents of heaven saw that the earth was in a miserable state. It was full of danavas who were terrible in form and were extremely strong. Afflicted by the load of that burden, it was miserable and submerged.[26] The Adityas were terrified. They went to Brahma and said, 'O Brahma! How will we continue to bear the depredations of the danavas?' Svayambhu replied, 'I have already ordained what needs to be done. They are powerful and intoxicated because of boons. Those stupid ones do not know that Vishnu, whose form cannot be seen, has assumed the form of a boar.[27] That god cannot be assailed, even by all the immortals together. He will swiftly go to the spot where those worst among danavas are. Thousands of those terrible ones reside inside the bowels of the earth. He will pacify them all.' Hearing this, the supreme ones among the gods were delighted. The immensely energetic Vishnu assumed the form of a boar. He penetrated the nether regions and advanced against Diti's offspring. On seeing that superhuman being, all the daityas united. Goaded by destiny, all of them advanced violently and encircled him. From every direction, they rushed against the boar and seized it. From every direction, they angrily tugged at the boar. The Indras among the danavas were gigantic in form. They were immensely valorous and full of strength. O lord! But they were not able to do anything at all. Those Indras among the danavas were then terrified and overcome by fear. Though there were thousands of them, they were full of doubt in their minds. The god of the gods is the soul of yoga and the charioteer of yoga. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The illustrious one resorted to yoga. He emitted a mighty roar and agitated those daityas and danavas. The worlds and all the ten directions seemed to resound with these roars. At the sounds of those roars, all the worlds were agitated. The directions, and all the gods, with Shakra[28] at the forefront, were frightened. The entire universe was severely afflicted and became immobile. Mobile and immobile objects were confused by that roar. All the danavas were terrified by that noise. They lost their lives and fell down, confused by Vishnu's energy. Those who hated the thirty gods sought refuge in *rasatala*.[29] But the boar tore into them with his hooves and mangled their flesh, fat and bones. Because of that great roar, he came to be known as Sanatana.[30] He is Padmanabha,[31] the great yogi, the preceptor of all beings and the king of all beings. All the large number of gods went to the grandfather and asked, ‘O lord! O god! Who is roaring like this? We cannot understand this. Who is this? Whom does this roar belong to? It has paralysed the universe.’ At that time, Vishnu was in his form of a boar and the maharshis praised the great god. The grandfather replied, ‘He has slain the lords among the danavas. He is great in his form and great in his strength. This god is the great yogi. He is the soul of all beings and the creator of all beings. He is the yogi who is the lord of all beings. He is the womb. He is the atman. Be steady. He is Krishna, the destroyer of all sins. He is the immensely radiant one and has accomplished a task that others would have found impossible to undertake. He has now returned to his own atman. He is immensely fortunate and immensely radiant. He is Padmanabha, the great yogi. He is the soul of all beings and the creator of all beings. O supreme among the gods! You should not be tormented. Nor should you be frightened, or grieve. He is the one who ordains. He is the creator. He is time, the destroyer of everything. He is the one who holds up the worlds. He is the great-souled one who emitted the roar. He is the immensely fortunate one, revered by the worlds. He is Achyuta Pundarikaksha,[32] the origin of all beings.”“

Chapter 1531(203)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O father![33] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Tell me about the supreme yoga of moksha. O supreme among eloquent ones! I wish to know the truth about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation on moksha between a preceptor and a disciple. There was a supreme brahmana rishi who was a preceptor. His disciple was extremely intelligent and desirous of welfare. While the preceptor was seated, the disciple controlled himself and touched his feet. With hands joined in salutation, he said, ‘O illustrious one! I have a great doubt in my mind. If you are satisfied with my worship, you should explain this. Where have I come from? Where have you come from? What happens thereafter? Tell me accurately. O supreme among brahmanas! If all beings are the same and if their driving force is the same, why are their origin and destruction so different from each other? There are also detailed words in the Vedas about different kinds of people.[34] You know the truth about this and you should explain all this to me.'

'"The preceptor said, 'O disciple! O immensely wise one! Listen to the supreme mystery about the brahman, described in the sacred texts. This is *adhyatma* and represents wealth for all beings. Vasudeva is everything in the universe. He is the mouth of the brahman. He is truthfulness, generosity, sacrifices, renunciation, self-control and uprightness. He is the eternal Purusha. Those who know the Vedas know him as Vishnu. He is the cause of creation and destruction. He is the eternal brahman, who is not manifest. That brahman was born in the Vrishni lineage. Listen to the history. Brahmanas should hear this from brahmanas and kings from kshatriyas. This is about the greatness of the god of the gods, the infinitely energetic Vishnu. You should hear about the supreme Varshneya, since that will ensure your welfare. He is the wheel of time. He is without beginning and without end. His signs are both existence and non-existence. He is the one who makes all beings in the three worlds revolve on the wheel. He is Akshara.[35] He is Avyakta.[36] He is Amrita.[37] He is the eternal brahman. Keshava is spoken of as a tiger among men and a bull among men. The supreme and undecaying one created the ancestors, the gods, the rishis, the *yaksha*s,[38] the danavas, the serpents, the asuras and human beings. In that way, the lord created the sacred texts of the Vedas and the eternal dharma of the worlds. Having destroyed everything, at the beginning of a new yuga, he creates nature.[39] As seasons with their many different signs and forms progressively come into being, these are also seen at the end of Brahma's night. Through the progress of time, different yugas come into being. For the advance of the worlds, different kinds of knowledge are also decreed. At the end of a yuga, the Vedas and the histories also disappear. However, having obtained Svayambhu's prior permission, the maharshis get them back through their austerities. The illustrious Brihaspati knew about the Vedas and the Vedangas.[40] For the sake of the universe and for the welfare of the universe, Bhargava obtained the sacred texts about good policy.[41] Narada accepted the knowledge about gandharva[42]and Bharadvaja about bows.[43] Gargya learnt about the conduct of the devarshis and Krishnatreya about medicine. There were many others who were learned and spoke about nyaya,[44] tantra, reasoning and the sacred texts. Let him[45] be worshipped through good conduct.' '"Neither the gods nor the rishis were capacble of comprehending the supreme brahman. The illustrious lord, Dhata Narayana, was the only one who comprehended him. From Narayana, the large numbers of rishis, the foremost among the gods and the asuras and the ancient rajarshis got to know about the supreme one, who is the medication for all misery. With the appropriate cause, prakriti always brings forth, urged by the sentiments of *purusha*, and the entire universe begins to whirl around.[46] This is like thousands of lamps being lit from another lamp. In that way, prakriti creates many other things, but is not exhausted. Though it is not manifest, it creates intelligence and ego, which lead to acts. Space results from ego and wind results from space. Energy results from wind. Water results from energy and the earth is created from water. These are the eight foundations of prakriti and the universe is established on these.[47] The five senses of knowledge, the five organs of action, the five objects of the senses and the mind, as the sixteenth, result from transformations of these. The ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose are the five senses. The feet, the anus, the genitals, the mouth and the hands are the five organs of action. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell are what are to be known and pervade the consciousness, the mind going everywhere. It[48] knows taste through the tongue and is said to become words. United with the senses, the mind is engaged in everything. In their various forms, these sixteen should be known as divinities. They bring about knowledge within the body and are worshipped by those who know about worshipping. The tongue represents the qualities of water, smell the qualities of the earth, hearing the qualities of sound[49] and touch the qualities of the wind. This is always known to be the case with all beings. It is said that the mind is the quality of existence. Existence arises from that which is not manifest. Those who are intelligent know that it[50] is there in all beings, as the soul of beings. Its attributes are borne by the entire universe, by mobile and immobile objects. The blazing radiance of that god is said to be the supreme objective. This sacred city with nine gates[51] possesses all these characteristics. The great atman pervades and lies down inside and is known as purusha. It is without decay. It is immortal. It knows about what is manifest and also about what is not manifest. It is pervasive, with qualities, and subtle. It is the refuge of all beings and their qualities. A lamp shows whether a person is small or large. In that way, in all creatures, one can know the purusha through the knowledge of the atman. It is the one who knows what is to be known. It is the one who hears and sees. It is the reason behind this body. It is the doer of all the deeds. There is fire in wood, but it cannot be seen if the wood is cut. In that way, the atman is inside the body, but it can only be seen through yoga. The river has water and there are rays attached to the sun. In that way, it[52] goes where the body goes. Where there is the body, the soul is there. When a person dreams, the atman and the five senses leave the body. Like that, when the body is cast aside,[53] the atman departs and obtains another. It is bound down by its earlier acts and obtains the consequences of those acts. The powerful force of its own deeds conveys it elsewhere. Having left one body, it obtains another body and another one after that. I will now tell you about how beings naturally follow their own acts."'

Chapter 1532(204)

'"The preceptor said, 'All mobile and immobile beings belong to four categories. They are not manifest, alive, manifest and dead. Know that the mind exists in the atman, which is not manifest. It[54] is not manifest and it is destroyed. A giant tree may be hidden inside the small blossom of an *ashvattha* flower. It is seen only when it has emerged. Like that, the manifest is created from what is not manifest. A piece of iron has no consciousness, but advances towards a lodestone. Some reasons and attributes are natural. But others are not like that.[55] Having become manifest, those attributes provide reasons and objectives to the doer. However, there are also unconscious attributes that provide reasons for the consciousness to be collected.[56] The earth, the sky, heaven, beings, the rishis, the gods, the asuras and nothing else existed, with the exception of the soul. It conveys everything. It goes everywhere. It is the cause behind the mind, which then possesses attributes. It has been said that reasons and characteristics are based on ignorant deeds. Because of being united with those reasons, it is made to engage in deeds again and the great wheel continues to revolve, without beginning and without end. That which is not manifest is the nave, while the manifest transformations represent the circumference. As the smooth axles revolve, the kshetrajna is certainly established in that wheel.[57] Those who extract oil crush sesamum seed in presses. Like that, because of the sentiments of desire and ignorance, the entire universe is crushed in that wheel. Having been seized by ego, the being performs acts. In the combination of acts and reasons, further reasons are generated.[58] There are no reasons behind acts. Nor are acts associated with reasons. In what is thought to be deeds and effects, it is time which is actually the doer. But prakriti is united with the reasons and the transformations work against each other. They transgress each other. However, the purusha is always established over them. Like dust following the wind, dust, darkness, impure sentiments and powerful reasons follow the kshetrajna. But they do not touch or effect the great-souled one. It is like the wind, which bears dust, but is itself without dust. Just as the two[59] are different, a learned person knows the difference between kshetra and kshetrajna. If one practises, one does not have to go to prakriti again.'[60]

'"The illustrious rishi thus severed the doubt that had arisen. Having considered this view, which has all the signs of accomplishment, the seeds[61] must be burnt, so that they do not sprout again. If they are burnt through knowledge, the atman is not tied down to hardships again."'

Chapter 1533(205)

'"The preceptor said, 'Those who exhibit signs of being engaged in action think that they are obtaining dharma through this. But others who are devoted to knowledge find no delight in them. Those who know about the Vedas and base themselves on what the Vedas have said are extremely rare. In this case, those who are learned, desire to follow the superior path.[62] Those who are of virtuous conduct practise this praiseworthy behaviour. These intelligent ones advance towards the supreme objective. Having obtained a body, everyone is seized by delusion. Such a person is overcome by desire and anger and *raja*s and *tama*s.[63] Therefore, one should not perform impure acts and should desire disassociation from the body. Having driven deeds into a hole, one obtains the auspicious worlds. When gold is mixed with iron, it becomes impure and does not shine. In that way, if mixed with the impure and the astringent,[64] knowledge no longer shines. Because of confusion, desire and avarice, if one follows *adharma*, one transgresses the path of dharma and is continuously destroyed. Therefore, one must not have attachment towards sound and the others[65] and material objects. Anger, delight and misery feed on each other. The five elements are in the body and so are sattva,[66] rajas and tamas. Who will one censure? Who will one praise? What will one say? Foolish people follow attachment towards things like touch, form and the others. Because of their ignorance, they do not realize that the bodies only represent earthy qualities. A house made of earth is plastered with earth. Like that, this body is made out of earth and is attached to earth.[67] Honey, oil, milk, butter, meat, salt, molasses, grain, fruits and roots are modifications of earth, mixed with water. There are those who resort to the wilderness. They are not interested in roaming around with other men. They obtain food with difficulty and taste it only for remaining alive. That is the way one should dwell in this world, which is also a wilderness. One must make efforts and take food only for the journey, like medicine by a patient.[68] Using truth, purity, uprightness, renunciation, fame, valour, forgiveness, fortitude, intelligence, the mind and austerities, one must search out the proper nature of everything, in due order. One must desire tranquility and not be distressed in the soul. One must restrain the senses. In their ignorance, beings are confused by sattva, rajas and tamas and are severely whirled around on the wheel. Therefore, one must properly examine all the sins that arise from ignorance. One must always cast aside the power of ignorance and ego. The great elements, the senses, the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas and the three worlds and their lord are all established in the ego.[69] Time always shows afflicted people its qualities. In that way, know that, in all beings, it is the ego that makes beings embark on action. Know that tamas is responsible for confusion. It represents darkness and results from ignorance. All joys and sorrows are attached to the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. Listen to them. Lack of confusion, delight, affection, lack of doubt, fortitude and memory—know that these are the virtuous qualities associated with sattva. Desire, anger, distraction, avarice, confusion, fear, exhaustion, despondency, sorrow, excessive pride, insolence, lack of nobility —without any distress, the severity or lack of severity of these faults must be examined. Each of these must always be tested, to the extent that they exist in the atman.'

'"The disciple asked, 'To loosen the bonds,[70] which sins do intelligent people banish from their minds? Like the fruits of confusion, which are the ones that keep on recurring? Using reasoning and intellect, which are the strong and weak faults an intelligent person should think about? O lord! Tell me about all this and instruct knowledge to me.'

'"The preceptor replied, 'A person who is pure in his soul severs the sins from their roots and is freed. An axe made of steel can destroy an object made of steel. That is the way a person who has cleansed his soul easily destroys the sins associated with rajas. In all bodies with the atman, rajas, tamas and those which give rise to pure deeds[71] are like seeds. Therefore, the atman in the body must discard rajas and tamas. Having been freed from rajas and tamas, the sattva will make it clean. There are those who say that sacrifices and rites, when performed with mantras, are instruments in following pure dharma. However, if one performs acts of dharma driven by rajas, or if one performs them with a desire for artha, all these amount to a serving of kama. When tamas is united with avarice, one serves anger and one becomes full of violence, addicted to pleasure, lassitude and sleep. However, one who is based in sattva is virtuous. He sees, and resorts to, only what is virtuous. Such a being is sparkling, handsome, pure and full of learning."“

Chapter 1534(206)

'"The preceptor said, 'O bull among men! Delusion is brought about by rajas. Anger, avarice, fear and insolence—these are brought about by tamas. Purity[72] leads to the supreme *paramatman*, the god who is without decay and without change. This is Vishnu, who is not manifest, but pervades everything. He is the supreme god. It is because of his skilful maya that the bodies of men are dislodged from knowledge and the beneficial. With their knowledge confounded, they are led towards desire. Desire leads to anger, avarice and delusion in men and they perform deeds full of pride, insolence, ego and selfishness. From deeds, bonds of attachment arise and that attachment then leads to sorrow. Because these are undertaken, there is happiness and unhappiness and one is liable to birth and death. Since one is born from the mixture of semen and blood, one resides in the womb and that abode is full of excrement, urine, moisture and blood. Overcome by thirst, the being is flooded by these. One must know that women are the strands through which this cycle[73] is borne along. They are naturally the kshetra and men possess the qualities of kshetrajna. Therefore, learned men in particular must not follow young women. They are sorceresses,[74] terrible in form, and confuse those who are not learned. They are immersed in rajas and are the eternal embodiment of the senses. It is because of attraction for them that semen is created and beings are born. There are worms that get attached to one's body. One knows that these are not really part of one's body and flings them away. In that way, one should know that the offspring are also not really part of one's body and should cast them aside, like worms. Beings are born from semen, juices and affection, determined naturally by the acts that they have performed earlier. An intelligent person ignores them. Rajas is established in tamas and sattva also bases itself on tamas.[75] Know that knowledge is based on ignorance and that there are signs of ego. There is a seed in beings and that seed is known as the *jiva* of consciousness.[76] Because of deeds performed and because of time, it is whirled around in this cycle. It takes pleasure in this body, like the mind does in a dream. Because there are qualities of a womb in those deeds, the living being obtains a womb. The seeds of deeds performed goad the senses in beings.[77] Ego, attachment and consciousness are generated. The attachment to sound leads to the atman obtaining ears. Because of the attachment to form, the eyes result and desire for scent leads to the nose. There is touch and the five kinds of wind, *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*, which lead to the sustaining of the body. The limbs are created because of attachment and the brahman[78] is engaged in action. In the body and in the mind, in the beginning, the middle and the end, there is sorrow and nothing but grief. Know that misery is inherent in birth and ego enhances it. It can be restrained through renunciation and a person who knows about renunciation is freed. Both the creation and the destruction of the senses result from rajas. Using the sight obtained from the sacred texts, a learned person must act so as to test them. Even if one accomplishes the objective of satisfying the senses, a person who knows can use the senses of knowledge to determine the reasons. Such a being does not have to accept a body again.”“

Chapter 1535(207)

‘“The preceptor said, ‘I will now tell you about the means one can use, if one uses the sight obtained from the sacred texts. Using that knowledge, a wise person can attain the supreme objective. Among all beings, humans are said to be the best, brahmanas among humans and brahmanas who know the mantras among brahmanas. Brahmanas who know the truth about the Vedas can determine the purpose and progress of everything. They know everything and can see everything. They are special among all beings. A blind man who is travelling alone experiences hardships. It is like that for people devoid of knowledge. Therefore, those with knowledge are known to be superior. Thus, those who are blind about dharma, but yet desire to follow dharma, go by the sacred texts. But they only accomplish limited objectives and I will soon describe those qualities. Purity in words, body and mind, forgiveness, truthfulness, fortitude, learning—among all kinds of dharma, these are described as the qualities of those who know about dharma. The form of the brahman is said to be there in *brahmacharya*. This is the supreme way for all beings and takes one towards the supreme objective. This means the avoidance of any association with the genital organ.[79] It also means the avoidance of touch by the body, hearing by the ears, sight by the eyes and taste by the tongue. All these are to be cast aside. Using the intelligence, one follows the unblemished conduct of brahmacharya. A person who follows this conduct in its entirety obtains Brahma’s world. A person who follows it in an average way obtains the world of the gods. A person who resorts to such conduct in an inferior kind of way is born learned, as a foremost one among the brahmanas. It is extremely difficult to follow the methods of brahmacharya. Listen to this. A brahmana who engages in this must control his mind. He must not speak to women, nor hear them. He must not look at them when they are naked. Sometimes, when one looks at them, passion arises in those who are weak. If there is attraction, one must follow a vow of hardship,[80] enter the water and spend three days there. If this happens when one is asleep, one must mentally recite *aghamarshana* thrice.[81] One must burn down the sins of passion that are inside. Using knowledge, the discriminating person controls his mind. Excrement and filth exist in ducts that are inside the body. Like that, know that the atman is also bound down inside the body. There are arteries inside the human body, with bile, phlegm, blood, skin, flesh, bones, marrow and nets of veins. These bear juices. Know that there are ten arteries that convey the qualities of the five senses.[82] From those arteries, thousands of others emanate out and those are subtler in form. The veins are like rivers that convey juices to the ocean of the body. In the midst, attached to the heart, there is a vein known as *manovaha*. When men think of it, it collects semen from all parts of the body and releases it. There are veins that follow it and extend to every part of the body. They also convey the quality of energy and terminate at the eyes. There is butter hidden inside milk and that is churned up through churning rods. Like that, when there is resolution, churning rods churn out semen from the body. Even when one is asleep, passion can lead to resolution in the mind. The semen is touched by manovaha and is released from the body. The illustrious maharshi Atri knows about the generation of semen. There are three seeds, Indra is the associated divinity and this is spoken of as indriya.[83] Know that the progress of the semen is the reason behind an admixture of species. Detachment can burn these sins and such men do not have to take up a body again. When it is the time to die and give up the functions of the body, if a person pacifies the qualities[84] and uses his mind to draw them into manovaha, he is freed.[85] The mind then obtains knowledge and everything proceeds from the mind. Such great-souled persons become successful and divine and blaze like stellar bodies. Therefore, one must undertake unblemished deeds. One must sever rajas and tamas and ascend upwards. The knowledge one has obtained when one is young becomes weak with old age. However, when one's intelligence matures with age, one can regain it through one's mental strength. But this is an extremely difficult path to follow and involves transcending the bonds of qualities. However, if one sees the sins, one can transcend them and obtain immortality.’”’

Chapter 1536(208)

““The preceptor said, ‘Beings come to a bad end because they are lazy and addicted to the objects of the senses.

However, not being attached to these, great-souled ones attain the supreme objective. Birth, death, old age, misery, disease and mental anguish—seeing that the world is always overwhelmed by these, an intelligent person seeks to bring about his emancipation. He must be pure and without ego in his words, mind and body. He must be tranquil, learned and a mendicant who is indifferent. He will then roam around happily. However, if there is attachment in his mind because of compassion towards beings, he must ignore this, knowing that everything in this universe is because of the fruits of earlier deeds. Whether good or bad deeds have been committed earlier, those results must be borne. In words, intelligence and action—one must peform auspicious deeds. Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, uprightness towards all beings, forgiveness and lack of distraction—a person who follows this is happy. This is supreme dharma and brings joy to all beings. Know that this eliminates all misery. A person who knows the truth about this is happy. One must use one’s intelligence to control one’s mind and sustain all beings. One must not desire to injure them and one must not allow one’s thoughts to bind one down. One should direct one’s words and mind towards such action. He should always speak virtuous words, looking towards the subtleties of dharma, and speak words that do not censure, but are truthful and do not cause injury. Evil results from harsh and violent words which are cruel and condemning, as it does from excessive speech. One’s consciousness is then distracted. Words lead to attachment. If one is detached, that should be reflected in words too. One should avoid tamas in intelligence, mind and deeds. If a person resorts to action because of rajas, he will reap the consequences. He will obtain misery in this world and hell thereafter. Therefore, one must exhibit patience in one’s mind, words and body and act accordingly. Bandits who are carrying loads of sheep always opt for directions that are adverse.[86] Know that ignorant people in the world are like that. If the bandits wish to follow desirable directions, they have to fling aside their burdens. Like that, to obtain happiness, one has to cast aside acts based on rajas and tamas. Such a person is not suspicious. He doesn't desire anything. He has freed himself from possessions. He lives alone. He has attained all his desires. He is an ascetic. He is in control of his senses. He has burnt his hardships through knowledge. He has controlled his atman. Having withdrawn his mind, he obtains the supreme. There is no doubt that a patient man who has cleansed his soul must control his intelligence. The mind must be controlled with intelligence and desire for objects controlled with the mind. When the senses have been restrained and the mind is under subjugation, the god manifests himself and one cheerfully advances towards that lord. When the mind has been controlled, Brahma manifests himself. One must not engage in yoga and tantra, in any form at all. Instead, one must act so that one's conduct is permeated by the warp of that tantra.[87] One should seek to sustain oneself on broken bits of grain, seeds from which oil has been extracted, inferior kinds of grain,[88] vegetables, barley, coarsely ground meal, roots and fruit that have been obtained through begging. Depending on the time and the place, a virtuous person will be restrained in his diet. Having examined it, he will follow the appropriate conduct. This is like gradually kindling a fire. One must gently use the kindling of knowledge and the sun of knowledge will manifest itself. Ignorance is actually based on knowledge and the three worlds are based on that.[89]*Jnana* follows *vijnana*[90] and destroys the ignorance. One does not know the eternal because they seem to be separate.[91] A person who knows about renunciation is devoid of attachment and is freed. Having overcome age, old age and death, he wins the eternal brahman. He obtains immortality, the Akshara who is without change.'"“

Chapter 1537(209)

"'The preceptor said, 'One must always desire to follow unblemished brahmacharya. Considering the sins that arise from dreaming, one must wholeheartedly try to give up sleep.[92] In sleep, the embodied being is overcome by rajas and tamas. Having lost its memory, it wanders around outside the body. Practising knowledge and thereafter enquiring about objectives, one must remain awake. Concentrating on vijnana, one must always remain awake at night. On this, there are feelings whereby one thinks about material objects during dreams. While the senses are suspended, the being behaves as if it still possesses a body. It has been said that Hari, the lord of yoga, knows how this occurs. The maharshis have said that what he has described is the truth. The learned say that when the senses are exhausted, everyone sees dreams. The mind has not been exhausted and it is said that is the reason. The mind is addicted to action and resolution is awake. That is the reason mental desire for prosperity surfaces in the mind during dreams. In this cycle, there are innumerable desires a being faces.[93] They may seem to have disappeared from the mind, but the supreme being inside knows them all. The qualities of those deeds become known and present themselves.[94] They affect the minds of beings and influence them. Those qualities of rajas, sattva and tamas present themselves. This is even if one has engaged in virtuous deeds that yield infinite fruits. The ignorant see images that excite wind, bile and phlegm. It has been said that sentiments of rajas and tamas are difficult to cast aside. Even when one's senses are tranquil, there are resolutions in the mind. In the course of dreams, the mind perceives these through its sight. The mind is pervasive and unrestrained in all beings. The mind is based in the body. The door that is the mind does disappear.[95] Everything that exists and does not exist becomes manifest in that state of sleep. But the learned person becomes acquainted with the quality of adhyatma,[96] which is inside all beings. At that time, the mind only has the resolution to be attached to the qualities of the supreme god and objective. Through the powers of his own atman, he knows everything and knows himself to be divinity. He is engaged in austerities. He is as radiant as the sun and is beyond darkness. Because of the austerities, the being becomes like Maheshvara and like the prakriti of the three worlds. These are the kinds of austerities the gods engaged in. The asuras represented tamas and destroyed those austerities. This is what was respectively protected by the gods and the asuras. This is said to be the signs of ignorance.[97] Know that the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas also characterize the gods and the asuras. Know that sattva is the quality of the gods and that the other two[98] represent the qualities of the asuras. Know that Brahma is beyond all this. He is immortal, radiant and Akshara. Those who are learned and have cleansed their souls go to that supreme objective. With the sight of knowledge, one is capable of recounting reasons about this. It is only through withdrawal that one is capable of knowing the brahman, which is not manifest.”"

Chapter 1538(210)

‘“The preceptor said, ‘A person who does not know about those four things does not know supreme dharma.[99] The supreme rishi obtained the manifest, and that which is not manifest, as *tattvam*.[100] That which is manifest is in the jaws of death. Know that which is not manifest is the immortal objective. The rishi Narayana has spoken about the signs of inclination.[101] Everything in the three worlds, the mobile and the immobile, is established on this. The traits of the dharma of renunciation[102] are that this leads to the eternal brahman, who is not manifest. Prajapati has spoken about the characteristics of the dharma of pravritti. From pravritti, one has to return again.[103]Nivritti leads to the supreme objective. A supreme sage who is engaged in nivritti attains that supreme end. He is devoted to knowledge and always discriminates between what is auspicious and what is inauspicious. For that, one must know both the unmanifest and purusha. One must also know the one who is greater than the unmanifest and the purusha. One who is accomplished must specially look towards the differences between them. The signs of both of them[104] are that they are without beginning and without end. They are both always subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest. They are similar in this way. But there are also differences between them. Prakriti’s dharma is creation and it has three kinds of traits.[105] Know that the traits of the kshetrajna are the converse.[106] Because of the qualities, prakriti is seen to have transformations. But purusha and the more powerful one[107] are incapable of being comprehended. Creation results from the union[108] and the attributes of action enable one to understand. A doer is characterized by action and withdrawal from action. Though words like ‘who’, ‘I’ and ‘this’ are used, they are meaningless. It is like a person who wears a headdress made out of three pieces of cloth. The embodied being is enveloped in sattva, rajas and tamas. Therefore, one must understand four subjects and aspects.[109] Someone who knows this will not be confused, even when his time draws to an end. If one desires the celestial prosperity of the brahman, one must be pure in words and mind. For the body, one must observe fierce rituals and be engaged in unblemished austerities. The three worlds are illuminated and pervaded by austerities performed by the inner being. The radiance of the sun and the moon in the sky is because of austerities. The power of austerities is in knowledge. Austerities are praised in the world. Because of its attributes, austerities free a person from acts committed because of rajas and tamas. Brahmacharya and non-violence are said to be the austerities of the body. Control over words and the mind and tranquility are said to be austerities of the mind. In particular, following the ordinances, one must receive food from brahmanas. If one is restrained in food, the sins that result from rajas are destroyed. In one's mind, one must withdraw from material objects and action. Thus, one must only accept that much of food as is necessary.

'"'When one is afflicted by old age and one's end has arrived, one must act without any distress. One must confront it by fixing one's mind on knowledge. Divested from rajas and the body, the embodied being silently moves around. When one is freed from action and one's intelligence turns to lack of attachment, one is based in prakriti.[110] When one is freed from the distraction of the body, one can also be freed from what comes after the end of the body.[111] The creation and destruction of beings always has a reason. However, if one has belief in the supreme reason behind creation, one is freed from the compulsion to return.[112] But there are those who are ignorant about the forces behind the end of the world and creation and destruction. They use their patience to hold up their bodies and use their intelligence to withdraw their minds. They withdraw from places and objects that are destructible and worship what is subtle. They know everything that should be known from the sacred texts. After death, some of them, with cleansed souls, attain the ultimate resort. Some virtuous ones worship the object of meditation.[113] The supreme god cannot be destroyed and has been described as a flash of lightning. When the end comes, some have burnt their sins through austerities. All these great-souled ones go towards the supreme objective. The attributes[114] are subtle and one must look at them with sight gained from the sacred texts. Freed from all possessions, one knows that supreme body. One has fixed one's mind on dharana and has penetrated into what is inside. With the mind united with knowledge, one is then freed from the mortal world. Pure and having obtained the brahman, one attains the supreme objective. One obtains the knowledge that is free from folly and cannot be dislodged. This is the divine and illustrious one, without origin. This is Vishnu, who has the attributes of not being manifest. Those whose sentiments are pure have no desires and become content with that knowledge. With that knowledge, they base themselves in Hari. They suffer no decay and do not return. They obtain the supreme resort and take delight in the one who is without decay and without destruction. This is said to be knowledge and there is nothing else. The entire universe is bound down by thirst and is whirled around on a wheel. The strands of a lotus plant penetrate everywhere within the lotus. In that way, for those who are thirsty,[115] it always penetrates everything in the body, from the beginning to the end. This is like a weaver using his needle and thread to move around everywhere in a garment. Like that, the threads of this cycle are bound down by the needle of desire. Prakriti is subject to transformation. Purusha is eternal. A person who knows this is freed from desire. The illustrious rishi Narayana, the refuge of the universe, revealed all this, driven by compassion for beings and for the welfare of the universe. This is immortality.'"'

Chapter 1539(211)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O one who knows about conduct! O one who knows about dharma! After discarding human objects of pleasure, what conduct did Janaka, the lord of Mithila,[116] follow, so as to advance towards emancipation?"

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. By following this conduct, the one who knew about conduct, advanced towards great happiness. In Mithila, there was a lord of men named Janadeva and he was descended from Janaka. He thought about the dharma that would uplift him beyond the body. One hundred preceptors always dwelt in his residence. They showed him different kinds of dharma and some of them were heretical. But basing himself on the sacred texts, he was not satisfied with what they repeatedly told him about their determinations about death, birth after death and the nature of the atman. There was a great sage named Panchashikha, the son of Kapila. Having travelled the entire earth, he came to Mithila. He had ascertained the true knowledge about all kinds of dharma connected with renunciation. He had settled all the meanings, was free from opposite sentiments,[117] and all his doubts had been dispelled. He was said to be the only rishi who was beyond the desire that characterizes humans. He desired the ultimate and eternal happiness that was so difficult to obtain. People were astounded at his form and thought that he was the supreme rishi, Prajapati Kapila, who expounded samkhya,[118] himself. He was the first disciple of Asuri and was said to be immortal. For one thousand years, he[119] had performed the sacrifice known as *panchasrota*.[120] There was a circle of the followers of Kapila and they were seated. They wished to hear from him about the supreme being, who was not manifest. Because of his own sacrifices and austerities, the sage had become successful. He had obtained divine sight and had understood the difference between kshetra and kshetrajna. The single Akshara of the brahman is seen in many different forms. In that circle, Asuri spoke about the one who is not manifest. There was a brahmana lady by the name of Kapila[121] and she was Asuri's wife. Panchashikha became his[122] disciple and suckled milk at her breast. Because he suckled milk from the breasts of Kapila's wife, he came to be known as his son and obtained supreme intelligence. The illustrious one told me about how he became Kapila's son.[123] He also told me about how Kapila's son obtained every kind of supreme prosperity.

'"Kapila's son knew about supreme forms of dharma and also knew that those one hundred ordinary preceptors were confused about the reasons. Kapila[124] therefore presented himself there and Janaka became devoted to him. He abandoned those one hundred preceptors and started to follow him. For the sake of supreme welfare, following dharma, he bowed down before him. He taught him about supreme emancipation, described as samkhya. He spoke to him about being free from birth and about being free from action. Having spoken to him about being free from action, he spoke to him about being free from everything. He spoke about being attached to action, and about the fruits those acts lead to. ‘These cannot be trusted, since they are certain to be temporary and subject to destruction.[125] There are some who argue that people can directly witness the destruction. They therefore say that the supreme words of the sacred texts have evidently been defeated.[126] They say that there is no atman and one’s self is subject to death, hardship, death,[127] old age and decay. A person who holds the view that the atman is different is completely confused. If something that does not exist is thought of as without decay and without death, then the king should also be thought of in that way.[128] Whether something exists or does not exist should be determined by the signs of its existence. How can the progress of people be determined to be based on such an object? The foundations of a conclusion must be based on what can be directly seen. Even if the sacred texts hold a different view, without direct evidence, one cannot arrive at such a conclusion. One’s sentiments cannot be influenced by guesses. Thus, the view that there is another being in the body should actually be held to be the view of non-believers.[129] A banyan tree results from a single seed. Clarified butter results from the process of cooking. These are said to be properties of different species. Lodestone and the sun-crystal[130] drink up water.[131] When one is dead, why should there be a being that approaches the gods? There is certain proof that once one is dead, there is a cessation of action. However, these are not valid arguments for something that does not have a form. The immortal cannot be realized by ordinary mortals. There are some who say that rebirth is because of ignorance and because of the attempt to undertake action. The reasons are avarice and confusion and inclination towards sin. Ignorance is said to be the field, and deeds performed earlier are like the seed. Thirst generates affection and that leads to rebirth. It lies hidden in the consciousness. When the mortal body is burnt, it is born again in a different body, preserving the spirit.[132] This has been heard from some as the truth. However, since the body that one is born in may be a completely different one, how can there be an association between the two? In this case, what desire can there be for donations, learning and the strength of austerities, since the results of all such deeds are held to be obtained by someone else?[133] There are others who are miserable because of the deeds that they have performed earlier. One must arrive at a determination after looking towards this misery and joy. When the body is crushed by a club and is born again, it is sometimes held that the consciousness that results is a different one. This is held to be like seasons, years, lunar days, cold, heat, the pleasant and the unpleasant. Like these, one passes on,[134] but the spirit is preserved. However, this[135] will be overcome by old age and be destroyed by death. Like a house that is progressively weakened, it will eventually be destroyed. The senses, the mind, the wind, the blood, the flesh and the bones are all progressively destroyed and enter the elements that created them. There are many reasons that arise in the mind about the paths followed by people, the obtaining of the fruits from the dharma of donations, the meaning of the words in the Vedas and the conduct of people. But none of these would be valid.[136] Reflecting on such things, different people head in different directions. Some submerge in them and obtain intelligence. Others age like trees. Every being is made miserable because of good and bad deeds. The sacred texts bring them back, like elephants by those who control elephants. Thus, there are many who desire happiness, but are unwilling to pay the price. They are overcome by greater misery and like people who have been separated from their meat,[137] come under the subjugation of death. Everyone is certain to be destroyed. What is the point of relatives, friends and possessions? If one abandons these in an instant and then departs, one does not return. Earth, space, water, fire and the wind always nourish the body. If one thinks of this, how can one be freed of desire? However, these are also destroyed and there is no happiness in these.' These words were supreme and were without deception. With the atman only as a witness, they were beyond disease. Hearing them, the king was astounded. He glanced towards him[138] and got ready to ask him once again."'

Chapter 1540(212)

'Bhishma said, "Janadeva, Janaka's descendant, was thus instructed by the supreme rishi. He again asked him about existence and non-existence after death. 'O illustrious one![139] If there is indeed a consciousness after death, then what is ignorance and what is knowledge? What does one do? O supreme among brahmanas! If it is seen that all good deeds are destroyed, then what is the difference between being distracted and not being distracted? Whether there is attachment, or whether there is lack of attachment, a being is destroyed. Why should one undertake acts? What should one determine and resolve? What is the truth about this?' He was thus confused, foolish and enveloped in darkness.[140]

'"The wise Panchashika pacified him by speaking these words to him. 'There is no destruction in that excellence.[141] Nor is there any existence in that excellence. This is an accumulation of the body, the senses and consciousness. They circle independently, but also influence each other and lead to action. The five branches are the elements of space, wind, fire, water and earth. They follow their own natures and are naturally distinct. Space, wind, heat, liquids and earth—these five come together in the body and become one. Knowledge, heat and wind—these are the three that give rise to action. The senses, the objects of the senses, natural consciousness, the mind, prana, apana and transformations flow from the elements. Hearing, touch, taste, sight and scent are the five senses and their qualities result from consciousness. When this is united with knowledge, three kinds of pain are said to be certain—happiness, unhappiness and the absence of both unhappiness and happiness. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell—these five exist in the body until the time of death. With the sixth quality of knowledge, they bring about everything. All acts, renunciation and all determinations about the truth depend on these. Intelligence is said to be the supreme, great and imperishable seed.[142] If a person sees the atman in this accumulation of qualities, then his sight is faulty and his infinite misery will not be destroyed. If a person looks on these as not being the atman, then he has no sense of ownership. In such a case, sorrow lacks a foundation to which it can attach itself. That is the reason there is the supreme sacred text known as *samyangamana*.[143] I will expound this to you. For the sake of your moksha, listen attentively. Renunciation is recommended for all those who wish to be free of their deeds. However, those who have always been versed in false views have to undergo hardship and sorrow. Deeds are for renouncing objects. Vows are for renouncing objects of pleasure. The yoga of austerities involves the renunciation of happiness and terminates in the renunciation of everything. I will tell you about what the learned have described as the path for renouncing everything. That leads to the alleviation of misery. Anything else leads to hardship. The five senses of knowledge, and the mind as the sixth, are based in consciousness. I have spoken of the mind as the sixth and there are the five organs of action. Know that the two hands are the organs of action and the two feet are the organs of movement. The penis is the organ for procreation and pleasure and the anus is the organ for release. The mouth is specially for uttering words. Know the movements of these five. With intelligence, there are eleven[144] and these must be cast away from the mind. The ears, sound and consciousness—these three are required for hearing. It is the same for touch, form, taste and smell. These fifteen[145] are required for the reception of the qualities. Three kinds of sentiments also present themselves. These three are sattva, rajas and tamas. In all kinds of attempts, they lead to three kinds of pain. Jubiliation, delight, happiness, joy, tranquility in consciousness, irrespective of whether a reason is present or absent for this state of consciousness—these are the qualities of sattva. Dissatisfaction, repentance, sorrow, avarice, lack of forgiveness, irrespective of whether a reason is present or absent—these are the signs of rajas. Lack of judgement, confusion, distraction, dreaming and excessive sleep, irrespective of how these have been caused—these are the many qualities of tamas. If there are any signs of delight in the body or the mind, these should truly be known as the attributes of sattva. If there is any association of repentance or sorrow in a person, without any reflection, this can be identified to have been caused by rajas. Thus, if there is any confusion in the body or in the mind, even if it is incomprehensible or indiscernible, that has been caused by tamas. Hearing originates with sound and the ears base themselves on it. In the science of hearing, one cannot discern any difference between the two.[146] The skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose, as the fifth, are also like that. Touch, form, taste, smell and consciousness are based on the mind. The ten[147] undertake their own tasks, separately and collectively. Know that consciousness is the eleventh and intelligence is the twelfth. As long as these work together, tamas cannot be destroyed.Their simultaneous operation is commonly known as conduct. The learning of the sacred texts has earlier determined the working of the senses and the three kinds of qualities have been thought of. Confused by them, consciousness swiftly roams around amidst what is impermanent. Even at the best of times, this is said to be tamas happiness. If one does not serve what has been described in all the sacred texts, then one is enveloped in darkness and serves what is false and manifest. These are the thoughts on how dependence on the qualities leads to individual action. Some follow them completely and some not at all. There are those who have thought about adhyatma. They speak of this accumulation as kshetra and what exists in the mind as kshetrajna. This being the case, what is destroyed? What is eternal? All beings are driven by these reasons and their natures. Once a river has entered an ocean, it gives up its name. The spirit is destroyed in that way and no longer has an individuality. This being the case, after death, how can consciousness again be born? The *jivatma* merges and nothing in the middle can be grasped.[148] If a person possesses intelligence and knowledge about moksha, without any distraction, he then desires his own atman and does not get tainted by the fruits of any evil acts. He is like the leaf of a lotus, sprinkled with water. He is freed from the many firm bonds, whether these arise from offspring or from the gods.[149] He abandons both happiness and unhappiness. He is freed and goes to the foremost one, who is without any signs. This is the auspicious one. Accepting the proofs of the sacred texts, he then lies down, beyond old age, death and fear. His good deeds are destroyed. He is beyond the sins too. Therefore, the fruits of these are also destroyed. The great one is pure, free and without signs. He sees and gets attached to that greatness. When the strands are severed, a spider that has been stationed there, falls down. Like that, he is freed from his miseries, which are crushed like rocks on a mountain. A *ruru* deer casts aside its old horns and a snake its old skin. Like that, he goes beyond what can be seen and casting aside his miseries, is free. When a tree is about to fall down on water, a bird abandons it. In that way, he casts aside his happiness and unhappiness. He is free and goes to the supreme one, who is without any signs. A song is sung about the king of Mithila.[150] When he saw that his city was being burnt by a fire, he said, “Not even a chaff of mine is being burnt here.”[151] The lord of the earth had himself said this.’ Having heard these words about the immortal objective, spoken by Panchashikha himself, the king of Videha looked at everything. He ascertained the truth about everything and roamed around in great happiness, bereft of sorrow. He who reads this, determined to pursue moksha, always considers this and never decays. He does not suffer miseries because of any calamities. He is freed, like the lord of Mithila after meeting Kapila.”’

Chapter 1541(213)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What action enables one to obtain happiness? What action leads one to obtain unhappiness? What action frees one from fear in this world? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! What conduct ensures success?”

‘Bhishma replied, “The intelligence of the ancient ones was based on the sacred texts and they praised self-control for all the varnas, but especially for brahmanas. A person who is not self-controlled does not obtain success in his rites. Rites, austerities and the Vedas are all based on self-control. Self-control increases energy and that is the reason self-control is said to be sacred. A person who is self-controlled is free from fear, is cleansed of sins and attains greatness. A self-controlled person sleeps in happiness and awakes in happiness. He roams around happily in the world and is cheerful in his mind. Self-control leads to restraint and one is not overcome by fierceness of energy. Such a person always sees his many enemies[152] as distinct from the atman. Those without self-control are like predatory beasts and always cause fear among beings. It was to control them that Svayambhu created kings. Among all the ashramas, self-control is special. The fruits of self-control are said to be greater than the dharma obtained through these. I will now tell you about the signs of those among whom self-control has arisen—lack of miserliness, lack of excitement, satisfaction, faithfulness, forgiveness, lack of anger, constant uprightness, lack of excessive speech, lack of pride, worship of seniors, lack of envy, compassion towards all beings, absence of slander, refraining from speaking too much in public, lack of false speech and abstention from praise and censure. Among men, such a person is convinced about being virtuous and does not wish to pursue desire. He is not driven by enmity and possesses no deceit. He regards praise and censure equally. He immerses himself in good conduct. He is cheerful in his atman and is learned. He obtains reverence in this world. After death, he goes to heaven. He is engaged in the welfare of all beings and does not hate people. He is like a giant and calm lake. He is cheerful and content in his wisdom. He has no fear of any being and they are also not frightened of him. He bows down before all beings. Such a self-controlled person is learned. He is not delighted if he obtains great prosperity. He does not sorrow during a hardship. If a brahmana is thus accomplished in his wisdom, he is said to be self-controlled. His deeds are informed by the sacred texts. He follows the auspicious conduct of virtuous people. He is always full of self-restraint and enjoys great fruits. He has lack of jealousy, forgiveness, tranquility, satisfaction, pleasantness in speech, truthfulness, generosity and ease. That path is not for an evil-souled person. A brahmachari conquers his senses, having subjugated his desire and anger. Rigid in his vows, such a brahmana performs valiant and terrible austerities. He roams around in this world, waiting for his time.[153] He possesses no evil and is full of his atman."'

Chapter 1542(214)

'Yudhishthira asked, "Brahmanas who observe vows sometimes eat the food that is offered as an oblation. O grandfather! What happens if a brahmana possesses this desire?"

'Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishthira! If one eats after following the Vedas, it is different. But if one commits the act of eating in violation of the three Vedas, then one's vows are destroyed."

'Yudhishthira asked, "Ordinary people say that fasting is like austerities. O great king! Is this really austerity? What are austerities?" 'Bhishma replied, "People think that fasting for months or fortnights are austerities. But the virtuous do not regard them as austerities. Instead, they are an impediment in getting to know about the atman. Renunciation and becoming the disciple of a virtuous person is the supreme austerity. Such a person is always fasting and such a person is always a brahmachari. Such a brahmana will always become a sage and will always worship the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even if he lives in a family,[154] he will always desire and dream of dharma. He will never eat flesh and will always meditate on the auspicious. He will always desire amrita and will never cause violence for food. He will always be devoted to guests and will always be like one who survives on leftovers."

'Yudhishthira asked, "How can one fast and be a brahmachari all the time? How can one always be devoted to guests and survive on leftovers?"

‘Bhishma replied, “If a person eats in the morning and eats again in the evening, without eating anything in between, he will be regarded as fasting all the time. If a brahmana goes to his wife only at the time of her season, he is a brahmachari, as long as that man always speaks the truth and is always devoted to wisdom. A person who does not pointlessly eat meat is said to be a vegetarian.[155] He will always be generous and pure by not dreaming or sleeping during the day. O Yudhishthira! Know that if a person only eats what has been left after the servants and guests have eaten is like a person who subsists on amrita. If a brahmana never eats until they[156] have eaten, through that act of not eating, he conquers heaven. If one survives on the leftovers after gods, ancestors, servants and guests have eaten, that is said to be like surviving on what is left at a sacrifice. They always obtain infinite worlds. With Brahma, the apsaras and the residents of heaven present themselves in their homes. They share their food with the gods and the ancestors.

They find delight with their sons and grandsons and obtain the supreme objective.”’

Chapter 1543(215)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this world, men are united with their good and bad deeds, for the sake of reaping the fruits. But is a man actually the doer or not? I have a doubt about this. O grandfather! I wish to hear the complete truth about this. I wish to hear the truth.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Prahlada and Indra is recounted. Though he[157] was born in an evil lineage, he was extremely learned and was unattached. His sins had been cleansed and he was bereft of confusion and insolence. He was virtuous and engaged in the observance of vows. Praise and censure were the same to him and he was self-controlled. It was as if he dwelt in an empty house. He knew about the creation and destruction of all beings, mobile and immobile. He was not enraged at objects that caused displeasure. Nor did he find delight in objects that caused pleasure. He looked upon gold and a lump of earth in the same way. He was patient and had resolved to fix his determination on the supreme knowledge about the atman. He knew everything, superior and inferior, about beings and looked upon them equally. He was in control of his senses. '"Once, when Prahlada was seated alone, Shakra approached him, wishing to dislodge him from his wisdom, and spoke these words. 'In this world, there are qualities that are revered among men. All of those qualities are seen to be present in you. Your intelligence is seen to be like that of a child. You know about the atman. What do you think is the supreme? You are now tied down in bonds. You have been dislodged from your place and have come under the subjugation of your enemies. O Prahlada! You are devoid of prosperity. Though you should grieve, you are not sorrowing. O son of Diti![158] Is this because of the wisdom that you have obtained or is it because of your fortitude? O Prahlada! You seem to be well. But behold the state of your hardship.' The patient one, who knew about what had to be determined, was thus urged. He used gentle words to describe his own state of wisdom. 'He who does not understand the origin and destruction of all beings is confused because of that foolishness. But someone who sees this is not confused. Origin and destruction happen because of nature. In either existence or non-existence, no enterprise can be seen. There is no enterprise in non-existence and there is nothing that is the doer. Though the person never actually does anything in this world, there is a sense of vanity. If a person thinks himself to be the doer of good or bad deeds, he does not know his own self and his wisdom is tainted. That is my view. O Shakra! If a person is himself the doer, then it is certain that all the deeds he begins for the sake of his benefit will be successful. There will never be any defeat. It is seen that despite the best of efforts, there is no cessation of the unpleasant and no existence of the pleasant. Where is the scope for enterprise? It is seen that though some do not make any efforts, there is nothing unpleasant and they are covered by the pleasant. This must be because of nature. It is seen that some extremely intelligent people confront adversity and have to seek riches from those who are malformed and limited in intelligence. Indeed, all the qualities, good and bad, penetrate a person because of nature. Therefore, where is the scope for pride? Everything is because of nature. That is my determined view. Thus, my wisdom is based on the atman and there is nothing else. In this world, I think that the fruits of all good and bad deeds become attached. I will now tell you everything about action. Listen. When a crow eats, the presence of the food is known because of its cawing. In that way, all deeds are the manifestations of nature. A person who knows about the appearances of nature, but does not know about supreme nature, is confused because of his foolishness. He looks at everything through this foolishness. Everything flows from nature. A person who has comprehended all these manifestations has understood. What will he do with pride and insolence? I know everything about the rites of dharma and that all beings are not permanent. O Shakra! Therefore, I do not sorrow. I know that everything has an end. I have no sense of ownership. I am without insolence. I do not belong to this world. I am free of all bonds. I see that all beings have a beginning and an end and I am well. O Shakra! For a person who is accomplished in his wisdom, self-controlled, without thirst, without hope and without effort, everything in this world is looked at with the light of that knowledge. These are manifestations of nature and I do not love them or hate them. I do not see anyone who hates me. Nor do I see anyone who is my own. O Shakra! I do not desire anything above or below, or in the transverse directions.[159] There is no delight to be obtained[160] from knowledge, lack of knowledge, or the object of knowledge.' Shakra asked, 'O Prahlada! I am asking you. Tell me the means whereby one can obtain this kind of wisdom and this kind of tranquility.' Prahlada said, 'O Shakra! A man attains greatness through uprightness, lack of distraction, calmness, being immersed in the atman and serving the elders. One then obtains wisdom from nature and tranquility from nature. Everything that you see is obtained from nature.' Thus addressed by the lord of the daityas, Shakra was astounded. O king! Delighted, he then honoured these words. The lord of the three worlds[161] worshipped the Indra among the daityas. Having taken the permission of the Indra among the asuras, he returned to his own abode."'

Chapter 1544(216)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! There may be a lord of the earth who has been dislodged from his prosperity and is roaming around the earth.

He may have been crushed by the rod of destiny. What intelligence should he resort to? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Vasava[162] and Bali, Virochana’s son, is recounted. Having defeated all the asuras, Vasava went to the grandfather,[163] joined his hands in salutation and bowing down before him, asked him about Bali. ‘O Brahma! I do not see Bali, whose wealth did not dimish, despite his giving it away liberally.[164] Tell me where Bali is. He was the one who set and arose, lighting up the directions. He was the one who attentively showered down at the right time. I do not see Bali. O Brahma! Tell me where Bali is. He was Vayu, Varuna, Ravi,[165] Chandrama[166] and Agni, who heated beings and the earth. I do not see Bali. O Brahma! Tell me where Bali is.’

‘“Brahma replied, ‘O Maghavan![167] It is not proper that you should ask about him now.[168] However, if one is asked, one should not utter a falsehood. I will tell you about Bali. O Shachi’s lord![169] He may be[170] among camels, cows, asses or horses. He may be the best among those animals[171] and may be alone in his apartment.’

‘“Shakra asked, ‘O Brahma! If I meet Bali, alone in his apartment, should I kill him, or should I not kill him? O Brahma! Instruct me about that.’

‘“Brahma replied, ‘O Shakra! You should not cause injury to Bali. Bali does not deserve to be killed. O Shakra! You should ask him about good policy. O Vasava! But you should do as you wish.’”

‘Bhishma replied, “Having been addressed by the illustrious one, the great Indra went to the earth. He was surrounded by great prosperity and was ascended on Airavata’s[172] shoulder. He saw Bali, in the form of an ass. As the illustrious one had said, he was alone in that abode.

‘“Shakra said, ‘O danava! You have now obtained the form of an ass and are subsisting on chaff. You have been born as an inferior species. Are you grieving or are you not grieving? I see what I have not seen earlier. You have been brought under the subjugation of your enemies. You are devoid of your prosperity and friends. You have been dislodged from your energy and valour. Earlier, when you advanced, you used to be surrounded by thousands of your relatives. You scorched all the worlds and did not think that we were worth considering. The daityas looked towards you and subjected themselves to your rule. It is because of your prosperity that the earth yielded crops, even when it had not been tilled. You have now been reduced to this hardship. Are you grieving or are you not grieving? In earlier times, you were full of pride and stationed yourself on the eastern shores of the ocean, dividing your riches amongst your relatives. What was the state of your mind then? You were honoured by thousands of celestial women, who danced before you. For thousands of years, you sported in blazing prosperity. All of them[173] were adorned in garlands made out of lotuses and all of them were golden in complexion. O lord of the danavas! What was the state of your mind then and what is it now? You used to possess a great and golden umbrella and it was adorned with gems. In seven different ways, sixty thousand gandharvas danced before you. In your sacrifices, there used to be a gigantic altar that was completely made out of gold. There, you gave away thousands and millions of cattle. You roamed around the entire earth, hurling the *shamya* according to the prescribed rites and performing sacrifices.[174] What was the state of your mind then? I do not see the vessel now, nor the umbrella or the whisks. O lord of the asuras! Nor do I see the garland that was given to you by Brahma.'

'"Bali replied, 'You do not see the vessel, the umbrella or the whisks. O Vasava! Nor do you see the garland that was given by Brahma. You have asked me about my gems. They have now been hidden inside a cave. When my time arrives, you will see them again. However, this conduct of yours is not appropriate for your fame or your lineage. When you see me amidst this adversity, why are you boasting about your prosperity? Learned ones who are accomplished in wisdom, virtuous, content in their wisdom and tranquil, do not grieve in misery and find delight in happiness. O Purandara! You are boasting because of your common knowledge. When your sentiments become like mine, you will not speak in this way.'"'

Chapter 1545(217)

'Bhishma said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage. He[175] was sighing like a serpent. Shakra laughed at him and again spoke words that were more piercing than those uttered earlier. 'When you advanced earlier, you were surrounded by one thousand vehicles and relatives. You scorched all the worlds and disregarded all of us. O Bali! Behold your extremely miserable state now. Your relatives have abandoned you. Are you grieving or are you not grieving? You obtained unsurpassed delight earlier. You were stationed, with all the worlds under your subjugation. You have been brought down now. Are you grieving or are you not grieving?'

'"Bali replied, 'I see that all of this is transient and is because of what the progress of time has wrought on me. O Shakra! Since I know the truth about all of this, I do not sorrow. O lord of the immortals! These bodies of beings have an end. O Shakra! That is the reason I do not grieve. This is not because of any crime that I have committed. This life force and the physical body are born together and last till death. They grow up together and they are destroyed together. Having obtained this existence,[176] I am powerless only temporarily. Since I know this, because of that knowledge, I suffer no pain. Just as all flows head towards the ocean, all beings end in death. O wielder of the *vajra*! Men who know this are never confused. Those who do not know this are overcome by rajas and confusion. They sink down when they face hardships and their intelligence is destroyed. A man who gains intelligence destroys all his sins. Bereft of sins, one obtains virtue. Such a person is hale and delighted. Those who retreat from it[177] are born again and again. They are tormented by misery and are goaded by that which does not lead to welfare. Whether there is success in obtaining prosperity, whether there is adversity, whether one is alive or dead and whether there are fruits of joy or misery, I do not hate them. Nor do I crave them. There is a slayer and there is someone who is slain. But if a man thinks that he is the slayer, he is himself slain. Whether it is the slain or whether it is the slayer, neither of them truly knows. O Maghavan! A person who kills and is victorious and then boasts about his manliness, is not actually the doer. The actor who has done this is elsewhere. Who is the one who has brought about the creation and the destruction of the worlds? It may be thought that this task has been accomplished by a doer. But the actual doer is someone else. All beings are generated from earth, wind, space, water and light, as the fifth. Therefore, where is the scope for sorrow? Realize this great knowledge—a weak person, a strong one, a malformed person, a handsome one, an unfortunate person and a fortunate one, are all afflicted by time, deep in its own energy. Since I know that I have come under the subjugation of time, why should I be pained? What is being burnt is something that has already been burnt.[178] What is being slain is something that has already been slain. What is being destroyed is something that has been destroyed earlier. A man gets what has already been obtained for him. There is no island.[179] Where is the further shore? No boundary can be seen. This destiny is divine. Though I think about it, I do not see an end to it. O lord of Shachi! Had I not seen that time is behind the destruction of beings, then I might have felt delight, insolence and anger. I subsist on chaff. I have been abandoned by the people of the household and am in the form of a donkey. Knowing this, you are condemning me. If I so desire, even now, I can assume many kinds of forms that are so terrible that, looking at them, you will run away from me. But it is time that gives everything and it is time that takes everything away. Time pervades everything. O Shakra! Do not boast about your manliness. O Purandara! Earlier, everyone was distressed because of my rage. O Shakra! I know about the eternal dharma of the worlds. Like me, know about this and do not be overcome with amazement. Power and influence are never due to one's own self. Your consciousness is like that of a child. It is just as it was in ancient times.[180] O Maghavan! Glance towards everything with your intelligence and obtain what is best for you. The gods, men, the ancestors, the gandharvas, the serpents and the rakshasas—all of them used to be under my subjugation earlier. O Vasava! You know this. "We bow down before the directions where Bali, Virochana's son, is stationed." Their intelligence confused because of envy, this is what they used to say to me. O lord of Shachi! I do not sorrow because of that reverence that was shown to me. My intelligence is firm and I will remain under the subjugation of the one who ordains. One may see a person who has been born in a noble lineage. He is handsome and influential. But with his advisers, he lives in misery. This can be nothing other than destiny. O Shakra! On the other hand, one may see a person who has been born in an inferior lineage and is stupid. Despite his inferior birth, with his advisers, he may live in happiness. This can be nothing other than destiny. O Shakra! An auspicious and beautiful woman will be seen to suffer from misfortune. O Shakra! An inauspicious and ugly woman will be seen to be fortunate. O Shakra! My state is not because of anything I have done. O Shakra! My state is not because of anything you have done. O wielder of the vajra! Your state is not because of you and our state is not because of us. O Shatakratu! This is not because of anything you have done, not to speak of something I have done. Progressively, prosperity and adversity do not come about because of deeds. I see you in your resplendence, stationed as the king of the gods. You are handsome and radiant and are roaring at me. This would not have happened had time not attacked me and remained stationed here. Had that not been the case, despite your holding the vajra, I would have used my bare fists to bring you down now. But this is not the time for exhibiting valour. The time for exhibiting forgiveness has arrived. Everything is established in time and time cooks everything. There was a time when I was the lord of the danavas and was worshipped. I roared and tormented and there was no one who could advance against me. O king of the gods! I single-handedly robbed the twelve great-souled Adityas of their energy, with you included in that group. O Vasava! I was the one who soaked up the water and released it again.[181] I was the one who offered heat and light to the three worlds. I was the one who protected and I was the one who destroyed. I was the one who gave and I was the one who took away. I was the one who restrained and I was the one who released. I was the lord and master of the worlds. O lord of the immortals! That lordship has now been taken away. I have been assailed by the soldiers of time and none of that can be seen in me. O lord of Shachi! I am not the doer. You are not the doer. No one else is the doer. O Shakra! It is time that progressively destroys the worlds, as it desires. People who are learned about the Vedas say that the year is his mouth.[182] The months and the fortnights are his body and days and nights are his attire. The seasons are the gates.[183] There are also people who, because of their learning, say that everything should be thought of as him. The five sheaths one thinks of are nothing but his five aspects.[184] Brahma is deep and fathomless, like a gigantic ocean. He is without beginning and without destruction. He is said to be supreme and without decay. Though he himself possesses no attributes, he assumes attributes in beings. Men who have comprehended the truth certainly think of him in this way. They think that he brings about the progression and regression of beings. But there is no progression for that which is inside.[185] It is above nature. He is the resort of all beings. Where can one go, other than to that resort? One cannot avoid this by running, or by remaining stationary. All the five senses are incapable of seeing him. Some speak of him as Agni and some speak of him as Prajapati. Others say he is the seasons, the fortnights, the months, the days and the moments. There are others who say he is the forenoon, the afternoon, or midday, or an instant. Virtuous ones speak of him as one and many. Know him as time, the one who has everything under his subjugation. O Vasava! There have been many thousands of Indras. O lord of Shachi! Their strength and valour were just like your own. O Shakra! You are extremely strong. You are the king of the gods and are proud of your strength. However, when it is time, immensely valorous time will pacify you. It takes away everything. O Shakra! Therefore, be steady. Neither I, nor you, nor those who have come before us, are capable of transgressing it. You have obtained this supreme royal prosperity now. Know that it was earlier vested in me. It is not real and does not remain with one person alone. It was established in one thousand Indras before this and all of them were superior to you. O lord of the gods! It is unstable. It abandoned me and has approached you now. O Shakra! You should not boast again. You should be tranquil. If you have such sentiments, it will abandon you and swiftly go to someone else.'"'

Chapter 1546(218)

'Bhishma said, "Shatakratu then saw the blazing Shri,[186] in her own form, emerge from the body of the great-souled Bali. The illustrious chastiser of Paka[187] saw her resplendent power. Vasava's eyes dilated with wonder and he asked Bali. 'Who is this one who is emerging, blazing in her own energy? Her bracelets and diadem are beautiful.'

'"Bali replied, 'I do not know whether she is an asura maiden, a goddess or a human. O Vasava! Do as you wish and ask her yourself.'

'"Shakra asked, 'O one with the beautiful smiles! O one with the diadem! O radiant one who is emerging from Bali! Who are you? I do not know you. Tell me your name. You are stationed here like Maya,[188] resplendent in your own energy. Who are you? O one with the beautiful eyebrows! You have abandoned the lord of the daityas. Tell me your true nature.'

'"Shri replied, 'Virochana did not know me. Virochana's son, Bali, does not know me. I am known as Duhsaha and the learned know me as Vidhitsa.[189] O Vasava! I am also known by the names Bhuti, Lakshmi and Shri.[190] O Shakra! You do not know me. All the gods don't know me.'

'"Shakra asked, 'O Duhsaha! You have dwelt with Bali for a long time. Why are you abandoning him now? Is it because of his acts or because of mine?'

'"Shri replied, 'Dhata and Vidhata[191] cannot control me. O Shakra! Time determines my progressive movement. O Shakra! Do not show disrespect.'[192]

'"Shakra asked, 'O one with the diadem! Why have you abandoned Bali? Why are you approaching me? O one with the sweet smiles! Tell me this.'

'"Shri replied, 'I am established in truth, donations, vows, austerities, valour and dharma. Bali has deviated from these. He was devoted to brahmanas. He was truthful and in control of his senses. But he began to hate brahmanas and touched clarified butter with soiled hands.[193] Earlier, he was devoted to the performance of sacrifices. However, he was afflicted by destiny and became foolish. He began to boast to people that he was capable of performing sacrifices to me.[194] O Shakra! O Vasava! I will therefore abandon him and dwell with you. Bear me up without distraction and through austerities and valour.'

'"Shakra said, 'O one whose abode is a lotus! There is no single man amongst gods, humans or amongst all beings, who is capable of bearing you for ever.'

'"Shri replied, 'O Purandara! Indeed, there is no single one amongst gods, gandharvas, asuras or rakshasas who is capable of bearing me for ever.'

'"Shakra said, 'O auspicious one! Tell me the means whereby you will always remain with me. You should tell me truthfully and I will act in accordance with those words.'

'"Shri replied, 'O Indra of the gods! I will tell you the means whereby I am always established with you. Listen. Following the ordinances of the Vedas, divide me into four parts.'

'"Shakra said, 'According to their capacity and their strength, I will determine abodes for you. O Lakshmi! When you are with me, I will never transgress you. O creator of all beings! Among men, let the earth bear you. It is my view that she is capable of bearing one quarter of you.'

'"Shri replied, 'This is one quarter of me. Let it be established on earth. O Shakra! Now make arrangements for the second of my four quarters.'

'"Shakra said, 'Among men, the water tends to them in liquid form. Let the clear waters bear a quarter. They have the capacity to bear.'

'"Shri replied, 'This is one quarter of me. Let it be established in the waters. O Shakra! Now make arrangements for the third of my four quarters.'

'"Shakra said, 'The gods, the sacrifices and the Vedas are established in the fire. Let it bear the third quarter, since it is capable of bearing well.'

'"Shri replied, 'This is one quarter of me. Let it be established in the fire. O Shakra! Now make arrangements for the fourth of my four quarters.'

'"Shakra said, 'There are virtuous men who are truthful in speech and are devoted to brahmanas. Those unblemished and virtuous ones have the capacity to bear. Let them bear a quarter.'

'"Shri replied, 'This is one quarter of me. Let it be established in the virtuous. O Shakra! With I having been distributed among beings, protect me.'

'"Shakra said, 'I have thus caused a distribution among beings. Listen to my words. I will kill those who injure you.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus abandoned by Shri, Bali, the king of the daityas, spoke these words. 'The sun heats in front[195] and in the southern direction, in the west, as well as in the east. However, when the midday sun shines and does not set, there will again be a battle between the gods and the asuras and I will defeat you.[196] Amidst all the worlds, the sun will then heat only one spot. O Shatakratu! There will then be a battle between the gods and the asuras and I will vanquish you.'

'"Shakra replied, 'Brahma instructed me that you should not be killed by me. O Bali! That is the reason I am not releasing the vajra at your head. O Indra among the daityas! O great asura! Go wherever you wish and may you be at peace. There will be no occasion when the sun will only be stationed at the midpoint and heat there. Svayambhu[197] has earlier laid down the course of time it must follow. It follows that truth and heats subjects incessantly. It follows six months of a northward and southward course each. That is the way the sun creates cold and heat for all the worlds.'"

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by Indra, Bali, the Indra among the daityas, left for the southern direction.

Purandara went towards the north. Bali sang this song, which was without any trace of pride. Having heard his words, the one with the thousand eyes rose up into the sky.”’

Chapter 1547(219)

'Bhishma said, "O Yudhishthira! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Shatakratu and Namuchi is recounted. He[198] was seated, bereft of prosperity, like an ocean that wasn't agitated, knowledgable about the creation and destruction of all beings. Purandara spoke to him. 'O Namuchi! You have been tied down in bonds. You have been dislodged from your place. You are under the subjugation of your enemies. You are devoid of prosperity. Are you grieving, or are you not grieving?'

'"Namuchi replied, 'Nothing changes because of sorrow. The body alone is afflicted and enemies are delighted. No help is brought by grieving. O Shakra! I know that everything has an end. Therefore, I am not sorrowing. O lord of the gods! Grief destroys beauty and dharma. One must indeed subdue the sorrow that arises in one's mind. Knowing what is beneficial, one must meditate on that in one's mind and in one's heart. There is no doubt that this is capable of ensuring success in everything. There is one ordainer. There is no second ordainer. The ordainer ordains the man, as he lies down in the womb. I am instructed by him, like water flowing downwards. I flow as I am appointed. I know about existence and non-existence and about that which is superior.[199] However, despite knowing what is best, I do not act in that way. Submerged in hopes, dharma and well-wishers, I do good deeds and their reverse. I flow as I am appointed. Whatever can be obtained is what will be obtained. Whatever is meant to happen is what will happen. As has been decided by the creator, one will repeatedly dwell in different wombs. One doesn't go there because of one's own wishes. The existence that I have obtained is because of my destiny. A person whose sentiments are like this will never be confused. Respect and the lack of a name occur progressively. Only a person who thinks his own self to be the actor sees unhappiness in this.[200] In this world, who is not afflicted by catastrophes—the sages, the gods, the great asuras, the aged ones who know the three Vedas and hermits in the forest? Those who know the supreme are not frightened by this. No anger is generated in a learned person. He does not suffer. Nor is he delighted. He does not sorrow if there is a hardship on account of lack of riches, or some other kind of difficulty. He is established, as naturally immobile as the Himalayas. If riches and success do not delight him and a time of hardship does not confuse him, such a person is superior. A man who can bear the burden when faced with happiness or unhappiness is medium. A man must always be cheerful and must not torment himself, even when he confronts a downfall. He must control the torment that grows in his mind, because that harms the body. If there is an assembly with virtuous people gathered there and if, on entering it, a person is not freed from fear, then that is not a virtuous assembly.[201] If an intelligent man immerses himself in dharma and then decides, he is capable of bearing a burden. The deeds of a wise man are difficult to fathom. Even when it is a time for confusion, a wise person is not confused. Even when he is dislodged from his position and faces a hardship and a disaster because of this, like Goutama in his old age, he is not confused.[202] In the world of the mortal, one cannot obtain what is not meant to be obtained through mantras, strength, valour, wisdom and manliness. Why should one sorrow on account of that? In ancient times, the creator ordained this, before I was born. What was ordained has happened. What can death do to me? One obtains what was meant to be obtained. One goes where one is meant to go. One gets what is meant to be got, unhappiness or happiness. A man who knows all of this is not confused. He is skilled in the midst of joy and misery and is the lord of all riches.’”’

Chapter 1548(220)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What is best for a man when he is immersed in hardships and difficulties? O lord of the earth! What about when his relatives are destroyed and his kingdom is destroyed? O bull among the Bharata lineage! In this world, you are the supreme speaker for us. I am asking you about this. You should tell me about it.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! If a person has been separated from his sons, wives, happiness and riches and is immersed in hardships and difficulties, fortitude is the best for him. For a person who has patience, the body does not suffer. Because the body is healthy, he again obtains prosperity. If a king or a man resorts to righteous conduct, his patience and steadfastness will manifest themselves in all the tasks he is engaged in. O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation that again took place between Bali and Vasava. There was a battle between the gods and the asuras and this lead to a destruction of daityas and danavas. Vishnu obtained the worlds and the kingship of the gods for Shatakratu.[203] Sacrifices were performed to the gods and the four varnas were established. The three worlds were prosperous and Svayambhu was filled with delight. Shakra was ascended on Airavata, which had four excellent tusks and was an Indra among elephants. Surrounded by prosperity, the lord travelled through the three worlds. He was surrounded by the Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas, the Ashvins, the rishis, the gandharvas, the Indras among the serpents, the Siddhas and others. On one such occasion, on the frontiers of the ocean and in a cavern inside a mountain, the wielder of the vajra saw Bali, Virochana's son, and approached him. Despite seeing Indra, the lord of the gods, seated on Airavata's shoulder, surrounded by large numbers of gods, the Indra among the daityas was not distressed and did not sorrow. Shatakratu was seated on that best of elephants and saw that Bali was stationed there, without any fear and without any agitation. He asked, 'O daitya! You are not distressed. Is this because of your valour or is this because you have served your seniors? Is it because you have been cleaned through austerities? In every respect, this is a very difficult state to attain. You have been brought down from a supreme position and are now under the subjugation of your enemies. O Virochana's son! What is the support that enables you not to grieve, though you should sorrow? With your relatives, you attained the best state possible and enjoyed supreme objects of pleasure. You have now been deprived of your army and your kingdom. Tell me. Why aren't you mourning? Earlier, you were a god, occupying the seat of your father and grandfather. You have now seen that robbed by your rivals. Why aren't you mourning? You have been tied down in Varuna's nooses and have been struck by the vajra. You have been robbed of your wives. You have been robbed of your wealth. Tell me. Why aren't you mourning? You have been dislodged from your prosperity. You have been dislodged from your riches. Yet, you are not sorrowing, and this is an extremely difficult thing to do. If the kingdom of the three worlds has been destroyed, who else would be interested in remaining alive?’ He spoke these and other harsh words, intending to subdue him.

‘“However, Virochana’s son, Bali, heard these words cheerfully. Without being frightened, he replied, ‘O Shakra! When I have been severely afflicted, why are you boasting? O Purandara! I see you standing here now, with the vajra upraised. Earlier, you were incapable of doing this. How have you acquired the capacity now? Indeed, who other than you could have spoken such extremely cruel words? The learned say that if someone has brought a brave enemy under his subjugation and control, but has the capacity to show mercy, that person is indeed a man. When two people quarrel and fight, the outcome is uncertain. One of them obtains victory and the other one obtains defeat. O bull among the gods! You should not exhibit such a temperament towards me. Do not think that you have become the lord by defeating all the beings with your valour and strength. O Shakra! This state is not because of anything we have done. O Shakra! Nor is it because of what you have done. O wielder of the vajra! This state is not because of you or because of us. You will become what I am now. You will become like us. Do not think that my state is because of my wicked deeds or because of what you have done. Progressively, a man encounters happiness and unhappiness. O Shakra! You have obtained the state of Shakra because of progression, not because of your deeds. As time elapsed, time conveyed me. It is time again that conveys you. Happiness does not come to a man because of serving the mother and the father, worshipping the gods, or because of following other good qualities. When a man is afflicted by time, learning, austerities, donations, friends and relatives are not capable of saving him. Even if one counters in one hundred different ways, calamities strike back. Men are incapable of fighting them back through intelligence and strength. One is afflicted through this progression and there is no one who is a saviour. O Shakra! This is a reason for sorrow only if you think of yourself as the doer. If the doer is actually the doer, then no one else would have made the doer do anything. However, because someone else makes the doer do things, that other entity is a lord over the apparent doer. I defeated you through the aid of time. It is through the aid of time that you have vanquished me. Time is the force behind all movement. Time drives all beings. O Indra! Your intelligence is ordinary and you do not comprehend the destruction. Some show you a great deal of reverence because of the superiority you have obtained through your own deeds. But there are those like us, who know the progress of the worlds. When we are afflicted by time, why should we grieve? Why should we be confused and frightened? Even when I am constantly afflicted by time and suffer a calamity, shall my intelligence, or that of someone like me, be destroyed, like a shattered boat? O Shakra! I, you, and all the future lords of the gods, will have to traverse the path followed by hundreds of Indras earlier. You are now extremely unassailable and are blazing in supreme prosperity. But when your time comes, time will destroy you, just as it has destroyed me. From one yuga to another yuga, there have been many thousands of Indras and daityas. They have been carried away by time. Time is extremely difficult to cross. Having obtained this state, you have an extremely high opinion of yourself, as if you are the eternal god Brahma, the creator of all beings. But this state is not immobile. Nor is this state eternal. However, because of your foolish intelligence, you think it to be thus. You trust something that should not be trusted. You think that something temporary is permanent. Because of your delusion, you think that the royal prosperity that you desire is yours. Know this to be a fact that this is not yours, nor ours, nor that of others. There are many others who have obtained this state. But they have all passed on. O Vasava! This fickle position will stay with you for some time. Like a cow abandoning one drinking spot for another, it will then go to someone else. There are so many kings who have passed through this world earlier, that I am not even interested in enumerating them. O Purandara! There will be many others after you too. This earth possesses trees, herbs, jewels, rivers and mountains. I no longer see those who have enjoyed it in earlier times. Prithu, Aila, Maya, Bhima, Naraka, Shambara, Asvagriva, Puloma, Svarbhanu, with an infinitely long standard, Prahlada, Namuchi, Daksha, Viprachitti, Virochana, Hrinishedha, Suhotra, Bhuriha, Pushpavan, Vrisha, Satyeshu, Rishabha, Rahu, Kapilashva, Virupaksha, Bana, Kartasvara, Vahni, Vishvadamshtra, Nairrita, Rittha, Ahuttha, Viratamra, Varahashva, Ruchi, Prabhu, Vishvajit, Agratishouri, Vrishanda, Vishkara, Madhu, Hiranyakashipu, the danava Kaitabha, the daitya Kalakhanja, with all the Nairritas—there were these Indras among daityas and Indras among danavas. These came earlier and even before that. We have heard their names and those of others. There were many Indras among daityas earlier. They have abandoned the earth and have gone. They have all been afflicted by time. Time is the strongest. O Shatakratu! All of them performed hundreds of sacrifices and rites. You are not the only one. All of them were devoted to dharma. All of them always performed sacrifices. All of them could roam around in the sky. All of them never showed their backs in the field of battle. All of them were capable of tolerating. All of them possessed arms like clubs. All of them could show one hundred different kinds of maya. All of them could go wherever they desired. We have not heard of any of them being defeated, once they embarked on a battle. All of them were devoted to the vow of truth. All of them could sport as they willed. All of them were devoted to the vows of the Vedas. All of them were extremely learned. All of them could withstand. All of them obtained riches and lordship. However, none of those great-souled ones who came earlier was proud because of his wealth. All of them were truly generous. All of them were devoid of malice. Each of them behaved towards all beings exactly as they should have. All of them were the sons of Dakshayani and Prajapati.[204] All of them were extremely strong. They blazed and scorched. But time carried them away. Once you have enjoyed the earth, you will again have to give it up. O Shakra! You will be incapable of restraining your grief then. Free yourself from this desire for objects of pleasure. Free yourself from this pride that comes from prosperity. If you do that, when your own kingdom is destroyed, you will be able to bear the sorrow. You should not sorrow when it is a time for grief. You should not be delighted when it is a time for joy. Forget the past and the future and act in accordance with what has presented itself. Time never sleeps and it presented itself before me. O Indra! Pardon me. But it will also present itself before you. O Indra of the gods! You have spoken such words to me with the object of piercing and frightening me. Seeing that I am controlled, there is no doubt that you think extremely highly of me. Time struck me first and will follow you later. O Indra of the gods! Who are you roaring at? I have already been struck by time. When I used to rage in battle, who in this world was capable of standing before me? O Vasava! You are stationed here because time has proved to be more powerful. Those one thousand years meant for you will be completed.[205] You will then be dislodged from your state and be robbed of your energy, just as all my limbs are now. I am an Indra who has been dislodged from his status and you have naturally become an Indra in heaven. Because of the progress of time, you are now worshipped in this extremely wonderful world of the living. O Indra! But what is it exactly that you have done? And what have we done to be dislodged? Time is the doer and the undoer. There is nothing else that is the cause. Decay, destruction, riches, happiness, unhappiness, existence and non-existence—when a learned person confronts any of these, he is neither delighted, nor distressed. O Indra! You know us. O Vasava! We know you too. I have been disarmed and bound by time. Why are you then boasting before me? You know the manliness that I exhibited earlier. The valour that I exhibited in battle is sufficient proof. O lord of Shachi! The Adityas, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, together with the Vasus, and all the Maruts were vanquished by me. O Shakra! You also know what happened in the encounter between the gods and the asuras. All the assembled gods were swiftly shattered by me in the battle. In that terrible battle, I angrily struck you on the head with mountains, with their forests and those who lived in those forests. I struck with you with summits and peaks. What could I not have done then? But time is impossible to cross. That is the reason I am not interested in killing you, holding that vajra, with my fists. This is not the time for exhibiting valour. The time for showing forgiveness has arrived. O Shakra! That is the reason I am being tolerant, though I am less tolerant than you are. My time has matured and I have been cooked by the flames of time. O Shakra! I have been restrained and bound by the nooses of time and you are boasting before me. This is the dark being whom the worlds find impossible to cross.[206] This terrible one has bound me, like an animal with ropes, and is standing here. Gain, loss, happiness, unhappiness, desire, anger, existence, non-existence, slaughter, bondage, freedom—all of these are obtained because of time. I am not the doer. You are not the doer. The doer is always the one who is the lord. Time has cooked me, like a fruit that has appeared on a tree. Despite being yoked to time, there are things a man can do to obtain happiness. Despite being yoked to time, there are again things that can be done to obtain misery. When a person who knows about time has been touched by time, that person should not grieve. O Shakra! That is the reason I am not grieving. That is of no help at a time of sorrow. If one grieves at a time of sorrow, the hardship is not ameliorated. There is no capability in that grief.

That is the reason I am not sorrowing now.' He spoke in this way to the thousand-eyed and illustrious chastiser of Paka.

'"Having been thus addressed, Shatakratu controlled his anger and spoke these words. 'You have seen my upraised arm with the vajra and Varuna's nooses. Who with intelligence will not be distressed at this, including Death, the destroyer of everything? However, you are not distressed at this. Your intelligence is not fickle and you have seen the truth. O one with truth as his valour! You have spoken words to the effect that you are not distressed. On seeing that everything in this universe is transient, which embodied being in this world will be interested or capable of reposing his faith in anything that pertains to the body? I also know that everything in this world is temporary. Although it cannot be seen, everything is constantly being borne by time's eternal and terrible fire. When one has been touched by time, there is no salvation. The subtlest and the greatest of beings are cooked. Without any master and without any distraction, it constantly cooks beings. The decay due to time cannot be withdrawn. Once one has attained it, there is no freedom. One may not realize this. But ever attentive, time is awake in beings. No one has earlier been seen to have made efforts and escaped it. It is the ancient and eternal dharma. It looks on all living beings in the same way. Time cannot be avoided and there is no exception to what it does. Like a moneylender computing interest, time calculates days, nights, months, *kshana*s, *kashtha*s, *kala*s and *lava*s for us. There are those who say, "I will do this today. I will do that tomorrow." Time approaches and bears them away, like a raft on the current of a river. "I saw him just now. How can he be dead?" While men are heard to lament in this way, time robs them. Riches, objects of pleasure, status and prosperity are all temporary and uncertain. It is extremely difficult to conduct oneself. Everything is brought down and so are existence and non-existence. But you are not distressed by this. Your intelligence is not fickle and you have seen the truth. Even in your mind, you are not bothered about what you have been before. Time afflicts this world and being stronger, cooks it. It sweeps away, regardless of whether a person is young or old. Addicted to jealousy, pride, greed, desire, anger, fright, wishes, confusion and pride, people are deluded. But you know the truth about existence. You are learned in wisdom and austerities. You look at time extremely well, as if it was a myrobalan fruit in your hand. You know the truth about the character of time. You are accomplished in all the sacred texts. O son of Virochana! You have cleansed your soul. You are desired by those who know. I think that with your intelligence, you have comprehended all the worlds. You roam around, free in every way. You have not been tainted by anything. You have conquered your senses and the qualities of rajas and tamas do not touch you. You are without affection. You have destroyed all sorrow. You worship your atman alone. You are a well-wisher to all beings. You are without enmity. You are tranquil in your mind. On seeing you in this state, my mind turns to compassion. Because of the progress of time, you are bound in Varuna's noose and you will be freed from them, because of the evil conduct of subjects. O great asura! May you be safe. When daughters-in-law will engage aged mothers-in-law in work, when deluded sons will send their fathers to work, when *vrishala*s will make brahmanas wash their feet, when shudras will fearlessly serve brahmana wives, when men will release their seeds into vaginas that should be avoided, when sacrifices will be carried in brass vessels, those made out of mixed metal and other inferior vessels, when the four varnas will transgress all restraints, then, one by one, you will progressively be freed from these bonds. There will be no fear from me. Adhere to this agreement. Be safe and without any restraint. Be hale and healthy.' Having spoken these words, the illustrious Shatakratu departed, with that king among elephants as his mount. The lord of the gods had vanquished all the asuras. He was delighted and happy and was the single king. The maharshis chanted words of praise in the name of Vrishakapi, the lord of all mobile and immobile objects. The fire god bore all the oblations and the amrita that was offered to the lord. The supreme among brahmanas performed sacrifices in every way. The lord[207] lost all his rage and his mind was tranquil. Vasava blazed in his energy and cheerfully returned to his own abode in heaven and found pleasure there."'

Chapter 1549(221)

'Yudhishthira said, "O king! O grandfather! Tell me about a man's earlier form and his subsequent downfall."

‘Bhishma replied, “O fortunate one! The mind indicates a man’s earlier form and what will happen and not happen to him in the future. On this, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Shri and Shakra. O Yudhishthira! Listen to this. As he wished, Narada roamed around in the three worlds. He was great in his austerities and could see this world and the supreme one. Though he was an ordinary rishi, he was the equal of those who resided in Brahma’s world. He was a great ascetic and was tranquil in his soul. His infinitely blazing energy was like that of Brahma himself. On one occasion, he arose in the morning and wished to purify himself with water. He went to where the Ganga emerges through the gate known as Dhruva.[208] The one with the thousand eyes, the wielder of the vajra and the slayer of Shambara and Paka, also happened to come to the spot where the devarshi was. Both of them were in control of their souls. Having performed their ablutions and meditations, they sat down together. They were seated on the banks of the river, with sand as fine as gold. The devarshi recounted stories of auspicious deeds, tales about good conduct. They were attentive and spoke to each other about these ancient accounts. The sun arose and its net of rays was spread before them. On seeing that full solar disc, they arose. They worshipped the supreme sun, whose task it was to dispel the darkness. At that time, on the further side of the sky, they saw a body of light arise and it blazed like the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They saw that it was approaching them. There was this unmatched radiance that illuminated the three worlds and it was astride Vishnu’s vehicle, with both Suparna[209] and the sun situated there. There was a divine form, attended by apsaras. She was like a gigantic sun or fire herself, with large rays radiating out. Her ornaments were like nakshatras and her garlands dazzled with stars. They saw the goddess Padma Shri herself, stationed on a lotus. The supreme lady descended from her celestial vehicle and approached Shakra, the lord of the three worlds, and rishi Narada. Followed by Narada, Maghavan approached. He joined his hands in salutation and offered himself to the goddess. The one who knew about everything[210] also worshipped the supreme one. O king! The lord of the gods spoke these words to Shri. ‘O one with the beautiful smile! Who are you? For what purpose have you come here? O one with the excellent brows! O fortunate one! From where have you come and where are you going?’

'"Shri said, 'In the three worlds, all the mobile and immobile objects, those with supreme souls desire to be united with me and make efforts. I have been born from a lotus and awake at the rays of the sun. I bring prosperity to all beings. I am Padma Shri and I wear a garland of lotuses. O slayer of Bala! I am Lakshmi. I am Bhuti.[211] I am Shri. I am Shraddha and Medha.[212] I am Sannati, Vijiti and Sthiti.[213] I am Dhriti.[214] I am Siddhi.[215] I am Tvidbhuti.[216] I am Svaha and Svadha. I am Samstuti, Niyati and Kriti.[217] I station myself on the standards and at the forefront of the soldiers of victorious kings. I dwell in the abodes, material objects and cities of those who are devoted to dharma. O slayer of Bala! I always dwell with Indras among men, those brave ones who desire victory and do not retreat from the field of battle. There are those who are always devoted to dharma, extremely intelligent ones who are devoted to brahmanas and speak the truth. I always dwell with those who are modest and generous in their conduct. I earlier used to dwell with the asuras, when they were bound down by the dharma of truth. However, since their intelligence has turned perverse, it no longer pleases me to live with them.'

'"Shakra asked, 'O one with the beautiful face! What was the conduct of the daityas when you dwelt with them? What did you see that you abandoned the daityas and the danavas?'

'"Shri replied, 'There are those who based themselves on their own dharma. They are not dislodged from patience. They take delight in the paths that lead to heaven. I am always attached to those spirited ones. There are those who are engaged in donations, studying, sacrifices and the serving of seniors, gods, brahmanas and guests. I always dwell with them. They[218] kept their houses clean. Their women were under control and they offered oblations to the fire. They were self-controlled and served their superiors and brahmanas. They were truthful in speech. They were faithful and conquered their anger. They were generous and did not suffer from jealousy. They never wished to be intolerant towards each other. They were patient and were not tormented at the prosperity of others. They donated and accumulated. They were noble and compassionate. They were extremely content and upright. They were firm in their devotion and had conquered their senses. Their servants and advisers were satisfied. They were grateful and pleasant in speech. They did what should be done and did not cause any injury. They were modest and sought to ensure their vows. On auspicious occasions, they always bathed well, smeared themselves well and ornamented themselves. They were devoted to fasting and austerities. They were cheerful and knowledgable about the brahman. They awoke before the sun arose. They did not sleep before it was night. In the night, they always avoided curds and pounded ground meal.[219] They were brahmacharis. At the right time, they looked at clarified butter and other auspicious objects. They worshipped the brahmanas. They always observed dharma and donated, and always received back in turn. They slept when it was midnight and never slept during the day. They always found delight in giving a share of their possessions to the distressed, those who were without protectors, the aged, the weak, the diseased and women. They always comforted those who were miserable, frightened, anxious, terrified, afflicted by disease, those who had been robbed and those who suffered from calamities. They followed what was dharma and did not injure each other. They undertook favourable tasks and served preceptors and the aged. As is appropriate, they worshipped the ancestors, the gods and guests. They ate leftovers and were always devoted to truth and austerities. No one ate alone. No one went to another person's wife. They exhibited compassion towards every being, as if towards one's own self. They never found delight in releasing semen into space, animals, forbidden vaginas, or on sacred days. They were always accomplished in donating and were always upright. They were enthusiastic, without arrogance, extremely affectionate and forgiving. O lord! Truthfulness, generosity, austerities, purity, compassion, gentle speech and lack of injury towards friends—they possessed all these. They were not penetrated by excessive sleep, procrastination, lack of affection, jealousy, rashness, discontent, sorrow and desire. In earlier times, the danavas possessed these qualtiies and I dwelt with them, since the time beings were created. But once the era changed, time turned adverse and they lost those qualities. I saw that they had lost dharma and that their selves had been taken over by desire and anger. There were aged advisers who spoke about what was right and the truth. But they repeatedly laughed at these aged ones, who were superior in all the qualities. When they were seated and the aged ones arrived, they did not stand up and greet and worship them, as they used to earlier. Sons displayed their own power in the presence of the fathers. Enemies became servants and shamelessly proclaimed this fact. They desired to obtain great riches through the performance of reprehensible deeds that were not in accordance with dharma. They spoke loudly in the night. The fire began to blaze downwards.[220] Sons prevailed over their fathers and wives over their husbands. Mothers, fathers, the aged, preceptors, guests and seniors were no longer respected because of their seniority. Children were no longer protected. Without giving away as alms and sacrifices and without apportioning shares for ancestors, gods, guests and seniors, people started to eat. The cooks no longer faithfully observed requirements of purity in minds, words or deeds. They ate what was not covered. Grain was scattered around and became food for crows and rats. Milk was left uncovered. They arose with unwashed hands and touched clarified butter.[221] Spades, plants, garments and brass vessels were scattered around and so were all the other objects and implements, with the housewives taking no notice of these. Walls and storehouses were destroyed and no care was taken to repair these. The tethered animals were not given grass and water. While the children and all the servants looked on, the danavas ate, and it was food that should not be eaten. They cooked *payasa*,[222] *krisara*,[223] meat and *shashkuli*[224] for themselves.[225] They cooked what should not be cooked and ate pointless flesh. All of them slept after the sun arose and before it was night. There were quarrels in every house, day and night. Though noble ones were seated there, the ignoble ones were worshipped. They deviated from the tasks of the ashramas and hated each other. There was a mixture[226] and no sorrow on account of this. No difference could be seen between brahmanas who knew about the Vedas and those who were unclear about the chants, those who deserved a great deal of respect and those who deserved no respect. No difference could be seen in behaviour, ornaments, attire, movement or status. There was enjoyment without service and the rites and conduct of bad people were followed. Women wore the attire of men. Men wore the attire of women. They obtained supreme delight in sporting, pleasure and roaming around. Earlier, the prosperous ones had only given to heirs who were deserving. But that was no longer the case. Those who were non-believers became powerful. In a time of difficulty, a friend sought the support of a friend. However, even if there was the slightest bit of selfish gain a friend could obtain, he acted against his friend. People were interested in obtaining the riches of others. Even the noble varnas were seen to take up the livelihood of traders. Shudras became rich in austerities. There were others who followed futile rules of studying, without observing any vows. Students no longer served their preceptors. Some preceptors became friends to their students. Fathers and mothers became exhausted from trying to earn a livelihood. The aged no longer had protectors and had to beg food from their sons. There were wise ones there, knowledgable about the Vedas and as deep as the ocean. However, they resorted to agriculture and similar pursuits and ignorant ones started to eat at funeral ceremonies.[227] Every morning, students no longer went to preceptors and asked them excellent questions about the tasks that should be performed. Instead, the roles were reversed. In the presence of the father-in-law and the mother-in-law, daughters-in-law summoned, chastised and instructed their husbands, or having summoned them, conversed with them. Fathers had to take great care to ensure that their sons were kindly disposed. Having divided up the property, they dwelt there in great misery. On seeing that the riches of others were burnt by the fire, stolen by thieves and seized by kings, they laughed from a sense of enmity, even if those others happened to be well-wishers. All of them were ungrateful, non-believers, wicked and intolerant and had intercourse with the wives of their preceptors. They ate what should not be eaten. They were without restraints and violated pledges. They became distressed because of their conduct and walked the path of catastrophe. O Indra of the gods! It is my view that I will not dwell with the danavas. O lord of Shachi! I have myself come before you. Welcome me. O lord of the gods! If you worship me from the forefront, so will the other gods. Seven other goddesses exist wherever I am. They are devoted to me. They follow my instructions and have given themselves to me. There is an eighth, and these eight desire to dwell with me here—Asha, Shraddha, Dhriti, Kanti, Vijiti, Sannati and Kshama.[228] O chastiser of Paka! The eighth, Vritti,[229] is at their forefront. They and I have abandoned the asuras and come to your dominion. We will reside with the thirty gods, who possess steadfast dharma in their souls.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been addressed by the goddess in these words, Narada, the rishi of the three worlds, and Vasava, the slayer of Vritra, delighted her by welcoming her. The wind, the friend of the fire, began to blow in the abodes of the gods. It bore auspicious fragrances and was pleasant to the touch, bringing happiness to all the senses. The thirty gods stationed themselves in that auspicious spot, desiring to worship her. They wished to see Maghavan seated with Lakshmi. The one with the thousand eyes obtained divinity. He was with Shri and with his well-wisher, the celestial rishi.[230] The bull among the gods arrived there, on a chariot that was yoked to tawny horses and was immediately honoured by all the gods. The powerful Narada noticed the sign that the wielder of the vajra made, one that was mentally approved of by the goddess Shri. The immensely wise one praised the arrival of Shri there as an auspicious event. The firmament was radiant and showered down amrita on the abode of Svayambhu, the grandfather. Drums sounded, though they had not been struck. All the directions were pleasant. As was appropriate, Vasava showered down rain on the crops. No one deviated from the path of dharma. The earth was ornamented with many stores of jewels. Victorious sounds, voiced and unvoiced, resounded on earth and in heaven. Illustrious men found delight in the rites, performed auspicious deeds and remained established in the path of virtue. Illustrious men, immortals, kinnaras, yakshas and rakshasas were happy and prosperous. Even if there was a wind, flowers, not to speak of fruits, did not drop down from trees before it was the right time. Cows yielded tasty milk whenever it was desired. There was no one who ever spoke fierce words. Such were all the objects of desire that were brought to the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, by Shri. If a person reads this account at an assembly of brahmanas and worships it, desiring prosperity, he will obtain prosperity. O supreme among the Kurus! I was urged by you. These are the supreme indications of prosperity and adversity. I have recounted all of this to you. You should examine the truth about this and follow it."'

Chapter 1550(222)

'Yudhishthira asked, "Through what behaviour, what conduct, what learning and what devotion can one obtain Brahma's abode, which is certainly beyond nature?"[231]

'Bhishma replied, "If one is engaged in the dharma of moksha, is controlled and limited in diet and controls his senses, then he obtains Brahma's abode, which is certainly beyond nature. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the conversation between Jaigishavya and Asita. Jaigishavya was immensely wise and knew about the path of dharma. Asita-Devala spoke to the great rishi, who was never enraged. ‘You are not delighted when you are praised. You are not angered when you are criticized. What is this wisdom and whence has it come? How have you found refuge in it?’ Having been thus addressed, the great ascetic replied. Those great and auspicious words left no doubt and were full of deep import. ‘O brahmana! You have asked me about the supreme objective, devotion, tranquility and the performance of auspicious deeds. I will tell you. O Devala! There are those who regard censure and praise equally. They hide their vows and good deeds. They do not hurt through words. Nor are they engaged in speaking anything injurious. They do not wish to strike back those who strike them. Such people are learned. They do not grieve over what is yet to come. They act in accordance with what has presented itself. They do not sorrow over what is past and do not even remember it. O Devala! For both kama and artha, they honour what has presented itself. They accomplish their vows and forcefully act in accordance with what has presented itself. Their learning is mature and they are immensely wise. They have conquered anger and have vanquished their senses. They never commit any crimes, in mind, deeds and words. They never desire harm or injury to anyone else. Those patient ones are not tormented at someone else being prosperous. They do not speak words of praise or censure about others. Nor do they ever react to words of praise or censure about their own selves. They are tranquil in every way and are engaged in the welfare of all beings. They are not angered or delighted. They do not cause injury to others. They have released themselves from all the bonds that bind the heart down and are happy. They have no friends. Nor are they friends to others. They have no enemies. Nor are they enemies to others. Mortal ones who act in this way always live happily. O supreme among brahmanas! They know about dharma and observe dharma. They are happy, but that is not true of those who have deviated from the path. I have resorted to that path. What else is there to say? Whether I am criticized or praised, that is no cause for any joy. Depending on what they desire, men advance along different paths. However, censure and praise cannot affect my growth or decay. A person who knows about the truth is content with this, as if it is amrita. An accomplished person will always regard the two[232] equally and treat them like poison. He will then be freed from all sins. If a person ignores this, he will be destroyed. There are some learned ones who desire the supreme objective. Those people, who seek refuge in this vow, obtain happiness. A person who has conquered his senses is regarded as having performed all the sacrifices. He obtains Brahma's abode, which is certainly beyond nature. Gods, gandharvas, pishachas and rakshasas are incapable of climbing up to that objective and obtaining that supreme end.'"'

Chapter 1551(223)

'Yudhisthira asked, "On this earth, who is the man who is loved by all the worlds, is unblemished and possesses all the spirits and also has every kind of quality?"

'Bhishma replied, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have asked me a question. In this connection, there was a conversation between Ugrasena and Keshava about Narada.[233]

'"Ugrasena said, 'Behold. All the worlds have resolved to praise Narada. I think that he possesses all the qualities. I am asking you. Tell me.'

'"Vasudeva replied, 'O lord of the Kukkuras! Listen to me and I will tell you what you have asked me. O lord of men! I will briefly tell you about Narada's virtuous qualities. His character and conduct are such that he does not suffer from arrogance, destructive of the body. There is no gap in his learning and his character. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. The ascetic Narada is restrained in his speech and there is no exception to this. There is no desire and avarice in him. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He knows the truth about adhyatma. He is tranquil, capable and in control of his senses. He is upright and truthful. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is energetic and illustrious. He possesses intelligence, policy and humility. Because of his birth, austerities and age, he is worshipped everywhere. He is cheerful in his conduct. He is excellent in his pleasures and food. He is considerate and pure. He speaks excellent words, devoid of malice.

That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He firmly acts so as to ensure welfare. There is no sin in him. He is not pleased at the hardships of others. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He desires to hear the objectives of the Vedas, the sacred texts and the accounts, and tolerates those who are ignorant. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He behaves equally. There is no one he loves and no one he hates. He speaks what is pleasant to the mind. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is extremely learned and is colourful in his tales. He possesses knowledge. He is without laziness and without deceit. He is not distressed. He is without anger and without greed. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He has never engaged in any quarrels for the sake of artha, dharma or kama. He has severed all taints. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is firm in his devotion. His soul has no blemish. He is learned and is devoid of cruelty. He is free from all sins of delusion. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. Though he is seen to be attached, he is actually detached from all the things that cause attachment. His doubts do not last for a long time. He is eloquent. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. For the sake of accomplishing any object or obtaining respect, he never praises himself. He is not envious and is mild in his speech. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. There are many kinds of ordinary conduct in this world. He is accomplished and knows about these. He associates with these people, but does not censure them. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He does not hate any kind of knowledge and subsists on austerities. He does not allow himself to spend time fruitlessly. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He has conquered exhaustion. He is accomplished in his wisdom. He is not content with meditation. He resorts to the rituals, without any distraction. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. Because his policies are good, he is never shamed. He is engaged in the supreme objective. He does not reveal the secrets of others. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is not delighted at obtaining wealth. Nor is he distressed when nothing is obtained. He is firm in his intelligence and his soul is not attached. That is the reason he is worshipped everywhere. He is vested with all the qualities. He is skilful and ceaseless in the pursuit of the auspicious. He knows about time. He knows about policy. He knows about the people to whom good things should not be done.’”’

Chapter 1552(224)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O Kourava! I wish to hear about the origin and end of all beings. From one yuga to another yuga, what is the nature of meditation, deeds and time? What is the truth about all the worlds and beings, their coming and going? How do creation and destruction come about? O supreme among virtuous ones! I am asking you. If your intelligence is so disposed as to favour me, you should tell me. Earlier, I heard you recount the supreme words that Bhrigu spoke to the brahmana rishi Bharadvaja, supreme in his intelligence. Therefore, I have become supremely devoted to dharma and wish to find refuge in that celestial spot. Therefore, I am asking you again and you should tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about the illustrious Vyasa being asked by his son. Vyasa’s son, Shuka, studied all the Vedas, Vedangas and Upanishads and having become accomplished about the knowledge of dharma, wished to find out about virtuous deeds. Vyasa’s son thus asked Krishna Dvaipayana, so that his doubt and uncertainty about the purport of dharma might be dispelled. ‘Who is the creator of all the categories of beings? How is the classification of time determined? What are the tasks that brahmanas should perform? You should tell me.’ Having been thus asked by the son, the father told him about everything. He knew about everything and about all forms of dharma. He knew about the past and the future.

‘“‘Brahma is without a beginning and without an end.[234] He is without origin and divine. He is without decay. He is permanent and without transformation. He cannot be thought of. He cannot be known. Before everything else, Brahma was there. Fifteen *nimeshas*[235] make a kashtha. Thirty kashthas are reckoned as a kala. Thirty kalas and an additional one tenth of a kala make a *muhurta*. Thirty muhurtas make up one day and one night. This is the enumeration given by the sages. Thirty days and nights are said to be one month. Twelve months are said to constitute one year. Those who know about numbers say that there are two *ayana*s in a year, *uttara* and *dakshina*.[236] In the world of men, the sun separates day from night. Beings make efforts to undertake tasks during the day and sleep during the night. One such month[237] is again one day and one night for the ancestors. *Krishnapaksha* is their day and they undertake action then, while *shuklapaksha* is their night and they sleep then.[238] One year[239] is again one day and one night for the gods. *Uttarayana* is their day and *dakshinayana* is their night. I have already recounted day and night in the world of the gods. I will now tell you about the number of years for Brahma. In due order, I will tell you about the number of years in krita, treta, dvapara and kali yuga. Four thousand years[240] is said to be the duration of krita yuga. There are another four hundred years as morning and four hundred as evening.[241] For the other three, the main is reduced by one fourth, or thousand, and the *sandhya* by hundred.[242] These measurements continuously hold up the eternal worlds. O son![243] Those who know about Brahma also know the eternal brahman. In krita yuga, all the four parts of dharma and truth exist. This is supreme and nothing is followed that is against dharma. In each of the others, dharma is seen to progressively reduce by one-fourth. Theft, falsehood, deceit and adharma flourish. In krita, there is no disease. There is success in all pursuits and the life span is four hundred years. In treta, the life span is reduced by a quarter. We have heard that the following of the Vedas, life spans, benedictions and the fruits of the Vedas also progressively decrease. There are different kinds of dharma for krita yuga, treta and dvapara. Dharma is also different for kali yuga, when one acts according to one's capacity. Austerities are supreme in krita yuga and knowledge is supreme in treta. Sacrifices are spoken of in dvapara and donations in kali yuga. Wise and learned ones say that twelve thousand years constitute a yuga.[244] A thousand of these[245] is said to be one of Brahma's days. Brahma's night is also like that. When it is day for the lord, the universe is created. When it is destroyed, he immerses himself in adhyatma.[246] At the end of the sleep, he awakes. People who know about night and day say that Brahma's day is for one thousand yugas and his night is also for one thousand yugas.

'"'When the night is over, the unmanifest Brahma awakes. Though he is not manifest, he creates the great being that is his manifest mind. Brahma is the energetic seed and everything in the universe springs from that. From that single being, both mobile and immobile objects are created. When it is dawn, he awakes and creates the universe with his knowledge. At first, there is Mahabhuta.[247]This quickly becomes Mana,[248] the manifest form of the soul. Those overwhelming rays create those seven through mental powers.[249] Mana is far-reaching and flows in many different ways. There are determination and resolution to create and is done by transforming itself. Akasha[250] is generated and sound is held to be its quality. From Akasha is created the pure and powerful Vayu,[251] the bearer of all scents. Touch is held to be its quality. From Vayu is generated Jyoti,[252] the dispeller of darkness. Those rays are created and their qualities are held to be form. From Jyoti is created Apa,[253] with taste as its attribute. From Apa results Bhumi,[254] with scent as its quality. This is said to be the original creation. One after another, they receive the qualities of the preceding one. They are said to not only possess their own quality, but also of the one from which they were created.[255] If one discerns scent in water and takes that to be its quality, the person is ignorant. Scent is known to belong to earth, though it may also find a refuge in water or wind. These seven different entities have different forms of energy and exist separately, so that beings may be destroyed. But for the sake of creation, they come together. Those great-souled ones assemble and unite with each other. When they resort to a body, it is then said to be Purusha. When they resort to the body, there are sixteen forms.[256] With all the deeds,[257] Mahat enters the body. For the sake of austerities, it resorts to all beings. This is Mahabhuta, the original creator, and is known as Prajapati. He creates beings and is the supreme Purusha. Brahma is without orgin and generates gods, rishis, ancestors, humans, worlds, rivers, oceans, directions, mountains, trees, men,[258] kinnaras, rakshasas, birds, animals, wild animals,[259] serpents, unmanifest and manifest objects, both mobile and immobile. Each of those created obtains the legacy of its earlier deeds. Having obtained these, each is created again and again. Violence, non-violence, mildness, cruelty, dharma, adharma, truth, falsehood—the creator thinks of the qualities that had pleased the being earlier. Mahabhuta affixes the different senses to the bodies of beings and determines the constituent parts. Some learned ones speak of enterprise, others of earlier deeds. Some brahmanas think of destiny, others think of the natural traits of beings. Enterprise, deeds and destiny lead to fruits and this is helped by nature. Some say that thinking of these three as separate is not correct. Some say this is true. Others say that is true. Others speak of the uneven consequences of deeds. However, there are insightful ones who know about the being who created the universe and regard all these equally. Austerities bring the greatest benefit to beings and its foundations are self-control and tranquility. Through these, one obtains everything, all that one desires and wishes for. Through austerities, one obtains the being who created the universe. He is in all beings and is the lord who created beings. It is because of austerities that the rishis can study the Vedas, day and night. Svayambhu created those eternal words, which are without origin and are passed down. Though they go by the names of the rishis, he created the Vedas.[260] When it was the end of the night, he gave it to them. Nama, Bheda, Tapas, Karma, Yajna, Akhya, Loka-siddhi, Atma-siddhi and the ten kinds of techniques have been spoken of in the Vedas.[261] He[262] is mysterious and has been spoken about in the words of the Vedas. Those who have insight into the Vedas know this. He has also been spoken about at the end[263] and can be realized by practising the rites. A person who is devoid of yoga has a sense of separateness and duality and is born because of his deeds. However, a person who knows about Atma-siddhi can generally drive that sense forcefully away. There are two Brahmas who should be known, Shabda-Brahma and Para-Brahma.[264] Having understood Shabda-Brahma, one can go to Para-Brahma.

‘“‘Slaughter represents sacrifice for kshatriyas. Offerings[265] represent sacrifice for vaishyas. Servitude represents sacrifice for shudras. Austerities represent sacrifice for brahmanas. There was no need for sacrifices in krita yuga, but they were recommended in treta yuga. There was an uprooting of sacrifices in dvapara yuga and this is also true of kali yuga. Mortals have come to regard Rig, Sama and Yajur as standing for different kinds of dharma. They desire their own prosperity and look upon austerities and the object of austerities as distinct. In treta, they were regarded as the same and there were extremely powerful ones, who controlled all mobile and immobile objects. In treta, sacrifices and the varnas co-existed together. However, because lifespans were reduced, these went into a decline in dvapara yuga. Even if one looks, in kali yuga, all the Vedas cannot be seen. With sacrifices, which are the bridges of dharma, they have been destroyed. The dharma of krita yuga can only be seen to be vested in some brahmanas who have cleansed their souls and are learned and are also devoted to austerities. Depending on the dharma of one yuga and another yuga, people are associated with rites of adharma. Though they know what the Vedas have described as being appropriate for a certain yuga, they sell their own dharma. When it rains repeatedly during the monsoon, a large number of beings and immobile objects are generated. From one yuga to another, dharma[266] is created in that fashion. As the seasons progress, many different kinds of forms are seen. In that fashion, different signs can be seen in Brahma, Hara and the third.[267] This has been ordained by time and it has neither a beginning, nor an end. It has been spoken about earlier and it creates and devours subjects. It is the controller who uses its powers to establish and restrain them. Because of their nature, they are repeatedly seen to be addicted to opposite sentiments. O son! I have told you everything that you have asked about—creation, time, rituals, the Vedas, doers, tasks, action and fruits. I will now tell you about how he[268] withdraws himself, when it is night and day is over. The subtle lord of the universe then immerses himself in adhyatma. In the firmament, the sun burns everything, with its seven crests of flames. Everything is pervaded by those rays and the entire universe starts to blaze.’”’

Chapter 1553(225)

‘“Vyasa said, ‘All beings on earth, mobile and immobile, are first destroyed and then merge into the earth. Everything, mobile and immobile, thus disappears. The ground is then seen to be without wood and without grass, like the back of a tortoise. Water then accepts the quality of the earth, that is, scent. Having been bereft of scent, the earth can then be thought of as having been destroyed. Water is then established, in the form of mighty waves that make giant roars. It pervades everything, staying still and moving around. O son! Light then accepts the quality of water. Having lost its own quality, water seeks refuge in light. The sun is stationed in the middle of the firmament. But crests of flames hide it. Everything is covered by those rays and the entire sky seems to be blazing. However, the wind then accepts the quality of light. Though light is pacified, a gigantic wind is whirled around. The wind creates itself, using its own foundation.[269] It moves upwards, downwards and diagonally, agitating the ten directions. Space then devours the wind's quality of touch. The wind is pacified. But basing itself in the sky, it continues to roar. The quality of space, sound, is then accepted by Mana, the soul of everything that is manifest. Whatever is made manifest by Mana, is withdrawn by the unmanifest Brahma. With its qualities, Mana is then submerged into Chandrama.[270] Mana is immersed in adhyatma and bases itself in Chandrama. After a long period of time, Sankalpa[271] is brought under subjugation. Chitta[272] devours Sankalpa and this is the supreme knowledge. Time devours knowledge and the sacred texts say that time is devoured by Bala.[273] But Bala is devoured by Time and is in turn brought under subjugation by Vidya.[274] The unmanifest and supreme Brahma then roars in the sky and brings Vidya into his soul. He is eternal and the greatest. In this fashion, all the beings are drawn into Brahma. This has certainly been spoken about properly. This is what should be known. This is knowledge. This has been seen by yogis who are supreme in their souls. Thus, the unmanifest Brahma repeatedly extends and withdraws. Thus do Brahma's night and day last for 1,000 yugas.'"'

Chapter 1554(226)

''Vyasa said, 'I have recounted everything that you asked about, about how different categories of beings are appointed. I will now tell you about the tasks to be undertaken by brahmanas. There are *jatakarma* and other rituals, ending with *samavartana*.[275] These involve the payment of dakshina and require a preceptor who is knowledgable about the Vedas. One must be engaged in serving the preceptor and study all the Vedas. Having repaid the preceptor's debt,[276] one obtains knowledge about all the sacrifices, and graduates. Having taken the preceptor's permission, one must then adopt one of the four ashramas and follow its prescribed ordinances, until one is freed from one's body. One can accept a wife for generating offspring. Or one can adhere to brahmacharya. Or, with the preceptor, one can dwell in the forest. Or one can follow the dharma of a mendicant. The state of the householder is said to be the foundation for all four. Such a person, who is self-controlled and matures while he scrapes away,[277] is successful everywhere. Through offspring, studying and performing sacrifices, he is freed from the three divine debts.[278] Having purified himself through these deeds, he can then proceed to the other ashramas.[279] He must dwell in a place of learning that is the most sacred spot on earth. That will be the yardstick for his obtaining supreme fame. The fame of brahmanas increases through extremely great austerities, accomplishment in learning, performing sacrifices and donating. As long as his deeds and fame remain in this world, a man obtains eternal and sacred worlds in the hereafter. He must study and teach. He must officiate at a sacrifice and perform his own sacrifices. He must not receive or give without reason. Great riches can be obtained by officiating at sacrifices, through pupils and through maidens.[280] Whatever has been obtained must not be enjoyed alone. For a person who is in the state of a householder, there is no option but to receive for the sake of gods, rishis, ancestors, preceptors, the aged, the diseased and the hungry.[281] For those who are afflicted and in disguise, one must give, including cooked food, to the best of one's capacity. One must indeed give in excess of one's capacity. To those who deserve to be given, there is nothing that cannot be given.

'"'The virtuous and learned must even be given Uchchaishrava.[282] Entreated by Kavya,[283] Satyasandha, great in his vows, gave up his own life for the sake of protecting a brahmana and went to heaven.[284] Samkriti's son, Rantideva, offered only lukewarm water to the great-souled Vasishtha and obtained greatness in the vault of heaven. Atri's son, Indradamana, was an intelligent lord of the earth. He gave many kinds of riches to deserving people and obtained worlds in the hereafter. Ushinara's son, Shibi, gave up his limbs and his beloved son for the sake of benefiting a brahmana and went to heaven.[285] Pratardana was the lord of Kashi and gave up his own eyes for the sake of a brahmana, obtaining umatched fame here and in the hereafter. The extremely intelligent Devavridha gave away a celestial umbrella, with eight golden ribs, and went to heaven with his entire kingdom. The immensely energetic Samkriti, from Atri's lineage, instructed his pupils about Brahma, who is without qualities, and went to the supreme worlds. The powerful Ambarisha gave brahmanas eleven billion cows and went to heaven, with his entire kingdom. For the sake of brahmanas, Savitri gave away her earrings and Janamejaya gave away his body. Both of them went to the supreme worlds. Yuvanashva, the son of Vrishadarbha, gave away all his jewels, his beloved women and a beautiful residence, and obtained the supreme worlds. Nimi, the king of Videha, gave away his kingdom. Jamadagni's son[286] gave away the earth. Gaya gave away the earth, with its cities, to brahmanas. There was a time when it did not rain and Vasishtha sustained and kept all the beings alive, like Prajapati among the subjects. Karandhama's son was King Marutta. He gave away his daughter to Angiras and swiftly proceeded to heaven. King Brahmadatta of Panchala was supreme among intelligent ones. He gave away his treasure and a conch shell to the foremost among brahmanas and obtained the worlds.[287] King Mitrasaha gave away his beloved wife, Madayanti, to the great-souled Vasishtha and went to heaven with her. The immensely illustrious royal rishi, Sahasrajit, gave away his beloved life for the sake of a brahmana and went to the supreme worlds. The great king, Shatadyumna, gave Mudgala a golden residence that was full of all the objects of pleasure and went to heaven. The powerful king of Shalva was known by the name of Dyutiman. He gave his kingdom to Richika and went to the supreme worlds. The royal rishi, Madirashva, gave away his slender-waisted daughter to Hiranyahasta and went to worlds that the gods are content with. The lord and royal rishi, Lomapada, gave away his daughter Shanta to Rishyashringa and obtained all the great objects of desire. The immensely energetic King Prasenjit gave away one hundred thousand cows, with their calves, and went to the supreme worlds. There are many other such great-souled ones. They were virtuous in their souls and conquered their senses. Through their donations and austerities, they went to heaven. As long as the earth exists, their fame will remain established. They obtained heaven through donations, sacrifices and the generation of offspring.'"'

Chapter 1555(227)

““Vyasa said, ‘The knowledge known as trayi, mentioned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, must be experienced.[288] There are varnas and aksharas in the Rig and in the Sama, and in the Yajur and in the Atharva.[289] There are spirited and immensely fortunate ones who are accomplished in what is recounted in the Vedas and skilled about adhyatma. They can see the beginning and the end. A person who acts in a virtuous way must observe the rites laid down by dharma. A brahmana must desire to conduct himself so that he does not suppress any other being. He must obtain knowledge from virtuous and good people who are skilled in the sacred texts. He must be devoted to the truth and undertake all the acts in the world that are in accordance with his own dharma. Dwelling as a householder, a brahmana must perform the six tasks.[290] He must always faithfully perform the five sacrifices.[291] He must be patient and should not be distracted. He must be self-controlled, in control over his soul and knowledgable about dharma. A brahmana must be beyond joy, fear and anger and must not suffer from lassitude. Donations, studying, sacrifices, austerities, modesty, uprightness and self-control increase energy and drive away sin. An intelligent person must cleanse his sins and be restrained in his diet. He must conquer his senses. Having subjugated desire and anger, he should seek to attain the brahman. He must worship the fire and brahmanas. He must bow down before the gods. He must discard hateful words and all violence that is not in accordance with dharma. This is the kind of conduct that has first been laid down for brahmanas. Later, when knowledge arrives, he must engage in tasks. It is tasks that bring success. An intelligent person will be able to cross the terrible river that is extremely difficult to traverse and is difficult to withstand. The five senses constitute the water. The banks are made out of greed. Intolerance constitutes the mud. It originates from desire and anger and always causes great delusion. The entire universe is always struck by that great force, ordained by destiny, and confused and whirled around by the flow of nature. Time is the single great river and the years are the eddy. The months are waves and the seasons are the current. The fortnights are moss and grass. The twinkling of the eyelids represents the foam. Day and night are the force. The terrible crocodiles are represented by desire. The Vedas and sacrifices are the rafts. For beings, dharma is like islands. Artha and kama are the springs. Truth represents the stairs along the banks. Non-violence represents the trees that flow along. The yugas are the pools in the middle of the course. This is as difficult to comprehend as the brahman. The creator creates beings and drags them along, towards Yama's abode. Those who are learned can cross it, using their wisdom and patience as rafts. But what can those of limited intelligence, those who possess no rafts, do? A wise person can cross it, but not an ordinary person. From a distance, the wise person sees everything, good and bad traits. However, a person with limited intelligence has doubt in his soul and desire in his soul. His senses are fickle. A person who is not wise cannot cross and cannot go to the further shore. He suffers from the great taint of not possessing a raft and advances towards delusion. There are also those who have knowledge, but are grasped by the crocodile of desire. They don't possess a raft either. Therefore, an accomplished person must make efforts so that he does not submerge. A person who is not submerged in this way is a brahmana. A person who speaks about the three,[292] is born in a noble lineage and is without doubt and performs the three acts[293] is thus not submerged and crosses with the help of wisdom. A person who has refined himself, is self-restrained and controlled and has cleansed his soul is wise and subsequently obtains success in this world and in the next. Following the conduct of a householder, he must be without anger and without envy. He must perform the five sacrifices and always eat the leftovers from sacrifices. He must observe virtuous conduct and act in accordance with righteous rites. He must follow a conduct that does not obstruct dharma. Greed is censured for him. He must know the truth about learning and knowledge. He must be accomplished in virtuous conduct. He must observe the tasks of his own dharma and not mix up tasks.[294] He must faithfully perform the rites. He must be generous, wise and devoid of jealousy. If he knows the difference between dharma and adharma, he will be able to cross everything, even if it is difficult to traverse. He must possess fortitude and not be distracted. He must be restrained, knowledgable about dharma and immersed in his soul. He must be without delight, fear and anger. Such a brahmana does not suffer. This was the conduct that was laid down for brahmanas earlier. If he performs acts that bring him the wealth of knowledge, he is successful everywhere. Even if they desire dharma, those who are not accomplished observe adharma. Dharma becomes like adharma for him and he is made to grieve. Deciding to do dharma, he achieves adharma. Wishing to do adharma, he achieves dharma. Such a person is foolish and does not know these two kinds of acts. He adopts bodies and is born and dies.’”’[295]

Chapter 1556(228)

‘“Vyasa said, ‘Therefore, if one does not wish to be confused in one’s mind, when one is immersed and submerged, one must resort to the raft of knowledge. Learned and patient ones use this raft, which is constructed out of wisdom, to cross over. Those who are not learned cannot save themselves, or others. Sages who are united with yoga sever themselves from the taints. They yoke themselves to the ten tasks that bring bliss and also to *anupaya* and *upaya*.[296] Those who are wise use their mental sight to control their eyes[297] and conduct. Those who desire supreme knowledge use their intelligence to control their speech and thoughts. Those who desire tranquility in the soul use their knowledge to control their souls. A man who follows this may be extremely terrible, knowledgable about the Vedas or ignorant about hymns and meditation, an observer of dharma and performer of sacrifices or one who commits wicked deeds, a tiger among men or a follower of the practices of eunuchs. But as long as he follows this, he will be able to cross the ocean of old age and death, which is so difficult to traverse. That is the reason one must single-mindedly devote oneself to yoga. One who enquires in this way obtains Shabda-Brahma. Dharma is the *upastha*.[298] Upaya is the *varutha* and apaya is the *kubara*.[299] Apana is the *aksha*, prana is the yuga.[300] Wisdom represents the harnesses that are attached to the yoke. Consciousness is the *bandhura*.[301] Good conduct and the avoidance of bad conduct are the *nemi*.[302] Sight, touch, scent and hearing are the four mounts that bear it along. Wisdom is the *nabhi*.[303] All the sacred texts are the *pratoda*.[304] Knowledge is the charioteer. The patient kshetrajna is seated there and faith and self-control are at the front.[305] Renunciation follows at the rear, with tranquility. The path is of purification, and meditation is the objective. With the soul, the chariot then obtains radiance in the divine world of Brahma. There are means of yoking this chariot so that one speedily reaches Akshara[306] by observing mental ordinances. The chariot then travels fast. I will tell you about this. Altogether, there are seven kinds of dharana that a learned person practises.[307] There are dharanas to the rear, to the side and everywhere. Gradually, through these, he controls the earth, the wind, space, water, fire, ego and intelligence and obtains special powers.[308] He then gradually obtains power over the one who is not manifest. Those who are united with yoga obtain the power of conception. Those who are united with yoga obtain success and behold their own atmans. Instructed properly, he sees the subtlety of the atman. The firmament seems to be covered in a subtle substance, as if smoke has been mixed with dew. Initially, the soul seems to be freed from the body. When the smoke has disappeared, a second form can be seen. In the sky, he then sees his atman in the form of water. When the water has passed, the form of fire manifests itself. When that has disappeared, there is the manifestation of a form that has the complexion of gossamer and is dressed in yellow garments. The yellow then becomes white and there is a form that is as subtle as the wind. The consciousness becomes white and subtle and this is nothing but the unmanifest brahman. There are diverse kinds of fruits that result from all these. Listen. If he is able to conquer the earth, he becomes like Prajapati, undisturbed, and with powers over creation and destruction. He can create beings from his own body. If he is able to control the quality of the wind, it is said that he can make the earth tremble with only his toe or finger, or with his hands and feet. If he immerses himself in the quality of space, he assumes the quality of space and differences between him and space vanish and he can make himself vanish. If he obtains the quality of water, as he wills, he can drink up all waterbodies. When his form is like that of the fire, he is seen to have a form that cannot be pacified. When the sense of ego has been conquered, these five[309] come under subjugation. When these and the sixth aspect of the atman, intelligence, have been conquered, he obtains all the powers and has a form that is not blemished. The manifest merges with the unmanifest and the unmanifest can be grasped. Everything in the world emerges from that[310] and obtains the trait of manifestation. I will explain to you in detail about how things become manifest. Listen. What is manifest has been spoken about in sankhya.[311] Listen. In both yoga[312]and sankhya, twenty-five kinds of truth have been spoken about and treated equally.[313] There is no difference between them. Listen. It has been said that anything that is manifest has birth, growth, decay and death. These are its four attributes. That which is the reverse of this is said to be the unmanifest. It is the determination of the Vedas that there are two kinds of atman. One has those four traits[314] and the four objectives[315] are prescribed for the other. The manifest comes out of the unmanifest and may have intelligence or may not have intelligence. I have told you about sattva and kshetrajna, which we have been instructed about.[316] The Vedas have said that both these atmans get attached to material objects. Sankhya says that withdrawal from material objects is the characteristic of success. One must be free from a sense of ownership and free from ego. One must be free from opposite sentiments and dispel all doubt. One must never be angered, nor hate. One must never utter a falsehood. Even if one is censured or struck, one must be friendly and not act in an adverse way. One must restrain all three kinds of chastisement in the form of speech, deeds and thoughts. One must look upon all beings in the same way. Such a person obtains the brahman. A person should not have desire, or lack of desire. He must only establish himself in the journey. He must not be greedy. He must not be distressed. He must be controlled. He must perform tasks and be indifferent to appearance. His senses must be brought together in his mind. He must not deviate from his wishes. He must show lack of injury towards all beings. According to sankhya, this is the kind of person who is emancipated. This is also the path of emancipation through yoga. Listen to the reasons for this. If one can progress beyond the powers obtained through yoga, one is freed. There is no doubt that I have spoken to you about different kinds of attributes of intelligence. If a person is free from opposite sentiments in this way, he attains the brahman.”"

Chapter 1557(229)

‘“Vyasa said, ‘In this way, a patient person accepts the raft of knowledge and accepts and bases himself on peace. He is immersed and submerged, but seeks refuge in knowledge.’

'"Shuka asked, 'What is that knowledge? What is the learing that restrains opposite sentiments? According to dharma, what are the characteristics of attachment and detachment?'

'"Vyasa replied, 'A person who thinks that everything is because of nature, without being established in any other foundation,[317] does not obtain the means of emanicipation, because of his lack of wisdom. Those who hold the view that nature is the sole reason for existence are like sacred grass that has not been sprinkled. They obtain nothing. Foolish people who resort to either of these views[318] and regard nature as the cause do not get what is best for them. This belief in nature is an act that results from confusion in the mind and brings destruction. There are those who hold that things exist because of nature and others who hold that they flow from other entities.[319] Those who are full of learning engage in tasks like agriculture, accumulation of crops, generation of offspring, collection of means of transport, objects of pleasure, houses, seats and medicines. Those who speak about these are full of wisdom. Wisdom engages one in attaining objectives. Wisdom conveys one to what is most beneficial. Though kings are the equals of others in attributes, it is through wisdom that they enjoy kingdoms. It is because of learning that one can differentiate between superior and inferior beings. O son! Creation results from learning. Learning is the supreme objective. Four kinds of birth have been laid down for all beings—from wombs, from eggs, from sweat and plants. This can be discerned. Mobile entities are seen to be superior to the immobile. It is evident that enterprise is superior to material objects. It is said that there are two kinds of mobile entities, those with many legs and those with two legs, those with two legs being superior. Those with two legs are said to be of two kinds, those that live on land and those that do not.[320] Those that live on land are superior and enjoy many kinds of food. Bipeds who live on land are of two kinds, medium and superior. Those who are medium follow the dharma of *jati*s and are better.[321] Among those who are medium, there are said to be two kinds—those who know about dharma and those who do not. Those who know about dharma are superior because they undertake what should be done and do not undertake what should not be done. Those who know about dharma are said to be of two kinds, those who are learned about the Vedas and those who are not. Those who are learned about the Vedas are superior because the

Vedas are vested in them.[322] Those who are learned about the Vedas are said to be of two kinds—those who expound on them and those who do not. Those who expound on them are superior, because they uphold all kinds of dharma. They know about the Vedas and all the rites that lead to the fruits of dharma. The sacrifices and all the Vedas flow from those who expound about them. Those who expound about the Vedas are said to be of two types—those who know about the atman and those who do not. Those who know about the atman are superior, because they have comprehension about birth and lack of birth.[323] He who knows about both kinds of dharma[324] knows everything about all kinds of dharma. He is detached and firm in his resolution to the truth. He is pure. He is the lord.[325] The gods know such a brahmana as someone who is established in knowledge about dharma. He is firm in his determination about Shabda-Brahma and the one who is superior to that.[326] Such people know the soul both inside and outside.[327] O son![328] Such people are brahmanas. Such people are gods. The entire universe of beings and everything that is beneficial in the universe is based on them. There is nothing that is equal to their sentiments of greatness. They are beyond all deeds and beyond origin and destruction. They are like Svayambhu and the lords of the four kinds of beings.'"'

Chapter 1558(230)

''Vyasa said, 'This is the conduct for brahmanas, as laid down earlier. If a learned person performs these tasks, he is successful in everything. He has no doubt in determining what acts should be undertaken. What are tasks that are mandatory and what are tasks that lead to knowledge?[329] For tasks that lead to knowledge in men, this is what I have deduced and experienced. I will describe this. Listen. Some say that tasks are undertaken by men because of enterprise. There are other people who praise natural destiny. There are also some who draw a distinction between the three—human enterprise, destiny and the natural fruits of conduct. Some pick on a single reason, others on their combination. In this way, people established in acts say that there is existence, or that there is non-existence, or that existence cannot be established, or that non-existence cannot be established, thus treating them differently. But there are those who know the truth and regard all these as equal.[330] Treta, dvapara and kali yugas are full of doubts. The ascetics of krita yuga were tranquil and knew the truth. They did not look upon all the Rig, Sama and Yajur hymns differently.[331] They examined desire and hatred and only worshipped austerities. They were engaged in the dharma of austerities. They were firm in their observance and always devoted to austerities. They obtained everything, all that they desired and wished for in their minds. Through austerities, one becomes like the one who created the universe. One becomes like the lord who is the creator of all beings. He[332] has been spoken about in the words of the Vedas. He is difficult to fathom, even by those who have the sight of the Vedas. He has again been spoken about in Vedanta. He can be discerned through the yoga of tasks. It has been said that slaughter represents sacrifice for kshatriyas and oblations for vaishyas.[333] Servitude represents sacrifice for shudras and meditation represents sacrifice for brahmanas. One becomes a brahmana by diligently performing the tasks and studying. However, whether one performs the tasks or does not perform the tasks, by exhibiting friendliness,[334] one is said to be a brahmana. At the beginning of treta, all the Vedas, sacrifices and varnashrama existed. But as lifespans decreased, they went into a decline in dvapara yuga. The Vedas suffered during dvapara. It was like that in kali yuga too. At the end of kali, though they could be seen, yet they could not be seen.[335] One's own dharma went into a decline and dharma suffered. The juices disappeared from cows, the earth, water and herbs. Because of adharma, the Vedas vanished, and so did the dharma of the Vedas and the ashramas. All mobile and immobile objects deviated from their own dharma. Just as all the beings are sustained by the rain showering down on the ground, from one yuga to another, the Vedas and their *angas*[336] are created afresh. Time does this and it has no beginning and no end. I have recounted this to you earlier, about creation and destruction. Dhata is the creator of all beings and Yama controls them. Nature drives them into many kinds of opposite sentiments. O son![337] Creation, time, the upholding of the Vedas, the doer, tasks, rites and fruits—I have told you about these. This is what you had asked me.'"'

Chapter 1559(231)

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed, he[338] praised the supreme rishi and asked him about the pursuit of moksha dharma.

'"Shuka asked, 'There may be a learned brahmana who has had offspring. He has performed sacrifices and has become old. He is wise and devoid of jealousy. How can he obtain the brahman, which is so difficult for the mind to grasp? Is it through austerities, brahmacharya, renouncing everything, intelligence, sankhya or yoga? I am asking you this. Instruct me. How can a man bring about unwavering attention in the mind and in the senses? You should explain this to me.'

'"Vyasa replied, 'There is nothing other than learning and austerities. There is nothing other than the control of the senses. There is nothing other than renouncing everything. Success cannot be obtained through any other means. Svayambhu created all the great elements first. These were then placed in the bodies of the living beings. It is said that the bodies come from the earth, the essence from water and the eyes from light. Prana and apana have the wind as their refuge and the vacant spots in the bodies have space as their refuge. Vishnu is in their steps, Shakra is in their strength and Agni is in their bowels, desiring to eat. The directions are in the ears, with hearing. Sarasvati is in the tongue, with speech. The ears, the skin, the eyes and the nose as the fifth, are said to be the senses of sight and it is through using these that knowledge becomes successful. Sound, touch, form, taste and scent as the fifth are separate from the senses. They should be thought of as objects of sight. Like horses are controlled, the senses must be yoked by the mind. The atman in the heart must control the mind. The mind is the lord of all the senses and their objects. The atman and the mind ensure their creation and destruction. The senses, the objects of the senses, nature, consciousness, mind, prana, apana and the soul always reside in the bodies of embodied beings. But attributes, sound[339] and consciousness are not the base for knowledge. Knowledge is generated through energy, never through the qualities. In this way, in the body, the seventeenth is surrounded by the sixteen qualities.[340] Using his mind, a learned brahmana sees the atman inside himself. It cannot be seen through the eye or comprehended through all the senses. The great atman manifests itself through the lamp of the mind. It is without sound, touch, form, taste and scent. It is without decay. It is in the body, but is without a body. It is beyond the senses, but can be seen. It is not manifest, but exists in the manifest body. It is immortal, but resorts to a mortal body. A person who beholds it obtains the brahman after death. A learned person looks upon a learned brahmana, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste[341] equally. The great atman pervades everything and dwells in all beings, mobile and immobile. The atman is in all beings and all beings are in the atman. A person who sees the atman in all beings obtains the brahman. The extent to which one knows the atman in one's own self is the extent to which one knows the atman in the paramatman.[342] A person who always knows this, obtains immortality. He regards all beings as his own self and is engaged in the welfare of all beings. He leaves no trail, like a bird in the sky or an aquatic creature in the water, and the gods themselves are confused in trying to follow his tracks. A person whose tracks cannot be seen is indeed extremely great-souled. Time cooks all beings, inside its own self. But that which cooks time[343] can never be known. It does not exist above, or diagonally, below, to the side, or in the middle. It does not exist anywhere. Nor has it come from anywhere. Everything in this world is inside it. There is nothing that is outside it. Even if one shoots one thousand arrows one after another, each endued with the speed of thought, even then one will not be able to obtain the extremities of that which is the cause of everything. It is subtler than the most subtle. It is larger than the largest. Its hands and feet extend in every direction. The eyes, heads and faces are everywhere. The ears are everywhere in the world. It is established, pervading everything. It is smaller than the smallest. It is larger than the largest. It is certainly seen to be established inside all beings. The atman has two attributes, indestructible and destructible. The destructible form is in all the beings. The indestructible form is divine and immortal. Having gone to the city with the nine gates,[344] Hamsa[345] restrains and controls it. It is the lord of all beings, mobile and immobile. Those who are accomplished speak of the truth—it resorts to the nine, subject to destruction and decay. But Hamsa is said to be without decay. It is mysterious and is Akshara.[346] The learned obtain Akshara and give up life and birth.'"'[347]

Chapter 1560(232)

‘‘Vyasa said, ‘O virtuous son! I was asked by you and have recounted the exact truth. I have recounted to you the philosophy of sankhya. I will now tell you everything about the tasks of yoga. Listen. The intelligence, the mind and all the senses must be united. O son! If one meditates on the atman, one will obtain supreme knowledge. One will obtain this through tranquility. One must be self-controlled and devote oneself to adhyatma. One must turn one’s intelligence to finding pleasure in the atman. One must be pure in one’s deeds. One will then know what should be known. The learned and the wise say that five taints associated with yoga must be severed. These are desire, anger, avarice, fear and sleep as the fifth. Anger is conquered through tranquility, desire by giving up all resolution. A patient person resorts to the truth and should give up all sleep. Through fortitude, the penis and the stomach must be controlled. The hands and the feet must be protected through the eyes. The eyes and the ears must be controlled through the mind, the mind through words and deeds. Fear can be conquered through attentiveness and greed by serving the wise. In this way, one must attentively conquer the taints associated with yoga. One must honour the fire and brahmanas and bow down before the gods. One must abandon hateful words, those that are full of violence and not pleasant to the mind. The brahman is the energetic seed and is the essence of everything. It is the single one in both kinds of beings, mobile and immobile. Meditation, studying, donations, truth, modesty, uprightness, forgiveness, purity in food, cleanliness and control of the senses—energy can be increased through these and sins cleansed. One is then successful in all one’s pursuits, and knowledge arrives. One must behave equally towards all beings and towards what has been obtained and what has not been obtained. One will be cleansed of all sins, energetic, restrained in diet and in control over the senses. Having subjugated desire and anger, one must desire to attain the objective of the brahman. One must be single-minded and controlled in restraining the mind and the senses. Just before night, or just after night, one must fix one’s mind on the atman.[348] If a person cannot control a single one of the five senses, that is a weakness in the senses, and wisdom drains out, as if through a hole at the bottom. The mind must first be subdued, like a fisherman drawing in the fish. A person engaged in yoga must then control the ears, the eyes, the tongue and the nose. Having restrained them, they must be fixed in the mind. With all resolution having ebbed away from the mind, it must then be fixed on the atman. The five[349] must be controlled and placed in the mind. After this, the mind, as the sixth, must be placed in the atman. When this has been done, the brahman is pleased and manifests itself. It blazes, like flames without smoke, or like the resplendent sun. Like fire in lightning in the sky, one then beholds the atman inside one's own self. Everything is then seen in it and it is seen in everything. Learned brahmanas see the great atman. They are immensely wise and persevering and are engaged in the welfare of all beings. If a person is rigid in his vows and observes them for a limited period of time,[350] seated alone, he obtains identity with Akshara. Infatuation, hallucination, the whirling around of scent, hearing and sight, wonders of taste and touch, pleasant, cool and warm breezes, powers and other phenomena—all these are obtained through yoga.[351] Knowing the truth about these, he must ignore them and return them to his atman. A restrained sage must ignore them. At three times,[352] he must engage himself in yoga—on the summit of a mountain, at a place of worship, or at the foot of a tree. He must control all his senses, like cattle in a cow pen in a village. He must always be single-minded in his thoughts and turn his mind to nothing other than yoga. In every way possible, one must restrain the fickle mind. He must be engaged in this and must never deviate. Single-minded in attaining the objective, he must reside in deserted mountain caverns, temples to the gods or deserted houses. He should have no association with others, in words, deeds and thoughts. He must ignore everything and be restrained in his diet. He should look at what has been obtained and what has not been obtained as equal. He should not be delighted. Nor should he be distressed. Whether he is praised or whether he is reprimanded, he must look on both equally, and not desire good things for the former and bad things for the latter. He should not be delighted at obtaining something. He should not think about something that has not been obtained. He must behave equally towards all beings and must follow the dharma of the wind.[353] Such a virtuous person seeks everything in the atman and looks upon everything equally. If he is engaged in this way for six months, he obtains the Shabda-Brahma.[354] On seeing that subjects are afflicted by grief,[355] he must look upon a lump of earth and gold in the same way. He must withdraw from this path.[356] He must desist from it and be free of confusion. Even if one belongs to one of the inferior varnas and even if one happens to be a woman, as long as one desires dharma, one can resort to this path and obtain the supreme objective.[357] A man who controls his senses and is not fickle obtains the ancient and eternal one who is without birth and without decay. It is subtler than the most subtle. It is greater than the greatest. United with his own atman, he sees it inside himself. These are the words of the great-souled maharshis. They spoke about this and beheld it with their minds. In one's mind, one should follow the words that have been spoken and instructed. A learned person will then see the great being inside his own self, until the time comes for a living being to be destroyed.'"'

Chapter 1561(233)

'"Shuka asked, 'The words of the Vedas talk about undertaking tasks and also about renouncing them. Where do those who pursue knowledge go?[358] Where do those who act go? I wish to hear about this. Please tell me about this. These two kinds of instructions seem to be similar and also contradictory.'"

'Bhishma said, "Thus addressed, Parashara's son spoke these words to his son.[359] 'I will tell you about the paths of tasks and knowledge and also about the destructible and the indestructible, about where those who pursue knowledge go, and about the destination of those who undertake rites. O son! Listen single-mindedly to the mysteries of one and the other. Listen to dharma, as stated by the believers, and also to what the non-believers say.[360] Both sides may seem to be similar, but there are differences between them. There are two paths on which the Vedas are established. There is dharma with characteristics of pravritti, and nivritti is also well spoken of.[361] A being is bound down through deeds and is freed through knowledge. Therefore, those who are far-sighted do not undertake any tasks. After death, one is born again through deeds and adopts a form with the sixteen attributes. Through knowledge, one becomes part of the eternal and umanifest one, the one without decay and transformation. Therefore, men who are limited in intelligence praise deeds alone. They find pleasure and worship this net of bodily entities. However, there are also those who are supreme in intelligence, accomplished in the sight of dharma. They do not praise deeds, just as a person who drinks water does not praise wells and rivers. Deeds lead to fruits, happiness and unhappiness, existence and non-existence. However, a person who obtains knowledge reaches the spot where there is no reason to grieve. Once one goes there, one does not die. Once one goes there, one is not born. Once once goes there, one does not decay. Once one goes there, one does not increase. That is the supreme brahman, eternal, unmanifest and without decay. It is without any obstructions. It is without any exertion. It is immortal. It is without destruction. Opposite sentiments do not bind down a person there, in thoughts or in deeds. He is equal and friendly towards everyone, engaged in the welfare of all beings. O son! There is a difference between a man who is full of knowledge and one who is full of deeds. Know that he[362] can be seen to be as subtle as the moon established in its *kala*.[363] The rishi[364] has spoken in detail about what has been inferred. A newborn moon can be seen in the firmament, like a bent sliver. O son! Know that a person is embodied with the qualities of his deeds and, with those eleven transformations in him, is endowed with the increase in kalas.[365] The kshetrajna is the divinity who finds refuge in the bodily form, like a drop of water on the petal of a lotus. A person who conquers his atman through renunciation always knows this. Know that all beings are united with the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. The jivatman has these qualities. But know the jivatman to be the paramatman. Consciousness is said to be the quality of living beings. It makes them endeavour in everything. Those who know speak about the supreme beyond the body. The seven worlds flow from that.’”’[366]

Chapter 1562(234)

‘“Shuka said, ‘I have understood that there is a creation that is destructible, one united with qualities and the senses. But there is another kind of auspicious and eternal creation that can be comprehended by meditating on the atman. However, I again wish to hear about the reasons for virtuous conduct in this world. That is what righteous ones have ordained. I desire to hear those described. The words of the Vedas say that tasks should be undertaken and also that they should be renounced. How will I know which is better? You should explain this to me. Once I have been purified through instructions from my preceptor, I will know the truth about conduct in the world. Using the intelligence to separate and delink my atman from my body, I will then obtain that which is without decay.'

'"Vyasa replied, 'In ancient times, Brahma himself laid down rules for conduct. The supreme and virtuous rishis followed this earlier. The supreme rishis conquered the worlds through brahmacharya. In their hearts, they placed their atmans in what was most beneficial. They placed their minds in their atmans. They dwelt in the forest and survived on roots and fruits. They tormented themselves through extremely great austerities. They dwelt in auspicious spots. They showed no injury towards living beings. At the right time, they went to seek alms from the abodes of those who were in the vanaprastha stage, when there was no smoke and when the pestles were silent.[367] They obtained the brahman. They did not praise. They did not bow down. They gave up both the good and the bad. They roamed around alone in the forest, surviving on whatever little was available.'

'"Shuka said, 'In the words of ordinary people, the words of the Vedas are contradictory. In matters of proof, when there is such a conflict, which is then the sacred text? I wish to hear about this. O illustrious one! Tell me about it. How should one act, so as not to violate any rites that have been laid down?'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed, Gandhavati's son[368] spoke to his son. The rishi honoured the words that his infinitely energetic son had spoken. 'Whether a person is a householder, a brahmachari, in the vanaprashta stage or a mendicant, if he undertakes all the prescribed tasks, he attains the supreme objective. Even if a person follows any one of these ashramas in the appropriate way and is free from desire and hatred, he will obtain greatness after death. These are four steps in a ladder that vests with the brahman. By resorting to this ladder, a person obtains greatness in Brahma's world. For one quarter of the life, a person should follow brahmacharya, without any malice. Learned about dharma and artha, he should dwell with his preceptor or with his preceptor's son. He must be compliant and must not censure anybody. Having performed all his tasks, he must study with his preceptor, but only when his preceptor has summoned him for a lesson. In his preceptor's house, he must eat and sleep after his preceptor, and awake before his preceptor does. A disciple must perform all the tasks that a servant would have. Having done all this, he must stand at the side. He must be like a servant who performs all tasks and is accomplished in all the duties. He must be pure and skilled. He must possess all the qualities. He must be limited and pleasant in speech. He must conquer his senses and must not look at his preceptor with fierce eyes. He must not eat before he has eaten. He must not drink before he has drunk. He must not be seated before he has sat down. He must not sleep before he has slept. He must gently touch his preceptor's feet with upturned palms and knead them, the right with the right and the left with the left. He must respectfully greet his preceptor and say, "O illustrious one! Instruct me. I have done this. O illustrious one! I will do whatever else you ask me to." Having told him all this, he must offer all his riches to the preceptor. He must again tell his preceptor about all the tasks that he has undertaken and ask about what needs to be done. There are some scents and tastes a brahmachari must refrain from. However, it is the determination of dharma that once he has graduated, he can use these again. These are the detailed rules that have been laid down for a brahmachari. Practising all these, he must remain near his preceptor. To the best of his strength, he must try to please his preceptor. Having done this, the disciple can move on from this ashrama to another ashrama and observe the duties of that. One quarter of his life will thus be spent on the vows of the Vedas and fasting. Having given the dakshina to the preceptor, following the prescribed ordinances, he will graduate. Desiring to accomplish dharma, he will follow dharma and ignite a fire,[369] accepting a wife. This is the state of a householder, in which, he spends the second quarter of his life.'"'

Chapter 1563(235)

"Vyasa said, 'For the second quarter of his life, he will dwell in a house, in the state of a householder. Desiring to pursue dharma, he will follow good vows, ignite a fire and accept a wife. Wise and learned ones have laid down four kinds of conduct for a householder. The first of these is to maintain a store of grain, the second to maintain a pot of grain, the third is not to provide for tomorrow, while the last is to follow the conduct of pigeons.[370] If one desires to follow dharma and conquer the worlds, in progressive order, the succeeding one is superior to the preceding one.[371] A person who follows the first must undertake six tasks.[372] A person who follows the second must undertake three.[373] A person who follows the third must undertake two.[374] The fourth will only base himself on sacrifices to Brahma.[375] The dharma of a householder is said to be great. However, one must not cook only for one's own self. Nor should animals pointlessly be slaughtered.[376] If an animal or an inanimate being[377] is to be brought down, the ordinances of a sacrifice must be observed. He must not sleep during the day, or during the first part of the night and the last part. He must not eat in between.[378] When it is not her season, he must not summon his wife. In his house, there must never be a brahmana who is not fed or not worshipped. Guests who convey oblations at sacrifices, those who are learned in the Vedas and have bathed themselves in the vows, those who are accomplished and learned in the Vedas, those who are generous and live according to their own dharma, those who observe the rites and those who are ascetics must always be honoured. It is recommended that offerings meant for the gods and the ancestors are for people like these. It is instructed that a share should be given to all beings, even if they sport long nails and hair, even if they have been dislodged from dharma despite knowing it, even if they have deviated from *agnihotra* sacrifices and even if they have injured the old and the young. A person who is a householder must give food to all of them. The eating of leftovers is always like eating amrita. It is like eating the oblations that are left at the end of a sacrifice, like amrita. A person who eats after the servants have eaten is said to subsist on leftovers. He must be content with his own wife. He must be self-controlled. He must conquer his senses and be devoid of malice. He must not get into debates with officiating priests, priests, preceptors, maternal uncles, guests, dependants, the aged, the young, the distressed, physicians, kin, matrimonial allies, relatives, mothers, fathers, daughters-in-law, brothers, sons, wives, daughters and the category of servants. Having been freed from such conversations, he is freed from all sins. If he can conquer this, there is no doubt that he wins all the worlds. The preceptor is the lord of Brahma's world, the father is the lord of Prajapati's world.[379] Guests are the lords of Indra's world, the officiating priest of the world of the gods. Daughters-in-law hold sway over the world of apsaras, kin over that of the Vishvadevas. Matrimonial allies and relatives control the directions and mothers and maternal uncles control the earth. The old, the young, the distressed and the weak hold sway over the sky and have a power like Vishnu. The elder brother is like a father. The wife and the son are like one's own body. The class of servants represents one's own shadow. The daughter is most loved. Therefore, one must always tolerate them, without any anxiety, and must never reprimand these. A person devoted to the dharma of a householder must be learned. He must always be devoted to dharma and must be free of exhaustion. He must perform any task because of considerations of artha. He must act in conformity with dharma. There are three kinds of conduct for a householder and in progressive order, each subsequent one is superior to the preceding one.[380] This is also said to be true of the four ashramas.[381] These are said to be the rules that ensure prosperity in all tasks. A kingdom prospers when those who dwell in it follow the conduct of those who store grain in pots, or glean them like pigeons from the ground.[382] If a person cheerfully follows the vows of a householder, ten generations of his ancestors and ten generations of his descendants attain the supreme objective. Acting in this way, he obtains worlds obtained by universal emperors. This is also the objective ordained for those who control their senses. The world of heaven is ordained for householders who are generous in their minds and engaged in welfare. That heaven is full of excellent blossoming flowers and has celestial vehicles. It has been spoken about in the Vedas. Householders who control their souls find a place in the world of heaven. The brahman is the ladder that frees them. By following this second mode,[383] one obtains greatness in the world of heaven. After this, there is the supremely great ashrama that is the third, spoken about for those who are ready to cast aside their bodies. Residing in the forest is superior to being a householder. They waste away their bodies there. Listen to this.'"'

Chapter 1564(236)

'Bhishma said, "You have been told what learned ones have ordained about the conduct of householders. O Yudhishthira! Listen to what has been spoken about next. In due order, a person must proceed to the third stage, one that is characterized by supreme conduct. This is the ashrama of vanaprastha, followed by those who are not distressed from observing vows. O Partha! Listen to the conduct of those fortunate ones, who follow this everywhere in the world. They reside in auspicious regions and follow this conduct after having examined it first.

'"Vyasa said, 'When a householder sees wrinkles on his body and white hair, and when he sees the children of his children, he should then resort to the forest. The third quarter of the life should be spent dwelling in vanaprastha. He must tend to the fires he used to tend to.[384] He must worship the residents of heaven. He must be controlled and restrained in his diet. Without any distraction, he must only eat at the sixth time indicated for taking meals.[385] He must maintain cows and other things required for agnihotra sacrifices. He must survive on rice or barley that grows wild and has not been tilled. He must offer oblations at the five kinds of sacrifices.[386] Four kinds of conduct are recommended for those who are in the vanaprastha ashrama. Some only wash[387] what is needed immediately. Others store enough for a month. Some others store for a year and some others store for twelve years. To accomplish their objectives, they must perform the sacrifice of honouring guests. When it rains, they must only have the sky for a shelter. When it is autumn, they must find refuge in the water. When it is summer, they must torment themselves through the five austerities.[388] They must always be restrained in diet. Some roam around the earth. Others are seated or lie down on the bare ground. In the forest, some sprinkle their beds and seats with water. Some use their teeth as mortars for grinding grain. Others use stones for crushing grain. Some only drink a little bit of grain mixed with water during shuklapaksha. Some only drink[389] during krishnapaksha. Others eat what becomes available in the normal course of things. Some are rigid in their vows and subsist on roots, fruits and flowers. As is appropriate, they follow the mode revered by the

Vaikhanasas.[390] That apart, there are many other learned ones who have been consecrated. The fourth stage[391] is generally referred to as the dharma of the Upanishads. This follows after garhasthya and vanaprastha. O son! Even in this yuga, brahmanas who know the truth about everything have followed this—Agastya, the saptarshis,[392] Madhucchanda, Aghamarshana, Samkriti, Sudiva, Tandi, who lived on barley and conquered his exhaustion, Ahovirya, Kavya, Tandya, the wise Medhatithi, Shala, Vaka, Nirvaka and Shunyapala, who conquered his exhaustion. They were learned in this kind of dharma and went to heaven. O son! There were large numbers of Yayavara[393] rishis, fierce in their austerities and accomplished and far-sighted about dharma. They immediately obtained the fruits of this dharma. There were so many brahmanas who resorted to the forest that it is impossible to speak about them. There were the Vaikhanasas, the Valakhilyas and Sikatas. They performed difficult deeds. They were always devoted to dharma. They conquered their senses. All of them went to the forest and immediately obtained the fruits of their dharma. Those fearless ones may not have become *nakshatra*s,[394] but can be seen in the large number of stellar bodies. When one is overcome by old age and afflicted by disease, in the fourth quarter of one's life, one should abandon the vanaprastha stage. One should perform the sacrifice that can be performed in a single day and offer up everything as dakshina. One must perform one's own funeral rites.[395] One must take pleasure in one's own self and must not depend on anyone else. One must regard one's own self as the sacrificial fire and give up all possessions. One must perform the sacrifice that can be performed in a single day, which is the sacrifice of all sacrificies. When one sacrifices one's own self, all other sacrifices and rites can cease. This sacrifice for the sake of emancipation is like making sacrifices to the three fires.[396] One should not find fault with the food and only eat five or six mouthfuls for the sake of the five breaths of life.[397] At the end of vanaprastha, a sage will cut his hair, beard and nails. Having cleansed himself, he will then proceed from this ashrama to the next sacred ashrama. Such a brahmana departs, offering freedom from fear to all beings. After death, he obtains the eternal and energetic worlds. He is excellent in conduct and all his sins have been cleansed. He doesn't act so as to desire anything in this world or in the next. He is without anger and without confusion. He is beyond friendship and enmity. Such a man is indifferent towards anything other than his own atman. He observes *yama* and that which follows.[398] He is not distressed at having to give up the principles, oblations and mantras of the sacred texts.[399] He is pursuing the objective of performing a sacrifice with his atman. He has conquered his senses and has no doubt about this supreme dharma. After the other three, this fourth ashrama is said to be supreme. It is the best and has all the good qualities. I will recount that supreme state to you. Listen.'"'

Chapter 1565(237)

'"Shuka said, 'You have spoken to me about what should be done in vanaprastha. When one is engaged in this,[400] to the best of one's ability, how should one engage the atman, so that one attains the supreme objective?'

'"Vyasa replied, 'A person must cleanse himself in the two ashramas.[401] Having done this, he must then engage in tasks for the supreme objective. Listen attentively to this. Having eliminated all taints in the first three stages, he must then resort to the supreme state of renunciation. Renunciation is the best stage. Listen to the conduct that must be followed in that state. One should always roam around alone and seek to accomplish the objective without any help. A person who roams around alone sees that there is nothing to be shunned and there is nothing that decays. He is without a fire. He is without an abode. At best, he enters a village for the sake of food. It is recommended that he should save nothing for the next day. His sentiments must be like that of a sage. He must eat little, be restrained in his diet and eat only once a day. The signs of a mendicant are a skull,[402] shelter under trees, old garments as attire, lack of companions and indifference towards all beings. Words penetrate him like stones hurled into a well[403] and do not return to the original speaker. Such a person is fit to dwell in the ashrama of isolation. He does not see others. He does not hear others. He never speaks injurious words, especially about brahmanas. He always speaks words that are pleasant to brahmanas. He is silent when he is censured and finds treatment for this within his own self. Though he is always alone, he fills the entire sky.[404] To him, a deserted spot seems to be full of people. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He covers himself with anything. He eats anything. He sleeps anywhere. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is afraid of company, as if they are serpents. He regards anything that satiates as hell.[405] He regards women as corpses.[406] The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is not angered or delighted, regardless of whether he is honoured or insulted. He does not cause any being to be frightened. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is not delighted at the prospect of death. Nor is he delighted at the prospect of remaining alive. He only waits for the time,[407] like a servant awaiting instructions. His consciousness has been cleansed. His food and words are clean. He is free from all sins. Since he is without enemies, what fear can he have? He has been freed and has no cause for fear from anything that possesses a body. The footsteps of any animal that follows get lost in the footsteps of an elephant. Everything is absorbed in the footprints of an elephant.[408] In that fashion, all dharma and artha are absorbed in lack of injury towards all beings. A person who practises non-violence always resides in what is immortal. He is non-violent and looks on everything equally. He is truthful. He has fortitude and controls his senses. He is the refuge of all beings. He attains the supreme objective. In this way, learned ones are content in their wisdom and are not frightened. He has gone beyond death and the attributes of death do not affect him. Such a sage is free from all attachments and seems to be established in the sky. He wanders alone and tranquil. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. His life is for the sake of dharma and his dharma is for the sake of others. His days and nights are for the sake of the auspicious. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He is without desire. He is without exertion. He does not bow down his head. He is without praise.[409] He does not engage in any inferior deeds. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He takes delight in the happiness of all beings. He is extremely distressed at the misery of everyone. If they are frightened, he sorrows. He faithfully undertakes his own tasks. Granting beings freedom from fear is superior to all donations and dakshina. A person who first gives up all injury to the bodies of beings grants these subjects eternal freedom from fear. From the navel of the world, the face is raised upwards and oblations are offered into it.[410] The head and the upper limbs of the fire receive everything, the good and the bad. In the confines of his heart, he offers his own life up as a libation. All the worlds and the gods are satisfied with his offering up his atman as oblation in that agnihotra. It is divine and golden. It has three shells and three parts.[411] It is the supreme objective and is foremost among things to be known. It is greatest in all the worlds. The gods and accomplished people with good deeds walk along that path. It has been spoken of as the greatest objective, the essence of what is to be known in the Vedas and all the rites. He who knows it as the atman in his own body is always loved by the gods. It is not attached to the earth and is divine. It cannot be measured. It is golden. It was born from an egg and resides in the egg.[412] It is like a winged bird in the firmament. Blazing in its rays, it can be known inside the atman. It whirls around and has no decay. It rotates on six naves, with twelve spokes and excellent joints.[413] The wheel of time is deep and mysterious and everything in the universe heads towards its gaping mouth. It pervades the body of everything in the universe and all the worlds progress towards it. That is spoken of as something that satisfies the gods. When they are satisfied, they gratify that open mouth. The body is ancient and eternal and is full of energy. It is the end of all the worlds and offers freedom from fear. Beings are never frightened of him and he never causes fright to beings.[414] He is not censured. Nor does he censure anyone. A brahmana who sees the paramatman in his own atman is like that. He is humble and without confusion. He is beyond all sins. He desires nothing in this world, nor in the other world. He is without anger and without confusion. He regards a lump of clay and gold in the same way. He is devoid of sorrow and is beyond friendship and enmity. He is beyond censure and praise and beyond liking and disliking. He wanders around indifferent, as a mendicant.’”’

Chapter 1566(238)

““Vyasa said, ‘The kshetrajna has to experience the transformations of nature. These don’t know it,[415] but it knows them. It is made to undertake tasks because of the senses, with the mind as a sixth. Well-trained and excellent horses are firmly controlled.[416] The objects of the senses are superior to the senses and the mind is superior to these objects. Intelligence is superior to the mind and the mahat atman is superior to the mind. The unmanifest is superior to the mahat and the inmortal[417] is superior to the unmanifest. There is nothing that is superior to the immortal. It is the highest limit and the supreme objective. The atman is hidden inside all beings and cannot be seen. Only those who are sharp in their intelligence and can see the subtleties of the truth can fathom it. The intelligence must be used to collect all the senses, the many objects of the senses and the mind, as the sixth, into the atman. One must think about what should be thought about. Having used intelligence to goad the mind, one must meditate on the supreme. Realizing that he has no power, the person must seek to obtain the immortal objective through tranquility in his soul. But a person whose memory is fickle and whose self is under the subjugation of all the senses and who gives his atman up to them, is like a person who is dead and obtains nothing but death. Abandoning all resolution, the consciousness must be merged in the truth. When consciousness is vested in the truth, a person becomes like Kalanjara.[418] With the consciousness gratified, the sage goes beyond the good and the bad. He bases himself on the gratification of his atman and enjoys infinite happiness. A sign of that satisfaction is that he sleeps in contentment. He is like the flame of a lamp that is not stirred by the wind. In this way, at the beginning of the night and the end of the night,[419] he unites the atman with the atman.[420] He is virtuous in his diet and pure in his soul and beholds the atman in the atman.[421] This is the essence of all the Vedas and the sacred texts. O son! For realizing the atman, these are the instructions of the sacred texts. This is the essence of all dharma and all accounts about the truth. This amrita has been obtained by churning the ten thousand chants from the Rig Veda.[422] It is like wood and fire being used to churn butter from curds. O son! In that way, for you, I have given you the wisdom of the learned ones. O son! These are the words of the sacred texts, given as instructions to snatakas. These should not be given to people who are not tranquil, those who are not self-controlled and ascetics. Nor should they be given to those who are unacquainted with the words of the Vedas, or do not follow them. They should not be given to those who are malicious, not upright, those who are directionless in their tasks, those who slander and those who burn everything down in the science of argumentation. But they should be given to calm ascetics who are praised, or should be praised, and beloved sons and devoted disciples. The secrets of this dharma should be revealed to such people and not to anyone else. I think that even if a man is given the entire earth with all its treasures, this truth is superior to that gift. There is a greater and superhuman mystery about adhyatma. This was seen by the maharshis and sung about in Vedanta. You have asked me about it and I will tell you the truth about it.'"'

Chapter 1567(239)

'"Shuka asked, 'In detail, tell me about adhyatma again. O illustrious one! O supreme among the rishis! What is this adhyatma?'

'"Vyasa replied, 'O son! For men, there is something known as adhyatma. I will recount this to you. Listen to the explanation. Earth, water, fire, wind and space are the great elements in beings and are like the waves of the ocean.[423] A tortoise stretches out its limbs and draws them back again. Like that, the great elements extend and withdraw in beings. They pervade all the mobile and immobile objects. Creation and destruction are determined on the basis of these. The five great elements exist in all the beings that have been created. O son! But it is also seen that these exist unevenly in different beings.'

'"Shuka asked, 'How can one discern this in the bodies? What are senses? What are qualities? How can they be felt?'

'"Vyasa replied, 'I will accurately describe what has been comprehended about this. Listen attentively to the truth about how it occurs. Sound, hearing and space inside beings—these three originate in space. The breath of life, exertion and touch—these three are the qualities of the wind. Form, sight and digestion—these three are said to result from fire. Taste, tongue and juices—these three are the qualities of water. Scent, nose and the body—these three are the qualities of the earth. The five elements that I have described to you mix with the senses and undergo transformations. Touch is said to be associated with the wind, taste with water and form with fire. Sound is said to be created by space and smell is the attribute of the earth. The mind, intelligence and sentiments—these three are created by their own selves.[424] Though these are beyond the qualities, it is the view that they are not superior to the qualities. There are five senses in men and the mind is said to be the sixth. Intelligence is said to be the seventh and the kshetrajna is the eighth. Rajas, sattva and tamas—these three are created by their own selves. Those qualities are seen to exist equally in all beings. A tortoise extends its limbs and draws them back again. In that way, intelligence extends the qualities and draws them back. A person who is supreme in intelligence acts so as to look for it[425] above the feet, the hands, the face and the head. Intelligence is controlled by the qualities, and the senses are controlled by intelligence. Among all of these, the mind is the sixth. If there is no intelligence, how can there be qualities? When a person is full of cheerfulness and is seen to be tranquil in his soul and pure, that is held up by sattva. When a person is full of torment in deeds and thoughts, rajas is always the originator and this confuses beings. When a person is confused about the unmanifest and finds this imcomprehensible and impossible to know, this is driven by tamas. Delight, joy, bliss, peace and satisfaction in the consciousness, regardless of whether something unexpected occurs or does not occur—these are the qualities of sattva. Insolence, falsehood in words, greed, confusion, lack of forgiveness, whether there is a reason for this or whether there is no reason for this—are the signs of rajas. Delusion, distraction, lassitude, sleep and lack of exertion—whenever these are indulged in, that is known to be the quality of tamas.’”’

Chapter 1568(240)

““Vyasa said, ‘The mind creates sentiments, and intelligence chooses between them. The heart differentiates between the pleasant and the unpleasant. Know that there are three kinds of urges behind action. The objects of the senses are superior to the senses and the mind is superior to the objects of the senses. Intelligence is superior to the mind and it is held that the atman is superior to intelligence. Intelligence is in the atman of men. Intelligence is in the atman that is inside. When it creates sentiments, it becomes the mind. Since the senses are different, the intelligence discriminates between them. When it hears, it becomes hearing. When it touches, it becomes touch. When it sees, it become sight. When it tastes, it becomes the tongue. When it smells, it becomes the nose. It is intelligence that creates a difference between these. What are called the senses in men are seen to be the three kinds of sentiments of the intelligence.[426] One is sometimes delighted. At other times, one grieves. There are times when a person is united with neither happiness, nor unhappiness. The ocean is the lord of the rivers and the giant shoreline withstands the waves. Like that, though driven by the three sentiments, it can transcend them.[427] Though thought of as existing separately, when it desires anything, intelligence is known as the mind. All the strong senses must be conquered. In due course, when each of these[428] overwhelms the intelligence, it exists in the mind. Rajas is excited and follows sattva. Just as the spokes are attached to the wheel of a chariot, those qualities are attached to those three.[429] A man must use his supreme intelligence like a lamp to control the senses and use yoga to be indifferent and immobilize desire. While qualities are natural, a learned person is not confused. He is always without sorrow and without delight and beyond jealousy. The senses pursue objects of desire and are incapable of seeing the atman. It is difficult for people with cleansed souls to see it in this way, not to speak of others. However, the mind can be used to control them,[430] as if through reins. The atman then manifests itself in all beings, like a lamp inside a pot, when the darkness has been overcome. An aquatic bird doesn’t become wet, even when it roams around in water. In that fashion, a person whose wisdom is accomplished is not tainted by material objects. Though he enjoys them, he is never attached to them. He has performed deeds earlier,[431] but only loves the atman now, which is inside all living beings. He has given up the path characterized by the qualities. For him, there are no qualities, other than those engendered by the sattva in his atman. The qualities are incapable of comprehending the atman, though it always knows them. It sees the qualities and is also their creator. Know that this is the subtle difference between understanding and the kshetrajna. One of them creates the qualities. But the qualities do not create that single one. They[432] are naturally different, but are always united. The fish that lives in water is different from the environment in which it lives. A gnat may be attached to a fig tree, but they are actually different. A blade of grass is also different from the clump of *munja* grass it is in. Like that, though they are united, they are actually established separately.'"'

Chapter 1569(241)

''Vyasa said, 'Understanding creates the qualities and the kshetrajna is also established there. However, the lord[433] is indifferent towards all the qualities that have been created. All the qualities that have been created follow their own nature. This is like a spider creating strands that are the qualities. Despite pravritti, some are not felt, because they decay and are withdrawn. Others are destroyed because of nivritti.[434] One must think about both these possibilities and try to do what is best. Following either principle, one can obtain the womb of greatness. A man must always act so as to obtain the one without beginning and without end.[435] He must not be angry. Nor should he be delighted. He must always be devoid of jealousy. He must firmly sever the strands in his heart that are due to intelligence and thoughts. Having overcome them, he will be free from doubt. He will be devoid of sorrow and obtain happiness. A man who is dislodged from the ground and falls down and is submerged in a full river is tormented. Know this world to be also like that. However, a learned man who knows the truth acts accordingly and it is as if he is on land. A person who knows the atman realizes that the atman is only knowledge. Such a person understands the origin and destruction of all beings. He looks on both[436] equally and soon obtains excellent and supreme tranquility. In particular, because of birth, this comes naturally to brahmanas. Knowledge of the atman and tranquility are sufficient to lead to emancipation. Having known this, one becomes enlightened.[437] What other qualities can there be of learning? Having known this, learned people accomplish their objectives and are emancipated. Those without learning suffer from great fear. But those with learning have no such great fear. There is no objective that is superior to this, the eternal end obtained by learned people. There are people who are afflicted with jealousy because of material objects.[438] There are others who glance at these and sorrow. However, an accomplished person looks at these and does not grieve at what has been obtained and what has not been obtained. Anything done without attachment destroys earlier deeds.[439] In this world, one must act so as to renounce[440] both the pleasant and the unpleasant.'"'

Chapter 1570(242)

'"Shuka asked, 'O illustrious one! Tell me about supreme dharma, to which nothing is superior. What is that special dharma?' '"Vyasa replied, 'I will tell you about the dharma that was praised by the ancient rishis. This is special among all kinds of dharma. Listen single-mindedly to this. The senses cause agitation. One must carefully use one's intelligence to restrain them. This is like a father controlling his foolish and wayward sons. The concentration of the mind and the senses is the greatest austerity. Since all dharmas flow from this, this is regarded as supreme dharma. The intelligence must be used to restrain all of them, with the mind as the sixth. Thinking a lot about what it is difficult to think about, one must be satisfied in the atman. Just as cows return from pasture and return to their houses, when one is immersed in the atman, one can see the supreme and the eternal. Like a flame that is without smoke, great-souled and learned brahmanas can see the great atman[441]in all atmans. A giant tree with many branches and full of flowers and fruit does not itself know which are its flowers and which are its fruit. In that way, the atman does not know where it has come from and where it is going.[442] However, there is an inner atman that sees everything.[443] With the blazing lamp of knowledge, see the atman inside your own self. Having seen the atman inside your own self, know everything and know that you are not the body. Be cleansed from all sin, like a snake that has cast off its skin. With that supreme intelligence, be free of sin and free from anxiety. This terrible river[444] has currents that flow in every direction in this world. The five senses are crocodiles and the mind and resolution are embankments. It is strewn with the grass of greed and confusion. Desire and anger are the reptiles. While truth constitutes the *tirtha*s, falsehood constitutes the waves. Wrath is the mud in that supreme river. It arises from the unmanifest and flows swiftly. A person who has not cleansed his soul is incapable of crossing it. It is full of desire in the form of crocodiles. Use your intelligence to cross it. It flows towards the ocean of life and its womb is in the nether regions. It is difficult to cross. O son! It flows from one's birth and in this world, its eddies are impossible to cross. Learned and persevering people, accomplished in wisdom, can cross it. Having crossed, you will be freed from everything. You will be pure and your soul will be cleansed. Having resorted to that superior intelligence, you will attain the brahman. After crossing, you will be free from all hardships. Your soul will be cheerful and devoid of sin. You will calmly look down on beings on this earth, as if from the top of a mountain. You will not be enraged. You will not be delighted. You will not possess any violent designs. You will behold the creation and destruction of all beings. The learned think that this is the best among all kinds of dharma. Sages who know about the truth and are the best among the upholders of dharma, say that this is dharma. This knowledge about the atman should be made known and instructed to one's son. It should be spoken about to someone who is self-controlled and devoted and has welfare in mind. This knowledge about the atman is a mystery. It is the greatest among all mysterious things. O son! The omnipresent atman is itself a witness to what I have spoken about. The brahman is not female, male or neuter. It doesn't experience misery and joy. It is the past, the present and the future. If one knows this, irrespective of whether one is male or female, one does not have to be born again. This has been ordained for obtaining freedom from birth. O son! Just as I have spoken about this to you, there are many other views and perceptions. But I have expounded what is proper. You are my son. You are a virtuous son, with qualities. Therefore, I have affectionately told you this excellent account. You asked me about it and for the sake of your welfare, I have lovingly told you. O son! I have told you what you asked me about.'"'

Chapter 1571(243)

““Vyasa said, ‘One should not be enamoured of fragrances, food and other objects that bring happiness. Nor should one accept ornaments. One should not desire for honour, deeds and fame. A brahmana is known from such conduct. There may be a person who has served,[445] observed brahmacharya and studied all the Vedas—the Rig, the Sama and the Yajur. But this does not make him a brahmana. There may be a person who looks upon all beings as kin, who knows everything and knows all the Vedas. But until lack of desire is generated in him, he does not become a brahmana, free from birth and death. There may be a person who has performed many kinds of sacrifices and rites, giving away a lot of dakshina. But until he is compassionate and without greed, he does not obtain the status of a brahmana. When a person does not frighten others and is himself not terrified by others, when he does not desire anything or hate anything, he attains the brahman. When he does not have wicked sentiments towards all beings, in deeds, thoughts and speech, he attains the brahman. Other than the single bondage of desire, there is no other bondage in this world. Someone who is free from the bondage of desire attains the brahman. Just as the moon is freed from misty clouds, he is freed from desire. Such a patient person is radiant and waits for his time[446] with fortitude. He is full, like waters flowing into the ocean. He is in a state that is not dislodged and is not overwhelmed by desire. He does not wish for any desires. In this body, he obtains the world of heaven. The Upanishads represent the truth of the Vedas. Self-control represents the truth of the Upanishads. Donations represent the self-control of the Upanishads. Austerities represent the donations of the Upanishads. Renunciation represents the austerities of the Upanishads. Happiness represents the renunciation of the Upanishads. Heaven represents the happiness of the Upanishads. Tranquility represents the heaven of the Upanishads. If you desire truth and contentment, their supreme signs are tranquility and the extinguishing of grief, sorrow in the mind, torment and thirst. Lack of sorrow, lack of ownership, tranquility, cheerfulness, immersion in the atman and lack of desire for riches—these again are said to be the six signs of completeness. The wise use these six qualities of sattva to become extremely learned. Those learned ones are established in the atman in this world and are also learned after death. It[447] has not been created, nor is it destroyed. It is natural and does not require cleansing. A wise person acts well, knows adhyatma and enjoys a happiness that is without decay. He restrains his mind from wandering around in every direction and fixes it.[448] Through this, he obtains a satisfaction that is incapable of being obtained through any other means. Through this, one is content without eating. Through this, one is content without riches. Through this, one is strong, despite lack of attachment. A person who knows this knows the Vedas. Such a person protects his atman and does not think about the various doors.[449] He is only devoted to the atman. Such a person is said to be a virtuous brahmana. Such a person is established, having extinguished his desire. He is controlled in the supreme truth. He is happy in every way, like the waxing moon. Because of his qualities, such a sage is honoured among beings as special. His happiness dispels sorrow, like the sun dispelling darkness. He transcends tamas. He transcends deeds. He transcends any decay in the qualities. He is not attached to material objects. He does not experience birth and death. He is free in every way and regards everything as equal. While still in his body, he transcends the senses and the objects of the senses. He obtains the supreme cause and transcends the reason for action.[450] Having obtained the greatest of the great, there is no return[451] for him.'"'

Chapter 1572(244)

''Vyasa said, 'There may be a disciple with qualities, one who has been freed from opposite sentiments and having established himself in artha and dharma, is inquisitive. Such a person should be told, and made to hear, about this greatness. Space, wind, light, water and the earth as the fifth, existence, non-existence and time—these exist in all beings formed by the five elements. The gaps are space and the sense of hearing is formed by that. A person who knows about the ordinances of the sacred texts knows that sound is its quality. Movement and prana and apana are constituted by the wind. Know that the sense of touch and touch itself is its[452] essence. Heat and the light in the eyes are full of light. Know that its qualities are the warmth in the body. Liquid discharges, juices and fat are instructed as belonging to water. It is held that the sense of taste and the tongue represent qualities of water. Bones, teeth, nails, beard, body hair, hair, veins, arteries, skin and all solid objects are the essence of the earth. The nose is said to represent the sense of smell. The sense associated with scent is known to represent the essence of the earth. Each succeeding element possesses the qualities of the preceding one.[453] The sages know that everything flows from the aggregate of the five elements. The mind is the ninth and intelligence is said to be the tenth.[454] The eleventh is the atman inside and this is said to be superior to all the others. Intelligence tries to analyse the atman and the mind tries to explain the atman. Through deeds, it is possible to infer that the atman is inside the body.[455] All living beings are characterized by these[456] and time. But a wise person sees it[457] as untainted and does not suffer from confusion.'"'

Chapter 1573(245)

''Vyasa said, 'It[458] is separate from the body and exists in a subtle form inside the body. Following the deeds mentioned in the sacred texts, those who are conscious of the secret texts, can see it. When the rays of the sun travel around, their coming and going cannot be seen. In that way, it is freed from the body and moves around, but it is beyond human powers to detect this.[459] However, the sun's radiance can be seen in an image in the water. In that fashion, the image of the soul can be seen in the gross body. In its subtle form, it is freed from the body. Those who have controlled their senses and know about the truth can perceive this. Whether asleep or awake, they always think about the atman. Primarily, they are free from opposites and abandon all tasks connected with rajas. Day is like night to them and night is like day. These yogis always practice yoga and have their atmans under control.[460] It is eternal. But because of qualities, it is not eternal in living beings. It is without birth and without decay and roams around in subtle form, with those seven.[461] If a man has not been able to conquer his mind and his intelligence even in his sleep, he distinguishes between his body and someone else's body and experiences happiness and unhappiness. That is the reason he obtains misery. That is also the reason he obtains joy. He experiences anger and greed and acting in accordance with these, faces calamities. In his dreams, he obtains great riches and performs auspicious deeds. But when he awakes, these cannot be seen. The extremely energetic atman is located in the hearts of all beings. However, because of being enveloped with tamas and rajas, it cannot be seen in the bodies. But there are those who are devoted to the sacred texts and yoga, searching for their own atmans. They look for that other form, which is as firm as a vajra. Different beings have been created, with the four ashramas and their tasks. But of these, yoga is the foremost and it takes one to the supreme brahman. Meditating, immersed in yoga and tranquil, Shandilya spoke about the seven subtle ones and the six strands of Maheshvara.'"'[462]

Chapter 1574(246)

''Vyasa said, 'There is a colourful tree of desire in the heart. It is generated from the store of confusion. Anger and insolence constitute its gigantic trunk. The desire for knowledge is the source of its liberation. Ignorance is its root and delusion sprinkles it with water. Jealousy makes up the leaves. Earlier acts provide the fertilizer. Lack of judgement and lack of thought are the branches. Sorrow makes up the terrible smaller branches. The thirst that seduces are the creepers that surround it from all sides. Those who are extremely greedy, desiring the fruit, worship that giant tree. They seek those fruits, tied up in bonds of effort. As long as one is tied down by those bonds, the tree attracts a person. But if a person endeavours, he can go beyond misery and transcend them both.[463] A person whose wisdom is accomplished and bursts forth burns down the tree, like the poison in a person afflicted with disease being destroyed. Aversion becomes his foundation and forcibly destroys its foundation.[464] Distraction is severed through renunciation and by resorting to supreme tranquility. A person who knows that desire only attracts, can use the knowledge of desire to kill it and go beyond misery. The body is described as a city and intelligence as its lord. For intelligence, which is based in the body, the entity known by the name of the mind is the one that thinks of the objectives. The senses are the subjects in the city and it is for them that tasks with objectives are performed. It is there that two terrible taints exist, known as tamas and rajas. With the lords of the city,[465] the citizens remain alive for this. Serving those two taints, the ones without the gates[466] also serve those objectives. It is difficult for intelligence to be conquered.[467] Nevertheless, its dharma is said to be the same as that of the mind. The citizens[468] are agitated by the mind and lose their stability. The intelligence strives for objectives that are damaged and are not successful. But despite not being accomplished, they are separately remembered and torment the mind. Though the mind alone is important, the intelligence is also separately afflicted. One is then enveloped by emptiness and covered by rajas. The mind meets this rajas and has a friendship with it. It gathers up the citizens of the city and hands them over to rajas.'"'

Chapter 1575(247)

'Bhishma said, "O son! Listen once again to an enumeration of the qualities in beings. O unblemished one! These are praiseworthy words, uttered from Dvaipayana's mouth. The words spoken by the illustrious one are like a blazing fire, with flames that have no smoke. O son! I am recounting these examples to you yet again. The earth has qualities of stability, gravity, hardness, productiveness, smell, heaviness, capacity, accumulation, establishment and fortitude. The water has qualities of being cool, juices, moisture, liquidity, softness, tranquility, taste, flowing and wetness in earthy objects. The qualities of fire are difficulty of resisting, energy, heat, capacity to cook, radiance, purification, affection, lightness, sharpness and the ability to rise upwards, as the tenth. The qualities of the wind are control, touch, the location of speech, independence, strength, speed, confusion, effort and the performance of tasks. The qualities of space are sound, expanse, ability to pervade, the lack of a foundation, the lack of a refuge, not being manifest, not being transformed, the ability of not being resisted and the ability to cause transformations in beings. Created by the five elements, it is said to possess fifty qualities.[469] Fickleness, argumentation, expression, detachment, imagination, forgiveness, propensity towards good, propensity towards evil and lack of readiness—these are the nine qualities of the mind. Thinking good and evil, enterprise, concentration, doubt and observation—these are the five qualities of intelligence.'"

'Yudhishthira asked, "How can intelligence have five qualities? How can the senses possess qualities? O grandfather! Tell me everything about this subtle knowledge."

'Bhishma replied, "There are said to be sixty qualities in beings.[470] Beings are always attached to those qualities. Beings, and what they are attached to, have been created by Akshara. O son! That is what has always been spoken about in this world. O son! Everything present in this world is said to have been thought in his mind and created. That is the truth about the origin of all beings and about the origin and destruction of beings. Therefore, obtain tranquility in your intelligence."'

Chapter 1576(248)

'Yudhishthira said, "These lords of the earth are lying down on the surface of the ground. Those immensely strong ones have lost their lives in the midst of the armies. Each of them was terrible in strength, endowed with the might of ten thousand elephants. In the battle, they have been slain by men who were their equals in energy and strength. In earlier times, I have not seen any others who could have killed these people in battle. They were full of valour. They were full of energy and strength. O immensely wise one! Yet they are lying down here, bereft of their lives. When they have lost their lives, the word 'dead' is used about them. These dead kings were generally fierce in their valour. I have a doubt in this connection. Where do senses and death come from? Who dies?[471] Where does death come from? Why do subjects on earth confront death and are borne away by it? O one who is like the immortals! O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "O son! In ancient times, in krita yuga, there was a king named Avikampaka. With his mounts having been destroyed in a battle, he came under the subjugation of the enemy. His son was named Hari and he was

Narayana’s equal in strength. However, with his army and his followers, he was slain in the battle by the enemy. Having come under the subjugation of the enemy, the king was overcome by sorrow, because of his son. Desiring peace, he roamed around on earth[472] and saw Narada. The lord of men told him everything that had happened, about his being captured in the battle by the enemy and about his son’s death. On hearing his words, Narada, the store of austerities, wished to dispel the sorrow on account of his son and told him an account. ‘O king![473] Listen to this extremely detailed account. O lord of the earth! I heard this account earlier. Engaged in the creation of subjects, the immensely energetic grandfather[474] created a large number of subjects. They became extremely old, but did not die, and generated offspring. O unblemished one! There was not the slightest bit of space that was not covered with living beings. O king! The three worlds were covered with them and were unable to breathe. O lord of the earth! He[475] then began to think about how they might be destroyed. However, though he thought about it, he could not determine any reason for the destruction. O great king! From the fire of his rage, a fire arose out of his body. O king! The grandfather burnt down all the directions with this. O king! The fire that resulted from the illustrious one’s anger burnt down heaven, earth, the firmament and the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects. When the great grandfather was enraged with the force of that great anger, living beings and immobile objects were certainly destroyed. Then the god Sthanu Shiva, the destroyer of enemy heroes and the lord of the Vedas, the one who has tawny and matted hair, wanted to ensure a refuge for the universe and went to Brahma. For the sake of the welfare of the subjects, Sthanu went to him. The blazing god, the granter of boons, spoke to Shiva. “It is my view that you should get a boon from me. What is your desire? I will accomplish it today. O Shambhu! I am the doer. I will ensure your pleasure and your growth.”’”’

Chapter 1577(249)

‘“‘Sthanu said, “O lord! Everything that I have done is for the sake of the subjects who have been created. O grandfather! Know that you should not be angry with the ones you have created. O god! In every direction, the subjects are being burnt because of the fierceness of your fire. On seeing this, I feel compassion. O lord of the universe! Do not be enraged with them.”

‘“‘Prajapati replied, “I am not enraged. Nor is it my desire that these subjects should cease to exist. I desire the destruction for the sake of making the burden of the earth lighter. The goddess[476] has been afflicted by the burden and has constantly urged me for the destruction. O Mahadeva! Because of the burden, she seems to be submerging in the water. Despite using my intelligence to reflect on this, I have not been able to understand what to do. Anger entered me because I wished to destroy this growth.”

‘“‘Sthanu said, “O lord of the thirty gods! Be pacified about this destruction and do not be enraged. Do not destroy the subjects and the mobile and immobile objects. There are four kinds of categories of beings—all the waterbodies, all the grass and herbs, mobile objects and immobile objects. The entire universe is being robbed of these and all these created entities are being reduced to ashes. O illustrious one! Show your favours. O virtuous one! This is the boon that I seek from you. Once they are destroyed, these subjects will never return again. Therefore, let this infinite energy be countered with your own energy. With the welfare of the subjects in mind, think of some other means. O scorcher of enemies! Let all these living beings be able to return again. It is not desirable that all the created subjects should be destroyed, together with their offspring. O lord over lords of the worlds! I have been appointed by you as the one who presides over existence. O protector of the universe! All the mobile and immobile objects in the universe have sprung from you. O great god! With your favours, I desire that these subjects should return and find subsistence.”’

‘“Narada said, ‘The god who was restrained in speech[477] heard Sthanu’s words. He then restrained the energy that had originated from within himself. The illustrious one, worshipped by the worlds, restrained the fire. The lord began to think about creation and destruction. He restrained the fire that had resulted from his anger. At that time, from within the great-souled creator of the universe, a lady manifested herself. She was dark and dressed in red garments. Her eyes and palms were red. She was adorned with celestial earrings and wore divine ornaments. Having emerged from within him, she stood on his right. Those two lords of the universe[478] saw that celestial maiden. O lord of the earth![479] The original god of the worlds[480] addressed the goddess and said, "O Death! Slay the subjects. Using my intelligence and my rage, I have thought of you as the destroyer. Therefore, destroy all the subjects, whether they are dumb or learned. O beautiful one! Without any differentiation, destroy the subjects. You are thus appointed by me and you will obtain supreme prosperity." The goddess Death wore a garland of lotuses. Hearing this, the maiden was tormented by grief and began to shed tears. O lord of men! She joined her hands in salutation and wept. To ensure the welfare of men, she again entreated him.'"'

Chapter 1578(250)

'"Narada said, 'The large-eyed lady controlled her grief. She bent like a creeper, joined her hands in salutation and said, "O supreme among those who grant boons! I have been created by you. How can you engage a lady like me in such a terrible deed, one that is fearful to all living beings? I am terrified that I will act in accordance with adharma. Instruct me about a task of dharma. O lord of everything auspicious! You can see with your eyes that I am terrified. There are living beings who are children, young and aged, who have done me no injury. How will I take them away? O lord of living beings! I am bowing down before you. Show me your favours. There will be beloved sons, friends, brothers, mothers and fathers. O god! If I make them die, I am terrified that I will commit a crime. The tearful sorrow and compassion of the survivors will burn me for an eternal period. I am frightened of their power. That is the reason I seek refuge with you. O god! The performers of wicked deeds will go to Yama's abode. O granter of boons! O lord! Be pacified and show me your favours. O grandfather of the worlds! This is the desire that I wish you to satisfy. O lord of the gods! Through your favours, it is my wish that I should perform austerities."'

'"The grandfather replied, 'O Death! I have thought of you for the sake of destroying subjects. Do not think about this. Go and destroy all the subjects.

This will certainly happen. It cannot be otherwise. O one with the unblemished limbs! O unblemished one! Act in accordance with my words.'

'"Narada said, 'O mighty-armed one! O vanquisher of enemy cities! Having been thus addressed, she did not reply. She stood there, raising her eyes up at the illustrious one. Though he repeatedly spoke to her, the beautiful one seemed to be bereft of her senses. The god of the gods, the lord of the lords,[481] was himself silent. Brahma then resorted within himself and became pacified. The lord of the worlds smiled and looked at all the worlds. The illustrious and unvanquished one controlled his rage. We have heard that the lady then departed. Having promised to destroy subjects, she withdrew. O Indra among kings! Mrityu[482] swiftly went to the spot known as Dhenuka. The goddess performed supreme austerities there, ones that are very difficult to accomplish. Standing on one foot, she performed austerities for fifteen billion years.[483] There, she performed austerities that are extremely difficult to accomplish. After this, the immensely energetic Brahma again spoke these words to her. "O Death! Swiftly act in accordance with my instructions." But she ignored this. O son![484] O one who grants honours! She again performed austerities for eighteen billion years. O son! She roamed with the deer and again performed austerities for ten thousand billion years. O king! She went again and observed an extraordinary vow of silence. O king! During this, she immersed herself in water for eight thousand years. O bull among the Bharata lineage![485] The maiden then went to the river Koushiki. Subsisting on water and air, she practised the vows again. The immensely fortunate one then went to Ganga and Mount Meru. Desiring the welfare of living beings, she stood immobile there. She went to the summit of the Himalayas, where the gods had assembled. O Indra among kings! She stood on her toes for a billion years. She made careful efforts to pacify the grandfather. The creator of the worlds went and spoke to her there. "O daughter! Why are you acting in this way? Act in accordance with my words." Death then again spoke to the illustrious grandfather. "O god! I cannot take away the subjects. I am again seeking your favours." She was terrified because of the fear of adharma and again beseeched him. However, the god of the gods ignored her words and spoke to her. "O Death! There will be no adharma for you. O fortunate one! It is desirable that you should control the subjects. O fortunate one! The words that I have spoken can never be falsified. Eternal dharma will now penetrate you. I and all the gods will always be engaged in ensuring your welfare. I will also grant you the other wish you desire. Subjects will be afflicted by disease and no sin will accrue to you. You will be a man among men, a woman among women and the third sex among eunuchs.” O great king! Having been thus addressed, she joined her hands in salutation and again spoke to the great-souled and undecaying one, to the effect that she could not do this. But the lord of the gods told the goddess, “O Death! Destroy men. O auspicious one! I am decreeing that no adharma will attach to you. In front of me, I can see that tears are dropping from your eyes and that you are holding them in your hands. These will become diseases among men, terrible in form. O Death! At the appropriate time, they will afflict them. When their end comes, all living beings will be united with desire and anger. Since you will not discriminate in your conduct, you will follow dharma and no adharma will be attached to you. Protect the dharma that I have spoken about. You will not immerse yourself in adharma. Therefore, you should find this desire agreeable. Engage yourself in destroying living beings.” At this, Mrityu was frightened of his curse and agreed to follow the instructions. When the time of living beings was over, she started to dispatch desire and anger, so as to confound and destroy them. The tears that Mrityu had shed became diseases that afflicted the bodies of men. Therefore, one should not sorrow when the lives of living beings are extinguished. Instead, one should use one’s intelligence to understand this. When their lives are over, all gods among beings depart and return again.[486] O lion among kings! In that way, when their lives are over, all men go away, like the gods. The wind is terrible and immensely energetic. It emits a mighty roar and is the breath of life in all living beings, following different courses in the bodies, until they are separated from their bodies. That is the reason the wind is special and is known as the god of the gods. All the gods are characterized by traits of mortality. There are traits of divinity in all mortals. O lion among kings! Therefore, do not sorrow over your son. Your son has obtained heaven and delight there. This is the way Mrityu was created by the god, so that she could appropriately destroy beings when the time arrives. The diseases are the tears that she shed. At the right time, they destroy living beings.’”’

Chapter 1579(251)

'Yudhishthira asked, "All these men have doubts about dharma. What is dharma? Where does dharma come from? O grandfather! Tell me this. Is dharma for objectives in this world, or is it for objectives in the world hereafter? Or is dharma for both objectives? O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "Good conduct, the sacred texts and the Vedas—these are the three signs of dharma. The wise say that the objective is a fourth indication of dharma. On this, superior and inferior deeds have been spoken about. The rules of dharma have been laid down for conduct in this world. They ensure happiness, both in this world and in the next. A wicked person who engages in evil is incapable of obtaining the subtle aspects of dharma. Some say that those who perform wicked deeds can never be freed from their sins. However, a person who speaks about sin may act like one who follows dharma.[487] Devotion to dharma is evident in the conduct of those who resort to it, not by speaking about it. A thief may steal riches and spend those on dharma. When there is no king, a thief may find delight in stealing the property of others. However, when others steal what he has stolen, he then wishes for a king. Even when his own property has been touched, he is not content with the riches that belong to him alone. Without any fear and without any uncertainty, he knocks at the king's doors, as if he is a pure person.[488] A person who is evil in conduct never thinks of himself in that way. Truthful words are virtuous and there is nothing that is superior to the truth. Truth holds everything up. Everything is established in truth. The perpetrators of wicked and terrible acts also separately have pledges of truth among themselves. They resort to the pledge of not acting violently towards each other. If they do not abide by these agreements, there is no doubt that they are destroyed. It is eternal dharma that the riches of others should not be stolen. Powerful ones think that this system has been instituted by the weak. However, when destiny makes them weak, they take pleasure in this system. Those who are extremely powerful are not necessarily happy. Therefore, never use your intelligence to embark on a task that is not upright. Then there is no reason for fear from wicked people, thieves, or kings. Since such a person has not done anything against anyone else, he is free from fear and dwells in purity. A thief is frightened of everything, like a deer that has come to a village. Having acted wickedly, he thinks that everyone's conduct is like that. A pure person is always delighted and is always fearless. Judging by his own self, he never sees any wicked conduct in others. Those who are engaged in the welfare of beings have said that donations represent dharma. Those who have riches think that this conduct has been laid down by those who are miserly. However, when destiny makes them poor, they find pleasure in this principle. However, those who are extremely rich aren't necessarily happy. A man should not act towards others in a way that he would not like to be acted against. Knowing what is not agreeable to himself, he should not act towards others in that way. If a person becomes the lover of someone else's wife, whom will he speak to? What does he deserve to say? Act towards others in ways that you are prepared to tolerate yourself. That is my view. If a person wishes to remain alive himself, how can he murder another? One should think about others on the basis of what one desires for one's own self. Extra objects of pleasure should be shared with others. That is the reason the Creator ordained the practice of moneylending. One must remain established in the pledges that have been made to the gods. When it is a time of gain, it is laudable to remain established in dharma. The learned have said that dharma is what is agreeable to everyone. O Yudhishthira! Behold. I have instructed you about the signs of dharma and adharma. This is what the Creator ordained in ancient times, for the sake of ensuring accumulation in the worlds. Virtuous people always pursue the subtle objectives of dharma and observe supreme conduct. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! I have recounted to you the signs of dharma. Therefore, never use your intelligence to embark on a task that is not upright."'

Chapter 1580(252)

'Yudhishthira said, "You have spoken about the subtle signs of dharma, which have been instructed by the virtuous. I have the power to differentiate between some of the things you have spoken about. There were several questions in my heart and you have answered them. O king! Without disputing what you have said, there is something else I want to say. But the beings that are created come and go. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is incapable of being understood by studying about dharma.[489] The dharma of those who flourish is of one kind. But it is different for those who face a hardship. In a time of adversity, how is a person capable of knowing through studies alone? It is the view that good conduct constitutes dharma. Conduct is the sign of the virtuous. But there is capability and there is incapability. How can good conduct then be taken to be a sign? It is seen that an ordinary person acts in accordance with adharma, though it is in the form of dharma. And an extraordinary person acts in accordance with dharma, though it is in the form of adharma. Those who are knowledgeable about the sacred texts have also laid down standards of proof. We have heard that the words of the Vedas decline from one yuga to another. There is one kind of dharma in krita yuga and another kind in treta and dvapara. There is another kind of dharma in kali yuga. So it seems to depend on capacity. The true words of the Vedas are for the sake of propagation of the worlds. The supreme words of the Vedas have extended in all the directions. They are said to constitute the proof, but the proof is not to be seen.[490] When one proof contradicts another proof, where does the sacred text come from? When dharma goes into a decline, evil-souled ones become powerful. Whatever they act against is destroyed and never obtains a foundation again. Whether we know it or not, whether we are capable of knowing it or not, this[491] is finer than a razor's edge and larger than a mountain. At first, it seems to be as large as a city of the gandharvas. But then, when it is minutely scrutinized by the wise, it seems to become invisible. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Cattle drink from small puddles in fields, which then dry up. Like that, when the eternal dharma of the sacred texts decays, it cannot be seen. There are some who follow desire. There are others who follow decay. There are others who follow other objectives. There are many others who are wicked and follow fruitless conduct. Even among virtuous people, dharma is seen to swiftly go into a decline. There are others who call it[492] madness and laugh at it. There are great ones who withdraw and follow the dharma of kings.[493] They are not seen to engage in conduct that ensures the welfare of everyone. Some become powerful through such conduct. Others are again seen to be constrained by it. There are others who do as they wish, but their status remains unchanged. Something increases the power of one person. But the same thing restrains another person. There are many kinds of conduct that are discerned among everyone, not always pursued single-mindedly. There are things that wise people have spoken about for a long time, as illustrative of eternal dharma. Their earlier conduct is the eternal foundation.”’[494]

Chapter 1581(253)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about words exchanged between Tuladhara and Jajali on dharma. There was a brahmana named Jajali. He lived in the forest, following the conduct of those who dwell in the forest. Once, the immensely ascetic one went to the region near the ocean and tormented himself through austerities there. He controlled himself and was restrained in diet. He was dressed in tattered garments and skins and his hair was matted. He was covered in dirt and mud. The intelligent sage spent many years there. O lord of the earth! The immensely energetic one dwelt in the water. Wishing to see the worlds, he travelled around, with the speed of thought.[495] He saw the earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean, with its forest and groves. Having done this, while he was inside the water, one day, the sage thought, ‘In this world, with its mobile and immobile objects, there is no one like me. Who else can dwell in the water and roam around with me in this way?’ While he said this in the water, the rakshasas noticed this. The pishachas said, ‘You should not speak in this fashion. There is the immensely illustrious Tuladhara in Varanasi and he follows the dharma of a trader. O supreme among brahmanas! Even he should not speak the words that you have.’ Having been thus addressed by the demons, Jajali, the great ascetic, replied, ‘I will go and see the wise and illustrious Tuladhara.’ When the rishi spoke in this way, the rakshasas arose from the ocean and said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! Go. Follow this road.’ Thus addressed by the demons, Jajali departed, with distress in his mind. He went to Varanasi, met Tuladhara and spoke these words to him.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O father![496] What were the virtuous deeds that Jajali had performed earlier? How did he obtain supreme success? You should recount that to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “He performed extreme and terrible austerities. The great ascetic was devoted to performing ablutions in the morning and in the evening. He tended to the fire properly. The brahmana was devoted to studying. Jajali knew about the ordinances of vanaprastha and blazed in his radiance. He was engaged in truth and austerities, but was still not able to comprehend dharma. When it rained, he slept under the open sky. During autumn, he immersed himself in water. During summer, he exposed himself to the heat and the wind. But he still did not obtain dharma. He lay down on many uncomfortable beds and on the ground and changed these around. When it rained, the sage would stand under the open sky. Rain showered down on his head from the sky and he repeatedly received this. The lord’s hair became matted and filthy and the strands were tangled. He always went to the forest, covered in filth and dirt. Sometimes, the immensely ascetic one did not eat. Sometimes, he survived on air. Sometimes, he stood like a wooden pillar and did not move at all. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! While he stood there, immobile like a pillar, two *kulinga* birds[497] built a nest on his head. However, the brahmana rishi was overcome with compassion for this couple. He allowed them to use grass to build a nest in his matted hair. The immensely ascetic one remained immobile, like a pillar. They[498] were reassured and lived there happily. The rains passed and autumn presented itself. Following Prajapati’s rules, those carefree birds approached each other with desire. O king! Those birds laid eggs on his head. The energetic brahmana, rigid in his vows, realized this. However, despite knowing this, the immensely energetic Jajali did not move. His mind was always firm on upholding dharma, and adharma did not appeal to him. He was not going to harm anyone. O lord! They were thus assured and happily lived on his head. The eggs were nurtured and young birds developed inside them. They began to grow. But even then, Jajali did not move. Careful in his vows, he protected the eggs and the birds. Therefore, the one with dharma in his soul did not move and meditated. In the course of time, the birds emerged and the sage realized when the young birds developed wings. Thus, one day, the one who was rigid in his vows saw the birds. The supreme among intelligent ones was extremely delighted. He was happy to see them grow. The birds and their offspring were fearless there. Once the wings had developed, he saw that they would fly out and return again. The birds would go out in the morning and return in the evening. The brahmana Jajali did not move. Sometimes, though the mother and the father were not present, they would return and then fly out again. Jajali did not move. O king! Then they began to go out and return again in the evening. The birds returned, to live there. After this, the birds went out for five days before they returned. Then it became six days. Jajali did not move. In the course of time, as they became strong, all the birds went out for many days at a time and did not return. Later, the birds did not return for a month. O king! Finally, when they did not return at all, Jajali left. Jajali was overcome with wonder at what had happened. He thought that he had obtained success, and pride penetrated him. The one who was careful in his vows saw that the birds, which had been born and reared on his head, finally left. He was full of delight. When the sun arose, the immensely ascetic one went to the river. He bathed there and offered oblations to the fire. Since those chataka birds had been born on his head, Jajali, supreme among ascetics, slapped his armpits and exclaimed, 'I have obtained dharma.' At this, Jajali heard an invisible voice speak in the sky. 'O Jajali! You are not Tuladhara's equal in dharma. The immensely wise Tuladhara lives in Varanasi. O brahmana! Though he deserves to, he does not speak the way you do.' On hearing these words, he became full of anger and wished to see Tuladhara. O king! The sage began to roam around the earth, without any fixed place of abode. After a long period of time, he reached the city of Varanasi and saw Tuladhara, selling his wares. On seeing the brahmana arrive, the one who earned a living from trading arose cheerfully and welcomed and honoured him. Tuladhara said, 'O brahmana! I knew for certain that you would come here. O supreme among brahmanas! Listen to the words that I tell you. You lived on the shores of the ocean and performed great austerities there. But earlier, you never had any sense of what was dharma. O brahmana! When you obtained success in your austerities, birds were soon born on your head and they were nurtured by you. When they developed wings, they flew around, here and there. O brahmana! Having given birth to those chatakas, you felt proud at having obtained dharma. O supreme among brahmanas! You then heard a voice in the sky and it spoke about me. At this, you felt anger and that is the reason you have come here. O supreme among brahmanas! What can I do to please you? Tell me.’”’

Chapter 1582(254)

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed by the intelligent Tuladhara, the intelligent Jajali, supreme among ascetics, replied in these words. ‘O trader! You sell all the juices and all the scents, trees and herbs and their roots and fruits. How has this steadiness in intelligence come to you? From where has this knowledge come? O immensely wise one! Tell me everything about this.’ O king! Having been thus addressed by the illustrious brahmana, the vaishya Tuladhara, who knew about the true objectives of dharma and the subtleties of dharma, spoke to Jajali, who had performed difficult austerities, but was still not content with his knowledge. ‘O Jajali! I know eternal and ancient dharma, with all its mysteries. People who know say that it is nothing but friendliness and being engaged in the welfare of all beings. There should be no violence towards living beings, or limited violence. O Jajali! Such conduct is said to follow supreme dharma and that is the way I live. My house is built with wood and grass that has been cut by other people. O brahmana rishi! Lac, lotus roots, lotus filaments, scents, the agents for cleaning, superior and inferior, and the juices and many other objects, with the exception of liquor, are bought by me from other people. I sell them again, without any deceit. O Jajali! If there is a person who regards everyone as a well-wisher and is engaged in everyone’s welfare, in deeds, thoughts and words, he knows dharma. I do not praise or censure the deeds of others. O brahmana rishi! I look upon these colourful people, the way I look at the sky. I do not obstruct or oppose. I do not hate or desire. O Jajali! I look upon all beings as equal. That is my vow. I have been freed from good and bad. I have cast aside love and hatred. O Jajali! I hold up my pair of scales equally towards everyone. O Jajali! O best among intelligent ones! That is the way I look at you and at all the other people. A lump of earth, a piece of iron and gold are the same to me. The blind, the deaf and the mad, despite being adversely affected by destiny, are always full of joy. That is the way I look at everything. Those who are old, those who suffer from disease and those who are emaciated are indifferent towards objects of pleasure. In that way, I have lost all interest in objects of desire and pleasure. When a person is not frightened and no one is terrified of him, when he does not desire and does not hate, then he obtains success and becomes a brahmana. A person who does not harbour wicked sentiments towards all beings, in deeds, thoughts and words, attains the brahman. A person who grants fearlessness to all beings attains a state that is without fear. For him, there is no past and no future and no dharma. A person who agitates people through cruel words and harsh punishment, as if he is the face of death, suffers from great fear. Great-souled and aged ones observe the conduct of non-violence towards their sons and grandsons and I follow them. A person who knows, an ascetic or a powerful person can be deluded and from that confusion, eternal dharma and good conduct can be destroyed. However, if a wise person follows good conduct, he can swiftly obtain dharma. Such a virtuous person wanders around, self-controlled, without any violence in his consciousness. In a river, a piece of wood drifts along as it wishes and sometimes comes into contact with another piece of wood, which is also flowing along, as it wills. There are other pieces of wood that come together and then drift apart. Grass, wood and refuse are sometimes seen to come together. This is the nature of conduct, seen here and there. If there is a person who does not agitate any being and if he grants fearlessness to all beings, that person always attains the state of a sage. O learned one! There may also be a person who agitates all the people, like a wolf. Like an aquatic animal, he makes people shriek and climb onto the shore. A person who has aides is extremely fortunate and obtains riches, in this world and hereafter. That is what wise people have spoken about in the sacred texts. Some practise a little bit of what has been mentioned. Other accomplished ones follow it in entirety. All the fruits that are obtained through austerities, sacrifices, donations and wisdom can be obtained by ensuring fearlessness. In this world, a person who grants the dakshina of fearlessness to all beings accomplishes all the sacrifices and himself obtains the dakshina of fearlessness. There is no dharma that is the equal of non-violence towards beings. A person who never agitates beings and grants all beings fearlessness attains the state of a great sage. A person who agitates beings, like a snake that has arrived inside a house, does not obtain dharma, in this world or in the next. When a person looks on all beings as his own self and treats all beings equally, the gods themselves are confused when they try to follow his path and his footsteps. The donation of fearlessness to beings is the supreme among all donations. O Jajali! I am telling you the truth. Listen to it with devotion. A person who is fortunate is not born again. An unfortunate person is born again. Obsessed with their tasks, people are always seen to be asleep. There is nothing that is without a reason. O Jajali! Dharma is subtle. In the words of dharma, tasks have been ordained for the past and the future. There are subtleties and so many contradictions that one is incapable of knowing it. Some understand this internally. Others only comprehend conduct. There are those who kill bulls, making them bear heavy burdens, binding and restraining them, inserting rings in their noses. Why aren't these people killed? There are those who kill beings for eating them. Why are they not censured? Men make other men slaves and enjoy the results. They kill, bind and restrain them, making them work day and night. This is despite they themselves knowing the misery from killing and striking. The gods dwell in the five senses of all beings—Aditya, Chandrama, Vayu, Brahma, Prana, Kratu[499] and Yama. But there are those who kill and trade beings, without even thinking about it. O brahmana! I am not speaking about oil, clarified butter, honey, other objects and herbs.[500] There are many animals that are happily reared in regions where there are no gnats. Despite knowing that their mothers love them, many men oppress them. They take them to regions where there is a lot of mud, with many gnats. They make them mounts and beasts of burden. Others oppress them in other ways. I think that these deeds are no different from killing a foetus. Agriculture is regarded as a virtuous livelihood. But it is extremely terrible. Wooden implements with iron at the mouth injure the earth and kill beings that live in the ground. O Jajali! Look towards the bulls that have been yoked. Cows have been named as unslayable. How can this person then kill them? The person who kills a cow for the sake of gain commits a great offence. Many rishis and ascetics spoke to Nahusha. "A cow is a mother. You have killed a bull, which is like Prajapati. O Nahusha! You have perpetrated a wicked deed and we are frightened on this account." They divided it[501] into a hundred and one parts and inflicted it as diseases on all living beings. O Jajali! The immensely fortunate rishis passed this on to the subjects and told Nahusha, who had committed a sin like that of killing a foetus, “We will not be able to offer oblations at your sacrifices.” This is what those great-souled ones, who knew about the truth, said. However, the rishis and the ascetics got to know the truth and were quickly pacified.[502] O Jajali! These are the kinds of inauspicious and terrible conduct practised in this world. These are practised even by accomplished people who know, simply because these are norms of conduct. One should seek out the reasons behind dharma and not follow it because it is the conduct of the world. O Jajali! Listen to the conduct I follow towards those who hurt me or praise me. They are equal before me and I do not like or dislike either. This is the kind of dharma that is praised by the learned. This is full of reason and is practised by the ascetics. This is always seen among those who observe dharma in their conduct and are accomplished.’”’

Chapter 1583(255)

‘“Jajali said, ‘O Tuladhara! You have spoken about the dharma that has been laid down and about the supreme conduct that snould be followed by beings to reach the gates of heaven. Crops results from agriculture and it is on the basis of those that you remain alive. O trader! It is with animals and herbs that mortal beings remain alive. Sacrifices flow from those. You speak like a non-believer. This world will not be sustained and nothing will be left if these doctrines are followed.’

‘“Tuladhara replied, ‘O Jajali! O brahmana! I will speak about sustenance. I am not a non-believer. I am not criticizing sacrifices. But a person who knows about sacrifices is extremely rare. I bow down before the sacrifices of brahmanas and before people who know about sacrifices. Having abandoned their own sacrifices, brahmanas have resorted to the sacrifices meant for kshatriyas. O brahmana! Greedy for the riches of others, it is the non-believers who have led to such practices. Though they know about the words of the Vedas, they have disguised falsehood behind apparent truth. “This should be given. That should be given.” There is no end to this kind of desire. O Jajali!

Theft and undesirable acts result from this. An oblation obtained through good means is what satisfies the gods, such as bowing down, oblations, studying and herbs. The worship of gods should be in accordance with what is laid down in the sacred texts. Through their sacrifices, wicked people give rise to wicked offspring. The greedy give birth to the greedy. The contented give birth to the contented. The resultant offspring are just like the performer of the sacrifice and the officiating priest. Through sacrifices, offspring who are like the unblemished sky can result. O brahmana! Oblations offered into the fire rise up into the sun. Rain results from the sun. Crops result from rain and offspring come through these. Therefore, earlier, people performed their own sacrifices and obtained all the objects of desire. The earth yielded crops without tilling. Herbs resulted because of the benedictions. No sacrifices were seen to be undertaken with a view to obtaining selfish fruits. However, there were some who undertook sacrifices, despite having doubts about the fruits of sacrifices. Consequently, the wicked, the cunning, the greedy and those who felt a need for riches were born. Those who have performed wicked deeds go to the worlds earmarked for those with inauspicious deeds. Using arguments to counter arguments, a man performs inauspicious deeds. O supreme among brahmanas! Such people are always evil-souled and unaccomplished in wisdom. O brahmana! They take deeds to be misdeeds and the reverse. They do not also follow the deeds that Brahma laid down for the worlds. We have also heard that if deeds without qualities are performed, they lead to no fruits. If these are not countered, they injure all beings. Truth is sacrifice. Self-control is sacrifice. So are lack of jealousy towards everyone, contentment with one's own riches and lack of greed for riches. That is how a renouncer results. A person who knows the truth about kshetra and kshetrajna is engaged in his own sacrifice. He studies, wishing to know about the brahman, and is satisfied in his own self. All divinity is in the brahman. Everything finds a refuge in the brahman. O Jajali! When such a person is satisified, the gods are satisfied. When he is not satisfied, they are not satisfied. If a person is satisfied with all the juices, he finds no delight in anything in particular. In that way, a person who is satisified with wisdom is always satisfied and this gives rise to happiness. Dharma is comfort for him. Dharma is happiness and everything is established on that. Such a person knows the truth about existence and searches for wisdom. There are others who know about jnana and vijnana and can cross over to the further shore, which is always extremely auspicious and is full of sacred people. Having gone there, one does not grieve. Nor is there distress of any kind. That is the place of the brahman and virtuous people attain it. That is not for those who desire heaven, or for those who sacrifice for fame and riches. It is a path followed by the virtuous and their strength is non-violence. They know about trees, herbs, fruits and roots.[503] Those who sacrifice, and their officiating priests, are not greedy and do not desire riches. There are also brahmanas who have accomplished all their tasks. Nevertheless, driven by compassion for other subjects, they perform their own sacrifices. Subjects obtain heaven by pursuing their own dharma. O Jajali! Thus, because of my intelligence, my conduct towards everyone is identical. O bull among brahmanas! O great sage! The wise ones always engage themselves in these kinds of sacrifices and through these, go along the path trodden by the gods. Some have to return.[504] But there is no return for the learned. O Jajali! However, both types go along the path trodden on by the gods. Using the resolution in their minds, they become successful, yoking their own selves and using their own selves as beasts of burden, and milking their own selves. They make their own selves the sacrificial altars and thus give away a lot of dakshina. A person who has cleansed himself in this fashion should not be greedy for cattle. O brahmana! He performs a sacrifice by bowing down, as if he was a herb. His intelligence places renunciation at the forefront. That is what I am describing to you. He is beyond desire and beyond starting anything. He is beyond honour and praise. His deeds have been extinguished, but he is without decay. The gods speak of such a person as a brahmana. A person who does not listen to the sacred texts, does not perform sacrifices and does not give to brahmanas is a person who follows common conduct. O Jajali! What end will he attain? By following this path, observed by the gods, it is as if he performs sacrifices.'

'"Jajali said, 'I have not heard this truth from the sages. O trader! I am therefore asking you about a difficulty. The rishis who came earlier did not consider this.[505] Nor did those who came later establish this. O trader! If animals are capable of obtaining happiness by serving the tirtha of the atman, then why do they obtain misery because of their deeds? O immensely wise one! Instruct me about this. I have great faith in you.'

'"Tuladhara replied, 'There are some sacrifices that do not actually become sacrifices.[506] They should not sacrifice. A cow can be used for all the oblations at a sacrifice, because of milk, curds, clarified butter, hair, horns, feet and everything that comes from the mouth.[507] It has been ordained that one should not embark on a sacrifice without a wife. The sacrificial cake has been spoken of as representing sacrifices of all animals. This is like all the rivers being akin to Sarasvati and all mountains being sacred. O Jajali! The atman is a tirtha and one does not have to become a guest at different places.[508] O Jajali! If one follows this kind of dharma, without searching for reasons behind dharma, one will obtain the auspicious worlds.'"

'Bhishma said, "This was the kind of dharma that was praised by Tuladhara. This is always full of reason and is followed by the virtuous."'

Chapter 1584(256)

'"Tuladhara said, 'Those who are virtuous live in this way. Those who are virtuous resort to this path. Look at the deeds performed by the virtuous and you will know the truth. There are many birds that roam around in every direction. There are some that were born on your head. There are also hawks and others of different species. O great brahmana! Here and there, they are seeking to enter.[509] Behold. They have contracted their wings, feet and bodies everywhere. Summon them. Though they have been born through their father, they have also been generated from you. There is no doubt that you are their father. O Jajali! Therefore, summon your sons.'"

'Bhishma said, "At this, Jajali summoned the birds. They replied in divine words, words that were full of dharma. 'For this world and for the next, one must perform acts of non-violence. O brahmana! Desire destroys and with that, men are also destroyed. When faith declines in words and thoughts, no sacrifices can lead to salvation. In this connection, Brahma recited a song and it is chanted by those who know about the sacred accounts. The gods regard the sacrificial deeds of those who have purity, but lack faith, and those who have faith, but lack purity, equally and ignore them both. The gods have also held that a miserly and learned brahmana and an eloquent and prosperous person are equal. However, Prajapati told them that they had erred in treating two unequal things equally. “Faith purifies a prosperous person. Lack of faith destroys him. Even if there is only one person in the world and he is without faith, the gods do not accept his oblations. Those learned about dharma also know that his food should not be eaten. Lack of faith is a supreme sin. Faith releases from all sin. A faithful person discards sin, like a snake casting off its skin.”[510] Renunciation with faith is superior to all sacred deeds. If a person refrains from all evil conduct and is faithful, he is purified. What need does he have of austerities, deeds or conduct? There can be a man with faith and there can be a man without faith. This is what virtuous and knowledgable people who know about the purpose of dharma have said about dharma. We were curious and obtained this insight about dharma. O immensely wise one! If you conquer the urge to compete, you will obtain the supreme. The trader possesses faith and follows the dharma of faith. O Jajali! A person established in his own path is superior.’[511] In this way, Tuladhara told him about many things and he obtained a complete realization of what has been spoken of as eternal dharma. O Kounteya! Having heard those famous and valorous words spoken by Tuladhara, the brahmana obtained tranquility. In a short while, he and Tuladhara, those two immensely wise ones, went to heaven and found delight in the happiness there. Having earned the fruits of their own deeds, they went to their respective places. A person who looks at everything equally, is faithful and controlled and possesses an excellent intelligence, performs sacrifices in this way. Without sacrifices, a person is not taken there. O king! Faith is the virtuous goddess Savitri, the daughter of the sun. She is the one who gives birth to faith in the world of the living. I have instructed you appropriately. What more do you wish to hear?”’

Chapter 1585(257)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about what King Vichakhanna sung, driven by compassion for subjects. He saw the mangled body of a bull and heard the extremely piteous cries of cattle. The king saw a sacrificial enclosure where cows were being slaughtered. He said, ‘May there be safety to all the cattle in this world.’ When the violence had started, these words of benediction were heard. ‘Those who have deviated from the ordinances, those who are non-believers and confused, those who have doubts within themselves, are the men who applaud of violence. Manu, with dharma in his soul, said that there should be non-violence in all deeds. Driven by attachment to desire, men cause violence to animals outside the sacrificial enclosure.[512] Therefore, one should follow the instructions and know the subtle nature of dharma. It has been held that non-violence is superior to all kinds of dharma. They dwell near sacred places, but have abandoned the learning of the Vedas. These misers are driven by desire for the fruits and follow bad conduct, in the disguise of good conduct. Pointing to sacrifices, trees and sacrificial altars, men pointlessly eat flesh.[513] This kind of dharma is not praised. Flesh, *madhu*, *sura*, fish, *asava* and krisara have been thought of by cunning people.[514] They were not thought of in the Vedas. Desire, confusion and greed led to these temptations being introduced. The brahmanas note that Vishnu is present in all sacrifices. It has been said that, with an excellent mind, he should only be offered payasa.[515] In the Vedas, trees have been thought of as sacrificial offerings. These are the kinds of things that should properly be offered to the great god, with pure sentiments. All these deserve to be offered to that god.’”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “The body and various difficulties always quarrel and cause injury to each other. If one abstains from all work, how will it be possible to sustain the body?”

‘Bhishma replied, “One must act so that the body does not suffer and so that one does not come under the subjugation of death. According to capacity, one’s conduct should follow the norms of dharma.”’

Chapter 1586(258)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O supreme teacher! In determining what task to pursue, should one decide quickly or take time over the decision? We are always confronted with extremely difficult tasks.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about what happened earlier, concerning the conduct of Chirakara, born in the lineage of Angiras.[516] A person who acts after a long time is fortunate. A fortunate person is one who acts after a long time. A person who acts after a long time is intelligent and does not commit a sin in his acts. Goutama’s son acted after a long time and was immensely wise.[517] He took a long time to decide on all tasks. He thought about the objective for a long time. He remained awake for a long time. He slept for a long time. He completed tasks after a long time. Therefore, he was known as Chirakara. He was also spoken of as lazy and limited in intelligence. People said that he was foolish in intelligence and lacked far-sightedness. On one occasion, his father was angry at his mother’s promiscuous behaviour.[518] Ignoring the other sons, he told him, ‘Kill this mother of yours.’ Though he agreed when he was asked, as was his nature, Chirakara thought about this for a long time.[519] He was cautious and always thought for a long time about what should be done. ‘How will I follow the instructions of my father and yet not kill my mother? While apparently following dharma, how will I avoid being submerged, like a wicked person? Following the instructions of the father is supreme dharma. Yet, protecting my mother is my own dharma. Since a son is not independent, how can I avoid being afflicted? How can one be happy after killing a woman and a mother? How can one obtain status after ignoring a father’s orders? I cannot ignore what my father has said. I must nurture and protect my mother. How will I resist suffering on either score? How will I not cross either? The father’s own self enters the wife and is born, so that conduct, character, lineage and family can be sustained.[520] I am my father’s own self. But I am also my mother’s son. Since I know how I have been born, why should I not possess knowledge about this?[521] My father spoke words at the time of my jatakarma and other minor rites. Those are sufficient to firmly establish the reverence that is due to my father. Because the father nurtures and instructs, it is supreme dharma to regard him as the foremost among instructors. That is dharma, conclusively determined in the Vedas. The only source of delight to the father is the son. The father is everything for the son. The body and everything else have been given by the father alone. Therefore, one must act in accordance with one’s father’s words and not think about it at all. If one acts in accordance with one’s father’s words, all one’s sins are cleansed. In sight of all the worlds, he provided fortune and objects of pleasure at the time of delivery. He was a party to the union and acknowledged this is the simantonnayana ceremony.[522] The father is heaven. The father is dharma. The father is the supreme of austerities. When the father is pleased, all the gods are pleased. Any benedictions pronounced by a father serve a man. When the father praises, there is cleansing of all sins. The flower is severed from the stalk. The fruit is also severed from the stalk. But even if the son’s affection decreases, the father’s affection remains.’ These were the son’s thoughts about the reverence that was due to the father. ‘The father does not occupy an inferior station. Let me now think about my mother. I have been born on earth as a compound of the five elements. But my mother was the origin, like the two pieces of wood used to create a fire. For the body of any man, the mother represents those sticks and saves him from all hardships. When she is there, there is no reason for sorrow. When she is not there, there is hardship. Even when a person is divested of riches, his mother is there in the house. Even if a person has many sons and grandsons, even if he is one hundred years old, when he approaches his mother, he behaves like a two-year-old. Whether a person is capable or incapable, whether a person is fat or thin, the mother protects the son. According to the ordinances, there is no one else who sustains in that way. When he is separated from his mother, he ages, he is distressed and the entire world seems to be empty. There is no shelter that is equal to a mother. There is no objective that is equal to a mother. There is no sanctuary equal to a mother. There is no protection equal to a mother. Because she bears him in her womb, she is known as Dhatri. Because she gives birth, she is known as Janani. Because she nurtures his limbs, she is known as Amba. Because she gives birth to a brave one, she is known as Virasu. Because she nurtures the child, she is known as Sushru. There is no difference between a mother and one’s own body. Unless his head is empty and he is devoid of his senses, which man will kill such a person? When a couple unites to bear life, there is resolution in both the mother and the father, but success in accomplishing that objective depends on the mother. The mother knows the gotra and the mother knows whom he has been born from.[523] The mother’s pleasure comes from nurturing alone. The father’s affection is from a desire to have offspring. If a man himself accepts a woman’s hand for the sake of following dharma together and then goes to another woman, he is not slain on those grounds. A husband is known as Bharta because he sustains his wife. He is known as Pati because he protects his wife. When these two traits disappear, a husband is neither a Bharta nor a Pati. A woman cannot commit a crime. It is the man who commits the crime. While adultery is a great crime, it is the man who has commited the crime.[524] For the wife, it has been said that the husband is the greatest protector and the supreme god. She gave herself up to someone who was in the form of that supreme person.[525] In all acts that involve crimes, women never commit the crimes. We have been given the injunction that women are never satisfied with intercourse.[526] There is no doubt about this evident nature of dharma and it should be remembered. She is a woman and a mother and occupies a position of greatest reverence. Even brutish animals know that such a person should not be killed. It is known that the father is alone a collection of all the gods. But because of her affection, the mother is a collection of all mortal beings and the gods.’ In this way, because he took a long time to act, he reflected a lot.

‘“After a long period of time had elapsed, Goutama returned. After having engaged in austerities, the immensely wise Medhatithi Goutama returned. He had also thought about it for a long time and had decided that what he had proposed for his wife was improper. He was tormented by great grief and tears flowed from his eyes. Because of the effects of his learning, he was overcome with repentance. ‘Purandara, the lord of the three worlds, came to my hermitage. He was in the form of a brahmana, following the vow of being a guest. At that time, I comforted him with words. I welcomed and honoured him. As is proper, I gave him the gift due to a guest and water for washing the feet.[527] As is proper, I bowed down before him and spoke to him obediently. A woman belongs to an incompetent species and cannot be held to have committed a transgression. Thus I, my wife, or the lord of the thirty gods, did not commit a crime.[528] It is dharma’s fault that delusion led to the offence. Those who hold up their seeds have said that all hardships emanate from envy. It is because of jealousy[529] that I have been destroyed and flung into this ocean of great grief. I confront this hardship because I have had a virtuous and beloved woman killed. I should have protected my wife. Who will save me now? I acted hastily and commanded the intelligent Chirakara. But because he takes a long time to act, perhaps he can still save me from this sin. A person who takes a long time to act is fortunate. A fortunate person takes a long time to act. If you have taken a long time to act now, you will truly be Chirakara. Save me, your mother and all the austerities that I have accomplished. If you also save yourself from that sin, you will truly be Chirakarika. You naturally take a long time to act and this long time is indicative of your wisdom. Make the truth about your name successful today and be Chirakarika. Your mother expected you for a long time. She bore you in her womb for a long time. Make that long period of time you take also true today. Be Chirakarika. Is he taking a long time[530] because of repentance? Has he been delayed because he has slept for a long time? Perhaps Chirakarika is not showing himself because of the great torment it will cause to both of us.' O king! In this fashion, maharshi Goutama was miserable at the time. Then he saw his son, Chirakarika, standing close to him. On seeing his father, Chirakarika was extremely miserable. He threw the weapon away and bowed his head down, to seek favours. Goutama saw that his son was prostrate before him on the ground, with his head bowing down. He was extremely delighted to see that his wife was without harm. The great-souled one had gone away alone, separating himself from his wife and his intelligent son in that hermitage. The son stood there humbly, with the weapon in his hand, expecting to be reprimanded.[531] He asked if he should complete the task that had been assigned to him. The father saw that the intelligent son was still prostrate at his feet. He was terrified and was seeking his pardon for at all having picked up the weapon. The father praised him for a long time and inhaled the fragrance of his head for a long time. He embraced him for a long time and said, 'May you live for a long time.' Because of his son, Goutama was thus filled with joy and delight.

'"The immensely wise one praised him and spoke these words. 'O fortunate one! O Chirakarika! For a long time, may you take a long time to act. Because of the long time you took, I have been saved from great misery for a long period of time.' The learned one, supreme among sages, then sung this chant. 'Patient people, should take a long time to act, because that course is full of qualities. One should take a long time before severing a friendship. One should act so as to discard him, only after a long period of time. One should take a long time before making a friend. But having done this, one should sustain him for a long time. Whether it is in anger, insolence, pride, hatred, wicked deeds or unpleasant tasks, a person who takes a long time is praised. When an accusation against a relative, a well-wisher, a servant or a woman has not been proved, a person who takes a long time is praised.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus was Goutama pleased with his son. O Kouravya! Therefore, on any task, you should also take a long time. If a man thus thinks about every task for a long time and then makes up his mind, he will not be tormented for a long time. If a man holds his anger for a long time and if he embarks on action after a long time, he does not suffer repentance because of his deeds. The aged must be worshipped for a long time. One must sit near them for a long time. One must serve dharma for a long time. One must spend a long time in enquiry. One must serve the learned for a long time. One must attend to the virtuous for a long time. One must restrain one's atman for a long time. Then, one will be respected for a long time. When one is asked by others, one must spend a long time in replying, in words that are full of dharma. One must think for a long time before answering. Then, one will not be subjugated for a long time. The extremely great ascetic[532] performed a lot of worship in his hermitage for many years. With his son, the brahmana then went to heaven."'

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'Yudhishthira asked, "Without oppressing even a little, how should a king protect? O best among virtuous ones! I am asking you. O grandfather! Tell me."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Dyumatsena and King Satyavat. We have heard that on the instructions of his father,[533] some men were to be executed and Satyavat spoke words, the likes of which, had never been spoken earlier. 'Dharma becomes adharma and adharma seems to be dharma. Execution has assumed the form of dharma. But it should not be that way.'[534]

'"Dyumatsena said, 'If one does not execute in accordance with dharma, how will one be able to differentiate dharma? O Satyavat! These are bandits who should be killed. Otherwise, there will be a mixing up.[535] If I do not act this way, I will bring about the advent of kali yuga. If you know how the world can progress without this, then tell me.’

‘“Satyavat replied, ‘It is the task of the brahmanas to keep the other three varnas under restraint. If they are bound in the noose of dharma, then there will be little deviation. The others look towards the conduct followed by brahmanas. When they do not listen, it is only then that the king should restrain them. He will differentiate according to the sacred texts, but there should not be any execution. In such action, one should follow the tasks appropriately laid down in the sacred texts of policy. By slaying a single bandit, the king kills those who are innocent. When that man is slain, his wife, mother, father and son are also killed. When a king has been injured, he must impose appropriate punishment. Sometimes, there may be a wicked person who imbibes good conduct from someone virtuous. From wicked subjects, virtuous offspring can be born. The roots should not be severed. That is not eternal dharma. They should be punished lightly and atonement is recommended. Such people can be imprisoned and disfigured. Their riches can be taken away. But the relatives should not be made to suffer through capital punishment. They may seek refuge with a priest and say, “O brahmana! I will not commit such a wicked act again.” O king! The instructions are that in such cases, they should be released. If a brahmana wears deerskin, holds a staff and has shaved his head, he should nevertheless be punished, if he commits a crime. A great person’s crime should be considered against his greatness. However, unlike the first offence, if a person commits a crime repeatedly, he does not deserve to be released.’

‘“Dyumatsena said, ‘As long as subjects remain within the agreements, that is said to be dharma, but not when those boundaries are transgressed. If they are not killed, everything will break down. In earlier times, light punishments were sufficient to ensure good rule.[536] They were mild and established in truth and their enmity was also light. In earlier times, shaming was sufficient chastisement. Later, harsh words and censure became punishment. Still later, seizure of property became punishment. Finally, chastisement through execution became common. Despite the threat of execution, there are people who are incapable of being restrained. Bandits pay no attention to the sacred texts of men, gods, gandharvas and ancestors. Such a person does not belong to anyone. Nor does anyone belong to him. He does not hesitate to steal ornaments from cremation grounds frequented by demons.[537] A person who depends on an agreement with them is ignorant and is bereft of his senses.’

‘“Satyavat replied, ‘If there is no means of making them virtuous other than through violence, then act so that one can at least gain through a sacrifice.’[538]

‘“Dyumatsena said, ‘For the sake of the progress of the world, kings perform supreme austerities. When they[539] proliferate, everyone follows that kind of conduct. They must be terrified to ensure good conduct. Evildoers are not slain because of any other desire. Having ensured good deeds, a king can then rule his subjects. When he follows superior conduct, the better people also follow him. Men always follow the conduct of superior people. A person who controls himself is able to control others. However, if he is himself addicted to material objects and the senses, men laugh at him. If there is a person who acts against the king, driven by arrogance or delusion, he must be restrained through every possible means, so that he is checked from evil. He[540] must restrain himself, so that he can control evildoers. But he must also use the staff of severe punishment, even against those who are relatives and intimate. If a person who has committed a grave sin is not confronted with a great calamity, it is certain that wickedness will proliferate there and dharma go into a decline. A learned brahmana who possessed good conduct instructed me about this earlier. O son! I have also been instructed this by your grandfather. They were driven by great compassion and gave this assurance to virtuous people. In the first era of krita yuga, this is what was thought of for kings. During treta yuga, dharma diminished by one quarter. In the subsequent dvapara yuga, there was another decrease by one quarter and only two quarters were left. When kali yuga set in, kings became wicked in conduct. With the progress of time, only one-sixteenth of dharma’s kalas remains.[541] O Satyavat! If one follows the norms of the first era, there will be confusion. It has been instructed that punishments should be in proportion to lifespans,[542] strength and era. Out of compassion for beings, Svayambhu Manu said that for the sake of emancipation, there are great fruits from following dharma.’”’

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'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! You have already told me about lack of injury and renunciation among beings, those that have the six characteristics.[543] Tell me about the two kinds of dharma now, the dharma of the householder and the dharma of a person who renounces. O grandfather! For those who wish to travel a long distance, which of these two is superior?"

'Bhishma replied, "Both kinds of dharma lead to great fortune and both are extremely difficult to follow. O son! Both lead to great fruits and both are followed by the virtuous. I will tell you about the proofs that have been cited for both. O Partha! Listen single-mindedly, so that your doubts about dharma can be severed. O Yudhishthira! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Kapila and a cow is recounted. Listen to it. We have heard that when Tvashtri[544] came to visit Nahusha in earlier times, he saw that he[545] was following the certain and ancient practice of the sacred texts and was about to kill a cow. Kapila was cheerful in spirit and was engaged in the pledges of truth. He was learned and restrained in diet. He possessed the supreme intelligence of faith. When he saw this, he said, 'I remember the truth of the Vedas, which have become lax now.' At that time, a rishi and mendicant named Syumarashmi penetrated the cow's body and said, 'What is this? If it is the view that the Vedas constitute dharma, how can there be a different kind of view?[546] Patient ascetics use the knowledge of the sacred texts to obtain insight. All of them know about the atman and are regarded as rishis. They are devoid of thirst and without anxiety. They desire nothing. All of them have no resolutions. This is what the Vedas have proclaimed.'

'"Kapila replied, 'I am not censuring the Vedas, or saying anything against them. We have heard that for the same objective different kinds of duties have been laid down for different ashramas. The renouncer[547] goes there. The one who is in vanaprastha goes there. The ones who are in garhasthya or brahmacharya also go there. It has been the eternal view that all the four modes represent paths followed by the gods. Their superiority and inferiority, strength and weakness, have been spoken about in terms of the fruits obtained. Knowing this, the Vedas have advocated tasks to accomplish all the objectives. But elsewhere, we have faithfully heard the sacred texts to state that there need be no tasks at all. There seem to be taints with beginning tasks. But there also seem to be great taints with not beginning tasks. This being the state of the sacred texts, it is difficult to comprehend strengths and weaknesses. With the exception of these sacred texts, if you see any view that holds something to be superior to non-violence, tell me about it. What do you see?'

'"Syumarashmi said, 'We have always heard the sacred texts say that sacrifices must be performed for the sake of heaven. One first thinks of the fruits and then embarks on a sacrifice. The sacred texts have said that goats, horses, sheep, cows, different kinds of birds, wild and domesticated, and herbs are meant for sustaining life.[548] Every day, food must be eaten in the morning and in the evening. The sacred texts have said that animals and grain are the limbs of a sacrifice. Prajapati created them and sacrifices together. The lord Prajapati made the gods and others perform sacrifices with their help. All animals have been divided into seven categories each and a succeeding one is inferior to a preceding one.[549] The entire universe has been spoken of as a supreme sacrificial altar. From earlier times, this is what has progressively been followed. According to his strength, which learned man doesn't choose a living form for a sacrifice? Animals, humans, trees and herbs also desire to go to heaven and with the exception of sacrifices, there is no means of reaching heaven. Oblations like herbs, animals, trees, creepers, clarified butter, milk, curds, the earth,[550] the directions, faith and the time—these are the twelve components.[551] When the hymns of the Rig, Yajur and Sama Veda and the person performing the sacrifice are added, there is a total of sixteen. The fire that burns in the household is said to be the seventeenth. These are said to be the limbs of a sacrifice and the foundations of the sacrifice. Clarified butter, milk, curds mixed with sugar, skin, hair,[552] horns and hooves—a cow can provide everything for a sacrifice. Each of these is a recommended object. With officiating priests and dakshina, they can sustain sacrifices. People collect all of these and perform sacrifices. It has been heard in the sacred texts that they[553] have been created for sacrifices. Since ancient times, this is how men have progressively conducted themselves. However, there are some who do not wish to cause any injury or lead to any violence. They perform sacrifices because of conviction and not because they desire the fruits of sacrifices. There is no doubt that what have been stated constitute the limbs of a sacrifice. Following the ordinances, they must be appropriately used and support each other. I see the sacred texts of the rishis and the Vedas are established in them.

Those learned ones see the instructions that have been laid down by the Brahmanas.[554] Sacrifices have been created by the Brahmanas and they are based on the Brahmanas. The entire universe is based on sacrifices and sacrifices are based on the universe. The learned say that if a person has sacrificed to the best of his capacity and has uttered the words "Om", the womb of the brahman, "Namah", "Svaha", "Svadha" and "Vashat", he has nothing to fear in the three worlds and in the world hereafter. The Vedas, the Siddhas and the supreme rishis say this. A person in whom all the hymns of the Rig, the Yajur and the Sama are vested, invoked in the proper way, is truly a brahmana. O brahmana! You know the results of an agnihotra and soma sacrifice. O illustrious one! You also know the consequences of the other great sacrifices. O brahmana! Therefore, you should not think at all about sacrifices or about officiating at them. Sacrifices performed properly lead to heaven and after death, lead to great fruits in heaven. It is certain that those who do not perform sacrifices do not obtain any worlds here, or in the hereafter. Those who know about the words of the Vedas know that there are proofs about both.'"'[555]

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'"Kapila said, 'Ascetics see these are the outcomes and there is nothing in the three worlds that can obstruct them.[556] Those learned ones are without opposite sentiments. They do not bow down. They are not bound down by any hopes. They are free from all kinds of sins. They roam around, pure and unblemished. They are firm in their resolution that renunciation represents emancipation. They base themselves in the brahman. They are full of the brahman. They have made the brahman their abode. They are devoid of sorrow and have destroyed rajas. They obtain the eternal worlds. They obtain the supreme objective. Why do they need garhasthya?'[557]

'"Syumarashmi said, 'Even for those with supreme faith, even for those who seek the supreme objective, there is no option but to resort to garhasthya. All other ashramas depend on it. All living beings sustain themselves by depending on their mothers. In that way, all the other ashramas are possible because they are based on garhasthya. The householder performs sacrifices. The householder observes austerities. Any dharma that one wishes to pursue has garhasthya as its foundation. O sage! Everything that has life is engaged in procreation. It is not possible to generate offspring in any other mode. O brahmana! All grass and grain, in plains and mountains, depend on this mode. And life is sustained on those grass and grain. Therefore, how can any eloquent person say that there can be emancipation without the householder stage? Those who are without faith, those who are without wisdom, those who are devoid of subtle insight, those who are without hope, those who are lazy and exhausted and those who are tormented because of their own deeds—even though they may be regarded as learned—these are the only ones who regard renunciation as the supreme ashrama. The firm and eternal injunctions are for the sake of the three worlds. That is the reason an illustrious brahmana is worshipped from the time of his birth.[558] Even before the ceremony of conception has been performed, mantras exist in brahmanas and enable them to perform, without any uncertainty, direct and indirect acts. In cremations, renewed attachment,[559] using vessels for food, donating cattle and other animals and immersing funeral cakes in water, these[560] become necessary. There are three kinds of ancestors—archishmats, barhishads and kravyads.[561] After death, they grant permission for mantras to be chanted. Mantras are thus the reason.[562] When this has been pronounced in the Vedas, how can mortals obtain emancipation without repaying their debts to ancestors, gods and brahmanas? There are indeed the speculations of some learned people. But they are lazy and devoid of prosperity. They may say that they know about the words of the Vedas. But they speak lies in the guise of truth.[563] If a brahmana performs sacrifices in accordance with the sacred texts of the Vedas, he is never afflicted by sin. With his sacrifices, the animals that have been killed and his dharma, he ascends upwards. He satisfies his desires and satisfies them.[564] A man cannot obtain greatness by ignoring the Vedas, deceit or illusion. The brahman is obtained through the practices of brahmanas.'

'"Kapila said, 'There are *darsha, pournamasa,* agnihotra and *chaturmasya*.[565] These are eternal sacrifices for intelligent people. There are those who no longer have any resolutions and are extremely firm in their fortitude. They are pure and have sought refuge in the brahman. They desire immortality and through the brahman, can satisfy the gods and the ancestors.

They see their own selves in all beings and all beings in their own selves.[566] The gods are themselves confused when they try to follow in their footsteps. The being inside has four gates and four faces. Therefore, censure can also come from four directions. The gatekeeper has those four gates of the two arms, the organ of speech, the stomach and the genital organ.[567] One should not gamble with dice and take the riches that belong to others. One should not accept cooked food from those who have not been born in a womb.[568] An intelligent person will not come under the influence of anger and strike others with hands and feet, thus protecting these well. He will not loudly indulge in verbal abuse, nor will he indulge in slander and rumour. He will be devoted to the truth and restrained in speech. He will not be distracted. Thus, he will protect the gate that is the organ of speech extremely well. He will not refrain from food. But nor will he eat a lot. He will not be greedy and solicit the companionship of the virtuous. He will eat just enough to sustain the progress of life. Thus will he protect the gate that is the stomach. When there is a brave wife, he will not have intercourse with another woman. Nor will he summon a woman when it is not her season. He will devote himself to the vow of serving his wife. The gate of the genital organ will be protected in this way. The learned brahmanas protect all the gates of the genital organs, the stomach, the arms and the organ of speech, as the fourth, extremely well. If all these gates are not guarded, there will be failure. What will such a person obtain through austerities? What will be accomplished through sacrifices or his atman? If a person casts aside his upper garment, if he sleeps on the bare ground, using his arm as a pillow and if he is tranquil, the gods know such a person to be a brahmana. Such a sage finds pleasure alone and is comfortable with all the opposite sentiments. He does not think about others. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He knows everything about nature and its transformations. He knows about the objectives of all beings. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana. He grants fearlessness to all beings and is engaged in being free of fear from everyone. He sees himself inside all beings. The gods know such a person to be a brahmana.[569] He is not concerned with the Vedas and the fruits of rites. However, following the sanctions of all these, he takes delight in the absence of fruits. But it is certain that his tasks bring the rewards of fruits. They are seen to be without qualities and are obtained alone and in private. Those qualities are extremely difficult to comprehend and extremely difficult to obtain. But the fruits of rites come to an end. That is what you should see.'

'"Syumarashmi said, 'The Vedas provide support for both renunciation and fruits.[570] Both those paths are evident. O illustrious one! Tell me about this.'

'"Kapila replied, 'You should see it as evident that you should resort to the path of the virtuous. What is evident about the one that you wish to follow?'[571]

'"Syumarashmi replied, 'I am Syumarashmi. I have come here to ask you about the brahman. I desire what is beneficial for me. That is the reason, in an upright way, I started this conversation. My intention wasn't a debate. O illustrious one! It is just that I have this terrible doubt. Explain it to me. You have said that, for those who resort to virtuous paths, the benefits can directly be seen. For the path that you follow, what can be directly seen? There are sacred texts about argumentation and there are the other sacred texts. Avoiding the sacred texts about argumentation, I have studied the other sacred texts, which bring success. Those sacred texts are the words of the Vedas. It can be seen that those sacred texts have determined that the signs of success are directly manifest. This is like a boat that has been tethered, so that it cannot be borne along by the tide. O brahmana! How can we be dragged away? If we possess wicked intelligence, how can we cross it?[572] O illustrious one! Tell me about this. I have resorted to you. Instruct me. There is no one who has completely renounced, is completely content, is completely without sorrow and disease, and is completely free from desire, resolution and action. You indulge in joy and misery, just as we do. You are no different from all the other animals in serving the objects of the senses. Conduct has accordingly been laid down for the four varnas and ashramas and they follow this. How does one determine what brings happiness?'

'"Kapila replied, 'If one acts according to the sacred texts and follows all the injunctions and rites, there will always be happiness. For a person who pursues knowledge, knowledge saves from everything. Any conduct that deviates from knowledge destroys subjects. That is the reason learned people are always happy in every way. Sometimes, one obtains the sense of complete unity.[573] Without understanding the truth about the sacred texts, some weak people come under the subjugation of desire and anger and are overwhelmed by arrogance.

They do not know the truth about the sacred texts. They are like bandits who rob the sacred texts. Their intelligence has not ripened and they are inauspicious. They do not seek to attain the brahman. They see the lack of qualities. Their bodies are based on the qualities of tamas and they are devoted to tamas. Any being follows the inherent traits of his natural characteristics. Because of the qualities that are always generated by their nature, they are overcome by hatred, desire, wrath, insolence, falsehood and arrogance. However, there are those who use their intelligence and abandon both the good and the bad. They desire the supreme objective and endeavour to remain engaged in self-restraint.’

‘“Syumarashmi said, ‘O brahmana! Everything that I have said has been recounted in the sacred texts. If one does not understand the true purport of the sacred texts, one engages in rites. It has been heard that learning is that which is in conformity with the sacred texts. It has also been determined that not following the rites is against the sacred texts. The words of the Vedas represent the learning of the sacred texts. However, it is seen that many insolent people act against the sacred texts. For both this world and for the next, they see faults in the sacred texts. Ignorance destroys their wisdom and with wisdom in decay, they become enveloped in tamas. A person who resorts to this and roams around in every direction, basing himself on the words of the Vedas, is alone capable of being emancipated and being successful in every possible way. He is said to be liberated. This is an extremely difficult task for someone who lives in a household. Even if he indulges in donations, studying, sacrifices, generating offspring and uprightness, he is not capable of being freed. Shame on the doer and the tasks and on the futile exertions. However, if one turns one’s back on the rites of the Vedas, one becomes a non-believer. O illustrious one! This is what I quickly wish to hear about. O brahmana! Tell me about this. I have sought refuge with you. Instruct me. I wish to learn everything that is known to you about emancipation.’”’

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““Kapila said, ‘People regard the Vedas as proof and one should not turn one’s back on the rites in the Vedas. Know that there are two brahmans, Shabda-Brahma and Para-Brahma. Having attained Shabda-Brahma, one can then proceed towards Para-Brahma. Having created the body, he follows the Vedas and creates the body.[574] When the body has thus been purified, that vessel becomes a brahmana. After this, other tasks must be undertaken and I will tell you about them. Only the person can directly know whether there has been detachment in the mind. Other people cannot bear witness to this fact. Dharma is followed by those who sacrifice without any desires. They are those who renounce and are not greedy. They are devoid of sentiments of compassion or envy. Even when they are engaged in the path of riches, they use it for visting places of pilgrimage. They never indulge in wicked deeds and resort to the rites prescribed by birth. They are firm in their minds and resolutions. They have decided to pursue pure wisdom. They are not enraged. They do not suffer from malice. They have no sense of ego and do not indulge in jealousy. They faithfully pursue unsullied knowledge. They are engaged in the welfare of all beings. There were many such householders, following their own tasks. There were kings and brahmanas who practised the indicated rites. For a long time, they followed uprightness. They were content, firm in their pursuit of knowledge. Those faithful and pure people clearly followed dharma, both Para and the other kind.[575] They first cleaned their souls and then acted in accordance with the vows. They acted according to that dharma, even when it was very difficult to follow and involved hardships. Earlier, they followed that dharma collectively and earned happiness. Since they had no doubts, they did not have to perform atonements. They truly depended on dharma. Their minds were such that they could not be dislodged. They did not transgress the norms and showed no deceit in the practice of dharma. Collectively, those initial ones followed such conduct and because of this, they had no need of atonements. The sacred texts say that atonements became necessary when the souls became weak. In earlier times, there were many brahmanas like this. They performed sacrifices. They possessed the wisdom of the three.[576] They were pure, good in conduct and illustrious. Those learned ones continuously performed sacrifices, but without being tied down by the bonds of desire. Their sacrifices and rites from the Vedas were in conformity with the sacred texts, appropriate for the time, appropriate for their resolutions and appropriate for their vows. They had overcome desire and anger and were naturally firm in their souls. They were upright and always tranquil. They were engaged in their own tasks. In every way, they followed what we have come to know as the eternal sacred texts. They were cheerful in their spirits. They performed tasks that were extremely difficult to accomplish. They were engaged in their own tasks and performed terrible austerities. That ancient and eternal conduct was certainly extraordinary. They acted without any uncertainty in their intelligence, clear about the signs of dharma. They were safe in the practice of dharma. They were not distracted and not vanquished. All the varnas were engaged in this way and there was no exception to this. Those bulls among men followed that single dharma which has four quarters. Having followed it in the proper way, those virtuous ones went to the supreme objective. They left their houses and resorted to the forest. There were others who remained in their houses and became brahmacharis. Learned brahmanas know that dharma consists of four ashramas. Those who attain the brahman's eternal abode are certainly brahmanas. There were thus many ancient brahmanas who followed dharma. Those brahmanas can be seen in the firmament, shining as stellar bodies. Some are nakshatras and many are large numbers of stars. Following the Vedas, they are content and have obtained the infinite. If they happen to be reborn in this cycle of life, since they are not tainted by wicked deeds, they rarely perform tasks that require births in wombs. Such people are brahmanas. How else can one be a brahmana? It is good and evil acts that enable the determination. We have learnt in the sacred texts that all of them obtain the infinite in this way and that their wisdom has been ripened. They have auspicious souls and only thirst for emancipation. The four kinds of dharma in the Upanishads is generally said to apply to everyone.[577] Those brahmanas who control their souls are Siddhas and are always successful. They are said to base themselves on knowledge, with contentment as the foundation. They possess renunciation in their souls. This eternal search for the brahman has always been the dharma of mendicants. Sometimes others also pursue this, but only according to capacity. Whether one reaches that objective, or whether one only moves towards it because one is weak, the brahman is the auspicious object of desire and frees a person from the cycle of life.'

'"Syumarashmi said, 'There are those who enjoy, donate, perform sacrifices, study and resort to a life of renunciation, after having pursued the dharma of serving the senses. Among these, when they die, who attains supreme heaven? O brahmana! I am asking you about this. Tell me the exact truth.'

'"Kapila replied, 'All those auspicious ones who enjoy have all the qualities.[578] However, they do not obtain the bliss that comes through renunciation. You can see this.'

'"Syumarashmi said, 'You based yourself on knowledge. Householders have determined to perform acts. However, it has been stated that the objective of all the ashramas is the same. No difference is seen between them, singly or collectively. Which is superior or inferior? O illustrious one! Tell me this.'

'"Kapila replied, 'Acts clean the body, but knowledge is the ultimate objective. When sins have been thrown out and one has tasted knowledge, non-violence, forgiveness, peace, lack of injury, truth, uprightness, lack of enmity, lack of pride, modesty, renunciation and tranquility result. Through this path, one obtains the supreme objective of the brahman. A learned person knows this in his mind and determines to act accordingly. There are brahmanas who are always tranquil, pure, firm in the pursuit of knowledge and content. They are said to progress towards the supreme objective. Those who know what it is to be known in the Vedas and also the contexts are said to know the Vedas. The others are like bellows.[579] Since everything is established in the Vedas, a person who knows the Vedas knows everything. All the faith is established in the Vedas and everything that exists and does not exist.[580] All the faith exists in this and everything that exists and does not exist.[581] Those who realize know that it is the end and the middle and everything that is true and everything that is false.[582] When everything has been renounced, there is tranquility and peace. There is contentment, and auspicious emancipation is based on this. There is lack of falsehood in this. There is truth in this. This is everything that is to be known. This[583] is inside all mobile and immobile objects. The unmanifest brahman does not decay and is the source of creation. This gives all kinds of happiness and is the supreme objective. Energy, forgiveness and unadulterated and auspicious tranquility—these are certainly the eternal reasons for bliss. If the sight of knowledge is used, one reaches Shabda-Brahma. For the sake of the brahman, I bow down in obeisance before Brahma.'"'

Chapter 1591(263)

'Yudhishthira said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The Vedas praise dharma, artha and kama. But which gain is special? O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about what Kundadhara had affectionately done for someone who had done him a good turn earlier. There was a brahmana who did not possess any riches. But he desired to pursue dharma and use the wealth for the purpose of conducting sacrifices. He tormented himself through fierce austerities. Having made up his mind, he worshipped the gods. But though he worshipped the gods with devotion, he failed to obtain riches. He then began to think, 'Which is the god who has not so far been worshipped by men, who can be speedily pleased?' He then saw a follower of the gods, Kundadhara, standing near him, with a tranquil form that was in the form of the cloud. On seeing that great-souled one, devotion was generated in him. 'This one, with a body like this, will bring prosperity for me. He lives near the gods and has not been worshipped by men earlier. He will quickly grant me a lot of riches.' The brahmana then used incense, fragrances, superior garlands and many kinds of offerings to worship him. The cloud was pleased within a short period of time. Wishing to benefit him, he spoke these words to the one who had controlled himself. 'The virtuous ones have decreed methods of salvation for those who kill brahmanas, those who are drunkards, those who are thieves and those who have broken their vows. But there is no salvation for those who are ungrateful. Desire has a son named adharma. Anger is said to be the son of jealousy. Greed is the son of deceit. But ungratefulness has no offspring.' The brahmana lay down on a bed of kusha grass. Kundadhara's energy penetrated him and he saw all the beings in a dream. He was tranquil and he had cleansed himself with austerities and devotion. The brahmana's atman was pure and in the night, he saw these signs. O Yudhishthira! He saw the immensely radiant and great-souled

Manibhadra standing amongst the gods, issuing instructions. The gods were granting kingdoms and riches to those who performed good deeds and were taking them away in the case of bad deeds. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the midst of the yakshas, he saw Kundadhara prostrate himself on the ground before the gods. Instructed by the words of the gods, the immensely illustrious Manibhadra asked, 'Why is Kundadhara prostrate on the ground? What does he want?"

'"Kundadhara said, 'That brahmana is devoted to me. If the gods are pleased with me, I desire that favours should be shown to him, so that he can obtain happiness.'"

'Bhishma said, "Instructed by the words of the gods, Manibhadra again spoke these words to the immensely radiant Kundadhara. 'O fortunate one! Arise. You have been successful. Be happy. Whatever riches are desired by this brahmana, your friend, on the instructions of the gods, I will give those riches to him, because of your friendship with him.' But Kundadhara thought that the sentiments of men were certainly fickle. Therefore, the illustrious one thought that he should turn the brahmana's mind towards austerities.

'"Kundadhara said, 'O granter of riches! I am not seeking riches for the brahmana. For this devotee, I desire that you should act so as to show him another favour. For this devotee, I do not desire the earth, full of riches, or a great store of wealth. Instead, let him follow dharma. Let him find delight in dharma. Let his intelligence be such that he earns a living through dharma. Let dharma be the most important thing for him. It is my view that this should be the favour shown.'

'"Manibhadra replied, 'The fruits of dharma are many kinds of kingdoms and happiness. Let him enjoy those fruits and let him be free of all physical hardships.'"

'Bhishma said, "However, the immensely illustrious Kundadhara repeatedly entreated that he should only be driven to practise dharma. At this, the gods were satisfied.

'"Manibhadra replied, 'The gods are pleased with you and with this brahmana. He will have dharma in his soul and his mind will turn towards dharma.'"

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! The cloud was delighted at having been successful. He had obtained the boon that he desired in his mind, one that was extremely difficult to get. The supreme among brahmanas saw that many fine pieces of cloth were scattered around near him. But he was indifferent towards them.

‘“The brahmana said, ‘Since he has not paid any attention to my good deeds, no one else will.[584] I will therefore go to the forest and live a life of supreme dharma.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The supreme among brahmanas was indifferent and the gods had also shown him their favours. He entered the forest and started great austerities. The brahmana subsisted on whatever fruits and roots were left after serving the gods and the guests. O great king! There was great love in his mind for dharma. The brahmana then discarded all roots and fruits and subsisted only on leaves. The supreme among brahmanas gave up leaves and subsisted on water. Thereafter, he subsisted for a large number of years on air alone. Despite this, it was extraordinary that the breath of his life did not fade. He was faithful towards dharma and performed fierce austerities. After a long period of time, he obtained divine sight. He thought, ‘If I am pleased with someone and my mind turns towards giving him great riches, my words will never be false.’[585] Cheerfully, he continued with more austerities. Having been successful, he again thought about what would come next. ‘If I am satisfied with someone and wish to grant him a kingdom, he will become a king and my words will not be false.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, Kundadhara showed himself before him, both because of his friendship and because the brahmana had been successful in his yoga of austerities. O king! The brahmana was surprised to see Kundadhara, but met him and honoured him according to the prescribed rites. Kundadhara said, ‘O brahmana! Use your divine and supreme sight to see the ends that kings come to and also use your sight to look at the worlds.’ With his divine sight, the brahmana could see a long distance away and saw that thousands of kings were submerged in hell.

‘“Kundadhara said, ‘If after worshipping me faithfully you had only obtained misery, what would I have given you and how would I have shown you favours?[586] Look and look again at what happens to the desire that men possess. In particular, the gate of heaven is barred to men.’”

‘Bhishma said, “He saw[587] men stationed there, enveloped in desire, anger, greed, fear, intoxication, sleep, laziness and procrastination.

‘“Kundadhara said, ‘People are bound by these. Gods are frightened of men because they always act contrary to the words of the gods, in every way. Without the permission of the gods, no one can follow dharma. Through the strength of austerities, you can bestow kingdoms and riches.’”

‘Bhishma said, “At this, the brahmana bowed his head down before that store of water. The great-souled one said, ‘You have shown me a great favour. Earlier, I was bound down by desire and avarice and did not realize your affection for me. Therefore, you should pardon me.’ Kundadhara told the bull among brahmanas, ‘I have forgiven you.’ He embraced him with his arms and disappeared from there. In ancient time, thus did the brahmana roam through all the worlds, having been united with austerities through Kundadhara’s favours. Through the strength of dharma and yoga, one attains the supreme objective. One can roam around as one wishes and obtain success in all one’s desires. A person who follows dharma is worshipped by gods, brahmanas, virtuous people, yakshas, men and *charana*s.[588] But this is not true of those who desire riches and other things. If a person’s mind is such that loves dharma and practises it, the gods are extremely pleased with him. The happiness obtained through riches lasts for a short time. Dharma brings supreme happiness.”’

Chapter 1592(264)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! There are many sacrifices and austerities, all with a single objective. Which of these sacrifices is recommended for dharma and not for the sake of happiness alone?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, Narada recounted the ancient account of a brahmana. For the sake of performing sacrifices, he resorted to unchhavritti.[589] The brahmana lived in Vidarbha, best among kingdoms in the practice of dharma. Surviving on unchhavritti, that rishi worshipped Vishnu. He ate shyamaka, *suryapatni* and *suvarchala*.[590] But because of his austerities, those bitter and tasteless herbs also tasted succulent. Having gone to the forest, he refrained from injury towards all beings on earth. O scorcher of enemies! Desiring to go to heaven, he offered roots and fruits in those sacrifices. His wife's name was Pushkaracharini and she was pure and thin through the practising of vows. Satya[591] instructed her to join him in the sacrifice as a wife. Though she did not approve of this, she was terrified of his curse and her nature was also to follow.[592] Her garments consisted of feathers that peacocks had cast aside. Though she was unwilling, she was summoned to the sacrifice by the officiating priest.[593] In that forest, not very far away, dwelt a person who was descended from Shukra's lineage. He was in the form of a deer. He was also jealous and a follower of adharma.[594] He spoke these words to Satya. 'You are trying to perform an extremely difficult task. If a sacrifice is devoid of its mantras and other limbs, it will be performed improperly. Therefore, fling me there as an oblation and without any distractions, go to heaven.' At this, Savitri herself manifested at the sacrifice and counselled him to do this. But though invited, he replied, 'I will not slay my neighbour.' Having been restrained, she[595] entered the flames of the sacrifice. She did not wish to see a sacrifice that was improperly performed and wished to enter the nether worlds. However, the deer again joined its hands in salutation and entreated Satya. But Satya embraced it and asked it to go away. The deer departed. But having gone eight steps, it returned and said, 'O Satya! If you slay me, you will perform a good deed. Slay me and attain a virtuous end. I am granting you divine sight. Look at those apsaras. Look at those wonderful vimanas and the great-souled gandharvas.' With that sight, he glanced at those extremely beautiful worlds and he was touched by desire. He looked at the deer and thought that he was capable of dwelling in heaven through violence. It was Dharma himself who had spent many years in the forest in the form of a deer. Wishing to ensure his salvation, he said, 'In your mind, you should not think of a sacrifice that involves the killing of a deer. Your great austerities will thereby be destroyed. Sacrifices should not involve any violence.' The illustrious Dharma himself accepted an officiating role at that sacrifice. He obtained the state of meditation and supreme austerities that his wife had already obtained. All dharma involves non-violence. Violence does not bring success in a sacrifice. This is the truth that Dharma spoke to Satya and I have told you about it."'

Chapter 1593(265)

'Yudhishthira asked, "How does a man become wicked? How does he follow dharma? How does he obtain emancipation and where does he go?"

'Bhishma replied, "You know everything about dharma. You are only asking to confirm your belief. Hear about emancipation and renunciation and the foundations of wickedness and dharma. On knowing about the five,[596] wishes first run after them. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained these, desire and anger are generated. To accomplish these, he then takes delight in performing tasks. Form, taste and the others attract as desirable objectives. From this, attachment results and aversion follows after that. Greed follows and confusion comes after that. When one is overcome with greed, confusion, attachment and aversion, no dharma is generated. The intelligence turns to acts of adharma. One uses deceit to practise dharma. One finds delight in using deceit to pursue artha. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Through deceit, one tries to be successful in obtaining riches. The intelligence turns to this and wickedness becomes attractive. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is despite well-wishers and learned people trying to restrain him. He replies to them in words that seem to be full of reason, supported by the ordinances. Because of attachment and confusion, three kinds of adharma increase. He thinks of sin, speaks of it and does it. When he thus engages in adharma, the virtuous perceive his taints. But those who have similar dispositions become his friends and serve the evildoer. He does not obtain happiness here, not to speak of the hereafter. This is how one has evil in his soul. Now hear about the person who has dharma in his soul. He is accomplished in dharma and obtains benefits. Because of his wisdom, he can see the sins in advance. He is skilled in ascertaining happiness and unhappiness and serves virtuous people. Because he consorts with those who are righteous, his proclivity towards such conduct also increases. He finds delight in wisdom and dharma. He sustains himself through dharma. Even if his mind turns towards obtaining riches, he does this only through dharma. He sprinkles his foundations only with those things where there are qualities. He has dharma in his soul and obtains friends who are good. Having obtained friends and riches, he finds delight in this world and in the next. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The learned know that as the fruits of dharma, a living being obtains lordship over sound, touch, form, taste and scent.[597] O Yudhishthira! However, having obtained the fruits of dharma, he is not satisfied. Through the sight of learning, he is not content until he has renounced. Through the sight of wisdom, he sees sins in desire. He no longer finds delight in desire, and dharma liberates him. On seeing that everything in the world is destroyed, he strives to give up everything.[598] He uses every means possible for emancipation and avoids those that are against it. He quickly resorts to renunciation and abandons all wicked deeds. He has dharma in his soul and obtains supreme emancipation. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have told you what you asked me about—sin, dharma, emancipation and renunciation. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, in every situation, you must practise dharma. O Kounteya! If you base yourself in dharma, you will obtain eternal success.”’

Chapter 1594(266)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! You have said that emancipation can be obtained through some means and not by others. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear what those appropriate means are.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely wise one! What you have asked requires accomplished sight. O unblemished one! You must always seek to hunt out the appropriate means in everything. O unblemished one! When one turns one’s intelligence towards fashioning a pot, once the pot has been done, it vanishes.[599] In that way, the reasons for pursuing dharma are no longer there once one has obtained dharma.[600] The road that goes to the eastern ocean doesn’t go to the western one. There is only one path for emancipation. Listen to that in detail. One should practise forgiveness, eliminate anger and abandon all desire and resolution. One must patiently follow sattva and conquer sleep. By being attentive, one must protect oneself against fear. The atman must be used to control the breath. Patience must be used to restrain wishes, hatred and desire. Practice must be used to control errors and the whirl of confusion.

Through practice of knowledge, one must ascertain the truth about important and unimportant things. Through restrained diet, one must ward off digestive disorders and disease. Contentment and knowledge of the truth must be used to control greed, confusion and hatred. Through the dharma of compassion, one should conquer the adharma of indifference. Through tranquility and abandoning of attachment, one must control the desire to obtain things. Through yoga, a learned person realizes that affection and hunger are temporary. Compassion and contentment are used to control pride and thirst. Enterprise is used to conquer lassitude. Certainty is used to conquer doubt. Loquaciousness is conquered through silence and fear through valour. Words and thoughts are controlled through intelligence and intelligence through the sight of knowledge. Knowledge about the great paramatman is used to control the jivatman.[601] Finally, that[602] can be known by those who are tranquil and pure in deeds. The wise know how to control the five taints associated with yoga. These are desire, anger, greed, fear and laziness as the fifth. These must be discarded and yoga must be practised. Meditation, studying, donations, truthfulness, modesty, uprightness, forgiveness, purity in intake of food and control over the senses—these are the means used to increase energy and dispel sins. Thus, resolution becomes successful and knowledge is obtained. Such a person is energetic and has cleansed his sins. He is restrained in diet and has conquered his senses. Having subjugated desire and anger, he attains the state of the brahman. He is without folly and without attachment. He has cast aside desire and anger. He bases himself on lack of distress, lack of insolence and lack of anxiety. He is cheerful, unblemished and pure. This is the path of emancipation. He controls his words and thoughts and all desire.”’[603]

Chapter 1595(267)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Narada and Asita-Devala. The aged Devala, supreme among intelligent ones, was seated. Narada asked him about the creation and destruction of beings. ‘O brahmana! Where was this universe, with its mobile and immobile objects, created from? Where do they go at the time of destruction? Tell me about this.'

'"Asita replied, 'It is said that when the time comes, the creator of all beings thinks about existence and brings into being the five great elements. Time urges itself to create beings from these. There is no doubt that those who say that there is anything else[604] utter a falsehood. O Narada! Know that these five are eternal, indestructible and fixed. These naturally possess great energy and time is the sixth. Water, space, earth, wind and fire are the elements. Do not entertain the doubt that there is anything superior to these. There are no texts or arguments to substantiate that doubt. Know that the accumulation or withdrawal of these six leads to everything. These five, time, the eight strands are the only eternal reason behind the creation and destruction of all beings.[605] When beings are destroyed, it is into these that merger takes place. When beings are created, they emerge from these. When a creature is destroyed, it is divided into five parts, and is also created from these. The body comes from earth, hearing from space. The eyes come from fire, life from the wind and blood from water. The eyes, the nose, the ears, the skin and the tongue as the fifth are the senses of knowledge and the wise know that these are for attaining the objects of the senses. Sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste are known to be the qualities of the senses. There are five senses, five qualities and five connections. Form, scent, taste, touch and sound are the qualities that are obtained through the senses. There are five each of senses, qualities and connections. The senses don't actually comprehend the qualities of form, scent, taste, touch and sound. These are actually understood by the kshetrajna. Consciousness is superior to the accumulation of the senses. The mind is superior to consciousness. Intelligence is superior to the mind. The kshetrajna is superior to intelligence. Initially, creatures consider all material objects through separate senses. Subsequently, the mind reflects and resorts to intelligence. One then comprehends the truth about all the objects perceived by the senses. Consciousness and mind interact with the accumulation of the senses, and intelligence is the eighth. Those who have thought about adhyatma and have thought about it know these eight to be the organs of knowledge. Know that the hands, the feet, the anus, the penis and the mouth as the fifth are the organs of action. The mouth is said to be the organ that is used for speaking and eating. The feet are the organs for moving and the hand are the organs for doing something. The anus and the penis are similar in action and are both organs for discharge. One is for the discharge of excrement, while the other is for discharge at the time of sexual desire. However, it has rightly been said that there is a sixth organ of action and that is strength. I have spoken to you about all the senses of knowledge, organs of action and their attributes. When the organs are exhausted, they cannot perform their own tasks. Since the action of the organs is suspended, a man sleeps. However, though the senses are under suspension, if the mind is awake and concerns itself with material objects, this is known as a state of dreaming. There are three attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas. When engaged in action, the state of sattva is praised. Joy, success in tasks, power and the supreme objective are said to be the signs of those who have resorted to sattva. The sentiments that any creature properly resorts to and the sentiments that it aspires for, are always evident in its coming and going.[606] It is said that there are seventeen characteristics of the qualities and the senses.[607] The eighteenth one[608] that dwells in the body is eternal. All those qualities adhere to the one who assumes a body and dwells in the body. When he no longer dwells in the body, they are also disassociated from the body. The body is reduced to the five elements. There are eighteen qualities in the body.[609] Heat is the twentieth and all this comes about through an interaction between the five elements. Together with the breath of life, mahat sustains these in the body. That is the reason for creation and destruction of the body. When those good and bad deeds are exhausted, the body is reduced to the five elements. In due course of time, depending on the good and bad deeds that have been performed, another body is entered. Through a process of death and rebirth, he repeatedly gives up one body and resorts to another body. He is urged on by time, like a person abandoning a dilapidated house for a new house. Those who are wise and firm in their resolution are not tormented because of this. Foolish people, those who are proud of relationships, are the only ones who grieve on account of this. There is no one to whom he belongs. There is no one who belongs to him. He is always alone, enjoying joy and misery in the body. Some creatures are born again. There are others who are not reborn. Some are freed from their bodies and attain the supreme objective. Having abandoned the body, the store of good and bad deeds, when the body is destroyed, such people attain the brahman. Knowledge of sankhya is recommended for the destruction of good and bad deeds. Once those are destroyed, learned ones can see that the state of the brahman is the supreme objective.'"

Chapter 1596(268)

'Yudhishthira said, "Brothers, fathers, sons, relatives and well-wishers have been slain for the sake of accomplishing objectives. We have been driven by wicked resolutions and have been cruel. O grandfather! How can this thirst for riches be removed? Following that thirst, we have perpetrated wicked deeds."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a song sung by the king of Videha, when he was asked by Mandavya. 'I possess nothing, but I live my life in great happiness. Though Mithila[610] is blazing, nothing that belongs to me is burning. Riches indeed bring prosperity. But those who know, regard these as misery. Objects that bring little prosperity always confuse those who are not accomplished. Whatever happiness satisfaction brings in this world and whatever great happiness is obtained in heaven are not even one-sixteenth of the happiness that comes about from the extinguishment of thirst. With the progress of time, a cow grows and so does its horns. In that way, with more and more riches, the thirst also increases. If one has a sense of ownership in anything, then, when that object is destroyed, one suffers from torment. One should not be driven by desire. Attachment to desire brings misery. When desired riches have been obtained, they should be used for dharma. But even then, desire must be shunned. A learned person regards all beings as equal, as equal as a tiger and a lump of flesh.[611] Having been successful in purifying his soul, he renounces everything. He discards both truth and falsehood, sorrow and joy, the pleasant and the unpleasant, fear and freedom from fear. Having abandoned everything, he is tranquil and healthy. This[612] is difficult to be given up by those who are evil in their intelligence. Even when the body decays, it does not decrease. It is like a disease that destroys life. The casting aside of thirst brings happiness. A person who has dharma in his soul beholds his own atman, like the sparkling and unblemished moon. He obtains happiness in this world and fame in the hereafter.’ On hearing the king’s words, the brahmana was pleased. Mandavya, who had earlier been confused, honoured those words.”’

Chapter 1597(269)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What kind of conduct, what kind of behaviour, what kind of knowledge and what kind of faith enable one to obtain the state of the brahman, which is permament and is beyond nature?”

‘Bhishma replied, “A person who is devoted to the dharma of moksha must be restrained in diet and must conquer his senses. He will then obtain the supreme state, which is permanent and is beyond nature. The sage will depart from his home and regard gain and loss as equal. He will be indifferent to objects of desire, even when they present themselves. He will become a mendicant. He will not hurt anyone through sight, thoughts or words. He will not display any harsh conduct, whether the person is present or absent. He will not cause injury to any being. He will roam around like the sun.[613] He should lead a life so that he does not commit an act of injury. He must tolerate harsh words and never be arrogant. Even when he is enraged, he will speak pleasant words. When he is censured, he will reply agreeably. When he roams around in the midst of a village, he should not show either excessive friendship or enmity. When searching for alms, he should not go to a house that he has visited earlier. Even when he is reviled, he must protect himself well and not speak unpleasant words in reply. He must be mild and not injure someone who has injured him. He must control fear and rage. The sage should desire alms when the smoke has gone out, when the pestle has been laid down, when the fire has been extinguished, when food has been eaten and when the vessels are no longer laid out.[614] He should only accept what is required for subsistence and ignore anything in excess. He should not be distressed at not getting something. Nor should he be delighted at getting something. He should not desire what ordinary people want. He should not eat when he is respectfully invited.[615] In a similar way, he should refuse anything that is offered as a mark of honour. He must not find fault with the food that has been offered, nor should he praise its qualities. He must always refuse a bed or a seat offered as a mark of honour. He should reside in an empty house, at the foot of a tree, in a forest or in a cave. His conduct should not be known to others. If others come there, he should go somewhere else.[616] He should treat requests and obstructions equally. He will be certain and fixed. He will not be bound down by either good deeds or bad ones. He will control the force of words, his mind and the force of anger. He will control the urge to know and the force of the stomach and the penis. The ascetic will control these urges. No censure will be allowed to afflict his heart. He will be neutral, regarding praise and censure as equal. This is the supremely sacred ashrama of a mendicant. He is great in soul and excellent in his vows. He is controlled and is detached in every way. He doesn't go to earlier places.[617] He is tranquil. He is without an abode. He is controlled. He does not consort with those who are in vanaprastha or garhasthya stages. He should not unwittingly fall prey to desire. Nor should he succumb to delight. Know that this is the ashrama of moksha, known to those who are learned. Everything about moksha was spoken about by the learned Harita. If a person departs from his house and grants fearlessness to all beings, he obtains worlds that are full of energy.'"

Chapter 1598(270)

'Yudhishthira said, "All the people speak of ourselves as being blessed. However, there is no man who is more miserable than we are. O supreme among the Kurus! O grandfather! We have been born as men, but have been born from the gods. The worlds honour us, but we have obtained misery. When will we resort to sannyasa and destroy this sorrow? O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Taking life in these bodies is a matter of sorrow. We will free ourselves of the seventeen attributes[618] and merge with the five elements. O great grandfather! We will also free ourselves from the eight objects of the senses and the qualities.[619] The sages, who are firm in their vows, are not born again. O scorcher of enemies! When will we be in a position to abandon the kingdom?"

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! Everything can be counted and everything has an end. The number of rebirths can also be counted.[620] Nothing in this world is fixed. O king! In connection with what we are talking about, no sin has been associated with you. O one who knows about dharma! Endeavour and in the course of time, you will follow that path. O king! In this body, the atman is the lord of good and bad deeds. But the rising darkness obstructs the vision. The wind has no dust or colour in it. But when it is tinged with a pigment, that colour penetrates it and this is also seen to colour the directions. In that way, because of the fruits of deeds, the atman is tinged and enveloped in darkness. It fades, adopts that colour and circles around amidst bodies. In any creature, knowledge destroys the ignorance that causes darkness. When that is dispelled, the eternal brahman manifests itself. The sages say that this cannot be accomplished through acts. Those who have been liberated should be worshipped, even by the worlds of the immortals. The large numbers of maharshis are also not content.[621] In this connection, there is an ancient song. O king! Listen to it attentively. The daitya Vritra was dislodged from his prosperity and sung this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He was vanquished and was without aides. His kingdom was lost. However, despite being in the midst of enemies, he resorted to his intelligence alone and did not grieve. In those ancient times, Vritra lost his riches and Ushanas[622] spoke to him. ‘O danava! Now that you have been defeated, are you distressed?’

‘“Vritra said, ‘Because of truth and austerities, I know about destruction. I do not sorrow or rejoice at the creation and destruction of beings. Goaded by time, beings are subjugated and submerged in hell. Some say that all the learned ones go to heaven. Goaded by time, they spend the computed durations of time there. However, when that duration is over, they are born again and again. They are born as thousands of inferior species and go to hell. Bound by the nooses of time, beings are helpless and go there. I have seen that creatures circle around in this way. The sacred texts have said that gains are commensurate with deeds. Creatures are born as inferior species, men and gods and go to hell. After that unhappiness and happiness and misery and joy is over, they return to their earlier conduct.[623] All the worlds are bound down by the injunctions of Yama. All beings are travellers along a path that has been travelled before.’”

‘Bhishma said, “He knew about time and its enumeration, about what cannot be enumerated and about creation and stability. When he spoke in this way, the illustrious Ushanas replied, ‘O son![624] Why are you speaking these terrible, wicked and insane words?’

‘“Vritra said, ‘You and the other learned ones have directly seen the great austerities I tormented myself with in earlier times and the sacrifices that I performed out of greed. I brought fragrances, beings and diverse kinds of scents. I grew in my energy and transcended the three worlds. I roamed around with my companions, showering garlands of rays. I could not be defeated by any being and I was never frightened of anyone. However, the prosperity that I earned through my austerities was destroyed through my own deeds. O illustrious one! But resorting to my fortitude, I am not sorrowing over that. In earlier times, when I was fighting with the great-souled and great Indra, I saw the illustrious lord, Hari Narayana. He is Vaikuntha, Purusha, Vishnu, Shukla, Ananta, Sanatana, Munjakesha, Harishmashru and the grandfather of all beings.[625] There is no doubt that a little bit of those austerities are still left for me.[626] Therefore, I wish to ask you about the fruits of deeds. For which varna has Brahma decreed the greatest prosperity? Why is that supreme prosperity lost? How are beings created? How do they live? Who makes them act? What are the supreme fruits obtained by living for an eternal period? What can be achieved through deeds and what can be achieved through knowledge? What fruits are obtained? O brahmana rishi! You should explain this to me.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O lion among kings! Having been thus addressed, the sage replied. O bull among men! Together with your brothers, listen attentively to what he said.’”

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‘“Ushanas said, ‘I bow before the illustrious and powerful god Vishnu. O son! He holds up the surface of the earth and the sky in his hands. O supreme among danavas! His head is the eternal region. I will tell you about Vishnu’s supreme greatness.’”

‘Bhishma said, “While they were conversing in this way, the great sage Sanatkumara, with dharma in his soul, arrived there, to dispel their doubts. The Indra among the asuras and the sage Ushanas worshipped him. O king! The bull among sages then sat down on an expensive seat. When the immensely wise one was seated, Ushanas spoke these words to him. ‘For the sake of the Indra among the danavas, tell him about Vishnu’s supreme greatness.’ On hearing this, Sanatkumara spoke words that were full of grave import. He told the intelligent Indra among the danavas about Vishnu’s greatness. ‘O daitya! Listen to everything about Vishnu’s supreme greatness. O scorcher of enemies! Know that everything in the universe is established in Vishnu. O mighty-armed one! He is the one who creates all beings, mobile and immobile. In the course of time, it is he who withdraws them back and creates them again when the time arises. At the time of destruction, everything enters him. Everything is created from him. Danavas are incapable of obtaining him through austerities or through sacrifices. One is capable of obtaining him by restraining the senses. Both internal and external acts must be based in the mind.[627] If they are purified through intelligence, one can obtain eternity. This is like a goldsmith purifying gold in the fire, using a great deal of different efforts. A being may purify himself through one hundred births. But through limited deeds and a great effort, another being may purify himself in a single birth. If the filth on the body is cleansed before it has become thick, it requires only a little effort. In that way, one must make a great deal of effort to remove the taints. If a few garlands are mixed with sesamum seeds, they do not shed their scent and become fragrant. This is the subtlety of knowledge. A large number of garlands must repeatedly be mixed. Then the scent[628] goes away and the fragrance of the garlands is established. Through hundreds of lives, one must seek for the qualities. One must use one’s intelligence to restrain the taints and endeavour and practise. O danava! Listen to the reasons behind deeds, whereby creatures become addicted to, or detached from, the consequences of those deeds. O lord! Listen with single-minded attention. In due course, I will explain how creatures engage in action and refrain from it. The illustrious lord, Hari Narayana, is without a beginning and without an end. He creates all the beings, mobile and immobile. He is in all beings that are mutable and immutable. He uses his rays to drink up the universe through his eleven transformations.[629]

Know that his feet are the earth and the firmament is his head. O daitya! His arms are the directions and his ears are the sky. His energy is the sun and his mind is established in the moon. His intelligence is always in knowledge and his juices are in the water. O supreme among the danavas! The planets are in the midst of his eyebrows. O danava! The nakshatras are his eyes and the earth constitutes his feet. Know that rajas, tamas and sattva are Narayana's soul. O son! Know that the ashramas and the fruits of all deeds are his face. The supreme and undecaying one is also the fruit of not performing deeds. The metres are his body hair and the syllables are his speech. The different kinds of modes and the various aspects of dharma are based in his heart. He is the brahman. He is supreme dharma. He is austerities. He is the truth. He is *shruti* and the sacred texts.[630] He constitutes the vessels used in sacrifices, sacrifices and the sixteen officiating priests.[631] He is the grandfather. He is Vishnu. He is the Ashvins. He is Purandara. He is Mitra. He is Varuna. He is Yama. He is the lord of riches.[632] Though he is seen as separate, he is known as one. Know that this entire universe is under the control of that single god. O Indra among the daityas! In all beings, he is spoken of as the single one. When a creature perceives this through his knowledge, truth is manifested before him. Between creation and destruction, beings exist for one thousand crore and this is also true of the others.[633] O daitya! The measure of the duration of the creation of beings is in terms of many thousands of lakes. Each lake is one *yojana* in width, one *krosha* in depth and five hundred yojanas in length. The distance between one lake and another is one yojana. Let water be taken away from one of these lakes, using a single hair and not a second one, with this being done only once a day. Know that the time it takes for all the lakes to be dried up is the period of creation of beings, and destruction is of the same duration. There is supreme evidence that creatures have six complexions—dark, smoky, blue in the middle, red, which is easier to tolerate, yellow, which is extremely pleasant, and white.[634] White is supreme. O Indra among danavas! It is unblemished and without sorrow. It is bereft of exhaustion and brings success. O daitya! A creature goes through birth in thousands of wombs before it obtains success. Indra of the gods considered all the possible ends and also examined what the auspicious sacred texts had said about the ends. The gods then decided that the ends of creatures were determined by their colour and that their colour was determined by time. O daitya! A creature has to pass through fourteen hundred thousand existences[635] and the number isn't unlimited.[636] Know that depending on deeds, a creature can ascend, stay in the same place or descend. The end obtained by a dark complexion is the worst. Such a person is submerged in hell and is cooked there. It is said that the creature has to undergo hardships in that state for many thousands of kalpas. After having been there for hundreds and thousands of years, the creature obtains a smoky complexion. The creature dwells there helplessly, until the end of the yuga, with its atman enveloped in tamas. But when the creature is united with the qualities of sattva, it uses its own intelligence to dispel the darkness. It may then obtain a red complexion. However, if it is stuck with the blue, it circles around in the world of men.[637] Bound down by its own deeds, it is then afflicted by death and rebirth. However, when it attains a yellow complexion, though it is beyond immediate destruction, it still has to return.[638] With that yellow complexion, it roams around for thousands of kalpas. O daitya! But it has still not been emancipated and has to spend time in hell for a thousand and ten years. There are still ends determined by nineteen thousand cycles of deeds.[639] Know that one is freed from hell and every other form of birth only through emancipation. A creature may roam around in the world of the gods. But when the merits decay, it is dislodged and becomes human again. After having remained a mortal for one hundred and eight kalpas, it can become immortal again. However, if in that state,[640] it deviates because of destiny, it obtains the status of a dark complexion and suffers from every kind of hardship. O brave one among the asuras! I will now tell you about how a creature in the world of the living can obtain success, if it so desires. Through seven hundred different kinds of acts, a creature progresses from red to yellow and white.[641] Having finally united with white, it obtains and roams around in the supreme eight worlds.[642] These eight, or sixty, or hundreds, are extremely radiant. But they are created by the mind.[643] The white complexion is the supreme objective and its greatness is more than that of the other three.[644] Even if one transcends the kalpas, one dwells cheerlessly in the eight worlds or in the other four.[645] The sixth complexion[646] attains the supreme objective. Such a distinguished person obtains success and is devoid of exhaustion. One can dwell cheerlessly in the seven superior worlds[647] for hundreds of kalpas. When this ends, one is born in the world of men, although one obtains greatness there. In due course of time, one transcends these and moves up in the hierarchy of creatures. For several kalpas, one dwells seven times in those superior worlds. If one can escape from destruction and misfortune there, it is possible that one might reach the world of success. Those regions without decay are infinite and belong to Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Shesha, Nara, unadulterated consciousness and Para-Brahma. At the time of destruction, though their bodies are burnt, such subjects approach the brahman. All the various categories of gods also endeavour to obtain immortality in Brahma's world. When it is time for creation after the period of destruction is over, all beings move to their designated regions. But once the fruits are over, those regions terminate. So do those ends and they become like men. However, for those who are progressively dislodged from the world of success,[648] their end remains what it used to be earlier. When there is creation after destruction, all superior beings obtain forms that are in conformity with their destinies. However, creatures who have obtained success retain their white complexion and both kinds of knowledge.[649] Their sentiments are pure and controlled and they see everything, as if with their own five senses.[650] Their ends are pure. Their objectives are supreme. In their minds, they always think of what is auspicious. They obtain Brahma's world, which is without decay. It is eternal and is difficult to obtain. O spirited one! I have thus recounted to you everything about Narayana's powers.'

'"Vritra said, 'Since this is the case, there is nothing for me to grieve. I can clearly see the truth in your words. O one with a cheerful spirit! On hearing your words, I have become cleansed of all evil and sin. O illustrious one! O maharshi! O immensely radiant one! The immensely energetic wheel[651] is moving. The infinite and eternal Vishnu is the spot from which all creation originates. He is the great-souled Purushottama. Everything in the universe is established in him.'"

'Bhishma said, "O Kounteya! Having said this, Vritra gave up his life. He united his atman and obtained the supreme region."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! In ancient times, Sanatkumara spoke to Vritra about an illustrious god. Is Janardana that same person?"

‘Bhishma replied, “With his own infinite energy, the illustrious one is the foundation. From there, the immensely ascetic one creates many kinds of beings. Know that Keshava is not dislodged from his richness of turiya. The intelligent one creates the three worlds from his richness of turiya. Stationed at one end, at the end of a kalpa, he transforms himself. The immensely strong and illustrious lord lies down on the water. From there, the one with the cheerful soul roams around the eternal worlds. The great-souled one is not obstructed in his creation. Everything in this wonderful universe is established in him.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O one who knows about the supreme truth! I think that Vritra himself knew his end was going to be auspicious. O grandfather! That is the reason he was happy and did not grieve. O unblemished one! A person who is white in complexion, a person who belongs to the white category and a person who is successful does not return.[652] O grandfather! Such a person is freed from hell and from birth as inferior species. O king! But a person who has a yellow or red complexion has deeds that are enveloped by tamas and is seen to be born as inferior species. We are extremely afflicted. We are addicted to things that take us to the mouth of hardships and unhappiness. What ends will we obtain, blue or dark, the worst of them all?”

‘Bhishma replied, “You are Pandavas and you have been born in a pure lineage. You are rigid in your vows. Having obtained pleasure in the world of gods, you will again be born as men. Having enjoyed happiness as long as creation lasts, you will return to the gods and enjoy bliss. In joy, you will be counted among the Siddhas. Do not entertain any fear on this account. All of you will be unblemished.”’

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‘Yudhishthira said, “O father![653] It is evident that the infinitely energetic Vritra was devoted to dharma. His knowledge was unequalled and so was his devotion to Vishnu. O father! Vishnu’s infinite energy is difficult to comprehend. O tiger among kings! How was Vritra capable of understanding that state? O one without decay! You have spoken about him and I have heard faithfully. But there is something that I still do not understand. Hence, I am asking you again. O bull among the Bharata lineage! How could Vritra be slain by Shakra? He was devoted to dharma and faithful to Vishnu. He knew about the true state. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have a doubt on this account and am asking you. O tiger among kings! How was Vritra vanquished by Shakra? O grandfather! Tell me how this extraordinary thing happened. O mighty-armed one! I have supreme curiosity. Tell me in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In ancient times, Indra had left on a chariot, with large numbers of gods with him. He saw Vritra stationed before him, like a mountain. O scorcher of enemies! He was five hundred yojanas tall and three hundred yojanas in circumference. On seeing that form of Vritra’s, which was difficult for the three worlds to vanquish, the gods were terrified and could not obtain any peace. O king! At that time, on suddenly seeing Vritra’s supreme form, Shakra was frightened and his thighs were paralysed. Having presented themselves at that battle, the gods and the asuras roared and sounded musical instruments. O Kouravya! However, on seeing Shakra present himself, Vritra was not scared or terrified and made no efforts. An encounter, frightful for the three worlds, ensued between Shakra, Indra of the gods, and the great-souled Vritra. There was the great sound of swords, battleaxes, tridents, javelins, spikes, clubs, many kinds of stones, bows, diverse kinds of divine weapons, fire and flaming torches. All the soldiers of the gods and the asuras clashed against each other. With the grandfather at the forefront, all the numerous gods, and the immensely fortunate rishis came on their celestial vehicles to witness the battle. O great king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were the siddhas too. Gandharvas came on their celestial vehicles and so did the apsaras. Vritra, supreme among those who upheld dharma, covered the sky and showered down boulders, which were as large as mountains, on the Indra among the gods. The large numbers of gods were enraged at this. In that battle, in every direction, they used their weapons to counter the boulders that had been showered down by Vritra. O tiger among the Kurus! Vritra was gigantic in form and extremely strong. He resorted to fighting with maya,[654] and in every way, confounded the Indra among the gods. Shatakratu was overcome with confusion and afflicted by Vritra.”

'"However, Vasishtha addressed him in a rathantara.[655] Vasishtha said, 'O Indra among the gods! You are chief among the gods. O destroyer of the enemies of the gods! O Shakra! You possess the strength of the three worlds. Why are you distressed? O Shakra! Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, the lord of the universe, the illustrious god, Soma, and all the supreme rishis are looking towards you. O Shakra! Do not fall prey to lassitude, like an inferior god. O noble one! Make up your mind to fight. O lord of the gods! Slay the enemy. The three-eyed one,[656] the preceptor of the worlds and worshipped by all the worlds, is looking at you. O illustrious one! O lord of the gods! Discard this confusion. O Shakra! These brahmarshis, with Brihaspati at the forefront, are using divine chants to praise you, so that you may be victorious.' The great-souled Vasishtha addressed Vasava in this way and ignited and extended his strength and energy. The illustrious chastiser of Paka used his intelligence to resort to great yoga and dispelled the maya.

'"The illustrious son of Angiras[657] and the other supreme rishis witnessed Vritra's valour and went to Maheshvara. They worshipped him for the welfare of the worlds and for Vritra's destruction. The illustrious lord of the universe then assumed the form of a fever and in this extremely terrible form, penetrated the body of Vritra, supreme among the daityas. The illustrious god Vishnu, revered by all the worlds, was engaged in the protection of the worlds and entered Indra's vajra. The intelligent Brihaspati, the immensely energetic Vasishtha and the other supreme rishis approached Shatakratu. They worshipped Vasava, the granter of boons and worshipped by the worlds, and said, 'O lord! Slay Vritra with single-minded attention.' Maheshavara said, 'O Shakra! This gigantic Vritra is surrounded by a great army. He is the soul of the universe. He can go everywhere. He possesses great powers of maya and is learned. Therefore, this best of asuras is incapable of being vanquished by the three worlds. O lord of the gods! Resort to a state of yoga and then slay him. O lord of the immortals! To obtain strength, he has tormented himself with austerities for sixty thousand years. Thus, Brahma gave him boons—the greatness that yogis possess, great powers of maya, immense strength and fierce energy. O lord of the gods! O Vasava! My energy has permeated into this danava.[658] You are capable of slaying Vritra with your vajra.' Shakra replied, 'O illustrious one! This son of Diti is extremely difficult to assail, but I will do it with your favours. O bull among the gods! While you look on, I will slay him with the vajra.’ The daitya, the great asura, was permeated by that fever and the gods and the rishis uttered loud roars of delight. Thousands of drums, conch shells, kettledrums and tambourines were loudly sounded. All the asuras lost their memories and their great wisdom and strength disappeared in an instant. On realizing that tamas had penetrated them, the rishis and the gods praised Shakra and Ishana and urged them. At the time of the battle, the great-souled Shakra was stationed on his chariot and his form was extremely difficult to look at. He was praised by the rishis.”’

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‘Bhishma said, “O great king! In every way, that fever penetrated Vritra. Listen to the signs that then manifested themselves on his body. His mouth flamed and assumed a terrible form. He became extremely pale. His body trembled mightily and he began to breathe heavily. His body hair stood up and turned fierce. O great king! He sighed deeply. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! His memory assumed the form of an extremely terrible, fearful and inauspicious jackal, emerged from his mouth and fell down. Blazing and flaming meteors descended along his flanks. Vultures, herons and cranes emitted extremely hideous shrieks and happily circled around above Vritra. Stationed on his chariot in the battle, the god Shakra glanced towards Vritra and prepared to use the vajra. The great asura released a superhuman roar. O Indra among kings! Overwhelmed by that fierce fever, he yawned. While he was thus yawning, Shakra released the vajra. That extremely energetic vajra was like the fire of destruction. It swiftly brought down the giant form of the daitya Vritra. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Vritra had been slain, the gods again roared in every direction. Having slain the danava, Vritra, the illustrious and immensely famous one[659] entered heaven with the vajra, which was permeated by Vishnu.

‘“O Kouravya! At this, the sin of having killed a brahmana[660] emerged from Vritra’s body. She was extremely terrible and horrible and caused fear to the worlds. Her teeth were fearsome. She was hideous and malformed, dark and tawny. Her hair stood up and her eyes were awful. O bull among the Bharata lineage! She was thin and wore a garland of skulls. O one who knows about dharma! She was attired in tattered rags and bark that were wet with blood. O Indra among kings! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That terrible form emerged and searched for the wielder of the vajra. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! After some time, with the welfare of the worlds in mind, Vritra's slayer was headed in the direction of heaven. On seeing that the immensely energetic Shakra was advancing, she seized Indra of the gods by the throat and adhered to him. The sin of having killed a brahmana generated great fear in him. He therefore entered the stalk of a lotus and spent many years there. O Kouravya! But the sin of having killed a brahmana still sought to pursue him. Grasped by her, he lost all his enterprise. Though Shakra made great efforts to rid himself of the sin of having killed a brahmana, Indra of the gods wasn't able to shake her off. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Indra of the gods was seized by her. He went to the grandfather and bowed his head down before him. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! On knowing that Shakra had been seized by the sin of having killed a brahmana, Brahma began to think.

'"O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a reassuring and gentle voice, the grandfather spoke to the sin of having killed a brahmana. 'O beautiful one! Do what is agreeable to me and free this Indra of the thirty gods. Tell me what I can do for you now. What is your desire?'

'"The sin of having killed a brahmana replied, 'O god! You are worshipped by the three worlds. You are the creator of the three worlds and you are pleased with me. You have thus done everything that I wish for. But decree an abode for me. It was for the sake of protecting the worlds that you laid down this rule.[661] O god! This extremely great ordinance was laid down by you. O one who knows about dharma! O lord and master of all the worlds! Since you are pleased with me, I will leave Shakra. But decree an abode for me.'"

'Bhishma said, "At this, the grandfather spoke to the sin of having killed a brahmana. He thought of a means so that the sin of having killed a brahmana might be removed from Shakra. Svayambhu thought of the great-souled Agni. He presented himself before Brahma and spoke these words. 'O illustrious god! O scorcher of enemies! I have presented myself before you. O god! You should tell me about the task that I have to accomplish.'

'"Brahma said, 'I will divide the sin of having killed a brahmana into many parts. For the sake of saving Shakra, accept one-fourth of it from me.'

'"Agni replied, 'O Brahma! O lord! But think of a means whereby I shall also be saved. O one who is revered by the worlds! I wish to know the truth about how that will come about.'

'"Brahma said, 'There will be people who will be enveloped by tamas. When they approach your blazing form, they will not offer seeds, herbs and juices into the fire. O bearer of oblations! The sin of having killed a brahmana will then swiftly leave you and enter into them. Let your mental anxiety be dispelled.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed by the grandfather, the illustrious lord who was the devourer of oblations[662] accepted this. The grandfather summoned trees, herbs and grass. O great king! To accomplish the objective, he spoke to them along similar lines.[663] O king! But the trees, herbs and grass were just as distressed as Agni and spoke to Brahma along similar lines. 'O grandfather of the worlds! If we accept the sin of having killed a brahmana, what will become of us? We are naturally afflicted and you are oppressing us again. O god! We always have to endure heat, cold, rain and wind, not to speak of the cutting down and chopping that we are subjected to. On your command, we will accept the sin of having killed a brahmana. O lord of the three worlds! But while we accept it, please think of a means so that we may be saved.'

'"Brahma said, 'If there is a man who is confounded by tamas and indulges in cutting down and chopping on auspicious days, then it[664] shall penetrate him.'"

'Bhishma said, "Thus addressed by the great-souled Brahma, the trees, herbs and grass worshipped him. They quickly went to wherever they had come from. The god who was the grandfather of the worlds then summoned the apsaras. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He reassured them and spoke to them in gentle words. 'O ones with supreme limbs! Indra has been overcome by the sin of having killed a brahmana. Instructed by me, accept one-fourth of that.'

'"The apsaras replied, 'O lord of the gods! On your instructions, we will make up our minds to accept it. O grandfather! But let us have an agreement.

Think of a means to save us.’

‘“Brahma said, ‘Do not have any mental anxiety. If a person has intercourse with a woman who is menstruating, it will leave you and quickly go to him.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The large numbers of apsaras became cheerful at these words. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They went to their respective regions and pleasured there. The immensely ascetic god who was the creators of the three worlds then thought of the waters. When he thought of them and summoned them, all the waters appeared before the infinitely energetic Brahma. O king! They bowed down before the grandfather and spoke these words. ‘O god! O scorcher of enemies! On your instructions, we have thus arrived before you. O lord of the gods! O lord! Command us.’

‘“Brahma said, ‘Puruhuta[665] is suffering from this great fear on Vritra’s account. Accept one-fourth of the disquiet that has come about because of killing a brahmana.’

‘“The waters replied, ‘O lord of the worlds! O master! It shall be as you say. But let us have an agreement that you will think of a means for saving us. You are the lord of the gods. You are the supreme preceptor of the entire universe. Who else can grant us favours? Therefore, free us of the hardship.’

‘“Brahma said, ‘There will be a man with limited intelligence and confused understanding. He will release phlegm, urine and excrement into the water. It[666] will then swiftly leave you and begin to reside in him. You will be freed in this way. I am telling you this truthfully.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! Thus Indra of the gods was freed from the sin of having killed a brahmana. On the instructions of the god,[667] it left him and went to the designated spots. O lord of men! In this way, Shakra was afflicted with the sin of having killed a brahmana. With the grandfather’s permission, he decided to perform a horse sacrifice. O great king! It has been heard that Vasava was tainted by the sin of having killed a brahmana, but obtained purification through performing the horse sacrifice. The god regained his prosperity and slew thousands of enemies. O lord of the earth! Vasava obtained a great deal of delight. O Partha! Khurvundas[668] were born from Vritra’s blood. That is the reason brahmanas and ascetics who have consecrated themselves do not eat these. In every situation, you must act so as to bring pleasure to brahmanas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! They are said to be gods on earth. O Kouravya! In this way, Shakra used his subtle intelligence to decide in advance about means so that the infinitely energetic and great asura, Vritra, might be killed. O Kouravya! You will also be unvanquished on earth and be like the god Shatakratu, the slayer of enemies. If a person reads this divine account about Shakra, in the midst of brahmanas and on auspicious occasions, he will never be tainted by sin. This is the great and extraordinary account about Vritra's encounter with Shakra. O son! I have recounted that deed to you. What else do you desire to hear now?"'

Chapter 1602(274)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! O immensely wise one! You are accomplished in all the sacred texts. From this account about the slaying of Vritra, a question has arisen in my mind. O lord of men! You have said that Vritra was confused by a fever. O unblemished one! He was then slain by Vasava with the vajra. O immensely wise one! Where did this fever manifest itself from? O lord! I wish to hear the details about the origin of this fever."

'Bhishma replied, "O king! Listen to the origins of this fever. It is an account that is famous in the worlds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you in detail about how this came about. O great king! In ancient times, there was a summit in Meru that was famous in the three worlds. It was named Savitra. It was resplendent and was decorated with every kind of jewel. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was immeasurable and no one in the worlds could approach it. There was a bed on the slope of that mountain, adorned with gold and minerals. The dazzling god[669] was seated there. The shining daughter of the king of the mountains[670] was always seated by his side. The great-souled and immensely energetic gods, the Vasus, were also there and so were the great-souled Ashvins, supreme among physicians. King Vaishravana[671] was also there, served by the *guhyaka*s.[672] He was the prosperous master and lord of the yakshas and Kailasa was his abode. There were the devarshis, with Angiras as the foremost. The gandharva Vishvavasu was there and Narada and Parvata. A large number of apsaras gathered there. An auspicious, sacred and pleasant breeze blew there, with many kinds of scents. In every direction, there were giant and blossoming trees. There were *vidyadhara*s and ascetics who were stores of austerities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All of them worshipped Mahadeva Pashupati. O great king! There were many kinds of creatures, with diverse forms. There were extremely terrible rakshasas and immensely powerful pishachas. They were cheerful, with many kinds of forms, and they wielded diverse kinds of weapons. There were the companions of the god there, like the fire in their forms. The illustrious Nandi was there, ready to follow the instructions of the god. He wielded a flaming and blazing spear, resplendent in its own energy. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Ganga, supreme among rivers, was there, the source of all the waters in the tirthas. In that form, she worshipped the god. Thus worshipped by the gods and the rishis, the illustrious and extremely fortunate god, Mahadeva, was established there.

'"After some time passed, Prajapati Daksha[673] followed the ancient rites and decided to perform a sacrifice. All the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, made up their minds to go to the sacrifice. Those great-souled ones ascended blazing celestial vehicles that were like the fire in complexion. It has been heard that they took the god's permission and went to Gangadvara.[674] On seeing that the gods had left, the virtuous daughter of the Himalayas spoke these words to her husband, the god Pashupati. 'O illustrious one! Where are the gods, with Shakra at the forefront, going? O one who knows about the truth! Tell me the truth about this. I have a great doubt on this account.'

'"Maheshvara replied, 'O immensely fortunate one! Daksha is the supreme lord of beings. He is performing a horse sacrifice and the residents of heaven are going there.'

'"Uma asked, 'O immensely fortunate one! Why are you not going to the sacrifice? Is there any reason preventing you from going there?'

'"Maheshvara replied, 'O immensely fortunate one! All the gods determined that I should not have a share in any of the sacrifices. O supreme among beautiful ones! That is the method that they had decided on earlier. And following that dharma, the gods do not give me a share in sacrifices.'

'"Uma said, 'O illustrious one! Among all beings, you are the supreme in qualities. In your energy, fame and prosperity, you cannot be vanquished and cannot be assailed. O immensely fortunate one! I am extremely miserable at this obstruction to you obtaining a share. O unblemished one! I am trembling.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed by the goddess, the god Pashupati, her husband, was silent. O king! His senses began to burn. He realized what was in the mind of the goddess and the desire of her heart. He summoned Nandi and asked him to wait there. The lord of all the lords of yoga resorted to the strength of his yoga. The god of the gods, the wielder of Pinaka, went to the sacrifice with his extremely energetic and terrible followers and destroyed it. Some of them[675] roared, others laughed. O king! Others extinguished the fire with blood. Some, with malformed faces, uprooted the sacrificial stakes and whirled them around. There were others who devoured the attendants with their mouths. O king! In every direction, the sacrifice was destroyed. It assumed the form of a deer and fled through the sky. But realizing that the sacrifice was running away in that form, the lord seized a bow and arrow and pursued it. The infinitely energetic lord of the gods was overcome by rage and a terrible drop of sweat manifested itself on his forehead and fell down on the ground. From that, an extremely large fire resulted and it was like the fire of destruction. O bull among men! A man was born from that. He was short and his eyes were extremely red. He was dreadful and his beard was green. His hair stood up. He was covered with hair, like a hawk or an owl. He was horrible and dark in complexion. He was attired in red garments. That greatly spirited being destroyed the sacrifice, like a fire consuming deadwood. All the gods were terrified and fled in the ten directions. O lord of the earth! That man began to roam around everywhere on earth. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Woes of lamentation, frightful to the worlds, arose. The grandfather manifested himself before Mahadeva and said, 'O lord! From now on, all the gods will give you a share in the sacrifices. O lord of all the gods! Withdraw the destruction that you have wrought. O scorcher of enemies! O Mahadeva! Because of your rage, all the gods and the rishis are finding it impossible to obtain peace. O supreme among gods! There is this man who has been born from your sweat. O one who knows about dharma! In the form of fever, let him wander around the worlds. O lord! If all of this energy is concentrated, the entire earth will not be able to bear it. Let it be divided into fragments and let there be safety.' The god was thus addressed by Brahma, who also decreed shares for him. He agreed to what the illustrious and infinitely energetic Brahma had said. The wielder of Pinaka was filled with great delight and smiled. Bhava accepted the share that Brahma had spoken about.

'"For the sake of peace for all beings, the one who knew about all forms of dharma divided the fever into many parts. O son! Listen to how he did this. O one who knows about dharma! The heat that is in the heads of elephants, in the bitumen in mountains, in the hornwort plants that float around in the water, in the cast-off skins of snakes, in diseases in the hooves of cattle, in sterile spots on the surface of the earth, in the dullness of sight of animals, in diseases that are in the throats of horses, in the crests of peacocks and in the eye diseases of cuckoos—the great-souled one decreed all these to be fever. We have heard all this and about the diseases that goats have in their livers and the hiccups that parrots suffer from. All of these are said to be fever. O one who knows about dharma! The exhaustion in tigers is said to be fever. O one who knows about dharma! There is also something known as fever among men. It penetrates men at the time of birth, death, and in the middle. This is Maheshvara's energy, known as extremely terrible fever. The lord of all beings must be worshipped and revered. When Vritra yawned, it is he who penetrated that supreme among the upholders of dharma. It was thus that Shakra could release his vajra at him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The vajra penetrated Vritra and shattered him. The great asura and great yogi was splintered by the vajra. He went to the infinitely energetic Vishnu's supreme region. Earlier, it was because of his devotion to Vishnu that he obtained the entire universe. Having been slain in the battle, he obtained Vishnu's region. O son! I have told you in detail about the great fever that Vritra was overwhelmed by. What else do you wish me to tell you? A man who is extremely controlled and reads this account about the origin of the fever with a cheerful mind, is freed from all disease. He is happy and full of delight. He obtains all the desires that are there in his mind."'

Chapter 1603(275)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! Creatures are always terrified of sorrow and misery and death. O grandfather! Tell me how both of these can be prevented.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Narada and Samanga.

‘“Narada said, ‘You bow down with your chest and cross with your arms.[676] You are always cheerful and are seen to be without sorrow. One cannot discern the slightest bit of anxiety in you. You are always content and satisfied and seem to be like a child in your endeavours.’

‘“Samanga replied, ‘O one who grants honours! I know the truth about the past, the present and the future. Since I know the truth about these, I am never distressed. I also know about how exertions result and their fruits. There are many different kinds of fruits. Therefore, I am never distressed. O Narada! Behold. Those who are unfathomable in destitution, those who are not healthy and those who are blind and dumb are also alive. They are seen to live. It has been ordained that the residents of heaven should have no disease in their limbs. The strong and the weak are also thus created.[677] A person who rules over thousands is alive. A person who rules over hundreds is also alive. There are others who sustain themselves only on vegetables. Behold. I am also alive. O Narada! I do not grieve. What use do I have for dharma or deeds? One comes under the control of happiness that results from deeds and it is only misery that grows. When a person realizes that wisdom is actually the foundation of all the gratification of the senses, such a man is said to be wise. The senses cause confusion and sorrow. If a person is confounded because of the senses, such a person cannot obtain wisdom. A foolish person also suffers from pride and delusion. There is no world here, or in the hereafter, for a foolish person. Misery does not last forever. Any happiness obtained is also not eternal. Since I know that everything created is always changeable, a person like me never suffers from fever. I do not care for objects of desire or the happiness that results from possessions. Nor do I think about any unhappiness that may befall. I am controlled and do not desire the possessions of others. I do not bother about what has not been obtained. Nor do I find delight in what has been obtained. I am not delighted at obtaining a great deal of riches. Nor am I distressed if riches are destroyed. Relatives, riches, noble birth, learning, mantras and valour are incapable of saving one from miseries and they have to be tolerated. Good conduct alone can bring peace in the world hereafter. If a person does not possess intelligence or yoga, he cannot obtain happiness. There cannot be any happiness without both fortitude and the abandoning of misery. Anything that brings delight is pleasant. But delight also increases pride. Pride leads to hell. That is the reason I have discarded these. Sorrow and fear cause delusion and so do pleasure and pain. I may move around in my body. But I look upon all these as an indifferent witness. I have abandoned all desire for riches. I am bereft of sorrow and bereft of fever. I roam around the entire earth, having discarded thirst and confusion. There is no death. There is no adharma. Where will greed come from? I have drunk amrita. I have no fear in this world and in the next. Because of the great and undecaying austerities that I have performed, I have got to know the brahman. O Narada! Having obtained that, there is no grief that can constrain me.’”’

Chapter 1604(276)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! There may be a person who does not know the truth about the sacred texts. He may always have doubts in his mind. He may not be accomplished in his conduct. What is best for him? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The worship of seniors, serving the aged and listening to the learned and the superior—these are said to be the best. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversion between Galava and devarshi Narada. That brahmana was free from confusion and fatigue. He was content in his knowledge and had conquered his senses. Having conquered his atman, but desiring to know what was best for himself, Galava spoke to Narada. ‘There are qualities that are revered among men. I can see all those qualities, in undecaying form, in you. There are several doubts in those like us. Therefore, you should sever them. We are foolish and will always remain stupid. We do not know the truth about the worlds. Should there be an inclination towards knowledge and the renunciation of acts? How does one know which acts to undertake? What are the tasks one should not undertake?

You should speak about these to us. O illustrious one! All the ashramas indicate different kinds of conduct. Some say, this is superior. Others say, that is superior. We are driven in different directions. Therefore, it is seen that even those who resort to the sacred texts do not take delight in all the sacred texts. They are satisfied with their own sacred texts and do not necessarily realize what is superior. Had all the sacred texts been unified, the best would have manifested itself. But because there are many kinds of sacred texts, what is best is immersed in a mystery. That is the reason why the superior appears to me in a confused form. O illustrious one! I have resorted to you. You should instruct me.'

'"Narada replied, 'O son![678] There are four ashramas and they were thought of in separate ways.[679] O Galava! Examine all of them and then choose the one you wish to resort to. Those ashramas differ from each other. They speak of many different kinds of qualities and instructions. These are not only distinct, they are also contradictory. But if one considers them, free from doubt, one sees that all of them convey to what is appropriate. Behold. All the ashramas lead straight to the appropriate and supreme objective. There can be no doubt in one's mind about what is appropriate and beneficial—favour to friends, suppression of enemies and accumulation for pursuing the three objectives.[680] The learned ones have said that these are beneficial. One must always abstain from wicked deeds and be auspicious in conduct. One must exhibit good conduct towards those who are virtuous. There is no doubt that these are beneficial. Mildness towards all beings, uprightness in conduct and pleasantness in speech—there is no doubt that these have been said to be beneficial. Giving the appropriate shares to gods, ancestors, guests and not depriving servants—there is no doubt that these are beneficial. Truthfulness in speech is beneficial. But ascertaining true knowledge is extremely difficult. I am telling you the truth when I say that one must ensure welfare towards all beings. The renouncing of pride, the suppression of attachment, contentment and following one's own conduct—the wise say that these are beneficial. Following dharma and studying the Vedas and the Vedangas and inquisitiveness for the sake of knowledge—there is no doubt that these are beneficial. O scorcher of enemies! A person who seeks excellence must not enjoy sound, form, taste, touch and scent for their sake alone, without some other objective in mind. A person who seeks excellence must give up roaming around in the night, sleep during the day, idleness, calumny, pride, excessive indulgence and complete abstinence.[681] One must not seek to establish that one’s own deeds and path are superior by deprecating others. Through one’s own qualities, one will be able to establish that the path followed is superior and different from that followed by other people. There are many men who are devoid of qualities, but are full of self-pride. They find faults in those who possess qualities. They inflict their own undecaying qualities on others. When they are not restrained, they think of themselves as great people. Thinking their own qualities to be superior, they are full of insolence and pride. They are learned people who possess qualities and they obtain great fame, but without speaking censorious words about others, or describing the honour that is due to their own selves. Pure ones with excellent minds are like fragrant flowers. They do not have to speak about their own selves. The sparkling sun, with dispersing rays in the sky, is also like that. In this way, there are others who renounce, using their intelligence. Nevertheless, their fame blazes in the world and is not reduced. A foolish person cannot blaze in the world through his self-praise alone. However, a person who is accomplished in his learning manifests himself, even if he is hidden in a hole. Wicked words, even if spoken loudly, are soon pacified. But excellent words, even if spoken gently, illuminate the worlds. Foolish ones, who are full of their own insolence, speak many futile words. However, the sun in heaven displays its own inner self. That is the reason one searches for different kinds of wisdom. It seems to me that the obtaining of wisdom is the supreme objective for creatures. One should not speak until one is asked. Nor should one speak if asked improperly. In this world, a person who is learned and intelligent behaves like one who is dumb. One must scrutinize and dwell with virtuous people who are always devoted to dharma. They are generous men who are devoted to their own dharma. A person who desires benefit must never dwell with the four varnas when they act contrary to the dharma. In this world, one should abstain from embarking on any action, but should subsist on whatever has been obtained. Dwelling among the meritorious, one will obtain sparkling merits. But dwelling among the wicked, one will obtain sin. One can comprehend the touch of the water, the fire, or the rays of the moon. In that way, one can discern the touch of both the wicked and the virtuous. There may be those who do not look towards enjoying material objects and eat only leftovers. However, if a person is still concerned with the flavours of the food, know that he is still bound by material objects and deeds. A brahmana may be asked and may discourse about dharma, when asked. But if he has not been asked reverentially, one must abandon that spot. Instead, there may be a spot where there is a controlled discourse, following the sacred texts, between disciples and a preceptor. Who will abandon that spot? Without any foundation, there may be ignorant people who wish to earn respect for themselves, who speak about taints, though none exists. Which learned person will dwell there? There may often be greedy people, who try to agitate the boundaries of dharma, like setting fire at the extremities of a mountain. Who will not abandon such a spot? One should dwell and roam among virtuous people who are auspicious in their conduct. Dharma is followed there, without any doubt and without any malice. One should not dwell in places where men pursue dharma only for the sake of artha. Those are people who are wicked in their conduct. One must swiftly flee from places where wicked deeds are performed with a desire to ensuring sustenance, as if from a room where there is a snake. Right from the beginning, one must act with a desire to realize one's own atman. One must not engage in tasks that make one stretch out on a bed.[682] Where the king, royal officers and those who are in charge of the frontier regions eat before their relatives, a person who is in control of his atman must abandon that kingdom. One must dwell in a kingdom where learned brahmanas, who are always devoted to eternal dharma and are engaged in performing sacrifices and studying, are fed first. Without any reflection, one must dwell in a place where svaha, svadha and *vashatkara* are properly uttered numerous times. Where brahmanas are seen to be engaged in inauspicious acts, one must swiftly abandon that kingdom, as if it is a piece of poisoned meat. Where men cheerfully give before they have been asked, a person who has accomplished his tasks and is based on his own atman, must dwell there. One must roam and dwell among virtuous people, those who are righteous in their conduct, where there is punishment for those who are wicked and reverence for those who are cleansed in their souls. In those places, those who are not generous, those who are wicked and evil in conduct and those who are unruly and greedy are afflicted with extremely severe chastisement. Those are places where the king and the kingdom always serve dharma, desiring purity and without falling prey to desire. Without any reflection, those are places one should dwell in. When the king displays such conduct, everyone enjoys prosperity. Benefit is swiftly obtained and welfare presents itself. O son! You asked me and I have thus told you about what is beneficial. But I am incapable of enumerating what is most important, what brings benefit to the atman. There is conduct that has been ordained for the benefit of the atman. It is evident that there are many kinds of austerities that will bring about that benefit.’”’

Chapter 1605(277)

'Yudhisthira asked, "How should a king who has been emancipated move around on earth? What qualities should he always possess, so that he is freed from the noose of attachment?"

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, there is an ancient history about what Arishtanemi spoke when Sagara asked him."

'"Sagara asked, 'O brahmana! What is supremely beneficial? What action enables one to obtain happiness? How does one avoid grief and agitation? I wish to know about this.'"

'Bhishma said, "Tarkshya[683] was knowledgable about all the sacred texts. He also knew that the person who was before him deserved to hear virtuous words. Having been asked, he said, 'The real happiness in the world is the happiness that comes from emancipation. People do not understand this, because they are attached to sons and animals and anxious about riches and grain. If the intelligence is full of attachment and if the atman is not tranquil, treatment is impossible. A stupid person who is tied to the bonds of affection cannot be free. I will tell you about the bonds that result from affection. Listen to them. Using the ears and the head, one is capable of knowing and severing them. At the right time, one must have offspring. When they attain youth, after ascertaining that they are capable of earning a living, one should be cheerful and roam around free. When one's wife has had a son that she is devoted to, when she is aged and is affectionately attended to by that son, know that this is the time to depart and search for a superior objective. However, whether one has obtained offspring or one has not obtained offspring, the senses and the objects of the senses have been pursued in the proper way. Therefore, one should be cheerful and roam free. One has performed one's tasks. One should be inquisitive and cheerful, roaming freely. One must be equal vis-à-vis what has been gained and the reasons that do not lead to any gain. I have recounted this briefly to you. I will again tell you in detail about the objective of emancipation. Listen. A free man roams around happily in this world, bereft of fear. There is no doubt that a man who has sentiments of attachment is destroyed, just like insects and ants engaged in the accumulation of food. Those who are detached are happy in this world. Those with attachments are destroyed. A person whose intelligence has turned towards emancipation has no business to think about his relatives, such as, “How will these people survive without me?” A creature is born on its own. A creature grows on its own. A creature advances towards happiness, unhappiness and death on its own. In this world, people do not obtain anything because of anything that they have done, or because of the food and garments that have been stored up by their mother and father. It is all because of what they have done earlier. On earth, the one who ordain has laid down food for all living beings. Though people run after it, this has actually been determined by their own acts. A man is himself like a lump of clay. He is always under someone else’s control. What is the reason behind sustaining one’s relatives? Instead, one should be firm in protecting one’s atman. While you look on, your relatives will be slain by death, even if you make great efforts. Therefore, know your own atman. While they are still alive and you are engaged in sustaining and protecting them, you may have to give it up incomplete, since you end up dying. In that way, when your relatives die, you will never know whether they are happy or miserable. Therefore, you should know your own atman. While you are alive, these people die or are freed because of their own deeds. Therefore, one should turn one’s intelligence towards ensuring welfare for the atman. In this world, since one knows this, how does one determine who belongs to whom? Therefore, fix your mind on emancipation. I am entreating you again. A man who has conquered hunger and thirst and similar sentiments, and also anger, greed and confusion, such a spirited person is indeed free. If a man is not distracted by gambling, drinking, women and hunting and is not confused, such a person is free. If a man is only anxious about what he will enjoy from one day to another day and from one night to another night, his intelligence is said to be tainted. A person who always realizes that his birth is due to nothing but attachment for women, such a person is free. In this world, a person who knows the truth about the birth, destruction and exertion of beings is indeed free. A person who sees no difference between a handful of corn and thousands of crores of carts loaded with it, or a person who sees no difference between a palace and a clump of bamboos is free. The world suffers from death and is afflicted by disease and oppressed by famine. A person who sees this is free. A person who sees it in this way is happy and content. A person who does not see this, is destroyed. If a person is satisfied with only a trifle, he is free in this world. A person who sees that everything is destroyed, as if by fire, and is not touched by sentiments on account of this, is free. If a person regards a bed and the bare earth, or *shali* rice and awful food, as equal, he is free. If a person regards linen and grass or rags, silk and bark, sheepskin and ordinary leather, as equal, such a person is free. A person who sees that everything in this world results from the five elements and having seen this, acts in accordance with this, is free. If a person regards happiness and unhappiness, gain and lack of gain, victory and defeat, like and dislike, fear and anxiety[684] as equal, he is always free. The body is full of many taints, it is a store of imperfections like blood, urine and excrement. A person who sees it in this way is free. It is subject to decay, wrinkles, emaciation, paleness, bending down and old age. One who sees it in this way is free. In the course of time, there is impotence, weakness of sight, deafness and a slowdown in the life force. One who sees it in this way is free. The rishis, the gods and the asuras have gone from this world to other superior worlds. One who sees it in this way is free. There are thousands of powerful lords of the earth who have had to leave the earth and depart. A person who knows this is free. In this world, the accumulation of riches is extremely difficult. Hardship is extremely easy. There is misery on account of relatives. A person who sees this is free. There are offspring without qualities. There are people without qualities. If a person repeatedly sees this in the world, why should he not hanker after emancipation? There may be a man who sees everything in the world on the basis of the intelligence of the sacred texts. He sees that everything human is without substance. Such a person is free in every way. Having heard these words of mine, you should always roam around as if you are free. Whether you pursue garhasthya or whether you pursue emancipation, act so that your intelligence is not clouded.' On hearing these words attentively, the lord of the earth[685] protected the subjects, acquiring qualities that are conducive to emancipation."'

Chapter 1606(278)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O father! There has always been a curiosity in my heart. O grandfather of the Kuru lineage! I wish to hear the truth about this from you. Devarshi Ushanas[686] was always engaged in what was agreeable to the asuras and unpleasant for the gods. Why was he then called the immensely intelligent Kavya? Why did the infinitely energetic one always increase their energy?[687] Why were the danavas always engaged in enmity with the supreme among the gods? How did Ushanas, as radiant as an immortal, become Shukra? How did he obtain prosperity? Tell me everything about this. Though he possesses energy, why can he never go to the middle of the sky?[688] O grandfather! I wish to know everything about this."

'Bhishma replied, "O king! With undivided attention, listen to what exactly transpired. O unblemished one! I will tell you what I have heard earlier, as I have understood it. This sage, heir of the Bhargava lineage,[689] was truthful and firm in his vows. Because of the compassion in his soul, he became engaged in ensuring what was pleasant for the asuras. The lord of riches,[690] the king of the yakshas and the rakshasas, was entrused with superintendence of the treasure house of Indra, the lord of the universe. The great sage[691] was accomplished in yoga. He used yoga to enter the lord of riches and bind up that god. He robbed him of his riches. On seeing that his riches had been seized, the lord of riches could find no peace. Anxious and filled with rage, he approached the infinitely energetic Shiva, supreme among the gods, and told him everything. This was the foremost among the gods, who possessed many forms, terrible and amiable. Kubera said, 'Using his yoga, Ushanas bound me and stole my riches. The immensely ascetic one entered my body through yoga and has thereafter left.' On hearing this, the great yogi, Maheshvara, became angry. O king! His eyes were red and he stood there, with his spear. Having grasped that supreme weapon, he asked, 'Where is he? Where is he?' However, from a distance, Ushanas got to know what he[692] desired. The great-souled one got to know about the great yogi's rage. The lord did not know whether he should run away, advance,[693] or stay in the same spot. He used his fierce austerities to think about the great-souled Maheshvara. Ushanas was accomplished in the use of yoga. He next used this to place himself at the tip of the spear. The archer[694] comprehended that the one who had obtained success in austerities had assumed that form. The lord of the gods therefore bent the bow with his hand.

The infinitely energetic lord used his hand to bend the spear down and the terrible weapon that was the spear came to be known as Pinaka.[695] Thus, Uma's consort saw that Bhargava had now been brought into the palm of his hand. Kakudi[696] opened his mouth and used his hand to swiftly fling him inside. The lord Ushanas entered Maheshvara's stomach. The great-souled descendant of the Bhrigu lineage began to wander around there."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O king! How could the intelligent Ushanas roam around inside the stomach of the god of the gods? What did the immensely resplendent rishi do there?"

'Bhishma replied, "O king! In that ancient time, the one who was great in his vows[697] entered the water and remained there, immobile like a pillar, for a million years. He performed extremely difficult austerities in that great lake and then arose. Brahma, the first god among the gods, approached and asked him whether he was hale and well and whether his austerities had prospered. The one with the bull on the banner[698] replied that the austerities had proceeded well. Shankara was immensely intelligent and is impossible to fathom. He is always devoted to the dharma of truth. Through yoga, he saw the growth inside.[699] The great yogi[700] was prosperous because of austerities and riches. O great king! The one who was valiant in the three worlds was roaming around inside. At this, the wielder of Pinaka, with yoga in his atman, entered the yoga of meditation. The extremely anxious Ushanas continued to wander around inside the stomach. But though located there, the great yogi[701] tried to please the god from there. He desired to emerge and craved that the energy might be withdrawn. From inside the stomach, the great sage, Ushanas, said, 'Show me your favours.' O scorcher of enemies! He said this repeatedly. Mahadeva replied, 'Go. Free yourself through my penis.' Earlier, the bull among the thirty gods had closed all the other outlets. On seeing that the doors had been closed on every side, the sage roamed around here and there, being burnt by the energy. He finally emerged through the penis and came to be known as Shukra.[702] That is the reason he is never able to go to the middle of the firmament. On seeing him emerge, flaming in energy, Bhava was filled with rage and stood there, with the spear in his hand. However, the goddess restrained her angry husband, Pashupati. When Shankara was restrained by the goddess in this way, he came to be regarded as her son.[703]

'"The goddess said, 'You should not cause any injury to him. He has become your son and my son. O god! Someone who has emerged from your stomach does not deserve to be destroyed.'"

'Bhishma said, "Bhava was pleased by these words of the goddess. O king! He smiled and repeatedly spoke these words. 'Let him go wherever he wishes.' He bowed down before the god who is the granter of boons and also the goddess Uma. The intelligent and great sage, Ushanas, went to his desired destination. O son! O best among the Bharata lineage! I have thus spoken to you about the great-souled Bhargava and his conduct. That is what you had asked me about."'

Chapter 1607(279)

'Yudhishthira said, "O mighty-armed one! After this, tell me what is best for me. O grandfather! I am not satisfied with your words, which are like amrita. O supreme among men! What are the auspicious acts a man can perform, so that he obtains supreme benefit in this world and in the world after death? Tell me that."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, I will tell you what the immensely illustrious King Janaka asked the great-souled Parashara in ancient times. 'What is best for all beings here and in the hereafter, so that one can obtain prosperity? Tell me about this.' The sage was full of austerities and knew about the ordinances associated with all kinds of dharma. To show favours to the king, he spoke these words. 'Deeds of dharma bring benefit in this world and in the next. The learned ones have said that there is nothing that is superior to this. Through such dharma, a man obtains greatness in the world of heaven. O supreme among kings! For all beings, the rites and ordinances that have been laid down represent the essence of dharma. That is the reason virtuous people perform their respective acts in their respective ashramas. O son![704] Four kinds of modes have been laid down for progress in this world.[705] When mortals follow these, they obtain what they desire. They perform good and bad deeds and attain their respective ends. In different ways, creatures are divided into five elements. Just as a golden or silver vessel reflects the sheen of the metal, creatures are bound down by the acts that they have performed earlier. Nothing is generated without a seed. Without acting for it, happiness cannot be obtained. When the body is destroyed, a man obtains happiness because of the good deeds he has performed. O son! I do not see any destiny in this, nor any action on the part of the gods. Gods, gandharvas and danavas become what they are because of their natures. After death, people never remember what they have done in their earlier lives. But they obtain the consequences of the four kinds of acts that they have performed.[706] For progress in the world, the words of the Vedas have described the deeds that one must resort to. O son! That is what brings peace to the mind, not merely the instructions of the elders. There are four kinds of action one can perform with the eye, the mind, words and deeds. Whatever the nature of the action, the consequence is like that. O king! Often, one obtains mixed consequences as a result of a deed. However, whether it is good or bad, deeds are never destroyed. O son! Sometimes, the consequences of good deeds remain concealed and submerged in the cycle of life, one is not freed from misery. However, once the misery has been exhausted, the results of good deeds will become evident. O lord of men! Know that when good deeds have been exhausted, the results of bad deeds will become evident. Self-control, forgiveness, fortitude, energy, contentment, truthfulness, modesty, lack of injury, not indulging in vices and skilfulness—these are the things that yield happiness. For no creature are the effects of good deeds and bad deeds eternal. That is the reason an accomplished person always tries to fix his mind. One does not face the consequences of the good or bad deeds performed by another person. The consequences one reaps are commensurate with the deeds that one has performed. Along one path,[707] a man can give up both happiness and unhappiness. O king! But there are many other people who are always prone to attachment. A man must never undertake an act that he censures in someone else. If he does something like this, he will be laughed at. A king who is a coward, a brahmana who eats everything, a vaishya without exertion, an inferior varna[708] who is lazy, a learned person who lacks good conduct, a noble person who is without a means of sustenance, a brahmana who has deviated from the truth, a wayward woman, a 'free' person who is still attached, a person who cooks only for himself, a foolish person who is eloquent, a kingdom without a king and a king who has no affection for his subjects—all these are reasons for grief.’”’

Chapter 1608(280)

‘“Parashara said, ‘A person who drives the chariot[709] in accordance with his wishes, controlling the horses that are the objects of the senses with the reins of knowledge, is intelligent. A person who serves these with his mind, even if he does not possess a means of sustenance, is praised. A brahmana and a person who has refrained from action are not equal to each other.[710] O lord of the earth! Having obtained a designated span of life, one should not diminish it. A man must strive for auspicious deeds, so that he can improve himself. A person who has been dislodged from his varna deserves to be censured. A person who has obtained the consequences of good deeds must not perform deeds associated with rajas. A man obtains a superior varna through auspicious deeds. However, having obtained what is difficult to obtain, one destroys it because one is overcome with tamas and performs wicked deeds. Wicked deeds perpetrated due to ignorance can be destroyed through the practice of austerities. But a wicked deed that is perpetrated knowingly leads to evil consequences. Therefore, one must never perform wicked deeds. They lead to miserable consequences. An intelligent person will never be bound down by wicked deeds, even if they lead to great fruits, just as an auspicious person will not touch water that has been tainted. As the fruits of wicked deeds, I see great hardships. Though virtue and the atman are evident, one acts perversely and contrary to this. If a foolish person does not turn back, he is like a person who is dead and faces great wickedness. A garment that is not dyed can be cleaned, but not one that has been dyed black. O Indra among men! Listen to me. That is also the case with sinful efforts. If a man knowingly performs wicked deeds and then performs good ones in atonement, he will separately obtain the fruits of both.[711] Brahmanas who know about the brahman mention the instructions of the sacred texts. If an act of injury is committed in ignorance, an act of non-injury can correct it. However, if an act of violence is committed knowingly, brahmanas who are accomplished in the

Vedas and versed in the sacred texts, say that this is an act of adharma. I see that all the acts that are performed, good or evil ones, lead to manifestations of their qualities. All deeds that are performed, using the intelligence and the mind, lead to corresponding fruits, gross or subtle. O one who knows about dharma! But acts that are done involuntarily lead to smaller fruits. Fierce deeds performed knowingly always lead to strong consequences. There may be acts that are performed by gods and sages.[712] If a person with dharma in his soul hears about these, he should not censure them. But nor should he practise them. O king! One should use one's mind to reflect on one's own capacity. A person who performs auspicious deeds sees what is fortunate. If a vessel is new,[713] water placed into it gradually becomes less and less. But that is not the case if the vessel has been baked. One obtains happiness through such sentiments. When water is poured into a vessel that already has water, the quantity of the water is increased. Intelligence is also increased in that way. O lord of the earth! That is the way one should perform deeds on earth, using one's intelligence. One's store of merits is then not diminished, but added to. A king's proper duty is to protect the subjects, raising his weapons to subjugate those who are unruly. He must kindle many fires and perform sacrifices. Then, in middle or old ages, he must resort to the forest. Self-controlled and with dharma in conduct, a man must look upon all beings as one's own self. One must worship those who are superior and disabled. O Indra among men! Through truthfulness and good conduct, one obtains happiness.'"'

Chapter 1609(281)

''Parashara said, 'No one does a favour to another. No one gives anything to another. In every way, all creatures only act for their own selves. When there is a lack of affection, one's own uterine brothers are proudly discarded. What should one say about unrelated people? Giving gifts to superior people and receiving gifts from superior people are equal. But among these, the gift given to a brahmana is more sacred. With the objectives of dharma and artha in mind, each of the varnas must endeavour to protect riches earned through fair means, and increase them. For the sake of dharma and artha, one should not undertake tasks that seek to obtain wealth through injurious means. One must remember the virtuous and perform all tasks according to one’s capacity. According to one’s capacity, if one gives cool water or that heated through a fire to a guest, one obtains fruits that are like those got by giving food to someone hungry. The great-souled Rantideva obtained success in the world. But all he did was to worship hermits with fruits, leaves and roots. Shaibya, lord of the earth, satisfied Mathara[714] with fruits and leaves and obtained a supreme region. Through being born, mortal people incur debts to gods, guests, servants, ancestors and their own selves and one must act so as to repay these debts. There is studying for maharshis, sacrifices and rites for gods, funeral sacrifices and donations for ancestors and honouring for men.[715] Debts to one’s own self are repaid through words,[716] eating leftovers and protecting one’s own self. If one is interested in following dharma, right from the beginning, one should discharge debts to the various categories of servants. Even if one is devoid of riches, one can make efforts to obtain success. Hermits offered oblations of clarified butter into the fire and obtained success. Vishvamitra’s son went to Richika’s son.[717] The mighty-armed one worshipped the gods who have shares in sacrifices with hymns from the Rig Veda. Through the favours of the god of the gods,[718] Ushanas became Shukra. Through praising the goddess, he was surrounded by energy and found pleasure in the sky.[719] Asita-Devala, Narada and Parvata, Kakshivat, Jamadagni’s son Rama, Tandya, Anshuman, Vasishtha, Jamadagni, Vishvamitra, Atri, Bharadvaja, Harishmashru, Kundadhara, Shrutashrava—these maharshis controlled themselves and praised Vishnu, using hymns from the Rig Veda. Through the favours of that intelligent one, they obtained success in their austerities. By praising him, even those who are undeserving have become deserving and virtuous. One should not desire to perform acts that increase one’s prosperity in this world. Riches obtained through dharma are true riches. Shame on those obtained through adharma. Dharma is eternal in this world and must not be abandoned for the sake of riches. A person who has dharma in his soul and makes offerings to the fire is supreme among the performers of auspicious deeds. O Indra among kings! O lord! All the Vedas are established on the three fires.[720] If a brahmana possesses the sacred fire, his deeds are never diminished. However, if one does not perform the rites of agnihotra, it is better to give up the sacred fire. O tiger among men! The sacred fire, the mother, the father who has provided the seed and the preceptor must be served in the proper way. If a man abandons pride and serves the aged, if he is learned, if he behaves as if he is impotent,[721] if he looks upon everything with affection, if he is accomplished and if he is non-violent—even if he does not possess wealth, he is worshipped in this world as a virtuous and noble person.'"'

Chapter 1610(282)

'"Parashara said, 'It is appropriate that the inferior varna[722] should earn a living by serving the other three. If this designated service is rendered affectionately, that person always remains devoted to dharma. Even if the ancestors of the shudra were not engaged in such an occupation, it is certain that he should not engage himself in any means of sustenance other than servitude. It is my view that under all circumstances, it is proper that they[723] should always associate with virtuous people who know about dharma, not with those who are wicked. When they are close to Mount Udaya,[724] objects blaze. Similarly, an inferior varna blazes when it is associated with the virtuous. A white garment assumes the colour with which it is dyed. They assume their appearances in the same way. Therefore, one should rejoice because of qualities and never because of taints. The lifespan of mortals, whether mobile or immobile, is temporary. If an accomplished person only acts in accordance with good policy, whether he faces joy or misery, he faces fortune in this world. An intelligent person does not deviate from virtue, even if that act of deviation from dharma yields great fruits. If a king steals thousands of unprotected cattle and then gives them away as a gift, he only obtains the fruits that the sound of that action makes. He is actually a thief. Right at the beginning, Svayambhu created Dhata, revered in the worlds. Dhata created a son who is engaged in sustaining beings.[725] It is through worshipping him that vaishyas earn wealth and prosperity. The kings must think of means to protect brahmanas. Shudras should, honestly, faithfully and without anger, clean the objects used to offer havya and kavya. Through such acts, dharma is not destroyed. If dharma is not destroyed, subjects are happy. O Indra among kings! Through their happiness, the gods in heaven are delighted. A king who follows dharma and protects is revered. So are brahmanas who study, vaishyas who are enaged in the welfare of people and shudras who serve, always in control of their senses. O Indra among men! If they act in any other way, they deviate from their own dharma. Not to speak of thousands, even if a few kakinis[726] are earned lawfully and donated, without causing grief to one's life, that leads to great fruits. If a lord of men honours brahmanas and always donates to them, he earns fruits that are commensurate. If one seeks out the donee and satisfies him, that is said to be the best. When one gives when asked, the learned say that this is medium. Sages who are truthful in speech say that gifts given indifferently and disrespectfully are the worst. Through transgressions, men are always submerged in different ways. Therefore, one should make efforts so that one is freed from one's doubts. A brahmana is always radiant through self-control, a kshatriya through victory, a vaishya through riches and a shudra through skill.'"'

Chapter 1611(283)

''Parashara said, 'Whatever little riches a brahmana obtains through receiving gifts, a kshatriya through conquest by weapons, a vaishya through lawful means and a shudra through servitude, are praised. When spent for dharma, these yield great fruits. It is said that the shudra must always serve the three varnas. But if a brahmana doesn't have means of sustenance and follows the dharma of kshatriyas or the dharma of vaishyas, he suffers no downfall. But if a brahmana follows the dharma of shudras, then he does face a downfall. When a shudra does not possess a means of sustenance, then trade, animal husbandry and subsistence on the basis of artisanship are recommended for him. If a person has not engaged in such occupations earlier, then descending in an arena,[727] earning a living through one's beauty and earning a living through the sales of liquor, flesh, iron and leather are not recommended. These are censured in the world. It has been heard that if one has been engaged in such tasks and has then given them up, this leads to great dharma. In this world, it is said that if a successful man is overcome by arrogance in his mind and acts wickedly, that cannot be accepted. It has been heard in the ancient accounts that subjects used to be self-controlled and placed dharma at the forefront, following the fair policy of dharma. Shaming them through words was sufficient chastisement. O king! At that time, dharma alone was praised among men. Men on earth served and extended the qualities of dharma. O son! O lord of men! But the asuras could not tolerate this. They increased themselves and gradually penetrated the subjects. Because of this, insolence was generated among subjects and this destroyed dharma. Resulting from insolence, anger was again generated within them. Having been overcome with anger, their conduct became shameful. O king! When they were overcome with lack of modesty, confusion was generated in them. Having become overcome with confusion, they no longer looked at things the way they had done earlier. They cheerfuly conducted themselves and crushed each other. Shaming them through words was no longer sufficient chastisement then. They served their senses and no longer showed respect towards gods and brahmanas. At this time, the gods sought refuge with Shiva, supreme among the gods, the brave one with many forms and the lord of the ganas. With the combined energy of the gods, with a single arrow, he brought down the three cities from the sky onto the ground.[728] Their lord was terrible and fearsome in valour, frightful to the gods. But he was slain by the wielder of the trident. When he was slain, men regained their own nature. As was the case earlier, the Vedas and the sacred texts were revived. The saptarshis instated Vasava in the kingdom of the gods in heaven and he was given the task of wielding the staff of chastisement over men. After the saptarshis, there were the king named Viprithu and several other kshatriyas who became kings over separate categories. However, even when they were born in great lineages, there were some who continued to follow the earlier conduct. Their hearts were full of sentiments like that of the asuras. Because of those sentiments, those kings, terrible in valour, continued to be attached to deeds that were like those of the asuras. Men who are exceedingly foolish continue to be devoted to such acts, rever them and establish them. O king! That is the reason I am telling you that you must reflect about the sacred texts. You must discard all notions of violence within you and act so as to obtain success. An accomplished person does not think of obtaining riches by mixing up the means. For the sake of dharma or artha, he does not abandon what is proper. That is not said to be the way towards welfare. It is recommended that a kshatriya should be self-controlled, affectionate towards relatives and protect subjects, servants and sons in accordance with his own dharma. Because of prosperity and adversity, there can be enmity and affection. One is born and circles around in thousands of lives in many ways. Find delight in the qualities and never in sins. Even if a person is evilminded and devoid of qualities, he realizes this internally. O great king! Dharma and adharma are prevalent among men. Other than men, these notions are not seen to exist in other creatures. Whether a man is concerned with this life or is not concerned with this life, he must be learned and must follow dharma in conduct. He must cause injury and must always regard everyone like his own self. When there is no longer any desire in the mind, there is no longer any falsehood and one desires what is beneficial.’”’

Chapter 1612(284)

‘“Parashara said, ‘O son! I have told you about the dharma that is recommended for householders. I will now tell you about the techniques for austerities. Listen attentively. O best among men! It is often seen that because of being overcome with tamas and rajas, householders suffer from attachment and have a sense of ownership. Since they resort to homes, men acquire cattle, fields, riches, wives, sons and servants. In their conduct, they are always seen to look towards these. Their attachment and aversion are always seen to increase. Overcome by attachment and aversion, a man comes under the control of material objects. O lord of men! When confusion has been generated, the object known as desire is generated. Seeking to obtain objects of pleasure, he becomes addicted to desire. He does not see anything beyond the gains from ordinary pleasure and desire. Having become overwhelmed by greed, attachment is increased in people. Men become interested in sustaining these objects. Even if he knows, a man performs acts that should not be undertaken, for the sake of objects. Because he is overcome with affection for the children, he is tormented at the prospect of these[729] being destroyed. He is full of pride and seeks to protect himself against all defeat. He acts so as to enjoy pleasure and is thereby destroyed. It is known that those who have seen the brahman are full of intelligence and engage in austerities. Such men seek auspicious deeds and give up happiness.[730] O king! They obtain indifference towards loss of affection and riches and physical and mental hardships. That indifference leads to knowledge of the atman and knowledge of what the sacred texts have said. O king! Having seen the purport of the sacred texts, they see the importance of austerities. O Indra among men! A man who realizes what is essential and what is damaging is extremely rare. Realizing that all beloved happiness decays, he resorts to austerities. O son! Austerities are everything. They are recommended even for those who are inferior. A person who has conquered his senses and is self-controlled is on the road to heaven. O king! Earlier, the lord Prajapati created subjects through austerities, sometimes resorting to different kinds of vows. O son! The Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, Agni, the Ashvins, the Maruts, the Vishvadevas, the Sadhyas, the ancestors, the large numbers of Maruts,[731] the yakshas, the rakshasas, the gandharvas, the siddhas, the other residents of heaven and all other celestial ones obtained success through austerities. In the beginning, Brahma created brahmanas. Earlier, through their austerities, they prospered the earth and also roamed around in heaven. In the world of mortals, kings and other householders who are seen to have been born in great lineages have all obtained the fruits of their austerities.[732] The silken garments, the radiant ornaments, the mounts, the seats and the vehicles—all these are the fruits of austerities. Thousands of beautiful women who follow them and the dwelling in palaces—all these are the fruits of austerities. The best of beds, many kinds of objects of pleasure and all that is—these are the outcomes of past deeds. O scorcher of enemies! There is nothing in the three worlds that cannot be obtained through austerities. The renunciation of objects of pleasure also represents the fruits of earlier deeds. Whether he is happy or miserable, a man must abandon greed. O supreme among kings! He must use his mind and intelligence to look towards the sacred texts. Discontent leads to misery. Greed leads to confusion of the senses. Wisdom is then destroyed and knowledge is not accompanied by practice. When wisdom is destroyed, one does not see what is proper. Therefore, even when happiness has been destroyed, a man must resort to fierce austerities.

Whatever is beneficial represents happiness. Whatever is hated is said to represent misery. Behold. These are the fruits of austerities that have been performed and have not been performed. If one performs unblemished austerities, one goes to what is best. One always faces the fortunate and enjoys the objects of pleasure. However, a person who gives up the virtuous path and goes after the fruits[733] obtains the unpleasant and faces many kinds of misery, despite obtaining objects of pleasure. Dharma, austerities and donations are desirable. But because desire is generated, one performs wicked deeds and obtains hell. O supreme among men! But whether he faces joy or misery, if a man does not deviate from his own conduct, he possesses the sight of the sacred texts. O lord of the earth! It is said that the pleasure from touch, taste, sight, scent and hearing only lasts for as long as it takes for an arrow to fall down on the ground. When these are over, a fierce pain again takes over. That is the reason the learned praise emancipation, productive of supreme bliss. Those who follow that obtain fruits with superior qualities. For those who always have a conduct in accordance with dharma, kama and artha do not diminish them. Householders must never make efforts to serve objects of pleasure. But it is my view that they must always make efforts to follow their own dharma. Those who are revered and are born in noble families always have the sight of the sacred texts. However, those who have separated themselves from acts of dharma are incapable of controlling their atmans. All other deeds that are performed by men are destroyed. These should be ignored in this world and nothing other than deeds of austerities followed. However, there may be householders who have made up their minds to perform deeds. O king! They should skilfully observe their own dharma and offer havya and kavya. All the male and female rivers flow to the ocean and find their refuge there. In that way, all the other ashramas are based on that of the householder.'"'

Chapter 1613(285)

''Janaka asked, 'O maharshi! How were the different complexions generated among the varnas? O supreme among eloquent ones! I wish to hear about this. Tell me. The sacred texts say that one’s offspring are nothing but one’s own self. In particular, having been generated from brahmanas, how has there been decay?’

‘“Parashara replied, ‘O great king! It is indeed that way. The offspring are generated from one’s own self. But because of the deviation from austerities, this decay into jatis has set in.[734] When the field is good and the seed is good, an auspicious crop results. However, if these are inferior, an inferior crop results. Those who are learned about dharma know that when Prajapati created the worlds, some were created from his mouth, some from his arms, some from his thighs and some from his feet. O son! The brahmanas were born from the mouth and the kshatriyas and their relatives from the arms. O king! The rich ones[735] were born from the thighs. The attendants[736] were born from the feet. O bull among men! These were the only four varnas that were created. The sacred texts say that all the others that were created, over and above these, were the result of a mixture. Among those that resulted from the kshatriya jati were Atirathas, Ambashthas, Ugras, Vaidehakas, Shvapakas, Pulkasas, Stenas, Nishadas, Sutas and Magadhas. O lord of men! The Ayogas, Karanas, Vratyas and Chandalas were born from an intermingling between the four varnas.’

‘“Janaka asked, ‘How did brahmanas with different gotras[737] result? O supreme among sages! There are many gotras in the world. How can those born from different wombs, those born from shudra wombs and those born from inferior wombs become sages?’

‘“Parashara replied, ‘O king! Though these are not brahmanas by virtue of their inferior birth, these great-souled ones can resort to austerities and cleanse their souls. O king! Here and there, the sages had sons. However, because of their[738] own austerities, they again succeeded in becoming rishis. O king! O ruler of Videha! Earlier, my grandfather,[739] Rishyashringa, Kashyapa, Vata, Tandya, Kripa, Kakshivat, Kamatha and the others, Yavakrita, Drona, supreme among eloquent ones, Ayu, Matanga, Datta, Drupada and Matsya obtained their own natural states by resorting to austerities. They were knowledgable about the Vedas and were established in self-control and austerities. O king! Initially, only four gotras were born—Angiras, Kashyapa, Vasishtha and Bhrigu. O king! But because of their deeds, other gotras were generated. Their names resulted from the austerities that those virtuous ones resorted to.’

'"Janaka asked, 'O illustrious one! Tell me about the specific dharma of different varnas. What is the general template of dharma that leads to welfare everywhere?'

'"Parashara replied, 'O king! Receiving gifts, officiating at sacrifices and studying represent the specific dharma for brahmanas. Kshatriyas are radiant when they protect. The vaishyas must engage in agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. O lord of men! The task of shudras is to serve the other three varnas.[740] O king! I have described to you the specific dharma of the varnas. O son! Now listen to the details about general dharma. O king! Non-violence, lack of injury, lack of distraction, giving proper shares, performing funeral rites, attending to guests, truthfulness, lack of anger, contentment with one's own wife, purity, constant lack of malice, knowledge of the atman and endurance—these represent general dharma. Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas are the three varnas that are *dvija*s.[741] O supreme among bipeds! These are the ones who have rights to such dharma. O king! If these three varnas resort to perverse deeds, then that leads to their downfall. They are elevated if they stick to their own deeds, just as the righteous ones do. No downfall has been determined for a shudra, nor is there any means of his cleansing himself from such a downfall. He cannot follow the conduct of dharma laid down in the sacred texts. However, he should not act against such dharma. O ruler of Videha! O great king! Learned ones say that shudras are like brahmanas. O Indra among men! I see such a person as the god Vishnu, the foremost one in the universe.[742] Even an inferior person can desire to uplift himself by resorting to the conduct of the virtuous. They are not censured if they perform any of the rites that lead to nourishment. But they must avoid mantras. Whenever inferior people resort to the conduct of the virtuous, they obtain happiness, both in this world and in the hereafter.'

'"Janaka asked, 'O great sage! What taints a person? Is it his deeds or his jati? A doubt has arisen in my mind. You should explain this to me.'

'"Parashara replied, 'O great king! There is no doubt that both can give rise to taints. But listen specifically to how both deeds and jati can be countered. Regardless of birth and deeds,[743] a person may perform wicked acts. However, even if the birth is tainted, if a person does not act wickedly, he is truly a man.

If a man of superior birth performs wicked deeds, he is censured. Those acts taint him. Therefore, such deeds are not appropriate.’

‘“Janaka asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! In this world, which are the acts of dharma? Which are the acts that never lead to injury to beings?’

‘“Parashara replied, ‘O great king! Listen to what you have asked me. These are acts of non-injury that always save a man. Those who renounce and worship the fire can see that their anxiety is dispelled. They are the ones who resort to the beneficial path of dharma and ascend progressively. They are devoted and humble. They are always self-controlled and restrained. They abandon all kinds of action and go to the spot that is without decay. O king! All the varnas should perform the deeds of dharma properly and speak truthful words. In the world of the living, they must give up terrible adharma. They will go to heaven. There is no need to reflect on this.’”’

Chapter 1614(286)

‘“Parashara said, ‘Fathers, friends, preceptors and women belonging to those who are devoid of qualities bring them no status in the world. O king! Even if one is devoted to them, speaks pleasantly to them, ensures their welfare and is obedient, that brings no gains. For men, the father is the supreme god. The father is said to be superior to the mother. Knowledge is said to be the supreme gain. By controlling the objects of the senses, one obtains the supreme. If the son of a king faces the flames of arrows in the field of battle and is consumed by them and killed, he goes to the immortal worlds that are extremely difficult to obtain. As he pleases, he obtains the fruits of heaven there. O king! One should not strike the exhausted, the terrified, those who have lost their weapons, the weeping, those who are not willing to fight, those who have been deprived of their mounts, those who are not exerting themselves, those who are ill, those who are seeking refuge, those who are very young and those who are aged. One should fight someone who is mounted, properly equipped, ready to fight and one’s equal. In a battle, a king should engage against the son of a kshatriya. It is certain that it is best to be killed by someone who is an equal or superior. Kings who are slain by inferiors and cowards are censured. O lord of men! It is said that if one is slain by a wicked person who resorts to evil conduct, or is inferior, that is wicked and certainly leads to hell. O king! If a person's fortune is over and he has come under subjugation,[744] then no one can save him. But if the lifespan is left, no one can assail him. If a person has attained one hundred years of age or he is senior in age, one must gently restrain him from performing any injurious acts. O son! When a householder suspects that his end is near, it is appropriate that his death should occur near a river or at a sacred place. When the lifespan is over, one merges into the five elements. This can happen without reason and can also occur with reason.[745] Having obtained a body, if a person gives it up in a mishap, after losing the body, he follows the same kind of course.[746] This is like a man going from one house to another house. There is no second reason for a person to obtain a similar kind of body. That is the way he pursues the goal of emancipation. The body consists of a mass of arteries, sinews and bones. It is terrible and impure. It is a mixture of the elements, the senses and the qualities. This body is then covered by a skin. Learned ones who have thought about adhyatma say this. When the qualities decay, the body becomes mortal. The body is abandoned and becomes immobile and senseless. The elements return to their natural states and the body merges with the ground. Driven by the urge to act, the body is born, here and there. O ruler of Videha! Whatever be the state in which the body dies, driven by the deeds it has performed, its next birth is seen to be determined by that nature. O king! But the atman in the creature is not born again immediately. Like a giant cloud, it roams around in the sky. O king! It is born again only after it has obtained a new receptacle. O king! The atman is superior to the mind. The mind is superior to the senses. O king! Of the two kinds of creations, the mobile are superior.[747] It is held that bipeds are supreme among mobile ones. Among bipeds, dvijas are held to be superior. O Indra among kings! Among dvijas, the wise are held to be superior. Among the wise, those who know about the atman are superior and among those who know about the atman, the ones who are humble. It is certain that men who are born must die. Because of the qualities,[748] subjects undertake tasks that also come to an end. O king! A man who dies when the sun is in its northern solstice[749] and when the nakshatras and muhurtas are auspicious, is a person who performs auspicious deeds. A person must undertake tasks to the best of his capacity. He must cleanse himself of all wicked deeds and without causing hardship to people, face the natural course of death. Poison, hanging, burning, being slain by bandits and being bitten to death by animals are said to be inferior kinds of death. Those who are the performers of auspicious deeds do not confront these and many other inferior kinds of death. O king! The life forces of virtuous ones ascend upwards, those who are middling in merit remain towards the middle and the perpetrators of wicked deeds head downwards. O king! For any man, there is only one foe and no second enemy, and that happens to be ignorance. It is because he is enveloped by this that he is goaded to perform extremely terrible and loathsome deeds. For the sake of realization, one must serve the aged and follow the dharma of the sacred texts. O prince! One must make efforts for success. That enemy can only be brought down through the arrow of wisdom. One must study the Vedas, perform austerities and be a brahmachari. To the best of one's capacity, one must perform the five sacrifices.[750] With a desire to obtain dharma, a man must then go to the forest. He must control himself and seek to obtain what is best. However, he must not emaciate himself by giving up all material objects. O son! Birth as a human is extremely difficult to obtain, even as a *chandala*.[751] O lord of the earth! This is the first kind of birth, because one can seek to save the atman by performing auspicious deeds. O lord! Who will destroy such a life once it has been obtained? Using the sacred texts as a yardstick, men perform acts of dharma. But though the status as a human may be very difficult to obtain in this world, there may be a man who ignores dharma. He is overcome by desire and thereby deceives himself. O son! A person who looks at all beings with eyes of affection is not destroyed, like the flames of a lamp that have been protected. He comforts everyone and speaks pleasantly to them. He is impartial towards delight and misery. He obtains greatness in the hereafter. Donations, renunciation, making the appearance pleasant and amiable, repeated purification of the body through bathing and austerities—these must be undertaken near the Sarasvati, in Naimisha, in Pushkara, or in other sacred spots on earth. For those who die in houses, it is recommended that their dead bodies should be taken out from there and taken to cremation grounds in vehicles. Cremation must be performed in accordance with the rites of purification. Rites, beneficial sacrifices, officiating at sacrifices, donations and efforts to undertake auspicious deeds according to one's capacity—these have been recommended for the sake of the departed ancestors. A man also undertakes these for his own self. O lord of men! The sacred texts, the Vedas and the six Vedangas have been laid down for the benefit of men who perform unblemished deeds.'"

'Bhishma said, "O lord of men! The extremely great-souled sage related all this and, in those ancient times, spoke to the king of Videha for his benefit.'"

Chapter 1615(287)

'Bhishma said, "For the sake of determining supreme dharma, Janaka, the lord of Mithila, again asked the great-souled Parashara. 'O brahmana! What is the supreme objective? Which deeds are never destroyed? Which is the spot, from which, one does not have to return? O great sage! Tell me that.'

'"Parashara replied, 'Detachment is the best foundation of knowledge. Knowledge represents the best path. Austerities are never destroyed. Seeds sown in a field are not destroyed. If a person severs the noose of adharma and takes pleasure in dharma, if he grants the gift of fearlessness, then he obtains success. A person who gives away thousands of cattle and hundreds of horses and grants fearlessness to all beings, he is the one who truly gives. One may dwell in the midst of material objects. However, if one is intelligent, one does not really dwell amidst them. It is only the evil-minded person who dwells amidst trifling material objects. Like water on the leaf of a lotus, a wise person is not stained by adharma. Sin attaches more to an ignorant person, just as lac and wood attach to each other. Adharma can only be extinguished after the fruits have been felt and do not let go of the doer. At the right time, the doer will have to endure all of these. But they do not afflict those who have clean souls and have seen the atman. An ignorant person is distracted by his intelligence and the organs of action. Attached to good and bad deeds, he suffers from great fear. Even when he is in the midst of objects, a person who is devoid of attachment and has properly conquered his anger, is never united with sin. When there is a dam, the store of water swells up. In that way, someone with the dam of dharma does not suffer. The gem purifies itself by attracting the rays of the sun.[752] O tiger among kings! A person who practices yoga receives in that way. When sesamum seeds are separately mingled with flowers, they imbibe those pleasant qualities. By resorting to the quality of sattva, men on earth can improve themselves by associating with those who have clean souls. When a man makes up his mind about heaven, he abandons his wife, his riches, his excellent horses, his vehicles and all kinds of rites. His intelligence is then delinked from material objects. If a man's intelligence is addicted to material objects, he can never comprehend what brings welfare to his atman. O king! His consciousness is attracted by all these sentiments, like fish after a bait of meat. All mortal beings in this world encounter each other and depend on each other. But like a plantain tree, this lacks essence. They sink like a boat in the ocean. No time has been designated for a man to follow dharma. Death does not wait for any man. It is appropriate that one should always practise the rites of dharma, since a man is always headed towards the jaws of death. Through practice, a blind man can roam around in his own house. In that way, by concentrating the mind, a wise person can follow the desired path. It has been said that everything that is born must die. Birth is associated with death. A person who is ignorant about the dharma of emancipation is bound and is whirled around in that cycle. The stalk of a lotus can swiftly free itself from the mire. In that way, a man's atman can free itself of the mind. It is the mind that initially brings the atman to yoga. Engaged in one's own acts, one tends to ignore the supreme objective. By being addicted to the objects of the senses, one falls away from one's true acts. Though heaven is the supreme objective, one obtains birth as inferior species. Through his own deeds, a wise person's atman obtains the supreme benefit. When an earthen vessel has been baked, the liquid kept there does not escape and diminish. Even if one is in the midst of material objects, it is the same with a person who has tormented his body through austerities. There is no doubt that a person who discards material objects can obtain emancipation, delinking his atman from objects of pleasure. But there are others who base themselves on objects of pleasure. A person attached to his penis and stomach is shrouded in mist. His soul is enveloped, like a person who has been born blind and does not understand. Merchants who go out to sea obtain riches that are proportionate to the capital invested. Know that in the world of mortals, creatures obtain ends that are proportionate to their deeds. In this world, made up of days and nights, death roams around in the form of old age and devours creatures, like a snake devouring the air. A creature obtains a birth that is determined by the deeds that he has himself performed. There is nothing, pleasant or unpleasant, that is obtained but is not dependent on earlier acts. Whether he is lying down, moving around or is seated, or is in the midst of material objects, a man always obtains the fruits of good and bad deeds. But it is seen that someone who has obtained the furthest shore,[753] which is so difficult to reach in this great ocean, does not return again. When a burden is to be carried, boats are lowered into the great ocean through ropes.[754] That is the way the mind uses yoga to uplift the body. Rivers head towards the ocean and unite with it. In that way, yoga always makes one unite with prakriti. The minds of men are attached to many kinds of bonds of affection. Their nature is destroyed, like houses of sand by the water. The being must realize that the body is like a house and that it has to be purified through sacred waters. If one advances along the path of intelligence, one obtains happiness in this world and in the next. There are many things that lead to hardship, but there are only a few that bring happiness. The learned say that among the many things that lead to benefit in the hereafter, renunciation is the best. There are large numbers of friends who have their own intentions. There are relatives who follow their own reasons. There are wives, servants and sons. All of them wish to enjoy one's riches for their own reasons. A mother or a father cannot bring about anything in the hereafter. Donations are the medication and a creature reaps the fruits of his own deeds. Mothers, sons, fathers, brothers, wives and friends are only like etchings of gold against the real stuff.[755] All the deeds that have been done earlier, good and bad, follow a creature's atman. Knowing that the fruits of deeds present themselves, one should turn one's intelligence towards the inner atman. One should resort to one's conduct, using others as aides. One who has begun his acts in this way, never suffers. One must have no doubt in one's mind. One must be brave, patient and learned. Prosperity will never abandon such a person, just as the rays don't leave the sun. If a person believes and uses means to engage in such conduct, without any wonder and without any doubt, and if he controls himself, then his atman does not suffer and he does not deviate from the objective. All the deeds that a creature himself performed, good and bad, control him from the moment he obtains a womb. Both types of earlier deeds restrain him. Death cannot be countered and time severs everything, like a saw scattering dust from wood. In the end, the fruits of deeds are obtained. Through the acts that he has himself performed earlier, good and bad, a man obtains everything—his appearance, birth, material objects, prosperity and other stores.'"

'Bhishma said, "O king! The learned one thus spoke about the truth to Janaka. Having heard, the best among those who were knowledgable about dharma, obtained great delight."'

Chapter 1616(288)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! Learned men in this world praise truthfulness, forgiveness, self-control and wisdom. What is your view?"

'Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishthira! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between the Sadhyas and a swan. Once upon a time, the eternal Prajapati assumed the form of a golden swan. In this form, he travelled through the three worlds and came upon the Sadhyas.

'"The Sadhyas said, 'O bird! We are the gods who are known as the Sadhyas. You are the one who truly knows about moksha and we wish to ask you about the dharma of moksha. We have heard that you are learned, patient and eloquent. O bird! Virtuous words are heard from you. O bird! What do you think is the best? O great-souled one! Where does the mind find delight? O supreme among birds! It should be your task to instruct us. O Indra among birds! What do you think is the best among deeds, so that one can be swiftly emancipated?'

'"The swan replied, 'O ones who have fed on amrita! I have heard that one must resort to these tasks—austerities, self-control, truthfulness and the protection of the atman. All the strands of the heart must be loosened and the pleasant and the unpleasant must be brought under one's control. One must not hurt others and be harsh in speech. One must not receive anything good from those who are inferior. One must not excite others through speech. One must not speak words that make them go to wicked worlds. Spoken words descend like arrows. Struck by those, one grieves day and night. A learned person will not make these descend towards the vitals of others. He will not release these at other people. If one is severely struck with arrows of extreme words released by others, it is one's task to pacify them. If a person replies angrily, all his good merits from the hereafter are taken away. A person should control his blazing anger, pacify his pride and counter the futile humiliation. He should be cheerful and free from malice. He then takes away the good merits that the evil-minded person has earned in the hereafter. I do not speak anything when I am censured. Even when I am incessantly assailed, I ignore it. Noble ones say that forgiveness, truthfulness, uprightness and non-violence are the best. Truth is the foundation of the Vedas. Self-control is the foundation of truth. Emancipation is the foundation of self-control. These are all the various instructions. I think that a person who can control the force of words, the force of anger in the mind, the force of knowledge,[756] the forces of the stomach and the genitals and all the other forces that consume and destroy, is a brahmana and a sage. Lack of anger is superior to anger. Patience is superior to the lack of patience. A human is superior to those who are not human. In that way, knowledge is superior to ignorance. One who is not enraged is superior to one who is angered. One must be patient when one is raged against. In that event, the assailant is burnt[757] and one obtains all his good merits. In such a case, if a person does not say anything, harsh or pleasant, in reply, if when struck, a person is patient and does not strike back, if when assailed, he does not desire anything wicked in retaliation, such a person is always desired by the gods. A wicked person must be forgiven, as if he is equal to a superior person, even if one has been dishonoured, assailed and censured. That is the way to obtain success. I no longer possess any thirst. Nor is there any rage in me. In private, I always serve noble ones. I do not desire anything that belongs to others and I do not seek any of their possessions. When I am cursed, I do not curse back. I know that this is the door towards immortality. I am telling you the secret about the brahman. There is nothing superior for men. They will then be freed from sin, like the moon from the clouds. Such a patient person will obtain success through his patience and be radiant while he waits for the right time to come.[758] He deserves to be worshipped by everyone and is like a pillar that holds everything up. Words of great praise are spoken about him. Such a person has control over his atman and goes to the gods. Revilers who are full of anger do not wish to speak about his lack of qualities, because there is nothing like that. His words and mind have been protected and controlled in the appropriate way. Through the Vedas, austerities and renunciation, he has obtained everything. Such a learned person does not react to the censure and disrespect shown by ignorant people. Nor does he cause injury to his own self by extolling others.[759] Like one who is content with amrita, he ignores this. Such a person is a brahmana. He sleeps happily and disrespect does not destroy him. If there is rage when sacrifices are performed, gifts given, austerities performed or oblations offered, Vaivasvata[760] takes all these away. The efforts of a person who is enraged are futile. O supreme among the immortals! If a person protects the four gates—the genitals, the stomach, the hands and speech as the fourth—well, he knows about dharma. Truthfulness, self-control, modesty, uprightness, non-violence, fortitude, patience, renunciation, constant studying, lack of desire towards the possessions of others—if a person has the good conduct to practise these single-mindedly, he will rise upwards. Like a calf sucking at the four udders of the cow, these are all the things that one should follow. There is nothing that is purer than the truth. I have seen men and have travelled around among gods. Truth is the ladder to heaven, like a boat on an ocean. One becomes like the people one dwells and associates with. Whoever a person advances towards, he becomes like that. If one associates with the virtuous, one becomes virtuous. The same is the case with ascetics or thieves. This is like a garment being dyed with the colour it has been immersed in. In that way, one comes under their subjugation. The gods always converse with the virtuous. They are not seen to be interested in human objects. A person should know that material objects come and go, like the moon and the wind.[761] If the being inside the heart has not been stained and walks along the path of the righteous, the gods are pleased with him. From a distance, the gods avoid those who are always addicted to their penis and stomach, men who are thieves and always harsh in speech, even if one knows that they have tried to atone for those sins. The gods are not satisfied with those who are inferior in spirit, those who eat everything and those who are the perpetrators of wicked deeds. They honour men who are truthful in their vows, grateful and devoted to dharma. It is said that silence is superior to speech. The second course is that of speaking the truth. The third course is to speak words of dharma. The fourth course is of speaking pleasant words.’[762]

‘“The Sadhyas asked, ‘What is the world covered by? Why does it not shine? Why are friends cast away? What are the reasons for not reaching heaven?’

‘“The swan replied, ‘The world is enveloped in ignorance. Malice leads to a lack of shining. Friends are abandoned because of greed. Because of attachment, one does not go to heaven.’

‘“The Sadhyas asked, ‘Among the brahmanas, who is the single one who is always happy? Who is the single one who is silent amidst the many? Who is the single one, who though weak, is strong? Who is the single one who does not quarrel?’

‘“The swan replied, ‘Among the brahmanas, the wise one is the single one who is always delighted. The wise one is the single one who is silent amidst many. The wise one is the single one who is strong, though weak. The wise one is the one who does not quarrel.’

‘“The Sadhyas asked, ‘What is divinity among brahmanas? What is said to be their virtue? What is wicked among them? What is held to constitute their humanity?’

‘“The swan replied, ‘Studying represents their divinity. Vows are said to be their virtue. Censuring others is their wickedness. Mortality constitutes their humanity.’”

‘Bhishma said, “I have recounted the excellent conversation concerning the Sadhyas. The body is the womb for deeds and a virtuous existence is said to be the truth.”’

Chapter 1617(289)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O father! You should explain to me the difference between sankhya and yoga. O one who knows about everything! O supreme among the Kuru lineage! You know everything about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Brahmanas who follow sankhya praise sankhya and those who follow yoga praise yoga. Driven by reasons and sentiments, they proclaim the superiority of their own school. O afflicter of enemies! Learned ones who follow yoga have appropriately given reasons for their superiority. How can someone who does not believe in an Ishvara be emancipated? But those brahmanas who follow sankhya also speak about appropriate reasons. By knowing the progress of everything, one becomes detached from material objects. When one ascends upwards from the body, it is evident that this can be nothing other than emancipation. This is said by the immensely wise ones who are conversant with the emancipation set out in sankhya. Whichever school one follows, one should accept those reasons. One will then be capable of ensuring benefit with those words. The views of the virtuous must be accepted and there are virtuous and revered people on both sides. The reasons behind yoga can be experienced. Those for sankhya are determined on the basis of the sacred texts. O son! O Yudhishthira! It is my view that both sides represent the truth. O king! It is my view that both sides represent knowledge and are revered by the virtuous. If one follows the sacred texts and practises them, both will convey to the supreme objective. O unblemished one! Both are equal in recommending purification and compassion towards beings. Both are comparable in the vows that have been laid down. They are only unequal in their philosophy.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! They are comparable in vows, purification and compassion. O grandfather! In that case, why is it that they are not equal in their philosophy? Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Attachment, confusion, affection, desire and anger—by resorting to yoga, one severs these five sins and obtains success. Large fish break through nets and regain the water. In that way, through yoga, one transcends sins and attains the objective. O king! Greed and other bonds are powerful. Having severed these, the yogi treads along the supreme path, sparkling and auspicious. O king! There is no doubt that weak animals are enmeshed in nets and later destroyed. This is also true of those who do not possess the strength of yoga. O Kounteya! Weak ones are like fish caught in a net. O Indra among kings! Those yogis who are extremely weak also meet their end in the same way. O destroyer of enemies! This is like birds caught in fine nets. They can free themselves from that hardship, but only if they are strong. O scorcher of enemies! There are yogis who are bound down by the bonds of action. They are weak and are destroyed, while the powerful ones escape. O king! A small and weak fire is pacified when a large quantity of kindling is placed atop it. O lord! It is the same with yogis who are weak. O king! However, if that fire obtains its strength back again, it can swiftly burn down the entire earth, fanned by the wind. When strength has been generated in him, a yogi blazes in his energy and is immensely strong. He is like the sun that has arisen at the time of destruction and can dry up the entire universe. O king! A weak man is borne away by the current. A weak yogi is helpless and is borne away by the objects of the senses. However, an elephant is capable of withstanding the same strong current. Having obtained the strength of yoga, one can discard many objects of the senses. O Partha! Through the strength of yoga, a yogi can bring under his control and penetrate Prajapatis, rishis, the great elements and the Ishvaras. O king! Yama, the enraged destroyer, and Death, terrible in valour, cannot afflict the yogi, who is infinite in his energy. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Through the power of yoga, he can create many thousand who are like him and wander around the entire earth in these forms. Through practising fierce austerities, he can also obtain the objects of desire. O Partha! He can then fling them away again, like the sun discarding its qualities of energy. O king! There is no doubt that with the strength of yoga, and having freed himself from the bonds, a person can obtain Vishnu's powers and free himself. O lord of the earth! I have spoken to you about the power of yoga. I will now again tell you about the subtle signs. O lord! O bull among the Bharata lineage! The indications of dharana and samadhi in the atman are subtle.[763] Listen to them. An archer who is controlled and not distracted can strike the target. There is no doubt that a yogi who is properly focused in this way can obtain emancipation. A man ascending a flight of stairs with a liquid in a vessel, concentrates his mind.[764] The mind has to be withdrawn and rendered immobile in that way. O king! Uniting it with the atman in yoga, he becomes completely immobile. He cleanses his atman and makes it as resplendent as the sun. O Kounteya! O king! When a boat is tossed around on the mighty ocean, it is like a boatman taking control and swiftly steering the boat. In that way, a yogi who knows the truth unites his atman in samadhi. O king! Having gone to a desolate spot, he then gives up the body. O bull among men! A charioteer can yoke well-trained horses, control them and swiftly take the archer to the designated region. O king! That is the way a yogi is concentrated in dharana. He swiftly reaches the supreme spot, like a released arrow hitting the target. A yogi makes his self penetrate the atman and remains motionless. He destroys his sins and obtains the spot that is without decay. O infinitely valorous one! O lord of the earth! In his navel, in his throat, in his head, in his heart, in his chest, along his flanks, in his eyes, in his touch and in his nose, and in the spot that he has resorted to, the yogi controls himself in that great vow and merges his self with the subtle atman. Cleansed in his wisdom, he quickly burns all his deeds, auspicious and inauspicious. Resorting to that excellent yoga, he frees himself as he wills.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! How does a yogi obtain strength? What should he eat and what should he conquer? You should tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A yogi obtains strength by eating grain, by eating oilcakes and avoiding fatty products. O destroyer of enemies! A yogi obtains strength by being pure in soul and eating only once a day and subsisting for a long period of time on rough barley.[765] A yogi obtains strength by only drinking water mixed with milk once a fortnight, once a month, once in two months, and finally, once a year. O lord of men! A yogi obtains strength and purifies his soul properly by always avoiding meat. O king! O supreme among kings! He conquers desire, anger, cold, rain, fear, sleep, breath, the penis, material objects, hatred, which is so difficult to conquer, terrible thirst, touch and all the other senses and sleep, which is so difficult to defeat. The great-souled ones blaze and find their own subtle selves in their atmans. Those immensely wise ones are devoid of attachment. Their riches are meditation and studying. It is the view that the path followed by learned brahmanas is extremely difficult to traverse. O bull among the Bharata lineage! No one who is disturbed can walk along this. It is like a fearful forest full of terrible serpents and reptiles, covered with pits and without water, dense with many thorns and difficult to travel in. It is like a path frequented by bandits, with nothing to eat and no trees, as if the large trees have been burnt down in a forest conflagration. Young people do not find safety along it. Since the path of yoga is like this, very few brahmanas can travel along it. But it is said that the other paths, which have safety, have many taints. O lord of the earth! Those who can sustain yoga can safely walk along it, though it is as sharp as a razor’s edge. But those who have not cleansed their souls find it difficult to remain there. O son! However, if dharana is disturbed, it takes one to an inauspicious end. O king! This is like a blind man steering a boat on the ocean. O Kounteya! But if one is based in dharana in the proper way, one can free oneself from death, birth, unhappiness and happiness. All this has been stated in different sacred texts on yoga. This entire and supreme yoga is certainly seen among brahmanas. The great brahman is supreme. Those great-souled ones can enter the lord Brahma, Vishnu, the granter of boons, Bhava, Dharma, the six-faced one,[766] the six great sons of Brahma,[767] tamas, which makes one face such a great deal of difficulty, the pure sattva, supreme prakriti, the goddess Siddhi, Varuna's wife, all energy, great patience, the sparkling lord of the stars and all the stars, the Vishvadevas and the ancestors, their followers, all the mountains and the terrible oceans, all the rivers, the forests, the clouds, serpents, mountains, the large numbers of yakshas, the directions and the groups of gandharvas, male and female. Those great-souled ones and these great ones attain each other. The yogi becomes perpetually free. O king! This auspicious account is about the immensely valorous god. The great-souled yogi has Narayana in his soul and overcomes everything that is mortal."'

Chapter 1618(290)

'Yudhishthira said, "O king! You have properly described to me the path of yoga, which is approved by the virtuous. You have explained it, as if to a disciple whose benefit you desire. I am now asking you about all the principles of sankhya. You know all the knowledge that is to be known in the three worlds."

'Bhishma replied, "Listen to the pure principles of sankhya. Intelligent ascetics who know about the atman have laid them down, Kapila and the other lords being the first. O bull among men! No errors can be seen in those doctrines. They have many qualities and no taints. O king! Through knowledge, one can enumerate that all objects have faults. Men and pishachas are associated with objects that are extremely difficult to conquer. The rakshasas and yakshas are associated with objects. The serpents and the gandharvas are associated with objects. O king! The ancestors, who roam diagonally above, are associated with objects. The Suparnas[768] and the Maruts are associated with objects. The rajarshis and the brahmarshis are associated with objects. The asuras and the Vishvadevas are associated with objects. The devarshis and the lords of yoga are associated with objects. The lords of subjects and Brahma are associated with objects. O supreme among eloquent ones! Knowing about all these and knowing the truth about the ultimate lifespans and time in this world, they find happiness in the supreme truth. At the right time, those who search for objects descend into hardships. Some find misery as inferior species, others descend into hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There are all the qualities and all the demerits of heaven. There are taints and qualities in the words of the Vedas and in those who speak about the Vedas. O king! There are taints and qualities in jnana yoga and in yoga itself. O king! There are also taints and qualities in the knowledge of sankhya. There are ten qualities in sattva, nine qualities in rajas, eight qualities in tamas, seven qualities in intelligence, six qualities in the sky, five qualities in the mind, four qualities in intelligence and yet again, three great qualities in tamas, two qualities in rajas and one single quality in sattva.[769] One gets to know all this. One gets to know and obtains insight about the path of destruction. Having become full of jnana and vijnana and learnt the auspicious reasons behind everything, one obtains sacred emancipation, as subtle as the ultimate parts of the sky. Sight is attached to form, just as the nose is attached to the quality of smell. Sound is attached to hearing, the tongue to the quality of taste and touch to the skin. The wind finds refuge in the sky. Confusion is attached to tamas and has greed for riches as its foundation. Vishnu is attached to motion, Shakra to strength and Agni to the stomach. Water is attached to the goddess[770] and water has the fire as its foundation. Fire is attached to the wind and the wind has space for its foundation. Space is attached to Mahat and Mahat has intelligence for its foundation. Intelligence is attached to tamas and tamas has rajas for its foundation. Rajas is attached to sattva and sattva is attached to the atman. The atman is attached to the lord and god, Narayana. That god is attached to emancipation and emancipation has no foundation. One knows that sattva is attached to this body, surrounded by the sixteen qualities[771] and that natural consciousness has the body as a foundation. O king! One knows that the single atman is in the middle and that sin cannot attach to it and that the second element is acts committed in pursuit of the objects of the senses. All the senses and the objects of the senses have their foundation in the atman. There is also the truth about prana, apana, samana, vyana and udana. One knows about the two breaths of life that flow upwards and downwards. These seven breaths of life also possess their determined roles. O scorcher of enemies! One knows about Prajapatis, the rishis, the many different supreme paths and the large number of saptarshis and rajarshis. There are the great celestial rishis and the maharshis, as resplendent as the sun. O king! One knows that in the great course of time, they are also dislodged from their prosperity. O king! One learns that the large number of great creatures are destroyed. O king! One knows the outcome of inauspicious acts and evildoers. When Yama brings about destruction, there are hardships undergone by those who fall into Vaitarani.[772] There are many kinds of inauspicious wombs in the cycle of life. There is residence in inauspicious wombs, feeding on blood, water, phlegm, urine and excrement, terrible in smell. Bodies result from the union of semen and blood and have marrow and sinews. In that inauspicious city with the nine gates,[773] there are hundreds of veins and arteries. O king! One learns about the many kinds of yoga that bring welfare to the atman and about tamas, which envelopes the beautiful atmans of creatures. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is sattva among creatures, but also the abhorrent and censured one[774] from the perspective of greatness. Those who know about sankhya know about the atman. They see the terrible devouring of the energy of the moon,[775] the fall of the stars and the deviation of the nakshatras. O king! They see the piteous coming together and separation of creatures and the unholy ways in which they eat each other. They know the delusion of childhood and the inauspicious destruction of bodies and because of attachment and confusion, the rare resort to sattva. Among thousands of men, only one possesses intelligence that turns to moksha. They know what the sacred texts have said earlier, that emancipation is extremely difficult to obtain. O king! They know of the great importance that is given to things that have not been obtained and the limited importance to those that have been obtained, since the objects of the senses are overwhelming. O Kounteya! When life has departed, they see that the bodies are unholy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They know that in the midst of homes and families, creatures are in misery. They know of the extremely terrible ends faced by those who are the killers of brahmanas and evil-souled brahmanas who are addicted to drinking. O Yudhishthira! They know the unholy ends that come to those who have intercourse with the wives of their preceptors, to those who do not show proper respect to their mothers and men in this world who do not revere the gods. They have the knowledge to know what happens to the perpetrators of wicked deeds and they are also conversant with the different kinds of birth as inferior species that takes place. They know about the colourful words of the Vedas, the progress of the seasons and the fading of the years and the months. They see the decay of the fortnights and the decay of the days. They can directly see the waxing and waning of the moon, the ebb and the flow in the oceans and the destruction of riches and their subsequent increase. In particular, they see the coming together and separation of the yugas, the destruction of mountains and the destruction of rivers. They see the decay and repeated destruction of varnas. They see old age, death, birth and hardships. They know the truth about the taints of bodies and their miseries. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are conversant with the frailties of bodies. They know about the faults in their own atmans and those that all atmans are prone to. They know about the inauspicious scents that arise from their own bodies.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O immensely valorous one! What are the faults that you see in your own body? I have a doubt about this. You should explain in detail the truth about this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord! The learned have said that there are five faults in the body. Those who know about the paths propagated in Kapila’s sankhya have spoken about this. O destroyer of enemies! Listen. There are desire, anger, fear, sleep and the fifth is said to be the breath. These faults are seen in all those who possess bodies. Anger can be severed through forgiveness and desire through the abandoning of resolution. In that way, sattva and good conduct can be used against sleep and lack of distraction against fear. O king! The fifth one of breath can be severed through a restrained diet. The qualities can be comprehended through hundreds of other qualities, the faults through hundreds of faults. One can understand the truth about colourful reasons through hundreds of diverse reasons. The world is surrounded by one hundred of Vishnu’s maya and is like foam in the water. It has the appearance of something that has been painted and its essence is as futile as that of a reed. One sees that it is like a dark pit and the years are like bubbles. It is about to be destroyed and is without happiness, with the characteristics of inevitable destruction. It is submerged in rajas and tamas and is as immobile as an elephant stuck in mud. O king! The immensely wise ones who know about sankhya generate offspring and then discard their bodies. O king! They use the great and pervasive knowledge of sankhya. O king! As instructed, they use the auspicious scent of sattva to dispel all the inauspicious scents of rajas and tamas, all the sense of touch that resides in the body. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They quickly sever these through the weapon of knowledge and the rod of austerities. The waters of the ocean[776] are terrible misery. Anxiety and sorrow are its large lakes. Disease and death are the giant crocodiles. The great fears are the giant serpents. Tamas is the tortoises and rajas is the fish. One can cross over with the use of wisdom. Affection is the mud. O scorcher of enemies! Old age represents the impenetrable fortifications and touch is like the islands. Deeds are the great depth, truth represents the banks. O king! One has to base oneself on one's vows. Injury represents the swift and strong current. The many kinds of tastes are like large mines. The different kinds of gratification are the gems. Grief and fever are the breeze. Sorrow and thirst are the giant whirlpools. Fierce diseases are the large elephants. O destroyer of enemies! Bones are like flights of stairs and phlegm is foam. Donations provide the pearls. Lakes of blood are the coral. Loud laughter constitutes the roar. The different kinds of knowledge[777] make it extremely difficult to cross. Tears are the salt. One should resort to the refuge of abandoning attachment. O king! Sons are the large number of leeches. Relatives are the inhabitations. Lack of injury and truthfulness set boundaries to this. The giving up of life is the giant wave. Vedanta is an island one advances towards and all creatures can use it as pots[778] for support. Emanicpation is an object that is extremely difficult to obtain, but that is the reason one is heading to the ocean, with subterranean fire that is like a mare's head. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through using the yoga of knowledge, sages can successfully cross it. Having been born and having crossed what is extremely difficult to cross, they enter into the sparkling sky. From there, the sun uses its rays to bear those who practise sankhya, the performers of virtuous deeds. O king! This is like the stalk of a lotus bearing the water. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The breeze that blows there receives them. Those stores of austerities are devoid of attachment. They are full of valour and successful. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The breeze is subtle, cool, fragrant and pleasant to the touch. Those best of the seven Maruts convey them to an auspicious world. O Kounteya! It takes them to the ultimate end of space. O lord of men! Space conveys them to the ultimate end of rajas. O Indra among kings! Rajas conveys them to the ultimate end of sattva. O one who is pure in soul! Sattva conveys them to the supreme lord, Narayana. The lord bears those pure-souled ones and makes them part of the paramatman. O lord! They attain immortality there and never return. O Partha! Those great-souled ones are beyond opposites and attain the supreme objective."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! Those who are firm in their vows obtain that supreme region. O unblemished one! Do they remember anything about their birth and death? You should tell me the truth about this. O Kourava! Other than you, there is no no man I should ask this. I find this taint in the description about the greatness of moksha. Having reached and obtained success there, do the rishis retain consciousness and continue to endeavour for something else? O king! In that case, I see that the dharma of pravritti[779] is supreme. Once one is immersed in supreme knowledge, what can be more miserable than that?"

'Bhishma replied, "O son! The question that you have asked is proper, but it is extremely difficult. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Such is this question that even the learned have been confounded. Listen properly to the supreme truth on this. The great-souled ones who follow Kapila have supreme intelligence. O king! Embodied beings have senses in their bodies so that they can perceive. But these are instruments and the subtle atman uses them to perceive. Without the atman, they are like lumps of wood. They will no doubt be destroyed, like foam in the giant ocean. O scorcher of enemies! When the senses sleep, the subtle atman roams around everywhere, like the wind in space. O lord! It sees what can be seen and touches what can be touched. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It comprehends everything, just as in a state of being awake. All the senses continue to be there, in their respective places. But because they are without their lord,[780] they are extinguished and are like snakes with their poison missing. There is no doubt that the subtle atman roams around, goes to the respective places of the senses and performs their tasks then. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O one with dharma in your soul! O Partha! O Yudhishthira! All the qualities of sattva, all the qualities of rajas, all the qualities of tamas, all the qualities of intelligence, all the qualities of the mind, all the qualities of space, all the qualities of wind, all the qualities of energy, all the qualities of water, all the qualities of earth and all the qualities of the atman are in the atman. It is the atman which makes the atman perform good and bad acts. O lord! The senses wait on the great atman, like disciples. The undecaying atman transcends prakriti and proceeds. It goes to the supreme atman, Narayana, who is beyond opposites and is beyond prakriti. Free from taint and emancipated from good deeds and evil ones, it[781] enters the paramatman and does not return from the qualities there. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! But the mind and the senses remain. At the right time, on the instructions of the preceptor, they have to return.[782] If a person desires peace and the qualities, he is capable of obtaining it within a short period of time. O Kounteya! United with knowledge in this way, they can find emancipation. O king! The immensely wise ones, who know about sankhya, go to that supreme objective. O Kounteya! There is no knowledge that is equal to this knowledge. Do not have any doubt about this. The views of sankhya represent supreme knowledge. They are without decay and certain and were earlier revealed by eternal Brahma, who is the creator without a beginning, a middle and an end, beyond opposites and everlasting. Those who have tranquility in their souls say that he is deep and eternal. All the acts of creation and destruction flow from him. This has been praised in the sacred texts and spoken about by the supreme rishis. For all the brahmanas, gods and people who know about the sacred texts, the eternal and undecaying brahman is the supreme god and there is nothing superior to him. The brahmanas pray to him and the learned speak about his qualities. This is the view of the far-sighted ones who properly practise yoga and sankhya. O Kounteya! The sacred texts of sankhya are a manifestation of the one who is without form.[783] O bull among the Bharata lineage! That is the reason these views have been regarded as his signs. O lord of the earth! There are two kinds of creatures on earth, mobile and immobile, and the mobile are superior. O king! This knowledge, which is the greatest of the great, is in the Vedas, in sankhya and in yoga. O Indra among men! Whatever is seen in the various Puranas can be found in sankhya. O king! Whatever is seen in the great accounts of history, in the sacred texts about artha, as prescribed by the virtuous, and all the knowledge that exists in the world, can be found in sankhya. It is the greatest of the great. O king! Tranquility, supreme strength, the subtle knowledge that has been spoken about, subtle austerities and happiness can be found in sankhya. O Partha! Even when they suffer, the practitioners of sankhya always go to the gods and enjoy happiness there. Having followed it and having become successful in their objectives, in cases of a downfall,[784] they become brahmanas and ascetics. O Partha! Those who practise sankhya give up their bodies, join the residents of heaven in the firmament and find emancipation. O lord of the earth! The excellent knowledge of sankhya is the best and is revered by all virtuous brahmanas. O king! If a brahmana knows about this and is devoted to this knowledge, he is not seen to be born as inferior species, or reach the abodes that are meant for the perpetrators of wicked deeds. O king! Sankhya is large, supreme and ancient. It is like a giant, sparkling, infinite and generous ocean. A great-souled person who follows all of sankhya sustains the immeasurable Narayana. O god among men! I have now told you the truth about the ancient Narayana, who is everywhere in the universe. At the time of creation, he causes creation. He is the one who again withdraws at the time of destruction.”’

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‘Yudhishthira asked, “What is said to be without decay and something from which one does not return? What is said to be the one with decay and something from which one has to return? O slayer of enemies! I wish to know the difference between that which is without decay and that which is with decay. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I wish to realize the truth about this. Brahmanas who know about the Vedas speak of you as an ocean of knowledge. So do the immensely fortunate rishis and the great-souled ascetics. There are only a few days left for the sun in dakshinayana. When the illustrious sun turns, you will go to your supreme objective. When you have departed, where will we hear what is best for us? You have been like a lamp for the lineage of the Kurus and have always illuminated with your knowledge. O extender of the Kuru lineage! That is the reason I wish to hear the truth about this. O Indra among kings! I am not satisfied with hearing amrita like this."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, there is an ancient history, about a conversation between Vasishtha and Karala, of Janaka's lineage. Vasishtha, best among the rishis and with the resplendence of the sun, was seated. King Janaka asked him about the knowledge that was supremely beneficial. Maitravaruni[785] was seated. He was accomplished about the knowledge of supreme adhyatma and had determined the progress of adhyatma. In ancient times, King Karala, of Janaka's lineage, greeted him. Joining his hands in salutation, he asked the supreme of rishis in words that were articulated well, humble, sweet and devoid of arguments. 'O illustrious one! I wish to hear about the supreme and eternal brahman, on obtaining whom, learned ones do not return. What is that which decays, into which the universe is itself destroyed? What is said to be without decay, auspicious, beneficial and without any taint?'

'"Vasishtha said, 'O lord of the earth! Listen to how this universe is destroyed and about that which has not been destroyed earlier and will never be destroyed. Know that twelve thousand years constitute a yuga and four such, taken one thousand times, are said to make up a kalpa, one of Brahma's days.[786] O king! Understand that Brahma's night is of the same duration. When he is destroyed, Svayambhu Shambhu, the performer of infinite deeds, creates a great being, who is the first among creatures.[787] This has form, though he[788] is without form. This is Ishana and he is resplendent and without decay. Anima and laghima are in him.[789] The extremities of his hands and feet extend in all the directions. His eyes, head and mouth are everywhere. His ears are everywhere in the world and he is stationed, enveloping everything. This illustrious Hiranyagarbha[790] is said to be intelligence. In the texts of yoga, he is known as Mahat and Virincha. He is addressed by many different names in the sacred texts of sankhya. He has many different forms and he is the soul of the universe. He is known as Ekakshara.[791] The three worlds have been created by him and he pervades everything with his atman. He is also known as Bahurupa and Vishvarupa.[792] Through transformations, he creates himself from his own atman. The immensely energetic one creates consciousness[793] and Prajapati is created from that consciousness. The manifest[794] is created from the unmanifest and this is said to be the creation of knowledge. Mahat and Ahamkara also represent the creation of ignorance. Those who have thought about, and know the purport of the sacred texts, have said that knowledge and ignorance came about through these contrivances.[795] O king! Know that the elements are created from consciousness as the third.[796] Know that transformations lead to a fourth kind, ego in creatures and wind, light, space, water and earth and their attributes of sound, touch, form, taste and scent. There is no doubt that the ten categories were created in this way. O Indra among kings! Know that there is a fifth kind of creation that resulted from the elements—the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, the nose as the fifth, speech, the two hands, the two feet, the anus and the genitals. These are the senses of knowledge and the organs of action. O king! They were created at the same time as the mind. It is the truth that these twenty-four exist in all creatures.[797] A brahmana who knows and has seen the truth about this does not sorrow. These are said to be in the bodies of everything in the three worlds. O best among men! Know that they exist in gods, men, danavas, yakshas, demons, gandharvas, kinnaras, giant serpents, charanas, pishachas, devarshis, travellers in the night,[798] gnats, insects, mosquitoes, filthy worms, rats, dogs, *svapacha*s, *vaineya*s,[799] chandalas, *pulkasa*s, elephants, horses, mules, tigers, trees and cattle. These manifestations are seen in everything that has form, in the water, on earth and in the sky. We have heard that it has been determined that these are the only regions where those with bodies exist. O son![800] Everything that has the sign of manifestation is destroyed. It has been said that, from one day to another, all creatures are destroyed. It has been said there is Akshara and there is the universe, which is destroyed. The universe has signs of the manifest and the unmanifest, but is enveloped in illusion. Mahat, the one who was created first, is also always referred to as an example of one who is destroyed. O great king! I have told you what you asked me. However, there is also a twenty-fifth. This is Vishnu. He is the truth and his manifestations are the truth. The learned ones have said that it is true that he is the refuge of all truth. Everything that is manifest and has form is based on that which has no form. Those twenty-four are manifest. However, the twenty-fifth has no form. He is in the heart of all beings and his form is established in his own atman. Consciousness and lack of consciousness always exist in all bodies that have form. They follow the characteristics of creation and destruction, but he[801] is without creation and without destruction. Although he is without qualities, he can always be perceived and is the one who invests qualities. Those who know about creation and destruction have said that this is the way that the intelligent Mahat acts, having united with Prakriti. In that womb, he is united with tamas, sattva and rajas. He dwells in the atmans of creatures and does not think that there is anything else. Though he possesses knowledge, because of loss of memory, he is conveyed into ignorance. Restrained by the qualities, he says, "I am this," or "I am that." Having been enveloped by the darkness of tamas, he is overcome by sentiments of ignorance. In that way, rajas and sattva lead to the sentiments of rajas and sattva. There are the three complexions of white, red and black.[802] Know that prakriti gets associated with these three complexions. Tamas conveys to hell and rajas to the status of humanity. With sattva, one enjoys happiness and goes to the world of the gods. If one is helpless and indulges in wicked deeds, one obtains birth as inferior species. Men have both good and wicked deeds, gods have good ones only. The learned ones have spoken about these objects as those that are destructible. But it is the twenty-fifth that those with knowledge follow.'"'

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''Vasishtha said, 'Because of forgetfulness, he[803] follows ignorance and has to go through thousands of lives in bodies. Depending on the qualities and the strengths of those qualities, he is born thousands of times as inferior species, and sometimes, also as gods. From the status of humanity, he goes to heaven. From heaven, he obtains the status of humanity. From humanity, for an infinitely long time, he sinks into hell. This is like an insect weaving a sheath around itself,[804] using thread as strands. In that way, the qualities are always like threads woven around the atman. Though he should be beyond opposite sentiments, it is thus that creatures succumb to opposite sentiments. Because of this headaches, eye diseases, toothaches, throat problems, dropsy, haemorrhoid, diseases like enlargement of glands, cholera, white leprosy, leprosy, *agnidaha*,[805] *sidhma*,[806] epilepsy and many other kinds of opposites are naturally seen in bodies. He sees himself to be afflicted by these and other ailments. Because of arrogance, he thinks that he enjoys the fruits of good deeds. He attires himself in a single garment or in torn garments.[807] He always lies down in inferior places. He lies down like a frog, or seats himself in virasana.[808] He clothes himself in rags and lies down under the sky. Or he lies down on bricks and stones, or thorns and stones. He lies down on ashes or bare stones. Or he smears himself and lies down on the ground. He sleeps in places meant for heroes, in mud and on stakes. Searching for many kinds of fruits, he futilely uses these different kinds of beds. He attires himself in girdles of munja grass or is naked. Or he wears silk and the skin of black antelopes. He attires himself in hemp or hair, or is dressed in tiger skin, lion skin, woven silk, those woven by insects and torn rags. Dressed in many other kinds of attire, he thinks himself to be intelligent. There are many kinds of food and many kinds of ornaments. He sometimes wears a single piece of cloth and eats only once a day. Alternatively, he eats at every fourth hour or every sixth hour, or once every six days or eight days. He eats once every seven days, or once every twelve days. He fasts for a month, or eats only roots and fruits. He subsists on air or water, or only eats oilcakes. He drinks only cow's urine, or vegetables and flowers. He eats moss and only drinks water from the palm of the hand. He subsists on leaves that have fallen down, or fruit that has fallen down. In a desire for happiness, he undergoes many other kinds of hardship. There are many types and many kinds of chandrayana.[809] There are the modes of the four ashramas. One can follow those ashramas, or deviate from those ashramas. Resorting to mountainous caverns, the good and the wicked practise them. They are solitary under the shades of mountains, or near fountains. There are many different kinds of meditation and diverse kinds of vows. There are colourful rituals and many kinds of austerities. There are different kinds of sacrifices and diverse ordinances. There are many kinds of donations for merchants, brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras, decreed for the miserable, the blind and the helpless. Instigated by the three qualities, he is full of ignorance. He pursues sattva, rajas and tamas and dharma, artha and kama. With Prakriti influencing the atman, he engages in all these. He performs rites, to the words of svadha, vashat and svaha. He officiates at sacrifices, teaches, gives donations, receives, performs sacrifices, studies and does many other things. For birth, death, disputes, causing death and everything connected with the good and the bad, it has been said that there is the path of rituals. But it is the goddess Prakriti who actually does everything. At the time of the great destruction, at the end of the day,[810] all those qualities are withdrawn, like the sun withdrawing its net of rays at the time of setting. In this way, she[811] can be thought of, as repeatedly sporting with everything. Depending on the atman, there are many kinds of qualities that bring pleasure to the heart. But this is the way, the originator of creation and destruction works. There are rituals along the path of rituals. Those who are attached to the three qualities follow those three qualities. Driven by those, a person follows rituals along a path of rituals. He[812] has a sense of ownership and it is that sense of ownership that binds him down. O lord of men! It is because of ignorance that he thinks that all these can be transcended through good deeds. "These objects of pleasure will be enjoyed by me. I will enjoy the fruits of good and bad deeds in the world and then go to the world of the gods. It is my task to ensure happiness and through these good deeds, happiness will be mine. I will obtain happiness till the end of this life and also ensure it when I am born and born again. But because of what I do, till the end of my life, I may also confront misery. There is great misery for humans and the prospect of submerging in hell. From hell, it will take a long period of time before I become human again. From humanity, I may obtain divinity. From divinity, I may again obtain humanity. From humanity, I may also progressively have to descend into hell." Those who always think in this way are those whose atmans are covered by the qualities and therefore, it is as if they are without an atman. From that state of divinity or humanity, they obtain hell. They are enveloped by a sense of ownership and always circle around there. At the end of death, they have to go through millions of births. If a person acts in this way, with a desire for good and bad fruits in mind, he obtains the fruit of having to assume a body in the three worlds. But it is actually Prakriti who enjoys that desire in the three worlds. Inferior species, humanity and the world of the gods—all those three regions should be known as belonging to Prakriti. Prakriti has no attributes. But she is said to possess attributes in this world. In that way, Purusha is also thought of as possessing attributes. Prakriti is without attributes or taints, but she enters inside something[813] that possesses attributes. Therefore, one thinks that she is established in those attributes and undertakes action. The ear and the other senses, the five organs of action and speech and the others unite with the qualities and become engaged. Because of the senses, he thinks, "I am the one who is acting." He[814] is actually devoid of the senses. He is without attributes. But he thinks that he is with attributes. He is beyond signs, but thinks himself to have signs. He is beyond time, but thinks himself to be subject to time. He is beyond understanding, but thinks himself to be understanding. He is beyond truth, but thinks himself to be truth. He is immortal, but thinks himself to be mortal. He is motionless, but thinks himself to possess motion. He is without a field,[815] but thinks himself to possess a field. He is beyond creation, but thinks himself to be created. He is beyond austerities, but thinks himself to be made up of austerities. He is beyond all objectives, but thinks himself to possess an objective. He is beyond sentiments, but thinks himself to possess sentiments. He is beyond fear, but finds himself to be touched by fear. He is beyond decay. But because of ignorance, he thinks himself to be subject to decay.'"'

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"'Vasishtha said, 'Thus, because of his ignorance and because of association with those who are ignorant, he faces downfall and goes through millions of births. He goes through thousands of abodes, but each of those ends in death. He is born as inferior species, as human, or in the world of the gods. Like the encasement of the moon, he waxes and wanes thousands of times. It is known that the moon always has kalas.[816] Fifteen of these increase and decrease, but the sixteenth is always there. That is the way with the atman too, with abodes increasing and decreasing. But like the moon, the sixteenth is always subtle and sustained.[817] It is not united with anything. Nor is it used up in the course of anything that happens. O supreme among kings! These[818] are the ones which are destroyed and take birth again. These are seen as Prakriti and their destruction is said to be emancipation. The sixteenth kala in the body is not manifest. But because of the sense of ownership, it circles around. One is ignorant about the twenty-fifth[819] that is there in the atman. It is sparkling and pure and is fanned by an auspicious breeze. O king! Though the atman is pure, because of the taint, it is rendered impure. Though one knows, one serves ignorance and roams around, like an ignorant person. O supreme among kings! That is the one who should be known. However, because of serving the three qualities of Prakriti, one is rendered ordinary.'

'"Karalajanaka said, 'O illustrious one! It is said that the relationship between that which is not destroyed and that which is destroyed is like the relationship between a woman and a man. Without a man, a woman can never conceive. Without a woman, a man can also not create a form.[820] They have a relationship with each other and depend on the qualities of each other. That is the way forms are created among all kinds of beings. For the sake of desire, they have intercourse with each other at the right season and resort to each other's qualities. That is the way forms result. Let me tell you about these signs. There are qualities for a man and there are qualities for a mother. O brahmana! We know that bones, sinews and marrow come from the father. We have heard that skin, flesh and blood comes from the mother. O best among brahmanas! This is what has been laid down in the sacred texts of the Vedas. Since it has been laid down in the Vedas and in the sacred texts, it can be taken as proof. The proofs of the Vedas and the sacred texts represent eternal proof. This is the eternal relationship between Prakriti and Purusha. O illustrious one! But I cannot see any signs about the dharma of emancipation. I can see no signs of this inside me. Therefore, if there is anything evident about the truth, please tell me about it. I desire emancipation. I desire that which grants freedom from fear. It[821] is without a body. It is without decay. It is divine and is beyond the senses. It is the ultimate lord.'

'"Vasishtha replied, 'What you have said about the proofs of the Vedas and the sacred texts is indeed true and you have accepted them. O lord of men! O one who knows about the truth! But though you have accepted both those types of books, the Vedas and the sacred texts, you have not grasped the truth that is there in those two sets of books. If a person is eager to accept books like the Vedas and the sacred texts, but does not know the truth about the purport of those books, his acceptance is fruitless. A person who does not understand the purport of those books only bears a burden. If a person does not understand the truth about the purport of a book, his study of that book is fruitless. If a person is asked about the purport of a book, he should explain what he has grasped by studying the truth carefully. If a person is gross in his intelligence and cannot explain the meaning of a book in an assembly, it is evident that his knowledge is limited and he cannot speak about its meaning. A person whose soul is imperfect cannot speak about the truth. He is laughed at. This is also true of those who know about the atman. O Indra among kings! Therefore, listen to what has been instructed by the great-souled ones who know about sankhya and yoga. What is seen by those who practise yoga is exactly that which is followed by those who practise sankhya. A person who sees that sankhya and yoga are identical is intelligent. O son! Skin, flesh, fat, bile, marrow and sinews—these belong to the senses and you have spoken to me about them. Objects result from objects and senses from the senses. Like seeds from seeds, bodies originate from bodies. The atman is beyond senses, without seed and without objects. How can that great-souled one, who possesses no qualities, give rise to qualities? Qualities result from qualities and are destroyed. They are born from Prakriti and do not exist otherwise. Skin, flesh, blood, fat, bile, marrow, bones and sinews—know that these eight are created from the seed and Prakriti. Male and non-male—these three[822] genders are said to result from Prakriti. Those that are not male are said to be non-male genders. Prakriti has no gender. But her offspring obtain gender and form. For example, flowers and fruit have form, though they result from what is formless. It is inferred that gender is obtained in this way. O son! It is the twenty-fifth one who determines the gender of the atman. He is without beginning and without end. He is infinite. He sees everything. He is without disease. It is because of ego that qualities are said to result from qualities. Qualities can result in qualities. How can qualities result from one who possesses no qualities? People who have insight about qualities know this. That is the reason all those qualities are seen to originate with Prakriti. A person who goes beyond the qualities, sees the supreme. All those who are intelligent in the schools of sankhya and yoga speak about the supreme. Those immensely wise ones are intelligent and have abandoned ignorance. Those who are ignorant speak of a manifest Ishvara who possesses qualities. Ishvara is always established as someone who is devoid of qualities. Those who are accomplished in sankhya and yoga understand about the supreme. They know about a twenty-fifth who is beyond Prakriti's qualities. Those who know about the unmanifest can overcome the fear of birth. Those who know go there, just as the intelligent ones do.[823] O scorcher of enemies! These are the indications that have been properly instructed, though the paths of those who are intelligent and those who know are separate. They respectively speak about the signs of what is destroyed and what is not destroyed. There is a single one who is not destroyed and everything else is said to be subject to destruction. When a person has studied the twenty-five attributes properly, he realizes that all philosophy leads to the single one and many kinds of philosophy are irrelevant. There is a truth that is over and above individual indications. In the twenty-five categories that are created, the learned speak of this as the truth. The supreme truth is said to be what is beyond the twenty-five. There are categories and there is conduct according to the categories. While this is true, the eternal truth is above this.'"'

Chapter 1622(294)

'"Karalajanaka asked, 'O supreme among rishis! You have spoken about the characteristics of the many and the one.[824] But I still detect some doubt about the signs of the two. O unblemished one! This is comprehended by both those who are knowledgable and those who are ignorant.[825] However, because my intelligence is gross, I still have some doubt about the truth of this. You have spoken about the causes behind that which is destructible and that which is not destructible. O unblemished one! However, because my intelligence is fickle, I have forgotten about all of that. That is the reason I wish to know how one can be seen in many. How does a knowledgable or ignorant person comprehend the truth about this? O illustrious one! Tell me, completely and separately, what sankhya and yoga say on knowledge and ignorance and on the indestructible and the destructible?'

'"Vasishtha replied, 'I will tell you what you have asked me about. O great king! Hear separately from me about the practice of yoga. For yogis who practice yoga, meditation is the supreme strength. Those who know about the Vedas say that there are two kinds of meditation—concentration of the mind and pranayama. Pranayama possesses qualities, while concentration of the mind is without qualities.[826] O lord of men! With the exception of three times—passing urine, releasing excrement and eating—at all other times, the mind should be devoted to the supreme. A sage uses his mind to withdraw from the senses and the objects of the senses and should engage in the twenty-two and the supreme twenty-four.[827] The intelligent person uses these to direct the atman. Learned ones have said that this is the undecaying entity that resides in the body. It has been instructed that the atman must always be known. It has been determined that this is for someone whose mind has been delinked from objects and not for others. He must be free from all attachments. He must be restrained in diet and conquer the senses. During the early and later part of the night, the mind must be fixed on the atman. O lord of Mithila! All the senses must be stilled by the mind. The mind must be stilled with intelligence. Having done this, one should be as motionless as stone. He must be as motionless as a pillar. Like a mountain, he must not move. When learned ones, who know about the techniques, are like this, they are said to be united in yoga. He does not hear. He does not inhale. He does not taste. He does not see. He does not know any touch and there is no resolution in his mind. He does not pay attention to anything, or understand anything. He is like a piece of wood. The learned say that such a person is then united with Prakriti. One is seen to blaze like a lamp in a place where there is no wind. He does not move and is immobile. Such a person ascends upwards and doesn't descend into inferior species. Then he sees what is to be seen. Having seen, he does not speak. People like us say that the heart of the knower and what is to be known, the atman, have become one. He is like a smokeless fire with the seven flames.[828] He is like the sun with its rays. He is like the fiery lightning in the sky. He sees the atman in his own self. Great-souled and intelligent and learned brahmanas see it in this way. This is the brahman, who has not been born. This is immortality that exists in the atman. It is said that this is more subtle than what is most subtle and greater than what is greatest. Though it is inside all beings, it is certain that it cannot be seen. The creator of the world can be seen through the wealth of intelligence and the lamp of the mind. It is the greatness that is beyond darkness. It is located beyond darkness. Those who know about the truth of the Vedas say that it is the dispeller of darkness. It is sparkling. It is beyond darkness. It is without attributes. It has the characteristic of being without traits. Yogis say that this is yoga. I think that these are the signs of yoga. This is the way they see the supreme and undecaying one in their own atmans. I have thus told you the truth about the philosophy of yoga.

'"'I will now tell you about the knowledge of sankhya, where one progressively destroys the errors. Those who know about Prakriti say that the unmanifest Prakriti is the supreme. O supreme among kings! From this, the second entity, known as Mahat, is generated. We have heard that the third entity, consciousness, results from Mahat. Those who have the insight of sankhya say that the five elements are created from consciousness. These eight are Prakriti.[829] There are sixteen transformations of these. In particular, there are the five senses and the five organs of action.[830] Learned ones who know about sankhya say that this is the truth. They know about the ordinances of sankhya and are always established along the path of sankhya. Whatever is generated from the cause, is also destroyed within it. As they have been created from inside that atman, they are destroyed in reverse order. They are created in the proper order, but are destroyed in the reverse order.[831] O supreme among kings! The qualities are always like waves in an ocean. This is the way the creation and destruction of Prakriti also take place. When there is destruction, the single one[832] alone remains and many are subsequently created from it. O Indra among kings! This is what has been determined by those who have reflected on it. It is evident that the presider[833] is not manifest. It is both one and many and so is the case with Prakriti. There is a single one at the time of destruction and many at the time of creation. Prakriti generates from its womb and the atman makes it many.[834] The great-souled one is established over the twenty-five that constitute the field.[835] O Indra among kings! That is the reason the best among ascetics say that it[836] is the presider. We have heard that it is the presider and it presides over the field.[837] Because it knows the kshetra, the umanifest one is known as kshetrajna. Since the unmanifest one lay down in earlier times, it is known as Purusha.[838] Those that are known as kshetra and kshetrajna are distinct. While kshetra is also not manifest, it becomes discernible because of the twenty-fifth. Knowledge and the object of knowledge are said to be distinct. Knowledge is not manifest, but becomes known because of the twenty-fifth. The kshetra is not manifest and neither are intelligence and Ishvara. The lack of Ishvara isn’t truth. Truth is known because of the twenty-fifth. These are the principles of sankhya philosophy. Those who believe in the philosophy of sankhya say that, in accordance with sankhya, it is Prakriti that acts. They enumerate and ascertain the truth about the twenty-four elements. Those who believe in sankhya talk about Prakriti and the twenty-fifth, which is devoid of qualities. It is said that if a person has got to know the twenty-fifth, he is the one who knows. A person who knows this realizes that it is the atman alone that exists. I have properly spoken to you about the true nature of sankhya philosophy. A person who knows this obtains tranquility. Prakriti is manifest to such a person, as something that is directly seen. It is the one with qualities and there is also the entity without qualities. When they no longer exist,[839] they do not have to return again. They obtain sentiments that are without decay and also obtain the supreme and unmanifest one. But there are also those who do not see properly and do not see everything as one. O destroyer of enemies! They do not reach the unmanifest and have to return again and again. They have not understood everything and have not comprehended. They are born in manifest forms and are under the subjugation of the manifest. Everything that is manifest results from the unmanifest and the twenty-fifth. A person who knows this does not suffer from any fear.’”’

Chapter 1623(295)

‘“Vasishtha said, ‘O supreme among kings! I have spoken to you about the philosophy of sankhya. Now listen to me as I describe knowledge and ignorance to you progressively. The manifest, which is subject to the rule of creation and destruction, is said to be ignorance. The twenty-fifth, freed from creation and destruction, is knowledge. Listen to what has, in due course, been described as knowledge. O son! Rishis who have the sight of sankhya have laid this down. Among the senses and the organs of action, the senses are said to represent knowledge. Among the senses, we have heard that intelligence is superior. The learned ones have said that the mind is superior to the senses and represents knowledge. Compared to the mind, the five elements are said to represent knowledge. There is no doubt that consciousness is superior to the five elements. O lord of men! Compared to consciousness, understanding represents knowledge. Compared to understanding, the unmanifest Prakriti, expressive of the truth about the supreme lord, is superior. O best among men! Among the different kinds of knowledge that are to be known, the ordinances are said to be the supreme. The unmanifest and twenty-fifth is said to be the supreme form of knowledge. O king! Among everything that can be known, this is said to be the supreme kind of knowledge. The twenty-fifth is the object of knowledge and knowledge about this is said to be unmanifest. A person who knows about the twenty-fifth knows about what is unmanifest. I have told you the difference between knowledge and ignorance. I will now tell you what has been said about the destructible and the indestructible. Listen. Both[840] have been said to be destructible and perishable. I will tell you truthfully the reasons that have been cited in support of this. There is the view that both are imperishable and both are without a beginning and without an end. Those who have thought about knowledge have said that both are truly nothing but principles. Though it leads to the principles of creation and destruction, the unmanifest[841] is said to be indestructible. It is through its qualities that it repeatedly creates. Mahat and the other qualities are respectively generated. It is said to be the truth that the twenty-fifth presides over the field. The unmanifest that is the twenty-fifth withdraws the net of qualities and the qualities merge into it. The qualities merge into its quality and the single one that remains is Prakriti. O son! Kshetrajna then merges into kshetra.[842] Prakriti, characterized by its qualities, then goes towards destruction. O king of Videha! With the qualities withdrawn, it no longer possesses any qualities. In this way, kshetrajna's knowledge of kshetra is also destroyed. We have heard that Prakriti is then devoid of qualities. The one with qualities then becomes destructible. He[843] realizes that just like himself, Prakriti is devoid of qualities. Discarding Prakriti, he then becomes pure. The intelligent one realizes himself to be distinct.[844] O Indra among kings! When he gives up that combination, he exists separately and Prakriti is also seen to be distinct from that combination. When he no longer desires Prakriti and that net of qualities, he can behold the supreme.

'"'Having seen the supreme, he is free from all anxiety. "What have I done? I have been like a person overtaken by destiny. Because of my ignorance, I have been like a fish entangled in a net. Because of my delusion, I have moved from one body to another body. My conduct has been like that of an ignorant fish, moving from one body of water to another body of water and thinking in its ignorance that the water is everything. In that fashion, because of my ignorance, I have not known my own atman. Shame on my ignorance that I have been repeatedly submerged thus. Because of my confusion, I have followed the course from one body to another body. This[845] is alone my friend and my emancipation is with it. I am capable of being united with it. I am just as it is. I see myself as equal to it. I am like it. It is without blemish. It is evident that I am just like it. I have been ignorant and deluded. Because of ignorance and delusion, I have been properly entangled. Though without attachments, I have spent a long period of time being attached. For a long period of time, I have been controlled by others, but did not realize it. There are different kinds of states—high, medium and low.[846] How can I be like that? How can I dwell with her[847] as an equal? Because of my ignorance, I went to her earlier. I will still myself now. I will not dwell with her and be deceived for a long period of time. I am without transformations. However, I have been deceived by the one who possesses transformations.[848] That is not her crime. It is my crime. It is because of my sentiments that I became attached and withdrew from what had presented itself.[849] That is the reason I assumed many forms and moved from one body to another body. Despite being one without a body, I have assumed the form of a body and have been assailed, because of that sense of ownership. Prakriti has accordingly conveyed me into those wombs. I am without a form. Thanks to the sense of ownership, what acts have I performed in those forms? She is in those wombs and destroys sense and consciousness. I do not possess any sense of ownership. But goaded by ego, I have performed acts. She divided my atman into many parts and repeatedly engaged me. However, now. I have no sense of ownership and no ego. I have acted so as to discard the sense of ownership and have always removed a sense of ego from myself. Having escaped from all that, I have resorted to what is beneficial. I will go to that tranquility and not unite with what is without consciousness. That kind of union is beneficial. I have no similarity with her." He thus realizes the supreme relationship with the twenty-fifth. He abandons what is destructible and not beneficial and is conveyed to the indestructible. This is unmanifest. But because of the nature of becoming manifest, one without qualities is vested with qualities. O one from Mithila! Having seen the original one who is without qualities, he becomes like it. I have spoken to you about the indications of what is indestructible and destructible, according to the knowledge that I have obtained and according to what the sacred texts have instructed. I will now again tell you about what I have heard. This is knowledge that is sparkling, without any doubt, and subtle. I have told you what the sacred texts of sankhya and yoga instruct. This has been stated in the sacred texts of sankhya and the philosophy of yoga. O lord of the forests! The knowledge of sankhya can awake people and for the welfare of disciples, this has been clearly enunciated. Accomplished people say that those sacred texts are extensive. The yogis also accept these sacred texts. O lord of men! Those who follow sankhya do not see the truth about a supreme twenty-fifth. What they regard as supreme has already been described.[850] Those who cite indications from yoga talk about the truth of awakening, knowledge, that which is to be known and the one who knows.'"'[851]

Chapter 1624(296)

''Vasishtha said, 'Hear about awakening and the unmanifest one, from whom all qualities are created. He sustains these qualities and creates and withdraws them. O lord of men! For the sake of sport, he[852] divides his own self into many parts and collects them again. The one who can understand this action[853] does not understand. Because he is capable of understanding the one who is not manifest, he is spoken of as *budhyamana*.[854] Nevertheless, he cannot understand the one who is not manifest, whether it is with qualities or without qualities. Therefore, rare is the case when he is awakened. The learned texts have said that whenever budhyamana gets to know the unmanifest and twenty-fifth one, he becomes united with it. That is the reason the one who is not manifest is spoken of as ignorant.[855] Budhyamana is spoken of as being both unmanifest and ignorant. Nothing with life can comprehend the great-souled and twenty-fifth. The twenty-sixth is sparkling, immeasurable and eternal and it can understand.[856] It can always understand the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth. The immensely radiant one[857] follows her nature, vis-a-vis both what is seen and is not seen. O son! Those who truly understand can not only see the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth, but also the unmanifest brahman. When a person knows the atman, he thinks himself to be it.[858] He uses that sight to look at prakriti and the unmanifest. With that pure and unsullied knowledge, he comprehends the supreme. O tiger among kings! He is then established in knowledge about the twenty-sixth. He then casts aside the unmanifest,[859] which is subject to the rules of creation and destruction. Though because of consciousness, prakriti is invested with qualities, he knows the one without qualities. Having seen the unmanifest, he is only full of dharma. Having approached the whole, he is freed and obtains the atman. This is said to have form and also not have form.[860] It is immortal and without decay. O one who grants honours! Though it resorts to what has form, it has no form. The learned ones talk about twenty five principles. O son! But the intelligent one[861] has no form and is beyond these principles. The swift freeing from principles is a sign of intelligence. A wise person knows himself to be the twenty-sixth and accepts himself to be the immortal one, without decay. Through the strength of the absolute, he has no doubt that he is identical to it.[862] However, though awakened by the intelligent twenty-sixth, there is still ignorance. The sacred texts of sankhya have spoken about the signs of this. When one is united with consciousness and the twenty-fifth,[863] because of that consciousness, one does not comprehend the sense of unity. O lord of Mithila! O lord of men! Because of the rules of attachment, one is not awakened. However, when one is awakened and loses attachment, one realizes unity. Without any sense of attachment, a learned person approaches the twenty-sixth. Abandoning the unmanifest,[864] he obtains powers and comprehends the truth. With knowledge about the twenty-sixth awakened, he realizes that the twenty four are valueless. As indicated in the sacred texts of sankhya, I have spoken to you about the true nature of knowledge. It is with the sight of the sacred texts that one must consider the many and the one. One must understand the difference between the gnat and the fig,[865] the fish and the water and this and that.[866] That is the one one must approach the one and the many. When one has knowledge about ignorance and the unmanifest, that is said to be emancipation. This twenty-fifth resides in bodies and is said to be freed through comprehension about the unmanifest. It has been determined that this is the only method for emancipation and there is no other. Because it[867] dwells in the body, it conveys the impression of being different. By uniting with purity, one becomes pure. By uniting with intelligence, one becomes intelligent. O bull among men! By uniting with the dharma of emancipation, one becomes emancipated. By following the dharma of becoming engaged in this way, the atman becomes engaged. By striving for emancipation, one unites with emancipation. By peforming pure deeds, one becomes pure and resplendent. By uniting with the unblemished atman, one's own atman becomes unblemished.[868] By uniting with the absolute, one obtains the absolute in one's atman. By uniting with the one who is free, one uses that freedom to obtain freedom.

'"'O great king! I have told you the truth. I have accurately described the exact truth to you. This is about the eternal, pure and original brahman, and accept the purport of this. O king! You can pass on this supreme knowledge to a person who does not follow the Vedas, as long as that person is free of malice. But he must seek this knowledge, which leads to an awakening. As long as he bows down and follows instructions, you can pass this on, for the sake of his awakening. However, it should not be passed on to a person who has falsehood in his soul, or is deceitful, impotent or fraudulent in his intelligence. Nor must the knowledge be given to learned men who are jealous. Listen to the ones to whom it can be given. A person who is faithful, possesses qualities, one who always abstains from censuring others, one who performs pure yoga for the sake of knowledge, a forgiving person who performs rites for the sake of welfare, one who can discriminate about good conduct, a person who loves the rituals, one who is extremely learned and does not engage in quarrels, one who is knowledgable and forgives those who cause injury, one who possesses strength and self-control—these are the people to whom it can be given. It is said that this pure and supreme knowledge of the brahman should not be given to those who are devoid of these qualities. Those who know about dharma have said that no benefits or fruits accrue from giving it to undeserving people. If a person does not observe the vows, it should not be given to him, even if one obtains the earth, full of riches, in exchange. O Indra among men! But there is no doubt that this supreme knowledge can be communicated to a person who has conquered his senses. O Karala! Having heard about the supreme brahman now, you should not have the slightest reason for fear. I have spoken about the pure and the supreme, the dispeller of sorrow, and without a beginning, a middle and an end. O king! This is deep and without birth and death. It is auspicious and free from disease and fear. Having seen it, abandon all your delusion now. Know that this is the true nature of knowledge. O lord of men! In ancient times, I gratified the eternal Hiranyagarbha and obtained it from him. I made efforts to please the one who is fierce in his energy. Having obtained knowledge about the supreme brahman, I have now passed it on to you. O Indra among men! Asked by you, I have now told you exactly what I learned. O Indra among men! This is what I obtained from Brahma. This is great knowledge, the ancient wisdom about emancipation.'"

'Bhishma said, "O great king! I have told you about the instructions of the supreme rishi. I have spoken to you about the twenty-fifth, the supreme brahman from whom one does not return. If one does not comprehend this supreme knowledge, one has to return again. But if one knows the truth, there is no decay and no death. O son! O king! I heard about this supreme and beneficial knowledge from the devarshi[869] and have recounted it to you. The great-souled Vasishtha obtained it from Hiranyagarbha. Narada obtained it from Vasishtha, tiger among rishis. I got to know about the great and eternal brahman from Narada. O Indra among Kouravas! Do not grieve. You have heard about this supreme objective. A person who knows about the destructible and the indestructible has no reason to fear. O lord of the earth! A person who does not know about it has reason to fear. Because of ignorance and being foolish in the soul, a person has to repeatedly return. After death, he is born thousands of times and dies again. He is sometimes born in the world of the gods, but is also born as inferior species. However, if he is purified over time, he can cross that ocean of ignorance. That ocean of ignorance is terrible. It is said to be unmanifest and fathomless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Day after day, beings are submerged in it. O lord of the earth! But you have crossed that eternal, unmanifest and fathomless ocean of ignorance. Therefore, you have been freed from rajas and from tamas."'

Chapter 1625(297)

'Bhishma said, "Once, Janaka's son was roaming around in a desolate forest. In the course of the hunt, he saw a brahmana rishi who was Bhrigu's descendant. Vasuman bowed his head down before the seated sage and also sat down. Having taken his permission, he then asked him a question. 'O illustrious one! What brings the greatest benefit, in this world and in the next, to a man who possesses a temporary body, but is overcome by desire?' Having been honoured and asked, the great-souled and great ascetic was gratified and spoke these beneficial words. 'If your mind desires what is positive in this world and in the next, then you must control your senses and restrain yourself from causing injury to beings. Dharma brings benefit to those who are virtuous. Dharma is the refuge of those who are virtuous. O son! It is from dharma that the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects, are generated. You wish for the taste of desire. Why have you not become satiated with these? O evil-minded one! You see the honey, but not the downfall.[870] A person who seeks the fruits of knowledge must pursue it. Like that, a person who seeks the fruits of dharma must pursue it. If a wicked person desires dharma, it will be extremely difficult for him to perform pure deeds. However, if a virtuous person desires dharma, it is extremely easy for him to perform those difficult deeds. If one dwells in the forest but pursues what would bring happiness in a village, then one is just like a villager. Similarly, if one dwells in a village but pursues what would bring happiness in the forest, then one is just like a forest dweller. Controlling yourself faithfully, observe dharma in thoughts, words and deeds. Examine the good and the bad aspects of attachment and detachment. Without any malice, always donate a lot to virtuous people who ask for it, but bearing the time and the place in mind and honouring them with vows and purification. One should earn through auspicious means and then give it away. When giving, one must discard anger and not be tormented at having given. Nor should one boast about it. Non-violent, pure, self-controlled, truthful in words, upright, pure in birth and deeds and learned in the Vedas—such a brahmana is a worthy recipient. He must have been born from a virtuous mother who has had only one husband. He must know about Rig, Sama and Yajur and must perform the six tasks.[871] Such a recipient is said to be a deserving one. If one does not consider the time and the place and performs the act of giving to an undeserving person, a man acts in a contrary way and dharma becomes adharma. A man can clean a little dirt on the body easily. More requires greater effort. In that way, much effort needs to be made to dispel great sin. After easing oneself, clarified butter is a good medication. In that way, once one has cleansed the sins and follows dharma, this brings happiness in the hereafter. There is good and evil in the minds of all beings. One must withdraw from the evil and use the good to cross. One must be attached to one's own dharma and desire that dharma. You do not possess patience. Cultivate patience. You do not possess intelligence. Cultivate intelligence. You do not possess tranquility. Cultivate tranquility. You do not possess wisdom. Cultivate wisdom. If one associates with the right people, one is capable of using one's energy to obtain what is beneficial in this world and in the next. Fortitude is the foundation for this. Because of lack of fortitude, rajarshi Mahabhisha fell down from heaven. Yayati obtained the worlds through his fortitude, but fell down when his merits were exhausted. Serve ascetics who are devoted to dharma and are learned. You will then obtain great intelligence and the welfare that you desire.' His[872] natural disposition was good and he heard the words spoken by the sage. He withdrew his mind from desire and turned his intelligence towards dharma."'

Chapter 1626(298)

"Yudhishthira said, "There is adharma. There is dharma, which brings emancipation and freedom from all foundations. It frees from birth and death and also frees from good and evil deeds. It is always auspicious and grants freedom from fear. It is always eternal and without decay. It is pure and always brings comfort. You should speak to me about this."

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is the ancient history of a conversation between Yajnavalkya and Janaka. Yajnavalkya was the best among rishis and was supreme among those who knew the answers to all questions. The immensely illustrious King Daivarati, from Janaka's lineage, asked him this question. 'O brahmana rishi! How many senses are there? How many kinds of prakriti are there said to be? What is the unmanifest and supreme brahman? What is superior to even that? What is creation and destruction? What is the measurement of time? O Indra among brahmanas! You should tell me about this. I desire to obtain your favours. You are a store of knowledge. I am ignorant and am asking you. On all these doubts, I wish to hear from you.' Yajnavalkya replied, 'O protector of the earth! Listen to what you have asked. This is the supreme knowledge of yoga and in particular, that of sankhya. None of this is unknown to you. Nevertheless, you have asked me. It is eternal dharma that one must answer when one has been asked. It is said that there are eight kinds of prakriti and sixteen kinds of transformations. Those who have thought about adhyatma have said that there are seven kinds of the manifest. There are the unmanifest, Mahat, ego, earth, wind, space, water and light as the eight.[873] These eight are known as prakriti. Listen to the transformations. These are the ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue, the nose as the fifth, sound, touch, form, taste, scent, speech, the two hands, the two feet, the anus and the penis.[874] O Indra among kings! O one from Mithila! Those that originate in the five great elements[875] are known as Vishesha and the senses of knowledge are known as Savishesha. Those who have thought about adhyatma say that the mind is the sixteenth. You, and other intelligent ones who know the truth, also hold the same view. O king! The Mahat atman is generated from the unmanifest. The learned say that this is the first and most important creation. O lord of men! Ego[876] is created from Mahat. Those who know about adhyatma say that this second creation is that of intelligence. The mind is generated from consciousness and this creates qualities in beings. This is said to be third creation, which results from consciousness. O lord of men! The five great elements are generated from the mind. I say that this fourth creation is from the mind. Those who know about the elements say that sound, touch, form, taste and scent are the fifth creation and concern the elements. The ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue and the nose as the fifth, are said to be sixth creation by those who have thought a lot about the atman. O lord of men! Those that are created after the ear and the other senses are said to be the seventh creation, concerning the senses.[877] O lord of men!

There are the flows that rise upwards and move diagonally and the learned know these as the eighth and straight creation.[878] O lord of men! There are also flows that move directly and diagonally downwards. The learned call these the ninth and straight creation. O lord of men! This is the truth about the nine different kinds of creation. The learned texts speak of these as possessing twenty-four signs. O great king! After this truth about the qualities, the great-souled ones have spoken about the measurement of time. Listen to this.'"'

Chapter 1627(299)

"'Yajnavalkya said, 'O best among men! I will tell you about the measurement of time for the unmanifest. Ten thousand kalpas make up a single day for him. O lord of men! His night is said to be of the same duration. When night is over, he awakes and first creates the herbs, which provide sustenance to all living beings. He then creates Brahma, who arises from the golden egg. It has been heard by us that his form is there in all[879] living beings. Having dwelt for one year inside the egg, the great sage Prajapati emerged and created the entire earth, heaven above it, and all that is below. O king! Those who have studied the Vedas know that the sky is between earth and heaven. The lord created the sky to lie between them. Those who are learned about the Vedas and the Vedangas say that the duration of his day is seven thousand and five hundred kalpas. Those who have thought about adhyatma say that his night is of an equal duration. From his divine self, he creates Mahat and consciousness. Before creating any other beings, the great rishi created four sons.[880] O supreme among kings! We have heard that these were the ancestors of the fathers. O best among men! We have heard that the gods, the ancestors, all those who surround the world of the gods and mobile and immobile objects were their sons. Parameshthi, the consciousness, then created the five elements—the earth, the wind, the sky, the water and the light, as the fifth. This consciousness, which led to the third creation, is said to have five thousand kalpas as his night and his day is said to possess an equal duration. O lord of the earth! Sound, touch, form, taste and scent, as the fifth, are known as Vishesha and adhere to the five great elements. Because they are enveloped by these, beings kill each other. They respect each other, but also rival each other. Overcome by those undecaying qualities, they slaughter each other. They whirl around in this world and are born as inferior species. O lord of men! Their[881] day is said to last for three thousand kalpas. Their night is of the same duration and this is also the case with the mind. O Indra among kings! Instigated by the senses, the mind circulates among all of them. The senses do not see anything. It is the mind that sees. The eye perceives form only when it is driven by the mind. The eye doesn't do this alone. When the mind is distracted, the eye may seem to see, but does not actually see. It is said that all the senses perceive. O king! But this is incorrect. When the mind does not act, the senses do not act either. The mind does not cease to act because the senses cease to act. The mind is the foremost and influences the senses. The mind is said to be the lord of all the senses. O immensely illustrious one! These penetrate all creatures.'"'

Chapter 1628(300)

'"Yajnavalkya said, 'I have enumerated the truth about the different types of creation and about the measurement of time. I have progressively described them. Now hear about destruction. Beings are repeatedly created and destroyed. The eternal and undecaying Brahma, without a beginning and without an end, does this. When his day is over and he realizes that it is night, he makes up his mind to sleep. The illustrious and unmanifest one urges the creation of a being from his consciousness and this manifests itself as a sun with a hundred thousand rays. It then divides itself into twelve suns that blaze like fire. O lord of men! With this energy, the four kinds of beings are swiftly consumed—those born from wombs, those born from eggs, those born from sweat[882] and herbs. In a short instant, all mobile and immobile objects are destroyed and, in every direction, the earth becomes as plain as the back of a tortoise. When everything in the universe has been destroyed with this great force, in every direction, it is filled up with the great force of water. At this, the fire of destruction dries up the water. O Indra among kings! When the water has been destroyed, a great fire begins to rage. An immeasurable and extremely powerful fire continues to blaze. The energy of those seven flames is infused with the heat from all creatures. But it is devoured by an extremely powerful wind that has its own inner strength. This courses upwards, downwards and diagonally. However, that extremely strong and terrible wind is devoured by space. But mind cheerfully and swiftly swallows up space. Consciousness, the Prajapati and the atman of everything, devours mind. Consciousness is devoured by the soul of Mahat, who knows about the past, the present and the future. The soul of the universe, Shambhu Prajapati, swallows up Mahat. This is the radiant and undecaying Ishana, with the properties of anima, laghima and prapti. His hands and feet extend in every direction. His eyes, head and face are everywhere. His ears are everywhere. He is established, enveloping all the worlds. He is in the heart of all creatures and his size is only that of a thumb. The infinite and great-souled lord of the universe devours everything. With everything swallowed, what is left is the immutable and the undecaying. This is the unblemished one, the creator of the past and the future of humans. O Indra among kings! I have thus described all this to you accurately. Now I will make you hear about adhyatma, *adbibbuta* and *adhidaiva*.'"'

Chapter 1629(301)

'"Yajnavalkya said, 'Brahmanas who have seen the truth speak of the two feet as adhyatma, the act of motion as adhibhuta and Vishnu as adhidaiva. Those who have seen the truth exactly say that the anus is adhyatma, the releasing is adhibhuta and Mitra is adhidaiva.[883] Those who know the indications of yoga say that the penis is adhyatma, its pleasure is adhibhuta and Prajapati is adhidaiva. Those who know the indications of sankhya say that the hands are adhyatma, tasks are adhibhuta and Indra is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts say that speech is adhyatma, what is spoken is adhibhuta and Agni is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts correctly say that the eyes are adhyatma, form is adhibhuta and Surya is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts correctly say that the ears are adhyatma, sound is adhibhuta and the directions are adhidaiva there. Those who know the truth correctly say that the tongue is adhyatma, taste is adhibhuta and water is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts correctly say that the nose is adhyatma, smell is adhibhuta and the earth is adhidaiva there. Those who are accomplished in their learning say that the skin is adhyatma, touch is adhibhuta and the wind is adhidaiva. Those who know the indications of the sacred texts say that the mind is adhyatma, the object of the mind is adhibhuta and the moon is adhidaiva. Those who know the true indications say that consciousness is adhyatma, pride is adhibhuta and Bhava is adhidaiva there. Those who know the indications of the Vedas correctly say that intelligence is adhyatma, what is understood is adhibhuta and the kshetrajna is adhidaiva. O king! O one who knows about the truth! I have thus described to you the power of the manifest and the truth about the beginning, the middle and the end. O great king! As if in sport and easily according to her desire, Prakriti brings about hundreds and thousands of transformations in her qualities. It is like a man lighting thousands of lamps from a single lamp. In that way, Prakriti creates many qualities in Purusha. Spirit, joy, prosperity, contentment, radiance, happiness, purity, lack of disease, satisfaction, devotion, generosity, lack of hatred, forgiveness, fortitude, lack of injury, equanimity, truthfulness, repayment of debts, mildness, humility, lack of fickleness, cleanliness, uprightness, observance of conduct, lack of passion, lack of fear in the heart, indifference at separation from good and bad things, lack of boasting about acts performed, receiving when given, lack of desire for riches, the welfare of others and compassion towards all beings—these are said to be the qualities of sattva. The qualities of rajas are manifested in quarrels over beauty and prosperity, lack of generosity, lack of compassion, the enjoyment of happiness and unhappiness, attachment towards speaking ill of others, fondness for disputes, insolence, thoughts that show no respect, the practice of enmity, repentance, seizing the property of others, lack of humility, lack of uprightness, strife, harshness, desire, anger, intoxication, pride, hatred and excessive speech. These are said to be the qualities of rajas. I will now tell you about the accumulations that tamas leads to—delusion, lack of radiance, darkness and darkness that makes one blind. Darkness is said to be anger and darkness that makes one blind is death. The signs of tamas are gluttony in eating, lack of satisfaction even though one has enough to eat and drink, attachment towards fragrances, garments, sporting, beds, seats, sleeping during the day, quarrels and distraction, taking pleasure in singing, music and dancing, ignorance, lack of faith and hatred of dharma. In particular, these are the qualities of tamas.’”’

Chapter 1630(302)

‘“Yajnavalkya said, ‘O supreme among men! These are the foremost signs of the three qualities. They always attach themselves to everything in the universe and are established there. He[884] divides himself into hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands and crores of different selves. Those who have thought about adhyatma say that sattva has a superior spot, rajas a medium one and tamas an inferior one. Through auspicious deeds alone, one heads towards an upwards destination. As a result of both good and wicked deeds, one becomes human. Through adharma, one obtains a destination that is downwards.[885] There is also the truth about what happens if two or three of the qualities are mixed. Sattva may exist with rajas or tamas. Listen to me. Sattva can be seen with rajas and rajas with tamas. Sattva can exist with tamas and sattva may exist with the unmanifest.[886] When sattva is united with the unmanifest, one obtains the world of the gods. When rajas is united with sattva, one becomes human. When rajas is united with tamas, one is born as inferior species. When rajas, tamas and sattva are united, one becomes human. It is said that learned ones obtain a region that is separated from both good deeds and wicked ones. It is eternal and immutable. It is without decay and there is no fear there. Learned ones obtain births in that best of places, without faults and without decay. They go beyond the senses. That does not lead to any generation and is beyond birth and death. O lord of men! You asked me about the supreme and the unmanifest.[887] He is established in his own nature. O lord of the earth! It is the view that he resides in Prakriti, without any consciousness. She can create and destroy only when she is presided over by him.’

‘“Janaka replied, ‘O great sage! Both of them are without beginning and without end. They are without form and without change. They are without blemish and without decay. O tiger among rishis! They cannot be comprehended. How can one of them be without consciousness? How can one have consciousness? Why is one called kshetrajna? O Indra among brahmanas! You are the one who has practised everything about the dharma of emancipation. It is my resolution that I wish to hear the truth about the dharma of emancipation, about the existence of the absolute and about non-existence, about the regions that creatures progressively go to and about their separation from those. With the progress of time, what regions do they obtain? O brahmana! Tell me this. Tell me the truth about the knowledge of sankhya and separately about yoga. O supreme one! You should also tell me the truth about misfortune. You know everything about these, like a myrobalan that is held in your hand.'"'

Chapter 1631(303)[888]

'"Yajnavalkya said, 'O son! O lord of the earth! One cannot describe something without qualities by ascribing qualities to it. I will tell you the truth about what possesses qualities and what doesn't have qualities. Listen to me. The great-souled sages who have seen the truth have spoken about the qualities obtained by the one with qualities and the qualities not obtained by the one without qualities. The unmanifest one[889] naturally has qualities and cannot surpass those qualities. Because she is united with those, she naturally lacks knowledge. The unmanifest Purusha is naturally the one who knows and always thinks, "There is nothing superior to me." It is because of this reason that this unmanifest one is without consciousness. He is always spoken of as indestructible. But it is also true that he combines with the destructible.[890] It is because of the repeated association with various categories of qualities that one becomes ignorant. When he does not know his own atman, he is spoken of as the manifest. When he assumes lordship over those principles,[891] he is said to follow the dharma of those attributes. Because he has lordship over wombs, he is said to follow the dharma of wombs. Because he has lordship over Prakriti, he is said to follow the dharma of Prakriti. Because he has lordship over seeds, he is said to follow the dharma of seeds. Because he is associated with birth, he observes the dharma of birth.[892] Because he has lordship over destruction, he follows the dharma of destruction. Because of association with Prakriti, he follows creation and destruction. This is despite the absolute knowing that he is indifferent and distinct. Ascetics who are pure, devoid of anxiety and knowledgeable about adhyatma, think of him in this way. We have heard of him as permanent and unmanifest, but also as unstable.[893] However, those who depend only on knowledge and are compassionate towards all beings say that the unmanifest is one and Purusha is many.[894] There are others who hold that the unmanifest Purusha, even though apparently unstable, has all the signs of stability. He is distinct, just as a blade of grass is different from its sheath. The gnat that is inside a fig should be known of as distinct. Despite being associated with the fig, the gnat doesn't get attached to it. The fish is said to be different from the water it is in. Though the fish is touched by the water, it isn't in any way attached to it. The fire in a boiler is always known to be distinct. Though the fire touches the boiler, it isn't attached to it. A lotus is said to be different from the water. Though it touches the water, the lotus isn't attached to it. In this way, there is always separation, even when one dwells together. This can never be understood by people who are always ordinary. Those who cannot see it in this way, do not see properly. It is evident that they will repeatedly be submerged in a terrible hell. I have enumerated the supreme philosophy of sankhya. Enumerating it in this way, those who follow sankhya obtain the absolute. I have also told you about the others who are accomplished and know the truth about the manifestations. I will now tell you about the philosophy of yoga.'"'

Chapter 1632(304)

''Yajnavalkya said, 'I have already spoken to you about the knowledge of sankhya. Now hear about the knowledge of yoga. O supreme among kings! This is the truth about what I have learnt and what I have seen. There is no knowledge that is equal to sankhya. There is no strength that is equal to yoga. They prescribe similar practices and both are said to lead to prosperity. However, men who possess limited intelligence perceive them as distinct. O king! We see them as identical and have arrived at this determination. Whatever is seen through yoga is exactly the same as whatever is seen through sankhya. A person who sees yoga and sankhya as identical actually sees the truth. O scorcher of enemies! Know that restraining the breath[895] is the foremost and supreme aspect of yoga. Through this, they wander around in the ten directions in their bodies.[896] O son! O unblemished one! When the body is destroyed, one cheerfully abandons it and, in subtle form, uses the eight qualities of yoga[897] to roam around in the worlds. Those who are learned about yoga speak of these eight qualities. O supreme among kings! They also speak about the eight other subtle qualities.[898] The practice of yoga has been said to be excellent and these are the two kinds of qualities that are practised in yoga. The sacred texts have given indications about how this is to be done, with qualities and without qualities.[899] O lord of the earth! Together with pranayama, there has to be dharana in the mind. Pranayama can be with qualities. Without qualities, dharana occurs in the mind. O supreme among those from Mithila! The breath of life is seen to be released. However, one should not act so as to have an excess of the breath.[900] In the first quarter of the night, twelve principles of breathing have been prescribed. Having slept in the middle, in the last quarter of the night, there are another twelve principles of breathing. One must practise these, self-controlled and satisfied with one's own self. One must turn one's intelligence towards finding pleasure in one's own atman. There is no doubt that one must join oneself with the atman.[901] The five taints associated with the five senses—sound, touch, form, taste and scent—must be flung away. O lord of Mithila! One must withdraw from thoughts of what can be obtained through action. All the objects of the senses must be immersed in the mind. O lord of men! The mind must be established in the consciousness, consciousness in intelligence and intelligence in prakriti. Having merged in this way, one must meditate on the absolute. He is radiant and without blemish. He is eternal and infinite. He is pure and without decay. He is the purusha of sattva, beyond mortality and destruction. He is eternal and unmanifest. He is Ishana and the unmanifest Brahma. O great king! Listen to the signs of someone who has been united in this fashion. The signs are of satisfaction, contentment and cheerful sleep. He is like a lamp ignited with oil, but burning in a place where there is no wind, with straight flames rising upwards. The learned speak of him in this way. He is like a rock that does not move, even when it has been struck by the rain. He is incapable of being moved in any way. Those are the signs of a person who is united. The sounds of conch shells, drums and many kinds of singing and the playing of musical instruments do not make him tremble. These are the signs of a person who is united. It is like a man who climbs a flight of steps with a full vessel of oil in his hand, not spilling any, even if he is frightened. A person who has controlled his atman is like that, not spilling a drop from the vessel, though scared. He ascends, single-minded. He calms his senses and is immobile. These are the signs of a sage who has been united in this way. Having been united in this way, he sees the supreme and unmanifest Brahma, blazing, as if located in the midst of a great darkness. O great king! The eternal sacred texts say that, after a long period of time, he is like a witness and abandons this body, advancing to the absolute. This is the yoga of yogis. What other signs can there be of yoga? Knowing this, the learned ones think themselves to have been successful.'"'

Chapter 1633(305)

''Yajnavalkya said, 'O king! Now listen attentively to the places that they go to. If it[902] emerges through the feet, the person is said to go to Vishnu's region. If it emerges through the calves, we have heard that he obtains the gods known as the Vasus. If it emerges through the knees, he obtains the immensely fortunate gods known as the Sadhyas. If it emerges through the anus, he obtains Mitra's region. If it emerges through the loins, it is the earth's region.[903] If it is through the thighs, it is Prajapati's. Through the flanks, it is the gods Maruts. Through the nose, it is the region of the moon. Through the arms, it is Indra's. Through the chest, it is Rudra's. Through the neck, he obtains the supreme region of the best of rishis, Nara. Through the mouth, he obtains the Vishvadevas and through the ears, the directions. Through the nose, he obtains the wind god and through the eyes, Surya. Through the brows, it is the region of the gods, the Ashvins. Through the forehead, it is the ancestors. Through the crown of the head, it is the region of the lord Brahma, the foremost among the gods. O lord of Mithila! I have thus told you about the different places that can be obtained through emerging. I will now tell you about the signs described by learned ones, signifying that an embodied being only has one year of lifespan left. If a person fails to see Arundhati, although he has seen it earlier, or if it is the same with Dhruva, or if the moon appears like a lamp, with the radiance broken towards the south, it is said that he only has one year of lifespan left.[904] O lord of the earth! Those who can no longer see their own selves reflected in the eyes of others only have one year of lifespan left. If a person has been extremely radiant, but loses that radiance, or if a person has been extremely wise, but loses that wisdom, or if there are changes in his inner or outer nature, those are signs that he will die within six months. If a person disrespects the gods, if he acts against brahmanas, if his dark complexion turns pale—those are signs that he will die within six months. If the lunar disc is seen to have holes, like a spider's web, or if this is the case with the one with one thousand rays[905]—such a person will confront death within seven nights. If the fragrant scents in temples of the gods appear to a man to be like the putrid scent from corpses, he will confront death within six nights. A depression in the ears or the nose, a discolouring of the teeth or the eye, the loss of consciousness and the loss of heat from the body—these are the signs of imminent death. O lord of men! If there is a sudden flow of tears from the left eye, or if vapour rises from the crown of the head—these are the signs of imminent death. Knowing these signs, a man with a cleansed atman should spend day and night in uniting the atman with the paramatman. That is the way he should spend his time, until the time for setting arrives. Even if he doesn't wish to die, he should establish himself in all the rites. He should control himself and discard all fragrances and tastes. By fixing his atman on the supreme, he can conquer death. O bull among men! He knows the practice of those who follow sankhya. By using yoga to fix his atman on the supreme, he can conquer death. He goes to the place that is completely indestructible, without birth and death. It is auspicious and without decay. It is the eternal and immutable region, difficult for those with unclean souls to obtain.'"'

Chapter 1634(306)

““Yajnavalkya said, ‘O lord of men! You asked me about the supreme, established in the unmanifest. This question is about a great secret. O king! Listen attentively. O lord of Mithila! Having conducted myself in accordance with the precepts of the rishis, I obtained the *yaju*s from Aditya.[906] I gratified the god of heat through great austerities. O unblemished one! Pleased with me, the lord Surya said, “O brahmana rishi! Ask for the boon you desire, even if it is very difficult to obtain. I am pleased and will give it to you. It is extremely difficult to obtain my favours.” I bowed my head down before that supreme of heat-givers and said, “I do not know the yajus. I wish to know them quickly.” The illustrious one replied, “O brahmana! I will give it to you. Sarasvati, speech personified, will enter your body.” The illustrious one then asked me to open my mouth. When I opened my mouth, Sarasvati entered through the mouth. O unblemished one! When she entered, I began to burn and plunged into the water. Not understanding what the great-souled Bhaskara[907] intended, I became angry. However, while I was burning, the illustrious Ravi told me, “Tolerate this burning for an instant. You will be cooled down.” When he saw that I had cooled down, the illustrious Bhaskara said, “O brahmana! All the Vedas and Vedanta will be established in you. O bull among brahmanas! You will compile all the Shatapathas.[908] When that has been done, your intelligence will turn towards the question of rebirth. You will obtain the objective desired by those who practise sankhya and yoga.” Having said this, the illustrious one disappeared. On hearing these words and on seeing that the god Vibhavasu had departed, I happily returned home and thought of Sarasvati. The auspicious goddess Sarasvati instantly appeared. She was adorned with the vowels and the consonants and she gave me the syllable “Om”. As is prescribed, I offered Sarasvati an arghya and another to the best of heat-givers,[909] the refuge of the distressed. To my great delight, all the Shatapathas, with their mysteries, compilations and appendices, appeared before me. I taught them to one hundred supreme disciples and caused displeasure to my maternal uncle and his disciples.[910] O great king! With my disciples, like the sun with its rays, I was engaged in performing a sacrifice for your great-souled father. There was a dispute about who should get the dakshina. In Devala’s presence, I took half of the dakshina and gave the other half to my maternal uncle. Sumantu, Paila, Jaimini, your father and the other sages agreed to this. O unblemished one! I thus obtained fifty yajus. I then studied the Puranas from Lomaharshana.[911]

'"'O lord of men! Placing the original mantra[912] and the goddess Sarasvati at the forefront, and with the resolution obtained from Surya, I comprehended and compiled the Shatapatha, not done by anyone earlier. I thus accomplished the path I wished to follow. I instructed that entire and complete compilation to my disciples. All those disciples were purified and became supremely delighted. The knowledge instructed by Bhaskara had fifty branches[913] and I established it. As I desired, I then began to think about knowledge. O king! The gandharva Vishvavasu was accomplished in the knowledge of Vedanta. While I was contemplating, he came there and asked me, "What is the immortal brahman? What is supreme knowledge?" O lord of the earth! He thus asked me twenty-four questions about knowledge. He then asked me a twenty-fifth question about metaphysics. What is the universe? What is the negation of the universe? What is Ashva and what is the negation of Ashva?[914] What is Mitra? What is Varuna? What is knowledge? What is the object of knowledge? Who is ignorant? Who is not ignorant? Who possesses heat? Who is without heat? Who devours Surya? Who is Surya? What is knowledge? What is ignorance? O king! What exists? What does not exist? What is mobile? What is immobile? What has no beginning? What is without destruction? What can be destroyed? O king! These were the excellent questions that the supreme king of the gandharvas asked me. One after another, he asked me these questions, which were full of meaning. I told him to wait for an instant, while I thought about it. When I had restrained him in this way, the gandharva was silent and remained there. In my mind, I thought again about the goddess Sarasvati and the answers to the questions arose, like clarified butter from curds. O lord of the earth! O son! I churned the Upanishads and their annexures in my mind and saw the supreme objective of metaphysics. O tiger among kings! This is the fourth kind of knowledge, concerning the next world.[915] I have already spoken to you about this, which is based on the twenty-fifth. O king! I spoke about it to King Vishvavasu then. I told him, "O illustrious one! I have heard the questions that you asked me. O gandharva! You asked me, 'What is the universe and what is the negation of the universe?' Know that the supreme and unmanifest one[916] is the universe. She has the terrible aspects of creation and destruction. She possesses the three qualities[917] and invests everything with these. The one without these is said to be the negation of the universe.[918] In that way, Ashva and the negation of Ashva are said to be the couple.[919] The unmanifest is said to be prakriti and the one without qualities is purusha. Mitra is purusha and Varuna is prakriti. Knowledge is said to be prakriti and the object of knowledge is purusha. The ignorant and the not ignorant are said to be purusha, since both are without qualities. The one with heat is prakriti and the one without heat is said to be purusha. In that way, ignorance is the unmanifest one[920] and knowledge is said to be purusha. You asked me about the mobile and the immobile. Listen to me. Prakriti is said to be mobile. It undertakes transformations and is the reason behind creation and destruction. The immobile one, who has lordship, but does not undertake transformations for creation and destruction, is said to be purusha. Those who have determined the nature of adhyatma speak of both of them as without beginning, without sentiments, without offspring, without destruction, without decay, without creation and eternal.[921] Though it[922] leads to creation, it is said to be without decay, without beginning and without change. Purusha is said to be without destruction. There is no decay in it. The learned say that the qualities created by prakriti are destructible, but not she herself. This is the fourth knowledge of metaphysics, that concerning the next world. O Vishvavasu! It has been said that one's duty is to obtain riches through knowledge and always perform the ordained tasks, studying all the Vedas attentively. O supreme among gandharvas! This[923] is not dislodged. Everything is born from it and merges into it after death. Those who do not understand this purport of the Vedas know nothing. Even if they study the five Vedas,[924] with the Vedangas and the subsequent branches, they do not understand the knowledge of the Vedas. The Vedas are like a burden to such a person. O supreme among gandharvas! This is like a person who desires clarified butter by churning the milk of a she-ass. He only sees the excrement there. There is no cream from the milk, nor any clarified butter. In that way, despite studying the Vedas, one does not obtain the knowledge in the Vedas. Such a person is said to be foolish in his intelligence and only bears a burden. In one's atman, one must always single-mindedly think about the supreme objective, so that one does not have to repeatedly go through birth and death. One must abandon what is indestructible in this world and resort to the dharma of the indestructible. O Kashyapa![925] Day and night, if one only contemplates the absolute, then one sees oneself as devoid of qualities, united with the absolute. Those virtuous ones see the two as one.[926] They get to know the undecaying nature of the twenty-fifth. Desiring the supreme, those practitioners of sankhya are beyond birth, death, fear and enterprise.”

‘“Vishvavasu replied, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! O illustrious one! You have spoken about the twenty-fifth. But this is not easy to comprehend and you should explain it. I have heard about this earlier from Jaigishavya, Asita, Devala, the brahmana rishi Parashara, the intelligent Varshaganya, Bhikshu, Panchashikha, Kapila, Shuka, Goutama, Arshtishena, the great-souled Garga, Narada, Asuri, the intelligent Pulastya, Sanatkumara, the great-souled Shukra and my father, Kashyapa. Later, I heard about this from Rudra and the intelligent Vishvarupa, and also the gods, the ancestors and the daityas. I have obtained the knowledge that they always speak about. O brahmana! However, using my intelligence, I wish to hear about this from you. O illustrious one! You are foremost among those who know the sacred texts. You are eloquent and extremely intelligent. There is nothing that is not known to you. O brahmana! In the world of the gods and in the world of the ancestors, you are said to be an ocean of learning. The great rishis who dwell in Brahma’s abode say that Aditya, the eternal lord of all those who give heat, taught you about this. O brahmana! O Yajnavalkya! You have obtained the entire knowledge of sankhya and in particular, the knowledge of yoga. There is no doubt that you are learned and know about the mobile and the immobile. I wish to hear about that knowledge, which is like clarified butter inside cream.’

‘“Yajnvalkya said, ‘O supreme among gandharvas! I think that you are capable of bearing all of it. O king! You have asked me. Listen to what I have learned. Prakriti cannot be comprehended, but can be realized by the twenty-fifth.[927] O gandharva! But the twenty-fifth cannot be comprehended by prakriti. Because it cannot be realized in this way, those who know the truth about sankhya and yoga and about the instructions of the sacred texts refer to it as Pradhana.[928] But though it cannot be seen, it can see itself. It can see the twenty-fourth, the twenty-fifth and the twenty-sixth.[929] Even when it does not see,[930] it is capable of seeing. The twenty-fifth thinks that there is nothing superior to itself. The twenty-fourth is incapable of being grasped by those who do not possess the sight of knowledge. The fish dwells in water. But though they are together, they are distinct. Like the fish, those who are learned know that it is different.[931] There is always consciousness from the attachment that results from dwelling together. However, those who do not understand the unity[932] are submerged in time. Enveloped by a sense of ego, they are submerged in time. A person who thinks that he is no different from the other one is a true brahmana. He becomes one with the absolute and sees the twenty-sixth. O king! The other one and the twenty-fifth are perceived to be different. But those who see them as one are virtuous. They do not find delight in the indestructible twenty-fifth alone. O Kashyapa! Those practitioners of sankhya and yoga are terrified because of their fear of birth and death. They are devoted to purity and see the twenty-sixth. They are learned in every way and do not enjoy rebirth. O unblemished one! I have thus told you about what is to be known. Following the indications of the sacred texts, I have told you about true knowledge. O Kashyapa! I have told you about what is seen and what is not seen, about seeing what is indestructible, about what is absolute and what is not absolute and about what is superior to the twenty-fifth.’

‘“Vishvavasu replied, ‘O lord! You have spoken auspicious words to me and told me properly about what is indestructible and is the origin of divinity. May you always be fortunate and without decay. I bow down before you. May you always be vested with intelligence.’

‘“Yajnavalkya said,[933] ‘Having said this, he left for heaven, radiant in his handsome appearance. Having been satisfied, the great-souled one circumambulated me first and I was exceedingly pleased with him. O Indra among men! He passed on the knowledge that he obtained from me to those who live in Brahma’s world and those who dwell in the sky and on earth and they appropriately chose the path that leads to the indestructible. Those who follow sankhya are devoted to the dharma of sankhya. Those who follow yoga are devoted to the dharma of yoga. There are other men who desire emancipation. To all those who desire insight, this brings knowledge. Among men, emancipation results from knowledge. O Indra among men! It is said that it cannot be obtained through ignorance. Therefore, one must search for the truth about knowledge, so that one can free oneself from birth and death. With faith and devotion, one must always obtain knowledge from a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya or even a shudra who is of low birth. A person who has faith is not assailed by birth and death. Since they are born from Brahma, all the varnas are brahmanas. All of them always speak about Brahma. I have spoken to you the truth about the sacred texts and about knowledge of Brahma. The entire universe is completely pervaded by Brahma. Brahmanas were generated from Brahma's mouth. Kshatriyas were generated from his arms. Vaishyas were generated from his navel and shudras from his feet. All the varnas should not be thought of in any other way. O king! It is because of ignorance that one suffers from birth and deeds and the pangs of existence. Devoid of knowledge, all the varnas fall down in this way. They are immersed in terrible ignorance and enveloped in prakriti's net of birth. Therefore, one must seek every means to stick to the path of knowledge. I have spoken to you about this. A person who is established in the supreme brahman is always said to obtain emancipation and is an Indra among brahmanas. I have instructed you about what you had asked me. I have told you the truth. Be bereft of grief. O king! Cross over to the other side. You have spoken properly. May you always be fortunate.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus instructed by the intelligent Yajnavalkya, the king, the lord of Mithila, was delighted. He circumambulated the supreme of sages and departed. Daivarati, the lord of men, obtained knowledge about emancipation. He seated himself and touching one crore cattle, gold and an accumulation of jewels, gave them away to brahmanas. He instated his son in the kingdom of Videha. The lord of Mithila then resorted to the dharma of mendicants. He studied the entire knowledge of sankhya and the sacred texts of yoga. O Indra among kings! He abandoned the ordinary practices of dharma and adharma. He always thought of himself as the infinite and the absolute. O Indra among kings! O lord of men! He no longer thought of ordinary things like birth and death, but always devoted himself to tasks associated with the unmanifest brahman. The practitioners of yoga and sankhya, accomplished about the indications of their own sacred texts, see that the brahman is supreme and is superior to good and evil. Those learned ones always speak of it as pure. You should also become pure. O best among men! The giver, the receiver, what is intended as a gift, what is given, what is received, what is instructed to be given, what is instructed to be received—all these are aspects of the unmanifest. The atman is the only thing that belongs to the atman and there is nothing that is superior to this. Always regard it in this way and do not think otherwise. A person who does not know the unmanifest, with qualities and without qualities,[934] always goes to places of pilgrimage and performs sacrifices. He is ignorant. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! One cannot realize the state of the unmanifest through studying, austerities or sacrifices. The unmanifest must be comprehended. It is the same with the state of Mahat and consciousness. One must obtain the state that is superior to that of consciousness. Those who are devoted to the sacred texts always know about the supreme and the unmanifest. They are disassociated from birth and death and are disassociated from the qualities. O king! In ancient times, I obtained this knowledge from Janaka and he from Yajnavalkya. This special knowledge is superior to sacrifices. It is through knowledge that one can traverse what is difficult to cross, not through sacrifices. O king! Those who are learned say that birth, death and hardships are difficult to traverse through sacrifices, austerities, rituals and vows. Even if one obtains heaven, one falls down on the ground. You should worship the supreme, great and pure one, auspicious, without blemish and sacred, the path to emancipation. O king! As the kshetrajna, perform the sacrifice of knowledge. That is the truth that the rishi spoke about. It has been spoken about in the Upanishads and in ancient times, Yajnavalkya told King Janaka about this. It is the eternal and the undecaying and he enumerated the auspicious and the immortal. He[935] then obtained the one who is beyond sorrow.”’

Chapter 1635(307)

“Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having obtained prosperity, great riches and a long lifespan, how can one overcome death? Can one overcome old age and death through extremely great austerities, deeds, learning and the application of medicines?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the conversation between the mendicant Panchashikha and Janaka. To dispel his doubt about dharma, King Janaka of Videha progressively asked the great rishi Panchashikha, who was supreme among those who knew about the Vedas. 'O illustrious one! What is the conduct through which one can overcome old age and death? Is it through austerities, intelligence, deeds or learning?' Having been thus addressed by the ruler of Videha, the one who knew about the supreme replied, 'These two cannot be overcome. But it is not true that they can never be overcome. Days, nights and months pass. Though a person is temporary, he can obtain what is permanent and certain. All creatures are destroyed. Without a raft, they are continuously borne along on a flow and submerged in the ocean of time. Old age and death are the giant crocodiles and there is no escape from them. There is no one who can aid a person. Nor can he help anyone else. Along that path, one gets to know wives, relatives and others. There is no one with whom one has spent a great deal of time earlier. Because of time, they are repeatedly brought together and repeatedly thrust apart. They are like accumulations of clouds, moved around by the wind. Like wolves, old age and death devour all creatures, regardless of whether they are strong or weak, short or tall. Though creatures are impermanent, in those creatures, there is a being[936] who is eternal. Why should one take delight at birth? Why should one suffer anxiety on account of death? Where have I come from? Who am I? Where will I go? To whom do I belong? Where am I established? Where will I be? Therefore, why are you grieving? Even if you see heaven or hell, you will not remain there. This cannot be overcome through sacred texts, gifts or sacrifices.'"'

Chapter 1636(308)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O supreme among rajarshis of the Kuru lineage! Without abandoning garhasthya, has anyone obtained emancipation and been conveyed to wisdom? Tell me the truth about this. How can the atman be discarded? How can the atman be discarded?[937] What is supreme emancipation? O grandfather! Tell me about this."

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Janaka and

Sulabha. It has been heard that in ancient times, there was a king of Mithila who was descended from Janaka and was named Dharmadhvaja. He determined to obtain success through renunciation. He was learned about the sacred texts on emancipation. He was also accomplished in his own sacred texts.[938] He restrained his senses and ruled the earth. O lord of men! He was knowledgable about the Vedas. He was wise and learned. His conduct was virtuous and other men in this world wished to emulate him. In that yuga when dharma prevailed, there was a mendicant[939] named Sulabha. She followed the dharma of yoga and wandered around the earth. As she roamed around the entire earth, she heard from various *tridandis*[940] about the lord of Mithila, who was pursuing emancipation. On hearing these accounts, she had doubts about the truth of these and wished to ascertain the subtleties. Therefore, she formed a resolution that she should see Janaka. Through the powers of yoga, she discarded her earlier form and assumed a supremely beautiful appearance, flawless in her limbs. Her eyebrows were excellent and her eyes were like the petals of lotuses. In the twinkling of an eye and with great speed, she went to the city of Videha.[941] She reached the beautiful city of Mithila, inhabited by a large number of people. Assuming the form of a mendicant, she presented herself before the lord of Mithila. The king saw her supremely delicate form. He was astounded and asked her who she was, who did she belong to, and where she had come from. Having welcomed her, he instructed that an excellent seat should be given to her. He honoured her by offering her water to clean her feet and satisfied her with wonderful food. Having eaten this, she was gratified. The king was surrounded by his advisers and was in the midst of an assortment of learned people. But the mendicant Sulabha still had her doubts about whether he had understood the dharma of emancipation and wished to test him. She used her powers of yoga to penetrate the king's spirit with her own spirit. She restrained the rays that emanated from his eyes with the rays that emanated from her eyes. Wishing to test him, she tied him up in the bonds of yoga, determined to make him dumb. But King Janaka, supreme among kings, prided himself on his own invincibility. He countered her resolution with his own. They were both situated thus. He was without his umbrella and she was without her three staffs.[942] Listen to the conversation that took place between them.

'"The lord of the earth asked, 'O illustrious one! What conduct do you follow? Who are you? Having accomplished your purpose, where will you go? Whom do you belong to? Where have you come from? Learning, age, birth and good conduct cannot be ascertained without asking. Therefore, having arrived here, you should answer me truthfully. In particular, know that I have rid myself of my umbrella and other signs. I wish to know who you truly are. I think that you are deserving of my respect. In earlier times, I have obtained knowledge about *vaisheshika*.[943] There is no one else who can speak to you about emancipation. Listen to me. There was an aged and extremely great-souled mendicant named Panchashikha, from the Parashara gotra. As a pupil, he regarded me greatly. All my doubts have been severed about the three kinds of moksha dharma—knowledge of sankhya, yoga and the rites that are followed by kings. When he[944] roamed around as a mendicant, as instructed in the sacred texts, in ancient times, he happily dwelt in my city for four months during the monsoon. He instructed me well and told me the truth about the three modes of emancipation, with sankhya as the foremost. But he didn't ask me to give up the kingdom. I completely follow the three kinds of conduct that lead to emancipation. I am without attachment. In solitude, I have based myself on the supreme. Renunciation is the foremost conduct for emancipation. Renunciation results from knowledge and that leads to liberation. One must endeavour for knowledge. It is through endeavour that one can obtain Mahat. Mahat frees one from opposite sentiments. That is the success that transcends death. I am devoid of opposite sentiments and have obtained that supreme intelligence. I am free from attachment and roam around in this world, bereft of delusion. When a field is flooded with water and softened, it leads to seeds sprouting. In that way, the deeds of men lead to rebirth. If a seed is heated in a dish, though the inherent strength for sprouting remains in it, the seed no longer sprouts. The illustrious mendicant Panchashikha spoke to me about knowledge and I no longer have the seed that creates attachment towards material objects. I do not hate anyone. Nor do I love my wife. Since both kinds of attachment are futile sins, I do not find pleasure in either. If a person smears my right hand with sandalwood paste and if another person wounds my left hand, I regard both equally. I am happy at having accomplished my objectives and a lump of earth, a stone and gold are the same for me. I am established in my kingdom, but am free from attachments. Therefore, I am superior to tridandis. Maharshis have earlier instructed that there are three kinds of devotion that lead to emancipation.[945] Some hold knowledge to be the best, others the renunciation of all acts. There are people who know about the sacred texts of moksha and say that knowledge is the best. However, there are other ascetics, subtle in their sight, who hold that acts are the best. The great-souled one held that knowledge or deeds alone would not suffice and that the third mode was best.[946] A householder can be the equal of a tridandi in yama, niyama, hatred, desire, receiving, pride, insolence and affection. If emancipation results from knowledge, then there is nothing to prevent the possessor of an umbrella[947] from obtaining it either. Because of different objectives and reasons, one becomes associated with different objects and receives them. One may perceive taints in garhasthya and advance towards a subsequent ashrama. But despite giving up the objects, one may not be freed from attachment. Lordship means that one must chastise and reward. However, rajarshis and mendicants are equal in this and why should they alone be liberated? Irrespective of lordship, one is freed through knowledge alone. If one establishes oneself in the supreme objective, why should one not be freed? The wearing of ochre robes, shaving the head, carrying the three sticks and the *kamandalu*[948]—these are only signs. It is my view that these do not lead to emancipation. Whether these signs exist or not, knowledge alone is the cause for emancipation and freedom from sorrow. The signs alone are futile. Therefore, despite the umbrella, why should it not be found? Freedom is not found in possessing nothing. Nor does possessing something lead to bondage. Irrespective of whether a creature possesses or does not, knowledge results in emancipation. One receives a kingdom for the sake of dharma, artha and kama and if one is not careful, this can lead to bondage. But though I am in that state, I am without bondage. There is a noose from the kingdom's prosperity. There are the bonds of affection. But I have used the sword of renunciation, severed on the stone of emancipation, to sever those. O female mendicant! I have thus been freed. However, I have a liking for you. Therefore, let me tell you that your conduct does not befit your vocation. Your form is delicate. Your body possesses beauty. You are extremely young. I have doubts that you follow niyama. The signs do not suggest it. To test whether I am emancipated, you have assailed and seized me, rendering me immobile. A tridandi wishing to be emancipated should not fall prey to desire. If you cannot protect yourself from this, you will not be able to preserve the liberation you have obtained. You have entered my body. Listen to the transgression you have committed. I have been married earlier. Why have you used your nature to enter me? Why have you entered my kingdom and my city? Have there been any signs suggesting that you are entitled to enter my heart? You are a brahmana, chief and foremost among all varnas. I am a kshatriya. There can be no union between us. Do not cause a mixture of varnas. You follow the dharma of moksha. I am in the ashrama of a householder. This will lead to a second evil, a mixture of ashramas. I do not know whether we have the same gotra or different gotras, and neither do you.[949] If I belong to the same gotra, by entering me, you have confused gotras and caused a third evil. If your husband is alive and lives in a distant place, you are someone else's wife and cannot be approached. Therefore, by causing a confusion of dharma, there has been a fourth evil. Have you committed these evil acts with some specific objective in mind? Has it been caused by ignorance or false knowledge? Perhaps it is your own evil nature that leads to such independence. If you possess any learning, you should know that all these acts have been wicked. There is a third sin that comes from the touch of an unchaste woman.[950] This sign of sin is evident in what you have expounded. In your desire for victory, it is not me alone that you wish to defeat. You also desire to defeat all my advisers. You are repeatedly glancing towards them and then towards your own self, as if you wish to defeat those on my side and establish the superiority of your own side. You have been confused by the delusion of your powers and intolerance. Therefore, you have invoked the weapon of yoga and have mixed poison with amrita. The mutual desire between a man and a woman, when they seek to obtain each other, is like amrita. However, when one doesn't obtain the person one desires, that is a sin that is like poison. Do not touch me. Know that I am virtuous. Follow the instructions of your own sacred texts. You wished to know whether I am emancipated or not, and that enquiry has been accomplished. You should not have concealed all your secret motives. Perhaps you are doing this at the instigation of some other king.[951] The truth about those secret motives shouldn't have been hidden from me. One must never be deceitful before a king or a brahmana. Nor must one approach a wife with deceit, as long as that wife possesses all the qualities. Prosperity is a king's strength. Knowledge of the brahman is a brahmana's strength. Beauty, youth and good fortune are the greatest strength for a woman. Those who are strong in this way can accomplish their objectives and must be approached with sincerity.[952] Deceit leads to destruction. You should tell me the truth about your birth, learning, conduct, character, natural inclination and the reason why you have come here.'

'"She was addressed in these unpleasant and inappropriate words by that Indra among men.[953] However, Sulabha did not tremble. When the king had spoken those words, the beautiful Sulabha replied in words that were more beautiful than her person. 'There are nine taints associated with speech and nine taints associated with intelligence. Meaningful words must possess eighteen qualities. O king! It has been said that meaningful words must possess five characteristics—subtlety, judging the pros, judging the cons, final determination and ascertaining necessity. I will progressively explain the meaning and characteristics of each of these, beginning with subtlety. Listen to how meanings of words and words should be combined to form sentences. There are differences between knowledge and the object of knowledge. Subtlety consists of using great intelligence to bring out these differences. Before using intended words, one must enumerate and think about their meanings and the various good and bad qualities these words possess. Having examined this progressively, one must then use them in speech. People who are accomplished in framing sentences say that words must thus be progressively used in a sentence. One must specially examine the ends of dharma, artha, kama and moksha and having determined this, then use the instructions to formulate a sentence. O king! When desire and hatred are intense, hardships multiply. O king! Therefore, conduct[954] must be in accordance with necessity. O lord of men! When subtlety and the other mentioned characteristics are combined together, the sentence is perceived to be intelligible. The words I speak to you will be full of meaning, consistent in meaning, restrained, to the point, smooth, without any doubt and excellent. They will not have long syllables. They will not be unkind and harsh. They will not be false. They will be refined and will not be against the three objectives.[955] There will not be words that are difficult to understand, ones that go in different directions. There will be nothing with alternative meanings, nor anything without a reason or an objective. I will not tell you anything because of desire, anger, fear, avarice, misery, destitution, lack of nobility, shame, compassion or pride. O king! When the speaker, the listener and the words are in harmony, the meaning of what is spoken becomes clear. When the speaker disrespects the listener, irrespective of whether it is for his own or someone else's objective, the words spoken have no impact. Even if a man gives up his own objective and accepts the objective of someone else, those words are sinful, because they are capable of giving rise to doubt. O king! If a person speaks words that are incapable of double meaning and are comprehensible to the listener, then he is an excellent speaker, not anyone else. I will speak words that are full of meaning and rich in purport. O king! You should listen to them with single-minded attention. Who am I? Whom do I belong to? Where have I come from? This is what you asked me. I will speak words in reply. O king! Listen attentively. O king! All beings created are combinations, like lac and wood, dust and drops of water.[956] Sound, touch, taste, form and scent are the five senses. They may seem to be different, but are actually together, like lac and wood. It has thus been determined that no one should ask who someone else is. No one knows about his own self, not to speak of someone else. The eye cannot see itself. The ear cannot hear itself. Nor can they undertake each other's tasks. Like dust and water, even when they combine, they cannot know their own selves. Listen to me. Even for the sake of obtaining their qualities, they have to resort to external objects. Form, eye and light—these three are required for seeing. This is also the case with the other senses of knowledge and the objects of the senses. Between a sense of knowledge and the object of that sense, there is the quality of what is known as the mind. It reflects and arrives at its own determination about what exists and what does not exist. It has been said that the quality known as intelligence is the twelfth.[957] When the others have a doubt, it is intelligence that settles matters. The thirteenth quality that is beyond this is known as sattva.[958] It is inferred that creatures may possess a lot of sattva or a limited quantity of sattva. There is yet another attribute, the fourteenth, known as kshetrajna. This helps one think—"I am this. I am not that." O king! There is yet another quality, said to be the fifteenth.[959] O king! There is said to be a sixteenth that is attached to this collection.[960] There is an interaction between these sixteen qualities. The qualities of *akriti* and *vyakti* are attached to these.[961] Happiness and unhappiness, old age and death, gain and loss, pleasant and unpleasant—the union of these opposite sentiments are said to constitute the nineteenth. Beyond these, there is the twentieth characteristic, known as time. Know that the creation and destruction of all beings is because of this twentieth. There is interaction between these twenty characteristics and the five great elements. Existence and non-existence are the other characteristics of manifestation.[962] It is thus said that there are twenty-seven characteristics. Know that there are three characteristics beyond these—Vidhi, Shukra and Bala.[963] It has been said that the number of characteristics is thirty-one.[964] It has been said that all of them circle around in the body. There are those who hold that the unmanifest prakriti is the cause behind all the characertistics.[965] There are others who are gross in their vision and think that the manifest is the cause.[966] Whether it is the unmanifest, the manifest, the combination of the two[967] or all four taken together,[968] those who have thought about adhyatma hold that prakriti creates all beings. Prakriti is unmanifest, but becomes manifest in the form of these characteristics. O Indra among kings! I, you and everything that possesses a body are the outcome of this. There is a point at which creation results from the mixture of semen with blood. Because of this union, a *kalala*[969] is generated. A *budbuda*[970] results from the kalala and a *peshi*[971] results from the budbuda. The limbs manifest themselves in the peshi, and nails and hair are attached to the limbs. O lord of Mithila! When nine months are over, the creature is born. When it has been born, on ascertaining whether it is a boy or a girl, a name is given. Immediately after birth, the nails and fingers are seen to have the complexion of copper. When that person becomes an infant, that earlier form is no longer discerned. Infancy becomes youth and youth becomes old age. In this way, from one stage to another, the earlier form is no longer seen. The separate characteristics change from one instant to another. These transformations occur in all creatures, but are so subtle that they are not noticed. O king! The beginning and the end of these minute changes cannot be seen, just as one cannot discern the movement in the flame of a lamp. This is the state of all creation, rushing along like a well-trained horse. Among these numerous people, is it possible to answer who has come from where and who has not come from where? Whom does someone belong to? Whom does someone not belong to? How does one know where someone has come from, or where someone has not come from? What is the connection between beings and their physical forms? Just as fire results when sticks are rubbed together, all creatures are generated from the characteristics mentioned earlier. You see your atman in your own self. In that fashion, why don't you see your atman in other people? But perhaps you do regard yourself and others as identical. In that event, why did you ask me who I am and whom I belong to? O lord of Mithila! If it is true that you have been freed from opposite sentiments, what was the need for expressions like "Who are you?" and "Whom do you belong to?"—At times of peace and war, if a king's action towards enemies, friends and neutrals are no different from that of others, where are the signs that he has become free? The three objectives exist in seven combinations.[972] If one does not know this and does not show it in his deeds and if one is attached to the three objectives, where are the signs of emancipation in him? If one does not cast an impartial sight towards the pleasant and the unpleasant and the weak and the strong, where are the signs of emancipation in him? O king! You pride yourself on having become emancipated. This is without basis. Your well-wishers should restrain you and treat you with medication. O scorcher of enemies! You should think of other similar things that you are attached to. Glance towards the atman inside your own self. That is a sign of emancipation. There are other subtle signs of having resorted to liberation, such as not being attached to the four pursuits.[973] Listen to me. A person who brings the entire earth under a single umbrella[974] is praised. That king then lives in a single city. In that city, he lives in a single house. In that house, there is a single bed, on which, he lies down at night. Half of that bed has earlier been occupied by his wife. In this context, this is the kind of fruits he enjoys.[975] This is true of all objects of pleasure, food and garments. The qualities he enjoys are limited. He also has to apportion out reward and chastisement. The king is always engaged in the tasks of others. There is little that he directly enjoys. Whether there is peace or whether there is war, how is the king independent? In sporting with women and other kinds of pleasure, the king's independence is always circumscribed. With all those ministers and advisers, where does he have independence? When he instructs others, he is said to be independent. However, he is incapable of personally checking whether they undertake those tasks. He cannot sleep when he wishes. People who have work with him prevent his sleep. He can only lie down after taking their permission. When he is asleep, he is unable to prevent his being awakened. Bathing, obtaining, drinking, eating, offering oblations into the fire, performing sacrifices, speaking, hearing—in all of these, he is helpless and is driven by the objectives of others. Groups of men always come to him and solicit things. However, because he is also the supervisor of the treasury, he is incapable of giving, even if he wishes to. If he gives, the treasury is exhausted. If he does not give, there is enmity. These kinds of taints swiftly generate detachment in him. If wise, brave and rich men gather together in one place, he is suspicious. Even when there is no reason for fear, the king is always frightened of those who serve him. The ones I have mentioned also blame the king. Behold. A similar kind of fear is also generated in them. In their own houses, all men are kings. In their own houses, all men are householders. O Janaka! Like kings, they too chastise and reward. They also possess sons, wives, their own selves, stores, friends and treasuries. Because of these reasons, he[976] is not really different from other people. The country has been destroyed, the city has been burnt down, the best of elephants is dead—in all of these, he is tormented like others. He has a false sense of knowledge. The king is not freed from mental grief that results from desire, hatred, love and fear. He is also afflicted by headaches and other diseases. Opposite sentiments prey on him and he is always alarmed. There are many kinds of hardships in the kingdom and he counts the nights.[977] There is only a little bit of happiness and there is a great deal of misery. How can there be peace if one has obtained a kingdom? You think that this capital and kingdom are yours. O king! But these soldiers, this treasury and these advisers aren't really yours. Whom do they belong to? O king! Allies, advisers, the capital, the country, the staff, the treasury and the king—these seven limbs of the kingdom depend on one another. These seven limbs hold up the kingdom, like three staffs tied together. They depend on each other's qualities. There is none that is superior to the others in qualities. At particular points in time, when a specific task has to be accomplished by it, one of these limbs may be thought to be superior to the rest. O supreme among kings! However, those seven limbs and three others[978] come together. These ten categories enjoy the kingdom, as if they are the king himself. If a king has great enterprise and is devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas, then he should be satisfied with one-tenth share.[979] There are others who are satisfied with less than one-tenth. There is no extraordinary king and there is no kingdom without a king. If there is no kingdom, how can there be dharma? If there is no dharma, how can the supreme objective be attained? The supreme and sacred dharma depends on a king and a kingdom. O lord of Mithila! The earth can be offered as dakshina, but there are those who do not even perform a horse sacrifice. There are many who act so as to cause hardships to their kingdoms, though they are capable. I can mention hundreds and thousands. I am not even attached to my own body. How can I then seize someone else's? You should not therefore say that I have caused an obstruction in your emancipation in this way. From Panchashikha, there is no doubt that you have heard a complete account of what is known as moksha, with techniques, modes, practices and conclusions. O king! However, if you have been freed from all attachment and have overcome all your bonds, specifically, why are you still attached to the umbrella and other objects? I think that you have not heard the sacred texts. Or perhaps you have heard some false sacred texts. Perhaps you came close to the sacred texts, but heard some other texts instead. It is only the consciousness of the material world that is established in you. Therefore, like an ordinary person, you are tied down by these excellent possessions. If you are emancipated in every way, how have I harmed you by penetrating your spirit? It is the ritual and dharma of ascetics to dwell alone. Had you tried to dwell alone, how could I have caused any harm to you? O unblemished one! I have not touched you with my hands, my arms, my feet or my thighs. O lord of men! Nor have I touched your body in any other way. You have been born in a great lineage. You are humble. You are far-sighted. Whether my entering you was good or bad, surely it was bad and futile to speak about it.[980] These brahmanas are superior. They are the foremost among advisers. They are your seniors. You treat each other with reverence. That being the case, you should have thought about what should be said and what should not be said. In an assembly, you should not have spoken about the union between a woman and a man. The water rests on the leaf of a lotus without really touching the leaf of the lotus. O lord of Mithila! I am dwelling with you in that way, without touching you. You have felt my touch, even though I have not touched you. What is the seed of knowledge that you then obtained from the mendicant? You have not been able to give up garhasthya. Nor have you obtained moksha, which is so difficult to understand. Though you desire moksha, you are stuck in between the two. If an emancipated person mingles with another emancipated person, that union does not lead to a mixing of varnas, like the mingling between the existent and the non-existent.[981] Those who regard the varnas and the ashramas to be distinct are those who do not perceive that this is different from that.[982] Because they do not know that this is different from that, they think that this acts differently from that. There is a pot in the hand. There is milk in the pot. There is a fly in the milk. Though they mingle and coexist with each other, they are distinct from each other. The pot does not assume the characteristics of milk. Nor does the milk assume the characteristics of a fly. They each possess their own characteristics and not those of something else. The different varnas and ashramas are just like that. Since they are different from each other, how can there be a mixture of varnas? I have not been born in a varna that is superior to yours. Nor am I a vaishya or something worse than that. O king! I belong to the same varna as you and have been born in a pure lineage. There was a rajarshi named Pradhana and it is evident that you have heard of him. Know that I was born in his lineage and my name is Sulabha. In the sacrifices performed by my ancestors, Drona,[983] Shatashringa and Mount Vakradvara came to the altars, accompanied by Maghavan. Since I had been born in such a lineage, a husband could not be found for me. Humbly, I adopted the vow of a sage and roamed around alone, observing the dharma of moksha. There is no deceit in my rites. Nor do I desire the possessions of others. I will not cause confusion in dharma. I am firm in my vows and follow my own dharma. I will not be dislodged from my own resolve. Nor do I speak without thinking about it first. O lord of men! I have not come to you and approached you without having thought about it first. I had heard that your intelligence had turned towards moksha and had thought that coming here would be beneficial. I came here, wishing to ask you about moksha. I am not saying this to boast about my side and denigrate another side. A person is not liberated and freed until he is peaceful and tranquil. A mendicant spends only a single night in an empty house. In that way, I will not dwell in your body for more than one night.[984] You have honoured me by treating me like a guest and giving me a seat and speaking pleasant words. O lord of Mithila! I will happily sleep inside you tonight and leave tomorrow.' These sentences were full of reason and purport. On hearing these, the king could not say anything after that."'

Chapter 1637(309)

'Yudhishthira asked, "In ancient times, how did Shuka, Vyasa's son, obtain knowledge? O Kouravya! I am curious and wish to hear about it."

'Bhishma said, "The father saw that the son was engaged in the ordinary norms of good conduct and was roaming around fearlessly. He saw that he was capable of studying and taught him everything that there was to be studied. He said, 'O son! Serve dharma. Conquer extreme cold, heat, hunger, thirst and the wind. Having vanquished these, always subjugate your senses. Always preserve the ordinances of truth, uprightness, lack of anger, lack of malice, self-control, austerities, non-violence and lack of injury. Always base yourself on the truth. Be attached to dharma. In every way, discard deceit. Eat what is left after serving gods and guests. In this journey, life in the body is like foam in a vessel. The jivatman is like a bird.[985] O son! Living with beloved ones is temporary. Why dream about it? Even if you are distracted, the enemies are always awake.[986] They are searching for a weakness. Do not be so foolish as to ignore this. As one counts the years passing, your lifespan becomes less and less. As long as you are alive, why are you not rushing, to be instructed like a disciple? There are extreme non-believers who desire objects in this world and seek to increase their flesh and blood. Regarding tasks for the world hereafter, they are asleep. The intelligence of these men has been deluded and they censure dharma. They advance along wrong paths and those who follow them are also afflicted. However, there are also those who are content and extremely controlled. They are devoted to truth and the sacred texts. They tread along the path of dharma. Worship them and seek instruction from them. Accept the instructions of those aged ones, who have the insight of dharma. Use supreme intelligence to exercise restraint and prevent the consciousness from treading along wrong paths. There are those whose intelligence is fixed only on today. They are fearless and think that tomorrow is far away. They eat everything. Devoid of consciousness, they do not see that this is an arena for action.[987] You are like a silkworm inside a cocoon now, but do not know that you are tied down. There are non-believers who disregard the restraints. They are like bamboos standing up with pride, when the river's bank is being broken down by a current. Avoid these mean men and keep them to your left.[988] Desire, anger, death and the five senses are the water in the river that flows from birth. It is difficult to cross. However, using the boat of resolution, cross it. People are afflicted by death and assailed by old age. The progress of dharma cannot be repulsed and descends on them. Whether you are seated or lying down, death will seek you out. How will you obtain salvation? How will you escape being devoured by death? Despite acquisitions, desire is not satisfied. Like a she-wolf grasping a young ram, death seizes and departs, while one is still engaged in acquiring. The great intelligence of dharma is like the flame of a lamp. Hold it carefully and enter the darkness. Descending through a maze of various bodies, a creature rarely becomes a man and becoming a brahmana is rarer still. O son! Therefore, protect it. You have not been born in this body of a brahmana for the sake of satisfying desire. In this world, it is meant to be tormented through austerities, so that one obtains supreme happiness in the hereafter. The status of a brahmana is obtained after austerities. Having obtained it, it must not be carelessly frittered away. Always be engaged in studying, austerities and self-control. Always endeavour to obtain what is best and beneficial for you. The life of a man is like a horse and it is continuously running. The sixteen parts of the unmanifest Prakriti constitute the body. Its essence is subtle. Kshana, *truti* and nimesha[989] are the body hair. The seasons are the mouth. Shuklapaksha and krishnapaksha, equal in strength, are the eyes. The months are the limbs. If you possess the sight, look at it. It is extended in front, always advancing with great speed. Hear what others have to say about the hereafter and turn your mind towards dharma. There are those who are overcome by desire and are dislodged from dharma. They are always enraged, and engaged in causing harm. Their bodies will be afflicted by pain. Since they do not wish for dharma, they will be burnt by flames.[990] A king who is devoted to dharma and always protects the auspicious can look forward to worlds meant for those with righteous deeds. If he performs many kinds of good deeds, he obtains an unblemished felicity that cannot be obtained in thousands of births. If a man transgresses the words of his preceptor, he goes to hell after death. Fierce dogs, crows with iron beaks, large numbers of wild crows, vultures and other birds and blood-sucking worms attack him. In his mind, Svayambhu fixed ten ordinances that must be followed in this world.[991] If one does not follow these, such a wicked person confronts terrible misery and has to dwell in the desolate dominion of the ancestors.[992] If a man is extremely avaricious, loves falsehood, is always addicted to deception and fraud and causes hardship by appropriating what has been left to him in trust, is the performer of wicked deeds. He goes to the worst of hells and suffers great misery there. He is submerged in the boiling waters of the great river Vaitarani. His body is mangled in a forest where the leaves are like swords. He is flung down and made to lie on a bed made out battle axes. He has to dwell in that great hell and is severely afflicted. You speak about great worlds, but do not see what is supreme. You have never understood that death will always follow. Why don't you go there?[993] A great fear has arisen in front of you. It is terrible and you should arrange for your happiness. Death is ahead of you. On Yama's instructions, death will convey you to him. Yama is terrible. Make efforts to be upright. Earlier, regardless of your misery, the lord has uprooted your relatives. Though you are still alive, there is nothing that can stand in Yama's way. The winds that advance ahead of Yama will begin to blow in front. Since you will be conveyed before him, act for the sake of the hereafter. Like a hiccup, Yama's winds will blow soon. When that great fear arrives, the directions will whirl around in front of you. O son! Soon, the learned texts will disappear. You will head towards agitation. Therefore, act so as to obtain supreme samadhi. Search for the only store of riches. Remembering the past, may you not be tormented by the good and bad deeds that you have done, or have not done. On account of those deeds, may you not be overcome by confusion. Soon, old age will destroy your body and take away your strength, limbs and beauty. Search for the only store of riches. In front of you, Yama will mangle your body with diseases that are like arrows. You will have to tolerate the destruction of your life. Therefore, perform great austerities. Soon, the terrible wolves that are within the human body will attack you in every way.[994] Therefore, try to perform auspicious acts. Soon, you will be alone and will perceive a great darkness. Soon, you will see golden trees atop a mountain.[995] Soon, you will have evil companions and enemies disguised as well-wishers. They will make you deviate from your insight. O son! Therefore, strive for the supreme. Obtain the radiant riches that suffer no fear on account of theft. Even when one dies, those riches are not taken away. That is earned through one's own deeds and does not have to be shared with anyone else. One enjoys whatever one has earned. O son! Give, so that one is able to live in the hereafter. On your own, accumulate the riches that are indestructible and permanent. Do not think that greater riches can be obtained after material objects have been cooked and enjoyed.[996] Even before those material desires have been satisfied, you may soon be taken away. When there is the hardship,[997] one has to traverse alone. Mothers, fathers, relatives, praised and beloved people and companions do not follow one there. When one goes there, one only carries the riches that one has earned through one's own acts, good or bad. Stores of gold and jewels, accumulated through fair means or foul, accomplish no objective when the body is destroyed. When one goes to the hereafter, there are deeds that have been performed and deeds that have not been performed. For all these, a man has no witness other than his atman. When one goes there, the human body amounts to nothing. However, through the intelligence of insight, it[998] can see everything that there is to see. In this world, there are three things that exist in the body—the fire, the sun and the wind. They possess the insight of dharma and are witnesses to everything. When it is night, one desires all the other wives.[999] One thinks that this conduct remains secret, but it is revealed. Therefore, follow your own dharma. There are many obstructions along the path, which is guarded by terrible and malformed creatures. But protect your own deeds. Perform your own deeds and go there. One's own deeds do not have to be shared with anyone else. One enjoys the fruits, depending on the acts that one has oneself performed. Large numbers of apsaras and maharshis obtain the fruits of bliss. They obtain the fruits of their deeds and go where they will, on celestial vehicles. In a similar way, pure people with cleansed souls, men who have been born in pure wombs, also obtain the fruits of their good deeds. In the hereafter, those who follow the ordinances of the dharma of garhasthya roam around in the worlds of

Prajapati, Brihaspati or Shatakratu. I can speak to you about many thousands of methods. However, there is lack of intelligence and delusion and the perception that there is nothing other than material objects.[1000] Twenty-four years have certainly passed and you are twenty-five years old now. Your life is thus passing. Act so as to build a store of dharma. Soon, Yama will be there and he will smear your self-control with delusion. Before he arises and seizes you, swiftly act in accordance with dharma. On the road that you have to follow, you alone will lead the way and you alone will follow. You[1001] and others do not matter. Without any companions, one has to go there alone. There is fear in the hereafter. Therefore, accumulate the great treasure. Even if one tries to restrain him,[1002] the lord takes away the relatives one is attached to, with the foundations of the family. Thus, act to build up the store of dharma. O son! The instructions I have given you are the ones I honour. I have described them. Use your own insight to examine them and act accordingly. If a person gives away whatever riches he has earned through his own deeds, he is freed from a hundred qualities that are associated with ignorance and delusion.[1003] One must perform the auspicious rites that are in conformity with the sacred texts. The insight that is given there is beneficial and full of purport. The attachment to dwelling in a village[1004] is like a bond made out of ropes. Having severed it, one can perform good deeds. If one does not sever it, one performs bad deeds. O son! What will you do with riches? What will you do with relatives? What will you do with sons? They will die. Enter a cave and search for your atman. Where have all your ancestors gone? Do today a task meant for tomorrow. Do in the forenoon a task meant for the afternoon. Who knows what is today. The soldiers of death do not wait to see. The relatives follow you to the end of the cremation ground and return. Kin and well-wishers hurl a man into the fire. Non-believers are hateful. They are established in their wicked ways. Ignore them and keep them on the left. With undivided attention, seek the supreme. The world is thus afflicted and is oppressed by time. Therefore, resort to dharma with all your soul and resort to the great riches. A man who knows the methods for obtaining this insight well, acts appropriately, in accordance with dharma, and obtains felicity in the hereafter. Know that resorting to another body does not mean death. There is no destruction for a person who himself sticks to the indicated path. A person who enhances dharma is learned. A person who deviates from dharma is deluded. If a person is engaged in his own deeds along the path of action, in due course, he obtains the fruits that have been spoken about. A performer of inferior deeds goes to hell. A person who is devoted to dharma goes to heaven. In general, it is extremely difficult for a man to obtain the staircase to heaven. Therefore, having obtained it, one should concentrate one's atman, so that one does not fall away again. If a person's intelligence is such that he follows the path to heaven, he is spoken of as a performer of auspicious deeds and his friends and relatives grieve at his death. If a person's intelligence is determined and does not waver, he obtains heaven and does not suffer from great fear. Even if a person has been born in a hermitage and dies there, despite not having experienced desire and objects of pleasure, he obtains only a little bit of dharma. I think that if a person forsakes objects of pleasure and torments his body through austerities, he doesn't obtain only a little, but obtains great fruits. Thousands of mothers and fathers and hundreds of sons and wives have come and will come again.[1005] Whom do they belong to? Whom do we belong to? Their tasks have nothing to do with you. Your tasks have nothing to do with them. People are born because of their own deeds and depart from here. In this world, others act as relatives when one is rich. If a person is poor, even when he is alive, relatives are destroyed. For the sake of a wife, a man willingly commits inauspicious acts. Because of those, he suffers hardships in this world and in the next. Behold. In the world of the living, the weaknesses of creatures result from their own deeds. O son! Therefore, act entirely in accordance with the instructions I have imparted to you. Look on this as a field of action and enter it. If you desire worlds in the hereafter, your conduct should be auspicious. Time is the witness of all deeds committed by creatures and forcibly cooks them. It uses the months and the seasons to whirl them around. The sun is the fire and the nights and days are the kindling. What can be gained through riches that are not given away? If strength is not used to restrain enemies, what is its use? If dharma is not followed, what is the use of sacred texts? If the senses are not subjugated, what purpose can the atman have?' These were the beneficial words that Dvaipayana spoke. Shuka took his father's leave and went in search of someone who could instruct him about moksha."'

Chapter 1638(310)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! How did Shuka, the great ascetic with dharma in his soul, obtain birth as Vyasa's son? How did he obtain supreme success? Tell me that. Through which woman did Vyasa, the store of austerities, generate Shuka? We do not know anything about his mother, or about the birth of that fierce and great-souled one. When he was a child, how did his intelligence turn towards the pursuit of subtle knowledge? There is no second person in the world in whom such signs can be seen. O immensely radiant one! I wish to hear about all this in detail. Your words are the equal of amrita and I am never satisfied with hearing them. O grandfather! In due course, tell me about Shuka's greatness, the yoga in his atman and about his knowledge."

'Bhishma replied, "The rishis did not make dharma dependent on grey hair, riches or relatives. A person who is devoted to learning is great. O Pandava! Everything that you have asked me about has austerities as a foundation. Austerities can be resorted to by controlling the senses and not in any other way. There is no doubt that addiction to the senses is associated with sin. It is through controlling them that a man obtains success. O son! One thousand horse sacrifices and one hundred *vajapeya* sacrifices are not equal to one-sixteenth of the fruits that one can obtain through these means. I will tell you how the fierce Shuka's birth came about, the fruits of his yoga and the end that he attained. It is difficult for a person with an unclean soul to understand this. In ancient times, Mahadeva was sporting on the summit of Mount Meru, which was decorated with *karnikara* flowers.[1006] He was surrounded by a large number of terrible spirits. In those ancient times, the goddess[1007] who was the daughter of the king of the mountains, was also there. The lord, Krishna Dvaipayana, tormented himself through divine austerities there. He was devoted to the dharma of yoga and using yoga, penetrated his atman. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! For the sake of a son, he tormented himself through austerities, meditating in dharana. He repeatedly said, 'O lord![1008] Give me an energetic son who will have the power of the fire, the earth, the water, the wind and space.' Driven by this resolution, he prayed to the lord of the gods, one whom those with unclean souls find difficult to obtain. He worshipped him through supreme austerities. Subsisting only on air, the lord was there for one hundred years. He worshipped the many forms of Mahadeva, Uma’s consort. The brahmana rishis, all the devarshis, the guardians of the worlds, the lords of the worlds, the Sadhyas, accompanied by the Vasus, the Adityas, the Rudras, the sun, the moon, the wind, the Maruts, the oceans, the rivers, the Ashvins, the gods, the gandharvas, Narada, Parvata, the gandharva Vishvavasu, the Siddhas and large numbers of apsaras were also there. Rudra Mahadeva was decorated with beautiful karnikara flowers. He blazed in his radiance, like moonlight from the moon. That beautiful and divine forest was full of gods and devarshis. For the sake of a son, the rishi[1009] was engaged in supreme yoga there. His complexion did not fade and there was no decay in his beauty. The three worlds thought that this was extraordinary. In his matted hair, his energy was like the flames of a fire. United in that infinite energy, he was seen to be blazing. The illustrious Markandeya told me about this. He always talked about the conduct of the gods. O son! Because, Krishna’s[1010] matted hair blazed through those austerities, even today, it is seen to possess the complexion of the fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this way, he faithfully performed austerities. Maheshvara was gratified and decided to grant him his wish. The illustrious Tryambaka seemed to smile and said, ‘O Dvaipayana! You will get the kind of son you desire. You will have a pure and great son and he will be like the fire, the wind, the earth, the water and space. His sentiments and his intelligence will be like that and he will seek refuge in the atman. He will be enveloped in energy and he will obtain fame in the three worlds.’”’

Chapter 1639(311)

‘Bhishma said, “Satyavati’s son obtained this supreme boon from the god. One day, in a desire to create a fire, he collected two sticks and was rubbing them together. O king! At that time, the illustrious rishi saw the apsara named Ghritachi. She blazed in her energy and her beauty was supreme. O Yudhishthira! In that forest, on seeing the apsara, the rishi, the illustrious

Vyasa, was suddenly overcome by desire. O great king! On seeing that Vyasa's mind was overwhelmed by desire, Ghritachi assumed the form of a she-parrot and appeared before him. Seeing the apsara assume a different form, the desire in his body did not vanish, but spread all over his body. The sage summoned his great fortitude and tried to suppress it. However, Vyasa was unable to control it and his mind was agitated. What was going to happen was certain to happen. Thus, Ghritachi's body seized him. Wishing to control it, the sage tried to create a fire. However, his semen suddenly fell down on those sticks. However, without any anxiety in his mind, the supreme among brahmanas continued to rub those sticks. O king! Through her, the brahmana rishi had a son named Shuka.[1011] When the semen fell down, the great ascetic, Shuka, was born. The supreme rishi and great yogi was born from the womb of those two sticks. At a sacrifice, when oblations are poured on the kindling, a blazing fire results. Shuka was born in such a form, flaming in his energy. O Kouravya! His radiance and supreme beauty and complexion were like that of his father. The one with the clean soul was as resplendent as a fire blazing without any smoke. O lord of men! In her own personified form, Ganga, best among rivers, came to the slopes of Meru and bathed him with her water. O Kouravya! O Indra among kings! From the sky, a staff and a black antelope skin fell down on the ground, for the sake of the great-souled Shuka. Gandharvas sang and large numbers of apsaras danced. The drums of the gods were sounded with a loud roar. The gandharvas Vishvavasu, Tumburu and Narada, and the gandharvas Haha and Huhu, praised Shuka's birth. With Shakra at the forefront, the guardians of the worlds arrived. So did the gods, the devarshis and the brahmana rishis. The wind god showered down all kinds of divine flowers. Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, was delighted. The great-souled and immensely radiant one[1012] was delighted. With the goddess,[1013] he himself arrived and when the sage's son was born, performed the sacred thread ceremony, following the proper rites. Shakra, the lord of the gods, was delighted and gave him a divine and extraordinary kamandalu[1014]and celestial garments. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Swans, *shatapatra*s,[1015] thousands of cranes and blue jays circled around Shuka. The immensely radiant one obtained a divine birth from those sticks. He dwelt there, intelligent, controlled and a brahmachari. O great king! As soon as he was born, all the Vedas, with their mysteries and their collections, presented themselves before him, just as they had before his father. O great king! Thinking about dharma, he[1016] chose Brihaspati, learned about the Vedas, the Vedangas and their commentaries, as his preceptor. He studied all the Vedas, with their mysteries and their collections. The lord also studied all the histories and the sacred texts about royal policy. Having given a dakshina to his preceptor, the great sage returned. Controlled and a brahmachari, he started fierce austerities. Even when he was a child, the gods and the rishis revered him, because of his knowledge and his austerities. O lord of men! His intelligence found no delight in the three ashramas, with garhasthya as their foundation. He sought insight about the dharma of moksha.”’

Chapter 1640(312)

‘Bhishma said, “Thinking about emancipation, Shuka went to his father. Humbly and desiring what was beneficial, he saluted the preceptor and said, ‘O illustrious one! You are accomplished in the dharma of moksha. Tell me about it. O lord! Let supreme tranquility be generated in my mind.’ On hearing his son’s words, the supreme rishi replied, ‘O son! Study the different texts on moksha and dharma.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shuka, supreme among those who know about the brahman, accepted the instructions of his father and studied the sacred texts of yoga and everything propounded by Kapila.[1017] He was united with the prosperity of the brahman and became like Brahma in his valour. Vyasa thought that his son had become accomplished in knowledge about moksha. He said, ‘Go to Janaka, the lord of Mithila. In particular, he will tell you everything about the objective of emancipation.’ Instructed by his father, he decided to go to Janaka, the king of Mithila, to ask him about the benefit of dharma and devotion to moksha. He was told,[1018] ‘Follow the path that humans take. Do not proceed so as to cause wonder. Do not use your powers to travel through the sky. Be upright in your path. Do not seek happiness along the way. In particular, do not get attached. And in particular, do not seek out companions. You must not show any insolence when you perform sacrifices for that lord of men. If you are obedient to him, he will dispel your doubts. The king is skilled about dharma and is accomplished in the sacred texts of moksha. I am the officiating priest at his sacrifices. Without any doubt, you should do whatever he asks you to.' Having been thus addressed, the sage, with dharma in his soul, left for Mithila.

'"He proceeded on foot, though he was capable of traversing the earth, with all its oceans, through the sky. He passed mountains and traversed rivers and lakes. There were many kinds of forests, full of predators and diverse other animals. He passed through the two *varsha*s, Meru and Hari, and went through the varsha Himavat.[1019] In due course, he arrived in Bharatavarsha. Having seen many countries, inhabited by the Chins and the Hunas, the great sage arrived in the country known as Aryavarta. Thinking about the words of instruction given by his father, he travelled, like a bird travelling through the sky. Despite many beautiful habitations, prosperous cities and wonderful gems, Shuka saw them, without quite seeing them.[1020] There were beautiful groves and plains and sacred places of pilgrimage. The traveller passed through them. In a short while, he reached Videha, protected by the great-souled Dharmaraja[1021] Janaka. He saw many villages there and many men with food. There were prosperous habitations of cowherds, full of large numbers of cattle. There were fields rich with rice and barley and hundreds of lakes full of lotuses, inhabited by swans and cranes. They were beautiful and adorned. Videha was rich and densely populated. Passing through it, he arrived in the beautiful and expensive groves of Mithila. It was full of elephants, horses and chariots and populated with men and women. The undecaying one passed through them, seeing, but not quite seeing. His mind bore a burden and he kept thinking about this. He found pleasure in his atman. He took delight in his atman and arrived in Mithila. When he arrived at the gate, he was restrained by the gatekeepers. He waited there, free and devoted to meditation.

'"Having obtained permission, he entered. He advanced along the royal road, frequented by prosperous people. Without any hesitation, he entered, desirous of meeting the king. But there too, the gatekeepers used harsh words to bar his entry. Like earlier, without any anger, Shuka waited. The heat and the travel had not distressed him, despite his suffering from hunger, thirst and exhaustion. He did not suffer from any misery, nor did the heat trouble him. Shuka waited there, like the midday sun. On seeing him there, one of the gatekeepers was filled with grief. He honoured him in the proper way, greeting him with hands joined in salutation. He escorted him to the second chamber in the king's palace.[1022] O son! Seated there, Shuka began to think about moksha. The immensely radiant one was indifferent as to whether a place was in the sun or in the shade. In a short while, the king's minister arrived. Joining his hands in salutation, he escorted him to the third chamber in the king's palace. The great inner quarters were there, the equal of Chaitraratha.[1023] It was excellently divided into waterbodies used for pleasure. There were beautiful and flowering trees. The minister showed Shuka that supreme grove. He instructed that a seat should be given to him and departed. There were young and beautiful women there, attired in handsome garments. Their hips were excellent and their attire was wispy. They were adorned in ornaments made out of molten gold. They were skilled in conversation and accomplished in dancing and singing. They smiled before they spoke and their beauty was like that of apsaras. They were accomplished in all aspects of kama. They could discern signs and were skilled in everything. Fifty such excellent women, foremost among courtesans, surrounded him. One after another, they seized his feet and washed them, worshipping him. They satisfied him with excellent objects that were appropriate to the time and the place. O son! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once he had eaten, one after another, they led him and showed him the beautiful groves in the inner quarters. They sported, laughed and sang before Shuka. He was generous in his spirit and knew about the truth. However, all of them entertained him in this way. The one with the pure soul had been born from two sticks. His senses were under subjugation and his anger had been conquered. The performer of the three kinds of karma did not have the three kinds of doubt concerning these.[1024] He was neither delighted, nor enraged. Those supreme women gave him a bed and a seat, decorated with jewels, excellent and supreme. They were strewn with spreads and cushions. Having washed his feet, Shuka performed his evening prayers. He sat down on the seat and began to think about his auspicious objective. In the first part of the night, he engaged in meditation there. As is proper, in the middle of the night, the lord ate and went to sleep. In a short while, he arose and performed the rites of ablution. Surrounded by those women, the intelligent one meditated. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Following the rites, in this way, Krishna's undecaying son spent the day and the night in the king's household."'

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'Bhishma said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Later, King Janaka, with all his ministers and with his priest at the forefront, came to the inner quarters. He brought an expensive seat and many kinds of jewels. Bearing those offerings on his head, he approached his preceptor's son.[1025] He gave him the expensive seat. It was decorated with many gems, was covered with spreads and cushions and was fortunate in every way.[1026] With his own hands, the king received the seat from the priest. He gave it to Shuka, his preceptor's son, and worshipped him. Krishna's son was seated there and honoured, in accordance with the sacred texts. Water to wash the feet was offered first. A gift and a cow were given next. Following the prescribed rites and reciting the mantras, he accepted the honour. Having received the honours, the supreme among brahmanas worshipped Janaka. Taking the king's permission, he accepted the cow. The immensely energetic one asked the king whether he was well and in good health. Shuka next asked about the welfare of the followers. Having taken his permission, the Indra among kings and his followers seated themselves. The generous king joined his hands in salutation and sat down on the ground. The king asked whether Vyasa's son was well and healthy. The king then asked why he had come.

'"Shuka said, 'O fortunate one! My father said that you are accomplished in the meaning of the dharma of moksha. He said that he is the officiating priest to the famous King Janaka of Videha. If I had any doubts in my heart, he asked me to quickly go there. He said that you would sever my doubts about pravritti and nivritti. Instructed by my father, I have come here to ask you. You are the foremost among the upholders of dharma. Therefore, you should tell me. If a brahmana desires the objective of emancipation for himself, what are the tasks that he should undertake? What are the tasks required for emancipation? Is it knowledge or austerities?'

'"Janaka replied, 'From the time of birth, hear about the tasks a brahmana must undertake. O son! When the sacred thread ceremony is over, he must devote himself to the Vedas. O lord! He must devote himself to austerities, tending to his preceptor and brahmacharya. Without any malice, he must repay the debts to the gods and the ancestors. Having controlled himself, he must study the Vedas. Once this is over, he must take the preceptor's permission, offer a dakshina, and return. Having returned, with his wife, he must dwell in the state of a householder. He must not go to anyone else.[1027] He must be free from malice and must possess the household fire. Having obtained sons and grandsons, he must dwell in the ashrama of vanaprastha. Following the sacred texts, he must establish a fire there and affectionately attend to the guests. In the forest, a person who knows about dharma ignites another fire in his atman.[1028] He is without the opposite pairs of sentiments. There is no attachment in his soul and he dwells in the ashrama that is devoted to the brahman.'

'"Shuka asked, 'If jnana and vijnana have been generated and if one can see the eternal in one's heart, is it necessary to reside in the ashrama of the forest? I am asking you about this and you should tell me. O lord of men! Tell me the truth about the purport of the Vedas.'

'"Janaka replied, 'One cannot advance towards emancipation without jnana and vijnana. It has been said that one cannot obtain jnana without association with a preceptor. It has been said that jnana is the boat and the preceptor is the one who steers the boat. After having obtained knowledge, one has accomplished one's objective. After having reached the shore, one can abandon both.[1029] It has been said that the four ashramas of dharma and their codes of conduct were thought of earlier, to prevent the destruction of the worlds and the destruction of rites. In the course of progress, one performs many kinds of tasks. However, emancipation cannot be obtained in this world by performing good or bad deeds. By thinking about the reasons through many births in this cycle of existence, one can obtain a pure soul and attain emancipation even in the first ashrama. When one has obtained liberation in this way, the learned person can see the purpose behind everything. For someone who desires the supreme in this way, what is the purpose behind the other three ashramas? One must always discard the taints associated with rajas and tamas. Perceiving the atman in one's atman,[1030] one must adhere to the path of sattva. One must see one’s atman in all beings and all beings in one’s atman. However, one will not be attached, like an aquatic creature in the water. If one is free from the body in this way, one is liberated and beyond opposites. One obtains tranquility. Like a bird, one soars above the flood and obtains the infinite in this world. In ancient times, King Yayati sung a chant about this. Listen. O son! This is upheld by brahmanas who are accomplished in the sacred texts of moksha. “The radiance exists in the atman and not anywhere else.[1031] Be attached to it. If one is extremely controlled in one’s consciousness, one is capable of seeing it oneself. Such a person is not frightened of others and others are not frightened of him. He does not desire or hate. He then obtains the brahman. In deeds, thoughts or words, he does not entertain wicked sentiments towards any creature. He then obtains the brahman. He engages himself in austerities. He discards the enticement of jealousy. He abandons desire and avarice. He then obtains the brahman. In words and sight, he does not cause injury to any creature. He is impartial and beyond opposites. He then obtains the brahman. He looks upon praise and censure equally. He is indifferent to gold and iron, joy and misery, cold and heat, good and evil, pleasant and unpleasant, birth and death. He then obtains the brahman.” A tortoise extends its limbs and then draws them back again. That is the way a mendicant restrains his senses and his mind. When a house is enveloped in darkness, one can see with the light of a lamp. In that way, using the lamp of intelligence, one is capable of seeing the atman. O supreme among intelligent ones! I can see that you are already aware of all of this. You also know the truth about everything else that there is to be known. O brahmana rishi! Through the favours of your preceptor and because of his teachings, you already know about all these subjects. O great sage! It is also because of his favours that this divine knowledge has manifested itself before me and I know all this. Your vijnana is superior to mine and your destination is superior to mine. Even if you do not realize it, your prosperity is superior to mine. Though that vijana has been generated in you, you are not aware of its existence, perhaps because of doubts associated with a young age, perhaps because of fear that you might not obtain emancipation. Through my pure conduct, I may have been able to sever the doubts. With the bonds of the heart loosened, you will obtain the objective. The vijnana has already been generated in you. You are firm in your intelligence and without avarice. O brahmana! However, without the appropriate conduct, one cannot obtain the supreme. There is no joy or misery in you. In particular, there is no greed. You are not interested in dancing and singing. No attachment was generated in you. You are not bound down by relatives. You are not terrified of things that lead to fear. O immensely fortunate one! I can see that you regard a lump of earth or iron and gold as the same. I and other learned ones can see that you are established on the supreme path, which is without decay and eternal. O brahmana! All the fruits of the objective of moksha exist in you. O brahmana! What else do you wish to ask me?'"'

Chapter 1642(314)

'Bhisma said, "Hearing these words, the one with the cleansed soul became firm in his resolution. He based his atman on the atman and saw the atman in his atman. He was happy and tranquil at having accomplished his objective. Silently, with the speed of the wind, he headed towards the northern direction, towards the cold mountains. At this time, devarshi Narada wished to see the Himalayas, inhabited by siddhas and charanas. It was populated by a large number of apsaras and reverberated with the sound of singing. There were large numbers of kinnaras and bees. There were diver-birds, wagtails and wonderful pheasants. There were colourful peacocks, calling in hundreds of tones. There were collections of swans and cheerful cuckoos. Garuda, the king of birds, always went there. To ensure the welfare of the worlds, the four guardians of the worlds, the gods and large numbers of rishis always gathered there. For the sake of a son, the great-souled Vishnu tormented himself with austerities there.

'"In his childhood, it was there that Kumara hurled his spear down on the ground, disrespecting the three worlds and the residents of heaven. Having flung it down, Skanda spoke these words to the universe. 'Is there anyone superior to me? Is there anyone who loves brahmanas more? Is there a second valiant Brahmanya[1032] in the three worlds? If there is any such person, let him raise this spear, or make it tremble.' On hearing this, the worlds were distressed and wondered who would be the saviour. The large number of gods were frightened that he wished to become Indra. The illustrious Vishnu saw that the asuras and the rakshasas were also agitated. He began to think, ‘What is the best thing to be done under the circumstances?’ He could not afford to tolerate and ignore the act of flinging down by Pavaki.[1033] The one with the pure soul laughed at the blazing spear. Purushottama grasped it in his left hand and it began to tremble. The powerful Vishnu made the spear tremble in this way. The earth, will all its mountains, forests and groves, began to shake. Although he could have uprooted the spear, he only made it tremble a little. In this way, the lord Vishnu preserved Skandaraja’s pride. Having made it tremble, the illustrious one spoke to Prahlada. ‘Behold Kumara’s valour. No one else is capable of acting in this way.’ Unable to tolerate these words, he[1034] determined to uproot the spear. He grasped it, but could not make it tremble. Uttering a loud roar, he fell down on the summit of the mountain, unconscious. Hiranyakashipu’s son was numbed and fell down on the ground.

‘“O son! The one with the bull on his banner[1035] always goes to the northern slopes of that king among mountains and torments himself with austerities there. The hermitage there is surrounded by a blazing fire and is extremely difficult to approach. It is known as Adityabandhana and a person with an unclean soul cannot approach it. It is surrounded by a blazing fire that extends for ten yojanas.[1036] The valiant and illustrious Pavaka is himself established there. He removes all impediments for the intelligent Mahadeva. Mahadeva was firm in his vows. There, he stood on a single foot for one thousand divine years, thereby tormenting the gods.

‘“On the slopes of those mountains, Vyasa, Parashara’s immensely ascetic son, taught the Vedas. The great ascetic instructed his disciples—the immensely fortunate Sumantu, Vaishampayana, the immensely wise Jaimini and the ascetic Paila. The great ascetic, Vyasa, was surrounded by these disciples. At that sacred hermitage, the supreme father saw that the one who had been born from the sticks[1037] was approaching, pure in his soul and like the sun in the sky. Vyasa saw that his son was approaching, like a fire scattering flames on every side. He was like the sun in his resplendence. The great-souled one was united with yoga and did not seem to touch the trees, the mountains, or the uneven terrain. He was like an arrow that had been released from a bow. The son of the two sticks approached his father and grasped his feet. Following the rites, the great sage welcomed him. Cheerful in his mind, Shuka informed his father about his conversation with King Janaka. He told him everything. With his son, the great sage, Parashara's son, Vyasa, continued to dwell on the slopes of the Himalayas, instructing his disciples. They were accomplished in studying the Vedas and tranquil in their souls, having conquered their senses. Those ascetics had obtained the benefits from the Vedas and the Vedangas.

'"On one occasion, Vyasa was surrounded by them. The disciples joined their hands in salutation and spoke to their preceptor. 'We have obtained great benefits and our fame has increased. However, through the favours of our preceptor, there is one thing that we still desire.' On hearing their words, the brahmana rishi replied, 'Tell me what you wish for. I will act so as to bring you pleasure.' On hearing their preceptor's words, the disciples were cheerful in their minds. They joined their hands in salutation and again bowed their heads down before their preceptor. O king! Together, they spoke these supreme words. 'O supreme among sages! If our preceptor is pleased, we have been blessed. O maharshi! All of us desire that you should grant us a boon. Through your favours, other than us, let no sixth person become famous.[1038] The four of us are your disciples and the preceptor's son is the fifth. We desire the boon that the Vedas may only be established in us.' Vyasa knew about the true purport of the Vedas. On hearing the words of his disciples, Parashara's intelligent son thought about welfare in the world hereafter. The one with dharma in his soul spoke these words, which were full of beneficial dharma, to his disciples. 'They must always be given to a brahmana who is devoted to the brahman, one who certainly wishes to dwell in Brahma's world. May you multiply and spread the undecaying words of the Vedas. They should not be given to someone who has not become a disciple, nor to a person who is without vows and has not cleansed his soul. These should be known as the true qualities of someone who becomes a disciple. Without testing for character, the knowledge should never be given. Pure gold is tested by heating, cutting and rubbing. In that way, a disciple's birth and qualities must be tested. Do not employ a disciple in a task that should not be undertaken, or where there is great danger. The fruits of knowledge are proportional to intelligence and studying. Let all the difficulties be overcome. Let everyone see what is fortunate. You are accomplished to teach the four varnas, with brahmanas at the forefront. In studying the Vedas, these are said to be the great tasks that must be observed. To praise the gods, Svayambhu created the Vedas. If a person is ignorant and deluded and is jealous of brahmanas, disrespecting a brahmana who is accomplished in the Vedas, there is no doubt that he will be overcome. If a person speaks about this without following dharma, or if a person asks about this without following dharma, there will be no affection between them.[1039] Instead, there will be hatred. I have thus told you everything about the rites to be followed in the course of studying. Bear these in your hearts and bring welfare to your disciples.'"'

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'Bhishma said, "On hearing these words of their preceptor, the immensely energetic disciples of Vyasa were delighted in their minds and embraced each other. They said, 'The illustrious one spoke beneficial words. We will firmly bear these in our minds and act in accordance with them.' Cheerful in their minds, they again embraced each other. Accomplished in the use of words, they again addressed their preceptor. 'O great sage! We wish to descend from this great mountain and depart. O lord! If it pleases you, we wish to divide the Vedas into many parts.' On hearing the words of his disciples, the lord who was Parashara's son replied in beneficial words that were full of dharma and artha. 'Go wherever you wish, to earth, or to the world of the gods. However, always be attentive. Brahma has a lot of deceit.'[1040] They obtained the permission of their preceptor, who was truthful in his speech. Circumambulating Vyasa and bowing their heads down before him, they departed. They descended to earth and performed four sacrifices. They began to officiate at the sacrifices of brahmanas, kings and vaishyas. They were cheerful and devoted themselves to the householder mode of life, honoured by brahmanas. They were prosperous and famous in the worlds, engaged in studying and officiating at sacrifices.

'"When his disciples had descended, Vyasa was only accompanied by his son. The intelligent one was silent and seated alone, engaged in meditation.

Narada saw the extremely ascetic one in that hermitage. At that time, he spoke to him in these sweet words and syllables. 'O maharshi! O one who is descended from Vasishtha's lineage![1041] The chants of the brahman can no longer be heard. You are silent and seated alone in meditation. What are you thinking about? Without chants of the brahman, the mountain is no longer beautiful. It is like the moon, when it is invaded by Upaplava[1042] and enveloped in dust and darkness. It is no longer as radiant as it was earlier and looks like a habitation of the *nishada*s. Though there are a large number of devarshis here, the sounds of the Vedas can no longer be heard. The rishis, the gods and the infinitely energetic gandharvas have been deprived of the sounds of the brahman. It is no longer as resplendent as it used to be.' On hearing Narada's words, Krishna Dvaipayana replied, 'O maharshi! You are accomplished in the words of the Vedas and I am in agreement with what you have said. You have indeed said what is appropriate. You know everything. You see everything. You are curious about everything. Everything that happens in the three worlds is known to you. O brahmana rishi! Therefore, tell me what I can do for you. O brahmana rishi! Instruct me about what I should do now. Separated from my disciples, my mind has become cheerless.'

'"Narada said, 'The stain of the Vedas is in their not being chanted. The stain of brahmanas is in the non-observance of vows. Carriers[1043] are the stain of the earth. Curiosity is the stain of women. With your intelligent son, study the Vedas. Let the chants of the brahman protect us from the fear of darkness.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Vyasa was supremely devoted to dharma. On hearing Narada's words, he agreed with those words. Firm in his vows, he cheerfully began to practise the Vedas. With his son Shuka, he began to chant the Vedas. Those syllables were accomplished and seemed to fill the worlds. Both of them were learned about all kinds of dharma. One day, as they were chanting, a turbulent wind arose. That wind seemed to have arisen from the depths of the ocean. Vyasa instructed his son to refrain from chanting. Having been restrained, Shuka was filled with curiosity. He asked his father, 'O brahmana! Where has this wind originated? You should tell me everything about the progress of the wind.' Hearing Shuka's words, Vyasa was greatly astounded. He spoke these words, explaining why this portent meant that the chanting should cease. 'You possess divine sight. Your pure mind has also been cleansed. You have discarded tamas and rajas and have resorted to sattva. Just as a person sees a reflection in the mirror, you see the atman in your atman. Basing yourself on your atman, you use your intelligence to think about the Vedas. Vishnu walks along devayana. There is darkness along pitriyana.[1044] After death, there are two paths. One goes to heaven, or one heads downwards. The wind blows on earth and in the firmament. There are seven courses that the wind follows. In due progression, listen to them. O son! The large numbers of gods and the immensely strong Sadhyas gave birth to a son named Samana. He was invincible. Udana was his son. Vyana was his son. Vyana's son was Apana. Know that Apana's son, Prana, came after that.[1045] Prana was invincible and the scorcher of enemies. However, he didn't have any offspring. I will now tell you accurately about their separate deeds. In all living bodies, these winds have their separate courses. Prana is said to be the breath of life in creatures. The first wind, which follows the first course, is known by the name of Pravaha.[1046] It whirls along the large masses of clouds that are full of smoke and heat. It is attached to clouds in the sky and manifests itself in the form of flashes of lightning. The second wind is known as Avaha[1047] and it blows with a loud roar. This is the one that causes Soma and the other stellar bodies to rise and set. Inside bodies, maharshis speak of it as Udana. There is a wind that sucks up water from the four oceans. Having sucked it up, this wind gives it to the clouds in the sky. Having given it to the clouds, it then gives it to Parjanya.[1048] This is the third wind, which always blows and gives rise to rain. This has the name of Udvaha.[1049] There is a wind that causes confusion in the sky and creates separate clouds for the sake of releasing rain. It roars in the clouds. It brings them together and separates them again. It is the roar in the rivers. For the sake of preserving creatures, it appears in the form of clouds. In the sky, it bears the celestial vehicles of the gods. This fourth wind is named Samvaha[1050] and it shatters mountains. There is a fifth and immensely forceful wind named Vivaha.[1051] It is powerful and dry and shatters the trees that yield juice. When they are attached to it, clouds are known as Balahaka. When this wind moves, it creates terrible calamities. It roars in the firmament. The sixth wind is supreme among upright ones and is named Parivaha. It bears the celestial waters in the firmament and prevents them from overflowing. It supports the sacred waters of the Ganga in the sky and prevents them from being dislodged. The sun possesses one thousand rays and lights up the earth. However, because it is restrained from afar by this wind, the sun seems to possess a single ray. It is because of this wind that Soma becomes the store of divine amrita. There is another wind by the name of Paravaha. When the time of death arrives, this takes away the breath of life from all creatures. Death and Vaivasvata[1052] follow its trail. However, there are also those who use their intelligence to properly see. They are tranquil and always devoted to adhyatma. They are cheerful in their practice of meditation. They can think of themselves as immortal. Daksha's ten sons and the thousands of sons of Prajapati encountered its force at the place where the directions end.[1053] Though it is created, those who can subjugate it don't have to return.[1054] O son! These Maruts are the extremely wonderful sons of Aditi.[1055] They blow and go everywhere. They sustain everything, but do not get attached to anything. It is a great wonder that this supreme among mountains should suddenly be made to tremble because of the blowing of the wind. Since this blows with great force, it is the wind that results from Vishnu's breath. O son! When it blows suddenly, the entire universe is distressed. Hence, as long as it is blowing, those who know about the brahman do not chant the name of the brahman. They are also a form of the wind.[1056] It is said that when the brahman is chanted, the other wind that blows suffers from a fear and a difficulty.' Having spoken these words, the lord who was Parashara's son instructed his son to chant again, so that the firmament should again be full of the Ganga."'[1057]

Chapter 1644(316)

'Bhishma said, "At that time, Narada came to the spot where Shuka was alone,[1058] engaged in studying. He wished to ask him about the purport of the Vedas. On seeing that devarshi Narada had presented himself, Shuka first offered him arghya and then honoured him, following the rites laid down in the Vedas. Narada was delighted and spoke these words. 'O supreme among those who know about the brahman! O son! How can I ensure what is best for you? Cheerfully, instruct me.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hearing Narada's words, Shuka replied, 'What is beneficial in this world? You should instruct me about the truth of this.'

'"Narada answered, 'Earlier, rishis with cleansed souls desired to find out about the truth. The illustrious Sanatkumara spoke these words to them. "There is no sight that is like that of knowledge. There are no austerities that are equal to learning. There is no misery that is equal to attachment. There is no bliss that is equal to renunciation. Abstention from wicked deeds, constant engagement in auspicious conduct, virtuous conduct and virtuous behaviour constitute supreme benefit. Having obtained the miserable status of being born as a man, if a person becomes attached, he is confused. Such a person will not be freed from misery. Attachment is the sign of misery. The intelligence of someone who is attached is fickle. The net of delusion is only widened. If one is enmeshed in the net of delusion, one obtains misery in this world and in the next. Every means must be used to restrain desire and anger. These two arise to destroy what is beneficial and prevent observance of beneficial tasks. Austerities must always be protected against anger, and prosperity must be protected against jealousy. Knowledge must be protected against honour and dishonour and the atman against distraction. Non-violence is supreme dharma. Forgiveness is supreme strength. Knowledge of the atman is supreme knowledge. There is nothing that is superior to the truth. Truthful words are the best. However, beneficial words are preferable to the truth. It is my view that whatever brings great benefit to creatures is the truth. A person who has renounced the fruits of all enterprise, is without desires, delinked from possessions and has renounced everything, is knowledgable and learned. If a person enjoys the senses and the objects of the senses without his self being subjugated by them and if he is not attached, he is tranquil in his soul. He is indifferent and controlled. If a person is immersed in his atman and if he is not attached to anything he is associated with, he has been freed. He will soon obtain the supreme benefit. O sage! If a person does not really see, touch or converse with other creatures, he will obtain the supreme benefit. One should not act violently towards any being. One should always be affectionate. Having obtained birth, one should never exhibit enmity. A person who is content with a trifle, a person who is without hopes and not fickle—such a person is said to have conquered himself. He knows his atman and will obtain the supreme benefit. O son![1059] Discard all possessions and conquer your senses. Be established in the place that has no sorrow and be without fear, in this world and in the next. Those who have no desires do not grieve. Cast aside all desire from your self. Cast aside all desire and be tranquil. You will thus free yourself from misery and calamity. A sage must control his self, be restrained and always engage in austerities. He must conquer desire, which is difficult to vanquish. In the midst of attachments, he must not be attached. If a brahmana is not attached to an association with any of the qualities and if he always dwells alone, he will soon obtain supreme bliss. Creatures are addicted to the pleasure that comes from sexual congress. In the midst of this, a sage takes pleasure in himself alone. Know him to be a person for whom wisdom has brought contentment. A person who is content with his knowledge does not sorrow. Through auspicious deeds, one obtains divinity in the firmament. Through mixed deeds, one obtains birth as a human. Through inauspicious deeds, one obtains an inferior birth. One is powerless against what has been obtained through deeds. Creatures are cooked in the cycle of life. One is always assailed by death, old age and misery. Why do you not understand this? Something that is not beneficial is regarded by you as beneficial. Something that is transitory is regarded by you as permanent. Something that is undesirable is regarded by you as desirable. Why do you not understand this? Like a silkworm, you are enmeshing yourself in these multiple strands. You are entangling yourself in this cocoon. But you do not comprehend. There has been enough of possessions. Possessions are associated with sins. The worm encased in a cocoon is destroyed by what it has itself done. Beings who are attached to sons, wives and families have to suffer. They are like an aged and wild elephant that has got stuck to the mud in a pond. They have been captured in a large net, like fish that have been dragged to the land. Behold. Creatures are entangled in the net of affection and undergo great misery. Families, sons, wives, bodies and accumulations of objects are all transitory and serve no purpose in the hereafter. There is nothing except one's good and bad deeds. One must certainly abandon everything and go there. Why should one then be attached to the undesirable and not be engaged in what brings one benefit? There is no place for resting along that path, no refuge and no provisions. That region is desolate, unknown and enveloped in darkness. How will you go there alone? When you advance there, there is nothing that will follow you from the rear. Your good and bad deeds are the only things that will follow you. One searches for one's objectives through learning, deeds, valour and extremely great wisdom. Once one is successful in accomplishing that objective, one is freed. The attachment towards dwelling in a village[1060] is like a noose made out of ropes. When one has severed it, the ones with good deeds move forward. Without severing it, the ones with bad deeds find it difficult to make progress. Beauty constitutes the banks.[1061] The mind is the current. Touch constitutes the islands and taste is the flow. Scent is the mud. Sound is the water. The flow along the road to heaven is extremely difficult. Forgiveness constitutes the oars. Truth, patience and dharma are the ropes. Renunciation is the wind that swiftly drives it. Using one's intelligence as a boat, one must cross that river. Abandon both dharma and adharma.[1062] Cast aside truth and falsehood. Having cast aside both truth and falsehood, cast aside everything that must be abandoned. Abandon all resolution about dharma. Abandon adharma and violence. Having cast aside both truth and falsehood, use your intelligence to form a resolution about what is supreme. The bones[1063] are the pillars. The sinews are like strings. Flesh and blood are the external plaster. The skin is a sheath. It emits a foul smell and is full of urine and excrement. It is pervaded by the sorrow of old age. It is an abode for disease and affliction. Abandon this residence of creatures, full of passion and impermanent. Everything in the universe is in this universe. This universe has originated in the five great elements. Everything results from the atoms[1064] of Mahat. There are the five senses and tamas, sattva and rajas. The collection of the seventeen[1065] is said to be indicative of the manifest. With the objects of the senses, the manifest and the unmanifest, there are said to be twenty-five,[1066] with the qualities of the manifest and the unmanifest. When all of these are united together, one is always described as a being.[1067] If a person knows the nature of the three objectives,[1068] life and death, he knows the truth. He knows about creation and destruction. A person who has the slightest bit of knowledge knows that prosperity exists in the hereafter. Anything that can be grasped by the senses is established in the realm of the manifest. One must know the unmanifest and attentively comprehend it through the signs. The senses always satisfy a creature, like a shower. However, a person who sees the atman sees that the atman is extended everywhere in the world. Through the strength of knowledge, a person can see the supreme and he does not perceive the lack of a shore. In every way and in every circumstance, he sees it in all beings. Even if he is associated with other creatures, he does not suffer anything undesirable on this account. Through knowledge, one can overcome many kinds of hardship that are due to delusion. When a person's knowledge has become manifest, he does not suffer any injury on account of the ways of the world. An illustrious person who knows about the sacred says that in its atman, a creature is without beginning and without end. It is without decay. It is not the doer and it is without form. Because of its own deeds, a creature is always engaged in tasks and confronts misery. In an attempt to counter this misery, it kills many other creatures. Having performed such an act, it goes through many other births. It is tormented, and suffers like a diseased person without any medication. There are many who are afflicted by such delusion, thinking that unhappiness is actually happiness. Slain and crushed, it is always churned in these deeds. That is the reason one must refrain from the bonds that are caused by deeds. One is wheeled around in this cycle of life and suffers many kinds of pain. However, you have withdrawn from those bonds. You have restrained yourself from deeds. You know everything. You have conquered everything. Be successful and free from all sentiments. Through restraint, abstaining from new bonds and resorting to the strength of austerities, many people have become successful. They have obtained unrestrained bliss."'"'

Chapter 1645(317)

““Narada said, ‘There are sacred texts that dispel sorrow and destroy all grief. They lead to tranquility and are auspicious. If one listens to them, one obtains intelligence and attains happiness. From one day to another, there are thousands of reasons for sorrow and hundreds of reasons for fear. They pervade a foolish person, but not one who is learned. Therefore, for the sake of destroying the undesirable, listen to the history. If one follows their instructions, one obtains the intelligence that destroys sorrow. Through association with the disagreeable and lack of association with the agreeable, men of limited intelligence suffer from mental grief. When things belong to the past, one should not think about their qualities. By not having bonds of attachment with what is in the past, one can be emancipated. Whenever there is attachment, one should look for evils in it. If one sees the undesirable in such bonds, one is quickly separated from them. If a person sorrows over the past, he has no artha, dharma or fame. Thinking about their absence does not make them return. Creatures obtain some qualities and are also separated from them. All of these, and not just one, are reasons for grief. If a person grieves over the past, over something that is dead or destroyed, he piles misery on misery and doubles the grief. On seeing the progress of the worlds, intelligent people do not shed tears. Those who do not shed tears are the ones who see everything properly. A calamity may lead to physical or mental grief and even if one makes the best of efforts, one may be incapable of doing anything about it. Then, one should not think about it. Not thinking about it is the medicine for grief. Thoughts do not dispel it, but make it increase. Mental grief is destroyed through wisdom, physical through medication. Such is the capacity of learning and one must not behave like a child. Youth, beauty, life, stores of possessions, health and dwelling with loved ones are temporary. A learned person does not desire them. One should not sorrow alone over a calamity that has affected the entire country. Instead of grieving, if one perceives a way, one should act so as to counter it. In life, there is no doubt that there are many more reasons for misery than for joy. There is delusion over the fondness for satisfying the objects of the senses. Death is regarded as unpleasant. A man who casts aside both unhappiness and happiness obtains the brahman, and learned people do not sorrow over the end that he has obtained. There is misery in abandoning riches. But there is no happiness in protecting it. There is misery in obtaining it. Therefore, if there are no riches left, one should not think about it. Specific kinds of men obtain different types of riches. However, they are discontented and meet destruction. Learned people are content. All stores are destroyed. Anything that goes up, falls down. Association ends in disassociation. Life ends in death. There is no end to thirst. Contentment is supreme happiness. Therefore, learned people look upon contentment as the greatest prosperity. One's lifespan passes in an instant. It does not tarry. When one's own body is transitory, there is nothing that one can think of as permanent. Those who think about the nature of beings realize that everything is covered in darkness. They do not sorrow over those who have departed, but look towards the supreme objective. If a person is not satisfied with objects of desire and thinks that they are insufficient, death seizes him and departs, like a tiger grasping an animal. Therefore, one should seek means to be freed from misery. Even if one confronts a hardship, one should not sorrow. Even if one possesses a little riches, once one has enjoyed sound, touch, form, scent and taste, there is nothing further to tie one down.[1069] Before a creature was united with these, there was no misery and all was well. Consequently, a separation from these results in the natural state and there is nothing to grieve about. Fortitude must be used to control the penis and the stomach, the eyes to control the hands and feet. The mind should be used to control the eyes and the ears and knowledge used to control the mind and speech. If a person controls affection towards those who are superior and inferior and conducts himself in accordance with humility, such a person is learned and happy. A person who is devoted to adhyatma, is seated,[1070] is indifferent, without desire and depends only on the atman, is happy.'"'

Chapter 1646(318)[1071]

"Narada said, 'When happiness and misery appear and disappear, they cannot be countered through wisdom, good policy or enterprise.

Established in one's own nature, one must make efforts not to suffer from lassitude. A person who loves his atman saves himself from old age, death and disease. Physical and mental diseases afflict the body, like sharp-pointed arrows that have been released from the bows of firm archers. A person who is frightened and desires to remain alive, wishing to be free from the afflictions, is rendered incapable. His body is afflicted and he is destroyed. Through nights and days, the lifespan of a mortal creature is continuously running, like the flowing current in a river, which does not retreat. Shuklapaksha and krishnapaksha incessantly progress. Without tarrying for an instant, they decay mortal creatures who have been born. The sun is without decay, but continuously rises and sets. The happiness and unhappiness of creatures is like that and is subject to decay. While he is concerned with what he has not seen earlier and what he has not obtained earlier, the desirable and undesirable aspects of a man set and depart like the night. Had a man not been dependent on the consequences of his earlier deeds, he would have obtained whatever he wished for and all his desires would have been satisfied. There are men who are controlled, accomplished and intelligent. However, if such virtuous people have not performed their own tasks,[1072] they are seen to be unsuccessful. There are others who are foolish, devoid of qualities and the worst among men. But because they possess the benedictions, they are seen to obtain everything that they desire.[1073] There are other creatures who are always ready to indulge in violence. Though they deceive the worlds, they age in happiness. There is someone who doesn't exert at all, but obtains prosperity. There is another one who undertakes all the tasks, but does not get what he should. Do you think that this is due to a transgression in a man's nature? The semen that is generated somewhere, goes somewhere else. Even when it has been placed inside a vagina, there may or may not be conception. It is then like the flower of a mango and it is as if there was abstinence. There are some who desire a son and wish for offspring. They are potent and make efforts, but no embryo results. There may be another brahmana who wishes to avoid embryos, like a venomous serpent. But he has a son with a long lifespan. Without a life after death, how could he have become a father? There are those who are miserable and desire sons. They satisfy the gods and perform austerities. After being borne for ten months, a son who is the worst of the lineage is born. There are others who obtain auspicious and extensive stores of riches and grain stored by their fathers and only enjoy them. When two people approach each other in an act of sexual intercourse, the vagina is invaded and an embryo results. When the body decays, the wind of life leaves and enters another body. When a creature's life is destroyed, the flesh and phlegm are rendered immobile. When the next body is burnt, movement and lack of movement pass on to a further body. This ends in destruction. And there is an end in a further destruction. This is like boats moving back and forth.[1074] Through sexual intercourse, an unconscious drop of semen is deposited in the womb. What do you see? Through whose efforts does that embryo become alive? Inside the stomach, why is that embryo not digested? Inside the womb, there is a natural progression of urine and excrement. It[1075] cannot do anything about whether it is retained or discharged. It is not independent. Some foetuses suffer a miscarriage, others are born. There are some that are destroyed as soon as they are born. When there is union with the vagina, semen is released. Sometimes, an offspring results. In due course, that offspring is also submerged in intercourse. Among the hundreds who are born, some survive till seven or ten years of age. Some die and do not survive to be one hundred years old. There is no doubt that when men are assailed by disease, they are unable to get up. They are crushed, like small animals by predatory beasts. They are devoured by disease and spend a great deal of riches. But even then, despite the best efforts of physicians, the pain is not reduced. The physicians may be skilled. They may be accomplished in the use of large numbers of herbs. However, they are themselves afflicted by disease, like animals by hunters. They may drink astringent concoctions and diverse kinds of clarified butter. But they are seen to be crushed by old age, like serpents by stronger serpents. When animals and birds suffer from disease, who on earth treats them? In general, among predatory beasts and poor people, there are rarely those who are afflicted. There may be fiercely energetic kings. Even they are attacked by terrible diseases that are extremely difficult to withstand, like animals by stronger animals. Overcome by confusion and sorrow, people shriek. They are suddenly flung into a current and borne away by something that is stronger. Those with bodies can't counter what is natural—through riches, kingdoms or fierce austerities. Otherwise, no one would have died or become old. Everyone would have obtained everything that he desired. No one would have seen anything unpleasant and all and the fruits would have been obtained. Every person wishes to rise upwards. They try their utmost. But it doesn't work out that way. Even people who are not distracted by deceit and are brave without being cruel, become insolent and intoxicated because of riches and drunk and maddened with liquor. For some, hardships disappear even before they have seen them. There are others who are searching, but do not obtain anything. A great difference is seen between fruits and the undertaking of acts. There are some who bear palanquins. Others ride on those palanquins. Everyone desires prosperity. But only some have chariots advancing in front of them. There are men with hundreds of wives and there are hundreds of widowed women. There is conflict and pleasure in creatures and hundreds of men face these. Therefore, look only towards the hereafter and do not get confused. Cast aside both dharma and adharma. Abandon both truth and falsehood. Having abandoned both truth and falsehood, cast aside everything that must be cast aside. O supreme among rishis! I have told you about a supreme secret. Using this, the gods abandoned the mortal world and went to heaven.'"

'Bhishma said, "Hearing Narada's words, the extremely intelligent Shuka patiently thought about this in his mind, but could not arrive at a conclusion. 'Sons and wives lead to great hardship. Knowledge requires great effort. What is the eternal spot that is free from hardship and leads to greatness?' Having thought about this for some time, he made up his mind to follow the atman. He knew about supreme dharma and the supreme and beneficial end. 'How can I be unattached and go to that supreme objective? From there, there will no return and birth in this ocean of life. I desire that supreme state, so that I do not have to return again. I have determined in my mind that I will cast aside all attachment and strive towards that end. I will go to the place where the atman will find peace. I will establish myself in the eternal there and there will be no decay and destruction. Without yoga, I cannot obtain that supreme objective. Deeds cannot lead to that unattached state of liberation. Therefore, I will resort to yoga and cast aside this body, which is like a house. I will become a wind and enter the mass of energy in the rays of the sun. Having gone there, there is no decay, unlike the moon and the large number of gods, who tremble and fall down on the ground, ascending again when they have acquired merit. The moon always wanes and waxes again. The sun heats the world with its rays. It receives all the energy and the solar disc never decays. Therefore, going to the sun's blazing energy appeals to me. I will dwell there, without being assailed, without attachment and based on my inner atman. I will cast my body into the sun's residence. With the rishis, I will go to the sun's energy, which is extremely difficult to withstand. I am seeking the permission of the trees, the elephants, the mountains, the earth, the directions, the firmament, gods, danavas, gandharvas, pishachas, serpents and all the creatures in the world. There is no doubt that I will enter there. Let all the gods and the rishis behold the power of my yoga.' Narada, the rishi who was famous in the worlds, gave him permission. Having obtained his permission, he went to his father. Having greeted the great-souled sage and rishi, Dvaipayana, Shuka circumambulated him. He then asked the sage Krishna's permission. On hearing the words of the rishi Shuka, the great-souled one was delighted and said, 'O son! Stay here today, so that my eyes are gratified at the sight of you.' Shuka had become indifferent, without affection and free from all attachment. Having thought about moksha, he had made up his mind to go. Leaving his father, the supreme among brahmanas went away."'[1076]

Chapter 1647(319)

'Bhishma said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vyasa's son ascended the slope of the mountain. He sought out a flat spot that was devoid of grass and sat down there. Following the sacred texts, the great sage, accomplished in yoga, progressively held his atman in different parts of the body, beginning with the feet.[1077] A short time after the sun had risen, the learned one sat facing the east, humbly drawing in his hands and feet. There weren't any flocks of birds there, nothing to see and nothing to hear. Vyasa's intelligent son embarked on yoga there. Delinked from all attachments, he saw his atman there. On seeing the sun, Shuka laughed. To realize the path of moksha, he again resorted to yoga. The great lord of yoga overcame all limits of the sky.[1078] He circumambulated devarshi Narada and told the supreme rishi that he had resorted to yoga. 'O one rich in austerities! May you be fortunate. I have seen the path that I should resort to. O immensely radiant one! With your favours, I will go to that beneficial objective.' Having obtained Narada's permission, Dvaipayana's son saluted him.

'"He again resorted to yoga and entered the sky. He arose from the slopes of Kailasa and ascended into the sky. Vyasa's handsome son had made up his mind and travelled through the firmament. As he arose, the best among brahmanas looked like Vinata's resplendent son.[1079] He possessed the speed of the thought and the wind and all the creatures saw him. Along that divine path, the lord's complexion was like that of the fire or the sun. He thought about the progress of all the three worlds. He proceeded without any fear, single-minded in his attention. All the creatures, mobile and immobile, saw him. As is proper, they worshipped him, according to their capacity. The residents of heaven showered down celestial flowers. All the gandharvas and the large number of apsaras were astounded on seeing him. The rishis and the Siddhas were also extremely surprised. 'Who is this who has obtained success through his austerities and is travelling through the sky? His body is downwards and his face is upwards. He is looking at everything with tranquility.' The supremely patient one, famous in the three worlds, turned his face towards the east and looked at the sun. He seemed to fill the entire sky with his sound. On seeing him swiftly advance, all the large numbers of apsaras were frightened in their minds. O king! They were filled with great wonder. There were Panchachuda[1080] and the others and their eyes dilated widely. 'Who is this divinity who has attained such a supreme end? There is no doubt that he has been emancipated and is without desire. That is the reason he has been able to come here.' Passing beyond them, he went to Mount Malaya, always frequented by Urvashi and Purvachitti.[1081] At the sight of the brahmana rishi's son, they too were filled with great wonder. 'Behold. This brahmana has used his intelligence and has studied the Vedas. Like the moon, in a short while, he will traverse through the sky. It is through serving his father that he has obtained this supreme success. He is devoted to his father. He is firm in his austerities. He is a son who is loved by his father. Why has his father not paid attention? Why has he allowed him to go?' Shuka was supremely devoted to dharma. When he heard Urvashi's words and the purport of those words penetrated his mind, he looked towards all the directions. He glanced at the firmament, the earth, with its mountains, forests and groves, and the lakes and rivers. All the gods also looked towards him. They joined their hands in salutation and showed great reverence towards Dvaipayana's son. Shuka, supremely knowledgable about dharma, spoke these words. 'My father may follow me and call out my name. In that event, all of you control yourselves and reply to him. Since all of you bear affection towards me, please speak those words for my sake.' On hearing Shuka's words, all the directions, the forests, the groves, the oceans, the rivers and the mountains answered in every direction, 'O brahmana! It shall be as you instruct. When the rishi speaks words to us, we will loudly reply in that way.'"'

Chapter 1648(320)

'Bhishma said, "Having spoken these words, the greatly ascetic brahmana rishi, Shuka, established himself in that success and cast away the four kinds of creatures.[1082] He cast aside the eight kinds of tamas and discarded the five kinds of rajas.[1083] The intelligent one also abandoned sattva and this was extraordinary. In that state, he was always without any qualities and was divested of all signs. He was like a blazing fire without any smoke and established himself in the brahman. Meteors showered down. The directions were aflame. The earth trembled. At that time, all these manifestations were extraordinary. Trees released their branches and mountains their summits. There were loud sounds, as if the Himalaya mountains were being shattered. The one with the thousand rays[1084] was no longer radiant. The fire did not blaze. The ponds, rivers and oceans were agitated. Vasava showered down water that was tasty and fragrant. Winds began to blow, with auspicious and divine scents. He saw two divine and unmatched peaks, rising from the Himalayas and Meru. They were sacred and close to each other. One was white, the other was yellow. One was made of silver, the other was made of gold. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Each was one hundred yojanas in expanse, both in height and in breadth. As he headed towards the northern direction, he saw these beautiful peaks. Without any fear in his mind, Shuka descended on them. At this, the two mountain peaks were cleft into two. O great king! That sight was extraordinary. The mountain peaks suddenly withdrew. Those supreme among mountains were unable to impede his progress. All the residents of heaven created a great roar in heaven. And so did the gandharvas and the rishis who resided in the mountains. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the sight of Shuka dividing the peaks and proceeding, roars of ‘Wonderful! Wonderful!’ arose everywhere. He was worshipped by the gods, the gandharvas, the rishis, the large numbers of yakshas and rakshasas and innumerable vidyadharas. In every direction, the firmament was strewn with celestial flowers. O great king! This is what happened when Shuka descended. As Shuka, with dharma in his soul, travelled above, he saw groves with flowering tree, and the beautiful Mandakini flowed through that region. Large numbers of apsaras were engaged in bathing there. Their bodies were naked and without garments. Because Shuka was without a form, they were not ashamed of their nudity.

‘“In due course, his father learnt about the excellent route that he had taken. Overcome with affection, he followed him from the rear. Shuka had ascended up into the sky, beyond the region traversed by the wind. Displaying his own powers, he had identified himself with all creatures.[1085] The immensely ascetic Vyasa resorted to the same fierce mode of great yoga. In a short while, he reached the spot where Shuka had descended. He saw the two mountain peaks that Shuka had shattered as he had proceeded. The rishis praised the deeds of his son. Using his learning, for a long time, he called out Shuka’s name. The sounds of his own father’s voice resounded in the three worlds. By then, Shuka had become one with everything. He was in the soul of everything and faced every direction. The one with dharma in his soul replied in an echo, with the sound of ‘*Bho*’.[1086] All the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects, replied loudly, resounding with the single syllable of ‘Bho’. Even today, when separate sounds are uttered in mountains, caves and slopes, that echo of ‘Bho’ is heard, as if replying to Shuka. Having exhibited his powers, Shuka disappeared. He abandoned all the qualities, the attributes of sound and the others. He attained the supreme end. On witnessing the greatness of his infinitely energetic son, he[1087] sat down on the slopes of the mountain and began to think about his son. Large numbers of apsaras were sporting on the banks of the Mandakini. On seeing that the rishi had come there, they were frightened and came to their senses. Some of them immersed themselves in the water. Some others tried to cover themselves with creepers. On seeing that supreme among sages, some others tried to clutch at their garments. The sage realized that though they were naked, they had not been ashamed of his son. He understood that though he still had attachment, his son had been freed. He was both pleased and ashamed.

'"Surrounded by gods and gandharvas and worshipped by large numbers of maharshis, the illustrious Shankara arrived there, with the Pinaka in his hand. Mahadeva spoke these words of comfort to Krishna Dvaipayana, who was tormented by grief on account of his son. 'In earlier times, from me, you sought a son whose valour and conduct would be like that of the fire, the earth, the water, the wind and space. Because of your austerities, a son with such traits was born from you. He was pure and full of the energy of the brahman. This happened because of my powers. He has attained the supreme objective, one that is extremely difficult for someone who has not conquered his senses to obtain, even if that person is a god. O brahmana rishi! Why are you grieving? As long as the mountains are established and as long as the oceans exist, your son's undecaying deeds will endure. A shadow that is like your son will always be with you. O great sage! Through my favours, you will be able to see it in this world.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thereafter, through the favours of the illustrious Rudra himself, the sage was enveloped by a shadow and he could see it follow him. He was supremely delighted. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is Shuka's birth and progress. You asked me about it and I recounted it to you in detail. O king! In ancient times, I was told about this by devarshi Narada, and the great yogi, Vyasa, also told me about it on several occasions. This is an auspicious history, full of purport about the dharma of moksha. A person who bears this in mind obtains supreme tranquility and goes to the supreme destination."'

Chapter 1649(321)

'Yudhishthira asked, "If a person is in the status of garhasthya, brahmacharya, vanaprastha or a mendicant, and wishes to establish himself in success, which god should be worshipped? How can he certainly go to heaven? How can one obtain supreme benefit? What rites should one observe in offering oblations to the gods and the ancestors? Where does one go when one is emancipated? What is the essence of moksha? Having obtained heaven, how should one act, so as not to be dislodged from heaven? Who is the god of the gods? Who is the ancestor of the ancestors? What is superior to him?[1088] O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "O unblemished one! O one who knows how to ask! The question you have asked me is about a mystery. Even if one speaks for one hundred years, one is incapable of answering this through arguments. O king! Without the favour of the gods or without resorting to the sacred texts, this fathomless mystery cannot be recounted. O slayer of enemies! I will recount it to you. In this connection, an ancient history is cited. This concerns a conversation between Narada and the rishi Narayana. My father told me that the eternal Narayana, the soul of the universe, was born in four forms as Dharma's son. O great king! This happened in ancient times, during krita yuga, during Svayambhuva.[1089] These were Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna. Out of these, Nara and Narayana travelled to the hermitage of Badari in their golden wagons and engaged in fierce austerities there.[1090] These were beautiful, yoked to the elements and possessed eight wheels.[1091] Those protectors of the worlds went there and because of the exertions that they undertook, became emaciated. The energy of their austerities was such that even the gods were unable to look at them. Only a god to whom they showed their favours was capable of seeing them. Narada was devoted to them in his heart and was goaded by a desire to see them. From the summit of the great mountain Meru, he descended on Gandhamadana and this was extremely wonderful. O king! Roaming through the worlds, he quickly went to the spot where the hermitage of Badari was. He was overcome by curiosity and went to the region where those two, the foundations of all the worlds, with the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas, the rishis, the kinnaras and the serpents, were based. Earlier, they were in one single form. However, they had been born in four different forms as Dharma's offspring and had been reared by that great one. It was wonderful that Dharma had thus been honoured by those gods, Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna. For some reason, Krishna and Hari were elsewhere then. However, those two[1092] wished to enhance dharma and were engaged in austerities there. This was the time for daily rites.[1093] However, these two are the supreme refuge. What daily rites should they engage in? They are illustrious gods and the ancestors of all creatures. Which god or ancestor will those extremely intelligent ones worship? Thinking this in his mind and full of devotion towards Narayana, Narada suddenly appeared before those two gods. When they finished their prayers to the gods and the ancestors, they glanced towards him and honoured him, in accordance with the rites that are laid down in the sacred texts. Seeing that they followed the rites and prayed, Narada was filled with great wonder. The illustrious rishi was pleased and sat down. Delighted in his mind, he looked towards Narayana. Worshipping the great god, he spoke these words. 'You have been praised in the Vedas, the Puranas, the Vedangas and the additional Vedangas. You are without birth and eternal. You are held to be the creator and the supreme amrita. You are the foundation of everything in the universe, what has happened and what will happen. O god! All the four ashramas, with garhasthya as their foundation, incessantly worship you in the many forms in which you are established. You are the father and mother of the entire universe. You are the eternal preceptor. Which god and ancestor are you worshipping? We do not understand this.'

'"The illustrious one replied, 'This is an eternal mystery and nothing should be said about this. O brahmana! However, because of your devotion, I will tell you the truth about this. It is subtle, impossible to comprehend, unmanifest, without mutation and eternal. It is disassociated from the senses, the objects of the senses and all the elements. It is in the atman of beings and is known as kshetrajna. It is beyond the three qualities[1094] and has been thought of as Purusha. O supreme among brahmanas! The manifest one,[1095] with the three qualities, has been generated from him. Though unmanifest, she has a manifest form and is the undecaying Prakriti. Know that she is the womb from which we have been generated. We worship that pervading atman, thinking of him as gods or ancestors. There is nothing that is superior to him. There is no other ancestor, god or brahmana. He should be known as our atman and we worship him. O brahmana! Thinking of the worlds, he is the one who has formulated the ordinances. The rites for gods and ancestors are based on his instructions. Brahma, Sthanu, Manu, Daksha, Bhrigu, Dharma, Tapa, Dama, Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Parameshthi, Vivasvat, Soma, the one known as Kardama, Krodha and Vikrita—these twenty-one Prajapatis are said to have been generated from him. They worshipped the god's eternal ordinances. They always knew the truth about what had been laid down for the gods and the ancestors. Those supreme among brahmanas knew, and obtained, their atmans. Through his favours, embodied beings and those in heaven who worship him, obtain all the fruits and ends that they desire. It has been determined that those who are devoid of deeds and the seventeen qualities[1096] and have cast aside the fifteen,[1097] are liberated. Those who are liberated attain an end that has been thought of as the brahman or the kshetrajna. That is the destination of everything and has been spoken about as being devoid of qualities. We have been generated from there and he can be seen through the yoga of knowledge. Knowing this, we worship that eternal atman. The Vedas and the ashramas resort to many different kinds of forms. However, he is the one who is worshipped with devotion and he is the one who grants the objective. If a person in this world thinks of him alone and is controlled, he obtains a superior end and penetrates into him. O Narada! O brahmana rishi! Because of your devotion and because of our affection towards you, I have recounted this mystery. It is because of your faith that you have been able to listen to it.'"'

Chapter 1650(322)

'Bhishma said, "Having been thus addressed by Narayana, the supreme being and best among men, for the welfare of the worlds, the best among men[1098] spoke these words to Narayana. 'In four forms, you have obtained this excellent birth in Dharma's house for a reason. For the welfare of the worlds, let that objective be accomplished. I will now see Prakriti. O protector of the worlds! I have studied the Vedas. I have tormented myself through austerities. I have never uttered a falsehood. I have always worshipped my seniors. I have never revealed the secrets of others. Following the secret texts, I have protected the four.[1099] I have always treated enemies and friends equally. I have always single-mindedly worshipped the original god and not several. Having purified myself in these special ways, why should I not be able to see the eternal lord?' Hearing the words of Parameshthi's son,[1100] Narayana, the protector of the dharma of the Satvatas,[1101] honoured him with many kinds of rites and said, 'O Narada! Go.' Having been given permission to leave, Parameshthi's son also worshipped the ancient rishi.[1102]

'"Having ascended into the sky with great force, he suddenly descended on Meru's peak. For a short while, the sage remained in a solitary spot on the peak of that mountain. He then glanced towards the north-western direction and beheld an extraordinary sight. There is an extensive region named Shvetadvipa to the north of the ocean of milk. The wise ones have said that it is thirty-two thousand yojanas to the north of Meru. Those who dwell there are beyond any senses and do not eat. Their eyes do not blink and their bodies possess fragrances. The men in Shveta have been cleansed of all sins. They uproot the eyes of men who perform wicked deeds. Their bones and bodies are as firm as the vajra and they are impartial towards respect and disrespect. They are divine in form and are marked with auspicious signs. Their heads are like umbrellas and their voices rumble like the clouds. Their feet bear the marks of four *pushkara*s and one hundred rajivas.[1103] They possess sixty white teeth and eight smaller ones. They have many tongues and with these, they seem to lick the bright rays of the sun. They are devoted to the god from whom all the people in the universe, the Vedas, dharma, the sages, the tranquil gods and all their offspring have been generated."

'Yudhishthira asked, "They do not possess senses. They do not eat. Their eyes do not blink and they emit fragrances. How were these men born? What is the supreme end that they attain? O supreme among the Bharata lineage! What are the signs of emancipation exhibited by the men who are the residents of Shvetadvipa? I have great curiosity. Sever my doubt about this. You are the repository of all the accounts and we depend on you."

'Bhishma replied, "O king! This is an extensive account that I heard from my father. What I will tell you is regarded as the essence of all accounts. There used to be a king on earth, by the name of Uparichara. He was famous as Akhandala's[1104] friend and was devoted to Hari Narayana. He was always devoted to dharma and always attentive towards his father. In ancient times, he obtained his kingdom as a boon from Narayana. Earlier, the satvata rituals had emerged from Surya's mouth.[1105] He first used these to worship the lord of the gods and then used the remnants to worship the grandfather.[1106] With what remained, he first worshipped the ancestors and then divided up the rest among brahmanas. He was truthful and only ate what remained thereafter. He did not cause injury to any creature. In every kind of way, he was faithful to Janardana, the god of the gods. O destroyer of enemies! His devotion to Narayana was great. Because of this, Shakra, the king of the gods, shared his own bed and his own seat with him. He[1107] regarded his own self, his kingdom, his riches, his wives and his mounts as having been obtained from the illustrious one[1108] and offered all these to him. He desired to perform many sacrifices and excellent rites. Following the satvata rituals, he observed all of these. In the great-souled one's household, there were many foremost ones who knew about the pancharatra rites and instructed by the illustrious one, they generally ate before all the others.[1109] Thus, the slayer of enemies followed dharma and ruled his kingdom. He did not speak any falsehood and there were no wicked thoughts in his mind. Nor did he perform any exceedingly wicked deeds.

'"Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha—these seven extremely energetic sages were known as the Chitrashikhandins.[1110] The Chitrashikhandins came together and prepared an excellent sacred text. They were like seven Prakritis and Svayambhu was the eighth. The sacred text that emerged from their mouths is studied by all the worlds. Those sages were single-minded in their attention, devoted to restraint and self-control. 'This is the best. This is the brahman. This constitutes the greatest welfare.' Thinking about the worlds in this way, they created the sacred text. This speaks about dharma, artha and kama. Later, it also speaks about moksha. It prescribes the many kinds of ordinances that heaven and earth should resort to. Together, all those rishis performed austerities and worshipped the lord god, Hari Narayana, for one thousand celestial years. For the welfare of the worlds, instructed by Narayana, the goddess Sarasvati entered all those rishis. That is the reason those brahmanas could engage so well in the composition of that first creation—full of words, meanings and reasons. Right at the beginning, the sacred text was ornamented with the syllable 'Om'. The rishis first recited it at the spot where the compassionate one[1111] was. The illustrious Purushottama was pleased. Unseen by the rishis and in an invisible voice, he instructed them, ‘You have composed one hundred thousand excellent shlokas. So that dharma is observed, everything in the worlds will flow from this. Notions of pravritti and nivritti will be generated from this, so will Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva of Angiras.[1112] As proof of this, I have created Brahma through my favours, Rudra from my anger, all of you brahmanas from my nature, the sun, the moon, the wind, the earth, the water, the fire, the large number of nakshatras and everything that is known as a creature. Those who speak about the brahman are regarded as authorities. In that fashion, all proof will be found in this excellent sacred text. It is my instruction that this will be taken to be proof. Based on this, Svayambhuva Manu will himself promulgate dharma. When Ushanas[1113] and Brihaspati are born in the future, they will also base their instructions on this sacred text. The worlds will think of this as the sacred texts on dharma prepared by Svayambhuva, Ushanas and the intelligent Brihaspati. O supreme among brahmanas! King Vasu[1114] will obtain the sacred text prepared by you from Brihaspati. That king will think about me and be devoted to me. All the rites in the worlds will be performed in accordance with that sacred text. Among all the sacred texts, this sacred text will be known as the best. Artha, dharma and supreme fame will be based on this. Having propounded it, you will have offspring. The great King Vasu will also be prosperous. This eternal sacred text will exist as long as that king is there, but will disappear after that. I am telling you this truthfully.’ Having said this in that invisible voice, Purushottama left the rishis. As they wished, they too left for the different directions. Thus, those ancestors of the worlds[1115] thought about the welfare of the worlds and compiled that sacred text. It is the eternal source of all dharma. When Brihaspati was born in the lineage of Angiras in the first yuga, he established that sacred text, with the Vedangas and the Upanishads. The upholders of all the worlds,[1116] the propounders of all kinds of dharma, left for their desired destinations, having determined to perform austerities.”’

Chapter 1651(323)

‘Bhishma said, “When that great kalpa was over, the descendant of Angiras was born and all the gods were delighted that a priest had been born for the gods.[1117] O king! The words Brihat, Brahma and Mahat progressively convey the same meaning and he came to be known as Brihaspati because he possessed all these qualities.[1118] The foremost king, Uparichara Vasu, became his disciple. He properly studied the sacred texts of the Chitrashikhandins. The gods had earlier thought of the birth of King Vasu and he protected the earth, like Akhandala in heaven. The great-souled one performed a gigantic horse sacrifice. His preceptor, Brihaspati, was the officiating priest there. Prajapati's three sons, the maharshis Ekata, Dvita and Trita, acted as assistant priests at the sacrifice. Dhanushaksha; Raibhya; Arvavasu; Paravasu; the rishi Medhatithi; the great rishi Tandya; the immensely fortunate rishi Shakti, also known as Vedashira; Kapila, the foremost rishi who was the grandfather of Shalihotra; the first Katha; Taittira, the elder brother of Vaishampayana; Kanva; and Devahotra—all these sixteen were famous.[1119] O king! The great sacrifice had all the ingredients. On the instructions of the king, no animals were slain. He was not violent, pure, not inferior, without desire and devoted to the rites. The shares offered in the sacrifice were all products of the forest. The ancient and illustrious god of the gods[1120] was delighted at this. Though he was incapable of being seen by anyone else, he manifested himself. Though he was not seen by anyone, the god Hari himself seized and took away his share of the sacrificial cake. At this, Brihaspati was enraged. He forcefully picked up the ladle and flung it up into the sky. Shedding tears of rage, he told Uparichara, 'I have placed a share[1121] in front. While I see, there is no doubt that the god will accept it himself. The other gods are seen to have appeared in person and have accepted the shares offered to them. Why should the lord Hari not manifest himself?' When he arose in this way, the great King Vasu and all the assistant priests sought to satisfy the sage. Without displaying any fright, they told him, 'You should not be enraged. In krita yuga, it is not dharma for anyone to display wrath. The god who accepted the share does not also yield to anger. O Brihaspati! He is incapable of being seen by you or us. He can only be seen by those towards whom he exhibits his favours.'

'"Ekata, Dvita and Trita said, 'We are named as Brahma's sons, those who have been born through his mental powers. To ensure our benefit, we once went to the northern direction. For four thousand years, we tormented ourselves through excellent austerities. We controlled ourselves and stood on one foot, like wooden pillars. This was to the north of Meru and on the shores of the ocean of milk. That is the spot where we tormented ourselves through extremely terrible austerities. "How can we see the god Narayana?" This is the vow that we resorted to. When we bathed ourselves at the end, we heard an invisible voice. "O brahmanas! Cheerful in your souls, you have tormented yourselves through austerities. With devotion, you have asked how you can see the lord. To the north of the ocean of milk, there is the immensely radiant Shvetadvipa. The men there are as radiant as the moon and are devoted to Narayana. They worship Purushottama with single-minded devotion. They enter the eternal god, who possesses one thousand rays. They are devoid of senses. They do not eat. Their eyes do not blink and they emit fragrant scents. Those men, who live in Shvetadvipa, worship one person alone. O sages! Go there. That is the place where I have revealed myself." On hearing these invisible words, all of us followed the path that had been indicated and went to that country. Our hearts were full of the desire to see him and went to the great Shvetadvipa. However, when we went there, our sight was blinded by his energy and we could not see that being. At this, we decided that we had not undertaken enough yoga to see the god. Without further austerities, we wouldn't be able to see the energetic being. At that time, we again performed great austerities for another one hundred years. When we bathed at the end of the vow, we saw some extremely auspicious men. They were as fair as the moon and they possessed all the auspicious signs. Facing the northern and the eastern direction, with hands joined in salutation, they were silently meditating on Brahma. Those great-souled ones were thus engaged in mental chanting. Hari was pleased because of their single-minded devotion. O tiger among men! The radiance and resplendence of each of those men was like that of the sun that arises at the end of a yuga. We thought that energy alone resided in that region. No one was superior or inferior. All of them were equal in energy. O Brihaspati! We suddenly saw another mass of blazing energy, as if one thousand suns had simultaneously arisen. Together, those men quickly ran towards this. Cheerfully, they joined their hands in salutation and said, "We bow down." A great collective shout arose from them, as if those men were offering a sacrifice to the god. Suddenly, that energy robbed us of our senses. Bereft of sight, strength and senses, we could not see anything. We only heard a single sound, uttered incessantly. “O Pundarikaksha! O creator of the universe! We bow down to you. Victory is yours. O Hrishikesha! We bow down before you. You are the great being and you are the one who was born first.” We heard these sounds, the syllables articulated properly. At that time, an auspicious wind began to blow and it bore all the fragrant scents. There were the fragrances of celestial flowers and herbs that had been used in the rites. Those men knew about the beneficial rituals of pancharatra. They single-mindedly worshipped Hari. There is no doubt that, invoked by those words, the god arrived there. However, because we were confounded by his maya, we could not see him. O supreme among those of the Angiras lineage! When the wind retreated and the sacrifice was over, our minds became full of anxious thoughts. Those thousands of men were born in pure lineages. But they did not honour us with their thoughts or their sight. Those large numbers of sages were single-minded in their vows. They were based on the brahman and paid no attention to us. We were exhausted and afflicted by the austerities. An invisible voice addressed us. “Are you well? These men from Shveta are bereft of all the senses and are capable of seeing the being. Only those who are given sight by these best among brahmanas are capable of seeing him. O sages! All of you should quickly leave this place and go where you have come from. Those without devotion are incapable of ever seeing the god. The illustrious one’s circle of radiance is difficult to see. It can only be witnessed by those who desire to, and have single-mindedly spent a long period of time in worshipping him. O supreme among brahmanas! You have a great task to perform. There will be a catastrophe at the end of this krita yuga. O brahmanas! At the time of Vaivasvat Manu, there will be a treta yuga. You will then become aides in performing a task for the gods.” O drinker of soma! We heard these wonderful words. Having obtained this favour, we returned from that radiant region. In this way, despite austerities and offering of havya and kavya, we could not see that god. How can you see him? Narayana is extremely wonderful. He is the unmanifest creator of the universe. He is the devourer of oblations.’”

‘Bhishma said, “The intelligent Brihaspati was entreated by these words of Ekata, Dvita and Trita and also by the assistant priests. He honoured the gods and completed the sacrifice. When the sacrifice was over, King Vasu protected the subjects. Because of the curse of brahmanas, he was dislodged and submerged in the ground.[1122] He was always devoted to dharma, but was submerged inside the earth. He was devoted to Narayana and attained the objective of Narayana. It is through his favours that he arose again from the nether regions of the earth and obtained the abode of the brahman. Because of this devotion to the highest one, he attained a supreme end."'

Chapter 1652(324)

'Yudhishthira asked, "Since the great king Vasu was devoted to the illustrious one, why was he dislodged? Why did he have to sink into a hole in the ground?"

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is the history of a conversation between the rishis and the residents of heaven. The gods told the supreme among brahmanas that ajas should be killed in sacrifices.[1123] However, by aja, one should understand a goat and no other animal.

'"The rishis said, 'The shruti texts of the Vedas aver that only seeds should be offered at sacrifices. The word aja signifies seeds. You should not slaughter goats. O gods! The slaughter of animals cannot constitute virtuous dharma. This is the best yuga of krita. How can one slaughter animals?'"

'Bhishma continued, "This conversation was going on between the rishis and the gods. At that time, travelling along a path, Vasu, best among kings, arrived at the spot. He could travel through the sky. He was prosperous and all the soldiers and mounts were ahead of him. On seeing Vasu suddenly arrive through the sky, the brahmanas told the gods, 'He will dispel our doubts. He performs sacrifices. He is foremost among those who donate. He is affectionate towards all creatures and is devoted to their welfare. How can the great Vasu speak contrary words?' Thus conversing, the gods and the rishis approached King Vasu, who had suddenly arrived, and asked him. 'O king! How should one sacrifice? Should one use goats or herbs? Sever our doubt about this. We will accept your view as the proof.' Thus asked, Vasu joined his hands in salutation and said, 'What are your views? Let both sides tell me the truth.' The rishis responded, 'O lord of men! The view of our side is that grain should be offered at sacrifices. The gods are of the view that animals should be offered. O king! Tell us your opinion.’ Ascertaining the views of the gods, Vasu opted for their side. He said that goats should be offered at sacrifices. All the sages were as radiant as the sun and were enraged at this. Vasu was on his celestial vehicle and had spoken on the side of the gods. They told him, ‘You have opted for the side of the gods. Therefore, you will fall down from heaven. O king! From today, you will no longer be able to travel through the sky. Because of our curse, you will shatter the earth and penetrate there.’ As soon as they said this, King Uparichara quickly fell down. The king penetrated a hole in the ground. However, because of Narayana’s instructions, he did not lose his memory.

‘“All the gods began to think of a means to free Vasu from his curse. The gods anxiously reflected on the king’s good deeds. 'The great-souled king has obtained this curse on our account. The residents of heaven must unite and do what is agreeable for him.’ Having determined this, the lords swiftly went to where King Uparichara was. They cheerfully spoke to him. ‘You are devoted to the god of the brahmanas, Hari, the preceptor of the gods and the asuras. You should desire to please him. He will then act, so as to free you from this curse. However, the great-souled brahmanas also deserve respect. O supreme among kings! Their austerities must yield fruits.[1124] That is the reason you have suddenly been dislodged from heaven and have fallen down on the surface of the earth. O supreme among kings! However, we will show you a favour. O unblemished one! Because of the taint of the curse, there will be a period when you will be in this hole in the ground. The great-souled brahmanas offer excellent oblations at sacrifices, in the name of “Vasudhara”.[1125] Through our favours, as long as you are here, you will obtain those and hardships and despair will not touch you. O Indra among kings! As long as you are in this hole in this ground, you will not be afflicted by hunger or thirst. You will drink Vasudhara and your energy will not be diminished. Because of our boon, that god[1126] will be pleased with you and will convey you to Brahma’s world.’ This is the boon that all the residents of heaven granted to the king. The gods and the rishis, rich in austerities, returned to their own abodes.

‘“O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He always worshipped Vishvaksena.[1127] He always worshipped him through mantras that had emerged from Narayana’s mouth. O scorcher of enemies! Though he was in the hole in the ground, at five times of the day, he worshipped Hari, the lord of all gods, through the five sacrifices.[1128] The illustrious Narayana Hari was satisfied at his devotion. He was entirely devoted to him. He conquered his soul and was always faithful to him. In the presence of the best among brahmanas, the illustrious Vishnu, the granter of boons, smiled and spoke to the immensely swift Garuda, who was near him. ‘O supreme among birds! O greatly fortunate one! Listen to my words and go there. There is an emperor named Vasu. He has dharma in his soul and is devoted to me. Because of the wrath of the brahmanas, he has penetrated into the ground. The Indras among brahmanas have already been shown due respect. O supreme among birds! O Garuda! On my instruction, go to that hole in the ground. The best among kings can no longer travel up. Without any delay, bring him up into the sky.’ The bird, Garuda, left, with a speed that was like that of the wind. He entered the hole in the ground and saved Vasu, as he had been asked to. Vinata’s son violently rose up into the sky and quickly released him there. In a short instant, King Uparichara regained his senses. In his own body, the supreme among kings went to Brahma’s world. O Kounteya! In this way, in his ignorance, he committed a fault in speech. Because of the curse of the great-souled brahmanas, the performer of sacrifices obtained that end. However, he only worshipped the lord Hari, the great being. He was thus quickly freed from the curse and went to Brahma’s world. I have told you everything about the origin of men. I will now tell you everything about how the rishi Narada went to Shvetadvipa. O king! Listen with single-minded attention.”’

Chapter 1653(325)

‘Bhishma said, “Having arrived at the great Shvetadvipa, the illustrious rishi, Narada, saw those men, who were fair in complexion and were like the rays of the moon. He was honoured by them and he worshipped them in his mind, bowing his head down. Desiring to see the supreme one, he remained there, suffering all the hardships. The brahmana and great sage was single-minded and remained there, with his arms upraised. He chanted this *stotra*[1129] to the great-souled one, who is without qualities and is the universe.”

‘“Narada said, ‘I bow down before you. (1) O god of the gods![1130] (2) You are without acts. (3) You are without qualities. (4) You are the witness of the worlds. (5) You are kshetrajna. (6) You are infinite. (7) You are Purusha. (8) You are Mahapurusha.[1131] (9) You are the one with the three qualities. (10) You are Prathana.[1132] (11) You are amrita. (12) You are space. (13) You are eternal. (14) You are the existent and the non-existent, the manifest and the unmanifest. (15) You are the abode of truth. (16) You are the first among the gods. (17) You are the granter of riches. (18) You are Prajapati. (19) You are Suprajapati.[1133] (20) You are the trees. (21) You are the great Prajapati. (22) You are the lord of energy. (23) You are the lord of speech. (24) You are the lord of the mind. (25) You are the lord of the universe. (26) You are the lord of heaven. (27) You are the lord of wind. (28) You are the lord of the water. (29) You are the lord of the earth. (30) You are the lord of the directions. (31) You are the original abode.[1134] (32) You are Brahmapurohita.[1135] (33) You are Brahmakayika.[1136] (34) You are the one with the gigantic body. (35) You are Maharajika.[1137] (36) You are Chaturmaharajika.[1138] (37) You are Abhasura.[1139] (38) You are Mahabhasura.[1140] (39) You are Saptamahabhasura.[1141] (40) You are Yamya.[1142] (41) You are Mahayamya.[1143] (42) You are with a name and you are wihout a name. (43) You are Tushita.[1144] (44) You are Mahatushita.[1145] (45) You are Pratardana.[1146] (46) You are Parinirmita.[1147] (47) You are the one who possesses power. (48) You are Aparinirmita.[1148] (49) You are the sacrifice. (50) You are the great sacrifice. (51) You are the origin of sacrifices. (52) You are generated from sacrifices. (53) You are the womb of sacrifices. (54) You are the heart of sacrifices. (55) You are praised in sacrifices. (56) You are the one who takes shares in sacrifices. (57) You are the one who holds up the five sacrifices. (58) You are the one who creates the five measurements of time.[1149] (59) You are Pancharatra. (60) You are Vaikuntha. (61) You are the unvanquished one. (62) You are the one who is in the mind. (63) You are the supreme lord. (64) You are the one who has been bathed well.[1150] (65) You are Hamsa.[1151] (66) You are Paramahamsa.[1152] (67) You are supreme among those who sacrifice. (68) You are sankhya yoga. (69) You are the one who lies down on amrita. (70) You are the one who lies down on gold. (71) You are the one who lies down on the Vedas. (72) You are the one who lies down on kusha. (73)

You are the one who lies down on the brahman. (74) You are the one who lies down on the lotus. (75) You are the lord of the universe. (76) You are the one whom the universe follows. (77) You are prakriti in the universe. (78) There is fire in your mouth. (79) You are the fire that is in the form of a mare's head.[1153] (80) You are the oblations. (81) You are the charioteer. (82) You are vashatkara. (83) You are the sound of "Om".[1154] (84) You are the mind. (85) You are the moon. (86) You are the original eyes. (87) You are the sun. (88) You are the elephants in the directions. (89) You illuminate the directions. (90) You are Hayashira.[1155] (91) You are the first among those who know the hymns. (92) You are the five fires.[1156] (93) You are Trinachiketa.[1157] (94) You are the one who has laid down the six Vedangas.[1158] (95) You are Pragjyotisha.[1159] (96) You are first among those who chant the Sama hymns. (97) You are the one who upholds the vows of the Sama Veda. (98) You are Atharvashira.[1160] (99) You are Panchamahakalpa.[1161] (100) You are Phenapacharya.[1162] (101) You are Valakhilya. (102) You are Vaikhanasa.[1163] (103) You do not deviate from yoga. (104) You do not deviate from enumerating. (105) You are the beginning of a yuga. (106) You are the middle of a yuga. (107) You are the end of a yuga. (108) You are Akhandala. (109) You are the ancient womb. (110) You are Koushika. (111) You are Purushtuta.[1164] (112) You are Puruhuta.[1165] (113) The universe is your form. (114) You are infinite in your progress. (115) You are infinite in your pleasure. (116) You are infinite. (117) You are without beginning. (118) You are without a middle. (119) You are without a middle that is manifest. (120) You are without an end that is manifest. (121) You are the refuge of vows. (122) You dwell in the ocean. (123) You dwell in fame. (124) You dwell in austerities. (125) You dwell in prosperity. (126) You dwell in learning. (127) You dwell in fame. (128) You dwell in beauty. (129) You dwell in everything. (130) You are Vasudeva. (131) You are charming in every way. (132) You are Harihaya.[1166] (133) You are Harimedha.[1167] (134) You are the one who accepts shares in great sacrifices. (135) You are the granter of boons. (136) You are the one who upholds the rules of yama, niyama, great niyamas, austerities, extreme austerities, great austerities and all kinds of austerities. (137) You are the one who can be reached through the words spoken about the dharma of nivritti. (138) You are engaged in the rites of the Vedas. (139) You are without birth.

(140) You go everywhere. (141) You can see everything. (142) You cannot be grasped. (143) You do not move. (144) You are immensely powerful. (145) Your body is formed out of greatness. (146) You are pure. (147) You are immensely pure. (148) You are golden. (149) You are large. (150) You cannot be countered. (151) You cannot be comprehended. (152) You are foremost among brahmanas. (153) You are the creator of beings. (154) You are the destroyer of beings. (155) You are the one who displays great maya. (156) You are Chitrashikhandin. (157) You are the granter of boons. (158) You are the one who accepts a share of the sacrificial cakes. (159) You are the one who has travelled. (160) You are without thirst. (161) You are without doubt. (162) You have withdrawn from everything. (163) You are in the form of a brahmana. (164) You are affectionate towards brahmanas. (165) The universe is your form. (166) Your form is great. (167) You are the friend. (168) You are affectionate towards your devotees. (169) You are the god of brahmanas. (170) I am your devotee and wish to see you. (171) I wish to see you with single-minded devotion. I worship you. I bow down before you.'"'

Chapter 1654(326)

'Bhishma said, "The illustrious one was thus praised with secret names. The one who upholds the universe in his form showed himself to the sage Narada. His pure soul was somewhat like the moon, but it was also somewhat different from the moon. The lord's complexion was somewhat like that of the fire and his form was somewhat like that of a meteor. His complexion was somewhat like that of a parrot's feathers and his radiance was somewhat like that of a crystal. His radiance was seen to be somewhat like that of a mass of black antimony and somewhat like that of gold. His complexion was a bit like that of young coral and somewhat white. Some of the complexion was like that of gold and some of it was like lapis lazuli. The hue was a bit like blue lapis lazuli and a bit like sapphire. The complexion was somewhat like that of a peacock's neck and somewhat like that of a necklace of pearls. The eternal one was thus radiant in many diffierent kinds of complexions and diverse forms. He possessed a thousand eyes, one hundred beautiful heads and a thousand feet.

There were one thousand stomachs and one thousand arms and some of those could not be seen. With one of his mouths, he chanted 'Om'. With another mouth, he chanted 'Savitri'.[1168] When this was over, with other mouths, he chanted the beneficial four Vedas. The Aranayakas were also under the god, Hari Narayana's, control. In his hands, he held a sacrificial altar, a kamandalu, some *darbha* grass, some gems, a pair of sandals, a deerskin, a wooden staff and a blazing fire. The lord of gods and the lord of sacrifices held these in his hands and was cheerful. Narada, supreme among brahmanas, was delighted at this. Restrained in speech, he bowed down before the supreme lord. While his head was still bowed down, the first and undecaying god said, 'Wishing to see me, the maharshis Ekata, Dvita and Trita came to this spot. However, they could not see me. With the exception of someone who is single-minded in devotion towards me, no one can see me. O brahmana! It is my view that you are thus single-minded. These are the best of my forms, born in Dharma's house. You must always endeavour to worship these, who have appeared before you. O brahmana! Ask for whatever boon you desire from me. I am pleased with you today and have appeared in my universal form, which is without decay.'

'"Narada replied, 'O god! My austerities, yama and niyama have instantly received their fruits now, since your illustrious self has been seen by me. That I have seen your eternal self is the ultimate boon. O illustrious one! O immensely great lord! In your different forms, you see the entire universe.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Having thus shown himself to Narada, the one generated from Parameshthi again spoke these words. 'O Narada! Without any delay, leave this spot. These devotees of mine are like the moon in their complexions. They are devoid of senses and do not eat. They single-mindedly think of me. Let there not be any obstructions in their pursuits. They are successful and immensely fortunate. In ancient times, they were single-mindedly devoted to me. They have been freed from tamas and rajas. There is no doubt that they will merge into me. There is one who cannot be seen with the eyes. He cannot be touched with touch. He cannot be smelt through smell. He is beyond taste. He is beyond the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. He is a witness to everything and people speak of him as the atman. He is in the body of all creatures and is never destroyed. He is without birth. He is everlasting.

He is eternal. He is without qualities. He cannot be divided into components. He is beyond the twenty-four principles and is known as the twenty-fifth. He is the passive Purusha and is said to be comprehended through knowledge. O supreme among brahmanas! A person who merges into him is emancipated. He is known as Vasudeva. He is the eternal paramatman. O Narada! Behold the greatness and power of that god. He is never touched by good and bad deeds. Sattva, rajas and tamas are said to be the qualities. These exist in all bodies and roam around there. Though these qualities are enjoyed, kshetrajna does not enjoy them. He is without qualities. He is free from the qualities. He is the creator of qualities. He is superior to the qualities. O devarshi! When the universe is destroyed, the earth merges into water. Water merges into light. Light merges into the wind. The wind merges into space. Space merges into the mind. The mind is a supreme element and it merges into the unmanifest.[1169] O brahmana! The unmanifest merges into the inactive Purusha. There is nothing that is superior to the eternal Purusha. There is no creation in the universe, mobile or immobile, that is eternal. The only single exception is the eternal Purusha Vasudeva. The immensely powerful Vasudeva is in the atmans of all creatures. The great-souled one exists in bodies, known as the accumulation of the earth, the wind, space, water and light as the fifth. O brahmana! Though he cannot be seen, he uses his great valour to enter. That is how birth occurs, through the efforts of the lord. Without a combination of the elements, there cannot be a body. O brahmana! Without the jivatman, that combination of elements wouldn’t have moved. That jivatman is also known as the lord Shesha or Samkarshana. Using his own deeds, the one who arises from this is known as Sanatkumara. When all creatures are destroyed, it is into him that they merge. The mind of all creatures is known as Pradyumna. It is from him[1170] that the the doer and cause and effect arise. Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is generated from Aniruddha. He is also known as Ishana and he manifests himself through all his deeds. The illustrious Vasudeva is kshetrajna and possesses no qualities in his soul. When that illustrious one is born in any creature, he is known as the lord Samkarshana. Pradyumna is said to be generated from the mind and is born from Samkarshana. Aniruddha is generated from Pradyumna and is consciousness, or Maheshvara. Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is generated from me. O Narada! This is true of the destructible and the indestructible, the existent and the non-existent. Those who are devoted to me, enter me and are emancipated. Know that I am the inactive Purusha, the twenty-fifth. I am without qualities. I am without separate constituents. I am without opposite sentiments and I am without possessions. You will not understand this, since you are seeing me in a form. However, if I so desire, I can make this form disappear instantly. I am the preceptor of the universe. O Narada! That you can see me is only because of a maya that has been created by me. I seem to possess the qualities of all creatures, but that's because you cannot comprehend me. I have appropriately told you about my four forms. O sage! There are successful and immensely fortunate men who are single-minded in their devotion to me. They are freed from both tamas and rajas and they enter me. O Narada! I am the doer. I am the cause. I am the effect. The consciousness of creatures is because of me. All creatures find a refuge in me. All creatures are pervaded by me and do not think that you have seen me. O brahmana! I go everywhere. I am in the atmans of all categories of creatures. When the bodies of creatures are destroyed, I am not destroyed. I am Hiranyagarbha, the origin of the worlds. I have four faces and can be understood through nirukta. The eternal god Brahma thinks of me in many ways. Behold! The eleven Rudras are established on my right. The twelve Adityas are established on my left. Behold! The eight Vasus, supreme among gods, are established to my front. Behold! Nasatya and Dasra, the physicians,[1171] are to my rear. Look at all the Prajapatis. Look at the seven rishis. Look at the Vedas, hundreds of sacrifices, amrita, the herbs, the austerities, the niyamas, the separate yamas and the eight kinds of prosperity.[1172] Look at them in their embodied form. Look at Shri, Lakshmi,[1173] Kirti,[1174] the earth, the mountains and the goddess Sarasvati, the mother of the Vedas. Behold! They are all established in me. O Narada! Look at Dhruva[1175] and the best of the stellar bodies in the firmament and also at the oceans full of water, the lakes and the rivers. Behold the embodied forms of the best among the four classes of ancestors.[1176] Behold the three qualities. Abandoning their embodied forms, they are vested in me. O sage! Tasks undertaken for ancestors are held to be superior to tasks undertaken for gods. I alone am the original father of the gods and the ancestors. Along the northern and the western ocean, I became Hayashira. I drank the havya and the kavya, offered faithfully, to the accompaniment of mantras. Earlier, I created Brahma and he himself honoured me through sacrifices. Thus pleased with him, I granted him many excellent boons. At the beginning of the kalpa, I told him, “You will be born as my son and will be the supervisor of the worlds. Once there is consciousness, you will progressively be addressed by different names. No one will transgress the ordinances you lay down. O Brahma! For those who desire boons, you will also be the granter of boons. O one rich in austerities! O immensely fortunate one! Large numbers of gods and asuras, the rishis, ancestors who are rigid in their vows and many kinds of creatures will worship you. To accomplish the tasks of the gods, I will always manifest myself. O Brahma! For such purposes, you can always instruct me, like a father instructs his son.” Since I was pleased with him, I granted the infinitely energetic Brahma these and many other excellent boons. Thereafter, I again resorted to nivritti. Among all the kinds of dharma that lead to emancipation, nivritti is said to be the supreme. That is the reason one should follow nivritti and act so as to withdraw all one’s limbs. Preceptors like Kapila have set out their firm conclusions in the knowledge of sankhya. That is an aid in advancing towards my eternal self, with the resplendence of the sun. Metrical compositions have praised me as the illustrious Hiranyagarbha. O brahmana! In the sacred texts of yoga, I have been spoken about as the objective of yoga. I am established in the eternal firmament and am thus manifest in the sacred texts. At the end of one thousand yugas, I will destroy the universe again. I will withdraw all mobile and immobile objects into myself. O supreme among brahmanas! I will then exist alone, with nothing except knowledge. Using that knowledge, I will again create everything in the universe. My fourth form creates the undecaying Shesha. This is also spoken of as Samkarshana, and Pradyumna is created from this. From Pradyumna, I repeatedly create myself as Aniruddha. Brahma, the one who is born from the lotus, results from Aniruddha. All mobile and immobile creatures are created by Brahma. Know that this repeatedly happens in several kalpas. It is I who make the sun rise and set in the sky. When it has disappeared, at the right time, I use my force to bring back the extremely radiant one. For the sake of the welfare of creatures, it is I who will bring the earth forcefully back and restore her to her proper state.[1177] When all her limbs are destroyed in the girdle of the ocean, I will assume the form of a boar and bring her back to her right place. I will slay the daitya Hiranyaksha, intoxicated of his valour.[1178] To accomplish the tasks of the gods, I again will slay Diti's son, Hiranyakashipu, the destroyer of sacrifices, in the form of narasimha.[1179] The great asura Bali will be the powerful Virochana's son. He will dislodge Shakra from his own kingdom. Defeating Shachi's consort, he will deprive him of the three worlds. I will be born as the twelfth son of Aditi and Kashyapa.[1180]I will give the kingdom back to the infinitely energetic Shakra. O Narada! I will establish the gods in their own places. I will act so that Bali becomes a resident of the nether regions. In treta yuga, in the lineage of Bhrigu, I will be born as Rama.[1181] I will exterminate the kshatriyas, powerful with their soldiers and mounts. At the conjunction of treta and dvapara, I will be born as King Rama, the son of Dasharatha. Because of the injury that they caused to Trita, the two rishis who are the sons of Prajapati, Ekata and Dvita, will become malformed and will be born as monkeys.[1182] Born in those forms, those noble ones will be residents of the forest. O brahmana! They will become my allies in accomplishing the tasks of the gods. The terrible lord of the rakshasas will be the worst among those born in the Pulastya lineage. He will be like a thorn to the worlds. In a battle, I will kill Ravana and all his companions. When the intervening period between dvapara and kali is about to end, for Kamsa's sake, I will again manifest myself in Mathura. There, I will slay many danavas, who will be like thorns to the gods. I will dwell in Kushasthali, in the city of Dvaraka. While residing there, I will slay Naraka, the son of the earth, who will cause an injury to Aditi,[1183] and also the danavas Mura and Pitha. The beautiful city of Pragjyotishapura[1184] will be full of many kinds of riches. Having slain that supreme danava, I will bring those to Kushasthali. Shankara and Mahasena will be revered in the world of the gods, but they will be engaged in ensuring the welfare of Bana.[1185] Though they will exert themselves on his side, I will defeat the thousand-armed Bana and win back my son through force. I will also destroy all the residents of Soubha.[1186] There will be the famous Kalayavana, born from Garga's energy. I will slay him.[1187] The powerful Jarasandha will act against all other kings. That powerful asura will be born as the king of Girivraja. It is through my intelligence that someone else will kill him. When the armies of all the kings on earth come together, I alone will be the excellent aide to Vasava's son.[1188] The worlds will speak of us as the rishis Nara and Narayana. To accomplish the objectives of the world, these two lords will consume the kshatriyas. As is desired, we will reduce the burden of the world. O excellent one! I will create a terrible destruction that will devastate my own kin and absorb the foremost among the Satvatas and Dvaraka into my own self. With the four forms, I will thus perform immeasurable deeds. Honoured by Brahma, I will then go to the worlds that I have myself created. O supreme among brahmanas! It is I who will manifest himself as Hamsa and Hayashira. When the sacred texts of the Vedas were lost, I retrieved them.[1189] Earlier, in krita yuga, it is I who had composed the sacred texts of the Vedas. Whenever the Puranas and the sacred texts have suffered, from my excellent self, I have resurrected them several times. Having performed the tasks of the worlds, I have myself entered Prakriti. Single-minded in your devotion, you have been able to see me now and even Brahma has been unable to see me in this kind of form. O brahmana! O excellent one! Because you are faithful to me, I have told you everything, about the mysteries of the past and the future.' The illustrious and undecaying god, with the universe as his form, spoke these words and immediately vanished. The extremely energetic Narada obtained the desired favour. He went and saw Nara and Narayana in the hermitage of Badari. This great Upanishad[1190] is in conformity with the four Vedas and sankhya and yoga, and is referred to by this name in the pancharatra rituals. O son! This song arose from Narayana's mouth and was heard by Narada, in exactly the same way that it is uttered and heard in Brahma's abode."

'Yudhishthira asked, "The greatness of the intelligent one is extraordinary. Did Brahma not know what Narada had heard? What is the difference between the grandfather and that illustrious god? Why should he not know about the power of that infinitely energetic one?"

'Bhishma answered, "O Indra among kings! There have been thousands of mahakalpas and hundreds of mahakalpas and cycles of creation and destruction. At the beginning of every cycle of creation, Brahma is thought of as the lord who creates creatures. O king! He knows that the supreme among gods[1191] is superior to him. He is the paramatman. He is the powerful lord of the atmans. There were large numbers of siddhas who assembled in Brahma's abode and they wished to hear about the ancient accounts that were in conformity with the Vedas. He recited it to them.[1192] There, Surya heard it from the brahmana with the cleansed soul. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He repeated it to the sixty-six thousand rishis, with cleansed souls, who follow him.[1193] Surya had earlier been created to heat the worlds. Surya repeated the account to all those with cleansed souls. O son! Those great-souled rishis were Surya's followers. They repeated this excellent account to the gods who assembled on Meru. The brahmana Asita first heard it from the gods. O Indra among kings! That supreme among sages recounted it to the ancestors. O son! My father, Shantanu, told me about it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have recounted to you what I had heard. All the gods and sages who have heard this Purana repeatedly worship the paramatman. O king! This account has progressively been handed down by the rishis. It should never be recounted to someone who is not Vasudeva's devotee. O king! You have heard many other hundreds of accounts from me, but this represents the essence of the dharma described in those. O king! In ancient times, the gods and the asuras churned the ocean for amrita. In that fashion, the brahmanas churned the accounts for this amrita. If a man continuously reads it or hears it, alone, controlled and single-minded in his devotion, he obtains the great Shvetadvipa and becomes a man with the complexion of the moon. There is no doubt that he merges into the god with the one thousand rays. If a diseased person listens to this account, he is freed from his affliction. A curious person obtains the objects of his desire. A devoted person obtains the object of faith. O king! You should also always worship Purushottama. He is the mother and the father. He is the preceptor of the entire world. The illustrious and eternal one is the god of the brahmanas. O mighty-armed Yudhishthira! Let the mighty-armed Janardana be pleased with you."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O Janamejaya! On listening to this excellent account, Dharmaraja and all his brothers became devoted to Narayana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They spoke the words, "Let us be victorious because of the illustrious one. Let him always be victorious." Our supreme preceptor is the sage Krishna Dvaipayana. He uttered great words of chanting in Narayana's name. He went to the oceans of milk and amrita that are near the firmament and honoured the lord of the gods there. Then, he returned to his hermitage.'

Chapter 1655(327)

Janamejaya asked, ‘The illustrious god and lord is the one who receives the shares at sacrifices. He upholds the sacrifices and knows the Vedas and the Vedangas. He comforts those who are devoted to the illustrious one, established in the dharma of nivritti. Why has the illustrious one created the dharma of pravritti? Why has he arranged for the gods to share in the dharma of pravritti? Why has he created such ordinances for the intelligent ones who wish to engage in the dharma of nivritti? O brahmana! We have a doubt about this eternal mystery. Dispel it. You have heard the accounts about Narayana that are consistent with dharma. The worlds, Brahma, the gods, the asuras and men are always seen to be addicted to rites and engage in them. O brahmana! You have said that emancipation through moksha is supreme bliss. In this world, those who are freed from good and bad deeds merge into the auspicious god with the one thousand rays. The eternal dharma of moksha seems to be exceedingly difficult to follow. Therefore, all the gods abandon it and enjoy havya and kavya. Brahma, Rudra, Shakra, the lord who killed Bala, Surya, the lord of the stars,[1194] Vayu, Agni, Varuna, the sky, the universe and the remaining residents of heaven don’t seem to know about the knowledge of the atman that ensures destruction.[1195] That is the reason they do not resort to the certain, indestructible and undecaying path. It has been said that the existence of those who resort to pravritti is circumscribed by time. This is the great taint associated with deeds, being circumscribed by time. O brahmana! That is the reason I have this doubt in my heart, as if a stake has been impaled there. Dispel it by recounting the histories. My curiousity is great. O brahmana! Why are the gods spoken of as ones who accept shares in sacrifices? O brahmana! Why are the residents of heaven worshipped through sacrifices? O supreme among brahmanas! They receive shares in sacrifices. Why do they themselves perform great sacrifices and give away shares there?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O lord of men! The question that you have asked me is an extremely great mystery. A person who has not tormented himself through austerities, a person who does not know the Vedas and a person who is not acquainted with the Puranas is incapable of explaining this in its entirety.

However, I will tell you what you have asked me. In ancient times, our preceptor was Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, the great rishi Vedavyasa. Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, extremely firm in his vows, I as the fourth, and Shuka as the fifth are known as his disciples. All five of us were together and these disciples were controlled. We were pure in our conduct. We had conquered anger and had won victory over our senses. On the beautiful slopes of Mount Meru, frequented by the Siddhas and the charanas, we studied the Vedas, and the Mahabharata as the fifth.[1196] There, on one occasion, we had a doubt about the Vedas. This concerns the question that you have asked and we asked him.[1197] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you what I heard then. Parashara's son was the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance. On hearing the words of his disciples, the prosperous Vyasa spoke these words. "O excellent ones! I have tormented myself through extremely great and extremely terrible austerities. I thus know the past, the present and the future. I tormented myself through austerities and restrained my senses. Hence, because of the favours of Narayana, I dwelt on the shores of the ocean of milk. All the knowledge in the three worlds, everything that I desired, manifested itself before me. Based on that knowledge, I will tell you about this great doubt. Listen. Through the sight of knowledge, I got to know about everything that happened at the beginning of the kalpa. People who know about sankhya and yoga speak of him as the paramatman. Because of his own deeds, he has obtained the name of Mahapurusha. From him was generated the unmanifest being, whom the learned know as Pradhana. For the sake of creating the worlds, the manifest lord was generated from the unmanifest. In the worlds, this is known as Aniruddha and the great atman. The one who was generated from this manifest is the grandfather. He is spoken of as consciousness and he is full of every kind of energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Earth, wind, space, water and light as the fifth—these great elements resulted from consciousness. After creating the great elements, he again created their qualities.[1198] On the basis of the elements, the embodied beings were derived. Listen to them. Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, the great-souled Vasishtha and Svayambhuva Manu—these should be known as the eight Prakritis. The worlds are established on them. For the success of the worlds, Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, then created the Vedas, the Vedangas, combined with sacrifices and other elements of sacrifices. The entire universe was generated from the eight Prakritis. Rudra was generated from anger. Having been generated, he created ten others that were like himself. These eleven Rudras are known as Vikara-Purushas.[1199] Having been generated, for the success of the worlds, the Rudras and the prakritis who were the divine rishis approached Brahma. 'We have been created by your illustrious self, through the powers of Vishnu. O grandfather! What are the rights that will be vested in us? Having thought about the objectives, you must have determined rights for us. What powers will we have to protect and supervise those rights? Having thought about our rights, you must also instruct us about our strengths.' On being thus addressed, the great god spoke to those gods. 'O gods! O fortunate ones! It is good that you have brought this to my notice. This was also a thought that had arisen in my mind. How should the worlds be upheld and preserved? How should your strength and mine not be diminished in the process? Therefore, let us all go and seek the refuge of the witness of the worlds. He is the unmanifest Mahapurusha.[1200] He will tell us what is beneficial.' With the welfare of the worlds in mind, Brahma, the rishis and the gods went to the shores of the ocean of milk. They resorted to the austerities that Brahma had laid down in the Vedas. Those are the extremely terrible austerities that are known by the name of the great niyamas. They fixed their minds and raised their eyes and arms upwards. They stood on a single foot. They were controlled and were like pillars of wood. For one thousand celestial years, they tormented themselves through those wonderful austerities. Pleasant words, ornamented with the Vedas and the Vedangas, were then heard. 'O Brahma! O gods! O rishis who are rich in austerities! Welcome. All of you should listen to these excellent words. I know the reason why you have come, for the great welfare of the worlds. I will increase your strength of life so that you are engaged in tasks of pravritti. O gods! Desiring to worship me, you have tormented yourselves through excellent austerities. O great spirits! Now enjoy the excellent fruits of your austerities. This Brahma is the preceptor of the worlds. He is the grandfather of all the worlds. You are the best among the gods. Worship me with controlled minds. Always give me a share in the sacrifices that you perform. O lords! I will then ensure your benefit and lay down rights for you.' Hearing the words of the god of the gods, all the gods, Brahma and the maharshis were increasingly delighted. Following the rites laid down in the Vedas, they performed a sacrifice to Vishnu. Brahma determined the share that he would give to him.[1201] Similarly, all the gods and the devarshis also thought of the shares that they would give. They honoured him greatly and following the dharma of krita yuga, offered him a share. He is the Purusha who has the complexion of the sun and is beyond darkness. He is large and goes everywhere. He is the god Ishana, the lord who is the granter of boons. The god granted boons to all the immortals who were assembled there. The great lord was invisible, stationed in the sky, and spoke these words. 'The shares that you have given me have reached me. I am pleased with you. However, I will give you fruits that will be characterized by the cycle of rebirth. O gods! This is the certain fruit that you will obtain through my favours. In every yuga, you will perform sacrifices for the sake of boons and give away dakshina when the sacrifice is over. You will enjoy the fruits of those who follow pravritti. O gods! Following the ordinances of the Vedas, men will also perform sacrifices and give you shares at these. In the *sutra*s[1202] of the Vedas, I will lay down that whatever share someone has given me at this great sacrifice will be proportionate to the share that he receives at those sacrifices.[1203] Based on the shares obtained at the sacrifices, you will hold up the worlds. Those are your rights and you will think of the welfare of the worlds on that basis. You will be greatly honoured and obtain fruits from rites performed from pravritti. That will give you the strength to hold up the worlds. In the world, men will think of you at all these sacrifices. When you are gratified in this way, you will also gratify me. This is what I have thought of. That is the reason I have created the Vedas, sacrifices and herbs. If these are properly used on earth, the gods will be pleased. O best among the gods! As long as this kalpa is not destroyed, I have created you with the attributes of pravritti. O lords! Therefore, based on your rights, think of the welfare of the worlds. Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishtha—these seven were created from the powers of the mind. They will be foremost among those who know the Vedas. They have been thought of as the preceptors of the Vedas. However, because they will give birth to offspring, they will also follow the dharma of pravritti. This is eternal path of rites for manifest creatures. Aniruddha is spoken about as the lord who created the worlds. Sana, Sanatsujata, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, Kapila and Sanatana as the seventh—these seven will be spoken of as the rishis who were born through Brahma’s mental powers as his sons. They obtained vijnana on their own and will resort to the dharma of nivritti. They are foremost among those who know about yoga. They also know about the dharma of sankhya. They are the teachers of the sacred texts of emancipation. They are the ones who will expound the dharma of moksha. It is from me that the unmanifest has flowed earlier, as have the three great qualities.[1204] The one who is beyond these is thought of as kshetrajna and I am he. Along the path of rites, it is extremely difficult to obtain the spot from where there is no return. Different creatures have been created for different tasks. Helplessly, a creature obtains the fruits of pravritti or nivritti. This Brahma is the preceptor of the worlds. He is the original creator of the worlds. He is the father and the mother and your grandfather. It is on my instructions that he has become one who grants boons to all creatures. Rudra is junior to him and was created from his forehead. It is on Brahma’s instructions that he became one who grants boons everywhere. Go and exercise your own rights. Think of the appropriate rights. Without any delay, let all the rites be observed in all the worlds. O supreme among gods! Depending on the acts undertaken and conduct followed by creatures, determine their spans of life. This period of krita yuga will be the best. In this yuga, at sacrifices, no violence will be exhibited towards animals and there will be no violation of this. O gods! Dharma will possess all its four parts. Thereafer, there will be treta yuga. Animals will be slaughtered then, but only at sacrifices. One part of dharma will no longer exist and only three quarters will remain. After that, there will be the mixed period known as dvapara. Two parts of dharma will decay in that yuga. When that is over, kali yuga will present itself and only one quarter of dharma will remain.’

‘“The gods asked, ‘When only one quarter of dharma remains, where will we go? What will our tasks be then? O illustrious one! Tell us that.’

‘“The illustrious one answered, ‘O supreme among gods! You should frequent countries where the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities, truth, self-control, non-violence and the practice of dharma continue to be followed. Adharma will then not touch you with its feet.’”

'Vyasa continued, "Thus instructed by the illustrious one, the gods and the large numbers of rishis worshipped the illustrious one and went away to the regions they wished to go to. When the residents of heaven had gone, Brahma remained there. He remained there, wishing to see the illustrious Aniruddha. The god showed himself in the form of the great Hayashira. He held a kamandalu and tridanda and chanted the Vedas and the Vedangas. On seeing the infinitely energetic god, Hayashira, the lord Brahma, the creator of the worlds, desired the welfare of the worlds and bowed his head down in obeisance. He joined his hands in salutation and stood before the one who was the granter of boons. The god embraced him and spoke these words. 'Think of appropriate means so that all the worlds can progress. You are the creator of all beings and you are the lord and preceptor of the universe. I will impose this burden on you and be completely free from all anxiety. However, whenever the tasks of the gods becomes very difficult to undertake, using my knowledge, I will go to that place and manifest myself.' Having said this, Hayashira disappeared from the spot. Receiving the instructions, Brahma also went to his own world. He[1205] is the immensely fortunate one. He is the eternal Padmanabha. He is said to be the first one who receives shares in sacrifices. He is the one who always upholds sacrifices. He resorts to the dharma of nivritti, the dharma that leads to an indestructible end. However, for the welfare of the worlds, he has created the colourful dharma of pravritti. He is the beginning, he is the middle and he is the end of all creatures. He is the creator and he is the object of meditation. He is the doer and he is the task. At the end of a yuga, he withdraws the worlds and sleeps. At the beginning of another yuga, he awakes and creates the universe. Bow down to that god. He is without qualities, but has the qualities in his atman. He is without birth. The universe is his form. He is the refuge of all the residents of heaven. He is the lord of the great elements. He is the lord of the Rudras. He is the lord of the Adityas. He is the lord of the Vasus. He is the lord of the Ashvins. He is the lord of the Maruts. He is the lord of the Vedas and the sacrifices. He is the lord of the Vedangas. He always dwells in the ocean. He is Hari. He is Munjakeshi.[1206] He is tranquility for all creatures who are in search of the dharma of moksha. He is the lord of austerities, energy and fame. He is always the lord of speech and the lord of the rivers. He is the intelligent Kapardin, Varaha and Ekashringa.[1207] He is Vivasvat. He is

Ashvashira.[1208] He is the one who always bears the four forms. He is mysterious, but can be seen through knowledge. He is both indestructible and destructible. This is the undecaying god who pervades everything and goes everywhere. In ancient times, this is the one I beheld with my sight of knowledge. I have told you the truth about everything that you had asked me. O disciples! Act in accordance with my words and serve the lord Hari. Sing of him in the words of the Vedas and worship him, following the proper rites."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'The intelligent Vedavyasa told us this. He told all the disciples, including his son, Shuka, supremely devoted to dharma. O lord of the earth! We and our preceptor worshipped him, using hymns from the four Vedas. I have told you everything that you asked me about. O king! This is what my preceptor, Dvaipayana, said in earlier times. If a man is controlled in his mind, says, "I bow down before the illustrious one" and always listens to this account, or recites it, he is then free of disease, radiant, strong and handsome. An afflicted person is freed from ill health. A person who has been tied down is freed from his bondage. A person who desires something obtains the objects that he desires. A long lifespan is obtained. A brahmana gets to know all the Vedas. A kshatriya becomes victorious. A vaishya obtains great gain. A shudra obtains happiness. A person without a son obtains a son. A maiden obtains the desired husband. A lagnagarbha is freed.[1209] A woman who is expecting gives birth to a son. A barren woman gives birth and has many sons and grandsons. A traveller who reads this reaches his destination without facing any hardships. There is no doubt that everyone obtains the object that he desires. These are the words of the maharshi, after due deliberation. They speak about the great-souled Purusha and about the assembly of the rishis and the residents of heaven. Having heard, those devotees obtained great felicity.'

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Janamejaya said, 'O illustrious one! Vyasa and his disciples praised Madhusudana with many kinds of names that they uttered. You should tell me about those. I wish to hear about Hari, the lord of all Prajapatis. On hearing them, I will become purified and will be like the bright moon in the autumn.'

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! Listen to what the lord Hari told Phalguna.[1210] Cheerfully, the great-souled Keshava recounted these names. O king! Phalguna, the destroyer of enemy heroes, had asked Keshava about these names and the qualities and deeds that led to their being used.

‘Arjuna said, “O illustrious one! O lord of the past and the future! O creator of all beings! O immutable one! O refuge of the worlds! O protector of the universe! O one who grants the worlds freedom from fear! O god! There are names that the maharshis have used to praise you in the Vedas and the Puranas, because of your mysterious deeds. O Keshava! I wish to hear the true explanations about these. O lord! With the exception of you, there is no one else who is capable of explaining these names.”

‘The illustrious one replied, “O Arjuna! In the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Atharva Veda, the Sama Veda, the Puranas, the Upanishads, the sacred texts of sankhya, yoga and ayurveda, the maharshis have recounted many of my names. Some of those names are based on qualities, others are based on deeds. O unblemished one! Listen attentively. I will explain the ones that are based on deeds. O son! I will tell you. It has been said that in earlier times, you were half of me. I bow down to the extremely famous one, the paramatman who exists in all bodies. He is Narayana. He is the universe. He is without qualities. He possesses all the qualities in his atman. It is through his favours that Rudra was generated from Brahma’s rage. He is the womb of everything, mobile and immobile. O supreme among those who possess sattva! He possesses the eighteen qualities of sattva.[1211] After me, there is Prakriti, who holds up heaven and earth through her yoga. She is truth. She is immortal. She is invincible. She is the consciousness in the worlds. Everything, the transformations of creation and destruction, flow from her. The ancient and great Purusha is the sacrifice and the person who performs the sacrifice. He is known as Aniruddha and he is the reason behind the creation and the destruction of the worlds. O one whose eyes are like lotus petals! When Brahma’s night is over, it is through the favours of the infinitely energetic one that a lotus manifests itself. It is through his favours that Brahma is generated from this. When the day is over, it is because of that god that a son is born from the forehead, as the outcome of rage. This is Rudra, the destroyer.[1212] These two, the best among the gods, are said to be the result of favour and rage. They follow his indicated paths in becoming agents of creation and destruction. Though they are capable of granting boons to all creatures, they are actually nothing but instruments. Rudra is Kapardi, Jatila and Munda.[1213] His house is the cremation ground. He is a yogi who engages in fierce vows. He was terrible for Tripura.[1214] He destroyed Daksha's sacrifice and uprooted Bhaga's eyes. O Pandaveya! From one yuga to another yuga, know that Narayana is always present in his atman. O Partha! Therefore, if Maheshvara, the god of the gods, is worshipped, that is the same thing as the lord god, Narayana, being worshipped. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! I am the atman of all the worlds. Therefore, I single-mindedly worship Rudra as my own self. If Ishana Shiva, the granter of boons, is not worshipped, then I think of that as my own self not being worshipped. The worlds follow my ordinances. Those ordinances must be honoured and I also honour them. A person who knows him,[1215] knows me. A person who knows me, knows him. O Kounteya! Rudra and Narayana possess a single essence, although they divide themselves into two, pervade people and make them engage in all the acts. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! There is no one else who is capable of granting me a boon. In ancient times, I mentally thought this and worshipped the great-souled lord of the universe,[1216] for the sake of obtaining a son. There is no other god that Vishnu bows down before, with the exception of Rudra, who is my own self. Therefore, I worship him. Brahma, the Rudras, Indra and the rishis worship the god who is foremost among the gods, Narayana Hari. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Among creatures of the past, the present and the future, Vishnu is the foremost and he must always be served and worshipped. Bow down before Vishnu, the one to whom havya is offered. Bow down before the one who is the refuge. O Kounteya! Bow down before the one who is the granter of boons. Bow down before the one who eats havya and kavya. You have heard that four kinds of people are my devotees.[1217] Among these, the best are the ones who single-mindedly seek me, and not any other god, as the objective. They are without desire and do not pursue rites. Though virtuous, it is the view that the three other categories of devotees desire the fruits. They follow a dharma that leads to rebirth. The enlightened obtain the best outcome. It is said that enlightened ones may serve Brahma, Shitikantha[1218] or any of the other gods, but they obtain me, who is beyond them. O Partha! I have recounted the differences among my devotees. O Kounteya! You and I are known as Nara and Narayana. O Partha! We have entered these human forms to reduce the burden.[1219] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I know adhyatma yoga, who I am and where I have come from. I know the attributes of nivritti and the means whereby dharma is awakened. I alone am known as the eternal refuge of men. The water is known as Nara[1220] and Nara obtained birth from the waters.[1221] Since, in earlier times, the water was my road, I am known as Narayana.[1222] Assuming the form of Surya, I envelop the world and the universe with my rays. Since I am the dwelling of all creatures, I am Vasudeva.[1223] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I am the destination of all creatures and subjects. O Partha! My extreme splendour pervades heaven and earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the end, all perishable creatures desire to merge into me. O Partha! Since I make everything progressively flow, I am known by the name of Vishnu.[1224] People who desire success in self-control wish for me and I am in between heaven and earth. That is the reason I am Damodara.[1225] Food, the Vedas, water and amrita are known as prishni.[1226] Since I always bear these in my womb, I am known as Prishnigarbha. The rishis have said that when Trita was flung into a well and hurled there by Ekata and Dvita, he called out, 'O Prishnigarbha! Save Trita.' The rishi Trita, who was Brahma's original son, was thus raised from the well, after calling out the name of Prishnigarbha. The sun fiercely heats the worlds and there are the rays of the moon too. Know these to be my hair. The best among brahmanas, who know everything, therefore call me Keshava.[1227] When the great-souled Utathya's wife had conceived, through a maya worked by the gods, Utathya disappeared.[1228] Brihaspati, best among rishis, approached Utathya's wife for the sake of intercourse. O Kounteya! The fetus had already been formed, constituted of the five elements. It said, 'O one who is the granter of boons! I am already here. You should not oppress my mother.' Hearing this, Brihaspati was angered and cursed him. 'Since you have prevented me when I was about to engage in intercourse, there is no doubt that, because of my curse, you will be born blind.' In ancient times, thanks to the curse imposed by that foremost rishi, the rishi named Dirghatama was born and remained blind for a long time.[1229] He studied the eternal Vedas, the Vedangas and the subsidiary branches. Using this secret name, he invoked me. Following the prescribed ordinances, he repeatedly called out to Keshava. Because of this, he obtained his eyesight and later came to be known as Goutama. O Arjuna! This is the boon that the name Keshava grants to all the gods and great-souled rishis who invoke it. Agni and Soma come together and unite in the mouth.[1230] Everything in the universe, mobile and immobile, is based on the essence of Agni and Soma. This is what is said in the Puranas. Agni and Soma are spoken of as having united together. Agni is spoken of as the mouth of the gods. These two great ones come together and hold up the worlds.”’[1231]

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‘Arjuna asked, “In ancient times, how did it happen that Agni and Soma came together? O Madhusudana! I have a doubt about this. Dispel it.”

‘The illustrious one replied, “O descendant of the Pandu lineage! In this connection, there is an ancient account. O Partha! This concerns what was generated from my own energy. Listen with single-minded attention. When four thousand yugas are over, the time for cleansing arrives. All creatures, mobile and immobile, are destroyed and merge into the unmanifest. Light, earth and wind vanish. There is blind darkness everywhere and the world is covered in water. When everything is enveloped in this fashion, nothing other than the unmanifest exists. There is no night, nor day. There is no existence, or non-existence. There is no manifest, or unmanifest. In this state, Narayana is the refuge of qualities. He is without destruction. He is without old age. He is incapable of being grasped by the senses. He is without birth. He is truth. He is beyond the attributes of injury and gain. He is indestructible, immutable and immortal. He is without form, but pervades everything. In that darkness, he is the eternal Purusha who undertakes everything. The undecaying Hari then manifests himself. These are the signs then. There is no day. Nor is there night. There is no existence. Nor is there non-existence. In the beginning, there was only darkness everywhere in the universe. This darkness is spoken of as the mother of the universe. Purusha was born from that darkness. Brahma, born from the lotus, was generated from Purusha. Having been created, this being wished to create subjects and created Agni and Soma from his eyes. After this, the various categories of creatures were generated, progressively subjects like brahmanas and kshatriyas. Soma is the same as Brahma and Brahma is the same as brahmanas. Agni is nothing but the kshatriyas and the brahmanas were more powerful than the kshatriyas. Why did this happen? This is an evident attribute of the worlds. Everything was created after the brahmanas, not before them. Oblations are offered into the blazing Agni. After having created the various categories of beings, Brahma established these creatures, so that the three worlds might be held up. The mantras speak about this. 'O Agni! For the benefit of the universe, you are the one who receives the oblations at sacrifices. You are the one who is engaged in the welfare of gods, men and the worlds. There are signs for this. O Agni! In the universe, you are the one who receives the oblations at sacrifices. You are the one who is engaged in the welfare of gods, men and the universe. O Agni! You are truly the one who offers oblations and performs sacrifices.' Agni is Brahma. No oblations can be offered without mantras. There can be no austerities without someone to undertake them. Oblations are offered with mantras and worship. 'O Agni! The gods and men have appointed you as the receiver of oblations.' There are men who have been given the right to offer oblations. For kshatriyas, vaishyas and all the twice-born categories, it is only brahmanas who can officiate at sacrifices. That is the reason brahmanas are like Agni. They uphold sacrifices. The gods are satisfied through sacrifices. The gods sustain the earth. There are hundreds of ways to be a brahmana. If a learned person gives food to the mouth of a brahmana, that is like offering kindling and oblations into a fire. The learned have thus come to think of brahmanas as Agni. Since it penetrates all creatures and sustains life, Agni is also Vishnu. There is a shloka that Sanatkumara sung about this. 'In creating the universe, Brahma created them first. Through chanting about the brahman, those who are born as brahmanas become immortal and are established in the firmament and in heaven. The intelligence, speech, acts, faith and austerities of brahmanas hold up the earth and the sky, like great amrita sustaining one during the cold season. There is no dharma superior to the truth. There is no preceptor equal to the mother. In this world and in the next, there is nothing superior to a brahmana.' In a kingdom where brahmanas are without a means of subsistence, bulls do not grow or bear burdens, milk does not produce anything when it is churned and property comes under the possession of bandits. The Vedas, the Puranas and the histories state that brahmanas emerged from Narayana's mouth. They are in the atmans of everything. They are in all doers. They are in all creatures. It is said that when the god who is the granter of boons had restrained his speech, the brahmanas emerged first and all the other varnas were born later. That is the reason the brahmanas are superior to gods and asuras. In ancient times, I myself created gods, asuras and maharshis and established brahmanas as superior, so that they could restrain other creatures.

'"Because he oppressed Ahalya, Indra was cursed by Goutama and got a tawny beard. Through Koushika's curse, Indra lost his testicles and obtained a ram's testicles.[1232] When Chyavana wished to give shares to the Ashvins, Purandara, the wielder of the vajra, tried to prevent this and his arms were paralysed.[1233] When his sacrifice was destroyed, Daksha was overcome by great rage. He performed austerities again and obtained another eye on his forehead, to replace the one that had been uprooted by Rudra. When Rudra consecrated himself and advanced for the destruction of Tripura, Ushanas[1234] uprooted a strand from his matted hair and hurled it down. Serpents were generated from this. Oppressed by these serpents, his neck turned blue.[1235] Earlier, in Svyambhuva manvantara, Narayana had seized his throat with his hand and that is how it had turned blue. To obtain amrita, Brihaspati, born in the Angiras lineage, wished to perform purashcharana.[1236] However, when he tried to touch the water, it turned dirty. Brihaspati was enraged and cursed the water. 'When I tried to touch you, you did not show me your favours and your water turned filthy. Therefore, from now on, you will be dirty and will be populated by fish, makaras, other fish, turtles and aquatic creatures.' Since then, the waters of the ocean have been thus infested.

'"Vishvarupa, Tvashtri's son, was the priest of the gods. But his mother was related to the asuras.[1237] Outwardly, he offered shares to the gods. However, secretly, he offered shares to the asuras. With Hiranyakashipu at the forefront, the asuras went to their sister, Vishvarupa's mother, and asked for a boon. 'O sister! Your son, Vishvarupa, also known as Trishira, is Tvashtri's son. As a priest of the gods, he outwardly gives them their shares and only gives us a share privately. Because of this, the gods are prospering and we are suffering. You should restrain him, so that he also serves us.' At that time, Vishvarupa was in the forest of Nandana. His mother went to him and said, ‘O son! Why are you making the side of the enemy prosper and why are you destroying your maternal side? You should not act in this way.’ Unable to ignore his mother’s words, Vishvarupa honoured her and went over to Hiranyakashipu. At this, Hiranyakashipu was cursed by Vasishtha, Hiranygarbha’s son.[1238] ‘Since you have appointed someone else to offer the oblations, this sacrifice will not be completed. A being, the like of whom has never been born before, will slay you.’ Hiranyakashipu was slain because of this curse. To make his mother’s side prosper, Vishvarupa engaged in austerities. To make him desist from his vows, Indra and Agni sent beautiful apsaras. On seeing them, his mind was agitated and within a short period of time, he became attached to those apsaras. Realizing that he had become attached to them, the apsaras said, ‘We will not remain here any more. We will return to the place we have come from.’ Tvashtri’s son replied, ‘Where will you go? Stay here with me and I will do what brings you benefit.’ They answered, ‘We are celestial women, the apsaras. In earlier times, we obtained boons from Indra and the powerful Vishnu.’ At this, Vishvarupa replied, ‘Indra and the gods will no longer exist.’ He chanted a mantra and meditated. Because of the mantra, Trishira began to grow. In all the worlds, the brahmanas offered oblations and soma at sacrifices. With one mouth, he drank the soma. With a second mouth, he ate the oblations. With a third mouth, he sapped the energy of Indra and the gods. Indra saw that because he was drinking the soma, every limb of his body was growing. He began to worry. Indra and the gods went to Brahma and said, ‘Vishvarupa is drinking all the soma offered as oblations at sacrifices. We no longer obtain our shares. The side of the asuras is prospering and we are decaying. O creator! You should arrange for our welfare.’ Brahma replied, ‘The rishi Dadhicha of the Bhargava lineage is tormenting himself through austerities. Go and seek a boon from him, so that he gives up his body. Use his bones to construct a vajra.’ The gods went to the place where the illustrious rishi Dadhicha was tormenting himself through austerities. Indra and the gods went to him and said, ‘O illustrious one! We hope your austerities are proceeding well, without any hindrances.’ Dadhicha replied, 'Welcome. What can I do for you? I will do what you ask me to.’ They answered, ‘O illustrious one! For the welfare of the worlds, you should cast aside your body.’ Dadhicha was a great yogi. Joy and misery were the same to him and he was not distressed at this. He controlled his atman and gave up his body. When he had merged into the paramatman, Dhatri[1239] collected his bones and constructed the vajra. The invincible vajra was created with the bones of a brahmana and Vishnu penetrated it. Using this, Indra slew Vishvarupa and severed his head. Thereafter, when the body of Vishvarupa, Tvashtri's son, was churned, the energy gave birth to Vritra and Indra also killed Vritra. However, Indra was frightened because he had killed two brahmanas.[1240] He gave up the kingdom of heaven. He entered a lotus stalk that grew in the cool waters of Lake Manasa. Using the powers of anima obtained through yoga, he became minute and penetrated the fibres of the lotus. Shachi's consort, the protector of the three worlds, disappeared, terrified at having killed brahmanas. When the lord of the universe vanished, the gods were enveloped in rajas and tamas. Mantras were no longer chanted. Maharshis were attacked by rakshasas. The sons of the brahman disappeared. The worlds were without an Indra. Weakened, they were easily attacked. At this, the gods and the rishis instated Nahusha, the son of Ayusha, in the kingdom of heaven. There were five hundred blazing stars on Nahusha's forehead and they robbed everyone of energy. He began to rule in heaven. The worlds regained their natural state of comfort. Nahusha said, 'Everything that Shakra used to enjoy has presented itself before me. Shachi is the only exception.' Having said this, he went to Shachi and said, 'O extremely beautiful one! I am the Indra of the gods now and you should serve me.' Shachi replied, 'You are naturally devoted to dharma and you have also been born in the lunar dynasty. You should not oppress someone else's wife.' Nahusha said, 'I have obtained the title of Indra. I have obtained his kingdom and there is no adharma in enjoying anything that Indra used to enjoy.' She replied, 'There is a vow that I am observing now. Within a few days, after the vow has been completed, I will come to you.' When he was thus addressed by Shachi, Nahusha departed. Shachi was afflicted by grief. She wished to see her husband and was frightened of being seized by Nahusha. She went to Brihaspati. On seeing her approach, Brihaspati discerned through his meditations that she wished to ensure her husband's objectives. Brihaspati said, 'Because of the vow and austerities you have observed, you should summon the goddess Upashruti, the granter of boons. She will show Indra to you.' She engaged in those great rituals and using mantras, summoned the goddess Upashruti, the granter of boons. Upashruti arrived before Shachi and said, ‘Since you have summoned me, I have come here. What can I do to please you?’ Bowing her head down, Shachi replied, ‘O illustrious one! You should show me my husband. It is my view that you are the truth.’ He took her to Lake Manasa and showed her Indra, hidden in the fibres of the lotus. Seeing that his wife was pale and distressed, he began to think. ‘This is a great misery that has presented itself before me. My possessions have been destroyed and I confront this calamity.’ Indra asked her, 'How are you?’ She replied, ‘Nahusha has summoned me and I have only obtained the pledge of some time.’ Indra said, ‘Go. Speak these words to Nahusha. Tell him that he should come to you on a vehicle that has not been used before. Let him ascend a vehicle to which rishis have been yoked. Tell him that this is the desire in your mind, that there should be a vehicle that is superior to those possessed by Indra and that he should act so as to please you.’ Thus addressed, she left cheerfully. Indra again entered the fibres of the lotus. On seeing that Indrani[1241] had returned, Nahusha told her that the time period was over. Shachi repeated what Shakra had asked her to. He ascended a vehicle yoked to maharshis and came to Shachi. Agastya, born in a jar and the son of Maitravaruna, saw Nahusha being dragged by those maharshis. When he was touched by him with the foot,[1242] he told Nahusha, ‘You have performed a wicked act and will fall down on earth. As long as the earth and the mountains exist, you will be a snake.’ As soon as the maharshi spoke these words, he fell down. The three worlds were again without an Indra. For the sake of an Indra, the gods and the rishis went to the illustrious Vishnu. They said ‘O illustrious one! You should save Indra from the sin of having killed brahmanas.’ The granter of boons replied, ‘Let Shakra perform a horse sacrifice in Vishnu’s honour. He will then regain his status.’ The gods and the rishis searched for Indra, but could not find him. They went to Shachi and said, ‘O beautiful one! Bring Indra here.’ She again went to the lake. Indra arose from the lake and went before Brihaspati. For Shakra’s sake, Brihaspati arranged for a great horse sacrifice. Instead of a horse, a black antelope was used and Indra, the lord of the Maruts, was made to ride this. In this way, Brihaspati got his old state back for him. The king of the gods was cleansed of sin. Praised by the gods and the rishis, he was established in heaven. The sin of killing a brahmana was divided into four parts and vested in women, fire, trees and cattle. Indra's energy was thus extended through a brahmana. He could slay his enemies and also regain his own status.

'"In ancient times, maharshi Bharadvaja was on the banks of the Ganga that courses through the sky. At that time, he was touched by one of Vishnu's three feet.[1243] Bharadvaja picked up some water in his hand and struck him in the chest with this. This left a mark.[1244] Maharshi Bhrigu cursed Agni that he would devour everything. Aditi cooked some food for the gods, so that on eating it, they would be able to kill the asuras. Having completed a vow, Budha appeared before Aditi and asked for some alms. Aditi thought that no one should be given alms before the gods had eaten. At being refused alms, Budha, who possessed the brahman inside him, was enraged. He cursed her that when Vivasvat would have the second birth in Aditi's womb in the form of an egg, he would cause her pain.[1245] This form of Vivasvat, Martanda, is the god of funeral ceremonies.

'"Daksha had sixty daughters. He gave thirteen to Kashyapa, ten to Dharma, ten to Manu and twenty-seven to the moon. These twenty-seven, known as nakshatras, were equal. But Soma loved Rohini the most. The other wives were jealous. They went to their father and censured Soma. 'O illustrious one! All of us are equal in beauty. But he loves Rohini more.' They informed Daksha about this disrespect. Daksha cursed King Soma that tuberculosis would penetrate him. Thus struck by tuberculosis he went to Daksha. Daksha told him, 'Treat them all equally.' The rishis saw that Soma was afflicted by tuberculosis and said, 'Towards the western directions of the ocean, there is the tirtha known as Hiranyasara. Go and bathe there.' Soma went to the tirtha known as Hiranyasara. He went and bathed there. Having bathed, he was cleansed from his sin. Since that tirtha was illuminated by Soma, the tirtha has come to be famous by the name of Prabhasa.[1246] However, because of the curse, Soma still suffers from the inner trait of waning. On the night of the full moon, his complete form can be seen and is then gradually covered by lines of darkness. Even when he is sparkling, a dark sign can be seen on him, with the mark of a hare.[1247]

'"Maharshi Sthulashira went to the northern directions of Meru and tormented himself through austerities there. While he tormented himself through austerities there, an auspicious breeze began to blow. That breeze bore all kinds of fragrant scents and touched his body. His body was tormented because of those austerities. It was lean. Fanned by the breeze, his heart was satisfied. While he was fanned in this way, to satisfy him and show their beautiful selves, the trees blossomed out in flowers. He cursed them, 'You will not be able to bear flowers all the time.'[1248] In ancient times, for the welfare of the worlds, Narayana became a maharshi named Vadavamukha. He tormented himself through austerities in Meru and summoned the ocean there. Since it did not arrive when it had been summoned, through the heat of his body, the rishi stilled the waters of the ocean. He cursed them and said, 'Your water will be salty, like the sweat from a body. Your water will be sweet only when Vadavamukha drinks it.'[1249] Since that day, the waters of the ocean cannot be drunk, except by the one known as Vadavamukha.

'"Uma, the daughter of the Himalaya mountains, desired Rudra. Maharshi Bhrigu appeared before the Himalayas and said, 'Give your daughter, Uma, to me.' The Himalayas replied, 'I have already chosen Rudra as a groom.' Bhrigu said, 'You have refused me your beautiful daughter. Therefore, you will no longer be full of jewels.' Even today, the words of the rishi remain true. These are the different kinds of greatness of brahmanas. It is through the benedictions of brahmanas that kshatriyas are able to look upon this eternal and undecaying earth as their wife and are able to enjoy her. It is they who hold up the universe."'

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'The illustrious one said, "Surya and Chandra and their eternal rays are said to be my hair. They are known to separately exist and heat up the universe. Since they heat up the universe in this way, they cause delight. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! It is because of these deeds of Agni and Soma that I am known as Hrishikesha.[1250] I am Ishana, the granter of boons and the creator of the worlds. When I am invoked through prayers at a sacrifice, I accept the share. Since my complexion is the best one of tawny, I am known as Hari.[1251] Those who have thought about it regard me as amrita and the refuge of all the worlds. Since I am the truth, brahmanas praise me as Ritadhama.[1252] In earlier times, the earth had disappeared and was hidden. Since I found her out and raised her, the gods praise me as Govinda.[1253] I am known as Shipivishta, since I am devoid of body hair.[1254] Someone who is only covered in skin is known as Shipivishta. This is the only name in which the rishi Yaska anxiously chanted my name in sacrifices. Thus, I came to hold the secret name of Shipivishta. Having praised me through the name of Shipivishta, the intelligent rishi, Yaska, could use my favours to recover the nirukta, which had got submerged.[1255] I was not born earlier. I have not been born now. I will never be born. I am kshetrajna in all creatures. That is the reason I am known as Aja.[1256] I have never spoken anything that is inferior or obscene. The goddess, Sarasvati, Brahma's daughter, is the truth and is always with me. O Kounteya! The existent and the non-existent are immersed in my atman. In Pushkara, in Brahma's abode, the learned rishis addressed me as Satya.[1257] I have never deviated from sattva. Know that sattva has been created by me. O Dhananjaya! In this life too, as earlier, I have resorted to sattva. Those who act, but without any desires, think of me as Satvata. I can be seen by those who have the knowledge of sattva. I am Satvata, the lord of the Satvatas. O Partha! Assuming the form of a plough made up of black iron, I till the earth. O Arjuna! It is because of my dark complexion that I am known as Krishna.[1258] I have united the earth with space, the space with wind and wind with energy. The quality of Vaikuntha[1259] is in me. Emancipation is supreme felicity and dharma is said to be superior to both of these. Since I have never deviated from these in my deeds, I am known as Achyuta.[1260] People on earth know that the earth and the firmament extend in all directions. Since I hold all of them up, I am known as Adhokshaja.[1261] Those who are learned about nirukta and the Vedas and have thought about the purport of words have sung my praises, giving me the first share, and addressing me as Adhokshaja. The supreme rishis have invoked me by that single name too. With the exception of the lord Narayana, there is no one else in the world who can be addressed as Adhokshaja. Clarified butter, which sustains the life of creatures in this world, represents my rays. That is the reason concentrated ones who know about the Vedas address me as Ghritarchi.[1262] There are said to be three elements—bile, phlegm and the wind. Their union is said to constitute all deeds. It is said that when these are weak, creatures are also weakened. In Ayurveda, I am therefore spoken of as Tridhatu.[1263] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the world, the illustrious Dharma is known by the name of Vrisha. Thus, in the words of Nighantuka, I am known as the supreme Vrisha.[1264] Kapi is said to be the best among boars and Vrisha is said to be the best among dharma. Therefore, Prajapati Kashyapa has addressed me as Vrishakapi.[1265] I am without beginning, without middle and without end. The gods and the asuras have never been able to comprehend my beginning, my middle, or my end. I have been praised as the lord, the lord who is a witness to the worlds. O Dhananjaya! I do not hear, or cause to be heard, anything that is inauspicious. I do not accept anything that is wicked. Hence, I am Shuchishrava.[1266] In earlier times, I assumed the form of a boar and it possessed a divine form, with a single horn. In that form, I raised up the earth. That is the reason I am Ekashringa.[1267] When I assumed that form of a boar, I had three humps. As a measure of my body, I became famous as Trikakud.[1268] Those who have thought about the knowledge propounded by Kapila speak of me as Virincha.[1269] I am Prajapati, the consciousness that created all the worlds. With knowledge as a companion, I am established in the eternal Aditya. Those who have arrived at conclusions about sankhya also refer to me as the preceptor, Kapila. I am praised in the chants as the radiant Hiranyagarbha. I am always worshipped by yogis and I am known as Vibhu.[1270] I have been spoken about in the twenty-one recensions of the Rig Veda.[1271] Those learned in the Vedas have spoken about me in one thousand branches of the Sama Veda. Devoted brahmanas who sing about me in the *Aranyaka*s are extremely rare. The adbvaryu priests have spoken about me in one hundred and one branches of the Yajur Veda. The brahmanas who know about the Atharva Veda have thought of me as the five kalpas and the rituals of the Atharva Veda.[1272] Know that all the recensions, divisions, knowledge, branches, songs, vowels and pronunciation have been fashioned by me. O Partha! Hayashira, the granter of boons, arose. I am he and all the subsequent sections, divisions and syllables are based on me. It is through the instructions of Rama and my favours that the great-souled Panchala progressively obtained that eternal being.[1273] He was born in the Babhravya gotra and progressively became accomplished. Through Narayana's boon, he attained supreme yoga. Thus, Galava was progressively led on to set out rules on shiksha.[1274]

Kandarika and King Brahmadatta repeatedly kept thinking about the misery that comes through birth and death.[1275] Through their efforts, they obtained supreme prosperity for seven births. O Partha! In earlier times, for a certain reason, I was born as Dharma's son. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! I was therefore known as Dharmaja. Earlier, I performed undecaying austerities as Nara-Narayana. On the slopes of Mount Gandhamadana, I ascended on that vehicle that leads to dharma. There was a time when Daksha performed a sacrifice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He refused to earmark a share for Rudra. Following Dadhicha's instructions, he repeatedly hurled his blazing spear and uprooted Daksha's sacrifice. The spear reduced Daksha's entire sacrifice to ashes and violently advanced towards us in the hermitage of Badari. O Partha! It descended with great force on Narayana's chest. Narayana's hair became suffused with energy and assumed the complexion of munja grass. That is the reason I am known as Munjakesha. The great-souled Narayana repulsed the whirling spear with the sound of '*Hum*' and it returned to Shankara's hand. At this, Rudra attacked the rishis who were engaged in austerities. When he attacked in this way, Narayana, the soul of the universe, seized his throat with his hand, and he became Shitikantha. To destroy Rudra, Nara picked up a blade of grass. He swiftly invoked mantras and it became a giant battle axe. He hurled it violently, but Rudra shattered it into fragments before it reached him. Since the battleaxe was shattered, I came to be known as Khandaparashu."[1276]

'Arjuna said, "O Varshneya! That encounter was capable of devastating the three worlds. O Janardana! Who was victorious? Tell me."

'The illustrious one replied, "An encounter started between the souls of Rudra and Narayana. All the worlds suddenly became anxious. The fire god no longer accepted the auspicious oblations offered at sacrifices. The Vedas no longer manifested themselves before the rishis who possessed cleansed souls. Rajas and tamas penetrated the gods. The earth trembled and the firmament started to waver. All the energy diminished and Brahma was dislodged from his seat. The oceans dried up and the Himalayas were shattered. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Ominous portents manifested themselves. Brahma, surrounded by large numbers of gods and the great-souled rishis, swiftly went to the spot where the battle had commenced. The four-faced one[1277] can only be comprehended through nirukta. Because of those portents, he joined his hands in salutation and spoke to Rudra. ‘Let everything in the worlds be auspicious. O lord of the universe! For the welfare of the universe, you should thrown down your weapon. He is indestructible. He is unmanifest. He is the lord who has created the worlds. He is subtle. He is the doer. He is beyond opposites. He is the learned one. He has assumed this manifest form. Nara and Narayana have been born in Dharma’s lineage and actually have a single and auspicious form. These best of gods are engaged in great austerities and major vows. For a different reason, I have also been generated from them. O son! Though you are eternal, in an earlier cycle of creation, you have been born from his rage. O one who is the granter of boons! With the gods and the maharshis, I am soliciting your favours. Let there quickly be peace in the worlds.’ Thus addressed by Brahma, Rudra withdrew the fire of his anger and sought to please the lord god Narayana. He sought the refuge of the one who should be worshipped, the granter of boons, Hari. The god, the granter of boons, was in control of his rage and had vanquished his senses. He cheerfully met Rudra. He was worshipped by the rishis, Brahma and the gods. Hari, the lord of the universe, spoke to the god Ishana. ‘He who knows you, knows me. He who follows you, follows me. There is no difference between you and me. Do not think otherwise. Your spear will leave the srivatsa mark on my chest. My hand will leave a beautiful mark on your throat, to be known as shrikantha.’[1278] They thus left marks on each other. Rudra and the rishis exhibited a great deal of friendliness towards each other. Giving permission to the residents of heaven to go, they[1279] engaged in austerities again. O Partha! I have told you how Narayana was victorious in that encounter. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have also told you about the secret names and their meanings. The rishis speak about these and recount them. O Kounteya! In this way, I roam around the earth in many forms and also in the world of Brahma and eternal Goloka.[1280] You were protected by me in the great battle and obtained victory. O Kounteya! When the battle presented itselft, there was a being who advanced in front of you. Know him to be Rudra Kapardin, the god of the gods. He is also known as Kala[1281] and he was born out of my rage. He had already slain all your enemies. Uma’s consort, the god of the gods, is immeasurable in his power. Bow down before that god. He is the lord of the universe and he is the undecaying Hara."'[1282]

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Janamejaya said, 'O brahmana! You have narrated a great account. On hearing this, all these sages are overcome by great wonder. This has been churned from the excellent and extensive ocean of knowledge known as the Mahabharata, consisting of one hundred thousand,[1283] like getting butter from curds, sandalwood from Mount Malaya, the Aranyakas from the Vedas and amrita from herbs. O brahmana! O store of austerities! You have raised it like excellent amrita and stated it, based on accounts about Narayana. The illustrious lord and god has created the atmans of all creatures. O supreme among brahmanas! Narayana's energy is impossible to look at. Brahma and all the other gods, the rishis, the gandharvas and everything mobile and immobile merge into him at the end of a kalpa. I do not think that there is anything in heaven that is more sacred than him. Visiting all the hermitages and bathing in all the tirthas do not yield as many fruits as listening to Narayana's account does. Hari is the lord of the universe and is the one who destroys all sins. There is nothing colourful that was done by the noble Dhananjaya. Nor is there any excellent victory that was accomplished by him. After all, he had Vasudeva as his aide. I think that someone who has Vishnu, the protector of the three worlds, as his friend, is capable of obtaining anything in the three worlds. O brahmana! All these ancestors of mine were blessed. Janardana was engaged in their welfare and prosperity. The illustrious one is revered in the worlds and cannot be seen through austerities. However, they directly saw the one adorned with the shrivatsa mark on his chest. Narada, Parameshthi's son, was even more fortunate. Narada is known as the undecaying rishi whose energy is significant. He went to Shvetadvipa and saw Hari himself. It is through that god's favours that he obtained that vision. There, he saw the god in the form of Aniruddha. Thereafter, he again went to the hermitage of Badari to see Nara and Narayana. Why did the sage do that? Having returned from Shvetadvipa, the rishi Narada, Parameshthi's son, again went to the hermitage of Badari.

After returning from Shvetadvipa, the extremely great-souled one went there. How long did he dwell there and what did he ask them? What did the great-souled rishis, Nara and Narayana, say? Tell me the truth about this. You should tell me everything.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘I bow down to the illustrious and immensely energetic Vyasa. I will narrate this account about Narayana through his favours. Having reached the great Shvetadvipa, he saw the immutable Hari. O king! Narada then swiftly returned to Meru. The brahmana bore in his heart the words spoken by the paramatman. O king! Thereafter, he thought to himself that he had achieved great success. He had travelled a long distance and had returned safe. From Meru, he went to Mount Gandhamadana. He travelled through the sky and quickly descended on the extensive region of Badari. There, he saw the ancient gods, the supreme rishis. They were engaged in extremely great austerities and were following wonderful vows, basing themselves on their own atmans. Their energy illuminated all the worlds and was greater than that of the sun. Those revered ones bore the srivatsa mark and their hair was matted. They had the marks of a jalapada on their palms.[1284] Their feet bore the auspicious marks of a chakra. Their chests were broad. Their arms were long. They possessed four arms each. They possessed sixty teeth each and their voices rumbled like the clouds. Their faces were beautiful and their foreheads were broad. Their jaws were beautiful and their eyebrows and noses were excellent. Their heads were like umbrellas. These were the signs that those two great beings were marked with. On seeing them, Narada was delighted. He worshipped them and was honoured back in return. They welcomed him and asked him whether he was well. On seeing them, Narada thought within himself, “These two Purushottamas, revered by all creatures, are just like the supreme rishis I saw in Shvetadvipa.” Thinking this in his mind, he circumambulated them and sat down on an auspicious seat that was made out of kusha grass. They were the abodes of austerities. They were illustrious and full of energy. Those rishis were tranquil and self-controlled. Having performed their ablutions, they calmly honoured Narada with water for washing the feet and a gift. O king! After observing the rites to welcome a guest, they sat down on two wooden seats. When they sat down there, the entire area was illuminated. It was just like a sacrificial altar, blazing with large flames of the fire, when oblations have been offered. Narada was happily seated. He was rested and having been received with hospitality, was cheerful. Narayana spoke to him. “The original and eternal paramatman is illustrious. He is the supreme form of our Prakriti and you have seen him in Shvetadvipa.”

‘Narada replied, “I have seen that illustrious and immutable Purusha. The universe is his form. All the worlds and the gods and the rishis are in him. Having seen the two of you now, I see that eternal one in you. The unmanifest Hari did not possess a form. But the signs he possessed are the signs that exist in you, in manifest and embodied forms. There, I saw you on both sides of the god. Having taken the permission of the paramatman, I have come here. With the exception of you two, born as Dharma’s sons, who in the three worlds can possess energy, fame and prosperity like his? Earlier, he has told me the signs of the kshetrajna. He has also told me how he will manifest himself in the future. In Shveta, there were men who were devoid of their five senses. Their knowledge has been awakened and they are Purushottama’s devotees. They always worship the god and he finds pleasure in them. The illustrious paramatman is affectionate towards his devotees and loves brahmanas. He always finds pleasure in those who are devoted to the illustrious one. The god enjoys everything in the universe and is friendly and affectionate towards his devotees. He is the doer. He is the cause and the effect. He is immensely powerful and radiant. That supreme one in Shvetadvipa represents austerities and sacrifices for those who are united with their atmans. He is famous for his energy. He is illuminated through his own radiance. For successful ones in the three worlds, who have cleansed their souls, he is tranquility. There, the devoted ones have resorted to vows, using their auspicious intelligence. The lord of the gods performs very difficult austerities in a spot where the sun does not heat, the moon does not shine and the wind does not blow. The enjoyer of the universe has constructed an altar on the ground and it measures the length of eight palms. The god is stationed there, standing on a single foot and with his arms raised. He faces the eastern direction. He performs those extremely difficult austerities, chanting from the Vedas and the Vedangas. Brahma, the rishis, Pashupati himself, the other best among gods, daityas, danavas, rakshasas, serpents, birds, gandharvas, siddhas and rajarshis always offer havya and kavya, following the ordinances. All of these present themselves at that god’s feet. Intelligent ones perform rites with single-minded attention. That god himself receives all these on his head. There is no one he loves more in the three worlds than learned and great-souled ones who are single-minded in their devotion to him. Having been given permission to leave by the paramatman, I have come here. The illustrious god, Hari, himself told me that I should always reside with you, obtaining supreme benedictions.”’

Chapter 1660(332)

‘Nara and Narayana said, “You are blessed, since you have seen and have been favoured by the lord himself. The one who has been born from the lotus[1285] has himself been unable to see him. The illustrious Purushottama has an unmanifest origin and is extremely difficult to see. O Narada! The words we are speaking to you are entirely true. O best among the brahmanas! There is no one in the worlds that he loves as much as a devotee. That is the reason he has shown himself to you. The paramatman torments himself through austerities in a region. O supreme among brahmanas! With our exception, no one is capable of going there. Because of his radiance, that place seems to be illuminated by one thousand suns together. That place shines through his own resplendence. O brahmana! He is the lord behind the creation of the universe. The quality of forgiveness, and the best among those who forgive, the earth, arose from him. For the welfare of all creatures, the quality of taste also arose from that god and the attribute of fluidity that is associated with the water. It is from that god that light, and the quality of form with which it is associated, arose. United with this, the sun radiates the worlds. It is from the supreme god Purushottama that touch has arisen. United with the wind, this makes the worlds feel. Sound arose from the god who is the lord of the universe. This is attached to space, which extends unconstrained in all the directions. Mind arose from that god and is inside all beings. This becomes attached to the moon and assumes the quality of showing things. That place, associated with the Vedas, is known as the region where the six elements arose.[1286] The illustrious one, the devourer of havya and kavya, resides there, accompanied by knowledge. O supreme among brahmanas! There are people who have been cleansed from sin and are disassociated from good and bad deeds. They are capable of going to that sacred region. That is a region which frees the worlds from delusion and Aditya is said to be the door to that. On entering Aditya, the bodies of such people are consumed. Others are rendered invisible. Becoming like atoms,[1287] such people merge into the god. They are thus emancipated and are established in Aniruddha. After that, they only retain the attributes of the mind and merge into Pradyumna. Freed from Pradyumna, the being next enters Samkarshana. The best among brahmanas, those who know about sankhya and are devoted, merge there. O best among brahmanas! When the three qualities[1288] are completely extinguished, they merge into the paramatman, the kshetrajna who is devoid of qualities. Truly know that Vasudeva, the refuge of everything, is kshetrajna. There are those who have controlled their minds, are restrained and have checked their senses. Single-minded in devotion, they enter into Vasudeva. O supreme among brahmanas! We have been born in Dharma’s house. Dwelling in this beautiful spot, we have practised fierce austerities. O brahmana! We have done this for the welfare of the three worlds, so that the supreme one, beloved by the gods, can manifest himself. O supreme among brahmanas! We have observed rites that have not been witnessed earlier. We have properly observed all the wonderful vows of hardship. O store of austerities! In Shvetadvipa, you saw us too. Having met the illustrious one, you formed a resolution and we know about it. We know everything in the three worlds of mobile and immobile objects, everything that has happened, is happening and will happen, good or bad.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘They were engaged in fierce austerities. Having heard their words, Narada, devoted to Narayana, joined his hands in salutation. He meditated on many kinds of mantras, all of which had originated with Narayana. He spent one thousand divine years in the hermitage of Nara and Narayana. The immensely energetic and illustrious rishi, Narada, dwelt there. He worshipped the gods, Nara and Narayana.’

Chapter 1661(333)

Vaishampayana said, ‘There was a time when Narada, Parameshthi’s son, resided there. Having performed rites in honour of the gods, he thereafter got ready to perform rites in honour of the ancestors. At that time, the lord who was Dharma’s elder son spoke these words. “O best among brahmanas! What are these rites you are performing in honour of the gods and the ancestors? You are the best among intelligent ones. Tell us about these rites from the sacred texts. Why are you undertaking these rites? What are the fruits you desire?”

‘Narada replied, “Earlier, you yourself said that rites in the honour of the gods must be performed. You said that sacrifices to gods are supreme, from the point of view of obtaining the eternal paramatman. It is because of what you have determined that I perform sacrifices to the undecaying Vaikuntha. Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, was formerly generated from him. Parameshthi cheerfully gave birth to my father, though I was the first son that he mentally thought of.[1289] I am performing this sacrifice for my virtuous ancestors and observing the rites in honour of Narayana. The illustrious one is my father, my mother and my grandfather. I always perform these rites and sacrifices in honour of the ancestors, to worship the lord of the universe. The gods instructed the various sacred texts to their sons and the latter offered sacrifices to their ancestors. However, when the Vedas and sacred texts were destroyed, they again had to study them from their sons.[1290] Using the mantras, the sons therefore became like fathers. In this way, fathers and sons came to worship each other and these ancient accounts are certainly known to both of you. Having first spread kusha grass on the ground, I have offered three pindas to the ancestors.[1291] In ancient times, why did the ancestors come to acquire the name of pindas?”

‘Nara and Narayana replied, “In ancient times, the earth was destroyed and disappeared inside the girdle of the ocean. Assuming the form of a boar, Govinda swiftly raised it up. Purushottama established the earth in its proper place. He raised it to accomplish the objective of the worlds and his limbs were covered in water and mud. The sun was at its midday position then and it was time to perform the afternoon ablutions. The lord violently shook his tusks and three balls of mud fell down from there. O Narada! He laid these out on a bed of kusha grass on the ground. Following the proper rites, he offered these to the ancestors, that is, to himself. Following the ordinances, the lord thought of these as three pindas. The heat generated from his own body became the oil obtained from sesamum seeds. The lord of the gods faced the eastern direction and himself declared these special rules. So as to establish the ordinances, he spoke these words. ‘I am the ancestor. I have readied myself to create the worlds.’ Having thought this, he immediately began to think of rites in honour of the ancestors. There were those three lumps of mud that fallen down from his tusk on the ground, in the southern direction. He declared that these balls on the ground should thereafter be known as pindas offered to the ancestors. ‘These three have no from. Let these pindas on the ground be assumed to have form. I have thus created the eternal ancestors for the worlds. I am the father, the grandfather and the great grandfather. It is I who will be regarded as being established in these three pindas. There is no one who is superior to me. Whom can I myself worship? Who is my father in this world? Who is my grandfather? I am the grandfather, the father and the cause.’ These were the words that Vrishakapi, the god of the gods, spoke. O brahmana! On the slope of a mountain, the boar spread out and offered those pindas. Having worshipped himself, he disappeared at that spot. Through this auspicious intelligence, the pindas came to be known as the ancestors. Following Vrishakapi’s words, they always obtain the worship. If a person worships the ancestors, the gods, the preceptors, the guests, cattle, the foremost among brahmanas, the earth and the mother, in deeds, mind and thoughts, then it is as if that person worships Vishnu. That illustrious one is inside all bodies. The lord is impartial towards all creatures and towards happiness and unhappiness. He is the large and great-souled one. He is inside all atmans. He is known as Narayana.”’

Chapter 1662(334)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing these words of Nara and Narayana, Narada became extremely devoted towards that single god. He spent one thousand years in Nara and Narayana’s hermitage. He heard accounts about the illustrious one and saw the undecaying Hari. Then he quickly went to his own hermitage, on the slopes of the Himalayas. The famous rishis, Nara and Narayana, continued to dwell in their own beautiful hermitage, tormenting themselves through supreme austerities. You are extremely valiant. You are the extender of the lineage of the Pandavas. Having heard about these accounts, right from the beginning, you have been completely purified. O supreme among kings! A person who hates the immutable Vishnu in deeds, thoughts and words, possesses neither this world, nor the next. For an eternal number of years, his ancestors are submerged in hell. This is what happens to someone who hates the best among the gods, the god Narayana Hari. How can one hate someone whose atman is in all the worlds? O tiger among men! Know that Vishnu is established in all atmans. Our preceptor is the rishi who is Gandhavati's son.[1292] O son! He is the one who told us about the paramatman's greatness. O unblemished one! I have told you what I heard from him. Know that Krishna Dvaipayana is the lord Narayana. O tiger among men! Who else could have composed the Mahabharata? Other than that lord, who could have spoken about the many kinds of dharma? The great sacrifice that you thought of, is going on.[1293] Having listened to the truth about what the sacred texts say about dharma, think of a horse sacrifice.

'Souti said, "The king who was Parikshit's son heard this great account.[1294] He started all the rites that were necessary for the completion of the sacrifice."'

Vaishampayana said, 'I have recounted to you the stories about Narayana. O king! In earlier times, Narada told my preceptor about these, in the hearing of the rishis, the Pandavas, Krishna and Bhishma. He[1295] is the supreme preceptor and the lord of the universe. He is the one who holds up the earth. He is the store of tranquility and rituals. He is the store of the sacred texts and humility. He is engaged in the supreme welfare of brahmanas. The beneficial Hari should be your destination. He is the great store of extremely great austerities. He is famous. He is worshipped by the ones who do not cause injury. He is the single refuge. He is the end that grants freedom from fear. He is the one who accepts shares at sacrifices. He is beyond the three qualities. He has four and five sacred forms.[1296] He accepts a share in the fruits of sacrifices. He is always worshipped. He cannot be vanquished. He is extremely strong. He is the destination for the atmans. He constitutes the good deeds of the rishis. He is a witness to the worlds. He is without birth. He is the Purusha. He is like the sun in complexion. He is the lord who progresses along many paths. He is the single one to whom one should bow down. He emerged from the waters. It is before him that the rishis bow down. He is the origin of the worlds. He is the immortal destination. He is subtle, ancient, immobile and supreme. He is the one who is always upheld by intelligent ones who know about sankhya and yoga, those who are controlled in their souls and know about him.’

Chapter 1663(335)

Janamejaya said, ‘I have heard about the greatness of the illustrious paramatman, about how he was born in Dharma’s house in the form of Nara and Narayana and about the ancient origin and creation of pinda by the great boar. O brahmana! O unblemished one! I have heard how the modes of pravritti and nivritti were thought of. Earlier, you have also spoken about Hayashira, the devourer of havya and kavya, Vishnu’s form that arose from the north-eastern part of the great ocean. That was seen by the illustrious Brahma Parameshthi. O supreme among intelligent ones! When Hari, the upholder of the worlds, adopted that form in earlier times, what were the aspects of power and greatness that had not been witnessed earlier? O sage! On seeing that sacred and infinitely energetic form of Hayashira, foremost among the gods and never witnessed earlier, what did Brahma do? O brahmana! Based on that ancient account, such a doubt has arisen. Why did the great being create this excellent form? O brahmana! You have purified us by telling us about these sacred accounts.’

Vaishampayana replied,[1297] ‘I will tell you everything about that ancient account, which is in conformity with the Vedas. This was told to the king who was Dharma’s son by the illustrious Vyasa. On hearing about the god Harimedha[1298] adopting the form of Hayashira, there was a doubt in the king’s mind and he went and asked him.[1299] Yudhishthira asked, “Brahma saw the god in the form of Hayashira. Why did this happen and why did the god appear in such a form?”

‘Vyasa said, “O lord of the earth! Everything in the world that possesses a body is made out of the five elements. This creation results from the lord’s intelligence. The great god and lord, Narayana, is the creator of the universe. He is in the atmans of all beings. He is the granter of boons. He is with qualities and without qualities. O supreme among kings! It is the unmanifest one who brings about the destruction of beings. Listen. First, the earth was submerged in water and everything was one large ocean. Water merged into light and light merged into the wind. The wind merged into space and space merged into the mind. Mind merged into the manifest[1300] and the manifest merged into the unmanifest.[1301] The unmanifest merged into Purusha and Purusha merged into the one who pervaded everything.[1302] There was darkness everywhere and nothing could be seen. The brahman arose from the darkness. He created himself from that foundation of darkness. With the desire to create the universe, he assumed the form of Purusha. This form is known as Aniruddha and is also known as Pradhana. O supreme among kings! He is also known as the manifest and as a combination of the three qualities. With knowledge as his companion, the lord is also known as Vishvaksena or Hari. Immersed in yoga, he slept on the waters. He thought of creating the universe, with wonderful and diverse attributes. While thinking of creation, he remembered his own great qualities. Consciousness was generated then and this was the auspicious and four-faced Brahma. The illustrious Hiranyagarbha is the grandfather of all the worlds. He possessed eyes that are like a lotus and he emerged from a lotus that was in Aniruddha.[1303] The eternal and radiant one was seated on the flower with the one thousand petals. Wishing to create the worlds, the lord looked at the water that was on all sides. Basing himself on sattva, Parameshthi created the different categories of beings. Before this, Narayana had placed two drops of water, invested with excellent qualities, into the petals of the lotus, which were as bright as the rays of the sun. The illustrious Achyuta is without beginning and without end. He looked at those two drops of water. One of these was beautiful and radiant and looked like honey. On Narayana’s instructions, Madhu, based on tamas qualities, was generated from this.[1304] The other drop was hard, and Kaitabha, based on rajas qualities, was generated from this. With the qualities of tamas and rajas, these two superior ones advanced. They were powerful and held clubs in their hands. They roamed around inside the stalk of the lotus. Inside the lotus, they saw the infinitely radiant Brahma. He was engaged in creating the first forms of the four beautiful Vedas. The supreme asuras saw the forms of the Vedas. While Brahma looked on, they violently seized the Vedas. Having seized the eternal Vedas, the best among the danavas quickly entered the nether regions, inside the waters of the great ocean.

‘“When the Vedas were stolen, Brahma was immersed in grief. Deprived of the Vedas, he spoke these words to the lord. ‘The Vedas are my supreme sight. The Vedas are my supreme strength. The Vedas are my supreme refuge. The

Vedas are the supreme brahman. All my Vedas have been stolen by the powerful danavas. With the Vedas having been stolen, the world is enveloped in darkness. Without the Vedas, how will I engage in the task of creating the worlds? I am suffering from a great grief because my Vedas have been stolen. My heart is afflicted and I am consumed by a great misery. Who will raise me from this ocean of grief into which I have been submerged? Who will save the destroyed Vedas and do something agreeable for me?' O supreme among kings! These were the words that Brahma spoke. O supreme among intelligent ones! The intelligent one thought of some hymns in praise of Hari. Joining his hands in salutation, the lord bowed down and approached the supreme one. He chanted, 'I bow down before you. You are Brahma's heart. I bow down before you. You were created before me. You are the origin of the worlds. You are the best in the universe. You are the lord who is the store of sankhya and yoga. You are the creator of the manifest and the unmanifest. You are established on the path of tranquility. You are the enjoyer of the universe. You are inside all creatures. You are without birth. I have been generated through your favours. O Svayambhu! You are the abode of the worlds. My first birth, honoured by all the brahmanas, was from your mind. My ancient and second birth was from your eyes. It is through your favours that my great and third birth occurred from your speech. O lord! It is the truth that my fourth birth was from your ears. O one without decay! It is the truth that my fifth birth was from your nose. It is true that you thought of my sixth birth from an egg. O infinitely powerful lord! This, my seventh birth, has happened from a lotus. O one who is devoid of the three qualities! From one cycle of creation to another cycle of creation, I have been your son. You are famous as Pundarikaksha. You are Pradhana, who has thought of the qualities. You are the natural lord. You are Svayambhu and Purushottama. I have been created by you and the Vedas are my eyes. The Vedas, which are my eyes, have been stolen. Though I have been born, I am blind. Please awake. Give my eyes back to me. I am dear to you. You are dear to me.' The illustrious Purusha, who faces every direction, was thus praised.

'"To accomplish the task of recovering the Vedas, he raised himself from his sleep. Using his powers, he assumed a second form. He assumed a form with an excellent nose and it was as radiant as the moon. The lord who is the abode of all the Vedas assumed the auspicious form of Hayashira. The firmament, with its nakshatras and stars, became his head. His long and flowing hair was as radiant as the rays of the sun. The sky and the nether regions constituted his ears. The earth was his forehead. The sacred and great rivers, Ganga and Sarasvati, were his eyebrows. The sun and the moon were his eyes. The evening was said to be his nose. The syllable ‘Om’ was his mind and the lightning was his tongue. O king! The ancestors, who drink soma, were known as his teeth. Goloka and Brahmaloka[1305] became the great-souled one’s lips. O king! The terrible night of universal destruction, which is beyond the three qualities, became his neck. He created this form of Hayashira and it was covered with many kinds of other forms. The god who was the lord of the universe disappeared and penetrated the nether regions. Having entered the water, he resorted to supreme yoga. Using accomplished techniques of pronunciation, he uttered the syllable ‘Om’. This sound was pleasant in every way and echoed everywhere. It possessed all the beneficial qualities and reverberated in the nether regions. Having decided to come back for the Vedas, the asuras flung them down into the nether regions and swiftly proceeded to the spot where the sound was coming from. O king! Meanwhile, Hari, the god who was in the form of Hayashira, picked up all the Vedas from the nether regions. He gave them back to Brahma and assumed his natural form again. Hayashira was the abode of the Vedas and he established this form of Hayashira in the north-eastern parts of the great ocean. O king! The danavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, could not find anyone and quickly returned to the spot. However, they found that the place where they had flung the Vedas was empty. Those two supremely powerful ones resorted to great speed. They quickly raised themselves from the nether regions and saw the lord Purusha, who had originally created them. He was based in the form of Aniruddha and he was as pure in complexion as the fair moon. The valiant one had again resorted to yoga and was sleeping on the waters. He had manifested himself in this form and was sleeping on the waters. He was sleeping on the hood of a serpent[1306] and seemed to be enveloped in a covering of flames. The beautiful lord was full of sattva and without any blemish. On seeing him, the Indras among the danavas laughed loudly. Full of rajas and tamas, they said, ‘This Purusha is fair and he is lying down, immersed in sleep. There is no doubt that he is the one who has stolen the Vedas from the nether regions. Whom does he belong to?

Who is he? Who belongs to him? Why is he sleeping on a snake?' While they were speaking in this way, Hari was awakened. The god Purushottama realized that they wished to fight with him. He saw that the two Indras among rakshasas had made up their minds to fight. A battle commenced between them on one side and Narayana on the other. Madhu and Kaitabha were full of rajas and tamas. To please Brahma, Madhusudana slew them.[1307] Purushottama quickly killed the ones who had stolen the Vedas and dispelled Brahma's grief. Brahma was again revered and surrounded by the Vedas that had been stolen. Without any sense of ownership, he created the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. He[1308] gave the grandfather the powerful intelligence required for the creation of the worlds. Having given this to the god, Hari went away. It is thus that Hari assumed the form of Hayashira and killed the two danavas. He assumed that form so that the dharma of pravritti could be propagated again. Thus did the immensely fortunate Hari assume the form of Hayashira. This form of the lord who grants boons is regarded as the most ancient. If a brahmana always hears it, or recites it, his studies will never be destroyed. Using fierce austerities, the rishi Panchala worshipped the god who assumed the form of Hayashira and learnt shiksha, following the path instructed by Rama. O king! I have recounted the story of Hayashira to you. This is an ancient account that is in conformity with the Vedas and you had asked me about it. To accomplish different kinds of tasks, the god assumes different kinds of forms. Using his atman, the god creates himself and performs those different tasks.

'"He is the store of the Vedas. He is prosperous. He is the store of austerities. The powerful lord Hari is yoga, sankhya and the brahman. Narayana is the supreme Vedas. The sacrifices constitute Narayana's atman. Narayana represents supreme austerities. Narayana is the supreme objective. Narayana is the supreme truth. Amrita is Narayana's atman. Naryana is the supreme dharma and from this, it is extremely rare to return.[1309] Dharma with the characteristics of pravritti has Narayana as its soul. Scent, said to be the best attribute of the earth, has Narayana as its soul. O king! Taste, the quality of water, has Narayana as its soul. Form, the quality of light, is said to have Narayana as its soul. Touch, the quality of the wind, is said to have Narayana as its soul. Sound, resulting from space, also has Narayana as its soul. Mind, with the quality of the unmanifest,[1310] has Narayana as its soul. Time, computed through the measurement of the stellar bodies, is nothing but the supreme Narayana. The supreme Narayana is the deities of Kirti, Shri and Lakshmi.[1311] Sankhya and yoga are the supreme Narayana and they have Narayana as their soul. He is the cause as Purusha. He is also the cause as Pradhana. All deeds are in his nature. He is the cause behind the gods. He is enumerated as the five kinds of causes.[1312] Hari is there in all devotion. He is the truth that the curious ones seek. He is the reason that faces all the directions. He is the single truth. He is the great yogi. He is the lord Hari Narayana. He is the one Brahma, the worlds, the great-souled rishis, the practitioners of sankhya and yoga and the ascetics seek to know. The learned ones know of him as Keshava. Everything that is done in all the worlds for the sake of gods and ancestors, the donations that are given, the great austerities that are observed—all these have the lord Vishnu as their refuge. He has determined the ordinances for these. He resides in all creatures and is said to be Vasudeva.[1313] He is eternal. He is the supreme maharshi. He possesses the greatest power. He is beyond qualities. He is without the three qualities. When the occasion arises, he acts so as to quickly bring about a union of the qualities. The great-souled ones cannot comprehend his progress. No one can see his movements. Maharshis who are restrained and possess knowledge in their atmans always see the Purusha, who is beyond the qualities.”’

Chapter 1664(336)

Janamejaya said, ‘The illustrious Hari is affectionate towards all beings who are single-minded in their devotion to him. The illustrious one himself accepts offerings made according to the ordinances. There are people who have burnt up the kindling,[1314] are free of good and bad deeds and have followed the instructions that have progressively been passed down.[1315] They advance towards the fourth objective of Purushottama.[1316] Those single-minded ones go to the supreme objective. There is no doubt that the dharma of being single-minded is the best and is loved by Narayana. They do not have to pass through the other three, but directly go to the undecaying Hari. There are brahmanas who study the Vedas and the Upanishads properly, following the strictures and observing the dharma of ascetics. I know that men who are single-minded in their devotion are superior to them. Was it a god or a rishi who first propounded this kind of dharma? O lord! When did this single-minded mode of worship develop? Please dispel my doubt about this. My curiosity is great.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'The armies of the Kurus and the Pandavas were arrayed in the battle. When Arjuna was distracted, the illustrious one himself sung about this, about the ends that are obtained and the ends that are not obtained.[1317] I have told you about this earlier. This dharma is deep and is difficult for those who have not cleansed their souls to comprehend. This is in conformity with the Sama Veda and was thought of in the first yuga.[1318] O king! It was sustained by the lord Narayana himself. O great king! Partha asked the immensely fortunate Narada about the purport of this, in the midst of the rishis and in the hearing of Krishna and Bhishma. O supreme among kings! My preceptor heard what was said.[1319] He heard what Narada said. O lord of the earth! Brahma was born through Narayana's mental powers and heard what emerged from Narayana's mouth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Following dharma, Narayana himself performed the divine rites that any father should. The rishis who subsist on foam then obtained the dharma. The Vaikhanasas obtained the dharma from those who lived on foam. Soma obtained it from the Vaikhanasas. But it then disappeared again. O king! Brahma had a second birth from the eyes.[1320] Then, the grandfather obtained and learned this dharma from Soma. O king! He gave this, which has Narayana as its soul, to Rudra. O king! In that ancient krita yuga, Rudra immersed himself in yoga and taught this dharma to all the Valakhilya rishis. However, because of the god's[1321] maya, it disappeared again. Brahma had a third birth from his[1322] great speech. O king! The dharma was again generated from Narayana himself. A rishi named Suparna obtained it from Purushottama and tormented himself with austerities, following self-restraint and rituals. Suparna followed this supreme dharma thrice a day. Because of this, on earth, he came to be known as Trisouparna.[1323] These are read when one studies the Rig Veda and the vows to be followed are extremely difficult. O best among men! From

Suparna, this eternal dharma was obtained by the wind god, who is known as the one who sustains life in the universe. Vayu gave it to the rishis who only subsist on leftovers. The great ocean obtained the supreme dharma from them. However, it disappeared again and merged into Narayana. The great-souled one, Brahma, was again born from his ear.[1324] O tiger among men! I will tell you what happened. Listen. The god, Hari Narayana, himself thought of creating the universe. The lord, who is the creator of everything in the universe, thought of a being. When he thought of this, the being, his son, emerged from his ears. The lord of the universe spoke to Brahma, the creator of different categories of subjects. "O son! Create. Create everyone from your mouths and feet. O one who is excellent in vows! I will do what is beneficial for you. I will give you the strength and the energy. Also receive this dharma from me. It is known as satvata. Use it to create and establish all the rites of krita yuga." At this, Brahma bowed down before the god Harimedha. He eagerly accepted the dharma, with its mysteries and collections and groups of *Aranyaka*s. These arose from Narayana's mouth. With infinite energy, he instructed this dharma to Brahma and said, "You know about the dharma of krita yuga, which has the traits of being without desire and without deeds." Having said this, he[1325] departed to beyond tamas, to the place where the unmanifest is established. Then, Brahma, the god who grants boons and is the grandfather of the worlds, created all the worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. That is how the first sacred krita yuga commenced. The dharma of satvata pervaded everything in the world. Brahma, the creator of the various worlds, used that original dharma to worship the lord Hari Narayana, the lord of the gods. For the welfare of the worlds and for the sake of establishing this dharma, he then taught it to Svarochisha Manu.[1326] O king! In ancient times, Svarochisha, the lord and protector of all the worlds, himself carefully taught it to his son, Shankhapada. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shankhapada taught it to his son Sudharma, the protector of the directions. When treta yuga commenced, it[1327] disappeared again. O supreme among kings! Then, in ancient times, Brahma was born from the nose. In Brahma's presence, the lord and god, the lotus-eyed Hari Narayana, himself chanted this dharma. O king! The illustrious Sanatkumara studied it. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! From Sanatkumara, at the beginning of krita yuga, Prajapati Virana obtained this dharma and studied it. Having studied it, Virana gave it to the intelligent Rouchya and Rouchya gave it to his son Shudra, who was excellent in his vows and great in his intelligence. He gave it to Kukshi, who protected the directions.[1328] However, the dharma that arose from Narayana's mouth vanished again. Brahma was again born as Hari's son, from an egg and this dharma arose again, from Narayana's mouth. O king! Brahma received it, and following the instructions, applied it. O king! He taught it to the sages named Barhishada.[1329] A brahmana who knew about the Sama Veda obtained it from the Barhishadas. His name was Jyeshtha and because of this, he came to be known as Jyeshtha Hari, the follower of the Sama vows. King Avikampana obtained it from Jyeshtha. O king! Then the dharma that had been received from the lord Hari disappeared again. O king! Brahma had a seventh birth from the lotus and Narayana himself spoke to him about this dharma. At the beginning of the yuga, the sacred grandfather was the upholder of the worlds. In those ancient times, the grandfather gave this dharma to Daksha. O supreme among kings! Daksha gave it to Aditya, who was the eldest of his grandsons through his daughters and was also older than Savitri. Vivasvat obtained it from him.[1330] At the beginning of treta yuga, Vivasvat gave it to Manu. For the prosperity of the worlds, Manu gave it to his son, Ikshvaku. When Ikshvaku spoke about it, it spread in all the worlds. O king! At the end of the destruction, it will again merge into Narayana. O supreme among kings! This is the dharma that is practised by the mendicants. With the collection of the ordinances, it has been recounted in Hari *Gita*.[1331] O king! Narada obtained this dharma, with its mysteries and its collections, from the protector of the worlds himself. O king! These are the origins of this great and eternal dharma. It is difficult to comprehend and it is difficult to practise. It is always sustained by those with sattva. Those who know about dharma appropriately apply it in their deeds. This dharma is without violence and it pleases the lord Hari. Some worship him in one form and some in two forms.[1332] He is sometimes enumerated in three forms.[1333] He is sometimes seen in four forms.[1334] Hari is kshetrajna. He is without a sense of ownership and he is without parts. He is the atman in all beings and is beyond the five elements. O king! He is spoken of as the mind that controls the five senses. He is the intelligent one who ordains the worlds. He is the creator of the worlds. He is not the doer. But he is also the doer. He is the cause and the effect. O king! He is the immutable Purusha, who sports as he wills. O supreme among kings! I have spoken to you about the dharma of single-minded devotion. It is difficult for those with unclean souls to understand. I have obtained it through my preceptor's favours. O king! Men who are single-minded in their devotion are difficult to find. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Had the worlds been full of many such people, who are non-violent and devoted to their atmans, engaged in the welfare of beings, then it would have been krita yuga. People would have been free of desire and freed from rites. O lord of the earth! This is what the illustrious Vyasa, my preceptor, the one who knows about dharma, and supreme among brahmanas, told Dharmaraja. O king! This was in the hearing of the rishis and of Krishna and Bhishma. He had earlier been told this by Narada, the immensely ascetic one. Narayana is the god who is the supreme brahman. He is immutable and fair in complexion, with the radiance of the moon. Those who are single-minded go to him.'

Janamejaya asked, 'Those who have been awakened practise many different kinds of dharma. Why don't other brahmanas follow this too, instead of devoting themselves to diverse vows?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O king! Those who are bound in bodies possess three kinds of nature. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They follow sattva, rajas and tamas. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Among those who are bound in bodies, the best man is one who follows sattva. O tiger among men! It is certain that he will be emancipated. A man who is devoted to the brahman and is attached to Narayana is known and spoken of as a *sattvika* person. Such a person thinks of Purushottama and obtains learning. He is always devoted to Narayana and is single-minded in his faith. There are some learned people who desire emancipation. Hari, who looks after yoga and *kshema*,[1335] eliminates their thirst.[1336] Know that if a man is born and Madhusudana looks favourably at him, he is sattvika and his emancipation is certain. The dharma of those who are single-minded is equal to sankhya and yoga. A person who has Narayana in his soul obtains liberation and goes to the supreme destination. Such a person cheerfully comprehends Narayana. O king! However, unless he so desires,[1337] knowledge is not awakened. It is said that a nature that has rajas and tamas is confused. O lord of the earth! A person with these traits in his soul is born again. If a person possesses these attributes of attachment, Hari does not look at him himself. If a man is immersed in rajas and tamas, he is born again and it is Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, who looks at him. O supreme among kings! The gods and the rishis desire sattva. However, sattva is subtle and those who deviate from it are said to undergo transformations.'[1338]

Janamejaya asked, 'How can a man with transformations advance towards Purushottama?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Purusha is united with the subtlety of sattva. It is united with the three syllables.[1339] Abstaining from acts, a man goes to the one who is the twenty-fifth. He is the single one who has been spoken about in sankhya, in yoga, in the Vedas, in the Aranyakas, in the other limbs and in the doctrines of pancharatra. Those who are single-minded in their dharma go to Narayana, the paramatman. O king! The waves of the ocean seem to retreat from it, only to return to it again. In that way, the great waves of knowledge again merge into Narayana. O relative of the Yadus![1340] I have spoken to you about satvata dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If you can, follow it properly. This is what the extremely fortunate Narada told my preceptor, about the single-minded mendicants of Shvetadvipa, who followed the immutable one. Vyasa affectionately recounted it to Dharma's intelligent son.[1341] Passed down from my preceptor, I have also told you about it. O supreme among kings! This dharma is extremely difficult to follow. There are others who are so confused that they do not follow it. It is Krishna, the creator of the worlds, who confuses them in this way. O lord of the universe! That is because he is also the reason behind destruction.'

Chapter 1665(337)

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana rishi! Sankhya, yoga, pancharatra, the Vedas and the *Aranyaka*s—these kinds of knowledge are prevalent in the worlds. O sage! Do they speak about the same thing, or different things? Tell me what I have asked and in due order, describe the rites that they prescribe.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'A son was born to maharshi Parashara and Gandhavati in the midst of an island.[1342] He is infinite and knows a lot. He is the knowledge that dispels darkness. I bow down before him. Learned ones speak about his power and say that he is the sixth one, even before the grandfather.[1343] Dvaipayana was the single son[1344] who was born as part of Narayana. He is the great store of the Vedas. He is immensely powerful and was born at that time of darkness.[1345] Narayana, the great store of the brahman, created the generous and energetic one as his son. Thus, the great-souled Vyasa is actually ancient and without birth.'

Janamejaya said, 'O best among brahmanas! It has been said that, earlier, Vasishtha had a son named Shakti and that Shakti's son was Parashara. Parashara's son was the sage Krishna Dvaipayana. However, you have also spoken about him as Narayana's son. Did the infinitely energetic Vyasa have an earlier birth? Tell me about that excellent birth, when he was born from Narayana.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'My preceptor desired to know about the purport of the Vedas. He was devoted to dharma and was the store of austerities. Devoted to knowledge, he spent some time on the slopes of the Himalayas. Having composed the account of the Mahabharata, the intelligent one was exhausted and performed austerities. O king! At that time, we tended to him—Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, extremely firm in his vows, I as the fourth disciple, and Shuka, Vyasa's son. Vyasa was thus surrounded by five excellent disciples. He was resplendent on the slope of the Himalayas, like the lord of the demons,[1346] surrounded by the demons. After having been instructed about the Vedas, the Vedangas, the Mahabharata and all their meanings, we worshipped the generous one, when he was reflecting in his mind. In the course of the conversation, we asked that supreme among brahmanas to tell us about the meanings of the Vedas, the meanings of the Mahabharata and about Narayana's birth. The one who knew the truth first told us about the meanings of the Vedas and the meanings of the Mahabharata. He next told us about his birth from Narayana. "Listen to this excellent account about the birth of a supreme rishi. O brahmanas! Through my austerities, I got to know about my ancient birth. This was the seventh cycle of creation[1347] that resulted from the lotus. The great yogi, Narayana, is free from good and bad deeds. From his navel, he created the infinitely radiant Brahma, his son. When he manifested himself, he spoke these words. 'You have been born from my navel. You are the lord who will create different categories of subjects. O Brahma! Create many kinds of subjects, those who are learned and those who are dumb.’ Having been thus addressed, he was reluctant and anxiously thought about this in his mind. He bowed down before Hari, the lord and god who is the granter of boons, and said, ‘O lord of the gods! I bow down before you. But where do I possess the strength to create subjects? O god! I do not possess the requisite wisdom. You decide what is to be done next.’ Having been thus addressed, the illustrious one who is the creator of beings,[1348] disappeared. The intelligent one, the lord of the gods and supreme among intelligent ones, began to think. The lord Hari resorted to yoga and used this yoga to make the goddess of intelligence present herself before him. Using the power of yoga, the undecaying lord then addressed the virtuous and powerful goddess of intelligence. ‘O goddess of intelligence! Enter Brahma, so that the objective of creating the worlds become successful.’ Having been thus instructed by the lord, the goddess of intelligence swiftly entered him. Hari saw that he was united with intelligence and again spoke to him. ‘Create different categories of subjects.’ Saying this, the illustrious one vanished from there and in an instant, returned to his one state of divinity. He entered Prakriti and remained united with her. However, the intelligent one again began to think along the following lines. ‘Brahma Parameshthi will create all the subjects—daityas, danavas, gandharvas and large numbers of rakshasas. The ascetic, the earth, will become burdened with those who have been born. The earth will be full of many strong daityas, danavas and rakshasas. They will engage in austerities and obtain excellent boons. Insolent at having obtained these different kinds of boons, they will obstruct the large numbers of gods and the rishis, stores of austerities. It is proper that I should devise a method for removing this burden. Therefore, in different forms, I will progressively be born on earth. I will chastise the wicked and protect the virtuous. The virtuous and ascetic earth will then be able to bear the burden. In the form of a serpent,[1349] I will hold her up from below. Thus held up by me, she will hold up the universe, with its mobile and immobile objects. So that I can save the earth, I will have incarnations.’ The illustrious Madhusudana thought in this way. ‘I will create and manifest in different kinds of forms—boar, man-lion, dwarf and human. I will slay the insolent enemies of the gods.’ After this, the creator of the universe uttered the sound of ‘*Bho*’.[1350] This sound echoed and Sarasvat manifested himself. This son, who manifested himself from the lord’s speech, came to be known as Apantaratama.[1351] He was truthful, firm in his vows and knew about the past, the present and the future. He bowed his head down before the original and immutable god, who told him, ‘O supreme among intelligent ones! Your task is the recounting of the Vedas and the sacred texts. O sage! You should act in accordance with these instructions of mine.’ In the manvantara known as Svayambhuva, he[1352] collated the Vedas. The illustrious Hari was pleased with his deeds, his tormenting himself with austerities, his self-restraint and rituals.

‘“The illustrious one said, ‘O son! In each manvantara, you will thus establish the way of the worlds. O brahmana! You will not deviate and you will always be unassailable. The Kurus, known as the Bharatas, will be descended from you. They will be great-souled kings who are famous on earth. They will be born from you. But there will be a dissension within the lineage. O supreme among brahmanas! Barring you, all the others will destroy themselves. Then too, engaged in austerities, you will classify the Vedas. In that dark age, you will have a dark complexion. You will know about different kinds of dharma and the diverse tasks that have to be performed. However, despite engaging in austerities, you will not be freed from attachment. Your son will be free from attachment and will be like the paramatman. This will happen through the grace of Maheshvara and my words will not be falsified. Vasishtha is spoken of as the intelligent son who has been born from the grandfather’s mental powers. He is a store of austerities and his radiance transcends that of the sun. A maharshi named Parashara will be descended from him and he will be extremely powerful. He will be supreme among those who are storehouses of the Vedas. He will be a great ascetic and will immerse himself in austerities. He will be your father. There will be a maiden who will dwell in her father’s house. While still a virgin, she will have you as her son, through that rishi.[1353] You will know about the past, the present and the future, and all your doubts will be dispelled. The progress of thousands of yugas will pass before you. Through my instructions, you will witness all of them and be engaged in austerities. O sage! I am without beginning and without end. When thousands of yugas have passed, you will again see me, with the chakra in my hand. O sage! All this will happen to you because of your meditations and my words will not be falsified.

Shanaishchara[1354] will be Surya's son and will be a great Manu. In that manvantara, because of my grace, you will be superior to the saptarshis. O son! There is no doubt about this.'"

'Vyasa said, "The virtuous rishi, Sarasvata Apantaratama, heard these words spoken by the lord. Through the favours of the god Harimedha, I am the one who was born as Apantaratama. I was born through Hari's commands. I was again born as the famous one who is a descendant of the lineage of Vasishtha.[1355] I have thus told you about my earlier birth, whereby I was born through Narayana's favours and as Narayana's part. I performed extremely great austerities. I performed terrible austerities. O best among intelligent ones! In ancient times, I performed excellent meditation. O sons! I have told you everything that you asked me about, about my earlier birth and my future. You are devoted to me and I am affectionate towards you."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'O king! I have thus told you how my preceptor was born earlier. Vyasa was cheerful in his mind and when he was asked, this is what he said. Listen. O rajarshi! Know that there are many kinds of knowledge—sankhya, yoga, pancharatra and *pashupata*. The great rishi, Kapila, is said to be the exponent of sankhya. The ancient Hiranyagarba, and no one else, is known as the exponent of yoga. Apantaratama is said to be the teacher of the Vedas. Some speak of him as the rishi Prachinagarbha. Brahma's son, Shiva Shrikantha, the lord of the demons and Uma's consort, is said to be the attentive exponent of the knowledge known as pashupata. The illustrious one[1356] himself is the exponent of all of pancharatra. O best among kings! All of these are considered as the exponents of knowledge. O lord of the earth! All the sacred texts and all knowledge speaks of devotion to the lord Narayana. Those who are enveloped in darkness do not comprehend this. There are learned ones who have propounded the sacred texts. They said that there is nothing other than faith in the rishi Narayana. There is no doubt that Hari always resides in everything. However, Madhava does not reside in those in whom doubt is strong and who dispute. O king! There are those who know about pancharatra and follow it properly. They are single-minded in their devotion and merge into Hari. O king! Sankhya and yoga are eternal and so are all the Vedas. All the rishis have said that the ancient Narayana pervades everything in the universe. Everything that is done in all the worlds, good or bad, depends on him. All forms of knowledge flow from him. He is in the firmament, the sky, the earth and the water.'

Chapter 1666(338)

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! Are there many Purushas or is there only one? Which is the best Purusha and what is said to be the origin of everything?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'In the reflections of sankhya and yoga, people have spoken about many Purushas. O extender of the Kuru lineage! They do not wish to accept that there is a single Purusha. All these many Purushas are held to have a single origin. That is explained as the single Purusha in the universe, possessing superior qualities. I will first bow down before my preceptor, the infinitely energetic Vyasa. He is a supreme rishi, controlled and united with austerities, deserving to be worshipped. O king! This *purushasukta* exists in all the Vedas.[1357] It is famous as both rita and satya.[1358] The lion among rishis[1359] thought about this. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Kapila and the other rishis thought about adhyatma and devoted themselves to the contradictions spoken about in the sacred texts. Vyasa brought all this together and spoke about a single Purusha. Through the favours of that infinitely energetic one, I will tell you about the truth. O lord of the earth! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Brahma and Tryambaka. O king! In the midst of the ocean of milk, there is a supreme mountain, known by the name of Vaijayanta. Its hue is like that of gold. Thinking about the progress of adhyatma, the god[1360] used to go there alone. He always went there from his resplendent abode and spent time on Vaijayanta. The intelligent one with the four faces was seated there. His son, Shiva, born from his forehead, arrived there. Travelling as he willed through the sky, the three-eyed lord of yoga saw him seated there. From the sky, the lord quickly dropped down on the summit of the mountain. He cheerfully presented himself before his superior and worshipped his feet. On seeing him prostrate at his feet, Prajapati, the single lord, raised him with his left hand. Having met his son after a long time, the illustrious one welcomed him and said, "O mighty-armed one! Welcome. It is through good fortune that you have come before me. O son! Is everything well? You are always engaged in studying and austerities. You are always engaged in fierce austerities. That is the reason I am asking you about those."

'Rudra answered, "O illustrious one! Through your favours, all is well with my studies and austerities. The entire universe is also without decay. O illustrious one! It has been a long time since I saw you in your radiant abode. That is the reason I have come to this mountain, where your feet are resting now. Since you have decided to come here alone, I am curious. O grandfather! There must be a grave reason why you have done that. Your excellent abode is free from hunger and thirst. It is always inhabited by gods, asuras, the infinitely radiant rishis and gandharvas and apsaras. Why have you given that up and come alone to this supreme mountain?"

'Brahma said, "Vaijayanta, this supreme mountain, is always frequented by me. Here, with concentration in my mind, I think of the great Purusha."

'Rudra replied, "O Brahma! You are Svayambhu and you have created many Purushas. O Brahma! You are creating others too. But there is only a single great Purusha. O Brahma! Whom are you thinking about? Who is that Purushottama?[1361] I have great curiosity and a doubt about this. Tell me."

'Brahma said, "O son! As has been stated by you, there are many Purushas. But this one cannot be seen and transcends all the others. I am telling you that this single Purusha is alone the foundation. That single one is said to be the origin of the many Purushas. That Purusha is the universe. He is supreme and extremely great. He is devoid of qualities. Devoid of qualities, they[1362] enter the eternal one."'

Chapter 1667(339)

'Brahma said, "O son! Hear about the eternal and undecaying Purusha. He is said to be without destruction and immeasurable. He goes everywhere. O virtuous one! I, you, nor anyone else, can see him. He is this universe, with qualities and without qualities. It is said that he can be seen through wisdom. He is without a body. But he also dwells in every body. Though he dwells in bodies, he is not touched by any of the acts committed by them. He is in my atman, in yours and in that of others, conscious of the bodies. He is a witness to everything, but cannot be grasped by anyone. The universe is his head. The universe is his arms. The universe is his feed, his eyes and his nose. As he wills, he alone cheerfully wanders among all the kshetras.[1363] The kshetras are the bodies, the seeds of everything, good or bad.[1364] Since he knows them through the yoga of his atman, he is known as kshetrajna. No creature can discern his coming and going, though this progress is indicated in the ordinances of sankhya and yoga. Even if I think about his progress, I will be unable to comprehend that supreme progress. According to my knowledge, I will tell you about that eternal Purusha. His alone is the greatness. There is said to be only one Purusha. That single and eternal one should be praised by the words of Mahapurusha.[1365] There is one fire, but it blazes in different kinds of kindling. There is one sun. There are many austerities, but their origins are the same. There is one wind, but it blows in many ways in the world. There is one great ocean, though there are many sources of water. There is one Purusha, devoid of qualities. The universe is his form and it also enters Purusha, devoid of qualities. One should abandon all the qualities. One should discard all acts, good and bad. One should give up both truth and falsehood. In this way, one should be divested of qualities. One can then know the one who is unthinkable. He has four subtle forms.[1366] An ascetic who roams around in this way can advance towards the lord, Purusha. There are some learned ones who desire him as the paramatman. There are others who have thought about adhyatma and think of him as the single atman within their own selves. The paramatman is always spoken of as one who is devoid of qualities. He is known as Narayana. He is the Purusha who is inside all atmans. Like water on the leaf of a lotus, he is not touched by any acts. He is sometimes engaged in acts.[1367] He is sometimes freed from bonds and united with moksha. He is sometimes united with the accumulation of the seventeen.[1368] In this way, in due order, Purusha is spoken of in many ways. Everything in the worlds has a refuge in him. He is the supreme object of knowledge. He is the one who knows and he is also what is to be known. He is the thinker and the object of thought. He is the eater and the object that is eaten. He is the one who smells and the object that is smelt. He is the one who touches and the object that is touched. He is the seer and the object that is seen. He is the hearer and the object that is heard. He is the one who learns and he is the object of learning. He is with qualities and without qualities. He has been spoken of as Pradhana, the accumulation of qualities. He is always eternal and immutable. He is the foundation and the prime cause behind Dhatri.[1369] Brahmanas speak of him as Aniruddha.[1370] There are virtuous and beneficial acts in the world, sanctioned by the Vedas. All these flow from him. All the gods and sages, righteous and controlled, take their places on the altar and offer him a share in the sacrifices. I am Brahma. I am the first lord of subjects. I have been generated from him and all of you have been generated from me. O son! I am the origin of all mobile and immobile objects in the universe, and all the Vedas and their mysteries. Purusha is divided into four parts and sports as he wishes. The illustrious one is awakened through his own knowledge. O son! I have thus told you exactly what you have asked. I have described to you the knowledge of sankhya and yoga."'

Chapter 1668(340)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! You have spoken about dharma and the sacred dharma of moksha that one must seek refuge with. Among the different ashramas, you should now tell me what is the best kind of dharma."

'Bhishma replied, "If followed, all kinds of dharma lead to heaven and yield the fruits of truth. There are many doors to dharma and no rites in the world are fruitless. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Whoever determines that he should follow one particular mode, decides that all the others are not worth knowing. O tiger among men! In this connection, you should listen to an account. In ancient times, Narada, the rishi of the gods, and Shakra spoke about this. O king! Narada, the rishi of the gods, had obtained success and was revered by the three worlds. He progressively roamed around the worlds, like a wind that is not restrained. O great archer! On one occasion, he went to the abode of the king of the gods. The great Indra honoured him well and welcomed him. After some time, when he was seated, Shachi's lord[1371] asked him, 'O brahmana rishi! O unblemished one! Have you seen anything wonderful? O brahmana rishi! You wander amidst the mobile and immobile objects of the three worlds, always curious. You have obtained success and are like a witness to what transpires. O devarshi! There is nothing in the worlds that is unknown to you. Tell me about anything that you might have heard, felt or seen.' O king! Narada, supreme among eloquent ones, was seated. At this, he told Indra of the gods about an extensive account. I will tell it to you as that supreme among brahmanas described it. He recounted this account when he was asked. You too should listen to this."'

Chapter 1669(341)

'Bhishma said, "O best among the Kuru lineage! In an excellent city named Mahapadma, on the southern banks of the Ganga, there lived a brahmana who was controlled. He was amiable and was born in the lineage of the moon. All his doubts had been dispelled and he knew the path he should pursue. He was always devoted to dharma and had conquered anger. He was always content and had conquered his senses. He was always engaged in non-violence. He was truthful and was revered by the virtuous. He obtained riches through proper means and through his own efforts. His conduct was good. He possessed many relatives and kin. There were honoured friends who sought refuge with him. He was born in a noble and great family and resorted to the best of conduct. O king! On seeing that he had many sons, who were engaged in the extensive tasks of dharma that the family required, he thought about a dharma that would be superior to this. He thought there were three kinds of dharma—that spoken about in the Vedas, that laid down in the sacred texts[1372] and the dharma practised by virtuous people. Which are the auspicious tasks that I should perform? What will bring benefit? What should I resort to? He always thought about such things and could never arrive at a conclusion. While he thus reflected on dharma, a guest arrived at his house. He was also an extremely controlled brahmana and was devoted to the supreme. He honoured him well, in accordance with the proper rites that have been laid down. When he was rested and seated, he spoke these words."'[1373]

Chapter 1670(342)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘O unblemished one! Because of the weight of your words, I have become attached to you.[1374] You have become my friend. Listen to me. I will tell you something. O Indra among brahmanas! I have handed over the dharma of garhasthya to my son. O brahmana! I now want to be established on the path of supreme dharma. What should I do? I have based my atman on the atman[1375] and wish to be established in the atman. I do not wish to do anything that leads to bondage to the ordinary qualities. So far, all of my life has been spent on acquiring the fruit of a son. Therefore, I desire provisions for the world hereafter. The virtuous ones in this world desire the supreme that will enable them to cross the hereafter. That resolution has been awakened in me. Where will I obtain the raft of dharma? I have heard that people are confused in this world and even those with sattva in their souls find it difficult to emerge. Above the heads of all subjects, I have seen the garlands, flags and standards of dharma held aloft. My mind no longer finds delight in time spent on pleasure. I have seen that mendicants desire the hereafter. O guest! You possess the strength of intelligence and know the truth about the purport of dharma. Engage me in that.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The guest heard the words of the one who desired to pursue dharma. The wise one replied in gentle and sweet words. ‘I am also confused and that is my wish too. I cannot make up my mind. There are many doors to heaven. Some praise moksha, other brahmanas the fruits of sacrifices. Some resort to the dharma of vanaprastha, others resort to garhasthya. Some resort to the dharma of kings, others to the fruits of the atman. Some resort to serving preceptors, others speak words in favour of yama. Some have gone to heaven by serving their mothers and fathers. Others have gone to heaven through non-violence, and still others through truth. Some have advanced towards battle, were slain and have gone to heaven. Others became successful through the practice of the vow of *unchha*[1376] and have advanced along the path that leads to heaven. Some have been engaged in studying and have been devoted to the auspicious vows of the Vedas. Intelligent ones have gone to heaven by being content and conquering their senses. There are others who were upright, but were killed by people who were deceitful. There are upright ones, pure in their souls, who have been established in the vault of the sky.[1377] In this way, in this world, there are many doors to heaven that have been opened. Thus, my mind is also anxious, like a light cloud that is driven by the wind.’”’

Chapter 1671(343)

‘“The guest said, ‘O brahmana! I will instruct you in accordance with the sacred texts. I will tell you the purport of what I have learned from my preceptor. Listen. In an earlier cycle of creation, the wheel of dharma was set in motion in Naimisha, on the banks of the Gomati. There is a city of the serpents there. O bull among brahmanas! All the residents of heaven had assembled there and had performed a sacrifice. There, the supreme king, Mandhata, had surpassed Indra. The great Padmanabha dwells there. He has dharma in his soul and follows it in deeds, sight and words. The immensely fortunate resident is famous by the name of Padma. O bull among brahmanas! He pleases creatures in three different ways—words, deeds and thoughts. He protects everything through his insight and controls wicked people through the four techniques of conciliation, gifts, dissension and chastisement. You should go and ask him about the desired techniques. When you bow down before him, he will show you what supreme dharma is. The intelligent serpent is accomplished in all the sacred texts and is attentive towards guests. He possesses the rare and desired nine qualities.[1378] His nature is such that he is always immersed in water.[1379] He is always engaged in studying. His conduct is excellent and he practises austerities and self-control. His inclinations are towards performing sacrifices and donations. He is forgiving and his conduct is supreme. He is truthful in speech and without malice. He always resorts to good conduct. He eats what is left.[1380] He is pleasant in speech. He has discarded deceit. He does what is best and is grateful. He is without enmity and is engaged in the welfare of beings. He has been born in a lineage that is as noble as the waters in a lake in the midst of the Ganga.’”’

Chapter 1672(344)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘I have heard your words of reassurance. It is as if a load has been taken off the back of someone who is bearing a great load. Your words have delighted me—like a tired person when he lies down, like an exhausted person when he finds a seat, like a thirsty person when he finds a drink, like a hungry person when he finds food, like a guest who is given the desired food at the right time, like an aged person who obtains a beloved son after a long time and like the sight of a beloved one has been thinking about. I have been like a hesitant person, casting his eye towards the sky. Your words of wisdom have served to instruct me. I will certainly do what you have asked me to. O virtuous one! Spend this night with me. In the morning, happily go wherever you wish to. The illustrious Surya is gradually withdrawing his rays.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O destroyer of enemies! At this, the guest accepted his hospitality. He spent the night with the brahmana. They had a conversation that was full of words of dharma. They spent the night in this way and it was almost as if it was day. When it was morning, the brahmana honoured the guest, according to his capacity, and desired to accomplish his own objective. The brahmana made up his mind to accomplish dharma. The one who knew about dharma took the permission of his relatives. As instructed, at the right time, resolving to perform good deeds, he set out for the residence of the Indra among serpents.”’

Chapter 1673(345)

‘Bhishma said, “Progressively, he passed through many wonderful groves, places of pilgrimage and lakes and arrived before a sage. The brahmana asked him about the serpent the other brahmana had spoken about. Having been duly instructed, he proceeded again. He was clear about his intention and went to the residence of the famous serpent. Having reached, he exclaimed, ‘I am here. Is there anyone here?’ The serpent’s wife was devoted to her husband. She was beautiful and devoted to dharma. She came and showed herself to the brahmana. She was devoted to dharma and following the prescribed rites, honoured him. She said, ‘Welcome. What can I do for you?’

'"The brahmana replied, 'I was exhausted. But your gentle words of reverence have swept that away. I wish to see your lord, the supreme serpent. This is my supreme task. This is the fruit that I desire. That is the reason I have come here now, to the serpent's abode.'

'"The serpent's wife said, 'O honourable one! He has gone for a month, to bear Surya's chariot. O brahmana! There is no doubt that he will return in fifteen days and show himself to you. I have told you the reason why the noble one is not here. That being the case, what else can I do for you? Tell me that.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'O virtuous one! That is the reason why I decided to come here. O goddess! I will wait for him to return and dwell in that great forest. When he returns, tell him I have come here, anxious to see him. You should also tell me when he returns. O beautiful one! Till then, I will reside on the banks of the Gomati. I will spend the time, following the practice of living on a restrained diet.'"

'Bhishma said, "The brahmana repeatedly entreated the serpent's wife in this way. The bull among brahmanas then went to the banks of the river."'

Chapter 1674(346)

'Bhishma said, "O best among men! The serpents were distressed when the ascetic brahmana began to dwell there, without any food. All the serpent's relatives, including his brother, son and wife, assembled and went to where the brahmana was. They saw him in a lonely spot along the riverbank, controlled in his vows. Without any food, the brahmana was seated, devoted to meditation. All of them approached the brahmana and worshipped him properly. The relatives wished to extend hospitality and spoke these words. 'O one rich in austerities! Since you arrived here, this is the sixth day. O one who is devoted to dharma! But you do not desire any food. We have come and have presented ourselves before you. All of us belong to the household and it is our duty to extend hospitality to a guest. O supreme among brahmanas! O brahmana! You should take whatever food you wish to have—roots, fruits, leaves or water. As a virtuous person, you are dwelling in the forest, without any food. All of us, old and young, are afflicted and face a conflict of dharma. None of us has killed a foetus. None of us is one from whom food cannot be received. None of us utters a falsehood. There is no one in our family who eats before serving to gods, guests and relatives.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'Because of your entreaty, it is almost as if I have eaten. Eight nights are still left for the serpent to return. If the serpent does not return after eight nights are over, then I will indeed eat. But until then, I have this vow, for the serpent's sake. You should not be tormented on this account. Go wherever you have come from. My vow is for him and you should not do anything that causes it to be violated.'"

'Bhishma said, "The serpents then took leave of the brahmana. O bull among men! Having accomplished their objective, they returned to their own houses."'

Chapter 1675(347)

'Bhishma said, "When those many lunar days were over,[1381] the serpent completed his task. He took Vivasvat's[1382] permission and returned to his own house. On seeing that he had arrived, his wife gave him water to clean his feet and performed other similar tasks. The virtuous one approached him and the serpent asked, 'O fortunate one! I hope you have been attentive in tending to the gods and the guests, as used to be the case when I was here. I hope you followed the ordinances I told you about. The intelligence of women is not straightforward and is often false towards accomplishing an objective. O one with the excellent hips! I hope you have not violated the norms of dharma in my absence.'

'"The serpent's wife replied, 'The duty of disciples is to serve the preceptor, that of brahmanas to be devoted to the Vedas, that of servants to follow the words of their master and that of kings to protect people. It is said that the dharma of kshatriyas is to protect all creatures and that of vaishyas is to support sacrifices and attend to guests. The task of shudras is to serve brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas. O Indra among serpents! The dharma of householders is to be engaged in the welfare of all beings. Restrained diet and the constant observance of vows, in the proper order, are dharma. In particular, there is an association between dharma and the senses.[1383] Whom do I belong to? Where have I come from? Who am I? Who belongs to me? If a person is devoted to the state of pursuing moksha, it is necessary that he should always ask these questions. It is said that being devoted to the husband is the supreme dharma for a wife. O Indra among the serpents! I have learnt the truth about this through your instructions. You are always devoted to dharma and I also know about dharma. Why will I abandon the path of virtue and advance along an uneven road? O immensely fortunate one! There has been no decrease in the dharma with which I have worshipped the gods. I have always been attentively engaged in tending to the guests. Fifteen days ago, a brahmana arrived here. He desired to meet you and has not divulged his objective to me. He is waiting on the banks of the Gomati, anxious to meet you. The brahmana is rigid in his vows and is seated there, concentrated on the brahman. O Indra among serpents! O supreme among serpents! I pacified him and told him that when you arrived before me, I would sent you to him. O immensely wise one! Having heard this, you should go there. O one who hears with the eyes![1384] You should show yourself to him.'"'

Chapter 1676(348)

'"The serpent asked, 'O one with the beautiful smiles! In the form of a brahmana, whom did you see? Was that brahmana only a human, or was he a god? O illustrious one! Among men, who is capable of seeing me, or would desire that? Would anyone like that speak and leave words of instruction that I should go and see him? O beautiful one! Among the number of gods, asuras and devarshis, the serpents are certainly immensely valorous. They are the descendants of Surasa and are swift.[1385] They deserve to be honoured and are the granters of boons. We deserve to be followed by others. In particular, it has been heard that men follow us for riches.'

'"The serpent's wife replied, 'O one who subsists on air! From his uprightness, I know that he is not a god. O one who is extremely wrathful! I know that he is devoted to you alone. He desires to accomplish some task through you and is waiting, like the chataka bird for water.[1386] Like the bird which loves the monsoon, he desires to meet you. He should be protected against any misfortune and anxiety. A person like you, with noble birth, should not disregard someone who has come before you. You should cast aside your natural anger and go and see him. You should not cause torment to yourself by destroying his hopes. If a king or a prince does not wipe away the tears of someone who has come with hope, he commits the sin of having killed a foetus. Knowledge is the fruit of silence. Great fame results from giving. Through eloquence and truthful words, one obtains greatness in the hereafter. Through donating land, one obtains an end that is lauded by all the ashramas. Even if the riches obtained have been destroyed in this way, one gets fruits. If one desires benefit, one must perform all the desirable acts. One will then never go to hell. Those who are learned about dharma say this.'

'"The serpent said, 'O virtuous one! Because of the great pride associated with the sinful species that I have been born into, I possessed insolence and resolved to yield to anger. But that has been burnt down by the fire of your words. O virtuous one! I do not see any darkness that is greater than being consumed by anger. Serpents are said to be especially prone to this. This is the sin that the powerful Dashagriva[1387] fell prey to. He rivalled Shakra and was slain by Rama in the battle. On hearing that Rama had entered the inner quarters of the palace to seize the calf, the sons of Kartavirya were also afflicted by this sin and were slain.[1388] The immensely strong Kartavirya was like the thousand-eyed one.[1389] However, he was slain in a battle by Rama, Jamadagni's son. Because of your words, I have controlled my anger, which is the enemy of austerities and destroys all benefit. You are large-eyed and possess all the qualities. I am indeed praiseworthy, since I have someone like you as my wife. I will therefore go where that brahmana is waiting. In every way, I will speak appropriate words to him. He will not depart as one unsuccessful.'"'

Chapter 1677(349)

'Bhishma said, "The lord of the serpents advanced towards the brahmana, mentally thinking about the task that might have brought him there. O lord of men! The Indra among serpents was intelligent and devoted to dharma.

Having arrived there, he addressed him in naturally pleasant words. ‘I am addressing you peacefully. You should not be enraged with me. What is the task that has brought you here? What is your purpose? O brahmana! I have arrived before you and am asking you affectionately. On the banks of the Gomati, whom do you desire to worship?’

‘“The brahmana replied, ‘Know me to be Dharmaranya, foremost among brahmanas. I have come here to see the serpent Padmanabha. I have some work with him. I have heard that he has gone away, so I am waiting nearby for him, like a person waiting for a relative, or a farmer waiting for the rain. I wish to dispel his hardships and do what is beneficial for him. Therefore, without any difficulty, I am engaged in yoga here, united with the brahman.’

‘“The serpent said, ‘O virtuous one! Your conduct is beneficial and you are devoted to righteous people. O immensely fortunate one! I have heard that you bear supreme affection towards him. O brahmana rishi! I am that serpent and you have now met me. What is your command? Tell me what I can do to bring you pleasure. I have heard from my relatives that you had come here. O brahmana! That is the reason I have myself come here to meet you. Now that you have come here, you will be successful in your pursuits. O foremost among brahmanas! You can instruct me to be engaged in whatever pursuit you wish. In particular, all of us have been won over by your qualities. You have abandoned your own welfare and are engaged in seeking ours.’

‘“The brahmana replied, ‘O immensely fortunate one! I have come here with a desire to meet you. O serpent! I do not know the truth and have a desire to ask you about the truth. With my atman based on the atman,[1390] I wish to embark on a path that brings benefit to the atman. O immensely wise one! I am not attached to anything and wish to worship that which is powerful. You are radiant and famous through your qualities, as if you are the origin of the sun’s rays. The radiant touch of your inner self now seems to be like the touch of the moon’s beams. O one who survives on air! Answer the question that has arisen. Later, I will tell you about the task that has brought me here. I should hear about this from you.’”’

Chapter 1678(350)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘Vivasvat’s[1391] chariot has a single wheel and in due course, you firmly draw it. If you have seen anything wonderful and praiseworthy, you should tell me about it.’

‘“The serpent replied, ‘Successful sages and the gods reside in his thousand rays, like birds perched on branches during the spring. The great wind emerges from Surya’s rays and yawns in the sky. O brahmana! What can be more wonderful than that? The one named Shukra is at his feet.[1392] At the time of the monsoon, he showers down rain from the clouds in the sky. What can be more wonderful than that? For eight months, he sucks up the water through his pure rays and at the right time, showers them down again. What can be more wonderful than that? The atman is always established in specific parts of his energy. That is the seed of the earth and sustains mobile and immobile objects. The mighty-armed god is eternal. He is supreme and without decay.[1393] O brahmana! He is without beginning and without end. What can be more wonderful than that? There is something that is even more extraordinary than all these wonders. Hear about it from me. Residing with Surya, I have seen this in the sparkling sky. In ancient times, at midday, the sun used to scorch the worlds. At that time, an entity was seen to advance towards the sun. It illuminated all the worlds with its own natural radiance. It advanced towards the sun and seemed to splinter the sky in the process. The rays of that energy blazed like oblations poured into the fire. That form was like that of a second sun and could not be looked at. As it advanced, Vivasvat stretched out his hand. As if honouring back in return, the entity also stretched out its right hand. Splintering the firmament, it then entered the solar disc. It mingled with Aditya’s energy and in an instant, merged inside it. A doubt arose, because we could no longer distinguish between the two different masses of energy. Of these two, which one was Surya on his chariot? And which was the one that had arrived? Since a doubt arose in us, we asked Ravi,[1394] “O Surya! Who is the one who has advanced through the firmament and has merged into you, like a second self?”’”’

Chapter 1679(351)

‘“Surya said, ‘O friend! This is not the wind god, an asura or a serpent. This is a sage who has gone to heaven because he has become successful through the vow and conduct of unchha. This brahmana controlled himself and subsisted on roots and fruits. He ate dry leaves. He did not eat, or subsisted only on air. The brahmana obtained favours by reciting hymns from the Rig Veda Samhita. His acts opened the doors to heaven and he went to heaven. O serpent! He was restless in his desire, but he possessed fortitude. He always subsisted only on unchha. This brahmana was always engaged in the welfare of all beings. He was not a god, a gandharva, an asura, or a serpent. But because he was powerful among beings, he obtained the supreme objective.’

‘“The serpent said, ‘O brahmana! Such was the wonder that I witnessed. He obtained success in his human form and obtained the destination meant for those who are successful. O brahmana! With Surya, he circles around the earth.’”’

Chapter 1680(352)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘O supreme among serpents! There is no doubt that this is extraordinary. I am extremely delighted. Your sentences are full of meaning and have shown me my path. O virtuous one! O supreme among serpents! May you be fortunate. I will depart. Remember me and send your messengers to find out how I am.’

‘“The serpent replied, ‘You have not told me about the task that you are attached to. How can you then go? O brahmana! Tell me what is to be done and the reason why you have come here. O bull among brahmanas! Whether you state it or don’t state it, take my permission and leave only after you have accomplished your purpose. O brahmana! You should only go after you have honoured me and received my permission. I have become attached to you. You should not go only after having seen me, seated near the root of this tree. O brahmana rishi! This is not how you should depart. O foremost among brahmanas! There is no doubt that you have also become attached to me. O unblemished one! All these people belong to you. In staying with me, what is there to think about?’

‘“The brahmana said, ‘O immensely wise one! O serpent! It is exactly as you have understood it. The gods are not superior to you in any way. O serpent! I am you and you are me. I, you, and all the creatures can always go everywhere.[1395] O lord of Bhoga![1396] There was a doubt in my mind about the way to accumulate merit. O virtuous one! I have now seen the truth and will follow the vow of unchha. O virtuous one! I have now made up my mind to follow the best method. O fortunate one! O serpent! I have obtained success and I seek your leave.’”’

Chapter 1681(353)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! The brahmana honoured the foremost among serpents. He made up his mind to be initiated and desiring this, resorted to Chyavana, of the Bhargava lineage. O king! He[1397] performed the sacraments for him to be initiated into the way of dharma. O king! O Indra among kings! Bhargava also recounted this story in Janaka’s abode. He[1398] described this sacred account to the great-souled Narada. O Indra among kings! O foremost among the Bharata lineage! When he was asked, Narada, unblemished in his deeds, recounted this account in the abode of the gods. O lord of the earth! In ancient times, the king of the gods recounted this sacred account to an assembly of the praiseworthy Vasus. O king! When I fought that extremely terrible battle with Rama,[1399] the Vasus recounted this story to me. O lord of the earth! O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Having been asked by you, I have told you the truth about this sacred account, which is full of dharma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You asked me about supreme dharma. O king! This account is about a patient person who acted in accordance with dharma and artha. That foremost among brahmanas was firm in his resolution and to accomplish his objective, was instructed by the lord of the serpents. At the extremities of the forest, he practised yama and niyama. He engaged in practices that were sanctioned by those who eat in accordance with unchha.”’

This concludes Moksha Dharma Parva and also concludes Shanti Parva.

Anushasana Parva

Anusbasana means instruction or advice and Anushasana Parva continues with Bhishma's instructions. In the 18-parva classification, Anushasana Parva is the thirteenth. In the 100-parva classification, Anushasana Parva constitutes Sections 87 and 88. Anushasana Parva has 154 chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Anushasana Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Anushasana Parva.

Section Eighty-Seven
Dana Dharma Parva

This parva has 6409 shlokas and 152 chapters.

Chapter 1682(1): 76 shlokas
Chapter 1683(2): 95 shlokas
Chapter 1684(3): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1685(4): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1686(5): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1687(6): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1688(7): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1689(8): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1690(9): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1691(10): 70 shlokas
Chapter 1692(11): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1693(12): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1694(13): 6 shlokas
Chapter 1695(14): 199 shlokas
Chapter 1696(15): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1697(16): 75 shlokas
Chapter 1698(17): 171 shlokas
Chapter 1699(18): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1700(19): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1701(20): 76 shlokas
Chapter 1702(21): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1703(22): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1704(23): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1705(24): 101 shlokas
Chapter 1706(25): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1707(26): 66 shlokas
Chapter 1708(27): 104 shlokas

Chapter 1709(28): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1710(29): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1711(30): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1712(31): 64 shlokas
Chapter 1713(32): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1714(33): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1715(34): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1716(35): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1717(36): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1718(37): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1719(38): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1720(39): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1721(40): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1722(41): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1723(42): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1724(43): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1725(44): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1726(45): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1727(46): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1728(47): 61 shlokas
Chapter 1729(48): 49 shlokas
Chapter 1730(49): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1731(50): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1732(51): 48 shlokas
Chapter 1733(52): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1734(53): 69 shlokas
Chapter 1735(54): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1736(55): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1737(56): 20 shlokas

Dana *means gifts, donations, giving things away in charity. So this section is about the dharma to be followed in* dana.

Chapter 1682(1)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! It has been said that tranquility is subtle and of many different types. But having acted in this way, there is no peace in my mind. O unblemished one! In this connection, you have spoken in many different ways about peace. Because of what I myself have done, these diverse kinds of peace are not available to me. I can see the terrible wounds left by the arrows on your body. O brave one! Thinking of the wicked deeds I have done, I can find no peace. Blood is flowing from your limbs, like streams from a mountain. O tiger among men! On seeing this, I am suffering, like a lotus during the rains. O grandfather! Could I have done anything more painful than this? Having confronted your enemies in the field of battle, you have now been reduced to this state. This is also what has happened to other kings, with their sons and relatives. Under the subjugation of destiny, we, and the sons of Dhritarashtra, were overcome by anger. We have perpetrated this reprehensible act. O king! What end will we obtain? I am the one who has caused your death. I am the one who has killed the well-wishers. On seeing you in this miserable state, lying down on the ground, I cannot find any peace.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When something else is responsible, why do you see yourself as the cause? O immensely fortunate one! The course of action is subtle and beyond the grasp of the senses. In this connection, an ancient history is cited, about a conversation between Mrityu,[1] Goutami, Kala,[2] a hunter and a serpent. O Kounteya! There was an aged lady named Goutami and she was full of tranquility. She saw that her son had been bitten by a snake and was unconscious. A hunter named Arjunaka was enraged with the snake. He tied it up with some rope and brought it to Goutami. He said, ‘This worst of snakes has killed your son. O illustrious one! Quickly tell me how I should kill it. Should I fling it into the fire, or should I chop it up into bits? This slayer of a child does not deserve to remain alive for much longer.’

‘“Goutami said, ‘O Arjunaka! You have limited intelligence. Release it. Do not kill it. Virtuous ones who have thought about it do not act so as to impose such a heavy burden on their own selves. They use the boat of dharma to tide over this world, like crossing the waters with a boat. Those who have made themselves heavy with sin sink, like a weapon sinks in the water. By killing it, the one who is dead will not come back to life. What purpose will be achieved by killing this creature? By letting it go, this creature will have life. Why should it be dispatched to the eternal world of death?'

'"The hunter responded, 'I know that you know the difference between good and bad. Everyone bears a great burden. But those words of instruction are for a balanced person only. Therefore, I will kill this inferior snake. For the sake of something immediate, something far away in time must be abandoned. Those who know about objectives realize that it is the immediate that is good and not incessant grieving about what is good and what is bad.[3] That is the reason why it must not be released. Once it has been killed, conquer your sorrow.'

'"Goutami said, 'Those who know are not afflicted in this way. The virtuous always seek delight in dharma. The death of this child was predetermined. I cannot go against the power of dharma. Brahmanas are not enraged.[4] Why should I face the pain from anger? O virtuous one! Be mild and forgiving. Let the serpent go.'

'"The hunter replied, 'Killing it will bring inexhaustible gain. An immediate gain and increase in strength is praised. There is an immediate gain. And by killing such a wicked creature, there may even be long-lasting gain.'

'"Goutami asked, 'Why should one kill an enemy who has been captured, when one can obtain peace by releasing that enemy? O amiable one! Why don't you wish to forgive the serpent? What is the reason why you don't want to release it?'

'"The hunter replied, 'O Goutami! There are many who can be protected from this one. A single one should not be protected at the expense of many. Those who know about dharma abandon the vicious. This reptile is wicked and you should allow it to be killed.'

'"Goutami said, 'O hunter! My dead son will not come back to life if this serpent is killed and I will not get him back. Nor do I see any other good from killing it. O hunter! Therefore, save the life of this creature.'

'"The hunter replied, 'After killing Vritra, the king of the gods obtained the best share. By destroying a sacrifice, the god with the trident obtained a share.[5]

Therefore, follow the conduct of the gods. Do not entertain any doubts about quickly killing this snake.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The hunter asked the immensely fortunate Goutami to act in this wicked way towards the serpent, but she had no intention of perpetrating that evil act. Meanwhile, tied up in the rope and afflicted, it was facing difficulties. It sighed a little and spoke slowly, in a human voice. 'O foolish Arjunaka! What is the crime that I have committed? I am not independent. I am powerless and Mrityu sent me here. I bit him because of his instructions, not because of any anger or desire. O hunter! If there has been any sin, that sin therefore vests with him.'

'"The hunter said, 'O serpent! Even if you have committed an inauspicious act because you have been under someone else's subjugation, since you have been the instrument, the sin also vests in you. When an earthen pot is fashioned, the rod and the wheel are thought of as instruments. O serpent! You are also like that. Anyone who has committed a crime deserves to be slain by me. O serpent! You have committed a crime. O serpent! Indeed, you have described yourself as an instrument.'

'"The snake replied, 'The rod and the wheel are helpless in every way. I am just like that. Therefore, I am not the cause that you have mentioned. If you hold a contrary view, realize that these objects are being used by someone else. When something is urged by something else, there is a doubt about which one is the cause and which one is the effect. Thus, I am not guilty. I do not deserve to be killed. I have not committed a crime. Even if you think that there has been a crime, the crime is due to multiple reasons.'

'"The hunter said, 'Even if you are not the prime cause, you have been the agent responsible for his death. Therefore, you deserve to be killed. That is my view. O serpent! Even if you think that if you perform a wicked act and you will not be touched by it, you are the cause whereby that act was undertaken. That is sufficient for you to be killed. Why do you want to speak more?'

'"The snake replied, 'Regardless of whether there has been some other cause or not, an act is driven by its motive. The intention behind my words was to draw particular attention to the motive. O hunter! Even if you truly think that I was the cause, the motive behind that use was someone else's. The sin of killing a living being then also vests with someone else.'

'"The hunter said, 'O one who is extremely evil-minded! You deserve to be slain by me. You have committed the cruel deed of killing a child. Why do you keep speaking? O worst among serpents! You deserve to be killed.'

'"The snake replied, 'O hunter! In this world and in the next, officiating priests who offer oblations into a sacrifice do not obtain any fruits.[6] I am like that.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Having been goaded by Mrityu, the serpent spoke in this way. Mrityu then arrived before the serpent and spoke these words. 'O serpent! I was goaded by Kala and I goaded you in turn. I or you are not the causes behind this child's destruction. The clouds are moved here and there by the wind. O snake! Just like the clouds, you and I are under Kala's subjugation. All the attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas exist in Kala's essence and thus exist among beings. Mobile and immobile objects, in heaven and on earth, are all controlled by Kala. O snake! The entire universe is influenced by Kala. Inclinations of people towards pravritti and nivritti and all their various transformations are all said to be dependent on Kala. O serpent! Aditya, the moon, Vishnu, water, wind, Shatakratu, Agni, the sky, the earth, Mitra, the herbs, the Vasus, the rivers, the oceans, existence and non-existence—all these are created by Kala and destroyed again. O snake! Since you know this, why do you think that I am guilty? Had I been a sinner, you would also have been a sinner.'

'"The snake replied, 'O Mrityu! I am not saying that you are absolved, nor am I saying that you are guilty. I have only said that I have been goaded by you. Nor do I say anything about Kala being blamed, or not being blamed. You or I do not possess the right to examine that crime. It is my duty to ensure that I am absolved of the sin. It may also be necessary for me to show that Mrityu is innocent.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The snake then spoke to Arjunaka. 'You have heard what Mrityu said. I am innocent. You should not torment me in these bonds.'

'"The hunter said, 'O serpent! I have heard your words, as well as those of Mrityu. O serpent! But that does not make you innocent. You and Mrityu are both responsible for this creature's destruction. I think that both of you are causes. Something that is a cause should not be regarded as not being a cause.

Shame on the evil-souled Mrityu. He cruelly afflicts the virtuous. I will kill you too.[7] You are the sinful cause behind a sinner.'

'"Mrityu replied, 'We are helpless. We are under the subjugation of Kala. We do what he instructs us. If you look at this objectively, there should not be anything to blame us.'

'"The hunter said, 'O Mrityu! O serpent! If both of you are under the subjugation of Kala, how are joy and anger generated?[8] I desire to know this.'

'"Mrityu responded, 'Everything that all of us have endeavoured to do is because of us being goaded by Kala. O hunter! I have already told you that all of this is because of Kala. If the two of us have caused any injury, that is because we have been under Kala's subjugation. O hunter! There is no way that we can be held to be guilty.'"

'Bhishma continued, "At that time, while there was this confusion about dharma, Kala arrived at the spot. He spoke to the serpent, Mrityu and the hunter Arjunaka.

'"Kala said, 'O hunter! Mrityu or the serpent or I am not guilty of any sin, on account of having caused the death of any creature. O Arjunaka! These outcomes are caused by the deeds a creature commits. Nothing other than one's own deeds is responsible for destruction and death. It was because of his deeds that he faced death. All of us are under the subjugation of our deeds and those deeds are the reason for destruction. People reap the fruits of their deeds. Being bound by one's deeds is the manifestation. One deed leads to another, just as we urge each other. A doer fashions whatever he wants with a piece of clay. In that fashion, a man confronts the consequences of his deeds. Light and shadow are always connected to each other. In that fashion, a deed and a doer are connected because of past deeds. You, Mrityu, the snake, you and the aged brahmana lady are not the reasons for the child's death.'"

'Bhishma continued, "O king! When he spoke in this way, Goutami, the brahmana lady, realized that people suffered the consequences of their own deeds. She told Arjunaka, 'Kala, the serpent or Mrityu aren't the cause of the death. This child has died because of his own deeds. And it is because of my earlier deeds that my son has died. O Arjunaka! Let Kala and Mrityu go and release this serpent.' Mrityu, Kala and the serpent went away to wherever they had come from. Arjunaka was freed of his anger and Goutami of her sorrow.

O king! Hearing this, be tranquil and do not think a lot. O bull among men! Know that people obtain the three worlds because of their own deeds.[9] O Partha! You did not do anything, nor did Duryodhana. Know that the kings died because of what Kala did."'

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing these words, the immensely energetic Yudhishthira lost all his anxiety. The one who followed dharma had more questions.'

Chapter 1683(2)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! O immensely wise one! One who knows about all the sacred texts! O supreme among intelligent ones! I have heard this great account. O king! However, I again to hear about things connected with dharma and artha. You should tell me about some such account. Has any householder been able to conquer death by resorting to garhasthya dharma? O king! Tell me the truth about all of this."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, there is an ancient history, about a householder who conquered death by resorting to dharma. O king! Prajapati Manu had a son named Ikshvaku. That king had one hundred sons who were as radiant as the sun. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The tenth son was named Dashashva. He had dharma in his soul, was truthful in his valour and became the king of Mahishmati. Dashashva's son was a king who was extremely devoted to dharma. His mind was always devoted to truth, austerities and donations. Throughout the earth, that lord of the earth was known by the name of Madirashva. He was always engaged in studying the Vedas and in Dhanurveda. Madirashva's son was the king named Dyutimat. He was immensely fortunate, immensely energetic, immensely spirited and immensely strong. Dyutimat's son was the king named Suvira. He possessed dharma in his soul and his treasury was like that of the king of the gods. Suvira had a son who was invincible in battle. He was known by the name of Durjaya and he was accomplished in all the sacred texts. Durjaya's body was like that of Indra's. He had a son who was resplendent as the fire. O supreme among kings! He was a great king and his name was Duryodhana. His valour was like that of Indra and so were his possessions and power. He never retreated from the field of battle. His city and kingdom were full of separate stores of jewels, riches, animals and grain. There was no one in the kingdom who was weak or afflicted. No man there was diseased or lean. He[10] was accomplished and pleasant in speech. He was without jealousy and had conquered his senses. He had dharma in his soul and was non-violent. He was valiant, but did not boast. He performed sacrifices and was restrained in speech. He was intelligent, devoted to brahmanas and devoted to the truth. He did not disrespect others. He was generous and knowledgable about the Vedas and the Vedangas. The celestial river, Narmada, is sacred and auspicious, with cool waters. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In a natural state, she served that best among men![11] O king! Through the river, he had a daughter named Sudarshana. Her eyes were like a lotus. Her form was beautiful to look at.[12] O Yudhishthira! No woman with such beauty had been born earlier. Duryodhana's daughter, Sudarshana, was supremely beautiful.

'"Agni wished to marry the princess Sudarshana. Adopting the disguise of a brahmana, he appeared before the king and sought her hand in marriage. The king was unwilling to bestow his daughter, Sudarshana, on the brahmana. After all, he was poor and did not belong to the same varna. At this, Agni disappeared and his sacrifice was destroyed. King Duryodhana spoke these words to the priests who offered oblations. 'O bulls among brahmanas! What wicked act have I committed, to make Agni disappear? That is the way he should behave towards wicked people. I must have committed an extremely wicked deed to make Agni vanish thus. You must have done something, or I must have done something. Ascertain the truth about this.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing the king's words, the brahmanas controlled themselves and using eloquent words, sought Agni's refuge. The illustrious bearer of oblations showed himself to them. The firmament blazed with his radiance. He was as resplendent as the autumn sun. The great-souled one scorched those bulls among brahmanas and said, 'I seek the hand of Duryodhana's daughter.' All the brahmanas were astounded at what Chitrabhanu[13] had said. They immediately arose and went and reported this to the king. The king heard the words of the ones who knew about the brahman and was supremely delighted. However, the intelligent king sought a bride price from the illustrious fire god and this was that Chitrabhanu should always dwell near him. The illustrious Agni agreed to the king's condition. That is the reason why, even today, the fire god is in Mahishmati and in the course of his conquest, Sahadeva saw him in that direction. The maiden was attired in new garments and ornamented. King Duryodhana gave her to the great-souled Pavaka. Following the ordinances laid down in the Vedas, Agni accepted the princess Sudarshana, just as he accepts offerings of clarified butter. Agni was delighted with her beauty, good conduct, noble lineage, form and grace and resolved to have offspring through her. Agni thus had a son named Sudarshana.[14] Even as a child, he knew everything about the eternal brahman.

'"There was a king named Oghavat and he was Nriga's grandfather. He had a daughter named Oghavati and a son named Ogharatha. Oghavat gave his daughter, Oghavati, who was as beautiful as a goddess, to the learned Sudarshana as a wife. O king! In the ashrama of garhasthya, Sudarshana dwelt with Oghavati in Kurukshetra. O lord of the earth! The intelligent lord, blazing in his energy, took a pledge that he would conquer death in the state of garhasthya. O king! Pavaka's son told Oghavati, 'Always act so as to satisfy the guests. One should offer one's own self, without even thinking about it. This vow is always circulating in my mind. O one with the beautiful hips! For householders, there is nothing that is superior to guests. O one with the beautiful thighs! O beautiful one! If you set any store by my words, always bear these words in your heart, without doubting them. O fortunate one! O unblemished one! This is irrespective of whether I am here, or have gone out. If you set any store by my words, never disrespect a guest.' Oghavati joined her hands in salutation and raised them up above her head. She said, 'It is my duty to never disregard your words.' O king! Mrityu sought to test this and followed Sudarshana around in the house, searching for a weakness. Agni's son, Sudarshana, went out for some firewood and a handsome brahmana arrived as a guest before Oghavati. He said, 'O beautiful one! I seek your hospitality today. Please grant it to me. Prove to me that you are following the dharma of the garhasthya ashrama.' O lord of the earth! Thus addressed by the brahmana, the illustrious princess welcomed him, following the rites that are spoken about in the Vedas. She gave the brahmana a seat and water to wash his feet. Oghavati then asked the brahmana, 'Why have you come here? What should I give you?' The brahmana told the princess who belonged to Sudarshana, 'O fortunate one! I have come here for you. Without any hesitation, you should act for that objective. O queen! If you wish to prove that you are following the dharma of garhasthya ashrama, you should give yourself to me. Do what I find to be agreeable.' The king's daughter tried to dissuade him by offering many other desirable objects. However, the only boon that the brahmana sought was that she should offer herself. The daughter of the king remembered the words that her husband had spoken. Though she was ashamed, she agreed to what the bull among brahmanas had proposed. She rememberd her husband's words and desired to follow the ashrama of garhasthya. Therefore, she went to the brahmana rishi and lay down with him.

'"Having collected the firewood, Pavaka's son returned. Like a friend who follows, the terrible Mrityu was constantly at his side. Having arrived at the hermitage, Pavaka's son called out to Oghavati. Since there was no reply, he wondered where she could have gone. She was in no position to reply to her husband then. The virtuous one, devoted to her husband, was locked in an embrace in the arms of the brahmana. She thought that she had been defiled and was ashamed of facing her husband. Therefore, the virtuous one remained silent and did not say anything. At this, Sudarshana addressed her again. 'Where can the virtuous one be? Where could she have gone? Nothing is more important to me than her. She is devoted to her husband. She is truthful in her conduct. She is always upright. As she used to earlier, why is she not smiling and answering?' The brahmana who was inside the cottage replied to Sudarshana. 'O Pavaka's son! Know me to be a brahmana guest who has arrived. O excellent one! This upright one is firm in her mind about tending to guests. She offered me other things, but I was only interested in her. Following the prescribed rites, the fair-faced one is now serving me. Whatever you say should be appropriate to the occasion.' Mrityu raised the heavy club in his hand, thinking that he would slay a person who deviated from his pledge. However, Sudarshana had discarded all anger in his mind, deeds, sight and speech. He smiled and replied, 'O foremost among brahmanas! Enjoy the intercourse well. This brings great pleasure to me. The prime dharma for a householder is to honour a guest who has arrived. The learned have said that there is no dharma superior to a householder than the departure of a guest after being honoured. My life, my wife and all the riches I possess are to be given to a guest. That is the vow I have taken. There should be no doubt about the words that I have spoken. O brahmana! I speak the truth when I say that it is through this means that I will get to know my own atman. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! The earth, wind, space, water, light as the fifth, intelligence, the atman, the mind, time, the directions and the ten qualities[15] are always a witness to good and bad deeds. Depending on the truth or falsehood of the words I have spoken today, let the gods protect me or consume me.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, a great roar arose in all the directions. 'This is true in every way. This is not false.' The brahmana also emerged from the hut. He arose like the wind and his form covered the sky and the earth. The brahmana spoke in accomplished tones and his voice resounded in the three worlds. 'O one who knows about dharma! In the mantras, you have earlier invoked me as Dharma. O unblemished one! I arrived here to test you. On knowing that you are devoted to the truth, I am greatly delighted with you. You have conquered Mrityu, who has been following you around. He has always been searching for your weaknesses. But your fortitude has subjugated him. O supreme among men! This virtuous one is devoted to her husband and no one in the three worlds is capable of even looking at her. She is protected by your qualities and by her qualities of being devoted to her husband. She has not been touched. The words that I have spoken are not false. This one knows about the brahman and is united with austerities. To purify the worlds, she will become the best of rivers.[16] This immensely fortunate one will control her body through yoga. While half of her self will remain in her body, the other half will become the River Oghavati. With her, you will go to the worlds you have earned through your austerities. There is no return from those eternal and everlasing worlds and you will obtain those worlds in your physical body. You have conquered Mrityu and have obtained the greatest prosperity. Through the valour of your mind, you have transcended the five elements. You have resorted to the dharma of garhasthya and have conquered desire and anger. O king! You have conquered affection, attachment, lassitude, delusion and hatred through your service and have also obtained this princess.' An excellent chariot arrived, yoked to one thousand white horses. It arrived and bore the illustrious one away. Mrityu, the atman, the worlds, the five elements, intelligence, time, mind, space, desire, anger—all these were conquered through the garhasthya ashrama. O tiger among men! There should be no doubt in one's mind that there is no god who is greater than a guest. The learned ones have said that in one's mind, one must always remember the auspicious fact that even one hundred sacrifices are not equal to honouring a guest. If there is a deserving guest who is not honoured in accordance with good conduct, when he goes away, he takes the good deeds earned and leaves the bad deeds earned.[17] O son! I have thus recounted this excellent account to you, wherein, in ancient times, a householder conquered death. This account[18] brings renown, fame and a long life. A person, who desires prosperity and wants his evil conduct to be dispelled, should listen to it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person recites this account of Sudarshana's conduct every day, he obtains the sacred worlds."'

Chapter 1684(3)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O lord of men! O great king! If the other three varnas find it extremely difficult to become a brahmana, how did the great-souled kshatriya, Vishvamitra, with dharma in his soul, become a brahmana? O grandfather! I wish to hear the truth about this. Please tell me. O great grandfather! Through his austerities and infinite valour, the great-souled one instantly killed one hundred of Vasishtha's sons. When anger entered his body, he created many yatudhanas[19] and rakshasas who were fierce in their energy. They were like the Destroyer himself. There were hundreds of brahmana rishis in the great lineage of Kushika.[20] Having established this lineage in the world of men, he was praised by the learned brahmanas. The great ascetic, Shunahshepa, was Richika's son. He was treated like an animal at a great sacrifice and was freed by him.[21] The energetic Harishchandra performed a sacrifice and pleased the gods, thus becoming the intelligent Vishvamitra's son. O lord of men! Because they did not honour their eldest, Devarata, fifty of his sons were cursed and became shvapakas.[22] Trishanku, the son of Ikshvaku, was abandoned by his relatives. However, he[23] affectionately conveyed him to heaven, with his head hanging downwards. Vishvamitra created a large, pure and sacred river named Koushiki and this was frequented by the rajarshis and also frequented by the brahmana rishis. There was the apsara named Rambha, who had five tufts of hair and was extremely beautiful. However, because she disturbed his austerities, she was cursed and turned into stone. In ancient times, because he was scared of him, Vasishtha submerged himself in the water and rose after he had been freed from his bonds. That is the reason the sacred and large river came to be known as Vipasha.[24] This was a famous deed the great-souled one performed for Vasishtha's sake. The lord praised and pleased the eloquent and illustrious one who was at the forefront of the army of the gods and thus freed himself from the curse.[25] He always blazes in the northern direction in the midst of the brahmana rishis and Uttanpada's son, Dhruva.[26] O Kourava! These and many others are his deeds. This is despite his being born as a kshatriya and I am curious about this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! How did this happen? Tell me the truth about this. Without taking birth in another body, how did he become a brahmana? O king! You should tell me the entire truth about this. Tell me the truth about Matanga too. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Having been born in the womb of a chandala, Matanga did not obtain the status of a brahmana. How did he[27] then become a brahmana?"'

Chapter 1685(4)

'Bhishma replied, "O Partha! O son! Listen to the ancient and truthful account about Vishvamitra, about how be obtained the status of a brahmana and became a brahmana rishi. In the lineage of the Bharatas, there was a king named Ajamidha.[28] O best among the Bharata lineage! He performed sacrifices and was supreme among those who upheld dharma. His son was the great king named Jahnu. The great-souled one obtained Ganga as his daughter.[29] His son was the immensely illustrious Sindhudvipa, who was his equal in qualities. The immensely strong rajarshi, Balakashva, was born from Sindhudvipa. His son was Vallabha, who was like Dharma himself. His son was Kushika, whose radiance was like that of the thousand-eyed one.[30]

Kushika’s son was the prosperous King Gadhi. The mighty-armed one was without a son and began to dwell in the forest. While he dwelt in the forest, a daughter was born to him. Her name was Satyavati and her beauty was unmatched on earth. The illustrious Chyavana’s son was the lord Richika, born in the Bhargava lineage. Because of his great austerities, he was famous. He sought her hand. However, Gadhi, the destroyer of enemies, thought that the great-souled Richika was poor and did not give her to him. When he was refused and about to go away, the supreme among kings again said, ‘If you give me a price, I will then give you my daughter.’

‘“Richika asked, ‘O Indra among kings! What will I give you as a price? O king! Without hesitating about it, tell me what I should give you for your daughter.’

‘“Gadhi replied, ‘O Bhargava! Give me one thousand horses that are as swift as the wind, as white as the beams of the moon, but with each one possessing one black ear.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The lord who was Chyavana’s son and was a tiger of the Bhrigu lineage went to Varuna, Aditi’s son and the lord of the waters, and said, ‘O supreme among gods! I seek alms from you—one thousand horses that are as swift as the wind, as white as the beams of the moon, but with each possessing one black ear.’ Varuna, the god Aditya, agreed to what the supreme one of the Bhrigu lineage had asked. ‘As soon as you think of them, the horses will be there.’ Richika thought of horses that were as radiant as the moon and one thousand of them arose from the waters of the Ganga, great in their energy. Not far from Kanyakubja, there are the excellent banks of the Ganga. Even today, men still refer to the spot as Ashvatirtha.[31] O son! Richika, foremost among those who meditate, cheerfully gave those one thousand fair horses to Gadhi, as a price. King Gadhi was astounded, but was also terrified of a curse. He therefore gave his ornamented daughter to Bhrigu’s descendant. Following the recommended rites, the supreme among brahmana rishis accepted her hand. She was also extremely delighted at having obtained such a husband. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brahmana rishi was pleased at her conduct and desired to grant a boon to the beautiful one. O supreme among kings! The maiden reported this to her mother. As the daughter stood before her, with downcast eyes, the mother said, ‘O daughter! You should ask your husband to show me his favours too. That great ascetic is capable of granting me a son too.' O king! She swiftly went to Richika and told him everything about what her mother desired. He said, 'O fortunate one! Because of my love for you, she will give birth to a son who possesses all the qualities. There will be no violation of this. O fortunate one! You will also have a son who will be proud of his qualities. This prosperous one will extend our lineage. Your brother will also extend his lineage. When you have bathed at the end of your seasons, let her embrace an ashvattha tree and you should embrace a fig tree. O fortunate one! Thereby, both of you will obtain what you wish for. O one with the beautiful smiles! Here are two vessels of charu,[32] sanctified with the pronouncement of mantras. When you consume these, you will obtain the desired sons.' Satyavati happily told her mother what Richika had said. She also told her about the two vessels of charu. The mother inhaled the fragrance of her daughter Satyavati's head and told her, 'O daughter! Act in accordance with my words. Your husband first gave you a vessel of charu, sanctified with mantras. Give that to me. Accept the one he gave me instead. O one with the sweet smiles! We should also exchange the trees. O unblemished one! If you honour your mother, this is what you should do. It is evident what the illustrious one wants to do.[33] O slender-waisted one! Therefore, I desire your charu and your tree. You should also think about obtaining a superior brother for yourself.' O Yudhishthira! Satyavati and her mother acted in this way and both of them conceived.

'"When the great rishi, the supreme one of the Bhrigu lineage, saw that his wife, Satyavati, had conceived, he was distressed in his mind and said, 'It will soon be apparent that you have not done well in exchanging the charu. O beautiful one! It is clear that you have exchanged the trees too. I had placed all the brahmana energy in the universe in your charu. I had placed all the kshatriya valour in her charu. You would have given birth to a brahmana who would have been famous in the three worlds because of his qualities. She would have given birth to an excellent kshatriya. That is what I had arranged for. However, you and your mother have effected an exchange. Therefore, your mother will give birth to the best among brahmanas. O fortunate one! You will give birth to a kshatriya who will be terrible in his deeds. O beautiful one! Thanks to your affection for your mother, you have not done a good deed.' O king! On hearing this, the beautiful Satyavati was overcome by grief and fell down on the ground, like a creeper that has been severed. When she regained her senses, she bowed her head down on the ground. The wife, Gadhi's daughter, spoke, to her husband, the bull among brahmanas. 'O supreme among those who know about the brahman! Show mercy towards your miserable wife. O brahmana rishi! Show me your favours, so that I do not have a son who is a kshatriya. If you so desire, let my grandson be the performer of terrible deeds. O brahmana! Grant me the boon that my son should not be like that.' The greatly ascetic agreed to what his wife had said.

'"She gave birth to an auspicious son named Jamadagni. O Indra among kings! Through the rishi's powers, Gadhi's illustrious wife gave birth to the brahmana rishi, Vishvamitra, knowledgable about the brahman. The immensely ascetic Vishvamitra obtained the status of a brahmana. Though he was born as a kshatriya, he became the originator of a lineage of brahmanas. His sons were great-souled and the extenders of the lineages of brahmanas. They were ascetics who knew about the brahman. They were the creators of gotras. The illustrious Madhuchanda, the valiant Devarata, Akshina, Shakunta, Babhru, Kalapatha, the famous Yajnavalkya, Sthuna, great in his vows, Uluka, Yamaduta, the rishi Saindhavayana, the illustrious Karnajangha, the great rishi Galava, the rishi Vajra, the famous Shalankayana, Lalatya, Narada, the one known as Kurchamukha, Vaduli, Musala, Rakshagriva, Anghnika, Naikabhricha, Shilayupa, Sita, Shuchi, Chakraka, Marutantavya, Vataghna, Ashvalayana, Shyamayana, Gargya, Jabali, Sushruta, Karishiratha, Samshrutya, Parapourava, Tantu, the great rishi Kapila, the rishi Tarakayana, Upagahana, the rishi Arjunayana, Margamitri, Hiranyaksha, Janghari, Babhruvahana, Suti, Vibhuti, Suta, Suranga, Aradvina, Amaya, Champeya, Ujjayana, Navatantu, Bakanakha, Shayana, Yati, Shayaruha, Arumatsya, Shirishi, Gardhabhi, Ujjayani, Adapekshi, the great rishi Naradi—all these sages were knowledgable about the brahman and were descended from Vishvamitra. O king! The great ascetic, Vishvamitra, was born as a kshatriya. O Yudhishthira! But Richika had brought the supreme brahman to him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have truthfully told you the entire account about Vishvamitra's birth. His energy was like that of the moon, the sun and the fire.

O supreme among kings! Tell me about everything that you have a doubt over. I will sever your doubts.”’

Chapter 1686(5)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I wish to hear everything about the dharma of non-violence and about the qualities of those who are devoted. O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In the kingdom of Kashi, a hunter left his village to hunt for deer. He had poisoned arrows with him. Searching for flesh, the hunter entered a large forest. He saw some deer at a distance and carefully shot an arrow at them. The weapon was difficult to repulse. However, in that large forest, though it has been released in order to kill a deer, it missed the target and struck a tree. The powerful poison in the arrow burnt it down. Having dried up, the tree shed its fruits and leaves. A parrot lived in a hollow in that withered tree. Because of its affection for the tree, it did not leave its abode. It did not emerge in search of food and starved. It suffered and became feeble. Because it was grateful to the tree, the one with dharma in its soul dried up with it. The chastiser of Paka[34] was astounded on learning that it looked upon happiness and unhappiness equally. Shakra wondered, ‘This bird has been born as an inferior species. How did it come to resort to non-violence? Or perhaps there is nothing wonderful in this, since all creatures are everywhere seen to be kindly disposed towards each other.’ Thus did Vasava think.

‘“Shakra assumed a human form, in the attire of a brahmana. He descended on earth and addressed the bird. ‘O parrot! O best among the birds! Daksha’s daughter has indeed had excellent offspring.[35] I wish to ask you a question. Why are you not abandoning this withered tree?’ Having been thus asked, the parrot bowed its head down in obeisance and replied, ‘O king of the gods! Welcome. Through my austerities, I know who you are.’ The one with the one thousand eyes exclaimed words of praise. ‘The austerities through which it has discerned this deserve to be honoured.’ The destroyer of Bala[36] knew that the parrot was extremely devoted to dharma and that it was the performer of auspicious deeds. However, he still wanted to know why the parrot wouldn’t leave. ‘This tree is without leaves and without fruit. It is withered and can no longer be a refuge for birds. Why are you still on this tree? There are many other trees in this great forest and they have leaves and are full of hollows. In this great forest, there are many other places where you will find a fortunate spot. This one has lost its lifespan and its capacity. Its essence has been destroyed. It has lost its prosperity. O wise and patient one! Why are you not abandoning a tree that has been destroyed and is now fragile?’ The parrot, with dharma in its soul, heard the words that Shakra had spoken. It sighed deeply and spoke these words of distress. ‘O Shachi’s consort! Destiny cannot be overcome. O lord of the gods! Listen to the reason why I am still here. I have been born in this tree. All my virtuous qualities result from it. It protected me well in my infancy and I was not assaulted by my enemies. O unblemished one! Why are you asking questions about the fruits I seek—non-violence, affection and attachment towards those who are devoted? Lack of anger is a great trait of those who are virtuous. Lack of anger always grants cheer to the virtuous. When there is a doubt about dharma, it is you whom the gods ask. O god! That is the reason you have been established as a lord of the gods. O thousand-eyed one! You should not ask me to abandon someone who is devoted to me. When it was capable, it sustained my life. How can I abandon it now?’ At these amiable words, Paka’s chastiser was delighted. He was satisfied with the parrot’s non-violence and knowledge of dharma and said, ‘O parrot! Ask for a boon.’ The parrot, always devoted to non-violence, asked for the boon that the tree might be revived. Shakra had got to know about the parrot’s firmness and richness of good conduct. Delighted, he quickly sprinkled amrita on the tree. Beautiful fruits, leaves and branches sprouted. Because of the parrot’s firm devotion, the tree regained its beauty again. O great king! Because of its deeds and acts of non-violence, when its lifespan was over, the parrot obtained Shakra’s world. O Indra among men! In this way, those who are devoted become successful in everything, just as the tree did, through the parrot.”’

Chapter 1687(6)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who is accomplished in all the sacred texts! Which is stronger, destiny or human endeavour?"

'Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Vasishtha and Brahma. In ancient times, Vasishtha asked the illustrious grandfather, 'Which is superior, destiny or the deeds of men?' O king! At this, the grandfather, born from the lotus and the god of the gods, replied in pleasant words that were full of purport and reason. 'Nothing is born without a seed. There are no fruits without a seed. It is said that seeds result from seeds and fruits result from seeds. The tiller of a field may sow good or bad seeds. The fruits obtained are in accordance with that. Without seeds, a ploughed field does not yield fruits. But in that way, without human enterprise, destiny doesn't become successful. The field is said to be like human enterprise, the seed is like destiny. Crops are harvested from a union of the field and the seed. The fruits of deeds are not destroyed. The doer reaps them himself. The consequences of good and evil deeds are evident in the world. There is happiness through good deeds and misery through wicked deeds. What is done is enjoyed. What is not done is never enjoyed. A person who does deeds[37] obtains prosperity in every way and his good fortune is not destroyed. A person who does not do deeds is destroyed, like caustic matter being poured into a wound. Austerities, beauty, good fortune and many kinds of jewels—all these are obtained through deeds, not through deeds coupled with individual inaction. In a similar way, heaven, objects of enjoyment and everything that one wishes for—all these are obtained through human endeavour, not through lack of action. The stellar bodies, the gods, the serpents, the yakshas, the moon, the sun, the Maruts—all these have been elevated from humanity to divinity through enterprise. Riches, categories of friends, prosperity, good lineage, beauty and objects of pleasure are extremely difficult to obtain, unless one has embarked on action. A brahmana obtains prosperity through purity, a kshatriya through valour, a vaishya through exertion and a shudra through servitude. It is not obtained by someone who is not generous and not brave, someone who is impotent and does not act, someone who does not engage in good deeds, someone who is not valiant and someone who does not resort to austerities. The illustrious Vishnu created the three worlds, the daityas and all the gods. But even he tormented himself through austerities in the ocean. Had there not been fruits from deeds, all these fruits would not have materialized. The worlds would only have looked towards destiny and become indifferent. If a man does not undertake deeds and only follows destiny, all his exertions will be futile, like a woman with an impotent husband. In the world of men, one should not be that frightened of good and bad deeds. More important is the slightest bit of fear in the world of the gods.[38] Deeds and human enterprise follow destiny. However, when there is inaction, destiny cannot provide anything. The status of the gods is also seen to be temporary. Without deeds, how can the gods remain established in their states? The gods never approved of good conduct in this world, since they fear that such fierce deeds might lead to their being dislodged. That is the reason there is always conflict between the rishis and the gods. Therefore, if the gods have themselves determined it, how can one speak of destiny? How is destiny itself supposed to have arisen? There are many kinds of deceit that are practised in the world of the thirty gods.[39] One's own atman is one's friend. One's own atman is also one's enemy. The atman is a witness to one's own self and to the deeds that have been performed and the ones that have not been performed. Between good deeds and perverse deeds, it is the good deeds that lead to success. Sometimes, good and bad deeds do not lead to consequences.[40] Divinity has the auspicious as a foundation. Everything is based on what is auspicious. A man with auspicious deeds will obtain everything. What can the gods do? In ancient times, Yayati was dislodged from heaven and fell down on the ground.[41] He was again restored to heaven through the auspicious deeds of his grandsons. In ancient times, the rajarshi, King Pururava, descended from Ila's lineage, obtained heaven, but was restrained by the brahmanas.[42] Soudasa, the lord of Kosala, performed a horse sacrifice and other sacrifices. However, cursed by a maharshi, he became a maneater.[43] Ashvatthama and Rama[44] were the sons of sages and great archers. However, despite their good deeds in this world, they could not go to heaven. Like a second Vasava, Vasu[45] performed one hundred sacrifices. However, because of a single act of falsehood, he was dispatched to the nether regions. Destiny bound down Bali, Virochana's son, in the noose of dharma. But it was Vishnu's enterprise that made him lie down in the nether regions. Janamejaya followed in the footsteps of Shakra. He killed brahmana women.[46] Could destiny prevent this? The brahmana rishi, Vaishampayana, killed a brahmana child in his ignorance and was tainted by this.[47] Could destiny prevent this? In ancient times, in a great sacrifice, rajarshi Nriga made the false promise of giving cattle to a brahmana. Because of this, he became a lizard.[48] While performing a sacrifice, rajarshi Dhundumara was overcome by old age.[49] Abandoning all these delights, he fell asleep in Girivraja. The immensely strong sons of Dhritarashtra seized the kingdom of the Pandavas. They obtained it back by resorting to their arms, not through destiny. The sages are devoted to their vows and are engaged in austerities and rituals. Are they able to levy curses because of their deeds or because of destiny? If one abandons wickedness in this world, one can obtain everything that is difficult to get. If a man is overcome by avarice and delusion, destiny cannot save him. Even if a fire is small, when it is fanned by the wind, it becomes large. When united with deeds, a virtuous person thus prospers, aided by destiny. When the oil in a lamp is exhausted, it is extinguished. In that way, if deeds are exhausted, a person is also extinguished. Even if a man obtains a great store of riches and women to be enjoyed, devoid of acts, he will not be able to enjoy them in this world. If a person resorts to the qualities of virtuous deeds, protected by destiny, he will find riches, even if those are well hidden. The world of men is superior to the world of the gods, because the houses of men are full of many riches. In contrast, that of the immortals is seen to be like that of the dead. Devoid of deed, destiny cannot bring success in the world of the living. Destiny can exert no power over someone who has deviated from the path. The performance of great deeds is superior. It drives destiny. The uninterrupted and generous desire to perform deeds conveys enterprise towards the store of destiny. O supreme among sages! I have told you everything about this. It is true that the fruits of enterprise are always seen. Destiny arises because of being engaged in action. By performing the prescribed tasks, one obtains the road to heaven.”’

Chapter 1688(7)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O best among the great ones! I wish to ask you about all the fruits of auspicious deeds. Tell me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! Listen to this secret of the rishis, about the ends that they obtain and the ends that they desire after death. Whatever are the deeds performed in these bodies, the proportionate fruits are reaped in similar bodies. Whatever is the state in which one performs good deeds or evil deeds, from one birth to another, the fruits are enjoyed in a similar state. Deeds that are performed with the five senses are never destroyed. As a sixth, the atman always remains as a witness. A sacrifice must be performed by honouring with the five dakshinas—by giving one’s eyes,[50] by giving one’s mind, by giving one’s words and by giving one’s devotions.[51] If one cheerfully gives to an exhausted traveller, even if one has never seen him before, one obtains great and auspicious merits. If one lies down on the bare ground, one obtains houses and beds.[52] If one wears rags and barks, one obtains garments and ornaments. A person who is a store of austerities and immerses himself in yoga obtains mounts and vehicles. A king who lies down alongside a fire is said to obtain manliness. A person who refrains from tasty food obtains good fortune. A person who refrains from flesh obtains animals and sons. A person who hangs, with his head downwards, lives in the water, or always sleeps alone,[53] obtains the desired objective. If a person honours a guest and gives him water to wash the feet, a seat, a lamp, food and refuge, it is as if he has performed a sacrifice with the five kinds of dakshinas. If a person sits on a seat meant for heroes, lies down on a bed meant for heroes and frequents the places meant for heroes,[54] he obtains the eternal worlds where all the objects of desire are available. O lord of the earth! Riches are obtained by making gifts. Silence leads to others being obedient. Objects of pleasure are obtained through austerities. A long life is obtained through brahmacharya. Beauty, prosperity and lack of disease are the fruits obtained through non-violence. A person who eats fruits and roots obtains a kingdom. A person who eats leaves obtains heaven. If a person fasts, there is happiness everywhere in the kingdom. Heaven is obtained through truth, an excellent lineage is obtained by being consecrated for a sacrifice. Through subsisting only on vegetables, cattle are obtained. Those who desire to go to heaven should subsist on grass. If one bathes thrice after intercourse with one’s wife and inhales air, one obtains the fruits of a sacrifice. A person who only subsists on water is like a cleansed brahmana who always tends to the fire. A desert-like penance[55] ensures a kingdom and indestructible residence in the vault of heaven. O king! If a person consecrates himself in a sacrifice that involves fasting and performs this for twelve years, he obtains a region that is better than the one meant for heroes. If one studies all the Vedas, one is instantly freed from all misery. If one follows dharma in one’s mind, one obtains the world of heaven. Evil intentions are extremely difficult to conquer. They are not destroyed, even when the body ages. They are like a disease that causes loss of life. If one can discard this thirst, one obtains happiness. A calf is able to identify its mother even among one thousand cows. In that way, earlier deeds always follow the doer. When the time arrives, flowers and fruits develop. So it is with deeds that have been performed earlier. When the body ages, the hair also ages. When the body ages, the teeth age. The eyes and ears also age. However, thirst is not destroyed. When the father is pleased, Prajapati is pleased. When the mother is pleased, it is as if the earth is worshipped. When the preceptor is pleased, it is as if Brahma is worshipped. When these three are respected, all kinds of dharma are respected. When they are disrespected, all rites are fruitless.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing Bhishma’s words, the bulls among the Kurus were astounded. Their minds became cheerful and they were delighted. Mantras are futile without sacrifices. Soma is futile unless it is rendered as an offering. A fire without oblations is futile. In that way, without studying, everything is futile. O lord! I have told you what the rishis said about the fruits of good and bad deeds. What else do you wish to hear?’

Chapter 1689(8)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Who should be worshipped? Whom should one bow down to? Whom do you bow down before? O king! Tell me everything about the ones you like. When you confront a hardship, what excellent things does your mind turn towards? Amidst everything in the world of men, and in the next world, what is most beneficial?”

‘Bhishma replied, “I like brahmanas for whom the brahman represents supreme wealth and who have themselves determined that austerities and careful studying constitute heaven. I like those who bear the burden of the aged, the young and fathers and grandfathers, without suffering from this. There are virtuous ones who are learned, humble, self-controlled, mild in speech, full of knowledge and good conduct and always knowledgable about the brahman. When they speak in an assembly, they are like flocks of swans.[56] Their words are beautiful and auspicious in form, like the rumblings of celestial clouds. O Yudhishthira! When they are heard, their words are pronounced well. Their words are heard by kings, for happiness in this world and in the next. They are always honoured by those who hear them in assemblies. They are accomplished with the qualities of vijnana. I like them. O king! O Yudhishthira! There are those who always give and try to satisfy brahmanas who are extremely polished and auspicious, possessing the qualities. I like them. It is easy to fight in a battle. But it is not easy to give, without a sense of malice. O Yudhishthira! In this world, there are hundreds of brave and valiant people. Among all those numbers, those who are brave in giving are superior. I would have regarded myself as fortunate had I been an ordinary and amiable brahmana, not to speak of one born in a noble lineage, devoted to austerities and learning and knowledgable about the progress of dharma. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! In this world, there is nothing that is dearer to me than you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, brahmanas are dearer to me than you. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Since brahmanas are dearer to me than you, through that truth, I will go to the world where Shantanu has gone. However, my father is not dearer to me than brahmanas. Nor is this true of my father’s father, or other well-wishers. There is nothing that I desire from brahmanas, small or large, though I am known as a performer of virtuous deeds.[57] O scorcher of enemies! In deeds, thoughts and words, I have done good to brahmanas. That is the reason I am not tormented now.[58] I am content that I am referred to as one who is devoted to brahmanas. It is said that they are supremely sacred among all those who are sacred. Since I have followed brahmanas, I see many pure and auspicious worlds. O son! In a short while, those are the regions I will go to. O Yudhishthira! In this world, the dharma for women is to be devoted to their husbands. They are like gods. Like that, other than brahmanas, there is no other destination for kshatriyas. If a kshatriya is one hundred years old and a brahmana is ten years old, know that in deciding who is a father and who is a son, it is the brahmana who will be regarded as the father. In the absence of her husband, a woman accepts her husband's younger brother as her husband. In that way, in the absence of brahmanas, the earth made kshatriyas her lord. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Like the fire, brahmanas must be worshipped. They must be protected like a son and revered like a father. They are upright and virtuous. They are truthful and good in conduct. They are engaged in the welfare of all beings. They must always be honoured. When brahmanas are enraged, they are like venomous serpents. Their energy and austerities can always cause fright. Therefore, one must avoid their energy and their austerities. If they are unleashed, both can swiftly lead to fear. O great king! The wrath of an ascetic brahmana can kill. If either is released against a brahmana who has conquered anger, both are extinguished. But though extinguished, one is not entirely extinguished.[59] With a staff in his hand, a herdsman is always engaged in protecting the herd. Similarly, kshatriyas must always protect brahmanas and the brahman. They must protect brahmanas, who possess the energy of the brahman, like a father protects his son, and must look towards their houses, so that they have a means of sustenance."'

Chapter 1690(9)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! O immensely wise one! There may be people who have promised things to brahmanas, but because of confusion, they do not subsequently give these. What happens to them? O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Tell me about this kind of dharma. What happens to the evil-minded men who do not give, despite having promised to?"

'Bhishma replied, "There may be a person who has promised to give a little or a lot, but does not give according to that promise. All his hopes are destroyed, like an impotent person trying to get offspring. O descendant of the

Bharata lineage! Whatever good deeds he has performed between the night of his birth and the night of his death and all the oblations that he has offered are destroyed. People who are learned about the sacred texts of dharma have a saying about this. O best among the Bharata lineage! Using their supreme intelligence, they have spoken about this. People who are learned about the sacred texts of dharma cite an example, about being freed if one gives away one thousand horses with black ears.[60] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between a jackal and a monkey. O scorcher of enemies! When they were humans, they used to be friends. They were subsequently born in the wombs of a she-jackal and a she-monkey. The monkey saw the jackal feeding off a corpse in the midst of a cremation ground. Remembering its earlier life, it asked, ‘What wicked and extremely terrible deed did you perform earlier? Why are you in this cremation ground, feeding off vile and putrid carcasses?’ Thus addressed by the monkey, the jackal replied, ‘O monkey! I promised a brahmana something, but committed the injury of not giving it. Because of that sin, I have been born in this species. That is the reason, when I am hungry, I have to eat this kind of food.’ O king! Earlier, I heard this spoken about, in connection with brahmanas.[61] The one who knows about dharma[62] recounted this ancient and auspicious story. O lord of the earth! O Pandava! I heard this again, when Krishna related accounts about brahmanas earlier.[63] This is the reason there is the perennial instruction. If one has promised to give something to a brahmana, one must always give it. One must not bring about one’s destruction through brahmanas.[64] O lord of the earth! It has been said that if a brahmana’s hopes have earlier been raised, this is like a blazing fire into which kindling has been offered. O king! If the hopes have been raised and he glances at anything angrily, he will burn everything down, like dead wood being consumed by a fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If he resides in the kingdom, he must be rendered affectionate and satisfied, honoured with words. Then sons, grandsons, animals, relatives and stores in the city and the countryside will be nurtured with peace and benefit. The supreme energy of brahmanas can be seen, like the sun with the thousand rays shining down on the surface of the earth. O Yudhishthira! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, if one has promised something and desires a good birth in the next life, one must always give it. It is certain that one is capable of obtaining supreme heaven by giving to brahmanas. This is the greatest rite and the best of gifts. Know that such donations to brahmanas are gifts that keep the gods and the ancestors alive. O best among the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas are said to be like a great tirtha. There is no time of the day when one should not honour a brahmana who has arrived.”’

Chapter 1691(10)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O rajarshi! O grandfather! If because of friendship or affection, a person imparts instructions to someone of inferior birth, is any sin incurred because of this? I wish to hear the truth about this. Please explain it. The progress of dharma is subtle. That is the reason men are confused.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! In this connection, following the sacred texts, rishis spoke about this earlier and I heard them. Listen. Instructions must never be given to someone who is of inferior birth. It is said that a teacher who imparts such instruction incurs a great sin. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There is an example about this. Listen. O king! O Yudhishthira! The evil that occurs has earlier been spoken about. There was a hermitage of brahmanas on the sacred slopes of the Himalayas. That sacred hermitage was full of a large number of trees. It was full of many creepers and plants and was inhabited by animals and birds. Siddhas and charanas frequented it. It was beautiful because of its flowering groves. There were many mendicants there and many handsome ascetics. The immensely fortunate brahmanas were like the sun or the fire in their splendour. It was full of ascetics who were accomplished in rituals and vows. O best among the Bharata lineage! They had consecrated themselves, were restrained in diet and had cleansed their souls. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There were the sounds of the Vedas being studied. It was full of many valakhilya mendicants. There was a shudra who was driven by compassion. He arrived at that hermitage and was honoured by those ascetics. Those large numbers of sages were greatly energetic and were like the gods, having been consecrated in many kinds of ways. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing them, he was delighted. O bull among the Bharata lineage! His mind turned towards the idea of becoming an ascetic. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He grasped the feet of the *kulapati*[65] and said, ‘O bull among brahmanas! Through your favours, I wish to follow the path of dharma. O illustrious one! You should initiate me into a path of renunciation. O illustrious one! I belong to an inferior varna. O excellent one! I have been born as a shudra. I wish to serve you and have sought refuge with you. Show me your favours.’

‘“The kulapati replied, ‘It is not possible for a shudra to accept those indications. If your mind turns towards that, you should always engage in servitude.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O king! Having been thus addressed by the sage, the shudra began to think. ‘What should I do now? I have great devotion towards the supreme dharma. Let it be known that I will do whatever brings me the greatest benefit.’ Going some distance from the hermitage, he constructed a hut. O best among the Bharata lineage! He created a sacrificial altar and a spot for the gods on the ground. He cheerfully began to practise the rituals. He offered sacrifices and oblations and worshipped the gods. He controlled desire and followed the rituals. He lived on fruits and controlled his senses. He always collected herbs and fruits, so that he could worship the guests who arrived. In this way, he spent a long period of time. One day, to meet him, a sage came to that hermitage. He honoured the rishi who had come and following all the rites, satisfied him. He spoke pleasant words and as is proper, asked him about his welfare. The rishi was extremely energetic, with dharma in his soul and with his senses in restraint. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O bull among men! In this way, desiring to see the shudra, the rishi came to the shudra’s hermitage on several occasions. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On one such occasion, the shudra told the ascetic, ‘I wish to perform rites for the ancestors. Please show me your favours.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! The brahmana agreed that he would certainly do so. The shudra purified himself and brought water for the rishi to wash his feet. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He brought darbha grass, wild herbs and the sacred seat known as a *brisi*.[66] However, the excellent head of the brisi was spread out in the southern direction. This was against the ordinances.[67] Seeing this, the rishi said, ‘Place the head towards the east. Purify yourself and sit with your head facing the north.’ The shudra acted in accordance with everything that the rishi had said. He was intelligent and spread out the darbha grass, following the instructions. As instructed by the ascetic, he followed all the rites of havya and kavya. He stayed on the path of dharma in observing rites for the ancestors. The rishi instructed him and when the rites for the ancestors were over, took his leave and departed. Subsequently, for a long period of time, the shudra ascetic tormented himself through austerities. O great king! Following these good practices, he died in the forest and thanks to these, the immensely radiant one was born in a lineage of kings. O son! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Following the progress of time, the rishi was also born as a brahmana, in a family of priests. The shudra and the sage were born in this way. They gradually grew up and became accomplished in learning. The rishi became extremely learned in the Atharva Veda, the Vedas,[68] and the application of kalpa[69] and also obtained excellence in astronomy. His delight in the study of the great sankhya increased. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! When his father died, the prince performed the funeral rites and was instated by the subjects as a king. In turn, he instated the rishi as his priest and placed him at the forefront. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He followed dharma and happily ruled the kingdom, protecting the subjects. However, whenever there was an occasion for sacred oblations to be offered or rites of dharma to be practised, the king glanced towards the priest and laughed loudly. O king! Thus, there were numerous occasions when he laughed at the priest. The priest noticed that the king always smiled or laughed at him. On seeing this, he was enraged. The priest came and met the king who was alone. He spoke pleasantly to him and put him at ease. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The priest then told that lord of men, ‘O immensely wise one! I desire only a single boon from you.’

‘“The king replied, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! I will grant you one hundred boons, why only a single one? I like you and revere you greatly. There is nothing that I cannot give you.’

‘“The priest said, ‘O king! If you are satisfied with me, I desire only one single boon. O great king! If you wish to give me something, let it be such that you will always speak the truth to me, and never utter a falsehood.’”

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! Thus addressed, the king agreed and replied, ‘I accept. If I know the answer, I will tell you. If I do not know, I will not speak.’

‘“The priest asked, ‘Whenever sacred oblations are being offered, the rites of dharma performed and chants of peace recited, why do you glance towards me and laugh? Since you laugh at me, my mind is ashamed. O king! You have pledged to tell me the truth. If you do not, you will be cursed. There must be some reason behind such sentiments. The laughter cannot be without reason. I am extremely curious. You should tell me the truth.’

‘“The king replied, ‘O brahmana! If you ask me in this way, I must certainly tell you the truth, even though this is not something that you should hear. O brahmana! Listen attentively. O supreme among brahmanas! Listen to what happened in our earlier births. O brahmana! I remember that. Listen with single-minded attention. I used to be a shudra earlier and practised terrible austerities. O supreme among brahmanas! You were a rishi who was fierce in his austerities. O brahmana! Your mind was favourably inclined towards me then. O unblemished one! Following your instructions, I had performed the funeral rites for my ancestors. O supreme among sages! I used brisi, darbha, havya and kavya. O Indra among brahmanas! Because of this transgression in deeds, you have been born as a priest.[70] I have been born as a king. Behold the progress of time. You imparted instructions for my sake and have reaped this fruit. O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! That is the reason I laugh at you. O brahmana! I do not laugh at you out of any disrespect. You are my superior. Indeed, I am enraged at this course of events and my mind is tormented. However, I remember our earlier births and laugh at you. Your fierce austerities have been destroyed by those instructions. Give up this priesthood and endeavour to be born again. O brahmana! Otherwise, you may obtain a birth that is inferior to the present one. O brahmana! Take whatever riches you want. O excellent one! Purify your self.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The king gave the brahmana many gifts and gave him permission to leave. He gave all the brahmanas riches, land and villages. As asked, that supreme among brahmanas observed many hardships. He went to places of pilgrimage and gave away diverse gifts. The brahmana donated cattle to brahmanas and cleansed his soul. He went to that hermitage[71] and performed a large number of austerities. O supreme among kings! In this way, the brahmana obtained supreme success. In that hermitage, he was revered by all those who dwelt in that hermitage. O supreme among kings! Thus, that rishi had faced this great hardship. A brahmana must not reveal things to someone of an inferior varna. O king! A brahmana must always refrain from parting with such instructions. A brahmana who parts with such instructions faces hardships. A king can always receive such instructions from a brahmana. But they should not be revealed to a person who belongs to an inferior varna. O king! Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas—these three are known as the twice-born varnas. A brahmana is not tainted if he tells them anything. Virtuous people do reveal things to those who are advanced in this way. The course of dharma is subtle and is difficult for those with unclean souls to comprehend. That is the reason sages remain silent and perform *diksha*[72] without speaking. O king! They are scared of saying something that should not have been said. There are those who follow dharma, possess all the qualities, are truthful and upright. Even they can perform the wicked act of speaking what should not be said. Therefore, one must never impart instructions to anyone. Through imparting instructions, a brahmana can incur a sin. Thus, a wise person who desires dharma should act wisely. Instruction bartered in exchange for something is evil. If one is asked about something, one must answer only after determining the consequences. An instruction must only be given when it leads to the accumulation of dharma. I have told you everything about imparting instructions. There can be great hardships as a result of imparting instructions.”’

Chapter 1692(11)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O grandfather! In what kind of man or woman does Shri,[73] the one who resides in the lotus, always dwell? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “I will tell you what transpired, as I have seen it and heard it. Rukmini asked this in the presence of Devaki’s son.[74] She saw the blazing Shri seated on Narayana’s lap, with a face like that of a lotus. The one with the beautiful eyes, the mother of the one with a makara on his banner, was surprised and curious and asked this question. ‘Who are the beings who worship you? Who are the ones you reside with? Who are the ones to whom you do not show favours? You are loved by the one who is the lord of the three worlds and is the destroyer of beings. O daughter of a maharshi![75] Tell me the truth about this.’ Having been thus asked, in the presence of the one who has Garuda on his banner,[76] the goddess, whose face was as beautiful as the moon, was pleased and replied in sweet words. ‘O beautiful one! O eloquent one! I dwell in men who are truthful and accomplished, who are engaged in deeds. I do not dwell in men who are not good in their deeds, or in those who are non-believers, cause a mixture of varnas and are ungrateful. I do not reside in those who are violent in conduct or indulge in perverse conduct. Nor do I reside in those who are thieves or malicious towards seniors. There are those who are limited in energy, strength, spirit and essence, who are incessantly delighted and enraged. I do not reside with them. O goddess! Nor do I reside with men who hide their true intentions. O goddess! If a man does not desire anything, has no natural enterprise and is always content with whatever little he possesses, I do not reside with him either. I dwell with those who follow dharma in their conduct, great-souled ones who know about dharma, those who serve their seniors, are great-souled and restrained and spirited. I dwell with women who are forgiving, generous, devoted to gods and brahmanas, truthful in their conduct and naturally restrained. I avoid women who do not look towards the broken vessels in their homes, who always speak against their husbands, who prefer the houses of others and are shameless. I avoid women who are fickle and unclean, who lick the corners of their mouths, who have no patience and are quarrelsome, who are addicted to sleep and are always lying down. I always reside with women who are truthful, beautiful to see, united with good fortune and qualities, devoted to their husbands, good in conduct and well-attired. I dwell in vehicles, maidens, ornaments, sacrifices, clouds, rain, blooming lotuses, nakshatras in the autumn sky, mountains, pens of cattle, forests, lakes, blossoming lotuses,[77] rivers that resound with the calling of swans and the beautiful cries of cranes, with extensive banks and beautiful lakes, frequented by ascetics, siddhas and brahmanas. I always reside in large waterbodies where the water is agitated by lions and elephants. I am always there in mad elephants, bulls, kings, thrones and virtuous people. I always dwell in houses where oblations are offered to the fire, where cattle, brahmanas and gods are worshipped and in houses where, at the right time, flowers are offered as sacrifices in rites.[78] I reside in brahmanas who are always engaged in studying, in kshatriyas who are always devoted to dharma, in vaishyas who are engaged in agriculture and in shudras who are engaged in servitude. Single-mindedly, I dwell in Narayana. In every way, I am part of his body. It is in him that great dharma, the brahman and all delight exist. O goddess! I am incapable of saying that my embodied form resides in anything other than these. When I dwell in a man in the form of my attributes, his dharma, fame, artha and kama are enhanced.'"'

Chapter 1693(12)

'Yudhishthira said, "O king! When there is intercourse between a woman and a man, who feels the greater pleasure from this? I have a doubt about this and you should tell me."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Bhangashvana and Shakra is recounted, as if there was an old enmity between them. In ancient times, there was a rajarshi named Bhangashvana and he was extremely devoted to dharma. O tiger among men! He was without a son and performed a sacrifice for the sake of obtaining a son. The immensely strong one performed a sacrifice named Agnishtu,[79] one that is hated by Indra. Mortal beings who desire sons perform this, as atonement for their sins. The immensely fortunate Indra, lord of the gods, got to know about this sacrifice. Though the rajarshi was controlled in his soul, he began to search for an internal weakness. After some time, the king went out on a hunt. Taking this to be an opportunity, Shakra confused the king. Confused by Indra, the rajarshi wandered around, alone on his horse. The king could not determine any of the directions and was afflicted by hunger and thirst. Afflicted by thirst and exhaustion, the king wandered around, here and there. He then saw a beautiful lake and it was full of excellent water. O son! Having alighted from the horse, he made it drink from the lake. When the horse had drunk, the best among kings tied it to a tree. Descending into the lake, the king bathed and assumed the form of a woman. On seeing that he had turned into a woman, the best among kings was ashamed. He was anxious in his senses and consciousness. His entire self was immersed in thoughts. 'How will I climb onto the horse? How will I return to the city? Because of the sacrifice named Agnishtu, one hundred sons have been born from my loins. They have been born as immensely strong ones. What will I tell them, or my wives, well-wishers and the inhabitants of the city and the country? Rishis who have seen the truth about dharma have said that mildness, gentleness and timidity are the qualities of women. The attributes of men are exertion, harshness and valour. Why has my manliness been destroyed and why have I obtained womanhood? Because of these traits of having become a woman, I am no longer interested in climbing onto the horse again.' With a great deal of effort, the lord of men managed to climb onto the horse. O son! O supreme among kings! Having assumed the form of a woman, he returned to the city.

'"His sons, wives, servants and the inhabitants of the city and the countryside were extremely surprised on seeing him and wanted to know what had happened. The rajarshi, supreme among eloquent ones, had assumed the form of a woman and spoke to them. 'I went out on a hunt, surrounded by a strong army. Confounded by destiny, I was confused and entered a terrible forest. That forest was extremely fearful. I was afflicted by thirst and had lost my senses. I then saw a beautiful lake that was populated by birds. Having bathed there, I assumed the form of a woman. There is no doubt that this is nothing but destiny. This must be because I am not content with my sons, my wives and my riches.' The best among kings, who had assumed the form of a woman, then spoke to his sons. 'O sons! Happily enjoy this kingdom. I will leave for the forest.' Consecrating those one hundred sons, the king left for the forest.

'"O son! That woman arrived in an ascetic's hermitage. Through that ascetic and in that hermitage, she gave birth to one hundred sons. Collecting these sons, she returned to her house and told her earlier sons, 'You are my sons when I was a man. I have obtained these one hundred sons as a woman. O sons! With fraternal sentiments, enjoy this kingdom together.' Together, they began to enjoy the kingdom, like brothers. Seeing that they were enjoying that excellent kingdom with brotherly affection, Indra of the gods began to think.

He was overcome with anger. ‘I seem to have done a good turn to this rajarshi, instead of injuring him.’[80] Assuming the form of a brahmana, Shatakratu, the king of the gods, went to the city, hoping to spread dissension among the princes. He said, ‘There is no fraternal affection among brothers, even if they happen to be sons of the same father. On account of the kingdom, there was conflict between the gods and the asuras, though both were Kashyapa’s sons. You are the sons of Bhangashvana. The others are the sons of the ascetic. The gods and the asuras were the sons of Kashyapa. This paternal kingdom is yours. It should not be enjoyed by the sons of the ascetic.’ With Indra having spread dissension, they fought against each other and killed each other.

‘“Hearing this, the ascetic lady[81] was tormented and started to lament. In the disguise of a brahmana, Indra arrived there and asked her, ‘O one with the beautiful face! Why are you tormented by grief and why are you weeping?’ Seeing the brahmana, the woman piteously replied, ‘O brahmana! Two hundred of my sons have been brought down by destiny. O brahmana! I used to be a king and had one hundred sons. O supreme among brahmanas! They were born from me and were handsome and valiant. On one occasion, I went out for a hunt and was confused in the desolate forest. O supreme among brahmanas! Having bathed in a lake, I assumed the form of a woman. Having established my sons in the kingdom, I departed for the forest. In the form of a woman, through a great-souled ascetic, I obtained one hundred sons. O brahmana! They were born in the hermitage and were conveyed by me to the city. O brahmana! Because of destiny, enmity was generated between them. O Indra among brahmanas! I have been overwhelmed by destiny and that is the reason I am grieving.’ Seeing that she was afflicted, Indra spoke these harsh words. ‘O fortunate one! Earlier, you caused me great hardship and your pain has been caused by me. O evil-minded one! You did not invoke Indra through a sacrifice and you showed me disrespect. I am Indra. O evil-minded one! That is the reason you have caused an enmity between us.’ Seeing Indra, the rajarshi fell at his feet and bowed her head down. She said, ‘O best among the gods! Be pacified. That sacrifice was performed for the sake of a son. O tiger among the gods! There was no intention to injure you and therefore, you should pardon me.’ Seeing that she had prostrated herself, Indra was satisfied and granted her a boon. ‘O king! Tell me. Which of your sons do you wish to bring back to life, those born while you were a woman, or those born while you were a man?' The ascetic lady joined her hands in salutation and replied to Indra, 'O Vasava! Let the ones born while I was a woman come back to life.' Surprised and pleased at this, Indra again asked the woman, 'Why do you dislike the sons you obtained while you were a man? Why is it that you entertain greater affection for those who were born while you were a woman? I wish to hear the reason behind this. You should tell me.'

'"The woman replied, 'The affection borne by a woman is much greater than that borne by a man. O Shakra! Therefore, the ones born while I was a woman should come back to life.'"

'Bhishma said, "Addressed thus, Indra was delighted and spoke these words. 'O one who speaks the truth! All of your sons will come back to life. O Indra among kings! O one excellent in vows! Ask for another boon that you desire. Ask for whatever you wish, the state of a man, or the state of a woman.'

'"The women replied, 'O Shakra! O Vasava! If it pleases you, I wish to remain as a woman.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Hearing this, Indra of the gods replied to the woman, 'O lord! Why do you wish to give up your manhood? Why does remaining a woman please you?' Thus addressed, the supreme among kings, who was in the form of a woman, replied, 'In an act of intercourse, the pleasure obtained by a woman is greater than that obtained by a man. O Shakra! That is the reason why I desire to remain as a woman. O supreme among gods! Truthfully, there is greater pleasure in being a woman. O lord of the thirty gods! I am content with this state of being a woman. Let me go.' Hearing this response to what he had asked, he agreed and returned to heaven. O great king! Thus, it is said that women obtain the greater pleasure."'

Chapter 1694(13)

'Yudhishthira asked, "If a man desires benefit in this progress through the world, what should he do? In this journey through the world, what kind of conduct should he follow?"

‘Bhishma replied, “Three kinds of deeds done with the body, four kinds done with speech and three types done with the mind—these ten kinds of deeds should be avoided. Destruction of life, theft and intercourse with someone else’s wife—these three kinds of wicked deeds done with the body should be avoided. O Indra among kings! Evil conversation, harsh words, calumny and falsehood—one should not think of committing these four kinds of sin with speech. Not desiring the possessions of others, affection towards all creatures and belief that deeds lead to fruits—these are the three that must be followed with the mind. With words, body or the mind, a man must not perform any sinful deeds. Depending on whether one performs good or bad deeds, one obtains the fruits.”’

Chapter 1695(14)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Tell me the truth about the different names of the lord Isha Shambhu, the tawny one who represents great fortune, the one who withdraws the universe.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! You have asked me about Shiva, whose form is the universe. The god Vishnu, the preceptor of the gods and the asuras, can tell you about him. In ancient times, Tandi[82] was born from Brahma. In Brahma’s world, in front of Brahma, he recited one thousand names of that god. Dvaipayana and other rishis, controlled, rich in austerities and extremely good in their vows, heard these devotedly. He is Dhruva,[83] Nandi,[84] Hotri,[85] Goptri,[86] the creator of the universe, Agni, the immensely fortunate one, the lord, Mundin[87] and Kapardin.[88]

‘“Vasudeva said, ‘The gods, Indra and the maharshis, with Hiranyagarbha at the forefront, are incapable of understanding the truth about the progress of his deeds. Even those who possess the subtle sight of knowledge do not know the one who is the beginning and the end. How can an ordinary man comprehend the virtuous one? I will properly recount to you some of the qualities of the illustrious one who is the slayer of asuras and is the lord of vows.’”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Saying this, the illustrious, great-souled and intelligent one[89] purified himself by touching water and recounted the qualities.

‘Vasudeva said, “O Indras among brahmanas! O Yudhishthira! O father![90] O son of the river![91] Listen to the names of the lord of the universe. For the sake of Samba, I meditated earlier and could see the illustrious one, something that is very difficult to accomplish.[92] Twelve years passed after Rukmini’s intelligent son killed Shambara.[93] Jambavati spoke to me. She saw Pradyumna, Charudeshna and the other sons who had been born from Rukmini. O Yudhishthira! Desiring a son, she spoke these words to me. ‘O one without decay! Quickly grant me a brave son who is the best among strong ones and is beautiful and without sin, one who is like you. There is nothing in the three worlds that you cannot obtain. O extender of the Yadu lineage! If you so desire, you can create supreme worlds. For twelve years, you dried yourself by subsisting only on air. You worshipped the lord of creatures[94] and obtained sons through Rukmini—Charudeshna, Sucharu, Charuvesha, Yasodhara, Charushrava, Charuyasha, Pradyumna and Shambhu. Through Rukmini, you obtained sons who are excellent in their valour. In that way, also grant me a son who is powerful.’ Thus addressed by that goddess, I spoke to the one with the excellent waist. ‘O queen! Grant me leave. I will act in accordance with your words.’ She told me, ‘Go. May you be victorious and obtain what is auspicious. May Brahma, Shiva, Kashyapa, the rivers, the gods who follow the mind, the fields, the herbs, the hymns that convey sacrificial offerings, the large numbers of rishis, the earth, the oceans, the dakshinas, the chants, the bears, the ancestors, the planets, the wives of the gods, the daughters of the gods, the mothers of the gods, the manvantaras, the cattle, the moon, the son, Hari, Savitri, the knowledge of the brahman, the seasons, the years, the *kshapa*s,[95] the kshanas, the lavas, the muhurtas, the nimeshas and the progress of the yugas always protect you. O Yadava! Wherever you go, may they bring you cheer. O unblemished one! May you be safe and undistracted along your path.’ When she had pronounced her benedictions in this way, I took my leave of that daughter of the Indra of the apes.[96] I then went to my father, supreme among men, my mother, the king and Ahuka.[97] I told them the purport of what the daughter of the Indra among the vidyadharas had told me, in great affliction.[98] Miserably, I took their leave and then went to Gada and the immensely strong Rama.[99] Having taken the permission of the seniors, I thought of Tarkshya.[100]

He bore me to the Himalayas and I let him go. It was on that supreme of mountains that I saw the one who is the creator of beings. I saw an excellent hermitage, the best place for performing austerities. This divine spot belonged to the great-souled Upamanyu, the descendant of Vyaghrapada. It was revered by the gods and the gandharvas and possessed all the signs of the brahman. There were *dhava*s,[101] *kakubhas*,[102] *kadamba*s,[103] coconut trees, *kurabaka*s,[104] *ketaka*s,[105] *jambu*s,[106] *patala*s,[107] *vata*s,[108] *varunaka*s,[109] *vatsanabha*s,[110] *bilva*s,[111] *sarala*s,[112] *kapittha*s,[113] *priyala*s,[114] *sala*s,[115] *tala*s,[116] *badari*s, *kunda*s,[117] *punnaga*s,[118] *ashoka*s,[119] mango trees, *atimuktaka*s,[120] *bhallataka*s,[121] *madhuka*s,[122] *champaka*s,[123] *panasa*s[124] and many other kinds of wild trees that were full of fruits and flowers. The place was covered with flowers, creepers and lantanas and was adorned with the roots of plantain trees. The trees were full of fruit and many kinds of birds fed on them. These[125] were flung around here and there, decorating the forest and making it beautiful. The place was inhabited by ruru antelopes, elephants, tigers, lions and leopards. There were deer and peacocks, wild cats and snakes. There were herds of animals and buffaloes and bears. Pleasant winds blew, bearing pollen from many flowers and the scent of *gajapushpa* flowers. Many songs were sung be celestial women. O brave one! There were sounds from streams, the singing of birds, the auspicious trumpeting of elephants, the songs sung by kinnaras and the sacred chants of Sama hymns. The mind cannot think of those ornamented lakes. There were large altars for the sacrificial fire, covered in kusha grass. O king! That place was always decorated and swept by the pure and auspicious waters of Jahnu's daughter.[126] The best among maharshis, great-souled ones who were the upholders of dharma, were always there and they were like the fire. Some of them only subsisted on air and others only subsisted on water. Those ascetics were always engaged in meditating and cleansing themselves. Some subsisted on smoke, others on fire and still others on milk. In every direction, it was full of Indras among the brahmanas. There were some who followed the conduct of cattle.[127] Some used stones to grind grain.[128] Some used their teeth to grind.[129] Some fed on rays.[130] Some fed on foam. There were others who conducted themselves like deer.[131] They followed great hardships and rituals and observed excellent austerities. My eyes grew wide and I wished to enter that place. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! That circle of hermitages was as radiant as the solar disc in the firmament. It was revered by the large number of gods and all great-souled ones, even the likes of Shiva. Snakes and mongooses played there. Deer and tiger were like friends. This was because of the power of those ascetics, who possessed all the qualities. That best of hermitages was pleasant to all creatures. It was inhabited by tigers among brahmanas, accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. There were great-souled rishis, renowned because they practised many rituals. Entering there, I saw the lord,[132] who was attired in tattered rags and bark. Because of the energy of his austerities, he blazed like a fire. That bull among brahmanas was tranquil and young and was in the midst of his disciples.

'"When I bowed my head down and greeted him, Upamanyu said, 'O Pundarikaksha! Welcome. Our austerities have now become successful. You should be honoured, but you are honouring me. You should be seen, but you wish to see me.' I joined my hands in salutation and asked him about his welfare and dharma, that of his disciples and that of the animals, the birds and the sacrificial fire. The illustrious one addressed me in amiable and extremely sweet words. 'O Krishna! There is no doubt that you will obtain a son who is just like your own self. Perform extremely great austerities and satisfy the lord Ishana. O Adhokshaja! With his wife, he sports here. O Janardana! In ancient times, it was here that the gods and the large numbers of rishis satisfied that best of gods with thier austerities, brahmacharya, truth and self-control and obtained their sacred wishes. The illustrious one is the store of energy and austerities here. He creates everything that is good and bad and withdraws them back again. O destroyer of enemies! He is the unthinkable god you wish to meet. He is here, with the goddess. A great danava named Hiranyakashipu was born. He could make Mount Meru tremble. From Sharva,[133] he obtained a boon that he would obtain the prosperity of the immortals for one billion years. His eldest son was the famous Mandara. Because of a boon from Mahadeva, he could fight with Shakra for one billion years. O son![134] O Keshava! In those ancient times, Vishnu's terrible chakra and Akhandala's[135] vajra were shattered on the evil one's body. Like an evil planet, that extremely powerful one afflicted the gods. O king! Because of the boon obtained from Shiva, that asura was a severe burden on Indra of the gods. Vidyutprabha[136] satisfied him and intoxicated at this, roamed around the three worlds. He was the lord of all the worlds for one hundred thousand years. He[137] said, "Always be my companion." The lord gave him the boon that he would have one million sons. The illustrious one, who has no birth, gave him the kingdom known as Kushadvipa. Dhatri[138] created another great asura named Shatamukha. For one hundred years, he offered flesh from his own body as oblations into the fire. Satisfied with this, the illustrious Shankara asked him, "What can I do for you?" Shatamukha replied, "O best among the gods! Please grant me extraordinary yoga, so that I can possess eternal strength." He[139] agreed. In ancient times, for the sake of sons, Svayambhu[140] performed a sacrifice. He entered his atman for three hundred years and resorted to yoga. Honoured by this sacrifice, the god[141] gave him one thousand sons. O Krishna! Know that there is no doubt about him being the lord of yoga, referred to in the songs of the gods. In ancient times, the Valakhilyas were disrespected by Maghavan.[142] They were enraged and satisfied the illustrious Rudra through their austerities. The best of the gods and the lord of the universe was pleased and told them, "Through your austerities, you will create Suparna and he will steal the soma."[143] In ancient times, the waters were destroyed because of Mahadeva's wrath. The other gods satisfied him with the sacrifice known as *saptakapala*[144] and made them flow again. Atri's wife was knowledgable about the brahman and abandoned her husband.[145] She said, "I will never again subjugate myself to this sage." Having said this, she sought refuge with Mahadeva. Terrified of Atri, she fasted for three hundred years, lying down on a bed of clubs and trying to please Bhava.[146] The god appeared before her, smiled and said, "You will obtain a son, as you desire. He will be famous in a lineage that is named after him."[147] O Keshava! Shakalya[148] restrained his soul for nine hundred years and worshipped Bhava through mental sacrifices. The illustrious one was satisfied and told him, "You will be the composer of books. O son! Your deeds will be famous in the three worlds and will never decay. Your lineage will not decay and will be adorned by many maharshis." In krita yuga, there was a famous rishi by the name of Savarni.[149] For six thousand years, he tormented himself through austerities here. The illustrious Rudra was pleased. He showed himself to him and said, "O unblemished one! I am satisfied with you. You will be without old age and without death. You will be a composer of books and will be famous in the worlds." O son![150] O Madhava! In ancient times, I have also seen the lord, the god of the gods. I saw Pashupati himself. Listen to this. O immensely energetic one! In ancient times, I made endeavours to worship Mahadeva. Listen to the details. Earlier, I learnt this from Mahadeva, the god of the gods, himself. O unblemished one! I will tell you everything about that now. O son! In ancient times, in krita yuga, there was an immensely illustrious rishi. He was known as Vyaghrapada and he was accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. I was his son and Dhoumya was born as my younger brother. O Madhava! On one occasion, while playing with Dhoumya, I went to a hermitage where there were sages who had cleansed their souls. I saw a cow being milked there. I saw the milk and it seemed to me to be as tasty as amrita. O Madhava! There were also cakes being boiled in water. We were given milk to drink. O son! I had never tasted the milk of cows earlier. O son! I was no longer happy with cakes boiled in water. In my childishness, I told my mother, "Please give me some food cooked in milk." My mother was overcome with grief. O Madhava! Out of affection for her son, she embraced me and inhaled the fragrance of my head. She said, "O son! How can sages who have cleansed their souls have food with milk? We always reside in forests and eat bulbs, roots and fruits. O son! Without the favours of the undecaying Sthanu Virupaksha, how can one obtain food cooked with milk, objects of pleasure or garments? O son! In every possible way, always seek refuge with Shankara. O son! It is through his favours that you will obtain all the fruits that you desire." O slayer of enemies! Since that day, on hearing my mother's words, my faith and devotion in Mahadeva were aroused. I resorted to austerities to satisfy Shankara. I stood on the tips of my toes for one thousand celestial years. For one hundred years, I subsisted only on fruit. For a second one hundred, I subsisted on dried leaves. For a third one hundred, I subsisted on water. Then, for seven hundred years, I only lived on air. The lord Mahadeva, the lord of all the worlds, was pleased. He assumed Shakra's form and was surrounded by large numbers of all the gods. The immensely illustrious one was in the form of the thousand-eyed one and held the vajra in his hand. He was astride a gigantic elephant that was extremely white and red-eyed. Its ears were folded back and it was crazy with musth. The trunk was rolled back. It was terrible and had four tusks. The illustrious one was seated astride this, radiant in his own energy. He advanced, with a diadem on his head and adorned with necklaces and bracelets. A white umbrella was held aloft his head. He was served by apsaras and celestial gandharvas sung his praises. He said, "O supreme among brahmanas! I am Indra of the gods and I am pleased with you. Ask a boon from me, whatever it is that your mind cherishes." I wasn't pleased on hearing Shakra's words. O Krishna! Hearing the words of the king of the gods, I replied, "O amiable one! I desire no boon from you nor from any of the other gods, with the exception of Mahadeva. I am telling you this truthfully. On Pashupati's words, I am ready to become a worm, or a tree with many branches. Without Pashupati's favours, the prosperous kingdom of the three worlds will not bring me any benefit. On Shankara's instructions, I will become a worm or an insect. O Shakra! However, if they are granted by you, I do not desire the three worlds. He wears the sparkling crescent of the moon on his crest. As long as the illustrious lord, Pashupati, is not pleased with me, I will bear these hundreds of hardships of old age, death and birth. I will bear these miseries in bodies. He blazes like the sun, the moon and the fire. He is the single one who conveys across the impermanence of the three worlds. It is through Rudra's favours that one overcomes old age and becomes immortal. In this universe, where is the man who can obtain tranquility without him?" Shakra asked, "What is the reason why you regard him as the cause behind all causes? Why don't you desire the favours of any god other than him?"'

'"Upamanyu answered, 'Why does one have to think of reasons as to why Isha is the cause behind all causes? We have not heard of the gods worshipping anyone else's signs. If we leave aside Maheshvara, who is the other one whom the gods worship in all his signs? Has any such person been worshipped earlier? If you have heard this, tell me. You, Brahma, Vishnu and the other gods always worship his signs. Therefore, he is the supreme one. O Koushika![151] Therefore, I desire a boon from him and am ready to be destroyed otherwise. O Shakra! O slayer of Bala! Stay or go, as you wish. I desire to have a boon, or a curse, from none other than Maheshvara. I do not desire it from any other god, even if it brings all the fruits of desire.'

'"Upamanyu continued,[152] 'Once I had said this to Indra of the gods, my senses were overcome with grief. Why has Rudra not been pleased with me? That is what I thought. In a short instant, I again saw Airavata.[153] It transformed itself into a bull that was as white as a swan or jasmine, as radiant as the stalk of a white lily and like the ocean of milk itself. It was huge in size and its tail was black. Its eyes were reddish brown, like honey. Throughout, the horns were ornamented with molten gold. Its eyes were red and it had large nostrils. Its ears and waist were excellent. Its flanks were excellent and it possessed a huge neck. It was handsome and beautiful to behold. The dazzling hump covered the entire shoulder. It was like the snowclad summit of a mountain, or the crest of a white cloud. With Uma, the illustrious god of the gods was seated on it. Mahadeva was as resplendent as the lord of the stars[154] on a full-moon night. The flames of his energy were like lightning tinging the clouds. It was as if one thousand suns had enveloped everything. The immensely energetic Ishvara was like the fire of destruction that arises at the end of a yuga and consumes all creatures. Since that energy pervaded everything, it was difficult to see anything. My heart again became anxious. I thought "what is this?" In a short while, that energy pervaded the ten directions. However, through the maya of the god of the gods, it also became pacified in an instant. I then saw the illustrious Sthanu Maheshvara stationed there. He was astride Surabhi's descendant[155] and was as peaceful as a fire without smoke. Parvati, beautiful in every limb, was with Parameshvara. The great-souled Nilakantha is the store of the energy of detachment. Sthanu possessed eighteen arms, adorned with all the ornaments. The god was attired in white garments. He had white garlands and unguents. The unassailable standard was white. His sacred thread was also white. His divine companions were like him in valour. They surrounded him, singing, dancing and playing on musical instruments. A white crescent moon was his diadem, arising like the moon in the autumn. The three eyes blazed and looked like three suns that had arisen. The god dazzled, wearing a garland that was white in complexion. It was made out of molten gold and strung with lotuses and decorated with gems. O Govinda! On the infinitely energetic Bhava's person, I also saw the embodied forms of weapons, all of them radiating energy. The great-souled one's bow possessed a thousand colours, like that of the rainbow. This is famous as Pinaka, but is actually a giant serpent. It is giant in form and has seven heads. Its fangs are sharp and its poison is virulent. With a giant neck, it was stationed in a man's embodied form, with the bowstring wound around it. The arrow was like the sun and was as resplendent as the fire of destruction. This was the great and extremely terrible divine weapon, the Pashupata. It was unmatched, impossible to describe and fearful to all creatures. It was gigantic in size, with sparks, and seemed to spout out fire. It possessed a single foot and giant teeth.[156] It had one thousand heads and one thousand stomachs. There were one thousand arms and one thousand eyes, and these seemed to spout out fire. O mighty-armed one! It is superior to Brahma, Narayana, Aindra, Agneya and Varuna weapons and is capable of countering all weapons. O Govinda! In ancient times, Mahadeva sported around and with this single arrow, in an instant, consumed and reduced Tripura to ashes. There is no doubt that if it is released from Maheshvara's arms, in an instant, it can consume the entire universe and the three worlds, with their mobile and immobile objects. There is nothing in the worlds that cannot be slain with it, even Brahma, Vishnu and the gods. O son! I saw that extraordinary, wonderful and supreme weapon there. There was another mysterious and supreme weapon, equal or superior.[157] This is famous in all the worlds as the spear of the one who wields the trident. It is capable of shattering the entire earth and drying up the giant ocean. When it is released from the hand of the one who wields the trident, it can destroy the entire universe. Yuvanashva's son, Mandhata, was an immensely energetic king who became an emperor by conquering the three worlds. In ancient times, Mandhata and all his soldiers were struck down by this.[158] O Govinda! He was immensely strong and immensely valorous and was like Shakra in his prowess. However, the rakshasa Lavana released it from his hand and struck him down. That trident is sharp at the points. It is extremely terrible and makes the body hair stand up. It seems to be stationed, ready to strike, as if its forehead is creased into three furrows. It is dark and is like a fire without smoke, like sun when it arises at the time of destruction. That trident is impossible to describe. Its handle is a snake. It is like the Destroyer with his noose. O Govinda! Near Rudra, I saw that weapon. In ancient times, Mahadeva was gratified and gave Rama[159] a battleaxe that was sharp at the edges. This was used to destroy the kshatriyas. It was also used to slay Emperor Kartavirya in a great battle. Using this, there were twenty-one occasions when kshatriyas were exterminated from the earth. O Govinda! Jamadagni's son, Rama of the unblemished deeds, accomplished this. It flamed at the edges and was extremely terrible. This was also near the wielder of the trident, who had a snake strung around his neck. It looked like the blazing flames of a fire. The intelligent one also possessed numerous other divine weapons. O unblemished one! I have only recounted the main ones. Brahma, the grandfather of the worlds, was stationed on the god's left flank. He was astride a celestial vimana, yoked to swans that possessed the speed of thought. Narayana was also stationed on the left flank. He held a conch shell, chakra and club and was astride Vinata's descendant.[160] Astride a peacock, Skanda was near the goddess. Grasping a spear and a bell, he looked like a second fire.[161] Nandi could be seen, stationed in front of the god. Stationed with a spear in his hand, he looked like a second Shankara. The rishis, with Bhrigu at the forefront, born from Svayambhu's mental powers, were there and so were all the gods, with Shakra at the forefront. In every direction, they surrounded the great-souled one and worshipped him. The gods praised Mahadeva with many kinds of hymns. Brahma praised Bhava by uttering the rathantara. Narayana praised the lord of the gods with the *jyeshtha* Sama hymn. Shakra praised him with the excellent *shatarudriya*, which is about the supreme brahman.[162] Those three, Brahma, Narayana and Koushika, the king of the gods, were radiant around the great-souled one, like three fires. In their midst, the resplendent god Shiva was resplendent. He was like the rays of the autumn sun, freed from the clouds.

'"'I followed excellent vows and worshipped the god through chants. "I bow down before the one who is the god of everything. I bow down before Mahadeva. You are Shakra. You are in Shakra's form. You are in Shakra's attire. I bow down before the one with the vajra in his hand. You are tawny. You are red. You always hold the Pinaka in your hand. You hold the sword and the trident. I bow down before the one with the dark garments, the one who has dark and curly hair. A black antelope skin forms your upper garment. You are the one who is worshipped on *krishnashtami*.[163] You are white in complexion. You are white. You are attired in white garments. You are smeared in white ashes. You are engaged in white deeds. Among all the gods, you are Brahma. Among all the Rudras, you are Nilalohita. You are the soul of all creatures. In sankhya, you have been spoken of as Purusha. You are the bull[164] among all things that are sacred. Among yogis, you are the Shiva who is indivisible. You are garhasthya among the ashramas. You are the lord Maheshvara. Among all the yakshas, you are Kubera. You are Vishnu among sacrifices.[165] Among mountains, you are the great Meru. Among nakshatras, you are the moon. You are Vasishtha among the rishis. You are said to be the sun among planets. Among forest animals, you are the lion. You are Parameshvara. Among domesticated animals, you are the bull. You are the illustrious one who is worshipped in the worlds. You are Vishnu among the Adityas. You are Agni among the Vasus. You are Vinata's descendant among the birds. You are Ananta among the serpents. Among the Vedas, you are Sama Veda. In the hymns of Yajur Veda, you are shatarudriya. You are Sanatkumara among the yogis. Among the exponents of sankhya, you are Kapila. O god! You are Shakra among the Maruts. Among the ancestors, you are the king of dharma.[166] Among the worlds, you are Brahma's world. Among all destinations, you are said to be moksha. Among oceans, you are the ocean of milk. Among mountains, you are the Himalaya mountains. You are brahmanas among varnas. Among brahmanas, you are brahmanas who have been initiated. You are the origin of the worlds. You are the destroyer who destroys everything. You are everything that is said to constitute superior energy in the worlds. You are the illustrious one who is everything. That is my firm view. O illustrious one! O god! I bow down before you. O one who is affectionate towards devotees! I bow down before you. O lord of yoga! I bow down before you. O origin of the universe! I bow down before you. Show your favours towards one who is devoted towards you. I am miserable. I am distressed. I am without prosperity. O Bhava! You are the eternal destination. O Parameshvara! O lord of the gods! I may have committed crimes in my ignorance. Since I am your devotee, you should pardon all these. O lord of the gods! I was confused because of the form you assumed. O lord of the gods! I did not offer you arghya and padya."[167] Thus, with devotion, I worshipped Ishana and offered him padya and arghya. I joined my hands in salutation and offered everything to him. O son! A shower of auspicious flowers descended on my head. They were sprinkled with cool water and possessed divine fragrances. The servants of the gods sounded celestial drums. An auspicious breeze started to blow. It was pleasant and bore sacred scents.

'"'With his wife, Mahadeva, the one with the bull on his banner, was pleased with me. Delighted with me, he spoke to the gods who were present. "O all the gods! Look at the great-souled Upamanyu. His single-minded devotion towards me is divine and supreme and he has no other sentiment.” O Krishna! The one with the trident in his hand spoke in this way to the gods. All of them joined their hands in salutation. They bowed down before the one with the bull on his banner and said, “O illustrious one! O god! O lord of the gods! O protector of the worlds! O lord of the universe! Thanks to you, this excellent brahmana will obtain all the fruits that he desires.” All the gods, with Brahma at the forefront, spoke in this way to Sharva. The illustrious lord Shankara seemed to smile at me. He said, “O Upamanyu! O child! I am pleased with you. O bull among the sages! Look at me. Your devotion towards me is firm. O brahmana rishi! I wished to test you.[168] I am extremely delighted at your great devotion. Therefore, I will now give you everything that you wish for.” This is what the lord Mahadeva told me there. My eyes filled with tears of joy and my body hair stood up. In a voice that was full of joy and devotion, I spoke these words to the god. I sank down on my knees and repeatedly prostrated myself before him. “O god! It seems to me as if I have been born today. My austerities have become successful today. O Mahadeva! I have seen you in person. You are stationed in front of me, pleased with me. I have seen the one who is worshipped, the infinitely valorous one whom even the gods cannot see. Having seen that god, who is more fortunate than me? Learned ones meditate on him as the supreme and eternal truth. He is famous as the lord of attachment. He is supreme of the supreme. He is the one without decay. He is the illustrious god who represents all that is true. He is without beginning and without destruction. He is the one who knows about all truth and ordinances. He is the lord who is the foremost Purusha. He is the one who created Brahma, the creator of the worlds, from his right flank. He is the lord who created Vishnu, for the protection of the worlds, from his left flank. When the end of a yuga arrives, he is the lord who creates Rudra from his limbs. Rudra destroys everything in the universe, mobile and immobile. He is the immensely energetic Destroyer, the fire of destruction. This god, Mahadeva, is the creator of everything in the universe, mobile and immobile. At the end of a kalpa, it has been said that everything is withdrawn into him. You go everywhere. You are the soul of all creatures. You are Bhava, the creator who creates the creator of beings. You always go everywhere, but are incapable of being seen by all the gods. O lord! O Shankara! If you are gratified with me and wish to grant me a boon, let me have eternal devotion towards you. O lord! O supreme among the gods! Through your favours, let me possess the intelligence so that I know everything about the past, the present and the future. Let me and my relatives be able to enjoy an inexhaustible supply of food cooked with milk. May your supreme self always reside near me, in my hermitage.” The illustrious one, revered by the worlds, agreed to this.

‘“‘The lord Maheshvara, the immensely energetic preceptor of everything mobile and immobile, said, “Be without old age and without death. Be free from misery. Be full of good qualities. Know everything and be handsome. May you possess eternal youth. May you possess an energy that is like that of the fire. O sage! Wherever you desire, there will be an ocean of milk. As you desire, that store of milk will always be near you. Enjoy that ocean of milk, with amrita mixed in it. With your relatives, always think of worshipping me. O supreme among brahmanas! I will always be with you, in your hermitage. O child! Reside wherever you wish. You should have no anxiety. O brahmana! Whenever you remember me, I will always show myself to you.” The illustrious one was as resplendent as one crore suns. Having granted me the boon, Ishana disappeared from that spot. O Krishna! Thus, through my meditations, I saw the god of the gods. I obtained everything that the intelligent one had mentioned. O Krishna! Behold. You can directly see the siddhas who reside here. There are the rishis, the vidyadharas, the yakshas, the gandharvas and the apsaras. Look at the trees that are always beautiful and full of flowers and fruit. There are flowers everywhere. There are pleasant leaves and excellent branches. O mighty-armed one! Everything has a celestial ring to it.’”’

Chapter 1696(15)

““Upamanyu said, ‘The great Hara has favoured many thousand others. O Madhava! Why will the illustrious one not show you his favours? Such an assembly of the gods is to be praised, especially by someone like you, who is faithful, devoted to brahmanas and non-violent. I will grant you the *japa*,[169] through which, you will be able to see Shankara’”

Krishna said,[170] “I told him, ‘O brahmana! O great sage! Through your favours, I will see the lord of the gods, the one who crushed the large numbers of Diti’s sons.’[171] On the eighth day, following the rites, I was initiated by the brahmana. I received the staff and shaved my head. I held the kusha grass and dressed myself in rags. I sprinkled myself with clarified butter and wore a girdle made out of grass. For one month, I lived on fruits. For a second month, I subsisted on water. For the third, fourth and fifth months, I only subsisted on air. I single-mindedly stood on one foot, raising my arms upwards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I saw the energy of one thousand suns in the firmament. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! In the midst of that energy, I saw a cloud that was decorated by an array of cranes. It looked like a blue mountain and there were rainbows all over it. Garlands of lightning seemed to form a window inside it. The illustrious and extremely radiant one was seated there, together with the goddess. With his wife, he blazed because of his austerities, energy and beauty. There, with the goddess, the illustrious Maheshvara looked resplendent. It was as if the sun was located inside that cloud, together with the moon. O Kounteya! My body hair stood up in delight. My eyes dilated in wonder. He is the refuge of the large numbers of gods. He is the dispeller of all affliction. I saw Hara. He wore a crown. He held a club and a trident in his hands. He was attired in tiger skin. His hair was matted and he held a staff in his hand. He held the Pinaka and the vajra. His teeth were sharp. He wore sparkling bracelets and his sacred thread was a snake. A celestial garland, with many colours, adorned his chest. It was so large that it hung down, right up to his ankles. I saw him and he looked like the moon in the evening, when the rains are over. Large numbers of demons[172] surrounded him on every side. He was difficult to see, as dazzling as the autumn sun. He was seated on a bull and there were eleven Rudras around him. They sought to praise the deeds of the one who is the performer of auspicious deeds. The Adityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Ashvins praised the god who is the lord of the universe. Everything in the universe chanted his praise. Shatakratu and the illustrious Vishnu, both sons of Aditi, and Brahma were near Bhava, praising him with the rathantara Sama hymn. O Yudhishthira! There were many lords of yoga, ancestors and preceptors who knew about yoga, brahmana rishis and their sons, devarshis, the earth, the firmament, the nakshatras, the planets, the fortnights, the months, the seasons, the nights, the years, the kshanas, the muhurtas, the nimeshas, the yugas in due order, the divine branches of knowledge, all the directions, Sanatkumara, the Vedas, *itihasa*, Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, the seven Manus, soma, the Atharvans, Brihaspati, Bhrigu, Daksha, Kashyapa, Vasishtha, *kashya*,[173] the metres, diksha, sacrifices, dakshina, the fire, oblations, the embodied forms of all the articles required at sacrifices, all the guardians of the worlds, the rivers, the serpents, the mountains, all the mothers of the gods, the wives and the daughters of the gods and thousands, tens of thousands and billons of sages. They, and the mountains, the oceans and the directions, bowed down before the lord of tranquility. There were gandharvas and apsaras, accomplished in singing and the playing of musical instruments. They sung divine and wonderful praises to Bhava. O great king! The vidyadharas, the danavas, the guhyakas, the rakshasas and all the beings, mobile and immobile, bowed down before the lord, in speech, thoughts and deeds. Sharva, the lord of the gods, manifested himself before me. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing that Ishana was in front of me, the universe, with Prajapati and Shakra, glanced towards me. However, I did not possess the strength to look towards Mahadeva.

'"At this, the god spoke to me. 'O Krishna! Look at me and speak to me.' Delighted, I bowed my head down before the god and the goddess, Uma. I praised Sthanu in words that are used by Brahma and the other gods to praise him. 'I bow down before the eternal one who is the womb of everything. The rishis speak of you as Brahma's lord. Virtuous ones speak of you as austerities, sattva, rajas, tamas and truth. You are Brahma. You are Rudra. You are Varuna.

You are Agni. You are Manu. You are Bhava. You are Dhatri. You are Tvashtri. You are Vidhatri. You are the lord who faces all the directions. All creatures, mobile and immobile, originate in you. You are the origin of all beings and you are the one who destroys them. The rishis speak of you as being superior to all the objects of the sense, the mind, the wind, the seven kinds of fire and all the male gods who are in heaven. O illustrious one! There is no doubt that you are the Vedas, the sacrifices, soma, dakshina, the fire, the oblations and everything else required for a sacrifice. Sacrifices, gifts, studies, vows, rituals, modesty, fame, prosperity, radiance, contentment and success are offered to you. O illustrious one! Desire, anger, fear, avarice, insolence, confusion, malice, pain and disease are your offspring. You are deeds. You are the outcome of those deeds. You are destruction. You are the foremost one. You are power. You are immutable. You are the supreme origin of the mind. Your nature is eternal. You are the unmanifest. You are the purifying lord. You are golden and possess a thousand rays. You are the origin of all the qualities. All life is dependent on you. The great atman, Mati,[174] Brahma, the universe, Shambhu, Svayambhu, Buddhi,[175] Prajna,[176] realization, consciousness, fame and fortitude are all words that the great-souled ones have progressively used in the sacred texts to express your greatness. It is through comprehending you that learned brahmanas overcome the confusion that is in the hearts of all beings. The rishis have praised you as kshetrajna. Your arms and feet are in all the directions. Your eyes, heads and faces are in all the directions. You hear everything in the worlds. You are established, pervading everything. You are the fruits of everything that the one with the sharp rays[177] performs in a nimesha. As Purusha, the rays of your power are in all hearts. You are the obtaining of anima and laghima. You are Ishana, the resplendent and undecaying one. The worlds resort to your understanding and intelligence and seek you out as a refuge. Those who have conquered their senses and are devoted to the truth always use yoga to meditate on you. There are those who know you as the eternal one, the lord who is the deep refuge, the Purusha who is everywhere in the universe, the one who is golden in complexion, the one who is supremely intelligent and is the greatest destination. These intelligent ones based themselves on what transcends intelligence. Those intelligent ones know the seven subtle forms,[178] the six of your attributes[179] and the main techniques of yoga and penetrate into you.' O Partha! I spoke in this way to Bhava, the destroyer of all afflictions. At this, the entire universe and all mobile and immobile objects roared like lions. The large numbers of brahmanas, the gods, the asuras, the serpents, the pishachas, the ancestors, the birds, the large numbers of rakshasas, the large numbers of spirits[180] and all the maharshis bowed down before him. Fragrant and celestial flowers showered down on my head in large numbers. A pleasant breeze began to blow. For the welfare of the universe, the illustrious Shankara glanced towards the goddess Uma, Shatakratu and me and said, 'O Krishna! O slayer of enemies! We know of your great devotion towards us. I am extremely pleased with you and I will do what brings you benefit. O Krishna! O supreme one! Ask for eight boons and I will give them to you. O tiger among Yadavas! Tell me what you desire, even if it is something that is extremely difficult to get.'"'

Chapter 1697(16)

'Krishna said, "I bowed my head down before that great mass of energy. Filled with great delight, I told the illustrious one, 'Firmness in dharma, the ability to destroy enemies in battle, fame, ferocity, supreme strength, devotion to yoga, your proximity and hundreds and hundreds of sons—these are the boons I seek.' On hearing my words, Shankara agreed that it would be this way. Thereafter, the mother of the universe, the one who holds up everything, the one who cleanses everything, the store of austerities, Sharvani Uma, spoke to me. 'O unblemished one! The illustrious one has granted you a son named Samba. Ask for eight boons from me too and I will grant them to you.' O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Addressed thus, I bowed my head down before her and said, 'Lack of anger towards brahmanas, the favours of my father, hundreds of sons, supreme objects of pleasure, affection towards my family, the favours of my mother, the attainment of tranquility and skill—these are the boons I seek.' The goddess replied, 'It shall be that way. You will possess the power of an immortal. I never speak anything that is false. You will have sixteen thousand wives. Your love for them, and their love for you, will never decay. You will obtain great affection from your relatives. I also grant you a handsome body. Seven thousand guests will always feed in your house.'"

'Vasudeva continued, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The god and the goddess granted me these boons. O Bhima's elder brother! Then, with those companions,[181] they instantly disappeared. O supreme among the Kourava lineage! I recounted all these wonderful incidents to Upamanyu, the extremely energetic brahmana. The one who was excellent in his vows bowed down before the god of the gods and said, 'There is no one who is Sharva's equal in giving. There is no one who is Sharva's equal in battle. There is no god who is Sharva's equal. There is no refuge that is equal to Sharva. O son! In krita yuga, there was a famous rishi named Tandi. For ten thousand years, he meditated on that god. He worshipped him with devotion. Listen to what he obtained as a consequence. Having satisfied Mahadeva with his praises, he saw the lord. He said, "You are the most sacred of the sacred. You are the supreme destination among all destinations. You are the fiercest energy among all kinds of energy. You are the supreme austerity among all austerities. You are the wealth of the universe. You are the golden-eyed one. You are the one who is invoked by many. I bow down before you. O lord! You are the one who grants a lot of fortune. You are the supreme truth. I bow down before you. O lord! You are the one whom ascetics, scared of birth and death, strive to obtain. You are the one who grants emancipation. You are the one with the one thousand rays. I bow down before you. You are the abode of bliss. Brahma, Shatakratu, Vishnu, the Vishvadevas and the maharshis are incapable of comprehending your truth. How can those like us comprehend you? You are the one who gets time going. You are the one into whom time merges. You are spoken of as Kala.[182] You are spoken of as Purusha. You are also spoken of as Brahma. The celestial rishis who know about the Puranas speak of you as possessing three forms.[183] You are Adhipourusha, Adhyatma, Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva, Adhiloka, Adhivijnana and Adhiyajna.[184] Even the gods find it difficult to know you. But when learned people know you in the body, they are emancipated and obtain the supreme state of welfare. O lord! Those who do not wish to know you, undergo many births and deaths. You are the gate to heaven and emancipation. You grant and you take away. You are emancipation and heaven. You are desire and anger. You are sattva, rajas and tamas. You are the lower regions. You are the upper regions. You are Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Skanda, Indra, Savitri, Yama, Varuna, the moon, Dhatri, Vidhatri and the lord of riches.[185] You are earth, wind, water, fire, water, speech, intelligence, understanding and mind. You are deeds. You are both truth and falsehood. You are the existent. You are the non-existent. You are the senses. You are the objects of the senses. You are beyond Prakriti. You are permanent. You are superior to the universe and superior to everything that exists in the universe. You can be thought of. You cannot be thought of. You are the supreme brahman. You are the supreme destination. There is no doubt that you are the objective of those who follow sankhya and yoga. There is no doubt that I have become successful today.[186] There is no doubt that I have obtained the destination of the virtuous. This is the destination obtained on earth by those whose knowledge and intelligence are unblemished. Alas! I was foolish. For a long period of time, I did not possess the consciousness. I did not know the supreme god, the eternal one who is known by the learned. It is through the devotion of many births that the god has shown me his favours and I have been able to directly see him. Knowing you is like obtaining amrita. You are the eternal mystery to gods, asuras and men. He is the illustrious god who does everything. His face is in every direction. He is inside all atmans. He sees everything and goes everywhere. He knows everything. He creates life and is the one who upholds life. He is the creator of beings and is the destination of all creatures. He is embodied and is the refuge of all those who are embodied. He is the one who enjoys a body. He is the destination of all those with bodies. He is adhyatma, the destination of all those who are virtuous, those who meditate and know about the atman. He is also the lord who is the immortal objective. He is the one who grants good and bad ends to all creatures. He is the one who ordains birth and death for all creatures. He is the lord who grants success to the rishis who desire success. He is the lord who grants emancipation to the brahmanas who desire emancipation. Beginning with the earth, he is the creator of all the worlds, including the residents of heaven. He maintains the gods and grants them welfare in his eight forms.[187] Everything flows from him and he is established in everything. It is into him that everything is destroyed. He is alone the one who is eternal. He is the world of truth, desired by the supremely righteous ones who desire truth. He is the emancipation and freedom from hardships, sought by those who know about the atman. He is the lord whom Brahma and the Siddhas have kept secret and do not reveal to gods, asuras and humans.[188] That is the reason that gods, asuras and men do not know about Bhava. Though he resides in their hearts, they are confused. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He resides in all atmans and shows himself to those who resort to the yoga of devotion. Knowing him, one is not born and does not have to face death. If one knows that supreme one, there is nothing else that remains to be known. Having obtained that supreme gain, there is nothing else that remains to be obtained. By obtaining that supreme and subtle being, one obtains a state that is without decay. There are those who know the truth about the qualities of sankhya, they are accomplished in the sacred texts of sankhya. Having got to know about that supreme knowledge, they are freed from bonds. He is the one known by those who are learned in the Vedas. He is the one who is established in Vedanta. Those who are devoted to pranayama and immerse themselves in it, meditate on him. He is devayana and is said to the gate to the sun. He is pitriyana and is said to be the gate to the moon.[189] He is the colourful progress of time, the years and the yugas. He is existence and non-existence. He is uttarayana and dakshinayana.[190] Earlier, Prajapati praised him in many chants. He accepted you as a son, under the name of Nilalohita. In their rites, officiating priests praise you with many hymns from the Rig Veda. Officiating priests know you in three different ways[191] and offer oblations with hymns from the Yajur Veda. Those who are pure in their intelligence and know about the Sama Veda chant Sama hymns to you. You are the supreme origin of sacrifices. You are said to be the supreme lord. Night and day are his hearing and sight. Fortnights and months are his heads and arms. The seasons are his energy. Austerities are his patience. The year constitutes his anus, thighs and feet. He is Mrityu and Yama. He is the fire of destruction. He is time. He is the force of destruction. He is the supreme origin of time. He is eternal time. He is the moon, the sun, the nakshatras, the planets, the winds, Dhruva, the saptarshis and the seven worlds.[192] He is Pradhana and Mahat. He is not manifest. He is the specific destination of all deeds. He is all creatures, beginning with Brahma and ending with the lowest. He is the eight Prakritis.[193] He is beyond Prakriti. He is the state of lack of anxiety. He is the eternal brahman. He is the supreme objective that those who know about the sacred texts and Vedangas meditate on. He is the supreme kashtha. He is the supreme kala. He is supreme success. He is the supreme objective. He is supreme tranquility. He is supreme detachment. Having obtained him, learned ones think that they have obtained everything. He is contentment. He is success. He is said to be shruti and smriti. He is the objective of adhyatma, sought by the faithful. Learned ones obtain the one who is without decay. Those who desire to perform sacrifices, with a great deal of donations given away, seek him. He is the destination of the divine gods. He is the eternal destination. There are those who meditate, offer oblations and observe vows, subjecting their bodies to hardships and rituals. Their torments are with that god as an objective. Bhava is the objective. There are those who are detached and cast aside all rites. They desire Brahma's world, but you are actually that eternal objective. There are others who seek to overcome death and abandon all detachment, seeking an end to transformations and destructions. He is that eternal end too. He is the refuge of jnana and vijnana. He is said to be without form and without blemish. That god is the objective of emancipation. Bhava is the supreme goal. He has been spoken about in the Vedas, the sacred texts and the Puranas. He has been spoken of as the end after death. It is through the favours of the lord that one obtains, or does not obtain." Thus did Tandi satisfy the undecaying Ishana through his austerities and yoga. He spoke these words, which Brahma, the creator of the worlds, had said in ancient times. "Brahma, Shatakratu, Vishnu, the Vishvadevas and the maharshis are incapable of knowing him." Shiva was pleased at this and replied, "You will be without destruction and without transformation. You will be free from all misery. You will be famous and full of energy. You will possess divine knowledge. The rishis will come to you. Your son will be the composer of sutras.[194] O best among brahmanas! There is no doubt that this will happen through my favours. What will I give you or someone else? What do you desire? Tell me what you wish for." Joining his hands in salutation, he[195] replied, "Let my devotion towards you be firm." The god granted this boon. Praised and worshipped by the gods, the rishis and the residents of heaven, he then disappeared. O lord of the Yadavas! With her companions, the goddess also disappeared. The rishi came to my hermitage and told me everything that had happened. O best among men! For my success, Tandi recounted to me all those famous names.[196] Listen to those. The grandfather knew ten thousand names. The sacred texts have one thousand of Sharva's names. O Achyuta!

Tandi mentioned some names of the illustrious one, but those are secret. Through the favours of the god,[197] in ancient times, the great-souled lord of the gods[198] uttered those names.’”’

Chapter 1698(17)

‘Vasudeva said, “O father![199] O Yudhishthira! The brahmana rishi[200] controlled himself. He joined his hands in salutation and told me those names, starting at the beginning.

‘“Upamanyu said, ‘I will satisfy Sthanu through these names, famous in all the worlds. Some were spoken of by Brahma and the rishis. Others are in the Vedas and the Vedangas. These are great names and uttered by those who are truthful, ensure success in every kind of endeavour. Having cleansed his soul, the rishi Tandi devotedly used these names for the god. These names, famous in the worlds, have been uttered by sages who know about the truth. He is supreme. He is the foremost. He is heaven. He is the one who is engaged in the welfare of all beings. These names have been heard everywhere in the universe and open up entry into Brahma’s world. This is the supreme and eternal mystery that Brahma spoke about earlier. O best among the Yadu lineage! I will tell you. Listen with single-minded attention. You are devoted to the supreme god Bhava, Parameshvara. Therefore, listen to what the eternal Brahma said. Even if one tried for one hundred years, one is incapable of speaking about Sharva’s powers in entirety and detail. Even the gods are incapable of comprehending his beginning, middle and end. O Madhava! Therefore, who is capable of speaking about all his qualities? Who is capable of speaking about that god’s greatness of conduct? Through his favours, I will use phrases and syllables to touch on it briefly. Without his blessings, one can neither obtain nor praise the lord. Since I have been granted permission by him, I always praise Bhava. The great-souled one is without beginning and without end. He is the origin of everything. His own origin is unmanifest. I will tell you about some names that have been used for him. He is the granter of boons. He is the one to be revered. The intelligent one’s form is the universe. Listen to the names that were used for him by the one who was born from the lotus.[201] The great grandfather spoke of ten thousand names. Like clarified butter being churned out of curds, I will use my mind to churn names from those. Gold represents the essence of the mountains. Honey represents the essence of flowers. Cream represents the essence of clarified butter. This essence has been extracted like that. It cleanses all kinds of sins and is in conformity with the four Vedas. They need to be studied carefully and remembered with clean souls. They grant tranquility and benefit. They are great and auspicious and destroy rakshasas.[202] They should be told to devotees, those who are faithful and believers. They should not be told to those who are not devoted, have not cleansed their souls and are non-believers. The god who is the wielder of Pinaka is in all atmans. O Krishna! If a person hates him, he will go to hell, with his ancestors and his descendants. This[203] represents meditation. This represents knowledge. This is the supreme mystery. If one gets to know them at the time of death, one goes to the supreme destination. This is sacred, auspicious, pure and supremely beneficial. O mighty-armed one! Recite these names. This is the best chant among all chants of praise. In ancient times, Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, composed these. He thought of it as the divine king of all chants. Since that time, this praise to the great-souled lord has been famous in the universe and has been revered by the immortals. This king of hymns descended from Brahma's world. In ancient times, he recited it to Tandi and it is therefore thought of as something composed by Tandi. It was Tandi who brought it down from heaven to earth. It is the most auspicious among all things that are auspicious. It is destructive of all sins. O mighty-armed one! I will recite this hymn, which is supreme among all hymns. It is about the one who is the brahmana among all brahmanas, supreme among all things supreme, energy among all kinds of energy and austerity among all types of austerities. He is peace among all kinds of peace, resplendence among all kinds of resplendence, restraint among all kinds of restraint, intelligence among all kinds of intelligence, god among all kinds of gods, sage among all kinds of sages, sacrifice among all kinds of sacrifice, auspicious among all things auspicious, Rudra among all the Rudras, the lord among all lords, the yogi among all yogis and the cause among all causes. All the worlds originate from him and merge into him when they no longer have existence. He is in the atman of all beings. He is the infinitely energetic Hara. Hear Sharva's one thousand and eight names. O best among men! If you listen to them, you will be successful in all your desires.

‘“‘(1) Sthira;[204] (2) Sthanu;[205] (3) Prabhu;[206] (4) Bhanu;[207] (5) Pravara;[208] (6) Varada;[209] (7) Vara;[210] (8) Sarvatma;[211] (9) Sarvavikhyata;[212] (10) Sarva;[213] (11) Sarvakara;[214] (12) Bhava;[215] (13) Jati;[216] (14) Charmi;[217] (15) Shikhandi;[218] (16) Sarvanga;[219] (17) Sarva-bhavana;[220] (18) Hari;[221] (19) Harinaksha;[222] (20) Sarvabhutahara; [223] (.) Prabhu;[224] (21) Pravritti; (22) Nivritti; (23) Niyata;[225] (24) Shashvata;[226] (25) Dhruva;[227] (26) Shmashanachari;[228] (27) Bhagavan;[229] (28) Khachara;[230] (29) Gochara;[231] (30) Ardana;[232] (31) Abhivadya;[233] (32) Mahakarma;[234] (33) Tapasvi;[235] (34) Bhutabhavana;[236](35) Unmatta-vesha-prachchhanna;[237] (36) Sarvaloka-prajapati;[238] (37) Maharupa;[239] (38) Mahakaya;[240] (39) Sarvarupa;[241] (40) Mahayasha;[242] (41) Mahatma;[243] (42) Sarvabhuta;[244] (43) Virupa;[245] (44) Vamana;[246] (45) Manu;[247] (46) Lokapala;[248] (47) Antarhitatma;[249] (48) Prasada;[250] (49) Hayagardabhi;[251] (50) Pavitra;[252] (51) Mahat; (52) Niyama;[253] (53) Niyamashraya;[254] (54) Sarvakarma;[255] (55) Svayambhu; (56) Adiradikara;[256] (57) Nidhi;[257] (58) Sahasraksha;[258] (59) Virupaksha;[259] (60) Soma; (61) Nakshatra-sadhaka;[260] (62) Chandra-surya-gati;[261] (63) Ketu-graha;[262] (64) Graha-pati-vara;[263] (65) Adriradyalaya;[264] (66) Karta;[265] (67) Mriga-banarpana;[266] (68) Anagha;[267] (69) Mahatapa;[268] (70) Ghoratapa;[269] (71) Adina;[270] (72) Dina-sadhaka;[271] (73) Samvatsara-kara;[272] (74) Mantra; (75) Pramana;[273] (76) Parama;[274] (77) Tapa;[275] (78) Yogi; (79) Yojya;[276] (80) Mahabija;[277] (81) Mahareta;[278] (.) Mahatapa;[279] (82) Suvarna-reta;[280] (83) Sarvajna;[281] (84) Subija;[282] (85) Vrisha-vahana;[283] (86) Dasha-bahu;[284] (87) Animisha;[285] (88) Nilakantha;[286] (89) Umapati;[287] (90) Vishvarupa;[288] (91) Svayam-shreshtha;[289] (92) Balavira;[290] (93) Bala;[291] (94) Gana;[292] (95) Ganakarta;[293] (96) Ganapati;[294] (97) Digvasa;[295] (98) Kamya;[296] (.) Pavitra;[297] (.) Parama;[298] (.) Mantra;[299] (99) Sarva-bhava-kara;[300] (100) Hara;[301] (101) Kamandalu-dhara;[302] (102) Dhanvi;[303] (103) Banahasta;[304] (104) Kapalavan;[305] (105) Ashani;[306] (106) Shataghni;[307] (107) Pattishi;[308] (108) Ayudhi-mahan;[309] (109) Sruvahasta;[310] (110) Surupa;[311] (112) Tejas;[312] (113) Tejaskara;[313] (.) Nidhi;[314] (114) Ushnishi;[315] (115) Suvaktra;[316] (116) Udagra;[317] (117) Vinata;[318] (118) Dirgha;[319] (119) Harikesha;[320] (120)

Sutirtha;[321] (121) Krishna;[322] (122) Srigala-rupa;[323] (123) Sarvartha;[324] (124) Munda;[325] (125) Kundi;[326] (126) Kamandalu;[327] (127) Aja;[328] (128) Mrigarupa;[329] (129) Gandha-dhari;[330] (130) Kaparda;[331] (131) Urdhvareta;[332] (132) Urdhva-linga;[333] (133) Urdhva-shayi;[334] (134) Nabhastala;[335] (136) Trijata;[336] (137) Chiravasa;[337] (138) Rudra; (139) Senapati;[338] (140) Vibhu;[339] (141) Ahachara;[340] (142) Nakta;[341] (143) Tigma-manyu;[342] (144) Suvarchasa;[343] (145) Gajaha;[344] (146) Daityaha;[345] (147) Loka;[346] (148) Lokadhata;[347] (149) Gunakara;[348] (150) Simha-shardula-rupa;[349] (151) Ardracharmambara-vrita;[350] (152) Kalayogi;[351] (153) Mahanada;[352] (154) Sarva-vasa-chatushpatha;[353] (155) Nishachara;[354] (156) Pretachari;[355] (157) Bhutachari;[356] (158) Maheshvara;[357] (159) Bahubhuta;[358] (160) Bahudhana;[359] (161) Sarvadhara;[360] (162) Amitagati;[361] (163) Nrityapriya;[362] (164) Nityanarta;[363] (165) Nartaka;[364] (166) Sarvalasaka;[365] (167) Ghora;[366] (.) Mahatapa;[367] (168) Pasha;[368] (169) Nitya;[369] (170) Girichara;[370] (171) Nabha;[371] (172) Sahasra-hasta;[372] (173) Vijaya;[373] (174) Vyavasaya;[374] (175) Anindita;[375] (176) Amarshana;[376] (177) Marshanatma;[377] (178) Yajnaha;[378] (179) Kama-nashana;[379] (180) Daksha-yajnapahari;[380] (181) Susaha;[381] (182) Madhyama;[382] (183) Tejopahari;[383] (184) Balaha;[384] (185) Mudita;[385] (186) Artha;[386] (187) Jita;[387] (188) Vara;[388] (189) Gambhira-ghosha;[389] (190) Gambhira;[390] (191) Gambhira-bala-vahana;[391] (192) Nyagrodharupa;[392] (193) Nyagrodha;[393] (194) Vriksha-karnasthithi-vibhu;[394] (195) Tikshnatapa;[395] (196) Haryashva;[396] (197) Sahaya;[397] (198) Karma-kala-vit;[398] (199) Vishnuprasadita;[399] (200) Yajna;[400] (201) Samudra;[401] (202) Vadavamukha;[402] (203) Hutashana-sahaya;[403] (204) Prashantatma;[404] (205) Hutashana;[405] (206) Ugrateja;[406] (207) Mahateja;[407] (208) Jaya;[408] (209) Vijaya-kala-vit;[409] (210) Jyotishamayana;[410] (211) Siddhi;[411] (212) Sandhi-vigraha;[412] (213) Shikhi;[413] (214) Dandi;[414] (215) Jvali;[415] (216) Murtija;[416] (217) Murdhaga;[417] (218) Bali;[418] (219) Vainavi;[419] (220) Panavi;[420] (221) Tali;[421] (222) Kala;[422] (223) Kala-katam-kata;[423] (224) Nakshatra-vigraha-vidhiguna-vriddhi-laya-agama;[424] (225) Prajapati-disha-bahu-vibhaga;[425] (226) Sarvatomukha;[426] (227) Vimochana;[427] (228) Suragana;[428] (229) Hiranya-kavachodbhava;[429] (230) Medhraja;[430] (231) Balachari;[431] (232) Mahachari;[432] (233) Stuta;[433] (234) Sarvyaturyaninadi;[434] (235) Sarva-vadya-parigraha;[435] (236)

Vyalarupa;[436] (237) Bilavasi;[437] (238) Hemamali;[438] (239) Taranga-vit;[439] (240) Tridasha-trikala-dhrik;[440] (241) Karma-sarva-bandha- vimochana;[441] (242) Bandhana-asurendranam;[442] (243) Yudhishatru-vinashana;[443] (244) Sankhya-prasada;[444] (245) Durvasa; (246) Sarva-sadhu-nishevita;[445] (247) Praskandana;[446] (248) Vibhaga;[447] (249) Atulya;[448] (250) Yajna-bhaga-vit;[449] (251) Sarvavasa;[450] (252) Sarvachari;[451] (.) Durvasa;[452] (253) Vasava; (254) Amara;[453] (255) Hema;[454] (256) Hemakara;[455] (.) Yajna;[456] (257) Sarvadhari;[457] (258) Dharottama;[458] (259) Lohitaksha;[459] (260) Mahaksha;[460] (261) Vijayaksha;[461] (262) Visharada;[462] (263 Samgraha;[463] (264) Nigraha;[464] (.) Karta;[465] (265) Sarpachira-nivasana;[466] (266) Mukhya;[467] (267) Amukhya;[468] (268) Deha;[469] (269) Dehardhi;[470] (270) Sarvakamada;[471] (271) Sarvakalaprasada;[472] (272) Subala;[473] (273) Bala-rupa-dhrik;[474] (274) Akashanidhi-rupa;[475] (275) Nipati;[476] (276) Uraga;[477] (277)Khaga;[478] (278) Roudra-rupa;[479] (279) Ashura-aditya;[480] (280) Vasurashmi;[481] (281) Suvarchasi;[482] (282) Vasuvega;[483] (283) Mahavega;[484] (284) Manovega;[485] (.) Nishachara;[486] (285) Sarvavasi;[487] (286) Shriyavasi;[488] (287) Upadeshakara;[489] (.) Hara;[490] (288) Muniratma;[491] (289) Pati-loke;[492] (290) Sambhojya;[493] (291) Sahasrada;[494] (292) Pakshi;[495] (293) Pakshirupi;[496] (294) Atidipta;[497] (295) Vishampati;[498] (296) Unmada;[499] (297) Madanakara;[500] (298) Artharthakara;[501] (299) Romasha;[502] (300) Vamadeva; (301) Varna;[503] (302) Prak;[504] (303) Dakshina;[505] (304) Vamana;[506] (305) Siddhayogapahari;[507] (306) Sarvarthasadhaka;[508] (307) Bhikshu;[509] (308) Bhikshurupa;[510] (309) Vishani;[511] (310) Mridu;[512] (311)Avyaya;[513] (312) Mahasena;[514] (313) Vishakha;[515] (314) Shashthi-bhaga;[516] (315) Gavampati;[517] (316) Vajrahasta;[518] (317) Vishkambhi;[519] (318) Chamustambha;[520] (319) Kratu;[521] (320) Kratukara;[522] (321) Kala;[523] (322) Madhu;[524] (323) Madhukara;[525] (324) Achala;[526] (325) Vanaspatya;[527] (326) Vajasena;[528] (327) Nityam-ashramapujita;[529] (328) Brahmachari;[530] (329) Lokachari;[531] (330) Sarvachari;[532] (331) Sucharvit;[533] (332) Ishana;[534] (333) Ishvara;[535] (.) Kala;[536] (.) Nishachara;[537] (334) Pinakadhrik;[538] (335) Nandishvara;[539] (336) Nandi; (337) Nandana;[540] (338) Nandivardhana;[541] (339) Bhagasyakshi-nihanta;[542] (.) Kala;[543] (340) Brahma-vidam-vara;[544] (341) Chaturmukha;[545] (342) Mahalinga;[546] (343) Charulinga;[547] (344)

Lingadhyaksha;[548] (345) Suradhyaksha;[549] (346) Lokadhyaksha;[550] (347) Yugavaha;[551] (348) Bijadhyaksha;[552] (349) Bijakarta;[553] (350) Adhyatmanugata-bala;[554] (351) Itihasa-kara;[555] (352) Kalpa; (353) Goutama; (354) Jaleshvara;[556] (355) Dambha;[557] (356) Adambha;[558] (357) Vaidambha;[559] (358) Vashya;[560] (359) Vashyakara;[561] (360) Kavi;[562] (361) Lokakarta;[563] (362) Pashupati;[564] (363) Mahakarta;[565] (364) Mahoushadhi;[566] (365) Akshara;[567] (.) Parama;[568] (366) Brahma; (367) Balavan;[569] (368) Shakra; (369) Niti;[570] (370) Aniti;[571] (371) Shuddhatma;[572] (372) Shuddha;[573] (373) Manya;[574] (374) Manogati;[575] (375) Bahuprasada;[576] (376) Svapana;[577] (377) Darpana;[578] (378) Amitrajit;[579] (379) Vedakara;[580] (380) Sutrakara;[581] (381) Vidvana;[582] (382) Amara-darshana;[583] (383) Maha-meghanivashi;[584] (384) Maha-ghora;[585] (385) Vashikara;[586] (386) Agnijvala;[587] (387) Atidhumra;[588] (388) Huta;[589] (389) Havi;[590] (390) Vrishana;[591] (391) Shankara;[592] (.) Nitya;[593] (392) Varchasvi;[594] (393) Dhuma-ketana;[595] (394) Nilastathangalubdha;[596] (395) Shobhana;[597] (396) Niravagraha;[598] (397) Svastida;[599] (398) Svastibhava;[600] (399) Bhagi;[601] (400) Bhagakara;[602] (401) Laghu;[603] (402) Utsanga;[604] (403) Mahanga;[605] (404) Maha-garbha;[606] (405) Para;[607] (406) Yuva;[608] (407) Krishnavarna;[609] (408) Suvarna;[610] (409) Indriya-sarva-dehinam;[611] (410) Maha-pada;[612] (412) Maha-hasta;[613] (413) Maha-kaya;[614] (414) Mahayasha;[615] (415) Maha-murdha;[616] (416) Maha-matra;[617] (417) Mahanetra;[618] (418) Digalaya;[619] (419) Maha-danta;[620] (420) Maha-karna;[621] (421) Maha-medhra;[622] (422) Maha-hanu;[623] (423) Maha-nasa;[624] (424) Maha-kambu;[625] (425) Maha-griva;[626] (426) Shmashana-dhrik;[627] (427) Maha-vaksha;[628] (428) Mahoraska;[629] (429) Antaratma;[630] (430) Mrigalaya;[631] (431) Lambana;[632] (432) Lambitoshtha;[633] (433) Maha-maya;[634] (434) Payonidhi;[635] (.) Maha-danta;[636] (435) Mahadamshtra;[637] (436) Maha-jihva;[638] (437) Maha-mukha;[639] (438) Maha-nakha;[640] (439) Maha-roma;[641] (440) Maha-kesha;[642] (441) Maha-jata;[643] (442) Asapatna;[644] (.) Prasada;[645] (443) Pratyaya;[646] (444) Giri-sadhana;[647] (445) Snehana;[648] (446) Asnehana;[649] (447) Ajita;[650] (448) Maha-muni;[651] (449) Vrikshakara;[652] (450) Vrikshaketu;[653] (451) Anala;[654] (452) Vayu-vahana;[655] (453) Mandali;[656] (454) Meru-dhama;[657] (455) Deva-danava-darpaha;[658] (456) Atharvashirsha;[659] (457) Samasya;[660] (458) Rig-sahasraamitekshana;[661] (459) Yaju-pada-bhujou;[662] (460) Guhya-prakasha;[663] (461) Jangama;[664] (462) Amoghartha;[665] (.) Prasada;[666] (463) Abhigamya;[667] (464) Sudarshana;[668] (465) Upahara-priya;[669] (466) Sharva; (467) Kanaka;[670] (468) Kanchana;[671] (469) Sthira;[672] (470) Nabhi;[673] (471) Nandi-kara;[674] (472) Bhavya;[675] (473) Pushkara; (474) Sthapati;[676] (.) Sthira;[677] (475) Dvadasha;[678] (476) Trasana;[679] (477) Adya;[680] (.) Yajna;[681] (478) Yajna-samahita;[682] (.) Nakta;[683] (479) Kali;[684] (.) Kala;[685] (480) Makara; (481) Kala-pujita;[686] (482) Sagana;[687] (483)Ganakara;[688] (.) Bhuta-bhavana;[689] (484) Sarathi;[690] (485) Bhasma-shayi;[691] (486) Bhasmagopta;[692] (487) Bhasmabhuta;[693] (488) Taru-gana;[694] (489) Agana;[695] (490) Lopa;[696] (.) Mahatma;[697] (491) Sarva-pujita;[698] (492) Shanku;[699] (493) Trishanku; (494) Sampanna;[700] (495) Shuchi;[701] (496) Bhuta-nishevita;[702] (497) Ashramastha;[703] (498) Kapotastha;[704] (499) Vishvakarma;[705] (500) Patirvara;[706] (501) Shakha;[707] (.) Vishakha;[708] (502) Tamroshtha;[709] (503) Ambujala;[710] (504) Sunishchaya;[711] (505) Kapila;[712] (506) Akapila;[713] (507) Shura;[714] (508) Ayu;[715] (.) Para;[716] (509) Apara;[717] (510) Gandharva; (511) Aditi; (512) Tarkshya; (513) Suvijneya;[718] (514) Susarathi;[719] (515) Parashvadhayudha;[720] (516) Deva; (517) Arthakari;[721] (518) Subandhava;[722] (519) Tumbavini;[723] (520) Mahakopa;[724] (.) Urdhva-reta;[725] (521) Jaleshaya;[726] (522) Ugra;[727] (523) Vamshakara;[728] (524) Vamsha;[729] (525) Vamsha-nada;[730] (.) Anindita;[731] (526) Sarvanga-rupa;[732] (527) Mayavi;[733] (528) Suhrida;[734] (529) Anila;[735] (530) Anala;[736] (531) Bandhana;[737] (532) Bandha-karta;[738] (533) Subandhana-vimochana;[739] (534) Yajnari;[740] (535) Kamari;[741] (.) Maha-damshtra;[742] (536) Mahayudha;[743] (537) Bahustva-anindita;[744] (.) Sharva;[745] (.) Shankara;[746] (538) Shankara-adhana;[747] (539) Amaresha;[748] (540) Mahadeva;[749] (541) Vishvadeva;[750] (542) Surariha;[751] (543) Ahirbudhna;[752] (544) Nirriti;[753] (545) Chekitana;[754] (.) Hari;[755] (546) Ajaikapada;[756] (547) Kapali;[757] (548) Trishankurjit;[758] (549) Shiva;[759] (550) Dhanvantari;[760] (551) Dhumaketu;[761] (552) Skanda; (553) Vaishravana;[762] (554) Dhatri; (555) Shakra; (556) Vishnu; (557) Mitra; (558) Tvashtri; (559) Dhruva; (560) Dhara;[763] (561) Prabhava;[764] (562) Sarvaga;[765] (563) Vayu; (564) Aryama; (565) Savitri; (566) Ravi; (.) Udagra;[766] (567) Vidhatri; (568) Mandhata; (.) Bhuta-bhavana;[767] (569) Ratitirtha;[768] (570) Vagmi;[769] (571) Sarva-kamagunavaha;[770] (572) Padma-garbha;[771] (573) Maha-garbha;[772] (574) Chandra-vaktra;[773] (575) Manorama;[774] (.) Balavan;[775] (576) Upashanta;[776] (577) Purana;[777] (578) Punya-chanchuri;[778] (579) Kuru-karta;[779] (580) Kala-rupa;[780] (581) Kurubhuta;[781] (.) Maheshvara;[782] (582) Sarvashaya;[783] (583) Darbhashayi;[784] (584) Sarvesham-praninampati;[785] (585) Deva-deva-mukha;[786] (586) Asakta;[787] (587) Sat;[788] (588) Asat;[789] (589) Sarva-ratna-vit;[790] (590) Kailasa-shikharavasi;[791] (591) Himavat-giri-samshraya;[792] (592) Kula-hari;[793] (593) Kulakarta;[794] (594) Bahu-vidya;[795] (595) Bahu-prada;[796] (596) Vanija;[797] (597) Vardhana;[798] (598) Vriksha;[799] (599) Nakula-chandanachhada;[800] (600) Sara-griva;[801] (601) Maha-jatru;[802] (602) Alola;[803] (603) Mahoushada;[804] (604) Siddhartha-kari;[805] (605) Siddharthachhanda-vyakaranottara;[806] (606) Simha-nada;[807] (607) Simhadamshtra;[808] (608) Simhaga;[809] (609) Simhavahana;[810] (610) Prabhavatma;[811] (611) Jagat-kala-tala;[812] (612) Lokahita-taru;[813] (613) Saranga;[814] (614) Nava-chakranga;[815] (615) Ketumali;[816] (616) Sabhavana;[817] (617) Bhutalaya;[818] (618) Sarva-bhutanam-nilaya;[819] (.) Vibhu;[820] (.) Bhava;[821] (619) Amogha;[822] (620) Samyata;[823] (621) Ashva;[824] (622) Bhojana;[825] (623) Prana-dharana;[826] (624) Dhritiman;[827] (625) Matiman;[828] (626) Satkrita;[829] (627) Yugadhipa;[830] (628) Gopali;[831] (629) Gopati;[832] (630) Grama;[833] (631) Go-charmavasana;[834] (.) Hara;[835] (632) Hiranya-bahu;[836] (633) Guha-palapraveshinam;[837] (634) Pratishthayi;[838] (635) Maha-harsha;[839] (636) Jitakama;[840] (637) Jitendriya;[841] (638) Gandhara;[842] (639) Surala;[843] (640) Tapah-karma-rati;[844] (641) Dhanu;[845] (642) Maha-gita;[846] (643) Mahan-ritta;[847] (644) Apsara-gana-sevita;[848] (645) Maha-ketudhanu;[849] (646) Dhatunaika-sanu-chara;[850] (.) Achala;[851] (647) Avedaniya;[852] (648) Avesha;[853] (649) Sarva-gandha-sukhavaha;[854] (650) Torana;[855] (651) Astarana;[856] (.) Vayu;[857] (652) Paridhavati;[858] (653) Ekata;[859] (654) Samyoga;[860] (.) Vardhana;[861] (655) Vriddha;[862] (656) Maha-vriddha;[863] (657) Ganadhipa;[864] (.) Nitya;[865] (658) Atmasahaya;[866] (659) Devasura-pati;[867] (660) Pari;[868] (661) Yukta;[869] (662) Yukta-bahu;[870] (663) Dvivida;[871] (664) Suparvana;[872] (665) Ashada;[873] (666) Sushada;[874] (.) Dhruva;[875] (667) Harihana;[876] (.) Hara;[877] (668) Vapuravarta;[878] (669) Manebhya;[879] (670) Vasu-shreshtha;[880] (671) Maha-patha;[881] (672) Shirohari;[882] (673) Vimarsha;[883] (674) Sarvalakshanabhushita;[884] (675) Aksha;[885] (676) Ratha-yogi;[886] (677) Sarvayogi;[887] (678) Maha-bala;[888] (679) Samannaya;[889] (680) Asamannaya;[890] (681) Tirtha-deva;[891] (682) Maharatha;[892] (683) Nirjiva;[893] (684) Jivana;[894] (.) Mantra;[895] (685) Shubhaksha;[896] (686) Bahu-karkasha;[897] (687) Ratna-prabhuta;[898] (688) Raktanga;[899] (689) Maharnava-nipanvit;[900] (690) Mula;[901] (691) Vishala;[902] (692) Amrita; (693) Vyakta; (694) Avyakta; (695) Tapo-nidhi;[903] (696) Arohana;[904] (697) Niroha;[905] (698) Shailahari;[906] (.) Maha-tapa;[907] (699) Sena-kalpa;[908] (700) Maha- kalpa;[909] (701) Yugayuga-kara;[910] (.) Hari;[911] (702) Yuga-rupa;[912] (703) Maha-rupa;[913] (704) Pavana;[914] (705) Gahana;[915] (706) Naga;[916] (707) Nyaya-nirvapana;[917] (708) Pada;[918] (709) Pandita;[919] (710) Achalopama;[920] (711) Bahu-mala;[921] (712) Maha-mala;[922] (713) Sumala;[923] (714) Bahu-lochana;[924] (715) Vistara-lavana;[925] (716) Kupa;[926] (717) Kusuma;[927] (718) Safalodaya;[928] (719) Vrishabha;[929] (720) Vrishabhankanga;[930] (721) Mani-bilva;[931] (722) Jatadhara;[932] (723) Indu-visarga;[933] (724) Sumukha;[934] (725) Sura; (726) Sarvayudha;[935] (727) Saha;[936] (728) Nivedana;[937] (729) Sudha- jata;[938] (730) Sugandhara;[939] (731) Maha-dhanu;[940] (732) Gandhamali;[941] (733) Bhagavanutthana-sarva-karmanam;[942] (734) Manthana;[943] (735) Bahula;[944] (736) Bahu;[945] (737) Sakala;[946] (738) Sarva-lochana;[947] (739) Tarastali;[948] (740) Karastali;[949] (741) Urdhvasamhanana;[950] (742) Vaha;[951] (743) Chhatra;[952] (744) Suchattra;[953] (745) Vikhyata;[954] (746) Sarva-lokashraya;[955] (.) Mahat;[956] (.) Munda;[957] (.) Virupa;[958] (747) Vikrita;[959] (748) Dandi-munda;[960] (749) Vikurvana;[961] (750) Haryaksha;[962] (751) Kakubha;[963] (752) Vajri;[964] (753) Dipta-jihva;[965] (754) Sahasra-pat;[966] (755) Sahasra- murdha;[967] (756) Devendra;[968] (757) Sarva-deva-maya;[969] (758) Guru;[970] (759) Sahasra-bahu;[971] (.) Sarvanga;[972] (760) Sharanya;[973] (761) Sarva-loka-krit;[974] (.) Pavitra;[975] (762) Tri-madhurmantra;[976] (763) Kanishtha;[977] (764) Krishna-pingala;[978] (765) Brahma-dandavinirmita;[979] (.) Shataghni;[980] (766) Shata-pasha-dhrik;[981] (.) Padmagarbha;[982] (.) Maha-garbha;[983] (767) Jalodbhava;[984] (768) Gabhasti;[985] (769) Brahma-krit;[986] (770) Brahma; (771) Brahmavid;[987] (772) Brahmana-gati;[988] (773) Ananta-rupa;[989] (774) Naikatma;[990] (775) Tigma-teja;[991] (.) Svayambhu;[992] (776) Urdhvagatma;[993] (.) Pashupati;[994] (777) Vatamraha;[995] (778) Manojava;[996] (779) Chandani;[997] (780) Padmalagrya;[998] (781)

Surabhyuttarana;[999] (782) Nara; (783) Karnikaramahasragvi;[1000] (784) Nilamouli;[1001] (785) Pinaka-dhrik;[1002] (786) Uma-pati;[1003] (787) Uma-kanta;[1004] (788) Jahnavi-dhrik;[1005] (789) Uma-dhava;[1006] (.) Vara;[1007] (790) Varaha;[1008] (791) Varesha;[1009] (792) Su-mahasvana;[1010] (793) Maha-prasada;[1011] (794) Damana;[1012] (795) Shatruha;[1013] (796) Shvetapingala;[1014] (797) Pritatma;[1015] (798) Prayatatma;[1016] (799) Samyatatma;[1017] (800) Pradhana-dhrik;[1018] (801) Sarva-parshvasuta;[1019] (.) Tarkshya;[1020] (802) Dharma-sadharana;[1021] (.) Vara;[1022] (803) Characharatma;[1023] (804) Sukshmatma;[1024] (805) Suvrisha;[1025] (806) Go-vrisheshvara;[1026] (807) Sadhyarshi-vasuradityavivasvansavita-mrida;[1027] (808) Vyasa-sarvasya-samkshepa-vistara;[1028] (809) Paryaya;[1029] (810) Naya;[1030] (811) Ritu;[1031] (812) Samvatsara;[1032] (813)Masa;[1033] (814)Paksha;[1034] (815)Samkhya-samapana;[1035] (816) Kala; (817) Kashtha; (818) Lava; (819) Matra;[1036] (820) Muhurta; (821) Aha;[1037] (822) Kshapa;[1038] (823) Kshana; (824) Vishvakshetra;[1039] (825) Praja-bija;[1040] (826) Lingamadya;[1041] (.) Anindita;[1042] (827) Sadas;[1043] (.) Vyakta;[1044] (.) Avyakta;[1045] (828) Pita;[1046] (829) Mata;[1047] (830) Pitamaha;[1048] (831) Svarga-dvara;[1049] (832) Praja-dvara;[1050] (833) Moksha-dvara;[1051] (834) Trivishtapa;[1052] (835) Nirvana;[1053] (836) Hladana;[1054] (837) Brahma-loka;[1055] (838) Para-gati;[1056] (839) Devasura-vinirmata;[1057] (840) Devasuraparayana;[1058] (841) Devasura-guru-deva;[1059] (842) Devasuranamaskrita;[1060] (843) Devasura-mahamatra;[1061] (844) Devasuraganashraya;[1062] (845) Devasura-ganadhyaksha;[1063] (846) Devasuraganagrani;[1064] (847) Devatideva;[1065] (848) Devarshi-devasuravaraprada;[1066] (849) Devasureshvara;[1067] (.) Deva;[1068] (850) Devasura-maheshvara;[1069] (.) Sarva-deva-maya;[1070] (851) Achintya;[1071] (852) Devatatma;[1072] (853) Asambhava;[1073] (854) Udbhida;[1074] (855) Trivikrama;[1075] (856) Vaidya;[1076] (857) Viraja;[1077] (858) Virajombara;[1078] (859) Idya;[1079] (860) Hasti;[1080] (861)Sura-vyaghra;[1081] (862)Deva-simha;[1082] (863)Nararshabha;[1083] (864) Vibudhagra-vara;[1084] (865) Shreshtha;[1085] (866) Sarvadevottomottama;[1086] (867) Prayukta;[1087] (.) Shobhana;[1088] (868) Vajra; (.) Ishana;[1089] (.) Prabhu;[1090] (.) Avyaya;[1091] (.) Guru;[1092] (869) Kanta;[1093] (870) Nija;[1094] (871) Sarga;[1095] (.) Pavitra;[1096] (872) Sarvavahana;[1097] (873) Shringi;[1098] (874) Shringa-priya;[1099] (875) Babhru;[1100] (876) Rajaraja;[1101]

(877) Niramaya;[1102] (878) Abhirama;[1103] (879) Sura-gana;[1104] (880) Virama;[1105] (881) Sarva- sadhana;[1106] (882) Lalataksha;[1107] (883) Vishva-deha;[1108] (884) Harina;[1109] (885) Brahma-varchasa;[1110] (886) Sthavaranam-pati;[1111] (887) Niyamendriya-bardhana;[1112] (888) Siddhartha;[1113] (889) Sarvabhutartha;[1114] (.) Achintya;[1115] (890) Satya-vrata;[1116] (.) Shuchi;[1117] (891) Vratadhipa;[1118] (.) Parama;[1119] (.) Brahma;[1120] (892) Muktanam-parama-gati;[1121] (893) Vimukta;[1122] (894) Mukta-teja;[1123] (895) Shriman;[1124] (896) Shri-vardhana;[1125] and (897) Jagat.[1126]

'"'Since you are the foremost and illustrious one, I have praised you with devotion. Brahma and the other gods and learned maharshis praise, worship and honour you. Who can satisfy the lord of the universe? However, because of my devotion, I have placed that prosperous lord of sacrifices at the forefront. Having obtained his permission, I have praised that supreme among intelligent ones. These names of Shiva enhance prosperity. If one is always pure and uses these to praise the god, one obtains the atman inside one's own atman.[1127] Svayambhu himself chanted these as a means towards the supreme brahman. The rishis and the gods subsequently chanted these. When he is thus praised, Mahadeva is himself pleased. Compassionate towards his devotees, the illustrious one comforts them. The foremost among men are believers and faithful and praise him across several births. Whether they are asleep, awake or wandering along different paths, they praise the one who should be praised and are content and delighted. They do this in thousands of crores of births and in many wombs of the cycle of life. When all the sins have been cleansed in a creature, devotion towards Bhava is created. That devotion towards Bhava is also created by him and by no one else. He is the reason behind the emancipation of everyone. This god is extremely difficult to obtain. It is rare to find single-minded, unobstructed and unwavering devotion towards Rudra among men. It is only through his favours that men obtain such faith. When their consciousness is overcome by such sentiments, they advance towards the supreme end. When men are overcome by such supreme sentiments in every way, the god becomes gracious towards them and saves them from this cycle of life. I think that other gods, with the exception of Mahadeva, do not wish that men should use the strength of their austerities to be freed from the cycle of life.[1128]

‘“‘O Krishna![1129] Tandi was pure in his intelligence and was Indra’s equal. Thus did he praise the illustrious Krittivasa, the lord of officiating priests. Illustrious Brahma himself chanted this praise. Brahma recounted it to Shakra and Shakra recounted it to Mrityu. Mrityu recounted it to the Rudras and the Rudras presented it to Tandi. Through great austerities, Tandi obtained it in Brahma’s abode. Tandi recounted it to Shukra and Bhargava[1130] recounted it to Goutama. O Madhava! Goutama told Vaivasvata Manu about it. The intelligent Manu instructed Narayana and the Sadhyas. Achyuta Narayana and the illustrious Sadhyas told Yama about it. The illustrious Vaivasvata Yama told Nachiketa. O Varshneya! Nachiketa told Markandeya about it. O Janardana! Following the proper rituals, I obtained it from Markandeya. O slayer of enemies! I have now given this famous chant to you, and heaven, freedom from disease, a long life, riches and strength can be obtained through it. The danavas, yakshas, rakshasas, pishachas, yatudhanas, guhyakas and serpents cause no obstructions for such a person. If a person is pure, follows brahmacharya, is in control of his senses and reads this continuously for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice.’”’

Chapter 1699(18)

Vaishampayana said, ‘After this, the great yogi, the sage Krishna Dvaipayana, spoke. “O son![1131] Read this.[1132] May you be fortunate and let Maheshvara be pleased with you. O son! In ancient times, I tormented myself through supreme austerities on the slopes of Meru. O great king! That was for the sake of a son and I praised him through this chant. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! Thus did I obtain my desires. In that way, you will also obtain all your wishes from Sharva.” Then, Shakra’s beloved friend, Chatushirsha, also known as Alambayana,[1133] spoke, driven by a feeling of compassion. “I went to Gokarna and performed austerities for one hundred years, thus obtaining one hundred sons who were not born from any woman’s womb. They were self-restrained, learned about dharma and extremely radiant. Without facing old age and misery, they lived for one hundred thousand years. O son of King Pandu! In ancient times, I obtained them through Sharva.” Next, the illustrious Valmiki spoke to Yudhishthira. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Once, in the course of a dispute, sages who were learned in the Sama Veda accused me of having killed a brahmana.[1134] As soon as they said this, in an instant, that adharma overcame me. To cleanse myself, I sought to satisfy the unblemished Ishana. I was incapacitated. But that dispeller of grief freed me. The destroyer of Tripura told me that I would obtain great fame." O son! Jamadagni's son,[1135] supreme among the upholders of dharma, spoke to Kounteya. Stationed amidst the rishis, he was like the sun radiating heat. "O eldest among the Pandavas! I was afflicted because I had killed brahmanas who were like my father.[1136] O king! To purify myself, I sought Mahadeva's refuge. I chanted the god's names and praised him. Bhava was satisfied and gave me a battleaxe. The god also gave me divine weapons. He said, 'From now on, no sin will attach to you and you will be invincible. Death will have no power over you and you will be famous.' The illustrious Shikhandi, auspicious in form, spoke to me in this way and I obtained everything through the favours of that intelligent one." Next, Asita-Devala spoke to the king who was Pandu's son. "Earlier, because of Shakra's curse, all my dharma was destroyed. I obtained my dharma, great fame and a long life because of Bhava." There was a rishi named Gritsamada and he was Shakra's beloved friend. This illustrious one was like Brihaspati in his radiance. He told Ajamidha,[1137] "The illustrious Vasishtha was Chakshusha Manu's son. Shatakratu performed the inconceivable task of a sacrifice that lasted for one thousand years. While that was going on, I was given the task of reciting Sama hymns and he[1138] told me, 'O foremost among brahmanas! The rathantara is not being chanted properly. O supreme among brahmanas! Cast aside your delight and use your intelligence to consider what you are doing again. O extremely evilminded one! Why are you acting so that the sacrificial offerings will not be conveyed?' Having said this, he was overcome by great rage. Wrathfully, he again spoke these words. 'You will become a forest dweller. You will be miserable and bereft of wisdom. You will always be terrified and you will remain in that state for ten thousand, eight hundred and ten years. You will have neither food nor water and you will be abandoned by other animals.[1139] That spot will not have any trees that can be used for sacrifices and will be populated by ruru deer and lions. You will become a cruel animal and will face great hardships.' O Partha! Because of his words, when I died, I was born as an animal. I sought refuge with Maheshvara and the yogi told me, ‘You will be without old age. You will be immortal. You will be free from misery. Your friendship[1140] will be ensured and both your sacrifices will prosper.’ The illustrious lord exhibits his favours in this way. In matters of happiness and unhappiness, he is always superior to the creator and the ordainer. In deeds, thoughts and words, the illustrious one is incomprehensible. O son! I know of no warrior who is superior to him, nor anyone who is his equal in learning.”’

‘Jaigishavya added, “O Yudhishthira! In ancient times, in Varanasi, the illustrious and powerful one carefully protected me and gave me the eight kinds of powers.”[1141]

‘Gargya continued, “O Pandava! On the banks of the Sarasvati, I satisfied him through a mental sacrifice and he conferred on me the sixty-four different branches associated with the knowledge of time.[1142] He also gave me one thousand sons who were my equal in knowledge of the brahman. I and my sons obtained life-spans of one million years each.”

‘Parashara said, “O king! In earlier times, I thought of Sharva in my mind and gratified him. I desired a son from Maheshvara, one who would be great in asceticism, great in energy, immensely famous and a great yogi. He should be one who would classify the Vedas, be the abode of prosperity and be driven by compassion towards the brahmanas. Knowing that this was the desire in my heart, the supreme among gods spoke to me. ‘The fruit that you desire from me will be obtained and you will have a son named Krishna.[1143] This will happen in the creation associated with Savarni Manu[1144] and he will be one of the saptarshis. He will classify the Vedas and extend the Kuru lineage. That son will compose itihasa[1145] and be engaged in the welfare of the universe. That great sage will be loved by the great Indra. O Parashara! Your son will be without old age and will be immortal.’ Having said this, the illustrious one vanished from the spot. O Yudhishthira! The great yogi is full of energy. He is without decay and without transformation.

‘“Mandavya added, ‘I was no thief. But suspected of being one, I was impaled on a stake.[1146] While I was in that state, I praised the god. Maheshvara told me, “You will be freed from the stake and will live for one billion years. O brahmana! But you will not suffer any pain from being impaled on the stake.

You will be free from all kinds of affliction and disease. O sage! Your atman has been generated from the fourth foot.[1147] Your birth is unrivalled. Make it successful. Without any obstructions, you will be able to bathe in all the tirthas. O brahmana! When you die, I ordain that you will obtain eternal heaven.” The illustrious one, with the bull as his mount, spoke in this way. O great king! Maheshvara deserves worship. The immensely radiant one is clad in hides. With his companions, the best among gods then disappeared.’

‘“Galava continued, ‘Having obtained Vishvamitra’s permission, I went to my father.[1148] My mother was miserable and wept piteously. She said, “O son! Through Koushika’s[1149] favours, you have been adorned with knowledge of the Vedas. O unblemished one! O son! You are young and self-controlled. But your father is unable to see you.” On hearing my mother’s words, I despaired, because I wouldn’t be able to see my senior. I controlled my atman and devoted myself to Mahadeva. He showed himself and spoke to me. “O son! Your father and mother will not suffer from death. Swiftly enter your house and you will be able to see your father there.” O Yudhishthira! Having obtained the illustrious one’s permission, I went home. O son! I saw my father there, emerging after having completed a sacrifice. He held some offerings, kusha and other grass. With tears in his eyes, my father flung these away. O Pandava! I had bowed down before him. He raised me, embraced me and inhaled the fragrance of my head. He said, “I have seen you through good fortune. O son! You have returned after completing your learning.”’”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The sages spoke about these and other extraordinary deeds of the great-souled one. On hearing this, Pandava was astounded. Then Krishna,[1150] supreme among extremely intelligent ones, again spoke to Yudhishthira, who was always devoted to dharma, like Ishvara speaking to Puruhuta.[1151] “O Ajamidha! Aditya, Chandra, wind, fire, heaven, the earth, the water, the Vasus, the Vishvadevas, Dhatri, Aryama, Shukra, Brihaspati, the Rudras, the Sadhyas, Varuna, the protector of riches,[1152] Brahma, Shakra, the Maruts, the truth about the brahman, the Vedas, sacrifices, dakshina, those who chant the Vedas, soma, the one who sacrifices, all the offerings and oblations, protection, consecration, rituals, svaha, vashatkara, the brahmanas, the descendants of Surabhi, the wheel of dharma, the wheel of time, movement, fame, self-control, the steadfastness of intelligent and wise people, good and bad, the seven sages, the best of intelligence, thoughts, sight and touch, success in deeds, success itself, the large number of gods who drink heat and soma, the horizon, *suyama*s,[1153] *tushita*s,[1154] everything with a form of the brahman, the shining bodies, those who survive on scent, those who survive on sight, those who restrain their speech, those who restrain their thoughts, the pure, those who are devoted to emancipation, the gods who survive on touch, the gods who survive on sight, the gods who survive on clarified butter, the foremost among gods that one can think of, all the other gods, birds, gandharvas, pishachas, danavas, yakshas, serpents, charanas, the subtle, the gross, the mild, the extremely subtle, happiness, unhappiness, all that is intermediate between joy and misery, sankhya, yoga, everything that is superior to the most supreme and everything that I have recounted—know that all these originate with Sharva. All creatures have originated from him. He is the one who deserves to be revered. In ancient times, all the gods who are the protectors of the universe and all the rakshasas who have penetrated into the earth were created by him. I think of him in my mind and please him. He is the reason behind this breath of life and I bow down before him. When he is praised and pleased, that god, the lord without decay, grants boons. If a man purifies himself and reads this praise after having controlled his senses, restrained and not deviating from yoga for one year, then he obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. A brahmana obtains all the Vedas, a king conquers the entire earth, a vaishya obtains gains and dexterity and a shudra obtains a good destination and happiness after death. This is the king of chants. If one fixes one's mind on Rudra and chants it, one is freed from all sins and becomes pure, sacred and famous. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Such a man dwells in heaven for thousands of years, for as many years as there are hairs on his body."'

Chapter 1700(19)

'Yudhishthira said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Why is it that at the time of accepting a woman's hand in marriage, it is stated in the learned texts that one must follow dharma together? This *sahadharma*[1155] has been spoken about by the great rishis earlier. Does this dharma result from *arsha*, *prajapatya* or asura?[1156] I have a grave doubt on this account and my mind refuses to accept this. Why has sahadharma been recommended, if there is death? O grandfather! When one dies, one goes to heaven. What does sahadharma mean then? If one of the couple dies first, what happens to the other one then? Tell me this. There are diverse fruits that result from deeds. There are diverse means of subsistence. Depending on what they do, there are diverse and many kinds of hells that men go to. Those who have laid down the sutras have said that women are false in their behaviour. O father![1157] If women are prone to falsehood, why have the sacred texts spoken about sahadharma? Even in the Vedas, one can read that women are prone to falsehood. The signs of dharma are said to be the observance of rituals and rites on auspicious occasions. I have thought about this incessantly, but it seems to be a great mystery to me.[1158] O grandfather! As has been instructed in the sacred texts, as it is practised and as it has come down, dispel all my doubts about this. O immensely wise one? You should explain this to me in its entirety."

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Ashtavakra and Disha. In ancient times, the great ascetic, Ashtavakra, desired the daughter of the great-souled rishi Vadanya, and asked for her. The lady was known by the name of Suprabha and her beauty was unmatched on earth. She was supremely worthy in her qualities, conduct, virtue, character and beauty. A glance of that beautiful-eyed one had robbed him of his heart, just like a beautiful grove adorned with blossoming flowers does so in the spring. The rishi said, 'I will give you my daughter. But listen to me. First, go to the auspicious northern directions, to see what you might find there.'

'"Ashtavakra answered, 'You should tell me what I will see there. I will undertake whatever task you ask me to.'

'"Vadanya said, 'When you pass beyond the dominion of the lord of riches, you will approach the Himalayas and see Rudra's plains, frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. A large number of his cheerful companions will be there. They will possess many kinds of faces and will be engaged in dancing. Their limbs will be smeared with divine paste. There will also be many kinds of pishachas. They will clap their hands and sound musical instruments. The rhythms of their cheerful dancing will be both uneven and smooth. They serve Sharva there. We have heard it said that in that celestial region in the mountains, the god is always present, with his auspicious companions. To obtain Shankara, it was there that the goddess[1159] tormented herself with extremely difficult austerities. It has therefore been said, that region is desired by the god and Uma. There is a cave that is on the great slopes that are to the north of where the god resides. The seasons, the night of destruction[1160] and celestial humans, all assume their own forms to worship the god there. You should cross that region and proceed further. You will see a blue forest that has the complexion of the clouds. You will see a beautiful lady there, charming to the mind. The immensely fortunate one is aged and has consecrated herself to asceticism. When you see her there, worship her carefully. When you return after having seen her, you can accept the hand.[1161] If you want to make a true pledge, then undertake a successful journey there.'"'

Chapter 1701(20)

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'There is no doubt that I will undertake a successful journey there, just as you have said. O virtuous one! May you also be truthful in your words.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The illustrious one headed further and further towards the north, to the slopes of the Himalaya mountains, populated by the siddhas and the charanas. The tiger among brahmanas reached the great mountains, the Himalayas. He went to the sacred river of Bahuda, the granter of dharma. He bathed in the clear waters of the tirthas and rendered offerings to the gods. He then spread out a bed of kusha grass and lay down happily. Having spent the night in this way, the brahmana arose in the morning. Having bathed, he followed the rites, kindling a sacrificial fire and offering oblations. He reached the cave known as Rudrani and rested near the lake there. After resting, he awoke and headed towards Kailasa. He saw a golden gate that blazed in its beauty. He saw Mandakini and Nalini, both belonging to the great-souled lord of riches.[1162] There were rakshasas entrusted with the task of protecting that lake full of lotuses and they were led by Manibhadra. On seeing the illustrious one, all of them arose and greeted him. He also honoured those rakshasas, who were terrible in their valour, and told them to quickly inform the lord of riches that he had arrived. O king! At this, the rakshasas told the illustrious one, 'King Vaishravana is himself approaching you. The illustrious one knows the reason for your coming here. Behold. The immensely fortunate one has arrived, blazing in his energy.' Vaishravana approached the unblemished Ashtavakra. He duly asked him about his welfare and told the brahmana rishi, 'May you obtain happiness here. Tell me what you desire from me. O brahmana! Tell me everything. I will do whatever you ask me to. O supreme among brahmanas! If it pleases you, do enter my residence. I will honour you properly. When your task has been accomplished, depart without any obstructions.' Having said this, he took that supreme among brahmanas and led him into his residence. He gave him his own seat, water to wash his feet and a gift.

'"When both of them were seated, Kubera's companions, the yakshas, gandharvas and rakshasas, with Manibhadra leading them, also sat down. When they were seated, the lord of riches spoke these words. 'If they have your permission, the large numbers of apsaras will commence dancing. It is my supreme duty to serve a guest like you.' In a sweet voice, the sage replied that it could commence. Urvara, Mishrakeshi, Rambha, Urvashi, Alambusa, Ghritachi, Chitra, Chitrangada, Ruchi, Manohara, Sukeshi, Sumukhi, Hasini, Prabha, Vidyuta, Prashama, Danta, Vidyota, Rati—these and many other beautiful apsaras started to dance. The gandharvas played on many kinds of musical instruments. The celestial music and dancing started. Without realizing it, the rishi, the extremely great ascetic, found pleasure and spent an entire divine year there. King Vaishravana spoke to the illustrious one. 'O brahmana! Behold. Since you arrived here, more than a year has elapsed. O brahmana! O noble one! This kind of performance is known by the name of gandharva. O brahmana! It shall be as you wish. Shall it continue? You are a guest in my household and a guest must be honoured. All of us will quickly follow your commands. We are supremely devoted to you.' Pleased with Vaishravana, the illustrious one replied, 'O lord of riches! You have honoured me, as is proper. I shall now depart. O lord of riches! I am pleased with you. Everything that you possess is exactly like you. O illustrious one! Through your favours, I must now undertake the task the great-souled rishi[1163] has entrusted me with. May your prosperity become even more prosperous.’ The illustrious one emerged and headed in a northward direction. He passed Kailasa, Mandara and all the golden mountains.

‘“Beyond this, there is the supreme region, the great mountain known as Kairata. He controlled himself, bowed his head down and circumambulated it. Having descended again on the ground, he thought that he had been purified. Circumambulating the mountain thrice, he proceeded northwards. With joy in his heart, he advanced along the plain ground that extended in front of him. He then saw another beautiful forest. There were roots and fruits that grew in every season and it was full of birds. It was as if the beautiful forest was, here and there, adorned with them. The illustrious one saw a divine hermitage there. There were hills with many kinds of forms, decorated with gold and jewels. Gems were stuck to the ground and there were lakes. He saw many other extremely beautiful things. At this, the maharshi with the cleansed soul was delighted in his mind. There, he saw a celestial and golden house, covered everywhere with jewels. It was extraordinary in form and was superior to the residence of the lord of riches. There were many giant palaces that were like mountains. There were beautiful vimanas and many kinds of gems. The river Mandakini flowed there, covered with *mandara* flowers. There were gems that blazed with their own radiance and the ground was strewn with diamonds. There were many kinds of houses, with colourful jewels on their gates. Nets of pearls were flung around and there were decorations of gems and jewels. It was beautiful everywhere, captivating the mind and the eye, and everything was auspicious. In every direction in that beautiful place, he saw rishis. He began to think about where he might be able to find a residence. He advanced towards a gate. Stationing himself there, he said, ‘Let those who dwell here know me to be a guest who has arrived.’ At this, several maidens emerged from that house. They had many different forms and all of them were beautiful. O lord! Actually, there were seven maidens. They were so beautiful that, whichever one he looked at, happened to steal his mind. Despite making the best of efforts, he could not control his mind. Finally, the intelligent brahmana resorted to his fortitude and controlled himself. The women said, ‘O illustrious one! Enter.’ The brahmana was filled with curiosity about the extremely beautiful women in that house and entered the house. There, he saw an aged lady. She was overcome with old age and was dressed in a white garment. Though she was lying down on a bed, she was adorned with every kind of ornament. He spoke words of greeting and the lady reciprocated. She arose and asked the brahmana to be seated.

'"Ashtavakra said, 'Let all these women go to their houses and let only a single one remain. Let the one who remains be extremely wise and extremely tranquil. As they wish, let the others depart.'

'"Thus addressed, the maidens circumambulated the rishi and left the house. The aged lady was the only one who remained. She lay down on a radiant bed and he told her, 'O fortunate one! You should go to sleep. Night is passing.' They were engaged in conversation, but the brahmana put an end to it, himself lying down on a second, extremely radiant bed. After some time, she pretended that her limbs were trembling with the cold and she climbed onto the maharshi's bed. The illustrious one respectfully welcomed her. O bull among men! She was delighted. Stretching out her arms, she embraced the rishi. The rishi was indifferent and was as rigid as a piece of wood. On seeing this, she was miserable and began to converse with the rishi again. 'O brahmana! A man may possess patience, but women are overcome by desire. I am overcome by kama and desire you. You should desire me. O brahmana rishi! Be happy and have intercourse with me. O brahmana! Embrace me. I am severely afflicted with desire for you. This is the revered fruit obtained by your following dharma and observing austerities. As soon as I saw you, I began to desire you. Desire me. All the riches that you see here, all the forests and everything else that you see, are mine. There is no doubt that you will become their lord and also of me. If you find pleasure with me, I will give you every object that you desire. O brahmana! Sport with me in these forests, which grant every fruit that one desires. If you sport with me, I will become obedient to you. We will enjoy all the objects of desire, divine and human. For a woman, there is no task that is superior to that of having intercourse with a man. For us women, that is the supreme fruit. When they are goaded by the god of love, women do whatever they wish. Even if they have to walk over sand that is extremely hot, they do not get burnt.'

'"Ashtavakra replied, 'O fortunate one! I never have intercourse with another man's wife. The sacred texts of dharma have decreed that intercourse with another person's wife is a sin. O fortunate one! I tell you truthfully that I am indeed interested in kama. However, know that I am inexperienced in material objects and am only interested in offspring for the sake of pursuing dharma and artha. There is no doubt that after having obtained a son, I will proceed to those worlds. O fortunate one! Know that this is dharma and that there is nothing superior to this.'

'"The woman said, 'O brahmana! Anila, Agni, Varuna and the other residents of heaven are not loved by women as much as Kama.[1164] Women are addicted to sexual desire. Among thousands of women, even among hundreds of thousands, there will perhaps be only one who is devoted to her husband. They do not care for the father, the lineage, the mother, the brother, the husband, the son or the husband's younger brother.[1165] In the pursuit of pleasure, they destroy the family, just as a great river destroys its banks.[1166] Prajapati himself has spoken about the wicked vices of those evil ones.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The rishi was single-minded and replied to the woman, 'I find no pleasure or desire in you. Tell me what I should do.' The woman said, 'O illustrious one! O immensely wise one! One sees according to the time and the place.[1167] Dwell here and my task will have been accomplished. After that, depart.' O Yudhishthira! The brahmana rishi agreed to this and remained there. He said, 'As long as I am interested in doing so, there is no doubt that I will reside with you.' The rishi glanced at the woman and saw that she was overcome with old age. He thought a lot about this and was tormented. Whenever the brahmana rishi looked at her limbs, he derived no pleasure, because her beauty had been destroyed. 'She is the owner of this house. There is no doubt that her beauty has been destroyed through some curse. I must deduce the reason and not arrive at any hasty conclusion.' He was occupied with these thoughts and desired to know the reason. His mind was anxious and he thought about this, until the day was over. After this, the woman spoke to him. 'O illustrious one! Look at the sun. Its form is now tinged by the evening clouds. What can I possibly do for you?' He told the woman, 'Bring me water for my bath. I will restrain my speech and my senses. Having bathed, I will perform the evening rites.'"'

Chapter 1702(21)

‘Bhishma said, “Having been thus addressed, the woman agreed to what the brahmana had said. She brought some divine oil and a garment he would wear during his bath. Having obtained the sage’s permission, the woman rubbed the great-souled one’s limbs, everywhere, with the oil. She rubbed him gently and then took him to the bathroom. The rishi was made to sit on a colourful, new and excellent seat. When he was seated on that excellent seat, she used her hands to pleasurably and gently wash the rishi all over. She tended to the sage in many divine ways. Because of the pleasure associated with the warm water and because of the pleasure associated with the touch of the hands, the one who was great in his vows did not realize that the entire night had passed in this way. When he arose, the sage was extremely surprised. He saw that in the eastern direction, the sun was rising in the sky. He thought that his intelligence had been confounded. Having worshipped the one with the thousand rays, he asked her what he should do next. She gave the rishi some food that tasted like amrita. Because the food was so delicious, he couldn’t eat much. In the course of this, the day passed and it again became evening. The woman requested the illustrious one to go to sleep. Excellent beds were prepared for him and for her.

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘O fortunate one! My mind is not interested in intercourse with another person’s wife.[1168] O fortunate one! Arise. It is better that you should desist. Go and sleep.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “She was thus rebuffed by the brahmana’s fortitude. She replied, ‘I am independent and you will not commit any deviation from dharma.’[1169]

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘There is no independence for women. Women are dependent. It is Prajapati’s view that women do not deserve to be independent.’

‘“The woman replied, ‘O brahmana! I am constrained by the need for intercourse. Behold my devotion to you. O brahmana! You will suffer from adharma if you do not give me delight.’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘If a man is wilful, there are many kinds of sins that lead him astray. O fortunate one! I possess the strength of my fortitude. Go to your own bed.’

‘“The woman replied, ‘O brahmana! I am bowing down my head before you and you should show me your favours. O unblemished one! I am lying down on the ground before you and have sought refuge with you. O brahmana! I am giving myself to you. If you perceive a sin from congress with another person’s wife, then touch me and accept my hand now. There will be no sin associated with this. I am telling you truthfully. Know that I am independent. If there is any adharma, it will vest with me.’[1170]

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘O fortunate one! How can you be independent? Tell me the reason. There is no woman in this world who should be regarded as independent. The father protects her when she is a maiden, the husband protects her when she is young and the son protects her when she is aged. There is no woman who deserves to be independent.’

‘“The woman replied, ‘Since I have been young, I have followed the vow of brahmacharya. There is no doubt that I am a virgin. O brahmana! Do not have a doubt about me. Do not destroy my devotion towards you.’

‘“Ashtavakra said, ‘Just as you are attracted towards me, I am also attracted towards you.[1171] However, there still remains a doubt. Will the pledge I made to the rishi[1172] not be violated? This is a great wonder. What will bring greater benefit? This maiden has presented herself before me and she was adorned in divine garments and ornaments. How does she possess this supreme beauty and why was she enveloped in that aged appearance earlier? She has assumed the form of a maiden now. Who knows what form she will assume later? However, I should resort to the great strength of my fortitude and never deviate. Deviations do not appeal to me. I will obtain success by resorting to my fortitude.’”’

Chapter 1703(22)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Why was that woman not scared of being cursed by that extremely radiant one? How did the illustrious one return? You should tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Ashtavakra asked her, ‘How could you change your form? Tell me. You should not wish to utter a falsehood before a brahmana.’

‘“The woman said, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! O one with truth as his valour! Listen to everything attentively. Whether one is in heaven or on earth, there is desire everywhere. You have witnessed the fickleness of a woman. But know me to be the northern direction. O one with truth as his valour! You have conquered the worlds through your composure. O unblemished one! I was employed to test you. Even when women are aged, they suffer from the fever of sexual desire. Now, the grandfather and the gods, together with Vasava, are satisfied with you. O illustrious one! That is the reason why you were sent here. O bull among brahmanas! You were sent here by the brahmana who was the father of the maiden. I have done everything so that you might be instructed. Go in peace and you will not suffer from any exhaustion when you head home. O brahmana! You will obtain the maiden and she will bear a son. I tested you through my desire, but you rebuffed me through an appropriate reply. In all the three worlds, this is something that is impossible to overcome. Having accomplished a good deed, depart. What else do you desire to hear? O brahmana rishi! O Ashtavakra! I have told you exactly what occurred. O bull among brahmanas! It was for your sake that I pleased that rishi.[1173] It is to show him honour that I spoke those words to you.’”

‘Bhishma said, “On hearing her words, the brahmana stood there, his hands joined in salutation. Having obtained her permission, he returned to his own house again. On reaching his house, he rested and honoured his relatives. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Following what was proper, he then went to that brahmana. He was asked by that brahmana about the signs that he had seen. With great delight in his heart, the brahmana told the brahmana, ‘Having taken your permission, I proceeded towards Gandhamadana. I encountered a great divinity towards the north of that region. It is with her permission that I am recounting this to you. O lord! I have returned home after hearing her words.’ The brahmana told him, ‘Accept my daughter. Let us follow the conjunction of the nakshatras and the tithis.[1174] You are the best groom possible.’ O lord! Thus instructed, Ashtavakra agreed and accepted her. The one who was supremely devoted to dharma was delighted with the maiden. He accepted the extremely beautiful maiden as his wife. He was free from all anxiety and dwelt happily in his hermitage.”’

Chapter 1704(23)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O best among the Bharata lineage! Who have the brahmanas always described as the best recipient of a gift? Is it a brahmana with the signs or is it a brahmana without the signs?”[1175]

‘Bhishma replied, “O great king! It has been said that one must give to a person who follows his own prescribed conduct, regardless of whether he bears the signs or not, because both are ascetics.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! A person may be unclean. Nevertheless, with supreme devotion, he gives to brahmanas. What are the taints associated with such havya, kavya and gifts?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son![1176] There is no doubt that even if a man is impossible to restrain, he is cleansed through devotion. O lord of the earth! He is cleansed in every way. What else is there to say?”

‘Yudhishthira said, “A man must not examine a brahmana who is engaged in the tasks of the gods. However, the learned have also said that when it comes to offering kavya, the learning of the brahmana must be tested.”[1177]

‘Bhishma replied, “Brahmanas do not ensure the success of havya. It is the gods who ensure success. There is no doubt that a person who undertakes a sacrifice is successful in that sacrifice because of the favours of the gods. O best among the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas always speak about the brahman. In ancient times, Markandeya, the most intelligent person in the worlds, said this.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “A person whom one has not met before, a learned person, a person who is related through marriage, an ascetic and a person who is devoted to sacrifices—why are these regarded as worthy recipients of a gift?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Noble lineage, devotion to tasks, learning, non-violence, modesty, uprightness and truthfulness—the foremost recipients possess at least three of these attributes.[1178] O Partha! Listen to the views of four energetic ones—the earth, Kashyapa, Agni and Markandeya.

'"The earth said, 'When a stone is flung into the great ocean, it is destroyed because of that act of flinging. In that way, all evil conduct is destroyed in three kinds of conduct.'[1179]

'"Kashyapa said, 'O king! All the Vedas and the six Vedangas, sankhya, the Puranas and noble birth—if a man deviates from good conduct, none of these can save him from destruction.'

'"Agni said, 'There may be a person who studies and thinks himself to be learned. He may use his learning to destroy the fame of others. Such a brahmana acts as if he has killed a brahmana. All the worlds are destroyed for him.'

'"Markandeya said, 'If one thousand horse sacrifices and truth are weighed on a pair of scales, I do not know whether truth will weigh one and a half times the other.'"

'Bhishma said, "Having said this, those four infinitely energetic ones, the earth, Kashyapa, Agni and Bhargava, with his excellent weapons, quickly went away."[1180]

'Yudhishthira asked, "In this world, there may be a brahmana who follows vows. In order to please brahmanas, if offerings meant for gods are eaten by such a brahmana, is that regarded as good conduct?"[1181]

'Bhishma replied, "O Indra among kings! A brahmana may have been instructed and may have become accomplished in the Vedas. However, if he devours what is meant for the brahman, he has deviated from his vows."

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! Learned ones have said that dharma has many end objectives and many doors. Please tell me what has certainly been determined."

'Bhishma replied, "O Indra among kings! Non-violence, truth, lack of anger, lack of injury, self-control and uprightness—these are said to be the certain signs of dharma. There are those who praise dharma and roam around the earth. O lord! However, they may be engaged in wicked conduct, amounting to a confusion of dharma. If a person gives gems, gold, cattle or horses to such a person, then the giver remains in hell for ten years, surviving on excrement. This is also the case if one gives to those who eat human fat and flesh, those who live as outcasts outside habitations and those who are confused by anger and confusion and talk about the undesirable acts that others have performed. O Indra among kings! There may be a brahmana who follows brahmacharya. If a person stupidly gives something meant for the Vishvadevas to such a brahmana, he is made to enjoy inauspicious worlds.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What is superior to brahmacharya? What are the best signs of dharma? What is the best kind of purification? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! The avoidance of liquor and flesh is superior to brahmacharya. The signs of dharma are adherence to strictures, tranquility and purity.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “When is the time for pursuing dharma? When is the time for pursuing artha? When is the time for being happy? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There is a time for pursuing artha and that for pursuing dharma comes after that. It is after this that one should pursue kama. But one must not get attached. One must honour brahmanas and worship seniors. One must treat all creatures in a proper way. One must be mild in conduct and pleasant in speech. In a judicial dispute, one must not utter a lie. When one is brought before a king, one must not be deceitful. One must not behave falsely towards a senior. All these are equal to the sin of killing a brahmana. One should not strike a king, nor should one kill a cow. Anyone who does either commits a sin that is equal to that of killing a foetus. One must not abandon the sacrificial fire. One must not abandon the Vedas. Nor should one attack a brahmana. These sins are equal to the sin of killing a brahmana.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What kind of brahmanas are good? Who are the ones to whom one should donate, so as to obtain great fruits? Who are the ones who should be fed? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Those who are without anger, those who are devoted to dharma, those who are truthful and those who are always self-restrained—these brahmanas are regarded as virtuous. Great fruits are obtained from donating to them. There are those who aren’t insolent, withstand everything, are cheerful in pursuing their objectives, have conquered their senses, are engaged in the welfare of all beings and are friendly. Great fruits are obtained from donating to them. There are those who are without avarice, pure, learned, modest, truthful in speech and engaged in their own tasks. Great fruits are obtained from donating to them. There are bulls among brahmanas who have studied the four Vedas and the six Vedangas and have withdrawn from action. The learned have said that they are the best recipients of gifts. Great fruits are obtained from donating to those who have these kinds of qualities. If one gives to a person with these qualities, the giver's own qualities are multiplied one thousand times. Even if there is only one single bull among brahmanas who possesses wisdom and learning and good conduct, he is alone capable of saving an entire lineage.[1182] One should give cattle, horses, riches, food and other objects to such a person. In that event, one won't have to grieve after death. Even one brahmana who is excellent is capable of saving an entire lineage. That is the reason one must be selective about choosing the recipient. If one hears that a brahmana who possesses the qualities and is revered by the virtuous lives some distance away, even then, one must honour him and worship him in every possible way."'

Chapter 1705(24)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! I desire that you should tell me about the time of a funeral ceremony. What have the gods and the rishis ordained about the gods and about dharma?"

'Bhishma replied, "One must perform rites for the gods in the forenoon and those for the ancestors in the afternoon. This must be done after one has made efforts to purify oneself and has completed the recommended auspicious rites. At an appropriate time towards midday, gifts can be made to men. The learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share of anything that is given at the wrong time. Anything left over, anything licked or touched, anything performed that has been preceded by a discord and anything that has been seen by a woman who is in her season—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share of these. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If there has been public proclamation of a gift, if it has been eaten by someone who doesn't follow vows and if it has been seen or licked by a dog—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share of these. If hair or worms are found in food, if someone has sneezed into it, if a dog has looked at it, if drops of tears have fallen into it, or if it is unclean—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share in it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If food has been tasted by an unworthy person[1183] or by someone who is armed and if food has been tasted by an evil-souled person—the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share in it. If food has been tasted by someone else, or if it has been eaten without offerings first being made to the gods and the ancestors—the learned say that the rakshasas always obtain a share in it. If reprehensible or censured food is offered to the gods and the ancestors, or if it is served with anger—the learned say that they don't accept it and that the rakshasas obtain a share. O foremost among men! At funeral ceremonies, if the three varnas serve food without mantras and without rites, the learned say that rakshasas obtain a share in it. If food is served without offerings of clarified butter being made first, or if it has been tasted by wicked people earlier, the learned say that the rakshasas obtain a share in it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I have spoken to you about the shares that have been stated to be for the rakshasas.

'"I will now tell you how one should determine higher classes of brahmanas. Listen. O king! In rites performed for gods and ancestors, brahmanas who have become outcasts and those who are stupid and mad should never be invited. O king! Nor should one invite and honour one who suffers from white leprosy or leprosy, one who is impotent, one who has been afflicted by tuberculosis, one who suffers from epilepsy or one who is blind. One who is a physician, one who is in a temple, one who practises futile rituals and one who sells soma should never be invited to a funeral ceremony.[1184] A king must never invite those who are singers, dancers, acrobats, players of musical instruments, raconteurs and warriors. A king must never invite those who officiate at the sacrifices of vrishalas,[1185] teaches vrishalas or become the disciples of vrishalas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who becomes a teacher or a student because of payment should never be invited to a funeral ceremony. They are sellers of the brahman. Even if a brahmana is foremost and is learned in every possible way, if he marries into an inferior varna, a king should never invite him. A brahmana without a sacrificial fire, one who tends to dead bodies, one who is a thief and one who is an outcaste—a king should never invite such a person. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One whose earlier antecedents are unknown, one whose tribe is unknown and one who is a *putrika-putra* should never be invited to a funeral ceremony.[1186] A king must never invite a brahmana who earns a living off the interest on loans given to kings, or one who makes a living by selling animals. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A brahmana who was a woman in a former life, one who is the husband of a courtesan, or one who does not perform his meditations, should never be invited to a funeral ceremony. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There are brahmanas who have been recommended for funeral ceremonies and for rites to the gods. They can affectionately give and receive.[1187] Listen. O king! If they observe vows, possess qualities, know about the *savitri* mantra and perform rites, they are capable of being invited, even if they happen to be agriculturists. O son! If a brahmana has been born in a noble lineage, even if he resorts to the dharma of kshatriyas or is a trader, he can be invited to a funeral ceremony. O king! A brahmana who observes the agnihotra sacrifice, resides in a village, is not a thief and tends to guests, can be invited. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! One who chants the savitri mantra three times a day, survives by begging for alms and performs the rites can be invited. O king! If a person is rich in the morning and poor in the evening,[1188] if he is non-violent and only has minor faults, he can be invited. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! If a brahmana is not mean and is not prone to arguing, if he consciously resorts to begging for alms, he can be invited. There may be one who is devoid of vows, deceitful, a thief, a merchant, or a person who earns a living by selling living beings. O king! If he subsequently drinks soma, he can be invited. A person may have earlier earned riches through terrible deeds, or through agriculture. O king! If he subsequently serves the guests, he can be invited. Wealth obtained by selling knowledge, that earned by living off a woman and that earned by living off a eunuch must never be given to the gods and the ancestors. O bull among the Bharata lineage! After a brahmana has officiated at a rite, if he does not speak the words which should be uttered, he commits adharma that is equal to *gavanrita*.[1189] O Yudhishthira! On the day of the new moon, when one has obtained a brahmana, curds, clarified butter and the flesh of wild animals, that is the time for performing a funeral ceremony. When a brahmana’s funeral ceremony has been completed, one must say ‘svadha’. For a kshatriya, one must say, ‘May your ancestors be pleased.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For a vaishya, one must say, ‘May everything be inexhaustible.’ For a shudra, one must say, ‘*svasti*’. For a brahmana, it is recommended that the sacred word must be pronounced for the gods.[1190] In this way, for a kshatriya, words pronounced for the gods must not have the word ‘Om’. For a vaishya, one should say, ‘May the gods be pleased.’

‘“Listen to what has been decreed about the rites that must be performed, one after the other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those associated with jatakarma[1191] must be performed for all the three varnas. O Yudhishthira! For brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas, these must be performed with the aid of mantras. A brahmana’s girdle must be made out munja grass. For someone belonging to the royal family, it will be made out of hemp.[1192] O Yudhishthira! It is dharma that for a vaishya it should be made out of *balbajika*.[1193] O lord! Listen to what is dharma and adharma for the giver and the receiver. If a brahmana utters a lie, that is an act of adharma and he commits a sin. It is said that for a kshatriya, this becomes four times and for a vaishya, it becomes eight times.[1194] If a brahmana has earlier been invited by another brahmana, he should not eat anywhere else. If he does so, he becomes inferior and commits adharma that is equal to causing injury to animals.[1195] If he eats elsewhere after having first been invited by a king or a vaishya, he becomes inferior and commits a sin that is half of what is committed by causing injury to animals. O king! When a sacrifice is performed for the gods, the ancestors, or brahmanas and the other varnas, if a brahmana eats without having bathed first, he commits the adharma of gavanrita. When a sacrifice is performed for kings, brahmanas and the other varnas, and a brahmana eats there out of greed, knowing himself to be impure,[1196] he commits the adharma of gavanrita. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among kings! If a person invites someone else to perform a task, because of greed for food or anything else, he is said to commit adharma that is equal to uttering a falsehood. O Yudhishthira! In the three varnas, there may be people who do not observe the vows of the Vedas, are devoid of character and serve without the necessary mantras. They commit adharma that is equal to gavanrita.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! There may be things intended for the ancestors and the gods. To obtain great fruits, whom should one give these to? I wish to hear about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! Just as farmers wait for excellent rains, there are wives who wait for the leftovers, after their husbands have eaten. Feed them.[1197] There are kings who possess good character. They are emaciated because their subsistence has suffered. Their wealth has disappeared. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. O king! There are those who are without food, without homes, without riches and without shelter. When they seek riches, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. O Yudhishthira! There are those who have suffered at the hands of thieves and others and are oppressed by fear. They seek riches so that can obtain food. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are guiltless brahmanas who have made up their minds to beg. When such brahmanas beg, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are brahmanas who have lost their possessions and their wives when the country has been flooded. When they desire riches, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are learned brahmanas who are mendicants. They resort to rituals and desire riches so that these can be completed. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There may be those whose dharma has suffered because of rules enforced by the wicked. Their lives and riches are afflicted. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There are innocent people who have been robbed of everything by those who are stronger. They desire some food. Great fruits are obtained by giving to them. There may be ascetics who are devoted to austerities and have resorted to begging for sustenance. When they desire some riches, great fruits are obtained by giving to them. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have heard about what has been decreed concerning the great fruits from giving.

‘“Now hear about what makes one go to hell and what makes one go to heaven. Those who seize other people’s wives, those who oppress other people’s wives and those who have intercourse with other people’s wives go to hell. Those who seize other people’s property, those who destroy other people’s possessions and those who point out the weaknesses of others go to hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who destroy stores of drinking water, assembly houses, roads and apartments go to hell. Men who deceive women without protectors and those who are young, aged, terrified and ascetics, go to hell. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who destroy means of sustenance for others, or their homes or wives, those who destroy other people's hopes and those who cause dissension among friends go to hell. Those who proclaim the weaknesses of others, those who destroy bridges, those who earn a living off others and those who are ungrateful towards friends go to hell. Those who are heretical and censure,[1198] those who censure the ordinances and those who deviate from their beliefs go to hell. Those who cause divisions and take away the shares of those who have accomplished their tasks and are waiting go to hell.[1199] Those who eat without giving shares to wives, fires, servants and guests and those who deviate from making offerings to ancestors and gods go to hell. Those who sell the Vedas,[1200] those who censure the Vedas and those who render the Vedas in writing go to hell. Men who are outside the four ashramas, outside the boundaries of learning and survive through perverse deeds go to hell. O king! Those who sell hair, those who sell poison and those who sell milk go to hell. O Yudhishthira! Those who cause obstructions in the tasks of brahmanas, cattle and women go to hell. O Yudhishthira! Those who sell weapons and make them and those who make stakes and bows go to hell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who cause obstructions along roads, using stakes, pits and holes, go to hell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Those who abandon preceptors, servants and followers without any valid reason go to hell. Those who make under-age animals work, pierce their noses and tether them go to hell. Having accepted one-sixth of the produce as taxes, those who do not protect, despite being capable, go to hell.[1201] There are people who are forgiving, self-controllled and wise. Despite having associated with such people for a long time, if a person discards them when they are no longer of any use, he goes to hell. Men who eat first, without giving to children, the aged and servants go to hell. All these who have thus been named go to hell. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the various categories that go to the world of heaven.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In all the tasks undertaken by brahmanas, where gods are placed at the forefront, if a person causes hindrances, all his sons and animals are slain.[1202] O Yudhishthira! Men who follow dharma through donations, austerities and truth go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who have obtained learning through servitude and austerities and are no longer attached to what they receive go to heaven. Men who act so as to free others from fear, sin, impediments in the way of learning and affliction from disease go to heaven. Men who are forgiving, patient, prone to performing acts of dharma and those who follow auspicious indications go to heaven. Men who refrain from liquour, flesh, intercourse with other people's wives and drinking go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who construct hermitages and establish lineages, countries and cities go to heaven. Men who give garments, ornaments, food, drink and grain and those who give to their matrimonial allies go to heaven. Men who refrain from all kinds of violent conduct and withstand everything and men who are refuges to all creatures go to heaven. Men who serve their mothers and fathers, are in control over their senses and are affectionate towards their brothers go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who are patient and conquer their senses, despite being rich, powerful and young, go to heaven. Men who are kind towards those who cause injury, men who are mild and affectionate towards their friends and those who gratify and make others happy go to heaven. Despite being surrounded by thousands, men who give to thousands and save thousands go to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Men who give away gold, cattle, vehicles and mounts go to heaven. O Yudhisthira! Men who give garments to maidens at the time of marriage and to servants go to heaven. Men who construct *vihara*s,[1203] houses, gardens, wells, resting-houses, assemblies and *vapra*s[1204] go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who give houses, fields and habitations to those who ask for them go to heaven. O Yudhishthira! Men who give juices, seeds and grain of their own accord go to heaven. Men who are born in noble lineages, have hundreds of children, live for one hundred years, possess compassion and have conquered their anger go to heaven. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have told you about the rites that must be performed for the gods and the ancestors. As laid down earlier by the rishis, I have also told you about dharma and adharma concerning gifts."'

Chapter 1706(25)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should tell me the truth about this. What kinds of violence are said to be the equal to the sin of actually killing a brahmana?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Indra among kings! On an earlier occasion, I had invited Vyasa to tell me about this. I will tell you the truth about this. Listen with single-minded attention.’O sage! O one who is fourth from Vasishtha![1205] Tell me the truth about this. What kinds of violence are said to be equal to the sin of actually killing a brahmana?’ O great king! Thus asked, Parashara’s son told me about the skilful and supreme determination of dharma on this.’There may be a brahmana who is lean because he lacks a means of subsistence. If a person himself invites him for the sake of giving alms and later says that nothing is available, know that this person has effectively killed a brahmana. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![1206] If an evil-minded person is indifferent and destroys the livelihood of a brahmana who is devoted to learning, know that he is regarded as having killed a brahmana. O lord of the earth! When cattle are thirsty and seek to slake their thirst, if a person causes obstructions in this, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. The learned texts have been composed by the sages and these sacred texts have been passed down properly. Without knowing them, if a person censures them, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. If a person has a beautiful and excellent daughter, but does not bestow the maiden on a groom who is her equal, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. If a stupid person is addicted to adharma and, through falsehood, causes affliction and sorrow to brahmanas, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. If a person robs all the possessions of someone who is blind, lame or dumb, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana. Because of delusion, if a person sets fire to a hermitage, a forest, a village or a city, know him to be guilty of killing a brahmana.”’

Chapter 1707(26)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O immensely wise one! Visiting the tirthas, bathing in them and hearing about them is said to be superior. I desire to hear the truth about this. You should tell me about all the sacred tirthas on earth. O lord! I have controlled myself and wish to hear about them."

'Bhishma replied, "O immensely radiant one! Angiras spoke about a listing of all the tirthas. O fortunate one! Listen to that and you will obtain supreme dharma. The brave Goutama, rigid in his vows, went to the hermitage of the brahmana and great sage, Angiras, and asked him.'O illustrious one! I have a doubt about which of the tirthas bring dharma. I wish to hear about all of them. O great sage! Instruct me. O sage! What fruits are obtained by bathing in the waters of these tirthas? What does one get after death? O immensely wise one! Tell me the truth about this.'

'"Angiras said, 'If one fasts for a week and bathes in the waters of the Chandrabhaga or the Vitasta,[1207] which has garlands of waves, then one loses all sense of ego and becomes like a sage. In the circle of rivers that flow through Kashmira, there are many great rivers that flow into the river known as Sindhu.[1208] If one bathes there, one obtains good conduct and goes to heaven. If one bathes in Pushkara, Prabhasa, Naimisha, the waters of the ocean, Devika, Indramarga and Svarnavindu, know that one then ascends a vimana and is served by apsaras.[1209] If one restrains one's agitation and reverentially bathes in Hiranyavindu, Kusheshaya and Devatva, one is cleansed from all sins. If a man controls and purifies himself and then approaches and bathes in Indratoya, which is near Gandhamadana, and in Karatoya, which is in Kuranga, after having fasted for three nights, he obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. If one bathes in Gangadvara, Kushavarta, Vilvaka, which is in the Nemi mountains, and in Kankhala,[1210] one is cleansed of sins and goes to heaven. If a person is a brahmachari, conquers his anger, is devoted to the truth and is non-violent, and if he bathes in the lake known as Apa, he obtains the fruits of a vajapeya sacrifice. Bhagirathi Ganga flows in a northern direction, in a spot favoured by Maheshvara. If a man fasts for one month and then bathes there, he can then see the gods themselves. However, even if a man worships at Sapta-Ganga, Tri-Ganga and Indramarga and tastes the water there, he has to be born again.[1211] If a person observes agnihotra, purifies himself, fasts for one month and then bathes in Mahashrama, he obtains success within a month. If a person frees himself from avarice, fasts for three nights and bathes in the great lake known as Bhrigutunga,[1212] he is freed from the sin of having killed a brahmana. If one bathes in the waters of Kanyakupa and Balaka, one obtains fame like that of the gods and blazes in that reknown. If a man bathes in the waters of Deshakala and in Lake Sundarika, after death, he obtains beauty and radiance that is like that of the Ashvins. If one fasts for a fortnight and bathes in Mahaganga and Krittikangaraka, one sparkles in heaven. If one bathes in Vaimanika and in the hermitage known as Kinkinika, one obtains greatness and divinity, can roam as one wishes, and dwells with apsaras. If one conquers anger, observes brahmacharya for three nights and bathes in the hermitage of Kalika, in the waters of Vipasha,[1213] one is freed from rebirth. If one bathes in the hermitage of Krittika and worships the ancestors, one satisfies Mahadeva and obtains sparkling heaven. If a man fasts for three nights and bathes in Mahapura, he is freed from fear of all immobile objects and also discards fear of bipeds. If a man purifies himself, fasts for seven nights and bathes in the waters in the forest of Devadaru, he cleanses himself and obtains the world of the gods. If one bathes in the waterfalls in Koushanta, Kushastamba and Dronasharmapada, one is served by large numbers of apsaras. If one fasts and bathes in Chitrakuta, Janasthana[1214] and in the waters of the Mandakini, one obtains royal prosperity. If one goes to the hermitage known as Shyama, fasts and resides there for three nights and bathes there, one dwells in the city of the gandharvas. If one fasts for one month and bathes in the beautiful waters of Gandhatarika, one obtains the powers of disappearing at will. If a man goes to Koushikidvara, casts aside all greed and survives only on air for twenty-one nights, he ascends to heaven. If one bathes in Matanga, one becomes successful in a single night. If one conquers one's senses and bathes in the eternal waters of Analamba, Andhaka, Naimisha or Svargatirtha, within one month, one obtains the fruits of *purushamedha*.[1215] If one bathes in the waters of Gangahrada and Utpalavana for a month, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. If one bathes in the tirthas that are along the Ganga and the Yamuna and in the sixty lakes that are in Mount Kalanjara,[1216] this is superior to all kinds of donations. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the month of Magha, ten thousand tirthas and another thirty crore tirthas assemble in Prayaga.[1217] O foremost among the Bharata lineage! If one is controlled, rigid in vows and bathes in Prayaga in the month of Magha, one obtains sparkling heaven. If a man bathes in Marudgana, in the sacred hermitage of the ancestors and in the tirtha of Vaivasvata, he becomes like a tirtha himself. If one goes to Brahmashira and bathes in the waters of the Bhagirathi, after having fasted for one month, one obtains the world of the moon. If a man fasts for twelve days and bathes in the waters of Kapotaka and Ashtavakra, he obtains the fruits of a human sacrifice. If one goes to Munjaprishtha, the divine mountain of Nirriti and Krouchapadi, all three of which are in Gaya, one is freed from the sin of having killed a brahmana.[1218] If one bathes in Kalashya, know that one will obtain a great deal of water. If a man bathes in the city of Agni, in the waters of Vishala and in Devahrada, he becomes radiant and merges with the brahman. If a man is controlled and non-violent and bathes in Purapavartana, Nanda or Mahananda, he goes to Nandana[1219] and is served by apsaras. At the conjunction of Urvashi and Krittika, as is ordained, if one is self-controlled and bathes in the Lohitya, one obtains the fruits of a *pundarika* sacrifice.[1220] If one fasts for twelve days and bathes in Ramahrada and in the waters of Vishala, one is freed from all sins. If a man purifies his mind and bathes in Mahahrada, fasting for one month, he obtains the end got by Jamadagni. If one is non-violent and devoted to the truth, tormenting oneself in Vindhya and standing on one foot for six months, one will be purified within a month. If one fasts for a fortnight and bathes in the waters of Narmada and Surparaka, one becomes a prince. If one goes to Jambumarga and is controlled and self-restrained for three months, one obtains success within a single day and a single night. If one goes to the hermitage of Chandalika and bathes in Kokamukha, subsisting on vegetables and attired in rags, one obtains ten maidens. If one resides in Kanyahrada, one goes to the world of the gods and never goes to Vaivasvata's[1221] abode. O mighty-armed one! If a man is controlled and bathes in Prabhasa on the night of the new moon, when he is reborn, he obtains success within a single night. If one bathes in Ujjanaka, in the hermitages of Arshtishena and Pinga, then, one is freed from all sins. If one purifies oneself and fasts for three nights, bathing in the waters of Kulya and chanting the aghamarshana mantra, one obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. If a man fasts for one night and bathes in Pindaraka, then, as soon as night is over, he is purified and obtains the fruits of an *agnishtoma* sacrifice. If one goes to Brahmasara, adorned by the forest known as Dharmaranya, then, as soon as night is over, one is purified and obtains the fruits of a pundarika sacrifice. If one bathes in Mount Mainaka for a month, performing the morning and evening prayers and conquering desire, one then obtains the fruits of all sacrifices. The Himalayas are sacred and famous. They are Shankara's father-in-law. They are a store of all jewels and are frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. There may be a brahmana who knows about Vedanta and knows that life is transient. If he worships the gods, bows to the sages and, following the prescribed rites, fasts and gives up his life there, he obtains divine success. He goes to Brahma's eternal world. There may be a person who dwells in a tirtha, having given up desire, anger and avarice. Since he has gone to a tirtha, there is nothing that he cannot obtain. Even if one wishes to go to all the tirthas, some tirthas are inaccessible and difficult to reach. In that case, one should approach them mentally. They are like sacrifices. They make one fortunate. They yield divine bliss. It is a great secret that even the gods purify themselves by bathing there. This secret can be divulged in the hearing of brahmanas, the virtuous, sons, well-wishers and devoted disciples."'

'Bhishma continued, "The great ascetic, Angiras, told Goutama about this, after having obtained the permission of his preceptor, the intelligent Kashyapa.[1222] What the maharshi said is pure and supreme and should be chanted. If one chants it when one wakes up, one is cleansed and obtains heaven. This mystery was obtained from Angiras. If one hears it, one is born in an excellent lineage and remembers one's past life."'

Chapter 1708(27)

Vaishampayana said, 'He was Brihaspati's equal in intelligence and Brahma's equal in forgiveness. He was Shakra's equal in valour and as infinitely energetic as Aditya. Gangeya was extremely radiant and had been brought down in the battle by Arjuna. With his brothers and the others, Yudhishthira worshipped him. The one without decay was waiting for the right time and was lying down on a hero's bed. The maharshis arrived, wishing to see the foremost one among the Bharata lineage. There were Atri, Vasishtha, Bhrigu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Angiras, Goutama, Agastya, Sumati, controlled in his soul, Vishvamitra, Sthulashira, Samvarta, Pramati, Dama, Ushanas, Brihaspati, Vyasa, Chyavana, Kashyapa, Dhruva, Durvasa, Jamadagni, Markandeya, Galava, Bharadvaja, Raibhya, Yavakrita, Trita, Sthulaksha, Shakalaksha, Kanva, Medhatithi, Krisha, Narada, Parvata, Sudhanva, Ekata, Dvita, Nitambhu, Bhuvana, Dhoumya, Shatananda, Kritavrana, Jamadagnya Rama, Kamya, Chetya and others. These great-souled maharshis arrived to see Bhishma. In due order, with his brothers, Yudhishthira worshipped the great-souled ones who had arrived. Having been worshipped, the maharshis seated themselves and began to converse. In extremely gentle tones, which delighted all the senses, they talked about Bhishma. On hearing the words of the rishis, who had cleansed their souls, Bhishma was supremely delighted and satisfied and thought that he was already in heaven. While everyone looked on, taking the leave of Bhishma and the Pandavas, all the rishis vanished. Though those extremely fortunate rishis had disappeared, all the Pandavas continued to repeatedly worship and bow down before them. With cheerful minds, all these supreme Kurus presented themselves before Gangeya, like those who know about mantras presenting themselves before the rising sun. Because of the powers of austerities of the rishis, the Pandavas saw that the directions were ablaze. All of them were quite astounded at this. They thought that the rishis were much more than fortunate. The Pandavas started to converse with Bhishma. When that conversation was over, Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, touched Bhishma’s feet with his head and again questioned him about dharma. “O grandfather! Which countries, provinces, hermitages, mountains and rivers are really sacred?”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a person who followed *shilonchhavritti* and one who had obtained success.[1223] A best among bipeds roamed over the entire earth, adorned with mountains. He finally arrived at the house of someone who was best among those who followed *shilavritti*. Once he arrived, he was duly honoured. After the ablutions, the guest, who had obtained success, seated himself. Those great-souled ones seated themselves and started to talk about auspicious things, such as what was in the Vedas and in their appendices, and their various attributes. When this conversation was over, the intelligent one who followed shilavritti carefully asked the one who had obtained success to answer the question that you have asked me.

'"Shilavritti asked, 'Which countries, provinces, hermitages, mountains and rivers are really sacred? Tell me that.'

'"The Siddha[1224] replied, 'Countries, provinces, hermitages and mountains are best when Bhagirathi Ganga, supreme among rivers, flows through them. Through austerities, brahmacharya, sacrifices and renunciation, a creature cannot obtain the ends that can be obtained by frequenting the Ganga. If the limbs have been sprinkled with the waters of the Ganga, or if creatures cast aside their bodies there, they are not dislodged from heaven. O brahmana! When embodied creatures perform all their rites in the waters of the Ganga, having left earth, such men are permanently in heaven. Men may have committed sins in the earlier parts of their lives. However, later, if they reside near the Ganga, they advance towards a supreme end. If men control their souls and bathe in the pure waters of the Ganga, they obtain merits that are greater than those obtained through one hundred sacrifices. As long as a man's bones are established in the waters of the Ganga, he obtains greatness in heaven for thousands of years. The run rises in the morning and through its radiance, dispels the terrible darkness. In that way, when washed by the waters of the Ganga, the sins are dispelled and one is radiant. Without the auspicious waters of the Ganga, countries and directions are deprived, like a night without the moon, or a tree without flowers. Without the Ganga, the universe is like sacrifices without soma, or the varna and ashrama system, with everyone deprived of knowledge about his own dharma. There is no doubt that deprived of the Ganga, countries and directions are as deprived as the firmament without the sun, the earth without mountains, or the sky without air. When they obtain the auspicious waters of the Ganga, all the beings in the three worlds are supremely satisified and become content. Drinking water from the Ganga, heated by the sun, is superior to picking out and eating food from the excrement of a cow. To purify one's body, a person may perform one thousand *chandrayana* sacrifices. It is impossible to determine whether this is equal, or unequal, to drinking the water of the Ganga. A man may stand on a single foot for one thousand yugas. It is impossible to determine whether this is equal, or unequal, to standing in a similar way in the Ganga for one month. A man may remain for ten thousand yugas, with his face hanging downwards. However, if one remains on the banks of the Ganga for some time, that is superior. O supreme among brahmanas! When cotton is burnt in a fire, nothing is left. In that way, through submerging in the Ganga, all sins are washed away. The consciousness of all creatures is taken away by misery. If they seek an escape, there is no escape that is equal to the Ganga. On seeing Tarkshya,[1225] a snake loses its poison. In that way, on seeing Ganga, one is freed from all sins. Because of their addiction towards adharma, there are those who are without any status. They obtain refuge, prosperity and protection from the Ganga. There are many who are worst among men, prone to inauspicious deeds and destined for hell. After death, they are saved by the Ganga. Those who always advance towards the Ganga are certainly counted together with the sages and the gods, with Vasava. There are many who are inauspicious and worst among men, devoid of good conduct and humility. O brahmana! When they resort to the Ganga, they become auspicious. The waters of the Ganga are for men what amrita is for the gods, svadha is for the ancestors and *sudha* is for serpents.[1226] Children who are afflicted by hunger seek out their mothers. In that way, embodied beings who desire welfare seek out the Ganga. Svayambhu's region is said to be the best. In that fashion, Ganga is said to be the best among rivers to bathe in. Cattle and the earth are said to be the best means of sustenance for the gods and others. In that way, for all beings on earth, Ganga is the means of sustenance. The gods are established in the sun and the moon and sustain themselves through sacrifices and amrita. For men, the waters of the Ganga are like that. If a man smears himself with sand from the banks of the Jahnavi and arises, he can think of himself as adorned as the gods in heaven. If a person raises up mud from the banks of the Jahnavi and smears it on his head, he becomes radiant, as sparkling and radiant as the sun, the dispeller of darkness. If water mixed with drops of water from the Ganga's waves touches a man, he is instantly cleansed of all sin. If a man is afflicted by hardships and is about to be destroyed, the mere sight of the Ganga cheers him up and dispels those hardships. Swans, ruddy geese and other birds crying on the Ganga challenge the gandharvas and her banks challenge tall mountains. There are swans and many other kinds of birds on the Ganga. There are herds of cattle along the banks. On seeing these, one forgets heaven. The supreme delight obtained by men who reside along the banks of the Ganga is greater than the bliss from residing in heaven, with all one's wishes gratified. There may be a man who has committed the worst of sins in speech, thought and deeds. There is no doubt that on seeing Ganga, he is purified. If a man sees, touches and bathes in the Ganga, he saves seven generations of his ancestors and seven generations of his descendants. In particular, by wishing to hear about the Ganga, seeing it, touching it and drinking its waters, a man rescues both his family lines.[1227] By seeing, touching, drinking and praising the Ganga, hundreds and thousands of sinners become purified. People who desire to make their births, lives and learning successful should go to the Ganga and worship the ancestors and the gods. Through sons, riches and deeds, a man cannot obtain the fruits that can be derived through approaching the Ganga. If a person, though able, does not go and see the sacred and auspicious waters of the Ganga, he is like one born blind, or one who is dead or disabled. The Ganga is worshipped by maharshis who know about the past, the present and the future, and by the gods, together with Indra. Which man will not worship it? Those in vanaprastha and garhasthya, those who are mendicants and brahmacharis and those who have knowledge and learning resort to the Ganga. Which man will not seek refuge there? When a man is about to give up his breath of life, if he behaves virtuously, controls himself and thinks of the Ganga, he obtains the supreme objective. If a man worships the Ganga at the time of giving up his body, he has no fear from fear and does not suffer from any sin. The extremely sacred goddess fell down from the sky and was held by Maheshvara on his head. It is she who is there in heaven. The three sparkling courses adorn the three worlds.[1228] A man who frequents her waters becomes successful in every possible way. Among the rivers of earth, Ganga is like the lord of the gods[1229] to men, the moon to the ancestors and the sun to the stellar bodies in the firmament. The misery on being separated from a mother, a father, sons, wives or riches is nothing compared to the sorrow on being separated from the Ganga. Through meritorious deeds, sons and the inflow of riches, men do not obtain as much gratification as they do from seeing the Ganga. The hearts of men are delighted on seeing the full moon. On seeing the Ganga, which possesses three flows, hearts rejoice in that fashion. With faith, single-mindedness, devotion and steadfastness, if a devotee worships the Ganga, he becomes her beloved. Creatures who are on earth, in the sky or in heaven, and even those who are higher still, should always bathe in the Ganga. This is a task indicated for the virtuous. Ganga is sacred and is famous in the three worlds. She is illustrious. Sagara’s sons, who were reduced to ashes, were conveyed by her to heaven.[1230]

‘“‘Ganga’s waves are tall, bright and sparkling and arise, after being driven by winds that make a loud noise. Those who are washed by these are purified and become as radiant as the sun, the one with the one thousand rays. The prosperous waters are swift and difficult to immerse in. They are like the clarified butter generously offered at sacrifices. Patient men who go to the Ganga and give up their lives there, become like the gods. The Ganga is illustrious and large. The universe is her form. She is worshipped by the sages and by the gods, with Indra at their head. She grants all the objects of desire to those who are blind, dumb and bereft of possessions. Her water is full of energy and is sweet as honey. She is extremely sacred and has three flows. She is the protector of the three worlds. Those who seek refuge with the Ganga, go to heaven. If a mortal person dwells near her and sees her, the gods grant him happiness. He is cleansed by the touch and the sight. The gods grant him auspicious directions. She is large, excellent and accomplished. She is the earth. She is auspicious and like amrita. She is lovely and extremely gracious. She is brilliant and all creatures are established in her. A person who goes to Ganga goes to heaven. Her fame is always known on earth, in the sky and in heaven, and fills the directions and the minor directions. She is supreme among rivers, and by resorting to her waters, all mortal beings accomplish their objectives. This Ganga is always established. She bore the golden Guha in her womb.[1231] She possesses three flows. She has descended as the water of the universe. She is like a flow of clarified butter. If a person bathes in the Ganga in the morning, he is cleansed of all sin. She is a daughter of the mountains and is Hara’s wife. She is like an ornament of heaven and earth. She is the radiant one who sustains the earth. O king![1232] Ganga is the purifier of the three worlds. Her flows are as sweet as honey. She is like the clarified butter offered at sacrifices. She is adorned with large waves and with brahmanas. Ganga is like a garland in heaven. She is the daughter of the mountains. She descended from heaven and was held by Bhava on his head. She is the best of wombs. She is radiant and subtle. Fame is granted by her roaring and surging waters. She is the one who protects the universe. Her form is one that confers the greatest benefit. For heaven and for earth, Ganga is the path to follow. In forgiveness, protection and sustenance, brahmanas revere Ganga as the earth’s equal. She is like the fire and the sun in her radiance. In being gracious towards the brahmanas, she is always like Guha. She is ancient and is praised by the rishis. She emerged from Vishnu’s feet. Her waters are extremely auspicious and take one to the worlds one can think of. A person who resorts to Jahnavi with all his soul, goes to Brahma’s world. She possesses all the qualities and with all their souls, there are people who worship her, like sons towards their mothers. She is the one who facilitates the restraint of one’s soul. If a person desires benefit in Brahma’s abode, he should worship Ganga. She is like a pleasant cow that provides her waters to the universe. She is like an ocean of prosperity, as sweet as honey. She is like the amrita desired by the virtuous and is loved by Brahma. Those who seek success in their souls seek refuge with Ganga. Through his fierce austerities, Bhagiratha worshipped the lord and the god,[1233] pleased him and brought down Ganga. Men who go to her can free themselves of all fear, in this world and in the next. Using the best of my intelligence, I have considered and recounted some of her qualities. However, I do not possess the capacity to enumerate and speak about all her qualities. One can enumerate all the jewels in Meru and all the waters that exist in the ocean. But one is incapable of enumerating all the qualities of the waters of the Ganga. Resorting to devotion, one should listen to Jahnavi’s supreme qualities and show great faith and reverence, in words, thoughts and deeds. One will then obtain fame and prosperity in the three worlds. One will then obtain the great success, created by Ganga herself, one that is difficult to obtain. In a short while, you will roam around in the desired worlds. She possesses all the great qualities. If we are devoted to our own dharma, may she always turn our intelligence towards her. Ganga is affectionate towards those who seek refuge with her. She grants happiness to those who worship her with faith.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The successful one was radiant. In this way, he expounded the many qualities of the one with the three flows to Shilavritti. Having instructed him in many ways and having told him about the truth of her form, he ascended up into the sky. Shilavritti was awakened by the words of the successful one. In the proper way, he worshipped Ganga and obtained the kind of success that is extremely difficult to obtain. O Kounteya! Therefore, resort to great devotion and always worship Ganga. You will obtain supreme success.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘This is the history that Bhishma recounted and Yudhishthira and his brothers were filled with great delight at hearing about Ganga’s praise. This is a sacred history, filled with praise about Ganga. Even now, if a person hears it or reads it, he is freed from all sins.’

Chapter 1709(28)

‘Yudhishthira said, “You possess wisdom, learning, good conduct and behaviour. You possess all the qualities and are also aged. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! Therefore, I am asking you about dharma. O supreme among kings! If a person is a kshatriya, vaishya or a shudra, you should tell me how he can become a brahmana. O grandfather! Does one become a brahmana through austerities, great deeds or learning? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! O Yudhishthira! For a kshatriya and the others, the three varnas, becoming a brahmana is extremely difficult. For all beings, that is the best state. O son! If one is repeatedly and progressively cooked in the cycle of life, one can then be born as a brahmana. O Yudhishthira! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Matanga and a she-ass. O son! There was a brahmana and this lord obtained a son through a varna that was not his equal.[1234] His name was Matanga and he possessed all the qualities. O Kounteya! O scorcher of enemies! Wishing to perform a sacrifice, his father sent him to bring the required objects. He departed on a wagon that travelled fast and it was drawn by an ass. O king! The ass was young and it dragged the wagon to its mother. At this, he[1235] repeatedly struck it on the nose. The she-ass loved its son. On seeing those terrible wounds, it said, ‘O son! Do not grieve. A chandala is driving you. A brahmana is never terrible. A brahmana is said to be friendly. He is the preceptor of all creatures and their instructor. How can such a person strike? This one is wicked in nature and does not show any compassion, even to someone who is young. By exhibiting his character, he is only exhibiting the nature of his birth.’ Matanga heard these terrible words of the she-ass. He descended from the wagon and addressed the she-ass.’O she-ass! O fortunate one! How was my mother tainted? How do you know that I am a chandala? O she-ass! Instruct me quickly. How was I born as a chandala and how has my status as a brahmana been destroyed? O immensely wise one! Without leaving out anything, tell me everything about this.’

‘“The she-ass said, ‘There was a brahmana lady who was overcome with desire and you were born through a vrishala who was a barber. That is the reason you have been born as a chandala and the reason why your status as a brahmana has been destroyed.’” ‘Bhishma continued, “Having been thus addressed, Matanga returned home. On seeing that he had returned, his father spoke these words. ‘I asked you to do some things connected with the sacrifice. How can you return without performing the tasks instructed by your superior? Is everything well with you?’

‘“Matanga replied, ‘How can someone of uncertain birth, or with the worst possible birth, be well? O father! How can someone with a mother like that be well? O father! I have got to know that though my mother is a brahmana, my father is a vrishala. A superhuman she-ass told me this. Therefore, I must torment myself through great austerities.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Having spoken to his father and having made up his mind, he left for the great forest, to torment himself through great austerities. The gods themselves were tormented by the force of these austerities. Through his good conduct, Matanga desired the region that would provide great bliss. While he was thus engaged in austerities, Harivahana[1236] appeared before him and asked, ‘O Matanga! Why are you tormenting yourself? Why have you given up the pleasures that men like? I wish to grant you a boon. Tell me about the boon that you desire. Without any delay, tell me about everything that is in your mind.’

‘“Matanga replied, ‘I have started these austerities with the desire of becoming a brahmana. Having attained this, I will depart from this place. This is the boon sought by me.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “On hearing his words, Purandara said, ‘You desire the status of a brahmana, but that cannot be obtained by someone whose soul has not been cleansed. This is the best state among all creatures. Therefore, refrain from these austerities. This desire and these fierce austerities will quickly destroy you. Among gods, asuras and mortals, this state is said to be sacred and supreme. Having been born as a chandala, you can never obtain it.’”’

Chapter 1710(29)

'Bhishma said, "O one without decay! Matanga was careful about his vows and in control of his soul. Though he was addressed in this way, he stood on one foot for one hundred years. The immensely illustrious Shakra again appeared before him and said, 'O Matanga! The supreme state that you desire is extremely difficult to obtain. O son! Do not exhibit this futile rashness. This isn't the path of dharma. You cannot obtain what you wish for and will soon be destroyed. O Matanga! I have sought to restrain you from aspiring to obtain that supreme state. If you still desire to perform these austerities, you will be destroyed in every possible way. Among all the men who are born as inferior[1237] species, only a few are reborn as pulkasa or chandala. O Matanga! Anyone on earth who is seen to have been born as wicked species, will have to whirl around in that state for a long period of time. After having spent one thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a shudra.[1238] One is whirled around in the state of a shudra for a long period of time. After three thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a vaishya. One is whirled around in the state of a vaishya for a long period of time. After six thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a king.[1239] One is whirled around in the state of a king for a long period of time. After six thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of being a friend of a brahmana.[1240] One is whirled around in the state of being a friend of a brahmana for a long period of time. After two thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of a brahmana who earns a living by selling weapons. One is whirled around in the status of a brahmana who earns a living by selling weapons for a long period of time. After three thousand births in this way, one obtains the status of an ordinary brahmana. Having obtained this status, one is whirled around for a long period of time. After four thousand births in this way, one is born as a learned brahmana. One is whirled around in the state of a learned brahmana for a long period of time. O son! In that state, anger, delight, desire, hatred, insolence and argumentation penetrate him and try to make him the worst among brahmanas. When he abandons these enemies, he obtains a virtuous end. However, if they defeat him, he falls down, as if from the top of a palm tree. O Matanga! That is the reason I have spoken to you, restraining you and asking you to ask for some other boon. The status of a brahmana is something that is extremely difficult to obtain.’”’

Chapter 1711(30)

‘Bhishma said, “Thus addressed, Matanga was overwhelmed by great grief. He went to Gaya and stood on one toe for one hundred years. He performed many kinds of extremely difficult yoga. He became thin and was reduced to veins. The one with dharma in his soul was reduced to nothing but bones and we have heard that he fell down. When he was falling down, Vasava came and seized him. After all, the lord and the granter of boons is engaged in the welfare of all beings.

‘“Shakra said, ‘O Matanga! You are engaged in trying to obtain the status of a brahmana, but this is a perverse pursuit. Worship what will bring you happiness. Do not worship what will bring you unhappiness. Among all creatures, it is controlled brahmanas who display yoga and kshema. The ancestors and the gods are satisfied through brahmanas. O Matanga! Among all creatures, brahmanas are said to be supreme. It is brahmanas who grant what you are asking for.[1241] O son! One is repeatedly and progressively cooked in the fire of the cycle of life. It is only in rare cases that one can obtain the status of a brahmana.’

‘“Matanga replied, ‘I am already afflicted by grief. Why are you oppressing me? You are striking me, but I am already like one who is dead. I am not grieving that I have not obtained the radiance that comes about from being a brahmana. O Shatakratu! Among the three varnas, if the status of a brahmana is so difficult to obtain, why do men who have obtained it deviate? An evil person who acts in this way should be regarded as the worst among wicked ones, since he disregards the status of being a brahmana, something that is like getting riches which are extremely difficult to obtain. It is indeed hard to become a brahmana and having become one, it is very difficult to maintain it. Having obtained something that is difficult to get, men do not maintain it. O Shakra! I find pleasure in only one thing.[1242] I do not suffer from opposite sentiments. I am devoid of possessions. I am non-violent. I am self-restrained and generous. Why should I not obtain the status of a brahmana? Let me roam around in my own pleasures, just as birds roam around as they will. Without any constraints, let me be revered by both brahmanas and kshatriyas. O Purandara! Let me obtain fame without decay.'

'"Indra said, 'You will become famous as the god of metre and will be worshipped by women.'"[1243]

'Bhishma continued, "Vasava granted this boon to him and disappeared. Having given up his life, Matanga obtained a supreme station. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus, the status of a brahmana is supreme. As indicated in the words of the great Indra, it is extremely difficult to obtain."'

Chapter 1712(31)

'Yudhishthira said, "O extender of the Kuru lineage! I have heard this great account. O supreme among eloquent ones! You have said that the status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. O excellent one! However, though you have said that it is extremely difficult to obtain, it has been heard that in ancient times, Vishvamitra became a brahmana. I have also heard that rajarshi Vitahavya became a brahmana.[1244] O Gangeya! O lord! I wish to hear everything about this. O supreme among kings! What deeds enabled him to become a brahmana? Was it through a boon or austerities? You should explain this to me in detail."

'Bhishma replied, "O king! Listen. King Vitahavya was greatly illustrious. Though he was a kshatriya, he became a brahmana and was revered by the worlds. O son! The great-souled Manu followed dharma and ruled his subjects. He had a famous son named Sharyati, who possessed dharma in his soul. O king! Two kings were born in that lineage. O supreme among victorious ones! They were Haihaya and Talajangha and they were the sons of Vatsa. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Through his ten wives, Haihaya had one hundred brave sons, who did not retreat in battle. They were equal in beauty and power. They were learned and accomplished in fighting. In every way, they completed their learning of *dhanurveda* and of the Vedas. O king! There was a king in Kashi and he was Divodasa's grandfather. He was famous as Haryashva and he was foremost among victorious ones. O bull among men! Because of enmity, in the area between the Ganga and the Yamuna, Vitahavya's sons brought him down in a battle.[1245] Having slain that best of men, the maharathas who were the sons of Haihaya fearlessly returned to their beautiful city in the land of the Vatsas. Haryashva's son became the king of Kashi. His name was Sudeva. He was like a god and he was dharma personified. With dharma in his soul, the descendant of the Kashi lineage ruled the earth. However, because of enmity, Vitahavya's sons again invaded and conquered everything in the battle. Having become victorious in this way, they returned to wherever they had come from. Sudeva's son, Divodasa, was instated as the king of Kashi. Divodasa realized that his great-souled enemies were valorous. On Shakra's instructions, the extremely energetic one rebuilt the fortifications of Varanasi. There were large numbers of brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras there. There were stores of many kinds of objects and provisions and prosperous shops and stalls. O supreme among kings! The area extended from the northern banks of the Ganga to the southern banks of the Gomati and it was like Shakra's Amaravati. O lord of the earth! The tiger among kings used to dwell there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yet again, the Haihayas advanced and attacked. The immensely radiant Divodasa emerged and fought with them. It was a terrible battle, like that between the gods and the asuras. O great king! He fought against them for one thousand days. However, since his mounts were repeatedly slain, he was overcome by distress. O king! The warriors were killed and the king's treasury was exhausted. Abandoning his city, Divodasa fled. He went to the hermitage of the intelligent Bharadvaja. O scorcher of enemies! The king joined his hands in salutation and sought refuge with him.

'"The king said, 'O illustrious one! Vitahavya's sons have destroyed my lineage in battle. I am the only one who has escaped and I have sought refuge with you. O illustrious one! You should protect me, just as you would a disciple. Those performers of wicked deeds have destroyed my lineage.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The powerful and immensely fortunate Bharadvaja replied, 'Do not be frightened. O Sudeva's son! Do not be scared. Dispel your fear. O lord of the earth! So that you can have a son, I will immediately perform a sacrifice. You can use him to strike down thousands on Vitahavya’s side.’ Desiring a son, the rishi performed a sacrifice. A son was born and he was known as Pratardana. As soon as he was born, he grew up and looked like someone who was thirteen years old. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He learnt all the Vedas and dhanurveda. The intelligent Bharadvaja immersed himself in yoga. He accumulated all the energy of the worlds and made it penetrate into him.[1246] He was clad in armour and wielded a bow and arrows. He blazed like a fire. Wielding the bow and with his form like that of a monsoon cloud, the archer advanced. On seeing him advance, Sudeva’s son was filled with great delight. In his mind, the king thought that Vitahavya’s sons had already been consumed. He instated Pratardana as the heir apparent. The king thought that he had already become successful and was full of joy. The king instructed his son Pratardana, the scorcher of enemies, to advance and slay the sons of Vitahavya. On his chariot, the valiant one swiftly crossed the Ganga. The destroyer of enemy cities advanced towards the city of the sons of Vitahavya. The sons of Vitahavya heard the sounds created by that chariot. They emerged on their own chariots, which were like cities, and advanced against the enemy’s chariot. They were as swift as tigers. They were colourful in fighting. They emerged, attacked Pratardana and showered down arrows and weapons on him. O Yudhishthira! They attacked the king with many kinds of weapons and floods of chariots, like rain clouds showering down on the Himalayas. King Pratardana repulsed their weapons. The immensely energetic one slew them with arrows that were like the vajra or the fire. O king! Hundreds and thousands of broad-headed arrows were used to sever the heads. Flowing with blood, they fell down, like severed *kimshuka* trees. When all of his sons were slain, Vitahavya abandoned his city and fled to Bhrigu’s hermitage. King Vitahavya went to Bhrigu and sought refuge with him. Bhrigu offered him shelter, as if to a disciple. Following him, Pratardana swiftly arrived there.

‘“Having arrived there, Divodasa’s son said, ‘O disciples of the great-souled Bhrigu! O those who are in the hermitage! Listen. Please go and tell the sage that I wish to see him.’ When he got to know, Bhrigu emerged from the hermitage. Following supreme rites, he honoured him and asked, ‘O Indra among kings! What is your purpose with the king?'[1247] O king! He told him the reason why he had come.'O brahmana! King Vitahavya has come here. Please surrender him. O brahmana! His sons have destroyed my entire lineage. They have devastated the kingdom and the stores of jewels in Kashi. Through my valour, I have slain one hundred of his insolent sons. O brahmana! By killing this one now, I will repay the debt to my father.' Bhrigu, supreme among the upholders of dharma, was overcome by compassion, and replied, 'There is no kshatriya here. Everyone who is here is a brahmana.' Hearing Bhrigu's words, Pratardana thought that this must be the truth. He touched his feet, laughed and gently spoke these words.'O illustrious one! There is no doubt that I have become successful. Because of my valour, the king will now have to give up the state he was born in. O brahmana! Grant me permission to leave and pronounce your auspicious benedictions on me. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Because of you, the king has been forced to give up my varna.' O great king! Having obtained his permission, King Pratardana departed to where he had come from, like a serpent that has given up its poison. O great king! Thanks to Bhrigu's words alone, Vitahavya became a brahmana rishi and became knowledgable about the brahman. He had a son named Gritsamada, who was Indra's equal in beauty. Once, taking him to be Indra, the daityas oppressed him. O lord of the earth! There is a hymn in the Rig Veda that states, 'Wherever the brahmana Gritsamada goes, the brahmanas regard that place as great.' The illustrious Gritsamada was a brahmana rishi and a brahmachari. Gritsamada had a brahmana son named Suteja.[1248] Suteja's son was Varcha and his son was Vihavya. Vihavya's son was Vitatya. Vitatya's son was Satya and Satya's son was Santa. Santa's son was the rishi Shravas and Shravas had a son named Tama. Tama had a son named Prakasha, who was supreme among brahmanas. Prakasha's son was Vagindra and he was supreme among victorious ones. His son was Pramati, accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas. Through Ghritachi, he had a son named Ruru.[1249] Through Pramadvara, Ruru had a son named Shunaka and he was a brahmana rishi. His son was Shounaka. O lord of men! O bull among kshatriyas! O Indra among kings! Thus, though he was a kshatriya, through Bhrigu's favours, Vitahavya became a brahmana. In that way, I have also described Gritsamada's lineage to you in detail. O great king! What else do you wish to ask?"'

Chapter 1713(32)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! Whom should men worship? Who should they bow down to? Tell me this in detail. I am not satisfied with what you have told me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Narada and Vasudeva. On seeing that Narada had joined his hands in salutation and was worshipping bulls among the brahmanas, Keshava asked, ‘O illustrious one! Whom are you bowing down to? Whom among these are you revering so much and bowing down to? O supreme among those who know dharma! If possible, I wish to hear this. Tell me.’

‘“Narada replied, ‘O Govinda! O scorcher of enemies! Listen to whom I am worshipping. Truly, with your exception, which other man in the world is capable of hearing this? O lord! I always worship and bow down before Varuna, Vayu, Aditya, Parjanya, Jataveda,[1250] Sthanu, Skanda, Lakshmi, Vishnu, brahmanas, Vachaspati,[1251] the moon, the water, the earth and Sarasvati. O one who should be revered! O tiger among the Vrishni lineage! I always worship those who are stores of austerities, those who know the Vedas and those who are always devoted to the Vedas. O lord! I bow down before those who perform the tasks of the gods without eating and without boasting about it and those who are content and full of forgiveness. O Yadava! I bow down before those who perform sacrifices well, those who are forgiving, self-controlled and in control of their senses and those who give away grain, riches, land and cattle. O Yadava! I bow down before those who perform austerities in the forest, surviving on roots and fruits, those who do not store anything and those who observe rites. O Yadava! I bow down before those who are fond of maintaining their servants, those who always love the act of tending to guests and those who only eat leftovers, after the gods have eaten. I always worship those who have become unassailable after learning the Vedas, eloquent ones who are knowledgable about the brahman and those who are always engaged in officiating at sacrifices and teaching. I worship those whose hearts are always pleasant towards all creatures and those who study until their backs are heated.[1252] O Yadava! I bow down before those who study by satisfying their preceptors, those who endeavour to be firm in their vows, those who serve and those are without malice. O Yadava! I bow down before sages who are excellent in their vows, brahmanas who are devoted to the truth and offer havya and kavya. O Yadava! I bow down before those who are devoted to subsistence through begging, those who are emaciated, those who live in the houses of their preceptors, those who do not pursue happiness and those who are without riches. There are men without a sense of ownership, without enemies, without shame,[1253] without requirements and without violence, devoted to the truth, self-controlled and devoted to tranquility. O Keshava! I bow down before them. There are those who are householders, devoted to worshipping gods and guests and following the conduct of pigeons.[1254] O Yadava! I always bow down before them. There are those who pursue the three objectives[1255] without deviating from them and are addicted to good conduct. I always bow down before them. In the three worlds, there are brahmanas who pursue the three objectives, without greed, and are devoted to auspicious conduct. O Keshava! I bow down before them. There are those who always subsist on water, air and milk, engaged in many kinds of vows. O Madhava! I bow down before them. I bow down before brahmanas who are celibate, those who aren’t celibate but tend to the sacrificial fire, those who are the source of the brahman and those who are the refuge of all creatures. O Krishna! I always bow down before rishis who have created the worlds. They are the eldest in the worlds. Like the sun, they are the dispellers of the darkness of ignorance in the worlds. O Varshneya! Therefore, I always worship those brahmanas. O unblemished one! They confer happiness and deserve to be worshipped. You should also worship them. In this world and in the next, these people are the ones who grant happiness. If you revere them, they will also confer bliss on you. There are those who are always hospitable towards guests and tend to cattle and brahmanas. They are always devoted to the truth and succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. They are always devoted to peace and are without malice. They are always devoted to studying and succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. Those who bow down before all the gods, those who resort to even a single god and those who are faithful and controlled succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. Those who bow down before the foremost of brahmanas, are careful in their vows and are addicted to giving succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. Those who follow the rituals, kindle and maintain the sacrificial fire and offer oblations of soma into it succeed in crossing things that are difficult to traverse. O tiger among the Vrishni lineage! A person who is like you and always tends to his mother, his father and his preceptor properly, is always united with bliss. O Kounteya! Therefore, you should also properly tend to ancestors, gods and guests and worship them. You will then obtain a beneficial end.'"'

Chapter 1714(33)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! What is the supreme task that has been recommended for a king? For both the worlds,[1256] what are the tasks a king should undertake?"

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a king has been instated, if he desires great happiness, he should worship brahmanas. Learned and aged brahmanas must always be worshipped. There will be extremely learned brahmanas who dwell in the city and in the countryside. They must be comforted, given their shares, revered and worshipped. A king must always look towards this as his supreme task. He must protect them, just as he protects his own self or his sons. When they honour him, he must firmly honour them back. When they are at peace, the kingdom is radiant in every possible way. They must he honoured, revered and protected, like a father. The progress of the worlds depends on this, just as creatures depend on Vasava. They can burn everything down, without leaving any remnants, through their mantras and their energy. Their valour is based on truth and if enraged, they can perform fierce deeds. I do not see anything that can pacify them. When they are enraged, their sight can envelop the directions, like the flames of a forest conflagration. They are learned and courageous and possess excellent qualities. They are like the clear sky, or like pits hidden by grass.[1257] Some are fierce, while others are as mild as cotton. Some are extremely cunning, but others are extreme ascetics. While some are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, others earn a living through begging. Some may be thieves and resort to falsehood. Others may be actors and dancers. They are seen to be engaged in all kinds of tasks, superior and inferior. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas follow many diverse kinds of conduct. They are engaged in many kinds of tasks. They earn a living through diverse kinds of occupations. Some among them are virtuous and knowledgable about dharma and are always praised. O lord of men! Such immensely fortunate brahmanas officiate as priests for the ancestors, gods, men, serpents and rakshasas. Gods, ancestors, gandharvas, rakshasas, asuras and pishachas are incapable of vanquishing these brahmanas. They can grant divinity to someone who is not divine. They can take away divinity from someone who is divine. If they wish, they can make someone a king. If they dislike someone, they can destroy him. They are skilled in understanding praise and censure and can cause fame and ill repute to people. O king! If inadvertently, a person slanders brahmanas, brahmanas always become enraged with someone who hates them. If brahmanas praise a person, he prospers. If brahmanas censure a person, he is instantly defeated. It is because there are no brahmanas among them that Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas and other similar kshatriya tribes are regarded as the equals of vrishalas. It is because there are no brahmanas among them that Dramilas, Kalingas, Pulindas, Ushinaras, Kolas, Sarpas, Mahishakas and other similar kshatriya tribes are regarded as the equals of vrishalas. O supreme among victorious ones! It is better to be defeated by them than to defeat them. There is no sin as serious as that of killing a brahmana. The supreme rishis have said that killing a brahmana is a great sin. One must never hear slander about brahmanas. When such words are spoken, one must be silent, with a downcast face. Alternatively, one must arise and walk away. On this earth, there is no one who has been born, or will be born, who can spend a life of happiness after opposing brahmanas. It is impossible to grasp the wind with one's hands. It is impossible to touch the moon with one's hands. It is impossible to hold up the earth on one's head. In this world, it is impossible to vanquish brahmanas."'

Chapter 1715(34)

‘Bhishma said, “Brahmanas must always be worshipped reverentially. With Soma as their king, they are the lords of happiness and unhappiness. Just as a king worships and protects his ancestors, they must always be worshipped and revered and offered objects of pleasure, ornaments and whatever else they wish for. The tranquility of the kingdom flows from them, just as all creatures flow from Vasava. Let pure brahmanas, as radiant as the brahman, be born in the kingdom. Maharatha kings,[1258] those who can scorch enemies, are also desired. There may be a brahmana who has been born in a noble lineage, knows about dharma and is rigid in his vows. O king! There is nothing superior to making him dwell in your house. Offerings made to brahmanas are received by the gods. They are the forefathers of all creatures and there is nothing that is superior to them. Aditya, the moon, Vayu, the earth, the water, the sky and the directions—all these enter the body of a brahmana and consume whatever food he eats. When a brahmana does not eat, the ancestors do not consume. When a wicked person hates brahmanas, the gods do not eat with him. When brahmanas are satisfied, the ancestors are always delighted. O king! That is the way with gods too and there is no need to think about this. Therefore, when they[1259] are given offerings, the givers are themselves gratified. After death, they aren’t destroyed and go to the ultimate destination. Whatever be the proportion in which a man gives offerings to brahmanas, in that proportion, the ancestors and the gods are delighted. All the subjects have originated from brahmanas. They are the origin and after death, they are also the destination. Brahmanas know about the paths to heaven and hell, about both what has happened and about what will occur. They are supreme among bipeds. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Through his intelligence, a brahmana knows his own dharma. A person who follows them is never defeated. Nor does such a person confront destruction and defeat after death. Great-souled ones who have cleansed their souls and accept the words that issue out of the mouths of brahmanas are never defeated. Kshatriyas scorch through their energy and strength, but are pacified by the energy and strength of brahmanas. The Bhrigus defeated the Talajanghas.[1260] The son of Angiras defeated the Nipas.[1261] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Bharadvaja defeated the Vitahavyas and the Ailas. All these warriors were colourful in fighting. However, those with standards made out of black antelope skins[1262] vanquished them. They are capable of flinging away their water pots, crossing over and striking.[1263] In this world, everything that has been heard of or seen is latent within brahmanas, like a fire concealed inside wood. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Vasudeva and the earth.

'"Vasudeva asked, 'O mother of all creatures! O beautiful one! I am asking you about a doubt. If a man is a householder, through which acts can be cleanse his sins?'

'"The earth replied, 'The best method of purification is to serve brahmanas. Through serving brahmanas, all kinds of dirt are destroyed. This is the source of prosperity. This is the source of fame. Intelligence is generated by this. This grants superiority over another and is better than the best. If a man is praised by brahmanas, he prospers. If a man slanders brahmanas, he is soon defeated. Just as a lump of earth flung into the great ocean is destroyed, in that way, a performer of wicked deeds faces destruction. Behold the dark marks on the moon and the saline water in the ocean. The great Indra was also marked with the signs of one thousand vaginas. It was through their powers that these were converted into one thousand eyes and Shatakratu obtained peace.[1264] O Madhava! They are like that. O Madhusudana! A man who desires prosperity and fame and the worlds, follow brahmanas and purifies his soul.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Hearing the earth's words, Madhusudana applauded them. Having heard them, he worshipped the earth. O Partha! Since you have heard this, try to always worship the bulls among brahmanas. That is the way you will obtain benefit."'

Chapter 1716(35)

'Bhishma said, "If one is born as a brahmana, one is immensely fortunate. One is revered by all creatures and if one is a guest, one gets to eat first. O son! Brahmanas are well-wishers towards everyone. They have excellent minds and mouths. When they are worshipped, they pronounce auspicious words of benediction. O son! There may be those who hate brahmanas and disrespect their birth. When they are not properly worshipped, let them pronounce terrible curses on these. Those who know about the ancient accounts recount a hymn that was sung by Brahma. In ancient times, having created brahmanas, the creator ordained their tasks. ‘He[1265] should never do something that has not been properly laid down for him. When they are protected, brahmanas protect. They are the best ornament of any habitation. When a brahmana undertakes his own tasks, there is prosperity. They set the standards for all beings and also restrain them along their paths. A learned brahmana must never undertake tasks recommended for a shudra. If he performs tasks recommended for a shudra, dharma is obstructed. Through studying, he obtains prosperity, intelligence, energy, powers, influence and unadulterated greatness. By offering oblations, they are established in great fortune. Prosperous brahmanas have been thought of as those who deserve to eat even before expectant mothers. If such a person has great faith, is without violence and without greed and is devoted to self-control and studying, he obtains all the objects of desire. Through their austerities, knowledge and humility, they can be successful in obtaining everything that exists in the world of men and gods.’ O unblemished one! I have thus recounted to you what Brahma chanted. Out of compassion towards brahmanas, the intelligent one himself stated this. I think that the strength of those who are ascetics is equal to that of those who are kings. They are impossible to assail, fierce, proud and swift in action. There are some virtuous ones who are as spirited as lions. There are others who are as spirited as tigers. There are some who are as spirited as boars or deer. Others are as spirited as elephants. There are some who are as mild as cotton. Others are like *makara*s to the touch. There are some who can destroy those who speak against them. Others can slay with their sight. There are virtuous ones who are like the poison of serpents. But there are also virtuous ones who are mild. O Yudhishthira! Many kinds of conduct are followed by brahmanas. Because there are no brahmanas among them, Mekalas, Dramidas, Kashas, Poundras, Kollagiras, Shoundikas, Daradas, Darvas, Chouras, Shabaras, Barbaras, Kiratas, Yavanas and many other tribes of kshatriyas have been reduced to the status of vrishalas. Having been defeated by brahmanas, asuras had to resort to the depths of the ocean. It is through the favours of brahmanas that gods got to reside in heaven. One is incapable of touching the sky. The Himalaya mountains are incapable of moving. A bridge cannot be constructed over the Ganga. On earth, brahmanas are incapable of being defeated. If one acts counter to brahmanas, one is incapable of ruling the earth. Great-souled brahmanas are like gods among the gods. If you desire to enjoy this entire earth, right up to the girdle of the ocean, always worship them through gifts and servitude. O unblemished one! When they receive gifts, the energy of brahmanas is pacified. O unblemished one! If you wish to protect yourself, do not engage with those who do not receive.”’

Chapter 1717(36)

‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between Shakra and Shambara. Listen. Shakra assumed the disguise of an ascetic with matted hair, smeared with dust all over his body. In that distorted form, he presented himself before Shambara and asked, ‘O Shambara! What is the conduct through which you have come to be regarded as the foremost one among your relatives? I am asking you. Tell me that.’

‘“Shambara replied, ‘I never censure brahmanas and Brahma, the grandfather. When brahmanas recite from the sacred texts, I cheerfully honour them. I do not ignore what I have heard, nor do I ever find fault with it. Having grasped the feet of those intelligent ones, I worship and then question them. Since they are always assured by me, they speak to me trustfully. Even if they are distracted, I am attentive. When they are asleep, I am awake. Without any malice, I follow the path indicated by the sacred texts. Like bees use honey in a hive, these brahmanas sprinkle me with knowledge from the sacred texts. I satisfy them and use my intelligence to accept whatever they say. Meditating with my soul, I always think of myself as inferior. I am like one who is licking the juices at the tip of their tongues. That is how I am established amidst my kin, like the moon among nakshatras. The sacred texts that emanate from the mouths of brahmanas are like amrita on earth. If one acts in accordance with this, one obtains supreme benefit. Thus, in ancient times, my father was delighted and amazed to see that this was being used in a battle between the gods and the asuras in ancient times.[1266] On witnessing the greatness of the great-souled brahmanas, my father asked the moon, "How do they become successful?"

'"'Soma said, "All the brahmanas become successful through their austerities. Their strength always lies in speech, just as that of kings lies in the valour of their arms. For brahmanas, words are weapons. Wherever he dwells, he should study. If he lives in a place that is extremely difficult to reside in, he must tend to the fire. He must be without anger and without pride. He must be an ascetic who looks upon everything equally. If he is born in a superior lineage, he must dwell in his father's house and study all the Vedas. He must not boast about this learning. Know that this is the sign of an ordinary person. Just as a snake is swallowed up by a hole in the ground, a king who is unwilling to fight and a brahmana who does not dwell far away[1267] are both swallowed. Great insolence destroys prosperity for men who are limited in intelligence. A maiden who conceives is tainted and this is also true of a brahmana who resides at home."'

'"Shambara continued, 'My father heard these extraordinary instructions from Soma. He followed the great vow of worshipping brahmanas and so do I.'"

'Bhishma said, "On hearing the words that had emanated from the mouth of the Indra among the danavas, Shakra worshipped brahmanas and became the great Indra."'

Chapter 1718(37)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! Who is the best recipient for a gift—a stranger, a person with whom one has lived for a long time, or a guest who has come from a long distance away?"

'Bhishma replied, "People follow diverse rites and excellent vows. Everything should be given to whoever asks. However, we have heard that donations that make the various categories of servants suffer must not be undertaken. If the various categories of servants suffer, one's own self suffers. The learned know that all these are proper recipients—a stranger, a person with whom one has lived for a long time, or a guest who has come from a long distance away.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “One must not give by making the servants suffer or by causing violence to dharma. We must also ascertain the nature of the recipient, so that we do not suffer from the act of giving.”

‘Bhishma said, “If the officiating priest, the priest, the preceptor, the disciple, matrimonial allies and relatives possess learning and lack tendencies of causing injury, they must all be honoured and worshipped. All those who do not possess these traits do not deserve to be treated virtuously. Therefore, one must always attentively examine men. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Lack of anger, truthfulness in speech, lack of injury, self-control, uprightness, lack of hatred, lack of excessive pride, modesty, patience, austerities, tranquility and lack of improper deeds—if these signs are seen in a person, he is a deserving recipient and must be honoured. Whether it is someone with whom one has dwelt for a long time, or whether it is someone one has just met, whether it is a stranger or someone one knows, if these signs are present, he is a deserving recipient and must be honoured. A person who questions the proof of the Vedas and transgresses the sacred texts, or a person who questions the ordinances in every way, destroys his own self. O son! There may be a brahmana who thinks himself to be learned but censures the Vedas, who is addicted to the futile knowledge of argumentation and scrutinizes everything in detail, who questions the reasons behind everything and seeks to be triumphant over those who cite reasons, who always speaks against brahmanas and talks too much, who is suspicious of everyone, childish and harsh in speech—the learned know such a man to be the equal of a dog. He barks like a dog, always seeking to bite. The purpose of such speech is to destroy all the sacred texts. Such people are limited in learning and are inferior in arguments. When they are asked, they are seen to be lacking in learning. They may exhibit the signs of knowledge, but they are engaged in detecting weaknesses in those who are learned about shruti, smriti, itihasa, Puranas and the *Aranyaka*s. However, there are also acts that lead to the progress of the worlds and do not cause damage to dharma or one’s own self—men who engage in these, obtain prosperity for eternity. The rishis have said that debts to gods, rishis, ancestors, brahmanas and guests, as the fifth, must be repaid.[1268] In due order, if a householder purifies himself and undertakes these tasks that have been laid down, then, his dharma does not suffer.”’

Chapter 1719(38)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear about the character of women. O grandfather! Women are the root of all sins and their intelligence is fickle.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Narada and the courtesan Panchachuda. In ancient times, the intelligent devarshi Narada was roaming through the worlds. In Brahma’s region, he saw the unblemished apsara, Panchachuda. On seeing all her beautiful limbs, the sage asked the apsara, ‘O one with the excellent waist! There is a doubt in my heart. Tell me.’ Having been thus addressed, she told the brahmana Narada, ‘If you think that I am capable, tell me what the subject is.’

‘“Narada said, ‘O fortunate one! I will never ask you to do something that you are incapable of. O one with the beautiful face! I wish to hear the truth about the character of women.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “On hearing the words of the devarshi, the supreme among apsaras replied, ‘Since I am a woman, I am incapable of criticizing women. You know about women and their nature. O devarshi! You should not ask me to answer such a question.’ The devarshi said, ‘O one with the excellent waist! You have spoken the truth. However, lying is a sin. There is no sin in speaking the truth.’ Having been thus addressed, the one with the beautiful smiles made up her mind. She truthfully spoke about the eternal vices of women.

‘“Panchachuda said, ‘O Narada! Even if a woman belongs to a noble lineage, is beautiful and has a protector, she doesn’t follow the restraints. That is a fault among women. There is nothing more evil than women. Women are the root of all sins. You yourself know this. There may be a husband who is famous, prosperous, handsome and obedient. Even then, a woman waits to disregard him. O lord! We women are prone to wickedness and adharma. We abandon our shame and are attracted to evil men. Women like those who approach, desire and serve them. They aren’t concerned about not following the restraints. Out of fear of relatives, or injury caused to people, women aren’t constrained to follow restraints and stick by their husbands. Women do not find anyone unapproachable, nor do they care about age. They enjoy men, regardless of whether they are handsome or ugly. Because of fear, compassion, riches, kin, family and alliances, women never remain with their husbands. Women of good families also envy independent women who are young and wear beautiful ornaments and garments. There may be beloved wives who are protected and always greatly respected. Even they are attracted to those who are hunchbacked, blind, dumb and dwarves. O devarshi! They are attracted to the disabled and other ugly men. O great sage! There is no one in this world whom women regard as unapproachable. O brahmana! If a man can be obtained in any way, a woman never remains with her husband. If a woman is restrained and protects herself, that is because a man cannot be obtained, out of fear of relatives, or out of fear of being killed or imprisoned. Their nature is fickle. They are difficult to please and difficult to understand. Women are like words spoken by the wise.[1269] Wood never satisfies a fire. The great ocean is never satisfied by rivers. Yama is not satisfied with all creatures. The fair-eyed ones are never satisfied with men. O devarshi! I think that this is a mystery about all women. As soon as she sees a man, a woman’s vagina is moistened. Even the best of women are not satisfied with husbands who give them everything that they wish, do whatever they desire and protect them. A woman does not attach as much importance to objects of pleasure, many ornaments and large stores of possessions as she does to the prospect of sexual intercourse. The destroyer, destruction, death, the nether regions, the subterranean fire, the sharpness of a razor, the poison of a snake and the fire—all these collectively exist in a woman. The creator ordained the worlds and the five great elements originated with him. O Narada! When men and women were created, these are the sins that were implanted in women.’”’

Chapter 1720(39)

‘Yudhishthira said, “In this world, men are extremely attracted to women. O king! They are overcome by great confusion and think that this is because of destiny. In this world, it can be distinctly seen that women are also attracted to men. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Therefore, a great doubt is circling around in my heart. Why are men attracted to women? Which are the men who attract and repel women? O tiger among men! How is one capable of protecting them? You should tell me about women and men. They seem to be full of illusion and deceive men. If a man falls into their hands, how can he escape? Like a cow searching out new grass, they seem to seize upon newer and newer men. The learned say that Shambara’s maya, Namuchi’s maya and that of Bali and Kumbhinasa, all of that exists in a woman. When a man laughs, they laugh.[1270] When a man cries, they weep. By chance, even if a disagreeable person arrives at the house, they greet him with pleasant words. The intelligence of a woman is superior to the sacred texts that Ushanas and Brihaspati know. That being the case, how can men protect themselves? They present falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood. O brave one! That being the case, how can men protect themselves? O slayer of enemies! The purport of the sacred texts seems to have been derived from the essence of feminine intelligence. I think that Brihaspati and others derived their norms of good conduct on that basis. When they are worshipped by men, they turn their minds away from men. O king! Women also agitate the minds of men. How can one protect oneself? I have a great doubt on this score. O mighty-armed one! O extender of the Kuru lineage! Tell me about this. O best among the Kuru lineage! If it is possible, how does one protect oneself against them? How does one do this? Has anyone managed to do this earlier? You should explain this to me.”’

Chapter 1721(40)

‘Bhishma said, “O mighty-armed one! It is exactly like that. O Kouravya! O lord of men! There is no falsehood in what you have said about women. In this connection, there is an ancient history about how, earlier, the great-souled Vipula was able to ensure protection. O bull among the Bharata lineage!

O son! O lord of the earth! I will also tell you the truth about how and why women were created by Brahma. O son! There is no one who is more evil than women. O lord! A woman is the flame of a fire. She is Maya's maya.[1271] She is the sharp edge of a razor. She is the poison of a snake. A woman is all these, and death, come together. O mighty-armed one! We have heard that these subjects were once devoted to dharma. They themselves obtained divinity. The gods were alarmed at this. O scorcher of enemies! The gods went and met the grandfather. They told him what was in their minds. They stood there silently, with downcast faces. The grandfather discerned what was in the hearts of the gods. For the sake of confusing men, the lord created women. O Kounteya! In an earlier creation, all the women were virtuous. In this creation, Prajapati created those who were wicked. The grandfather gave them desire and, driven by desire, they started to pursue each other. Driven by desire and greed, women tormented the men. The lord, the lord of the gods, also created anger as an aide of desire. Under the subjugation of desire and, anger, all the subjects were submerged. There is no special act of dharma that has been laid down for women. The sacred texts say that they are without senses and without mantras and are prone to falsehood.[1272] Prajapati gave women beds, seats, ornaments, food, drink, ignoble behaviour, immoderation in speech and addiction to desire. Men are incapable of ever restraining them. O son! Even the creator of the universe is incapable of doing that, how can men do it? Words, the prospect of being killed, imprisonment and many kinds of hardships are incapable of keeping women within bounds. They are always without restraints.

'"O tiger among men! However, earlier, I have also heard how, in ancient times, Vipula was able to restrain his preceptor's wife. There was an immensely fortunate and famous rishi by the name of Devasharma. His wife was named Ruchi and her beauty was unmatched on earth. O Indra among kings! All the gods, gandharvas and danavas were attracted to her beauty, in particular, the slayer of Vritra and Paka. The great sage, Devasharma, knew about feminine nature. As best as he could, to the best of his ability, he sought to protect his wife. He knew that Purandara coveted other people's wives. That is the reason he made efforts to protect his wife. O son! On one occasion, the rishi made up his mind to undertake a sacrifice. He began to think about how his wife's protection might be ensured. The immensely ascetic one thought and thought about a method for protection. He summoned his beloved disciple, Vipula, who was from the Bhargava lineage. ‘O son! I will depart to undertake a sacrifice. The lord of the gods has always desired Ruchi. You must protect her, to the best of your ability. Be attentive and always watch out for Purandara. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! He can assume many different kinds of forms.’ O king! The ascetic, Vipula, controlled in his senses and always fierce in his austerities, with a resplendence that was like the fire and the sun, was thus addressed. He was knowledgable about dharma and truthful in speech. He signified his assent. O great king! As his preceptor was about to leave, he again asked him, ‘O sage! What are the forms in which Shakra appears? What kind of body and energy does he assume? You should explain this to me.’ O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The illustrious one described the truth about Shakra’s maya to the great-souled Vipula. ‘O brahmana rishi! The slayer of Bala and chastiser of Paka has many kinds of maya. Repeatedly, he assumes all these diverse forms. He sports a diadem and wields a vajra or bow. Or he may wear a crown and adorn himself with earrings. In a short instant, he may assume a form like that of a chandala. O son! Yet again, he may have a crest and matted locks and attire himself in rags. His body may be large and thick, or it can again become thin. He can also assume compexions that are fair, dusky or dark. He may be ugly or handsome, young or old. He can be wise, stupid, dumb, short or tall. Shatakratu can appear like a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya or a shudra. He can belong to a superior varna, or an inferior one. He may appear in the form of a parrot or a crow, or in the form of a swan or a cuckoo. He can also assume the form of a lion, a tiger or an elephant. He can appear as a god, a daitya or a king. He may seem to be extremely thin, as if the wind can break down his limbs. He can also appear like a malformed bird. Sometimes, he assumes many forms which are those of quadrupeds. He may also seem to be foolish. He can assume the form of a fly or a mosquito. O Vipula! One is incapable of comprehending the form that he has assumed. O son! The creator of the universe, the one who has created this entire world, cannot understand it. Shakra can also disappear and only be seen with the sight of knowledge. The king of the gods can also transform himself into the form of the wind. O Vipula! Therefore, you must make great efforts in protecting the one with the slender waist. O supreme among the Bhrigu lineage! You must ensure that Indra of the gods does not molest Ruchi. That would be like sacrificial oblations being licked by an evil-minded dog.’ Having said this, the sage departed, to undertake the sacrifice. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The immensely fortunate Devasharma went away.

‘“Hearing his preceptor’s words, Vipula began to think. ‘I will make supreme efforts to protect her from the immensely strong king of the gods. But what can I possibly do to protect my preceptor’s wife? Indra of the gods is well versed in may a. He is valiant and unassailable. What efforts will I make to protect her from the chastiser of Paka? He can assume many kinds of forms and enter this cottage. Shakra is capable of assuming the form of the wind to molest my preceptor’s wife. Therefore, the best thing I can do now is to penetrate Ruchi’s body. In that way, I can protect her through my manliness. The illustrious Harivahana is capable of deception through his many disguises. I will use the strength of my yoga to protect her from the chastiser of Paka. I will penetrate her body with my body and protect her. My preceptor will return and see that his wife, Ruchi, has been defiled. There is no doubt that he will curse me in rage. The great ascetic possesses divine sight. But this lady cannot be protected through techniques adopted by other men. Indra of the gods has the power of maya and I am confronted with a dilemma. I must certainly obey my preceptor’s instructions. If I am able to protect her, that will be extraordinary. I will use yoga to penetrate the body of my preceptor’s wife. She will be free from taint and no sin will attach to me. On his journey, a traveller seeks shelter in a deserted house. In that way, I will reside in the body of my preceptor’s wife. A drop of water moves, but does not touch the lotus leaf that it is on. In that way, I will dwell inside the body, detached.’ Knowing everything about the Vedas, this is the way he looked at dharma. Vipula considered his own austerities and those of his preceptor. Having made up his mind, Bhargava resorted to this technique of protection. O king! He made great efforts. Listen. The great ascetic, Vipula, seated himself near his preceptor’s wife. When the one with the unblemished limbs was also seated, he distracted her by telling her stories. He fixed his eyes on her eyes and the vision that emerged from him on her vision. Vipula entered her body, like the wind entering the sky. His attributes mixed with her attributes. His face merged into her face. Like an immobile shadow, the sage remained inside her. Vipula numbed the body of his preceptor's wife. He resided there and protected her and she herself didn't get to know. O king! He continued to do this until his great-souled preceptor returned to his house. He protected her for the duration that the sacrifice took."'

Chapter 1722(41)

'Bhishma said, "One day, Indra of the gods assumed a divine form. Sensing an opportunity, he arrived at the hermitage. O lord of men! He assumed a form that was attractive and handsome and in that disguise, he entered the hermitage. He saw that Vipula's body was seated immobile. His eyes were visionless, as if he was a portrait. Ruchi was beautiful in her limbs. Her hips and breasts were full. Her eyes were as large as lotus petals. Her face was like the full moon. She was also seated. On seeing him, she wished to stand up. She was astounded at his form and wished to ask him who he was. O Indra among men! But though she wished to rise, she was restrained by Vipula, who was inside her. She was incapable of movement. In extremely sweet and gentle words, Indra of the gods addressed her. 'O one with the beautiful smiles! Know that I am Indra of the gods and I have come here for you. I am afflicted by the god of love and desire you. O one with the beautiful brows! Therefore, accept me. A long period of time has already elapsed.'[1273] The sage, Vipula, heard Shakra's words. From inside the body of his preceptor's wife, he saw the lord of the gods. O king! However, the unblemished one was incapable of rising. O king! Since Vipula had penetrated her, she was also incapable of speaking. Through the signs, the extender of the Bhrigu lineage understood what his preceptor's wife intended.[1274] O lord! Using his powers of yoga, the immensely energetic one restrained her. Using the bonds of yoga, he tied down all her senses.

'"Seeing that she was indifferent, Shachi's consort addressed her again. O king! Restrained by the strength of yoga, she was ashamed that she couldn't speak. She wished to reply, 'Come to me. Welcome.' However, Vipula restrained the words his preceptor's wife desired to speak. Instead, the words that emerged were, 'Hello. Why have you come here?' From a mouth that was as beautiful as the moon, these refined words emerged.[1275] Under someone else's subjugation, she shame-facedly spoke these words. Purandara was terrified at this and became distracted. O lord of the earth! The king of the gods glanced at her again. The one with the one thousand eyes glanced at her with his divine sight. He thus saw the sage inside her body. Inside the body of the preceptor's wife, he was like an image in a mirror. Purandara saw that he was terrible in his austerities. O lord! Scared of being cursed, he trembled. The immensely great ascetic, Vipula, released his preceptor's wife. He entered his own body and addressed the terrified Shakra. 'O Purandara! You have not conquered your senses. You are wicked in your soul. Gods and men will not worship you for long. O Shakra! Have you forgotten? Is that incident no longer in your mind? You were marked with the signs of vaginas and freed from those because of Goutama. I know that you are foolish in understanding and that you have not cleansed your soul. You are fickle. O stupid one! She is protected by me. O wicked one! Go wherever you have come from. O foolish one! If you do not, I will instantly burn you down with my own energy. O Vasava! It is only out of pity towards you that I am not burning you down. O evil-minded one! My preceptor is intelligent and terrible in his austerities. If he sees you, his eyes will blaze in rage and he will burn you down. O Shakra! Never again, should you disrespect brahmanas in this way. If you do not depart, through the power of brahmanas, your sons and your advisers will be destroyed. You think yourself to be immortal and conduct yourself in this way. But that is not true and there is nothing that cannot be obtained through austerities.' Hearing the great-souled Vipula's words, Shakra did not say anything in reply. Overcome by shame, he disappeared.

'"Soon after Shakra had departed, the great ascetic, Devasharma, returned to his hermitage, having completed the sacrifice he had desired to undertake. O king! Vipula was engaged in doing what brought his preceptor pleasure. As soon as he returned, he handed over his preceptor's unblemished wife, whom he had protected, to him. Devoted to his preceptor and tranquil in his soul, he greeted his preceptor. Without any fear, Vipula greeted him and stood there. When he had rested and was seated with his wife, Vipula told him what Shakra had done. Hearing Vipula's words, the powerful sage was satisfied with his good conduct, austerities and control. The lord saw the Vipula was devoted to his preceptor and was virtuous. On seeing that he was devoted to dharma, he uttered words of praise. The one with dharma in his soul applauded his disciple, who was devoted to dharma. He wished to grant a boon to the one who was devoted to his preceptor. Having obtained his preceptor's permission, he asked that he might be able to perform supreme austerities. From that day, Devasharma, the great ascetic, dwelt there with his wife. In that desolate forest, he no longer had any fear from the slayer of Bala and Vritra."'

Chapter 1723(42)

'Bhishma said, "Having acted in accordance with his preceptor's words, Vipula performed terrible austerities. The valiant one thought that he had accomplished a lot of austerities. O lord of the earth! He rivalled the entire earth in these deeds. He roamed around without any fear. Amongst men, he was regarded as one who had obtained great fame. O Kourvya! The lord Vipula thought that he had conquered both the worlds because of his deeds and austerities. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! After some time had passed, an occasion arose when gifts of riches and grain were to be made to Ruchi's sister. At that time, a celestial damsel was travelling through the sky. Her dazzling beauty was supreme. From her body, some flowers fell down on the ground, not very far from the hermitage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Their fragrance was divine. O king! Ruchi, the one with the beautiful eyes, picked them up. Soon, an invitation arrived from the kingdom of Anga. O son! Her elder sister, named Prabhavati, was the wife of the king of Anga, Chitraratha. The beautiful one braided those flowers in her hair. To honour the invitation, Ruchi went to the house of the king of Anga. On seeing those flowers, the queen of the kingdom of Anga, possessing beautiful eyes, asked her sister to get some flowers for her. Ruchi, with the extremely beautiful face, told her husband everything about this. She told the rishi everything that her sister had said.

'"The great ascetic, Devasharma, summoned Vipula. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He instructed him to go in search of the flowers. Without any hesitation, the great ascetic, Vipula, accepted his preceptor's command. O king!

He agreed and went to the spot and the region where those had fallen down from the sky. He saw some other flowers lying there and they were still not faded. He took those divine and beautiful flowers, which were divine in scent. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He managed to get them because of his own austerities. Having obtained them, he was delighted at having been able to follow his preceptor's words. With that garland of champaka flowers, he quickly left for the city of Champa.[1276] O son! In a desolate forest, he saw a human couple. Holding each other's hands, they were dancing around in a circle. O king! One of them quickly advanced too far ahead and a quarrel ensued between them. One said, 'You moved too fast.' The other said, 'No.' O son! They disagreed and argued with each other. While they debated with each other, each one of them muttered an oath and in the words that each of them mentally spoke, each named Vipula. 'If I have spoken falsely, in the world after death, may I face the end that is destined for the brahmana Vipula.' Hearing this, Vipula's face became cheerless. 'I have undergone terrible austerities and find this difficult to accept. Why has this couple said that I will attain an evil end? Why have they said that my end will be the worst among all creatures?' O supreme among kings! Vipula thought along these lines. He bowed his head down and, distressed, began to think about any wicked deed that he might have committed. As he proceeded, he saw six men gambling with golden and silver dice, so excited that their body hair stood up. They also took oaths just like the ones the couple had uttered and mentioned Vipula in their words. 'If there is anyone among us, who is driven by avarice and plays unfairly, after death, may he obtain the kind of end that Vipula will get.' O Kouravya! Hearing this, Vipula began to think about everything that he had done since birth, but could not remember any transgression of dharma. O king! He was tormented, like a fire burning in the midst of another fire. Because of the curse he had heard, his mind burnt in grief. O son! While he proceeded, he thought about this for many days and nights. He then remembered the way he had protected Ruchi. 'I penetrated her vision with my vision and her face with my face. But I did not narrate the truth to my preceptor.' O Kouravya! This was the wicked deed that Vipula thought of. O immensely fortunate one! He thought that there was no doubt that this was the transgression. He went to the city of Champa and gave his preceptor the flowers. Loved by his preceptor, he followed the rites and worshipped his preceptor.”’

Chapter 1724(43)

‘Bhishma said, “O lord of men! On seeing that his disciple had returned, the immensely energetic Devasharma spoke these words to him. Listen.

‘“Devasharma asked, ‘O Vipula! What did you see in that great forest? They know about your accomplished soul and about Ruchi.’

‘“Vipula said, ‘O brahmana rishi! O lord! Who were the couple? Who were those men? They knew about me. You should tell me the truth about this.’

‘“Devasharma replied, ‘O brahmana! Know that the couple was night and day. Whirling around in a circular way, they knew the truth about your wicked deed. O brahmana! Know that the men who were cheerfully gambling with the dice were the seasons. They too knew about your wicked deed. No one should be comforted that his wicked deed will remain unknown. O brahmana! A man hides his wicked soul and his wicked deed. Even if a man performs a wicked deed secretly, the seasons, night and day are witness to this. They saw that you had not told your preceptor about your deed, but were nevertheless, cheerful. They thought that a learned person like you should be reminded of this. Day and night and the seasons always know the wicked deeds that a man undertakes, the auspicious, as well as the inauspicious deeds. You did not tell me the truth about what you had done, out of fear that you had committed a transgression. O brahmana! Knowing that you had not told me, they spoke to you about it, so that you did not go the worlds that are meant for wicked people. Having committed a deed, you did not tell me about it. O brahmana! You were capable of protecting a woman, whose nature is evil. You did not do anything to cause my displeasure and I am pleased with you. O supreme among brahmanas! Had I thought that you had committed a wicked deed, without thinking about it and in anger, I would have cursed you. Women have intercourse with men and men find this to be an excellent pursuit. However, your intention was to protect her. Otherwise, your end would have been as the recipient of a curse. O son! You protected her and this is known to me. O son! I am pleased with you. You will progress along a path that is comfortable.'"

'Bhishma said, "The great rishi, Devasharma, was pleased and spoke to Vipula in this way. With his wife and his disciple, he cheerfully ascended to heaven. O king! In ancient times, in the course of a conversation on the banks of the Ganga, the great sage, Markandeya, told me about this. O Partha! That is the reason I have said, women must be protected. Both types of women can always be seen, those who are virtuous and those who are evil. The ones who are virtuous are extremely fortunate and are revered as the mothers of the worlds. O king! They hold up this entire earth, with its forests and groves. The ones who are evil are wicked in conduct. Having determined to sin, they destroy the lineage. O king! They can be known through their wicked signs, naturally manifest on their bodies. It is in this fashion that great-souled ones are capable of protecting them. O tiger among kings! There is no other way in which one is capable of protecting women. O tiger among men! They are fierce. They are fierce in their valour. There is nothing that they love more than sexual intercourse with men. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Even when they have agreed to live with one person, they do not act in this way. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! They consort with other men. O lord of men! Men should not act out of affection towards them, nor should they be driven by jealousy. They should be enjoyed regretfully, because that is dharma. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! If a man acts in a contrary way, he will destroy himself. O tiger among men! In every kind of situation, logic is always honoured. That is the single method Vipula used to protect a woman. O king! In this world of men, there is no other way to protect women."'

Chapter 1725(44)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! Tell me the foundation of all dharma concerning offspring, the home, ancestors, gods and guests."

'Bhishma replied, "O lord of the earth! Those who have thought about dharma have expressed their views about all kinds of dharma associated with the bestowing of a maiden. O Yudhishthira! A virtuous brahmana who is always devoted to dharma bestows his daughter on an excellent groom, after ascertaining his good conduct, learning, birth and deeds. This kind of favourable bestowal is also the eternal dharma of virtuous kshatriyas and is known as a *brahma* form of marriage. O Yudhishthira! When one bestows one's daughter on someone she has herself chosen, ignoring one's own wishes, those who know about dharma speak of this as a gandharva kind of dharma.[1277] O king! When a lot of riches are used to tempt a girl's relatives and purchase her, the learned say that this is an asura kind of dharma. O son! When weeping relatives are slain and their heads severed and a weeping maiden is forcibly abducted from her house, that kind of dharma has the signs of rakshasa. O Yudhishthira! Of these five, three constitute dharma and two are adharma.[1278] The paishacha and asura forms should never be resorted to.[1279] O bull among the Bharata lineage! The brahma, *kshatra* and gandharva forms represent dharma.[1280] There is no doubt that these should be resorted to, in pure or mixed form.[1281] A brahmana can have three wives, a kshatriya can have two wives. A vaishya should take one from his own varna. The children will be equal.[1282] The brahmana wife will be senior and the kshatriya wife for the kshatriya.[1283] There are people who say that a shudra wife can be accepted for intercourse, but others disagree. The virtuous do not praise the birth of offspring through shudras. If a brahmana has offspring through a shudra, penance is recommended. A man who is thirty years old should wed a girl who is ten years old, known as *nagnika*.[1284] Alternatively, a man who is twenty-one years old should wed a girl who is seven years old. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a girl has a father, but does not have a brother, she should not be wed, since she might follow the dharma of a *putrika*. When a girl has attained puberty, one should wait for three years. In the fourth year, if she is still not married, she should look for a husband herself. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The offspring of such a girl are not tainted, nor is intercourse with her condemned. If she does not act in this way, Prajapati does not approve of her conduct. One should wed a girl who is not of the same pinda as the mother or the same gotra as the father.[1285] In this way, one follows the dharma that Manu spoke about."

'Yudhishthira said, "Some people offer a bride price and others speak of gifts. Some speak of their bravery, others exhibit their riches. O grandfather!

Others accept the hand in marriage. Whom does the maiden belong to?[1286] I wish to ask the truth about this. You are like my sight.”

‘Bhishma replied, “As long as men remain in their own station, whatever action they undertake is beneficial, regardless of whether it is with mantras or without mantras. However, a lie is a grave sin.[1287] Some people say that if a marriage takes place as the outcome of a falsehood, the wife, the offspring, the officiating priest, the preceptor, the disciple and the instructor, all of these deserve to be punished. But others do not agree. Manu does not approve of intercourse with a person one doesn’t desire. This is against fame and against dharma. This is a falsehood that causes violence to dharma.[1288] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whether there was a promise to give following dharma, or whether the girl was purchased, in such an instance, there is certainly no sin if the promise to bestow is not adhered to. With the sanction of the relatives, mantras and offerings should be resorted to. Without mantras, an act of bestowal is never successful. When the relatives take a pledge to the accompaniment of mantras, the offspring that are obtained through such a wife are regarded as superior.[1289] It is the injunction of dharma that a husband must regard his wife as having been given to him by the gods. Whether she is a goddess or whether she is human, one must not reject someone who is the victim of a falsehood.”[1290]

‘Yudhishthira asked, “A bride price may have been obtained for a maiden. Thereafter, one may come across a superior groom. If the father looks at dharma, artha and kama, should he then make his words come false? In such instances, whatever one does seems to be inferior. In deciding on what is dharma for all of us, what are the views of those who have thought of dharma? I wish to ask you the truth about this. You are my vision. Therefore, tell me everything. I am not satisfied with what you have recounted.”

‘Bhishma replied, “One should not be firm in adhering to the bride price and the one who pays it, knows this.[1291] Virtuous ones never bestow their daughters on the basis of a bride price. Relatives desire a bride price only when the groom doesn’t possess qualities. Many ornaments are willingly given. When these are given, that’s not a price, nor is this a sale. Receiving objects in this way has been eternal dharma. Some say, ‘I will bestow this maiden.’ Other say nothing. Still others say, ‘I will certainly bestow this maiden.’ Whether it is said or not said, doesn't matter.[1292] Therefore, there is marriage only when they accept each other's hands. We have heard that earlier, this is the way the Maruts used to bestow their excellent daughters. The rishis have instructed that maidens should not be bestowed on those who are inappropriate. They are the foundation of desire and also the root of offspring. That is my view. Though the practice of purchase and sale of maidens has continued, on scrutiny, it is seen to be associated with many evils and cannot lead to marriage. Listen. Having defeated all the Magadhas, Kashis and Kosalas, I abducted two maidens for Vichitravirya.[1293] He accepted the hand of one, but not the other, because a bride price had been paid through the act of conquest. My father was of the view that even if her hand had been accepted, she should have been released.[1294] Kourava said that one should not marry this maiden. Since I doubted my father's words, I went and asked others, thinking that my father was overly conscious about dharma. O king! Wishing to know the nature of good conduct, I also went to him and repeatedly addressed these words. 'I wish to know the truth about good conduct.' O great king! My father, Bahlika, supreme among the upholders of dharma, spoke to me in these words. 'The issue is whether marriage is contracted when a bride price is accepted, or when the hand is accepted. If one holds that one becomes a husband from the act of acceping a bride price, this is shameless behaviour. The ones who know about dharma have said that there is no such proof in the sacred texts. Marriage results from accepting the hand and not from accepting the bride price. It is known that which is important is the act of bestowal and not purchase and sale. People who respect purchase through a bride price are not those who know about dharma. One should not bestow to those, nor have marriages with their likes. A wife should never be bought or sold. People who think that she can be bought and sold, like a servant-girl, follow the conduct of those who are wicked in intelligence and avaricious.' In this connection, people had asked Satyavan about dharma.'A person may have paid a bride price for a maiden. But the payer subsequently dies. Can someone else then accept the maiden's hand? We have a doubt on this score about dharma. O immensely wise one! You are revered by the wise. Please dispel our doubt about this. We are asking you about the truth. You are like our sight.' Satyavan spoke these words to all of them. 'She should be bestowed on someone desirable. One should not reflect about this. Since this is true even when the payer is alive, there is no scope for doubt when he is dead.’ It is also held that if the girl is a virgin, she can torment herself through great austerities, or marry the husband’s[1295] younger brother, follow him and have intercourse with him. Some have written in this way, others have voiced their views strongly. The learned have not spoken firmly about this. Even if all the prenuptial rites have been performed, with all the auspicious mantras, there is no sin from uttering a falsehood.[1296] The act of accepting a hand in marriage concludes with the mantras uttered at the seventh step.[1297] The hand of the maiden is offered and accepted as a wife. A brother must give away that maiden and following the rites, there must be circumambulation around the fire. An excellent brahmana must not marry a maiden who is unwilling, or one who is not from a comparable family.”’

Chapter 1726(45)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “There may be a situation where a bride price has been given for a maiden, but the prospective husband no longer exists.[1298] O grandfather! What should be done then? Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “She must be maintained like a son, in case the husband returns. Alternatively, the bride price can be returned. If it is not returned, the maiden belongs to the one who has paid the price. Therefore, she is also capable of having offspring through means that have been sanctioned.[1299] However, no person can use mantras for this purpose.[1300] Instructed by her father, Savitri had herself done this.[1301] Some people who know about dharma have praised this, but not others. There are some who have not acted in this way. There are some who do not hold this to be virtuous. There are those who hold that the best sign of dharma is the conduct of the virtuous. About this kind of conduct, Sukratu spoke the following words. He was the grandson of the king of Videha, the great-souled Janaka. ‘How can one praise conduct that is along a path followed by the wicked? There should be no questioning or doubt about the conduct of the virtuous. The dharma of the wicked is the confused dharma of asuras. We have not heard of anything like this in the lives of those who have come before us.' The relationship between a wife and a husband is not comparable to mere intercourse between a woman and a man. The latter is the ordinary dharma of desire. This is what that king[1302] said."

'Yudhishthira asked, "What are the rules whereby a man's riches are inherited? For a father's property, a daughter should be no different from a son."

'Bhishma replied, "The son is like one's own self and the daughter is like the son. As long as these offspring are alive, no one else should inherit the riches. Unmarried daughters have a share in their mother's *youtaka*.[1303] If a father dies without leaving any sons, then the daughter's son inherits the ancestral property. He is the one who offers the funeral cakes to both his father and his maternal grandfather. The sacred texts of dharma have said that there is no special difference between a son and a daughter's son. Even if offspring has been generated by someone else,[1304] he is said to be a son. There is no special difference between a son and a daughter's son who has been generated by someone else. However, in cases where a daughter has been sold by the father, I see no reason in dharma that allows a daughter's son to inherit. Such sons are malicious and addicted to adharma. They are deceitful and appropriate other people's possessions. They are the result of an asura form of marriage, a conduct that is contrary to the dictates of dharma. There are those who are knowledgable about the ancient accounts, devoted to dharma and the sacred texts of dharma, binding themselves down to the ordinances of dharma. They recount a chant that was sung by Yama. 'In a desire for riches, if a man sells his own son, or bestows his daughter through a bride price for the sake of earning a living, he has to progressively pass through seven terrible hells known as Kalasahvya. After death, he feeds on sweat, urine and excrement.' There is a form of marriage called arsha. In this, a cow and a bull are given and some rishis have spoken of this as a bride price. O king! But whether it is small or large, this[1305] should not be regarded as a sale. However, though some people act in this way, it should never be regarded as dharma. Other kinds of marriage are seen, indulged in by those who are greedy. There are some who bring maidens under their subjugation and enjoy them. These are evildoers and have to lie down in hell. A man must never be sold, not to speak of one's own offspring. If riches are obtained with adharma as a foundation, no artha can ever be gained from it."'

Chapter 1727(46)

'Bhishma said, "Those who know about the ancient accounts recite the words of Prachetas. 'Gifts given to relatives cannot be regarded as a sale. Anyone who is not cruel should receive a maiden and, in particular, show her honour by giving the girl gifts.' If they desire a great deal of welfare, the father, brothers, father-in-law and brothers-in-law should honour and sustain her in this way. If the wife does not appeal to a man or does not cause men pleasure, or if a man is not attracted to her, he should not have offspring. O lord of men! A wife must always be honoured and cherished. When women are not honoured, all the rites become unsuccessful. When daughters-in-law grieve, the family is destroyed. O king! When daughters-in-law curse a household, all the performed rites become undone. The houses do not dazzle and grow and their prosperity is destroyed. Before Manu ascended to heaven, he handed over women to men, since they were weak, lightly clad, kind and devoted to the truth.[1306] There are others who hold that they are jealous, desire honour, are fierce, lack affection and lack learning. However, women deserve to be honoured and men must show them respect. Dharma is in trusting women, not just in sex and pleasure. Tend to them, honour them and give them what they want. Behold. The generation of offspring, the nurturing of offspring and pleasure in the way of the world—all these are tied to women. By respecting and honouring them, one becomes successful in all the tasks. The daughter of the king of Videha sung a shloka. 'There are no sacrifices for women. There are no funeral ceremonies they have to observe. Their dharma is to serve their husbands and that is the way they conquer heaven. The father protects her when a child, the husband protects her in youth. The son protects her when she is aged. A woman does not deserve to be independent.' A person who desires affluence and prosperity must treat women well. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Whether she is nurtured or oppressed, a woman is like Shri and this is therefore reflected in one's prosperity."'

Chapter 1728(47)

'Yudhishthira said, "You know the ordinances of all the sacred texts. You know the purport of the dharma of kings. You are famous on earth as someone who can dispel grave doubts. O grandfather! I have a doubt. Explain this to me. When we confront a difficulty, whom shall we ask, other than you? The task of men is to follow eternal dharma. O mighty-armed one! You should explain all of this. O grandfather! Four wives have been recommended for a brahmana—a brahmana, a kshatriya, a vaishya and a shudra, if one desires sexual gratification. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Sons may be born through all of them. In due order, which of these deserves to inherit the father's property? O grandfather! Which of them obtains the father's riches? I wish to hear what has been said about their shares in the sacred texts."

'Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishthira! Brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas—these are the three varnas that are born twice.[1307] It is recommended dharma that a brahmana should marry these. O scorcher of enemies! Through error, greed and desire, a brahmana may marry a shudra, but this is not sanctioned in the sacred texts. If a brahmana lies down in a shudra's bed, he will be afflicted. That is the reason rites of atonement have been laid down for situations like this. O Yudhishthira! If offspring results from this, the penance is doubled. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will now tell you about the rules for distributing riches. The son who is born through a brahmana mother will obtain the best auspicious bull and the best vehicle from his father's riches as his share. O Yudhishthira! What is left of the brahmana's property must then be divided into ten parts. From this, the son born through a brahmana mother will obtain four parts as his share of the father's riches. There is no doubt that the son who is born through a kshatriya mother has the same status as a brahmana. However, because the mother is different, he deserves to be given three parts. Though the son born through the vaishya has been born from the third varna, the father was a brahmana. O Yudhishthira! He should be given two parts of the brahmana's property. It has been said that the son born through a brahmana father and a shudra mother should never be given any riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, a little bit can be given to the son born through the shudra mother.[1308] In this order, the riches are thus divided into ten parts. There may be several sons who have been born through the same varna and they will obtain an equal share in the portion recommended for them. The son who has been born through a shudra mother should not be regarded as a brahmana. Those born through the other three varnas, with a brahmana father, are regarded as brahmanas. It has been said that there are only four varnas and there is no fifth one. The son born through a shudra will obtain a tenth share in the father's riches. But that share will be given to him if his father has given him the share. If his father has not given it, he will not get it. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Subject to this, riches must certainly be given to the son of a shudra. Lack of cruelty is supreme dharma and that is the reason he must be given. Whenever there is compassion, it gives rise to good qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, irrespective of whether one has sons or does not have sons,[1309] under no circumstances should more than a tenth share be given to the son of a shudra wife. If a brahmana possesses more riches than are required to sustain him for three years, he should faithfully use these to perform sacrifices. Riches must not be acquired without reason. Out of the riches, three thousand coins must be given to the wife. When riches are given to her by her husband, she should enjoy them, without giving them away. When the husband dies without an heir, it has been said that the wife is entitled to enjoy all his riches. However, without asking him, a wife must never take her husband's riches. O Yudhishthira! If a brahmana lady possesses any riches that have been given to her by her father, these are inherited by her daughter, since a daughter is like a son. O king! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It has been decreed that she is equal to a son. O bull among the Bharata lineage! These are the instructions of dharma. If these instructions of dharma are remembered, any exercise in obtaining riches will not be rendered futile."

'Yudhishthira said, "It has been said that the son of a brahmana father and a shudra mother must be given riches. However, why must a tenth share be specifically given? There is no doubt that a son born through a brahmana father and a brahmana mother is a brahmana. That is also true of a kshatriya mother and a vaishya mother. O supreme among kings! In that case, why is there a differential in shares? After all, the sons of all three varnas have been said to be brahmanas."

‘Bhishma replied, “O scorcher of enemies! All wives in the world are known by the single name of *dara*.[1310] But though they are addressed by the same name, there are great differences between them. Even if a brahmana marries a brahmana wife after having already married three other wives, she is honoured as the eldest and is regarded as the seniormost. Objects for her husband’s bath, cosmetics, washing the teeth, collyrium, havya, kavya and everything that is connected with dharma will be kept in her room. When she is present, no one else should think of performing those acts. O Yudhishthira! In the rites, the brahmana wife alone should aid the brahmana. Because she is the foremost, food, drink, garlands, garments and ornaments should be given by the brahmana wife to the husband. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! This has been instructed by Manu in the sacred texts. O great king! Therefore, this has been seen as eternal dharma. O Yudhishthira! Out of desire, if a brahmana acts in a contrary way, it has already been said that he is like a chandala. The son born through a kshatriya wife is equal to the son born through a brahmana wife. O king! But even then, there is a difference in the varnas of the mothers. In this world, that is the reason why sons born through brahmana and kshatriya mothers are unequal. O supreme among kings! The son born through the brahmana mother is the foremost. O Yudhishthira! That is the reason he is regarded as the first in inheriting his father’s riches. The sons born through a brahmana mother and a kshatriya mother are not equal. In that way, the sons born through a kshatriya mother and a vaishya mother are not equal. O Yudhishthira! Prosperity, kingdoms and stores of riches have been recommended for kshatriyas. O king! The earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, are seen to belong to them. If a kshatriya is established in his own dharma, he obtains a great deal of prosperity. The king is the wielder of the rod. O king! There can be no protection without the kshatriya. Brahmanas are extremely fortunate and are like gods among the gods. That is the reason, following the proper way, kings must worship them. Know that this is the eternal and undecaying dharma laid down by the rishis. When it decays, by adhering to their own dharma, kshatriyas protect subjects. Riches, wives and all the possessions of all the varnas would have been seized by bandits, had the king not existed as a protector. Thus, there is no doubt that the son of a kshatriya wife is superior to the son of a vaishya wife. O Yudhishthira! That is also the reason he deserves to have a greater share in the father's riches."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O king! O grandfather! You have talked about the rules laid down for brahmanas. What are the rules that have been laid down for the other varnas?"

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Two wives have been recommended for a kshatriya. There are instances of a third and shudra wife, but this is not sanctioned by the sacred texts. O Yudhishthira! This is the order that has been laid down for kshatriyas. O Yudhishthira! The property of a kshatriya must be divided into eight parts. The son of a kshatriya wife will obtain four of those parts from the father's riches. He should also take that much from the father's possessions as is required for engaging in warfare. The son of a vaishya will obtain three parts and the son of a shudra will obtain the eighth part. But the son of a shudra should only take what has been given by the father. He should not take what he has not been given. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! A vaishya should only have a single wife. Sometimes, a second shudra wife is seen. But this is not sanctioned by the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O Kounteya! When a vaishya has both a vaishya and a shudra wife, rules have been laid down for a division between the two. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The property of a vaishya must be divided into five parts. O lord of men! I will tell you how this must be divided among the offspring. The son of the vaishya should take four parts from his father's riches. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The fifth part is the share for the son of the shudra. But the son of a shudra should only take what has been given by the father. He should not take what he has not been given. If the other three varnas have a son through a shudra wife, riches must be given to the son. A shudra can only have a wife from his own varna and not from any other. Even if he has one hundred sons, all of them will have an equal share in the shudra's property. It has also specifically been said that if sons are born through the same varna, irrespective of the varna, all of them will have an equal share in the riches. However, the eldest son is the foremost and the eldest will therefore have one share more than the others. O Partha! This is the law of inheritance, as has been stated by Svayambhu earlier. O king! There is another difference in sons who have been born through the same varna. Especially at the time of marriage, the ones who have been born first must be married first. When the sons are equal, the eldest will obtain one share more. The son in the middle will obtain a medium share and the youngest a smaller share.[1311] Among wives of different varnas, the one who has the same varna as her husband is regarded as the foremost. This is what was stated by maharshi Maricha, the son of Kashyapa.”’

Chapter 1729(48)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “There is a mixture of the varnas and children of mixed parentage are born out of addiction to wealth, desire, uncertainty about varnas or plain ignorance. What are the rules for children of such mixed parentage? What is their dharma and what are their recommended tasks? O grandfather! Tell me this.” ‘Bhishma replied, “Earlier, for the sake of performing sacrifices, Prajapati created the four varnas and there were only four kinds of tasks. A brahmana can have four wives and in two of them, he himself is born.[1312] The sons who are born from the two who are lower down are inferior and have the varna of their mothers. The son born through a brahmana father and a shudra mother is known as a *parashava*, because this is like offspring from a corpse.[1313] He should not give up his own duty of servitude and should serve his own family. He should never abandon that kind of conduct. He must make every kind of effort to hold up the different strands of the family. Even if he is the eldest, he must devote himself to serving the younger ones who are brahmanas. A kshatriya can have three wives and he is himself born in two of these.[1314] The third and shudra wife is inferior and the son born through this is known as *ugra*. A vaishya can have two wives and is himself born in both of these. A shudra can have only one wife and the son obtained through the shudra woman is also a shudra. Any birth outside the pale of the four varnas is condemned by the four varnas. Such a person is especially inferior and will oppress his preceptor’s wife. A kshatriya gives birth[1315] to an outcast son known as a *suta*, who is not entitled to sacrifice, but is only entitled to sing praises and eulogies. A vaishya gives birth[1316] to a *vaidehaka*, who earns a living through grass. A shudra gives birth[1317] to a chandala, who is fierce, lives on the outskirts of habitations and acts as an executioner. These sons are born from brahmana mothers and are the worst of their lineages. O best among intelligent ones! O lord! These are the offspring of mixed parentage. The son born through a vaishya is a *bandi* or *magadha*[1318] and earns a living through the use of words. If perversely, a shudra father has a son through a kshatriya mother, the son is known as a nishada and becomes a fisherman. If a shudra father has a son through a vaishya mother, the son is known as *ayogava* and he dwells in a village or earns a living from the forests. Brahmanas should not accept gifts from them. If those with mixed parentage have offspring through women who are like them in status, the offspring have the same varna. But if the mother's status happens to be inferior, then the offspring that are born are inferior. For the four main varnas, the son has the same status as the father when the mother is of the same varna, or the one immediately below it. However, if the mother's varna is below this too, in general, the offspring is outside the pale of the father's varna. As long as parentage is from the same varna, the offspring also have the same varna. However, where the varnas have intercourse with each other, reprehensible categories are born. For example, a shudra father and a brahmana mother lead to offspring who are outcasts. In this way, those who are outside the four varnas can have offspring with those who are outside the four varnas and this leads to deterioration. There can be such repeated violations of varna, with outcast uniting with outcast. More and more inferior offspring are generated and there are fifteen in number. By having intercourse with someone one should not have intercourse with, a mixture of varnas results. The offspring of *vratya* and magadha are *sairandhra*.[1319] They are servants, earn a living through menial servitude and know about cosmetics and toiletries. The offspring of vratya and ayogava are suta and they earn a living through words. The offspring of *maireyaka* and vaidehaka is *madhuka*. The offspring of nishada and mudgara is *dasha* and they earn a living as boatmen. The offspring of *mritapa* and chandala are shvapaka and they are extremely vile. The offspring of *chatura* and magadha are cruel and earn a living through deceit. They subsist by selling flesh, fragrances, tasty substances and by lending money. Vaidehakas are wicked and cruel and live off their wives. Nishadas give birth to *madranabhas* and they ride on vehicles drawn by asses. Chandalas give birth to pulkasas and they eat the flesh of asses, horses and elephants. These dress themselves in garments stolen from corpses and eat from broken vessels.[1320] Three inferior varnas are born from ayogavas—*kshudra*, vaidehaka and *andhra*. They reside outside the outskirts of a village. *Charmakaras* are born from *karavaras* and nishadas. *Pandusoupakas* are born from chandalas and they make objects of use from stripped cane. Nishadas and vaidehakas give birth to *ahindakas*. Chandalas and *soupakas* give birth to those who earn a living through moudgalya. Nishadas and chandalas have sons who live outside human habitations. These sons live in cremation grounds and are exiled outside. Depending on the transgressions of the father and the mother, many such children of mixed parentage are born. Whether they disclose this or do not disclose this, they should know their own tasks. There is no dharma other than that for the four varnas. There are no indications about dharma for those who are outside the four varnas. They have been born out of wilfulness. They are outside the pale of virtue and no sacrifices have been recommended for them. Outcastes and more outcastes hae been born. They can dwell where they please and earn a living as they please. They reside at crossroads, in cremation grounds, in mountains, and even in trees. They wear ornaments and use many kinds of implements. There is no doubt that they act for the welfare of cattle and brahmanas. They have traits of non-violence, compassion, truthfulness in speech and forgiveness. O tiger among men! There is no doubt that by giving up their own lives to protect others, they can ensure success. I have recounted the instructions about how the intelligent ones have thought about men having offspring. One should not have offspring through a woman from a wrong varna. That would be like a stone sinking into the water. Irrespective of whether a man possesses intelligence or does not possess intelligence, he must not come under the subjugation of desire and anger and walk along an ignoble path. It is the nature of women to taint men. That is the reason learned people are not attracted to women.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “There may be a man who is born of a wicked lineage, but his varna is unknown. O king! How does one discern whether he is noble or ignoble?”

‘Bhishma replied, “Those who are born of mixed parentage have many different kinds of conduct. The purity of birth can be discerned from one’s virtuous acts. Ignoble conduct, contrary behaviour, cruelty and not practising the rites—in this world, these are the signs of a man being born in a wicked lineage. A son inherits his father's conduct, his mother's conduct, or both. He will never be able to conceal his narrow nature. One is born with a form that is like that of the mother or the father. Just as a tiger's stripes reveal, a man will be constrained by his own nature. Even if the origin of the lineage is hidden, if one is born of mixed parentage, a man will reveal himself, depending on whether his good conduct is a lot or is limited. To achieve some purpose, one may walk along a path and adopt a conduct that is apparently noble. However, adherence to good conduct will enable one to determine whether that person is from a superior varna or an inferior varna. People have many kinds of conduct and undertake many kinds of deeds. But in this world, there is nothing as important as good birth and good conduct. A man is affected by his body and his spirit. The spirit can be superior, middling or inferior. Depending on the spirit, one decides on what brings one pleasure. If a person has high birth, but lacks good conduct, he is not worshipped. And if a shudra has good conduct, he is worshipped by those who know about dharma. A man makes himself known through his own deeds. He shows his character through his conduct, good or bad. A man can destroy himself and his lineage, but he also makes it resplendent through his own deeds. That is the reason learned people avoid all those different kinds of women, where they are themselves not born."'[1321]

Chapter 1730(49)

'Yudhishthira said, "O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Tell us about the different kinds of sons who are born in separate varnas. What kinds of sons are these? Who are they? Whose sons are they? We have heard that there have been many disagreements about these sons. O king! We are confused about this. You should sever our doubts."

'Bhishma replied, "Know that an *anantaraja* son is like one's own self.[1322] Know that a son who has been obtained through niyukta is called *prasritaja*.[1323] When a husband unites with his wife, despite knowing that she has gone astray, the son obtained in this fashion is known as *vadhyuda*. There are six kinds of sons known as *apadhvamsaja* and also the one known as *kanina*.[1324] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that these are the kinds that have been mentioned.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Who are the six kinds of sons known as apadhvamsaja? Who is the one known as an *apasada*?. You should explain the truth about all this to me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons that a brahmana obtains through the three lower varnas, the sons that a king obtains through the two lower varnas and the sons that a vaishya obtains through the lower varna are understood to be apadhvamsajas. Now hear about apasadas. Chandala, vratya and *vena*—these are seen to be the three kinds of apasadas and are respectively born through a shudra father and a brahmana, kshatriya or vaishya mother. A vaishya father is seen to have magadha or *vamaka* sons, depending respectively on whether the mother is a brahmana or a kshatriya. When a kshatriya father is seen to have a son through a brahmana mother, the offspring is known as suta. These are said to be apasadas. O lord of men! One is incapable of falsely asserting that these kinds of sons aren’t really sons.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Some say that the son is *kshetraja*. Others say that he is *shukraja*.[1325] Are both of these the same? Whom does the son belong to? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The son is said to be both shukraja[1326] and kshetraja. Listen to me. The sole exception to this principle is *adhyuda*.”[1327]

‘Yudhishthira asked, “We know that the son is shukraja. How can the son become kshetraja? We know about the one called adhyuda. However, in a violation of an agreement, why does the father abandon him?”

‘Bhishma replied, “He may have obtained another son, or there may be some other reason. In any event, ownership does not come from the seed, but from the field. O lord of the earth! The field is the proof. When a person desires to marry for the sake of a son and has a son, that son is his own. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But in other cases,[1328] the son is said to be kshetraja. The son cannot conceal his biological traits. They can be discerned.[1329] The son is sometimes known as the son of the father who has given him birth, or the one who has reared him. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, neither the seed, nor the field, is the complete proof.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “When is a son regarded as that of the biological father and when is he regarded as the son of the one who has reared him? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When is the seed, or the field, taken to be the proof?”

‘Bhishma replied, “A son may be found abandoned on the road by the mother and the father. Unable to find the mother and the father, someone may rear him. In this case, since he is no one’s son, he becomes the son of the person who has reared him. Just as a son obtains the varna of the person who has given him birth, this son obtains the varna of the person who has reared him.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “How are the sacraments[1330] of such a person performed? Who undertakes them? What kind of girl should he be married to? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “The person who rears him should himself perform the sacraments. Having been abandoned by the mother and the father, it is his varna that the son has adopted. O undecaying one! The sacraments should be performed in accordance with the foster-father’s gotra and varna. O Yudhishthira! The maiden bestowed on him should thus be of the same varna. Such sacraments are performed without knowing the biological mother’s gotra and varna. Kanina and adhyuda are known to be tainted sons. Despite this, it has been determined that sacraments should be performed for them. Brahmanas and others should use the same kinds of sacraments for kshetrajas, apasadas and adhyudas as they would for themselves. The sacred texts of dharma have determined injunctions for the different varnas. I have recounted all of this. What else do you wish to hear?”’

Chapter 1731(50)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather! What kind of affection results from seeing someone or dwelling together? What is the great fortune that is associated with cattle? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O immensely radiant one! I will tell you an ancient account, about a conversation between Nahusha and maharshi Chyavana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In ancient times, maharshi Chyavana, from the Bhargava lineage, decided to observe an extremely great vow, characterized by residing in water. He destroyed his pride, anger, joy and sorrow. Firm in his vows, the sage dwelt in water for twelve years. He offered all the creatures there great and auspicious reassurances. To the creatures who lived in the water, the lord was like cool rays. He purified himself and was like a pillar. He bowed down before the gods. He entered the water at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. The currents of the Ganga and the Yamuna flowed with a loud and terrible roar. The force was as swift as that of the wind, but he received all this on his head. The Ganga and the Yamuna, and the other rivers that followed and flowed into them, passed by the rishi and did not cause him any affliction. The great sage was like a piece of wood and happily slept inside the water. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Sometimes, the intelligent one stood upright. The creatures that lived in the water thought that he was agreeable to look at. Cheerful in their minds, the fish sniffed at him. Thus, a long period of time elapsed. O immensely radiant one! On one occasion, some fishermen arrived at the spot, with fishing nets in their hands. Those many nishadas had made up their minds to catch fish. They were brave, strong and broad and were not scared of the water. They arrived at that spot, determined to cast their nets. O lord of men! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! They tied all their nets together and readied themselves to catch fish in the water. Desiring to catch fish, those *kaivarta*s[1331] arrived at the banks of the Ganga and the Yamuna and covered a part of the water with nets that were joined together. These nets were made of new strands and covered a large space. They cast this large net at an appropriate place in the water. With great force, all of them then began to draw the net in from every side. They were cheerful and without fear and listened to each other. Many fish and other aquatic creatures got enmeshed. Chyavana, descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, was surrounded by the fish. O great king! As they dragged in the net, as they wished, he too got enmeshed. His limbs were covered with moss. His beard and matted hair were tawny. Large numbers of conch shells and other kinds of shells had attached themselves to his body and made it multicoloured. As they dragged in the net, they saw the one who was accomplished in the Vedas. All those lower classes joined their hands in salutation, bowed their heads and prostrated themselves on the ground. When the net had been dragged in, the fish were distressed at having been brought in contact with the ground. They were terrified and lamented. The sage saw the carnage that had been done to the fish. He was overcome by compassion and sighed repeatedly.

'"The nishadas said, 'In our ignorance, we have committed this sin.[1332] Show us your favours. O great king![1333] What can we do to please you? Tell us.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Chyavana was thus addressed in the midst of the fish and spoke these words. 'Listen with single-minded attention to my supreme desire now. Whether I have to give up my life, or whether I am sold, I wish to remain with the fish now. I have dwelt with them for a long time and cannot abandon them now.'

Having been thus addressed, the nishadas trembled in great fear. All their faces were distressed and they went and told Nahusha what had happened."'

Chapter 1732(51)

'Bhishma said, "Hearing this, with his advisers and his priest, Nahusha swiftly arrived at the spot where Chyavana was. As is proper, the king purified himself, joined his hands in salutation and presented himself before the great-souled Chyavana. O lord of the earth! The king's priest worshipped the one who was truthful in his vows, immensely fortunate and the equal of a god.

'"Nahusha said, 'You should tell me in detail what agreeable task I can perform for you. O illustrious one! I will do everything for you, even if it is something that is extremely difficult to accomplish.'

'"Chyavana replied, 'These kaivartas earn a living through fish and have made great efforts. Pay them a price for selling me and the fish.'

'"Nahusha said, 'Let the priest give one thousand coins to the nishadas as a price for purchasing such an illustrious one as the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage.'

'"Chyavana replied, 'O king! I am worth more than one thousand coins. What do you think? Use your own intelligence to determine the appropriate price that should be given.'

'"Nahusha said, 'Let one hundred thousand coins quickly be given to the nishadas. Perhaps that is the appropriate price for you. What do you think?'

'"Chyavana replied, 'O bull among kings! I should not be purchased with one hundred thousand coins. Give an appropriate price. Think. Consult your ministers and decide.'

'"Nahusha said, 'Let the priest give one crore coins to the nishadas. If you do not agree to this, let more be given to them.'

'"Chyavana replied, 'O king! O immensely radiant one! I do not deserve to be purchased with one crore coins, or even more. Give an appropriate price. Think. Consult with the brahmanas and decide.'

'"Nahusha said, 'Let one half of my kingdom, or all of it, be given to the nishadas. I think that this should be a right price. O brahmana! Do you think differently?'

'"Chyavana replied, 'O king! I do not deserve to be purchased with one half of the kingdom, or with all of it. Give an appropriate price. Think. Consult with the rishis and decide.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Hearing the maharshi's words, Nahusha was afflicted by grief. He began to think, consulting his ministers and his priest. At that time, a forest dweller who survived on roots and fruits arrived before Nahusha. He was a sage, but had been born from a cow. The supreme among brahmanas addressed the king. 'I will ensure that the brahmana is satisfied. I do not utter a lie, even in jest. How can it be otherwise? Without any doubts, you should do exactly what I tell you.'

'"Nahusha said, 'O illustrious one! Tell me a price that is appropriate for the maharshi descended from the Bhrigu lineage. Save me, my kingdom and my lineage. If the illustrious one is angry, he can destroy the three worlds, not to speak of someone like me, who is devoid of austerities and only possesses the valour of his arms. With my advisers and my officiating priest, I have now been submerged in fathomless waters. O maharshi! Become my boat and determine the price.'"

‘Bhishma continued, “Hearing Nahusha’s words, the powerful one who had been born from a cow spoke, thereby delighting all the advisers and the king. ‘O great king! Brahmanas are supreme among varnas and there can be no price for them. O lord of the earth! However, cows are also priceless. Suggest a cow as a price.’ O king! Hearing the maharshi’s words, Nahusha, and his advisers and his priest, were filled with great delight. They went to Chyavana, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, who was devoted to his vows. Wishing to satisfy him, the king spoke these words. ‘Arise. O brahmana rishi! Get up. O Bhargava! I have purchased you with a cow. O supreme among those who uphold dharma! I think that this is your price.’

‘“Chyavana replied, ‘O Indra among kings! I am getting up. O unblemished one! You have indeed purchased me properly. O one without decay! I do not see any riches that are equal to a cow. O king! O brave one! Talking about, hearing about, giving and seeing cattle is praised. This is auspicious and cleanses all sins. Cows are always the foundation of prosperity. There are no sins in cattle. Cows are like food and represent the supreme oblation that can be offered to gods. Cows are always established in sounds of “svaha” and “vashatkara”. Cows are the ones who convey sacrifices. They are the mouth of a sacrifice. The undecaying and divine milk is borne by them and flows from them. It is like amrita. They are stores of amrita and are honoured by all the worlds. In energy and form, cows are like a fire on earth. Cows represent great energy and bring happiness to beings. When they are in a cow pen and can breathe without fear, that country is resplendent and sins are not attracted to it. Cows represent the ladder to heaven. Cows are worshipped in heaven. Cows are like goddesses that yield every object of desire. It is said that there is nothing superior to a cow. O bull among kings! I have thus recounted the greatness of cattle. I can only state some of the qualities and am not capable of repeating them in their entirety.’

‘“The nishadas said, ‘O sage! You have seen us and have spoken to us. O lord! The virtuous say that seven steps taken together lead to friendship. Show us your favours. The fire consumes all the oblations that are offered into it. O one with dharma in one’s soul! In that way, you are a man who is as powerful as the fire. O learned one! We are bowing down before you. Show us your favours. To show us your grace, take this cow back from us.’

'"Chyavana replied, 'The sight of a sage is like virulent poison and can burn down a niggardly person from his roots, just as a fire consumes dead wood. O kaivartas! I have accepted the cow. You have been freed from all sin. Swiftly go to heaven, with all the fish that have been caught in the net.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Because of the favours of the maharshi with the cleansed soul and because of his words, the nishadas and the fish went to heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On seeing the fishermen ascend to heaven with the fish, King Nahusha was amazed. The sage born from the cow and Chyavana, extender of the Bhrigu lineage, delighted the king by giving him comparable boons, until he said enough. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The immensely valorous King Nahusha, lord of the earth, was supremely delighted. The king was Indra's equal and following dharma, received these. In great joy, he honoured the rishis back. Having completed his vow, Chyavana returned to his hermitage. The immensely energetic sage, descended from a cow, also returned to his hermitage. O lord of men! With the fish, the nishadas went to heaven. Having received the boons, Nahusha went to his own city. O son! O Yudhishthira! I have thus told you what you had asked me about, the affection that results from sight and from dwelling together. It is also the determination of dharma that cows are extremely fortunate. O brave one! What will I speak about next? What does your heart want to know?"'

Chapter 1733(52)

'Yudhishthira said, "O immensely wise one! I have a doubt that is as large as the great ocean. Listen. O mighty-armed one! Having heard, you should explain this to me. O lord! I have a great curiosity about Jamadagni's son, Rama, foremost among the upholders of dharma. You should explain this to me. How was Rama, with truth as his valour, born? Despite being born in a lineage of brahmana rishis, how did he come to practise the dharma of kshatriyas? O king! The entire world also recounts the story of Koushika. Despite being born in a lineage of kshatriyas, how did he become a brahmana? O tiger among men! The power of those two extremely great-souled ones, Rama and Vishvamitra, was exceedingly great. What sins skipped their sons and afflicted their grandsons? How did that happen? You should explain this to me."

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, the ancient history of a conversation between Chyavana and Kushika is recounted. Bhargava Chyavana, immensely intelligent and a bull among sages, foresaw in advance a sin that would descend on his own lineage. He mentally thought about all its good and bad aspects, its strength and weaknesses. The store of austerities desired to burn down the entire Kushika lineage.[1334] Chyavana went to Kushika and spoke these words to him. 'O unblemished one! I desire to dwell with you for some time.'

'"Kushika said, 'O illustrious one! The learned ones have held that the act of dwelling together is a dharma that should be practised only when a daughter has been given away in marriage. That is what learned people have always said. O store of austerities! Otherwise, the door to dharma will be barred. However, with your permission, I should do what you have asked me to.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Kushika instructed that a seat should be offered to the great sage, Chyavana. With his wife, he went and stood before the sage. The king took a vessel and offered him water to wash his feet. The great-souled one ensured that all the rites were observed. Following the prescribed rites, the king offered Chyavana madhuparka. He anxiously waited for the great-souled one, rigid in his vows, to accept this. Having shown the brahmana honour in this way, he spoke these words. 'O illustrious one! We are waiting for your instructions. What should we do for you? O one who is rigid in vows! Is it the kingdom, riches, cattle or objects given in sacrifices? Tell us. I will give you everything. This house, this kingdom and this seat of dharma are yours. You are the king of everything, with the servants. Rule everything. I am also dependent on you.' Having been thus addressed by Kushika in these words, Bhargava Chyavana was filled with great joy. He replied, 'O king! I do not desire the kingdom, riches, women, cattle, the country, or objects offered at sacrifices. If it pleases both of you, I desire to observe a vow. While I am observing it, you should tend to me, without any doubts.' Thus addressed, the couple was delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They told the rishi that it would be that way. Cheerfully, the king led him to an excellent part of the palace, to a beautiful apartment and showed it to him. 'O illustrious one! This is your bed. Live here, as you please. O store of austerities! We should do our best to please you.' While they were conversing in this way, the sun set and the rishi instructed that food and drink should be brought. King Kushika bowed down and asked, 'What kind of food do you desire? What will I present before you?' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Filled with great delight, he told the king, 'Offer me appropriate food that is ready.' Hearing these words, the king honoured him and agreed. The lord of men offered him appropriate food. Having eaten, the illustrious one, knowledgable about dharma, told the couple, 'O lord! I wish to sleep now. Sleep is getting in the way.' The illustrious one, supreme among rishis, went to his bedchamber. The king and the queen also entered and waited. Bhargava said, 'Do not wake me up while I am asleep. Remain awake and press my feet throughout the night.' Kushika knew about dharma. Without doubting this, he agreed. Without waking him, they waited for night to be over. As they had been instructed by the maharshi, they tended to him in an excellent way. O great king! The couple tried its best to do this. As he had told the king, the illustrious brahmana slept. He did not turn in his sleep and slept for twenty-one days. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The king and his wife remained without food. They cheerfully remained engaged in tending to him and serving him. Eventually, Bhargava, the store of austerities, himself awoke. Without saying anything to them, the great ascetic left the house. The two of them were hungry and overcome with exhaustion. Husband and wife followed him. But the best among sages did not even glance at them. While they looked on, the extender of the Bhargava lineage vanished. O Indra among kings! At this, the king fell down on the ground. However, the immensely radiant one arose in a short while. With his queen, he made great efforts to again search for him everywhere."'

Chapter 1734(53)

'Yudhishthira asked, "When the brahmana disappeared, what did the king do? What did his immensely fortunate wife do? O grandfather! Tell me this."

‘Bhishma replied, “When the rishi could no longer be seen, the king and his wife were tired. Ashamed and bereft of their senses, they returned. In distress, they entered the city and did not say anything. They only thought about what Chyavana had done. With an empty mind, the king entered his house and saw that the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage was lying down on his bed. They were amazed at seeing this and thought about this marvel. The sight of the sage removed their exhaustion. They remained in their places and again began to tend to him. However, this time, the great sage was sleeping on his other side. The valiant one arose after the same time span. Though they were scared, they did not display any of their agitation. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having awoken, the sage said, ‘Give me some oil for my limbs. I wish to have a bath.’ Despite being hungry and afflicted by exhaustion, they agreed. They presented him with some extremely expensive oil that had been boiled one hundred times. When the rishi was happily seated, they controlled their words and rubbed him with the oil, until the immensely great ascetic, Bhargava, said that he had had enough. Bhargava noticed that they seemed to be indifferent. He suddenly arose and entered the bathroom. Everything required for taking a bath, befitting a king, had been kept there. Ignoring all this, while the king looked on, the sage disappeared again.

‘“O bull among the Bharata lineage! However, the couple was not disturbed at this. Kushika and his wife then saw the illustrious lord, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, seated on the throne, after having taken his bath. Cheerfully, King Kushika and his wife offered the sage some food that had been cooked, feigning complete indifference. The sage had told the king that food should be brought, and with his wife, the king served it. There were many kinds of meat and many kinds of vegetables. There were spices and condiments, and light drinks were served. There were succulent biscuits, colourful cakes and confectionery. There were many kinds of tasty items, including wild fare that sages feed on. There were varied kinds of fruit and piles of good. There were jujubes, *inguda* nuts, *kashmari* nuts and cashew nuts. There was food meant for householders and for forest dwellers. Fearing the sage’s curse, the king offered all kinds of food. All of this was brought and placed before Chyavana. Once this had been brought, a bed and a seat were offered to the sage. The food was placed in vessels and covered with white cloth. But Chyavana, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage, burnt all this down to ashes. Engaged in their great vow, the couple did not exhibit any rage at this. While they looked on, he disappeared again. For the entire night, the rajarshi stood there, with his wife. The prosperous one did not say anything. Nor did he allow rage to penetrate him. Every day, in the king's abode, he was honoured with many kinds of mantras, given the best of beds and all the expensive requirements for having a bath. There were large piles of garments that were offered. Chyavana was incapable of detecting any change in their behaviour.

'"The brahmana rishi again spoke to King Kushika. 'You and your wife get yoked to a chariot and quickly bear me to wherever I ask you to.' Without showing any doubt, the king agreed to what the store of austerities had said. He only asked, 'Should it be a chariot for pleasure or a chariot for fighting?' The king cheerfully spoke these words to the sage. Chyavana cheerfully replied to the destroyer of enemy cities. 'Swiftly prepare a chariot that is used for warfare. Equip it with weapons, flags, spears, spikes and staffs. Let it roar with hundreds of bells. Stock it with javelins. Let it also be stocked with clubs and swords and armed with the best of weapons.' He agreed and prepared a giant chariot. His wife was yoked to the left and he was himself yoked to the right. A three-pointed goad was placed on the chariot. It was as hard as the vajra and as sharp as a needle. Having equipped it in this way, the king spoke these words. 'O illustrious one! The chariot is ready. Where does the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage want it to go? O brahmana rishi! The chariot will go wherever you ask it to.' The illustrious one told the king, 'Let it proceed one step at a time, gently. The two of you should drag it so that I am not exhausted and the rhythm does not break. While all the people look on, I should be borne pleasantly. If any passer-by approaches me, I will give him riches. Along the way, there may be brahmanas who desire riches. Without retaining anything, I will give them all the riches and the gems. O king! Without any reflection, act entirely in this way.' Hearing these words, the king summoned his servants and said, 'Without any doubts, give the sage everything that he has asked for.' Many kinds of riches, women, pairs of sheep, raw and polished gold, large elephants that were like elephants and all the king's advisers were made to follow the rishi's chariot. Lamentations arose from every part of the afflicted city. The king and the queen were violently struck on their backs and flanks by the pointed goad. However, they displayed no signs of agitation. They trembled, because they were hungry and had not eaten for fifty nights. But the brave couple managed to drag along that excellent chariot. They were severely struck in many places and blood began to flow from their wounds. O great king! They looked like flowering kimshuka trees. On seeing them, the citizens were overcome by great grief. However, afraid of being cursed, no one said anything. They gathered in groups of two and said, 'Behold the strength of austerities. Though we are angry, we are incapable of looking at the best of sages. Great is the valour of the illustrious maharshi, who has cleansed his soul. But also behold the fortitude of the king and his wife. They are exhausted and afflicted. Nevertheless, they are dragging the chariot along. The descendant of the Bhrigu lineage cannot detect any signs of agitation in them.' The extender of the Bhrigu lineage saw that they were indifferent. As if he was Vaishravana,[1335] he began to give away the riches. Despite this, the king remained cheerful in his soul and did all that he was asked to do.

'"The illustrious one, supreme among sages, was pleased. He descended from the best of chariots and released the couple. Having released them in the proper way, he spoke these words. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Bhargava was extremely happy and spoke these gentle and deep words. He said, 'I wish to grant you the best of boons.' The learned one, the best of sages, rubbed their delicate bodies with his hands. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The touch of his affection was like that of amrita. The king spoke these words. 'We have not suffered from any exhaustion.' Their exhaustion was dispelled through Bhargava's powers. Cheerfully, the illustrious one said, 'I have never spoken a falsehood. What I say will happen. This is an auspicious and beautiful spot on the banks of the Ganga. O king! Devoted to my vow, I will dwell here for some time. O son! You are exhausted. Return to your own city. O lord of men! Come here with your wife tomorrow and you will see me. You should not yield to rage. A beneficial time is imminent. Everything that is in your heart will be accomplished.' Thus addressed, Kushika was cheerful in his mind. He spoke these words, which were full of purport, to the tiger among sages. 'O immensely fortunate one! I have no anger. O illustrious one! We have been purified by you. Our bodies have become young and strong. I and my wife no longer see any of the wounds that were caused by the goad on our bodies. With my wife, I am hale. O sage! I see that this queen looks like a divine apsara. She possesses great beauty, just as I have seen her in earlier times. O great sage! All of this has become possible because of your favours. O illustrious one! O one with truth as one's valour! There is no marvel in your having accomplished this.' Thus addressed, Chyavana told Kushika, 'O lord of men! With your wife, come here tomorrow.' Hearing this, the rajarshi honoured him and took his permission. With a body that was like that of the king of the gods, he returned to the city. The advisers and priests came out to meet him. So did all the soldiers, the courtesans and the ordinary people. King Kushika blazed in his supreme prosperity and they surrounded him. He happily entered his city and was praised by the bards. Having entered the city, he performed all the ablutions. With his wife, the king ate and spent the night. They looked at each other. Their old age was gone and it was as if their youth had just bloomed. They were like immortals. They were delighted with these new bodies and went to sleep. Because of the boon granted by the brahmana, they had become extremely handsome. The rishi was an extender of the fame of the lineage of the Bhrigus. The store of austerities changed that forest into a prosperous spot. The learned one adorned it with many kinds of jewels. This was a beauty that Shatakratu's abode didn't possess."'

Chapter 1735(54)

'Bhishma said, "When night was over, the extremely intelligent king awoke. Having performed the morning ablutions, with his wife, he headed for the forest. There, the king saw a palace that was completely made out of gold. There were a thousand pillars covered with jewels and it was like a city of the gandharvas. Kushika saw that everything seemed to have been divinely designed. There were hills with beautiful peaks and valleys. There were lilies and lotuses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! There were galleries with many kinds of gates. The ground was verdant, as if the fields were made out of gold. There were blossoming *sahakaras*, *ketakas*, *uddalakas*, *dhavas*, ashokas, *muchukundas*, flowering *atimuktas*, champakas, *tilakas*, *bhavyas*, panasas, *vanjulas* and flowering karnikaras.[1336] This is what he saw there, here and there. There were dark *varanapushpas* and *ashtapadika* creepers. The king saw that these had been properly trimmed. There were trees on which there were lotuses and lilies and there were flowers from every season. He saw many mansions that were as beautiful as celestial vehicles and mountains. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some of the water was cool and some was warm. There were colourful seats and the best of beds. The beds were made completely out of gold and were strewn with expensive covers and cushions. Large quantities of food and drink had been prepared and were properly laid out. There were parrots that spoke, she-parrots, fork-tailed shrikes, cuckoos, woodpeckers, lapwings, wild cocks, peacocks, domestic cocks, *putrakas,*[1337] partridges, Greek partridges, monkeys, swans, cranes and ducks. There were beautiful sounds and sights on every side. O king! In some places, there were large numbers of apsaras and gandharvas. He saw that they were sporting with their loved ones. Sometimes, the king was able to see them and sometimes, he was unable to see them. There was the extremely beautiful sound of singing and also the sounds of teaching going on. The king also heard the melodious sound of geese. On seeing this extraordinary sight, the king began to think. ‘This must be a dream. Perhaps my mind has gone. Is this for real? In my body, have I attained the supreme end? This must be the sacred land of Uttara Kuru or Amaravati. What is this wonder that I have seen?’ He thought in this way.

‘“While he was thinking, he saw the bull among the sages. He was in a celestial vehicle made out of gold and its pillars were encrusted with jewels. The descendant of the Bhrigu lineage was lying down on an expensive and divine bed. With great delight, the king and his wife approached him. Chyavana would be seen to disappear and would then appear again. He next saw him in a part of the forest. He was seated on a mat made out of kusha grass and was meditating, engaged in a great vow. Through his powers of yoga, the brahmana confounded the king. In an instant, the forest, the large numbers of apsaras, the gandharvas and the trees—all of these vanished. O king! The banks of the Ganga became silent again. As had been the case earlier, it was again covered with kusha grass and termite hills. King Kushika and his wife were supremely astounded at these deeds. They thought it was a great wonder that everything had disappeared. Kushika was filled with delight and spoke to his wife. ‘O fortunate one! Behold. The colourful sight that we have witnessed is extremely difficult to see. This is because of the favours of the foremost one of the Bhrigu lineage. Other than the strength of austerities, what can this be? These things can be obtained through austerities, not merely by wishing for them. Austerities are superior to the kingdoms of the three worlds. The store of austerities has tormented himself with extremely great austerities and is sporting. Through the valour of his austerities, he is even capable of creating other worlds. Brahmanas are born to perform auspicious deeds and use their intelligence. Who other than Chyavana could have endeavoured to do this? A kingdom is very easy for a man to obtain. However, in this world, the status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. It is because of the brahmana's powers that we were yoked to the chariot, like beasts of burden.' Chyavana got to know about these thoughts of his. He glanced at the king and said, 'Come here quickly.' Thus addressed, he and his wife advanced towards the great sage. The king bowed his head down and they worshipped the one who should be revered. The sage pronounced a benediction over the king. O bull among men! The intelligent one comforted him and asked him to be seated. O king! Assuming his natural form, Bhargava comforted the king. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! To reassure him, he spoke these gentle words. 'O king! You have properly controlled the five senses, the five organs of action and the sixth sense of the mind. That is the reason you have escaped from the hardship. O supreme among eloquent ones! O son! You have honoured me properly. I have not been able to detect the slightest bit of taint in you. O king! With your permission, I will now return to wherever I had come from. O Indra among kings! I am pleased with you. Accept a boon from me.'

'"Kushika replied, 'O illustrious one! In your presence, I have been like one who is in the midst of a fire. O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! It is sufficient that my lineage and I have not been burnt down. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! This is the best of boons and I have already obtained it. O unblemished one! If you are pleased with me, let the conduct of my lineage be auspicious. O brahmana! If you grant me this, the purpose of my life will have been accomplished. This is the fruit of my kingdom and this is my supreme austerity. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! However, I have a doubt. If you are pleased with me, you should explain this to me.'"'

Chapter 1736(55)

'"Chyavana said, 'Accept a boon from me. What is the doubt in your heart? O foremost among men! Tell me what it is and I will explain everything to you.'

'"Kushika said, 'O illustrious one! O Bhargava! If you are pleased with me, tell me something. I wish to hear the reason why you decided to reside with me. What was the reason for sleeping on the bed for twenty-one days, without changing sides? O bull among sages! Why did you depart, without saying anything? Why did you suddenly disappear and again reveal yourself? O brahmana! You again slept for twenty-one days. After having been rubbed with oil, you left my house, without having eaten. There were many kinds of food that were brought, but you burnt them down with fire. Why did you suddenly and swiftly depart on a chariot? Why did you give away the riches? Why did you show us the forest? O great sage! There were many golden palaces there. You showed us beds where the bed posts were decorated with jewels. Then you made them disappear again. I wish to hear the reason for this. I am extremely confused by this and have thought about this day and night. But I have been unable to understand anything about this. O store of austerities! I wish to hear the entire truth about this.'

'"Chyavana replied, 'Listen in detail to all the reasons. O king! Since you have asked me, I cannot refuse to tell you. Earlier, in an assembly of the gods, the grandfather said something. O king! I heard that and will tell you. Listen. Because of a conflict between a brahmana and a kshatriya, my lineage will become mixed up and tainted. O king! Your grandson will be full of energy and valour. That is the reason I have come to you, to save my lineage. O Kushika! I desired to exterminate and burn down your lineage. O lord of the earth! Earlier, that is the reason I came to you and said, "I am observing a vow. You should serve me. However, while I resided in your house, I could not detect any signs of wicked conduct. O rajarshi! That is the reason you are still alive. Otherwise, you would no longer have been here. That is the reason I decided to sleep for twenty-one days. O king! I was hoping that someone would wake me up. But you and your wife allowed me to sleep and did not wake me.

O supreme among kings! That is when my mind became pleased with you. O lord of the earth! O lord! I awoke and departed. I was hoping that you would restrain me, so that I could curse you. I repeatedly disappeared in your house. For twenty-one days, I again immersed myself in yoga. O lord of men! You were hungry and exhausted and I was hoping that you would show your anger. That is the reason I afflicted you with hunger. O king! However, I could not detect the slightest bit of anger in your mind. O best among men! I became pleased with you and your wife. When I had the food brought and burnt it down, I was hoping that you would be overcome by anger. But you tolerated that. O lord of men! That is when I ascended the chariot and told you and your wife to drag me along. But you did what I had asked you to. O lord of men! You did not show any doubts and I was pleased with you. You were not overcome with rage when I gave away the riches. O king! O lord of men! While I was pleased with you, for you and your wife, I created the forest that you saw. To please you, I showed you heaven. O king! In that forest, you saw some signs of heaven. O king! You saw a little bit of heaven in your physical body. O king! O supreme among kings! For a short while, you and your wife witnessed that. O lord of men! This was to demonstrate to you the dharma of austerities. O king! I am aware of the desire that there is in your heart. O lord of the earth! Through your austerities, you desire to obtain the status of a brahmana. O king! You have no interest in being a king on earth or being a king of the gods. O son! However, the status of a brahmana will be extremely difficult for you to obtain. Having become a brahmana, it is difficult to become a rishi. Having become a rishi, it is difficult to become an ascetic. O Kushika! But your desire will come true. There will be a Koushika[1338] who will become a brahmana. He will be third in descent from you and he will obtain the status of a brahmana. O best among kings! He will be born in your lineage, but he will possess the energy of the Bhrigus. Your grandson will become a brahmana. He will be an ascetic, with the resplendence of the fire. He will be one who will cause fright to gods and men and to the three worlds. I tell you this truthfully. O rajarshi! Ask for the boon that is in your mind. A long period of time has elapsed and I wish to proceed on a visit to the tirthas.'

'"Kushika said, 'O great sage! This is enough of a boon, since you are pleased with me. O unblemished one! Let my grandson become a brahmana through his austerities. O illustrious one! Grant me the boon that my lineage should always have that status. O illustrious one! Once again, I wish to ask you about this in detail. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! How will my lineage obtain the status of a brahmana? Who will be my relative? Whom will I honour?’”’

Chapter 1737(56)

‘“Chyavana said, ‘O bull among men! I should certainly tell you this. O lord of men! That is the reason I came here, wishing to exterminate your lineage. O lord of men! Kshatriyas always have the assistance of the Bhrigus in the performance of sacrifices. However, because of reasons determined by destiny, there will be conflict between them. O lord of men! The kshatriyas will slay all the Bhrigus. Struck by the rod of destiny, they will not even spare those who are in the wombs. Then, in our lineage, a person will be born to extend the line. His name will be Ourva and he will be greatly energetic. His resplendence will be like that of the blazing fire. The flames of his anger will be such that they will be capable of destroying the three worlds. He will be capable of reducing the earth, with its mountains and oceans, to ashes. He will control the fire of his anger for some time. That supreme of sages will hurl it into the ocean, in the form of the subterranean fire. However, the descendant of the Bhrigu lineage will have an immensely fortunate son named Richika. O unblemished one! The entire dhanurveda will present itself before him. Because of reasons determined by destiny, so as to destroy the kshatriyas, he will receive it and pass it on to his son, Jamadagni, who will be immensely fortunate and will clease his soul through austerities. But that tiger among the Bhrigu lineage will still hold that knowledge. O supreme among kings! The one with dharma in his soul will unite with a maiden from your lineage, for spreading that knowledge on. The great ascetic will obtain your granddaughter and Gadhi’s daughter. He will give birth to Rama, who will be a brahmana, but will follow the dharma of kshatriyas. In your lineage will be born Visvamitra, as Gadhi’s son. He will be extremely devoted to dharma and will be like Brihaspati in his energy. He will be a kshatriya, but will follow the dharma of brahmanas. O immensely radiant one! Gadhi will have this son, who will be devoted to great austerities. There will be a mixing up because of women.[1339] This has been determined by the grandfather. It will happen and there can be no reversal. In the third generation from you, there will be a brahmana. The Bhrigus, cleansed in their souls, will be your matrimonial allies.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Hearing the words of the sage, the great-souled Chyavana, Kushika was delighted. The king, with dharma in his soul, replied in the following words. 'Let it be this way.' O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The greatly energetic Chyavana again spoke to the king. He urged the king to ask for a boon, who said, 'O great king! I will accept it and let my desire truly come true through you. Let my lineage have the status of brahmanas and let their minds always be fixed on dharma.' The sage, Chyavana, replied that it would indeed be this way. Having taken the king's permission, he then departed for a visit to the tirthas. O king! I have told you everything, exactly as it occurred. This is the reason for the matrimonial alliance between the Bhrigus and the Kushikas. O king! Everything happened exactly as the sage had said. The births of Rama and the sage, Vishvamitra, occurred in that way."'

Volume 9 ends here. Section 87 will be concluded in Volume 10.

The final volume ends the instructions of the Anushasana Parva. The horse sacrifice is held, and Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Kunti, Vidura and Sanjaya leave for the forest. Krishna and Balarama die as the Yadavas fight among themselves. The Pandavas leave on the great journey with the famous companion—Dharma disguised as a dog. Refusing to abandon the dog, Yudhishthira goes to heaven in his physical body and sees all the Kurus and the Pandavas are already there.

Anushasana Parva

Anushasana means instruction or advice and Anushasana Parva continues with Bhishma's instructions. In the 18-parva classification, Anushasana Parva is the thirteenth. In the 100-parva classification, Anushasana Parva constitutes Sections 87 and 88. Anushasana Parva has 154 chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Anushasana Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Anushasana Parva.

Section Eighty-Seven

Dana Dharma Parva

This section has 6450 shlokas and 152 chapters.

Chapter 1738(57): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1739(58): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1740(59): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1741(60): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1742(61): 93 shlokas
Chapter 1743(62): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1744(63): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1745(64): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1746(65): 63 shlokas
Chapter 1747(66): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1748(67): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1749(68): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1750(69): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1751(70): 56 shlokas
Chapter 1752(71): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1753(72): 48 shlokas
Chapter 1754(73): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1755(74): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1756(75): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1757(76): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1758(77): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1759(78): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1760(79): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1761(80): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1762(81): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1763(82): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1764(83): 57 shlokas

Chapter 1765(84): 81 shlokas
Chapter 1766(85): 70 shlokas
Chapter 1767(86): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1768(87): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1769(88): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1770(89): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1771(90): 47 shlokas
Chapter 1772(91): 45 shlokas
Chapter 1773(92): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1774(93): 17 shlokas
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Chapter 1780(99): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1781(100): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1782(101): 65 shlokas
Chapter 1783(102): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1784(103): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1785(104): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1786(105): 62 shlokas
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Chapter 1791(110): 137 shlokas
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Chapter 1793(112): 113 shlokas
Chapter 1794(113): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1795(114): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1796(115): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1797(116): 76 shlokas
Chapter 1798(117): 41 shlokas

Chapter 1799(118): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1800(119): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1801(120): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1802(121): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1803(122): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1804(123): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1805(124): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1806(125): 38 shlokas
Chapter 1807(126): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1808(127): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1809(128): 59 shlokas
Chapter 1810(129): 55 shlokas
Chapter 1811(130): 57 shlokas
Chapter 1812(131): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1813(132): 58 shlokas
Chapter 1814(133): 63 shlokas
Chapter 1815(134): 57 shlokas
Chapter 1816(135): 142 shlokas
Chapter 1817(136): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1818(137): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1819(138): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1820(139): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1821(140): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1822(141): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1823(142): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1824(143): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1825(144): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1826(145): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1827(146): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1828(147): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1829(148): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1830(149): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1831(150): 9 shlokas
Chapter 1832(151): 51 shlokas

Chapter 1833(152): 13 shlokas

Dana *means gifts, donations, giving things away in charity. So this section is about the dharma to be followed in dana.*

Chapter 1738(57)

'Yudhishthira said, "On listening to your words now, I am confused and am thinking repeatedly. The earth has been deprived of a large number of kings who were prosperous. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have conquered the earth and have obtained hundreds of kingdoms. O grandfather! I am tormented because I have killed crores of men. What will now happen to the best of women? They are deprived of their husbands, sons, maternal uncles and brothers. We have slain our seniors, our kin and our well-wishers. There is no doubt that we will descend into hell, with our heads facing downwards. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to yoke my body to fierce austerities. O lord of the earth! I desire that you should instruct me about the truth."'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Hearing what Yudhishthira had said, the great-minded Bhishma used his accomplished intelligence to examine them. He then spoke to Yudhishthira. "This is wonderful and a mystery. Listen. I will tell you the truth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is about the ends that are obtained after death. Heaven is obtained through austerities. Fame is obtained through austerities. O lord! A long life and objects of pleasure are obtained through austerities. O bull among the Bharata lineage! *Jnana, vijnana,*[1] recovery from disease, beauty, wealth and good fortune are obtained through austerities. Riches are obtained through austerities. Refraining from speech provides knowledge. Through donations, one obtains objects of enjoyment. One obtains life through brahmacharya. The fruits of non-violence are beauty. Through an act of initiation, one obtains birth in a good family. Those who subsist on fruits and roots obtain kingdoms. Those who subsist on leaves obtain heaven. A person who only drinks water goes to heaven. By bathing, one obtains even greater riches. Through serving the preceptor, one obtains knowledge. Through always performing funeral ceremonies, one obtains offspring. Through initiating oneself into a vow that one will only eat vegetables, one obtains a large number of cows. One is said to obtain heaven by subsisting on grass. By bathing thrice a day, one obtains women. If one only subsists on air, one obtains the fruits of a sacrifice. A brahmana who bathes every day and performs meditation in the morning and the evening, becomes like Daksha. One obtains kingdoms by observing austerities in a desert. A person who fasts to death obtains the vault of heaven. If one lies down on the bare ground, one obtains beds and houses. If one is attired in bark and tattered rags, one obtains garments and ornaments. Those who are rich in austerities and engaged in yoga obtain beds, seats and vehicles. It has been said that a person who enters the fire goes to Brahma's world. By refraining from savouring good tastes, one obtains good fortune. By refraining from flesh, one obtains offspring who have long lives. If a person dwells in *udvasa*,[2] he becomes a lord of men. O best among men! A person who speaks the truth finds delight with the gods. Fame results from donations. Non-violence results in recovery from disease. By serving brahmanas, one obtains a kingdom and the status of becoming a brahmana. By donating things to drink, one obtains eternal fame. By donating food, one satisfies all the desires that one possesses. A person who assures all beings is freed from all kinds of sorrow. Through serving the gods, one obtains kingdoms and celestial beauty. By offering the light of lamps, a man obtains vision. If one gives beautiful objects, one obtains memory and intelligence. By refraining from fragrances and garlands, one obtains great fame. Those who sport long hair and beards obtain offspring. O king! If a person is initiated and consecrated in a vow that involves fasting for twelve years, he obtains the special region meant for heroes. O bull among men! If one bestows one's daughter according to the *brahma* form of marriage,[3] one obtains female servants, male servants, ornaments, fields and houses. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person performs sacrifices and fasts, he goes to heaven. A man who renders offerings of flowers obtains the eternal spot. A man who gives away one thousand cows whose horns have been decorated with gold, obtains the auspicious world of the gods in heaven. This was stated in an assembly of the sages and the gods. A man may give away a *kapila*[4] cow and her calf, with gold entrusting the tips of her horns and with a brass vessel to milk her. Because of the qualities of the cow, he will obtain all the objects that he desires. A person who donates a cow in this way obtains fruits as long as she possesses hair on her body. In the world hereafter, he saves all the sons and grandsons of his lineage, for seven generations.[5] With *dakshina*, a person may give away a cow with beautiful horns that are decorated with gold, along with a brass vessel to milk her, an expensive upper garment and sesamum seed to a brahmana. Such a person obtains the world of the Vasus with ease. In the world hereafter, a man may be tied down by his own deeds in this world and descend into the terrible darkness of hell. The donation of a cow saves him, like a boat with the wind saves in the great ocean. A person who bestows his daughter according to the brahma form of marriage, donates land to a brahmana, or donates food in the proper way, obtains Purandara’s world. A person who donates a house with all the qualities to a brahmana who is engaged in studying and possesses the qualities and character, obtains the world of Uttara Kuru. By donating bulls that can bear the burden, a man obtains the world of the Vasus. It is said that heaven can be obtained through donations of gold, though the gift of pure gold is superior to this. By donating an umbrella one obtains an excellent house. By giving shoes one obtains a vehicle. By giving clothes one obtains the fruits of excellent beauty. By giving fragrances a man becomes famous among the gods. If a person touches a tree full of flowers or a tree full of fruits and gives it to a brahmana, he obtains an excellent house that is full of many jewels and beautiful women.

A person who donates food, drink and juices obtains all the kinds of fruits that he desires. There is no doubt that a person who gives houses and covers gets those objects back. If a man gives garlands, incense, fragrances, unguents, objects required for a bath and wreaths to a brahmana, he is without disease and obtains a place in the worlds meant for kings. O king! A man who gives a house full of seeds and beautiful beds to a brahmana, obtains an excellent and auspicious house that is full of many jewels. A man who gives a fragrant bed, covered with a colourful spread, to a brahmana, easily obtains a beautiful and pleasant wife who is faithful. A man who lies down on a bed of heroes follows the grandfather.[6] There is nothing superior to this. This is what the supreme rishis have said.” On hearing these words, the descendant of the Kuru lineage was delighted. He desired the path meant for brave ones and no longer found the *ashrama* of a householder disagreeable. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O lord! Yudhishthira spoke to the other Pandavas. “You should find the grandfather’s words acceptable.” All the Pandavas and the illustrious Droupadi agreed and applauded Yudhishthira’s words.’

Chapter 1739(58)

'Yudhishthira said, "O bull among the Kurus! Outside of the Vedas, there are other kinds of gifts that have been mentioned. In your view, out of these, which one is special? O lord! I have a supreme curiosity about this. When a giver gives a gift, how does that gift follow him?[7] Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Assurance towards all creatures, compassion towards someone who is suffering, giving what is desired to someone who is thirsty and asking for it and gifts that are given without thinking of them as gifts—such gifts are said to be the best. These gifts follow the giver. Gifts of gold, gifts of cattle and gifts of land are regarded as purifiying. These liberate from evil acts. O tiger among men! Always donate these to virtuous people. There is no doubt that gifts save men from sins. A person who wishes to make his gifts eternal must always give what is desired in this world and what is loved in his house to recipients who possess the qualities. A person who does what is agreeable obtains what is agreeable and is loved in this world. He is loved by beings, in this world and in the next. O Yudhishthira! If a person is proud and does not honour through gifts someone who is hopefully asking, despite possessing the capacity, is cruel. A person who shows favours towards an enemy who has fallen on hard times and has sought refuge, is supreme among men. O son! There is no man equal to a person who satisfies the hunger of a learned person who is emaciated and suffering because his means of subsistence have been disrupted. O Kounteya! One must use every means possible to aid a humble, self-controlled and virtuous person who does not have sons and wives and is suffering, even if he doesn't ask. There are those who subsist on whatever they have been able to obtain and do not pronounce benedictions on gods and humans.[8] They deserve to be worshipped and are always spirited. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They are like virulent serpents and protect yourself from them.[9] Use spies to test if they are the best among brahmanas. O Kouravya! They must always be honoured with good houses that have servants and garments and with all the objects of desire that bring happiness. O Yudhishthira! Those who follow dharma and are the performers of auspicious deeds think that such tasks have purified their devotion, if those gifts are accepted. There are brahmanas who have bathed in learning and have bathed in vows. They do not depend on anyone else for a living. They are rigid in their vows, study quietly and resort to austerities. They are pure, self-controlled and satisfied with their own wives. Anything good done to them follows the donor in future worlds. Brahmanas obtain merits by offering oblations into the *agnihotra* fire, morning and evening. The same merits are obtained by giving to brahmanas who have cleansed their souls. This is like a sacrifice with dakshina, purified by devotion. O son! Perform this sacrifice through giving, since it is superior to all sacrifices. O Yudhishthira! When one touches water and gives gifts, it is like a sacrifice. It is like touching water and performing worship and one is freed from all debts.[10] There are people who are not prone to anger and do not desire even a blade of grass. They, and others who are pleasant in speech, are the ones who should be worshipped. They do not prize gifts highly, nor do they solicit them. But they must be protected like sons and I bow down before them. They provide freedom from fear. Officiating priests, priests and preceptors may be mild, but they hold the *brahman*. Those brahmanas can pacify the energy created by any kshatriya. O Yudhishthira! Since you are a king, you may think yourself to be powerful. However, without giving to brahmanas, you will not enjoy that prosperity. O unblemished one! Remain established in your own dharma. For the sake of your prosperity and for the sake of your power, use whatever riches you possess to honour brahmanas. Wherever the brahmanas may be, bow your head down before them. Depending on their happiness and inclination, let them take delight in you, as does a son. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! They are extremely favourably inclined and are your well-wishers. They are satisfied with only a little. Who other than you can look towards ensuring a means of subsistence for them? In this world, the eternal dharma of a woman is to depend on her husband. He is like a god and she has no other objective. For us, the brahmanas are like that. O son! If the brahmanas see that they are dishonoured and that the kshatriyas always base themselves on terrible deeds, they will abandon us. In this world, we will then be without the Vedas, without name, without fame, without health and without sacrifices. Without resorting to brahmanas, what is the purpose of our remaining alive? This is the way eternal dharma has been followed. O king! In earlier times, kings used to serve brahmanas. It has been heard that vaishyas used to serve kings and shudras served vaishyas. The brahmana was like a blazing fire. Without being able to approach or touch, the shudra used to worship him from a distance. But the vaishya and the kshatriya could approach and touch. Brahmanas are mild in character. They are truthful in conduct and protect the true dharma. However, when they are enraged, they can behave like venomous serpents. They are superior to what is inferior. But they are also superior to what is superior. Kshatriyas can torment with their energy and strength. However, they are pacified through the energy and austerities of brahmanas. My father is not loved more by me.[11] My son is not as loved. O king! My grandfather is not as loved, nor the life in my body. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It is the truth that there is nothing I love more on earth than you. But it is also the truth that I love brahmanas more. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! I am telling you this truthfully. Through this truth, I will go to the world where Shantanu has gone. I can see that virtuous and pure world, with Brahma at the forefront. O son! I will go there and live there for an eternal number of days. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! I have seen those worlds, which I will obtain because of what I have done for brahmanas. I am not tormented."'

Chapter 1740(59)

'Yudhishthira asked, "There may be two[12] who are equal in conduct, purity, learning and birth. Between donating to either, which is superior, giving to the one who asks or giving to the one who does not ask?"

'Bhishma replied, "O Partha! It has been said that giving to the person who does not ask is superior. In a miserable state, one who has fortitude deserves greater worship than one who does not have fortitude. A kshatriya's fortitude is in protection. A brahmana's fortitude is in not asking for riches. A brahmana who has fortitude, learning and contentment pleases the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! An effort made to solicit has been said to show lack of control. A person who solicits always acts like a bandit towards beings. A person who solicits confronts death, though a person who gives does not confront death. O Yudhishthira! Through the act of giving, a donor revives and also revives his own self. Compassion is supreme dharma and one should give to those who seek. However, for those who are suffering and do not solicit, one should respectfully use every possible means to make them accept. If such supreme among brahmanas reside in your kingdom, they must be regarded as fire covered with ashes and efforts must be made to treat them accordingly. They can even consume the earth through the fire of their austerities. Possessing jnana, vijnana, austerities and yoga, they should be worshipped. O scorcher of enemies! Such brahmanas deserve to be worshipped in every way. They must be given many kinds of gifts, even if they do not ask and do not solicit. There are fruits that are obtained from properly offering oblations into the agnihotra fire in the morning and the evening. It is said that the fruits obtained from giving to brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and follow the vows are equal. There are brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas and have bathed themselves in the vows. They do not depend on anyone else for a living. They are rigid in their vows, study privately and observe austerities. O Kounteya! Such brahmanas must be invited and be given excellent houses with servants and garments and all the other objects of desire. O Yudhishthira! They know about dharma and are subtle in their insight. They will think that it is their duty to receive such gifts that have been purified with devotion. There may be brahmanas who are away from home, with their wives waiting for their return, like farmers waiting for the rain. The wives must be fed and food given for the other dependents at home. O son! If a brahmana *brahmachari* with self-control takes food at your house in the morning, it is as if he satisfies the three sacrificial fires. O son! If the act of feeding takes place at midday, donate cattle, gold and garments and Indra will be pleased with you because of this. O Yudhishthira! This is the third sacrifice, in which, gifts are given to the gods, the ancestors and brahmanas and is for the Vishvadevas.[13] Non-violence towards all creatures, giving everyone a proper share, self-control, renunciation, fortitude and truthfulness are like the bath at the end of a sacrifice. This is the way this sacrifice is conducted, purified by devotion and with dakshina. O son! It is superior to all sacrifices and should always be performed."'

Chapter 1741(60)

'Yudhishthira said, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I wish to know the truth about the great fruits obtained from donations and sacrificial rites. Where are those fruits obtained, in this world or in the next? Which is superior and what is the nature of the fruits? You are learned and I am asking you. Tell me about dana dharma. O father![14] Tell me which is better, that which is done from inside the sacrificial altar, or that which is done with faith and non-violence.[15] O grandfather! Tell me."

'Bhishma replied, "O son! A kshatriya is always engaged in terrible deeds. For him, sacrifices are the duty and donations purify him. But virtuous people do not receive from kings who perform wicked deeds. That is the reason kings perform sacrifices with a lot of dakshina. Gifts are received from a king who donates with devotion and this is supreme and a great cleanser. One must therefore be devoted to the vows of sacrifices and give objects to brahmanas who are friendly, virtuous, knowledgable about the Vedas and possessing good conduct and austerities. The outcome is dependent on the way one acts. Perform sacrifices and give tasty food and dakshina to virtuous people. When you give, think that in that task of giving, you are performing a sacrifice. If you honour officiating priests, you will also obtain a share in their merits. You must sustain brahmanas who bear the burden of many offspring. You will then obtain as many offspring as the creator.[16] Those who are virtuous in pursuit of dharma always nurture those who are righteous. In every way, you must support men who suffer from many burdens. O Yudhishthira! You are prosperous. Therefore, you must give brahmanas cattle, bulls, food, umbrellas, garments and footwear. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Give clarified butter to those who perform sacrifices and also horses, vehicles, houses and beds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! These are easy to do and bring prosperity to the giver. One must search out brahmanas who are not liked and whose means of subsistence has suffered.[17] Directly or indirectly, their livelihood must be ensured. For kshatriyas, this is superior to performing royal sacrifices and horse sacrifices. In this way, you will be cleansed of sin and purified, and you will obtain heaven. You will be able to replenish your treasury again and rule the kingdom. You will obtain a great deal of riches and become a brahmana.[18] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Protect your own means of subsistence and that of other people. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Always support brahmanas in their yoga and *kshema*.[19] If they are not protected and are killed, then this will lead to the destruction of all pleasure. The king will suffer decay. All the subjects will be killed and destroyed. A king who says that he is the protector, but does not protect, should be collectively killed, like a dog that is diseased and mad. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a king does not protect and the subjects commit wicked deeds, one-fourth of those sins are vested in the king. Some have said that they vest in him in entirety. Others have determined it as half. However, we have heard Manu's instructions and hold it to be one-fourth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When a king protects the subjects properly, one-fourth of all the good and auspicious deeds that they do vests in the king. O Yudhishthira! As long as you live, make the lives of all the subjects depend on you. Be like Parjanya to beings and like a giant tree to birds. Be like Kubera to the *rakshasas* and like Shatakratu to the immortals. O scorcher of enemies! Let the lives of kin and well-wishers depend on you."'

Chapter 1742(61)

'Yudhishthira said, "The sacred texts urge us—give this, give that. The kings give many things. Which of these is the best donation?"

'Bhishma replied, "Among the many gifts, the earth is said to be the first. It does not move and is indestructible. Land yields all the supreme objects of desire. It yields garments, jewels, animals, grain and barley. Among all beings, a giver of land prospers for an eternal number of years. As long as the land lasts, a giver of land earns prosperity. O Yudhishthira! There is nothing that is superior to giving land. We have heard that earlier, everyone gave a little bit of land. Since all of them gave a little bit of land, everyone enjoys the earth. In this world and in the next, a man sustains himself on the basis of his deeds. The earth is prosperity and is a great goddess. She does agreeable things for a person who gives her. A lord of the earth who gives the indestructible earth as dakshina is again born as a man and becomes a king. Enjoyment is dependent on what one has given. That is the determination of dharma. One must give the earth or give up one's body in battle. It is said that this is supremely beneficial for kshatriyas and their relatives. We have heard that donating the earth purifies the giver. If a man is wicked in conduct, has killed a brahmana or has indulged in falsehood—all these sins are cleansed. One is freed from these sins. If a king has performed wicked deeds, the virtuous wish to accept only land from him and nothing else. The earth purifies, like a mother. There is an eternal and sacred name of the goddess and that is Priyadatta.[20] This is a name known to both the giver and the recipient, because it is supremely loved. A king who gives the earth to a brahmana obtains it back. However, an owner of land must never give that prosperous gift of land to an unworthy recipient. If he acts in this way, that gift vanishes. There is no doubt that a person who desires land should act in this way and no other. A person who takes away a virtuous person's land will never get any land. A person who gives land to virtuous people will get land. After death, such a person, with dharma in his soul, will obtain great fame. O king! The brahmanas always praise a person who gives land to righteous people. He has no enemies and the entire earth praises him. In an attempt to ensure subsistence, if a man commits any wicked deeds, all those are cleansed by giving away as much of land as can be covered by a cow hide. Kings who are narrow in their deeds and terrible in their deeds should be told that they can be purified by making the supreme gift of land. The ancient ones thought that there was little difference between a person who performs a horse sacrifice and one who gives land to virtuous people. Learned ones may have doubts about other kinds of good deeds. But they are incapable of entertaining doubts about the supreme gift of land. An immensely wise person gives land, since this is the same as giving gold, silver, garments, jewels, pearls, riches and everything else. Austerities, sacrifices, learning, good conduct, lack of greed, devotion to the truth and worship of seniors and the gods—all these are vested in a person who gives away land. There are those who are engaged in what brings benefit to their masters and cast aside their lives in the field of battle. They are successful and go to Brahma's world. However, even they are surpassed by those who give away land. The mother nurtures her son with her milk. In that way, all the tastes on earth favour a person who gives away land. If a person gives away land, Yama’s servants, the staff of punishment, heat, extremely fierce fires and Varuna’s terrible noose are unable to touch him. If a person is tranquil in his soul and gives away land, the ancestors in the world of the ancestors and the gods in the world of the gods are satisfied. If a man gives away land to someone who is emaciated, about to die and suffering from a means of subsistence, thereby granting him sustenance, this is like performing a sacrifice. With her udders overflowing with milk, a cow rushes towards her calf. O immensely fortunate one! In that way, the earth runs towards someone who gives away land. If a person gives away land tilled by the plough, or sown, or with crops, and thereby provides the greatest refuge, all his desires are met. If a man persuades a brahmana, who has good conduct, sacrifices to the fire and is pure in vows, to accept land, he doesn’t go to Yama’s abode. From one day to another, the moon waxes. In that way, every time the land given by someone yields crops, his own crops increase.

‘“In this connection, those who know about the ancient accounts chant a song about land. On hearing this, Jamadagni’s son[21] gave away the earth to Kashyapa. ‘Accept me.[22] Donate me. By giving me, you will obtain me. Anything given away in this life will be obtained later in the next life.’ A brahmana who bases himself on the brahman and recites this at a funeral ceremony, merges with the brahman. Those who cause great injuries in the course of undertaking a wicked sacrifice can obtain atonement in this way and save ten generations.[23] A person who knows this injunction of the Vedas also benefits in that way. It has been held that the earth is the eternal origin of all creatures. After a king has been consecrated, he should be made to hear this. On hearing this, he should give land to virtuous people and not take it away from them. There is no doubt that all of a king’s riches are meant for brahmanas. The first sign of prosperity in a kingdom is a king who is knowledgable about dharma. If their king doesn’t know about dharma and is a non-believer, they will not awake in happiness. Nor will they sleep happily. Because of his wicked acts, the men will always be anxious. The many kinds of yoga and kshema will then be non-existent in the kingdom. However, if the king is wise and follows dharma, they will awake in happiness. They will also sleep happily. The subjects will also be restrained through the king’s auspicious deeds. Yoga and kshema will shower down and they will prosper in their own tasks. A person who donates the earth is truly a man. He is born in a noble lineage. He is a friend and is a performer of auspicious deeds. He is benevolent and valorous. Men who give prosperous tracts of land to brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas blaze in their energy on earth, like suns. When they are sown on the ground, seeds sprout into crops. In that way, objects of desire are the crops for those who give away land. Aditya, Varuna, Vishnu, Brahma, Soma, Hutashana[24] and the illustrious wielder of the trident[25] find delight in a person who gives away land. Men are born on earth and it is on earth that they faithfully wander. There are four kinds of creatures that have the qualities of the earth.[26] O lord of the earth! The earth is the mother and the father of the universe. O lord of men! There is no other element that is its equal.

'"O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Brihaspati and Indra. Maghavan performed one hundred sacrifices, giving away copious quantities of dakshina. He then asked Brihaspati, the supreme among eloquent ones, 'O illustrious one! What is the single gift that ensures bliss in heaven? What grants inexhaustible and excellent fruits? O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me this.' Thus addressed by Indra of the gods, the immensely energetic Brihaspati, the priest of the gods, replied to Shatakratu. 'O slayer of Vritra! An immensely wise person who gives gold, gives cattle and gives land is freed from all sins. O Indra of the gods! O lord! But there is nothing that is superior to giving away land. I think it is superior and the learned ones have also said this. O best of the gods! Among the brave ones who are killed in battle and among the ones who give to those who solicit gifts, there is no one who is superior to the one who gives away land. There are those who are engaged in ensuring the welfare of their masters and give up their lives in battle. Those brave ones go to Brahma's world. But they cannot surpass the ones who give away land. A man who gives away land saves eleven generations of his lineage, the five generations that will follow and the six generations that have gone to the nether regions. O Purandara! A man who gives away the earth, with all its riches, is freed from all sins and obtains greatness in the world of heaven. A king who gives away the prosperous earth, with qualities that satisfy all the objects of desire, becomes the king of kings because of that supreme gift. O Vasava! When the earth, with all its objects of desire, are given to someone like Kashyapa, all the creatures think that it has been given to them. O one with the thousand eyes! It is like a cow that yields all the objects of desire and satisfies the best of wishes. A man who gives this, goes to heaven. O Indra of the gods! It has flows of honey. The flows of water in the rivers are like milk and curds. The donation of land satisfies everything. O king! By giving away land, a king is said to be freed from all sins. There is no other gift that is superior to the giving away of land. If a man uses his sword to conquer the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean, and then gives it away, men in this world talk about him as long as fame is talked about. O Purandara! If a man gives away the earth with all its sacred juices, then the qualities that he has obtained by donating land are never destroyed in this world. O Shakra! A king who desires his own prosperity and desires his own happiness must always follow the proper rites and give away land to worthy recipients. If a man commits sins and then gives away land to brahmanas, he abandons all those sins, like a snake casts aside old skin. O Shakra! If a man gives away the earth, with its oceans, rivers, mountains and groves, that is like giving away everything. The donation of the earth is like giving away lakes, wells, streams and rivers. Because of the earth's moisture, it is like giving away the best of juices. The donation of the earth is like giving away herbs full of juices, trees that are covered with flowers and fruits and groves and hills. There are sacrifices like *agnishtoma*, performed with the giving away of a lot of dakshina. However, the fruits obtained from those are nothing compared to those obtained from giving away land. The giver of land saves ten generations.[27] However, having given land, if one subsequently takes that away, ten generations are cast into hell. If a person promises to give, but does not give later, or having given, if he takes it back, on the instruction of Death, such a person is bound up in Varuna's nooses. Those who offer oblations into the fire, always perform sacrifices, tend to their beloved guests even if they lack servants and sustain the best of brahmanas—are not approached by Yama. O Purandara! The king must repay the debt that he owes to brahmanas. That apart, he must save the weak and the distressed among other varnas. O lord of the gods! O best among the gods! One must never touch land that belongs to someone else, especially to a brahmana who lacks a means of subsistence. If tears fall from the eyes of such miserable and suffering brahmanas because the land has been taken away, then three generations of the lineage are destroyed. O one with the thousand eyes! If a person re-establishes a king who has been dislodged from his kingdom, such a person obtains greatness in the vault of heaven. There may be a person who conquers the earth with the valour of his arms and that land is always full of sugar cane, barley, wheat, cattle, horses and other kinds of mounts, being covered with jewels above the surface, as well as all kinds of riches under the surface. If he gives this away, that is known as a land sacrifice and earns the inexhaustible regions. All his sins are washed away. He is radiant, revered by the virtuous. If he gives away the earth to virtuous people, he obtains greatness in this world. O Shakra! If a drop of oil falls on water, it extends on every side. In that way, if land is given away, the fruits are enhanced on every side. O Shakra! There are brave kings who are the ornaments of assemblies. Without retreating, they are slain on the field of battle and obtain Brahma's world. Noble women, adorned in divine garlands and well versed in dancing and singing, tend to them there. O Indra of the gods! Those who give land always obtain heaven.[28] They obtain bliss in heaven and are worshipped by the gods and the gandharvas. This happens to those who properly give away land to brahmanas. O Indra of the gods! If a man gives away land, one hundred apsaras, adorned with divine garlands, always serve him. If a person gives away land, he obtains a conch shell, an excellent seat, an umbrella, excellent horses, excellent elephants, flowers and stores of gold. His commands are never disobeyed and he is greeted with sounds of victory. O Purandara! Heaven constitutes the flowers and fruits of giving away land. A man who gives away land, the origin of immortality, obtains gold, flowers, herbs, *kusha* grass, refined gold and pastures. There is no gift that is equal to giving away land. There is no preceptor who is equal to the mother. There is no dharma equal to the truth. There is no wealth equal to donations.' Having heard this from the son of Angiras, Vasava gave the son of Angiras the earth, with its riches and jewels. If these chants about the merit of giving away land are recited at funeral ceremonies, rakshasas and asuras will not take away any of the shares. There is then no doubt that anything offered to the ancestors will become inexhaustible. Therefore, on the occasion of a funeral ceremony, a learned brahmana must make other brahmanas listen to this, while they are engaged in the act of eating.

O unblemished one! O tiger among the Bharata lineage! I have told you about the best of gifts. What do you wish to hear again?”’

Chapter 1743(62)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! In this world, when a king wishes to give away gifts to brahmanas, which are the ones with superior qualities? What satisfies them instantly? What follows when they are satisfied? O mighty-armed one! Instruct me about the great fruits of auspicious deeds. O king! In this world and in the world hereafter, what are the fruits of donations? I wish to hear about this from you. Tell me in detail.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Earlier, I asked Narada, who has the form of a celestial being, these questions. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you what he told me. Listen.

‘“Narada said, ‘In ancient times, the gods and the rishis praised food. The sustenance of beings and all the sacrifices are based on food. There is no donation that is equal to food. There has not been and there will not be. Therefore, men especially wish to donate food. In this world, food provides energy and life is based on food. O lord! It is food that holds up everything in the world and in the universe. In this world, householders and mendicants sustain themselves on food. There is no doubt, and it is evident, that life depends on food. If one desires for one’s own prosperity, even if this means causing suffering to the family, one should donate food to great-souled brahmanas who are begging for alms. If a person donates food to an accomplished brahmana who asks for it, then, in the world hereafter, the donor ensures the best riches for himself. There may be an aged guest who arrives at a house, exhausted and far from home. If the householder desires his own prosperity, he should worship him. O king! If a person casts aside anger, is without anger and is extremely good in conduct, donating food in this way, then he obtains happiness in this world and in heaven. A guest who has arrived must not be disrespected or refused. Gifts to even *shvapakas*[29] and bitches aren’t destroyed. There may be a person who is exhausted and has never been seen before.[30] If clean food is given to such a person, then great dharma is obtained. O lord of men! A man who affectionately offers food to ancestors, gods, rishis, brahmanas and guests obtains great and auspicious fruits. If a person has committed wicked deeds and donates food to someone who asks for it, then his sins are destroyed, especially if the recipient happens to be a brahmana. A gift of food to a brahmana becomes inexhaustible and that to a shudra yields great fruits. This is the difference between donating food to brahmanas and to shudras. When a brahmana solicits food, he should not be asked about his *gotra*, conduct, learning, country of residence or birth. Food must be given to this alms-seeker, even if he doesn't ask for it. O king! There is no doubt that if a man gives food, he plants a tree of food that provides all the objects of desire, in this world and in the next. Like farmers who wait for excellent rains, the ancestors hope that their sons and grandsons will donate food. The brahmana is a great creature. If he himself comes and asks to be given, whether one gives voluntarily or involuntarily,[31] one obtains auspicious merits. For all creatures, the brahmana is a guest. He is the one who eats first. When a brahmana seeks alms at a house and returns after being treated well, the householder's prosperity increases. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After death, he is born in a family that enjoys great objects of desire. If a man gives food in this world, he obtains the supreme objective. A person who gives sweetmeats and sweet food resides in heaven and is honoured there. Food is the life of men. Everything is established on food. A person who donates food gets animals, daughters, riches and objects of pleasure. In this world, a person who donates food is described as a giver of life and he is said to be someone who has given everything. If a person follows the proper rites and gives food to guests and brahmanas, then the donor obtains happiness and even the gods worship him. The brahmana is a great being. He roams around on foot, but is like a field. Any seed that is sown there leads to great and auspicious fruits. A gift of food directly leads to delight in the giver and the recipient. The fruits of all other kinds of gifts are felt indirectly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that birth results from food. Desire results from food. Know that dharma and artha result from food. It is food that cures disease. In an earlier *kalpa*, Prajapati said that food is amrita. Food is the earth, heaven and the sky. Everything is established in food. When food is destroyed, the five elements in the body are adversely affected. When food is destroyed, even the strongest of the strong is destroyed. In the absence of food, invitations, marriages and sacrifices vanish. O foremost among men! Even the brahman[32] is destroyed. Everything, mobile and immobile, is based on food. For dharma and artha in the three worlds, the learned give away food. O king! If a man donates food, in the three worlds, his strength, energy, fame, happiness, deeds and breath of life increase. The auspicious wind, the lord of the breath of life, accumulates water in the clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shakra showers down rain from the clouds. Using his rays, the sun in the sky sucks up those juices from the earth. For the juices, the god, Prajapati, uses the sun and the wind in this way. From the clouds, rain pours down on the earth. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That makes the goddess Vasumati gentle.[33] Crops are sown then and these sustain the universe. Flesh, fat, bones and semen result again. O lord of the earth! The creatures are generated from the semen. Agni and Soma create the semen and nurture it. In this way, the sun, the wind and semen are dependent on food. These are said to be parts of the same accumulation and creatures are generated from this. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a person swiftly gives food to someone who comes to his house and asks for it, then he gives life and energy to creatures.'"

'Bhishma said, "O king! Having been thus addressed by Narada, I have always given food. Therefore, do not be malicious. Give food without any anxiety. O king! O lord! If you follow the rites and give food to brahmanas in the proper way, then you will obtain heaven. O lord of men! Hear about the worlds that are obtained through donations of food. In heaven, the abodes of those great-souled ones are resplendent. They are in many places, have many kinds of forms and possess many pillars. They are as white as the lunar disc and have nets of bells. Those abodes are both stationary and mobile and possess the complexion of the rising sun. They are populated by many hundred creatures that dwell on land and in the water. They dazzle like lapis lazuli and are decorated with silver and gold. Trees that yield all the objects of desire are placed in those abodes. There are tanks, roads, plains, wells and lakes everywhere. The roar of thousands of yoked vehicles can be heard. There are mountains of food to be tasted and swallowed and garments and ornaments. There are rivers overflowing with milk and mountains of food. The palaces have the hue of white clouds and the beds shine in gold. Those who donate food obtain these. Therefore, give food. For great-souled ones who give food, these are the worlds obtained, meant for the performers of auspicious deeds. Therefore, on earth, men must specially donate food.”’

Chapter 1744(63)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have heard the words you have spoken about the ordinances on giving food. But tell me about the conjunctions of *nakshatras*,[34] under which, different kinds of gifts must be thought of.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Devaki and *devarshi* Narada. Narada, with a divine form, arrived in Dvaraka. Devaki, who had insight about dharma, asked him this question. Thus asked, devarshi Narada told her everything about the ordinances. O lord of the earth! Listen.

‘“Narada said, ‘O immensely fortunate one! Under Krittika, if one satisfies brahmanas with *payasam*[35] and *ghee*, then one obtains the supreme among the worlds meant for the virtuous. Under Rohini, to free oneself from debts, one must give brahmanas the meat of deer, food, ghee, milk and other objects of food and drink. Under Somadaivata,[36] if one gives a cow and a calf, one goes from the world of men to the supreme world of heaven. Under Ardra, if a man fasts and gives *krisara*[37]mixed with oil, then he is freed from all difficulties, including those that are as razor-sharp as the edges of mountains. O beautiful one! Under Punarvasu, if one gives sweet cakes and food, one is reborn in a family that has a lot of food and one is also famous and handsome. Under Pushya, if one gives gold, whether it is worked or unworked, one obtains a world where one shines like Soma, though the world itself is dark. Under Ashlesha, if one gives a bull decorated with silver, one is freed from all fear and obtains prosperity. Under Magha, if a man fills vessels with sesamum, one obtains sons and animals in this world and happiness after death. Under Purva Phalguni, if a person desires prosperity, he should fast and give food and fermented sugar cane juice to brahmanas. Under Uttara Phalguni, if one follows the rites and gives rice[38] mixed with ghee and milk, one obtains greatness in heaven. It has been determined that any gifts made by a man under

Uttara Phalguni lead to great and infinite fruits. Under Hasta, if a man fasts and gives a chariot yoked to four elephants, he obtains the supreme and auspicious worlds that satisfy every kind of desire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Under Chitra, if one gives a bull and auspicious fragrances, one roams around in delight in this world, like the apsaras do in Nandana. Under Svati, if one gives riches, one obtains the auspicious worlds that one desires and also obtains great fame. Under Vishakha, if one gives a bull, a milk-yielding cow, a basket, a wagonload of paddy and garments, then one pleases the ancestors and the gods. After death, one obtains the infinite. He does not face any hardships and goes to the world of heaven. By giving what has been stated to brahmanas, one obtains whatever vocation one desires. It has also been determined that the donor is saved from hell and other hardships. Under Anuradha, if a man fasts and gives embroidered cloth and garments, then he obtains greatness in heaven for one hundred *yugas*. If a person desires prosperity, under Jyeshtha, he should give brahmanas the herb known as *kalashaka*, with earth still clinging to the roots. He will then obtain the desired objective. Under Mula, if a person is controlled and gives roots and fruits to brahmanas, he pleases the ancestors and goes to the desired destination. Under Purva Ashadha, if a person fasts and gives vessels full of curd to a brahmana who has good lineage and conduct and is learned in the Vedas, then after death, the donor is born in a family that has an extremely large number of cattle. Under Uttara Ashadha, if one gives jars filled with barley, ghee and large quantities of fermented liquor, one obtains all the objects that one desires. Under Abhijit, by giving milk, honey and ghee to learned men who are always devoted to dharma, one obtains greatness in the world of heaven. Under Shravana, by giving blankets and thick cloth, one roams around the worlds on white vehicles. Under Dhanishtha, if a person is controlled and gives a vehicle yoked to bulls and garments with fine strands, immediately after death, he obtains a kingdom. Under Shatabhisha, if one gives fragrances, aloe and sandalwood, after death, one obtains a world with apsaras and eternal fragrances. Under Purva Bhadrapada, if a person gives *rajamasha*,[39] he is happy after death and obtains all kinds of food and fruits. Under Uttara, if a person gives goat meat, he pleases the ancestors and obtains the infinite after death. Under Revati, if a person gives a cow and a brass vessel for milking, after death, the cow presents itself before the donor and satisfies every desire. Under Ashvini, if a supreme among men gives a chariot yoked to horses, after death, one is radiant and is born in a family that possesses elephants, horses and chariots. Under Bharani, if a man gives brahmanas sesamum and a cow, after death, he obtains fame and a large number of cows.'"

'Bhishma continued, "These are the signs associated with the nakshatras that have been indicated. Narada told Devaki about these and she told her daughters-in-law."'

Chapter 1745(64)

'Bhishma said, "The illustrious Atri, the son of the grandfather, said that those who give gold give all the objects of desire. Harishchandra, Indra among men, spoke about gold as something that is pure, cleansing the donor and providing indestructible benefits to his forefathers. Manu said that the gift of a drink is a supreme gift. Therefore, tanks, wells and ponds must be dug. If a man undertakes the task of digging a well and always follows good conduct, then half of his sins are taken away. If cattle, brahmanas and virtuous people always drink from a waterbody dug by a man, then his entire lineage is saved. If a person offers an unrestricted supply of water during the summer, then he never faces any calamity or hardship. The illustrious Brihaspati, Pushan, Bhaga, the Ashvins and the fire god are satisfied with ghee. It is a supreme medication and this is supreme knowledge. It is a supreme liquid and leads to supreme fruits. A man who desires fruits, fame and nourishment must always purify himself and give ghee to brahmanas. If a person gives ghee to brahmanas in the month of Ashvina, then the gods, the two Ashvins, are pleased with him and confer beauty on him. If a person gives payasam mixed with ghee to brahmanas, rakshasas never attack his house. If a person gives vessels filled with water, he doesn't die from thirst. He doesn't face a hardship and isn't seen to suffer from a difficulty. If a person is controlled and with supreme devotion gives to a best among brahmanas, then he obtains one-sixth of the brahmana's merits. O Indra among kings! If a man gives a brahmana wood for the successful completion of his rites or for purposes of heating, he is always successful in his efforts. All of his different kinds of efforts are always successful. His form is seen to be progressively more radiant than that of the enemy. The illustrious fire god is always extremely pleased with such a person. He is never separated from his animals. Nor is he separated from victory in battle. If a person gives an umbrella, he obtains sons and prosperity. He doesn't suffer from any disease of the eyes and obtains a share in the sacrifices. If a person gives an umbrella during the summer or when it is raining, he never suffers from any mental anxiety. O brahmana![40] He is freed from all hardships and difficulties. Among all the kinds of gifts that can be given, a cart is the best. O immensely fortunate one! This was said by the illustrious rishi, Shandilya."'

Chapter 1746(65)

'Yudhisthira asked, "O grandfather! If a brahmana's feet are being scorched by the heat and one gives him footwear, what fruits are obtained? Tell me that."

'Bhishma replied, "If a person is controlled and donates footwear to brahmanas, he is able to overcome all thorns and difficulties. O Yudhishthira! He is always placed above his enemies. O lord of the earth! His sparkling vehicle is yoked to mules and is decorated in silver and in gold. O Kounteya! He is stationed atop that. The merit is like that of donating a cart with well-trained mounts."

'Yudhishthira said, "O Kourava! Tell me once again about the fruits from donating sesamum, donating land, donating cattle and donating food, though you have already recounted it."

'Bhishma replied, "O Kounteya! Hear about the fruits from donating sesamum. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! It has to be given properly. Listen. Svayambhu created sesamum as the first food for the ancestors. Therefore, the party of the ancestors is delighted when sesamum is donated. If a person gives sesamum to brahmanas in the month of Magha,[41] then he does not have to see hell, which is populated by all kinds of unholy creatures. Offering sesamum to the ancestors is like performing all the sacrifices, with a desire for the fruits. Without a desire for the fruits, one should never perform a funeral ceremony where sesamum is offered. Sesamum was created from the body of *maharshi* Kashyapa. O lord! That is the reason the offering of sesamum has divine attributes. They provide nourishment and beauty and destroy sins. That is the reason the gifting of sesamum is superior to all other donations. The intelligent Apastamba,[42] Shankha, Likhita and maharshi Goutama went to heaven after donating sesamum. Brahmanas who are devoted to offering oblations of sesamum, control the urge towards sexual intercourse and perform acts of *pravritti* where oblations of cattle products are offered, are regarded as equal. It has been said that the donation of sesamum is superior to all other kinds of gifts. It has also been said that among all kinds of gifts, the gift of sesamum leads to inexhaustible fruits. O scorcher of enemies! On an earlier occasion, oblations of clarified butter weren't available. Having offered sesamum seeds, the rishi Kushika went to the supreme destination. O best among the Kuru lineage! I have thus spoken to you about the supreme gift of sesamum. I have also told you about the rules. It is because of those rules that the gift of sesamum is praised.

'"After this, listen to what I have to say about the gods desiring to perform a sacrifice. O great king! They went and met Svayambhu Brahma. The gods went and met Brahma, desiring a part of the earth where they might perform the sacrifice. O king! They said, 'We desire an auspicious spot where we can perform the sacrifice. O illustrious one! You are the lord of the earth and of heaven. O immensely fortunate one! With your permission, we wish to undertake a sacrifice. If the ground is used without permission, the fruits of the sacrifice aren't obtained. You are the lord of everything in the universe, mobile and immobile. Therefore, we are seeking your permission.' Brahma replied, 'O bulls among the gods! O descendants of Kashyapa! I will give you a part of the earth. You can perform your sacrifice at that spot.' The gods said, 'O illustrious one! Our wishes have been satisfied. We will perform our sacrifice and give away large quantities of dakshina. Let this spot always be worshipped by the sages.' Agastya, Kanva, Bhrigu, Atri, Vrishakapi, Asita and Devala came to the sacrifice performed by the gods. O undecaying one! The great-souled gods performed their sacrifice. At the right time, the bulls among gods completed the sacrifice. The gods performed their sacrifice on the slopes of the Himalayas. They earmarked one-sixth share of their sacrifice for those who would donate land. If a person donates a small bit of land reverentially, he does not suffer from any hardships and does not have to face any difficulties. If a person donates some land with a well-constructed house that is capable of withstanding heat, cold and wind, then even when his merits are exhausted, he is not dislodged from the world of the gods. O king! A wise person who gives such a refuge resides happily with Shakra and obtains greatness in heaven. There may be a learned brahmana who is in control of his senses and has been born in a family of preceptors. If he is given a house in which he resides happily, the donor obtains the best of worlds. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! If a person donates a shelter for cows that is strong and is capable of withstanding cold and rain, then the donor saves seven generations of his lineage.[43] O son! By donating arable land, one obtains prosperous worlds. By donating land that is rich in wealth, one extends one's family and lineage. One should never donate land that is barren or scorched. Nor should one donate land that is near a cremation ground or is populated by wicked people. If a person performs a funeral ceremony for the ancestors in land that is owned by someone else, then the gift of that land and the fruits of the ceremony are both destroyed. Therefore, a learned person will purchase a plot of land and then donate it, even if it is small. The funeral cakes offered to the ancestors then become inexhaustible. Forests, mountains, rivers and *tirthas* are not owned by anyone. Therefore, ceremonies can be performed there. O lord of the earth! I have spoken to you about the fruits from donating land.

'"O unblemished one! I will next tell you about the donation of cattle. Cows are superior to all ascetics. That is the reason the god Maheshvara performed austerities in their company. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Together with Soma, they dwell in Brahma's world. That is the supreme destination that successful brahmana rishis seek. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They provide milk, clarified butter, curds, dung, hides, bones, horns and hair. They tolerate cold and heat and always work. They tolerate the difficult hardships of the monsoon season. With brahmanas, they go to the supreme destination. That is why the learned say that cows and brahmanas are equal. In ancient times, Rantideva performed a sacrifice where animals were slaughtered. It is because of the hides of cattle that the river formed came to be known as Charmanvati.[44]

O lord of the earth! However, animals are no longer slaughtered and are thought of as gifts. O king! A person who donates them to the best of brahmanas is saved from calamities, hardships and difficulties. A person who donates one thousand cows does not have to see hell after death. O lord of men! Such a person obtains victory everywhere. The lord of the thirty gods has spoken of the milk of cows as amrita. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates amrita. Those who are knowledgable about the Vedas say that ghee obtained from such milk is the best oblation offered to a fire. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates oblations. A bull is like the direct manifestation of heaven. A person who donates it to a brahmana who possesses the qualities obtains greatness in heaven. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A cow is said to be the breath of life among creatures. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates the breath of life. Those who are knowledgable about the Vedas have said that a cow is the refuge of creatures. Therefore, a person who donates a cow, donates refuge. A cow must not be donated for slaughter, to someone who kills animals, or to a non-believer. O bull among men! A cow must not be given to someone who earns a living from cattle. Learned ones have said that if a man gives a cow to such perpetrators of wicked deeds, he goes to ever-lasting hell. A cow that is given to a brahmana should not be lean, barren, diseased, defective in limb, exhausted, or one that does not easily calve. A man who properly donates ten thousand cattle enjoys delight with Shakra. A man who donates one hundred thousand cattle obtains the eternal worlds. I have talked about donating cows, donating sesamum and donating land.

'"O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Now hear about gifts of food. O Kounteya! The donation of food is said to be the best. After donating food, Rantideva went to heaven. O lord of the earth! O lord of men! If a person gives food to someone who is exhausted and hungry, the immensely fortunate one sees Svayambhu's world. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord! By donating gold, garments and horses, a man doesn't obtain the benefit that can be obtained by donating food. Food is the supreme object. It has been held that food is supreme prosperity. Life, power, energy, valour and strength result from food. If a man always donates food single-mindedly, then he does not suffer from any hardship. Parashara said that. O king! After worshipping the gods in the proper way, food must be offered to them. A man offers the gods the food that he himself partakes. If a man donates food in the *shuklapaksha* of Koumudi,[45] then he can tide over all hardships. After death, he obtains the infinite. O bull among the Bharata lineage! If a person is controlled and offers food to a hungry guest, he obtains the worlds that are meant for those who know about the brahman. A man who donates food manages to cross over every difficulty and hardship. He overcomes his sins and cleanses all his wicked deeds. I have thus spoken about the fruits from donation of food, donation of sesamum, donation of land and donation of cattle."'

Chapter 1747(66)

'Yudhishthira said, "O father! You have recounted the fruits of donations and I have heard. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Food has specially been praised. What are the great and supreme fruits obtained from donating drinks? O grandfather! I wish to hear about this in detail."

'Bhishma replied, "O bull among Bharatas! I will accurately tell you about this. O one with truth as his valour! I will tell you about this now. Listen. O unblemished one! I will tell you everything about gifts of drinks. I think that the benefit that a man obtains from donating food and drinks is supreme and there is no other gift that is equal to these. O son! In every way, life is upheld through food. Therefore, in this world, it is held to be the supreme donation. It is through food that the energy and strength of creatures are always increased. Therefore, Prajapati has said that the donation of food is supreme. O Kounteya! Savitri's auspicious words about this have also been heard. O immensely intelligent one! They were uttered on the occasion of a sacrifice of the gods. 'If a man donates food, he donates life. There is no gift in this world that is superior to granting life.'[46] O mighty-armed one! You have also heard Lomasha's words, spoken in earlier times, when Shibi granted life to the pigeon.[47] O lord of the earth! If a person donates food to a brahmana, he grants life and obtains a superior end. That is what we have heard. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! Drinks are superior to food. Without water, nothing can exist. The illustrious Soma, the lord of the large number of planets, was created from water. O great king! Amrita, *sudha*,[48] *svaha*, *vashat*, food, herbs and medicinal plants have originated from water. O lord of the earth! The breath of life of creatures results from this. Amrita is food for the gods and sudha is food for the serpents. Svadha is said to be food for the ancestors and plants and herbs are food for animals. The learned have said that food is the breath of life for humans. O tiger among men! All of these have resulted from drink. Therefore, there is nothing superior to a gift of drink. A man who desires his own prosperity must always gift it. O lord of the earth! A gift of drink ensures praise, fame and long life. O Kounteya! One who gives water is always established above his enemies. He obtains all the objects of desire and eternal fame. He is freed from sins. After death, he obtains the infinite. O tiger among men! O immensely radiant one! A person who gifts water goes to heaven. He obtains the indestructible and eternal worlds. This is what Manu has said."'

Chapter 1748(67)

'Yudhishthira said, "Tell me again about gifts of sesamum, lamps, food and garments."

'Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a brahmana and Yama. In the middle region, in the land between the Ganga and the Yamuna, there was a large village of brahmanas, at the foot of the mountains known as Yamuna.[49] O lord of men! That beautiful village was known as Parnashala. Many learned brahmanas resided there. One day, Yama instructed a man.[50] He was attired in black garments. His eyes were red and his body hair stood erect. His feet, eyes and nose were like that of a crow. 'Go to the village of brahmanas. Having gone there, bring the one who is named Sharmina. He belongs to Agastya's lineage. He is learned and self-controlled. He is a revered and well-known preceptor. Do not bring anyone else, even if that person lives near him and is from the same gotra. That other person is his equal in qualities, studying and birth. He is also the intelligent one's[51] equal in offspring and conduct. Bring the one I have spoken about. It is my duty to honour him.' Having gone there on Yama's instructions, he did the opposite of what he had been asked to.

Though restrained by Yama, he attacked and brought the other one. At this, Yama arose and worshipped the valiant one. He said, ‘Take this one away and bring the other one instead.’ When Dharmaraja[52] spoke these words, the brahmana replied to Dharmaraja. ‘I am tired of studying. O undecaying one! Whatever be the time that is left for me, I wish to dwell here with you.’[53] Yama said, ‘I cannot accept anyone until his ordained time has come. I only know about the acts of dharma that people have performed.[54] O brahmana! O immensely radiant one! Return to your own house. Tell me if there is anything else that I can do for you.’ The brahmana replied, ‘Tell me about extremely great and beneficial acts. O excellent one! You are the yardstick for everything in the three worlds.’

‘“Yama said, ‘O brahmana rishi! Listen to the excellent ordinances that have been laid down for donations. Sesamum is a supreme gift and leads to eternal merits. O bull among brahmanas! Depending on capacity, one must always donate sesamum. If one donates sesamum every day, one obtains all the objects of desire. A funeral ceremony with sesamum is praised and it is the supreme gift. Following the ordinances laid down for rites, give it to brahmanas. Whenever sesamum is obtained, sesamum must always be eaten. If a virtuous person desires prosperity, he must always do this in his house, with all his soul.[55] There is no doubt that drinks also figure among all gifts. Lakes, ponds and wells must be constructed. O supreme among brahmanas! Such tasks are extremely rare in the world. Water must always be given, since it brings supreme merits. O supreme among brahmanas! For the sake of drinking water, reservoirs must always be constructed. In particular, after a person has eaten, water must be offered.”’

‘Bhishma continued, “Having been instructed, Yama’s messenger then took him back to his residence. Once he[56] had been taken there, he followed all of Yama’s instructions. Having taken him there, Yama’s messenger seized Sharmina and went and conveyed him to Dharmaraja. Dharmaraja, who knew about dharma, worshipped the powerful one. Having conversed with him, Yama also instructed him about everything and said that he should be taken back to where he had been brought from. Having returned, he also did everything that Yama had asked him to. For the benefit of the ancestors, Yama praised the donation of lamps. Therefore, to enable the ancestors to cross over, lamps must always be given. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! One must always give lamps. O lord! These have been held to constitute eyes for the gods and the ancestors. O lord of men! It has been said that the donation of jewels brings extremely great merits. If a brahmana receives these, and then sells them for undertaking a sacrifice, he doesn't do anything terrible. Having received these, if a brahmana donates them to other brahmanas, both the donor and the recipient obtain inexhaustible benefits. Manu knew about dharma and said that as long as the donor and the recipient follow the appropriate rites, both of them obtain eternal dharma. A man who is devoted to his own wife must always give garments. He will then obtain excellent garments and excellent attire. O tiger among men! These are the proofs enunciated and described in the Vedas about the many benefits from donating cattle, gold and sesamum. One must marry and generate offspring. O Kouravya! The obtaining of a son is superior to all kinds of gains."'

Chapter 1749(68)

'Yudhishthira said, "O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Tell me again about the supreme ordinances associated with donations. O immensely fortunate one! Especially tell me about gifts of land. Through his own deeds,[57] a kshatriya must donate the earth to brahmanas and they must receive it, following the rites. No one else[58] should donate it. Desiring the fruits, all the varnas must donate according to their capacities. The Vedas have enumerated this and you should explain it to me."

'Bhishma replied, "There are three gifts that have the same name and lead to the same kind of fruits. They lead to all the fruits of desire being met and they are a cow, the earth and Sarasvati. A person who tells his disciple about the dharma of Brahmi Sarasvati obtains fruits that are equal to those obtained from donating the earth and cows.[59] Cows are also praised in that way and there is no gift that is superior. O Yudhishthira! From their donation, one can also reap the best fruits. Cattle are the mothers of all creatures and yield all kinds of happiness. A person who desires his prosperity must always give cows as dakshina. They are the auspicious abodes of divinity and must always be worshipped. Earlier, when gods used cattle to till the land, they goaded them. Therefore, it is permissible to goad them in such a task, but never for anything else. When cows are grazing, drinking water or lying down, they must not be disturbed. When they are thirsty, even by looking at a man, they are capable of killing him and his relatives. The seats of the ancestors and the seats of the gods are purified with cow dung. What can be more pure than them? Before he himself eats, if a person gives someone else's cow a handful of grass daily, for an entire year, that is like performing a vow that satisfies all the objects of desire. He obtains sons, fame, riches and prosperity. Everything inauspicious is destroyed and his nightmares melt away."

'Yudhishthira asked, "What are the signs of cattle that can be given and which are the ones to be avoided? Who is a good recipient and who are the ones to whom one shouldn't give?"

'Bhishma replied, "A cow must never be given to a person who is wicked in conduct, sinful, greedy, untruthful in speech and one who does not render offerings to the ancestors and the gods. If a person gives ten cows to a learned brahmana who seeks alms, has many sons and makes offerings to the fire, the donor obtains supreme worlds. If a person performs acts of dharma with possessions he has obtained from someone else, then both the actor and the original owner get a share of the auspicious merits. A person who is the biological father, a person who saves from great fear and a person who provides means of subsistence—these are the three types of fathers. Sins are destroyed by serving a preceptor. Insolence destroys great fame. If one has three sons, then one is no longer a person without a son.[60] Ten cows ensure a means of subsistence. Means of sustenance must be created for a brahmana who is devoted to Vedanta, is extremely learned, is content in his wisdom, has conquered his senses, is virtuous and self-controlled, is pleasant in speech towards all beings, is one who will not perform a perverse deed out of a minor fear, is mild and generous, is always attentive towards guests, has sons and wives and is equal in conduct.[61] The merits obtained from giving a cow to a recipient who possesses the qualities are equal to the demerits substracted if one seizes a brahmana's possessions. In every situation, one must avoid taking away a brahmana's possessions and one must maintain a distance from his wives."'

Chapter 1750(69)

‘Bhishma said, “O extender of the Kuru lineage! In this connection, there is the recital of the extremely difficult hardship Nriga had to face when he took away the possession of a virtuous brahmana. O Partha! On an earlier occasion, it has been heard that some people entered the city of Dvaravati and saw a giant well that was covered with grass and creepers. They made efforts, seeking to obtain water from the well. Since the water was extensively covered, they had to struggle a lot. After clearing this, they saw a giant lizard there. They made thousands of attempts to remove it from that place. It was as large as a mountain and they used ropes made of leather to bind and drag it away. However, not succeeding in these attempts, they went to Janardana. ‘There is a giant lizard that has completely covered the mouth of the well. We have been unable to remove it.’ They reported this to Krishna.

‘“Vasudeva removed it from there and wished to know who it actually was. Thus asked, it reported itself to be King Nriga, who, in earlier times, had performed one thousand sacrifices. When it answered in this way, Madhava said, ‘You performed auspicious deeds, not wicked ones. Why did you then face this hardship? O Indra among kings! Tell me. How did you attain this state? We have heard that in ancient times, you repeatedly gave brahmanas hundreds of thousands of cows one hundred times. Then you again gave hundred and eight thousand of cows a hundred thousand times. Why did this happen to you?’ Nriga told Krishna, ‘There was a brahmana who practised agnihotra. While he was away, it was led astray and mixed with my herd of cows. That animal got included in thousands of cattle I possessed. Desiring prosperity after death, I gave it away to a brahmana. The brahmana returned and saw that his wayward cow was in another brahmana’s house. He said, “This belongs to me.” They disputed the matter and, extremely anxious, appeared before me. Both of them spoke to me. One said, “You gave me this.” The other said, “You stole this from me.” I told the one I had given the cow to, “In exchange for this cow, accept these hundreds and hundreds of cows.” However, he replied, “The one I got is appropriate for the time and the place. She yields a lot of milk. She is quiet and affectionate. Her milk is sweet. She has always been praised in my house. I have a weak son who has just been weaned and this cow has nourished him. I am incapable of giving her away." Having said this, he left. So I spoke to the other brahmana and proposed an exchange. "Instead of this cow, accept these hundred thousand other cows." But the brahmana replied, "I am established on my own path and am incapable of accepting gifts from kings. Therefore, swiftly return the cow that is mine." O Madhusudana! I offered him gold, horses, silver and chariots. However, the bull among brahmanas did not accept these. Meanwhile, urged by the dharma of time, I obtained the world of the ancestors[62] and was brought before Dharmaraja. Yama worshipped me and spoke these words. "O king! There is no end to the number of auspicious deeds you have performed. But there is a sin, even if you committed it inadvertently. Do you wish to suffer for the sin earlier or later? It shall be as you wish. You promised that you would protect. You took a false pledge. You seized the possession of a brahmana. These are the three aspects to the sin you committed." I replied, "O lord! I shall suffer from the sin first. Let the auspicious benefits come later." As soon as I said this to Dharmaraja, I fell down on the surface of the earth and could hear the words that Yama spoke to me. O Janardana! He said, "Vasudeva will save you. When one thousand years are over, the fruits of your evil deed will wear thin. Because of the other deeds that you have yourself performed, you will then conquer and obtain the eternal worlds." I fell down, head downwards, and found myself inside this well. Though I was born as an inferior species, my memory did not desert me. You have saved me today. This can be nothing other than the strength of your austerities. O Krishna! Grant me permission. I wish to go to heaven now.' O scorcher of enemies! He took Krishna's permission. He bowed down to Janardana and ascending a celestial vehicle, went to heaven. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! After Nriga reached heaven, Vasudeva recited this shloka. 'No man should willingly seize something that belongs to a brahmana. If seized, a brahmana's property causes destruction, just as the brahmana's cow destroyed Nriga.' O Partha! A meeting with the virtuous is never fruitless. Behold Nriga's encounter with a virtuous person. He was freed from hell. There are fruits from donations. There are also evil fruits from violence. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, you should avoid acts of injury towards cows."'

Chapter 1751(70)

"Yudhishthira said, "O unblemished one! O mighty-armed one! Tell me in detail about the fruits that can be obtained from donating cattle. I am not satisfied with what you have said."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the words the rishi Uddalaki and Nachiketa spoke to each other. Having initiated himself for a rite, the rishi Uddalaki told his son, Nachiketa, 'Serve me.' When those rituals were completed, the maharshi again told his son, 'I have been engaged with my ablutions and have focused on studying. Since my mind was on those, I have forgotten to bring the firewood, the *darbha* grass and the pot full of water that I had collected. They are on the banks of the river. Go and bring them.' However, having gone there, he saw that all these had been washed away by the force of the river's current. The sage went and told his father, 'I did not see them there.' At that time, the sage Uddalaki was overcome by hunger, thirst and exhaustion. The immensely ascetic one cursed his son, 'You will see Yama.' Struck by the *vajra* of his father's words, he joined his hands in salutation and asked for pacification. However, he lost his life and fell down on the ground. His father saw that Nachiketa had fallen down and became senseless with grief. He exclaimed, 'What have I done?' He also fell down on the ground. He was overcome with supreme grief at his son having been killed through his own acts. The day passed and the terrible night arrived. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Nachiketa lay down on a mat of kusha grass. As his father's tears fell on him, he began to move, like crops reviving when they are showered with rain. His body was smeared with divine fragrances and he was still weak, as if he had woken up from sleep. His father praised this phenomenon of his son reviving and asked, 'O son! Have you conquered the worlds through your auspicious deeds? It is good fortune that I have got you back. Your body isn't human any longer.' The great-souled one had directly witnessed everything and was thus asked by his father.

'"In the midst of the maharshis, he clearly told his father what had happened. 'Following your instructions, I quickly went to Vaivasvata's abode. It was large, beautiful and resplendent. I saw a multi-storeyed assembly hall that was golden and one thousand *yojanas*[63] wide. As soon as he saw me advance towards him, Vaivasvata instructed that a house and a seat should be given to me. He offered *arghya* [64] and the other signs of welcome. For your sake, he honoured me. I was thus surrounded and honoured by his attendants. I gently spoke these words. “O Dharmaraja! I have come to your dominion. Grant me the worlds that have been earmarked for me.” Yama told me, “O amiable one! You are not dead. Your ascetic father told you to see Yama. He is like a blazing fire in his energy. O brahmana! I am incapable of rendering his words false. O son![65] I have seen you now. Return. The one who created your body is sorrowing. What can I give you? What does your mind desire? You are my beloved guest. I will grant the boon you desire.” Thus addressed, I replied, “I have obtained your dominion and it is extremely difficult to return from here. If you think that I am deserving of a boon, I wish to see the prosperous worlds meant for those who perform auspicious deeds.” The god asked me to ascend a vehicle. It was yoked to horses and was extremely radiant, like the sun. O Indra among brahmanas! He showed me all the worlds meant for the performers of auspicious deeds. There, I saw the dazzling residences meant for those who have cleansed their souls. They had different foundations and forms. They were full of many kinds of jewels. They sparkled like the lunar disc. They were decorated with nets of bells. There were hundreds that had many floors and there were lakes and groves inside them. They dazzled like lapis lazuli and were decorated with silver and gold. Everything there, mobile and immobile, possessed the complexion of the rising sun. There were mountains of objects to eat and swallow. There were garments and beds. In those residences, there were trees that granted all the objects of desire. Everywhere, there were rivers, roads, assembly halls, lakes and tanks. Thousands of vehicles were yoked and they thundered. There were rivers that flowed with milk. There were mountains of ghee. The water sparkled. With Vaivasvata’s permission, I saw many such countries that I had never seen before. Having seen all this, I addressed the ancient and powerful Dharmaraja. “These rivers have eternal flows of milk and ghee. Whose food have these been decreed as?” Yama replied, “Know that these objects of food are for the virtuous ones who donate milk. There are other eternal and pervasive worlds, bereft of all misery, for the virtuous ones who are devoted to donating cows. The gifting of cows alone is not praised.

There are ordinances about the time and the recipient. O brahmana! One should give after knowing these. Know that if a cow is kept inside a place where it suffers from the fire or the sun, this leads to hardship.[66] If a brahmana is firm in studying, is extremely ascetic and is devoted to sacrifices, he is a worthy recipient. Cows which have been rescued from a situation of distress and have thereafter been nourished, are especially praised. One should fast for three nights and sleep on the ground. After that, contented, one should give cows away. Cows should cheerfully be given away, with their calves, with all the other accompaniments. They should be ones that yield good calves. Having given them, for three days, the donor should only subsist on the milk of cows. One must donate a cow after following good vows. A brass vessel must be given for milking. It should be one that has easy birth and should also be one that does not run away. In that event, the donor enjoys the world of heaven for as many years as there are hair on the cow's body. A bull must be controllable and capable of bearing a burden. It must be strong and young. It must be large, brave and of noble birth. A donor who gives to a brahmana in this way, enjoys the worlds, like the donor of a cow. A forgiving and grateful person who has no means of subsistence and depends on cows for a living is said to be a worthy recipient. The donation of a cow is praised when there is fear about means of subsistence, for some great purpose, for the sake of agriculture, or for the sake of a sacrifice. The gift of a beloved cow is especially praised when it is for the preceptor or when it is for the sake of nurturing a child. The time and the place are important. Cows that are given should have been born internally,[67] purchased, obtained as a price for learning, obtained in exchange for other animals, conquered[68] or obtained in marriage." Hearing Vaivasvata's words, I spoke to him again. "If people do not own cattle, how can they go to worlds that are meant for the donors of cattle?" At this, the intelligent Yama replied, "By donating cattle, one goes to the supreme destination. In the absence of cattle, one can go to the regions where donors of cattle go, by giving what is regarded as equivalent to cows. In the absence of cows, one can carefully observe vows and create a cow made out of ghee. That flow of ghee is like a milk-yielding cow with a calf. In the absence of ghee, one can carefully observe vows and donate sesamum. Like a cow, that will save from all kinds of hardship and one will find delight, as with a river of milk. In the absence of sesamum, one can carefully observe vows and donate water. That will be like a flowing river of cool water and will satisfy all the objects of desire." These were the instructions that Dharmaraja gave me then. O undecaying one! On seeing all this, I was filled with supreme delight. I will now report something that you will find agreeable. There is a great sacrifice that only requires a little bit of wealth. O father! It has been obtained by me and it will flow from me. It can also be observed by those who follow the ordinances of the Vedas. The curse that you imposed on me was actually a favour. Through that, I was able to see Yama. I witnessed the great gains that can be reaped through donations. Without any doubt, I will practise dana dharma. O brahmana rishi! This is what Dharmaraja repeatedly told me, cheerfully. "O son! A person who always donates, should specially gift cows. Be pure in pursuing this artha and do not ignore your own dharma. Depending on the time and the place, donate to a worthy recipient. Therefore, always donate cows. You should not entertain any doubts about this. In ancient times, there were those who were tranquil in their souls. They remained on the path of donations and always gave gifts. They were scared of engaging in terrible austerities. Hence, to the best of their capacities, they practised donations. In due course of time, they abandoned all malice. They purified their souls. They were faithful and good in conduct. Those performers of auspicious deeds tormented themselves through donations and obtained blazing worlds in the vault of heaven. Lawfully obtained objects must be given to brahmanas, after examining whether the recipient is worthy. They should be given on *kamyashtami*.[69] After donating, for ten days, one should subsist on cow's milk, cow dung and cow's urine. The donor of a bull follows the vows of the Vedas. The donor of a couple of bulls becomes skilled in knowledge of the Vedas. By giving a vehicle yoked to cattle, one obtains the merit of bathing in tirthas. By giving a kapila cow, one is cleansed of all sins. If the owner of a kapila obtained through legitimate means gives it away, he is purified of all sins. There is nothing that is superior to the milk of cows. It is said that greatness is obtained from donating cows. Through their milk, cows hold up the world. Cows produce the food that sustains the worlds. Knowing about what cattle do, if a person oppresses them, he is evil in his consciousness and goes to hell. If a person donates one thousand cows, one hundred, fifty or even ten, or even if one gives a single cow that properly gives birth to calves, to a virtuous brahmana, that cow becomes like a river that is full of sacred tirthas, yielding benefits. In prosperity, nourishment and protecting the worlds, cows are like the rays of the sun that descend on earth. The word is the same for both.[70] The donor of a cow enjoys extensive offspring. Therefore, a cow shines like the sun. In donating cows, for a disciple, the preceptor is the best recipient. He is the eloquent and controlled speaker who grants heaven. The knowledge of the ordinances is extremely great dharma. This is the first ordinance and all other ordinances result from this.[71] Thus, legitimately earned objects must be given to brahmanas, after ascertaining the worthiness of the recipient. When praising, the immortals, men and we say, 'May the auspiciousness of your deeds extend.'" O maharshi! This is what Dharmaraja told me. I bowed my head down before the one who has dharma in his soul. O illustrious one! Having taken Vaivasvata's permission, I have returned here, at your feet.'"'

Chapter 1752(71)

'Yudhishthira said, "O lord! When speaking about the rishi Nachiketa, you have told me about the greatness of donating cows and you have also instructed me about cattle. O grandfather! O immensely intelligent one! You have also told me about the hardship that the great-souled Nriga faced because of a single transgression. He had to dwell in Dvaravati for a long time. I have learnt how Krishna became the cause of his liberation. O lord! However, I still have a doubt about the world of cows. I wish to hear the truth about what is obtained by those who donate cows."

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, there is an ancient history about what the god Shatakratu asked the one who was born from the lotus.

'"Shakra said, 'I have a doubt about the prosperity seen by those who reside in Goloka[72] and it transcending that experienced by the residents of the world of heaven. O illustrious one! O unblemished one! What is the world of cows like? Tell me. I desire to know about where the donors of cows go and reside. What fruits do they obtain? What are the supreme qualities there? How do men go there, freed from anxiety? For how long does a donor of cows enjoy those fruits? Do they donate a lot, or do they donate a little? What is it for those who donate a lot? What is it for those who donate a little? How do those who donate none become like those who donate cows? Tell me. O lord! How do those who donate a lot become equal to those who donate a little? O lord! How do those who donate a little become like those who donate a lot? When cattle are given, what kind of dakshina is superior? O illustrious one! You should tell me the truth about this.'"'

Chapter 1753(72)

'"Brahma said, 'O Shatakratu! You have asked me questions about the superiority of donating cows and there is no one else in the world who could have asked them. O Shakra! There are many kinds of worlds that you cannot see. I can see those worlds and so can women who have only one husband. Rishis who are excellent in their vows and extremely auspicious in their deeds go there, in their own bodies, and so do brahmanas who are virtuous in their conduct. Those who are excellent in their vows obtain emancipation and free themselves from their bodies.[73] With clear minds, they see those worlds in this world itself, as if in dreams. O one with the thousand eyes! Listen to the qualities that those worlds possess. There is no passage of time there. There is no old age. Nor is there sin. There is nothing that is inauspicious there. There is no disease or exhaustion. O Vasava! The cattle that dwell there obtain everything through their mental powers. I have directly seen this. They can go wherever they want. They roam around, wherever they wish. They enjoy one object of desire after another object of desire. Lakes, ponds, rivers, many kinds of groves, houses, mountains and all the objects that are agreeable to all beings—all these are seen there. Know that there is no world that is superior to this world. O Shakra! The best of men who tolerate everything, are forgiving and affectionate, follow their preceptors and are devoid of ego, go there. A man who does not eat any kind of flesh, is always self-controlled, worships his mother and his father, is truthful, cheerfully serves brahmanas, does not exhibit anger towards cows or brahmanas, is devoted to dharma, serves his preceptors, is devoted to the truth for as long as he lives, is engaged in donations, is forgiving towards crimes, is mild and self-controlled, is devoted to gods and is compassionate towards all guests is a man who possesses the qualities to go to that eternal and undecaying world. A person who has intercourse with someone else's wife cannot see this world. Nor can a person who kills his preceptor, engages in futile boasting, or always engages in censuring peaceful brahmanas who are devoted to the Vedas. Evil-souled ones who possess other wickedness cannot go there either. Goloka is the residence of those who are the performers of auspicious deeds. Those who injure their friends, are ungrateful, deceitful, crooked, haters of dharma and slayers of brahmanas cannot see it, not even in their minds. O lord of the gods! I have thus skilfully told you everything.

'"'O Shatakratu! Now listen to the fruits obtained by those who gift cows. A person who donates a cow bought with the riches obtained through inheritance or bought with wealth that has been earned through dharma obtains worlds without decay. O Shakra! If a person buys a cow with riches won through gambling and then donates it, he enjoys the fruits for ten thousand divine years. If a person obtains a cow through inheritance, that is regarded as having obtained a cow lawfully. Such a gift can be received and the donor certainly obtains the undecaying worlds. O Shachi's lord! If a person receives a cow as a gift and then gives it away with an extremely pure heart, know that it is certain that he will obtain the eternal worlds. If a person speaks the truth from the moment of his birth, controls his senses, is forgiving and tolerates his preceptors and brahmanas, he goes to the destination meant for cows. O Shachi's lord! Words that should not be spoken should not be uttered towards a brahmana. One must not harm a cow, even mentally. One must follow the conduct of a cow.[74] One must be compassionate towards cows. O Shakra! Listen to the fruits obtained by those who are devoted to the truth. If he gives away a single cow, that is like giving away one thousand cows. Listen to the fruits obtained by kshatriyas who possess such qualities. If he gives away a single cow, it has been determined that this is like giving away one hundred cows. If a vaishya possesses such qualities, it will be like giving away fifty cows. For a humble shudra, the fruits are said to be one-fourth. There may be a person who is devoted to rites, devoted to the truth, engaged in service to the preceptor, self-controlled, forgiving, tranquil, pure in intelligence and devoted to dharma. He may worship gods and be free of egoism. If he follows the ordinances and gives a milk-yielding cow to a brahmana, he obtains great fruits. Always single-minded in devotion, one must always give, established in the truth and engaged in serving the preceptor. O Shakra! Listen to the fruits obtained by a person who studies the Vedas, is respectful towards cows, is always delighted at seeing cows and who, since birth, has bowed down before cows. He is said to obtain great fruits equal to those obtained by the perfomer of a royal sacrifice, or a sacrifice where a lot of gold is given. All the virtuous and successful rishis have said this. If a person practises great reverence, is truthful in speech, is tranquil and wise and always follows a vow towards cows, in the sense of giving cows something for an entire year, then he is auspicious in conduct and obtains fruits equal to those from donating one thousand cows. If a person eats only once a day and follows a vow towards cows, giving the remainder of the food to cows and showing compassion towards cows, he obtains the infinite for ten years. O Shatakratu! If a person devoutly gives away a single cow that has been bought, it is said that he obtains the fruits for many days, as if he had given away one hundred cows. These are the fruits obtained by a brahmana. Listen to what is said about the fruits obtained by a kshatriya. The fruits obtained by a kshatriya are said to last for five years.[75] It is said to be half that for a vaishya and a shudra’s is half that for a vaishya. If one sells one’s own person, buys a cow with this and then gives it away, it is said that the duration of the fruits enjoyed can be ascertained by touching the cow. O immensely fortunate one! It is said that there are as many eternal and indestructible worlds as there are hair on the cow’s body. O Koushika![76] Know that if a cow is conquered in battle and then given away, the fruits are as eternal as those from selling one’s own self. In the absence of a cow, if one is careful in vows and gives away a cow made out of sesamum, one can tide over all hardships. That cow’s milk is like a river of bliss. The mere gift of a cow is not praised. The ordinances must be observed and the time and the place are important. One must donate a cow only at the right time and after ascertaining the nature of the brahmana. The cow must not suffer from fire and the sun in the recipient’s residence. A person who is firm in studying, is pure of lineage, calm, is devoted to sacrifices, scared of sin, grateful, forgiving, is not too fierce, one whose subsistence has suffered and a person who will provide a refuge to cows is said to be a worthy recipient. The time and the place are particularly superior for donating a cow when the recipient is excessively suffering because of the lack of a means of subsistence, when the cow is meant for agriculture, a sacrifice, a pregnant mother, for the sake of a preceptor or for rearing a child. If one knows about a cow's nature, if it has been obtained in exchange for knowledge, if it has been conquered through weapons, if it has been born in one's own house, if it has been saved from a distressful situation and if it has to be given because it can no longer be maintained—such cows are praised as gifts. Cattle that are strong, good in disposition and fragrant are always praised as gifts. Ganga is the best among rivers. Like that, a kapila is the best among cattle. For three nights, one must only subsist on water. One must sleep on the bare ground. After satisfying with other gifts, one must then give a cow. Healthy calves that have not been weaned must be given away with the cow. After giving the cow away, for three days, one must only subsist on milk. One must donate cows of a good disposition, ones that yield excellent calves. They must behave well and must not run away. If one gives away such a cow, in the world hereafter, one enjoys happiness for as many years as the cow possesses hair. For a brahmana, one must give a strong, young and truculent bull that is capable of bearing a burden. It must be great in courage and must be capable of carrying the plough. One then obtains worlds obtained by those who donate ten cows. O Koushika! If a person saves a brahmana or a cow from a desolate state, because of that act of conferring safety, he is freed. Listen to the good merits. Such a man obtains eternal fruits equal to a horse sacrifice. O one with the one thousand eyes! At the time of death, he obtains whatever status he desires.[77] He obtains many kinds of divine worlds and everything else that is there in his heart. Through that deed, the man obtains all these. With the permission of cattle, he obtains greatness everywhere. There may be a person who follows the ordinances and follows cows into the forest, surviving on grass, cow dung and leaves, free from desire, self-controlled and pure. O Shatakratu! Free from desire, he resides happily in my world with the gods, or in whatever other world he wishes for.'"'

Chapter 1754(73)

‘“Indra said, ‘I wish to know about the ends obtained by a person who steals a cow, or one who sells a cow because of the money.’

‘“Brahma replied, ‘Listen to the fruits obtained by a person who steals a cow to eat it, sell it, or gift it to a brahmana. Without following the restraints, if a man sells, causes injury and eats, or causes it to be slain, he does not do what is permissible. For as many years as there are hair, the slayer, the eater and the perpetrator of heinous deeds is submerged.[78] O lord! The sins from stealing and selling are said to be equal to the sins from destroying the sacrifices of brahmanas. If a person steals a cow and gives it to a brahmana, there are fruits from the act of donation, but he also has to suffer in hell. O immensely radiant one! When a cow is donated, gold has been said to be the dakshina. There is no doubt that gold is supreme for purposes of dakshina. By donating a cow, seven of the preceding and succeeding generations are saved. The gains are said to double if gold is given as dakshina. Gold is a supreme gift. Gold is a supreme dakshina. O Shakra! Gold purifies. Gold is said to be the supreme purifier. O Shatakratu! Pure gold is said to purify the lineage. O immensely radiant one! I have briefly told you about dakshina.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is what the grandfather[79] told Indra. Indra told Dasharatha and Rama learnt it from his father. Raghava told the illustrious Lakshmana, his beloved brother. O lord! While dwelling in the forest, Lakshmana told the rishis. Progressively, the rishis, rigid in their vows, sustained this, though it was difficult to sustain. And so did the kings who were devoted to dharma. O Yudhishthira! My preceptor told me about this. A brahmana who recites this at an assembly of brahmanas, or at a place where sacrifices and donations of cows are both being held, indeed obtains the undecaying worlds and is always with the gods. This is what the illustrious Brahma, the supreme lord, said.”’

Chapter 1755(74)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O lord! I am reassured by what you have spoken about dharma. O grandfather! But I will relate the doubts that I have. Tell me about these. O immensely radiant one! What are said to be the fruits of vows and what is their nature? What are the fruits of rituals?[80] What are the fruits of studying on one’s own? What are the fruits of self-restraint and of sustaining the Vedas? What are the fruits of teaching? I wish to know about all these. O grandfather! In this world, what are the fruits of not accepting gifts? What are heard and seen to be the fruits for those who give? What are the fruits obtained by brave ones who are engaged in their own acts? What are said to be the fruits of truth? What are the fruits of *brahmacharya*?. What happens as a result of serving the father or serving the mother? What about serving the instructor or the preceptor? What about lack of anger and compassion? O grandfather! O one who knows about dharma! I desire to know the truth about all this, in detail. My curiosity is great.”

‘Bhishma replied, “A person who follows the instructions, commences a vow and completes it properly, obtains the eternal worlds. O king! The fruits of rituals are directly seen. You have obtained the fruits of rituals and sacrifices. The fruits of studying on one’s own are seen in this world and in the world hereafter. There is artha in this world and eternal bliss in Brahma’s world. O king! Listen in detail to the fruits of self-restraint. A self-restrained person is happy everywhere. A self-restrained person is detached everywhere. Self-restrained people can go wherever they wish and can destroy all their enemies. There is no doubt that self-restrained people obtain what they desire. O Pandava! Those who are self-restrained obtain all the objects of desire everywhere. Because of their valour and austerities, they find bliss in heaven. There are many kinds of sacrifices with donations. A self-restrained and forgiving donor is not enraged. Therefore, self-restraint is superior to donations. If a person is enraged after the act of giving, his eternal worlds of giving are destroyed because of that rage. Therefore, self-restraint is superior to donations. O great king! There are tens of thousands of invisible abodes in heaven. The rishis are conveyed to all those worlds and the gods go there. O king! The supreme rishis go there because of their self-restraint. As they wish, they can go to those great places. Therefore, self-restraint is superior to donations. O lord of men! If an instructor follows the instructions and offers oblations into the fire, by virtue of his efforts, he obtains the fruits of Brahma’s undecaying world. Having studied the Vedas, if a person legitimately passes on that knowledge, having praised the deeds of his preceptor, he obtains greatness in heaven. If a kshatriya is engaged in studying, performs sacrifices, gives donations and saves others in battle, he too obtains greatness in heaven. A vaishya who donates and is engaged in his own tasks obtains greatness. A shudra who serves and is engaged in his own tasks goes to heaven. Many kinds of valiant ones have been spoken of, and listen to what is earmarked for them. There are indicated destinations for brave ones and fruits for brave ones. There are those who are brave in sacrifices, brave in self-restraint and brave in truth. Men are said to be brave in battle and brave in donating. Others are brave in intelligence and still others are brave in forgiveness. There are men who are brave in uprightness, or brave in tranquility. There are many other virtuous ones who are brave in rituals. There are those who are brave in studying the Vedas and those who are brave in teaching. There are those who are brave in serving preceptors and brave in serving fathers. Others are brave in serving mothers, or brave in begging for alms. There are many who are brave in practice of *sankhya*. There are others who are brave in practice of yoga. There are those who are brave in the forest, in the household and in worshipping guests. Because of the fruits they have conquered through their own deeds, all of them go to the supreme worlds. Upholding all the Vedas or bathing in all the tirthas may, or may not, always be equal to speaking the truth. One thousand horse sacrifices and truth were weighed on both sides of a balance and truth was superior to one thousand horse sacrifices. The sun heats because of truth. The fire blazes because of truth. The wind blows because of truth. Everything is established in truth. The gods, the ancestors and brahmanas are delighted by the truth. Truth is said to be the supreme dharma. Therefore, truth must not be violated. The sages are devoted to the truth. The sages possess truth for their valour. The sages pledge by the truth. Therefore, truth is superior. O bull among the Bharata lineage! A person who is devoted to the truth finds delight in the world of heaven. Self-restraint leads to the fruits of truth being obtained. Thus, with all my soul, I have spoken about it. There is no doubt that all those who are humble in soul obtain greatness in heaven. O lord of the earth! Hear from me about the qualities of brahmacharya. O lord of men! In this world, if a person practises brahmacharya from birth to death, know that there is nothing he cannot obtain. There are many crore of rishis who dwell in Brahma’s world. They have always been devoted to the truth. They have been self-restrained and have held up their seed. O king! A person who follows brahmacharya destroys all sins. This is especially true of a brahmana. A brahmana is said to be like the fire. This fire is evident in an ascetic brahmana. If a brahmachari is enraged, even Shakra is terrified. Thus, the fruits of brahmacharya are seen in the rishis. Hear about the dharma that results from worshipping the mother and the father. O king! If a person serves the father without any malice, if he serves the mother, the preceptor or the instructor without any sense of ego, know that his fruits are a supreme state in the world of heaven. With a cleansed soul, if a person serves his preceptor, he doesn't have to see hell."'

Chapter 1756(75)

'Yudhishthira said, "I wish to hear the truth about the supreme ordinances that govern gifts of cattle. It is through those that one obtains all the eternal worlds."

'Bhishma replied, "O lord of the earth! There is nothing that is superior to donating cows. If a lawfully obtained cow is gifted, the lineage is immediately saved. These[81] were properly developed for the virtuous, but became appropriately applied to all subjects. They have been followed from ancient times. O king! Hear about the ordinances for gifting cows. In ancient times, cows were brought before Mandhata and he had doubts about what should be done when the cows were donated. He asked Brihaspati, who replied. 'On the previous day, the donor should worship brahmanas and determine the appropriate time for making the gift, following the rituals. The cow should be of the Rohini type.[82] The cows to be given should be addressed as *samanga* and *bahula*.[83] Entering amidst the cows, the following words from the sacred texts should be recited. "The cow is my mother. The bull is my father. Let them give me heaven and prosperity and status on earth. I seek refuge in the cow." One should spend the night amidst the cows. Those words spoken by the sages must also be uttered when the cow is given away. The donor must spend the night with the cows, like a friend and following the vows they practise.[84] By reducing himself to their state, he instantly becomes cleansed of sins. When the sun rises, he must give away the cow, with a bull and a calf. When these three are given away, you will obtain benedictions and the objective of prosperity. “They[85] are the source of energy.[86] They are the energy of intelligence. They are the source of the immortality in sacrifices. The universe is established on them. They are the source of eternal prosperity on earth. They are spoken of as the source of all offspring. Let the cows drive all evil away. They have traits of Surya and Soma. Let them convey me to heaven. Like a mother, let them offer me refuge. Let them yield all the benedictions, even those that haven’t been uttered. When I have completed this act of donation, let my body be freed. Like Sarasvati, let them envelope me with benefits. You are always the conveyors of auspicious deeds. I have sought refuge with you. Determine a desirable end for me. It is because of you that I am what I am today. By giving you away, I am giving myself away. From my mind, I have let you go. Through my mind, I have sought refuge in you. You are the one who ignites the peaceful form of Soma and the fierce form of Surya.” In this way, following the ordinances, the donor of the cow must utter the first part of the verse that has been indicated. When he has spoken, the brahmana who knows about the rituals concerning the donation of cows must receive and utter the second part of the verse.[87]

‘“‘Instead of a cow, if a donor gives away an equivalent amount of garments and riches, he is regarded as the donor of a cow. The giver of garments and gold will ensure subsistence through these.[88] The names and number of what is being given must be enumerated. The fruits are entry for thirty-six thousand, eight thousand and twenty thousand respectively.[89] These are the ancient qualities, progressively described, of donating cows and other objects. These are equal to donating a cow only when the eighth step has been completed.[90] A person who gives a cow enjoys good conduct. A person who donates the equivalent enjoys freedom from fear. Whether a cow or riches are given, the donor does not suffer from misery. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Those who know about what has been recounted ascend upwards to the worlds of Vishnu and the moon. Having given a cow away, the donor must practise the vow of cattle for three nights. For one night, he should dwell alone, with cattle. For three nights after *kamyashtami*, he should only subsist on cow’s milk, cowdung and cow’s urine. The donor of a bull obtains merits obtained by one who follows the vows of the Vedas. The donor of a couple of cows becomes knowledgable in the Vedas. If a person follows the rituals in giving away cows, he enjoys the best of worlds. However, this is not enjoyed by someone who doesn't know about the rituals. If a person gives away a single cow, he obtains all the objects of desire on earth. That cow is like one which satisfies all desires with its milk. If one properly observes *havya* and *kavya* [91] and gives away bulls, the benefits obtained are superior. The ritual must not be divulged to a person who is not a disciple, one who does not follow vows, one who lacks faith, or one who is crooked in intelligence. In all the worlds, this is indeed a secret dharma. This dharma must not be indiscriminately spoken about here and there. There may be men in this world who are virtuous and faithful. However, there are also inferior men, who are like rakshasas. If this is divulged to them, it will lead to injury. There will be evil ends if non-believers get to hear about this.

'"'There are kings who have listened to Brihaspati's instructions and have donated cows. They have been auspicious in conduct and have followed excellent vows. They have obtained the worlds. O king! I will recount their names. Listen to me—Ushinara, Vishvagashva, Nriga, Bhagiratha, Yuvanashva's famous son Mandhata, King Muchukunda, Bhuridyumna, Naishadha, Somaka, Pururava, Emperor Bharata, from whom all those of the Bharata lineage have descended, Rama, the brave son of Dasharatha, others who are famous for their deeds, and King Dilipa, whose deeds were extensive. They knew about the rituals, donated cows and went to heaven. King Mandhata was engaged in sacrifices, donations, austerities, royal dharma and donation of cows. O Partha! That is the reason I have spoken to you about Brihaspati's words. Bear them in mind. Cheerfully, give cows to the best of brahmanas. Having obtained the kingdom of the Kurus, you will then perform auspicious deeds.'"'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Dharmaraja did everything that Bhishma had spoken to him about, following the ordinances about the donation of cows. The king properly upheld the dharma that the god of the gods[92] had instructed Mandhata about. O king! He always gave cows and subsisted on barley and cowdung, drinking the urine of cows. He controlled his soul, slept on the ground and sported a tuft of hair on his head. He was like a bull and became a bull among kings. Controlled in his soul, the king always praised cows and tended to the calves. The king no longer used cows as beasts of burden. Wherever he had to go, he used excellent horses instead.’

Chapter 1757(76)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! The intelligent King Yudhishthira again humbly asked Shantanu’s son about the details concerning gifts of cows.

‘Yudhishthira said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yet again, tell me properly about the qualities associated with donating cows. O brave one! I am not satisfied with hearing this, which is like amrita.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘O king! Thus addressed by Dharmaraja, Shantanu’s son again properly told him about the qualities associated with the donation of cows.

‘Bhishma said, “The cow must have a calf and possess all the qualities. It must be covered with a garment and must be young. By giving such a cow to a brahmana, one is freed from all sins. There are worlds where there is no sun. If one donates a cow that cannot drink water and eat grass, or one that does not yield milk or has had its senses destroyed, one goes there. A cow that is old and diseased is like a well that has dried up. By giving such a cow to a brahmana, one enters darkness and faces hardships. A cow that is wicked, wrathful, diseased, weak, or one for which the agreed price has not been given, should never be donated. If a cow causes hardship to the recipient brahmana, there are no fruits. There is no valour or fruits in the worlds thus obtained. A cow that is strong, fragrant and good in conduct is praised by everyone. Just as Ganga is the best among rivers, a kapila is the best among cattle.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “In acts of donating, all cows should be the same. Why then do the virtuous praise the gift of a kapila? O excellent one! I particularly desire to hear about this. You are capable of telling me.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O son! The ancients spoke about this and I heard what they said. I will tell you the details about how a rohini was created. Earlier, Svayambhu instructed Daksha to create offspring. Desiring the welfare of the subjects, he first created a means for their subsistence. O lord! The residents of heaven subsist by resorting to amrita. Like that, the subjects exist on the basis of a means of subsistence. The mobile are superior to the immobile and men are best among the mobile. The brahmanas are best among men and sacrifices depend on them. Soma is obtained through sacrifices and sacrifices depend on cows. When a means of subsistence was first arranged for subjects, the gods were delighted.[93] When beings were created, they began to clamour for a means of subsistence. Thirsty, and seeking a means of subsistence, they approached the one who was like a father and a mother.[94] Through his mental powers, he himself discerned what the various categories of beings desired. To obtain strength, Prajapati imbibed some of the amrita. When he was satisfied, a fragrance wafted out and Surabhi[95] was created from this. He saw the cow Surabhi, the daughter who had been born from his mouth. Surabhi had daughters who are known as the mothers of all the worlds. They had complexions like gold and they were kapilas. They were cows that provided a means of subsistence for the subjects. With a complexion like that of amrita, they began to flow with milk in all directions. As it flowed, there were waves, and froth was created in the flow that resulted from amrita. Some of this was dislodged from the mouths of calves and fell down on Bhava, who was then on earth. When it fell down on his head, the lord was enraged. With the eye that was in the middle of his forehead, he glanced at the rohinis, as if to burn them down. O lord of the earth! Like the sun tinging the clouds with many kinds of colours, that energy of Rudra's created hues in the bodies of the kapilas. Some among them escaped by seeking refuge with Soma. Those which managed to do this retained their own complexions. The others assumed other colours.

'"Seeing that Mahadeva was angry, Prajapati[96] addressed him. 'You have been sprinkled with amrita. This is not a leftover from the cows.[97] Soma drinks up amrita and showers it down again. In that way, the rohinis shower down milk and it has been created from amrita. The wind, the fire, gold and the ocean are never tainted. That is the way with the amrita from cows, once the calves have drunk the amrita. They sustain the world with the milk and the ghee. All of us enjoy that prosperity and the auspicious pervasiveness of amrita.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having said this, Prajapati gave Rudra a bull and cows and pleased his heart. Pleased with this, Mahadeva made the bull his mount and placed it on his standard. Thus he became the one with the bull on his standard. Then the gods made Mahadeva Pashupati.[98] He became the lord of cattle and came to be known as Vrishanka.[99] The kapilas are extremely energetic and bear the original complexion. That is the reason why they are thought of first in any act of donation. They are the best among creatures, and the means of subsistence of creatures flows from them. They are placid and sacred. They grant life and all the objects of desire. A person who gifts a cow like that gives all the objects of desire. These are the supreme ordinances about the power of cattle. If a man desires the auspicious, is pure and always reads this, he is freed from all sins and taints. He obtains beloved sons and the wealth of animals. Havya, kavya, offerings of water, rites of pacification, gifts of vehicles and garments, the nurturing of the aged and the young—all of these qualities are obtained through donations of cows. O king! The donor always obtains those benefits.'"

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing the grandfather's words, King Ajamidha and his brothers followed what he had said and made gifts of gold, brass and cows. Partha gave these to excellent brahmanas. He gave brahmanas hundreds and thousands of cattle. He instructed that sacrifices with dakshina should be performed. He obtained fame and conquered supreme worlds.'

Chapter 1758(77)

'Bhishma said, "There was a time when King Soudasa, born of the Ikshvaku lineage and supreme among generous ones, went to Vasishtha, supreme among sages, who was successful and could roam around in all the worlds. He was the eternal store of the brahman. Having honoured him, he asked his priest the following question.

'"Soudasa asked, 'O illustrious one! O unblemished one! What is sacred in the three worlds? Tell me. Recount to me the means whereby a mortal can always obtain the supreme benefits."'

'Bhishma continued, "He bowed down and spoke these beneficial words. The learned one instructed him about cattle, after having first purified himself by bowing down to cows. 'Cows possess an excellent fragrance. They possess the fragrance of *guggula*.[100] Creatures owe their existence to cattle. Cows provide great blessings. Cows are the past and the future. Cows are eternal nourishment. Cows are the foundation of prosperity. Anything given to cows is not destroyed. Food always exists in cows. They provide supreme oblations for the gods. Svaha and *vashatkara* are always established in cows. Cows are the fruits of sacrifices. Sacrifices are established in cows. O immensely intelligent one! O bull among men! Morning and evening, and always at the time of oblations, cows provide oblations to rishis. O lord! If a person gifts a cow, he tides over all the sins and evil deeds he has committed and all the hardships he faces. If a person possesses ten cows and gifts one, if he possesses a hundred cows and gifts ten, if he possesses a thousand cows and gifts one hundred—all of them obtain equal fruits. However, if the owner of one hundred cattle doesn't ignite the sacrificial fire, if the owner of one thousand cattle doesn't perform sacrifices and if a prosperous person acts like a miser—all three of them warrant no respect. If a person observes excellent vows and gifts a kapila and a calf, with a brass vessel for milking and a garment covering the cow, he conquers both this world and the next. O scorcher of enemies! There may be a young bull, an Indra among cows, among the hundreds that are in the herd, with all its senses intact. If a person ornaments its horns and gives it to a learned brahmana, he obtains prosperity when he is repeatedly born. One should not go to sleep without reciting the names for cows, or awake without remembering them. If one bows down to cattle morning and evening, one obtains prosperity. One must not hate cow dung and the urine of cows. One must not eat the flesh of cows. Thus, one will obtain prosperity. One must always recite the names of cows. One must never disrespect cows. If a man has bad dreams, he must recite the names of cows. One must always bathe in cow dung. One must sit on dried cow dung. One must not release spit, urine and excrement on cow dung. One must avoid obstructing cows. When one eats, one must sit on moistened cow hide, looking towards the west. Restrained in speech, one must eat ghee off the ground. One will then obtain the prosperity that cattle confer. Ghee is offered as an oblation into the fire. Benedictions must be pronounced with ghee. If one gives ghee and eats ghee, one will obtain the prosperity that cattle confer. One may also pronounce mantras on a cow moulded out of sesamum, taking it to assume the form of a cow. If a person gifts this, with tasty food and jewels, one does not sorrow from sins committed and not committed.[101] Let cows that yield plentiful supplies of milk and have gold-encrusted horns approach me, like rivers approach the ocean. These are *surabhis* and the descendants of Surabhi. Let cows always look at me. Let me always look at cows. The cows belong to us and we belong to them. We exist where cows are. If a man chants this, day and night, in joy and misery, and even in times of great fear, he is freed from all fear.'"'

Chapter 1759(78)

'Vasishtha said, 'The cattle that were originally created tormented themselves with extremely difficult austerities for hundreds of thousands of years, so that they might obtain superiority. O scorcher of enemies! They said, "Among all kinds of dakshina, we will become the best. The slightest bit of taint will never attach to us. Our dung will always be used for purifying gods and humans. Those who smear themselves with it will never be deprived of their senses. O one who grants honours![102] Among all the mobile and immobile objects that are given, those who gift us will go to Goloka." At the end of those austerities, the lord Brahma himself gave them that boon. The lord agreed and said that they would save the worlds. Having become successful in the attainment of their wishes, the mothers of the past and the future arose. O great king! At the end of those austerities, people became devoted to cattle. Therefore, the immensely fortunate cattle are said to be supremely sacred. It is for this reason that cows stand ahead of all creatures. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding kapila cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Brahma's world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding rohini cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Surya's world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding dappled cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Soma's world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding white cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Indra's world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding black cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Agni's world. If a person covers a well-behaved and milk-yielding smoky-complexioned cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains greatness in Yama's world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of foam on water with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains Varuna's world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of the dust in the wind with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains greatness in Vayu's world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of gold, with reddish-brown eyes, with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains Kubera's world. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of smoky straw with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains greatness in the world of the ancestors. If a person gives away a fat cow with a white and ornamented throat, he easily obtains the best status with the Vishvadevas. If a person covers a well-behaved, milk-yielding and fair cow with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf, he obtains the world of the Vasus. If a person covers a cow that has the complexion of a white blanket with a piece of cloth and gives it away, with her calf and a brass vessel for milking, he obtains the world of the Sadhyas. If a person decorates a bull with a large hump with all the jewels and gives it away, he doesn't suffer from old age and goes to the world of the Maruts. If a man decorates a blue-limbed bull that is no longer a calf with all the jewels and gives it away, he obtains the world of the gandharvas and the apsaras. If a person decorates a handsome bull with a white throat with all the jewels and gives it away, he obtains Prajapati's world and suffers from no sorrow. O king! A person who is devoted to gifting cows shatters the clouds on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of the sun and becomes radiant in heaven. A man who gifts cows is best among men. He finds delight, served by thousands of excellent women, dressed in beautiful garments and with attractive hips. He awakes and sleeps to the sounds of the laughter of those deer-eyed ones and the sounds of veenas, lutes and anklets. He obtains greatness for as many years as there is hair on the cow donated. When he is dislodged from heaven and comes to the world of men, he is born in a family that owns cattle.'"'

Chapter 1760(79)

““Vasishtha said, ‘Cows yield milk and ghee. They originate in ghee and provide ghee. They are rivers of ghee. They are whirlpools of ghee. Let them always remain in my house. Ghee is always in my heart. Ghee is always established in my navel. Ghee is in all my limbs. Ghee is established in my mind. Cows are always in front of me. Cows are also behind me. Cows are on all my sides. I dwell in the midst of cattle.’ Having performed the ablutions, a man must always recite this, morning and evening. He will then be cleansed of all the sins he has committed during the day. They who donate one thousand[103] go to places with golden palaces, with gandharvas and apsaras and a river of riches. They who donate one thousand go to places where rivers of milk flow, with butter as the mud and curds as the lichen. A person who follows the rituals and gives hundreds of thousands of cattle obtains supreme prosperity and greatness in Goloka. After death, he saves ten generations of his ancestors, both on his mother’s side and on his father’s side and gives them the worlds meant for the performers of good deeds. Such a man purifies his lineage. Among all objects that are the best, cattle are the foremost. If a person gives cows a trifle of food and water to drink, he does not suffer any misery in Yama’s world. They are the foremost among all that is sacred. The universe is based on them. They are immeasurable and are the mothers of the residents of heaven. When one walks, one must keep them on one’s right. Ascertaining the right time, one must give them to a worthy recipient. If a man gives away a kapila with large horns, along with her calf, a brass vessel for milking and an upper garment, even when he is submerged in Yama’s assembly hall, which is so very difficult to tolerate, he will be free from fear. One must always recite, “Cows are beautiful in form. Cows have many forms. Cows are like mothers of the universe. Let cows approach me.” There is no gift more sacred than that of a cow. There are no fruits that are more auspicious. There has been nothing that is superior to a cow, nor will there ever be. The cow bears the burden of the sacrifice through the skin, the hair, the horns, hair on the tail, the milk and the fat. What can be better? I bow down my head and worship the cow. She is the mother of the past and the future. All the mobile and immobile objects of the universe are pervaded by her. O best among men! I have only recounted some of the qualities of the cow. There is no gift that is superior to donating a cow. There is no other refuge that is superior.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “The great-souled lord of the earth[104] thought about the superiority that the supreme rishi had spoken about in his words. Controlled in his soul, he gave brahmanas a large number of cows and obtained the worlds.”’

Chapter 1761(80)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “What is the most sacred among all the sacred things in the world? What is best? What is supremely purifying? O grandfather! Tell me that.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Cows are extremely valuable and sacred and they save men. They sustain subjects through their milk and ghee. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! There is nothing that is more sacred than cattle. They are the most sacred among all the sacred and excellent objects in the three worlds. Cows dwell in a region that is superior to that of the gods. O lord of men! Learned donors[105] go to heaven. Yuvanashva’s son, Mandhata, Yayati and Nahusha always respectfully gave away hundreds of thousands of cattle. They went to the supreme destination, one that is extremely difficult for even the gods to obtain. O unblemished one! There is an ancient story about this and I will recount it. Shuka was an excellent and intelligent rishi. Having controlled his mind, he purified himself through his morning ablutions and worshipping his father, Krishna Dvaipayana, who possessed insight about the supreme worlds, questioned him. ‘What do you think is the best sacrifice among all sacrifices? What do learned ones do to obtain supreme heaven? O lord! Through what act of purification do gods obtain heaven? What makes a sacrifice a sacrifice? What are sacrifices established on? What is a supreme gift? What is a supreme sacrifice? O unblemished one! Also tell me what is most sacred among all the objects that are sacred.’ O bull among the Bharata lineage! Hearing these words, Vyasa, supreme in his knowledge of dharma, told his son everything.

‘“Vyasa said, ‘Creatures are established on cattle and cows constitute the refuge. Cows are sacred and purify. They are the dharma that sanctifies. We have heard that, earlier, cows did not have horns. Indeed, for the sake of horns, they worshipped the undecaying lord. Brahma saw that cows were engaged in *praya*[106] near him. The lord gave each of those cows what they desired. Horns were created and they obtained horns. O son! With horns of many colours, they were beautiful. Having obtained boons from Brahma, they became the auspicious providers of havya and kavya. They are sacred, pure and extremely fortunate. They possess the signs of divine residence. The energy of cows is immensely divine. The gift of cows is praised. Virtuous people who, without malice, donate them, are spoken of as the doers of virtuous deeds, as if they have given all kinds of gifts. O unblemished one! They obtain the sacred Goloka. The trees produce sweet fruits there. The trees yield divine flowers and fruit. O supreme among brahmanas! The flowers possess excellent and celestial fragrances. The ground is covered with jewels everywhere. The sand is made out of fine gold. Everything is pleasant to the touch. There is no dust. It is auspicious and sparkling. There are groves of red lotuses and their stalks are made out of gems and gold. The waterbodies there are as radiant as the morning sun. There are lakes with many lotuses, mixed with blue lotuses. Their petals are made out of extremely expensive gems. Their filaments have a golden complexion. There are forests of blossoming red oleander, surrounded by thousands of creepers. There are also forests with trees adorned with blooming *santanakas*.[107] There are sparkling and extremely expensive rivers, with pearls and jewels along the colourful banks, decorated with gold. There are excellent and colourful trees, covered with gems everywhere. They are ornamented with gold and have the complexion of the fire. There are golden mountains and hills made out of gems and jewels. Because of the jewels everywhere, they exude radiance from their beautiful summits. The trees are covered with leaves and always yield flowers and fruit. O bull among the Bharata lineage![108] The flowers and fruits possess divine tastes and fragrances. O Yudhishthira! The performers of auspicious deeds always find bliss there. They are devoid of sorrow and anger and are prosperous, with every object of desire satisfied. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The illustrious performers of auspicious deeds find pleasure and delight in wonderful and beautiful celestial vehicles there. O king! They sport with large numbers of beautiful apsaras. O Yudhishthira! These are the worlds obtained by those who donate cows. Pushan and the Maruts, strongest of the strong, are the lords there. In prosperity, they become like King Varuna. Firm in vows, one must always recite the words spoken by Brahma Prajapati—"May Yugandhara, Surupa, Bahurupa, Vishvarupa and Matara save me."[109] If a person respectfully serves cattle, they are satisfied and grant him boons that are extremely difficult to obtain. One must never injure cows, not even in one's mind. They are the ones who provide happiness. One must always bow down before them and worship and honour them. If a self-restrained person always does this cheerfully, he obtains the benefits associated with cattle. There is a sacred object that the gods eat and it is supreme in the worlds. This is ghee and it is the most sacred among all the items that are sacred. This must be carried on the head. Ghee is offered as oblation into the fire. Benedictions are pronounced with ghee. When ghee is consumed and ghee is donated, one obtains the benefits that are associated with cattle. For three days, one must drink warm cow's urine. For three days, one must drink warm milk. After having drunk warm milk, for three days, one must drink warm ghee. Having drunk warm ghee for three days, for three days, one must subsist on air. For one month, if one subsists on grains of barley that have been searched out from cow dung, one is cleansed from all sins, including that of killing a brahmana. When they were defeated by the *daityas*, the gods purified themselves in this way. The extremely powerful ones thus became successful and obtained divinity. Cows are sacred and auspicious. They are the great and supreme purifiers. Having donated them to brahmanas, a man obtains heaven. One must purify oneself by residing amidst cattle. In one's mind, one must meditate amidst cattle.[110] One must do this after having purified oneself through ablutions first. One will then become pure and clean. A brahmana who is the performer of auspicious deeds and is learned in the Vedas and follows vows, must bathe and recite it[111] in the presence of the sacred fire, amidst cattle and in an assembly of brahmanas. Teaching the gomati to disciples is as revered as performing a sacrifice. If a person fasts for three nights and hears the gomati, he obtains a boon. A person who desires a son obtains a son. Others obtain riches. One who desires a husband obtains a husband. Men obtain all their objects of desire. There is no doubt that when cattle are served and are satisfied, they grant all this. In this way, these immensely fortunate ones provide all the objects of desire sought through sacrifices. Know that rohinis are like this and there is nothing superior to them.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The immensely energetic Shuka was addressed by his great-souled father in this way. He always worshipped cattle. Therefore, you should also worship them."'

Chapter 1762(81)

‘Yudhishthira said, “I have heard that cow dung has Shri[112] in it. I have a great doubt about this and wish to hear about it.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O king! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between cows and Shri. Shri assumed a beautiful form and entered amidst cattle. The cows were astounded on seeing her wealth of beauty.

‘“The cattle asked, ‘O goddess! Who are you? Where have you come from? How do you possess a beauty that is unmatched on earth? O immensely fortunate one! We are astounded at the wealth of your beauty. We wish to know who you are and where you will go. O one with the extremely beautiful complexion! Tell us the entire truth.’

‘“Shri replied, ‘O fortunate ones! I am loved by the worlds. I am famous by the name of Shri. When I abandoned the daityas, they were destroyed for eternity. Having obtained me, Indra, Vivasvat, Soma, Vishnu, the water[113] and Agni have obtained prosperity and so have the rishis and the other gods. O cattle! Those who hate me are destroyed in every way. They suffer misery and are devoid of dharma, artha and kama. O cattle! These are my powers. Know that I am the one who grants happiness. I wish to always dwell in each of you. O unblemished ones! I have come here to pray that you should be united with Shri.’

‘“The cows replied, ‘You are temporary and fickle. You dwell with many ordinary people. O fortunate one! We do not desire you. Go wherever it pleases you. We think ourselves to be beautiful in every way. Why do we need you now? Go wherever you want. You have already made us successful.’

‘“Shri said, ‘O cattle! Pardon me, but shouldn’t you welcome me? Why don’t you accept me? I am extremely difficult to obtain. O ones who follow excellent vows in the world! It is certain that a saying in the worlds is true. “If one presents oneself voluntarily, one is refused.” Men, gods, danavas, gandharvas, serpents and rakshasas get me after performing great and fierce austerities. O cattle! Pardon me and accept me. O amiable ones! I am not ignored by anything mobile and immobile in the three worlds.’

‘“The cattle replied, ‘O goddess! We are not disrespecting you. Nor are we slighting you. You are temporary and fickle. That is the reason we are forsaking you. What is the need to speak a lot? Go wherever you wish. O unblemished one! All of us possess beautiful forms. Why do we need you?’

‘“Shri said, ‘O ones who grant honours! Refused by you, I will be ignored in all the worlds. Show me your favours. O immensely fortunate ones! You offer protection to those who seek refuge. I am without blemish. Save the one who is always worshipped. O auspicious ones! I desire your respect and will always reside with you. I wish to dwell in any of your limbs, irrespective of how ugly it is. O unblemished ones! Indeed, I do not perceive that any of your limbs is ugly. You are sacred, auspicious and extremely fortunate. Grant me a place. You should indicate one of your limbs where I may dwell.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Thus addressed, the auspicious cattle were overcome with compassion. O lord of men! All of them consulted each other and spoke to Shri. ‘O illustrious one! It is indeed our task that we should show you respect. O auspicious one! Therefore, reside in our urine and dung. Both of these are sacred.’

‘“Shri replied, ‘It is through good fortune that you have shown me your favours and your grace. O fortunate ones! It shall be that way. O ones who grant happiness! I have been honoured by you.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This was the agreement between Shri and the cattle. While they looked on, she disappeared. O son! I have thus described to you the greatness of cow dung. I will again tell you about the greatness of cattle. Listen to me.”’

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‘Bhishma said, “O Yudhishthira! Those who donate cows and subsist on leftovers after oblations have been rendered into the fire are always regarded as having performed all the sacrifices. No sacrifice can be performed without curds and ghee. It is seen that these are the essence of a sacrifice and the foundation for a sacrifice. Among all kinds of gifts, the donation of cows is praised. Cows are best and sacred. They are the supreme purifiers. They must be served for the sake of sustenance and for the sake of peace. Their milk, curds and ghee can cleanse all sins. It is said that the energy of cows is supreme, in this world and in the next world. O bull among men! There is nothing that is superior to, and more sacred than, cattle.

'"O Yudhishthira! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between the grandfather and Indra. When Shakra defeated the daityas and became the lord of the three worlds, all the subjects were delighted and became devoted to true dharma. O Kouravya! On one occasion, the rishis, the gandharvas, the *kinnaras*, the rakshasas, the gods, the asuras, the birds and the Prajapatis arrived before the grandfather and worshipped him. Narada and Parvata were there. Vishvavasu, Haha and Huhu worshipped the lord by singing divine hymns. The wind bore the scent of celestial flowers. The seasons assembled, conveying their separate fragrances. All the creatures gathered together in that assembly of gods. Celestial musical instruments were sounded. The place was surrounded by celestial women and *charanas*. Indra, lord of the gods, bowed down before the lord of all the worlds. He asked, 'O illustrious god! O grandfather! I wish to know why cattle are supreme in the worlds. O great lord! What are the austerities and brahmacharya that cattle have performed? Why do they happily reside in a region that is above that of the gods?' At this, Brahma replied to Shakra, the slayer of Bala. 'O slayer of Bala! You have always shown cattle disrespect. That is the reason you do not know about their greatness. O lord! Listen. O bull among gods! Hear about the supreme greatness and power of cattle. O Vasava! Cows are said to constitute the limbs of a sacrifice. They represent fame. Without resorting to them, sacrifices can never be undertaken. They sustain subjects through their milk and ghee. That apart, their male offspring are yoked for agriculture. That is the way grain and many other kinds of seeds are generated. All the havya and kavya used in sacrifices flow from them. O lord of the gods! Milk, curd and ghee are pure. Even when they are hungry, thirsty and afflicted, they bear many kinds of burdens. Through their deeds, they sustain sages and subjects. O Vasava! They do not show any deceit in bearing the burdens. They are the performers of good deeds. That is the reason they always reside above us. O

Shakra! O Shatakratu! I have now explained to you the reason why cattle have obtained an abode that is above that of the gods. O Vasava! They are the ones who grant boons. They are the granters of boons. Surabhis are the performers of auspicious deeds. They have sacred marks and are purifiers. O supreme among the gods! Listen to the reason why the descendants of Surabhi, the cows, have come down.[114] O slayer of Bala! I will tell you the entire reason. Listen. O son![115] In ancient times, in the yuga of the gods, there was a great-souled Indra among the daityas who subjugated the three worlds. O best among the immortals! To obtain a son through Vishnu, Aditi[116] performed extremely difficult and terrible austerities. She always stood only on one leg. Daksha had a daughter, the goddess named Surabhi. On seeing that the great goddess[117] was tormenting herself through great austerities, she too cheerfully decided to torment herself through terrible austerities. Devoted to dharma, she did this on the beautiful summit of Kailasa, frequented by the gods and the gandharvas. She stood on one leg and resorted to supreme yoga. She spent eleven thousand years in this way. The gods, the rishis and the great serpents were scorched through her austerities. With me, they went there and worshipped the auspicious one. O Purandara! I spoke to the goddess who was engaged in austerities. “O goddess! O unblemished one! Why are you tormenting yourself through these terrible austerities? O immensely fortunate one! O beautiful one! I am pleased at your austerities.

O goddess! Ask for a boon and I will grant it to you.” Surabhi replied, “O illustrious one! O grandfather of the worlds! I do not desire any boons. O unblemished one! Since you are pleased with me, I have already got the boon I want.” O lord of the thirty gods! This is what the goddess Surabhi told me. O Indra of the gods! O Shachi’s consort! Hear what I told her in reply. “O goddess! I am pleased at your lack of desire and auspicious austerities. Since I am pleased with you, I am granting you the boon of immortality. Your abode will always be above the three worlds. Through my favours, this will be famous as Goloka. Your sons will dwell among men and will always perform tasks for the subjects. O immensely fortunate one! Your daughters will also reside there. All the divine and human objects of pleasure you think of will be yours. O goddess! O fortunate one! Divine happiness will also be yours.” O one with the thousand eyes! Her world has all the objects of desire. Death, old age and fire does not cause any suffering there. O Vasava! There is nothing miserable or inauspicious there. There are divine forests and celestial residences there. O Vasava! There are celestial vehicles that can go wherever they wish. O lotus-eyed one! Through observing many kinds of auspicious vows, through frequenting tirthas, through great austerities and through good deeds, one is capable of going to Goloka. O Shakra! I have thus told you everything that you asked me about. O slayer of enemies! You should never show disrespect to cattle.' O Yudhishthira! Hearing these words, the one with the thousand eyes always worshipped cows and always showed them a great deal of respect.

'"O immensely radiant one! I have thus told you everything about their purifying nature. Cows are sacred and supreme. They possess excellent greatness. O tiger among men! They destroy all sins and I have told you about this. If a person controls himself and always recounts this to brahmanas on occasions where havya and kavya are offered, sacrifices performed and rites observed for the ancestors, he establishes his ancestors in a place that is inexhaustible, one that satisfies all the objects of desire. A man who is devoted to cows obtains everything that he wishes for. Women who are devoted to cows also obtain everything that they desire. One who desires a son obtains a son. A maiden obtains a husband. One who desires riches obtains wealth. One who desires dharma obtains dharma. One who desires learning obtains learning. One who desires happiness obtains happiness. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For someone who is devoted to cows, there is nothing that is difficult to obtain."'

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'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! You have spoken to me about the supreme donation of cows. This is especially true of kings who look towards dharma. A kingdom is always full of misery. It cannot be sustained by a person who is ignorant. A family is the source of misery. It is difficult for a person who has not cleansed his soul to bear that burden. Most kings fail to obtain an auspicious end. However, by donating the earth, they can always purify themselves. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! You have spoken to me about dharma earlier. In that way, you have told me about the gift Nriga made of cattle. You have told me about the earlier instructions of rishi Nachiketa. The Vedas and the Upanishads have instructed that in all rites and in all sacrifices, dakshina must be in the form of land, cattle or gold. But the sacred texts have also said that gold is the supreme dakshina. O grandfather! I wish to hear the truth about this. What is gold? How was it created and when? What is its nature? What are the fruits from donating it? Why is it said to be supreme? Why do learned people revere the gift of gold? Why is it praised as dakshina in the rites associated with sacrifices? Why is gold regarded as a better purifier than land and cattle? Why is it a supreme dakshina? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O king! I will recount in detail the many reasons. Listen attentively to the origin of gold, as I have understood it. When Shantanu, my greatly energetic father, died, I went to Gangadvara, wishing to perform his funeral ceremony. O son! Having gone there, I commenced the funeral rites for my father. My mother, Jahnavi, helped me. I placed many rishis, who had obtained success through fierce austerities, at the forefront and asked them to be seated. I began the offering of water and the other rites. As instructed, I controlled myself and completed the preliminary rites. In the proper way, I then started to offer the funeral libations. O lord of the earth! At that time, an arm pierced through the darbha grass that had been spread out and rose up. It was adorned in beautiful armlets. On seeing it rise, I was struck by great wonder. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I thought that my father had himself come to receive what was being offered. When I regained my senses, I began to think about the sacred texts. O lord! The ordinances of the Vedas decree that a man must not render the funeral cake into a hand. That was my view. The ancestors are invisible. They do not appear before a man in visible form. It is said that the funeral cake must be offered on a mat of kusha grass and that it will be received from there. Therefore, I ignored what seemed to be my father’s hand. O king! I remembered the subtle rituals that are laid down in the sacred texts. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O bull among men! Know that I followed the method indicated in the sacred texts and offered everything on the mat of darbha grass. O lord of men! At this, my father’s arm disappeared. When I slept,[118] my ancestors appeared before me and told me, ‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! We are pleased and delighted with you for your knowledge. You have not been confused about dharma. O king! You have acted in accordance with the proofs laid down in the sacred texts. You have maintained yourself, dharma, the sacred texts, the Vedas, your ancestors, the maharshis, Brahma, the grandfather, the preceptors and Prajapati. There has been no deviation from the proofs that have been laid down. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Today, you have completed everything in the proper way. But to accomplish the purpose, what will be achieved with land and cattle? Donate gold. It is supremely cleansing. By following this act of dharma, we and all our ancestors will be purified. If you donate gold, ten generations of your ancestors and descendants will be saved.’ My ancestors spoke in this way. O king! O lord of the earth! I was astounded and woke up. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I turned my mind towards donating gold. ‘“O king! O lord! Listen to this ancient history about Jamadagni’s son, which is praiseworthy and leads to an increase in the lifespan. In ancient times, Rama, Jamadagni’s son, was overcome by great rage and exterminated all the kshatriyas from earth twenty-one times. Having conquered the entire earth, the brave and lotus-eyed Rama made arrangements for a sacrifice that was honoured by brahmanas and kshatriyas. O great king! This was a horse sacrifice that grants all the objects of desire. It purifies all creatures and leads to the enhancement of energy and resplendence. Because of the fruits of that sacrifice, that energetic one was cleansed of his sins. However, despite performing that supreme sacrifice and offering dakshina, Jamadagni’s great-souled son still did not obtain lightness of heart. Bhargava met the gods and the rishis and asked them. He said, ‘For men who have indulged in fierce deeds, what is the supreme purifier? O ones without decay! O immensely fortunate ones! Tell me.’ Overcome by compassion, this is what he asked. The maharshis who knew about the sacred texts and the Vedas replied. Vasishtha said, ‘Give gold to the gods. All the gods are nothing but fire and gold is its essence. Therefore, donate gold. Give it to all the gods. O tiger among men! The learned know that there is nothing superior to it. O brahmana rishi! O supreme among all the bearers of weapons! Listen to me. I will again[119] tell you about the greatness of gold. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Earlier, I heard about this in the ancient accounts.

Prajapati spoke about this to Svayambhu Manu. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! The marriage of the great-souled and illustrious Rudra, the wielder of the trident, and the goddess Rudrani was completed on the slopes of the excellent Himalaya mountains. The illustrious and great-souled one was about to unite with the goddess. Everyone was anxious and approached the illustrious one. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Mahadeva was seated with the goddess Uma, the granter of boons. All of them bowed down their heads and spoke to Rudra. "O god! O unblemished one! This union of yours with the goddess is of one ascetic with another ascetic, of one energy with an extremely greater energy. O god! Your energy, and that of the goddess Uma, are both invincible. O god! O lord! Your offspring will be powerful. There is no doubt that he will leave nothing left in the three worlds. O large-eyed one! The gods are bowing down before you. O lord of the worlds! For the welfare of the three worlds, grant them a boon. Withdraw your supreme and blazing energy, which will give rise to offspring." Hearing their words, the illustrious one, with the bull on his banner, agreed and accordingly replied to the gods and the brahmana rishis. Having said this and having held up his seed, the one with the bull as his mount came to be known as Urdhvareta.[120] Since then, he has held up his seed. However, Rudrani became angry at this termination of offspring. Though she was a woman, she used harsh words and spoke to the gods. "You have restrained my husband's desire to have offspring. Therefore, all of you gods will no longer have offspring. Since you have stopped me from having offspring, you will also be restricted in that way." Therefore, the residents of heaven no longer have offspring. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! But at the time when this curse was imposed, the fire god was not present. Because of the curse imposed by the goddess, the gods no longer had offspring. A little bit of Rudra's unsurpassed energy was dislodged and fell down on the earth, which held it up. That fell into the fire and a wonderful being began to grow. With energy having come into contact with another energy, an embryo was formed. At this time, with Shakra at the forefront, the gods were severely tormented by the asura named Taraka. The Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Maruts, the Ashvins and all the Sadhyas were terrified by the daitya's valour. The asuras seized the regions of the gods, their celestial vehicles, their cities and the hermitages of the rishis. All the gods and the rishis were distressed in their minds. They sought refuge with the lord and god, the undecaying Brahma.'"'

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'"The gods said, 'O lord! The asura Taraka has obtained boons from you and is causing suffering to the gods and the rishis. Determine a method for his death. O grandfather! A great fear has been generated in us. O god! Save us. We have no other refuge.'

'"Brahma replied, 'I am impartial towards all beings, but *adharma* doesn't please me. Let Taraka, the impediment to large numbers of gods and rishis, be quickly destroyed. O supreme among gods! The dharma of the Vedas must not be uprooted. I have already determined what must be done. Dispel your anxiety.'

'"The gods said, 'O illustrious one! Since you gave him a boon, that daitya is proud of his strength. The gods are unable to slay him. How can he be pacified? O grandfather! The boon he obtained from you was that he couldn't be killed by gods, asuras and rakshasas. O lord of the entire universe! Earlier, at the time of procreation, the gods have also been cursed by Rudrani and they will not have offspring.'

'"Brahma replied, 'O best among gods! Agni was not present at the time. To kill the one who hates the gods, he will have a son who will surpass all the gods, danavas, rakshasas, men, gandharvas, serpents and birds. He will kill him with the invincible weapon of a spear. He will destroy the one who has led to your fear and all the other enemies of the gods. Resolution is eternal and is known as kama. Rudra's energy fell down into the fire. That energy is like a second fire. For killing the enemies of the gods, Agni will fling it into the Ganga and a son will be born. Since Agni wasn't present, that seed has not been affected by the curse. Thus, to remove the fears of the gods, Pavaki will be born.[121] Search out the fire god and employ him for this task. O unblemished ones! I have told you about the means for Taraka's death. The energy of the curse will have no effect on this energy. When strength encounters a greater strength, it is rendered weak. Ascetics are capable of slaying the granters of boons, ones who are indestructible.[122] Resolution, inclination and kama are eternal. Agni has been ordained as the lord of the universe. He can go everywhere and is the creator of everything. He is in the hearts of all beings. The lord is older than even Rudra. Swiftly search out Agni, the mass of energy. O gods! He will accomplish the desire that there is in your hearts.'

'"Vasishtha continued, 'Hearing the words of the great-souled one, the gods thought that their wishes had been accomplished and began to search for Agni. The gods and the rishis searched everywhere in the three worlds. Single-mindedly, all of them looked for Agni. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage![123] They were supreme in austerities, handsome and famous in the worlds. Those successful ones could roam around in all the worlds. But since Agni had hidden himself in his own self, they couldn't search him out.[124] There was a frog that dwelt in the water. Since it was scorched by Agni's energy, the frog arose from the nether regions and spoke to the gods. "O gods! The lord Agni is residing in the nether regions. I have come here, having been consumed by Agni's power. O gods! The illustrious bearer of oblations is sleeping in the water. The energy that has been released in the water has scorched all of us. O gods! If you wish to see Agni and if you have anything to do with Agni, go there. O gods! Because of our fear of Agni, we will try to leave this place." Having said this, the frog quickly entered the water again. The bearer of oblations got to know about the frog's treachery and cursed it that it would no longer have any sense of taste. Having thus cursed the frog, the lord Agni departed, so that he could reside elsewhere and would not have to show himself to the gods. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! But the gods showed their compassion towards frogs. O mighty-armed one! I will tell you everything. Listen.'

'"The gods said, 'Because of Agni's curse, your tongues will no longer have any sensation of taste. But you will be able to utter many kinds of sound. You will dwell in holes, without food and without any sensation. When the ground is dry and without any sign of life, you will still be able to sustain yourselves. You will roam around in the night, when darkness has enveloped everything.'

'"Vasishtha continued, 'After saying this, the gods wandered around the earth again, looking for Agni. But they couldn't find Agni. O extender of the

Bhrigu lineage! There was an elephant that was like the elephant that belonged to Indra of the gods. It told the gods, “Agni is inside an *ashvattha* tree.” Senseless with rage, Agni cursed all the elephants. “Your tongues will bend backwards.” O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Having said this, since he had been singled out by the elephant, Agni left the ashvattha tree. Wishing to sleep, Agni entered inside a *shami* tree. O lord! O best among the Bhrigu lineage! However, the gods, with truth as their valour, were pleased with elephants and showed them their compassion. Listen.’

‘“The gods said, ‘Though your tongues will bend backwards, you will be able to eat everything. And you will still be able to utter words, though the syllables will be indistinct.’

‘“Vasishtha continued, ‘After saying this, the residents of heaven began to search for Agni again. Agni had left the ashvattha tree and was now inside a shami tree. O brahmana! A parrot told the gods about this and they went there. Agni cursed parrots, “You will no longer have the power of speech.” Because of what the bearer of oblations had said, their tongues became that way. The gods saw Agni at the place that the parrot had indicated and did not wish that the bird should be completely destroyed. They said, “Though your tongue is concealed, you will utter beautiful words. Though indistinct, they will be wonderful, like those spoken by old people and children.” Having said this, the gods saw Agni inside the shami tree and ordained that the shami tree would be regarded as an abode for the gods, with its sacred wood used in all the rites. Since then, Agni has always been found inside a shami tree and men have used it to ignite a fire.[125] The water in the nether regions came into contact with Agni. O Bhargava! Those heated waters are released through mountain springs. Since Agni resided in them, they became heated through his energy. On seeing the gods, Agni was distressed. Agni asked, “Why have you come here?” They replied, “O illustrious one! You should accomplish a task for us. You possess extremely great qualities and you should do this for us.” Agni said, “O gods! Tell me what the task is and I shall do everything for you. You should not think about it. Employ me for the purpose.” The gods replied, “There is an asura named Taraka. Because of a boon received from Brahma, he has become insolent. He counters us through his energy. You must arrange for his destruction. O father![126] O immensely fortunate one! O Pavaka! Save this large number of gods, large number of Prajapatis and the rishis. O lord! Give birth to a brave son who is full of energy. O bearer of oblations! He will destroy our fear from the asura. We have been cursed by the great goddess and no one else can be a refuge. Barring your energy, there is nothing else that can save us now.” Thus addressed, the illustrious devourer of havya and kavya agreed.

‘“‘The invincible one went to Ganga Bhagirathi. He united with her and caused the conception.[127] The embryo began to grow, just as the one with the black trails[128] grows in the presence of deadwood. Because of the energy in the womb, Ganga was bereft of her senses. She suffered from terrible torment and was incapable of bearing it. When the lord Agni placed the energy in Ganga’s womb, there was an asura who emitted a terrible roar. Because of that loud roar, she lost her senses. Ganga was terrified and her eyes rolled in fear. She looked around in agitation. Bereft of her senses, she was no longer capable of bearing herself or the embryo. With the energy pervading all her limbs, Jahnavi trembled. O brahmana! Struck by the strength of the embryo, she told Agni, “O illustrious one! I am incapable of bearing this energy any longer. I am confounded and am suffering from great ill health. O illustrious one! O unblemished one! I am distracted and your energy has destroyed me. O supreme among those who heat! I am no longer capable of bearing this embryo. Though I do not desire it, because of the misery, I will have to cast it off. O god! O Vibhavasu! I did not voluntarily wish this union with you. O immensely radiant one! Our extremely subtle relationship arose because of the disaster. O Agni! Any qualities that result from this relationship are because of you. The dharma and adharma belong to you alone. That is what I think.” However, Agni replied, “Bear what must be borne. The embryo is the outcome of my energy and it will lead to great qualities and fruits. You are capable of bearing the entire earth. There is nothing that you will gain by not holding onto this seed.” The best among rivers was restrained by Agni and also by the gods.

‘“‘However, she released the embryo on Meru, best among mountains. Though she was capable of bearing it, she suffered from Rudra’s energy. Therefore, she was incapable of bearing the embryo and the associated energy. Overcome by misery, she released it and it blazed, like the fire in complexion. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Agni saw Ganga and asked the best among rivers, “Is the embryo well? O goddess! What is its complexion? What is seen to be its form? What kind of energy does it possess? Tell me everything.” Ganga replied, “O Agni! With your energy, the embryo has the complexion of gold. It is golden, sparkling and blazing and has illuminated the mountain. O supreme among the ones who heat! Its fragrance is like that of the *kadamba* flower, mixed with that of lotuses from the cool lakes. Every object that has been touched by the energy of the embryo, on earth and in the mountains, is like the rays of the sun. In every direction, everything is seen to have turned into gold. That energy has descended on mountains, rivers, streams and the mobile and immobile objects in the three worlds and illuminated them. O illustrious one! O bearer of oblations! This is the form of that son. His beauty is like that of the sun or the fire, or like that of the moon.” Having said this, the goddess vanished. The energetic Pavaka had also accomplished the task of the residents of heaven. O descendant of the Bhargava lineage! Therefore, he also left the spot. It is because of the qualities of his deeds that the rishis and the gods conferred a name on Agni and it is recited in the worlds. This is Hiranyareta.[129] The goddess earth came to be known as Vasumati.[130] Ganga’s immensely energetic embryo was generated through Agni. It fell on a divine clump of reeds and began to grow there, assuming a wonderful form. The Krittikas[131] saw it there and it was like the young sun in radiance. Their affection being stirred, they nourished the child at their own breasts. That is how the extremely radiant one came to be known as Kartikeya. Since the seed had fallen down, he came to be known as Skanda.[132] Since he resided in secrecy, he came to be known as Guha. This was the way gold was born from Agni. That is the reason gold is the best ornament for the gods. That is the reason it is spoken of as *jatarupa*.[133] Gold is nothing but the illustrious Girisha and Prajapati. O supreme among brahmanas! Gold is the most sacred among everything that is sacred. *Jatarupa* is said to possess the essence of Agni and Soma. It is the best jewel among all jewels. It is the supreme ornament. It is the most sacred among all things sacred. It is the most auspicious among all things that are auspicious.’”’

Chapter 1766(85)

‘Vasishtha said, ‘O Rama! In ancient times, I heard this from Brahma. This is about the conduct of the grandfather, identical with the brahman and the *paramatman*. O son! The gods performed a great sacrifice of *varuni*.[134] O Rama! The lord Rudra assumed a resplendent form and went to that great varuni. All the sages and gods came there, with Agni at the forefront. All the limbs of sacrifices and vashatkara were there in personified form. Thousands of hymns from the Sama and Yajur Vedas were there in personified form. There were parts of the Vedas, arranged in the proper order of verses. There were the divisions of signs, vowels, chants and distinct and indistinct syllables. Omkara was there, with techniques of *nigraha* and *pragraha*.[135] There were the Vedas, the Upanishads, all kinds of learning and Savitri. The illustrious Shiva upheld these and the past, the present and the future. The lord offered the oblations himself. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Delighted that the varuni sacrifice was being conducted by the great-souled Pashupati, the wives and daughters of the gods and the mothers of the gods came there. On seeing them, Brahma’s semen fell down on the ground. When that semen fell down on the ground, Pushan seized it with his hands and flung it into the fire. The sacrifice continued, with the fire blazing away. Brahma was offering oblations into the fire. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! He picked up some of the dislodged semen in a sacrificial ladle, and uttering the mantras, offered it as a libation into the fire. Through this, the valiant one generated categories of beings. From that energy was generated all the energy in the world. The ignorance of *tamas* and *sattva*[136] pervaded everything. The energy of sattva is eternal and tamas characterizes space. The energy of sattva and tamas exist in all creatures. O lord! From the semen that was offered as a libation into the fire, three beings manifested themselves. These were men, endowed with the qualities from which they had been generated. The one from *bhrig*[137]was known as Bhrigu. The one from *angara* was called Angiras. Yet another, based on angara, was called Kavi.[138] The one born with flames and bhrig was called Bhrigu. Marichi was born from *marichi*[139] and Kashyapa was born from Marichi. O son! Angiras was born from angara. The Valakhilyas were born from the sacrificial stones. It has been said that Atri was also born from that. The large number of revered brahmana rishis was generated from the ashes. The Vaikhanasas were born, with the qualities of austerities and learning. The handsome Ashvins were born from his[140] ears. Finally, the Prajapatis were born from his ears. The rishis were born from his pores and the metres from his unclean sweat. That is the reason Agni is said to represent all the gods and the learned rishis, who possess insight about the proofs of the Vedas. The months are the wood.[141] The essence of the kindling constitutes the *pakshas*. Day and night are from the bile. The light from the varuni constitute the *muhurtas*. The Rudras are said to come from his blood, as do the red and golden Maitras. Know that the Vasus are said to come from the smoke. The immensely radiant Rudras and Adityas arose from the flames. The benevolent gods located in the firmament[142] arose from the angara. He[143] is the original lord of the worlds. Brahma is spoken about later. The bearer of oblations is said to be the one who satisifies all the objects of desire. With the varuni as part of his supreme soul, Mahadeva said, "This is my divine sacrifice. I am the *grihapati*.[144] There is no doubt that the three earlier offspring[145] are mine. O those roaming in the sky! Know that these are the fruits of the sacrifice." Agni responded, "They have been generated from my limbs and they have depended on me. They are my offspring and the one who is in the form of varuni[146] is wrong." Brahma, the preceptor of the worlds and the grandfather of the worlds said, "They are my offspring. It was my semen that was offered as a libation. I am the one who uttered the mantras. I am the one who offered the semen as a libation. The fruit belongs to the one whose seed it is. It is my view that the semen was the source." At this, the large number of gods approached the grandfather.

'"'All of them bowed their heads down and worshipped him. They said, "O illustrious one! We, and all the mobile and immobile objects in the universe, were generated from you. However, let Agni Vibhavasu and the lord god who is in the form of varuni get what they wish."[147] Though Brahma was the original lord of all creation, the one who was in the form of varuni accepted the firstborn, Bhrigu, with a radiance like that of the sun, as his son. The lord[148] determined that for purposes of deciding a son, Angiras should be Agni's. Kavi, who knew about the truth, was accepted as the grandfather's son. Bhrigu, of terrible fame, engaged himself in the act of procreation. The handsome Angiras was regarded as Agni's and the immensely illustrious Kavi as Brahma's. In this world, Bhrigu and Angiras are regarded as the ones who have had descendants. All the best among brahmanas are the offspring of these three. All the descendants were reared and nurtured by them. Bhrigu had seven sons who were like Bhrigu in qualities. They were Chyavana, Vajrashirsha, Shuchi, Urva, the revered Shukra, Vibhu and Savana. These were the seven. All of them are known as Bhargavas and Varunas and this is your lineage too. Angiras had eight sons and they are also known as Varunas.[149] They are Brihaspati, Utathya, Vayasya, Shanti, Ghora, Virupa, Samvarta and Sudhanva. These are said to be the eight. All of them were generated through Agni. They were free from disease and were devoted to learning. The sons of the brahmana, Kavi, are also known as Varunas. There were eight of them and they possessed the qualities. They were sacred and knowledgable about the brahman. Their names were Kavi, Kavya, Vishnu, the intelligent Ushanas, Bhrigu, Viraja, Kashi and Ugra, who was devoted to dharma. These are the eight sons of Kavi. Everyone in the universe has descended from them. They are Prajapatis and all these offspring have resulted from them. In this way, Angiras and Kavi also had descendants. O tiger among the Bhrigu lineage! All the offspring on earth come from their lineage and that of Bhrigu. O brahmana! O son! In the form of varuni, the lord and god[150] originally accepted Bhrigu and Kavi. That is the reason they are known as Varunas. The crested bearer of oblations accepted Angiras. That is the reason all the others are known as the descendants of Angiras.

‘“‘In ancient times, the grandfather, Brahma, was pleased by the gods. They said, “Let these lords and offspring save us. Let these offspring have more offspring. Let all of them be extreme ascetics. Through your favours, let them eternally save the world. Let them be the creators of your lineage and let them extend your energy. Let them possess knowledge of the Vedas and let them be the lords of speech. Let them be amiable and on the side of the gods. Let them be Prajapatis and maharshis. Let them obtain austerities and supreme brahmacharya. O lord! All of us and they are your offspring. O grandfather! You are the creator of the gods and the brahmanas. Marichi is your original son. But so are all the Bhargavas. O grandfather! Considering all your offspring, forgive us.[151] In their own ways, they will generate offspring. At the end of the destruction and the beginning of a new yuga, they will establish themselves again.” At the time of the origin of the worlds, this is what happened at the sacrifice of the great-souled one, the best of the gods who assumed the dazzling form of varuni. Agni is Brahma, Pashupati, Sharva, Rudra and Prajapati.

'"'It is held that gold is the offspring of Agni. When fire is not available, gold can be used instead of fire. O Jamadagni's son! O one who knows about proof! The learned texts and the Vedas are proof of this. Gold can be placed on a mat of kusha grass and oblations to the fire offered there. It is thought that the illustrious one will be pleased at these oblations and will ensure prosperity. We have thus heard that Agni is supreme among the gods. Agni was created from Brahma and gold from Agni. Therefore, those who possess insight about dharma donate gold. We have heard that this is like making gifts of all the gods. O Bhargava! Such a donor leaves the world of darkness and obtains the supreme objective. He is consecrated as a king of kings in the world of heaven. When the sun rises, if a person observes the rituals and recites the appropriate mantras first, thereafter donating gold, he destroys all his bad dreams. If he donates as soon as the sun has risen, he cleanses all his sins. If he donates gold at midday, he destroys all the future sins. If a person is firm in his vows and donates gold at the time of the western *sandhya*,[152] he obtains the worlds of Brahma, Vayu, Agni and Soma. With Indra, he obtains an auspicious status in those worlds. He is tranquil in his soul and obtains happiness and fame in this world too. He always obtains many other unmatched worlds. There are no obstructions in his path and he can roam around as he wills. He obtains an eternal greatness that is never dislodged. By donating gold, a person obtains all the indestructible worlds. At the time of sunrise, if a person ignites a fire and donates,[153] after having followed all the indicated vows, he obtains all the objects of desire. It has been said that it[154] is like Agni and its donation brings happiness. For those who follow rites, it is said to possess all the qualities.'"

'Bhishma continued, "This is what Vasishtha told Jamadagni's powerful son. He gave gold to brahmanas and was freed from all sins. O lord of the earth! I have told you everything about gold, about the fruits from its donation and its supreme birth and origins. Therefore, give a lot of gold to brahmanas. O king! If you donate gold, you will be freed from sins."'

Chapter 1767(86)

“Yudhishthira said, “The grandfather talked about the ordinances connected with gold and you have told me these. You have explained in detail the qualities and signs associated with donating it, as described in the sacred texts. You have also recounted the reason behind the origin of gold. But tell me how that Taraka met with his destruction. O king! You have said that he was unslayable, so far as the gods were concerned. However, you have not yet told me the details about his death. O extender of the Kuru lineage! I wish to hear the truth about that. Tell me everything about the slaying of Taraka. My curiosity is great.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Indra among kings! The gods and the rishis thus faced distress. They urged the Krittikas to rear that divine offspring. Among the gods, there was no one who would have been able to rear Agni’s embryo alone. It was too full of energy. However, Pavaka was pleased that each of the six had agreed to nurture the embryo. He released his own energy and the supreme seed. Each of the six Krittikas nurtured a part of Agni’s embryo. O lord! Agni’s energy was divided into six parts and all of them carried it together. The great-souled Kumara began to grow in this way. However, their limbs were overwhelmed with his energy and they could not find any peace. While their limbs were overwhelmed with this energy, the time for delivery arrived. O bull among men! All the Krittikas delivered at the same time. Though the six parts of the embryo had been delivered separately, they came together and united. The earth received him and placed him in a beautiful spot. The child was divine in form and blazed with the complexion of the fire. Having been placed in a divine clump of reeds, the one who was handsome in appearance began to grow. The Krittikas saw the child, who possessed the resplendence of the fire. Their affection and love was stirred and they nurtured him with milk from their breasts. That is the reason why, among the mobile and immobile objects of the three worlds, he came to be known as Kartikeya. Because the seed trickled down, he was known as Skanda. Because he was reared in secrecy, he was known as Guha. The thirty-three gods, the lords of the directions, Rudra, Dhatri, Vishnu, Yajna,[155] Pushan, Aryama, Bhaga, Amsha, Mitra, the Sadhyas, the Vasus, Vasava, the Ashvins, the water, the wind, the sky, the moon, the nakshatra, the planets, the sun and all the separate objects that are offered to the gods[156] went there to see Kumara, Agni’s son. The rishis chanted words of praise and the gandharvas sang. Kumara possessed six faces and twelve eyes and loved brahmanas. His chest was broad and he possessed twelve arms. His radiance was like that of the fire and the sun. The gods and the rishis saw him, as he lay down on that clump of reeds. They were extremely delighted, thinking that the asura had already been killed. The gods brought everything that would bring him pleasure. Since he was still engaged in playing, they gave him dolls and a large number of birds. Suparna[157] gave him a feathered peacock with colourful plumage. The rakshasas gave him a boar and a buffalo. Varuna himself gave him a cock that was like the fire in complexion. The moon gave him a sheep and the sun gave him dazzling rays. The goddess who is the mother of cows[158] gave him hundreds and thousands of cattle. Agni gave him a goat that possessed many qualities and Ila gave him many flowers and fruit.[159] Sudhanva[160] gave him a cart and a chariot with a large frame. Varuna gave him many of Varuna's celestial objects and some sacred serpents. Indra of the gods gave him lions, tigers, leopards, many other carnivorous, predatory and terrible beasts and diverse umbrellas. Large numbers of rakshasas and asuras began to follow the lord.

'"On seeing the lord grow up, Taraka tried many kinds of methods to try and kill him. But he wasn't successful. The gods honoured the one who had been reared secretly and made him their general. They also informed him about the depredations that had been caused by Taraka. The immensely valorous one, the general of the gods, grew up. With an invincible spear, Guha slew the danava Taraka. As he killed the asura, it was as if Kumara was playing. The lord again established Indra of the gods in the kingdom of the gods and he made the powerful Skanda the general. The lord[161] protected the gods and did what would bring Shankara pleasure. The illustrious Pavaki[162] is golden in form. Kumara has always remained the general of the gods. It is held that gold is Agni's supreme energy, born with Kartikeya. That is the reason it is auspicious and is a supreme and indestructible jewel. O Kouravya! This is what Vasishtha told Rama in ancient times. O lord of men! Therefore, you should make efforts to donate gold. Having gifted gold, Rama was freed from all his sins. He obtained a great spot in heaven, which is extremely difficult for a man to obtain."'

Chapter 1768(87)

'Yudhishthira said, "O one with dharma in his soul! O unblemished one! You have spoken to me about the dharma of the four varnas. O king! In that fashion, tell me everything about the rites to be followed in funeral ceremonies."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Thus addressed by Yudhishthira, Bhishma, Shantanu's son, sought to explain to him everything about the rites to be followed in funeral ceremonies.

'Bhishma replied, "O king! Listen attentively to the sacred rites that have been prescribed for funeral ceremonies. O scorcher of enemies! These sacrifices for the ancestors are praised and lead to fame and sons. Gods, asuras, humans, gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas, *pishachas* and kinnaras always worship their ancestors. The ancestors are worshipped first and the gods are satisfied next. Therefore, a man must undertake every kind of effort for such a sacrifice. O great king! It is said that a funeral ceremony for the ancestors can be undertaken later. But that general rule is countered by the rule that it must be performed first.[163] The grandfathers are pleased with a funeral ceremony that is performed on any day. But I will tell you about the qualities and demerits of specific tithis. O unblemished one! Funeral ceremonies performed on different days yield different fruits. I will tell you everything. Listen attentively. If one worships the ancestors on the first day of shuklapaksha, one obtains beautiful wives in one's own house and they give birth to many beautiful sons. On the second day, one obtains daughters. On the third day, one obtains minstrels who praise. On the fourth day, one obtains many small animals in one's house. O king! On the fifth day, many sons are born. A man who performs it on the sixth day gets radiance. O king! By performing a funeral ceremony on the seventh day, one gains through agriculture. By performing it on the eighth day, one gains through trade. By performing a funeral ceremony on the ninth day, one obtains many animals with uncloven hooves. By performing a funeral ceremony on the tenth day, the cattle prosper. O king! By performing it on the eleventh day, one obtains vessels made out of earth and base metals. Sons with the radiance of Brahma's rays are born in the household. It is always seen in this world that if it is performed on the twelfth day, there are many colourful and beautiful objects of silver and gold. If a funeral ceremony is performed on the thirteenth day, one becomes superior to one's relatives. If a man performs a funeral ceremony on the fourteenth day, he has to take part in battles on earth. There is no doubt that the young men in his household will die. If it is done on the day of the new moon, all the objects of desire are satisfied. In krishnapaksha, it can be done from the tenth day onwards, but avoiding the fourteenth. The other tithis are not praised for funeral ceremonies. The subsequent paksha is superior to the earlier paksha.[164] For a funeral ceremony, the afternoon is also superior to the forenoon."'

Chapter 1769(88)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O lord! Which is the object that, if donated to ancestors, becomes inexhaustible? What oblation lasts for many nights? Indeed, what is thought to last for an eternity?" 'Bhishma replied, "O Yudhishthira! Those who are learned about funeral ceremonies have thought of oblations for funeral ceremonies. Listen to the desirable fruits associated with each. O king! If sesamum, rice, barley, kidney beans, roots and fruits are given at funeral ceremonies, the ancestors are satisfied for a month. Manu has said that if a large quantity of sesamum is given at a funeral ceremony, it becomes inexhaustible. Among all the objects that are eaten, sesamum is said to be the best. When fish is offered, the large number of ancestors is satisfied for two months. Lamb is said to satisfy for three months and rabbit meat for four months. O king! With the meat of goats, the ancestors are delighted for five months. It is six months with the meat of boar and seven months with the flesh of birds. With the meat of *parshata*,[165] it is eight months. It is nine months with the meat of *ruru*. With the meat of *gavaya*,[166] they are content for ten months. With the meat of buffaloes, the ancestors are delighted for eleven months. If the product from a cow[167] is given at a funeral ceremony, the satisfaction is said to last for an entire year. The product from a cow can be mixed with payasam and ghee. With the flesh of *vardhinasa*,[168] the satisfaction lasts for twelve years.

When the flesh of a rhinoceros is offered to the ancestors, the fruits are infinite and indestructible. The fruits of basil, the petals of the *kanchana* flower and goat meat are also said to be eternal. O Yudhishthira! In this connection, there are some hymns and chants sung by the ancestors. In earlier times, the illustrious Sanatkumara told me about these. 'In the month of Magha,[169] during *uttarayana*, on the thirteenth day, a person who has been born in our lineage must give us payasam mixed with ghee. When the nakshatra Magha is in the ascendant, he must observe the vows and offer us petals of the kanchana flower, with goat meat. When the nakshatra Hasta is in the ascendant,[170] he must offer this in accordance with the rites, using whisks made from the leaves of the Indian laburnum tree. Many sons are desired so that at least one of those can go to Gaya and render offerings at the banyan tree there, famous in the worlds as one that makes the fruits inexhaustible. On the anniversary of a father's death, even if a little bit of water, roots, fruits, meat and rice are offered, mixed with honey, that is thought of as becoming inexhaustible."'

Chapter 1770(89)

'Bhishma said, "Yama spoke about funeral ceremonies to Shashabindu.[171] Hear about the desirable acts under separate nakshatras. With his offspring, if a man always ignites the fire and performs a funeral ceremony at the conjunction of Krittika, he becomes devoid of anxiety. One who desires offspring should do it under Rohini. One who desires energy should do it under Mrigashira. If a man performs a funeral ceremony under Ardra, he becomes the perpetrator of cruel deeds. A mortal who performs a funeral ceremony under Punarvasu makes gains through agriculture. A man who desires prosperity should perform a funeral ceremony under Pushya. A person who performs a funeral ceremony under Ashlesha gives birth to brave sons. A person who performs a funeral ceremony under Magha becomes superior to the relatives. A person who performs a funeral ceremony under Purva Phalguni obtains good fortune. Uttara Phalguni leads to offspring. Hasta leads to fruits being obtained. If a person performs a funeral ceremony under Chitra, he obtains handsome sons. If a person worships the ancestors under the conjunction of Svati, he earns a living through trade. A man who desires many sons should worship the ancestors under Vishakha. If he does it under Anuradha, he becomes an emperor. O best among those of the Kuru lineage! If a mortal is devoted and self-controlled and does this under Jyeshtha, such a man avoids difficulties and becomes a sovereign. Under Mula, one recovers from disease. Under Purva Ashadha, one obtains excellent health. Under Uttara Ashadha, one roams around the earth, devoid of sorrow. A person who undertakes a funeral ceremony under Abhijit obtains supreme learning. If a person undertakes a funeral ceremony under Shravana, after death, he goes to the supreme destination. A man who does it under Dhanishtha obtains the status of getting a kingdom. If one does it under Varuna's nakshatra,[172] one becomes successful as a physician. If one does it under Purva Proshthapada,[173] one obtains many goats and sheep. If one does it under Uttara Proshthapada, one obtains thousands of cattle. If one does it under Revati, one obtains the prosperity and wealth of a large amount of silver. If one does it under Ashvini, one obtains many horses. Under Bharani, one obtains an excellent lifespan. Having heard about these rites of funeral ceremonies, Shashabindu acted accordingly. He conquered the earth easily and ruled it."'

Chapter 1771(90)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! O tiger among the Kurus! You should explain to me about the kinds of brahmanas who should get gifts at funeral ceremonies."

'Bhishma replied, "A kshatriya who knows about dana dharma must examine brahmanas. It has been said that in rites connected with the gods and the ancestors, one must lawfully undertake this scrutiny. When the gods are worshipped, it is the energy of the gods that is used. A man receives this and uses it to worship the gods. O great king! At a funeral ceremony, one must examine the brahmanas for lineage, conduct, age, beauty, learning and nobility. There are some who are polluted and tainted. Others purify taints. O king! Listen. I will recount the ones who should be barred from the line[174]—one who is deceitful; one guilty of foeticide; one with tuberculosis; one engaged in animal husbandry; one who has not read the Vedas;[175] one who works as a servant in a village; one who lives on the interest of moneylending; one who is a singer; one who sells everything; an arsonist; a poisoner; a pimp; one who sells soma; a palmist; one who is the servant of a king; a seller of oil; a cheat; one who quarrels with his father; one who allows his wife's lover to dwell in his own house; one who has been cursed; a thief; one who earns a living as an artisan; one who sells baskets on festive occasions; one who injures his friends; one who has intercourse with someone else's wife; one who teaches those who don't observe vows; the husband of a courtesan;[176] one who roams around in the company of dogs; one who has been bitten by a dog; one who has married before his elder brother; a leper; one who has had intercourse with his preceptor's wife; an actor; one who makes a living off idols; and one who makes a living by studying the nakshatras. Know that such brahmanas are inferior and should not be allowed to sit in the same line. In addition, there are those of limited intelligence who offer instructions to shudras. O king! If they are seated alongside, the entire line is polluted. A one-eyed[177] person pollutes sixty,[178] an impotent person pollutes one hundred and one with white leprosy pollutes as many as he looks at. If a person eats[179] with his head covered in cloth, if he eats facing a southern direction, or if he eats with his footwear on, all the resultant learning is obtained by the asuras. If anything is given with malice and if anything is given without devotion, Brahma has thought of all of these as shares belonging to Indras among the asuras. The spot where funeral offerings are given should be surrounded and covered with sesamum seeds. Dogs and brahmanas who are not allowed to sit in the same line should not look at these. If this is not done, all the sesamum seed and oblations are stolen by predatory beasts, *krodavashas*, *yatudhanas* and pishachas.[180] If a brahmana is not allowed to sit and eat in the same line, but does it, then the fruits of the foolish donor are destroyed, proportionate to the number of individuals along the line that the offending brahmana looks at.

'"O best among the Bharata lineage! Know that these are the ones who sanctify the line.[181] I will tell you the truth about this. Examine brahmanas. All the brahmanas who possess learning about the Vedas and have bathed themselves in vows are ones who can eat in the same line. I will tell you about them. Know that they are the sanctifiers of the line—one who knows about the three Nachiketa fires;[182] one who knows about the five sacrificial fires; one who knows the three Suparnas;[183] one who knows the six Vedangas; one who is the descendant of ancestors who knew about the brahman; one who knows about metres; one who knows about Jyeshtha Sama;[184] one who is obedient to his mother and his father; one whose ancestors have been learned for ten generations; one who always has intercourse with his lawful wife when she is in season; one who is learned in the Vedas; and one who has bathed himself in vows. Such a brahmana deserves to sit in the line. A person who has studied *Atharvashirasa*,[185] a brahmachari, a person who is rigid in his vows, one who is truthful in speech, one who possesses dharma and good conduct, one who is devoted to his own tasks, one who has made the efforts to bathe in the sacred tirthas, one who has successfully bathed after having completed a sacrifice with mantras, one without anger, one who isn't fickle, one who is forgiving, one who is self-restrained, one who has conquered his senses and one who is engaged in the welfare of all beings—this is the kind of person who should be invited to a funeral ceremony. These are the ones who sanctify the line. If one donates to them, the fruits are inexhaustible. O great king! In addition, know that there are others who also sanctify the line—ascetics, those who know about the dharma of moksha, those who follow the vows of yoga well, those who make efforts to make the best of brahmanas listen to *itihasa,* those who know about commentaries, those who are devoted to studying grammar, those who have studied the Puranas and the sacred texts of dharma, those who have studied *nyaya,* those who follow the rituals properly, those who have lived in the households of their preceptors, those who are truthful, those who have donated to thousands and those who are foremost in their knowledge of all the Vedas and all the aphorisms. They are the sanctifiers of the line. They are said to sanctify the line for as far as they can see. Learned ones who know about the brahman and are the descendants of those who know about the brahman sanctify for a distance of one-third of a *krosha*.[186] If a person is not an officiating priest or an instructor and takes the front seat, even if this is with the permission of the officiating priests, then he appropriates the evil deeds of all the people who are seated along that line. O king! However, if he is knowledgable about all the Vedas and is devoid of taints that cause pollution to the line, he is not regarded as fallen. He is one who sanctifies the line.

Therefore, before inviting brahmanas, every effort must be made to examine them to see that they are engaged in their own tasks, are self-controlled, born in noble lineages and are extremely learned.

'"A person who performs a funeral ceremony and primarily feeds the offerings to his friends does not please the ancestors and the gods. He does not go to heaven. If a person performs a funeral ceremony only for the purpose of getting some people together, he does not walk along the path of the gods. If a person performs a funeral ceremony for the sake of his friends, he is not freed from the bondage of the senses. He is dislodged from the world of heaven. Therefore, friends must not be honoured at funeral ceremonies. The stored riches can be given to them on other occasions. Food, havya and kavya should be offered to those who are neutrals, not to those who are thought of as enemies or friends. Seed that is sown on barren ground does not sprout. Nor does a person who hasn't sowed, benefit from the sprouting of the seed. In that way, if undeserving people eat at a funeral ceremony, no fruits are obtained, in this world or in the next. A brahmana who doesn't study is like a fire that is kindled with straw. It is pacified. Similarly, at a funeral ceremony, one shouldn't give to the undeserving. That is like libations poured onto ashes. There is something named *sombhajani*.[187] That is like giving dakshina to pishachas. The gods or the ancestors do not receive anything from it. Instead, it[188] wanders around on earth, like a cow that has lost its calf and is wandering around from one pen to another, searching. The gods and the ancestors receive nothing, like ghee that has been poured into a fire that has been pacified. It is no different from dakshina given to dancers and actors, or to those who are inferior. When dakshina is given to an inferior person, both the donor and the recipient suffer. These are censured and lead to misfortune and downfall of the ancestors from their divine states. O Yudhishthira! The learned know that brahmanas are those who always follow the injunctions laid down by the rishis. They are certain in their knowledge of all kinds of dharma and the gods. They are devoted to studying. They are devoted to learning. They are devoted to austerities. They are devoted to rites. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They should be understood to be rishis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! For benefit, the kavya should be given to those who are devoted to knowledge. Those brahmanas are supreme and should never be censured. Those who censure them and slander them should not be fed at funeral ceremonies. O king! A person who censures such brahmanas destroys three generations of his lineage. O king! This has been heard to be the words of the Vaikhanasa rishis. Brahmanas should be examined from a distance to see whether they are learned about the Vedas. Whether one likes them or dislikes them, they are the ones who should be invited to a funeral ceremony. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is better for a man to cheerfully feed a single brahmana who knows about the mantras than thousands and thousands of inferior ones.”’

Chapter 1772(91)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Who thought of funeral rites and when? What is its essence? During the age of the Bhrigus and the Angirases, which sage thought of them? Which acts should be avoided at funeral ceremonies? What about roots and fruits? What kinds of paddy should not be used? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O lord of men! I will tell you about how funeral rites were started, when, by whom, and about their essence. Listen. O Kouravya! From Svayambhu was born the powerful and supreme rishi Atri. O great king! In his lineage was born the one known as Dattatreya. Dattatreya had a son named Nimi and he was rich in austerities. Nimi had a son named Shrimat and he was extremely handsome. He performed extremely difficult austerities for a full one thousand years. When this was completed, he succumbed to the dharma of time and died. Nimi performed the instructed rites of purification. However, overwhelmed by sorrow on account of his son, he suffered from severe torment. On the fourteenth lunar tithi, the immensely intelligent one brought together various ingredients. He was full of grief and slept during the night. With his mind still overcome with grief, he arose in the morning. He focused his mind and controlled his intelligence from wandering away. Having controlled himself, he conceived of funeral rites. He was rich in austerities. He mentally thought of food, roots and fruits and all the other objects that would bring benefit. On the day of the new moon, the immensely wise one invited some revered brahmanas. He himself made all of them sit down on mats of kusha grass and circumambulated them. He brought together seven such brahmanas and gave them food. The lord offered them *shyamaka* rice,[189] cooked without salt. Mats of darbha grass were spread out near the feet of the brahmanas, once they were seated, with the tips of the blades pointing to the south. They ate off these. Controlling himself, he spread out the darbha grass, with the tips of the blades pointing to the south. He then offered the funeral cakes to Shrimat, citing his name and gotra. Having done this, the best among sages confronted a conflict of dharma in his mind.[190] As he thought about it, he was tormented by repentance. 'What have I done? This has not been done by sages earlier. How can I avoid being scorched by the curses of brahmanas?' He thought about the original creator of his lineage. As soon as he thought of him, Atri, rich in austerities, arrived there.

'"On seeing that he was severely afflicted by grief on account of his son, the undecaying and eloquent Atri reassured him. 'O Nimi! O one who is rich in austerities! The sacrifice you have thought of is for the ancestors. Do not be anxious about this. Earlier, Brahma himself instructed that this is dharma. What you have thought of has been ordained by Svayambhu to be dharma. Who but Svayambhu could have laid down the ordinances for a funeral ceremony? I will again tell you about the supreme rites for a funeral ceremony. O son! These have been ordained by Svayambhu. Act in accordance with those. Listen to me. O one rich in austerities! First, chant mantras and follow the rites for igniting the fire. Then always offer oblations to Aryama, Soma, Varuna, the Vishvadevas, the ancestors and all their respective domains. These shares have been thought of by Svayambhu himself. The earth is the one who sustains the oblations. Therefore, she must be praised as Vaishnavi, Kashyapi and the indestructible one. When water is brought, the lord Varuna must be praised. O unblemished one! After this, Agni and Soma must be invoked. The divinities known as the ancestors were created by Svayambhu. He also thought of shares for the extremely fortunate ones known as the Ushmapas.[191] If one worships them at funeral ceremonies, one is freed from sins. Earlier, Svayambhu instructed that there are seven generations of ancestors. I have enumerated the Vishvadevas earlier and they have Agni as their mouth. I will now recount the names of the great-souled ones who deserve to be given shares—Saha, Kriti, Vipapma, Punyakrit, Pavana, Gramni, Kshema, Samuha, Divyasanu, Vivasvat,

Viryavat, Hrimat, Kirtimat, Krita, Vipurva, Somapurva, the one named Suryashri, Somapa, Suryasavitra, Dattatman, Pushkariyaka, Ushninabha, Nabhoda, Vishvayu, Dipti, Chamuhara, Suvesha, Vyomari, Shankara, Bhava, Isha, Kartri, Kritidaksha, Bhuvana, Divyakarmakrit, Ganita, Panchavirya, Aditya, Rashmimat, Saptakrit, Somavarcha, Vishvakri, Kavi, Anugopta, Sugopta, Napta, Ishvara, Jitatman, Munivirya, Diptalobha, Bhayamkara, Atikarma, Pratita, Pradata, Amshumat, Shailabha, Paramakrodhi, Dhiroshni, Bhupati, Sraji, Vraji, Vari and the eternal Vishvadevas. These immensely fortunate ones, who know about the progress and dominion of time, have been enumerated. The paddy known as *kodrava* and *pulaka*,[192] asafoetida mixed with the vegetables, onions and garlic should not be offered at funeral ceremonies. Nor should one use onions,[193] drumsticks, *grinjana*,[194] all varieties of pumpkins and bottle gourds, black salt, meat of domesticated pigs, the flesh of animals not killed at sacrifices, fennel, rock salt and *shitapaki*.[195] All objects that sprout and *shringatakas*[196] should be avoided. All kinds of salt and the *jamun* fruit must be avoided. Items on which tears and spit have fallen must not be offered at funeral ceremonies. Something that a dog has looked at must not be offered as havya and kavya. The ancestors and the gods are not pleased at such oblations. Some people should be barred from places where oblations are being offered—chandalas, shvapakas, those attired in yellowish-red garments, those with leprosy, those who are outcasts, those who have killed a brahmana, a brahmana born from an inferior lineage[197] and those who are the relatives of those who are outcasts. The learned shun their presence at funeral ceremonies.' In ancient times, having said this to the rishi who has descended from his own lineage, Atri, rich in austerities, left for the grandfather's divine assembly hall."'

Chapter 1773(92)

'Bhishma said, "All the maharshis began to follow these rites and observing the rituals, began to undertake the indicated tasks at funeral ceremonies for the ancestors. The rishis always acted in accordance with dharma. Firm in their vows, after the ceremony, they started to offer water at the tirthas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Satisfied with the oblations offered by the four varnas, the ancestors and the gods were content and began to eat the food. However, the gods and the ancestor suffered because the food wasn't digested. Afflicted by indigestion, they went to Soma. The ancestors, suffering from indigestion, approached Soma and said, 'We are oppressed because of this indigestion. Determine what is best for us.' Desiring what was good for the gods, Soma replied, 'Go to Svayambhu's abode. He will determine what is best for you.' O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Hearing Soma's words, the gods and the ancestors went to the grandfather, who was seated on the summit of Meru. The ancestors said, 'O illustrious one! We are suffering from not being able to digest the food. O god! Show us our favours and determine what will be good for us.' Hearing their words, Svayambhu told the ones who were suffering from the excess. 'This Agni is by my side. He will determine what is good for you.' Agni said, 'O fathers! When the oblations are presented before us, we will eat together. If you eat with me, there is no doubt that you will be able to digest the food.' On hearing this, the anxiety of the ancestors was dispelled. O king! O bull among men! That is the reason why, when oblations are offered at funeral ceremonies, a share of the oblations is first offered to Agni. *Brahma-rakshasas*[198] are then unable to cause any harm at a funeral ceremony. Seeing that Agni is there, the rakshasas run away. The funeral cake must first be offered to the father and next to the paternal grandfather. It should then be offered to the paternal great grandfather. This is said to be the ritual connected with a funeral ceremony. While controlled, one must utter the *savitri* mantra over each funeral cake that is offered. One must also state that the soma is being offered for the sake of the ancestors. A woman who is in her season or a woman with mutilated ears should not be present at a funeral ceremony. Nor should a woman from some other family be present. When one traverses a body of water, one must mention the names of the ancestors. Having approached a river, one must offer oblations of water to the ancestors. Once one has offered oblations of water to those from one's own family, one should then offer oblations of water to groups of well-wishers and relatives.[199] When one crosses a body of water on a cart that is yoked to two black[200] bulls, or astride a boat, the ancestors desire oblations. Those who know this, always offer water in a controlled way. The funeral ceremony must be performed in that half of the month that is krishnapaksha. If one is devoted to the ancestors, nourishment, long life, valour and prosperity follow. O best among those of the Kuru lineage! The grandfather, Pulastya, Vasishtha, Pulaha, Angiras, Kratu and the great rishi, Kashyapa—these are known as the great lords of yoga. These are also ancestors. O king! This is the supreme ritual of a funeral ceremony. Through the act of offering funeral cakes to the deceased relatives, they are freed. O best among men! I have thus told you how the funeral ceremony originated. It was established through the ancient ordinances. I will next tell you about donations."'

Chapter 1774(93)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! There may be a brahmana who is observing a vow. If he is invited by another brahmana and eats the food offered as an oblation, what happens?"[201]

'Bhishma replied, "If the vow is not in conformity with the Vedas, eating is not a perverse act. O Yudhishthira! However, if it is in conformity with the Vedas, he has deviated from his vow."

'Yudhishthira said, "There are some people who say that fasting is a vow. Is fasting really an austerity? Are there any other kinds of austerities?"

'Bhishma replied, "People think that fasting for a month, or for half a month, is an austerity. However, a person who causes harm to his own body is not an ascetic. Nor does he know about dharma. Renunciation is excellent and has been said to be the supreme austerity. A brahmachari is a person who always fasts in that way. A brahmana must always behave like a sage and always perform sacrifices for the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage. Desiring dharma, he must always have a family and never sleep.[202] He must always subsist on amrita and always be pure. He must always be truthful in speech. He must always be self-restrained. He must always eat leftovers.[203] He must always be affectionate towards guests. He must never eat meat. He must always be pure."

'Yudhishthira asked, "O king! What is regarded as fasting and when is one a brahmachari? What does eating leftovers mean? How is one affectionate towards guests?”

‘Bhishma replied, “If a person eats in the morning and in the evening and never in the intervening period, he is regarded as a person who always fasts. A person who only has intercourse with his wife during her season is regarded as a brahmachari. So is a man who always speaks the truth and is generous in his conduct. By not eating the flesh of animals that should not be eaten, or of animals pointlessly killed,[204] one is regarded as a person who abstains from meat. A person who donates is pure. One who doesn’t sleep during the day is regarded as one who does not sleep. O Yudhishthira! Know this. If a man always eats what is left after the servants and the guests have eaten, he is a person who only subsists on amrita. If a person does not eat as long as brahmanas are unfed, he is regarded as someone who does not eat. He conquers heaven. If a person eats what is left after gods, ancestors, servants and guests have eaten, he is said to be a person who only eats leftovers. It is said that they obtain worlds all the way up to Brahma’s abode. O lord of men! The apsaras and the gandharvas attend to them there. They eat and find pleasure with the gods, the guests, the ancestors and their sons and grandsons there. This is their supreme destination.”’

Chapter 1775(94)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Many kinds of gifts are given to brahmanas. O grandfather! What are the special characteristics of the donor and the recipient?”

‘Bhishma replied, “A brahmana can accept a gift from a person who is virtuous and also from a person who is wicked. If the donor possesses the qualities, there is little sin in that. But if the donor doesn’t possess the qualities, the recipient is submerged. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Vrishadarbhi[205] and the *saptarshis*. Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Bharadvaja, Goutama, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni and the virtuous Arundhati[206] had a common female servant named Ganda. Her husband was the shudra Pashusakha. In ancient times, all of them performed austerities and wandered around the earth. Immersed in *samadhi,* they wished to see Brahma's eternal world. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! There was a very long period of drought. The world was hungry and it became very difficult to remain alive. On an earlier occasion, a sacrifice had been performed by Shibi. As dakshina at that sacrifice, he had given away his own son to the officiating priest. O lord! This son was not destined to have a long life and he died at that time. Tormented by hunger, they sat around the dead body. The supreme rishis saw that the son of the one who had performed the sacrifice was dead. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Afflicted by hunger, they placed the body on a plate and cooked it. There was no food available in the world of mortals. Desiring to save their lives and in search of a means of sustenance, those ascetics had to resort to this calamity. While they were cooking, the king was passing along that road. King Shaibhya, Vrishadarbha's son, was distressed to see this.

'"Vrishadarbhi said, 'If you accept a gift, you will be saved. For your sustenance, accept a gift. O ones rich in austerities! Listen. I will tell you about the riches I possess. I love brahmanas who seek gifts from me. I will give you one thousand mules. I will give each of you cows, with calves that have just been born. All of them will be swift, with white hair. I will give each of you one thousand bulls that are capable of bearing loads. They will be well born and auspicious. I will give you fat ones that can till the ground. I will give you well-behaved cows that have only had one calf. There are the best of villages that yield succulent grain. There are other jewels that are extremely difficult to obtain. What will I give you? Do not act so as to eat something that should not be eaten. For your sustenance, what can I give you?'

'"The rishis replied, 'O king! Receiving a gift from a king may seem to be sweet, but is like poison. Knowing this, why are you trying to tempt us? It is destiny that kshatriyas must seek refuge with brahmanas. Their austerities are unblemished. By pleasing them, the gods are pleased. A brahmana earns merits through days of austerities. If he accepts a gift from a king, those are destroyed, as in a forest conflagration. O king! May you always be fortunate, giving to those who solicit from you. Give them all those riches.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Having said this, all of them departed. The meat the intelligent ones had intended to prepare remained uncooked. Having abandoned it there, all of them left for the forest, wishing to search for food.

Urged by the king, his ministers went to the forest. They plucked some figs and tried to give those away as donations. The servants filled the insides of some of those plucked figs with gold and tried to persuade them to accept these. Atri picked up some of those figs and found that they were heavy. He said, ‘Do not take us to be fools. We are not evil in intelligence. We know there is gold in these. We know and are awake. If accepted in this world, they will lead to bitter results in the world hereafter. They should not be accepted by someone who desires happiness in this world and in the next.’ Vasishtha said, ‘One gold coin will be counted as one hundred, or even one thousand.[207] If we accept many, we will obtain the ends meant for the wicked.’ Kashyapa said, ‘All the paddy, barley, gold, animals and women on earth cannot satisfy one person’s desire. Therefore, abandon greed and walk the path of peace.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Once horns appear on a ruru deer, as the animal grows, they also grow. There is no limit to what a man wishes for.’ Goutama said, ‘All the objects in the world cannot fill up the world. A man is like an ocean. He can never be filled.’ Vishvamitra said, ‘When desire is satisfied, that only leads to another desire growing. The subsequent desire and thirst pierce like an arrow.’ Jamadagni said, ‘It is certain that self-restraint in not accepting sustains austerities. A brahmana’s avarice for riches makes him deviate.’ Arundhati said, ‘It is the view of some that objects must be stored for the sake of dharma and artha. However, storing austerities is superior to storing objects.’ Ganda said, ‘My lords are fierce and they are frightened of this. They are stronger than me. I am weak. Therefore, I am even more terrified of this.’ Pashusakha said, ‘There is nothing superior to dharma and brahmanas know about that wealth. I humbly wait on them, so that I may accurately get to know about that excellent learning.’ The rishis said, ‘Let him[208] keep his subjects happy through the gifts that he makes. Let him gift the stuffed fruits to them and not to us.’ Having said this, they discarded the fruits that had gold inside them. Firm in their vows, all the rishis went off elsewhere. The ministers said, ‘O king! You should know that suspecting that the fruits were stuffed, they have abandoned them and have gone elsewhere.’ Thus addressed by his servants, Vrishadarbhi was enraged. Determined to take revenge on all of them, he went to his own house. Having gone there, he ignited a fire. Resorting to terrible rituals, he poured oblations into this. To satisfy his wishes, the king uttered well-pronounced mantras and offered oblations with each one of them. A demoness arose from the fire. She could strike terror in the worlds. Vrishadarbhi named her Yatudhani. The demoness was like the night of final destruction. With hands joined in salutation, she presented herself before King Vrishadarbhi and asked, 'What will I do?' Vrishadarbhi replied, 'Go to the seven rishis and Arundhati and also to their male servant and female servant. Find out their names and remember those in your mind.[209] Once you have found out their names, kill them all. Having destroyed them, you can go wherever you want.' Yatudhani agreed. She assumed her own form[210] and went to the forest where the maharshis were roaming around."'

Chapter 1776(95)

'Bhishma said, "O king! The maharshis, with Atri as the foremost, were wandering around in the forest, eating roots and fruits. As they roamed around, they saw a mendicant named Shunasakha. His shoulders, hands, feet, mouth and stomach were plump and his limbs were stout. The beautiful Arundhati saw that all his limbs were well formed. She told the rishis, 'You are not like him. Nor will you ever be.' Vasishtha said, 'His agnihotra fire is not like ours. Morning and evening, he pours oblations into it, while we can't. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' Atri said, 'Unlike us, he doesn't suffer from hunger. He possesses vigour and control. Unlike ours, his learning hasn't been destroyed. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' Vishvamitra said, 'We are suffering from decay. Unlike us, he is able to sustain the eternal sacred texts. We have become lazy, overcome by hunger and stupid. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' Jamadagni said, 'Unlike us, he does not have to think at all about the annual store of food and kindling. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' Kashyapa said, 'Unlike us, he does not have four brothers who beg and solicit alms.[211] That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' Bharadvaja said, 'Unlike us, he is devoted to the brahman. His consciousness is not clouded by grief because of the wife's recriminations.[212] That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' Goutama said, 'Unlike us, he is not clad in three pieces of kusha grass and one piece of *ranku*[213] hide. These are also three years old. That is the reason Shunasakha is stout.' On seeing the maharshis, the mendicant Shunasakha approached them. Observing the appropriate custom, he greeted them by touching their hands. They spoke to each other about how difficult it was to roam around in the forest, hunting for food. For some time, they remained together.

'"After this, they departed. They roamed around in the forest again, single-minded in their task of collecting roots and fruits. Once, as they were wandering around, they saw a beautiful lake that was full of lotuses. The banks were thick with rare trees. The water was pure and transparent. The lotuses were beautiful in form, with complexions like that of the rising sun. The lake was covered with the petals of lotuses, with a complexion like that of lapis lazuli. There were many kinds of aquatic birds that lived in the water. There was a single path that led down to the water. It was easy of access and was free of mud. Engaged by Vrishadarbhi, the demoness known as Yatudhani, terrible to see, protected the lotuses. With Shunasakha to help them, the maharshis sought some lotus stalks. All of them wished to approach the lotuses, protected by the demoness. They saw Yatudhani, with a terrible visage. She was stationed on the banks of the lake. The maharshis addressed the demoness. 'Who are you, standing here alone? Who are you waiting for and what is your purpose? You are stationed on the banks of this lake. What do you wish to do?' Yatudhani replied, 'Whoever I might be, you should never question me. O ones rich in austerities! Know that I am the one who protects all the riches of this lake.' The rishis said, 'All of us are afflicted by hunger. We have been able to obtain nothing. With your permission, let all of us gather some lotus stalks.' Yatudhani replied, 'As long as there is a compact, you can gather lotus stalks as you wish. One after another, you must tell me your names. Without any delay, you can then gather the lotus-stalks.' Having told them that she was Yatudhani, the demoness wished to kill the rishis. Atri was overcome by hunger and spoke these words. 'I am the one who saves. I study thrice a day. There is no night during which I have not studied. O beautiful one! Know that this is the reason why my name is Atri.'[214] Yatudhani replied, 'O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name, though I am unable to comprehend the explanation. But you can descend into the lake.' Vasishtha said, 'I am Vasishtha. I am the foremost. I reside in wealth and houses. Know that since I am the foremost and since I reside, I am Vasishtha.'[215] Yatudhani replied, 'You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.' Kashyapa said, 'I am the mooring for my lineage and I am radiant like the sun.[216] Since I come from Kashi, know that I am the brahmana who bears the name of Kashyapa.' Yatudhani replied, 'O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name, though I am unable to comprehend the explanation. But you can descend into the lake.' Bharadvaja said, 'O beautiful one! I support my sons.[217] I support my disciples. I support the gods. I support brahmanas. I support my wife. Since I do this easily, I am Bharadvaja.' Yatudhani replied, 'You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.' Goutama said, 'O demoness! O Yatudhani! Listen to me. I have conquered the sky and earth through my self-restraint.[218] I travel using my self-restraint. I am like a fire without smoke. Because of my self-restraint, you will find it extremely difficult to look at me. Know me to be Goutama.' Yatudhani replied, 'O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name and I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.' Vishvamitra said, 'The gods of the universe are my friends.[219] The cattle are my friends. O Yatudhani! Listen to me. I am known as Vishvamitra.' Yatudhani replied, 'You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.' Jamadagni said, 'O beautiful one! I have been born from the sacrifices of those who have no birth.[220] I provide inspiration because of my purity. Know that it is the view that I am Jamadagni.' Yatudhani replied, 'O great sage! You have told me the truth about your name and I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.' Arundhati said, 'I stand next to my husband and hold up the earth. My mind gently follows my husband.[221] Therefore, know me to be Arundhati.' Yatudhani replied, 'You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.' Ganda said, 'The side of my face has a lump.[222] I bear that mark of a lump on the cheek. O one who has been born from the fire! Because of the lump that stands out on my cheek, know me to Ganda.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Pashusakha said, ‘O one who has been born from the fire! O friend! I am a friend to, and friendly towards, animals, especially towards cows.[223] Therefore, know me to be Pashusakha. Yatudhani replied, ‘You have told me your name, though I am sorry that I cannot understand what you have said about the syllables. But I am incapable of barring you any more. Descend into the lake.’ Shunasakha said, ‘I am not interested in explaining my name the way they have done.[224] O Yatudhani! However, you should reflect on the fact that I am known by the name of Shunasakha.’ Yatudhani replied, ‘The words that you have spoken are not clear. Your words are ambiguous. O brahmana! Therefore, tell me your name properly.’ Shunasakha said, ‘I have told you my name properly, though you have been unable to grasp it. Therefore, I will strike you with my triple stick.[225] May you instantly be reduced to ashes.’ That stick was like the curse of a brahmana. Struck by it on the head, the demoness fell down on the ground, reduced to ashes. Shunasakha thus slew the immensely strong Yatudhani.

‘“Having done this, he stuck his triple staff on the ground and sat down on a grassy spot. As they wished, all the sages collected lotus stalks. Delighted, they then arose. Having collected bundles of lotus stalks, they were full of exhaustion. They flung these down on the banks and again entered the lake to offer oblations of water. O bull among men! Having arisen from the water, all of them looked around, but could no longer see the lotus stalks. The rishis said, ‘We were overcome with hunger. Which wicked person has stolen what belongs to us? We desired to eat those lotus stalks. Who has acted in this cruel way?’ Those bulls among brahmanas suspected each other and questioned each other. O afflicter of enemies! They told each other that all of them would have to swear an oath. When all of them said this, Shunasakha tried to restrain them. But they were hungry and exhausted and prepared to swear. Atri said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks touch cattle with his feet, urinate while facing the sun and study in a forbidden way.’ Vasishtha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks not study, suffer affliction from dogs, live a life of mendicancy, slay his friends and those who seek refuge, earn a living through his daughter and seek riches from wicked people and thieves.’

Kashyapa said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks gamble everywhere, destroy trust, bear false witness, eat the flesh of animals killed in vain, make unsuccessful donations and have intercourse with his wife during the day.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks be addicted towards cruel adharma vis-à-vis women, relatives and cattle, let him defeat brahmanas, let him defy his preceptor and study the Rig Veda and the Yajur Veda and let him offer oblations into fires that are kindled with straw.’ Jamadagni said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks release excrement into the water, kill milk-yielding cattle, indulge in sexual intercourse outside the season, be hated and have enemies, live off his wife, make friends with difficulty and become someone else’s guest.’[226] Goutama said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks discard the Vedas after studying them, throw away the three sacrificial fires, sell soma, dwell in a village that has a common well, and live with a brahmana who has a *vrishala* for his wife.’ Vishvamitra said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks be faced with a situation where his seniors and servants are maintained by other people, though he is alive. Despite many children, let him not accomplish his purpose. Let him be an impure and crooked brahmana. Let him be insolent because of his prosperity. Let him have to till the soil and let him be malicious. During the rains, let him be a servant of the king. Let the thief be an officiating priest for someone who is not entitled to perform a sacrifice.’ Arundhati said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks always cause grief to her mother-in-law and her husband. Let her be evil in intelligence. Let her eat the tasty food alone. In the midst of her family, at the end of the day, let her be made to eat only *saktu*. Despite giving birth to a brave son, let her be unfortunate.’[227] Ganda said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks always speak falsehoods and act against the virtuous. Let her have to bestow her daughter in marriage in exchange for a price. Let her eat the food she has cooked alone. Let her spend her life as a servant maid. Let her be destroyed because of her perverse deeds.’ Pashusakha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotus stalks give birth to servants. Let him have worthless offspring. Let him never worship the gods.’ Shunasakha responded, ‘Let the person who has taken away the lotus stalks bestow his daughter in marriage on a revered brahmana who knows the metres and observes brahmacharya. Let him bathe after having studied the Atharva Veda.’ The rishis replied, ‘The oath you have taken is something desired by brahmanas. O Shunasakha! You must have stolen all our lotus stalks.’ Shunasakha said, ‘What you left here can no longer be seen. What you have said is true. I have done the deed. It isn’t a lie. I have stolen the lotus stalks. While you looked on, I made the lotus stalks vanish. O illustrious ones! O unblemished ones! I did that to test you. I have come here to protect all of you. Yatudhani was an extremely angry demoness who desired to kill you. She was invoked by Vrishadarbhi. O ones rich in austerities! I have slain her. That evil and wicked one was generated from the fire, so as to cause injury to you. O brahmanas! That is the reason I have come here. Know me to be Vasava. Since you are without avarice, you have obtained the indestructible worlds that satisfy all the objects of desire. O brahmanas! Arise quickly from this spot and go there.’ Thus addressed by Purandara, the maharshis were delighted. With Indra of the gods, all of them went to heaven. Those great-souled ones suffered hardships from supreme hunger. Yet, because they did not succumb to greed, they obtained heaven. In this way, those great-souled ones enjoyed many objects of pleasure. Therefore, in every situation, a man must abandon greed. O king! Lack of avarice is known as supreme dharma. If a man recites this account of good conduct in an assembly, he obtains a share of happiness and does not have to face difficulties. The ancestors, the rishis and the gods are pleased with him. After death, such a man obtains fame, dharma and artha.”’

Chapter 1777(96)

‘Bhishma said, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about the oaths taken in the course of a visit to the tirthas. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! O great king! This is about what was done by rajarshis and brahmana rishis when there was a theft of lotuses. The rishis assembled on the western side of Prabhasa. Having assembled there, they consulted each other. They decided that they would roam around, visiting all the sacred tirthas on earth. Having said this, all of them departed on that task. O king! There were Shukra, Angiras, the learned Kavi, Agastya, Narada, Parvata, Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Goutama, Vishvamitra, Jamadagni, the rishi Galava, Ashtaka, Bharadvaja, Arundhati, the Valakhilyas, Shibi, Dilipa, Nahusha, Ambarisha, King Yayati, Dhundhumara and Puru. O Indra among men! Those great ones proceeded, placing Shatakratu, Vritra's slayer, at their head. Having visited all the tirthas, in the month of Magha, they went to the sacred tirtha of Koushiki. They had cleansed their sins after visiting all the tirthas. After this, they went to that extremely sacred lake that was Brahma's. They were like fires and they bathed in that tirtha of the gods. They then gathered lotus stalks and ate them. O king! Some of them extracted the stalks of lotuses. Other brahmanas extracted the roots of the lotuses.

'"However, they found that the lotuses uprooted by Agastya had been stolen by someone. Agastya, foremost among the rishis, spoke to them. 'Who has stolen my excellent lotuses? I suspect it must be one of you. Give my lotuses back. It is unworthy of you to steal my lotuses. I have heard that time destroys the strength of dharma. That time must have arrived and dharma's affliction is increasing. Before adharma increases further, I should quickly leave for the world of the hereafter. There will be a time when brahmanas will recite the Vedas in loud tones in the midst of villages, within the hearing of vrishalas. There will be a time when kings will conduct themselves according to adharma. I do not wish to see all that. Before all that happens, I will leave for the world of the hereafter. There will be a time when men will regard the superior, the middling and the inferior as the same. A great darkness will pervade everything. Before that happens, I wish to quickly leave for the world of the hereafter. There will be a time when strong mortals will oppress weaker ones. Before I see that, I wish to quickly leave for the world of the hereafter. I am not interested in seeing this state of affairs in the world of men.'

'"Thus addressed by the maharshi, the rishis replied, 'We have not stolen your lotuses. You should not suspect us in vain. O maharshi! We will take terrible oaths.' O Indra among men! Since the maharshis were certain that they had not dishonoured dharma, with the kings, and their sons and grandsons, one after another, they took these oaths. Bhrigu said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses abuse when he is censured, strike back when he is struck and let him eat the flesh from the backbones of animals.'[228] Vasishtha said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses not be interested in studying, let him be surrounded by dogs and as a mendicant, let him live in a city.'[229] Kashyapa said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses sell merchandise everywhere, let him covet objects left in trust and let him bear false witness.' Goutama said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses live with insolence in his mind, let him earn a living through trade and tilling the ground and let him be malicious.' Angiras said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be impure and a crooked brahmana, let him be surrounded by dogs and let him not be freed from the sin of causing injury to brahmanas.' Dhundhumara said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be ungrateful towards his friends, let him be reborn to a shudra mother and let him eat the food alone.' Puru said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be a physician, let him be sustained by his wife and let him obtain a means of living through his father-in-law.' Dilipa said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses dwell in a village that has a common well, let him be the husband of a vrishala and let him go to the worlds meant for such people.' Shukra said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses eat flesh from the backbones of animals, let him have intercourse during the day and let him become the servant of a king.' Jamadagni said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses study in a prohibited way, let his friends eat at his funeral ceremonies[230] and let shudras eat at his funeral ceremonies.' Shibi said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses die without having ignited the sacrificial fire, let there be impediments at his sacrifices and let him obstruct the ascetics.' Yayati said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be false to his vows and procreate through his wife when he wears matted hair and let him disrespect the Vedas.' Nahusha said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be a householder who drives his guests away because he has initiated himself into the pursuit of desire, let him pass on learning to his servants.' Ambarisha said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be extremely cruel and a follower of adharma in his treatment of women, relatives and cattle and let him disregard brahmanas.' Narada said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be ignorant, let his fire remain hidden, let him read the sacred texts in mispronounced tones, let him show disrespect to those who are superior.' Nabhaga said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses always utter falsehoods, let him quarrel with the virtuous, let him bestow his daughter for a price.' Kavi said, 'Let the person who has stolen the lotuses strike a cow with his feet, let him urinate towards the sun, let him abandon those who seek refuge.’ Vishvamitra said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be a servant to a king during a drought, let him act as an officiating priest to those who should not perform sacrifices.’ Parvata said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses have lordship over a village, let him travel on vehicles drawn by asses, let him use dogs for a means of subsistence.’ Bharadvaja said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses suffer all the sins committed by those who perform all the cruel and wicked acts, let him utter lies.’ Ashtaka said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a king who is not accomplished in his wisdom and is wicked in conduct and addicted to desire, let him rule the earth in accordance with adharma.’ Galava said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses be worse than a person who is a sinner, let him be a man who injures his own through his wicked deeds, let him boast about the gifts he has donated.’ Arundhati said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses speak ill of her mother-in-law, let her harbour evil thoughts towards her husband, let her eat the tasty food alone.’ The Valakhilyas said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses stand on one foot at the entrance to a village, seeking alms,[231] despite knowing about dharma, let him abandon dharma.’ Pashusakha said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a brahmana who disregards the agnihotra fire and sleeps happily, let him adopt the life of a mendicant and yet be addicted to desire.’ Surabhi said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a cow who, despite possessing her own calf, is milked by some other cow’s calf, with the milk being placed in a brass vessel.’ O Indra among Kouravas! In this way, they were ready to curse with too many different kinds of oaths.

‘“The one with the thousand eyes, the king of the gods, was delighted. He glanced at the angry ones, foremost among brahmanas. The rishis were enraged and Maghavan told them what he thought. He spoke to the brahmana rishis, the devarshis and the *rajarshis*. O king! Hear from me.’ Shakra said, ‘Let the person who has stolen the lotuses bestow his daughter in marriage on a brahmana who knows about the metres, follows brahmacharya and has studied the Atharva Veda. Let the person who has stolen the lotuses become a person who has studied all the Vedas. Let him be pure in conduct and devoted to dharma. Let him go to Brahma’s abode.’ Agastya replied, ‘O slayer of Bala!

Instead of a curse, you have pronounced a benediction. Follow eternal dharma and return my lotuses.'[232] Indra said, 'O illustrious one! I did not steal the lotuses because of greed. You should not be angry at me. I stole them because I desired to hear about dharma. Dharma represents the essence of the sacred texts. Dharma is the bridge that leads to welfare. From the rishis, I have heard what is eternal, undecaying and everlasting. O supreme among sages! Take back the lotus stalks. O illustrious one! O unblemished one! You should forgive my transgression.' Thus addressed by the great Indra, the extremely angry ascetic accepted the lotuses. The intelligent sage was pleased. Those residents of the forest visited tirthas again. They washed their bodies at those sacred tirthas. If a person reads this account on auspicious and festive days, his son will not be born stupid and wicked. He will never be touched by any anxiety or dirt. After death, he will be radiant and obtain excellence in heaven. These are the sacred texts followed by the rishis. O supreme among men! A person who follows these goes to Brahma's undecaying world."'

Chapter 1778(97)

'Yudhishthira said, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! In the dharma followed at funeral ceremonies, umbrellas and footwear are given. Who started this? How did this originate and why are these given? It isn't just the dharma of funeral ceremonies. They are given on other auspicious occasions too. O king! I wish to hear the truth about this."

'Bhishma replied, "O king! Listen in detail to how the system of umbrellas and footwear started, about how it originated in this world and who started it. It became an everlasting practice for those who seek an auspicious end. O lord of men! I will tell you everything in detail. O lord of men! In this connection, listen to an ancient account. This is a conversation between Jamadagni and the great-souled Surya. O lord! In ancient times, the illustrious one used to play around with his bow himself. One after another, Bhargava would take aim and shoot his arrows. Renuka[233] would bring back all the ones that the blazingly energetic one shot. She would properly bring them back and return them to him. He would be pleased at the sound of the bowstring slapping against his palm and the sound of the arrows. He would cheerfully shoot them and she would bring them back. Once, it was the month of Jyeshtha[234] and the sun was in the middle of the sky. Having shot his arrows, the brahmana told Renuka, 'O large-eyed one! Go and fetch the arrows that have been shot from the bow. O one with the beautiful brows! Bring them back, so that I can shoot them again.' O lord of men! She left. But the beautiful one had to seek shade at the foot of a tree. There, her head and feet were scorched by the sun. The beautiful one spent some time there, but she feared that she would be cursed by her husband. The black-eyed one therefore began to collect the arrows again. The illustrious one collected the arrows and returned. But the one with the beautiful limbs was distressed and her feet suffered from the pain. Scared and trembling, she returned to her husband. The husband, the rishi, angrily spoke these words to the one with the beautiful face. 'O Renuka! Why do you repeatedly take such a long time to return?' Renuka replied, 'O one rich in austerities! My head and feet are scorched. I suffer from the heat of the sun and have to seek shade at the foot of a tree. O brahmana! That is the reason I take a long time to return. O lord! O one rich in austerities! Knowing this, you shouldn't be angry with me.' Jamadagni said, 'O Renuka! The one with the blazing rays has been the cause of your misery. Today, using the blazing energy of my weapons and my arrows, I will destroy Surya.' He drew back his divine bow and picked up many arrows. He stood there, turning his face in the direction of the sun. O Kounteya! On seeing that he was ready to strike, Surya approached in the form of a brahmana and spoke these words. 'What crime has Surya committed against you? From the firmament, Surya scatters down his rays. The sun collects juices from the earth and showers them down in the form of rain. O brahmana! Food is generated from that and this brings happiness to humans. It has been read in the Vedas that food is life. O brahmana! Hidden in the clouds, the sun is surrounded by his rays and showers down rain on the seven *dvipas*. The herbs, the creepers, the leaves and the flowers result. O lord! It is through the rain that all the food is generated. Everything is sustained through food—the sacraments, beginning with birth, all the vows and rites, the donation of cows, marriages, the prosperous sacrifices, the donations and all the methods for the accumulation of wealth. O Bhargava! You know the truth about that. Everything that is pleasant and beautiful results from food. I am telling you what you already know. O brahmana! Everything that I am telling you is already known to you. O brahmana rishi! Be pacified. Why are you trying to bring Surya down?’”’

Chapter 1779(98)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “When the sun beseeched the supreme among sages, what did the immensely energetic Jamadagni do?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Despite the supplication, the sage Jamadagni, the lord who was like the fire in his radiance, was not pacified. Surya again spoke to him in sweet words. O lord of the earth! In the form of the brahmana, he bowed his head down and joined his hands in salutation. ‘O brahmana rishi! In his course, Surya is always moving. Since the sun is always moving forward, how will you strike one who is in motion?’ Jamadagni replied, ‘Through the sight of my knowledge, I know who you are. Whether you are stationary or mobile, it will be my task to teach you humility today. O sun! In the afternoon, you are stationary for a brief instant. O Surya! Without thinking about it, I will pierce you then.’ Surya said, ‘O brahmana rishi! O supreme among archers! There is no doubt that you know who I am. O illustrious one! Even if I have offended you, know that I have sought refuge with you.’ At this, the illustrious Jamadagni laughed and spoke these words. ‘O Surya! Since you have sought protection with me, you should not be frightened any more. If a person who has sought refuge with me is slain, that will cause a transgression of the uprightness of brahmanas, the stability of the earth, the mildness of the moon, the gravity of Varuna, the resplendence of the fire, the radiance of Meru and the heat of the sun. A person who kills a supplicant is like one who violates his preceptor’s bed, kills a brahmana and drinks liquor. O son![235] Therefore, think of something against the heat. Let the paths of those who are oppressed by your rays become comfortable.’ Having said this, the extender of the Bhrigu lineage was silent. Quickly, Surya gave him an umbrella and footwear. Surya said, ‘O maharshi! Accept this umbrella as a helmet against my rays. Accept this footwear, made out of leather, for the protection of the feet. From this day, these will be known on earth as auspicious gifts and they will be regarded as supreme and indestructible.’ Umbrellas and footwear were thus instituted by Surya. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the three worlds, they came to be known as auspicious. Therefore, excellent umbrellas and footwear must be given to brahmanas. This is extremely great dharma and one should not think about this. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! If a person gives a white umbrella with one hundred ribs to brahmanas, he obtains happiness after death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Always honoured by brahmanas, apsaras and gods, he dwells in Shakra’s world. O mighty-armed one! If a person gives footwear to brahmanas, *snatakas* and other brahmanas who are controlled and are being scorched, he obtains worlds that are revered by the gods. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After death, he resides happily in Goloka. O best among the Bharata lineage! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! I have thus told you everything about the fruits from donating umbrellas and footwear.”’

Chapter 1780(99)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I wish to hear the truth about the fruits obtained from trees and ponds.”

‘Bhishma replied, “Land that is beautiful with forests, adorned with many kinds of colourful minerals and grows all kinds of seeds is said to be the best. Among fields, the one that have ponds are superior. I will progressively tell you about all kinds of waterbodies. I will tell you about the qualities associated with those who dig ponds. Those who create ponds are honoured everywhere in the three worlds. Even when dwelling with friends, in places that enhance friendship, it is best to dwell in houses that have ponds. Those lead to the greatest fame. To obtain the fruits of dharma, artha and kama, the learned say that it is best to dig a pond properly. A field with a pond is a great refuge. Four kinds of creatures are noticed near a pond.[236] When there are ponds in every direction, this brings supreme benefit. Gods, humans, gandharvas, ancestors, serpents, rakshasas and all mobile objects resort to waterbodies. Therefore, I will tell you about the qualities that are said to be associated with ponds. The rishis have spoken about these fruits being obtained. The learned have said that if one’s pond has water when the rains are meagre, one obtains the fruits of an agnihotra. If one’s pond has water during autumn, after death, one obtains the supreme fruits of donating one thousand cows. If one’s pond has water during the cold season,[237] one obtains the fruits of performing a sacrifice where a lot of gold is donated. If one’s pond has water during the winter, the learned have said that the fruits obtained are like those of an agnishtoma sacrifice. If one’s well-contructed pond provides excellent refuge during the spring, the fruits obtained are those of an *atiratra* sacrifice. If one’s pond has drinking water during the summer, the learned sages have said that the fruits are like those of a *vajapeya* sacrifice. A man whose wells and waterbodies are such that cattle can always find drinking water there, is virtuous and saves his entire lineage. If a person’s pond is such that thirsty cows, animals, birds and humans find drinking water there, he obtains the fruits of *ashvamedha*. If everyone drinks water, bathes and rests in a person’s pond, after death, he is thought of as obtaining everything infinite. O son! Water is extremely difficult to obtain, especially after death. Eternal pleasure results from offering water to drink. If a person remains awake and donates sesamum, water and a lamp, after death, with his relatives, he obtains bliss that is extremely difficult to get. O tiger among men! The giving of water is heavier than all gifts. It is superior to all gifts. Therefore, drinking water must always be given. I have thus spoken to you about the supreme fruits associated with ponds. I will next tell you about the planting of trees. Among immobile objects six kinds of species are spoken about—trees, bushes, creepers, smaller creepers,[238] bamboos and grass. Among these different species, the planting of trees brings the greatest benefit. It brings fame in the world of men and leads to auspicious fruits in the hereafter. Such a person obtains a name in this world and greatness with the ancestors. He goes to the world of the gods and his name is never destroyed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A person who plants trees saves his lineage, both ancestors and descendants. Therefore, plant trees. There is no doubt that a person who plants trees will obtain sons. When he dies, he will obtain the undecaying world of heaven. There will be blossoming trees with large numbers of gods there. There will be fruits, with the ancestors. The trees there will honour him as a guest and offer him shade. The trees offer refuge to kinnaras, serpents, rakshasas, gods, gandharvas, humans and large numbers of rishis. They satisfy humans with their flowers and their fruit. If a person plants trees, those trees save him in the world hereafter, like a son. Therefore, a person who desires benefit must always dig ponds and plant trees. These will protect you, like sons. O son! This is said to be your dharma. If a person digs ponds and plants trees, he is like a brahmana who speaks the truth or performs desirable sacrifices. He will obtain greatness in heaven. Therefore, dig ponds and plant trees. This is like a sacrifice among all kinds of sacrifices. This is like always speaking the truth."'

Chapter 1781(100)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! Tell me everything about the dharma associated with *garhasthya*. O king! What must a man do to obtain prosperity in this world?"

'Bhishma replied, "O lord of men! In this connection, there is an ancient account. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is about a conversation between Vasudeva and the earth. The powerful Vasudeva praised the goddess earth. O best among the Bharata lineage! He asked her what you have asked me.

'"Vasudeva said, 'Having resorted to the dharma of garhasthya, what acts should I undertake? O earth! What are the necessary tasks? Which acts bring happiness?'

'"The earth replied, 'Rishis, ancestors, gods and humans must be worshipped through sacrifices. O Madhava! Listen to me. The gods are always satisfied with sacrifices and humans with hospitality. One must always warmly give them what deserves to be given. O Madhusudana! The large number of rishis is also delighted with this. Before eating, the householder must always tend to the sacrificial fire and offer the oblations. O Madhusudana! The gods are pleased through these acts. For the sake of pleasing the ancestors, every day, he must perform the funeral rites of offering food, water, roots and fruits. After having followed the prescribed ordinances and ignited the fire, one must offer cooked food to the Vishvadevas. This must be offered to Agni, Soma and the Vishvadevas, and thereafter, to Yama. Separate oblations are recommended for the Prajapatis. The oblations must be offered in the due order. For Yama it is to the south, for Varuna it is to the west, for Soma it is to the north and for brahmanas, it is in the centre of the house. O Madhava! For Dhanvantari it is to the north-east and for Shakra it is to the east. It is said that men must be given offerings at the gate of the house. In the interior of the house, it is only the Maruts and the gods who can be given offerings. The Vishvadevas should be given offerings under the open sky. The ones who roam during the night and ghosts must be given offerings at night. After these offerings have been properly rendered, alms must be given to brahmanas. If no brahmanas are present, the first share of the offerings must be flung into the fire. If a man wishes to donate at a funeral ceremony for the ancestors, there are rites he must perform after the funeral ceremony has been concluded. Following the ordinances, the ancestors must be satisfied with the offerings. It is the turn of the Vishvadevas next. Thereafter, the brahmanas must be invited. The guests must next be served the food that is left. O great king! When they are first honoured, men are pleased. A guest is said to be a person who stays for a short period of time. A man must always submit to a preceptor, a father, a friend and a guest, "This is what is available in my house today." A person who says this and does this is said to follow dharma. O Krishna! A man who is a virtuous householder must always eat what is left after this. Even if they reside in his house for an entire year, a man must honour and satisfy a king, an officiating priest, a snataka, a preceptor and a father-in-law with *madhuparka*. In the morning and in the evening, it is recommended that food must be placed on the ground for dogs, *shvapakas* and birds. This is known as an offering to the Vishvadevas. This is said to be dharma for a person who follows garhasthya. Without any malice, one must act in this way. One will then obtain supreme prosperity in this world. After death, one will obtain greatness in the vault of heaven.' Hearing the earth's words, the powerful Vasudeva always acted in this way. You should also act accordingly. O lord of men! By following the dharma of a householder, you will obtain fame in this world and heaven after death."'

Chapter 1782(101)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O bull among the Bharata lineage! What is the one that is known as the donation of lamps? How did it originate and what are its fruits? Tell me about this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Prajapati Manu and Suvarna. There was an ascetic who was known by the name of Suvarna. His complexion was golden. That is the reason he was known as Suvarna.[239] He possessed the qualities of noble lineage and good conduct. He was supremely devoted to studying. Through his own qualities, he surpassed many who were descended from excellent lineages. On one occasion, the brahmana saw Manu wandering around. They asked each other questions about their respective well-beings. Resolved to obtain success, they sat down together on the mountainous slopes of the golden mountain of Meru. Seated there, they conversed with each other on various topics—the brahmana rishis, the gods, the daityas and the ancient great-souled ones. Suvarna spoke these words to the lord, Svayambhu Manu. ‘For the welfare of all beings, you should answer my question. O lord of the subjects! There are many beautiful objects that are offered to the gods. How did this originate and what are the fruits that result? Please instruct me about this.’

‘“Manu replied, ‘In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Shukra and Bali when they met. Bali, Virochana’s son, ruled the three worlds. He quickly approached Shukra, the extender of the Bhrigu lineage. The lord of the asuras honoured Bhargava with arghya and after he had sat down, seated himself. In the proper way, he then offered him a large quantity of dakshina. They then conversed about what you have spoken about, about the fruits of donating beautiful objects like incense and lamps. The Indra among the daityas asked the Indra among wise ones this supreme question. “O supreme among those who know about the brahman! What are the fruits from donating beautiful objects like incense and lamps? O foremost among brahmanas! You should tell me this.”

‘“‘Shukra said, “Austerities were created first and dharma evolved after that. During the intervening period, creepers and herbs were generated. They had soma as their essence and many of these were created on earth. Some of this species were like amrita, while others were like poison. There were others that were neither. Amrita instantly provided pleasure and nourishment to the mind. The terrible stench of poison makes the mind suffer in every way. Know that amrita is auspicious and poison is extremely inauspicious. All the herbs constitute amrita. The energy of poison is generated from the fire. Whatever delights the mind is beneficial. That is the reason men who are performers of good deeds describe them as beautiful. A pure man gives the gods these beautiful objects. Whatever satisfies the gods is said to be beautiful. O lord! O king of the daityas! When a person gives beautiful objects to the gods, with an auspicious end in mind, they are pleased with him. Herbs possess many kinds of valour and have many different forms. It should be known that they have separate categories of fierce, mild and energetic. There are trees that can be used at sacrifices and those that should not be used at sacrifices. Listen to me. There are garlands that ensure welfare for the asuras and for the gods. I will progressively tell you what is loved by rakshasas, gods, *yakshas,* ancestors and humans and what ensures benefit. There are those[240] that are wild, those that naturally grow in villages, those that have to be cultivated, those that are grown in mountainous regions, those with thorns, those without thorns and those that have fragrance, beauty and taste. The scent of flowers is said to be of two types—agreeable and disagreeable. Flowers with an agreeable fragrance must be offered to the gods. O lord! The gods always desire flowers that come from trees without thorns and those that are generally white in complexion. A person who knows about donations should give garlands of aquatic flowers, lotuses and the like, to gandharvas, serpents and yakshas. Flowers which are extremely difficult to touch, those with thorns and those that are mostly red or black, must be offered to creatures that are fierce in their valour.[241] O lord! It has been said that beautiful and agreeable flowers, those that delight the mind and are sweet when crushed, should be offered to humans. Flowers that have grown in cremation grounds or temples should not be used in any activity that involves nourishment, such as marriages or secret pleasures. Mild flowers from slopes of mountains should be offered to the gods. Following the ordinances of the sacred texts, mild flowers that have grown and have been plucked properly can be offered. They please gods with their fragrance, yakshas and rakshasas with their sight and serpents with their touch. Men are pleased in all three ways. Gods are pleased instantly. They are capable of satisfying all the desires and wishes of mortals. When the gods are pleased, they always honour those who revere them. When they are ignored and disrespected, they destroy those inferior men. I will now tell you the fruits from offering incense. There are many kinds of incense—good and bad. Listen to me. There are three kinds—extractions, wood that naturally burns and incense that is artificially created. There are auspicious and inauspicious fragrances. Listen in detail. With the exception of *sallaki*,[242] all extractions can be given to the gods. It is certain that *guggulu*[243] is the best among these. *Aguru*[244] is the best among extractions and is desired by yakshas, rakshasas and serpents. The daityas love sallaki and such similar extractions. O king! Fragrances from *sarja*[245] and the essence of similar wood, mixed with the fermented juice of sugar cane are recommended for men. The gods, the danavas and demons are said to be instantly satisfied. Men are said to use these[246] for pleasure. These are the qualities and reasons why these beautiful objects are said to be given. These different kinds of incense lead to an enhancement of pleasure. I will tell you about the supreme fruits associated with giving lamps—whom these lamps should be given to, when, and in what form. Light is a manifestation of energy and it is described as moving upwards. Therefore, when energy is given, it increases the energy of men. *Dakshinayana* is mixed with a period of intense darkness. Therefore, the donation of lamps is praised during uttarayana.[247] Light moves upwards and it is an antidote to darkness. Therefore, it has been determined as something that moves upwards. It is because of light that the gods are energetic, powerful and radiant. Rakshasas obtain these through darkness. Thus, lamps should be given. Through giving light, a man obtains the radiance of eyesight. Such a donor should not be injured and the lamp must not be stolen or destroyed. A person who steals a lamp becomes blind. He is shrouded in darkness and loses his radiance. The donor of a lamp goes to heaven and is surrounded by an array of lights there. The best lamps are those in which ghee is burnt. Next are those in which the juices of herbs[248] are burnt. A person who desires prosperity must never give a lamp in which the essence of fat, marrow and bones is being burnt. A person who desires his own prosperity must always place lamps on the slopes of mountains, along deserted roads, near sanctuaries and crossroads. A man who gives lamps always saves his lineage and purifies his soul. He becomes radiant and obtains the world of the stellar bodies. I will tell you about the qualities and fruits associated with rendering offerings to gods, yakshas, serpents, men, ghosts and rakshasas. Know that rakshasas are those who eat first, without feeding brahmanas, gods, guests and children. They are inauspicious and do not pronounce vashatkara. Therefore, one must single-mindedly bow one's head down and respectfully first render offerings to the gods. The gods accept these and always praise the house. It is through such offerings that brahmanas, other guests, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, gods and ancestors are sustained. When they are gratified, they please the offerer with a long life, fame and riches. Along with the offerings, flowers, curds and well-cooked food, auspicious, fragrant and agreeable to see, must be rendered to the gods. Offerings made to yakshas and rakshasas must have blood and meat, mixed with liquor[249] and decorated with parched rice. What is given to the serpents must always be mixed with lotuses. The ghosts accept sesamum seed and molasses. Someone who eats only after honouring the gods with a first share becomes strong and noble. Therefore, they must be given an offering first. One's house is radiant because of the gods who are present in the house. For the sake of prosperity, one must worship them and give them the first share."'"

'Bhishma continued, "This is what Kavya Bhargava told the Indra among the asuras. Manu told Suvarna this and Suvarna told Narada. O immensely radiant one! Narada told me about these qualities. O son! Therefore, you should also follow all these kinds of conduct."'

Chapter 1783(102)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O best among the Bharata lineage! I have heard about giving flowers, incense and offerings, about the rites to be followed and the fruits. However, you should tell me about this again. What are the fruits from giving incense and lamps? Why do householders hurl offerings down?"[250]

'Bhishma replied, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Nahusha and Agastya and Bhrigu. O great king! Rajarshi Nahusha was an extremely great ascetic. Through his excellent and good deeds, he obtained the kingdom of heaven. O king! Though Nahusha went to heaven and resided there, he performed many kinds of human and divine rites. O king! Though the great-souled one was in heaven, he performed all the human rites and the eternal divine ones. He ignited the fire, collected kindling, kusha grass and agreeable objects. He made offerings of food, parched grain, incense and lamps. All of these continued to be practised in the great-souled king's house. Though he dwelt in heaven, he performed the sacrifice of meditation and the sacrifice of mental control. The lord of the gods[251] worshipped all the gods in the proper way. O scorcher of enemies! He continued to do everything in the indicated way, just as he had done earlier. But after some time, the fact of having become Indra, led to insolence penetrating him. O king! He ignored all the rites and began to suffer. Intoxicated at having been granted a boon,[252] he made the rishis carry him. Since his observance of the rites had diminished, he also became weak. When it was time for the foremost among sages, stores of austeries, to bear him, he became overcome with a great deal of insolence. One after another, the rishis carried him. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It was then time for Agastya to bear him. At that time, the immensely energetic Bhrigu, supreme among those who knew about the brahman, had gone there. He reached Agastya's hermitage and asked, 'O great sage! Why do we have to tolerate Nahusha? Since he has become Indra of the gods, the evil-minded one shows us disrespect.'

'"Agastya replied, 'O great sage! How can I curse him? You know that the granter of boons has given him a boon. When he arrived in heaven, he asked for a boon from that god. "Anyone that my eyes turn towards will come under my subjugation." This boon was granted. Therefore, there is no doubt that I won't be able to burn him down. That is also the reason why the other supreme rishis have not been able to curse him or bring him down. O lord! In earlier times, the great-souled gave him amrita to drink. That is the reason we can't bring him down. It is evident that the god has granted this boon to cause misery to all beings. That is the reason the worst among men displays this adharma towards brahmanas. O supreme among eloquent ones! The time has arrived. Tell me what should be done. All of us will act exactly as you tell us to.'

'"Bhrigu said, 'I have come here because I have been asked to do so by the grandfather. This is to counter Nahusha's strength and insolence. Today, the extremely evil-minded king of the gods will yoke you to his chariot. Today, I will use my energy to uproot him from the status of Indra. Behold. Today, I will establish Shatakratu as Indra again. That extremely evil-minded and wicked person will be dislodged from his status as Indra. Today, the evil Indra of the gods will strike you with his foot. His consciousness will be affected by destiny and that evil-minded one will destroy himself. He will transgress dharma and I will thus be able to strike the one who causes the injury. O best among brahmanas! In my anger, I will curse him, "May you become a snake." I will thus shame that extremely evil-minded one. O great sage! While you look on, I will bring him down to earth. Nahusha is the performer of wicked deeds. He is intoxicated because of his prosperity and strength. O sage! If it pleases you, I will act in this way.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Thus addressed by Bhrigu, the undecaying son of Mitravaruna, Agastya, was extremely pleased and his anxiety was dispelled."'

Chapter 1784(103)

'Yudhishthira asked, "How did he face a calamity and how was he brought down on the ground? How did he lose his status of Indra? You should tell me about this."

'Bhishma replied, "Those two great-souled ones conversed about what they should do. I have told you everything about how humans go to heaven. In that way, the great-souled one became the king of the gods by giving lamps and all the other required objects, observing all the rites for rendering offerings and performing all the other separate tasks that are meant for auspicious days. O Indra among kings! The learned say that in the world of the gods and in the world of men, a householder who practises good conduct obtains prosperity. This is through offering incense and lamps and prostrations. When food is cooked, the first share must be offered to brahmanas. When offerings are rendered to gods who reside in the house, they are pleased. The householder obtains satisfaction by rendering such offerings. However, through such an act, the gods are pleased a hundred times more. This is also the way virtuous people give incense and lamps, prostrating themselves. Such acts are praised and possess many qualities. After bowing down, learned people perform many acts of ablutions and these please the gods. When they are worshipped in accordance with the rites, the gods accept the offerings and are delighted. This is the kind of intelligence Nahusha, lord of men, resorted to. Having performed these wonderful rites, he obtained the great status of Indra of the gods. But after some time, his good fortune started to decline. He no longer followed all the rites and started to ignore them. The Indra among the gods was negligent in observing the rendering of offerings and in following the ordinances and giving incense, lamps and water. The rakshasas started to obstruct his sacrificial rites.

'"He yoked Agastya, foremost among rishis, to his vehicle. The immensely strong one smiled and instructed that the vehicle should be swiftly conveyed from the banks of the Sarasvati. The immensely energetic Bhrigu spoke to the son of Mitravaruna. 'Until I have entered your matted hair, do not shut your eyes.' While he entered the matted hair, the undecaying one[253] stood immobile. The immensely energetic Bhrigu prepared to bring the king down. The king of the gods approached the rishi and the vehicle. O lord of the earth! Agastya spoke these words to the lord of the gods. 'O Indra! Yoke me swiftly. What region will I bear you to? O lord of the gods! I will convey you wherever you tell me to.' Thus addressed, Nahusha yoked the sage. Bhrigu, who was inside the matted hair, became extremely delighted. However, Bhrigu took care not to look at the great-souled Nahusha, since he knew about the power that the boon had given him. Though he was yoked by Nahusha, Agastya did not display any rage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king struck him with a goad. But even then, the one with dharma in his soul wasn't angered. The king of the gods then angrily kicked Agastya on the head with his left foot. Bhrigu was inside the matted hair. When the head was thus struck, the powerful one angrily cursed Nahusha, evil in his intelligence. Bhrigu said, 'In your rage, you have kicked the head of this great sage. O extremely evil-minded one! Therefore, you will quickly fall down on earth and become a snake.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! As soon as he said this, he[254] became a snake and fell down on earth, on the surface of the ground. This was done by Bhrigu, who had not looked at him. O lord of the earth! Had Nahusha been able to see Bhrigu, he wouldn't have been able to use his energy to bring him down. O great king!

However, because of his gifts, austerities and rituals, though he fell down on the ground, he still retained his memory. To bring an end to the curse, he sought to pacify Bhrigu. O great king! He[255] felt compassion and sought to bring an end to the curse. Bhrigu said, 'There will be a king named Yudhishthira, an extender of the Kuru lineage. He will free you from the curse.' Saying this, he vanished.

'"The immensely energetic Agastya thus accomplished Shatakratu's purpose. Worshipped by the brahmanas, he returned to his own hermitage. O king! You have saved Nahusha from that curse. O lord of men! While you looked on, he went to Brahma's abode. Bhrigu thus brought Nahusha down to earth and went to Brahma's abode and told Brahma what had happened. The grandfather summoned Shakra and the gods. 'O gods! It is because of my boon that Nahusha obtained this kingdom. However, because of Agastya's anger, he has been dislodged and has gone to earth. The gods are incapable of continuing without a king. Therefore, again consecrate Shakra in the kingdom of heaven.' O Partha! The gods were thus addressed by the grandfather. Cheerfully, they replied to the grandfather that it would be that way. The illustrious Vasava was consecrated in the kingdom of heaven by Brahma and conducted himself as earlier. O tiger among kings! This is the ancient account about Nahusha's transgression. But because of his deeds, Nahusha regained his success. Therefore, in the evening, a householder must offer lamps. After death, a person who gives lamps obtains divine eyesight. The donor of a lamp becomes like the full moon in his resplendence. A man who gives a lamp obtains beauty and riches for as many years as the number of *nimeshas*[256] for which the lamp is ablaze."'

Chapter 1785(104)

'Yudhishthira asked, "There are wicked and foolish men who perform cruel deeds and steal the possessions of brahmanas.

Where do they go?"

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a chandala and a *kshatrabandhu*.[257]

'"The king said, 'O chandala! You have the form of an aged person, but your behaviour is like that of a child. Your body is covered with dust created by dogs and asses, but you are concerned with what has come from cows. Tasks censured by the righteous are recommended for chandalas. Why are you using water from the tank to wash off only the dust that has been raised by cattle?'

'"The chandala replied, 'O king! Earlier, cows that belonged to a brahmana were stolen and in the process, they raised some dust and this descended on some *soma* plants. Brahmanas who drank this soma and the king who had initiated himself into the sacrifice were swiftly submerged in hell, with the officiating priests, since all of them had appropriated something that belonged to a brahmana. Men who partook of the milk, ghee and curds,[258] all the brahmanas and all the kings, were submerged in hell. When they shook their bodies, with the milk, they slew the sons and the grandsons.[259] Though the couple[260] was virtuous in conduct, because they had looked at the animals, they were killed. O king! I used to reside there, as a brahmachari who had conquered his senses. O lord of men! The food I had obtained as alms got sprinkled with the dust. O king! Having eaten that, when I died, I became a chandala. The king who stole the brahmana's possessions came to an inglorious end. Therefore, under no circumstances, should one steal a brahmana's possessions. I only ate food that was sprinkled with a brahmana's dust. Look at what has happened to me. That is the reason a learned person must never sell soma. Learned people censure those who sell soma. O king! When they reach Vaivasvata's body, all the people who sell it or buy it go to *rourava*.[261] Even if a person is learned and ignorantly sells dust that has been laced with soma, he is destroyed and, for a long period of time, is reborn as a person who lives off lending money and usury. He goes to hell three hundred times and subsists on the excrement of dogs, in the companionship of dogs. If excessive insolence and transgression of a friend's wife are weighed on both sides of a balance, excessive insolence is heavier. Look at this wicked dog. It is light brown and thin. It is through excessive insolence that beings attain such an end.[262] I was born in a large and prosperous family. O lord! In that other life, I was accomplished in jnana and vijnana. I knew that sins would lead to destruction. But I showed by anger towards beings and ate the flesh from the backbones. I displayed that kind of conduct and ate that kind of food. That is the reason I have come to this present state. Behold the progress of time. I am like a person whose clothes have caught fire at one end, or like one who is pursued by bees. Look at me. I am agitated and covered with dust and am running away. Those who are householders can overcome great sins through studying. In addition, there are donations. That is what the learned ones have said. O lord of the earth! If it is a brahmana who has committed sinful deeds, he must go to a hermitage and free himself from all attachments and desire. O bull among kshatriyas! I have now been born in a wicked lineage. I am not certain about how I can liberate myself. Because of some good deeds that I performed then, I have not lost my memory. O king! I wish to be emancipated. I am seeking refuge with you and asking you. Dispel my doubt. O excellent one! How can I free myself from this state of being a chandala?'

'"The king said, 'O chandala! Know about how you can be freed. If you cast aside your life for the sake of a brahmana, you will obtain what is desirable. To ensure the welfare of brahmanas, give up your body in the field of battle, or before predatory beasts. If you offer your life as an oblation, you will be freed. There is no other means for your liberation.'"

'Bhishma continued, "O king! O scorcher of enemies! Thus addressed, to protect the possessions of a brahmana, in the field of battle, he offered his life as an oblation, thus attaining a desirable end. O son! O bull among the Bharata lineage! O mighty-armed one! Therefore, if you desire the supreme end, always protect the possessions of brahmanas."'

Chapter 1786(105)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O grandfather! It has been said that all the performers of good deeds obtain an identical world. O grandfather! Or are there many worlds? Tell me this."

'Bhishma said, "O Partha! Because of their deeds, men go to many different worlds. People with good deeds go to worlds meant for the virtuous and those with bad deeds go to places meant for the wicked. O son! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between the sage Goutama and Vasava. There was a brahmana named Goutama. He was mild and self-controlled and had conquered his senses. In a great forest, he saw a baby elephant that was distressed because it had lost its mother. The one who was firm in his vows was overtaken by compassion. On seeing it, he nurtured it. After a long period of time, it became large and extremely strong. It was a giant elephant with shattered temples, exuding musth everywhere. Assuming the form of Dhritarashtra,[263] Shakra seized the elephant. Goutama, firm in his vows, saw that it was being dragged away. The immensely ascetic one spoke to King Dhritarashtra. 'O Dhritarashtra! Do not be ungrateful and seize this elephant. It is my son and I have nurtured it with difficulty. The virtuous say that one becomes a friend after taking seven steps together.[264] O king! Let the sin of having injured a friend not touch you. It fetches me water and kindling. It protects my hermitage when I am away. It is humble towards the family of its preceptor. It is engaged in the tasks of its preceptor. It is mild, restrained and grateful. I have always cherished it. O king! Ignoring my protestations, you should not take this elephant away.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'I will give you one thousand cows, one hundred female servants and five hundred gold coins. O maharshi! I will give you many other kinds of riches. What will a brahmana do with an elephant?'

'"Goutama replied, 'O king! Keep your cows, female servants, gold coins and many other jewels. O Indra among men![265] Keep your diverse riches. What will a brahmana do with wealth?'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'What will brahmanas do with elephants? O brahmana! The race of elephants is meant for kings. I am taking this best of elephants away as my mount and there is no adharma in this. O Goutama! Do not obstruct me.'

'"Goutama replied, 'After death, the virtuous rejoice in a world. After death, the wicked sorrow in another world. O great-souled one! I will follow you to those worlds in Vaivasvata's abode to try and bring this elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are those who lack faith and belief and do not follow rites. They are evil in soul and are addicted to satisfying the senses. They suffer misery in Yama's abode. Dhritarashtra will go to a supreme region and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'In Vaivasvata's world, people are controlled. There is truth there and no falsehood is uttered. The weak can oppress the strong there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are worlds for those who are proud and do not follow the ordinances in their behaviour towards their elder sisters, fathers, mothers and preceptors. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a supreme region and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'King Vaishravana's[266] dominion is Mandakini. It yields great objects of pleasure and is entered by those who are entitled to enjoy pleasure. There are large numbers of gandharvas, yakshas and apsaras there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are people who are excellent in their vows and follow the vow of tending to their guests. They give what they have pledged to brahmanas. They eat what is left after giving the others their shares. They obtain adornments in Mandakini.'

'"Goutama replied, 'There is a beautiful forest on the summit of Meru. It has excellent flowers and rings with the songs of kinnaras. There are beautiful and large *jambu*[267] trees there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are brahmanas who are mild and devoted to the truth. They are extremely learned and seek to ensure the pleasure of all beings. They study itihasa and the Puranas. They offer libations and give offerings to brahmanas. O maharshi! Worlds are ordained for such people. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there. If you know about such a region, tell me about it. I will quickly go there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'There is the grove of Nandana that belongs to the king of the kinnaras.[268] It possesses many excellent blossoming trees and is loved by Narada. Large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras are always there. I will follow you there and try to bring this elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are people who are always accomplished in dancing and singing. They are devoted to the welfare of people and never seek anything. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'O Indra among men! There is the beautiful region of Uttara Kuru, where you will find delight with the gods. The brahmanas who reside there were created from the fire. There are those who had other origins and those who were generated from the mountains. Shakra showers down and yields all the objects of desire there. The women there pursue kama. There is no jealousy between men and women there. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are people who feel no desire about any creature. They do not eat meat and have cast aside the rod of chastisement. They do not cause injury to mobile and immobile objects. They regard all creatures as being like their own selves. They are without desire and without any sense of ownership. They are devoid of attachment. They are indifferent towards gain and loss and regard censure and praise as identical. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'There are eternal worlds beyond these. Those sparkle and are supremely fragrant. They are devoid of sorrow. That is the abode of King Soma. O great-souled one! I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are those who are devoted to donating, but never accept anything back. For no reason do they accept anything from others. There is nothing that they are not prepared to give to the deserving and to all their guests. These people are extremely gracious. They are forgiving and do not speak ill of others. They are devoid of attachment and are always auspicious in conduct. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'There are resplendent and eternal worlds beyond these. They are free from dust, free from darkness and free from sorrow. This is the extremely great world of Aditya, meant for those who possess excellent conduct. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are those who are devoted to studying. They are devoted to serving their preceptors. They are ascetics, excellent in their vows and devoted to the truth. They never speak against their preceptors. They always seek to tend to the tasks of their preceptors. Worlds are ordained for such people. O maharshi! These are the pure and cleansed ones, restrained in speech. Those great-souled ones are established in the truth and learned in the Vedas. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'There are resplendent and eternal worlds beyond these. Those sparkle and are supremely fragrant. They are devoid of sorrow. That is the abode of King Varuna. O great-souled one! I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are people who observe the *chaturmasya* sacrifice. There are worlds obtained by those who perform one thousand sacrifices. There are faithful brahmanas who follow the ordiances and offer agnihotra oblations for three years. Those great-souled ones bear the burden of dharma with their own wives. They are well-established along the appropriate path. There is said to be a destination for such people, who have dharma in their souls. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'Indra's world is sparkling. It is devoid of sorrow. It is extremely difficult to reach and is sought by men. That is the abode of the one with abundant energy. O king! I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.'

'"Dhritarashtra said, 'There are brave men who live for one hundred years. They study the Vedas and without any distraction, perform sacrifices. All of these wander around in Shakra's world. Dhritarashtra will go to a superior world and not there.'

'"Goutama replied, 'There are the great worlds of Prajapati. These are in the vault of heaven and all of these are devoid of sorrow. These belong to the learned ones from whom all the worlds have been generated. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

‘“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are kings who have bathed after a royal sacrifice. Those great-souled ones have protected their subjects. They have bathed their limbs after a horse sacrifice. But Dhritarashtra will not go to their worlds.’

‘“Goutama replied, ‘There are blazing and eternal worlds beyond these. Those sparkle and are supremely fragrant. They are devoid of sorrow. Those worlds are extremely difficult to obtain and there is no oppression there. This is Goloka. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

‘“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are people who possess one thousand cows and every year, give away one hundred. There are people who possess one hundred cows and every year, according to capacity, give away ten. There are those who possess ten and give away one. There are generous ones who possess five and give away one. There are brahmanas who emaciate themselves through brahmacharya. They recite words about the brahman. Those spirited ones are devoted to visiting the tirthas. In Goloka, they find delight on celestial vehicles. They go to Prabhasa, the sacred Manasa, the great lake of Pushkara, the sacred Naimisha, the tirtha of Bahuda, Karatoya, Gaya, Gayashira, Vipasha, Sthulavaluka, Tushniganga, Dashaganga, Mahahrada, Goutami, Koushiki, Sarasvati, Drishadvati and Yamuna. Those pure and great-souled ones, firm in their vows, go to divine and auspicious regions, where they are adorned in celestial garlands. They go to those fragrant regions. But Dhritarashtra will not go there.’

‘“Goutama replied, ‘There are regions where there is no fear from the cold and no fear from heat. There is no hunger, thirst, suffering, unhappiness and happiness. There is nothing hated or loved. There is no friend or enemy. There is no old age or death. There is no good deed or bad. Those who are wise and spirited find extensive prosperity there. That is Svayambhu’s auspicious world. I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back.’

‘“Dhritarashtra said, ‘There are those who are free from all attachments. They have cleansed their souls and are firm in their vows. They establish themselves in the yoga of *adhyatma*. They attain the destination of heaven.

They possess the attribute of sattva and obtain Brahma’s auspicious world. O great sage! You will not be able to see Dhritarashtra there.’

‘“Goutama replied, ‘The *rathantara* and *brihat are* chanted there.[269] The sacrificial altar is strewn with lotuses. The drinker of soma goes there on tawny horses.[270] I will follow you there and try to bring the elephant back. I know that you are Shatakratu, the slayer of Vritra. You are the one who roams through the earth and the universe. Through mental affliction, I hope I have not said or done anything unpleasant to you.’

‘“Shakra said, ‘I came to this world traversed by people and followed in their footsteps so as to seize this elephant. I bow down before you. Command me. I will do everything that you ask me to.’

‘“Goutama replied, ‘Give my son, the white elephant, back. It is a child and is only ten years old. It resides in this forest with me and I have no second companion. O Indra of the gods! Give me back the elephant.’

‘“Shakra said, ‘O foremost among brahmanas! This elephant is your son. It is sniffing in the air and looking towards you. It is sniffing your feet with its trunk. I bow down before you. Meditate so that I may obtain benefit.’

‘“Goutama replied, ‘O Indra of the gods! I always think of what will be auspicious for you. I always meditate about you and worship you. O Shakra! Grant me everything auspicious. Given by you, I am accepting this elephant.’

‘“Shakra said, ‘There are learned, spirited and great-souled ones who have the Vedas hidden inside them. Among all those great-souled ones, you alone have been able to recognize me. I am pleased with you now. Listen. O brahmana! Swiftly come to me with your son, the elephant. Today, without any delay, you will obtain the auspicious worlds.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Placing Goutama and his son, the elephant, ahead of him, the wielder of the vajra went to heaven, a place that is extremely difficult for even the righteous to reach.”’

Chapter 1787(106)

‘Yudhishthira said, “You have spoken about many kinds of gifts, tranquility, truth, non-violence, satisfaction with one’s own wife and the fruits of donations. O grandfather! It is known that there is nothing other than the strength of austerities. You should now explain about supreme austerities.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O Yudhishthira! There are said to be worlds associated with austerities. O Kounteya! It is my view that there is no austerity that is superior to fasting. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Bhagiratha and the great-souled Brahma. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! We have heard that Bhagiratha went beyond the world of the gods, Goloka and the world of the rishis. On seeing this, Brahma spoke these words to King Bhagiratha. ‘This region is extremely difficult to reach. How have you come here? O Bhagiratha! The gods, the gandharvas and men cannot come here, without tormenting themselves through austerities. How have you come here?’

‘“Bhagiratha replied, ‘Without any doubt, I always gave to brahmanas. I always gave them hundreds and thousands.[271] Know that I always practised brahmacharya. It is because of those fruits that I have come here. I performed the *ekaratra* sacrifice and the *pancharatra* sacrifice ten times each and the *ekadasha* sacrifice eleven times.[272] I performed one hundred *jyotishtoma* sacrifices. But it is not because of those fruits that I have come here. For one hundred years, I always resided on the banks of the Jahnavi, tormenting myself through austerities. I gave away thousands of she-mules and women there. But I have not come to this city because of that. In Pushkara, I gave brahmanas one hundred thousand horses and again two hundred thousand horses. I gave them thousands of cows. I gave excellent and garlanded maidens, ornamented with golden moons.[273] There were another sixty thousand who wore ornaments made out of pure gold. O protector of the worlds! In the sacrifice of *gosava*[274] I gave away one hundred million cows. I gave each of them[275] ten cows ready for milking, accompanied by their calves and gold and brass vessels for milking. Once they had accepted these, controlling myself, I gave each of them ten more cows that had only had one calf each. These were those that yielded milk and were rohinis. I gave them ten million more cows and all of these yielded milk. I gave them ten times that number. O Brahma! But I have not come here because of that. I gave away one hundred thousand horses of the *bahlika* variety. They were white and had golden harnesses. But that is not the reason I have come here. O Brahma! I gave away eight crore of gold coins and another ten crore at each sacrifice that I performed. But it is not because of those fruits that I have come here. O grandfather! I gave away seventeen crore horses. They were pale yellow in complexion and possessed black ears. They were adorned with golden harnesses. O Brahma! I gave away seventeen thousand she-elephants.[276] They were gigantic in size and their tusks were as large as ploughs. They were adorned in golden garlands. O lord of the gods! I gave away ten thousand chariots that were made out of gold throughout. They were ornamented with celestial decorations made out of gold. There were seven thousand more that were yoked to horses that were ornamented with gold. I gave these away in the form of dakshina at ten horse sacrifices that I performed, following what has been recommended in the Vedas. I was Shakra's equal in my power and in the valour of my sacrifices. O grandfather! At eight royal sacrifices that I performed, I vanquished all the kings and gave them away as dakshina, with thousands of gold coins strung around their necks. But that is not the reason I have come here, because of those sacrifices. O lord of the universe! The dakshina given there flowed over everything, like the Ganga's current. Following my inclinations, to each.[277] I gave two thousand elephants and two thousand horses that were ornamented in gold and one hundred of the best villages. I did this three times. I was an ascetic and controlled my diet. I restrained my speech. For a long period of time, I resided in the Himalayas, along the Ganga, whose flow is irresistible. Her flow was held by Mahadeva on his head. O grandfather! But I have not come here because of those fruits. I hurled the shami stick[278] and performed tens of thousands of sacrifices for the gods. Some lasted for thirteen days, others for twelve days. Some were *pundarika* sacrifices. But I am not here because of those fruits. I gave eight thousand humped bulls to brahmanas. Each of them was white and the horns were encrusted with gold. I gave them beautiful wives with golden necklaces. I gave piles of gold and gems. There were mountains of jewels. There were hundreds of thousands of villages, prosperous with wealth and grain. At the many great sacrifices I performed, I attentively gave each brahmana one hundred thousand cows that had only had a single calf each. But I am not here because of that. With dakshina, I performed sacrifices that lasted for eleven days. O god! There were horse sacrifices that lasted for twenty four days. O Brahma! Yet again, I performed such rites sixteen times. But I haven't come here because of those fruits. I also gave each of them a grove with kanchana trees. Each grove extended for a yojana on every side and was full of gems. But I am not here because of those fruits. Without any anger, for thirty years, I practised the excellent *turayana* vow[279] During this period, every day, I cheerfully gave brahmanas eighty thousand cows. They yielded milk and were rohinis. O protector of the universe! O lord of the gods! I always gave to brahmanas. But I have not come here because of those fruits. O Brahma! I always performed sacrifices with thirty fires. I performed eight *sarvamedha* and seven *naramedha* sacrifices. I also performed one hundred and twenty eight *vishvajit* sacrifices.[280] O lord of the gods! But I have not come here because of those fruits. On the banks of Sarayu, Bahuda and Ganga, and in Naimisha, I gave away one million cows. It is not because of that either. Indra knew about the truth and kept it a secret. However, through his austerities, Bhargava[281] got to know. O one who should be worshipped! Blazing in his energy, Ushanas revealed that means of success and I have followed it. I have satisfied brahmanas and obtained success through those deeds. O lord! Thousands of rishis and others assembled and told me, "Go to Brahma's world." O lord! Thousands of brahmanas were pleased with me and also told me this. That is the reason I have obtained this world and there is nothing more to think about. This is the method that the ordainer has ordained. Asked by you, I have described it accurately to you. It is my view that there is no austerity that is greater than fasting. O supreme among gods! I bow down before you. Be pleased.'"

'Bhishma continued, "King Bhagiratha told Brahma this. Following the indicated rites, he worshipped the one who deserves to be worshipped."'

Chapter 1788(107)

'Yudhishthira asked, "The Vedas say that a man possesses valour that lasts for one hundred years and has a lifespan of one hundred years. O grandfather! In that case, why do men die when they are children? Despite possessing a long lifespan, why does a man's lifespan become short? How does one obtain fame? How does one obtain prosperity? Is it austerities, brahmacharya, meditation, oblations, herbs, birth or conduct? O grandfather! Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "I will now tell you about what you have asked, the reason why a man has a short life or a long life. How does he obtain fame and how does he obtain prosperity? How should a man act so as to obtain benefit? Conduct ensures a long lifespan. Prosperity is obtained through conduct. It is through conduct that a man obtains fame, in this world and in the next. A man who is wicked in conduct does not obtain a long lifespan. Creatures are terrified of him and suffer on his account. Therefore, a person who desires his own prosperity must act in accordance with good conduct. Good conduct destroys the wickedness of the body and removes everything that is inauspicious. Good conduct is the sign of dharma. Good conduct is the sign of the virtuous. The conduct of virtuous people is a sign of good conduct. Even if people hear of a person who follows dharma and undertakes appropriate tasks, without actually having seen him, they repeatedly act so as to bring him pleasure. There are people who are non-believers, devoid of rites, those who cross their preceptors and the sacred texts. They are evil in conduct and only know about adharma. Their lifespans are destroyed. They don't follow good behaviour and violate the ordinances. They are always indiscriminate about sexual intercourse. Such men have short lives and go to hell. If a man doesn't possess any auspicious signs, but is nevertheless faithful and without malice, following good conduct, then he lives for one hundred years. A person without anger, truthful in speech, non-injurious towards creatures, without jealousy and without deceit—lives for one hundred years. A man who crushes lumps of earth or tears up grass,[282] bites his nails, eats food tasted by others and is restless—does not obtain greatness.

'"A person must wake up at *brahma muhurta*[283] and think about dharma and artha. After waking, he must perform the ablutions and joining the hands in salutation, recite the morning prayers, facing the east. In the same way, restraining conversation with others, the evening prayers must be recited. One must never look at the rising sun or the setting sun. During the two sandhyas,[284] the rishis worship for a long time. That is the reason they obtain long lifespans. Therefore, restraining speech at the time, one must respectively face the east and the west. There are brahmanas who do not worship during the eastern and the western sandhya. All of them follow adharma and the king must make them undertake the tasks of shudras. For all the varnas, one must never have sexual intercourse with another person's wife. For a man, there is nothing on earth that shortens a lifespan as much as having intercourse with another person's wife. The application of cosmetics, dressing the hair, applying of collyrium, brushing the teeth and worshipping the gods must be done in the forenoon. One must never look at urine or excrement, or stand on these. One must not speak when passing urine. One must not release excrement in a field or near a village. Both urine and excrement must never be released in water. One must not speak while eating and must face the east. One should not criticize the food. Having finished eating, one must mentally touch the fire. If one eats facing the east, one obtains a long lifespan. If one eats facing the south, one obtains fame. If one eats facing the west one obtains wealth. If one eats facing the north, one speaks the truth. One must never sit on anything like chaff, hair, ash or bones. From a distance, one must avoid the water that someone else has used for bathing. One must offer oblations for peace and recite the savitri mantra. One must be seated while eating and not walk around. One must not pass urine while standing, or on ashes or inside a pen for cows. One must wash one's feet before eating. But one must not go to sleep with wet feet. A person who washes his feet before eating lives for one hundred years. Three things of energy must never be touched with a hand that has not been washed after eating—a fire, a cow and a brahmana. If one does this, the lifespan is not diminished. When one is impure, one must never look at three objects of energy—the sun, the moon and all the nakshatras. When an aged person arrives, a young person's breath of life ascends upwards. By standing up and greeting him, it is got back again. After greeting an aged person, a seat must be offered to him. When he is seated, one must remain standing, hands joined in salutation. When the aged person walks, one must follow him from the rear.[285] One must not sit on a broken seat. A broken brass vessel must also be thrown away. One must never eat while clad in a single garment.[286] One should not bathe naked. One should not sleep naked. One should not touch food that someone else has partly eaten. In an impure state, one must not touch another person's head, since all the breath of life is concentrated there. One must not grasp another person's hair or strike him on the head. One must not join one's hands together and use them for scratching one's own head. While bathing, one must not repeatedly dip one's head in the water. Then, the lifespan will not be shortened. After having washed the head, one should not apply oil to the limbs or touch the water again. Before eating, one should eat some crushed sesamum. One will then obtain greatness. One should never teach or study in an impure state. Nor should one mentally think of these when a bad stench is borne along by the wind. In this connection, those who know about the ancient accounts recount a chant that Yama sung. 'If a person speaks about studying or studies during an impure state, then he reduces his lifespan and that of his offspring.'[287] Therefore, one must never prepare to teach or study at such times. If a person passes urine or excrement towards the sun, towards a fire, towards a cow, towards a brahmana or along a road—then his lifespan is destroyed. During the day, urine and excrement must be released while facing the north. At night, they must be released while facing the south. If this is followed, the lifespan will not be diminished. A person who desires to live for a long time must not show disrespect towards three creatures, regardless of how weak they are—a brahmana, a kshatriya and a snake. All three possess virulent poison. When angry, a virulent serpent can burn down with its sight. An angry kshatriya can also burn down in that way, through the touch of his energy. A brahmana can destroy the entire lineage, through his sight, as well as through his meditation. Therefore, a learned person makes efforts to worship all three. One must never engage in enmity against one's preceptor. O Yudhishthira! If the preceptor is enraged, he must be pacified through entreaties. Even if he does something improper, the preceptor must always be followed. There is no doubt that the criticism of the preceptor burns down a man. One must always pass urine at a spot that is far from a habitation. After this, one must always wash one's feet at a distance. Those who desire benefit must throw away food that has been partially eaten by others far away.

'"One should not set out on a journey in the morning, in the evening, when it is midday, with someone one does not know, alone, or with a vrishala. One must always yield right of way to a brahmana, cattle, the king, old people, those who bear burdens, those who are pregnant and those who are weak. When one comes upon a large tree that one knows about, one must circumambulate it. One must always circumambulate a crossroads that is along the path. One must never frequent crossroads at midday, in the evening and in the middle of the night. This is also true of both the sandhyas. One must never wear footwear or garments that have been worn by another person. One must always be a brahmachari and one must never cross one's legs. One must always be a brahmachari on the night of the new moon, the night of the full moon, the fourth lunar tithi and the eighth lunar tithi of both the pakshas.[288] One must not pointlessly eat meat, nor should one eat meat from the backbone. One must avoid censure, calumny and slander. One should not utter cruel words and those that make another person feel inferior. One should not agitate others with words and say that people are wicked. When they descend from the mouth, such words are like arrows. They strike and cause sorrow, night and day. They descend on the inner organs of the other person. Therefore, a learned person does not release these on others. When a forest is struck with arrows or cut down with an axe, it grows again. But words spoken badly are terrible. The wounds caused by words are never healed. One should not quarrel with, and strike, those who have a limb missing, have an excessive limb, are lacking in knowledge, are deficient in beauty and riches and lacking in spirit. If a person is a non-believer, criticizes the Vedas, slanders the gods, or is hateful, insolent and harsh—he must be shunned. One must not angrily pick up someone else's rod and use it to strike.[289] That apart, it has been said that for purposes of imparting instruction, only the son or the disciple can be struck. One must not cause suffering to brahmanas. One must not point a finger at nakshatras. One must not mention the names of tithis and pakshas. If this is done, the lifespan will not be diminished. After having passed urine or excrement or having walked along a road, one must wash one's feet. One must also do this before studying and eating. The gods have thought of three things that are pure and recommended for the use of brahmanas—something that is invisible, something that has been washed and something that has been praised in words. *Samyava,*[290] krisara, meat, *shashkuli*[291]and payasam must never be cooked for one's own self. They must be offered to the gods. One should always tend to the sacrificial fire. One should always give alms. One should always use a *dantakashtha,*[292] refraining from speaking at the time. One should not be in bed when the sun has arisen. If this happens, one must atone for this. After waking, one must first greet the mother, the father, the preceptor and other seniors. That is the way to attain greatness. The dantakashtha must always be thrown away and a new one used. One must always eat according to the injunctions of the sacred texts, fasting on auspicious occasions. When one passes urine or excrement, one must control one's mind and always face the north when doing this. Without worshipping the gods first, one should never set out. Elsewhere, it has been said that this also applies to preceptors, the aged, those who know about dharma and those who are learned. An extremely intelligent person never looks at a mirror that is dirty. He never has intercourse with a woman he does not know, or with one who is pregnant. One should not sleep with the head facing the north or the west. One should sleep with one's head facing the east or the south. One should not sleep on a bed that is broken or weak. One should not sleep on a bed without a cover, or lie down diagonally. One must not bathe naked and never in the night. After bathing, a learned person doesn't allow his body to be massaged. One should not smear unguents without having had a bath first. After having bathed, the garment must not be waved around.[293] A man must never wear wet garments. One should not take off the garlands. Nor should one wear them outside.[294] One should not wear garlands of red flowers. The learned person only uses white flowers. O lord! Avoid the lotus and the water lily. However, a red flower can be worn on the head, even if it is wild. A garland made of kanchana flowers is never censured. O lord of the earth! After bathing, one must always use wet unguents.[295] An intelligent man does not mix up his garments.[296] One should not wear a garment worn by another person. Nor should one wear a garment without a fringe.[297] O best among men! One must wear a different garment when one goes to bed. One must wear a different garment when making a journey. One must also wear a different garment when worshipping the gods. Otherwise, the gods are dishonoured.

'"An intelligent person uses separate unguents made out of *priyangu*, sandalwood, *bilva, tagara* and *kesara*.[298] When fasting, one must purify oneself through a bath and wear ornaments. On the days of the new moon and the full moon, one must always be a brahmachari. One must never eat food cooked by a woman who is going through her monthly period. One should not eat food that has lost its essence. Nor should one eat food, without first offering it to someone who is looking towards it. An intelligent person does not sit close to someone who is inferior or impure. Food that is forbidden by dharma should not even be eaten subsequently.[299] An excellent person who desires prosperity on earth does not eat *pippala, vata, shanashaka* and *udumbara*.[300] The meat of goats, cows and peacocks must be avoided. One must not eat dried meat, or meat that is stale. A learned person does not eat salt picked up with his hand.[301] In the night, curds and saktu must not be eaten and pointless meat[302] must also be avoided. One should not eat food with hair in it. Nor should one eat at the funeral ceremony of an enemy. One must be controlled. One must eat in the morning and in the evening and never in between. One must not talk while eating. While eating, one must not be clad in a single garment. One should never eat without being seated. One should never eat food off the bare ground. When one is seated and one is eating, one must not make a sound. O lord of the earth! Water and food must first be offered to a guest. An intelligent man who is not distracted only eats later. O lord of men! A person who eats food without first offering it to well-wishers, and to those who are entitled to eat in the same row,[303] is said to partake of virulent poison. After having water, payasam, ghee, curds, saktu and honey, the leftovers must never be offered to anyone. O tiger among men! One should never be suspicious of the food one is having. A person who desires his benefit must never drink curds after a meal. When one has finished eating, one must wash oneself, using water and the hand. One should sprinkle one's right toe with some water. One should then touch the head with the hand and controlled, touch fire. A man who is skilled in these techniques becomes superior to all his relatives. After eating, noticing where the breath of life is established, one should touch the navel with the palm of the hand. However, the hand must not be wet. The space between the base and the tip of the thumb is said to be brahma tirtha. The back of the little finger is said to be deva tirtha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The space between the thumb and the middle finger is used in offering oblations of water to the ancestors, following the ordinances.

'"One should not speak ill of others. One should never say anything that is disagreeable. A person who desires his own well-being is not enraged, even when he is provoked. One should not converse with outcasts. One should avoid their sight. One should not have any association with them. That is the way to attain greatness. One should not have sexual intercourse during the day. Nor should one have intercourse with a maiden or a harlot. One should not have intercourse with a woman who has not bathed. That is the way to attain greatness. Different parts of the body must be washed after different tasks. After doing this, one must drink water thrice and wash one's lips with water twice. That is the way for a man to be purified. After all the organs of action have been washed, a man must sprinkle himself with water thrice. After this, he can undertake the rites mentioned in the Vedas for ancestors and gods. O Kourava! Listen to the purification recommended for a brahmana. This is said to be beneficial before and after eating, and for everything else. In all kinds of purification, the brahma tirtha must be touched first. Aftere releasing excrement or after spitting, one must touch water and be purified. An aged relative or a friend who is poor must be invited to reside in one's own house. One will be praised and obtain a long lifespan. One is praised if pigeons, or male or female parrots, are kept in the house. They remove difficulties from the house and so do cockroaches. If fire-flies, vultures, wood pigeons and bees enter a house and seek shelter in it, an act of pacification must be performed. These are inauspicious signs and great-souled ones must seek to counter them. One must never reveal the secrets of great-souled people. One should not have intercourse with a woman who is prohibited, or with a king's wife or her friends. O Yudhishthira! One should not be intimate with physicians, children, the aged and servants. O Indra among kings! One must always take care of friends, brahmanas, those who have sought refuge and relatives. That is the way to obtain greatness. O lord of men! If a wise person desires his own benefit, he must always dwell in a house that has been constructed in consultation with architects and brahmanas. O king! One should not sleep during the two sandhyas. Nor should one attend to learning at those times. An intelligent person does not eat at these times. That is the way to obtain greatness. Rites for the ancestors should not be performed at night. Nor should one indulge in cosmetics after having taken food. If one desires one's own prosperity, one should not render offerings of water in the night. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At night, saktu must always be avoided. Leftovers of food and drink must not be taken. At night, one should not eat in excess. One should not kill birds, especially after having fed them.[304] An immensely wise person must marry a maiden who has been born in an extremely good lineage, has all the praiseworthy signs and has attained the right age. So that the lineage is established, one should have offspring. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons must be imparted learning and knowledge about the dharma of the family. The daughters who are born must be bestowed on sons born from good families. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The sons must be established, so that they can earn subsistence from what the family owns. Before worshipping the ancestors and the gods, the head must be washed. A man's funeral ceremony must not be performed during the nakshatra he has been born under. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Rites with a fire must not be performed during Proshthapada.[305] One must always avoid nakshatras that are said to be fierce. All of them must be shunned. O Indra among kings! When being shaved, one must be controlled and must face the east. One can also face the north. That is the way to obtain greatness. One must never criticize others, or even one's own self. O bull among the Bharata lineage! It has been said that censure is not in conformity with dharma.

'"O supreme among men! One should avoid a woman who is deficient in limb or is a maiden. One must avoid a woman who is descended from the same rishi's lineage.[306] One must avoid a woman who comes from the same lineage as one's mother.[307] One must also avoid an aged woman, one who has become an ascetic, or one who is devoted to her husband. One must avoid one who is excessively dark, or one who has a bad complexion. A learned person will not have intercourse with a woman whose birth is unknown, or with one who has inferior birth. One should also avoid marriage with a woman whose complexion is yellow, or one who has leprosy. O lord of men! Three kinds of women must be avoided—those with a family history of epilepsy, those who are inferior and those born in a family that has white leprosy. One should only marry a woman who possesses the auspicious marks, has all the praiseworthy signs and is pleasant and beautiful. O Yudhishthira! One should marry into a family that is superior or equal. If a person desires prosperity, he should not marry a woman who is inferior or an outcast. The fire must be carefully lit. All the rites spoken about in the Vedas and the Brahmana texts must be carefully observed. One must not injure women and one must always protect the wife. Jealousy reduces the lifespan. Therefore, jealousy must be avoided. Sleeping during the day reduces the lifespan. Sleeping after the sun has arisen also does that. Those who sleep in the morning and the evening are as impure as those who eat leftovers. Intercourse with someone else's wife reduces the lifespan. After having been shaved, one must not remain impure.[308] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One must make efforts not to do what is prohibited. One must not eat during the sandhyas. Nor should one eat food in which there is excrement. Before undertaking any rite, there are some tasks that must carefully be done. O lord of men! One must bathe and worship the brahmanas. One should also bathe before worshipping the gods and saluting the preceptor. Unless invited, one should not turn up at a sacrifice as a spectator. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If one goes there without an invitation, this reduces the lifespan. One should not travel alone, nor should one travel during the night. Before the western sandhya arrives, one must find shelter inside a house. O bull among men! One must always follow the commands of the mother, the father and the preceptor, without thinking about whether these are desirable or undesirable.

'"O lord of men! One must pay attention to Dhanurveda and to the Vedas. O Indra among kings! Pay attention to riding on elephants, riding on horses and riding on chariots. A person who pays attention to these, and to sacrifices, obtains happiness. He is invincible towards his enemies, his servants and his relatives. If he is engaged in protecting the subjects, he will never suffer a loss. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should know about the sacred texts of logic and about the sacred texts of sound. O lord of men! You should know about the sacred texts of the gandharvas and about the different kinds of arts. You should always hear about the Puranas, itihasa, different stories and about the conduct of great-souled ones. If the wife is not in the right season, one should not have intercourse with her, or invite her. A learned person has intercourse with her on the fourth day, after she has bathed, and in the night. Intercourse on the fifth day gives birth to a daughter. Intercourse on the sixth day gives birth to a son. A learned person follows these rules in having intercourse with the wife. Relatives, matrimonial allies and friends must always be honoured. To the best of one's capacity, sacrifices must be performed and many kinds of dakshina must be offered at these sacrifices. O lord of men! After this period is over, one moves on to the next period, leading up to death.[309] I have briefly recounted the techniques that lead to a long life. O

Yudhishthira! Anything that remains, which I have refrained from stating, must be learnt from aged ones. Conduct leads to prosperity. Conduct enhances fame. Conduct increases the lifespan. Conduct destroys anything that is inauspicious. Conduct is said to be superior to all the different kinds of knowledge. Conduct is said to be the power of dharma. Conduct increases the lifespan. I have thus told you about conduct. This is great in attaining heaven and obtaining benedictions. Brahma has said that one must exhibit compassion towards all the varnas."'

Chapter 1789(108)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O bull among the Bharata lineage! How should an elder brother behave towards a younger brother and how should a younger brother behave towards an older brother? Tell me this."

'Bhishma replied, "O son! You have always been the eldest and you must behave as an elder brother. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is the superior conduct that a preceptor exhibits towards a disciple. Even if the preceptor is unaccomplished in wisdom, the disciple is unable to abandon him. At times, the elder brother must be blind to the transgressions of the younger brothers. Even if he understands, he must pretend to be stupid. He must refrain from speaking to them about these transgressions. If it is evident that they[310] have different inclinations, men will try to create dissension. O Kounteya! Enemies are always tormented by prosperity and desire to bring about dissension. It is through the eldest that the lineage prospers and is also destroyed. If the eldest is inferior, the lineage is destroyed in every possible way. An eldest brother who injures a younger brother is no longer entitled to the share of the eldest brother and must be restrained by the king. There is no doubt that a deceitful man must go to the worlds meant for the wicked. It is said that the birth of such a person is fruitless, like the flower of a bamboo. When a wicked man is born, he creates all kinds of hardships for the family. He generates ill fame and all the fame vanishes. If a person performs perverse deeds, his other brothers should not give him his share. The eldest brother no longer needs to give such a younger brother a share in the ancestral property.

If riches are obtained by an elder brother through his own efforts, as a result of travels and without using the ancestral property in any way, then unless he so desires, a share in these need not be given to younger brothers. When the father has not ascended upwards,[311] if the brothers want the property to be divided up, the father should never have an unequal division among the sons. The eldest brother must not be ignored, regardless of whether he performs good or bad deeds. Even if the wife is wicked, her interests must be considered.[312] Those who are learned about dharma say that this is the best dharma. The *upadhyaya* is superior to ten *acharyas*.[313] The father is superior to ten upadhyayas. The mother is superior to ten fathers and even to the entire earth. There is no preceptor who is equal to the mother and all the respect is due to her. That is the reason why people think that the mother is the most superior. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When the father is dead, the elder brother is regarded as equal to the father. He is the one who provides a means of sustenance for everyone and protects them. All the younger brothers must bow down before him and follow his instructions. Like their father, he is the one who will provide them a means of subsistence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The body is created by the father and the mother. But the birth that the instructor gives[314] is true birth and is without old age and without death. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The elder sister is like a mother. The wife of the elder brother is also like that, since in infancy, the younger brother is suckled at her breast.”’

Chapter 1790(109)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “O grandfather. Among all the varnas, including the *mlechchhs*, there is a view that there should be fasting. But the reason for this is not known to us. We have heard that brahmanas and kshatriyas must follow rituals. O grandfather! But why should the others fast? O king! How did the ritual of fasting come to be applied to everyone? Tell me this. What kind of destination is obtained by those who are given to fasting? It is said that fasting leads to supreme benefits and that one should fast. O foremost among men! What are the fruits that are obtained through fasting? How is one freed from adharma and how does one obtain dharma? O supreme among the Bharata lineage! How does one obtain supreme heaven? O lord of men! What must be donated after fasting? Tell me about the dharma that leads to the obtaining of happiness and artha.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Kounteya knew about dharma and asked this. Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, who knew the truth about dharma, spoke these words to Dharma’s son. “O bull among the Bharata lineage! O great king! In ancient times, I had heard about this, about the rituals of fasting and about its best qualities. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I had asked Angiras, Prajapati’s son. Asked by me, that store of austerities told me the truth. I asked this question to the illustrious one who was generated from the fire. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He told me about the sacred rituals of fasting.

‘“Angiras said, ‘O descendant of the Kuru lineage! It is recommended that brahmanas and kshatriyas should fast for three nights. O bull among men! It has also been decreed that they can fast for two nights, or for a single night. Out of confusion, if vaishyas or shudras fast for three nights or two nights, they gain nothing out of this.[315] Without fasting, eating one-fourth of the normal food is recommended for vaishyas and shudras. Those who know about dharma have not recommended that they should fast for three nights. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person who knows about the brahman fasts on the fifth or sixth lunar day, or on the day of the full moon, he obtains the quality of forgiveness and beauty and becomes learned. If a person performs sacrifices and fasts either on the fifth or the sixth lunar day, eating on the other, he is never without offspring. He is wise and is never poor. He gets to feed brahmanas. O Kounteya! If a person fasts on the eighth lunar day, or on the fourteenth day of shuklapaksha, he is without disease and becomes valiant. If a person devotedly eats only one meal during the month of Margashirsha,[316] he is freed from disease and sins and gets to feed brahmanas. He is full of all kinds of benefit and he obtains all the herbs. He obtains crops through agriculture, a lot of riches and many sons are born to him. O Kounteya! If a person devotedly eats only one meal during the month of Pousha,[317] he becomes extremely fortunate and handsome and obtains a share of fame. If a person is devoted to his father and eats only one meal during the month of Magha,[318] he is reborn in a prosperous lineage and obtains greatness amidst his relatives. If a person eats only one meal during the month of Bhagadaiva,[319] he is loved by women and they are under his control. If a person is controlled and eats only one meal during the month of Chaitra,[320] he is reborn in a great family that has a wealth of gold, jewels and pearls. If a person conquers his senses and eats only one meal during the month of Vaishakha,[321] regardless of whether the person is a man or a woman, the person obtains superiority among all the relatives. If a person eats only one meal a day during the month of Jyeshthamula,[322] that person obtains the greatest and supreme prosperity, regardless of whether the birth is as a man or as a woman. Without any distraction, if a person eats only one meal during the month of Ashadha,[323] he is reborn with a lot of grain, a lot of riches and a lot of sons. If a person is controlled and eats only one meal during the month of Shravana,[324] he enhances his relatives and is consecrated by them as superior. If a man eats only one meal during the month of Proshthapada,[325] he swells with wealth and his prosperity remains stable. If a person eats only one meal a day during the month of Ashvayuja,[326] he obtains subjects and mounts and a large number of sons are born to him. If a man eats only one meal a month during the month of Kartika,[327] when he is reborn, he is brave, obtains great fame and has many wives. O tiger among men! I have recounted the benefits from fasting in different months.

'"'O king! Listen to the rules for the tithis. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person only eats when a paksha is over,[328] when he is reborn, he obtains a long life, has many sons and owns many cattle. If a person fasts for three nights in every month and does this for twelve years, he becomes an uncontested lord of the tribe,[329] with no rivals. O best among the Bharata lineage! These are the rules and the rites that should be followed for twelve years and you should also observe them. O king! If a person only eats in the morning and in the evening, and doesn't drink even water in between, if he is always devoted to non-violence, if he offers oblations into the fire, and if he does this every day for six years, there is no doubt that he will obtain success. Such a man obtains the fruits got through an agnishtoma sacrifice. He gets to dwell with apsaras, who delight him with their dancing and singing. He ascends on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of molten gold. He obtains greatness in Brahma's world for a full one thousand years. When those merits are exhausted, he returns[330] and obtains greatness. If a man takes only one meal a day for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of an atiratra sacrifice. He obtains greatness in heaven for ten thousand years. When those merits are exhausted, he returns and obtains greatness. If a person only eats on every fourth day for an entire year, if he is devoted to non-violence, if he is always truthful in speech and if he controls his senses, he obtains the fruits of a vajapeya sacrifice. He obtains greatness in heaven for thirty thousand years. O Kounteya! If a man only eats on every sixth day for an entire year, that man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. He travels on a celestial vehicle that is yoked to ruddy geese. He obtains delight in heaven for forty thousand years. O king! If a man remains alive through only eating on every eighth day for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a *gavamaya* sacrifice.[331] He travels on a celestial vehicle yoked to swans and cranes. He obtains delight in heaven for fifty thousand years. If a person only eats at the end of the fortnight and does this for a year, the illustrious Angiras has said that this is like fasting for six months. He resides in heaven for sixty thousand years. O lord of the earth! He is woken up from sleep with the sweet sounds of veenas, lutes and flutes. O son! O king! If a man eats only once a day for an entire year, drinking only water at the end of every month, he obtains the fruits of a vishvajit sacrifice. He travels on a celestial vehicle that is yoked to lions and tigers. He obtains delight in heaven for seventy thousand years. O tiger among men! Fasting for more than a month has not been recommended. O Partha! Those who know about dharma have spoken about these rules for fasting. If a person is not afflicted by disease and follows these indications for fasting, at every step, there is no doubt that he obtains the fruits of sacrifices. He travels to heaven in a celestial vehicle yoked to swans. That man finds delight with one hundred apsara maidens. O lord! If a person is not afflicted by disease and follows these indications for fasting, he obtains delight in heaven for one hundred thousand years. He is woken from his sleep to the sound of *kanchis* and *nupuras*.[332] O bull among the Bharata lineage! He travels on a celestial vehicle that is yoked to thousands of swans and is as radiant as the moon. He goes to a place surrounded by hundreds of women and finds delight there. There, he doesn’t have to look for something that will restore his strength when he is weak, or something that will heal his wound when he is wounded. He will not have to look for medications that will cure his disease, or something to pacify him when he is angry. He will not have to search for wealth to counter misery caused by a lack of riches. A person who seeks heaven will find happiness and delight there. He will be astride a celestial vehicle that is golden in complexion, one that can travel anywhere at will. Such a man will be ornamented with everything auspicious and will find pleasure, surrounded by hundreds of women. He will be well, successful in attaining his desires. He will be happy and devoid of sin. Through fasting and the eventual giving up of the body, such a man obtains these fruits. He will be on a celestial vehicle that is as radiant as gold, with a complexion that is like that of the rising sun. It will be decorated with lapis lazuli and there will be the sounds of veenas and drums. There will be flags and lamps and the sound of celestial bells. Followed by thousands of women, such a man will find happiness there. O Pandava! He will find delight in heaven for as many thousands of years as there are pores in his body.

'"'There is no sacred text that is superior to the Vedas. There is no preceptor who is equal to the mother. There is no acquisition superior to obtaining dharma. There is no austerity superior to fasting. There is nothing superior to, and more sacred than, brahmanas, on earth and in heaven. There is no task in austerities that is equal to fasting. It is through following the rites of fasting that the gods obtained heaven. It is through fasting that the rishis obtained supreme success. For one thousand celestial years, the intelligent Vishvamitra devotedly ate only one meal a day and obtained the status of becoming a brahmana. Chyavana, Jamadagni, Vasishtha, Goutama and Bhrigu—all of these maharshis were forgiving and obtained heaven.' This is what Angiras indicated to the maharshis earlier. A person who always follows what he has indicated, never confronts any misery. O Kounteya! These are the progressive ordinances that were laid down by maharshi Angiras. If a man listens to these all the time, he doesn't suffer from any sin. His mind is not overcome by wickedness and he is free from all kinds of confusion. He understands the sounds made by everything, whether it has been born from a womb or has not been born from a womb. That supreme among men obtains eternal fame."'

Chapter 1791(110)

‘Yudhishthira said, “The grandfather has spoken about the rules the great-souled ones have laid down for sacrifices. You have also spoken their true qualities, in this world and in the world hereafter. O grandfather! However, those who are poor cannot perform sacrifices. Sacrifices require many objects and an extensive list of articles. O grandfather! Only princes and kings are capable of undertaking these. Those without riches, alone and without help, are deprived of sacrifices. What are the rules that the poor can always follow to obtain these qualities, which are equal to the fruits of sacrifices? O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “For this, the fruits of fasting were spoken about by Angiras. O Yudhishthira! Those ordinances are equal to the fruits of sacrifices. Listen. There may be a person who is always devoted to non-violence, offering oblations to the fire and only eating in the morning and in the evening, not taking food or water during the intervening period. If he does this for six years, there is no doubt that he will be successful. Such a man obtains a celestial vehicle that is like molten gold in complexion. He resides amidst celestial women, with the sounds of singing and dancing. With a complexion like that of the fire, he dwells in Prajapati’s abode for a *padma* number of years.[333] If a person continuously eats one meal a day for three years and is always devoted to his lawful wife, he obtains the fruits of an agnishtoma sacrifice. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too only on the second day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, if he performs sacrifices at which he gives away a lot of gold and if he does this for one year, he is loved by Vasava. If such a person is truthful in speech, good in conduct, does not hate brahmanas, if he is self-restrained, forgiving and has conquered his anger, he attains the supreme destination. He is astride a sparkling white celestial vehicle, yoked to swans. He dwells with apsaras for two padma years. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every third day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, and if he does this for one year, then he obtains the supreme fruits of an atiratra sacrifice. Such a man obtains a celestial vehicle that is yoked to peacocks and swans. He always dwells in the world of the saptarshis, with the apsaras. The learned know that this residence is for three padma years. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every fourth day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, and if he does this for one year, then he obtains the supreme fruits of a vajapeya sacrifice. Such a man is astride a celestial vehicle, together with Indra's daughters. In Vasava's world, which extends up to the ocean, he always witnesses the king of the gods sporting. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every fifth day, if he always offers oblations to the fire, if he does this for one year, if he is not greedy, truthful in speech and does not injure brahmanas and if he is without jealousy and without sin, then he obtains the fruits of a *dvadashaha* sacrifice.[334] He is on a divine and celestial vehicle made out of molten gold, yoked to swans, which has the complexion of a garland of suns collected together. He resides in a white palace. He happily dwells there for fifty-one padma years.[335] If a sage only eats a meal on every sixth day, if he always offers oblations into the fire, if he does this for one year, if he performs ablutions three times a day and if he is without malice and observes brahmacharya, then he obtains the supreme fruits of a gavamaya sacrifice.[336] He is on a supreme vehicle meant for virtuous people. It is as radiant as a blazing fire and is drawn by swans and peacocks, decorated with pure gold. He sleeps and awakes on the laps of apsaras, to the sound of nupuras and girdles. He resides there for one thousand and three hundred crore, eighteen padma and two *pataka* years.[337] He obtains greatness in Brahma's world for as many years as there is hair on the skins of fifty thousand bears. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every seventh day, if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, if he protects his speech and practises brahmacharya and if he avoids agreeable pigments, liquor and meat, such a man goes to the world of the Maruts and to Indra's world. He is successful in all his objectives and is served by the daughters of the gods. Such a man obtains the fruits of sacrifices at which a lot of gold is given. He enjoys happiness in those worlds for an extremely large number of years. If a man is forgiving for an entire year, if he only eats on every eighth day, if he is always devoted to the tasks of the gods and if he offers oblations into the fire, he obtains the supreme fruits of a poundarika sacrifice. He ascends on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of lotuses. There is no doubt that he obtains dark, golden, fair and dark women, who are young and beautiful. For an entire year, if a person only eats on every ninth day and if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, then that man obtains the fruits of a horse sacrifice. Such a man obtains a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of a lotus flower. It blazes like the sun and the fire and is full of energy, like a divine garland. He is conveyed to the eternal firmament by Rudra's daughters. He obtains delight in those worlds for eighteen thousand years and another one crore, one thousand and one hundred years. For an entire year, if a person only eats on every ninth day and if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he obtains the supreme fruits of one thousand horse sacrifices. He dwells with Brahma's daughter in a region that is agreeable to the hearts of all beings. That man always finds delight with beautiful women. Some of them have the complexions of red lotuses. Others have the complexion of blue lotuses. He is in a supreme celestial vehicle meant for the virtuous. It has the complexion of the waves of the ocean. It goes around in circles, forwards and backwards, in movements that can't be detected. It resounds with the noise of colourful garlands made out of jewels and conch shells. It is decorated with lotuses, crystals and diamonds and there are well-constructed pillars and altars. He ascends this great vehicle, drawn by swans and cranes. If a person only eats ghee on every eleventh day, if he always offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, if he does not desire the wives of others, in thoughts and in deeds and if he does not utter a lie, even for the sake of his mother and his father, then a celestial vehicle presents itself before him. Astride that, he sees Svayambhu and the immensely strong Mahadeva on their celestial vehicles. He is conveyed there by beautiful maidens who are golden in complexion. He resides in that divine and beautiful world of heaven that belongs to Rudra. He dwells there for as many years as it takes for the yuga to be over, one hundred thousand crores and another hundreds of crores. Rudra is always worshipped by the gods and the danavas, who bow their heads down before him. Every day, he gets to see Rudra. If a person only eats ghee on every twelfth day and if he does this for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of all the sacrifices. He is on a celestial vehicle that has the radiance of the twelve Adityas. It is extremely expensive in form, with jewels, pearls and coral. Beautiful peacocks and ruddy geese sing melodiously there. O king! Surrounded by women, he always resides in an expensive palace that is in Brahma's world. The immensely fortunate rishi, Angiras, who knew about dharma, spoke about this. If a person only eats ghee on every thirteenth day and if he continuously does this for a year, he obtains the fruits of a sacrifice performed by the gods. That man is successful in obtaining a celestial vehicle that is named after the red lotus. It is adorned with pure gold and heaped high with gems. There are divine women there, adorned in celestial ornaments. The wind bears along beautiful, auspicious and divine fragrances. He dwells there for *shanku,* pataka, padma, *samudra*[338] and tens and tens of thousands of number of years, until the end of the yuga. He is always delighted with sounds from the singing of the gandharvas and the playing of drums and kettledrums. Celestial maidens give him pleasure. If a person only eats ghee on every fourteenth day and if he continuously does this for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a great sacrifice.[339] There are ornamented celestial maidens, whose beauty cannot be described and whose ages cannot be discerned. They wear armlets made out of polished and molten gold. They follow him on celestial vehicles. He wakes to the excellent sounds of swans and the jingle of nupuras and kanchis. That man resides in the abode of the celestial maidens. That man resides there for as many years as there are grains of sand in the Jahnavi. If a person eats only one meal a day, and that too at the end of a fortnight, if he conquers his senses and if he continuously offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, then he obtains the supreme fruits of one thousand royal sacrifices. He always ascends on a vehicle that is drawn by swans and peacocks. It is decorated with pure gold and is colourful with circles of jewels. There are beautiful and supreme women, adorned in divine ornaments. He ascends on that divine and celestial vehicle, with celestial qualities. It has one column, four gates and seven floors and is extremely auspicious. It is beautiful because of the sounds of singing and thousands of flags signifying victory. It is decorated with jewels, pearls and coral that have the tinge of lightning. With rhinoceroses and elephants as mounts, he resides there for thousands of years. If a person only eats ghee, and that too on every sixteenth day, and if he does this continuously for an entire year, he obtains the fruits of a sacrifice at which soma is offered. He always resides in the abode of Soma's daughters. He is worshipped astride a beautiful celestial vehicle that has all the objects of pleasure. It has sweet and pleasant fragrances and can go everywhere at will. He enjoys these fruits for fifty padmas and over and above that, another ten great kalpas.[340] Such a man dwells there for four *sagaras*.[341] If a person only eats ghee, and that too on every seventeenth day, if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he goes to the abodes of Varuna, Indra, Rudra, the Maruts and Ushanas, and to Brahma's world. He is on a supreme seat and is served by the daughters of the gods. He comprehends the form of the universe and gets to see the divine rishis known as the Bhurbhuvas. The daughters of the god of the gods offer him pleasure there. They are sweet and ornamented and can adopt thirty-two different types of forms. O lord! The brave one resides there for as long as the moon and the sun travel in the sky, subsisting on sudha and amrita. If a person eats one meal a day, that too on every eighteenth day, and if he does this for an entire year, he gets to see all the seven worlds. Chariots that thunder follow him at the rear. Beautiful and ornamented celestial maidens accompany him. He obtains great happiness astride a divine and excellent celestial vehicle that is yoked to tigers and lions and thunders like the clouds. With those maidens, he enjoys delight for one thousand kalpas. He subsists on the juice of sudha, which is like amrita. If a person eats only one meal a day on every nineteenth day and if he does this for an entire year, he gets to see all the seven worlds. He obtains an excellent region that is served by large numbers of apsaras, with the melodious songs of the gandharvas. He is on a celestial vehicle that is as radiant as the sun. Without any anxiety, he finds delight there, with those excellent women. He is handsome and wears divine garments. He is there for tens of thousands of years. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twentieth day, if he does this for an entire year, if he is truthful in speech and firm in his vows, if he is a brahmachari and does not eat flesh and if he is engaged in the welfare of all beings, he obtains the extensive and divine worlds of the Adityas. Gandharvas and apsaras, wearing divine garlands and fragrances, follow him on golden celestial vehicles. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-first day and if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he goes to the divine world of Ushanas, Shakra's world and those of the Ashvins and the Maruts. He always finds happiness there and experiences no misery there. He is astride a supreme celestial vehicle, served by the best of women. The lord sports with them. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-second day, if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, if he has fortitude and is always devoted to non-violence and if he is truthful in speech and without malice, he obtains the world of the Vasus, which are as radiant as the sun. He is astride a supreme celestial vehicle. He subsists on sudha and can go anywhere at will. Adorned with divine ornaments, he finds pleasure with the maidens of the gods. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-third day, if he does this for a year and if he is restrained in diet and has conquered his senses, he goes to the worlds of Vayu, Ushanas and Rudra. He can go wherever he wants. He can travel wherever he wants. He is worshipped by large numbers of apsaras. He is astride a supreme celestial vehicle and obtains many qualities. Adorned with divine ornaments, he finds pleasure with the maidens of the gods. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-fourth day and if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he obtains delight for a long period of time in the world named after the Adityas. He wears divine garlands and garments and is smeared with celestial fragrances. He is on a beautiful and golden celestial vehicle that is drawn by swans. He finds delight with the daughters of the gods for crores of years. If a man eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-fifth day and if he does this for an entire year, he is astride a magnificient vehicle that is yoked to lions and tigers and which thunders like the clouds. Celestial maidens follow him at the rear on chariots that are silvery, sparkling and auspicious. He is astride that extremely beautiful and celestial vehicle. Surrounded by hundreds of women, he resides there for one thousand kalpas. He subsists on the juice of sudha, which is like excellent amrita. If a man eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-sixth day, if he is controlled and restrained in diet for an entire year, if he has conquered his senses and is devoid of attachment and if he offers oblations into the fire, that immensely fortunate one obtains a region where he is worshipped by a large number of apsaras. He obtains the seven worlds of the Vasus and the Maruts. He is astride a celestial vehicle that is made out of crystal, ornamented with all the jewels. He finds delight, worshipped by the gandharvas and the apsaras. With celestial energy, he dwells there for two thousand divine yugas. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-seventh day and if he offers oblations into the fire for an entire year, he obtains great fruits and is worshipped in the world of the gods. He resides there, subsisting on amrita. He finds happiness and all his thirst is extinguished. O king! He conducts himself like the divine rishis and the rajarshis. He resides there, astride a supreme celestial vehicle, divine in his soul. He obtains pleasure and pride, served by beautiful women.

He dwells happily there for three thousand yugas and kalpas. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-eighth day, if he does this for an entire year and if he conquers his soul and conquers his senses, he obtains the pervasive fruits that lead to a conduct like that of the divine rishis. He obtains all the objects of pleasure. His sparkling energy is like that of the one with the one thousand rays.[342] The extremely radiant one finds delight with delicate women. Their breasts are large and their thighs are plump. They are adorned in celestial ornaments. He is astride a celestial vehicle that is as radiant as the sun and those beautiful women please him there. That celestial vehicle can go anywhere it wills. He resides there for one hundred thousand kalpas. If a person eats only one meal a day, that too on every twenty-ninth day and if he devotes himself to a vow of truth for an entire year, he obtains divine and auspicious worlds where he is worshipped by divine rishis and rajarshis. He travels on a celestial vehicle that has the complexion of the sun and the moon. It is made out of pure gold and is decorated with every kind of jewel. It is full of large numbers of apsaras and there are sounds of gandharvas singing. There are beautiful women who wear divine ornaments. They are sweet and bring delight to the mind. Proud and energetic, he finds pleasure with them. He obtains all the objects of pleasure and is full of energy. He is like the fire in his radiance. He is divine, with a celestial form, and his radiance is like that of the immortals. He goes to the worlds of the Vasus, the Maruts, the Sadhyas, the Ashvins and the Rudras, and to Brahma's world. If a person controls himself and eats only one meal a day, that too on every thirtieth day and if he does this for an entire year, he obtains Brahma's world. He subsists on the juice of sudha. He is handsome and agreeable to everyone. The energy and prosperity of his form are as radiant as that of the one with the rays.[343] He is adorned in divine garlands and garments and is smeared with celestial fragrances. He is immersed in yoga. He enjoys happiness and does not know any misery. He obtains greatness astride his celestial vehicle and shines with his own radiance. The daughters of the Rudras and the divine rishis always worship him. They are capable of assuming many kinds of beautiful forms. They exhibit many different kinds of love. They speak in many kinds of sweet voices. They can cause pleasure in many different kinds of ways. He is astride a celestial vehicle that is like a city. It is like the sun and has the complexion of the sun. The chariots that follow him are like the moon. Those that are ahead of him are like the clouds. Those to his right are red. Those below him form a blue circle. Those above him are colourful. He resides there and is worshipped. That intelligent one is said to reside in Brahma's world for as many years as is the number of raindrops that shower down on Jambudvipa in the course of one thousand years. As many drops descend from the sky during the monsoon, for that number of years he resides there, with the radiance of an immortal. If a person fasts for an entire month and does this for ten years, he obtains the supreme state of heaven in his own body and gets the status of a maharshi. Such a sage is self-controlled and has always conquered his anger. He has also triumphed over his penis and his stomach. He is restrained and offers oblations into the fire. He follows the rites during the two sandhyas. If a man follows these diverse rituals and eats at the end of a month, because of his good conduct, he is said to dwell in a place that is as stainless as the clouds. O king! Like the immortals, he goes to heaven in his own body. Following the ordinances, he obtains heaven and all that is auspicious. He enjoys every object of desire. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! These are the rituals for supreme sacrifices. I have progressively explained them to you and also the fruits obtained from fasting. O Partha! Poor men can thus obtain the fruits of sacrifices. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Having fasted, and devoted to worshipping gods and the brahmanas, they can go to the supreme destination. I have described in detail the rituals associated with fasting. Without distraction, the great-souled ones follow these rituals and purify themselves. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They turn their intelligence towards restraining insolence and hatred. They are steady and do not deviate. You should not have any doubt about this."'

Chapter 1792(111)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! Tell me about what is best among all the tirthas, the place where one can obtain supreme purification. You should explain this to me."

‘Bhishma replied, “The learned say that all the tirthas indeed possess qualities. Hear attentively about the tirtha that leads to purification. One should bathe in the tirtha of Manasa.[344] It is fathomless, sparkling and pure. It has truth as its water and fortitude as its lake. It is eternal and one must resort to its spirit. This tirtha leads to purification of the mind, uprightness, truthfulness, mildness, non-violence, lack of hatred towards all beings, self-control, tranquility, lack of ownership, lack of ego, freedom from opposite pairs of sentiments and lack of desire for possessions. One should seek alms at this tirtha of purification. A person who possesses this wealth of the truth and whose intelligence has no sense of pride is said to be the supreme tirtha. In looking for signs of purity, one should look for them everywhere. The *rajas*, tamas and sattva in their atmans have been washed. Without considerations of purity and impurity, they follow the tasks of their own paths. They are devoted to renouncing everything. They know everything and can see everything. Through purity, they cleanse their impure conduct. They are the tirthas of purification. A person who has sprinkled his body with water isn’t regarded as having bathed. A person who hasn’t bathed through self-control hasn’t really bathed. Purification isn’t outside, but inside. They do not look towards what has happened in the past. They do not desire objects and have no sense of ownership. Those who have no desire are said to be the ones who are supremely pure. Wisdom is the special purification of the body. Freedom from desire and tranquility of the mind is also like that. Purity of conduct and purity of the mind are the pure tirthas that yield supreme benefit. The purification that results from knowledge is said to be the supreme purification. A person who uses the lamp of his mind and the strength of knowledge about the brahman is known to bathe in the tirtha of Manasa. He is the *kshetrajna* who knows. A person who always possesses these sentiments of purification and is only devoted to these qualities is a man who is always pure. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have spoken about the tirthas that are in the body. Listen to the other sacred tirthas that exist on earth. Just as specific aspects of the body are said to be pure, there are sacred waters in parts of the earth too. By praying at these tirthas and bathing and offering oblations to the ancestors, one cleanses one’s sins. Those sacred tirthas enable one to obtain happiness in heaven. Because of association with virtuous people and because of the earth’s energy, those waters are extremely energetic and those regions are extremely auspicious. If one bathes in the sacred tirthas both of the mind and of the earth, one swiftly obtains success. Strength without exertion and exertion without strength are unable to ensure success in tasks. In that way, these two bring success together. Thus, both types, purification through the body and purification through tirthas, lead to success and represent supreme purification."'

Chapter 1793(112)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! O mighty-armed one! O one who knows about all the sacred texts! I wish to hear about the supreme cycle of life that mortals have to go through. O Indra among kings! O king! In a battle, what kind of conduct ensures that men obtain supreme heaven and what conveys them to hell? When people die and give up this body, which is like a piece of wood or a lump of earth, and go to other worlds, who are the ones who follow them?"

'Bhishma replied, "The illustrious and extremely intelligent Brihaspati is arriving here. Ask the extremely fortunate one about this eternal mystery. No one other than him is capable of explaining this. There is no speaker who is Brihaspati's equal."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Partha and Gangeya were thus conversing with each other. The illustrious Brihaspati, pure in his soul, arrived there. With Dhritarashtra at the forefront, the king arose. All of them, including the advisers, worshipped him in an unmatched way. Following the prescribed method, the king who was Dharma's son, excellent in his vows, approached the illustrious Brihaspati and asked him a question.

'Yudhishthira asked, "O illustrious one! O one who knows about every kind of dharma! O one who knows about all the sacred texts! Who is an aide to mortals? Is it the father, the mother, the son or the preceptor? When people die and give up the body, which is like a piece of wood or a lump of earth, and go to the world hereafter, who are the ones who follow them?"

‘Brihaspati replied, “O Indra among kings! A creature is born alone and is destroyed alone. He tides over hardships alone. He advances towards calamities alone. The father, the mother, the brother, the son, the preceptor, large numbers of kin and allies and large numbers of friends cannot be aides. When people die and give up this body, which is like a piece of wood or a lump of earth, those people remain for a while and then return. When the body is discarded, it is dharma alone that follows. Therefore, men must always serve dharma, which alone is the aide. A being who is full of dharma goes to supreme heaven. One who is full of adharma goes to hell. Therefore, a learned person always pursues artha that is obtained through dharma. In the world hereafter, dharma alone is the one who helps men. A man undertakes tasks because of greed, confusion, compassion and fear. Even if he is extremely learned, he is overcome by avarice and may do perverse deeds for the sake of others. Dharma, artha and kama—these are the three fruits of remaining alive. While avoiding adharma, one should try to obtain these three.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O illustrious one! I have heard the extremely beneficial words that you have spoken and they are full of dharma. My intelligence now turns to what happens to the existence of the body.[345] After death, what remains of the body is subtle and unmanifest.[346] It can no longer be seen through the eye. How can dharma follow it?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “Earth, wind, space, water, light as the fifth, the intelligence, the atman and dharma always look on. These elements are incessant witnesses for beings.[347] Together with these, dharma follows the being.[348] O immensely intelligent one! The body that consists of skin, bones, flesh, semen and blood is abandoned when life is given up. However, if the being is full of dharma, it obtains happiness in this world[349] or in the next. What will I tell you about next?”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O illustrious one! You have instructed me about how dharma follows. I wish to know about how semen originates.”

‘Brihaspati replied, “O lord of men! The deities that are in the body, earth, air, space, water, light, and the mind, eat the food. O Indra among kings! Those five elements[350] are satisfied. This is also true of the mind, as the sixth. O one who is pure in his soul! This leads to the great semen being generated. O

Partha! When a man and a woman unite, conception results from this. I have thus told you everything. What do you wish to hear next?"

'Yudhishthira said, "O illustrious one! You have explained how conception results. Explain to me how a being is born and delivered thereafter."

'Brihaspati replied, "When the *jivatman* unites with the body, it is overcome by the elements. When it is freed from the elements,[351] it again goes to its supreme destination. The jivatman unites with the elements.[352] The deities who are in the five elements see all the good and the bad deeds. What do you wish to hear about next?"

'Yudhishthira said, "O illustrious one! The jivatman casts aside the skin, bones and flesh and also abandons the elements. How can it then enjoy joy or misery?"

'Brihaspati replied, "The jivatman is united with dharma and swiftly unites with the semen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When it is time for women to ovulate, it unites and a birth results. A man must endure difficulties and misery in this cycle of life. Following Yama's orders, Yama's messengers endow the embryo with difficulties and the time of death. O king! From the time of birth in this world, a being has to enjoy the effects of his[353] own earlier deeds and the fruits of the dharma he has resorted to. Since his birth, if he has followed dharma to the best of his capacity, then when the man is reborn, he always enjoys happiness. However, if after following dharma, he has served the cause of adharma, the being will experience happiness first, followed by unhappiness subsequently. Full of adharma, the being will have to go to Yama's dominion. Born as inferior species, he will have to endure great hardships. A being is overcome by confusion. Listen attentively to the different kinds of birth that result from different kinds of acts. This has been spoken about in the sacred texts and in the historical accounts. Those from the mortal world have to go to Yama's terrible dominion. If a brahmana who has studied the four Vedas is overcome by confusion and accepts a gift from an outcast, he is reborn as a mule. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives as a mule for fifteen years. When he dies as a mule, he is reborn as a bull and lives in that state for seven years. When he dies as a bull, he is born as a Brahma-rakshasa. After living as a Brahma-rakshasa for three months, he is again born as a brahmana. A person[354] who acts as an officiating priest for an outcast is born as a worm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives in that state for fifteen years. When he is freed from his state of a worm, he is reborn as a donkey. He lives as a donkey for five years and then again as a pig for five years. He next lives as a dog for one year. After that, he is reborn as a man. There is no doubt that a stupid disciple who injures his preceptor has to go through cycles of inferior birth. O Indra among kings! He is first born as a dog, then as a predatory beast and finally as a mule. After going through these hardships after death, he is then reborn as a brahmana. If a disciple has wicked intentions towards his preceptor's wife, even in his mind, because of that adharma in his mind, he has to go through inferior transformations in this cycle of life. He is reborn as a dog and lives in that state for three years. When he dies, he is reborn as a worm. Having become a worm, he lives in that state for one year. When he dies, he gets his status of a brahmana back. If without any reason, a preceptor slays a disciple, who is like a son, because of that capricious act, he is born as a swan. O king! If a son disrespects his father or his mother, when he dies, the creature gives up his earlier form and is born as a donkey. He lives as a mule for ten months, as a dog for fourteen months and as a cat for seven months. After that, he is again born as human. O king! If a person abuses his mother or his father, he is reborn as a *sarika*.[355] If he strikes them, he is reborn as a tortoise. He lives as a tortoise for ten years and as a porcupine for three years. For six months, he is born as a snake. After that, he is reborn as human. If a person lives on food that a king provides, but overcome with delusion, injures his master, when he dies, he is born as a monkey. He is a monkey for ten years and a rat for three years. He then becomes a dog for six months. After that, he is reborn as human. A man who misappropriates what has been left to him in trust has to go through one hundred transformations in the cycle of life after reaching Yama's dominion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He is first born as a worm and lives in that state for fifteen years.[356] After that, when the evil deeds are exhausted, he is reborn as human. When a malicious man dies, he is born as a *sharngaka* bird. An evil-minded man who causes breach of trust is born as a fish. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After having been a fish for eight years, he is born as a deer. After having been a deer for four months, he is born as a goat. He dies after having lived as a goat for one year. The being is then born as a worm. It is after this that he is reborn as human. O great king! If a shameless and confused man whose senses are afflicted steals paddy, barley, sesamum, beans, pulses, mustard, chickpeas, groundnut, black gram, wheat, linseed and others kinds of grain, he is born as a rat. O great king! After he dies, he is reborn as a pig. O king! As soon as he is born as pig, he dies from disease. O king! Because of his foolish deeds, he is then born as a dog. After being in the state of a dog for five years, he is then reborn as human. If a person oppresses another person's wife, he is born as a wolf. After that, he is successively born as a dog, a jackal, a vulture, a snake, a heron and a stork. O king! If a confused and evil-minded person violates his brother's wife, he is born as a male cuckoo and lives in that state for a year. In that way, if a person is overcome by desire and violates a friend's wife, a preceptor's wife or a king's wife, when he dies, he is born as a pig. He spends five years as a pig and five years as a porcupine. He then becomes an ant for six months and a worm for one month. In addition, he has to spend cycles of birth as a worm. Spending one month in each life as a worm, he has to spend thirteen years as a worm. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn as human. O lord! If a person presents himself and because of confusion, causes obstructions at a marriage, an act of donations or a sacrifice, when he dies, he is born as a worm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives as a worm for fifteen years. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn as human. O king! If a person has already promised his daughter to someone, but bestows her on a second person instead, when he dies, he is born as a worm. O Yudhishthira! He lives in that form for thirteen years. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn as human. If a person eats without having completed the rites of oblation for the gods and the ancestors, he is born as a crow. After ten years as a crow, he is born as a cock. After being a snake for one month, he then becomes human. If a person disrespects his elder brother, who is like a father, when he dies, he is born as a crane. He lives as a crane for thirty-two months. When he dies, he becomes human again. A vrishala who has intercourse with a brahmana lady is born as a worm. However, if offspring have resulted, he is born as a rat. O king! When an ungrateful person dies and goes to Yama's dominion, he suffers extremely terrible afflictions in Yama's dominion. He is angrily struck there, with spears, clubs and tridents. He is flung into fierce pits of fire, forests that have swords as leaves, heated sands and *shalmali* trees that are covered with thorns. There are many other fires he has to face in Yama's dominion. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He confronts extremely sharp pain. He is then brought back into the cycle of life and is born as a worm. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He lives as a worm for fifteen years. After that, whenever he is born, he dies as a child. He goes through one hundred different births as different kinds of creatures. Having gone through many such cycles of existence, he is born as inferior species. After dying, he faces hardships for a very large number of years. He is then born as a senseless tortoise. Because of desire for riches or because of enmity, if a person who is armed kills a man who is unarmed, he is worst among men. When he dies, he is born as a mule. He lives as a mule for two years and is slain through the use of weapons. When he dies, he is born as a deer that is always anxious. After one year as a deer, he is slain through the use of weapons. After having died as a deer, he is born as a fish that lives for four months and is slain through the use of a net. He is then born as a predatory beast. After ten years as a predatory beast, he becomes a leopard for five years. Goaded by the progress of time, he then confronts his death. When the adharma has been extinguished, he is reborn in human form. If an evil-minded person kills a woman, he faces many hardships when he goes to Yama's dominion. He goes through the cycle of life twenty times. O great king! After that, he is born as a worm. After twenty years as a worm, he is born as human. If a man steals food, he is born as a bee. He spends many months in the company of bees. When the sin has been extinguished, he becomes human again. If a man steals a musical instrument, he is born as a mosquito. If a man steals food mixed with sesamum cakes, he is born as a fierce rat, the size of the rat depending on how much was stolen. A person who steals salt is born as a cricket. A person who steals curd is born as a stork. A person who steals fish is born as an unclean frog. A person who steals water is born as a crane. A person who steals oil is born as a cockroach. An evil-minded person who steals honey is born as a gnat. An evil-minded person who steals iron is born as a crow. A person who steals payasam becomes a partridge. A person who steals cakes is born as an owl. A person who steals fruits, roots and cakes is born as an ant. An evil-minded person who steals brass is born as a pigeon. A person who steals a silver vessel is born as a dove. A person who steals a golden vessel is born as a worm. When a person who steals cotton dies, he is born as a heron. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a man steals jute, he becomes a sheep. If a person steals a woolen garment, he is born as a rabbit. If a man steals dyes, when he dies, he is born as a peacock. If a person steals red garments, he is born as a pheasant. O king! Overcome by greed, if a man steals pigments and fragrances, he is born as a mole. If a man violates trust and misappropriates what has been left with him, that man loses his lifespan and is born as a fish. After he dies as a fish, he is born as a man. However, though he becomes a man, he only has a short lifespan. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who perform wicked deeds are born as inferior species. They do not know any of the dharma that is there in their own souls. Having performed wicked deeds and having always ignored the vows, they suffer from disease and from joy and misery. There is no doubt that they are born as mlechchhas one should not associate with. Those are men who are wicked in conduct and are overcome by avarice and confusion. There are also men who avoid sin from the time they are born. They are handsome and prosperous and do not suffer from disease. Wicked women are also thought to go through the same kinds of progressions. They are born as the wives of the creatures that have been mentioned. I have recounted all the sins that come from stealing the possessions of others. O unblemished one! I have told you about this briefly. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In the course of some other conversation, you will hear about this again. O great king! In ancient times, Brahma told me about this. I asked him about it and he told me the truth, in the midst of the divine rishis. I have told you everything, just as it had been described to me. O great king! Having heard this, always turn your mind towards dharma and act accordingly.”’

Chapter 1794(113)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O brahmana! O unblemished one! You have spoken to me about the progress of adharma. O supreme among eloquent ones! I wish to hear about the progress of dharma. Having performed wicked deeds, how can one go to the auspicious destination?”

‘Brihaspati replied, “Having performed wicked deeds, one comes under the subjugation of adharma. Because the mind is perverse, one goes to hell. However, having performed adharma out of delusion, a person may be tormented by this. If he turns his mind towards meditation, he does not have to suffer on account of those wicked deeds. If a man controls his mind and properly follows the dharma that has been spoken about, he is accordingly freed from his earlier anxieties. This is like a snake casting aside its skin. If one controls oneself, immerses one’s mind in meditation and gives away many kinds of gifts, one attains a desirable end. O Yudhishthira! I will speak about the objects that should be given. Having performed such tasks, a man becomes united with dharma. Among all kinds of donations, food is said to be the best. An upright person who desires dharma should first donate food. Food provides life to men and other creatures are also generated from it. All the worlds are established on food. That is how food manifests itself. The gods, the rishis, the ancestors and men praise food. It is by giving food that Koushika went to heaven. Cheerfully, excellent food that has been lawfully obtained must be given to brahmanas who are devoted to studying. When food is cheerfully given and it is eaten by one thousand brahmanas, the donor is not born as inferior species. O bull among men! If a man feeds ten thousand brahmanas, he is said to be always freed from all adharma and sin. If a brahmana follows the Vedas, invites another brahmana who is devoted to studying and gives him food as alms, he obtains happiness in this world. This is also true of a kshatriya who doesn’t injure brahmanas, always protects them according to law, and gives them food. O one with dharma in your soul! O Pandava! If a person is restrained and controlled and gives it to brahmanas who are aged in their knowledge of the Vedas, all his evil deeds are destroyed. If a vaishya gives a one-sixth share of his agricultural produce to brahmanas, he is purified and freed from his sins. A shudra can obtain food through hard labour, with risk to his life. If he gives this to brahmanas, he is cleansed and freed from sin. If a person takes food that he has grown, or has obtained through his own strength, without causing injury or without being deceitful, and gives it to brahmanas, he does not have to face any hardships. If a man is devoid of greed and gives lawfully earned food to brahmanas who are aged in their knowledge of the Vedas, he is freed from sin. Food leads to energy in this world. A man who donates it becomes energetic. By resorting to this path, followed by the virtuous, one is freed from all sins. The learned travel this path of making gifts. This is the eternal dharma of giving what is life itself. In every kind of situation, it is a man's task to always give lawfully earned food to worthy recipients. Food leads to the ultimate destination. If a man donates food, he does not have to face hardships. Therefore, avoiding what is unlawful, food must be given. A householder must always eat after food has been offered to brahmanas first. If a man does not donate food on a certain day, that day becomes sterile. O king! If a man feeds one thousand brahmanas who know about the Vedas and right policy, are learned about dharma and also know about itihasa, then he does not go to hell, or undergo this terrible cycle of life. After death, he obtains the fruits that lead to the satisfaction of all the objects of desire. Without anxiety, in this way, he enjoys happiness and delight. He becomes handsome, famous and prosperous. I have thus told you everything about the great fruits from the donation of food. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This kind of gift is the foundation of dharma."'

Chapter 1795(114)

'Yudhishthira asked, "What is best for a man—non-violence, the rites of the Vedas, meditation, controlling the senses, austerities or service to the preceptor?"

'Brihaspati replied, "All of these are different gates to dharma. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I will talk about all six. Listen. I will tell you about what is supreme and best for creatures. If a man resorts to the dharma of non-violence, this man always restrains the three sins that characterize all creatures, desire, anger, and obtains success.[357] If a person desires happiness for himself, he should be non-violent towards beings and should not use the rod of chastisement against them. After death, he will then be happy. If a man looks upon all creatures as his own self, controls the rod and conquers his anger, he obtains happiness after death. He sees himself in all beings and all beings in his own self. Even the gods are confused in trying to follow his footsteps.[358] One should never do something to others that one would regard as an injury to one’s own self. In brief, this is dharma. Anything else is succumbing to desire. In refusing gifts, judging happiness and misery, the agreeable and the disagreeable, a man who desires success must use the yardstick of how it would affect him.[359] If one injures another person, one is in turn injured by that other person. In that way, if one loves another person, one is in turn loved by that other person. For the world of the living, this is the yardstick of dharma that has been instructed by the accomplished.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The preceptor of the gods said this to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. While they looked on, the intelligent one then went to heaven.’

Chapter 1796(115)

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The grandfather was lying down on the bed of arrows. After this, the immensely energetic King Yudhishthira again asked the supreme among eloquent ones. “O immensely intelligent one! The rishis, the brahmanas and the gods cite the proofs laid down in the Vedas and praise the dharma that has signs of non-violence. O supreme among kings! However, if a man has indulged in violence, in deeds, words and thoughts, how can he be freed from the misery?”

‘Bhishma replied, “O slayer of enemies! Those who have spoken about the brahman have instructed that there are four kinds of non-violence and deviation from even one of these is not acceptable. All quadrupeds are incapable of standing on three legs. O protector of the earth! In that way, it is said that one cannot stand on only three. When others follow in the footsteps of an elephant, all their footprints are lost in the footprints left by the elephant. In that way, in this world, non-violence has been instructed as the supreme dharma. Creatures become attached to violence in deeds, words and thoughts. It must first be given up in the mind and then in words and deeds. Those who have spoken about the brahman have spoken about these three kinds of reasons. The sins are established in thoughts, words and taste.[360] Learned ones who are devoted to austerities do not eat flesh. O king! I will tell you about the sins attached to the eating of meat. Listen to me. Those who senselessly eat it, eat what is like the flesh of their own son. A son is born through the union of the mother and the father. In that way, the juices are united with the tongue and lead to discrimination. That is the reason the sacred texts say that taste and attachment must be controlled.[361] Whether it is cooked well or not cooked well, whether there is salt in it or no salt in it, once one discriminates, those sentiments constrict the consciousness. After listening to the sounds of drums, conch shells and stringed musical instruments, how can those evil men eat meat? Having tasted the juices, there are those who praise meat and the fruits it leads to, describing it as inconceivable, unimaginable and impossible to describe. These are sinful acts and lead to consequent fruits. There are many virtuous people who protected the flesh of others and gave up their own flesh and their own lives instead. They went to heaven. O great king! These are the four traits of non-violent conduct. What I have instructed you has the essence of all dharma and artha."'

Chapter 1797(116)

'Yudhishthira said, "You have said several times that non-violence is supreme dharma. However, you have also said that in funeral ceremonies, the ancestors desire meat. Earlier, you have spoken about funeral rites where many different kinds of meat are offered. Without causing injury or killing, how can meat be obtained? In giving up meat, there is thus a doubt that is created about dharma. What are the sins from eating meat and what are the qualities associated with not eating it? What if one eats something that has been seized or killed by another person? What if a man buys and eats meat from an animal that has been killed by some other person? I wish to determine the nature of eternal dharma. How does one obtain a long lifespan? How does one become spirited? How does one obtain faultless limbs? How is prosperity obtained?"

'Bhishma replied, "O king! O bull among the Kuru lineage! There is adharma attached to eating meat. Listen to the truth about the excellent ordinances that have been stated on this. It has been said that those who desire beauty, unblemished limbs, long lives, intelligence, spirit and strength and wish to cleanse their souls should abandon violence. O bull among the Kuru lineage! There have been many conversations between the rishis on this. O Yudhishthira! Listen to their views. O Yudhishthira! Every month, if a person is careful in his vows and avoids liquor and meat, he does what is equal to performing a horse sacrifice. O king! The learned ones, the saptarshis, the Valakhilyas and the rishis who subsist on air praise absention from eating meat. If a person does not eat meat, if he does not kill animals and does not cause others to kill him, he is a friend to all creatures. Svayambhuva Manu said this. Such a person is not oppressed by any creature and all beings trust him. A person who abandons meat is always revered by the virtuous. Narada, the one with dharma in his soul, has said that a person who desires to enhance his own flesh on the basis of the flesh of others, always faces hardships. Brihaspati has said that a person who abstains from liquor and meat is like an ascetic who donates and performs sacrifices. It is my view that two kinds of people are equal—those who perform a horse sacrifice every month for one hundred years and those who do not eat meat. A person who abandons liquor and meat is like one who always performs sacrifices, always gives donations and is a perennial ascetic. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If a person eats meat, but subsequently gives it up, he is like one who performs all the sacrifices indicated in all the Vedas. After one has savoured its taste, it is extremely difficult to give up meat. This act of granting life and freedom from fear to all beings is superior to performing all the vows indicated in the four.[362] There is no doubt that a learned person who grants the dakshina of freedom from fear to all beings is a donor who grants life in this world. This is the supreme dharma praised by the learned. Those who desire their benefit see that the lives of all other beings are like their own lives. An intelligent, virtuous and great-souled person who desires his own prosperity must look upon all others as one's own self. Even the learned are scared of death. Why should one forcibly slay those who are trying to save their own lives? They are without disease and without sin. In trying to remain alive, why should one be wicked and subsist on their flesh? O great king! That is the reason meat must be avoided. This is the supreme aspect of dharma, heaven and joy. Non-violence is supreme dharma. Non-violence is the greatest austerity. Non-violence is supreme truth. Dharma flows from this. Meat cannot be obtained from grass, wood or stone. Meat is obtained by slaying animals. That is the sin attached to eating it. The gods love truth and uprightness and subsist on svaha, svadha and amrita. Know that predatory beasts and rakshasas are devoted to deceit and falsehood. O king! A person who does not eat meat does not face any fear in terrible and desolate spots, in deserted regions that are difficult of access, at crossroads and in assembly halls, during night and day and during the two sandhyas. If one is not an eater, then one is not a slayer either. A man becomes a slayer and slays because of food. Therefore, if one does not eat, one withdraws from violence too. It is because of food that there is violence towards deer and other animals. O immensely radiant one! This violence goes on because of devouring. Therefore, a person who desires his own prosperity must abstain from meat. Terrible people who cause violence to creatures will never find protectors. They will always be oppressed by creatures, like deer by beasts of prey. Men are attached to adharma because of greed, confusion of the intelligence, in search of strength and vigour and because of association with the wicked. If a person seeks to enhance his own flesh by eating the flesh of others, he always dwells in anxiety and is reborn as inferior species. The supreme rishis have always said that abstention from eating meat leads to prosperity, fame, long lives, heaven and great benedictions. O Kounteya! I heard everything about this earlier. Markandeya spoke about the sins associated with eating meat. If a person eats the flesh of animals that seek to remain alive, whether he slays them or whether they are already dead,[363] it is as if he himself is the slayer. There are three kinds of slaughter—killing by using wealth to purchase, killing by eating and directly killing by binding and slaying. Because of sinful sentiments, men eat food that is not sanctioned. Even if one sanctions slaughter, one is tainted with that sin. If one does not eat meat and is compassionate towards all creatures, one is not oppressed by any being. One obtains a long life. One is without disease and happy. The sacred texts have said that not eating meat is superior dharma to donating gold, donating cattle and donating land.

'"One should never eat futile meat that has not been offered in sacrifices, without following the rites. There is no doubt that a man who eats this will go to hell. Know that if one eats meat that has been offered at sacrifices or has been killed for the sake of brahmanas, there is a little bit of sin. However, by acting in a contrary way, one is touched by sin. A person who kills animals for someone else to eat is the worst among men. But the greater sin is attached to the eater, not to the killer. If an ignorant person wishes to follow the path of the rites and sacrifices laid down in the sacred texts, but nevertheless kills animals in a desire for their flesh, such a man goes to hell. If a man eats meat but subsequently refrains from it, he withdraws from sin and pursues extremely great dharma. One who brings the meat, one who sanctions it, one who actually kills, one who buys and sells, one who cooks and one who eats—all of these are killers. I will now tell you about the proofs that have been laid down by the ordainer himself. The ancient rishis indicated their nature in the Vedas. O tiger among kings! It has been said that the dharma that is in the nature of pravritti, with a desire for obtaining the fruits, is not for those who are in pursuit of moksha. An oblation that has been sanctified with the mantras, even if it is in the form of meat that has been slaughtered, is pure. This is in accordance with the proofs cited in the Vedas and is used in rites for the ancestors. Manu has said that anything else is futile meat and must not be eaten. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O king! Anything else is the behaviour like that of a rakshasa. It does not lead to heaven or fame. A man must not eat meat that has not been sanctioned by those earlier ordinances. If a man desires to save himself from all kinds of extreme hardships, he must avoid the flesh of creatures in every form. It has been heard that in an earlier kalpa, men obtained the auspicious worlds by performing sacrifices with grain, regarding this as equivalent to animals. In ancient times, the rishis had a doubt and went and asked Vasu, the king of the Chedis. O lord! Though he knew that meat should not be eaten, he said that it could be eaten. Because of this, that king fell down from the sky onto the ground. When he again repeated his view, he penetrated into the nether regions of the earth. For the welfare of the subjects, the great-souled Agastya used the power of his austerities to dedicate deer and other wild animals to all the gods. Therefore, the rites do not suffer if these are not offered to the ancestors and the gods. The ancestors are delighted, even if their satisfaction is not through meat. O Indra among kings! O unblemished one! Listen to what I am recounting. O lord of men! There are all kinds of happiness associated with not eating meat. It is my view that if a person torments himself through extremely difficult austerities for one hundred years and if a person gives up meat, both of them are equal. O lord of men! Especially during shuklapaksha in the month of Koumudi,[364] one must avoid all kinds of meat. That is ordained by dharma. Meat must also be avoided during the four months of the monsoon. A person will then obtain four kinds of fortune—deeds, a long life, fame and strength. If, in addition, a person does not eat any kind of meat for several months, he overcomes all types of misery. He is happy and possesses good health. If a person abstains from meat for several months or pakshas at a stretch, thus refraining from violence, Brahma's world is ordained for him. O Partha! Kings who regarded all beings as their own selves and knew about the supremely desired objective, avoided meat during the month of Koumudi and the paksha mentioned. O Indra among kings! These were Nabhaga, Ambarisha, the great-souled Gaya, Ayu, Anaranya, Dilipa, Raghu, Puru, Kartavirya, Aniruddha, Nahusha, Yayati, Nriga, Vishvagshvena, Shashabindu, Yuvanashva, Shibi, the son of Ushinara, Shvyenachitra, Somaka, Vrika, Raivata, Rantideva, Vasu, Srinjaya, Dushsanta, Karusha, Rama, Alarka, Nala, Virupashva, Nimi, the intelligent Janaka, Sila, Prithu, Virasena, Ikshvaku, Shambhu, Shveta, Sagara and many others. O Indra among kings! In earlier times, they did not eat meat during the bright part of the month of Koumudi and went to heaven.[365] Blazing in their prosperity, they remained in Brahma's world. They were worshipped and revered by gandharvas and thousands of women. Thus, non-violence is supreme dharma and is associated with all the auspicious signs. Great-souled ones who act accordingly reside in the vault of heaven. There are those who are devoted to dharma and always avoid liquor and meat. Since birth, they avoid all kinds of liquor and they are said to be sages. There is no doubt that they become superior to all their kin. They are freed from all kinds of calamities that present themselves. They are freed when they are bound down. They are freed from affliction and disease. They are freed from misery and grief. Such a man is always handsome and does not have to be born as inferior species. O best among the Kuru lineage! He is intelligent and obtains great fame. O king! I have thus spoken to you about the avoidance of meat and also about the ordinances of pravritti and *nivritti* laid down by the rishis."'

Chapter 1798(117)

‘Yudhishthira said, “In this world, men are extremely desirous of flesh and give up many other kinds of food instead. They behave like many rakshasas. There are many kinds of cakes and different forms of vegetables, full of juices and succulent. But they do not desire them as much as they crave for meat. My mind is confused because of this. I think that the taste associated with meat must be superior. O bull among men! I wish to hear about the qualities that are associated with not eating meat and about the sins associated with eating it. O one who knows about dharma! You know the truth about everything. Tell me about what is in conformity with dharma. What should be eaten? What should not be eaten? Tell me everything.”

‘Bhishma replied, “O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you have said. There is nothing on earth that is superior to meat in taste. There is nothing superior to meat for those who are wounded, weak, afflicted, exhausted from travels and those who are addicted to sexual desire. It instantly enhances the life force and provides the best means of sustenance. O scorcher of enemies! There is no food that is superior to meat. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! However, there are many qualities associated with giving it up and they manifest themselves in men. Listen to this attentively. If there is a man who desires to enhance his own flesh by resorting to the flesh of others, there is no one who is inferior or more cruel than him. In this world, there is nothing as loved as one’s own life. Therefore, a man must act towards others, as he would towards his own self. O son! There is no doubt that flesh originates in semen. That is the reason it is said that there are great sins in eating and killing it. Learned ones who know about the Vedas have said that non-violence is a characteristic of dharma. Therefore, one should resort to non-violence. A man must act towards others as he would towards his own self. It has been said that slaughtered animals are oblations offered to the ancestors and the gods in sacrifices. If this is in accordance with the injunctions of the Vedas, then there can be no sin attached to eating it. It has been heard in the sacred texts that animals were created for the purpose of sacrifices. Those who do not follow these ordinances are said to be rakshasas. Listen to the ordinances that have been laid down for kshatriyas. If they eat meat that has been obtained through their own valour, they do not incur any sin. All deer and wild animals are said to have been dedicated to all the gods. O king! This was done by Agastya in ancient times and that is the reason hunting is praised. There can be no hunting without being prepared to give up one's own life. O king! There is thus no difference in form between the one who is killing and the one who is being killed. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! That is the reason all the rajarshis went on hunts. The learned say that this does not lead to their being tainted by any sin. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! In this world and in the next world, there is nothing superior to compassion towards all creatures. A man who is compassionate does not suffer from any fear. In this world and in the next world, those who are compassionate are ascetics. Those who are compassionate grant all creatures freedom from fear. We have heard that no being causes them fear either. Whether he is wounded, fallen down, prostrate, afflicted or hurt, whether it is plain or uneven terrain, all creatures protect him. Snakes, animals, pishachas and rakshasas do not strike him. Even if there is an occasion for fear, he is freed and he frees others too. There has not been, nor will there be, any donation that is superior to the granting of life. It is certain that there is nothing more loved than one's own life. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Causing injury to any being is thus nothing but another name for death. When the time for death arrives, all creatures tremble. In this ocean of life, creatures are whirled around and agitated through conception, birth, old age, misery and death. While dwelling in the womb, they are cooked in juices that are astringent, acidic and bitter, with the extremely terrible touch of urine, phlegm and excrement. In that stage of an embryo, they are helpless and are repeatedly struck. Because they desire flesh, in that helpless state, they are seen to be brought down. Having been born as different kinds of species, they are cooked in the hell known as Kumbhipaka.[366] Being born and killed, a creature is repeatedly whirled around. When one arrives on earth, there is nothing as loved as one's own life. Therefore, one should be compassionate towards all beings and look upon them as one's own self. O king! If a person does not eat any kind of flesh from the moment of his birth, there is no doubt that he obtains an extensive spot in heaven. In a desire to remain alive, if a person eats the flesh of other creatures, there is no doubt that those other creatures will devour him. 'Whomever I eat, that creature will eat me.'[367] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Know that it is my view that this is how the word for meat has evolved. A slayer is always killed. A person who binds is bound. O king! A person who injures is injured. One who hates faces hatred. Whatever deeds are performed in whatever kind of body, in exactly that kind of body are the fruits enjoyed.[368] Non-violence is supreme dharma. Non-violence is supreme self-control. Non-violence is supreme donation. Non-violence is supreme austerity. Non-violence is supreme sacrifice. Non-violence is supreme strength. Non-violence is supreme friendship. Non-violence is supreme happiness. Non-violence is supreme truth. Non-violence is supreme learning. Among donations made at all the sacrifices, bathing at all the tirthas and the fruits of all kinds of donations, there is nothing that is equal to non-violence. The austerities of a person who is non-violent are inexhaustible. A non-violent person is like one who always performs sacrifices. A person who is non-violent towards all beings is like their mother and their father. O bull among the Kuru lineage! These are the many fruits of non-violence. I am incapable of speaking about all its qualities, even if I were to speak for one hundred years."'

Chapter 1799 (118)

'Yudhishthira said, "Whether they desired it, or whether they did not desire it, there are those who were slain in this great battle. O grandfather! What species will they be born as? In this great battle, men gave up their lives amidst hardships. O one who knows about dharma! I know that the giving up of life is an extremely difficult task. It is my view that you know everything. Why is that the case, regardless of whether there is prosperity or adversity, or whether there is good or bad?"

'Bhishma replied, "O lord of the earth! Whether there is prosperity or adversity, whether there is good or bad, creatures born in this cycle of life follow a certain conduct. They exhibit a certain sentiment. Listen to the reason. O Yudhishthira! The question that you have asked me is an extremely appropriate one. O king! In this connection, there is an ancient account. O Yudhishthira! This is a conversation between Dvaipayana and a worm. In ancient times the brahmana Krishna Dvaipayana, the essence of the brahman, was roaming around. He saw a worm swiftly advancing along a road that was meant for carts. He knew about the progress of all creatures and could speak the languages of all embodied beings. The one who knew everything and could see everything spoke to the worm in these words. ‘O worm! You seem to be frightened and I can see that you are hurrying? Tell me. Why are you running? Where has this fear come from?’

‘“The worm replied, ‘My fear results from having heard the great roar of a cart. O immensely intelligent one! That terrible sound is approaching. I have heard it. It will kill me. That is the reason I am making efforts. I can also hear the sighs of the bulls as they are being goaded. O lord! They are bearing a great load and I can hear that sound approaching. I can hear many kinds of sounds being made by men who are urging the mounts. For those who have been born as worms, these kinds of sounds are intolerable. I face an extremely terrible fear and that is the reason I am making efforts. Life is extremely difficult to get and all creatures are miserable at the prospect of death. I am therefore running away in fear. From a state of happiness, I do not wish to confront a state of unhappiness.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Thus addressed, he[369] replied, ‘O worm! What will bring you happiness? Since you have been born as inferior species, I think that death should bring you happiness. O worm! You cannot experience sound, touch, taste, smell, speech and many kinds of pleasure. For you, there can be nothing better than death.’

‘“The worm replied, ‘Whatever be the state, a living being is devoted to that state. O immensely wise one! I sense that this represents my happiness and that is the reason I wish to remain alive. Everything that I value results from my present body. Men and those who are inferior in species differ in what brings them pleasure. In earlier times, I was also a man. I was an extremely rich shudra. I was not a brahmana. I was cruel and wicked in the means I used to earn subsistence. I was harsh in speech. I was deceitful and unwise. I hated everything in the universe. I violated agreements in pursuit of riches. I was devoted to appropriating the possessions of others. In my household, I did not tend to servants and guests. I was malicious and cruel and desired to keep the tasty objects for myself. I did not faithfully offer food at sacrifices meant for the gods and the ancestors. I did not desire to give any riches. Nor did I give any food. I did not protect frightened people who sought refuge and sought protection with me. I violently cast aside those who were terrified. I did not save those who were frightened. On seeing the prosperity of other men, their riches, grain, beloved wives, vehicles and wonderful houses, I indulged in futile acts of jealousy. I was jealous on seeing the prosperity of others and I desired that they might suffer. Following my own caprices, I sought to destroy the three objectives[370] of others. Earlier, I engaged in these acts, driven by the many qualities of cruelty. Remembering that, I am tormented, just as one is at having to give up a beloved son. I have not known the fruits of any auspicious deeds I performed. But I worshipped my aged mother and on one occasion, I worshipped a brahmana, when he came to my house. He possessed the qualities of good conduct. Since I worshipped that brahmana as a guest, I have not lost my memory. It is evident that good act has led to this bit of happiness. O one rich in austerities! I wish to hear from you the truth about what will be best for me.'"'

Chapter 1800 (119)

"'Vyasa said, 'Though you have been born as inferior species, V it is because of that good deed that you have not been confused. O worm! It is because of that deed that you are not confused and have met me. Now that you have met me, I can save you through the strength of my austerities. There is no other strength that is stronger than the strength of austerities. O worm! I know that you have been born as a worm because of your own wicked deeds. However, if you wish to base yourself on dharma, resort to what is supreme dharma. Because of their deeds, gods also have to come down to earth, or are born as inferior species. Among men, there are the qualities of dharma, kama and artha. A learned person desires speech, intelligence, hands and feet. What can be worse for a man than to resort to this evil kind of life?[371] As long as one is alive on this earth, a foremost brahmana is one who worships the moon and the sun and speaks about the auspicious accounts. O worm! You will become that. You will be freed and will enjoy all those qualities of creatures. I will convey you to that status of being a brahmana, which is what you desire.'"

‘Bhishma continued, “Having agreed to this, the worm remained where it was.[372] It went through birth in all the other kinds of species—porcupine, lizard, boar, animal, bird, shvapaka, vaishya and finally, kshatriya. He went and met the rishi and reported everything to him. He remembered how he had been a worm. He joined his hands in salutation and touched the feet of the rishi, who was truthful in speech, with his head. The worm said, ‘My present state is unmatched and possesses ten times the qualities I had desired. I was earlier a worm, but have become a prince now. Extremely strong elephants, with golden harnesses, bear me. Supreme horses from Kamboja are yoked to my chariot. The vehicles that bear me are yoked to camels and mules. With my relatives and advisers, I eat food that is mixed with meat. I happily sleep on beds in excellent houses. O immensely fortunate one! While I sleep in the second half of the night, I am extremely honoured. In the second half of the night, all the bards, raconteurs and minstrels chant my praises and speak pleasantly to me, as if I am the great Indra of the gods. O one who is devoted to the truth! O infinitely energetic one! All this is because of your favours. I used to be a worm, but have now become a prince. O immensely wise one! I bow down before you. Instruct me about what I should do. In truth, everything that has happened to me has occurred because of the strength of your austerities.’ Vyasa replied, ‘O king! As you chose, you have now worshipped me with eloquent words. Even when you were a worm, you retained your memory and that has now come back. The wicked deeds that you committed earlier have not yet been extinguished. You were a shudra who primarily desired riches. You were cruel and an assassin. You performed a good deed in earlier times and that is the reason you have met me now. Though you were born as inferior species, you worshipped me. O prince! Because of that, you will obtain the status of becoming a brahmana. In the field of battle, you will give up your life for the sake of cows and brahmanas. Enjoy the happiness of being a prince. Perform sacrifices and give away dakshina. Immersed with the brahman, enjoy eternal happiness in heaven. Those born as inferior species become shudras. Shudras become vaishyas and vaishyas become kshatriyas. A kshatriya who discharges his conduct proudly becomes a brahmana. A brahmana who is virtuous in his conduct goes to the sacred heaven.’”’

Chapter 1801 (120)

‘Bhishma said, “O king! Having given up the state of being a worm, he became a kshatriya and followed that dharma. However, the valiant one remembered and performed extensive austerities. Krishna Dvaipayana, foremost among brahmanas and learned about dharma and artha, saw his extensive austerities and arrived there.

‘“Vyasa said, ‘O worm! The vow of a kshatriya is to protect all creatures. If you observe the vow meant for a kshatriya, you will then become a brahmana. In your own self, know what is good and bad, and save all the subjects properly. Share everything that is auspicious. Purify everything that is inauspicious. Be cheerfully immersed in your own soul. Follow your own dharma. Once you give up the body of a kshatriya, you will become a brahmana.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “O Yudhishthira! He had actually retired to the forest. However, hearing the maharshi’s words, he returned and began to protect the subjects, following dharma. O supreme among kings! The worm continued to follow the dharma of protecting the subjects. After a short period of time, he died and became a brahmana. The immensely wise and immensely illustrious Krishna Dvaipayana saw the brahmana and again arrived there.

‘“Vyasa said, ‘O brahmana rishi! O handsome one! Never be distressed. A person who performs good deeds obtains a good birth. One who performs wicked deeds obtains a wicked birth. O one who knows about dharma! You will obtain the dharma that has been laid down in the sacred texts. O worm! Therefore, on no account, should you ever be distressed at the prospect of death. The only fear is about the destruction of dharma. Therefore, follow supreme dharma.’

‘“The worm replied, ‘O illustrious one! Because of what you have done, I have moved from happiness to greater happiness. With the foundation of dharma, I have obtained this prosperity. My sins have now been destroyed.’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Because of the illustrious one’s words, the worm obtained the status of a brahmana, which is extremely difficult to get. O king! He marked out the earth with many sacrificial altars. The excellent brahmana then went to Brahma’s world. O Partha! The worm obtained the supreme state of the eternal brahman. Because of Vyasa’s words, the fruits of his own deeds were extinguished. The bulls among kshatriyas have followed their own natures and have been slain. They have obtained auspicious ends. O son! Therefore, do not grieve about them.”’

Chapter 1802 (121)

‘Yudhishthira asked, “Learning, austerities and donations—which among these is superior? O best among virtuous ones! I am asking you. O grandfather! Tell me this.”

‘Bhishma replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Maitreya and Krishna Dvaipayana. O king! Once, Krishna Dvaipayana was wandering around in disguise. He arrived in Varanasi and came to Maitreya, who was from an independent lineage.[373] That supreme sage was seated. However, seeing that he had arrived, Maitreya worshipped him and fed him excellent food. That excellent food possessed all the qualities and he ate it. The great-minded Krishna was seated. He smiled happily. On seeing him smile, Maitreya spoke to Krishna. ‘O one with dharma in your soul! Tell me the reason why you are smiling. You are an ascetic. You are firm in your intelligence. And yet, you are overcome by delight. O learned one! I am bowing down my head before you and am asking you. I have myself earned fortune through my austerities. Indeed, I have obtained great fortune. O father![374] Our conducts are different and the title you bear is different from the title I bear. But that apart, I think there is little difference between us. Indeed, I think I am superior to you.’

‘“Vyasa replied, ‘I smiled because I remembered hyperbolic and paradoxical statements.[375] The words of the Vedas seem to be false. However, why should the Vedas utter a falsehood? There are three modes that are said to represent the supreme vow for a man—lack of hatred, gifts and finally, speaking the truth. These are the supreme words of the ancient sacred texts and even now, we should act in accordance with them. Even a little bit of donations, given in this way, gives rise to great fruits. Without any malice in your heart, you have given a drink to a person who was thirsty. Though you were thirsty, you gave a thirsty man a drink. You gave me food. O lord! You have thus conquered great worlds, as if you have performed a great sacrifice. I am pleased with you because of your sacred gift and because of your austerities. Your scent is auspicious. Your sight is auspicious. I think that the wind bears this sacred fragrance because of the dutiful acts you have performed. O son! This is superior to all the bathing and all the smearing of unguents. Among all the things that are sacred and auspicious, donations are supreme. Had they not been excellent, the words of the Vedas would not have praised them. There is no doubt that gifts are the best. Learned people travel along the paths followed by those who make gifts. Those who donate grant life. They are established in dharma. Among those who study the Vedas, those who control their senses and those who renounce everything, those who donate are the best. O son! From this state of happiness, you will rise to another state of happiness that is even more beautiful. It is my view that a man thus moves from bliss to greater bliss. There is no doubt that we have experienced many direct manifestations of what has been spoken about in the Vedas. Prosperous people obtain greater riches. They donate, perform sacrifices and obtain happiness. O immensely wise one! It can be seen that unhappiness follows happiness and happiness follows unhappiness. This is natural progression. Learned people have ordained that a man must follow three kinds of conduct—some are good, some are wicked and some are neither good, nor wicked. I do not think there is any other kind of conduct. However, there is a conduct that is not sinful. For example, a person who is engaged in his own tasks does neither good, nor evil. Find delight. Find pleasure. Donate and perform sacrifices. Even those who are learned and ascetic will not be able to surpass you.’”’

Chapter 1803(122)

‘Bhishma said, “Maitreya was born in an extremely prosperous family. He was wise and extremely learned. He was also one who valued rites. Thus addressed, he replied, ‘O immensely wise one! There is no doubt that it is exactly as you have described it. O lord! However, with your permission, I wish to say something.’

‘“Vyasa replied, ‘O Maitreya! O immensely wise one! Say whatever you wish to. Speak. I wish to hear your words.’

‘“Maitreya said, ‘Your words on gifts are blameless and pure. There is no doubt that your soul has been cleansed through learning and austerities. Since your soul has been cleansed, I can obtain a great advantage from this. Using my intelligence, I can see that you are extremely prosperous in austerities. O god! I think this great opportunity of my being able to see you is because of your favours and because of the rites I have naturally performed. Austerities, learning and birth—these are the three ways of becoming a brahmana. It is through these three qualities that one obtains the status of being a brahmana. Therefore, when he[376] is satisfied, the ancestors and the gods are also satisfied. There is no one superior to a brahmana in knowledge. Men obtain fruits from a field that has been ploughed well. In that way, a donor obtains fruits when the recipient is learned. Had there not been a brahmana with learning and good conduct as a recipient, the donations of riches by a wealthy person would have been useless. When an ignorant brahmana eats, he destroys the food that he eats and also destroys the donor. Such an ignorant person destroys the food and also destroys the person who is doing the eating. A learned lord digests the food and the lord again regenerates it. In the absence of learning, the food is not regenerated and this is a difference that is more than subtle. Merits are obtained both by the donor and by the recipient and do not devolve only on a single one. This is what the learned rishis have said. If donations are made to learned brahmanas who are controlled and have good conduct, then the auspicious fruits are obtained in this world and in the next. There are those who are pure in lineage and are always devoted to severe austerities. They are engaged in donations and studying. They should always be worshipped. These are the paths followed by the virtuous and one is not confused if one treads that way. They have nurtured the eternal sacrifices and have conveyed people to heaven.’”’

Chapter 1804(123)

‘Bhishma said, “Thus addressed, the illustrious one[377] replied to Maitreya. ‘It is through good fortune that you possess learning. It is through good fortune that your intelligence is like this. In this world, these qualities are repeatedly praised. There is no doubt that beautiful, young and prosperous people cannot surpass you and that is because of good fortune. The gods have shown you their favours. There is something that is superior to donations. Listen. All the rites of pravritti described in the sacred texts and all the other kinds of pravritti that have progressively evolved, are based on the primacy of the Vedas. I praise donations. You praise austerities and learning. Austerites are sacred. Austerities are the means to acquire the Vedas and heaven. We have heard that greatness can be obtained through austerities and learning. It is through austerities that all the evil acts can be destroyed. However, whatever a man obtains by tormenting himself with austerities can also be obtained by a brahmana who is accomplished in the Vedas. Anything that is difficult to do, anything that is difficult to conquer, anything that is difficult to get and anything that is difficult to cross—all these can be obtained through austerities. Austerities are supremely strong. A person who drinks liquor, a person who violates agreements and seizes, a person who kills a foetus and a person who has intercourse with his preceptor’s wife—can be freed from all the sins through austerities. A person with all kinds of knowledge has true sight. He can see what cannot be seen. Both of them[378] are ascetics and one must always bow down before them. All those who possess learning are ascetics and must be worshipped. A person who donates obtains happiness and prosperity in this world and in the next. Those who perform the good deed of donating food obtain this world and other worlds, Brahma’s world and worlds that are superior to that. They should be worshipped and are worshipped. They should be revered and are revered. A donor is praised wherever he goes.[379] Gains are proportionate to what one does and what one does not do. Whether one resides in the upper regions or whether one resides in the lower regions, worlds are accordingly obtained.[380] You will obtain the food and the drink that you yourself give. You possess intelligence. You have been born in a noble lineage. You are learned. You are not cruel. O Maitreya! Always be devoted to the vow of being celibate and not taking a wife. In addition, receive this instruction about what is primarily praised for a householder. When the wife is pleased with her husband and when the husband is pleased with his wife, in that family, all will be well. Water washes away dirt from the body. The radiance of the fire dispels darkness. In that way, all sins are cleansed through donations and austerities. O Maitreya! May you be well. May all be well in your house. I will depart. You should retain this in your mind and you will obtain benefit.’ Maitreya bowed down before him and circumambulated him. He joined his hands in salutation before the illustrious one and pronounced benedictions for him.”’

Chapter 1805(124)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O supreme among those who uphold all kinds of dharma! I wish to hear about the good conduct of virtuous women. O grandfather. Tell me the truth.”

‘Bhishma replied, “There was a lady named Sumana, from the Kaikeya lineage. Shandili knew about everything and about all kinds of dharma. In the world of the gods, she asked the spirited one.[381] ‘O fortunate one! What conduct did you follow? How did you cleanse all your sins and arrive in the world of the gods? You are blazing in your own energy, like the flames of a fire. You seem to be like a daughter of the lord of the stars,[382] creating day with your own radiance. You are clad in a white garment and you show no signs of exhaustion. You are resplendent astride a sparkling celestial vehicle and there are one thousand qualities in your energy. Your austerities, donations and rituals cannot have been minor, since you have obtained this world. Therefore, tell me the truth.’ The one with the sweet smiles was thus gently asked by Sumana.

‘“In private, Shandili spoke these words to Sumana. ‘I did not wear ochre robes. I did not dress myself in bark. I did not shave my head, nor did I sport matted hair. That is not the reason I have obtained divinity. In a fit of distraction, I never addressed my husband in any hurtful or harsh words. I worshipped the gods, the ancestors and brahmanas. I was never careless and served my father-in-law and my mother-in-law. I never allowed any calumny to penetrate my mind. I never stood at the door, speaking to someone for a long period of time. I did not laugh when a wicked act was performed. I did not perform any injurious acts. I never divulged a secret, or what was not a secret. When my husband went out for work and returned home, I was controlled and honoured him by offering him a seat. I did not eat food that he did not know about, or did not approve of. I avoided anything like that, whether it was eaten, swallowed or licked. I arose in the morning and performed all the tasks that needed to be done to honour the relatives. If my husband had to go elsewhere on some task, I always remained engaged in tasks that would bring many benedictions. Until my husband returned, I did not use beautiful collyrium, wear garlands and apply fragrances after bathing, or ornament myself. I never awoke my husband when he was happily asleep. I satisfied my mind by undertaking tasks for the afflicted. For the sake of the family, I did not urge my husband to exert himself. I never divulged secrets and I kept the household clean. If a woman is controlled and protects this path of dharma, she will obtain greatness in heaven, just as Arundhati did amongst all the women.' The ascetic goddess recited this account to Sumana. The immensely fortunate one described this dharma towards the husband and instantly disappeared. O Pandava! A person who reads this account on an auspicious occasion obtains the world of the gods and resides in great happiness in Nandana."'

Chapter 1806(125)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O foremost among the Bharata lineage! What is superior, conciliation or gifts? Tell me which you think is better."

'Bhishma replied, "Some are pleased through conciliation, others are pleased through gifts. One must secure a man's devotion after ascertaining his nature. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Listen to the qualities that are associated with conciliation. The most terrible of creatures can be pacified through conciliation. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. In a forest, a brahmana who was seized by a rakshasa was freed. There was an intelligent brahmana. In a desolate forest, he confronted a catastrophe because he was seized by a rakshasa who intended to eat him. However, he possessed intelligence and learning. Despite seeing that terrible creature, he was not confused or distressed. Instead, he resorted to conciliation. Having honoured him with his words, the rakshasa asked the brahmana a question. ‘I will free you if you can answer my question. Why am I yellowish green and lean?’ The brahmana thought for an instant about the purport of the rakshasa’s anxious question.

‘“He then replied, ‘You reside away from home. You are alone and without any of your well-wishers, though you command an unmatched territory. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. O rakshasa! Though you are virtuous, there is no doubt that your friends, because of their own wickedness, have acted perversely against you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You possess an excess of prosperity and wealth and you stupefy them with your supreme and excellent qualities. Nevertheless, they disregard you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You have performed good deeds and possess the qualities. You can see that they don’t have the qualities. You are wise. They are foolish and uncontrolled in their souls. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. Though you are afflicted because of lack subsistence, you have avoided the censured means of subsistence. This has resulted from your greatness. There is no doubt that this is the reason why you are yellowish green and lean. You have chosen to suffer because of your own noble qualities. But you are disregarded by the others, who think that they have defeated you. O virtuous one! That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There are those who suffer because they resort to deviant paths, overcome by the desire and the anger in their souls. I think you are reflecting about those people. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. Though you have obtained everything, you have to adopt the form of one who has obtained nothing. Though you are humble, those who are evil in conduct exhibit their intolerance towards you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There was an enemy who arrived before you, pretending to be a friend. He first acted nobly. Subsequently, he deceived you and left. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that you know about the purport and progress of everything that is manifest. You are skilled in the mysteries and accomplished. But those people do not honour you. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You remained among wicked people and spoke to them, clearing their doubts. Nevertheless, they did not praise your qualities. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You do not possess riches, intelligence and learning. Despite this, on the basis of your energy, you aspire to obtain greatness. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. I think that you have controlled your soul and desire to roam around in this forest in the pursuit of austerities. But your numerous friends are not prepared to accept this. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. At the right time, when you spoke excellent words amidst rich people, they were not applauded. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is a stupid and angry person whom you love from your heart. Though you have firmly instructed him and entreated him, you have been unsuccessful. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that someone urged you to undertake a task. But once the objective has been attained, he is trying to appropriate it. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that your well-wishers only honour you for your own sake, ignoring the qualities that you naturally possess. Knowing this, you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that you are ashamed. Consequently, you are unable to divulge your intentions and desires. Therefore, you are lax in pursuing what you want. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. In this world, there are many kinds of men, with diverse intelligence and inclinations. You wish to persuade them with your own qualities, but are unable. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You are without learning. You are timid. You possess limited riches. You seek to obtain fame on the basis of learning, valour and donations. There is no doubt that this is the reason why you are yellowish green and lean. There is a fruit that you have desired for a long time, but have not been able to get. What you obtained was stolen by others. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There is no doubt that you are unable to see any taints in yourself or anything wrong in what you have done. You are abused without reason. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. Your well-wishers are miserable and afflicted. They lack riches and qualities and you wish to free them from their destitution. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You see virtuous people in the householder mode and wicked people roaming around in the forest. Those who are emancipated have become attached to houses. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. The words you speak are full of dharma and artha and are appropriate to the time and the place. But they are not accepted. There is no doubt this is the reason why you are yellowish green and lean. You are learned. However, wishing to remain alive, you have accepted riches from a unaccomplished donor. There is no doubt that you are yellowish green and lean because you accepted that. It is certain that when you are engaged in hunting, you can see wickedness flourish and the good suffer. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. You wish to do what is agreeable towards well-wishers who are in conflict and act against each other. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean. There are learned and wise people who are unable to control their senses. I think that you reflect about their indulging in perverse deeds. That is the reason you are yellowish green and lean.' Thus honoured, the rakshasa honoured the brahmana back in return. He made him a friend, gave him riches and released him."'

Chapter 1807(126)

'Yudhishthira said, "O grandfather! O immensely wise one! O one who is accomplished in all the sacred texts! You are the one who is famous in our lineage. There are many kinds of extensive sacred texts. They are about the truth of dharma and artha and about how happiness can be brought. O destroyer of enemies! I wish to hear about the wonderful worlds that can be obtained. A time has arrived when kin and friends are extremely difficult to find. O bull among the Bharata lineage! With your exception, there is no one else who can instruct us. O unblemished one! O king! If you wish to show me and my brothers a favour, you should answer a question that I am asking you. This Narayana is handsome and is revered by all the kings. But he shows you a great deal of honour, serves you and indulges you. In his presence and before all these kings, and for doing what is agreeable to my brothers, you should speak to me about the nature of this affection."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing his respectful words, Bhishma, Bhagirathi's son, was filled with affection and spoke these words.

‘Bhishma continued, “I will tell you about an extremely enchanting account. O king! It is about the power this Vishnu showed in ancient times and I heard about it. Also hear from me about the power of the one who has a bull as his sign. Hear about the doubts of Rudrani and the couple.[383] Krishna, with dharma in his soul, observed a vow for twelve years. When he had initiated himself, Narada and Parvata went there to see him. Krishna Dvaipayana, Dhoumya, supreme among those who meditate, Devala, Kashyapa and Hastikashyapa were also there. There were other virtuous and self-restrained rishis who had initiated themselves. Those stores of austerities were like the gods and they were followed by all their disciples. Devaki’s son was delighted. Taking them to be the equals of the gods, he worshipped them with all the honours that were due to guests, befitting their lineages. Happily, the maharshis sat down on seats that were green and gold, new and made out of the feathers of peacocks. While the stores of austerities resided there, there were pleasant conversations on topics connected with dharma, and about rajarshis and gods. At that time, because of the vow that was being observed, Narayana’s energy arose from the kindling. In the form of a fire, it emerged from the mouth of Krishna, the performer of wonderful deeds. That fire started to burn the mountain, with its trees, creepers and bushes, with the large numbers of birds, animals, predatory beasts and reptiles. Many kinds of animals lost their senses and began to utter cries of lamentation. The summit of the mountain was mangled and assumed a blazing appearance. The mighty and raging fire burnt down everything else. It then approached Vishnu and touched his feet, like a disciple. Seeing that the forest had been burnt down, Vishnu, the afflicter of enemies, cast his benign eye towards it and brought it back to its natural state. The mountain again became full of blossoming trees and creepers. There were large numbers of birds and predatory beasts and reptiles. On witnessing this extraordinary sight, the large numbers of sages began to think. They were astounded and their body hair stood up. They showed signs of fear. Narayana, supreme among eloquent ones, saw that the rishis were astounded. In gentle and sweet words, he asked them a question. ‘What has happened to these bulls among rishis? You are always devoid of attachment. You have renounced and are without a sense of ownership. Why are you overcome by this wonder? O unblemished ones! I have a doubt about the precise nature of this. O rishis! O stores of austerities!

You should speak to me and explain this.’

‘“The rishis replied, ‘You create the worlds and you withdraw them back again. You are winter. You are summer. You are the monsoon. You are the father and the mother of every object that exists on earth, mobile and immobile. You are the lord and you are the source of creation. O Madhusudana! This itself is wonderful and praiseworthy. O benign one! However, you should explain the fire that emerged. O afflicter of enemies! That is the reason we are suffering from fright. O Hari! You should speak to us about what we have heard and what we have seen.’

‘“Vasudeva said, ‘What emerged from my mouth is Vaishnava energy. It has black trails and it is the fire of destruction at the end of a yuga. The mountain was mangled by this. O rishis! Why are you afflicted? You have conquered anger. You have conquered your senses. You are the stores of austerities and are like the gods. Nevertheless, you are distressed and are seeking assurance. I am observing a vow. I am following the vow of an ascetic. That is the reason the fire arose from me. You should not be pained by this. I came to this auspicious mountain to observe the vow. A son who will be my equal in valour will be created through these austerities. That is the reason the soul in my body emerged in the form of this fire. It has gone to see the grandfather of all the worlds, the granter of boons. O best among sages! He told me that I would have a son. This son would use half of my energy and would be born as Vrishadhvaja.[384] It is he who assumed the form of a fire and appeared before my feet, restored to his nature, as if he was a peaceful disciple wishing to serve me. This is the mystery about the intelligent Padmanabha.[385] Out of affection, I have told you this. O ones rich in austerities! You should not be scared. Without any anxiety, you can go everywhere. You are far-sighted. You are ablaze in the vow of asceticism. You are full of jnana and vijnana. Tell me about something supremely wonderful that you have heard of, or seen, in heaven or on earth. I wish to taste the amrita that emerges as words from your lips. O ones who reside in hermitages! Anything that you speak about will be like that. O ones who are pure in vision! Everything wonderful and divine that I see in heaven or on earth is part of my own supreme nature, which no one can obstruct. There is nothing that manifests itself as wonderful unless that wonder originates in me. But everything that is spoken by the faithful and the virtuous must be heard.

They have remained on earth for a long time and are like the writing on the rocks. Now that you have assembled, that is the reason I wish to hear something from the mouths of the virtuous. You continuously speak about topics that illuminate the intelligence of men.'"

'Bhishma continued, "At this, all those numerous sages were comforted and approached Krishna. With eyes that were like lotus petals, they looked at Janardana. Some of them glorified him. Others worshipped him. Those eloquent ones used hymns from the Rig Veda to chant Madhusudana's praises. All the sages appointed Narada, who could see the words and who was eloquent with words, to speak on their behalf. They said, 'O lord! There was an extraordinary and unthinkable event on Mount Himalaya. This was experienced by a large number of sages who had gone on a visit to the tirthas.' He was urged by those large numbers of sages. As instructed, for everyone's welfare, he told Hrishikesha everything. The illustrious sage and rishi, devarshi Narada, spoke about the auspicious incident that had occurred in earlier times."'

Chapter 1808(127)

'Bhishma said, "Narada, the illustrious rishi, Narada's well-wisher, spoke about the conversation between Shankara and Uma. '"Narada said, 'The lord of the gods, the one with dharma in his soul and the one with the sign of the bull was engaged in austerities on sacred Mount Himalaya, frequented by the siddhas and the charanas. The place was beautiful because of the numerous herbs and diverse flowers. It was inhabited by large numbers of apsaras and surrounded by hundreds of bands of *bhutas*. They had many forms and some were malformed. Some were divine and extraordinary to see. Others had faces like lions, tigers, elephants and all kinds of other species. There were those with faces like jackals and leopards. Others had faces like bears and bulls. There were those with faces like owls. There were others with faces like hawks and kites. Some had faces like many kinds of deer. All kinds of species assembled there. There were large numbers of kinnaras, gods, gandharvas, yakshas and bhutas. The place was full of divine flowers and was adorned with celestial garlands. There was divine sandalwood and the smell of celestial incense. The one with the mark of the bull was seated there. Celestial musical instruments were sounded—drums, kettledrums, conch shells and trumpets. With peacocks surrounding them, the large numbers of bhutas danced. The place was populated by celestial women and the divine apsaras also danced. It was a beautiful sight and was divine and wonderful to see. The lord of the bhutas practised austerities on that mountain. O Madhava! The mountain was unmatched. The supreme brahmanas studied there and there were the sounds of the brahman and vashatkara, combined with singing. It was as if a great festival was being observed, though the place also had a terrible appearance. O Janardana! On seeing this, the large numbers of sages were overcome by great delight. There were the immensely fortunate sages, successful ones who had held up their seed, the Maruts, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the eternal Vishvadevas, the yakshas, the serpents, the pishachas, the guardians of the worlds, the fire god and all the different kinds of sentiments. All of them assembled, to reside there. There were the seasons, scattering flowers, and the great elements. There were the blazing herbs, illuminating the forest. Filled with delight, the birds sang and danced. They sported on the slopes of that beautiful mountain and people found this very pleasant.

‘“‘The great-minded god was seated on the slope of that mountain, which was adorned with divine minerals. It seemed like a bed. His lower garment was the skin of a tiger and his upper garment was the skin of a lion. A snake was his sacred thread and he was adorned with red armlets. His beard and matted hair were tawny. His form was terrible, one that created terror among the enemies of the gods. However, Vrishabhadhvaja[386] granted freedom from fear to all creatures who were devotees. On seeing him, all the rishis bowed down their heads. Those forgiving ones were cleansed from all their sins and freed from all their taints. Bhutapati’s[387] place had an extremely terrible appearance. It was extremely difficult to approach and was populated by large serpents. O Madhusudana! But in a short instant, everything became wonderful. The one with the bull as his sign was seated there, assuming a terrible form. However, the daughter of the mountain[388] arrived there, surrounded by the wives of the bhutas. Her garments were like Hara’s and the vows that she followed were also similar to his. She held a sparkling golden pot that was filled with water from all the tirthas. All the sacred mountainous streams followed the auspicious one. Flowers were showered down and many kinds of fragrances began to blow. The one who resided on the slopes of the Himalayas approached Hara's side. Smilingly and in sport, the auspicious and beautiful goddess suddenly covered Hara's eyes with her hands. As soon as his eyes were covered, everything lost consciousness and was enveloped in darkness. Suddenly, oblations and vashatkara disappeared. Everyone was distressed and overwhelmed by terror and fright. As soon as Bhutapati's eyes were covered, it was as if the sun had vanished. However, in a short instant, the darkness that pervaded the worlds was dispelled. A great and blazing flame emerged from his forehead, from the mouth of the third eye and it was like the sun. It blazed like the fire of destruction at the end of a yuga and it began to destroy the mountain.

'"'The daughter of the mountain saw the blazing fire emerge from the eye. On seeing this, the large-eyed one bowed her head down before Hara. The forest of shala and *sarala* trees was being burnt. So were the beautiful groves of sandalwood. The celestial herbs were ablaze. Large numbers of animals were terrified. They swiftly appeared before Hara and sought his protection. It was simultaneously terrible and beautiful. The flames were like the fickle touch of lightning and rose up and touched the sky. It was as if all twelve Adityas were together. It was like the fire at the time of the destruction of a yuga. It was as if Mount Himalaya was burnt down in an instant. The summit and its minerals were consumed. The herbs were burnt and destroyed. On seeing that the mountain had been destroyed, the daughter of the king of the mountains sought refuge with the illustrious one. She joined her hands in salutation and stood there. Sharva[389] saw Uma standing there, mild in her feminine nature. She did not desire that her father should face this disaster. Bhava glanced affectionately towards the mountain and everything became beautiful again, returned to the natural state. The birds were delighted and the trees in the forests blossomed.

'"'On seeing that the mountain had returned to its natural state, the goddess was happy. The unblemished one spoke to her husband, Maheshvara, the lord of all creatures. "O illustrious one! O lord of all creatures! O one who wields the trident! O one who is great in vows! A great doubt has been generated in me and you should explain this. Why did a third eye manifest itself on your forehead? Why was the mountain, with its large numbers of birds and forests, burnt down? After a short instant, why did it regain its natural state? O Maheshvara! Having destroyed it, why did you cover it with trees again?" Maheshvara replied, "O goddess! O unblemished one! In your childishness, you covered my eyes. Since the light was destroyed, in a short instant, the world was destroyed.[390] O daughter of the mountain! When the sun was destroyed, the world was pervaded by darkness. I created the blazing third eye to protect the subjects. In a short while, that great energy destroyed this mountain. O goddess! To ensure your pleasure, in a short instant, I restored it to its natural state." Uma said, "O illustrious one! Those of your faces that are towards the east, the north and the south are handsome and beautiful to see, like the moon. Why is the face towards the south terrible? Why do you possess tawny, matted and erect hair? Why is your throat blue, like the plumage of a peacock? Why is the Pinaka[391] always there in your hand? Why are you always in the form of a matted brahmachari? I have a doubt about all of this. O Bhutapati! O unblemished one! Tell me. O Vrishadhvaja! I am your companion in the pursuit of dharma." The daughter of the mountain spoke to the illustrious wielder of the Pinaka in this way. The lord was pleased with her conduct and her intelligence. The god therefore said, "O extremely beautiful one! O one with the beautiful face! I will tell you the reason behind these forms."'"'

Chapter 1809(128)

'"'Maheshvara said, "In ancient times, Brahma created a supreme woman named Tilottama. The beautiful one was created out of tiny particles from jewels.[392] In her beauty, she was unmatched on earth. That goddess approached me. O beautiful one! The one with the beautiful face wanted to ostensibly circumambulate me, but actually wanted to seduce me. O goddess! In whichever direction the one with the excellent teeth approached me, one of my handsome faces emerged. In a desire to see her, using the powers of yoga, I came to have four faces. Using the yoga in my own self, I came to exhibit those four faces. With the face that is towards the east, I rule everything, like a lord. O unblemished one! With the face that is towards the north, I sport with you.

With the face that is towards the west, I am amiable and bring happiness to all creatures. But towards the south, I am fierce in form. I am terrible and destroy subjects. For the welfare of all the worlds, I have become a brahmachari with matted hair. The Pinaka is in my hand to accomplish the tasks of the gods. In ancient times, hankering after my prosperity, Indra hurled his vajra at me. That scorched my throat. That is the reason I have a blue throat.”

‘“‘Uma asked, “There are many other excellent and handsome mounts. O god! Why have you accepted a bull as your mount?”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “In ancient times, Brahma created a cow named Surabhi that yielded milk. Once she was created, she had many offspring and all of them yielded milk that was like amrita. From the mouth of one of the calves, some froth fell on my body. At this, I scorched the cows and they came to assume many different complexions. I was then pacified by the preceptor of the worlds,[393] who knows about the meaning of good policy. He gave me a bull for my standard and also as my mount.”

‘“‘Uma asked, “There are many different kinds of abodes and they possess all the qualities of the universe. O illustrious one! Having discarded all those, why do you find pleasure in the cremation ground? It is full of hair and bones and is terrible with broken doors and pots.[394] It is infested with vultures and jackals and flames from funeral pyres. It is impure because of the mire from flesh, fat and blood, with entrails strewn around. There are the howls of jackals.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “During the night, I roam around the entire earth in search of a sacred spot. However, there is nothing more sacred than a cremation ground. Among all kinds of abodes, that is the reason I find pleasure in a cremation ground. It has the shade of banyan trees and is decorated with garlands that have been thrown away. O one with the beautiful face! With the large numbers of bhutas, I am happy there. O goddess! Without those large numbers of bhutas, I am not interested in residing anywhere. It is my view that this residence is sacred and is like heaven. It is supreme and auspicious. It is applauded by those who desire something sacred.”

‘“‘Uma said, “O illustrious one! O lord of all the creatures! O supreme among those who uphold all kinds of dharma! O one who holds the Pinaka in the hand! O granter of boons! I have a great doubt. O lord! These large numbers of sages have tormented themselves through all kinds of austerities. There are many kinds of people who roam around in the world, attired as ascetics. O destroyer of enemies! For the sake of this large number of rishis and also to do what is agreeable to me, you should dispel this doubt. What are said to be the signs of dharma? How should men act? You are capable of speaking about dharma. You know about dharma. O lord! Tell me."'

'"Narada continued, 'At this, the entire assemblage of sages honoured the goddess. Those eloquent ones, who were supreme among those who knew about meanings, praised her with hymns from the Rig Veda.

'"'Maheshvara replied, "Non-violence, truthfulness in speech, compassion towards all creatures, tranquility and donations according to capacity—this is said to be the supreme dharma for a householder. Not desiring the wives of others, protecting what has been left in trust, protecting women, not accepting what has not been given and the avoidance of liquor and meat—these are five aspects. Dharma has many branches and all of these yield happiness. Any embodied being must act in accordance with dharma and accumulate dharma."

'"'Uma asked, "O illustrious one! I wish to ask you about a doubt and you should explain it to me. For each of the four varnas, dharma has qualities associated with the respective varnas. What is the nature of dharma for a brahmana? What is it for a kshatriya? What are the signs of dharma for a vaishya? What are the signs for a shudra?"

'"'Maheshvara replied, "O illustrious one! You have asked me about a very pertinent doubt. O immensely fortunate one! On earth, the brahmanas are like gods on earth. There is no doubt that fasting always constitutes dharma for brahmanas. Dharma and artha result from this and they become immersed with the brahman.[395] O goddess! The rituals of dharma involve the law of following the vows. People are born twice through the sacrament of the sacred thread.[396] The supreme dharma for embodied beings is to worship the seniors and the gods and immerse oneself in studying. Dharma results from acting in this way."

'"'Uma said, "O illustrious one! I have a doubt in this connection and you should explain it to me. Skilfully recount to me the dharma of the four varnas."

'"'Maheshvara replied, "Listening to the mysteries of dharma, observing the vows of the Vedas, following the dharma of the vows, pleasing the preceptor by remaining near his feet, following the dharma of seeking alms, always being immersed in dharma, always following the dharma of studying and following the stage of brahmacharya—these are for a brahmana. After having finished studying and having received the preceptor's permission, he must follow the proper rites and accept a wife who is his equal. For him, dharma is to follow the path of the virtuous and avoid food offered by a shudra. Dharma must always be followed and so must brahmacharya. Controlling the senses, oblations must always be offered into the fire. A householder must be restrained in diet and must subsist on leftovers. He must be pure and truthful in speech. Dharma is following the vow of serving guess. Dharma is tending to the three sacred fires. Following the indicated ordinances, animals must be bound for the purposes of performing sacrifices. Sacrifices and non-violence towards creatures constitute supreme dharma. It is dharma not to eat first and to only eat leftovers. It is said that there is dharma when one eats after the other family members have eaten. This is especially true of a learned brahmana who is a householder. The dharma of a householder is that the husband and the wife should be equal in their pursuit of dharma. For the gods who reside in the household, one must always offer flowers and sacrifices. The house must always be rubbed clean and fumigated with smoke. For the sustenance of the worlds, this is the dharma of the twice-born who are householders. This is always nurtured by virtuous brahmanas. O goddess! I will recount for you the dharma of kshatriyas. I will recite it for you. Listen to me with undivided attention. It has been said that the dharma of kshatriyas is to protect the subjects. For a king who follows this dharma, his enjoyment of the fruits has been indicated. If a king follows the dharma of protecting the subjects, because he has accumulated dharma through protecting the subjects, he conquers the worlds. In addition, the supreme dharma for a king is self-control and studying, the performance of agnihotra sacrifices and donations. He must wear the sacred thread and follow the rites of dharma associated with sacrifices. His dharma is to unwaveringly follow the tasks and support the servants. Dharma lies in applying the rod of chastisement appropriately. It is dharma to follow the rites and sacrifices indicated in the Vedas. Dharma is being devoted to truthfulness in speech and ensuring the resolution of disputes. If a king extends a helping hand to those who are distressed, he obtains greatness in the world hereafter. He must exhibit valour for the sake of cattle and brahmanas and lay down his life in battle. He conquers the world through horse sacrifices and obtains residence in heaven. The eternal dharma of a shudra is animal husbandry and agriculture. He must perform agnihotra sacrifices and donate gifts and study. He must engage in trade in virtuous ways. He must tend to guests and be tranquil and self-restrained. He must welcome brahmanas. Renouncing is the eternal dharma of vaishyas. A vaishya who is engaged in the path of trade must never sell sesamum, fragrances and juices and must follow the path of truth. According to capacity and as is proper, he must tend to all the guests, and thus pursue the three objectives.[397] The supreme dharma for a shudra is to always serve brahmanas. A shudra who is controlled, performs austerities, is devoted to the truth, conquers his senses and serves his guests obtains a store of greatness that is associated with austerities. An intelligent shudra will shun violence and be good in conduct. He will worship gods and brahmanas. He thus obtains the fruits associated with dharma. O beautiful one! I have told you everything about the four varnas, one by one. O beautiful one! What else do you wish to hear?”’”’

Chapter 1810(129)

‘“‘Uma said, “You have separately described for me the sacred dharma that the four varnas must observe for their benefit. O illustrious one! But tell me about the dharma that pervades everything.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “The creator and ordainer of the worlds desired qualities and created brahmanas for saving the worlds. Among all the mortals on earth, they are regarded as gods. I will tell you about their rites of dharma and the resultant fruits. The dharma of brahmanas is said to be the supreme dharma. For sustaining the worlds, Svayambhu created three kinds of dharma. Whenever the earth is recreated, these are created. Listen to them. The dharma cited in the Vedas is supreme, the ones in the sacred texts known as the smritis come next. After that, it is said to be virtuous conduct. These three types of dharma are eternal. A brahmana should know the three Vedas,[398] but he should not earn a living through studies. A person who performs the three rites, overcomes the three and is a friend to everyone is said to be a brahmana.[399] The lord of the worlds has decreed that brahmanas can perform six acts for making a living. Hear with single-minded attention. Studying, teaching, donating gifts, receiving gifts, performing sacrifices and officiating at the sacrifices of others—these six acts are in conformity with dharma for a brahmana. Continuous studying is dharma. Sacrifices represent eternal dharma. According to capacity and according to the ordinances, gifts are praised. This is supreme dharma and the virtuous are always devoted to this. In this way, pure householders can accumulate great stores of dharma. A person who performs the five sacrifices,[400] is pure in soul, is truthful in speech, is without malice, donates, treats brahmanas well, lives in clean houses, is without insolence and is always upright, is pleasant in speech, is devoted to welcoming guests, eats leftovers and lawfully offers *padya*, arghya, a seat, a bed, a lamp and refuge to a guest—is regarded as someone who follows dharma. One must wake in the morning and perform ablutions, then invite the guests to eat. One must treat them well, before allowing them to leave. This is eternal dharma. Day and night, to the best of one’s capacity, one must tend to guests and pursue the three objectives. The dharma of shudras is said to be service towards the other three varnas. It has been ordained that the dharma of a householder has the attributes of pravritti. This is auspicious and beneficial towards all beings and I will recount this. According to one's capacity, one must donate. One must perform sacrifices in the same way. One must follow the acts for sustenance and one must desire one's own prosperity. Wealth must be earned through dharma. The riches earned through dharma must be divided into three parts. In all tasks, a man must make efforts to follow supreme dharma. A person who desires his own prosperity must set aside one part for the pursuit of dharma. Another part is for the pursuit of kama. The third part is set aside for increasing the riches. Another kind of dharma is said to be the pursuit of moksha and this has the attributes of nivritti. O goddess! I will describe this kind of conduct to you. Listen to the truth. This dharma is compassion towards all beings. One should not reside in the same village for more than one night. For someone who craves for moksha, the act of freeing oneself from the bonds of hope is praised. There should be no attachment towards the water pot, water, clothes, seats, the triple staff, beds, fire, or the place one has sought refuge in. Such a person's mind and consciousness is turned towards adhyatma. He is always attached to yoga and sankhya. He seeks shelter under a tree. He finds refuge in an empty house. He lies down along the banks of rivers. He loves the banks of rivers. A person who is freed from all kinds of attachment and all bonds of affection is a brahmana. A person who has the sentiments of merging his own self with his atman is a brahmana. He is as immobile as a pillar. He abstains from food. All his acts are driven towards moksha. He wanders around, attached only to such things. This is eternal dharma. He dwells alone. He is without attachment. He cannot be seen in the same village for more than one night. He is not tied to any place of residence. He is free. He does not sleep on the same bank of a river for more than one night. The learned say that this is the dharma of moksha. This is the virtuous path of the righteous, mentioned in the Vedas. A person who follows this path leaves no footprints behind him. There are four kinds of mendicants—*kutichara, kritodaka, hamsa* and *paramahamsa*.[401] Among these, the one that follows is superior to the preceding one. There is nothing superior, inferior or equal to the last.[402] There is nothing before it or after it. Such a person is tranquil, without happiness or unhappiness. He is without change, without old age and without death.”

‘“‘Uma said, “You have spoken about householders, the dharma of moksha and the conduct of virtuous people. In the mortal world, these paths are beneficial and great. O one who knows about dharma! I wish to know about the supreme dharma followed by the rishis. I have always been attached to those who reside in hermitages. A fragrant smoke rises from the ghee offered as oblations and seems to spread throughout the hermitage. O Maheshvara! My mind is always delighted at seeing them. O god! O lord! I have a doubt about the dharma followed by sages. O one who knows about the truth about all kinds of dharma! O god of the gods! Tell me about this. O Mahadeva! Explain to me everything about what I have asked you.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “I will tell you about the supreme dharma followed by the sages. O beautiful one! Observing their own austerities, the sages progress towards success. O immensely fortunate one! O one who knows about dharma! Listen to the dharma observed by the rishis who always know about dharma. They are the Phenapas and their dharma is to subsist on foam.[403] In heaven, Brahma drank some sweet amrita and some sacred foam was released from what Brahma had drunk. The pure stores of austerities who subsist on this are known as the Phenapas. Now hear about the large numbers of Valakhilyas who tread along the path of dharma. The Valakhilya sages have obtained success through their austeries and reside in the solar disc. There are also those who know about dharma and follow the conduct of birds. They wish to observe *unchha.* They dress themselves in skins cast off by deer. They are attired in hides and rags. The Valakhilyas, stores of austerities, are beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and progress along the virtuous path. They are each as long as a thumb and they reside in their own respective places, desiring to perform austerities. The fruits of their dharma are great. They are as revered as the gods. They ensure success in the tasks meant for the gods. They have burnt down all their sins through their austerities and illuminate the directions. There are others who are pure in their minds and are devoted to the dharma of compassion. These virtuous and auspicious ones are Chakracharas[404] and they roam around in Soma’s world. The Samprakshalas, the Ashmakuttas and the Dantolukhalinas reside near the world of the ancestors and following the ordinances, resort to unchha.[405] There are others who drink soma, like the gods. Still others subsist on heat. Resorting to unchha, they are present there and naturally restrain their senses. They offer oblations into the fire and worship the ancestors and the gods. They perform the five sacrifices and these sacrifices are said to constitute their dharma. O goddess! These are the Chakrachara brahmanas who roam around in the world of the gods. Other kinds of dharma are also practised by the rishis. Hear about those. All those who follow the dharma of rishis conquer their atmans and control their senses. After this, it is my view that desire and anger must be conquered. The sacrifices known as agnihotra and *dharmaratri* must be performed and so must sacrifices with oblations of soma. Dakshina must be given at the five sacrifices. Always observing the rites of sacrifices and devotion towards worshipping the ancestors and the gods constitute dharma. Through what has been obtained by practising unchha, one must tend to the guests. One must refrain from enjoying beauty and control the addiction towards milk. One must lie down on the bare ground. One must practise yoga. One must eat herbs and leaves. One must eat fruits, roots, wind, water and moss. These are the rituals practised by the rishis. Through these, they obtain the destinations meant for those who have renounced. When there is no smoke from a house, when the pestle has been laid down, when the fire has been extinguished, when residents have eaten, when the vessels have been put away, when mendicants have ceased to solicit alms and when there are no guests waiting—that is when a person must eat whatever food is left. A person who is devoted to this dharma of the truth and is forgiving follows the dharma of a sage. He is not arrogant. He is not proud. He is not distracted. He is not astounded. He treats friends and enemies equally. He is friendly towards everyone and knows about supreme dharma.”’”’

Chapter 1811(130)

‘“‘“Uma said, “There are those who are controlled in their vows and restrained and reside in beautiful regions, mountainous springs, streams, groves and forests in hills and colourful spots with fruits and roots. O Shankara! I wish to hear about their sacred rites. O lord of the gods! They reside in vanaprastha and depend only on their own selves for maintenance.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “Listen attentively to the dharma practised by those who are in vanaprastha. O goddess! Listen attentively to this and turn your intelligence towards supreme dharma. For those virtuous and controlled ones who decide to reside in the forest, there are things that ensure success. Listen to the tasks that must be observed by those who are in vanaprastha. They must perform ablutions thrice a day and must perform the rites for worshipping the ancestors and the gods. They must observe agnihotra and follow the ordinances in offering oblations at sacrifices. They must pick up wild rice and subsist on fruits and roots. They must extract the oil required from castor and inguda nuts. Having obtained success through the practice of yoga, they must give up desire and anger. They must resort to *virashayya* and reside in *virasthanas*.[406] A virtuous person must be immersed in yoga and during the summer, he must expose himself to the five fires.[407] He must follow the yoga practised by a frog and other similar techniques.[408] He must always be in *virasana*. He must sleep on the bare ground. A person whose mind has turned towards dharma must act so as to expose himself to the cold and to the heat. He must subsist on water or air. He must eat moss. He must be controlled and must be an Ashmakutta or a Samprakshala. He must be attired in rags and hides. He will wear garments made out of deerskin. Following dharma and following the ordinances, he must spend as much of time as left to him. He must always reside in forests. He will roam around in forests. He will always be found in a forest. He will approach his preceptor in the forest. He will reside there and obtain his subsistence from the forest. His dharma is represented by the rites of offering oblations. He will perform the five sacrifices. He will follow the injunctions mentioned in the Vedas and perform sacrifices on *nagapanchami*.[409] He will be devoted to performing sacrifices on the eighth lunar day and chaturmasya. He will always perform sacrifices on the day of the full moon and all the other sacrifices. He will be freed from all attachment towards the wife. He will be free from all kinds of confusion. He will be freed from all kinds of sin. Such a sage will roam around in the forest. His supreme possessions are the sacrificial ladle and vessel and he is always devoted to the three fires. Such a righteous person is established on the virtuous path and goes to the supreme destination. Such sages resort to the dharma of rishis and obtain success. They go to Brahma’s extremely auspicious world and to Soma’s eternal world. O goddess! I have thus told you briefly about the auspicious dharma followed by those who resort to vanaprastha. However, there are many detailed aspects.”

‘“‘Uma said, “O illustrious one! O god! O lord of the gods! O one to whom all creatures bow down! There is a dharma that is spoken about as leading to success and large numbers of sages follow it. Tell me about this. Success has been spoken about and those who reside in the forest have obtained success through that mode. However, there are also others that follow their own independent modes and remain attached to their wives. What is said to be their dharma?”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! All those ascetics who follow independent modes sport with their wives. Their shaved heads and ochre robes are because of where they reside during the night.[410] The rishis perform ablutions thrice a day and render great oblations. Meditation, resorting to the virtuous path and following the instructions have been specified for them. I have earlier spoken about the dharma that should be followed by forest dwellers. If that dharma is followed, one obtains the fruits of austerities. If one is following the dharma of having a wife, then one should control one’s senses and be satisfied with one’s own wife alone. Following the ordinances, one should have intercourse with her when she is in season. The dharma that has been laid down by the rishis is the dharma that should be followed. Those who know about dharma do not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by desire. A person must properly grant the dakshina of freedom from fear to all creatures. If he also frees himself from violence and anger, he is united with dharma. If a person is compassionate towards all creatures, upright in his vows towards all creatures and if he looks upon all creatures as his own self, he is united with dharma. Bathing oneself in all the Vedas and uprightness towards all creatures are equal in merit. Perhaps uprightness is superior. Uprightness is said to be dharma. Deceit is said to be adharma. A man who is upright is said to be united with dharma. A person who is upright in this world always resides near the immortals. Therefore, a person who desires to follow dharma must always be upright. A person who is forgiving and self-restrained, if he has conquered anger and he does not cause injury, is immersed in dharma. A man who is always devoted to dharma is said to be united with dharma. A person must not be distracted and must have dharma in his soul. To the best of his capacity, he must resort to the path of the virtuous. His intelligence and character are then supreme and he is thought to be immersed in the brahman.”

‘“‘Uma asked, “O god! There are ascetics who are stores of austerities. They are radiant in their states. What kind of conduct ensures this for them? O illustrious one! There are also kings and princes, poor or extremely rich. Through what deeds can they obtain great fruits? O god! There are also forest dwellers who obtain eternal regions where they are smeared with divine sandalwood paste. What are their deeds? O god! I have a doubt about the auspicious pursuit of austerities. O three-eyed one! O destroyer of Tripura! Tell me everything about this.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “There are self-controlled people who follow the vow of fasting. They are non-violent and truthful in speech. They are successful and without disease. After death, they find delight with the gandharvas. In the right place and following the ordinances, they lie down in manduka yoga. They have dharma in their souls and initiate themselves. They find delight with the nagas. There are those who reside with deer and survive on the basis of grass that falls off from the mouth of deer. They initiate themselves in this. They go to Amaravati[411] and find delight there. There are those who follow the vow of surviving on moss and dried leaves. They always follow the yoga of exposing themselves to the cold. They go to the supreme destination. There are those who survive on wind and air and eat fruits and roots. They obtain the prosperity of the yakshas and find delight with large numbers of apsaras. There are those who follow the rites instructed in the ordinances. They follow the yoga of exposing themselves to the fire and the heat. If they do this for twelve years, they become kings. If a sage controls his food and carefully observes the rituals for twelve years, near a desert, he becomes a king.[412] If a person initiates himself into the vow of lying down on the bare ground, with the open sky in every direction, and follows this for twelve years, he obtains happiness. O beautiful one! A person who lies down on the ground obtains many kinds of fruits, extremely expensive beds and houses and the radiance of the moon. If a person obtains subsistence through his own self and is controlled and restrained in food, giving up his life through fasting, he obtains heaven. If a person initiates himself in the vow of obtaining subsistence through his own self, follows this for twelve years and gives up his body in the great ocean, he obtains Varuna’s world. If a person initiates himself in the vow of obtaining subsistence through his own self, follows this for twelve years and pierces his feet with stones, he obtains delight with the guhyakas. There may be a person who cleanses his soul with his own atman. He is beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and is without possessions. Immersed in his mind alone, he initiates himself into this vow, which he observes for twelve years. He obtains the world of heaven and finds delight with the gods. If a person initiates himself into the vow of obtaining subsistence through his own self, follows this for twelve years and then gives up his body as an oblation into the fire, he obtains greatness in Agni’s world. O goddess! There may be a brahmana who is controlled and has initiated himself into the proper ordinances. He immerses himself in his atman. He is beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and is without possessions. Immersed in his mind alone, he initiates himself into this vow, which he follows for twelve years. He then ties a pile of kindling to his shoulder, but is otherwise unattired. He always devotes himself to the path meant for brave ones and is in virasana. He is always in virasthana and gives up his life in the way followed by brave people. He goes to Shakra’s eternal world, where he is honoured with all the objects of desire. It is full of divine flowers and he is smeared with celestial sandalwood paste. With dharma in his soul, he resides happily in heaven, with large numbers of gods. If a brave person is always engaged in the yoga followed by brave people, if he is spirited and gives everything up and if he initiates himself into the path followed by brave people and is always controlled and pure, then he obtains the eternal worlds that are meant for brave people. With great ease, he roams around on celestial vehicles that can go wherever they want. He is handsome and without disease. He goes to Shakra’s world and finds happiness there.”’”’

Chapter 1812(131)

‘“‘Uma said, “O illustrious one! O one who plucked out Bhaga’s eyes! O one who struck down Pushan’s teeth![413] O one who destroyed Daksha’s sacrifice! O three-eyed one! I have a great doubt. In ancient times, the illustrious Svayambhu created the four varnas. Through what perverse deeds does a vaishya become a shudra? How does a kshatriya become a vaishya and a brahmana become a kshatriya? O god! By following what kind of dharma is one capable of preventing this degradation of varnas? As a consequence of what deeds is a brahmana reborn as a shudra? O lord! Through what deeds does a kshatriya become a shudra? O god! O lord of the bhutas! O unblemished one! I have a doubt. Tell me. How can those who naturally belong to the other three varnas become brahmanas?”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! O auspicious one! The status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. One is a brahmana as a result of creation. It is my view that kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras are also created.[414] However, because of wicked deeds, a brahmana can be dislodged from his state. Therefore, being the best of the varnas, a brahmana must try to protect that status. If a kshatriya or vaishya follows a brahmana’s dharma and lives in the manner indicated for brahmanas, he too can obtain the status of a brahmana. If a person abandons the status of a brahmana and follows the dharma of a kshatriya, he is dislodged from the status of a brahmana and is reborn as a kshatriya. The status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain. However, because of greed and confusion, a brahmana may always resort to the work of vaishyas and this shows extreme folly. A brahmana can thus become a vaishya and a vaishya can become a shudra. A brahmana can be dislodged from his own dharma and can become a shudra. Such a brahmana is dislodged from his varna and becomes an outcast. He goes to hell and is dislodged from Brahma’s world. He is reborn as a shudra. An immensely fortunate kshatriya or vaishya can also deviate from his own dharma and tasks and follow the tasks meant for a shudra. Dislodged from this own position, he causes a confusion of varnas. In this way, brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas can become shudras. If a person is pure and is engaged in his own dharma, if he pursues jnana and vijnana without being sullied, if he knows about dharma and follows dharma, he obtains the fruits of dharma. O goddess! After this, I will recount what was recited by Brahma. ‘The virtuous faithfully pursue dharma, kama and adhyatma.’ Food cooked by those who are fierce, food cooked together for large groups and food at the funeral ceremony for a miscarriage at birth are condemened. Tainted food and food served by a shudra must never be eaten. O goddess! Food cooked by a shudra is condemned. It is my view that the proof for this lies in the words that emanated from the mouth of the grandfather, the great-souled god of the gods. If one dies with some of the food from a shudra undigested in one’s stomach, even if one has offered oblations into the fire, one is reborn as a shudra. Because of the undigested food from a shudra, one is dislodged from the status of a brahmana. Such a brahmana becomes a shudra. There is nothing to think about this. If a brahmana dies with undigested food in his stomach, whatever be the varna of the person from whom he received that food, he is reborn as that varna. The status of a brahmana is extremely difficult to obtain and is sacred. If one disrespects it and eats food that should not be eaten, one is dislodged from the status of a brahmana. A brahmana who drinks liquor, is guilty of killing a brahmana, is mean in behaviour, is a thief, breaks his vows, is impure, is negligent about studying, is wicked, greedy, deceitful and fraudulent, is without vows, is the husband of a vrishala lady, eats directly from the cooking vessel, sells soma and serves those who are inferior is dislodged from a brahmana birth. A brahmana who violates his preceptor’s bed, hates his preceptor and maligns his preceptor is dislodged from a brahmana birth, even if he happens to know about the brahman. However, by performing the acts associated with virtuous conduct, a shudra can obtain the status of a brahmana and a vaishya that of a kshatriya. Following the law and the ordinances, a shudra must make efforts to serve and attend to the needs of the superior varnas. Without any distraction, a shudra must always remain established in this path of the virtuous. He must honour gods and brahmanas and observe the vow of showing hospitality towards all guests. He must be controlled and restrained in diet and approach his wife when it is her season. He must search out accomplished people and separate them from the unaccomplished. He must eat leftover food. A shudra who desires to become a vaishya must not eat pointless meat. He must be truthful in speech. He must be without a sense of pride. He must be beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and must be knowledgable about tranquility. He must always perform sacrifices. He must be pure and supremely devoted to studying. He must be self-controlled. He must honour brahmanas and seek the welfare of all the varnas. He must be in the state of a householder and must only eat in the morning and in the evening.[415] He must conquer the inclination to eat and subsist on leftovers. He must be without desire and without ego. Following the rites, he must offer libations at agnihotra sacrifices. He should eat the food that is left after all the guests have eaten. A vaishya must thus tend to the three fires. Such a vaishya is pure and obtains greatness by being born in a family of kshatriyas. If such a vaishya is born as a kshatriya, observes all the sacraments from the time of birth, performs virtuous deeds and observes all the vows, thereafter, he becomes a brahmana. Born as a kshatriya, he must cleanse himself, perform sacrifices and donate copious amounts of dakshina. If he desires heaven, he must always study and tend to the three fires. He must always stretch out a hand towards the afflicted and following dharma, protect the subjects. He must be truthful and always seek happiness in following the truth. Following dharma, he must use the rod of chastisement. He must not hesitate to use the rod of chastisement in ensuring adherence to dharma. In all acts, he must be bound by not extracting more than one-sixth.[416] A person who knows about artha must be comfortable in matters of sexual intercourse. A person who has dharma in his soul must always have intercourse with his wife when it is her season. He must be controlled in observing fasts. He must be pure and supremely devoted to studying. He must always sleep on a bed of kusha grass. There must always be a fire in his house. With a cheerful mind, he must attend to all the guests and pursue the three objectives. He must always tell shudras who desire food that it is available. No desire should be discernible that is driven by selfish motives. He must seek to tend to ancestors, gods and guests. In his own house, he must live like a mendicant. Following the ordinances, he must render oblations into the fire thrice a day. He must not turn his back in a battle and must lay down his life for cows and brahmanas. Or, he must give up his life by entering the three fires that have sanctified with mantras. Such a person becomes a brahmana. A kshatriya who has cleansed himself, is full of jnana and vijnana, is accomplished in the Vedas and has dharma in his soul can become a brahmana through his own deeds. These are the fruits of deeds obtained by those who are born in inferior varnas. A shudra who cleanses himself in this way can become a brahmana. A brahmana who is indiscriminate about which varna he accepts food from can become an outcast. He may have to give up the sacredness associated with the status of being a brahmana and become a shudra. A shudra who is pure in his deeds, pure in his soul and has conquered his senses can obtain the status of becoming a brahmana. Brahma himself said this. It is my view that a shudra who is naturally pure in his deeds should be known as one who is purer than a brahmana. Birth, sacraments, learning and humility are not sufficient reasons for a person to be a brahmana. Conduct is the only reason. All the brahmanas in the world obtain that status because of conduct. O one with the beautiful hips! A person who possesses that good conduct obtains the status of a brahmana. O fortunate one! It is my view that the nature of being a brahmana is equal everywhere[417]—wherever the sparkling brahman, devoid of qualities, exists, that person is a brahmana. O goddess! Depending on the place, the fruits of birth are only for purposes of classification. Brahma, the granter of boons, created subjects and spoke of it in this way. The status of being a brahmana is like a great field that roams around on earth, using its feet. The seeds that are sown in that field lead to crops in the hereafter. A person who is always restrained in diet and is always on the path of the virtuous is one who walks along Brahma's path and obtains greatness. When he is in a house in the form of a householder, he must always show the traits of studying the samhitas. He must always devote himself to studies and earn a living through donations and studies. A brahmana who acts in this way and is always based on the path of virtue, offering oblations into the fire, is regarded as one who is immersed in the brahman. Once one has obtained the status of a brahmana, one must make all one's efforts to preserve it through deeds and not accepting gifts from inferior varnas. O one with the sweet smiles! I have thus told you everything about how a shudra can become a brahmana. I have also told you about how a brahmana can be dislodged from dharma and can become a shudra."'"'

Chapter 1813(132)

'"'Uma asked, "O illustrious one! O lord of all the bhutas! O one who is worshipped by the gods and the asuras! O god! O lord! I have a doubt about dharma and adharma for men. Tell me about this. Men are always bound down in three ways—deeds, thoughts and words. They are also freed from nooses through these means. O god! Through what kinds of good deeds, what kinds of qualities in conduct and what kinds of speech do men go to heaven?”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! You know the truth about the purport of dharma. You are always devoted to truth and self-control. However, engaged in the welfare of all beings, you have asked a question that enhances intelligence. Listen. A virtuous person is devoted to the dharma of truth. He discards every kind of desire. He dispels all his doubts and is not bound down by dharma or adharma. He is omniscient and looks on everything equally. He knows the truth about destruction and falling down. Such men are beyond attachment and are freed from all bondage. Such a man does not cause any injury in deeds, thoughts and words. They are never attached and are not bound down by any kinds of deeds. They are not addicted to taking the lives of others. They are virtuous in conduct and are full of compassion. They are impartial towards what is hated and what is agreeable. They are controlled and are freed from all the bondage of deeds. They are compassionate towards all creatures. They grant assurance to all beings. Such men discard all injurious tendencies in their conduct and go to heaven. They never have a sense of ownership about what belongs to others. They avoid the wives of other people. Men who enjoy the riches obtained through dharma go to heaven. Men who always act towards other people’s wives as if they are mothers, sisters or daughters, go to heaven. They always refrain from theft and are satisfied with their own riches. Men who are content with what fortune has given them go to heaven. They are devoted to their own wives and have intercourse when it is the season. Men who do not hanker after sexual intercourse like vulgar people go to heaven. Their conduct is such that they always withdraw their glances from looking towards the wives of other people. They control their senses. Such men exhibit supreme good conduct and go to heaven. These men always tread along the path that has been created by the gods. Learned men always tread along this path, even if they are not attired in ochre. They follow the dharma of donating. They observe good conduct and purity. They are compassionate. For the sake of earning a living, such men always follow dharma. Virtuous men who wish to reside in heaven should follow this and nothing else.”

‘“‘Uma said, “There are words that bind down and there are also those that lead to liberation. O god! O lord of creatures! O unblemished one! Tell me about those.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “For one’s own self, for the sake of someone else, for sport or for laughter, if a man never utters a falsehood, he goes to heaven. For the sake of subsistence, for the sake of dharma, or for the sake of satisfying desire, if a man never utters a falsehood, he goes to heaven. Men who speak gentle, harmless and sweet words that are devoid of sin, and those who utter words of welcome go to heaven. Virtuous men do not utter bitter, harsh and cruel words, and are not addicted to slander. They go to heaven. There are men who avoid calumny and do not use words that cause dissension. They only utter words that ensure friendship. They go to heaven. There are men who never seek to hate others and do not seek to search out their weaknesses. They are self-controlled and equal in treatment towards all creatures. They go to heaven. There are those who avoid deceitful and vain talk and words that are against others. They always indulge in amiable speech. They go to heaven. Because of anger or fear, they do not utter words that shatter the hearts of others. Even when angered, they speak comforting words. Such men go to heaven. O goddess! In speech, a man must always follow this kind of dharma. This is auspicious and has the quality of truth. A learned person must always avoid falsehood.”

‘“‘Uma said, “A man is always bound down by his thoughts and deeds. O immensely fortunate one! O god of the gods! O wielder of Pinaka! Tell me about those.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “A man must always exhibit dharma in his thoughts. O fortunate one! He will then go to heaven. I will tell you about it. Listen. If there are wicked thoughts, the acts these lead to are more evil. They bind men down. O one with the beautiful face! Listen. Even if a man seeks something that belongs to someone else, abandoned in a deserted forest, and does not entertain thoughts about appropriating it, he goes to heaven. If a man never desires an object that belongs to someone else, in a village, house or a deserted place, he goes to heaven. In that fashion, if a man never desires to have intercourse with someone else’s wife, not even in his mind, he goes to heaven. A man whose thoughts are such that he always regards a friend and an enemy as equal, and treats both as friends when he meets them, goes to heaven. A man who is learned, compassionate, pure, devoted to the truth and satisfied with what belongs to him, goes to heaven. A man whose nature avoids enmity, one whose intelligence is always turned towards friendship and one who is compassionate towards all beings, goes to heaven. If a man is faithful, compassionate, virtuous, loves association with virtuous people and always knows the difference between dharma and adharma, he goes to heaven. O goddess! If a man knows the fruits and consequences of good and bad deeds, he goes to heaven. A man who follows the law, possesses the qualities, is always devoted to gods and brahmanas and reveres those who should be shown respect, goes to heaven. I have recounted to you the fruits of auspicious deeds about the path that leads to heaven. What do you wish to hear next?”

‘“‘Uma said, “O Maheshvara! I have a great doubt about mortal creatures. Therefore, you should explain this to me in a skilful way. O lord! Through what deeds does a man obtain a long life? O lord of the gods! Through what great austerities does one obtain a long life? On earth, because of what deeds does a man obtain a short life? O god! O unblemished one! You should tell me about these perverse deeds. Some obtain great fortune. Others obtain ill fortune. Some are born in ignoble families. Others are born in noble families. Some men are hideous and look like pieces of wood. Other men are handsome and beautiful to behold. Some are limited in intelligence, others are wise. Some are extremely wise and have insight about jnana and vijnana. Some face few obstructions, others confront great impediments. O god! Men are seen to be like this. You should instruct me about this.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! I will tell you about the fruits of deeds. In the world of mortals, all men enjoy these fruits. There may be a fierce man who is engaged in taking the lives of others, with a staff raised in his hand. With staffs raised in their hands, large numbers of demons always attack him.[418] There may be a man who is cruel towards all beings. He always causes anxiety to everyone. He is so wicked that he doesn’t even spare insects and ants. O goddess! Such a man goes to hell. If a hideous person has dharma in his soul, he is reborn handsome. A person with injurious tendencies in his soul goes to hell. A person who doesn’t cause injury goes to heaven. In hell, a man confronts terrible hardships. Having passed through hell, some are reborn as humans, but have short lifespans. O goddess! A man who is addicted to violence is bound down by his wicked deeds. A person who causes injury to all creatures is reborn as one with a short lifespan. A person who does not kill beings, has cast aside his staff and does not use his staff against anyone, one who does not strike or kill even when he is struck and one who is affectionate towards all creatures, treating others like his own self, is reborn as a pure person. O goddess! These kinds of men are the best and obtain divinity. They obtain happiness and all the objects of pleasure. They will obtain bliss. When such a person is reborn in the world of men, he obtains happiness and a long life. Through good conduct and good deeds, this is the path to obtain a long life. Brahma has spoken about liberation through lack of injury towards creatures.”’”’

Chapter 1814(133)

‘“‘Uma asked, “Through what kind of conduct, behaviour, deeds and donations does a man obtain heaven?”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “O goddess! If a man is generous, honours brahmanas, is compassionate towards the distressed and the blind, donates food, grain, drink and garments, constructs dwelling houses, assemblies, wells, lakes and ponds and cheerfully gives all those who desire, and not just one single person, seats, beds, vehicles, riches, jewels, houses, all kinds of grain, cattle, fields and women—when such a person dies, he obtains the world of the gods. He dwells there for a long period of time, enjoying all the objects of pleasure. With apsaras for company, he sports and obtains bliss in Nandana and other pleasure gardens. Thereafter, when he is dislodged from heaven, he is reborn in the world of men. O goddess! However, he is born in a family that possesses all the objects of pleasure, with riches and grain. With all the qualities of desire, he finds delight there. Such a man is prosperous. He has large stores of treasure and many objects of pleasure. O goddess! In this way, a person who is generous in his conduct towards all creatures obtains all the objects of pleasure and is handsome in every way. Brahma himself spoke about this in ancient times. O goddess! There are others who are niggardly in giving to brahmanas. They are limited in intelligence and do not give, even when they have possessions. Even when they see distressed, blind and afflicted people and mendicants and guests who are seeking, they turn them away. They are addicted to their own tongues and greed. They do not give riches, garments, objects of pleasure, food, gold, cattle, not even food that is not good. They follow evil conduct. They are greedy and non-believers. They are devoid of generosity. O goddess! Such foolish men always go to hell. After some time has passed, they are reborn as men. But these ones, limited in intelligence, are born in families that lack riches. They are overwhelmed by hunger and thirst. They do not enjoy the objects of pleasure. They lose hope about obtaining all the objects of pleasure. They subsist by following inferior methods of living. Such men are born in families that have few objects of pleasure. They suffer from ill fortune. O goddess! It is through their own deeds that these men are born poor. There are others who are insolent and proud, always addicted to wicked deeds. Lacking sense, they do not offer seats, even to those who deserve them. Limited in intelligence, they do not yield right of way to those who should be granted right of way. Limited in intelligence, they do not offer padya to those who should be offered padya. They do not follow the ordinances and worship and honour those who should be revered by giving them arghya. Limited in intelligence, they do not offer arghya and water for ablutions to those who deserve them. When a preceptor arrives, they do not treat the preceptor with the affection that he deserves. Their conduct is driven by insolence and they are full of greed. They disrespect those who should be revered. They seek to subjugate their seniors. O goddess! Such kinds of men always go to hell. After many years have passed, these men overcome hell and are born again, but in inferior families. Those insensible people, those who disrespect their preceptors and seniors, are born in inferior lineages, like those of svapakas and *pulkasas*.[419] A person who is not insolent and proud, one who worships gods and brahmanas, one who bows down before everyone and uses sweets words, one who does what is agreeable to all varnas and is always engaged in the welfare of all beings, is honoured in the worlds. Such a person does not hate. He is pleasant and gentle in his words. His speech is always agreeable. He does not cause injury to any being and has words of welcome for everyone. He always observes the virtuous ordinances and worships those who deserve to be shown respect. He yields the right of way to those who should be given right of way. He worships preceptors as a preceptor should be worshipped. He receives guests who arrive and honours the others who come. O goddess! Such men obtain the destination of heaven. When such a person is reborn as a man, this occurs in a superior family. There are all the objects of pleasure there and the family possesses all the jewels. He follows supreme dharma and donates to those who should be given. He is revered by all creatures. All the worlds bow down before him. Such a man always obtains these fruits because of his own deeds. He obtains a superior lineage and associates with those who are superior. I have spoken about the dharma that the creator himself spoke about. There may be a person who is fierce in conduct. All creatures are terrified of him. He strikes them with his hands and feet and sticks, or binds them up in ropes. O beautiful one! He stupefies creatures with bricks and other methods and ties them up. He is deceitful in his intelligence, causing violence and agitation. He always attacks creatures and makes them anxious. A person who shows this kind of conduct goes to hell. After some time has passed, he is born as a man. However, he is reborn in an inferior family and has to face many kinds of impediments and hardships. This wicked man hated creatures and these are the fruits of his own deeds. O goddess! Know that this man's relatives and friends also have similar natures. There may be another person who is seen to be compassionate towards all creatures. He looks on everyone with a friendly eye, and treats them the way a father treats his son. He is in control of his senses and is without any enmity. He does not agitate creatures or cause any violence to them. He controls his hands and feet and offers assurance to all beings. He does not use ropes, rods, sticks and weapons to agitate creatures. He is gentle in his deeds and is full of compassion. A person with good conduct of this nature obtains heaven. He obtains delight in that divine residence, dwelling like a god. After those deeds have been exhausted, he is reborn in the mortal world as a human. However, when he is born, he faces no hardships or impediments and obtains happiness. Without any effort, he obtains happiness. Such a man is always without any anxiety. O goddess! These are the paths of the virtuous, where there are no obstructions."

'"'Uma said, "Some men are seen to be accomplished in commentaries and debating. They are full of jnana and vijnana. They are wise and learned about meanings. O god! There are others who find wisdom difficult to obtain. They are devoid of jnana and vijnana. Through what specific deeds does a man become wise? O Virupaksha! How does a man become limited in wisdom? O supreme among those who know about all kinds of dharma! Dispel my doubt about this. O god! Some are born blind. Others are afflicted by disease. Some men are seen to be eunuchs. Tell me the reason for this.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “There are brahmanas who are learned about the Vedas. They are successful and know about dharma. They incessantly ask about what is good and what is bad. They avoid inauspicious deeds and practise the auspicious ones. They always obtain heaven and happiness in this world. When they are reborn as men, they become intelligent. They are learned and wise and obtain what is beneficial. If a foolish person looks at another person’s wife with a wicked eye, because of that evil sentiment, he is reborn as a blind person. With wicked intent, if a man looks at naked women, because of that evil deed, he is reborn as a person who is afflicted with disease. If a foolish man is evil in conduct and engages in an act of sexual intercourse with someone from another varna, because of that lack of wisdom, he is reborn as an eunuch. A man who binds animals, violates his preceptor’s bed and indulges in indiscriminate sexual intercourse, is reborn as one who is impotent.”

‘“‘Uma asked, “What are virtuous deeds? What leads to hell? O supreme among gods! How can a man obtain what is beneficial?”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “A person who wishes to stay on the virtuous path must always ask brahmanas. A person who searches for dharma and desires the qualities obtains heaven. O goddess! Thereafter, when he is reborn as a human, he is intelligent and wise and retains his memory. O goddess! This is the revered dharma of the virtuous and it leads to prosperity. For the welfare of men, I have told you about this.”

‘“‘Uma said, “There are men who are limited in knowledge. They hate dharma. They do not desire to approach brahmanas who are learned in the Vedas. There are other men who follow vows and are full of devotion and self-control. There are others who deviate from vows and rituals and are like rakshasas. Some perform sacrifices. Others do not offer oblations. What kind of deeds lead to these outcomes? Tell me.”

‘“‘Maheshvara replied, “For the worlds, the ordinances of dharma have been laid down earlier in the sacred texts. However, even those who are firm in vows are subsequently seen to become ordinary in conduct. Because they are overcome by delusion, those who speak about dharma practise adharma. Those who deviate from their vows and ordinances are said to become Brahma-rakshasas.[420] After some time has passed, they regain their enterprise and are reborn as humans. However, they do not offer oblations. They do not utter vashatkara and are the worst among men. O goddess! I have thus dispelled all your doubts. I have told you about what is good and bad for men and about the ocean of dharma.”’”’

Chapter 1815(134)

‘“‘Maheshvara said, “O one who knows about the supreme! O one who knows about dharma! O one who resides in hermitages! O virtuous one! O one with the excellent brows! O one with beautiful tips of the hair! O daughter of the Himalaya mountain! O accomplished one! O one who possesses tranquility and self-control! O one who has no sense of ownership! O one who follows dharma! O beautiful one! I am asking you. I wish to ask you about something. Tell me. Savitri is Brahma’s virtuous wife, Shachi is Koushika’s[421] virtuous wife, Dhumorni is the wife of Martanda’s son,[422] Riddhi is Vaishravana’s[423] wife, Gouri is Varuna’s wife, Suvarchala is Surya’s wife, Rohini is the virtuous wife of the moon, Svaha is the wife of Vibhavasu[424] and Aditi is the wife of Kashyapa. All of them regard their husbands as gods. O goddess! You have always spoken to all of them and have asked them. O one who knows about dharma! O one who speaks about dharma! That is the reason I am asking you. I wish to hear about the dharma of women, which you also follow vis-à-vis me. You observe dharma with me. Your conduct is similar to mine. Your vows are similar to mine. Your attributes and energy are similar to mine. You have performed terrible austerities. Whatever you speak to me will become a yardstick. This will be specific to women and will always be the objective of women. O Gouri! O one with the beautiful hips! This will always be observed on earth and be established in all the worlds.

Your body is half of my body. It has emerged from half of my body. You are the one who performs the tasks of the gods. You are the one who caused the worlds to have offspring. O beautiful one! You know everything about the eternal dharma of women. Therefore, in detail, tell me about the specific dharma of women.”

‘“‘Uma replied, “O illustrious one! O lord of all beings! O creator of the past, the present and the future! O god! It is because of your powers that these words are manifesting themselves before me. O lord of the gods! These rivers, with the waters of all the tirthas, have approached near you, so that you can touch their waters. After consulting them, I will progressively tell you everything.[425] Purusha is said to be someone who possesses the powers, but has no sense of ego.[426] O lord of creatures! Women always tend to follow other women. These rivers will therefore be honoured by me. This sacred river, Sarasvati, is supreme among all rivers. This is the foremost among all rivers and heads towards the ocean. There are Vipasha, Vitasta, Chandrabhaga, Iravati, Shatadru, Devika, Sindhu, Koushiki, Gomati and the river of the gods, which has all the tirthas and is the supreme rivers which has come down to earth from heaven, the goddess Ganga.” This is what the wife of the god among the gods, supreme among the upholders of dharma, said. She first smiled and then addressed all those rivers. Devoted to dharma, the goddess and queen asked them about the dharma of women. All of them, with Ganga, supreme among rivers, as the foremost, were accomplished about the dharma of women. Uma said, “The illustrious one has asked a question about the dharma of women. I wish to speak to Shankara after I have consulted you. I do not see any knowledge on earth that is possessed by one single individual. Whether you are in heaven, or whether you head towards the ocean, I am therefore showing you respect.”’”

‘Bhishma continued, “Those best among rivers were auspicious and extremely sacred and were thus asked. They appointed Ganga, the river of the gods, who worshipped her.[427] She[428] was prosperous with a great deal of intelligence. She was sweet in her smiles and knew about the dharma of women. She spoke to the goddess who was the auspicious and sacred daughter of the king of the mountains, the one who destroys all sins. She[429] was intelligent and full of humility. She was accomplished in all kinds of knowledge. Possessing great intelligence, Ganga smiled and spoke these words. 'O goddess! O one who is devoted to dharma! We are blessed that you have shown us your favours. O unblemished one! You are revered by the entire universe, but you have shown honour to a river. If a powerful person asks another person, there is no doubt that the questioner should be respected. There is no doubt that a person who is evil-souled will not go to a learned person. A person who knows about jnana and vijnana and is accomplished in commentaries and arguments, but who does not ask others before replying, is not worthy of respect, even if he speaks extremely learned words in an assembly. If he is driven by a sense of ego, he ends up uttering words that are weak in import. You are foremost in heaven in your divine knowledge. The divine and the sacred are always present in you. O goddess! In instructions about the dharma of women, you are the one who should be worshipped by us.' The goddess was thus praised by Ganga because of her many qualities. The extremely beautiful one among the gods[430] then began to speak everything about the dharma of women. 'In accordance with the ordinances, the dharma of women manifests itself to me. I will thus speak about what is praiseworthy. In a marriage, the relatives speak about the dharma that women should follow. In the presence of a fire, she agrees to follow the dharma of her husband. She must be pleasant in nature and sweet in speech. She must be good in conduct and must be pleasant in her appearance. With an attentive mind and a pleasant face, she must follow the dharma of her husband. This is the supreme dharma for a woman who wishes to have a share in dharma. A virtuous wife always regards her husband as a divinity. In her conduct, she attends to him and follows his words, as if a god has spoken it. She does not exhibit any sentiments of disregarding this and is excellent in her vows. She derives as much happiness from looking at her husband as from looking at her son's face. She is virtuous and controlled in her conduct. Such a wife follows dharma. It has been heard that the dharma of a couple is to follow the sacred dharma together. A wife whose intelligence is devoted to her husband and who bears a pleasant visage is one who follows that dharma. She does not speak harsh words, or does not glance at him with cruelty in her eyes. A woman who exhibits an extremely pleasant face towards her husband is one who is devoted to her husband. Such a beautiful woman does not look at the moon or the sun, or at a tree that has an appellation of being male. If she looks at none other than her husband, she is one who follows dharma. A woman who attends to her husband like a son, even if he is poor, diseased, distressed, or weak from travels, is one who obtains a share in dharma. If a woman is accomplished and self-controlled, if she has sons, if she is devoted to her husband and if she loves her husband, then that woman has a share in dharma. If a woman always serves and tends, without any distraction, if she is extremely happy and humble, then she obtains a share in the dharma. If a woman does not desire any objects of pleasure, prosperity or happiness other than her husband, then she has a share in that dharma. She always awakes at the right time and attends to the seniors. She keeps the house clean and rubs it down with cow dung. She always tends to the fire and makes offerings of flowers. With her husband, she satisfies gods, guests and servants. Following the law and the ordinances, she subsists on leftover food. A woman who always satisfies and nourishes people is united with dharma. Possessing the qualities, she satisfies the father-in-law and the mother-in-law, attentive at their feet. She is always devoted to her mother and her father and possesses a store of austerities. A woman who nourishes brahmanas, the weak, those without protectors, the distressed, the blind and the destitute with food is one who takes part in the vows of her husband. With a light spirit, she always practises vows that are extremely difficult to observe. Her mind is on her husband. She is engaged in the welfare of her husband. She is one who has a share in the vows of her husband. A woman who regards her husband as supreme, practises auspicious austerities, which convey her to eternal heaven. She is sacred and follows her husband's vows. For women, the husband is the god. The husband is the friend. The husband is the destination. There is no objective equal to the husband. There is no divinity equal to the husband. There is no heaven that can match a woman as much as a husband's favours. O Maheshvara! If you are pleased with me, that is beneficial heaven for me. Even if a poor or diseased husband asks the wife to undertake a task that is adharma or leads to a loss in life, even if that task is a vice or leads to a curse imposed by brahmanas, regarding this as the dharma to be followed in a time of catastrophe, that task must be undertaken, without any reflection. In accordance with your words, I have thus recounted the dharma of women. A beautiful woman who conducts herself in this way obtains a share in dharma.' Thus addressed, the lord of the gods worshipped the daughter of the mountain. He then gave all the people permission to leave, including his supreme companions. The large numbers of bhutas and the rivers went away, to wherever they had come from. The gandharvas and the apsaras also bowed their heads down before Bhava."'

Chapter 1816(135)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having heard everything about dharma and about everything that purifies, Yudhishthira again spoke to Shantanu's son. "Who is the single divinity in the world? Who is the single one who is the refuge? Who should a man praise and worship to obtain what is beneficial? In your view, what is the supreme dharma among all kinds of dharma? What mantras should be chanted to free a creature from the bondage of this cycle of life?"

'Bhishma replied, "The lord of the universe is the infinite god of the gods. He is Purushottama. A man must always arise and chant his one thousand names. A man must always devotedly worship the one without decay. One must meditate on him and praise him. One must perform sacrifices for him. Vishnu is without beginning and without end. He is the great lord of all the worlds. He is the controller of the worlds and must always be praised. One will then transcend all misery. He is devoted to brahmanas. He knows about all kinds of dharma. He is the one who enhances deeds in the worlds. He is the protector of the worlds. He is the great being. All the creatures originated in him. It is my view that this is the supreme dharma among all kinds of dharma. A man must always devotedly praise Pundarikaksha. He is supreme in his great energy. He is supreme in his great austerities. He is the supreme and great brahman. He is the supreme refuge. He is purest among all objects that are pure. He is the most auspicious among all objects that are auspicious. He is the god among all the gods. He is the undecaying father of all creatures. When the beginning of a yuga commences, all creatures owe their origin to him. When there is destruction at the end of a yuga, everything merges into him. O lord of the earth! He is Jagannatha, foremost in the worlds. Listen to Vishnu's one thousand names. They dispel all sin and fear. The great-souled one possesses minor names and famous ones. The rishis chanted them. For the sake of prosperity, I will state them. (1) Vishva;[431] (2) Vishnu; (3) Vashatkara; (4) Bhuta-bhavya-bhavat-prabhu;[432] (5) Bhuta-krit;[433] (6) Bhuta-bhrit;[434] (7) Bhava;[435] (8) Bhutatman;[436] (9) Bhuta-bhavana;[437] (10) Putatman;[438] (11) Paramatman; (12) Muktanam-parama-gati;[439] (13) Avyaya;[440] (14) Purusha;[441] (15) Sakshi;[442] (16) Kshetrajna; (17) Akshara;[443] (18) Yoga; (19) Yoga-vidam-neta;[444] (20) Pradhana-purusheshvara;[445] (21) Narasimha-vapu;[446] (22) Shrimat;[447] (23) Keshava;[448] (24) Purushottama;[449] (25) Sarva;[450] (26) Sharva;[451] (27) Shiva;[452] (28) Sthanu;[453] (29) Bhutadi;[454] (30) Nidhi-avyaya;[455] (31) Sambhava;[456] (32) Bhavana;[457] (33) Bharta;[458] (34) Prabhava;[459] (35) Prabhurishvara;[460] (36) Svayambhu; (37) Shambhuraditya;[461] (38) Pushkaraksha;[462] (39) Mahasvana;[463] (40) Anadi-nidhana;[464] (41) Dhatri;[465] (42) Vidhatri;[466] (43) Dhaturuttama;[467] (44) Aprameya;[468] (45) Hrishikesha;[469] (46) Padmanabha;[470] (47) Amara-prabhu;[471] (48) Vishvakarma;[472] (49) Manu; (50) Tvashtri;[473] (51) Sthavishtha;[474] (52) Sthavira;[475] (53) Dhruva;[476] (54) Agrahya;[477] (55) Shashvata;[478] (56) Krishna; (57) Lohitaksha;[479] (58) Pratardana;[480] (59) Prabhuta;[481] (60) Trikakubdham;[482] (61) Pavitra;[483] (62) Mangala;[484] (63) Parama;[485] (64) Ishana;[486] (65) Pranada;[487] (66) Prana;[488] (67) Jyeshtha;[489] (68) Shreshtha;[490] (69) Prajapati; (70) Hiranyagarba;[491] (71) Bhugarbha;[492] (72) Madhava;[493] (73) Madusudana;[494] (74) Ishvara; (75) Vikrami;[495] (76) Dhanvi;[496] (77) Medhavi;[497] (78) Vikrama-krama;[498] (79) Anuttoma;[499] (80) Duradharsha;[500] (81) Kritajna;[501] (82) Kritiratmavan;[502] (83) Suresha;[503] (84) Sharana;[504] (85) Sharma;[505] (86) Vishvareta;[506] (87) Prajabhava;[507] (88) Aha;[508] (89) Samvatsara;[509] (90) Vyala;[510] (91) Pratyaya;[511] (92) Sarva-darshana;[512] (93) Aja;[513] (94) Sarveshvara;[514] (95) Siddha;[515] (96) Siddhi;[516] (97) Sarvadirachyuta;[517] (98) Vrishakapi;[518] (99) Ameyatman;[519] (100) Sarva-yoga-vinishrita;[520] (101) Vasu;[521] (102) Vasumana;[522] (103) Satya;[523] (104) Samatman;[524] (105) Sammita;[525] (106) Sama;[526] (107) Amogha;[527] (.) Pundarikaksha;[528] (108) Vrishakarma;[529] (109) Vrishakriti;[530] (110) Rudra; (111) Bahushira;[531] (112) Babhru;[532] (113) Vishva-yoni;[533] (114) Shuchi-shrava;[534] (115) Amrita; (.) Shashvata;[535] (.) Sthanu;[536] (116) Vararoha;[537]

(117) Mahatapa;[538] (118) Sarvaga;[539] (119) Sarvavid;[540] (120) Bhanu;[541] (121) Vishvaksena;[542] (122) Janardana;[543] (123) Vedas; (124) Vedavid-avyanga;[544] (125) Vedanga; (126) Vedavid-kavi;[545] (127) Lokadhyaksha;[546] (128) Suradhyaksha;[547] (129) Dharmadhyaksha;[548] (130) Kritakrita;[549] (131) Chaturatman;[550] (132) Chaturvyuha;[551] (133) Chaturdamshtra;[552] (134) Chaturbhuja;[553] (135) Bhrajishnu;[554] (136) Bhojana;[555] (137) Bhokta;[556] (138) Sahishnu;[557] (139) Jagadadija;[558] (140) Anagha;[559] (141) Vijaya;[560] (142) Jeta;[561] (.) Vishva-yoni;[562] (143) Punarvasu;[563] (144) Upendra;[564] (145) Vamana;[565] (146) Pramshu;[566] (.) Amogha;[567] (147) Shuchirurjita;[568] (148) Atindra;[569] (149) Samgraha;[570] (150) Sarga;[571] (151) Dhritatman;[572] (152) Niyama;[573] (153) Yama;[574] (154) Vedya;[575] (155) Vaidya;[576] (154) Sadayogi;[577] (155) Viraha;[578] (.) Madhava;[579] (156) Madhu;[580] (157) Atindriya;[581] (158) Mahamaya;[582] (159) Mahotsaha;[583] (160) Mahabala;[584] (161) Mahabuddhi;[585] (162) Mahavirya;[586] (163) Mahashakti;[587] (164) Mahadyuti;[588] (165) Anirdeshya-vapu;[589] (.) Shrimat;[590] (.) Ameyatman;[591] (166) Mahadri-dhrik;[592] (167) Maheshvasa;[593] (168) Mahibharta;[594] (169) Shrinivasa;[595] (170) Satamgati;[596] (171) Aniruddha;[597] (172) Surananda;[598] (173) Govinda;[599] (174) Govidampati;[600] (175) Marichirdmana;[601] (176) Hamsa;[602] (177) Suparna;[603] (178) Bhujagottama;[604] (179) Hiranyanabha;[605] (180) Sutapa;[606] (.) Padmanabha;[607] (.) Prajapati;[608] (181) Amrityu;[609] (183) Sarvadrikimsaha;[610] (184) Samdhata;[611] (185) Samdhimat;[612] (186) Asthira;[613] (.) Aja;[614] (187) Durmarshana;[615] (188) Shasta;[616] (189) Vishrutatman;[617] (190) Surariha;[618] (191) Gururgurutama;[619] (192) Dhama;[620] (.) Satya;[621] (193) Satya-parakrama;[622] (194) Nimisha;[623] (195) Animisha;[624] (196) Sragvi;[625] (197) Vachaspati;[626] (198) Rudaradhi;[627] (199) Agrani;[628] (200) Gramani;[629] (.) Shrimat;[630] (201) Nyaya;[631] (202) Neta;[632] (203) Samirana;[633] (204) Sahasra-murdha;[634] (205) Vishvatman;[635] (206) Sahasraksha;[636] (207) Sahasra-pada;[637] (208) Avartana;[638] (209) Nivritatman;[639] (210) Samvrita;[640] (211) Sampramardana;[641] (.) Aha;[642] (212) Samvartaka;[643] (213) Vahni;[644] (214) Anila;[645] (215) Dharanidhara;[646] (216) Suprasada;[647] (217) Prasannatman;[648] (218) Vishvadhrik;[649] (219) Vishva-bhuk;[650] (220) Vibhu;[651] (220) Satkarta;[652] (221) Satkrita;[653] (222) Jahnu;[654] (223) Narayana;[655] (224) Nara;[656] (225) Amaskhyeya;[657] (226)

Aprameyatman;[658] (227) Vishishta;[659] (228) Shishtakrit;[660] (229) Shuchi;[661] (230) Siddhartha;[662] (231) Siddha-samkalpa;[663] (232) Siddhida;[664] (233) Siddhi-sadhana;[665] (234) Vrishahi;[666] (235) Vrishabha;[667] (236) Vishnu;[668] (237) Vrishaparva;[669] (238) Vrishodara;[670] (239) Vardhana;[671] (240) Vardhamana;[672] (241) Vivikta;[673] (242) Shruti-sagara;[674] (243) Subhuja;[675] (244) Durdhara;[676] (245) Vagmi;[677] (246) Mahendra;[678] (247) Vasuda;[679] (.) Vasu;[680] (248) Naikarupa;[681] (249) Brihadrupa;[682] (250) Shipivishta;[683] (251) Prakashana;[684] (252) Ojas;[685] (253) Tejas;[686] (254) Dyutidhara;[687] (255) Prakashatman;[688] (256) Pratapana;[689] (257) Riddha;[690] (258) Spashtakshara;[691] (259) Mantra; (260) Chandramshu;[692] (261) Bhaskaradyuti;[693] (262) Amritamshu;[694] (263) Bhava;[695] (264) Bhanu;[696] (265) Shashabindu;[697] (266) Sureshvara;[698] (267) Oushadha;[699] (268) Jagata;[700] (269) Setu;[701] (270) Satya-dharma-parakrama;[702] (271) Bhuta-bhavya-bhavannatha;[703] (272) Pavana;[704] (273) Paavana;[705] (.) Anila;[706] (274) Kamaha;[707] (275) Kamakrit;[708] (276) Kanta;[709] (277) Kamaprada;[710] (278) Prabhu;[711] (279) Yugadikrit;[712] (280) Yugavarta;[713] (281) Naikamaya;[714] (282) Mahashana;[715] (283) Adrishya;[716] (284) Vyakta-rupa;[717] (285) Sahasrajit;[718] (286) Anantajit;[719] (287) Ishta;[720] (.) Vishishta;[721] (288) Shishteshta;[722] (289) Shikhandi;[723] (290) Nahusha;[724] (291) Vrisha;[725] (292) Krodhaha;[726] (293) Krodhakrit;[727] (294) Karta;[728] (295) Vishva-bahu;[729] (296) Mahidhara;[730] (297) Achyuta;[731] (298) Prathita;[732] (.) Prana;[733] (.) Pranada;[734] (299) Vasavanuja;[735] (300) Apamnidhi;[736] (301) Adhishthanam;[737] (302) Apramatta;[738] (303) Pratishthita;[739] (304) Skanda; (305) Skanda-dhara;[740] (306) Dhurya;[741] (307) Varada;[742] (308) Vayu-vahana;[743] (309) Vasudeva; (310) Brihad-bhanu;[744] (311) Adideva;[745] (312) Purandara; (313) Ashoka;[746] (314) Tarana;[747] (315) Tara;[748] (316) Shura;[749] (317) Shouri;[750] (318) Janeshvara;[751] (319) Anukula;[752] (320) Shatavarta;[753] (321) Padmi;[754] (322) Padmanibhekshana;[755] (.) Padmanabha;[756] (323) Aravindaksha;[757] (324) Padmagarbha;[758] (325) Sharira-bhrit;[759] (326) Mahardhiriddha;[760] (327) Vriddhatman;[761] (328) Mahaksha;[762] (329) Garuda-dhvaja;[763] (330) Atula;[764] (331) Sharabha; (332) Bhima;[765] (333) Samayajna;[766] (334) Havi;[767] (335) Hari;[768] (336) Sarva-lakshana-lakshanya;[769] (337) Lakshmivat;[770] (338) Samitimjaya;[771] (339) Vikshara;[772] (341) Rohita;[773] (342) Marga;[774] (343) Hetu;[775] (344) Damodara;[776] (345)

Saha;[777] (.) Mahidhara;[778] (346) Mahabhaga;[779] (347) Vegavat;[780] (348) Amitashana;[781] (349) Udbhava;[782] (350) Kshobhana;[783] (351) Deva; (352) Shrigarbha;[784] (353) Parameshvara;[785] (354) Karana;[786] (355) Kaarana;[787] (.) Karta;[788] (356) Vikarta;[789] (357) Gahana;[790] (358) Guha;[791] (359) Vyavasaya;[792] (360) Vyavasthana;[793] (361) Samsthana;[794] (362) Sthanada;[795] (.) Dhruva;[796] (363) Parariddhi;[797] (364) Parama;[798] (365) Spashtastushta;[799] (366) Pushta;[800] (367) Shubhekshana;[801] (368) Rama;[802] (369) Virama;[803] (370) Virata;[804] (.) Marga;[805] (371) Neya;[806] (372) Naya;[807] (373) Anaya;[808] (374) Vira;[809] (375) Shaktimatam-shreshtha;[810] (376) Dharma; (377) Dharma-viduttoma;[811] (378) Vaikuntha; (.) Purusha;[812] (.) Prana;[813] (.) Pranada;[814] (379) Pranava;[815] (380) Prithu;[816] (381) Hiranya-garbha;[817] (382) Shatrughna;[818] (383) Vyapta;[819] (384) Vayu;[820] (385) Adhokshaja;[821] (386) Ritu;[822] (387) Sudarshana;[823] (388) Kala;[824] (389) Parameshthi;[825] (390) Parigraha;[826] (391) Ugra;[827] (392) Samvatsara;[828] (393) Daksha;[829] (394) Vishrama;[830] (395) Vishva-dakshina;[831] (396) Vistara;[832] (397) Sthavara;[833] (.) Sthanu;[834] (398) Pramana;[835] (399) Vijamavyayam;[836] (400) Arrha;[837] (401) Anartha;[838] (402) Maha-kosha;[839] (403) Maha-bhoga;[840] (404) Maha-dhana;[841] (405) Anirvinna;[842] (406) Sthavishtha;[843] (407) Murdhamaryupa;[844] (408) Maha-makha;[845] (409) Nakshatra-nemi;[846] (410) Nakshatri;[847] (411) Kshama;[848] (412) Kshaama;[849] (413)Samihana;[850] (414) Yajna;[851] (415) Ijya;[852] (416) Mahejya;[853] (417) Kratu;[854] (418) Satra;[855] (419) Satam-gati;[856] (420) Sarva-darshi;[857] (421) Vimuktatman;[858] (422) Sarvajna;[859] (423) Jnanam-uttamam;[860] (424) Suvrata;[861] (425) Sumukha;[862] (426) Sukshma;[863] (427) Sughosha;[864] (428) Sukhada;[865] (429) Suhrid;[866] (430) Manohara;[867] (431) Jita-krodha;[868] (432) Vira-bahu;[869] (433) Vidarana;[870] (434) Svapana;[871] (435) Svavasha;[872] (436) Vyapi;[873] (437) Naikatman;[874] (438) Naikakarma-krit;[875] (439) Vatsara;[876] (440) Vatsala;[877] (441) Vatsi;[878] (442) Ratna-garbha;[879] (443) Dhaneshvara;[880] (444) Dharmagub;[881] (445) Dharma-krit;[882] (446) Dharmi;[883] (447) Sadastksharam;[884] (448) Aksharam;[885] (449) Avijnata;[886] (450) Sahasramshu;[887] (.) Vidhatri;[888] (451) Kritalakshmana;[889] (452) Gabhasti;[890] (453) Nemi;[891] (454) Sattvastha;[892] (455) Simha;[893] (456) Bhuta-maheshvara;[894] (.) Adideva;[895] (457) Mahadeva;[896] (458) Devesha;[897] (459) Deva-bhrit-guru;[898] (460) Uttara;[899] (461) Gopati;[900] (462) Gopta;[901]

(464) Kapindra;[902] (465) Bhuri-dakshina;[903] (466) Somapa;[904] (467) Amritapa;[905] (468) Soma; (469) Purujit;[906] (.) Purushottama;[907] (470) Vinaya;[908] (471) Jaya;[909] (472) Satya-sandha;[910] (473) Dasharha; (474) Satvata-pati;[911] (475) Jiva;[912] (476) Vinayita;[913] (.) Sakshi;[914] (477) Mukunda;[915] (478) Amita-vikrama;[916] (479) Ambho-nidhi;[917] (480) Anantatman;[918] (481) Maho-dadhishaya;[919] (482) Antaka;[920] (.) Aja;[921] (483) Maharha;[922] (484) Svabhavya;[923] (485) Jitamitra;[924] (486) Pramodana;[925] (487) Ananda;[926] (488) Nandana;[927] (489) Nanda;[928] (490) Satya-dharma;[929] (491) Tri-vikrama;[930] (492) Maharshi; (493) Kapilacharya;[931] (.) Kritajna;[932] (494) Medini-pati;[933] (495) Tripada;[934] (496) Tridashadhyaksha;[935] (497) Mahashringa;[936] (498) Kritantakrit;[937] (499) Mahavaraha;[938] (.) Govinda;[939] (500) Sushena;[940] (501) Kanakangadi;[941] (502) Guhya;[942] (503) Gabhira;[943] (.) Gahana;[944] (504) Gupta-chakra-gadadhara;[945] (505) Vedha;[946] (506) Svanga;[947] (507) Ajita;[948] (.) Krishna;[949] (508) Dridha;[950] (509) Samkarshana; (.) Achyuta;[951] (510) Varuna; (511) Vaaruna;[952] (512) Vriksha;[953] (.) Pushkaraksha;[954] (513) Maha-mana;[955] (514) Bhagavat;[956] (515) Bhagaha;[957] (516) Nandi;[958] (517) Vanamali;[959] (518) Halayudha;[960] (519) Aditya; (520) Jyotiraditya;[961] (521) Sahishnu;[962] (522) Gati-sattama;[963] (523) Sudhanva;[964] (524) Khanda-parashu;[965] (525) Daruna;[966] (526) Dravina-prada;[967] (527) Divah-sprik[968] (528) Sarva-drik;[969] (529) Vyasa; (.) Vachaspati;[970] (530) Ayonija;[971] (531) Trisama;[972] (532) Samaga;[973] (533) Sama; (534) Nirvana;[974] (535) Bheshaja;[975] (536) Bhishaka;[976] (537) Sannyasa-kricchama;[977] (538) Shanta;[978] (539) Nishtha;[979] (540) Shanti;[980] (541) Parayanam;[981] (542) Shubhanga;[982] (543) Srashta;[983] (544) Kumuda;[984] (545) Kuvaleshaya;[985] (546) Gohita;[986] (.) Gopati;[987] (.) Gopta;[988] (547) Vrishabhaksha;[989] (548) Vrisha-priya;[990] (549) Anivarti;[991] (.) Nivritatman;[992] (550) Samshepta;[993] (551) Kshema-kricchiva;[994] (552) Shrivatsa-vaksha;[995] (553) Shrivasa;[996] (554) Shripati;[997] (555) Shrimatam-vara;[998] (556) Shrida;[999] (557) Shrisha;[1000] (.) Shrinivasa;[1001] (558) Shri-nidhi;[1002] (559) Shri-vibhavana;[1003] (560) Shridhara;[1004] (561) Shrikara;[1005] (562) Shreya;[1006] (.) Shrimat;[1007] (563) Loka-trayashraya;[1008] (564) Svaksha;[1009] (565) Khadga;[1010] (566) Shatananda;[1011] (.) Nandi;[1012] (567) Jyoti;[1013] (568) Ganeshvara;[1014] (569) Vijitatman;[1015] (570) Vidheyatman;[1016] (571)

Satkirti;[1017] (572) Chinna-samshaya;[1018] (573) Udima;[1019] (574) Sarvata-chakshu;[1020] (575) Anisha;[1021] (.) Shashvata;[1022] (576) Sthira;[1023] (577) Bhushaya;[1024] (578) Bhushana;[1025] (579) Bhuti;[1026] (.) Vishoka;[1027] (580) Shoka-nashana;[1028] (581) Archishmat;[1029] (582) Archita;[1030] (583) Kumbha;[1031] (584) Vishuddhatman;[1032] (585) Vishodhana;[1033] (.) Aniruddha;[1034] (586) Apratiratha;[1035] (587) Pradyumna; (.) Amita-vikrama;[1036] (588) Kalanemiha;[1037] (.) Vira;[1038] (.) Shura;[1039] (.) Shouri;[1040] (.) Janeshvara;[1041] (589) Trilokatman;[1042] (590) Trilokesha;[1043] (.) Keshava;[1044] (591) Keshiha;[1045] (.) Hari;[1046] (592) Kamadeva;[1047] (593) Kamapala;[1048] (594) Kami;[1049] (.) Kanta;[1050] (595) Kritagama;[1051] (596) Anirdeshya-vapu;[1052] (.) Vishnu;[1053] (.) 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Shubhanga;[1171] (710) Lokasaranga;[1172] (711) Sutantu;[1173] (712)Tantu-vardhana;[1174] (713) Indra-karma;[1175] (.) Maha-karma;[1176] (714) Krita-karma;[1177] (.) Kritagama;[1178] (.) Udbhava;[1179] (715) Sundara;[1180] (716) Sunda;[1181] (717) Ratna-nabha;[1182] (718) Sulochana;[1183] (719) Arka;[1184] (720) Vajasana;[1185] (721) Shringi;[1186] (722) Jayanta;[1187] (723) Sarva-vijjayi;[1188] (724) Suvarna-bindu;[1189] (725) Akshobhya;[1190] (726) Sarva-vagishvareshvara;[1191] (727) Maha-hrada;[1192] (728) Maha-garta;[1193] (729) Maha-bhuta;[1194] (730) Maha-nidhi;[1195] (.) Kumuda;[1196] (731) Kundara;[1197] (732) Kunda;[1198] (733) Parjanya;[1199] (.) Pavana;[1200] (.) Anila;[1201] (734) Amritamsha;[1202] (735) Amrita-vapu;[1203] (.) Sarvajna;[1204] (736) Sarvato-mukha;[1205] (737) Sulabha;[1206] (.) Suvrata;[1207] (.) Siddha;[1208] (738) Shatru-jit;[1209] (739) Shatru-tapana;[1210] (740) Nyagrodha;[1211] (741) Udumbara;[1212] (742) Ashvattha;[1213] (743) Chanura-andhra-nishudana;[1214] (744) Sahasrarchi;[1215] (745) Sapta-jihva;[1216] (746) Saptaidha;[1217] (747) Sapta-vahana;[1218] (748) Amurti;[1219] (.) Anagha;[1220] (749) Achintya;[1221] (750) Bhaya-krit;[1222] (751) Bhaya-nashana;[1223] (752) Anu;[1224] (753) Brihat;[1225] (754) Krisha;[1226] (755) Sthula;[1227] (756) Guna-bhrit;[1228] (757) Nirguna;[1229] (758) Mahat;[1230] (759) Adhrita;[1231] (760) Svadhrita;[1232] (761) Svasya;[1233] (762) Pragvamsha-vamsha-vardhana;[1234] (763) Bhara-bhrit;[1235] (764) Kathita;[1236] (765) Yogi; (766) Yogisha;[1237] (767) Sarva-kamada;[1238] (768) Ashrama; (769) Shramana;[1239] (.) Kshama;[1240] (.) Suparna;[1241] (.) Vayu-vahana;[1242] (770) Dhanurdhara;[1243] (771) Dhanurveda;[1244] (772) Danda;[1245]

(773) Damayita;[1246] (774) Dama;[1247] (.) Aparajita;[1248] (775) Sarva-saha;[1249] (776) Niyanta;[1250] (.) Niyama;[1251] (.) Yama;[1252] (777) Sattvavat;[1253] (778) Sattvika;[1254] (.) Satya;[1255] (779) Satya-dharma-parayana;[1256] (780) Abhipraya;[1257] (781) Priyarha;[1258] (782) Arha;[1259] (783) Priya-krit;[1260] (784) Priti-vardhana;[1261] (785) Vihayas-gati;[1262] (.) Jyoti;[1263] (786) Suruchi;[1264] (787) Huta-bhuj;[1265] (.) Vibhu;[1266] (788) Ravi;[1267] (789) Virochana;[1268] (790) Surya; (791) Savita; (792) Ravi-lochana;[1269] (.) Ananta;[1270] (.) Huta-bhuj;[1271] (.) Bhokta;[1272] (.) Sukhada;[1273] (793) Naikada;[1274] (794) Agraja;[1275] (795) Anirvinna;[1276] (796) Sadamarshi;[1277] (797) Lokadhishthanam-adbhutam;[1278] (798) Sanatana;[1279] (799) Sanatanatama;[1280] (800) Kapila; (801) Kapi;[1281] (.) Avyaya;[1282] (802) Svastida;[1283] (803) Svasti-krit;[1284] (804) Svasti;[1285] (805) Svasti-bhuk;[1286] (806) Svastidakshina;[1287] (807) Aroudra;[1288] (808) Kundali;[1289] (809) Chakri;[1290] (.) Vikrami;[1291] (810) Ajita-shasana;[1292] (811) Shabdatiga;[1293] (812) Shabda-saha;[1294] (813) Shishira;[1295] (814) Sharvari-kara;[1296] (815) Akrura;[1297] (816) Peshala;[1298] (.) Daksha;[1299] (817) Dakshina;[1300] (818) Kshaminam-vara;[1301] (819) Viddhatama;[1302] (820) Vita-bhaya;[1303] (821) Punya-shravana-kirtana;[1304] (822)Uttarana;[1305] (823) Dushkritiha;[1306] (.) Punya;[1307] (824) Duhsvapna-nashana;[1308] (.) Viraha;[1309] (825) Rakshana;[1310] (826) Santa;[1311] (827) Jivana;[1312] (828) Paryavasthita;[1313] (829) Ananta-rupa;[1314] (830) Ananta-shri;[1315] (831) Jita-manyu;[1316] (832) Bhayapaha;[1317] (833) Chaturasra;[1318] (834) Gabhiratman;[1319] (835) Vidisha;[1320] (836) Vyadisha;[1321] (837) Disha;[1322] (838) Anadi;[1323] (839) Bhur-bhuva;[1324] (840) Lakshmi; (841) Suvira;[1325] (842) Ruchirangada;[1326] (843) Janana;[1327] (844) Janaja;[1328] (845) Janmadi;[1329] (.) Bhima;[1330] (846) Bhima-parakrama;[1331] (847) Adhara;[1332] (848) Nilaya;[1333] (.) Dhatri;[1334] (849) Pushpa-hasa;[1335] (850) Prajagara;[1336] (851) Urdhvaga;[1337] (852) Satpathachara;[1338] (.) Pranada;[1339] (.) Pranava;[1340] (853) Pana;[1341] (.) Pramana;[1342] (854) Prana-nilaya;[1343] (855) Prana-krit;[1344] (856) Prana-jivana;[1345] (857) Tattva;[1346] (858) Tattva-vid;[1347] (859) Ekatman;[1348] (860) Janma-mrityu-jaratiga;[1349] (861) Bhur-bhuvah-svastarutsara;[1350] (.) Savita;[1351] (862) Prapitamaha;[1352] (.) Yajna;[1353] (863) Yajna-pati;[1354] (864) Yajva;[1355] (865) Yajnanga;[1356] (866) Yajna-vahana;[1357] (867) Yajna-bhrit;[1358] (868) Yajna-krit;[1359] (869) Yajni;[1360] (870) Yajna-bhuk;[1361] (871) Yajna-sadhana;[1362]

(872) Yajnanta-krit;[1363] (873) Yajna-guhyam;[1364] (874) Annam;[1365] (875) Annada;[1366] (876) Atma-yoni;[1367] (877) Syayam-jata;[1368] (878) Vaikhanas; (879) Sama-gayana;[1369] (880) Devaki-nandana;[1370] (.) Srashta;[1371] (881) Kshitisha;[1372] (882) Papa-nashana;[1373] (883) Shankha-bhrit;[1374] (.) Chakri;[1375] (884) Sharnga-dhanva;[1376] (885) Gada-dhara;[1377] (885) Rathanga-pani;[1378] (.) Akshobhya;[1379] and (886) Sarva-praharanayudha.[1380] These are recited as the one thousand names of the great-souled Keshava. I have recounted them in detail and these divine names must be chanted. A man who always listens to these and recites them does not confront anything inauspicious, in this world and in the next. Such a brahmana obtains the Vedanta and a kshatriya becomes victorious. A vaishya becomes prosperous and a shudra obtains happiness. A person in search of dharma obtains dharma. A person in search of artha obtains artha. A person who desires objects of desire obtains objects of desire. A person who wants offspring obtains offspring. One must awake in the morning, purify one's mind and with devotion, recite Vasudeva's one thousand names. He will obtain great fame and become foremost among his relatives. He will obtain a prosperity that is not destroyed and will obtain supreme benefit. He will never face any fear and will obtain valour and energy. He will not suffer from disease. He will be radiant and will be full of strength, beauty and other qualities. A person afflicted by disease will be freed from disease. A person who is bound down will be freed from bondage. A person who is scared will be freed from his fear and will be freed from all catastrophes. A man who always chants Purushottama's one thousand names with devotion will be able to quickly overcome all hardships. A mortal person must seek refuge with Vasudeva. He must be devoted to Vasudeva. He will then be freed from all sins and, pure in soul, will obtain the eternal brahman. A person who is devoted to Vasudeva never faces anything inauspicious. For such a person, there is no fear from birth, death, old age and disease. With faith and devotion, one must study these words of praise. One will then unite oneself with happiness, forgiveness of character, prosperity, fortitude, memory and deeds. There will be no anger, jealousy, greed or inauspicious tendencies. A person who is devoted to Purushottama accomplishes auspicious deeds. The firmament, the moon, the sun, the nakshatras, the directions, the earth and the great ocean—all these are pervaded with the great-souled Vasudeva's valour. The gods, the

asuras, the gandharvas, the yakshas, the serpents, the rakshasas and everything mobile and immobile in the universe—all these are under Krishna's subjugation. The senses, mind, intelligence, spirit, energy, strength and fortitude—all of these are said to be part of Vasudeva's soul. He is the *kshetra* and the kshetrajna. In all the sacred texts, conduct is said to be the foremost. Conduct is based on dharma and he is said to be the lord of dharma. The rishis, the ancestors, the gods, the great elements, the minerals and everything mobile and immobile in the universe has originated from Narayana. The knowledge of yoga, the knowledge of sankhya, all the acts of artisanship, the Vedas, the sacred texts and vijnana—all these originated from Janardana. Vishnu is the single great being. He has manifested himself in many kinds of forms. He pervades the three worlds and is in the soul of all creatures. He is the undecaying enjoyer who enjoys the universe. This praise of the illustrious Vishnu was chanted by Vyasa. If a man desires to obtain benefit and happiness, he should read it. He is the lord of the universe. He is without origin. He is the undecaying god whose power pervades the universe. A person who worships Pundarikaksha does not have to face defeat."'

Chapter 1817(136)

'Yudhishthira asked, "Who deserves to be worshipped? Who should one bow down to? What should one's conduct be, and towards whom? O grandfather! What kind of conduct, and towards whom, does not lead to suffering?"

'Bhishma replied, "The subjugation of brahmanas makes the gods suffer. O Yudhishthira! One does not suffer if one bows down before brahmanas. They must be worshipped. One should bow down before them. They should be treated like one's own sons. Those learned ones are the ones who hold up all the worlds. For all the worlds, the brahmanas are the great bridges of dharma. Their happiness is in renouncing riches and in restraining speech. They are firm in their vows and lay down ordinances that are agreeable to creatures. Those illustrious ones are the ones who formulate the sacred texts for the worlds. They possess the wealth of austerities. Words always constitute their great strength. Their power flows from dharma. They possess the subtle insight of dharma. They desire dharma and are established in dharma. Their good deeds are the bridges of dharma. All the four kinds of subjects[1381] depend on them for life. They lead along the path that everyone should follow. They are the conveyors of the eternal sacrifices. They always bear the burdens of fathers, grandfathers and preceptors. Like well-trained cattle, they do not waver under the burden, even on uneven terrain. They are ahead of ancestors, gods and guests. They deserve the first share of havya and kavya. By eating the food, they save the worlds from great fear. They are lamps for all the worlds. They are eyes, even for those who possess sight. They are subtle in their insight and accomplished. They are the stores of all kinds of artisanship. They know about the progress of all creatures. They think about the progress of adhyatma. They know about the beginning, the middle and the end and are devoid of any sense of doubt. They know about what is superior and inferior. They go to the supreme destination. They are emancipated and have cleansed all sins. They are beyond the opposite pairs of sentiments and are without any possessions. They deserve to be honoured and are always respected. Those great-souled ones possess knowledge. They treat sandalwood paste and mud and filth equally. They are indifferent to what constitutes food and what does not constitute food. They regard fine cloth, coarse cloth, silk and hides equally. They can remain for many days, without eating anything. They can control their senses and dry up their bodies in studying. They can turn those who aren’t divinities into gods and turn gods into those who aren’t divinities. If they are enraged, they can create other worlds and guardians of the worlds. Because of the curse of those greatsouled ones, the waters of the ocean can no longer be drunk. The fire of their rage has still not been pacified in Dandaka. They represent gods among the gods. They are the reason among all reasons. They are the supreme proof among all proofs. Which learned person can disregard them? Among them, the aged and the young deserve all kinds of honours. They are superior because of their austerities and learning and they revere each other. An ignorant brahmana is also like a god and can be a great source of purification. A learned one is a greater god and is like a full ocean. Whether ignorant or learned, a brahmana is like a great divinity. This is like Agni being a great divinity, whether sanctified by mantras or not. An energetic fire is not tainted, even if it burns in the cremation ground. Clarified butter is also as beautiful, whether used in a sacrifice or not. A brahmana must always be revered, even if he is engaged in all kinds of acts that aren't beneficial. Know that he is like a supreme divinity."'

Chapter 1818(137)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O lord of men! What is seen to be the prosperity that comes from worshipping brahmanas? O immensely wise one! What is your view? Why do you engage in these tasks of worshipping them?"

'Bhishma replied, "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, a history is recounted about a conversation between Pavana and Arjuna. There was the thousand-armed and handsome Kartavirya.[1382] The immensely strong one became the lord of this entire world and his capital was in Mahishmati. Haihaya had truth for his valour and he ruled the entire earth, with its stores of jewels, islands and the girdle of the ocean. He placed the dharma of kshatriyas at the forefront and was humble and learned. For some reason, he gave all his own riches to Dattatreya. Kritavirya's son worshipped the sage. The brahmana was delighted and offered to grant him three boons. Happy at the prospect of receiving boons, the king said, 'When I am in the midst of the soldiers, let me have one thousand arms. But in my house, it should not be that way.[1383] In the battle, let the soldiers see my one thousand arms. O one who is great in his vows! Let me conquer the entire earth through my valour. Having obtained it through dharma, let me attentively rule it. O supreme among brahmanas! I desire a fourth boon from you too. O unblemished one! You have shown me your favours and you should grant me this. If I ever resort to false conduct, let the virtuous instruct me.' Thus addressed, the brahmana told the king that it would be that way. The one who was blazing in his energy granted him these boons. He[1384] ascended a chariot that was as resplendent as the fire and the sun. Deluded by his valour, he exclaimed, 'There is no one who is my equal in valour, patience, fame, purity, bravery and energy.' When he spoke these words, an invisible voice was heard from the sky. 'O foolish one! You do not know that brahmanas are superior to kshatriyas. The kshatriya protects subjects because he is aided by brahmanas.' Arjuna replied, 'When I am pleased, I can create beings. When I am angry, I can convey them to their destruction. There is no brahmana who is superior to me in deeds, thoughts and words. You have said that the brahmana is superior. However, there is a second view that the kshatriya is superior. No special reason for superiority can be seen in what you have said. Brahmanas seek refuge with kshatriyas. Kshatriyas do not seek refuge with brahmanas. On earth, the brahmanas obtain their prosperity, their studying of the brahman and their food from kshatriyas. Dharma and the protection of subjects have kshatriyas as a refuge. Brahmanas obtain their sustenance through kshatriyas. How can brahmanas be superior? If those who always resort to alms are superior to all creatures, I will use my powers to bring all the brahmanas under my subjugation. What the maiden Gayatri[1385] has spoken from heaven is not the truth. The brahmanas are attired in skins. I will defeat them and bring all of them under my subjugation. There is no one in the three worlds, human or divine, who can dislodge me from my kingdom. Therefore, I am superior to brahmanas. If the brahmanas are foremost in the world, today, I will make kshatriyas superior to them. There is no one who can withstand my strength in battle.' Hearing Arjuna's words, the invisible voice was frightened. At this, Vayu spoke from the firmament. 'Cast aside these wicked sentiments and bow down to brahmanas. If you commit this sin, your kingdom will be agitated. O lord of the earth! Otherwise, the brahmanas will pacify you. Those immensely strong ones will drive you away from your kingdom or destroy your enterprise.' The king asked, 'Who are you?' The windgod replied, 'I am Vayu. I am a messenger of the gods. I am telling you what is beneficial for you.' Arjuna asked, 'I can see that you have now exhibited your devotion and attachment towards brahmanas. Among all the creatures on earth, tell me about the brahmanas. Tell me. Is a supreme brahmana Vayu's equal? Tell me. Is he equal to the water, the sun or the firmament?'"'

Chapter 1819(138)

‘“Vayu said, ‘O foolish person! Listen to the qualities associated with the great-souled brahmanas. O king! The brahmanas are superior to the ones you have spoken about. The earth challenged King Anga and lost her essence in the ground. She was stupefied by the brahmana Kashyapa and faced destruction. O king! The brahmanas are always indestructible, on earth and in heaven. In ancient times, the one from the Angiras lineage himself used his energy to drink up the waters. Having drunk up the waters, as if they were milk, the great ascetic wasn’t satisfied. O king! He covered up the giant ocean with land everywhere. When the one from the Angiras lineage was angry with me, I had to flee from the earth for a long period of time and reside in the agnihotra sacrifice. When Purandara desired Ahalya, he was cursed by the illustrious Goutama. It was only for the sake of dharma that greater injury was not done to him. O king! The ocean became full of salty water. O lord! That salinity was due to the curse of brahmanas. Agni[1386] is golden in complexion, without any smoke and the flames rise upwards together. However, when cursed by an angry Angiras, all these qualities vanished. Behold the Maruts. They were crushed when they laughed at the great ocean. Those who wear gold[1387] have always been cursed by brahmanas. O lord of men! You are not their equal. Know brahmanas to be superior, even when these lords, the brahmanas, are still inside wombs. The great kingdom of Dandaka was destroyed by a brahmana. The great kshatriya named Talajangha was destroyed by Ourva alone. You have obtained your extensive kingdom, strength, dharma and learning because of the favours of Dattatreya and these are extremely difficult to obtain. O Arjuna! Why do you always offer oblations to Agni? He is nothing but a brahmana. He is the one who bears the oblations of all the worlds. Don’t you know this? A brahmana is foremost. He is the protector of beings. He is the creator of the world of the living. Despite knowing this, why are you confused? Prajapati Brahma is unmanifest.[1388] He is powerful and without decay. He created everything in this universe, mobile and immobile. Some learned people say that Brahma was born from an egg. When that original egg cracked, mountains, directions, water, earth and heaven were created. No one saw that happen. How could he have been born from that darkness? The sacred texts also say that space was the egg from which the grandfather was generated. “Tell me. Since there was nothing then, where was he stationed then?” O king!

"The lord was nothing but pervasive energy and is said to be Ahamkara. There was no egg. But Brahma, the creator of the worlds, was that energy."'"[1389]

'Bhishma continued, "Having been thus addressed, he was silent and Vayu spoke again."'

Chapter 1820(139)

‘"Vayu said, 'O king! In ancient times, there was a king named Anga. He wished to give away this entire earth as dakshina to brahmanas. The earth began to think. "I am Brahma's daughter and I properly sustain all the creatures. The king has obtained me as a boon. Why does he desire to give me away to brahmanas? I will abandon my essence in the ground and repair before Brahma's feet. Let this kingdom and its king face destruction." Kashyapa saw the earth wandering around. He controlled himself, freed himself from his body and entered the ground. Thus penetrated, it became full of grass and herbs in every way. O king! All fear was removed from the ground and it was pervaded by supreme dharma. O king! Kashyapa, great and attentive in his vows, remained inside the ground for thirty thousand divine years. O great king! After this, the earth arrived and bowed down before Kashyapa. She became the daughter of the great-souled Kashyapa. O king! This was the nature of the brahmana Kashyapa. Tell me about another one, or a kshatriya, who is superior to Kashyapa.'"

'Bhishma continued, "The king was silent and Pavana[1390] spoke again. 'O king! Hear about Utathya, born in the lineage of Angiras. Soma had a daughter named Bhadra and she was held to be supremely beautiful. Soma saw that Utathya would be an unmatched husband for her. For this purpose, the immensely fortunate and illustrious lady tormented herself through extremely fierce austerities. She wished to obtain the immensely fortunate Utathya as a husband. He[1391] invited Utathya and gave away the illustrious one as a wife and he received her in the proper way, with a lot of dakshina. The handsome Varuna had desired her earlier. He arrived in the forest and when she was bathing in the Yamuna, stole her. Abducting her, the lord of the waters took her away to his own city, which was extremely wonderful and had six hundred thousand lakes. There was nothing that was more beautiful or better than that city. There were palaces with divine apsaras and all the beautiful objects of pleasure. O king! The god, the lord of the waters, sported with her there. Utathya got to know about the way his wife was being oppressed. He heard everything from Narada. Utathya spoke to Narada. “Go and speak harsh words to Varuna. Report my words that he should release my wife. Why has he abducted her? He is a protector of the worlds and their people. He is not a destroyer of the worlds. Soma gave me this wife and he has abducted her.” Addressed in these words, Narada went to the lord of the waters and told him, “Release Utathya’s wife. That is what Utathya has asked me to tell you.” However, Varuna told him, “I love this wife a great deal and I am unwilling to let her go.” Thus addressed by Varuna, Narada returned to the sage alone. Distressed, he spoke these words to Utathya. “O great sage! Varuna seized me by the throat and threw me out. He did not give me your wife. Do what you must.” Hearing Narada’s words, the one from the Angiras lineage blazed in rage. Using his energy, the extremely great ascetic stupefied the waters and drunk them up. When all the waters were drunk up, the lord of the waters and his well-wishers began to be destroyed. But he still did not release her. Enraged, Utathya, supreme among brahmanas, spoke to the earth. “O fortunate one! There are six hundred thousand lakes. Instead, show me land there.” At this, the ocean retreated and a creek[1392] was created there. The supreme among brahmanas told the rivers that flowed through the region, “O Sarasvati! O timid one! Become invisible here. Instead, go towards the desert. O beautiful one! Abandon this region and make it inauspicious from now on.” When the region was thus destroyed, the lord of the waters took the fortunate lady and returned the wife to the one born in the Angiras lineage. Having obtained his wife back, Utathya was happy. O Haihaya! He released Varuna from his miserable plight. After having got his wife back, the one who knew about dharma, Utathya, the extremely energetic one, spoke to Varuna. O lord of men! Listen to what he said. “O lord of the waters! You suffered these hardships because of my austerities.” Having said this, he took his wife and returned to his own house. O king! Utathya, bull among brahmanas, was like this. I have told you about him. Tell me about a kshatriya who is superior to Utathya.’”’

Chapter 1821(140)

'Bhishma said, "Thus addressed, he was silent and Vayu spoke again. 'O king! Listen to the greatness of the brahmana Agastya. Once, defeated by the asuras, the gods lost all their enthusiasm. All their sacrifices were appropriated and also the svadha that was due to the ancestors. O bull among the Haihaya lineage! The danavas stopped rites performed by men. We have heard that the gods were dislodged from their prosperity and began to wander around on earth. O king! While doing this, they saw Agastya. He was full of energy and was engaged in great vows. He blazed like the sun in his radiance. On seeing him, surrounded by his fame, the gods worshipped him. O lord of men! At that time, they spoke these words to the great-souled one. "We have been shattered by the danavas in the battle. We have been dislodged from our prosperity. Therefore, we are suffering from great fear. O bull among sages! Save us." Thus addressed by the gods, Agastya became angry. The energetic one blazed, like the fire at the time of the destruction of a yuga. The danavas were burnt down by the net of his flaming rays. O great king! In thousands, they fell down from the firmament. The daityas were burnt down by Agastya's energy. They abandoned both the worlds[1393] and sought refuge in the inauspicious southern direction. At that time, Bali was performing a horse sacrifice in the nether regions of the earth. He and the other great asuras who were in the bowels of the earth were saved and were not burnt down. The gods again got the worlds back, tranquil and without any dust. The gods said, "Slay the asuras who are hidden inside the earth." O king! Addressed by the gods, he replied, "I am capable of using my austerities to burn down those who are inside the earth. However, if I burn them down, my austerities will be diminished." Nevertheless, the illustrious one used his own energy to burn down the danavas. O king! Thus did Agastya, cleansed in soul, use his austerities. O unblemished one! I have told you about Agastya's powers. I have spoken about him to you. Tell me is there is a kshatriya superior to him.' Thus addressed, he was silent.

'"Vayu spoke again. 'O king! Listen to the great deeds performed by the illustrious Vasishtha. Once, the gods performed a sacrifice near Lake Manasa.

Because of Vasishtha’s learning, they mentally approached him and made him the officiating priest. They were anxious about initiating themselves into that sacrifice and became lean in the process. There were danavas named Khalinas, with complexions like those of mountains, and they wanted to slay the gods. However, they were repeatedly slain, from a distance. But they had been granted a boon by Brahma. Therefore, as soon as they were killed, they immersed themselves in the waters of the lake and came back to life again. They seized extremely terrible mountains and used trees as clubs. With these, they arose from the waters and agitated them so much that it extended for hundreds of yojanas. They attacked the tens of thousands of gods. Oppressed by them, the gods sought refuge with Vasava. However, Shakra was also afflicted and sought refuge with Vasishtha. The illustrious rishi, Vasishtha, granted them freedom from fear. The sage wasn’t cruel. But he also knew about their misery. Almost carelessly, he used his own energy to burn down all the Khalinas. The river Ganga had left for Kailasa. But the greatly ascetic one brought the divine river to the lake and she penetrated the waters of the lake. When the water was penetrated, the river began to flow as Sarayu. The region where the Khalinas were killed came to be known as Khalina. Thus did Vasishtha protect Indra and the residents of heaven. Despite the supreme boon they had received from Brahma, the daityas were killed by the great-souled one. O unblemished one! I have thus spoken to you about Vasishtha’s deeds. I have told you about them. Tell me if there is a kshatriya who is superior to Vasishtha.’”’

Chapter 1822(141)

'Bhishma said, "Thus addressed, Arjuna was silent and Vayu spoke again. 'O best among the Haihaya lineage! Listen to the deeds of the extremely great-souled Atri. Once upon a time, there was a terrible battle between the gods and the danavas. Svarbhanu[1394] pierced the sun and the moon with his arrows. O tiger among kings! Devoured by darkness, the gods were slain by the danavas, together with the sacrificial animals. Struck by the asuras, the residents of heaven began to lose their lives. They saw the brahmana Atri performing austerities in a great forest. He had conquered his senses and all his rage had been pacified. The gods spoke to him. "Both the moon and the sun have been struck by the arrows of the asuras. We are being killed and have been enveloped by the enemies. O lord! We cannot find peace and there is nothing to save us from our fear." He asked, "How can I save you?" They said, "You become the moon. You become the sun, the dispeller of darkness. Become the one who slays these bandits." Thus addressed, Atri became the sun and the moon. He showed his amiable form as the moon and he also showed himself as the sun. O king! Seeing that the sun and the moon had lost their radiance, in that battle, Atri used the power of his austerities to display himself in those forms. The universe was covered in darkness, but he illuminated everything again. With his own energy, he destroyed the large numbers of enemies of the gods. The gods saw that the giant asuras were being burnt down by Atri. Protected by Atri, they used their valour to slay their enemies. In his form as the sun, he saved the gods and slew the asuras. Using his supreme energy, Atri became the moon. The sage, who meditated and was attired in skins, had no second. He subsisted on fruits. O rajarshi! But behold the deeds Atri performed. In detail, I have spoken to you about the deeds of the extremely great-souled Atri. I have told you. You tell me if there is a kshatriya who is superior to Atri. O king! Listen to the great deeds that the great-souled Chyavana performed. Having given his promise to the Ashvins, Chyavana spoke to the chastiser of Paka and to all the other gods and said, "Give the Ashvins a share of the soma." Indra replied, "We have cast them away.[1395] How can we give them soma? They are not revered as gods. Therefore, we cannot do what you have asked us to. O one who is great in vows! We do not desire to drink soma with the Ashvins. Let anyone else who desires to drink with them do so. We are not interested in drinking with them." Chyavana said, "O slayer of Bala! You should not act against the words that I have spoken. Forced by me, you will drink soma with them at a sacrifice." With the Ashvins and for their benefit, Chyavana started a rite and as a result of the mantras, sura manifested itself. On seeing that he had started the rite, Indra became senseless with rage. He raised a huge mountain and attacked Chyavana. With intolerance in his eyes, he also attacked the illustrious one with his vajra. Chyavana was full of austerities. On seeking that he was advancing, he sprinkled some water on him, the vajra and the mountain and thereby paralysed him. The great sage also created an extremely terrible enemy for Indra. He used mantras to summon Mada, with a gaping mouth. He possessed one thousand teeth that extended for one hundred yojanas. His extremely terrible jaws extended for two hundred yojanas. One of the jaws rested on earth, while the other one rose up and touched heaven. All the gods, together with Vasava, were stuck at the base of his tongue. They were like fish in the great ocean, in the process of being devoured by a whale. Because of the invocation of the mantras, the gods entered Mada's mouth. With Shakra, all of them said, "We bow down before brahmanas. Without any anxiety, we will drink soma with the Ashvins." Shakra bowed down before Chyavana. Thus did Chyavana ensure that the Ashvins would drink soma. The sage withdrew Mada and instructed him about the tasks that he should henceforth do.[1396] The valiant one was instructed to reside in dice, hunting, liquor and women. O king! There is no doubt that men confront destruction because of these sins. Therefore, men must always avoid them from a distance. O king! I have thus recounted to you Chyavana's deeds. I have told you about this. Tell me if there is a kshatriya superior to Chyavana.'"'

Chapter 1823(142)

'Bhishma said, "Arjuna was silent and the wind god spoke again. 'O lord of men! Listen to what that foremost of brahmanas did. Indra and all the other residents of heaven were engulfed in Mada's mouth. At that time, Chyavana took the earth away from them. Since both the worlds had been taken away from them, the gods were distressed. Afflicted with grief, they sought refuge with the great-souled Brahma.'

'"The gods said, 'O one who is worshipped by the worlds! We have been seized by Mada's mouth. O lord! Chyavana has seized the earth and the Kapas[1397] have taken over heaven.'

'"Brahma replied, 'O residents of heaven! With Indra, quickly go and seek refuge with the brahmanas. With their favours, you will obtain back the worlds, as in earlier times.'

'"The wind god continued, 'They went and sought refuge. However, the brahmanas asked, "Whom will we subjugate?" They told the brahmanas, "Defeat the Kapas." However, the brahmanas responded that they could only vanquish those who were on earth. Nevertheless, the brahmanas initiated rites to destroy the Kapas. Hearing this, the Kapas sent a messenger named Dhani to the brahmanas. Dhani conveyed the words of the Kapas to the brahmanas. "All of the Kapas are exactly like you. Why have you embarked on this task? All of them are knowledgable about the Vedas. All of them are wise. All of them observe the rites and the sacrifices. All of them follow the vows of truth. All of them are equal to the maharshis. Shri[1398] roams happily amidst them and they also sustain Shri. They do not pointlessly seek intercourse with the wives of others. They do not pointlessly eat meat. They offer oblations into the blazing fire. They follow the words of their preceptors. All of them are restrained in their souls. They give children their shares. They travel on vehicles together.[1399] They do not have intercourse during the menstrual period. They do not eat when others are unfed. They do not sleep during the day. The Kapas possess these and many other qualities. Why do you wish to conquer them? Refrain. It will be better for you to withdraw." The brahmanas replied, "We will defeat the Kapas. We have promised the gods this. Therefore, the Kapas deserve to be slain by us. O Dhani! Return to where you came from." Dhani went and told the Kapas that the brahmanas wouldn't do what was agreeable to them. Therefore, all the Kapas seized weapons and attacked the brahmanas. The brahmanas saw that all the Kapas were advancing, with upraised standards. They released blazing fire at the Kapas, designed to destroy their lives. The brahmanas released those eternal fires, meant to devour the Kapas. O lord of men! They blazed in the firmament, like clouds. Because of this energy, the energy and valour of the gods increased. They praised the brahmanas and the illustrious Brahma. They got their immortality back and were worshipped in the three worlds.'"

'Bhishma continued, "Hearing Vayu's words, Arjuna worshipped him and replied. O mighty-armed one! O lord of men! Hear what he said. 'O lord! In every way, I always remain alive for the sake of brahmanas. I always bow down before Brahma and brahmanas. I have obtained this fame through Dattatreya's favours. That is the reason I have been able to perform supreme deeds in this world and have observed great dharma. O wind god! I have heard the truth about the deeds of the brahmanas. You have told me everything and I have listened attentively.' Vayu replied, 'Use your senses and the dharma of kshatriyas to protect brahmanas. There is a terrible danger to you from the Bhrigu lineage.[1400] But that will occur in the distant future.'"'

Chapter 1824(143)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O king! You always worship brahmanas who are rigid in their vows. O lord of men! What do you see as the outcome of those acts of revering them? O one who is great in vows! What do you see as the prosperity obtained from worshipping brahmanas? O mighty-armed one! Tell me everything about worshipping them."

'Bhishma replied, "This Keshava, extremely intelligent, will tell you everything about the prosperity obtained from worshipping brahmanas and about the prosperity that has been seen from observing great vows. My strength, hearing, speech, mind, years and knowledge are no longer as pure as they used to be. I do not think that there is a great deal of time left for me to give up my body. The sun seems to move very slowly. The dharma for brahmanas, kshatriyas and vaishyas, as stated in the great Puranas, and the rods of chastisement that have been laid down in the Puranas, have been stated by me. O Partha! Let Krishna instruct you about what remains. I know the truth about Krishna and about his ancient strength. O Indra among Kouravas!

Keshava is immeasurable in his soul. He will speak to you about doubts on dharma. Krishna created the earth, the sky and heaven. Terrible in his strength, he is the ancient boar. The firmament, heaven, the four directions and the four sub-directions are subservient to him. Everything in this ancient universe was created by him and originates in him. He is without a sense of ownership. A lotus was generated from his navel and the infinitely energetic Svayambhu emerged from that. O Partha! It is he who dispelled that terrible darkness which pervaded the primeval ocean. He existed in the form of all the dharma in krita yuga. In treta yuga, he existed in the form of knowledge. O Partha! In dvapara yuga, Krishna exists in the form of strength. In kali yuga, he will be on earth in the form of adharma. He is the god who slew the daityas earlier. He is the ancient god who became an emperor. He is the creator of beings. He is the creator of future beings. He is the protector of the world and the universe. When dharma suffers, Krishna is born among gods and men. Cleansed in his soul and based on dharma, he establishes the superior and the inferior worlds. Sparing those who should be spared, he slays the asuras. O Partha! He is good and bad deeds and their reason. The god does what needs to be done. He is also what will be done. Again, know that he is Soma and Shakra. He is Vishvakarma. He is the one who has the universe as his form. He brings prosperity to the universe. He is the one who destroys the universe. He wields the trident. He is covered in blood. He is fierce. He is known by his deeds and everyone praises him. The gandharvas, the apsaras and hundreds of gods always worship him. The rakshasas bear him. He is the bringer of prosperity. He alone is the victorious one. He is honoured and praised in the sacrifices. He is praised in the *rathantara* hymns of the Sama Veda. The brahmanas praise him in mantras about the brahman. It is to him that the officiating priests offer oblations. He is the ancient Brahma, shrouded in mystery. O foremost among the Bharatas! He is seen in the great sacrifices. He is the one who is fierce in deeds, the savior of cattle.[1401] He is the one who agitates the daityas and the danavas and those who are devoted to them. He is the one to whom the many kinds of food are given. He is the one to whom the horses and the mounts are rendered. He is the one who protects earth and heaven. Everything is under the eternal one’s subjugation. He is the ancient one whose seed fell into the pot. The rishi Vasishtha is said to have originated from that. He is the wind god. He is the powerful Ashvins. He is the rays of the sun. He is the first god. All the asuras were defeated by him. In three steps, he conquered them with his valour.[1402] He exists in gods, men and the ancestors. Those who know about sacrifices speak of him as abundance. He is the one who rises in the morning and divides time. He is the two ayanas of uttarayana and dakshinayana. His rays move upwards, downwards and diagonally and heat the earth. He is the one who is praised by brahmanas who know about the Vedas. It is from him that the sun obtains its radiance. From one month to another month, he is the one who is sanctified in sacrifices. Those who know about the Vedas recite his name at sacrifices. He is like a single wheel with three naves, borne by seven horses in the three worlds.[1403] He is immensely energetic. He goes everywhere. He is the one who is supremely powerful. Krishna alone holds up the worlds. He is the food. He is the devourer. He is the patient one. O Partha! Krishna is always the doer. Once, in the form of deadwood, the great-souled lord satisfied the fire god[1404] in Khandava. He vanquished the rakshasas and those who were devoted to them. He goes everywhere. He is all the fires to whom libations are offered. He is the single horse from whom all the white horses originated. He is the single horse which led to all the horses being created. His chariot has three seats for the driver and three wheels. It has three kinds of motion and four horses.[1405] He is the refuge of the five elements. The earth, the firmament and heaven are in him, though he is without a sense of ownership. Hrishikesha, the infinitely resplendent one, as energetic as the fire, created these beautiful mountains. The wielder of the vajra crossed the waters in an attempt to cause him violence and strike him, but was repulsed. The great Indra praises him in great sacrifices. The brahmanas speak about the ancient one in thousands of hymns from the Rig Veda. No one other than him was capable of hosting the immensely energetic Durvasa in his house. He is spoken of as the single and ancient rishi. He is immersed in adhyatma and he is the creator of the universe. He is the original god who makes the Vedas known. He is the one who follows the ancient rituals. He is Vishvaksena. All the objects of desire, everything in the Vedas and all the fruits desired in the world flow from him. He is the white light in all the worlds. He is the three guardians of the worlds in the three worlds. He is the three fires. He is the three kinds of speech.[1406] Devaki's son is all the gods together. He is the year. He is the seasons. He is the fortnights.

He is day. He is night. He is *kala* and *kashtha*. He is *matra*, *muhurta*, *lava* and *kshana*.[1407] Vishvaksena is in all of these. He is the moon and the sun. He is the planets, the nakshatras and the stars. He is everything that can be seen on the night of the full moon. O Partha! He is the conjunction of the nakshatras and the seasons. All of these are created out of Vishvaksena. The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the large number of Maruts, Prajapati, Aditi, the mother of the gods and the saptarshis—all of them are in Krishna. He becomes the wind and agitates the universe. He becomes the fire and burns the universe. His form is the universe. He becomes water and submerges everything. He becomes Brahma and creates the large numbers in the universe. He learns everything that is in the Vedas. But he is the Vedas. He follows the ordinances. But he is the ordinances. He is dharma, the Vedas and strength. Know that Keshava is everything mobile and immobile. He manifests himself as supreme light. He is the radiance that is in front of us. In his form as the universe, he illuminates everything. From his own self, he first created water and then everything else in the universe. He is the origin of the wonderful and varied seasons. He is the clouds and lightning and everything else. He is Airavata. Everything mobile and immobile is Krishna. He is famous in the universe. Know him to be Vishnu. He is the abode of the universe. He is devoid of qualities. He is Vasudeva. As life in creatures, he is Samkarshana and is worshipped. He is Pradyumna. He is Aniruddha in his fourth form.[1408] From his own self, the great-souled one manifested himself to us in these forms. Desiring to create this universe with its five kinds of beings,[1409] he divided himself into five elements. O Partha! He thus created earth, wind, space, light and water. He created mobile and immobile objects and the four kinds of beings.[1410] He created the earth and sowed the five kinds of seed.[1411] He created the firmament, so that it could shower down on earth. O king! He created the universe. It is he who created all creatures from his own self. The lord of creatures always desires to create and brought together everything—the gods, the asuras, men, the worlds, the rishis, the ancestors and the subjects. Know that everything good and bad, mobile and immobile—flows from Vishvaksena. Everything that exists and everything that will exist—know that everything flows from Keshava. When it is time for creatures to die and the time of destruction presents itself, it is Krishna who is the eternal and direct conveyor of dharma. Know that every creature in the universe and everything else originates in Vishvaksena. Everything that is praised in this world, everything auspicious, everything good and bad is Keshava, who is himself inconceivable. There is no reason to hold an opposite view. Keshava is like this. He is Svayambhu. He is the supreme and undecaying Narayana. He is the beginning and the end of all creatures and he is also their middle. The universe vests in him."'

Chapter 1825(144)

'Yudhishthira said, "O Madhusudana! Tell us about the prosperity that comes from worshipping brahmanas. Our grandfather knows you. And you know about the purport of everything."

'Vasudeva replied, "O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Hear attentively to the truth about brahmanas. O supreme among the Kuru lineage! I will speak to you about their qualities. Once, Pradyumna[1412] was enraged by some brahmanas and asked, 'O Madhusudana! What are the fruits associated with worshipping brahmanas? In this world and in the world hereafter, how do they get that sovereignty? O one who deserves honours! What are the fruits from constantly worshipping brahmanas? O father! Tell me everything about this. In this connection, I have a great doubt.' I was addressed in these words by Pradyumna and replied. O great king! Listen attentively to what I said. 'O Rukmini's son! Listen to the prosperity that comes from worshipping brahmanas. They are Somarajas.[1413] They are the lords of happiness and unhappiness and prosperity, in this world and in the next. O Rukmini's son! O son! Brahmanas are the best of friends. There is no need to think about this. In this world, the brahmanas are foremost in valour, lifespans, deeds, fame and strength. Among all those who roam around in the world, brahmanas are the foremost. O son! How can one disrespect those who are like lords? O mighty-armed one! You should not display any rage towards brahmanas. In this world and in the next world, brahmanas are great beings. If they are angry, they can burn down the entire universe and this can be instantly seen. They are capable of creating worlds and those who roam around in those worlds. They possess knowledge and energy. Why should one not treat them properly? O son! A brahmana resided in my house and his complexion was tawny. He was dressed in rags and he had a staff made out of a bilva tree. His hair and nails were long. He was a tall man and there was no one taller than him on earth. He wandered around the worlds of gods and men, singing a chant at public squares and assemblies. "Who will honour the brahmana Durvasa by inviting him to reside in his house? Hearing my words, who will dare to grant me refuge? If someone accepts me as a guest, he must not enrage me." Since no one invited him, I invited him to come and live with me. On some days, he would eat food that could be eaten by many thousands of people alone. Some days, he would eat very little. Some days, he would go out of the house and not return. He would suddenly laugh and suddenly cry. At that time, there was no one on earth who was his equal in rage. On one occasion, he entered his living quarters and burnt down the beds, the spreads and the ornamented maidens who were there to serve him. Having done this, he left. On another occasion, the sage, rigid in his vows, told me, "O Krishna! I wish to eat some payasam. Fetch it quickly." I always got to know what he had in mind beforehand. Therefore, I had instructed all the people in the house to keep every kind of food and drink ready. I thus brought him the food he wanted. Having known in advance, I treated him with every honour. I brought some flaming hot payasam and offered it to him. Having quickly eaten it, he spoke these words to me. "Swiftly smear this payasam on your limbs." Without any hesitation, I did what he had asked me to. I smeared my body and my head with what was left. At that time, he saw that your mother, the one with the beautiful face, was standing nearby. Smiling, he smeared the payasam on her too. The sage suddenly yoked her, with payasam smeared all over her limbs, to his chariot and left my house. The intelligent brahmana blazed, with a complexion like that of the fire. While I looked on, he yoked the young Rukmini like a beast of burden to his chariot and goaded her. Despite this, I did not exhibit the least bit of sorrow or jealousy. He went out, along a large royal road. On witnessing this great wonder, some from the Dasharha lineage were overcome by rage. They spoke to each other and conversed among themselves. "Let only brahmanas be born. Let no other varnas be born. Which other man could have used his chariot in this way and remained alive? The venom from a virulent serpent is the sharpest among all kinds of poison. But this is sharper than that poison. When one is burnt by the poison of a brahmana, no physician exists.” When the unassailable one advanced in this way, Rukmini tottered and fell down on the road. Intolerant, the handsome one quickly goaded her. Extremely angry, the brahmana descended from the chariot. He advanced along the path on foot and headed towards the southern direction. With payasam smeared all over our limbs, we followed that rushing supreme among brahmanas along the path. We said, “O illustrious one! Be pacified.” The energetic brahmana looked towards me and replied, “O Krishna! O mighty-armed one! Using your nature, you have conquered anger. O one who is excellent in vows! I do not see any crime in you. O Govinda! Ask for the boon that you desire. O son![1414] I am pleased with you. Behold the prosperity I can confer. As long as men have a liking for food, they will exhibit the same liking towards you, as they do towards their food. As long as anything auspicious remains in the worlds, your fame will also remain. You will obtain supremacy in the three worlds. O Janardana! You will be extremely loved in the worlds. O Janardana! Each of your objects that have been shattered, burnt or destroyed, will be restored, in a better form than earlier. O Madhusudana! O Achyuta! Because you have smeared your body, as long as you wish, you will not suffer any fear from death. O son! Why did you not smear the soles of your feet too? Acting in that way, you have not done something that is agreeable to me.” Pleased with me, he spoke to me in that way. When he said this, I myself saw that my body had become radiant and handsome. Delighted, he told Rukmini, “O beautiful one! You will be supreme among women in fame and deeds. You will be supreme in the worlds. You will not suffer from old age or disease. You will not lose your complexion. With an auspicious fragrance emanating from your body, you will be seen to be worshipping Krishna. Keshava will have sixteen thousand wives. But you will be foremost among them and will obtain the worlds with Keshava.” Having said this to your mother, he again addressed me. “O Keshava! May your intelligence always be directed in this way, towards brahmanas.” The extremely energetic Durvasa, blazing like the fire, then departed. O son! Having said this, he vanished. Having instructed me about this radiant vow, he disappeared. O lord! I have done everything that the brahmana told me about. O son! With your mother, I have observed that vow. Cheerful in our souls, we entered the house. O son! When we entered our house, we found that everything had become new, all that had been destroyed or burnt down by the brahmana. Seeing that everything had become new and firm, I was overcome by great wonder. O Rukmini's son! I mentally worshipped the brahmana.' O bull among the Bharata lineage! When Rukmini's son asked me, I thus told him everything about the greatness of that foremost among brahmanas. You should always worship those immensely fortunate and eloquent ones with gifts. In this way, through the favours of brahmanas, I obtained prosperity. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything that Bhishma has said about me is true."'

Chapter 1826(145)

'Yudhishthira said, "O Madhusudana! You should explain to me the vijnana you obtained through Durvasa's favours. O supreme among intelligent ones! I wish to know the truth about the names of that immensely fortunate and great-souled one."

'Vasudeva replied, "After bowing down to Kapardin,[1415] I will recount them to you. O great king! It is through this that I obtained what is beneficial. It is through this that I obtained fame. O lord of the earth! When I arise in the morning, I control myself, join my hands in salutation and recite the shatarudriya.[1416] Listen attentively to this. At the end of his austerities, the great ascetic, Prajapati, created him.[1417] O son! It is Shankara who created all the subjects, mobile and immobile. O lord of the earth! There is no other being who is superior to Mahadeva. He is the creator of all the beings in the three worlds. No one is capable of standing before that great-souled one. There is no being who is his equal in the three worlds. When he is enraged in battle, his scent makes the enemies tremble, lose their senses and fall down. Those that remain are slain. His fierce roars are like the thunder of the clouds. On hearing these in a battle, even the hearts of the gods are shattered. When the wielder of the Pinaka is angry, he assumes a terrible form. On seeing this wrathful visage, the gods, the asuras, the gandharvas and the serpents in the worlds can find no peace, not even when they seek shelter inside caves. Prajapati Daksha wished to perform a sacrifice. When that sacrifice was spread out, the fearless Bhava[1418] roared loudly. He angrily shot an arrow from his bow and struck that sacrifice. There was no peace or tranquility then and the gods were filled with sorrow. Enraged, Maheshvara sought to violently strike the sacrifice. O Partha! All the worlds were anxious at the sound of his bowstring slapping against his palm. The gods and the asuras were incapacitated and miserable. The oceans were agitated and the earth began to tremble. The mountains started to move and the firmament was shattered. The worlds were enveloped in a blinding darkness and nothing could be seen. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The radiance of the sun and all the stellar bodies was destroyed. Everyone was extremely terrified. Desiring the welfare of all the creatures and of their own selves, the rishis pronounced benedictions of peace. The valorous Rudra angrily rushed towards the gods. In rage, he struck Bhaga and tore out his eyes. He then attacked the handsome Pushan. As he ate the sacrificial cake, he struck down his[1419] teeth. Trembling with fear, the gods bowed down before Shankara. Rudra again affixed an extremely sharp and blazing arrow. Witnessing Rudra's valour, the gods and the rishis were terrified. The supreme among the gods sought Sharva's[1420] favours. The gods joined their hands in salutation and meditated on the *shatarudriya* mantra. Praised by the thirty gods, Maheshvara was pacified. O king! Scared, the thirty gods sought refuge with me and earmarked a special share in the sacrificial offerings for Rudra. Because of his great anger, the sacrifice had been divided into many parts and these were brought together again. Everything that had been destroyed was restored.

'"In ancient times, the valiant asuras had three cities in the firmament and these were made out of iron, silver and gold. Despite using all his weapons, Maghavan was incapable of shattering them. Afflicted, all the immortals sought refuge with Rudra. All the assembled gods spoke to the great-souled one. 'O Rudra! Those animals are terrible in all their acts. O one who deserves honours! To save the worlds, slay the daityas and destroy their cities.' He agreed. Having agreed, he made Vishnu his supreme arrow. He made Agni the shaft of the arrow and Vaivasvata Yama the tuft. He made the Vedas his bow and the supreme Savitri the bowstring. He yoked all the gods to his supreme chariot. He shattered them with an arrow that had three joints and three heads. That arrow was like the sun in its complexion. It was like the fire of destruction in its energy. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The asuras and their cities were burnt down by Rudra.

'"Later, on seeing Panchashikha[1421] lying down on her lap in the form of a child, Uma asked, 'Who are you?' Shakra was jealous[1422] and struck him with the vajra. However, he paralysed the arm, which was like a club, with the hand still holding the vajra. The gods did not understand that this was the lord of the universe. With the Prajapatis, all of them were repeatedly confused about the lord's nature. The illustrious and infinitely energetic Brahma meditated and got to know that this was the foremost one. He worshipped Uma and her consort. The gods also sought the favours of Uma and Rudra. The arm of Bala's slayer was restored to its normal state.

'"He became a valiant brahmana named Durvasa. He spent a long period of time in my house in Dvaravati. While residing in my house, he tried to perform many injurious acts. Though difficult to tolerate, I ignored them because of my generosity.[1423] He is Indra of the gods. He is Vayu. He is the Ashvins. He is lightning. He is the moon. He is Ishana. He is the sun. He is Varuna. He is time. He is the destroyer. He is death. He is darkness. He is night. He is day. He is the months. He is the fortnights. He is the seasons. He is the sandhyas. He is the years. He is the creator. He is the ordainer. He is Vishvakarma. He is the one who knows everything. He is the nakshatras. He is the directions. He is the sub-directions. He is the planets. The universe is his form. His soul cannot be measured. The illustrious one is infinitely resplendent. He is one. He is two. He is also many. He is one hundred. He is one thousand. He is also hundreds of thousands. This is the nature of Mahadeva, the illustrious one. Even if I try for one hundred years, I am incapable of speaking about his qualities."'

Chapter 1827(146)

'Vasudeva said, "O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! V Listen to me. I will recite the names of the immensely fortunate and great-souled Rudra, who has many forms. He is spoken of as Agni, Mahadeva, Sthanu, Maheshvara, Ekaksha,[1424] Tryambaka,[1425]Vishvarupa and Shiva. Brahmanas who know about the Vedas say that the god has two forms—one is terrible and the other is auspicious. Those forms are again divided into many others. The form that is fierce and terrible is equated with fire, lightning and the sun. The form that is auspicious and benign is equated with dharma, water and the moon. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Half of his body is also said to be the fire, while the half that is auspicious is said to follow brahmacharya. The fiercest of his forms is the one which destroys the universe and is said to be the great lord or Maheshvara. He burns down. He is sharp. He is fierce. He is powerful. Since he subsists on flesh, blood and marrow, he is said to be Rudra.[1426] He is great among all the gods and his dominion is vast. Since he saves the great universe, he is known to be Mahadeva.[1427] In everything that he does, in every way, he seeks to ensure what is auspicious for men. That is the reason he is known as Shiva.[1428] Remaining established above, he burns everything down. He is established in one place for the origins of life. He is always immobile in the form of a lingam. That is the reason he is spoken of as Sthanu.[1429] He has many different kinds of forms. He is the past, the present and the future. He is immobile and mobile. That is the reason be is said to be Bahurupa.[1430] He is said be Dhurjati because he has the form of smoke.[1431] The Vishvadevas are in him. That is the reason he is said to be Vishvarupa. He possesses one thousand eyes. He possesses ten thousand eyes. He has eyes in every direction. His energy and power flow through his eyes. He destroys through his eyes. He nourishes creatures and also sports with them in every way. Since he is their lord, he is said to be Pashupati.[1432] He is established in the form of a lingam and always practises brahmacharya. Since he ensures greatness in the worlds, he is known as Maheshvara. A great-souled person should worship his image and his lingam. A person who worships the lingam always obtains great prosperity. The rishis, the gods, the gandharvas and the apsaras always worship the lingam, which is stationed, facing upwards. When worshipped, the person who provides delight is Maheshvara. He is affectionate towards his devotees. Cheerful in his soul, he grants happiness to his devotees. This god always resides in cremation grounds. People who worship him there obtain the regions meant for heroes. In the bodies of creatures which face hardship, he exists in the form of death. In the form of the breath of life in the bodies of embodied beings, he exists as prana and apana. He has many terrible and blazing forms. These are also worshipped in the worlds and are known to learned brahmanas and the gods. He has many other names and meanings that are spoken about in the Vedas, based on his greatness, powers and deeds. Learned brahmanas recite the supreme shatarudriya from the Vedas. The great-souled Vyasa articulated it thereafter. He is said to be the great one who has provided all the worlds and the universe. That is the reason brahmanas and other rishis speak of him as the first being. He is first among the gods and Agni was generated from his mouth. In creating and sustaining many kinds of life, he faces various difficulties. He is the one who grants refuge. He saves the pure-souled ones who seek refuge and grants long lives, freedom from disease, prosperity, riches and all the objects of desire. He confers these on men and takes them away again. He is said to be the prosperity of Shakra and the other gods. In addition, he is always all the good and the evil that exists in the three worlds. He is said to be Ishvara because he is prosperity and all the objects of desire. Since he is the great lord of the worlds, he is known as Maheshvara. He pervades the universe in many kinds of different forms. This god's mouth exists in the ocean in the form of the mare-headed fire."'[1433]

Chapter 1828(147)

Vaishmapayana said, 'When Krishna, Devaki's son, spoke these words, Yudhishthira again asked Bhishma, Shantanu's son. "O immensely intelligent one! O supreme among those who uphold all kinds of dharma! In determining the reason behind anything, should one depend on direct perception or the sacred texts?"

'Bhishma replied, "It is my view that there should be no scope for doubt on this. O wise one! Listen to me. I will answer your question properly. O king! It is easy to have a doubt. It is extremely difficult to arrive at a determination. There are innumerable instances where there are doubts about what one has seen and what one has heard.[1434] There are those who are proud of their wisdom and are skilled in debating. They say that direct perception can be the only proof. They hold that everything that cannot be perceived is non-existent and cannot be true. However, even if they pride themselves on their learning, people who speak in this way are nothing but foolish. Or perhaps you may doubt how a single entity[1435] can be the cause. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is only capable of being comprehended by those who have fixed their senses and tried for a long period of time, thinking of this alone in the journey of life. No one other than such a person is capable of comprehending this single cause. This is the ultimate cause. When one reaches it, one has obtained supreme knowledge. This[1436] is extensive radiance that illuminates all the worlds. O king! When one reaches that truth, one reaches the ultimate cause. It cannot be grasped or bound down through words and those methods must be avoided.”

‘Yudhishthira said, “O grandfather! Tell me about direct perception, what other people have proclaimed as leading to success, the ancient sacred texts that exist in the world and the many kinds of virtuous conduct.”

‘Bhishma replied, “When dharma suffers through the strength of evil-souled people, it can be re-established for a short period of time by making efforts. Dharma, like grass, can cover the mouth of a well that is full of adharma. O Yudhishthira! However, listen to what happens. Those who are wicked in conduct and have discarded the sacred texts, those who are sinful and hate dharma, attack this good conduct and doubts arise because of what they say. Those who are satisfied at this state of affairs must approach virtuous people who possess the knowledge of the sacred texts and ask them. That will lead to satisfaction. Turn your back on desire and also on greed and confusion, which are followers. Approach learned people and ask them about dharma. Their conduct and tasks of sacrifices and studying never suffer. These three kinds of behaviour[1437] are also the foundations of dharma.”

‘Yudhishthira asked, “My intelligence is again confused by a doubt. It is as if I cannot find a path to cross over and cannot even see the distant shore. If the Vedas, direct perception[1438] and conduct are the three yardsticks, they are seen to be different. If dharma is one, how can it be of three different types?”

‘Bhishma replied “Dharma is seen to sometimes suffer because of the strength of evil-souled ones. O king! That is the reason you reflect and think that dharma is of three different types. Know that it flows as one, but can manifest itself in three different ways. That is the reason one’s intelligence thinks of it in three different forms. Truthfully follow the three different paths that have been laid down. You should never question dharma or hear about it being reviled. O best among the Bharata lineage! There should be no doubt about this. Without any hesitation, follow what I have said, like a person who is blind and dumb. O Ajatashatru![1439] Non-violence, truth, lack of anger and generosity as the fourth—following these is eternal dharma. Follow your fathers and grandfathers in behaviour towards brahmanas. O mighty-armed one! These are the methods to reach the region of heaven. An ignorant man who is concerned with proof and lack of proof does not deserve to get any proof. He only generates debate. Respect brahmanas greatly, serve them and treat them well. Listen to me. All these worlds are established on them."'

Chapter 1829(148)

'Yudhishthira said, "Tell me about the ends obtained by those who censure dharma and those who follow it. O illustrious one! Where do they go?"

'Bhishma replied, "There are those whose consciousness is overwhelmed by rajas and tamas. These men hate dharma and go to hell. O great king! A man who always serves dharma and is devoted to truth and uprightness is virtuous and enjoys heaven. Because they serve their preceptors, they are devoted to dharma. Those who serve dharma obtain the world of the gods. Whether they are men or gods, if they are devoid of greed and hatred and if they give up their lives in the pursuit of dharma, they obtain happiness. The learned say that Brahma's first son was Dharma. Those who follow dharma enjoy the ripe fruits that are desired."

'Yudhishthira asked, "What is the form of those who are wicked? What do virtuous people do? Tell me about the nature of virtuous and wicked people."

'Bhishma replied, "Those who are wicked in their conduct cannot be disciplined. They are evil and foul in speech. The virtuous possess good conduct. That good conduct is their attribute. O Indra among kings! Those who follow dharma do not release urine or excrement on a royal road, amidst cattle, or in the midst of a cow pen. Virtuous people eat what is left after feeding the five.[1440] They do not talk while eating. They do not go to sleep with wet hands. A person who follows dharma circumambulates a fire, a bull, a god, a cow pen, a crossroads, a brahmana and a sanctuary. He yields the road to the aged, those who are bearing burdens, women, children, the afflicted, brahmanas, cattle and kings. He protects all the guests, servants, relatives and those who seek refuge, welcoming them. The gods have determined that men should eat in the morning and in the evening. A person should not eat in between and one who behaves in this way is regarded as one who fasts. A sacred fire waits for the time when libations will be poured into it. In that way, a woman waits for her season to come. A person who does not have intercourse with anyone else is said to follow brahmacharya. Amrita, brahmanas and cattle—these three are regarded as identical. Therefore, following the ordinances, one must always worship cows and brahmanas. There is no taint if one eats meat purified with hymns from the Yajur Veda. However, the meat from the backbone, pointless meat and the meat of one's son are equal and must be shunned. Whether one is in one's own country or whether one is in someone else's country, one must not make guests fast. After one's tasks[1441] have become successful, one must always give something to the preceptor. One must offer a seat to the preceptor. One must greet him and worship him. Through worshipping the preceptor, the lifespan, fame and prosperity are increased. One must not censure an aged person, or use him as a messenger. One should not be seated while such a person is standing. Then the lifespan will not be diminished. One must not look at a naked woman, or at such a learned man. Sexual intercourse and eating must always be done in secret. A preceptor is the greatest tirtha among tirthas. The heart is the most pure among all objects that are pure. Knowledge is the supreme kind of sight. Contentment is supreme happiness. Morning and evening, one must always listen to all the words spoken by the aged. A man always obtains learning by serving the aged. In studying and in eating, one must use the right hand. One must always control one's speech and thoughts, so that the senses are not distracted. In a ceremony on the eighth lunar day, the ancestors, the gods and the aged must always be worshipped with properly cooked payasam, bits of barley, krisara and clarified butter. One must not shave without pronouncing benedictions. If one sneezes, one must have blessings pronounced on one's own self. For a long lifespan, blessings must be pronounced on all those who are diseased. One must not use the word *tvam* for someone who is superior.[1442] Know that the learned are superior and using tvam for them is tantamount to slaying them. This word can be used for those who are inferior, equal or disciples. A person who is wicked in his heart always boasts about the wickedness he has committed. Even if a person willingly hides these sins from learned people, he is destroyed. Those who willingly commit wicked deeds often seek to hide them from the virtuous. ‘Men have not seen me. The gods have not seen me.’ However, struck by the wickedness of his sins, he is reborn as a wicked person. The sin increases like the interest on a loan and waits for his body to be destroyed. A sin can be destroyed through the practice of dharma and dharma can prevent sin from increasing. This is like salt dissolving, when water is poured over it. In that way, when there is atonement for a sin, it is immediately destroyed. Therefore, a sin must never be hidden. The act of hiding enhances it. Having done such a deed, one should recount it to the virtuous, thereby pacifying it. Objects are stored with hope. If they are not enjoyed at the right time, when one is separated from one’s body, they are enjoyed by someone else. The learned have said that dharma is in the minds of all creatures. That is the reason all creatures have an inclination to follow dharma. One should practise dharma alone. One should not raise aloft the flag of dharma, since those who practise dharma in this way are regarded as traders in dharma. Without any pride, one should worship the gods. Without any deceit, one should serve the preceptor. Gifts made quietly are the store of riches that sustain a person in the journey to the world hereafter.”’

Chapter 1830(149)

‘Yudhishthira said, “If a person is unfortunate, even if he is strong, he does not obtain riches. However, if fortunate, even a weak person, or a child, obtains riches. When it is not the time for getting, even if one who makes exertions, one obtains nothing. And when it is the time for getting, even if one doesn’t exert oneself, one obtains great riches. It can be seen that there are hundreds of men who make fruitless efforts. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Had a mortal person been able to get all the fruits through exertions, why doesn’t he get them? Why are men unable to get those? It is seen that a man makes efforts, but is unsuccessful, despite resorting to the path of making hundreds of attempts to acquire riches. However, another person doesn't resort to that path and is happy. Men who avoid perverse deeds are seen to be without riches. However, it is also seen that there are other people who resort to adharma and are rich. Even after studying all the sacred texts on good policy, one can be seen to be devoid of policy. An unaccomplished person is appointed as an adviser. What is the reason for this? There is an apparently learned person who is devoid of learning. A rich person faces hardships. If a man can obtain happiness by resorting to learning, a learned person should not be devoid of learning. Nor should he have to resort to an inferior person for subsistence. A man conquers thirst by resorting to water. If learning brought joy, then a man would not resort to ignorance. If one's time has not come, one does not die, even if one has been pierced by a hundred arrows. However, if the time has come, a person does not live, even if he is touched by the tip of a blade of grass."

'Bhishma replied, "In this world, if one has made attempts and does not obtain riches, one should resort to fierce austerities. Austerities lead to germination.[1443] One obtains objects of pleasure through donations. One becomes intelligent by serving the aged. One obtains a long life through non-violence. The learned ones have said this. Therefore, one must donate, not seek, and worship those who follow dharma. One must be pure and pleasant in speech and not show injury towards any creature. There is proof that power, happiness and unhappiness result from one's own nature, even among mosquitoes, insects and ants. O Yudhishthira! Therefore, be patient."'

Chapter 1831(150)

'Bhishma said, "If one performs virtuous deeds, or gets others to perform virtuous deeds, one obtains assurance because of those good deeds. However, the performer of wicked deeds does not obtain the assurance. In this world, it is time which afflicts creatures and also shows them its favours. It overwhelms the intelligence of creatures and drives them along dharma and artha. When a person's intelligence shows him dharma and artha, he possesses dharma in his soul and obtains the assurance. His firmness of intelligence grants him that assurance. This alone is the sign of wisdom in creatures. A person who knows about both[1444] should look towards time and act accordingly. The men who possess this wealth are worshipped by other men. Those who know about dharma also honour these traits in their own selves. They never spend their time in polluting their practice of dharma with adharma. Therefore, they purify their souls so that they are reborn as those who practise dharma. They are like blazing fires and adharma is always incapable of touching them. Dharma is protected by time. Time acts so that dharma is victorious. In the three worlds, it is this that provides illumination. A man cannot seize an ignorant person and force him to act in accordance with dharma. Even if he practises dharma out of fear, he will resort to many kinds of deceit."'

Chapter 1832(151)

'Yudhishthira asked, "What is best for a man? What should he do to obtain happiness? How can he be cleansed of his sins? How can he destroy his sins?"

'Bhishma replied, "This is the lineage of the gods and this is the revered lineage of the rishis. O son! If one reads this during the two sandhyas, this is a supreme method to destroy all sins. The god who is the preceptor of the gods and the asuras, the one to whom all creatures bow down, the inconceivable one, the one who cannot be described, the life of all beings, the one who has not been born, the grandfather, the protector of the universe; Savitri, Brahma's faithful wife; the origin of the Vedas, the creator Vishnu, the lord Narayana; Virupaksha, Uma's consort; Skanda, the general; Vishakha, the devourer of oblations;[1445] Vayu; the radiant Chandra and Aditya; Shakra, the god who is Shachi's consort; Yama, with Dhumorni;[1446] Varuna, with Gouri;[1447] the lord of riches, with Riddhi;[1448] the amiable cow, the goddess, Surabhi; the great rishi, Vishrava; the six seasons; the ocean; Ganga; other rivers; the diverse Maruts; the Valakhilyas, accomplished in austerities; Krishna Dvaipayana; Narada, Parvata; Vishvavasu, Haha, Huhu, Tumbaru, Chitrasena, the famous messengers of the gods; the immensely fortunate daughters of the gods; the large number of divine apsaras; Urvashi; Menaka; Rambha; Mishrakeshi; Alambusha; Vishvachi; Ghritachi; Panchachuda; Tilottama; the Adityas; the Vasus; the Rudras; the Ashvins; the ancestors; dharma; truth; austerities; initiation; resolution; the grandfather; night; day; Kashyapa, Marichi's son; Shukra; Brihaspati; Bhouma;[1449] Budha; Rahu; Shanaishchara;[1450] the nakshatras; seasons; months; sandhyas; years; Vinata's son;[1451] the oceans; Kadru's sons, the serpents; Shatadru; Vipasha; Chandrabhaga; Sarasvati; Sindhu; Devika; Pushkara tirtha; Ganga; Mahanadi; Kapila; Narmada; Kampuna; Vishalya; Karatoya; Ambuvahini; Sarayu; Gandaki; the great river, Lohitya; Tamra; Aruna; Vetravati; Parnasha; Goutami; Godavari; Venna; Krishnavenna; Adrija; Dhrishadvati; Kaveri; Vamkshu; Mandakini; Prayaga; Prabhasa; the sacred Naimisha; Vishveshvara's place, where the water in the lake is clear;[1452] the famous and sacred tirtha of Kurukshetra, with many water bodies; the supreme Sindhu; austerities; gifts; Jambumarga; Hiranvati; Vitasta; the river Vekshumati; sacred parts of the earth, like Gangadvara; Rishikulya; Medhya; the river Chitrapatha; Koushiki; Yamuna; Sita; the river Charmanvati; the river Bhimarathi; the great river Bahuda; Mahendravani; Tridiva; Nilika; Sarasvati; Nanda; Aparananda; the tirtha of the great lake; Gaya; Phalgu-tirtha; Dharmaranya, surrounded by the gods; the sacred lake and river created by Brahma, auspicious and pure, capable of destroying all sins and famous in the three worlds; Mount Himalayas, full of divine herbs; Vindhyas, covered with many kinds of minerals, tirthas and herbs; Mount Meru; Malaya; Shveta, decorated with silver; Shringavat; Mandara; Nila; Nishadha; Dardura; Chitrakuta; Anjanabha; Mount Gandhamadana; the sacred Somagiri and many other large mountains; the directions; the sub-directions; the earth; all the large trees; the Vishvadevas; the firmament; the nakshatras; and the planets. Let the gods I have named, and those I have not named, always save us. A man who recites this is freed from all sins. A man who cheerfully chants this is freed from all fear. A man who, without criticizing, chants this praise is free from all sins associated with a mixture of the varnas. After the gods, I will recite the names of the brahmanas, stores of austerities, who have obtained success through austerities. The recital of their names frees from all sins—Yavakrita; Raibhya; Kakshivat; Oushija; Bhrigu; Angiras; Kanva; the lord Medhatithi; and

Barhi, the possessor of qualities. All of these are based in the eastern direction. In the southern direction there are the immensely fortunate Ulmuchu; Pramuchu; the immensely fortunate Mumuchu; the valiant Svastyatreya; the powerful Agastya, the son of Mitra-Varuna; and Dridhayu and Urdhvabahu, the two famous and excellent rishis. Listen to the names of those who are in the western direction—Ushadgu; his valiant brother, Parivyadha; the rishi Dirghatama; Goutama; Kashyapa; the maharshis Ekata, Dvita and Trita; Atri's great-souled son; and the lord Sarasvata. Now hear about the ones who worship in the northern direction—Atri; Vasishtha; Shakti; Parashara's valiant son; Vishvamitra; Bharadvaja; Jamadagni; Richika's grandson, Rama; the rishi who is Uddaloka's son; Shvetaketu; Kohala; Vipula; Devala; Devasharma; Dhoumya; Hastikashyapa; Lomasha; Nachiketa; Lomaharshana; the rishi Ugrashrava; and Bhargava, Chyavana. These are enumerated as the names of the rishis who are revered by the gods. O king! If their names are recited first, one is freed from all sins. There are many rajarshis who are named—Nriga; Yayati; Nahusha; Yadu; the valiant Puru; Dhundhumara; Dilipa; the valiant Sagara; Krishashva; Yuvanashva; Chitrashva; Satyavat; Dushyanta; Bharata, the immensely famous emperor; Yavana; Janaka; King Dridaratha; Raghu, supreme among men; King Dasharatha; Rama, the destroyer of rakshasas; the brave Shashabindu; Bhagiratha; Harishchandra; Marutta; Jahnu, who was served by Jahnavi; Mahodaya; Alarka; King Aila; Karandhama, best among men; King Kadhmara; Daksha; Ambarisha; Kukura; the immensely illustrious Ravata; rajarshi Muchukunda; Chitrabhanu, the performer of agreeable deeds; King Trasadasyu; Shveta, supreme among rajarshis; the famous Mahabhisha; Nimi; King Ashtaka; Ayu; rajarshi Kshupa; King Kaksheyu; Shibi, Ushinara's son; King Gaya; Pratardana; Divodasa; Soudasa, the lord of Kosala; Ela; rajarshi Nala; Prajapati Manu; Havighna; Prishaghna; Pratipa; Shantanu; Kakshasena; and other rajarshis who have not been named. 'Let me not face obstructions. Let me not suffer from sin. Let there be no impediments along my path. Let my victory always be certain. After death, let me go to the supreme destination.""'"'[1453]

Chapter 1833(152)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Bhishma became silent then, like a picture that has been painted. Vyasa, Satyavati’s son, thought for a short while. He then spoke these words to the King Gangeya, who was lying down. “O king! With all his brothers and the kings who have followed him, Yudhishthira, the king of the Kurus, has been brought back to a state of normalcy. The tiger among men is worshipping you, together with the intelligent Krishna. You should now give him permission to return to the city.” Thus addressed by the illustrious Vyasa, the king who was the son of the river granted Yudhishthira, and his advisers, permission. The king who was Shantanu’s son spoke these sweet words. “O king! Enter the city and let your mental anxiety be dispelled. O Indra among kings! Placing self-control and devotion at the forefront, like Yayati, perform many kinds of sacrifices and give away large quantities of dakshina. O Partha! Remain engaged in the dharma of kshatriyas and satisfy the ancestors and the gods. With your mental anxiety dispelled, engage in what is beneficial. Delight all the subjects and let there be natural tranquility. As is proper, honour all the well-wishers with the fruits. O son! For their subsistence, let all the friends and well-wishers follow you, like the birds seek refuge in a tree that stands at a sacred spot and is laden with fruit. O king! Return here again, when it is time for me, when the sun retreats and begins to move towards uttarayana.” Having been thus addressed, Kounteya worshipped the grandfather. With his family, he left for the city of Nagasahvya. Placing Dhritarashtra and Gandhari, who was devoted to her husband, at the forefront, and with the rishis, all his brothers, Keshava, the inhabitants of the city and the countryside and the aged ministers, the king, foremost among the Kurus, entered the city of Varanasahvya.’

This ends Dana Dharma Parva.

Section Eighty-Eight
Bhishma-Svargarohana Parva

This section has 84 shlokas and 2 chapters.

Chapter 1834(153): 50 shlokas
Chapter 1835(154): 34 shlokas

> Svarga *means heaven and* arohana *means ascent. Thus, this parva is about Bhishma's death and ascent to heaven.*

Chapter 1834(153)

Vaishampayana said, 'The king who was Kunti's son honoured the inhabitants of the city and the countryside and gave them permission to leave for their own homes. The king who was Pandu's son consoled the women who had lost their brave husbands and gave them a lot of riches. Having obtained his kingdom back, the immensely wise Yudhishthira was instated there. The best among men followed his own nature in everything. The supreme among the upholders of dharma obtained the benedictions of brahmanas, the foremost commanders of the army and the citizens. Having spent fifty nights in that supreme and beautiful city, the bull among men remembered that this was the period the foremost among Kouravas[1] had indicated. Surrounded by priests, he emerged from Gajasahvya.[2] He saw that the sun had retreated and was proceeding towards uttarayana. Before leaving, Kounteya Yudhishthira took clarified butter, garlands, fragrances, silken garments, sandalwood, the best of aloe and also black aloe, all required for preparing Bhishma. There were expensive garments and many kinds of jewels. The intelligent bull among men placed Dhritarashtra, the illustrious Gandhari, his mother, Pritha, and his brothers in front of him. Janardana and the intelligent Vidura followed, and so did Kouravya Yuyutsu and the lord Yuyudhana.[3] The king was surrounded by a large number of wagons with stores. O great king! Praises were sung. Fires were carried for kindling Bhishma. Like a king of the gods, he emerged from the city and arrived in Kurukshetra, to the king who was Shantanu's son. O rajarshi! Parashara's intelligent son, Vyasa, was worshipping him there and so were Narada and Asita-Devala. The remaining kings, who had not been killed, had assembled there from many countries. In every direction, the great-souled one was protected by the guards. The king saw that he was lying down on a bed meant for heroes. With his brothers, Dharmaraja descended from the chariot. Kounteya honoured his grandfather, the scorcher of enemies and Dvaipayana and the other brahmanas, who greeted them back. The undecaying one was with his brothers and with the officiating priests, who were like Brahma himself.

They approached the bed of arrows, which was surrounded by the rishis.

'O Kouravya! With his brothers, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira addressed the son of the river, the foremost among the Bharata lineage, who was lying down. "O king! O Jahnavi's son! I am Yudhishthira and am bowing down before you. O mighty-armed one! If you can hear, tell me what I should do. O king! O lord! The time has come and I have brought the fire for you. The preceptors, the brahmanas, the officiating priests and my brothers are also here. Your son, the immensely energetic King Dhritarashtra, is also present, with his advisers and the valiant Vasudeva. O tiger among the Kuru lineage! All the kings from Kurujangala,[4] who have not been slain, are also here. Open your eyes and look at them. Everything that needs to be done now has been arranged by me. Since this is the time you had spoken about, everything has been arranged." Thus addressed by Kunti's intelligent son, Gangeya looked at all those of the Bharata lineage who were standing there, surrounding him. Though Bhishma was strong, he could not move. At that time, the eloquent one grasped his[5] strong hand and spoke in a voice that was as deep as a torrent of water or the roar of the clouds. "O Kounteya! O Yudhishthira! It is good fortune that you have come here with your advisers. The illustrious sun, the one with the one thousand rays, is returning. Fifty-eight nights have passed since I have been lying down here, on these arrows that are sharp at the tip. It has been like one hundred years. O Yudhishthira! The sacred month of Magha[6] has arrived. One-fourth of shuklapaksha should still remain." Gangeya spoke in this way to Yudhishthira, Dharma's son. At that time, he also greeted Dhritarashtra and spoke these words. "O king! You know about dharma. Your doubts about artha have also been properly dispelled. You have served many brahmanas who are extremely learned. O lord of men! You know all the sacred texts of dharma associated with the Vedas, the four Vedas and all the Vedangas. O Kouravya! Since you know the truth about destiny, you should not grieve. From Krishna Dvaipayana, you have heard secret accounts connected with the gods. O king! Under dharma, the Pandavas are also your sons. They are always engaged in attending to their seniors. Remain established in dharma and protect them. Dharmaraja is pure in soul and always follows your instructions. I know that he is non-violent and is devoted to his seniors. Your sons were evil-souled and were addicted to anger and greed. Overcome with jealousy, they indulged in wicked conduct. You should not grieve over them." Having spoken these words to the learned Dhritarashtra, the mighty-armed Kourava addressed Vasudeva. "O illustrious one! O god of the gods! O one who is worshipped by the gods and the asuras! O Trivikrama![7] O wielder of the conch shell, chakra and the club! I bow down before you. O Krishna! O Vaikuntha! O Purushottama! Grant me permission. Protect the Pandaveyas. They are devoted to you. On an earlier occasion, I said this to the wicked and evil-minded Duryodhana. 'Wherever Krishna exists, dharma is there. Wherever dharma exists, victory is there. O son! Use Vasudeva as a tirtha and have peace with the Pandavas.' I repeatedly told him that the time had come for an alliance. However, that evil-minded and stupid one did not act in accordance with my words. Having destroyed the earth, he has himself been killed. O brave one! I know you as an ancient and supreme rishi. You spent a long period of time in Badari,[8] with the god Nara. Narada told me this and so did Vyasa, the great ascetic. They told me that Nara and Narayana have been born as men."[9] Vasudeva replied, "O Bhishma! O king! I grant you leave. May you become a Vasu.[10] O immensely radiant one! I have not seen the slightest bit of deceit in you. O rajarshi! In your devotion to your father, you were like another Markandeya.[11] Like a servant with a bowed head, death was under your control." Thus addressed, Gangeya again spoke to the Pandavas and to all his well-wishers, with Dhritarashtra as the foremost. "I wish to cast aside my breath of life. You should grant me leave. Strive to be truthful. Truth represents supreme strength. O descendant of the Bharata lineage![12] Always be with non-violent and excellent brahmanas, those who have controlled their souls, are devoted to dharma and always engage in austerities." Having said this, he embraced all his well-wishers. Yet again, the intelligent one spoke these words to Yudhishthira. "O lord of men! Brahmanas, especially wise ones, preceptors and officiating priests, should always be worshipped by you."'

Chapter 1835(154)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, spoke these words to all the Kurus. O scorcher of enemies! Then, Kouravya remained silent for a while. In due order, he held himself in different stages of *dharana*.[13] Having controlled his breath of life, the great-souled one propelled it upwards. In the midst of those great-souled ones, an extraordinary event occurred. As Shantanu’s son released it along different parts of his body, because of being united with yoga, the wounds disappeared from those parts. While all of them looked on, in a short while, he was completely free of wounds. O king! With Vasudeva at the forefront, all of them were astounded on seeing this and that included all the sages, Vyasa and the others. He restrained his breath of life and controlled all the exits. Therefore, it pierced the crown of his head and ascended towards heaven. O lord of men! Like a giant meteor, it pierced Bhishma’s head and emerged, penetrating the sky and instantly disappearing. O tiger among kings! Thus did the king who was Shantanu’s son, the extender of the Bharata lineage, himself give up this world.

‘The great-souled Pandavas and Vidura collected many diverse kinds of wood and fragrances and prepared the funeral pyre. Yuyutsu and the other Kouravas looked on. Yudhishthira and the extremely intelligent Vidura wrapped Gangeya Kourava’s body in silken cloth and covered it with garlands. Over it, Yuyutsu held aloft an excellent umbrella. Bhimasena and Arjuna fanned it with whisks. The sons of Madri held the headdresses. Bhishma was the protector of the Kouravas and the extender of the Kuru lineage. On every side, the women stood around with fans made of palm leaves and fanned the body. The great-souled one’s funeral ceremony[14] was performed according to the prescribed ordinances. Priests who knew the Sama Veda chanted Sama hymns. Sandalwood, yellow fragrant wood, black aloe and fragrances were used in the pyre. Gangeya was covered in these and the fire was lit. The kings, with Dhritarashtra at the forefront, stood on the right side of the pyre. Thus did the supreme ones of the Kuru lineage perform the funeral rites of Gangeya, foremost among the Kurus. With large numbers of rishis, the extenders of the Kuru lineage then went to the banks of the Bhagirathi. They were followed by Vyasa, Narada, Asita, Krishna, the women of the Bharata lineage and the assembled citizens. Following the prescribed rites, the best among the kshatriyas and all the people offered water to the great-souled Gangeya.

‘When water was offered to her son, the goddess Bhagirathi herself arose from the water, weeping in grief. Lamenting, she addressed the Kouravas. “O unblemished ones! I will tell you what has happened. Listen. He was royal in conduct, with wisdom and a noble lineage. He honoured the elders among the Kurus, was devoted to his father and was firm in his vows. On an earlier occasion, Rama, Jamadagni’s son, could not defeat him.[15] He possessed divine weapons and was immensely valorous. He has now been slain by Shikhandi. O kings! There is no doubt that the core of my heart is made out of stone. Though I can no longer see my beloved son, it has not yet been shattered. For the *svayamvara*, all the kings and the kshatriyas assembled in the city of Kashi.[16] On a single chariot, he defeated all of them and abducted the maidens. There never has been strength like his on earth. Yet, on hearing that he had been brought down by Shikhandi, my mind was not shattered. In Kurukshetra, the great-souled one fought with Jamadagni’s son. Despite his being brought down by Shikhandi, I am not greatly afflicted.” In this fashion, the great river lamented in many ways. The lord Damodara[17] comforted her. “O fortunate one! Control yourself. O one who is beautiful to see! You should not grieve. There is no doubt that your son has obtained supreme success. O beautiful one! He was one of the immensely energetic Vasus and was cursed. That is the reason he was born as a man. You should not sorrow. He followed the dharma of kshatriyas and fought in the field of battle. He was brought down by Dhananjaya, not by Shikhandi. When Bhishma, tiger among the Kurus, was engaged in a great battle, no one was capable of bringing him down in that engagement, not even Shatakratu himself. O one with the beautiful face! Your son is at ease and has gone to heaven. O best among rivers! Therefore, you should not sorrow on account of that descendant of the Kuru lineage. O goddess! Be without anxiety. Your son has gone and has become one of the Vasus.” In this way, the best among rivers was addressed by Krishna and by Vyasa. O great king! She abandoned her grief and controlled herself. All the kings, with Krishna at the forefront, honoured the river. Having taken her permission, all the kings then returned.’

This concludes Bhishma-Svargarohana Parva and also concludes Anushasana Parva.

Section Eighty-Nine

Ashvamedhika Parva

This section has 2743 shlokas and 96 chapters.

Chapter 1836(1): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1837(2): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1838(3): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1839(4): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1840(5): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1841(6): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1842(7): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1843(8): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1844(9): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1845(10): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1846(11): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1847(12): 14 shlokas
Chapter 1848(13): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1849(14): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1850(15): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1851(16): 43 shlokas
Chapter 1852(17): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1853(18): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1854(19): 60 shlokas
Chapter 1855(20): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1856(21): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1857(22): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1858(23): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1859(24): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1860(25): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1861(26): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1862(27): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1863(28): 28 shlokas

Chapter 1864(29): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1865(30): 31 shlokas
Chapter 1866(31): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1867(32): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1868(33): 8 shlokas
Chapter 1869(34): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1870(35): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1871(36): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1872(37): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1873(38): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1874(39): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1875(40): 9 shlokas
Chapter 1876(41): 5 shlokas
Chapter 1877(42): 62 shlokas
Chapter 1878(43): 40 shlokas
Chapter 1879(44): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1880(45): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1881(46): 55 shlokas
Chapter 1882(47): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1883(48): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1884(49): 55 shlokas
Chapter 1885(50): 51 shlokas
Chapter 1886(51): 56 shlokas
Chapter 1887(52): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1888(53): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1889(54): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1890(55): 35 shlokas
Chapter 1891(56): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1892(57): 56 shlokas
Chapter 1893(58): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1894(59): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1895(60): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1896(61): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1897(62): 23 shlokas

Chapter 1898(63): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1899(64): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1900(65): 29 shlokas
Chapter 1901(66): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1902(67): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1903(68): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1904(69): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1905(70): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1906(71): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1907(72): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1908(73): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1909(74): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1910(75): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1911(76): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1912(77): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1913(78): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1914(79): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1915(80): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1916(81): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1917(82): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1918(83): 30 shlokas
Chapter 1919(84): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1920(85): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1921(86): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1922(87): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1923(88): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1924(89): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1925(90): 39 shlokas
Chapter 1926(91): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1927(92): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1928(93): 93 shlokas
Chapter 1929(94): 34 shlokas
Chapter 1930(95): 36 shlokas
Chapter 1931(96): 15 shlokas

Ashva means a horse and medha means a sacrifice. Thus, Ashvamedhika Parva or Ashvamedha Parva is about a horse sacrifice. In the 18-parva classification, Ashvamedhika Parva is the 14th. In the 100-parva classification, Ashvamedhika Parva is Section 89. In the numbering of the chapters in Ashvamedhika Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Ashvamedhika Parva. There is a recital of the Anu-Gita. Krishna leaves for Dvaraka and there is a discourse with Utanka on the way. Yudhishthira collects riches for the horse sacrifice, this section being named after that. Krishna returns to Hastinapura. Parikshit is born dead, but is revived by Krishna. As the horse travels around, Arjuna fights with the Trigartas, Vajradatta (Bhagadatta's son), the Saindhavas, Babhruvahana (his son through Chitrangada), Magadha, Shakuni's son and many others. Yudhishthira's horse sacrifice is held and there is the incident of the mongoose.

Chapter 1836(1)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Placing King Dhritarashtra at the forefront, the mighty-armed Yudhishthira offered water.[1] His senses were bewildered. His eyes overflowing with tears, the lord of the earth arose from the waters of the Ganga and fell down on the bank, like an elephant struck by a hunter. Instructed by Krishna, Bhima picked up the one who was sinking down. Krishna, the afflicter of enemy armies, said, “Do not act in this way.” O king! The Pandavas saw that Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, was afflicted and had fallen down on the ground, sighing repeatedly. They saw that the lord of men was distressed in his mind and was almost lifeless. At this, the Pandavas were overwhelmed by grief again and sat down. The mighty-armed Dhritarashtra saw that the king was seated, afflicted by great grief. The immensely wise one spoke these words. “O tiger among Kurus! Arise. Do what must be done next. O Kouravya! You have conquered the earth through the dharma of kshatriyas. O lord of men! Enjoy the earth with your brothers and your well-wishers. O supreme among the upholders of dharma! I do not see any reason why you should grieve. O lord of the earth! It is I and Gandhari who should grieve. We have lost our sons and our kingdom, like wealth that is obtained in a dream. I did not listen to the words, full of grave import, of the great-souled Vidura, who desired our welfare. That is the reason I, an evil-minded person, am repenting. The one with divine sight and dharma in his soul had told me earlier, “Your lineage will be destroyed because of Duryodhana’s crimes. O king! If you desire welfare for yourself and for your lineage, kill the evil-souled one, the wicked King Suyodhana. Never let Karna and Shakuni meet him. Restrain them from their intoxication with this gambling match. Instate King Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul. He will follow dharma and control and rule the earth. O king! Or, if King Yudhishthira, Kunti’s son, does not desire the kingdom, be the focal point for the entire kingdom and accept it yourself. O lord of men! Look upon all creatures impartially. O extender of your kin! Let all your relatives earn a living.” O Kounteya! The far-sighted Vidura spoke to me in this way. But my intelligence was foolish and I followed the wicked Duryodhana. I did not listen to the brave one’s sweet words. Hence, I have obtained the fruits of this great grief and am immersed in this ocean of sorrow. O king! Behold. Your aged fathers[2] are miserable. O lord of men! However, I do not see any reason why you should be grieving.’

Chapter 1837(2)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus addressed by the intelligent Dhritarashtra, the intelligent king was silent and Keshava spoke to him. “O lord of men! If a man has excessive grief in his mind about the death of his forefathers, he has nothing but torment. You should now perform many kinds of sacrifices, with large quantities of dakshina, satisfying the gods with soma and the ancestors with svadha. O immensely wise one! You should not act in this way. You know what is to be known. Act in accordance with that. You have heard about the dharma of kings from Bhishma, Bhagirathi’s son, Krishna Dvaipayana, Narada and Vidura. You should not follow the conduct of the foolish. O one who bears the burden of the lineage! You should follow the conduct that was resorted to by your forefathers. There is no doubt that a kshatriya should obtain heaven through his fame. A brave person is never slain when he has turned his back on a battle. O great king! Therefore, abandon your grief. This is nothing but destiny. You will not be able to see those who have been slain in this battle again.” Govinda spoke in this way to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. When the immensely energetic one paused, Yudhishthira replied. “O Govinda! I know the affection you bear towards me. You have loved me, wished me well and always shown me your compassion. O one with the chakra and the club! Do what will bring me great pleasure now. O handsome one! O descendant of the Yadava lineage! In every way, my mind will then be happy. O illustrious one! Grant me permission to go to a hermitage. After having killed the grandfather, I cannot find any peace. There is also Karna, tiger among men, who never retreated from an encounter. O scorcher of enemies! I will then be able to free myself from the cruel deed. Through such an act, I will be able to purify my mind.” While he was speaking, Vyasa, who knew about dharma, spoke to him. The immensely energetic one comforted him through these auspicious words. “O son! Your intelligence is still not refined. You are again confused, like a child. Why are all of us repeatedly casting our words towards the sky?[3] You know about the dharma of kshatriyas. Fighting is their livelihood. A king must follow that conduct, without being tied down by bonds of affection. You have heard the entire truth about moksha dharma. I have severed your unaccomplished doubts that resulted from desire. However, intelligence is extremely difficult for those who have no faith. It is certain that you have forgotten everything. You should not act in this way. You should not be so ignorant. O unblemished one! You know about all the rites of atonement. You have heard everything about the dharma of fighting and the dharma of giving. You know about all kinds of dharma and are accomplished in all the sacred texts. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Yet, you are confused again, as if you are ignorant.”’

Chapter 1838(3)

‘Vyasa said, “O Yudhishthira! It is my view that your wisdom is still not complete. No mortal person does anything himself, there is no action that is under his own control. A man is engaged by God and performs good and bad deeds. Since it is Purusha who does the acts, where is the scope for repentance? You think that you have yourself performed those wicked deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Listen to the means whereby these wicked deeds can be countered. O Yudhishthira! A wicked deed perpetrated by a man can always be overcome through austerities, sacrifices and donations. O lord of men! O tiger among kings! Sacrifices, austerities and donations purify a man from his wicked deeds. To become sacred, the asuras and the gods performed rites. Those great-souled ones sought to perform sacrifices. It is through sacrifices that the great-souled gods became even more powerful. Thus, after performing rites, the gods assailed the danavas. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O king! O Yudhishthira! Prepare for rajasuya, ashvamedha, *sarvamedha* and naramedha.[4] Perform *vajimedha* and give away dakshina in the proper way, distributing many desired riches, just as Rama, Dasharatha’s son, did. King Marutta did that too and so did the immensely valorous king who was the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala,[5] your ancestor.”

‘Yudhishthira replied, “There is no doubt that vajimedha purifies the earth. However, I have an intention that you should hear about.

O supreme among brahmanas! I have caused this extremely great slaughter of the kin. I am incapable of giving away even limited riches.

I have no wealth left. I am not interested in asking these children for riches.[6] The princes alone are left and I am responsible for their wounds and their hardships. O supreme among brahmanas! I have myself destroyed the earth and they are overcome with grief. For the sake of performing a sacrifice, how can I impose a levy on them? The earth and the kings were destroyed because of Duryodhana’s crimes. O supreme among sages! But in the process, we have been united with ill-repute. For the sake of riches, Duryodhana destroyed the earth. The treasury has been exhausted because of Dhritarashtra’s evilminded son. In the first place, the earth was thought of as dakshina. In the case of adverse fortune, the learned and the virtuous have thought of an exception.[7] O one who is rich in austerities! However, I do not desire to have such a proxy. O illustrious one! In this connection, you should advise me about what should be done.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Krishna Dvaipayana was thus addressed by Partha. He thought for a while and then spoke to Dharmaraja. “O Partha! There are riches in the Himalaya mountains. At King Marutta’s sacrifice, the brahmanas left them there.[8] O Kounteya! If you bring that, it will be enough.” Yudhishthira asked, “What was Marutta’s sacrifice and what riches were distributed there? O supreme among eloquent ones! What was the era of that king?” Vyasa replied, “O Partha! If you wish to, hear about that king from the Karandhama lineage. I will tell you about that immensely valorous king and his era and his great riches.”’

Chapter 1839(4)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O one who knows about dharma! I wish to hear the story of that rajarshi. O Dvaipayana! O unblemished one! Tell me about Marutta’s account.”

‘Vyasa replied, “Earlier, in *krita* yuga, there was the lord Manu, the wielder of the staff. His son was the great archer, famous as Prajati. Prajati had a famous son named Kshupa. Kshupa’s son was the lord, King Ikshvaku. O king! He had one hundred sons and they were supremely devoted to dharma. The lord Ikshvaku made all of them kings. The eldest, Vimsha, was unmatched as an archer. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Vimsha had a fortunate son named Vivimsha. O king! Vivimsha had fifteen sons. All of them were brave archers, devoted to brahmanas and truthful in speech. They were virtuous and devoted to the dharma of giving. They were always agreeable in speech. The eldest one was Khaninetra and he oppressed all the other brothers. The valiant Khaninetra conquered the kingdom and removed all its sons.[9] However, he was incapable of protecting the kingdom and the subjects weren’t happy. They took away the kingdom from him and gave it to his son, Suvarcha. O Indra among kings! They instated him and were delighted. He[10] saw the action taken against his father and the fact that he had been banished from the kingdom. Therefore, he was devoted to the law and engaged in the welfare of the subjects. He was devoted to brahmanas. He was truthful in speech and pure. He was tranquil and self-restrained. Since the learned one was always devoted to dharma, the subjects found joy in him. Because of his devotion to dharma, the treasury and vehicles became exhausted.[11] When the treasury was exhausted, the vassals oppressed him from all directions. With his treasury and vehicles diminished, he was afflicted by many. The king, the servants and the city faced supreme suffering and hardships. O Yudhishthira! The king was always completely devoted to dharma. However, since his strength was diminished, he was incapable of offering protection. When the king and the city faced the ultimate in hardships, he blew violently into his hand and from this, soldiers emerged. The soldiers generated in this way defeated all the kings along the boundaries. O king! It is because of this reason that he became famous as Karandhama.[12] Karandhama’s son was born at the beginning of *treta* yuga. He was supreme and handsome and like Indra. Like the gods, he was extremely difficult to defeat. All the kings were always under his subjugation. Because of his conduct and his strength, he became the emperor of all creatures. His name was Avikshit and he possessed dharma in his soul. He was Indra’s equal in valour. He was devoted to sacrifices and addicted to rites. He possessed fortitude and was in control of his senses. He was Aditya's equal in energy and the earth's equal in forgiveness. He was Brihaspati's equal in intelligence and like the Himalayas in steadfastness. The king sustained the minds of the subjects through his deeds, thoughts, words, self-control and tranquility. Following the rites, the lord performed hundreds of horse sacrifices. The learned lord Angiras himself was the officiating priest at these sacrifices. His son surpassed the father in qualities. His name was Marutta and he was knowledgable about dharma. He was an immensely illustrious emperor. His strength was equal to that of ten thousand elephants. He was like a second Vishnu. Wishing to perform a sacrifice, the one with dharma in his soul accumulated a lot of molten gold. He had thousands of sparkling vessels constructed. He went to Mount Meru, to the north of the Himalayan slopes. He performed the rites on the great golden slopes there. He had golden bowls, vessels, pans and seats constructed and they were innumerable. The sacrificial area was arranged near that spot. Following the ordinances, the king, with dharma in his soul, performed the sacrifice there. All the other kings were also with King Marutta."'

Chapter 1840(5)

'Yudhishthira asked, "O supreme among eloquent ones! How did the king become so valorous? O brahmana! How did he accumulate so much gold? O illustrious one! Where are all those objects now? O one who is a store of austerities! How can we get them now?"

'Vyasa replied, "O son! Daksha Prajapati had several offspring—asuras and gods and they challenged each other. Angiras had two sons who were equal in their vows—Brihaspati, great in energy, and Samvarta, a store of austerities. O king! They rivalled each other and went their separate ways. Brihaspati repeatedly obstructed Samvarta. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Always obstructed by his elder brother, he gave up his riches, went around naked and evinced a desire to live in the woods. At that time, Vasava defeated and killed all the asuras. Having obtained the title of Indra of the worlds, he appointed the eldest son of Angiras, Brihaspati, best among brahmanas, as his priest. Earlier, Angiras was King Karandhama’s priest. In valour, conduct and strength, he[13] was unmatched in the worlds. He had dharma in his soul and was rigid in his vows. He was as energetic as Shatakratu. He possessed many kinds of mounts, warriors and objects. O king! Through his meditations, all of these would be generated from his mouth. Through these qualities, the king brought all the kings under his subjugation. After having lived for as long as he wished, he went to heaven in his physical body. He had a son who was as knowledgable about dharma as Yayati. O afflicter of enemies! His name was Avikshit and he brought the earth under his subjugation. In valour and qualities, this king was like his father. He had a valiant son named Marutta, who was Vasava’s equal. The earth, up to the girdle of the ocean, was devoted to him. O descendant of the Pandu lineage! The king always challenged the king of the gods and Vasava also challenged Marutta. King Marutta was pure and possessed qualities. Despite trying, Shakra wasn’t able to get the better of him. So that he might surpass him, Harivahana[14] summoned Brihaspati and, together with the other gods, spoke these words to him. ‘O Brihaspati! Marutta never does anything that I find agreeable. O Brihaspati! I have obtained the title of Indra in the three worlds and over the gods. Yet, in rites for the gods and in rites for the ancestors, Marutta does what is disagreeable to me. O brahmana! You are the officiating priest of the king of the gods. How can you be the officiating priest for a mortal? Without the least bit of doubt, you have become the officiating priest of King Marutta, who is a mere mortal. O fortunate one! You will have to choose me or King Marutta. Give up Marutta and come over to my side.’ O Kouravya! The king of the gods spoke in this way. Having thought for a while, Brihaspati replied to the king of the gods. ‘You are the lord of creatures. The worlds are established in you. You are the slayer of Namuchi, Vishvarupa and Bala. O brave one! You have single-handedly obtained supreme prosperity for the gods. O slayer of Bala! You are the one who always holds up earth and heaven. O lord of a large number of gods! O chastiser of Paka! After having acted as an officiating priest for you, how can I be the officiating priest for a mortal like Marutta? O lord of the gods! I will stay with you and never with a mortal. I am accepting the ladle for the sacrifice. Listen to my words. If I deviate from this truth, may the one with the golden seed[15] turn cold, may the earth begin to move and may the sun cease to radiate heat.’ On hearing

Brihaspati’s words, Shakra lost all sense of jealousy. Having praised him, he entered his own abode.”’

Chapter 1841(6)

‘Vyasa said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between Brihaspati and Marutta. On hearing about the agreement made between the son of Angiras[16] and the king of the gods, King Marutta was enraged. Karandhama’s grandson made up his mind to organize a sacrifice and made the arrangements. The eloquent one went to Brihaspati and spoke these words. ‘O illustrious one! O store of austerities! O preceptor! When I came to you earlier, you asked me to perform a sacrifice. I have made up my mind to do this now and have collected all the ingredients. O virtuous one! I wish to make you the officiating priest. Therefore, accept these and perform the rites.’ Brihaspati replied, ‘O lord of the earth! I do not wish to be your officiating priest. I have been engaged by the king of the gods and have given him an undertaking.’ Marutta said, ‘You have been the priest for my ancestors and I revere you greatly. I have obtained you as an officiating priest. Since I am devoted to you, you should also be devoted to me.’ Brihaspati replied, ‘Having been an officiating priest for immortals, I can’t be an officiating priest for humans. O Marutta! Whether you stay or whether you go, I have now withdrawn from being your officiating priest. Since I will not be your officiating priest, choose whomever you want. O mighty-armed one! Find a priest who will perform the sacrifice for you.’

‘“Having been thus addressed, King Marutta was ashamed. He was anxious. While he was returning, he met Narada along the road. The king met devarshi Narada. In the proper way, he joined his hands in salutation and stood there. Narada asked, ‘O rajarshi! O unblemished one! You do not seem to be happy. Is everything well with you? Where had you gone? Which is the place where you experienced such cheerlessness? O king! O bull among kings! If I can hear about it, tell me. O lord of men! I will make every attempt to dispel your rage.’ Marutta was thus addressed by maharshi Narada and told him everything about how he had been rebuffed by his preceptor. ‘I went to Brihaspati, the preceptor of the gods and the son of Angiras. I met him to request him to be the officiating priest at my sacrifice. However, he did not give me reason for joy and rebuffed me. I no longer desire to remain alive now. O Narada! Having been abandoned by my preceptor, I am tainted.’ O great king! Having been thus addressed by the king, Narada replied in words that brought life into Avikshit’s son. ‘O king! Angiras has a son named Samvarta and he is devoted to dharma. He is confusing all creatures and is wandering around in all the directions, naked. If Brihaspati does not wish to be your officiating priest, go to him. O great king! If Samvarta is pleased with you, he will be your officiating priest.’ Marutta said, ‘O Narada! I have been revived by your words. O supreme among eloquent ones! Tell me where I can see Samvarta. How can I ensure that he remains with me and how can I ensure that he doesn’t abandon me? If he also refuses me, I will not be interested in remaining alive.’ Narada replied, ‘He sports the attire of a mad man and has all those signs. He has resorted to a life of begging in the city of Varanasi. O lord of the earth! Approach its gates and place a corpse there. If you see someone repelled by this, he will be Samvarta. Follow him from the rear and go wherever that valiant one goes. Approach him, join your hands in salutation and seek refuge with him. O slayer of enemies! If he seems to be pained and asks you who told you about him, tell him it was Narada. He may ask you to follow me and seek to persuade me. In that case, without any hesitation, tell him I have entered the fire.’ The rajarshi agreed to this and honoured Narada. Having taken his permission, he went to the city of Varanasi.

‘“Having gone there, the immensely illustrious one remembered Narada’s words. He placed a corpse in front of the gate. Through a coincidence, the brahmana entered the gate at the same time. On seeing the corpse, he suddenly retreated. On seeing this, the king who was Avikshit’s son joined his hands in salutation and followed him from the rear, desiring to be instructed by Samvarta. When he[17] saw the king in that desolate spot, he covered him with dirt, mud, spittle and excrement. The king was thus made to suffer by Samvarta. However, he joined his hands in salutation and entreated the rishi, seeking his favours. Eventually, Samvarta desisted. He was exhausted. He sought out the cool shade of a banyan tree with many branches and sat down there.”’

Chapter 1842(7)

'"Samvarta said, 'How did you get to know about me? Who told you about me? If you desire that I should do something agreeable for you, tell me the truth about this. If you speak the truth, you will obtain everything that you desire. If you utter a lie, your head will be shattered into seven fragments.'

'"Marutta replied, 'Along the road, Narada told me about you. He said that you are the son of our preceptor[18] and will give me great delight.'

'"Samvarta said, 'You have told me the truth. He knows me as an officiating priest. Now tell me, where is Narada?'

'"Marutta replied, 'The excellent devarshi told me about you. Having done that, he took my leave and entered the fire.'"

'Vyasa said, "On hearing the king's words, Samvarta was greatly delighted. He said, 'I am also capable of doing that.' O king! The brahmana repeatedly seemed to censure Marutta through these crazy and harsh words. 'I suffer from disease of the wind.[19] I am capricious and wilful. Why do you want such an abnormal person to be your officiating priest? My brother is capable and has been honoured by Vasava. He is engaged in performing sacrifices. Get your rites done by him. He has taken away my house and all my rights as an officiating priest. He has taken away all my gods. My elder brother has taken all these away and has only left me with this body. O Avikshit's son! Without his permission, I can never act as an officiating priest. How can I? He deserves my worship. Therefore, go to Brihaspati. Obtain his permission and then return to me. If you desire to engage me as an officiating priest at your sacrifice, this is what you must do.'

'"Marutta replied, 'O Samvarta! Listen to me. I went to Brihaspati earlier. Restrained by Vasava, he did not desire to be my officiating priest. "O rishi! You are an officiating priest for the immortals now and cannot be one for humans. You cannot be an officiating priest for Marutta, who suffers from having to follow the dharma of mortals. O brahmana! That king always seeks to rival me." This is what your brother was told by the slayer of Bala and Vritra and he agreed. O bull among sages! I affectionately went to him and sought him as an officiating priest. But having resorted to the king of the gods, he did not accept my request. I wish to surpass Vasava in all the qualities. Therefore, I will expend all my riches in a sacrifice, with you as the officiating priest. O brahmana! Since I went to Brihaspati and have been rebuffed by him, I no longer have the inclination to go back to him.'

'"Samvarta said, 'O king! I will certainly do everything that you desire, but only if you do everything that I intend. However, when Brihaspati and Purandara know that I am the officiating priest, they will be angry and seek to cause injury. They have the capacity. Therefore, you must assure me that you will be steadfast. If I am enraged with you, I will reduce you and your relatives to ashes.'

'"Marutta replied, 'If I abandon the association with you, may I not obtain the worlds for as long as the one with the one thousand rays radiates heat, or as long as the mountains exist. If I abandon the association with you, may I never obtain proper intelligence and may I always be immersed in the improper ignorance of material possessions.'

'"Samvarta said, 'O Avikshit's son! Your intelligence is pure and I will undertake the act. O king! I will be your officiating priest. O king! I will plan it so that your excellent riches are inexhaustible and superior to those of the gods and the gandharvas, together with Shakra. My mind does not turn towards the sacrifice for the sake of riches. However, I wish to do what is disagreeable to both my brother and Indra. It is certain that I will make you Indra's equal. I will do what is agreeable to you. I am telling you this truthfully.'"'

Chapter 1843(8)

'"Samvarta continued, 'There is a summit named Munjavat on the slopes of the Himalaya mountains. The illustrious one, Uma's consort,[20] is always engaged in tormenting himself through austerities there. As he desires and as he pleases, he does this under trees, slopes, summits and caves of that king of mountains. With Uma as his companion, the illustrious Maheshvara is always there. The immensely energetic one has a trident and is surrounded by large numbers of different kinds of demons.[21] The Rudras, the Sadhyas, the Vishvadevas, the Vasus, Yama, Varuna, Kubera and his followers, bhutas, pishachas, the Nasatya Ashvins,[22] the gandharvas, the apsaras, the yakshas, the devarshis, the Adityas, the Maruts and all the yatudhanas are also there, worshipping Uma's great-souled consort in his many different forms. O lord of the earth! The illustrious one finds pleasure there, sporting with Kubera's malformed and deformed companions. His blazing prosperity is seen to be as radiant as the morning sun. However, that region is never seen to have any particular form. No ordinary creature, made out of flesh, can see it with his eyes. It is neither hot, nor cold, there. There is no wind. Nor is the sun there. O king! There is no old age, hunger, thirst, death or fear. O supreme among victorious ones! Shining like the rays of the sun, there are minerals and gold along all the slopes of that mountain. O king! With their weapons raised, Kubera's companions protect the spot. They wish to do what brings pleasure to the great-souled Kubera. O king! Go there and bow down before the illustrious one—Sharva, Vedha, Rudra, Shitikantha, Surupa, Suvarcha, Kapardi, Karala, Haryakshana, Varada, Tryakshana, Pushna, Dantabhida, Vamana, Shiva, Yama, Avyakta-kesha, Sadvritta, Shankara, Kshemya, Harinetra, Sthanu, Purusha, Harikesha, Munda, Kusha, Uttarana, Bhaskara, Sutirtha, Devadeva, Ramha, Ushnishi, Suvaktra, Sahasraksha, Midusha, Girisha, Prashanta, Yati, Chiravasa, Bilvadanda, Siddha, Sarva-dandadhara, Mriga-vyadha, Mahat, Dhanvina, Bhava, Vara, Soumya-vaktra, Pashuhasta, Varshina, Hiranyabahu, Ugra, Dikpati, Pashupati, Bhutapati, Vrisha, Matri-bhakta, Sena, Madhyama, Sruva-hasta, Dhanvipati, Bhargava, Aja, Krishna-netra, Virupaksha, Tikshna-damshtra, Tikshna, Vaishvanara-mukha, Mahadyuti, Ananga, Sarvanga, Prajavat, Shukradhipati, Prithivi, Krittivasa, Kapalamali, Nitya, Suvarna-mukuta, Mahadeva, Krishna, Tryambaka, Anagha, Krodhana, Nrishamsa, Mridu, Bahushali, Dandi, Tapta-tapasa, Krura-karma, Sahasra-shira, Sahasracharana, Svadha-svarupa, Bahurupa, Damshtri, Pinaki, Mahayogi, Avyaya, Trishula-pani, Bhuvaneshvara, Tripuraghna, Trinayana, Trilokesha, Mahoujasa, Prabhava-sarvabhutanam, Dharna, Dharanidhara, Ishana, Sarva, Shiva, Vishveshara, Umapati, Vishvarupa, Dashabhuja, Tishya, Go-vrisha-dhvaja, Ghora, Gouri-shamishvara, Shukra, Prithu, Prithuhara, Hara, Bahurupa, Pranamya-shirasa-deva, Ananga-anga-hara, Sharanya, Sharana, Chaturmukha.[23] Go and seek refuge with Mahadeva. Having done this, bow down before the powerful Mahadeva. O lord of the earth! You will obtain gold from that great-souled one. Men who go there obtain gold.'"

'Vyasa continued, "Thus addressed, Karandhama's son acted in accordance with these words. After this, he made superhuman arrangements for the sacrifice. Artisans manufactured golden vessels. On hearing about King Marutta's prosperity, which surpassed that of the gods, Brihaspati was severely tormented. He was tormented and became pale. His body became emaciated. 'Samvarta, my enemy, will also become prosperous.' The king of the gods heard that Brihaspati was severely tormented. Surrounded by the immortals, he went there and spoke these words."'

Chapter 1844(9)

'"Indra asked, 'O Brihaspati! Are you sleeping happily? Are your attendants doing what brings you pleasure? O brahmana! Do you desire the happiness of the gods? Are the gods protecting you?'

'"Brihaspati replied, 'O great Indra! I sleep happily in my bed. My attendants do what brings me pleasure. O Shakra! I desire the happiness of the gods. The gods protect me extremely well.'

'"Indra asked, 'What is the reason for your mental or physical grief? Why are you pale and faded now? O brahmana! Tell me about all those who have caused you misery, so that I can kill them.'

'"Brihaspati replied, 'O Maghavan! I am restless because Marutta will perform a great sacrifice, at which, excellent dakshina will be offered. I have heard that Samvarta will be the officiating priest. However, I desire that he should not be the officiating priest.'

'"Indra said, 'O brahmana! O one who knows about mantras! Having become the foremost priest of the gods, you have obtained all the objects of desire. O brahmana! You have transcended birth and death. What can Samvarta do to you now?'

'"Brihaspati replied, 'Whenever one sees signs of prosperity in a rival, one is miserable. That is the reason, with the gods, you attack and kill the asuras and their relatives. O Indra of the gods! Listen. I am pale in complexion at the prosperity of my rival. O Maghavan! Use every means to restrain Samvarta and King Marutta.'

'"Indra said, 'O Jataveda![24] Come here. I am asking you to go to Marutta and render Brihaspati to him. Tell him that Brihaspati will be his officiating priest and make him like one who is immortal.'

'"Agni replied, 'O Shakra! I will go there as your messenger and offer Brihaspati to Marutta. In this way, I will make Puruhuta's words come true and will do what brings pleasure to Brihaspati.'"

'Vyasa continued, "The great-souled one, with the smoke on his standard, departed as he wished. He whirled and roared, like the wind shattering the wood at the end of the winter, breaking down forests, trees and plants.

'"Marutta said, 'I see something extraordinary. The fire god has arrived in his personified form. O sage![25] Offer him a seat, water for washing the feet, a cow and water for drinking.'

'"Agni replied, 'O unblemished one! I am happy to accept the seat, water and water for washing the feet. Know that I have come here as a messenger instructed by Indra.'

'"Marutta asked, 'O one with the smoke on the standard! Is the intelligent king of the gods happy? Is he pleased with us? Are the other gods under his subjugation? O god! Accurately, tell me everything.'

'"Agni replied, 'O Indra among kings! Shakra is extremely happy. He is pleased with you and wishes to free you from old age. O king! All the other gods are under his subjugation. Hear the message of the king of the gods. He has sent me here so that Brihaspati can be handed over to Marutta. O king! Let him be the preceptor and the officiating priest for your sacrifice. You are mortal. But he will make you immortal.'

'"Marutta said, 'This brahmana, Samvarta, will be my officiating priest. I join my hands in salutation before Brihaspati.[26] He has been the officiating priest for a god, the great Indra. It is not appropriate that the virtuous one should now be an officiating priest for someone who is mortal.'

'"Agni replied, 'If Brihaspati is your officiating priest, through the favours of the king of the gods, you will obtain the worlds and greatness in the world of the gods. It is certain that you will conquer heaven and obtain fame. O Indra among men! If Brihaspati is your officiating priest, you will now win all the human and celestial worlds and the great worlds of Prajapati and you will also conquer the entire kingdom of heaven.’

‘“Samvarta said, ‘You must never again come here to offer Brihaspati to Marutta. O Pavaka![27] Listen to me. If you do so, I will be enraged and will burn you down with my terrible sight.’”

‘Vyasa continued, “The one with the smoke on his standard was terrified at the prospect of being burnt down. He trembled like the leaves of a fig tree. He went back to the gods. The great-souled Shakra saw that the fire god was in Brihaspati’s company and asked, ‘O Jataveda! Did you go and offer Brihaspati to Marutta? What did the king who wishes to perform a sacrifice say? How did he receive your words?’

‘“Agni replied, ‘Marutta did not find your words appealing. He joined his hands in salutation before Brihaspati and said, “This Samvarta will be my officiating priest.” He repeatedly glanced towards me and spoke these words. He said he was not interested in obtaining the worlds of men or gods or the great worlds of Prajapati. He had no such desire.’

‘“Indra said, ‘Go and meet the king again. Tell him these words of mine. They are for his own good. If he still does not act in accordance with my words, I will strike him down with the vajra.’

‘“Agni replied, ‘Let the king of the gandharvas go there as your messenger. O Vasava! I am frightened of going there. Samvarta has observed brahmacharya. He was angry. He cast a wrathful and fierce glance at me and said, “If you come here again, to hand over Brihaspati to Marutta, I will burn you down with my fierce sight.” O Shakra! Full of great rage, this is what he told me.’

‘“Indra said, ‘O Jataveda! You are the one who burns things down. There is no one else who can reduce anything to ashes. All the worlds are terrified of touching you. O bearer of oblations! What you have said cannot be believed.’

‘“Agni replied, ‘O Indra of the gods! O Shakra! Through your own strength, you have enveloped everything on earth and in heaven. That being the case, how was Vritra able to seize the three worlds?’

‘“Indra said, ‘When I am angered, I can crush all immobile objects into fragments. O Vahni! However, I do not drink soma offered by an enemy. I do not release the vajra at someone who is weak.[28] But how can a man who strikes me be happy? I have banished the *kalakeyas*[29] to earth and have flung down the danavas from the firmament. I brought to an end Prahlada's residence in heaven. How can a mortal strike me and remain happy?'

'"Agni replied, 'Chyavana officiated at Sharyati's sacrifice. With the Ashvins, he accepted the soma alone.[30] O great Indra! Do you remember that earlier occasion? You were enraged and tried to prevent Sharyati's sacrifice. O Purandara! You struck rishi Chyavana with the extremely terrible vajra. That brahmana was overcome with rage. Through the powers of his austerities, he seized your arm, with the vajra. In his anger, he created an enemy who was terrible in form in every way. This was the asura named Mada and the universe was his form. On seeing him, you closed your eyes in fear. One of the jaws of that great danava was on earth and the other extended up to heaven. He had one thousand teeth that extended for one hundred yojanas. These were extremely sharp and terrible in form. There were four teeth that extended for two hundred yojanas. These were round and gigantic, with complexions like silver pillars. He gnashed those teeth and pursued you, wishing to slay you with an upraised and fierce spear. On seeing that terrible form, all the others looked on at a spectacle that had never been seen before. O slayer of danavas! At that time, you were terrified. You joined your hands in salutation and sought refuge with the maharshi. The strength of brahmanas is superior to the strength of kshatriyas. There is nothing that is superior to a brahmana. I know the truth about the energy of brahmanas. O Shakra! Therefore, I do not desire to go before Samvarta.'"'

Chapter 1845(10)

''Indra answered, 'Indeed, the strength of brahmanas is superior in this way. There is nothing that is superior to a brahmana. But I cannot tolerate the strength of Avikshit's son. I will strike him with the terrible vajra. O Dhritarashtra![31] Go to Marutta and tell him and Samvarta, "O king! Accept Brihaspati as your preceptor. Otherwise, I will strike you with the terrible vajra."'"

‘Vyasa continued, “Dhritarashtra went to that Indra among men and told him about Vasava’s words. ‘O Indra among kings! Know me to be the gandharva Dhritarashtra. Desiring to say something, I have come here. O lion among kings! Listen to me. I will convey Indra’s words. This is what the great-souled lord of the worlds said. “Choose Brihaspati as your officiating priest. Otherwise, I will strike you with the terrible vajra. Act in accordance with my words.” This is what the one with the incomprehensible deeds has said.’

‘“Marutta replied, ‘You, Purandara, the Vishvadevas, the Vasus and the Ashvins know the truth about this. In this world, it has always been said that there is never any escape for someone who acts injuriously towards a friend. Let Brihaspati be the officiating priest for the great Indra, who is the excellent wielder of the vajra and the foremost among the gods. O king![32] Samvarta will be my officiating priest now. I do not find any pleasure in your words or in his.’[33]

‘“The gandharva said, ‘O lion among kings! You can hear Vasava’s terrible roar. He is roaring in the firmament. It is evident that the great Indra will release his vajra. O king! At this time, think of what is good for you.’”

‘Vyasa continued, ‘He was thus addressed by King Dhritarashtra and heard Vasava’s roar. Samvarta was supreme among those who knew about dharma and was always devoted to austerities. He told him everything and asked him about what should be done.

‘“Marutta said, ‘It is showering down, with thunderbolts. Though he cannot be seen yet, the immortal cannot be far. O Indra among brahmanas! For the sake of peace, I am seeking refuge with you. O foremost among brahmanas! Grant me freedom from fear. The wielder of the vajra is advancing from the ten directions. He is superhuman and terrible. Our assisting priests have become frightened.’

‘“Samvarta replied, ‘O lion among kings! I will pronounce mantras and remove this extremely terrible fear that comes from Shakra. I will quickly stupefy him with my learning. It will soon be evident that you have nothing to fear. O king! I will stupefy him. Do not be frightened of Shakra. Let all the gods hurl their weapons towards me. Let the vajra blaze in all the directions. Let the wind blow. Let showers pour down and bring down forests. Let a flood rain down from heaven. Let the lightning be seen. Do not be terrified. All of this will be futile. Let Vasava shower down as much as he wants. Vahni will protect you in every way. Let him fling his vajra wherever he wants, let him make the wind blow. Let torrents of water flow in a terrible deluge.'

'"Marutta said, 'The terrible sound and great roar of the vajra can be heard, mixed with that of the wind. My soul is repeatedly distressed. O brahmana! All my tranquility has vanished now.'

'"Samvarta replied, 'O Indra among men! Your anxiety on account of the vajra and the wind will soon be dispelled. I will destroy the vajra. Abandon your fear and ask for a boon from me. What do you desire my austerities to accomplish for you?'

'"Marutta said, 'O brahmana! I desire that Indra should suddenly manifest himself at this sacrifice and receive the oblations that are being offered. Let all the gods accept their respective shares and receive the soma that has been extracted.'

'"Samvarta replied, 'O king! I have invoked Indra with his horses and with all the gods, so that they come and drink soma. They have now been summoned to this sacrifice because of the mantras. Behold their forms, terrified by the mantras.'"

'Vyasa continued, "The king of the gods was on a chariot, to which, the best of tawny horses were yoked. With the gods, he came to the sacrifice of the immeasurable king who was Avikshit's son, to drink the soma. He came with a large number of gods. With his priest, Marutta arose to greet them. Following the ordinances laid down in the sacred texts, he cheerfully worshipped the king of the gods with the best of honours.

'"Samvarta said, 'O Puruhuta! Welcome. O learned one! O slayer of Bala and Vritra! O Indra! Through your presence here, this sacrifice has become more resplendent. Drink the soma that I have extracted.'

'"Marutta added, 'I bow down before you. Look on me benevolently. While I am alive, may I successfully obtain the fruits of the sacrifice. O Indra of the gods! This sacrifice has been conducted by the one who is younger to Brihaspati in birth.'

'"Indra replied, 'I know this preceptor, who is a store of austerities. He is sharp in his energy and is Brihaspati's younger brother. O Indra among men! I have come because of his summons. I am pleased with you now and my anger has been destroyed.’

‘“Samvarta said, ‘O king of the gods! If you are pleased, then instruct us about the rites of the sacrifice yourself. O Indra of the gods! O god! You yourself determine the modes that must be followed and let all the worlds know that this has been done by you.’”

‘Vyasa continued, “Shakra was thus addressed by the son of Angiras. He himself instructed the gods that an assembly hall, with the best of rooms, should be constructed. These had colourful and expensive floors. Large staircases were swiftly erected for the large numbers of gandharvas and apsaras. These were constructed in the sacrificial ground, so that thousands of apsaras could dance along these and ascend towards heaven. O Indra among men! Thus addressed by Shakra, the residents of heaven happily and quickly acted in accordance with his words. O king! Delighted at being worshipped by King Marutta, Indra spoke these words to him. ‘O king! All the other kings who were your ancestors have come here to meet you. O king! All the other gods are also delighted. They have accepted the oblations from you. On my instructions, let the bulls among brahmanas now offer a bull with a reddish complexion to Agni and a multicoloured bull with blue eyes that have the complexion of the clouds to the Vishvadevas.’ Thus, the king’s sacrifice prospered. The gods themselves offered the food and oblations. Shakra, the king of the gods, with the horses, was worshipped by the brahmanas and himself became an assistant priest at the sacrifice. The great-souled Samvarta ascended the altar, like a second fire that had been kindled. He summoned the large numbers of gods with mantras that were pronounced extremely well and offered oblations into the fire. The slayer of Bala drank the best of soma. The other residents of heaven also drank soma. They were satisfied and delighted. Having taken the king’s permission, all of them then departed. The king, the slayer of enemies, cheerfully arranged for large piles of gold, here and there. He gave away a large amount of riches to the brahmanas and was as dazzling as the lord of riches. The king collected many kinds of wealth and built up his treasury. Then, with the permission of his preceptor, he returned[34] and ruled the entire earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. These were the qualities of the king who performed a sacrifice with large amounts of gold. O Indra among men! You should collect those riches. Following the prescribed rites, you should perform a sacrifice and satisfy the gods.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing the words of Satyavati’s son, the Pandava king was delighted. He made up his mind to perform a sacrifice with that wealth. Therefore, he again consulted his advisers.’

Chapter 1846(11)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king was thus addressed by Vyasa, whose deeds were extraordinary. After this, the immensely energetic Vasudeva also spoke some words. The king was distressed in his mind. His kin and relatives had been slain. He was like an eclipsed sun or a fire covered by smoke. Discerning that Partha’s mind was cheerless, the extender of the Vrishni lineage wished to comfort Dharma’s son and spoke these words.

‘Vasudeva said, “All deceit leads to death. All uprightness leads to the state of the brahman. If you possess wisdom about this, then why are you lamenting? You have not completed your assigned tasks. Nor have your enemies been vanquished. How can you not comprehend the enemies that exist within your own body? I have heard of an account that transpired, following dharma. There was an encounter between Indra and Vritra. O lord of men! In ancient times, the entire earth was enveloped by Vritra. When the earth was enveloped, it was seen that all fragrances disappeared from earth. The earth having been seized, bad smells arose from the earth. At scent having vanished from the earth, Shatakratu was enraged. He angrily released the terrible vajra at Vritra. Thus struck by the vajra, the immensely energetic one entered the earth. Having violently entered the water, he seized all taste from there. Wrathfully, Shatakratu released the vajra again. In the water, the immensely energetic one was struck by the vajra. He violently entered energy and seized the essence from there. Enveloped by Vritra, energy lost its attribute of form. Angrily, Shatakratu released his vajra there. The immensely energetic one was severely struck by the vajra. He violently entered wind and seized the essence from there. Enveloped by Vritra, the wind lost its attribute of touch. Shatakratu angrily released his vajra there. The immensely energetic one was struck by the vajra there. He entered space and seized the essence from there. With Vritra in space, the attribute of sound vanished. Shatakratu angrily released his vajra there. The immensely energetic one was struck by the vajra there. He violently entered Shakra and stole all the attributes from there. Thus seized by Vritra, he was overcome by great confusion. O son! Vasishtha brought him back to his senses by using the rathantara hymn. O bull among the Bharata lineage! We have heard that Shatakratu then used an invisible vajra to slay Vritra inside his body. Shakra told the maharshis about this mystery of dharma. O lord of men! The rishis told me about this. Listen."'

Chapter 1847(12)

'Vasudeva said, "There are two kinds of diseases, physical and mental. They are never generated without a conflict between these two.[35] There is no doubt that a disease produced in the body is physical. It has been determined that a disease produced in the mind is mental. O king! Cold, heat and wind are physical qualities.[36] When these qualities are in balance, it is then said that one exhibits the signs of being healthy. Heat obstructs the cold and cold obstructs the heat. Sattva, rajas and tamas are said to be the three qualities.[37] When these qualities are in balance, it is then said that one exhibits the signs of being healthy.[38] If there is an excess of any of these, antidotes have been prescribed. Joy counters misery. Joy is countered by misery. When misery is present, some desire to remember joy.[39] When joy is present, some desire to remember misery.[40] O Kounteya! That is the nature of unhappiness in misery and the happiness in joy. What do you wish to remember? Destiny is most powerful. O Partha! Is it the case that your innate nature is afflicting you? You saw Krishna[41] brought to the assembly hall in a single garment, when she was in season. All the Pandaveyas looked on. Do you not remember that? You were banished from the city, attired in hides and bereft of garments. You were exiled to the great forest. You do not wish to remember that. You were afflicted by Jatasura, there was a battle with Chitrasena and you were oppressed by Saindhava. You do not wish to remember that. O Partha! You again dwelt in disguise and Kichaka struck Yajnaseni with his foot.[42] You do not wish to remember that. O destroyer of enemies! There was an encounter with Bhishma and Drona. However, there is a battle that has presented itself now and you must fight it in your mind, alone. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Therefore, you must prepare yourself for that encounter. This is supremely unmanifest in form. You must free yourself and reach the other side through your own deeds. There are no arrows, no tasks, no servants and no relatives. In the battle that has presented itself, you must fight your soul alone. If you win this battle, you will obtain the state that you desire. O Kounteya! Knowing this, do what needs to be done. Use your intelligence to determine the coming and going of all creatures. Follow the conduct of your fathers and grandfathers and rule the kingdom appropriately.”’

Chapter 1848(13)

‘Vasudeva said, “O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One does not obtain success by giving up external objects. Success may or may not be obtained by giving up physical objects. Even if one is freed from external objects, one may still hanker after the body. Let the dharma and happiness that results from this be the lot of the enemy. The word *mrityu* has two syllables.[43] The eternal brahman has three syllables.[44] A sense of ownership has two syllables and represents death.[45] A lack of ownership is eternal. O king! Both mrityu and the brahman are inside all creatures, though they are invisible. There is no doubt that they are fighting with each other. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! If it is true that the soul is indestructible and eternal, then no injury results if one strikes the physical bodies of creatures. Having obtained the earth with all its mobile and immobile objects, if a person has no sense of ownership, there is nothing else left for him to do. O Partha! But there may be a person who dwells in the forest, surviving on forest fare. If he still possesses a sense of ownership in objects, he is in the jaws of death. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Behold the nature of external and internal enemies. If a person can see this in creatures, he is freed from great fear. In this world, those with desire in the soul are not praised. But without desire, there can be no inclination towards action. It is because of desire that one often undertakes the rites of the Vedas, donations, studying the Vedas and austerities. Know the vows, sacrifices, rituals, meditation and yoga that are not begun because of desire. That which is not undertaken because of desire is dharma. Something with rituals as the foundation does not constitute dharma. Those who know about the ancient accounts have chanted the *kamagita* in this connection.[46] O Yudhishthira! Listen to that being recounted in its entirety. 'No creature is capable of destroying me without using the proper methods. If someone knows my strength and tries to destroy me using weapons, I destroy him using those same weapons and manifest myself again. If he tries to destroy me through sacrifices that involve many kinds of dakshina, I become those mobile objects and the soul of those rites, thus manifesting myself again. If he tries to destroy me through the rites of the Vedas and Vedanta, I become the tranquil soul in those immobile objects and manifest myself again. If someone tries to destroy me through fortitude and the valour of truth, I become those sentiments and he is not able to comprehend me. If someone tries to destroy me through austerities and rigidity in vows, I base myself on those austerities and manifest myself again. If a learned man tries to destroy me by resorting to moksha, I base myself on that state of moksha and laugh and dance. Amongst all creatures, I alone cannot be slain and am eternal.' Therefore, you should desire to perform a sacrifice with many kinds of dakshina. O great king! Act in accordance with dharma and kama will also be served by that. Perform a horse sacrifice with the prescribed kinds of dakshina. Perform the other prescribed sacrifices, prosperous with dakshina. Do not look towards your slain relatives and be repeatedly distressed. You are incapable of again seeing those who have been killed in the field of battle. Perform great sacrifices, rich with copious quantities of dakshina. You will then obtain fame in this world and obtain the supreme destination after death."'

Chapter 1849(14)

Vaishampayana said, 'Rajarshi Yudhishthira's relatives had been slain. The sages, rich in austerities, used many kinds of words to comfort him. He was entreated by the illustrious Vishtarashrava himself, Krishna Dvaipayana, the lord Devasthana, Narada, Bhima, King Nakula, Krishna,[47] Sahadeva, the intelligent Vijaya[48] and many other tigers among men and brahmanas who were learned about the sacred texts. He was thus relieved of his sorrow, grief and mental depression. Yudhishthira worshipped the gods and the brahmanas. The king again performed the funeral rites for his dead relatives. The one with dharma in his soul ruled the earth, right up to the frontiers of the ocean. Having obtained only his own kingdom,[49] Kouravya's mind was tranquil. The king spoke to Vyasa, Narada and the others. "I have been comforted by the aged ones who are bulls among sages. I do not have the slightest bit of affliction left. I have also obtained a great deal of riches, with which, I can sacrifice to the gods. With you at the forefront, I will perform the sacrifice. O grandfather![50] We will go to what is protected in the Himalayas. O supreme among brahmanas! We have heard that the region is extremely wonderful. O illustrious one! You have spoken a lot about that colourful and fortunate spot and so have devarshi Narada and Devasthana. But no man can go there without the sanction of the gods and the preceptors, without honouring virtuous well-wishers. Otherwise, he will face hardships." The king said this to all the maharshis, who took the permission of the king and that of Krishna and Phalguna, and while everyone looked on, instantly vanished. The king, the lord who was Dharma's son, remained seated. They spent a long period of time there. They performed the purification rites for the slain Bhishma. In the course of the funeral rites, they gave many gifts to brahmanas. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! With Dhritarashtra, they donated at the funeral rites of the Kurus, Bhishma and Karna being the foremost. The bulls among the Pandavas gave many riches to brahmanas. Then, with Dhritarashtra at the forefront, they entered Gajasahvya.[51] With his brothers, the one with dharma in his soul ruled the earth. He comforted his father, the lord for whom his wisdom was his sight.'

Chapter 1850(15)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O supreme among brahmanas! Having conquered the kingdom, the Pandaveyas were tranquil. What did the brave Vasudeva and Dhananjaya do?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O lord of the earth! Having conquered the kingdom, the Pandaveyas were tranquil. Vasudeva and Dhananjaya were delighted. They sported in pleasure, like the lord of the gods in heaven. They progressively sported in colourful groves, the slopes of mountains, colourful valleys, lakes and rivers. They were like the two Ashvins in Nandana.[52] The great-souled Krishna and Pandava found pleasure in Indraprastha. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! They entered the assembly hall and sported there. O king! They conversed and recounted the colourful stories of the war and tales of the hardships. They spoke about the lineages of the rishis and the gods. Those great-souled ones, the ancient and excellent rishis,[53] were delighted.

‘Keshava knew about the significance of everything and spoke to Partha. His words were colourful in purport, meaning and diction. He spoke these gentle and wonderful words. Partha was tormented on account of grief over his son and the death of thousands of relatives. Shouri Janardana comforted him with these words. The great ascetic knew about all the rites and comforted him in the prescribed way. After Satvata had removed the burden from his mind, he rested for a while. When the accounts were over, Govinda spoke to Gudakesha. These words were comforting and gentle. These words were full of reason. “O Savyasachi! O scorcher of enemies! By resorting to the strength of your arms, the king who is Dharma’s son has conquered the entire earth. O supreme among men! Without any rivals, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira can now enjoy the earth, through the powers of Bhimasena and the twins. O one who knows about dharma! It is through dharma that the king has obtained the kingdom, bereft of thorns. It is through dharma that King Suyodhana has been slain in the battle. The sons of Dhritarashtra were addicted to adharma and greedy. They were always disagreeable in speech. They were evil-souled and have been brought down with their relatives. O Partha! The entire earth is peaceful. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Protected by you, the king who is Dharma’s son is the lord of the earth and can enjoy it. O Pandava! With you, I have been sporting in this forest. O afflicter of enemies! But where are the others? Where is Pritha? I am greatly attracted towards the place where the king who is Dharma’s son, the immensely strong Bhima and Madravati’s two sons are. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This assembly hall is like heaven. O unblemished one! It is beautiful and sacred and I have spent time with you here. O son of a brave father! O Kouravya! A long period of time has elapsed without my seeing Baladeva and the other bulls among the Vrishni lineage. I wish to now go towards the city of Dvaravati. O bull among men! It seems to me that you should also go. When King Yudhishthira was afflicted by grief, Bhishma and I spoke many things to him. The virtuous Pandava Yudhishthira ruled according to those words. The extremely great-souled one exhibited proper respect towards those words. Dharma’s son knows about dharma. He is grateful and truthful in speech. His mind is first fixed on truth and dharma. He is always established in fortitude. O Arjuna! If it so pleases you, you should go to that great-souled one. Tell the lord of men that I wish to leave this place. O mighty-armed one! Even if I am faced with the prospect of losing my life, I cannot do anything that causes him displeasure. How can I go to the city of Dvaravati without asking him? O Partha! With affection towards you and desiring your welfare, I have told you everything. O Kouravya! I have told you the truth. I have never uttered a lie. O Arjuna! The reason for my residing here is over now. The king who was Dhritarashtra’s son has been killed, with his soldiers and his followers. O son![54] The earth is under the subjugation of Dharma’s intelligent son. Pandava, king of the Kurus is instated there, with the mountains, forests and groves, with many kinds of riches and with the ocean as a garment. The king knows about dharma. He will follow dharma and protect the entire earth. He will be worshipped by many great-souled siddhas. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He will always be praised by the bards. You should now go with me to the king who is the extender of the Kurus. O tiger among the Kurus! Having taken his permission, I will leave for Dvaraka. O Partha! I have always offered this body and all the riches in my house to Yudhishthira. I have always loved and honoured the immensely intelligent Yudhishthira, the lord of the Kurus. O mighty-armed one! With the exception of you, there is no other reason left for me to reside here any longer. O Partha! Your senior, Yudhishthira, is excellent in his conduct and the earth is established under his rule.” The great-souled Janardana spoke in this way to the infinitely valorous

Arjuna. O king! Though he wasn't happy, he reluctantly agreed and honoured Janardana.'

Chapter 1851(16)

Janamejaya asked, 'When the enemies were slain, those great-souled ones, Keshava and Arjuna, dwelt in the assembly hall. O brahmana! What was the conversation between them?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Having regained his own kingdom, Partha resided in that beautiful assembly hall with Krishna and sported, filled with delight. O king! That region was like a spot in heaven. Surrounded by their relatives, they cheerfully roamed around, as they willed. With Krishna, Pandava Arjuna looked at that beautiful assembly hall and spoke these words. "O mighty-armed one! O son of Devaki! When the battle presented itself, I got to know about your greatness, the truth about your lordship and your form. O Keshava! Out of affection towards me, you spoke to me then. O tiger among men! However, my intelligence has been destroyed and I have forgotten everything. O lord! However, my curiosity about that truth has again been ignited. O Madhava! You will soon go away to Dvaraka." Having been thus addressed, the greatly energetic Krishna, supreme among eloquent ones, embraced Phalguna and replied in these words. "I made you listen to something that is eternal and secret. O Partha! That was about the nature of eternal dharma for all the worlds. I am greatly displeased that you have ignorantly not grasped what I told you. O Pandava! It is evident that you have not been faithful, or your intelligence is not adequate. That dharma is sufficient to obtain the state of the brahman. However, I am incapable of telling you everything in detail again. I immersed myself in yoga and told you about the supreme brahman.[55] But I will tell you about an ancient history with the same purport. Using that, if you use your intelligence, you will reach the ultimate destination. O best among those who uphold dharma! Hear everything attentively. O scorcher of enemies! On one occasion, a brahmana came to the world of heaven. He was unassailable and arrived from Brahma's world. He was worshipped by us. O bull among the

Bharata lineage! When he was asked by us, he followed the divine rites and answered us. Without any hesitation, listen to that.

'"The brahmana said, 'O Krishna! What you have asked me concerns the adoption of the dharma of moksha. O lord! This is driven by compassion for creatures and is meant to sever delusion. O Madhusudana! I will tell you about it accurately. O Madhava! Listen attentively to me. There was a brahmana named Kashyapa. He was full of austerities and rich in dharma. He went to another brahmana who knew everything about the sacred texts of dharma. He[56] was accomplished in jnana and vijnana and knew the past and the future in great detail. He was skilled in the truth about the worlds and knew about misery and joy. He knew the truth about birth and death. He was wise about virtue and sin. He knew about the superior and inferior ends that embodied beings obtained, depending on their deeds. He roamed around, emancipated and successful. He was tranquil and in control over his senses. He blazed in the prosperity of the brahman and could go everywhere. He knew how to disappear. Thus, he would vanish with the siddhas and the lords of the world. He would sit down with them and converse alone. Unattached, he would roam around as he willed, like the wind. The intelligent Kashyapa heard the truth about him. The supreme among brahmanas went and met him. Desiring dharma, he controlled himself well and fell down at the feet of the ascetic. He met him in the appropriate way, filled with great devotion. Kashyapa was astounded on seeing that extraordinary person, who was supreme among brahmanas. To satisfy him and obtain learning, he served his preceptor with great devotion. He[57] possessed learning and character. O scorcher of enemies! By following the conduct and sentiments due to a preceptor, he pleased him. Having been pleased with the disciple, the preceptor considered supreme success and spoke to the disciple. O Janardana! Listen to those words from me. "O son![58] Through different kinds of deeds and also by resorting to auspicious yoga, those who are mortal can obtain a place in the world of the gods. However, there is no happiness that is extreme. There is no status that is eternal. When one is dislodged from a great state, one repeatedly has to face misery again. Because I practised sin, I obtained inauspicious ends and suffered misery. I was overcome by desire, anger, thirst and delusion. I have repeatedly gone through death and birth. I have eaten many kinds of food. I have suckled at many kinds of breasts. I have seen many kinds of mothers and fathers who are different from each other. O unblemished one! I have faced diverse kinds of happiness and unhappiness. There are many occasions when I have been separated from what I love and united with what I do not love. I have confronted the destruction of riches. I have faced misery on account of those riches. I have suffered disrespect and great hardships on account of relatives and those who are not related. I have suffered from extreme and terrible physical and mental pain. I have faced extreme dishonour and the terrible death of my relatives. I have descended into hell and suffered hardships in Yama's abode. There have always been old age, disease and many kinds of hardship. In this world, I have experienced extreme opposite sentiments. After a time, I became indifferent, beyond the opposites and without a desire to do anything. Afflicted by great grief, I abandoned this world. Through the tranquility in the atman, I then obtained this success. I will not come to this world again, nor will I go to any other world. Amidst this creation of subjects, I have tasted success and my atman obtained an auspicious end. O best among brahmanas! That is the reason I have experienced excellent success. From here, I will go to the supreme. From there, I will go to what is superior still. There is no doubt that I will obtain the foremost state of being merged with the brahman. O scorcher of enemies! I will not return to the mortal world again. O immensely wise one! I am pleased with you. Tell me what I can do for you. The time for your desires to be satisfied has arrived. Indeed, I know the reason why you have come here. I will soon leave this place. That is the reason I have told you this. I am extremely pleased with you, at your character and your discernment. Ask what you want and I will tell you what you want to hear. Since you have shown me this great honour, I deeply respect your intelligence. O Kashyapa! You clearly possess intelligence and understanding."'"'

Chapter 1852(17)

'Vasudeva said, "Touching his feet, he[59] asked some questions that were extremely difficult to answer. "I am asking you about all of those. O supreme among the upholders of dharma!" Tell me that.

'"Kashyapa asked, 'How does the body go away and how does one get another again? How is one freed from the hardships of this cycle of life? Having freed oneself from the body, how is one united with the atman? Having been freed from this body, how does one obtain another end? How does a man enjoy the fruits of the good and bad deeds done by him? If one is freed from the body, what kind of acts can be undertaken?'

'"The brahmana[60] said, 'Thus asked, the siddha replied to the questions, one after another. O Varshneya! Listen to my words.

'"'The siddha replied, "A body is adopted to perform acts that increase the lifespan and bring fame. However, all of these eventually decay. When there is little of lifespan left, the jivatman begins to act in a contrary way. When destruction presents itself, his[61] intelligence turns perverse. The jivatman knows his spirit, strength and the time. Yet, though it acts against the jivatman, he eats excessively and out of season.[62] He serves everything that causes greater difficulties for him. He eats too much, or does not eat at all. He tastes rotten food and tainted food and other kinds that are perverse. He eats more food than he should. Or he eats before the earlier food has been digested. He indulges in excessive exercise or sexual intercourse. Though his natural speed has diminished, overcome by greed, he always engages in tasks. He eats food that is too juicy. Or he sleeps during the day. Even when the time has not come, these taints cause agitation that are brought on by the person himself.[63] There is disease because of these taints and death comes as the end. Sometimes, one resorts to hanging and other methods.[64] Else, though alive, the physical body of a creature decays because of such things. I am telling you what should be understood. When the wind in the body is fierce and begins to blow violently, heat is generated. This reaches all parts of the body and constrains the breath of life. Know that when the heat in the body becomes excessive, strong and violent, it injures the inner organs and the place where the breath of life resides. In great pain, the physical body of the jivatman melts away. The inner organs are pierced and the creature gives up the physical body. O supreme among brahmanas! Know that the jivatman suffers great pain. All creatures are always extremely anxious about birth and death. O bull among brahmanas! They are seen to abandon the physical bodies. Human beings experience a similar kind of pain when they enter a womb or emerge from the inner organs.[65] A man's joints are shattered and he suffers in the moistness. When the wind in the body is fierce and begins to blow violently, cold is also generated. Then, the body seeks refuge in the five elements. The five elements are established in *prana* and *apana*. This breath of life ascends upwards and causing hardship, frees itself from the body. When it leaves the body, there is no longer any life to be seen. There is no heat. There is no breath. There is no beauty and the senses have left. When the brahman[66] abandons the body, a man is said to be dead. There are ducts through which a person with a body perceives the objects of the senses. However, the breath of life, which is sustained through food, can no longer see them. The eternal jivatman makes those ducts in the body work. These are sometimes combined together and sometimes they collapse. Know that the sacred texts have stated these to be the inner organs. When those inner organs are shattered, the jivatman rises up and enters the heart, thereby swiftly curtailing all spirit. In such a situation, despite being conscious, a creature cannot discern anything. The inner organs are overwhelmed and knowledge is enveloped in darkness. The jivatman no longer has a place to reside and is agitated by the wind. At such a time, the being breathes deeply and breathes extremely painfully. The jivatman emerges swiftly, causing trembling. The body is bereft of sensation. The jivatman discards the body, but is still enveloped by its own deeds. It is marked by all its sacred and auspicious acts and also by all its wicked deeds. There are brahmanas who are accomplished in knowledge and also possess the determinations of the sacred texts. Through the signs, they can discern whether good or bad deeds have been committed. Even when it is dark, those with eyes can see fireflies appear and disappear. In that way, those who possess the sight of knowledge can see. Similarly, successful ones with divine sight can see the act of a creature abandoning the body and being born again, as it enters a womb. According to the sacred texts, a creature is seen to occupy three spots. There is *karmabhumi*, the arena of action. All creatures reap the fruits of their good and bad deeds there. Depending on the good deeds they have themselves performed in this world, they reap the fruits. Those with wicked deeds in this world go to hell, because of those deeds. A wicked man cannot speak and is severely cooked in hell. Since it is extremely difficult for the atman to be freed from such a state, one must do one's utmost to protect oneself against this.

There are states obtained by creatures that ascend upwards. I will recount the truth about these. Listen to me. Having heard, you will obtain faith and intelligence. Using that intelligence, you will be able to determine the course of action. There are many like stars in the lunar disc and the solar disc. Through their own radiance, they shine in those worlds. Know that these, and others, are meant for men who are the performers of auspicious deeds. However, when these deeds are exhausted, they are repeatedly dislodged from there. Heaven is superior to these. But even there, the superior, the medium and the inferior exist. There is discontent there,[67] whenever one sees prosperity that is more blazing than one's own. These are all the separate destinations that have been recounted. I will now tell you about the origin in the womb. O brahmana! When I recount the truth about this, listen attentively."'"'

Chapter 1853(18)

''The brahmana said, 'Good and bad acts committed in this world are never destroyed. As one body is obtained after another body, the fruits are cooked there. A high-yielding fruit tree produces large quantities of fruit. In that way, deeds performed with an auspicious mind yield a great deal. This is also true of wicked deeds perpetrated with an evil mind. In this world, the atman places the mind at the forefront and then undertakes action. After this, listen to how a man enters a womb, when deeds are instructed by desire and anger. Semen is created from blood and enters a woman's womb. The body is derived from acts and is a function of good and bad acts. The brahman[68] is subtle and unmanifest in nature. It resorts to the body, but is not attached to anything. That is the reason, it is the eternal brahman. This is the seed of all beings and it is because of this that all creatures are alive. Having entered the womb, the jivatman penetrates all the different limbs in the body. Basing itself on the place meant for the breath of life, it instantly imparts consciousness. The limbs begin to move and the foetus has consciousness. When liquid iron is drained and poured into a mould, it assumes the form of an idol. Know that this is the way the jivatman approaches and penetrates a foetus. When fire enters a lump of iron, it heats it up. Know that this is the way the jivatman approaches and penetrates a foetus. When one uses a lamp, the light illuminates everything. In that way, consciousness illuminates different parts of the body. Whatever deeds have been committed, good or bad, in an earlier life, all of these must certainly be enjoyed. These are thus extinguished and others are again gathered together. This continues as long as one does not understand the dharma that leads to moksha. O excellent one! When one is born and is repeatedly circling around, I will tell you about the dharma that ensures happiness. Donations, vows, brahmacharya, sustaining the prescribed rites, self-restraint, tranquility, compassion towards all beings, self-control, lack of injury, not appropriating the possessions of others, uprightness, abstention from futile censure of all creatures on earth, serving the mother and the father, worshipping gods and ancestors, worship of seniors, tenderness, purity towards others, constant restraint of the senses and ensuring what is auspicious—these are said to be virtuous conduct. Dharma flows from this and protects subjects eternally. This conduct is always seen among the virtuous and they obtain a state that is permanent. Conduct in conformity with dharma is said to be that which is resorted to by those who are virtuous. They immerse themselves in dharma and this is the dharma that is eternal. If one resorts to this, one never has to confront extreme hardship. When the world is deluded, it is through such rules that it is brought back to the path of dharma. Yogis and those who are emancipated are superior to these.[69] If a man follows the appropriate dharma, he is freed from this cycle of life after a long period of time. In this way, all creatures have to follow their earlier deeds. All the wicked deeds are the reason why one has arrived in this world. Who first determined the acceptance of a body?[70] There is a doubt in the world about this. I will tell you about this next. The grandfather of all creatures first created his own body. Brahma then created the three worlds and all the mobile and immobile objects. Having adopted a body, Pradhana created consciousness. This pervades all the worlds and is known as supreme. This is said to be Kshara. The other one is immortal and Akshara.[71] There are couples formed of these three. They all exist together, but they also exist separately. In his first creation, Prajapati created all the creatures and the immobile objects. This is what the sacred texts say about that ancient account. Thereafter, the grandfather determined the measurement of time and decreed the going and coming of creatures.[72] There may be a person who has seen his atman and knows about his earlier birth. I will accurately tell you everything that such a person would say, or has experienced. Such a person always looks upon happiness and unhappiness as transitory. He regards the body as a vigorous arena for conflicting action, certain to decay. Whenever there is happiness, he remembers all the unhappiness. Such a person is able to cross this ocean that is the cycle of life and which is so very difficult to traverse. Immersed in birth, death and disease, he knows about Pradhana. Basing his consciousness on that universal consciousness, he looks upon all creatures impartially. He is indifferent towards everything and seeks for the supreme path and destination. O excellent one! I will tell you and instruct you about the true nature of that. That is the eternal and undecaying state. That is supreme knowledge. O brahmana! I will tell you about it in detail. Listen to me.'"'

Chapter 1854(19)

''The brahmana said, 'A person who submerges himself in that receptacle,[73] not thinking about his own self, not even thinking about his own identity, progressively casting off the layers, is freed from all bonds.[74] He is a friend to everyone. He endures everything. He is attached to tranquility. He has conquered his senses. He has overcome fear and anger. He has killed desire. Such a man is emancipated. He sees himself in all beings. He is controlled and pure. He is without insolence and without ego. Such a man is emancipated in every way. He is impartial towards both life and death, happiness and unhappiness, gain and loss and the pleasant and the unpleasant. Such a man is emancipated. He does not desire what belongs to someone else. He does not show disrespect towards anyone. He is beyond opposite pairs of sentiments and is devoid of attachment. Such a man is emancipated in every way. He has no enemy. He has no friend. He has no offspring. He has abandoned dharma, artha and kama. He does not hope for anything. Such a man is emancipated. He has neither dharma nor adharma. He has cast aside everything from earlier.[75] When the elements waste away,[76] he is tranquil in his soul. He is without the opposite pairs of sentiments. Such a man is emancipated. He has no acts. He has no hope and only looks at the eternal universe, always submerged helplessly in ill health, delusion and the cycle of birth. His intelligence is always focused on detachment. He is indifferent towards difficulties of heat and cold. In a short while, he is able to free himself from his own bonds. He sees his own atman, which does not experience smell, taste, touch, sound and ownership and is without form and difficult to comprehend. Such a man is emancipated. It[77] is independent of the five elements. It is without form and without cause. Though it enjoys the qualities, it is without qualities. A man who sees the atman in this way is emancipated. He uses his intelligence to cast aside all resolutions of the body and of the mind. Like a fire that is without kindling, such a person gradually obtains liberation. He is freed from all sacraments and obtains the eternal brahman. He obtains the supreme, which is tranquil and stable. This is the celestial Akshara. Thereafter, I will tell you about the supreme and sacred texts of yoga. Knowing this, in this world, yogis obtain success and see their own atmans. I will convey the instructions accurately, as I see them. Listen to me. By always following this conduct, one passes through those doors and sees one's atman in one's own self. The senses must be restrained. The mind must be fixed on the atman. Having first tormented oneself through terrible austerities, one must then undertake this yoga. An ascetic abandons all resolution. He is devoid of pride and ego. A learned brahmana uses his mind to see his atman in his own self. Such a virtuous person is capable of seeing his atman in his own self. Devoted to good conduct alone, he sees his atman in his own self. He is always full of restraint. He is united with his atman. He conquers his senses. Such a virtuous person, engaged in yoga, sees his atman in his own self. In a dream, a man may see someone and recognizing him on waking up, exclaim, "This is he." In that way, a virtuous person engaged in yoga sees the image of the atman.[78] When the outer case is extracted from munja grass, the strand inside can be seen. In that way, taking away the body, the yogi sees the atman. The outer case of the munja grass is like the body. The inner strand is the beautiful atman. Those who know about the excellent texts of yoga cite this as an example. When a person with a body is united with yoga and sees the atman properly, there is no one who can bring him down. He is like the lord of the three worlds. As he wishes, he moves from one body to another one. Without any joy and without any grief, he withdraws himself from the phenomena of old age and death. Such a person, engaged in yoga, can become a god over all the gods. Casting aside this temporary body, he obtains the undecaying brahman. Even if all the worlds are destroyed, no fear is generated in him. Even if all creatures are afflicted, he is not afflicted in the slightest way. A person who uses yoga to unite with his atman is without desire and tranquil in his mind. He is not disturbed by sorrow, misery, fear, terror, or the affection that flows from attachment. Weapons do not pierce him. There is no death for him. There is no one in any world who is happier than him. Having properly engaged himself in yoga, he looks at his atman. No one can touch him, not even Shatakratu himself. If one has engaged in yoga, one obtains a state of indifference. This requires single-minded devotion to yoga alone. Listen to how one must embark on yoga. Wherever one resides, one must think of the eastern direction. The mind should be fixed inside the house, not outside. Wherever one resides, one must remain inside that house. In that abode, the mind must be taken away from external and internal distractions and fixed on the room that one is in. All the thoughts must then be withdrawn and fixed on the body one inhabits. The mind must be fixed on the body, never on anything outside it. One can control all one's senses in a silent and desolate forest.[79] One must single-mindedly fix all one's thoughts inside the body. One must meditate on the teeth, the palate, the tongue, the throat, the neck, the heart and the arteries and veins inside the heart.'

'"The brahmana said,[80] 'O Madhusudana! Thus addressed by me, the intelligent disciple again asked me about moksha dharma, which is extremely difficult to explain. "How is the food, eaten every once in a while, digested in the stomach? How does it become juices? How is blood generated from that? How does this sustain flesh, marrow, sinews and bones? How do all the limbs of embodied creatures grow? As one keeps growing, how does the strength increase? How is waste that is without substance separately excreted? How does one inhale and exhale? Which part of the body is inhabited by the atman? How does the jivatman exert itself and move the body around? What is the complexion of the mind and where does it dwell?" O Madhava! I was asked this by that brahmana. O mighty-armed one! O scorcher of enemies! Based on what I had heard, I replied. "If one has a vessel full of riches, one places it in a room and guards it with one's mind. In that way, the mind must be guarded in the body and prevented from wavering. One must fix it on the path that leads to the atman and discard all carelessness. If one always exerts in this way, one will soon find delight in the atman. One will see and obtain the brahman and become knowledgable about Pradhana. It cannot be grasped with the eyes, or with all the other senses. The great atman[81]can be seen with the lamp of the mind. His hands and feet are in all the directions. His eyes, head and faces are in all the directions. The creature sees the atman, extracted from the body. Having abandoned the body, he is sustained only by the brahman. As if smiling in delight, he sees the atman with the help of his mind. 'O supreme among brahmanas![82] I have now told you about all the mysteries. O disciple! I grant you permission. Cheerfully, go wherever you wish to.'" O Krishna! Having been thus addressed, my immensely ascetic disciple, the brahmana, went away as he desired, his doubts having been dispelled.'"

'Vasudeva continued, "O Partha! These are the words the bull among brahmanas spoke to me at that time. These were appropriate words for those who wish to resort to moksha dharma. He then disappeared. O Partha! Have you heard this truth with single-minded attention? This is exactly what you heard when you were on your chariot.[83] O Partha! It is my view that a man who is not accomplished in consciousness, is not learned and has not cleansed his soul, will be confused about this and will find it extremely difficult to grasp it. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This is a great secret even among the gods. O Partha! It is rare for any other mortal to have heard it, anywhere. O unblemished one! No man other than you deserves to hear it. A person whose soul is confused will not be able to comprehend it easily. O Kounteya! The world of the gods is full of those who observe rites. For those who have mortal forms, the gods disapprove of withdrawal from sacrifices.[84] O Partha! The eternal brahman is the supreme destination. One obtains immortality there, abandoning misery. One is always happy. O Partha! If they resort to this dharma, those with inferior births, women, vaishyas and shudras, also go to the supreme destination, not to speak of extremely learned brahmanas and kshatriyas, who are always devoted to their own dharma and to the object of obtaining Brahma's world. This has been indicated in the reasons and means for that pursuit. There are determinations about misery and the successful obtaining of the fruits of emancipation. O bull among the Bharata lineage! There is no bliss that is superior to this. O Pandava! A man who is learned, faithful and brave, one who abandons the insubstantial practices of the mortal world, can use these means to quickly obtain the supreme destination. This is all that needs to be said and there is nothing more. O Partha! This becomes evident if one steadily practises yoga for six months.”’

Chapter 1855(20)

‘Vasudeva said, “O Partha! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, one that is known as the conversation between a couple. There was a brahmana who was accomplished in vijnana. On seeing that he was seated alone, the brahmani, the wife, spoke to her husband. ‘I am devoted to my husband. What world will be obtained by me? You are seated here, having abandoned all rites. You do not discern that I am uneasy. We have heard that a wife goes to the world obtained by her husband. I am devoted to my husband. What is the destination I will obtain?’ The one who was tranquil in his soul was addressed in this way. He smiled and replied, ‘O fortunate one! O unblemished one! I have not taken umbrage at your words. There are acts that are accepted,[85] seen and heard. Those who are devoted to acts practise these acts and follow these acts. Those who try to withdraw from all acts are confused and bereft of knowledge. In this mortal world, there can never be freedom from acts. Whatever is committed, good or bad, in deeds, thoughts and speech, leads to differences in birth and form among creatures. Deeds are always vested in creatures. Material objects used in rites[86] are seen to be destroyed by rakshasas. Having seen the seat of the atman inside myself, I have based myself there. The brahman, devoid of opposite sentiments, is there. So are Soma and Agni. Vayu always courses there, sustaining creatures with fortitude.[87] That is the reason Brahma and the others practise yoga and worship Akshara. This is also sought by those who are learned, excellent in their vows, tranquil in their souls and in control of their senses. The nose cannot smell it. The tongue cannot taste it. The organ of touch cannot touch it. It can only be obtained through the mind. The eye cannot see it. It is beyond any sense of hearing. It is without smell, without taste, without touch, without form and without sound. It is without decay. Everything flows from it and everything is established in it—prana, apana, *samana*, *vyana* and *udana*.[88] They flow from it and merge into it again. Prana and apana course around between samana and vyana. When one sleeps, samana and vyana remain absorbed. Udana remains pervaded in the space between apana and prana. Thus, even when a man sleeps, prana and apana do not abandon him. The one which controls all the breaths of life is known as udana. Those who know about the brahman and resort to austerities try to control it. In those who possess bodies, all these different breaths of life seek to devour each other. The fire known as Vaishvanara courses in the space between them and it has seven flames. The nose, the tongue, the eyes, the skin, the ears as the fifth, the mind and intelligence as the seventh—these are the seven tongues and flames of Vaishvanara. That which is smelt, that which is drunk, that which is touched, that which is heard, that which is thought and that which is undertood—for me, these are the seven kinds of kindling. The one who smells, the one who eats, the one who sees, the one who touches, the one who hears as the fifth, the one who thinks and the one who understands—these are the seven supreme officiating priests. There are seven kinds of oblations, seven kinds of fires and seven kinds of officiating priests. Learned ones who know about the respective wombs from which the kindling are generated offer the oblations properly. The earth, the wind, space, water, light as the fifth, the mind and intelligence—these are said to be the seven wombs. All the qualities of the oblations enter into the mouth of what results from the fire. Having spent time inside, they are again reborn in their respective wombs. They are the origin of creatures.[89] However, at the time of destruction, they remain restrained. Smell is born from that.[90] Taste is born from that. Form is born from that. Touch is born from that. Sound is born from that. Doubt is born from that. Faith is born from that. The learned know that these are the seven kinds of creation. These were the methods that were grasped by the ancient ones. The complete offering of oblations makes them full and also fills them with energy.’”’

Chapter 1856(21)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘In this connection, there is an ancient history. Listen to the ordinances for the ten officiating priests.[91] Know everything about this. Consider the consciousness with the tool of knowledge. Know that all those who bear bodies sustain their bodily forms with the aid of semen. The *garhapatya* fire is said to be the sustainer of the body. The *ahavaniya* fire is the one into which oblations are offered.[92] Word was born from that and also the source from which words are pronounced. Form manifested itself from that and began to follow the mind.’

‘“The brahmani asked, ‘Why did word originate first and why was mind created afterwards? Words are seen to be pronounced after they have been thought of by the mind. Through what knowledge and what yoga can one say that intelligence is based on consciousness? When it is raised up, why can’t it follow? What restrains it?’[93]

‘“The brahmana replied, ‘Apana is the lord. Therefore, it is the one that despatches everything. It is said to control the mind and mind controls intelligence. However, you have asked me a question about word and the mind. Therefore, I will recount to you a rivalry that took place between them. Both word and mind went to the jivatman and asked a question. “O lord! Dispel a doubt that exists in our minds. Which among us is superior? Tell us.” The illustrious one told the goddess of speech, “The mind is superior.” However, word responded, “I am the one who leads to the accomplishment of desire.” Know that I have two kinds of minds, mobile and immobile.[94] The immobile is with me and the mobile is your dominion. That in your dominion depends on mantras, syllables and sound. Therefore, the mind that is immobile is superior.[95] O beautiful one![96] However, you came to me of your own accord and spoke to me. O Sarasvati! Therefore, I pronounce your name. O goddess! You are always based in speech, in the space between prana and apana. O immensely fortunate one! However, in prana’s absence, you rushed towards Prajapati and asked the illustrious one to rescue you. At this, prana manifested itself and the word appeared again. That is the reason why, when there is inhalation alone, no words can ever be pronounced. Syllables are always either aspirated or unaspirated. Among these two, the unaspirated ones are superior to the aspirated ones. O one who speaks about the eternal brahman! You are always excellent, like a cow that yields a large quantity of milk. O Bharati! O one with the beautiful smiles! You are like a cow. You are both divine and not divine in your powers.[97] Behold the subtle difference between these two.'

'"The brahmani asked, 'Earlier, when she wished to speak, but words did not come out, what did the goddess Sarasvati say?'

'"The brahmana replied, 'The body results from prana. Apana follows from prana. It then becomes udana and is released from the body. It then envelopes all the directions with vyana. After that, it remains established in samana. This has been stated earlier. Thus, the immobile mind is superior. And the goddess of speech is superior to the mobile mind.'"'

Chapter 1857(22)

'"The brahmana said, 'O beautiful one! In this connection, there is an ancient history about the ordinances for the seven officiating priests. The nose, the eyes, the tongue, the skin, the ears as the fifth, the mind and intelligence—these are the seven separate officiating priests. These exist in the subtle intervening space and do not perceive each other. O beautiful one! Given this, know the natures of the seven officiating priests.'

'"The brahmani asked, 'When they exist in the subtle intervening space, why can't they see each other? O illustrious one! O lord! What is their nature? Tell me.'

'"The brahmana replied, 'Not knowing about the qualities is ignorance. Knowing about the qualities is said to be knowledge. They can never know each other's qualities. The tongue, the eyes, the ears, touch and intelligence do not experience smell. It is the nose alone that can experience it. The nose, the eyes, the ears, the skin and intelligence do not experience taste. It is the tongue alone that can experience it. The nose, the tongue, the ears, the skin and intelligence cannot experience form. It is the eyes alone that can experience it. The nose, the tongue, the eyes, the ears, the intelligence and the mind cannot experience touch. It is the skin alone that can experience it. The nose, the tongue, the ears, the touch and intelligence cannot experience sound. It is the ears alone that can experience it. The nose, the tongue, the eyes, the skin and the ears cannot experience doubt. It is the mind alone that can experience it. The nose, the tongue, the eyes, the skin, the ears and the mind cannot experience devotion. It is intelligence alone that can experience it. O beautiful one! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between the senses and the mind.

'"'The mind said, "Without me, the nose cannot smell and the tongue does not experience taste. The eyes cannot grasp form and the skin doesn't experience touch. Without me, the ears can never comprehend sound. I am supreme and eternal among all the elements. Without me, the senses are never radiant. They are like an empty house where the flames of the sacrificial fire have been doused. Without me, all the creatures cannot understand the purport of the qualities. Even when they try, the senses are like fuelwood that is wet and is not dry."

'"'The senses responded, "What you think is false. Without us, or the objects of the senses, you cannot enjoy any objects of pleasure. You think that when we are destroyed, you will be content, able to sustain life, able to enjoy objects of pleasure and able to taste. You think that when we are destroyed, your resolution alone will enable you to remain in those objects and enjoy the objects of pleasure, as they should be enjoyed. You think that you will be successful in enjoying the objects of the senses as you always have, perhaps form through the nose, taste through the eyes, smell through the ears, faith through the tongue, sound through the skin and touch through intelligence. Those who are strong do not follow any rules. Rules are for the weak. Do not experience what you have enjoyed earlier. Experience what you have not enjoyed earlier.[98] To understand the sacred texts, a disciple goes to an instructor. Even after having obtained the sacred texts, he serves the teacher to understand the meaning of the sacred texts. You think that we haven't shown you what exists in the objects, whether it is in sleep or when in a state of waking, whether it is in the past or in the future. There are creatures who are limited in intelligence and who, therefore, seem to have lost their minds. However, it is seen that for sustaining their lives, it is we who discharge their tasks for them. There are many kinds of resolutions that are formed in dreams. However, when afflicted by hunger, one runs after material objects.[99] If one avoids material objects and seeks to enjoy resolutions alone, that is like entering a house without any doors. In that case, one always obtains the peace that comes from the extinguishment of life, like a blazing fire when all the wood has been exhausted. We desire to be attached to our own qualities. We do not desire to be attached to the qualities of another sense. But nothing is experienced without us. Without us, you will not experience any delight.”’”’

Chapter 1858(23)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘O extremely beautiful one! In this connection, there is an ancient history about the ordinances followed by the five officiating priests. Those who are knowledgable and learned know the supreme—prana, apana, udana, samana and vyana are the five officiating priests.’

‘“The brahmani said, ‘Earlier, it was my view that there are seven natural officiating priests. But tell me about the supreme principle, whereby, there are five officiating priests.’

‘“The brahmana replied, ‘The breath of life is nurtured by prana and gives birth to apana. The breath of life is nurtured by apana and makes vyana flow. The breath of life is nurtured by vyana and makes udana flow. The breath of life is nurtured by udana and makes samana flow. In earlier times, they went to Prajapati, who was born first, and asked, “Tell us who is the eldest among us. He is the one who will be the foremost.”

‘“‘Brahma responded, “In all creatures that have bodies and are alive, there is a breath of life. When that is destroyed, the creature is destroyed. When it is destroyed, the creature can no longer move. That is the best among you. Now go wherever you wish.”

‘“‘Prana said, “When I am destroyed, the creature also heads towards destruction. Therefore, among all the breaths that sustain life in a body, I am foremost. When I am destroyed, the creature can no longer move. Behold. I am going to destroy myself.”’

‘“The brahmana continued, ‘Prana was destroyed. But the creature continued to move. O beautiful one! At this, samana and udana spoke up. “You do not pervade everything. You are not established like us. O prana! You are not the foremost. Apana alone is under your control.” Prana began to move around again and apana said, “When I am destroyed, the creature also heads towards destruction. Therefore, among all the breaths that sustain life in a body, I am foremost. When I am destroyed, the creature can no longer move. Behold. I am going to destroy myself.” Vyana and udana spoke these words. “O apana! You are not the foremost. Only prana is under your subjugation.” Apana began to move again and vyana now said, “I am the foremost among all of us. Listen to the reason. When I am destroyed, the creature also heads towards destruction. Therefore, among all the breaths that sustain life in a body, I am foremost. When I am destroyed, the creature can no longer move. Behold. I am going to destroy myself.” Vyana was destroyed. But the creature continued to move. Prana, apana, udana and samana said, “O vyana! You are not the foremost. Samana alone is under your subjugation.” Vyana began to move again and samana said, “I am the foremost among all of us. Listen to the reason. When I am destroyed, the creature also heads towards destruction. Therefore, among all the breaths that sustain life in a body, I am foremost. When I am destroyed, the creature can no longer move. Behold. I am going to destroy myself.” Samana was destroyed. But the creature continued to move. At this, prana, apana, udana and vyana said, “O samana! You are not the foremost. Vyana alone is under your subjugation.” Samana began to move again and udana said, “I am the foremost among all of us. Listen to the reason. When I am destroyed, the creature also heads towards destruction. Therefore, among all the breaths that sustain life in a body, I am foremost. When I am destroyed, the creature can no longer move. Behold. I am going to destroy myself.” Udana was destroyed. But the creature continued to move. Prana, apana, samana and vyana said, “O udana! You are not the foremost. Vyana alone is under your subjugation.” At this, Brahma Prajapati spoke to the assembled ones. “All of you are foremost. Yet, not a single one is foremost. All of you follow different kinds of dharma. All of you are foremost in your own area. All of you are protected by each other. There are superior five breaths of life. They are both mobile and immobile. My atman is one, but is experienced in many different forms. Be affectionate towards each other and make each other prosper. O fortunate ones! Depart in peace. Sustain each other.”’”’

Chapter 1859(24)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘In this connection, an ancient history is recounted, about a conversation between Narada and the rishi Devamata.

‘“‘Devamata asked, “When a creature is born, which comes first—prana, apana, samana, vyana or udana?”

‘“‘Narada replied, “When a being is created, it is the other one that comes first.[100] Know that the breath of life has two components—one that moves diagonally and one that moves upwards.”

‘“‘Devamata asked, “When a being is created, who creates the other one that comes first? Who determines the two breaths of life, one that moves diagonally and one that moves upwards? Tell me.”

‘“‘Narada replied, “Delight is generated from resolution. It[101] is also generated from sound. It is also generated from taste. It is also generated from form. It is also generated from touch. It is also generated from smell. These are the types that result from udana. Delight results from physical intercourse. Semen results from desire. Juices flow from desire.[102] Usually, the mixture of semen and blood results from the union of samana and vyana. When semen and blood are mixed, the first result is that of prana. When the semen is transformed by prana, apana results. The pair of prana and apana are said to move upwards. The pair of vyana and samana are said to move diagonally. Agni represents all the gods. This is the instruction of the Vedas. This[103] generates knowledge in brahmanas and confers them with intelligence. Smoke is its terrible tamas form, the potent ashes represent rajas. Sattva is generated from it when oblations are offered into it. Those who are learned and knowledgable about sacrifices say that samana and vyana form the foundation. Prana and apana are the offerings of clarified butter and the fire is between them. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana. I will also tell you about the pairs and what is separate from them. Listen. Day and night are a pair and the fire is between them. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana. The two *ayanas*[104] constitute a pair and the fire is between them. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana. Existence and non-existence constitute a pair and the fire is between them. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana. Good and bad constitute a pair and the fire is between them. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana. Truth and falsehood constitute a pair and the fire is between them. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana. Samana comes first and the pervasive vyana undertakes its task. The third is the pervasive samana. Vamadeva[105] is for the sake of tranquility. Tranquility is the eternal brahman. Learned brahmanas know that this is the supreme form of udana.”’”’

Chapter 1860(25)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘In this connection, there is an ancient history about the ordinances for *chaturhotra*,[106] explaining why the rites are like that. All those ordinances and rites are now being recounted to you. O fortunate one! I will tell you. Listen to this supreme mystery. O beautiful one! The agent, the action, the instrument and emancipation—these are the four officiating priests that envelope the universe. Listen to the means that are used by all these officiating priests. The nose, the tongue, the eyes, the skin, the ears as the fifth, mind and intelligence—these seven are known to be qualities associated with the agent. Smell, taste, form, sound, touch as the fifth, what is thought and what is understood—these seven are qualities associated with the action. The one who smells, the one who eats, the one who sees, the one who touches, the one who hears as the fifth, the one who thinks and the one who understands—these seven are known as qualities associated with the instrument. They possess qualities, good or bad, and are consumed by their own qualities. A person who knows himself to be beyond the seven and devoid of qualities has reason for emancipation. Learned ones know that these qualities occupy their respective places. They are the forms of the gods and always enjoy the oblations. Ignorant ones eat and develop a sense of ownership.[107] Such a person only cooks for himself and is always destroyed by this sense of ownership. He eats what he should not eat and he is also destroyed by the drinking of liquor. He destroys the food he has eaten. Having destroyed the food, he also destroys his sense of knowledge. However, a learned lord eats the food for the sake of being born again. Because of the food he has eaten, there is not the slightest bit of transgression in him. What is thought by the mind, what is spoken in words, what is heard by the ears, what is seen by the eyes, what is touched by the skin, what is smelt by the ears—all these six are like oblations and must be controlled by the mind. These qualities must be offered to the blazing fire that rages inside the body.[108] This is the sacrifice of yoga that I am engaged in. This knowledge about the brahman emanates from the mind. Prana is the hymn for that sacrifice and apana is the weapon that is used. Renouncing everything is the excellent dakshina. The action and the doer are both the officiating priest with which I praise the beloved brahman. I praise him with the rules of the sacred texts and offer dakshina. Those who know about Naryayana praise him with a hymn from the Rig Veda. "In ancient times, animals were slaughtered in the name of the god Narayana." Hymns chanted from the Sama Veda are also cited as an illustration. O timid one! Listen to me. The god Narayana is the soul of everything.'"'

Chapter 1861(26)

'"The brahmana said, 'There is one ruler. There is no second ruler. Wherever I am employed, that is where I roam around. The ruler is the being who is lodged in the heart and he rules from there. I am moved by him, like water down a slope. There is one preceptor. There is no second one. He is in the heart and I will speak about him. I am always instructed by that preceptor and all the danavas are defeated because of that. There is one relative. There is no second one. He is in the heart and I will speak about him. It is because of his instructions that relatives behave like relatives and the saptarshis blaze in the seven firmaments. There is one person who hears. There is no second one. He is in the heart and I will speak about him. Having resided with that preceptor in the preceptor's house, Shakra obtained immortality in all the worlds. There is one enemy. There is no second one. Having always been instructed by that preceptor, all the serpents hate the worlds. In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about what Prajapati told the serpents, the gods and the rishis. Seated around Prajapati, the gods, the rishis, the serpents and the asuras asked, "What is best for us? Tell us." Asked about their welfare, the illustrious Brahma only uttered the syllable of "Om". Hearing this, they fled in different directions. Having received what was meant to be an instruction to their own selves, they fled. The attribute of an inclination to bite first emerged among snakes. Asuras developed natural insolence in their conduct. The gods were engaged in giving and the maharshis in self-control. They received the same instruction and the single refined word. However, all the snakes, the gods, the rishis and the danavas developed diverse dispositions. One hears what is spoken only when one receives it in the proper way. This is true even if one asks again. No other preceptor can be thought of.[109] An act is thought of first. It is undertaken subsequently. The preceptor, the one who understands, the enemy and the one who hates are all lodged inside the heart. By undertaking wicked acts in the world, one becomes an evildoer. By undertaking good acts in the world, one becomes a doer of good deeds. If a person is addicted to the pleasure that comes from gratifying the senses, he is driven by desire and his conduct follows desire. A person who follows vows is always engaged in conquering the senses. There may be a person who abandons all vows and deeds and bases himself on the brahman alone. Basing himself on the brahman, he roams around in this world and becomes a brahmachari. The brahman is the kindling. The brahman is the fire. The brahman is the sacrifice. The brahman is the water. The brahman is the preceptor. He is submerged in the brahman. This is the subtle nature of brahmacharya, understood by those who are learned. Having understood it and instructed by kshetrajna,[110] they follow this.'"'

Chapter 1862(27)

'"The brahmana said, 'I have entered this great forest, having crossed the terrain that is extremely difficult to traverse.[111] It has grief, joy, cold and heat, and these are like gnats and mosquitoes. It is enveloped in the blind darkness of confusion and greed is like predators and reptiles. Possessions are hardships and desire and anger are like bandits along the road.'

'"The brahmani asked, 'O immensely wise one! Where is that forest? What are its trees and rivers? What are its hills and mountains? How far away is the forest?’

‘“The brahmana replied, ‘There is nothing that is separate from it. There is nothing that is equal to it. Since there is nothing that is separate from it, it is only a short distance away. There is nothing smaller than it. There is nothing larger than it. There is nothing that is more miserable than it. There is nothing that is its equal in happiness. Once brahmanas enter there, they no longer have any reason to grieve or rejoice. They are not frightened of anyone. Nor does anyone have reason to be frightened of them. There are seven large trees in that forest, seven fruits, seven guests, seven hermitages, seven kinds of meditation and seven different types of initiation.[112] The trees that pervade that forest yield divine flowers and fruits of five colours. The trees that pervade that forest yield divine flowers and fruits that have excellent colours. The trees that pervade that forest yield divine flowers and fruits that have four colours. The trees that pervade that forest yield flowers and fruits that have mixed and three colours. The trees that pervade that forest yield flowers and fruits that are fragrant and have a single colour. The giant trees that pervade that forest yield flowers and fruits that have many colours that are not manifest. For a brahmana with an excellent mind, there is a single fire there. The five senses are the kindling. For the sake of emancipation, there are seven kinds of initiation. The qualities are the fruits and the guests survive on those fruits. The seven maharshis become the guests there. When they have been honoured and disappear, another beautiful forest manifests itself. Resolution is that tree, full of shade. Tranquility is its fruit. Knowledge is the resort and contentment is the water. Beyond all this, the kshetrajna is the sun. Virtuous ones who go there, never have to suffer from fear again. Whether upwards, diagonally or downwards, the extremeties of that tree cannot be discerned. Seven women always dwell there. Their visages face downwards and they are radiant mothers. From above, they provide juices to the subjects. In every other way, they are all transient. The seven successful saptarshis, with Vasishtha as the foremost, are established there and repeatedly emerge from there. Fame, radiance, power, victory, success and energy—these always follow those seven, who are like radiant stellar bodies. Collected together, there are hills and mountains there. There are rivers and streams that bear water, all originating with Brahma. There is a sacred sacrificial ground at the confluence of the rivers. There, those who are content in their own atmans advance towards the grandfather himself. Their desires have been extinguished. They are excellent in their vows. They have burnt their sins through austerities. They enter the atman in their own selves and worship the brahman. People who know about that forest of knowledge praise it with hymns from the Rig Veda. For those who intend that forest, patience is generated. Learned brahmanas instruct us about that divine forest in this way. Having obtained the knowledge, they follow the instructions of the kshetrajna.'"'

Chapter 1863(28)

'"The brahmana said, 'I do not smell scents. I do not know taste. I do not see form. I do not touch. I do not hear different kinds of sound. I do not entertain the slightest bit of resolution. It is nature that desires agreeable objects. It is nature that dislikes disagreeable objects. Like prana and apana when they enter the bodies of living creatures, it is nature that experiences desire and hatred. There are other sentiments that are permanent. The atman in creatures does not discern them in the body. When I am based there,[113] I am capable of being distracted by desire, anger, old age and death. I do not desire all the objects of desire. I do not hate all the sins. There is no taint in my nature, like a drop of water is not left on a lotus. When one glances at many kinds of nature, the eternal is everlasting. The net of enjoyment is no longer attached to deeds, just as the blazing rays of the sun are not attached to the firmament. In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between an officiating priest[114] and a mendicant. O illustrious one! Listen to it. On seeing an animal prepared for a sacrificial rite, a mendicant censured the violence and spoke to an officiating priest who was seated there. The officiating priest replied, "This goat will not be destroyed. If the sacred texts are right, this animal will obtain great benefit. This part, constituted of earth, will enter the earth. This part, constituted of water, will enter the water. The eyes will enter the sun. The ears will enter the directions. The breath of life will enter the firmament. I follow the sacred texts and there is no sin in this." '"'The mendicant said, "If you perceive a benefit from the sacrifice of the goat, then the sacrifice is for the sake of the goat. Why does the sacrifice need you? Take the permission of the goat's mother, father, brother and friends and let them pronounce the mantras. In particular, the goat depends on them. You should ask them and obtain their consent. It is only after their permission has been obtained that one can think about what should be done. The life-breath of the goat has left[115] and returned to its own origin. It is my view that only the immobile body is left. This body, bereft of senses, is like kindling. Those whose desire is addicted to violence have thought of this as an animal and have reduced it to kindling. Non-violence is the ancient instruction of all dharmas. I know that a rite is indeed a rite if it does not involve any violence. I have a pledge of non-violence. If I wish to say anything beyond this, I am capable of saying many things. Your deed is reprehensible. All of us always find delight in non-violence towards all beings. We see this directly manifest. We do not worship what is indirect."

'"'The officiating priest replied, "You enjoy the qualities of smell that belong to the earth. You drink and taste the quality of the water. You see form, the quality of fire. You touch the quality of the wind. You hear sound, which originates in space. You use your mind to think of different things. You think that all these elements have life. You are always engaged in taking away life. You are engaged in violence. There is no endeavour without violence. O brahmana! What do you think?"

'"'The mendicant said, "The indestructible and the destructible are the two opposite aspects of the soul. The indestructible is existence. The destructible is said to be non-existent nature. Life, the tongue, the mind, the spirit, sattva and rajas are part of nature. When one has been freed from the opposite pairs of sentiments, one is without hope. Such a person looks upon all creatures impartially. He has no sense of ownership and has conquered his atman. When one has been freed in every possible way, there no longer is any fear."

'"'The officiating priest replied, "O supreme among intelligent ones! One should always reside with those who are virtuous. Hearing your views, my intelligence has been illuminated. O illustrious one! Realizing that you were an enlightened one, I spoke to you in this way. O brahmana! I showed honour to the customs in performing this sacrifice. No crime attaches to me because of this sacrifice."'

'"The brahmana continued, 'When this was said, the mendicant remained silent. The officiating priest was freed from his confusion. He engaged in the supreme rite of the great sacrifice. In this way, learned brahmanas know about the extremely subtle nature of moksha. They know and follow the instructions of kshetrajna.'"'

Chapter 1864(29)

'"The brahmana said, 'O beautiful one! In this connection, there is an ancient history about a conversation between Kartavirya and the ocean. There was a king named Kartavirya Arjuna and he possessed one thousand arms. Using his bow, he conquered the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. We have heard that on one occasion, intoxicated with his strength, on the shores of the ocean, he enveloped the ocean with hundreds of arrows. The ocean joined its hands in salutation and bowed down before him. "O brave one! Do not shoot iron arrows at me. What can I do for you? O tiger among kings! The creatures that have sought refuge with me are being slaughtered by the great arrows you have released. O lord! Grant them freedom from fear."

'"'Arjuna replied, "If there is any archer who is equal to me in battle, tell me about him, so that I can face him in an encounter."

'"'The ocean said, "O king! You may have heard of maharshi Jamadagni. As you have said, he is capable of receiving you as a guest."'"'[116]

'"The brahmana continued, 'At this, the king was overcome by great rage. He left for the hermitage and confronted Rama. With his relatives, he engaged in hostilities against Rama and this caused stress to the great-souled Rama. O lotus-eyed one! The infinitely energetic Rama's energy blazed forth and he burnt down the enemy soldiers. Rama violently grasped a battleaxe and sliced down the thousand arms, like lopping off the branches from a tree. When they saw that he had been slain, all the relatives assembled together. They surrounded Bhargava and attacked him with their spears. Rama seized his bow and swiftly ascended a chariot. He released a shower of arrows and killed the king's soldiers. Some of the kshatriyas were slain by Jamadagni's son. Others entered fortifications in the mountains, like deer afflicted by a lion. Because of their fear, some of them could not find brahmanas and could not engage in their own rites. Their offspring became vrishalas.[117] In this way, Dramidas, Kashas, Pundras and Shabaras were uprooted from the dharma of kshatriyas and became vrishalas. When the brave ones were slain, the brahmanas obtained sons through the kshatriya women.[118] However, Jamadagni's son repeatedly killed these kshatriyas. When this had happened twenty-one times, an invisible and divine voice spoke gentle words and these were heard by all the worlds. "O Rama! Desist. O son![119] O Rama! What gain do you see in this? Why are you repeatedly depriving the relatives of the kshatriyas of their lives?" His great-souled and immensely fortunate ancestors, with Richika at the forefront, asked him to desist. However, unable to tolerate his father's death, Rama told those rishis, "You should not restrain me in this way." The ancestors replied, "O supreme among victorious ones! You should not kill the relatives of the kshatriyas in this way. You are a brahmana. You should not kill these kings."'"'

Chapter 1865(30)

'"The ancestors said, "In this connection, an ancient history is recounted. O supreme among brahmanas! Having heard the truth about this, decide on your course of action. There was a rajarshi named Alarka and he was extremely great in his austerities. He was knowledgable about dharma and devoted to the truth. He was great-souled and extremely great in his vows. Seizing his bow, he conquered the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. Having performed this extremely difficult task, his mind turned towards what was subtle. He sat down at the foot of a tree. O immensely intelligent one! Forgetting that extremely large kingdom, his thoughts turned towards what was subtle.

'"'"Alarka said, 'Strength has been generated in my mind. When one conquers the mind, victory is certain. Elsewhere, when surrounded by enemies, I shot arrows. If my mind assumes a fickle form and tries to distract me in every possible way, I will unleash extremely sharp-pointed arrows towards it.'

'"'"The mind replied, 'O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die. Consider other arrows with which you can strike at me.'"

'"'The ancestors continued, "Hearing these words, he thought and spoke these words.

'"'"Alarka said, 'I inhale many kinds of smells and receive them. Therefore, I will release sharp arrows towards my nose.'

'"'"The nose replied, 'O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die. Consider other arrows with which you can strike at me.'"

'"'The ancestors continued, "Hearing these words, he thought and spoke these words.

'"'"Alarka said, 'I enjoy many kinds of tastes and receive them. Therefore, I will release sharp arrows towards my tongue.'

'"'"The tongue replied, 'O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die. Consider other arrows with which you can strike at me.'"

'"'The ancestors continued, "Hearing these words, he thought and spoke these words.

'"'"Alarka said, 'I touch with my skin and receive the sensation of touch. Therefore, I will bring the skin down with many arrows shafted with the feathers of herons.'

'"'"The skin replied, 'O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die. Consider other arrows with which you can strike at me.'"

'"'The ancestors continued, "Hearing these words, he thought and spoke these words.

'"'"Alarka said, 'I hear many kinds of sound and receive them. Therefore, I will release sharp arrows towards my ears.'

'"'"The ears replied, 'O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die. Consider other arrows with which you can strike at me.'"

'"'The ancestors continued, "Hearing these words, he thought and spoke these words.

'"'"Alarka said, 'I see many kinds of attributes and receive them. Therefore, I will release sharp arrows towards my eyes.'

‘“‘“The eyes replied, ‘O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die. Consider other arrows with which you can strike at me.’”

‘“‘The ancestors continued, “Hearing these words, he thought and spoke these words.

‘“‘“Alarka said, ‘There are many kinds of devotion, but wisdom constraints them. Therefore, I will release sharp arrows towards my intelligence.’

‘“‘“The intelligence replied, ‘O Alarka! Those arrows will never be able to pierce me. They will pierce your inner organs instead. With your inner organs pierced, you will die.’”

‘“‘The ancestors continued, “At this, Alarka engaged in terrible, supreme and extremely difficult austerities. However, he was unable to touch those seven[120] with his arrows. The lord controlled himself and began to think. O supreme among brahmanas! Alarka thought for a long time. The supreme among intelligent ones could not think of anything that was better than, and superior to, yoga. Single-minded and without moving, he resorted to yoga. Using a single arrow, the valiant one quickly slew his senses. Immersing his atman in yoga, he obtained supreme success. Astounded, the rajarshi chanted this song. ‘Alas! It was a hardship that I formerly served the kingdom. I only got to know later that yoga brings supreme bliss.’ O Rama! You should also know this. Do not kill the kshatriyas. If you wish what is beneficial for you, engage in terrible austerities.”’

‘“The brahmana continued, ‘Having been thus addressed by his ancestors, Jamadagni’s son engaged in terrible austerities. Having resorted to those, the immensely fortunate one obtained success that is extremely difficult to obtain.’”’

Chapter 1866(31)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘There are said to be three enemies and nine qualities in the world. Delight, stupefaction and pride—these are the qualities of sattva. Sorrow, anger and extreme intolerance—these are said to be the qualities of rajas. Sleep, lassitude and confusion—these are the qualities of tamas. An intelligent person does not waver and cuts these off with large numbers of arrows. He is tranquil in his soul and conquers his senses. He is interested in vanquishing the enemy.[121] Those who know about the ancient accounts recite a chant in this connection. When he ruled the kingdom, this was sung by King Ambarisha. It has been heard that Ambarisha swiftly seized the kingdom, after using virtue to slay the rising tide of vices. He subdued the great vices and honoured the virtuous. He obtained great success and chanted this song. "I have conquered many vices. I have slain all the enemies. However, there is one vice that should have been killed. I have not been able to slay it. As long as a creature is afflicted by this, it does not obtain freedom from desire. Driven by desire, one dashes downwards and does not understand. Because a man is addicted to this, he commits acts that should not be undertaken. Greed must be severed with an extremely sharp sword. It should be sliced off. Desire results from greed and that gives rise to anxiety. A person who desires obtains many qualities that are associated with rajas. Because of these qualities, he is tied down to the bondage of the body. He is repeatedly born, to perform deeds in this world. When life is over and the body is mangled and scattered, he again confronts death because of the act of being reborn. Therefore, one must look towards greed properly. If one desires true sovereignty, one must restrain it with the fortitude of the atman. This is the true kingdom. A king should know that this alone is what needs to be conquered." The illustrious King Ambarisha sung this chant. Having severed greed, he placed this sovereignty at the forefront.'"'

Chapter 1867(32)

''The brahmana said, 'O beautiful one! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about a conversation between a brahmana and Janaka. A brahmana committed a crime. Wishing to punish him, King Janaka said, "You will not reside in my kingdom." Thus addressed, the brahmana replied to the best of kings. "O king! Tell me. Which is the kingdom that is under your subjugation? O lord! I wish to dwell in the territory of another king. O lord of the earth! I wish to act in accordance with the words of the sacred texts.” Thus addressed by the illustrious brahmana, the king sighed repeatedly and did not say anything in reply. The infinitely energetic king sat down and thought. He was suddenly immersed in great lassitude, like the sun devoured by a planet.[122] After some time, the king reassured himself and overcame that lassitude. He spoke these words to the brahmana. “There is the ancestral kingdom of my forefathers. There are the habitations. I thought of the entire earth. None of this is under my subjugation. When I couldn’t find such a place on earth, I searched for such a place in Mithila. When I couldn’t find such a place there, I searched for it among my own offspring. When I couldn’t find such a place even there, I was overcome by lassitude. With that lassitude over, my intelligence has been aroused again. I think that nothing is under my subjugation and everything is under my subjugation. My atman is not my own. Yet, this entire earth belongs to me. Dwell here as long as you want. Enjoy it as long as you wish.” The brahmana replied, “This kingdom of your forefathers and these habitations are under your subjugation. But tell me this. Have you resorted to your intelligence and given up a sense of ownership? On the basis of what intelligence have you determined that everything is under your subjugation? Why is nothing under your subjugation? And why is everything under your subjugation?”

‘“‘Janaka said, “I have realized that all the deeds that are started in this world come to an end. Therefore, I could not think of anything that belongs to me. Whom does this belong to? Who is the owner? These are the words of the Vedas. Using my intelligence, I could not determine what belongs to me. Having resorted to this intelligence, I gave up all sense of ownership. Listen to the intelligence whereby I decided that everything belongs to me. For my own sake, I do not desire the scents that are received by my nose. It has been conquered by me and therefore, the earth is always under my subjugation.[123] For my own sake, I do not desire what is savoured by my tongue. It has been conquered by me and therefore, the water is always under my subjugation. For my own sake, I do not desire the form and light received by my eyes. It has been conquered by me and therefore, the fire is always under my subjugation. For my own sake, I do not desire what is touched by my skin. It has been conquered by me and therefore, the wind is always under my subjugation. For my own sake, I do not desire the sound that is received by my ears. It has been conquered by me and therefore, sound is always under my subjugation. For my own sake, I never desire my mind or what is in my mind. It has been conquered by me and therefore, the mind is always under my subjugation. All the acts that I start are for the gods, the ancestors, the elements and the guests.”’

‘“The brahmana continued, ‘At this, the brahmana replied and again spoke to Janaka. “Know that I am Dharma. I have arrived here now to test you. Set in motion the wheel that does not return. Its circumference is sattva, the brahman is the nave and intelligence constitutes the spokes.”’”’

Chapter 1868(33)

‘“The brahmana said, ‘O timid one! You have censured me according to your intelligence. But I do not roam around in the world in that way. I am a brahmana. I am free. I dwell in the forest. Despite resorting to the dharma of being a householder, I am a brahmachari. O beautiful one! I am not what you see with your eyes. Everything in this universe that has come and gone is pervaded by me. Know me to be the one that destroys every object in this world, mobile and immobile, like fire consumes wood. I know that my intelligence is superior to sovereignty over everything on earth and even that in heaven. That intelligence is my wealth.[124] This is the single path that is traversed by all brahmanas. Whether they are in households, reside in forests, dwell in the houses of their preceptors or are mendicants, irrespective of the many kinds of signs they displace, they use their intelligence to worship only this. They may resort to many kinds of signs, but the intelligence is based on tranquility in the soul. The destination is a single one, like that of rivers heading to the ocean. That path is traversed through intelligence. It is not a path that is traversed by the body. All action has a beginning and an end and the body is bound down by action. O extremely beautiful one! Therefore, you should not entertain any fear about the life hereafter. Be devoted to me[125] and it is into me that your atman will merge.’”’

Chapter 1869(34)

‘“The brahmani replied, ‘A person who is limited in his intelligence or has not cleansed his soul is incapable of comprehending this. My intelligence is extremely fickle, limited and diffused. Tell me a means whereby I can obtain intelligence. I wish to learn from you the source from which this knowledge emanates.’

‘“The brahmana said, ‘Knowledge of the brahman is the lower *arani* and the preceptor is the upper arani.[126] Austerities and the sacred texts provide the friction and this leads to the fire of knowledge being generated.’

‘“The brahmani asked, ‘Kshetrajna is said to be a sign of the brahman. What are its signs? How is one capable of grasping it?’

‘“The brahmana said, ‘He[127] is without signs and without qualities. There is nothing that is his origin. I will tell you about the methods whereby he can be grasped, or not be grasped. I will instruct you about a proper method, like the one that is seen in bees.[128] The signs are that intelligence must determine action and knowledge must determine intelligence. In instructions about moksha, it is not said that this must be done, or that must not be done. Through hearing and sight, intelligence is generated in the atman.[129] As long as one is capable of doing this, one must contemplate hundreds and thousands of manifest and unmanifest forms. There are many kinds of yoga and all of these directly provide the means. Through practice, one obtains the supreme, beyond which, nothing exists.’”

‘Vasudeva said, “At this, the brahmani’s intelligence became such that the kshetrajna was destroyed.[130] Having obtained what is beyond kshetrajna, it became other than the kshetrajna.”

‘Arjuna asked, “O Krishna! Where is that brahmani and where is that bull among brahmanas? They obtained success. O undecaying one! Tell me about them.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “Know that my mind is that brahmana. Know that my intelligence is that brahmani. O Dhananjaya! The one who has been spoken of as kshetrajna is I.”’

Chapter 1870(35)

‘Arjuna said, “The brahman is the supreme object of knowledge and you should explain this to me. Through your favours, my mind finds pleasure in these subtle aspects.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “In this connection, an ancient history is cited about a conversation between a disciple and a preceptor on the question of moksha. O scorcher of enemies! There was a brahmana preceptor who was rigid in his vows. While he was seated, his intelligent disciple asked him, ‘O illustrious one! Desiring supreme benefit, I am seeking refuge with you. What is supremely beneficial? O brahmana! I have bowed down my head and am soliciting you. Tell me and instruct me.’ O Partha! The preceptor replied to the disciple. ‘O brahmana! I will explain whatever you have doubts about.’ O best among the Kuru lineage! The one who was devoted to his preceptor was thus addressed by the preceptor. He joined his hands in salutation and asked. O immensely intelligent one! Listen to this.

‘“The disciple asked, ‘Where have I come from? Where have you come from? Tell me about the supreme truth. From where do mobile and immobile creatures originate? How do creatures remain alive? What is their lifespan? O brahmana! What is truth? What are austerities? What are the qualities of those who are virtuous? What are auspicious paths? What is happiness? What are wicked deeds? O illustrious one! O excellent one! O brahmana rishi! There is no one other than you who knows the truth about these questions and you should tell me the truth.’”

‘Vasudeva continued, “The disciple asked humbly, in the proper way. He was tranquil and possessed the qualities. He followed his preceptor like a shadow. He was a self-controlled mendicant who observed brahmacharya. O Partha! He asked these questions. O best among those of the Kuru lineage! O scorcher of enemies! The preceptor, who was intelligent and firm in his vows, answered them properly. ‘This was stated by Brahma and is practised by the best of rishis who are devoted to dharma. This constitutes knowledge of the Vedas. It is the truth behind the reason why beings were created. It is a determination about the past, the present and the future and about dharma, kama and artha. This is known to the large number of siddhas. It is eternal and was thought of in ancient times. O immensely wise one! Using proper words, I will now tell you about it. Learned ones who possess this intelligence have success in this world.

In earlier times, the rishis wished to ask each other and assembled together—Brihaspati, Bharadvaja, Goutama, Bhargava, Vasishtha, Kashyapa, Vishvamitra and Atri. All of them had traversed along various paths, performing their own rites, and were exhausted. With the aged Angiras leading them, they went to Brahma's abode and saw Brahma, cleansed of sin. He was seated happily and the great-souled maharshis bowed down before him. They humbly asked him about the supreme benefit. What deeds should a virtuous person undertake? How is one freed from sin? What are auspicious paths? What is truth? What is extremely wicked? Which path enables one to obtain greatness? What is the final destruction of beings? What is their creation? The best among sages spoke in this way to the great grandfather. I will tell you what he said. O disciple! Listen to what the sacred texts have to say.

'"'Brahma said, "All mobile and immobile objects are born from the truth. O ones who are excellent in your vows! They live through austerities. It is because of their own deeds that they are again born in their own species. Truth is always united with the qualities and has the five manifestations.[131] The brahman is truth. Austerities are truth. Prajapati is the truth. Creatures are born from the truth. Creatures possess the greatness of truth. That is the reason brahmanas resort to the truth and are always devoted to yoga. They overcome anger and repentance and use dharma as the bridge. There are other learned brahmanas who have laid down the ordinances of dharma. I will tell you about them, the ones who have thought about the eternal worlds. There are four separate varnas and four separate ashramas. Dharma is one. But the learned have always said that it has four components. O brahmanas! I will now tell you about the path that is auspicious and brings benefit. Earlier, learned ones who have thought about the brahman have always traversed along this. Listen to me now. This supreme path is difficult to comprehend. O immensely fortunate ones! Listen to everything about that supreme destination. The first step is said to be the ashrama of brahmacharya. Garhasthya is the second and vanaprastha comes after that. After this, it is known as the supreme step of adhyatma.[132] Light, space , Aditya, Vayu, Indra and Prajapati—these can only be seen as long as one has not attained the state of adhyatma. Listen now to the means of obtaining that state. Sages reside in the forest and subsist on fruits, roots and air. This stage of vanaprastha has been laid down for the first three varnas.

Garhasthya is recommended for all the varnas. In this stage, it has been said that patience and faithfulness are the signs of dharma. These are the paths that are known as *devayana*. The virtuous and the patient use these rites as the bridge of dharma. Other than this, there is another kind of dharma for those who are rigid in their vows. Such people can always visualize the creation and destruction of beings. I will now accurately tell you the truth and the reasons as to why different essences exist separately in objects. Mahat is unmanifest. There is ego. There are eleven senses[133] and the five great elements. The sacred texts of the Vedas have said that the five elements are superior. The attributes are said to be twenty-four.[134] One who understands the truth about this is patient and knows the truth about the creation and destruction of all beings. He is not overcome by confusion. A person who know the exact truth about the attributes and the qualities and everything about the gods, is cleansed of all sin and is freed from his bonds. He obtains all the unblemished worlds.”’”’

Chapter 1871(36)

‘“Brahma said, “That is unmanifest. It cannot be identified. It pervades everything. It is permanent and does not move. It is known as a city with nine gates, with three qualities and five elements.[135] The mind discriminates inside and pervades the eleven.[136] Intelligence is the supreme lord over these eleven. This is repeatedly nurtured by three flows. These are the *nadis*[137] and the qualities flow along these, known as the qualities of tamas, rajas and sattva. All of these are joined to each other in pairs and obtain support from each other. They find refuge with each other and also follow each other. The three qualities are attached to each other and also to the five elements. Tamas is mixed with sattva. Sattva is mixed with rajas. Other than rajas being mixed with sattva, sattva is also mixed with tamas. When tamas is restrained, rajas flows there. When rajas is restrained, sattva flows there. Among the three qualities, tamas should be known as the night, since it has signs of confusion. It has the attributes of adharma and is always associated with wicked deeds. Rajas is said to progressively stimulate enterprise and action. In all beings, when it flows, its signs are generation. Radiance, dexterity and faith—in all beings, these are seen to be the forms of sattva and dexterity is respected by the virtuous. I will now tell you about the nature of these qualities and their reasons. Understand from me the truth about these qualities, individually and collectively. Confusion, ignorance, lack of detachment, inability to take a decision about acting, sleep, insolence, fear, greed, sorrow, censure of good acts, lack of memory, distress, lack of belief, perverse conduct, lack of discrimination, blindness, vileness in conduct, boasting about action even when no action has been performed, belief in knowledge despite being ignorant, lack of friendliness, contrary action, lack of faith, stupidity in beliefs, crookedness, lack of sense, wicked sentiments in action, heaviness, despondency, darkness and degradation—brahmanas recount these as the qualities of tamas. There are other sentiments that constrain one in this world, laced with signs of confusion. Wherever they cause those constraints, those are the qualities of tamas. Such people always censure the gods, brahmanas and the Vedas. Attachment, insolence, confusion, anger, lack of forgiveness and malice towards creatures—such conduct has the attributes of tamas. People begin futile tasks. They donate in vain. They eat in vain. Such conduct has the attributes of tamas. Speaking a lot, lack of patience, jealousy, pride, lack of faith—such conduct has the attributes of tamas. There are men in this world who perpetrate such wicked deeds. They break the ordinances. All such people are tamas. Their sentiments lead them downwards and they are born as inferior species. They become immobile objects, animals, beasts of burden, predatory beasts, snakes, worms, insects, birds, creatures born from eggs, all the other kinds of quadrupeds, or those who are mad, deaf and dumb, or those who suffer from other vile diseases. Because of the consequences of their deeds, these evildoers are immersed in tamas. Their course is downwards. From one kind of tamas, they submerge into greater tamas. I will next tell you what such people can do for their benefit. Through such means, they become the performers of auspicious deeds and can obtain worlds meant for the virtuous. Those born as inferior species should be engaged in their own deeds, bring pleasure to brahmanas and take part in their rites.[138] If one endeavors to ensure this process of cleansing, one ascends to superior worlds. It is even possible to be with the gods in heaven. This is what is said in the sacred texts of the Vedas.

Those born as inferior species should be engaged in their own deeds. Thereby, they become human, though they have to be born again. They obtain inferior births, like those of chandalas. Or they are dumb, or stammer. However, progressively, they obtain better and better varnas. They transcend birth as a shudra and other qualities of tamas. But those who indulge in the qualities of tamas continue to remain submerged in that flow. The attachment to desire is said to be a great delusion. Desiring happiness, even rishis, sages and gods become confused. Darkness, confusion, great confusion, the darkness known as anger, death and blinding ignorance—of these, the darkness of rage is said to be the worst. O brahmanas! I have recounted to you the truth about different kinds of birth. I have also told you everything about tamas. Who is the virtuous one who understands it? Who is the virtuous one who sees it? Taking falsehood to be the truth is indeed a characteristic of tamas. The qualities of tamas have been recounted in many ways. I have also told you about what is superior to tamas. A man who knows these qualities will always be freed from all the qualities of tamas.”’”’

Chapter 1872(37)

‘“Brahma said, “O excellent ones! I will tell you the truth about rajas. O immensely fortunate ones! Listen to everything about the qualities in this kind of conduct. O brahmanas! Conflict, beauty, effort, happiness, unhappiness, cold, heat, prosperity, war, peace, debates, discontent, forgiveness, strength, valour, ego, anger, physical exertion, dissension, jealousy, calumny, battles, sense of ownership, protection, slaughter, imprisonment, hardships, buying, selling, slicing off, piercing, severing, mangling, fierceness, terror, violence, earning a living through the wealth of others, thinking of worldly affairs, anxiety, intolerance in speech, false speech, false gifts, hesitation in speech, censure, worship, praise, influence, contentment, being served, serving, obedience, thirst, being self-centred, separation, bad policy, distraction, repentance, receiving, the separate sacraments that are prescribed in the world for men, women, animals, objects and houses, torment, lack of confidence, rites, rituals, incessant gifts for benedictions, svadha, bowing down, svaha, vashatkara, performing sacrifices, studying, receiving gifts, attachment that is generated for various qualities, treachery, deception, dishonour, honour, theft, injury, slander, torment, wakefulness, vanity, insolence, attachment, devotion, joy, delight, gambling, scandal, alliances with women, attachment to dancing, musical instruments and singing—these are said to be the qualities associated with rajas. There are those who think about the past, the present and the future. They are always devoted to the three objectives of dharma, artha and kama. They act because they find delight in desire and in the successful obtaining of all the objects of desire. Since their energy is enveloped in rajas, they head downwards. They find pleasure in this world and are repeatedly born again. They desire what can be obtained in this world and in the world after death. They give and they receive. They meditate and offer oblations. The qualities of rajas have been recounted in many ways. The conduct that follows this quality has also been described. A man who always understands these qualities is freed from all the qualities that are associated with rajas.”’”’

Chapter 1873(38)

‘“‘Brahma said, “After this, I will tell you about the third and supreme quality. This is beneficial for all creatures in this world. This is the unblemished dharma followed by the virtuous. Joy, happiness, lack of terror, enlightenment, bliss, lack of niggardliness, lack of insolence, contentment, devotion, forgiveness, fortitude, lack of violence, impartiality, truthfulness, uprightness, lack of anger, lack of malice, purity, skill, valour—those who follow these in the practice of dharma, obtain the infinite in the world hereafter. Engaged in yoga, they think that knowledge, conduct, service and effort are futile. Such a person has no sense of ownership. He is without ego and without hope. He looks upon everyone equally. He is free from desire. This is the eternal dharma followed by the virtuous. Confidence, modesty, patience, renunciation, purity, constancy, lack of violence, lack of delusion, compassion, lack of injury towards creatures, joy, contentment, wonder, humility, good conduct, tranquility and purity in deeds, auspicious intelligence, liberation, indifference, brahmacharya, detachment in every way, lack of ownership, lack of hope and being surrounded by dharma—these are their traits. Such a person thinks donations, sacrifices, studies, vows, receiving gifts, dharma and austerities to be futile.[139] There are some people who have sought refuge in satva and follow this kind of conduct. These brahmanas are patient, virtuous in their insight and are situated in Brahma’s womb. They have abandoned all kinds of sin. They are without grief. They are beyond old age. They are immortal. The patient ones who act in this way obtain heaven. Through their minds, they possess the powers of lordship, subjugation and lightness.[140] Those great-souled ones behave like the gods in heaven. They are said to move upwards and like the gods, can create. Having reached heaven, they can use their natures to modify everything. They obtain everything that they desire and enjoy these. O bulls among brahmanas! I have thus told you about sattva conduct. If one understands this in the proper way, one can obtain whatever one wishes. The qualities of sattva have specially been recounted. The conduct associated with these qualities has also been described. A man who always knows these qualities enjoys these qualities. But the qualities do not enjoy him.”’”’[141]

Chapter 1874(39)

‘“‘Brahma said, “One is incapable of speaking about all the qualities separately. Rajas, sattva and tamas are seen to be together. They are attached to each other and depend on each other. All of them seek refuge with each other and follow each other. There is no doubt that where there is sattva, tamas also proliferates. It is said that as long as tamas and sattva exist, rajas also coexists. They progress together along the path. They combine and adhere to each other. Their conduct is also collective, sometimes with reason, sometimes without reason. However, even when they follow each other, the outcomes may be different. Collectively, they can progress in a superior way and also in an inferior way. When there is an excess of tamas, the progress is downwards. A little bit of rajas will be discerned there and sattva will be lesser still. When there is an excess of rajas, the progress is then medium. A little bit of tamas will be discerned there and sattva will be lesser still. When there is an excess of sattva, the progress is upwards. A little bit of rajas will be discerned there and tamas will be lesser still. Sattva is the origin for any transformation of the senses. There is no other attribute that is superior to sattva. The progress of sattva is upwards, that of rajas is medium. People who have tamas possess inferior qualities and progress downwards. The three qualities course in the three varnas—tamas in shudras, rajas in kshatriyas and the excellent sattva in brahmanas. Even from a distance,[142] they are seen to exist together and collectively. We have not heard of tamas, sattva or rajas existing separately. When they see the sun rising, wicked thieves suffer from fear. Those who are below are tormented. They are afflicted by thirst and suffer from hardships. The rising sun is like sattva. Wicked thieves are tamas. The heat that torments those who are below is said to be the quality of rajas. The radiance in the sun is sattva. The torment is the quality of rajas. The invasion on the right day is known as the quality of tamas.[143] In this way, all the three qualities exist in luminous bodies. In due course, they manifest themselves, here and there. Even in immobile objects, tamas leads to an inferior state. Rajas and sattva also exist in the oils. Know that the day has three parts. The night has also been divided into three parts. There are months, fortnights, years, seasons and the intervals that join these. Three kinds of gifts can be given. Three kinds of sacrifices can be undertaken. There are three worlds. There are three Vedas. There are three kinds of knowledge. There are three destinations. The past, the present and the future exist. Dharma, artha and kama exist. The three qualities are also there in prana, apana and udana. Everything that exists in the world has three components. The three qualities always exist in unmanifest form. The creation of the three qualities, sattva, rajas and tamas, is eternal. The eternal and everlasting origin is unmanifest and represents tamas. This is auspicious and without birth. There are also Prakriti, transformation, destruction, Pradhana and creation. These cannot be discerned. But they are indeed certain and fixed. Everything that is manifest and unmanifest is said to possess the three qualities. A man who thinks about adhyatma must know these names and meditate about them. Such a person will know the names and the truth about the qualities of the unmanifest. He will know about all the destinations. He will know the truth about the different kinds of divisions and will be freed from his body. He will be liberated from all the qualities and be without disease.”’”’

Chapter 1875(40)

‘“‘Brahma said, “From the unmanifest, the immensely intelligent Mahat was generated first. This is the origin of all the qualities and is known as the first creation. Mahat is also known as the great soul, intelligence, Vishnu, Vishva, the valiant Shambhu, understanding, wisdom, realization, fame, fortitude and memory. Progressively, Mahat is thought of in these different words. A learned brahmana who knows this is not immersed in confusion. His arms and feet are in every direction. His eyes, heads and faces are in every direction. His ears are everywhere in the worlds. He is established, pervading everything. With the attributes of greatness, power and radiance, Purusha is based in the heart of everything. He is the lord of being minute, being light and obtaining everything.[144] He is resplendent and without decay. There are intelligent people in the world who are devoted to renunciation. They meditate and always immerse themselves in yoga. They are devoted to the truth and conquer their senses. They are learned, without greed and have conquered anger. They are patient and cheerful in their minds. They are without a sense of ownership and without a sense of ego. They are free in every possible way and obtain Mahat. Those who perceive Mahat in their own atmans go to the supreme and auspicious destination. Among all the people, they are patient and are not submerged in confusion. Svayambhu Vishnu is himself the lord of that first creation. This is the ancient lord, Purusha. He is hidden in a cave and the universe is his form. He is golden and is the supreme destination for those who are intelligent. A person who knows him is intelligent and obtains an understanding that is greater than all kinds of intelligence.”’”’

Chapter 1876(41)

‘“‘Brahma said, “Mahat originated first and then came Ahamkara.[145] The sense of ‘I am’ originated and is known as the second creation. It is said that Ahamkara is the reason behind the creation of beings. Prajapati is the essence of energy and consciousness behind the creation of subjects. He is the god who is the creator of the gods through his mental powers. He is the creator of the three worlds. This is said to be the sense of ego, ‘I am all this.’ There are sages who have cleansed their souls and are always devoted to the knowledge of adhyatma. They have obtained success and the eternal worlds through studying and sacrifices. The qualities are attached to the sense of Ahamkara. It is in this way that the creator of beings creates all creatures. It is this that causes all the transformations and all movement. It is through his own energy that he illuminates the universe.”’”’

Chapter 1877(42)

‘“‘Brahma said, “The five great elements were generated from Ahamkara—earth, air, space, water and light as the fifth. All beings are confused because of these five great elements, through the action of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. When the five great elements are destroyed, there is universal destruction. O patient ones! There is great fear to all those who sustain life. Every creature is dissolved into its source of origin. That dissolution occurs in an order that is the reverse of the progress of creation. All mobile and immobile objects face destruction. However, those who are learned and patient are never destroyed. Sound, touch, form, taste and smell as the fifth are the effects. Because of confusion, they are thought of as the cause. They are not different from each other. But they are created in that way because of greed. In the mixture of flesh and blood, they draw sustenance from each other. They are external to the atman. They cause distress and miserable conduct. Prana, apana, udana, samana and vyana are also like that. These five kinds of breaths of life are always attached to the inner atman. Together with speech, mind and intelligence, these eight are the soul of the universe. There may be a person who is controlled in skin, nose, ears, eyes, tongue and speech. His mind is pure and his intelligence does not stray from the course. His mind is never consumed by these eight fires. Such a person obtains the auspicious brahman and nothing is superior to that. In particular, there are said to be even senses. These originate in Ahamkara. O brahmanas! I will recount these. These are the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, the nose as the fifth, the feet, the anus, the gential organ, the hands and speech as the tenth. In this aggregate of senses, mind is the eleventh. When this aggregate is conquered, it is only then that the brahman is manifested. Five of these are said to be organs of sense and five are organs of action. It is the truth that the five that begin with the ears are said to be the organs of sensation. The remaining ones are the organs of action. The mind is classified as both.[146] Intelligence is the twelfth. In due order, I have thus recounted the eleven organs of sense. Learned ones who know this think that they have become successful. There are three states of beings, land, water and sky. There is no fourth state. There are four kinds of birth—from eggs, upwards,[147] from sweat and from wombs. In all kinds of creatures, these four kinds of birth are seen. There are immobile creatures too. Among the ones that roam in the sky, know that all these are born from eggs, or are reptiles. Worms are born from sweat and there are other creatures like that. This is said to be the second kind of birth, one that is inferior. O supreme among brahmanas! After some time, there are some who are born after sprouting through the earth. These are known as plants and trees. O excellent ones! Now learn about the creatures that are born from wombs. Some have two feet. Some have many feet. Some move diagonally. Know that Brahma's eternal womb is the outcome of two things—austerities and auspicious rites. This is the view held by the learned.[148] Know that there are two kinds of auspicious rites for those who have been born—sacrifices and donations at sacrifices and studying. This is the instruction of the ancients. O bulls among brahmanas! A person who knows this in the proper way becomes liberated. Listen. In this way, he is freed from all sins. Space is the first element and it is connected with the atman through the ear. In its natural form, it becomes sound and is the divinity of the directions. Wind is the second element and it is connected with the atman through the skin. In its natural form, it becomes touch and is the divinity of lightning. Light is the third element and it said to be connected with the atman through the eyes. In its natural form, it becomes form and is said to be the divinity of the sun. Know that water is the fourth and is connected with the atman through the tongue. In its natural form, it becomes taste and is the divinity of the moon. Earth is the fifth element and is connected with the atman through the nose. In its natural form, it becomes smell and is the divinity of the wind. These five elements are said to be progressively divided into four categories.[149] I will next relate how all the senses are divided into three categories. Brahmanas who have seen the truth have said that the feet are connected with the atman. In their natural state, they represent movement and their divinity is Vishnu. When apana moves downwards, it is connected with the atman through the anus. In its natural state, it is what is excreted and its divinity is Mitra. In the act of procreation of all beings, the genital organ is connected with the atman. In its natural state, it is semen and its divinity is Prajapati. Those who are learned about adhyatma say that the hands are connected with the atman. In its natural state, it is represented in action and its divinity is Shakra. The Vishvadevas come before the mind and are said to be connected with the atman through the tongue. In its natural state, it is speech and its divinity is Agni. In adhyatma, the mind is said to instigate the five elements and its natural state is thought of in that way. Its divinity is the Moon. In adhyatma, intelligence is said to be that which moves the six senses.[150] In its natural state it represents what there is to be known and its divinity is Brahma. I have recounted the rules of adhyatma in the proper way. O ones who know about dharma! A person who possesses this knowledge is said to have obtained intelligence. The senses, the objects of the senses and the five great elements—all these should be collected and restrained by the mind. When the mind manages to diminish there, there is no longer any happiness from birth. It is the view of those who are learned that such spirited ones experience true bliss. I will next tell you about what is subtle in sentiment and auspicious. This is about strong and weak renunciation in all beings. A brahmana who is no longer attached to differences between the existence and non-existence of qualities and follows the conduct of being alone obtains bliss. Such a learned person withdraws all desire, like a tortoise drawing in its limbs. Such a liberated man is radiant in every way and is always happy. He controls desire in his atman. He is controlled and his thirst has been exhausted. He has fraternal sentiments of affection towards all creatures. He becomes merged in the brahman. He restrains all the senses that hanker after material objects. Such a sage abandons habitations and uses the fire of adhyatma as kindling. When kindling is offered into the fire, it blazes forth in great radiance. Through the restraint of the sense, a great-souled one is illuminated in that way. With a tranquil soul, he considers all the elements in his heart. Originating within himself, he obtains what is subtler than the most subtle. Fire is the form.[151] Water is the flow of liquids. Wind is touch. The earth is the terrible mire.[152] Space is in the ears. It is enveloped by these five kinds of flows and is overwhelmed with attachment and grief. It is made up of the five elements. It has nine gates. It has two divinities.[153] It is full of rajas and does not deserve to be seen. It has three qualities and three attributes.[154] Foolishly, one assumes a body and is delighted with attachment. Those who have sought refuge with the essence find it difficult to roam around in this world of the living. It is in this way that the wheel of time revolves in this world. This is a terrible, fathomless and great ocean. It is full of delusion. It[155] extends and contracts, awaking the universe, including the immortals. Desire, anger, fear, confusion, hatred and falsehood are extremely difficult to cast away. They can be abandoned through the restraint of the senses. If a person conquers the world, with its three qualities and five elements, it is seen that he obtains an infinite status, beyond the sky. He crosses the river that has desire as its banks and the mind as the fearful current. He crosses the river and the lakes that are so difficult to traverse and vanquishes both desire and anger. He is freed from all sins and beholds the ultimate. By using his mind to control his mind, he sees his atman in his own self. He sees his atman in his own self and sees himself in all beings, in one form and in many forms. There is no doubt that he sees all those forms, like a hundred lamps lit from a single lamp. He is Vishnu, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Prajapati, Dhatri and Vidhatri. He is the lord with a face in every direction. The great-souled one is illuminated in the hearts of all beings. He is in the large numbers of brahmanas, the gods, the asuras, the yakshas, the pishachas, the ancestors, birds and all the large numbers of rakshasas and bhutas. The maharshis always praise him.”’”’

Chapter 1878(43)

‘“‘Brahma said, ‘Among men, royal kshatriyas possess medium qualities. Among mounts, elephants are like that. Among residents of the forest, lions are like that. Among all animals, it is the sheep.[156] Among those that live in holes, it is the rat. Among cattle, it is the bull. Amidst women, it is the man. There is no doubt that in this world, kings among men are like the Indian fig tree, the rose apple tree, the holy fig tree, the silk cotton tree, the Indian rosewood tree, the Indian paintbrush and the hollow bamboo among trees.[157] They are like the Himalayas, Pariyatra, Sahya, Vindhya, Trikuta, Shveta, Nila, Bhasa, Mount Kashthavat, Shubhaskandha, Mahendra and Mount Malyavat—kings among mountains, and like the Maruts among the ganas. The sun is the lord of the planets and the moon of the nakshatras. Yama is the lord of the ancestors and the ocean of the rivers. Varuna is the king of the waters and Mitra of all the spirits. The sun is said to the lord of all heated bodies and the moon of stellar bodies.[158] Agni is the eternal lord of the elements and Brihaspati of brahmanas. The moon is the lord of herbs and Vishnu of those who are supremely strong. Tvashtri is the lord of those with form and Shiva is the lord of animals. A sacrifice is the lord of dakshina and the rishis of the Vedas. The north is the king of the directions and the powerful moon of brahmanas. Kubera is the lord of all the yakshas and Purandara of the gods. Among subjects, it is Prajapati. This represents the various categories in which beings were created. Among all beings who are immersed in the brahman, I am the foremost. There is no one else who is superior to me or Vishnu. The great Vishnu is immersed in the brahman and he is the king of all the kings. Know him as Ishvara, Vibhu and Prajapati. He is the lord over all men, kinnaras, yakshas, gandharvas, serpents, rakshasas, gods, danavas and snakes. Among those who follow the illustrious one, there is the one with beautiful eyes. She is known as Maheshvari, Mahadevi and Parvati. Know her as the goddess Uma, supremely auspicious among women. Among the wealth of women who provide pleasure, the apsaras are the foremost. Kings desire dharma and brahmanas possess the attributes of dharma. Therefore, kings make efforts to protect brahmanas. If virtuous people suffer in a king’s kingdom, then they take away all his qualities. After death, he moves downwards. If virtuous people are protected in a king’s kingdom, they find delight in this world and obtain the infinite after death. Those great-souled bulls among brahmanas obtain such riches. I will tell you about how those who possess attributes of dharma always move upwards. Non-violence is a sign of dharma. Violence is a sign of adharma. Radiance is the sign of the gods. Deeds constitute the signs of men. Sound is the sign of space. Touch is the sign of the wind. Form is the sign of light. Taste is the sign of water. The earth holds up all creatures and its sign is smell. Speech has the attributes of truth and is cleansed through vowels and consonants. Thoughts constitute the attribute of the mind. These are also said to be an attribute of intelligence. Intelligence imparts purport to the thoughts in the mind. There is no doubt that it is intelligence which provides discernment. A great attribute is meditation. The attribute of a virtuous person is to remain undetected.[159] Pravritti is the attribute of yoga. Knowledge is the attribute of sannyasa. Therefore, in this world an intelligent person should place knowledge at the forefront and practise renunciation. United with knowledge and renunciation, one obtains the supreme objective. Such a person overcomes opposite sentiments and darkness, death and old age. I have properly told you about the signs of being united with dharma. After this, I will properly tell you my view about how the qualities should be received. Smell is the quality of the earth and is received by the nose. The wind that is in the nose has been ordained to obtain knowledge of smell. Taste is always the quality of water and is received by the tongue. Soma resides in the tongue and has been ordained to obtain knowledge of taste. Form is the quality of light and is received by the eyes. Aditya resides in the eyes and has been ordained to obtain knowledge of form. Touch is the quality of the wind and this is comprehended through the skin. The wind that resides in the skin has been ordained to obtain knowledge of touch. Sound is the quality of space and this is received by the ears. All the directions reside in the ears and are cited as those who know about sound. Thought is the quality of the mind and this is received by wisdom. The attribute of consciousness resides in the heart and has been ordained to obtain knowledge of the mind. Through endeavour in the use of intelligence and great meditation, one can receive consciousness. Thus, there is no doubt that one can always comprehend the unmanifest. Kshetrajna possesses no qualities. It is eternal and is incapable of being grasped through signs. Since kshetrajna has no manifestations, its only attribute is knowledge. The unmanifest resides in the body and it is through this that qualities are created and destroyed. I always see, know and hear how it is latent. Purusha knows this and that is the reason it is known as kshetrajna. Kshetrajna sees everything about the progress of the qualities. He is ancient. Through infinite endeavour, he creates consciousness. He creates again and again. One cannot know him through the qualities of the atman. Kshetrajna can never be obtained or known through truth.[160] He is the quality among all the qualities in creatures. He is supreme among the supreme and the greatest. Therefore, a person who knows about the truth casts aside all truth about the qualities. When the sins are destroyed and qualities cast aside, one enters into kshetrajna. Such a person is beyond opposite pairs of sentiments. Such a person does not bow down before anyone and has no need for svadha. He does not move and he has no abode. He is actually kshetrajna and the supreme lord.”’”’

Chapter 1879(44)

‘“‘Brahma said, “I will tell you the entire truth about comprehending the beginning, the middle and the end and about the names and signs that are associated with this. It has been said that day was the first. Night came after that. Within months, shuklapaksha comes first. Among nakshatras, Shravishtha is the first.[161] Among seasons, winter is the first. Earth is the source of all smells and water of all tastes. Light is the source of all forms and the wind of all sensations of touch. Space is the source of all sound. These are qualities created by the elements. After this, I will tell you about what is supreme and first among all creatures. Aditya is the first among all luminous bodies and Agni is the first among all elements. Savitri[162] is the first among all kinds of knowledge and Prajapati among all gods. Omkara[163] is the first among all the Vedas and prana among all kinds of speech. Everything that restrains this world is known as Savitri. Gayatri is the first among all Sama metres and the goat among all animals.[164] The cow is the first among all quadrupeds and brahmanas among all men. The hawk is the first among all birds. Among all sacrifices, the pouring of oblations is supreme. O best among brahmanas! Among all the things that creep along the ground, the snake is the foremost. There is no doubt that among all the yugas, krita is the first. Gold is the first among all jewels and barley among all plants. Food is said to be supreme among all things that are eaten or swallowed. Water is supreme among all the objects that are drunk. Without any exception, among all the immobile regions, Plaksha is always said to be the first. This is the sacred region of Brahmakshetra.[165] There is no doubt that I am the first among all Prajapatis. Vishnu, whose soul is incomprehensible, is superior to me. He is known as Svayambhu. The great Meru is said to the first among all mountains. Among the directions and the sub-directions, the northern direction is the one that was born first. Ganga, with its three flows, is said to be the first among rivers. The ocean is the first among all lakes and waterbodies. Ishvara is the lord of all gods, danavas, bhutas, pishachas, serpents, rakshasas, men, kinnaras and yakshas. The great Vishnu, immersed in the brahman, is the origin of the world and the universe. In the three worlds, there is no entity which is superior to him. There is no doubt that garhasthya is foremost among ashramas. The unmanifest is the origin of all the worlds and is also their end. Day ends when the sun sets. Night ends when the sun rises. Happiness always ends with unhappiness. Unhappiness always ends with happiness. All accumulations have an end. All ascent ends in descent. Association ends in disassociation. Life ends in death. All action is destroyed. Everything that is born is certain to die. Everything in this world, mobile and immobile, is temporary. Sacrifices, donations, austerities, studies, vows and rituals—all these are destroyed. However, knowledge has no destruction. Therefore, if a person has knowledge, is pure, tranquil in his soul, restrained, without a sense of ownership and devoid of a sense of ego, he is freed from all his sins.”’”’

Chapter 1880(45)

‘“‘Brahma said, “Intelligence is the essence. The mind is the pole.[166] The aggregate of senses constitute the spokes. The great elements are the circumference and nimesha[167]sets the boundaries. It is overwhelmed by old age and sorrow. It moves with disease and hardship. Depending on the time and the place, there is the sound of toil and endeavour. Day and night constitute the revolutions. Hot and cold set the limits. Both happiness and unhappiness end in hardships. Hunger and thirst are like nails. Shade and heat leave marks along the path. Even a brief instant of time and the twinkling of an eye can cause distraction. It is full of people who are terribly confused and lack consciousness, being dragged along. Measured in months and fortnights, it moves unevenly in this world. The store of tamas is the mud. Rajas provides the impulse for movement. The ornament of sattva provides illumination. The wheel is made out of the conflict of qualities. Sounds of not having obtained what one wants are like the nave and increases grief as it revolves. It has cause and effect and attachment increases its size.[168] Greed and ignorance are clearly responsible for making it unsteady. Fear and confusion become possessions and cause delusion among creatures. One hopes to obtain what brings joy and pleasure and is seized by desire and anger. Though it is specially brought into existence by Mahat and the others, it is destroyed because of the influence of an attachment to tamas. Without tiring, the wheel of time moves on, with the speed of thought. This wheel of time is devoid of consciousness and is united with opposite pairs of sentiments. The entire universe, with the immortals, are awakened,[169] extended and then contracted again. Among all creatures, a man who always knows about the pravritti associated with the wheel of time and the truth about nivritti is never confused. He is liberated from all kinds of hardships. Such a sage overcomes all kinds of opposite sentiments. He is freed from all sins and obtains the supreme objective. Among all the four ashramas, garhasthya, brahmacharya, vanaprastha and the state of being a mendicant,[170] garhasthya is said to be the foundation. It has eternally been stated that the following of the ordinances of the sacred texts brings benefit and fame. A person who is born in a family with special qualities should first observe the vows, practise the sacraments and cleanse his soul. Having got to know the Vedas, he should return.[171] He must always be devoted to his own wife. He must be controlled and good in conduct. He must conquer his senses. He must faithfully perform the five great sacrifices.[172] Always engaged in the rites mentioned in the Vedas, he must eat what is left after serving the gods and the ancestors. According to capacity and following the prescribed ordinances, he must donate at sacrifices. A sage will not excessively use his hands or feet. Nor will he excessively use his eyes. He will not be excessive in speech. He will then be classified as someone virtuous. He will always wear the sacred thread.

He will wear clean and white clothes. He will be pure in his vows. He will always be controlled, restrained and generous. He will associate with those who are good. He will conquer his penis and his stomach. He will be friendly, good in conduct and calm. He will sport a staff made out of bamboo and hold a water pot filled with water. Having studied, he will teach.[173] He will perform sacrifices and officiate at sacrifices. He will give and receive. He will follow these six attributes of conduct.[174] In this world, there are three tasks brahmanas can use for earning a living. Studying, teaching and performing sacrifices are only for purification.[175] The other three, studying, teaching and the performance of sacrifices are for purposes of dharma. A person who knows about dharma will therefore perform these three tasks without any distraction. A sage is controlled, friendly, full of forgiveness and looks upon all creatures impartially. A householder brahmana who does all this to the best of his capacity, is rigid in his vows and is controlled and pure, conquers heaven.”’”’

Chapter 1881(46)

‘“‘Brahma said, “One must properly follow the path mentioned earlier. One must study to the best of one’s capacity and observe brahmacharya. A sage will be engaged in his own dharma. He will be learned and will control all his senses. He will be engaged in what brings pleasure to his preceptor. He will be pure and devoted to the dharma of truth. Having taken the preceptor’s permission, he will eat the food, without criticizing it. He will eat *havishya* obtained through begging for alms.[176] He will sit, stand, or roam around.[177] Pure and controlled, he will offer oblations into the fire twice a day. He will always wield a staff made out of bilva or *palasha*.[178] A brahmana must wear linen or cotton clothes, or deerskin, or garments that are dyed reddish brown. There can be a girdle made out of munja grass. His hair must be matted and he must bathe every day. He must wear the sacred thread. He must study. Without any greed, he must always observe the vows. He must purify himself and always offer water to the gods. A brahmachari who controls himself in this way is praised. He is self-restrained and controls his seed. Such a person conquers heaven. Having obtained the best kind of birth,[179] he is not dislodged from that state. He must cleanse himself and observe all the sacraments in the stage of brahmacharya. After that, he can leave the village and dwell in the forest as a mendicant sage.[180] He will be clad in hides and bark and have his bath in the morning. He will always roam around in the forest and never return to the village again. When guests arrive, he will worship them and offer them refuge. He will subsist on fruits, leaves, ordinary roots and dark millet.[181] He will subsist on water and air and everything else that is obtained from trees in the forest. Single-mindedly and in due progression, he will eat according to his initiation.[182] If a guest arrives, he will offer him roots and fruits as alms. He must always, single-mindedly, offer as alms whatever food there is available. He must always control his speech and eat after the gods and the guests have eaten. His mind should not be effusive. He must eat limited quantities and seek refuge with the gods. He must be self-controlled, friendly and forgiving. He must wear his hair and beard long. He must be engaged in offering oblations and studying. He must be devoted to the dharma of truth. He must abandon all attachment to the body. He must be accomplished and always controlled in the forest. He must conquer his senses. A person in the vanaprastha stage who acts in this way conquers heaven.

‘“‘“After having followed garhasthya, brahmacharya and vanaprastha, a person who desires moksha can resort to the supreme conduct.[183] He grants fearlessness to all creatures and no longer performs any tasks. He is engaged in the welfare of all beings. He is friendly. Such a sage controls all his senses. As he wishes, he eats food that has not been solicited or has not been prepared, but has just presented itself. He must approve of whatever food has presented itself and must wish to eat only a mouthful. He must eat only for surviving on this journey of life and only for the sake of sustaining life. He will eat whatever has been obtained through dharma and not to satisfy desire. He will accept only a mouthful of food and garments and nothing more than that. He will accept what he can eat and never more than that. He will not accept gifts from others. Nor will he ever give to them. Because of the helplessness of beings, a learned person will always share with them. He will not seize the possessions of others. Nor will he receive without having been asked to. Having enjoyed some object, he will not desire it again. He will only use earth, water, stones, leaves, flowers and fruits that are lying around.[184] His action will not be driven by desire. He will not earn a living as an artisan. He will not desire gold. He will not hate. Nor will he teach. He will not own any possessions. He will only eat what has been purified through devotion. He will stay away from arguments. He will not be addicted to futile occupations. He will not have any associations with any creatures. Having ignited a fire, he will roam around for alms. However, he will only seek these from a house where the fire has been put out and the residents have eaten.[185] A person who knows about moksha will only wish to beg after the kitchen vessels have been washed. He will not rejoice at having obtained something. Nor will he be distressed if he doesn't obtain something. When he wishes to beg, he will be controlled and will only seek what is sufficient for the moment. He will not seek gains that ordinary people want. Nor will he eat when he has been honoured. A mendicant will hide himself, so that he is not given things as a mark of respect. He will not eat food that is putrid, acidic, bitter, astringent, pungent, succulent, sweet or not fit to be tasted. He will only eat enough to sustain life, enough to remain alive on this journey. A person who knows about moksha will not desire to earn sustenance through a conduct that causes conflict with other creatures. When he seeks alms, he should never follow another person who is also begging. He should never reveal the dharma he practises. He should be pure and roam around alone. He should seek refuge in an empty house, in the forest, under a tree, near a river or in a mountainous cavern. During the summer, he can spend a night in a village. During the monsoon, it can be more than one night. With his progress determined by the movement of the sun, he should roam around on the earth like a worm. He should roam around on earth with an eye of compassion towards all beings. He should not accumulate anything and should not become attached to where he resides. A person who knows about moksha will always perform his rites with pure water. Such a man will always perform his ablutions with water that has been taken.[186] He will always practise non-violence, brahmacharya, truth, uprightness, lack of anger, lack of jealousy, self-control and lack of calumny. He will possess these eight attributes and control his senses in following the vows. He will always have a conduct that is without sin, without deceit and without falsehood. He will never perform tasks for the sake of obtaining benedictions or those that are associated with violence. Nor will he follow the dharma of accumulation followed in the world. He will overcome all the sentiments and wander around, satisfied with only a little. He will be impartial towards all creatures, mobile and immobile. He will not seek to defeat another person. Nor will he be defeated by another. A person who is trusted by all creatures is said to be someone who knows about moksha. He will not reflect on the future. Nor will he think about the past. He will be indifferent towards the present. He will be controlled and wait for the time.[187] He will not soil anything through sight, thoughts and words. Directly or indirectly, he will not do anything that is a sin. He will withdraw his senses, like a tortoise draws in all its limbs. He will make the senses decay. Devoid of the senses, he will look towards his mind and his intelligence. He will be without the opposite pairs of sentiments. He will not bow down before anyone. He will be without sounds of svaha. He will be without a sense of ownership. He will be without ego. He will be without yoga and kshema.[188] He will be without hope. He will be unattached towards all creatures. He will be without refuge. He will know everything. He will be free in every way. There is no doubt that he will be emancipated. He will only base himself on the sparkling one.[189] It is without hands, feet and back. It is without a head and without a stomach. It does not receive any of the qualities and is without tasks. It is without smell, without touch, without form and without sound. It is without touch, without base and without flesh. It is without anxiety and without decay. It is eternal and is always based in the heart. A person who sees the atman in all creatures knows that they do not die. Intelligence cannot reach it. Nor can the senses, the gods, the Vedas, sacrifices, the worlds, austerities, or valour. It cannot be comprehended through signs. It is said that the learned obtain it through knowledge. Therefore, those who know about dharma and follow the vows of dharma do not follow signs. A learned man knows the nature of true conduct and follows this mysterious dharma. He may not be foolish. However, he does not censure dharma[190] and follows it, as if he is foolish. He always does this, even if others disrespect him. A virtuous one follows the conduct of true dharma, even if he is censured. A person who possesses this kind of conduct is said to the best among sages. He properly understands the senses, the objects of the senses, the five great elements, mind, intelligence, the atman, the unmanifest Purusha and everything else that is enumerated. However, he abandons all this for the sake of what is sparkling. Such a person is freed from all his bonds and obtains heaven. A person who knows the truth knows what has been enumerated about the time that brings about an end. He meditates single-mindedly, without any refuge, and is emancipated. He is free from all attachments, like the wind in the sky. Even when everything that he has accumulated is destroyed, he is without terror. He obtains the supreme destination.”’”’

Chapter 1882(47)

‘“‘Brahma said, “The ancient ones who are certain in their determinations say that renunciation is an austerity. Learned brahmanas who are immersed in the brahman say that knowledge is the supreme brahman. Knowledge of the supreme brahman is a long distance away. The knowledge of the Vedas provides the refuge. It is without the opposite pairs of sentiments. It is without qualities. It is eternal. It cannot be thought of. It is the supreme secret. Those who have fortitude see that destination through knowledge and austerities. These are the purified and sparkling ones, who have transcended tamas and rajas and have been cleansed. Silently, those who resort to austerities advance towards the supreme objective. People who know about the brahman are always devoted to renunciation. Those who follow the pursuit of dharma say that austerities are like a lamp. They know that knowledge is supreme and that it is the best form of renunciation and austerities. There may be a person who has determined the truth and knows it, using his unobstructed knowledge. He succeeds in going everywhere and knows the atman that is inside all creatures. Such a learned person can see association and also disassociation. He sees the unity between the two and is freed from all misery. He does not desire anything. He does not disrespect anything. Even when he is in this world, he thinks of himself as being immersed in the brahman. He knows the true qualities of Pradhana, the one who has ordained all creatures. He is without a sense of ownership. He is without ego. He is beyond the opposite sentiments. He does not bow down before anyone. He is devoid of sounds of svadha. He is devoid of qualities and is always without any conflict. There is no doubt that such a person is liberated and advances towards tranquility. Such a being gives up everything associated with qualities and all tasks, good or bad. He gives up both truth and falsehood. There is no doubt that such a person is emancipated. The unmanifest is the seed of creation. Intelligence is the gigantic trunk. Great Ahamkara represents the branches and the senses are the hollows inside them. The giant elements are the smaller branches and also the branches that are smaller still. This eternal tree is the brahman. It is always full of leaves and flowers. It yields fruits that are good and bad. It provides sustenance to all beings. Through the supreme seat of knowledge, one can cut and pierce this tree. One then abandons the association with death and birth and obtains immortality. Such a person is without a sense of ownership and without a sense of ego. There is no doubt that he is liberated. There are always two birds that are friends.[191] Of these, one is said to be unconscious and the other is said to be conscious. The unconscious spirit is full of conflict. The other intelligent spirit is inside the atman. The kshetrajna uses intelligence to understand the conflict of the spirits. He overcomes the qualities and is freed from the noose of death.”’”’

Chapter 1883(48)

‘“‘Brahma said, “Some say that the tree is full of the brahman. Some say that Mahat is full of the brahman. Some say that Purusha is unmanifest. Some say that it is supreme and is free from disease. Some think that everything is created from the unmanifest and also dissolves into it. There may be a person who is indifferent and breathes without agitation when the time for his death arrives. Such a person obtains his atman and deserves to be immortal. Even if he controls himself with his atman even for a short instant, through the favours of the atman, he becomes learned and obtains an end that is without decay. Such a person uses pranayama to restrain the breath of life again and again. He does this for twelve times and for twenty-four times after that.[192] Having thus made the soul tranquil, one obtains everything that one wants. When the quality of sattva arises from the unmanifest, such a person deserves to be immortal. Those who know about sattva praise it, since there is nothing that is superior to this. The learned have deduced that one can obtain Purusha by resorting to sattva. O brahmanas! One cannot reach Purusha through any other means. Forgiveness, fortitude, non-violence, impartiality, truth, uprightness, knowledge, renunciation and detachment—these are said to be the conduct that is associated with sattva. It is through such deductions that learned people think that sattva and Purusha are one and the same. There is no need for any further reflection on this. Some learned people who have based themselves on knowledge have said that kshetrajna and sattva are identical and there is no difference between them. However, these are always different and one should not think about this. One should know the truth. These are naturally different. Those who are learned about policy have determined the difference between unity and disassociation. It is evident that a gnat and a fig tree are together, but are also different. Though a fish and water may be together, they are actually different. A drop of water may be united with the leaf of a lotus, but they are different.”’[193]

‘“The preceptor said, ‘The brahmanas were thus addressed by the grandfather of the worlds.[194] However, overcome by doubts, the excellent brahmanas asked again.

‘“‘The rishis asked, “Which of the many kinds of dharma is said to be the best? We see that the progress of different kinds of dharma is often contradictory. When the body is destroyed, some say nothing remains. Others say something is left and have no doubts about this. Still others have doubts about everything. Some say that the eternal is not truly eternal. Others say that it is non-existent.[195] Some say that it has a single form. Others say that it has two parts. And still others say that there are many. Some say that it is one and the same. Others that they are distinct. Others say that the situation is diverse. There are brahmanas who are wise and have seen the truth. They think in this way. There are others who have matted hair, and are clad in deerskin. Others have shaved heads. Some are naked. Some don’t wish to bathe. Others wish to bathe. Some desire to eat. Others are engaged in fasting. Some praise deeds. Others praise tranquility. Some praise moksha. Others praise different kinds of enjoyment. Some desire riches. Others wish to be poor. Some worship the means used. Others say that this is unimportant. Some praise sacred deeds and fame. Others say that this is unimportant. Some are devoted to the path of virtue. Others are immersed in doubt. Some follow misery. Others follow joy. Still others are engaged in meditation. Some patient ones are engaged in sacrifices. Others follow the practice of giving. Some praise only one method. Others praise everything. Some praise austerities. Others praise studying. Some speak of knowledge and renunciation. Others think of the nature of beings. In this way, many kinds of dharma present themselves and brahmanas follow them. O supreme among the gods! We are confused and undecided. We cannot understand. People present themselves and say, ‘This is best. That is best.’ Everyone always worships the dharma that he practises. That is the reason our wisdom is destroyed and our minds are dragged in different directions. O excellent one! That is the reason we wish that what is beneficial is explained to us. Thereafter, you should tell us what is supremely secret. What is the connection between sattva and kshetrajna and what is the cause of this?”’”

‘Vasudeva said, “The illustrious one, the creator of the worlds, was addressed by the brahmanas in this way. The intelligent one, with dharma in his soul, instructed them about the truth.”’

Chapter 1884(49)

‘‘‘‘Brahma said, “O excellent ones! I will now tell you what you have asked. Listen to everything properly and in due order. It is the view that non-violence towards all creatures is the supreme task. That is the highest state and is free of anxiety. It is the sign of dharma. The ancient ones, certain in their determinations, have said that knowledge is the best. Therefore, through knowledge, one is purified and is freed from all sins. Those who are violent in conduct towards other people are non-believers. They are immersed in greed and confusion and go to hell. Those who single-mindedly pursue beneficial acts are born again and again and find pleasure in this world. There are learned ones who faithfully perform tasks. They do not desire anything. They are patient and virtuous in their insight. After this, I will tell you about the association between sattva and kshetrajna. O excellent ones! Listen to the association between them and to the disassociation. This is said to be the connection between the subject and the object. Purusha is always the subject and sattva is said to be the object. In an earlier section, this has been explained as the difference between a gnat and a fig-tree. Sattva is always unconscious. It enjoys and does not know. The one who enjoys the enjoyer[196] is the one who knows. Sattva is said to be associated with the qualities. It is transient and possesses opposite sentiments. Kshetrajna has the attribute of being without qualities. It is eternal and without opposite sentiments. It has no parts. It always enjoys sattva, like the leaf of a lotus enjoys the water on it. It knows all the qualities. Despite being associated with them, it is not attached. It is like a drop of water that moves on the leaf of a lotus. There is no doubt that Purusha is unattached in that way. It has been determined that matter originates with sattva, which is in turn owned by Purusha. The connection between the two is like that between matter and its creator. When one is in a place that is dark, one advances with the help of a lamp. In that way, if one desires the supreme, one advances with the lamp of sattva. That lamp shines as long as matter and its qualities exist. When matter and its qualities are destroyed, the light is also extinguished. The manifest is said to be the quality of sattva, while Purusha is unmanifest. O brahmanas! Know this. I will tell you more. Even if there is a thousand, it is difficult to comprehend and one doesn't attain intelligence.[197] However, even with one-fourth of that,[198] if one has intelligence, one can obtain happiness. Know that the attainment of dharma depends on the means. A person who knows the means is intelligent and obtains extreme happiness. There may be a man who is travelling without the requisite provisions. He suffers from great hardships and may even die before he reaches his destination. In that way, actions may, nor may not, yield fruits.[199] By resorting to his own atman, a man can determine what is auspicious and what is inauspicious. If a person proceeds without knowledge of the truth, that is like a man rashly advancing on foot along an unfamiliar road. However, when an intelligent person advances along that same road, it is like swiftly advancing on a chariot yoked to horses. When one has ascended a tall mountain, one does not look down at the ground.[200] However, even if a charioteer is mounted on a chariot, he can be seen to be afflicted and unconscious. Therefore, one should advance on a chariot as long as there is a road for the chariot. When a track for the chariot no longer exists, a wise person abandons the chariot. An intelligent person who knows the truth about the ordinances of yoga advances in that way. He uses his great intelligence to progressively move from one stage to the next. If a person plunges into a great and terrible ocean without a boat and tries to cross using his arms, there is no doubt that he will be destroyed. However, a wise person knows about the different categories and uses a boat. There is no doubt that using oars, he is not exhausted and immersing himself in the water, swiftly crosses over. Having crossed over to the other side, he no longer possesses any sense of ownership and abandons the boat. For the person on a chariot and on foot, this has already been explained earlier. If a person is overwhelmed by attachment and delusion, he is like a fisherman attached by a sense of ownership to his boat. He is whirled around. One cannot climb onto a boat and roam around on land. In that way, it is not recommended that one should ascend a chariot and travel on water. In different kinds of terrain, one accordingly has different kinds of deeds. Depending on the deeds that are performed in this world, one obtains the fruits.

'“'“There is an entity that has no smell, taste, form, touch or sound. Using their intelligence, sages think about this. This is said to be Pradhana. Pradhana is unmanifest and one of the aspects of the unmanifest is Mahat. An attribute of Mahat, generated from Pradhana, is Ahamkara. Through Pradhana, the attribute of the great elements orginates from Ahamkara. The qualities of objects are said to be different from the elements. The unmanifest follows the dharma of a seed and creates from its own self. We have also heard that Mahat follows the dharma of a seed and has also been created. Ahamkara follows the dharma of a seed and has also been created again and again. The five great elements follow the dharma of being a seed and also creating. Those which possess the dharma of seeds are usually said to be ones that do not create. However, the five elements are special in this way and possess a distinctive property. Space has only one quality and wind is said to possess two qualities. Light is said to possess three qualities and water has four qualities. Know that the earth, full of mobile and immobile objects, has five qualities. This goddess is the creator of all beings and has agreeable and disagreeable aspects. O supreme among brahmanas! Sound, touch, form, taste and smell as the fifth—know that these are the five qualities associated with the earth. Smell is always associated with the earth and smell is said to have many different types. Therefore, I will tell you in detail about the many qualities of smell. Agreeable, disagreeable, sweet, sour, pungent, pervasive, concentrated, oily, dry and clear—know that these are the ten kinds of qualities associated with the earth. Sound, touch, form and taste are said to be the qualities of water. I will tell you about the many kinds of smell that have been spoken about. Sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, astringent and saline—in detail, these are the six kinds of smell that are said to be associated with water. Sound, touch and form—these are said to be the three qualities associated with light. Form is said to be the quality of light and form is of many different types. White, dark, red, blue, yellow, orange, short, long, large, square and circular—in detail, these are the twelve kinds of attributes associated with form. Brahmanas who know about dharma and are truthful in speech should always know this. Sound and touch—these are the two qualities known to be associated with the wind. Touch is a quality of the wind and there are said to be many kinds of touch. Hot, cold, agreeable, disagreeable, gentle, extensive, hard, oily, smooth, slippery, rough, soft—in detail, these are said to the twelve qualities associated with the wind. Brahmanas who know dharma, have insight about the truth and are successful know this. It has been said that space has the single quality of sound. In detail, I will recount the many different qualities of sound. These are known as *shadaja, rishabha, gandhara, madhyama, panchama,* and after that, *nishada* and *dhaivata*.[201] There are agreeable and disagreeable sounds, combined together and separate. In this way, sound is generated from space and has many different types. Space is supreme among the elements and Ahamkara is superior to it. Intelligence is superior to Ahamkara and the atman is superior to intelligence. The unmanifest is superior to the atman and Purusha is superior to the unmanifest. A person who knows the difference between superior and inferior attributes obtains the infinite.”’”’

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‘“‘Brahma said, “The mind is the lord of the five elements. In controlling them and releasing them, the mind is like the soul of the elements. The mind always rules over the great elements. Intelligence possesses the power and, over everything, is said to be kshetrajna. The mind controls the senses, like a charioteer controls well-trained horses. The senses, the mind and intelligence are always associated with kshetrajna. The atman that is in beings ascends the chariot and drives it around on all sides. The great elements are yoked to it and intelligence constitutes the reins. The aggregate of senses are yoked[202] and the mind is the charioteer. Intelligence is always like the reins and the chariot is immersed in the great brahman. A learned person always knows that the chariot is immersed in the brahman. In all the worlds, such a person is patient and is never overcome by confusion. The unmanifest has all these mobile and immobile objects as an end. The moon and the sun provide illumination to the worlds, adorned by the planets and the nakshatras. On every side, it is decorated by nets of rivers and mountains. There are many kinds of ornaments in every direction. This provides sustenance to all creatures and it is also the objective of all those who possess life. A person who knows about the kshetra always roams around in the forest that is the brahman. There are many creatures, mobile and immobile, in this world. Those are the first to be destroyed. The qualities that result from the elements are destroyed later.

Depending on their qualities, many different kinds of beings have originated from the five elements—gods, men, gandharvas, pishachas, asuras and rakshasas. All of them have been created from nature, not from deeds and not from any other cause. The brahmanas are the creators of the universe and are born again and again. It is from them that the five great elements have been generated. When the time arrives, they are destroyed, like waves in the ocean. Then, the elements that create the universe merge into the great elements. These five elements are freed and merge into Prajapati. Through his austerities, Prajapati is the lord who created everything. The rishis know this through their austerities. In due order, they undertake austerities, surviving on fruits and roots. They control themselves through their austerities. Having become successful, they can see the three worlds. Herbs, medicines and many kinds of knowledge are obtained through austerities. Austerities are the foundation of success. There are things that are difficult to obtain, difficult to name, difficult to conquer and difficult to learn. Austerities ensure success in all this. Austerities are difficult to surpass. There may be a person who drinks liquor, kills a brahmana, steals, kills a foetus or violates his preceptor's bed. By tormenting himself well through austerities, he is freed from his sins. If men, ancestors, gods, animals,[203] animals, birds and all other mobile and immobile objects are always devoted to austerities, they can always obtain success through austerities. It is through austerities that the immensely fortunate gods went to heaven. If a person single-mindedly performs beneficial acts, even if these are tinged with egoism, he approaches Prajapati. However, there are pure ones without a sense of ownership and without a sense of ego. They are pure and devoted to the yoga of meditation. Those great-souled ones obtain supreme and great worlds. They are devoted to the yoga of meditation and are always tranquil. Their selves penetrate the unmanifest and obtain undecaying bliss there. There are those without a sense of ownership and without a sense of ego. They are devoted to the yoga of meditation. They penetrate the unmanifest and obtain supreme and great worlds. They are generated from the unmanifest and merge into it again. They are freed from tamas and rajas and resort to sattva alone. They are freed from all sins and liberated from all divisions. They know kshetrajna. They know what there is to be known. A sage must always be controlled and resort to consciousness alone.

The mind must be fixed on the consciousness and on the eternal mystery. The unmanifest has objects as a manifestation. But a focus on these is said to be a sign of ignorance. Listen to what is beyond all signs associated with the qualities. The word Mrityu has two syllables. Akshara, the eternal brahman, has three syllables. Mama is Mrityu and namama is eternal.[204] There are some evil-minded men who praise deeds. The great-souled ones who know do not praise deeds. Death leads to birth as a creature, characterized by the sixteen.[205] The body is the creation of ignorance and those who are after immortality refuse to accept it. It is said that Purusha is comprehended through knowledge, not through action. It is without something that has come before. It is immortal. It is eternal. It is immutable. A person who realizes it within his atman refuses to accept something that does not lead to immortality. It is because of this certain reason that they refuse to accept something that is not immortal. Such a person casts aside all resolution and controls his atman through his own self. He knows the auspicious brahman and there is no return after that. Through the favours of sattva, he obtains the benefit of tranquility. The signs of this favour is that everything is seen as if in a dream.[206] This is the destination of liberated ones who are devoted to knowledge. They can see all the consequences of action. They are not addicted to these outcomes. This is eternal dharma. Those who possess knowledge obtain this. This is unblemished conduct. Such a person is impartial towards all creatures. He is without desire and without hope. He is always indifferent towards what he sees. He is capable of progressing to that destination. O supreme among brahmana rishis! I have thus told you everything. Act swiftly in this way and you will obtain success.”’

‘“The preceptor said,[207] ‘Thus addressed by the preceptor, Brahma, the great-souled sages acted in this way and obtained the worlds. O immensely fortunate one! You should also act in accordance with Brahma’s words. If you purify yourself and act properly in that way, you will obtain success.’”

‘Vasudeva continued, “The preceptor thus spoke to the disciple about supreme dharma. O Kounteya! He acted in that way and obtained moksha. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Having accomplished what he was meant to do, the disciple obtained that state. Having obtained it, one does not grieve.”

‘Arjuna asked, “O Krishna! O Janardana! Who was that brahmana and who was the disciple? O lord! If I can hear the truth about this, tell me.”

‘Vasudeva replied, “O mighty-armed one! Know me. I am the preceptor and the mind is the disciple. O Dhananjaya! It is because of my affection towards you that I have revealed this secret to you. O one who is excellent in vows! Having heard about adhyatma, act properly. O extender of the Kuru lineage! If you practise this dharma properly, your soul will be cleansed of all sins and you will obtain moksha alone. I told you this earlier, when the time for battle had presented itself. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, make up your mind to follow this. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! O lord! It has been a long time since I have seen my father. O Phalguna! With your permission, I wish to see him.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Addressed by Krishna in these words, Dhananjaya replied, “O Krishna! Today, we will go to the city of Gajasahvya. We will meet King Yudhishthira, who has dharma in his soul. O unassailable one! Take his permission and then go to your city.”’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘After this, Krishna instructed Daruka to yoke the horses. In a short while, Daruka informed him that the horses had been yoked. Pandava instructed that arrangements be made for the journey. “Make the arrangements. We will leave for the city of Gajasahvya.” O lord of the earth! Thus addressed, the soldiers made the arrangements and informed the infinitely energetic Partha that everything was ready. Krishna and Pandava ascended the chariot and departed. O lord of the earth! On their way, they carried on a wonderful and affectionate conversation. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! Vasudeva was on the chariot and the greatly energetic Dhananjaya again spoke these words to him. “O extender of the Vrishni lineage! It is because of your favours that the king has obtained victory. The enemy has been slain and he has obtained the kingdom, without any thorns. O Madhusudana! The Pandavas possess a protector in you. You were the boat that enabled us to cross the ocean of the Kurus. O creator of the universe! I bow down before you. O soul of the universe! O origin of the universe! I know you only to the extent that you allow my mind to know you. O Madhusudana! The fire has always been created out of your energy. O lord! You find pleasure in your sporting. Heaven and earth are the result of your maya. Everything in this universe, mobile and immobile, is established in you. You are the eternal creator of all the different categories of beings, earth, the firmament and everything mobile and immobile. The sparkling moonlight is your smile. The seasons are your senses. The moving wind is your breath of life. Eternal death is your rage. O immensely intelligent one! Shri, seated on a lotus, is always established in your favours. You are sport. You are contentment. You are fortitude. You are forgiveness. Everything mobile and immobile is based in you. O unblemished one! You are said to be the destruction that comes at the end of a yuga. Even if I try for an extremely long period of time, I am incapable of recounting your qualities. O lotus-eyed one! You are the supreme atman. I bow down before you. O unassailable one! I know from Narada, Devala, Krishna Dvaipayana and the grandfather of the Kurus[208] that everything is based in you. You are alone the lord of men. O unblemished one! Because of your favours towards me, you told me that too. O Janardana! I will properly follow all this. What you have done to ensure our pleasure is wonderful. You slew Kouravya, Dhritarashtra's wicked son, in the battle and burnt down his soldiers. It was only thereafter that I defeated them in the encounter. You performed the deeds whereby I obtained the victory. It was through the valour of your intelligence that we could defeat Duryodhana in the battle. You showed us the means to slay Karna, the wicked Saindhava and Bhurishrava. O Devaki's son! Without any reflection, I will do everything that you have affectionately asked me to. O one who knows about dharma! O unblemished one! I will meet King Yudhishthira, who has dharma in his soul, and request him to let you go. O lord! I think it is a good idea that you should go to Dvaraka. O Madhusudana! You will soon see the maternal uncle,[209] the invincible Baladeva and all the other bulls among the Vrishnis." Conversing in this way, they reached Varanasahvya.[210]

'It was full of people and they entered cheerfully. O great king! They went to Dhritarashtra's house, which was like Shakra's residence, and saw Dhritarashtra, lord of men, the immensely intelligent Vidura, King Yudhishthira, the invincible Bhimasena and the two Pandavas who were the sons of Madri. Dhritarashtra was seated and the unvanquished Yuyutsu stood before him. The immensely wise Gandhari was seen, with Pritha, the beautiful Krishna,[211] Subhadra and all the other women of the Bharata lineage surrounding Gandhari. Those two scorchers of enemies approached King Dhritarashtra. They announced their names and touched his feet. They worshipped Kshatta and asked him if he was well. With the aged king, they honoured him too. O great king! Since it was night, Dhritarashtra granted the extenders of the Kuru lineage and the intelligent Janardana permission to leave for their houses. Having obtained the king's permission, they went to their own respective residences. The valiant Krishna went to Dhananjaya's house. As is proper, he was honoured there with every object of desire. With Dhananjaya as his companion, the intelligent Krishna slept.

'When night was over and it was morning, they performed their morning ablutions properly and went to Dharmaraja's residence. The great-minded Dharmaraja was there, with his advisers. Those two immensely strong ones entered and saw him. Dharmaraja was seated and they saw him, like the Ashvins meeting the king of the gods. Varshneya and the bull among the Kuru lineage approached the king. He affectionately gave them permission to be seated. On seeing them, the intelligent king wished to speak to them. The best among eloquent ones, supreme among kings, spoke these words. "O brave ones! O extenders of the Yadu and Kuru lineages! I think you wish to say something. Do not hesitate and quickly tell me. I will do everything." Having been thus addressed, Phalguna, accomplished in speech, humbly approached and replied to Dharmaraja in these words. "O king! The powerful Vasudeva has been away for a long time. With your permission, he wishes to see his father. If you so think, please grant him permission to go. O brave one! Grant him leave to go to the city of Anarta."[212] Yudhishthira replied, "O Pundarikaksha! O fortunate one! O Madhusudana! Go now to the city of Dvaravati and see the lord who is the son of Shura.[213] O mighty-armed one! O Keshava! It pleases me that you should go. You have not seen my maternal uncle and the goddess Devaki for a long time. O immensely wise one! O Madhava! Meet my maternal uncle, Vasudeva, and Baladeva and convey my words of worship, as they deserve. O Madhava! Always remember me, Bhima, supreme among powerful ones, Phalguna, Nakula and Sahadeva. O mighty-armed one! O unblemished one! Having seen your father and the Vrishnis in the land of Anarta, you will again return for the horse sacrifice. O Satvata! Depart after taking many kinds of jewels and riches and all the other desirable objects. O Madhava! O brave one! It is through your favours that we have slain our enemies and obtained the entire earth.” Kouravya Dharmaraja Yudhishthira spoke in this way. Vasudeva, supreme among men, replied in these words. “O mighty-armed one! All the jewels, riches and the entire earth only belong to you now. O lord! You alone will be the lord of all the riches that are there in my house.” Having said this, Gada’s eldest brother worshipped Dharma’s valiant son.[214] He met his father’s sister in the proper way.[215] He worshipped her and circumambulated her. He was appropriately greeted by her and by also Vidura and all the others. Gada’s elder brother then left the city of Nagapura[216] on a divine chariot, with four tawny horses yoked to it. With the permission of Yudhishthira and his father’s sister, the mighty-armed Janardana also took Subhdra on his chariot.[217] He departed, surrounded by large numbers of citizens. The one with the best of apes on his banner,[218] Satyaki, Madravati’s sons, Bhima himself, with the valour of a king of elephants, and Vidura followed the infinitely intelligent Madhava. Then the valiant Janardana asked all the extenders of the Kuru kingdom and Vidura to return. He asked Daruka and Satyaki to swiftly urge the horses. Janardana, the one who crushed large numbers of the enemy, proceeded, followed by the foremost among the Shini lineage. The powerful one advanced towards the city of Anarta, like Shatakratu going to heaven after slaying large numbers of the enemy.’

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Vaishampayana said, ‘As Varshneya proceeded towards Dvaraka, those bulls among men, scorchers of enemies, embraced him and with their followers, returned. Phalguna repeatedly embraced Varshneya. As long as he could see him, he continued to glance back at him. It was with a great deal of difficulty that Partha turned his eyes away from Govinda. The invincible Krishna also withdrew his gaze in a similar way. I will now tell you the many extraordinary signs that were associated with the great-souled one’s departure. Listen. Ahead of the chariot, a strong wind began to blow and cleared all stones, dust and thorns from the path. Ahead of the wielder of the Sharnga bow, Vasava showered down pure and fragrant rain and divine flowers. As the mighty-armed one advanced, he came upon the plains of a desert and saw the infinitely energetic Utanka, foremost among sages, there. The large-eyed and energetic one worshipped the sage and asked the sage about his welfare, having been worshipped back in return. Utanka worshipped Madhusudana and asked him about his welfare. The best among brahmanas then asked Madhava, "O Shouri! You went to the residences of the Kurus and the Pandavas. Were you able to establish permanent fraternal relationships between them?[219] You should explain everything to me. O Keshava! O bull among the Vrishni lineage! Those brave ones are your matrimonial allies and you have always loved them. Did you succeed in your intentions? O scorcher of enemies! Perhaps the five sons of Pandu and the sons of Dhritarashtra will sport with you in this world. Will the kings be happy in their own kingdoms? O Madhava! With you as a protector, the Kouravas must have been pacified. O son![220] My trust about this possibility has always been vested in you. O Krishna! That was my desire about the Bharatas and perhaps you have been successful."

'Vasudeva replied, "O brahmana! I made efforts to bring about fraternal feelings among the Kouravas. However, they preferred adharma and I could not prevent the conflict. Therefore, all of them have been slain, with their sons and their relatives. Whether one uses intelligence or whether one uses strength, destiny is impossible to overcome. O maharshi! O unblemished one! You know everything about this. Bhishma and Vidura referred to me, but they didn't listen to them either. Thereafter, they clashed against each other and went to Yama's abode. The five Pandavas alone remain, their friends and their sons have also been slain. All the sons of Dhritarashtra have been killed, with their sons and their relatives."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Hearing Krishna's words, Utanka was filled with severe rage. His eyes dilated in anger and he replied, "O Krishna! Though you were capable, you did not save the Kurus and the Pandavas, despite their being your matrimonial allies and you loving them. There is no doubt that I will curse you. O Madhusudana! You did not restrain them and force them to retreat. Therefore, in my wrath, I will curse you. Despite being capable and virtuous, you indulged in a false act. You were indifferent to the best among the

Kurus and caused them to be destroyed." Vasudeva said, "O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Listen in detail to what I have to say. O Bhargava! You are an ascetic. Nevertheless, listen to my entreaties. Having heard what I have to say about adhyatma, free me from the curse now. No man is capable of overwhelming me with a little bit of austerities. O supreme among those who meditate! I do not wish to destroy your austerities.[221] You have blazed in great austerities and you have satisfied your seniors. O supreme among brahmanas! Since childhood, you have observed brahmacharya. You have earned these austerities through hardships and I do not desire that they should be expended."'

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'Utanka said, "O Keshava! Tell me the truth about unblemished adhyatma. O Janardana! After having heard you, I will decide whether I should curse you or not."

'Vasudeva replied, "Know that the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas that exist have me as a refuge. O brahmana! In that way, know that the Rudras and the Vasus have originated from me. All the beings are in me and I am in all the beings. Know that this is the state and you should not have any doubt about this. O brahmana! Know that all the large numbers of daityas, yakshas, rakshasas, serpents, gandharvas and apsaras originate from me. Everything that exists, everything that does not exist, the manifest, the unmanifest, the indestructible and the destructible—all these come from my soul. O sage! The dharma that has been laid down for the four ashramas and the rites for the gods—know that all these come from my soul. In the universe, there is the existent and the existent/non-existent.[222] However, I am supreme, beyond existence and non-existence. I am the eternal god of the gods and there is nothing superior to me. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Know me to be the Vedas and Omkara. I am the sacrificial stake. I am soma. I am the oblations that are offered to gods in sacrifices. I am the *hotar*.[223] O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Know me also to be the oblations that are offered. I am the adhvaryu. I am the one who thinks of the supremely cleansed sacrificial libations. I am the udgatar. I am the one who is praised in the loud sounds of the chants. O brahmana! Know me to be atonement and the words of peace and benediction. I am always praised by the best of brahmanas as the creator of the universe. O supreme among brahmanas! Know Dharma to be my eldest son. O brahmana! It is out of compassion towards all creatures that I mentally created him out of my own self. I am present in men in the form of nivritti. O supreme among brahmanas! In the form of fire, I move around in wombs. O Bhargava! In the three worlds, I assume those forms for the sake of protecting dharma and for the sake of establishing dharma. I am Vishnu. I am Brahma. I am Shakra. I am the origin and the end of all the different categories of beings. I am the creator and the destroyer. Among all those who practise adharma, I bind them down as the bridge of dharma, moving around from one yuga to another. In a desire to ensure the welfare of subjects, I enter various wombs. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! When I am born in a divine womb, there is no doubt that I follow all the acts followed by the gods. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! O Bhargava! In that way, when I am born in the womb of a gandharva, I then make all the efforts that are made by gandharvas. When I am in the womb of a serpent, I then behave like a serpent. When I am born in the wombs of yakshas and rakshasas, I then follow their kinds of conduct. Since I am now a human, I beseeched them piteously. However, because of the delusion that was engendered in them, they did not accept my beneficial words. I instructed the Kurus with the prospects of great fear and terrified them, overcome with rage.[224] Then I again assumed my earlier form[225] and instructed them. But they were addicted to adharma and were overwhelmed by the dharma of time. Following dharma, they have been slain in the battle and there is no doubt that they have gone to heaven. O supreme among brahmanas! In this world, the Pandavas obtained fame. I have thus recounted everything that you had asked me about."'

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'Utanka said, "O Janardana! I know that you are the creator of the universe. There is no doubt that I know this because of your favours. O Achyuta!

My mind is full of extremely calm sentiments. O scorcher of enemies! Know that my anger has ebbed away. O Janardana! If I truly deserve any favours from you, then show me a favour. I wish to see your divine form. Reveal it to me."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Pleased with him, he showed him the eternal Vaishnava form that the intelligent Dhananjaya had seen.[226] He saw the great-souled one's universal form, with giant arms. Having seen that universal form, the brahmana was filled with wonder.

'Utanka said, "With a form like this, you are the creator of the universe and I bow down before you. Your feet cover the earth and your head envelopes the firmament. The space between the firmament and the earth is covered by your stomach. O Achyuta! All the directions are covered by your arms. O god! Withdraw your supreme and indestructible form again. I wish to see your own eternal form again."'[227]

Vaishampayana continued, 'O Janamejaya! Govinda was pleased and spoke to him. He told Utanka, "Ask for a boon," who replied, "O immensely radiant one! O Krishna! This is boon enough that I have seen this splendid form of yours." However Krishna again said, "Do not think about this. This must be done, since the sight of me cannot be in vain." Utanka replied, "O lord! If you think this is needed, then it must be done. In the desert, it is extremely difficult to get water and I desire that there should be water, whenever I wish for it." At this, the lord withdrew his energy and spoke to Utanka. "Whenever you desire water, think of me." Having said this, he proceeded towards Dvaraka.

'On one occasion, the illustrious Utanka desired water. Wandering around in the desert, he was thirsty. Therefore, he remembered Achyuta. At this, the intelligent one saw a hunter in the desert.[228] He was naked and was covered in mud. He was surrounded by a pack of dogs. He was fierce. A sword was girded to his waist and he wielded bow and arrows. O supreme among brahmanas! He[229] saw large quantities of water issuing from his genitals. When he remembered Krishna, the hunter smiled at him and said, "O Utanka! O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Accept this water from me. On seeing that you have been overcome by thirst, I have been overcome with great compassion for you." Having been thus addressed, the sage did not wish to accept this water. The intelligent and eloquent one started to reprimand Achyuta. The hunter repeatedly urged him to drink. He was determined not to drink and his inner soul was agitated by rage. O great king! Refused by the great-souled one, the hunter vanished, with the dogs. On seeing this, Utanka's mind was overcome with shame. He thought that Krishna, the slayer of enemies, had tempted him in this way. After this, the mighty-armed one[230] arrived along the same road, wielding a conch shell, a chakra and a club. Utanka said, "O Purushottama! You should not have offered water of this kind to me. O lord! I am the foremost of brahmanas and this was a hunter's urine." Thus addressed, the intelligent and immensely wise Janardana spoke these gentle words of assurance to Utanka. "I gave it to you in the form in which it should have been given. However, when I offered it to you, you did not understand. For your sake, I spoke to Purandara, the wielder of the vajra. I told him, 'O lord! Offer Utanka amrita in the form of water.' O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! Indra of the gods replied, 'It is not proper that a mortal person should walk the path of the immortals. Grant some other boon and honour him.' I again asked Shachi's consort to offer amrita. However, seeking my favours, Indra of the gods again said, 'O immensely radiant one! If amrita has to be indeed offered to the great-souled Bhargava, I will assume the form of a hunter and offer it to him. If Bhargava accepts the amrita from me, I will give it to him. O lord! However, if Bhargava refuses the amrita, I will go away and not grant it to Bhargava.' In that form, Vasava concluded an agreement with me. He presented himself before you, but you refused the amrita he offered you. The illustrious and great one was in the form of a chandala and you committed a sin. But to satisfy your wish, I will again do what I can. I will make you successful and invincible through the water. O brahmana! Whenever you face a desire for water, clouds full of water will appear in this desert. O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! They will give you tasty water. Those clouds will be known as Utanka clouds and will become famous." Thus addressed by Krishna, the brahmana was delighted. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Even today, Utanka clouds shower down in the desert.'

Chapter 1890(55)

Janamejaya asked, ‘What austerities did the great ascetic Utanka perform? How could he desire to curse Vishnu? Vishnu is the source of all power.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O Janamejaya! Utanka performed great austerities. The energetic one was devoted to his preceptor and did not worship anyone else. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! All the sons of the rishis harboured the wish that they should be as devoted to their preceptors as Utanka was. O Janamejaya! Among the many disciples that he had, Goutama loved Utanka the most and was always affectionate towards him. Goutama was pleased because of his self-control, purity, valour, deeds and proper conduct. Thousands of disciples received Goutama’s permission.[231] However, because of his great affection for Utanka, he did not wish to let him go. O son! In the course of time, the great sage became aged. But because he was so devoted to his preceptor, the sage did not realize it. O Indra among kings! One day, he set out to fetch wood. Utanka was overwhelmed by that great burden of wood. O king! He was exhausted and hungry. O scorcher of enemies! Overwhelmed by carrying that great burden of wood, he flung it down on the ground. One of the locks of his matted hair, silvery in complexion, had got entangled in the wood. With the wood, it fell down on the ground. Bhargava was crushed by the burden and was afflicted by hunger. On seeing that sign of old age, he lamented in loud tones and wept. His preceptor’s daughter possessed eyes that were like the petals of a lotus. Her hips were wide and her eyes were large. On the instructions of her father, with her head lowered, the one who knew about dharma received those drops in her hand. Those teardrops fell down on her hands and burnt them. Unable to hold those teardrops, she flung them down on the ground. Delighted in his mind, Goutama spoke to Utanka. “O son! Why is your mind overcome with grief now? O brahmana rishi! Tell me yourself. I wish to hear your words.”

‘Utanka answered, “My mind has been devoted to you and I have always sought to do what brings you pleasure. I have been faithful towards you and I have followed you. Without realizing it, I have aged. I have not experienced any happiness. I have resided with you for one hundred years, but you have not granted me permission.[232] You have granted leave to disciples who are younger than me. O best among brahmanas! Indeed, there have been hundreds and thousands of them.”

‘Goutama said, “O bull among brahmanas! Because of my affection towards you and because of your devotion towards your preceptor, a long period of time has elapsed and I have not realized it. O Bhargava! But if your mind has turned towards returning, you have my permission to go home. Leave without any delay.”

‘Utanka asked, “O supreme among brahmanas! Tell me, what will I give my preceptor?[233] O lord! After having gratified you, I will take your permission and leave.”

‘Goutama replied, “The virtuous have said that gratification of the preceptor is dakshina. O brahmana! There is no doubt that I have been satisfied by your conduct. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! Therefore, know that I am satisfied with you. O brahmana! Had you now been a young man sixteen years old, I would have given you my own daughter as your wife. There is no one else who is capable of tolerating your energy and serving you.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘At this, having taken his preceptor’s permission, he became young and accepted the illustrious one. He next spoke to his preceptor’s wife. “Instruct me. What will I give, so that I can satisfy my preceptor? I desire what is agreeable to you, even at the cost of riches and my life. Whatever is extremely rare in this world, whatever wonderful jewels exist, there is no doubt that I will use my austerities to bring all of that here.” Ahalya[234] replied, “O son! Together with the illustrious one, I have always been content with you. Your devotion has been enough. O son! Go wherever you wish.” O great king! But Utanka again spoke these words. “O mother! Command me. What task will bring you pleasure?” Ahalya replied, “It is known that Soudasa’s wife possesses divine earrings. O fortunate one! For the sake of your preceptor, bring those here and perform a good deed.” O Janamejaya! Having agreed to this, he departed. For the sake of bringing pleasure to his preceptor’s wife, he wished to bring them. Utanka, bull among brahmanas, went swiftly. He went to Soudasa, who had become a maneater, to beg those earrings from him.[235] Goutama told his wife, “Utanka is not to be seen today?” Thus asked, she told him that he had gone to fetch the earrings. He told his wife, “You have not acted properly. That king has been cursed and there is no doubt that he will kill the brahmana.” Ahalya replied, “O illustrious one! In my ignorance, I asked the brahmana to do this today. However, through your favours, he will not face any fear.” Thus addressed by his wife, Goutama agreed. In the desolate forest, Utanka saw the king.’

Chapter 1891(56)

Vaishampayana said, ‘There, he saw the king, who had assumed a terrible form. His beard was long and it was smeared with the blood of humans. However, the brahmana wasn’t frightened. The immensely energetic king, the cause of terror, looked like Yama’s equal. He arose and said, “O supreme among brahmanas! It is good fortune and beneficial that you have come before me at the sixth hour, when I am about to hunt for food.”[236] Utanka replied, “O king! Know that I have wandered around and have come here for the sake of my preceptor. The learned ones have said that a person who is engaged in his preceptor’s task must not be injured.” The king said, “O supreme among brahmanas! The sixth hour has been ordained as a time for me to seek food. I am hungry now and am incapable of letting you go.” Utanka replied, “O great king! Fine, let you and me have an agreement. Having accomplished my preceptor’s task, I will again return and place myself under your control. O supreme among kings! O lord of men! I have heard that what I seek for my preceptor is owned by you. O Indra among kings! I beg that from you. You give all kinds of jewels to the best of brahmanas. You are a giver. O tiger among men! On earth, I am a fit person to receive. O supreme among kings! Know me to be a worthy recipient. O scorcher of enemies! I will take it from you and satisfy my preceptor by giving it to him. O Indra among kings! After that, following the agreement, I will return and place myself under your control. I only know the truth and have never resorted to falsehood. Since I have never uttered a lie, why shall I violate that rule now, even in jest?” Soudasa said, “If the object that you seek for your preceptor is something that I am fit to give and you are fit to receive, then tell me what that object is.” Utanka replied, “O bull among men! It is my view that you have always been a worthy person from whom one can receive. That is the reason I am begging the earrings from you.” Soudasa said, “O brahmana rishi! Those earrings are loved by my wife. O one with excellent vows! Think of some other boon and I shall grant that to you.” Utanka replied, “O king! Enough of this attempt to instruct me. If you want to demonstrate that you speak the truth, then give me those earrings.” Thus addressed, the king again spoke these words to Utanka. “O excellent one! Listen to my words. Go to the queen and ask her to give them to you. O best among brahmanas! There is no doubt that when you speak to the sweet-smiling one and tell her about my instructions, she will follow them and give you those earrings.” Utanka asked, “O lord of men! Where is your wife and how am I capable of meeting her? Why don’t you go to your wife and ask her yourself?” Soudasa said, “You will now find her near a waterfall in the mountains. It is now the sixth hour and I am incapable of seeing her.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! Utanka agreed to this and departed.

‘He saw Madayanti[237] and told her about his need. O Janamejaya! On hearing Soudasa’s words, the large-eyed one spoke to the immensely intelligent Utanka. “O brahmana! O unblemished one! It shall be that way. But I need to ensure that you are not lying. You should bring me some sign.[238] These earrings are divine and the gods, the yakshas and the giant serpents always desire to look for means to steal them. They watch out for opportunities. If they are placed on the ground, the serpents will steal the jewels and so will the supreme rishis. If the wearer eats leftovers, they will be taken away by the yakshas. If the wearer succumbs to sleep, they will be stolen by the gods. O bull among brahmanas! Whenever there are weaknesses, they are always capable of being stolen. The gods, rakshasas and the serpents look for a moment of carelessness. O supreme among brahmanas! During day and night, they produce gold. At night, they attract the radiance of the nakshatras and the stars. O illustrious one! The wearer is freed from hunger, thirst and fear. There is also no fear from poison, fire and predatory beasts. If the wearer is short, the earrings become short. If the wearer is tall, they also assume a similar kind of form. These are the characteristics of the earrings and they are worshipped. They are famous in the three worlds. Therefore, bring me some sign.”’

Chapter 1892(57)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Utanka returned to his friend[239] and asked for a sign. The supreme one of the Ikshvaku lineage gave him a sign.

‘“Soudasa said, My present status cannot be tolerated. But there is no other escape. That being the case, it is my instruction that you should give the earrings away.”’[240]

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Thus addressed, Utanka went and told her what her husband had said. Hearing this, she gave him those earrings. Having obtained the earrings, he went to the king and said, “O king! I wish to hear the secret that was implicit in your words.”

‘Soudasa replied, “Since the time subjects were created, kshatriyas have worshipped brahmanas. But we have committed many sins towards brahmanas. I have always bowed down before brahmanas, but my present state is also because of a sin committed towards a brahmana. Without Madayanti’s aid, I do not perceive any other escape, whether it is in terms of advancing towards the gate of heaven or in this world. O supreme among brahmanas! In particular, a king who is against brahmanas is incapable of obtaining status in the world of men, or obtaining happiness after death. That is the reason I asked that the earrings you desired should be given to you. You should now successfully complete the agreement that you made with me.”

‘Utanka said, “O king! I will truly act that way and again place myself under your control. O scorcher of enemies! But there is a question I wish to ask you. Please answer the question.”

‘Soudasa replied, “O brahmana! Tell me what you wish. I will reply to your words. I will instantly dispel whatever doubt you have. There is no need to think about this.”

‘Utanka said, “Those who are learned and accomplished in their insight about the dharma to be followed vis-à-vis friends say that one who behaves unfairly towards friends is like a thief. O king! You have become my friend today. O supreme among intelligent ones! Therefore, use your intelligence to give me proper advice. I have now obtained what I wanted and you are a maneater. Should I now come back before you or not?”[241]

‘Soudasa answered, “O supreme among the best of brahmanas! You should not ask me to answer this. O foremost among brahmanas! You should never return before me. O extender of the Bhrigu lineage! I can see that this is best for you. O brahmana! If you return, there is no doubt that you will die.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘He was thus addressed by the intelligent king about what was beneficial for him. Having obtained the king’s permission, he went to meet Ahalya. He grasped the divine earrings that were so desired by his preceptor’s wife. With great speed, he left for Goutama’s hermitage. He protected them in the way Madayanti had instructed. He carried the earrings after having bound them in black antelope skin. On one occasion, he was overcome by hunger. Afflicted by hunger, he saw a bilva tree that was heavy with the burden of fruit. O scorcher of enemies! The best among brahmanas hung the black antelope skin, with the earrings bound in them, to a branch and climbed the tree, so as to gather fruit. But the bond was loosened and the black antelope skin fell down on the ground. A certain serpent, born in the lineage of Airavata, saw the earrings and swiftly seized them in its mouth. With the earrings, it then entered a termite hill. On seeing that the earrings had been stolen by the serpernt, he was overcome by sorrow and great rage and quickly descended from the tree. Grasping a wooden stick, he began to dig up the termite hill. The bull among brahmanas was so overcome with rage that his limbs became hot. The earth was incapable of tolerating this force. Its limbs were severely afflicted by the wooden stick and it began to tremble. The brahmana rishi was still digging away on the surface of the ground. He had made up his mind that he would find a way to the world of the serpents. The immensely energetic wielder of the vajra came to the spot on a chariot that was yoked to tawny horses and saw the supreme among brahmanas. He assumed the form of a brahmana who was also grieving at Utanka’s sorrow and told him, “O son! This task of yours cannot be accomplished. The world of the serpents is thousands of yojanas away. I do not think your task can be undertaken with a wooden stick.”

‘Utanka replied, “O brahmana! O supreme among brahmanas! If I cannot get back the earrings from the world of the serpents, then, while you look on, I will cast aside my breath of life.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The one with the vajra in his hand failed to dissuade him from the task he had set his mind on. Thereafter, he infused the wooden stick with the vajra weapon. O Janamejaya! The earth was shattered at being struck by the vajra and a path was created to the world of the serpents. Through that path he entered the world of the serpents and saw the world of the serpents, extending for thousands of yojanas. There were many celestial walls, adorned with pearls and jewels. O immensely fortunate one! These were made out of molten gold. There were tanks with crystal staircases leading down to them. There were rivers with sparkling water. He saw many trees, populated by large numbers of birds. The extender of the Bhrigu lineage saw the gate to that world. It was five yojanas high and one hundred yojanas wide. On seeing the world of the serpents, Utanka was distressed. O son! He lost all hope of getting the earrings back again. But a horse arrived. It was dark, with a white tail. O Kouravya! Its eyes were coppery in complexion and it blazed with energy. It said, "O brahmana! Blow into my apana duct.[242] You will then get back the earrings that were seized by Airavata's son. O son! Do not hesitate. For your sake, this attempt will not be fruitless. When you were in Goutama's hermitage, this is what you used to do." Utanka asked, "How did I know you in my preceptor's hermitage? I wish to hear how I earlier did what you have asked me to do now."

'The horse replied, "O son! Know that I am the blazing Jataveda,[243] your preceptor's preceptor. For the sake of your preceptor, you always worshipped me. O brahmana! O descendant of the Bhrigu lineage! You always purified yourself and worshipped me. That is the reason I will ensure your welfare. Do it without any delay."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Thus addressed by Chitrabhanu, Utanka did what he had been asked to. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The fire god was pleased with him. From the horse's pores, flames issued and blazed in the directions. Thick smoke billowed and caused terror in the world of the serpents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! That smoke suddenly increased and nothing could be seen in the world of the serpents. O Janamejaya! There were cries of lamentation everywhere in Airavata's abode, among the serpents, with Vasuki as the foremost. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Obstructed by the smoke, the residences could no longer be seen. They looked like forests and mountains that were enveloped in mist. They[244] were tormented by the energy of the fire. Because of the smoke, their eyes were red. They arrived before the infinitely energetic Bhargava to ascertain what had happened. They heard what had occurred from the greatly energetic maharshi and all of them honoured him in their minds, worshipping him with the appropriate rites. All the serpents, with the aged and the young at the forefront, joined their hands in salutation. They bowed their heads down and asked the illustrious one to be pacified. When the brahmana was pacified, they offered him water to wash his feet and a gift.[245] The serpents returned the greatly revered and divine earrings. The powerful Utanka was thus worshipped by the serpents. He circumambulated the fire and left for his preceptor's house. O king! He swiftly proceeded towards Goutama's residence. O unblemished one! He gave his preceptor's wife the divine earrings. O Janamejaya! In this way, the great-souled one roamed around the three worlds, for the divine earrings that had been stolen. O bull among the Bharata lineage! This was the power of the sage Utanka, about which you had asked me. He was supreme in austerities.'

Chapter 1893(58)

Janamejaya asked, 'O supreme among brahmanas! After having granted the boon to Utanka, what did the immensely illustrious and mighty-armed Govinda do next?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Having granted the boon to Utanka, Govinda left for Dvaraka on extremely swift and large horses, accompanied by Satyaki. Having passed over lakes, rivers and many kinds of forests, he arrived at the beautiful city of Dvaravati. O great king! When Pundarikaksha reached, followed by Yuyudhana, it was time for the festival of Raivataka. The mountain was ornamented in many colourful ways.[246] O bull among men! All the roads were paved with gold. The summit of the great mountain was decorated with extremely pleasant and golden garlands and so were the houses. There were kalpavrikshas everywhere.[247] There were golden lamps on the trees and it was a beautiful sight. Even the caves and the waterfalls shone, as if it was day. There were colourful flags, decorated with bells, in every direction. There were the melodious notes of men and women singing. It was beautiful to see, like Meru inhabited by large numbers of sages. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The women and the men were cheerful and intoxicated. They sang on that Indra among mountains and the sound seemed to touch heaven. The place was full of these excited people, mad with delight and intoxicated. Extremely beautiful and cheerful sounds could be heard. There were excellent shops and stalls, filled with food that could be tasted and swallowed. There were garments and garlands. There was the sound of veenas, flutes and drums. Food that could be tasted and swallowed was mixed with sura and *maireya*.[248] Gifts were incessantly offered to the distressed, the blind and the miserable. Because of these supremely beneficial acts, the giant mountain seemed to be greater still. O brave one! Many auspicious abodes had been erected there and the virtuous ones resided there. Thus did the brave ones from the Vrishni lineage enjoy the festival of Raivataka. Surrounded by all these residences, the mountain looked like the world of the gods. O bull among the Bharata lineage! On Krishna's arrival, that king of mountains looked like Shakra's residence. Honoured, Govinda entered an auspicious residence and Satyaki also went to his own home. Cheerful, he[249] entered after a long period of residence away from home. Like Vasava among the danavas, he had performed many extremely difficult deeds. The Bhojas, Vrishnis and Andhakas came forward to meet the great-souled Varshneya, like the gods meeting Shatakratu. The intelligent one honoured them and asked about their welfare. Delighted, he greeted his father and his mother. The mighty-armed one was embraced and comforted by them. Surrounded by all the Vrishnis, he then sat down. When the greatly energetic one had washed his feet and had rested, Krishna was asked by his father and told him about the great battle.'

Chapter 1894(59)

'Vasudeva said, "O Varshneya! I have heard about the supremely wonderful battle. O son! Men have always spoken about it. O immensely wise one! But you were a direct witness and a participant. O unblemished one! Therefore, speak about the battle accurately. How was the battle that involved the great-souled Pandavas, Bhishma, Karna, Kripa, Drona, Shalya and the other excellent ones, all the other large numbers of kshatriyas who were accomplished in the use of weapons and those who wore diverse kinds of garments and were the residents of many different countries?"'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Thus addressed, in the presence of his father and his mother, Pundarikaksha recounted how the brave ones among the Kurus had been slain in the battle.

'Krishna[250] said, "The great-souled kshatriyas performed extremely wonderful deeds. There were such a large number of these that one is incapable of recounting all of them in hundreds of years. Listen. I will tell you about the most important elements of the encounter, about what those lords of the earth exactly did. Bhishma was the overall commander for Kouravya, like Vasava for the gods, and there were eleven chiefs of the Kouravya army under him.[251] Shikhandi was the leader of the seven chiefs of armies of the sons of Pandu.[252] The intelligent one was protected by the intelligent Savyasachi. The battle between the great-souled Kurus and Pandavas went on for ten days.[253] It was so great that it made the body hair stand up. After this, in the great battle, Shikhandi fought against Gangeya and struck him with many arrows, aided by the wielder of Gandiva. After this, the sage lay down on a bed of arrows. He waited for dakshinayana to be over and gave up his life in uttarayana. Then Drona, supreme among those who know about weapons, became the commander. For the Indra among the Kouravas, the brave one was like Kavya for the lord of the daityas.[254] The supreme of brahmanas was surrounded by the nine akshouhinis that were left. He prided himself in battle and was protected by Kripa, Vrisha[255] and the others. Dhrishtadyumna, who knew about great weapons, became the leader of the Pandavas. He was protected by the energetic Bhima, like Varuna by Mitra. The great-minded one was surrounded by five armies[256] and wished to get at Drona. He remembered the ill treatment of his father[257] and performed great deeds in the battle. In that clash between Drona and Parshata, many brave kings who had come from various directions were mostly destroyed. That supremely terrible battle lasted for five days. After this, Drona was exhausted and was subjugated by Dhrishtadyumna. Next, Karna became the commander of Duryodhana's forces. He was surrounded by the five akshouhinis that still remained in the battle. Three armies were left for the sons of Pandu and they were protected by Bibhatsu. Many brave ones had been killed. The remaining ones clashed. The suta's son fought a terrible battle against Partha and clashed against him, like an insect headed towards a fire. He was slain on the second day. When Karna was killed, the Kouravas lost their spirits and their energy was destroyed. The remaining three akshouhinis surrounded the lord of Madra. With many mounts slain, the remaining one akshouhini of the Pandavas was also cheerless. However, they faithfully surrounded Yudhishthira. Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, peformed an extremely difficult deed. Before half of the day was over, he slew the king of Madra. When Shalya was killed, the great-minded and infinitely valorous Sahadeva killed Shakuni, who was responsible for the dissension. When Shakuni was killed, the extremely evil-minded king who was Dhritarashtra's son saw that most of the soldiers had been slain and fled, with a club in his hand. The powerful Bhimasena angrily rushed after him. He found him inside the waters of Lake Dvaipayana. From every direction, the remaining soldiers surrounded him. After he had hidden in the lake, the five Pandavas were delighted at having discovered him. Though he was submerged in the water, the arrows of their words swiftly and severely injured him. He rose up and prepared to fight, with a club in his hand. In that great encounter, the king who was Dhritarashtra's son was slain. Many kings witnessed Bhimasena's valour. After this, the Pandava soldiers were sleeping in their camp in the night. Intolerant because his father had been killed, they were slain by Drona's son. Their sons were killed. Their soldiers were killed. Their friends were killed. I, Yuyudhana as the second, and the five Pandavas are the only ones who remain. With Kripa and Bhoja,[258] Drona's son is the only one who escaped from the Kourava side. Having sought refuge with the Pandavas, Yuyutsu also escaped. Suyodhana, Indra among the Kouravas, was killed, with his followers, and Vidura and Sanjaya presented themselves before Dharmaraja. O lord! Thus did the great battle rage for eighteen days. Those lords of the earth were slain and began to reside in heaven."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O great king! On hearing the account that made the body hair stand up, the Vrishnis were overcome by grief, misery and sorrow.'

Chapter 1895(60)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The powerful Krishna recounted the story of the Mahabharata battle before his father. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave one glossed over Abhimanyu’s death. The great-minded one did not wish Vasudeva to hear something that was unpleasant. On hearing about the death of his daughter’s son, Vasudeva would have been tormented by great sorrow and grief. That is what the immensely intelligent one thought. Subhadra noticed that the matter of her son’s death in the battle had been passed over. She said, “O Krishna! Recount the account of the death of Subhadra’s son,” and fell down on the ground. Vasudeva saw that she had fallen down on the ground. On seeing that she had fallen down, he was overcome by grief and also lost his senses. O great king! Vasudeva was overwhelmed by sorrow and grief at his daughter’s son having been killed. He spoke these words to Krishna. “O Pundarikaksha! It is true that you are famous as one who is truthful in speech. O slayer of enemies! Why did you now not tell me about my daughter’s son having been killed? O lord! Tell me the truth about how your sister’s son was slaughtered. His eyes were like yours. How could he have been killed by the enemy in battle? O Varshneya! It is always impossible for men to die before their time has come. Despite the grief, that is the reason why my heart has not shattered into a hundred fragments. At the time of the battle, what did he tell his mother, Subhadra? O Pundarikaksha! He was my beloved. What did the one with the restless eyes say to me? Was he slain by the enemy in the battle when he had turned his back towards them? O Govinda! I hope his face wasn’t distorted when he fought against them. O Krishna! He was immensely energetic and because of his childish sentiments, boasted in my presence. The lord spoke about his being victorious. When he was slain and was lying down on the ground, was that child mangled by Drona, Karna, Kripa and the others? O Keshava! Tell me. In an encounter, he always used to challenge Drona, Bhishma, Karna and the supreme of charioteers. He was my daughter’s son.” Extremely miserable, he thus lamented in many different ways.

‘Govinda spoke these words to his grieving father. “In the forefront of the battle, he never distorted his face. Though the battle was extremely difficult, he did not show his back. He killed hundreds and thousands of assembled kings. He was then afflicted by Drona and Karna and subjugated by Duhshasana’s son. O lord! If they had always fought against him one by one, no one would have been able to kill him in the battle, not even the wielder of the vajra. At that time, in the encounter, Partha had been challenged by the *samshaptakas* and Drona and the others angrily surrounded him in the battle. O father! In the encounter, he created an extremely great carnage among the enemy. O Varshneya! After this, your daughter's son was brought down by Duhshasana's son. O immensely wise one! Conquer your sorrow. There is no doubt that he has gone to heaven. Confronted with a hardship, a man should never yield to lassitude. In the battle, he countered Drona, Karna and the others. He was like the great Indra. Why will he not have gone to heaven? O invincible one! Vanquish this grief. Do not yield to intolerance. The conqueror of enemy cities has gone to the destination meant for those who have been purified by weapons. That is the way my sister Subhadra's brave son was killed. She was afflicted by grief. When she met Pritha, she shrieked like a female osprey. When she met Droupadi, she sorrowfully asked, 'O noble one! Where are all our sons? I wish to see them.' On hearing her words, all the Kuru women embraced her in their arms. Extremely miserable, all of them lamented. On seeing Uttara, she asked, 'O fortunate one! Where has your husband gone? When he returns, without any delay, let me know. O Virata's daughter! In earlier times, as soon as he heard my voice, he used to swiftly appear before me. Where is your husband now? O Abhimanyu! Your *maharatha* maternal uncles are well. All of them used to ask you about your welfare when you returned from a battle. O scorcher of enemies! As was the case earlier, tell me what happened in the encounter today. I am lamenting? Why are you not answering me today?' At that time, the daughter of the Varshneya lineage lamented in this way. Pritha was also extremely miserable. On hearing this, Pritha spoke these gentle words. 'O Subhadra! In the battle, he was protected by Vasudeva,[259] Satyaki and his father. Despite this, the child has followed the dharma of time and has been killed. This is the dharma of those who are mortal. O daughter of the Yadu lineage! Do not grieve. Your son was unassailable and has gone to the supreme destination. You have been born in a great lineage of great-souled kshatriyas. O one with the restless eyes! O one with eyes like lotus petals! Do not sorrow. Look towards Uttara. She is expecting. O fortunate one! Do not grieve. This beautiful one will soon give birth to a son.' O extender of the Yadu lineage! Kunti comforted her in this way. O invincible one! Casting aside her sorrow and with the permission of the king,[260] Bhima and the twins, who are like Yama, the one who knows about dharma[261] then began to think about his funeral rites and gave away large quantities of gifts. O extender of the Yadu lineage! She gave many cattle away to brahmanas. The daughter of the Vrishni lineage[262] summoned Virata's daughter and told her, 'O Virata's daughter! O illustrious one! One should not lament. O one with the wide hips! For your husband's sake, protect the child that is in your womb.' O immensely radiant one! After saying these words, Kunti stopped. With her permission, I have brought Subhadra here. O Madhava! This is the way your daughter's son was killed. O invincible one! Conquer your misery. Do not have any grief in your mind."'

Chapter 1896(61)

Vaishampayana said, 'In this way, Shura's son heard the words of his son. The one with dharma in his soul abandoned his grief and performed a supreme funeral ceremony. He[263] was always loved by his father. With his wife, the great-souled Vasudeva performed the funeral rites for him. The mighty-armed one fed six million brahmanas. He fed them many kinds of food that possessed all the qualities. The mighty-armed Krishna satisfied all the thirst the brahmanas possessed for riches and this made the body hair stand up. There was gold, cattle, beds and garments. These were given away to the brahmanas and they said, "Let these increase more." Dasharha Vasudeva,[264] Baladeva and Satyaki, together with Satyaka,[265] performed the funeral rites for Abhimanyu. They were tormented by great grief and could not find any peace.

'In the city of Nagasahvya, the brave Pandavas were also in a similar situation. Separated from Abhimanyu, they could not find any tranquility. O Indra among kings! Virata's daughter did not eat for many days. On account of her husband, she suffered greatly. However, the child in her womb had to be protected. Using his divine sight, Vyasa got to know and arrived there. Having arrived, the intelligent and greatly energetic one spoke to the large-eyed Pritha and to Uttara. "O illustrious one! Abandon this grief. An immensely energetic son will be born to you, because of Vasudeva's powers and because of what I have said. When the Pandavas are dead, he will protect the earth." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In Dharmaraja's presence, he looked towards Dhananjaya and spoke to him, gladdening him. "O mighty-armed one! A great-minded grandson will be born to you. He will rule the earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. O best among the Kurus! O afflicter of enemies! Therefore, conquer your grief. There is no need to think about this. This will truly happen. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Krishna, the brave one among the Vrishni lineage, said this earlier and this will indeed happen. There is no need to reflect on this. O son! You should not sorrow about him[266] or any of the other Kurus. They have earned and gone to the indestructible worlds of the gods." Dhananjaya, with dharma in his soul, was thus addressed by his grandfather. O great king! He abandoned his grief and became cheerful. O one who knows about dharma! O immensely wise one! As time passed, your father began to grow in the womb, like the moon during shuklapaksha. Vyasa urged the king who was Dharma's son to perform a horse sacrifice and vanished. The intelligent Dharmaraja heard Vyasa's words. He made up his mind that a journey should be undertaken to obtain the requisite riches.'

Chapter 1897(62)

Janamejaya asked, 'O brahmana! On hearing the words spoken by the great-souled Vyasa, what steps did the king take towards performing the horse sacrifice? Marutta's riches were buried inside the ground. O supreme among brahmanas! How did he obtain those? Tell me that.'

Vaishampayana said, 'At that time, hearing Dvaipayana's words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira summoned all his brothers and spoke these words to Arjuna, Bhimasena and Madri's sons, the twins. "O brave ones! You have heard the words the great-souled one affectionately addressed to us. The intelligent Krishna[267] said this, desiring the welfare of the Kurus. Vyasa is great in his power of austerities and is wonderful in his deeds. His conduct is full of dharma and he desires the prosperity of his relatives. He is our preceptor. O Pandavas! Remember what the immensely wise Bhishma and the intelligent Govinda told us. I wish to properly follow those. If we act in accordance with those words, there will be welfare for all of us. They know about the brahman and following their words will bring benefit. O extenders of the Kuru lineage! All the riches of this earth have now been destroyed. O kings! Therefore, Vyasa told us about Marutta's many riches. If you think that those riches are sufficient, how will we bring them here? O Bhima! What do you think?" O extender of the Kuru lineage! The king spoke these words then. Bhimasena joined his hands in salutation and spoke these words to the best of kings. "O mighty-armed one! I like what you have said about bringing the riches here, citing what Vyasa had said. O lord! O great king! If we obtain the riches of Avikshit's son, we will be successful. That is my view. O fortunate one! We will bow down before the great-souled Girisha, worship Kapardin and bring the riches here. We will certainly gratify the lord who is the god of the gods and his followers, in words, thoughts and deeds, seek their favours and bring the riches here. The servants who protect those riches are terrible to see. However, if the one with the bull on his banner is pleased, they will be controlled." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing the words spoken by Bhima, the king who was Dharma's son was pleased. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In joy, he spoke to Arjuna and the others that this is what should be done.

'All the Pandavas made up their minds that the riches should be brought. They instructed the soldiers that they should set out under a good nakshatra and on Dhruva's day.[268] The brahmanas pronounced words of benediction and the sons of Pandu set out. Before that, they worshipped Maheshvara, the best of the gods. They offered the great-souled one sweetmeats, payasam, meat and cakes and left in high spirits. As they set out, the foremost among brahmanas and the citizens cheerfully pronounced auspicious words of benediction. Pandu's sons circumambulated the brahmanas and the sacrificial fire, bowing their heads down. They then set out. They sought the permission of King Dhritarashtra, who was afflicted by sorrow on account of his sons, his wife and the large-eyed Pritha. They were honoured by the citizens and learned brahmanas. Kouravya Yuyutsu, Dhritarashtra's son, remained in charge of the capital.'

Chapter 1898(63)

Vaishampayana said, ‘They cheerfully set out, with delighted men and mounts. The loud roar of the chariots filled the earth. Bards, minstrels and raconteurs chanted songs of praise. They were accompanied by their own soldiers, like the sun by its rays. With a white umbrella held aloft his head, Yudhishthira looked lustrous, like the king of the stars[269] on the night of the full moon. As Pandava proceeded along the road, men joyfully pronounced benedictions of victory. As is appropriate, the bull among men accepted these. O king! There were soldiers who followed the king and their clamour rose up into the sky and filled it. The great king passed through lakes, rivers, forests and groves and arrived at the mountain. O Indra among kings! The best of riches was buried at the spot and with his soldiers, King Pandava arrived there. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! That plain region was auspicious. The brahmanas, full of austerities and knowledge of the Vedas, were placed at the forefront. King Kouravya placed Agniveshya,[270] the priest, accomplished in the Vedas and the Vedangas, ahead of the brahmanas. Following the ordinances, the rites of peace were performed and all of them surrounded the spot. Following the rites, the king and his advisers were in the middle. The brahmanas indicated that the camp should be laid out with six roads and nine divisions.[271] A separate encampment was properly erected for the crazy kings among elephants.

‘Having done all this, the Indra among kings addressed the brahmanas. “O best among brahmanas! For this task, determine an auspicious nakshatra and day. Decide what you truly think to be the most opportune time. However, we should not spend a long period of time here. O Indra among brahmanas! Having determined this, decide what should be done next.” Hearing the king’s words, the brahmanas and the priest were delighted. Wishing to ensure pleasure to Dharmaraja, they spoke these words. “Today’s nakshatra is extremely auspicious and is the best for undertaking this task. O king! Today, we will reside here, surviving only on water. You should also not eat today.” Hearing the words of the excellent brahmanas, the Indras among men fasted during the night. They happily slept on beds made out of kusha grass, like fires that blaze at the time of a sacrifice. Throughout the night, the great-souled ones listened to the words spoken by the brahmanas. When the clear morning dawned, the bulls among brahmanas spoke to the king who was Dharma’s son.’

Chapter 1899(64)

'The brahmanas said, "Let rites be performed for the great-souled Tryambaka. O king! When these rites have been performed, we will endeavour to accomplish your objective."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing the words of the brahmanas, as is proper, Yudhishthira performed rites for Girisha. Following the ordinances, the priest offered cleansed clarified butter and *charu* sanctified with mantras as libations to the fire. O lord of men! Cheerfully, he accepted sweetmeats, payasam, meat and other offerings sanctified by mantras and offered them to the powerful one. He was accomplished in the Vedas and happy in his mind. He offered all kinds of colourful garlands and cleansed and parched rice, as has been recommended. After that, he rendered offerings to the servants of that extremely powerful one. Offerings were also rendered to Kubera, Indra among the yakshas, Manibhadra and all the other yakshas who were the lords of the bhutas. O king! There was krisara mixed with meat and other oblations mixed with sesamum.[272] That spot of the god of the gods was beautiful. Worship was performed for all of Rudra's ganas. Placing Vyasa at the forefront, the king advanced towards the store of riches. He worshipped the lord of riches and bowed his head down before him. With a cheerful mind, colourful vessels full of krisara were offered to him.[273] Worship was rendered to Shankha and Nidhi and all the guardians of riches by the valiant one[274] and also to the foremost of brahmanas. Strengthened by their auspicious benedictions and full of energy, the best among the Kuru lineage happily began to dig for the riches. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira dug out many thousands of colourful and beautiful vessels made out of iron—utensils, jugs, pitchers, pans, pots and jars. These were then placed in giant chests with lids. O king! The king had three hundred thousand of these vessels placed at either end of a pole. O lord of the earth! Arrangements were made for the wealth of Pandu's son to be borne. There were sixty thousand camels and one hundred and twenty thousand horses. O great king! There were one hundred thousand excellent elephants. There were similar numbers of carts, chariots and she-elephants. There was no count of the number of mules and men. That was the amount of riches that Yudhishthira caused to be dug up. Each load amounted to twenty four thousand coins, sixteen thousand plus eight thousand.[275] Collecting all this wealth, Pandava again worshipped Mahadeva and set out for the city of Nagasahvya. With Dvaipayana's permission, he placed the priest at the forefront. The bull among men marched a distance of a *govyuti* every day, setting up camp accordingly.[276] With that large army, the king advanced towards the city. They suffered because of the burden of the riches. However, the extenders of the Kuru lineage were delighted.'

Chapter 1900(65)

Vaishampayana said, 'Meanwhile, accompanied by the Vrishnis, the valiant Vasudeva arrived at the city of Varanasahvya. When he had left for his own city, Dharma's son had told him that the bull among men should return when he knew that it was time for the horse sacrifice. He was accompanied by Rukmini's son,[277] Yuyudhana, Charudeshna, Samba, Gada, Kritavarma, the brave Sarana, Nishatha and Ulmuka, with Baladeva leading the way. Subhadra was also with him. They came to see and comfort Droupadi, Uttara, Pritha and all the other kshatriya women whose husbands had been slain. On seeing that they had come, King Dhritarashtra and the great-minded Vidura received and welcomed them in the proper way. Worshipped by the greatly energetic Vidura and Yuyutsu, Krishna, bull among men, resided there. O Janamejaya! The brave ones among the Vrishni lineage dwelt there.

'O king! Your father, Parikshit, the slayer of enemy heroes, was born. O great king! That king had been afflicted by the *brahmastra*.[278] He was born as a lifeless corpse and this increased both joy and grief. On hearing that he was born, loud roars of joy, like those of lions, were let out. That sound penetrated all the directions, but soon stopped.[279] At this, Krishna swiftly entered the inner quarters. His senses and mind were distressed and Yuyudhana was with him. He saw that his father's sister[280] was quickly advancing. As she rushed forward, she wept and repeatedly called out to Vasudeva. Droupadi and the illustrious Subhadra were behind her. O king! They, and all the female relatives, wept piteously. O tiger among kings! Kunti, the daughter of a king, met Krishna. She spoke in a voice that was choking with tears. “O Vasudeva! O mighty-armed one! Having given birth to you, Devaki has come to be known as an excellent mother. You are our destination and our refuge. This lineage depends on you. O brave one of the Yadu lineage! O lord! This is the son of your sister’s son. Because of Ashvatthama, he has been born dead. O Keshava! Revive him. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! This is what you had promised when the blade of grass was released. ‘O lord! The child will be born dead, but I will revive him.’ O son![281] O bull among men! Behold. The child has been born dead. O Madhava! Look at Uttara, Subhadra, Droupadi and me and also at Dharma’s son, Bhima, Phalguna, Nakula and Sahadeva. O invincible one! You should save all of us. The breath of life of the Pandavas and of me is in the child. O Dasharha! He will offer the funeral cakes for Pandu and for my father-in-law. O fortunate one! Abhimanyu was your beloved and like you. O Janardana! You should now do what brings pleasure here and in the hereafter. O slayer of enemies! Uttara recounts the beloved words spoken to her by Abhimanyu. O Krishna! There is no doubt that she loves those words. O Dasharha! In earlier times, this is what Arjuna’s son told Virata’s daughter. ‘O fortunate one! Your son will be reared in the family of my maternal uncle. He will go to the lineage of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas and learn *dhanurveda*. He will learn about wonderful weapons and also about the sacred texts of good policy.’ O son! This is what Subhadra’s son, the slayer of enemy heroes, said in love. The invincible one spoke these words and there is no doubt about this. O Madhusudana! For his sake, we are bowing down our heads and beseeching you. For the welfare of the lineage, act so as to ensure this supreme benefit.” Thus did the large-eyed Pritha speak to Varshneya. Having said this, she raised her arms up and, with the other women, fell down on the ground. O great king! All the women had tears in their eyes. O lord! They lamented, “The son of Vasudeva’s sister’s son has been born dead.” When Kunti spoke in this way, Janardana seized her. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! He raised her from the ground and comforted her.’

Chapter 1901(66)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Pritha was raised. On seeing her brother, Subhadra was stricken by grief. She lamented loudly and said, “O Pundarikaksha! Behold the intelligent Partha’s grandson. His life has been destroyed and the lineage of the Kurus has decayed. Drona’s son raised a blade of grass for the sake of Bhimasena. But it descended on Uttara, Vijaya and me. O Keshava! It blazed and is still impaled in my heart. O invincible one! O lord! Behold my son’s son. What will Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, with dharma in his soul, say? What about Bhimasena, Arjuna and Madravati’s sons? O Varshneya! On hearing that Abhimanyu’s son has been born dead, the Pandavas will think that they have been deceived by Drona’s son. O Krishna! There is no doubt that Abhimanyu was loved by his fathers. On hearing that they have been vanquished by the weapon of Drona’s son, what will they say? They will be overcome by supreme grief. O Janardana! What do you think? O Krishna! O scorcher of enemies! Abhimanyu’s son has been born dead. O Krishna! I seek your favours. I am bowing down my head before you now. O Purushottama! Look towards Pritha and Droupadi. O Madhava! O slayer of enemies! When Drona’s son slew the foetuses of the Pandava women, you wrathfully said, ‘O worst of men! O one who does not deserve to be a brahmana! I will render your desire unsuccessful. I will bring back the son of Kiriti’s son to life.’ O invincible one! Hearing these words and knowing your strength, I am seeking your favours. Let Abhimanyu’s son be brought back to life. O tiger of the Vrishni lineage! Having pledged, if you do not act in accordance with your auspicious words and make them successful and listen to my entreaties, I will kill myself. O brave one! O invincible one! If Abhimanyu’s son is not brought back to life while you are still alive and present, what have you done for us? O invincible one! Bring Abhimanyu’s son back to life, like rain from the clouds revives crops. O brave one! His eyes are like his.[282] O Keshava! You have dharma in your soul. You are truthful. Truth is your valour. O scorcher of enemies! You should make your words true. If you so wish, you can make all the dead ones in the three worlds come back to life, not to speak of the son of your beloved sister’s son, who has been born dead. O Krishna! I know your powers. That is the reason I am speaking to you. Perform this great favour for the sons of Pandu. O mighty-armed one! I am your sister and my son has been killed. I have sought refuge with you. Knowing this, you should show me this compassion.”’

Chapter 1902(67)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Indra among kings! Thus addressed and senseless with grief, the slayer of Keshi signified his assent. When he said this, all the people were delighted. The bull among men spoke these words to the people and they rejoiced, like those who are suffering from sweat recovering through a sprinkling of water. O tiger among men! He quickly entered the quarters where your father had been born. In the proper way, it was sanctified with white garlands. In every direction, pots completely full of water were arrayed. O mighty-armed one! There was *tinduka*[283] wood sprinkled with clarified butter. There were mustard seeds. Sparkling weapons and fires were arranged on every side. There were pleasant and aged women as attendants. O brave one! All around, there were skilled and accomplished physicians. The energetic one also saw many objects designed to destroy rakshasas laid around, placed there by people who were accomplished in such matters. On seeing that the room where your father was born had been readied in this way, Hrishikesha was delighted and spoke words of appreciation. With a cheerful face, Varshneya said this. Droupadi quickly went to Virata’s daughter and spoke these words. “O fortunate one! Your father-in-law, Madhusudana, has come here. He is the ancient rishi whose soul cannot be comprehended. The unvanquished one has approached.” The queen[284] controlled her tears. She covered herself and glanced towards Krishna, the way one looks towards a god. The ascetic lady’s heart was shattered. On seeing that Govinda was approaching, she lamented piteously, in a voice that choked with tears. “O Pundarikaksha! Behold. We have been deprived of this child. O Janardana! It is as if both Abhimanyu and I have been killed. O Varshneya! O slayer of Madhu! O brave one! I am bowing down my head and seeking your favours. My son has been burnt by the weapon of Drona’s son. Revive him. O lord! O Pundarikaksha! At that time, had Dharmaraja, Bhimasena or you said, ‘Let the blade of grass destroy the unconscious mother,’ I would have been destroyed and this disaster would not have occurred. The child in the womb has been destroyed by the brahmastra. Drona’s evil-minded son has perpetrated a cruel deed. What purpose has been served by that? O slayer of enemies! She is now bowing down her head and seeking your favours. O Govinda! If you do not revive him, I will cast aside my life. O virtuous one! Many of my wishes are based on him. O Keshava! If he is slain by Drona’s son, why should I remain alive? O Krishna! O Janardana! It was my hope that I would honour you with him on my lap, but that has been destroyed. O bull among men! This son of the one with the restless eyes[285] has been killed. O Krishna! All the wishes in my heart have become futile. O Madhusudana! You loved the one with the restless eyes. Look at his son, brought down by the brahmastra. He is ungrateful and cruel, just like his father. Having cast aside the prosperity of the Pandavas, he has now gone to Yama’s abode. O Keshava! O brave one! When Abhimanyu was slain in the forefront of the battle, I had pledged that I would soon follow him. O Krishna! But I didn’t do that. I am cruel and love life. If I go there and meet him now, what will Phalguna’s son say?”’

Chapter 1903(68)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The ascetic lady lamented piteously, as if she was mad. Desiring her son, the miserable Uttara then fell down on the ground. On seeing that she had fallen down, with her son dead and her clothing dishevelled, Kunti and all the other Bharata women were afflicted by grief and shrieked out. O king! In a short while, the residence of the Pandavas was no longer a sight to be seen. It echoed with sounds of lamentation. O Indra among kings! O brave one! Virata’s daughter was afflicted by sorrow on account of her son. She suffered from unconsciousness. O bull among the Bharata lineage! But in a short while, Uttara regained her senses. She placed her son on her lap and spoke these words. “You are the son of one who knew about dharma. But you do not understand the adharma you have committed. You are not greeting the brave one from the Vrishni lineage. O son! Go and tell your father my words. ‘O brave one! It is impossible for beings to die before their time has come. I am separated from you. I do not have a husband, or a son. Yet I am alive on this earth, though I should be dead. O mighty-armed one! Perhaps

I will take Dharmaraja's permission and consume terrible poison. Perhaps I will enter the fire.' O son![286] Perhaps death is extremely difficult to obtain. Despite being deprived of my husband and my son, my heart has not shattered into one thousand fragments. O son! Arise. Behold your miserable great grandmother. She is afflicted and miserable. She is immersed in an ocean of grief. Behold the noble Panchali and the ascetic Satvati.[287] Look at me. I am extremely miserable, like a deer that has been pierced by a hunter. Arise. Behold the face of the intelligent protector of the worlds.[288] His eyes are restless and like lotus petals. He is in front of you." Uttara lamented in this way and fell down again. On seeing this, all the women raised her up again. The daughter of the king of Matsya was raised and resorted to her fortitude. While still on the ground, she joined her hands in salutation and greeted Pundarikaksha. The bull among men heard her great lamentations. Krishna touched water and withdrew brahmastra's powers. Dasharha had promised that he would bring him back to life. The one with the pure soul spoke these words, so that the entire universe could hear. "O Uttara! I do not utter a falsehood. This will come true. While all the creatures look on, I will revive him. I have never spoken a lie earlier, not even in jest. Never have I retreated in battle. Therefore, he will come back to life. I love dharma and I specially love brahmanas. Abhimanyu's son was born dead. But let him revive. There has never been a conflict between me and Vijaya. Through the virtue of that truth, let this dead child come back to life. Since truth and dharma have always been established in me, let this dead child come back to life. I killed Kamsha and Keshi by resorting to dharma. Because of that truth, let his child again come back to life." O bull among the Bharata lineage! O great king! When Vasudeva spoke in this way, the child regained its senses and gradually began to move.'

Chapter 1904(69)

Vaishampayana said, 'Krishna thus withdrew the power of brahmastra and that room was illuminated through your father's energy. All the rakshasas were rebuffed and forced to leave that house. An invisible voice was heard to speak in the firmament, "O Keshava! Excellent." The blazing weapon returned to the grandfather. O lord of men! Your father again got back his life. Appropriate to its capacity and its strength, the child began to move. O king! At this, the Bharata women were delighted. On Govinda's instructions, the brahmanas pronounced benedictions. Everyone was delighted and praised Janardana. The wives of the lions among the Bharatas were like those who acquire a boat and reach the shore. Kunti, Drupada's daughter, Subhadra and Uttara and the wives of the other lions among men were cheerful in their minds. Wrestlers, actors, fighters, narrators, *soukhashayikas*[289] and large numbers of bards and minstrels praised Janardana. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They pronounced praises and benedictions for the Kuru lineage. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At the right time, Uttara was raised and she and her son cheerfully greeted the descendant of the Yadu lineage. Delighted, the lord who was a tiger among the Vrishni lineage gave away many gems and so did the others. Janardana, devoted to the truth, named your father. He said, "Since Abhimanyu's son was born when the lineage had decayed, his name will be Parikshit."[290] O lord of men! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! In course of time, your father grew up and gladdened the minds of all the people. O brave one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When your father was a month old, the Pandavas returned, having collected a great deal of riches.[291] On hearing that they were approaching, the bulls among the Vrishni lineage went out. The men decorated Nagasahvya with large numbers of garlands. There were colourful flags and diverse kinds of standards. O lord of men! The citizens decorated their houses. On Vidura's instructions and to bring pleasure to the sons of Pandu, many kinds of worship were performed in the temples. The royal roads were ornamented in beautiful ways. The beautiful city resounded with a noise that was like the roar of the ocean. There were the sounds of dancers dancing and singers singing. The city seemed to be like Vaishravana's[292] abode. O king! There were bards and thousands of curious women in every direction. Stirred by the wind, the flags fluttered, as if pointing out the southern and the northern directions to the Kurus. The royal officers announced that it was a time for festivities. Since the riches had been obtained, the festivities would last throughout the night.'

Chapter 1905(70)

Vaishampayana said, 'Hearing that the Pandavas were near, Vasudeva, the destroyer of enemies, went out with his advisers, wishing to see them. Following the proper rites, the Pandavas and the Vrishnis met. O king! Together, they then entered the city of Varanasahvya. There was a large army and the sound of hooves. The sound that arose filled up the earth and the firmament. Placing the store of riches in the front, they entered their own city. The Pandavas were delighted and were accompanied by large numbers of advisers and well-wishers. As is proper, they went and met King Dhritarashtra. They announced their own names and touched his feet. O tiger among kings! The best among the Bharata lineage met Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Subala's daughter, and Kunti. They met Vidura, the son of a vaishya, and worshipped him. O lord of the earth! The brave ones honoured the others and were radiant. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On hearing about the extremely wonderful and colourful way your father had been born, those brave ones were struck by great amazement. Hearing about the deeds of the intelligent Vasudeva, they worshipped the one who deserves worship, Krishna, the son of Devaki.

'After a few days, Vyasa, Satyavati's immensely energetic son, arrived at the city of Nagasahvya. All the extenders of the Kuru lineage worshipped him in the proper way, accompanied by the tigers among the Vrishni and Andhaka lineages. After many kinds of tales had been recounted, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, spoke these words to Vyasa. "O illustrious one! Through your favours, these riches have been obtained. I now wish to make arrangements for the great horse sacrifice. O supreme among sages! I wish to take your permission for this. All of us follow you and the great-souled Krishna." Vyasa replied, "O king! You have my permission to do what must be done next. Follow the ordinances and perform the horse sacrifice, giving away dakshina. O Indra among kings! A horse sacrifice cleanses all sins. There is no doubt that, having performed this sacrifice, your soul will be purified." O Kouravya! Having been addressed in this way, Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus and with dharma in his soul, made up his mind to perform the horse sacrifice. The king had obtained the permission of Krishna Dvaipayana. The eloquent one sought Vasudeva's permission and spoke these words. "O Purushottama! Through you, the queen Devaki has come to be known as an excellent mother. O mighty-armed one! O Achyuta! Please ensure what I will tell you about. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! It is through your favours that we have obtained these objects of pleasure. It is through your valour and intelligence that we have conquered the earth. You are our supreme preceptor. Consecrate yourself to perform the sacrifice. O one who knows about dharma! O lord! If you perform the sacrifice, I will be cleansed of sin. You are the sacrifice. You are indestructible. You are everything. You are dharma. You are Prajapati." Vasudeva replied, "O mighty-armed one! O scorcher of enemies! It is appropriate that you should speak in this way. It is my considered view that you are the refuge of all creatures. Among all the brave ones in the Kuru lineage, you are resplendent because of your dharma. O king! You have surpassed them in qualities. You are the king and you are our senior.[293] You have my permission to undertake the sacrifice. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Employ us in whatever task you desire. O unblemished one! I tell you truthfully that I will do everything that you ask me to. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When you perform the sacrifice, this will also be a sacrifice for Bhimasena, Arjuna and Madravati's sons."'

Chapter 1906(71)

Vaishampayana said, 'Thus addressed by Krishna, the intelligent Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, approached Vyasa and spoke these words. "When you truly know that it is the time for the horse sacrifice, please consecrate me. My sacrifice is dependent on you." Vyasa replied, "O Kounteya! There is no doubt that when it is time, I, Paila and Yajnavalkya will perform all the requisite rites. Your initiation will happen on the night of the full moon in the month of Chaitra.[294] O bull among the Bharata lineage! Let all the objects required for the sacrifice be prepared. Let there be brahmanas and sutas who are knowledgable about the science of horses. Let them examine the horses and choose one that will make the sacrifice successful. Follow the sacred texts and let it be released, to wander around the entire earth, up to the girdle of the ocean. O king! This will increase your fame and name.” O Indra among kings! Thus addressed by the one who knew about the brahman, the Pandava king agreed and did everything just as he had been instructed. O Indra among kings! He collected all the required objects. The king who was Dharma’s son brought all these objects together. The one who was immeasurable in his soul then told Krishna Dvaipayana that the arrrangements had been made.

‘The greatly energetic Vyasa spoke to the king who was Dharma’s son. “At the right time, we will make arrangements to intitiate you into the sacrifice. O Kourava! Let the *sphya, kurcha* and everything else be made out of gold.[295] Let everything used as a harness also be made out of gold. Let the horse be released today, so that it can progressively roam around the earth. O Yudhishthira! Following the sacred texts, when it roams around, let it be protected well.” Yudhishthira replied, “O brahmana! I have released this horse, so that it can roam around the earth, as it wishes. I have made all the arrangements for the horse to wander around the earth, wherever it wills. O sage! But you should tell me about who should protect it.” O Indra among kings! Addressed thus, Krishna Dvaipayana replied. “He is younger to Bhimasena and he is supreme among all archers. Jishnu is patient and can withstand everything. He will be the protector. The destroyer of *nivatakavachas*[296] is capable of conquering the entire earth. He possesses celestial weapons and he is capable of withstanding the gods. He has a divine bow and arrows and he will follow it. He is accomplished in dharma and artha and is knowledgable about all the sacred texts. O best among kings! He will follow the sacred texts in making the horse wander around. The prince is mighty-armed. He is dark and has eyes that are like the petals of lotuses. The brave one is Abhimanyu’s father and he will follow it. O lord of the earth! The energetic Kounteya Bhimasena is infinite in his valour. With Nakula, he is capable of protecting the kingdom. O Kouravya! The intelligent Sahadeva is immensely illustrious. Following the proper rites, he will welcome all the relatives who have been invited.” The extender of the Kuru lineage properly followed everything that he had been asked to do. He gave Phalguna instructions about the horse.

‘Yudhishthira said, “O Arjuna! O brave one! Protect the horse. No man other than you is capable of protecting the earth. O mighty-armed one! The kings will advance against you. O unblemished one! But if possible, you should avoid any fights with them. You should tell all of them about my sacrifice. O mighty-armed one! Depart and try to have alliances with those kings.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The one with dharma in his soul spoke in this way to his brother, Savyasachi. He instructed Bhima and Nakula to protect the city. With the permission of King Dhritarashtra, Yudhishthira asked Sahadeva, the lord of warriors, to tend to the relatives who had been invited.’

Chapter 1907(72)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The time for initiation into the great sacrifice arrived. Following the prescribed rites, the officiating priests initiated the king into the horse sacrifice. The sacrificial animals were tied and the descendant of the Pandu lineage was initiated. With the officiating priests, the immensely energetic Dharmaraja looked resplendent. The infinitely energetic Vyasa, knowledgable about the brahman, followed the ordinances of the sacred texts and himself released the horse earmarked for the horse sacrifice. O king! The king who was Dharma’s son was initiated and looked radiant. He wore a golden garland around his neck. He looked like a blazing fire. Dharma’s son was clad in black antelope skin and a silken garment. He held a staff in his hand. Dazzling in his splendour, he looked like Prajapati on a sacrificial altar. O lord of the earth! All the officiating priests were attired in a similar way. Arjuna also dazzled, like a blazing fire. O lord of the earth! The horse was as dark as a black antelope and white horses were properly yoked to Dhananjaya’s chariot, who waited for Dharmaraja’s instructions. O king! He stretched Gandiva and his fingers were covered in armour made out of the skin of lizards. O lord of the earth! He was cheerful and ready to follow the horse. O king! O lord! All the people in the city, including the children, emerged with the desire of seeing Dhananjaya, foremost among the Kuru lineage, depart. Such a large number of them had assembled with the desire of seeing the horse and the one who would follow the horse that they crushed each other in the process and a dust arose. O great king! The sound filled the ten directions. The men assembled to see Dhananjaya, Kunti's son. "There goes Kounteya. There is the shining horse. There is the mighty-armed one, touching his supreme bow." Such were the words that were spoken and heard by the intelligent Jishnu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Indra among men! There were other men who spoke different words. "May you go safely and return safely. In the great crush, we can't see him, but we can see the bow. This is the terrible twang of the famous Gandiva bow. May you go safely and return safely. May you face no fear along the journey. We will see him again when he returns. It is certain that he will return." O bull among the Bharata lineage! These were the pleasant words that were repeatedly spoken by the men and the women and he heard them.

'There was a disciple of Yajnavalkya who was accomplished in the performance of sacrificial rites. He was knowledgable about the Vedas. To perform benedictions of peace, he left with Partha. O lord of the earth! There were many brahmanas who were accomplished in the Vedas. They followed the great-souled one and so did kshatriyas and vaishyas. The Pandavas had conquered the earth with the energy of their weapons. O great king! O excellent one! The horse wandered around in different countries and many battles ensued between them and Pandava. O brave one! I will tell you about those great and wonderful accounts. O king! O scorcher of enemies! The horse circumambulated the earth. O lord of the earth! It began in the north and moved towards the east. Listen. That excellent horse brought the kings of many countries under its subjugation. It was followed slowly by the maharatha with the white horses. O great king! There were tens of thousands of kings and kshatriyas who fought and their relatives were slain. O king! Many kiratas, the wielders of swords and bows, were brought down. There were many other kinds of mlechchhas, who had been defeated in the earlier encounter.[297] There were noble kings, cheerful men and mounts. They were indomitable in battle and many of them clashed against Pandu's son. O lord of the earth! Here and there, many such encounters took place between Arjuna and kings who resided in different countries. O king! O unblemished one! I will only tell you about the great and terrible battles that Arjuna fought.'

Chapter 1908(73)

Vaishampayana said, ‘There was a battle between Kiriti and the Trigartas, who were firm in their enmity and had been slain.[298] However, their maharatha sons and grandsons clashed against him. They got to know that the supreme horse, meant for the sacrifice, had arrived on the outskirts of their kingdom. Those brave ones armoured themselves and surrounded it. The charioteers affixed their quivers. Their well-trained horses were decorated. O king! They surrounded the horse and attempted to seize it.[299] At this, Kiriti thought about what the king had desired. The scorcher of enemies first tried to pacify and restrain those brave ones. However, all of them ignored this and attacked him with their arrows. They were overcome with tamas and rajas and Kiriti tried to check them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Jishnu seemed to laugh and said, “O ones who don’t know about dharma! Refrain. It is best to remain alive.” Dharmaraja had said, “O Partha! The kings whose relatives have been slain should not be killed.” Because of this, the brave one tried to restrain them. Having heard the words of the intelligent Dharmaraja, he tried to follow them. However, they did not retreat. In the battle, Dhananjaya laughed. He enveloped Suryavarma, king of the Trigartas, in a net of arrows. They filled all the directions with the clatter of their chariots, the noise of the wheels and the sound of the hooves and attacked Dhananjaya. O Indra among kings! Suryavarma exhibited his dexterity in the use of weapons. He shot hundreds of arrows with drooping tufts towards Partha. There were other great archers who followed him. Desiring to slay Dhananjaya, they released showers of arrows. O king! However, Pandava shot many shafted arrows from his own bowstring and severed those arrows, so that they fell down on the ground. The energetic Ketuvarma[300] was youthful and younger. For the sake of his brother, he fought against the great-souled Pandava. On seeing that Ketuvarma was descending on him in the battle, Bibhatsu, the slayer of enemy heroes, slew him with sharp arrows. When Ketuvarma was killed in the encounter, maharatha Dhritavarma swiftly advanced on a chariot and enveloped Jishnu with arrows. On seeing the swiftness of the young Dhritavarma, the valiant and immensely energetic Gudakesha was gratified. The son of Paka’s chastiser could not discern when he affixed an arrow, aimed it and shot it. In the encounter, he honoured Dhritavarma. For a short while in the battle, he was mentally delighted with him. He was like an enraged serpent and the brave one of the Kuru lineage smiled at him. O great king! Since he did not wish to take away his life, he initially fought affectionately with him. However, protected by the infinitely energetic Partha, Dhritavarma released a sharp arrow at Vijaya. Swiftly, it severely pierced Vijaya in the hand and in pain, he released Gandiva, which fell down on the ground. O lord! O supreme among the Bharata lineage! When the bow fell down from Savyasachi's hand, it seemed to have the form of Indra's weapon.[301] O king! When that giant and divine bow fell down in that great battle, Dhritavarma laughed out loudly. Enraged, Jishnu wiped the blood from his hand. He picked up the divine bow and rained down a shower of arrows. The tumultuous noise seemed to touch heaven, as many kinds of creatures praised that deed. In his anger, Jishnu looked like Yama at the end of a yuga. On seeing this, the Trigarta warriors quickly surrounded him, desiring to save Dhritavarma. When Gudakesha Dhananjaya was surrounded, his anger increased. Using sharp arrows that were like the great Indra's vajra, he swiftly killed eighteen warriors. They began to run away. On seeing this, Dhananjaya quickly shot arrows that were like virulent snakes and laughed out aloud. All the Trigarta maharathas were distressed in their minds. Afflicted by Dhananjaya's arrows, they fled in all the directions. They spoke to the tiger among men, the slayer of samshaptakas.[302] "All of us are your servants. All of us have been subjugated by you. O Partha! Command us. We are here, awaiting your instructions. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! All of us will do what is agreeable to you." Hearing these words of subjugation from all of them, he told them, "O kings! Save your lives and accept my suzerainty."'

Chapter 1909(74)

Vaishampayana said, 'That supreme of horses then headed towards Pragjyotisha and began to wander around there. Bhagadatta's son, harsh is battle, came out there. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! King Vajradatta found that the horse of Pandu's son had arrived within his kingdom and wished to fight. The king who was Bhagadatta's son emerged from his city. He seized the horse and left for his own city. On noticing this, the mighty-armed bull among the Kuru lineage quickly stretched Gandiva and violently attacked. The king was afflicted by arrows released from Gandiva. The brave one released the horse and attacked Partha. The supreme among kings entered the city and armoured himself again. Desiring to fight, he ascended a supreme elephant and emerged again. A white umbrella was held aloft his head. The maharatha was fanned with a white whisk. Confused by his childishness, in the battle, he challenged Kouravya Partha, the maharatha among the Pandavas, and clashed against him. The elephant was foremost among elephants and musth exuded from its temples and mouth. It was angrily goaded towards the white horses. The elephant descended on the enemy's elephants, like a cloud showering down rain. Following the sacred texts, it had been readied for battle. It created terror and was indomitable in battle. The immensely strong king urged the elephant on with a goad. It was resplendent as it seemed to descend from the sky. O king! On seeing it descend, Dhananjaya became angry. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Though he was on the ground, he fought against the one who was on the elephant. Extremely enraged, Vajradatta swiftly released lances towards Dhananjaya. These were as powerful as the fire and descended like locusts. As they descended, Arjuna countered them with arrows released from Gandiva. These coursed through the sky and while the lances were still in the sky, severed them into two or three fragments. On seeing that the lances had been shattered, Bhagadatta's son quickly shot a line of arrows[303] at Pandava. Acting even more swiftly, Arjuna angrily shot gold-tufted arrows at Bhagadatta's son. In the great battle, the immensely energetic Vajradatta was pierced by these. Severely struck, he fell down on the ground. But he did not lose his memory. In the battle, he again climbed onto the supreme elephant. Desiring victory, he shot excellent arrows towards Vijaya. Extremely enraged, Jishnu released arrows that were like venomous serpents. These arrows flamed like the fire. Pierced by these, blood began to flow from the giant elephant, like many streams flowing down from the Himalayas, Indra among mountains.'

Chapter 1910(75)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O bull among the Bharata lineage! That battle between Arjuna and the Indra among men raged for three nights, like that between Vritra and Shatakratu. On the fourth day, the immensely strong Vajradatta laughed loudly and spoke these words. “O Arjuna! O Arjuna! Wait. You will not escape from me with your life. I will slay you and following the proper rites, offer water to my father. My aged father, Bhagadatta, was your father’s friend.[304] He was aged and was killed. Though I am not an adult and am still a child, fight with me now.” O Kouravya! The angry King Vajradatta spoke these words and urged the elephant towards Pandava. The Indra among elephants was urged in this way by the intelligent Vajradatta and as it attacked Pandava, it seemed to descend from the sky. O great king! From its trunk, it sprayed Phalguna with water, like a blue cloud showering down on a mountain. Like a cloud, it thundered repeatedly. Goaded by the king, it trumpeted loudly and rushed towards Phalguna. Urged by Vajradatta, that Indra among elephants seemed to be dancing. O king! It quickly advanced against the maharatha of the Kouravas. On seeing that Vajradatta’s elephant was descending on him, the powerful one, the slayer of enemies, did not waver. He resorted to Gandiva. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Pandava remembered the earlier enmity and the obstruction the powerful king had proved to be in accomplishing his tasks and was angry.[305] Enraged, Pandava enveloped the elephant with a net of arrows and restrained it, like the shoreline holds back the abode of *makaras*.[306] The foremost of elephants was checked by Arjuna’s valour. Its limbs were pierced by arrows and it looked like a porcupine. On seeing that the elephant had been restrained, the king who was Bhagadatta’s son became senseless with rage and released sharp arrows towards Arjuna. O great king! Arjuna repulsed these arrows with a storm of arrows and it was extraordinary. The king, the lord of Pragjyotisha, became angry again. He again urged that powerful Indra among elephants, which was like a mountain. On seeing that it was descending, the powerful son of the chastiser of Paka shot an arrow that was like a fire towards the elephant. O king! This severely wounded the elephant in its inner organs and it violently fell down on the ground, like a mountain shattered by the vajra. The elephant was struck by Dhananjaya’s arrows. When it fell down, it was as beautiful as the shattered summit of a large mountain that had been struck by the vajra and had fallen down on the ground. When Vajradatta’s elephant fell down, Pandava spoke to the king, who had also fallen down on the ground. “Do not be frightened. This is what the immensely energetic Yudhishthira told me when I left. ‘O Dhananjaya! You must never slay the kings. O tiger among men! It is only then that you will be successful in every way. O Dhananjaya! In the battle, you must not slay any of the warriors. This is what you should tell all the kings, along with their well-wishers. They should all come to Yudhishthira’s horse sacrifice.’ O lord of men! Having heard my brother’s words, I will not kill you. Get up. Do not be afraid. O king! May you be well. O great king! Later, when it is the month of Chaitra, you should come to the intelligent Dharmaraja’s horse sacrifice.” The king who was Bhagadatta’s son was addressed in this way. Having been vanquished by Pandava, he agreed to these words.’

Chapter 1911(76)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thereafter, there was a battle between Kiriti and the Saindhavas. O great king! Some of them had not been killed and there were also the sons of those who had been slain. They heard that the one with the white horses had come to their kingdom. Those kings found this intolerable and advanced against the bull among the Pandavas. Though the horse was like poison, when it entered the frontiers of their kingdom, they seized it. They were not frightened of Partha, Bhimasena’s younger brother. Bibhatsu was on foot and received them, stationed not far from the sacrificial horse. Those immensely valorous kings surrounded him. Remembering their earlier defeat in the battle,[307] those tigers among men were desirous of victory. They announced their names, gotras and various deeds and having done this, enveloped Partha with showers of arrows. They shot sharp arrows that were capable of repulsing Indras among elephants. Desiring victory in the encounter, they surrounded Kounteya. He was on foot and saw those brave ones, capable of performing terrible deeds in a battle. Those valiant ones fought from their chariots. They struck the brave one, the slayer of the nivatakavachas, the slayer of the samshaptakas and the slayer of Saindhava.[308] They penned in Kounteya with one thousand chariots and ten thousand horses and fought cheerfully. O Kouravya! Those brave ones remembered the death of Jayadratha, the intelligent king of Sindhu, at the hands of Savyasachi in the battle. Like clouds, all of them released showers of arrows. Enveloped by these, Partha was beautiful, like the sun covered by clouds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Covered by those arrows, the bull among the Pandavas could be seen, like a bird moving around inside a cage. O king! On seeing that Kounteya was afflicted by those arrows, sounds of lamentation arose in the three worlds and the rays of the sun were covered in dust. O great king! A wind that made the body hair stand up began to blow. It was as if Rahu had simultaneously devoured the sun and the moon. From every direction, meteors fell into the sun and were scattered around. O king! Kailasa, the giant mountain, began to tremble. Overcome by sorrow and grief, the saptarshis and the devarshis were struck by fear and released warm sighs of fright. The moon was swiftly pierced and they[309] fell down on the lunar disc. O king! All these perverse portents were witnessed. Clouds that were as red as donkeys covered the sky. They were tinged with bows[310] and lightning and showered down flesh and blood. O foremost among the Bharata lineage! Thus it was when the brave one was enveloped by those showers of arrows and it was an extraordinary event on earth. Because of his confusion, Gandiva was dislodged from his hand and fell down on the ground. His arm guards were loosened. When the maharatha had lost his senses and was overcome by confusion, the Saindhavas swiftly released another greater net of arrows. Discerning that Partha was overcome by confusion, all the residents of heaven were terrified in their minds and thought that peace had been defeated. All the devarshis, the saptarshis and the *brahmarshis* prayed for the intelligent Partha's victory. O king! Because of this divine intervention, Partha's energy blazed forth. The intelligent one, who knew about supreme weapons, was as immobile as a mountain in the battle. The descendant of the Kourava lineage stretched his divine bow. Its great and repeated twang was like the sound from a machine. The lord showered arrows towards the enemy. Partha rained these down from his bow, like the lord of the gods showering down rain. All the Saindhava warriors and their kings were shrouded in these arrows and could no longer be seen. They were like insects headed towards a fire. They were terrified by the sound and extremely frightened, they fled in different directions. The

Saindhavas lamented loudly in their grief and shed tears. The powerful one roamed around everywhere. The best among men drove them away. O king! He released that net of arrows and it seemed to be like a circle of fire. The slayer of enemies produced that net of arrows and it was almost magical. He released them in every direction, like the great Indra wielding his vajra. Those soldiers were like a mass of clouds. As he routed them, the best among the Kourava lineage was resplendent, with a complexion like that of the sun. He looked like the autumn sun.’

Chapter 1912(77)

Vaishampayana said, ‘With Gandiva, the brave one remained stationed in the battle. The invincible one was resplendent in the battle, like the immovable Himalayas. The Saindhava warriors rallied again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Angrily, they released showers of arrows. The immensely valorous one tolerated them and still remained stationed. Kounteya spoke gentle words to those who were about to die. “Fight to the best of your capacity. Make efforts to kill me. Make every kind of effort, because you are confronted with a great fear. I will fight with you and repulse all your arrows. Stay here and make up your mind to fight. I will destroy your insolence.” Angrily, Kouravya, the wielder of Gandiva, spoke these words. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! However, he then remembered the words of his elder brother. “O son![311] You should not kill the kshatriyas who seek to defeat you in battle. But you should defeat them.” The great-souled Dharmaraja had said this. Therefore, Phalguna, bull among men, began to think. “This is what the Indra among men said, that the kings should not be killed. How can I act so that Dharmaraja’s auspicious words are not rendered false? I must follow the king’s instructions and not kill these kings.” Engaged in bringing pleasure to his brother, he thought in this way. The one who knew about dharma then spoke these words to the Saindhavas, who were indomitable in battle. “In the battle, I will not kill those among you who say, ‘I am a child. I am a woman. Do not kill me. I have been defeated by you.’ On hearing these words of mine, do what is best for your own selves. Those who act contrary to this will face hardships and be afflicted by fear." The bull among Kurus spoke these words and began to fight with those brave ones. He roared in rage and wished to defeat those who were also angry.

'O king! The Saindhavas released hundreds of thousands of arrows with drooping tufts towards the wielder of Gandiva. They descended, like cruel and venomous serpents. However, Dhananjaya sliced them down with sharp arrows. He severed those arrows with arrows shafted with the feathers of herons and sharpened on stone. Then, in that encounter, he pierced each of them with ten arrows. The Saindhava kings remembered Jayadratha's death and again hurled javelins and spears towards Dhananjaya. However, the great-minded Kiriti rendered their resolution futile. Pandava severed all those weapons and was delighted. On seeing that those warriors were descending on him, desiring victory, he brought down their heads with broad-headed and straight-tufted arrows. Some ran away and then returned and attacked again. When they returned, they roared, like a giant and billowing ocean. They were slain by the infinitely energetic Partha. They fought against Arjuna, according to their strength and according to their effort. Phalguna used arrows with drooping tufts to make many of them unconscious. The mounts and soldiers were exhausted.

'Duhshala,[312] Dhritarashtra's daughter, got to know that all of them were cheerless. She took her young grandson, Suratha's son, and advanced towards the brave one's chariot. Desiring peace for all the warriors, she went towards Pandava. She reached Dhananjaya and lamented piteously. On seeing her, the lord Dhananjaya cast aside his bow. Partha cast aside his bow and greeted his sister in the proper way. He spoke to her and asked her what he could do for her. She said, "O foremost among the Bharata lineage! This child is the son of your sister's son. O brave one! O bull among men! Behold. He is greeting you." When the father was thus addressed, Arjuna asked, "Where is he?"[313] O king! Duhshala replied, "There he is. He is tormented by grief on account of his father and is afflicted by sorrow. His brave father is dead. Listen to how that happened. O unblemished one! He[314] heard that his father had earlier been slain in the battle by you. He heard that you had arrived, following the horse, and were ready to fight. O Dhananjaya! He was miserable on account of his father's death and gave up his life. O unblemished one! On hearing that

Bibhatsu had come and on hearing the name, he was afflicted by grief. My son fell down on the ground and died.[315] O lord! On seeing that he had fallen down, I seized his son and came here, seeking refuge with you now.” Dhritarashtra’s daughter released shrieks of lamentation. She was miserable and in that sorry state, with a downcast face, she spoke these words to Partha. “Look towards me, your sister. This is the son of your sister’s son. O one who knows about dharma! O extender of the Kuru lineage! You should exhibit pity towards me. You should forget the king of the Kurus[316] and the evil Jayadratha. Parikshit, the slayer of enemy heroes, has been born from Abhimanyu. O mighty-armed one! In that way, my grandson has been born from Suratha. O tiger among men! I have seized him and have come before you. For the sake of pacifying all the warriors, listen to my words. O mighty-armed one! Your young and unfortunate grandson has come before you. You should show your favours to this child. That is the way you should act. O scorcher of enemies! With me, he is bowing his head down before you. O mighty-armed one! O Dhananjaya! He is beseeching you. Seek peace. O Partha! This child’s relatives have been slain and he is ignorant of that. O one who knows about dharma! Show him your favours. Do not come under the subjugation of anger. Forget his cruel grandfather and the injury he caused you. You should show your favours towards someone who has come before you.” Duhshala spoke in this piteous tone. Dhananjaya remembered Queen Gandhari and King Dhritarashtra. Censuring the dharma of kshatriyas, he sorrowfully and miserably spoke these words. “Shame on the inferior Duryodhana. He was insolent and greedy for the kingdom. Because of what he did, I have conveyed all his relatives to Yama’s abode.” Having said this, Jaya comforted her in many ways and showed her his favours. He happily embraced her and gave her permission to return to her house. Duhshala also restrained those warriors from that great battle. The one with the beautiful face worshipped Partha and left for her own house.

‘Having defeated the Saindhava warriors, the bull among men again started to follow the horse, which wandered around as it wished. O lord of the earth! In the proper way, the brave one followed the sacrificial animal, just as the god of the gods, the wielder of Pinaka, followed the stellar deer in the firmament.[317] As it wished, the horse wandered through other countries. It thrived because of Partha's deeds and roamed as it willed. O bull among the Bharata lineage! In due course, as it roamed around with Pandava, the horse arrived in the country of Manipura.'

Chapter 1913(78)

Vaishampayana said, 'On hearing that his brave father had arrived, King Babhruvahana emerged in humility, placing noble brahmanas and gifts before him.[318] Dhananjaya saw that the lord of Manipura had arrived. However, remembering the dharma of kshatriyas, the intelligent one did not approve of this. Phalguna, with dharma in his soul, was enraged and said, "This conduct of you coming out is not in accordance with the dharma of kshatriyas. I have arrived here, protecting Yudhishthira's horse. The sacrificial animal has arrived in your kingdom. O son! Why are you not fighting with me? You are knowledgable about the dharma of kshatriyas. O extremely evil-minded one! Shame on you. Wishing to fight, I have arrived before you and you are seeking peace. Though you are alive on this earth, no manliness exists in you. Since you seek to receive me peacefully, you possess the intelligence of women. O extremely evil-minded one! You have cast aside your weapons and have arrived here now. O worst of men! This is what your conduct has shown." The daughter of the serpent[319] got to know what her husband had said and could not tolerate it. Ulupi emerged through the earth and reached the spot. O lord! She saw her son there, distressed and with a downcast face, since he had been reprimanded by his lord,[320] who wished to fight with him. The serpent's daughter, beautiful in all her limbs, approached him. Ulupi was accomplished in the dharma of kshatriyas and spoke these words. "Know me to be Ulupi. I am your mother and the daughter of a serpent. O son! Act in accordance with my words. You will then be established in supreme dharma. O scorcher of enemies! Fight with Dhananjaya, foremost among Kurus. There is no doubt that he will be pleased at this." O bull among the Bharata lineage! King Babhruvahana was thus instigated by his mother and made up his mind to fight.

'He donned golden armour and a radiant helmet. The intelligent one ascended a giant chariot stocked with hundreds of quivers. It had all the necessary equipment and was yoked to horses that were as fleet as thought. The chariot was decorated with a golden pole and possessed ornamented and excellent wheels. An excellent standard was raised, marked with the sign of a golden lion. King Babhruvahana set out in Partha's direction. With the help of men who were trained and accomplished about horses, the brave one seized the sacrificial horse protected by Partha. On seeing that the horse had been seized, Dhananjaya was delighted. In the battle, his son was on the chariot, but he opposed him from the ground. The king[321] showered down thousands of torrents of sharp arrows, which were like venomous serpents, on the brave one. An unmatched encounter ensued between the father and the son. Cheerfully, they fought against each other, like the gods and the asuras. Babhruvahana, tiger among men, pierced Kiriti in the shoulder joint with an arrow with a drooping tuft and laughed. This was shafted with feathers and penetrated Kounteya, the way a snake enters a termite hill. It then entered the ground. Because of the great pain, the intelligent one supported himself on his excellent bow, resorting to his divine energy. But he seemed to be dead. O lord of the earth! When he regained his senses, Shakra's son, bull among men, praised his son in these words. "Excellent. O mighty-armed one! O son! Excellent. O Chitrangada's son! O son! On witnessing this deed, I am pleased with you. I will now shoot arrows at you. O son! Be steady in the battle." Having said this, the slayer of enemies showered down iron arrows. These were shot from Gandiva and were like the vajra and thunder. However, the king severed each of those iron arrows into three fragments. His[322] divine standard was decorated with gold and looked like a golden palm tree. Using a *kshurapra* arrow, Partha brought it down from his chariot. The king's horses were giant in size, valiant and extremely speedy. The bull among Pandavas laughed and killed them. The king became extremely angry and swiftly descended from his chariot. Enraged, he fought with his father, Pandava, on foot. The bull among the Pandus was delighted at his son's valour. The son of the wielder of the vajra did not wish to oppress his son excessively. However, Babhruvahana thought that his father was no longer willing to fight. The powerful one again struck him with arrows that were like virulent serpents. The young Babhruvahana powerfully pierced his father's heart with a sharp arrow that had excellent tufts. In its energy, the arrow blazed like a flaming fire. O king! It severely penetrated Pandava’s inner organs and caused great pain. The descendant of the Kuru lineage was severely struck by his son. O king! Afflicted and bereft of his senses, Dhananjaya fell down on the ground. The brave one, the bearer of the burden of the Kouravas, fell down. At this, Chitrangada’s son also quickly lost his senses. The king was exhausted in the battle and thought that his father had been killed. Earlier, he had also been severely struck by Arjuna’s arrows. On seeing that his lord had been slain, the father fell down on the ground. Scared, Chitrangada rushed to the scene of the battle. The beautiful one was tormented by grief in her heart and wept. On seeing that her husband had been slain, the mother of the lord of Manipura lamented.’

Chapter 1914(79)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The timid one, with eyes like lotus petals, lamented in many ways. She was confused and miserable. Afflicted, she fell down on the ground. The queen was divine in form. When she regained her senses, she saw Ulupi, the daughter of the serpent, and spoke these words. “O Ulupi! Behold. Our victorious husband is lying down in the battle, slain. This is because of what you did to my young child. Are you not noble? Do you not know dharma? Are you not devoted to your husband? Because of what you have done, our husband has been killed and is lying down in the battle. Even if Dhananjaya has committed all manner of crimes towards you, I am beseeching you now to forgive him. Give him his life back. O beautiful one! You are indeed noble. You know about dharma and are famous in the three worlds. Having caused your husband to be killed by your son, why are you not grieving? O daughter of a serpent! I am not sorrowing because my son has been killed. I am grieving because of my husband and because of the hospitality that has been shown to him.” The queen said this to Ulupi, the daughter of the serpent. Having said this, the illustrious one went to where her husband was and said, “O foremost among the Kurus! Arise. O beloved! Do what brings me pleasure. O mighty-armed one! I have set this horse free. O brave one! You should indeed follow Dharmaraja’s sacrificial horse. Why are you lying down on the ground? O descendant of the Kuru lineage! My breath of life depends on you and so do those of the Kurus. How can someone who grants others their breaths of life give up his own breath of life? O Ulupi! Behold this praiseworthy sight of your husband having been slain in the battle. You incited the son to kill him and are not grieving. This child should sleep as he wishes. Instead, he has been killed and is lying down on the ground. O one with the red eyes! O Gudakesha! O Vijaya! It would be good if you came back to life. O extremely beautiful one![323] It is not a crime for a man to have many wives. Women should be like me. Their intelligence shouldn't be like yours. This friendship[324] was ordained by the creator. It is eternal and indestructible. Know that friendship and make that relationship come true. My husband has been slain through my son now. If I do not see him alive now, I will cast aside my life. I am miserable and timid, having been separated from my husband and my son. There is no doubt that while you look on, I will fast to death."[325] Chaitravahini[326] spoke in this way to her co-wife, the daughter of the serpent. O lord of men! Then silent, she sat down, prepared to fast to death.'

Chapter 1915(80)

Vaishampayana said, 'Having stopped lamenting, she seized her husband's feet. The queen sat down, sighed and looked towards her son. However, King Babhruvahana regained his senses. He saw his mother seated on the ground in the field of battle and said, "My mother has been reared in happiness. What can be a greater misery than to see her seated on the ground, next to her brave and dead husband who is lying down? He slew many brave ones in battle and was supreme among those who wielded all weapons. He has been killed by me in the encounter. It is evident that it is very difficult to die.[327] This queen's[328] heart is extremely firm. Otherwise, it should have been shattered. She has seen that her mighty-armed and broad-chested husband has been slain. I think it is extremely difficult for people to die until their time has come, since neither I, nor my mother, have been separated from life. Alas for the brave one's golden armour, lying down on the ground. Behold! It has been pierced by his son and he has been killed. O brahmanas! Behold. My brave father is lying down on the ground. He is lying down on a bed meant for heroes. He has been killed by me, his son. The foremost among the Kurus followed the horse and the brahmanas pronounced benedictions of peace on him. But he has now been slain by me in the battle. O brahmanas! Instruct me. What atonement should I practise now? I have slain my father in the field of battle and that is an extremely cruel sin. Having killed my father now and performed this extremely cruel deed, I should hide my face and roam around, observing extremely difficult austerities for twelve years. I should now wander around, with my father's skull affixed to my head. For the sake of my father, there is no other atonement that is possible now. O daughter of the best of serpents! Behold. Your husband has been slain by me. I have slain Arjuna in the battle and have now accomplished what is agreeable to you. I will now follow the path traversed by my father. O beautiful one! I am incapable of sustaining myself any longer. My mother and the wielder of Gandiva will also be dead. O queen! Be delighted. That is the truth you have realized today." Having said this, the king was afflicted by sorrow and grief. O great king! He touched water and spoke these miserable words. "O all mobile and immobile creatures! Listen. O mother! O supreme among the serpents! You also listen. I am speaking the truth. If my father, Jaya, the bull among the Bharata lineage, does not arise, in this field of battle, I will dry up my body. Having slain my father, I will never be able to escape. Having suffered from the act of having killed a senior, it is certain that I can visualize hell. If one kills a brave kshatriya, one is freed by giving away one hundred cows. However, having killed my father, it is extremely difficult for me to escape. Pandu's son, Dhananjaya, was the only one endued with great energy. He was my father and had dharma in his soul. Therefore, how can there be escape for me?" O king! The king who was Dhananjaya's son spoke in this way. The immensely intelligent one touched water and was silent, having decided to fast to death.'

Chapter 1916(81)

Vaishampayana said, 'The king who was the lord of Manipura sat down, resolved to fast to death. O scorcher of enemies! With his mother, he was overcome with grief on account of his father. At this, Ulupi thought of the *samjivanam* jewel.[329] Devoted to serpents, it presented itself. O Kouravya! The daughter of the king of serpents grasped it and spoke these words, which delighted the minds of the soldiers. “O son! Arise. Jishnu has not been slain by you. He is incapable of being defeated by men and not even by the gods, with Vasava. For the sake of causing pleasure to your illustrious father, Indra among men, I invoked the maya known as Mohini today. O son! Kourava desired to test your strength. O king! That slayer of enemy heroes came here to fight against you in the encounter. O son! It is for his sake that I incited you to fight. O son! O lord! You should not entertain the slightest bit of doubt about your having committed a sin. This man is an immensely energetic rishi. He is eternal and indestructible. O son! Even Shakra is incapable of defeating him in a battle. O lord of the earth! This divine jewel has been summoned by me. Like amrita, it always revives the Indras among serpents when they die. O lord! Place this on your father’s chest. O son! You will again see that Pandava has come back to life.” He had not committed any sin. Thus addressed, he affectionately placed the jewel on his father’s, the infinitely energetic Partha’s, chest. When that jewel was placed, the brave lord Jishnu was revived. Cleansed, the one with the red eyes arose, as if from sleep. The spirited and great-souled one regained his senses and arose. On seeing that his father was well, Babhruvahana worshipped him. O lord! The tiger among men arose and again regained his handsomeness. Delighted in his mind, the chastiser of Paka showered down auspicious and divine flowers from above. Without being struck by anyone, kettledrums were sounded and these made a noise like the thunder of clouds. Great sounds of praise were heard from the sky. The mighty-armed Dhananjaya was restored and arose. He embraced Babhruvahana and inhaled the fragrance of his head. His mother was not very far away, afflicted by grief, and with Ulupi. On seeing her there, Dhananjaya asked, “O slayer of enemies! Why is everyone seen to be sorrowful and miserable on the field of battle? If you know, tell me. Why has your mother come to the battleground? Why has Ulupi, daughter of Indra among the serpents, come here? I know that you fought with me because of my words. However, I wish to know the reason why the women have come here.” Thus asked, the lord of Manipura bowed his head down and said, “O learned one! Let Ulupi be asked.”’

Chapter 1917(82)

'Arjuna asked, "O delighter of the Kourava lineage! Why have you come here? Why is the mother of the lord of Manipura in the field of battle? O daughter of a serpent! I hope you do desire this king's welfare. O one with restless eyes! I hope you do wish for my welfare. O one with the wide hips! O one who is beautiful to see! I hope I, or Babhruvahana, have not caused you any displeasure inadvertently. O beautiful one! Has Chaitravahini Chitrangada, your co-wife, caused you any injury?"'

Vaishampayana continued, 'At this, the daughter of the lord of the serpents laughed and replied, "You, or King Babhruvahana, has not committed any crime. His mother follows my commands, like a servant maid. Listen to how I have brought everything about. You should not display anger towards me. I bow down my head and seek your favours. O Kouravya! O unblemished one! I have done everything to bring you pleasure. O mighty-armed one! O Dhananjaya! Listen to everything. In the Mahabharata war, you slew the king who was Shantanu's son by resorting to adharma. O Partha! My act has freed you from that. O brave one! You did not bring down Bhishma while he was fighting with you. He was slain by you while he was engaged in a duel with Shikhandi. Had you given up your life without pacifying that sin, there is no doubt that because of that wicked deed, you would have descended into hell. Through your son you have now obtained pacification. O lord of the earth! O immensely intelligent one! Earlier, when the Vasus were with Ganga, I heard the Vasus talk about this, when they came to the banks of the Ganga after the king who was Shantanu's son had been slain. Having approached the great river, the gods, the Vasus, bathed there. With Bhagirathi's permission, they then uttered these terrible words. 'This Bhishma, Shantanu's son, has been slain by Savyasachi, though he was not fighting in the battle with him. O beautiful one! He was engaged with someone else. O beautiful one! Because of that reason, we are pronouncing a curse on Arjuna.' She agreed to this. My senses were greatly afflicted and I reported this to my father. On hearing this, he was also plunged in supreme grief. For your sake, on many occasions, my father went to the Vasus and repeatedly tried to seek their favours. They eventually told him, ‘O immensely fortunate one! The lord of Manipura is young. Using his arrows, in the midst of the battle, he will bring him down to the ground. O Indra among serpents! If this is done, he will be freed from the curse.’ He returned and told me about what the Vasus had said. Having heard this from him, I have freed you from the curse. Even the king of the gods is incapable of defeating you in a battle. The son is said to be like one’s own self and you have been vanquished by your own self. O lord! No sin attaches to me. What do you think?” Thus addressed, Vijaya was delighted and said, “O queen! Everything that you have done for me is extremely agreeable.” Having said this, Jaya spoke to his son, the lord of Manipura, while Chitrangada, the daughter-in-law of the Kouravyas, heard. “Yudhishthira’s horse sacrifice will take place in the next month of Chaitra. O king! With your advisers and your mothers, go there.” This is what Partha told King Babhruvahana. With tears in his eyes, the intelligent one replied to his father. “O one who knows about dharma! Because of your command, I will certainly go there. At the great horse sacrifice, I will serve the brahmanas. O slayer of enemies! But to show me your favours, with your wives, please enter your own city.[330] You should not reflect about this. O lord! Without any pain, happily spend one night in your own residence. O supreme among victorious ones! Then follow the horse again.” Thus addressed by his son, Kounteya, the one with the ape on his banner, smiled and replied to Chitrangada’s son. “O mighty-armed one! You know about the initiation I am following now. O large-eyed one! That is the reason I cannot enter the city. This sacrificial horse goes as it wills and I have to follow it. May you be fortunate. I have to depart and there is no place where I can tarry.” The son of Paka’s chastiser was then worshipped in the proper way. Having taken leave of his wives, the supreme one among the Bharata lineage departed.’

Chapter 1918(83)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The horse wandered around the entire earth, up to the frontiers of the ocean. O king! It then returned and headed for the city of Nagasahvya. The energetic one who sported the diadem also returned and followed the horse. Wandering around as it willed, it arrived at the city of

Rajagriha. The king who was Jarasandha's grandson[331] saw that it had arrived in his territory. The brave one was established in the dharma of kshatriyas and decided to issue a challenge for battle. Megasandhi emerged from his city on his chariot, with bow, arrows and a guard for his palms. With foot soldiers, he attacked Dhananjaya. The immensely energetic Megasandhi approached Dhananjaya. O great king! He was childish in his sentiments and spoke without any skill. "O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Why is this horse wandering around, as if in the midst of women? I will seize the horse. Make efforts to free it. When requested to fight, my forefathers may not have treated you properly. I will offer you hospitality. Strike me and I will strike you back." Thus addressed, Pandava laughed and replied, "O king! I must counter those who seek to obstruct me. That is the vow my elder brother has imposed on me. It is certain that you know about this. Strike me to the best of your capacity. There is no anger in me." Thus addressed, the lord of Magadha first struck Pandava. He showered down thousands of arrows, like the thousand-eyed one. O bull among the Bharata lineage! At this, the brave one who was the wielder of Gandiva shot arrows from Gandiva and baffled all the arrows that had been carefully shot. The one with the ape on his banner baffled that torrent of arrows. He then shot blazing arrows that were like serpents with flaming mouths. He shot arrows at the standard, the flagpole, the carriage of the chariot, the horses and all the other parts of the chariot, but not at his body, or at his charioteer. His body was protected by Partha. However, Magadha did not realize this was because of Phalguna and thought that it was due to his own valour. Therefore, he continued to shoot arrows. Struck by Magadha, the brave wielder of Gandiva was as radiant as a giant and blossoming palasha tree[332] during the spring. The bull among Pandavas did not wish to kill Magadha. O Kouravya! That is the reason why he remained successfully stationed within sight of that brave one of the world. However, Savyasachi was enraged and powerfully stretched his bow. He slew his horses and severed his charioteer's head from his body. He affixed a razor-sharp arrow and brought down his great and colourful bow, the guard on his hands, his flag and his standard. The king was distressed. He was without horses and without a bow. His charioteer had been slain. He seized a club and powerfully attacked Kounteya. He then swiftly descended, with a club that was ornamented with gold. However, this was shattered into many fragments with many arrows that were shafted with vulture feathers. The club was shattered and its jeweled joints were broken into one thousand pieces. It fell down, like a she-serpent that has been released. The intelligent Arjuna, foremost in the field of battle, did not wish to attack an adversary who was without a chariot, without a bow and deprived of his club.

‘He comforted the distressed one, who was following the dharma of kshatriyas. The one with the ape on his banner spoke these words of assurance. “O son! Depart. You have displayed enough of the dharma of kshatriyas. O king! Though you are a child, you have exhibited many deeds in this battle. It was Yudhishthira’s instruction that kings should not be killed. O king! Though you have acted against me in the encounter, this is the reason you are still alive.” Magadha thought about what he should do. He approached, joined his hands in salutation and worshipped him. Arjuna comforted him and again said, “In the next month of Chaitra, you should come to the king’s horse sacrifice.” Having been thus addressed, in the proper way, Sahadeva’s son worshipped the horse and Phalguna, best among warriors, and signified his consent. As it willed, the maned animal[333] began to wander along the shores of the ocean, in Vanga, Pundra and Kerala. There were large numbers of many mlechccha soldiers there. O king! Dhananjaya vanquished them with the Gandiva bow.’

Chapter 1919(84)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! After he was worshipped by Magadha, Pandava, with the white horses, followed the horse to the southern direction. Roaming as it willed, the powerful horse returned from there and went to the beautiful city of the Chedis, known as Shuktisahvya.[334] Shishupala’s son, Sharabha, honoured him. Having honoured him and shown him respect first, the immensely strong one then fought against him. O king! After having been worshipped there, the supreme among horses then went to the Kashis, the Andhrakas, the Kosalas, the Kiratas and the Tanganas. Pandava received the appropriate honours there. Kounteya then returned and went to Dasharna. There was a powerful king named Chitrangada there. A terrible battle raged between him and Vijaya. Kiriti, bull among men, subjugated him. He then went to the kingdom of Ekalavya, the king of nishadas. Ekalavya's son received him in an encounter. A battle that made the body hair stand up raged with the nishadas. Kounteya defeated him in the battle. In the encounter, the brave one vanquished the one who sought to create an obstruction to the sacrifice. O great king! After he had been defeated by the son of the chastiser of Paka, the son of the nishada honoured him. He[335] headed towards the south, towards the salty ocean. Battles were fought between Kiriti and the Dravidas, the Andhras, the terrible Mahishakas and the hill-dwelling Kollas there. Subjugating them, the protector of the horse went to Surashtra. He went to Gokarna and then to Prabhasa. Beautiful Dvaravati was there, protected by the brave ones from the Vrishni lineage. The beautiful sacrificial horse of the king of the Kurus arrived there. O king! The young ones from the Yadava lineage sought to use force against the best of horses, but Ugrasena came forward and restrained them. The Vrishnis and the Andhakas emerged from the city. They were with Vasudeva,[336] Arjuna's maternal uncle. Affectionately, and following the proper rites, they met the best among the Kurus. They showed supreme honour to the best among the Bharata lineage. With their permission, he then left, following the horse. The horse went to the western countries, along the ocean. In due course, it wandered around and went to the prosperous land of the five rivers. O Kouravya! From there, the horse went to the kingdom of Gandhara. Followed by Kounteya, it roamed around, as it willed. Shakuni's son continued the earlier enmity and a terrible battle ensued between the king of Gandhara and the great-souled one.'

Chapter 1920(85)

Vaishampayana said, 'Shakuni's brave son, the maharatha among the Gandharas, attacked Gudakesha and surrounded him with a large army of soldiers that was full of elephants, horses and chariots and was decorated with flags and standards. Those warriors were unable to tolerate the death of King Shakuni and with their bows and arrows, attacked Partha. The unvanquished Bibhatsu, with dharma in his soul, spoke to them, but they were not prepared to accept Yudhishthira's beneficial words. Partha first tried to restrain them with words of assurance, but they were intolerant. They surrounded the horse and Pandava became enraged. Pandava severed their blazing heads. Arjuna incessantly shot razor-sharp arrows from Gandiva. Slaughtered by Partha, they were terrified and released the horse. O great king! Afflicted severely by that shower of arrows, they retreated. The heads of the Gandharas were radiant. The energetic bull among the Pandavas aimed towards these and brought down those heads. When the Gandharas were being slain in every direction, the king who was Shakuni's son countered Pandava. Established in the dharma of kshatriyas, the king fought. Partha said, "Because of the king's instructions, I do not wish to kill these kings. O brave one! Desist from fighting. You should not be defeated by me today." However, he was confounded by ignorance and did not accept the words that had been spoken. With arrows, he enveloped the one who was like Shakra in his deeds. With an arrow that was in the shape of a half-moon, Partha fearlessly severed his helmet and conveyed it like Jayadratha's head.[337] On seeing this, all the Gandharas were astounded. They knew that he did not kill their king deliberately. The prince of Gandhara decided that it was time to run away. All of them were frightened and fled, like small animals. Partha swiftly chased them. He severed their heads with broad-headed arrows with drooping tufts. Arrows were released from Gandiva and some of the arrows shot by Partha were thick. They were struck by these arrows and sometimes did not understand that their arms had been sliced off. That army of men, elephants and horses was terrified and routed. Slain and annihilated, it repeatedly circled around. Among those brave ones, there was no one who could stand in front of the performer of fierce deeds. The enemy was brought down and could not withstand those large arrows. At this, the terrified mother of the king of Gandhara came out. The aged minister led the way and they bore a supreme gift before them. Her son was indomitable in battle, but she anxiously restrained him. She sought the favours of Jishnu, unblemished in his deeds. Kounteya honoured her and showed her his favours. He comforted Shakuni's son and spoke these words. "O mighty-armed one! Your intelligence has not made you do what is agreeable to me. O slayer of enemies! O unblemished one! I am your brother, but you fought against me.[338] O king! Remembering the mother, Gandhari, and what Dhritarashtra has done, I have spared your life, though I have slain your followers. Let this not occur again. Let the enmity be pacified. May you not show this kind of intelligence again. In the next month of Chaitra, you should come to the king's horse sacrifice."'

Chapter 1921(86)

Vaishampayana said, 'The horse wandered around as it willed. After saying this, Partha followed it. The horse then returned towards the city of Nagasahvya. Through messengers, Yudhishthira got to know that the horse was returning. He heard that Arjuna was well and was delighted. The king was extremely happy to hear about Vijaya's deeds in the kingdom of Gandhara, as well as in the other countries. At this time, it was the twelfth lunar day in shuklapaksha of Magha.[339] Dharmaraja Yudhishthira discerned that the nakshatras were auspicious. The immensely energetic Kourava summoned all his great-minded brothers, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva. At that time, the supreme among the upholders of dharma spoke these words. The best among eloquent ones specifically addressed Bhima, terrible in his valour. "O Bhimasena! Your younger brother, Arjuna, is arriving with the horse. The men who followed Dhananjaya have reported this to me. The horse is returning and the time for the sacrifice has presented itself. O Vrikodara! The month of Magha is about to end and it will soon be the day of the full moon. Let learned brahmanas who are accomplished in the Vedas leave. For the success of the horse sacrifice, let them seek out a spot for the sacrifice." Thus addressed, Bhima followed the king's instructions. O king! He was delighted to hear that Savyasachi was returning. Bhimasena left with wise architects. He placed brahmanas, who were skilled in the performance of sacrificial rites, ahead of him. Following the ordinances, Kouravya measured out a sacrificial ground. He had it levelled and had houses, palaces and roads constructed. Residences were erected for the officiating priests and the wives and for the sacrificial fire towards the north. In the proper way, everything was laid out with gems and decorated with gold. There were colourful golden pillars and large gates. The sacrificial area was encrusted with pure gold. In the proper way, the one with dharma in his soul had inner quarters constructed and residences for the kings who would come from many countries. There were residences for the brahmanas who would arrive from many countries. Bhima had many such constructed. O great king! On the king's instructions, Bhimasena, unblemished in his deeds, sent messengers to the kings. To do what was agreeable to the lord of the Kurus, those supreme kings arrived. They brought many gems, women, horses and weapons. They were made to reside in those thousands of pavilions. The sound that arose was like the roaring of the ocean and seemed to touch the sky. The king with the redeyes instructed that they should be welcomed with food and drink and beds superhuman in beauty. The mounts were fed different kinds of grain, sugar cane and milk. O tiger among men! Dharmaraja gave such instructions for those who had come. Many sages who knew about the brahman came in large numbers to the intelligent Dharmaraja's great sacrifice. O lord of the earth! All the foremost brahmanas assembled there, with their disciples, and Kourava received them. Abandoning all pride, Yudhishthira himself followed all of them, until they had found the residences earmarked for them. O king! Following the ordinances, after completing everything that was required for the sacrifice, the architects and artisans went and reported this to Dharmaraja. On hearing that everything had been arranged, Dharmaraja praised them all. With his brothers, the undecaying king was delighted.'

Chapter 1922(87)

Vaishampayana said, 'The sacrifice started. Eloquent ones who knew about debating argued and spoke about many kinds of logic, seeking to defeat each other.[340] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! The kings saw the supreme arrangements that had been duly made for the sacrifice by Bhima, as if they had been made by the king of the gods himself. They saw the golden gates and the seats and beds made for relaxing, decorated with large numbers of jewels. There were pots, vessels, jars, jugs and pans. The kings did not see anything there that was not made out of gold. Sacred texts were recited and sacrificial altars set up. These were made of wood, but were adorned with gold. At the right time and following the rites, these radiant altars were consecrated. O lord! The kings saw that all the animals, from the land and from the water, had been brought. There were cattle, buffaloes, aged women, aquatic creatures, predatory beasts and birds. There were those born from wombs, eggs, sweat and plants and herbs. They also saw creatures from the mountainous regions. All the kings saw that the sacrificial arena was full of animals, cattle and grain and were filled with supreme wonder. Large numbers of excellent sweets were prepared for the brahmanas and the vaishyas. More than one hundred thousand brahmanas were fed. Kettledrums were repeatedly struck and made a noise like the roar of clouds. Every day, this sound signified the welcome accorded. In this way, the intelligent Dharmaraja's sacrifice was performed. O king! Piles of food, as large as mountains, were offered. There were tanks of curds and lakes of clarified butter. There are many countries in Jambudvipa. O king! Residents from all of these were seen to come to the king's great sacrifice. There were men from thousands of races. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They received the copious gifts of wealth that were made. The king's servants wore garlands and were adorned in jewels and earrings. They served the hundreds and thousands of foremost of brahmanas. These men followed them around with many kinds of food and drink. They offered food and drink that was fit for kings to the brahmanas.'

Chapter 1923(88)

Vaishampayana said, 'The kings and lords of the earth, knowledgable about the Vedas, arrived. On seeing this, King Yudhishthira spoke to Bhimasena. "Make arrangements for honour to be shown to these tigers among men and lords of the earth. These lords of men deserve to be honoured." O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by the illustrious Indra among men, the greatly energetic Bhimasena, together with the twins, acted in that way. Govinda, supreme among all those who are alive, arrived before Dharma's son with the Vrishnis, placing Baladeva ahead of them. He was also with Yuyudhana, Pradyumna, Gada, Nishatha, Samba and Kritavarma. The mighty-armed Bhima showed them supreme respect too. The bulls among men entered their bejewelled residences. Conversing in Yudhishthira's presence, Madhusudana told him that Arjuna was exhausted because of the many battles. Kounteya repeatedly asked him about that scorcher of enemies and the lord of the universe told Dharmaraja about his brother, Jishnu. “O king! A messenger, a resident of Dvaraka, came to me. He had seen that the best among Pandavas had been exhausted because of numerous battles. O lord! He also said that the mighty-armed one is near. O Kounteya! Now perform the acts that must be undertaken to make the horse sacrifice successful.” Thus addressed, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira replied, “O Madhava! It is through good fortune that Jishnu is returning safely. O descendant of the Yadu lineage! I wish to hear from you whatever has been said about Pandava, foremost among strong ones.” O tiger among kings! Thus addressed, the lord of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, the eloquent one, spoke these words to Yudhishthira, who had dharma in his soul. “O great king! That man reported Partha’s words to me. ‘At the right time, my words should be reported to Yudhishthira and Krishna.[341] All the kings are coming towards Kourava. Since we are capable, it is our task to exhibit many kinds of honour towards them. O one who shows honours![342] However, also convey to the king these words of mine. We should avoid a calamity at the time of offering the arghya.[343] The king must ensure that there is no display of intolerance. O king! Because of enmity between the kings, let the subjects not be destroyed again.’ O Kounteya! These are the words that man reported to me. O king! I will tell you Dhananjaya’s words. Listen. ‘The king who is the lord of Manipura will come to the sacrifice. He is my extremely energetic and beloved son, Babhruvahana. Out of consideration towards me, honour him in the appropriate way. O lord! He has always been devoted towards me and faithful.’ On hearing these words, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira honoured these words. He replied in the following words.”’

Chapter 1924(89)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O Krishna! I have heard your agreeable words. They are indeed words that you should speak. O lord! They are like amrita and gladden my mind. Vijaya has indeed fought many battles with the lords of men, here and there and repeatedly. O Hrishikesha! I have heard that. Vijaya is extremely intelligent. However, it oppresses my mind that Partha is always separated from happiness. What is the mystery behind that? O Varshneya! I always think about Kunti's son.[344] O Krishna! His body possesses all the auspicious marks that are revered. What is the inauspicious mark, because of which, he always suffers misery? That son of Kunti has always borne a disproportionate share of sorrow. I do not see anything on Bibhatsu's body that can be censured. If you think I deserve to hear this, you should explain it to me."'

Vaishampayana said, 'Having been thus addressed, Hrishikesha reflected for a very long time. Vishnu, the extender of the king[345] and the king of Bhoja, replied. "O king! No inauspicious marks can be seen in him, but for the fact that the lion among men has cheekbones that are exceedingly large. That is the reason the tiger among men is perpetually fighting. I do not see any other reason why Jaya should have his share of misery." O lord! Thus addressed by the intelligent Krishna, the foremost among the Kurus told the tiger among the Vrishnis that this was indeed true. However, Krishnaa Droupadi cast a sidelong glance towards Krishna.[346] The slayer of Keshi accepted this as a sign of affection. She was his friend. Dhananjaya was also his friend and like Hrishikesha himself.

'O lord! Bhima and the others, the Kurus and the Yadavas, were delighted on hearing about Dhananjaya's colourful exploits. They began to talk about Arjuna and conversed about the great-souled Vijaya's immortal deeds. At that time, an intelligent man arrived before the best among the Kurus. He bowed down and reported that Arjuna, tiger among men, had arrived. On hearing this, the king's eyes became full of tears of joy. On hearing this agreeable news, he gave him copious amounts of riches. On the second day, a large roar resulted and increased, when the tiger among men, the bearer of the burden of the Pandavas, arrived. A dust was raised from the hooves of the resplendent horse. It had fearlessly returned, as if it was Uchchaihshrava.[347] As he advanced, Arjuna heard many happy words spoken by the men. "It is good fortune that Partha is well. King Yudhishthira is blessed. As the best among horses wandered around, who other than Arjuna could have followed it? The great-souled one has surpassed all the kings, Sagara and the others. We have not heard of any such deed. Nor will any of the lords of the earth be able to accomplish this in the future. The foremost among the Kuru lineage has performed an extremely difficult deed." These were the words, agreeable to the ear, spoken by those men. Hearing this, Phalguna, with dharma in his soul, entered the sacrificial arena. The king and his advisers and Krishna, the descendant of the Yadu lineage, went out to receive him, placing Dhritarashtra at their head. He honoured his father's feet and the intelligent Dharmaraja. He honoured Bhima and the others and embraced Keshava. Having met them and being worshipped duly by them, he worshipped them back. The one with dharma in his soul rested, like a person who has crossed over to the shore. At this time, King Babhruvahana, accompanied by his mothers,[348] came to the intelligent Kuru. He met all the Kurus and was welcomed by all of them. He then entered his grandmother Kunti's supreme residence.'

Chapter 1925(90)

Vaishampayana said, 'As was appropriate, he entered the residence of the Pandavas. In extremely gentle and comforting tones, he greeted his grandmother. The queen Chitrangada and Kouravaya's daughter[349] met Pritha and Krishna with humility. As is proper, they also met Subhadra and the other women of the Kuru lineage. Kunti gave both of them many kinds of jewels. So did Droupadi, Subhadra and the other women. Desiring to do what was agreeable to Partha, Kunti herself honoured the queens[350] and they made themselves comfortable on extremely expensive beds and seats. Babhruvahana, the immensely valorous king, was honoured. Then, following the appropriate rites, he presented himself before King Dhritarashtra. Resorting to humility, the immensely energetic one approached King Yudhishthira and Bhima and the other Pandavas. They affectionately embraced him and following the rites, showed him honours. Delighted, the maharathas gave him large amounts of riches. In that way, the king[351] humbly presented himself before Krishna, the wielder of the chakra and the *gada*, like Pradyumna presenting himself before Govinda. Krishna honoured the king and gave him an extremely expensive chariot that was decorated with gold and was yoked to divine and supreme horses. Dharmaraja, Bhima, the twins and Phalguna separately honoured the one who deserved to be shown respect.

‘On the third day, the sage who was Satyavati’s son,[352] the eloquent one, approached Yudhishthira and spoke these words. “O Kounteya! From today, the time for conducting the sacrifice has arrived. The time for the sacrifice has arrived and the officiating priests are urging us. O Indra among kings! Let arrangements be made for the sacrifice, so that there are no blemishes. Because of the large amount of gold that has been used, this sacrifice will be famous as a golden one. O great king! Let three times the normal dakshina be offered. The brahmanas who have come for the sacrifice deserve to be given three times the norm. O king! You will then obtain three times the merits of a horse sacrifice performed with a large quantity of dakshina. O lord of men! You will be freed from the sin of having slain your kin. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! When you bathe after completing the horse sacrifice, that will be the supreme of the supreme and you will become cleaner than the most clean.” The spirited and infinitely energetic Vyasa spoke in this way. The one with dharma in his soul[353] initiated himself into the horse sacrifice. The king engaged himself in the great horse sacrifice. O king! The officiating priests were knowledgable about the Vedas and performed the rites. They were virtuous and learned and knowledgable about the sacred texts. Everything was performed in the proper way. There were no deviations and nothing was done in an inappropriate way. The bulls among brahmanas did everything, both for what was laid down and what was not laid down.[354] The supreme among brahmanas, knowledgable about dharma, performed the preliminary rites. O king! Following the ordinances, the brahmanas extracted soma juice. O king! The supreme among those who drank soma extracted the soma juice. In due order, they followed the sacred texts and completed the concluding ceremony of the sacrifice. No man who came to the sacrifice remained distressed or poor. There was no one who was hungry, miserable or vulgar. On the instructions of the king, the immensely energetic Bhimasena was always engaged in providing food to those who sought food. The officiating priests skilfully performed all the rites. From one day to another day, they oversaw that all the intentions of the sacred texts were met. Among the officiating priests who were there, there was one who was not intelligent, or did not know the Vedangas. There was no brahmana who did not follow vows, or was incapable of being an instructor.

There was no one who was incapable of speaking. O bull among the Bharata lineage! At the right time, sacrificial stakes were erected—six were made of bilva, six were made of *khadira*[355] and six were made out of *sarvavarnina*.[356] In the sacrifice of the lord of the Kurus, two stakes were made out of *devadaru*.[357] The officiating priests created two out of *shleshmataka*.[358] O bull among men! On Dharmaraja's instructions, Bhima had other golden sacrificial stakes created, but these were purely ornamental. O rajarshi! O Indra among men! These were beautiful, as if the sapatarshis and the other gods had assembled around Vasava in heaven. Golden bricks were used for the *chayana*.[359] The chayana there was as beautiful as Daksha Prajapati's. It has four layers and measured eighteen cubits. It was triangular in shape, in the form of Garuda, and the sides were golden. Following the sacred texts, the learned ones then tied the animals and the birds to the respective stakes, offering each to the appropriate god.[360] After the fire rites had been performed and the sacred texts recited, all the bulls and aquatic creatures were also yoked to the stakes. In the great-souled King Kounteya's sacrifice, three hundred animals were tied to the stakes and there was also the supreme horse. The sacrifice was beautiful, as if large numbers of devarshis were directly present and the place was full of a large number of gandharvas and adorned by large numbers of apsaras. There seemed to be the songs of *kimpurushas* and ornamented with the beauty of kinnaras.[361] In every direction, there were the abodes of successful brahmanas. Supreme among brahmanas, the disciples of Vyasa, the composer of all the sacred texts, were always there. They were accomplished and skilled in all the sacrificial rites. Narada was there and the immensely radiant Tumburu. There were Vishvavasu, Chitrasena and others who were accomplished in singing. The gandharvas were accomplished in singing and skilled in dancing. When there were gaps in the sacrificial rites, they delighted the brahmanas.'

Chapter 1926(91)

Vaishampayana said, 'The supreme among brahmanas followed the rites and sacrificed the animals. Following the sacred texts, the brahmanas then sacrificed the horse. O king! Following the rites, the bulls among the officiating priests then offered it to Drupada's daughter. O king! In the proper way, its parts were offered to the spirited one. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Following the sacred texts, they plucked out the entrails. Again following the sacred texts, they roasted the entrails and anxiously offered them. With his younger brothers, Dharmaraja inhaled the smoke. As is appropriate, this inhalation cleansed them of all sins. O lord of men! Together, the sixteen officiating priests patiently offered the remaining limbs as oblations into the fire. When the sacrifice was completed, the king became as energetic as Shakra. O illustrious one! With his disciples, Vyasa enhanced the king's energy. As is proper, Yudhishthira gave the officiating priests one thousand crores of golden coins. To Vyasa, he gave the entire earth. O king! Having accepted the earth, Vyasa, Satyavati's son, spoke to Yudhishthira, best among the Bharata lineage and with dharma in his soul. "O supreme among kings! I have vested this earth in you. Give me a price for this. Brahmanas always desire riches." With his brother and in the midst of those great-souled kings, the intelligent and great-minded Yudhishthira replied, "In a great horse sacrifice, the earth is said to be the dakshina. I have given away what Arjuna won and obtained for me. O Indras among brahmanas! I will enter the forest. Divide the earth up among yourselves. Following the indications of a *chaturhotra* sacrifice,[362] divide up the earth into four parts. O supreme among sages! I do not wish to take back what belongs to brahmanas. O unblemished ones! With my brothers, this has always been my view." When he said this, his brothers and Droupadi also signified their assent. These replies made the body hair stand up. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! At this, there were words of praise from an invisible voice in the sky. In loud tones, the large number of brahmanas also praised this. In the midst of the brahmanas, the sage Dvaipayana agreed to these words and honoured them. However, he again said, "You gave it to me. But I am giving it back to you. Give gold to the brahmanas and let the earth be yours." Vasudeva then spoke to Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. "You should act as the illustrious Vyasa has said." Thus addressed, the best of the Kuru lineage and his brothers were delighted in their minds. They gave away crores and crores of coins, so that it was three times the normal dakshina at a sacrifice. In this world, no other man will be able to accomplish what that lion among Kurus did, following Marutta. The lord Krishna Dvaipayana accepted those riches. The learned one divided this into four parts and gave it to the officiating priests. Having given away the gold, Yudhishthira bought the earth back. He was cleansed of his sins and conquered heaven. With his brothers, he was delighted. The officiating priests were satisfied with this collection of gold. According to desire and according to capacity, they divided this among the brahmanas. With Yudhishthira's permission, all the golden ornaments that were there in the sacrificial arena, the gates, the stakes, the pots, the vessels and the bricks—all these were divided among the brahmanas. After the brahmanas got what they wanted of the riches, it was the turn of the kshatriyas, the large numbers of vaishyas and shudras and the other tribes of mlechchhas. It took a long period of time to divide up the gold there. All the brahmanas were delighted and returned to their abodes. The great-souled Dharmaraja satisified them with riches.

'The illustrious and immensely radiant Vyasa respectfully gave his own share of that great amount of gold to Kunti. At having obtained this from her father-in-law, she was delighted. Pritha used it to perform great and auspicious deeds in this world. After the sacrifice, the king and his brothers bathed and were cleansed of their sins. He was resplendent, like the great Indra among the gods. The Pandavas were surrounded by the assembled kings. O great king! They were as resplendent as planets among large numbers of stars. They gave away many kinds of jewels to the kings and elephants, horses, ornaments, women, garments and gold. Having given away that large amount of riches, in the congregation of those kings, King Partha was as beautiful and radiant as Vaishravana. He summoned the brave King Babhruvahana. He gave him a large amount of riches and granted him permission to return home. O bull among kings! He cheerfully instated the child who was Duhshala's grandson in his own kingdom, the one over which his forefathers had ruled. In different categories, all the kings had been honoured. Having expressed their subjugation to Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, they departed. Thus, the intelligent Dharmaraja's sacrifice was performed. There were copious quantities of riches and jewels. There were oceans of sura and maireya.[363] There were lakes where clarified butter made up the mud. There were many mountains of food. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The mire and the banks were made up of many kinds of tasty food. Many kinds of sweetmeats were prepared and eaten. No end could be seen to the number of animals that were sacrificed. There were young women who were intoxicated and maddened. They danced in delight. With the sounds of drums and conch-shells, it was enchanting. Through day and night, there were incessant exclamations of “give” and “eat”. It was like a great festival and large numbers of people were happy. Men who came from many different countries continued to talk about this. The best among the Bharata lineage showered torrents of wealth, objects of desire, gems and riches. He was cleansed of his sins. Successful, he entered the city.’

Chapter 1927(92)

Janamejaya said, ‘If there was anything wonderful in the sacrifice of Dharma’s intelligent son, my grandfather, you should tell me about it.’ Vaishampayana replied, ‘O tiger among kings! Hear about a great wonder. O lord! This occurred after the great horse sacrifice was over. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The best among brahmanas, relatives, kin, friends, the distressed, the blind and the helpless were gratified. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The great gifts were being spoken about in every direction. Showers of flowers rained down on Dharmaraja’s head. O unblemished one! A mongoose that was golden along one flank emerged from its hole. O lord of the earth! It spoke in a voice that resembled the vajra and thunder. Because of the roar it uttered, it terrified all the animals and birds. That proud hole dweller spoke in a human voice. “O lord of men! This sacrifice is not equal to a little bit of coarse ground meal[364] given away by a person who resided in Kurukshetra and followed the conduct of unchha.” O lord of the earth! On hearing the words of the mongoose, all the bulls among brahmanas were overcome by great wonder. The brahmanas approached the mongoose and asked, “From where have you come to this sacrifice, attended by the virtuous? What is your greatest strength? What is the learning you resort to? You are censuring this sacrifice, but what do you know? Without any deviation, all the rites have been observed in the sacrifice that has been performed. Everything has been according to the sacred texts. Everything has been proper. Everything that needs to be done has been done. Using the insight of the sacred texts and following the rites, everyone who deserves to be worshipped has been honoured here. Without any malice, oblations sanctified by mantras have been offered into the fire. With many kinds of gifts, the bulls among brahmanas have been satisfied here. The kshatriyas have been satisfied with excellent battles. The ancestors have been satisfied with funeral rites. The vaishyas have been satisfied with protection and the best of women have been satisfied through their desires having been met. The shudras have been satisfied through kind words and the others who are left have been satisfied with the remnants of gifts. The kin and relatives have been satisfied by the purity of our king’s behavior. The gods have got sacred oblations and those who sought refuge have been granted protection. Therefore, speak to these brahmanas, who are devoted to the truth. The brahmanas who desire to know have asked you about what is in the sacred texts and about what has been seen. You seem to be wise and you are radiant in your celestial form. Your words should be respectfully heard. The brahmanas have assembled here and you should tell them the truth.” Thus asked by the brahmanas, the mongoose laughed and replied, “O brahmanas! The words I have spoken are not false. Nor have I spoken out of insolence. Everything that I have said has been heard by you. The sacrifices performed by kings are not equal to a little bit of coarse ground meal being given by a person who resided in Kurukshetra, resorting to the vow of unchha. O bulls among brahmanas! I should indeed tell you about this. O bulls among brahmanas! Listen single-mindedly to what I tell you. I felt and saw something extraordinary. This is about a person who resided in Kurukshetra, resorting to the vow of unchha. That brahmana obtained heaven, with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. Because of what transpired, one half of my body turned golden.”’

Chapter 1928(93)

‘The mongoose said, “O brahmanas! I will soon tell you about the supreme fruits of gifts. That brahmana donated only a trifle, obtained through lawful means. There are many who know about dharma who have resided in the sacred area of Kurukshetra. In earlier times, this brahmana lived there, following unchha and dwelling like a pigeon.[365] He lived with his wife, son and daughter-in-law and engaged in austerities. The daughter-in-law was thus the fourth. The aged one was devoted to dharma and was in control of his senses. The brahmana was excellent in his vows and with them, ate at the sixth hour.[366] There were some occasions when there was nothing to be had at the sixth hour. In such cases, that supreme among brahmanas would fast for the day and eat at the sixth hour of the next day. He followed the dharma of pigeons. There happened to be a terrible famine. Listen. There was nothing for the brahmana and he had not stored up anything. The collection of herbs and plants and all other objects was destroyed. When the time for eating arrived, there was no food to be had. All of them were afflicted by hunger, but managed to survive. On one occasion, it was midday and the sun was scorching down. It was shuklapaksha and the brahmana was engaged in unchha.[367] He suffered from the heat and from hunger. But nevertheless, he resorted to that austerity. With his family, he sought to obtain something through unchha. Though he was hungry, following the rituals, he touched water. That supreme among brahmanas spent the time, holding up his life with difficulty. One day, at the sixth hour, he obtained a *prastha* of barley.[368] The ascetic converted that prastha of barley into saktu. Following the rites, they performed their ablutions and offered oblations into the fire. The ascetic divided up the prastha into one *kudava* each. As they were about to eat, a guest came to the brahmana's house. On seeing the guest, they were delighted. They cheerfully welcomed the guest and asked him questions about his welfare. They were pure in their minds, self-controlled and full of faith and restraint. They were without malice, having cast aside their anger. They were virtuous and without jealousy. O supreme among brahmanas! They were knowledgable about dharma, had renounced and had conquered their anger. They respectively informed the guest about their own brahmacharya and gotra. They asked the hungry guest to enter their cottage. 'This arghya is for you. This is the padya. O unblemished one! This is the seat of kusha grass. O lord! This is pure saktu, obtained through fair means. O fortunate one! O supreme among brahmanas! We are giving this to you. Please accept it.' Having been thus addressed, the brahmana accepted a kudava of saktu. O Indra among kings! But after having eaten it, his hunger was not satisfied. The one who resorted to unchha could see that the brahmana's hunger was still not satisified. He began to think about what other food could be offered, so as to ensure satisfaction. O king! At this, his wife said, 'Let my share also be given to him. Let the supreme among brahmanas be satisfied. He can then go wherever he wills.' The bull among brahmanas was thus addressed by the virtuous lady. The one with dharma in his soul knew that she was hungry and did not approve of giving away her share of saktu. He was aged and learned and knew that she was afflicted by hunger. The ascetic lady was exhausted and distressed. Consisting only of skin and bones, she was trembling. He spoke to his wife. 'O beautiful one! Even worms, insects and animals protect and sustain their wives. You should not speak in this way. A man is driven by compassion and protects and sustains a woman. A man who does not do so is dislodged from blazing prosperity and does not obtain the worlds.' Thus addressed, she replied, 'O brahmana! We are united in pursuing dharma and artha. Be pleased with me and accept one fourth of the prastha of saktu. O supreme among brahmanas! For women, truth, intercourse, dharma, heaven, the acquisition of qualities and everything desired is dependent on the husband. The mother provides the season, the father provides the seed. But the supreme divinity is the husband. It is through the favours of the husband that women obtain sexual intercourse and the fruit of a son. You are my husband because you protect me.[369] You are my husband because you sustain me.[370] You have granted me a boon because you have given me a son. Therefore, accept the saktu from me. You are overcome by old age. You are aged. You are afflicted by hunger. You are extremely weak. You are exhausted because of the fasting. You are also suffering.' Thus addressed, he accepted the saktu and spoke these words. 'O brahmana! O excellent one! Please accept some more saktu.' The brahmana accepted and ate it, but was still not satisfied. The one who had resorted to the vow of unchha noticed this and began to think.

'"The son said, 'O excellent one! Take my share of saktu and give it to the brahmana. I think that this will be a good deed. Therefore, we should do it. O supreme among brahmanas! I must make every effort to sustain you. Virtuous ones desire that aged fathers must be nurtured. O brahmana rishi! The sacred texts are famous in the three worlds. For the son, it is recommended that the father must be maintained in old age. You are capable of undertaking austerities only through remaining alive. For those who have bodies, sustaining the life in the body is supreme dharma.’[371]

‘“The father replied, ‘Even if you are one thousand years old, it is my view that you will still be a child before me. After having a son, a father obtains success through him. O lord! I know that hunger is an extremely strong force in children. I am aged and can sustain myself. O son! But you need to be strong. O son! I am old and aged and hunger does not obstruct me. For a long time, I have tormented myself through austerities. I am not frightened of death.’

‘“The son said, ‘I am your offspring. I am your son because the sacred texts make me known as a *putra*.[372] It has been said that a son is like one’s own self. Therefore, using your own self, save your own self.’

‘“The father replied, ‘You are like me in form, conduct and self-control. I have tested you on several occasions. Therefore, I will accept the saktu.’”

‘The mongoose continued, “Having said this, the supreme among brahmanas happily accepted the saktu and smilingly, gave it to the brahmana. But despite eating the saktu, he was not satisfied. The supreme among brahmanas, who had resorted to the vow of unchha, was ashamed. The virtuous daughter-in-law was standing there, wishing to ensure the welfare of the brahmana. She cheerfully gathered up her saktu and addressed her senior in these words. ‘O brahmana! I will obtain a son through your son. Therefore, accept this saktu from me and give it to the guest. Through your offspring, I will obtain worlds without decay and having gone there, I will not sorrow. Your grandson will be generated through him. Dharma is based on three fires and it has three components now.[373] The son, the grandson and the great-grandson are the three who ensure heaven without decay. We have heard it said in the sacred texts that it is because of the act of saving a father that a son is known as putra. Through sons and grandsons, one always obtains worlds meant for the virtuous.’

‘“The father-in-law replied, ‘Your limbs have become emaciated because of the wind and the heat. You can be seen to be pale. O one who is excellent in vows! Your senses are distracted because of hunger. How can I accept your saktu and cause violence to dharma? O fortunate one! Devote yourself to fortunate conduct. You should not speak in this way. You are devoted to your vows. You show good conduct and purity. The sixth hour has come. You have resorted to hard vows. You have been fasting. How can I not notice this? You are a child. You are afflicted by hunger. You are a woman and I must always protect you. You are exhausted through fasting. You are the one who delights my relatives.'

'"The daughter-in-law said, 'You are my senior's senior. You are the god of my god. O lord! Since you are the god of my god, accept this saktu from me. The body, life and dharma are meant for providing service to a senior. O brahmana! Through your favours, I will obtain many desired worlds. O brahmana! Look towards me. I am firm in my devotion. Thinking about me in this way, you should give away the saktu.'

'"The father-in-law replied, 'O virtuous one! Because of this, you will always be radiant in your good conduct. You follow the vows of dharma and always look towards the conduct of your seniors. O daughter-in-law! Therefore, I should not deprive you and will accept this saktu. O immensely fortunate one! You will be reckoned among those who are supreme among the upholders of dharma.'"

'The mongoose continued, "Having said this, he accepted the saktu and gave it to the brahmana. The brahmana was satisfied at the conduct of that virtuous and great-souled one. Cheerfully, he spoke these words to that bull among brahmanas. That eloquent bull among brahmanas was actually Dharma in the form of a man. 'O supreme among brahmanas! I am pleased with you, at your purity, generosity in carefully giving what was obtained through lawful means, according to your capacity. This gift of yours is being praised in heaven by the residents of heaven. Behold. Flowers are being showered down from the sky and are falling down on the ground. The rishis in heaven, the gods, the gandharvas and the messengers of the gods, with the gods at the forefront, are praising you, astounded at your gift. O bull among brahmanas! The brahmana rishis, located on celestial vehicles, have come here from Brahma's world, with a desire to see you. Go to heaven. All your ancestors, who have gone to the world of the ancestors, have been saved, for many yugas that have still not come. O brahmana! Go to heaven because of your brahmacharya, sacrifices, donations, austerities and the following of dharma without deceit. You have resorted to supreme devotion and have observed austerities and excellent vows.

O supreme among the best of brahmanas! That is the reason the gods are delighted with you. With a pure consciousness, you gave up everything now, in a time of hardships. Through your deeds, you have conquered heaven. Hunger destroys wisdom and drives away dharma and intelligence. Hunger overcomes knowledge and destroys fortitude. A person who defeats hunger, certainly conquers heaven. As long as one is inclined towards generosity, dharma does not suffer. You ignored the affection towards the son. You ignored the affection towards the wife. You did not pay cognizance to thirst and recognized that dharma was superior. For men, the acquisition of objects is minor. Donating it to an appropriate recipient is superior. A donation at the right time is superior and devotion is superior to that.[374] The gate to heaven is extremely subtle and because of confusion, men do not see it. The bar to heaven has greed as its seed. That bar is kept protected by attachment, which is extremely difficult to overcome. There are men who can see the truth. They have conquered their anger and have subjugated their senses. These are brahmanas who are engaged in austerities and donate to the best of their capacity. A person who is capable of giving away a thousand, but gives away a hundred; a person who is capable of giving away a hundred, but gives away ten; and a person who has nothing, but is only capable of giving away water—it has been said in the sacred texts that the fruits obtained by all these are equal. O brahmana! When he possessed nothing, King Rantideva gave away a little bit of water with a pure mind and went to the vault of heaven. O son![375] Dharma is not pleased with the fruits from giving a large amount of donations. He is instead satisfied with a little bit that has been obtained through lawful means and is given with faith and purity. King Nriga gave away thousands of cows to brahmanas. However, because he gave away one cow that did not belong to him, he went to hell. King Shibi, Ushinara’s son, gave away flesh from his own body. He was excellent in his vows. He obtained the auspicious worlds and rejoiced in heaven. Virtuous men are radiant because of the auspicious objects they have obtained themselves, according to their capacity. O brahmana! They don’t obtain this through the rituals of sacrifices, but through the stores that have been lawfully earned. Anger destroys the fruits of donations. A greedy person does not go to heaven. Heaven is obtained through lawful conduct, austerities and donations. The fruits that have been obtained by you are equal to those obtained through many royal sacrifices, at which copious amounts of dakshina are given, and many horse sacrifices. O unblemished one! You have won Brahma's world through a prastha of saktu. O brahmana! As you wish, go to Brahma's abode and be resplendent there. O best among brahmanas! A celestial vehicle has appeared. As you desire, all of you ascend it.

O brahmana! Look at me. I am Dharma. You have purified your body. In this world, your fame will be eternal. Go to heaven with your wife, with your son and with your daughter-in-law.' When he was addressed by Dharma in these words, the brahmana ascended the vehicle. He went to heaven with his wife, with his son and with his daughter-in-law. That brahmana went to heaven with his son, with his daughter-in-law and with his wife as the fourth. When the one who knew about dharma had departed, I emerged from my hole. There was the smell of the saktu, which had formed some mud with the water. There were the celestial flowers, mixed with the barley that had been given. Because of all this and the austerities of the brahmana, my head turned golden. O brahmanas! Because of the trifling donation given by the one who was devoted to the truth, one half of my body turned into gold. Behold the extremely great austerities of that intelligent one. O brahmanas! Repeatedly, I cheerfully went to the sacrifices performed in hermitages, hoping that the other half of my body would also turn to gold. I heard about the sacrifice performed here by the intelligent king of the Kurus. I was extremely hopeful. But I have not been turned into gold. O supreme among brahmanas! That is the reason I spoke those words and laughed. This sacrifice is in no way comparable to the one that involved the giving away of one prastha of saktu. With the grains in that prastha of saktu, I was turned into gold. This great sacrifice is not equal to that. This is my view."'

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! At that sacrifice, having said this to the supreme of brahmanas, the mongoose disappeared and the brahmanas returned to their houses. O conqueror of enemy cities! In this way, I have told you everything that happened, including the wonderful event at the great horse sacrifice. O king! You should never be astounded at any sacrifice. Through austerities alone, thousands of rishis have gone to heaven. It has been held that lack of injury towards all beings, contentment, good conduct, uprightness, austerities, self-control, truthfulness and donations are also equal.'[376]

Chapter 1929(94)

Janamejaya said, ‘Kings are addicted to sacrifices and maharshis are addicted to austerities. O lord! Brahmanas base themselves on tranquility, peacefulness and self-control. Therefore, there is nothing in this world that is equal to the fruits of sacrifices. This is my intelligence and there is no doubt about this. O supreme among brahmanas! Many kings have performed sacrifices. They have obtained fame in this world and, after death, have gone to heaven. The king of the gods, the one with one thousand eyes, performed sacrifices and gave away a lot of dakshina. The immensely energetic lord obtained the entire kingdom of heaven. In that way, King Yudhishthira, with Bhima and Arjuna at the forefront, used their valour to obtain a prosperity that was equal to that of the king of the gods. Therefore, why did the mongoose censure the sacrifice, the great horse sacrifice that the great-souled king performed?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O bull among men! I will tell you about the fruits of sacrifices, but I will first tell you about the rites. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I will tell you. Listen. All the maharshis have said that, on an earlier occasion, Shakra performed a sacrifice. The officiating priests anxiously performed all the acts associated with the rituals of a sacrifice. The *hotri*, possessing all the qualities, poured oblations into the fire. The supreme rishis were there and the gods were summoned. O king! The brahmanas were extremely learned and recited agreeable chants. The bulls among the *udhvaryus* were not exhausted and chanted softly. O great king! It then became the time to sacrifice the animals and the maharshis were overcome with compassion. The rishis, rich in austerities, were distressed on seeing the animals. They approached Shakra and said, “This kind of ritual in a sacrifice is not auspicious. You desire great dharma, but this displays ignorance. O Purandara! It is not seen that the rituals of a sacrifice involve the slaughter of a large number of animals. O lord! What you have set out to do involves a destruction of dharma. This is not dharma. This is not an act of dharma. Violence is not said to be dharma. If you so desire, let the sacrifice be performed in accordance with the sacred texts. If one follows the ordinances indicated for a sacrifice, great dharma will be ensured. O one with the one thousand eyes! Perform the sacrifice with seeds that have been stored for three years. O Shakra! This will be great dharma. Think about this and understand.” The rishis knew about the truth and spoke these words. However, overcome by pride and delusion, Shatakratu did not accept them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! A great dispute arose between Shakra and the maharshis, about whether sacrifices should be performed with animate or inanimate objects.

‘The rishis knew about the truth and were distressed at this dispute. They had an agreement with Shakra that they would go and ask King Vasu. “O fortunate one! O king! What have the sacred texts said about sacrifices? Should a sacrifice be performed with slaughter of animals or with herbs and juices?” On hearing these words, he reflected about the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. The king replied, “A sacrifice can be performed with whatever is available.” Having said this, the king entered the nether regions. O king! The lord who was the king of the Chedis suffered this hardship because of having uttered a falsehood. A learned person who desires dharma should not perform a sacrifice with an object that has been obtained unlawfully. The fruits of dharma are not reaped from this. Donations may be made to brahmanas by a man who is evil-souled. This is deceitful dharma and leads to people distrusting him. A brahmana may resort to wicked deeds and obtain riches. He may be overcome by uncontrolled attachment and confusion. However, eventually, he attains a vile end. A wicked person may be devoid of intelligence and may give away a lot of donations. But he doesn’t realize the essence and is destroyed. There may be an evil-souled person who is attached to adharma and is violent. That evil-minded person does not obtain any fame through his gifts, in this world or in the next. Having become overcome by greed and delusion, one’s intelligence may turn to accumulation. Because of evil intelligence, such a person may oppress beings and indulge in violence. Riches obtained through greed may be given away in sacrifices. However, it is extremely difficult for those deeds to lead to any success. There are those who are rich in austerities. They give away what has been obtained through unchha—roots, fruits, herbs, water and leaves. These men follow dharma. Having given away these gifts, they go to heaven. There is great dharma in renunciation, donations, compassion towards beings, brahmacharya, truthfulness, lack of anger, fortitude and forgiveness. This is eternal dharma and this is the eternal foundation. We have heard of brahmanas and kings like Vishvamitra in earlier times. Vishvamitra, Asita, King Janaka, Kakshasena, Arshtishena, King Sindhudvipa—these and many others obtained supreme success. The kings and those rich in austerities resorted to truth and gave away what was lawfully obtained. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras who resort to austerities and purify themselves in the fire of dharma and donations, go to heaven.'

Chapter 1930(95)

Janamejaya said, 'O illustrious one! If everything can be obtained through following dharma and renunciation, you should tell me everything about it. You are accomplished in speaking. Great fruits were obtained by the one who lived by the vow of unchha, by giving away saktu. O brahmana! You have spoken to me about it. But I suffer from a great doubt. What is definitely supreme among all kinds of sacrifices? O bull among brahmanas! You should tell me everything about this.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'O scorcher of enemies! In this connection, an ancient history is recounted about what happened in earlier times, in Agastya's great sacrifice. O great king! In earlier times, there was the greatly energetic Agastya. He was engaged in the welfare of all beings. He initiated himself into a sacrifice that would last for twelve years. Many hotris came to the great-souled one's sacrifice and they were like the fire. They ate roots. Some did not eat. Others were *ashmakuttas*.[377] Still others subsisted on rays. There were *parighrishtikas*, *vaighasikas* and *samprakshalas*. There were many mendicants and those who lived on alms who were present. All of them had conquered their anger and vanquished their senses. They had directly experienced dharma. All of them based themselves on self-control. They were devoid of insolence and confusion. They were always based on pure conduct and were never constrained by their senses. Those maharshis were worshipped at that sacrifice and ate. To the best of his capacity, the illustrious one[378] offered food that had been properly earned. Nothing at that sacrifice was not of this nature. In this way, there were many other great sages who performed similar sacrifices.

‘O supreme among the Bharata lineage! While Agastya’s great sacrifice was going on, the thousand-eyed one did not shower down. O king! During gaps in the great-souled Agastya’s sacrifice, the sages, cleansed in their souls, conversed about this. “This Agastya is conducting a sacrifice. However, when he is offering the food, it suffers from malice. If Parjanya does not rain down, how will there be food? O brahmanas! The sage’s great sacrifice will go on for twelve years. The god will also not shower down for twelve years. O intelligent maharshis! Think about this. You should show some compassion for Agastya, whose austerities are great.” Agastya was powerful and eloquent. On hearing these words, he bowed his head down and gratified those sages. He replied in these words. “If Vasava does not shower down for twelve years, I will follow the eternal rituals and perform a mental sacrifice. If Vasava does not shower down for twelve years, I will make great efforts and perform other sacrifices with great vows. I have collected the seeds for this sacrifice over many years. I will accomplish tasks with these seeds and there will be no obstruction to that. Under no circumstance, is anyone capable of rendering my sacrifice unsuccessful. This is regardless of whether the god rains, or the god does not rain. Indeed, if Indra does not act in accordance with what I wish, I will myself become Indra and revive the subjects. Every creature will obtain the food that he is used to. I will specially do this, again and again. Let gold arrive here today and all the riches that are extremely difficult to obtain. Let everything in the three worlds arrive here, of its own accord. Let large numbers of divine apsaras come and gandharvas and kinnaras. Let Vishvavasu and all the others who are always worshipped come here. Let all the riches that exist in Uttara Kuru arrive at this sacrifice on their own. Let heaven and all those who reside in heaven come. Let Dharma himself come.” Thus addressed by the intelligent one, everything arrived.

‘The sages witnessed the strength of the sage’s austerities. They were astounded and spoke words that were full of great meaning. “We are pleased at your words, but we do not wish that your austerities should be diminished.[379] We have initiated ourselves in a sacrifice where we are only looking for oblations. We desire a sacrifice that we can undertake ourselves. There is nothing else that we are looking for. We are engaged in our own tasks and subsist on what is obtained through lawful means. We pray in the proper way, follow the Vedas and observe brahmacharya. After having spent a period of following the law, we have emerged from our houses. We wish to follow the rituals instructed by dharma. We wish to torment ourselves through those kinds of austerities. You should properly instruct that one's intelligence must always turn away from violence. O lord! You must always speak about sacrifices that involve no violence. O supreme among the best of brahmanas! We will be pleased at this. After the sacrifice is over, we will take our leave from you and depart." While they were conversing, the extremely energetic Purandara, the king of the gods, showered down, having witnessed the strength of his austerities. O Janamejaya! Until the sacrifice of that infinitely valorous one was over, Indra of the gods showered down the rain that was desired. O rajarshi! Placing Brihaspati before him, the lord of the gods himself arrived there and gratified Agastya. When the sacrifice was over, Agastya was extremely delighted. Following the prescribed rites, he worshipped the great sages and gave them permission to leave.'

Chapter 1931(96)

Janamejaya asked, 'Who was the mongoose with a golden head? Who was the one who spoke in a human voice? I am asking you. Tell me.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'You did not ask me earlier. That is the reason I did not tell you. Hear about the mongoose, the one who spoke in a human voice. In ancient times, Jamadagni thought of a funeral ceremony. The cow for the oblations appeared before him and he milked her himself. He placed the milk in a new, firm and pure vessel. Krodha[380] adopted a personified form and entered the vessel. He wished to test what the best among sages would do if something disagreeable was done. Having thought this and driven by this wicked intelligence, he corrupted the milk. But the sage knew that this was Krodha and wasn't enraged. At this, Krodha showed his form to him and stood, hands joined in salutation. "O foremost among the Bhrigu lineage! It is said that the Bhrigus are extremely prone to rage. But I have been conquered by you. People are wrong in their slander. I have been defeated by you. O great-souled one! I am stationed before you now. Forgive me. O virtuous one! I am frightened of your austerities. O lord! Show me your favours.” Jamadagni replied, “O Krodha! I have seen you in your personified form. Without any anxiety, depart. You have not caused me any injury today and there is no rage in me. I kept this milk with the resolution that I would offer it to the immensely fortunate ancestors. Go to them and ascertain what they want.” Thus addressed, fear was generated in him and he[381] disappeared. Cursed by the ancestors, he became a mongoose. He sought their favours, so that the curse might end. They told him, “When you speak ill of dharma, you will be freed.” Thus addressed, he wandered in places where sacrifices were performed and in forests, censuring dharma. It was thus that he came to this sacrifice. He censured Dharma’s son by mentioning the prastha of saktu. Yudhishthira was Dharma’s self and thus Krodha was freed from the curse. This is what transpired at the great-souled one’s sacrifice. While we looked on, the mongoose vanished.’

This concludes Ashvamedhika Parva.

Ashrama-Vasika Parva

In the 18-parva classification, Ashrama-Vasika Parva is the 15th. In the 100-parva classification, Ashrama-Vasika Parva consists of Sections 90 to 92. Ashrama means a forest and Ashrama-Vasika Parva is about residing in a hermitage in the forest. This parva has 47 chapters. In the numbering of the chapters in Ashrama-Vasika Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Ashrama-Vasika Parva.

Section Ninety

Ashrama-Vasa Parva

This section has 737 shlokas and 35 chapters.

Chapter 1932(1): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1933(2): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1934(3): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1935(4): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1936(5): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1937(6): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1938(7): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1939(8): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1940(9): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1941(10): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1942(11): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1943(12): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1944(13): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1945(14): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1946(15): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1947(16): 27 shlokas
Chapter 1948(17): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1949(18): 12 shlokas
Chapter 1950(19): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1951(20): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1952(21): 13 shlokas
Chapter 1953(22): 32 shlokas
Chapter 1954(23): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1955(24): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1956(25): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1957(26): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1958(27): 16 shlokas
Chapter 1959(28): 16 shlokas

Chapter 1960(29): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1961(30): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1962(31): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1963(32): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1964(33): 37 shlokas
Chapter 1965(34): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1966(35): 25 shlokas

> *Ashrama-Vasa Parva means more or less the same as Ashrama-Vasika Parva. A bit more accurately, Ashrama-Vasika means residents of the forest, while Ashrama-Vasa means residence in the forest. Dhritarashtra, Gandhari, Sanjaya, Vidura and Kunti leave for the forest. Vidura dies and merges into Yudhishthira.*

Chapter 1932(1)

Janamejaya asked, 'After having obtained the kingdom, how did the immensely fortunate Pandavas, my grandfathers, act towards the great-souled and great king, Dhritarashtra? The king's advisers and sons had been slain. He was without a refuge. With the prosperity gone, what did the illustrious Gandhari do? How long did my great-souled forefathers and ancestors remain in that kingdom? You should tell me this in detail.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'With the enemy slain, the great-souled Pandavas obtained the kingdom. Placing Dhritarashtra at their head, they protected the earth. Vidura, Sanjaya and the intelligent Kourava Yuyutsu, the son of a vaishya lady, tended to Dhritarashtra. Before undertaking any task, the Pandavas asked the king and obtained his permission. They did this for fifteen years. Those brave ones always went to the king and worshipped him. Acting according to the views of Dharmaraja, they touched his feet. Before they engaged in any task, he inhaled the fragrances of their heads. Kuntibhoja's daughter[1] also followed Gandhari. So did Droupadi, Subhadra and the other Pandava women. They followed the rites in attending to them, as if they were their own father-in-law and mother-in-law. O great king! Yudhishthira presented Dhritarashtra with extremely expensive beds, garments, ornaments, everything that should be given to a king and large quantities of food and objects of pleasure. Kunti acted in the same way towards Gandhari, treating her like a senior. Vidura, Sanjaya and Kourava Yuyutsu tended to the aged king, whose sons had been slain. Drona's brother-in-law, Kripa, the great archer and beloved and great brahmana, also attended on him. The illustrious Vyasa always dwelt with the king. O king! He told him accounts of the ancient rishis, devarshis and rakshasas. On Dhritarashtra's instructions, Vidura undertook many kinds of tasks and rites that were in conformity with dharma. Because of Vidura's influence, they obtained riches, large and small, from vassal kingdoms and were loved by them. Those who were imprisoned were freed. Those identified for capital punishment were also freed. With dharma in his soul, the king never said anything about this.[2] When Ambika's son[3] went out on a pleasure trip, the immensely energetic king of the Kurus, Yudhishthira, gave him every object of pleasure. As in earlier times, cooks, chefs[4] and confectioners served King Yudhishthira. As is proper, the Pandavas offered Dhritarashtra extremely expensive garments and many kinds of garlands. As was the case earlier, he was given maireya liquor, meat, light beverages and wonderfully concocted food. Lords of the earth assembled on every side. As in earlier times, all of them served the Indra among the Kouravas.[5] Kunti, Droupadi, the beautiful Satvati,[6] Ulupi, the naga princess, the queen Chitrangada, Dhrishtaketu's sister and Jarasandha's daughter[7]—all of them served Subala's daughter[8] like servants. Yudhishthira's perpetual instruction to his brothers was that the king should not suffer the slightest bit of misery because of being deprived of his sons. All of them paid special attention to Dharmaraja's purposeful words and acted according to them, with the sole exception of Bhima. The evil intelligence and conduct of the sons of Dhritarashtra at the time of the gambling match were still lodged in the brave one's heart.'

Chapter 1933(2)

Vaisampayana said, 'The king who was Ambika's son was thus worshipped by the Pandavas. He found pleasure, as in earlier times, and the rishis tended to him. The king who was Kunti's son, the extender of the Kuru lineage, gave everything that should be given to brahmanas. King Yudhishthira was affectionate and non-violent. The lord of the earth told his brothers and advisers, "The lord of men[9] must be worshipped by me and you. A person who follows Dhritarashtra's instructions is my well-wisher. A man who acts contrary to this is an enemy and will go to hell." At the time of performing the funeral ceremonies for his sons, it was instructed that everything that the king[10] desired should be given. The immensely intelligent Kouravya, King Dhritarashtra, gave brahmanas great quantities of riches, just as they deserved. Dharmaraja, Bhima, Savyasachi and the twins—all of them followed Dhritarashtra's instructions. How could the aged king suffer grief on account of his sons? They wished to ensure that he did not die because of grief. They made sure that the foremost among the Kurus obtained all the objects of pleasure that he enjoyed as long as his sons were alive. Together, all the five Pandava brothers followed this good conduct and obeyed Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra saw that those brave ones were humble and always behaved with modesty. He was like a preceptor surrounded by disciples. Gandhari performed all kinds of funeral ceremonies for her sons and freed herself of her debt towards them, giving to brahmanas. In this way, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira, intelligent and foremost among those who upheld dharma, together with his brothers, worshipped the king.'

Chapter 1934(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'The extremely energetic and aged king, the extender of the Kuru lineage, could not see anything unpleasant in Pandu's descendant. The great-souled Pandava always followed virtuous conduct and King Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, was pleased with him. Gandhari, Subala's daughter, forgot all sorrow on account of her sons. She was always pleased with them, as if they were her own sons. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Kouravya always acted in an agreeable way towards the king who was Vichitravirya's son and never did anything disagreeable. O great king! Whatever King Dhritarashtra said that he wanted done and whatever the illustrious Gandhari desired, small or large, was done by the Pandava king, the bearer of burdens. The destroyer of enemy heroes honoured those words and acted in accordance with those wishes. Therefore, the king was pleased at this conduct and was tormented by memories of his evil-minded son. The king always arose at dawn, meditated and purified himself. He then blessed the sons of Pandu that they might be invincible in battle. As instructed by brahmanas, he offered oblations into the fire. The king pronounced benedictions that the sons of Pandu might live for a long time. The king had never obtained such great delight from his own sons, nothing like the joy the king got from the sons of Pandu. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The state of brahmanas, the aged, kshatriyas and large numbers of vaishyas and shudras was extremely agreeable. Following the king,[11] the king acted so that his heart no longer bore the evil acts that the sons of Dhritarashtra had done towards him earlier. If a man did anything unpleasant towards Ambika's son, the intelligent Kounteya acted against him. Scared of Yudhishthira, no man said anything about the wicked deeds done by King Dhritarashtra or Duryodhana. O slayer of enemies! The Indra among men,[12] Gandhari and Vidura were pleased with Ajatashatru's fortitude and purity, but not with Bhima. Bhima did follow the instructions of the king, Dharma's son. However, he became cheerless whenever he saw Dhritarashtra. Kouravya[13] saw that Dharma's son followed the extremely intelligent king and also followed him, but his heart was not in it.'

Chapter 1935(4)

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! The people did not see anything missing in the affection that King Yudhishthira and Duryodhana's father displayed towards each other. O king! However, whenever the Kourava king remembered his foolish son, the king couldn't help mentally censuring Bhima. O Indra among kings! In that way, Bhimasena could never tolerate King Dhritarashtra and caused the aged one displeasure. Vrikodara didn't reveal these disagreeable acts. Instead, he used deceitful men to ignore his commands. One day, in the midst of his well-wishers, Bhima intolerantly slapped his palms, in Dhritarashtra and Gandhari's hearing. He remembered his enemy, Duryodhana, and Karna and Duhshasana. Extremely enraged, Bhima spoke these harsh words. "This aged king's sons were skilled in the use of all weapons. However, my arms are like clubs and I used these to kill them and convey them to the world hereafter. My arms are said to be like clubs and are impossible to withstand. The sons of Dhritarashtra were embraced by these and were destroyed. That is the reason these arms should be smeared with sandalwood paste and revered. It is because of these that Duryodhana and his sons and relatives have been destroyed." Vrikodara spoke many other similar words and they were like stakes. Hearing these, the king was distressed. The intelligent queen, Gandhari, knew about the progress of time and knew about all kinds of dharma. Despite hearing this, she paid no attention. However, after fifteen years had elapsed, the king was extremely affected by similar words from Bhima and they were like arrows. The king became distressed. King

Yudhishthira, Kunti's son, didn't know this, nor did the one with the white horses,[14] Kunti, the illustrious Droupadi or Madri's sons. They did not know Bhima's mind, or that he was happy at this. They sought to protect the king and never spoke anything that was disagreeable. After this, Dhritarashtra summoned his well-wishers and in a voice choking with tears, spoke these purposeful and grave words.'

Chapter 1936(5)

'Dhritarashtra said, "All of you know how the destruction of the Kurus came about. O Kouravas! It is known that all this happened because of my crimes. He was evil-minded, foolish and increased the fear of his relatives. However, it was I who instated Duryodhana as a lord over the Kouravas. I did not listen to Vasudeva's words, which were full of importance. 'It will be a virtuous act to kill this wicked and evil-minded one, with his advisers.' I was overcome by affection towards my son and did not heed the learned and beneficial words of Vidura, Bhishma, Drona and Kripa. At every step, the illustrious and great-souled Vyasa said the same thing and so did Sanjaya and Gandhari. I am now tormented because of that. The great-souled sons of Pandu are full of qualities. But I did not bestow the blazing and prosperous earth, inherited from my ancestors, on them. Gada's elder brother[15] foresaw the destruction of all the kings, but Janardana thought that this would be supremely beneficial. I did not control myself from engaging in what was futile. I always bear that in my heart, like thousands of snakes. In particular, it has tormented me for fifteen years. I am extremely evil-minded. I wish to control myself and purify my sins. Gandhari knows that I only eat and drink a little, at the fourth hour, and sometimes at the eighth hour. All my relatives think that I eat regularly. This has been hidden. Otherwise, Pandava Yudhishthira would have been sorely tormented. I clad myself in deerskin, lie down on darbha grass on the ground and meditate. The illustrious Gandhari also follows similar vows. One hundred brave sons, who did not retreat from the field of battle, have been killed. Knowing that this is the dharma of kshatriyas, I have not been tormented."'

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Kourava spoke in this way to Dharmaraja. “O fortunate one! O Yadavi![16] Listen to my words. O son! I have been sustained by you in great happiness. I have given great gifts away and have repeatedly performed funeral ceremonies. O son! My age and strength are just right to earn auspicious merits. Though her sons have been slain, it is Gandhari who has taught me patience. They oppressed Droupadi and stole away her riches. However, following dharma, those violent ones have been slain in the battle. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! I do not see anything more that needs to be done for them. They have been killed while facing the battle and have conquered the worlds with their weapons. O Indra among kings! My best course of action is what brings benefit to me and Gandhari. Therefore, you should grant us permission. You are foremost among those who uphold dharma. You have always been devoted to dharma. You are the king who sustains the life of all beings. That is the reason I am speaking to you. O brave one! Grant us permission. We wish to resort to the forest. With Gandhari, I will wear tattered rags and skins. Pronouncing benedictions over you, we should resort to dwelling in the forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! O son! In our lineage, that has always been regarded as the best. O king! When the age is right, one must hand over the possessions to the son and go to the forest. I will reside there, subsisting on air and fasting. O brave one! With my wife as a companion, I will observe supreme austerities. O son! As a king, you will also obtain the fruits of those austerities. The king has a share in the fruits, good or bad, of anything done in the kingdom.”’

Chapter 1937(6)

‘Yudhishthira said, “O king! I am not pleased at your leaving the kingdom in such grief. Shame on me. I am extremely evil-minded. I have been addicted to the kingdom and have been careless. O king! I did not know that you were afflicted by grief and have become thin because of fasting. With my brothers, I did not know that you were not eating and were lying down on the ground. I am foolish and have been deceived by your deep intelligence. Before this, though you were afflicted by sorrow, you assured me. What will I do with this kingdom or with these objects of pleasure? What will I do with sacrifices and happiness? My king has suffered from a great deal of misery. I now know that my kingdom is diseased and so am I. O lord of men! But what is the point in speaking these words of sorrow to you? You are our father. You are our mother. You are our supreme preceptor. Separated from you, how will we remain alive? O supreme among kings! Yuyutsu is a son who has been born from your own loins. O great king! Let him be the king, or whoever else you think fit. I will go to the forest. You rule the kingdom. I am being burnt through ill fame. Do not burn me again. I am not the king. You are the king. I am dependent on you. You know about dharma. How can I grant permission to someone who is a senior? O unblemished one! Because of what Duryodhana did, I bear no rancour in my heart. Know it to be destiny and we were all confounded by it. We are your sons, just like Duryodhana and the others. It is my view that there is no difference between Gandhari and Kunti. O Indra among kings! If you abandon us and leave, I will follow you at the rear. I will take a pledge on that. This earth, up to the girdle of the ocean, is full of riches. Without you, this will no longer be agreeable to me. All of this belongs to you. To gratify you, I bow down my head. O Indra among kings! All of us are under your subjugation. Please dispel this mental fever. O lord of men! I think it is destiny which has come over you. It is through good fortune that we are able to serve you. Free us from this mental fever."

'Dhritarashtra replied, "O son! O descendant of the Kuru lineage! My mind has turned towards austerities. O lord! Going to the forest is appropriate for our lineage. O son! You have honoured me for a long time. You have served me for a long time. O lord of men! Since I am aged, you should grant me permission."'

Vaishampayana said, 'King Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, spoke these words to Dharmaraja and joining his hands in salutation, trembled. He told Sanjaya, the great adviser, and maharatha Kripa, "I wish to entreat the king through you. My mind and heart are distressed. My mouth is dry. I am aged and speech leads to exertion." The aged king, the extender of the Kuru lineage and with dharma in his soul, spoke in this way. The intelligent one leaned on Gandhari and seemed to be lifeless. The king of the Kurus was seated there, immobile. On seeing him, King Kounteya, the slayer of enemy heroes, was suddenly filled with great depression.

'Yudhishthira said, "His strength was equal to that of ten thousand elephants. That king is lying down now, leaning on a woman and seems to be lifeless. In earlier times, he used his strength to crush Bhimasena's iron image into fragments.[17] For the sake of strength, he now has to hold on to a woman. Shame on me. I do not know about dharma. Shame on my intelligence. Shame on my learning. The lord of the earth is now lying down in a way that does not befit him. I will also fast, like my preceptor, if the king and the illustrious Gandhari do not eat."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Pandava rubbed the king's hands with cold water. Knowledgable about dharma, he also gently rubbed his chest and face. The water was auspicious and fragrant, mixed with jewels. At the touch of the king's hand, the king regained his senses.'

Chapter 1938 (7)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O Pandava! Touch me with your hands again and embrace me. O lotus-eyed one! I have regained my senses through your touch. O lord of men! I wish to inhale the fragrance of your head. If you touch me with your hands, I will not give up my life. It is the eighth hour and time for me to eat. O tiger among Kurus! Having not eaten, I am incapable of moving. I have committed a great deal of exertion in seeking your permission. O son! That is the reason I was weak and seemed to have lost my senses. O lord! The touch of your hand has been like the touch of amrita. O extender of the Kuru lineage! I think that I have got back my life again."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Thus addressed by his father's elder brother, Kounteya gently and affectionately touched him all over the body. At this, King Dhritarashtra regained his senses. He embraced Pandava with his arms and inhaled the fragrance of his head. In great sorrow, Vidura and all the others wept loudly. However, since they were overcome with sorrow, the Pandavas had nothing to say to the king or to Gandhari, who was knowledgable about dharma and bore the severe mental pain. Kunti and the other women were also extremely distressed. In their great grief, they tried to restrain the king. Tears of sorrow flowed down their faces. They surrounded him and stood there. Yet again, Dhritarashtra spoke these words to Yudhishthira. “O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! I seek your permission to become an ascetic. O son! My mind is full of distress and I have been thinking about this repeatedly. O son! You should not cause me greater grief.” This is what the Indra among the Kouravas told the Pandava. At this, a great sound of lamentation arose among all the warriors. Dharma’s son saw that the king was wan and faded, exhausted with the fasting, as if he was made out of only skin and bones. The mighty-armed one embraced his father. He shed tears of sorrow and again spoke these words. “O best among men! I do not desire to remain alive, nor do I wish for the earth. O king! O scorcher of enemies! If I have done what you wish and if you are fond of me, if you love me and wish to gratify me, then stay with us and eat something.” The immensely energetic king told Dharma’s son, “O son! If you wish that I should eat something, with your permission, I shall.” Dhritarashtra, Indra among kings, told Yudhishthira this. Satyavati’s son, the rishi Vyasa, arrived and spoke these words.’

Chapter 1939(8)

‘Vyasa said, “O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! Do what the great-souled Dhritarashtra, descendant of the Kuru lineage, has asked. Do not think about this. This king is aged. More specifically, his sons have been killed. It is my view that he will not be able to bear this hardship for a long time. The immensely fortunate Gandhari is wise and speaks piteously. O great king! She has borne the grief on account of her sons with great fortitude. I am asking you to act in accordance with my words. Grant the king permission. Let him not die in vain.[18] Let the king follow the ancient path meant for rajarshis. At the end, all rajarshis have resorted to the forest.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Vyasa, extraordinary in his deeds, spoke in this way to the king. The immensely energetic Dharmaraja Yudhishthira replied, “O illustrious one! We respect you. O illustrious one! You are our preceptor. O illustrious one! You are the refuge of the kingdom and the lineage. O illustrious one! I am your son. You are my father, my king and my preceptor. According to dharma, the son must follow the instructions of the father.” Vyasa, supreme among the upholders of dharma, was addressed in this way. O lord of the earth! He again spoke to the immensely energetic Yudhishthira. “O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! It is exactly as you have said. The king is aged and it is evident that he is in the last stages. O lord of the earth! You and I should grant him the permission. Act according to his wishes and do not cause an obstruction. O Yudhishthira! This is the supreme dharma of rajarshis. Their death should be in the field of battle, or following the proper ordinances, in the forest. O Indra among kings! When your father, Pandu, ruled the earth, he served this king, like a disciple tends to his preceptor. He[19] performed sacrifices with different kinds of dakshina that were piled up as high as hills. He obtained large objects of pleasure and enjoyed them, also protecting his sons. For the thirteen years when you were in exile, he ruled the subjects of the kingdom like sons and enjoyed and gave away many kinds of riches. O tiger among men! With your servants, you have served this king and the illustrious Gandhari as seniors. Grant your father permission. The time has come for him to perform austerities. O Yudhishthira! He does not harbour the slightest bit of anger towards you.” With these words, he gave the king permission and Kounteya agreed. After the illustrious Vyasa left for the forest, the king who was Pandu’s son spoke these soft and gentle words to his aged father. “I will swiftly follow the instructions of the illustrious Vyasa, your views, the words of the great archer, Kripa, and those of Vidura, Yuyutsu and Sanjaya. All of them are well-wishers of our lineage and I must pay heed to them. O king! However, I am lowering my head in front of you and asking for something. Before going to the hermitage, please eat something.”’

Chapter 1940(9)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having obtained the king’s permission, the powerful King Dhritarashtra, followed by Gandhari, went to his own house. Because of the hardships the intelligent one had undergone, he was weak and frail and walked slowly. The king was like the aged leader of an elephant herd. The learned Vidura and the suta, Sanjaya, followed him. So did the great archer, Kripa Sharadvata. Having entered his house, the king performed his morning ablutions. He satisfied the best among brahmanas and then ate. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Gandhari, knowledgable about dharma, and the learned Kunti were honoured by their daughters-in-law with various items and also ate. When they had eaten, Vidura and the others also ate. The Pandavas then sat down around the king who was the foremost among the Kurus. O great king! Kunti's son was seated near him. Touching him on the back with his hand, Ambika's son said, "O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Never be distracted in your tasks in any way. O tiger among kings! In the eight aspects of the kingdom, always have dharma at the forefront.[20] O son! O descendant of the Pandu lineage! You are capable of protecting it in that way. O Kounteya! You are learned. Listen to the dharma of the kingdom. O Yudhishthira! You must always respect those who are learned and aged. You must listen to what they say and act accordingly, without any reflection. O king! You must arise in the morning and following the proper rites, worship them. When the time comes for acting, you should ask them what you should do. O king! O son! O descendant of the Kourava lineage! When you have the welfare of the kingdom in mind and ask them respectfully, they will tell you everything that should be done for your benefit. All the senses must be controlled like horses. You will then obtain benefit and it will be like your wealth being preserved. The advisers must be tested. They must be pure and must be those whose fathers and grandfathers have also served. They must be self-controlled in all the tasks. Whether in superior or inferior positions, such are the people who should be employed. The spies employed in your kingdom and in that of the enemy must always be tested in many ways and these spies must be unknown to the enemy. The city must be protected well, with firm walls and gates. In every direction, the walkways along which guards march must be such as to permit six people to walk abreast. One must ensure that the gates are adequate and large. They must always be suitably apportioned and protected by machines. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You must always protect yourself and your food[21] using men who are born in noble lineages and have good conduct. They must know about the objectives. This is also true of periods of pleasure and in protecting garlands and seats. O Yudhishthira! The women must be properly protected through aged guards and these must have good conduct, be born in noble lineages and learned. Consultations should be with those who are humble, born in good lineages, accomplished about dharma and artha and upright. One should not consult with too many people. Sometimes one needs to consult all of them, sometimes only a few. The chamber for consultations must be protected well. The place for consultations must be one that one climbs up to.[22] It can also be a forest that is bereft of thorns. However, consultations must not be during the night. All birds and animals that imitate men must be barred from the chamber for consultations and so must stupid and lame people.[23] It is my view that the sins that follow from the divulging of consultations of kings can never be countered in any way. O king! O scorcher of enemies! In the circle of ministers, you must repeatedly speak about the sins that result from the divulging of consultations and the gains if they are not divulged. O Yudhishthira! Ascertain the good and the bad in the city and in the countryside. O king! O scorcher of enemies! Your action must be based on what you get to know."'

Chapter 1941(10)

'Dhritarashtra said, "O son! O king! Learned and content people must always be employed in the administration of justice and spies must always be employed to observe them. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O Yudhishthira! These men must not be driven by affection. They must ascertain the gravity of the crime and, under the law, impose a punishment that is commensurate. Those addicted to bribery, those who oppress other people's wives and those who are false in conduct warrant the severest of punishments. Depending on the time and the place, those who indulge in calumny, those who are greedy, those who are murderers, those who are rash,[24] those who cause disturbances in assemblies and at the time of pleasure and those who cause a pollution of the varnas should be killed or punished with a fine of gold. In the morning, you must first ensure that all the acts of expenditure are taken care of. You must then attend to ornaments and food. After this, you must always seek to cheer the warriors. In the evening, you must always attend to messengers and spies. The next part of the night must be devoted to determining acts connected with artha. One must always engage in pleasure at midnight or midday. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You must always undertake all the tasks without any delay. At the right time, you must adorn yourself with ornaments and give away large quantities of dakshina. O son! Like a revolving wheel, in due order, all the duties must be undertaken. Following lawful means, you must always endeavour to fill the treasury. O great king! But you must always avoid duplicity and perversity. Using spies, get to know about enemies who are inside the kingdom. From a distance, use learned men to ensure that the enemies destroy each other. O extender of the Kuru lineage! After examining their deeds, appoint the best servants. Use them to accomplish those tasks, irrespective of whether they have been employed for that particular task or not. O son! The commander of the soldiers must be firm in his vows. He must be brave. He must love you and respect you. He must be capable of enduring hardships. O Pandava! It is your task to ensure that all the noble residents of the countryside and the city have a means of subsistence, like cattle. O Yudhishthira! You must always determine your own weaknesses and the weaknesses of the enemy. Inside the kingdom, there will be brave men. They must be shown proportionate favours, so that, in all tasks, they ensure your welfare. O lord of men! It is your task to enhance the qualities of those who have qualities and are learned. They will then be devoted to you and will not waver, like the great mountain, Meru."'

Chapter 1942(11)

'Dhritarashtra said, "You must know the provinces[25] that are devoted to you, devoted to the enemy, those who are indifferent to both and those who are neutral. O afflicter of enemies! You must know the four kinds of enemies, all the kinds of assassins, friends and the enemy of an enemy.[26] O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Advisers, the countryside, forts, uneven ground and soldiers must not be wilfully tampered with. O Kounteya! These are the twelve different attributes of the kingdom.[27] O lord! Out of the seventy-two attributes, the ministers are the foremost.[28] Teachers who know about policy have spoken about these mandalas. O Yudhishthira! In this connection, listen to the six techniques.[29] O descendant of the Kuru lineage! One must know the determinants of growth, decay and maintenance of the status quo. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, one must act in accordance with the seventy-two and the six. O Kounteya! When one's own side is strong and the enemy is relatively weak, that is the time when a king should try to seize the enemy. When one's own side is weak, one must try for an alliance. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! One must then try to build up one's store of riches. As soon as one is strong, one must advance without delay. At that time, it is recommended that everyone must be in his own place, without a division in the ranks. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When obliged to surrender territory, it should be infertile land. When obliged to give gold, it should be adulterated. As with the treasury, when obliged to surrender friends, it should be relatively weak ones. When receiving back in turn, those who are skilled about alliances know that the opposite should be practised.[30] O bull among the Bharata lineage! At the time of an alliance, one should try to obtain a prince as a hostage. O son! However, if one faces a calamity and has to give, the opposite should be practised. One must resort to counsel and seek means to escape from that calamity. O Kounteya! When the king is distressed, so are ordinary people. Depending on strength and weakness, he must simultaneously fight and seek to get rid of the calamity. While himself protecting his own kingdom, he must try to afflict and paralyse the enemy and reduce his treasury. If one desires prosperity, one should not cause injury to vassals who have accepted subjugation. O Kounteya! One should not cause injury to someone who desires to conquer the entire earth.[31] Using one's ministers, one must seek to create dissension among the tribes.[32] The virtuous must be nurtured and the wicked must be punished. O tiger among kings! If a weak king is attacked by a stronger one, he must follow the behaviour of cane, and yield.[33] When a strong king advances against a weak king, the weak one must use conciliation and other means to gradually dissuade him. If he fails, he must fight, using his advisers, his treasury, the citizens, using the staff, and all those who wish to do him good.[34] Despite attacking with all his best devices, one after another, if it becomes an impossible task, he must then seek emancipation by giving up his body.”’

Chapter 1943(12)

‘Dhritarashtra said, “O supreme among kings! Consider war and peace. O Yudhishthira! For both of these, three kinds of situations and many kinds of techniques have been thought of.[35] O Indra among kings! For your own self, you must progressively and calmly, examine both of these.[36] You must remember not to advance against an enemy who is content, nourished and strong. At such a time, the opposite is recommended and one must excuse oneself. O Indra among kings! It is better to retreat and wait for a time to attack. One must act so as to cause hardship to the enemy and create dissension in his ranks. After creating this great affliction, one must create great destruction through a battle. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Before advancing, a king who knows about the sacred texts thinks of the three kinds of strength that characterize him and the enemy—enterprise, power over the soldiers and the strength of good advisers. A man who possesses these, advances. If one doesn’t possess these, one acts in the opposite way. The king must accumulate the strength of riches, the strength of friends, the strength of forests, the strength of servants and the strength of traders. O king! Of these, the strength of riches and the strength of friends are superior. It is my view that the strength of servants and the strength of traders are equal. O king! The strength of spies is equal to either of these. When all this strength has accumulated, the king knows it is time. O lord of men! Know that calamities kings face are of many different types. O Kouravya! Listen to what these separate types are. O king! O descendant of the Pandu lineage! There are many ways of countering these calamities. A king must use conciliation, pacification and the others. O scorcher of enemies! When united with the six kinds of strength, a king must advance, combining these with the strength of his own qualities and considering the time and the place. A king who desires growth must not advance unless the soldiers are content, nourished and strong. A king can also falsely claim that these exist and advance. To destroy the enemy, the king must advance along a river that has quivers as stones, horses and chariots as currents, standards as trees that cover the banks and large numbers of foot soldiers and elephants as mire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord! The sacred texts known to Ushanas have recommended battle formations in the form of a cart, a lotus and a vajra. Having deprecated the enemy's soldiers, act to increase cheer in your own soldiers. This is irrespective of whether you are fighting in your own territory or the enemy's territory. After having rested, the king must hurl the best men against the enemy. Knowing the state of one's own kingdom, one should resort to conciliation and the other techniques. O great king! The body must be protected in every possible way. One must ensure supreme benefit for one's own self, in this world and in the world after death. A king who listens to these auspicious words protects the subjects according to dharma and obtains this world. After death, he obtains heaven. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! For the welfare of the subjects, this is the way you must act. O son! You must always act so as to obtain both the worlds. Bhishma has spoken to you about this earlier, and so have Krishna and Vidura. O supreme among kings! However, since I bear affection towards you, I must also tell you. O one who grants a lot of dakshina! Following the law, you must do all of this. You will then be loved by the subjects and will obtain happiness in heaven. A king who performs one thousand horse sacrifices and one who protects the subjects according to dharma obtains fruits that are equal."'

Chapter 1944(13)

'Yudhishthira said, "O lord of the earth! I will faithfully do all of this. O bull among kings! But you should instruct me yet again. Bhishma has gone to heaven and Madhusudana has left.[37] Vidura and Sanjaya will also go.[38] Who else is capable of speaking to me? I will adhere to whatever you instruct me today. O lord of the earth! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You should not hold yourself back."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'The rajarshi was thus addressed by the intelligent Dharmaraja. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He took Kounteya's permission and said, "O son! Desist. My strength has been exhausted." Having said this, the king and Gandhari entered their house. The queen Gandhari followed dharma. She knew about time. Her husband was like Prajapati. When he was seated, at the right time, she said, “You have obtained the permission of maharshi Vyasa himself. Having obtained Yudhishthira’s permission, when will you leave for the forest?” Dhritarashtra replied, “O Gandhari! My great-souled father has himself given me permission. After I have obtained Yudhishthira’s permission, I will leave for the forest, without any delay. All my sons engaged in a deceitful act of gambling with the dice. In their names, in the annual funeral ceremony, I wish to give away riches to ordinary people, inviting them to my own house.” Having said this, the king told Dharmaraja and, instructed by the king, he brought everything that was required. All the well-wishers, all the ordinary people, all the inhabitants of the city and all the inhabitants of the countryside assembled. Brahmanas and kings came from many countries. The king emerged from his inner quarters and saw all of them. The immensely energetic King Dhritarashtra said, “Brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras who have assembled from Kurujangala. Listen to me attentively. You and the Kurus have lived together for a long time. You are affectionate towards each other and are engaged in each other’s welfare. The time has presented itself and I am going to speak about it to you now. Without thinking about it, you should act in accordance with my words. With Gandhari, I have made up my mind to leave for the forest. I have obtained the permission of Vyasa and the king who is Kunti’s son. You should also grant me leave and not act contrary to this. There has been an eternal fraternal affection between you and us, the king and the subjects. It is my view that this does not exist in any other country. I am exhausted. I am old and have lost my sons. With the unblemished Gandhari, I have fasted and have become emaciated. I am extremely happy that the kingdom has passed on to Yudhishthira. O excellent ones! I think that joy is greater than what I would have obtained from Duryodhana’s prosperity. I am blind, aged and have lost my sons. O immensely fortunate ones! Other than the forest, what other refuge can there be for me? You should grant me permission.” O bull among the Bharata lineage! On hearing his words, all those from Kurujangala wept, their voices choking with tears. They were overcome with sorrow and grief. The immensely energetic Dhritarashtra spoke to them yet again.’

Chapter 1945(14)

'Dhritarashtra said, "Shantanu ruled this entire earth. In that way, protected by Bhishma, so did Vichitravirya. There is no doubt that you know about that protection. I loved my brother Pandu. It is known to you that he also protected you in that way. O unblemished ones! I have also sought to serve you well. O immensely fortunate ones! If I have failed to do it properly, or if I have been distracted in this, you should forgive me. After all, without any thorns, Duryodhana also enjoyed this kingdom. He was foolish and evil in intelligence. However, he also protected you. Because of the crimes of that evil-minded one and his insolence, and because of what I myself did, there has been this great carnage of kings. Whether I have done something good or whether I have done something bad, you should not bear it in your heart and you should grant me permission. This king is aged and miserable. His sons have been slain. He is the son of your earlier kings. Because of these reasons, you should grant me permission. This aged ascetic is miserable. Her sons have been slain. Gandhari is afflicted on account of her sons. Like me, she is also asking you. You know that our sons have been killed. We are aged and unhappy. O fortunate ones! We have sought refuge with you. Grant us leave. This Kourava king, Yudhishthira, is Kunti's son. You must look after him, in prosperity and in adversity. However, he will never face any adversity. His four brothers are greatly energetic and are his advisers. All of them know about dharma and artha and are like the guardians of the world. The illustrious Brahma is the lord of all creatures in the universe. The greatly energetic Yudhishthira will protect you, like him. I have now said what I should certainly have said. I am handing all of you over to Yudhishthira as a trust. I have handed you over to this brave one as a trust. If there is anything disagreeable that my sons have done, or anything else by anyone on our side, you should forgive that. Earlier, you have never harboured any anger towards me. Your devotion towards me is exceedingly great. I join my hands in salutation and bow down before you. Their[39] intelligence was fickle. They were greedy and acted as they willed. O unblemished ones! With Gandhari, I seek forgiveness for everything."'

Vaishampayana continued, ‘The king spoke in this way to the inhabitants of the city and the countryside. Their voices were choked with tears. They looked at each other and said nothing.’

Chapter 1946(15)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Thus addressed by the aged Kouravya king, the inhabitants of the city and the countryside were almost senseless. The king saw that they were standing in silence, their voices choked with tears. King Dhritarashtra again spoke to them. “O excellent ones! I am aged. My sons have been slain. I am lamenting in many ways. I am distressed. With my lawful wife, who knows about dharma, I have obtained the permission of my father, Krishna Dvaipayana to go to the forest. The king, who knows about dharma, has also agreed. O unblemished ones! With my head bowed down, I am again beseeching you, along with Gandhari. You should grant us permission.” O king! Hearing the piteous words of the king of the Kurus, all those who had assembled from Kurujangala wept. They covered their faces with their hands and their upper garments. Tormented by grief, like fathers and mothers,[40] they wept for a while. At the prospect of Dhritarashtra’s departure, their hearts were empty. Because of the misery they bore, it was as if they had lost their senses, at the prospect of being separated from the king of the Kurus. But they made a great deal of effort and controlled it. They spoke softly to each other. O king! All of them then got together, chose a brahmana, and charged him with the task of conveying their own words to the king. He was aged, revered and accomplished about artha. O king! He was learned about many hymns. His name was Samba and he sought to speak.

‘The brahmana was intelligent and eloquent. He took the permission of the great king and the entire assembly and spoke to the king. “O king! These people have entrusted their words to me. O brave one! O lord of men! I am telling you those words. Listen. O Indra among kings! O lord! Everything that you have said is true. There is no falsehood in your words. We wish each other well. In this royal lineage, there has been no king who has not protected the subjects or has not been loved by the subjects. You have protected us like a father and like a brother. O king! Nor has Duryodhana done anything that is improper. O great king! Act in accordance with what the sage who is Satyavati's son, who knows about dharma, has said. He is our supreme preceptor. Abandoned by you, we will soon be overcome with sorrow and grief. O king! We will be without your hundreds of qualities. O king! We were protected by Shantanu, King Chitrangada and by your father, Bhishma, whose valour was deep. With the help of your intelligence, King Pandu also protected us in that way. In that fashion, King Duryodhana also protected us well. O king! Your son has not committed the slightest bit of falsehood. We trusted that king as if he was our own father. You know that perfectly well. O king! Protected by Kunti's intelligent son and sustained by his fortitude, we have enjoyed happiness for thousands of years.[41] Your lineage has come down from ancient rajarshis and has Kuru, Samvarana, the intelligent Bharata and others.[42] The one with dharma in his soul[43] followed good conduct and gave away large quantities of donations. O great king! One cannot speak about the slightest bit of deviation in him. Protected and nurtured by you, we have always lived in great happiness. There has not been the slightest bit of falsehood in you and your son. You have spoken about Duryodhana's role in the destruction of the kin. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! In that connection, this is what I have to convey to you."'

Chapter 1947(16)

'The brahmana said, "The destruction that the Kurus confronted was not caused by Duryodhana, you, Karna or Subala's son.[44] We know it was destiny and no one was capable of countering it. Destiny is incapable of being thwarted through manliness. O great king! Eighteen akshouhinis assembled. The bulls among warriors killed them over eighteen days. O king! They were Bhishma, Drona, Kripa and the others, the great-souled Karna, the brave Yuyudhana, Dhrishtadyumna and the four sons of Pandu, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins. O king! This destruction of people has been accomplished by the forces of destiny. In particular, in this world, there is no doubt that kshatriyas and relatives of kshatriyas must be slain in a battle, using weapons. Those tigers among men possessed learning and the strength of their arms. They destroyed everyone on earth, including horses, chariots and elephants. Your son, the king, was not responsible for that crime against the great-minded ones. Nor were you or your servants responsible, or Karna, or Soubala. Thousands of kings and the best among the Kurus were destroyed. However, everything was because of destiny. What else can be said about this? We hold the view that you are our preceptor and the lord of the entire world. You have dharma in your soul. We forgive your son. With his aides, that king has obtained the world meant for heroes. With the foremost among the brahmanas, let him enjoy happiness in heaven. May you also obtain the auspicious and be established in supreme dharma. O supreme among Bharatas! May you completely know everything that is sacred. The Pandavas are bulls among men. It can be seen that they are capable of ruling heaven. Why should they then be unable to establish their status on earth? O best among those of the Kuru lineage! The Pandavas possess the ornaments of good conduct. We, the subjects, will dwell with them in prosperity and in adversity. Pandava[45] protects like all the large number of kings who have preceded him. He gives liberally to brahmanas. He is always far-sighted and firm in his wisdom. He is like Vaishravana.[46] Kunti's great-minded son has advisers who are not inferior. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He is pure and compassionate, even towards his enemies. He is upright and intelligent and always looks upon us as his sons. O rajarshi! Because of their association with Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna and the others will never act in a disagreeable way towards the people. O Kouravya! They are gentle and mild, but like the venom of snakes towards those who are fierce. They are brave and great-souled, engaged in the welfare of the residents. Kunti, Panchali, Ulupi and Satvati[47] will never do anything that goes against these people. Your affection towards us has been extended by Yudhishthira and the residents of the city and the countryside will not disregard it. Even if these men engage in adharma, these virtuous maharatha sons of Kunti are always devoted to dharma and will protect them. O king! Therefore, do not have any mental disquiet on account of Yudhishthira. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Engage in the acts of dharma. We bow down before you."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'These words were full of dharma and possessed a flow of all the superior qualities. Hearing them, all the people applauded and accepted them. Dhritarashtra repeatedly applauded those words. He then gently dismissed all the ordinary people. They honoured the king and cast auspicious glances towards him. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He also joined his hands in salutation and honoured the people back. With Gandhari, the king entered his house. Listen to what he did when the night was over.'

Chapter 1948(17)

Vaishampayana said, 'When night was over, Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, sent Vidura to Yudhishthira's house. The greatly energetic one, supreme among all those who are intelligent, went there. Having gone there, he spoke these words to King Yudhishthira, the lord who had no decay. "O great king! Dhritarasthra has consecrated himself for departure to the forest. The king will leave for the forest on the day of the full moon in the month of Kartika.[48] O best among those of the Kuru lineage! He desires some riches. He wishes to give this away at a funeral ceremony for the great-souled Gangeya, Drona, Somadatta, the intelligent Bahlika, all his sons, the well-wishers who have been killed and, if you allow it, for the wicked Saindhava."[49] Hearing Vidura's words, Yudhishthira and Gudakesha Pandava[50] were delighted and applauded them. However, Bhima was unwavering in his anger and did not accept Vidura's words. The greatly energetic one remembered what Duryodhana had done. 'Phalguna understood Bhimasena's thoughts. Kiriti lowered his face and spoke these words to Bhima. "O Bhima! Our aged father has consecrated himself for going to the forest. He wishes to give something for the funeral ceremonies of all the well-wishers. Kourava wishes to give away riches that have been conquered by you. O mighty-armed one! It is for Bhishma and the others. You should grant permission. O mighty-armed one! It is good fortune that Dhritarashtra is asking us now. Behold the progress of time. Earlier, we used to ask him. This king used to be the lord of the entire earth earlier. With his offspring killed by the enemy, he now desires to go to the forest. O tiger among men! You should not consider any option other than giving. O mighty-armed one! Everything else will bring ill fame and will be adharma. We serve the lord and king who is our elder brother. O bull among the Bharata lineage!

From him, we should learn to give and not refuse.” When Kounteya said this, Dharmaraja applauded these words. However, Bhimasena angrily spoke these words in reply. “O Phalguna! We should perform funeral rites for Bhishma, King Somadatta, Bhurishrava, rajarshi Bahlika, the great-souled Drona and the other well-wishers. Kunti will give for Karna. O tiger among men! The king should not perform funeral rites for the Kouravas. That is my view. Let the enemy not find an opportunity to rejoice. Let Duryodhana and all the others move from misery to greater misery. They were the worst of the lineage and destroyed everything on earth. How can you now forget that enmity of twelve years and the departure for a period of concealment, which increased Droupadi’s grief? What was the affection Dhritarashtra showed towards us then? We attired ourselves in black antelope skins and our ornaments and adornments were lost. With the daughter of Panchala, we followed the king then. Where were Drona, Bhishma and Somadatta then? For thirteen years we dwelt there, roaming from one forest to another forest. Your elder father did not cast a paternal eye towards us then. O Partha! When we were defeated in the gambling match, have you forgotten what this wicked one, the worst of the lineage, asked Vidura? ‘What has been won?’” When this was said, King Yudhishthira, Kunti’s intelligent son, rebuked his brother and asked him to be quiet.’

Chapter 1949(18)

‘Arjuna said, “O Bhima! You are my elder brother and my senior and I am not interested in saying anything more. Rajarshi Dhritarashtra must always be honoured. Virtuous people, the best among men, remember the good deeds that have been done to them. They do not remember crimes and the breaking of agreements. O Kshatta! Convey my words to the Kourava king. I will give him whatever he desires on account of his sons and for Bhishma and all the others, all the well-wishers who helped our cause. O lord! It will be given from my store of riches. Let Bhima not be greatly distressed at this.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘When Arjuna spoke in this way, Yudhishthira honoured him. But Bhimasena cast angry glances at Dhananjaya. The intelligent Yudhishthira spoke these words to Vidura. “The king should not be angry at Bhimasena. In the forest, the intelligent Bhima was afflicted by cold, rain and heat and many kinds of hardships. That is known to you. However, convey my words to the king who is a bull among the Bharata lineage. He can take everything that he wishes from my house. Bhima sorrows greatly and has exhibited this intolerance. The king should not take these words to heart. Whatever riches exist in my house and that of Arjuna’s, the great king is the owner of all of that. Tell the king these words. Let the king give to brahmanas and spend whatever he wishes. Let him repay the debt to his sons and well-wishers. This body of mine also belongs to that lord of men. O Kshatta! Knowing this, how can there be any doubt about the riches?”’

Chapter 1950(19)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The king spoke in this way to Vidura, supreme among intelligent ones. He went to Dhritarashtra and conveyed these words of deep import. “I first spoke about your message to King Yudhishthira. Having listened to my words, the immensely radiant one praised them. The greatly energetic Bibhatsu has given his houses, the riches in those houses and even his life to you. O rajarshi! Your son, Dharmaraja, has placed the kingdom, his life, his riches and everything else at your disposal. However, Bhima remembered all the misery and the many kinds of hardship. The mighty-armed one was filled with anger and sighed. However, because of the brotherly affection he bears towards the king who follows dharma in his conduct and his brother Bibhatsu, the mighty-armed one has also given his permission. Bhima remembered the enmity and the wicked deeds that were perpetrated. Dharmaraja has said that you should not be enraged with him. ‘O lord of men![51] This is generally the dharma of kshatriyas.[52] Vrikodara has been devoted to following the dharma of kshatriyas in battle. O king! I and Arjuna repeatedly crave your pardon for what Vrikodara has done. You are our lord. O king! As you wish, give whatever riches we possess. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You are the owner of all the lives in this kingdom. For the funeral rites of your sons and to give to brahmanas, here are jewels, cattle, male servants, female servants, goats and sheep. O foremost among the Kuru lineage! Bring them and give them to brahmanas, the distressed, the old, the blind and the weak. O Vidura! On the king's instructions, let an assembly hall be constructed and let it be stocked with many kinds of juices, drinks and food. Let places for cattle to drink from be constructed. Let diverse kinds of auspicious acts be performed.' This is what the king and Partha Dhananjaya told me. You should tell me what needs to be done next." This is what Vidura said and Dhritarashtra applauded this. O Janamejaya! He made up his mind to give large quantities of gifts on the day of the full moon in Kartika.'

Chapter 1951(20)

Vaishampayana said, 'Vidura spoke in this way to King Dhritarashtra. The king was delighted at what the king[53] and Jishnu had done. For the sake of Bhishma, his sons and his well-wishers, he examined and invited thousands of brahmanas and superior rishis. The supreme among kings instructed that food, drink, vehicles, spreads, gold, gems, jewels, female servants, male servants, garments, blankets, hides, gems,[54] villages, fields, goats, sheep, ornaments, elephants, horses, maidens and the best of women should be readied for the brahmanas. He named Drona, Bhishma, Somadatta, Bahlika, King Duryodhana, his other sons and all the well-wishers, with Jayadratha as the foremost, separately and gave these away in their respective names. With Yudhishthira's sanction, the funeral ceremony prospered, with large amounts of cattle, riches, dakshina and diverse kinds of wealth and jewels given away. On Yudhishthira's instructions, men, enumerators and writers incessantly told the king, "Command us. What should be given? Whom should it be given to? Everything is here." They recorded this. No sooner had he spoken, than these objects would be seen. On the instructions of the intelligent king who was Kunti's son, a thousand was given to the one who should be given one hundred and ten thousand was given to the one who should be given one thousand.[55] Like the monsoon showering down rain on the ground, the king[56] was like an ocean and showered down a flow of riches on the brahmanas, thereby satisfying them. After this, the king segregated all the varnas. The king flooded them with food and drink. The garments were like foam, the jewels were like currents, the drums were like the roar of the waves. Cattle and horses were like whirlpools. There were extensive amounts of women and gems. The villages were like crocodiles on the shore. The water in that ocean was made out of jewels and gold. The ocean that was Dhritarashtra flooded the earth. O great king! Thus, he donated at that funeral ceremony and gave for his sons, his grandsons, his forefathers, for himself and for Gandhari. After he had given away many gifts, he became exhausted. The extender of the Kuru lineage then terminated the sacrifice of donations. In this way, the Kouravya king performed that festival of donations. There was a lot of dakshina that was succulent[57] and actors and dancers performed incessantly. For ten days, the king who was Ambika's son gave away gifts in this way. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He thus freed himself from the debt to his sons and grandsons.'

Chapter 1952(21)

Vaishampayana said, 'When it was morning, King Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, determined that the time had come for departure to the forest. He summoned the brave Pandavas. With Gandhari, the intelligent one greeted them in the proper way. Using brahmanas accomplished in the Vedas, he performed the rites associated with the full moon in Kartika, agnihotra being the foremost. He attired himself in bark and deerskin. Surrounded by his daughters-in-law, the king emerged from his house. The king who was Vichitravirya's son departed in this way. The Kourava and Pandava women and all the others who belonged to the royal lineage of the Kouravas were distressed and lamented loudly. Using parched grain, the king cheerfully worshipped the wonderful house where he had lived. The Indra among men met all the large numbers of servants, said farewell to them and left. King Yudhishthira trembled and joined his hands in salutation. In a voice that was choking with tears, he exclaimed, "O virtuous and great king! This is a time for lamentation. Where are you going?" He said this and fell down on the ground. Arjuna was tormented by great grief. The foremost among the Bharata lineage sighed repeatedly. He restrained

Yudhishthira and told him that he should not act in this way. However, he was himself distressed. Vrikodara, Phalguna, Madri's brave sons, Vidura, Sanjaya, the son of the vaishya,[58] Goutama,[59] Dhoumya and other brahmanas followed the king, their voices choking with tears. Gandhari's eyes were covered with a strip of cloth.[60] For support, her hand was placed on Kunti's shoulder, who walked ahead. King Dhritarashtra advanced cheerfully, grasping Gandhari's shoulder with his hand. Krishna Droupadi, Yadavi,[61] Kouravi Uttara, who had had a son as offspring,[62] Chitrangada, other women and daughters-in-law advanced with the king. O king! Their lamentations were piteous, like the shrieks of she-ospreys. In every direction, brahmana, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra women also emerged. O king! The large numbers of citizens of Gajasahvya were distressed at the departure. O king! This was just like in earlier times, when after the gambling match, they had witnessed the departure of the Pandavas from the assembly hall of the Kouravas. There were women who had never seen the sun or had been seen by it. But when that Indra among men, the Indra among the Kouravas, left for the forest, they were afflicted by grief and emerged onto the royal roads.'

Chapter 1953(22)

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! A great uproar arose from the women and men who were standing atop the palaces or on the ground. The royal road was crowded with men and women. With difficulty, the king advanced along that, trembling and with his hands joined in salutation. He emerged from Gajasahvya through the main gate and repeatedly took his leave from those large numbers of people. Vidura decided that the time was right for him to also go to the forest with the king. The chief adviser and suta, Sanjaya, Gavalgana's son, also took the same decision. King Dhritarashtra persuaded Kripa and maharatha Yuyutsu to return and handed them over to Yudhishthira. After the citizens had returned, the king[63] sought Dhritarashtra's permission to return, with the women from the inner quarters of the palace. O bull among the Bharata lineage! He told his mother, Kunti, "I will go with the king.[64] You should return. O queen! Surrounded by your daughters-in-law, you should return to the city. The king is devoted to dharma and is firm in his resolution that he will devote himself to austerities." With tears flowing down from his eyes, Dharmaraja said this. But Kunti clung on to Gandhari and continued to advance. She said, "O great king! Never disregard Sahadeva. O king! He has always been affectionate towards you and me. Karna never retreated from battle and you must always remember him. It is because of my stupid intelligence that the brave one was destroyed. O son! My wicked heart is certainly made out of iron. Despite my being unable to see the son of the sun, it has not shattered into a hundred fragments. O destroyer of enemies! That being the case, what can I possibly do now? It is my sin that I did not reveal that he was the son of the sun. O mighty-armed one! Therefore, with your brothers, I hope you will give excellent gifts in his name. O slayer of enemies! He was your elder. O afflicter of enemies! Always be devoted to Droupadi. O extender of the Kuru lineage! Always look after Bhimasena, Arjuna and Nakula. O brave one! You have to bear the burden of the Kuru lineage now. I will dwell in the forest now and devote myself to serving my father-in-law and mother-in-law.[65] I will dwell with Gandhari, cover myself with filth and devote myself to austerities." Yudhishthira had dharma in his soul. Thus addressed, he controlled himself. With his brothers, he was immersed in great grief and did not say anything.

'After having thought for some time, though he was distressed, full of reflection and overcome by sorrow, Yudhishthira, Dharma's son, spoke to his mother. "Why are you going away? You should not speak in this way. I will not give you permission to go. You should show us your favours. O beautiful one! In earlier times, you spoke agreeable words to energize us. You spoke to us about Vidula's words and you should not abandon that principle.[66] I have obtained this earth after slaying the kings. Those were your words of wisdom, received by me through Vasudeva, bull among men. I had heard about your intelligence earlier. Where has that gone now? You spoke to us about adherence to the dharma of kshatriyas, but you wish to deviate from those now. How will you dwell alone in the forest after abandoning us, the kingdom and these illustrious daughters-in-law? Show me your favours." Her eyes flowing with tears, Kunti heard these words from her son. However, with tears flowing from her eyes, she continued to advance and Bhima spoke to her. "O Kunti!

You should enjoy this kingdom that has been conquered by your sons. Having obtained it, why does your mind turn away from the dharma of kings? Earlier, why did you then ask us to destroy the earth? For whom do you wish to give it up and go to the forest? When we were children, why did you bring us back from the forest?[67] Madri's sons are overcome with sorrow and grief. O mother! O illustrious one! Be gratified and do not go to the forest. Enjoy Yudhishthira's prosperity, conquered through Partha's[68] strength." But she had made up her mind that the time had come to go to the forest. Though her sons lamented in many ways, she did not pay any attention to their words. Droupadi's face was distressed. As her mother-in-law left for the forest, she wept, and with Bhadra,[69] followed her. The immensely wise one[70] had made up her mind to leave for the forest. She repeatedly glanced at her sons, who were weeping, but proceeded. The Pandavas, the servants and the women from the inner quarters continued to follow. She restrained them and tearfully, spoke these words to her sons.'

Chapter 1954(23)

'Kunti said, "O mighty-armed one! O Pandava! It is exactly as you have described it. O king! Earlier, when you were suffering from lassitude, I reprimanded you. Your kingdom was lost in the gambling match. You were dislodged from happiness. You were defeated by your relatives and I reprimanded you. How could Pandu's sons, bulls among men, be destroyed? How could their fame be destroyed? That is the reason I goaded you into action. All of you are Indra's equal. You are the equal of the gods in valour. You should not have to depend on others. That is the reason I acted in that way. You are best among those who uphold dharma. You are a king who is Vasava's equal. You should not have returned to the forest and undergone hardships there. That is the reason I goaded you. Bhima is known for his great valour and manliness, equal to that of ten thousand elephants. I goaded you so that he did not face a decline. Vijaya[71] is Vasava's equal and is younger to Bhimasena. I goaded you so that he did not suffer from lassitude. Nakula and Sahadeva always follow their seniors. I goaded you so that they did not suffer from hunger and lassitude. This buxom and dark one is beautiful, with large eyes. She was unnecessarily oppressed in the assembly hall. Then, while all of you looked on, she trembled like a plantain tree. The one with the unblemished limbs was in her season then and was won over in the gambling match. I goaded you so that she didn't have to go through with these difficulties again. The foolish Duhshasana dragged her along, like a servant girl. I knew all this, about the defeat of our lineage. The Kurus, my father-in-law and the others, were distressed then. She desired a protector, but was like a she-osprey in the grasp of a predator. The wicked one, whose intelligence had been destroyed, seized her by the hair. O king! When Duhshasana did that, I lost my senses. To increase your energy, I goaded you then. O sons! I recounted the words of Vidula. How could a royal lineage that included my sons be destroyed? O sons! You were born from Pandu and me. That is the reason I goaded you then. If a king destroys his own lineage, how can his sons and grandsons obtain the worlds that are meant for the performers of good deeds? O son! Earlier, thanks to my husband, I had enjoyed the great fruits of the kingdom. I had given away large quantities of gifts. Following the rites, I had drunk soma. I didn't urge Vasudeva to obtain any fruits for my own self. It was for your sakes that I flooded you with Vidula's words. O sons! I did not desire the fruits of the kingdom, conquered by my sons. O lords! Through austerities, I desire the sacred worlds obtained by my husband. I will serve my father-in-law and mother-in-law, who will dwell in the forest. O Yudhishthira! I will dry myself up through austerities. O best among the Kurus! With Bhimasena and the others, return. Turn your intelligence towards dharma and may your mind be great."'

Chapter 1955(24)

Vaishampayana said, 'O supreme among kings! Hearing Kunti's words, the Pandavas were ashamed.[72] With Panchali, the unblemished ones returned. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! On seeing Kunti go away, a great uproar of lamentation arose from the women of the inner quarters. Having been unable to persuade Pritha to return, the Pandavas circumambulated the king[73] and withdrew. The great king, Dhritarashtra, Ambika's son, supported himself on Gandhari and Vidura and spoke. "It is better for the queen who is Yudhishthira's mother to return. Everything that Yudhishthira has said is the truth. The prosperity of her sons is great and there are great fruits there. Why should one foolishly abandon one's sons and proceed to the forest along impassable ways? She can perform austerities in the kingdom. She can perform austerities, give gifts and observe vows. She is capable of doing this and not doing it would be bad policy. Let her listen to my words. O Gandhari! I am satisfied with the service of my daughter-in-law. O one who knows about dharma! Therefore, you should give her permission to return." Thus addressed by the king, Subala's daughter spoke to Kunti. She repeated everything that the king had said and also added her own words. However, the queen[74] had made up her mind to reside in the forest. Kunti was virtuous and devoted to dharma and it was impossible to dissuade her. The women of the Kuru lineage discerned that she was firm in her resolution. On seeing that the best of the Kuru lineage[75] had withdrawn, they began to weep. The Parthas and all the women from the inner quarters returned. The immensely wise king, Dhritarashtra, proceeded to the forest.

'The Pandavas were distressed and overcome by sorrow and grief. With the women, all of them used their vehicles to return to the city. The city of Hastinapura, with its women, aged and young, was completely silent and there were no festivities. All the Pandavas were angry and also disinterested. Without Kunti, they were extremely miserable, like calves separated from their mother.

'The same day, Dhritarashtra reached a place that was some distance away. The lord resided there, on the banks of the Bhagirathi. The best of brahmanas, accomplished in the Vedas, followed the prescribed rites and kindled a sacrificial fire, in a spot that had ascetics. A sacrificial fire was also lit for the aged king. Following the ordinances, the king offered oblations into the fire. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With evening having arrived, he worshipped the one with the one thousand rays. Vidura and Sanjaya used kusha grass to prepare a bed for the king, the brave one among the Kurus. Not very far from that, they prepared another one for Gandhari. Yudhishthira's mother, Kunti, was devoted to virtuous vows. She lay down on a bed of kusha grass, not far from Gandhari. Vidura and the others slept within a hearing distance. As instructed, the brahmanas and the officiating priests also followed suit. The foremost among the brahmanas kindled a fire and chanted. That night was as pleasurable as a *brahmi* night.[76] When night was over, they performed their morning ablutions. Following the rites, all of them offered oblations into the fire and proceeded again. Still fasting, they glanced towards the northern direction. That first day's residence had been miserable. They had sorrowed. The inhabitants of the city and the countryside had also grieved.'

Chapter 1956(25)

Vaishampayana said, 'Following Vidura's advice, the king dwelt on the banks of the Bhagirathi, amidst the dwelling places of many sacred people. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Large numbers of brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras, residents of the kingdom, came to visit the king there. They surrounded the king and he delighted them by conversing with them. Following the prescribed rites, he honoured them[77] and their disciples and took their leave. When it was evening, the king and Gandhari immersed themselves in the Ganga and purified themselves in the appropriate manner. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Separately, all the others also bathed in that tirtha. Vidura and the others performed all the rites there. O king! When he had performed his ablutions, Pritha, Kuntibhoja's daughter, brought her aged father-in-law and Gandhari to the banks of the Ganga. For the king, the officiating priests erected a sacrificial altar there. The king, devoted to the truth, offered oblations to the fire there. From the banks of the Bhagirathi, the king then proceeded to Kurukshetra, with his followers. He was learned, self-restrained and in control of his senses. The king, the rajarshi, arrived at the hermitage of the learned and intelligent Shatayupa and met him. That scorcher of enemies used to be the great king of Kekaya. The lord of men had handed over his wealth to his son and had entered the forest. O king! Following the prescribed rites, he welcomed the extender of the Kuru lineage. With the king, he then went to Vyasa's hermitage. The king who was the descendant of the Kourava lineage[78] was initiated there. After this, he began to reside in Shatayupa's hermitage. O king! On Vyasa's instructions, the immensely intelligent one instructed the king in all the rites pertaining to dwelling in the forest.[79] O great king! The high-minded King Dhritarashtra engaged himself in austerities and so did his followers. Queen Gandhari attired herself in bark and hides. O great king! In an identical way, with Kunti, she observed similar vows. O king! In deeds, mind, words and sight, they controlled their senses and resorted to supreme austerities. The king's flesh was dried up and he was reduced to bones. His hair was matted and he was attired in hides and bark. Devoid of taints, he performed fierce austerities, like a maharshi. Kshatta was supreme in his intelligence about dharma and artha. With Sanjaya, he served the king and his wife and both of them also cleansed their souls and engaged in supreme austerities. They were attired in bark and rags and became emaciated.'

Chapter 1957(26)

Vaishampayana said, 'The best of sages, Narada, Parvata and the immensely ascetic Devala came there to see the king. So did Dvaipayana and his disciples, other learned siddhas and the aged rajarshi, Shatayupa, supremely devoted to dharma. O great king! Following the prescribed rites, Kunti worshipped them. Those ascetics were satisfied with this service. O son! Those supreme rishis engaged in conversations about dharma. This delighted the great-souled king, Dhritarashtra. Narada could see everything directly. On one such occasion, at the end of the conversation, the devarshi told all of them this account. "In ancient times, there was a fearless king who was Prajapati's equal. He was known as Sahasrachitya and he was Shatayupa's grandfather. His eldest son was supremely devoted to dharma. Handing over the kingdom to him, King Sahasrachitya, with dharma in his soul, entered the forest. Having transcended all the supreme austerities, the resplendent and great-minded king obtained Purandara's region. O king! On many occasions, on my visits there, I have seen the king engaged in austerities in the great Indra's abode, having burnt down his sins. In that way, King Shailalaya, King Bhagadatta's grandfather, went to the great Indra's abode through the strength of his austerities. There was also a king named Prishaghna, equal to the wielder of the vajra himself. Through his austerities, that king obtained the vault of heaven. O king! It was in this forest that King Purukutsa,[80] Mandhata's son, obtained great success. Narmada, supreme among rivers, became his wife. It was in this forest that the king tormented himself through austerities and went to heaven. There was a king named Shashaloma and he was supremely devoted to dharma. It was in this forest that he tormented himself through austerities and obtained heaven. O king! You have come to this hermitage. Through Dvaipayana's favours, you will obtain the best of success, which is extremely difficult to obtain. O tiger among kings! You will also be surrounded by the prosperity of austerities. With Gandhari, you will reach the end obtained by those great-souled ones. Residing with the slayer of Bala, Pandu always remembers you. O great king! He will always engage you in what is best for you. The illustrious Gandhari, engaged in serving you, will obtain the worlds with her husband and your daughter-in-law, Kunti, will also go there. She is Yudhishthira's mother and he is eternal dharma. O king! We can see this with our divine sight. Vidura can be seen in the great-souled Yudhishthira. Having purified himself through meditation, Sanjaya will obtain heaven." On hearing this, the great-souled Indra among the Kouravas and his wife were delighted and welcomed these words. They praised Narada's learned words. They worshipped Narada in an unmatched way. O king! All the large number of brahmanas also repeatedly worshipped Narada a lot. They were delighted and this also cheered King Dhritarashtra up.'

Chapter 1958(27)

Vaishampayana said, 'The best among brahmanas applauded Narada's words. Rajarshi Shatayupa spoke these words to Narada. "O illustrious one! O immensely radiant one! You have increased the Kuru king's faith and all these people's and mine. O devarshi! But there is something I wish to tell you. Please listen attentively. O one who is revered by the worlds! It concerns Dhritarashtra. You possess divine sight and know the truth about everything. O devarshi! You can see the destinations of different kinds of men. You have spoken about the kings who are in the great Indra's abode. O great sage! But you have not spoken about the worlds this king will obtain. O lord! I wish to hear about the regions that will be obtained by this lord of the earth. When will he obtain them? I am asking you. Tell me the truth about that." Thus addressed, Narada spoke words that were pleasant for everyone to hear. The great ascetic with the divine sight was in the midst of all those virtuous ones. "I can always go to Shakra, whenever I wish. Having gone there, I saw Shakra, Shachi's consort. There, I also saw the rajarshi, King Pandu. O king! There was a conversation about Dhritarashtra there, about the extremely difficult austerities that the king was tormenting himself with. O king! I heard what Shakra said. There are three years left in this king's lifespan. After that, with Gandhari, the king will go to Kubera's abode. Dhritarashtra will find pleasure there and will be honoured by the king of the yakshas. He will be adorned in divine ornaments and will travel as he wishes, in a celestial vehicle. He is a rishi's son[81] and has burnt his sins through austerities. The one with dharma in his soul will roam around in the worlds of the gods, the gandharvas and the rakshasas at ease. What you have asked me is a great mystery, even to the gods. However, since I am pleased with you, I have told you. You are also learned about the sacred texts and have burnt your sins through austerities." They heard these sweet words of the devarshi. All of them were extremely happy in their minds and so was the king. Those learned brahmanas conversed in this way with Dhritarashtra and then went away as they desired, along paths meant for those who are successful.'

Chapter 1959(28)

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! When the Indra among the Kouravas left for the forest, the Pandavas were overwhelmed by sorrow and grief and were also miserable on account of their mother. All the citizens grieved about the king. The brahmanas conversed about the king. "How will the aged king dwell in that desolate forest? What about the immensely fortunate Gandhari and Pritha Kunti? The rajarshi deserved happiness. How will he find joy in that great forest? With his sons killed, what will be the state of the one who has wisdom for his sight? On being separated from her sons, Kunti has done something that is extremely difficult. She has abandoned the prosperity of the kingdom, cherishing life in the forest instead. What is the state of Vidura, who devotes himself to serving his brother? Gavalgana's intelligent son is the one who protects the legacy of his lord." The citizens, even the young, were afflicted by thoughts and sorrow. Here and there, they conversed in this way with each other. All the Pandavas were severely afflicted by grief. For a long time, they sorrowed over their mother, just as they had done so earlier. They also grieved over their father, the aged king who had lost his sons, the immensely fortunate Gandhari and the immensely intelligent Vidura. As they thought in this way, they could find no pleasure, not in the kingdom, not in women and not in studying the Vedas. Thinking about the king, they were overcome with supreme disregard for everything material. They repeatedly remembered the terrible slaughter of the kin, the destruction of the young Abhimanyu in the forefront of the battle and that of the mighty-armed Karna, who did not retreat from an encounter. There were the sons of Droupadi and other well-wishers. Remembering the slaughter of those brave ones, they were cheerless. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The brave ones on earth had been killed, the jewels had been destroyed. They always thought about this and could not sleep. The sons of the queens, Droupadi and the beautiful Subhadra, had been killed. They were also cheerless and miserable. But they saw the son of Virata's daughter, your father, Parikshit. That is the way your forefathers sustained their lives.'

Chapter 1960(29)

Vaishampayana said, 'Those brave tigers among men, the Pandavas, the delight of their mother, remembered their mother and were afflicted by terrible grief. Unlike what they had always done earlier, they no longer devoted themselves to the royal duties. Before this, all of them had performed those tasks of the kingdom. But they no longer did this. They were permeated by sorrow and could find nothing to delight them. Even if they were addressed by someone, they did not honour that person back in reply. Those brave ones were impossible to assail and were like the ocean in gravity. However, because of being afflicted by grief, they seemed to be ignorant. It was as if they had lost their senses. The descendants of the Kuru lineage remembered their mother. "How will the emaciated Pritha be able to bear the burden of the aged couple? How is the king? He has lost his sons and is without a refuge too. With his wife, how will he dwell in a forest that is infested with carnivorous beasts? The relatives of the queen, the immensely fortunate Gandhari, have been slain. How will she follow her aged and blind husband in that desolate forest?" Extremely anxious, this is the way they conversed.

'They then made up their minds to go and see Dhritarashtra. Sahadeva bowed down before the king and said, "I can see that you have made up your mind to go there. Out of respect for you, I was unable to say that I also desired that. O Indra among kings! It is time for us to go. Through good fortune, I will be able to see how the ascetic Kunti is faring. The aged ascetic will have matted hair. Her limbs will have been wounded from kusha and *kasha*.[82] She has been reared in palaces and mansions and has enjoyed great happiness. She is now exhausted and extremely miserable. When will I see my mother? O bull among the Bharata lineage! The progress of mortals is indeed temporary. The princess Kunti, who enjoyed happiness, is now in a forest." Hearing Sahadeva's words, the queen Droupadi, supreme among women, honoured the king and said, "If the queen Pritha is alive, when will I see her? O lord of men! If she is still alive, all of us will be delighted. In this way, may your mind and intelligence always find pleasure in dharma. O Indra among kings! You should now do what is best for us. O king! Know that all the daughters-in-law are ready, with their feet poised. They desire to see Kunti, Gandhari and their father-in-law." O bull among the Bharata lineage! The queen Panchali addressed the king in this way. He accordingly summoned the commander of the soldiers and instructed him about everything. "Make the soldiers advance, with a large number of chariots and elephants. I wish to see how King Dhritarashtra is in the forest. Let the superintendents of the women be asked to ready many vehicles. Let all the thousands of palanquins be prepared. We need carts, stores, tents, treasuries and artisans. Let the supervisors of the treasuries also advance towards the hermitage in Kurukshetra. Let there not be any restrictions for any of the citizens who wish to see the king and let them be protected well. Let there be cooks and all the overseers of the kitchen. Let many kinds of food and edible items be loaded onto the carts. Let it immediately be announced that we will depart tomorrow. Let diverse kinds of dwelling houses be constructed along the way.” With his brothers, the Pandava king issued these kinds of instructions. Next day, with the women and children in front, the king left. Once outside, the king waited for five days, protecting and waiting for the large number of people who wanted to go. After this, he left for the forest.’

Chapter 1961(30)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The supreme among the Bharata lineage instructed the soldiers. Those men were like guardians of the worlds and protected everyone, with Arjuna at the front. In delight, a loud roar arose, “Yoke the vehicles. Get ready.” The riders shouted, “Yoke the mounts.” Some men advanced on vehicles, others on horses as swift as thought. There were chariots that were like cities, blazing like the fire. O lord of men! Others were on Indras among elephants or camels. Some advanced on foot. There were warriors who fought with nails and spikes.[83] The residents of the city and the countryside were there, in many kinds of vehicles. Wishing to see Dhritarashtra, they followed the king of the Kurus. On the king’s instructions, the preceptor, Goutama Kripa, assembled all the soldiers and the commanders and advanced towards the hermitage. Yudhishthira, the prosperous king of the Kurus, was surrounded by brahmanas. He was praised by many bards, raconteurs and minstrels. A white umbrella was held aloft his head. The descendant of the Kuru lineage advanced with a large number of chariots. Vrikodara, the performer of terrible deeds, was on an elephant that was as large as a mountain. The son of the wind god advanced, equipped with machines and implements of war. Madri’s sons were astride well-prepared horses. They were cheerful at the prospect of seeing their mother. They were clad in armour and had standards. The immensely energetic Arjuna was on a chariot that was as radiant as the sun. This was yoked to divine and white horses and he followed the king on this. For the large number of women who were on palanquins, Droupadi led the way. The superintendents of the women advanced, showering around large quantities of riches. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The Pandava soldiers were beautiful, with many men and elephants, accompanied by the sounds of flutes and veenas. O lord of the earth! As they advanced, the bulls among the Kurus progressively dwelt along the banks of rivers and beautiful lakes. On Yudhishthira's instructions, the immensely energetic Yuyutsu and Dhoumya, the priest, were left with the task of protecting the city. Progressively, King Yudhishthira reached Kurukshetra. He crossed the extremely sacred river, Yamuna. From a distance, the intelligent rajarshi saw the hermitage of Shatayupa and Kouravya Dhritarashtra. All the people were delighted and entered the forest. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They filled everything with a loud uproar.'

Chapter 1962(31)

Vaishampayana said, 'When they were some distance away, the Pandavas descended and proceeded on foot. They bowed down in humility and advanced towards the king's hermitage. All the citizens, the residents of the kingdom, the women and the foremost among the Kurus followed them on foot. The Pandavas reached Dhritarashtra's lonely hermitage, only frequented by a large number of deer and beautiful with groves of plantain trees. There were ascetics there, engaged in different kinds of vows. When the Pandavas arrived, they were curious and came forward to see them. His voice choking with tears, the king asked them, "Where is the upholder of the Kourava lineage? Where has our elder father gone?" They replied, "The lord has gone to bathe in the Yamuna and to collect flowers and water." On foot, all of them swiftly proceeded along the path that was indicated to them and saw him from a distance. Wishing to see their father, they advanced swiftly. Sahadeva quickly dashed towards Pritha. Weeping aloud, the intelligent one touched his mother's feet. On seeing her beloved son, tears also flowed down her cheeks. She raised her son and embraced him with her arms, informing Gandhari that Sahadeva had come. Then Pritha saw the king, Bhimasena, Arjuna and Nakula and swiftly came towards them. She was ahead of the couple whose sons had been killed and was dragging them along. Seeing her, they[84] fell down at her feet. The great-minded and intelligent lord, the king,[85] recognized them through their voices and touch. Showering down tears and following the prescribed rites, the great-souled ones greeted the king, Gandhari and their mother. They took away the water pots and carried those themselves. The Pandavas were again comforted by their mother and regained their senses. The women, whose husbands were lions among men, the warriors and the inhabitants of the city and the countryside saw the king. King Yudhishthira presented each of them, announcing their names and their families and they were honoured back in return. Surrounded by them, the king's[86] eyes were filled with tears of joy and he thought himself to be back in his house in the city of Gajasahvya. With Gandhari and the intelligent Kunti, the king greeted his daughters-in-law, Krishna and the others and was delighted. He went to the hermitage, populated by siddhas and charanas. He wished to see it, since it was populated by the visitors, like the firmament by large numbers of stars.'

Chapter 1963(32)

Vaishampayana said, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! With his brothers, whose beautiful eyes were like lotus petals and who were tigers among men, the king resided in that hermitage. There were immensely fortunate ascetics who had assembled from many countries. They wished to see the sons of the king of the Kurus, the broad-chested Pandavas. They said, "We wish to know this. Which one among these is Yudhishthira? Where are Bhima, Arjuna and the illustrious Droupadi?" The suta recounted all their names. Sanjaya also introduced them to Droupadi and all the other Kuru women. "This one is fair, with a complexion that is like that of pure gold. His body is like that of a grown and large lion. His nose is sharp and his eyes are long and large. His complexion is coppery. This is the king of the Kurus. This one's gait is like of a mad king among elephants. He is fair and his complexion is like that of pure and heated gold. He is large and his arms are long and thick. Look. This is Vrikodara. Behold him. Next to him, there is the one with the large bow. He is young and dark, with a complexion like that of the leader of a herd of elephants. His shoulders are like that of a lion and his gait is like that of an elephant that is sporting. His eyes are like lotus petals. This is the brave Arjuna. The supreme men who are near Kunti are the twins, equal to Vishnu and the great Indra. Among all the men in this world, there is no one who is their equal in beauty, strength or good conduct. This one has eyes like lotus petals. She is middle-aged and is like one from heaven. Her complexion is like that of a blue lotus. This is Krishna, like Lakshmi personified, like the deity of a city. Next to her there is one with a golden complexion. Her complexion is like that of Gouri[87] personified. O foremost among brahmanas! This unmatched one in the middle is the sister of the one who has the chakra as a weapon.[88] There was a prosperous king who was the leader of an army. That king always challenged Krishna and this one, with a complexion like that of a blue lotus, is his sister.[89] This is the one who is Vrikodara’s chief wife. This is the daughter of the famous king of Magadha, Jarasandha. Her complexion is like that of a *champaka* flower and she is the wife of Madravati’s younger son.[90] This one has a body that is like a blue lotus and there is no one who is her equal on earth. Her eyes are like lotus petals and she is the wife of Madravati’s older son.[91] This fair one has a complexion like that of heated gold. She is the daughter of King Virata and this is her son.[92] She is the wife of Abhimanyu, the one who was slain in the battle when he was without a chariot, though Drona and the others were on their chariots. These ones are attired in white upper garments and do not have the partings in their hair.[93] They are the wives of the king of men.[94] They are also the daughters-in-law of the aged king, who lost one hundred of his brave sons. They are thus without protectors. O brahmanas! O upright ones! O those who are spirited and intelligent! I have recounted the names of the foremost ones. These are the ones you have asked me about. O ones who are pure in intelligence! These are the wives of lords of men.” The aged king of the Kurus was like a god among men and he thus met his sons. When all the ascetics had gone, he asked all of them about their welfare. The warriors seated themselves around the hermitage, in a clear area that was free of fallen leaves. As is proper, the women, the aged and the young seated themselves and he asked them about their welfare.’

Chapter 1964(33)

‘Dhritarashtra asked, “O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! O son! Are you well? What about your sons and all the residents of the city and the countryside? What about those who depend on you? Are they well? O lord! What about your advisers, large number of servants and seniors? Are the citizens served by the rajarshi so that they can obtain their subsistence? Is the treasury filled through revenue that does not violate any norms? Do you behave in the proper way towards enemies, neutrals and friends? Do you look after brahmanas properly and show them favours? O bull among the Bharata lineage! Are they satisfied with your good conduct? What about enemies, seniors, citizens, servants and relatives? O Indra among kings! Are you devoted towards ancestors and gods? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Do you worship guests with food and drink? Are the brahmanas in your dominion engaged in their own tasks? What about kshatriyas, large numbers of vaishyas, shudras and householders? Do the women, the young and the aged have to grieve or beg for anything? O bull among men! Are women honoured in your household? This lineage of rajarshis has obtained you as a king. O great king! I hope you are acting in the proper way and its fame is not diminishing.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Having been thus addressed, he[95] replied in the proper way. Those questions were about his welfare and deeds and he also asked questions about welfare. “O king! Are your austerities prospering? I hope exhaustion is not slowing you down. Without getting tired, is my mother able to serve you? O king! I hope her sojourn in the forest becomes successful. This is my elder mother[96] and she is afflicted and worn out through excessive exposure to the wind. She has been engaged in fierce austerities. I hope the queen is not suffering on account of this. Her immensely valorous sons have followed the dharma of kshatriyas and have been slain. I hope she does not censure us or regard us as sinners. O king! How is Vidura? We do not see him here. Is Sanjaya well and is he established in austerities?”

‘Thus addressed, King Dhritarashtra replied. “O son! Vidura is well. He has resorted to fierce austerities. He does not eat anything and subsists only on air. He is emaciated and consists only of veins. Sometimes, brahmanas catch sight of him, alone in this forest.” While he was speaking in this way, Kshatta was seen from a distance. His hair was matted and there were small pieces of wood in his mouth. He was emaciated and naked. He was covered in filth and smeared with pollen from wild flowers. The lord of the earth called out to him. However, on seeing such a large number of people in the hermitage, he suddenly began to run away. Alone, King Yudhishthira followed him. He entered that terrible forest, sometimes seeing him and sometimes unable to see him. The king pursued him carefully and called out, “Listen. O Vidura! I am your beloved King Yudhishthira.” Vidura, supreme among intelligent ones, entered another solitary part of the forest and stood there alone, clinging to a tree. The king saw that he was extremely emaciated and his form alone could be discerned. That is the way the immensely intelligent Yudhishthira could make out the immensely wise one. Standing before him, he said, “I am Yudhishthira.” The king said this in Vidura’s hearing and he received them only with his consciousness. He glanced at the king with unblinking eyes. Vidura fixed his gaze on his eyes. The intelligent Vidura penetrated his body with his body, his breath of life with his breath of life and his senses with his senses. Thus, using the strength of yoga, he entered the king’s body. Vidura ignited Dharmaraja’s energy. Vidura’s body still remained there, with unmoving eyes and clinging to the tree. The king saw that he had lost his senses. But he also realized that his many qualities had become more powerful. Pandava Dharmaraja remembered his own great energy.[97] O lord of the earth! He thus got to know everything about his earlier self. Vyasa had told him about the great energy that comes from the dharma of yoga. The learned Dharmaraja wished to perform the rites and perform the acts of cremation there. But an invisible voice was heard. “O king! What was known as Vidura should not be cremated. Your body is also in him and he is nothing but eternal Dharma. O king! He will obtain the worlds known as Santanaka.[98] O scorcher of enemies! He followed the dharma of mendicants and you should not grieve about him.” Having been thus addressed, Dharmaraja returned from that spot. He told the king who was Vichitravirya’s son everything that had happened. The radiant king, all the people and Bhimasena and the others were filled with great wonder. Hearing this, the king was delighted and spoke to Dharma’s son. “Accept this water, roots and fruits from me. O king! It has been said that a guest should be offered whatever one partakes oneself.” The king who was Dharma’s son agreed to this. They ate under trees. All of them accepted the fruits, the roots and the water. They spent the night under trees.’

Chapter 1965(34)

Vaishampayana said, 'The night was spent in that hermitage, performing auspicious deeds. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The conjunction of the nakshatras was auspicious and the night passed. Here and there, there were conversations, with the attributes of dharma and artha. There were citations from many sacred texts, with colourful words and syllables. O lord among men! Having cast aside their extremely expensive beds, the Pandavas slept on the ground, near their mother. Whatever the great-minded King Dhritarashtra ate, that is what those brave ones among men ate, spending the night there. When night was over, with his brothers, Kounteya performed the morning ablutions and took a look at the area around the hermitage. With Dhritarashtra's permission, he roamed around wherever he wished, with the women from the inner quarters, the servants and the priests. He saw the sacrificial altars, with fires blazing. Many sages had consecrated themselves there and were offering oblations into the fires. There were wild flowers from the region and the smoke rose upwards. There were handsome brahmanas and large numbers of sages. There were herds of deer there and these were completely at ease. O lords! Large numbers of birds were without any fear and were singing. There were peacocks, blue jays, warbling gallinules and melodious cuckoos. These auspicious notes were pleasant to hear. Some places echoed with the sounds of brahmanas studying. In other spots, there were huge piles of fruits and roots that had been gathered. The king gave the ascetics riches, golden and silver pots and the wood of fig trees. The king gave them hides, woolen cloth, ladles and spoons. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The king also gave them water pots, plates, pots for boiling, iron containers and many other kinds of vessels. Everyone accepted as much as he desired. The king, with dharma in his soul, toured the entire area of the hermitage. Having given away many kinds of riches to everyone, the king returned again.

'He went and met the learned King Dhritarashtra, who had performed his ablutions and was seated at ease, together with Gandhari. His mother stood not very far away, bowing down like a disciple. The one with dharma in his soul saw Kunti, who had always followed dharma. He worshipped the king and announced himself to the king. Having been asked to sit, he then seated himself on a mat made out of grass. Bhimasena and the other Pandavas, bulls among the Kouravas, also honoured the king and commanded by him, sat down. Surrounded by them, the Kourava king was radiant. He blazed in the prosperity of the brahman, like Brihaspati amidst the gods. When they were seated, the maharshis approached. There were also Shatayupa and the others, the residents of Kurukshetra. The illustrious and extremely energetic brahmana, Vyasa, worshipped by large numbers of devarshis and surrounded by his disciples, showed himself before the king. King Kouravya, Kunti's valiant son, and Bhimasena and the others arose and worshipped him. Vyasa, surrounded by Shatayupa and the others, approached and addressed King Dhritarashtra. There was an extensive mat made out of kusha grass and it was covered with black antelope skin and kusha grass on top. This had been prepared for Vyasa and it was offered to him. When he was seated, they took Dvaipayana's permission and seated themselves on mats around the immensely energetic one.'

Chapter 1966(35)

Vaishampayana said, 'When the great-souled Pandavas were seated, Satyavati's son, Vyasa, invited the king to speak. "O Dhritarashtra! O mighty-armed one! Are your austerities progressing? O lord of men! Is your mind pleased with residing in the forest? O king! Has the sorrow on account of the destruction of your sons diminished? O unblemished one! Are all your senses of knowledge clear? Is your intelligence firmly fixed on observing the rites of the forest? I hope my daughter-in-law, Gandhari, is not overcome by grief. The queen is immensely wise and intelligent and has knowledge of dharma and artha. She knows the truth about prosperity and adversity. I hope she is not sorrowing. O king! I hope Kunti is serving you without any sense of ego. She has given up the kingdom and devoted herself to serving her seniors. Did the king who is Dharma's son, Bhima, Arjuna and the twins greet you happily? Have they been comforted? Were you happy at seeing them? Has your mind been cleansed of sin? O lord of men! Do you possess pure sentiments and has knowledge been generated in you? O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O great king! In all creatures, there are three things that are superior—lack of enmity, truth and lack of violence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I hope you are not suffering from residing in the forest. O lord! What about eating forest fare and wearing the garments of sages? O king! I know about the departure, following the proper rites, of the great-souled Vidura. He was born from Dharma and was extremely great-souled. It was because of Mandavya's curse that Dharma was born as Vidura.[99] He was immensely intelligent. He was a great yogi. He was great-souled and extremely great-minded. Brihaspati among the gods and Sukra among the asuras did not possess as much of intelligence as that bull among men did. Over a long period of time, the rishi Mandavya accumulated the strength of his austerities and used this to overwhelm eternal Dharma. Through his strength, Brahma's command and my employment, that extremely intelligent one was born in Vichitravirya's field.[100] O great king! He was your brother. But he was also the eternal god of the gods. Through the techniques of dharana and dhyana, the wise and the learned known him now as Dharma. The eternal one prospers through truth, self-control, rituals, non-violence, generosity and austerities. Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, was born through the strength of his yoga. O king! That is the reason that wise and extremely intelligent one is also known as Dharma. Both here and in the hereafter, Dharma exists, like the fire, like the wind, like the water, like the earth and like the sky. O Kouravya! He can go everywhere. He pervades everything, mobile and immobile. That god of the gods can be seen by the siddhas, those who have cleansed their sins. Dharma is Vidura. Vidura is the Pandava.[101] O king! You can see Pandava, who is standing before you and is obedient to you. Your brother, the supremely intelligent one, has entered him with his soul. It is good fortune that the great-souled one, immensely strong in yoga, now pervades Kounteya. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You will also be united with the greatest benefit. O son! Know that I have come here to dispel your doubts. There is a deed that none of the maharshis in this world have ever accomplished earlier. It is marvelous. Through the fruits of my austerities, I will show it to you. O lord of the earth! What do you desire? What do you seek to obtain from me? Tell me clearly what you wish to see or hear. I will act in accordance with that."'

This ends Ashrama-Vasa Parva.

Section Ninety-One

Putra Darshana Parva

This section has 234 shlokas and 9 chapters.

Chapter 1967(36): 33 shlokas
Chapter 1968(37): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1969(38): 23 shlokas
Chapter 1970(39): 24 shlokas
Chapter 1971(40): 21 shlokas
Chapter 1972(41): 28 shlokas
Chapter 1973(42): 17 shlokas
Chapter 1974(43): 18 shlokas
Chapter 1975(44): 52 shlokas

> *Putra means son and* darshana *means sight. Vyasa uses the power of his austerities to show everyone the dead warriors, including the sons of Dhritarashtra and Gandhari. That explains the name of this parva. After visiting Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti, the Pandavas return to Hastinapura.*

Chapter 1967(36)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O brahmana! King Dhritarashtra, tiger among men, went to the forest with his wife and his daughter-in-law, Kunti. Vidura obtained success and merged himself into Dharmaraja. All the sons of Pandu were then residing in the circle of the hermitage. What wonderful deed did the supremely energetic maharshi, Vyasa, accomplish? What did he speak of doing? O brahmana! For how long did the undecaying Kouravya king, Yudhishthira, reside in the forest with his people? O lord! While he dwelt there, what did he and his soldiers eat? What about the great-souled ones and the women of the inner quarters? O unblemished one! Tell me that.’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘O king! With the permission of the king of the Kurus, the Pandavas prepared many kinds of food and drink and felt refreshed. With the soldiers and the women of the inner quarters, they resided there for one month. O unblemished one! After this, as I have told you, Vyasa arrived there. In the presence of the king, all of them began to converse. O king! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! When Vyasa had come, other sages also arrived there—Narada, Parvata, Devala, great in austerities, Vishvavasu, Tumbaru and Chitrasena.[1] With Dhritarashtra’s permission, Yudhishthira, the great-minded king of the Kurus, followed the proper rites and worshipped them. Having been worshipped by Yudhishthira, all of them sat down on sacred and excellent seats covered with grass. When they were seated, the immensely intelligent king who was the extender of the Kuru lineage[2] also sat down, surrounded by the sons of Pandu. Gandhari, Kunti, Droupadi, Satvati[3] and the other women also seated themselves. O king! The conversation that ensued was divine, full of dharma and concerned accounts of the ancient rishis, the gods and the asuras.

‘When this conversation was over, Vyasa, foremost among eloquent ones and supreme among those who knew about all Vedas, was pleased. The immensely energetic one again spoke these words to the lord whose sight was his wisdom. “O Indra among kings! I know the desire that is there in your heart. You are burning with grief on account of your sons. O king! That grief is also there in Gandhari’s heart. O great king! It is also there in the hearts of Kunti and Droupadi. Subhadra, Krishna’s sister, is also holding up a fierce sorrow on account of her son being killed. That is also known to me. O king! I heard that all of them had come here and were residing here. O descendant of the Kourava lineage! I have accordingly come here to dispel doubts. Over a long period of time, I have accumulated the valour of austerities. All of these gods, gandharvas and maharshis will witness that today. Therefore, tell me. O mighty-armed one! I will grant you whatever you wish. I am lofty and can grant you a boon. Behold the strength of my austerities.” The Indra among kings was thus addressed by the infinitely intelligent Vyasa. He thought for a short while and then spoke. “I am blessed that you are showing me your favours. Since you have come here today, with all these virtuous ones, my life has become successful. Today, I understand the destinations obtained by great-souled ones. All of you are Brahma’s equal. You are stores of austerities and have come here to meet me. There is no doubt that I have become purified through the act of seeing you. O unblemished ones! I no longer entertain any fears about the world hereafter. However, I loved my son and always remember him. My mind is distressed. He was evil-minded and extremely wicked. What has happened to him? He was evil in his intelligence and oppressed the innocent Pandavas. He violently destroyed the earth, with its men and elephants. There were great-souled kings, the lords of many countries. They assembled for my son’s sake and all of them came under the subjugation of death. Those brave ones gave up their sons and wives, dearer to them than their own lives. They went to the abode of the lord of the dead. What has happened to them? O brahmana! What has happened to those who were slain in the battle for the sake of their friends? What about my sons and grandsons who were killed in the encounter? My heart is pained at the immensely strong and aged Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, being brought down, as it is for Drona, supreme among brahmanas. My son was foolish and wicked. He hated his well-wishers. Desiring the kingdom of the earth, he conveyed his blazing lineage to its destruction. I remember all this and am burnt night and day. Overwhelmed by sorrow and grief, I cannot obtain any peace. O father! This is what I think about. There is no tranquility for me.”’

Chapter 1968(37)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O Janamejaya! Hearing these piteous words of the rajarshi, Gandhari began to sorrow again. So did Kunti, Drupada’s daughter, Subhadra and the excellent women and daughters-in-law of the Kourava lineage. Queen Gandhari was overwhelmed with grief. Her eyes were bound. Joining her hands in salutation, she spoke to her father-in-law. “O bull among sages! Sixteen years have elapsed since this king’s sons were slain. O lord! He sorrows over his sons and can find no peace. Overcome with grief on account of his sons, the lord of the earth sighs. O great sage! Dhritarashtra has never been able to sleep or sit. Through the strength of your austerities, you are capable of creating all the worlds. Why can you not show the king the worlds to which his sons have gone? Krishna Droupadi sorrows grievously because her relatives and sons have been slain. She is virtuous and you love this daughter-in-law the most among all your daughters-in-law. Krishna’s sister, Subhadra, is gentle in speech. The beautiful one sorrows grievously because Subhadra’s son was killed. This is the wife of Bhurishrava and she is extremely miserable. O lord! Because of the grief at the hardship her husband confronted, she cannot lie down or sit. Her father-in-law was the intelligent Bahlika, the extender of the Kuru lineage. With his father, Somadatta was slain in the great battle.[4] O immensely intelligent one! Your son had one hundred handsome sons who did not retreat from battle. They were slain in the forefront of the battle. These are those one hundred wives, also grieving on account of their sons. The king and I think repeatedly about this and sorrow. O great sage! They surround me in their sorrow. Those were brave and great-souled maharathas, my fathers-in-law, Somadatta and the others. O lord! What has happened to them? O illustrious one! Through your favours, the king’s sorrow can be banished. The time is right for this to be done for me too, and for Kunti, your daughter-in-law.” Kunti’s face was emaciated because of her vows. When Gandhari had spoken, she remembered her son, who had been secretly born from the sun god. Rishi Vyasa was the granter of boons and could hear and see from a distance. He saw that the queen, Savyasachi’s mother, was miserable. Vyasa told her, “O immensely wise one! Tell me what you wish to be done. What is in your mind?” Kunti bowed her head down before her father-in-law. In shame, she told him these words, explaining what had happened earlier.’

Chapter 1969(38)

‘Kunti said, “O illustrious one! You are my father-in-law. Therefore, you are like a god of the gods to me. Since you are like a god of the gods, listen to my truthful words. An ascetic and wrathful brahmana named Durvasa came to my father, soliciting alms. I gratified him by offering him food and through my purity, renunciation and cleanliness of mind. Even when there was reason for great anger, I did not exhibit any rage. He was pleased with me and said that he would grant me a boon. ‘You must accept a boon.’ That is what he told me. I was scared of being cursed by the brahmana and agreed. The brahmana spoke to me again. ‘O fortunate one! O one with the beautiful face! You will be Dharma’s mother. Whichever god you desire will obey your summons and present himself.’ Having said this, the brahmana disappeared and I was astounded. But in no situation, did it disappear from my mind.[5] Once I was seated in a floor of the palace and saw the rising sun. I remembered the rishi’s words and remembered the sun god. I was still a child and did not comprehend the sin associated with this. The god, the one with the one thousand rays, appeared before me. He divided his body into two parts, one for the sky and one for earth. One of these continued to heat the worlds and the other presented itself before me. I was trembling and he said, ‘Accept a boon from me.’ I bowed my head down before him and replied, ‘Please go.’ The one with the fierce rays told me, ‘A summons cannot be futile and I will not pardon you. I will burn down the brahmana who gave you the boon and will also burn you down.’ I wished to protect the brahmana. He had not committed any crime that deserved a curse. So I told him, ‘O god! Give me a son who will be like you.’ At this, the sun god penetrated me with his energy and confounded me. He told me that I would have a son and returned to the firmament. I was in the inner quarters and wished to hide what had happened from my father. The son, Karna, was secretly born and I cast the child into the waters. O brahmana!

There is no doubt that through the god’s favours, I once again became a virgin, just as the rishi had said I would. I was foolish. Though I knew him as my son, I ignored him. O brahmana rishi! This continues to consume me and you know it well. Whether this was a sin, or whether it was not a sin, I have now told you about it. O illustrious one! You should free me from the fear that I suffer from.[6] O unblemished one! Let the king also know what is in his heart. O supreme among sages! Through you, those wishes can be satisfied.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Having been addressed thus, Vyasa, supreme among those who knew about the Vedas, said, “You are praiseworthy. Everything will happen exactly as you have told me. There was no crime attached to you. You became a virgin again. The gods possess the power to enter human bodies. Since they are gods, they can have offspring through resolution, words, sight, touch and intercourse. These are the five methods they use. The dharma of humans must not be confused with the dharma of gods. O Kunti! Now that you know this, let your mental fever be extinguished. For all those who are strong, there is medication. For all those who are strong, there is purification. For all those who are strong, there is dharma. For all those who are strong, everything can be owned.”’

Chapter 1970(39)

‘Vyasa said, “O fortunate one! O Gandhari! You will see your sons, brothers, friends and the husbands of these daughters-in-law. They will seem to have woken up from sleep. Kunti will see Karna and Yadavi will see Subhadra’s son. Droupadi will see her five sons and her father and brothers. In my heart, I had thought of this means, even before you, the king and Pritha urged me. You should not grieve for all those great-souled bulls among men. They were virtuous and resorted to the dharma of kshatriyas. That is how they were slain. O unblemished one! This was certainly destiny, to accomplish the tasks of the gods. All of them were born on earth as incarnations, as parts of the gods. There were also gandharvas, apsaras, pishachas, guhyakas, rakshasas and other sacred ones, the siddhas and the devarshis. There were also gods, danavas and unblemished brahmana rishis. In the forefront of the battle, those were the ones who were slain in Kurukshetra. It has been heard that Dhritarashtra was an intelligent king of the gandharvas. He was born in the world of humans as Dhritarashtra, your husband. Know that the undecaying Pandu was a superior one from the large number of Maruts. Kshatta and King Yudhishthira were born as parts of Dharma. Know Duryodhana to be Kali and Shakuni to be Dvapara. O one who is beautiful to see! Know that Duhshasana and the others were rakshasas. Know that Bhimasena, the powerful scorcher of enemies, came from the Maruts and Partha Dhananjaya was the rishi Nara. Hrishikesha was Narayana and the twins are the Ashvins. O beautiful one! Know that Aditya, supreme among those who heat, divided himself into two parts, one for heating the worlds and the other as Karna. Since the objective was to foster enmity, he was generated through this friction. Subhadra's son was the heir of the Pandavas. He was slain by the six maharathas. He was born from the god Soma, who used yoga to divide himself into two. With Droupadi, Dhrishtadyumna was born from the fire, as parts of the auspicious fire god. Know that Shikhandi was a rakshasa. Know that Drona was a part of Brihaspati and Drona's son of Rudra. Know that Gangeya Bhishma was a Vasu born as a human. O immensely wise one! In this way, the gods were born as humans. O beautiful one! Having accomplished their tasks, they have returned to heaven again. All of you have borne sorrow in your hearts for a long time, resulting from a fear about what has happened in the world hereafter. I will dispel that now. All of you should proceed towards the river Bhagirathi. There, you will see all those who have been slain in the field of battle."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Hearing Vyasa's words, all the people roared loudly, like lions, and proceeded towards the Ganga. Dhritarashtra and his advisers proceeded with the Pandavas, together with the tigers among sages and gandharvas who had assembled. That ocean of people gradually reached the Ganga. Cheerfully, as they wished, all of them began to dwell there. The intelligent Pandava resided in a spot there, with his followers, with the women from the inner quarters and the aged. They spent that day, as if it was one hundred years. They waited for the night, desiring to see the slain kings. The sun set over the sacred Asta mountain.[7] They bathed and completed the evening rites.'

Chapter 1971(40)

Vaishampayana said, 'When night approached, they performed their evening ablutions. All those who had assembled approached Vyasa. Dhritarashtra, with dharma in his soul, purified his mind. He seated himself, with the Pandavas and the rishis. The women seated themselves with Gandhari. According to age, all the people, the residents of the city and the countryside, also sat down. Vyasa, the immensely energetic and great sage, bathed in the sacred waters of the Bhagirathi and summoned all the people[8]—all the warriors who had fought for the Pandavas and the Kouravas and the immensely fortunate kings who had resided in different countries. O Janamejaya! A tumultuous sound arose from inside the water, raised by those who had earlier been Kuru and Pandava soldiers. All the kings, with Bhishma and Drona leading the way, and all the soldiers arose from the water in their thousands. Virata and Drupada were there, with their sons and their soldiers. Droupadi's sons, Subhadra's son and the rakshasa Ghatotkacha were also there. There were Karna and Duryodhana, maharatha Shakuni, Duhshasana and the other maharatha sons of Dhritarashtra. There were Jarasandha's son, Bhagadatta, King Jalasandha, Bhurishrava, Shala, Shalya, Vrishasena and his younger brother, Prince Lakshmana, Dhrishtadyumna and his son, all of Shikhandi's sons, Dhrishtaketu and his younger brother, Achala, Vrishaka, the rakshasa Alayudha, Bahlika, Somadatta and King Chekitana. There were many others, several whom I have not mentioned now. With shining bodies, all of them arose from the water. The brave kings were seen to arise with the garments, standards and mounts that they had possessed. All of them were attired in celestial garments. All of them were adorned in dazzling earrings. They were beyond enmity, beyond ego, beyond rage and beyond intolerance. Gandharvas sang around them and bards chanted their praises. They sported divine garments and garlands and were surrounded by large numbers of apsaras. O lord of men! The sage who was Satyavati's son was delighted. Through the strength of his austerities, he gave Dhritarashtra divine eyesight. The illustrious Gandhari also had the strength of this divine knowledge. She saw all her sons and all the others who had been slain in the battle. All the people watched with unblinking eyes. They thought that this was an extremely great wonder and it made their body hair stand up. The large numbers of cheerful men and women made it seem like a festival. They saw the soldiers who had arrived, as if they had been etched on a painting. With his divine sight, Dhritarashtra saw all of them. O best among the Bharata lineage! Through the sage's favours, he was delighted.'

Chapter 1972(41)

Vaishampayana said, 'The best among the Bharata lineage met each other. They were devoid of anger and jealousy. All of them had cleansed their sins. They resorted to the sacred rites that had been laid down by the brahmana rishis. All of them were cheerful in their minds, like immortals in the world of the gods. O king! Sons met fathers and mothers, wives met husbands, brothers met brothers and friends met friends. Happily, the Pandavas met the great archer, Karna, Subhadra's son and all of Droupadi's sons. Karna and the Pandavas were delighted to meet each other. All the kings met each other affectionately. Through the favours of the rishi, all rage in the other kshatriyas was destroyed. They abandoned enmity and resorted to affection. In this way, all of them, the tigers among the Kurus and the other men, met their seniors and their relatives and sons. Cheerful in their minds, they passed that entire night. The kings were content and thought that they were in heaven. There was no sorrow, no fear, no terror, no desire and no fame. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The warriors met each other. Having met their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons, the women obtained great happiness and abandoned all their grief. The brave ones and their wives spent a night of pleasure together. They embraced each other and then returned to wherever they had come from. The bull among sages gave those people leave to depart. While everyone looked on, they disappeared in an instant.[9] The great-souled ones were submerged in the sacred river that has three flows. With their chariots and their standards, they returned to their own abodes. Some went to the world of the gods, others to Brahma's abode. Some went to Varuna's world, others obtained Kubera's abode. Some of those kings obtained the world of Vaivasvata. Some went to the worlds of the rakshasas and pishachas, others to Uttara Kuru. The progress of all of them was wonderful, as some went with the immortals. The great-souled ones left with their mounts and their followers.

‘The great sage was still standing in the water. He was devoted to dharma and immensely energetic, engaged in the welfare of the Kurus. When all of them had gone, he spoke to the kshatriya ladies who had lost their husbands. “Let the best among women who desire the worlds obtained by their husbands swiftly and faithfully immerse themselves in the waters of the Jahnavi.” Hearing those words, those beautiful women behaved faithfully. Obeying their father-in-law, they entered the waters of the Jahnavi. O lord of the earth! All those virtuous women were freed from their human bodies and departed with their husbands. In this way, all those virtuous women of the lineage entered the water, were freed and went to the worlds obtained by their husbands. They had divine forms. They were adorned in divine ornaments. There were divine garments and garlands. They went where their husbands were. They were spirited and possessed good conduct. All of them possessed all the good qualities. Freed from sin, they vanished and obtained their own respective abodes. Vyasa was the granter of boons and devoted to dharma. At that time, he satisfied the wishes of everyone.[10] There were people who had assembled from many countries. On hearing of this encounter between those gods among men and the men who had returned, they were greatly delighted. A man who listens to this account of the encounter between those who loved each other, always obtains good things, in this world and in the next. He obtains benefits and is united with his relatives. His mind is at ease. A learned man who makes others listen to this obtains supreme success. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Men who observe rites and study this are united with the yoga of adhyatma and become intelligent men. Those who hear this parva recited always obtain supreme success.’

Chapter 1973(42)

‘Suta[11] said, “On hearing of the reappearance and departure of his forefathers, the learned King Janamejaya was delighted. Filled with joy, he again asked about the reappearance. ‘If one has cast aside the body, how can one be again seen in that same form?’ The best among brahmanas, Vyasa’s powerful disciple was addressed in this way and replied. ‘It is certain that the results of all deeds are never destroyed. O king! Bodies and forms are the outcome of deeds. The great elements are united with the lord of all elements and are permanent. They always exist with the eternal and are not destroyed when they are separated from the impermanent. The efforts of acts done easily bring fruits. However, if the atman is attached to the acts, one enjoys happiness and unhappiness.[12] It has been determined that the kshetrajna is never destroyed. Know that the atman in creatures is permanent. One’s own form exists as long as deeds have not been exhausted. Until the deeds are exhausted, a man is constrained by his own form. There are many attributes that come together and lead to the body. Those who know can distinguish these from the eternal. In a horse sacrifice, the sacred texts have spoken about what is meant by a horse. Even when the horse goes to another world, the breath of life is eternal and in that sense, the horse is eternal. O king! If it pleases you, I will tell you what is beneficial for you. When engaged in sacrifices, you have heard of the path of devayana. When good deeds are performed for a sacrifice, the gods are favourably inclined towards you. When gods are honoured through animals, they become lords of the passage. Though they are seen to have gone, there are other parts that are permanent.[13] A man who sees this union of the five elements and various categories as permanent and confuses it with the eternal atman is futile in his intelligence. A person who sorrows because of separation is foolish. That is my view. A person who connects separation with taints should avoid all forms of association. If there is no attachment, there is no association. In this world, misery results from separation. A man who distinguishes the temporary from the permanent is not agitated by a sense of ego. A person who is touched by intelligence and can separate the temporary from the permanent is freed from confusion. Creatures arrive from a state of being invisible and return to being invisible again. I do not know him. He does not know me. Nor do I yet know detachment. If a man does not have control over his mind, whatever be the form of the body in which he undertakes acts, that is the form of the body in which he has to enjoy the fruits. Deeds of the mind are enjoyed in the mind. Deeds of the body are enjoyed in the body.”’

Chapter 1974(43)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O extender of the Kuru lineage! Through the favours of the rishi, the king obtained sight and saw his sons in their own forms, having never been able to see them earlier.[14] The king knew about the dharma of kings, the brahman and the Upanishads.[15] The best among men possessed the determination of intelligence. Through the strength of his austerities, the immensely wise Vidura advanced towards success. Having met the ascetic Vyasa, so did Dhritarashtra.’

Janamejaya said, ‘If Vyasa, the granter of boons, shows me my father in his former form, his former garments and his former age, I will then have faith in all this. Such a sight will be agreeable. I will then have accomplished success. I will be firm in my determination. Through the favours of that son of a rishi, let my desire be accomplished.

‘Suta said, “When the king spoke these words, the powerful and intelligent Vyasa wished to show him his favours and brought Parikshit there. King Janamejaya saw his handsome father. The king arrived from heaven in his former form and his former age. The great-souled Shamika and his son Shringi and the advisers also arrived and the king saw them.[16] Having performed the final rites of the sacrifice, King Janamejaya was delighted. The king bathed and also bathed his father himself. Having bathed, the best among the Bharata lineage addressed Astika, who was Jaratkaru’s son and was born in a lineage of nomadic mendicants. ‘O Astika! This sacrifice of mine has witnessed various wonders. That is my view. I have even obtained my father, the dispeller of my sorrows, now.’

‘“Astika replied, ‘Rishi Dvaipayana is an ancient store of austerities. O best among those of the Kuru lineage! If he is present at any person’s sacrifice, that person conquers both the worlds. O descendant of the Pandava lineage! You have heard many colourful accounts. The snakes have been reduced to ashes and have followed the footsteps of your father. O king! Because of your devotion to the truth, Takshaka has also been freed. All the rishis have been worshipped and you have seen the great-souled one’s end.[17] On hearing about this destruction of sin, you have accumulated a great deal of dharma. On seeing this generous person,[18] the strands of your heart have been loosened. There are those who are on the side of dharma, with good deeds and inclinations. On seeing them, sins are diminished. One should bow down before such people.'"

'Suta continued, "King Janamejaya heard this from the best among brahmanas. He worshipped the rishi and honoured him repeatedly. O one who knows about dharma! He then asked the undecaying and excellent rishi Vaishampayana about the remaining part of the account about residence in the forest."'

Chapter 1975(44)

Janamejaya asked, 'The king saw his sons and grandsons, with their friends and followers. After this, what did Dhritarashtra and King Yudhishthira do?'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Being able to see his sons again was a great and extraordinary wonder. After having seen this, the rajarshi was freed from his grief and returned to his hermitage. Taking Dhritarashtra's permission, all the ordinary people and the supreme rishis went away, as they desired. The great-souled Pandavas, with the superior and the inferior soldiers, followed the great-souled king and his wife. The intelligent sage who was Satyavati's son, worshipped by brahmana rishis and the worlds, also went to the hermitage and addressed Dhritarashtra. "O Dhritarashtra! O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Kourava lineage! Listen. You have obtained knowledge from the ancient rishis, the performers of auspicious deeds. They are senior, prosperous in knowledge and born in noble lineages. They know about the Vedas and the Vedangas. They know about dharma and about the ancient texts. They have told you about various accounts. Do not have any sorrow in your mind. A learned person is not distressed because of ill fortune. You have also heard about the secrets of the gods from Narada, who knows about what the gods intend. Your sons died after following the dharma of kshatriyas. They were sanctified by weapons and obtained an auspicious end. You have seen your sons, happily roaming around as they will. With all his brothers, their wives and well-wishers, the intelligent Yudhishthira is awaiting your instructions. Let him go, so that he can rule his own kingdom. He has dwelt in this forest for more than a month. O scorcher of enemies! The kingdom must always be protected carefully. O lord of men! There are many who hope to seize the kingdom." The extremely intelligent Vyasa addressed the Kourava king in this way.

'Hence, the eloquent one summoned Yudhishthira and spoke these words. "O Ajatashatru! O fortunate one! With your brothers, listen to me. O lord of the earth! Through your favours, grief does not constrain me any longer. O son! I am happy, just as I used to be with you earlier in Gajasahvya. O learned one! With you as my protector, I am surrounded by everything agreeable. I have obtained the fruits of obtaining a son through you. I am extremely happy with you. O mighty-armed one! I no longer suffer from rancour. O son! Leave quickly. Since I have met you, my austerities have suffered. My body has suffered from austerities. But on meeting you, I am able to hold it up again. Like me, your mothers[19] are also emaciated at having subsisted only on leaves. They are engaged in vows like mine. O son! They will not live for a long time. We have seen Duryodhana and the others, who have gone to the other world. That became possible because of the valour of Vyasa's austerities and you coming here. O unblemished one! The purpose behind my long life has been met. You should grant me permission to engage in severe austerities. The ancestral rites and fame of the lineage are now vested in you. O mighty-armed one! O son! Today or tomorrow, without any delay, leave. O bull among the Bharata lineage! You have heard a lot about the policy to be followed by kings. O lord! I do not see what else I can instruct you. You are accomplished." O son! These are the words the king spoke to the king.[20] "O one who knows about dharma! You should not abandon me in this way. I do not deserve it. If they so wish, let all my brothers and followers leave. I will carefully serve you and the two mothers in the vows." Gandhari replied, "O son! It shouldn't be that way. Listen to my words. The Kuru lineage and the ancestral rites of your father-in-law vest with you. O son! You should depart. You have worshipped us enough. O son! The king has spoken to you about what you should do and you listen to your father's words." Thus addressed, he wiped his eyes, which were overflowing with tears of affection. Weeping, he spoke these words to Kunti. "The king has cast me away and so has the illustrious Gandhari. However, I have always been bound to you. How can I miserably go away? O one who follows dharma! But I do not also wish to be an impediment in the path of your austerities. There is nothing superior to austerities. Greatness is obtained through austerities. O queen! My mind no longer turns towards the kingdom, as it used to do in earlier times. My entire mind and soul are now attracted towards austerities. This entire world is now empty. O fortunate one! The relatives are fewer. Our forces are no longer as strong as they used to be. The Panchalas have been severely diminished and only the maidens remain. O fortunate one! I do not see anyone who can establish their lineage again. In the encounter, all of them have been reduced to ashes by Drona alone. Those who were left were slain by Drona's son in the night. We can see that the Chedis and the Matsyas are no longer what they used to be. The Vrishnis alone are left, protected by Vasudeva's chakra. But I also see that dharma and artha must be established. There is no other reason. Therefore, cast your auspicious glances on all of us. It will be extremely difficult for us to see you. O mother! The king will engage in fierce austerities." When he heard these words, the mighty-armed Sahadeva, the lord of any battle, spoke these words to Yudhishthira, tears flowing down from his eyes. "O bull among kings! I am not interested in leaving my mother. You should quickly go. But I will observe austerities in this forest. I will use austerities to dry up my body here. I will serve at the feet of the king and my mothers." When he spoke in this way, Kunti embraced the mighty-armed one in her arms and said, "O son! You should not speak in this way. Act in accordance with my words. May everything be auspicious and well with you. May my sons be well. If you remain here, our austerities will be obstructed. I am bound by the noose of affection to you and my supreme austerities will suffer. O son! Therefore, depart. That is best for you. O lord! There is little time left for us." O Indra among kings! In this way, through this and many other words spoken by Kunti, their minds were calmed, especially those of Sahadeva and the king.

'The bulls among the Kuru lineage took permission from their mothers and from the king. They greeted the best among the Kuru lineage and the mothers and said, "O king! We will return. We have been honoured through these auspicious words. O king! With your permission, we will leave, cleansed of sin." This is what the great-souled Dharmaraja said. The rajarshi granted him permission, honoured Yudhishthira and pronounced benedictions of victory over him. The king comforted Bhima, best among strong ones. The intelligent and valiant one honoured him back in return. Kouravya embraced Arjuna and the twins, bulls among men. He honoured them and granted them permission to leave. They grasped Gandhari's feet and sought her permission. The king's mother[21] inhaled the fragrance of his head and embraced him. All of them circumambulated her, like calves who were being separated.[22] As they circumambulated, they kept on glancing towards her repeatedly. So did the virtuous Droupadi and all the other Kourava women. They followed the prescribed conduct and took leave of their father-in-law. The unblemished ones took leave from their mothers-in-law and were embraced by them. Having been instructed about their duties, they left with their husbands. The charioteers shouted, "Yoke. Arrange for the yoking." There was the grunting of camels and the neighing of horses. King Yudhishthira left for the city of Hastinapura, with his wives, soldiers and his relatives.'

This ends Putra Darshana Parva.

Section Ninety-Two
Naradagamana Parva

This section has 91 shlokas and 3 chapters.

Chapter 1976(45): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1977(46): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1978(47): 27 shlokas

> Agamana *means arrival and this parva is about Narada's arrival. Narada arrives and tells the Pandavas that Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and Kunti have been killed in a forest fire and Sanjaya has gone off to the Himalayas.*

Chapter 1977(45)

Vaishampayana said, ‘O king! Two years passed since the return of the Pandavas. As he wished, devarshi Narada came to meet Yudhishthira. Mighty-armed Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, worshipped him. When he was seated and rested, the supreme among eloquent ones asked, “O illustrious one! It has been a long time since you last came. O brahmana! Since you have arrived, is everything well and auspicious? Which countries have you seen? What can I do for you? O foremost among brahmanas! Tell me that. You are our beloved guest.” Narada replied, “O king! I have not seen you for a long time and that is the reason I have come from my hermitage. O king! I have seen the tirthas and the Ganga.” Yudhishthira asked, “People who reside along the banks of the Ganga say that the great-souled Dhritarashtra is resorting to supreme austerities now. Have you seen if the extender of the Kuru lineage is well? What about Gandhari, Pritha and Sanjaya, the son of a suta? How is the king, my father, now? O illustrious one! If you have seen the king, I wish to hear about this.”

‘Narada replied, “O great king! Be calm and listen. I will tell you everything about what I heard and what I saw in that hermitage. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! O king! When you returned from residing in the forest, your father left Kurukshetra and left for Gangadvara.[1] The intelligent one went with Gandhari, the daughter-in-law, Kunti, the suta Sanjaya, the sacrificial fire and the officiating priests. Your father is a store of austerities and resorted to fierce austerities. He placed pebbles in his mouth. He subsisted only on air. He became like a sage. In that forest, the great ascetic was worshipped by all the sages. In six months, the king was reduced to skin and bones. Gandhari subsisted only on water. Kunti ate only once a month. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Sanjaya ate every sixth day. The lord and the officiating priests offered many kinds of oblations into the sacrificial fire. In that forest, the king was sometimes seen and sometimes not seen.[2] The king roamed around in that forest, without a fixed abode. He was followed by the two queens and by Sanjaya. Sanjaya guided the king over plain and uneven terrain. In a similar way, the unblemished Pritha became Gandhari's eyes. Once, the supreme among kings went to a marshy tract near the Ganga. The intelligent one bathed in the Ganga and then headed for the hermitage. A wind arose and there was a large forest conflagration. In every direction, it grasped everything and burnt down the entire forest. In every direction, herds of deer and flocks of birds were burnt down. Herds of boar sought refuge in waterbodies. The forest thus confronted a great hardship. The king had not eaten. Because he was weak, he couldn't move around. Your mothers were also extremely emaciated and incapable of moving. The king saw that the fire was approaching near. Therefore, the lord of the earth anxiously spoke these words to the suta, Sanjaya. 'O Sanjaya! Go to a spot so that the fire does not burn you down. We will be burnt down by the fire and obtain the supreme objective.' Sanjaya, supreme among eloquent ones, replied, 'O king! This destruction and death from a fire is futile. However, I do not see any means of escaping from the fire. Therefore, you should tell me what needs to be done now.' Thus addressed by Sanjaya, the king spoke again. 'Since we have left our house ourselves, this death can cause us no harm. Water, fire, wind and emaciation of the body are praised for ascetics.[3] O Sanjaya! Leave without delay.' Having told Sanjaya this, the king concentrated his mind. He sat down with Gandhari and Kunti, facing an eastern direction. On seeing this, Sanjaya circumambulated them. The intelligent one replied, 'O lord! Focus yourself.' The king, the learned son of a rishi, acted in accordance with these words. He restrained all his senses and became like a piece of wood. So did the immensely fortunate Gandhari and your mother, Pritha. Your father, the king, was burnt down in the forest conflagration. But Sanjaya, the great adviser, escaped from the conflagration. I saw him on the banks of the Ganga, surrounded by ascetics. When I asked him, the energetic one told me everything. The suta, Sanjaya, next left for the Himalaya mountains. In this way, the great-minded king of the Kurus was killed. O lord of men! So were Gandhari and your mother, Pritha. O bull among the Bharata lineage! When I was wandering around as I wished, I saw the bodies of the king and the two queens. On hearing about the king, many ascetics assembled in that hermitage. He was devoted and you should not grieve about him. O supreme among men! O Pandava! That is where I heard everything about the king and the queens and about how they were burnt down.

O Indra among kings! You should not grieve about this. The lord of the earth, Gandhari and your mother desired that death by the fire voluntarily.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘On hearing this about Dhritarashtra’s departure, all the Pandavas were overcome by great grief. O great king! On hearing that the king had obtained his end, great sounds of lamentation arose from the inner quarters and from the citizens. Extremely miserable, the king exclaimed, “Alas!” Remembering his mother, Yudhishthira raised his arms upwards and wept. So did all his brothers, with Bhimasena at the forefront. O great king! On hearing that Pritha had departed, great sounds of weeping arose from the inner quarters. All of them sorrowed over the aged king who had lost his sons and had now been burnt down and about the ascetic Gandhari. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! After some time, those sounds stopped. Controlling his tears through his fortitude, Dharmaraja spoke these words.’

Chapter 1977(46)

‘Yudhishthira said, “The great-souled one was engaged in fierce austerities. Though we, his relatives, are here, he died without a protector. Since Vichitravirya’s son has been burnt down in a forest conflagration, it is my view that the fortune of men is extremely difficult to decipher. He had one hundred handsome sons, with strength in their arms. The king himself possessed the strength of ten thousand elephants. Yet, he has been burnt down in a forest conflagration. Earlier, the best of women used to fan him with fans made out of palm leaves. Since he has been consumed in a forest conflagration, vultures are fanning him now. Large numbers of bards and minstrels used to wake him from sleep earlier. Because of my wicked deeds, the king is lying down on the ground now. I am not grieving over the illustrious Gandhari, whose sons have been slain. Devoted to her husband’s vows, she has got the world obtained by her husband. But I sorrow over Pritha. She abandoned the extremely great and blazing prosperity of her sons and chose to reside in the forest instead. Shame on our kingdom. Shame on our strength. Shame on our valour. Shame on the dharma of kshatriyas and on the fact that we are alive while she is dead. O supreme among the best of brahmanas! The progress of time is indeed exceedingly subtle, since she abandoned the kingdom and desired to reside in the forest. She is the mother of Yudhishthira, Bhima and Vijaya. Without a protector, how could she have been burnt down? When I think of this, I am stupefied. Savyasachi pacified the fire god in Khandava and that was pointless.[4] It is my view that he[5] ignored that good deed and was ungrateful. The illustrious one burnt down Savyasachi's mother. He assumed the disguise of a brahmana and arrived, seeking alms. Shame on Agni. Shame on Partha's fame and unwavering aim. O illustrious one! There is something else that brings me greater grief. How could the lord of the earth suffer from a futile death from the fire? Rajarshi Kourava decided to become an ascetic. He ruled the earth. How can this kind of death be praised for him? In the great forest, there are also fires that have been sanctified by mantras. Since my father was so devoted, how could he have been consumed by a futile fire? Pritha was emaciated and reduced to veins alone. I think that in great fear, she must have trembled and shrieked, 'O son! O Dharmaraja! O Bhima! Save me from the fear that has surrounded me from all sides.' Anxious because of the fire, my mother must have run around in every direction. She loved Sahadeva more than her own sons. But that brave son of Madravati did not save her."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'Hearing this, all of them clung to each other and wept. The five Pandavas were afflicted by grief, like creatures at the time of the destruction of a yuga. The sounds of those Indras among men weeping filled the rooms of the palace and seemed to rise up to the space between heaven and earth.'

Chapter 1978(47)

'Narada said, "The king did not suffer a futile death from the fire. That is what I heard there. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! This is what happened to the king who was Vichitravirya's son. The intelligent one entered the forest and subsisted on air. He kindled the sacrificial fires. In that desolate forest, the officiating priests then cast those sacrificial fires away and the supreme among Bharatas left, as he wished. That fire began to rage in the forest.[6] It is this fire that blazed in the forest. That is what the ascetics told me.

O bull among the Bharata lineage! As I have told you earlier, the king voluntarily allowed himself to be burnt down in a marshy area around the Jahnavi. O unblemished one! O Yudhishthira! This is what I got to know from the sages whom I met on the banks of the Bhagirathi. O lord of the earth! The king was thus consumed by his own fire.[7] Since the king has gone to the supreme objective, you should not sorrow. O Pandava! There is no doubt that your mother was devoted to serving her seniors and has obtained an extremely great success. O Kouravya! You should perform the water rites for them. With your brothers, arrange for all the prescribed rites."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'O bull among the Bharata lineage! The lord of the earth, the bearer of the burden of the Pandava lineage, departed with his brothers and his wives. Because of their devotion towards the king, so did the inhabitants of the city and the countryside. Clad in a single piece of garment, they went towards the Ganga. All the bulls among the Kurus immersed themselves in the waters there. With Yuyutsu at the forefront,[8] they offered water to the great-souled one. They also did this for Gandhari and Pritha in the prescribed way, pronouncing their names and their gotras. Having performed the rites of purification, they returned, but remained outside the city.[9] They sent men who knew the ordinances about the funeral rites. O best among the Kuru lineage! They went to Gangadvara, where the king had been consumed. The lord of the earth[10] had given those men riches to perform the cremation rites in Gangadvara. On the twelfth day, the lord of men purified himself. For the funeral ceremony, Pandava gave away many types of dakshina. In Dhritarashtra's name, the lord of the earth gave away gold, silver, cattle and extremely expensive beds. Naming them separately, the king also gave away different gifts in the names of the energetic Gandhari and Pritha. Every brahmana received whatever he wanted and as much as he wanted. There were beds, food, vehicles, gems, jewels and riches. In the names of the lord of the earth and his mothers, the king gave away vehicles, spreads, objects of pleasure, female slaves and female servants. Having given away large quantities at the funeral ceremony, the intelligent lord of the earth again entered Varanasahvya.[11] The men who had gone, following the king's commands, also completed the cremation rites and returned with the remains. As is prescribed, these remains were worshipped with many kinds of garlands and fragrances. The king placed these remains in the proper places and performed the rites. O king! Narada comforted King Yudhishthira, the one with dharma in his soul. The supreme rishi then took his leave and went away wherever he wished. In this way, the intelligent Dhritarashtra spent fifteen years in the city and three years in the forest. He always gave away gifts in the names of his sons, kin, matrimonial allies, friends, brothers and relatives who had been slain in the war. With his kin and relatives dead, King Yudhishthira was distressed in his mind, but bore the burden of the kingdom.'

This ends Naradagamana Parva and also ends Ashrama-Vasika Parva.

Section Ninety-Three
Mousala Parva

This section has 273 shlokas and 9 chapters.

Chapter 1979(1): 11 shlokas
Chapter 1980(2): 20 shlokas
Chapter 1981(3): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1982(4): 46 shlokas
Chapter 1983(5): 25 shlokas
Chapter 1984(6): 15 shlokas
Chapter 1985(7): 22 shlokas
Chapter 1986(8): 74 shlokas
Chapter 1987(9): 38 shlokas

In the 18-parva classification, Mousala Parva is the 16th. In the 100-parva classification, Mousala Parva constitutes Section 93. The word musala *means club or mace. The Yadavas are cursed by sages that they will be destroyed by clubs. Grass turns to clubs and the Yadavas kill each other with these. Balarama and Krishna give up their lives on earth. Arjuna's powers vanish. In the numbering of the chapters in Mousala Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Mousala Parva.*

Chapter 1979(1)

Vaishampayana said, ‘When thirty-six years had passed, Yudhishthira, descendant of the Kuru lineage, saw contrary portents. Rough and violent winds began to blow, showering stones. Birds began to circle around on the left.[1] The giant rivers retraced their courses. The directions were covered in mist. From the sky, meteors showered down on the ground, with blazing coals. O king! The solar disc was covered in dust. When it arose, the sun always seemed to be without any rays and headless torsos could be seen in it. The sun and the moon were seen to be enveloped in terrible circles. These had three colours, black and rough at the extremities and with red and hues like ash elsewhere. There were many other omens, signifying fear and terror. O king! These could be seen continuously and caused anxiety in the minds. After some time, Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, heard of the carnage that had occurred among the Vrishnis because of the clubs. Pandava heard that only Vasudeva and Rama[2] had escaped. He summoned his brothers, to discuss what should be done. Having heard that the Vrishnis had been destroyed because of the force of the brahmana’s staff,[3] the Pandavas were distressed and consulted each other. The brave ones could not believe the death of Vasudeva, the wielder of the Sharnga bow.[4] It was like the drying up of the ocean. Hearing about the incident with the clubs, they were overcome by sorrow and grief. Distressed and devoid of resolution, the Pandavas sat down.’

Chapter 1980(2)

Janamejaya asked, ‘O illustrious one! While Vasudeva looked on, how were the Andhakas, the Vrishnis and the maharatha Bhojas destroyed?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘After thirty-six years passed, there was a great destruction of the Vrishnis. Goaded by destiny, they killed each other with clubs.’

Janamejaya asked, ‘Who cursed the brave Vrishnis, Andhakas and Bhojas and caused their destruction? O best of brahmanas! Tell me in detail.’

Vaishampayana said, ‘One day, those brave ones, Sarana and the others,[5] saw Vishvamitra, Kanva and Narada, store of austerities, when they came to Dvaraka. They placed Samba ahead of them and dressed him up as a woman. Goaded by the rod of destiny, they approached them and said, “This is the wife of the infinitely energetic Babhru and desires a son. O rishis! O virtuous ones! Do you know how she can give birth?” O king! Speaking in this way, they sought to deceive those brahmanas. O lord of men! Listen to what those sages said in reply. “Vasudeva’s son, Samba, will give birth to a terrible and iron club for the destruction of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. You are evil in conduct, cruel and insolent. With the exception of Rama and Janardana, you will exterminate your entire lineage. The one with the plough as his weapon[6] will go to the ocean and cast aside his handsome body there. When the great-souled Krishna is lying down on the ground, Jara will pierce him.” They spoke in this way to the evil-souled ones who had tried to deceive them. The eyes of the sages were red with rage and they glanced towards each other. Having said this, the sages went off to see Keshava.

‘Madhusudana told the Vrishnis what he had heard. The intelligent one knew about the end and told them that it would indeed happen in this way. Having told them this, Hrishikesha again entered his own house. The lord of the universe did not desire that the end should come about in any other way. Next day, Samba gave birth to a club. This was for the destruction of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas and looked like Yama’s giant messenger.[7] Because of the terrible curse, he gave birth to this and this was reported to the king.[8] The king was distressed and instructed that this should be crushed into tiny fragments. On the instructions of the king, men flung these into the ocean. Ahuka’s instructions were proclaimed throughout the city. “From today, for all the residents of the city, in the houses of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, there will be no drinking of liquor. If there is any man who does not listen to this and prepares liquor, he will himself be impaled alive on a stake and so will his relatives.” Out of fear for the king, everyone followed this rule. The men obeyed the commands of the great-souled king.’

Chapter 1981(3)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The Vrishnis and the Andhakas tried in this way. But Death always wandered around, in all their homes. His embodied form was that of a fierce and malformed man, dark and tawny, and with a shaved head. Sometimes, the Vrishnis saw him looking into their houses. At other times, they couldn’t see him. Day by day, fierce and terrible winds began to blow and there were many other evil portents for the destruction of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas and these made the body hair stand up. Rats covered the roads and the pots[9] were shattered. Sarika birds shrieked outside their houses and even inside the homes of the Vrishnis. Whether it was night or whether it was day, those sounds did not cease. The cranes made sounds like owls. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The goats made sounds like jackals. Pigeons wandered around in the houses of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas. Goaded by destiny, there were other birds, pale in complexion and red of feet. Asses were born from cows and elephants from donkeys. Cats were born from bitches and mice from mongooses. When they committed wicked deeds, the Vrishnis no longer repented. They hated and disrespected brahmanas, ancestors, gods and seniors. Rama and Janardana were alone the exceptions. Wives deceived their husbands and husbands cheated their wives. When a fire was lit, the flames circled to the left. Sometimes flames flared out and these were separately blue and red. When the sun was setting or rising, those wicked men always saw that it was surrounded by headless torsos. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O lord of men! When clean food was cooked in the kitchen, at the time of eating, it was seen to be full of worms. When great-souled ones meditated and chanted, instead of those sounds, the sounds of running feet could be heard, though no one was seen. The nakshatras repeatedly clashed against each other. No one could any longer see his own planet.[10] When Panchajanya[11] was blown in the houses of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, in every direction, instead of its sound, one could hear the terrible sounds of donkeys braying. ‘On seeing this Hrishikesha realized that the time of catastrophe had arrived. He saw that the thirteenth lunar tithi had merged into the night of the new moon and said, “Rahu has devoured the fourteenth and fifteenth lunar tithis. This happened at the time of the Bharata war and has again occurred for our destruction.” Remembering that time, Janardana thought. The slayer of Keshi reflected,[12] “Thirty-six years have passed since the time when Gandhari was tormented by sorrow on account of her sons and the slaying of her relatives. She was afflicted and the time has arrived. On an earlier occasion, when the battle formations were arrayed, Yudhishthira saw similar extremely terrible portents and spoke about them. That kind of time has arrived.” Thinking in this way, Vasudeva wished to make this come true.[13] The scorcher of enemies instructed that they should leave for a visit to a tirtha. On Keshava’s instructions, the men issued such a proclamation. The bulls among men prepared to visit a tirtha on the shores of the ocean.’

Chapter 1982(4)

Vaishampayana said, ‘In their sleep during the night, the women saw a dark lady with white teeth enter Dvaraka and run around there, laughing and plundering. Extremely terrible rakshasas were seen to steal ornaments, umbrellas, standards and armour. Krishna’s chakra had been given to him by Agni.[14] Its handle was made out of iron and it was as firm as the vajra. While the Vrishnis looked on, it disappeared into the sky. His chariot was divine and was like the sun in complexion. While Daruka[15] looked on, the four horses, supreme among horses and as swift as thought, dragged it away along the turbulent surface of the ocean. Rama and Janardana’s great standards had a palm tree and Suparna respectively and were greatly honoured by them.[16] They were taken away by apsaras who, day and night, asked the maharatha Andhakas and Vrishnis to go on a visit to a place of pilgrimage. With the women from the inner quarters, those bulls among men desired to set out on a visit to a tirtha. The Andhakas and the Vrishnis prepared food, drink, many kinds of liquor and large quantities of meat. They were addicted to liquor. Those handsome and fiercely energetic ones emerged from the city on vehicles, horses and elephants. With their wives and with large quantities of food and drink, the Yadavas went to Prabhasa and began to dwell in that region, just as they had done at home.

‘The brave Uddhava[17] was accomplished in matters of artha and knew about yoga. While they dwelt on the shores of the ocean, he came and sought permission[18] to depart. Hari knew that the Vrishnis were about to be destroyed and did not wish to restrain him. He joined his hands in salutation and greeted the great-souled one who was about to leave. The time had come for the maharatha Vrishnis and Andhakas. They saw Uddhava leave, enveloping heaven and earth in his energy. Food had been cooked for the great-souled brahmanas. They mixed this with the scent of liquor and gave it away to monkeys. Those fiercely energetic ones then started a great festivity of drinking in Prabhasa. There were hundreds of trumpets and there were actors and dancers. In Krishna’s presence, Rama, Kritavarma, Yuyudhana,[19] Gada and Babhru started to drink. In the midst of the assembly, Yuyudhana became intoxicated. He disrespected Kritavarma and said, “Is there anyone who thinks himself to be a kshatriya who will kill those who are asleep and are therefore almost as if dead? O Hardikya! The Yadavas will not tolerate what you have done.” When Yuyudhana said this, Pradyumna, foremost among warriors, praised these words and dishonoured Kritavarma. Kritavarma became extremely enraged. He stretched out his left hand in contempt and replied, “When Bhurishrava was in a state of praya in the battle, you severed his arm. How could a brave person have brought him down and slain him in such a cruel fashion?”[20] Hearing these words, Keshava, the destroyer of enemy heroes, cast an angry and oblique glance of anger.[21] Satyaki reminded Madhusudana about the Syamantaka gem that used to be with Satrajit.[22] Hearing this, Satyabhama was enraged. In her rage, she approached Janardana and sat on his lap. In his rage, Satyaki arose and spoke these words. “I truthfully take a pledge this one will go where the five sons of Droupadi, Dhrishtadyumna and Shikhandi have gone. While they were asleep, this evil-souled one killed them in their sleep. This wicked Kritavarma was aided by Drona’s son. O slender-waisted one! His lifespan and fame have come to an end.” Speaking in this way, he angrily picked up a sword and though he was near Keshava, attacked him[23] and angrily severed his head. Once Yuyudhana had killed him, he attacked the others in all directions and began to kill them, though Hrishikesha sought to restrain him.

‘O great king! All of them were goaded by destiny. The Bhojas and the Andhakas united and surrounded Shini’s descendant.[24] Janardana saw them descend, angrily and forcefully. But knowing that the time had come, the greatly energetic one was not enraged. They were driven by intolerance and were intoxicated by the liquor. They began to strike Yuyudhana with the vessels from which they had been eating. Seeing that Shini’s descendant was being struck, Rukmini’s son[25] became angry. He rushed forward to free Satyaki, Shini’s descendant, who was engaged with the Bhojas and the Andhakas. However, while Krishna looked on, those two were slain by the many. On seeing that Shini’s descendant and his own son had been killed, Keshava, the descendant of the Yadu lineage, angrily picked up a clump of *eraka* grass in his hand. This turned into a terrible club that was as firm as the vajra. With this, Krishna slew all those who were in front of him. Goaded by time, in that tumult, the Andhakas, the Bhojas, the Shinis and the Vrishnis slew each other with clubs. O king! O lord! Whenever anyone plucked out a clump of eraka grass, this was seen to turn into something like the vajra. The grass was seen to turn into clubs there. O lord of the earth! Know that all this happened because of the brahmana’s staff. O king! Whenever a blade of grass was hurled, it was seen to become a firm club that was like the vajra and became something that could pierce even impenetrable objects. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Son killed father and father killed son. They were intoxicated. They descended on each other and crushed each other. The Kukuras and the Andhakas were like insects falling into a fire. While they were being killed, they didn’t entertain any thoughts of running away. Knowing that the time of destruction had come, the mighty-armed Madhusudana stood there, looking on and with the club upraised. Madhava saw that Samba had been killed and so had Charudeshna. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! With Pradyumna and Aniruddha also killed, he became angry. Seeing that Gada was lying down, he became extremely wrathful. The wielder of Sharnga, chakra and the club slew all those who were left. When they were killed, the greatly energetic Babhru, the destroyer of enemy cities, and Daruka spoke to Dasharha. Listen. “O illustrious one! All of them have been killed by you. Let us follow Rama’s footsteps and go where he has gone.”’

Chapter 1983(5)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Daruka, Keshava and Babhru left and followed Rama’s footsteps. They saw the infinitely valorous Rama seated in a desolate spot, at the foot of a tree. Krishna approached the great one and gave Daruka the following instruction. “Swiftly go to the Kurus and tell Partha about this great destruction of the Yadus. On hearing about how the Yadavas have died because of the curse of brahmanas, let Arjuna come here quickly.” Thus addressed, Daruka, who was senseless in grief, left on a chariot for the Kurus. After Daruka left, Keshava saw that Babhru was still near him and spoke these words. “Go quickly and protect the women. Greedy for riches, let the bandits not cause any violence to them.” He was still intoxicated with liquor and distressed because of the slaughter of his relatives. However, instructed by Keshava, he departed. Babhru had gone only a short distance away from Keshava. He has also been covered in the curse of the brahmanas. Suddenly and swiftly, a club released from a hunter’s hand arrived and slew him. On seeing that Babhru was now dead, Krishna spoke these words to his elder brother. “O Rama! Wait here for me, until I have handed over the care of the women to our kin.” Janardana entered the city of Dvaravati and spoke these words to his father. “Wait for Dhananjaya’s arrival and protect all these women. Rama is waiting for me on the outskirts of the forest. I have to go to him now. I foresaw this slaughter of the Yadus even before I foresaw that of the kings and the bulls among the Kuru lineage. Without the Yadus, I am incapable of looking at this city of the Yadavas. Listen to me. I will go to the forest and practise austerities, together with Rama.” Having said this, Krishna touched his feet with his head and quickly departed.

‘Loud sounds of lamentation arose from the women and the children who were in the city. Hearing the sounds of the weeping women, Keshava returned and said, “Savyasachi will arrive in the city. That foremost among men will free you from your grief.” Keshava went and saw Rama in that desolate spot in the forest. He saw him immersed in yoga and a giant serpent was emerging from his mouth. Its complexion was white and that great being headed towards the great ocean. It possessed one thousand heads, was as large as a mountain and was an inhabitant of Bhogavati.[26] Its face was red and it freed itself from the former body. It moved towards the ocean. Divine serpents and sacred rivers were there to receive it. O king! Karkotaka, Vasuki, Prithushrava, Varuna, Kunjara, Mishri, Shankha, Kumuda, Pundarika, the great-souled naga Dhritarashtra, Hrada, Kratha, Shitikantha, Agrateja, the nagas Chakramanda and Atishanda, Durmukha and Ambarisha, the best among nagas and King Varuna himself came forward to welcome and honour it.[27] They worshipped it with padya, arghya and other rites.

'Vasudeva possessed divine sight. When his brother had departed, he knew that everyone was gone. For some time, he wandered around in that desolate forest, thinking. The greatly energetic one then sat down on the ground. He thought about all the words that the excellent Gandhari had spoken to him earlier. Krishna also remembered what Durvasa had said when his body had been smeared with payasam.[28] The great one thought about the destruction of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis and the destruction of the Kurus. Having decided that the time had come, he restrained his senses. He restrained his senses and his speech. Krishna lay down, immersed in great yoga. A fierce hunter named Jara arrived at that spot, searching for deer.[29] The hunter saw Keshava lying down in yoga and took him to be a deer. With an arrow, Jara swiftly struck him on the sole of the foot. He then quickly advanced, desiring to seize what he had struck. The hunter saw a man immersed in yoga, with many arms and attired in yellow garments. He thought he had committed a grave sin and severely distressed, touched his feet with his head. The great-souled one comforted him. Enveloping heaven and earth in his prosperity, he rose upwards. He reached heaven and was welcomed by Vasava, the Ashvins, Rudra, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Vishvadevas, the sages, the siddhas, the foremost among gandharvas and the apsaras. O king! Then, the fiercely energetic, powerful, undecaying, great-souled and illustrious Narayana went to his own region, which is impossible to fathom. O king! Krishna met the gods, the rishis and the charanas. The best among gandharvas and apsaras and the siddhas and the sadhyas bowed down and worshipped him. O king! The gods, the best among sages and their eloquent followers worshipped the lord of everything. The gandharvas served and praised him. Delighted, Puruhuta[30] also honoured him.'

Chapter 1984(6)

Vaishampayana said, ‘Daruka went to the Kurus and met the maharatha Parthas. He told them how the Vrishnis had destroyed each other with clubs. On hearing that the Varshneyas, the Bhojas, the Kukuras and the Andhakas had been destroyed, the Pandavas were tormented by grief and their minds were terrified. Arjuna, Keshava’s beloved friend, took their leave and went to see his maternal uncle, saying, “Nothing remains.” With Daruka, the lord went to the abode of the Vrishnis. The brave one saw Dvaraka, which looked like a woman with her husband dead. Earlier, the protector of the world used to be the protector of those women. Partha saw them shrieking there, without a protector and bereft of protection. There were sixteen thousand of Vasudeva’s wives. When they saw Arjuna arrive, they began to wail loudly. On seeing them, Kouravya Arjuna’s eyes became full of tears. They were without Krishna and without their sons and he was incapable of looking at them. The Vrishnis and the Andhakas were like water.[31] The horses were fish and the chariots were rafts. The sounding of musical instruments and the clatter of chariots were like the roar of the currents. The houses were tirthas and giant crocodiles. The jewels were accumulations of moss. The firm fortifications were like garlands. The roads were like flowing whirlpools in the water. The crossroads were large lakes. In the river of Dvaraka, Rama and Krishna were giant crocodiles. Devoured by the noose of destiny, that river was now terrible, flowing towards Vaitarani.[32] The intelligent Arjuna saw that it was now without the bulls among the Vrishnis. It was without prosperity and cheerless, like a lotus during the winter. Partha saw Dvaraka and Krishna’s wives. He wailed loudly, eyes overflowing with tears, and fell down on the ground, senseless. O lord of the earth! Satya,[33] Satrajit’s daughter, and Rukmini also wept and fell down, alongside Dhananjaya. They raised him and made him sit on a golden seat. They surrounded the great-souled and spoke words of praise about Govinda. They spoke to Pandava, who comforted the women and then left, wishing to meet his maternal uncle.’

Chapter 1985(7)

Vaishampayana said, ‘The brave and great-souled Anakadundubhi[34] was lying down. The bull among the Kurus saw him, tormented by grief over his son. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Partha’s chest was broad and his arms were mighty. With his eyes overflowing with tears and with his voice afflicted with grief, he seized his feet. The mighty-armed and aged one embraced Arjuna with his arms. Remembering his sons, his brother’s sons, and all his sons’ sons, daughters’ sons and friends, he was extremely distracted and wept. ‘Vasudeva said, “O Arjuna! There were hundreds of times when they conquered kings and daityas. O Arjuna! Though I am alive, I do not see them. Death will come to me with great difficulty. Those two[35] were your disciples. O Arjuna! You always loved them and showed them a great deal of respect. O Partha! It is because of their sins that the Vrishnis have faced destruction. Among the best of the Vrishnis, those two were held to be *atirathas*. In speaking about Pradyumna and Yuyudhana, you used to boast. O tiger among Kurus! In addition to Krishna, they were always like my sons. O Dhananjaya! Those two are the main reason behind the destruction of the Vrishnis. O Arjuna! However, I do not censure Shini’s descendant or Hardikya, or for that matter, Akrura or Rukmini’s son. The curse was the true reason. The lord of the universe used his valour to defeat Keshi and Kamsa. O Partha! He beheaded the lord of Chedi,[36] who was proud of his valour. Madhusudana defeated the nishada Ekalavya, Kalingas, Magadhas, Gandharas, the king of Kashi, kings from the desert regions and kings from the east, the south and the mountainous regions. Why did he disregard what was going to happen? On seeing his sons, grandsons, brothers and friends slain and lying down, he told me, ‘O bull among men! The time for the end of our lineage has arrived. Bibhatsu will come to this city of Dvaravati. Tell him about the great carnages that has happened among the Vrishnis. O lord! When that greatly energetic one hears about the destruction of the Yadus, without thinking about it, he will swiftly arrive here. Know that I am Arjuna and Arjuna is me. O Madhava! Know that you must do whatever he asks you to. Pandava will know what the occasion demands for the women and the children. Bibhatsu will also perform your funeral rites. When Dhananjaya has left, this city, with its walls and mansions, will instantly be swallowed up by the ocean. I will go to some sacred spot and resort to the rituals. With the intelligent Rama, I will wait for the right time.' Hrishikesha, whose valour is unimaginable, told me this. The lord then left me with the children and went to whichever direction he desired. I have thought about those two great-souled brothers[37] and about the terrible destruction of the kin. Afflicted by grief, I have not eaten. O Pandava! I will not eat. Nor will I live. It is through good fortune that I have met you. O Partha! Do everything that Krishna spoke about. O Partha! This kingdom, these women and these jewels are yours. O slayer of enemies! I wish to cast aside my breath of life."'

Chapter 1986(8)

Vaishampayana said, 'Bibhatsu, the scorcher of enemies, was thus addressed by his maternal uncle. He was cheerless and distressed in his mind and replied to Vasudeva, "O maternal uncle! O lord! Without the foremost among the Vrishnis and the Madhus, I am incapable of looking at the earth for a long period of time. The king,[38] Bhimasena, Pandava Sahadeva, Nakula and Yajnaseni as the sixth, hold the same kind of view. It is certain that the time has also come for the king to depart. O supreme among those who know about time! Know that the time has also arrived for you. O scorcher of enemies! By all means possible, I will first take the women, the children and the aged among the Vrishnis to Indraprastha." Having said this, Dhananjaya spoke these words to Daruka. "I wish to quickly see the advisers and the brave ones among the Vrishnis." Having said this, the brave maharatha Arjuna, who was sorrowing, entered the assembly hall of the Yadavas, known as Sudharma. When he arrived there, all the ordinary people, the brahmanas and the citizens, surrounded him there. All of them were distressed in their minds and were almost unconscious. Partha was himself distressed and spoke these words. "I will myself take the Vrishni and Andhaka people to Shakraprastha.[39] Everything in this city will be flooded by the ocean. Arrange vehicles and all kinds of jewels. This Vajra[40] will be the king in Shakraprastha. Seven days from now, we will depart when the sparkling sun rises. Make arrangements without delay and let all of us dwell outside."[41] Thus addressed by Partha of the unblemished deeds, the citizens anxiously made arrangements for saving themselves. Partha spent that night in Keshava's house. He was suddenly overwhelmed by great grief and confusion. When it was next morning, the powerful Shouri Vasudeva united himself in great energy and left for the supreme destination. A great sound was heard in Vasudeva's house. The women shrieked terribly and wept. All of them had dishevelled hair and they cast aside their ornaments and garlands. The women beat on their breasts with their hands and lamented piteously. Devaki, Bhadra, Rohini and Madira, supreme among women, seated themselves with their husband.[42] O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Shouri's body was covered with many garlands. Partha arranged for it to be drawn out of the city, on a large vehicle dragged by men. O bull among men! All the citizens and residents of Dvaraka were filled with grief and sorrow and followed it. The umbrella of a horse sacrifice[43] was held aloft, ahead of the vehicle. The officiating priests advanced, with kindled fires. The ornamented wives followed the brave one. They were surrounded by thousands of women and thousands of daughters-in-law. There was a spot that the great-souled one had loved while he was alive. It was resolved that the funeral rites for the father would be performed there. The funeral pyre of the brave one from the Shura lineage was ignited by his son.[44] The four beautiful women also ascended the fire, with the body of the husband who had departed. The four women also followed him. The descendant of the Pandu lineage ignited it, with sandalwood and other diverse kinds of fragrant wood. A loud sound arose from the kindling and the fire. There was the sound of chants from Sama hymns and men weeping. The brave children from the Vrishni lineage, with Vajra as the foremost and all the women offered water to the great-souled one. Phalguna arranged for dharma where there was no longer any dharma possible.[45] O bull among the Bharata lineage! He then went to the place where the Vrishnis had been destroyed. On seeing that they had been brought down in the carnage, he was extremely miserable. However, Kourvaya did everything that was appropriate for the occasion. All the rites were performed according to seniority, for all those who had been slain through the curse of the brahmanas and the generation of the clubs. He searched out the bodies of both Rama and Vasudeva[46] and had them cremated by men who were accomplished in such tasks. Following the ordinances, Pandava performed the funeral rites.

‘On the seventh day, he mounted a chariot and swiftly departed. There were other chariots yoked to horses and vehicles drawn by bulls, mules and camels. The wives of the brave Vrishnis followed on these, afflicted by grief and weeping. They followed the great-souled Dhananjaya, Pandu’s son. On Partha’s instructions, the servants of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis, horse riders and chariot riders surrounded the women, the aged, the young and the citizens, who were without any brave ones to defend them, and advanced. Elephant riders advanced on elephants that were as large as mountains. There were foot soldiers for protection. They also raised their weapons and advanced. All the sons of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis followed Partha. There were prosperous brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras. Ahead of them were Vasudeva’s sixteen thousand wives, his great riches and the intelligent Krishna’s grandson, Vajra. Bhoja, Vrishni and Andhaka women also advanced, with their husbands killed. There were thousands of them, indeed tens of millions. That group of Vrishnis was like an ocean. Partha, foremost among warriors, great in his knowledge of dharma and the conqueror of enemy cities, escorted it. After the people departed, the ocean, the abode of makaras, flooded Dvaraka, which was still full of jewels, with its waters. The people who were residents of Dvaraka looked at this extraordinary sight. They said that this was nothing but destiny and advanced faster and faster.

‘Dhananjaya made the Vrishni women rest in beautiful groves, mountains and near rivers. The intelligent one arrived at the prosperous land of the five rivers. The lord arranged for them to dwell there, in a region that was full of cattle, other animals and grain. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Some bandits saw that the husbands of these women had been killed and that they were being led by Partha alone. They became greedy. Greed robbed those evildoers of their senses. Those *abhiras*[47] saw the opportunity to do something wicked and consulted each other. “Arjuna is the only warrior. There are the aged and the young. The husbands have been killed. The other warriors are without energy and are passing through our territory.” Thousands of bandits descended and began to strike them with sticks. Desiring to steal the property, those people attacked the Vrishnis. As if goaded by the progress of time and desiring the riches, they attacked. With his followers, Kounteya swiftly returned. The mighty-armed Arjuna laughed and said, “O wicked ones who do not know about dharma! If you wish to be safe and do not wish to die, retreat. Otherwise, you will have to sorrow when my arrows mangle your bodies and you are killed by me.” When the brave one spoke in this way, they paid no attention to his words. Arjuna repeatedly tried to restrain the foolish ones who had attacked.

‘Arjuna then tried to string the giant, undecaying and divine bow, Gandiva. To be able to string it, he had to make a great deal of effort. While that tumultuous engagement was going on, he struggled and finally strung it. He then thought of his weapons, but couldn’t remember them. In the engagement, he witnessed this great calamity of the strength of his arms having disappeared. The great and divine weapons no longer manifested themselves and he was ashamed. All the Vrishni warriors, those who were fighting on elephants, horses and chariots, were unable to prevent those men from stealing their possessions. As they attacked from different directions, they abducted many women. Though Partha made great efforts, he couldn’t protect the people. While all the warriors looked on, in every direction, the best of women were seized. There were other women who voluntarily went with the robbers. Supported by the servants of the Vrishnis, the lord Partha Dhananjaya, forcefully shot arrows from Gandiva and struck the bandits. O king! However, in a short while, his arrows were exhausted. Earlier, his quivers used to be inexhaustible. But now, the arrows were exhausted. Seeing that his arrows were exhausted, he was filled with sorrow and grief. The son of Paka’s chastiser used the ends of the bow to kill bandits. O Janamejaya! However, in every direction, while Partha looked on, the mlechchhas seized the best of the Vrishni and Andhaka women. The lord Dhananjaya thought that this could be nothing other than destiny. He was full of sorrow and grief and sighed deeply. The weapons had disappeared and the valour of his arms had been destroyed. The bow was no longer under his control and his arrows had been exhausted. Partha was cheerless and thought.

‘O king! He started to retreat and said, “This is nothing but destiny.” The immensely intelligent one collected the remaining wives and the remaining jewels and went to Kurukshetra. Kouravya Dhananjaya arranged for the wives of the Vrishnis, with the remaining possessions, to reside there. There was a city named Martikavat. Partha, supreme among men, instated Hardikya’s son[48] there and left the remaining wives of the king of Bhoja there. Pandava collected all the other old, young and women, those who were without brave ones to protect them, and made them reside in Shakraprastha. The one with dharma in his soul honoured the aged and the young and made the beloved son of Satyaki Yuyudhana reside along the banks of the Sarasvati. The slayer of enemy heroes gave the kingdom of Indraprastha to Vajra. Though Vajra tried to restrain them, Akrura's wives left for the forest. O king! Rukmini Gandhari,[49] Shaibya Haimavati and the queen Jambavati entered the fire. O king! Satyabhama and the other queens, honoured by Krishna, made up their minds to perform austerities and entered the forest. There were the men who had resided in Dvaravati and had followed Partha. Jaya divided them into different groups and handed them over to Vajra. The time having arrived, his eyes overflowing with tears, Arjuna did all this. O king! He then went and visited Krishna Dvaipayana in his hermitage.'

Chapter 1987(9)

Vaishampayana said, 'O king! Arjuna, truthful in his speech, entered the hermitage. He saw the sage who was Satyavati's son seated alone. Knowing about dharma, he approached the one whose vows were great. As is proper, he reported, "My name is Arjuna" and waited. The sage who was Satyavati's son spoke words of welcome. Cheerfully, the great sage asked him to sit. He could see that Partha's mind was cheerless and that he was sighing repeatedly. Seeing that he was overcome with sorrow, Vyasa asked, "Have you been stained in any way? Have you been struck? Have you stolen a brahmana's possessions? Have you been defeated in a battle? It can be discerned that your prosperity has vanished. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I do not know what has transpired. O Partha! I deserve to hear it. You should quickly tell me what has happened."

'Arjuna replied, "His complexion was like that of a cloud. He was handsome and large, with eyes like lotus petals. That Krishna, with Rama, has given up his body and has gone to heaven. Because of a curse imposed by brahmanas, the brave ones among the Vrishnis have destroyed themselves with clubs.

There was an encounter in Prabhasa that led to the death of brave ones and it made the body hair stand up. O brahmana! They were brave. They were great-souled. They were proud as lions and extremely strong. The Bhojas, the Vrishnis and the Andhakas have killed each other in a clash. Their arms were like clubs and they could withstand clubs, maces and spears. Behold the progress of time. They have been slain by eraka grass. There were five hundred thousand ones, with the strength of arms. They attacked each other and have been killed. Because of the destruction of those infinitely energetic ones, I am repeatedly suffering. I keep thinking of the Yadus and the illustrious Krishna. It[50] is like the drying up of the ocean, the moving of the mountains, the falling down of the sky or the cooling down of a fire. I think that the death of the wielder of the Sharnga bow cannot be believed. Without Krishna, I do not wish to remain in this world any more. O store of austerities! Listen to something else that is even more painful. When I repeatedly think about this, my mind is shattered. O brahmana! In the region of the five rivers, while I looked on, thousands of Vrishni women were abducted by abhiras. Though I picked up my bow, I found that I was unable to string it. The valour in my arms is no longer like that in former times. O great sage! All my diverse kinds of weapons have been destroyed. In a short while, all my arrows were exhausted. That man's soul was immeasurable. He was the wielder of the conch shell, the chakra and the club. He was four-armed and attired in yellow garments. He was dark and his eyes were as large as the petals of lotuses. Earlier, the extremely radiant one used to be ahead of me, on my chariot, when I burnt down the enemy soldiers. I am unable to see him now. He was the one who first burnt down the enemy soldiers with his energy. With the arrows released from Gandiva, I brought them down later. O excellent one! Since I am unable to see him, I am distressed and my mind is whirling. I am depressed and cannot find any peace. Without the brave Janardana, I am not interested in remaining alive. When I heard that Vishnu had departed, the directions disappeared before me. My kin and my valour have been destroyed. I am like one empty and am running around. O excellent one! You should instruct me about what is best for me."

'Vyasa replied, "The maharatha Vrishnis and Andhakas were consumed because of the curse of brahmanas. O tiger among Kurus! They have been destroyed and you should not grieve about this. Know that this was bound to happen. This was the destiny of those great-souled ones. That is the reason why, despite being able to counter it, Krishna ignored it. Krishna is capable of countering everything in the three worlds, mobile and immobile, not to speak of a curse imposed by learned ones. The wielder of the chakra and the club used to advance in front of your chariot. He was affectionate towards you. He is the ancient rishi, the four-armed Vasudeva. The one with the large eyes desired to reduce the burden of the earth. Having freed the entire universe, he went to his own supreme destination. O bull among men! O mighty-armed one! With you as his aide and with the help of Bhima and the twins, he accomplished a great task for the gods. O bull among the Kurus! I think that you have been extremely successful. Know that the time for your departure has arrived. In my view, that is the best thing for you. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Strength, intelligence, energy and power remain for as long as the time of adversity does not come. O Dhananjaya! Time is the root of everything. It is the seed of the universe. As it wishes, time also draws everything back again. A person who was strong can subsequently become weak. One can possess prosperity, or one can be commanded by others. Having accomplished their tasks, your weapons have now returned to wherever they came from. If time should so ordain, they will arrive in your hands again. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! The time has come for you to attain the greatest end. O bull among the Bharata lineage! I think that this will bring supreme benefit for you.”’

Vaishampayana continued, ‘Having heard these words of the infinitely energetic Vyasa, Partha took his leave and went to the city of Nagasahvya. The brave one entered the city and met Yudhishthira. Concerning the Vrishnis and the Andhakas, he told him everything that had happened.’

This ends Mousala Parva.

Section Ninety-Four

Maha-Prasthanika Parva

This section has 106 shlokas 3 chapters.

Chapter 1988(1): 44 shlokas
Chapter 1989(2): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1990(3): 36 shlokas

Maha *means great and* prasthana *means journey or departure. Thus,* maha-prasthana *literally means great journey, but stands for departure from this world, or death. Maha-Prasthanika Parva is about the departure of the Pandavas for the Himalayas and their deaths, one after another. It has the story of Dharma disguised as a dog and Yudhishthira's ascent to heaven, in his physical body. In the 18-parva classification, Maha-Prasthanika Parva is the 17th. In the 100-parva classification, Maha-Prasthanika Parva consists of Section 94 alone. In the numbering of the chapters in Maha-Prasthanika Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Maha-Prasthanika Parva.*

Chapter 1988(1)

Janamejaya asked, ‘On hearing about the duel with the clubs in the lineage of the Vrishnis and the Andhakas and on hearing that Krishna had ascended to heaven, what did the Pandavas do?’

Vaishampayana replied, ‘Hearing about the great carnage caused among the Vrishnis, King Kourava made up his mind to give up his life and spoke these words to Arjuna. “O immensely wise one! Time cooks all creatures. I think all this has happened because of that. You should also consider that.” Thus addressed, Kounteya[1] only uttered the words, “Time! Time!” He agreed with the words his valiant elder brother had spoken. Discerning Arjuna’s intention, Bhimasena and the twins also agreed with the words that had been spoken by Savyasachi. Desiring dharma, they decided to depart and summoned Yuyutsu. Yudhishthira handed over the entire kingdom to the son of a vaishya.[2] Parikshit was instated as the king in his own kingdom.[3] The king who was the eldest of the Pandava sorrowfully told Subhadra, “This son of your son will be the king of the Kurus. The last of the Yadus, Vajra, has also been made a king. Parikshit will rule in Hastinapura and the Yadava in Shakraprastha. King Vajra should be protected by you and do not think of adharma in your mind.”[4] Having said this, the intelligent Dharmaraja, with dharma in his soul, together with his mothers,[5] attentively offered water to Vasudeva, his aged maternal uncle, Rama and the others. Following the prescribed rites, he instructed that the funeral ceremonies should be performed for all of them. He gave away jewels, garments, villages, horses and chariots, women and hundreds and thousands of cattle to the best among the brahmanas. The supreme among the Bharata lineage honoured Kripa and reverentially instructed that he would be the preceptor, handing over Parikshit to him as a disciple.

‘Yudhishthira honoured all the ordinary people. The rajarshi told all of them what he desired to do. On hearing his words, all the people of the city and the countryside were extremely anxious in their minds and did not welcome these words. They told the king, “This should not be done.” However, knowing about the progress of time and about dharma, the king did not listen to them. The one with dharma in his soul took the permission of the residents of the city and the countryside. He had made up his mind to leave and so had his brothers. Dharma's son, Kouravya, King Yudhishthira, took off the ornaments from his body and donned the bark of trees. O lord of men! Bhima, Arjuna, the twins and the illustrious Droupadi—all of them donned garments made from the barks of trees. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They performed all the recommended beneficial rites. All the bulls among men then cast the sacred fire into water.[6] On seeing the bulls among men, all the women wept. They departed, with Droupadi as the sixth, just as in earlier times, they had left after being defeated in the game with the dice. But at the prospect of departure, the brothers were cheerful. After seeing the destruction of the Vrishnis and ascertaining Yudhishthira's view, there was no other course.

'There were the five brothers. Krishna was the sixth and a dog joined as the seventh. Including him, there were seven and the king left Gajasahvya.[7] For some distance, the citizens and the ladies of the inner quarters followed them. However, none of them was capable of speaking to them and urging them to return. Then, all the men who resided in the city returned and stood around Kripa, Yuyutsu and the others. O Kouravya! Ulupi, the daughter of a serpent, entered the waters of the Ganga. Chitrangada left for the city of Manipura. All of Parikshit's mothers[8] surrounded him and began to instruct him.

'O Kouravya! The great-souled Pandavas and the illustrious Droupadi fasted and headed in an eastern direction. The great-souled ones immersed themselves in yoga, having decided to follow the dharma of renunciation. They passed through many countries, rivers and mountains. Yudhishthira walked in front, followed by Bhima. Arjuna came after him, followed by the twins, in the right order. O supreme among the Bharata lineage! The beautiful Droupadi, best among women, was at the rear. She was dark and her eyes were like the petals of lotuses. When the Pandavas left for the forest, a dog followed them. Gradually, the brave ones reached Louhitya,[9] an ocean full of water. O great king! Because of his love for precious things, Dhananjaya had still not let go off the divine bow, Gandiva, or the two inexhaustible quivers. They saw Agni standing before them, like a mountain. He stood there, barring their way, adopting a human form. The god with the seven flames addressed the Pandavas. "O sons of Pandu! Listen! O brave ones! Listen! Know me to be the god of fire. O mighty-armed one! O Yudhishthira! O scorcher of enemies! O Bhimasena! O Arjuna! O brave sons of the Ashvins! Listen to my words. O best among the Kurus! Using the powers of Arjuna and Narayana, I burnt down Khandava.[10] Your brother, Phalguna, can only go to the forest after casting aside the supreme weapon, Gandiva, not otherwise. The jewel, the chakra, which used to be with the great-souled Krishna, has vanished. When it is time, it will again appear in his hands. For Partha's sake, I had earlier brought Gandiva, best among bows, from Varuna. It should now be returned to Varuna." At this, all the brothers urged Dhananjaya to do this. He flung it into the water, together with the two great and inexhaustible quivers. O best of the Bharata lineage! After this, Agni vanished. The brave Pandavas now headed in a southern direction. O tiger among the Bharata lineage! On the northern shores of the salty ocean, they proceeded in a south-western direction. Then they again headed in a western direction. They saw Dvaraka, flooded by the ocean. The supreme among the Bharatas then again headed towards the north. Devoted to the dharma of yoga, they desired to circle the entire earth.'

Chapter 1989(2)

Vaishampayana said, 'Restraining their souls and immersing themselves in yoga, they headed in a northern direction. They saw the giant mountains, the Himalayas. Having passed beyond it, they saw an ocean of sand. There, they saw the giant mountain of Meru, with an excellent summit. All of them proceeded swiftly, devoting themselves to the dharma of yoga. However, Yajnaseni deviated from yoga and fell down on the ground. On seeing that she had fallen down, the immensely strong Bhimasena glanced towards Yajnaseni and spoke to Dharmaraja. "O scorcher of enemies! This princess never committed an act of adharma. O king! Why has Krishna[11] fallen down on the ground?" Yudhishthira replied, "O supreme among men! She had a great partiality for Dhananjaya. She has reaped the fruits of that." Having said this, the king who was Dharma's son didn't look back. The intelligent bull among men, with dharma in his soul, controlled his mind. The intelligent Sahadeva also fell down on the ground. On seeing that he had fallen down, Bhima spoke to the king. “Without any pride, he served all of us. Why has Madravati’s[12] son fallen down on the ground?” Yudhishthira replied, “He thought that there was no one who was his equal in wisdom. O son of a king! It is because of that sin that he has fallen down.” Having said this, he left Sahadeva there and proceeded. Kounteya Yudhishthira went on, with his brothers and the dog. On seeing that Krishna and Pandava Sahadeva had fallen down, the brave Nakula, who loved his relatives, was afflicted and also fell down. Seeing that the handsome and brave Nakula had fallen down, Bhima spoke to the king again. “He had dharma in his soul and his adherence to it never suffered. He followed the words of his brothers. In the world, Nakula was unmatched in his beauty. Yet, he has fallen down on the ground.” Thus addressed by Bhimasena, Yudhishthira replied, “Nakula possessed dharma in his soul and was supreme among all the intelligent ones. However, he held a view, like Diti’s offspring,[13] that there was no one who was his equal in beauty. In his mind, he thought that there was no one who was superior to him. O Vrikodara! Understand. This is the reason why Nakula has fallen down. O brave one! Anything ordained for a person is bound to happen.” On seeing that they had fallen down, Pandava, the one with the white horses and the scorcher of enemies,[14] was tormented by grief and also fell down. That tiger among men possessed Shakra’s energy. On seeing that the invincible one had fallen down and was about to die, Bhima spoke to the king. “I cannot remember any falsehood that this great-souled one has wilfully uttered. What is the transgression, as a result of which, he has fallen down on the ground?” Yudhishthira replied, “Arjuna always said that he would burn down the enemy in a single day. Though he was proud of his valour, he wasn’t able to accomplish that. That is the reason he has fallen down. Phalguna disrespected all the other wielders of the bow. Those who desire their own prosperity must always act as they have spoken.” Having said this, the king proceeded. Bhima fell down. Having fallen down, Bhima addressed Dharmaraja Yudhishthira. “O king! Look towards me. I am loved by you and I have fallen down. What is the reason I have fallen down? If you know, tell me.” Yudhishthira replied, “You ate too much and you boasted about your vigour. O Partha! You disrespected others. That is the reason you have fallen down on the ground.” Having said this, without looking back, the mighty-armed one proceeded. The single dog followed him and I have spoken about it to you many times.'[15]

Chapter 1990(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'Shakra arrived before Partha on a chariot, making all of heaven and earth echo with the roar, and asked him to ascend. On seeing that his brothers had fallen down, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira was overcome by grief and spoke these words to the one with the one thousand eyes. "My brothers have fallen down here. Let them come with me. O lord of the gods! Without my brothers, I do not desire to go to heaven. O Purandara! The princess was delicate and deserved happiness. Let her come with us. You should grant us this permission."

'Indra replied, "You will see your brothers and sons, together with Krishna and all the others. They have gone to heaven, ahead of you. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Do not grieve. O bull among the Bharata lineage! They have cast aside their human bodies and have gone there. However, there is no doubt that you will go to heaven in this body."

'Yudhishthira said, "O lord of the past and the present! This dog has always been devoted to me. He should go with me. Because of compassion, that is my view."

'Indra replied, "O king! You will now obtain immortality, prosperity like mine, all kinds of great fame and the happiness of heaven. Abandon the dog. There is no lack of compassion in this."

'Yudhishthira said, "O one with one thousand eyes! How can a person who is noble perform an ignoble act? O noble one! That is exceedingly difficult to do. I do not want a prosperity that comes about by abandoning those who are devoted to me."

'Indra replied, "For those with dogs, there is no place in the world of heaven. Krodhavasha takes away their beneficial and good deeds.[16] O Dharmaraja! You should think about this. Abandon this dog. There is no lack of compassion in this."

'Yudhishthira said, "It is said that there is great sin in abandoning one who is devoted. In this world, this is equal to the killing of a brahmana. O great Indra!

Ever since I have been born, I have patiently done that. Therefore, for the sake of my own happiness, how can I act in a contrary way now?”

‘Indra replied, “If gifts laid out for a sacrifice, or oblations poured into it, are seen by a dog, Krodhavasha takes the benefits away. Therefore, you should abandon this dog. If you abandon this dog, you will obtain the world of the gods. O brave one! Having abandoned your brothers and your beloved Krishna, you will obtain that world through your deeds. When you have given all of them up, why are you not ready to abandon the dog? Why are you confused?”

‘Yudhishthira said, “In the world of mortals, there is no friendship or enmity with those who are dead. I am incapable of reviving them. That is the reason I abandoned those who are no longer alive. O Shakra! It is my view that surrendering someone who was sought sanctuary, killing a woman, stealing the possessions of a brahmana and enmity towards a friend—these four are equal to the sin of abandoning someone who is devoted.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘Hearing Dharmaraja’s words, the illustrious one, who was in the form of Dharma, was pleased.[17] He gently spoke these words, which were full of praise, to Yudhishthira, Indra among men. “O Indra among kings! You have been born in a noble lineage. You follow your father’s conduct and possess intelligence. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! You possess compassion towards all beings. O son! On an earlier occasion, I had tested you in Dvaitavana.[18] Desiring to fetch some water, your valiant brothers were slain. Forgetting about your brothers Bhima and Arjuna and showing equality between your mothers,[19] you desired that Nakula should be brought back to life. Now, instead of giving up the devoted dog, you have decided to forsake the chariot of the gods. O lord of men! Therefore, there is no one in heaven who is your equal. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Therefore, in your own body, you will obtain the eternal worlds. O best among the Bharata lineage! You will obtain a divine and supreme objective.” Dharma, Shakra, the Maruts, the Ashvins, the gods and the devarshis made Pandava ascend the chariot. The siddhas, who could roam around at will, left on their own celestial vehicles. They were sacred and radiant, auspicious in words, intelligence and deeds. The king, the extender of the Kuru lineage, climbed onto the chariot, which ascended swiftly, covering heaven and earth with its energy.

‘Narada was great in austerities and knew about all the worlds. He was great with words. From amidst those gods, he spoke these words. “There are rajarshis who have assembled here. However, the king of the Kurus has surpassed all their deeds with his own. He has enveloped the worlds with his fame, energy, conduct and prosperity and has gone there in his own body. We have not heard of anyone other than Pandava who has accomplished that.” Hearing Narada’s words, the king, with dharma in his soul, spoke these words, after honouring the gods and the kings who were alongside. “My brothers have obtained a good state or a bad one. Those are the worlds that I also wish to go to.” Hearing these words, Purandara, king of the gods, was filled with compassion and replied to Yudhishthira. “O Indra among kings! Dwell in this place. You have conquered it through your auspicious deeds. Why are you attached to human affection still? You have obtained supreme success and no other man has obtained it. O descendant of the Kuru lineage! Your brothers are incapable of obtaining that region. O lord of men! You are still touched by human sentiments. Behold heaven and the abodes of the gods, frequented by devarshis and siddhas.” Yet again, Yudhishthira spoke these words to the lord who was the Indra of the gods. “O slayer of daityas! Without them, I am not interested in anything. I wish to go to the place where my brothers have gone. I wish to go where Droupadi, best among women and my beloved, is. She possessed the qualities of spirit and intelligence. She was buxom and dark.”’

This ends Maha-Prasthanika Parva.

Section Ninety-Five
Svargarohana Parva

This section has 194 shlokas and 5 chapters.

Chapter 1991(1): 26 shlokas
Chapter 1992(2): 54 shlokas
Chapter 1993(3): 41 shlokas
Chapter 1994(4): 19 shlokas
Chapter 1995(5): 54 shlokas

> *In the 18-parva classification, Svargarohana Parva is the 18th. In the 100-parva classification, Svargarohana Parva consists of Section 95 alone. It is the last Parva of the Mahabharata.* Svarga *means heaven and* arohana *means ascent. Thus, Svargarohana Parva is about the ascent to heaven. Yudhishthira is shown hell and then goes to heaven. In the numbering of the chapters in Svargarohana Parva, the first number is a consecutive one, starting with the beginning of the Mahabharata. And the second number, within brackets, is the numbering of the chapter within Svargarohana Parva.*

Chapter 1991(1)

Janamejaya said, 'My great grandfathers obtained heaven, the abode of the gods. What regions did the sons of Pandu and the sons of Dhritarashtra obtain? I wish to hear about this. It is my view that you know everything. You have obtained the permission of maharshi Vyasa, who was wonderful in his deeds.'

Vaishampayana replied, 'Your great-grandfathers, Yudhishthira and the others, obtained heaven, the abode of the gods. Listen to what they did. Having reached heaven, the abode of the gods, Dharmaraja Yudhishthira saw Duryodhana seated on a seat, blazing in prosperity. He was as resplendent as the sun and was covered with auspicious marks that distinguish heroes. He was with other shining gods and *sadhyas*, the performers of auspicious deeds. On seeing Duryodhana, Yudhishthira was filled with intolerance. Having seen Suyodhana's prosperity, he violently retreated and spoke these words. "I do not desire to be with Duryodhana. He lacked far-sightedness and was greedy for the worlds. It was because of him that we had to kill all the well-wishers and relatives on earth. Earlier, he had made us suffer in the great forest. Our wife, Panchali, was devoted to dharma and without a blemish in her limbs. In the presence of our elders, he oppressed Droupadi in the midst of the assembly hall. O gods! Grant me peace. I do not even wish to see Suyodhana. I wish to go to the region where my brothers are." Narada laughed and replied, "It is not like that. O Indra among kings! For those who reside in heaven, all enmity is destroyed. O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! Do not speak in this way about King Duryodhana. Listen to my words. This King Duryodhana is worshipped, together with the gods, by the virtuous ones, the best among kings and all those who reside in heaven. Having offered his own body as an oblation in the battle, he has obtained the world meant for heroes. All of you were the equals of the gods and encountered him in the battle. By practising the dharma of kshatriyas, he has obtained this region. Confronted with great fear, this lord of the earth was not terrified. O son! You should no longer remember what occurred in the course of the gambling match. You should not think about

Droupadi's affliction. Nor should you remember the hardships others caused at the time of the gambling match. Nor should you remember what happened elsewhere, in the course of the battle. You should follow propriety and meet King Duryodhana. O lord of men! There is no enmity in heaven." Having been addressed by Narada, the intelligent Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, asked about his brothers and spoke these words. "Duryodhana was ignorant about dharma. He was wicked and destroyed the earth and his well-wishers. Yet, he has obtained the eternal world meant for heroes. It is because of him that the earth was destroyed, with its horses, chariots and elephants. It is because of him that we burnt with rage and were goaded towards enmity. My brave brothers were great-souled and great in their vows. They were valiant and truthful in speech and abided by truthful pledges. Which are the worlds they have obtained? I desire to see those. What about the great-souled Karna Kounteya, devoted to the truth? What about Dhrishtadyumna, Satyaki and Dhrishtadyumna's sons? What worlds have been obtained by the kings who followed the dharma of kshatriyas and were slain by weapons in the battle? O brahmana! O Narada! Why don't I see those kings here? What about Virata, Drupada, the foremost Dhrishtaketu, Panchala Shikhandi, all the sons of Droupadi and the unassailable Abhimanyu? O Narada! I wish to see them."'

Chapter 1992(2)

'Yudhishthira said, "O gods! I do not see the infinitely energetic Radheya.[1] Nor do I see the great-souled brothers, Yudhamanyu and Uttamouja. Those maharathas also offered their bodies as oblations in the battle. In my cause, there are kings and princes who were slain in the battle. Where are all those maharathas, like tigers in their valour? Have those supreme men conquered other worlds? O gods! If all those maharathas have obtained this world, know that only in that case will I reside here, with those great-souled ones. If those kings have not obtained this eternal and auspicious world, then I do not desire to reside here, without my kin and my brothers. On hearing my mother's words, I performed the final water rites for Karna. She asked me to offer oblations of water to him. O gods! I am repeatedly tormented by this. I noticed that the infinitely energetic one's feet resembled those of my mother's. Despite this, I did not follow Karna, the destroyer of enemy forces. Had we been with Karna, even Shakra would have been unable to vanquish us in battle. I wish to go to the place where I can see the son of the sun. Since I did not know who he was, he was slain by Savyasachi. I loved Bhima, terrible in valour, more than my own life. Arjuna was like Indra and the twins were like the Ashvins. I wish to see Panchali, the one who followed dharma. I do not wish to remain here. I am telling you this truthfully. O supreme among gods! Without my brothers, what will I do with heaven? The place where they are is like heaven. It is my view that this is not heaven."

'The gods replied, "O son! We follow the instructions of the king of the gods and will do what brings you pleasure. If you really wish to go there, we will instantly take you there."'

Vaishampayana continued, 'O scorcher of enemies! Having said this, the gods instructed the messenger of the gods. "Show Yudhishthira his well-wishers." O tiger among kings! The messenger of the gods and the king who was Kunti's son went together to the place where those bulls among men were. The messenger of the gods went on ahead and the king followed at the back. That was an inauspicious and inaccessible path, frequented by the performers of wicked deeds. It was enveloped by terrible darkness and was covered with hair, moss and lichen. There was the scent of the performers of wicked deeds and the mire was made out of flesh and blood. It was populated by gnats, crickets, flies and mosquitoes. There were corpses on every side and the stench of carcasses, here and there. It was full of bone and hair and infested by worms and insects. From all sides, a blazing fire surrounded it. There were crows and vultures, with beaks that were like iron. Their mouths were like needles. There were piles of ghosts, as large as the Vindhya mountain. There were dead bodies covered with fat and blood, with arms, thighs and hands severed and stomachs and feet sliced off. The corpses emitted a vile and inauspicious scent and the body hair stood up. The king, with dharma in his soul, advanced along this and he thought a lot. He saw rivers filled with boiling water, extremely difficult to traverse. There were forests with leaves that were like sharp swords and razors. The place was spread with heated sand and there were rocks that were made out iron. In every direction, there were iron pots, with concoctions made out of boiling oil. There were cotton plants that were difficult to touch, with sharp thorns. Kounteya witnessed the pains that the performers of evil deeds had to undergo.

‘Noticing the vile stench, he spoke to the messenger of the gods. “How far must we progress in this fashion? Where are my brothers? You should explain that to me. What place of the gods is this? I wish to know that.” Hearing what Dharmaraja had said, the messenger of the gods stopped. He said, “You must go on. The residents of heaven have told me that I must return from here. O Indra among kings! However, if you are exhausted, you need not go on.” Yudhishthira was distressed and senseless with the stench. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Having made up his mind to return, he started to retreat. The one with dharma in his soul was overcome with sorrow and grief and started to return. He then heard distressed voices speaking in every direction. “O one who knows about dharma! O rajarshi! O one who has a sacred birth! O Pandava! Show us your favours and stay here for an instant. O unassailable one! Because of your arrival, an auspicious breeze has begun to blow. O father![2] It bears your fragrance and fills us with happiness. O Partha! O bull among men! O supreme among kings! It has been a long time and we are delighted that we have met you. O mighty-armed one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Remain here for a short while. O Kouravya! While you are here, our pain is restricted.” There were many such distressed words, full of pain. O king! In that spot, he heard such voices from every direction. Hearing their words, he was distressed and filled with compassion. Yudhishthira remained there and exclaimed, “This is terrible suffering.” He heard those words repeatedly and these seemed to be voices he had heard before. They were full of pain and suffering, but Pandava did not recognize them.

‘Unable to understand, Yudhishthira, Dharma’s son, spoke these words. “Who are you and why are you here?” Having been thus addressed, all of them replied from every direction. “O lord! I am Karna. I am Bhimasena. I am Arjuna. I am Nakula. I am Sahadeva. I am Dhrishtadyumna. I am Droupadi. We are Droupadi’s sons.” These were the voices that were raised. O king! In that place, he heard such words. The king wondered, “What kind of contrary destiny is this? What tainted deeds have these great-souled ones, Karna, Droupadi’s sons and the slender-waisted Panchali, performed? Why are they in this extremely terrible place, with the fetid scent? All of them are the performers of good deeds and I do not know of any wicked deeds that they have performed. What has Dhritarashtra's son, King Suyodhana, done? With all his wicked followers, he is full of prosperity. His prosperity is like that of the great Indra and he is extremely revered. What perversity has led to these people going to hell? All of them are brave and learned about dharma. They have been devoted to truth and the sacred texts. They were devoted to the dharma of kshatriyas. They were wise. They performed sacrifices and gave away a large quantity of gifts. Am I asleep or awake? Am I conscious or unconscious? Perhaps there is a defect in my consciousness. Perhaps my consciousness is deluded." Thus, King Yudhishthira pondered in many ways. He was overcome by sorrow and grief. Because of such thoughts, his senses became anxious. The king who was Dharma's son was filled with great rage. Yudhishthira censured the gods and dharma. Tormented by the terrible stench, he addressed the messenger of the gods. "O fortunate one! Go to those who have sent you as a messenger. I will not go to them. Go and tell them that I will remain here. O messenger! I will be happy with my brothers here." The messenger was thus addressed by Pandu's intelligent son. He went to the place where Shatakratu, the king of the gods, was, and told him what Dharmaraja desired. O lord of men! He also told him everything that Dharma's son had said.'

Chapter 1993(3)

Vaishampayana said, 'O Kouravya! Partha Yudhishthira Dharmaraja had remained there only for a short while. With Shakra at the forefront, all the gods arrived there. In embodied form, Dharma also presented himself, to see the king. He came to the spot where Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, was. The bodies of the gods dazzled. Their births and deeds were auspicious. O king! When they arrived, the darkness was dispelled. The pain of the evildoers could no longer be seen there. The river Vaitarani, the thorny shalmali trees, the iron pots and the terrible mountains also vanished. In every direction, King Kounteya had seen malformed bodies. These also disappeared. An auspicious breeze began to blow. It was pleasant to the touch and bore fragrant scents. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! Since the gods had arrived, it was extremely cool too. The immensely energetic king, Dharma's son, was at the spot. With Shakra, the Maruts, the Vasus, the Ashvins, the Sadhyas, the Rudras, the Adityas, all the other residents of heaven, the Siddhas and the supreme rishis arrived there.

'Shakra, lord of the gods, was extremely prosperous. He comforted Yudhishthira and spoke these words to him. 'O Yudhishthira! O mighty-armed one! The large numbers of gods are delighted with you. Come. O tiger among men! Come. O lord! You have obtained success. O king! You have obtained the eternal worlds. You should not have any anger. Listen to my words. O son![3] There is no doubt that all the kings must see hell. O bull among men! There are accumulations of good and bad deeds. A person who enjoys the good deeds earlier, goes to hell later. A person who goes to hell first, enjoys heaven later. A person who has committed many wicked deeds may enjoy heaven first. O king! It is with your benefit in mind that I sent you there first.[4] In connection with his son, you deceived Drona through a falsehood.[5] O king! Because of that falsehood, you had to see hell. You also saw Bhima, Partha,[6] the twins and Krishna Droupadi, as if they had gone to hell. However, that was an act of deceit. O tiger among men! Come. You have been freed from your sin. There are kings on your side who have been killed in the battle. O tiger among men! They have all gone to heaven. Come and see them. The great archer, Karna, was supreme among those who wielded all kinds of weapons. You are tormented on his account. But he has obtained supreme success. O lord! Look at that tiger among men, the son of the sun. He has obtained his own station. O mighty-armed one! O bull among men! Conquer your grief. Look at your other brothers and the kings who were on your side. They have obtained their respective stations. Get rid of this mental fever. O Kourava! Initially, you suffered some kinds of hardship. Be without sorrow now and without disease. Pleasure yourself with me. O son! You have yourself conquered these worlds through your auspicious deeds and austerities. O mighty-armed one! O Pandava! You have obtained the fruits of your donations. The gods, the gandharvas and the divine apsaras, attired in sparkling garments, will serve you now and ensure your comfort in heaven. You have conquered the worlds through the royal sacrifice and it has been extended through the horse sacrifice. O mighty-armed one! You have obtained the great fruits of austerities. O Yudhishthira! Your worlds are above those of kings. O Partha! They are like those of Harishchandra. Pleasure yourself there. You will sport there like rajarshi Mandhata, King Bhagiratha and Bharata, Dushhanta's son. O Partha! This sacred and divine river[7] purifies the three worlds. O Indra among kings! Go and bathe in Akashaganga.[8] Having bathed there, you will be freed from your human attributes. You will be without sorrow and without effort. You will be freed from all enmity." Indra of the gods spoke in this way to Yudhishthira, Indra among the Kouravas.

'In his personified form, Dharma himself spoke to his son. "O king! O immensely wise one! O son! I am pleased with you, because of your devotion towards me, your truthfulness in speech, your forgiving nature and your self-control. O king! This was the third test I devised for you. O Partha! But whatever be the reason, you are incapable of being dislodged from your nature. Earlier, I came before you and tested you in Dvaitavana, when you were searching for the kindling wood. But you passed that. O descendant of the Bharata lineage! O son! Assuming the form of a dog, I again tested you when your brothers and Droupadi died. This was the third, when you wished to remain here, for the sake of your brothers. O immensely fortunate one! You are pure. Be happy. Be cleansed of sin. O Partha! O lord of the earth! Your brothers are not in hell. This was arranged by me and by the great Indra, the king of the gods. O son! There is no doubt that all the kings must see hell. Therefore, for a short while, you faced supreme unhappiness. O king! However, Savyasachi, Bhima, the twins, bulls among men, and Karna, brave and truthful in speech, do not deserve to be in hell for a long period of time. O Yudhishthira! Nor does the princess Krishna deserve to be in hell. Come. O best among the Bharata lineage! See Ganga, which flows in the three worlds." Your great grandfather, the rajarshi, was addressed in this way. With Dharma and the other gods, he went to their abode. The sacred and divine river Ganga purifies everything and is praised by the rishis. The king bathed there and gave up his human body. Dharmaraja Yudhishthira assumed a divine form. Having bathed in those waters, he was without enmity and without torment. Surrounded by the gods, the intelligent Yudhishthira, king of the Kurus, left with them and with Dharma, praised by the maharshis.'

Chapter 1994(4)

Vaishampayana said, 'King Yudhishthira was praised by the gods, the rishis and the Maruts and went to where the bulls among the Kurus were. He saw Govinda, in his form of the brahman. This had not been seen earlier and nothing like this had been recognized before. He blazed in his own form and celestial weapons presented themselves, in personified forms. There was the celestial chakra and other terrible weapons, all in embodied forms. He was being worshipped by the brave Phalguna, also in an extremely radiant form. Karna, supreme among the wielders of weapons, was in a different spot. The descendant of the Kuru lineage saw him with the twelve Adityas. In yet another place, the lord saw Bhima with a handsome body, surrounded by a large number of Maruts. The descendant of the Kuru lineage saw Nakula and Sahadeva in the region of the Ashvins, blazing in their own energy. He saw Panchali, garlanded in lotuses and lilies. She had reached heaven and was there, as radiant as the rays of the sun. Suddenly, King Yudhishthira wished to question her. But the illustrious Indra, the king of the gods, spoke to him. "Shri assumed the form of Droupadi and was born as a human. O Yudhishthira! She was not born from anyone's womb.[9] She was loved by the worlds and her body had an auspicious fragrance. She was born in Drupada's lineage and served all of you. The wielder of the trident[10] created her for your pleasure. These five immensely fortunate gandharvas are like the fire in their radiance. O king! These infinitely energetic ones were the sons that you and Droupadi had. Behold the king of the gandharvas. He was the learned Dhritarashtra. Know that he was your father's elder brother. This is Kounteya, your elder brother, and like the fire in radiance. He was the son of the sun. He was the first and the foremost and was famous as Radheya. O bull among men! Behold. He moves around with Aditya. O Indra among kings! Behold the large numbers of Sadhyas, gods, Vasus and Maruts. The maharatha Vrishnis and Andhakas are in their midst. Satyaki was the foremost among the brave Bhoja maharathas.

Behold Subhadra’s unvanquished son with the moon. Abhimanyu, the great archer, possesses the radiance of the moon. Pandu, the great archer, is now with Kunti and Madri. On a celestial vehicle, your father often comes to see me. Behold. King Bhishma, Shantanu’s son, is with the Vasus. Listen. Your preceptor, Drona, is next to Brihaspati. O Pandava! There were other kings and warriors on your side. They are now with the gandharvas, yakshas and other auspicious people. Some of the best kings have obtained the status of guhyakas. Sacred in their speech, intelligence and deeds, they have given up their bodies and conquered heaven.”’

Chapter 1995(5)

Janamejaya asked, ‘The great-souled Bhishma and Drona, King Dhritarashtra, Virata, Drupada, Shankha, Uttara, Dhrishtaketu, Jayatsena, King Satyajit, Duryodhana’s sons, Shakuni Soubala, Karna’s brave sons, King Jayadratha, Ghatotkacha and the others whom you have not mentioned, other kings who were blazing in their forms and whom you have named—how long did they dwell in heaven? Tell me about that. O supreme among brahmanas! Was their stay there for an eternal period? When the fruits of their deeds were extinguished, what ends were obtained by those bulls among men? O brahmana! I wish to hear about this. You should tell me about it.’ ‘Suta said, “Thus addressed, the brahmana rishi took the permission of the great-souled Vyasa.[11] He sought to explain to the king.”’

Vaishampayana said, ‘O lord of men! When the fruits of deeds are extinguished, everyone has to leave. O king! O bull among the Bharata lineage! Listen to a divine mystery. He[12] was powerful, possessed great energy and had divine insight. O Kouravya! The sage who was Parashara’s son was ancient and was great in his vows. He was fathomless in his intelligence and knew everything. He knew the end of all kinds of deeds. The greatly energetic and immensely radiant Bhishma became a Vasu. O bull among the Bharata lineage! The eight Vasus can now be seen.[13] Drona, supreme among the Angiras lineage, entered Brihaspati. Hardikya Kritavarma entered the Maruts. Pradyumna entered Sanatkumara, which is where he had come from.

Dhritarashtra obtained the world of the lord of riches, which is so difficult to obtain. The illustrious Gandhari went with Dhritarashtra. With his wives, Pandu went to the great Indra's abode. Virata, Drupada, King Dhrishtaketu, Nishatha,[14] Akrura, Bhanu, Kampa, Viduratha, Bhurishrava, Shala, King Bhuri, Ugrasena, Kamsa, the valiant Vasudeva,[15] Uttara, his brother Shankha, bull among men—all these supreme men entered specific divinities. Soma[16] had a powerful and immensely energetic son named Varcha. He was born as Phalguna's son, Abhimanyu, lion among men. He followed the dharma of kshatriyas and fought the way no man ever has. On the completion of his deeds, the maharatha, with dharma in his soul, entered Soma. O bull among men! Karna entered his father, the sun. Shakuni entered *dvapara*[17] and Dhrishtadyumna the fire. All of Dhritarashtra's sons became yatudhanas,[18] intoxicated with their valour. They were powerful and great-souled. Purified by weapons, they went to heaven. Kshatta[19] and King Yudhishthira entered Dharma. Ananta, the illustrious god,[20] entered the nether regions. Instructed by his grandfather, he holds up the entire earth through his yoga. O Janamejaya! When the time came, Vasudeva's[21] sixteen thousand wives submerged themselves in the Sarasvati. They were then transformed into apsaras and presented themselves before Vasudeva. There were other brave maharathas, Ghatotkacha and the others, who were slain in the great war. All of them became gods and yakshas. Duryodhana's aides have been spoken of as rakshasas. O king! In due course, they obtained all the supreme worlds. Those bulls among men went to the regions of the great Indra, the intelligent Kubera or Varuna. O immensely radiant one! O descendant of the Bharata lineage! I have recounted all this in detail, including the entire character of the Kurus and the Pandavas.'

'Suta said, "O best among brahmanas! At appropriate gaps during the sacrificial ceremony, King Janamejaya heard all this and was filled with wonder. The officiating priests completed all the tasks that remained to be done. Astika was delighted at the serpents having been saved.[22] The king honoured all the brahmanas and gratified them with dakshina. They returned to wherever they had come from. Having taken his leave from the brahmanas, King Janamejaya left Takshashila and returned to Gajasahvya.[23] On Vyasa's command, Vaishampayana recounted all this at the king's snake sacrifice and I have told you everything about it. This is known as a sacred history. It is supreme and auspicious. It has been composed by the brahmana sage, Krishna, truthful in speech. He knew everything. He knew all the rites. He was virtuous and possessed knowledge about dharma. His senses were extraordinary and pure. He cleansed his soul with austerities. He possessed the powers associated with those who know sankhya and yoga. He saw all this with his divine sight and used his intelligence to compose it in a single strand. He wished to spread the deeds of the great-souled Pandavas in the world and also those of the other kshatriyas, who were rich in their great energy. If a learned person hears this on auspicious and festive occasions, his soul is cleansed. He conquers heaven and advances to the brahman. If a person seats himself at the feet of brahmanas and hears this at a funeral ceremony, his ancestors always obtain infinite amounts of food and drink. During the day, one may commit sins with one's senses and with one's mind. However, subsequently, if one listens to the Mahabharata in the evening, one is freed from one's sins. O bull among the Bharata lineage! Everything about dharma, artha, kama and moksha can be found here. What is here can be found elsewhere. But what is not here cannot be found elsewhere. Those who desire prosperity should hear the history known as Jaya, irrespective of whether they are kings, the sons of kings, or pregnant women. A person who desires heaven obtains heaven. A person who desires victory obtains victory. An expectant woman obtains a son. A maiden becomes extremely fortunate. For the sake of ensuring dharma, the lord Krishna Dvaipayana, who will not return, composed a summary known as Bharata and it took him three years. Narada recited it to the gods, Asita-Devala to the ancestors, Shuka to rakshasas and yakshas and Vaishampayana to mortals. This history is sacred. It is deep in meaning and is as revered as the Vedas. With brahmanas as the foremost, it should be heard by the three varnas. O Shounaka! A man who does this is freed from sin and obtains fame. There is no doubt that he advances towards supreme success. If one faithfully studies the sacred Mahabharata, or even if one studies one quarter of it, one is purified and all one's sins are destroyed. In ancient times, the illustrious maharshi, Vyasa, composed this. The illustrious one made his son, Shuka, study it, with these four shlokas. 'Thousands of mothers and fathers and hundreds of sons and wives arrive in this world and then depart elsewhere. There are thousands of reasons for joy and hundreds of reasons for fear. From one day to another, they afflict those who are stupid, but not those who are learned. I am without pleasure and have raised my arms, but no one is listening to me. If dharma and kama result from artha, why should one not pursue artha? For the sake of kama, fear or avarice, and even for the sake of preserving one's life, one should not give up dharma. Dharma is eternal. Happiness and unhappiness are transient. The atman is eternal, but other reasons are transient.' If a person awakes in the morning and reads Bharata, which is like the savitri, he obtains the fruits of reading the Bharata and obtains the supreme brahman. The illustrious ocean and the Himalaya mountain are stores of riches. The famous Bharata is said to be like that. If a person controls himself and reads the account of the Mahabharata, there is no doubt that he advances towards supreme success. This is immeasurable and emerged from the lips of Dvaipayana. It is auspicious and sacred. It is pure and removes all sin. If a person controls himself and listens to Bharata being recited, there is no need for him to sprinkle himself with water from Pushkara."'

This ends Svargarohana Parva and also ends the Mahabharata.